Town of Charlestown, Rhode Island
2006 Comprehensive Plan
5-Year Update

Adopted October 16, 2006

Charlestown Town Council and Planning Commission

TOWN OF CHARLESTOWN

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Introduction

In 2006, Charlestown is a rural residential coastal town of 8,269[1]. A settlement pattern that focused on Cross Mills on the historic Old Post Road and villages of Carolina, Shannock, and Kenyon on the Pawcatuck River, has broadened out to include residential use on narrow lanes throughout Town. Preservation of open space with conservation restrictions helps protect natural resources and the quality of life so important to residents. The rate of population growth of the last fifty years has slowed and the median age of residents continues to increase. The number of seasonally occupied units has declined slightly as summer cottages become home to year-round residents, many of whom have retired to Charlestown. The local economy continues to be dominated by business generated by summer residents and tourism.

Rhode Island's Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act of 1988, as amended, mandates that each community prepare a Comprehensive Plan and, at a minimum, update the plan at least once every five years. Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program approved Charlestown's *1991 Comprehensive Plan* on August 7, 2000. The State Certificate of Approval expired on August 6, 2005.

This comprehensive plan update has been prepared as a self-evaluation process to determine how the Town of Charlestown has succeeded in implementing original plan goals and objectives, and outlines policies and implementation for the next five year period. Planning staff at Pare Engineering Corp. has prepared this update to be meaningful and manageable. The original 1991 document represents a major work effort in documenting existing conditions. As such, the original Comprehensive Plan (including mapping) remains a significant document and is included by reference. Those looking for detailed information on the community are directed to that document, available for review in the Town of Charlestown Planning Department, for further data.

Planning staff of Pare Engineering Corp. has met with the former and interim Town Planner, Planning Commission, Affordable Housing Commission, Conservation Commission, and Economic Improvement Commission to discuss the 1991 plan and recommended revisions to meet current and projected issues facing the Town of Charlestown.

The *2006 Charlestown Comprehensive Plan Update* was adopted by both the Planning Commission and the Town Council at a joint public hearing held October 16, 2006. Adoption shall become effective upon the date of acceptance of the *2006 Charlestown Comprehensive Plan Update* by the Director of the Rhode Island Department of Administration.

[1] 2005 US Census Bureau, Population Estimates Division, July 1, 2005 (Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program)

Public Outreach / Visioning

A public outreach and visioning meeting, held April 24, 2006, was attended primarily by town officials and commission members, with one member of the general public attending. This meeting was useful in prioritizing issues for the upcoming five years. The Charlestown Planning Commission has subsequently provided public input and direction for the plan update at two planning workshops held June 1, 2006 and July 6, 2006. A joint Planning Commission – Town Council workshop was held August 28, 2006.

Although a survey was not taken as part of the 2006 update, many indicated that community sentiment is likely to be consistent with feedback received in 1990 when a survey provided insight into residents' perceptions, attitudes and opinions with respect to planning issues for the 1991 Comprehensive Plan. It is important to realize, however, that the 1990 survey was conducted following a twenty-year period of dramatic subdivision and residential development, when the population grew from 2,863 to 6,478. Low mortgage rates, investment in second homes, and lack of buildable land over the past 15 years have led to dramatic increases in home prices, a situation mirrored in Washington County communities and throughout the State of Rhode Island.

The dominant theme of the 1990 survey was almost unanimous support for preserving Charlestown's rural character. Population and commercial growth were identified as threatening Charlestown's rural character. Commercial and industrial over-development ranked highest as a concern for the future of Charlestown. Development opportunities that garnered the most support specifically addressed an increased tourism industry. The need to improve the quality of education at the regional level also surfaced as a dominant concern of Charlestown residents. An almost equal number of residents both supported and opposed several major issues, with long time and upper income residents stressing the need for the town to remain the same and short term and lower income residents looking for change regarding the variety of shopping opportunities; affordable housing; manufacturing and industry versus an increase in seasonal housing; and manufacturing, industry and growth of retail stores to provide tax revenue and employment.

The majority of projects endorsed or supported by residents in the 1990 survey focused on community services and facilities, and a desire to acquire land for conservation and recreation purposes. It is clear from the results of the 1990 survey, the 2006 public visioning workshop, and recent discussions with Town officials and members of boards and commissions, that Charlestown residents wanted (and still want) to preserve the rural character of the Town. Most residents believed (and still believe) that some form of development is necessary to maintain the tax base and employment opportunities. Support for tourism is viewed as a way to encourage economic development that is consistent with Charlestown's character.

Format of the Plan

Town of Charlestown Comprehensive Plan Elements

- Land Use
- Natural Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Open Space and Recreation
- Circulation
- Housing and Demographics
- Economic Development
- Services and Facilities

The 2006 Comprehensive Plan update has been prepared as a user-friendly planning tool for the community. Each element includes a brief introduction, a summary of accomplishments in implementing goals and policies of the 1991 plan (including reference to major studies conducted by the Town or others), findings of the April 24, 2006 public visioning meeting, and the stated goal of the element, followed with policies and actions for implementation. Tables presented in the Appendix document the status of actions presented in the 1991 plan and outline priorities and suggested responsible parties for implementation of the 2006 update. The list of responsible parties is not inclusive as other parties may provide guidance.

Consistency with State Guide Plan Elements

This Comprehensive Plan Update has been prepared to be consistent with State Guide Plan Elements including *Land Use 2025*, Rhode Island's State Land Use Policies and Plan (State Guide Plan Element 121) approved in April, 2006 and the *Rhode Island Five Year Strategic Housing Plan: 2006-2010* (State Guide Plan Element 423) approved in June, 2006. Charlestown's Comprehensive Plan Update is not subject to either the Water Emergency Response Plan (State Guide Plan Element 723) or the Rhode Island Drought Management Plan (State Guide Plan Element 724) since the Town does not provide municipal water service.

Consistency with Adjacent Towns

Coordination has been initiated with planners of the adjacent towns of Westerly, Hopkinton, Richmond, and South Kingstown to assure consistency between local comprehensive plans.

- Westerly, Charlestown and South Kingstown, three Block Island Sound shoreline communities, share a common need for coordinated emergency response for hurricanes and other disasters. It is imperative that these three towns communicate in advance and conduct routine drills to assure that evacuation routes, emergency shelters, and first responder rescue operations are coordinated and effective. These three towns should continue to work with the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency and federal officials for a regional response to natural and other disasters.

- Westerly, Hopkinton, Richmond and Charlestown all border the Pawcatuck River. Water quality, watershed management, greenspace coordination, habitat restoration, and protection of the US Environmental Protection Agency-

designated sole source aquifer are common issues for all towns. This update is consistent with the comprehensive plans of adjacent communities.

- The villages of Carolina, Shannock and Kenyon straddle the Pawcatuck River in Richmond and Charlestown. Growth Center designation, zoning and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) initiatives (coordinated though the East Greenwich Community Development Consortium) for these villages, are important for both towns. Continued communication is important to assure that future development including infill development and affordable housing strategies are consistent with the character of these rural villages and the towns in which they are located.

- The Chariho Regional School District, including the Towns of Charlestown, Richmond, and Hopkinton, unites these communities. Regional coordination is therefore critical for the provision of public education as one of many community services addressed through the comprehensive plan.

- Coastal development (and redevelopment) south of Route 1 in Westerly, Charlestown and South Kingstown is guided by the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) Salt Pond Special Area Management Plan. This assures that the quality of salt ponds is protected through consistent and intensive state review of developments within the watershed.

Implementation

The *2006 Charlestown Comprehensive Plan Update* outlines strategies for assuring that the Town's future growth and development reflects the vision of local residents to retain the rural quality of life of this shoreline community. Residents are justly proud of their community and are stalwart in their initiatives to protect its natural resources, conserve open space, and to set the stage for smart growth, mixed use, and diversity of housing stock to meet residents' needs for all life stages and incomes. The plan has also been prepared to reflect current and projected state and federal initiatives so that the Town is positioned to receive public funding for future programs. Implementation of the policies and actions outlined in the plan will help assure that future generations will enjoy the qualities important to so many residents today in the Town of Charlestown.

1. LAND USE ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Typical residence Old Post Road.

The use of land and the pattern of development in Charlestown is important in defining the community for the coming five and more years. Land use in Town is defined by natural resources; access to the regional road network; tribal lands; and property conserved as open space. Land use ranges from the village center in Cross Mills and densely developed summer colonies around salt ponds and beaches south of Post Road to older, lower density neighborhoods in the villages of Burdickville, Wood River Junction, Carolina, Shannock, and Kenyon north of Post Road. Although several subdivisions have been constructed in the past twenty years in Charlestown, most homes north of Post Road are constructed along the Town's major streets.

Typical Charlestown Beach house

Major land holdings for Burlingame State Park, Ninigret Park, and Narragansett Indian Tribal Settlement Lands also dominate land use. In addition to coastal salt ponds, freshwater ponds, Pawcatuck River, and underlying groundwater protection areas, the terminal moraine deposited by receding glaciers is a unique natural resource area where development may be constrained.

The Town of Charlestown is not located within the Municipal Services Boundary identified in *Land Use 2025*, State Guide Plan Element 121. *Land Use 2025* identifies Growth Centers in Cross Mills, Carolina and Shannock.

Land use, based on 1995 information, is presented in Figure 1. The Future Land Use Map is presented in Figure 2.

1991- 2006 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Town of Charlestown has continued its actions as stewards of land use. The following are key accomplishments outlined as recommendations / implementation in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan:

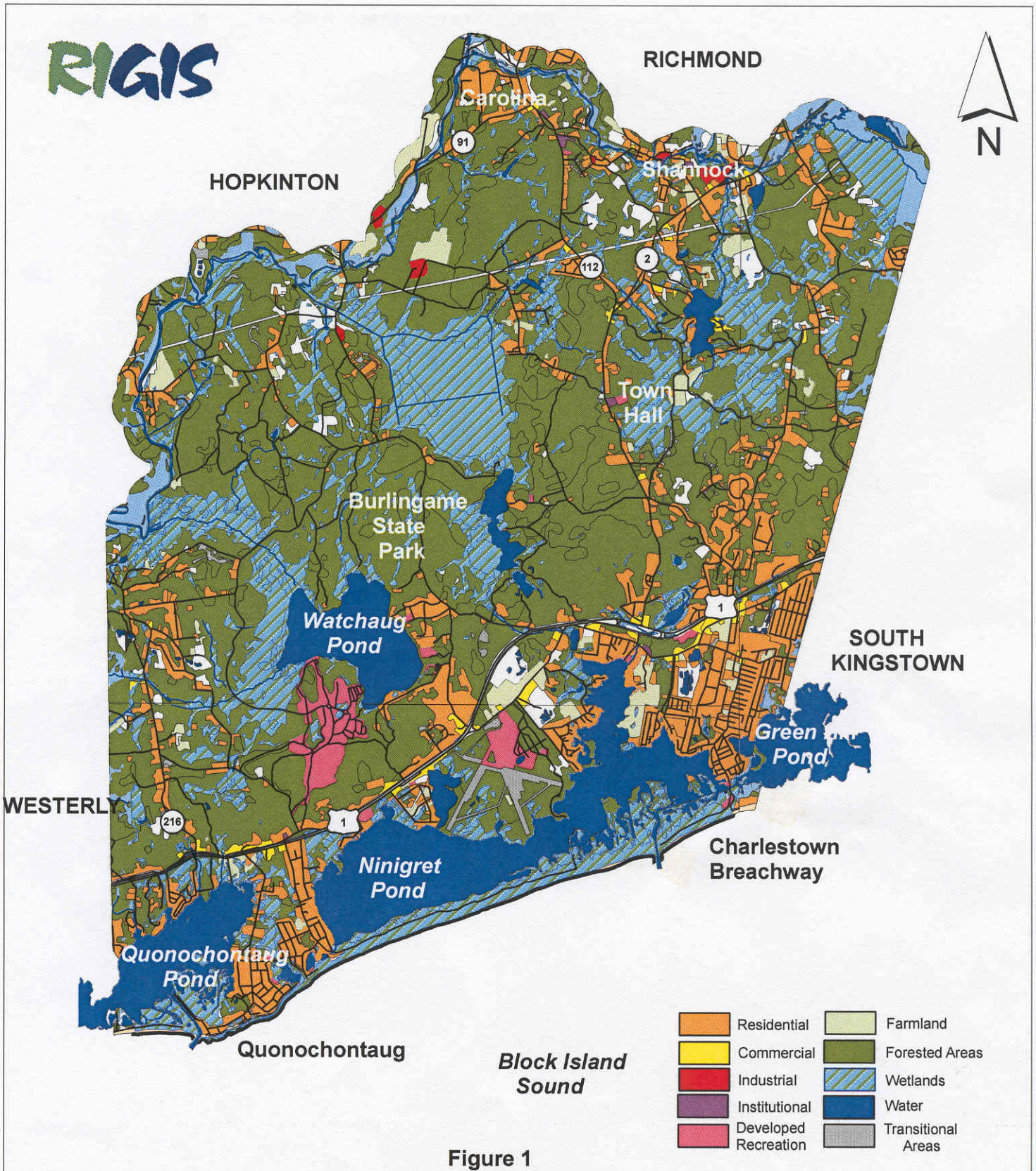


Figure 1

LAND USE

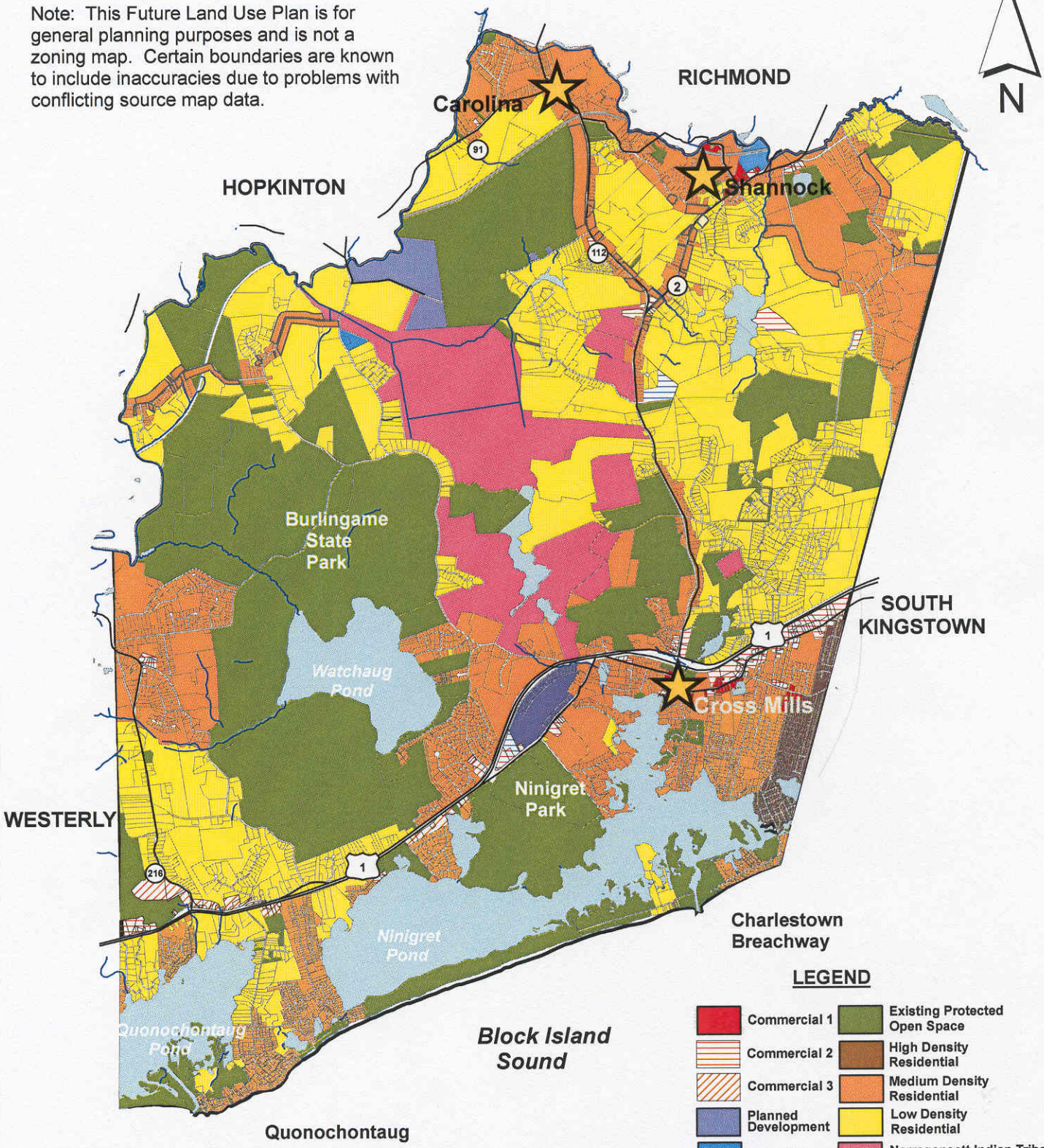
Charlestown, Rhode Island Comprehensive Plan Update

Information obtained from RIGIS Website / 1995.

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Pare Engineering Corporation / July, 2006

Note: This Future Land Use Plan is for general planning purposes and is not a zoning map. Certain boundaries are known to include inaccuracies due to problems with conflicting source map data.



LEGEND

- Commercial 1
- Commercial 2
- Commercial 3
- Planned Development
- Industrial
- Municipal
- Existing Protected Open Space
- High Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Narragansett Indian Tribe Settlement Lands
- Potential Growth Center

Based on Town of Charlestown's Zoning Map (unapproved), Charlestown Assessor's Office Open Space Data, and RI Land Use 2025.

RIGIS

Figure 2

FUTURE LAND USE

Charlestown, Rhode Island

Comprehensive Plan Update

0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

Pare Engineering Corporation / July, 2006

- The stage in the development process at which developers' rights are vested has been defined (i.e., at which the development process is "essentially complete").

- Zoning has been amended to allow single household residential uses, family day care facilities, and group homes in all zones except Industrial and certain Commercial zones (for health and safety reasons) and publicly owned Open Space/Conservation/Recreation Districts.

- Land previously zoned for Research & Development/Industrial (west of Route 112 on the former United Nuclear Parcel) and Planned Business (Old Post Road) have been rezoned as Planned Development Districts (PDD) to allow less intensive uses while providing flexibility in development.

- In order to encourage commercial development that is appropriate to the surrounding areas, three commercial zones (C1, C2, and C3) have been designated, each with different intensities and types of commercial use allowed.

- The least dense residential zone has been revised from a 5-acre to 3-acre minimum lot size.

- Residential lot size along Route 2 has been reduced to 2 acres.

- Open Space/Recreation (OSR) zone has been designated for areas in use as open space, conservation and recreation and contains lands owned by public and nonprofit agencies. Its purpose is to allow a variety of uses compatible with conservation recreation areas such as agriculture, conservation, recreation camps, and wildlife reserves.

- Municipal (M) zone is intended for Town-owned parcels to allow uses that accommodate the functions and needs of the Town.

- Zoning regulations have been amended to include overlay districts which specify aesthetic design standards or natural resource protection standards:

    - Flood hazard areas – to minimize hazards to persons, damage to property from flooding, to protect watercourses from encroachment and to maintain the capacity of floodplains to retain and carry off floodwaters.

- Historic village overlay district – to protect, preserve and maintain the quality of the Town's villages, to preserve the Town's heritage, cultural and architectural qualities, to foster civic beauty, to strengthen the local economy and to promote the use of such districts for the education, pleasure and welfare of the citizens of the Town.

- Groundwater protection district – to protect, preserve and maintain the quality and supply of groundwater resources upon which town residents and businesses depend for its present and future water supply.

- Mixed use zoning overlay district - to encourage small scale business and residential (including affordable housing) uses consistent with the historic and pedestrian-scale characteristics that exist and which are unique to Charlestown village, to preserve the Town's heritage, to strengthen the local economy, to continue small Town character and to promote the general welfare of the Town.

- *US Route 1 Scenic Highway Stewardship Plan* was prepared by the Conservation Commission in 2004, approved by Town Council, and approved by the RI Department of Administration as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan.

- The comprehensive plan was amended in 2004 to include Conservation Design and Development to reflect a desire to conserve open space and rural resources and to protect community character through the development regulatory review process. Conservation developments are characterized by protection of a majority of the flat, dry and otherwise buildable land from clearing, grading, and construction by reducing lot sizes in order to achieve full-yield density. Conservation development differs from cluster development in three important ways.
  - It sets much higher standards for the quality and configuration of the resulting open space.
  - The Town can exercise greater influence on the design through the identification of noteworthy resources.
  - The protected land is configured, wherever practical, to provide interconnecting network of protected open space.

  Conservation development can create viable neighborhoods while avoiding sprawl that is characteristic of large-lot suburban type

subdivisions and land development projects (although approved as a Comprehensive Plan amendment, zoning has not been amended).

- *The Charlestown Improvements Project: Making Green Connections to Commerce and Community,* completed by the University of Rhode Island Senior Design Studio in December 2004, explored mixed-use development options for Cross Mills and the Old Post Road (Route 1A).

- The zoning ordinance was amended in 2003 to permit an accessory dwelling unit in addition to the principal dwelling unit, on land actively devoted to agricultural or horticultural use in any residential zone. This amendment was implemented to enable construction of farm workforce housing.

- The Town participated with the Rural Lands Coalition, RI Department of Environmental Management, the University of Rhode Island, and the Washington County Regional Planning Council in the preparation of the *South County Greenspace Protection Project* in 2003.

- *Old Post Road Village – Charlestown, RI … A Vision for the Route 1A Commercial Corridor*, completed by the University of Rhode Island Planning Studio in Fall 2003, created a vision for the historic and rural route that is reflective of a mixed-use village center.

- The Charlestown section of Route 1 (The Post Road) was designated as a Rhode Island Scenic Roadway on August 26, 2002, based on its important natural, historic and cultural features, and as the primary gateway to the recreation and nature-based attractions on which the economies of Charlestown and the region as a whole depend.

- Zoning and subdivision regulations have been amended to comply with Zoning Enabling Act requirements that took effect January 1, 1992. Major amendments to Subdivision Regulations were made in February 2002.

- In 2000, growth management caps were implemented to equitably allocate a limited number of building permits annually to assure that new residential development is within the existing and future capacity of Town facilities and the Chariho Regional School District.

- Capital Facilities Impact Fees were adopted in 2000 to fund new and/ or expanded schools (and its related facilities) within Charlestown and/or within the Chariho Regional School District which are necessitated by new development.

- GIS mapping tools have been used to develop a parcel-based reproducible zoning map that includes Tribal lands (updated through 2001 but not approved by Town Council).

LAND USE VISION

Several natural resources issues were discussed at the April 24, 2006 Visioning meeting (priorities are in **bold**).

Strengths identified include:

- **Open space preservation**
- **Appropriate land uses for open space**
- **Character of farming/agricultural community**

Weaknesses identified include:

- **Amend zoning to foster re-use of hotels/motels as affordable housing** *(see Housing Element)*
- **Lack of affordable housing**
- Growth and development of affordable land

LAND USE GOAL

To protect the natural and cultural resources and rural character of the Town while providing the housing, economic base, and services necessary for the broad range of residents to enjoy the high quality of life associated with the Town.

Encourage public participation throughout the process, including the business community, interest groups, and residents. Consider involving a bipartisan citizens group.

POLICIES / ACTIONS

The following policies and actions have been developed to implement the vision and goals for land use in Charlestown.

Policy 1: Preserve the visual qualities of the villages, shorelines, important natural features, historic areas, scenic roads, and major collectors and arterials.

- Adopt the role of steward and advocate for the Route 1 Scenic Roadway, working closely with the RIDOT Scenic Roadways Board,

other state and federal agencies, Washington County Regional Planning Council, and local partners.

- Continue to implement recommendations of the *Route 1 Scenic Roadway Stewardship Plan.*

- Designate Route 1 as a shared community asset, its official designation as a RI Scenic Roadway.

- Review, update and enforce existing Town zoning and subdivision ordinances and where appropriate, enact new codes that specifically serve to protect the scenic quality of Route 1 in Charlestown. This is especially important for parcels zoned C3 (highway-oriented commercial district along Route 1 near Ross Hill Road).

- Consider the visual impact on Route 1 when planning for the Business District along Route 1A (the Old Post Road) or reviewing projects in this area.

- Inventory and evaluate developed and undeveloped parcels along Route 1. Propose site improvements to preserve, restore or enhance the appearance and scenic quality along the roadway and to bring properties into compliance with existing Town codes as required.

- Request RIDOT provide official Scenic Roadway signage and trim or remove vegetation which blocks scenic views on the south side of Route 1 and perform other routine maintenance and improvements as necessary – alternatively, request that the Town be allowed to undertake selected trimming activities.

- Consider establishing a Scenic Roadway Stewardship Commission, standing committee, or property manager to serve as the Town representative and primary advocate for the Route 1 Corridor and to oversee the implementation of the *Stewardship Plan*.

- Cooperate with the RI Scenic Roadways Program to pursue "National Scenic Byway" designation for Route 1. This designation would place the roadway among an elite group of scenic roads nationally and therefore qualify for special funding consideration.

- Pursue conservation of unique undeveloped parcels along Route 1 through conservation easements, purchase of

development rights, or purchase of the property, as opportunities arise.

- Actively support and participate in all future regional and state sponsored studies and planning activities relating to the Route 1 corridor.

- Consider designating appropriate local roads as scenic.

  - Establish "scenic roadway design standards" to address signage, lighting, buffers between the roadway and residential/ commercial structures or districts, landscape approaches/materials, parking locations, building dimensions/materials/styles and the preservation of key views and vegetative buffers. Standards may also seek to limit highway-oriented development and high density housing that would detract from the unique green corridor section of the highway and undeveloped sections of the terminal moraine.

Landscaped median at Ninigret Park on/off ramp.

- Amend land development regulations to address the following considerations for proposed development along town or state designated scenic roads:

  - Retention of scenic stone walls.

  - Retention of undisturbed natural landscape buffers (including significant trees) to shield view of new construction from the road where the character of the roadway would be adversely changed by clearing.

  - Require routine maintenance to trim vegetation as necessary to maintain scenic vistas of water bodies (including salt ponds, marshes, rivers, and wetlands), agricultural fields and pasture, and sites on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Route 2 north.

- Provide no more than one driveway access point to adjacent property unless mandated for safety or other function important to operation of the property.

- Preserve narrow, winding roads, where possible from a safety standpoint, to retain and protect the rural and scenic character of these roads. Reduction in speed limits could be considered to improve safety.

- Coordinate with RIDOT, Department of Public Works, and the Narragansett Tribe, as appropriate, to assure that Context Sensitive Design is used to protect scenic qualities with highway and roadway upgrade.

- Enhance site and building design standards for Cross Mills that could subsequently be used as a template for other villages. Design standards would address unobtrusive signage, sidewalks or pedestrian ways, bike paths, parking to rear, buildings in keeping with surrounding village in regard to roof line, building materials, architectural style, ornamentation, etc.

- Define the seaward setbacks along the barrier beach communities to be the most severe erosional dune scarp (edge), i.e., the erosional scarp from the blizzard of 1978 or more severe erosion after 1978 (see Rhode Island Geological Survey studies conducted by Jon C. Boothroyd, State Geologist).

Policy 2: Preserve vegetated buffers between land uses and roads.

- Develop a program of public information and owner outreach, education, site planning consulting and incentives to encourage property improvements.

Policy 3: Preserve important natural and cultural features as part of the development regulatory review process for new residential land development and subdivisions.

- Amend the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Ordinance to include provisions to allow for conservation design and development regulatory methods.

Policy 4: Maintain the current general patterns, scale, and densities of development, with the most dense development occurring in villages and generally low-density development occurring outside the village areas.

- Consider Growth Centers in accordance with the State Guide Plan Element *Land Use 2025*, in areas not located within groundwater overlay protection districts. Designation of Growth Centers in Cross Mills, Shannock and Carolina reflects the village character and pattern of development and location within Historic Village overlay zones.

    - Conduct outreach to residents of state-designated Growth Centers to address intent and potential implications of designation for future land use and development in these villages.

    - Conduct study or plan to determine how more dense development could be accommodated while maintaining village character. Consider how increased density could be achieved with private wells and individual sewage disposal systems, especially along the Pawcatuck River or in CRMC's Special Area Management Plan.

    - Utilize transfer of development rights to conserve land in more rural areas of Town while encouraging appropriate density of development in Growth Centers.

    - Utilize mixed-use overlay zones to facilitate diversity of housing and commercial uses while encouraging vibrant, walkable villages.

    - Consider form-based codes to encourage infill development that reflects the context of existing development constructed prior to implementation of zoning. Form-based codes place emphasis on the appearance of the streetscape or public realm by addressing building type, dimensions, parking location, and façade and less emphasis on permitted uses.

- Discourage incompatible uses in Charlestown.

    - Consider deepening commercial zones to encourage landscape buffering along roadway frontage and parking in the rear of the buildings.

- Promote development of affordable housing (including housing for seniors) on town-owned parcels zoned Municipal by special use permit, if site is not a priority area for resource protection, is developable, and has not been acquired for open space preservation or recreation.

Policy 5: Maintain Old Post Road from the Chamber of Commerce east to the South Kingstown Town line as the center of business.

- Focus general business commercial zoning in the existing commercial zone east of the historic Cross Mills area. Encourage village/neighborhood commercial uses in existing C1 and C2 zones within villages. Encourage tourist/visitor related commercial uses in existing C3 zones along Route 1.

Commercial development Old Post Road.

- Consider implementing recommendations of *Old Post Road Village – Charlestown, RI … A Vision for the Route 1A Commercial Corridor*, completed by the University of Rhode Island Planning Studio in fall, 2003.

Policy 6: Provide flexibility in land use management tools where appropriate based on natural constraints to encourage alternative land use developments.

- Consider extending the mixed-use overlay district to facilitate construction of affordable and workforce housing above commercial development.

- Consider revising the zoning ordinance to include form-based codes that encourage infill and new development that reflects the character of the local neighborhood (much of which was probably constructed before zoning was implemented in Charlestown in the 1960s). Form-based zoning may be used to encourage mixed-use development (including affordable and market rate residential, retail, and office use) while emphasizing the appearance and quality of structures and the sense of place that they convey, rather than regulating development by type of use.

    - Form-based zoning would be a tool to address "spot" zones, which may allow redevelopment that is inconsistent with surrounding land uses and natural resources: easternmost portion of commercial zone at eastern end of Matunuck School House Road and commercial zone on Shannock Road.

- Consider implementing a conservation land trust.

    - Respect the intent of those interested in conveying property to a land trust. If the seller is interested in future use of the property for conservation and possible multiple use including active recreation, construction of affordable housing, or other

municipal purpose, this should be defined during the negotiation process and rezoning should reflect multiple use.

- Continue to evaluate the need for transferable development rights and other land use management tools to preserve the rural character of development in Charlestown while promoting anti-sprawl "smart growth." Work with developers and land trusts to identify property for conservation ("sending area"). Development rights could be transferred from a "sending area" to a "receiving area" to enable denser development. This would enable construction of traditional neighborhood design on small lots, duplexes, and other multifamily housing, without increasing the overall buildout of the Town *(see also Mixed Use Overlay Zone and Growth Centers).*

    - Adopt mandatory inclusionary zoning for developments of five or more units that encourage creation of low/moderate income housing. *See Housing Element Policy 3*

    - Consider adopting impact fees or "fees in lieu of" for affordable housing since many developments may not be appropriate for increased density. Proceeds could go to a local restricted fund for implementation of affordable housing strategies. *See Housing Element Policy 4*

Policy 7: Encourage sustainable land uses that support protection of the aquifers and reflect green space development.

- Implement Conservation Development. S*ee Policy 3, above*

- Implement transfer of development rights. *See Policy 4, above*

- Preserve vegetated buffers between land uses and roads, streams and wetlands.

    - Implement or amend Soil and Erosion Control Ordinance by specifying a "do not disturb" zone. *See Natural Resources Element Policy 3*

- Manage growth and development to reflect the natural characteristics (resources and constraints) of the land.

    - Develop a land trust for conservation purposes.

    - Develop mapping of natural resources to facilitate review of development applications and preservation of open space. *(see Natural Resources Element)*

- Ensure that Town staff and the boards and commissions that review land development proposals have adequate GIS mapping to make well-considered land use decisions, including zoning and overlay zone designation, property and resources/constraints.

    - Develop accurate parcel-based mapping, with highest priority given to developing a reproducible zoning map. Town Council approval is required for the draft zoning map developed in November 2003.

    - Routinely update GIS zoning map for Town Council approval.

Policy 8: Work with neighboring communities including the Narragansett Tribe, to ensure that land uses along the common borders of communities are compatible.

- Work with adjacent communities, the Narragansett Tribe, and the Washington County Regional Planning Council to define the appropriate character of key resources and to cooperate in protecting them:

    - Resources shared by Tribe and Charlestown
    - Villages of Shannock and Carolina, visible from both sides of the river
    - Village of Burdickville
    - Route 1 and shore communities

- Provide courtesy review of development projects on adjacent properties in bordering communities or on Tribal Settlement Lands. Request that adjacent communities circulate Land Development applications for projects located adjacent to Charlestown to the Town Planner for courtesy review and comment. Also, submit projects located on the Charlestown border to the planning departments in adjacent communities for courtesy review.

Policy 9: Protect the character of summer colonies south of Route 1.

- Consider designation of a local historic district to include summer cottages over fifty years in age to preserve this unique housing type so important to Charlestown's history and heritage.

- Consider developing context sensitive design guidelines for teardowns and reconstruction to assure new residential construction reflects and is compatible with the neighborhood.

- Consider modifying performance standards in the zoning code to regulate height, floor area ratio, and dimensional standards of replacement structures to more closely reflect existing lot and building sizes to assure that new construction, renovations and additions are compatible with the neighborhood.

- Assure that building expansion and individual sewage disposal system operation protects the quality of groundwater and sensitive surface waters including salt ponds.

- Consider amending zoning to enable re-use of motels for affordable housing, assuring that the summer colony character of these properties is retained.

2. NATURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Charlestown's natural resources provide the context for daily life in Town. An abundance of natural resources that includes beaches, salt ponds, estuaries, fresh water marshes, open water and rivers not only benefit residents, but also are what attracts tourists to Charlestown. These resources also provide critical habitat to plant/animal threatened and endangered species. In conjunction with these resources, the rural farmlands and scenic woodlands complete the fabric of Charlestown's sense of place.

The Pawcatuck River Aquifer, designated as a sole source aquifer by the US Environmental Protection Agency in 2001, provides the source for many of the private residential, community, agricultural, commercial and industrial wells in Charlestown and is critical to the sustainability and future of the Town.

Salt ponds.

Ninigret Pond is one of the most intensively studied coastal salt pond ecosystems in New England. This pond continues to attract state and federal funding for both natural resource investigation and site restoration. The Town continues to be vigilant regarding land use and the impact of development on this unique resource.

1991- 2006 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Town of Charlestown has continued to work towards implementation of goals and policies established in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan. Two of the twelve prioritized recommendations have been accomplished: protective overlay districts have been designated and a wastewater management district has been implemented. Many of the other recommendations are ongoing. The following are key initiatives conducted in response to the 1991 Comprehensive Plan:

- The Town has proceeded with conservation of the White Cedar Swamp, located within the Historic Village Overlay District between Route 1 and Route 1A in Cross Mills. The Planning Commission, working jointly with the Economic Improvement Commission and supported by the Conservation Commission, has targeted protection of this rare habitat as a unique feature in the proposed business center. A RIDEM matching grant and Town Open Space Bond funding has been used to purchase this privately-owned property (closing anticipated in summer, 2006). *The Charlestown Improvements Project: Making*

Green Connections to Commerce and Community, completed by the University of Rhode Island Senior Design Studio in December 2004, included recommendations for elevated walkways and/or observation platforms with appropriate signage instructing visitors about the features of the habitat. The Conservation Commission has prepared a management plan.

- The Town of Richmond's 2006 grant from the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) addresses restoration of access to historic upstream spawning and rearing habitat for American shad, river herring, sea-run brown trout and American eel at the Lower Shannock Falls Dam (Richmond and Charlestown).

- The *Salt Ponds Shellfish Restoration Project* by the Rhode Island Departments of Health and Environmental Management, in May 2005, transplanted almost nine tons of adult quahogs into spawning sanctuaries in Quonochontaug, Ninigret, and Winnapaug Ponds.

- The University of Rhode Island's Mapcoast Program completed the bathymetry of the shallow areas of Ninigret Pond (including Foster Cove) in 2005. The program looked at the soils deposited alongside the Breachway (and spilled into the channel) and considered impacts to ecology.

- Recommencement of the *Ninigret Pond Habitat Restoration Project* by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers includes three construction contracts:
    - Dredging of the Breachway and tidal shoals in Ninigret Pond
    - Eelgrass planting and seeding at Ninigret Pond
    - Approved for construction of a fish passage to restore anadromous fish populations at Cross Mills Pond

- *Salt Ponds Watershed Restoration Project* addressed restoration of Green Hill Pond and Ninigret Pond watersheds.

- *South County Greenspace Project* completed by Dodson Associates, Ltd., June 2002 for the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Sustainable Watersheds Office, identifies the Natural Resources Priorities with Farmland and Protected Open Space:

    - Core / Supporting Biodiversity Resources
    - Rare Species Habitat
    - Aquifers
    - Farmland
    - Natural Resource Corridors / Zones

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's designation of the Pawcatuck River Aquifer as a sole source aquifer, under the Safe Water Drinking Act, in June 2001, prohibits the commitment of federal financial assistance for any project that the EPA determines may contaminate the aquifer through its recharge area so as to create significant hazards to public health.

- The Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association's WPA Action Plan has developed an open space plan that incorporates recommendations for watershed/river corridor protection along the Pawcatuck River that serves to *"Protect and restore natural, cultural, and recreational resources of importance to the communities within the watershed."*

- Federally authorized *Habitat Restoration Projects* are planned for Winnapaug and Quonochontaug ponds, in accordance with the Water Resources Development Act of 1996.

NATURAL RESOURCES VISION

Several natural resources issues were discussed at the April 24, 2006 Visioning meeting (priorities are in **bold**).

Strengths identified include:

- **Salt ponds as a unique natural resource**
- **Good water quality – ocean and drinking water**
- **Diversity of habitats**
- Ninigret Park
- Aquifers/ponds unique resources
- Core group who advocate for open space/resources

Weaknesses identified include:

- **Lack of water and sewer infrastructure**
- **Salt ponds as a fragile ecosystem**
- **Lack of protection for salt ponds**
- **Land management of open space**
- Continued protection of quality and quantity of natural resources
- Possible biohazards

NATURAL RESOURCES GOAL

To protect and encourage appropriate use of the town's natural resources, including groundwater, surface water, the salt ponds, trees, wetland and upland habitats, wildlife, the barrier beaches, historic villages, historic cemeteries, tribal artifacts and sites, scenic views and corridors connecting habitat complexes.

POLICIES / ACTIONS

The following policies and actions have been developed to implement the vision and goals for natural resources in Charlestown.

Policy 1: Protect natural resources.

- Continue to develop/update a Planner's database, combining environmental/cultural resources and constraint maps with lot information to be used as a 'red flag' in reviewing development plans.
    - Include natural resources checklist in Site Plan Review.
    - Investigate/map critical habitat of federal and state-listed endangered species (both plant and animal), wetlands (forested/shrub/emergent), and multi-purpose waters through the Rhode Island Geographical Information System (RIGIS), using the most up to date and reliable data available.
- Preserve natural resources through preservation of open space. *See also Land Use and Open Space and Recreation Elements*.
    - Evaluate transfer or purchase of development rights and other land use management tools to preserve the natural resources of Charlestown. *See Land Use Element Policy 4*
    - Develop a Land Trust for preservation purposes. *See Land Use Element Policy 6*
- Investigate measures to protect surface and groundwater resources from stormwater runoff contamination from the Town's salt, sand, and tar pits. (Department of Public Works, Town Council)

Policy 2: Allow and encourage development that protects natural resources and reflects the natural constraints of the land.

- Consider density of development in Growth Centers (Cross Mills, Carolina, Shannock) while preserving rural areas from development in accordance with the State Guide Plan Element *Land Use 2025*. *See Land Use Element Policy 4*

- Assess value of municipal property (including tax sale parcels but excluding open space parcels) for habitat, groundwater protection, conservation and affordable housing.

- Implement conservation design in subdivision zoning regulations that set high standards for the quality and configuration of the resulting open space and contribute to creating an interconnected network of open space throughout the community. Such a network should link resource areas in adjoining subdivisions and/or provide buffers between new development and pre-existing sensitive lands or developed neighborhoods. *See Land Use Element, Policy 3*

- Protect and preserve agricultural land within the Town. *See Economic Development Element, Policy 5*

  - Support the preservation of farmland for farming activities.

  - Consider developing a farmland/open space overlay district based on prime agricultural soils, historic farm use, character of the surrounding area, and open space.

  - Promote participation in the Farm Land Preservation Act as a measure to encourage the on-going maintenance of the historic landscapes of Charlestown.

Agricultural areas.

- Create, conserve, and maintain sustainable forest resources within the Town.

  - Educate public officials and the general public to gain an understanding and appreciation of forest resources, so they might better utilize, conserve and protect these resources for future generations.

- Protect and improve the health of forests by monitoring and responding to forest health threats and by encouraging fire districts to maintain a forest fire defense plan.

- Maintain a viable forest products industry by supporting products such as firewood, tree farms, and sustainable timber production from Charlestown woodlands.

- Protect forested riparian areas along rivers and streams to promote improved water quality, wildlife diversity, enhanced aesthetics, and reduced flooding.

Forested lands.

- Provide recreational activities/opportunities and promote tourism in forested recreation areas.

- Conserve and restore Charlestown's forests in un-fragmented conditions through innovative land conservation and management techniques.

Policy 3: Protect natural resources through zoning and the development review process, using innovative techniques as they become available or feasible.

- Promote establishing protective undeveloped zones along water resources and other habitats through the use of setbacks, design standards, exactions, open space dedication.

- Consider designation of a recessional moraine overlay zone (north of Route 1) with a requirement for advanced wastewater treatment on highly permeable soils.

- Consider strengthening the protections provided by the Rhode Island Freshwater Wetlands Act by adopting an *Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance* or amending zoning and subdivision regulations to include the following:

  - Develop a wetlands protection checklist for Site Plan Review of development proposals.

  - Designate a 'no-build' zone coincident with RIDEM or CRMC perimeter or riverbank wetland designation.

- Establish zoning performance standards for RIDEM or CRMC permitted construction within a perimeter or riverbank wetland to assure the integrity of the adjacent wetland resource.

- Establish a five-year wetland monitoring program for RIDEM or CRMC-permitted wetland restoration projects.

- Demarcate the wetland edge with permanent markers to protect the wetland resource area from alteration/use and incremental deterioration.

- Require that restrictions on use of wetland resource areas be included as a deed restriction.

- Address impacts of groundwater drawdown on wetlands.

- Develop a system to track State (RIDEM and CRMC) wetland permits to identify areas of wetland disturbance and to provide awareness regarding compliance with local and State approval conditions.

- Require that commercial and industrial businesses provide a clearly defined waste storage and disposal management plan for all hazardous materials as part of the building permit process.

- Promote tree protection and replacement through zoning and the development review process.

- Continue to safeguard the town from new/potential non-point source pollutants.

- Implement conservation design in zoning and land development regulations. *See Land Use Element Policy 3 and Housing and Demographic Element Policy 2*

Policy 4: Support efforts by others to monitor, evaluate, and implement programs to improve water quality and habitat in the fresh water bodies and salt ponds of the Town.

- Work with RIDEM and the US Army Corps of Engineers to assure that breachways are maintained to assure adequate flushing of Ninigret and Quonochontaug Ponds.

- Continue working with the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association and other local water monitoring associations.

- Continue working with the University of Rhode Island Watershed Watch Program in monitoring phosphate/potassium contamination from septic systems.

- Require that EPA's regularly issued reports on groundwater plume status at the United Nuclear Corporation site be posted as a public document and be available for review at Town Offices, the library, and the Department of Pubic Works.

- Support US Fish and Wildlife, US Army Corps of Engineers, and RIDEM efforts to restore habitats and water quality of coastal ponds.

- Continue to collaborate/partner with U.S. Fish and Wildlife, The Nature Conservancy, R.I. Department of Environmental Management, South County Conservancy, and the R.I. Audubon Society to preserve and protect natural resources.

- Continue to support, maintain, and further develop the objectives of the *South County Greenspace Project* to protect the following:

  - Farmland
  - Aquifers/Aquifer Recharge Areas
  - Rare Species Habitat
  - Wetlands
  - Supporting Biodiversity
  - Core Biodiversity Resources
  - Natural Resource Corridors
  - Wellhead Protection Areas
  - Large Forested Blocks

Policy 5: Protect and preserve the quality and quantity of surface waters and the Town's potable water supply.

- Adopt Coastal Resources Management Council Special Area Management Plan (CRMC SAMP) denitrification guidelines as part of the zoning ordinance for all lots, including six or more lots addressed by the SAMP.

- Consider the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Business District Water Use Committee to conduct a Central Business District Corridor Water System Study in Cross Mills, to include:

  - Quality and quantity of water supply

  - Life expectancy of water source

- Aquifer recharge
- Water uses: Commercial, Residential and Fire Protection
- Cost of siting, exploration, installation, distribution and operation
- Financing options
- Impacts on ISDS

- Continue to implement, maintain and periodically update the Hazard Mitigation Plan to protect the quality of surface water and subsurface drinking water in response to hurricanes and other hazards.

- Continue to support the U.S. EPA's designation of the Pawcatuck River aquifer as a sole source aquifer, under the Safe Water Drinking Act, and the actions associated with such designation.

- Continue to implement the Town of Charlestown On-Site Wastewater Management Plan. *See Services and Facilities Element Policy 13*

    - Recognize that both stormwater runoff as well as Individual Septic Disposal Systems (ISDS) contribute to bacterial and nutrient pollution of surface water. Develop procedures to minimize these threats.

    - Complete performance-based standards and link them to high-risk areas specified and defined in zoning regulations to control high-density development.

    - Extend wastewater responsibilities to include protection of drinking water, salt ponds, and other environmental or public health resources.

- Update mapping of the Groundwater Protection Districts, including districts in Carolina, Shannock, and Burkickville areas of the Pawcatuck River sole source aquifer, and the area along Route 1 in the Quonochontaug and Ninigret ponds areas.

Shelter Cove Marina.

Policy 6: Promote appreciation of natural resources by residents and visitors.

- Promote access to and appreciation of many of the natural resources as appropriate through the continued development of shore access points, hiking paths, and other opportunities for outdoor activities.
    - Develop small-scale access ways to the shore, which would allow a few visitors each, such as anglers, hikers, or people who wish to sit and look at the water.
    - Implement recommendations of *The Charlestown Improvements Project: Making Green Connections to Commerce and Community* to construct a series of elevated walkways and viewing platforms in the recently acquired White Cedar Swamp, located between Post Road (Route 1) and Old Post Road (Route 1A). Apply for grants through possible federal, state and private funding sources to promote access to and education regarding this rare habitat, located in the proposed business center of town.
- Continue educational efforts and group activities that raise awareness of environmental protection.
- Provide public access to the shoreline.
    - Investigate historic rights-of-way to the shore through deed research, and re-establish as necessary.
    - Continue to work with CRMC to identify rights-of-way to the shore.
    - Consider several town-owned waterfront properties for public access.
- Continue to work with local, State and Federal agencies and neighboring communities, including the Narragansett Indian Tribe, to ensure that land uses across municipal borders are compatible.
    - Work with the tribe and neighboring communities to delineate and protect shared natural resources.

Policy 7: Create an interconnected network of conservation and / or open space lands.

- Implement conservation design in zoning and subdivisions regulations, where possible, as part of the regulatory review of residential

subdivisions and land development projects. *See Land Use Element Policy 3*

- Consider interconnection of habitat areas as a priority in protection and conservation of open space property. *See Open Space and Recreation Element Policy 1*

- Implement recommendations of the 2002 *South County Greenspace Protection Project* as a means to identify and protect significant and important opens spaces and natural features of the Town.

3. CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The cultural context of Charlestown centers around the heritage of the Narragansett Indian Tribe, the settlement patterns of the colonists, and remnants of several villages from the Industrial era concentrated around the rail and river.

1991-2006 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Town of Charlestown has continued to meet goals and policies established in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan. The following are key accomplishments outlined as recommendations / implementation in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan as well as a summary of studies / plans completed to date since the 1991 Comprehensive Plan:

- The *Project Narrative for Ninigret Park*, completed by the University of Rhode Island Senior Design Studio in May 2005, developed a design solution to best utilize the 227-acre site.

- *The Charlestown Improvements Project: Making Green Connections to Commerce and Community,* completed by the University of Rhode Island Senior Design Studio in December 2004, explored development options for the heavily traveled section of Route 1A.

- A Mixed Use Overlay Zone was implemented in 2004 to encourage small-scale business and residential uses consistent with the historic and pedestrian-scale characteristics that exist and are unique to Charlestown village and to preserve the Town's heritage.

- *Old Post Road Village – Charlestown, RI…A Vision for the Route 1A Commercial Corridor*, completed by the University of Rhode Island Planning Studio in Fall 2003, created a vision for the historic and rural route that is reflective of a mixed-use village center.

- *South County Greenspace Project* completed by Dodson Associates, Ltd., June 2002, identifies the Cultural Resources and Cultural Priorities Maps of Charlestown (local heritage and historic corridors/ sites/ areas, scenic roads/ areas, archeological sites, and special places). Local historic districts inventoried:

    - Arnolda/ Arnolda East
    - Burdickville
    - Carolina Village

- Charlestown Beach/ Breachway
- Cross Mills
- Columbia Heights
- Ninigret Naval Air Station
- Quonochontaug Summer Colonies
- Watchaug Pond Summer Colonies

- *A Village Revitalization Plan for Shannock, RI* was completed by the Urban Design Group, March 2000, to enable both Charlestown and Richmond to be eligible for multi-year funding under the State's Small Cities Community Block Grant Program to improve the overall quality of life of the village.

- A Historic Village Overlay District was implemented in 1999 as part of the zoning ordinance to protect, preserve and maintain the quality of the Town's villages, to preserve the Town's heritage, cultural and architectural qualities, to foster civic beauty, to strengthen the local economy and to promote the use of such districts for the education, pleasure and welfare of the citizens of the Town.

- Three local mill villages were designated historic districts in 1999: Cross Mills Historic Village District, Shannock Historic Village District, and Carolina Historic Village District.

Historic structure, Cross Mills.

CUTLURAL RESOURCES VISION

Several Cultural Resources issues were discussed at the April 24, 2006 Visioning meeting (priorities are in **bold**).

Strengths identified include:

- **Small town, rural character**
- **Several villages unique to Charlestown**
- **Beach accessibility**
- **Woodlands**
- Narragansett Indian Tribe
- Mills (Carolina, Cross)
- People of the Town
- Ninigret Park

Weaknesses identified include:

- **Lack of diverse population**
- **Few events to celebrate cultural resources**

- **Need nodes of activity for sense of place**
- Additional cultural opportunities
- Lack of citizen involvement
- Under utilized cultural resources

CULTURAL RESOURCES GOAL

To protect and encourage appropriate use of the town's cultural resources, including historic villages, historic cemeteries, tribal artifacts and sites, and scenic views and corridors.

POLICIES / ACTIONS

The following policies and actions have been developed to implement the goals and vision for cultural resources in Charlestown.

Policy 1: Preserve and protect cultural resources including buildings, features and archeological resources which define the town's character.

- Consider the recommendations identified in the *Project Narrative for Ninigret Park*.
    - Preserve the historic character of the Charlestown Naval Airfield (CNALF).
    - Enhance/expand the memorial to a grand scale/size to gain national recognition.
- Support efforts by the Narragansett Indian Tribe to inventory Native American heritage resources not located on/within Tribal lands.

Ninigret Park Memorial.

- Continue to support, maintain, and further develop the following objectives of the *South County Greenspace Project*.
    - Local heritage areas/corridors
    - Historic sites/districts
    - Scenic areas/roads
    - Archeological sites
    - Special places

Policy 2: Allow and encourage development that protects the cultural resources, including historic villages, structures, and landscapes, scenic vistas and open areas, architectural heritage, and natural features that are important in defining the town's scenic rural character.

- Consider establishing a separate Historic District Commission. The Planning Commission currently undertakes these duties.

Historic District 2 Schoolhouse.

  - Proposed Commission to review proposed development within designated historic district.
  - Proposed Commission to recommend historic districts and/or individual buildings or structures that are deemed to be of historic value to Town Council for designation.
  - Proposed Commission to pursue listing of recommended properties/ structures on the National Register of Historic Places.
  - Proposed Commission to consider designation of summer seaside colonies as historic districts. Develop incentive program or relief for rehabilitation of cottages in designated districts to preserve this housing type.

Fort Ninigret historic site.

  - Re-examine zoning to ensure it is compatible with the integrity of the historical mill village.

- Develop a more defined identity for the Town. Seek funding through Enhancements or from RIEDC Office of Community Development.
  - Establish gateways with signage and landscaping at Pawcatuck River bridges and entrances from Westerly and South Kingstown.
  - Establish improved physical/visual access to the Pawcatuck River by creating a scenic overlook at Horseshoe Dam.

- Consider enhancing landscaping with a town memorial and flagpole at the intersection of South County Trail and Carolina Back Road.

- Encourage public/private partnerships for street tree/landscaping projects.

Route 2 / 112 intersection.

Policy 3: Protect cultural resources through zoning and the development review process, using innovative techniques as they become available or feasible.

- Develop design standards for cultural resources in village districts.

  - Village districts – enhance design standards that reflect village character (unobtrusive signage, sidewalks or pedestrian ways, buildings in keeping with surrounding village in regard to roof line, building materials, architectural style, ornamentation, etc.) that build upon current zoning requirements for the Mixed Use Overlay District and landscaping requirements.

- Revise the zoning ordinance and table of uses to include a Traditional Village District along Old Post Road. This would assure that potential uses are compatible with the Mixed Use Overlay.

- Designate scenic roadways and design standards to protect stone walls, views, and the integrity of the landscape.

  - Develop design standards that protect open undeveloped views and reduce the visual impact of development on country roads. *See Land Use Element Policy 1*

- Continue to develop/update a Planner's database, combining environmental/cultural resource and constraints maps with lot information to be used as a red flag in reviewing developments.

  - Include historic checklist in Site Plan Review.

- Consider a Demolition-Delay Ordinance to provide a limited time period to explore options to preserve local historic heritage threatened with demolition.

- Identify cultural resource areas for increased protection through dedication or acquisition of development rights or property.

- Encourage the development of a façade improvement program.

- Continue to collaborate/partner with U.S. Fish and Wildlife, The Nature Conservancy, R.I Department of Environmental Management, South County Conservancy, R.I. Audubon Society and others to protect cultural resources through dedication or acquisition of development rights or property.

Francis C. Carter Memorial Preserve, collaborative effort with The Nature Conservancy.

Policy 4: Encourage appropriate re-use through preservation or rehabilitation of historic structures in accordance with the provisions of the zoning district.

- Encourage residents to utilize state and federal investment tax credits for restoration of structures on the National Register of Historic Places.

- Develop and make available to owners of historic property a how-to booklet of guidelines for restoration.

Policy 5: Support the prehistoric and historic heritage of the Narragansett Indian Tribe and adjacent communities.

- Work with the Tribe and neighboring communities to delineate and protect shared resources.

- Continue to work with local, state, federal agencies and neighboring communities, including the Narragansett Indian Tribe, to ensure that land uses along Charlestown's common borders are compatible.

Narragansett Indian Tribal Administration Offices.

4. OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The protection of open space is critical to maintaining the undeveloped, rural character of Charlestown. With an abundance of unique natural resources and accompanying development constraints, the protection of open space is a priority for the Town. Charlestown continues to collaborate with private and non-profit organizations and State and Federal agencies in this effort. Access to open space and provision of organized recreational programs, activities and events are integral in serving local residents and supporting the local tourism/recreation-based economy.

Table 1 includes information on federal, state; local and private open space in Charlestown in 2006, with a comparison to 1991, as reported in the Comprehensive Plan. In 1991 private conservation / recreation land included Camp Davis, YMCA Camp, RI Boy Scouts, Camp Tanner Collins, as well as Audubon's 30-acre Kimball Wildlife Refuge. In 2006 many of these properties are recognized as not being protected from development. In 2006 the Town of Charlestown owns seven parcels totaling 117 acres that are not protected from development. Properties include town hall, the elementary school, and Camp Davis.

As indicated in Table 1, in 2006, federal, state, local and private owners have conserved a total of 6,583 acres, a 20 percent increase from 5,493 protected acres in 1991. The 2006 figure does not include the following:

- 504 acres protected from development within fourteen residential cluster subdivisions
- Approximately 900 acres fully protected from development within Narragansett Indian Tribal Settlement Land
- Approximately 675 acres, representing 75 percent of about 900 acres of Tribal lands designated as protected open space under the Settlement Act

Table 1 – Federal, State, Municipal and Private Protected Open Space

Description	2006 Acres *	1991 Acres **
Federal		
Ninigret Wildlife Refuge	379.7	
Refuge in Moraine	186.4	
Maynard land	178.8	
New USFWS Refuge Center	114.8	
Barrier Beach	27.0	
Ninigret Pond	4.3	
Park Lane	1.6	
Post Road	1.4	
Total Federal	***893.9***	***563***
continued		

Description	2006 Acres *	1991 Acres **
State		
Burlingame State Park	3,236.8	
Beach, Barrier Beach, Breachways	339.0	
Power Line to Great Swamp	54.8	
Word's Island	10.0	
Fort Ninigret	2.6	
Watchaug Pond Boat Ramp	2.9	
Miscellaneous	28.0	
Total State	***3,674.2***	***4,082***
Municipal		
Ninigret Park	230.0	
Former Richard's land	95.7	
Schoolhouse Pond	93.5	
South Farm	86.7	
Beach/shorefront/ parking	26.0	
Former Dump	8.6	
Driving Range	7.2	
Tennis court by school	6.1	
Hargraves Playground, Columbia Heights	5.3	
Recreation land in Subdivision	4.0	
Grand Prix Park, Carolina	2.8	
River Access Lower Shannock Falls	1.1	
Island Cross Mills Pond	0.5	
Total Municipal	*567.5*	*388*
Private* **		
Audubon Society of Rhode Island	60.5	
Kimball Wildlife Refuge, 26.9 acres		
Additional properties (5), 33.6 acres		
The Nature Conservancy	1,107.0	
Taylor land, 46.6 acres		
Frank Carter Preserve, 841.4 acres		
Philip Green, 199.7 acres		
Additional properties (2), 19.3 acres		
South County Conservancy Inc.	167.9	
Mill Pond property, 76.3 acres		
Additional properties (43), 91.6 acres		
Conservation Easements	112.0	
Total Private	***1,447.4***	***459***
TOTAL PROTECTED PROPERTY	**6,582.9**	**5,493**

* *Town of Charlestown Assessors Office, July 21, 2006*

** *Town of Charlestown Comprehensive Plan 1991, Table 1 – Public Land and Private Recreation/Conservation Land*

*** *Total does not reflect 504 privately-owned acres preserved within cluster subdivisions in accordance with land development and zoning regulations*

Currently 504 acres are protected from development in cluster subdivisions, in accordance with the zoning ordinance that requires a percentage of land to be preserved in its natural state. Although this privately-owned land is not open to the public, it protects landforms (upland woods, streams and wetlands) and groundwater quality, and provides natural habitat for wildlife.

As indicated in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, the 1978 *Joint Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Settlement of the Rhode Island Indian Land Claims* "resulted

in a settlement agreement providing the Narragansett Indian Tribe with approximately 1,800 acres of land in two equal parcels. This dual allotment consists of the Public Settlement lands and the Private Settlement lands. … Public Settlement lands were originally tribal-owned lands including the Indian Cedar Swamp Management Area, the Indian Burial Hill, and the Deep Pond Area. According to the settlement, this land, amounting to about 900 acres, is to remain perpetually as a conservation area. The Private Settlement lands were privately owned lands that were transferred to the Tribe. The private settlement land is also an approximate 900-acre parcel, 75 percent of which must remain as a limited conservation area where certain activities such as agriculture are permitted. The remaining 25 percent (approximately 225 acres) can be developed if such action is desired by the Tribe."[1]

In 2006, a total of 8,662 acres or 36.7 percent of land area[2] within the borders of Charlestown are protected from development. This figure includes 6,583 acres identified in Table 1, 504 acres protected within cluster subdivisions, and 1,575 acres of Tribal land protected from development.

Figure 3 identifies protected and unprotected open space property and Narragansett Indian Tribal land per the Settlement Act. Private cluster subdivision open space is included with protected and unprotected open space. Publicly accessible and privately controlled open space provide expansive habitat corridors in Charlestown which may be extended in the future.

1991-2006 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Town of Charlestown has continued its aggressive campaign with the South County Conservancy and other organizations to preserve/protect open space. The following are key accomplishments outlined as recommendations in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, together with a summary of open space / recreation initiatives completed in the past 15 years:

- The *Project Narrative for Ninigret Park* was completed by the University of Rhode Island Senior Design Studio, May 2005, to develop a design solution on how to best utilize the 227-acre site.

- In 2004, residents of Charlestown voted to approve a $2 million bond specifically for the purchase of open space and recreation through Financial Town Meeting Referendum.

[1] Town of Charlestown Comprehensive Plan 1991, Cultural Resource Element, pages 6 and 7.
[2] Total land area: 23,576.97 acres. Total area within Town boundaries also includes 14,367.94 acres of water bodies (Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation Profile Town of Charlestown, http://www.riedc.com/riedc/ri_databank/31/281/).

- Recently designated open space includes South Farm, White Cedar Swamp, TNC Carter Preserve, Mud Cove, USFWS Kettle Pond Center.

- In 2002 voters approved a $1 million open space and recreation bond issue at Financial Town Meeting.

- *South County Greenspace Project* completed by Dodson Associates, Ltd., June 2002, identifies the Charlestown Recreational Inventory Map with primary and secondary destination points, boat launches, protected lands, and existing/proposed hiking/water/bike trails. Primary destinations identified include:

    - Woodville
    - Alton Pond
    - Carolina/Shannock
    - Cross Mills
    - Burlingame State Park
    - Quonny Fishing Area
    - Charlestown Beach

- In 2000, voters approved a $2 million open space and recreation bond issue by referendum.

- *A Village Revitalization Plan for Shannock, RI* was completed by the Urban Design Group, March 2000, to enable both Charlestown and Richmond to be eligible for multi-year funding under the State's 'Small Cities Community Block Grant Program' to improve the overall quality of life of the village.

- The Town has developed criteria ranking for open space preservation that serves as a guide in assessing opportunities for open space acquisition or easements. Criteria include:
    - Ecologically significant habitat
    - Groundwater and surface water protection
    - Adjacency to (contiguous with) protected land or to surface water bodies
    - Scenic views and vistas
    - Cultural resource protection
    - Farmland protection

- RIDEM has developed a state north-south hiking trail that originates at Blue Shutters Beach, extends through Burlingame State Park, and then continues northward through the western portion of the state.

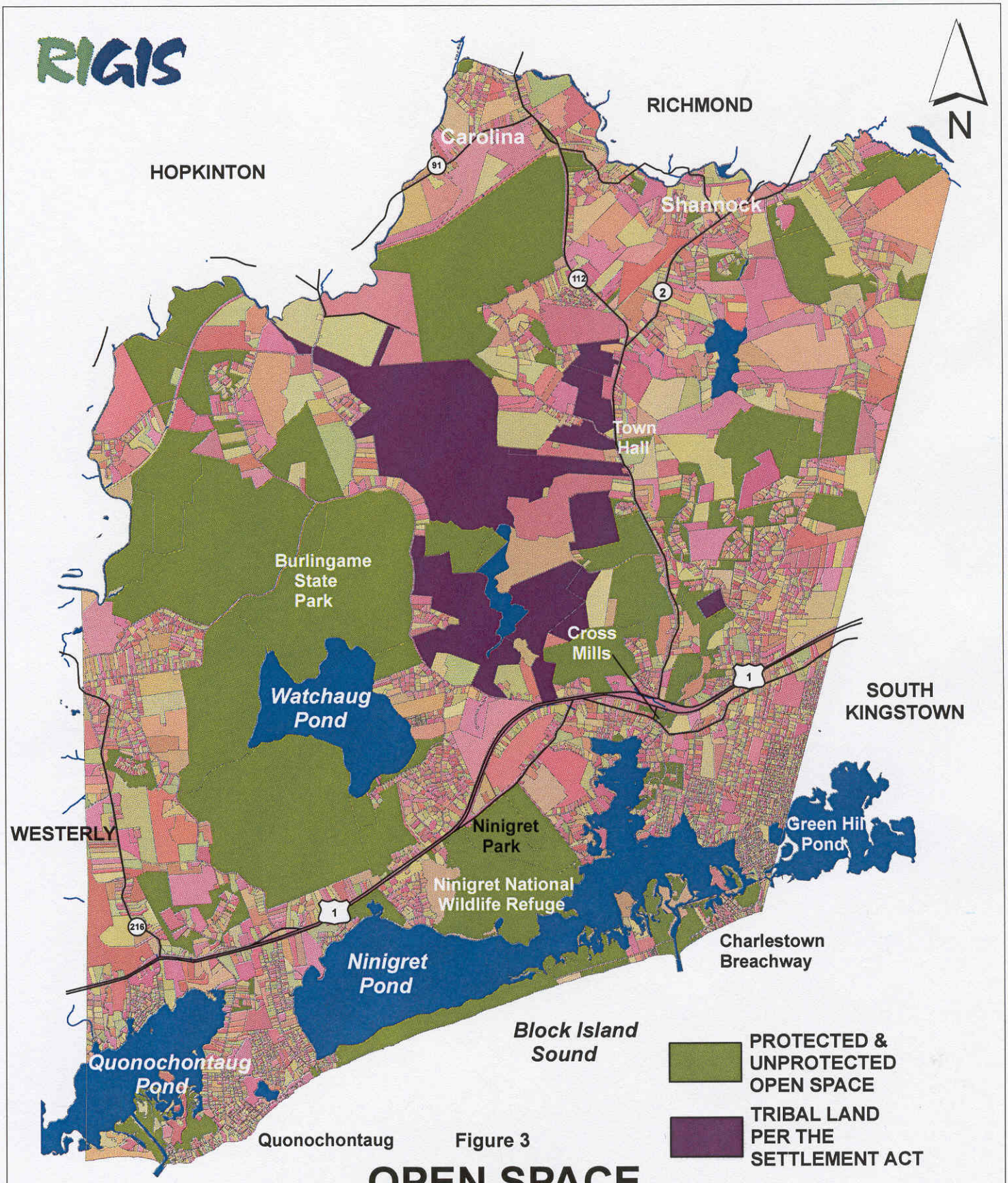


Figure 3

OPEN SPACE

Charlestown, Rhode Island Comprehensive Plan Update

Information obtained from Charlestown Assessor's Office / July 21, 2006.

Pare Engineering Corporation / July, 2006

- The Town requires recreation facilities and open space dedication for land developments. Every application subject to *Charlestown's Subdivision and Land Development Regulations* must dedicate land, pay a fee, or do both, for the purpose of providing open space and park and recreational facilities to serve the immediate needs of present and future residents of the proposed development.

- The *Recreation, Conservation, Open Space Plan* compiled by the Charlestown Planning Board in 1985, was designed to serve as a guide plan to implement a town-wide program to serve present needs as well as future needs within the framework of a Comprehensive Plan. Town Council has not approved a more recent plan.

- In 1999 Brown University students completed an Open Space and buildout analysis of the Town.

Matthew Puchalski Memorial Park.

VISION

Several open space issues were discussed at the April 24, 2006 Visioning meeting (priorities are in **bold**).

Strengths identified include:

- **Major blocks of protected open space**
- The Town focuses programs on existing resources
- Accessibility of the ocean

Weaknesses identified include:

- **Need for open space management**
- **Beach facilities are insufficient**
- **Transfer of development rights needs to be implemented**
- An updated master plan for use and development of Ninigret Park is required
- Better land acquisition planning is needed to provide connections between parcels
- Alternative marketing plans are needed for other areas in town, not always Ninigret/Beaches
- Conflicts continue between affordable housing and open space preservation
- The Town should support the Vermont model of affordable housing/open space
- Town needs a land trust

- Town needs to bolster economic development to support year-round recreation programming

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION GOAL

To promote appreciation and appropriate use of Charlestown's natural and cultural resources by providing a wide range of recreational opportunities for Charlestown's residents and visitors of all ages.

To collaborate with partners in the protection of open space through conservation easements, fee acquisition, transfer of development rights, and other techniques to protect rural character and preserve natural resources.

POLICIES / ACTIONS

The following policies and actions have been developed to implement the goals and vision for economic development in Charlestown.

Francis C. Carter Memorial Preserve.

Policy 1: Protect natural resources, cultural resources, important views and visual corridors through open space acquisition, dedications or purchase/transfer of development rights.

- Continue to apply for recreation/open space grants.
- Continue to support open space acquisition through municipal bond issues.
- Develop a separate municipal conservation land trust. *See Land Use Element Policy 6*
- Develop GIS map of critical habitat of federal and state-listed rare, threatened, and endangered species (both plant and animal) and wetlands (forested/shrub/emergent) through GIS, using the most up to date and reliable data available.
- Continue to collaborate/partner with U.S. Fish and Wildlife, The Nature Conservancy, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, South County Conservancy, Rhode Island Audubon Society and private developers (through the land development process) regarding open space acquisition and conservation.

- Implement Transfer of Development Rights to protect open space while encouraging development in villages and designated Growth Centers.

- Establish process and protocols for Town participation in open space protection.

    - Educate recreational users and others who enjoy open space on appropriate use to protect natural resources and habitat. Consider establishing an ordinance for police enforcement of posted open space rules and regulations.

    - Collaborate among town departments and commissions to assure that use of open space property respects the intent of the seller, protects natural resources, and is accessible by the public for passive and active recreation (as appropriate).

    - Continue using criteria ranking process to serve as a guide in assessing opportunities for open space preservation.

    - Consider amending open space criteria ranking process to include the following:

        - Potential to preclude residential or commercial use in areas not suited for development (including flood prone property) or to transfer development rights to more appropriate areas
        - Potential to construct affordable housing, if it is the seller's intent to both conserve the property and allow limited residential development
        - Accessibility to residential areas and neighborhoods, to increase use and appreciation of open space and to serve as a buffer to more intensively used areas
        - Potential partnership with other land conservation agencies, programs, and funding sources

    - Discuss potential uses of property with seller. Provide seller with information on options for open space preservation, residential development and other municipal use including active recreation.

        - If seller is only interested in conservation, the highest level of protection, conservation easements, should be applied to the property in its entirety and the property be rezoned as Open Space.

- If the seller is interested in future use of the property for conservation and possible multiple use including active recreation, construction of affordable housing, or other municipal purpose, this should be defined during the negotiation process and rezoning should reflect multiple use.

- Property acquired with open space bond funds should NOT be considered for construction of affordable housing.

- Consider using Limited Development Projects to manage residential growth, preserve open space, and help offset cost of acquisition through construction and sale of a limited number of single family homes on the larger tract to be conserved.

  - If a seller is supportive of limited residential development as a component of open space preservation, require a resource evaluation be conducted to identify areas more suitable for uses other than conservation. The resource evaluation should not be conducted if the seller is not interested in residential development.

  - Upon completion of a resource evaluation and consent of the seller, consider residential development on a portion of property considered less suitable for conservation to offset cost of acquisition, assuring that the selected site does not adversely affect the criteria ranking of the property.

  - If a portion of a property is sold or developed for other than open space or recreation purposes, proceeds of the sale should go to an open space fund such as a municipal land trust (or into the "fee in lieu of open space" fund if a municipal land trust has not been established).

- Assure good stewardship of municipally controlled open space and conservation parcels.

  - Require a management plan be prepared prior to open space acquisition or for currently controlled open space parcels. Management plan to address the following, as applicable:

    - Forestry management
    - Management of open fields and meadows to preserve views and vistas. Plan should address haying of open fields, seasonal restrictions on mowing to avoid grass-nesting birds and other species with unique habitat

needs, and any special equipment needed to avoid impacts to wet meadows.
- Signage and possible trail and parking construction and maintenance
- Potential active recreation use
- Maintenance and use of any existing structures including homes and barns
- Identification of funding sources

- Consider creating and funding municipal position (Town Land Steward/Manager/Easement Monitor) to manage municipal open space.

  - Consider use of a percentage of recreation/open space impact fee exactions to fund a Town Land Steward/Manager/Easement Monitor.

- Clarify long-term status of property preserved as part of the subdivision approval process to assure good stewardship and perpetual undeveloped use.

▪ Determine suitability of future tax sale lots or other municipally managed property for open space preservation, recreation or affordable housing.

  - Conduct a resource evaluation to identify areas appropriate for open space preservation, residential construction, or active recreation use.

  - Consider sale of tax lots with proceeds for open space and municipal purposes such as construction of affordable housing.

▪ Continue requiring exactions (land dedications and/or fee in lieu of land dedications) of developers to preserve open space, especially as undeveloped buffers to natural resources.

  - Use natural resources constraints maps, plans, and site visits to identify resources that should be protected on-site.

  - Implement zoning for conservation design and conservation subdivisions to protect valuable natural and cultural resources from subdivision development.

▪ Implement night sky view preservation regulations as part of the zoning ordinance. *See Circulation Element, Policy 3*

- Mandate full cut-off fixtures casting light directly downward at 90 degrees to the horizontal to obscure the source of illumination and minimize glare in the night sky and light trespass to adjacent properties.

- Reduce candlepower and restrict use of high-pressure sodium vapor lights that produce an orange/pink glow in the night sky in areas where reflected glow might be observed from a distance.

- Limit or schedule hours of recreation field or parking lot lighting to specifically assure the functionality of the Ninigret Park Observatory.

Frosty Drew Observatory.

Policy 2: Continue to fund the Parks and Recreation Department programs.

- Continue interdepartmental cooperation in maintaining facilities.

- Recognize volunteers who help support the programs.

- Continue funding salaried and hourly positions recognized as helping to manage recreational spaces, write management plans and develop educational programs.

Tennis courts at Ninigret Park.

Policy 3: Continue to provide opportunities for active and passive recreation throughout the Town.

- Update the Town Recreation, Conservation, Open Space Plan.

  - Assure consistency with *Ocean State Outdoors, Rhode Island's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan,* Element 152 of the State Guide Plan.

  - Update plan to assure Town is well positioned to receive federal and state funding for open space and recreation.

- Implement recommendations identified in the *Project Narrative for Ninigret Park*.

  - Design/plan for active and passive recreational use areas.

- Organize buildings and uses that address current needs.

- Develop a design solution (update Master Plan) for best utilization of the 227-acre Ninigret Park.

- Implement recommendations of the *Village Revitalization Plan for Shannock, Rhode Island*.

  - Develop (jointly with Carolina and Kenyon in Richmond) a Heritage Trail along the Pawcatuck River that would link the Carolina Management Area and the Great Swamp Management Area.

  - Inventory recreational facilities at Clark Memorial Ballfield (Columbia Heights).

  - Develop donated land on the river at Lower Falls as a fishing/canoeing site.

- Continue to facilitate the recommendations of the most recently approved *Recreation, Conservation, Open Space Plan*.

  - Acquire land for future recreation use prior to the time of critical need.

  - Work towards multiple use of state-owned areas, whereby the town will gain use benefits from these areas.

  - Continue to develop recreation complexes rather than single purpose recreation facilities.

- Make improvements to the Columbia Heights, Grand Prix and Schoolhouse Pond parcels to encourage the uses for which they were initially designed.

Policy 4: Continue to provide and expand opportunities for access to fresh/salt-water resources while protecting the resources from adverse impacts of overuse.

- Continue to develop small-scale access ways to the shore, which would allow a few visitors each, such as anglers, hikers, or people who wish to sit and look at the water.

  - Consider use of municipally-owned tax sale lots and easements to provide limited shore access.

- Provide limited parking (if any) at or near shore access points.

- Notify residents of sites and any restrictions.

- Investigate historic rights-of-way to the shore through deed research, and re-establish as necessary.

  - Continue to work with CRMC to identify rights-of-way to the shore.

- Ensure adequate facilities (parking, sanitary facilities and trash disposal) at Town beach and shore access sites.

  - Recognize that availability of parking limits use of the Town beaches. To avoid excessive beach crowding, shuttle bus service from a remote "green" parking area (possibly at Ninigret Park) should only be considered if additional waterfront property is developed as a municipal beach.

Charlestown beach parking.

  - Inventory/improve all town-owned beach facilities.

- Investigate the potential for additional boat ramps or small boat put-ins (including kayak and canoes) to facilitate designation of a "blue trail" with destinations along the salt ponds. *See Economic Improvement Element Policy 4*

5. CIRCULATION ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Circulation patterns in Charlestown have determined the settlement pattern and the use of the land. Although Post Road/Route 1 serves the Town along the southern tier of the town, through traffic on this major arterial is limited to coastal traffic in Westerly, Charlestown and South Kingstown and is especially heavy during summer months. I-95, located north of the Town's boarders, serves the burden of through, interstate traffic. Without easy access to the interstate system, the town has not developed as a destination for retail or office development.

Route 1/Post Road north.

1991-2006 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Town of Charlestown has continued to meet goals and policies established in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan. The following accomplishments and initiatives were undertaken in response to recommendations / implementation in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan:

- The Town implemented a sidewalk ordinance in 2005 identifying the responsibility of owners, occupants or any persons having the care of any building or lot of land bordering on any street where there is a sidewalk, for removal of snow, ice, litter/debris, placement of awnings, and maintenance.

- RIDEM has developed a state north-south hiking trail that passes through western Charlestown.

- *Old Post Road Village – Charlestown, RI … A Vision for the Route 1A Commercial Corridor*, completed by the University of Rhode Island Planning Studio in Fall 2003, created a vision for the historic and rural route that includes improved pedestrian and vehicular connections.

Cross Mills.

- *South County Greenspace Project* completed by Dodson Associates, Ltd., June 2002, identifies primary and secondary destination points, boat launches, protected lands, and existing and proposed hiking, water, and bike trails on the Charlestown Recreational Inventory Map

- *A Village Revitalization Plan for Shannock, RI,* completed by the Urban Design Group, March 2000, enables both Charlestown and Richmond to be eligible for multi-year funding under the State's Small Cities Community Block Grant Program to improve the overall quality of life of the village.

CIRCULATION VISION

Several circulation issues were discussed at the April 24, 2006 Visioning meeting (priorities are in **bold**).

Strengths identified include:

- **Scenic roads**
- **Department of Public Works**
- **Trail system**

Weaknesses identified include:

- **Roads too narrow to support bike paths**
- **Post Road traffic signals**
- **Lack of RIPTA services**
- **Lack of sidewalks**
- Poor road conditions south of Route 1
- Tribal land location/influence
- State road drainage issues
- Summer traffic
- No mass transit
- Route 1 reconstruction (RIDOT)
- Turn-arounds unsafe
- No shuttle to beaches/ through villages
- Inconsistent signage

View from Route 1 north.

Signage along Old Post Road.

CIRCULATION GOAL

To provide for safe travel through the town while protecting the rural character, scenic nature, and natural and cultural resources along the roads and throughout the Town.

POLICIES AND ACTIONS

The following policies and actions have been developed to implement the goals and vision for circulation in Charlestown.

Policy 1: Provide adequate funding and staff for the town to maintain and improve its roads.

- Support maintenance of local roadways through Town budget.
- Continue to assess transportation infrastructure needs through the Town's transportation improvement program.
- Conduct routine roadway and bridge maintenance to assure municipal assets remain safe and functional.

Policy 2: Seek appropriate state funding for transportation improvements.

- Actively work with problem areas including high-accident locations and possible solutions to maintain the amenities of the Town.
- Consult regularly on transportation issues including safety, demand for transportation improvements, and to provide local input on state transportation solutions.

Designated turning lane, Route 1 northbound.

- Maintain routine liaison with state agencies including Statewide Planning Program, RIDOT, and RIPTA to regularly discuss upcoming projects and their impact on the town, and the Town's needs.
    - Review all phases of RIDOT plans, and submit formal comments to the State to ensure that RIDOT road and bridge improvements are in keeping with the Town's character. The Town recommends that RIDOT consider the use of timber bridges.
    - Provide oversight regarding impacts of state-funded roadway construction.

- Coordinate with RIDOT regarding use of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) to improve safety and capacity of state roads.

- Prepare a yearly memo to the Planning Board and Town Council, outlining requests for state assistance or status of ongoing RIDOT construction projects. This memo would identify projects for the biannual state Transportation Improvement Program in the following categories: Bicycle Pedestrian, Bridge, Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (including multimodal or high occupancy vehicle projects), Enhancements, Pavement Management, Study and Development, Traffic Safety, and Indian Reservation Road Program.

- Collaborate with the Washington County Regional Planning Council to address regional transportation issues related to Route 1, the Northeast Corridor (Amtrak/future MBTA services), and tourism-based traffic.

- Continue to collaborate with the Narragansett Indian Tribe regarding maintenance of roads with adjacent jurisdiction. Consider joint application to the state Transportation Improvement Program for Town and Tribal roadway improvements.

Policy 3: Protect the rural quality of life and natural scenery along the town's roads, including vegetation, stone walls, historic structures and landscapes, and views.

- Continue to designate scenic roads.

  - Designate scenic roads and develop design standards to protect scenic qualities.

- Where safety allows, maintain less heavily traveled roads as winding country roads.

- Develop design standards for scenic and other roads.

  - Require vegetated buffers along roads and parking lots.

  - Consider enhanced landscaping on Route 1 and 1A, Charlestown Beach Road, East Beach Road and West Beach Road.

Landscaped median at Ninigret Park on/off ramp.

- Scenic Roads – vegetated buffers, stonewall preservation, preservation of narrow, winding roads. Specify depth of vegetated buffer to maintain scenic corridor on Route 1, a state designated Scenic Roadway.

- Reduce curb cuts to roadways and scenic roads to maintain local character.

- Design streets in new residential developments to meet anticipated traffic volumes and safety considerations without loss of site amenities and neighborhood character. Street design should be related to housing type and subdivision design. Consideration would be given to preserving site characteristics, and requiring or protecting trees, open spaces and unique or valuable site features.

    - Encourage development that minimizes new road surfaces, e.g. cluster or conservation design and development.

    - Consider flexible standards for roadway/driveway construction, including widths and type of material, to minimize impervious surfaces, reduce construction costs and encourage energy conservation.

    - Require that stormwater management be provided for new and rehabilitated roadways in accordance with state and federal regulations.

    - Encourage conservation subdivision design to reduce the length of streets, to reduce paved surfaces and to encourage infiltration of stormwater runoff.

    - Conduct periodic review of *Subdivision and Land Development Regulations* to determine if engineering standards reflect contemporary planning practices while retaining the natural, cultural and scenic objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

- Recognize the importance of street lighting for public safety.

    - To preserve the character of Charlestown and to preserve the night sky, consider installation of street lighting on a *priority basis only* in areas with relatively high accident or crime rates; areas served by senior citizens or handicapped residents; and areas of special or unusual character where street lighting is appropriate.

- Require that the zoning ordinance be revised with recommendations of the International Dark Sky Association to reduce glare. Require that new or upgraded street lighting and lighting for parking lots and other private development be downward casting to minimize glare in the night sky. Require that lighting be full cut-off fixtures that cast light directly downward at 90 degree to the horizontal to obscure the source of illumination and minimize glare in the night sky and light trespass to adjacent properties. Recommend that mercury vapor lighting be used and not sodium to avoid pink glow in the night sky.

- Implement the recommendations from *A Village Revitalization Plan for Shannock, RI* to reinforce connections that make up the fabric of the village.

    - Pursue RIDOT funding for roadway improvements
    - Incorporate sidewalks, street trees and lighting
    - Construct off-street parking areas to alleviate congestion
    - Incorporate directional signage

- Require that state and federal roadway project utilize Context Sensitive Design to protect and enhance the rural character of the community.

Policy 4: Promote safe bicycle and pedestrian travel and other modes of transportation where possible.

- Promote safe pedestrian and bicycle travel for recreation, physical exercise, and as an alternative to travel by passenger vehicle.

- Encourage bicycle, pedestrian and water travel as specified in the Open Space and Recreation Element priorities, to the extent possible under budgetary limitations.

    - Where possible, require sufficient setback to provide a pedestrian way in front of new businesses.

    - Evaluate the feasibility of widening/improving road rights-of-way to provide a safe pedestrian/bicycle route.

    - Consider reducing speed limits in densely developed coastal neighborhoods to increase bicycling safety.

    - Encourage provisions of pedestrian and/or bicycle paths as part of development exactions.

- Coordinate with RIDOT regarding existing and proposed bike routes.
    - Collaborate on suitability of local roadways for inclusion on the State Bicycle Map.
    - Support RIDOT bicycle projects as warranted.
- Undertake an analysis of the need for pedestrian and bicycle paths as new residential developments are proposed for review.
    - Consider the construction of pedestrian and bicycle paths to interconnect neighborhoods or major public or private facilities such as schools or playgrounds.
    - Consider construction of sidewalks in conservation design subdivisions where dwellings will be grouped together on relatively small lots to add to the character of the neighborhood as well as to provide social and recreational opportunities.
- Support pedestrian improvements throughout town to encourage walking as a multimodal option to the passenger vehicle.
    - Maintain existing sidewalks and construct new sidewalks where necessary through the Capital Improvement Program or with state funding, and enforce the Sidewalk Ordinance (July 11, 2005).
    - Establish well-defined crosswalk pavement markings and enforce regulations for motorists to stop for pedestrians.
- Recognize the importance of bike paths, hiking trails, and "blue trails" (water trails for small non-motorized boats) for recreation and tourism.
    - Continue to support, maintain, and further implement the objectives of the *South County Greenspace Project* regarding recreational trails within Charlestown.
    - Regularly maintain established municipal bike and hiking trails.
    - Support and further advance proposed federal, state, non-profit, and municipal water, bike and hiking trails.

- Designate "blue trails" for kayak tours. Post "blue trail" access points with appropriate signage including parking regulations.

- Support the Coastal Birding Trail.

- Include "blue trails," bike, hiking and coastal birding trails in tourism literature developed by the South County Tourism Council and others.

Policy 5: Maximize safety and capacity of existing roadways.

- Consider intersection and streetscape improvements at South County Trail (Route 2) and Carolina Back Road (Route 112) with enhanced landscaping. Consider a joint Town and Tribal Transportation Improvement Program or Enhancement grant application for funding.

- Consider traffic-calming strategies such as on-street parking, raised crosswalks, and neckdowns to improve safety and reduce through traffic speed where warranted.

- Consider roundabouts for all intersection improvements as an alternative to signalization.

- Consider amendment of *Subdivision and Land Development Regulations* to encourage shared use of parking by abutting properties to reduce pavement area and stormwater runoff.

- Encourage construction of connections between abutting commercial parking lots for access management.

- Consider reducing speed limits in densely developed coastal neighborhoods.

- Monitor RIDOT and local reports of traffic volumes and accidents, especially along heavily traveled routes, to alert town staff and officials of increased problems.

- Require adequate signage on state and local roadways to provide information about local destinations and recreational facilities while avoiding sign clutter. Recommend use of discrete signposts with arrows and graphics to direct motorists to local services.

- Encourage RIDOT and RIDEM to implement Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) tools including Highway Advisory Radio to alert motorists when State beach parking lots reach capacity. This would only be effective

in reducing traffic volumes on beach roads if information is routinely updated and reliable. ITS should not be used to monitor capacity of Town beach parking lots.

- Develop context sensitive design guidelines to assure that installation of any Variable Message System (VMS) boards reflect Route 1 designation as a RI Scenic Roadway and are sufficiently large to be visible but are at a scale consistent with the character of the Town. Once guidelines are developed, consider encouraging RIDOT to implement VMS as an additional ITS tool.

- Consider use of information kiosks at the Chamber of Commerce for an off-highway location to post information.

Policy 6: Support multimodal transportation.

- Support proposed MBTA commuter rail service to Providence from Kingston Station and possible Shoreline East service to Connecticut from Westerly Station.

- Support development of shuttle service to reduce dependence on single occupancy vehicles.

  - Encourage development of a Park n' Ride lot for carpooling, vanpooling, and future RIPTA bus service.

  - Encourage development of shuttle service to Kingston Station for proposed MBTA commuter rail service to Providence, and to URI and other Kingston destinations.

- Coordinate with RIPTA to determine if demand is suitable to initiate Flex service for transit dependent residents.

- Investigate the use of a beach shuttle to State beaches (Town beaches should not be served with shuttles).

  - Support the use of shuttle buses during summer months to reduce traffic congestion along Route 1 and local roads.

  - Locate remote shuttle parking lots with easy access from Route 1.

  - Require that remote lots be constructed with "green" unpaved or permeable surface parking areas.

6. HOUSING AND DEMOGRAPHICS ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Charlestown continues to be an attractive community for families and for summer visitors. Housing in Charlestown continues to be dominated by year-round single-family housing throughout Town and summer units south of Route 1. Key demographic indicators are presented in Table 2.

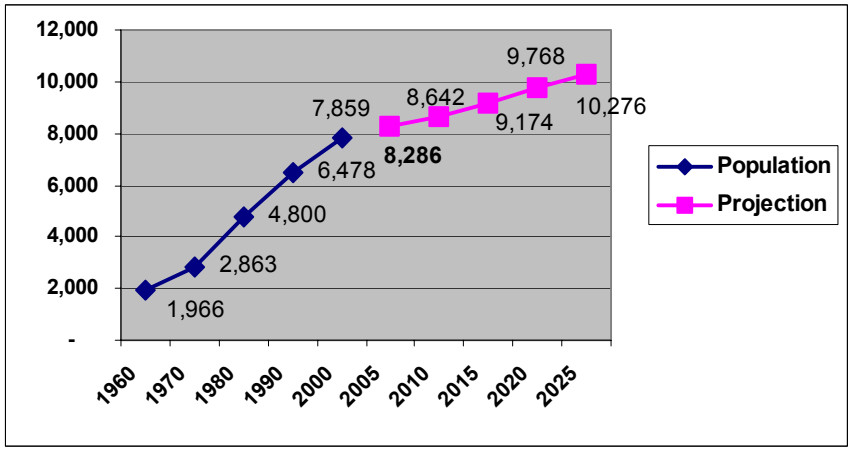
Table 2: Charlestown Demographics, 1990 to 2000

	1990	2000
Population	6,478	7,859
Population growth, previous decade, percentage	35.0	21.3
Number of Year-round Households	4,240	4,797
Average Household Size	2.6	2.46
Median Age of Resident	34.0	40.8
School-aged Children/Unit	0.30	0.37
Total Housing Units	4,256	4,797
Units for seasonal, recreational or occasional use	1,541	1,479
Homes constructed, previous decade	1,056*	622

*Includes 108 units in multifamily structures
Source: US Census and RIEDC Monograph

Between 1990 and 2000 the Town of Charlestown population increased from 6,478 to 7,859 full time residents. By July 1, 2005, RI Statewide Planning Program estimates that the population increased to 8,269, a slight decrease from its original 8,286 projection. The 2010 projected population is 8,642. Population trends and projections are presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Charlestown Population and Projections, 1960 to 2025



The rate of new home construction has generally leveled off from the mid-1980s. Indications are that this trend is based on the limited availability of developable land which meets more stringent zoning and land development regulations. Between 1990 and 2000, 622 permits for single-family homes were issued, a significant decrease from the previous decade when 1,056 units (including 108 multifamily units) were constructed. An additional 275 single-family homes were permitted between 2000 and 2003. Multifamily units were last permitted in Charlestown in 1987.

Typical rural residential neighborhood.

Housing values in Charlestown, as in other Rhode Island communities, have increased dramatically, from an average of $130,000 before 1998 to $334,500 in 2004 (www.HousingWorksRI.org). The state goal of 10 percent affordable housing for low and moderate-income residents is especially daunting for the Town of Charlestown where 1.42 percent of housing units meet the state definition of affordable. As the number of building permits has declined and housing values have increased, many have found their housing options limited. Children of residents are unable to find affordable housing and those interested in downsizing are unable to justify the costs of a smaller unit.

Border Hill Trailer Park.

The demographics of town residents are also changing as Baby Boomers age. The median age of local residents has increased dramatically between 1990 and 2000 as retirees with summer homes in town continue a trend to become year-round residents. During this period, the number of school aged children per unit increased from 0.30 children per unit to 0.37 per unit.

Typical Charlestown beach house.

The attraction of Charlestown as a tourist destination and as an attractive community for second home purchases affects demographics. Second homes represent an important source of tax revenue for the municipal budget that requires a lower level of municipal services than year-round residences. A recent trend has been the

pattern of summer residents to retire year-round to Charlestown, winterizing units only seasonally occupied in the past. With limited properties available south of Post Road in areas of town traditionally dedicated to seasonal use, the trend has been increasing to convert year-round homes to seasonal use north of Route 1 as well. This trend has implications for neighborhood cohesiveness and puts additional strains on median housing prices and affordability.

1991- 2006 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Town of Charlestown has continued its actions to provide diverse housing to meet the changing needs of its residents. Many of the following accomplishments have been directed toward implementation of the *Town of Charlestown Housing Element/Affordable Housing Plan* (September 10, 2004). Additional accomplishments and initiatives were outlined as recommendations / implementation in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan.

- The Affordable Housing Commission has been formed to build organizational infrastructure for continuity and accountability for meeting and sustaining 10 percent affordability of housing stock. The commission also directs the affordable housing public agenda for the Town.

- Charlestown Zoning Ordinance has been amended to include § 218-27 Low and Moderate Income Housing.

- Mixed-use zone overlay district was created in October 2004 to diversify land use, to enable continuing existing single family use, and to encourage small business and upper level market rate and affordable housing in historic villages. New structures within the overlay district must include businesses and may include residential use on the second floor.

- Accessory dwelling units now permitted on farms of 15 acres or more (5 acres farmed) providing for farm-hand housing, Ordinance No. 251, September 9, 2003.

- Zoning has been amended to allow community residences (group homes) by right in residential zones and by a Special Use Permit in commercial zones.

- Day Care-Family Home is allowed by a Special Use Permit in all Residential, Commercial and Industrial zones, as well as in the Planned Development District.

- Definition of affordable housing has been revised to include federal, state or municipally subsidized residential housing that has a sales price or rental amount that is within the means of a household that has moderate income or less (§218-27).

- *The Columbia Heights Housing and Streetscape Plan* completed by Barbara Sokoloff Associates, Inc. provides a comprehensive inventory of issues affecting the quality of life in the Columbia Heights neighborhood.

- *The Charlestown Improvements Project: Making Green Connections to Commerce and Community* was completed by the University of Rhode Island Senior Design Studio, December 2004, explored mixed-use development options (including residential) for the heavily traveled section of Route 1A, which lead to the creation of a mixed-use overlay zone along the Route 1A corridor.

- *A Village Revitalization Plan for Shannock, RI* was completed by the Urban Design Group, March 2000, to enable both Charlestown and Richmond to be eligible for multi-year funding under the State's Small Cities Community Block Grant Program to improve the overall quality of life of the village.

HOUSING VISION

Several Housing issues were discussed at the April 24, 2006 Visioning meeting (priorities are in bold).

Strengths identified include:

- **Maintaining rural character**
- **Cluster neighborhoods**
- Affordable housing
- Character of homes north of Route 1
- Cross Mills neighborhood

Weaknesses identified include:

- **Lack of affordable housing**
- **Lack of diverse housing types**
- **Lack of rental housing**
- **Lack of elderly housing**
- Need to reassess resources capacities for densities
- Design standards
- Need plan for rental housing

- Housing affordability
- Mc mansions limit diversity
- Set-asides for age-restricted housing
- Lack of workforce housing

HOUSING GOALS

Achieve and maintain a range of housing alternatives in keeping with Charlestown's tradition of being home to people at different times of life, family circumstances, and levels of income.

Assure new home construction offers a good quality of life while reflecting Charlestown's character.

Tailor and implement housing efforts to be in keeping with the Town's limited financial resources.

Coordinate housing policies and programs with other groups and public bodies.

Provide ten percent of housing units as affordable for people of low and moderate income.

POLICIES / ACTIONS

The following policies and actions have been developed to implement the goals and vision for housing in Charlestown.

Policy 1: Help residents of low income to be able to stay in their homes.

- Encourage rehabilitation of existing structures as the highest priority for development of affordable housing.

- Encourage purchase and management by non-profit organizations for rent or ownership.

Policy 2: Encourage a mix of dwelling unit types and price ranges in new residential development.

- Implement Conservation Design Development to provide a mixture of dwelling unit types, including single family, two-family, and multifamily dwelling according to an overall plan of development that may utilize relatively smaller lots but respects the density requirements of the underlying zoning district.

- Support amendments to the *Subdivision and Land Development Regulations* and *Zoning Ordinance* to adopt provision for optimal conservation design and development methods. As part of these amendments, the Town will encourage a mix of dwelling unit types and price ranges in new residential developments.

- Support amendments to the *Subdivision and Land Development Regulations* and *Zoning Ordinance* to enable diverse housing opportunities with appropriate services.

    - Encourage development of housing that is in low supply and high demand, e.g., in-law apartments, affordable housing, senior housing to provide more diverse housing opportunities.

    - Revise the zoning ordinance to allow single accessory apartments with owner-occupied housing.

    - Encourage development of the types of housing that fit the needs and resources of these groups: mixed use, apartments, rental homes, starter homes, homes combined with services such as day care for families or cooking and health care for elderly.

- Provide a means to construct new homes which assure a good quality of life for current and future residents while fitting into Charlestown's unique character.

    - Conduct a study to determine the impact of the density of development proposed with Growth Center designation on water quality and quantity, natural resources, and quality of life of existing residents.

    - Amend zoning requirements for multifamily units to allow construction of more three-bedroom units as well as one- and two-bedroom units. This would enable more diverse housing stock to meet changing needs of local residents while assuring that both three-bedroom single family and three-bedroom rental units are available.

    - Provide housing for ages 55 and over, assisted living, and continuing care facilities in response to the changing demographics of the community and the projected increase in the senior population.

Policy 3: Meet the state requirement of assuring that ten percent of housing units are affordable for people of low and moderate income.

- Implement recommendations of the *Housing Element Update / Affordable Housing Plan* (September 10, 2004).

- Consider a bond issue specifically for construction of affordable housing or consider a joint bond issue for both affordable housing construction and open space acquisition.

- Consider a charter change to enable Town Council to purchase land for affordable housing from Affordable Housing bond funds (if established) without going to Financial Town Meeting.

- Consider implementing a floating overlay district for affordable housing. By expediting permitting, developer costs would be reduced. Density bonuses would be directly tied to production of low moderate income units with an overall cap on density at some ratio of buildable acreage to unit that is yet to be determined. This type of overlay district would provide a framework within which the town and prospective developers could negotiate on key development issues.

- Expedite affordable housing development by assembling development parcels and issuing developer's RFPs. This would enable the Town to impose necessary affordability restrictions.

- Implement mandatory inclusionary zoning provisions that cover any developments of five or more residential units. *See Land Use Element Policy 6*

- Work with the Washington County Regional Planning Council, the Washington County Community Development Corporation, Habitat for Humanity of South County, and other agencies involved in affordable housing to identify parcels or funding to help develop housing alternatives.

    - Explore the use of town-owned land for alternative housing, e.g., tax lots for individual homes and low moderate housing developments.

Policy 4: Use incentives, negotiation, and zoning amendments to meet as many housing needs as possible through private and non-profit development.

- Provide incentives for development of diverse housing stock to meet the changing needs of residents of the community. Single family, duplex, and multi-family units and mobile homes contribute to diversity of housing

stock. Incentives such as reduced parcel size or density bonuses may be required to attract developers to multifamily construction. These incentives should include the transfer of development rights to protect open space without raising the overall residential density of the community. Affordable housing should be required with any incentives.

- Participate actively in regional strategies, including establishing a regional HOME consortium, an Affordable Housing Trust Fund and/or a Housing and Redevelopment Agency that will leverage state and federal funds and draw on the strengths of each town.

- Create or establish a restricted fund as a local funding mechanism to provide land or seed money for the creation of affordable housing in the Town. Such a fund could receive money from real estate transfer taxes, charitable donations, payments in lieu (see inclusionary zoning) and other funding sources, and even from local referendum borrowings, i.e. taxpayer money, in much the same way as open space acquisitions are funded. *See Land Use Element Policy 6*

- Use the resources available to the Town through the regional Affordable Housing Implementation Project for the eight South County towns (funded by a 2006 RI Housing Targeted Assistance Grant) to implement affordable housing strategies included in the Affordable Housing Plan.

- Explore feasibility of combining efforts with benevolent and non-profit organizations so that each party contributes what it can: land, development expertise, management over time, access to public and private sources of funds.

Policy 5: Improve streetscapes in villages to revitalize and strengthen neighborhoods.

- Implement the recommendations from the *Columbia Heights Housing and Streetscape Plan*.

    - Identify housing revitalization needs and determine resident interest in loan and grant programs for improvement to the interiors and exteriors of homes.

    - Preserve the supply of affordable housing throughout Columbia Heights.

- Implement the recommendations from *The Charlestown Improvements Project, Making Green Connections to Commerce and Community*.

- Encourage the mixed-use development with an emphasis on low to moderate-income housing, as well as elderly housing (55 and over communities).

- Implement the recommendations from *A Village Revitalization Plan for Shannock, RI.*

  - Expand CDBG housing programs to focus on concentrated code enforcement and housing rehabilitation programs.

  - Investigate financial assistance programs and small community wastewater treatment systems for property owners to provide the resources to correct problem systems.

  - Provide loan assistance programs for first-time buyers and young families.

- Submit application for state and federal funding for streetscape projects. Sources include RIDOT's bi-annual Enhancements, Federal Highway Administration's Transportation and Community Systems Preservation (TCSP) funds, and Rhode Island Economic Development Office of Community Development. *See Circulation Element Policy 2, Economic Development Policy*

Policy 6: Encourage residential and mixed use development in Growth Centers in accordance with the State Guide Plan Element *Land Use 2025.*

- Consider designation of Growth Centers within areas that currently or in the future may provide walkable access to transportation, childcare, health care, employment, and other services and opportunities necessary to sustain a healthy, productive life.

  - Provide diverse housing types as well as Traditional Neighborhood Design with single-family homes on small lots.

  - Amend zoning ordinance to enable conservation subdivisions in accordance with the 2004 comprehensive plan amendment.

  - Consider distributive wastewater management options to protect groundwater by eliminating the need for Individual Septic Disposal Systems (ISDS) on small lots.

  - Consider community wells to serve appropriate density of development, especially for conservation subdivisions and cluster development.

- Transfer potential housing units in a parcel to be protected for open space to a receiving area with higher density such as villages of Shannock, Carolina and Cross Mills, identified in the state's *Land Use 2025* as Growth Centers.
    - Amend zoning ordinance to implement transfer of development rights.

Policy 7: Utilize regional efforts to meet housing needs.

- Routinely meet with neighboring towns to compare housing needs and potential joint efforts. Seek ways to combine and coordinate efforts.
- Meet with Richmond officials regarding implementation of Growth Centers at Carolina and Shannock. Continue to utilize Community Development Block Grant funding to improve neighborhoods and community facilities.
- Utilize the Washington Country Regional Planning Council to address regional housing issues.

Policy 8: Meet with the Narragansett Indian Tribe Council to discuss progress in implementing the Town's housing program and the Narragansett's housing program for Tribal members who live in Charlestown.

- Consider how the Town and the Tribe might work together for services such as: meals for elders, a health center, transportation.

Policy 9: Continue to promote housing that protects the town's natural and cultural resources and rural character, and reflects the natural constraints of the land.

- Regulate the density of housing to keep with the capacities of soils to sustain the development over time.
- Consider the suitability of municipal land purchased in the future for open space / recreation / affordable housing construction. *See Open Space and Recreation Element, Policy 1*
    - Provide seller with information on both open space preservation and residential development. Consider providing sellers and developers with brochures addressing open space preservation and affordable housing options.
    - Require a compensatory land swap (or purchase of development rights) to preserve open space with higher

natural resources value. (Affordable Housing Commission, Conservation Commission, Town Council)

- Consider possible construction of market rate housing and / or affordable housing on a small portion of the land in future purchases to offset open space acquisition. Density of residential development should not exceed the buildout potential (yield plan) of the developed portion (see conservation design and subdivisions).

- Select possible housing location to avoid adversely impacting natural resources (including the unique terminal moraine area), habitat corridors, and groundwater.

- Encourage housing construction in proximity to existing neighborhoods.

- Consider all undeveloped town-owned properties not conserved, protected or used for open space (or sensitive for natural resources) for construction of affordable housing. *See Land Use and Open Space Elements.* Financial town meeting approval would be required.

  - Assess value of municipal property (including tax sale properties but excluding conserved open space) for residential development as well as open space preservation. If property is adjacent to or within close proximity of existing neighborhoods and its value to natural resources is relatively low, consider use for residential development.

- Implement transfer of development rights regulation to preserve open space while constructing residential units at a density that supports strong and vibrant neighborhoods.

7. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Economic improvement in Charlestown is focused on business retention, business expansion in character with the community, and tourism to capitalize on our abundant natural and scenic resources. The Town recognizes that the year-round population is limited in its ability to attract and sustain retail development which meets needs of residents and that most goods and services must be procured in adjacent communities. Although limited additional retail development would be welcomed in Charlestown, future development must be in keeping with local character.

Commercial development along Route 2.

1991-2006 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Town of Charlestown has continued its economic development actions. Of the ten recommendations outlined in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, the Town has accomplished several and made marked strides or is continuing with others. The following summarizes accomplishments and status to date:

- The *Project Narrative for Ninigret Park*, completed by the University of Rhode Island Senior Design Studio in May 2005, developed recommendations for use of the 227-acre site.

- *The Charlestown Improvements Project: Making Green Connections to Commerce and Community,* completed by the University of Rhode Island Senior Design Studio in December 2004, explored mixed-use development options or commercial for the heavily traveled section of Route 1A.

- Mixed-use zoning overlay district was approved by Town Council in October 2004 to encourage small scale business and residential (including affordable housing) uses consistent with the historic and pedestrian-scale characteristics that exist and which are unique to Charlestown village, to preserve the Town's heritage, to strengthen the local economy, to continue small-town character, and to promote the general welfare of the Town.

- An Historic Village District (HVD) overlay zone, approved by Town Council in October 1999, has been created to protect rural character south of Route 1.

- Commercial setbacks in the C1 and C2 zones within the Historic Village District overlay zone have been reduced to encourage parking to the rear and to encourage appropriate density of development in villages.

- Planned Development District zones have been implemented with less intensive and more appropriate uses than the previous Planned Business and Industrial Research and Development zone.

- Commercial zoning has been amended with three zones: C1 for development in areas predominantly residential in character, C2 for concentration of retail and service businesses serving the needs of regions of the Town, and C3 abutting Route 1. These zones encourage development of businesses appropriate to villages, roadsides, or the business center, thereby providing buffers between intensive uses and less intensive uses.

- The Town continues its initiatives to attract visitors through festivals at Ninigret Park.

- The Town continues to promote and recognize volunteer efforts that help maintain the rural qualities of the town and improve the business climate.

- The Town continues to develop and market specific recreational opportunities that focus on Charlestown's unique attributes.

- Zoning has been revised to allow development of community residences by right and transient housing and nursing homes with a special use permit.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISION

Several economic development issues were discussed at the April 24, 2006 Visioning meeting (priorities are in **bold**).

Strengths identified include:

- **Tourist industry**
- **Attraction of clean/green industry**
- No big box development
- Mixed-use ordinance passed

Weaknesses identified include:

- **Not enough tourism attractions**
- **Need appropriate commercial business for 'village-type' development**
- **Ninigret Park opportunities could be expanded**
- Low commercial tax base to support schools
- Lack of infrastructure
- Better coordination needed between businesses and Chamber of Commerce
- Need marketing for 'Shoulder Season'
- Ecotourism (year-round)
- Need plan for capturing business travelers
- Many Bed and Breakfast cannot feasibly comply with new fire codes.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL

To promote economic development that relies heavily on the Town's natural, scenic, and historic amenities and protects the important resources of the Town.

POLICIES / ACTIONS

The following policies and actions have been developed to implement the goals and vision for economic development in Charlestown.

Policy 1: Continue to develop and market specific recreational opportunities that focus on Charlestown's unique attributes, including its natural and cultural resources.

- Continue to develop and implement Rhode Island Coastal Adventure Trails, a joint project of the Town of Charlestown, Charlestown Chamber of Commerce, US Fish & Wildlife Service, and Friends of the National Wildlife Refuges of Rhode Island to encourage participation in bird watching, hiking and biking through an integrated network of ten outstanding birding sites. Links to the sites are through the historic village of Cross Mills and past local destinations, thereby stimulating the local economy. The Coastal Adventure Trail broadens out the tourist season to spring and fall shoulders, during peak bird migration along the Atlantic Flyway.
- Develop and market an art trail, linking artist studios, galleries, and performance spaces.

- Continue to market trails from older publications such as *Walks and Rambles in RI* and other books. Provide signage for trail heads and parking, as warranted.

Charlestown Beach access.

- Continue plans for Town Beach improvements including analysis of beach capacity in relation to available parking, adequate signage for parking lot, possible concession stand, beach expansion, and new building. *See Open Space and Recreation Element Policy 4*

Policy 2: Encourage the development of a diversity of businesses in keeping with the village character.

Cross Mills commercial development.

- Continue focusing business development in the commercial zone east of the historic Cross Mills area on a scale and with design standards compatible with the surrounding area. Encourage development of a variety of businesses consistent with village settings in other village settlements.
    - Maintain momentum established during URI studio project to assure acceptance by stakeholders and elected officials.
- Implement design standards to preserve the visual quality of the major roads and villages.
    - Continue work of a joint subcommittee of the Economic Improvement Commission and Planning Commission to develop village design standards for Cross Mills as a template for commercial zones in other villages in Town.
    - Work to prevent the commercial sprawl along Route 1 in Westerly from happening in Charlestown.
- Preserve land zoned commercial to meet needs of future residents for retail development and other services. Retaining this property as undeveloped in the near term, prior to demand for commercial construction, reinforces the rural character of the community.
- Initiate strategies to attract and retain businesses that meet the needs of local residents and tourists.

- Consider economic incentives such as shared septic systems / decentralized community wastewater treatment, community wells, shared parking, and reduced property taxes to attract and retain businesses.

- Utilize Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation services for community development, mill reuse, and tourism support.

- Consider supporting amendments to the state fire code which would make it feasible for Bed and Breakfasts and inns in older structures to cost-effectively comply with requirements. Inns and B&Bs are recognized as an important component of local tourism and therefore are integral to the local economy.

- Encourage private businesses to provide Wi-Fi connection for customers.

- Continue to support home businesses and cottage industries that meet current residential zoning. It is recognized that telecommuting from home reduces traffic volume and improves air quality, among others.

Policy 3: Continue to attract visitors through festivals at Ninigret Park.

- Continue to integrate the recommendations of the Ninigret Park URI studio project for various land uses. Uses include sports fields, senior/community center, new USFWS center, trails and trailhead parking areas, and former airfields suitable for hard surface use such as bicycle racing, antique shows, and festivals. Master plan must be completed for Ninigret Park every ten years. The plan should incorporate specifications outlined in the original lease from the government. *See Open Space and Recreation Element Policy 3.*

Ninigret Park activities.

- Develop Ninigret Park as a regional park to encourage visitors to explore cultural and natural resources and recreational opportunities at locations other than beaches.

- Encourage continuation of four major summer events: Big Apple Circus, Seafood Festival, Reggae, and Rhythm and Roots festivals.

- Expand use of Ninigret Park for regional festivals and events during the shoulder season and year round. Events such as the first New Years Eve bonfire with fireworks/sparkler displays encourage four-season use.

- Consider developing Ninigret Park as a regional attraction/destination, to attract residents and visitors from other South County towns.

Advertising for the annual Big Apple Circus.

Policy 4: Continue focus on tourism as a vital component of the local economy.

- Develop tourism packages for diverse demographic groups including families, singles, and seniors.

- Explore ecotourism, heritage tourism, and agri-tourism, as appropriate, to broaden the tourism market in Charlestown. Provide links to regional tourism routes in Washington County and eastern Connecticut.

- Capitalize on Ninigret Pond's popularity for wind surfing and kayaking and plan a marketing piece that features a range of services attractive to this demographic. Post on Town website with links to regional tourism and recreation sites.

- Continue to support Charlestown Chamber of Commerce and South County Tourism Council efforts to market local events to Rhode Island and regional residents, as an attractive alternative to more distant vacation destinations, especially given the rise in gasoline price.

Chamber of Commerce.

- Develop a scenic and historic driving tour contiguous with and similar to one developed by the Town of South Kingstown (posted on town website).

- Develop scenic and historic biking or walking tours to supplement the Coastal Adventure Tour and proposed driving tours.

- Support provision of Internet service for summer visitors, especially those staying in campgrounds or motels. The Town provides computer access in the library and supports the Charlestown Chamber of Commerce providing internet connections.

- Work with regional tourism agencies and major regional businesses to market existing hotels to business travelers, especially off-peak.

- Support efforts of Narragansett Indian Tribe to market information on local Native American heritage with the Chamber of Commerce and South County Tourism Council.

Policy 5: Support agriculture as a component of a diverse rural economy.

- Seek support from the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Division of Agriculture to promote Rhode Island grown products and, thereby, increase the income of local farmers.

- Collaborate with the Rhode Island Center for Agricultural Promotion and Education on agri-tourism through the Rhode Island FarmWays program.

Policy 6: Promote pride of community and pride of local businesses through improved signage that reflects the character of the town.

- Post *Welcome to Charlestown* signage (gateway signage) on Route 1 and other main roads in town to increase local pride in community.

- Post uniform signs (village-type) on major roads with arrows to local businesses on major roads.

- Provide oversight to RIDOT to assure signage on Route 1 is legible, visible at night, informative for visitors, and avoids *sign clutter*

Policy 7: Support construction of a diverse housing stock to facilitate economic initiatives.

- Encourage construction of affordable workforce housing.

- Recognize pressures for mega-house construction, understanding that seasonal units demand minimal public services while increasing the town tax base. See *Land Use Element Policy 9* for recommendations regarding design standards for teardowns.

8. SERVICES AND FACILITIES ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

As development pressures and the inmigration of residents from the metropolitan areas of the state or from out of state increases, the expectation/demand for municipal services also increases. Consistent with the small town character of Charlestown, the Town does not provide the array of municipal services residents in more urban areas have come to take for granted. In addition to several Town Hall departments, the Police Department, and a regional School Department, the town supports a volunteer Fire Department, Emergency Services Department, and Library Services.

Water supply and wastewater management are private homeowner responsibilities, as is typical for many rural communities. Options for new development and density of development are often limited and constrained by the suitability of sites for wells and individual sewer disposal systems. The Town of Charlestown is not located within the Urban Services Boundary identified in *Land Use 2025,* State Guide Plan Element 121.

1991- 2006 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Town of Charlestown has progressively achieved many goals identified in the Services and Facilities Element of the 1991 Comprehensive Plan. The following summarizes accomplishments to date:

- A wastewater management technician has been hired to manage complex wastewater responsibilities.

- Construction of the new police station, located across from Ninigret Park, is nearing completion.

- Construction of the Charlestown Volunteer Fire Station on South County Trail was completed in Spring of 2006.

- The *Septage Waste Report and Management Plan,* prepared by James J. Geremia and Associates, Inc. and submitted to Town Council and considered complete May 26, 2006, is an analysis of current and projected septic waste volumes removed from the community. The costs of increased demand on septic waste removal and the impact on wastewater treatment facilities to accept and treat the additional septic waste were investigated.

- *Strategy for Reducing Risk from Natural Hazards in Charlestown, RI* completed by the Charlestown Natural Hazard Mitigation Committee

and Resource Specialists Inc., March 2005, explored actions necessary to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and their property from the effects of natural hazards.

- Construction of the Dunn's Corners Fire District Station 2 was completed in 2005.

- The *Charlestown Stormwater Management Plan* completed by Fuss & O'Neill, Fall 2004, established a plan for the Town to be in compliance with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Phase I/Phase II of the *National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Regulations,* to implement programs and practices to control polluted stormwater runoff.

- The Charlestown Wastewater Commission has initiated homeowner education on wastewater problems and the importance of inspection. A sophisticated tracking system was installed to support Individual Septic Disposal System (ISDS) administration.

- The Wastewater Ordinance, approved in 1994 and amended, requires the removal of all cesspools by 2009 and regulates inspection and pumping of all septic systems on a flexible cycle that reduces homeowner costs.

- A pamphlet has been developed explaining municipal and other public services that are available to Charlestown residents. This pamphlet is available to various parties for distribution to the public, particularly new or prospective residents.

- *Town of Charlestown Growth Management Plan* completed by Samuel J. Shamoon, March 2000, was created to protect the natural and cultural resources and rural character of the town, while providing the housing, economic base, and services necessary for residents to enjoy the quality of life anticipated in Charlestown.

- Capital facilities impact fees were established for land development projects for new and/or expanded schools (and related facilities) within Charlestown and/or within the Chariho Regional School District (Ordinance No. 220/April 10, 2000; Article XVIII of Charlestown's *Zoning Ordinance).*

- *The On-Site Waste Water Management Plan* completed by Brenda Asher Dillman, March 1999, summarizes the status of on-site disposal systems in Charlestown based on the number of systems, causes/impacts of septic system failures, and identification of areas of concern. It evaluates the continued use of on-site sewage disposal

systems from an environmental/economic perspective, describes local management and research efforts, and enables the town to qualify for a line of credit under the State's Community Septic System Loan Program (CSSLP).

SERVICES AND FACILITIES GOAL

To continue to provide Charlestown residents and visitors with a high level of services which supports the quality of life enjoyed in the Town and is compatible with protecting the town's natural and cultural resources and rural character, at a reasonable tax rate.

VISION

Several services and facilities issues were discussed at the April 24, 2006 Visioning meeting (priorities are in bold).

Strengths identified include:

- **Great library**
- **New state of the art Police Station**
- **Senior Center/Community Center**
- Emergency Services
- Transfer Station
- Volunteer ambulance/fire personnel

Cross Mills library.

Weaknesses identified

- **Continuing need to address septic issues and impacts on water quality and public health**
- **Overcrowding in Elementary Schools**
- **School Administration buildings in regional system**
- Lack of technical services (engineering)
- Lack of Town services
- Increase in operating funds for Police Station
- Underutilization of Senior Center
- Place for ADA accessible facility for teens, families
- Lack of emergency health care
- Low achievement rates Middle-High School
- Lack of social services
- Underutilization of Ninigret Park
- Condition of Beach facilities
- Lack of infrastructure in villages
- Lack of tourists services
- Town Hall/Administration environment

- With a regional school system, it is challenging to define the heart of Town / community identity

POLICIES / ACTIONS

The following policies and actions have been developed to implement the goals and vision for services and facilities in Charlestown.

Policy 1: Provide high quality municipal services in a cost-effective manner as required to serve an expanding community.

- Maintain the high level of expertise that currently exists among municipal employees.
  - Complete a Comprehensive Wage Study.
  - Consider salary and benefit adjustments to make wages competitive with similar municipalities in the region.
  - Prepare and institute a *Town Personnel Ordinance*.
- Maintain and upgrade, when necessary, the level or amount of staff, facility space, and equipment required to maintain or improve the levels of service currently provided by the Town in order to meet the needs of the community.
  - Facilitate the planned renovations at Town Hall.
  - Continue the long-range capital improvement program to permit scheduling of capital needs in accordance with community needs and the ability to pay for such projects.

Town Hall facility.

  - Provide adequate funding in the annual Town budget for the operation of essential community services.
  - Continue to investigate the potential to utilize a percentage of the recreation/open space impact fee exactions to fund a Town Land Steward/Manager/Easement Monitor.

- Encourage and provide recognition for volunteerism in the fire, rescue, ambulance service, library, Parks and Recreation Department activities, Town Boards and Commissions, and other volunteer services.

- Encourage regular communication/exchange of information between all town Boards and Commissions.

- Update pamphlet explaining municipal/other public services that are available to Charlestown residents (made available to various parties for distribution to the public, particularly new or prospective residents through local realtors and the Chamber of Commerce).

- Require annual assessments be conducted by Town departments and commissions of comprehensive plan implementation for report to Town Council.

Policy 2: Continue to support the concept of a volunteer fire department and to assist the fire districts in their efforts to provide protective services.

Cross Mills Volunteer Fire Department.

- Develop incentives to encourage more people to become volunteers, especially during daytime hours.

- Encourage participation in the state-mandated fire fighting training programs to maintain an adequate volunteer force.

- Consider developing or implementing (in conjunction with fire districts) a town-wide ordinance to require all new subdivisions to install a system of cisterns, or a dry hydrant if there is a water source on-site.

Policy 3: Continue to support a professional police force, dedicated to upholding the law, assuring the safety and best welfare of the residents, and respecting the rights of all citizens.

- Finalize Memorandum of Understanding with the Narragansett Indian Tribe regarding the role of Town police protection on Tribal lands.

- Continue to conduct annual analyses of existing and future police force needs in

preparation of the Town Budget and Capital Improvement Program.

- Continue collaboration with adjoining towns (Richmond/Hopkinton) on regional issues and resource sharing.

Policy 4: Provide residents with the opportunity for a quality education, and superior school facilities.

- Continue to evaluate whether to remain in the Chariho school district based on the costs of remaining in the district, the costs of constructing and operating a new school, and the residents' goals for a quality educational system.

- Evaluate alternative sites for a new school in the town, should the need for new facilities be identified.

- Continue to review the town's educational goals and their attainment.

- Continue to monitor projected school enrollments using birth records, building permit records, and school department projections.

Policy 5: Maintain an effective Public Works program which recognizes the importance of the maintenance and construction of safe and efficient roads, bridges, sidewalks, stormdrains, and parks to serve its residents.

- Continue long-range improvement programs for improvements to roads, bridges, sidewalks and stormdrains in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. *See Circulation Element*

- Continue to support an adequately staffed and equipped Public Works Department.

    - Continue to evaluate the department's staffing and equipment needs required to accomplish proposed work programs, in preparation of the annual Town Budget and Capital Improvement Program.

    - Consider a charter change to enable hiring a town engineer to provide technical review for Public Works programs and land development plan applications.

Policy 6: Maintain a Town system of public libraries to meet the diverse needs of residents through expanded and improved library services and facilities.

- Continue to comply with the Office of Library and Information Service standards in order to continue to receive State funding.

- Celebrate Town-wide identity and history through library programs.

Policy 7: Provide the citizens of the Town with a wide range of effective human service programs and facilities, in cooperation with other public, private, and non-profit agencies and groups.

- Continue to coordinate and centralize senior citizen programs and facilities to offer community-based services.

- Support efforts to provide affordable housing and supports services. *See Housing Element Policy 2*

- Initiate programs for all ages at the senior center to integrate and reinforce intergenerational connections in the community.

Senior/Community Center.

Policy 8: Provide additional support of local volunteer ambulance services.

- Consider incorporating the ambulance service into municipal government or utilize for-profit ambulance services.

Policy 9: Maintain an effective Emergency Management Response Program that recognizes the importance of providing protection to citizens and property through public education, municipal preparedness plans and adequate training of key personnel.

- Continue to implement, maintain and periodically update the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

    - Incorporate Hazard Mitigation into Project Review.

    - Identify pre- and post-disaster mitigation opportunities for funding. Consider adopting a recovery and reconstruction ordinance that will expedite the rebuilding of the town and the recovery of town services after a storm or other natural hazard event.

    - Consider developing a Shoreline Overlay District.

- Acquire land in hazard-prone regions of the community. *See Open Space and Recreation Element Policy 1*

- Ensure continued safety of navigation in the ponds.

- Incorporate mitigation strategies that will ensure that current and future roads, bridges and dams subject to flooding, erosion, and other natural hazards remain functional to the community.

- Protect, preserve and maintain environmental resources and structures vulnerable to forest fires.

▪ Maintain communication/coordination/compliance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) and adjacent communities regarding natural hazards and man-made disasters.

- Assure that shoreline evacuation routes are coordinated with adjacent shoreline communities (Westerly and South Kingstown).

- Assure that municipal departments in adjacent communities can communicate with radio frequencies and other communication means.

- Ensure that adequate emergency shelter capacity exists.

  - Maintain existing emergency shelters based on standard requirements as determined by the American Red Cross.
  - Work with the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Red Cross to designate additional shelters needed in town and/or on a regional basis to accommodate residents in the event of a natural disaster.

▪ Develop a Debris Management Plan for collecting and disposing of debris after a storm event.

- Identify locations where debris can be collected, with different locations for potentially hazardous debris.

- Actively seek multiple agreements with hazardous waste vendors to ensure a timely response at a reasonable price.

- Develop strategies to help local businesses recover from the effects of a natural disaster.
    - Organize a collective clean-up strategy of properties after a disaster.
    - Create a list of businesses and people connected with those businesses authorized to enter the business immediately following a disaster to aid the Police Department in guarding properties after a disaster.
- Ensure safety of residents living in senior housing, nursing homes and residents living independently who may not have access to cars or who may have special needs.
    - Request that residents with special needs or seniors living independently within Town register with a designated Town department to facilitate coordination for evacuation.
    - Develop emergency evacuation plans for these buildings/facilities, with assistance from the Police Department.
- Develop and implement public education and outreach as part of pre-disaster planning.
    - Recognize the importance of outreach to summer residents including those with short-term rentals and tourists at local motels.
    - Develop information brochures regarding vulnerabilities of natural hazards to homeowners, renters and contractors to include information on self-assessments, how to form emergency plans, techniques for long-term hazard mitigation and protection and town evacuation routes and shelters.
    - Building Official to provide assistance for self-assessment of vulnerability of these structures to natural disasters.

Policy 10: Support the Parks and Recreation Department in providing enriching recreational experiences and quality facilities. *See Open Space and Recreation Element*

- Investigate the need for alternative transportation for programs.

- Consider the need for indoor recreation space for community activities.

- Continue to collaborate with and maintain the *South County Greenspace Project's* objectives.

Policy 11: Revisit its Growth Management Plan to address the continuing cumulative effects of development.

- Conduct routine assessment of the Growth Management Plan to assure that plan is consistent with community character and is equitable, environmentally sound and economically beneficial.

Policy 12: Maintain a long-range program of effective stormwater management designed to protect residents from flooding, to control erosion and sedimentation, and to maintain both surface and groundwater quality and quantity.

- Continue to support the implementation of the Rhode Island Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (RIPDES) Phase II Stormwater Management Program.

- Assure compliance with Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's RIPDES Phase II requirements for stormwater management in municipal separate storm sewer systems.

- Locate and inventory existing municipal stormwater facilities and work towards correcting problems for existing drainage in a manner which considers the surrounding drainage patterns and natural resources.

- Continue to encourage public education/participation/outreach in accordance with the Phase II Stormwater Management Program. (

- Amend the Town's Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance to strengthen the Rhode Island Freshwater Protection Act. *See Natural Resource Element Policy 3*

Policy 13: Implement the On-Site Wastewater Management Plan.

- Continue to develop and evaluate alternatives for septage disposal.

- Investigate/develop alternative strategies/designs to address problems in areas where ISDS upgrades cannot be done effectively. Investigate small-scale 'cluster' type solutions.

- Continue to work with the EPA and consultants to develop a management plan to rehabilitate and protect the future quality of Green Hill, Ninigret, and Quononchontaug Ponds.

- Continue to cooperate with the University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) and EPA to update ISDS technology and establish performance standards and controls that meet Charlestown's special needs.

- Work with the Salt Pond Coalition and South Kingstown High School to create a Charlestown version of the EPA-funded video project for alternative septic systems.

- Expand implementation of the inspection-based monitoring program to other parts of the town.

- Bulk purchase effluent filters for septic tanks to be sold at cost/slight mark-up, hold workshop for retro-fitting filters.

- Model buildout scenarios for the town by watershed.

- Investigate alternate disposal facilities for septage generated in Town in accordance with the recommendations of the 2006 septage study conducted by James J. Geremia & Associates, Inc.

Policy 14: Monitor the efficiency and capacities of the transfer station/collection center.

- Continue to evaluate population and waste generation/composition data to develop a basis of future waste generation volumes by type of waste material.

    - Educate residents and visitors in strategies to reduce the overall tonnage sent to the Central Landfill in Johnston through Pay As You Throw (PAYT) or other source reduction strategies that encourage recycling.

- Continue to evaluate current federal, state, and local regulations pertaining to waste disposal and recycling facilities.

Appendices

1991 Implementation

2006 Implementation

References

1991 Charlestown Comprehensive Plan - Implementation

Element / Action Item	Status / 2006
Land Use Element	
1. Amend zoning and subdivision regulations to comply with Zoning Enabling Act requirements that take effect January 1, 1992.	Complete
2. Develop adequate mapping, with highest priority given to developing a reproducible zoning map (described in Zoning Changes below).	Zoning map complete; staff to generate reproducible map. Washington County Greenspace Plans complete. Parcel based mapping complete.
3. Work with adjacent communities and the Tribe to define the appropriate character of key resources and to cooperate in protecting them.	Ongoing
4. Develop a land trust for conservation purposes.	Not completed
5. Continue to evaluate the need for transferable development rights and other land use management tools to preserve the rural character of development in Charlestown.	Ongoing
Zoning Amendments/Changes	
1. Develop a reproducible zoning map with clearly marked dimensions and boundaries and revise the zoning ordinance to incorporate the general changes listed below. Encourage public participation throughout the process, including the business community, interest groups, and other concurrent residents. Consider involving the CPCAC or a newly formed bipartisan citizens group.	See 2., above
2. Overlay districts in which to specify aesthetic design standards or natural resource protection standards:	
- Groundwater protection overlay	Complete
- Village districts	Complete
- Roadside design standards	Ongoing
- Scenic road design standards	Ongoing
- Historic districts	Complete
3. Rezone the Research & Development/Industrial zoned land west of Route 112 (United Nuclear Parcel) and current Planned Business district to allow less intensive uses while providing flexibility in development.	Complete
4. Commercial Zones. Focus general business commercial zoning in the existing commercial zone east of the historic Cross Mills area. Encourage village/neighborhood commercial uses in existing GB zones within villages. Encourage tourist/visitor related commercial uses in existing GB zones along Route 1.	Ongoing
- Consider deepening commercial zones;	Not completed
- In order to encourage commercial development that is appropriate to the surrounding areas, develop several commercial zones, each with different intensities and types of commercial use allowed;	Complete
- Eliminate or modify “spot” zones, which may allow redevelopment that is inconsistent with surrounding land uses and natural resources;	Ongoing
5. Re-zone the 5-acre residential zone to 3-acre residential.	Complete
6. Change the zoning along Route 2 to 2 acre lots.	Complete
7. Create municipal use zones to apply to town-owned parcels.	Complete
8. Rezone all conservation lands held by public agencies to open space/conservation/recreation.	Complete
9. Define the seaward setbacks along the barrier beach communities to be the most severe erosional dune scarp (edge), i.e., the erosional scarp from the blizzard of 1978 or more severe erosion after 1978.	Not completed
Natural Resources Element	
1. Designate the protective overlay district described in the Land Use Element.	Complete
2. Develop and implement a soil and erosion control ordinance based on State Enabling Legislation.	Not completed
3. Develop a planner's database, combining environmental / cultural resource and constraints maps with lot information to be used as a 'red flag' in reviewing development applications.	Not completed
4. Implement Wastewater Management District.	Complete

5. Work with the Tribe and neighboring communities to delineate and protect shared resources.	Ongoing
6. Continue educational efforts and group activities that raise awareness of environmental protection.	Ongoing
7. Develop additional provisions for water resources protection through zoning and other land use management tools.	Ongoing
8. Develop a land trust for conservation purposes.	Not completed
9. Continue to promote access to and appreciation of many of the natural resources as appropriate through the continued development of shore access points, hiking paths, and other opportunities for outdoor activities.	Ongoing
10. Continue to cooperate with agencies such as the Wood Pawcatuck Association and pond watcher groups in educational activities and preservation of undeveloped parcels.	Ongoing
11. Identify and promote acquisition of areas for increased protection through dedication or acquisition of development right or property.	Ongoing
12. Explore alternative measures of resource protection as they become available or feasible.	Ongoing
Cultural Resources Element	
1. Establish historic districts and/or the right to designate individual buildings or structures which are deemed to be of historic value.	Complete
2. Develop a planner's database, combining environmental/cultural resource and constraints maps with lot information to be used as a "red flag" in reviewing developments.	Not completed
3. Work with Tribe and neighboring communities to delineate and protect shared resources.	Ongoing
4. Designate scenic roadways and design standards to protect stone walls, views, and the integrity of the landscape.	Not completed for local roads. Stewardship Plan developed for Route 1
5. Identify areas for increased protection through dedication or acquisition of development rights or property.	Ongoing
Open Space and Recreation Element	
1. The town should continue to fund the Parks and Recreation Department programs.	Ongoing
2. Preserve important views and visual access to the water.	Ongoing
3. Continue requiring exactions of developers to preserve open space. Continue encouraging clustered developments with surrounding open space.	Ongoing
4. The town should continue expanding its recreational base.	Ongoing
5. Develop small scale access ways to the shore, which would allow a few visitors each, such as anglers, hikers, or people who wish to sit and look at the water.	Ongoing
6. Support development of North-South Hiking Trail.	Complete
7. Provide safe routes for pedestrians and bicyclists using wide road rights of way, and low speed limits in coastal settlements.	Ongoing
8. Develop a land trust for conservation purposes.	Not completed
9. Develop networks of paths for bicyclists and pedestrians.	Not complete for bicycle; completed for Coastal Birding Trail and North-South Trail
10. Explore diverting some beach-goers from the Town Beach to other public beaches, including East Beach or the town-owned parcels west of the Town Beach.	Not completed
11. Acquire additional open space land as the opportunities arise and budget allows, with a focus on providing buffers and/or limited access to natural resources.	Ongoing
Circulation Element	
1. Provide adequate funding for the town to continue implementing the Department of Public Works road maintenance and improvement program.	Ongoing
2. Designate scenic roads and develop standards to protect scenic qualities.	Ongoing

3. Develop a liaison function to work with RIDOT regularly in discussing upcoming projects and their impact on the town, and the town's needs. This should be instituted as a regular (e.g., yearly or quarterly) memo to the Planning Board and Town Council, with requests for input. Possible liaisons would include Town staff from Public Works and the Planning Department.	Ongoing
4. Encourage bicycle and pedestrian travel as specified in Open Space and Recreation priorities.	Ongoing
5. Investigate mass transit or para-transit alternatives.	Not completed
6. Investigate the use of a beach shuttle.	Not completed
Housing Element	
1. As described in the Land Use section, revise the zoning ordinance to allow residential uses (single household residences, group homes, and family day care) in all zones, with the exceptions of the Industrial zone for health and safety reasons and the publicly owned Open Space/Recreation/Conservation districts.	Complete
2. Encourage development of housing that is in low supply and high demand, e.g., in-law apartments, affordable housing, elderly housing.	Ongoing
3. Revise the zoning ordinance to allow single accessory apartments with owner-occupied housing.	Completed for agricultural use
4. Work with the SCCA Land Trust to identify parcels or funding to help develop housing alternatives.	Ongoing
5. Become familiar with the requirements and definitions of the state Low and Moderate Income Housing Act.	Complete
6. Explore the use of town-owned land for alternative housing, e.g., tax lots for individual homes.	Ongoing
7. Continue to monitor the housing situation over the long term to identify needs and possible solutions, revising the housing program as necessary.	Ongoing
Economic Development Element	
1. Continue focusing business development in the commercial zone east of the historic Cross Mills area on a scale and with design standards compatible with the surrounding area. Encourage development of a variety of businesses consistent with village settings in other village settlements.	Ongoing
2. Implement design standards to preserve the visual quality of the major roads and villages.	Ongoing
3. Designate the current Planned Business and Industrial Research and Development zones as Planned Development districts for less intensive and more appropriate uses.	Complete
4.Designate several commercial districts to encourage development of businesses appropriate to villages, roadsides, or the business center in current general business zones, thereby providing buffers between intensive uses and less intensive uses. (See Land Use section)	Complete (C1, C2, C3)
5. As discussed in the Land Use Priorities section, consider deepening commercial zones, especially along Route 1, to encourage the use of vegetated buffers and parking at the rear of establishments.	Not completed
6. Continue to attract visitors through festivals at Ninigret Park.	Ongoing
7. Promote and recognize volunteer efforts that help maintain the rural qualities of the town and improve the business climate.	Ongoing
8. Continue to develop and market specific recreational opportunities that focus on Charlestown's unique attributes.	Ongoing
9. Consider allowing development of congregate care facilities.	Complete (Lakeview Rehab)
Services and Facilities	
1. Maintain the high level of expertise which currently exists among municipal employees. This high level of expertise will help to ensure the cost-effective, successful implementation of other Plan recommendations.	Ongoing
2. Maintain and upgrade, when necessary, the level or amount of staff, facility space, and equipment required to maintain or improve the levels of service currently provided by the Town in order to meet the needs of a growing population.	Ongoing

3. Fund special studies in the short-run to address critical service/facility concerns:	
- Water resources management study to include both water supply and wastewater disposal components;	Complete
- Landfill facility plan to address future needs, capacity and expansion potential for municipal solid waste disposal, material recycling, and septage	Complete
- Hurricane damage impact study / contingency plan for coastal floodplain area;	Complete
- Community Center feasibility study	Not completed
4.Evaluate whether to remain in the Chariho district based on the costs of Remaining in the district, the costs of constructing and operating a new School, and the residents' goals for their educational system.	Ongoing
5. The Town should evaluate alternative sites for a new school in the Town, Should the need for new facilities be identified.	Not completed
6. Develop an understanding with the Narragansett Tribe of Indians regarding the role of police and fire protection on Tribal lands.	Ongoing
7. Support local fire, rescue, ambulance, library and other volunteer services to Maintain these services at a reasonable cost to the community. Encourage and Provide recognition for volunteerism in the fire, rescue, ambulance service, Library, Parks and Recreation Department activities, town boards and Commissions, and other volunteer services.	Ongoing
8. Develop a pamphlet explaining municipal and other public services that are available to Charlestown residents. The pamphlet would be made available to various parties for distribution to the public, particularly new or prospective residents.	Ongoing

2006 Charlestown Comprehensive Plan - Implementation

Element / Action Item (see Comprehensive Plan elements for further detail)	**Suggested Responsible Department/Commission** (lead in **BOLD**)	**Priority**
1. LAND USE ELEMENT		
Policy 1: Preserve the visual qualities of the villages, shorelines, important natural features, historic areas, scenic roads, and major collectors and arterials.		
Adopt the role of steward and advocate for the Route 1 Scenic Roadway, working closely with the RIDOT Scenic Roadways Board, other state and federal agencies, Washington County Regional Planning Council, and local partners.	**Town Planner,** Town Council, Conservation Commission, Planning Commission, Building Inspector, Assessors Department	High
Consider designating appropriate local roads as scenic.	**Planning Commission,** Conservation Commission, Town Council	Medium
Amend land development regulations to address considerations for proposed development along Town or state designated scenic roads.	**Planning Commission,** Town Planner, Conservation Commission	High
Enhance site and building design standards for Cross Mills that could subsequently be used as a template for other villages.	**Planning and Economic Improvement Commission subcommittee**, Town Planner	High
Define the seaward setbacks along the barrier beach communities to be the most severe erosional dune scarp (edge).	**Planning Commission**, Conservation Commission	Medium
Policy 2: Preserve vegetated buffers between land uses and roads.		
Develop a program of public information and owner outreach, education, site planning consulting and incentives to encourage property improvements.	**Conservation Commission**	Medium
Policy 3: Preserve important natural and cultural features as part of the development regulatory review process for new residential land development and subdivisions.		
Amend the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Ordinance to include provisions to allow for conservation design and development regulatory methods.	**Planning Commission**, Town Planner, Town Council, Conservation Commission	High
Policy 4: Maintain the current general patterns, scale, and densities of development, with the most dense development occurring in villages and generally low-density development occurring outside the village areas.		
Consider Growth Centers in accordance with the State Guide Plan Element*Land Use 2025*, in areas not located within groundwater overlay protection districts. Designation of Growth Centers in Cross Mills, Shannock and Carolina reflects the village character and pattern of development and location within Historic Village overlay zones.	**Town Planner,** Planning Commission, Town Council	Medium
Discourage incompatible uses in Charlestown.	**Planning Commission**	High
Promote development of affordable housing (including housing for seniors) on town-owned parcels zoned Municipal by special use permit, if site is not a priority area for resource protection, is developable, and has not been acquired for open space preservation.	**Affordable Housing Commission,** Planning Commission, Town Planner	High
Policy 5: Maintain Old Post Road from the Chamber of Commerce east to the South Kingstown Town line as the center of business.		
Focus general business commercial zoning in the existing commercial zone east of the historic Cross Mills area. Encourage village/neighborhood commercial uses in existing C1 and C2 zones within villages. Encourage tourist/visitor related commercial uses in existing C3 zones along Route 1.	**Planning Commission, Economic Improvement Commission**	High
Consider implementing recommendations of *Old Post Road Village – Charlestown, RI. A Vision for the Route 1A Commercial Corridor*.	**Planning Commission**, Economic Improvement Commission, Town Council	High
Policy 6: Provide flexibility in land use management tools where appropriate based on natural constraints to encourage alternative land use developments.		
Consider extending the mixed-use overlay districts to facilitate construction of affordable and workforce housing above commercial development.	**Affordable Housing Commission,** Planning Commission, Town Planner, Economic Improvement Commission	High
Consider revising the zoning ordinance to include form-based codes that encourage infill and new development that reflects the character of the local neighborhood (much of which was probably constructed before zoning was implemented in Charlestown in the 1960s).	**Town Planner,** Planning Commission, Affordable Housing Commission, Economic Improvement Commission, Town Council	Medium
Consider implementing a conservation land trust.	**Affordable Housing Commission, Conservation Commission**, Town Council	High
Continue to evaluate the need for transferable development rights and other land use management tools to preserve the rural character of development in Charlestown while promoting anti-sprawl "smart growth."	**Town Planner,** Planning Commission, Conservation Commission	High
Adopt mandatory inclusionary zoning for developments of five or more units that encourage creation of low/moderate income housing. *See Housing Element Policy 3*	**Planning Commission**, Affordable Housing Commission, Town Planner, Town Council	High

2006 Charlestown Comprehensive Plan - Implementation

Element / Action Item (see Comprehensive Plan elements for further detail)	Suggested Responsible Department/Commission (lead in **BOLD**)	Priority
Consider adopting impact fees or "fees in lieu of" for affordable housing since many developments may not be appropriate for increased density. Proceeds could go to a local restricted fund for implementation of affordable housing strategies. *See Housing Element Policy 4*	**Planning Commission**, Affordable Housing Commission, Town Planner, Town Council	High
Policy 7: Encourage sustainable land uses that support protection of the aquifers and reflect green space development.		
Implement Conservation Development. *See Policy 3, above*		
Implement transfer of development rights. *See Policy 4, above*		
Manage growth and development to reflect the natural characteristics (resources and constraints) of the land.	**Planning Commission,** Conservation Commission	High
Ensure that Town staff and the boards and commissions that review land development proposals have adequate GIS mapping to make well-considered land use decisions, including zoning and overlay zone designation, property and resources/constraints.	**Assessors Office,** Town Council	Medium
Policy 8: Work with neighboring communities including the Narragansett Tribe, to ensure that land uses along the common borders of communities are compatible.		
Work with adjacent communities, the Narragansett Tribe, and the Washington County Regional Planning Council to define the appropriate character of key resources and to cooperate in protecting them:	**Town Planner,** Planning Commission, Conservation Commission,	High
Provide courtesy review of development projects on adjacent properties in bordering communities or on Tribal Settlement Lands. Also, submit projects located on the Charlestown border to the planning departments in adjacent communities for courtesy review.	**Planning Commission,** Town Planner	Medium
Policy 9: Protect the character of summer colonies south of Route 1.		
Consider designation of a local historic district to include summer cottages over fifty years in age to preserve this unique housing type so important to Charlestown's history and heritage.	**Proposed Historic Commission**, Planning Commission, Town Council	Medium
Consider developing context sensitive design guidelines for teardowns and reconstruction to assure new residential construction reflects and is compatible with the neighborhood.	**Planning Commission,** Town Council	Medium
Consider amending zoning to enable re-use of motels for affordable housing, assuring that the summer colony character of these properties is retained.	**Affordable Housing Commission,** Planning Commission, Town Council	Medium
2. NATURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT		
Policy 1: Protect natural resources.		
Continue to develop/update a Planner's database, combining environmental/cultura resources and constraint maps with lot information to be used as a 'red flag' in reviewing development plans.	**Town Planner,** Conservation Commission, Assessors Department	Medium
Preserve natural resources through preservation of open space. *See also Land Use and Open Space and Recreation Elements.*	**Conservation Commission,** Town Council	High
Investigate measures to protect surface and groundwater resources from stormwater runoff contamination from the Town's salt, sand, and tar pits.	**Department of Public Works,** Town Council	Medium
Policy 2: Allow and encourage development that protects natural resources and reflects the natural constraints of the land.		
Consider density of development in Growth Centers (Cross Mills, Carolina, Shannock) while preserving rural areas from development in accordance with the State Guide Plan Element *Land Use 2025*. *See Land Use Element Policy 4*	**Town Planner,** Conservation Commission, Planning Commission	Medium
Assess value of municipal property (including tax sale parcels but excluding open space parcels) for habitat, groundwater protection, conservation and affordable housing. If value of parcel is low for conservation, consider use for residential development (especially affordable housing), with compensatory property conserved for open space.	**Conservation Commission,** Town Council	High
Implement conservation design in subdivision zoning regulations that set high standards for the quality and configuration of the resulting open space and contribute to creating an interconnected network of open space throughout the community. Such a network should link resource areas in adjoining subdivisions and/or provide buffers between new development and pre-existing sensitive lands or developed neighborhoods. *See Land Use Element, Policy 3*		
Protect and preserve agricultural land within the Town. *See Economic Development Element, Policy 5*	**Agricultural Preservation Commission**	High
Create, conserve, and maintain sustainable forest resources within the Town.	**Conservation Commission**, Town Council	Medium
Policy 3: Protect natural resources through zoning and the development review process, using innovative techniques as they become available or feasible.		

2006 Charlestown Comprehensive Plan - Implementation

Element / Action Item (see Comprehensive Plan elements for further detail)	Suggested Responsible Department/Commission (lead in **BOLD**)	Priority
Promote establishing protective undeveloped zones along water resources and other habitats through the use of setbacks, design standards, exactions, open space dedication.	**Planning Commission,** Conservation Commission, Town Council, Zoning Board of Appeals)	High
Consider designation of a recessional moraine overlay zone (north of Route 1) with a requirement for advanced wastewater treatment on highly permeable soils.	**Planning Commission,** Conservation Commission, Wastewater Management Commission, Town Council	High
Consider strengthening the protections provided by the Rhode Island Freshwater Wetlands Act by adopting an *Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance* or *Wetland Protection Ordinance*.	**Conservation Commission,** Planning Commission, Town Council	High
Require that commercial and industrial businesses provide a clearly defined waste storage and disposal management plan for all hazardous materials as part of the building permit process.	**Building Official,** Town Council	High
Promote tree protection and replacement through zoning and the development review process.	**Conservation Commission**, Planning Commission	High
Continue to safeguard the town from new/potential non-point source pollutants.	**Planning Commission,** Coastal Ponds Management Commission, Building Official, Town Council	High
Implement conservation design in zoning and land development regulations.*See Land Use Element Policy 3 and Housing and Demographic Element Policy 2*		
Policy 4: Support efforts by others to monitor, evaluate, and implement programs to improve water quality and habitat in the fresh water bodies and salt ponds of the Town.		
Work with RIDEM and the US Army Corps of Engineers to assure that breachways are maintained to assure adequate flushing of Ninigret and Quonochontaug Ponds.	**Conservation Commission,** Coastal Ponds Management Commission, Town Council	High
Continue working with the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association and other local water monitoring associations.	**Conservation Commission**, Town Council	High
Continue working with the University of Rhode Island Watershed Watch Program in monitoring phosphate/potassium contamination from septic systems.	**Wastewater Management Commission,** Coastal Pond Management Commission	High
Require that EPA's regularly issued reports on groundwater plume status at the United Nuclear Corporation site be posted as a public document and be available for review at Town Offices, the library, and the Department of Pubic Works.	**Town Administrator**	Medium
Support US Fish and Wildlife, US Army Corps of Engineers, and RIDEM efforts to restore habitats and water quality of coastal ponds.	**Conservation Commission**, Coastal Ponds Management Commission, Town Council	High
Continue to collaborate/partner with U.S. Fish and Wildlife, The Nature Conservancy, R.I. Department of Environmental Management, South County Conservancy, and the R.I. Audubon Society to preserve and protect natural resources.	**Conservation Commission, Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission,** Town Council	High
Continue to support, maintain, and further develop the objectives of the South County Greenspace Project to protect the following:	**Town Council,** Planning Commission, Conservation Commission	High
Policy 5: Protect and preserve the quality and quantity of surface waters and the Town's potable water supply.		
Adopt Coastal Resources Management Council Special Area Management Plan (CRMC SAMP) denitrification guidelines as part of the zoning ordinance for all lots, including six or more lots addressed by the SAMP.	**Planning Commission,** Town Council	High
Consider the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Business District Water Use Committee to conduct a Central Business District Corridor Water System Study.	**Town Council**	Medium
Continue to support the U.S. EPA's designation of the Pawcatuck River aquifer as a sole source aquifer, under the Safe Water Drinking Act, and the actions associated with such designation.	**Town Council**	High
Continue to implement the Town of Charlestown On-Site Wastewater Management Plan. *See Services and Facilities Element Policy 13*	**Wastewater Management Commission**, Specialist	High
Update mapping of the Groundwater Protection Districts, including districts in Carolina, Shannock, and Burkickville areas of the Pawcatuck River sole source aquifer, and the area along Route 1 in the Quonochontaug and Ninigret ponds areas.	**Town Planner**	High
Policy 6: Promote appreciation of natural resources by residents and visitors.		
Promote access to and appreciation of many of the natural resources as appropriate through the continued development of shore access points, hiking paths, and other opportunities for outdoor activities.	**Conservation Commission,** Planning Commission, Economic Improvement Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission	High
Continue educational efforts and group activities that raise awareness of environmental protection.	**Conservation Commission,** Parks and Recreation Commission	Medium
Provide public access to the shoreline.	**Town Planner,** Conservation Commission, Assessor's Office	High

2006 Charlestown Comprehensive Plan - Implementation

Element / Action Item (see Comprehensive Plan elements for further detail)	Suggested Responsible Department/Commission (lead in **BOLD**)	Priority
Continue to work with local, State and Federal agencies and neighboring communities, including the Narragansett Indian Tribe, to ensure that land uses across municipal borders are compatible .	**Town Planner,** Conservation Commission	High
Policy 7: Create an interconnected network of conservation and / or open space lands.		
Implement conservation design in zoning and subdivisions regulations, where possible, as part of the regulatory review of residential subdivisions and land development projects. *See Land Use Element Policy 3.*	**Planning Commission,** Town Council	High
Consider interconnection of habitat areas as a priority in protection and conservation of open space property. *See Open Space and Recreation Element*	**Conservation Commission,** Town Council	High
Implement recommendations of the 2002 South County Greenspace Protection Project as a means to identify and protect significant and important opens spaces and natural features of the Town .	**Conservation Commission,** Town Council	High
3. CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT		
Policy 1: Preserve and protect cultural resources including buildings, features and archeological resources which define the Town's character.		
Consider the recommendations identified in the Project Narrative for Ninigret Park.	**Parks and Recreation Department**, Town Council	High
Support efforts by the Narragansett Indian Tribe to inventory Native American heritage resources not located on/within Tribal lands.	**Town Council**	Medium
Continue to support, maintain, and further develop the following objectives of the South County Greenspace Project.	**Town Planner**, proposed Historic Commission,	High
Policy 2: Allow and encourage development that protects the cultural resources, including historic villages, structures, and landscapes, scenic vistas and open areas, architectural heritage, and natural features that are important in defining the town's scenic rural character.		
Consider establishing a separate Historic District Commission. The Planning Commission currently undertakes these duties.	**Town Council**, Planning Commission, Proposed Historic Commission	Medium
Develop a more defined identity for the Town. Seek funding through Enhancements or from RIEDC Office of Community Development.	**Town Planner,** Town Council	Medium
Encourage public/private partnerships for street tree/landscaping projects.	**Town Planner,** Conservation Commission, Town Administrator, Town Council	Medium
Policy 3: Protect cultural resources through zoning and the development review process, using innovative techniques as they become available or feasible.		
Develop design standards for cultural resources in village districts.	**Planning Commission and Economic Improvement Subcommittee,** Town Planner	Medium
Revise the zoning ordinance and table of uses to include a Traditional Village District along Old Post Road. This would assure that potential uses are compatible with the Mixed Use Overlay.	**Planning Commission and Economic Improvement Subcommittee,** Town Planner, Town Council	High
Designate scenic roadways and design standards to protect stone walls, views, and the integrity of the landscape.	**Planning Commission,** Conservation Commission	High
Continue to develop/update a Planner's database, combining environmental/cultura resource and constraints maps with lot information to be used as a red flag in reviewing developments.	**Assessors Department,** Town Planner, Conservation Commission	High
Consider a Demolition-Delay Ordinance to provide a limited time period to explore options to preserve local historic heritage threatened with demolition.	**Proposed Historic Commission,** Planning Commission, Town Council	Medium
Identify cultural resource areas for increased protection through dedication or acquisition of development rights or property.	**Proposed Historic Commission,** Town Planner, Planning Commission, Town Council	High
Encourage the development of a façade improvement program.	**Town Planner**	Medium
Continue to collaborate/partner with U.S. Fish and Wildlife, The Nature Conservancy, R.I. Department of Environmental Management, South County Conservancy, R.I. Audubon Society and others to protect cultural resources through dedication or acquisition of development rights or property.	**Conservation Commission, Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission,** Town Council	High
Policy 4: Encourage appropriate re-use through preservation or rehabilitation of historic structures in accordance with the provisions of the zoning district.		
Encourage residents to utilize state and federal investment tax credits for restoration of structures on the National Register of Historic Places.	**Proposed Historic Commission**	High
Develop and make available to owners of historic property a how-to booklet of guidelines for restoration.	**Proposed Historic Commission**	Medium
Policy 5: Support the prehistoric and historic heritage of the Narragansett Indian Tribe and adjacent communities.		
Work with the Tribe and neighboring communities to delineate and protect shared resources.	**Proposed Historic Commission,** Town Planner	Medium

2006 Charlestown Comprehensive Plan - Implementation

Element / Action Item (see Comprehensive Plan elements for further detail)	Suggested Responsible Department/Commission (lead in **BOLD**)	Priority
Continue to work with local, state, federal agencies and neighboring communities, including the Narragansett Indian Tribe, to ensure that land uses along Charlestown's common borders are compatible.	**Proposed Historic Commission,** Town Planner	Medium
4. OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION		
Policy 1: Protect natural resources, cultural resources, important views and visual corridors through open space acquisition, dedications or purchase/transfer of development rights.		
Continue to apply for recreation/open space grants.	**Conservation Commission,** Parks and Recreation Commission, Town Council	High
Continue to support open space acquisition through municipal bond issues.	**Conservation Commission,** Town Administrator, Town Council	High
Develop a municipal conservation land trusts. *See Land Use Element Policy 6*	**Conservation Commission, Affordable Housing Commission**, Town Council	High
Develop GIS map of critical habitat of federal and state-listed rare, threatened, and endangered species (both plant and animal) and wetlands (forested/shrub/emergent), using the most up to date and reliable data available.	**Assessors Office,** Conservation Commission, Town Planner	High
Continue to collaborate/partner with U.S. Fish and Wildlife, The Nature Conservancy, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, South County Conservancy, Rhode Island Audubon Society and private developers (through the land development process) regarding open space acquisition and conservation. *See Natural Resources Element Policy 4.*	**Conservation Commission, Planning Commission,** Town Council	High
Implement Transfer of Development Rights to protect open space while encouraging development in villages and designated Growth Centers.	**Town Planner, Planning Commission**, Conservation Commission, Town Council	High
Establish process and protocols for Town participation in open space protection.	**Conservation Commission,** Town Council	Medium
Consider using Limited Development Projects to manage residential growth and preserve open space.	**Planning Commission,** Town Council	Medium
Assure good stewardship of municipally controlled open space and conservation parcels.	**Conservation Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Town Council**	High
Determine suitability of future tax sale lots or other municipally managed property for open space preservation, recreation or affordable housing.	**Conservation Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Affordable Housing Commission,** Town Council	Medium
Continue requiring exactions (land dedications and/or fee in lieu of land dedications) of developers to preserve open space, especially as undeveloped buffers to natural resources.	**Planning Commission, Town Planner**	High
Implement night sky view preservation regulations as part of the zoning ordinance. *See Circulation Element, Policy 3*	**Planning Commission,** Town Planner	High
Policy 2: Continue to fund the Parks and Recreation Department programs.		
Continue interdepartmental cooperation in maintaining facilities.	**Building Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Town Administrator, Town Council**	High
Recognize volunteers who help support the programs.	**Town Administrator, Town Council**	High
Continue funding salaried and hourly positions recognized as helping to manage recreational spaces, write management plans and develop educational programs.	**Parks and Recreation Commission, Town Administrator, Town Council**	High
Policy 3: Continue to provide opportunities for active and passive recreation throughout the Town.		
Update the Town Recreation, Conservation, Open Space Plan.	**Parks and Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission,** Town Council	Medium
Implement recommendations identified in the Project Narrative for Ninigret Park.	**Parks and Recreation Commission,** Town Council	High
Implement recommendations of the Village Revitalization Plan for Shannock, Rhode Island.	**Parks and Recreation Commission,** Town Council	High
Continue to facilitate the recommendations of the most recently approved Recreation, Conservation, Open Space Plan.	**Parks and Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission,** Town Council	High
Make improvements to the Columbia Heights, Grand Prix and Schoolhouse Pond parcels to encourage the uses for which they were initially designed.	**Parks and Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission,** Town Council	High
Policy 4: Continue to provide and expand opportunities for access to fresh/salt-water resources while protecting the resources from adverse impacts of overuse.		
Continue to develop small-scale access ways to the shore, which would allow a few visitors each, such as anglers, hikers, or people who wish to sit and look at the water.	**Town Planner,** Parks and Recreation Commission, Town Council	Medium
Investigate historic rights-of-way to the shore through deed research, and re-establish as necessary.	**Town Planner,** Assessors Office	Medium
Ensure adequate facilities (parking, sanitary facilities and trash disposal) at Town beach and shore access sites.	**Parks and Recreation Commission,** Town Council	High

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Element / Action Item (see Comprehensive Plan elements for further detail)	Suggested Responsible Department/Commission (lead in **BOLD**)	Priority
Investigate the potential for additional boat ramps or small boat put-ins (including kayak and canoes) to facilitate designation of a "blue trail" with destinations along salt ponds. *See Economic Improvement Element Policy 4*	**Parks and Recreation Commission,** Planning Commission, Town Planner, Town Council	Medium
5. CIRCULATION ELEMENT		
Policy 1: Provide adequate funding and staff for the town to maintain and improve its roads.		
Support maintenance of local roadways through Town budget.	**Town Administrator**, Town Council	High
Continue to assess transportation infrastructure needs through the Town's transportation improvement program.	**Public Works Department**	High
Conduct routine roadway and bridge maintenance to assure municipal assets remain safe and functional.	**Public Works Department**	High
Policy 2: Seek appropriate state funding for transportation improvements.		
Actively work with problem areas including high-accident locations and possible solutions to maintain the amenities of the Town.	**Public Works Department,** Town Administrator, Town Council, Town Planner	High
Consult regularly on transportation issues including safety, demand for transportation improvements, and to provide local input on state transportation solutions.	**Police Department, Department of Public Works, Town Planner**	High
Maintain routine liaison with state agencies including Statewide Planning Program, RIDOT, and RIPTA to regularly discuss upcoming projects and their impact on the town, and the Town's needs.	**Town Administrator,** Department of Public Works, Police Department, Town Planner	High
Prepare a yearly memo to the Planning Board and Town Council, outlining requests for state assistance or status of ongoing RIDOT construction projects.	**Department of Public Works**, Town Planner	High
Continue to collaborate with the Washington County Regional Planning Council to address regional transportation issues related to Route 1, the Northeast Corridor (Amtrak/future MBTA services), and tourism-based traffic.	**Town Planner**	Medium
Collaborate with the Narragansett Indian Tribe regarding maintenance of roads with adjacent jurisdiction. Consider joint application to the state Transportation Improvement Program for Town and Tribal roadway improvements.	**Department of Public Works**, Town Planner	High
Policy 3: Protect the rural quality of life and natural scenery along the town's roads, including vegetation, stone walls, historic structures and landscapes, and views.		
Continue to designate scenic roads.	**Conservation Commission, Planning Commission,** Town Planner	High
Where safety allows, maintain less heavily traveled roads as winding country roads.	**Department of Public Works**, Town Planner, Planning Commission	High
Develop design standards for scenic and other roads.	**Planning Commission,** Town Planner	High
Design streets in new residential developments to meet anticipated traffic volumes and safety considerations without loss of site amenities and neighborhood character.	**Planning Commission,** Town Planner, Department of Public Works	High
Recognize the importance of street lighting for public safety.	**Planning Commission,** Town Council	High
Implement the recommendations from A Village Revitalization Plan for Shannock, RI to reinforce connections that make up the fabric of the village.	**Town Council**	High
Require that state and federal roadway project utilize Context Sensitive Design to protect and enhance the rural character of the community.	**Planning Department,** Public Works Department, Town Council	Medium
Policy 4: Promote safe bicycle and pedestrian travel and other modes of transportation where possible.		
Promote safe pedestrian and bicycle travel for recreation, physical exercise, and as an alternative to travel by passenger vehicle	**Town Council,** Police Department, Planning Commission, Public Works Department	High
Encourage bicycle, pedestrian and water travel as specified in the Open Space and Recreation Element priorities, to the extent possible under budgetary limitations.	**Town Council,** Planning Commission, Conservation Commission	High
Coordinate with RIDOT regarding existing and proposed bike routes.	**Town Planner**	High
Undertake an analysis of the need for pedestrian and bicycle paths as new residential developments are proposed for review.	**Planning Commission,** Town Planner	High
Support pedestrian improvements throughout town to encourage walking as a multimodal option to the passenger vehicle.	**Planning Commission**, Town Planner, Police Department, Public Works Department, Town Council	High
Recognize the importance of bike paths, hiking trails, and "blue trails" (water trails for small non-motorized boats) for recreation and tourism.	**Town Council,** Planning Commission, Conservation Commission, Economic Improvement Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Department of Public Works	High
Policy 5: Maximize safety and capacity of existing roadways.		
Consider intersection and streetscape improvements at South County Trail (Route 2) and Carolina Back Road (Route 112) with enhanced landscaping.	**Town Planner**, Department of Public Works, Town Council	Medium

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Element / Action Item (see Comprehensive Plan elements for further detail)	Suggested Responsible Department/Commission (lead in **BOLD**)	Priority
Consider traffic-calming strategies such as on-street parking, raised crosswalks, and neckdowns to improve safety and reduce through traffic speed where warranted.	**Public Works Department,** Town Planner	Medium
Consider roundabouts for all intersection improvements as an alternative to signalization.	**Public Works Department,** Town Planner	Medium
Consider amendment of *Subdivision and Land Development Regulations* to encourage shared use of parking by abutting properties to reduce pavement area and stormwater runoff.	**Planning Commission,** Town Planner	Medium
Encourage construction of connections between abutting commercial parking lots for access management.	**Planning Commission,** Town Planner	Medium
Consider reducing speed limits in densely developed coastal neighborhoods.	**Police Department**, Town Council	High
Monitor RIDOT and local reports of traffic volumes and accidents, especially along heavily traveled routes, to alert town staff and officials of increased problems.	**Police Department**	High
Require adequate signage on state and local roadways to provide information about local destinations while avoiding sign clutter. Recommend use of discrete signposts with arrows and graphics to direct motorists to local services.	**Public Works Department,** Town Planner, Conservation Commission, Town Council	Medium
Encourage RIDOT and RIDEM to implement Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) tools including Highway Advisory Radio on Route 1 to alert motorists when State beach parking lots reach capacity to reduce traffic volumes on beach roads.	**Town Administrator,** Town Planner, Public Works Department, Police Department, Town Council	Medium
Policy 6: Support multimodal transportation.		
Support proposed MBTA commuter rail service to Providence from Kingston Station and possible Shoreline East service to Connecticut from Westerly Station.	**Town Council**	High
Support development of shuttle service to reduce dependence on single occupancy vehicles.	**Town Planner,** Town Council	High
Coordinate with RIPTA to determine if demand is suitable to initiate Flex service for transit dependent residents.	**Town Planner**	High
Investigate the use of a beach shuttle to State beaches.	**Parks and Recreation Department**	Medium
6. HOUSING ELEMENT		
Policy 1: Help residents of low income to be able to stay in their homes.		
Encourage rehabilitation of existing structures as the highest priority for development of affordable housing.	**Affordable Housing Commission,** Planning Department, Building Official	High
Encourage purchase and management by non-profit organizations for rent or	**Affordable Housing Commission**	High
Policy 2: Encourage a mix of dwelling unit types and price ranges in new residential development.		
Implement Conservation Design Development to provide a mixture of dwelling unit types, including single family, two-family, and multifamily dwelling according to an overall plan of development that may utilize relatively smaller lots but respects the density requirements of the underlying zoning district.	**Planning Commission,** Town Planner, Town Council, Town Solicitor	High
Support amendments to the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations and Zoning Ordinance to adopt provision for optimal conservation design and development methods. As part of these amendments, the Town will encourage a mix of dwelling unit types and price ranges in new residential developments.	**Planning Commission,** Town Planner, Town Council, Town Solicitor	High
Support amendments to the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations and Zoning Ordinance to enable diverse housing opportunities with appropriate services.	**Planning Commission,** Town Planner, Town Council, Town Solicitor	High
Provide a means to construct new homes which assure a good quality of life for current and future residents while fitting into Charlestown's unique character.	**Affordable Housing Commission,** Planning Department, Town Council	High
Policy 3: Meet the state requirement of assuring that ten percent of housing units are affordable for people of low and moderate income.		
Implement recommendations of the Housing Element Update / Affordable Housing Plan (September 10, 2004).	**Affordable Housing Commission**, Town Council	High
Consider a bond issue specifically for construction of affordable housing or consider a joint bond issue for both affordable housing construction and open space acquisition.	**Affordable Housing Commission**, Town Council	High
Consider a charter change to enable Town Council to purchase land for affordable housing from Affordable Housing bond funds (if established) without going to Financial Town Meeting.	**Affordable Housing Commission**, Town Council, Referendum	High
Consider implementing a floating overlay district for affordable housing. By expediting permitting, developer costs would be reduced. Density bonuses would be directly tied to production of low moderate income units with an overall cap on density at some ratio of buildable acreage to unit that is yet to be determined. This type of overlay district would provide a framework within which the town and prospective developers could negotiate on key development issues.	**Planning Commission, Affordable Housing Commission,** Town Council	High

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Element / Action Item (see Comprehensive Plan elements for further detail)	Suggested Responsible Department/Commission (lead in **BOLD**)	Priority
Expedite affordable housing development by assembling development parcels and issuing developer's RFPs. This would enable the Town to impose necessary affordability restrictions.	**Affordable Housing Commission**, Town Council	High
Implement mandatory inclusionary zoning provisions that cover any developments of five or more residential units. *See Land Use Element Policy 6*	**Affordable Housing Commission**	High
Work with the Washington County Regional Planning Council, the Washington County Community Development Corporation, Habitat for Humanity of South County, and other agencies involved in affordable housing to identify parcels or funding to help develop housing alternatives.	**Affordable Housing Commission,** Town Planner	High
Policy 4: Use incentives, negotiation, and zoning amendments to meet as many housing needs as possible through private and non-profit development.		
Provide incentives for development of diverse housing stock to meet the changing needs of residents of the community.	**Planning Commission,** Affordable Housing Commission	High
Participate actively in regional strategies, including establishing a regional HOME consortium, an Affordable Housing Trust Fund and/or a Housing and Redevelopment Agency that will leverage state and federal funds and draw on the strengths of each Town.	**Affordable Housing Commission**	High
Create or establish a restricted fund as a local funding mechanism to provide land or seed money for the creation of affordable housing in the Town. *See Land Use Element Policy 6.*	**Affordable Housing Commission**, Town Council	High
Use the resources available to the Town through the regional Affordable Housing Implementation Project for the eight South County towns (funded by a 2006 RI Housing Targeted Assistance Grant) to implement affordable housing strategies included in the Affordable Housing Plan.	**Affordable Housing Commission**, Town Council	High
Explore feasibility of combining efforts with benevolent and non-profit organizations so that each party contributes what it can: land, development expertise, management over time, access to public and private sources of funds.	**Affordable Housing Commission**, Town Council	High
Policy 5: Improve streetscapes in villages to revitalize and strengthen neighborhoods.		
Implement the recommendations from the Columbia Heights Housing and Streetscape Plan.	**Town Council,** Affordable Housing Commission, Town Planner	High
Implement the recommendations from The Charlestown Improvements Project, Making Green Connections to Commerce and Community.	**Town Council,** Affordable Housing Commission, Town Planner	High
Implement the recommendations from A Village Revitalization Plan for Shannock, RI.	**Town Council**, Affordable Housing Commission, Town Planner, Building Official	High
Submit application for state and federal funding for streetscape projects. *See Circulation Element Policy 2, Economic Development Policy 2*	**Town Planner**	High
Policy 6: Encourage residential and mixed use development in Growth Centers in accordance with the State Guide Plan Element *Land Use 2025.*		
Consider designation of Growth Centers within areas that currently or in the future may provide walkable access to transportation, childcare, health care, employment, and other services and opportunities necessary to sustain a healthy, productive life.	**Planning Commission,** Town Planner, Town Council	Medium
Transfer potential housing units in a parcel to be protected for open space to a receiving area with higher density such as villages of Shannock, Carolina and Cross Mills, identified in the state's Land Use 2025 as Growth Centers.	**Planning Commission,** Town Planner, Town Council	High
Policy 7: Utilize regional efforts to meet housing needs		
Routinely meet with neighboring towns to compare housing needs and potential joint efforts. Seek ways to combine and coordinate efforts.	**Town Planner, Affordable Housing Commission**	High
Meet with Richmond officials regarding implementation of Growth Centers at Carolina and Shannock. Continue to utilize Community Development Block Grant funding to improve neighborhoods and community facilities.	**Town Planner**	Medium
Utilize the Washington Country Regional Planning Council to address regional housing issues.	**Affordable Housing Commission,** Town Planner	High
Policy 8: Meet with the Narragansett Indian Tribe Council to discuss progress in implementing the Town's housing program and the Narragansett's housing program for Tribal members who live in Charlestown.		
Consider how the Town and the Tribe might work together for services such as: meals for elders, a health center, transportation.	**Town Council**	Medium
Policy 9: Continue to promote housing that protects the town's natural and cultural resources and rural character, and reflects the natural constraints of the land.		
Regulate the density of housing to keep with the capacities of soils to sustain the development over time.	**Planning Commission, Conservation Commission**	High

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Element / Action Item (see Comprehensive Plan elements for further detail)	Suggested Responsible Department/Commission (lead in **BOLD**)	Priority
Consider the suitability of land purchased in the future for affordable housing construction , open space, or recreation. *See Open Space and Recreation Element, Policy 1.*	**Affordable Housing Commission,** Planning Commission, Conservation Commission,	High
Consider all undeveloped town-owned properties not conserved, protected or used for open space (or sensitive for natural resources) for construction of affordable housing.	**Affordable Housing Commission**, Town Planner, Town Council	High
Implement transfer of development rights regulation to preserve open space while constructing residential units at a density that supports strong and vibrant neighborhoods.	**Town Planner,** Affordable Housing Commission, Conservation Commission, Planning Commission, Town Council	High
7. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT		
Policy 1: Continue to develop and market specific recreational opportunities that focus on Charlestown's unique attributes, including its natural and cultural resources.		
Continue to develop and implement Rhode Island Coastal Adventure Trails to broaden out the tourist season to spring and fall shoulders, during peak bird migration along the Atlantic Flyway.	**Economic Improvement Commission,** Recreation Department, Town Planner, Town Council	High
Develop and market an art trail, linking artist studios, galleries, and performance spaces.	**Economic Improvement Commission**	Medium
Continue to market trails from older publications such as Walks and Rambles in RI and other books. Provide signage for trail heads and parking, as warranted.	**Economic Improvement Commission**, Public Works Department, Town Planner	Medium
Continue plans for Town Beach improvements including analysis of beach capacity in relation to available parking, adequate signage for parking lot, possible concession stand, beach expansion, and potential beach shuttle bus from Ninigret Park. *See Open Space and Recreation Element Policy 4*	**Parks and Recreation Department,** Economic Improvement Commission, Town Planner, Town Council	High
Policy 2: Encourage the development of a diversity of businesses in keeping with the village character.		
Continue focusing business development in the commercial zone east of the historic Cross Mills area on a scale and with design standards compatible with the surrounding area. Encourage development of a variety of businesses consistent with village settings in other village settlements.	**Planning Commission,** Economic Improvement Commission, Town Planner	High
Implement design standards to preserve the visual quality of the major roads and villages.	**Economic Improvement Commission and Planning Commission subcommittee,** Town Council	High
Preserve land zoned commercial to meet needs of future residents for retail development and other services. Retaining this property as undeveloped in the near term, prior to demand for commercial construction, reinforces the rural character of the community.	**Economic Improvement Commission and Planning Commission**	High
Initiate strategies to attract and retain businesses that meet the needs of local residents and tourists.	**Economic Improvement Commission**	High
Policy 3: Continue to attract visitors through festivals at Ninigret Park.		
Continue to integrate the recommendations of the Ninigret Park URI studio project for various land uses. The plan should incorporate specifications outlined in the original lease from the government. *See Open Space and Recreation Element Policy 3.*		
Develop Ninigret Park as a regional park to encourage visitors to explore cultural and natural resources and recreational opportunities at locations other than beaches.	**Economic Improvement Commission,** Parks and Recreation Department	Medium
Encourage continuation and expansion of four major summer events: Big Apple Circus, Seafood Festival, Reggae, and Rhythm and Roots festivals.	**Parks and Recreation Department**	High
Expand use of Ninigret Park for regional festivals and events during the shoulder season and year round.	**Parks and Recreation Department**	High
Consider developing Ninigret Park as a regional attraction/destination, similar to riverwalks underway or planned in South Kingstown and Westerly.	**Economic Improvement Commission,** Parks and Recreation Department, Town Planner, Town Council	High
Policy 4: Continue focus on tourism as a vital component of the local economy.		
Develop tourism packages for diverse demographic groups including families, singles, and seniors.	**Economic Improvement Commission**	Medium
Explore ecotourism, heritage tourism, and agri-tourism, as appropriate, to broaden the tourism market in Charlestown. Provide links to regional tourism routes in Washington County and eastern Connecticut.	**Economic Improvement Commission,** proposed Historic Commission, Agricultural Preservation Committee	Medium
Capitalize on Ninigret Pond's popularity for wind surfing and kayaking and plan a marketing piece that features a range of services attractive to this demographic. Post on Town website with links to regional tourism and recreation sites.	**Economic Improvement Commission**	Medium

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Element / Action Item (see Comprehensive Plan elements for further detail)	Suggested Responsible Department/Commission (lead in **BOLD**)	Priority
Continue to support Charlestown Chamber of Commerce and South County Tourism Council efforts to market local events to Rhode Island and regional residents, as an attractive alternative to more distant vacation destinations, especially given the rise in gasoline price.	**Town Council**	High
Develop a scenic and historic driving tour contiguous with and similar to one developed by the Town of South Kingstown (posted on Town website).	**Proposed Historic Commission,** Economic Improvement Commission	Medium
Develop scenic and historic biking or walking tours to supplement the Coastal Adventure Tour and proposed driving tours.	**Proposed Historic Commission,** Economic Improvement Commission	Medium
Support provision of Internet service for summer visitors, especially those staying in campgrounds or motels. The Town provides computer access in the library and supports the Charlestown Chamber of Commerce providing internet connections.	**Cross Mills Library,** Town Council	High
Work with regional tourism agencies and major regional businesses to market existing hotels to business travelers, especially off-peak.	**Economic Improvement Commission**	High
Support efforts of Narragansett Indian Tribe to market information on local Native American heritage with the Chamber of Commerce and South County Tourism Council.	**Economic Improvement Commission**	Medium
Policy 5: Support agriculture as a component of a diverse rural economy.		
Seek support from the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Division of Agriculture to promote Rhode Island grown products and, thereby, increase the income of local farmers.	**Agricultural Protection Committee**	Medium
Collaborate with the Rhode Island Center for Agricultural Promotion and Education on agri-tourism through the Rhode Island FarmWays program.	**Agricultural Protection Committee**	Medium
Policy 6: Promote pride of community and pride of local businesses through improved signage that reflects the character of the Town.		
Post Welcome to Charlestown signage (gateway signage) on Route 1 and other main roads in town to increase local pride in community	**Public Works Department**, Town Planner	High
Post uniform signs (village-type) on major roads with arrows to local businesses on major roads.	**Economic Improvement Commission,** Town Council	Medium
Provide oversight to RIDOT to assure signage on Route 1 is legible, visible at night, informative for visitors, and avoids sign clutter.	**Town Administrator,** Town Planner	High
Policy 7: Support construction of a diverse housing stock to facilitate economic initiatives.		
Encourage construction of affordable workforce housing.	**Affordable Housing Commission,** Economic Improvement Commission, Planning Commission, Town Council	High
Recognize pressures for mega-house construction, understanding that seasonal units demand minimal public services while increasing the town tax base. *See Land Use Element Policy 9* for recommendations regarding design standards for teardowns.		
8. SERVICES AND FACILITIES ELEMENT		
Policy 1: Provide high quality municipal services in a cost-effective manner as required to serve an expanding community.		
Maintain the high level of expertise that currently exists among municipal employees.	**Town Administrator, Town Council**	High
Maintain and upgrade, when necessary, the level or amount of staff, facility space, and equipment required to maintain or improve the levels of service currently provided by the Town in order to meet the needs of the community.	**Town Administrator, Town Council**	High
Encourage and provide recognition for volunteerism in the fire, rescue, ambulance service, library, Parks and Recreation Department activities, Town Boards and Commissions, and other volunteer services.	**Town Council**	High
Encourage regular communication/exchange of information between all town Boards and Commissions.	**Town Administrator, Town Clerk**	High
Update pamphlet explaining municipal/other public services that are available to Charlestown residents.	**Town Administrator, Town Clerk**	Medium
Require annual assessments be conducted by Town departments and commissions of comprehensive plan implementation for report to Town Council.	**All departments**	High
Policy 2: Continue to support the concept of a volunteer fire department and to assist the fire districts in their efforts to provide protective services.		
Develop incentives to encourage more people to become volunteers, especially during day time hours.	**Town Council**	High
Encourage participation in the state-mandated fire fighting training programs to maintain an adequate volunteer force.	**Fire Districts,** Town Administrator, Town Council	High

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Element / Action Item (see Comprehensive Plan elements for further detail)	Suggested Responsible Department/Commission (lead in **BOLD**)	Priority
Consider developing / implementing (in conjunction with fire districts) a town-wide ordinance to require all new subdivisions to install a system of cisterns, or a dry hydrant if there is a water source on-site.	**Planning Commission,** Town Planner, Town Council, Fire Districts	High
Policy 3: Continue to support a professional police force, dedicated to upholding the law, assuring the safety and best welfare of the residents, and respecting the rights of all citizens.		
Finalize memorandum of understanding with the Narragansett Indian Tribe regarding the role of Town police protection on Tribal lands.	**Town Administrator,** Town Council, Police Department	High
Continue to conduct annual analyses of existing and future police force needs in preparation of the Town Budget and Capital Improvement Program.	**Police Department,** Town Administrator	High
Continue collaboration with adjoining towns (Richmond/Hopkinton) on regional issues and resource sharing.	**Police Department,** Town Administrator	High
Policy 4: Provide residents with the opportunity for a quality education, and superior school facilities.		
Continue to evaluate whether to remain in the Chariho school district based on the costs of remaining in the district, the costs of constructing and operating a new school, and the residents' goals for a quality educational system.	**Town Council**	High
Evaluate alternative sites for a new school in the town, should the need for new facilities be identified.	**Building Commission**	Medium
Continue to review the Town's educational goals and their attainment.	**Chariho School Committee**	High
Continue to monitor projected school enrollments using birth records, building permit records, and school department projections.	**School Superintendent,** Town Planner, Town Council	High
Policy 5: Maintain an effective Public Works program which recognizes the importance of the maintenance and construction of safe and efficient roads, bridges, sidewalks, stormdrains, and parks to serve its residents.		
Continue long-range improvement programs for improvements to roads, bridges, sidewalks and stormdrains in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.	**Public Works Department**	High
Continue to support an adequately staffed and equipped Public Works Department.	**Public Works Department,** Town Administrator, Town Council	High
Policy 6: Maintain a Town system of public libraries to meet the diverse needs of residents through expanded and improved library services and facilities.		
Continue to comply with the Office of Library and Information Service standards in order to continue to receive State funding.	**Librarian,** Cross Mills Public Library Board of Trustees	High
Celebrate Town-wide identity and history through library programs.	**Librarian,** Town Council	Medium
Policy 7: Provide the citizens of the Town with a wide range of effective human service programs and facilities, in cooperation with other public, private, and non profit agencies and groups.		
Continue to coordinate and centralize senior citizen programs and facilities to offer community-based services.	**Public Assistance, Senior Citizens Commission**	High
Support efforts to provide affordable housing and supports services. *See Housing Element Policy 2*	**Public Assistance, Affordable Housing Commission,** Town Council	High
Initiate programs for all ages at the senior center to integrate and reinforce intergenerational connections in the community.	**Parks and Recreation Department**	High
Policy 8: Provide additional support of local volunteer ambulance services.		
Consider incorporating the ambulance service into municipal government or utilize for-profit ambulance services.	**Town Administrator**, Town Council	Medium
Policy 9: Maintain an effective Emergency Management Response Program that recognizes the importance of providing protection to citizens and property through public education, municipal preparedness plans and adequate training of key personnel.		
Continue to implement, maintain and periodically update the Hazard Mitigation Plan.	**Charlestown Emergency Management Agency (CEMA)**, Hazard Mitigation Committee, Police Department, Town Administrator, Town Council	High
Maintain communication/coordination/compliance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) and adjacent communities regarding natural hazards and man-made disasters.	**CEMA**, Hazard Mitigation Committee, Town Administrator, Police Department, Town Council	High
Develop a Debris Management Plan for collecting and disposing of debris after a storm event.	**Department of Public Works,** Town Council	Medium
Develop strategies to help local businesses recover from the effects of a natural disaster.	**CEMA,** Economic Improvement Commission, Town Council	High
Ensure safety of residents living in senior housing, nursing homes and residents living independently who may not have access to cars or who may have special needs.	**CEMA,** Police Department, Fire Department, Senior Citizens Commission	High

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Develop and implement public education and outreach as part of pre-disaster planning.	**CEMA,** Police Department, Fire Department, Senior Citizens Commission	High
Policy 10: Support the Parks and Recreation Department in providing enriching recreational experiences and quality facilities. *See Open Space and Recreation Element*		
Investigate the need for alternative transportation for programs.	**Parks and Recreation Commission**	Medium
Consider the need for indoor recreation space for community activities.	**Parks and Recreation Commission**	High
Continue to collaborate with and maintain the South County Greenspace Project's objectives.	**Parks and Recreation Commission,** Planning Commission, Town Council	High
Policy 11: Revisit its Growth Management Plan to address the continuing cumulative effects of development.		
Conduct routine assessment of the Growth Management Plan to assure that plan is consistent with community character and is equitable, environmentally sound and economically beneficial.	**Town Administrator,** Town Planner, Town Council	Medium
Policy 12: Maintain a long-range program of effective stormwater management designed to protect residents from flooding, to control erosion and sedimentation, and to maintain both surface and groundwater quality and quantity.		
Continue to support the implementation of the Rhode Island Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (RIPDES) Phase II Stormwater Management Program.	**Public Works Department,** Town Planner, Town Administrator	High
Assure compliance with Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's RIPDES Phase II requirements for stormwater management in municipal separate storm sewer systems.	**Public Works Department**	High
Locate and inventory existing municipal stormwater facilities and work towards correcting problems for existing drainage in a manner which considers the surrounding drainage patterns and natural resources.	**Public Works Department,** Town Administrator	High
Continue to encourage public education/participation/outreach in accordance with the Phase II Stormwater Management Program.	**Public Works Department,** Town Planner, Town Administrator	High
Amend the Town's Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance to strengthen the Rhode Island Freshwater Protection Act. *See Natural Resource Element Policy 3*		High
Policy 13: Implement the On-Site Wastewater Management Plan.		
Continue to develop and evaluate alternatives for septage disposal.	**Wastewater Management**	High
Investigate/develop alternative strategies/designs to address problems in areas where ISDS upgrades cannot be done effectively. Investigate small-scale 'cluster' type solutions.	**Wastewater Management,** Planning Commission	High
Continue to work with the EPA and consultants to develop a management plan to rehabilitate and protect the future quality of Green Hill, Ninigret, and Quonochontaug Ponds.	**Wastewater Management**	High
Continue to cooperate with URI, RIDEM and EPA to update ISDS technology and establish performance standards and controls that meet Charlestown's special	**Wastewater Management**	High
Work with the Salt Pond Coalition and South Kingstown High School to create a Charlestown version of the EPA-funded video project for alternative septic systems.	**Wastewater Management**	Medium
Expand implementation of the inspection-based monitoring program to other parts of the Town.	**Wastewater Management**	High
Bulk purchase effluent filters for septic tanks to be sold at cost/slight mark-up, hold workshop for retro-fitting filters.	**Wastewater Management**	High
Model buildout scenarios for the Town by watershed.	**Town Planner,** Wastewater Management	Medium
Policy 14: Monitor the efficiency and capacities of the transfer station/collection center.		
Continue to evaluate population and waste generation/composition data to develop a basis of future waste generation volumes by type of waste material.	**Town Administrator,** Public Works Department, Wastewater Management	Medium
Continue to evaluate current federal, state, and local regulations pertaining to waste disposal and recycling facilities.	**Town Administrator**, Wastewater Management	Medium

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Personal Communications

Haase, William – Town Planner, Westerly Rhode Island. June 27, 2006. (Telephone conference, P. Sherrill)
re: Compliance with adjacent communities for the 2006 Comprehensive Plan Update.

Hahn, Ashley – Hopkinton Town Planner. June 27, 2006. (Telephone conference, P. Sherrill)
re: Compliance with adjacent communities for the 2006 Comprehensive Plan Update.

Jewett, Melody – Richmond Town Planner. June 27, 2006. (Telephone conference, P. Sherrill)
re: Compliance with adjacent communities for the 2006 Comprehensive Plan Update.

Murray, Vin – South Kingstown Town Planner. June 27, 2006. (Telephone conference, P. Sherrill)
re: Compliance with adjacent communities for the 2006 Comprehensive Plan Update.

Petrarca, Barbara – RIDOT Landscape Architect. May 31, 2006. (Telephone conference, P. Sherrill)
re: Scenic Roadways – designation of Charlestown Route 1.

Ricci, Barry – Superintendent Chariho Regional School District. June 13, 2006. (Telephone conference, C. Pereira)
re: Concerns/inclusions for the 2006 Comprehensive Plan Update.

Sharkey, Thomas – Charlestown Chief of Police. June 14, 2006. (Telephone conference, C. Pereira)
re: Concerns/inclusions for the 2006 Comprehensive Plan Update.

Town of Charlestown Fire District. March 20, 2006.
re: Concerns/inclusions for the 2006 Comprehensive Plan Update.

Town of Charlestown Public Works Department. May 1, 2006.
re: Concerns/inclusions for the 2006 Comprehensive Plan Update, Circulation, Economic Development, and Services and Facilities Elements.

Meetings

Lamphere, James – Former Charlestown Town Planner. March 30, 2006.
re: 1991 Comprehensive Plan Goals/Policies accomplishments to date.

Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program - Rhode Island Department of Administration, Division of Planning. March 31, 2006.
re: *Municipal requirements for Comprehensive Plan Update.*

Town of Charlestown Affordable Housing Commission. March 30, 2006.
re: To discuss the Housing Element for the 2006 Comprehensive Plan Update.

Town of Charlestown Conservation Commission. March 30, 2006.
re: To discuss the Open Space and Recreation Element, as well as others, for the 2006 Comprehensive Plan Update.

Town of Charlestown Visioning Workshop. April 24, 2006.
re: To solicit public input regarding the 2006 Comprehensive Plan Update.

Town of Charlestown Economic Improvement Commission. April 27, 2006.
re: To discuss the Economic Development Element for the 2006 Comprehensive Plan Update.

Town of Charlestown Planning Commission Workshop. June 1, 2006.
re: Comments on the draft: Circulation, Housing and Demographics, Cultural Resources, and Natural Resources Elements.

Town of Charlestown Planning Commission Workshop. July 6, 2006.
re: Comments on the draft: Land Use, Open Space and Recreation, Economic Development, and Services and Facilities Elements.

Town of Charlestown Joint Planning Commission and Town Council Workshop. August 28, 2006.

Town of Charlestown Joint Planning Commission and Town Council Hearing. October 16, 2006.