

TOWN OF WAREHAM
MASSACHUSETTS

COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN
1998

Wareham Master Plan Committee

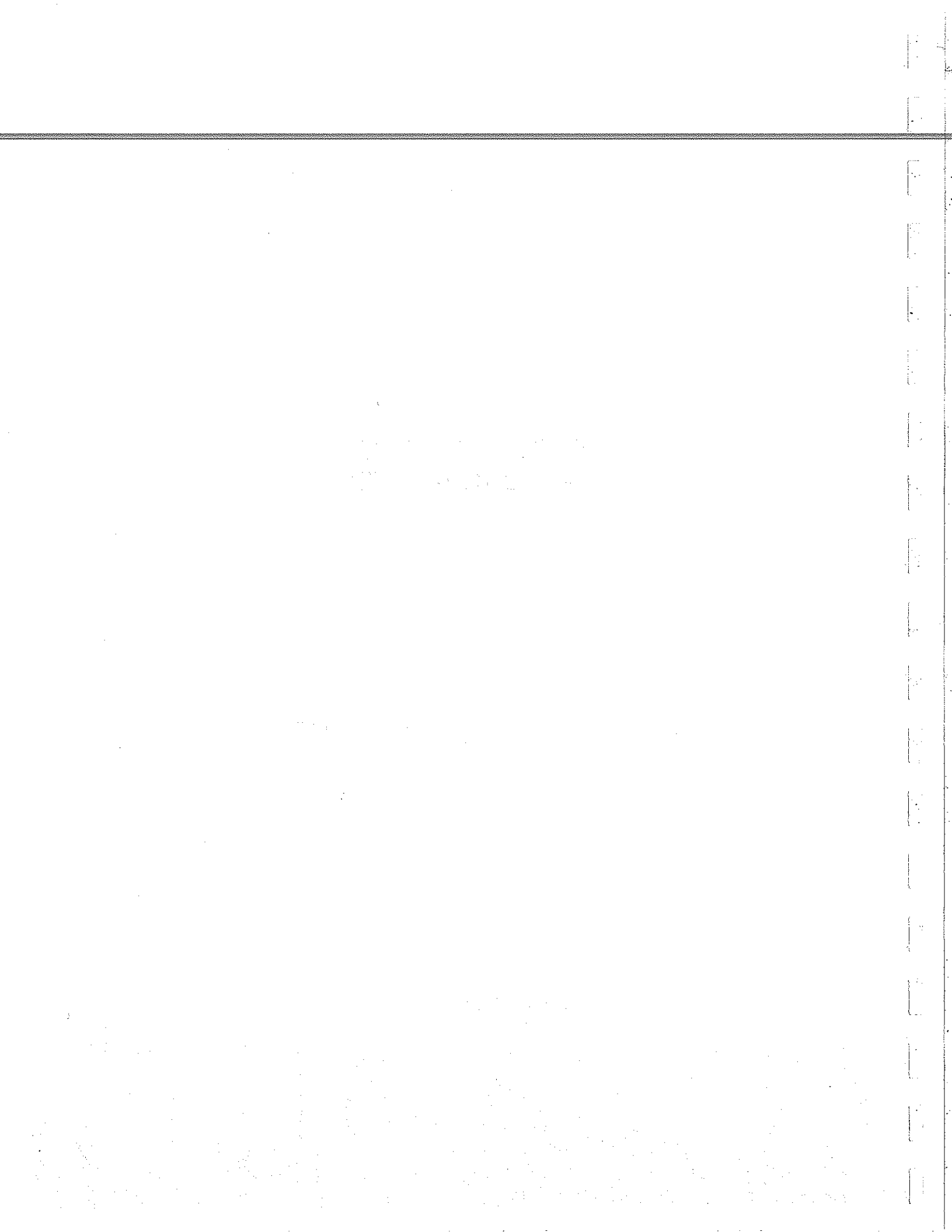


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Vision Statement

This plan sets forth a vision for Wareham's future according to input gathered from a citizen survey, numerous meetings, and public workshops over the course of a two-year planning process. Throughout the process, it was clear that residents feel strongly about their community, and wish to protect the natural features and community character that make the place unique. Finally, the role of trees and other flora in maintaining ecological balance cannot be overlooked.

A Town-wide survey was conducted to gather the opinions of residents on various issues. The responses to the survey indicated a strong desire to control taxes and "preserve the small town character and protect natural resources". The complete results of the survey are in the appendix. Wareham residents for the most part want to maintain the suburban and rural character of the various neighborhoods within the community. With a population of slightly more than 21,000, the community retains a small-town atmosphere. This atmosphere is one of the main reasons people choose to live in Wareham, and measures must be taken to protect it.

The residents of Wareham recognize that all communities have both positive and negative components which define the place they live. It is the intentions of residents who participated in the formulation of this Plan to maintain Wareham as a "good place to live" and continue to improve quality of life. This means protecting the natural resources of the town while preparing for appropriate growth in the future.

In Wareham, daily life means interaction with people of different culture, ethnicity, and economic status. This diversity is a positive thread in the fabric of the community. Efforts should be made by the Town to maintain quality of life for people of varying social strata.

A sense of history should also be maintained. The villages of Wareham, Onset, and Tremont (now West Wareham) and Agawam (now East Wareham) reflect the historic context of the area. A glimpse of more recent history when Wareham was dominated by summer cottages can be seen in White Island Shores, Rose Point, Briarwood, Agawam beach, and other areas.

Economics play an integral role in the health of a community. It is vitally important to maintain existing industries and agriculture. Efforts should be to make Wareham attractive to quality industry with better paying jobs as a way of improving the tax base and employment prospects for local residents, without sacrificing natural resources or community character.

Wareham is set apart from other communities of similar size by its vast open spaces provided by cranberry bogs, bays and rivers, and privately owned lands. Older villages and summer colonies are densely clustered near the sea. The many wetlands in town preclude easy development in the outlying areas. Numerous wetlands have been developed into cranberry bogs, and the land around them maintained as a buffer between agriculture and residential areas, yet it is becoming increasingly of concern that agricultural and temporary "chapter" lands are not permanently protected.

Access to the natural environment is an important component to the quality of life enjoyed by residents. To some, access means the views and vistas they pass on the drive to work. For others it is the chance to walk along the shore or hike in the woods. Fresh and saltwater recreation plays an vital role in the life of the community. Regardless of the way people enjoy the outdoors, residents wish to preserve the natural environment to be enjoyed by the current and future generations.

The value of open space to the community cannot be overemphasized. Open space provides habitat for animals, buffers between incompatible land uses, is a haven from the pace of modern life, and demands minimal services from the local government. Efforts should be made to preserve open space for future generations to enjoy, particularly large contiguous tracts.

In order to preserve the character of the community, new development must be directed to appropriate locations. As the population increases, the Town's zoning policies will dictate where growth can occur. In general, growth should occur in areas served by adequate infrastructure to support it, and should be guided away from rural and environmentally sensitive areas.

What residents require from their local government is stability and a sense of service. Efforts must be made to control property taxes while at the same time taking the necessary steps to prepare for the demands of the future with improved fiscal planning. This requires vision and constraint on the part of elected and appointed officials, as well as the governing body - Town Meeting.

This plan set forth statements and policies intended to improve all aspects of community life. The plan specifically seeks to:

- * Protect property values by guiding development into appropriate areas;
- * Improve the quality and condition of housing;
- * Moderate residential growth so that the Town is able to meet future demand for services;
- * Encourage the creation of permanently protected open spaces, preferably in contiguous parcels;
- * Encourage economic vitality in existing business areas while limiting commercial sprawl;
- * Provide a safe and efficient transportation network which encourages the use of alternative modes of transit such as bicycles and walking;
- * Create a sustainable fiscal climate for local government;
- * Foster a climate of open government, where all interests are invited to the table to discuss

issues to achieve an outcome which will be in the best interests of the community;

I. Population and Demographics

Population Characteristics

Since 1900, Wareham has had a fluctuating rate of population growth. The population has increased in each decade by 7% to 28%, with the exception of the 1971-80 diennial, when growth was more than 60%. The higher growth rate did not continue, however, as the 1981-90 growth rate was 4.2%. The table below shows the trend in population growth, with projections to 2010.

POPULATION GROWTH AND PROJECTIONS, 1900-2010			
YEAR	POPULATION	TOTAL CHANGE	PERCENT CHANGE
1900	3,432		
1910	4,102	670	+19.5
1920	4,415	313	+ 7.6
1930	5,686	1,271	+28.8
1940	6,364	678	+12.0
1950	7,569	1,206	+19.0
1960	9,461	1,891	+25.0
1970	11,492	2,031	+21.6
1980	18,457	6,955	+60.6
1990	19,232	775	+ 4.2
2000*	23,027	3,795	+19.7
2010*	24,099	1,072	+ 4.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

* Projections from SRPEDD, Southeastern Massachusetts Fact Book, October 1993.

Population change can be attributed to natural change (births vs. deaths) and migration. For the 1981-90 diennial, population characteristics show that natural change should have caused a greater population increase than was recorded. In the previous decade (1971-80), Wareham experienced significant in-migration. It appears that the in-migration pattern has changed and the town now experiences net out-migration.

Slow growth over the last decade may be attributed to a variety of economic and social conditions. The most prominent and likely cause was the completion of interstate highway linkage to Cape Cod. The highway by-passed Route 6/28, Wareham's major commercial center,

which caused many businesses to fail and tourists to seek newer destinations further out on Cape Cod.

Other factors which may have contributed to slow growth are the lack of an industrial employment base, Lack of public transportation to urban centers, difficult commute to Boston, and lack of undeveloped land near the ocean.

Ethnicity and Age

From an ethnicity standpoint, Wareham's more closely reflects state populations averages than other communities in the region. In 1990, the minority sector of the population was 11.1%. Most of Wareham's minority residents are of Cape Verde Island ancestry, smaller percentages of other ethnic groups.

Many residents maintain a strong identity with their country of origin. Some groups have annual festivals to celebrate their heritage. In general, this diversity is a benefit to the overall community.

Age characteristics of Wareham's residents closely reflect state averages. The table below shows the population breakdown by age cohort for the town, region, and state.

Percent of Population by Age						
Age Cohort	0-4	5-17	18-24	25-44	45-64	65+
Wareham	8%	17%	8.4%	31%	18.5%	16.7%
SRPEDD	7.1%	17.6%	10.4%	31.7%	18.6%	16.7%
State	6.9%	15.6%	11.8%	33.6%	18.5%	13.6%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census

As can be seen in the table, age distribution in Wareham is almost identical to regional and state figures. The only notable difference is that Wareham appears to have slightly more small children (0-4) and fewer young adults (18-24).

Other data suggests that Wareham's percentage of children may be increasing relative to the region. From 1980 to 1990, Wareham experienced a 22% increase in the number of people in the 0-4 cohort, while the regional increase was only 14.5%. If this trend continues, Wareham will soon have an even higher percentage of children.

Population Centers

Overall, population density in Wareham is low to moderate due to large areas of water space

and to the extensive cranberry lands, although a number of concentrated population pockets exist. West Wareham is basically rural, with scattered subdivisions, as is the Great Neck area and almost all of the town north of Route 495. Wareham Center is a residential village of moderate density.

One area of high density is Onset Village, in which most cottages are situated on lots of a tenth of an acre or smaller. Onset was conceived as a summer colony in the early part of the century, but most dwellings are now occupied year-round. This change has precipitated a need for more municipal services in the area.

Other neighborhoods with fairly high population density include Swifts Beach, Rose Point, Weweantic Shores, Hamilton Beach, Pinehurst, Agawam Beach, Swifts Neck, Tempest Knob, Indian Mound, Briarwood, and Parkwood Beach. The Shangri-La area, situated in the northeast corner of the community, is a large dimensionally-nonconforming subdivision platted in the 1940s. Many of the lots are undeveloped, and the growth potential of the neighborhood is controlled only by the lack of municipal water and sewer.

Seasonal Population

Wareham's experiences a significant population increase each summer. The seasonal population has been estimated at 40,000. In order to see if this figure appears reasonable, a check of housing stock was made.

Wareham has 11,383 housing units, 35% of which are seasonal dwellings. It is generally agreed that summer housing has more people per dwelling unit than the year-round average of 2.61 people per dwelling unit. Using a figure of density figure of 3.5 people/dwelling unit, summer housing would support 13,944 summer residents.

Additional summer population is derived from hotels, motels, and other rental rooms. There are 200 rental rooms in Wareham. Other increases may be caused by room rentals in private homes, which are not licensed or officially reported.

Another source to account for the seasonal population increase is the Maple Springs Campground which has 150 campsites and is essentially full the entire summer.

Summer Overnight Population			
	Units	Persons per Dwelling	Population
Year-round residents	7,399	2.60	19,232
Seasonal homes	3,984	3.50*	13,944
Lodging	200	3.50*	700

Campground	150	3.50*	525
Total Summer Population 33,876			

* Higher occupancy was used for the purposes of estimating the seasonal population.

The above figures are based on 1990 Census data. During the intervening six years to present, the year-round population has increased by approximately 600 people, based on new housing permits. Taking into account a proportional increase in the summer population, the current seasonal population is approximately 35,000.

While it is unlikely that the summer resident population reaches 40,000, there may actually be more people in the town on a given summer day. Wareham is becoming a regional retail center. Many people from surrounding communities come to Wareham to shop or dine. As the seasonal population of other communities increases, the number of shoppers coming to Wareham increases. This *transient factor* creates the perception that Wareham experiences a greater seasonal population increase.

II. Housing Element

A. Introduction

Housing for the citizens of Wareham is the primary component of the tax base, the largest single source of revenue. Conversely, it also generates, through population density, the greatest demand for services - roads, sewers, water, fire protection, police, and schools. Housing also represents the most extensive use of the community's land, and if improperly managed can be a threat to natural resources. The kind of housing which has been and will be built suggests the kind of community which Wareham is or wants to become.

Housing in Wareham historically developed along main roads and in farming areas. As its waterfront resources became attractive, beach communities developed intensively long before the desirability of zoning was recognized, and before infrastructure was in place to support them. Hence, Wareham developed densely clustered beach communities on small lots.

Heavy spurts of growth occurred in the 1930s, '50s, and 70s. Over the past decade, growth has slowed due to an economic recession and the fact that such compact development occurred earlier in easily developable land.

Housing for Wareham's residents is primarily clustered in village and neighborhood areas. In rural sections, most housing is along main roads, with a few units set back into the woods and hidden from view. Slow population growth over the last decade has helped the community maintain a degree of physical character. Future development has the potential to significantly alter the small town "feel" that currently that is prevalent in many of Wareham's areas.

B. Housing Stock Characteristics

Wareham is a suburban community with a higher percentage of lower cost homes than other towns in the region. The mix of housing ranges from large waterfront estates to modest summer cottages to manufactured (mobile) homes. Most housing consists of single family dwellings, though there are a number of apartment buildings and complexes in the community.

The majority of housing in Wareham is owner occupied. According to the 1990 Census, 75.4% of all units were owner-occupied. 24.6% were rental units. Some of the rental units are seasonal rentals, usually from September to June.

Housing Profile		
TYPE OF HOUSING	TOTAL UNITS	PERCENT
Single Family Units	9,032	79.3%
2-4 Units	567	5.0%
5 or More Units	621	5.5%
Manufactured Homes	1,045	9.2%
Other	118	1.0%
TOTAL UNITS	11,383	100.0%

Year-round vs. Seasonal Homes

Census data shows 3,148, or 28% of all housing units in the Town are seasonal units. They are vacant for a majority portion of the year. Anecdotal data suggests that most seasonal residents live within Massachusetts while a smaller portion reside in other states. Seasonal units are those dwellings which were vacant when the Census data was collected. Many retirees are listed as Wareham residents because they live in the town for a majority of the year. Some spend most of the winter in warmer climates, others leave town for only a few weeks. So the number of people residing in Wareham on a given winter day may be less than the Census figure indicates.

In 1988, regulations were adopted on conversions of seasonal homes to year-round dwellings. Approval by the Zoning Board and Board of Health is required prior to the conversion. This measure was adopted to ensure that converted homes meet minimum requirements for winterization, septic system, and kitchen facilities. It appears, however, that many property owners have ignored the regulation and converted dwellings without a permit. To date, fewer than two dozen homes have applied for a conversion permit.

The vacancy rate for dwellings was 10.8% for rental properties, 3.4% for other residential properties. This figure is compatible with state averages.

Age of Housing

Most housing units in Wareham are less than forty years old. 26% of all units were built between 1970 and 1979, the largest age group of Wareham's housing. The chart below shows the relative age of local housing.

Age of Housing Stock		
Year Built	Total Units	Percent
1990-1996	236	2.1%
1980-1989	1,578	13.8%
1970-1979	2,956	25.9%
1960-1969	1,407	12.3%
1950-1959	1,442	12.6%
1940-1949	1,264	11.0%
1939 or earlier	2,530	22.2%
Total Units	11,413	100.0%
Median Year Built - 1963		

Source: 1990 U.S. Census, and subsequent Building Dept. records

Housing Condition

In 1986 and again in 1996, the Community Development Authority conducted a survey of housing conditions throughout the town. A "windshield survey" method was used to categorize all housing units as either good, fair, or poor.

A set of objective criteria were used to make the determination of condition. A dwelling was rated in good condition if there was physical evidence of maintenance, i.e. lawn cut and trimmed, exterior of house in good condition. A fair dwelling was one that was habitable but not well maintained; there were obvious signs of necessary work such as chipped or peeling paint, broken gutters, missing shingles, etc. A house in poor condition had an uninhabitable appearance and in some cases was abandoned. The exterior was dilapidated, windows broken, foundation crumbling, etc.

Both mobile homes and multifamily homes such as apartments and condominiums were judged on the appearance of the entire complex or park as a whole. If the overall appearance was neat and well maintained, every housing unit in the area was judged in good condition. If the area looked as though it could use some physical maintenance and general cleanup but was basically in good shape, then the area was categorized as fair. The area was rated in poor condition if the majority of the units were run down and dilapidated, and appeared uninhabitable. There were several mobile home parks in which it was difficult to make a decision between classifying the area as fair or poor. In these cases half the mobile homes were rated in poor condition and half were rated in fair condition.

The only area omitted from the 1986 and 1996 studies was Onset Island, which could not be easily reached by the survey observers. There are 56 dwelling units on Onset Island. Results of the housing survey are shown below.

Housing Conditions Survey				
	1986		1996	
Condition	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Good	3,672	36.3	4,308	42.2
Fair	5,352	52.9	5,245	51.5
Poor	1,095	10.8	641	6.3
Totals	10,194	100.0	10,119	100.0

Note: Discrepancy in totals is due to the inexact nature of a windshield survey. Attempts were made in both surveys to observe conditions for all units in the town. Although a small percentage of units were omitted, in each case the findings are assumed to be representative of overall housing condition.

According to the survey, the percentage of homes in good condition has increased since 1986. The percentage of homes in fair condition stayed fairly consistent, while there was a reduction in those in poor condition. The condition of Wareham's housing stock is improving.

C. Subsidized Housing

Wareham offers a significant number of subsidized housing units. The Wareham Housing Authority and South Shore Housing Development Corporation operate or provide subsidies for virtually all subsidized housing in the town. Financial support for the programs is through state or federal housing programs.

The chart below lists the subsidized units currently in the community.

Subsidized Housing Units		
NAME OF COMPLEX	SERVICE POPULATION	NUMBER OF UNITS
Agawam Village	Senior	40
Redwood Park	Senior	64
Cromeset Park	Senior	28
Brandy Hill	Low-income	97
Depot Crossing	Low-income	32
Cranberry Manor	Low-income	24
Woods of Wareham	Low-income	78
MRVP (scattered)	Low-income	26
Section 8 (scattered)	Low-income	123
Modular Rehab. Units	Low-Income	3
TOTAL SUBSIDIZED UNITS		515

The chart above shows that 515 of the 7,333 year-round housing units are subsidized. This represents 7% of year-round housing stock.

D. Manufactured Home Parks

Seventeen manufactured or mobile home parks are located in Wareham, more than any other community in the state. Manufactured homes provide a low-cost housing alternative for many residents. In most cases, the dwellings are owned by the tenants and are situated on leased land. Total monthly cost for the home and the land can be as low as \$400/month. They are primarily occupied by senior citizens, though tenants represent all age groups.

One concern about manufactured homes is their fiscal impact to the community. Because the units are not classified as permanent buildings, they are taxed as vehicles. The property tax for the land upon which they sit is set by the state at \$108 per year. This situation forces other taxpayers to carry much of the financial burden for services which are demanded by park tenants. There does not appear to be a simple solution to this on-going

problem.

Many senior residents have utilized the low-cost of a manufactured home as part of their retirement strategy. Until cost-effective housing alternatives are shown to provide similar amenities and quality of life, the interests of manufactured home park residents should be protected.

E. New Dwelling Permits

New Building Permits 1980 - 1995	
Year	Total Units
1980	26
1981	25
1982	32
1983	33
1984	66
1985	208
1986	250
1987	152
1988	142
1989	75
1990	30
1991	45
1992	40
1993	34
1994	49
1995	38
TOTAL FOR PERIOD	1,245
AVERAGE LAST 5 YEARS	47
AVERAGE FOR PERIOD	77

Over the last 15 years, building permits for new homes have fluctuated greatly, from a

low of 25 in 1981 to a high of 250 in 1986. This cycle closely followed regional housing trends, though the peak growth period between 1985 and 1988 showed less growth in Wareham than many nearby communities. Due to the current state of the economy, the Town is experiencing a period of stable growth. There are signs that the economy may be growing again, and if this proves to be the case, new home construction may increase accordingly.

It should be noted that in many cases building permits were issued but the dwellings were not constructed. This was especially true of condominium projects. The nationwide building boom of the mid-1980s had a significant affect on local property values and the real estate speculation market. Wareham's "boom" began later and subsided sooner than the region as a whole¹. A case in point is the Bay Pointe condominium project. Approved in 1987 for 67 units, only 24 were constructed. Recently, a new developer has resurrected the project with hopes of constructing the remaining units in the near future. This may be an indicator that certain sectors of the real estate market are rebounding from the collapse of the early '90s.

F. Housing Costs

The chart below lists the median sales price of housing in Wareham from 1990 to 1996. Over the five year period, acquisition cost of housing decreased by 18.4%, in keeping with statewide trends.

Median Single Family Home Prices		
YEAR	PRICE	% CHANGE
1990	\$98,000	-4.9%
1991	\$90,000	-8.2%
1992	\$89,900	-0.1%
1993	\$80,000	-11.0%
1994	\$85,000	+6.3%
1995	\$78,500	-7.6%
1996 ¹	\$80,000	+1.9%
TOTAL CHANGE		-18.4%

Source: *EOCD Community Profile, 1995.*

1. Sales prices for 1996 are for the first two quarters only.

¹ Anecdotal information based on discussions with Gus Yankopoulos, Community Development Director and generally accepted by the business community.

The above chart of median sales prices does not present a complete picture of housing values. In a slow housing market few homes sell in the higher price levels. Most homeowners in the higher values will hold onto their properties until there is a better market. So, to develop a better understanding of local housing values, the Tax Assessor's values were compared.

In 1995, the average value for a single-family home in Wareham was \$91,900. The valuations are supposed to reflect the actual value of all properties. This data would seem to agree that housing values are higher than sales prices indicate.

Housing Costs Comparison

A comparison of recent housing sales data reveals that the cost of housing in Wareham is significantly lower than in Plymouth County or the state as a whole. The chart below shows median sales prices in 1995:

1995 Home Sales Price Comparison	
Area	Sales Price
Wareham	\$78,500
Plymouth County	\$115,400
Massachusetts	\$126,000

It is readily apparent the cost of a home in Wareham is significantly lower than regional or state averages. Part of this condition can be accounted for by the large number of small summer cottages in Wareham. Year-round homes, too, seem to be somewhat smaller in Wareham than in other communities, though there is no empirical evidence to support this statement. The above factors must be evaluated before one can determine the degree to which "location quotient"² affects local housing values.

G. Affordable Housing

The shortage of reasonably affordable housing is no longer a problem associated with urban areas, but encompasses suburbs and rural areas as well. "Affordable" housing is a relative term. What is affordable depends on one's financial means.

² In this context, location quotient is the proportional values of similar properties based on their proximity to services and the desirability of a community in general. Other factors that affect location quotient include image, social issues, proximity to employment, etc.

Affordable housing is generally considered to be housing which costs no more than 30% of a household's gross income. It applies to all housing options, and may include subsidized or nonsubsidized units. Mobile or manufactured homes are an example of a housing option which is generally available within the affordable cost range. All residents need a place to live which is within their means.

Income distribution in Wareham ranges from less than \$10,000 to over \$100,000. Median household income in 1990 was \$29,428, only 79.6% of the state median. Using this figure for a conventional mortgage (30-year loan at 8% interest, 5% downpayment), the median household can afford to purchase a home costing \$80,500.

The Housing Costs chart shows that in 1990, the cost of the average home sold was \$98,000. This cost was out of reach to the average household. The cost has fluctuated over the last 5 years, and stood at \$80,000 in 1996. Assuming income levels remained stable or rose slightly over the period, the median home is now affordable to the average household.

Household Income Distribution		
Income	# Households	% Population
Less than \$5,000	369	5.0
\$5,000 - \$9,999	842	11.4
\$10,000 - \$24,999	1,805	24.5
\$25,000 - \$34,999	1,359	18.4
\$35,000 - \$49,999	1,310	17.8
\$50,000 - \$74,999	1,096	14.9
\$75,000 - \$99,999	302	4.1
\$100,000 or more	228	3.1
Median Household Income		\$29,428

H. Housing Needs

Future Town housing programs should recognize the importance of balancing development and protecting the Town's village character and natural resources. Town policy allows for density bonuses for multifamily dwelling complexes, even where the area is not

served by public utilities. This has the potential to detract from the rural character of the community, as well as destroy natural resources. Affordable housing should be focused into areas which can accommodate the higher density, and should be designed to be consistent with existing community character and long-range development goals.

The housing repair program administered by the Community Development Authority has helped improve the appearance of the town's housing. To date, 475 homes have been improved through the program. In addition to the units repaired through housing loans, it is suspected that the improvements encourages nearby neighbors to maintain and improve their homes.

Due to the relatively low cost of housing in Wareham, ownership opportunities are available to most households. Many families, however, are unable to save enough money to initiate a purchase. The Town should consider creating a homebuyers assistance program for first-time buyers. Such a program could utilize Community Development funding, and could be structured to eventually create a self-supporting revolving fund. The Community Development Authority has recently begun a mortgage assistance program, called a "silent second", which lowers monthly payments for low-income homebuyers. The homeowner does not have to repay the loan until the property is sold. While different from downpayment assistance, this program has the potential to many households attain homeownership.

Despite the fact that housing is attainable to the average household, certain segments of the population are unable to obtain adequate housing and require assistance. Population groups which have been identified include senior citizens, disabled people, and low-income residents.

Senior Citizens

Input received from social agencies revealed a strong desire to develop better housing opportunities for Wareham's senior citizens. Wareham has a higher senior citizen component than other communities in the region, yet there are few residential facilities which cater to the senior population.

Agawam Village and Redwood Park supply 104 dwelling units for seniors. Redwood Park is constrained in its ability to serve seniors by the fact that many of the units are located on the second level. Many senior citizens have difficulty climbing stairs, and second floor apartments could exclude them from housing opportunities.

Cromesset Park is a new senior housing complex which offers rental units on a sliding-fee basis, according to income level. The facility is comprised of 28 dwelling units, which are subsidized through a low-interest loan from the Farmer's Home Administration. All units contain one bedroom.

The Town currently has three nursing homes. Because such facilities are often

occupied to capacity, residents who need this type of care may be forced to go elsewhere. Current zoning allows for this type of facility in most of the residential districts. Since the need for this type of facility has been identified by the community, the Town may wish to encourage the future development of additional nursing or rest homes in areas served by public utilities.

Disabled

Very few, if any of Wareham's supported housing units are accessible to people with disabilities. The Wareham Housing Authority has expressed a desire to bring more of its units up to the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), but has thusfar been unable to secure funding.

Low-Income

Approximately 7.0% of Wareham's 7,333 year-round occupied dwelling units are subsidized. This figure is below the 10% threshold required by state law. Because the community fails to provide sufficient subsidized housing, developers can essentially force the Town to approve any project which will provide supported housing.

It has been the contention of Town officials for some time that Wareham meets the 10% "affordable" requirement because of its large number of manufactured housing units. The State does not recognize manufactured housing as permanent, although many manufactured units in the community are more than 30 years old. If the 1,045 units were counted toward the requirement, more than 20% of local housing would be "affordable". The Town should continue to petition the state to accept manufactured housing as part of each community's supply of affordable housing. In terms of providing low-cost housing opportunities, Wareham is ahead of most other communities in the region. The Town should continue to petition its legislators to pursue means of relieving the Town of the 10% requirement.

I. Other Programs to Meet Housing Needs

Housing Assistance

Housing assistance is available in many forms through a number of governmental and social service agencies. The Town of Wareham has a Fair Housing Committee which deals directly with equity issues in regard to the availability of housing opportunities.

The Housing Authority currently operates state-subsidized Agawam Village and Redwood Park. They also administrate 26 MRVP and 45 Section-8 subsidies at scattered sites throughout the community.

South Shore Housing Development Corporation manages Depot Crossing and Cranberry Manor apartments. They administer 78 additional units under Section-8 and have provided for 3 additional units through the federal rental rehabilitation program.

The Community Development Authority provides referral services for numerous housing programs. They also administer the Town's housing rehabilitation program, which provides low-interest loans to qualified homeowners for home repairs and maintenance. More than 475 loans have been completed since the program began in 1982, with the total loan amount being more than \$2 million.

CDA participates with selected area banks in offering the MHFA "soft-second" mortgage program. The soft-second mortgage assists qualified buyers in purchasing a home which they could otherwise not afford. The soft-second mortgage subsidizes the loan interest to reduce the buyer's monthly mortgage payment. It is expected that many households in Wareham will have opportunity to utilize this program to achieve homeownership. The new program has thusfar been utilized by two households to purchase a home.

Accessory Apartments

In recent years, many communities have considered the merits of permitting accessory apartments as a way of increasing the supply of affordable housing. An accessory apartment is defined in the Zoning Bylaw as a second dwelling unit within a structure originally occupied as a single-family dwelling unit in a manner that maintains the appearance of the structure as a single-family home. They are often referred to as in-law apartments. Currently, Wareham permits accessory apartments only in the MR-30 Zoning District, and only by special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

In 1990, an article was sent to the Town Meeting to consider allowing accessory apartments in Wareham. The article would have limited the units to 40% of the overall floor space, and enacted other restrictions to reduce the impact of the apartments on nearby residences. The article was rejected by a majority of voters.

In considering the accessory apartment question, many issues are raised, including residential density, fiscal impacts, health impacts (in homes with septic systems), and increased traffic, and property values. Any future discussion of allowing accessory apartments must address the above issues.

J. Preservation, Improvement, Development

Wareham should continue efforts to improve and maintain existing housing stock while simultaneously making efforts to stimulate the production of higher priced homes. The community's seaside location makes it an attractive place for a summer home or year-round home. The addition of upper-end housing will help restore the balance of housing types and

help stabilize the tax base.

K. Housing - Community Goals, Policies, and Recommendations

Community Goals

1. To recognize the enormous long-term impacts of new housing development, and to take measures to balance growth with fiscal impacts, and to focus growth into appropriate areas.
2. To maintain Wareham as a diversified community that provides housing opportunities for all residents regardless of age, income, ethnic origin, or ability.
3. To create a balance in the community of housing types, levels, and values;
4. To promote the provision of fair, decent, safe, affordable housing for rental and purchase that meets the needs of Wareham residents;
- add → 5. To improve the physical condition and attractiveness of the existing housing stock and property.

Policies

1. Focus housing programs on meeting the needs of current Wareham residents.
2. Improve zoning policies in Onset and Wareham villages to allow a mix of housing and commercial development while preserving residential neighborhoods.
3. Severely limit the potential for new multifamily dwellings in the town.
4. Develop appropriate responses to the issues associated with manufactured (mobile) home parks.

Recommendations for Implementation:

Actions

1. Continue to improve quality of housing stock through an expanded home repair program.
2. Community Development Office should investigate additional resources for improving the condition of housing, just as silent mortgages and soft second have been created.
3. Continue a homeownership program to assist long-term residents who are first-time homebuyers.

4. Limit the number of manufactured housing units (mobile homes) within the Town to that which currently exists.
5. Petition the state to count manufactured homes in calculating Wareham's percent of affordable housing.
6. Consider methods to phase out existing manufactured home parks in dense commercial areas.
7. Encourage the development of additional housing for senior citizens and disabled people, and make efforts to make them available primarily to Wareham residents.
8. Reduce the potential for multifamily dwellings and apartments in inappropriate areas, such as those areas not served by public water and sewer services.
9. Town should create bylaws to limit the proliferation of motels being used as apartments, as this use was not intended and has deleterious effects upon the community.
10. Investigate policies to encourage high-quality new homes in the community to correct the radical imbalance in the housing mix and enhance the image and overall attractiveness of the community.
11. Consider adopting design guidelines for new infill housing in Onset and Wareham villages which will maintain a consistency with the prevailing architectural styles in the areas.
- * 12. Identify abandoned buildings and adopt a bylaw to regulate these properties which blight an area and discourage new investment. Bylaw should provide administrative guidelines and enforcement authority.
13. Improve enforcement of seasonal-conversions to eliminate illegal conversions and improve the quality of housing and valuation/assessment, and initiate a retro-active code & permit enforcement program.
14. Town should commission an external evaluation of the Town Building Code to:

STATE
Code

 - A. Encourage renovation and expansion existing dwellings as opposed to new construction;
 - B. Upgrade minimum local codes for new residential construction, including community design standards, to enhance visual attractiveness but not require architectural uniformity.

15. Town should request that SRPEDD survey all Cape Cod and SE Mass. shore communities with the objective of achieving a comprehensive understanding of their housing management issues and procedures, and identifying successful programs which could be adapted for local implementation.

Zoning Bylaw Amendments

1. Maintain the R-130 Zoning District to restrict further housing development within the public water supply watershed.
2. Rezone MR-30 District to R-30 District in areas which are not currently connected to municipal water and sewer services.
3. Eliminate density bonuses, which encourage higher residential density than is allowed for conventional developments, for multifamily dwellings and cluster developments.
4. Increase lot size requirements in West and South Wareham to R-60 or R-130 as appropriate.
5. Investigate the impacts of allowing accessory apartments in residential areas.
6. Prohibit new manufactured home parks in all zoning districts.
7. Provide incentives to convert manufactured home parks to permanent housing for seniors and disabled residents.
8. Allow mixed-use in village commercial zoning districts by right, and encourage use of the first floor for business to maintain a balance of business and residential uses.
9. Alter the Cluster Development section of the bylaw to encourage high-quality, single-family cluster development without density bonuses and require significant protection of open space.
10. Restrict residential development in federally designated flood-prone areas.

III. Land Use

A. Introduction

An important part of a comprehensive plan is an evaluation of the patterns of land use and development. Land use policies determine the nature of a community. A land use inventory identifies past trends, areas of incompatible or conflicting land uses, areas where future growth is likely to occur, areas where growth is suitable, and areas which should be protected from future growth. All these factors, as well as others, provide valuable information for future planning.

Historical Perspective

The Town of Wareham is a medium-sized community consisting of approximately 23,940 acres of land, or 37 square miles. The Town has a diverse land use pattern, from the dense suburban center of Wareham to the pastoral settings of the cranberry industry to the summer colonies located sporadically along the shoreline.

The Town has a long shorefront for its area. The 57+ miles of coastline are more than any other community in Massachusetts. Water access has played an important role in Wareham's development from its initial settlement to the present. Early shipbuilding and fisheries industries were directly water-dependent, while others such as salt works and iron products, were viable because of ready access to water transportation. It must be pointed out that most shorefront property remains in private ownership, and access to the shoreline is limited.

The overall development pattern reflects the Town's close ties to the sea. Residential development has taken place primarily along the shore. Many beach areas were developed for summer homes, most with lots sizes smaller than would be allowed under present regulations, with very small yards. The largest concentrations of development in these areas have occurred in the Swifts Beach area (856 homes), Indian Mound Beach (461), Parkwood (320), Pinehurst (238), Rose Point (200), Weweantic Shores (199) and Briarwood (133). Onset village was originally developed as a religious retreat community and currently contains 1,310 homes.

Inland there are several developed areas of large size, including the Shangri-La area (833 homes), Aga-Pine area (208), Pine Tree Estates (187), and Westfield (107).

Historically, the important commercial center of the town was downtown Wareham. As the town grew, commerce on Cranberry Highway surpassed the village center and today dominates the commercial activity of the community. Cranberry Plaza on Route 28 is the center of commercial activity with many new businesses attracting shoppers from a regional market.



Current Land

Legend	
	Water
	Cemetery
	Institutional
	Vacant Land
	Industrial
	Commercial
	Residential
	Government
	Agricultural
	Marine



4000 Feet



Land Use Pattern

Wareham has a diversity of land use. The percentages of land use are as follows:

Total Land Use

<u>Category</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Agricultural	5,064 Ac.	25.0%
Vacant	4,777 Ac.	23.6%
Single-family residential	3,967 Ac.	19.7%
Government Land	1,790 Ac.	8.8%
Chapter Lands	761 Ac.	3.8%
Institutional/ Tax Exempt	695 Ac.	3.4%
Multi-family residential	610 Ac.	3.0%
Commercial	540 Ac.	2.6%
Industrial	166 Ac.	0.8%
Other *	1,885 Ac.	9.3%

100.0%

* - This category is comprised of streets, rights-of-way, utility easements, inland water bodies, and other similar features.

A large portion of the undeveloped area is wetland subject to the constraints the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act. Any activity within 100 feet of a wetland must be approved by the Conservation Commission.

Residential Development

A review of current land use shows that Wareham has a highly diverse mix of housing types. While the predominant form of housing is single-family residential, there are also many forms of multifamily housing available to residents. Below is a breakdown of the residential types (based on 1997 Tax Assessors records):

<u>Type of Dwelling</u>	<u>Number of Units</u>
Single-family home	8,663
Manufactured homes	1,045 (17 parks)
Two-family homes	181
Three+ family/Apts.	73
Motels	19 (# units unknown)

1990 U.S. Census figures show that 34.5% of the total housing units were seasonal.

Commercial Land Use

There are more than 300 individual business properties located in the town, many with

multiple tenants. 42 of the businesses are classified as restaurants, most of the remainder being retail or office. Commercial activity is concentrated on the east end of Cranberry Highway, with lower concentrations of businesses found in Wareham center, Onset, and on Cranberry Highway west of the industrial parks.

Although Cranberry Highway remains the center of business activity, there is visible evidence of the economic decline brought about by the opening of Route 25. Economic conditions are apparent in poorly maintained properties, abandoned buildings, garish or makeshift signage, and general lack of investment. It appears that the area is in transition from a tourist economy to a local/regional based economy. Success of economic revitalization of Cranberry Highway is dependent upon the appropriateness of new businesses which come in.

Economic decline of Cranberry Highway began before Route 25 opened because of enormously high volume of traffic. Areas of Cranberry Highway have improved because Route 25 opened, allowing for less congestion on Route 6 & 28 and greater accessibility (safety) for businesses. "Eyesore" properties are either left over from earlier economic decline (not recent) or are businesses that catered to the high traffic volume (tourist oriented, fast-food) and are not substantive businesses for this location.

There are still many land uses on the "strip" that appear to be of marginal economic viability. New investment is needed to modernize existing buildings and improve the attractiveness of the area. A major reconstruction of the highway is planned for the near future, which will improve traffic safety and hopefully contribute to a better climate for business.

Analysis of land use in the Strip Commercial district along Cranberry Highway reveals the following:

Cranberry Highway Land Use by Parcel

<u>Type of Use</u>	<u>Number of Uses</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Single Family Home	289	33.0%
Other Housing	42	4.8%
Businesses	161	18.5%
Industrial Uses	7	0.8%
Agriculture	18	2.0%
Gov't owned	50	5.7%
<u>Vacant</u>	<u>308</u>	<u>35.2%</u>
Total	875	100.0%

It is clear from the above breakdown that there is considerable potential for commercial growth along Cranberry Highway. Residential and vacant properties comprise more than two-thirds of the total parcels in the commercial district. Conversion of residential

properties and development of vacant land has the potential to significantly alter the commercial makeup and character of the town.

Wareham's residential buildout potential could double the current population (see Buildout Analysis in this chapter). Commercially zoned land will be more than sufficient to accommodate the increased market that comes with residential growth. Wareham has an overabundance of land zoned for commercial purposes. Having excess commercial land will lead to a sprawling type of development with no central place or places. This will mean that businesses must spread out and will impact more residential areas than if they were clustered in a few distinct locations.

Therefore, areas along the highway which are still residential in character should be considered for rezoning to refocus commercial development potential. Also, focusing future commercial growth on specific areas may make commercial properties more attractive for development.

Other areas of the town which have significant levels of commercial activity are Onset and downtown Wareham. In recent years, the villages have had difficulty competing with businesses on Cranberry Highway. Each village has many vacant or underutilized commercial properties. The Onset Bay Association and the Wareham Village Association are dedicated to attracting desirable and appropriate economic activities to the villages. The development of large shopping malls within easy commuting distance has also affected the mix and viability of local business.

Agriculture

In terms of area, the predominant land use category in the town is agriculture, i.e. the cranberry industry. More than 7,500 acres (31.3%) of the Town's 23,940 are held by agricultural interests. Huge tracts of land, primarily in West Wareham or north of Route 495/25, are used for cranberry production. Approximately one-fifth of the cranberry growers' land is used for actual cranberry bogs, while the rest serves as an open space buffer and support area.

None of the agricultural land is permanently protected from development. Under Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B of MGL, owners receive substantial tax relief for agreeing to withhold their lands from development on a temporary basis. A declining tax penalty is assessed for development within 10 years of land being placed in the program, after which the owner may take the property out of the program and pay five years of role-back taxes.

Overall, permanent protection exists on only 3.7% of the total land area of the Town, less than any other town in the Buzzards Bay watershed. Most vacant land is potentially developable in the future. It is vitally important to the stability of the Town that it regulate the level and pace of future growth and seek to limit overall growth by acquiring land as

permanent open space. Uncontrolled residential development creates burdens on public services, especially schools, and often is not supported with adequate infrastructure (i.e. public sewer & water).

Methods for conserving agricultural lands include those mentioned in the Open Space/Conservation chapter, as well as lesser known techniques. Transfer of Development Rights is one such tool which would allow greater densities in a "Receiving District" in exchange for removing development rights from a "Sending District". This tool has been used successfully in other communities, but would require a change in the Zoning Bylaws and a Receiving District would have to be designated.

Publicly Owned/Tax Exempt Land

The Town of Wareham owns 358 parcels of land totalling 948 acres. Many of the parcels are very small increments of land taken for utility or public works purposes. The Town also owns many parcels acquired through tax foreclosures, most of which are unusable due to environmental constraints. The largest tract of undeveloped Town land is found in the Minot Forest off Indian Neck Road.

Other tax exempt properties are owned by other governmental authorities or by private non-profit entities. The largest tracts of land held by non-profits include the seminary on Great Neck, the RLDS campground on Onset Avenue, and scattered conservation lands of the Audubon Society or Southeastern Massachusetts Wildlands Trust.

B. Land Areas

Wareham can be categorized as having five different types of land areas. These areas have distinctive characteristics, and represent some of the features which make Wareham a unique place. The categories are the villages, commercial strip, residential areas, agriculture areas, and industrial pockets.

Villages

There are several villages in the town. Downtown Wareham and Onset are the major village centers, each containing commercial operations as well as a mix of residential types - single family homes, duplexes, and apartments. Other historic villages of note are Tremont in West Wareham, East Wareham at Depot Street, and Tihonet on the Makepeace property.

Wareham and Onset villages play important roles in the community. They are focal points for community functions and seasonal events. Commercial activity has suffered from competition with Cranberry Highway, but most residents still consider one of the villages as the "central place" in their town.

The villages are supported by public water and sewer services.

Wareham Village

Wareham Village contains the Main Street business area, Tobey Hospital, an historic waterfront, and many homes and professional offices. The area is zoned to allow a diverse mix of uses associated with a small village. Commercial businesses are permitted by right, and multifamily residential uses require a Special Permit. New development in the Main Street business area is constrained by parking limitations, as the historic area was developed well before automobiles were invented.

Outside the downtown business district, Wareham Village contains considerable office space, much of which is associated with the medical profession. The remainder of the land is used for residential purposes.

Today, though the traffic level is quite high, there are a number of vacant business properties on Main Street. Through-traffic creates problems for residents. Efforts by the new Wareham Village Association to revitalize the downtown began in 1996, and it is unknown as to how significant a role they will play in defining the downtown's future character.

Onset Village

Onset was developed as a seasonal religious camp in the late 1800s. The area was laid out in grids of small house lots, with communal beaches and parks throughout. Evidence of the area's past as a tourist mecca can be seen today in the Victorian homes and tightly clustered shops along Onset Avenue.

Today, a key focal points are the Onset Pier and Town Common. The Independence Day Fireworks, the Festival of Lights, and summer band concerts attract large crowds of residents and visitors.

New development in Onset is encouraged by two organizations, the Onset Protective League (OPL) and the Onset Bay Association (OBA). The OBA is business-oriented and concerned with encouraging appropriate new development in the village. The OPL is an organization formed around the so-called 1916 Decree, a judicial ruling which preserved the bluffs and other public areas for the use and benefit of the public in perpetuity. OPL members take an active role in advocating for land use policies which are in harmony with the Decree.

The Onset Bay Association is a non-profit agency which works to improve the business and community climate of Onset. OBA efforts include business facade improvements, home improvement loans, and marketing/promotion. The OBA is currently engaged in a streetscape improvement project for Onset Avenue, which would improve pedestrian access and enhance the attractiveness of the village.

Commercial Strip

The major commercial area in Wareham is located along Cranberry Highway. Although commercial zoning extends the length of the town, most of the businesses are located between the by-pass and the Bourne town line. This route was once a through route to Cape Cod, and has seen the rise and fall of seasonal businesses which relied on Cape-bound traffic for their customer base. The business area declined when Route 25 was completed, but has begun to rebound as a retail area.

Many of the properties along the "strip" show the effects of the economic decline caused by the Route 25 bypass.

Residential Neighborhoods

Wareham contains a number of densely settled neighborhoods, many of which predate zoning regulations and subdivision control laws. The large neighborhoods include Swifts Beach, Rose Point, Weweantic Shores, Indian Mound Beach, and the Shangri-La area. These areas have lot sizes which are significantly less than the current lot size requirements.

Setback requirements in residential districts are 20 feet in the front, 10 feet on the sides and rear. While this may be appropriate in areas with smaller lots, it is too permissive where lot sizes are more than one acre. The Planning Board should review setback requirements and set reasonable standards based on lot sizes.

Wareham has no lot coverage limitations. Theoretically, a property owner could construct a building which covers the entire area of the lot inside the setbacks. Excessive impervious lot coverage increases the effects of flooding because stormwater cannot filter into the ground, and may have an adverse affect on neighboring property values. In order to protect property values and improve future development, limits should be set on impervious surfaces.

Agricultural Areas

More than 30% of the town's land area is owned by cranberry growers. Nearly all of the land north of Route 495/25 is used for cranberry production.

The current ratio of cranberry property to active bogs is 4:1. This means that for every acre of cranberry bog, there are four acres of surrounding land owned by the grower. Much of the surrounding land is unprotected and could be developed in the future.

The largest single grower in Wareham is A.D. Makepeace Company, which owns more than 3,000 acres of land.

Industrial Land

Industrial uses are primarily clustered along Route 28 west of Interstate 195. There are two industrial parks. Phase I is nearly filled, while Phase II is less than half filled. The acreage of the two parks is 136 acres of land, of which 48 are currently being used (35%). In terms of total industrial land, 411 acres of land are designated in the Industrial district. There appears to be ample industrially zoned land to meet the needs of the foreseeable future.

The largest piece of contiguous industrial land is the Bliss property on Tobey Road. This 134 acre parcel has tremendous potential for industrial development that could benefit the residents of the community. The property is controlled by the Bliss Family Trust. The Town should make every effort to ensure that whatever business eventually occupies the property is one which is environmentally sound and will provide high-quality jobs and generate positive tax revenue for the Town.

While the industrial parks have been fairly successful in attracting businesses, some residents argue that the economic improvement envisioned when they were created has not been realized. Wareham sits at the junction of two interstate highways, between Boston, Providence, and Cape Cod. It would seem that this should be an attractive location for wholesale product distribution and corporate headquarters, but this has not happened. Perhaps it is time to evaluate the course pursued thus far, and determine how the industrial parks can attract high-quality businesses which will generate higher paying jobs and contribute to the overall betterment of the community.

C. Land Use Issues & Dilemmas

Poorly conceived land use patterns and practices cause systemic problems and nuisances for residents and businesses. Virtually every community contains certain uses or practices which are counterproductive to the interests of residents. More often than not, the problems are long-standing, having evolved over a long period of time or having been initiated prior to the adoption of adequate regulations. Below is a compilation of many of the land use issues which are present in Wareham.

Condition of the commercial strip on Cranberry Highway -

The decline of businesses along Cranberry Highway as a result of the completion of Route 25 is well-documented. In 1997, ten years after Route 25 opened, the business strip still contains numerous businesses which are in poor condition. Many properties are abandoned or filled with marginal businesses.

Cranberry Highway is the economic center of Wareham. The Town should pursue a course of action to encourage redevelopment of dilapidated properties, as well as preventing further deterioration of the vitally strategic commercial resource.

Signs -

The Sign Regulations are highly permissive, allowing up to 120 square feet of signage in the Strip Commercial district. No guidance is provided on the type of sign desired or the lighting method. This leads to a haphazard appearance of signs in the town, which on the whole is detrimental to the attractiveness of the commercial strip and bad for business.

Businesses use signs to compete for the attention of potential customers. As such, a similar business will want a sign that is *at least* as noticeable as his competitors' signs. The outcome is that businesses will compete at whatever maximum limit the Town sets for signage.

A uniform sign code would allow for new signs to create a pattern and organization overall that would become a characteristic of the business community in Wareham. Efforts should be made by the Town and the business community to investigate the size and type of signs needed on Cranberry Highway and elsewhere to better serve the long-term interests of the community.

Manufactured Housing -

As stated in the Housing chapter of this Plan, Wareham has a large number of manufactured home parks. The parks offer a low-cost housing alternative to more than 1,000 households in the town. The locations of some of the parks on Cranberry Highway is poor, with several older parks situated in the middle of the business strip. The appearance of some parks is very poor, detracting from the business climate of the area and overall property values within the town.

Efforts should be made to phase out the parks located directly in the center of the commercial strip. The high number of units available are more than enough to serve the needs of the population, and this Plan recommends that no new parks be allowed in the community.

Pre-existing subdivisions of small lots -

Wareham contains a large number of individual parcels for its land area. The 14,000+ parcels are equivalent to that of a small city. This situation is primarily derived from dense pre-Zoning subdivision platting in the early part of this century. Lot sizes in areas such as Swifts Beach and Onset average less than 5,000 square feet. There are scattered lots that can be found in the 1,100 square foot range.

Lots which existed prior to Zoning are legally protected under Massachusetts law. This protection allows building construction on protected lots which contain 5,000 square feet and 50 feet of street frontage. Smaller lots may be deemed "buildable" if they are approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Because there are so many vacant lots in existence, the Town is to a great extent unable to properly regulate growth and development. These circumstances constitute a

potential catastrophic deterrent to beneficial long-term growth.

Density bonuses for multifamily units -

The Town's zoning regulations permit density bonuses for housing which meets certain desirable criteria, such as affordable housing, traffic mitigation, vegetative buffering. Density bonuses allow development to occur at a higher rate than is allowed for conventional (single-family) development, and incur relatively higher service demands.

In order to protect property values and foster sound fiscal conditions, density bonuses should be eliminated from the Zoning Bylaws. The clustering of dwelling units in a subdivision serves the public purpose of protecting open space, and reduces infrastructure costs for the developer initially and the Town long-term. The Town's best interests are not served by allowing density bonuses.

Infrastructure Availability -

Steps should be planned to direct future growth into areas which are served by adequate infrastructure. Marion Road, for example, is a four-lane highway which is served by public water and sewer (completion date for sewer is 1999). Most parcels along the road are in a residential zoning district. There are currently 10 nonconforming commercial uses on Marion Road. Since the services are available, the Town should consider adopting a limited commercial zoning district for the area.

Appropriate Siting of Buildings -

Much of Wareham as it exists today was developed prior to enactment of modern growth control regulations. As such, many buildings and uses are located in inappropriate areas. Among the problems are homes built in flood plains, neighborhoods with high groundwater tables, beach areas lacking drainage facilities, wetland encroachment, house lots too small for sanitary facilities, and commercial buildings in residential neighborhoods.

Development which was the result of poor planning practices in the past can not be easily corrected. The Town must accept that the existing land use pattern is not ideal, and propose policies which will minimize adverse impacts of such conditions on the health, safety, and welfare of its residents.



Zoning Map

Legend

- Row
- Boundary
- Zoning Districts
- Conference Rec
- Strip Commerci
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Marine
- Multi-residential
- Onset Business
- Onset Village R
- Residential - 131
- Residential - 30
- Residential - 43
- Residential - 60
- Wareham Villag



5000 Feet
0

D. Land Use Consistency with Current Zoning

Land Use and Zoning

Zoning regulations dictate where and how development can occur in the future, residential or commercial. The Town's zoning regulations provide 13 zoning districts, 6 of which are residential. The districts are listed below:

<u>District</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Residential R-130	6,511	27.6
Residential R-60	8,240	34.9
Residential R-43	233	1.0
Residential R-30	2,257	9.6
Multiple Residential MR-30	4,075	17.2
Onset Village Commercial	39	0.2
Onset Village Residential	231	1.0
Wareham Village	63	0.3
Strip Commercial	1,243	5.3
Conference Recreational	143	0.6
Marine	62	0.3
Institutional	5	0.0
<u>Industrial</u>	<u>517</u>	<u>2.2</u>
Total	23,619	100.00

Nonconforming Uses

Conflicts arise when land use is inconsistent with the district in which it is located. Commercial uses in residential districts which were legally in existence at the time the Zoning Bylaws were adopted are considered nonconforming uses, and are allowed to continue operations. Many communities attempt to phase out such uses by prohibiting the enlargement or extension of the use. Wareham's Bylaws allow expansion of nonconforming uses by a finding of the Zoning Board of appeals that the change will not result in harm to the neighborhood.

In general, land uses are in compliance with the Zoning Bylaws. Scattered commercial uses exist in certain residential areas, such as Swifts Beach where there are five "grandfathered" businesses.

Another area where nonconforming commercial uses are prevalent is along Marion Road. This 2 mile stretch contains 10 business properties located in a residential zoning district. In past years, a petition to rezone a portion of the area surrounding the Country Market has been soundly defeated. Unless the opinions of residents change, the area will remain a residential district and the commercial uses will continue their legal, nonconforming

status.

In general, land use problems which have arisen have been rooted primarily by the Bylaws themselves. Wareham Zoning Bylaws are highly permissive, allowing a variety of districts in which specific uses can be located. The language of the Bylaws is often vague and difficult to interpret. This causes inconsistent administration and enforcement, even by well-meaning town officials. A well crafted bylaw should be easy to read and understand, and should direct growth into areas desirable to the community's residents. Even if no changes in growth regulations are proposed, Wareham's Zoning Bylaws should be rewritten for clarity and overall readability.

Cranberry Highway

One example of land use inconsistencies is where residential dwellings are located in commercial districts. On Cranberry Highway, for example, there are numerous examples of residential homes directly adjacent to commercial uses. There is no simple way to resolve this conflict. If the property is "down-zoned" to residential, the commercial property owner would be restricted as to what he could do with his property, as it would have a nonconforming status. If commercial zoning is retained, homeowners in the commercial district will be subjected to businesses being established in close proximity to their dwellings.

Although Cranberry Highway is zoned as Strip Commercial for virtually its entire length, there are several pockets in West Wareham of residential homes which have not yet been impacted by commercial development. This zoning scheme encourages sprawling development in a haphazard pattern. A well-planned commercial district should be distinct, with an identifiable beginning and end.

The Community Development Authority estimates that there is at least a third more commercial property than the Town could possibly need in the future. In areas along the west end of the highway where residential uses are still predominant, the Town should consider rezoning the areas to a residential or limited form of commercial zoning. The Strip Commercial area east of Depot Street should remain in the same district.

A new Commercial Limited district should allow non-retail commercial businesses which are needed in the community but are incompatible with retail uses. Such uses should be properly buffered from residential areas and/or hidden from direct view. These uses could include the following:

fuel storage & sales	construction suppliers
boatbuilding shops	professional offices
sand & gravel business	vehicle & boat storage
hotels & motels	

By restricting retail activity to the east end of Cranberry Highway, it will encourage a core retail shopping area. Major commercial development should be directed in the area east

of Depot Street along Cranberry Highway. Tremendous infrastructure investment has taken place to support growth far into the future. The area is already highly developed, but many of the businesses are outdated and will soon need to be replaced. The Town must limit the commercial potential along west end of Cranberry Highway if it hopes to encourage redevelopment of marginal or abandoned properties in the strip area.

Existing Residential Uses

According to the 1990 Census, there were 7,333 occupied dwelling units in the town in 1990. Most are located in the areas which were subdivided prior to the enactment of zoning regulations. Older subdivisions generally have lot sizes that are smaller than would be allowed under present regulations. In many cases, lot sizes average less than 5,000 square feet. This type of land use requires public water and sewer service in order to maintain a healthful living environment, and constitutes an extraordinarily heavy future infrastructure expense burden.

Subdivision activity in the town has been minimal over the last five years. The economic downturn of the early 1990s caused a dramatic decline in the real estate market. Recently, there has been more interest in new subdivisions, as well as resurrecting older subdivisions which are still active.

Although most existing neighborhoods are clustered near the center of the town, there are still many large tracts of land which could support significant subdivision developments. Notably, rural areas of West Wareham and Great Neck are becoming more desirable to new home buyers, and have the potential to see significant residential growth. The Town should consider methods of attenuating future growth, so that the community is able to retain its character and provide for increased demand for public services from a growing population.

E. Buildout Analysis

A build-out analysis is an estimate of the community's potential growth based on existing zoning and land development regulations. It is a useful tool to assist a community in projecting the amount of residential growth which could occur in the community in the future. It is up to the members of the community to decide if they approve what can happen in the future. Town officials can then respond with appropriate growth-directing measures to better serve the long-term wishes of the residents.

A build-out analysis can also be used to evaluate the impact of a proposed zoning or other regulatory change.

This report attempts to project the number of building lots which could potentially be created in Wareham. The analysis relies on several assumptions, 3 of which are detailed below:

1. The Zoning Bylaws remain as they exist today, with reference to the Map and minimum lot size requirements.
2. In a given tract of land, 15% of the developable area will be allotted for infrastructure (roads, sidewalks, utilities).
3. Other building constraints will reduce the buildable area by an additional 10%, such as slope, poor soil conditions, Rivers Act requirements, proximity to incompatible land uses.

Two sets of queries were run for the build-out analysis. The first involved making a straightforward application of the town's Zoning Bylaws. The second used a newly derived set of parcel shapes which deducted wetlands from the land before applying the zoning.

Existing Parcels

There are currently 14,371 separate parcels listed in the Tax Assessors' data base. 9,000 are used for residential purposes, 600 for business, and 469 are owned by governmental entities. This leaves just over 4,300 vacant parcels.

Any vacant parcel which is protected as a "grandfathered" lot is a potentially buildable parcel. The Assessing Department is in the process of merging unprotected undersized lots. When this process is completed a better estimate of the number of vacant house lots existing in the Town can be derived. For the purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that up to 2/3 of the vacant parcels, or 2,800 lots may be buildable.

Parcel Inquiry Method

The first set of inquiries made a direct calculation of potential lots based exclusively on the area of each parcel relative to its zoning district. For instance, a 120,000 square foot lot in the R-30 District would have a potential for 4 lots. A lot with 119,000 square feet, however, would have the potential for only 3 lots, since that is the maximum number of legal lots that could be created.

For this calculation, all parcels in the town were matched with their associated zoning requirements, i.e. minimum lot size. The size of the parcel was corrected to account for roads and wetlands. Wetlands comprise 22.4% of the land mass. Because the existing subdivision regulations allow wetland areas to be divided as parts of the new lots, only half of the wetland percentage was subtracted from the total area.

Total size of parcel	100%
less infrastructure	- 15%
less 50% of wetlands	- 11%
Area available for Development	= 74%

The remaining area was then divided by the minimum lot size to determine the number of potential new lots. Only parcels with an area at least twice the minimum size were considered as having the potential for subdivision.

Below is a calculation of the potential number of new parcels which could be created under the existing Zoning Bylaws, based on the parcel approach.

Gross potential:	8,649
less number of divisible lots:	882
Total number of potential new lots	7,767 (Parcel Method)

Wetland Polygon Method

To apply wetland information to the build-out question, a new set of parcel shapes was created by overlaying the wetland coverage with the parcel coverage. Wherever a wetland intersected a parcel, the initial two polygons were changed into three - the parcel, the wetland, and the new "wetland-in-the-parcel" polygon. This resulted in a lower overall build-out estimate because wetland areas were entirely removed prior to calculating the number of potential lots.

The wetlands-based build-out is as follows:

Gross potential	5,860
less number of lots that can be divided	720
Total Number of potential new lots	5,140 (Wetland Polygon Method)

Comparison of the Buildout Methods

Both the parcel method and the wetland polygon method provide an imprecise projection of total potential house lots in Wareham. The parcel method is higher than reality because it only accounts for the community's substantial wetland areas by subtracting a percentage of the area - it fails to assess the wetland area of each parcel individually.

The wetland polygon method subtracts all wetland areas from the each parcel before

performing a build-out calculation. This parcel-by-parcel approach deals with each parcel based on the true wetland area found on the parcel. However, the Town's Subdivision Regulations allow wetland areas to be divided as part of a subdivision, provided each lot has at least 80% of the minimum lot requirement as upland. Taking this factor into consideration, the findings from the wetland method may be slightly lower than the actual build-out potential. However, this factor is tempered by the many odd lot configurations which would cause the estimate to be slightly higher than actual build-out.

Due to the above considerations, the more accurate estimation of the new lot potential of the Town is probably slightly higher than 5,140. For the purposes of estimating future population growth, the 6,000 figure will be used.

Impact of Cranberry Lands on Future Growth

Cranberry growers account for the largest component of the community's open lands. There are more than 1,500 acres of cranberry bogs in Wareham, with growers retaining ownership to an additional 6,000± acres of associated upland and wetland surrounding the growing areas. Cranberry lands total approximately 7,500 acres in the Town, more than 30% of the total area.

Below is the build-out potential of all cranberry-associated lands in the Town:

Wetland polygon method

Number of parcels from cranberry lands	1,961
Total potential new parcels	5,140
Percentage	38%

Parcel method

Number of parcels from cranberry lands	3,407
Total potential new parcels	7,767
Percentage	44%

Agricultural interests control nearly 40% of the land that could be subdivided in the Town. If cranberry bogs owners ever decide to sell their lands for development, the character of the community could change significantly. Because of the level of regulation, cranberry farming is becoming more profitable in other regions, with less oppressive regulation than in Massachusetts. Recently, there has been a move by the largest grower in the Town, A.D. Makepeace Company to consider other uses for its non-productive lands. Potential uses may include golf courses, a hotel/conference center, and residential development. If such development goes forward, the Town should investigate ways to work closely with these major commercial interests to preserve as much of the land as possible.

Most cranberry growers appear to favor a buffer between agricultural land and

residential or other uses. Environmental regulations indicate a 200-foot buffer as the appropriate minimum standard. As long as cranberry production remains economically viable, residents will continue to enjoy the open space benefits the bogs and buffer areas without having to take any action to protect it. The non-essential lands held by the cranberry growers, however, is attractive for residential development.

Studies have shown that residential growth contributes to the demand for local services to a greater degree than any other category of land use. Open space, in contrast, generates more revenue than it demands in services. Therefore, it is in the best interests of all residents to maintain a viable local cranberry industry, and to take action to permanently preserve a reasonable level of open space from short-term, exploitive development.

Economic change in the future may force other growers to consider developing lands which are outside a designated buffer zone from the cranberry bogs. These lands could have a high residential value because of their proximity to water and the views of the agricultural areas. Proximity to water also makes the bog lands important habitat for wildlife.

If one assumes that cranberry lands remain undeveloped, the total number of potential new building lots in the Town is 6,000 (best estimate between the two buildout methodologies) minus 1,961, or 4,039.

F. Findings of Buildout Analysis

The total number of potentially buildable lots in the Town is below:

Existing buildable lots	2,800
<u>Potential new lots (cranberry lands excluded)</u>	<u>6,000</u>
Total Potential Lots	8,800

The above figure does not account for new water and sewer service extensions, which could increase the number of existing buildable lots. As it stands, the highest potential growth areas are clustered around the south-central portion of the Town, where infrastructure has allowed for high density zoning.

Rate of Growth

Over the last several years, Wareham has seen slow but steady growth in residential housing, averaging about 47 new homes per year. Most would agree that this represents a low point in the market cycle of the construction industry. The average number of new dwellings over the last 15 years is 77. Other than a brief period in the mid 1980s when 200+ permits were issued annually, the rate has been less than 50 new homes over the last 2

decades. If the rate of growth of 77 homes per year continues, Wareham will not begin to approach its build-out capacity for another century. Aside from reaching buildout, the community's ability to absorb the current rate of growth and maintain services remains a concern.

Rates of growth can be misleading, and Town officials should not succumb to a false sense of security in the present conditions. Southeastern Massachusetts is currently the fastest growing region in the Commonwealth. Several communities in the region are growing very slowly, notably the urban centers of Fall River and New Bedford. Wareham stands alone as a waterfront community experiencing slow growth. Many experts believe that Wareham will soon be "discovered", and that growth rates will accelerate in the near future.

Several factors suggest that Wareham may be approaching a era of increased building activity. Plymouth, just 10 miles to the northeast, has experienced tremendous recent growth. The commuter rail line to Middleborough will likely make Wareham more attractive to workers in Boston. Wareham's combination of waterfront properties and relatively low housing prices should make it more attractive in the future. Any increase in the rate of growth will bring the town to its buildout limit in a shorter time.

Population Change at Buildout

Wareham has an overall population density of 2.61 persons per dwelling unit (1990 U.S. Census). This includes all types of dwellings - single family, duplexes, apartments. Below is the projected population at build-out:

Population (1990)		19,232
Added since 1990	approximately	1,500
<u>Potential new population (@ 2.61 people/household</u>		<u>20,723</u>
Total Population at Build-out		41,455

Wareham has the potential to increase its present population by 100%. Growth of this magnitude has the potential to severely impact the quality of life in the community.

Areas Where Growth is Likely to Occur

An existing lot is a cheaper property upon which to construct a home than a large parcel which must first be subdivided. This is due to the cost of permits, road construction, and marketing. Therefore, it is likely that the community will continue to experience growth in areas which have already been subdivided, even if the lots are substandard (provided they are "grandfathered"). The housing market, however, may dictate wholesale subdivision of some of the larger tracts of the community. Many buyers prefer to purchase a home in a new subdivision than to buy a lot in a older neighborhood. Residential growth in the future will

probably be a combination of existing lots and new subdivisions.

To assess potential growth by areas, the build-out information was interpreted through a grid of equal sized squares that correspond to aerial photography owned by the Commonwealth. The results of this overlay indicate that the highest number of existing lots occurs in the most densely settled areas of the town. These areas include Wareham center, Onset, and Shangri-La. One qualifier: The Vacant Parcels Map should not be misinterpreted to mean that all the lots are buildable. Many undersized lots do not retain small lot protection and are therefore unbuildable. In the future, the Planning Department and Assessing Departments will be working together to determine the status of the many undersized lots. When this process is completed, the Town will have a better understanding of how many existing lots have the potential to be used for residential purposes.

The Build-out Potential Map indicates other areas of the town could experience high levels of subdivision growth. The areas west of downtown Wareham and between Wareham and Onset could have more than 300 new lots created. This is based on the existing zoning regulations. Changing the Zoning Bylaws to increase lot size requirements would lower the number of potential lots.

Impact on Natural Resources

An important consideration in determining the appropriateness of growth is its impact on the natural resources of the area. This is a quality of life issue in terms of open space, species diversity and basic community character. It can also be a health issue if there is not adequate provision for drinking water and waste disposal.

Every place has a carrying capacity, i.e. the level at which resources are being replaced as quickly as they are being used. Water is a good example. Many municipalities will have difficulty providing adequate water as populations increase. In Wareham, however, underground water is plentiful. The Plymouth Aquifer has been estimated to hold more than 500 billion gallons of potable water. Water quantity should not be an issue. It will be important in the future that the community take measures to safeguard the quality of the water. This can be done by reducing the use of pollutants above the aquifer and by ensuring that all hazardous materials in the community are dealt with in a safe manner.

Another issue which may arise would be the use of the aquifer to provide water to other municipalities and urban areas. This potential should be monitored so that the Town is able to safeguard the clean water currently used by residents. The Town should not seek to undertake the outside "sale" of water as a short-term revenue enhancement and incur a long-term strategic risk; short-term water provision arrangements once entered into may be perpetuated by state mandate.

Waste disposal is a more difficult issue, and the Town has dealt with many facets of the problem in the recent past. Approximately 50% of residents have public sewer service, the remainder use individual septic systems. Because the treatment plant is fairly close to capacity, new development will likely use septic systems for waste disposal. Septic systems allow waste water to percolate into the ground, adding nitrogen to the groundwater. Excessive nitrates in surface water cause alga blooms and other undesirable effects. They can contaminate groundwater and make it unfit for consumption. Failing systems can allow pathogens and other pollutants to get into the water table.

To minimize the effects of waste disposal, septic systems must be properly constructed, and should be located as far from wells and surface waters as is practical. As the population continues to increase, and the exploitation of undersized lots intensifies, the Town may find it necessary to enact more stringent septic regulations than the State. The possibility of shared septic systems in certain outlying areas serviced with public water should be explored.

Buildout Conclusion

Existing development regulations in the Town of Wareham allow for future growth which could double the population of the town when fully developed. However, as the

population increases, so to do needs of residents for open space and passive recreation areas. Wareham's currently abundant open space is an attractive feature of the community, and one that will draw people to call it home. Much of the open space is unprotected, leaving current residents vulnerable to significant lifestyle changes associated with new development.

The community urgently needs to decide now how much growth it desires and can sustain. Regulations can be changed to direct the amount and type of growth Wareham residents want, but regulations put in place after the fact do little to prevent undesirable growth. Many suburban communities have seen dramatic residential growth, at the expense of their uniqueness and quality of life. Development is increasing across Southeast Massachusetts - it is only a matter of time before Wareham is "discovered".

G. Growth Control Methods

There are various ways in which the Town may properly regulate growth so that it does not outstrip the ability of the community to absorb the associated fiscal and social impacts. Below are several alternatives.

Comprehensive upgrading of Subdivision Regulations - Comprehensive and detailed subdivision regulations require that specific improvements to land be constructed when land is subdivided. The current regulations could be rewritten to be more concise and to require that all infrastructure costs be borne by the developer. The Planning Board should examine and update the regulations.

Building Cap - A building cap would limit the rate of development to a set maximum number of residential units per year. This would prevent cyclical bursts of residential growth in the future. The Town of Marion recently approved a growth cap of 26 units per year, while a cap in Rochester (36 units) is being considered. A growth cap is temporary, maximum five years, and is intended as a stop-gap measure while other growth control regulations are created.

Larger lot size requirements - An increase in lot size requirements would lower the overall number of potential lots in the town. Wareham presently has more than 6,000 acres of land in the MR-30 or R-30 district, which could be rezoned to require 60,000 square foot lots.

Larger lots sizes would mean that new development would encompass more of the vacant land in the Town than smaller lots. As a result, this mechanism could have the adverse effect of making the town seem visually more developed. Mandatory clustering of dwelling units would alleviate the problem by requiring that a significant portion of the developable land be dedicated as open space.

Reduce potential for apartments and other multifamily dwellings - Multifamily dwellings are permitted in the MR-30, OVR, OVC, WV, and CS districts, which encompass more than 5,600 acres of land in the town. This situation leaves a great deal of potential for new multifamily dwellings in the future. As stated in the Housing Chapter, Wareham already

contains more low-cost housing than most other communities in the region.

The rezoning of the MR-30 district to R-30 would refocus future multifamily apartment complexes into the commercial areas of the town, where infrastructure is in place and services are readily available to future residents.

H. Future Land Use Recommendations

Community Goals

Specific programs/ordinances should be implemented to manage and upgrade present and future residential growth and to direct high quality commercial and industrial growth into areas served with infrastructure support. Development which results in a long-term positive fiscal impact on the community should be encouraged, but not at the expense of community character. For example:

1. Residential growth should be limited to high quality single-family dwellings, except in the villages, where apartments over storefronts will be allowed to foster pedestrian-oriented central places.
2. Residential development must be moderated to allow the Town time to remedy severe past problems and to fiscally accommodate increased demand for services from an expanding population.
3. Focus commercial and industrial development into areas served by public water and sewer services.
4. Commercial developments should be well-designed with regard to traffic and pedestrian safety, consistency, convenience, and appearance; Town should always retain and execute long-term enforcement authority to intervene in developments which adversely impact public health or safety.
5. Tracts of undeveloped land should be permanently preserved to maintain the character of the community, provide opportunities for residents to enjoy nature, and maintain habitat for wildlife.
6. Zoning Bylaws should strictly limit development in environmentally sensitive areas such as areas with poor soils, high groundwater table, in a flood velocity zone, or in a primary aquifer basin.

General Recommendations

1. Town Bylaws should be reviewed and brought up to date so that they are complete, coherent, and enforceable.

2. Town should investigate costs and issues associated with placing electric utility wires ~~underground in commercial areas, and continue to mandate in residential areas.~~

Growth Control Recommendations

1. Limit the number of new building permits issued annually to balance growth rate against infrastructure improvements (roads, utilities, town facilities, schools).
2. All new individual homes and/or developments within 1500 feet of existing sewer gravity mains must tie in to the service prior to occupancy.
3. Mandate open space dedication in all new subdivisions. Require that a minimum of 25 percent of developable land (excluding wetlands) must remain open.
4. Zoning Bylaws should require phasing of all new subdivisions of more than 20 lots, but should extend zoning protection during the period of such phasing.
5. Focus commercial expansion near interstate highway interchanges of Routes 195 & 28 and along Route 28 from the Bypass to Depot Street.
6. Create tax incentives to preserve greenbelts along significant wildlife corridors, such as Weweantic River, Minot Forest/Great Neck area, and Red Brook.
7. Public efforts should be undertaken to establish a community land bank program and similar efforts to raise the town from its last-place position in the region with respect to permanently protected Open Space.
8. Create incentives to encourage owners of undeveloped land to preserve the land through deed restrictions, local tax concessions, donation of development rights, gift, or other means.

Zoning Recommendations

1. The Town should urgently form a broad-based committee to revisit the Zoning Bylaws to consider the amendments proposed herein, bring it up to date, eliminate ambiguous statements, improve enforcement capabilities, and make the document more user-friendly. The committee should include local business owners, neighborhood groups, town officials, and citizens-at-large.
2. Existing residential districts should remain residential and not be rezoned commercial.
3. Planning Board should work with recognized, formally organized village organizations to identify zoning regulations to enhance desirable village characteristics within the entire town. Density bonuses should be prohibited. Encourage nodes of development and curtail strip development.

4. Develop architectural and landscape design guidelines for Wareham and Onset villages for new projects to provide applicants with examples of what is encouraged/discouraged and the supporting rationale.
5. Allow cluster subdivisions in areas without public water and sewer, but limit to single family dwellings, eliminate density bonuses, and require that 25 percent or more of the preserved open space be developable land.
6. Aesthetic considerations should be developed and expeditiously adopted into the Zoning Bylaws to ensure that new commercial development will be visually attractive from the outset and contribute to the long-term improvement of the commercial areas.

Specific Recommendations to Amend the Zoning Bylaws:

1. Update and revise the Permitted Use tables in the Zoning Bylaws so that they are easier to understand and fully support the objectives specified in this Plan.
2. Increase minimum lot sizes in areas without water and sewer service to a minimum of 60,000 square feet.
3. Increase minimum lot sizes north of Route 495\25 to 130,000 square feet to protect groundwater resources and retain rural character.
4. Investigate opportunities in Zoning Bylaws to facilitate economic revitalization of Main Street in Wareham Village while protecting property values and improving appearance and function. For example, allow shared parking areas for businesses with distinctly different hours of operation.
5. Revise dimensional requirements and design guidelines in Onset Village Commercial District to encourage new economic growth without need for ZBA approval. For example, building setbacks in the downtown area should be reduced to allow new buildings to have setbacks which are consistent with the existing streetscape.
6. Prohibit new Manufactured (mobile) Home Parks in all zoning districts, and support infrastructure and aesthetic improvements to existing parks.
7. Mandate a Site Plan Review process for all new commercial structures.
8. Continue to permit customary home occupations in residential districts, with limitations on customer trip generation, parking, and other characteristics which could adversely impact neighborhood quality of life, as defined in the Zoning Bylaws.
9. Require a 25-foot vegetative buffer, as defined in the buffer requirements of the

Zoning Bylaws, where commercial uses abut residential uses or districts, and define long-term maintenance responsibilities/penalties in deed.

10. Prohibit sheet metal front and side building facades or roofs for new commercial or industrial buildings, and require brick, architectural masonry, or other harmonious material.
11. Amend the bylaws to allow mixed use development in business areas. Define mixed use development as a planned unit development containing both commercial and residential land uses on a single lot. Develop detailed guidelines for mixed use development.
12. Evaluate individual parking space number and size requirements for businesses.
13. Review setback requirements and set reasonable standards based on type of use (commercial, industrial, residential) and prevailing land use pattern.
14. Invoke limits on the amount of impervious coverage which may be permitted on any building lot. Allow relief for pre-existing undersized lots.
15. Define "big box" retailers, and limit to specific areas of the business district through an overlay zone.
16. Work with business interests to rewrite the Sign Regulations to limit size, number, types, and design to that which will best serve the overall long-term interests of the community. Maintenance of existing signs should be required, and obsolete business signs should be removed. Enforcement of existing violations must be effectively carried out. Signs should be commercially effective and visually attractive.
17. Public efforts should be undertaken to establish a community land bank program and similar efforts to raise the town from its near-last place position in the region with respect to permanently protected open space. Town officials should be committed at all levels to supporting such efforts in lieu of direct town fiscal participation (see Open Space & Conservation Chapter for details).

Zoning Map Amendments:

1. Change MR-30 zoning district to R-30 to reduce the potential for new multifamily dwellings in the town.
2. Create a LIMITED COMMERCIAL zoning district on segments of Cranberry Highway in West Wareham to direct retail growth toward the business strip east of the bypass.
3. Change zoning in area south of Tremont Pond from Strip Commercial to residential, as

the area is residential in nature and should not be zoned for commercial uses.

4. Consider expanding the LIMITED COMMERCIAL district to include parcels along Marion Road. Planning Board should determine which areas are appropriate for this zoning designation.

IV. Economic Development

A. Introduction

Wareham's economic base is characterized by a mixture of wholesale & retail trade, service industries, tourism, manufacturing, and agriculture. Historically, commercial activity along the Cranberry Highway has been a mainstay of the local economy. The availability of physical infrastructure to support industry and commerce will be an important factor in the community's ability to support future growth.

The major commercial district is along the eastern half of Route 6/28. Lesser commercial areas are located in the villages of Onset and Wareham. The Town's industrial district is located along Route 28 west of Interstate 195.

Wareham's waterfront has played a major role in the economic development of the community. The more than 50 miles of shoreline have attracted summer residents since at least the late 1800's. Onset village, originally developed as a religious retreat community, supports a strong seasonal economy.

The most important recent event which shaped Wareham's economy was the opening of Route 25. The completion of the by-pass in 1987 destroyed the economic viability of many businesses along the highway, creating a depressed situation which still affects the Cranberry Highway today.

Of the Town's tax base, 16.7 percent is derived from commercial and industrial property. Wareham has a single tax rate for all classifications of property.

Labor force statistics

In 1990, Wareham's residential population had a labor force of 9,239. The labor force grew by 24% in the 1980-90 decade, while the Town's population increased by only 4%. In 1990, the participation rate of the labor force was 62.4%, 5% below the state average. Participation rate is the fraction of the work force which is working or seeking work. A low participation rate is indicative of economic hardship within a community.

Like many suburban communities, Wareham has fewer local jobs than workers. In 1990, the Census reported that 8,286 residents were employed, most of whom worked outside the community. The average employed resident travels 26 minutes to work.

The total number of jobs within the community was 5,838 in 1990. Therefore, Wareham is a net exporter of workers, i.e. more people leave the town to work than come to work in Wareham.

The most important industries in the community in terms of numbers of jobs are wholesale & retail trade and service industries, which account for more than 60% of all local

jobs. These types of employment are lower paying in general than other industries.

Manufacturing accounts for only 8% of local employment, but is the fastest growing sector of the economy. The chart below shows the trends in employment by industry.

Employment by Industry, 1979-1990				
Industry	1979	1990	% Change 1979-90	1990 % of Total
Whl/Retail Trade	1,140	1,783	+ 56.4	31.7
Service	712	1,511	+ 112.2	26.9
Transp., Commun., & Utilities	174	695	+ 300.0	12.4
Government	685	562	- 18.0	10.0
Manufacturing	212	542	+ 156.0	9.6
Agric., Fishing	238	222	- 6.7	3.9
Construction	105	162	+ 54.3	2.9
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate (FIRE)	168	137	- 18.5	2.4
Totals	2,755	5,621	+ 104.0	100.0

Source: Employment and Wages in MA Cities & Towns, Mass. Dept. of Employment & Training.

It is clear from the chart above that there have been significant changes in the local economy in recent years. The service sector has grown rapidly, as has manufacturing. Manufacturing remains a lesser sector of the economy but may be on a par with other industries if the trend continues. The transportation & utilities sector growth was largely based on Commonwealth Electric Co. locating its administration headquarters in West Wareham.

Industries which have seen a reduction in local employment are government, FIRE, and agriculture/fishing.

Skills and Education of Work Force

Generally, Wareham's work force is well-suited to provide skilled and unskilled labor for the predominant industries in the community. Workers for retail trade jobs can be easily trained. Most cranberry workers have considerable experience in the industry. Warehousing and distribution require unskilled laborers, of which Wareham has an abundant supply.

Work force characteristics appear well-suited for manufacturing. Businesses on Cape Cod have recently begun to recognize that Wareham has a ready labor pool of people with experience in direct manufacturing, something which is difficult to find on the Cape. The Community Development Office of the Town is active in pursuing interested businesses to relocate to Wareham for future expansions.

Educational attainment of Wareham residents in 1990 was lower than other towns in the region and the state average. The chart below shows the percentage of residents who have completed high school and college.

Educational Attainment, 1980-1990				
	% Completed High School		% Completed 4+ Years College	
	1980	1990	1980	1990
Wareham	64.5%	76.2%	9.7%	12.3%
Plymouth County	77.1%	83.8%	17.6%	22.2%
Massachusetts	72.1%	80.0%	20.0%	27.2%

Source: U.S. Census

One of the reasons for Wareham's lower overall level of educational attainment is the high number of young children and senior citizens in the community. Young people have not yet been educated and older generations received less formal education than today's children. Another reason is the availability of low-cost housing, which generally is occupied by individuals with less education.

Taken at face value, the data seems to indicate that Wareham has high potential to grow in professions where skills and experience are of higher value than education, such as manufacturing.

On the other hand, the percentage of college graduates is less than half the state average. This could prove a problem if the Town were to aggressively recruit high-tech businesses. These businesses would likely draw employees from outside the community, so the overall benefit of such businesses to the town would be somewhat diminished.

Place of Employment

Many Wareham residents commute long distances to their places of employment. Indeed, the average commuting time is 26 minutes, with nearly two-thirds of the work force working out of town. Because of the town's location between Boston, New Bedford, and Cape Cod, destinations for work spread over a wide geographic area. More than 80% of all workers commute alone in a vehicle.

These statistics are not uncommon for a suburban community. However, one measure of a quality community is the availability of good local jobs for local residents. Wareham should work to attract high-skill industries and take advantage of the Office of Employment & Training (located on Cranberry Highway) to train local residents to meet modern industry requirements.

Largest employers

According to tax records, there were 520 private businesses and industries in the Town in 1996. The largest employers in the community are as follows:

Town of Wareham (full-time)	617
Commonwealth Electric Headquarters	375
Tobey Hospital	375
Walmart	210
Stop n' Shop	150
Springborn Life Sciences	125
New England Telephone	100
A.D. Makepeace Company	65

B. Commercial Development and Zoning

1. Cranberry Highway

Existing conditions

Wareham's major commercial area is located along the Cranberry Highway. The route is zoned for Strip Commercial development along its entire 10 mile length within the Town. Since World War II, the strip has provided the economic lifeblood of the community.

Prior to the construction of Routes 495/25 and 195, Cape-bound traffic was funneled through the Route 6 corridor. This created enormous traffic congestion in the summer, and provided opportunity for numerous retail businesses. The eastern third of the Wareham stretch of the highway was developed to virtual build-out in the 50's, 60's, and 70's.

The opening of the Route 25 bypass removed pass-through traffic from the highway in 1987. The local economic impact was disastrous. Traffic was reduced by more than half, causing numerous businesses to fail. Surviving commercial activity became less profitable, resulting in poorly maintained properties. Business investment in the strip was almost nonexistent until very recently, when a Walmart store opened.

In Walmart, the highway has a new "anchor" store around which renewed economic activity can occur. The area immediately adjacent to the Walmart plaza is the only area along the highway which has experienced significant commercial growth in the past decade.

AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC - CRANBERRY HIGHWAY AT BOURNE LINE	
YEAR	ADT
July 1978	58,000*
1982	37,600
1986	38,700
1988	17,300
1989	20,700
1994	22,000

* Peak recorded traffic volume.

From a land use standpoint, Cranberry Highway contains two distinct sections. The stretch west of the by-pass contains a mix of commercial, residential, and agricultural properties. The section east of the bypass to Buttermilk Bay is a densely developed commercial strip, with many restaurants, motels, and shopping areas.

There are also a number of manufactured home parks along the highway. Some of the parks in the commercial strip are located very close to the highway. This type of incompatible land use detracts from the overall image of the commercial area, and may discourage new investment in the area.

The commercial strip on Cranberry Highway is an important regional retail center. The anchor store attracts shoppers from adjoining communities, bringing money into the community. Higher traffic volumes will create economic opportunity for businesses which can provide products and services which are not provided by the anchor store.

Revitalization strategies

Past revitalization studies have focused on the aesthetic and market aspects of the highway. Improvements to the appearance of the highway must be implemented primarily by individual businesses. The Town does not have an appearance code for new development. The major obstacle to aesthetic improvements is cost. Seed money must be sought through grants to assist business owners who could otherwise not afford to invest in the appearance of their businesses.

Businesses along the strip are organized as the Cranberry Highway Businessmen's Association. The organization has approximately 75 members, and meets on a monthly basis to work together to improve local businesses. The Association was instrumental in the development of a welcome center on Route 195, which is used to promote Wareham

attractions and businesses.

Alternative approaches for improvement

Town officials and business leaders have from time to time engaged in discussions about the future of the business strip. People with investments along the Cranberry Highway are reluctant to consider wholesale zoning changes, fearing new regulations could disrupt the operations of viable businesses. Current zoning regulations provide few incentives to foster new types of investment in the Strip Commercial district.

The Wareham Community Development Authority has developed a rezoning strategy for the strip which would permit high density apartment buildings. This would change market values by allowing uses at higher densities than are currently permitted. The rationale is that new investment is needed, and zoning for apartments would encourage new construction in the area.

Multifamily dwellings also have the potential to generate problems on Cranberry Highway. The increased traffic generated could cause congestion and/or hazards. The capacity of the sewer system may not be sufficient to handle additional residential services. From a fiscal viewpoint, high-rise apartments would generate demand for services far exceeding tax revenues generated. Because of these issues, the Town should carefully consider the impact of zoning changes on Cranberry Highway.

The WCDA rezoning program is still in the planning stages and has not been formally proposed.

In 1996, the Planning Board proposed down-zoning the western two-thirds of the Cranberry Highway to MR-30. This section of the highway is less developed than the eastern portion, but still contains more than 100 businesses. The vast majority of business owners opposed the proposal because of the impact of their businesses becoming nonconforming uses. The change was not adopted.

There appears to be general agreement that Cranberry Highway could benefit from some sort of zoning amendment. It has been determined that proper zoning along Cranberry Highway should be consistent with the overall goals for the Town as expressed in this document. Future amendments to the Zoning By-law are discussed in the Land Use section.

The State is planning a major reconstruction project on Route 6/28. Major improvements will include a center turning lane, new surfacing and sidewalks, and a traffic signal at the corner of Redbrook Road. Plans have been finalized, and construction is expected to commence in 1999.

2. Wareham Village

Introduction/History

Downtown Wareham encompasses the central business district on Main Street as well as professional offices on High Street. The commercial area is approximately 4/10 mile in length. Merchants Way, which runs behind Main Street, offers expansive water views, yet no effort has been made to utilize this resource to improve local businesses.

Central Wareham has evolved over its history from a manufacturing and shipping port to the present-day commercial center. During the early settlement period, various mills were constructed along the Wankinko River, processing cotton, paper, and iron. The need for tools and other iron products made Wareham an important contributor to the early development of Southeast Massachusetts.

From 1775 to 1847, shipbuilding was the dominant local industry. In fact, when a bridge was constructed across the Narrows, it was designed with a "draw" that could be removed to allow newly-built ships to pass out to sea. The lack of available big timber and the shallowness of the Wankinko River caused the industry to decline through the latter half of the 19th century.

Downtown Wareham has historically been the central meeting point of the community. Prior to development along the Cranberry Highway, businesses on Main Street prospered. Today, businesses which survive on Main Street are predominantly service industries (banks, medical) or local niches (convenience stores, fuel service). There is abundant office space available in the upper levels of downtown buildings. There is also significant storefront space available at street level.

Present economic viability

Businesses on Main Street contend with those on Cranberry Highway. This has limited the number of businesses and their success. The 1994 opening of a Walmart on Cranberry Highway put even more economic stress on the downtown. It is impossible for a small business to compete with a "big-box" retailer.

Present conditions indicate that downtown Wareham is still in economic decline. Businesses continue to close or leave the area for better locations. Office space in upper levels remains vacant. Steps must be taken in the near future to bring new investment to the downtown.

Mainstays of daily commercial activity are the post office and the three banks. These operations bring customers to Main Street on a regular basis. They are stable and functional, and will likely continue to operate downtown in the foreseeable future. This stability should be exploited by providing customers with attractive options to fulfill other shopping and service needs while they are in the downtown.

Revitalization methods

Physical improvements to the downtown are needed to make it more attractive for business and customers. There are many improvements which should be considered for Main Street and Merchants Way. They are listed below:

Main Street

- * Buildings in disrepair should be renovated.
- * Historic facades on commercial buildings should be uncovered and repaired.
- * Street lights should be replaced with traditional lamps.
- * Street light electrical wires should be placed underground.
- * Signage guidelines should be adopted by the Downtown Merchants Association and a program instituted to bring all signs into conformance.

Merchants Way

- * Parking should be better marked for motorists on Main Street to find.
- * Pedestrian connections to Main Street should be established.
- * A design scheme should be adopted for buildings with frontage on Merchants Way to encourage businesses to capitalize on the waterfront.
- * Dumpsters should be enclosed.

It is difficult for small businesses to compete directly with those on Cranberry Highway. Future revitalization efforts in the downtown should focus on developing businesses which are not found elsewhere in the community or which cater to a highly localized population. Examples may include newsstands, restaurants, and personal services.

The drawing ability of the post office and banks should be exploited by providing customers with attractive options to fulfill other shopping and service needs while they are in the downtown. These operations will be most successful if they are located within convenient walking distance of the "anchor" businesses.

Another option for Wareham center is to develop a unique identity to attract shoppers from other communities. The desired characteristics for the village should be determined by the Wareham Downtown Association and incorporated into an overall redevelopment program. Historic resources and the village's waterfront location should certainly be incorporated into the program. An agreement should be sought with the state for a couple of grade crossings of the rails to allow access to the river.

3. Onset Village

Historic context

Onset Village was planned and developed in the 1890s as a religious retreat community. The land was laid out with small building lots for summer cottages. The area later transitioned into a summer resort area, and was extremely popular from the turn of the

century into the 1950s.

At various times, the summer population has supported arcades, eating & drinking establishments, and large numbers of guest homes and hotels. Streets were crowded, business boomed, and the area had an excellent reputation as a holiday destination. Anecdotal data suggests that at one time there were 15 independent taxi services in Onset.

The economic demise of Onset came about as access to on-Cape destinations improved. Before automobiles were widely used, most families travelled by train to summer locations. Onset offered an escape from the city to thousands of people from nearby cities of Boston, New Bedford, Fall River, Brockton, etc. When highways were completed, locations further down Cape Cod were within a reasonable driving distance - and were considered more desirable, places where the wealthy summered. Onset began to decline.

The decline continued well into the 1980s. Many businesses closed and buildings fell into disrepair. Accessibility offered by new highways also changed the makeup of residences. Many homes were converted for year-round use. This further affected the tourist industry.

In 1993, the Onset Bay Association was formed to revitalize Onset's once-glorious stature. The OBA has taken major strides to improve the image and business climate of Onset, and has received more than \$1 million in grants which allowed a full-time revitalization office.

Opportunities

A comprehensive market study was recently conducted to determine opportunities for Onset in the future. The study revealed attitudes of residents and the regional population toward Onset, and showed holes in the market where new businesses could likely succeed.

Overall, revitalization efforts in Onset will be oriented around re-creating its identity as a tourist destination. Better marketing is needed by businesses, who should act corporately to enhance the village concept.

Physical improvements to the village will help Onset's image. OBA has a successful facade and sign program which assists qualified property owners in re-establishing the historic architecture of the village. The efforts of the OBA have encouraged other property owners to invest in their Onset properties, and the village is improving.

The study suggested that Onset must be sensitive to the experience first-time visitors have in the village. The Fourth of July and Illumination Night are two events which attract thousands of visitors each year. Other annual events are planned. Villagers must ensure that the overall experience of visitors is pleasant, so that some will return during non-event days. It is also of great importance that the community develop high-quality events if they wish to encourage visitors to return at other times.

Steps are being taken to improve the appearance of the village, especially the waterfront area from Shell Point to the Town pier. A parking and streetscape plan has been prepared, and grants are being sought to fund improvements. The Town has made significant improvements to the band shell and comfort stations.

The OBA has also developed a set of design guidelines to enhance the significant features of local architecture. All businesses in a downtown benefit from the improvement of other buildings. Building life is extended, retail activity increases, and downtown image is buoyed. These efforts add to the desirability of Onset, and make a significant contribution to the business climate.

The Town has supported the efforts of the OBA to improve Onset. Town officials must continue to encourage the OBA to achieve its goal of revitalizing a once-magnificent summer attraction.

4. West Wareham

West Wareham, that area west of Route 195, is commercially zoned along Cranberry Highway and a portion of Tremont Village. A few nonconforming businesses still exist, nearly all at Tremont. Much of the area is devoted to cranberry production. The industrial districts are located in West Wareham.

Recent growth in this area has been predominantly new single-family homes. Residents of this area of town consider the area to be rural, and are concerned that future development not compromise its character. Care should be taken to protect buffer industrial and commercial growth from residential areas.

5. Rt. 6 - Downtown to Weweantic River

A lesser commercial strip exists along Route 6 west of Town Hall. There are two pockets of commercially zoned land, but most businesses are legally nonconforming uses which predate zoning.

A group of Route 6 property owners has petitioned the Town on more than one occasion to rezone the area for business. The request brought forth opposition from neighbors and other residents who lived on side streets off Route 6. The primary reason for opposition was the impact on traffic safety, especially during the summer months. After careful consideration, the Town rejected the request and reaffirmed that the area should remain in a residential zoning district.

6. Scattered Businesses & Home Occupations

Many businesses which pre-date zoning operate in non-commercial districts. They are classified as legal nonconforming uses. They can continue to operate, but any expansion is subject to a permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Ideally, zoning is an expression of how a community wants to develop and grow. Nonconforming uses are legally exempt from the zoning requirements. If the community indeed wishes to grow and develop as it is zoned, it should explore methods to phase out nonconforming businesses.

In some cases, a moderate level of business activity is desirable in a residential area. The Town should consider the merits of developing small business nodes for neighborhood-oriented businesses.

Changes in the nature of work now permit a growing number of people to work out of their homes. The Town allows these types of businesses as long as they do not adversely impact the residential areas in which they are located. As changes continue, it may be prudent for the community to reassess the manner in which it regulates home occupations.

C. Industrial Areas

Wareham has two industrial parks, located on Route 28 near the junction of Routes 495 and 195. The Phase I Industrial Park was opened in 1980 as a joint venture between the Town of Wareham and the Wareham Economic Development Industrial Corporation (EDIC).

The park is virtually fully developed as a general commercial area.

EDIC's mission is to acquire and develop land for industrial projects and to make such land available at reasonable prices for new and expanding industries locating in Wareham.

Phase II Industrial Park is located further north off Route 28. It was established in 1986. The area is being principally targeted to light industrial users. The park is currently home to two multiple-business buildings and a basket making operation. Two other properties were permitted for incoming businesses in 1996.

The Industrial zoning district also includes private properties. Largest among these is the Bliss Foundation property, a 134 acre vacant parcel on Tobey Road and Route 28. This property has the potential to accommodate a large-scale industrial user.

Impacts of industrial growth

Wareham has taken an active role in attracting industry to offset the burden of

residential property in the tax base. The Town has also recognized the importance of developing local employment opportunities for its citizens. To that end, new businesses which utilize the Town's Tax Increment Finance (TIF) program are required to employ a percentage of local residents.

Tax Levy Percentages by Class			
Parcel Type	FY 1994	FY 1995	FY 1996
Residential	79.26	79.36	79.40
Commercial	14.49	14.33	14.38
Industrial	2.47	2.38	2.36
Personal Prop.	3.77	3.90	3.86

The table above shows that the tax structure is stable, with no marked trends toward realigning of tax burdens on any particular sector. Indeed, a million dollar industrial development would represent less than one-tenth of one percent of total property value, would not create an appreciably lowering of residential tax burden. Unless there are significant changes in the residential/commercial property base, the tax structure will not change.

Negative impacts of industrial growth include traffic, noise, pollution, and environmental impacts. Residents who use Route 28 in West Wareham complain periodically about traffic and noise caused by commercial trucking in the area. In response, parking has been restricted on Route 28.

Certain industrial uses have the potential to cause excessive noise. This can disrupt the peace of residents. There are a number of mobile home parks located within the industrial district. To minimize potential impacts, the Town requires a Site Plan Review process prior to the issuance of a building permit.

Recently, the Town discussed a proposal to locate a stump grinding facility in the industrial park. Residents spoke in opposition to the project, citing the excessive noise the use would generate. The project was abandoned. The Town should consider adopting industrial performance standards to better administer such applications.

Prospects for growth

The Wareham Community Development Authority aggressively markets the Town's industrial areas. In competing with other communities, Wareham must emphasize the characteristics which make it a desirable location for business. The Town is in a good location, has a pro-business political climate, and offers a number of programs to assist new industry in locating in Wareham.

Wareham is transected by interstate Routes 495 and 195. This creates convenient access to markets for many types of industry. Boston is located 1.25 hours to the north, Providence 50 minutes to the west. Below is a listing of the populations within set distances from Wareham.

Market Population by Distance			
	10 Mi. Radius	25 Mi. Radius	50 Mi. Radius
2001 Projection	78,100	713,704	3,876,498
1996 Estimate	74,391	687,539	3,789,110
1990 Census	69,363	656,610	3,764,798
1980 Census	57,166	578,990	3,594,507

In addition to market location, Wareham has a good regulatory climate compared to communities on Cape Cod. Industrial applications in Wareham go through a Site Plan Review, a process which can take as little as one month. In contrast, industrial projects on Cape Cod are subject to review by the Cape Cod Commission, a costly and lengthy process with an uncertain outcome. Wareham is the closest community to the Cape which is not within the Commission's jurisdiction. There may be opportunities to attract new industries which would otherwise locate on Cape Cod. Care should be taken to encourage desirable new economic growth, not merely draw businesses which are unacceptable to Cape Cod.

In addition to the aforementioned TIF, the Town offers other programs which facilitate industrial development. The WCDA offers commercial loans at 80% of prime rate to qualified businesses. These are targeted to start-up companies or those with fewer than 100 employees.

The South Eastern Economic Development (SEED) Corporation has an enterprise fund for small businesses, with loans ranging from \$5,000 to \$100,000.

WCDA also provides direct low-interest training loans as well as a variety of marketing and counseling services for local businesses.

D. Tourism

Tourism is a major component of Wareham's economy. The summer population is approximately 15,000 to 20,000 more than year-round. This population brings an annual inflow of money to Town businesses, and requires home maintenance services for their properties.

Historically, tourism has been the backbone of the local economy. When summer

traffic averaged 50,000 vpd on Cranberry Highway, there was a steady stream of motorists from which many businesses derived a majority of their revenue. Completion of Route 25 caused a major market change to the local economy.

Prior to the seasonal influx of Cape-bound traffic, Wareham was a major summer destination in its own right. For 50 years beginning around 1900, Onset boomed during the warm weather months, and other seaside areas experienced tremendous growth.

In recent decades, Wareham has lost its appeal to short-term visitors. Part of the reason was the change in travel means and patterns. Once automobiles were widely used and the highway system was completed, many travelers chose vacation spots further from home. People bypassed Onset for more exclusive Cape Cod locations, leading to a decline in the local tourist economy. They still supported businesses on Cranberry Highway, but did not vacation within the community.

Over the last 25 years, Onset has become more of a year-round community. This has necessitated a change in the way businesses are oriented within the village. Many marginal business have failed, and have been replaced by business offering personal services and convenience retail items.

Future Prospects

Wareham will likely never again experience a seasonal deluge of tourists as it did in previous generations. As the economy continues to change, however, there is opportunity to take advantage of the miles of shoreline and water views to create a level of tourism which supports a significant niche in the economy.

Tourism growth should be oriented toward attracting overnight guests who will make a significant contribution to local businesses. Part of this can be accomplished through better marketing of Wareham's assets. The Town should attempt to inform travelers on Routes 495 and 195 of what the area has to offer.

Another group who should be encouraged to visit Wareham are transient boaters. As a group, these vacationers have considerable disposable income. Onset has facilities to accommodate a large number of recreational vessels at private facilities. Local business associations should focus on providing services and transportation to boaters, with the goal of establishing Wareham as a desirable overnight harbor for travelling boaters. There are numerous marine-related businesses in Wareham which may benefit from encouraging visitors to visit Wareham.

E. Cranberry Industry

Level of activity

Cranberry production is a major component of Wareham's character and economy. There are currently more than 1500 acres of working bog in the community. Most are managed by families or small businesses, with a couple of exceptions.

Statewide, the wholesale value of the cranberry crop in 1995 was \$85 million. Production averaged 113 barrels per acre. Based on this average, the local crop produced 170,000 barrels, with a value of more than \$9 million. Given the multiplier effect, the cranberry industry makes an significant contribution to the local economy.

Pro/con impacts to community

Upland surrounding cranberry bogs accounts for a high percentage of Wareham's open space. According to the Cape Cod Cranberry Growers Association, the ratio of bog to adjacent upland is 1:4. This means that there is approximately 6,000 acres of open space associated with cranberry production. As long as cranberries are profitable, residents will benefit from the industry in terms of community open space.

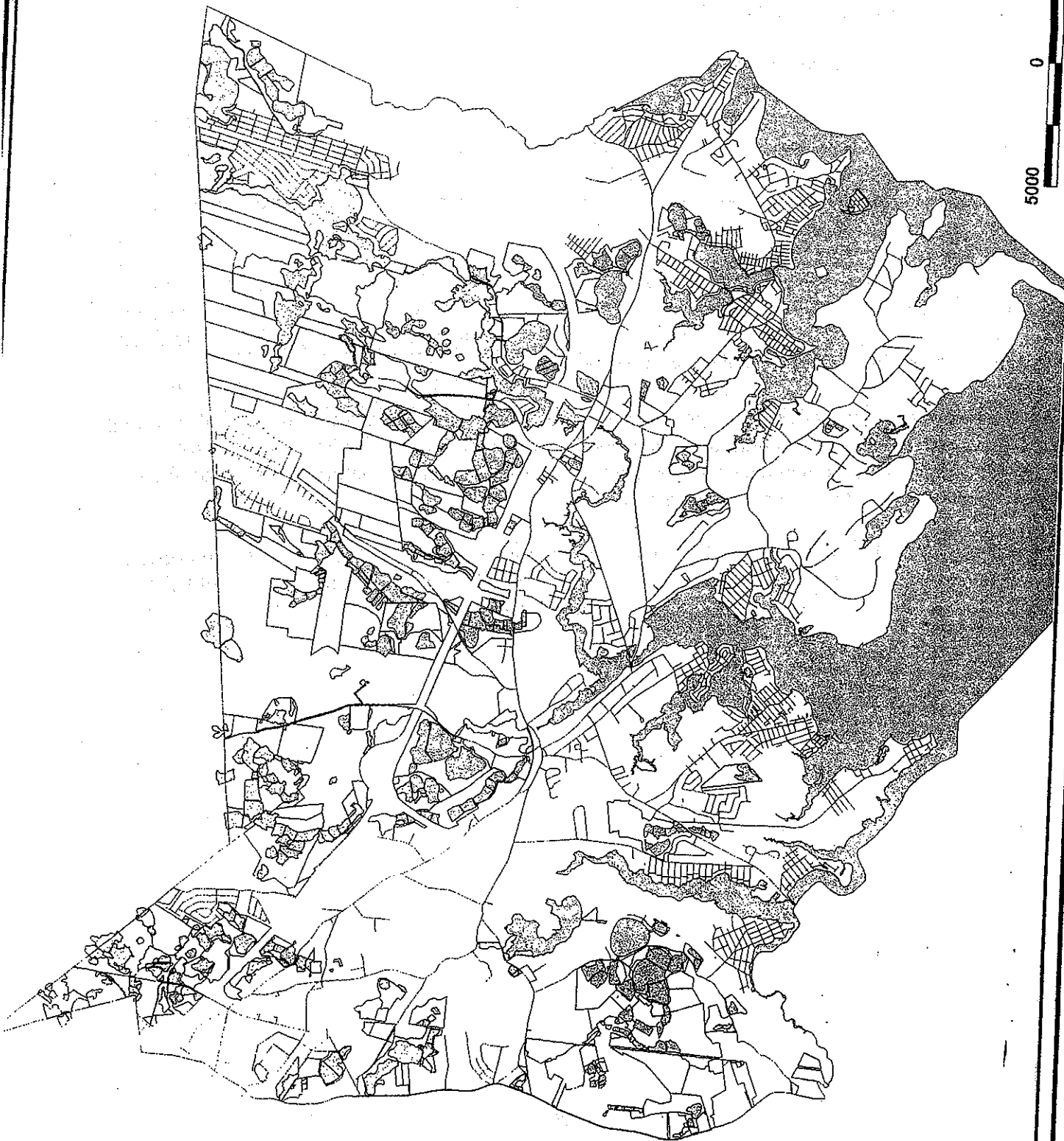
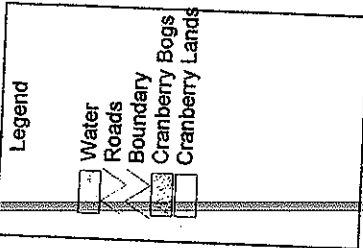
If cranberry production ever become economically unfeasible, the community can anticipate major real estate speculation of bog lands, especially since many bogs are located along or near open water. The Town should encourage continued prosperity in the cranberry industry as a way of maintaining open space.

Cranberry production requires large volumes of water. In addition to normal watering practices, cultivation techniques include flooding production areas for harvest and frost protection. To accommodate volume needs, growers either detain natural flowage on their property or maintain a man-made reservoir.

The practice of holding back water can cause adverse impacts to adjacent properties. Changes in groundwater levels have been documented through complaints registered by residents who live in areas where a high groundwater table already exists.



Cranberry Lands



The improper application of fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides has the potential to adversely impact the natural environment. However, Wareham is fortunate to be the home of the Cranberry Experiment Station, a state-run facility dedicated to perfecting cranberry cultivation. Courses in Best Management Practices (BMPs) have helped educate local growers in the proper use and treatment of agricultural chemicals.

Future prospects

Agricultural commodities fluctuate in price with market demand. Recent expansion of the market for cranberry products has created high demand, especially for fresh fruit. In 1996, the market price of fresh fruit reached an historic high of \$100 per 100 pound barrel. More common process-quality fruit brought \$85 per barrel.

One of the impacts of the high price is increased interest in developing new acreage. Under state regulations, active growers are exempt from wetlands protection regulations. However, Wareham contains a number of abandoned bogs - which are subject to regulation.

Until very recently, state law prohibited the restoration of abandoned bogs. In 1996, the Rivers Act was passed, which permitted the restoration of abandoned cranberry bogs under certain conditions. The Department of Environmental Protection is in the process of developing regulations in accordance with the Act. There is potential for significant increase in local cranberry acreage.

One abandoned local bog is owned by the Town, located adjacent to the High School. Town and School officials have expressed interest in restoring the bog as an educational tool. If successful, the program could be used to train young growers in proper BMPs, with the intended results of improved environmental quality and better crops.

F. Aquaculture

In recent years, many communities have considered fish-farming as a way to increase local fisheries production. The recent dramatic decline of the off-shore commercial fishing industry in New England has caused an increase in interest in aquaculture. The term aquaculture refers to any farming of sea life, be it finfish, shellfish, or seaweed.

Wareham has a long history of farming the sea. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, there were numerous private grants of local waters. Currently, the Town leases 22 grants totalling 102 acres.

Town officials have recently begun exploring aquaculture strategies to increase natural resources in local waters. There are two main avenues of activity - private grants and enhancement of public areas. An area leased to an individual provides a lease fee for the Town and also may contribute to enhancement of non-leased areas, as well as providing employment for the individual.

Other communities which have considered private leases have experienced divisive opposition to the concept. Issues are usually oriented around the perceived loss of water recreation areas and impact on aesthetics. Any effort to increase private leases should be sensitive to the rights and desires of shoreline property owners.

Wareham has taken a two-pronged approach to increasing overall shellfish stocks. A relay program (transferring shellfish from contaminated waters for purification in clean waters) has been successfully operated by the Shellfish Constable for several years. The Town is also in the process of establishing a grow-out program for transplant of juvenile clams into public waters. This project will utilize a shellfish grant held by the High School to develop a system of supplementing natural clam resources.

The Town has recognized the vital importance of good water quality in local fisheries. To that end, the Town has worked closely with Buzzards Bay Project on several stormwater remediation projects to purify waters entering local embayments. The Town also has a long-term strategy to provide sewer service to all waterfront residential areas. These programs are discussed elsewhere in this document.

G. Problems and Solutions - Working Together

Improvement of the local economy depends on the cooperative action of private businessmen and property owners in the village center. Commitment on the part of the Town to promote local business interests must be matched by the enthusiasm of business groups to facilitate positive changes.

Local government should be pro-active in creating an atmosphere that attracts high-quality new business to the community. High quality businesses would have attributes such as good pay, clean operation, advancement opportunities, environmentally friendly, not a nuisance to neighbors. It is a generally accepted principal that the community should encourage business and industrial growth to increase the tax base and provide local jobs for residents.

Such growth cannot be at the expense of the community's character. The Town still retains small-town characteristics that attracted many current residents. It is the responsibility of residents and local officials to ensure that policies are put in place to promote quality growth in appropriate areas. Effective communication between business interests and the Town is vital in developing a coherent community vision.

The other important aspect of encouraging economic development is an efficient regulatory process. Wareham suffers from an image that the community does not always respond quickly and properly to development proposals.

Town officials recently completed a Building Permit Process Guide, which assists applicants in obtaining all necessary permits. The Guide is helpful, but complicated applications still require the assistance of staff. The Town should undertake measures to improve customer service within Town Hall.

The Town recognizes the difficulty of maintaining viable commercial districts in Wareham and Onset villages. Recently, the Board of Selectmen created a Visitor Services Committee to promote Wareham tourism. This committee will provide input to town officials on matters of economic concern to the Town of Wareham.

H. Economic Development - Community Goals, Policies, and Implementation Methods

Community Goals

1. To capitalize on the strong existing historical, physical, and geographical attributes of the town by implementing a strategically balanced economic growth plan which serves existing and future citizens, enhances the commercial attractiveness of the community and defines the future role of the town in the rapidly emerging Southeastern Massachusetts sector.
2. To achieve a diverse, balanced local economy which provides good employment opportunities for local residents and maintains an affordable tax base.

General Government

Policy

Promote a cooperative partnership between business associations and the Town to further economic development goals.

Recommendation

1. Town officials should inform and involve residents early in the development process for maximum benefit of the town and its residents as well as the developers. All public meetings should be scheduled to allow for full public participation.
2. Improve accessibility, efficiency, and public comprehension of Town regulatory process and Town Hall. Town Hall hours should be extended to allow working people access to town services.
3. Town officials meet regularly with business groups to listen to their perspective and needs and respond appropriately, in a reasonable and efficacious manner.
4. Recognized business groups take a pro-active role in advocating businesses which will promote the overall goals of the group and accommodate the needs of the community at large.
5. Town should continue to advocate for a cost-effective year-round public transit system which will help residents access shopping areas and employment. Merchant associations should contribute (partially underwrite) when they are direct beneficiaries.

Cranberry Highway

Policy

1. Create an image of the Cranberry Highway as a regional retail center.
2. Encourage economic development on properties with existing marginal or abandoned businesses as opposed to vacant land.

Recommendations

1. Town officials work closely with the Cranberry Highway Businessmen's Association to enhance the economic climate and encourage economic revitalization.

2. Rezone the strip to encourage re-investment to improve poorly maintained or abandoned properties.
3. Work with business community on ways to improve the appearance of new businesses through Bylaw amendments.
4. Establish Economic Opportunity Area (EOA) for strip portion of the highway.
5. Work with business interests to amend the Zoning Bylaws to reduce safety hazards and confusion related to signs. Proper maintenance should be required, as well as removal of obsolete signs.
6. Work with Mass. Highway to ensure that reconstruction of the highway produces a safe and functional roadway for residents and visitors.
7. Town should adopt a Tax-Increment Financing program for Cranberry Highway to attract new investment.
8. Town should investigate cost-effective methods of removing utility structures and lines from the business area.

Downtown Wareham Village

Policy

Encourage the revitalization and continued viability of commercial activities within Wareham Village.

Recommendations

1. Town officials continue to work with the newly organized Downtown Business Association to establish a cohesive vision for the future.
2. Develop a realistic and contemporary market identity (niche) to help downtown businesses to attract a customer base.
3. Encourage mixed-use of buildings on Main Street with retail on street level.
4. Provide commercial rehabilitation loans to businesses through Community Development Grants to improve their appearance.
5. Establish Economic Opportunity Area (EOA) for downtown Wareham, and require adherence to design guidelines for businesses which are assisted.
6. Conduct a market study to determine future market opportunities to secure a stable economic future for Main Street.
7. Improve infrastructure to meet current and future demands of downtown.
8. Develop a second entrance to businesses on Merchant's Way to capitalize on the waterfront location.

9. Make the downtown more pedestrian-friendly by creating connections between Main Street and Merchant's Way.
10. Schedule high quality annual events which will attract first-time visitors into the downtown.
11. Develop a cohesive walking tour of the downtown from Tremont Nail Factory to Besse Park.
12. Explore funding alternatives to assist the business group in implementing physical improvements.
13. Petition the Commonwealth for permission to establish a pedestrian link to the Wankinko River through the existing rail corridor.
14. Wareham Village Business Association should schedule and coordinate regular clean-up days to remove litter and improve the appearance of the business district.
15. Research the merits and consequences of extending historic district from Center Park to Chapel Street (Route 6).
16. Improve parking and traffic circulation by implementing the recommendations of the Downtown Wareham Parking and Circulation Study.
16. Work with State transportation officials on any future plans to extend commuter rail service through Wareham. Efforts must be made to ensure that the service would be an economic benefit to the town without adversely affecting parking areas and not adding economic burden to the taxpayers.

Onset Village

Policy

Re-establish the village as an attractive overnight tourist destination with businesses which remain open on a year-round basis, while enhancing quality of life for residents.

Recommendations

1. Town should continue to support community development grants and infrastructure improvements which are in concert with the long-range goals of the town as a whole.
2. OBA should become more selective in marketing the village's assets to visitors and investors.
3. Improve the image of Onset through regular policing, good street lighting, and gateway signage at entry points.
4. Building Inspector should encourage the use of Design Guidelines to improve and enhance the image of Onset.
5. Consider creating a design review committee for changes to historic buildings in

Onset.

6. Encourage bed & breakfast establishments.

Industry

Policy

Develop and occupy existing industrial park areas with high quality, growth-oriented businesses.

Recommendations

1. Board of Selectmen should revisit the establishment of the EDIC, review its current effectiveness in meeting town goals, and amend its charter to require better municipal control of industrial lands and higher quality development.
2. Continue to actively pursue appropriate businesses for locations within the industrial parks.
3. Provide planning for infrastructure to support future industrial users.
4. Attract existing marine-oriented businesses in the region to locate to Wareham.
5. Continue to offer Tax-Increment Financing as a subsidy to new industry, as well as other support programs, and require that a percentage of the jobs produced must be filled by Wareham residents.
6. Set policies to attract small, clean, growth-oriented companies into the industrial parks, which will improve the parks, increase the tax base, and provide good-quality employment.

Tourism

Policy

Balance the encouragement of tourism with the desires of residents to retain a quality community environment. Where tourism is beneficial to the community, encourage destination tourism.

Recommendations

1. Town should make use of its motto from "Gateway to Cape Cod" to emphasize the community as an attractive overnight destination.
2. Town should develop an internet site for the purposes of promoting Wareham as a tourist destination.
3. Develop a number of high quality annual events designed to expose the public to the area's amenities and visual attractions; options to utilize include cranberry harvest and the anniversary of the British invasion.
4. Fill market gaps with quality businesses which have a high likelihood of success.

5. Accentuate the natural, historical, and cultural resources of the community to encourage family-oriented tourism.

Agriculture

Policy

Preserve and enhance the cranberry industry as a vital part of the community's fabric and economy.

Recommendations

1. Encourage value-added companies to process cranberries within the town.
2. Pursue methods of maintaining open space around cranberry bogs.
3. Town should restore the abandoned bog adjacent to the high school as an educational facility.
4. Town should encourage the restoration of abandoned acreage to augment current level of production.

Aquaculture

Policy

Encourage aquaculture in appropriate locations, and in a manner which preserves water quality, on-shore property values and aesthetics.

Recommendations

1. Town officials should explore and evaluate methods and programs to expand local shellfish resources.
2. Shellfish Constable work with school officials to utilize students in implementing resource enhancement programs.
3. Continue shellfish relay program until such time as the community is willing to consider new methods of augmenting local shellfish stocks.
4. Town officials set policies on new grow-out areas for private lease and determine appropriate locations.

V. Natural Resources

A. Introduction

Wareham is located on an outwash plain in a temperate environment. The area has a wealth of natural resources. The natural environment is important not only for ecological purposes, but also serves a role in the economy, attracting tourism and allowing commercial and recreational fisheries. Future growth must be balanced with resource protection to keep the area as an attractive place to live.

As development pressures intensify, so does the potential for destruction or damage to the environment. Sound land management policies are essential to produce development which minimizes adverse impacts on natural systems. Planning is especially critical in coastal and wetland areas where much of the wildlife is fragile and cannot tolerate environmental changes. However, due to the beauty and uniqueness of these areas they are in the greatest demand for development.

This chapter contains a description of the natural resources in the community, and proposes activities to protect them for the enjoyment of future residents.

B. Geology, Soils, and Topography

Topography and Geology

Land surfaces in Wareham are predominantly covered by glacial outwash, a reminder of the time when it was covered by glaciers. The land rises gradually from sea level in the south to an altitude of approximately 70 feet in the north, with a few hills above the 100 foot level. There are approximately 57 miles of saltwater shoreline, including over 30 barrier beaches. Good topsoil in Wareham is sparse, being only a few inches in depth and containing a high percentage of sand.

Soils

Nearly all of Wareham is located in the Carver-Peat general soil association. Soils in the town are generally very well drained, with poorly drained soils occurring in low areas. There are five general soil associations in Wareham. A second association is referred to as the Sanded Muck-Tidal Marsh-Scarboro-Peat association. The Gloucester-Essex association is composed of somewhat dry, extremely stony soils formed on glacial till. The Carver-Gloucester association contains dry, sandy and extremely stony soils. The Hinkley-Merrimac association is comprised of dry and somewhat drouthy soils underlain by sand and gravel.

Erosion problems are evident in varying degrees of magnitude in Wareham. The loose nature of the sandy soils can also present problems during excavation activity. At the same time the sandy soils are well drained providing excellent conditions for the construction of septic systems in most areas.

Landscape Character and Vegetation

Wareham's forested land, it's upland marshes which support cranberry growing, and its seaside marshes which support marine life, give the town a varied landscape. A special attribute of the town is its coastal location with fine beaches and excellent small boat harbors both in Onset Bay and at the mouth of the Wareham River. These assets provide not only a

desirable spot for the residents to call their home, but also provide an area which tourists have historically enjoyed.

The vast majority of the town's coastline is in private hands and what is left for the overwhelming majority of residents is shared with tourists. A notable exception is in Onset, where the Supreme Judicial Court granted the beaches to be held only for public purposes under the so-called "1916 Decree". Much of Onset's shore is protected as open space under the terms of that ruling.

C. Water Resources

Surface Water

Wareham has more coastline than any other town in the Commonwealth. There are three major river systems that flow through the town and empty into Buzzards Bay. The Wareham River Basin is made up of the Wankinco and Agawam Rivers. These rivers, which originate in the Myles Standish State Forest, flow southward through a series of ponds, bogs, and swamps to a point where they combine to form the Wareham River. The Wareham River Basin drains an area of approximately 29,795 acres. The Weweantic and Sippican Rivers, along with their tributaries, drain an area of 55,438 acres. Tributaries to the Weweantic and Sippican Rivers include Beaverdam Creek, Cohacket Brook, Crane Brook and Patterson Brook. The drainage area for all three of these major river systems, which includes land in Middleborough, Carver, Rochester, and Wareham, has been extensively developed for cranberry bogs.

The meandering coastline creates numerous coves, bays, rivers, and estuaries, that have become known locally as specific water bodies. Onset Harbor, located in the eastern most part of Wareham, has a drainage basin of 3,240 acres and is the largest and most important of the local water bodies. Other smaller water bodies include Marks Cove, Bournes Cove, Butlers Cove, Broad Cove, Shell Point Bay, Muddy Cove, Bass Cove, Widows Cove, Sunset Cove, Little Harbor, Buttermilk Bay, and the Broad Marsh River area, the Crooked River, and the East River. The town has a Harbor Management Plan which has been accepted by the Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management and the Board of Selectmen.

Salt Marshes

Salt Marshes are extensive in Wareham and amount to approximately 917 acres. Salt marsh systems are very important to many different species of marine life both as a food source and as habitat. Many marine species require estuarine environments to carry out a portion of their life cycle. A variety of water birds also depend on salt marshes as habitat area. Salt marsh also filters and stores nutrients. Broad Marsh is the largest single expanse of salt marsh in the town and is approximately 65 acres in size.

Barrier Beaches

The Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management has defined a barrier beach as a narrow low-lying strip of land that generally consists of coastal beaches and coastal dunes extending parallel to the trend of the coast, and which usually protects nutrient-rich areas behind it. The Town of Wareham has over 30 federal or state designated barrier beaches, amounting to approximately 59 acres. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts discourages development from occurring on barrier beaches because of their sensitive nature, their importance for flood



Wetlands Map

Wetland:

DM	BA	BB	BB-BE	BB-D	BE	BG	CB	D	DM	M	OW	RS	SM	SS	TF	U	WS1	WS2	WS3



5000 0 5000 Feet



damage abatement and their value as wildlife habitat.

Flood Hazard Areas

Wareham is a relatively low lying coastal town and subsequently has a significant portion of its land in the 100 Year Flood Zone as determined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Swift's Beach, Cromesett Point and Onset Island are examples of several velocity zone areas in Wareham that have been developed.

Fresh Water Resources

Freshwater Resources include the freshwater reaches of the following rivers, creeks and ponds: Wankinko River, Agawam River, Beaverdam Creek, Cohacket Brook, Crane Brook, Gibbs Brook, Red Brook, Rose Brook, Stony Run, Blackmore Pond, Glen Charlie Pond, White Island Pond, Dick's Pond, Sand Pond, Sandy Pond, Bartlett Pond, Tremont Pond, Horseshoe Pond, Union Pond, Spectacle Pond, Tihonet Pond, Black Johnny Pond and Agawam Mill Pond.

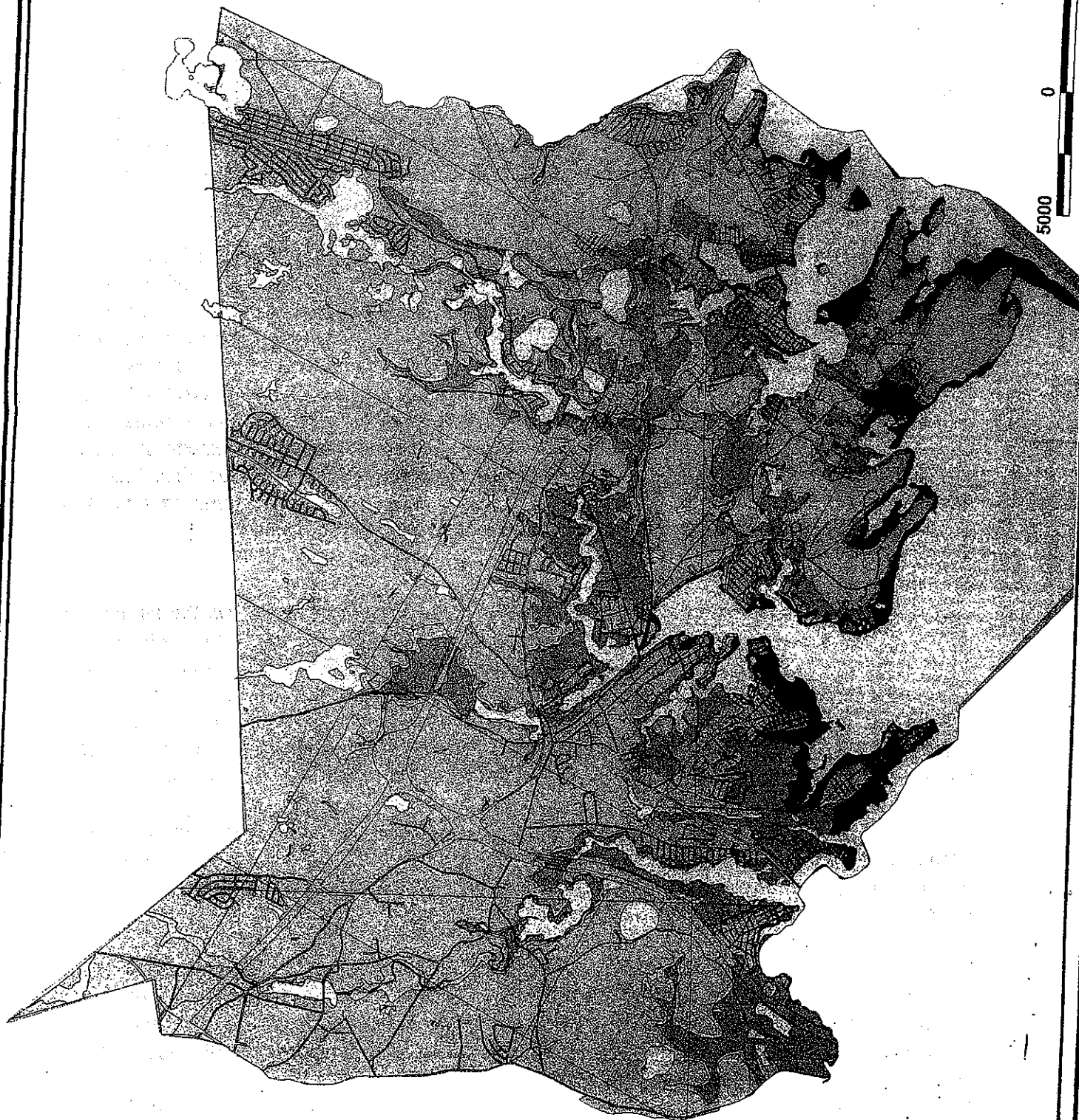
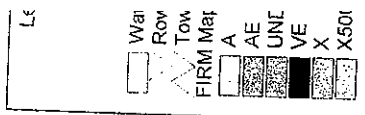
Two ponds in Wareham were evaluated in 1985 under the Massachusetts Lake Classification Program. Glen Charlie Pond was rated as oligotrophic and White Island was rated eutrophic. Oligotrophic generally refers to deep, clear lakes that have low dissolved nutrient content, an abundance of dissolved oxygen, limited communities of shore plants and relatively low plankton productivity. Eutrophic generally refers to highly productive lakes that are rich in dissolved nutrients and often with seasonal deficiencies in dissolved oxygen. The eutrophication of a body of water refers to the natural or artificial addition of nutrients and the effects of added nutrients. Problems associated with eutrophication include nuisance algal blooms (especially blue-green algae), excessive aquatic plant growths, low dissolved oxygen content, degradation of sport fisheries, low transparency, mucky bottoms, and changes in algal species composition and diversity.

Plymouth Aquifer

The Plymouth Aquifer is located in the Wareham outwash plain. It has the largest potential for groundwater supplies in southeastern Massachusetts. The aquifer includes most of Plymouth, plus portions of Kingston, Plympton, Wareham and Bourne. It is composed of sand and gravel deposits that range from 40 to 160 feet thick and that have potential groundwater yields of more than 30 gallons per minute per well. The coarse nature of the deposits results in a situation in which surface water runoff is very low and infiltration rates are high. There is an estimated 540 billion gallons of water stored within the aquifer.

The aquifer underlies the eastern portion of Wareham. The groundwater table in this portion of Wareham ranges from 40 feet below the surface in the north to 10 to 15 feet below the surface near the southern margin and near ponds. Both the Wareham Fire District and the Onset Fire District use the aquifer as their principal source of water.

Zoning in the area is principally low density residential. The RR-130 District covers the area north of the Route 25 extension and east of Charge Pond Road. Minimum lot size in this district is three acres. The area west of Charge Pond Road and north of the Route 25 extension is in a Rural Residential District that has a minimum lot size of 60,000 square feet. While the current zoning will work to protect the groundwater resources of Wareham, there are several large residential developments that were approved prior to the adoption of the RR-130 District that have lot sizes ranging from 4,000 to 10,000 square feet.



5000 0 5000 Feet

Another area of concern for the Wareham portion of the aquifer is the Tri-town Regional Landfill which is located in Carver, near the Wareham town line and on the fringe of the high yield portion of the aquifer. Though the landfill is closed to the public, SEMASS continues to dispose of ash at the site. Leachate from the landfill should be closely monitored to protect against pollution of the aquifer.

D. Vegetation

Forest Land

The undeveloped areas in Wareham are predominantly covered by forest land (52% of the total land area), wetlands (15%) and agricultural and open land (14%).

General Inventory

Hardwood forests found in Wareham, are generally made up of scarlet and black oak, sugar and red maple, white ash, American beech and blackgum. The understory is composed of arrowwood, spicebush, greenbriar, wildgrape, wintergreen, partridge berry, pipsissewa, rose acacia, sheep laurel, inkberry, sassafras, beachplum, huckleberry, blueberry, witch hazel, blackberry, sasparilla, club moss and salt spray rose.

A large area of land is also classified as wetlands. While this is primarily open water (about 50%), it also includes an equal amount of fresh and salt water wetlands. The fresh water wetlands are varied and include shrub swamps, shallow and deep marshes and seasonally flooded flats. Vegetation is also varied. Shrub swamps commonly contain alder, buttonbush, dogwood, willow and sedges. Shallow marshes generally contain emergent vegetation such as cattails, bulrushes, barreed, pickerelweed and arrowhead, in addition to grasses and sedges. Waterlilies and the yellow cowlily also grow in these areas. Salt water wetlands are mostly salt meadows which support cordgrass, saltgrass and black rush.

Agricultural land in Wareham is primarily used for growing cranberries. There are 1,500 acres of active bogs in the Town, with surrounding and associated lands accounting for an additional 6,000 acres.

Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species

The Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program has provided information relative to those species of plants found on the Endangered species list that are known to exist in Wareham or that have been identified in the past in the town.

E. Fisheries and Wildlife

Shellfish

The many small bays, coves, marshes, and rivers in Wareham provide excellent habitat for a variety of shellfish species, such as quahogs, softshell clams, oysters, and scallops. There are 21 shellfish grants in different locations throughout the town including the Wareham River, Cohasset Narrows, Bournes Cove, and Little Harbor. The majority of the shellfishing beds are open to fishing during the winter months although there are areas that remain permanently closed to shellfishing due to poor water quality.

Finfish

Wareham has several anadromous fish runs within its boundaries. Herring, chad and smelt return annually to the major river systems and several smaller brooks in Wareham. The numerous ponds and streams in Wareham contain many of the common freshwater fish species including large mouth bass, small mouth bass, pickerel, yellow and white perch, sunfish, catfish, suckers, and minnows. Coastal areas contain a variety of fish species including popular game fish, such as striped bass, bluefish and flounder.

Coastal areas contain a variety of fish species including popular game fish, such as striped bass, bluefish, and flounder. Other species caught in Wareham waters include tautog, scup, tomcod, and weakfish.

F. Wildlife

The densely wooded areas are habitat for snowshoe hare, deer, cottontail rabbit, gray squirrel, flying squirrel, racoon, ruffed grouse, woodchuck, opossum, skunk and fox. Open areas are used by quail and occasionally pheasant. After being threatened, osprey are again thriving in Wareham. Black ducks, mallards and wood ducks nest along the rivers, swamps, marshes and cranberry bogs. The coastal areas attract a great many migratory ducks and geese. Seagulls are observed in abundance. Swans nest on Mill Pond and many of the cranberry bog reservoirs.

Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species

In addition to the wildlife species that are common in Wareham there are also species that the Massachusetts Natural Heritage Program considers of special concern. This implies that the species could easily become threatened within Massachusetts. These species include the Piping Plover, Osprey and Eastern Box Turtle. A number of rare animal species are known only by their historical occurrence with no current observations on record. These species include the Marbled Salamander and the Northern Diamondback Terrapin (threatened), and the Southern Bog Lemming (special concern).

Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

Wareham has various types of scenic resources and unique environments. One of the most prominent features of Wareham are the acres of cranberry bogs within the town. The cranberry industry is the largest economic business in Wareham and continues to expand. Agricultural lands provide large expanses of undeveloped area both as bog and surrounding woodlands.

Onset Village overlooks Onset Bay from its elevated bluffs providing a visual panorama of the various activities associated with a coastal existence. Beaches, private piers, marinas, and fishing vessels coexist within this moderately protected embayment. The Onset shore is densely developed and becomes heavily populated in summer months.

The Narrows bridge is the crossing point of the Agawam River near the downtown area. Besse Park is located along the edge of the river adjacent to the bridge and is used by recreational fisherman and sightseers. One can view expansive salt marsh along the Agawam river from the bridge.

The Parker Mills Bridge is up stream from the Narrows Bridge and is another scenic

overlook. The Tremont Nail Co., which is a historic mill site, exists at this location. Views of the Narrows Bridge crossing can be seen to the south while views of the freshwater Parker Mills Pond are seen to the north. A fish ladder spans the difference in elevation between the Parker Mill Pond and the brackish tide waters below. Herring utilize this ladder annually in making their run upriver to spawning grounds.

Little Harbor is a barrier beach system which offers excellent views of Buzzards Bay. A valuable estuarine community exists behind the low dunes of this barrier. Shellfish grants are situated in the protected waters of Little Harbor. Little Harbor beach is a popular summer destination for town residents and offers primarily shallow calm waters for swimming. The barrier beach has been overwashed in several areas during past storm events. Efforts have been made to reestablish beach grass on the overwash areas to stabilize the dunes. Erosion problems are also evident along the coastal banks adjacent to Little Harbor Beach. The Little Harbor Area is a unique environment in Wareham and provides wildlife habitat for a wide variety of local fauna.

Horseshoe Pond is an inland freshwater pond with a diversity of wetland habitat. Open water, shallow and deep freshwater marsh, and wooded swamps all exist in and around the pond. The pond was created when the Weweantic river was dammed for the creation of an iron works factory at the site. Remnants of the building foundations and the dam are still in place. The dam at the foot of Horseshoe Pond is in a state of disrepair and is not actively managed. Water levels in the pond fluctuate depending on rainfall conditions and cranberry industry activity. Town and privately held conservation land occupy frontage along the pond in several locations. The value of this pond is its natural undisturbed shores which are aesthetically attractive and valuable wildlife habitat. The Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program has identified a portion of the pond and surrounding land as estimated habitat of rare wetlands wildlife.

Tremont Dam is an earthen water control structure on the Weweantic River. Tremont pond is above the dam and town owned property exists below the dam. The town owned property, which was a mill site at one point, is in the process of being transformed into a recreational facility for children's programs. This property has frontage along the Weweantic River which allows canoe access. The Tremont Dam is also currently used to generate electricity.

G. Environmental Concerns

Hazardous Waste Sites

There are 32 sites listed by the Department of Environmental Protection Site Management and Permits Section under the Massachusetts Contingency Plan and the MGL Chapter 21E.

Landfill

The Tri-Town Landfill, which was closed to the public in 1993, contributes leachate to adjacent wetlands areas, namely the Wankinko River, which flows south into Wareham. The SEMass facility in Rochester is a rubbish burning plant that generates a large volume of smoke that can be smelled in Wareham.

Erosion

Coastal erosion is an environmental problem in Wareham which has become a growing concern over the last several years.

Flooding

Wareham, as a waterfront community on Buzzard's Bay, is subject to flooding problems during coastal storm events. Flooding also occurs along inland river systems but does not result in the level of damage to personal property as is seen along the coast.

Sedimentation

Sedimentation of Wareham's wetlands and waterways has become a concern in many locations. The cost associated with dredge projects has made the town dependent on aid from other government agencies for funding.

Development Impacts

Water quality problems directly related to coastal development in Wareham have resulted in the closure of shellfishing areas. Specific sources include road runoff, septic systems, pollutants from industry, and the accumulation of discarded debris.

Ground and Surface Water Pollution

Wareham currently utilizes a combination of ways of handling its sewage. The Wareham Water Pollution Control Facility serves the main areas of town including Onset, Pinehurst, Swift's Beach, Hamilton Beach, Indian Mound, and sections of Cranberry Highway. Other parts of Wareham use subsurface sewage disposal systems which occur on individual lots.

H. Natural Resources Goals, Policies, and Recommendations

Goal

Preserve and protect Wareham's unique natural open space resources

Policy

Protect Wareham's extensive water resources including coastal waters, river systems, drinking water supply, ponds and wetlands against industrial pollution, commercial exploitation, and public abuse.

Recommendations

1. Board of Selectmen and Board of Health should support efforts to provide sewer to areas with failing septic systems and other high density areas served by septic systems, in conformance with sewer facilities planning.
2. Planning Board should adopt regulations regarding stormwater runoff control in new developments and support the remediation of existing stormwater runoff points which adversely impact shellfish beds and water quality.
3. Town should amend Zoning Bylaws regarding stormwater runoff control in site plan review process.
4. Board of Selectmen should act through Municipal Maintenance to manage nitrogen

impacts to the Agawam and Wareham Rivers through upgrade of Wareham Wastewater Treatment Plant.

5. Town should continue to explore strategies for controlling nitrogen inputs to Onset Bay and Weweantic River estuary.
6. Board of Health and Conservation Commission identify and eliminate other non-point and point pollution sources which threaten water quality.
7. Board of Health develop a program to upgrade failing septic systems in areas which will not be sewered in the near future.
8. School Department should conduct a baseline water quality study for streams and great ponds, and periodically monitor water quality (High School).
9. Town should work with the Cape Cod Cranberry Growers Association to ensure that agricultural practices do not adversely impact waterways or other natural resources.
10. Planning Board should evaluate land uses allowed in the public water supply watershed under existing zoning.
11. Town officials should prioritize dredging projects in coastal waterways, and begin the permitting process in anticipation of future needs and funding opportunities.
12. Work with local environmental groups to develop baseline data on water quality of river systems where they enter the town and at strategic locations therein.
13. Bylaws should be amended to further restrict development within federally designated flood zones.

Policy

Acquire strategically located parcels of land to prevent development in inappropriate areas, and amend zoning to better protect sensitive areas.

Recommendation

Town should acquire land along Wareham's major Rivers: Weweantic, Red Brook, Agawam, Wankinco.

Policy

Permanently protect lands containing endangered or threatened species as identified by the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program.

Recommendations

1. Conservation Commission should acquire lands containing rare species: Harlow Brook Bogs, Agawam River, Upper Weweantic River around Horseshoe Pond, Stoney Point Dike, Spectacle Pond, Dick's Pond, and Long Beach Point.
2. Town should continue to support Coastal Plain Ponds Program of Wildlands Trust of Southeastern Massachusetts, highlighting Dick's and Spectacle Pond.

VI. Open Space and Conservation

A. Introduction

The 1997 Wareham Open Space and Recreation Plan stressed that "preserving parcels of land as open space and providing recreational facilities for town residents is an integral component of preserving town character, natural resources values, and the overall quality of life for Wareham residents." In planning for the future of the town, the elements of open space, natural resources, conservation, and recreation are closely related and interwoven.

Values of Open Space

The value of open space has been shown in many ways, from academic and government studies to everyday experience. Open space protection leads to financial benefits, recreational opportunities, and to protection of public health. It provides visual respite and ecological benefits. Public open space allows residents the opportunity to be removed from congestion, which can have positive effects on physical and mental health.

In dollar terms, open space increase property values of adjacent properties, makes tourism more attractive, and reduces demand for public services. The Commonwealth Research Group in 1995 found that on average for every dollar of revenue raised, the towns spent \$1.14 in services for the residential sector, \$0.43 for the commercial/industrial sector (which in turn encouraged more residential development and resulting costs), and \$0.42 for forest, farm, and open space. This means that protection of open space is sound fiscal policy for a municipality. Other studies have shown more favorable ratios for protected open space.

Open space works to attenuate the impacts of storms and manmade uses. Stormwater runoff through a forested area creates less erosion than through a neighborhood. Impervious areas causes increased peak runoff, which can lead to erosion and flooding. It is important to preserve open space to allow natural systems to function properly.

B. Responsible Agencies

The following are the State, municipal, and private agencies involved in preservation of open space:

Conservation Commission - 7-member appointed commission responsible for administration of the Wetlands Protection Act and Wareham Wetlands Protective Bylaw. The commission also operates a Conservation Fund, supported through application fees, which can be used to purchase land for protection of valuable habitat.

Open Space Committee - Committee responsible for implementing the 1997 Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management - State Agency which advocates for good land use policy in coastal areas. The agency will occasionally make available grant funds for purchase of parcels which protect coastal resources.

Massachusetts Division of Fish & Wildlife - State agency which purchases open space for recreational, hunting, and habitat protection purposes.

Buzzards Bay Project - Quasi-public organization dedicated to improving water quality in Buzzards Bay. The Project is currently engaged in a grant program to identify and secure conservation easements on lands within the Onset Bay watershed.

Wildlands Trust of Southeastern Massachusetts - Private non-profit organization which owns land that has been permanently preserved as open space. The agency accepts charitable donations, gifts of land, and conservation restrictions. Currently has ownership/control of 15 parcels in Wareham.

Board of Assessors - Local board responsible for administration of Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B tax designation which reduces tax burden on owners of open space in exchange for temporary preservation.

In addition, private landowners have made significant contributions of land to protect open space.

C. Methods of Preservation

Some open space in Wareham is protected through a variety of temporary and permanent means. Below is a description of the methods which have been used to preserve open space in the community.

Acquisition

The most straightforward way of preserving open space is outright purchase. Wareham's updated Open Space Plan makes the town eligible to apply for leveraged funds through the State's Self-Help program and the Land & Water Conservation Fund. Demographic indicators dictate the town's required match on grant funds. Presently, the town is eligible for 62% reimbursement of acquisition costs. The Town has not utilized this program.

The federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Enhancement Act (ISTEA) can be used to purchase scenic views, especially if they are visible from major routes through town. The Act expires in FY98, and it is unknown whether it will be reauthorized.

Chapter Lands

Most open land in Wareham is not permanently protected. Short-term protection under General Law Chapter 61 (forestry), 61A (agriculture), 61B (open space/ recreation) has been granted to a large number of parcels, most associated with the cranberry industry. Other lands under this tax designation include golf course properties, Parkwood Beach Association lands, and a few privately held parcels. These statutes enable property owners to gain preferential tax assessment in exchange for preserving their land as open space for a temporary period. Such properties are partially or fully developable at some time in the future.

Article 97

Land is considered protected if it falls under Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution. The Article was added in 1972 to prevent the taking of public park, recreation, and conservation lands for other purposes without approval of the local Conservation Commission, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting, and a two-thirds vote of both houses of the legislature. For all intents and purposes, and lands in this category are considered permanently protected.

The Parks Department manages several town parks. These parcels are not protected from development by deed, but are effectively preserved by the use as public recreation areas. Onset parks and bluffs are protected by the 1916 Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Decree, but would also fall under this category. The Minot Forest was dedicated by Town Meeting in perpetuity for use as a park. This dedication would place the forest under the protection of Article 97.

Conservation Restrictions

Conservation restrictions can provide for permanent or temporary preservation of land. Land which is owned by a conservation land trust, such as the Wildlands Trust of SE MA, is considered permanently protected.

A conservation restriction or easement is a legally binding agreement under G.L.C. 184, s. 31-33, between a landowner and an organization, where the owner agrees to restrict all or some of the use of the property, usually from further development or subdivision. Unlike Chapter 61, it is permanent and travels with the deed. The property value is usually lowered, resulting in reduced property tax along with potential income and estate tax benefits. Conservation restrictions are required by state law to be honored, as long as a conservation value (such as scenery, wildlife, or water quality protection) can be demonstrated. For a town unable to afford to purchase property, it may be a lower cost solution to open space protection. Wareham currently has two parcels under conservation restriction.

Land Bank

Wareham, like many communities, is subject to the fiscal constraints of Proposition 2½. This puts the town in a very limited position to purchase open space lands through general budget allocations. An approach which would fund open space without a 2½ override is offered by the land bank concept. The program has been used in Massachusetts since the early 1980s on Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. It calls for a tax on all property transfers (in excess of \$100,000). Funds are set aside for the acquisition of land for open space and other needs such as affordable housing.

In 1997, several communities sought legislative approval to create similar land banks. The proposed Cape Cod Land Bank is intended to protect open space and aquifer lands, as well as quality of life and community character. A similar bill has been filed to allow all communities in the state to form land banks. Popular support appears to favor passage of the bill. Opponents, most vocal of whom are associated with the real estate industry, are concerned about potential adverse impacts to the local economy.

D. Open Space Inventory

With its many rivers and coastal embayments, Wareham contains an abundant diversity of natural resources and scenic landscapes. Human impacts, however, have threatened the quality of those resources. Many of the densely settled areas of the town were developed prior to the adoption of zoning or the availability of public sewer. The outcome has been overdevelopment of land which has led to adverse impacts on the natural environment. Seasonal population increases also contribute to environmental impacts. In addition, residents of nearby inland communities visit Wareham in the summer to enjoy its coastline and beaches.

Because many of the neighborhoods were developed at higher densities than are currently allowed, open space plays an important role in the life of the community. An indicator of quality of life to which many residents refer is the feeling that the town has significant open space. The many saltwater inlets, ponds, wetlands, agricultural fields, and cranberry bogs, and private greenspace provide visual access to open areas. However, much of this land is totally unprotected and could be developed at any time. Lands which are protected in perpetuity, including the town parks, town forest, and Onset beaches and bluffs (protected by a 1916 Supreme Court ruling) allow residents a change from the built environment.

Wareham lands which are protected in perpetuity include:

Mass. Audubon Society	141 Ac.
Wildlands Trust of SE MA	265 Ac.
Town Conservation land	104 Ac.
Town Parks	19 Ac.
Onset/Wareham Fire Districts	353 Ac.
New England Forestry	41 Ac.
Conservation Restrictions	38 Ac.
Army Corps of Engineers	Stony Point Dike (filled tidal land)
Total Permanently Preserved	961 Acres

The town has a total area of 23,940 acres. According to the Buzzards Bay Project, Wareham has a lower percentage of permanently protected land than any other community in the Buzzards Bay watershed.



Protected Op

Legend

—	Roads
△	Bounda
▨	Town C
▩	Private
□	Water



Warren, F



In addition to the permanently protected land, many thousands of acres of land are held under Chapter 61 (forested lands), 61A (agricultural lands), and 61B (open space/recreation). The cranberry industry is the dominant holder of chapter lands. The following are the total acreages in each designation:

Chapter 61	1,085 Ac.
Chapter 61A	6,071 Ac.
<u>Chapter 61B</u>	<u>523 Ac.</u>
Total Chapter Lands	7,679 Acres

The combination of protected and chapter lands totals 8,640 acres, or 36.1% of the total land area. This figure indicates that chapter lands play a crucial role in the current perception of open space in the community. Long-term efforts to preserve open space should focus on obtaining permanent protection of many parcels in the chapter designation.

Lands held in "chapter" protection are restricted from development only at the discretion of the owner. During the first 10 years that a property is in the program, there is a declining penalty for removing the protected status. Nearly all local parcels in the program have passed the inception period. Subsequently, in order for a property to be developed, the owner would have to pay current year property taxes plus the taxes for the previous four years. As property values and development pressures increase, it is likely that some owners of will opt to leave the program and develop their properties.

Discussion on Open Space

Wareham's dependence on the cranberry industry and on private voluntary preservation of green space and open vistas is precarious and will eventually be threatened by development pressures. The important source of open space provided by cranberry and agricultural land is not permanently protected open space since the resource depends on the continued viability of the industry.

Even many town-owned playgrounds and parks do not have permanent protection. In addition to the bogs, a small amount of private lands and the golf courses get some tax relief, but most private undeveloped land is assessed at full value for tax purposes. Land taxes on a large tract can reach a level which forces the owner to sell or develop the open space. The Town needs to determine the value of open space to the quality of life in the community, and should create tax policies which encourage preservation of valuable parcels.

Town citizens have had the experience of seeing land they thought was town open space developed into private housing. This happened in the early 1990s when the Forest View Nursing Home was developed on land adjacent to the Minot Forest. Prior to development, the property was covered with trees, and many residents assumed it to be part of the Town's protected land. This scenario should remind residents that there is no guarantee that unprotected open space will remain in a natural state.

Survey results indicate residents' desire to protect the community's open space. A 1991 citizen survey strongly urged that Wareham require open space for all housing developments and maintain the town's rural character; protect the natural environment and

recreational amenities; and preserve its open space over water, bogs, uplands, wetlands, and shorelines. Respondents to a 1996 Open Space survey supported these findings, and gave highest priority to permanently protecting open space and acquiring land to protect drinking water supplies. The 1997 Master Plan Survey also indicated a strong desire to preserve open space.

The Open Space Committee spent more than a year updating the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan. The committee remains active as an advocate for protecting Wareham's open areas. The Town should pursue every opportunity to acquire open space, whether by gift, charitable contribution, or fee-simple purchase. It is suspected that many residents are not aware of the tenuous nature of existing open space. Public education in this area is important. To paraphrase Walt Whitman, new land is not being made any more - and some people won't miss open space until it has disappeared.

The 1997 Open Space and Recreation Plan contains a highly detailed description of the open space priorities of the Town. Anyone interested in further discussion of the community's open space priorities should consult the Open Space Plan.

E. Open Space & Conservation Recommendations

Goal 1

Preserve and protect Wareham's unique natural open space resources

Policies

1. Protect Wareham's water resources including coastal waters, river systems, drinking water supply, ponds and wetlands, along with open fields and green spaces.
2. Develop a linked system of green belts along rivers and streams and between land use areas, wherever possible.
3. Encourage the continuing viability of cranberry and agricultural farming.
4. Develop a strategy of specific goals and techniques to implement the action plan expressed in the 1997 Open Space and Recreation Plan, with a goal of preserving at least one major parcel annually.
5. Discourage development in areas which are not served by public water and sewer service.

Recommendations

1. Town or Water Districts should acquire land in public water supply watershed to protect drinking water.
2. Acquire land along Wareham's major rivers: Weweantic, Red Brook, Agawam, and Wankinko.
3. Review all parcels in tax title to see if they could be used for conservation and/or recreation.

4. Target preservation of parcels adjacent to existing permanently protected open space to create large contiguous tracts and wildlife corridors.
5. Establish a land bank through such means as transfer fees if state enabling legislature is enacted, to allow the town to purchase appropriate open spaces.
6. Establish an annual town appropriation for a dedicated open space fund that supports opportunities to acquire critical lands for conservation.
7. Encourage tax incentives to preserve open space, and maintain an open door policy to consider all private, innovative preservation proposals.
8. Develop a Wareham Conservation Restriction Program as a conservation tool on private lands.
9. Support the formation of a private land trust and increase involvement in conservation activities of the Audubon Society and Wildlands Trust of SE Mass.
10. Amend Zoning Bylaws to encourage use of environmentally sensitive subdivision design to protect open space in new subdivisions.
11. Seek conservation restrictions on cranberry uplands to allow agricultural activities, but preserve the land from development.

Goal 2:

Preserve Wareham's character, rural areas, and quality of life.

Policies

1. Encourage re-use of abandoned buildings instead of new construction.
2. Protect visual access to the waterfront.
3. Designate scenic outlooks and viewing spots for protection, along with scenic rivers.

Recommendations

1. Conservation Commission should explore options for preserving Wicket's Island in Onset Bay
2. Conservation Commission prepare a wildlife management plan for Stoney Point Dike
3. Consider an "adopt a stream" or "adopt a scenic outlook" campaign for civic groups and businesses.
4. Prioritize important views for protection and consider making ISTEPA application to implement permanent protection.
5. Utilize the State's Scenic Road Program to preserve the rural character in outlying areas.

Goal 3:

Improve public awareness of the importance of Wareham's open space resources.

Policies

1. Encourage the School Department to continue to develop school curricula that utilizes the outdoor environment as a classroom to educate young people on civic, biological, ecological, environmental, economic, and aesthetic values of preserving open space.
2. Develop community programs such as open space tours and natural history walks.
3. Emphasize the open space attractions of Wareham in literature and brochures which are designed to attract tourists and new businesses.
4. Promote an Open Space Month in the Town as an annual event.
5. Private citizens could establish a support group such as Friends-of-Open-Space to advocate for preservation activities.

Recommendations

1. Promote an understanding of environmental issues such as recycling, water conservation, toxic waste reduction, and air quality.
2. Allocate within town government responsibility for public awareness of aesthetic, ecological, and sound-fiscal realities of protected open space.

VII. Historical and Archeological Resources

A. Introduction

Wareham's history and cultural resources date back to the mid 1700's. The Town was settled during the colonial period as a fishing/farming community. Early industry included a grist mill, salt works, ship building, and iron works. These industries shaped the town both physically and culturally. Wareham's railways, waterways, and waterfront provide evidence of its historical development with traditions of agriculture, marine activity and industry. Wareham is a leader in the cranberry industry, the marine shoreline is one of the longest in the state, and Tremont nail company still produces iron products.

Wareham, incorporated in 1739, is recognized as the Gateway to Cape Cod, at the mouth of the Cape Cod canal on Buzzards Bay. Preservation activities are organized by three local agencies: the Historical Commission, Historical District Commission and the Historical Society.

Historical Commission - Town-appointed commission which oversees historic preservation activities in the community. Commission is working to complete a local inventory of all historic structures and to increase awareness of Wareham's historic significance. The Commission was formed in October 1993.

Historic District Commission - Town-appointed commission responsible for protecting the integrity of the Town's three historic districts. All construction, alteration or demolition of any building in an historic district must be approved by the Historic District Commission.

Historical Society - A private non-profit agency which owns several historic properties and structures, most of which are located in the Center Park Historic District. The Society recently relocated Union Chapel from Great Neck Road to a site on Main Street.

In addition to the above agencies, several residents have expressed interest in creating an historical preservation society in Onset. Many of the Victorian homes in the village area date back to the turn of the century, making them eligible for State historic status.

Past Preservation Efforts

Some of the Town's historical resources have been placed on the National Register with benefits of national recognition, limited protection from federally funded projects and matching grants for restoration purposes. Developing a complete inventory of historic properties and sites, over one hundred years old, is an ongoing process. Each property listing contains a photograph, report sheet on its condition, and recommendations to protect the structure in the future.

Three historic districts exist, all of which are located near the center of town. Center Park and Parker Mills Historic Districts cover the area around Old Town Hall and the Tremont Nail Factory. Significant properties include the William Fearing house, the Tremont Nail Company and the Fearing Tavern, where tours are run during the summer months. The Historic District Commission is studying the possibility of extending the boundaries of the two districts to include more historic properties. The Town needs to explore alternatives to

protect its historic properties.

The Narrows Historic District focuses on the historic waterfront area on Main Street near Besse Park. Development activities in the districts must be consistent with design requirements and guidelines set up to protect the historic integrity of the areas. When the historic inventory is completed, the Town may wish to extend the design guidelines to cover all historic properties. Compliance throughout Wareham could enhance the historical image of a town which can be proud of its past.

In 1989, the Town celebrated its 250th Anniversary with festivities lasting over a week. A highlight was the re-enactment of the British invasion of 1814. This was an historic event that simulated the original British landing at the Narrows, amidst the 24 local militia that could not contain them. The British soldiers marched up Main Street shooting rounds from their muskets, searching buildings, and taking local selectmen hostage. The British retreated to Besse Park with the hostages after being fired upon and hearing additional militia were on the way. This re-enactment was well received by the large crowds of townspeople and visitors that gathered for this historical event.

B. Historic Properties Inventory

National Register of Historic Places

Properties of national significance may be designated by the Department of the Interior for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. Below is a listing of all Wareham properties of local, state, or national significance which appear on the Register.

<u>Historic Place</u>	<u>Location</u>
Conants Hill Site	end of Station Street
Parker Mills Historic District	Cranberry Hwy & Mayflower Ridge Dr
Tobey Homestead	Main Street & Sandwich Road
Tremont Nail Factory District	21 Elm Street

Massachusetts Historical Commission Properties

Wareham contains many other properties which have significant historical value which do not appear on the National Register. The Massachusetts Historical Commission has inventoried such properties across the state. The inventory is designed to record information on the location, appearance, condition and history of the resource, including the people and activities associated with them over time. It provides an evaluation of the significance relative to similar properties in a local or statewide context. Properties are listed in the State Register of Historic Places only when they receive one of several historical designations as established under law. Below is the inventory of Wareham properties categorized by the MHC as historic.

Historic Place

Center Park Historic District
Narrows Historic District

Location

Penn Central railroad and Main Street
Main St. From Agawam Rd. on the north,
to Warren Ave on the south, bounded to
the east by the Wareham River

On-I-Set Wigwam	Crescent Place, Onset
Tremont Nail Factory District	21 Elm Street
Tremont Nail Store	21 Elm Street
Cranberry Highway Bridge	Parker Mills Pond
Crocker, Wadsworth House	64 Elm Street
Fearing Hill Road Bridge	Weweantic River, South Wareham
Morton, Josiah - Burgess, Ebenezer House	13 Great Neck Rd. East Wareham
Gibbs Mansion	Great Neck Rd. East Wareham
Fearing House	Great Neck Rd. East Wareham
Bates, Barnabes House	Great Neck Rd. East Wareham
Hall House	Great Neck Rd. East Wareham
Great Neck Road	(loc. numbers 102 - 117) East Wareham
Union Chapel	Main Street Center Park District
Wareham Schoolhouse #6	Main Street Center Park District
Agawam Cemetery	Great Neck Rd. East Wareham
Broad Salt Marsh	Great Neck Rd. East Wareham
Tobey, George Oakes Jr. Library	75 High Street
U.S.Post Office - Wareham Branch	248 Main Street
Greer Lumber Yard Shed and Storehouse	Main Street
Tobey, Joshua B. Retail Store	Main Street
Gurney Brothers Granary	Main Street
Hurley Fuel Company Garage	Main Street
Thacher, Rev. Rowland House	Main Street
Tobey-Fearing-Bliss Burial Ground	Main Street, South Wareham
Main Street Bridges over Conrail	Main Street, West Wareham
Marion Road Bridge	Weweantic River at Briarwood Beach
Stone Bridge	East River, Onset
Onset Avenue Bridge over Conrail	Point Independence, Onset
Pierceville Road Bridge over Conrail	Tremont District
Route 28 Bridge	Weweantic River - Five Corners
Route 6 Bridge	Agawam River
Sandwich Road Bridge	Wareham River
Station Street Bridge/dam	Horseshoe Pond in South Wareham
Weweantic River Bridge	Western Bridge at Briarwood Beach

Archaeological Resources

It is believed that Wareham was a summer home for Native Americans for many centuries. The waterfront location provided access to abundant food sources during the warm weather months. As such, there are numerous archeological sites in the Town. Wicket's Island is thought to be a burial site for Native Americans, who appear to have preferred east facing slopes with sandy soils.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission maintains an inventory of all known

archeological sites in the State. In order to protect them from vandalism, the locations are not available to the public.

~~Potential impacts to archaeological sites by proposed projects come under review under~~ Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act, or Massachusetts Burial legislation. In most cases the Historical Commissions would be contacted for review.

Other Cultural and Historic Resources with preservation activity

Wareham sites that are future candidates for historic designation include all properties which will be listed in the local properties inventory. The Historical Commission is currently seeking to list all structures in excess of 100 years old, and wishes to identify structures more than 50 years old to be targeted for future preservation.

C. Threats to Historic and Archeological Resources

The lack of a comprehensive historic inventory presents a great threat to these resources, as they can be destroyed without any recourse by preservation authorities. Future growth and development within the town could be a threat to the preservation of historic landscapes and structures. Activities such as commercial development, subdivisions, recreational facilities, water facilities, sewer development, and public works projects have the potential to adversely affect historic and cultural resources.

The most dominant threat to archeological resources comes from amateur collectors, who may disturb a site and remove important components of the resource before the location has been properly investigated. The Massachusetts Historical Commission is in the process of attempting to have a law created which would require a permit for any archeological digging. Even with such a law, many collectors will continue to look for archeological sites without proper authority.

D. Historical Resources Community Goals, Policies, and Recommendations

Policy

The Town should identify and protect significant historical and archaeological resources.

Recommendations

1. Historical Commission should complete inventory of all historic resources in the town.
2. Under the direction of the Town Clerk, a town archive committee should identify and inventory all historical public records.
3. Historic public records should be made available for legal, historical, and general research organizations.
4. Town should create bylaws protecting historical resources from alteration or demolition without approval of the Historical Commission.

5. Develop a timely and efficient review process for proposed alterations to historic structures.
6. Historical Commission, Historic District Commission and Historical Society should coordinate responsibilities to ensure adequate protection of historic resources.
7. Investigate the possibility of permitting exceptions to Building Code requirements to encourage historically accurate renovation of historic buildings.
8. Consider providing tax incentives to encourage proper maintenance of inventoried historic buildings which are not listed on a historic register.

Policy

Target Specific projects for preservation activities

Recommendations

1. Support short-term efforts to restore the Tobey Homestead; if the project is not proven viable by the year 2001, the Town should take action to remove the blighted structure from the downtown.
2. Encourage the Historical Society to acquire period pieces for the buildings in the Center Park District to encourage ongoing tourist activity.
3. Town should consider providing grant writing services through the Planning Department or Community Development Department to assist property owners who wish to preserve historic structures but cannot afford to do so.
4. Encourage adherence to historical guidelines for building renovations within Onset Village and other relevant locations.

Policy

Increase public awareness of the significant history of Wareham and its role in the early development of New England.

Recommendations

1. Promote the historic resources of the town through visitor brochures and other media.
2. Historical Society should publish a Historical Newsletter that identifies key history events and tours in addition to listing historical and cultural locations.
3. Support the development of a historical complex at the Center Park District (Town Green) area for tours. The complex would include the Fearing Tavern, Tremont Nail Company Store, Tremont Nail Factory, Methodist Meeting House, School House #6, Great Neck Union Chapel, Old Town Hall and the Town Green. The Captain John Kendrick Museum at the other end of town would be part of this complex. A sidewalk system, crosswalks and parking should encompass the complex area to allow walking tours and charter bus parking. The touring season should be expanded to three seasons with as needed during the winter months.

4. Support regular events that celebrate the historic significance of Wareham. Such events may include re-enacting the British Landing of 1814, a "Victorian Day" in Onset, and an "Old Home Day" for families with strong Wareham ties.

VIII. Recreation

A. Introduction

Recreation plays an important role in the well-being of Wareham residents. Recreational activities develop confidence, leadership skills, and cooperation among participants. They also help reduce stress and promote good health. Alternative forms of recreation such as theater, music, crafts, and art encourage creativity and holistic development.

Recreational needs have long been considered a priority within the community. To that end, the Town established the Wareham Recreation Department in 1988 with the specific goals of refurbishing existing playgrounds and providing pre-school activities. Initially, the Department consisted of a part time director and a shared departmental secretary. Today, the department consists of a full time director, a part time events coordinator, and a part time secretary. The department also relies heavily on volunteers whose numbers vary throughout the year. Programs now include a variety of activities for all ages.

All monies raised through program fees, fund raising efforts and donations are deposited into a revolving fund. These funds pay the operating expenses for all department programs, activities, and equipment. Funding for staff salaries, including beach lifeguards, is provided through the Town budget. The Town also provides funding to offset special town events such as the annual Christmas parade.

Trends In Recreation

Since 1988, the Department's goals have evolved. Increased demand for recreational opportunities has caused the department to shift its emphasis from preschool children to a much broader spectrum of age groups. Program offerings have also changed, and now include boating, gymnastics, martial arts, and lifeguard certification.

Indoor Recreation

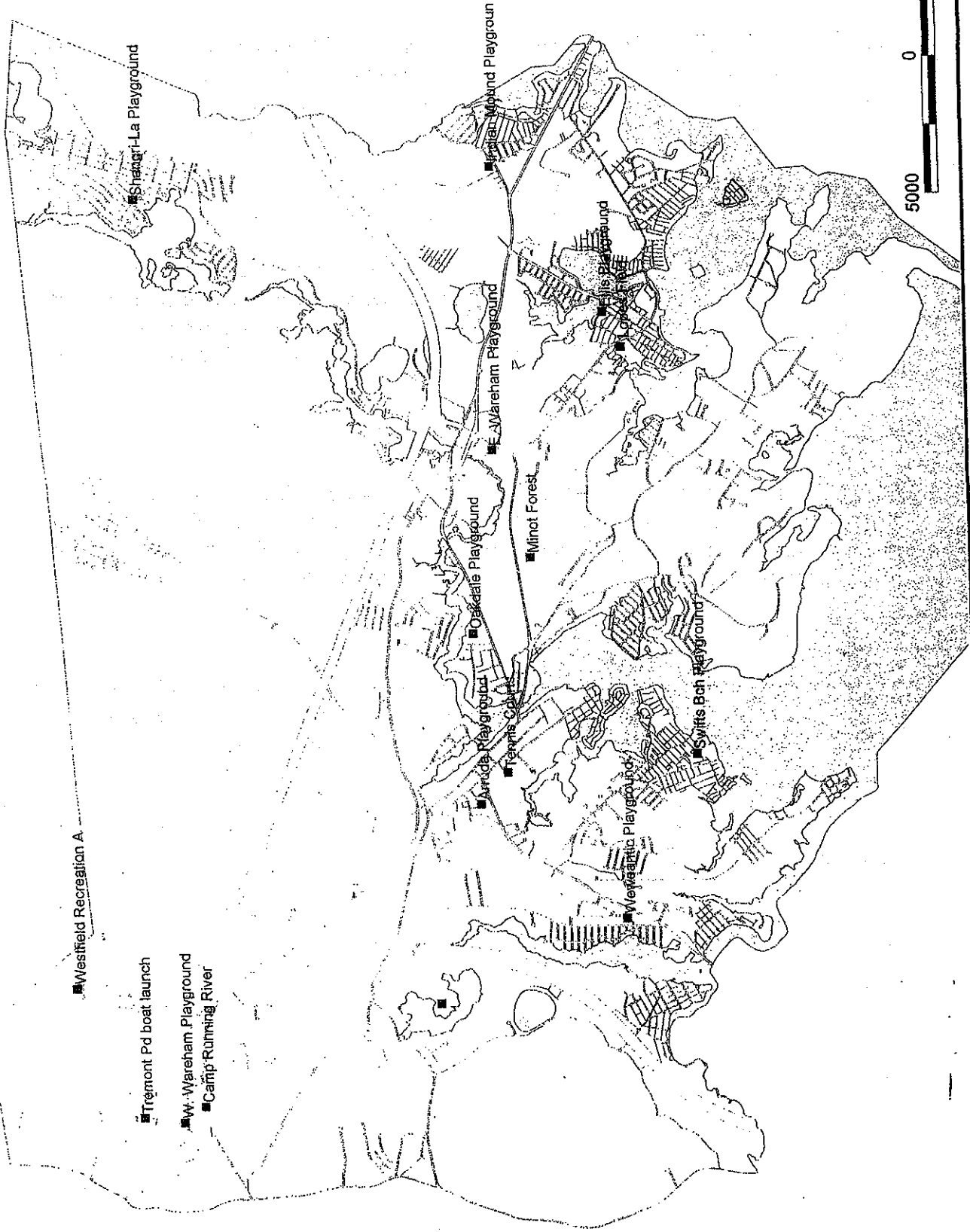
Indoor recreation programs are run in the Multi-Service Center. This new facility will permit a more efficient operation of the Recreation Department, as the larger space allows activities to be allocated to specific rooms so they do not have to be removed daily.

The department offers a wide area of programs for all ages groups. As an example, the 1997 summer brochure lists 25 different programs, several play programs for children and more than a dozen special events.



Legend

- Rec are
- Bounda
- ▨ Water
- ▧ Row



Outdoor Recreation

Playgrounds

Outdoor recreation is provided at a number of locations. The Town maintains eight playgrounds, at scattered locations throughout the community. They include the following:

Richard H Arruda Memorial Playground
Indian Mound Beach
Lopes Field
Oakdale Playground

Shangri-La Playground
Swifts Beach
Westfield Playground
Weweantic Shores

Athletic Fields

There are also a number of athletic fields, most of which are concentrated near the center the town. Maintenance and scheduling of field space is done by the Recreation Department and the School Department. The Town has formed a Fields & Grounds Committee to oversee long-term management and expansion of recreation areas. Existing playing fields are listed below:

Decas School Fields
Minot Forest School
Lopes Field
Spillane Field

Kelley Field
Hanes Field
Westfield

In recent years, it has become apparent that the existing field space is not large enough to meet demand. New fields are needed. To meet this demand, the Town is proceeding with two facilities. In 1996, a new multipurpose field was constructed behind the Minot Forest School. The 325' X 325' field will permit one regulation soccer pitch or several smaller events simultaneously. Plans are being formulated to add a second field adjacent to this facility. It is a policy of the town that all athletic fields should have irrigation.

The second part of the response to recreation demand is the planned Westfield Recreation Area. Town Meeting Voters funded and approved a master plan for the facility on a 45-acre tract off Charlotte Furnace Road. When completed, the facility will provide eight field surfaces for various sports, as well as court facilities, a pedestrian trail, and playground for small children. The facility has the potential to become the centerpiece of Wareham's recreation areas.

Cost of the Westfield project has been estimated at \$3.7 million. Due to fiscal constraints and other pressing capital needs of the Town, it is unrealistic to expect funding for the project to be provided through the local governmental budget. Outside State and private sources should be pursued to provide vast majority of funding to build the facility.

In addition to parks and play fields, the Recreation Department also provides lifeguards at four Town beaches. These beaches include Onset Beach, Little Harbor, Swifts Beach, and Pinehurst Beach. The department oversees training and certification of town lifeguards.

Activities for young children during summer months has always been an issue for the



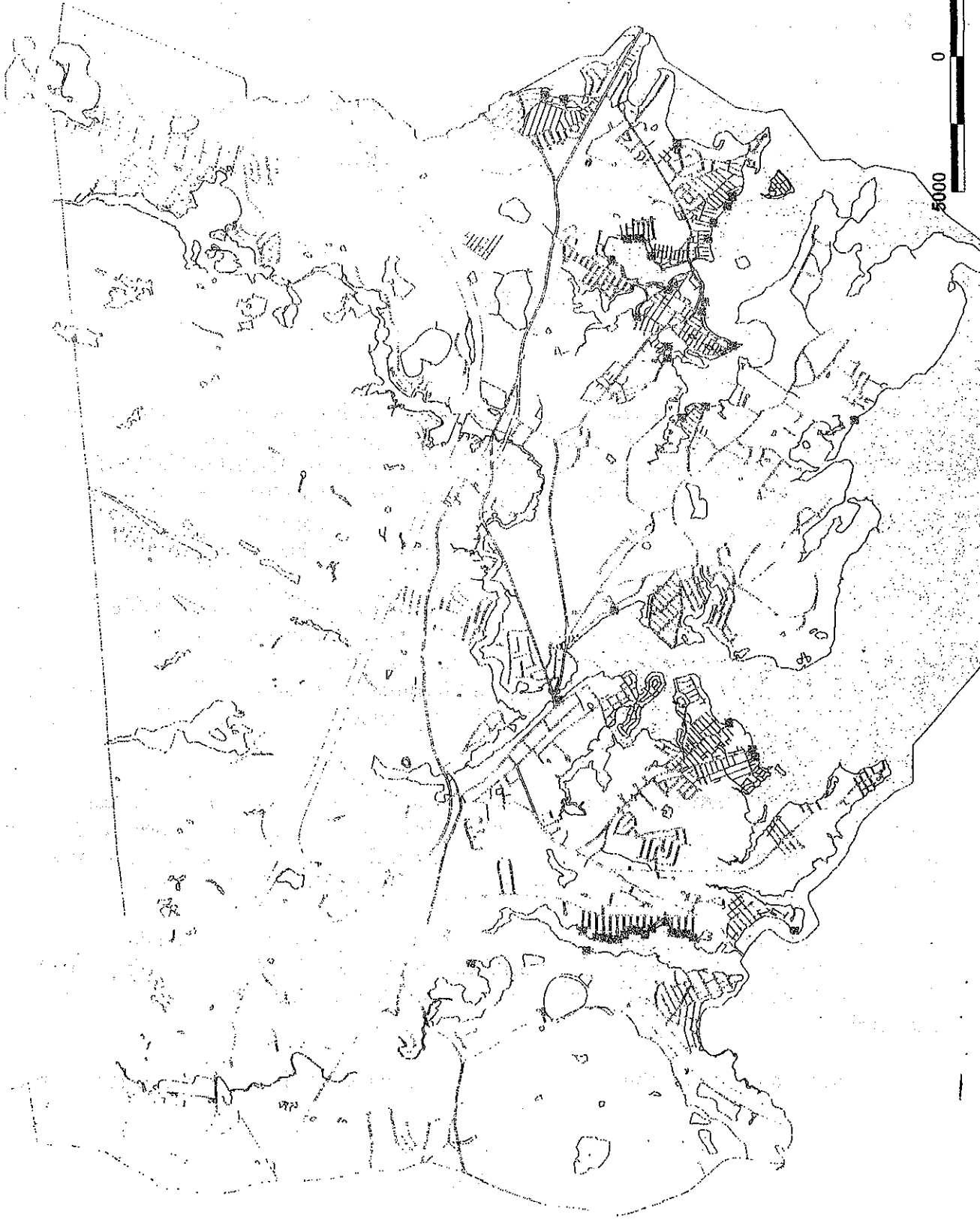
Public Shoreline
Access Points

Legend

- Shore access
- Boundary
- Water
- Roads



Feet



town's Recreation Department. As a result, Camp Running River was developed as a children's day camp in the summer of 1997. With each successive year more activities are expected through this facility.

Water Recreation

Water-based recreation is highly popular in Wareham. Whether it be beachgoing, swimming, shellfishing, or boating, Wareham residents enjoy access to the fresh and salt water. In response to the activities of residents, the Rec. Dept. has initiated sailing programs to teach young people, and also teaches kayaking for youth and adults. The department also runs the annual Weweantic River boat race.

There are more than 50 locations in Wareham where residents have public access to the shoreline. Efforts should be made in the future to secure public access as opportunities arise.

Bicycle Facilities

In recent years, bicycling has become a very popular form of transportation and recreation. However, little has been done to accommodate bicycle traffic on existing roadways or to build dedicated bikeways. Many Wareham residents avail themselves of bicycle trails in Myles Standish State Forest and along the Cape Cod Canal.

Beginning in 1996, the Town has renewed its efforts to develop a safe, efficient bikeways system within the community. In 1996, the Town was awarded an ISTE A grant to construct a bicycle link from Charge Pond Road up into the State Forest. This route is eventually planned to run through Wareham and Onset Villages to the Cape Cod Canal, creating a safe bicycle route through the community.

Other efforts are being made to develop bike-links to the larger neighborhoods in the community. The preference is to develop bicycle and pedestrian-only trails separate from streets. However, the reality of private land ownership and limited funding dictates that many bike routes be located along existing streets. On-street routes should be planned to meet engineering standards to provide a margin of safety to allow motorists and bicyclists to share the road.

Needs of the Recreation Department

It is the intention of the Recreation Department to continue to offer a wide array of recreation opportunities for Wareham residents. Below is a discussion of the current and future needs of the department in order to continue to provide adequate services.

The department has been able to dramatically increase its program offerings in recent years. At present, staff are stretched to capacity. Any changes or additional work will require increased staffing.

In 1995, a plan was developed for maintenance and improvement of the Town's various playgrounds, including handicapped accessibility. This project should be continued until all playgrounds are in a safe, functional condition.

Several of the sports facilities are in need of upgrading. New courts are needed for tennis, basketball, and volleyball courts. In addition, many young residents have expressed a desire for a skateboard park. These capital needs should be worked into the five-year capital budget.

There is an acute need for additional playing fields. Crowding of field space causes the turf to deteriorate and can lead to unsafe playing conditions when several games are played simultaneously on a single field. There is also a need to develop picnic and shaded areas at town playgrounds and fields.

The Recreation Department has expressed a desire for a community indoor pool for year round water activities.

Finally, a necessary component of effective recreation is transportation to and from the various facilities. The summer trolley provides service to many facilities, but off-season events require private transportation. Planning for public transit should incorporate stops at active recreation areas.

Culture and the Fine Arts

An important component of community life is the array of social and cultural opportunities which are available to its residents. Wareham is home to a number of fine artists, some of whom have reputations of regional or national significance, including photographers, sculptors, crafts people, painters, musicians, and actors. Artistic activity is supported and sometimes initiated by the Wareham Arts Lottery Council. This organization receives its funds from the Massachusetts Arts Lottery share of the state lottery proceeds along with private donations.

Cultural activity in Wareham is also supported in an important way by its excellent library, now offering expanded services in a well-equipped building.

There are several major arts organizations active in the community. The Onset Creative Arts Association supports exhibitions and creative arts activities in a building in the RLDS campgrounds (OCAAA activities are completely non-sectarian). Gateway Players Inc. is a non-profit group of semi-professional thespians. The MUSICo-op is a group of individual musicians that presents concerts involving local artists and guests. Chrysalis is a workshop of individual creative artists.

The Recreation Department has accepted a greater role in recent years in organizing arts activities in the town. Arts are also sponsored on an occasional or regular basis by churches, such as the Church of the Good Shepherd's on-going music series. In addition, the public schools provide opportunities for students to participate in a number of cultural endeavors.

Residents of Wareham are also served by major organizations in the region, including the Zeiterion Theater, New Bedford Symphony Orchestra, Whaling Museum of New Bedford, Plymouth Plantation, Pilgrim Hall, Plymouth Philharmonic, Cape Cod Conservatory, Cape Cod Symphony, and Heritage Plantation.

Wareham has a number of facilities which can accommodate performances. There is the 500-seat Town Hall auditorium, 60-seat Old Methodist Meeting House, Library meeting room (capacity 100), and High School auditorium (300+). In addition, local churches provide space for performances by outside groups.

Wareham cultural life is also actively supported by the local news media, notably the Wareham Courier, New Bedford Standard Times, and Media One (cable television).

Despite the number of regional opportunities, cultural life in Wareham, especially during the winter months, is somewhat thin and unsupported. Competition from movie theaters in surrounding areas and from television, as well as ever-increasing pressures and time constraints of modern life, cut down on the potential audience for live cultural events.

Improvements in the Arts

Arts activity in Wareham would be greatly energized and focused by the maintenance of a physical facility for teaching and performance. While the Town is constrained in its ability to support such a venture under Proposition 2 1/2, there would be great benefit in having an established facility for arts programs. Such a facility should be centrally located to encourage participation by residents from all parts of town.

Encouraging higher participation in the arts would be enhanced by the establishment of programming on the local cable channel. The Arts & Humanities Council might consider producing a weekly informational show featuring upcoming arts events and local and visiting artists.

The Historical Society should be encouraged to consider initiating a weekly or monthly "arts cafe" at the Old Methodist Meeting House or similar site, where local artists could perform music, display artwork, read poetry and plays, etc.

B. Recreation - Community Goals, Policies, and Implementation Methods

Policy

To provide all residents with safe and accessible passive and active recreational opportunities.

Recommendations

1. Increase programming in response to the expressed needs of the community.
2. Complete maintenance and improvement projects specified in the 5-year playground improvement plan.
 - * Install water fountains and restrooms
 - * Improve handicapped accessibility.
3. Construct the Westfield Recreation Area to provide for increased demand for field space.
 - * Seek outside grants for construction.
 - * Solicit construction assistance from local military reserve units.

- * Utilize volunteers and private contributions to the greatest extent possible.
- 4. Develop a long-range maintenance plan for all outdoor recreation facilities, and ~~prioritize field improvements in municipal budget.~~
- 5. Further the development of bicycle and walking trails throughout town.
- * Develop a bikeway plan to link neighborhoods with recreation facilities.
- * Seek funding federal funding for implementation (ISTEA)
- * Pursue opportunities to acquire easements or rights-of-way where appropriate for bikeways.
- 6. Pursue all possibilities to acquire additional shore access points for public use.
- 7. Petition the U.S. Dept of Public Health to declare Great Neck and other affected areas within the town as Lyme and associated disease epidemic areas, and encourage direct federal emergency assistance and oversight.

Policy

Encourage a year-round calendar of artistic and cultural events to be organized by the Wareham Arts Lottery and include art exhibits, lectures, musical programs, and stage performances which are in good taste and reflect positively on the community at large.

Recommendation

1. Visitor Services Committee should catalogue and publish a quarterly calendar of activities within the Town.
2. Town should display works of local artists in prominent places as a way of encouraging increased arts activity.

IX. Public Services and Facilities

A. Introduction

Like all communities, Wareham has a large investment in the capital facilities and operational budget necessary to provide town services. As such, it is useful to investigate how all departments work, and plan for future capital and personnel needs to meet the demands of the population for efficient, user-friendly local government. This section provides an overview into the workings of the town and its various departments, and makes recommendations to improve Town programs and activities in the future.

B. Fiscal Analysis

The total budget for the Town of Wareham in fiscal year 1998 was \$36.8 million. Of this total, the general government portion was \$18.8 million (51.1% of total budget); the School Department budget was \$18.0 million (48.9% of total budget). Part of the general government budget is the Sewer Department, operated under an enterprise fund, which had a budget of \$2.8 million.

As is the case in most communities, the School Department is by far the largest Town department. For the sake of discussion, Schools accounted for 55% of the total budget, even if the Sewer Enterprise Fund is counted toward the total budget. The State's complicated School-Aid formula makes percentage comparisons unreliable, because the Town is forced to pay for many school costs which are not considered "net school spending". Costs directly related to education such as bus transportation and capital debt are not considered part of net school spending. This makes the school percentage of the budget artificially low.

New minimum per pupil spending requirements make it difficult to anticipate future changes in the school-government budgetary ratio. Since Wareham spends less than the state-required minimum per student allocation, the School Department will likely be required to increase school spending further in the near future.

In fiscal year 1996, 11.6% of total funds were spent on public safety. This included police, fire, harbor services, and the Inspectional Services Department. Another tenth (10.2%) was allocated to insurance and retirement. This area covers all insurance costs of the Town, as well as payments into the retirement systems of current or retired Town employees.

Another major area of spending is on debt service. In 1996, the Town spent 8.4% of its total budget on principal and interest. Much of this is used to pay for the new high school, but the Town also has debt for other school buildings, the Multi-Service Center, as well as various capital equipment. The table on the following page describes the relative expenses of similar communities within the state.

FY 95 COMPARABLE COMMUNITIES EXPENDITURES AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL											
Municipality	GENERAL GOVT.	PUBLIC SAFETY	SCHOOLS	PUBLIC WORKS	HEALTH/ WELFARE	RECREATION	DEBT SERVICE	FIXED COSTS	INTER- GOVT.	OTHER	
Bellingham	5.78	8.82	50.48	10.25	.52	1.04	16.10	2.82	.47	3.74	
Bourne	5.46	14.56	46.68	5.47	1.13	1.33	10.29	12.21	2.85	.01	
Bridgewater	5.86	18.96	50.57	4.73	1.73	4.70	2.41	9.97	1.06	-	
Ludlow	3.70	12.09	56.10	9.93	1.06	1.75	5.27	9.56	.53	-	
Mansfield	4.35	11.28	52.71	5.68	1.01	1.59	9.88	12.44	.92	.13	
Norton	5.18	12.69	57.43	3.76	1.03	.98	5.93	11.08	.96	.98	
Pembroke	4.38	13.98	59.07	6.83	1.06	1.09	1.25	10.09	2.24	-	
Swansea	4.56	10.53	62.69	8.51	1.12	1.26	4.49	5.54	1.28	.01	
Wareham	6.43	11.79	54.20	3.19	.85	1.42	9.01	11.00	1.96	.15	
Westport	5.88	13.85	56.83	4.88	3.23	.98	2.11	10.10	1.67	.47	
Yarmouth	5.41	17.32	39.02	6.54	1.39	5.83	15.04	6.70	1.75	.98	
Group avg.	5.17	13.28	52.35	6.33	1.22	2.14	8.18	9.31	1.44	.58	
State avg.	4.86	15.08	45.37	7.58	3.32	2.19	5.86	11.90	3.32	.52	

The comparison table shows that Wareham's expenditures are generally consistent with the expenditures of similar communities. Wareham spends slightly more than other communities on general government. Other deviations appear to be minor, and may be partially the result of discrepancies in categorical reporting by individual towns.

Cost of Fire Protection

In Wareham, fire protective services are provided for three distinct areas - Wareham Fire District, Onset Fire District, and the "out-of-district" area³. To gain an understanding of the comparative cost of this service for Wareham residents, it is useful to look at the total cost of the departments.

In FY 97, the tax levies were as follows:

Wareham Fire District Tax Levy	\$2,038,833
Onset Fire District Tax Levy	\$536,688
Town budget for out-of-district	\$190,457

Total cost for fire protection	\$2,765,978
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The percentage of total taxes for fire protection is as follows:

Cost of fire protection	\$2,765,978
Total Town Budget	\$37,472,134

Total local taxes levied	\$40,238,112
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Percentage of taxes for fire protection	6.9%
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If the total cost of fire protection is combined with Town-provided safety services, Wareham appears to pay more than most for protective services. This may be due at least in part to the relatively large geographic size of the community which is being served.

Revenues

An analysis of revenues for FY98 reveals that 47.1% of total revenues were derived from local property taxes. Other major sources of revenue include State receipts (33.3%), departmental receipts (10.5%), and enterprise accounts (6.9%). Revenue from the State includes school aid, lottery distributions, and school capital reimbursements, and other minor types of aid. Departmental receipts are derived from the fees charged for permits, licenses, and other services provided by Town employees. Enterprise accounts are the Sewer Enterprise Fund and a new account to support emergency medical services.

³ Efforts have been made by the Town to dissolve the "out of district" area and incorporate all areas of into a district. The process has not been completed, due to unresolved issues of the Wareham Fire District.

ESTIMATED FY 98 REVENUES - 2 1/2 FORMULA	
Property Tax Levy	\$17,338,049.23
State Receipts	\$12,283,919.00
Estimated Local Receipts	\$3,859,422.00
Offset Receipt Accounts	\$89,260.00
Enterprise Funds	\$2,542,971.06
Revolving Funds	\$300,000.00
Available Funds	\$395,269.76
TOTAL REVENUES	\$36,808,891.05

Wareham's property tax rate for FY 96 was \$13.72 per thousand dollars valuation. There are also 2 other tax levies for residents who live within the Wareham Fire District (\$3.42) or Onset Fire District (\$2.22). In 1997, the Town Assessing Department completed a thorough revaluation of all residential and commercial properties. Properties are currently assessed at 100% of total value. All properties are revalued every three years.

C. Town Government

Type of governmental structure

The Town of Wareham is currently operated under a Home Rule Charter, which was last amended in May 1996 to establish an appointed Town Treasurer and elected Town Clerk. The legislative arm of the Town is the Town Meeting, held twice annually or as needed. All financial decisions of the Town and changes to bylaws must be approved by town meeting voters.

The Charter establishes a five member Board of Selectmen, who set policies to be carried out by personnel of the Town. The Board of Selectmen is an elected, unpaid part-time board. A full-time town administrator is appointed by the Selectmen to oversee all daily activities of Town Department. The Town Administrator has authority over all Town personnel except for elected officers as stipulated in the Charter.

Pros & Cons of local framework

Major changes to the Charter were adopted in 1977 to improve the formulation and adoption of an annual budget. The Financial Town Meeting held each April often takes multiple sessions to complete. In some cases, the body has not achieved the necessary quorum to act on all issues.

Residents have from time to time considered amending the form of government to allow for more efficient governance. Among the forms which could be considered are a representative town meeting or a change to a Town Council form of government. Actions at a representative town meeting would be taken by preselected designees who would vote in a similar fashion as the existing system. A Town Council form of government would give authority over many administrative matters to an elected council. The Council would have

the power to adopt bylaws and local ordinances at its regular meetings, instead of twice annually at the town meeting.

Wareham residents are strongly protective of their democratic rights under the existing system. The current system allows all voters to attend and speak before the populace. This is the most openly democratic form of local governance. Any 10 voters can bring an issue before the Town. However, the changing nature of the town meeting form of government may necessitate changes in the future to keep the Town operating efficiently.

D. Community Services and Facilities

Administrative/Departmental

Board of Selectmen

Wareham has a 5 member Board of Selectmen. This elected, volunteer body sets town policies, and provides oversight to the Town Administrator. In addition, the board serves as the Board of Sewer Commissioners and 3 members also serve on the Cemetery Commission.

Selectmen administer several licenses including victuals, liquor, entertainment, and commercial vehicles. The Board has the authority to create boards & committees when necessary to deal with specific issues. The Board hires only the Town Administrator, but must approve the appointment of new employees.

Town Administrator

The Town Administrator is the chief executive of the Town. This position is responsible for the day to day operations of the Town. The Town Administrator appoints all Town positions.

Individual departments are responsible to the Town Administrator. Departments include:

Accounting
Assessment
Health
Library
Harbormaster
Treasurer
Police

Emergency Medical Services
Recreation
Municipal Maintenance
Inspectional Services
Council on Aging
Planning & Natural Resources

Other Elected Officials

Two full-time employees are elected. The Town Clerk is responsible for the maintenance of all town records, as well as issuance of licenses, certificates, and keeping

the local census and voter registration. The Town Collector collects all tax revenues for real estate, personal property and excise.

~~The Town Moderator is an elected office. The Moderator runs Town Meeting and~~
serves as chairman of the Appointing Authority. The Board of Health, Board of Assessors, and School Committee are also elected positions.

Chartered Committees & Boards

Several committees in the Town are created by the Town's Charter. These committees are appointed by the Appointing Authority and report to Town Meeting. They are:

Capital Planning	Finance Committee
Personnel Board	Planning Board
Marine Resources Commission	

Other committees are set up by Town Meeting or through the enactment of local bylaws. They include:

Library Trustees	Commission on Disability
Council on Aging	Zoning Board of Appeals
Recycling Committee	Town Meeting Committee

E. Education

INVENTORY

The Town of Wareham currently provides educational services for students in grades K through 12. The Public School facilities consist of one High School, one Middle School, three Elementary Schools, one operational Kindergarten, one Kindergarten under renovation and one school building recently converted to a Multi-Service Center for various town agencies and departments.

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
WAREHAM HIGH SCHOOL										X	X	X	X
WAREHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL							X	X	X				
DECAS SCHOOL		X	X	X	X	X							
MINOT FOREST SCHOOL	X	X	X	X	X	X							
ETHEL E. HAMMOND SCHOOL	X	X	X	X									
WEST WAREHAM SCHOOL	X												
EAST WAREHAM SCHOOL	X												
MULTISERVICE CENTER													

Wareham has a history of rehabilitation or re-use of its educational facilities as a number of school buildings in the Town have served multiple functions or have been re-opened as increasing enrollment has demanded increased capacity.

	BUILT	HISTORY
WAREHAM HIGH SCHOOL	1991	
WAREHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL	1954	SERVED AS HIGH SCHOOL 1954-1991
DECAS SCHOOL	1969	ADDITION BUILT 1974 MODULAR CLASSROOMS 1994
MINOT FOREST SCHOOL	1966	ADDITION BUILT 1974 MODULAR CLASSROOMS 1994
ETHEL E. HAMMOND SCHOOL	1926	ADDITION BUILT 1952
WEST WAREHAM SCHOOL	1915	SERVED AS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 1915-1991 VACANT 1991-1996 RE-OPENED AS KINDERGARTEN 1996
EAST WAREHAM SCHOOL	1914	SERVED AS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 1914-1991 VACANT 1991-1997 RE-OPENED AS KINDERGARTEN 1997
MULTISERVICE CENTER	1909	SERVED AS HIGH SCHOOL 1909-1954 SERVED AS MIDDLE SCHOOL 1954-1991 VACANT 1991-1997 RE-OPENED AS MULTISERVICE CENTER 1997

The overall condition of these facilities is fairly good. The High School is in excellent condition as it is a new building. The West Wareham and East Wareham Schools are both in good condition as they have both been recently renovated. The Minot Forest and Middle Schools are both in need of some renovations related to temperature control and energy efficiency, but are otherwise in good condition. The Hammond School is in the most threatened condition as it is an aging, wooden structure.

ENROLLMENT

	96-97	95-96	94-95	93-94	92-93	91-92	90-91	89-90	88-89	87-88
WAREHAM HIGH SCHOOL	804	740	752	730	705	681	0	0	0	0
WAREHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL	857	856	788	747	685	699	654*	638*	676*	693*
DECAS SCHOOL	781	901	821	760	745	718	701	696	683	634
MINOT FOREST SCHOOL	687	701	717	739	710	692	678	640	633	634
ETHEL E. HAMMOND SCHOOL	247	260	266	268	215	229	228	201	215	221
WEST WAREHAM SCHOOL	124	0	0	0	0	0	86	102	101	85
EAST WAREHAM SCHOOL	0	0	0	0	0	0	137	143	133	127
MULTISERVICE CENTER	0	0	0	0	0	0	469**	477**	437**	426**
TOTAL	350 0	345 8	334 4	324 4	306 0	301 9	295 3	289 7	287 8	282 0
INCREASE FROM PREV YEAR	42	114	100	184	41	66	56	19	58	

*HIGH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT IN CURRENT MIDDLE SCHOOL

**MIDDLE SCHOOL ENROLLMENT IN CURRENT MULTISERVICE CENTER

The average cost per year to educate each student in the Wareham Public Schools in 1995-96 was \$4,772. This is 14.59% below the state average of \$5,468.

Of the current school aged residents of the Town of Wareham, 334 are educated outside the Wareham Public Schools. 180 of these students attend Upper Cape Regional Vocational Technical School. Tuition for each student attending Upper Cape is approximately \$6,500 per year. This is paid separately by the Town following approval of Town Meeting

each year.

As of January 1, 1997, Wareham was educating 11 Choice or out-of-town students and 66 State Wards or foster children. Tuition for Foster Students attending the Wareham Public Schools is paid partially or wholly by the State. The amount paid is determined on a sliding scale annually by the State Legislature. 1996-1997 is the first year that amount should fully cover costs incurred by the Town. Non-resident Students attending Wareham Schools are enrolled for various reasons. Tuition for these students is paid by the State from Cherry Sheet funds.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Over the next five years capital improvement plans consist of ongoing renovations to all but the High School and the purchase new school buses. Renovation projects include but are not limited to removal of fuel tanks on school property, improvements to fire alarm and public address systems, window replacement, upgrading the heating system at the Middle School, and general exterior maintenance.

PROJECTED IMPROVEMENT COSTS

1997	\$ 553,500
1998	\$ 836,000
1999	\$ 580,000
2000	\$ 460,000
2001	\$ 400,000

TOTAL \$2,829,500

As population increases, the Town will almost certainly have to consider adding a new school facility at some point in the future. In response to enrollment growth in the 1990's, the School Department has added several modular classrooms, as well as reopened two abandoned neighborhood schools. These efforts have added 27 classrooms to the department. There is little room for further expansion in this manner, and core facilities become overtaxed by the additional modular classes. Already, classes have more than the optimal number of students. If the enrollment trend continues, a new facility will be needed.

F. Library

Founded in 1891, Wareham Free Library has long played an important role within the community. A gift to the town by Alice Tobey Jones and Blanche Waterman Tobey in 1917 provided the first building. In 1991, the first Town-owned library was constructed.

The new library provides a wide range of services, including internet access, history room, children's room, and public meeting space. The collection includes 60,360 items as well as access to on-line periodicals. Membership in the Southeast Automated Library Exchange (SEAL) gives patrons access to materials in nearly all other libraries in Southeast Massachusetts.

Use of the library continues to rise at a rapid pace. In 1996, annual circulation reached 140,000 items, more than double the 1986 total. Also during 1996, 1,326 new patrons were registered, for a total of 15,828 registered library users. Heavy usage is also evident by the numerous meetings held at the facility, attendance in children's reading programs, and school visits.

The library faces many challenges as it prepares for the future. Staffing is a concern, as employee levels have increased only slightly since the opening of the new building. There are currently 7 full-time, 3 part-time staff, plus volunteers. Increasing staff would allow the facility to remain open more hours.

Another area of concern which must be addressed by the town is the possibility of providing library service in other parts of Wareham. Solutions to this problem include a branch library in Onset, establishing a bookmobile, and or a library shuttle that would provide transportation to the current facility.

The library is currently being used by various boards and committees. With the opening of the new Multi-Service Center, the role of the library as a community center will decrease. The library must continue to be a leader in the area of technology to provide citizens with the ability to gather information on a global scale.

Finally, as usage continues to increase, the facility may need to be expanded. The original design of the 1991 building was intended to handle the town's library needs for 20 to 30 years. Future capital priorities should consider the needs of the library so that service levels can be maintained at their current level.

G. Public Works Services and Facilities

Public works are administered by the Municipal Maintenance Department. The department is responsible for public streets, municipal buildings, and public sewer service. The Municipal Maintenance staff is comprised of 24 full-time personnel, not including the Sewer Division.

Municipal Maintenance headquarters is located at the Town Garage on Charge Pond Road. The building is used for storage and repair of Town vehicles and equipment. It is a sheet metal structure on a concrete slab. Office space is located in the front of the building for the director, custodial foreman, and 2 secretaries.

Over the past decade, the Municipal Maintenance department has seen a major shift in its operations. The number of laborers has been drastically reduced from a high of 35 in the 1980s. To compensate for this change, the department has become much more capital-intensive, and must continually maintain its equipment to provide an appropriate level of service.

Street Maintenance

The Highway Division is comprised of 7 seven full-time staff, a foreman, a mechanic, and 5 laborers. This labor force maintains 70 miles of public streets. It has also been a practice to maintain adequate access on the 110 miles of private streets to ensure access for emergency

vehicles and school buses. Under this policy, the Highway Division grades many private streets on an annual or semi-annual basis and provides snow removal services.

Public Property Maintenance

In 1996, responsibility for maintaining public buildings was transferred from the Building Inspector's office to Municipal Maintenance. A foreman oversees 6 full-time and 2 part-time custodians as well as an annual budget for building improvements. The newly opened Multi-Service Center adjacent to Town Hall is the latest building improvement to be completed by the Town.

The Town employs one full-time laborer in the Tree Division to maintain trees on public property in a safe condition. This position is predominantly concerned with trees adjacent to public streets. Parks, grounds, and cemeteries are maintained by 5 full-time personnel. Additional seasonal laborers are hired during the summer months.

The department is also responsible for the maintaining the Town composting area, located on Charge Pond Road. Residents are permitted to bring organic matter to the site during open hours. The department rotates the material to achieve an efficient decomposition of the materials for use in gardens, etc.

Trash removal in Wareham was private until recently, when the town solicited bids for public trash hauling. The service is available to interested residents for an annual fee. Since the Town does not currently operate a landfill or transfer station, all residents and businesses must contract for refuse disposal with a private hauler.

Future Needs

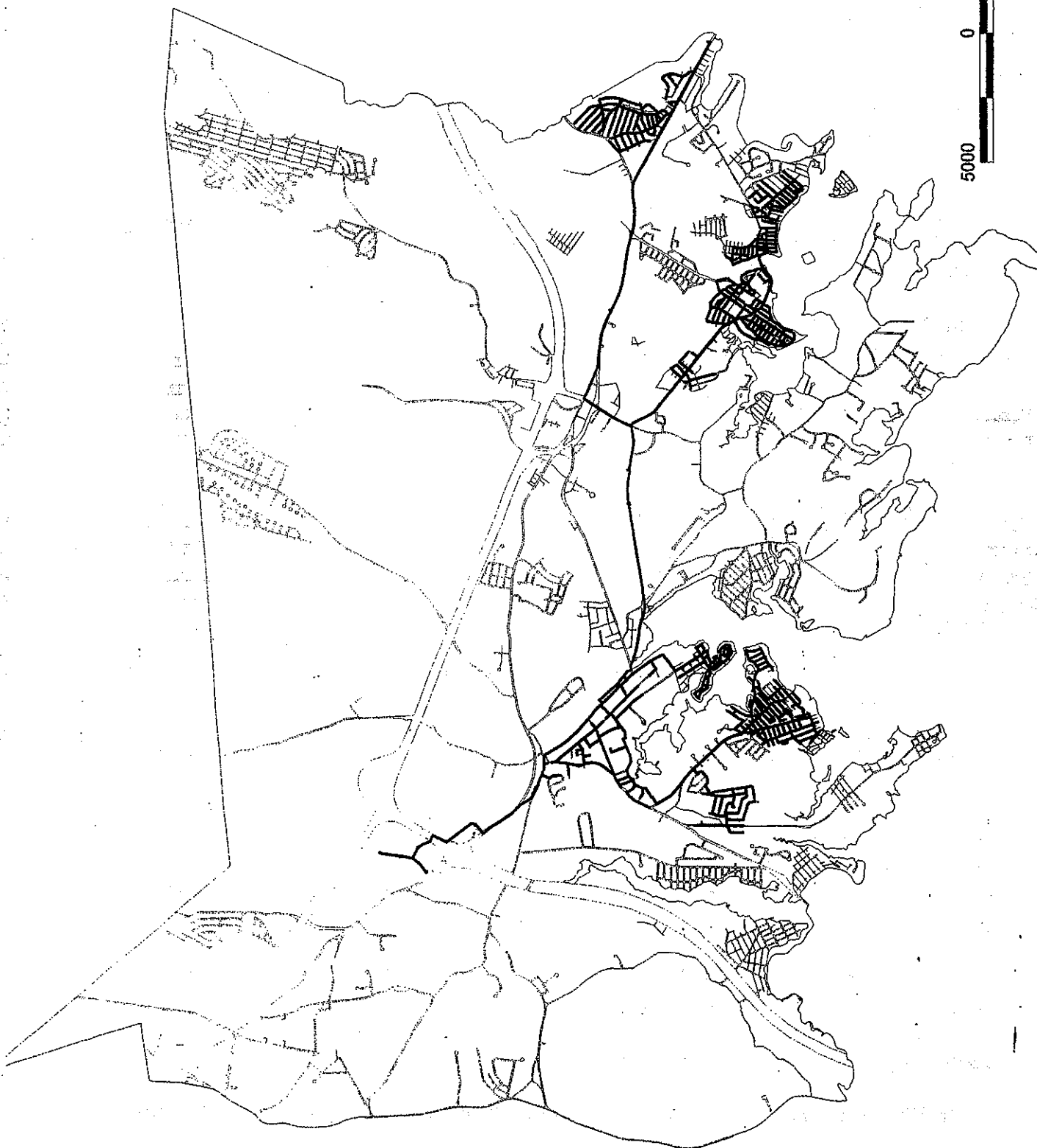
As the Municipal Maintenance department continues to provide services with a small staff, there will be an inevitable need for equipment replacement and additional storage space. The Town should take steps now to evaluate the capacity of the Town Garage in anticipation of future growth, so that preparations can be made to accommodate repair and expansion of the facility.



Sewer Service

Legend

Sewer
Bound
Roads



H. Public Water Supply and Treatment

Public water service is available to more than 50% of all residences in the Town. There are two water departments, Wareham and Onset, which operate independently of each other and the Town. Wareham is fortunate to be located over one of the most productive aquifers in the northeast. Public and private wells are exceptionally productive; some public wells have a withdrawal capacity of 1,200 gallons per minute.

Wareham Water Department

The Wareham Water Department was formed in 1907. The department is run by a superintendent who is overseen by a 3 member board of commissioners. The department controls 184 acres of land within the public water supply watershed.

The water supply system consists of 6 wells, 2 treatment facility, 2 standpipes and 140 miles of distribution lines. All wells have a capacity of at least 600 gallons per minute; one has a 900 gpm capacity. Two corrosion control facilities are used to control pH of the water. Treatment consists of lime only. Average daily water production in 1995 was 1.5 MG.

In 1995, the department had 6,306 customers. There are numerous commercial and industrial users served by the system. Among the largest users are:

- Springborne Laboratory
- Tobey Hospital
- Nursing homes

In 1997, Wareham Fire District annexed Cronesett Point and the White Island/Shangri-La area of the town. Plans are being prepared to provide water service to the two areas. The projects will add approximately 900 residential services to the customer base.

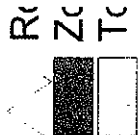
Onset Water Department

The Onset Water Department is a much smaller water provider than Wareham. Formed in 1894, the department serves the village of Onset, parts of Cranberry Highway, and a few outlying areas. The department is operated by a superintendent. Oversight is provided by a 3 member board of commissioners. 196 acres of land in the watershed are owned by the fire district.

Onset is served by 4 wells and a surface reservoir at Sand Pond. Though the department maintains Sand Pond, it has not been active since 1995, and is maintained only as an emergency source. Water production in 1995 was 184 MG. Average daily consumption was 504,000 gallons.

The department owns a single standpipe, and is considering adding a second to augment water pressure and simplify system maintenance. The distribution system consists of 45.5 miles of water mains. The pipes are composed of A.C., cast iron, and PVC. The size of the mains ranges from 2-inch to 18-inch diameter.

In 1996 there were 3,000 customers (2,800 residential). The customer base is mostly



CARVER

MIDDLEBOROUGH

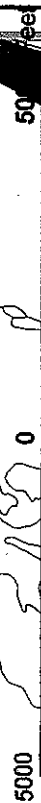
ROCHESTER

WAREHAM

PLYMOUTH

BOURNE

MARION



Potential Growth in Water Supply Districts

The potential for growth in the Onset area is fairly low. Most of the service area has reached its building capacity. What ever demand increase occurs will be the result of infill housing in existing neighborhoods, or changes in use patterns by residents and businesses.

Wareham faces a much more demanding future. The district encompasses large tracts of vacant land which could support residential subdivisions. In addition, the district provides water for the town's industrial parks. Because there is vacant industrial land available, a future industry could make a significant impact on water demand.

The impact of future water demand does not appear to be problematic for either department. Wareham is geographically situated over the Plymouth Aquifer, which has a storage capacity for in excess of Wareham's needs for the foreseeable future. An estimated 540 billion gallons of water are stored in the aquifer.

Zoning in the area covering the aquifer is principally low-density residential. The R-130 district covers the area north of Route 25 and east of Charge Pond Road. Minimum lot size is 3 acres.

Potential impacts to Wareham's public water supply include contamination and withdrawals by other suppliers.

I. Water Pollution Control Facility

The Water Pollution Control Facility provides the collection and treatment of public sewerage in Wareham and currently employs fourteen full-time year-round personnel. The sewer system is in good shape, experiencing few of the problems associated with older systems in the state. Sewer service is provided to approximately 60% of the Town's population, concentrated in 20% of the geographic area.

Wareham's treatment plant, constructed in 1972, is located on the south side of Route 6 adjacent to the Agawam River, where treated effluent is discharged. Plant operations occupy 31 acres on a 60-acre site. With approximately 70 miles of sewer pipes and 25 pumping stations, soon to increase to 27, the total value of departmental equipment is conservatively estimated at \$70 - 80 million.

The plant's present permitted capacity is 1.8 million gallons daily (mgd). Opinion differs whether the system can handle the "planned expanded potential capacity" of 2.9 mgd with the existing grit chamber and clarifier (the digester is gone). The clarifier was designed for 1.8 mgd and may not be able to handle 2.9 mgd. Each clarifier costs approximately \$.5 million. Around 1988, Wareham allowed the Town of Bourne to purchase 20% of the plant capacity. This allows the village of Buzzards Bay to be connected to Wareham's sewer treatment system.

Total average daily flow is .95 mgd. Off-season operation is approximately 50% of design capacity. During the summer season, the plant operates at close to 100% of capacity. The plant is currently able to handle all seasonal increases without violating its discharge permit.

In the early years, the WPC system was operated through funding under the general government. In 1990, an Enterprise Fund was established. The system is financially well-managed. Debt from initially plant construction in 1972 has been retired. Financing for major improvements in 1982 will be paid in 2002.

While Wareham does not technically have a tertiary plant, it is close to such a process in its operation. The treatment plant is highly regulated with weekly monitoring and testing under National Pollution Control Discharge Elimination System guidelines, and toxicity testing occurs four times a year.

The budget for the WPCF for FY98 is \$2,501,695. Funds are derived from sewer betterment retained earnings and wastewater enterprise revenue. A portion of the budget (\$437,246) goes to the Town share of its administrative salaries and expenses. In April 1997, Town Meeting voters restored the position of assistant maintenance director, which will bring the expertise of a professional engineer into the department.

The future of the sewer services depends on priorities set by the Board of Selectmen acting as the Board of Sewer Commissioners. The engineering firm of Camp, Dresser, & McKee has evaluated unsewered areas of the town and developed a priorities list for future service extensions. In preparing to expand services the firm is conducting an "optimization study" to determine the potential treatment capacity of the plant.

From time to time, the Town has considered creating a Board of Sewer Commissioners separate from the Board of Selectmen. To date, there has been no consensus on this change, and the Board of Selectmen appears capable of overseeing sewer matters for the foreseeable future.

J. Public Safety

Police

The Wareham Police Department can trace its origin back to the first town meeting in 1739 when one of the first town officers to be selected was an unpaid constable. 150 years later, the Selectmen appointed the first police officer who worked in the Onset area. In 1916, the Selectmen organized the first formal police department and in 1917 the department consisted of a chief and 12 regular police officers.

The Wareham Police Department currently has 42 full time officers, 16 seasonal officers, 6 1/2 F/T and 14 part time employees. Operating budget (FY 96) \$2,290,000. excluding capital expenditures for vehicles and equipment. The three principle operational divisions are patrol, criminal investigation and administration with the patrol division accounting for the largest portion of the allocated funds. The 39.7 square miles which the town encompasses are divided into five patrol sectors which are covered by individual cruiser units on a 24 hour/3 shift basis. Tactical and emergency backup is provided on a reciprocal basis by neighboring towns and the MA State Police.

The department has taken major steps in recent years to modernize programs to maintain and enhance its ability to provide protective services. Patrol units have Lo-Jac capability, mobile data terminals will be installed in cruisers, and a community policing program has

been initiated. Enhanced 911 for police/fire/EMS has been implemented. A DARE program has been underway in the local school system for a number of years.

~~On the street, the department, like other contemporary urban and most suburban law enforcement organizations, is challenged by a high volume and severity of juvenile issues and an increasingly severe drug problem. The latter relating significantly to the rise in breaking and entering incidents. In response, the department participates in the Cape Cod Drug Interdiction Task Force and has organized a bicycle patrol during the summer months.~~

Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

The EMS Department provides high quality 24 hour emergency medical service to the entire town. The department is equipped with two ambulance units, a recycled police cruiser utilized by the director and utilizes state of the art equipment on board and at the station. The primary unit was acquired in 1995 and the backup unit is 6 years old and although fully functional is overdue for replacement.

The department has an overall operating budget of \$410,000. It offers the Burgess plan, a \$50.00 per year mini-insurance plan covering emergency medical transportation. All 8 full time department employees are certified Paramedics and several members of the 8 person part-time call cadre are taking advanced level training.

The EMS headquarters building is located adjacent to the central police station and the two departments coordinate closely. A close working relationship is also maintained with the two independent local fire departments. The EMS department operates under the Wareham Enhanced 911 service which is centrally operated by the Police Department for the benefit of the various town public safety agencies. EMS offers a supplementary service whereby local citizens who have a medical condition, are disabled or have special needs may voluntarily provide special individual information to the E911 data base which can then be displayed on the dispatchers screen and relayed to the responding units.

Emergency Medical Services offers other ancillary services such as CPR training, blood pressure checks at various locations, bicycle safety information/clinics and bike helmets sold to the public at cost.

The Emergency Management Agency, under the direction of the EMS Director, is responsible for coordinating disaster response activities. The EMA works closely with the MA Emergency Management Agency and is responsible for reviewing and updating the town's comprehensive emergency management plan required by state law to be updated every five years.

Public Prosecutor

The Public Prosecutor Department is responsible for representing the town in Court on a regular basis to handle and assist all Town Departments in any action taken by them to effectuate enforcement of regulations, by-laws or delinquent taxes; to give seminars to police officers; serve as liaison with the Plymouth County District Attorney's Office; and provide legal assistance to the Board of Selectmen and other town departments. Annual operating

budget is \$53,000, shared by 5 communities.

Animal Control

The Animal Control Department is responsible for implementing town animal control procedures and enforcing applicable town ordinances. The department employs a contractual agreement with the Animal Rescue League of New Bedford to house stray animals picked up within the town and cooperates with local cat shelter (C.H.A.M.P.S.) personnel and the Animal Rescue League Staff. Annual operating budget is \$80,000 (FY96).

It has been reported that Wareham has a very high abandoned pet population, one of the highest in this section of the state. Such a condition is a threat to human health and quality of life, and can become a nuisance to residents. Efforts should be made to study the extent of the problem and find solutions to the situation.

Harbormaster

Oversight of all water activities including boating safety, moorings, and shellfishing, is performed by the Harbormaster's Office. Waterways and fisheries management activities have been evident in various forms throughout Wareham's long history as seashore community. Waterways as a means of transport and as a ready source of food were part of the town's attractiveness to early settlers. Over time the natural beauty of the area became a recognized attribute. However, public safety, conservation and resource management, aquaculture and the management and control of public activities as they relate thereto are seen as twentieth century phenomena.

The town's activities and attitudes with respect to the commercial and recreational utilization of its water resources has dramatically changed emphasis with the passage of time - and with it the organizational and financial resources. A combined Harbormaster/Shellfish Department is a fairly recent innovation in its present form; primarily driven by financial considerations.

The Harbormaster/Shellfish Department is responsible for public safety orientation with marine search/rescue and law enforcement, waterways maintenance, commercial and recreational fisheries management, law enforcement, and elements of environmental and conservation management. The operating budget of \$150,000. The department also administers a number of town permit programs including beach, harbor and recreational shellfish permits.

Significant programs underway are the dredging of the East River, mobile and stationary pumpout facilities, quahog and oyster propagation projects. The department works in close cooperation with the MA Division of Marine Fisheries, the Wareham Police Department which provides central communications and law enforcement support, the US Corps of Engineers, the US Coast Guard and various public and private environmental agencies.

K. Senior Services

The Town of Wareham currently operates a senior center in the new Multi-Service Center adjacent to Town Hall. For many years, the center was run in the basement of Town Hall. The new space will allow the Town to expand the array of services for senior residents. The new center will occupy 15,000 square feet of space. The building is entirely handicapped accessible.

The site is located in Wareham Center, the Town's population center. Transportation is provided to the senior center and to other locations on a reservation basis. The service is also available to disabled residents.

The Council on Aging provides a number of important services for senior residents. The department is an information clearinghouse for housing, nutrition, and social programs. An ongoing outreach effort encourages seniors to participate in available programs. Counseling and referrals are available for residents in need.

Full-time staff for the Council on Aging consists of a director, volunteer/outreach coordinator, nutrition manager, social day care supervisor, a dispatcher and six van drivers. Two part-time clerical assistants are retained, and the department has a contingent of 210 volunteers who assist in various programs and activities.

The major capital component of the senior services consists of the new building. The department also owns 3 vehicles, with an estimated value of \$180,000.

The current level of participation in senior programs is 50 daily. During the passed calendar year, more than 2,500 seniors were served by one or more of the programs. It is anticipated that the new location will result in an increase in the number of seniors who take advantage of the available services.

While the Town supports senior activities to a great degree, the department relies on outside grants to support many needed services. Among the program enhancements which are presently being pursued are a home repair service, Alzheimer's support group, and a fitness program for frail elderly.

L. Social Services

There is a wide variety of social service organizations which provide assistance to Wareham residents. Below is a description of the most predominant organizations and the services they provide.

Battered Women's Shelter - Locations in Plymouth and New Bedford provide services for Wareham residents in need.

Commission on Disability - Town commission works with Federal and State agencies to bring a full range of services to people with disabilities, their families and friends.

Community Entry Project - The Nemasket Group, serving older adults with developmental disabilities

and their families in community settings.

Community Resource Network - A cooperative effort of churches, social groups, non-profit agencies, businesses and individuals in order to provide access to basic living necessities for those in need. Food, clothing, furniture, bedding, appliances and emergency funds are available.

Early Childbearing Program - Program provides services to teenagers 18 years or younger who are pregnant or parenting a child under one year of age. Home visits, service coordination, health education, assessment and monitoring, parent education and support, and infant development are available.

Family Pantry, Damien's Place - Provides food for those in need. A family center from the Sacred Hearts Retreat Center has distributed food donated by local churches, businesses, community groups, and individuals.

Head Start - An early education program designed to prepare low-income and "high-risk" children to assimilate successfully into the school system.

Cape Cod Hospice Association - A program of supportive care for terminally ill individuals and their families, offering them physical, emotional, social, and spiritual support. A team of professionals and trained workers helping the patient and family during the patient's final stages of life and during the bereavement period.

SHARE Food Program - For \$14 plus 2 hours of community services per month, a person can receive more than \$30 worth of nutritious food.

Veterans' Administration - Located in the Multi-Service Center, assistance is offered on local, State, and Federal veterans matters.

Visiting Nurses Agency - Provides a full range of skilled services to homebound clients. They include nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, medical social work, home health aide, and Board of Health-related activity.

Wareham Child Care - An early childhood education and care facility providing children with safe, stimulating, and nurturing environment in which to grow and learn while their parents work or go to school or receive subsidized services.

Wareham Housing Assistance Program - Provides the following: direct low-interest home rehabilitation loans, affordable housing program referral, winterization assistance, home repair needs assessment, Section 8 or 707 - housing referrals and Federal and State home improvement program assistance. Located in the Wareham Community Development Authority office.

Women, Infants, & Children (WIC) - A special supplemental food and nutrition education program, which also provides breastfeeding information and smoking cessation groups for low to moderate income pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and children up to age five. Located at the Dept. of Employment & Training on Cranberry Highway.

Wareham Social Day Care Program - Located in the Senior Center, provides, daytime program of social, physical, and emotional stimulation to promote an independent lifestyle. Program offers

respite to caregivers, socialization (bingo, movies, parties, card games, other activities), exercise, crafts, hot lunches, daytrips, reading, music, educational programs, professional consultation and other related programs.

M. Future Public Services Recommendations

General Recommendations

1. Explore alternatives to combine fire districts into Town government to improve efficiency and effectiveness of public fire safety and water supply services, eliminate overhead redundancy, and reduce long-term costs to the public.
2. Develop an overall 5-year capital improvement plan which anticipates the capital needs of all town departments and enables the public to see all major requirements in order to exercise well-informed priorities at Town Meeting. Budget projections shall also be included to match expenditures with anticipated revenues.
3. Efforts should be made to retain superior employees and encourage long-term employment in Wareham, based on specified written performance standards.

Education

School facilities planning should be linked directly to long-term population demands, but should not be based purely on short-term enrollment projections.

Water Supply Recommendations

1. Continue to protect the aquifer area by maintaining low-density zoning regardless of infrastructure improvements in the area.
2. Work with communities to the north to ensure that water-quality regulations are adequate for all potential areas of contribution to existing and future well sites.
3. Each water department should prepare an emergency response plan for protection of the Town's water supply.
4. Planning Board should review the boundaries and regulations of the R-130 Zoning District, and recommend bylaw improvements to protect the water supply.

Sewer Recommendations

1. Develop reliable, independently verified data regarding the nutrient loading impacts of the Water Pollution Control Facility on the Agawam River and other territorial waters.
2. Continue physical and operational improvements to the treatment facility to maximize efficiency and accommodate expected new customers.
3. Extend sewer services consistent with existing planned priority areas to allow more residents access to sewer services, and contract for an external consultant to provide long-term cost/benefit analysis of potential future expansion.
4. Consider methods such as package treatment facilities to deal with sewage issues in hard to reach

areas such as Rose Point, Onset Island.

5. Investigate alternative methods of disposing of treated sewage sludge, including possibly transporting it to SEMASS for incineration.

Police Dept. Recommendations

1. The Police Station is too small to accommodate the needs of the department. Space is needed for staff, detained individuals, and equipment.
2. The department should be linked with state and federal law enforcement networks to improve efficiency and effectiveness of public safety services.
3. Personnel should be kept up to date with appropriate advances in the field through participation in training programs on a mandatory rotational schedule.

Emergency Medical Services Recommendations

1. A new facility is severely needed.
2. Capital planning for the Town should include periodic replacement of ambulances. An annual accrual program or vehicle leasing may be alternatives to outright purchase.
3. The department should prepare a long range service expansion plan to enhance services.

Harbormaster Recommendations

1. The department has two primary patrol boats, both of which are older and in need of refurbishing or replacement. A formal maintenance plan should be funded and put in place for all equipment.
2. Fund an appropriate training program for all law enforcement personnel similar to those employed by other town and local organizations.

Senior Services Recommendations

1. Plan for capital needs, especially with regard to vehicles.
2. Expand services deemed appropriate to the specific and identified needs of this community in accordance with standards set by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs.
3. Opportunities for grants and donations to enhance services should be aggressively pursued, so long as the award and acceptance of such infusions do not negatively impact local town authority.

X. Community Transportation

A. Introduction

A community's transportation network is an integral part of residential and business life. Transportation systems can also be used to encourage or discourage growth. The construction or reconstruction of a highway brings growth to the area it serves, with potential impact on the character of a town and its population. Conversely, avoiding improvements to overburdened roadways can slow new development.

Long-term planning for a transportation system should be oriented to serve the areas and types of development which the residents want to see in the future. This can mean widening arterial roads to allow better access to shopping. Or it may mean not widening to limit their carrying capacity.

Wareham's transportation system is comprised of interstate highways, secondary routes, minor streets, and rail and bus service. The evolution of transportation modes from water to rail to automobile played a major role in shaping Wareham as it stands today.

At times, particularly prior to the completion of Route 25, the transportation system has been pushed beyond its carrying capacity, resulting in traffic congestion. Today, however, many past problems have been overcome. The modern transportation system is fairly efficient, with only minor delays during the summer season. Pockets of town encounter transportation problems, notably downtown Wareham and central Onset. As the population increases in the future, traffic congestion will likely follow. The community needs to be responsive to transportation problems and correct them to maintain an acceptable level of service on all roads.

This chapter describes the basic transportation components and how the community has responded to changing modes of transit.

B. Transportation History

Wareham's early history is tied to its waterfront location. Early industry, mostly iron works and agricultural products, relied almost exclusively on waterways to bring commodities to markets. Water transportation gave way to locomotives in the mid-19th century. Freight and passenger boat services ceased many years ago.

Railroads played an important role in the development of Onset as a vacation area. For many years, locomotives transported beachgoers from the inland areas to Onset. The train station at Depot Street was the off-loading point for hordes of urban dwellers seeking the beach and carnival atmosphere that was Onset in the summer. A trolley service ran down Onset Avenue, delivering visitors right into the village.

After World War II, automobiles became the chosen mode of transportation. As more people bought their own vehicles, they were able to venture further from home for recreation. Many bypassed Onset for points down-Cape. During the summer, thousands still travelled through Wareham, but they kept travelling down Routes 6 and 28 toward Cape Cod.

As Cape Cod's attractiveness grew, Wareham became increasingly prone to traffic congestion on summer weekends. Cranberry Highway often backed up for miles, causing many motorists to seek

alternate routes, which led to congestion in other parts of town. Traffic peaked in July 1978 at 58,000 vehicles per day, approximately three times the current level.

In 1987, Route 25 was opened to traffic, by-passing the Cranberry Highway. The effect of the by-pass on Cranberry Highway businesses was devastating, especially to marginal businesses relying on seasonal traffic. Traffic was reduced by more than half, causing numerous businesses to fail. Surviving commercial activity became less profitable, resulting in poorly maintained properties. Business investment in the strip was almost nonexistent until very recently, when a Walmart store opened.

Throughout its modern history, Wareham has been known as the "gateway to Cape Cod". In the past, this nickname conjured up images of a traffic bottleneck to Cape-bound travelers. In the future, the gateway label may help Wareham establish itself as a retail center, a place to shop before and after vacationing. The community is becoming more of a destination for overnight visitors, so the nickname may become less appropriate in the future.

C. Vehicular Transportation Patterns

Routes 195 and 495/25

Two major interstate highways intersect in Wareham. Route 195 offers convenient access to New Bedford and Providence, the latter less than a one-hour drive away. Route 495/25 provides access to the greater Boston area to the north, Cape Cod to the south. This makes Wareham a convenient location for commuting to employment in the population centers.

Cranberry Highway

Cranberry Highway is the most important road in the Town. The state road runs 10 miles through Wareham and has an average daily traffic (adt) of nearly 20,000 vehicles. The stretch from the bypass to the Bourne line is a major commercial strip. Most of the town's retail businesses are located on the highway.

Massachusetts Highway has plans to completely reconstruct Route 6/28 from the "split" to the Bourne line. The major change will be a center turning lane to allow for safer left turns. In addition, curbs will be installed along the entire project length. Sidewalks will be constructed on the north side of the street and other traffic safety features will be added. These improvements will increase safety on the highway, and encourage economic growth to develop in an orderly manner.

State Route 6

Route 6 is the major east-west road in the town. It is part of Cranberry Highway up to the bypass, where it veers southwest toward Marion. Before Interstate 195 was constructed, Route 6 was the main route to New Bedford, Fall River, and Providence. Historically, Route 6 was an important highway, extending across the entire United States.

driveways, so on-street parking is needed in these areas.

Business districts in Wareham village and Onset have posted signs indicating parking limitations. ~~In both villages, there is a parking supply deficit during the peak usage periods of the summer.~~ The lack of overflow parking is an obstacle which new businesses must overcome. Future redevelopment of these areas must account for the limited opportunities to supply additional parking.

In 1996, the Town adopted parking standards for businesses. These requirements, found in the Zoning Bylaws, should be reviewed every 5-10 years to ensure that they accurately reflect the changing needs of business while avoiding parking deficiencies.

G. Public Transportation

Wareham does not have a year-round public bus system. Transit services are provided through a dial-a-ride for senior/disabled residents and a summer trolley system.

Dial-a-ride is a demand response service which supplies curb to curb transportation for senior citizens and those who are disabled. The cost is \$1 per ride. The vehicles can accommodate wheelchairs.

Beginning in 1996, GATRA began operating a seasonal trolley. The route has been expanded to 4 loops which serve all major population centers in the town. The system provided hourly pickup service from June through September. Service was extended through most of 1997, but it remains uncertain whether it will be permanently established.

Wareham has a Transportation Task Force which advocates increased public transit services within the community. It is hoped that the trolley will generate sufficient ridership to warrant year-round public transportation.

In addition to public services, Bonanza Bus Line provides daily service to Boston. The bus stops at the Mill Pond Diner, on Merchants Way, and at the Elks Club on Route 28.

Commuter Rail Service

Much time has been devoted to studying and predicting the impact of commuter rail service on Southeast Massachusetts. MBTA service to Middleborough began in September 1997. It is expected that this service will put Wareham within the commuting radius of Greater Boston, causing an accelerated residential growth. The level of impact is unclear at this point, as the commute will still require a worker to drive to the T station, ride an hour to South Station, then use public transit to reach the place of employment.

The Commonwealth is also considering the possibility of extending commuter rail service through Wareham to Buzzards Bay. Studies indicate a total ridership of 1,200 per day could be achieved. The Bourne Commuter Rail Study estimates the capital costs to begin service would be \$32.7 million. Ridership would not be sufficient to cover operating costs, so the service would have to be subsidized annually.

Some residents have voiced concerns that increased rail usage would have deleterious effects on the rural nature of the community. Noise from the engines and train whistles would increase with

each new train added to the route. The trains currently blow their whistles at several grade crossings in Wareham.

If commuter rail is seriously considered for Wareham, the Town should be wary of future rail service "assessments". Many communities inside the MBTA service area are forced to pay an annual fee to help cover the operating costs of the rail system. Wareham's budget is already constrained by Proposition 2 1/2, and the Town does not have the ability to provide an annual subsidy for rail service.

North of Wareham, MBTA service is expected to reach Plymouth some time in 1998. This terminal may further increase Wareham's attractiveness as a "bedroom" community.

H. Road Classification System

1. Local Classification System

The Town of Wareham's Rules & Regulations Governing the Subdivision of Land defines streets as collector, standard, local or minor. Collector streets carry through traffic and serve commercial areas. Standard streets serve only the population within a large subdivision. Local streets serve as access to residential areas of no more than 25 lots. Minor streets provide access to nine residences or fewer.

The subdivision regulations set standards for the construction of all new streets, and require minimum 40 foot right-of-way. Street width requirements vary from 18 to 24 feet depending on classification.

Sidewalks are required for all new subdivisions. The need for pedestrian walkways are determined by the Planning Board on an individual basis for subdivision applications.

2. State Classification System

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts classifies state and local roads according to function. See the street classification map for the function of roads in Wareham.

I. Road Maintenance and Improvements

State Roads

Massachusetts Highway Department is responsible for maintaining state-owned roads. This includes Interstate Routes 195 and 495/25, as well as state Route 6, Route 28, Route 58, Sandwich Road, and Tremont Road. All roads are in good condition, with the exception of the Cranberry Highway (which includes Routes 6 & 28 in this stretch) between the Bourne town line and the Bypass.

Two significant bridge projects were recently completed by the State. The Wareham Narrows Bridge was reconstructed in 1995. Replacement of the Pierceville Road Bridge was finished in 1997.

Town officials have petitioned the state to repair the Main Avenue Bridge leading into Onset. The so-called "Dummy Bridge" is deteriorating and should be repaired before it becomes a safety

hazard.

Local Roads

Road maintenance of local roads is performed on an as-needed basis by the Town's Municipal Maintenance Department. Major improvements projects are performed by private contractors. The Town utilizes State funding (Chapter 90) for annual street maintenance work.

In 1997, the Town hired a consultant to develop a systematic pavement management program. A pavement evaluation program will be prepared and all Town-roads will be inventoried for surface, function, condition, and history of maintenance. Based on 12 variables, each road section is then rated from 0 (non-functional) to 100 (excellent). This will enable Municipal Maintenance to project road conditions into the future and to prioritize maintenance projects based on budgetary constraints.

The system will utilize the Town's GIS to provide graphic illustration of road maintenance scenarios. It is expected to be operational in 1998.

Private Roads

The 70+ miles of private streets in the town are maintained by the property owners. Municipal Maintenance provides snow removal service to ensure that emergency vehicles can access all residences.

State law requires that adequate access be provided to any lot before a residence is constructed. The Building Inspector makes the determination for existing lots, while the Planning Board has authority where lots are proposed off an existing road.

J. Traffic Volume and Accidents

Traffic Volume

The two interstate highways running through Wareham carry the highest volumes of traffic in the town. In 1993, average daily traffic (adt) on Route 495/25 was 38,000 vehicles, while Route 195 recorded 21,000 adt in 1994.

The most interesting indicator of transportation change in Wareham is the historic record of traffic levels on Cranberry Highway. Prior to the 1987 opening of Route 25, Cape-bound traffic used Route 6/28. Peak summer days often recorded traffic counts of 55,000+. A count just before the opening showed 40,000 adt. By the following year, the traffic level had fallen to 17,300 adt. Today, traffic levels are rising, currently more than 21,000. As the traffic returns to the highway, improvements must be completed to maintain a safe and congestion-free flow of vehicles.

Accidents

Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) compiles traffic accident data from all communities in their service area. They recently published a report on the most dangerous intersections in the region from 1994-1996. The level of danger was classified based on accident severity (EPDO). Wareham had 4 of the 100 locations, which are listed below.

<u>Location</u>	<u>Regional Rank</u>	<u>EDPO 3-Year Total</u>
Cranberry Highway @ Onset Avenue	(#38) 30.3	35
Cranberry Highway @ Walmart	(#51) 25.7	49
Cranberry Highway @ Sandwich Road	(#63) 23.3	30
Cranberry Highway @ Depot Street	(#85) 19.7	31

Clearly, Cranberry Highway represents the most dangerous local traffic situation. Another section of the SRPEDD report recorded the total number of accidents on each roadway. Cranberry Highway ranked 3rd in the region on this list, with a three-year total of 792 accidents.

Factors that contribute to safety problems on the Cranberry Highway include lack of a left-turn lane, excessive curb cuts (in some places a lack of curbs entirely), and the many Cape-bound motorists who are unfamiliar with the area. The planned reconstruction of Route 6/28 by the State will improve safety at the Onset Avenue and Walmart intersections. The Town should petition the State to address safety problems at the other two locations.

The other roadway with a high incidence of accidents is Main Street, where 186 accidents were reported in the three-year period. Main Street extends from downtown Wareham to the Rochester border. The report did not indicate where most accidents occurred. Anecdotal data from Police Department personnel suggest the "hot spots" for accidents are in the downtown area and at the intersections of Elm Street, Tremont Street, and to a lesser extent Fearing Hill Road.

K. Alternative Modes of Transportation

Bicycles

Bicycling is an alternative mode of transportation that is simple and convenient for short trips in good weather. Since 1977, Wareham has had a written plan for developing a bicycling network. To date, no construction has been completed due to lack of funding.

Bicycle routes are categorized according to their functional classification. The following is an explanation of the basic types of bicycle facilities:

Class I - A separated bike path exclusively for non-motorized vehicles

Class II - Bike lanes adjacent to a roadway which have striping or pavement markings to separate them from traffic.

Class III - An on-road bikeway which may have wider street pavement to allow safe use by bicyclists.

In 1997, a primary route was laid out running from Myles Standish State Forest through Wareham and Onset, and eventually connecting to the Cape Cod Canal bikeway. The route will consist of a combination of facility types. Federal funding has been awarded to construct Phase I of the bikeway - a Class I bike path up Charge Pond Road into the State Forest.

Pedestrians

In recent years, the Town has recognized the need for sidewalks in densely populated

neighborhoods. Sidewalks have been constructed on Swifts Beach Road and reconstructed on Main Street. A sidewalk will be put on the south side of Minot Avenue in 1998.

The Town's Subdivision Regulations require sidewalks on one or both sides of a street in all new subdivisions.

Marine

Wareham's many coves and tidal rivers offer the opportunity for some limited use of waterways for transportation. Federal shipping channels exist in the Wareham River and Onset Bay. In 1998, a commercial ferry began trial service between Onset and Martha's Vineyard. It remains to be seen whether the service will be commercially viable.

L. Future Circulation Needs

1. Improvements and Maintenance

Many Town-accepted streets are in need of improvement. At the same time, several neighborhoods have petitioned the Town for acceptance of their private streets. The Town should be wary of accepting responsibility for additional street maintenance until it is able to use the Pavement Management System to determine the Town's ability to properly maintain existing streets.

2. Circulation Patterns

The general north-south orientation of the Town's waterways make access to all points in the town time-consuming. In the north part of town, the street network is incomplete; with virtually no east-west connections. As development occurs north of Route 495, the Planning Board should insist that cross streets be constructed to allow convenient access from other points in the town.

Wareham's meandering rivers, tidal inlets, and topography make it difficult to get from one place to another in the town. These conditions, combined with wetland constraints, make the widening of streets problematic and reconstruction of bridges very costly. The Town should recognize these conditions, and create policies to limit residential growth in areas to which adequate street access cannot be created.

M. Transportation - Community Goals, Policies, and Recommendations

Street Maintenance & Repair

Policy

Utilize the Pavement Management System to develop a systematic approach to street maintenance and improvement.

Recommendations

1. Develop a five-year road and drainage improvement plan programmed at current level of funding, and conduct well-publicized public hearings on the matter. Re-evaluate funding annually.
2. Solicit federal funding for road reconstruction to the greatest extent possible, and maximize

political awareness and participation by elected officials.

3. Planning Board should require that all new developments adhere to the road construction requirements in the Rules & Regulations Governing the Subdivision of Land.

Transportation Safety

Policy

Increase safety on existing state and local roads within the Town.

Recommendations

1. Town should encourage the State, and enlist legislative involvement, to begin improvements to Route 6/28 as soon as possible, and ensure that a center turning lane is constructed.
2. Improve local street and directional signs installed by the Town to reduce confusion and clearly direct traffic.
3. Petition the State, and enlist legislative involvement, to improve safety on and around the Bypass area to reduce the high incidence of traffic accidents.
4. Improve crosswalks and enforce regulations to allow safe access in the villages, around schools & shopping areas, and at major intersections.
5. Reduce the use of high-pressure sodium vapor lighting, which emits an high-glare, monochromatic light.
6. Petition the State, and enlist legislative involvement, to redesign the intersection of Great Neck Road, Onset Avenue, and Depot Street to improve safety and circulation.
7. Make efforts to control traffic speed through Onset and Wareham Villages to maintain village character.
8. Municipal Maintenance Dept. should re-line Onset Avenue to properly stripe the center of the street.

Public Transit

Policy

Develop an accessible, convenient, and cost-effective public transportation system to serve the daily needs of Wareham residents.

Recommendations

1. The Town should work with GATRA to extend seasonal public transportation service to year-round.
2. More effective means of publicizing the transit system should be explored to encourage maximum ridership.

3. Transit routes should be customer-oriented, to the extent practical.

4. Consider an on-demand bus service as an alternative to set routes.

5. Evaluate the need for commuter parking lots to accommodate bus expansion, car-pooling, and potential train service.

Alternative Transportation

Policy

Develop transportation routes for alternative modes of travel, including pedestrians and bicyclists.

Recommendations

1. Develop a network of bicycle paths connecting major population centers in the Town.

2. Selectmen should form a bikeways committee to oversee and advocate for construction of primary and secondary bicycle routes, and to ensure that street improvement projects incorporate areas for bicycles.

3. Town should continue to seek funding through ISTEA and legislative means for construction.

4. Construct a sidewalk between Onset and Wareham along Minot and Onset Avenues.

5. Develop a list of priorities for extending sidewalks in areas where there is high pedestrian traffic.

6. Maintain clear road shoulders along major public streets for walking and general safety.

Appendix 1

TOWN OF WAREHAM Comprehensive Plan Survey



Dear Wareham Resident:

The Town of Wareham is in the process of preparing a comprehensive plan. The Plan will guide the future development of the Town and will be a basis for changes in the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations.

The attached Citizen Survey will assist the Board of Selectmen, the Planning Board, and the Master Plan Committee in setting goals and policies for Wareham. Public meetings and workshops will be held to verify the responses and to solicit additional input from the public.

Please read the questionnaire carefully and answer all questions. Please return by mail to the Wareham Planning Office, 54 Marion Road or drop off at any location listed on the last page by November 13.

THIS IS YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF WAREHAM!

Thank you for your participation.

Wayne M. Sylvester, Chairman
Board of Selectmen

David Sharkey, Chairman
Master Plan Committee

CITIZEN SURVEY

1. What is your age group?

2 Under 18 98 18-35 546 36-64 380 65 or older

2. In what area of Wareham do you reside or in what area are you the principal property owner?

170 Onset

476 Wareham

222 East Wareham

153 West Wareham

3. Which one of the following applies to you?

926 year-round resident

78 seasonal resident

19 not a resident but own property in Wareham

4. Do you rent or own your residence?

81 Rent 939 Own

5. If you have school-age children, which of the following schools do they attend? check all that apply.

30 Preschool
106 Public elementary 103 Public secondary
14 Private elementary 20 Private secondary

6. What do you feel are the three most desirable qualities about living in Wareham? Write the number 1 beside the most desirable, number 2 beside the second most desirable, etc.

Ocean/ beaches
Small town
Location/ people

7. Please rank these goals 1 through 5 in order of their importance to you.
(Responses for first importance below)

312 Preserve small-town character
247 Protect natural resources
82 Encourage economic development
84 High quality public services
361 Keep taxes low
Other (specify)

8. Are you satisfied with the variety of stores and businesses available in commercial areas?
634 Yes 371 No

If no, what types of businesses should be added to the commercial areas? grocery, dept. store, clothing store, cinema, restaurant, Home Depot

9. Do you favor limiting the amount of commercially zoned land in Wareham?
681 Yes 149 No 175 Not sure

10. Wareham presently has a small fishing industry, but fishing played a larger role in the past. Do you favor increasing fisheries in the Town?

For commercial purposes? For recreational purposes?
393 Yes 363 No 195 Not sure 735 Yes 103 No 122 Not sure

11. Are you in favor of maintaining the level of recreation services available in town?
802 Yes 70 No 120 Not sure

12. Do you feel there are adequate outdoor recreation areas in the town?
468 Yes 364 No 175 Not sure
If no, what is needed?

13. Do you favor the Town building a community swimming pool?
266 Yes 644 No 104 Not sure

14. There are currently two fire & water districts in the town. What organization do you think is in the best interests of the residents?

335 Keep two districts

603 Merge fire & water into one district

15. Do you think the Town has enough open space?

400 Yes 367 No 223 Not sure

16. Would you favor efforts by the Town to acquire additional land for open space and conservation?

626 Yes 199 No 163 Not sure

17. Wareham has more than 500 subsidized housing units, but does not meet the State mandate for 10% affordable housing. Do you think there is a need to develop more affordable housing?

194 Yes, especially rental units

191 Yes, especially single-family homes

409 No, the amount is about right

216 No, the Town should phase out some existing units

18. Would you favor changing the Town's zoning to restrict new multifamily units in the future?

544 Yes 254 No 167 Not sure

19. Capital improvements are needed in a number of areas. Please rank the following by order of importance to you.

(number ranked time first below)

332 Road improvements

132 School buildings

198 EMS buildings

79 Police Station

192 Sidewalks, bikepaths, and downtown amenities

121 None, maintain existing structures

 Other _____

20. Do you favor building safe bikeways to connect major areas of town?

630 Yes 204 No 156 Not sure

21. Do you believe that the current form of governance structure, i.e. Town Administrator, 5 person Board of Selectmen, & bi-annual town meeting, is a satisfactory means for effectively governing the town for the next 25 years?

467 Yes 320 No 157 No opinion Comment Concerns about structure and many ideas on how it could be improved. Change Town Meeting form, go to Council/mayor

22. Any other specific comments you would like to make? Concerns about town government, need to improve services; Specific street improvement and sidewalk requests; control growth and retain community character; protect natural resources and shellfishing; Taxes too high

Comments at Public Workshops

Population & Housing

Limit Section 8

Policies clearer

Don't encourage more people

Improve demographics

Deal with long-term motels

Cap annual growth

Regional perspective

Enforce Zoning laws

New high quality homes

Consider sewer issues in housing

Zoning based on soils

Senior housing for residents

Expedite housing improvements

Identify abandoned

old buildings - make up-to-code easier

Design standards for new homes

Raise R-130 to ?

Non-residents claiming residency

Larger lot zoning

Incentives for deed/parcel restrictions

Incentives for open land

Change rules on 61, 61A, 61B

Public Services and Transportation

Capital costs - realistic

Project capital needs

Long-range where possible

Town & Fire Districts

Sludge to SEMASS?

Sewer - river quality

Nitrate problem

Beware sewer expansion cost

Need good data on sewer impacts

2nd treatment plant?

Harbor training - personnel

Citizens in policy making

Employee standards

School issues

Solicit federal road \$

Rt. 28 center turning lane

Re-line Onset Ave.

Publicize bus availability

Buses - customer oriented

SERTA

On-demand bus service?

Planning charrette

Funding through representatives/senators

Maintain clear road shoulders for walking

Economic Development

Preserve "Gateway" slogan!

History important

Lower paying region

Town inconsistent

Better public meeting times

Good local jobs for resident homeowners

Main Street is gone

Build on strengths of residents

Retail identity

Education is key

Extend Town Hall hours

Asset is water

Regional service center

Industry is important

Transit to support business

Cran. hwy - leave signs alone

Utilities underground

Cran. Hwy - appearance

Uniqueness!

Encourage improvement, don't force

Waterfront/ tourism

Small, non-franchise businesses

Go with economic flow

Maintain long-range goals

Listen to business owners' needs

Town should help

Wareham Village, hold annual events

Merchant's Way - one-way?

Plan for commuter rail

Attraction to Main St.

Enhance parking to meet needs

Walkway to water

Onset, attract longer-term overnight guests

Make post office fit architecturally

Rail impact - positive

C. H. business group

Encourage hotel function room

Industry

Evaluate what could be viable

Rewrite attraction rec. to be useful

Tourism, balance w/ residents needs

Where good for the town

Destination type

Aquaculture, tie-in water quality

Historic Resources & Recreation

Wigwam, on National Register?

Need preservation incentives

tax breaks for maintaining hist. properties?

St. Building Code is a problem

Public records, make available

Demolition delay bylaw

Tobey - Encourage renovation

Tobey Homestead - resolution imminent, costly

3-year time frame for Tobey

Town \$ participation may be needed

Town should hire grant writer for hist. pres.

Center Park needs comfort station, make user friendly

Encourage local history in schools

Taxes into improvements

Encourage Onset historic design

NC connection - sister city

"founding families" or heritage day

Recreation: Increase programs for all age groups

Refer to 5-year playground plan

Prioritize fields in town budget

Target reserves for field construction

Onset - make a park near Dummy Bridge

Pedestrian ways important

Use inmates for maintenance & improvements

Need rollerblade places

Residents needs before tourists

Culture is important

Shore access - create more

Beaches - Guard Onset beach

Natural Resources & Conservation

~~Encourage State to expedite sewer extension applications~~

More specific recommendations

Address vehicle run-off

Separate actions for existing and new development

More environmental remediation

Question on nitrogen at Treatment Plant

Need test results for Agawam River

MA Maritime testing assistance?

Weweantic - turbidity a problem

Educate residents on yard practices

Need envi. baseline data

HS student water testing?

More discussion on water quality

Better enforcement needed

Tighten ZBA/PB operatives

Target more dredging now

Closer work with Buzz. Bay advocacy groups

Tighten building in flood zones

larger setback distances

Scenic Rivers - Is Weweantic?

Annual town appropriation for open space

Over-ride for open space purchase?

Tax relief on land donations

Other ownership of protected lands

Other future town land needs

Larger zoning in watershed

Reduce grandfathered lots

Need resident advocates for open space

Seek permanent protection of bog lands

Lower taxes on vacant land

Land Bank! (not just "consider")

OS incentives on small lots too, and require access

Re-use of buildings - tax incentives

Scenic roads design

Coordinate school curricula

Adult ed.

Environmental ombudsman

Groundwater aquifer protection

Summer residents - important, economic plus

Land Use

Growth control, consider as non-zoning bylaw

Growth control - distribute permits geographically

Whose aesthetics?

Only fiscally positive development

Infrastructure improvements - define

Sewer tie-in, better define
Second homes encouraged
Control seasonal conversions
Better enforcement
Open space incentives - tax
Flexible cluster locations
Phasing req'ts should be in Zoning
Land gift incentives
Zoning review - broad based
"teeth" to bylaws
Enforcement
No double-standards in enforcement
Allow small lot exemption - ZBA
Home businesses allowed in res. areas
Pre-existing nonconforming - protect
Villages - Limited commercial space
Consider cluster density bonuses
Economic burden on phasing development
Historic districts - design criteria
Cluster, favor dens. bonuses
Aesthetics - against/for - be careful in crafting
Against design uniformity
Trees should be required in development
New commercial should be attractive
Increase lot sizes beyond 60,000
Higher lot sizes in other areas
Larger lot size in watershed
Traffic study needed for Main Street
Manuf. homes - define clearly
Manuf. homes - no help with infrastructure
SPR for all developments, retain thresholds
No SPR for change of business, only new structures
Define buffer req'ts
Setbacks based on use not district
Signs - better enforcement
Tighten laws, penalties on signs
Sign maintenance - not removal
Don't amortize nonconforming signs
Underground utilities for old plats? legal?
Limited commercial district
Widen east end of Strip Commercial district
Is there room for new businesses on strip?
Emergency access is important
Quality issues are number 1
Inform the public better
Create places for youth
Need better road signs, street signs