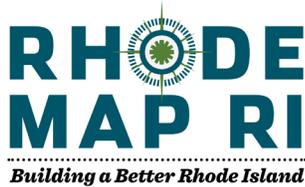




Concept Plan: West Warwick Arctic Village Growth Center

June 2014

About This Document



What's the purpose of this concept plan?

Five concept plans for Growth Centers have been developed as part of RhodeMapRI, a project of the State Division of Planning. Funding for RhodeMapRI comes from a federal Sustainable Communities Initiative Grant, and the project is organized around six key Livability Principles developed by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development:

- Provide more transportation choices.
- Promote equitable, affordable housing.
- Enhance economic competitiveness.
- Support existing communities.
- Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment.
- Value communities and neighborhoods

RhodeMapRI focuses on plans to enhance economic opportunities and outcomes, meet housing needs across the income scale, and strengthen the state's Growth Centers policy, first established in 2002, with effective strategies to promote growth and development activity where it can best be supported. Well-aligned with the federal government's Livability Principles, the state's criteria for designating growth centers promote the following conditions:

- Compact development with efficient use of infrastructure
- Mixed land uses
- Diverse housing opportunities and choices
- Transportation choice
- Protection of environmental resources
- Design for sense of place
- Development in existing centers and appropriately scaled new centers.

The five Growth Center concept plans cover the range of rural, ex-urban (or semi-rural), suburban, small main street, and urban locations. These areas have been targeted by their communities as having opportunities for mixed-use, denser, and more walkable development. In some cases, plans already exist for development or redevelopment.

The purpose of these RhodeMapRI concept plans is to test Growth Center criteria and identify Growth Center needs to achieve implementation, and/or to provide options or materials to help these communities move forward toward implementation.

What's in this concept plan?

- Background and summary
- Existing assets
- Existing issues and constraints
- Application of growth center criteria and identification of growth center opportunities
- Concept plan
- Growth center implementation strategies

Assets

Arctic Village has a number of assets that can be strengthened:

- **Location of Town Hall and the Senior Center.**
- **Town-owned land can be redeveloped.**
- **Successful small retail activities on the Main Street** segment, anchored by the Centreville Savings Bank development.
- The Main Street/Washington intersection has a **small park and gazebo** that can contribute to a gateway experience.
- Several key blocks have **opportunities for land assembly.**
- There is a **walkable street grid**, except for the Roberts Street bypass.
- **Arctic Mill on Factory** is in design to become a mixed-use building. Located on the river and at the terminus of phase I of the Riverwalk, it sits within walking distance of the Main Street segment of the commercial district.
- **Proximity to the Pawtuxet River, Washington Secondary Bike Path, and Riverwalk.** At-grade access to the bike path lies within a five-minute walk of the village.
- Arctic Village sits on an elevated bluff above the river, so it is **not vulnerable to flooding.**

1



Arctic Gazebo is the landmark and activity center of Arctic Village.

2



Successful small retail has strong Main Street character.

3

City-owned parcels are ready for redevelopment.

4



Arctic Mill is in design stage to become a **mixed-use building.**

5

Arctic Village Center is **close to the river, bike path** and newly completed Riverwalk phase 1.

6



Recent commercial development at **Centreville Savings Bank.**

7



Potential consolidation of existing parcels for redevelopment.

8



The **vacant parcel is available** for development.

9

At-grade access to the bike path lies within a 5-minutes walk of the center of Arctic Village.

10

Car show in the summer closes Main Street to accommodate vendors.

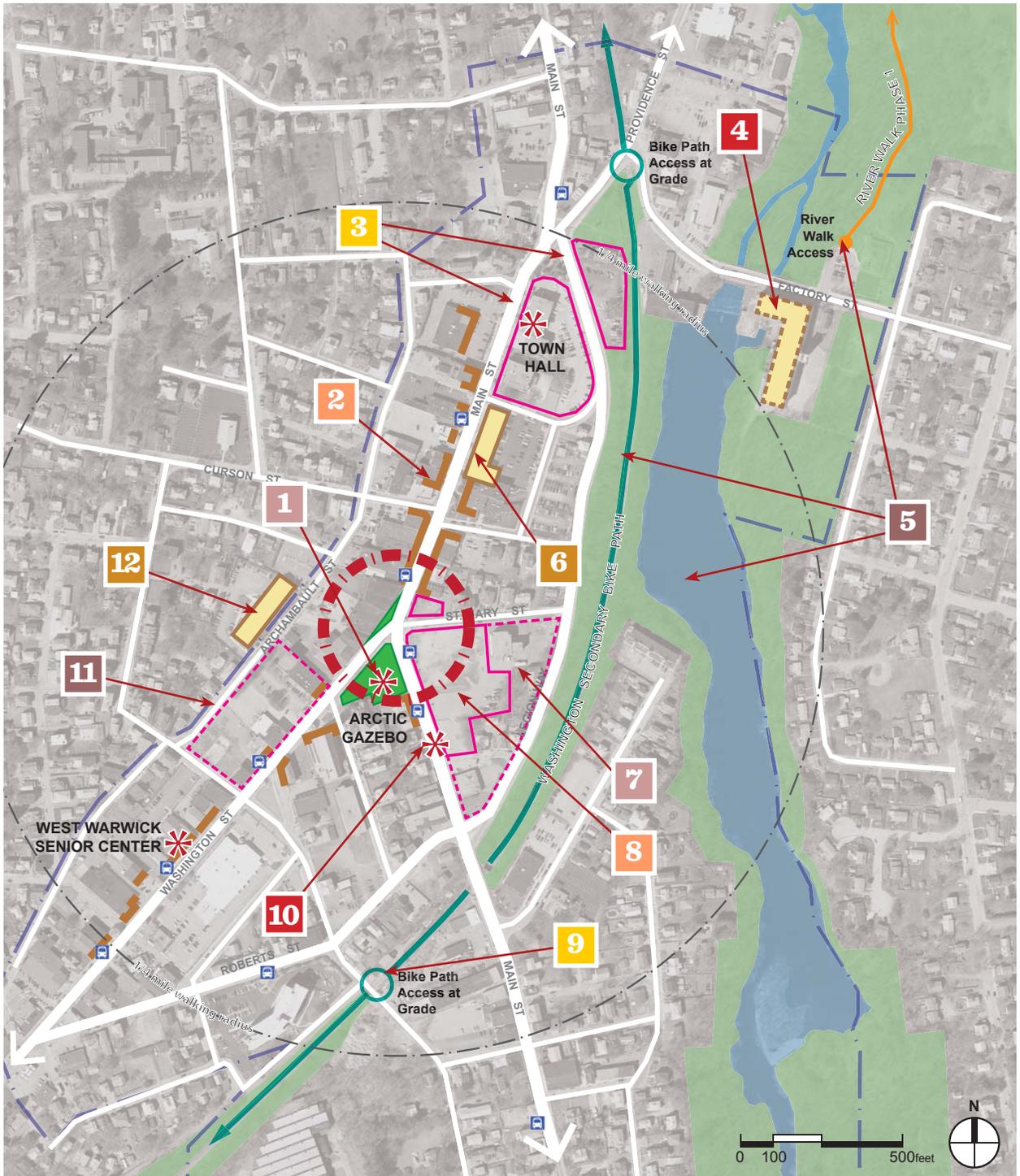
11

Potential consolidation of four parcels for redevelopment.

12



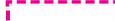
Wildberry Apartments 47 assisted living units opened in 2008.



WEST WARWICK GROWTH CENTER

Arctic Village Center **Existing Assets**

LEGEND

- | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|-----------------------|
|  | Redevelopment area |  | Recent development |  | Arctic Village Center |
|  | Vacant parcel for development |  | Proposed development |  | RIPTA bus stop |
|  | Potential consolidation of parcels for redevelopment |  | Active/occupied storefront and building |  | Community destination |

Issues and Constraints

The issues and constraints facing Arctic Village range from the topography to key vacancies.

- **A large vacant property sits at the heart of the Village** on a prominent parcel once occupied by a church. It occupies an important gateway location where many people enter the Village from Main Street and Route 117. Most of the rest of the buildings on the block are undistinguished and do not contribute to a gateway experience.
- In the same general location, but across the street, **storefront properties are either vacant or have unoccupied storefront windows.** The occupied buildings are **oriented toward entry from the back**, not from the Arctic Village sidewalk.
- **Stores and buildings on Washington Street have more vacancies and deferred maintenance issues.**
- A **steep slope** of some 15 to 20 feet divides the Village from the bike path and the river.
- There is **no access to the bike path** from the Main Street Bridge.
- The **Roberts Road bypass has no pedestrian crossings** or sidewalks on the river side.
- **Large surface parking lots** face Roberts Road and the river area.



Vacant parcels occupy two corners of the intersection across from the Arctic Gazebo.



Vacant/unoccupied storefront and buildings



3 Large area of surface parking lots



Bypass street lacks sidewalks in many locations and has no pedestrian crosswalk.



Steep slope with a grade drop 15 to 20 feet from Legion Way to the Bike Path and a dense wooded area in between obstruct visual and physical connections.

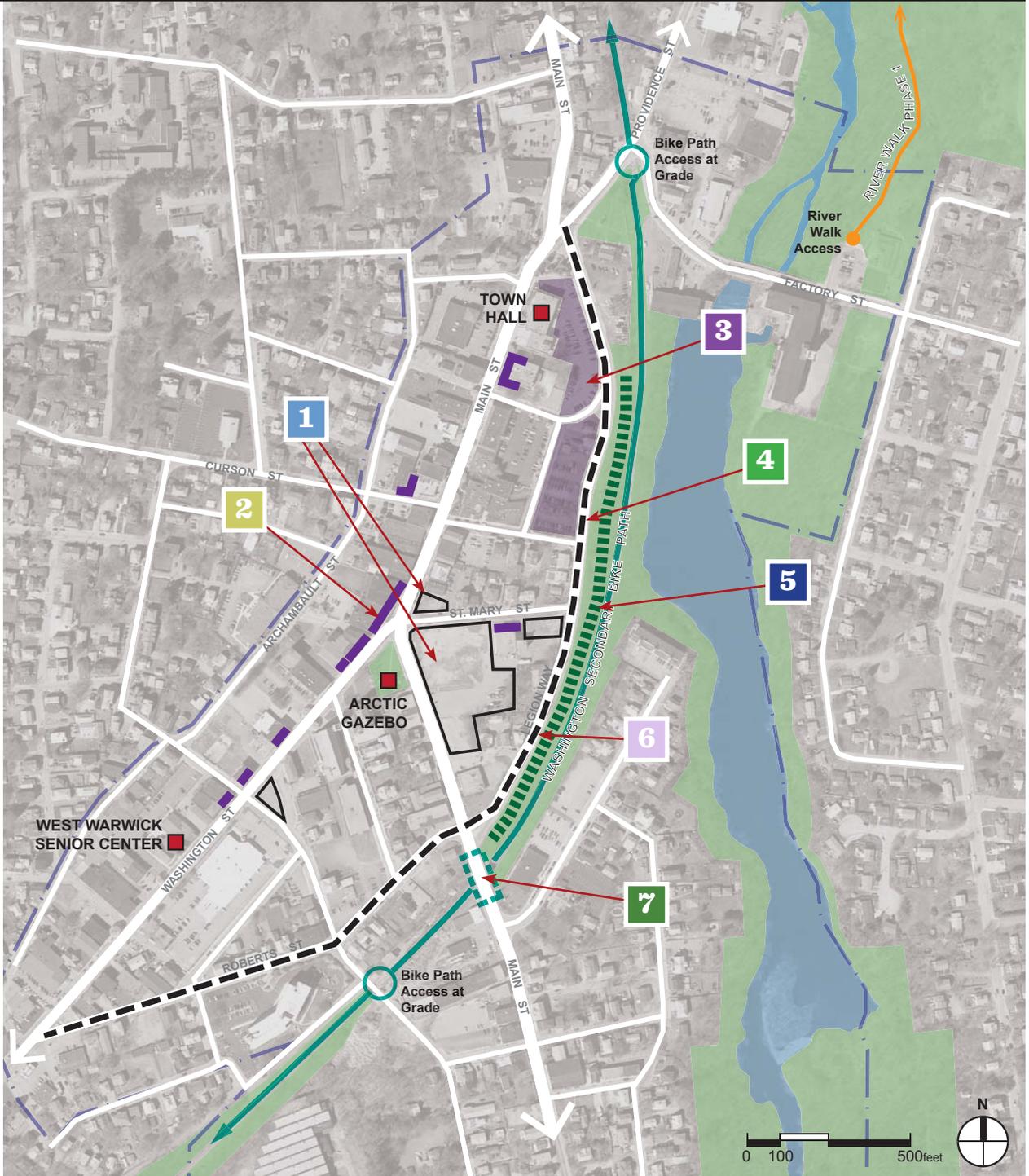


6 Bypass traffic travels at high speed.



7 No access to the Bike Path from the Main Street Bridge

EXISTING ISSUES & CONSTRAINTS



WEST WARWICK GROWTH CENTER
Arctic Village Center Existing Issues

LEGEND

- Redevelopment area
- Vacant parcel
- Vacant/unoccupied storefront and building
- Steep slope
- Bypass road
- Surface parking lot

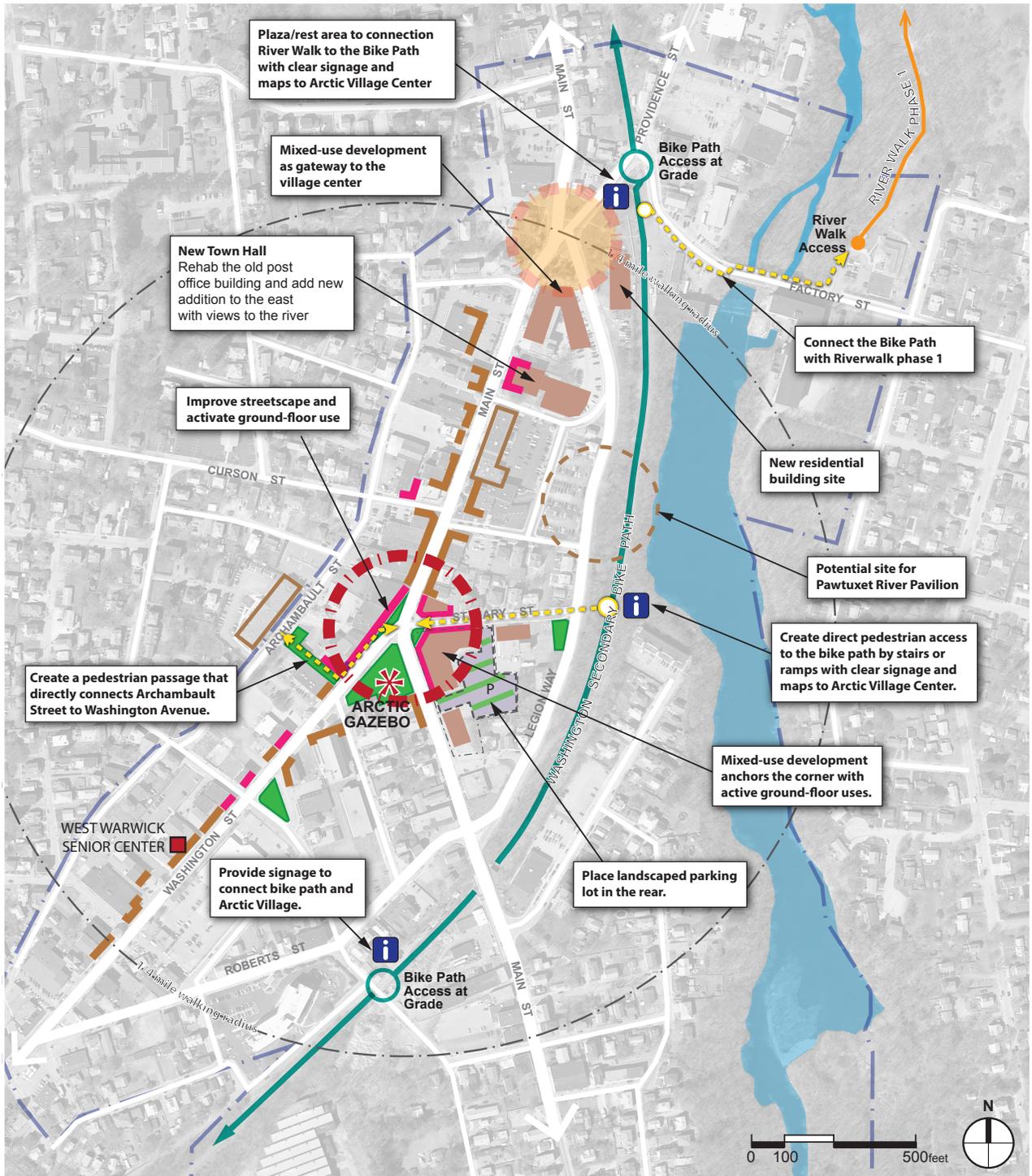
Applying Growth Center Criteria and Growth Center Opportunities

Arctic Village meets most Growth Center criteria well.

- **Compact development with efficient use of infrastructure:** The Redevelopment Plan, based on existing conditions, foresees redevelopment and new compact development. The Village has existing infrastructure, some of which may need upgrades.
- **Mixed land uses:** The Village is now and will continue to be a mixed-use location.
- **Diverse housing opportunities and choices:** The village already has relatively diverse housing opportunities and is expected to develop more—multifamily and single-family; rental and ownership. It is suitable for inclusion of affordable units in redevelopment and new development. There is potential for housing above retail and in the blocks between Main/Washington streets and Roberts Road. Future development appears unlikely to include additional single-family housing.
- **Transportation choice:** While Arctic Village is very walkable internally, it has limited transportation choice for longer trips. Most people travel by car. Three bus lines serve the village, including connections to job centers at Warwick Mall and express commuter service to downtown Providence. Bus stops lack shelters. The bike path could serve some people for commuting and other trips. In addition, there is discussion of creating bus shuttles to the airport.
- **Protection of environmental resources.** Arctic Village has long been highly developed. The small park at Main and Washington provides green space in the Village. The greenway along the Pawtuxet River enhances the environmental value of the river, both in terms of water quality and as a habitat corridor.
- **Design for sense of place.** Arctic Village has a traditional “main street” character as well as historic mill buildings. New buildings should be sensitive to their context, but can include greater height at key locations.
- **Development in existing centers and appropriately scaled new centers.** Arctic Village is an existing center.

Growth Center Opportunities

- **Focus on activating the Main/Washington intersection as a strong gateway and connecting site.**
 - > Develop the site with a **mixed-use building with active ground-floor uses** that is built to the sidewalk or with small setbacks on Main Street and St. Mary Street.
 - > **Redevelop Town Hall and Town-owned property at the northern gateway to Arctic Village** with mixed uses. Explore the potential for adaptive reuse of the old post office for some Town offices. Relocate the Police and Fire Departments, possibly elsewhere in Arctic Village away from Main/Washington Streets.
- **Pursue multifamily development** in order to build critical mass and create additional support for Village businesses.
- **Improve pedestrian connections** and connections to amenities.
- **Improve informational signage.**



WEST WARWICK GROWTH CENTER
Arctic Village Center **Opportunities**

LEGEND

- Redevelopment area
- New building
- New active/occupied storefront and ground-level use
- Landscaped surface parking lot
- Public green space/park/plaza
- Existing active/occupied storefront and building
- Signage/map
- Pedestrian connection

The Concept Plan

- Sites at the **Main/Washington intersection:**
 - > **Prepare use and design guidelines for mixed-use design and construction** to enhance the gateway experience and reinforce the Main Street experience, including building to the sidewalk or with small setbacks, except for café/plaza seating, parking to the rear, and overall context-sensitive design.
 - > **Seek site control of vacant buildings near the intersection** and prepare an RFP for rehabilitation or redevelopment.
 - > Work with owners either to **gain site control or assist in pursuing appropriate new construction.**
- Reinforce the existing street by **activating the ground floors of all buildings.**
- **Create pedestrian and bicycle connections:**
 - > Between **Archambault Street and Washington Street.**

- > Between the **bike path and Riverwalk phase 1** at Factory Street
- > Between **Arctic Village and the bike path by St. Mary's Street** and stairs and ramps.
- > Make Main Street and Washington Street **more bike-friendly with sharrows and bike parking**, in order to attract bicyclists off the bike trail to get to know Arctic Village for refreshments or other activities.
- **Develop a northern residential gateway to Arctic Village** with Arctic Mill and new development.
 - > **Develop new multifamily housing at the existing Town Hall site** and Town-owned land across Legion Way.
- **Provide informational signage** to connect users of the bikeway with Arctic Village.
- Explore implementation of **potential Pawtuxet River Pavilion and Boathouse** as a new gathering place and amenity connected to Arctic Village.



Small neighborhood retail with commercial/residential



New mixed-use building with active ground-floor uses



Sharrow marking lane for bike-friendly street



Activate existing storefront:
> holiday window display
> community art/museum display





Riverwalk Phase 1



Rehab Arctic Mill as a residential building.

Potential site for Pawtuxet River pavilion and boathouse



Mixed-use gateway building with public plaza at corner

New City Hall at the old post office



Existing condition

Bike path

River walk and bike path connection with guided information board/signage



Gateway residential building



Implementation Strategies for the Growth Center

The Arctic Village Redevelopment Plan includes more detailed analysis, recommendations, and implementation strategies than this concept plan. Strategies below address issues highlighted in the concept plan.

Growth Center Designations

- **Designate the Arctic Village Redevelopment Area as a Growth Center in the Town's Comprehensive Plan.**
- **Designate the Main/Washington gateway site as a Strategic/Priority Activity Center** and identify assistance that the State could offer. One possibility is amendment of the Municipal Economic Development Zone law to make it more usable for places like Arctic Village, as recommended in the Redevelopment Plan.

Design Guidelines and Regulation

- **Ensure that appropriate design guidelines are in place for the Main/Washington gateway site and the northern mixed-use residential gateway site.** These buildings should be taller than typical Main Street buildings, appropriate to the context, and pedestrian-friendly (built to the sidewalk or close to it, entrances oriented to the street, and parking provided at the rear, partially or fully structured, depending on topography). Because of the Arctic Mill and the other mills buildings in West Warwick, a modern structure design that responds to the mill aesthetic would reinforce Arctic Village and West Warwick character.
- **Amend zoning to require zero-line setbacks or very small setbacks in the Arctic Village commercial area** to reinforce pedestrian-friendly facades and stop suburban-strip style development with parking in the front.
- **Promote green infrastructure landscape practices** that provide infiltration of storm water and limit unnecessary impervious surfaces while providing trees and other green amenities.
- **Explore joint parking solutions for businesses.**

Activation

- Work with property owners at gateway to **activate store windows.**
- Establish a program of **art or other displays in empty storefronts.**
- Explore establishing a **program of pop-up retail** in unoccupied storefronts to promote interest in Arctic Village

Connectivity

- Strengthen wayfinding
 - > Provide **informational signage at the bike path** about Arctic Village offerings
 - > Provide **signage in Arctic Village** about access to the bike path and Riverwalk
- Establish a **direct connection from Arctic Village to the bike path** by stairs and ramps.
- **Remove the bypass or provide traffic calming, pedestrian crossings, and sidewalks.**



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Building a Better Rhode Island

This concept plan was prepared by Stantec for Goody Clancy as part of the consultant team led by Horsley-Witten Group assisting the State of Rhode Island Division of Planning for the RhodeMapRI initiative.