

A black and white photograph of a park. In the foreground, a paved path with a white double line runs across the frame. The path is bordered by dark mulch on the left and right. In the middle ground, several bare trees of varying sizes stand on a grassy area. In the background, a large open field stretches towards a line of houses and trees under a clear sky.

**City of East Providence**  
**2010 - 2015**  
**Comprehensive Plan Update**

**CITY OF EAST PROVIDENCE  
2010-2015 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE**

**ADOPTED BY EAST PROVIDENCE CITY COUNCIL  
ON JANUARY 5, 2010**

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Robert E. Cusack, Assistant Mayor  
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**EAST PROVIDENCE PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

Jeanne M. Boyle, Planning Director  
Diane M. Feather, AICP, Chief Planner  
James Moran, Principal Planner  
Patrick Hanner, Senior Planner  
Wayne A. Barnes, Planner I

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**City of East Providence, RI  
Comprehensive Plan Update  
Executive Summary**



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**INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

The East Providence Comprehensive Plan seeks to ensure that East Providence's growth is balanced with preservation, and that quality of life is protected and enhanced as the City grows, with an emphasis on neighborhood preservation, a vital and welcoming business climate for small and large businesses, ample parks and recreation, improved mobility for all modes of transportation, and the protection of the City and the region's natural resources. The Executive Summary was prepared to provide a better understanding of East Providence and the overall Comprehensive Plan as a basis for land use decisions, grant and funding priorities, and as a tool for preserving quality of life.

The East Providence Comprehensive Plan adopted under the "modern-era" enabling legislation (Title 45, Chapter 22.2) was drafted in 1991 and 1992 using a Citizens Advisory Task Force, was locally adopted, and certified by the State of Rhode Island in 1994. The 2004 Land Use Plan Update was the updating of the 1994 Comprehensive Plan and used a "Land Use 2010" planning timeframe. This current Plan Update utilizes a 2010-2015 planning timeframe. Checklists for the 2010 Plan Update are included in Appendix A. In each Plan Element the goals and policies for the 1994 Plan and 2004 and 2010-2015 Updates have been combined into one list. Each Plan Element and this Executive Summary also discuss the accomplishments since the adoption of the 2004 Plan Update, the projects currently underway.

The 1994 State-certified East Providence Comprehensive Plan ("Plan") and the Plan's 2004 State-certified Update were prepared to guide development and redevelopment of the City of East Providence to the year 2010 and to preserve and enhance the qualities of the City that resident's value. All provisions, sections and data of these earlier adopted and certified plans, and all subsequent amendments thereto, shall remain in full force and effect. The 2009 Update of the Plan will guide the City's land use actions through the year 2015. It was this information together with citizen input that guided the goals, policies and action items in this Update. The Plan was developed within the framework established by the Rhode Island General Laws Title 45, Chapter 22.2 (Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act).

The Plan serves as the policy framework for a wide range of decisions concerning land use, development, design, programs, and public investment priorities. Public input, in combination with technical studies, changes to the economy, fiscal constraints, prior actions and even global changes, were taken into account in the Update of the Plan. All East Providence land use decisions must be consistent with this Plan. As with all plans, this Plan is subject to amendment as conditions, public and private resources, and preferences evolve over time.

The City began public meetings regarding the Plan update in early 2009. A Kick-Off Meeting was held on February 2, 2009 from 6:30 to 8:30 PM at the East Providence Senior Center Campus at 610 Waterman Avenue. A press release for this event was issued on January 15, 2009, and notification to the public and city officials was widespread, which resulted in good participation. Following a brief Power Point presentation about the Comprehensive Plan and the Update, attendees of this meeting were able to provide input at several different tables, each representing a plan element and each led by a member of the Planning and Community Development staff. Citizens talked about the future of the City and ideas for attaining that future. The citizens at this meeting offered many positive comments about the city and offered constructive comments for improvement. A second meeting was held on May 20, 2009 with limited attendance but relevant comments were received. An overview of the public comments is offered at the conclusion of this section. Planning staff also met individually with stakeholders from the development and non-profit communities to elicit comments.

The Planning Board held a Public Hearing on the Plan on November 16, 2009 and offered an advisory recommendation to the City Council that the Plan be adopted. The City Council also held a Public Hearing on the East Providence Comprehensive Plan 2010 Update on December 15, 2009 and closed the hearing that evening. The City Council adopted the Plan Update at their next subsequent meeting, January 5, 2010.

The goals, objectives and action programs of this Plan reflect the input of East Providence residents and its business community, civic organizations, and environmental groups. It should be noted that the April 1, 2010 United States Census is too distant in its execution for use in the preparation of this Update. The U.S. Census Bureau compiles the data which it collects and releases it over time, beginning with the one-hundred percent data, i.e. those questions asked of everyone, and later, releases of sample data from questions asked of a random percentage of the population. Staff has used other reliable data and estimates where available to estimate the population and demographics of the residents of East Providence, and the number of businesses and daytime workforce population of the City.

This Executive Summary of the East Providence Comprehensive Plan was prepared to provide a better understanding of the overall Comprehensive Plan as a basis for land use decisions, grant and funding priorities, and as a tool for preserving quality of life.

This Executive Summary is organized as follows:

- Intent and Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan
- Organization of the Comprehensive Plan
- Overview of Present Conditions
- Summary of the Comprehensive Plan
- Accomplishments Since the 2004 Update of the Plan

The process of adoption of a Comprehensive Plan or an Update of a Plan requires that the Planning Board review the draft and make an advisory recommendation to the City Council. The Final Draft Comprehensive Plan was heard by the Planning Board at a public hearing held November 16, 2009 and the Planning Board made an advisory recommendation to the City Council to approve the Plan as proposed by staff subject to comments and revisions provided by the Planning Board. The City Council held a public

hearing on the draft Plan Update on December 15, 2009, and as the legislative body for the City, adopted the Comprehensive Plan Update on January 5, 2010. The State of Rhode Island, Division of Planning, Office of Statewide Planning, must review and certify the City's Plan or any updates or amendments.

## **INTENT AND PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The challenge for the City is to ensure quality development of the remaining undeveloped lands and the re-development of land for new uses, such as land in the waterfront districts, while protecting the quality of the life for residents, protecting the natural resources of the City, and creating an environment that can promote a favorable economic climate. With the exception of the waterfront special development districts, which were in large part mostly used for the storage of petroleum, oils and chemical storage or heavy industrial use, the City is mostly built-out with a mix of densities and types of land use. The East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Plan was adopted by the City Council on December 2, 2003. This was followed by the City Council's rezoning of the land in the waterfront district on March 2, 2004 for redevelopment with a mix of uses including residential, commercial, office, and retail.

This Comprehensive Plan is a guide for development, conservation and preservation of the City's resources, and a guide for the efficient and economical provision of long-range service needs. These resources include the developable land, existing housing, commercial and industrial properties, natural resources such as ponds, rivers, wetlands, and shorelines, parks and recreation facilities, as well as community facilities and services including schools, police and fire service, sewer and water service, and human services. Linking everything together is the circulation system including roadways, walkways, bicycle paths, pedestrian paths, and transit facilities.

This document provides the vantage of a citywide assessment and seeks to foster a balanced and sustainable community as defined by input from a cross section of residents, stakeholders, and interest groups. This Comprehensive Plan is intended to result in public and private actions that will:

- promote orderly development that protects the public health, safety and welfare;
- ensure adequate provision of public facilities and services;
- enhance the economic climate and vitality of the City;
- ensure an efficient, effective, convenient and safe transportation system; and
- promote high quality housing and neighborhood infill development while retaining the character of existing neighborhoods.

The East Providence Comprehensive Plan is a regulatory document adopted by the City Council. The Plan addresses issues that are much broader than physical design of the City. Decisions relating to planning and development are long range in their effect, frequently affect the entire community or a large segment of the community, and are somewhat irreversible in a physical sense, at least in the near-term. For those reasons, day-to-day decisions must fit into a framework for the future. This Comprehensive Plan for the City of East Providence is intended to provide the guidance upon which decisions are made that reflect consistency with the Plan and further its implementation. Land use actions and decisions must be made only when a finding of consistency with the Comprehensive Plan is found. It is meant to assist the City, the residents, the

developer, business owners and others in conceptualizing plans, making investment decisions and the delivery and use of public services.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The East Providence Comprehensive Plan provides an overview of the existing conditions in the City, the plan elements, and the policies, goals and implementation schedule. State Law requires each community to touch upon seven issues as follows: land use, housing, economic development, natural/cultural resources, community services and facilities, open space/recreation, and circulation. This Update is based on these basic elements (as done in earlier plans) and a new element on Community Sustainability is proposed. Sustainability and “green” actions will also be an overarching framework for all the elements of the Plan.

## OVERVIEW OF PRESENT CONDITIONS

By reference, the technical information and conditions provided in the 1994 State Certified Comprehensive Plan and 2004 State Certified Update unless specifically amended are included in the present Plan Update (2009) as applicable and remain in full force and effect. The United States Census Bureau “2006 Quick Facts” estimates the 2006 population of East Providence at 49,123 persons, a slight increase from the 2000 U.S. Census total population of East Providence of 48,688 persons. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the City’s total population is estimated to have grown slightly by 0.9 percent from the year 2000 to July 1, 2006, with the State of Rhode Island as a whole growing an estimated 1.8 percent in the same period (U.S. Census Quick Facts, 2006).

### *Total Population*

<b>Year</b>	<b>East Providence Total Number of Persons</b>
<b>2000</b>	<b>48,688</b>
<b>2006 (Estimate)</b>	<b>49,123</b>
	<b>+ 435 persons or .9%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Quickfacts.census.gov (2006)

East Providence consists of approximately thirteen (13) square miles, with a density of approximately 3,630 persons per square mile. The Census Bureau notes that persons per household in East Providence in the year 2000 was 2.33, less than the State of Rhode Island as a whole in the year 2000 with 2.47 persons per household. National trends and anecdotal data appear to indicate that the persons per household for East Providence has increased since the 2000 U.S. Census due to very poor economic conditions, particularly double-digit unemployment rates, with many homes now housing multiple generations of family.

The percentage of citizens over the age of 65 has remained at approximately nineteen percent (19%) of the total population. Nearly every year for the past two decades, the deaths of East Providence residents has outpaced the births to women residing in the city, so there has been no natural increase in the population. For the present, with the resident population in decline, if the in-migration of persons to the City is limited, the total population of the City will not grow, or will grow only by slight increases.

This Executive Summary of the Comprehensive Plan highlights some goals and action items of each of the Plan Elements. The complete listing of goals, objectives and action items are detailed in each respective Element.

## **SUMMARY OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

### **Land Use and Sustainability Plan Element**

The Land Use Plan Element can be considered the cornerstone of the Plan, as it establishes the desired pattern of land use throughout the City. In this Update it includes sustainability goals and objectives, and there is a separate plan element entitled "Community Sustainability". The following are highlights of the Land Use Plan Element.

- Preserve the densities of existing residential neighborhoods
- Preserve the character of existing "downtown" type commercial corridors, e.g. Taunton Avenue, Warren Avenue and Riverside Square, utilizing build-to lines and locating off-street parking to the rear of structures
- Continue to implement the East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Plan (adopted by the East Providence City Council on December 2, 2003) requiring mixed use redevelopment with various residential, commercial, office, retail, hospitality, and light manufacturing uses in the northern and southern districts.
- Utilize green building guidelines in the review and permitting of development to include environmental considerations in every aspect of the review process, including lot development, design, construction, and the development and/or structures impact on the environment,
- Continue to implement the Critical Area Specific Plans
- Develop community indicators to ensure that development is meeting community goals.

### **Housing Plan Element**

- Continue to maintain at least ten percent (10%) of the City's total housing stock as affordable in a range of housing options, both ownership and rental, and increase that percentage as necessary to meet needs.

- Continue to provide affordable housing units for low and moderate-income households in order to ensure safe, decent, and affordable housing to families, seniors, and people with special needs.
- Promote and enforce maintenance of existing housing stock and maintain densities in existing neighborhoods
- Continue to require a minimum of ten percent (10%) affordable units in developments in the Waterfront Districts and expand this requirement elsewhere in the City where possible, and seek voluntary inclusion of affordable units in developments
- Promote the retrofitting of buildings and new construction to include “green” building standards resulting in structures that are energy and resource efficient

### **Economic Development Plan Element**

- Continue the commercial loan programs in support of small and large business operation and growth in the City, including the 2 + 2 Façade Improvement Program, Enterprise Zone tax credit, and the Tax Stabilization program
- Maintain close working relationship with RIEDC and the East Providence Chamber of Commerce
- Regularly update the computerized inventory of commercial and industrial sites developed by the Planning Department
- Identify and seek emerging business and business clusters to locate in East Providence
- Target capital improvements to support economic development by maintaining infrastructure and utilities



### **Historical and Cultural Resources Plan Element**

- Implement the Historical District Overlay District at Hunts Mills in Rumford.
- Support cultural heritage days of the varied ethnicities and races of the citizens of East Providence.

- Support historic tax credit programs that preserve historic structures in the city through adaptive re-use. Historic tax credits were part of the budget for the re-development of the former Rumford Baking Powder site.

### **Community Services and Facilities Plan Element**

- Maintain City facilities and continue to provide needed community services, such as emergency services, libraries, recreation, parks and playgrounds, senior services, sanitary sewer and water, stormwater management, and refuse collection and recycling.
- Retrofit City facilities to incorporate “green” building standards which utilize sustainable and renewable energy and result in energy and resource efficiency
- Implement City studies and plans relating to infrastructure, stormwater management, and floodplain management,

### **Recreation, Conservation and Natural/Open Space Plan Element**

- Continue to maintain and enhance City parks, playgrounds and open space properties
- Continue to accept donations of property where circumstances and due diligence permit and where critical habitats would be preserved.
- Continued to acquire land through land donation along the Runnins River to establish an uninterrupted greenway.
- Construct sidewalk and dedicated pedestrian and bicycle paths where feasible to connect to and expand the existing network, including connections to adjoining communities and create Class 3 bicycle lanes where feasible
- Require dedication of recreation, open space and waterfront access as part of new development where appropriate and feasible
- Preserve and utilize natural water and drainage features and utilize low-impact development (LID) techniques for stormwater management such as rain gardens, minimizing impervious surfaces and increasing the use of porous materials so that pollutants carried by stormwater are filtered by percolation through soil.



### **Circulation Plan Element**

- Work with the Rhode Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) to provide a good transit system for residents and work to establish a RIPTA hub that provides comfort and convenience for RIPTA riders and encourage RIPTA to inventory existing bus shelters, bus stop signage and amenities, and upgrade facilities as needed.
- Continue to work with RIDOT and their consultants on the design and construction of Waterfront Drive from its current terminus at Warren Avenue northerly to Dexter Road in Phase 2 and northerly to Phillipsdale in Phase 3.
- Continue to develop a program of roadway rehabilitation including inventory, improvements, and funding sources.
- Work with RIDOT on Waterfront Drive, the Interstate 195 interchange at Taunton Avenue and Veteran's Memorial Parkway to enhance the entrance to the City.
- Continue to work with RIDOT to identify appropriate intersection improvements at arterial street intersections (turn lanes, signals, etc.) along Pawtucket Avenue Warren Avenue, Taunton Avenue, Newport Avenue, Waterman Avenue, and North Broadway.
- Work with RIDOT to develop strategies for restoring the historic former rail river crossing at Crook Point via the Seekonk River lift bridge connecting East Providence north of the Washington Bridge to the East Side of Providence through the existing underground tunnel for transportation corridors and alternatives.

### **Community Sustainability Plan Element**

- Require new development to utilize Low Impact Development (LID) techniques such as green roofs, rain gardens and reducing impervious coverage
- Retrofit City facilities to incorporate "green" building standards which utilize sustainable and renewable energy and result in energy and resource efficiency
- Utilize green building guidelines in the review and permitting of development to include environmental considerations in every aspect of the review process, including lot development, design, construction, and the development and/or structures impact on the environment,
- Continue to offer rehabilitation loans that incorporate construction techniques and equipment that follow the green building principal and that utilize renewable energy and promote energy efficiency
- Continue to incorporate LID techniques for stormwater management and reduce natural hazards through floodplain management in land development projects and subdivisions.

## **Major Changes Summary**

The following is an overview of some of the major accomplishments and studies since the 2004 Update of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Each plan element in the updated plan will include all the significant actions and accomplishments in greater detail.

### **Waterfront Special Development District Plan Adopted**

Upon its adoption December 2, 2003, the East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Plan replaced the former Strategic Waterfront Plan, and ushered in a future for the waterfront as a place where people could live, work and recreate. The Waterfront Special Development District Plan is part of the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan. This Plan was part of the 2004 Plan Update which was certified by the State of Rhode Island and included plans for the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) as an implementation tool. The City's adopted Tax Increment Financing Plan is included at Appendix B. The first development to be permitted and constructed in the waterfront district was the 54-unit Rossccommons condominium development on Roger Williams Avenue in Phillipsdale. Tockwotton Home, a 148-unit continuing care facility currently in Providence received approval for the construction of a \$40 million dollar facility which will be located on Waterfront Drive. Village on the Waterfront, a 600-unit development, with 40,000 square feet of commercial space (mixed use) was approved by the Waterfront Commission in 2009.

### **Waterfront Drive**

The Waterfront Drive/ Warren Avenue Connector was constructed and opened in 2006. The recommendations associated with this segment of Waterfront Drive and further construction of Waterfront Drive northerly are detailed within the City's Waterfront Special Development District Plan. This plan calls for mixed use along the waterfront including residences, offices, light industry, commercial space, and public access.

### **Warren Avenue Enhancement**

A Warren Avenue study was completed by Pare Corporation and the first phase of the Warren Avenue Enhancement Project was completed, including a monument dedicated to the late Councilman Norman Miranda for his tireless efforts to improve the Warren Avenue corridor.

### **Interstate-195/Waterfront Interchange Study**

An Environmental Assessment was completed by GRA Inc. on a new Interchange of Interstate 195 for improved waterfront access and the study resulted in a Finding of No Significant Impact. The interchange would greatly improve access into and out of the waterfront south of I-195 and would permit entrances and exits for both eastbound and westbound traffic from the new interchange.

### **New Businesses**

Aspen Aerogels, a manufacturer of high tech insulation materials, completed its \$30 million dollar renovation of a 145,000 square foot manufacturing facility on Dexter Road and became fully operational in 2008. The Aspen Aerogels facility has brought dozens of high paying jobs to East Providence and was recently named the “Emerging Company of the Year” by the New England Clean Energy Council.

A private developer, Adele Beck, has developed a seven-acre site in Rumford consisting of 100,000 square feet of distribution/warehouse space that will be occupied by the industrial laminate company Baer Supply. The building will be located next to the former Fram building that now houses Victoria Creations, Monarch Industries and Wood Precision and will add approximately 25 jobs when it becomes fully operational.

### **Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan**

The City adopted a Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan which pre-plans actions to be taken to mitigate the impacts of natural hazards, e.g. snow and ice storms, hurricanes, flooding, and high wind events. Such actions may include reducing power outages by conducting selective tree trimming to keep tree limbs away from power lines. This plan will be updated in 2010.

### **Parks and Recreation Development/Conservation Actions**

Land was acquired that was slated to be developed as residential housing and was combined with the existing park to create Rose Larisa Memorial Park. Rose Larisa Memorial Park is located on Bullocks Point Avenue opposite the Looff Carousel and is the venue for a highly popular outdoor music program in the summer.

The Turner Reservoir Walking Path and Raised Walkway were constructed.

The City accepted donations of property along the Runnins River.

### **Plans/Studies/Reports**

The Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) completed a number of studies for the City of East Providence including one for the Runnins River Watershed, one for the Central Pond/Turner Reservoir, and one for the Southeast Drainage District.

2004 Taunton Avenue Revitalization Plan (completed by Gates, Leighton in partnership with Vanasse, Hangen and Brustlin Inc.)

Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) for Taunton Avenue/Bomes Theatre was completed in 2007.

**2000 Profile\***  
**City of East Providence, Rhode Island**

**Location:** Located at the head of Narragansett Bay on the east bank of the Providence River. East Providence is bounded by Pawtucket on the north, Barrington on the south, Seekonk, Massachusetts on the east and the City of Providence on the west.

**Area of the City** Total: 16.5 square miles  
Land Area: 13.3 square miles  
Inland Water Area: 3.2 square miles  
Shoreline: 14.4 miles

**Population** 48,688 (2000 U.S. Census) (ranks 5<sup>th</sup> in RI cities and towns)

**Population Density** Approximately 3,700 persons per square mile

**Number of Housing Units:** 21,309

**Age 65 years and over** 18.9 % (9,203 persons)  
(U.S. Census) Race alone or in combination with one or more races:  
White 89.2 %  
Black or African American 6.9 %  
Some other race: 5.3 %

**Median Household Income** \$ 39,108 (from 2000 U.S. Census)

**Major Private Employment Sectors** – Service industries; manufacturing; retail trade; finance, insurance and real estate; and wholesale trade

**Miles of Paved Streets** City-owned approx. 160 miles  
State-owned approx. 30 miles

\* Source of Demographics 2000 United States Census

## OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

### *Positives*

1. Strong family ties/multi-generational community
2. Good schools
3. Good neighborhoods near schools
4. Second generation returning to live in home they grew up in
5. Small-town feel
6. Neighborhood branch libraries
7. Good variety of housing types at good densities
8. Proximity to Upper Narragansett Bay and rivers and ponds
9. East Bay Bicycle Path
10. Philharmonic School in East Providence – possibilities for cultural programs, events
11. Lakeside Square – good selection of neighborhood businesses
12. Live close to work (some stated they work and live in East Providence)
13. Some good local restaurants
14. Heritage Days
15. Loeff Carousel and Outdoor Summer Concerts at Rose Larisa Memorial Park
16. Comedy Club

### *Issues Impacting Quality of Life and Areas in Need of Improvement*

1. Forced to drive (rather than walk) to retail
2. Cannot walk because of concerns for safety
3. High volumes of traffic and traffic congestion
4. No sidewalks in many areas – pedestrians feel unsafe
5. Loss of Bomes Theatre to demolition (want site re-used for a cultural use)
6. Concern over losing public access to the waterfront
7. Lack of parking at public access points to the water
8. Loss of larger specialty stores (which are now in other communities)
9. Need to buy things outside of the City, like clothing
10. Little formal fine dining opportunities
11. Need to leave City for live events and cultural events (e.g. to PPAC or Trinity Repertory)
12. Not enough public transportation
13. Look for ways to consolidate and expedite development permitting
14. There is a need for more north/south road connections in the City
15. Stormwater drainage issues are important and must be addressed

## **Land Use Element**

The Land Use Plan Element (Land Use Plan) can be considered the cornerstone of the Plan, as it establishes the desired pattern of land use throughout the City. It is the City's land use pattern that determines the development of its transportation, community facilities, and parks and open space systems. The land use pattern also affects the implementation of the City's housing and economic development programs. While the City is largely built-out and much of the City's land use pattern is already established, there are opportunities for redevelopment of land uses or buildings that may have become obsolete and there are major opportunities for redevelopment of brownfields along the City's waterfront. Regarding nonconforming uses, it is a basic tenet of planning and zoning that nonconforming land uses, especially those that have negative environmental and/or aesthetic characteristics, should either be improved or eliminated over time. Buffers, either natural or man-made, should be utilized to buffer transitional land uses such as a lesser intensive land use or zoning district to a more intensive use or zoning district. The land use pattern can be enhanced and modified as necessary over time to reflect emerging trends and new conditions.

Land uses should be coordinated so that there is a balance and mix of uses and a broadened tax base. The Land Use Plan anticipates future trends regarding population and development, while maintaining the character and quality of life that East Providence residents value. Included in this element are sustainability goals and objectives, and there is a separate plan element entitled "Community Sustainability". The technical information and conditions provided in the 1994 State Certified Comprehensive Plan and 2004 State Certified Update, unless specifically amended, are included in the present Plan Update (2009) as applicable and remain in full force and effect. It was this information together with citizen input that guided the goals, policies and action items in this Update. The Land Use Plan provides a recommended land development and revitalization program for the City through the Year 2015 and a Future Land Use 2015 Map. The Land Use Plan has also been developed with regard to the State's plan, *Land Use 2025, Rhode Island State Land Use Policies and Plan*.

The State's Plan, *Land Use 2025*, envisions growth in an urban core that includes Providence and the surrounding metropolitan area, including East Providence, and envisions growth centers located in village centers in the State's thirty-nine cities and towns. The Plan proposes four goals and several objectives, to which the City is in accord:

State Land Use 2025 Goal 1: Build the Greenspace and Greenways System

- Protect critical natural resources
- Improve urban and community greenspace
- Provide diverse public outdoor recreation facilities
- Use greenspace to shape urban development patterns.
- Protect shoreline areas

State Land Use 2025 Goal 2: Achieve Excellence in Community Design

- Focus growth in a variety of centers
- Promote traditional neighborhoods
- Preserve special places
- Protect rural character
- Promote diverse, affordable housing
- Develop major employment centers

State Land Use 2025 Goal 3: Develop First-Class Supporting Infrastructure

- Maintain public water and sewer systems and focus development around them
- Protect drinking water
- Avoid negative environmental impacts from development
- Map areas where services will be expanded
- Promote intermodal centers and transit
- Provide pedestrian connections
- Maintain functionality of roadways

State Land Use 2025 Goal 4: Implementing the Vision

- Reform RI's property tax system
- Require current land-use plans and coordinated regulations at state and local levels
- Develop excellent land use information and technology systems
- Train and support municipal planning officials
- Update state planning enabling legislation
- Better integrate state and municipal planning systems
- Support regional efforts
- Establish growth center investment strategies

The East Providence Land Use Plan Element Vision Statement is as follows:

*East Providence shall seek to make development and investment decisions that promote economic development and broaden the tax base of the City and provide employment opportunities for City residents, that enhance potential downtown and village centers, that provide a range of housing choices, that maintain the density and character of existing neighborhoods, that provide recreation and open space, parks, playgrounds and linkages such as pedestrian paths and bikeways, that provide new opportunities for public access to the waterfront, and new places to work, live and recreate on the waterfront, that maintain infrastructure, that lessen our community's impact on the environment by becoming more sustainable and that look for opportunities to increase use of renewable energy, and decisions that retain the qualities that residents desire and cite as to why they choose to live in East Providence.*

The Comprehensive Plan may be amended to reflect changing needs and conditions, emerging trends, new opportunities and new technology. Rhode Island State Law allows a community to amend its Comprehensive Plan up to four times per year.

The following criteria were considered in developing this *Land Use Plan Element*. These criteria should also be used by City officials, boards, and commissions to evaluate the validity and appropriateness of actions that are taken to implement the *Land Use Plan* and other plan elements of the East Providence Comprehensive Plan.

- The land use pattern should maintain land use districts that contain complementary uses, which may include mixed uses.
- Redevelopment of appropriate areas at reasonably increased densities may be permitted throughout the City provided they are consistent with the existing

- character and density of adjoining properties, particularly for single-family land use. The Waterfront Districts are zoned for increased residential densities.
- Create walkable neighborhoods with varied housing choices, proximity to schools and access to recreation and greenspace, and small-scale neighborhood services and retail, thereby lessening the need to drive.
  - Balance land uses to meet needs and broaden the tax base.
  - Manage traffic volumes to the extent possible by mitigating any potential negative impacts, create new north-south routes in the City, and improve the safety and convenience of public transit for its riders.
  - Provide adequate infrastructure to meet the needs of the community.
  - Ensure adequate access and site depth of parcels in appropriate locations for commercial and light industrial development.
  - Consider the type, size and location of land uses with respect to slopes, and scenic views.
  - Preserve drainage ways, water bodies and wetlands as part of a “blueway” system linked to greenways, open spaces and parks.
  - Consider the impacts of future land uses on natural resources and wildlife habitat areas.
  - Permit infill development or redevelopment of properties provided they are compatible with adjoining land uses in terms of density and the neighborhood’s predominant character.
  - Increase use of renewable energy as a City and study potential impacts to land use by the widespread use of certain renewable energy options in an urbanized area, e.g. wind turbines.

The goals of implementation of the Plan, including the Land Use Element and other elements, are to:

1. Provide a foundation to guide orderly and planned development and conservation and revitalization of the land areas of East Providence that are fiscally and environmentally responsive to the needs and desires of the community.
2. Provide the basis for a land management program that maximizes the resources to ensure opportunities for growth while preserving the qualities that make East Providence a unique place to live.
3. Continue to identify land use-related guidelines and strategies which will achieve, over the long-term, the goals for efficient use of remaining vacant lands and redevelopment of parcels, conservation of environmentally sensitive areas, utilization of existing residential and non-residential structures, and an improved visual image of the City's commercial areas.
4. Establish a coordinated framework for day-to-day decision-making that is consistent with the City's long-range planning direction, and provides decision-making consistency as community leadership and administrations change over the years.

### *Early Beginnings of the City Plan - 1963*

The City has been on the forefront of planning for decades. As an example, the City's 1963 *Master Plan for Land Use* was prepared as part of the so-called "Section 701" Program of the 1954 Federal Housing Act. The 1950 population of the City was 35,871 persons. The 1963 Plan provided a future land use plan and goals and objectives for the future development of the City's circulation system and residential, commercial, industrial and open space lands. Shortly after adoption of the 1963 Plan, several of the Plan's recommended circulation improvements had taken place. The Washington Bridge was completed, as was the second Seekonk River Crossing (Henderson Bridge). Major neighborhoods were platted and built in the Post-World War II years. Significant areas of this development were located in the Kent Heights, Waddington and the Meadowcrest neighborhoods. Major parcels of land were acquired for parks, open space and playgrounds. Many multi-family developments, including apartment complexes and the senior citizen high-rise buildings, were built in the 1960's and 1970's. The City's population grew from 35,871 persons in 1950 to 41,955 persons in 1960, to the current population of 48,688 persons (2000 U.S. Census).

### Permitting Framework

The Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 19) and the Land Development and Subdivision Review Regulations are the two major means by which development plan review is reviewed and permitted in East Providence. (Building permit and Fire Department permits must be obtained.) The Zoning Ordinance contains the Waterfront Special Development District Zoning. There is a Development Plan Review (DPR) Committee, which conducts administrative review of lower scale developments, while larger scale developments are reviewed as Land Development Projects (LDP's) by the Planning Board. The Planning Board also reviews applications for subdivision.

### *Continuing Population Trends*

The United States Census Bureau "*2006 Quick Facts*" estimates the 2006 population of East Providence at 49,123 persons, a slight increase from the 2000 U.S. Census total population of East Providence of 48,688 persons. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the City's total population is estimated to have grown slightly by 0.9 percent from the year 2000 to July 1, 2006, with the State of Rhode Island as a whole growing an estimated 1.8 percent in the same period (U.S. Census Quick Facts, 2006). Since the deaths of an East Providence resident have slightly outpaced the births to an East Providence, the City has had a stable population for approximately two decades, hovering around 50,000 persons. This stability is born out by the public comments received that indicate people have strong multi-generational ties to East Providence, like their neighborhoods, enjoy proximity to the bike path, parks, playgrounds and bay, and despite being-called a City, still talked of enjoying the "small-town" feel of East Providence. The 2010 U.S. Census will provide a count of persons, but this Department is of the professional opinion that it will remain close to the 50,000-person level, and therefore East Providence would remain the 5<sup>th</sup> largest City in the State.

### *Aging in Place for Senior Citizens*

East Providence, like many other communities nationwide, reflects a nationwide trend in the aging of “baby boomers” who are reaching their senior years. The age 65 and over population in East Providence has remained at approximately nineteen percent (19%) for at least the past two decades. According to the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), over 80 percent of people over the age of 50 say they would prefer to stay in their homes as they grow older. This “aging in place” would require household modifications including zero clearance entrances, wider door openings, renovations to bathrooms and kitchens, stair lifts, ramps, and improved lighting. Demands for additional services, such as transportation, may also increase. Currently there is a bus associated with the East Providence Senior Center programs and a program offered through the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority, the RIDE Program. Continuation of property tax exemptions would also assist residents in their desire to age-in-place.

In economic downturns such as that occurring as this plan update is being written, and with a continued high concentration of senior citizens, the question of permitting accessory dwelling units (ADU's) could be examined. The positive attributes of such ordinances are generally seen as affordability for seniors who wish to stay in a home environment, as well as help for families who are just starting out and could benefit from rental income to pay the mortgage. Such an ordinance might meet the housing needs of elderly persons, single persons, couples living without children, and relatives of families living in East Providence. However, there are possible negative attributes to adopting an ADU ordinance, and they include excess density and congestion of neighborhoods and streets with excessive parking, increased noise and loss of privacy, negative impact on the stability of single-family neighborhoods, and possibly unsafe living conditions. Attempts to apply restrictions on accessory apartments to avoid negative impacts, such as requiring that the unit be used by family members only and that the unit be removed when no longer needed by a family member, are difficult to enforce. Should an accessory apartment ordinance be adopted in East Providence it should be clear that the accessory apartments would exist within, or as an addition to, a structure that was originally designed as a one-family dwelling, and the accessory apartment would be subordinate to the principal dwelling in terms of size, location and appearance.

In a partial move in this direction, in July 2010, the East Providence City Council adopted an ordinance authorizing the installation of accessory family dwelling units in owner-occupied, single-family houses permitted as a reasonable accommodation *only* for a family member(s) with disabilities, which was allowed by the adoption of Rhode Island General Laws 45-24-37. The proposed amendments were designed to place standards and guidelines on such uses and to provide a process by which they would be reviewed for permitting and open for inspection by the City annually. The definitions relating to disability, major life activities, and persons with disabilities were taken from Rhode Island State Law. A potential issue in allowing temporary single-family dwelling units for a person or persons of disability is to do so without the privilege becoming abused by those not providing care for a disabled family member but providing a rental unit for profit which may result in the unintended alteration of single-family neighborhood to a two-family neighborhood when not originally envisioned as such or when a neighborhood is incapable of sustaining such illegal use, e.g. infrastructure incapacity, particularly if it is widespread. Therefore, enforcement of this ordinance is essential.

### *Pedestrian Safety*

Public comments revealed that people felt like they could not walk because of concerns for safety, for reasons such as high-volume and high-speed traffic, and lack of sidewalks. A Pedestrian Master Plan should be prepared that looks for opportunities to increase sidewalks in the City and looks for opportunities to link to existing sidewalks and bicycle/pedestrian paths. In the short-term, the City has the authority in development and redevelopment to require sidewalks along the frontage of developments and outside of proposed developments if certain findings can be met.

A list of comments received regarding land use and the City are at the end of the Land Use Plan Element.

### *Implementation*

Many goals of the City's 1994 Plan have been accomplished or implementation is on-going. For the Land Use Plan Element, the major change was the adoption of the East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Plan on December 2, 2003 and adoption of the Waterfront Zoning on March 2, 2004. These districts and the formation of the Commission will foster development of the City's waterfront on the Seekonk River and upper Providence River for mixed use, including residential, commercial, office, retail, hospitality, and light manufacturing uses in various sub-districts along the northern and southern waterfronts. Developers of new market-rate single and/or multi-family housing developments within the waterfront districts are required to provide ten percent of their total housing units as affordable housing units.

The first development to be constructed under the Waterfront Zoning was the 54-unit Rossccommons condominium complex on Roger Williams Avenue. The Tockwotton Home has received approval from the Waterfront Commission to construct a \$40 million 148-unit continuing care facility on Waterfront Drive south of Mauran Avenue. This development would also include the construction of a public park on the waterfront adjoining Bold Point Park and would expand public access to the water. Village on the Waterfront, a 600-unit development, with 40,000 square feet of commercial space (mixed use) was approved by the Waterfront Commission in 2009. The East Pointe and Phillipsdale Landing proposed developments have also received approval from the Waterfront Commission.

Many major developments were permitted under the City's regulations and ordinances and constructed following the last Update including the projects noted below:

1. Construction of the Coast Realty Office Building on Waterman Avenue
2. Redevelopment of the former Rumford Chemical Works to a mixed-use facility containing residences, offices uses, and retail, including Seven Stars Bakery
3. Construction of the 54-unit Rossccommons condominium project on Roger Williams Ave. with five affordable housing units
4. Expansion of the Tripp's Lane Citizens Bank Operations and Lending Facilities
5. Opening of the Bank of America Call Center in the former Trifari Jewelry Factory on Pawtucket Avenue

6. Redevelopment of the former Meeting Street Center to the RI Philharmonic School
7. Redevelopment of the Shopperstown Plaza to include a new Shaw's Supermarket
8. Redevelopment of the Wampanoag Plaza to include a new Stop & Shop Supermarket
9. Construction of an Extended Stay Hotel on Warren Avenue
10. Construction of a Class A Coast Medical Building on Warren Avenue
11. Redevelopment of the Riverside Village Commercial Center on the East Providence/Barrington border in Riverside
12. Redevelopment of property for a new Walgreens store on Warren Avenue
13. Construction of Pawtucket Credit Union on Warren Avenue
14. Construction of Coastway Credit Union on Pawtucket Avenue
15. Construction of Columbus Credit Union on Willett Avenue (at the corner of Metropolitan Park Drive)
16. Construction of Navigant Credit Union on Newport Avenue
17. Construction of Bank RI on Newport Avenue
18. Redevelopment of the Dunkin Donuts at the corner of Pawtucket Avenue and Warren Avenue
19. Opening of Aspen Aerogels in Rumford, a manufacturer of high tech insulation materials
20. Development of a seven-acre site in Rumford consisting of 100,000 square feet of distribution/warehouse space that will be occupied by the industrial laminate company Baer Supply.
21. Village on the Waterfront, a 600-unit, 40,000 square foot commercial mixed use development approved by the Waterfront Commission in 2009.
22. A mixed use development of the former Ocean State Steel site that includes approximately 490 housing units, 75,000 square feet of commercial space, and a restaurant
23. The Riverside Village commercial property was redeveloped to include a freestanding pharmacy retail store and freestanding bank, and several smaller connected stores along the easterly side of the property, that now include a sandwich store, a realtor, a day spa and tanning salon, and the existing liquor store that was reconfigured as part of the renovation.
24. Wampanoag Partners LLC received Master Plan and conditional rezoning approval for a multi-family residential development of the former Leonardo Farm property located at 1279 Wampanoag Trail that would include approximately 321 townhouse units (with 10 affordable units), a clubhouse and walking paths.
25. The City Council approved the Conditional Re-Zoning of parcels in the Riverside Square section of the City, specifically Bullocks Point Avenue at Fenner Avenue from C-3 to Riverside Square Mixed Use District. The purpose of the rezoning is to revitalize these blighted properties through a redevelopment with a new mixed commercial and residential structure that makes the most of its location, i.e. easy walking distance to shopping, services and on a public transportation route, and which incorporates a mix of commercial and residential use that is decent, safe and affordable. The expansion of this re-zoning

for mixed used development in other areas of the City is being assessed and drafted as appropriate.

The Riverside Village commercial development at the East Providence/Barrington border in Riverside was redeveloped to include a freestanding pharmacy retail store and several smaller connected stores along the easterly side of the property, that now include a sandwich store, a realtor, a day spa and tanning salon, a jewelry and gift store, and the existing liquor store that was reconfigured as part of the renovation. The design of this development is of high quality, including seasonal decorative banners. It should be used as an example for other commercial development.



The Planning Board granted Conditional Master Plan approval to Wampanoag Partners LLC for a multi-family residential development of the former Leonardo Farm property located at 1279 Wampanoag Trail. The development would include approximately 321 townhouse units (with 10 affordable units), a clubhouse and walking paths. The development has received conditional approval of a zone change to Commercial – 1 to allow the multi-family use. The development will need to undergo Preliminary and Final Plan stages, including a public hearing at the Preliminary Plan stage, before it can proceed. The property consists of 56 acres and has frontage on Wampanoag Trail and Hospital Road. It was formerly mined for sand and gravel and will require significant grading in order to be developed.

The City Council approved the Conditional Re-Zoning of parcels in the Riverside Square section of the City, specifically Bullocks Point Avenue at Fenner Avenue from C-3 to Riverside Square Mixed Use District. The purpose of the rezoning is to revitalize these blighted properties through a possible teardown of all three existing structures and redevelopment with a new mixed commercial and residential structure that makes the most of its location, i.e. easy walking distance to shopping, services and on a public transportation route, and which incorporates a mix of commercial and residential use that is decent, safe and affordable. The expansion of this re-zoning for mixed used development in other areas of the City is being assessed and drafted as appropriate.

There were over 115 administrative or minor subdivisions creating infill lots for single-family and two family developments at scattered sites throughout the City.

The construction of Waterfront Drive from Warren Avenue southerly to its terminus at Bold Point Park opened up opportunities for new development and importantly another north-south roadway in the City. Expansion of this roadway northerly would take some volume off other arterial streets such as Taunton Avenue and Pawtucket Avenue, and would decrease motorist cutting-through on residential streets. The Village on the Waterfront Project will continue Waterfront Drive south along the easterly frontage of the property and will extend the East Bay Bicycle Path.

The City should continue to explore the use of flexible parking such as “shared parking”. Under this scenario shared uses that have different peaks of parking demand, such as a residential use and office use in a mixed-use project, may share parking spaces. This was utilized in the Rumford Center mixed-use redevelopment project, and certain spaces are dedicated while others shift between use by an office employee during the day and a resident on the evening and weekends. These types of shared parking arrangements require a study of the proposed uses which verifies that the sharing can be accommodated and a shared parking arrangement is recording against the property in the City’s land evidence records.



### **Taunton Avenue/Six Corners Specific Plan**

The Taunton Avenue/Six Corners critical area is located along Taunton Avenue, between the East Providence/Seekonk, Massachusetts border and Interstate 195. There are two distinct segments of Taunton Avenue, one extending from I-195 to Six Corners, and the second extending from approximately Hall Street easterly to the Seekonk, Massachusetts border.

#### *Area 1- from the Interstate 195 Taunton Avenue Off-Ramp (Exit 4)*

The critical issues confronting the future of the Taunton Avenue corridor fall into the two categories of circulation and image. The one-way street system in the Six Corners area is difficult to maneuver for the unfamiliar motorist. Attempts in the 1990’s to return to a two-way street system were not approved and there are no plans to revive this effort. Signage should be installed to provide motorists with clear directions. Some new street and directional signage was installed along the Taunton Avenue corridor in 2005, and more should be installed.

The traffic flow along Taunton Avenue is hindered because of the many driveway access points and local street crossings. Included in the heavy volume of traffic on Taunton Avenue are truck, bus and heavy commercial vehicle traffic that pose problems in relation to noise, perception of safety for pedestrians, and wear and tear on the road. Taunton Avenue needs to have a pedestrian feel, buildings with front walls at the sidewalk line with transparent windows, and a pedestrian friendly environment, e.g. slower traffic and less heavy vehicle traffic if it is going to regain a sense of a “downtown” and undergo an economic revitalization. The construction of Waterfront Drive from Warren Avenue to Dexter Road (and beyond) would help in removing truck traffic from Taunton Avenue.



The second critical issue along Taunton Avenue is its image. With a number of vacant buildings, and a now an empty lot where the Bomes Theatre stood prior to its demolition in the summer of 2008, the Taunton Avenue corridor lacks an appealing visual identity. The numerous driveway accesses, need for additional street beautification, and vacant parcels in the vicinity of City Hall and east of City Hall, contribute to this lack of cohesive identity.



In 2003 the City hired Gates, Leighton & Associates Inc., partnered with Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Inc., to prepare a “Taunton Avenue Revitalization Plan”. This Plan was developed with the assistance of the Downtown Business Association of East Providence (DBA), a 501 (c)(3), non-profit group which formed as a result of the 2001 “Taunton Avenue Revitalization Study” prepared by the Department of Planning. The preparation of the Plan included two walking audits of the street, a daytime audit which was taped and broadcast on the local cable access channel, and an evening audit to assess the lighting conditions. The Plan includes recommendations for streetscape amenities (including lighting, signage, benches, fences, trash receptacles, plantings, flag installations) and façade and property treatments.

Implementation of the Plan began in 2004 in cooperation with the DBA and included new street signs, planters, trash receptacles and benches for pedestrian and transit user comfort. The appearance of the street from Summit Street to Broadway has improved. The DBA deserves thanks for their efforts to clean and beautify Taunton Avenue.

The property to the north and south of the Exit 4 I-195 off-ramp as one enters Taunton Avenue present and unkempt image and should be improved. The RIDOT created a welcome sign, but the sign has not maintained its like-new appearance and needs attention in regards to plantings and lighting. Implementation of this plan should be continued through a partnership with the City, the Downtown Business Association, and the Beautification Commission.

*Area 2 – From Approximately Hall Street (East of Six Corners) to the Massachusetts Border*

Taunton Avenue has an Average Annual Daily Trip (AADT) count of over 13,000 vehicle trips per day. Taunton Avenue intersects with Pawtucket Avenue (Route 114), an arterial roadway and major north-south route in East Providence (24,000+ AADT). In the 1950's and '60's, Taunton Avenue, from approximately Hall Street to the Massachusetts boundary, became a magnet for auto dealerships looking for large parcels of land located on roads with a high volume of pass-by traffic and a large and growing population nearby. The City's population had grown from 32,165 persons in 1950 to 41,955 persons in 1960, an increase of 9,790 persons or approximately thirty percent (30%). This section of Taunton Avenue became known as "auto mile".

With the current recession and the dire financial straits of major U.S. automobile manufacturers, this sector of the economy has shrunk leaving some auto dealerships closed and vacant. There are now two vacancies of major parcels of land along this section of Taunton Avenue.

Based upon a grant application submitted by the Planning Department, the City received a grant of \$ 52,800 grant from the Statewide Planning Program to conduct a study a study of Taunton Avenue east of Hall Street to the Seekonk, MA border. The grant would assess the vacant parcels left after the closure of automobile dealerships and auto-related retail uses feasibility study of potential re-uses of these properties, as well as study feasibility for a RIPTA Hub at or near the current Park and Ride property. Multi-family residential is a possible land use given the close proximity and availability of services, i.e. food, banking, pharmacies, etc., as well as the availability of public transit.

*Residential Development Densities*

In November 2001, in recognition of citizen concerns expressed for a desire to have the densities and character of their neighborhoods protected from over-intensification by development, the City Council amended the Low Density Residential Land Use category from 8 dwelling units per acre to 5.8 dwelling units or fewer per acre. The major residential land use density categories were as follows in the 2004 East Providence Comprehensive Plan Update certified by the State and remain as such in the 2010 Update:

Low Density	5.8 or fewer dwelling units per acre
Medium Density	≤15.0 dwelling units per acre
High Density	≤25.0 dwelling units per acre

Zoning Ordinance changes, many relating to special formulas for nonconforming lots and merger of parcels where certain zoning dimensional requirements were not met

which supported this change, were also adopted by the City Council and were aimed at reducing by-right development on non-conforming vacant parcels of land.

### **Land Use Goals and Objectives**

The following Goals and Objectives are a compilation of the 1994 Plan and 2004 and 2010-2015 Plan Updates. This compilation necessitated a re-numbering of Goals 1 – 3.

**Goal 1.0: *Ensure that remaining vacant land or redeveloped parcels in the City are used for their maximum benefit to the community, and are of high-quality design and in character with the adjoining parcels and neighborhood.***

Objective 1.1 Continue to implement the City's Plan through the Land Development and Subdivision Review Regulations, Zoning Ordinance, and the Waterfront Plan regulations, and use technology to foster greater efficiency in City building permit and development review procedures.

Objective 1.2 Preserve appropriate properties as open space through donations, dedications or acquisitions.

Objective 1.3 Provide natural or man-made buffers between residential neighborhoods and incompatible adjacent non-residentially zoned properties and/or uses

Objective 1.4 Preserve the existing scale and character of developed areas of the community.

Objective 1.5 Rezone parcels, where appropriate, to provide opportunities for development, residential, commercial, or mixed use, that is compatible with surrounding land uses.

Objective 1.6 Target future land uses that will increase the tax base of East Providence as municipal costs increase and residential growth decreases.

Objective 1.7 Target future land uses that will create significant job opportunities in the community, in a manner compatible with surrounding land uses.

Objective 1.8 Continue to reduce nonconforming uses and structures over time and replace them with uses that meet the City's vision and community standards

**Goal 2.0: *Formulate City development codes that take a proactive stance on development in East Providence while recognizing the need to reduce the carbon footprint of the community and develop in a sustainable manner.***

Objective 2.1: Establish growth management techniques that encourage appropriate infill development and reuse of existing structures for new development

Objective 2.2: Continue to assess the existing zoning ordinance and revise as necessary to promote flexibility in development, to maintain the scale and character of existing areas and preserve the densities of existing residential neighborhoods.

Objective 2.3: Continue to look for opportunities to revise subdivision regulations and zoning codes to streamline permitting and broaden waiver authority to include the goals of the Comprehensive Plan relative to open space, affordable housing and historic preservation.

Objective 2.4: Continue to prepare plans for City-owned property to take the initiative in guiding development on these lands.

Objective 2.5: Examine the potential for a contextual zoning amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to encourage compatible infill development in existing neighborhoods.

Objective 2.6: Work with private land owners to prepare plans that meet the goals and objectives of the Plan and the developer.

Objective 2.7: Link the approval of new development proposals, including infill proposals, to the existing capabilities of the infrastructure.

Objective 2.8: Assess the feasibility of introducing multi-family residential in commercial corridors where there are large commercial parcels now vacant, e.g. vacant auto dealerships, and where services, transit and capacity exist to support residential land uses.

Objective 2.9: Continue to implement the East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Plan (adopted by the East Providence City Council on December 2, 2003) requiring mixed use redevelopment with various residential, commercial, office, retail, hospitality, and light manufacturing uses in the northern and southern districts.

Objective 2.10: Preserve the character of existing “downtown” type commercial corridors, e.g. Taunton Avenue, Warren Avenue and Riverside Square, utilizing build-to lines and locating off-street parking to the side and rear of structures.

Objective 2.11: Utilize green building guidelines in the review and permitting of development to include environmental considerations in every aspect of the review process, including lot development, design, construction, energy efficiency and renewable energy, and the development and/or structures impact on the environment.

Objective 2.12: Continue to implement the existing Critical Area and Specific Plans and establish more through planning studies and Council approval.

Objective 2.13: Develop community indicators to ensure that services and development are meeting community goals.

Objective 2.14: Require new development to utilize Low Impact Development (LID) techniques such as green roofs, rain gardens and reducing impervious coverage.

Objective 2.15: Retrofit City facilities to incorporate “green” building standards which utilize sustainable and renewable energy and result in energy and resource efficiency and a long-term lowering of energy costs.

Objective 2.16: Continue to incorporate LID techniques for stormwater management and reduce natural hazards through floodplain management in land development projects and subdivisions.

Objective 2.17: Continue to offer rehabilitation loans that incorporate construction techniques and equipment that follow the green building principals and that utilize renewable energy and promote energy efficiency.

Objective 2.18: Survey the need for loan or grant programs, if funding is available, for modifications to homes that will allow persons of age to remain in their homes as they age (“Aging in Place”).

**Goal 3.0: Continue to improve the image of the City's existing commercial development.**

Objective 3.1: Continue to work on revitalization of the City’s major commercial corridors, develop specific corridor design guidelines, including wayfaring signs, and a theme to right-of-way improvements that unifies the area and makes it a distinctive place, and continue to implement existing development plan review procedures.

Objective 3.2: Encourage the development of mixed-use projects and the use of alternative transportation modes to serve commercial facility areas.

Objective 3.3: Identify commercial uses that will attract consumers to East Providence to shop and secure services, to work and live, as well as maintain and create new “destinations”, e.g. currently the East Bay Bicycle Path and the Looff Carousel.

Objective 3.4: Diversify the City's existing tax base to reduce the tax burden on residential properties.

Objective 3.5: Continue to encourage a mix of land uses throughout the City.

Objective 3.6: Continue to implement the East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Plan.

Objective 3.7: Preserve the character of existing “downtown” commercial corridors throughout the City through prohibition of suburban-type development (with large building masses set back from the street with parking in the front of buildings and drive-through facilities), and instead require smaller-scale buildings with build-to street wall lines, with parking located in the rear of structures and no drive-through facilities.

**Land Use Needs**

With adoption of the 2003 East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Plan, and the related rezonings and zoning text amendments in March 2004, redevelopment opportunities now exist to provide the needed acreage for the various land uses, as detailed in the Waterfront Plan, e.g. high-density residential and retail land uses may co-exist in one building or in a number of buildings located within a development.

Over ten percent of the City's land area is occupied by industrial facilities that are operated predominantly by oil companies. Exxon Mobil, the largest industrial land owner, owns approximately eight hundred acres of land; Capital Terminals and Getty own smaller parcels, but the nature of their use is intense. Although these utilities serve a regional economic development function, their local impact is mostly negative: they generate large amounts of truck traffic, noise and pollution; they are unsightly; and they generate very few tax revenue dollars in return. While the City is committed to maintaining these uses at their current size and capacity, it will not support the enlargement of their area or their impacts.

In November 2001, in recognition of citizen concerns expressed for a desire to have the densities and character of their neighborhoods protected from over-intensification by development, the City Council amended the Low Density Residential Land Use category from 8 dwelling units per acre to 5.8 dwelling units or fewer per acre. The major residential land use density categories were as follows in the 2004 East Providence Comprehensive Plan Update certified by the State and remain as such in the 2010 Update:

Low Density	5.8 or fewer dwelling units per acre
Medium Density	≤15.0 dwelling units per acre
High Density	≤25.0 dwelling units per acre

Zoning Ordinance changes, many relating to special formulas for nonconforming lots and merger of parcels where certain zoning dimensional requirements were not met which supported this change, were also adopted by the City Council and were aimed at reducing by-right development on non-conforming vacant parcels of land.

**Land Use Definitions** (this section is carried forward from the 2004 Plan Update)

*Residential – Low Density (5.8 or fewer dwelling units per acre):*

The dominant character of this land use shall be of single-family and two-family development at densities less than 5.8 or fewer dwelling units per acre. While multi-family development and limited commercial uses may be allowed, such uses shall not alter the dominant low-density residential character of the area. Suitability for uses other than low-density residential development shall be determined on the basis of location, access, existing land use patterns, and natural or man-made development constraints and may require development as a Land Development Project.

*Residential – Medium Density (< 15.0 du/acre):*

The dominant character of the land use shall be of single-family development, or two-to-four unit residential structures. In newly developed areas, an alternative dominant characteristic may be higher density single family or lower density multi-family structures developed in clusters. Higher density multi-family and limited neighborhood commercial development may be allowed, however, such uses shall not alter the dominant character of the area. Suitability of higher-density multi-family or commercial development shall be determined on the basis of location, access, existing land use patterns and natural or man-made development constraints and may require development as a Land Development Project.

**Residential – High Density (< 25.0 du/acre):**

The dominant character of this land use shall be of multi-family development, with densities permitted to twenty-five (25) dwelling units per acre, if adequate community facilities are available and if such density is compatible with adjacent development. A typical 25 du/acre development would be a two or three level apartment or condominium housing project where each building will have from eight (8) to sixteen (16) units per building. Limited neighborhood commercial development may also be allowed, however, such uses shall not alter the dominant character of the area. Suitability for commercial development shall be determined on the basis of location, access, existing land use patterns and natural or man-made development constraints and may require development as a Land Development Project. Densities that are within the range of this land use character, but are higher than that allowed by the existing zoning designation may also require development as a Land Development Project

***Retail:***

The dominant character of this land use shall be of retail business enterprises business enterprises. Within the retail development, pedestrian activity shall be encouraged. The scale of the development shall be compatible with existing or planned surrounding land uses. Other commercial uses including services and offices may be allowed but shall not alter the character of the retail area and should serve as a buffer between the retail development and adjacent residential areas. Projects that are not of a retail nature may require development as a Land Development Project.

***Office/Service:***

The dominant retail character of this land use shall be of office and service enterprises. Other non-residential uses may be allowed, but shall not alter the dominant character of the area. Projects that are not of an office or service nature may require development as a Land Development Project.

***General Industrial:***

The dominant character of this land use shall be wholesaling, storage, repairing, fabricating, processing, and/or assembly of goods. The intensity of the uses shall be compatible with existing or planned uses. Other non-residential uses may be allowed, but shall not alter the character of the area and/or shall provide support services to the businesses and/or employees in the area. Projects that may not be compatible with adjacent land uses, and projects that are not industrial in nature, may require development as a Land Development Project.

***Mixed Use:***

The dominant character of this land use may vary from location to location. These uses may be industrial, retail, office, service or even residential, provided that such uses are compatible with existing and planned adjacent land uses. Any development within a Mixed Use area may itself contain a mix of uses or be only a single use. Projects within a Mixed Use area shall require development as a Land Development Project or Waterfront Mixed Use District.

### Open Space:

The dominant character of this land use is that it is relatively undeveloped. Open spaces may include parks, schools, cemeteries, golf courses and conservation areas. Open Space Designations in East Providence Generalized Land Use Maps include only major open spaces and areas connecting major open spaces. Limited open spaces, as part of new residential or non-residential developments, may be necessary in addition to the areas indicated.

As noted earlier, the City's population is estimated at 49,123 persons, an approximate increase of 435 persons, or +0.9 percent, from the 2000 U.S. Census figure of 48,688 persons (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). At nineteen percent (19%) of the total population, senior citizens represent the largest portion of the City's population. For most of the past two decades, the annual deaths of East Providence residents have slightly outpaced the births to an East Providence mother. The total population has remained stable for the past two decades. The United States Census 2010 will be conducted on April 1, 2010 and will determine the current population of the City. Census 2010 will also provide detailed information such as sex, age, race, ethnicity, years lived in the City, number of housing units, time of commute to work, and other information detailing who we are as a community. Unfortunately this detailed data is typically released on a rolling basis starting approximately two years after the date of the Census (April 1, 2010). This information will be available for the preparation of the next Update of the Plan.

### Interpretation of Land Use Boundaries

The land use boundaries, as shown on the *Land Use Plan*, utilize natural or man-made demarcations where possible. Where such boundaries are not readily distinguishable, variations may be allowed, provided the intent of the *Land Use Plan* is not violated. In the instance of uncertainty of any map, the text of the plan and all its previous versions not amended shall remain in full force and effect and the text shall govern in determining the policies, goals, objectives and action items of any applicable element of the Comprehensive Plan.

### Review of Land Development Regulations and Ordinances

The review of City regulations and ordinances is on-going and shall be conducted at least annually by the Planning Board. There have been amendments to the Zoning Ordinance since the 1994 Plan Update. The Zoning Officer now has "modification authority" (enabled by State law) which creates a process whereby petitioners to the Zoning Board of Review with a ten percent or less deviation from a Zoning standard (not including minimum lot area) may be granted approval by the Zoning Officer following a process defined in Zoning that includes notification to abutters. Abutters may object and the petition would then be referred to the Zoning Board of Review. For instance, in instances where a minimum 15-foot side yard setback may be required, modification authority saves petitioners from seeking a variance for a 14-foot-10 inch side setback (a variance of 2 inches), and also saves time on the Zoning Board agenda to review applications that may be of more consequence to abutters and the City as a whole.

Several Zoning Ordinance amendments were made following the adoption of the 2004 Plan Update and continuing through the current 2010-2015 Update. In response to concerns expressed by the City Council, Planning Department staff wrote amendments to ban the use of electronic signs in the City, and to require removal of derelict or obsolete signs. The Port District was eliminated as a Zoning District, as was the text related to the district in Chapter 19, Zoning, and the *2003 East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Waterfront Plan* was adopted. There were miscellaneous amendments relating to the merger provisions of Chapter 19, Zoning; modification authority for the Zoning Officer on variances up to ten percent (10%), ordinance amendments relating to storage containers such as PODS (on-site portable storage units), and ordinance amendments relating to massage parlors versus legitimate massage establishments. In July 2010 the City Council adopted ordinances revising the signage section of the code and adopting new tables for calculating amount of permitted signage, as well as adopting an ordinance allowing backyard beekeeping. The Planning Department staff is continuing to review and draft amendments for the City Council's consideration in the near future. These include downtown zoning regulations, regulations relating to use of renewable energy equipment such as solar panel facilities and use of small wind turbines in an urbanized area. As noted previously, an annual review of regulations and ordinances takes place.

#### Amendments to the East Providence Comprehensive Plan

The East Providence Comprehensive Plan, including the *Land Use Plan*, constitutes a land use regulatory policy statement that was created based upon prevailing needs, the existing development pattern, underlying zoning, considerations of both man-made and natural constraints and opportunities for development, and accepted planning practices. Over a period of time, any of these variables are subject to change. Consequently, the Plan must periodically be reviewed and occasionally amended if it is to remain effective. In the time since the adoption of the 2003 East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Plan, there was one plan amendment relating to disposition of a closed City fire station on Newman Avenue to a private owner for residential use. There are no known inconsistencies between the Plan and the City's land use and development regulations and ordinances, but for the Mixed Use designation of areas of Catamore Boulevard which requires rezoning from the current Industrial – 3 (Heavy Industrial) district zoning. The Planning Board has approved rezoning to Industrial – 1, and this must be approved by the City Council.

State comprehensive planning law limits the number of plan amendments on an annual basis to four and currently requires the plan to be updated every five years, and also establishes a process for State review of such amendments. Amendments to the Plan should only occur after careful review of the request, findings of the facts in support of the revisions, and public hearings. The statutory requirements which guided the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan shall be followed for all amendments as they pertain to public hearings and otherwise. The term amendments shall apply to both text and map revisions.

The Findings of Fact required shall include:

1. The development pattern contained in the *Land Use Plan* inadequately provides appropriate optional sites for the use proposed in the amendment.

2. The amendment constitutes an overall improvement to the Comprehensive Plan and is not solely for the good or benefit of a particular landowner or owners at a particular point in time.
3. The amendment will not adversely impact the community as a whole or a portion of the community by:
  - Significantly altering acceptable existing land use patterns,
  - Requiring larger and more expensive improvements to roads, sewer or water systems than are needed to support the prevailing land uses and which, therefore, may impact development of other lands,
  - Adversely impacting existing uses because of increased traffic on existing systems, or
  - Effect on the livability of the area or the health and safety of the residents.
4. The amendment is consistent with the overall intent of this Comprehensive Plan. Amendments to the East Providence Comprehensive Plan may be initiated by the City in accordance to the procedures set forth by State Statutes or may be requested by private individuals or agencies.

If a Plan Amendment is requested by a private individual or agency, it shall be the burden of the party requesting the amendment to prove that the change constitutes an improvement to the Plan. It shall not be the burden of the City to prove that an amendment should be denied.

#### *Public Input*

During the process of developing the Plan Update public input was sought. Residents named positive and negative issues about living in East Providence, but the majority of comments reflected a very positive attitude towards living in the city and an enjoyment of what the city has to offer. Planning staff also met individually with stakeholders from the private sector and non-profit communities to elicit comments. The following are comments pertinent to land use.

#### *Positives*

1. Strong family ties/multi-generational community
2. Good schools
3. Good neighborhoods (some near schools)
4. Second generation returning to live in home they grew up in
5. Small-town feel
6. Neighborhood branch libraries
7. Good variety of housing types at good densities
8. Proximity to Upper Narragansett Bay and rivers and ponds
9. East Bay Bicycle Path
10. Philharmonic School in E.P. – possibilities for cultural programs, events
11. Lakeside Square – good selection of neighborhood businesses
12. Live close to work (some stated they work and live in East Providence)
13. Some good local restaurants
14. Heritage Days
15. Loeff Carousel and Concerts at Rose Larisa Memorial Park

## 16. Comedy Club

### *Issues Impacting Quality of Life and Areas in Need of Improvement*

1. Forced to drive (rather than walk) to retail
2. Cannot walk because of concerns for safety
3. High volumes of traffic and traffic congestion
4. No sidewalks
5. Loss of Bomes Theatre to demolition (want site re-used for a cultural use)
6. Concern over losing public access to the waterfront
7. Lack of parking at public access points to the water
8. Loss of larger specialty stores (which are now in other communities)
9. Need to buy things outside of the City, like clothing
10. Little formal fine dining opportunities
11. Need to leave City for live events and cultural events (e.g. to PPAC or Trinity Rep)
12. Not enough public transportation
13. Look for ways to consolidate and expedite development permitting
14. There is a need for more north/south road connections in the City
15. Stormwater drainage issues are important and must be addressed

**Table 1. Land Use Implementation Strategies**

In reading all the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Strategies throughout the Plan Elements many of the timeframes are listed as “On-going”, meaning either that specific projects are underway and/or that Planning Department staff are actively initiating and assessing the availability of opportunities to further implementation of the Plan and its Action Items as part of the daily operation of the department. The short, intermediate and long-term timeframes assigned to Action Items are generalized and again, there may be current and on-going efforts that will continue into intermediate and long-term time periods. Generally, the phrase “Short Term” should be interpreted as currently underway or expected to be commenced in the year 2011. Generally, the phrase “Intermediate Term” should be interpreted as an Action Item that may be commenced in 2011-2013 and will take longer to implement, and/or may rely on data and financing not currently available. Generally, the phrase “Long Term” refers to a project that is of a larger scope that may take many years to initiate and/or complete and is dependent upon considerable financing, engineering, studies and/or permits to accomplish, and is likely to take beyond 2015 to fully implement, or one that is expected to commence prior to the next update of the Comprehensive Plan. Portions of phases of such an item may be on-going.

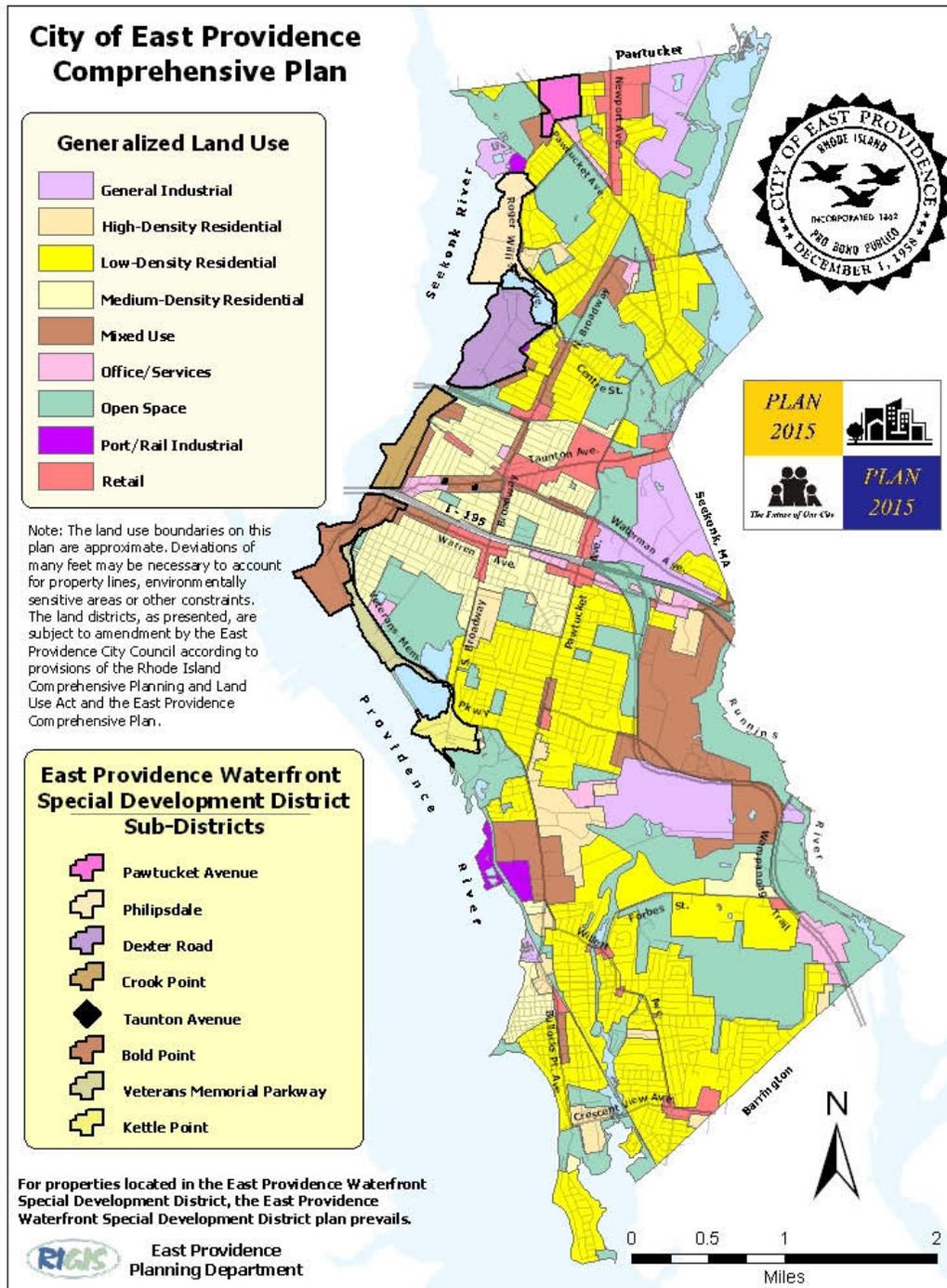
Please note that where the State of Rhode Island, or a specific State Agency, is listed as a party in the Implementation Strategies tables under the table heading “Responsible for Implementation” that this is not an obligation of any particular agency but is listed for informational purposes and is a recognition by the City that a collaboration between the City and the State is desirable and/or necessary for implementation of a particular project.

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible for Implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
LU - 1	Continue to construct streetscape improvements and revitalize the City’s major commercial corridors, including Taunton Avenue, Warren Avenue and Newport Avenue	City Council, Planning Board, Planning Department, State of Rhode Island	On-going (Intermediate & Long Term)
LU - 2	Continue to implement the East Providence Land Development and Subdivision Review Regulations, and use technology to foster greater coordination and greater efficiency in City building permit review procedures	Planning Board, Planning Department	On-going (Short and Intermediate Term)
LU - 3	Continue to implement the East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Plan	Waterfront Commission, Planning Department and Waterfront Commission staff, RIDOT	On-going (Short Term)

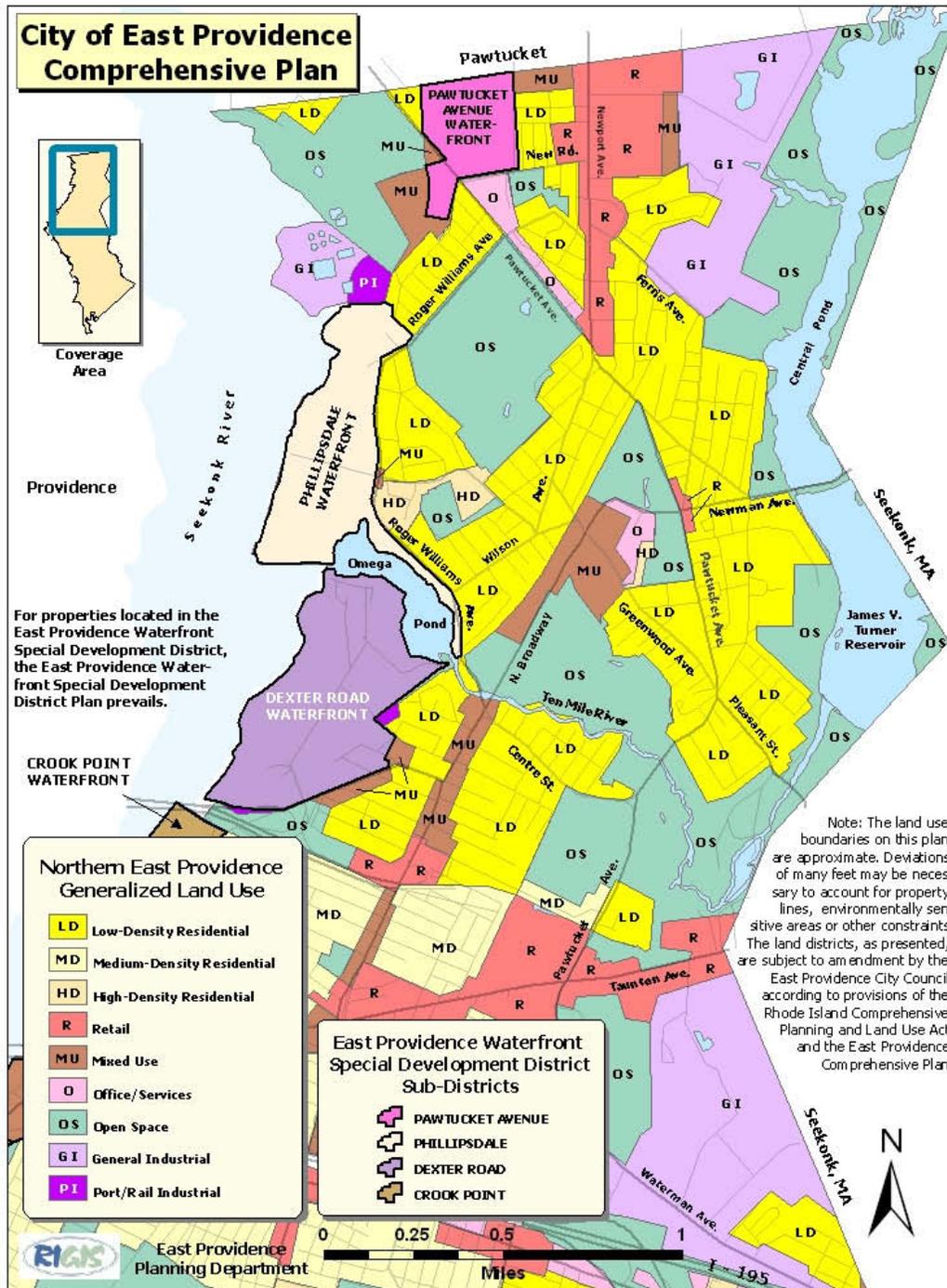
	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible for Implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
LU - 4	Seek RIDOT's most recent trip generation figures for the City's major arterial roadways; assess future capacity for development	Planning Department, Dept. of Public Works	2011 (on-going) (Short Term)
LU - 5	Maintain existing densities and character of neighborhoods	City Council, Planning Board, Zoning Board	On-going (Short Term)
LU - 6	Ensure that a variety of housing types, rental and ownership, are maintained and expanded where appropriate	City Council, Planning Board, Planning Department	On-going (Short Term)
LU - 7	Continue to pursue construction of a new Interstate 195 interchange at Taunton Avenue	City Council, Planning Board, Planning Department, RIDOT	On-going (Long Term)
LU - 8	Maintain and expand linkages from neighborhoods and parks to the bay, ponds and rivers	City Council, Planning Board, Planning Department, CRMC, RIDEM	On-going (Short & Intermediate Term)
LU - 9	Maintain the East Bay Bicycle Path and the Ten Mile River Bikeway as they connect to many neighborhoods and link regions and provides close to home opportunities for exercise and enjoying nature	City Council, Planning Board, RIDOT, RIDEM	On-going (Long Term)
LU - 10	Conduct a Willett Avenue Plan and Inventory to document and retain the mainly residential land use of this corridor (from Whitcomb Farm to Park Drive)	City Council, Planning Board, Zoning Board, Planning Department	2011-2012 (Intermediate Term)
LU - 11	Prepare a Pedestrian and Sidewalk Master Plan for the City	City Council, Planning Board, Planning Department, Department of Public Works, RIDOT	2011-2012 (Intermediate Term)
LU - 12	Research and consider an Accessory Dwelling Ordinance (ADU) for the City	City Council, Planning Board, Planning Department	Intermediate Term
LU - 13	Expand sidewalk network by requiring developers to install sidewalks or require payment into an in-lieu fund for future construction	City Council, Planning Board, Planning Department, Department of Public Works, RIDOT	On-going (Short-Term)

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible for Implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
LU -14	Require traffic impact assessments of developments as deemed appropriate and require that the developer mitigate any negative impacts, such as increased traffic congestion	City Council, Planning Board	On-going (Short-Term)
LU -15	Maintain land zoned for light manufacturing and biotech or flex-tech commercial uses in areas where such uses will not negatively impact adjoining properties	City Council, Planning Board	On-going (Short-Term)
LU -16	Adopt zoning to preserve the character of existing “downtown” areas, such as Riverside Square, Warren Avenue and Taunton Avenue (west of Six Corners) by utilizing Build-to lines and locating off-street parking to the rear or side of structures	City Council, Planning Board, Planning Department, Zoning Board	On-going & into 2011-2012 (Intermediate Term)
LU - 17	Prepare a plan for the vacant automobile dealership parcels and auto-dependent uses along Taunton Avenue (east of Hall Street), which may include plans for multi-family development due to proximity to services and public transit	City Council, Planning Board, Planning Department, Statewide Planning Program	By Aug. 2011 (Short Term)
LU - 18	Study the use of certain renewable energy, e.g. small wind turbines, in urbanized settings to assess potential impacts and the need for guidelines and zoning standards	Planning Department, Planning Board, City Council, City Energy Committee	On-going, 2011-2012, (Intermediate Term)
LU - 19	Require use of Low Impact Development (LID) methods in developments such as green roofs, rain gardens and limiting impermeable coverage, and use of porous materials for stormwater percolation	Planning Board, Planning Department, Zoning Board	On-going, expand in 2011-2012 (Intermediate Term)

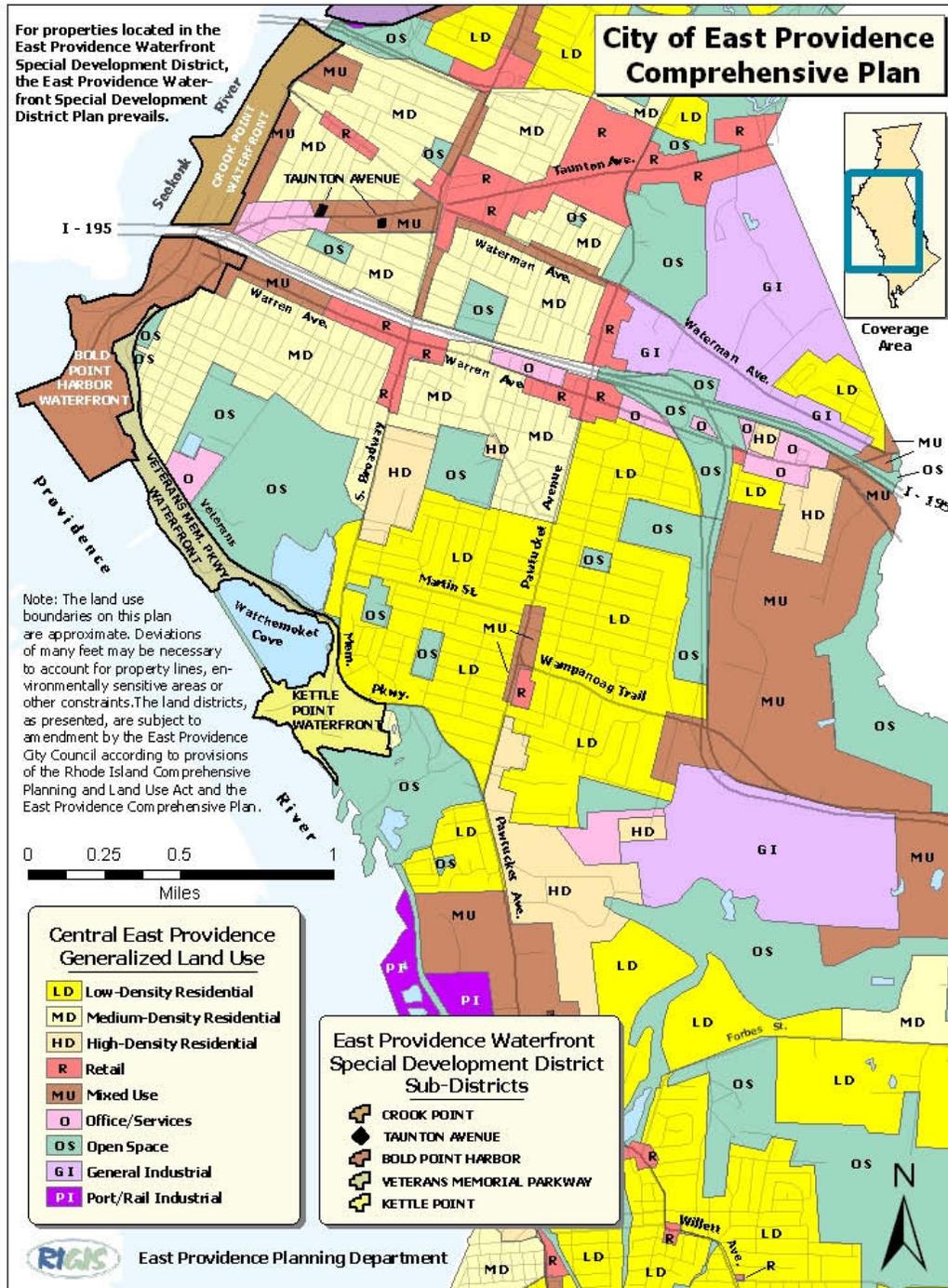
	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible for Implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
LU - 20	Encourage use of green building principles and LEED certification in developments, including in their design, construction and the structure itself	Planning Board, Planning Department	On-going (Short Term)
LU - 21	Develop community indicators to ensure that the City's Vision Statement is being implemented	Planning Board, Planning Department, Consultant, Citizens	2012-2014 and beyond (Partially Dependent upon U.S. Census; (Long Term)
LU - 22	Undertake a study of the Bold Point Harbor Waterfront Sub-District, which currently allows water-dependent uses, e.g. marine transport, to assess additional water-dependent uses beyond those already allowed.	Planning Department, Planning Board, City Council, Citizens	Short Term



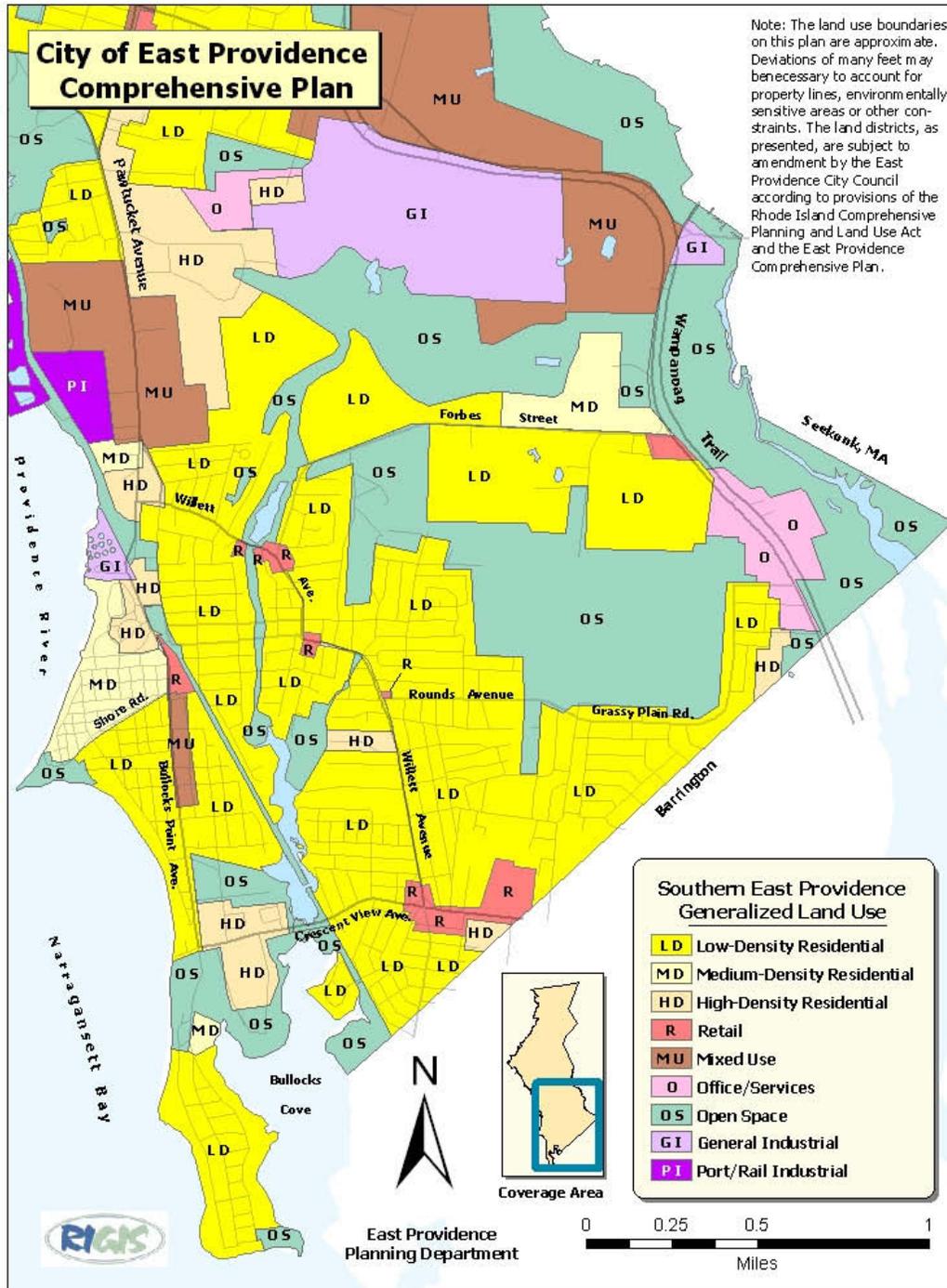
Map 1. East Providence Waterfront Special Development District



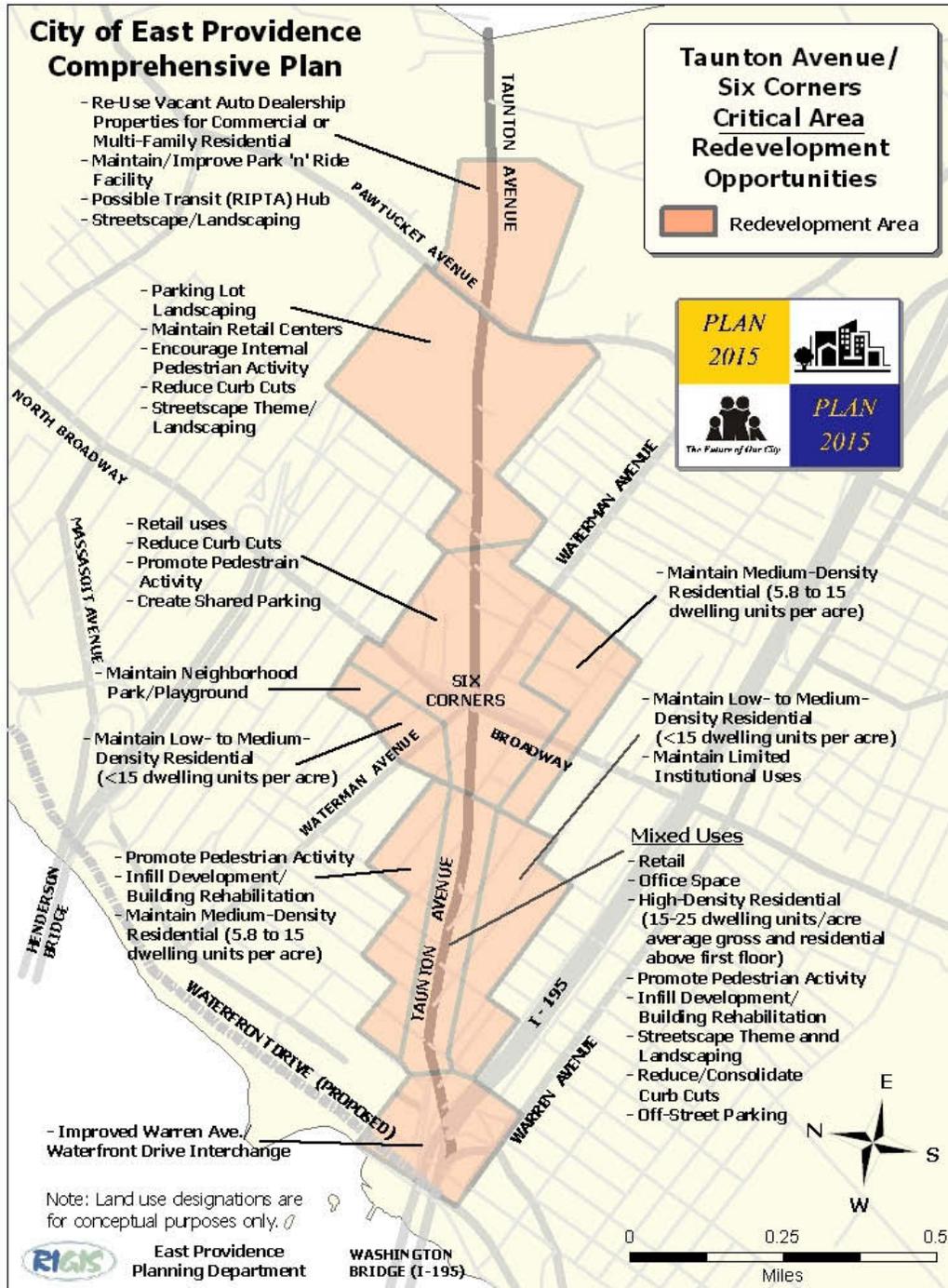
Map 2. Northern East Providence Generalized Land Use



Map 3. Central East Providence Generalized Land Use



Map 4. Southern East Providence Generalized Land Use



Map 5. Taunton Avenue/Six Corners Critical Area



Map 6. Veteran's Memorial Parkway Corridor Specific Plan



## **Circulation Element**

Chapter 45-22.2 of the Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act requires that the Circulation Element of municipal comprehensive plans include the inventory and analysis of existing and proposed major circulation systems, street patterns, and any other modes of transportation in coordination with the land use element. In so far as this update is being completed prior to the completion of the year 2010 Census, the Circulation Element's Inventory and Analysis is not an amended part of this application. The Inventory and Analysis for this amended element, therefore, and unless otherwise noted, refers to the Inventory and Analysis that was completed as part of the original 1994 East Providence Comprehensive Plan. This update, however, will reference changes that have occurred with the existing circulation systems since the preparation and adoption of the original Inventory and Analysis.

The City of East Providence's roadway system is representative of an essentially built out community with a long defined pattern of major thoroughfares providing access to stable neighborhoods and their associated street networks, many of which have been in place for decades and in some cases, since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Historically, the City's street networks have been designed to accommodate the accepted and predominant form of transportation that defined how the public moved from one place to another, the automobile.

Currently, the City of East Providence's traffic circulation system provides adequate access to certain locations within the City, most notably along the central east/west corridor of the City in the vicinity of Interstate-195. Efficient vehicular access to certain portions of Riverside is also provided via the East Shore Expressway/Wampanoag Trail.

Efficient vehicular access to some portions of Riverside and to nearly all of Rumford remains a major impediment to economic development and transportation efficiency for businesses and residents of the City.

Mass transit within the City is provided through the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority with several bus-lines serving the City. At present the lack of a central mass-transit hub in the City poses a significant impediment to providing enhanced mass transit services to East Providence. RIPTA has identified the need to establish a central transit hub in the City as a priority for public transit to and within East Providence in the future.

The City must also set a priority for finding ways to fund improvements given current and projected constraints in federal, state and local transportation money. There are mechanisms such as public-private partnerships, and other innovative mechanisms that could potentially be explored in the future.

### **Vision Statement**

The Vision for future circulation in East Providence includes the provision of a circulation system that meets the needs of all residents and visitors. The circulation system will provide adequate local traffic movement, connect local and regional systems, encourage the use of alternative transit modes and respect the historic pattern of street development and existing historic character. The circulation system will also provide ample capacity for new development in conjunction with the *Land Use Plan*.

## **State Guide Plans Associated with Circulation**

### **State Guide Plan Element 611, Report Number 112 – Transportation 2030 Plan**

This plan addresses Rhode Island’s transportation needs over the next twenty plus years. This latest plan update was developed with a commitment to public involvement in the transportation planning process, and is based on input from a variety of planning efforts and exercises. The Plan has been prepared to ensure compliance with the Safe Accountable Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) of 2005. The scope of the plan includes surface transportation for both passengers and freight, and connections to other modes.

The Vision Statement of the 2008 update of the 2030, Long Range Transportation states:

***“Our common vision recognizes transportation as a core function that threads through other elements of society. Transportation connects the state with the global and regional economies, the home with the workplace, the individual with the community, and all of us with one another. It must equitably benefit all communities, and must be reconciled with quality of life issues as vital as the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the preservation of our natural and historic heritage and beauty of the natural and built environments. It cannot exist independently of these concerns.”***

Revisions to the update include goals that provide a comprehensive approach in providing a wide variety of surface transportation options to the public including highway, bus, paratransit, rail, bicycle, pedestrian and intermodal facility development.

## **Other Plans Affecting Statewide Transportation and Circulation**

### **Rhode Island Public transit Authority (RIPTA) Transit 2020 Study**

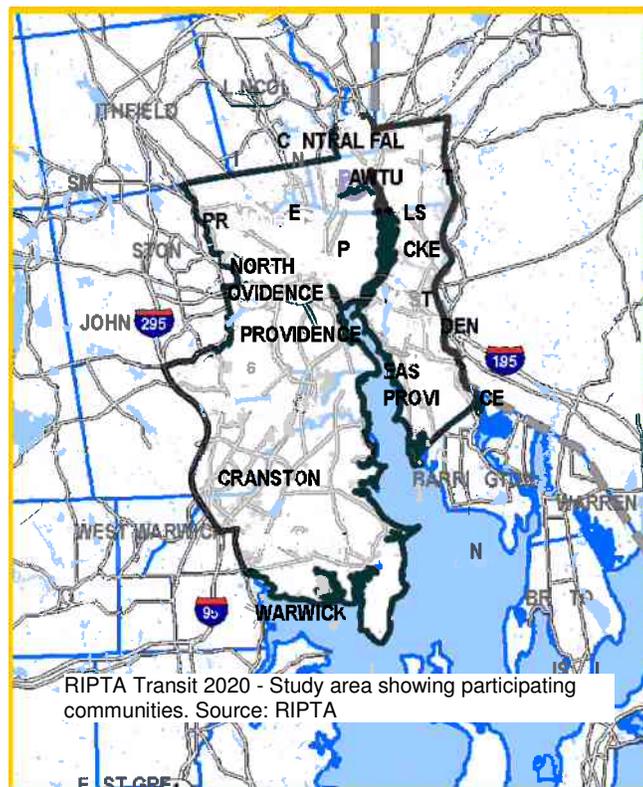
The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA), with support from the City of Providence, has initiated the **Metropolitan Providence Transit Enhancement Study** to meet the growing demand for transit in and around Providence including the city of East Providence (See study map area, below).

Over the last several years, RIPTA has indicated that ridership has increased at a record rate and there has been increasing recognition that transit is a critical component of the state’s infrastructure. Transit is also recognized as playing an essential role in helping to promote economic growth, provide access to jobs, support public health, and maintain vibrant urban centers.

The study will include the following as part of the scope:

- Develop a vision for the future of transit in Rhode Island
- Collect data on current travel patterns and analyze transit demand
- Identify major travel corridors and key activity centers
- Match demand with appropriate transit modes

- Develop conceptual alternatives (e.g. improvements to existing services, new bus routes or express services, dedicated rights of way, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), streetcars, light rail (LRT), etc.)
- Develop service plans, operating parameters and ridership projections
- Evaluate additional incentives to support metropolitan transit usage
- Recommend both short and long term alternatives for further consideration
- Identify potential funding sources and strategies
- Coordinate with the general public, local municipalities and other state agencies
- Produce a prioritized plan of action.



### Waterfront Drive

The first phase of Waterfront Drive, the Warren Avenue Connector, was completed in 2008 and provides improved access to Bold Point from I-195. A third phase located at the northern terminus of the project (Newport Avenue Connector) has been designed, but has not been authorized for construction by the City of Pawtucket. The Newport Avenue Connector continues to be supported by the City of East Providence and the City will continue to lobby for its eventual construction. However, at this time, it is the City's priority to assure that design phases for Waterfront Drive between Dexter Road and Pawtucket Avenue/New Road be designed and eventually constructed. The City's promising waterfront parcels located along the spine of Waterfront Drive will be difficult to develop without the full construction of Waterfront Drive.

## Veteran's Memorial Parkway

In 1992, the State designated the Veteran's Memorial Parkway as a Scenic Roadway under the State's Scenic Roadway Program. The Roadway was designed by Olmstead Brothers in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century and is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The Veteran's Memorial Parkway represents a truly unique transportation experience in the urban/suburban core. This roadway, however, serves as a major north/south corridor, delivering thousands of automobiles from Riverside to the I-195 corridor daily. Recent design plans for the City's waterfront properties in the vicinity of the Parkway have proposed potential improvements to mitigate expanding traffic numbers, the potential for congestion delays and visual impacts to the Parkway. The City will continue to emphasize preservation of the Parkway's scenic character while recognizing that careful design options must be considered in order to maintain safety and transportation efficiency.

## Road Diet

A road diet is a technique in transportation planning whereby a road is reduced in number of travel lanes and/or effective width, in order to achieve systemic circulation improvements. The City of East Providence and the Rhode Island Department of Transportation have utilized this technique to improve traffic circulation and achieve traffic calming along portions of Pawtucket Avenue, most notably between Taunton Avenue (Route 44) and Pleasant Street. Road diet techniques have also been successfully utilized on Bullocks Point Avenue in the Riverside Square section of the City. The technique assists in reducing hazardous traffic conditions and has become an accepted practice in achieving traffic calming affects along busy thoroughfares. The City should examine other arterial roadways where use of this technique can be employed without adversely affecting traffic flow. Coordination with the RI Dept. of Transportation will be required.

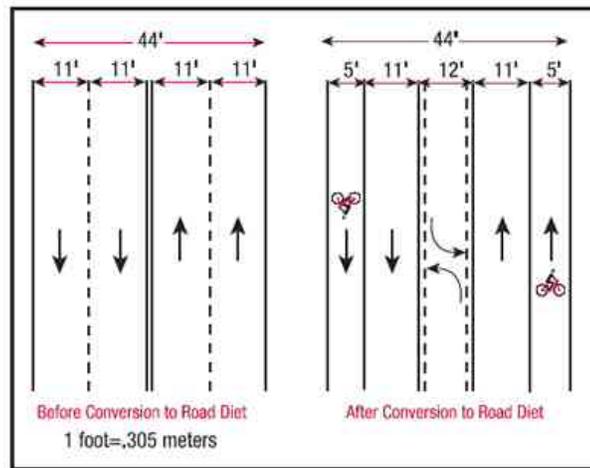


Figure 1 - Road Diet Concept  
Source: Institute of Traffic Engineers

## Access Management

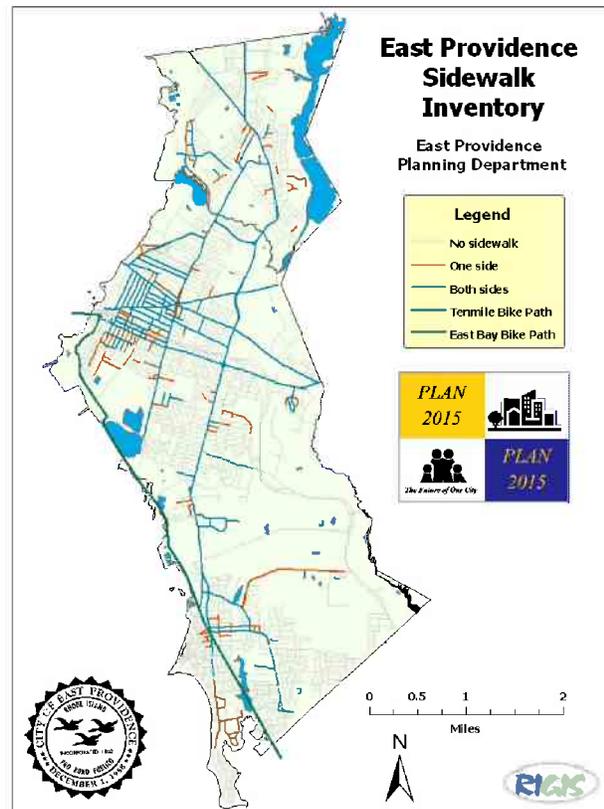
As indicated previously, East Providence's transportation system is essentially serving a built out community, with nearly all of the major thoroughfares in the City being in place for more than a century. These roadways have been developed and have evolved incrementally, over this period to reflect changing development patterns. Over the decades, roadway systems have been constructed to serve the various developments that have been built, and in some case re-developed, both commercial and residential. As a result of this incremental development, numerous curb-cuts and driveways have been created to serve the various uses located along the City's major roadways and

arterials. The City should investigate the potential to reduce and consolidate curb-cuts along major thoroughfares as a means of reducing roadway hazards and improving overall traffic circulation. Improvement to retail commercial corridors in particular, could dramatically improve safety and reduce congestion. Circulation corridors that could benefit from access management planning include portions of Newport Avenue, Pawtucket Avenue and Taunton Avenue.

### Sidewalk Study & Survey

East Providence neighborhoods vary as it relates to the availability of sidewalks. Older, higher density neighborhoods in the center of the City tend to provide sidewalks along the majority of their roadway networks. Conversely, areas of the City constructed in more recent times, with generally lower densities, tend to have fewer roadway areas with sidewalks. Below is a map that depicts the location of existing sidewalks in the City, based upon a visual survey of existing aerial mapping of the City.

The City should promote the continued installation of sidewalks for newly proposed developments and develop a comprehensive sidewalk and curbing study to identify roadways that could benefit the most through the installation of curbing and sidewalks, particularly in areas near schools and public recreation facilities.



### Other Intermodal Transportation Issues

#### Bicycle, Bicycle Path and Greenway Development and Preservation

The City of East Providence is fortunate to have several high quality bicycle and greenway facilities within its borders. The East Bay Bike Path, in particular, is recognized nationally as one of the finest examples of a dedicated Bike Path facility in the country. The East Bay Bike Path was the first project in Rhode Island to convert a former rail corridor into a dedicated bike path facility. Since its completion in the 1980's the path has seen hundreds of thousands of users who have the opportunity to travel between the City of East Providence and the town of Bristol.

The City should work closely with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, and other public and private non-profit agencies that support bike path and greenway

development, to preserve protect, and where applicable, expand bike path and greenway facilities in the City. Particular attention should be paid to assuring that facilities like the East Bay Bike Path are preserved as dedicated bicycle facilities in perpetuity.

The City should also investigate the potential for developing dedicated bicycle lane facilities along appropriate segments of major arterials within the City of East Providence, where development is practical. The use of dedicated bicycle lanes provides opportunities for bicycles to traverse busy thoroughfares in a safer, more efficient manner and provides the potential to increase bicycle ridership to local destinations in the area.



### **Bus Route Development/Mass Transit Hub**

Currently, RIPTA has several lines serving or traversing East Providence, including the following routes:

**32** - South Broadway, Veterans Memorial Parkway, Pawtucket Avenue, Willett Avenue

**33** – Taunton Avenue, Pawtucket Avenue, Bullocks Point Avenue

**34** – Waterman Avenue, Pawtucket Avenue, Waterman Avenue to Westminster Office Park and Evergreen Apartments

**35** – Waterman Avenue, Broadway, Newport Avenue

**60** - I-195, East Shore Expressway (No East Providence stops)

**78** – Waterman Avenue, Pawtucket Avenue Newport Avenue

While RIPTA bus service to East Providence is substantial, mass transit efficiency to East Providence could be dramatically improved with the establishment of a centralized mass transit hub in the central core of East Providence. RIPTA has long held that ridership trends in East Providence support this type of facility and have made it a priority in their route planning efforts to identify and establish a transit hub in the



City. Geographically, RIPTA has identified the vicinity of Pawtucket Avenue and Taunton Avenue for a hub transfer facility. The combination of trip generators associated with the commercial uses in the area, combined with the centralized location of this very busy intersection supports the establishment of a hub at this general

location. The City should work aggressively with RIPTA to develop a list of potential sites, both public and private that could potentially be utilized for the development of this hub.

### Gateway Improvements

Gateways to the City should be reflective of a vibrant city with a welcoming atmosphere that depicts prosperity and community pride. Currently, several gateway centers in the City are in need of improvements in attaining that goal. Working with the City's



Beautification Commission, the City should identify and prioritize its gateway corridors and develop a plan for completing physical improvements at the major entryways to the City. Provisions for appropriate regular maintenance of these gateway sites is also critical. Currently only one gateway provides a welcome sign; the Taunton Avenue

gateway at I-195. Even here however, maintenance is sporadic and at times this gateway has been overgrown and unwelcoming. If necessary, the City should coordinate with RIDOT to assure that gateways receive adequate maintenance when corridors within State jurisdiction are involved.

### Pedestrian Improvements

The City has successfully sought and received funding from the Rhode Island Department of Transportation for several important downtown pedestrian rehabilitation projects. Significant funding has been received to complete improvements at Riverside Square, Warren Avenue and Taunton Avenue. These pedestrian enhancement projects provide improved accessibility and safety for pedestrians traveling along the City's thickly populated downtown corridors, where traffic densities are high and amenities for pedestrians are often limited. These enhancement projects promote community pride, serve to bolster the local business economy and dramatically reduce hazards for the walking public. Additional enhancement projects should remain a priority for the City

including sections of Warren Avenue, Pawtucket Avenue, Bullocks Point Avenue, North Broadway and Willett Avenue. Pedestrian and safety enhancements should also be a priority along the very busy Newport Avenue corridor.

The City should also work with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation to ensure that high priority City improvement projects included in the State Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) such as the North Broadway Rehabilitation



Project and Roger Williams Avenue Improvements move forward through design to construction.

#### *Waterfront Drive Plan*

The primary means of improving northerly access from Interstate-195 will be accomplished through the construction of Waterfront Drive, a limited access principal arterial that, when completed, will provide direct access to the western half of Rumford from Route I-195, north to the Pawtucket City line. Initially proposed as a single phase industrial highway in the early 1970's, the project is currently proposed in several phases.

The recommendations for the design and construction of Waterfront Drive have changed significantly since the adoption of the East Providence Comprehensive Plan in 1994. The recommendations associated with the development of Waterfront Drive are currently detailed within the City's Waterfront Special Development District Plan that the City Council adopted in December 2003 and is a part of the 2009 update of the City's Comprehensive Plan. A general description of the modifications associated with the development of Waterfront Drive is as follows:

The northern terminus of Waterfront Drive (known as the Newport Avenue Connector) has been designed and is ready for construction. The design purpose for the Newport Avenue Connector is primarily to improve traffic movement by providing an alternative to Beverage Hill Avenue in Pawtucket and allowing for more efficient mobility for truck traffic in the area. The proposal also provides opportunities for commercial/industrial development in the Pawtucket Avenue sub-district identified within the City's Waterfront Special Development District Plan. It is estimated that approximately 15 acres of land could become immediately developable within the Pawtucket Avenue sub-district if the Newport Avenue Connector were constructed. Authorization to proceed with construction, however, has been delayed by the City of Pawtucket, due to concerns over impacts to property owners in the vicinity of the Connector. As a result, the City of East Providence has shifted its construction priorities to the southern portions of Waterfront Drive.

The Warren Avenue Connector located at the southern terminus of the Waterfront Drive Project is designed to provide direct access to the Bold Point Area from Warren Avenue. The Warren Avenue Connector was completed in 2008.

The next phase of Waterfront Drive will provide access from I-195 to Dexter Road, traversing several key development parcels along the way. Designated as the Dexter Road Connector, the project is currently under design and has several funding sources in place to finance construction, including a \$2,000,000 federal grant from the United States Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA). Construction is anticipated to commence in 2010.

Vacant parcels located adjacent to the proposed Dexter Road Connector provide significant opportunity for economic expansion and job growth under the newly adopted Waterfront Special Development District Plan. The elimination of the need for rail facilities south of the Dexter Road area has significantly reduced the estimated cost associated with the construction of Waterfront Drive. The City should continue to lobby

for complete construction of Waterfront Drive from the Warren Avenue Connector to the Pawtucket City boundary under the current design criteria identified in the Waterfront Special Development District Plan. The remaining northerly phases of Waterfront Drive are currently listed within the Study and Development category of the State's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)

There is also a priority on the part of the City to see Waterfront Drive extended south of Bold Point as a means of accessing important development parcels south of Bold Point. The former Chevron Oil facility, in particular, could be significantly enhanced through direct access from an extended Waterfront Drive. The Chevron site has received approvals from the City's Waterfront District Commission to develop a significant mixed use project that would be enhanced greatly through development of this extended "southern segment" of Waterfront Drive. Chevron, through its development partner, Village on the Waterfront, is proposing to construct this segment of Waterfront Drive and has sought City assistance in funding this project through the use of Tax Increment Financing.

The purposes identified in the 1994 Comprehensive Plan for the construction of Waterfront Drive remains essentially unchanged with the exception of references to serving an industrial waterfront. Purposes identified would be as follows:

- Extend the existing Waterfront Drive southward to Interstate 195
- Provide a direct and continuous route for north and south travel through East Providence
- Improve local access to Interstate 195 and the Henderson Bridge
- Improve access to waterfront property and the waterfront itself
- Reduce traffic on East Providence arterials
- Improve the level of service at intersections along East Providence arterials
- Reduce truck and commuter traffic on residential streets along the Seekonk River.
- Link multiple modes of transportation in a developing mixed use areas as described in the East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Plan
- Create a cohesive mixed use area along the Seekonk River waterfront in accordance with East Providence and Pawtucket City plans
- Improve access to the waterfront through the development of Interchange Improvements at the I-195 Taunton Avenue/Warren Avenue Interchange

### **Circulation Goals and Objectives**

The following Goals and Objectives are a compilation of the 1994 Plan and 2004 and 2010 Plan Updates. This compilation necessitated a re-numbering of Goals 1 – 8. However, the substance of the goals and objectives remains unchanged.

#### **Goal 1.0: Improve access to vacant and underutilized parcels on the waterfront.**

Objective 1.1: Upgrade the I-195 Interchange on the City's waterfront to provide increased capacity to waterfront development parcels and allow unencumbered access to the waterfront from both directions of the Interstate.

Objective 1.2: Work with RIDOT to develop strategies for restoring the historic former rail river crossing at Crook Point via the Seekonk River lift bridge connecting East

Providence to the East Side of Providence through the existing underground tunnel for a transportation corridor and transportation alternatives.

Objective 1.3: Continue to lobby the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) to initiate construction of the uncompleted portions of Waterfront Drive from its current terminus at Warren Avenue, northerly to Dexter Road in Phase 2 and northerly to Phillipsdale in Phase 3.

Objective 1.4: Encourage improvements to waterborne transportation, including dredging and removal of impediments to waterborne transportation.

Objective 1.5: Work with State and Federal agencies to streamline approval processes and application requirements for coastal projects particularly those dependent on transportation circulation systems.

**GOAL 2.0: Provide transportation that meets the needs of all residents of East Providence.**

Objective 2.1: Focus on providing walkable neighborhoods and a development scale that supports pedestrian movement within the City's Waterfront Special Development District.

Objective 2.2: Integrate neighborhoods, services, and recreation areas with bikeways and walkways.

Objective 2.3: Encourage the construction of sidewalks within areas where the greatest pedestrian traffic is generated, particularly in areas near schools, libraries and municipal recreation facilities.

Objective 2.4: Work with the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) to create a central transit hub in East Providence that promotes work to establish a RIPTA hub that provides comfort and convenience for RIPTA riders and encourage RIPTA to inventory existing bus shelters, bus stop signage and amenities, and upgrade facilities as needed.

Objective 2.5: Work with (RIPTA) to monitor and recommend changes in bus service based on ridership patterns.

Objective 2.6: Provide transportation service for low-income and elderly residents through the use of local systems and facilities.

Objective 2.7: Encourage the use of alternative transit modes by including provision for bus turnouts, transit shelters and bicycle parking facilities in new and revitalized private development, as well as public right-of-way improvements, where appropriate.

Objective 2.8: Improve accessibility to public and private facilities for handicapped residents.

Objective 2.9: Provide extensive advertising of the availability of public transportation in East Providence.

**Goal 3.0: Improve specific elements of the Circulation System to meet the goals of the Land Use Plan Element and the Waterfront Special Development District Plan.**

Objective 3.1: Increase accessibility to Interstate Route 195 and the Wampanoag Trail from the adjacent industrial parks and commercial land uses.

Objective 3.2: Improve the Six Corners intersection such that commercial uses on Taunton Avenue and Waterman Avenue are benefited, as well as improving traffic flow.

Objective 3.3: Improve Taunton Avenue, Route 195, Veterans Memorial Parkway and Waterfront Drive interchange to enhance appearance, and image of critical entrances to the City.

**Goal 4.0: Improve safety and traffic flow on the City's arterial roadways.**

Objective 4.1: Study the City's arterial roadways and identify specific measures to improve safety and traffic flow (e.g. controlling access points, synchronizing traffic signals, reducing speed limits, etc.)

Objective 4.2: Consider options for improving access to key development sites through use of innovative traffic design systems such as roundabouts and dedicated acceleration and deceleration lanes.

Objective 4.3: Initiate study with RIDOT to identify appropriate intersection improvements at arterial street intersections (turn lanes, signals, etc.) along Pawtucket Avenue, Warren Avenue, Taunton Avenue, Newport Avenue, Waterman Avenue, Willet Avenue and North Broadway.

Objective 4.4: Continue to develop a program of roadway rehabilitation including inventory, improvements, and funding sources.

Objective 4.5: Work with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation to ensure that high priority City improvement projects included in the State TIP, such as the North Broadway rehabilitation and Roger Williams Avenue improvements, move forward through design to construction.

**Goal 5.0: Protect the existing character of East Providence streets and roads.**

Objective 5.1: Develop comprehensive street landscaping and signage control provisions for the City's major transportation corridors.

Objective 5.2: Work with RIDOT on Waterfront Drive and Interstate 195 interchange at Taunton Avenue and Veteran's Memorial Parkway to enhance the entrance to the City.

**Goal 6.0: Establish a solid working relationship with RIDOT to monitor the regional transportation system and plan improvements.**

Objective 6.1: Meet on a regular basis with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation to forward City position on state projects that impact East Providence.

Objective 6.2: Provide for more community involvement with RIDOT during design development to assure roadway improvements that are consistent with Plan objectives.

**Goal 7.0: Review the City's existing parking needs for municipal and private facilities.**

Objective 7.1: Conduct a municipal parking study to determine the parking needs of all City-owned or operated facilities.

Objective 7.2: Conduct a study on the impact of off-street parking on commercial development and traffic movement on the City's arterial roadway system.

[Note: Added the following Goal 8 and Objectives in the 2010 Update.]

**Goal 8.0: Seek to preserve, enhance and where appropriate, expand bike path and greenway facilities in East Providence including the East Bay Bike Path and the Ten Mile River Greenway**

Objective 8.1: Work with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation and the State Legislature to designate the East Bay Bike Path as a unique and valued state resource that should be maintained as a bike path facility, and in the event of any future re-use involving rail or other transit use, work with the DOT and State Legislature to ensure that any future re-use of the Bristol Secondary rail corridor include a bike path component.

Objective 8.2: Work with RIDOT to expand existing bike path and Greenway facilities in East Providence including the Ten Mile River Greenway.

Objective 8.3: Support the development of dedicated bicycle lanes along appropriate segments of major arterials within the city of East Providence, where development is practical.

Objective 8.4: Create a bicycle network connection between the East Bay Bicycle Path and the Ten Mile River Greenway

Objective 8.5: Coordinate with neighboring communities including Providence, Pawtucket, Barrington and Seekonk, Massachusetts to examine opportunities for inter-municipal bicycle network connections.

**Table 2. Circulation Implementation Strategies**

In reading the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Strategies throughout the Plan Elements many of the timeframes are listed as “On-going”, meaning either that specific projects are underway and/or that Planning Department staff are actively initiating and assessing the availability of opportunities to further implementation of the Plan and its Action Items. The short, intermediate and long-term timeframes assigned to Action Items are generalized and again, there may be current and on-going efforts that will continue into intermediate and long-term time periods. Generally, the phrase “Short Term” should be interpreted as currently underway or expected to be commenced in the year 2011. Generally, the phrase “Intermediate Term” should be interpreted as an Action

Item that may be commenced in 2011-2013 and will take longer to implement, and/or may rely on data and financing not currently available. Generally, the phrase “Long Term” refers to a project that may be currently underway but that is of a larger scope that may take many years to initiate and/or complete and is dependent upon considerable financing, engineering, studies and/or permits to accomplish, and is likely to take beyond 2015 to fully implement.

Please note that where the State of Rhode Island, or a specific State Agency is listed as a party in the Implementation Strategies tables under the table heading “Responsible for Implementation” that this is not an obligation of any particular agency but is listed for informational purposes and is a recognition by the City that a collaboration between the City and the State is desirable and/or necessary for implementation of a particular project.

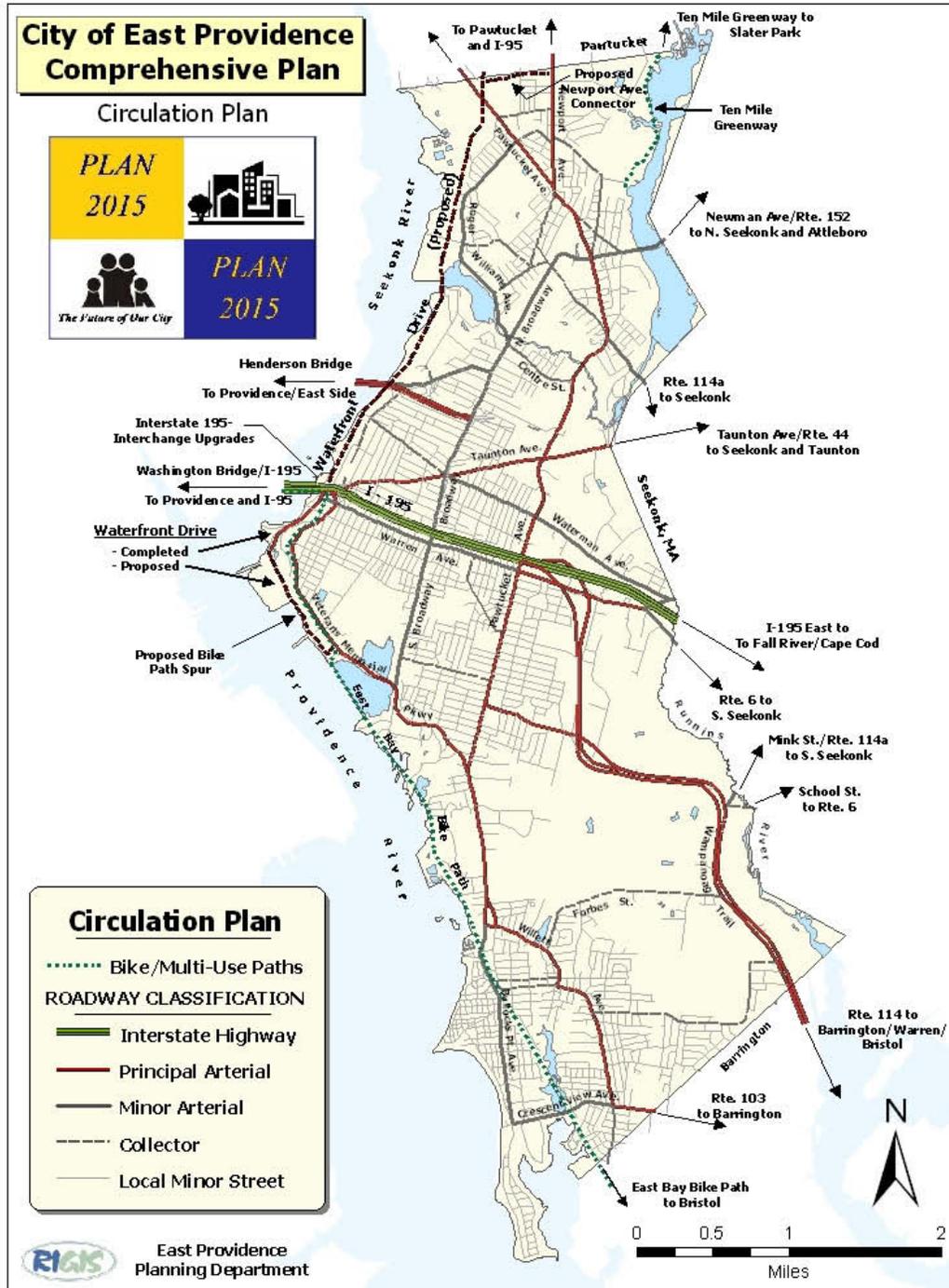
	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible for Implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
C - 1	Upgrade the I-195 Interchange on the City’s waterfront to provide increased capacity to waterfront development parcels and allow unencumbered access to the waterfront from both directions of the Interstate.	Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT)	On-going (Long Term)
C - 2	Work with RIDOT to develop strategies for restoring the historic former rail river crossing at Crook Point via the Seekonk River lift bridge connecting East Providence to the East side of Providence through the existing underground tunnel for a transportation corridor and transportation alternatives.	Planning Department Dept. of Public Works RIDOT Waterfront District Commission	(Long Term)
C - 3	Continue to lobby the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) to initiate construction of the uncompleted portions of Waterfront Drive from its current terminus at Warren Avenue, northerly to Dexter Road in Phase 2 and northerly to Phillipsdale in Phase 3.	Planning Department Dept. of Public Works	On-going Phased Development (Short, Intermediate and Long Term)
C - 4	Encourage improvements to waterborne transportation, including dredging and removal of impediments to waterborne transportation.	Army Corps of Engineers RI CRMC	(Long Term)

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible for Implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
C - 5	Work with State and Federal agencies to streamline approval processes and application requirements for coastal projects particularly those dependent on transportation circulation systems.	RIDEM RIDOT CRMC Army Corps of Engineers	Short Term
C - 6	Focus on providing walkable neighborhoods and a development scale that supports pedestrian movement within the City's Waterfront Special Development District.	Waterfront Commission	On-going
C - 7	Integrate neighborhoods, services, and recreation areas with bikeways and walkways.	Planning Department RIDOT	On-going
C - 8	Encourage the construction of sidewalks within areas where the greatest pedestrian traffic is generated, particularly in areas near schools libraries and municipal recreation facilities.	Planning Department Community Development Public Works Department	On-going (Short Term - 2011) (Intermediate)
C - 9	Work with the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) to create a central transit hub in East Providence that promotes work to establish a RIPTA hub that provides comfort and convenience for RIPTA riders and encourage RIPTA to inventory existing bus shelters, bus stop signage and amenities, and upgrade facilities as needed.	RIPTA RIDOT Planning Department Public works Department	On-going (Short Term)
C - 10	Work with RIPTA to monitor and recommend changes in bus service based on ridership patterns.	RIPTA	Short Term
C - 11	Provide transportation service for low-income and elderly residents through the use of local systems and facilities.	Recreation Department Senior Center	On-going
C - 12	Encourage the use of alternative transit modes by including provision for bus turnouts, transit shelters and bicycle parking facilities in new and revitalized private development, as well as public right-of-way improvements, where appropriate.	Planning Department developers	On-going

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible for Implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
C - 13	Improve accessibility to public and private facilities for handicapped residents.	Public Works Various Agencies	On-going
C - 14	Provide extensive advertising of the availability of public transportation in East Providence.	RIPTA	Short Term
C - 15	Increase accessibility to Interstate Route 195 and the Wampanoag Trail from the adjacent industrial parks and commercial land uses.	RIDOT	Long Term
C - 16	Improve the Six Corners intersection such that commercial uses on Taunton Avenue and Waterman Avenue are benefited, as well as improving traffic flow.	Planning Department Public Works Department RIDOT	Long Term
C - 17	Improve Taunton Avenue, Route 195, Veterans Memorial Parkway and Waterfront Drive interchange to enhance appearance, and image of critical entrances to the City.	Planning Department Beautification Commission Parks Department	On-going (Intermediate)
C - 18	Study the City's arterial roadways and identify specific measures to improve safety and traffic flow (e.g. controlling access points, synchronizing traffic signals, reducing speed limits, etc.)	Public Works Department RIDOT Planning Department	Underway On-going
C - 19	Consider options for improving access to key development sites through use of innovative traffic design systems such as roundabouts and dedicated acceleration and deceleration lanes.	RIDOT Public Works Department Planning Department	Short Term (Intermediate)
C - 20	Initiate study with RIDOT to identify appropriate intersection improvements at arterial street intersections (turn lanes, signals, etc.) along Pawtucket Avenue Warren Avenue, Taunton Avenue, Newport Avenue, Waterman Avenue, Willet Avenue and North Broadway.	RIDOT Public works Department	Intermediate

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible for Implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
C - 21	Continue to develop a program of roadway rehabilitation including inventory, improvements, and funding sources.	Public Works Department Planning Department	Intermediate
C - 22	Work with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation to ensure that high priority City improvement projects such as the North Broadway rehabilitation and Roger Williams Avenue improvements move forward through design to construction.	RIDOT Planning Department Public Works Department	Long Term
C - 23	Develop comprehensive street landscaping and signage control provisions for the City's major transportation corridors.	Planning Department Public Works Department RIDOT	Ongoing (Short Term)
C - 24	Work with RIDOT on Waterfront Drive and Interstate 195 interchange at Taunton Avenue and Veteran's Memorial Parkway to enhance the entrance to the City.	Waterfront commission RIDOT Planning Department	Underway On-going
C - 25	Meet on a regular basis with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation to forward City position on state projects that impact East Providence.	RIDOT Planning Department Department of Public Works	On-going
C - 26	Provide for more community involvement with RIDOT during design development to assure roadway improvements that are consistent with Plan objectives.	RIDOT Planning Department	On-going
C - 27	Conduct a municipal parking study to determine the parking needs of all City-owned or operated facilities.	Planning Department Public works Department	Intermediate
C - 28	Conduct a study on the impact of off-street parking on commercial development and traffic movement on the City's arterial roadway system	Planning Department Public Works Department	Intermediate

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible for Implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
C - 29	Work with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation and the State Legislature to designate the East Bay Bike Path as a unique and valued state resource that should be maintained as a bike path facility, and in the event of any future re-use involving rail or other transit use, work with the DOT and State Legislature to ensure that any future re-use of the Bristol Secondary rail corridor include a bike path component.	RIDOT Planning Department State Legislature	On-going monitoring. Long-term.
C - 30	Work with RIDOT to expand existing bike path and Greenway facilities in East Providence including the Ten Mile River Greenway.	RIDOT Planning Department Public Works Department	Long Term
C - 31	Support the development of dedicated bicycle lanes along appropriate segments of major arterials within the city of East Providence, where development is practical.	RIDOT Planning Department Public Works Department	Intermediate
C - 32	Create a bicycle network connection between the East Bay Bicycle Path and the Ten Mile River Greenway	RIDOT Planning Department	Long Term
C - 33	Coordinate with neighboring communities including Providence, Pawtucket, Barrington and Seekonk, Massachusetts to examine opportunities for inter-municipal bicycle network connections.	Planning Department Public Works Department	Intermediate and Long Term



Map 8. Circulation Plan

## **Economic Development Element**

Chapter 45-22.2 of the Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act requires that the Economic Development Element of municipal comprehensive plans include the identification of economic development policies and strategies, either existing or proposed by the municipality, in coordination with the land use plan element. These policies should reflect local, regional, and statewide concerns for the expansion and stabilization of the economic base and the promotion of quality employment opportunities and job growth. The policies and implementation techniques must be identified for inclusion in the implementation program element. Since the current Comprehensive Plan's adoption in 1992 the economy of Rhode Island has continued to shift from primarily a manufacturing based economy to a service and retail based economy that has had a dramatic impact on employment characteristics in East Providence.



The City has seen success in attracting business development in the finance and banking sector. Several national and regional banks have significantly invested in facility development in East Providence since the Comprehensive Plan's last update in 2004. Bank of America selected a site in the Riverside Section of the City for a customer service center that now employs approximately 1,000 in the former Monet building on Pawtucket Avenue. Citizens Bank invested significantly in new back office facilities in the City and Sovereign Bank also maintains a major customer service facility within the City. The former Monet building and Citizens Bank's facility are two of several large manufacturing facilities in the City that have been vacant or formerly utilized as manufacturing space and have been transformed to high technology back office facilities.

The City has also seen considerable investment in medical office facilities including a new 48,000 square foot medical office facility at 900 Warren Avenue developed for Coastal Medical, Rhode Island's largest primary care provider.

The transition of our economy to a service based economy from its former manufacturing days continues, and the expansion of the banking finance and the medical industry represent the greatest potential in this new and evolving economy in Rhode Island.

Although banking, finance and medical represent a significant contributor to East Providence's economy, the City has also seen several major manufacturing companies establishing or expanding operations in the City of East Providence. Aspen Aerogels, a manufacturer of high tech insulation materials, completed a \$30 million renovation of a 145,000 square foot manufacturing facility on Dexter Road and became fully operational

in 2008. The Aspen Aerogels facility has brought dozens of high paying jobs to East Providence and is considered to be at the cutting edge of nano-technology development.

Another manufacturer, EFD Manufacturing, consolidated its City and regional facilities at



40 Catamore Boulevard, spending more than \$9 million in improvements to build a facility that suited their needs. Despite shifting trends in the region's industrial economy, the company elected to stay in the City after considering a move to another state based on several positive factors that supported remaining in Rhode Island, including the quality of the company's local labor force.

The goals and objectives of this update of the Economic Element of the Comprehensive Plan are not dramatically different from those

identified in the 2004 update. The basic framework of the City's economy and the conditions and factors that were in place in 2004 have not fundamentally changed. Exceptions that have received much greater emphasis in recent years, however, have been in the green and sustainable economy industries. These emerging industries could play a vital role in shaping the economy of Rhode Island and East Providence. As such, new goals and objective associated with the promotion of sustainable development and green technology industries are now a part of the 2009 update of the Comprehensive Plan.

### **Vision Statement**

The vision of economic development in East Providence includes the development of a diverse job base predicated on attracting new high quality industry to the City, as well as maintaining the wide variety of existing businesses within the community. New industry should respect existing neighborhoods, maximize the use of existing infrastructure and positively contribute to the City's tax base. The City should also develop a comprehensive program of support services to encourage the consolidation and expansion of existing businesses through targeted assistance and public infrastructure improvements and should be consistent with the goals and policies identified within the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

### **State Guide Plans Associated with Economic Development**

#### ***State of Rhode Island Economic Development Strategy – State Guide Plan Element 211***

The updated State Guide Plan Element 211, Economic Development Policies and Plan, was approved by the State Planning Council on April 13, 2000. The 2000 update indicates that the newly adopted plan has changed its focus. This plan is no longer referred to as the Economic Development Strategy, but as the Economic Development Policies and Plan, which does not include policies per se, but its policies and objectives

will be used by Statewide Planning staff to review for consistency between Comprehensive Plan Goals and Objectives and the most recent Element 211 draft.

The State Guide Plan Element 211 provided three objectives under the primary goal to “foster and maintain a vigorous economy able to provide an adequate number and variety of activities that generate wealth for the people of the State.”.

The Element proposes three General Objectives and Policies as part of the plan, employment, facilities development, and business climate. Although the last update for this Element occurred in 2000, these general objectives as described, continue to remain valid and do impact the current decision processes as the City moves forward in updating its current Economic Development element.

### **State of Rhode Island Industrial Land Use Plan – State Guide Plan Element 212**

In 2001, the Statewide Planning Program revised the Industrial Land Use Plan to include language pertaining to the mitigation of natural hazard events. This included an explanation of hazard mitigation and why it is important when making economic development decisions. Conclusions associated with Element 212 remain valid today and are cited within this document as a General Goal to be associated with the Economic Development Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

Element 212’s conclusion is as follows:

*Measures must be taken to protect the prime industrial land we already have. These include what we have already mentioned: “matching the plant [use] to the land,” cleaning and recycling brownfields, using performance standards to cluster and commingle industries, promoting labor-intensive industrial sectors, and working toward the most efficient use of the land possible, including mixed uses, to conserve and stretch the resource.*

### **Other Plans Affecting Statewide Economic Development**

#### **Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation’s 2009 Economic Growth Plan**

The Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation’s (RIEDC) Economic Growth Plan proposes 10 Specific action plans to accelerate the pace of job growth in our state. The plan places a high priority on the following principles:

1. Help for Small Business
2. Workforce Development
3. Partnerships
4. Responsiveness

The 10 Action plans as highlighted in the plan include the following:

1. Action 1: Help Small Business Gain Access to Capital
2. Action 2: Equip Workers with Skills for High-Wage, Innovation Jobs
3. Action 3: Foster New Company Creation and Entrepreneurship
4. Action 4: Create a Public-Private Business Attraction Center
5. Action 5: Develop Robust Regional and Local Partnerships
6. Action 6: Establish Expedited Permitting Procedures
7. Action 7: Accelerate Science and Technology Research

8. Action 8: Expand Renewable Energy Capabilities
9. Action 9: Maximize Economic Impact of Federal Stimulus Dollars
10. Action 10: Reinvigorate RIEDC's Programs and Initiatives

The actions identified within RIEDC's Economic Growth Plan are particularly valid because they are reflective of the current economic development conditions within our State at this time and recognize the need for public private enterprise in the future, the need to develop regional partnerships in promoting economic expansion in our State and on the importance of developing initiatives that promote "green economy" opportunities in our State.



### **East Providence Waterfront Special Development District**

The City of East Providence undertook the drafting of the *East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Plan* (Waterfront Plan) to articulate and frame a plan, vision and strategies to transform over 300 acres of the City's currently underutilized waterfront along the Providence and Seekonk Rivers to a mix of land uses, including: commercial; office; medium and high density residential; light manufacturing; entertainment and hospitality; restaurants; marinas; civic, and recreational uses, particularly those oriented towards the water.

Adopted in 2003, and incorporated in the 2004 State certified Comprehensive Plan update, the "Waterfront Plan" proposes a vision for the East Providence waterfront to transform the City's coastline while striving to achieve the following:

#### ***Quality Product***

Projects should be of high quality, in terms of purpose, planning, architecture and materials.

#### ***Community Sensitivity***

All projects should be sensitive to historical and community concerns.

#### ***Mixed-Use***

Development should, in the aggregate, provide a self-sustaining mix of commercial, residential, institutional, light industrial, civic and recreational uses.

#### ***Environmental Improvements***

Waterfront development should improve current site conditions while protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

**Public Access**

Development should provide the public with improved access to the East Providence coastline.

**Economic Development**

Waterfront development should stimulate both short- and long-term economic development opportunities in the City and Rhode Island.

**Fiscal Impact**

Development should have a positive fiscal impact on local and State government.

**TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF)**

The redevelopment envisioned for the waterfront in the Waterfront Plan entails a number of activities including: road construction and associated public improvements; extension of utilities; undergrounding utilities; acquisition of properties; parcel assembly; rehabilitation of structures; improvement, clearance, sale, lease, or other disposition, or any combination of these, of land, buildings, or other the provision of streets, utilities, recreational areas, and other open spaces consistent with the needs of sound community growth in accordance with the City's *Comprehensive Plan*; and carrying out plans for a program of voluntary repair and rehabilitation of buildings and other improvements. In order to achieve these development objectives, the City Council adopted a TIF Project Plan (August 2008; (please see Appendix B) for the purposes of implementing a strategy to utilize TIF to finance public infrastructure improvements within the Waterfront District. For the purposes of this updated Element of the Comprehensive Plan, the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Project Plan is considered an integral part of this Comprehensive Plan update, and was listed as an implementation strategy in the *2003 East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Plan*, which was part of the 2004 Comprehensive Plan Update.



In order to achieve these development objectives, the City Council adopted a TIF Project Plan (August 2008; (please see Appendix B) for the purposes of implementing a strategy to utilize TIF to finance public infrastructure improvements within the Waterfront District. For the purposes of this updated Element of the Comprehensive Plan, the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Project Plan is considered an integral part of this Comprehensive Plan update, and was listed as an implementation strategy in the *2003 East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Plan*, which was part of the 2004 Comprehensive Plan Update.

**Transportation Improvements In Support of Economic Development**

The City's Transportation network has remained essentially unchanged since the 1970's. Waterfront Drive, a key coastal arterial that has been proposed since the early 1970's is only now becoming a reality, with the completed construction of the first phase of the project (Warren Avenue Connector) in 2008. The opportunities for re-use of the City's waterfront cannot be realized without the completion of several critical transportation infrastructure projects. Completing the remaining portions of Waterfront Drive from the Warren Avenue Connector is the first major piece in meeting the transportation need associated with waterfront economic development. The second piece is the completion

of improvements to the I-195 Waterfront Interchange in the City's Waterfront District. A recently completed Environmental Assessment (EA) has identified a preferred design alternative that will create new transportation efficiency for vehicles attempting to get to the City's waterfront from I-195, most notably, new ramp structures that would provide direct access to I-195 for vehicles coming from, and traveling to, eastern points on the Interstate. The completion of these projects are essential to the redevelopment of the City's promising waterfront.

There is also a priority on the part of the City to see Waterfront Drive extended south of Bold Point as a means of accessing important development parcels south of Bold Point. The former Chevron Oil facility, in particular, could be significantly enhanced through direct access from an extended Waterfront Drive. The Chevron site has received approvals from the City's Waterfront District Commission to develop a significant mixed use project that would be enhanced greatly through development of this extended "southern segment" of Waterfront Drive. Chevron, through its development partner, Village on the Waterfront, is proposing to construct this segment of Waterfront Drive and has sought City assistance in funding this project through the use of Tax Increment Financing. There is also a proposed extension of the East Bay Bicycle Path being constructed with a combination of private developer funds and TIF funds and providing access to a \$200 million development.

### **Commercial Corridor Revitalization**



The City of East Providence lacks a defined downtown, primarily the result of the construction of the Interstate highway more than forty years ago. Nevertheless, there are several prominent retail commercial corridors that serve a valuable purpose in serving the community and helping to establish a sense of neighborhood place for the residents of the City. Many of these retail commercial corridors have existed for decades and have, over the years, exhibited periods of expansion and decline and in some cases re-

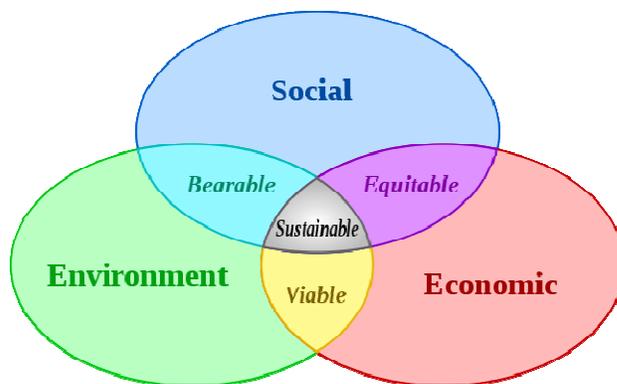
emergence. There are numerous examples of these corridors in the City. However, the most notable, and the areas with the most impact on neighborhoods, are the Taunton Avenue corridor from I-195 to Six Corners, the Warren Avenue corridor from Valley Street to Pawtucket Avenue and Riverside Square.

Recent trends in Planning have begun to recognize the value of these compact commercial corridors in supporting local economic vitality, building community strength, and providing a potential for promoting an economy that allows individuals to both live and work within our local commercial corridors. Efforts to provide for flexible uses within these commercial areas should be embraced, with flexible zoning that allows for a variety of uses to co-exist in harmony. Uses including, residential, retail, office and other local service uses should be encouraged and physical improvements to these corridors

should be completed as a means of promoting the re-use and development of these important economic generators. The 1994 Comprehensive Plan identified a Mixed Use land use designation for many of the corridors. The City has created a floating zone district ordinance that allows for flexible development in appropriate locations within the City, including high density urban corridors.

The City recently acquired and rezoned a parcel of property located in Riverside Square, containing several underutilized and dilapidated structures into the Riverside Square Mixed Use/Downtown Overlay as a means of supporting a high density mixed use redevelopment of the site. Other opportunities for similar developments in other high density downtown corridors should be explored as a means of promoting mixed use development along these corridors.

### **Economic and Environmental Sustainability**



Current trends in promoting economic development have stressed the need for a symbiotic relationship between economic, social and environmental responsibility. Creating economic models that reduce waste through shared transportation and use of shared resources, help to reduce waste and make companies more competitive. The promotion of a sustainable model that balances, social, environmental and economic factors leads to a balanced, healthier

model for growth and expansion in the community. This Comprehensive Plan includes a new, Community Sustainability Element that includes goals and objectives with the purpose of promoting a more balanced, sustainable community in support of social, environmental and economic sustainability. This Economic Development Element update recognizes the need to develop a decision process for growth that embraces these principles and is consistent with the goals and objectives identified within the Plan's Community Sustainability and Land Use Elements.

### **Economic Development Goals and Objectives**

The following Goals and Objectives are a compilation of the 1994 Plan and 2004 and 2010 Plan Updates. This compilation necessitated a re-numbering of Goals 1 – 4. However, the substance of the goals and objectives remains unchanged.

#### **GOAL 1: Foster a positive business environment for the existing business community within East Providence.**

Objective 1.1: Maintain strong communications with existing merchant associations, industrial councils and business-related civic groups to discuss economic development issues, business needs, marketing of the City, and approaches to improve the overall business environment.

- Objective 1.2: Work to improve the overall community business image through the targeted investment of public resources for revitalization of the Central City Commercial Area (Taunton Avenue/Six Corners Area), Warren Avenue, Pawtucket Avenue, Newport Avenue, Broadway, Waterman Avenue, Willett Avenue and Riverside Square as required.
- Objective 1.3 Encourage small retail and service businesses that meet the local needs of the residents of East Providence.
- Objective 1.4 Investigate the potential of developing business incubator space within unutilized or underutilized space as a means of promoting business startups in East Providence.
- Objective 1.5 Continue to offer incentives for commercial growth and expansion within the City, including commercial loans, façade improvement grants, tax stabilization and Enterprise Zone tax credits to existing businesses.

**GOAL 2: Facilitate economic development of appropriate vacant or underutilized parcels of land within the City to broaden the tax base and create local and regional job opportunities.**

- Objective 2.1 Maintain, for an appropriate period of time, a Waterfront Special Development District Commission as prescribed under State Law to facilitate the redevelopment of important large vacant commercial and industrial properties along the City of East Providence waterfront. The Commission should administer the City's Waterfront Special Development District Plan and implement the goals and objectives identified within this plan utilizing the economic development tools available to them including Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Special Assessment Districts, Bonding and their powers of eminent domain if necessary.
- Objective 2.2 Encourage the reclamation of brownfield properties in the City by environmental remediation and encourage use of the "built environment" by working with property owners and developers of these types of property in East Providence. Properties within the sub-districts identified in the City's Waterfront Special Development District Plan are examples of the areas of the City that are appropriate targets for this effort.
- Objective 2.3 Utilize appropriate financing mechanisms to fund revitalization efforts for significant economic development parcels in the City. Funding mechanisms may include federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) and Housing and Urban Development Section 108 funding as examples of funds that may be utilized in these efforts.
- Objective 2.4: Work with appropriate State, regional and local agencies to promote the overall quality of life and community image of East Providence in terms of quality housing opportunities, a skilled employment base, excellent transportation access and a full range of community facilities and services.

Objective 2.5: Establish contacts and develop strong working relationships and potential joint public/private partnerships with the owners of major vacant or underutilized parcels to encourage appropriate economic development.

Objective 2.6: Modify City development regulations, as appropriate, to encourage the development or redevelopment of various underutilized parcels (e.g., waterfront, Central City).

Objective 2.7: Balance economic development objectives with environmental and historical sensitivity and the need to buffer adjacent land uses carefully.

Objective 2.8 Continue to administer the City's Tax Stabilization program for new development in the City.

**GOAL 3: Diversify the economic base of the City of East Providence through a combined effort to market the City in general as a "good place to do business" and pursue targeted economic development opportunities matched to the City's assets.**

Objective 3.1: Work closely with the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation, (RIEDC) to identify target industries that match the assets of East Providence, and develop a comprehensive approach to marketing these industry types.

Objective 3.2: Update, as appropriate, the City's economic development marketing materials and dedicate staff time to working with the RIEDC, the Economic Development Commission, the Chamber of Commerce, and others to aggressively market the economic development potential of East Providence.

Objective 3.3: Conduct appropriate studies to examine the potential needs and opportunities to develop regional performing arts and/or recreational attractions in East Providence.

Objective 3.4: Promote the use of local minority and women owned businesses (MBE and WBE) on city improvement projects and programs and encourage job training programs for those business.

Objective 3.5 Provide a high quality infrastructure system including public sewer and water facilities, roadway networks and a quality public safety structure that supports and fosters continued economic growth.

**GOAL 4: Formulate a comprehensive framework to pursue appropriate economic development in the City of East Providence**

Objective 4.1: Clearly refine and publicize the role of the City's Economic Development Commission in marketing and securing new high quality economic development within the City.

- Objective 4.2: Define as the primary responsibility of the Economic Development Commission that of implementing the Economic Development Plan element of the East Providence Comprehensive Plan.
- Objective 4.3: Foster good communications and a close working relationship with the East Providence Chamber of Commerce to market economic development and support existing businesses in the City.
- Objective 4.4: Facilitate the expeditious reviews and approvals of rezoning and subdivision and land development applications for new and revitalized economic development projects which are consistent with other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Objective 4.5 Maintain existing industrial and commercially zoned districts in support of economic investment and expansion. Outside of the Waterfront Special Development District, discourage the rezoning of industrial and commercially zoned properties to residential zones.
- Objective 4.6 Encourage developers to seek tax increment financing (TIF) for the future infrastructure needs of the City's waterfront as identified in the City of East Providence Special Development District Tax Increment Financing plan

**Goal 5: Work for a mutually supportive relationship between commercial activities and quality of life issues in East Providence.**

- Objective 5.1 Promote a commercial base that allows for workers to walk or to use intermodal transportation options to travel to and from their workplace.
- Objective 5.2 Strengthen the amenities that make East Providence attractive to business investment, including a good education system, affordable housing and strong municipal services.
- Objective 5.3 Encourage business expansion that complement those businesses already existing in East Providence, particularly along the City retail commercial corridors.
- Objective 5.4 Encourage the reuse and rehabilitation of old industrial buildings and sites, either by incentives to the private sector or action by the Redevelopment Authority using powers authorized by State Law.
- Objective 5.5 Buffer commercial and industrial activities from adjoining uses where possible to alleviate incompatibilities.
- Objective 5.6 Complete a detailed citywide parking analysis to determine if parking needs in the commercial corridors in the City are being met.

**Goal 6: Promote the establishment and expansion of Sustainable and Green Technology Businesses in the City**

- Objective 6.1 Provide targeted financial assistance to green business and existing businesses seeking to become more sustainable through the use of

CDBG funds, City Commercial Loan Program and the Waterfront District Green Business Initiative.

Objective 6.2 Work with RIEDC to identify potential green industries and assist in site location and permitting.

Objective 6.3 Work with local educational institutes such as New England Institute of Technology, MotoRing Technical Training and the East Providence School Department to provide training opportunities for residents in green jobs.

**Table 3. Economic Development Implementation Strategies**

In reading the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Strategies throughout the Plan Elements many of the timeframes are listed as “On-going”, meaning either that specific projects are underway and/or that Planning Department staff are actively initiating and assessing the availability of opportunities to further implementation of the Plan and its Action Items. The short, intermediate and long-term timeframes assigned to Action Items are generalized and again, there may be current and on-going efforts that will continue into intermediate and long-term time periods. Generally, the phrase “Short Term” should be interpreted as currently underway or expected to be commenced in the year 2011. Generally, the phrase “Intermediate Term” should be interpreted as an Action Item that may be commenced in 2011-2013 and will take longer to implement, and/or may rely on data and financing not currently available. Generally, the phrase “Long Term” refers to a project that may be currently underway but that is of a larger scope that may take many years to initiate and/or complete and is dependent upon considerable financing, engineering, studies and/or permits to accomplish, and is likely to take beyond 2015 to fully implement.

Please note that where the State of Rhode Island, or a specific State Agency is listed as a party in the Implementation Strategies tables under the table heading “Responsible for Implementation” that this is not an obligation of any particular agency but is listed for informational purposes and is a recognition by the City that a collaboration between the City and the State is desirable and/or necessary for implementation of a particular project.

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible for Implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
ED - 1	Establish strong communications with existing merchant associations, industrial councils and business-related civic groups to discuss economic development issues, business needs, marketing of the City, and approaches to improve the overall business environment.	Planning Department	On-going

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible for Implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
ED - 2	Work to improve the overall community business image through the targeted investment of public resources for revitalization of the Central City Commercial Area Taunton Avenue/Six Corners Area), Warren Avenue, Pawtucket Avenue, Newport Avenue, Broadway, Waterman Avenue, Willett Avenue and Riverside Square as required.	Planning Department Public Works Department	On-going
ED - 3	Encourage small retail and service businesses that meet the local needs of the residents of East Providence.	Various City Departments Economic Development Commission	On-going
ED - 4	Investigate the potential of developing business incubator space within unutilized or underutilized space as a means of promoting business startups in East Providence.	Planning Department	On-going (Short and Intermediate Term)
ED - 5	Continue to offer incentives for commercial growth and expansion within the City, including commercial loans, façade improvement grants, tax stabilization and Enterprise Zone tax credits to existing businesses	Planning Department	On-going

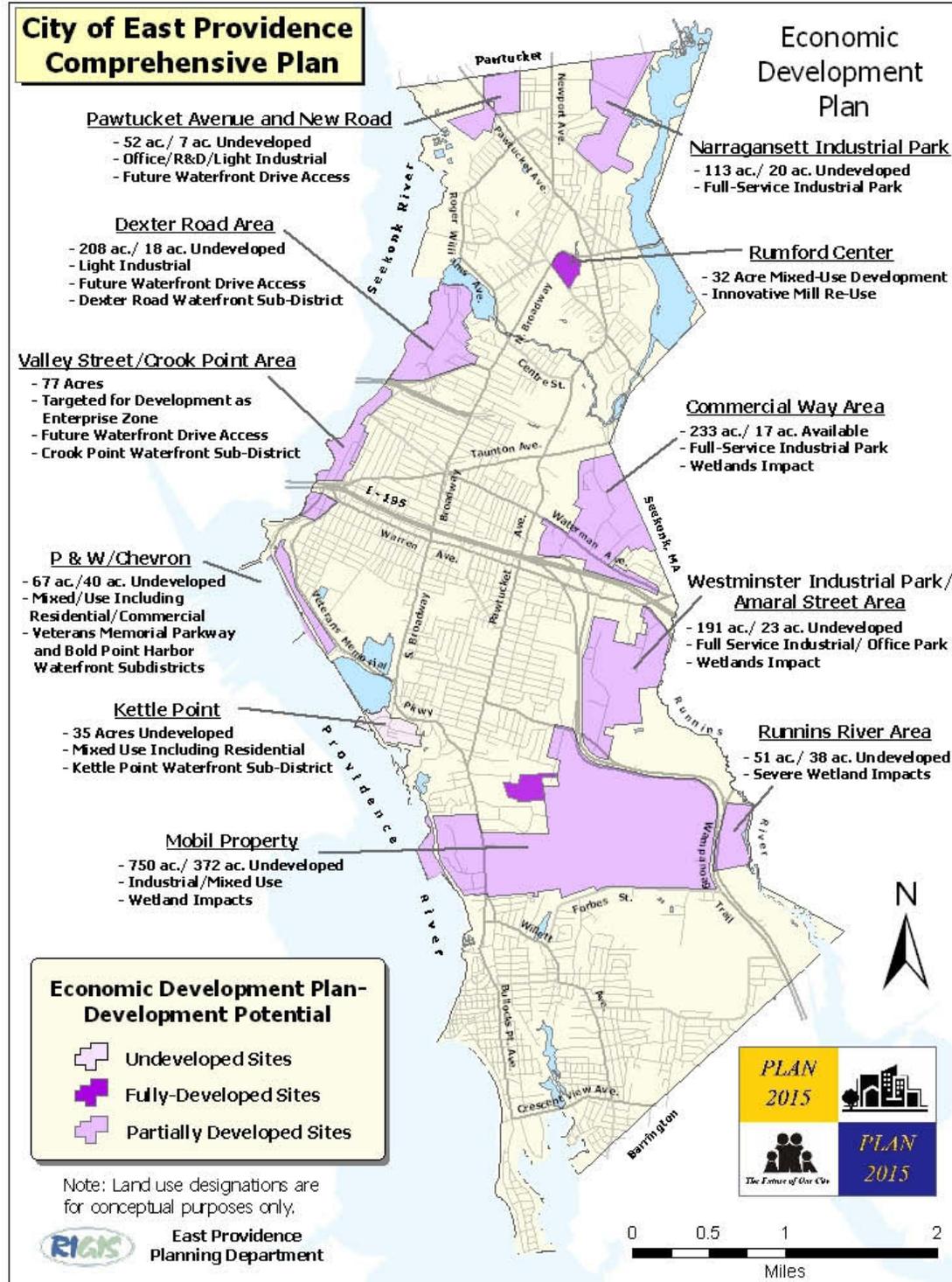
	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible for Implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
ED - 6	Establish and maintain, for an appropriate period of time, a Waterfront Special Development District Commission as prescribed under State Law to facilitate the redevelopment of important large vacant commercial and industrial properties along the City of East Providence waterfront. The Commission should administer the City's Waterfront Special Development District Plan and implement the goals and objectives identified within this plan utilizing the economic development tools available to them including Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Special Assessment Districts, Bonding and their powers of eminent domain if necessary.	Waterfront District Commission  Waterfront District Executive Director	Underway and On-going
ED - 7	Encourage the reclamation of brownfield properties in the City by environmental remediation and encourage use of the "built environment" by working with property owners and developers of these types of property in East Providence. Properties within the sub-districts identified in the City's Waterfront Special Development District Plan are examples of the areas of the City that are appropriate targets for this effort.	Waterfront District Commission  Planning Department  RIDEM	On-going
ED - 8	Utilize appropriate financing mechanisms to fund revitalization efforts for significant economic development parcels in the City. Funding mechanisms may include federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) and Housing and Urban Development Section 108 funding as examples of funds that may be utilized in these efforts.	Planning Department  Community Development	Intermediate

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible for Implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
ED - 9	Work with appropriate State, regional and local agencies to promote the overall quality of life and community image of East Providence in terms of quality housing opportunities, a skilled employment base, excellent transportation access and a full range of community facilities and services.	Chamber of Commerce Planning Department	On-going
ED - 10	Establish contacts and develop strong working relationships potential joint public/private partnerships with the owners of major vacant or underutilized parcels to encourage appropriate economic development.	Community Development Planning Department	On-going
ED - 11	Modify City development regulations, as appropriate, to encourage the development or redevelopment of various underutilized parcels (e.g., waterfront, Central City).	Planning Department Community Development Waterfront Commission	Completed/Underway On-going
ED - 12	Balance economic development objectives with environmental and historical sensitivity and the need to buffer adjacent land uses carefully	Planning Department	On-going
ED -13	Continue to administer the City's Tax Stabilization program for new development in the City.	Planning Department Assessor's Office	Underway On-going
ED -14	Work closely with the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation, (RIEDC) to identify target industries that match the assets of East Providence, and develop a comprehensive approach to marketing these industry types.	RIEDC Planning Department	Underway

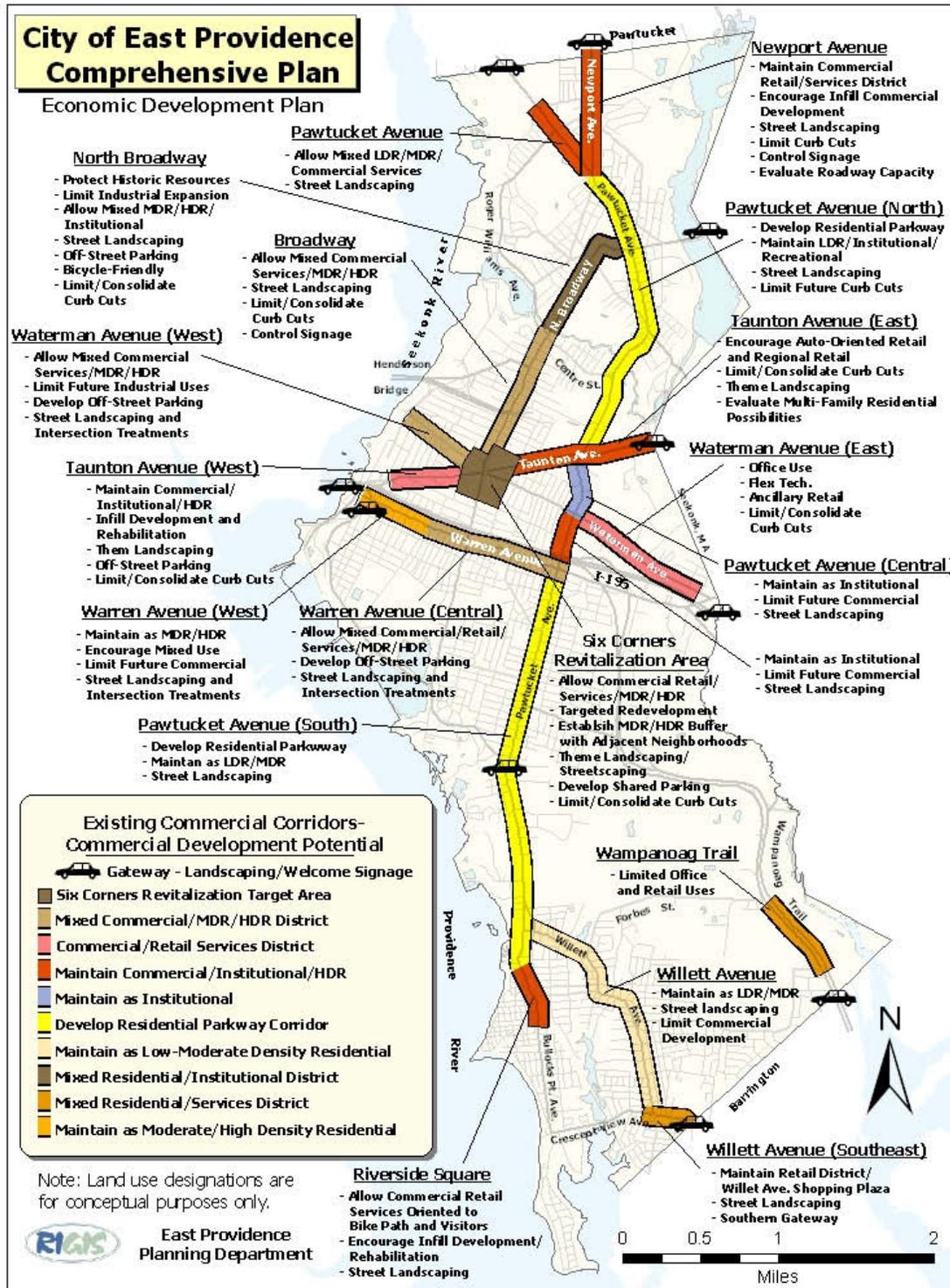
	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible for Implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
ED -15	Update, as appropriate, the City's economic development marketing materials and dedicate staff time to working with the RIEDC, the Economic Development Commission, the Chamber of Commerce, and others to aggressively market the economic development potential of East Providence.	Planning Department Chamber of Commerce	(Short Term) 2011
ED -16	Conduct appropriate studies to examine the potential needs and opportunities to develop regional performing arts and/or recreational attractions in East Providence.	Planning Department Recreation Department	2011-2012
ED -17	Promote the use of local minority and women owned businesses (MBE and WBE) on City improvement projects and programs and encourage job training programs for those businesses.	Various City Departments	On-going
ED -18	Provide a high quality infrastructure system including public sewer and water facilities, roadway networks and a quality public safety structure that supports and fosters continued economic growth.	Public Works Department	On-going, & Annual CIP
ED -19	Clearly refine and publicize the role of the City's Economic Development Commission in marketing and securing new high quality economic development within the City.	Economic Development Commission Planning Department	Short Term
ED -20	Define as the primary responsibility of the Economic Development Commission that of implementing the Economic Development Plan Element of the East Providence Comprehensive Plan.	Economic Development Commission Planning Department	On-going
ED -21	Foster good communications and a close working relationship with the East Providence Chamber of Commerce to market economic development and support existing businesses in the City.	Chamber of Commerce Various City Departments	On-going

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible for Implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
ED -22	Facilitate the expeditious reviews and approvals of rezoning and subdivision and land development applications for new and revitalized economic development projects which are consistent with other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.	Planning Board Planning Department Public Works Department Various city Departments	On-going
ED -23	Maintain existing industrial and commercially zoned districts in support of economic investment and expansion. Discourage the rezoning of industrial and commercially zoned properties to residential zones.	Planning Department	On-going
ED -24	Encourage developers to seek tax increment financing (TIF) for the future infrastructure needs of the City's waterfront as identified in the City of East Providence Special Development District Tax Increment Financing plan	Waterfront Commission	On-going, 2010- 2011 Project Specific
ED -25	Promote a commercial base that allows for workers to walk or to use intermodal transportation options to travel to and from their workplace.	RIPTA RIDOT Department of Planning	On-going
ED -26	Strengthen the amenities that make East Providence attractive to business investment, including a good education system, affordable housing and strong municipal services.	Various city Departments and Agencies	On-going, & Annual CIP
ED -27	Encourage business expansion that complement those businesses already existing in East Providence, particularly along the City retail commercial corridors.	Planning Department	On-going
ED -28	Encourage the reuse and rehabilitation of old industrial buildings and sites, either by incentives to the private sector or action by the Redevelopment Authority using powers authorized by State Law.	Planning Department Community Development	On-going (Short Term)

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible for Implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
ED -29	Buffer commercial and industrial activities from adjoining uses where possible to alleviate incompatibilities	Planning Board Planning department	On-going
ED -30	Complete a detailed citywide parking analysis to determine if parking needs in the commercial corridors in the City are being met.	Public Works Department Planning Department	(Intermediate) 2012
ED -31	Promote the establishment and expansion of Sustainable and Green Technology Businesses in the City	Various Departments and Agencies	On-going
ED -32	Provide targeted financial assistance to green business and existing businesses seeking to become more sustainable through the use of CDBG funds, City Commercial Loan Program and the Waterfront District Green Business Initiative.	Planning Department Community Development Waterfront Commission	Underway  On-going
ED -33	Work with RIEDC to identify potential green industries and assist in site location and permitting.	Planning Department	On-going (Short Term)
ED -34	Work with local educational institutes such as New England Institute of Technology, MotoRing Technical Training and the East Providence School Department to provide training opportunities for residents in green jobs.	Planning Department	Short Term



Map 9. Economic Development Plan - Development Potential



Map 10. Existing Commercial Corridors - Commercial Development Potential

## **Community Services and Facilities Element**

## **Vision Statement**

Maintain the existing high quality and cost effective municipal services and public utilities, while increasing the efficiency and performance of selected economic, social, and educational services of the City.

## **Recent Infrastructure Improvements**

The Public Works Department provides services to East Providence residents in the areas of street and sidewalk maintenance, refuse and recycling collection, engineering, water distribution, wastewater treatment, and animal control. In addition, the Department is responsible for the maintenance of all City owned buildings, vehicles, and equipment. The Department of Public Works consists of nine divisions, including Engineering, Building Inspection, Central Garage, Highway, Public Buildings, Refuse and Recycling, Water Utilities, Water Pollution Control, and Animal Control. The following Divisions have implemented infrastructure improvement projects from 2003 to the present.

### *Engineering Division*

The Engineering Division reviews plans and contracts for City public works projects, as well as private development projects. This Division also develops plans, specifications, and contract documents in house for City projects such as water and sewer improvements, storm drain and flood abatement projects, and roadway improvements. The Engineering Division provides engineering services to the public works divisions and other City Departments. It is responsible for maintaining and updating utility mapping, assessor's maps, and serves as the central source of information to residents and business on these subjects.

Since 2003, a number of capital projects have been undertaken by Engineering Division. The vast majority of these projects have been financed by bond issues approved by City voters in 1998, 1999 and 2002 and/or Community Development Block Grant Funds. Major projects include City-Wide Roadway Improvements, Watchemoket Cove Pump Station Force Main Improvements, Oak Avenue Sewer Improvements, Boyden Boulevard Sewer Improvements, and Crescent View Avenue Culvert Improvements.

With the assistance of an engineering consultant, the Engineering Division prepared the City's Municipal Stormwater Management Plan, which was approved by the RIDEM. This plan identifies the various sources of stormwater into the system and makes comprehensive recommendations on reducing these flows and making qualitative improvements to reduce or eliminate sources which have an actual or potential negative environmental impact. Engineering Division staff are responsible for overseeing and implementing the stormwater plan, preparing annual reports, and updating as necessary.

The City engaged the services of a private consultant to assess and recommend strategies for addressing drainage problems arising from the Southeast Drainage District. In 2005, the first project to address these drainage problems was completed at the intersection of Brook Avenue and Rounds Avenue to eliminate flooding on private properties. Subsequent work included the development of plans and specifications for

further drainage improvements on nearby streets. Construction for these improvements requires future funding.

#### *Water Pollution Control*

The Bucklin Point (NBC) and the East Providence Wastewater facilities continue to serve the sewage disposal needs for the City of East Providence. Bucklin Point, owned and operated by the Narragansett Bay Commission, also continues to serve the cities and towns of Pawtucket, Central Falls, Cumberland, Lincoln and a small section of North Smithfield. The East Providence Wastewater Facility owned and operated by the City, is located at Pomham Terrace in the Riverside section of the City, serves 2/3 of the City and the Town of Barrington. This Division is also responsible for the operation and maintenance of 22 wastewater pumping stations located throughout the City.

The City, with the assistance of a technical consultant, completed a comprehensive Wastewater Facility Assessment and Facility Plan in 2007/2008. The purpose of this planning document was to develop a 20 year Capital Improvement Plan for the City's Wastewater Treatment and Collection Facilities. Further, the City was issued updated regulatory requirements for Nitrogen Removal to improve water quality conditions in Narragansett Bay. In 2009, the City issued a Design, Build, Operate (DBO) Request for Proposals for the implementation of the major capital improvement projects and operation of the plant and collection system.

#### *Water Utilities*

This public works division is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the hundreds of miles of underground water and sewer pipelines that serve the residents and businesses of the City. On the sewer collection piping side of the operation, a key component is the implementation of a comprehensive Infiltration and Inflow project to reduce the volume of water into the City's wastewater collection system. This ongoing effort which was started back in 1998 has produced noticeable decrease in the level of non-wastewater flow through the system, leading to a reduction in the number of sewage overflows.

For the water distribution system, the City completed its "*Infrastructure Replacement Plan*", 5 year update, in accordance with the requirement of the RI Department of Health. This plan is an assessment of the City's water distribution system and makes recommendations on needed capital repairs and/or improvements. Further, a Water Quality Study was implemented in 2005 to assess the needs of the system and recommend improvements in order for the City's system to meet current as well as new water quality standards.

A significant improvement to the water system was the installation of radio read water meters for all water accounts. This work was completed in 2005, with funding assistance from the State Revolving Loan Fund. The radio system allows the staff to read nearly 15,000 accounts in just a few hours.

In 2008/2009, with the assistance of the Engineering Division, plans and specification were developed for the first phase of a comprehensive cleaning and lining water main project. The purpose of this project is to clean and line aging water main infrastructure to improve water quality. The first phase is scheduled to take place in the center of the City,

where some water mains are dated to be over 100 years old. A second phase of this work is planned within the Riverside section of the City.

#### *Highway Division*

The Highway Division is responsible for the maintenance of 160 miles of City streets. Maintenance work includes pothole and trench patching, snow plowing, and street sweeping. Division staff is instrumental in carrying out the maintenance requirements of the City's Stormwater Management Plan as work includes cleaning and maintaining catch basins, manholes, and drain pipes. This work, along with regular street sweeping, removes debris that otherwise may flow into rivers, streams, and Narragansett Bay. Further duties include the repair and replacement of traffic signals, signs, and pavement markings.

#### *Public Buildings Division*

The Public Buildings Division is responsible for maintenance of all City owned buildings including City Hall, the Public Works complex, the recreation center, police station, animal shelter, senior center complex, and the four libraries. The Division also provides assistance when requested to the Fire Department for the maintenance of the four fire stations. This Division assisted in the construction management of the recent addition to the Senior Center, and the construction of the new Riverside Library.

#### *Refuse/Recycling Division*

The Refuse/Recycling Division is responsible for the following collection programs: rubbish and recycling (paper, plastics, glass, metal), yard waste, and household appliances. Rubbish and recycling items are picked up by a contractor and disposed of at the State operated Resource Recovery Corporation in Johnston, RI. In 2009 the City collected 26,751 tons of municipal solid waste from 16,100 households (one-family through four-family), with 14,595 tons of that being refuse tons. The City operates and manages its own, successful compost site for the disposal of yard waste. Leaf and yard waste is composted into a rich soil material to be used by residents and the City's Parks Department. The City also operates a daily weekday drop off recycling area at the public works complex at 60 Commercial Way. This program goes beyond that required by DEM, and residents are able to drop off used motor oil, car batteries, discarded electronic equipment such as computers, monitors, and televisions. Through this Division's efforts and providing educational materials to residents, the City has been able to meet the State's mandated recycling goal of thirty-five percent (35%) based on the RIDEM mandatory recyclable materials list, and is striving to meet the fifty-percent diversion rate. The City has received grants and revenue shares from the Resource Recovery Corporation for meeting this objective. However, in an effort to further increase the City's recycling rate, in 2008, this Division instituted a recycling program called "No Bins-No Barrels" which required all residents to place recycling bins at the curb with their household rubbish to ensure pickup. This program dramatically increased the "blue and green bin" recycling rate from 20% to approximately 25% in a short period of time, and a total recycling DEM diversion rate of 45.4% with all the current City recycling and diversion programs in place. The City will re-visit the possibility of instituting a SMART (Save Money and Reduce Trash) solid waste program in 2011. This program is very similar to Pay-As-You-Throw but with a more politically palatable acronym.

The City's Comprehensive Plan supports the primary goal of the State Guide Plan Element 171 which states: " Environmentally sound management of solid waste that protects and preserves the environment and public resources, maximizes the useful life of the Central Landfill, and protects the convenience, health, comfort, safety, and welfare of the people of the state at reasonable cost including, in order of preference, 1) waste prevention, 2) source separation and recycling, and 3) processing and disposal."

### *Central Garage Division*

The Central Garage Division is responsible for the repair and maintenance of the City's fleet, including all police vehicles, fire apparatus, dump trucks, snow removal vehicles, and public works heavy equipment. In recent years, the City has improved conditions within the Central Garage Facility including new vehicle lifts, new exhaust system, and improved lighting and interior painting.

### **Capital Improvements**

The City's Ordinance requires a 5-year capital budget to be made part of the City's annual budget to be adopted by the City Council. On November 17, 2009, the City Council adopted the 2009-2015 Capital Budget, which assigned the highest priority to the following three projects:

- Removal and replacement of an aging in-ground 20,000 gallon fuel tank located at the City's garage facility. The tank must be removed from service by December 2012 to avoid RIDEM fines since the tank poses a threat of groundwater contamination;
- Improvements to Silver Spring School Playground. The basketball courts need complete rehabilitation and playground equipment has not been updated in nearly 20 years. Seeding and irrigation are needed for the playing field and the surface material of the playground needs to be updated to be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant; and
- Funds in the amount of \$15,000 to be used as a grant match or as start-up funding for improvements to Tranquility Place at Jones Pond. The project involves the beautification and enhancement of a city-owned property south of the Pierce Field Athletic Complex for passive recreational purposes.

### **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)**

Development of the City's waterfront requires a number of infrastructure improvements that include road construction, utilities, acquisition of private/public land, and creation of public areas. In August 2008, the City Council adopted *the City of East Providence Special Development District Tax Increment Financing plan* to meet the future infrastructure needs of the waterfront sub-districts, see objective 1.7, and this is included as Appendix B.

### **Renewable Energy**

The City is actively investigating the use of renewable sources of energy and is studying options to achieve greater energy efficiency. A City Energy Committee has been formed to aid in this effort and pursue outside funding for projects that will realize long-term

energy savings for the City. See objective 2.11 of the Community Sustainability Element, which proposes to develop a comprehensive energy plan for all city buildings.

#### Public Schools

There are twelve schools within the East Providence Public School District, as follows: Meadowcrest Early Childhood Center, Agnes B. Hennessey School, Alice M. Waddington School, Emma G. Whiteknact School, James R.D. Oldham School, Kent Heights School, Myron J. Francis School, Silver Spring School, Edward R. Martin Middle School, Riverside Middle School, and the East Providence High School (and Vocational and Technical School). These schools are maintained by the East Providence School Department. The East Providence School Department Strategic Plan is located at Appendix C.

### **Community Services and Facilities Goals and Objectives**

The following Goals and Objectives list is a compilation of the 1994 Plan and 2004 and 2010 Plan Updates.

#### **Goal 1.0: Maintain high quality and cost effectiveness of municipal services and public utilities in East Providence.**

Objective 1.1: Evaluate and renegotiate, if possible, the sewage treatment agreement between the City of East Providence and the Town of Barrington.

Objective 1.2: Study and analyze the present methods and procedures for the treatment of sewage and develop a long-term recommended system of improvements, as is appropriate.

Objective 1.3: Continue upgrades to the City's stormwater collection system to reduce the non-point source pollution of the Providence and Seekonk Rivers.

Objective 1.4: Reduce the City's solid waste stream and provide for a cost effective solid waste disposal, and continue to meet the State of Rhode Island's 35% recycling rate and strive for a 50% diversion rate.

Objective 1.5: Continue the City's yard waste composting program and consider expanding into a regional solid waste and yard waste program.

Objective 1.6: Continue to identify and map the location of all City infrastructure on a GIS based mapping system.

Objective 1.7: Encourage developers to seek tax increment financing (TIF) for the future infrastructure needs of the City's waterfront as identified in the City of East Providence Special Development District Tax Increment Financing plan.

#### **Goal 2.0: Expand and improve the delivery of economic, social and educational services of the City**

Objective 2.1: Continue to study the community's needs for neighborhood facilities for senior citizen and youth services.

Objective 2.2: Adopt development incentives for providing employer-based child care facilities as part of the City’s Development Plan Review.

Objective 2.3: Encourage and expand educational partnerships between local businesses and the School Department.

Objective 2.4: Encourage and assist in coordination between public and private non-profit providers of social services.

**Table 4. Community Services Implementation Strategies**

In reading the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Strategies throughout the Plan Elements many of the timeframes are listed as “On-going”, meaning either that specific projects are underway and/or that Planning Department staff are actively initiating and assessing the availability of opportunities to further implementation of the Plan and its Action Items. The short, intermediate and long-term timeframes assigned to Action Items are generalized and again, there may be current and on-going efforts that will continue into intermediate and long-term time periods. Generally, the phrase “Short Term” should be interpreted as currently underway or expected to be commenced in the year 2011. Generally, the phrase “Intermediate Term” should be interpreted as an Action Item that may be commenced in 2011-2013 and will take longer to implement, and/or may rely on data and financing not currently available. Generally, the phrase “Long Term” refers to a project that may be currently underway but that is of a larger scope that may take many years to initiate and/or complete and is dependent upon considerable financing, engineering, studies and/or permits to accomplish, and is likely to take beyond 2015 to fully implement.

Please note that where the State of Rhode Island, or a specific State Agency is listed as a party in the Implementation Strategies tables under the table heading “Responsible for Implementation” that this is not an obligation of any particular agency but is listed for informational purposes and is a recognition by the City that a collaboration between the City and the State is desirable and/or necessary for implementation of a particular project.

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible for Implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
CSF - 1	Identify and map the location of all City infrastructure on a GIS based mapping system (ongoing)	Public Works Director, City Engineer	On-going
CSF - 2	Install stormwater drainage in the Southeast Drainage District	Public Works/City Engineer	On-going
CSF - 3	Implement Stormwater Control Strategies and Regular Maintenance Activities in accordance with Stormwater Management Plan	Public Works/City Engineer/Highway	On-going

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible for Implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
CSF - 4	Implement improvements at the East Providence Wastewater Facility to meet new nitrogen removal requirements and improve processes.	Public Works Director, Water Pollution Control	On-going
CSF - 5	Implement improvements at Watchemoket Pumping Station, along with new force main and interceptor to eliminate sewage overflows.	Public Works Director, Water Pollution Control	On-going; Short-term
CSF - 6	Develop a Pavement Management Program for Roadway Improvements	Public Works Director/Engineering /Highway	On-going; short-term
CSF - 7	Investigate and Implement Energy Efficiency Programs or Retrofits for Municipal Buildings	Public Works/Public Buildings, City Energy Committee	On-going
CSF - 8	Implement upgrades to the Animal Control Shelter	Animal Control/Public Buildings	On-going; short-term
CSF - 9	Implement a regular maintenance schedule for sewage collection system for continued reduction in infiltration and inflow	Public Works Director; Water Pollution Control, Water Utilities	On-going; WWTF Privatized (United Water)
CSF -10	Implement recommendations stated in the "Infrastructure Replacement Plan"	Public Works Director; Water Utilities, Engineering	On-going
CSF -11	Evaluate recommendations within the Water Quality Study and implement needed improvements	Public Works Director, Water Utilities, Engineering	On-going
CSF -12	Implement Water Infrastructure Rehabilitation Plan, specifically Repair and Replacement of aging water infrastructure or Cleaning and Lining Projects where practicable	Public Works Director, Water Utilities, Engineering	On-going; short and intermediate term
CSF -13	Continue to increase recycling and diversion rates to exceed State goals of 35% recycling and 50% diversion, and re-visit volume-based disposal programs	Public Works Director, Recycling Coordinator	On-going; Intermediate 2011-2012

## **Housing Element**

**Vision Statement**

Ensure a diversity of housing that provides residents with a range of decent, safe, and affordable choices while maintaining the existing housing stock and increasing housing opportunities for the low to moderate income, senior citizens, and those with special needs.

**Recent Housing Trends**

The City of East Providence offers a range of housing choices from single-family dwellings located in traditional residential neighborhoods to multi-family dwellings located in or near commercial corridors. Recent large-scale residential developments being the Rumford Center, Rumford Gardens, and Ross Commons have increased the diversity of housing choices by increasing the supply of condominiums, rental units, and homeownership opportunities. As recent residential developments have increased the diversity of housing choices, the City’s population and number of housing units has remained relatively constant for the last 20 years, see table 5. The 2000 Census reported 48,688 residents living 21,309 housing units, a decrease from 50,380 residents living in 20,808 housing units reported in 1990.

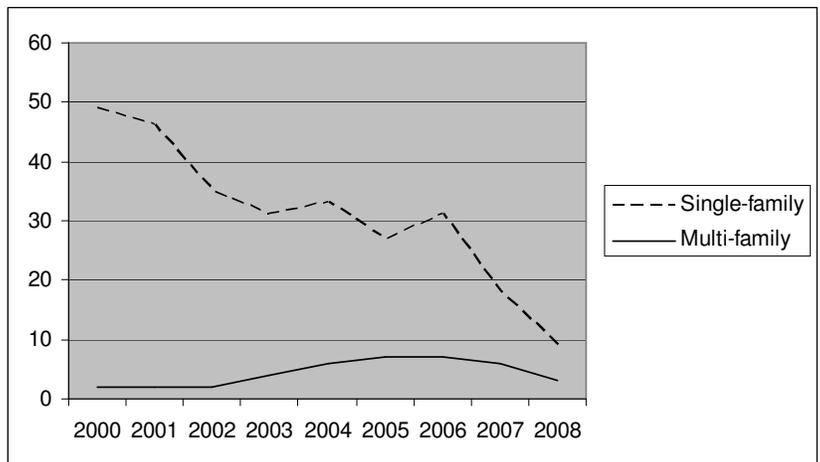


Table 5. Population and Housing Units

Year	Population	Housing Units
1990	50,380	20,808
2000	48,688	21,309

Source: 1990 and 2000 Census, summary file 1

As the population and housing units of the City has remained constant over the last 20 years, the number of single-family building permits issued by the City has decreased steadily over the last 8 years, while at the same time a minor increase was observed in the number of multi-family building permits between 2002 and 2005. It is assumed that the recent decrease in single and multi-family building permits from 2006 to the present is the result of the housing crisis that has impacted the availability of credit and decreased the market value of residential properties.



The percentage of single and multi-family dwellings has remained constant from 1990 to 2000, as well as the percentage of renter and owner occupied housing units, see tables 6 and 7. The small changes observed over time of the type of housing (i.e. single or multi-family), tenure of housing (i.e. owner or renter occupied), and vacancies reported by the decennial census suggest that the City's residential neighborhoods are stable and close to build-out capacity.

**Table 6. Housing Units by Type**

	1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Single Family	11,709	56.3%	12,036	56.5%
2-4 Units	4,763	22.9%	5,082	23.8%
5+ Units	4,065	19.5%	4,067	19.1%
Mobile home/other	271	1.3%	124	0.6%
Total	20,808		21,309	

Source: 1990 and 2000 Summary File 3

**Table 7. Housing Units by Tenure**

Year	Number of Units	Owner Occupied		Renter Occupied		Total Occupied		Vacant	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1990	20,808	12,039	60.3%	7,911	39.7%	19,950	95.9%	858	4.1%
2000	21,309	12,104	59.0%	8,426	41.0%	20,530	96.3%	779	3.7%

Source: 1990 and 2000 Summary File 3

## Foreclosures

As part of the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has been compiling the number and rate of foreclosures to assist States in the distribution of Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds. The data supplied by HUD has been useful in monitoring the number and location of foreclosed properties, as well as data obtained from the City's land evidence records. As of October 2009, the City has not experienced an alarming number or concentration of foreclosed properties as compared to the nearby cities of Providence, Pawtucket, and Central Falls. A comparison of East Providence to other Rhode Island cities located in the metropolitan area of Providence demonstrates that the City has maintained a low rate of foreclosures and the lowest number of housing units that have remained vacant for more than 90 days, see table 8.

Table 8. Estimates of Number and Rate of Foreclosures

City	Number of Foreclosures	Number of Mortgages	Rate of Foreclosures	Vacancies Reported 90 days or more
Cranston	1,115	17,800	6.3%	501
Newport	113	3,580	3.2%	783
Central Fall	237	2,029	11.7%	692
East Providence	513	8,697	5.9%	161
Pawtucket	992	12,261	8.1%	1,311
Providence	2,890	29,499	9.8%	2,547
Warwick	1,346	23,054	5.8%	391
Woonsocket	506	6,459	7.8%	1,218

Source: HUD, neighborhood stabilization program. Estimate number and rate of foreclosures for 18-month period, from 1/07 to 6/08. 'Rate of foreclosures' determined by number of foreclosures divided by number of mortgages. 'Vacancies Reported 90 days or more' is obtained by HUD from data collected by the US Postal Service to reduce delivery of bulk mail to vacant housing units.

Foreclosures as a result of the housing crisis have occurred in all sections of the City being Rumford, Central and Riverside, see table 9. The Planning Department and Community Development Division have been monitoring the number and location of foreclosed properties since early 2008. It has not been observed in any section of the City a large number or a concentration of foreclosed properties in comparison to other nearby communities. Site inspections of properties reported as foreclosed from the City's land evidence record revealed that the vast majority of the properties are being maintained with no evidence of neglect and real estate signs advertising the properties were present at almost all of the sites. The Planning Department and Community Development Division will continue to monitor the number and location of foreclosed properties, as well as conduct periodic site visits of foreclosed properties as stated in objective 3.2 of the housing element.

Table 9. Estimates of Number and Rate of Foreclosures

Census Tract	Area of City	Number of Foreclosures	Number of Mortgages	Rate of Foreclosures
101.01	Rumford	48	862	5.6 %
101.02	Rumford	25	645	3.9 %
102	Central	77	1,026	7.5 %
103	Central	53	753	7.0 %
104	Central	52	870	6.0 %
105.01	Central	48	800	6.0 %
105.02	Riverside	36	700	5.1 %
106	Riverside	97	1,441	6.7 %
107.01	Riverside	24	525	4.6 %
107.02	Riverside	53	1,077	4.9 %

Source: HUD, neighborhood stabilization program. Estimate number and rate of foreclosures for 18-month period, from 1/07 to 6/08. Rate of foreclosures determined by number of foreclosures divided by number of mortgages.

### Affordable Housing

The State of Rhode Island General Law, Chapter 45-53, "Rhode Island Low and Moderate Income Housing Act" assumes a shortage of affordable housing throughout Rhode Island and states that it is imperative for all 39 municipalities to take immediate action. The law requires all 39 municipalities to provide housing opportunities for low and moderate income individuals and families and further, that an equal consideration be given regarding retrofitting existing dwellings and assimilating low and moderate income housing into existing neighborhoods.

General Law 45-53-3(i), "Definitions" states that "low or moderate income housing" is defined as exists which is:

- (A) In the case of an urban city or town which has at least 5,000 occupied rental units and the units, as reported in the latest decennial census of the city or town, comprise twenty-five percent (25%) or more of the housing units, is in excess of fifteen percent (15%) of the total occupied rental units; or
- (B) In the case of all other cities or towns, is in excess of ten percent (10%) of the housing units reported in the census.”

The City meets the two standards stated in General Law 45-53-3(i), “Definitions”. In March 2009, Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation (RIHMFC) reported 2,322 low and moderate income housing units for the City of East Providence. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, a total of 21,236 housing units are located in the City and 8,431 units are classified as renter-occupied housing units, see table 10. Therefore, 39.7% of the total housing units are renter-occupied (an excess of the required 25% of General Law 45-53-3(i)(A)) and most important, 27.5% of the renter-occupied housing units are low and moderate housing units, an excess of the required 15%.

**Table 10. Calculation of 15% of the Renter-Occupied Units as Affordable**

	Number	Percent	
Total Number of Housing Units	21,236	100.00%	
Number of Occupied-Owner	12,096	56.95%	
Number of Occupied-Rental	8,431	39.70%	(exceeds 25% of total number of housing units)
Number of Affordable Units <sup>1</sup>	2,322	27.50%	(exceeds 15% of number of affordable units)

Source: U.S. Census Data, 2000 Summary File 2 (SF2) and RIHMFC, March 2009

In regards to the second definition requiring an excess of 10% of the housing units reported in the census, the 2,322 low and moderate income housing units reported by RIHMFC in March 2009 and the 21,236 housing units reported in the 2000 U.S. Census, results in 10.93% of the total number of housing units classified as affordable, an excess of the required 10% stated in General Law 45-53-3(i)(B), see table 11.

**Table 11. Calculation of 10% of Housing Units as Affordable**

	Number	Percent	
Total Number of Housing Units	21,236	100.00%	
Number of Affordable Units	2,322	10.93%	(excess of 10% of affordable units)

Source: RIHMFC, March 2009

### Accessory Family Dwelling Units for Family Members with Disabilities

In July 2010, the East Providence City Council adopted an ordinance authorizing the installation of accessory family dwelling units in owner-occupied, single-family houses permitted as a reasonable accommodation *only* for a family member(s) with disabilities, which was allowed by the adoption of Rhode Island General Laws 45-24-37. The proposed amendments were designed to place standards and guidelines on such uses and to provide a process by which they would be reviewed for permitting and open for inspection by the City annually. The definitions relating to disability, major life activities, and persons with disabilities were taken from Rhode Island State Law. A potential issue in allowing temporary single-family dwelling units for a person or persons of disability is to do so without the privilege becoming abused by those not providing care for a

disabled family member but providing a rental unit for profit which may result in the unintended alteration of single-family neighborhood to a two-family neighborhood when not originally envisioned as such or when a neighborhood is incapable of sustaining such illegal use, e.g. infrastructure incapacity, particularly if it is widespread. Therefore, enforcement of this ordinance is essential.

## **Housing Goals and Objectives**

The following Goals and Objectives are a compilation of the 1994 Plan and 2004 and 2010 Plan Updates.

### **Goal 1.0: Ensure that a diversity of housing exists in the city providing residents with a range of decent, safe, and affordable choices.**

Objective 1.1 Continue to coordinate with federal, state, local, and non-profit housing organizations to encourage low to moderate income housing opportunities for the elderly, families, and persons with special needs.

Objective 1.2: Continue the East Providence Lead Safe Program.

Objective 1.3: Review existing Land Use 2010 designation to compare with neighborhood densities identified through City's GIS parcel data.

Objective 1.4: Encourage the use of recent advances in construction materials and engineering techniques for the planning, design, and construction within the Waterfront Districts, defined in Element nine of the East Providence Comprehensive Plan, "East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Plan".

Objective 1.5: Coordinate efforts with Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation to target homeownership opportunities for residents and participation of the variety of programs offered by RIHMFC is assist first-time homebuyers.

Objective 1.6: Seek the assistance from a non-profit affordable housing developers, working under a federal funded technical assistance grant to conduct feasibility studies to identify appropriate sites for housing opportunities.

Objective 1.7: Continue to monitor the nightly occupancy rate of the East Providence Homeless Shelter.

### **Goal 2.0: Increase the supply of affordable housing for the various household income groups in the City.**

Objective 2.1: Continue to coordinate with non-profit affordable housing developers, state and federal agencies, and the East Providence Housing Authority for the development of additional affordable housing units.

Objective 2.2: Encourage and provide incentives to developers to increase number of affordable housing units.

Objective 2.3: Research the applicability of an accessory apartment ordinance.

Objective 2.4: Continue property tax exemptions for the elderly and research opportunities for other special needs households.

Objective 2.5: Ensure State “fair share” responsibilities are enforced in neighboring communities.

Objective 2.6: Identify City owned land that is suitable for affordable housing production.

**Goal 3.0: Maintain and preserve the existing housing stock**

Objective 3.1: Continue to coordinate efforts among the City’s Community Development Department’s rehabilitation program.

Objective 3.2: Obtain future funding from State and Federal sources including HUD, HOME, and CDBG funding to subsidize the cost of lead abatement in order to increase the number of participants of the City’s rehabilitation program.

Objective 3.3: Continue to monitor and conduct periodic site visits of foreclosed properties.

**Goal 4.0: Preserve the quality of existing residential neighborhoods while accommodating growth.**

Objective 4.1: Assist the East Providence Historic District Commission in identifying areas of the City or individual sites that are appropriate to be designated as historic districts in order to be eligible for state and federal tax credits to subsidize the cost of renovations to the exterior of structures.

Objective 4.2: Encourage adaptive reuse of existing structures for residential purposes, as appropriate, in order to preserve the City’s existing fabric.

Objective 4.3: Coordinate seminars with Rhode Island Builders Association, CRMC and FEMA for architects, engineers, contractors, developers, and City officials of the planning, designing, construction, and maintenance of residential buildings located in coastal areas.

Objective 4.4: Make available information to industries, businesses, business associations, and Chamber of Commerce, developers, contractors, and homeowners of risks of building or expanding facilities located on flood plains.

**GOAL 5.0 Increase the level of home ownership in the City.**

Objective 5.1 Coordinate with local not-for-profit organizations, State and Federal agencies and resources, and the East Providence Housing Authority to develop programs and a network of resources for home ownership.

Objective 5.2 Provide incentives to developers to reduce the costs of housing development where long term home ownership affordability is assured.

**GOAL 6.0 Ensure a balance between housing development and the environment, including open space, recreational, and economic development opportunities.**

Objective 6.1 Continue to protect against adverse impacts of residential development on environmentally sensitive areas by utilizing development standards and investigate regulating smaller scale developments.

Objective 6.2 Follow the East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Plan for mixed use developments in the waterfront districts.

**Table 12. Housing Implementation Strategies**

In reading the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Strategies throughout the Plan Elements many of the timeframes are listed as “On-going”, meaning either that specific projects are underway and/or that Planning Department staff are actively initiating and assessing the availability of opportunities to further implementation of the Plan and its Action Items. The short, intermediate and long-term timeframes assigned to Action Items are generalized and again, there may be current and on-going efforts that will continue into intermediate and long-term time periods. Generally, the phrase “Short Term” should be interpreted as currently underway or expected to be commenced in the year 2011. Generally, the phrase “Intermediate Term” should be interpreted as an Action Item that may be commenced in 2011-2013 and will take longer to implement, and/or may rely on data and financing not currently available. Generally, the phrase “Long Term” refers to a project that may be currently underway but that is of a larger scope that may take many years to initiate and/or complete and is dependent upon considerable financing, engineering, studies and/or permits to accomplish, and is likely to take beyond 2015 to fully implement.

Please note that where the State of Rhode Island, or a specific State Agency is listed as a party in the Implementation Strategies tables under the table heading “Responsible for Implementation” that this is not an obligation of any particular agency but a recognition by the City that a collaboration between the City and the State is desirable and/or necessary for implementation of a particular project.

Action		Responsible for Implementation	Implementation Timeframe
H – 1	Expand the Minimum Housing Code Enforcement	Public Works Department	2011-2012
H – 2	Continue Municipal Court	City Solicitor	On-going

<b>Action</b>		<b>Responsible for Implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
H – 3	Continue City Rental Rehab Loan Program	Planning Department, Community Development Division (CD)	On-going
H – 4	Study the need for an accessory dwelling unit ordinance	Planning Department, CD	2011-2012
H – 5	Adopt ordinance for City participation in historic rehab real estate tax credit	Planning Department, HDC	2011-2012
H – 6	Identify areas of the City appropriate for designation as a Local Historic District	Planning Department, HDC	Completed in part, & on-going
H – 7	Amend Subdivision Ordinance waiver criteria	Planning Department	Completed in part & on-going
H – 8	Review Development Plan Review affordable housing density bonus criteria	Planning Department	2011-2012
H – 9	Coordinate rehab loan program with minimum housing code improvements	Planning Department, CD Division, Building Inspection	On-going
H – 10	Continue to review disposition of surplus City Property	Planning Department	On-going
H - 11	Seek the assistance of affordable housing developers, state and federal agencies, and the East Providence Housing Authority for the development of additional affordable housing units.	Planning Department, CD Division	On-going
H - 12	Commit staff resources to plan for preservation of expiring use properties	Planning Department, CD Division	2011
H – 13	Continue to research inclusionary zoning and applicability to East Providence	Planning Department, CD Division	2011-2010, on-going

<b>Action</b>		<b>Responsible for Implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
H – 14	Research possibility/ramifications of real estate tax exemption for permanently disabled	Planning Department	On-going
H – 15	Prepare development standards for critical development/redevelopment areas	Planning Department	On-going
H – 16	Monitor nightly occupancy rate of the East Providence Homeless Shelter.	Planning Department	On-going
H – 17	Create partnership with community based non-profit organization to conduct feasibility study for homeownership opportunities.	Planning Department	On-going
H – 18	Educate public about fair housing laws	Affirmative Action Officer	On-going
H – 19	Educate public about historic preservation rehab programs	Planning Department	On-going
H – 20	Support local non-profit housing groups	Planning Department	On-going
H – 21	Lobby federal government for continued housing funding	Planning Department	On-going
H – 22	Monitor state enforcement of new “fair share” laws	Planning Department	On-going
H – 23	Educate public about the health hazards of lead-based <u>paint and follow EPA’s new Lead Requirements on projects in which the City is involved and broaden awareness of the new requirements to the general public and contractors</u>	Planning Department	On-going

## **Historical and Cultural Element**

### **Vision Statement**

Protect the heritage of the City of East Providence by preserving its cultural, social, economic and architectural history; foster neighborhood pride; maintain property values; strengthen the local economy through tourism; and promote the use of historic districts for the education, pleasure and welfare of the residents of East Providence.

### **East Providence Historic District Commission**

On January 16, 2007, the East Providence City Council created by ordinance a Historic District Commission (HDC) and designated Hunt's Mills, a 44 acre parcel owned by the City's first historic district. As of May 2009, the City Council appointed seven (7) residents of the City with background experience ranging from a professional Preservation Consultant to local preservationists with a strong appreciation in historic buildings, sites, and architecture. The HDC held its first public meeting on

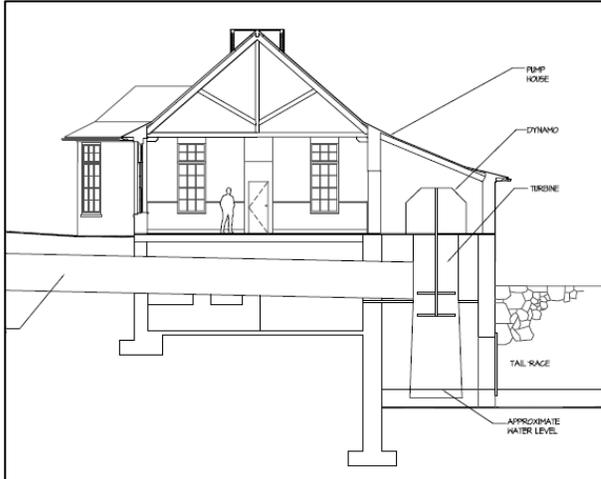


October 14, 2009. One of the first tasks to be undertaken by the recently appointed HDC is to explore areas and individual sites of the City that are appropriate to be designated as local historic districts with corresponding design guidelines. In September 2009, the City was awarded a "Preservation Is Local" grant from the RIHPHC for an architectural survey of Phillipsdale for the purpose of nomination to the National Register and local historic district designation. As of November 2009, the HDC is assisting the Planning Department in all phases of the project that include the selection of an architect, defining the study area, and host a public workshop to present the findings of the study to residents of the neighborhood and the City. It is also intended that the architectural study will be replicated, used as a template by the HDC for future studies in other areas of the City and individual sites that possess historic significance such as the colonial suburbs of Rumford, post World War II housing of Riverside, the former amusement parks of Riverside, and contemporary industrial buildings located throughout the City.

### **Hydropower Generation at Hunt's Mills and Omega Pond Dam**

Currently located at Hunt's Mills is a stone building with a unique architectural design known as the "Hunt's Mills Pump House" that has an existing dynamo, turbine, pumps, switching equipment and penstock that was used to produce electricity for the Phillipsdale and Rumford industries from the late 1930s to 1970. In 1980, the City hired the engineering firm C.E. Maguire Inc. to complete a feasibility study to consider the potential of activating the dormant hydro-electric plant at Hunt's Mills. The study was based on utilizing the head from both the horseshoe dam at Hunt's Mills and the nearby dam upstream at the Turner Reservoir dam for a total of 34 feet of net head. The 1980 feasibility study concluded that the capacity (based on 86% efficiency and the installation of 2 turbines) would produce an average yearly energy generation of 1,248,300 KWh. A

recent investigation completed in February 2009 by the engineering firm Woodard and Curran estimated an average energy generation of 744,600 KWh based upon a single modern turbine using a more efficient generator. In addition, a U.S. Hydropower Resource Assessment report dated July 1995 identified the Turner Reservoir dam as a potential resource for hydropower generation and assigned an annual energy rating of 750,000 KWh.



Hunt's Mills Pump House, prepared by DBVW Architects

The Omega Pond dam is the second site along the Ten Mile River that possesses the potential to produce hydropower. This site was selected as a potential for hydropower generation because the dam and abutting parcels to the north are owned by the City and the crest of the dam has an elevation of approximately 100 feet above sea level. The above-mentioned July 1995 U.S. Hydropower Resource Assessment report identified the Omega Pond dam as a potential resource for hydropower generation and assigned an annual

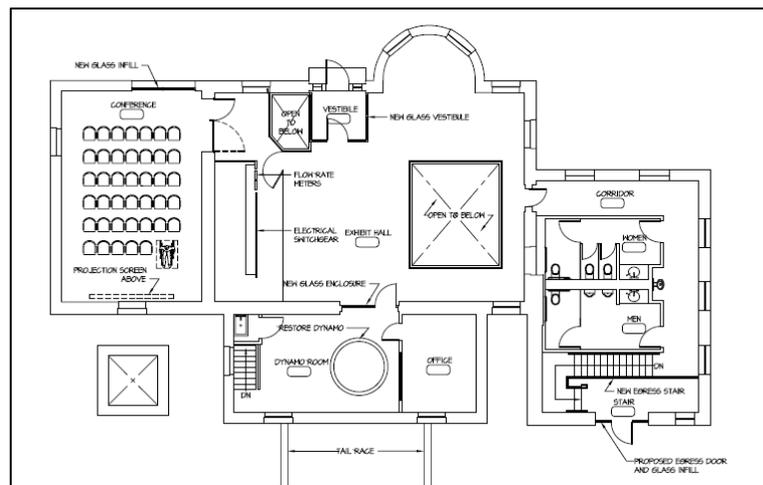
energy rating of 1,050,000 KWh. As of November 2009, the City is actively

seeking funding to update the 1980 C.E. Maguire Inc. report and explore public/private relationships for hydropower generation at Hunt's Mills and Omega Pond.

### Rehabilitation of Hunt's Mills Pump House

In November 2007, the City hired the architect firm Durkee, Brown, Viveiros, & Werenfels to conduct a feasibility study of the Hunt's Mills Pump House that concluded that the structure has the enormous potential to serve as a Sustainable Technology Education Center. It is intended that the education center will be a venue for demonstrating different forms of sustainable

technology and green building practices such as photo voltaic array panels, a green roof, a wind turbine, geo-thermal heating and cooling, and composting toilets. A Sustainable Technology Education Center at the Hunt's Mills Pump House presents a tremendous opportunity to reuse a significant historic structure and to create a resource for the future. The



Hunt's Mills Pump House, prepared by DBVW Architects

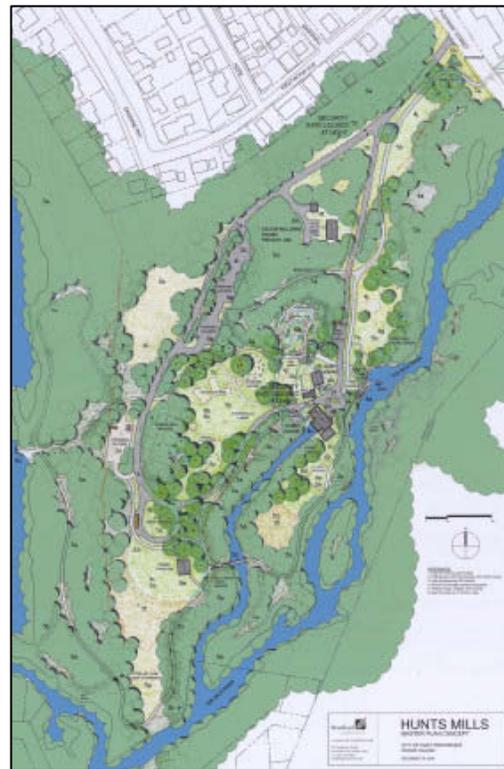
use of the structure as a place to showcase new, environmentally friendly technologies, products and practices, an education center can be created that will benefit many

sectors of the population, from school children to homeowners to researchers to serve all of Rhode Island. Individuals, businesses, and students who want to will have the opportunity to learn of sustainable renewable energy in a building that was constructed in the nineteenth century to generate hydro-electric power.

### **Hunt's Mills Master Plan**

During the summer of 2008, The City was awarded two historic preservation grants totaling \$175,000, a Rhode Island Department of Environmental Historic Park Restoration grant and a Preserve America grant. The two grants were awarded to the City to identify the previous uses of Hunt's Mills, document the historic significance, and propose improvements that will allow visitors to learn of the important role of Hunt's Mills towards the development of the City and contribution towards the industrial revolution.

The first phase of the project began in November 2008 by the City hiring the landscape architect firm 'The Bradford Associates Inc.' and a preservation consultant firm 'The Connor's Associates'. The location of historic significant structures and sites were identified being the horseshoe dam, John Hunt house, Caleb Williams cottage, pump house, gristmill, dance hall, carousel, and a trolley line. Following the initial research, a draft master plan was developed that proposed walking trails, viewing areas, terrace gardens, and interpretative signage at the location of the historic significant structures and sites, and proposed amenities to accommodate an increase use of the site such as a looped roadway, park security gates, and a formal parking area. In February 2009, a draft master plan was completed and a public workshop was held on February 26, 2009 with approximately 40 individuals in attendance that included residents from the adjacent residential neighborhood and members of the East Providence/Seekonk Rotary Club, Ten Mile River Watershed Council, Historic Society, Historic Properties Commission, and Conservation Commission.



*Hunt's Mills Master Plan, Prepared by The Bradford Associates, Inc.*

As a long-range conceptual plan, the master plan may take five to 10 years for all of the proposed improvements to be installed, especially considering the master plan's implementation is dependent upon securing state and federal funds. It is anticipated that as the usage of Hunt's Mills increases, the amenities shown on the master plan such as a designated parking area, looped roadway, and a picnic pavilion will most likely be in demand at some time in the future. As funding becomes available for future design and construction, public workshops will be held to solicit opinions from all stakeholders and adjacent residential neighborhood.

## **Historical and Cultural Goals and Objectives**

The following represents a compilation of the 1994 Plan, 2004 and 2010 Update Goals and Objectives and the compilation resulted in re-numbering.

### **Goal 1.0: Establish a mix of activities, both recreational and functional in nature that contributes to the quality of life and economic stability of the community.**

Objective 1.1: Continue to seek funding for the implementation of the Hunt's Mills master plan and the Hunt's Mills Pump House to serve as a Sustainable Technology Education Center.

Objective 1.2: Create a formal partnership with Groundwork Providence to continue the implementation of the Hunt's Mills master plan.

Objective 1.3: Coordinate efforts with the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor to promote heritage tourism.

Objective 1.4: Support the efforts of the East Providence Historic District Commission and East Providence Historical Society in nominations of properties or individual structures to the National Register of Historic Places.

Objective 1.5: Assist the Historic District Commission to establish local historic districts to ensure City and property owners participation in financial programs such as the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Loan Fund, Rhode Island Historic Homeownership Tax Credit, and federal tax benefits for the preservation of historic structures.

Objective 1.6: Encourage cultural and art organizations to locate in the City and increase awareness of existing organizations such as the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra & Music School and East Providence Community Chorus.

### **Goal: 2.0: Increase awareness of City historic resources.**

Objective 2.1: Encourage the placement of interpretative signage and historic markers at historic significant structures and sites located throughout City.

Objective 2.2: Seek funding for improvements to the Loeff Carousel that include the installation of a formal entrance sign, interpretative signage, a gift shop, landscaping, prominent pedestrian crosswalk for Bullocks Point Avenue, and a formal pedestrian/bicycle connection between the East Bay Bike Path and Loeff Carousel.

Objective 2.3: Conduct an inventory of all remaining and accessible artifacts of Crescent Park.

Objective 2.4 Develop a curriculum for use in City schools, which focuses on preservation in the East Providence community.

Objective 2.5 Continue City-wide observation of National Preservation Week, coordinating efforts by City departments and nonprofit preservation groups.

Objective 2.6 Support the marker program of the East Providence Historical Society.

Objective 2.7 Analyze the needs of public and private historic cemeteries and support preservation activities of these sites.

**GOAL 3 Regulate change in a responsive and flexible manner, to accommodate present and future needs which affect the historic fabric of the City.**

Objective 3.1 Continue to adopt Historic District Zoning to guide development within established districts to be compatible with existing historic resources.

Objective 3.2 Adopt an ordinance which elaborates on G.L. 42-45-5, requiring consultation with RIHPC before major repairs are made using City funds, to property on the State or national register.

Objective 3.3 Strengthen language in the LDP/DPR ordinances to clearly require applications to assess a project's impact on historic sites, including archeological sites, and to mitigate impacts on significant sites and the historic fabric of the community.

Objective 3.4 Continue implementation of the Hunts Mills Master Plan to guide use of this unique resource.

Objective 3.5 Encourage the use of historic easements, which give property owners tax incentives in exchange for deeding of historic easements to RIHPC.

Objective 3.6 Broaden the basis for waivers from development standards to include historic preservation as needed over time.

**Goal 4 Work to make the City and property owners aware of financial assistance available for preservation activities and expand the City's participation in financial programs.**

Objective 4.1 Disseminate information on existing financial assistance for historic renovation, through City Departments and City Libraries.

Objective 4.2 Pass an ordinance to establish City participation under G.L. Title 44, Chapter 4.1, in a local real estate tax credit program for eligible historic renovations.

Objective 4.3 Apply for Certified Local Government Status from the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission.

**Goal 5.0 Establish coordinated and accessible cultural programming for the residents of East Providence.**

Objective 5.1 Conduct a study to identify the varying cultural amenities germane to the City of East Providence and its citizens.

Objective 5.2 Conduct a study of the physical requirements to appropriately preserve and present the City’s cultural amenities and interests, and evaluate existing facilities against new facility objectives.

Objective 5.3 Establish a program for promotion of the City’s cultural aspects through the media, Chamber of Commerce, service groups and community organizations.

**Table 13. Historical and Cultural Implementation Strategies**

In reading the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Strategies throughout the Plan Elements many of the timeframes are listed as “On-going”, meaning either that specific projects are underway and/or that Planning Department staff are actively initiating and assessing the availability of opportunities to further implementation of the Plan and its Action Items. The short, intermediate and long-term timeframes assigned to Action Items are generalized and again, there may be current and on-going efforts that will continue into intermediate and long-term time periods. Generally, the phrase “Short Term” should be interpreted as currently underway or expected to be commenced in the year 2011. Generally, the phrase “Intermediate Term” should be interpreted as an Action Item that may be commenced in 2011-2013 and will take longer to implement, and/or may rely on data and financing not currently available. Generally, the phrase “Long Term” refers to a project that may be currently underway but that is of a larger scope that may take many years to initiate and/or complete and is dependent upon considerable financing, engineering, studies and/or permits to accomplish, and is likely to take beyond 2015 to fully implement.

Please note that where the State of Rhode Island, or a specific State Agency is listed as a party in the Implementation Strategies tables under the table heading “Responsible for Implementation” that this is not an obligation of any particular agency but is listed for informational purposes and is a recognition by the City that a collaboration between the City and the State is desirable and/or necessary for implementation of a particular project.

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible for implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
HC – 1	Support nominations to the National Register	HDC, Planning Department	On-going
HC – 2	Support marker program of Historic Society	HDC, Planning Department	On-going
HC – 3	Support preservation of historic cemeteries	HPDSC	On-going
HC – 4	Support ongoing activities of nonprofit groups and City commissions	City Manager, Planning Department	On-going
HC – 5	Coordinate efforts with the BRVHC to identify historically significant sites and	Planning Department	On-going

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible for implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
	structures		
HC – 6	Establish City Archivist position	City Clerk	Intermediate Term
HC- 7	Adopt ordinance on consultation with RIHPC about repairs to City owned historic properties	Planning Department	Intermediate Term
HC – 8	Strengthen DPR assessments with regard to historic resources	Planning Department	Intermediate Term
HC – 9	Broaden the basis for waivers from subdivision standards for preservation of historic character	Planning Director, Public Works Department	Short Term
HC -10	Continue implementation of master plan for Hunt’s Mills	Planning Department, Parks & Recreation Department, Public Works Department	On-going
HC – 11	Adopt ordinance for City participation in real estate tax credit program	Planning Department	Intermediate Term
HC – 12	Encourage use of historic easements	HPDSC, HDC	On-going
HC – 13	Develop curriculum on historic resources	HPDSC, HDC	Short Term
HC – 14	Observe National Preservation Week	HPDSC, HDC	On-going
HC - 15	Prepare a self-guided tour brochure and update as appropriate	HPDSC, HDC	On-going
HC - 16	Disseminate information on existing financial resources for historic renovations	HPDSC, HDC	On-going



Map 11. East Providence Historic Resources

## **Natural Resources Element**

## **Introduction**

The Natural Resources Plan Element provides a recommended program, through the year 2015, for conservation and protection of the City of East Providence's natural resources. These resources include the City's waterfront properties; surface and groundwater resources; scenic areas; wetland areas; and wildlife habitats. The plan element identifies areas to be conserved or protected, actions to be taken, and regulations recommended for adoption.

### ***Vision Statement:***

Our vision for Natural Resources in East Providence embraces a positive community understanding of the value that natural resources have on the quality of life in a community. Natural resources are a significant ingredient in the well-being of the community and should be perpetuated for their visual, passive recreational and aesthetic qualities; as habitat for local wildlife, and for their natural hazard mitigation function. These resources are finite and irreplaceable. Our vision also recognizes that our natural resources have an impact that extends beyond the bounds of the City and should be viewed in their local and regional context.

### ***Purpose of the Natural Resources Plan***

The purpose of the *Natural Resources Plan* is to provide the basis of conserving and protecting the natural resources that exist in the City of East Providence. It is the intent of this plan element to:

1. Protect the Runnins River and Ten Mile River Systems from urban runoff and encroachment from urban development.
2. Prevent residential, commercial and industrial wastes from entering groundwater and surface water systems.
3. Protect surface and groundwater quality in general and, in particular, protect the City's emergency drinking water reserves: the Ten Mile Groundwater Reservoir, Turner Reservoir, and Central Pond.
4. Prevent point and non-point pollution sources from discharging, unmanaged, into the coastal waters including Watchemoket Cove, Bullocks Cove, and the Seekonk and Providence Rivers.
5. Minimize damage to property from major flooding events, including hurricanes.
6. Maintain public access to coastal waters and landside water bodies that provide potential scenic vistas and observation points.
7. Develop an education program that reaches a wide segment of the population.
8. Provide for the re-establishment of a Municipal Land Trust to work with a rejuvenated East Providence Land Conservation Trust to protect open space and wetlands.

## **Natural Resources Planning Framework**

### ***Land Use 2025: Rhode Island State Land Use Policies and Plan - State Guide Plan Element 121***

Adopted by the State Planning Council in 2006, *Land Use 2025* expresses a series of goals, objectives and strategies for guiding land development in Rhode Island through the year 2025. The primary land use goal of *Land Use 2010* is:

“A sustainable Rhode Island that is beautiful, diverse, connected and compact with a distinct quality of place in our urban and rural centers, and abundance of natural resources, and a vibrant sustainable economy”.

Specific policies related to natural resource protection in East Providence are found in the document as follows:

- Relate the use of land to its natural characteristics, varying suitability and capacity for development.
- Recognize Narragansett Bay and watersheds as assets that contribute significantly to the State’s beauty and connectivity. Promote holistic systems planning approaches at the watershed level.
- Encourage development patterns that protect water for drinking, ecosystems, and other critical purposes, as well as other natural resources.
- Preserve and enhance wildlife, fish, and plant species diversity and stability through habitat protection, restoration, enhancement, and prevention or mitigation of adverse impacts due to human activities.
- Encourage development patterns that protect water for drinking, ecosystems, and other critical purposes, as well as other natural resources.
- Design open space systems and corridors to protect complete ecologic units and provide structure and character to the built environment.
- Guide development in a manner that will prevent encroachment on floodways, coastal and freshwater wetlands, and other natural features that provide protection from storms and flooding.

### ***Ocean State Outdoors: State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) – State Guide Plan Element 152***

Adopted by the State Planning Council in 2003 and amended in 2009, the vision of *Ocean State Outdoors* is “A statewide system of connecting greenspaces and greenways, a network made up of critical natural and cultural resources, outdoor recreation facilities, public spaces, community and urban forests, public and private open spaces.”

Specific policies related to the conservation and protection of natural resources in East Providence are found in the document as follows:

- Maintain natural diversity by preserving the integrity of Rhode Island's ecosystems.
- Protect water resources, including rivers, lakes, ponds, streams, and surrounding lands.
- Protect surface and groundwater resources areas, critical watershed, and aquifer recharge areas.
- Protect wetlands and floodplains to maintain their natural functions and to minimize damage from floods.
- Protect scenic areas and resources including landscapes, roadways, and views of the waterfront and significant geologic features.

### **Natural Resources Conservation and Protection Progress**

The City has been active in protecting its natural resources through a number of initiatives including the acquisition of open land, restricting development in floodplains, and thorough review of development plans in environmentally sensitive areas.



In 2008 and 2009, the Planning Department and East Providence Conservation Commission secured land donations totaling 22 acres along the Runnins River. These areas contain wetlands along the river along with upland forests, and are largely within the FEMA Special Flood Hazard Area adjacent to the river. The retention of these properties in their natural state assures their continued functions in flooding mitigation and as wildlife habitats, and creates new opportunities for passive recreation.

Progress continues on the Ten Mile River Fish Restoration Project, which includes three fish ladders to be located at the Turner Reservoir Dam, the Hunt's Mills Dam, and the Omega Pond Dam. The Community Sustainability Element includes more details on this project. Other current and future projects in the Ten Mile River corridor include the development of the Turner Reservoir Raised Walkway which was nearing completion late in 2009, and master planning for the Hunt's Mills Historic Site. All of these projects are being undertaken in a way that recognizes their potential to enhance these sites as public amenities while not compromising the natural attributes that makes them special places in the City.

To protect the City's surface water resources, the City has developed a DEM-approved Municipal Stormwater Management Plan. The plan identifies the various sources of stormwater and makes recommendations to reduce stormwater flows which may have a negative environmental impact.

### **Natural Resources Plan**

The Natural Resources Plan for East Providence addresses the conservation or preservation of three sensitive or limited resources in the community.

- Water resources, including wetlands, surface waters, coastal waters and groundwater.
- Wildlife habitats, including the vegetation and wildlife of the wetlands, surface water and coastal water and forested areas of the City.
- Scenic resources, including areas that offer visual attractions of a particular site or views and vistas to other areas.

Map 12, Natural Resources and Community Sustainability, identifies the resource areas of East Providence that will be targeted for conservation and preservation as the City continues to mature.

### **Wetland Conservation Areas**

The significant wetland conservation areas within East Providence are located along the Runnins River, within the Southeast Drainage District Area, and in the Mobil Properties Area. Within the Mobil Properties Area, most of the drainage from the wetlands runs toward Willett Pond and, from there, to Bullocks Cove. These wetland areas offer substantial wildlife habitats for many of the wildlife species found in East Providence.

The Runnins River and Hundred Acre Cove in East Providence and Barrington are identified Special Resource Protection Waters in Ocean State Outdoors – State Guide Plan Element 152. Special Resource Protection Waters are high quality surface waters identified by the Director of DEM as having significant ecological or recreational uses, which may include but are not limited to wildlife refuge or management areas, state and federal designated Estuarine Sanctuary Areas, and water bodies containing critical habitats.

The most serious threats to the Runnins River wetlands and other wetlands in the City are encroaching urban development and its accompanying stormwater runoff. Recent City land acquisitions along the Runnins River and an increased awareness of the functions of wetland and floodplains to mitigate not only flooding but also pollution will aid the protection of wetland areas within the Runnins River drainage basin.

The City Planning Board and the Conservation Commission must be cognizant of the potential damage to all wetland areas that development can cause if it is not planned properly. During all site plan reviews and even at earlier development stages such as rezoning, the Planning Department, Planning Board and Conservation Commission must ensure that all applicable protection measures at the City's disposal are incorporated in development approvals. To protect the City's wetland areas, strategies as outlined in the City's 2004 Comprehensive Plan with regard to development encroachment and urban run-off will be applied to new development.

## **Development Encroachment**

For areas designated as open space conservation areas on the Runnins River Critical Area Plan of the *Land Use Plan Element*, no new or expanded development will be permitted. Within the Southeast Drainage District Critical Area and the Mobil Properties Critical Area where wetlands occur, new or expanded development will be discouraged. In these areas, if development is requested and approved along the fringes of the wetlands areas, a 50-foot buffer between development and the edge of the preserved wetlands will be required. The buffer will provide for retention of any runoff from the development and will retain as much original vegetation as possible.

To guide and manage development within, and on the fringe of, any of the wetland areas of East Providence, the City should prepare wetlands and groundwater recharge area protection standards. These standards should be performance-based and prepared in conjunction with other development performance standards of the City's zoning and land development codes. Among other standards, the regulations should address allowable impervious coverage, provisions for undisturbed land, percolation rates, on-site treatment of runoff (containment, extraction and disposal of waste materials, underground storage tank leakage prevention measures, and penalty fees for wetlands impact, excessive runoff, and groundwater contamination.

## **Urban Runoff**

In East Providence, existing urban runoff has been degrading the Runnins River Wetlands. Future development could further impact these areas and could degrade the wetlands of the Southeast Drainage and Mobil Properties areas. To manage urban runoff from development within the Runnins River Drainage Basin, the following will be required:

- All new or expanding development within the area of Special Drainage Concern will be subject to the Development Plan Review process and adopted wetlands and groundwater recharge performance standards.
- Expansion of existing development and all new development that drains toward the Runnins River watershed will be permitted only when on-site provisions for zero-net storm drainage are met.
- The City will seek additional sources of funding to retro-fit existing storm drainage that leads to the Runnins River so that zero net drainage is achieved. Options include drainage impact fees paid at the time of building or site modification or creation of the drainage assessment district to pay for drainage retrofitting and retention basin(s).

## **Surface Water and Riverine Protection Areas**

Several of East Providence's surface water and riverine areas require protection from urban development encroachment. These areas include the Runnins River and adjacent wetlands, Central Pond-Turner Reservoir area, Omega Pond, the segment of the Ten Mile River that connects the Turner Reservoir and Omega Pond, Willett Pond, and the Bullocks Cove area.

Because the City is nearly fully served by the public sewer system, degradation of the City's surface waters is primarily the result of urban runoff from existing development, including nutrient-loading from residential fertilizer use. In the case of the Runnins River and the Central Pond-Turner Reservoir system, other communities including Pawtucket, Seekonk, and the Attleboro's could be contributing to development-related pollution. In addressing surface water pollution sources from within East Providence, the City must emphasize protection of its water resources, but should balance protection with public access and the availability of the water sources for public enjoyment.

### **Other Areas of Special Concern**

#### ***Central Pond/Turner Reservoir***

The areas designated as open space on the Central Pond/ Turner Reservoir Land Use Specific Area Plan will be retained as passive recreational open spaces (e.g. walking, biking, picnicking). Public access to the reservoir will be permitted, as will the use of the reservoir for non-power boat uses such as canoeing and fishing.

- Any new residential densities will be at less than 4 dwelling units per acre.
- The Bridgham Farm Site will be preserved for its historic significance and used for passive recreational purposes only.
- All new and expanded development which drains to Central Pond or the Turner Reservoir will be required to retrofit its site drainage so that it achieves zero-net runoff.
- The City will continue to monitor the water quality of Central Pond and Turner Reservoir.

#### ***Omega Pond, Ten Mile River, Willett Pond, Bullocks Cove and Watchemoket Cove***

Along the Ten Mile River and Omega Pond, the City will consider establishing a drainage retention program for all properties along these surface waters.

Storm drainage retrofitting and/or on-site grading to retain surface runoff before it reaches these water bodies will be a part of the program.

Zero-net runoff will be the goal for both residential and non-residential properties. For residential properties that directly abut the water bodies and where it is possible, lots will be regraded to retain runoff and allow percolation. For properties that cannot re-grade to allow runoff percolation, the use of lawn fertilizers will be prohibited. The City should establish a program to educate the managers of private golf courses about alternatives to herbicides and pesticides.

To finance long-term programs such as this the City will look for outside state and federal sources.

Specific actions and priorities for this strategy must be developed by the City and will be applied as financial sources permit.

### **Waterfront Development Areas**

Also, please refer to the section of the 2009 Plan Update of the **East Providence Waterfront District Development Plan**.

### **Scenic Areas and Viewpoints**

Several locations throughout East Providence offer potential viewing of the City's natural resources. Coastal locations such as Watchemoket Cove, open space abutting Bullocks Cove, Rose Larisa Memorial Park, Pomham Rock, The Boyden Heights Conservation Area and the Runnins River are visual attractions, offering a change from the urban and suburban landscapes typical of East Providence. These areas offer peaceful views of inland waters and their shorelines, and of coastal areas. The Boyden Heights property is being carefully enhanced by the East Providence Conservation Commission, including the improvement of woodland trails, rehabilitation of a scenic raised boardwalk, and improvement of the upper and lower entrances to the property.

Other scenic locations such as Bullocks Point, Kettle Point, Sabin Point, and many points along the East Bay Bike Path offer fine vistas across the upper reaches of Narragansett Bay. Inland scenic areas including the Ten Mile River, Central Pond, the Turner Reservoir, and their trail systems including the Ten Mile Greenway offer local residents peaceful vistas typical of those generally found in more rural areas of southeastern New England.



These scenic areas and viewpoints will remain relatively undeveloped and used for passive recreational purposes only. Public accessibility for each area will be maintained. However, the degree of accessibility will be determined by the nature of the area. In general, vehicular access will be limited, with emphasis given to pedestrian, bicycle, or kayak/canoe access, as applicable.

In addition, Veterans Memorial Parkway, a state-designated scenic roadway, offers a pleasant scenic drive in the western part of East Providence. As noted in *Ocean State Outdoors - State Guide Plan Element 152*, green space along our major public roads needs to be recognized for the importance of aesthetic and functional roles. Waterfront Development District projects along the Parkway will be executed with full regard to the preserving this roadway's unique attributes.

Elsewhere, relatively simple implementation of "road dieting" along a portion of Pawtucket Avenue north of Taunton Avenue, where the number of traffic lanes was reduced from four to two, greatly enhanced the appearance of this segment of a busy major artery. In addition to increasing vehicular, transportation and pedestrian safety in

this area, this modification helped to create a “parkway” aesthetic in an area featuring notable City- and privately-owned open space.

### **Natural Resources Goals and Objectives**

This is a new element of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan Update. Some of the applicable goals and objectives are a carry-over and represent a compilation of the 1994 Plan, and 2004 and 2010 Updates in the Natural, Historical and Cultural Plan Element and the Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Element.

#### **Goal 1: Preserve and protect the water bodies and groundwater and their sources within the City of East Providence for continuation of their natural beauty and as components of the East Providence ecosystem.**

Objective 1.1: Continue monitoring, through the USGS, the quality of the water in the Runnins River and Ten Mile River and Turner Reservoir.

Objective 1.2: Establish a policy of ongoing communications with the Cities of Providence, Pawtucket, Barrington, Seekonk, Attleboro, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regarding water quality issues.

Objective 1.3: Develop groundwater protection, underground storage tank, and sediment and erosion control ordinances along with a watershed protection overlay district as measures for natural resource protection, and specifically protection of the Ten Mile Groundwater Reservoir.

Objective 1.4: Provide for the protection of all freshwater wetlands including those that are outside of the designated Critical Areas.

Objective 1.5: Monitor non-point discharge into all City water bodies, including Omega Pond and Willett Pond.

Objective 1.6: Work with RIDOT on future road developments to incorporate design features that reduce discharge into waterways and wetlands.

Objective 1.7: Work with managers of private golf courses to control use of herbicides and pesticides.

Objective 1.8: Work with agencies such as the Northern Rhode Island Conservation District to encourage residents to use of organic lawn treatments in place of chemical-based treatments, particularly in areas close to the City’s waterways and coast.

Objective 1.9: Encourage wetland restoration along specified areas of the City’s waterfront to restore the indigenous species of plants, waterfowl, and marine life.

**Goal 2: Preserve private open lands in their natural state where possible to ensure their maintenance as wildlife and fish habitats, natural drainage areas, and areas of passive recreation and outdoor education.**

- Objective 2.1: Inventory and prioritize remaining significant natural resources which should be preserved and protected.
- Objective 2.2: Where significant open lands are developed, require preservation of open space and resources to the maximum extent possible.
- Objective 2.3: Continue to utilize National Park Service (NPS) assistance and other assistance for development of a greenway along the Runnins River.
- Objective 2.4: Develop a youth education program, possibly through "adoption" of a natural resource and study of that resource.
- Objective 2.5: Seek conservation easements and/or fee simple acquisition where possible and necessary.
- Objective 2.6: Utilize the technical expertise available within the City, Federal, and State governments and other qualified private groups in identifying and prioritizing such sites.
- Objective 2.7: Regenerate the private non-profit East Providence Land Conservation Trust.
- Objective 2.8: Seek Federal and State funding for development of programs and acquisition where necessary in accordance with the City's adopted plans and policies.

**Goal 3: Preserve and expand public access to the City's waterfront for passive and active recreational activities.**

- Objective 3.1: Require pedestrian access to the waterfront as part of any private mixed-use development in waterfront areas.
- Objective 3.2: Install signs at public access point locations to encourage public use.
- Objective 3.3: Develop and distribute maps showing the location of public access points.

**Table 14. Natural Resources Implementation Strategies**

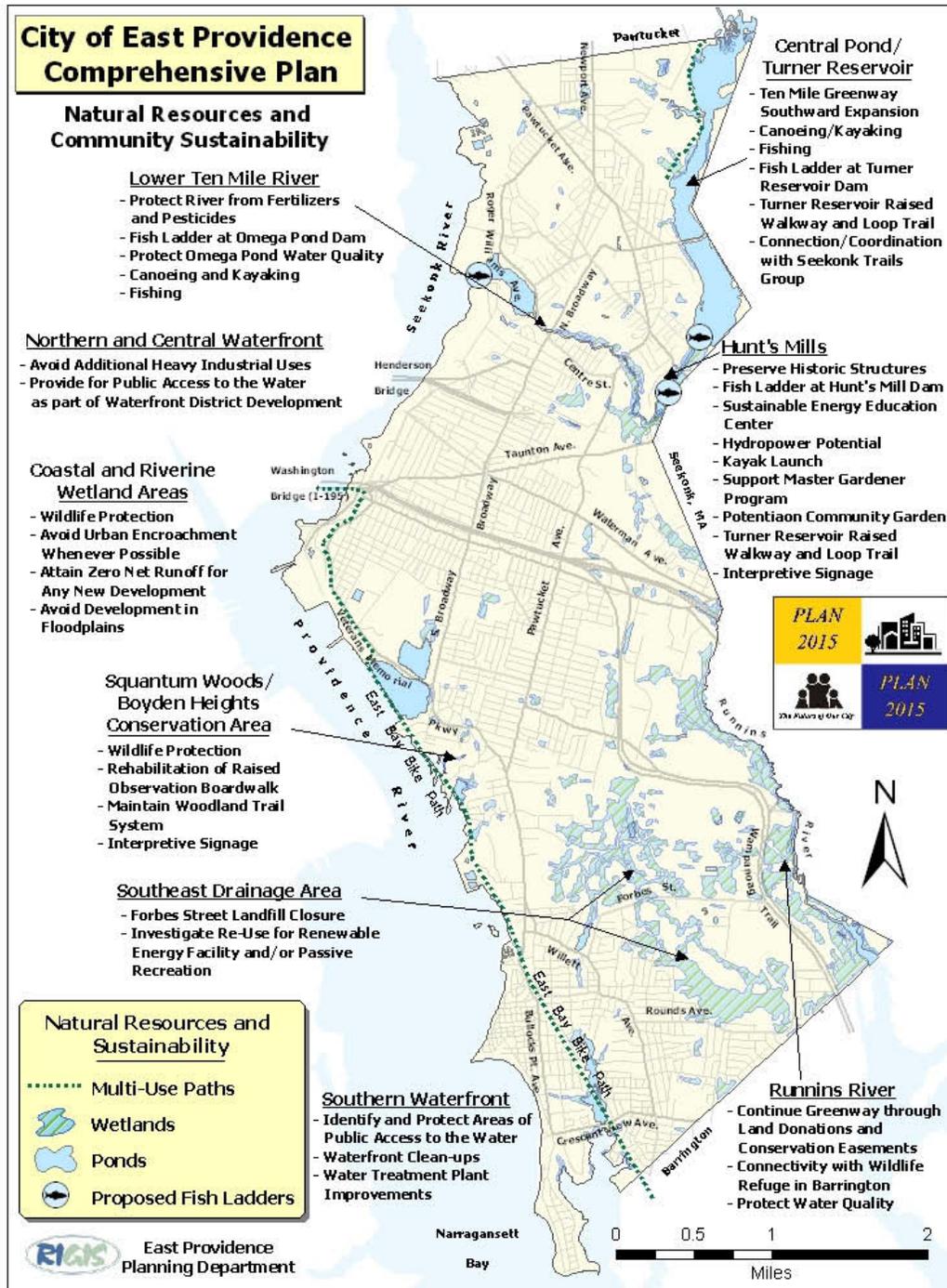
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Items are generalized and again, there may be current and on-going efforts that will continue into intermediate and long-term time periods. Generally, the phrase “Short Term” should be interpreted as currently underway or expected to be commenced in the year 2011. Generally, the phrase “Intermediate Term” should be interpreted as an Action Item that may be commenced in 2011-2013 and will take longer to implement, and/or may rely on data and financing not currently available. Generally, the phrase “Long Term” refers to a project that may be currently underway but that is of a larger scope that may take many years to initiate and/or complete and is dependent upon considerable financing, engineering, studies and/or permits to accomplish, and is likely to take beyond 2015 to fully implement.

Please note that where the State of Rhode Island, or a specific State Agency is listed as a party in the Implementation Strategies tables under the heading “Responsible for Implementation” that this is not an obligation of any particular agency but is listed for informational purposes and is a recognition by the City that a collaboration between the City and the State is desirable and/or necessary for implementation of a particular project.

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility for Implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
NR - 1	Develop groundwater protection, underground storage tank, and sediment and erosion control ordinances along with a watershed protection overlay district as measures for natural resource protection	Planning Department, Department of Public Works	Intermediate Term
NR - 2	Provide for the protection of all freshwater wetlands including those that are outside of the designated Critical Areas.	Planning Department, Conservation Commission	Ongoing (Short and Intermediate Term)
NR - 3	Monitor non-point discharge into all City water bodies	Department of Public Works Engineering Division, DEM	Short and Intermediate Term
NR - 4	Work with RIDOT on future road developments to incorporate design features that reduce discharge into waterways and wetlands.	Department of Public Works, Planning Department	Ongoing (Short and Intermediate Term)
NR - 5	Work with managers of private golf courses to control use of herbicides and pesticides.	Planning Department, Conservation Commission	Intermediate Term
NR - 6	Encourage residents to use of organic lawn treatments in place of chemical-based treatments, particularly in areas close to the City’s waterways and coast.	Planning Department, Conservation Commission	Short and Intermediate Term

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility for Implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
NR - 7	Encourage wetland restoration along specified areas of the City's waterfront to restore the indigenous species of plants, waterfowl, and marine life.	Planning Department, Conservation Commission	Ongoing (Short and Intermediate Term)
NR - 8	Inventory and prioritize remaining significant natural resources which should be preserved and protected.	Planning Department, Conservation Commission	Intermediate Term
NR - 9	Seek Federal and State funding for development of programs and acquisition where necessary in accordance with the City's adopted plans and policies	Planning Department	On-going as available
NR - 10	Require pedestrian access to the waterfront as part of any private mixed-use development in waterfront areas.	Planning Department, Waterfront Commission	On-going
NR - 11	Develop a youth education program, possibly through "adoption" of a natural resource and study of that resource.	School Department	Short and Intermediate Term
NR - 12	Continue to acquire land through land donation and less-than-fee interests in land, and conservation easements, along the Runnins River and elsewhere.	Planning Department, Conservation Commission	On-going
NR - 13	Identify points of public access to the water through signage and mapping that is available for public viewing.	Planning Department, Waterfront Commission	Intermediate Term



Map 12. Natural Resources and Sustainability

## **Recreation, Conservation, and Open Space Element**

## **Vision Statement**

Our Vision for Open Space and Recreation in East Providence is that of a community-wide, geographically balanced, conveniently accessed network of facilities and activities responsive to the varied recreational needs of the City's diverse population. The Open Space Recreation Vision recognizes the demands to meet efficiently today's needs, while remaining responsive to changing trends in the community. It is essential that open space and recreational opportunities are integrated with the City's natural and cultural resources to fulfill both aesthetic and practical needs, while contributing to the protection and enjoyment of East Providence's unique natural resources and ecosystems. The achievement of this Vision is hindered by the availability of funds for land acquisition and for recreation facility maintenance and rehabilitation.

## **Intent of the RCOS Plan Element**

The RCOS Plan Element is intended to serve as a guide to continued operation of a City-wide planning and capital improvement program which will serve existing community recreation, conservation and open space needs, as well as to provide for future needs within a comprehensive planning framework. This Plan Element is also intended to ensure continuing eligibility of the City to participate in State and Federal grant programs related to recreation, conservation and open space.

## **Recreation and Open Space Planning Framework**

### ***Land Use 2025: Rhode Island State Land Use Policies and Plan: State Guide Plan Element 121***

Adopted by the State Planning Council in 2006, *Land Use 2025* expresses a series of goals, objectives and strategies for guiding land development in Rhode Island through the year 2025. The primary land use goal of *Land Use 2010* is:

“A sustainable Rhode Island that is beautiful, diverse, connected and compact with a distinct quality of place in our urban and rural centers, and abundance of natural resources, and a vibrant sustainable economy”.

Specific policies related to Recreation and Open Space in East Providence are found in the document as follows:

- Use open space to control and shape urban growth.
- Relate the use of land to its natural characteristics, varying suitability and capacity for development.
- Factor into decisions regarding development the importance of recreation, open space, historic resources, and public access to the shore to the State's economy, in tourism, and in maintaining our quality of life.
- Create an interconnecting network of bike paths, trails, and walkways to expand pedestrian and bicycle travel options.

### ***Ocean State Outdoors: State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) – State Guide Plan Element 152***

Adopted by the State Planning Council in 2003 and amended in 2009, the vision of *Ocean State Outdoors* is “A statewide system of connecting greenspaces and greenways, a network made up of critical natural and cultural resources, outdoor recreation facilities, public spaces, community and urban forests, public and private open spaces.”

Specific policies related to Recreation and Open Space in East Providence are found in the document as follows:

- Protect scenic areas and resources including landscapes, roadways, and views of the waterfront and significant geologic features.
- Provide a diverse, balanced system offering quality recreational opportunities that meet users’ needs.
- Preserve and expand public access to the shoreline.
- Preserve and expand access to the state’s rivers, lake, ponds, streams and other inland waters for recreational use, while maintaining water quality.
- Maintain and expand the state’s network of trails and pedestrian paths, in natural and built areas.
- Strengthen and expand opportunities for open space and outdoor recreation for urban residents.
- Strengthen and expand community-based recreation facilities and open spaces to meet close-to-home needs.

### **Special Attractions and Other Recreational Opportunities**

**The historic Charles I.D. Loeff Carousel** in Riverside (ca. 1895), owned by the City and operated by the Carousel Commission, is widely recognized as one of the finest carousels in the United States and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Carousel attracts a large number of visitors annually from both within and outside of the City. The City's **Rose Larisa Memorial Park**, a passive recreation area located directly across Bullocks Point Avenue from the Loeff Carousel, provides scenic views of the Providence River and Upper Narragansett Bay. Special events, such as summer movie nights and band concerts as well as arts and crafts exhibitions, are held at this location.

The overlook areas of the **Veterans Memorial Parkway**, designed by famed landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead, also provide views of the Providence River and Providence skyline. **The East Bay Bicycle Path** and **Ten Mile Greenway**, portions of which pass through East Providence, are very popular with area walkers and bicyclists.

The Providence and Seekonk Rivers and the coves located within the City provide boating opportunities. Bullocks Cove is a safe harbor for a large number and variety of boats.

City-sponsored recreation and cultural events, such as the Dolly Searle Golf Tournament, the Fourth of July celebration and Heritage Days Festival held at Pierce Memorial Field and Stadium, also draw large crowds.

The three private golf courses located in East Providence - Agawam Hunt, Metacomet, and Wannamoissett - host amateur and professional sporting events, such as golf and

tennis tournaments. The City's annual charity golf tournament – the Dolly Searle - is hosted by each of the three golf courses on a rotating basis.

The recreation programs offered by the City's Recreation Department are important factors in the enhancement of the physical and mental health of all participants, and in social and cultural interaction between participants. Year-round programs are targeted at Youth, Adult, and Special Needs populations.

The City's many neighborhood parks, playgrounds and conserved natural areas also provide the opportunity for individual and non-organized passive and active recreation. Numerous private recreational facilities expand the quantity and types of recreation available.

There are several possibilities for providing future recreation opportunities for local residents. Depending upon funding sources and further study, examples of these opportunities include:

- Construction of an indoor municipal recreation center (top priority)
- Development of the Hunts Mills Historic Site for active and passive recreation and renewable energy education
- Development of the “Tranquility Place at Jones Pond” project on City-owned land near Pierce Field.
- Development of a soccer complex on City or state owned land.
- Creation of a skate park
- Expansion of the Ten Mile Greenway southward to the Hunt’s Mill’s Historic Site.
- Expand shoreline access for passive recreation and opportunities for saltwater fishing (dependent upon improved water quality)
- Development of a public access point, possibly a canoe launch, and a Conservation/Education Area along the Runnins River.

### **Identification of Public and Private Agencies or Entities which Fund and Administer Local Recreation and Open Space Resources**

The City of East Providence has contributed to the funding of the rehabilitation of existing recreation sites through the Capital Budget, local municipal bond sales and grants from outside agencies. The City has received Federal and State matching funds for recreation land acquisition and development. The City will continue to pursue local initiatives and Federal and State funding opportunities when available. Recreation programs in East Providence are administered through the Recreation & Parks Department and funded through the City budget.

### **Recreation**

The City offers year-round recreation programming to all its residents through the Parks and Recreation Department. The Department has a full-time staff of nine (9) persons. The Department uses approximately 35 part-time employees in the Fall/Winter, and approximately 75 in the Spring/Summer. The Department utilizes volunteers for City-sponsored special events, such as tournaments and festivals.

Recreational opportunities are offered through a formal adult recreation program, a special needs program, and a summer youth recreation program. Each of these programs has a full-time coordinator. The programs are offered on a non-discriminatory basis.

The City sponsors weekday summer recreation programming for boys and girls ages 6-15 over a period of 7 weeks. The summer programming is offered at numerous playground sites throughout the City, with several serving special needs individuals.

Average weekly attendance figures for 2008 Summer Youth Programs ranged from 1,050 to 1,500 children. Total attendance at all sites over the seven weeks of the summer program for 2008 was 7,714. Outdoor soccer is a very popular activity among the Youth Programs in East Providence.

The Adult Program offers activities on a weekly, semi-weekly, semi-monthly, and annual basis. Examples of the outdoor recreation activities include: golf instruction, day trips, and a walking program. These events drew the participation of 3,257 adults in 2008.

The Special Needs Program offers activities to special needs children on a weekly, monthly, and annual basis. Examples of weekly and monthly activities include: youth camp, walking program, and field trips. Youth participation in the special needs summer playground program for 2008 was 22 persons. Average weekly attendance for twelve adult special needs activities ranged from 16 to 25 persons. These activities included: bingo, bowling, coffee hour, crafts workshop, dance, dine out, exercises, garden club, mystery ride, park outings, and walking club. Participation in adult special events programs for 2008 was 213 persons. These events were a Halloween party, Christmas dinner and dance, St. Valentine dance, and a St. Patrick's Day dance.

The East Providence Activities and Recreation Center provides indoor activities for persons of all ages. The Center is heavily used, particularly during the fall, winter and spring months when outdoor activities are limited by weather conditions. There is a nominal annual fee (\$20 - adults; \$10 - youth) to join the Center, which has been waived in the past in situations where a person is unable to afford to pay the fee.



The Recreation Department issues permits for the use of City fields.

Youth and adult baseball and softball leagues for boys and girls and men and women operate in the summer months in East Providence. They are very popular and are subject to high demand. Pee-wee and Pop Warner football teams, and children's T-ball and soccer leagues also operate in the summer.

The City offers numerous special events through the Recreation & Parks Department. In the past these have included: annual Christmas Tree Lighting, Summer Playground

theater performances, Dolly Searle Golf Tournament, 4th of July celebration, Summer Concert Series, and the three-day Heritage Days Festival (2008 total attendance – 13,500) held annually at Pierce Memorial Field. These special events are popular and well attended.

### **Coordination with Non-Public and Private Sector**

The Department coordinates their activities with non-public programs and private sector groups. The Parks and Recreation Department sponsors free swim programs at the Boys and Girls Club of East Providence. The City pays for the hours of use of the facility, while the Club provides the lifeguard. These programs include: a weekly swim program in the summer for boys and girls participating the playground program who are able swimmers, and Adult Swim program. There are no public outdoor pools in East Providence.

The Recreation Department also rents time at a bowling alley, and provides supervision while the activities are taking place. The Department also rents courts for adults to play indoor tennis and racquetball.

### **Coordination with Schools**

The Recreation & Parks Department has a limited relationship with the East Providence School Department. The pool at the East Providence Senior High School is utilized for free swim programs, including a Learn to Swim program, and a Family Swim program. The football, soccer and baseball teams associated with the high school utilize school fields for practice and play their games at Pierce Memorial Stadium. The City Recreation & Parks Department does not schedule activities at the indoor School gymnasiums.

The East Providence Recreation & Parks Department is a local chapter of the National Youth Sport Coaches Association (NYSCA), which provides training in first aid, safety and sport techniques for youth sport coaches. There are two NYSCA clinicians in the Recreation & Parks Department who provide certification clinics as a community service.

### **Substance Abuse Prevention - East Providence Prevention Coalition**

The Recreation & Parks Department works closely with the East Providence Prevention Coalition (EPPC), formerly known as the East Providence Substance Abuse Prevention Task Force. Since 1988, the EPPC has acted as a catalyst and enabling system, pulling together a variety of public and private sectors voluntarily, to assist in the development of proactive efforts and strategies such as educational programs, community activities, alternative youth programs, legislative and environmental change, dealing with substance abuse and violence prevention in the City of East Providence. The EPPC office is currently housed in East Providence City Hall and will be relocated to the Weaver House sometime in 2010.

Many youth programs are sponsored by the EPPC including the youth branch of the Coalition, DICE, which stands for Drug Intervention Community Educators. DICE is a youth led, drug and alcohol empowerment program that has participated in over 800 community events and meets weekly on Wednesday evenings, year round, students in the 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade. Other youth programs include: peer mediation and conflict resolution (middle school students), Project P.A.V.E- Partnership to Address Violence Through

Education (elementary and middle schools), the Post Prom Party (high school seniors) and the Life of an Athlete Program (high school student athletes).

The EPPC works closely with the East Providence Police Department in the “Townies Putting the Brakes on Underage Drinking Campaign”. All three Student Resource Officers are EPPC board members.

### **East Providence Activities and Recreation Center**

The East Providence Activities and Recreation Center, presently owned by the East Bay Community Action Program, is headquartered in the former Riverside Junior High School, located on Bullocks Point Avenue in the Riverside section of the City. This three (3) story building, built in the 1920's, serves as the headquarters for a variety of social service organizations, in addition to the Recreation Center. The Recreation Center occupies the basement of this building (approximately 15,000 square feet) and offers a broad range of activities in the gymnasium, program room, weight room, game room and community room. Recreational programming is divided into four (4) major components: pre-school, youth, adult, and special needs.

While the Recreation Center offers an impressive array of programs and activities, the facilities housing the center are in serious disrepair and are inadequate to meet the current needs of the populations being served. Current building deficiencies include inadequate heating, electrical and water systems; undersized locker rooms; a damaged gymnasium floor and deteriorating restrooms.

A 2001 study commissioned by the City by the firm of Edwards & Kelcey recommended that, based upon an inventory and assessment of recreation needs for the City, a new indoor multi-purpose recreation be built on the site of Pierce Field complex, located off Mercer Street. This two (2) story facility, measuring 53,000 square feet would include the following amenities:

- Gymnasium (2 Courts and seating)/ Indoor Track.
- Locker Rooms
- Public Toilets
- Activity Room - Aerobics/Dance/Karate
- Fitness Room/ Weight Room
- Teen Lounge
- Computer Room
- Game Room
- Multi-purpose room with stage and kitchen
- Child Care Room
- Meeting Rooms
- Arts & Crafts Rooms
- Administration
- 6-lane Pool
- Racquetball Courts

The estimated cost at the time of a completed facility was \$7.8 million, including design, site costs and furnishings. Capital funding to construct or rehabilitate public indoor recreation facilities is recommended. A citizen committee is now actively involved in raising funds for a new Center, which is considered a need of highest priority by the Parks and Recreation Department and city residents alike.

### **East Providence Boys & Girls Club**

The East Providence Boys and Girls Club is a community-based agency which provides before and after school educational, recreational and social service programs for youths ages 6-18. Facilities at the Boys and Girls Club include a multi-purpose room, a 25-yard pool, program and game rooms, a day care center, a kitchen and administrative offices. With a focus on moderate and low income children, the Boys and Girls Club offers day care and latchkey programs, recreational programming, swimming, physical exercise activities, summer camp opportunities and daily programming which fosters social competence, self-esteem, peer interactions and individual achievement. Summer Camp facilities are provided at Camp Crosby, located in Bristol RI. The Boys & Girls Club has a long-term lease with the State of RI for the use of this facility. The Club is currently expanding its facility with the construction of 2,000 square-foot addition including a mini gymnasium, with the help of Community Development Block Grant Funding.

### **East Providence Senior Center**

The East Providence Senior Center, located on the former west campus of the Providence Country Day School at the intersection of Waterman and Pawtucket Avenues, provides additional indoor recreational opportunities for East Providence Senior Citizens. Outside amenities include a walking trail, a gazebo/picnic area, flower and vegetable gardens and play areas for bocce, croquet, etc. Consistent with its goal of meeting the social, educational, nutritional, medical as well as recreational needs of East Providence senior citizens, the center offers the following programs and activities:

- Exercise/rehabilitation classes
- Computer classes
- Daily lunches
- Bingo & other games
- Arts & crafts
- Field trips
- Educational programs (e.g. finance, nutrition)
- Group activities (e.g. chorus, hobbies)

Since the opening of the Senior Center in May of 1998, membership has risen from 314 to more than 2000 members, an increase of over 630%. (Source: East Providence Senior Center Director). The center has established new programs, which were not in the original design of the center. All rooms in the existing building were being utilized with a portion of the lower level hallway used for storage. Class size for various programs was limited due to lack of space. Because of the rapid increase in programming, social services, and membership, the need for the building expansion was crucial.

In September 2009 the center expanded; a 5,500 square foot addition was attached to the eastern portion of the main building. The very active fitness center has been relocated to a much larger area within the addition along with the center's library. A common area with tables, casual chairs and a coffee café is part as well. A new computer lab with seven terminals for computer classes is able to accommodate all levels of learning. The new large multi-purpose room hosts meetings, exercise programs, and seminars. A smaller seminar room is available for smaller groups.

### **Park Maintenance**

The Recreation & Parks Department is responsible for maintenance of twenty-three (22) parks, sixteen (17) playgrounds, eight (8) conservation areas, two (2) undeveloped lots, thirteen (13) public building grounds, three (3) cemeteries and thousand of street trees. The Recreation & Parks Department also maintains the Pierce Memorial Field Complex, while the School Department maintains the recreational facilities on school property. Consideration is currently being given to consolidating the Parks and School Department grounds maintenance functions.



Maintenance services provided by Recreation & Parks at recreation facilities include the following: grass mowing, ball field maintenance, tree and shrub planting, tree and shrub pruning and removal, litter and graffiti removal, repairs to play equipment, fence installation and repair, installation of play equipment and complete park renovation. Please see Map 13 for facilities and sites maintained by the Division of Parks and Recreation.

Snow removal and ice control from around public buildings is a major assignment of the department in the winter months.

The following generally represents the seasonal activities of the Recreation & Parks Department, with certain activities taking place throughout the year:

#### **Year-Round Activities:**

- Park cleanup and litter control
- Tree removal and pruning
- Fence repairs
- Equipment repairs

#### **Spring Activities:**

- Ball field preparation
- Flower planting
- Post-winter cleanup around public buildings
- Stump removal
- Grass mowing

**Summer Activities:**

- Grass mowing
- Shrub trimming around public buildings
- Weed control
- Ball field maintenance
- Play equipment installation & renovation

**Fall Activities:**

- Grass mowing
- Weed control
- Flower planting
- Park renovation work
- Overseeding of turf
- Fertilizing (fertilizing on fields dependent upon fund availability)
- Stump removal
- Fall leaf removal

**Winter Activities:**

- Snow removal and ice control
- Christmas tree recycling
- Repair, rebuild and paint bleachers, picnic tables etc.

Winter storms greatly impact the activities of the Recreation & Parks Department, requiring snow and ice removal from the grounds of public buildings. Hurricanes have the same effect as snow storms, requiring all other work to be put on hold to deal with the aftermath of the storm.

**Maintenance Management**

The Recreation & Parks Department maintenance staff operates using a "team-to-park" system where a specific supervisor is assigned oversight of each of the three (3) areas of the City (i.e. northern, central and southern). This system centralizes responsibility and cultivates commitment to a high level of park maintenance.

Park inspections are usually incorporated into other general maintenance activities such as grass cutting or leaf removal. Broken glass, broken swings, graffiti and other vandalism is to be noted and rectified during these inspections. If a major problem is found, it is repaired as soon as possible. If the Recreation & Parks Department receives a report of broken glass between inspections, personnel are reassigned to clean the area immediately.

The most prevalent examples of vandalism found by the Recreation & Parks Department are spray painting ("tagging") of signs and structures, burning and breaking plastic tube slides, carving wooden picnic tables, causing damage to chain link fences, and broken glass. While the amount of vandalism has been constant, the amount within the three main areas of the City tends to rotate. With the limited personnel available, Parks schedules vandalism cleaning and repair as soon as possible, especially spray painting and broken glass.

Care of landscaped areas takes a great deal of Recreation & Parks Department time. All grass at City parks, playgrounds and public buildings are mowed weekly throughout its growing season. Department staff care for existing plants and trees, and also plant additional flowers and trees as budgets allow.

Playing fields require special attention throughout three seasons. During the spring, the fields are prepared for play. This includes fertilizing, and adding infield mix as needed to all ball fields. During times of heavy use in the summer, ball field infield areas are raked and graded on a weekly basis. Fertilization is done on playing fields again in the fall, as funds are available. Grass mowing is performed weekly throughout its growing season.

The Recreation & Parks Department has also undertaken a program to enlarge the play surfacing around and under swing sets and play structures. The square footage of these areas has been expanded. The sand that is currently used should be replaced with engineered wood fiber, as sand damages the equipment supports and becomes unsanitary due to use by local cat populations. Additionally, sand is no longer an approved material for use around playground equipment under the guideline set by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Tennis courts are located at several City sites and are in fair to poor condition, though courts at the Kent Heights playground are in good condition. It is difficult and not always cost effective to provide proper regular care of court surfaces. Three centralized tennis facilities, one each in the north, south and central sections of the City may assist in providing regular and cost-efficient maintenance, and provide for a better play experience for resident tennis players. Two courts at Pierce Field service the general population in the central portion of the City. Courts at Glenlyon Playground serve the northern portion of the City. If a portion of the Southeast Drainage District close to Riverside Junior High School were developed for recreation, it would be a good location for courts in the southern portion of the City. Contracting out maintenance of tennis courts is an option that should be explored by the City.



Basketball courts are also located throughout the City at numerous sites, and are mostly in fair to poor condition. These should also be reviewed for their number and location in terms of being provided frequent and cost-effective maintenance.

Site inspection at undeveloped City sites and areas where homes border open space and natural resources such as streams and wetlands, revealed that some were being used as a "waste commons" for lawn clippings and leaves. This practice may prove degrading to some natural resources and the City's open and undeveloped areas and should be discouraged. The City provides curb-side pick-up for these items, which are then taken to the City's composting facility at the former Forbes Street landfill.

## **Urban Issues**

East Providence is a community of 48,688 persons (2000 U.S. Census). The closeness of the City's parks, playgrounds and natural areas to urban development enhances the value of the resources, but unfortunately this proximity may result in overuse and sometimes, vandalism. Increased monitoring of facilities, educating the general public, and designs which take these factors into account may reduce vandalism, destruction, overuse, and dumping problems.

One method of increasing monitoring of facilities may be to seek the help of neighbors to these facilities. The protection of City facilities may be improved by the unique ability of abutters to monitor and report problems as they see them occurring. Public workshops could be held to solicit interested persons, and signs could be placed at the sites that a neighborhood "Park Watch" is in effect. Organized user groups might also contribute a portion of fees charged to go towards maintenance costs, or at least be held accountable for trash left after games, which must be cleaned by City staff.

Drugs and related crime problems play a small role at some of the City's parks and playgrounds. There is, however, an increased amount of broken glass at facilities where crime problems occur, as well as damage to basketball courts (rims, nets). These sites have been identified and targeted for special attention. The lead worker in that section of the City in which the site is located, inspects and cleans the site as often as possible. The goal of the Parks Division is to repair whatever damage occurs as soon as it is found.

Section 13-2 of the City's ordinances makes loitering in public playgrounds, parks and other public grounds unlawful between the hours of 9:00 PM and 9:00 AM. According to the East Providence Police Department, damage to City property can be prosecuted under State Criminal Code 11-44-1 Malicious Mischief, with the penalty not to exceed \$500 or a prison term not exceeding one year. The Police Department frequently requests that the penalty instead be restitution for the damage and court costs. Increased monitoring may lead to increased prosecution which, hopefully, will lead to a reduction in damage related incidents.

## **"Tree City" Designation**

The City of East Providence was designated as a "Tree City, USA" in 1992 and has received that designation for the past seventeen consecutive years (1992-2008). To become a Tree City, USA, a community must have a tree board or department, a city tree ordinance, a comprehensive community forestry program, and an Arbor Day observance. The National Arbor Day Foundation awards the "Tree City USA" designation.

## **Urban Forestry Program – Grants**

The Parks Division prepares grant applications and has been successful in receiving several competitive grants for tree planting and tree inventories. From 1992 through 2009, the City will have planted approximately 1,180 trees, with over 470 obtained from grants, in addition to over 680 from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program and over 125 from the City budget. This will bring the inventory of public trees

to over 8,300. In addition two \$30,000 CDBG funds were used in 2006 and 2007 for hazardous-tree removal in designated areas.

In an effort to reduce or completely eliminate vandalism on park benches and tables, all new benches and tables will be made of recycled plastic materials in park renovation projects. This effort is also a reflection of the City's environmental efforts in recycling and in "closing the loop" on the utilization of recycled materials for new products. The plastic material now being used for park benches and tables is extremely difficult to carve and graffiti cleans up easily.

The development of new facilities and the redevelopment of existing facilities provide an opportunity to ensure that projects minimize operating and maintenance costs. As mentioned above, rehabilitation provides an opportunity to explore new materials in an effort to reduce vandalism and minimize maintenance costs, such as using recycled materials.

## **Needs Analysis**

### ***Community Standards for the Recreation and Open Space System***

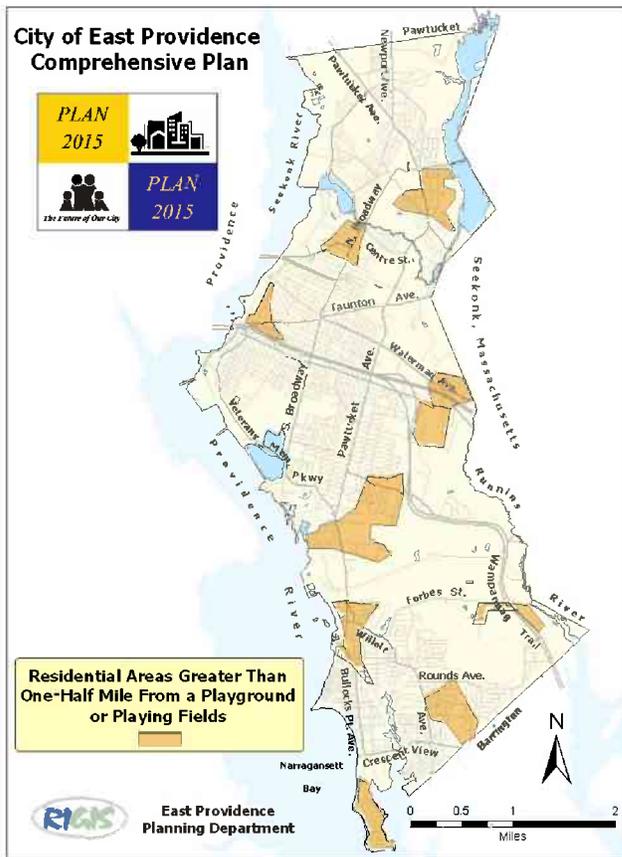
National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standards will be used as a (minimum) guide in considering the location and design of future facilities in East Providence. The NRPA standard for active recreation areas is to provide playgrounds and playfields within one-half (1/2) mile of residential areas, and 2.5 acres of parks and playfields per 1,000 people served.

NRPA standards suggest .25 to .5 acres per 1000 persons for mini-parks; 1.0 to 2.0 acres per 1000 for neighborhood parks and playgrounds. The City accepts the high-end of each of these categories for a total of 2.5 acres per 1000 persons for parks, playgrounds and playfields. NRPA additionally suggests 5.0 to 8.0 acres per 1000 for community parks of 25 acres or more.

Using the above standards, the total core parks and recreation system for East Providence should range from a minimum of 6.25 acres per 1000 persons to a high of 10.5 acres per 1000 persons. Additionally, NRPA suggests that a community provide for reserves, conservancies and linear parks. However, there are no set standards for the additional amount of land which should be provided for reserves, conservancies and linear parks, as factors vary from community to community.

Using a low standard of 6.25 acres per 1000 persons, the City is currently exceeding the minimum recommended acreage for parks, playgrounds and playfields, and will continue to do so based on relatively stable population projections for the City through 2020. Using the higher standard of 10.5 acres per 1000 persons, the City currently falls short of meeting the recommended acreage for parks, playgrounds and playfields by approximately 141 acres.

Factors such as population demographics, location of growth in East Providence, and expressed need will help determine whether the recreation acreage provided by the City is sufficient, and if not, where further development is needed. The development of the former Forbes Street landfill portion of the Southeast Drainage District (218 acres) for passive and active recreation, in addition to the development of the smaller Tripps Lane/Bayview could alleviate the deficiency. In addition, the encouragement of passive and active recreation (such as walking, hiking) at the Turner Reservoir/Central Pond area (approximately 266 land acres), could provide sufficient acreage.



Residential areas more than a half-mile away from a City playground or playing fields.

In addition to the standards stated above for playgrounds and playfields, other factors must be considered in deciding whether adequate service is provided. Active recreational areas such as playgrounds and playfields should be located in the center of the residential area they serve, easily accessible and within easy walking distance. They should be located away from major traffic arteries and removed from major barriers of pedestrian movement such as railroads, rivers or other man-made or natural barriers.

This discussion focuses primarily on the needs of the population under the age of eighteen and on whether active outdoor recreation needs are being met. However, whenever a playground is rehabilitated, great care is taken to provide both active and passive recreation opportunities for

persons of all ages. Many of the existing sites provide the opportunity for passive outdoor enjoyment. Additionally, the City's recreation programming seeks to meet the needs of persons of all ages and abilities. The need for additional indoor recreation space is acknowledged elsewhere in this plan element. There are nine areas which fall outside of the above-referenced one-half mile service area of City parks and playground.

**Identified General Recreation Needs**

- New Indoor Activities and Recreation Center
- Neighborhood parks and playgrounds offering play equipment, playing courts and ball fields
- Bicycle paths and walking paths
- Pedestrian path systems in neighborhood parks and playgrounds
- Preserved natural areas for passive recreation and reflection

- Expanded outdoor soccer facilities
- Skateboarding facilities
- Public swimming opportunities

The City intends to complete a survey in the near future to gauge demand among residents for recreational facilities and help to identify the need for additional recreational opportunities.

### **Future Open Space and Natural Resource Protection Needs**

The expressed desire of City residents for public access to the waterfront will continue to be taken into consideration in future planning and development proposals. Environmental protection of the Runnins and Ten Mile Rivers is important, as their environs are significant sources of open space for passive and active recreation needs. Development of any of the City's golf courses would result in a loss of open space which would be a detriment to the overall recreation and open space system of East Providence.

### **Need for Improvement of Access and Usage**

The principal and long-standing goal of the City of East Providence is to provide diversity and quality of recreational experiences to all of its residents, and particularly those with special needs and/or reduced recreational opportunities, including senior citizens, handicapped, and low to moderate income families. Recreation and open space provided to City residents should reflect changing technology and shifts in the desires and demands of residents and changes in population composition.

Providing equal access to City parks and playgrounds for physically challenged persons is a high priority. Redevelopment of existing sites and acquisition and development of new sites will be done with the needs of this segment of the population in mind.  
Ongoing Projects and Unique Opportunities

The City of East Providence has over six miles of dedicated multi-use non-motorized vehicle paths within its borders, as described in the Community Sustainability Element of this Comprehensive Plan. The East Bay Bike Path, traversing the western edge of southern East Providence, and the Ten Mile Greenway in northeastern East Providence are widely used by City and area residents. Bicycling between these two facilities and within other portions of East Providence can be challenging as many of the City's through streets are not bike-friendly. The City also should work with the RI DOT to develop a city-wide bicycle network that includes on-street bicycle paths using signage and striping.

The construction of three (3) fish ladders along the Ten Mile River and restoration of anadromous fish runs represents a tremendous opportunity to restore and enhance a river which has played a vital role in the life and history of the City of East Providence.

Nearby, the Turner Reservoir Raised Boardwalk project, nearing completion late in 2009, will provide a scenic woodland and wetland walkway with viewing areas, as well as a connection to other trails within conservation land surrounding the Turner Reservoir. This project is part of an overall vision of a large interconnected trail work in northeastern East Providence and the adjacent area of Seekonk, Massachusetts.

The Hunts Mills Historic Site project offers exciting opportunities for enhanced active and passive recreation, picnicking, expansion as a URI Master Gardener site, as also as a site to showcase renewable energy production. Execution of this long-term project will create a very unique multi-faceted facility celebrating a part of the City's past as well as its present and future, without compromising its exceptional natural attributes.

Elsewhere, a committee has been formed to investigate the possibility of developing the area around Jones Pond, on City property near Pierce Field, into a landscaped City park. The landscape architecture firm of Gate, Leighton and Associates, Inc. produced a concept plan for this roughly 8-acre property featuring walking trails, some handicap-accessible; an



*Concept Drawing for Tranquility Place at Jones Pond. Gates, Leighton & Associates, Inc.*

amphitheater with music shell; overlook areas; lighting; and an activity plaza. The “Tranquility Place at Jones Pond Commission” is meeting monthly and will pursue funding options to aid in the development of this proposed park.

The City Conservation Commission oversaw land donations totaling 22 acres along the Runnins River south of Route 6 in 2008 and 2009. These land acquisitions are an important step toward a long-term goal of creating continuous greenspace along this portion of the River.

The Commission was also executing an enhancement project at the Boyden Heights Conservation Area, which consists of about 10 acres of City property between Bradley Hospital, Boyden Boulevard and the East Bay Bike Path. The Commission secured funding from the National Park Service for the rehabilitation of a scenic wetland boardwalk/viewing platform and performed trail maintenance at the site in 2009.

Issues related to meeting recreation and open space needs in East Providence primarily relate to the established pattern of community development and the mature nature of the community. There is little available vacant land for expansion of the recreation system in those densely developed neighborhoods of the City. Solutions other than acquisition may have to be pursued in these areas, such as programming, transportation or other innovative means.

The waterfront presents both problems and opportunities. In many cases, industrial uses along the Providence and Seekonk Rivers have polluted the rivers, degraded their appearance, and limited public access. Yet, the opportunity to take advantage of the waterfront by providing access and preserving views exists. More mixed-use residential commercial and more public access is being pursued along the City's waterfront as

described in the City's 2003 Waterfront Development District Plan. There are several other opportunities for providing recreation for local residents. The following sites represent potential for active and passive recreation opportunities, or for conservation. Examples of the kinds of opportunities these sites provide are listed below.

- Providence and Seekonk Rivers - boating, scenic views;
- Turner Reservoir/Central Pond (passive) - walking, scenic views, bird watching, picnics, canoeing/kayaking, fishing;
- Hunts Mills - scenic views, picnics, historical, farmers market, alternative energy education;
- Southeast Drainage District (former Forbes St. Landfill site) - hiking, combined active and passive recreation and open space facility; renewable energy
- Ten Mile River Greenway and Bicycle Path - hiking, walking, bicycling, bird watching, picnics;
- Runnins River – canoeing/kayaking, walking, bird watching, environmental education;
- Omega Pond – canoe/kayak launching, fishing;
- Boyden Heights - hiking, bird watching, environmental education
- Kettle Point - scenic views, walking;
- Providence Avenue Playground/Bullocks Cove - walking, scenic views, bird watching, environmental education.

### **Cell Tower Location**

The City of East Providence is concerned about the growing proliferation of cell towers in the City in general and more particularly with the desire of wireless communication companies to locate them in recreation, conservation and open space areas. To that end, the City is opposed to the placement of such towers within City-owned recreation, conservation or open space land areas, in order to maintain the natural setting of these areas, unless there is a compelling public interest to do so. The City believes that cell towers are more properly suited for industrial and commercial areas and should be minimized to the greatest extent possible by the co-location of transmitting antennas and other telecommunication devices on existing structures or poles.

### **Forbes Street Landfill**

The Forbes Street site consists of approximately 225 acres, including five (5) acres occupied by the City's yard waste composting program, sixty (60) acres which comprises the area of the former landfill, along with extensive wetlands and forest areas. The City is reviewing reuse options for this property, including playfields, passive recreation, and renewable energy facilities. Any re-use will only occur after landfill closure plans have been prepared and implemented to the satisfaction of RIDEM. Two separate reuse reports were generated by outside consultants in 2000, which concluded among other things that while redevelopment of this site was possible, there would be substantial costs associated with this redevelopment.

## Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Goals and Objectives

The following goals serve as policy statements regarding the provision of recreation and open space within East Providence, and the protection of significant natural resources within the City. These goals are based upon the vision statement detailed above.

### General Goals

- Provide diversity and quality of recreational experiences to all residents of the City, and particularly those with special needs and/or reduced recreational opportunities, including senior citizens, handicapped, and low to moderate income families;
- Continue to solicit the opinions of citizens in assessing the recreation needs of neighborhood areas in particular, and the community in general, and to provide mechanisms for incorporating that input into the decision-making process; and
- Work to curb damage and destruction of the City's playgrounds, parks, and open space by vandalism and other misuse.

The following Goals and Objectives are a compilation of the 1994 Plan and the 2004 and 2010 Plan Updates.

### **Goal 1: Provide 2.5 acres of developed recreational space for every 1000 persons within a general ½ mile walking distance of individual residences.**

Objective 1.1: Continue to inventory and assess existing sites to determine whether they are meeting recreation needs.

Objective 1.2: Continue to inventory sites possessing the potential for meeting passive and active recreation needs.

Objective 1.3: Provide City residents with an increased diversity of recreational opportunities close to where they live.

Objective 1.4: Review major residential and commercial development proposals and other infrequent land use projects, such as the building of new transportation routes and extension of public utilities, for unique opportunities to expand the recreation system through the donation of easements or land, or fees in lieu of donation.

Objective 1.5: Where absolutely not possible to provide a facility due to the lack of vacant or underutilized sites, provide transportation, programming or other innovative measures to meet recreation demand.

**Goal 2: Reduce operation and maintenance costs of playground, park and open space areas while providing a sufficient and diversified supply of qualities for City residents.**

Objective 2.1: Consider the operation and maintenance costs of new and rehabilitated recreation facilities and use "green" building and rehabilitation techniques whenever possible.

Objective 2.2: Seek private sector funding and manpower for maintenance of City parks.

Objective 2.3: Promote capital projects which reflect proper concern for minimum impact on operating costs.

Objective 2.4: Do capital improvement planning for rehabilitation of sites requiring more than simple maintenance which are beyond the financial and staffing capabilities of the City.

Objective 2.5: Develop designs incorporating an arrangement of facilities and circulation patterns which allow for high visibility and secure areas in order to reduce vandalism and encourage use in the manner intended.

Objective 2.6: City specifications for vendors should specify equipment and apparatus exhibiting low maintenance, high durability and damage-resistant characteristics which are useful to a range of user groups.

Objective 2.7: Repair damaged facilities promptly to discourage further damage.

Objective 2.8: Replace obsolete equipment with City and/or State or Federal funds.

Objective 2.9: Involve neighborhood and community groups as "watchdogs" in monitoring park resources.

Objective 2.10: Implement an overall maintenance management program.

**Goal 3: Provide non-discriminatory municipal recreation, social and cultural programs for all ages and levels of ability.**

Objective 3.1: Develop a new multi-purpose indoor recreation center for City residents.

Objective 3.2: Analyze 2010 U.S. Census data as soon as it is available, and attempt to find other reliable sources of demographic information.

Objective 3.3: Inventory and survey participants in recreation programs and other city residents regarding demand for recreational programs and open space.

Objective 3.4: Conduct outreach programs, particularly through schools and organizations servicing the elderly and disabled.

Objective 3.5: Continue to offer summer youth recreation programming (ages 5 to 15).

Objective 3.6: Continue to offer year-round youth recreation programming.

Objective 3.7: Continue to provide adult and senior citizen recreation programming.

Objective 3.8: Provide the opportunity for passive and active recreation by all persons of all ages in each new or rehabilitated site.

**Goal 4: Provide for the recreational needs of citizens with special needs, and for those with reduced recreational opportunities, such as those with low and moderate incomes.**

Objective 4.1: Encourage private recreational facilities to open to residents during specified hours at no charge or a minimal charge.

Objective 4.2: Grade and surface walks and trails to allow access for handicapped and physically challenged persons wherever terrain allows.

Objective 4.3: Serve both young and old and passive and active recreation needs.

Objective 4.4: Provide close to home neighborhood parks.

Objective 4.5: Utilize 2010 U.S. Census data in planning for these segments of the population.

**Goal 5: Provide for a continuous system of interconnected bikeways in and out of the City for transportation and recreational uses.**

Objective 5.1: Work with RIDOT and RIDEM to expand the Ten Mile Greenway from Kimberly Ann Rock southward to the Hunt's Mill Historic Site utilizing Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) funds which are available for the development of the Greenway and/or other funds.

Objective 5.2: Work with RIDOT and local bicycling organizations in the development of a practical street-based bike network along existing or new transportation routes, such as Waterfront Drive.

**Goal 6: Expand opportunities for tourism relating to recreational and cultural offerings.**

Objective 6.1: Expand bikeway system connecting the City to other portions of RI.

Objective 6.2: Support the continued operation and maintenance of the three private golf courses presently operating within the City.

Objective 6.3: Continue City-sponsored recreational and cultural events such as the Dolly Searle Golf Tournament, Fourth of July celebration, Outdoor Concerts, Annual Tree Lighting and the Turkey Trot Road Race.

Objective 6.4: Work in conjunction with East Providence Heritage Days, Inc. to produce the Heritage Festival and other special events.

Objective 6.5: Make the City entrances more inviting through beautification and other efforts.

Objective 6.6: Develop a cultural, historic and passive recreation area at Hunts Mills.

Objective 6.7: Develop a combined active and passive recreation and open space facility in a portion, along with a passive energy facility, in the Southeast Drainage area (former Forbes Street Landfill site).

Objective 6.8: Expand shoreline access for passive recreation and opportunities for saltwater fishing.

Objective 6.9: Develop a Conservation/Education Area (possibly a bird sanctuary) along the Runnins River and/or at Squantum Woods/Boyden Heights.

## **RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

**Goal 7: Establish a mix of activity both recreational and functional in nature that preserved natural resources and aesthetics and contributes to the quality of life and economic stability of the community.**

Objective 7.1: Continue to utilize the City's Waterfront District Development Plan to guide responsible development in the Waterfront District

Objective 7.2: Systematically diminish barriers that presently reduce public access to the waterfront and its amenities.

Objective 7.3: Continue to coordinate the design and development of Waterfront Drive with RIDOT to assure the inclusion of design details and elements that maintain the scale and aesthetics of a parkway-type environment.

Objective 7.4: Implement the vegetation needs identified in the Waterfront Guide Plan to increase the proliferation of plant and animal life, to control erosion, and make aesthetic improvements.

Objective 7.5: Continue to acquire land through land donation along the Runnins River to establish an uninterrupted greenway.

Objective 7.6: Work with the City, the URI Master Gardeners Program, and private consultants to enhance the Hunts Mill Historic Site through the development of its renewable energy potential and through creative and attractive landscaping.

**Goal 8: Preserve, expand and enhance open space within the City of East Providence while broadening access to the public where warranted.**

Objective 8.1: Create a contiguous greenbelt network to function as a passive recreation, non-vehicular circulation, ecological landscape buffer and physical link between natural, recreational and historic points of interest.

Objective 8.2: Protect endangered and rare plant and animal species in East Providence based on the Natural Heritage Program List and incorporate the list as a standard too in the development review process. Develop a plan to study, identify and catalog rare plant and animal species.

Objective 8.3: Initiate and establish ongoing communications with landowners who have holdings that are important to the natural and cultural resources of East Providence.

Objective 8.4: Coordinate efforts with Save the Bay, The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, the Coastal Resources Management Council, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service for wetland restoration in specific areas of the City's waterfront.

Objective 8.5: Continue to work with the National Park Service, the Seekonk Trails Committee, and other groups in the responsible development of trails providing access to the City's natural and scenic amenities.

**Goal 9: Coordinate the development and preservation of open spaces so that together they contribute to a satisfying urban environment for City residents.**

Objective 9.1: Take National Recreation and Park Association standards for metropolitan parks and reserves into account in planning for the recreation, conservation and open space system.

Objective 9.2: Look for opportunities to develop greenways and linear parks connecting the recreation and open space system with other community facilities (schools, residences, etc.) and other parks.

Objective 9.3: Encourage cluster developments with private and public usable open space.

Objective 9.4: Investigate means for the protection and preservation of the City's private golf courses.

Objective 9.5: Work with the Department of Transportation in incorporating aesthetic considerations in future transportation development.

Objective 9.6: Require all future subdivisions, commercial developments, and Land Development Projects to provide for open space, active recreation space, buffers, and/or landscaping.

**Goal 10: Ensure that appropriate open space is available for the purpose of implementing environmental practices such as state-of-the-art stormwater management and the preservation and planting of trees and other vegetation for mitigation of air pollution.**

Objective 10.1: Require open space, buffers and landscaping of all developments.

Objective 10.2: Continue tree planting through City and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and other grant programs which are available.

Objective 10.3: Continue to identify and protect State and National Register properties as part of historic open spaces.

Objective 10.5: Maintain the Open Space - 1 Zoning District designations.

Objective 10.6: Inventory and identify existing vacant land which has the potential for providing significant recreation and/or open space opportunities, especially those parcels which are threatened by development.

Objective 10.7: Keep up-to-date on environmental protection advances.

Objective 10.8: Seek Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funding for studies and instituting programs.

**Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Action Plan**

Following is the master list of recommended **Capital Improvement and Development Projects** with regard to recreation and open space for the City of East Providence.

Table 15. Capital Improvement and Development Projects

Project	Fiscal Year 2009-10	Fiscal Year 2010-11	Fiscal Year 2011-12	Fiscal Year 2012-13	Fiscal Year 2013-14	5-Year Total	Notes / Financing Options
Multi-purpose Indoor Recreation Center			\$5,000,000			\$5,000,000	Community grassroots fundraising
Silver Spring Playground Rehabilitation	\$85,000					\$85,000	City capital funding, RIDEM matching grant
Bourne Park Basketball and Tennis Court Rehabilitation	\$55,000					\$55,000	City capital funding
Agawam-Fynn Field Light and Pole Replacement	\$185,000					\$55,000	City capital funding
Riverside Recreation Basketball Rehabilitation		\$35,000				\$35,000	City capital funding
Kent Heights Soccer Field Enlargement, Irrigation		\$150,000				\$150,000	City capital funding/RIDEM matching grant
Playground Fall Protection-Bourne, Rosegarden, Sabin Point		\$42,000				\$42,000	City capital funding
Agawam-Mello Field Light and Pole Replacement			\$185,000			\$185,000	City capital funding
Kimberly Rock- Sweeney Field Rehabilitation			\$45,000			\$45,000	City capital funding
Playground Fall Protection-Glenlyon, Kent Heights, Riverside Recreation				\$45,000		\$45,000	City capital funding
Playground Fall Protection/Equipment- Vintner Avenue				\$35,000		\$35,000	City capital funding
Hunts Mill Historic Area Enhancement Project		\$125,000	\$125,000			\$250,000	Potential RIDEM Open Space / Rec.

							Grant
Jones Pond Area Enhancement Project	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$500,000	Potential RIDEM Open Space / Rec. Grant
Squantum Woods Master Plan and Development				\$100,000		\$100,000	Potential RIDEM Open Space / Rec. Grant

The total cost of the Implementation Program is \$6,582,000.

Capital improvement priorities could change over time based upon community growth, demographic changes, and other factors. Final action on these projects is largely dependent on the future availability of local, state and federal funds. The cost reflected for the projects are estimates based on the City's experience with similar past projects, and are subject to revision depending upon inflation and the scope of the final specific designs for the projects.

Under Federal regulations, the City is also eligible for funding assistance under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Entitlement program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The CDBG Program requires that substantial benefit must accrue to low and moderate income persons as a result of assistance. The City will continue to seek resources for improving its park and recreation system through these and any other sources of assistance which might become available.

**General Summary of Recommended Rehabilitation of Playground/Parks/Athletic Areas (Source: Parks Division)**

**High Priority:**

- Silver Spring Playground and Athletic Area
- Mauran Avenue Tot Playground
- Hull Street Athletic Area
- Agawam Softball Complex

**Medium Priority:**

- Tranquility Place at Jones Pond
- Kent Heights Playground
- Willett Pond Conservation Area
- Riverside Recreation/DelleFemine Athletic Area
- Carousel Grounds

**Low Priority:**

- Rose Garden Playground
- Martello Playground
- Hull Street Playground
- Glenlyon Playground and Athletic Area
- Boyden Heights Conservation Area
- Lyle E. Bourne Neighborhood Park
- Providence Avenue Playground
- Sabin Point Park

John L. Lewis Waterfront Park  
Ailanthus Avenue Park  
Rose Larisa Memorial Park

**Summary of Recommended Acquisition and Development  
(Source: Parks Division)**

**High Priority:**

Multi-purpose Indoor Recreation Center Planning  
Hunts Mills Master Plan and Redevelopment  
Squantum Woods Master Plan and Development  
Crescent Beach Master Plan & Redevelopment

**Medium Priority:**

Grassy Plains Master Plan & Redevelopment  
Runnins River Canoe Launch/Public Access Point  
Ten Mile River Fishing & Public Access Point  
Forbes Street Landfill Feasibility Study  
Waterfront Acquisition (Phase I)  
Runnins River Acquisition (Phase I)

**Low Priority:**

Carousel/Seaview Tot Lot  
Forbes Street Landfill Redevelopment  
Waterfront Acquisition (Phase II)  
Runnins River Acquisition (Phase II)

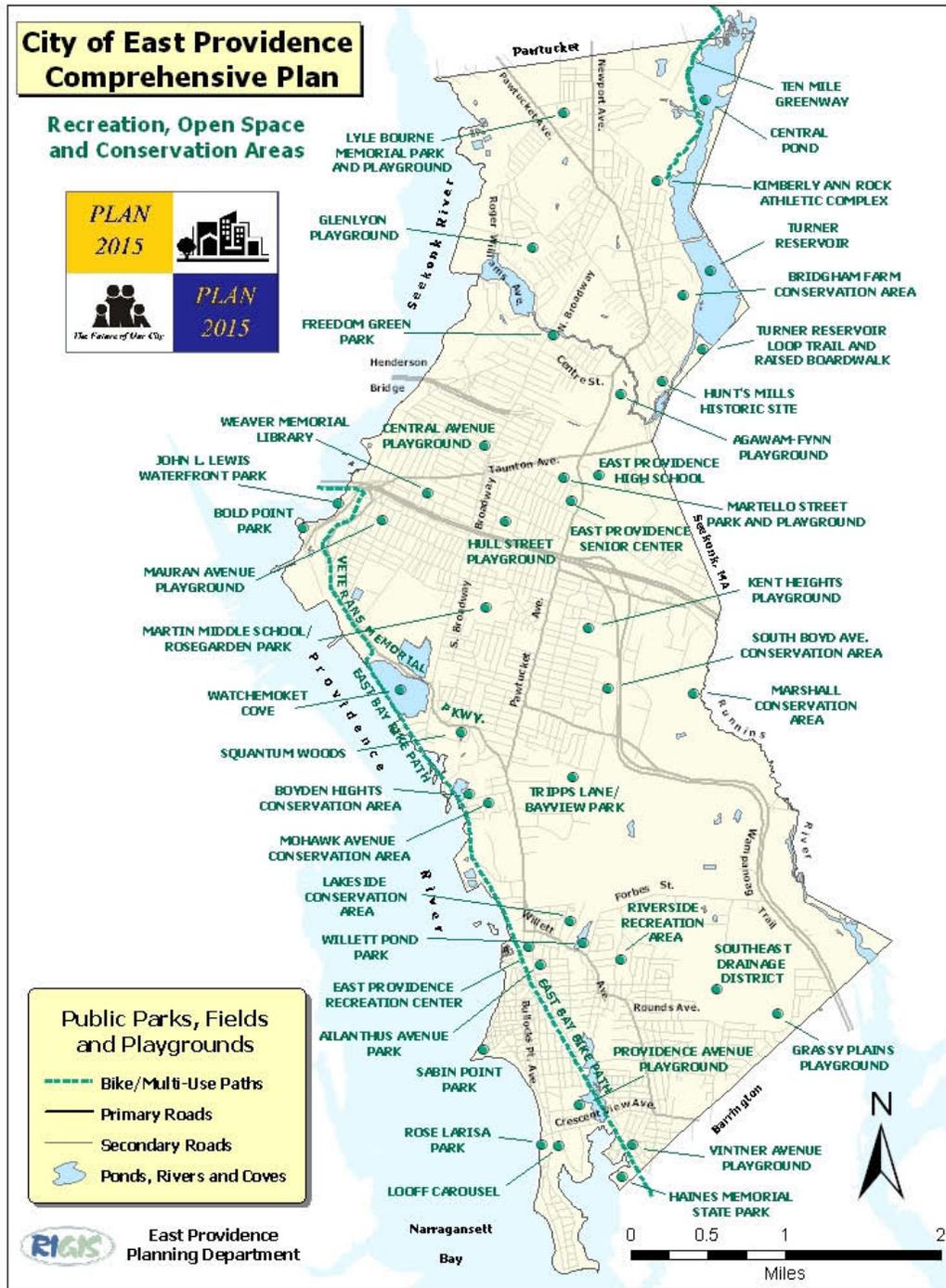
**Table 16. Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Implementation Strategies**

In reading the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Strategies throughout the Plan Elements many of the timeframes are listed as “On-going”, meaning either that specific projects are underway and/or that Planning Department staff are actively initiating and assessing the availability of opportunities to further implementation of the Plan and its Action Items. The short, intermediate and long-term timeframes assigned to Action Items are generalized and again, there may be current and on-going efforts that will continue into intermediate and long-term time periods. Generally, the phrase “Short Term” should be interpreted as currently underway or expected to be commenced in the year 2011. Generally, the phrase “Intermediate Term” should be interpreted as an Action Item that may be commenced in 2011-2013 and will take longer to implement, and/or may rely on data and financing not currently available. Generally, the phrase “Long Term” refers to a project that may be currently underway but that is of a larger scope that may take many years to initiate and/or complete and is dependent upon considerable financing, engineering, studies and/or permits to accomplish, and is likely to take beyond 2015 to fully implement.

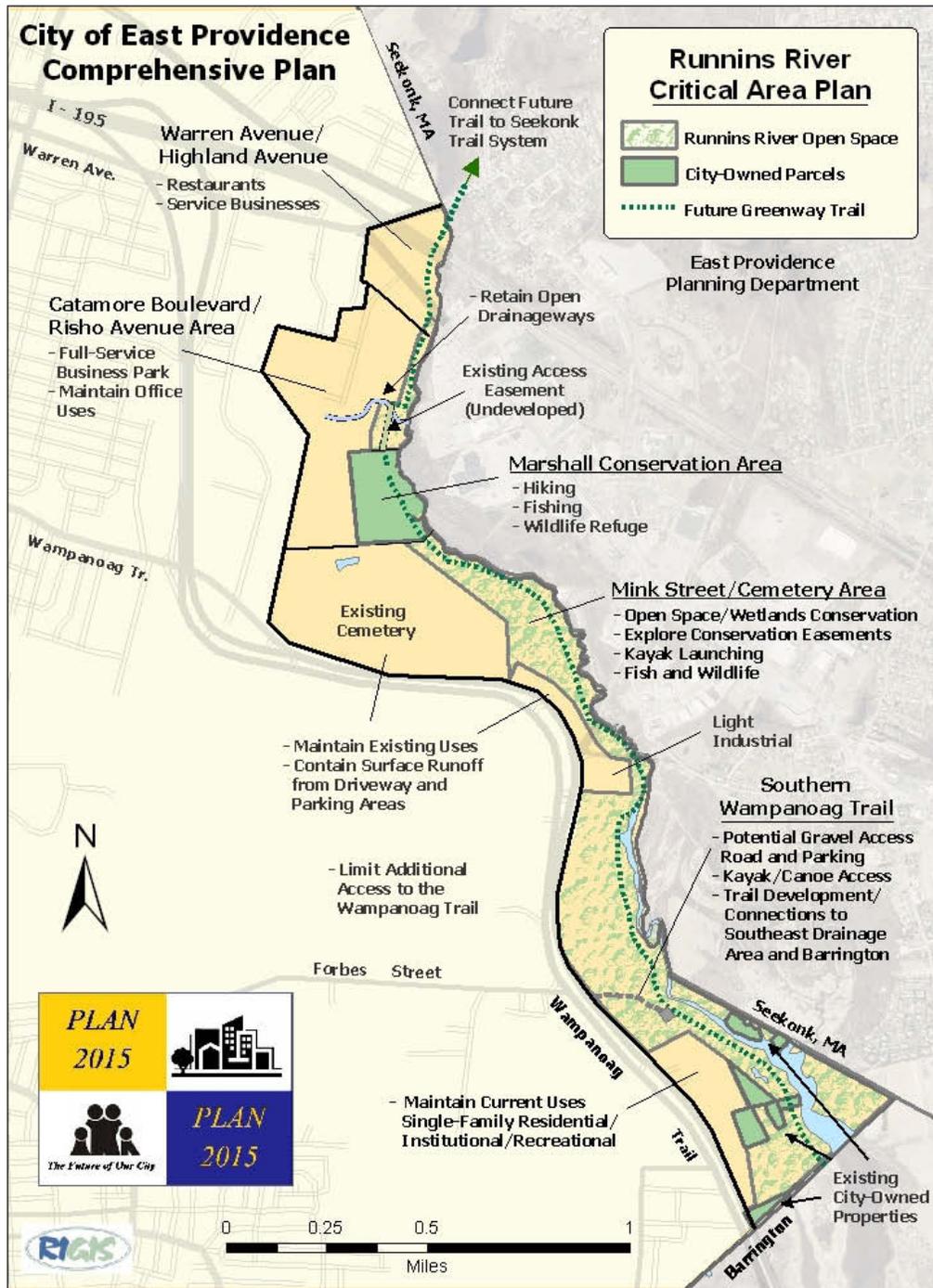
Please note that where the State of Rhode Island, or a specific State Agency is listed as a party under the table heading “Responsible for Implementation” that this is not an obligation of any particular agency but is listed for informational purposes and is a recognition by the City that a collaboration between the City and the State is desirable and/or necessary for implementation of a particular project.

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility for Implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
RCOS - 1	Inventory and assess existing sites to determine whether they are meeting recreation needs, and sites possessing the potential for meeting passive and active recreation needs.	Department of Parks and Recreation	On-going
RCOS - 2	Where not possible to provide a facility due to the lack of vacant or underutilized sites, provide transportation, programming or other measures to meet recreation demand.	Department of Parks and Recreation	On-going
RCOS - 3	Fund a capital improvement planning for rehabilitation of sites requiring more than simple maintenance which are beyond the financial and staffing capabilities of the City.	Department of Parks and Recreation, Planning Department, City Council	Intermediate and Long Term as available
RCOS - 4	Explore ways to supplement City maintenance crews such as by utilizing youth and/or senior citizen volunteers.	Department of Parks and Recreation, Planning Dept., local volunteer and youth organizations	Short and Intermediate Term
RCOS - 5	Involve neighborhood and community groups as "watchdogs" in monitoring park resources.	Department of Parks and Recreation, Police Department	On-going
RCOS - 6	Develop a new multi-purpose indoor recreation center for City residents.	City Council, Department of Parks and Recreation	2011-2012
RCOS - 7	Replace obsolete equipment with City and/or State or Federal funds.	Department of Parks and Recreation	On-going
RCOS - 8	Analyze 2010 U.S. Census data as soon as it is available, and attempt to find other reliable sources of demographic information to aid in determining recreational needs	Planning Department	On-going (U.S. Census 2011 and beyond)
RCOS - 9	Inventory and survey participants in recreation programs and other city residents regarding demand for recreational programs and open space.	Department of Parks and Recreation, Planning Department	On-going
RCOS - 10	Continue to offer youth, adult and senior recreation programming	Department of Parks and Recreation	On-going

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility for Implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
RCOS - 11	Work to develop the southern segments of the Ten Mile Greenway from Kimberly Ann Rock southward to the Hunt's Mill Historic Site	Planning Department, RIDEM, RIDOT	No timeframe set.
RCOS - 12	Work with RIDOT and local bicycling organizations in the development of a practical street-based bike network along existing or new transportation routes	Planning Department	On-going
RCOS - 13	Continue established City-sponsored recreational and cultural events.	Department of Parks and Recreation	On-going
RCOS - 14	Continue to produce the East Providence Heritage Festival and other special events.	Department of Parks and Recreation, Heritage Days LLC	On-going
RCOS - 15	Develop a cultural, historic and passive recreation area at Hunts Mills	Planning Department, Department of Parks and Recreation	Underway in part, and 2010-2013
RCOS - 16	Continue to acquire land through land donation and less-than- fee interests in land along the Runnins River and elsewhere.	Planning Department, Conservation Commission	On-going
RCOS - 17	Continue to identify and protect State and National Register properties as part of historic open spaces.	Planning Department, Historic Properties Commission, Historic District Commission	On-going
RCOS - 18	Apply the Zoning Ordinance (Development Plan Review, Land Development Project) and Subdivision Regulations, to gain open space set-asides development proposals	Planning Department, Zoning Officer	On-going
RCOS - 19	Research and pursue private sources of funding and in-kind contributions, such as through foundations and land trusts	Planning Department	On-going
RCOS - 20	Develop a Natural Resources/Open Space inventory that would enumerate natural attributes of larger open space parcels	Planning Department, Conservation Commission	2011 – 2012



Map 13. Public Parks, Fields and Playgrounds



Map 14. Runnins River Critical Area Plan

## **Community Sustainability Element**

## Introduction

The Community Sustainability Element of the 2009 East Providence Comprehensive Plan is the City's first detailed document that specifically addresses sustainability goals and objectives. The City recognizes that local government can play an important role in community sustainability through the carefully planned provision of City services and infrastructure improvements. Our vision for this plan element is to ensure that wise decisions are made regarding land use, management of City infrastructure,



and use of energy resources that satisfy present needs and also provide tangible benefits for our community well into the future. Aspects of sustainability to be considered in this plan include the conservation of natural resources, improved energy efficiency, low-impact development and green building techniques, sustainable transportation initiatives, and community involvement. Sustainability is central to long-term planning and is a primary theme of this Comprehensive Plan update, and as such many of the goals, objectives, and action items in the Community Sustainability Element reflect items in other Plan elements. The Community Sustainability Element presents a snapshot of ongoing, planned and visualized items directly pertaining to aspects of sustainability that are germane to the City and have the potential to protect and improve the quality of life for East Providence residents.

## Community Sustainability Planning Framework

### ***Land Use 2025: Rhode Island State Land Use Policies and Plan: State Guide Plan Element 121***

Adopted by the State Planning Council in 2006, *Land Use 2025* expresses a series of goals, objectives and strategies for guiding land development in Rhode Island through the year 2025. The primary land use goal of *Land Use 2010* is:

“A sustainable Rhode Island that is beautiful, diverse, connected and compact with a distinct quality of place in our urban and rural centers, and abundance of natural resources, and a vibrant sustainable economy”.

Specific policies related to Community Sustainability in East Providence are found in the document as follows:

- Achieve a livable, coherent and visually pleasing environment.
- Facilitate public stewardship of healthy and vibrant watersheds that sustain life and support current and future uses.

- Encourage development patterns that protect water for drinking, ecosystems, and other critical purposes, as well as other natural resources.
- Create an interconnected network of bike paths, trails, and walkways to expand pedestrian and bicycle travel options.
- Develop residential, commercial and mixed-use areas that are compactly grouped, attractive, and compatible with the ability of land and water resources and level of public facilities and services available to support development.
- Develop and promote innovative and sustainable land development techniques and apply available technology to make decent housing available for low- and moderate-income households.
- Protect and provide utility services that are adequate to meet the needs of present and future populations.
- Encourage development that applies best management practices for water and stormwater management.
- Promote concentrations of high-density housing and employment near existing mass transit routes.
- Require the integration of appropriate transit, pedestrian, bicycle and other modal choices in new development to lessen dependence on the automobile where feasible.

### **Conservation of Natural Resources**

While the primary source of information regarding goals, objectives and action items for natural resources in the City is found in the Natural Resources, Recreation and Open Space Plan Element, many of these items pertain to community sustainability and are also referenced in this Element. Since the 2004 Comprehensive Plan Update, several actions have been continued or initiated with respect to natural resource conservation that directly address sustainability.

One action of particular interest was continued progress on the Ten Mile River Fish Restoration Project, which includes three fish ladders to be located at the Turner Reservoir Dam, the Hunt's Mills Dam, and the Omega Pond Dam. The goal of this innovative restoration project between The City of East Providence, Save the Bay, the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program, Department of Environmental Management, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is to restore self-sustaining runs of American shad and river herring to the lower reaches of the Ten Mile River including the Turner Reservoir. As of late 2009, construction of the fish ladders at Hunt's Mills dam and Turner Reservoir Dam was expected to begin during spring 2010. As a result of a 16-inch gas main that is in conflict with the proposed fish ladder at Omega Pond Dam, a section of the gas line less than 100 feet in length must be relocated prior to construction, which will delay the construction of the Omega Pond site to the spring of 2011.

The City continued to secure donations of land along the Runnins River to the south of Route 6. Land donations totaling 22 acres were finalized late in 2008, protecting significant parcels of land and representing progress toward a long-term goal of creating an uninterrupted greenway along the Runnins River from the Route 6 area southward to the Barrington line along Hundred Acre Cove.

Flood mitigation and protection of floodplains became an enhanced priority as a result of major residential flooding near the Runnins River north of Waterman Avenue in both

2005 and 2006. A restriction was placed on development within the 100-year floodplain in this area in an effort to preserve floodplain and wetland functions in this area, which include the storage of floodwater and the protection of water quality in and downstream from this area. These factors are carefully considered by City staff during the review process for both residential and commercial development proposals.

### **Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency**

The City is actively investigating the use of renewable sources of energy and is studying options to achieve greater energy efficiency. A City Energy Committee has been formed to aid in this effort and pursue outside funding for projects that will realize long-term energy savings for the City. Among initiatives already in place in East Providence is a proposal to develop an alternative energy education center at the Hunt's Mills Historic Site that would showcase renewable energy and green building techniques. This project could include functioning hydroelectric, solar and geothermal infrastructure and a green roof while restoring the historic Hunt's Mills Pump House for use as both a power station and a community meeting facility. The facility would be unique in the southern New England region and would serve to enhance other sustainable energy initiatives that the City pursues in the years to follow.

City staff has investigated several renewable energy sources with regard to their potential as sources of power generation for East Providence. Some of the findings and future recommendations are presented below.

#### ***Wind Energy***

The use of wind power has visibly increased across the Rhode Island since 2005 with new turbines recently erected in Portsmouth and in Warwick. Investigation continues as of this time regarding additional land-based turbines in Rhode Island, as well offshore wind farms in Block Island Sound where a major utility-scale project may be the most feasible. Landward wind studies indicate, not surprisingly, that aside from Block Island, the immediate South Coast and the lower Narragansett Bay area has the steadiest and strongest winds in the state. This has not prevented wind power development efforts in other areas and the City should continue to investigate potential smaller scale wind projects. East Providence is a partner in the East Bay Energy Consortium (EBEC), a voluntary cooperative effort between nine cities and towns in the East Bay Region extending from East Providence southward to Little Compton and Newport, with administrative, technical and legal assistance from Roger Williams University. In 2009, the EBEC was evaluating the feasibility of developing a regional wind energy system that would benefit all nine municipalities, and had received a grant in the amount of \$140,000 from a combination of the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation and the Rhode Island Foundation to pursue this study. The City has supported this effort through both monetary and in-kind services and plans continued support of this unique collaboration of municipalities in our region.

#### ***Solar Energy***

The Northeastern United States is not as favored for sunshine as are other portions of the nation, in particular the Desert Southwest and High Plains regions. However, the southern New England coastal plain, including the Providence area, receives more

sunshine than the remainder of New England and is competitive with the Mid-Atlantic states with regard to average annual hours of sunshine.

The U.S. Department of Energy has developed a “Brightfields Initiative” to encourage the productive use of brownfield sites and advance the use of solar energy technologies. The term “brightfields” refers to the conversion of contaminated sites into usable land by bringing pollution-free solar energy and high-tech solar manufacturing jobs to these sites, Brightfield options include the installation of photovoltaic arrays that can result in a reduction in cleanup costs, building integrated solar energy systems as part of an area redevelopment, and solar manufacturing plants on brownfields. Large-scale solar energy in a southern New England setting remains an expensive proposition. For example, the groundbreaking Brockton (Massachusetts) Brightfields project, the largest of its kind in the nation when completed in 2006 with nearly 1400 solar modules, was projected to provide power to 70 homes and cost over \$3 million to construct. Substantial outside funding would likely be necessary for any single municipality to develop large-scale solar, and indeed the Brockton project received funding from state and federal grants along with a municipal bond.

Smaller scale solar, consisting of individual solar commercial and residential units, may be a more practicable and realistic use of solar energy in East Providence over the coming decade. Retrofitting of City facilities to incorporate solar technology will be investigated in the coming years. Residential solar still requires a considerable investment for individual homeowners, though standard residential solar kits that provide all or most electricity for home consumption are now available with pricing in low tens of thousands of dollars. Alternative energy tax credits may be available for such purposes as well.

### **Hydropower**

The Ten Mile River system in the northern portion of East Providence offers a unique opportunity within a coastal urban setting to explore the feasibility of producing electricity through hydroelectric generation. The Ten Mile River’s 54 square-mile watershed ensures a reliable year-round flow and features an elevation drop of around 50 feet within East Providence. The City is pursuing funding to conduct an engineering study on the



feasibility of hydropower at two locations along the river; the Hunt’s Mills Dam and the Omega Pond Dam. The existing Hunt’s Mills Pump House has much of the necessary infrastructure in place and was used to produce electricity for several decades up until the 1970s. Recent assessments have concluded that with the proper modifications, the Hunts Mills dam could generate up to 750,000 KWh annually, with the potential for over 1,000,000 KWh annually at the Omega Pond Dam. The City is excited at the prospect of hydropower as a viable renewal energy source in the foreseeable future.

### **Energy Efficiency**

An Energy Committee consisting of City officials was formed in 2009 to study potential opportunities to improve energy efficiency in City operations. Energy audits of City and School Department facilities were planned as an aid in determining how City buildings can be retrofitted and upgraded to reduce energy costs while provided for improved indoor environmental conditions for the many users of these facilities. Interior lighting fixtures and bulbs were replaced by more efficient lighting systems in City facilities including City Hall and the Central Garage during 2009. Further efficiencies could be realized through the development and implementation of a “green procurement” policy in the City whereby major purchases such as City vehicles, HVAC systems, and more would have the best energy efficiency possible for their intended use. The lack of available capital improvement funding for infrastructure improvements and vehicles in recent years has hindered efforts to develop and carry out a program that would save resources and result in long-term savings in operating expenses. The City is also considering partnerships with Energy Service Companies (ESCOs), and using performance contracting as a way of funding the installation of energy efficient systems. With performance contracting, there are no up-front costs to the City and improvement costs are paid out of long-term guaranteed energy savings.

### **Low-Impact Development and “Green” Building**

The City of East Providence and East Providence Special Waterfront Development District have both established stormwater management programs to effectively deal with added stormwater run-off resulting from development within the City. The Waterfront Development District has received approximately \$334,000 in State and Federal funds for waterfront environmental initiatives over the past three years. The Waterfront Commission received \$234,000 in 2006 from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for innovative stormwater management, design, and construction in the Waterfront District. A pilot stormwater management project at Bold Point Park will feature low-impact development (or “LID”) systems. LID is an approach to stormwater management that works with nature to manage stormwater as close to its source as possible. LID employs principles such as preserving and recreating natural landscape features, minimizing effective imperviousness to create functional and appealing site drainage that treat stormwater as a resource rather than a waste product. The project will feature vegetated stormwater systems such as constructed wetlands, permeable pavement and rain gardens. The District also received funds from the EPA’s Section 319 Nonpoint Source program for the project and for the elimination of invasive phragmites and replacement with native vegetation. These funds will enable the City to use innovative technology to improve the water quality of Upper Narragansett Bay.

The Waterfront District received \$234,746 from the Small Business Association (SBA) in 2009 as part of the federal FY2009 Consolidated Appropriations Act. The funds will be used to assist small businesses in constructing or renovating properties using “green” building design and other sustainable development approaches.

In November of 2009, the Rhode Island Green Buildings Act was signed into law. This new law applies to buildings entering the design phase after Jan. 1, 2010, which feature new construction of more than 5,000 square feet and renovation of spaces greater than 10,000 square feet if such projects receive any funding from the state. Under this law, building design must conform to the internationally recognized United States Green

Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system or an equivalent high-performance green building standard. Those standards are designed to promote a whole-building approach to sustainability in five key areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, energy and water efficiency, improved indoor air quality and environmentally sensitive use of resources and materials (Source: Rhode Island General Assembly).

The City should encourage developers and project managers to adopt “green” building practices during renovation and new construction of residential and commercial buildings. The mixed-use “Village on the Waterfront” development to be located along Veterans Memorial Parkway, featuring over 600 residential units, has been designed to attain Silver Certification through the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) program. This proposal represents one of the largest (residential) projects to date in the State of Rhode Island that would attain this level of environmental certification.

### ***Sustainable Transportation***

The City of East Providence is very fortunate to have over six miles of dedicated multi-use non-motorized vehicle paths within its borders. The 14-mile East Bay Bike Path is one of the gems of the Rhode Island recreational landscape and is one of 25 trails across the country that the National Rails to Trails Conservancy has selected for their Rails to Trails Hall of Fame. East Providence contains five miles of this highly scenic bikeway. In addition to its recreational and scenic attributes, many local residents also use the facility to commute to work by bike within Providence and the East Bay communities.



Another multi-use trail, the Ten Mile Greenway, spans 2.2 miles in Pawtucket and northeastern East Providence. The East Providence segment of this linear park opened in 2004 and is widely lauded for its scenic attributes. Long-term plans for the Ten Mile Greenway include expansion via a trail extension, or combination of trail and street network, southward to the Hunt’s Mills Historic Site, with a goal of creating being a viable and safe connection between the Greenway and the East Bay Bike Path.

There are a number of factors that currently make bicycling between these two facilities and within other portions of East Providence problematic. Many of the City’s through streets are not bike-friendly, being heavily traveled and relatively narrow considering their traffic volume. On-street parking on both sides of the roadway is a common occurrence, with numerous curb cuts for side streets and commercial uses. Nonetheless, bicycle commuters are evident on City streets, particularly in the northern portion of the City between the Henderson Bridge and the Seekonk border.

It is acknowledged that the City's established infrastructure and street layout will always present a challenge regarding safe bicycling through portions of the City not directly adjacent to one of bike paths. The City has been studying the street system to determine how to best utilize it to provide links to and between the existing bikeway systems, and to link City residents who are not in close proximity to these facilities. Opportunities to accomplish greater bicycle connectivity exist via planned construction of new roadways and reconstruction of existing arteries, along with relatively minor retrofitting of other streets that could be designated as bike routes. The City is also interested in coordinating with neighboring communities including Providence, Pawtucket, Barrington, and Seekonk, Massachusetts to explore opportunities for integration of municipal bicycle path networks.

### ***Pedestrian Initiatives***

In 2006, a Pedestrian Plan concept was developed for the City as part of a graduate project for the University of Rhode Island Community Planning program. The Plan analyzed and weighted 16 generators of pedestrian traffic, ranging from census data to the locations of bus stops and civic facilities, to derive a map depicting priority areas for pedestrian safety improvements. This information is being updated to account for changes in some of the criteria, in particular to place more emphasis on City's public schools as pedestrian traffic generators. An available City Sidewalk inventory will be included as part of a final Pedestrian Plan which can help to prioritize areas where new sidewalks or sidewalk improvements are necessitated.

The National Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program was established in Rhode Island in 2007 with a call for proposals from communities to participate in this 100% federally funded reimbursement program. Funding is available through this program for a wide variety of projects and activities, both infrastructure and non-infrastructure, designed to encourage schools and communities to work together to make walking and bicycling to school a safe and routine activity. East Providence successfully attained a grant for \$23,000 in 2007 for improvements to sidewalks and crosswalks in the immediate area of Kent Heights Elementary School, and for the establishment of an SRTS program of activities within the school. School officials and parents have embraced the program, resulting in increased awareness of the pedestrian hazards around the school along with solutions to these issues, as well as activities that encourage more students to walk to and from school. The School will continue this programming, and was planning to apply for additional grant opportunities through SRTS. Other schools in the City will be informed of the SRTS program, and will be encouraged to submit proposals and develop their own in-school safety programs. SRTS represents an excellent opportunity to promote walking and physical activity among elementary and middle school students, and to accomplish infrastructure improvements including sidewalks in the vicinity of schools to improve safety for the school community and area residents alike.

### ***Public Transportation***

The Rhode Island Public Transportation Authority (RIPTA) connects many points in East Providence to downtown Providence and other East Bay locations, and through downtown Providence to the remainder of the state. RIPTA Routes serving East Providence include Routes 32 through 34 servicing central and southern portions of the City, and Routes 35 and 78 serving mainly northern areas. Three of these routes, 33, 34 and 78, traverse the corner of Pawtucket and Taunton Avenues and in the past have all

shared a single bus stop in this area that effectively served as a hub for the City and nearby areas. Recent redevelopment activity in this area has resulted in the loss of this RIPTA hub. The City has been working with RIPTA to re-establish this important regional transportation hub to enhance service and bus line connectivity, making it easier and more convenient for City residents to use our state's primary public transportation system. This effort and others in cooperation with our State's primary public transportation authority will continue.

### ***Community Involvement***

In August of 2008, The City of East Providence implemented a Total Participation Recycling program in an effort to reduce the amount of solid waste material going directly to the state's central landfill. This program, also known as "No Bins-No Barrels", mandates that residents must set recycling bins out to the street each week with their regular trash in order for their trash to be collected. This requirement and an effective public informational campaign resulted in an increase in the City's recycling rate from 21.3% for the year ending June 30, 2008 to nearly 25% for the year ending June 30, 2009. The City's yard waste collection program has also successfully diverted substantial material from the solid waste stream for use as compost. Future initiatives should include the consideration of commercial and multi-family recycling programs. The Town of West Warwick was able to save money and increase their recycling rate significantly through a condominium recycling program that started in 2006. Similar efforts in East Providence along with continued outreach to residents regarding the value of recycling to the City should be continued in order to increase our rate of materials recycling. New multi-family development will be encouraged at permitting stage to incorporate recycling. Developers of the Village on the Waterfront project have included provision for recycling in their development plans.

### ***Youth Involvement***

The City recognizes that youth buy-in with regard to sustainability is crucial to the long-term success of programs that promote responsible stewardship of our natural resources and the transition to a more sustainable culture. School and community organizations have involved local youth on a number of City projects. Recent projects include an extensive study and clean-up of the lowland area around Martin Middle School performed by the entire seventh grade at the school, and conservation area and park work by youth crews sponsored by groups such as the Boys and Girls Clubs, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, and Groundwork Providence. The City should cultivate these efforts and develop a seasonal annual program for youth involvement on outdoor City projects as an aid in maintenance and beautification, and to foster awareness of our natural surroundings.

## **COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

This is a new element of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan Update and the goals and objectives are all new.

### **Sustainability and Natural Resources**

#### **Goal 1: Maintain, enhance and appropriately manage the City's abundant natural resources.**

- Objective 1.1: Identify special districts or special places, and define their character, functions, and contributing features.
- Objective 1.2: Utilize a City-owned property such as the Hunt's Mills site for a seasonal Farmer's Market to showcase locally-grown products.
- Objective 1.3: Support efforts of the City's Conservation Commission and re-invigorate the Land Trust regarding the stewardship of City-owned open space.
- Objective 1.4: Continue to support the long-term effort to construct fish ladders at the Omega Pond, Hunts Mill and Turner Reservoir Dams.
- Objective 1.5: Continue to pursue opportunities to acquire land or attain conservation easements in the Runnins River Critical Area.
- Objective 1.6: Establish an enhanced fee schedule for long-term owners of vacant property that would be sufficient to cover the complete cost of their maintenance, and to provide a disincentive to owners retaining these unutilized properties.
- Objective 1.7: Develop a tree farm on City property that would enable the City to provide street trees for residential and commercial projects.
- Objective 1.8: Continue efforts to protect the City's wetland and floodplain areas to preserve their wildlife sanctuary and natural flood mitigation functions.

#### **Goal 2: Promote the conservation and efficient use of energy and increased use of renewable forms of energy.**

- Objective 2.1: Pursue options for the siting of alternative energy systems within the City.
- Objective 2.2: Establish zoning provisions for the development and installation of renewable energy facilities in the Southeast Drainage Area and/or other appropriate locations.
- Objective 2.3: Continue City participation in the East Bay Energy Consortium's effort to develop a regional alternative energy system among the East Bay communities.
- Objective 2.4: Investigate the use of both micro- and larger-scale solar technology for residential, commercial and municipal use.

- Objective 2.5: Incorporate Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design™ (LEED) “green building” techniques in new construction and rehabilitation wherever possible.
- Objective 2.6: Retrofit existing City facilities to incorporate “green” building standards which utilize sustainable and renewable energy and result in energy and resource efficiency.
- Objective 2.7: Incrementally replace streetlights and traffic signal bulbs with energy-conserving LED bulbs to save energy and reduce City electricity costs.
- Objective 2.8: Explore options for the incremental replacement of City vehicles with more efficient vehicles. Set a goal to have a certain percentage of City vehicles be in the top 25% of efficiency for their weight class by 2025.
- Objective 2.9: Continue to pursue the development of an alternative energy education center at the Hunt’s Mill Historic Site.
- Objective 2.10: Investigate the feasibility of hydroelectric facilities at appropriate locations along the Ten Mile River.
- Objective 2.11: Work with the City’s newly-formed Energy Committee to develop a comprehensive Energy Plan for the City.
- Objective 2.12: Continue to pursue Small Business Administration funding for the green rehabilitation of commercial properties.

**Goal 3: Utilize “green” building and Low Impact Development (LID) techniques for all new development and modifications to existing development.**

- Objective 3.1: Utilize the Waterfront District Commission’s Stormwater Management Study and City Stormwater Management Plan to improve the quality of stormwater runoff entering coastal waters, local streams, and wetlands.
- Objective 3.2: Require Low Impact Development (LID) techniques for new development such as green roofs, swales and rain gardens, and the reduction of impervious surface.
- Objective 3.3: Investigate the use of pervious materials for pavement and sidewalks and encourage their use on City projects where practicable.
- Objective 3.4: Continue to offer rehabilitation loans that incorporate construction techniques and equipment that follow green building principles and that utilize renewable energy and promote energy efficiency.
- Objective 3.5: Consider vacant and underused properties as opportunities to provide housing, commercial space, community gardens, or recreational space.
- Objective 3.6: Encourage the establishment and growth of green businesses in the City through low-interest loans and other economic development mechanisms.

**Goal 4: Improve safety and increase opportunities for pedestrians and bicyclists within the City and increase and support public transportation.**

- Objective 4.1: Update and expand the Pedestrian Plan developed by the URI Community Planning Program in 2006 as a guide to improving of the City's pedestrian network.
- Objective 4.2: Continue to work with the School Department to pursue opportunities to improve and promote pedestrian safety through the Safe Routes to School Program and other available options.
- Objective 4.3: Construct infill sidewalks and pedestrian connections through capital improvement programs and during roadway or streetscape projects.
- Objective 4.4: Work with the Department of Transportation and local bicycling organizations in the development of a practical street-based bike network.
- Objective 4.5: Investigate options for additional off-street bikeways including the Seekonk River Crossing and other underutilized open land.
- Objective 4.6: Work with RIDOT and RIDEM to expand the Ten Mile Greenway from the Kimberly Ann Rock Complex southward to the Hunt's Mill Historic Site.
- Objective 4.7: Coordinate with neighboring communities of Providence, Pawtucket, Barrington and Seekonk to explore opportunities to integrate municipal bicycle networks.
- Objective 4.8: Continue to coordinate with the Seaconke Trails Committee to create links between the City's trail system in the Turner Reservoir area and trails to be developed in the City of East Providence.
- Objective 4.9: Work with RIPTA to enhance public transportation in the City through investigation of a new East Providence transportation hub in the Shopperstown/ Wampanoag Plaza area, and develop other multi-modal transportation facilities to serve future demand.
- Objective 4.10: Whenever possible, integrate appropriate transit, pedestrian, bicycle and other modal choices in new development to lessen dependence on the automobile.

**Goal 5: Maintain and if possible increase recycling, reuse and proper disposal of discarded items.**

- Objective 5.1: Encourage additional recycling to continue to reduce the percentage of the city's solid waste stream that goes directly to the Central Landfill.
- Objective 5.2: Promote local and statewide collections of hazardous materials and e-waste and educate residents on the importance of keeping these items out of the solid waste stream.

Objective 5.3: Require recycling for commercial and multi-family residential properties.

Objective 5.4: Increase City use of recycled products and encourage the reduction of printing and paper use whenever possible.

**Goal 6: Increase public awareness of the City's natural resources and their conservation and stewardship.**

Objective 6.1: Work with organizations such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Northern Rhode Island Conservation District to educate the community regarding the use of fertilizers and pesticides.

Objective 6.2: Educate the public, particularly youth, about the importance of wetlands, rare and endangered plants and species, floodplains, and wildlife and fish habitats.

Objective 6.3: Encourage the creation of environmental/sustainable curriculum in City public schools.

Objective 6.4: Involve City youth in natural resources sustainability efforts. For example, develop a "Groundwork" type of program for young people in the City to perform seasonal work in the City's recreation areas.

**Table 17. Community Sustainability Implementation Strategies**

In reading the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Strategies throughout the Plan Elements many of the timeframes are listed as "On-going", meaning either that specific projects are underway and/or that Planning Department staff are actively initiating and assessing the availability of opportunities to further implementation of the Plan and its Action Items. The short, intermediate and long-term timeframes assigned to Action Items are generalized and again, there may be current and on-going efforts that will continue into intermediate and long-term time periods. Generally, the phrase "Short Term" should be interpreted as currently underway or expected to be commenced in the year 2011. Generally, the phrase "Intermediate Term" should be interpreted as an Action Item that may be commenced in 2011-2013 and will take longer to implement, and/or may rely on data and financing not currently available. Generally, the phrase "Long Term" refers to a project that may be currently underway but that is of a larger scope that may take many years to initiate and/or complete and is dependent upon considerable financing, engineering, studies and/or permits to accomplish, and is likely to take beyond 2015 to fully implement.

Please note that where the State of Rhode Island, or a specific State Agency is listed as a party under the table heading "Responsible for Implementation" that this is not an obligation of any particular agency but is listed for informational purposes and is a recognition by the City that a collaboration between the City and the State is desirable and/or necessary for implementation of a particular project.

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility for Implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
<b>Natural Resources</b>			
CS - 1	Preserve open land in sensitive areas where possible through acquisitions of conservation easements	Planning Department, Conservation Commission	On-going
CS - 2	Enhance existing City open space for passive recreational use while conserving the natural characteristics of the land	Planning Department, Conservation Commission	On-going
CS - 3	Appropriately develop the Hunts Mills Historic Site for passive recreation, renewable energy and sustainable technology education	Planning Department, Parks Department	Partially Completed, On-going into 2011-2012
CS - 4	Establish a seasonal farmers market to showcase locally grown products	Planning Department, URI Master Gardeners	2011
CS - 5	Continue the process to construct fish ladders along the Ten Mile River	Planning Dept., Federal and State Government Agencies, Local Environmental Agencies	Project Underway - October 2010
<b>Renewable Energy/Resource and Energy Efficiency</b>			
CS- 6	Develop a comprehensive Energy Plan for the City	Planning Department, City Energy Committee	On-going, 2011
CS - 7	Investigate feasibility and siting potential for development of renewable energy resources	Planning Department, City Energy Committee	On-going
CS - 8	Retrofit City facilities using "green" building techniques to aid in energy and resources efficiency	Public Works Department, Public Buildings Division, School Department, City Energy Committee	On-going Intermediate Term
CS - 9	Improve the average efficiency of City vehicles through the replacement of older vehicles with models that have greater fuel efficiency	City Public Works Department, Central Garage Division, Parks Division	On-going
CS - 10	Enable renewable energy related uses in the Southeast Drainage area including the former Forbes Street Landfill	Planning Department, City Council	Feasibility analysis for solar underway 2010-2011

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility for Implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
CS - 11	Replace streetlights and traffic signal bulbs with energy-conserving LED lighting to save energy and reduce electricity costs for the City	Public Works Department	On-going
CS - 12	Continue to pursue the development of an alternative energy education center and the potential for hydroelectric power generation at the Hunt's Mill Historic Site.	Planning Department; City Energy Committee	On-going
<b>Low-Impact Development and "Green" Building</b>			
CS - 13	Improve the quality of stormwater run-off entering the coastal waters and the City drainage system	Waterfront Commission, Public Works Department, Planning Department	On-going & as projects are reviewed
CS - 14	Offer rehabilitation loans to encourage low-impact construction and green retrofitting techniques and utilize renewable energy resources	Planning Department, Community Development Division	Intermediate and Long Term
CS - 15	Require new development to incorporate Low Impact Development (LID) techniques such as green roofs, swales and rain gardens, and the reduction of impervious surfaces	Planning Department, Planning Board, City Council	On-going
<b>Transportation</b>			
CS - 16	Develop a public transportation hub to connect the bus lines that serve the City	Planning Department, RIPTA	Feasibility underway
CS - 17	Develop City Pedestrian Plan to guide the improvement of the City's pedestrian network and new sidewalk construction	Planning Department, Public Works Department Engineering Division	2011
CS - 18	Improve bicycle transportation connections in the City and provide an improved street-based bike route network	Planning Department, Public Works Department Engineering Division	On-going
CS - 19	Expand the Ten Mile Greenway southward to the Hunts Mills Historic Site	Planning Department, RIDOT, RIDEM	On-going as funds are available

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility for Implementation</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>
CS - 20	Improve and promote pedestrian safety for at City schools.	School Department, Public Works Department, Planning Department, RI Statewide Planning	On-going, implementing Safe Routes to Schools
<b>Community Involvement</b>			
CS - 21	Require recycling for commercial and multi-family residential properties.	Recycling Division, City Council	On-going
CS - 22	Promote local and statewide collections of hazardous materials and e-waste	Recycling Division	On-going
CS - 23	Involve City youth in various conservation and sustainability initiatives through education and active engagement in conservation projects	Planning Department, School Department, Department of Parks and Recreation.	On-going
CS - 24	Establish a system-wide Sustainability Education program within the East Providence Public Schools	School Department	Intermediate and Long Term

## **Waterfront District Element**

In 2003, the City of East Providence created and adopted the *East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Plan* to articulate and frame a plan, vision and strategies to transform over three hundred acres of the City's currently underutilized waterfront along the Providence and Seekonk Rivers to a mix of land uses, including: commercial; office; medium and high density residential; entertainment and hospitality; restaurants; marinas; civic, and recreational uses, particularly those oriented towards the water. The City's waterfront planning efforts have been on-going since the adoption of the City's *Comprehensive Plan* in 1992 and will continue into the future.

The East Providence waterfront is mostly vacant land formerly used for industrial or heavy commercial purposes. While these uses were actively operating, they generated revenues and employment opportunities to City residents and the region. However, dramatic changes in the United States economy over the last fifty years and a shift from industrial economies to a new service economy and information technologies have left behind unsightly vacant derelict structures and buildings, weed strewn fenced parcels of land, and, in many cases, environmental contamination on the East Providence waterfront. Reuse of this waterfront land has a direct bearing on the City's economic future. The potential redevelopment of the East Providence waterfront offers a unique opportunity to significantly expand the local tax base without comparable increase in the demand for City and school services. The positive effects of redevelopment reach far beyond the boundaries of the project area. The proposed new development along the waterfront will bring a distinctive and significant new identity to East Providence, as well as enhancing the economic and social climate of the City and also to Rhode Island.

The redevelopment envisioned for the waterfront in the Waterfront Plan entails a number of activities including: road construction and associated public improvements; extension of utilities; undergrounding utilities; acquisition of properties; parcel assembly; rehabilitation of structures; improvement, clearance, sale, lease, or other disposition, or any combination of these, of land, buildings, or other the provision of streets, utilities, recreational areas, and other open spaces consistent with the needs of sound community growth in accordance with the City's *Comprehensive Plan*; and carrying out plans for a program of voluntary repair and rehabilitation of buildings and other improvements.

The *Waterfront District Plan* lists the following goals for the waterfront. The City and the Waterfront District Commission has worked– and will continue to work– to implement these goals:

**Expand the Tax Base- Waterfront development should provide positive fiscal impacts to the City while expanding the tax base and/or reduce the tax burden on residents.**

- *Progress:* The 2008 *Tax Increment Financing Plan* proposes the use of tax increment financing to facilitate the implementation of public improvements in the Waterfront District, and was approved by the East Providence City Council for the proposed Village on the Waterfront Development on November 30, 2010. Tax increment financing (TIF) is the use of projected increased local tax revenues from an anticipated development to fund site and area improvements. TIF can be used as an incentive for developers who need an additional financing

tool for projects within the Waterfront District, as well as proving funding for updating and expanding public infrastructure and associated facilities such as water, sewer, and storm drainage systems.

**Generate New Jobs-** Implementation of waterfront development will generate a substantial number of new employment opportunities for the State's economy.

*Progress:* The Waterfront Commission approved two developments during the past year:

Baer Supply Co. has started construction on a seven-acre site with an industrial project consisting of 100,000 square feet of warehouse space for the distribution of wood products at 10 New Road, off of Pawtucket Ave. It is located next to the former Fram building that now houses Victoria Creations, Monarch Industries and Wood Precision Products. They will employ approximately eighteen workers at full build-out.

Village on the Waterfront LLC has entered into a cooperation agreement with Chevron to transform their former twenty-five acre site on Veteran's Memorial Parkway into a mixed-use community of approximately six hundred residential units with supporting commercial uses. Public amenities may include a fishing pier, a spur of the East Bay Bike Path, and a kayak beach. The development will create an estimated seventy-nine direct and indirect permanent jobs, not including construction jobs and associated industries.

**Implement a Mixed-Use Vision and Sustainability-** *Promote a mix of commercial, office, housing, institutional, civic, and recreational uses that will remain self-sustaining over time.*

*Progress:* The Waterfront Commission has approved design guidelines for every sub-district in the waterfront that call for a mix of commercial, residential and recreational uses along the waterfront, giving priority to public access and recreation, and water-related activities along the water's edge. These guidelines clearly state the types of development and urban design that the Commission feels best exemplifies the goal of sustainable mixed-use in the Waterfront District. The Village on the Waterfront project, for example, will have green roofs on several buildings, a "living wall" composed of green plants, "rain gardens" to treat stormwater through vegetative means, and a native plant conservation area. The development will also mitigate brownfield conditions of soil and groundwater contamination on the site.

**Create a Regional Destination-** *Encourage development that will create a "destination" for East Providence residents and that will draw visitors, businesses and investors from beyond East Providence.*

*Progress:* Due to the large scale of potential redevelopment and the scenic and recreational resources of these waterfront properties, the waterfront along the Providence and Seekonk Rivers holds the single greatest potential for East Providence for attracting new business and jobs, and creating new housing, recreational, civic and cultural opportunities.

***Expand Opportunities Equally for all Persons- Assist in creating an environment of market-driven redevelopment opportunities that will create new opportunities for higher-wage employment, and for housing, recreational, cultural and waterfront public access opportunities for all persons, especially to those with low to moderate incomes and to minority populations.***

*Progress:* Mixed-use developments over residential units must provide a minimum of ten percent of the total units for purchase or rent by persons of low-to moderate-incomes in the Waterfront District. This requirement may eventually be expanded to the rest of the City.

Other goals for the Waterfront District that the Waterfront Commission and staff continue to work towards include:

- Create safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle circulation-
- Assist private property owners in rehabilitating their existing commercial buildings
- Maintain and expand public access, recreational opportunities, and open space

In the current economic climate, the City believes that now is not the time to change the proposed uses for the North and South Waterfront Districts that were first adopted in the 2003 East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Plan, which was part of the 2004 East Providence State-certified Comprehensive Plan Update, and which remain in place in today in the 2010 Plan Update, as well as the waterfront zoning adopted in March 2004. There are many unknown factors as to whether, for example, a port would be feasible in the East Providence Waterfront Special Development Districts, and if so, what land and infrastructure would be necessary to support such a use. However, the City's waterfront zoning and Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) Water-Type categories allow for light industrial and "heavier" commercial uses, and the City is amenable to reviewing such uses. Also, there are legally operating existing industrial/port uses at the Mobil Terminal and the Getty Terminal (Wilkes Barre Pier) that are permitted uses. New proposed uses will be reviewed and assessed by CRMC and the Waterfront Special Development District Commission as they arise. The City will undertake research and analysis of water-dependent uses to assess potential uses that may be compatible with adjacent mixed uses and supportable by land-side infrastructure.

APPENDIX A CHECKLISTS 2010-2015 UPDATES

APPENDIX B – 2008 EAST PROVIDENCE TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF)  
PLAN

APPENDIX – C – EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN