

REPORT

August 2022



TOWN OF WESTERLY, RHODE ISLAND

Westerly Route 1 Corridor Report

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	I
LIST OF APPENDICES	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	IV
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	ES-1
1.0. INTRODUCTION	10
1.1. The Corridor.....	10
1.2. Comprehensive Plan Support for Commercial Corridor Redevelopment	10
1.3. Purpose of this Plan.....	11
2.0. PROJECT AREA AND APPROACH	12
2.1. Project Area	12
2.2. Study in Context of Westerly Land-Use Policy	13
2.3. Visual Analysis.....	13
2.4. Stakeholder and Partner Engagement	14
2.4.1. Online Survey	15
2.4.2. Westerly Architectural Review Board.....	18
2.5. Geographic Approach	19
2.6. Existing Data Review.....	26
2.6.1. Plans and Reports	26
2.6.2. Local Policy Review.....	27
3.0. RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	29
3.1. Travel in the Corridor	29
3.1.1. Roadway and Traffic Flow	29
3.1.2. Traffic Signals and Signs	31
3.1.3. Parking.....	32
3.1.4. Pedestrian Access	35
3.1.5. Bicycle Access	36
3.1.6. ADA Compliance.....	38
3.1.7. Comprehensive Plan and Travel in the Corridor.....	39
3.2. Infrastructure in the Corridor.....	39
3.2.1. Stormwater	39
3.2.2. Water Supply	41
3.2.3. Wastewater Management.....	42
3.2.4. Broadband	43
3.2.5. Undergrounding Cabling and Electrical Infrastructure.....	45
3.2.6. Comprehensive Plan and Infrastructure	47
3.3. Aesthetics in the Corridor	47
3.3.1. Landscape/Streetscape	48
3.3.2. Signage.....	50
3.3.3. Building Design and Location	51
3.3.4. Corridor Aesthetics and Neighborhood Planning.....	51
3.4. Housing in the Corridor.....	52
3.5. Economic Development in the Corridor.....	54

CONTENTS

3.5.1. Place-based Approach to Economic Development.....	55
3.5.2. Development Framework.....	56
3.5.3. Incentives.....	57
3.5.4. Programming and Initiatives	58
3.5.5. Partnerships.....	59
3.6. Regulation and Zoning Framework in the Corridor.....	59
4.0. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT	63
4.1. Implementation Overview	63
4.2. Implementation Matrix	63
4.3. Evaluation and Adaptive Management	63
4.4. Measures of Success	64

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A..... Route One Corridor, Existing Conditions

Appendix B..... Public Engagement Summary

Appendix C..... Economic Development Commission Survey Results Summary

Appendix D..... Architectural Review Board Exercise Summary

Appendix E..... Goals and Policy Review Checklist

Appendix F..... Existing Conditions and Market Analysis

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Town of Westerly extends its sincere thanks to the residents, community advocates, business leaders, stakeholders, and staff who have participated in the development of this plan. Your participation, knowledge, and dedication has been instrumental in ensuring that this plan is reflective of the needs and desires of the Town of Westerly. Your work on the Route One Corridor project will ensure that future growth and development will align with the visions developed during this process.

The Westerly Planning Board

Justin Hopkins
Joseph Montesano
Kevin Lowther, II
Andrew Delisio
Tabitha Harkin
Christopher Lawlor
Richard W. Constantine

The Westerly Economic Development Commission

Mary Scialabba
James Torres
Lucy Wang
Timothy McLaughlin, Jr.
Daniel Lathrop
Ralph M. Abruzzese
Douglas Brockway

The Westerly Architectural Review Board

James O. Frink, Jr.
Wayne J. Booker
Nancy N. Richmond
Marco Tommasini
Paul A. Azzinaro
Katherine Boll
Eliza Griscom

The Route One Corridor Committee

Justin Hopkins
Joseph Montesano
Douglas Brockway
James Torres

Consultants

Weston & Sampson
RKG Associates

Office of Planning

Nancy Letendre, Town Planner
Alyse Oziolor, Principal Planner

Office of the Town Manager

Shawn Lacey, Town Manager

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Westerly (the Town) has developed a strategic plan for the Route One Corridor to encourage the type of development the Town and community would like to see along Route One to meet the goals of the 2020-2040 Comprehensive Community Plan. This plan combines new analysis conducted as part of the project with work that has been done previously by various parties to develop a cohesive, implementable strategy for the Route One Corridor that will guide Town departments, the Planning Board, the Economic Development Commission, private properties owners and investors, and state agencies. It consists of an existing conditions assessment, the implementation of a robust public engagement strategy, stakeholder engagement, and an analysis of site conditions and implementable strategies.

The Route One Corridor Study provides assessment and strategic actions for six general topic areas, which include travel, infrastructure, aesthetics, housing, economics, and development regulation. A brief overview of findings and proposed actions is provided below. More detailed information on each topic area can be found in Section 3 of the study.

Travel in the Corridor

The Route One Corridor, which is a state-owned roadway, can be experienced through several different modes of travel. Traveling the corridor by car, as a pedestrian, bicyclist, or on a bus, each lends itself to a somewhat different experience; however, in its current condition Route One does not provide travel at an appropriate level of ease and safety. There is a lack of pedestrian and bicycle amenities (crosswalks, bicycle lane, pedestrian crossing signals, disconnected sidewalks, obstructed sidewalks). Street signs along the Corridor can be overwhelming and confusing and the Corridor lacks accessibility for people with physical disabilities.

The overall vision is to improve travel in the Route One Corridor so that it flows logically with clear wayfinding. Achieving that vision would include providing for easy access to, from, and between businesses and parking that is well-designed for the intended use. Also, making navigation of the corridor safe and convenient via all modes of transportation (motorists, cyclists, pedestrians, etc.) and ensuring there is adequate balance between public and private transportation.



Travel in the Route One Corridor can be overwhelming for motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists.

How can this be accomplished? This study proposes consolidation of curb cuts, improve access management between businesses and other uses; improved pedestrian connection and safety through consistent sidewalks and more appropriately signalized crossings; and establishment of aesthetically consistent sign standards. Because Route One is owned by the State of Rhode Island, implementation will require significant coordination with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation. This should begin with a Road Safety Audit, which will help to determine deficiencies and to direct interventions.

Infrastructure in the Corridor

Infrastructure in the Corridor includes stormwater, water supply, wastewater, broadband, and utility lines. The Corridor's infrastructure is owned by both private and public parties, including the Town, the State, utility companies, private businesses, and other property owners; therefore, improvement to conditions will require local action as well as close coordination with other owners of infrastructure. Current conditions constrain growth and economic development due to limited water and wastewater capacity as well as reportedly spotty broadband. Overhead utility lines present an unappealing visual aesthetic as well as a risk of outage during severe storms.

The overall vision is to provide for an effective level of water, wastewater, broadband, and other services that encourages development that is commensurate with the growth anticipated in the Comprehensive Plan and the sensitive natural resources surrounding the Corridor.

How can this be accomplished? This study proposes revising existing stormwater management standards to require the use of green infrastructure. The Town should establish improved water conservation standards to ensure adequate water for residential and commercial growth as well as to protect the Wood-Pawcatuck sole source aquifer. Similarly, the Town should assess existing wastewater infrastructure and provide adequate funding for improvements to support growth. The Town should also develop a telecommunications master plan and a plan for undergrounding communication and electrical utility lines.

Aesthetics in the Corridor

For the purposes of this study, aesthetics refers to the visual appeal of the Corridor as it relates to landscaping, retail signs, and building design and massing. Aesthetic appeal is an important component of economic development. People are generally drawn to places that look nice and create a certain sense of place.

As an overall vision, the aesthetics of the Corridor should demonstrate the character and charm of Westerly with a cohesive design that effectively mixes business, residential, and protected green space. Aesthetics should be established so as to encourage community gathering. Gathering spaces should be attractive to residents, businesses, consumers, and visitors.



Aesthetic appeal is an important component of economic development. People are generally drawn to places that look nice and create a certain sense of place.

How can this be accomplished? This study proposes consistent landscaping standards that incentivize curb appeal, enhanced and incentivized sign replacement and improved architectural and landscaping design standards.

Housing in the Corridor

One Corridor has an existing and important residential footprint. By adding mixed-use opportunities to existing commercial areas, Westerly can encourage integration with the development of neighborhood character and charm of Westerly across the Corridor. This will add “community” and “place” to the convenience of local businesses and services for residents and commerce alike. Housing of different types and sizes for people scaling up or scaling down, services that complement residential uses, access to shopping, travelways, and destinations.



Most housing in the Route One Corridor is single-family and lacks integration with commercial areas.

Currently the housing established within the Route One Corridor is predominantly single-family and is not properly integrated with commercial areas. Where it is located, it often clustered together but sporadically among the commercial development.

As an overall vision, the Route One Corridor should include a broad range of integrated, inclusive, age-friendly, and affordable housing options, which are supported by local policy, state and nonprofit partnerships, and private development interests.

How can this be accomplished? This study proposes promotion of mixed uses (e.g., commercial and residential together) on appropriate parcels or locations. This approach is anticipated to provide a wider range of housing choices, better integration of housing. This study also recommends providing better pedestrian connections between to existing residential neighborhoods and commercial uses on Route One.

Economic Development in the Corridor

Development and commercial activity along the Corridor are automobile-oriented and dramatically different in form, scale, and function than most of the rest of Westerly. Regionally, businesses along the Corridor serve a broad population in both southwest Rhode Island and southeast Connecticut; however, outdated modes of development have created an environment that fails to use land efficiently or to support the kind of experience that Westerly residents desire. Currently the Route One Corridor has a number of underutilized parcels, poorly utilized parking areas, and vacant storefronts. Many of the commercial and retail uses are located in strip malls that lack neighborhood character and integration with the rest of the Corridor. Currently, this condition constrains the Town's potential for economic growth.



Most commercial activity on the Route One Corridor is automobile oriented and lacks neighborhood character.

As an overall vision, Westerly should reestablish conditions in the Corridor to effectively leverage trending market dynamics. The Town should partner with businesses and developers to encourage new investment, increase the quality and quantity of jobs, and build a more robust, diverse, and resilient year-round economy that serves the needs of residents in Westerly.

How can this be accomplished? This study proposes broaden allowable uses in commercial districts, streamlining and clarifying the local review process for development and redevelopment and incentivizing mixed use (i.e., combined housing and commercial uses).

Regulation and Zoning in the Corridor

Changes to the Town's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations can be a powerful tool towards achieving many of the identified goals of the Route One Corridor. Ensuring that zoning is clear and concise is a strategic approach the Town can take that provides comfort and clarity to property owners and developers. When the regulatory framework is properly structured, well-defined, and streamlined to achieve intended outcomes, it provides a circumstance where property owners and developers can rely on the outlined rules and regulations. This fosters a development environment where all involved are able to achieve development goals confidently and efficiently as part of a coordinated effort.

As an overall vision, Westerly should revise existing development regulations to be clear, concise, and coupled with a streamlined approval process for redevelopment and development that attracts investment to the Corridor and fosters economic sustainability.

How can this be accomplished? This study proposes developing a Special Corridor District within the zoning ordinance that would apply to the entire corridor. As part of this approach the Town should remove the Bed and Breakfast Overlay as well as the Granite Street Overlay. Subdivision Regulations should be amended to create a streamlined permitting process for commercial development along the Corridor that complies with updated design guidelines.

Some key features of plan include:

- A stakeholder engagement process (see Section 2.4), which included development of a project webpage, a plan recommendations synopsis, a watershed video, an online survey, and stakeholder and public meetings. See Appendix B for a full summary of this information.
- A new management approach for reinvigoration of the Corridor (see Section 2.5), which is based on transect planning and breaks the Corridor into sub-corridors, each with their own characteristics and aesthetic feel. The transect-based approach is a community analysis tool that helps to provide a better understanding and appreciation for community form and patterns. This approach gives the Town a framework to manage the Corridor both holistically and with specificity for the unique conditions within each sub-corridor.
- A review of existing data, plans, reports, and enforceable policy (see Section 2.6) with key aspects incorporated into the new management approach.
- A series of recommended strategies listed by topic (see Section 3) with a proposed schedule, implementation approach, and measures of success (see Section 4). This approach addresses the major topics of travel in the corridor, infrastructure, aesthetics, housing, economic development, and regulatory framework (e.g., zoning).
- Adaptive management (see Section 4.3), which proposes a feedback loop to update management efforts as needed throughout the implementation of the plan, which is expected to take place over the course of 10 years or more. This will allow the Town to adjust its strategic approach despite the uncertainty of the future.
- As noted above, recommended strategies are listed in Section 3.0 by six topic areas including travel, infrastructure, aesthetics, housing, economics, and development regulation. Some more complex topics (e.g., travel) are broken out into subtopics (e.g., traffic flow, traffic signals, parking, pedestrian access, etc.) to provide appropriate specificity of findings and recommendations. A complete list of recommended actions to implement goals of each topic and subtopic is provided below.

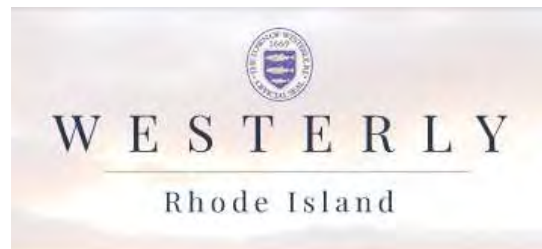


Table ES-1. Summary of Action Items

ACTION ITEMS
TRAVEL IN THE CORRIDOR
Roadway and Traffic Flow
Request a Road Safety Audit from RIDOT to determine issues related to safety and roadway conditions within and adjacent to the Route One Corridor Study Area.
Collaborate with RIDOT on priority short- and long-term improvements and schedule construction within the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).
Work with RIDOT to determine possible funding sources and schedules to implement proposed improvements determined from the RSA evaluation.
Adopt zoning requirements for cross access easements between properties for new developments or redevelopment sites to promote good access management techniques and reduce curb cuts on Route One.
Traffic Signals and Signs
Work with RIDOT as part of a Road Safety Audit to inventory traffic related and regulatory signs and pavement markings, ensure these meet state standards and MUTCD, are properly located and in good condition, and are consistent throughout the Corridor.
Work with RIDOT to inventory traffic signal equipment, ensure these meet current requirements, are properly located and in good condition, and determine appropriateness of timing and phasing of intersection and pedestrian crossing signals.
Adopt zoning requirements for access to side streets from properties for new developments or redevelopment sites to promote good access management and divert traffic to existing or proposed signalized intersections.
Parking
Amend the zoning ordinance off-street parking regulations to reflect parking maximums instead of minimum requirements and codify use of parking-demand studies to reduce parking spaces allowed.
Incentivize shared parking arrangements to provide adequate parking for small businesses and better utilization of existing parking lots.
Amend the zoning ordinance to require more robust use of landscape in the off-street parking regulations including, but not limited to, required buffers, berms, plant material, shade cover and interior landscape requirements.
Provide for a condensed review process for the updating of existing parking areas to meet performance standards and sites where existing underutilized parking areas are proposed to be converted to occupied commercial space.
During roadway improvements encourage RIDOT to remove wide curb cuts, closing sections, establish and maintain suitable curb reveal to create defined ingress and egress points.
Pedestrian Access
Work with RIDOT to conduct a bicycle and pedestrian safety audit to determine deficiencies using the FHWA <i>Pedestrian and Bicyclist Road Safety Audit (RSA) Guide</i> and Prompt List.
Coordinate with RIDOT to remove obstacles (such as sign poles, mailboxes, and other semi-permanent objects) from existing sidewalks improving pedestrian and ADA accessibility.
Identify gaps in the sidewalk network and work with RIDOT to plan for and install sidewalks in critical locations to provide continuous and safe pedestrian access through the Corridor.
Identify sidewalk areas where ADA required provisions (such as sidewalk width (minimum of a 4-foot clearance), curb ramps, and truncated domes) are lacking and coordinate with RIDOT to upgrade these areas to bring them into compliance.
Amend the zoning ordinance off-street parking regulations and use the site planning processes to require improved pedestrian access and amenities such as seating whenever businesses are updating or redeveloping and new development projects.

Table ES-1. Summary of Action Items
ACTION ITEMS
Bicycle Access
Work with RIDOT to conduct a bicycle and pedestrian safety audit to determine deficiencies using the FHWA <i>Pedestrian and Bicyclist Road Safety Audit (RSA) Guide</i> and Prompt List.
Amend the zoning ordinance off-street parking regulations and use the site planning processes to require improved bicycle access and amenities such as bike racks whenever businesses are updating or redeveloping and new development projects.
Work with RIDOT to install shared lane and dedicated lane markings and bicycle signage to increase awareness and safety around bicyclists on the Corridor.
Map any shared use or bicycle lanes, markings, and other amenities and ensure such information is available to the public and up to date.
Conduct a bicycle lane feasibility study along the Corridor to determine the appropriateness and feasibility of providing bicycle access and amenities.
Consider a complete streets program for Route One, to be phased in through future pavement resurfacing and road reconstruction projects and provide for long-term and continued reinvestment.
ADA Compliance
Collaborate with RIDOT on a strategy to identify, plan for, and address ADA compliance issues related to sidewalk access, signage, and other identified issues.
INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE CORRIDOR
Stormwater
Work with RIDOT and conduct an inventory and analysis of the existing stormwater infrastructure in the Corridor and its condition, and either disconnect or pretreat stormwater prior to conveyance.
Revise stormwater management and site development regulations to require green infrastructure and reduce the amount of impervious surface in all new private and public projects.
Implement a program of incentives for green infrastructure and reduction in the amount of impervious surface at existing uses and as part of redevelopment.
Develop a database of grant funding options for plan, design and construction of green infrastructure and publish it on the Town website.
Analyze and then implement preferred funding options for Corridor improvements in the public realm.
Analyze the potential value of developing a public or private stormwater utility.
Water Supply
Develop a water conservation program that is specifically aimed at businesses.
Protect groundwater through use of appropriate stormwater and wastewater management.
Plan, design and permit improvements and extension of water service as needed including capital funding as part of an update to the Westerly Water Supply Management Plan.
Construct improvements and extension of water service as needed.
Wastewater Management
Ensure that sewers within the project area are functioning properly and conveying flows without restrictions.
Plan, design and permit improvements and extension of sewer service to Dunn's Corners including capital funding as part of an update to the Westerly Wastewater Facilities Plan.
Construct improvements and extensions of sewers to Dunn's Corners.
If funding for conventional sewers does not go forward, consider the use of a small-diameter system for parts of the Corridor.
Broadband
Develop a telecommunications master plan for the Route One Corridor.

Table ES-1. Summary of Action Items

ACTION ITEMS
Establish a telecommunications advisory council.
Bring a broadband hub to Route One Corridor.
Amend the zoning ordinance and development regulations and use the site planning processes to require broadband infrastructure as part of development proposals whenever needed.
Undergrounding Cabling and Electrical Infrastructure
Develop a plan for undergrounding utility lines along the Route One Corridor.
Amend the zoning ordinance and development regulations and use the site planning processes to require underground utility lines as part of development proposals.
Develop an undergrounding process with the utility companies.
AESTHETICS IN THE CORRIDOR
Landscape/Streetscape
Draft a set of design standards that provide guidance for landscape design elements for each Sub-corridor.
Develop local and state support for applying Complete Street principles to the Route One Corridor.
Create a façade or streetscape improvement program to incentivize businesses to upgrade.
Amend the zoning ordinance to consolidate landscaping requirements that are currently scattered throughout the ordinance, into a single section for ease of design and implementation.
Signage
Amend the zoning ordinance to address sign requirements specifically for the Route One Corridor to create consistency yet appropriate to each sub-corridor.
Develop design standards for the Corridor that includes a sunset provision for existing nonconforming signage.
Develop a Route 1 Westerly brand to create design cohesion through the public realm and ensure that any public infrastructure improvements are also consistent with the Corridor Vision.
Develop a sign incentive program that encourages businesses to update and upgrade their signs to meet new requirements.
Building Design and Location
Develop design standards for the Corridor that are reflective of the character of the sub-corridors and adjacent neighborhoods that articulate the Town's desire for building massing, scale, and location.
Develop a tax incentive program to encourage property owners to implement new building design criteria as retrofits.
HOUSING IN THE CORRIDOR
Amend Corridor zoning to allow increased residential density within the Corridor consistent with Sub-corridor characteristics and infrastructure capacity.
Create incentives for development of affordable by design housing through public private partnerships, and changes in how multifamily units are assessed.
Amend Corridor zoning to provide an appropriate mix of uses and to allow mixed-use redevelopment to take on various forms within various Sub-corridors
Establish Sub-corridor zoning provisions to protect the existing stretches of single-family detached residential homes from commercial encroachment, inappropriate in-fill development, and changes of use.
Strengthen relationships with statewide agencies with access to funding and technical assistance resources for the Corridor and its businesses, such as RI Commerce, RI Small Business Development Center, Ocean State BDA, RI Science & Technology Advisory Council.
Actively pursue the construction of LMI qualified rental units within the existing sewer service area of the Route One Corridor.
Revise zoning ordinance regulations to allow family ownership units (of 1 to 3 bedrooms) such as those designed in 2- to 4-unit or 9- to 12-unit structures consistent with sub-corridor characteristics.

Table ES-1. Summary of Action Items

ACTION ITEMS
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE CORRIDOR
Development Framework
Use the Focus Areas identified in the Market Analysis to amend Corridor zoning to allow residential, retail, industrial and manufacturing within the Corridor consistent with Sub-corridor characteristics and infrastructure capacity.
Establish design districts along the Corridor with accompanying design guidelines, creating clear expectations for developers and a standard against which to judge proposed projects.
Customize the existing design review process for development projects within design districts.
Incentives
Consider the implementation of one or more Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts at strategic locations along the Corridor where large-scale development is likely or desirable and infrastructure adaptations are needed.
Consider structured tax abatements for complex redevelopment projects, including those that require environmental remediation or other significant upfront costs that produce public benefits.
Consider a rent assistance program for a defined list of desired corridor tenant types.
Reduce building permitting and utility hook-up fees for non-formula (i.e., locally owned, non-chain) commercial uses.
Programming and Initiatives
Fund a staff position responsible for guiding businesses interested in locating in Westerly, identifying and marketing real estate and development opportunities, and proactively identifying candidates for startup activity (organizations and individuals).
Engage directly with local property owners, real estate brokers, and developers to understand the local marketplace and identify growth opportunities consistent with the vision for the Corridor.
Partner with local organizations to facilitate markets, festivals, and other short-term and tactical interventions in the Corridor.
Partnerships
Create relationships with provosts, counselors, and advisors at higher education institutions such as Connecticut College, URI, RICC, and the Association of Independent Colleges & Universities of RI.
Create relationships with counselors, advisors, and teachers at local high schools, such as Westerly High School and the Chariho Career & Technical Center.
Strengthen relationships with statewide agencies that can improve the pipeline of W/MBEs, such as the RI Black Business Association and Center for Women & Enterprise.
Build on the existing relationship with the Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce to enhance connections to the local business community and improve understanding of their needs and concerns.
Strengthen relationships with statewide agencies with access to funding and technical assistance resources for the Corridor and its businesses, such as RI Commerce, RI Small Business Development Center, Ocean State BDA, RI Science & Technology Advisory Council.
REGULATION AND ZONING FRAMEWORK IN THE CORRIDOR
Develop a Special Area Management District within the zoning ordinance and apply it to the Route One Corridor, replacing the existing zoning.
Remove the Bed and Breakfast Overlay from the Route One Corridor area.
Remove the Granite Street Overlay.
Amend the Subdivision Regulations to create a streamlined permitting process for commercial development along the Corridor that complies with the newly adopted design guidelines.

1.0

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Westerly (the Town) has conducted a study of the Route One Corridor and identified strategies to encourage the type of development the Town and community would like to see along Route One and to meet the goals of the 2020-2040 Comprehensive Community Plan. The results of that work are contained in this Route One Corridor Plan.

Route One Corridor Plan compiles new analysis conducted as part of the project with historical work that has been done previously by various parties to develop a cohesive, implementable strategy for the Route One Corridor that will guide Town departments, the Planning Board, the Economic Development Commission, private property owners and investors, and state agencies.

The overall project consisted of an existing conditions assessment, the implementation of a robust public engagement strategy, stakeholder engagement, and a final report providing a full analysis of site conditions and implementable strategies.

1.1. The Corridor

The Route One Corridor (herein the “Corridor”) in Westerly is an approximate five-mile stretch of roadway that connects Downtown Westerly (west) to the Charlestown town line (east). Consisting of Granite Street, Franklin Street and Post Road, the Corridor is the principal arterial roadway that provides access across the southern portion of Town. This Corridor includes a majority of the Town’s commercially developed land, predominantly occupied by large-scale developments in the form of shopping centers, strip malls, gas stations, and other relatively large retail establishments. The commercial corridor is flanked on both sides by medium and high- density residential development. This area of Town developed incrementally over time without the benefit of an overarching plan to ensure the highest and best use of the land. The result is a sprawling linear strip of large-scale retail and service businesses, interspersed with single-family homes. These areas have little or no internal connectivity and are oriented to transportation by automobile with minimal opportunity for pedestrian accessibility. Likely due to the way it developed, the area lacks an overall sense of character that is appropriate to the Town of Westerly.

1.2. Comprehensive Plan Support for Commercial Corridor Redevelopment

The 2020-2040 Town of Westerly Comprehensive Community Plan can be found at <http://westerlyri.gov/710/Comprehensive-Community-Plan-2020-2040>. The Comprehensive Plan states:

The vision for the Town of Westerly is to preserve and enhance its quality of life for all generations as a safe, resilient, and compassionate community with a healthy environment, a distinctive heritage, extraordinary cultural and natural resources, a strong, stable, equitable economy, and a responsible and publicly- engaged government.

In alignment with this vision for Westerly, the Comprehensive Plan makes several references to economic development in the Town and prioritizes the transformation of the commercial corridor “to a distinctive, inviting, safe, commercial, professional, and residential area reflective of the Town’s character”. This commitment has led to the Route One Corridor Study and the recommendations for furthering the Town’s vision.

The Comprehensive Plan also identifies several Goals, Policies, and Actions to help achieve the vision for the Route One Corridor. These include implementation actions associated with Natural Resources, Housing Opportunities, Economic Vitality, Services & Facilities, and Transportation. Comprehensive Plan amendments and zoning and regulation changes can be derived from the Route One Corridor Plan. Consistency between this Route One Corridor Plan and the Comprehensive Plan will be ensured when the Town Council adopts, and Statewide Planning approves, amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan will continue to guide Town departments, the Planning Board, the Economic Development Commission, private property owners and investors, and state agencies in redevelopment of the Corridor area.

1.3. Purpose of this Plan

The Town of Westerly has conducted a study of the Route One Corridor and identified strategies to encourage the type of development the Town and community would like to see along Route One and to meet the goals of the 2020-2040 Comprehensive Community Plan. This Route One Corridor Plan compiles new analysis by Weston & Sampson and RKG Associates conducted as part of the project with historical work that has been done previously by various parties to develop a cohesive, implementable strategy for the Route One Corridor. The overall project consisted of an existing conditions assessment, an economic analysis, the implementation of a robust public engagement strategy, stakeholder engagement, and a final report providing a full analysis of challenges and opportunities and recommended implementation strategies.

Comprehensive Plan amendments and zoning and regulation changes related to the Route One Corridor can be derived from this Plan. Changes to the Comprehensive Plan to reflect the recommended actions in this Route One Corridor Plan are a necessary part of the process to ensure consistency between policy decisions the Town implements, and the policies outlined in the Town’s Comprehensive Plan. The amended Comprehensive Plan will continue to guide Town departments, the Planning Board, the Economic Development Commission, private property owners and investors, and state agencies in redevelopment of the Corridor area.

2.0

PROJECT AREA AND APPROACH

The overall approach to the Route One Corridor Study was to first understand what efforts the Town of Westerly had already put forth with regards to the Route One area. This consisted of a thorough review of existing data, plans, and documents. It is first important to understand what baseline information was available, and to review any goals and objectives that have already been formed around the issue. In the case of Route One, the Town had already identified this area of the Town in its newly adopted Comprehensive Plan and efforts had already been made to engage the businesses within the community to understand general sentiments with regards to the economic climate in the Town, which translates to the Route One Corridor as the primary commercial strip in Town.

Secondly, overall project goals and principles were discussed with the ROCC to assist in establishing intended outcomes of the study.

Thirdly, a geographic approach was discussed as a way to address the varied pattern of development experienced along the Corridor, with the understanding that a one size fits all approach would not adequately address the goals and objectives of the study. Geography refers to the physical features of a region. The geography of an area often contributes to how the area is developed and regulated. A geographic approach was required to manage the length and diversity of the Route One Corridor for this project. This was done by segmenting the Corridor into manageable sub-corridors based on similar uses and characteristics.

2.1. Project Area

The project area is an approximate five-mile stretch of roadway that includes the majority of the Town's commercially developed land, predominantly occupied by large-scale developments in the form of shopping centers, strip malls, gas stations, and other relatively large retail establishments. The commercial corridor is flanked on its north and south sides by medium and high-density residential development. This area of Town developed incrementally over time without the benefit of an overarching plan to ensure the highest and best use of the land. The result is a sprawling linear strip of large-scale retail and service businesses, interspersed with single-family homes. These areas have little or no internal connectivity and are oriented to transportation by automobile with minimal opportunity for pedestrian accessibility. Likely due to the way it developed, area lacks an overall sense of character that is appropriate to the Town of Westerly. The project area is outlined in Figure 2-1 below.

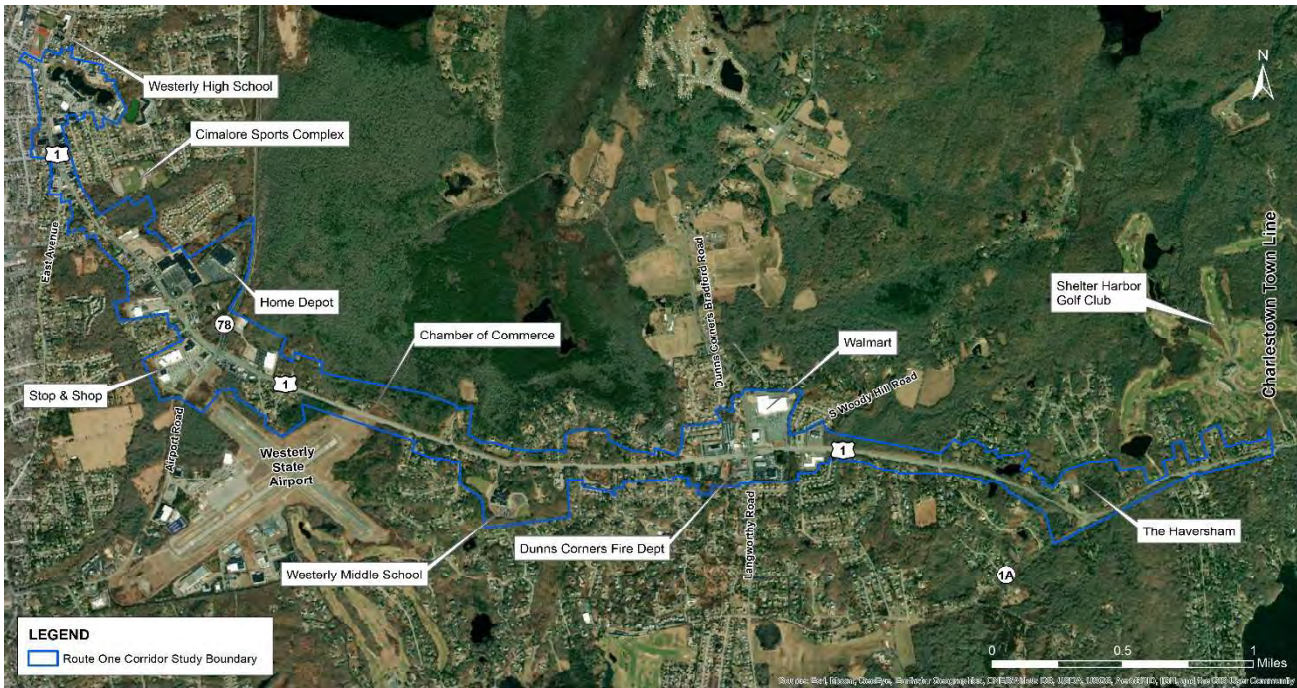


Figure 2-1. Route One Corridor Project Area

2.2. Study in Context of Westerly Land-Use Policy

The Town of Westerly's focus on the Route One Corridor began well before this study was initiated. As previously mentioned, the Town addresses the Route One Corridor throughout their Comprehensive Plan. Additionally, the Town's Economic Development Commission (EDC) has spent considerable time and energy working towards addressing the issues related to the Corridor called out in the Comprehensive Plan. The EDC has focused their efforts on five Comprehensive Plan action items, three of which directly apply to the Route One Corridor.

At the outset of this project the Town formed the Route One Corridor Committee (ROCC), consisting of two members of the Economic Development Commission, two members of the Planning Board, and two staff members from the Planning Office. The ROCC's role in this project is to work with the Town's consultant to manage the project development and implementation during the study process, as well as to further develop the overall vision and principles for the project initiated by the work of the EDC.

2.3. Visual Analysis

An important first step in this project was to conduct an existing conditions analysis to inventory what presently exists in the Corridor. The project team (members of the ROCC, Weston & Sampson, and Town staff) conducted two site visits to the Corridor to observe and document current conditions related to the roadway, traffic, traffic signals, signs, landscaping, building design, parking lot placement and design, infrastructure, and other general items related to a Corridor users experience as the travel.

This important information was synthesized into an Existing Conditions Report (Appendix A) that provided the foundation for the public engagement and eventual recommended action items for implementation contained within this document.

This on the ground analysis was supplemented with a desktop analysis using Google Earth and Geographic Information Systems software to gain a better understanding of the relationship between the roadway, the users, and the businesses and residences located there.

2.4. Stakeholder and Partner Engagement

Public engagement is an essential cornerstone of land-use planning. The public interest is derived through continuous and open discussion. Opportunities for public engagement have been provided throughout the development of the Route One Corridor Plan, with meaningful impact made by citizens and stakeholders on the issues, challenges, and opportunities within the Route One commercial corridor.

Public outreach, education, and information sharing are an important aspect of successful corridor and small area planning. Doing so effectively requires communicating with a variety of constituencies and often necessitates different approaches to involve citizen volunteers, Town residents, property owners, community organizations, and other stakeholders. This means that information must be provided in a user friendly and understandable manner to facilitate constructive feedback and participation. Several approaches were used, including:

- A project webpage, which was initiated at the beginning of the project and was updated with new information throughout the duration of the project.
- An online survey, which were posted on the project webpage.
- A project video, which begins with aerial footage of the Corridor with visually engaging imagery and voiceover explaining the need and purpose of the project.
- Regular project team meetings to ensure an effective project approach and appropriate course changes as circumstances demanded.
- Stakeholder interviews with property owners of key parcels, as well as meetings with Town staff, Boards and Commissions related to design and development along the Corridor.
- Two public meetings to gather input from residents and others in Town with an interest in the Route One Corridor.

Public engagement allowed the ROCC, Weston & Sampson become familiar with residents needs and wants for economic development and corridor revitalization. As a result their needs are up front and always in sight as the Route One Corridor Plan was developed and the proposals, ideas and implementation actions were created.

Moving forward will entail the Town Council adopting amendments to the Comprehensive Plan consistent with this document. These amendments will include changes to the zoning map, the future land use map, and adding the action items identified here into the implementation table in the Comprehensive Plan. The Town will also begin to work on a series of design regulations and zoning ordinance amendments within the Corridor. These important next steps will be a public process that will continue the high level of public engagement that has already been initiated.

The public's support and input will continue to be a critical part of the success of implementing this plan. Public meetings and informational sessions will continue to be a part of this ongoing process as we move forward to further refine the visions for the Corridor.

Full details of the public engagement and stakeholder interview processes are available in Appendix B. This includes response to comments were received through the website and comments received regarding location-specific issues in the Corridor

2.4.1. Online Survey

One online survey was launched during the duration of this project. It was developed by the Town and the project team. The survey was introduced at the Town Council meeting on February 28, 2022 and closed on July 5, 2022. In total there were 635 responses. Key questions and prompts in the survey data is summarized below:

- Do you live or work in the Route One Corridor Study Area?
- How often do you travel in the Route One Corridor and what mode of transit do you use?
- Provide feedback on the current conditions of the Route One Corridor, and rate the importance of making improvements, as they relate to traffic, site access and circulation, non-motorized travel, aesthetic quality, and business types.
- What do you like about the Route One Corridor and what would you most like to change?
- What types of businesses are meeting your needs, and which are not there currently that you desire?

Route One Corridor Survey, Westerly, RI

Welcome!

The Town of Westerly is in the process of developing a plan to revitalize the Route One Corridor. The plan will focus on making the Route One Corridor more enjoyable for users as well as more attractive to businesses and this survey is part of the planning process.

We are very interested in hearing from you as someone who uses Route One. The survey focuses particularly on aesthetics and travel through the Corridor. Responses from it will help the Town improve the Route One Corridor.

The survey should take approximately 10 - 12 minutes to complete. Again, your input is extremely valuable to us and we appreciate you taking the time to help improve our community.

For the purposes of this survey, the Route One Corridor includes the area shown in blue outline in the following map. The extent of the study area goes from approximately the intersection of Granite Street and Tower Street to Westerly-Charlestown town line. (In this survey, we refer to the Route One Corridor Study Area as simply the Route One Corridor.)

Study Area Map

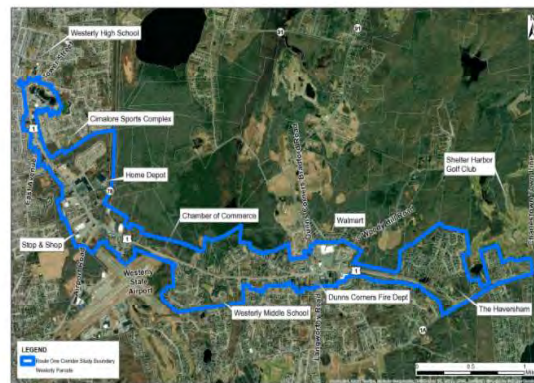


Figure 2-2. Image of the Online Survey

Summary of Findings

The results of the survey support the need for improvements to the Corridor, especially for improving the aesthetics of the Corridor; and statistically, the survey reflects the opinions of people in Town. With approximately 497 of respondents living in Westerly full time (population 23,359), it can be concluded that the results represent the general opinions of the overall populous within an approximately 3.89% margin of error with a 95% confidence level.

The following is a summary of findings from the survey:

- The Corridor is a popular location for shopping. Many respondents travel the Corridor over five times per week for grocery shopping (128 respondents, 20.2%) and other shopping (124 respondents, 19.5%).
- Most respondents feel uncomfortable as non-motorists on the Corridor. The majority of respondents (53.1%) disagree with the statement “overall, I feel comfortable as a non-motorist on Route One.”
- Respondents do not care for the aesthetics of the Corridor; and do not believe it reflects the character of Westerly. A significant majority (71.5%) of respondents disagree with the statement “overall, the Route One Corridor aesthetic appropriately reflects the character of Westerly.”
- Respondents consistently rated improving aesthetics in their top five most important issues to address. Westerly character was the most frequently identified issue with street aesthetics as the second most frequently identified. Site aesthetics was the fifth most frequently identified.

Detailed Findings

Only a small number of respondents were not Westerly residents (approximately 12%; Table 2-1). There is a discrepancy between respondents (19 respondents) reporting that they live in Westerly either part- or full time (577) and those reporting that they live in or outside of the study area (558). A possible explanation is that one or more of the respondents misunderstood the question. The number of Westerly residents responding to the survey (635) represents approximately 2.7% of the total Town population of 23,359, according to the 2020 Census data.

Table 2-1. Residency as Reported by Survey Respondents

RESIDENCY	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS
Not a Westerly Resident	76	12%
Full-Time Westerly Resident (more than 6 months out of the year)	497	78.5%
Part-Time Resident (less than 6 months out of the year)	60	9.5%
In the Study Area (on Route One)	207	32.8%
Outside of the Study (in Westerly, but not on Route One)	351	55.5%

The results of this survey are likely skewed to middle-aged and older adults. Slightly over 58.6% of respondents indicated their age as 36 to 65 years of age. While approximately 26.3% of respondents reported their age as over 65 years of age. 15.1% of respondents reported their age as 19 to 35 years. No respondents indicated their age to be under 19 years.

Respondents to the survey were roughly evenly distributed between those that work in Westerly, those that work outside of Westerly, and those that are retired, in school, or otherwise not working (Table 2-2). Of the 34% of respondents who work in Westerly, approximately 1/3 work in the Route One Corridor study area.

Table 2-2. Location of Employment as Reported by Survey Respondents

LOCATION OF EMPLOYMENT	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS
Work In the Study Area (on Route One)	78	12.4%
Work in Westerly, Outside of the Study Area	139	22.1%
Work Outside of Westerly	227	36.0%
Not working	186	29.5%

Ninety (90) survey respondents indicated that they own a business and 27 of these respondents reported owning a business in the study area, which is approaching half of those who work in the study area.

Over 50% of respondents indicated that they travel the Route One Corridor simply passing through to a destination outside of the Route One Corridor. Respondents indicate visiting the Route One Corridor most for travel to work, transporting passengers, grocery shopping, or other shopping. Table 2-3 summarizes percentage and frequency of trips to these top four destinations.

Table 2-3. Trips per Week in the Study Area Reported by Survey Respondents

TRIPS PER WEEK	WORK	TRANSPORTING OTHERS	GROCERY SHOPPING	SHOPPING OTHER THAN GROCERIES
Over 5	25.2%	19.2%	20.2%	19.5%
3 to 5	9.4%	8.2%	22.2%	19.2%
1 to 3	6.8%	13.4%	40.3%	41.4%
Less than 1	4.7%	9.1%	6.6%	10.7%
Rarely or Never	38.4%	34.3%	2.7%	3.0%

Respondents were queried on their overall impressions of roadway conditions and transit conditions, access onto and off Route One, pedestrian and bicycle access, and aesthetics. Some notable observations from this data include:

- The majority of respondents (59.7%) agree that traffic flow on Route 1 is generally efficient.
- The majority of respondents (53.1%) disagree with the statement “overall, I feel comfortable as a non-motorist on Route One.” Interestingly, 28.7% of respondents had “no opinion” on this matter, perhaps because they do not consider themselves to be non-motorists on Route One.
- A vast majority (71.5%) of respondents disagree with the statement “overall, the Route One Corridor aesthetic appropriately reflects the character of Westerly.”
- Respondents are roughly split on the overall effectiveness of access to and circulation within business locations on Route One.

Table 2-4. Impressions of Study Area Conditions as Reported by Survey Respondents

LEVEL OF AGREEMENT	ROADWAY CONDITIONS AND TRANSIT	ACCESS ON AND OFF ROUTE ONE	PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE ACCESS	AESTHETICS
	<i>OVERALL, TRAFFIC FLOW ON THE ROUTE ONE CORRIDOR IS GENERALLY EFFICIENT</i>	<i>OVERALL, SITE ACCESS AND CIRCULATION ARE EFFECTIVE AT BUSINESS LOCATIONS ON ROUTE ONE</i>	<i>OVERALL, I FEEL COMFORTABLE AS A NON-MOTORIST ON ROUTE ONE</i>	<i>OVERALL, THE ROUTE ONE CORRIDOR AESTHETIC APPROPRIATELY REFLECTS THE CHARACTER OF WESTERLY</i>
Strongly Agree	5.2%	3.3%	0.9%	1.9%
Agree	54.5%	39.4%	4.3%	10.9%
Disagree	20.6%	31.0%	18.4%	33.9%
Strongly Disagree	6.0%	9.4%	34.6%	37.5%
No Opinion	0.8%	3.9%	28.7%	2.7%

Respondents were asked to rate the relative importance of addressing and improving issues on Route One as critical, important, not overly important, not important, or no opinion. The following issues were identified as the top five critically rated with selection by the number of respondents in parenthesis:

- Westerly character (225)

- Street aesthetics (178)
- Traffic safety (180)
- Site landscaping (171)
- Pedestrian access (179)

The Economic Development Commission developed a summary of the survey results, which is provided in Appendix C. Appendix C also includes a summary of the survey and a spreadsheet of data both of which were collected from SurveyMonkey, which was used to create and administer the survey.

2.4.2. Westerly Architectural Review Board



Figure 2-3. ARB Exercise Worksheet

The Architectural Review Board (ARB) played an important role in this project. The project team met with the ARB on two occasions to gather feedback from them on issues of aesthetics in the Corridor. The ARB was asked to participate in a two-part exercise where they identified segments of the Corridor (see Section 2.5) and what the overall aesthetic qualities were within those areas. As part of a homework assignment, members were asked to consider the qualities that were important from a visual and character setting perspective. The members provided their observations and in the second part of the exercise they were asked to brainstorm around what the appropriate design and regulatory topics were for each section of the Corridor. Figure 2-6 is a representative image of the results of that work. A full summary can be found in Appendix D.

The ARB was instrumental in identifying the sub-corridor boundaries as well as important characteristics within each sub-corridor that should be either preserved or changed. The ARB members were asked to discuss and suggest potential standards that could be implemented at the Town level. Overall, important concepts that were identified by the ARB were to implement

2.5. Geographic Approach

The development of the sub-corridors for Route One is based on the concept of transect based planning. Transect based planning was used to provide a foundation for the sub-corridor approach used for the Route One Corridor.

The transect is a community analysis tool that helps to provide a better understanding and appreciation for community form and patterns. This tool can be used to categorize and regulate based on community form and character. Transects were originally developed to analyze natural ecologies showing the characteristics of different zones such as wetlands, shorelines, and uplands. The urban transect approach was adapted from this work and has been the subject of focus for the Center for Applied Transect Studies (CATS).

Traditionally, the urban transect is divided into six zones based on intensity of the built environment and physical and social character. A main principle to this approach is that certain forms and elements belong in certain environments. As an example, an office building belongs in a suburban or urban setting and a farm belongs in a more rural setting.

This overall concept and approach are being used to develop sub-corridors within the larger Route One Corridor area. These sub-corridors consider the form and characteristics of existing development in both pattern and type.

The Route One Corridor spans a distance of approximately five miles through Westerly. Over the course of these five miles, the development patterns change significantly from rural residential development in the east to sprawling commercial development, then to primarily suburban single-family homes in the center, to a denser urban commercial development pattern on the western end. Due to this varying development pattern, strategies for the redevelopment of the Corridor needed to be designed to address the varying issues and needs associated with each of the development patterns. In order to achieve this the transect approach was to establish sub-corridors within the Corridor that captured the varying development pattern within each sub-corridor.

In the study a sub-corridor defines a segment that is part of a series of areas that transition from one development pattern to another. Each zone is analogous in that they all contain transitions from the edges to the center of the sub-corridor. The sub-corridors do not have clean breaks in a development pattern, but rather a transitional area to a central core to another transitional area. The Route One Corridor has been segmented into five distinct sub-corridors, labeled by number from west to east as shown in Figure 2-7 below.



Center for
Applied
Transect
Studies



Figure 2-4: Study Area Depicted with Sub-Corridors

Sub-corridors 1 through 5 are represented in Figures 2-5 through 2-19.

Sub-corridor 1: Neighborhood Mixed-Use

- From Vose Street (at the high school) to the Wells Street intersection
- Primarily composed of compact commercial development with residential development flanking the corridor to the north and south

Sub-corridor 1 is the most densely developed of the Sub-corridors, with businesses close together creating a more urban environment. The roadway is relatively narrow in this section of the Corridor causing cars to compete for space with pedestrians and bicyclists. There are several traffic lights that help to slow speeds along with the narrow roadway width. Sign clutter and site access are the primary issues in this Sub-corridor. Many properties have multiple access points close together and this causes driver confusion.



Figure 2-5. Sub-corridor 1: Neighborhood Mixed-Use



Figure 2-6. 156 Granite Street looking west



Figure 2-7. Granite Street looking west from Franklin Street

Sub-corridor 2: Professional/Commercial Mixed-Use



- Wells Street intersection to the east side of Chamber Way.
- Consists of some large commercial developments and professional office and medical facilities

Figure 2-8. Sub-corridor 2: Professional/Commercial Mixed-Use

Sub-corridor 2 contains a mix of styles and sizes of commercial development. There are several older strip malls (Franklin Plaza, Ocean Plaza, and Mill Pond Plaza) as well as some smaller retail and office establishments. The western end near Wells street is more compactly developed with development spreading out a bit as you approach and pass Route 78 heading east. The roadway begins to widen at this point as well and travel speeds increase slightly. There are oversized parking areas in the Sub-corridor and a lack of landscaping that creates less than welcoming

atmosphere. Many signs in this area are outdated and in need of replacement. The eastern end of Sub-corridor 2 begins to transition to residential housing as you approach Sub-corridor 3, which is predominantly residential housing. This is an important transition area that serves to buffer the residents from the commercial activities occurring in Sub-corridor 2.



Figure 2-10. Job Lot Parking Lot



Figure 2-9. Mill Pond Plaza Parking Lot

Sub-corridor 3: Neighborhood Edge

- From the east side of Chamber Way to the east side of Old Post Road
- Primarily residential development including only those properties fronting on Route One and those that buffer neighborhoods

Sub-corridor 3 consists of primarily single-family residential development. There are two motel/hotel sites and several assisted care facilities. There are many side streets in this area that lead to larger neighborhoods that gain their access from Route One. These neighborhoods, while not fronting directly on the corridor play an important role as the residents within them are Corridor users on a regular basis, relying on that access for ingress and egress from their homes. The homes that do front on the corridor consist of a variety of styles and ages, likely the result of a long history of development through several decades. The homes have ample distance between them in most locations, providing privacy from and separation from each other. The Westerly Middle School is also located in the Sub-corridor, contributing to the traffic that travels to and from this part of the Corridor.

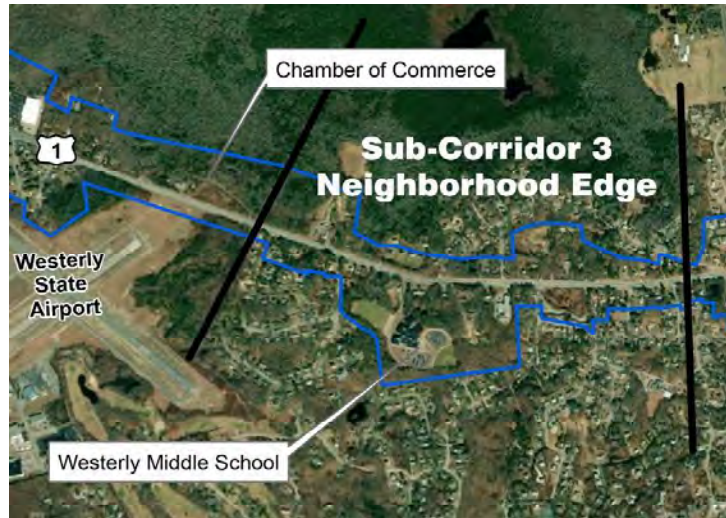


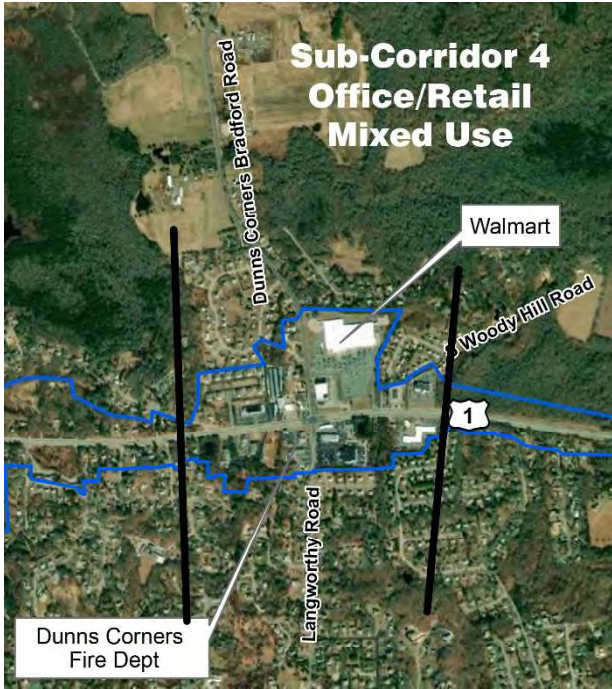
Figure 2-11. Sub-corridor 3: Neighborhood Edge



Figures 2-12 and 2-13. Route One (looking west and east, respectively)



Sub-corridor 4: Office/Retail Mixed-Use



- From the East side of Old Post Road to approximately 500 hundred feet east of South Woody Hill Road
- Contains Walmart, South County Medical Center, and other small businesses

Sub-corridor 4 transitions from residential development in Sub-corridor 3, almost abruptly to commercial development as you approach Dunns Corner Road. The intersection of Dunns Corner is the center of commercial development in this area. The east side of the intersection is dominated by Walmart and the former Benny’s building on the norther corner and a large car dealer ship on the south corner, both with expansive paved areas. The west side of the intersection contains smaller retail businesses. Langworthy Road is one of the main access points to the shore area and beaches. This intersection can get congested during summer months as visitors and residents use this roadway to head down to the beaches.

Figure 2-14. Sub-Corridor 4: Office/Retail Mixed-Use



Figures 2-15 and 2-16. Walmart and parking area and Route One looking west, respectively.



Sub-corridor 5: Neighborhood Edge

- Approximately 500 feet east of South Woody Hill Road to the Charlestown town line
- Primarily residential development and includes only those properties fronting on Route One and those that buffer neighborhoods. Includes The Haversham Inn.

Sub-corridor 5 transitions to residential development. In this area very few residences actually front on the Corridor and a majority are within small side streets or neighborhoods that gain access from the Corridor. After the intersection at Dunns Corner the road widens significantly and contains a wide turning lane for about one mile before transitioning into a divided highway that continues to the Charlestown town line. Travel speed is increased in this area and there are wide shoulders on both sides of the roadway. The Haversham Inn is the only notable business on this stretch of the roadway.

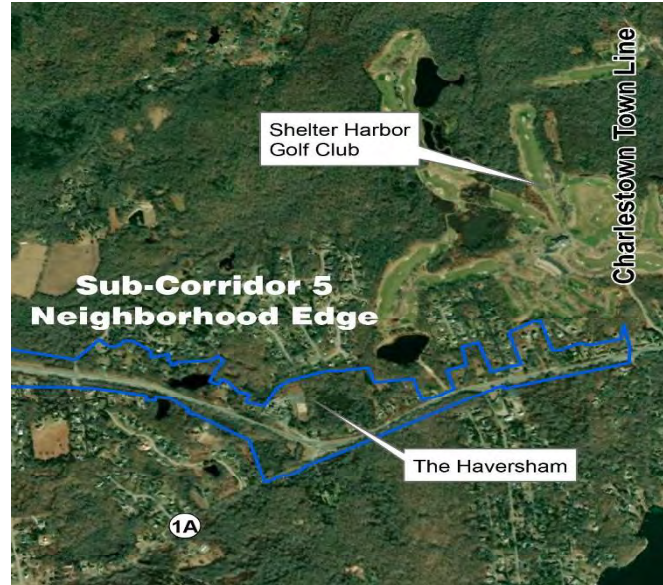


Figure 2-17: Sub-Corridor 5: Neighborhood Edge



Figures 2-18 and 2-19. Route One looking east



2.6. Existing Data Review

A major component of the approach to this project was to collect and analyze existing plans and information related to the Route One Corridor. The Town of Westerly has identified the Corridor as an important commercial location in numerous documents and given some consideration to the role the Corridor plays for the Town. The Town's recently adopted Comprehensive Plan mentions the Route One area no less than 35 times and the Town's Economic Development Commission has spent considerable time surveying local businesses and identifying goals for the future development of the area. This work was incorporated into the existing conditions work and used as the basis for recommended strategies in this study, which can be found in Appendix A of this report. This section provides an overview of the documents that were reviewed as part of this work.

2.6.1. Plans and Reports

Below is a compendium of brief abstracts describing plans, a study report, and survey results.

Comprehensive Community Plan (2020)

The 2020-2040 Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP), adopted by Town Council on January 20, 2021 and approved by Statewide Planning on May 13, 2021, provides vision strategies and implementation for community land use. The CCP includes policy on emphasizing the redevelopment of underutilized parcels in areas with adequate infrastructure and access to public services. The CCP identifies specific actions to be undertaken in order to achieve the goals and objectives of each component of the comprehensive plan, including Route One specific goals and objectives.

Economic Plan Summary (2021)

The Economic Plan Summary prepared by the Westerly Economic Development Commission, provides an overall economic strategy for downtown and an economic strategy for the Route One Corridor. This report identifies existing investments, existing under used and under productive spaces, commercialized properties, and mixed land uses in leverageable areas along the Route One Corridor.

This work and summary was the catalyst for the Route One Corridor Study and laid the foundation to further investigate the issues and opportunities that exist to enhance the Corridor, spur economic development, increase housing opportunities, and improve the

There is a recognition that commercial sprawl has turned a significant portion of Route 1, including Granite Street, Franklin Street, and Post Road into a generic commercial arterial strip which lacks character. There is a strong desire to reverse this trend and refocus development that promotes a sense of place and a reflection of small-town charm.

-Westerly Comprehensive Plan

Guiding principals for evaluating next steps

- Protect, do NOT cannibalize, existing residential areas
- Leverage and re-use already commercialized properties
 - Greyfields
 - Empty lots and buildings
 - Aging mini-malls
 - Parking lot deserts
- Mixed uses in these leverageable areas
 - just as with High Street downtown
 - Retail/commercial on the ground floor
 - Residential above
- Mini-destinations with "community feel" over "automotive centric commerce"
- Infrastructures and services appropriate to the plan

Figure 2-20. Economic Plan Summary Slide

overall aesthetic and character.

Rhode Island Long Range Transportation Plan (December 2020)

The Rhode Island Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), adopted by the State Planning Council, examines the State's most critical transportation needs and challenges, provides a framework for statewide goals and objectives, and identifies strategies to help Rhode Island facilitate the efficient movement of people and goods and promote economic development through transportation investments. As part of the goal to support economic growth through transportation connectivity and choices to attract employers and employees, the LRTP identifies coordinating a cross-border transit service throughout the Providence and Westerly/New London urbanized areas.

Westerly Business Survey Results (2019)

The Collaborative business survey was conducted by the Westerly Economic Development Commission and the Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce. The results of the Westerly Business Survey provided insights into potential focus areas including building a year-round economy, attracting and developing a skilled workforce, promoting Westerly and proactively attracting new business, protecting the Westerly charm, maintaining and improving roads and sidewalks, expanding downtown parking, managing stormwater and drainage problems, simplifying business entry to Westerly, and improving communication with the business community.

Route 1 Corridor Study: Transportation and Land Use Solutions (2007)

The purpose of the 2007 Route 1 Corridor Study, prepared for the Washington County Regional Planning Council, is to identify and implement effective strategies for sustainable growth that balance land preservation and development while retaining the character of Route 1 as a scenic, rural roadway and to provide adequate transportation infrastructure in response to present and future growth.

This study provides transportation and land use solutions including a complete vegetation management plan, impacts on wetland ecosystems, a uniform signage program, consolidation of driveways, increased public transit, accommodating pedestrians, improving roadway safety, and future improvements for a pedestrian-friendly roadway.

This was a countywide study and though it provided excellent recommendations, it did not specifically address the current issues faced by Westerly. To address the issues in the Westerly segment of the Route One Corridor, a more targeted study (i.e., the 2022 study) was needed.

2.6.2. Local Policy Review

Weston & Sampson conducted a review of the Town of Westerly's municipal documents including the Town's Zoning Ordinance. As part of this analysis Weston & Sampson reviewed a variety of Town resources including ordinances, regulations, and policy documents.

In order to facilitate consistency in the review of each document, Weston & Sampson developed a consolidated review checklist of goals and policies. This checklist is contained in Appendix E. In general, the checklist indicates:

- The type of plan or policy document reviewed
- The review items found in the Town documents
- The type of plan and page number and/or section number where review items were found

Town of Westerly documents reviewed as part of this analysis include:

- Comprehensive Community Plan (Policy LUZ-1.1 in Chapter 3, Section 3.7, page 63)

- Zoning Ordinance (Code 18 of Zoning 260 Attachment 11:1)
- Zoning Ordinance (§260-64)
- Zoning Ordinance (§260-77)
- Land Development and Subdivision Regulations (§A261-21)
- Land Development and Subdivision Regulations (§A261-30)

Zoning Ordinance

The Westerly Rhode Island Zoning Ordinance is designed to regulate development and implement the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. Section 260-64 of the Zoning Ordinance addresses mixed-use developments. Several districts along the corridor currently allow for mixed use under Section 260-64. These districts include Highway Commercial (HC), General Commercial (GC), Neighborhood Business (NB), and Professional/Office (P-15). Section 260-77 of the Zoning Ordinance addresses off-street parking regulations. The Zoning Ordinance allows off-street parking and Section 260-77 requires that all off-site parking be within 500 feet of the main use. The Ordinance also allows for shared parking in mixed use developments under Section 260-64.

Land Development and Subdivision Regulations

The Westerly Land Development and Subdivision Regulations have been adopted by the Westerly Planning Board in accordance with Rhode Island General Laws (RIGL) 45-23-25 through 45-23-74. The purpose of these regulations is to protect the safety, health, and general welfare of the inhabitants of Westerly by regulating land developments and subdivisions. Section A261-21 (Land Development and Subdivision Regulations) allows for the waiver of development plan approval under certain circumstances when no extensive construction of improvements is sought. Section A261-30 provides for specific design and improvement requirements as part of land development projects. These design requirements include street design standards, landscaping standards, and sidewalk standards, but don't require building design standards within most of the commercial districts.

3.0

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

This section includes goals and action items for implementation, achieving the Vision, and creating opportunity. Additionally, recommended strategies are presented that have been identified through a review and analysis of existing conditions and public feedback. Recommended strategies are presented in orange boxes. The strategies are incorporated into the Implementation Matrix in Section 4.0, where they are reiterated, and implementation timeframes and lead and support parties are identified.

3.1. Travel in the Corridor

The Route One Corridor can be experienced through several different modes of travel. Traveling the corridor by car, as a pedestrian, bicyclist, or on a bus, each lends itself to a somewhat different experience. This section of the study provides recommended strategies for travel-related improvements that effect the entire travel experience but are sometimes experienced differently in each sub-corridor.

Route One is a state-owned roadway. This limits the impact and jurisdiction the Town of Westerly has on achieving impactful change on many roadway-related issues. The Town has reached out to the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) to collaborate on issues related to roadway safety, accessibility, and overall user-related improvements.

3.1.1. Roadway and Traffic Flow

The Route One Corridor stretches approximately five miles and transitions from a wide divided highway at the far east end (at the Charlestown town line) to a narrow four lane roadway at its terminus at Tower Street at the far west end. Traffic flow and speed are impacted by a variety of roadway and intersection designs along the route. Higher travel speeds occur on the eastern end and with a move west along the Corridor increasing curb cuts and intersections requires a reduction in traffic speeds as the road narrows. Turning lanes, signal timing and site distances at intersections also vary greatly disrupting traffic flow.

These varying conditions pose a unique set of issues. There is ample room for cars, pedestrians, and bicyclists at the eastern end of the Corridor, but higher travel speeds are a safety concern for pedestrians and bicyclists. Drivers heading west bound approach Route 78 and may not recognize the narrowing of lanes beyond the intersection. Speed limits are reduced on Franklin and Granite Streets, where the roadway narrows considerably making walking or bicycling feel cramped and unsafe on the roadway or sidewalks.

Route One is a primary access point to Westerly beaches, Downtown Westerly, Ninigret Park in Charlestown, and numerous seasonal outdoor activities. The intersection of Route One and Route 78 is

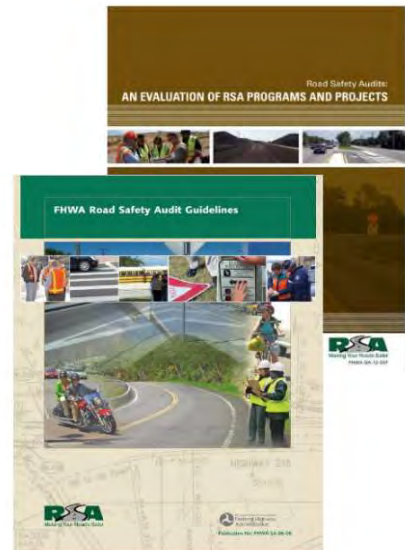
particularly vulnerable to traffic congestion during the summer, as an advertised access to Misquamicut Beach - the most visited beach in the State.

Since Route One is a state-owned roadway, addressing issues identified will need to be a coordinated effort with RIDOT. Issues related to roadway construction (i.e., lane widths, curb cuts) will be more challenging than those that can be managed through signal and signage upgrades. Ingress and egress to businesses creates other issues with traffic forced to slow or stop as vehicles exit the Corridor and with vehicles attempting to make left hand turns entering the Corridor by crossing two traffic lanes.

The Town of Westerly can address these needs by first requesting a Road Safety Audit (RSA) from RIDOT. The request to conduct an RSA will provide valuable insight into safety and traffic related issues along the Corridor. Doing so will initiate a dialogue with RIDOT concerning the Corridor regarding current issues as well as present viable solutions.

A Road Safety Audit (RSA) with RIDOT is typically a one-day review with a multidisciplinary team of stakeholders (town officials, police, fire, and RIDOT personnel) to review crash information and discuss the study area. The team then goes into the field to personally review intersections and other areas of interest. RIDOT then compiles this information into a report that identifies safety and other concerns, while providing recommendations for short-term and long-term solutions. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) notes that RSAs are one of nine safety countermeasures. FHWA has prepared several documents to assist communities in performing RSAs in their communities. Some of these documents look at the entire corridor such as the FHWA Road Safety Audit Guidelines.

Road safety audits (RSAs) are intended to ensure that operational road safety experience is applied during the design and construction process in order that the number and severity of collisions are kept to a minimum. This includes the mechanics of left-hand turns and turn lanes, width of streets, speed limits, signalization, etc.



RSA guidelines and evaluation manual

The goal and recommended actions for implementing this plan and achieving the Vision of the Travel in the Corridor section are:

GOAL

Travel through the Corridor flows logically without delay and navigating as a pedestrian, cyclist, motorist, or passenger is safe and convenient.

ACTIONS

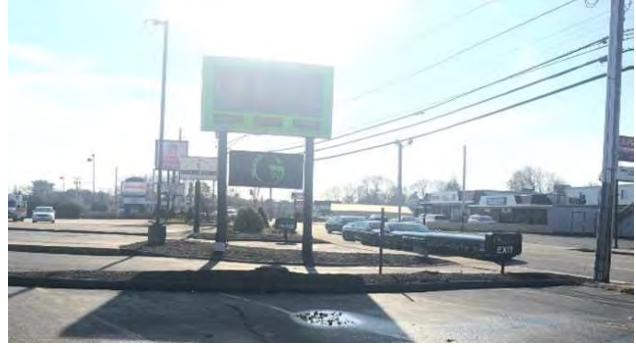
1. Request a Road Safety Audit from RIDOT to determine issues related to safety and roadway conditions within and adjacent to the Route One Corridor Study Area
2. Collaborate with RIDOT on priority short- and long-term improvements and schedule construction within the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)
3. Work with RIDOT to determine possible funding sources and schedules to implement proposed improvements determined from the RSA evaluation.
4. Adopt zoning requirements for cross access easements between properties for new developments or redevelopment sites to promote good access management techniques and reduce curb cuts on Route One.

3.1.2. Traffic Signals and Signs

Traffic signals and signs are abundant along the corridor. Many of the wayfinding signs along the corridor are obscured by other commercial and advertising-related signage. The sign clutter along the Corridor makes navigation difficult for drivers as traffic and directional signs are crowded by marketing signs. Some of the directional and traffic signs are worn and difficult to read in the context of so many other visual distractions. This is especially true in the portion of the corridor west of Route 78 where the density of development increases and buildings and access driveways are closer together in a more compact pattern of development.



RIDOT is working to improve signalization at some intersections including the intersection of John Street and Granite Street



Better placement of signs along the Corridor would improve visibility and aesthetics

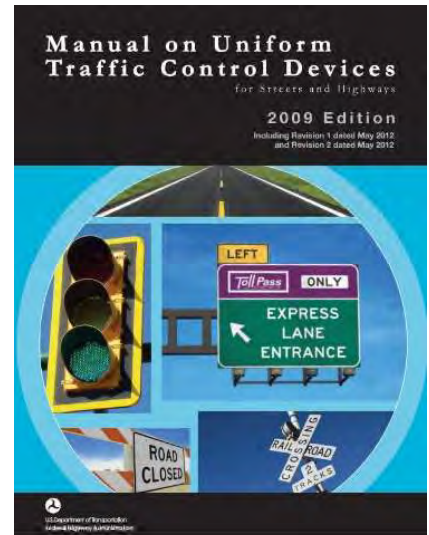
Traffic signals and signs are more abundant in the western portion of the corridor (west of Dunns Corner), as this area is more densely developed and signalized intersections are more frequent. This increased density of development coincides in the Franklin and Granite Street area with a narrowed roadway and slower travel speeds.

Appropriately placed and properly functioning traffic signals, signs and pavement markings are crucial to making the driving experience along a roadway safe and enjoyable. This is especially important along the Route One Corridor where there are many summer tourists. Businesses also depend on traffic infrastructure to ensure that their clientele are able to safely and easily navigate to and from their locations. Proper traffic infrastructure is important to safety as well as economic sustainability and growth.

Having Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) compliant traffic signs and pavement markings that are consistently used throughout a state or region helps drivers successfully navigate unfamiliar roadways.

See: https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2009r1r2/pdf_index.htm

Since Route One is a state road, improvements to traffic signs, signals, and pavement markings will need to be a coordinated effort with RIDOT. The Town can work with individual property owners as part of redevelopment and site upgrades to reduce business sign clutter along the Corridor, as well as consolidating site access points to reduce the volume of traffic entering and exiting single access points which increases the potential of crashes and interrupts traffic flow. Alternatively, the Town could regulate



Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

signs through a sunset provision essentially mandating that signs along the Corridor are replaced by a certain date.



Online wayfinding and signage classes

Proper placement of signs along the roadway, especially near driveways and intersection, is important to maintain safe sight lines. There are several wayfinding signage design manuals available including *Signage and Wayfinding Design: A Complete Guide to Creating Environmental Graphic Design Systems*.

In addition, there are numerous online examples of wayfinding guidelines that are used on large college campuses and at many airports.

Lastly, there are several online classes that can be taken to better inform community staff and leaders on proper wayfinding signage.

See: <https://www.travelwayfinding.com/courses/>

Improving traffic signal operations can reduce congestion and vehicle queuing, reduce serious crash potential, and reduce fuel consumption. In an article titled “Managing Traffic Flow Through Signal Timing” published in the January/February Public Roads Magazine, author S. Lawrence Paulson describes these benefits in more detail: <https://highways.dot.gov/public-roads/januaryfebruary-2002/managing-traffic-flow-through-signal-timing>.

The goal and recommended actions for achieving the Vision of Travel in the Corridor are:

GOAL

Travel through the Corridor is effortless and enjoyable. Wayfinding signage and traffic signals throughout the Corridor are designed and arranged consistently and are easy to read and interpret.

ACTIONS

1. Work with RIDOT as part of a Road Safety Audit to inventory traffic related and regulatory signs and pavement markings, ensure these meet state standards and MUTCD, are properly located and in good condition, and are consistent throughout the Corridor.
2. Work with RIDOT to inventory traffic signal equipment, ensure these meet current requirements, are properly located and in good condition, and determine appropriateness of timing and phasing of intersection and pedestrian crossing signals.
3. Adopt zoning requirements for access to side streets from properties for new developments or redevelopment sites to promote good access management and divert traffic to existing or proposed signalized intersections.

3.1.3. Parking

Businesses along Route One rely solely on off street parking to serve their needs. Many of the strip mall style developments have excessive amounts of parking, while small businesses in converted single family homes lack adequate parking.

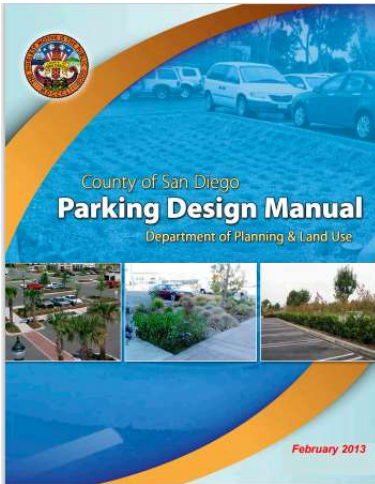
Many of the larger parking lots do not have a smooth and logical traffic flow which creates navigation confusion for motorists. Entering and leaving parking lots can often be challenging due to unlevel slopes and confusing entry and exit points. Landscaping of lots appears minimal, lacks attractiveness, and often result in excessive amounts of stormwater runoff, which can impact water quality. Large, underutilized parking areas are also aesthetically undesirable and use valuable real estate that could be put to a better purpose.

This pattern of parking lot development has occurred in part because the Town's current parking regulations are based on minimum parking requirements (see Section 3.6 Regulation and Zoning Ordinance Amendments for additional information on current parking requirements). This approach often results in excessive amounts of parking that create the concerns stated above.

Some areas of the Corridor have an excessive amount of single access curb cuts one after another which



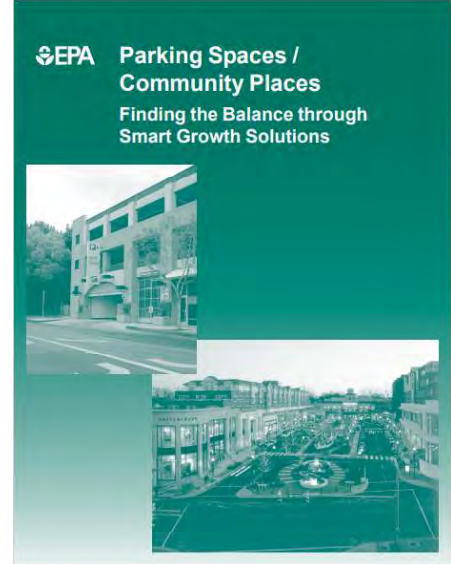
Example of parking lot landscaping to create visual appeal



Parking Design Manual

makes navigating difficult. In other areas, the curb cut is essentially nonexistent, and the entire frontage of the parking area is used to enter and exit the site. This causes confusion and a traffic hazard as there is no delineated entrance and exit to the parking lot area. This is most common in the Granite Street area of the Corridor, although there are instances elsewhere where this is an issue.

Many of the large sized parking lots occur in sub-corridors 2, 3, and 4. Those sub-corridors contain the aggregate of the excessively sized parking lots, as well as several that are confusing to navigate.



EPA's Parking Spaces/Community Places

Pavement contributes to stormwater runoff volumes and has the potential to impact water quality if not properly managed. Redevelopment of these areas provides an opportunity for a positive tax impact, a reduction in stormwater flow, and in turn an improvement in water quality. The Town can consider incentivizing the reuse of these spaces or they can continue to be underutilized land area that does not contribute to the Town's tax base.

An alternative approach is to have parking lot maximum requirements, which set a limit on how many spaces can be developed. This approach provides a ceiling for parking spaces, rather than a floor that can be exceeded without the need for additional approval by the Town. The Town of Bedford, Massachusetts has a maximum parking allowance for certain uses that the Town of Westerly could use as an example as a parking maximum approach.

Similarly, the Town of Burlington, Massachusetts has both minimum and maximum requirements for most uses. The Environmental Protection Agency provides guidance on balancing parking requirements through examples and innovative parking alternatives. Redevelopment opportunities can be realized by implementing a shared parking program. The City of Marlborough, Massachusetts and Waltham, Massachusetts have both implemented a shared parking structure that could be used as an example for the Town to structure their own shared parking regulation. The book *Shared Parking Third Edition* is a collaborative effort between the Urban Land Institute, the National Parking Association, and ICSC that is considered the definitive source for parking demand analysis for mixed-use projects that focuses on the shared parking concept.

In addition to shared parking, public parking could be used to alleviate the need for parking where exceeds the capacity of private parking lots. The Town should, therefore, consider the need for public parking.

The goal and recommended actions for implement this plan and achieving the Vision of Travel in the Corridor are:

GOAL

Parking areas and plazas in the Corridor provide appropriate parking capacity and safe pedestrian and vehicle circulation. Parking lots are well designed for parking opportunities, internal circulation, pedestrian paths, and access points that are coordinated.

ACTIONS

1. Amend the zoning ordinance off-street parking regulations to reflect parking maximums instead of minimum requirements and codify use of parking-demand studies to reduce parking spaces allowed.
2. Incentivize shared parking arrangements to provide adequate parking for small businesses and better utilization of existing parking lots.
3. Amend the zoning ordinance to require a more robust use of landscape in the off-street parking regulations including, but not limited to, required buffers, berms, plant material, shade cover, and interior landscape requirements.
4. Provide for a condensed review process for the updating of existing parking areas to meet performance standards and sites where existing underutilized parking areas are proposed to be converted to occupied commercial space.
5. During roadway improvements encourage RIDOT to remove wide curb cuts, closing sections, establish and maintain suitable curb reveal to create defined ingress and egress points.
6. Determine the need for public parking to alleviate parking demand in areas where private parking is in short supply.

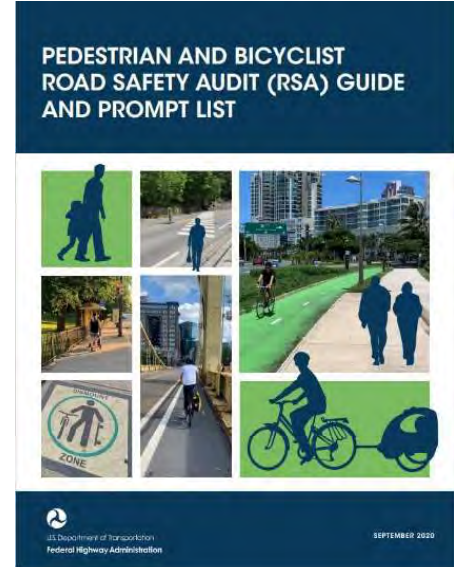
3.1.4. Pedestrian Access

Pedestrian access along the corridor is varied, with intermittent sidewalk access, varying in width and accessibility. This inconsistent network of sidewalk makes pedestrian access through the Corridor difficult and in some locations unsafe. Pedestrian amenities, such as signalized crosswalks are lacking throughout the Corridor.

The Route One Corridor is an automobile-centered commercial strip. The lack of connected sidewalks and pedestrian infrastructure has made pedestrian access unsafe and undesirable. Issues like climate change, the price of fuel, public health, and others has made pedestrian access to amenities a focus and goal in many communities. Lack of walkability in commercial areas, including parking lots and plazas, detracts from the appeal of the area for small businesses and tends to invite larger retailers and chains.

Sub-corridors three and five are almost entirely void of sidewalks. These sub-corridors are predominantly residential in nature and the lack of sidewalk access that connects to the adjacent sub-corridors isolates individuals in this area from making pedestrian connections between their homes and the commercial areas of the Corridor.

FHWA has prepared a pedestrian and bicycle specific RSA guide for communities to use to assess their pedestrian and bicycle related infrastructure. FHWA’s *Pedestrian and Bicyclist Road Safety Audit (RSA) Guide and Prompt List* can be found here: https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/tools_solve/docs/fhwasa20042.pdf

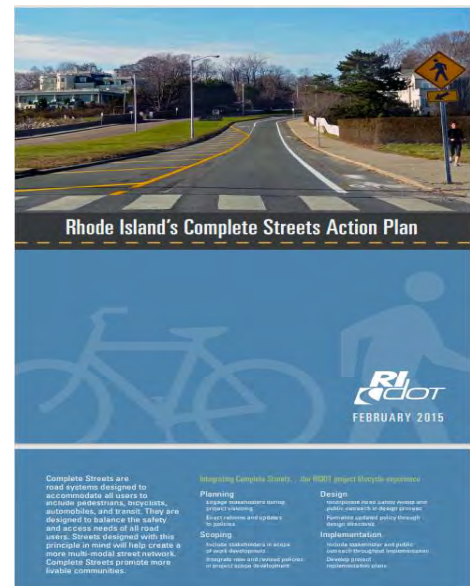


Pedestrian and Bicycle Road Safety Audit Guide

The Route One Corridor is a state road, and all pedestrian amenities are the purview of RIDOT. Working with RIDOT through a Road Safety Audit will help highlight some of the concerns related to the lack of safe pedestrian access and work to establish an ongoing dialogue between the Town and RIDOT focused on potential solutions. Without coordination from RIDOT, the Town will have little impact on improving safe access to pedestrian amenities.

Complete Streets are road systems designed to accommodate all users to include pedestrians, bicyclists, automobiles, and transit. They are designed to balance safety and access needs of all road users. RIDOT approved the *Rhode Island’s Complete Streets Action Plan* in 2015. This plan is intended to provide case studies of locations in the state where Complete Street efforts were implemented.

The Town can consider case studies from this plan to better assess their options and approach RIDOT with similar goals in mind. This plan can be used as a framework to outline how the Town would like to engage with RIDOT on pedestrian and bicycle related issues.



Rhode Island’s Complete Streets Action Plan

The Complete Streets concept is applicable to the pedestrian and bicycle sections of this plan, although is only identified here in this section.

The goal and recommended actions for implementing this plan and achieving the Vision of Travel in the Corridor are:

GOAL

Safe and convenient pedestrian access support residency, business patronage, and public transportation options within the Corridor.

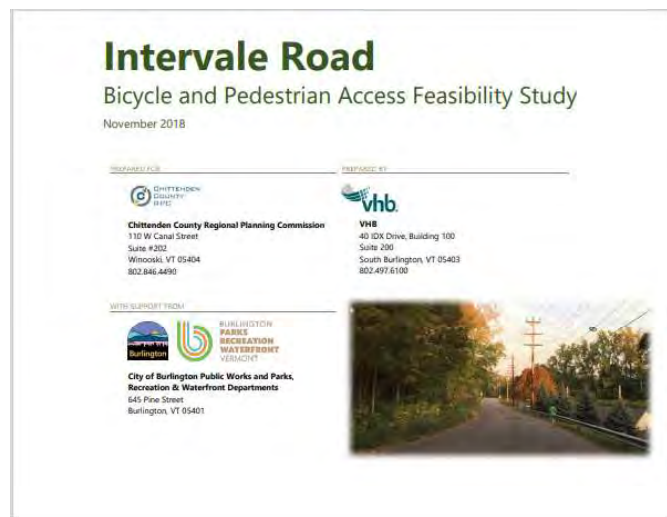
ACTIONS

1. Use the FHWA *Pedestrian and Bicyclist Road Safety Audit (RSA) Guide and Prompt List* to work with RIDOT to conduct a bicycle and pedestrian safety audit to determine deficiencies.
2. Coordinate with RIDOT to remove obstacles (such as sign poles, mailboxes, and other semi-permanent objects) from existing sidewalks improving pedestrian and ADA accessibility.
3. Identify gaps in the sidewalk network through a pedestrian and bicycle RSA and work with RIDOT to plan for and install sidewalks in critical locations to provide continuous and safe pedestrian access through the Corridor. This should include pedestrian crossings as well.
4. Identify sidewalk areas where ADA required provisions (such as sidewalk width (minimum of a 4-foot clearance), curb ramps, and truncated domes) are lacking and coordinate with RIDOT to upgrade these areas to bring them into compliance.
5. Use the site planning process to work with local business owners and require improved pedestrian access whenever businesses are updating or redeveloping.

3.1.5. Bicycle Access

Route One lacks designated bicycle accommodations. Although current bicycling activity along Route One is limited, bicycle access to Route One from adjacent neighborhoods from the Tower Street, East Avenue, Airport Road, and Langworthy Road areas would ideally be connected to residential areas of the Corridor. Survey results indicate that small percent of respondents consider bicycle amenities as a priority in the Corridor.

Experiencing the Corridor on a bicycle is variable. The western end of the corridor (sub-corridor five) has wide shoulders but high-speed traffic that make bicycling potentially dangerous. The situation is similar for sub-corridor three, although speeds are significantly lower because this section of roadway is flanked



Burlington created a bicycle and pedestrian access feasibility study in 2018.

by commercial development on either end, causing drivers to slow slightly with increased development. Sub-corridors two and four are similar in their development pattern and the intersection of Route 78 poses a major intersection crossing for any cyclist. Sub-corridor one provides no shoulder for bicycling and places cyclists in competition with automobiles for accessible space.

The use of bicycles as an alternative mode of transportation provides a variety of benefits. Bicycles improve health, ease traffic congestion, save money, use less space, and provide efficient transportation with little to no carbon footprint. When an area lacks adequate bicycle access these potential benefits are negated or significantly reduced. The varying conditions of Route One related to width and speed make bicycle access throughout the Corridor difficult and pose safety concerns in some areas.

Due to existing conditions on the Corridor, improving bicycle access in some areas may be cost prohibitive. A bicycle feasibility study will be able to further investigate this and other bicycle access issues and assist the Town in making determinations on what is feasible and appropriate.

Route One is a state-owned roadway and any on-street bicycle improvements will have to be a coordinated effort with RIDOT. The Town can require bicycle amenities on private property as part of development projects. A bicycle lane study can provide valuable input in the feasibility and costs associated with providing bicycle amenities. Burlington, Vermont conducted a *Bicycle and Pedestrian Access Feasibility Study* for Intervale Road.

The goal and recommended actions for implementing this plan and achieving the Vision of Travel in the Corridor are:

GOAL

Improved bicycle access in the Corridor provides a public health benefit, provides a connection to adjacent residential neighborhoods and other areas of Town, and provides an additional economic benefit to businesses located there.

ACTIONS

1. Work with RIDOT to conduct a bicycle and pedestrian safety audit to determine deficiencies using the FHWA Pedestrian and Bicyclist Road Safety Audit (RSA) Guide and Prompt List.
2. Amend the zoning ordinance off-street parking regulations and use the site planning processes to require improved bicycle access and amenities such as bike racks whenever businesses are updating or redeveloping and new development projects.
3. Work with RIDOT to install shared lane and dedicated lane markings and bicycle signage to increase awareness and safety around bicyclists on the Corridor.
4. Map any shared use or bicycle lanes and markings and ensure such information is available to the public and up to date.
5. Conduct a bicycle lane study along the Corridor to determine the appropriateness and feasibility of providing bicycle access and amenities.
6. Consider a complete streets program for Route One, to be phased in through future pavement resurfacing and road reconstruction projects and provide for long-term and continued reinvestment.

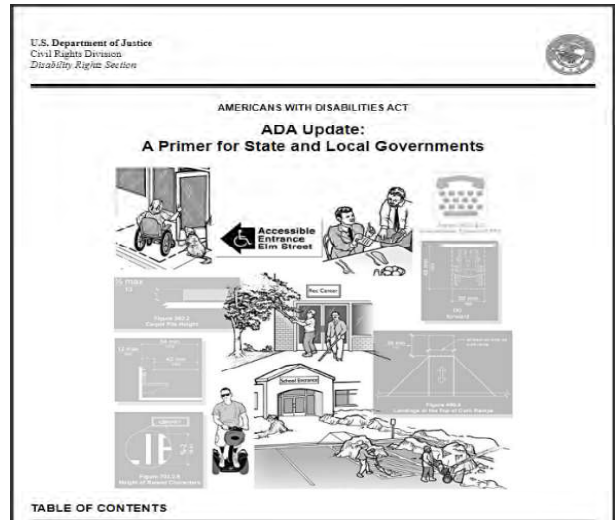
3.1.6. ADA Compliance

Many of the sidewalks along the Corridor are not ADA compliant. Noncompliance is in the form of narrow width of sidewalks, lack of proper access ramps and tactile warning panels, and obstructions within the sidewalk. These conditions present a potential safety issue for disabled travelers along the Corridor.

Sidewalk impediments and the lack of proper ADA compliance can present a hazard to disabled persons. Due to the fact that Route One is a state roadway, this issue must be addressed in collaboration with RIDOT. Repairing or correcting ADA compliance issues can be costly and labor intensive. This issue is present in sub-corridors one, two, and four, as three and five have little to no sidewalk infrastructure.



ADA compliance is thwarted in the Corridor, in part, by utility poles and discontinuous, substandard sidewalks.



ADA Update: A Primer for State and Local Governments

ADA compliance is an issue that must include RIDOT, as Route One is a state roadway. The Town can work together with RIDOT to identify issues of noncompliance and coordinate to work towards a resolution. The U.S Department of Justice provide guidance to state and local governments on compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The goal and recommended actions for implementing this plan and achieving the Vision of Travel in the Corridor are:

GOAL
The Route One Corridor is easily accessible to all, regardless of disability or impairment.

ACTIONS

1. Collaborate with RIDOT on a strategy to identify, plan for, and address ADA compliance issues related to sidewalk access, signage, and other identified issues.

3.1.7. Comprehensive Plan and Travel in the Corridor

There are several opportunities to amend zoning to support the Corridor vision for travel in the Route One Corridor. Comprehensive Plan updates are recommended to clarify this vision, especially where there are different goals for different transects. For the improved travel and targeted redevelopment, include language requiring new approaches to qualifying parking demands, and standards for parking lot design.

This Study identifies new approaches to access management and elevates the importance of pedestrian and bicycle circulation to and through the commercial corridor. Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan should complement this Corridor Plan and clarify the Town's support and incentives for quality redevelopment with consideration given to road capacity, the availability of pedestrian amenities and equitable access to goods and services in the Corridor.

3.2. Infrastructure in the Corridor

Infrastructure in the Corridor includes stormwater, water supply, wastewater, broadband, and utility lines. This infrastructure may be owned by both private and public parties, including the Town, the State, utility companies, private businesses, and other property owners. This section of the study provides recommended strategies for infrastructure improvements. While conditions vary across the sub-corridors, the variability of conditions has yet to be analyzed and is not addressed in this plan.

3.2.1. Stormwater

Based on observations during site visits for development of this plan, stormwater management infrastructure in the Corridor consists primarily of catch basins and drainpipes that are designed to convey runoff but provide little or no water quality treatment. One detention pond was observed next to the Walmart, which would provide removal of total suspended solids (e.g., road sand) but would not remove other pollutants such as pathogens and nutrients (e.g., nitrogen and phosphorus, a particular concern for drinking water supplies). The Corridor overlays the Wood-Pawcatuck Aquifer, which is the Town's principal source of drinking water. Addressing stormwater will help to minimize threats to the aquifer.

Wetlands and surface waters adjacent to the Corridor receive minimally treated or untreated stormwater discharge and are adversely affected as a result. For example, RIDEM has identified Pawcatuck River Segment 18E as impaired, in part due to stormwater.

In part, these concerns can be addressed by upgrading existing grey infrastructure to green infrastructure. Instead of conveying and managing stormwater in large, costly end-of-pipe facilities located at the bottom of drainage areas, green infrastructure addresses stormwater through small, cost-effective landscape



Two examples of green infrastructure where stormwater practices have been integrated with landscaping to provide aesthetic benefits.



features located at the lot level. Green infrastructure is now the Rhode Island state standard for new stormwater systems.

While the Town could simply wait for businesses to take action, three major obstacles will likely impede businesses from updating existing stormwater infrastructure—cost, technical knowledge, and availability of design resources. Without intervention, significant improvement is unlikely. The Town could step in and help to overcome these obstacles. Most existing stormwater systems are grandfathered and are unlikely to be updated in the foreseeable future unless the Town takes an active role in updating them. Incentive-based upgrade programs, typically including grants and rebates, are much more business friendly than retroactive regulatory requirements.

Executing Route One Corridor Plan will likely require more funding and technical assistance than is currently available at the Town level. Westerly should plan to leverage external resources (e.g., grants) whenever possible and may wish to consider a fee-based program such as a stormwater utility. **A stormwater utility is a municipal enterprise program—like a sewer or water supply authority—that charges a service fee for managing stormwater infrastructure.**

Stormwater utilities collect a service fee that is dedicated to the management of stormwater in town. They can help to fill a variety of operational and infrastructure needs.

The principal difference between a stormwater utility district and a typical municipally run stormwater management program is that a utility district has the authority to charge a user fee that becomes a dedicated source of funding for stormwater management and regulatory compliance. This means that the utility district can act independently from the constraints of budgeting under the general fund and general taxation process to more effectively address regulatory requirements, flood management, and abate water quality concerns and generate a more reliable revenue stream for these services.

In addition to revenue generation, stormwater utilities may provide all the functions of a fully realized stormwater management program such as:

- Infrastructure operation and maintenance
- Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Storm Water General Permit implementation
- Design review for development
- Technical assistance for the regulated community
- Capital improvements (e.g., drainage and flood control)
- Compliance with new total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) issued by DEM for water pollution
- Technology demonstrations
- Public education and outreach
- Flood protection and management

The goal and recommended actions for implementing this plan and achieving the Vision of Infrastructure in the Corridor are:

GOAL

Environmental resources in the Corridor are protected from contamination through outstanding water quality controls and stormwater management.

ACTIONS

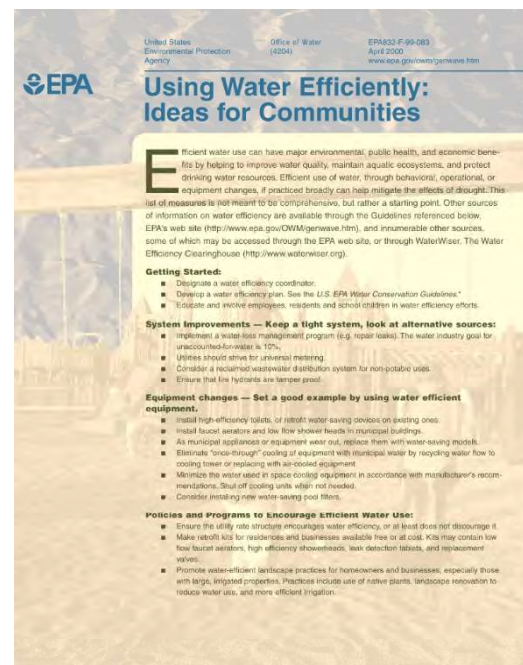
1. Work with RIDOT and conduct an inventory and analysis of the existing stormwater infrastructure in the Corridor and its condition, and either disconnect or pretreat stormwater prior to conveyance. Revise stormwater management and site development regulations to require green infrastructure and reduce the amount of impervious surface in all new private and public projects.
2. Implement a program of incentives for green infrastructure and reduction in the amount of impervious surface at existing uses and as part of redevelopment.
3. Develop a database of grant funding options for plan, design, and construction of green infrastructure and publish it on the Town website.
4. Analyze and then implement preferred funding options for Corridor improvements in the public realm.
5. Analyze the potential value of developing a public or private stormwater utility.

3.2.2. Water Supply

The entire length of the Corridor in Westerly is served by public water. Potable water is drawn from wells that tap the Bradford and Westerly groundwater reservoirs and pump from 12 supply wells at seven pumping stations.

Westerly's water supply, including the water supply to the Corridor, is particularly important to protect. The Wood-Pawcatuck Aquifer is one of 16 sole source aquifers in New England. The EPA defines a Sole Source Aquifer as one which supplies at least 50% of the drinking water consumed in the area overlying the aquifer. The Safe Drinking Water Act gives EPA the authority to designate aquifers which are the sole or principal drinking water source for an area, and which, if contaminated, would create a significant hazard to public health.

Since the Wood-Pawcatuck Aquifer is a sole source aquifer there are no practical options for replacing it as a water supply if it becomes contaminated or effectively supplementing it if it is overused. The only practicable options for the Town are protection of the aquifer, conservation of water, and ensuring effective delivery of the available water to the service area.



EPA has developed several excellent tools to assist municipalities with water conservation, many of which are targeted to businesses. Source: EPA, 2000.

The goal and recommended actions for implementing this plan and achieving the Vision of Infrastructure in the Corridor are:

GOAL

Adequate water remains available in the Corridor to support the Town's preferred level of residential and commercial growth.

ACTIONS

1. Develop a water conservation program that is specifically aimed at businesses.
2. Protect groundwater through use of appropriate stormwater and wastewater management.
3. Plan, design and permit improvements to, and extension of, water service as needed including the capital funding as part of an update to the Westerly Water Supply Management Plan.
4. Construct improvements and extension of water service as needed.

3.2.3. Wastewater Management

Approximately half of the Route One Corridor is served by sewers with the remainder served by onsite wastewater treatment systems. The area currently served by sewers includes the west end of the Corridor east to approximately the intersection with Route 78.

Conventional sewers are expensive but provide more capacity for commercial growth while other types of wastewater systems may be limited.

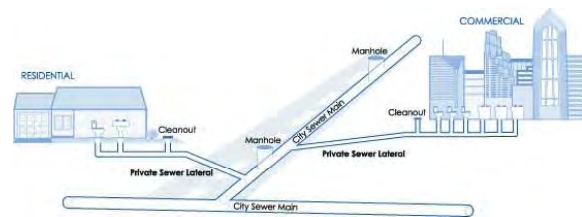


Diagram of a conventional sewer system.
Source: City San Diego, CA, 2022.

The Town is considering a plan to extend the sewer system to Dunns Corner, which would add sewer approximately half of the way from Route 78 to the Charlestown town line. Conventional sewers are expensive but provide more capacity for commercial growth while other types of wastewater systems may be limited. The Town has previously attempted to obtain funding and local approval for expansion but was unsuccessful. This happened despite a reportedly strong campaign for the sewerage initiative; therefore, funding for expansion remains in question.

In decades past (roughly through the first half of the 20th century), sanitary sewers were typically designed as combined systems, meaning that they conveyed both sanitary wastewater and stormwater. Modern conventional sanitary sewers are designed as “separate” sanitary sewer systems—only conveying wastewater—while stormwater is managed in its own “separate” storm sewer systems. The existing conventional sewer system in the Corridor is partially separated, meaning that there are some parts of it where stormwater and sanitary wastewater are conveyed in separated sewer lines and some parts with stormwater tie-ins to the sanitary sewers. The existing system also leaks wastewater out and groundwater into its conveyance lines. This is referred to as infiltration and inflow (I/I). The Town is working to separate its system and reduce I/I, which is expected to add significant capacity for sanitary wastewater, but there is more work to be done.

Small-diameter wastewater systems are an alternative to conventional sanitary systems and OWTs. They tend to be a more expensive option on a per-residential or business-unit basis and can be somewhat more complicated to operate than conventional sanitary systems. They are commonly used where onsite systems (e.g., septic systems) and conventional sewers are not practicable (e.g., hilly areas and areas with poorly drained soil).

Many towns have clusters of homes and housing developments in unsewered areas. Often, hookups to conventional sewers are not available in these places and would be too costly to build and yet small lot sizes, poor soil conditions, or other site-related limitations make onsite wastewater treatment alternatives inappropriate or expensive. Small-diameter alternatives can be considered as an option for parts of the Corridor that are planned for more intensive development and will not be conventionally sewered within approximately the next 10 or 20 years. The Town should plan to address the need for conventional or small-diameter sewers as part of supporting new development and redevelopment of the Corridor.

The goal and recommended actions for implementing this plan and achieving the Vision of improved Wastewater Infrastructure in the Corridor are:

GOAL

The capacity and maintenance of the wastewater treatment facility supports short- and long-term commercial and economic growth within the Corridor.

ACTIONS

1. Ensure that sewers within the project area are functioning properly and conveying flows without restrictions.
2. Plan, design and permit improvements and extension of sewer service to Dunn's Corners including capital funding as part of an update to the Westerly Wastewater Facilities Plan. Construct improvements and extensions of sewers to Dunn's Corners.
3. If funding for sewers does not go forward, consider the use of a small-diameter system for parts of the Corridor.

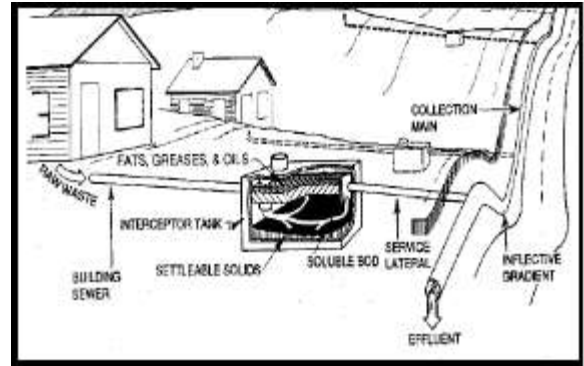


Diagram of a small-diameter wastewater system. Source: EPA, 2000.

3.2.4. Broadband

Access to broadband is important to the Route One Corridor and the entire Town of Westerly. Broadband internet refers to the various high-capacity transmission technologies that transmit data, voice, and video across long distances at high speeds. Common mediums of transmission include coaxial cable, fiber optic cables, and radio waves. Broadband allows for high-quality and quick access to information, teleconferencing, data transmission, and more in various capacities including healthcare, education, and technological development.

Broadband along the Route One Corridor is sometimes found to be spotty by users of the Corridor. Concerns about gaps and stability in internet and wireless service and overall network coverage have been identified anecdotally by Town staff and community members. Potential impacts of cell towers and antennae needed for better coverage have also been part of discussions.

The pandemic has highlighted the importance of digital connectivity. Yet, the digital divide persists in access to the internet with many rural and low-income communities lacking reliable, affordable internet. To the extent that families and businesses on the corridor experience this gap they suffer in potential achievement as compared to their peers.

Generally, internet and wireless service is established through private providers (e.g., Verizon or Xfinity) who make decisions based on the economics of expected demand and revenue. The Town has several internet and broadband providers in Westerly and coverage appears to extend throughout Town. The lack of adequate internet and wireless service may be more of a service quality issue than a broadband availability issue.

Some municipalities and communities take things into their own hands by investing by laying their own broadband networks, but this can be quite expensive. Rather than laying down their own fiber cables, many cities and communities turn to establish wireless networks in the absence of existing infrastructure.

Solutions to having good, ubiquitous broadband are very different for each community. Some communities do not have enough broadband providers; others have plenty of providers but pockets of areas that are underserved; still others have so many providers that they are concerned about running out of rights of way, particularly as fiber for 5G and small cells densifies. A master plan is generally completed in a three-step process: (a) establish goals; (b) establish an advisory council; and (c) prepare a master plan that assesses how to attract providers, make broadband reliable and affordable, consider funding and public-private partnerships.

The goal and recommended actions for implementing this plan and achieving the Vision of improved Broadband Infrastructure in the Corridor are:

GOAL

The Corridor provides a competitive and attractive opportunity for both business interests and families through improved broadband capacity.

ACTIONS

1. Develop a telecommunications master plan for the Route One Corridor.
2. Establish a broadband advisory council.
3. Bring a broadband hub to the Route One Corridor.
4. Amend the zoning ordinance and development regulations and use the site planning processes to require broadband infrastructure as part of development proposals whenever needed.



Small wireless facilities like this one can be used to fill in wireless capacity. Source: Fort Collins, CO, 2021.

3.2.5. *Undergrounding Cabling and Electrical Infrastructure*

Communications and electric lines along the Corridor are all above ground on utility poles, which compromise the use of sidewalks, especially for the wheelchair-bound, and negatively impact the appearance of Westerly and its overall appeal. Placing communications and electrical lines along the Corridor underground would improve the overall aesthetic of the Corridor and would reduce or remove the sidewalk obstructions related to the utility pole placement.

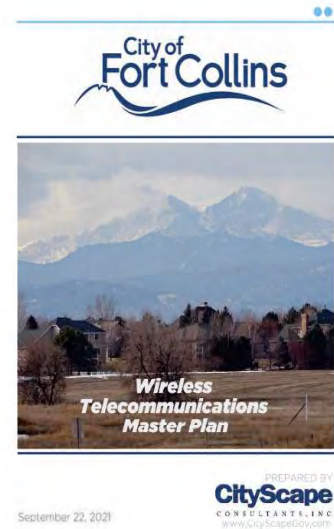
Key benefits of undergrounding include:

- Reduced visual clutter, which may increase the value of nearby properties.
- Reduced frequency of outages, particularly those caused by storms.
- Reduced cost of post-storm restoration of the electric system and reduces revenue losses for electric utilities resulting from these outages.
- Reduced cost of tree trimming and other vegetation management and damages to electric facilities caused by vehicle crashes.
- Reduced risk of the public encountering live wires.

Moving existing communications and electrical lines underground is a significant undertaking and would require coordination with RIDOT and the associated electric company and communications service providers. This is a long-term strategy that would require significant study and collaboration amongst several parties.

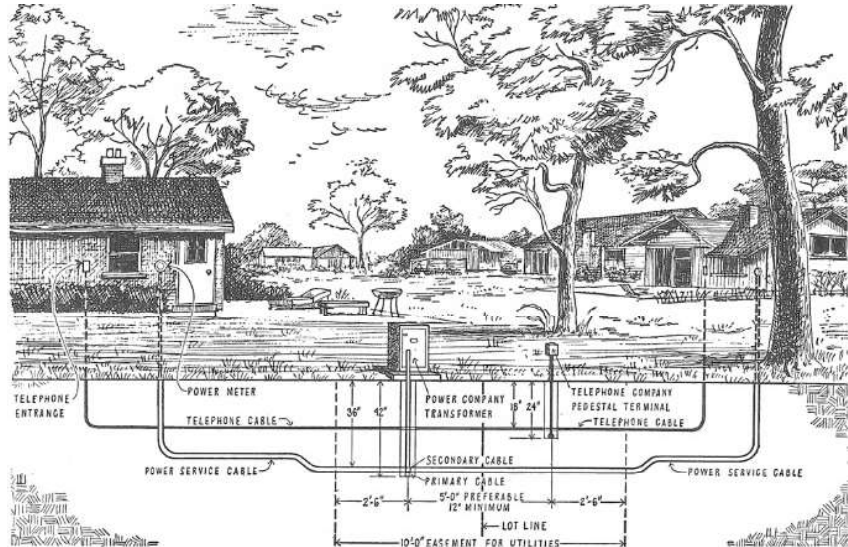
Pursuit of undergrounding as a municipal project would require the Town to take on a significant financial burden. The cost of undergrounding utilities can be estimated as approximately \$800 to \$1,000 per linear foot, making undergrounding of electrical and telecommunication lines in the Corridor on the order of a \$25 million project. Given the cost, a requirement to underground electric and telecommunication lines might discourage development. This plan proposes an approach of incentivizing undergrounding as doing nothing leaves the problem unaddressed.

Before any system, overhead or underground, is installed, a certain amount of planning is necessary, and more emphasis is required in this respect for the underground system. This is because the overhead system, being readily accessible, is much more flexible and can be added to or modified to suit changing loads or other requirements without too much difficulty.



Fort Collins created a telecommunications master plan in 2021.

1. In planning, a utility usually is looking for a system that, consistent with economy, will give a high degree of service continuity, is capable of maintenance, is safe both to public and to utility employees, and can supply present and future loads without expensive modification or additional construction.



2. The location of the system is important. Unless cables can be laid underneath a sidewalk, they are probably subject to more damage in the street location from the operation and maintenance of other utilities such as water, sewer, gas, than in a rear lot location. This must be balanced against more difficult accessibility of equipment, should maintenance be required when in the rear lot location.
3. Knowledge of present and future loads is important in the planning of any system and probably more so for underground systems. With an overhead system these additions usually are no problem but with underground they could be difficult and expensive unless carefully planned for in advance.
4. Continuity of service is of ever-increasing importance. Interruptions on an underground system are usually considerably longer than those on overhead systems and therefore it is necessary in the planning of an underground system to build in adequate facilities to avoid lengthy interruptions should a fault occur.
5. Operations and maintenance on an underground system are usually carried out in a much more confined space than on overhead systems and, therefore, to ensure safety to linemen, special facilities and work methods are usually required.

The goal and recommended actions for implementing this plan and achieving the Vision of Undergrounding Utility Line Infrastructure in the Corridor are:

GOAL

The Town of Westerly is relieved of undue financial burden and responsibility following the underground location of communications and electrical lines along the Corridor.

ACTIONS

1. Develop a plan for underground utility lines along the Route One Corridor.
2. Amend the zoning ordinance and development regulations and use the site planning processes to require underground utility lines as part of development proposals. Develop an undergrounding process with the utility companies.



Depiction of a streetscape with and without overhead utility lines. Source: Goldstein, 2015.

3.2.6. Comprehensive Plan and Infrastructure

The Comprehensive Plan could be updated to clarify this vision, especially where sewer availability and existing stormwater controls vary within sub-corridors. There are few opportunities to amend zoning to support the Corridor vision for Infrastructure. However, for improvement in water quality, include language in the Comprehensive Plan endorsing green infrastructure and its various co-benefits and provide an explicit statement of its inclusion in the regulatory process and all forms of land-use decision making by the Town Council, Boards and Commissions. Zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations should be amended to require low impact development stormwater prevention.

This Corridor Plan demonstrates the connection between the availability of public wastewater treatment and economic growth and vitality. Sewer extension, particular through sub-corridor 2 and into sub-corridor 3, is essential. The Comprehensive Plan already supports this effort. Action INF-1.2.A “Prepare and adopt a sewer service expansion plan providing environmental protection, accommodating economic development, and allowing multi-family housing development.” The Town is currently in update of its Wastewater Facilities Plan. The next step is to plan, design and permit the extension and finance its construction.

A resilient Westerly and a vital economy are an integral part of Westerly’s vision. The Comprehensive Plan establishes a policy of prioritizing and protecting at-risk municipal structures, property, *and utilities*. Action RES-1.1.D directs the Town to: “Identify and pursue grant opportunities to mitigate the vulnerability of existing utility infrastructure, such as requiring the installation of utilities underground in new developments to avoid damage from high winds and/or falling trees.” The Comprehensive Plan should be amended to require a plan for the burial of utility lines, not only in areas of storm surge and sea level rise but on Route One as well. The same policy and action is appropriate for inclusion in the Town’s revised Hazard Mitigation Plan.

3.3. Aesthetics in the Corridor

For the purposes of this report, aesthetics refers to the visual appeal of the Corridor as it relates to landscaping, retail signs, and building design and massing. Aesthetics is an important component of economic development. People are generally drawn to places that look nice and create a certain sense of place. Landscaping, signage, and building design can be important tools to create an environment people want to frequent.

The overall aesthetics in the Corridor vary significantly. Sub-corridors 3 and 5 are predominantly residential in nature and the visual landscape experienced by a user is one of residential driveways and streets that use the Corridor as their main access. In Sub-corridor 1 and 2, the visual experience is dominated by

signs and businesses of varying architectural style. Sub-corridor 4 is commercially developed, although the pattern of development is less dense, and buildings are typically set further back from the street with large parking areas up front. This diversity of aesthetics requires a tailored approach within each of the Sub-corridors.

The project team worked closely with the Town's Architectural Review Board (ARB) on determining what aesthetic characteristics were currently contained in the Corridor and what was desirable to keep or change. See Section 2.4.5 and Appendix D for more information on this.

3.3.1. Landscape/Streetscape

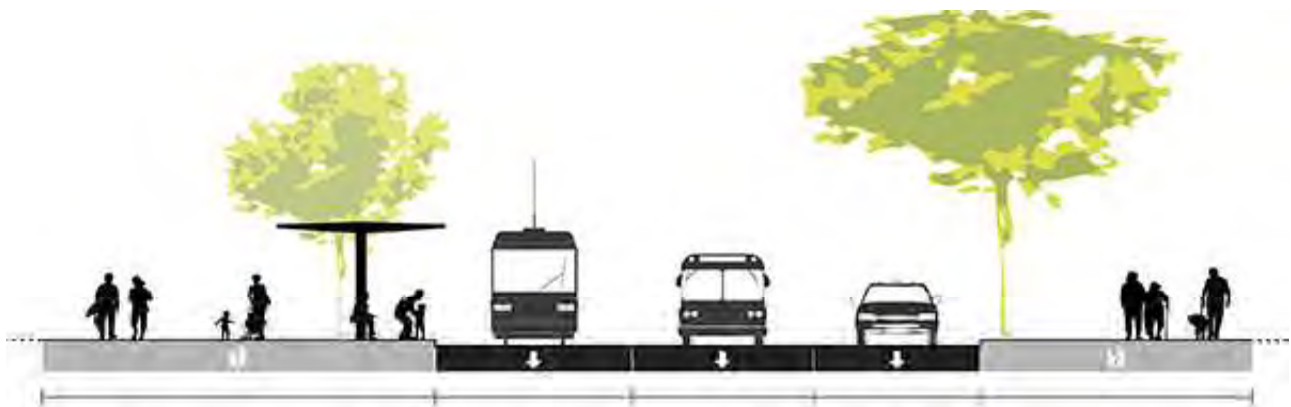
Landscaping is one of the major components in Corridor aesthetics and can affect how a business is perceived from the street. The landscaping pattern along the corridor is currently sporadic and inconsistent. Some establishments have aesthetically pleasing streetscapes and others lack any landscaping or other street-side improvements.



Route 1 Corridor image. Lack of landscaping can provide over-large access areas which affects pedestrian safety.

The landscaping pattern along the corridor is currently sporadic and inconsistent. Some establishments have aesthetically pleasing streetscapes and others lack any landscaping or other improvements. This inconsistent pattern of landscaping affects Corridor aesthetics and potential for economic development. These conditions also impact the Corridor's safety and efficiency in terms of circulation.

Inconsistent landscaping can also make it difficult for drivers to recognize access points which contributes to a less safe pedestrian environment throughout the Corridor. Because of how Corridor landscaping can affect vehicular and pedestrian safety, there is an opportunity to work on these issues together. The Travel in the Corridor Section proposes Complete Streets principals as a framework for the Route One Corridor. Working with RIDOT using this framework would improve the Corridor in multiple ways, including enhanced safety, improved aesthetics, and better walkability.



Graphic illustration of Complete Street principles. Houston, Texas Planning and Development (houstontx.gov/planning/transportation/CompleteStreets/)

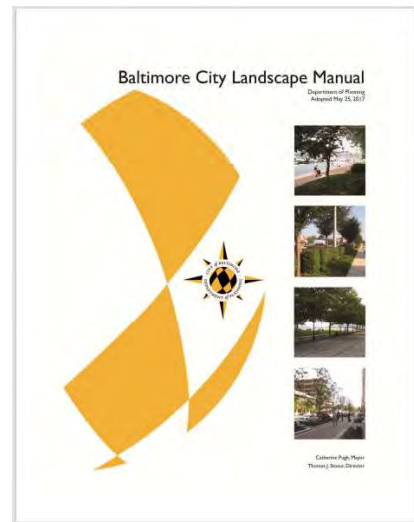
Discussions around improvements to landscaping regulations and incentives should clearly describe how “aesthetics” can improve the function of the Corridor in many ways. The lack of landscaping is mostly represented in sub-corridors 1, 2, and 4, which include the majority of the commercial development within the Corridor.



Temporary, low-cost visually interesting treatment to improve pedestrian safety.
Seattle Right-of-Way Improvement Manual: Intersection Treatments

Section 3.6 identifies impediments to better landscape design within the Town’s zoning ordinance. Streamlining the permitting process with clearly defined landscape requirements with consideration for the variations among the sub-corridors will provide a mechanism

for developers to improve the quality and quantity of landscaping in the Corridor in a clear and concise way.



Baltimore City
Landscape Manual

Landscaping can serve multiple purposes, defining site access, providing an overall enjoyable aesthetic, and treating stormwater in an environmentally conscious manner. Landscape requirements should take all of these benefits into consideration in the design and implementation of landscaping throughout the Corridor. An effective tool to ensure that landscaping requirements are clear and effective is to create a design manual for landscape requirements, or to incorporate landscaping into an overall design manual that includes building design as well.

The goal and recommended actions for implementing this plan and achieving the Vision of Aesthetics in the Corridor are:

GOAL

Landscaping within the Corridor serves multiple functions – treats stormwater, defines travel areas, provides directional clues, supports parking area navigation, and adds enjoyment to the traveler’s experience.

ACTIONS

1. Draft a set of design standards that provide guidance for landscape design elements for each sub-corridor.
2. Develop local and state support for applying Complete Street principles to the Route One Corridor.
3. Create a façade or streetscape improvement program to incentivize businesses to upgrade their façade or streetscape.
4. Amend the zoning ordinance to consolidate landscaping requirements that are currently scattered throughout the ordinance, into a single section for ease of design and implementation.

3.3.2. Signage

Overall Corridor signage is similarly inconsistent - with some establishments having newer and more modern signs and others having outdated, faded, and poorly placed signs. This inconsistent pattern of signage does not support the Town's vision for the area and impacts the overall aesthetic of the Corridor. This condition also impacts the Corridor's safety and efficiency in terms of circulation. Haphazard signage does not provide clear direction to drivers.

Signage is primarily an issue of concern in Sub-corridors 1, 2, and 4, with 3 and 5 consisting of primarily residential development. Signs in Sub-corridor 2 (at the eastern end) and 4 tend to be larger signs, as the businesses are larger in scale in these areas. Sub-corridor 1 and 2 (at the western end) contain more compact and small-scale development, which has created more of a sign clutter issue.

Approaches to improving corridor aesthetics can include regulatory changes and incentives. Current sign regulations attempt to restrict size and sign composition (in terms of the use of digital signs) to some degree. However, the current structure and content of the sign ordinance does not address sign replacement and retrofits. Including this language into the ordinance could be a way to incentivize and/or require property owners with existing signs to comply to new sign regulations upon replacement or repair of signs in addition to addressing new signage applications. See Section 3.6 for more information on the Town's sign regulation.

The Town could create a sign incentive program for the replacement of existing signs along the Corridor. It could be a voluntary program to improve the streetscape through signs and landscaping. Westerly could consider providing tax incentives to property owners or seek grant funding to assist with implementation.

The goal and recommended actions for implementing and achieving the Vision of Aesthetics in the Corridor are:

GOAL

Circulation and safety within the Corridor is improved with well-designed signage which coordinates signs for branding, advertising, site circulation, pedestrian paths, and access points.

ACTIONS

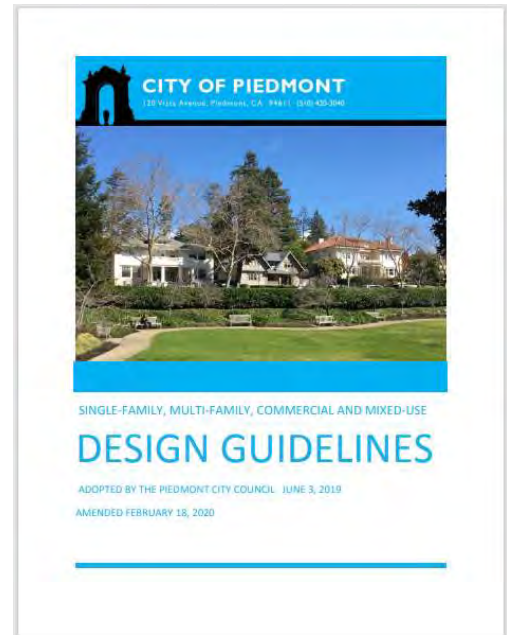
1. Amend the zoning ordinance to address sign requirements specifically for the Route One Corridor to create consistency, yet appropriate to each sub-corridor.
2. Develop design standards for the Corridor that includes a sunset provision for existing nonconforming signage.
3. Develop a Route One Westerly brand to create design cohesion through the public realm and ensure that any public infrastructure improvements are also consistent with the Corridor Vision.
4. Develop a sign incentive program that encourages businesses to update and upgrade their signs to meet new requirements.

3.3.3. Building Design and Location

Building design along the Corridor is also varied in terms of type, age, and design. Structures runs the spectrum from older single-family homes that have been converted to business use, to 1950s and 1960s style strip mall development, to modern shopping plaza style development. Combined with the inconsistent landscaping and signage, the irregular building placement contributes to the Corridor's impaired aesthetic and issues with circulation and pedestrian safety. The Corridor's functioning would improve and be safer with clear physical cues about access points, and clear separate of pedestrian and automobile circulation.

The major impediment to achieving more cohesive and aesthetically pleasing building design in the Corridor is that most of the property along the Corridor is already developed. The best opportunity to implement new standards is through redevelopment and development of the few remaining parcels of vacant land. The Town could incentivize redevelopment of existing buildings by providing tax incentives for property owners to voluntarily implement new design standards as building retrofits.

The goal and recommended actions for implementing this plan and achieving the Vision of Aesthetics in the Corridor are:



City of Piedmont
Design Guidelines

GOAL

Building design within the Corridor has a consistent look and feel while maintaining important characteristics of the neighborhoods it connects.

ACTIONS

1. **Develop design standards for the Corridor that are reflective of the character of the sub-corridors and adjacent neighborhoods that articulate the Town's desire for building massing, scale, and location.**
2. **Develop a tax incentive program to encourage property owners to implement new building design criteria as retrofits.**

3.3.4. Corridor Aesthetics and Neighborhood Planning

Westerly's current design review process and policy emphasis on neighborhood planning are the foundation of the Corridor vision for Aesthetics. The Comprehensive Plan supports addressing residential density and commercial redevelopment based on the unique qualities and characteristics of each planning "neighborhood" and supports context design and neighborhood-based zoning changes. To support the type of transect planning and establish objective design criteria, Westerly should include language directives for the inclusion of context sensitive design standards and provide an explicit statement of Comprehensive Plan consistency in any land-use decision making by the Town Council, Boards and Commissions based on neighborhood character.

The visual appearance and condition of the commercial corridor is also important for vital economic development. Within the zoning ordinance are impediments to better landscape design, quality efficient signage, and the lack of cohesive and pleasing building design. A priority of the Westerly Comprehensive Plan is excellence in community design through the application of context sensitive development standards and best practices. Development Plan Review (DPR) is a reliable method of regulation to a set of performance standards that have been used in Rhode Island to preserve the Town's natural environment, enhance its built environment, improve its visual character, and sustain a high quality of life through review of plans for new development and redevelopment of existing uses. DPR is context sensitive and utilizes best practices. The Town of Westerly is in a good position to incorporate design standards for landscape, signs, building design and location into the existing DPR and ARB reviews.

3.4. Housing in the Corridor

Housing along the corridor is sporadic. There are two stretches of primarily single-family home development from the Charlestown town line to just east of Dunns Corner Road and then again west of the Dunns Corner Road intersection for about one and a half miles, terminating at Wilder Avenue. Others residential development appears along the Corridor among commercial, professional, and even open space land uses. Residential developments, in the form of subdivisions of single-family homes, condominium developments or multifamily apartment complexes, rely on Route One as the primary connection to their neighborhoods.

Unique to Westerly, there is a higher proportion of residents who live and work in Town compared to Rhode Island and Connecticut neighboring communities. Yet increase in rent and home prices with a decrease in housing availability has put added pressure on the need for more new housing for the local workforce. An aging population means different housing needs as older adults leave their homes. As the number of persons per household declines, the number of required units increases and the size and location desired changes. This section of the study provides opportunity to develop housing throughout the Corridor for the Town's present and future workforce, assisting Westerly in its plan to address the overall need for affordable housing.

The Corridor study considers future development and redevelopment in the study area and the potential for development of housing to meet future demand. As trends in demographics continue and the need for workforce housing increases, vacant and underutilized property in the Route One study area will provide the Town with opportunity to meet this increased demand. In addition, changes to zoning of the Route One Corridor and regulations that enable development opportunities not yet available, influence Westerly's economic development prospects.

Carefully considered changes in the Zoning Ordinance to encourage both dense residential development and a mix of uses would help the Town move toward its goal of a safer, economically sustainable, and cohesive corridor. Zoning district classification should reflect the findings of this study and the use of sub-corridor characteristics to encourage the type of development that the Town would like to see throughout the corridor, protect established residential areas and to promote a mix of uses in a way that is intentional, not haphazard as it is currently.

There is an opportunity for the Town to encourage the development of housing to support its local workforce. Allowing increased density consistent with sub-corridor characteristics can help to increase the Town's overall supply of housing, which can help to improve or at least maintain some affordability. Increasing density bonuses for projects which include a higher percentage of rental housing can be a way for the Town to achieve multiple goals related to housing in the Corridor. Requiring a certain percentage of projects that exceed a certain size can also be an option to promote additional workforce housing.

The graphic below describes the “Missing Middle” – a range of house-scale building types that can reflect existing neighborhood characteristics while providing a diversity of housing choices. This design allows for the “perceived density” to be less than other types of housing and makes them appropriate building types for infill development. The unit sizes can vary, and the look of the building contextually designed.



These homes function best when located in walkable neighborhoods, which allows for less parking and/or shared parking with commercial uses. While this project is focused on the Corridor itself, safe, attractive, and walkable connections to the surrounding neighborhoods can help to improve aesthetics, safety, and economic development. When these neighborhoods are connected via safe and attractive pedestrian and bike – ways to the commercial corridor, a demand is created for neighborhood-supported businesses and services.

The Town may reconsider how units are assessed. If there is an opportunity to allow some developers to request tax assessment per square foot instead of per unit, this may provide incentive to build smaller units at a higher density which would create “affordable by design”/naturally occurring affordable housing.

There are several opportunities to amend zoning to support the Corridor vision for housing. We recommend that the Comprehensive Plan be updated to clarify this vision, especially since there are different goals for different transects. For the stretch of single-family homes, include language about protecting these land uses and not allowing additional commercial encroachment in the Comprehensive Plan so that it can be used when the Town has requests for variances or changes to zoning.



A single-family home and small apartment building next to one another in Providence, Rhode Island.

This Study will identify the areas of the Corridor where density and/or a mix of uses is appropriate. This is also important language to include in the Comprehensive Plan, to clarify that the Town’s approach is to support and encourage increased density in specific areas that meet certain criteria, served by existing infrastructure, etc. Updating to ordinance to allow shared parking can also encourage greater density and a mix of uses. These amendments can facilitate the development of “missing middle” types of housing units.

The goal and recommended actions for implementing this plan and achieving the Vision of Housing in the Corridor are:

GOAL

The Route One Corridor includes a broad range of integrated, inclusive, age-friendly, and affordable housing options.

ACTIONS

1. Amend Corridor zoning to allow increased residential density within the Corridor consistent with sub-corridor characteristics and infrastructure capacity.
2. Create incentives for development of affordable by design housing through public private partnerships, and changes in how multifamily units are assessed.
3. Amend Corridor zoning to provide an appropriate mix of uses and to allow mixed-use redevelopment to take on various forms within various sub-corridors.
4. Establish sub-corridor zoning provisions to protect the existing stretches of single-family detached residential homes from commercial encroachment, inappropriate in-fill development, and changes of use.
5. Strengthen relationships with statewide agencies with access to funding and technical assistance resources for the Corridor and its businesses, such as RI Commerce, RI Small Business Development Center, Ocean State BDA, RI Science & Technology Advisory Council.
6. Actively pursue the construction of LMI qualified rental units within the existing sewer service area of the Route One Corridor.
7. Revise zoning ordinance regulations to allow family ownership units (of 1 to 3 bedrooms) such as those designed in 2- to 4-unit or 9- to 12-unit structures consistent with sub-corridor characteristics.

3.5. Economic Development in the Corridor

Development and commercial activity along the Corridor are dramatically different in form, scale, and function than most of the rest of Westerly. As a section of an important regional link, businesses along the Corridor serve a broad population in both southwest Rhode Island and southeast Connecticut. However, outdated modes of development have created an environment that does not maximize land (a limited resource), nor one that supports the kind of experience Westerly residents desire or is sustainable in the face of changing consumer preferences for retail and business demands for workspace. The Corridor is varied in both form and function, and new development should be responsive to the role its surroundings are expected to play.

Route One is a corridor built predominantly around the automobile. Development along the Corridor is mostly single-use, single-story buildings where most customers arrive by car, park, and visit a business. Walking or biking along the Corridor is challenging due to the inconsistency or lack of sidewalks and bike facilities, but also the width of the roadway and speed of the vehicles create an unpleasant space for walking or biking even if such facilities were continuous. Buildings which are set far back from Route One and surrounded by expansive parking lots do not reflect development in other parts of Westerly and may make it difficult to attract new tenants and residents. Recent development projects do not suggest that these patterns are likely to change without the Town's intervention, both in terms of infrastructure investment and changes to zoning.

Currently, development is somewhat dispersed across the length of the Corridor, which can make it difficult for visitors (especially those new to the area) to find what they are looking for. Along the Corridor, particularly at key intersections, there are areas with more prominent visibility and activity. These include areas like Granite St, Airport Road, and Dunns Corners Road. While these areas stand out compared to more sparsely developed portions of Route One, they could benefit from redevelopment that creates a mix of uses, buildings closer to the street, improved parking and circulation, and changes in public infrastructure. Development opportunities (vacant and underused land) are often located near these nodes, providing opportunities to catalyze change along the Corridor.

It is critical to note that the nature of Route One is distinct from Downtown Westerly, and in many ways accommodates uses that Westerly and surrounding communities need but may not be appropriate for, or encouraged in, the downtown.

The Corridor is able to benefit from Westerly's recent and projected future population growth, as well as the improving financial resources of Westerly households – both of which increase local spending power. Furthermore, Westerly's recovery from the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has been strong, and Westerly is a local employment center that welcomes workers from several surrounding communities.

The largest employment sectors include Health Care, Accommodation & Food Services, Retail, and Manufacturing, which comprise approximately 70 percent of jobs in Westerly. Projections indicate growth in employment in the commercial and industrial sectors will drive demands for additional office and industrial space in Westerly, which could and perhaps should be accommodated in the Corridor. Despite the impacts of the pandemic on the Accommodation & Food Services and Retail industries, there may also opportunity for additional retail square footage in the Corridor. The addition of more housing units within a 15-minute drive time would further increase the demand for retail square footage since it would add customers for local businesses.

The identified sub-corridors within are particularly ready or desirable for new development, infill, or redevelopment based on an analysis of land use, assessed values, and built and buildable areas. Unique development approaches for each sub-corridor could help begin the Corridor's transformation into a more economically diverse and sustainable reflection of Westerly's vision for the future. More information on the selection of these focus areas and the specific land use and development recommendations for each can be found in the Market Analysis in Appendix F.

In addition to new real estate development, the Corridor would benefit from a range of other economic development approaches. Tax and other incentives can help simplify the process of starting or moving a business to Westerly and the Corridor. Town-led programming and initiatives can also help build a stronger business community and change the way that businesses, residents, and visitors perceive the Corridor. All these efforts can be enhanced by partnering with organizations that share Westerly's vision and can help connect the Town to resources, individuals, and enterprises that would improve the Corridor.

3.5.1. Place-based Approach to Economic Development

The transformation of the Route One Corridor requires development that is consistent with the vision of the 2020-2040 Comprehensive Community Plan and the concept of Neighborhood Planning. The Economic policy direction which led to this Corridor Study is explicit in the Comprehensive Plan.

GOAL ECON-1: A place-based approach to economic development will attract broad opportunities for all participants in the local economy.

Policy ECON-1.1: Focus on unique features and existing community assets to draw new investment.

Action ECON-1.1.D: Review and revise the Zoning Ordinance with strategies to promote longer stays by visitors and tourists while limiting impact on local neighborhoods

Policy ECON-1.2: Encourage regulatory reform, incentives, and other tools to create the appropriate conditions for equitable, robust economic activity.

Action ECON 1.2.F: Support the development and implementation of a strategy for commercial corridors that clearly articulate the town's vision and attracts investors and commercial businesses to these areas.

Action ECON 1.2.G: Support the development and implementation of town ordinances to sustainably allow for the future buildout of our commercial corridors.

The Comprehensive Plan also requires addressing issues of business attraction, retention, and growth identified in previous economic development planning efforts in Westerly. Based on the goals laid out in the CCP, 2021 Economic Plans Summary, and 2019 Business Survey, the Corridor must:

- Integrate commercial uses with a range of other uses.
- Maximize the potential of development in commercial districts in an effort to increase the value of these properties while also improving the experience for residents and visitors.
- Avoid the perpetuation of commercial sprawl.
- Promote the diversity and vitality of local businesses as part of a year-round economy.
- Improve the business climate while balancing the need for both growth and preservation.

The data relied upon in creating the comprehensive Plan economic goals could be updated with the information provided by RKG Associates in the Existing Conditions and Market Analysis, Appendix F. The RKG report can be used to supplement the Comprehensive Plan discussion of Economic Vitality, and this data should be used to continue with the discussion of job creation, year round economy, an economic diversification.

3.5.2. Development Framework

To achieve successful economic development outcomes along the Corridor, it is important to work from a strategic development framework and prioritize actions, policies, marketing, and incentives that help achieve the community's vision. To that end, the Town should work toward facilitating the redevelopment of vacant and underutilized parcels in the Corridor to increase the intensity of development and fiscal productivity of land and building assets. New development, particularly at high visibility locations along the Corridor, should enhance walkability, bring new and more diverse uses to the Corridor, increase job opportunities, and match the traditional development pattern found elsewhere in Westerly. Lastly, transformative projects often require a level of flexibility with zoning, phasing, infrastructure needs, and

financing. Having a flexible development framework that can adjust with changes in market dynamics, consumer preferences, and financing requirements will work to the benefit of both developers and the Town.

The goal and recommended actions for implementing this plan and achieving the Vision of Economic Development in the Corridor are:

GOAL

A development environment in the Corridor that encourages projects that benefit the Town and support growth that helps fulfill Westerly's vision to be a safe, resilient, and compassionate community.

ACTIONS

1. Use the Focus Areas identified in the Market Analysis to amend Corridor zoning to allow residential, retail, industrial, and manufacturing within the Corridor consistent with sub-corridor characteristics and infrastructure capacity.
2. Establish design districts along the Corridor with accompanying design guidelines, creating clear expectations for developers and a standard against which to judge proposed projects.
3. Customize the existing design review process for development projects within design districts.

3.5.3. Incentives

Development incentives can come in several forms which may include regulatory, financial, or infrastructure. To encourage conformity with the overall vision for the Corridor and for each focus area, the Town may want to consider a range of incentives to lower the barrier of entry for developers and property owners looking to undertake transformative projects. Flexible more permissive zoning can provide both short- and long-term benefits by allowing a wider range of appropriate uses by-right with enough flexibility to accommodate any future shifts in both residential and commercial markets.

Financial incentives can help reduce the tax burden over a determined period of time reducing the annual costs of building and operating a new development project and leveraging the incentive to achieve the Town's goals. This should be done in a way where both parties achieve their goals without creating a "race to the bottom".

Lastly, public infrastructure investments in roads, utilities, streetscape, or public open spaces can help set the table for development to occur by reducing infrastructure costs serving new development and providing a signal to the market that the Town is a willing partner in the transformation of the Corridor.

The goal and recommended actions for implementing this plan and achieving the Vision of Economic Development in the Corridor are:

GOAL

The business community understands that the Town of Westerly will facilitate growth and development in a proactive but responsible way that benefit both enterprise and the Town.

ACTIONS

1. Consider the implementation of one or more Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts at strategic locations along the Corridor where large-scale development is likely or desirable and infrastructure adaptations are needed.
2. Consider structured tax abatements for complex redevelopment projects, including those that require environmental remediation or other significant upfront costs that produce public benefits.
3. Consider a rent assistance program for a defined list of desired corridor tenant types.
4. Reduce building permitting and utility hook-up fees for non-formula (i.e., locally owned, non-chain) commercial uses.

3.5.4. Programming and Initiatives

The creation of different programs and initiatives can help Westerly provide publicity and attention to positive success stories and opportunities along the Corridor. Efforts such as a media campaign, newsletter, articles in the news, social media posts, a dedicated web page for marketing the Corridor's opportunities can all help bring attention to efforts of transforming this section of Route One.

The Town could also consider working closely with businesses and local business organizations to promote events or local hiring opportunities. There may also be opportunities, particularly in the focus areas, to create short-term activation of parcels or vacant spaces to help change perceptions and showcase an opportunity for change.

The goal and recommended actions for implementing this plan and achieving the Vision of Economic Development in the Corridor are:

GOAL

The Route One Corridor's brand is recognized as representative of Westerly, communicates the wealth of opportunities available, and supports community-wide connections.

ACTIONS

1. Fund a staff position responsible for guiding businesses interested in locating in Westerly, identifying and marketing real estate and development opportunities, and proactively identifying candidates for startup activity (organizations and individuals).
2. Engage directly with local property owners, real estate brokers, and developers to understand the local marketplace and identify growth opportunities consistent with the vision for the Corridor.
3. Partner with local organizations to facilitate markets, festivals, and other short-term and tactical interventions in the Corridor.

3.5.5. Partnerships

Finally, the Town can proactively engage with local, regional, and state organizations to build partnerships with the goal of expanding capacity to enact change in the Corridor. This could include connecting businesses with local education partners to create a pipeline of employees or training programs for current employees. Working with Westerly schools on career pathways and internships with local businesses in the Corridor. The Town could partner with local colleges and universities to identify development projects which benefit the Town while providing educational opportunities for students. Working with organizations in Rhode Island advancing opportunities for people of color who may be looking for employment or possibly to start their own business. These can serve as potential ways of bringing the Town, businesses, and organizations together to advance the vision and goals of the Corridor.

The goal and recommended actions for implementing this plan and achieving the Vision of Economic Development in the Corridor are:

GOAL

The Corridor benefits from strong partnerships between the Town; business and property owners; local, regional, and statewide organizations.

ACTIONS

1. Create relationships with provosts, counselors, and advisors at higher education institutions such as Connecticut College, URI, RICC, and the Association of Independent Colleges & Universities of RI.
2. Create relationships with counselors, advisors, and teachers at local high schools, such as Westerly High School and the Chariho Career & Technical Center.
3. Strengthen relationships with statewide agencies that can improve the pipeline of W/MBEs, such as the RI Black Business Association and Center for Women & Enterprise.
4. Build on the existing relationship with the Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce to enhance connections to the local business community and improve understanding of their needs and concerns.
5. Strengthen relationships with statewide agencies with access to funding and technical assistance resources for the Corridor and its businesses, such as RI Commerce, RI Small Business Development Center, Ocean State BDA, RI Science & Technology Advisory Council.

3.6. Regulation and Zoning Framework in the Corridor

Changes to the Town's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations can be a powerful tool towards achieving many of the identified goals of the Route One Corridor. Ensuring that zoning is clear and concise is a strategic approach the Town can take that provides comfort and clarity to property owners and developers. When the regulatory framework is properly structured, well-defined, and streamlined to achieve intended outcomes, it provides a circumstance where property owners and developers can rely on the outlined rules and regulations. This fosters a development environment where all involved can achieve development goals confidently and efficiently as part of a coordinated effort.

Zoning Classifications

Zoning along the Corridor is varied from rural residential zoning to highway commercial and industrial designations. The most prominent zoning district along the Corridor is Highway Commercial (HC) with approximately 186.7 acres designated. Rural Residential 60 (RR-60) is a close second at approximately 185 acres designated. A majority of the RR-60 land is on the far eastern end, close to the Charlestown Town line (Sub-corridor 5). The more central and western end of the Corridor is where a majority of the commercially zoned land is located (Sub-corridors 1, 2, and 4). Table 6-1 within Appendix A provides a full summary of the zoning characteristics for the entire Corridor.

The HC zoning designation is intended for automobile dependent areas and allows for a broad range of commercial type land uses. Section 260-64 of the zoning ordinance also allows for mixed use in the HC zone. This allowance heavily favors commercial use and places the residential units as more of an afterthought to the commercial square footage.

There are several overlay districts that are applied in the Corridor, which lay on top of the underlying zoning classification of HC. The entire length of the Route One Corridor contains the Bed and Breakfast Overlay District. This district permits bed and breakfast operations by right. A portion of the Corridor, approximately from the intersection of Granite Street and Tower Street to the intersection of Grove Avenue contains the Granite Street Overlay District. This district is intended to permit additional office spaces and artist studios to complement the area between Downtown and more intense highway commercial uses that commence at the Tower Street and Granite Street intersection.

To address the overall zoning pattern along the Corridor the Town should simplify the zoning framework by first removing the overlay districts. The Town utilized the overlay approach to zoning in the Corridor when they implemented the Bed and Breakfast overlay and the Granite Street Overlay. Using an overlay district as a tool to permit a single (or only a few specific uses) use is inefficient as opposed to amending the zoning ordinance to allow specific uses within multiple districts.

The use of a special corridor district would permit the Town to tailor the regulations specifically for the Route One Corridor. Generally, special districts are designed for a particular location or area with a unique set of circumstances or characteristics. Special districts can be used in a variety of ways and for a variety of circumstances. In the case of the Route One Corridor, the designation of a Route One Special Corridor District would allow the Town to define the Corridor area and create sub-corridors through which it can create an individualized regulatory framework based on existing conditions and desired outcomes.

Parking

The Town's off-street parking regulations, contained in Section 260-77 of the Town's zoning ordinance provide requirements for the number of parking spaces based on the type of use. The ordinance utilizes a parking minimum approach to parking standards. This type of requirement uses an approach based on the number of seats or the amount of floor area within an establishment to calculate the minimum number of parking spaces that must be constructed.

The Town's approach to parking requirements by way of a minimum standard often creates the unintended consequences of removing viable land for tax positive income, add excessive costs to development for small businesses, developers, and renters, and they can significantly add to the stormwater runoff that can have negative impacts on receiving waters. Parking minimum standards are usually not aligned with the amount of parking that is necessary for successful operation of a business. This results in excessive amounts of parking spaces that often go unused. See Section 3.1.3 for proposed actions on addressing parking issues.

Signs

The Town's sign regulations, contained in Section 260-86 of the Town's zoning ordinance provide requirements for the type, size, number, and placement of signs throughout the community. There are no specific standards for the Route One Corridor. All signs are required to obtain a sign permit that confirms the signs consistency with the standards outlined.

The Town's sign requirements are determined by zoning district and not the area of Town in which they are located. This approach may result in signs that are inappropriate in some areas of Town. The sign ordinance also lumps together several zoning districts into the same requirements, resulting in signs in the commercial zones mimicking signs in industrial zones. An alternative approach is to tailor sign requirements to specific areas of Town. The Route One Corridor could have sign requirements specific to its particular location, which would ensure that signs in the Corridor are not only appropriate, but also would be consistent and create a brand for the area.

Additionally, sign replacement with the exact same sign is permitted and not considered a change that would trigger compliance with new regulations. This ensures that grandfathered signs are allowed to perpetuate and not be brought into compliance. If the Town were to update its sign regulations it should consider providing for a clause that requires that all signs are brought into conformance within a certain amount of time. Alternatively, the act of replacing a sign could trigger a requirement as opposed to allowing the nonconforming sign to be replaced. See Section 3.3.2 for proposed actions to address the sign issue.

Landscaping

The Town's landscape requirements appear in several locations of the zoning ordinance, dependent upon the reason for the landscaping requirement. Landscape requirements appear in sections related to parking lots, development standards, multi-family housing development, development plan review applications, planned development applications, and in stormwater management sections of the zoning ordinance. The requirements for each of these sections varies.

Landscaping standards are scattered throughout the zoning ordinance. They vary in their requirements depending on what is being developed and where it is being developed. The Town should consider consolidating all of these landscape requirements into a single section of the zoning ordinance and organize that section by type of development instead of having the landscaping requirement spread throughout the ordinance. This would ensure that the Town could more easily update and enhance the standards to achieve common goals such as aesthetic improvements and stormwater management.

Often there is significant overlap in landscape requirements for development projects. As an example, the parking landscape requirements, as well as the development plan review requirements, often apply to the same application, although they are found in different sections of the ordinance. See Section 3.3.1 for proposed actions to address landscape and Section 3.3.3 for building design related issues.

Although a necessary tool to regulate development, zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations can often be complex and difficult to navigate. To foster the development of desired housing and business types, the Town needs to ensure that their regulatory framework is clear, concise, and easy to predict. Ensuring this will encourage developers and show them that the Town has considered the types of development it wants to promote, and this sends a strong message that Westerly is open for development opportunities that fit into the design they have created for their community.

The goals and recommended actions for implementing the Vision of Regulation and Zoning Framework in the Corridor are:

GOAL

Clear and concise regulations, coupled with a streamlined approval process for redevelopment and development attracts investment to the Corridor and economic sustainability.

ACTIONS

1. Develop a Special Corridor District within the zoning ordinance and apply it to the Route One Corridor, replacing the existing zoning.
2. Remove the Bed and Breakfast Overlay from the Route One Corridor area.
3. Remove the Granite Street Overlay.
4. Amend the Subdivision Regulations to create a streamlined permitting process for commercial development along the Corridor that complies with the newly adopted design guidelines.

4.0

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

4.1. Implementation Overview

Westerly engaged in an extensive, public process to evaluate and develop strategies for the Route One Corridor. An online presence and public meetings facilitated input from the public and stakeholders. The Route One Corridor Study itself outline strategies to achieve the intended goals of the Corridor, providing specific action items to achieve them. The implementation matrix is where the strategies come together to form a plan of action to move Westerly forward in achieving both short- and long-term goals outlined in the study.

4.2. Implementation Matrix

The implementation matrix (Table 4-2) is presented within this section in a tabular form and provides the strategies identified in Section 1 with assigned timeframes. Timeframes are considered short-term (1 to 5 years), medium-term (5 to 10 years), and long-term (10 plus years). Some of these strategies will span these timeframes and are provided as a guideline. The implementation matrix is not intended as prioritization, and short-term actions do not necessarily take priority over long-term actions.

The matrix also identifies a “strategy lead” for each strategy item and any support party (“other stakeholders”) that will likely assist in carrying out the action item. In some cases, responsibility, and support will overlap or span across multiple departments or parties. The matrix identifies the lead responsible party and the supporting party or parties, along with any associated stakeholders. Many of these strategies will require an effort and an investment of time from multiple groups or organizations. These actions are subject to amendment and will need to be reviewed and possibly revised on an annual basis to account for changes in policy or circumstances within Westerly.

4.3. Evaluation and Adaptive Management

Because strategy items are dynamic and policies and circumstances are constantly changing, the matrix and strategies contained within, will need to be monitored and updated annually. Regular review is also needed to adjust and update the funding sources. The Office of Planning will be responsible for annual progress reviews of the matrix and recommend to the Town Council which strategies are priority in the coming years. The Town Council will review (annually at minimum) the recommended resource and execution plan, as well as monitor progress against Route One Corridor Plan.



Adaptive management is a structured, iterative process to adjusting decision making over time in the face of uncertainty. The basic idea behind adaptive management is that initial implementation of actions will clarify the effectiveness of the approaches employed and, therefore, direction going forward. Adaptive management allows for adjustments based on learning. Because adaptive management is based on a learning process, it improves long-run management outcomes. The challenge in using the adaptive management approach lies in finding the correct balance between ensuring appropriate time to learn and advancing action, especially in the short term.

Adaptive management can be thought of as including a five-step, recurring approach:

- Concept building, which involves defining scope, vision, target actions, threats to effectiveness
- Action planning, which involves developing actions, a monitoring plan, and an operations approach
- Implement Route One Corridor Plan, which includes executing Route One Corridor Plan as well as budgeting resources
- Analyze results, which includes collecting data on the results of implementation and making adjustments to maximize effectiveness
- Teach lessons learned, which involves sharing the lessons with other involved in allied management efforts.

4.4. Measures of Success

An important component of a successful plan is to identify in Route One Corridor Plan how implementation success can be measured. This provides the Town with a way to track progress and keep momentum and motivation towards the desired outcomes. Table 4-1 presents the recommended actions from Section 3.0 of this plan with proposed mechanisms to measure success of the action item.

Table 4-1. Measures of Success	
ACTION ITEMS	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
TRAVEL IN THE CORRIDOR	
Roadway and Traffic Flow	
Request a Road Safety Audit from RIDOT to determine issues related to safety and roadway conditions within and adjacent to the Route One Corridor Study Area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of an RSA • List of issues and findings
Collaborate with RIDOT on priority short- and long-term improvements and schedule construction within the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority list • List of long- and short-term priorities implemented
Work with RIDOT to determine possible funding sources and schedules to implement proposed improvements determined from the RSA evaluation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of funding sources • Comprehensive funding plan with sequence of fund-raising actions
Adopt zoning requirements for cross access easements between properties for new developments or redevelopment sites to promote good access management techniques and reduce curb cuts on Route One.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promulgation of standards
Traffic Signals and Signs	
Work with RIDOT as part of a Road Safety Audit to inventory traffic related and regulatory signs and pavement markings, ensure these meet state standards and MUTCD, are properly located and in good condition, and are consistent throughout the Corridor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of an RSA • List of issues and findings
Work with RIDOT to inventory traffic signal equipment, ensure these meet current requirements, are properly located and in good condition, and determine appropriateness of timing and phasing of intersection and pedestrian crossing signals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of improvements needed • List of crossings and verification of crossing times • Number of signals improved • Number of retrofits completed
Adopt zoning requirements for access to side streets from properties for new developments or redevelopment sites to promote good access management and divert traffic to existing or proposed signalized intersections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical assistance program to promote access • Incentives codified to promote access
Parking	
Amend the zoning ordinance off-street parking regulations to reflect parking maximums instead of minimum requirements and codify use of parking-demand studies to reduce parking spaces allowed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promulgation of amendments
Incentivize shared parking arrangements to provide adequate parking for small businesses and better utilization of existing parking lots.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical assistance program to promote shared parking • Incentives codified to promote shared parking

Table 4-1. Measures of Success	
ACTION ITEMS	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
Amend the zoning ordinance to require more robust use of landscape in the off-street parking regulations including, but not limited to, required buffers, berms, plant material, shade cover and interior landscape requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promulgation of performance standards
Provide for a condensed review process for the updating of existing parking areas to meet performance standards and sites where existing underutilized parking areas are proposed to be converted to occupied commercial space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamlined permitting process in place Number of underutilized spaces converted
During roadway improvements encourage RIDOT to remove wide curb cuts, closing sections, establish and maintain suitable curb reveal to create defined ingress and egress points.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of curb cuts removed Length of granite curbing restored
Pedestrian Access	
Work with RIDOT to conduct a bicycle and pedestrian safety audit to determine deficiencies using the FHWA <i>Pedestrian and Bicyclist Road Safety Audit (RSA) Guide and Prompt List</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of an RSA List of issues and findings
Coordinate with RIDOT to remove obstacles (such as sign poles, mailboxes, and other semi-permanent objects) from existing sidewalks improving pedestrian and ADA accessibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of sidewalk obstacles removed
Identify gaps in the sidewalk network and work with RIDOT to plan for and install sidewalks in critical locations to provide continuous and safe pedestrian access through the Corridor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priority list of identified gaps in the pedestrian network Linear feet of pedestrian gaps addressed
Identify sidewalk areas where ADA required provisions (such as sidewalk width (minimum of a 4-foot clearance), curb ramps, and truncated domes) are lacking and coordinate with RIDOT to upgrade these areas to bring them into compliance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priority list of ADA issues in the pedestrian network Number of ADA issues addressed
Amend the zoning ordinance off-street parking regulations and use the site planning processes to require improved pedestrian access and amenities such as seating whenever businesses are updating or redeveloping and new development projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promulgation of amendments Integrate improved pedestrian access with redevelopment Linear feet of improved access Number of pedestrian amenities.
Bicycle Access	
Work with RIDOT to conduct a bicycle and pedestrian safety audit to determine deficiencies using the FHWA <i>Pedestrian and Bicyclist Road Safety Audit (RSA) Guide and Prompt List</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of an RSA List of issues and findings

Table 4-1. Measures of Success	
ACTION ITEMS	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
Amend the zoning ordinance off-street parking regulations and use the site planning processes to require improved bicycle access and amenities such as bike racks whenever businesses are updating or redeveloping and new development projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promulgation of amendments • Integrate improved bicycle access with redevelopment • Number of bicycle access improvements
Work with RIDOT to install shared lane and dedicated lane markings and bicycle signage to increase awareness and safety around bicyclists on the Corridor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bicycle feasibility study completed • Length of bicycle lanes added • Quantity of other bicycle amenities added
Map any shared use or bicycle lanes, markings, and other amenities and ensure such information is available to the public and up to date.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map of bicycle lanes and amenities posted to the Town’s website • Bicycle lanes and bike racks are included in the annual Westerly Discovery Map.
Conduct a bicycle lane feasibility study along the Corridor to determine the appropriateness and feasibility of providing bicycle access and amenities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed bicycle study
Consider a complete streets program for Route One, to be phased in through future pavement resurfacing and road reconstruction projects and provide for long-term and continued reinvestment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study and conceptual design received. • Phasing organized with RIDOT STIP • Capital budgeting in place
ADA Compliance	
Collaborate with RIDOT on a strategy to identify, plan for, and address ADA compliance issues related to sidewalk access, signage, and other identified issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a plan to address ADA compliance issues
INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE CORRIDOR	
Stormwater	
Work with RIDOT and conduct an inventory and analysis of the existing stormwater infrastructure in the Corridor and its condition, and either disconnect or pretreat stormwater prior to conveyance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed analysis with existing conditions and opportunities identified • The amount of RIDOT property disconnected • The number of pretreatment facilities added to the stormwater conveyance system

Table 4-1. Measures of Success	
ACTION ITEMS	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
Revise stormwater management and site development regulations to require green infrastructure and reduce the amount of impervious surface in all new private and public projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promulgation of amendments
Implement a program of incentives for green infrastructure and reduction in the amount of impervious surface at existing uses and as part of redevelopment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of an incentive program
Develop a database of grant funding options for plan, design and construction of green infrastructure and publish it on the Town website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Database posted to Town website
Analyze and then implement preferred funding options for Corridor improvements in the public realm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding strategy Dollars leveraged annually
Analyze the potential value of developing a public or private stormwater utility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of a feasibility study
Water Supply	
Develop a water conservation program that is specifically aimed at businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a water conservation program plan Implementation of the program Gallons of water saved annually
Protect groundwater through use of appropriate stormwater and wastewater management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of existing regulatory standards Update of standards as needed
Plan, design and permit improvements and extension of water service as needed including capital funding as part of an update to the Westerly Water Supply Management Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water supply management plan update Water supply facilities design and permitting Amount of capital funding
Construct improvements and extension of water service as needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity of water supply improvement
Wastewater Management	
Ensure that sewers within the project area are functioning properly and conveying flows without restrictions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation of sewers in the Corridor Linear feet of sewers evaluated Linear feet of sewers repaired
Plan, design and permit improvements and extension of sewer service to Dunn's Corners including capital funding as part of an update to the Westerly Wastewater Facilities Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wastewater facilities plan update Wastewater facilities design and permitting Amount of capital funding

Table 4-1. Measures of Success	
ACTION ITEMS	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
Construct improvements and extensions of sewers to Dunn's Corners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linear feet of sewer constructed Capacity of sewer improvement Number of households removed from OWTS.
If funding for conventional sewers does not go forward, consider the use of a small-diameter system for parts of the Corridor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity of upgraded wastewater service
Broadband	
Develop a telecommunications master plan for the Route One Corridor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a telecommunications master plan
Establish a telecommunications advisory council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telecommunication advisory council
Bring a broadband hub to Route One Corridor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broadband hub is operational
Amend the zoning ordinance and development regulations and use the site planning processes to require broadband infrastructure as part of development proposals whenever needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promulgation of amendments Quantity of broadband infrastructure added
Undergrounding Cabling and Electrical Infrastructure	
Develop a plan for undergrounding utility lines along the Route One Corridor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a plan for undergrounding
Amend the zoning ordinance and development regulations and use the site planning processes to require underground utility lines as part of development proposals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promulgation of amendments Linear feet of line undergrounded
Develop an undergrounding process with the utility companies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of the undergrounding process
AESTHETICS IN THE CORRIDOR	
Landscape/Streetscape	
Draft a set of design standards that provide guidance for landscape design elements for each Sub-corridor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design standards manual Codification of design standards
Develop local and state support for applying Complete Street principles to the Route One Corridor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of Complete Street principles
Create a façade or streetscape improvement program to incentivize businesses to upgrade.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of a façade and streetscape program
Amend the zoning ordinance to consolidate landscaping requirements that are currently scattered throughout the ordinance, into a single section for ease of design and implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promulgation of consolidate landscaping requirements

Table 4-1. Measures of Success	
ACTION ITEMS	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
Signage	
Amend the zoning ordinance to address sign requirements specifically for the Route One Corridor to create consistency yet appropriate to each sub-corridor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Codification of design standards
Develop design standards for the Corridor that includes a sunset provision for existing nonconforming signage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Codification of design standards and a sunset provision
Develop a Route 1 Westerly brand to create design cohesion through the public realm and ensure that any public infrastructure improvements are also consistent with the Corridor Vision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cohesive design brand Consistency in public branding Increase in private branding
Develop a sign incentive program that encourages businesses to update and upgrade their signs to meet new requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of an incentivization program
Building Design and Location	
Develop design standards for the Corridor that are reflective of the character of the sub-corridors and adjacent neighborhoods that articulate the Town's desire for building massing, scale, and location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Codification of design standards
Develop a tax incentive program to encourage property owners to implement new building design criteria as retrofits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Codification of a tax incentive
HOUSING	
Amend Corridor zoning to allow increased residential density within the Corridor consistent with Sub-corridor characteristics and infrastructure capacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promulgation of amendments
Create incentives for development of affordable by design housing through public private partnerships, and changes in how multifamily units are assessed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Codification of incentives
Amend Corridor zoning to provide an appropriate mix of uses and to allow mixed-use redevelopment to take on various forms within various Sub-corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promulgation of amendments
Establish Sub-corridor zoning provisions to protect the existing stretches of single-family detached residential homes from commercial encroachment, inappropriate in-fill development, and changes of use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promulgation of amendments
Strengthen relationships with statewide agencies with access to funding and technical assistance resources for the Corridor and its businesses, such as RI Commerce, RI Small Business Development Center, Ocean State BDA, RI Science & Technology Advisory Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationships established for ongoing coordination
Actively pursue the construction of LMI qualified rental units within the existing sewer service area of the Route One Corridor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of LMI rental units constructed and occupied.
Revise zoning ordinance regulations to allow family ownership units (of 1 to 3 bedrooms) such as those designed in 2- to 4-unit or 9- to 12-unit structures consistent with sub-corridor characteristics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promulgation of amendments

Table 4-1. Measures of Success	
ACTION ITEMS	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE CORRIDOR	
Development Framework	
Use the Focus Areas identified in the Market Analysis to amend Corridor zoning to allow residential, retail, industrial and manufacturing within the Corridor consistent with Sub-corridor characteristics and infrastructure capacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of zoning amendments • Promulgation of amendments
Establish design districts along the Corridor with accompanying design guidelines, creating clear expectations for developers and a standard against which to judge proposed projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Codification of design standards
Customize the existing design review process for development projects within design districts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Codification of design-review process
Incentives	
Consider the implementation of one or more Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts at strategic locations along the Corridor where large-scale development is likely or desirable and infrastructure adaptations are needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of tax incentive financing districts • Codification of tax increment financing
Consider structured tax abatements for complex redevelopment projects, including those that require environmental remediation or other significant upfront costs that produce public benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of structured tax abatements • Codification of tax abatements
Consider a rent assistance program for a defined list of desired corridor tenant types.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a rent assistance program
Reduce building permitting and utility hook-up fees for non-formula (i.e., locally owned, non-chain) commercial uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amended permitting fee schedule
Programming and Initiatives	
Fund a staff position responsible for guiding businesses interested in locating in Westerly, identifying and marketing real estate and development opportunities, and proactively identifying candidates for startup activity (organizations and individuals).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire a staff person
Engage directly with local property owners, real estate brokers, and developers to understand the local marketplace and identify growth opportunities consistent with the vision for the Corridor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement initiated • Growth opportunities identified
Partner with local organizations to facilitate markets, festivals, and other short-term and tactical interventions in the Corridor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships established
Partnerships	
Create relationships with provosts, counselors, and advisors at higher education institutions such as Connecticut College, URI, RICC, and the Association of Independent Colleges & Universities of RI.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships established for ongoing coordination
Create relationships with counselors, advisors, and teachers at local high schools, such as Westerly High School and the Chariho Career & Technical Center.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships established for ongoing coordination

Table 4-1. Measures of Success	
ACTION ITEMS	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
Strengthen relationships with statewide agencies that can improve the pipeline of W/MBEs, such as the RI Black Business Association and Center for Women & Enterprise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationships established for ongoing coordination
Build on the existing relationship with the Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce to enhance connections to the local business community and improve understanding of their needs and concerns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationships established for ongoing coordination
Strengthen relationships with statewide agencies with access to funding and technical assistance resources for the Corridor and its businesses, such as RI Commerce, RI Small Business Development Center, Ocean State BDA, RI Science & Technology Advisory Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationships established for ongoing coordination
REGULATION AND ZONING FRAMEWORK IN THE CORRIDOR	
Develop a Special Area Management District within the zoning ordinance and apply it to the Route One Corridor, replacing the existing zoning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promulgation of amendments
Remove the Bed and Breakfast Overlay from the Route One Corridor area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promulgation of amendments
Remove the Granite Street Overlay.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promulgation of amendments
Amend the Subdivision Regulations to create a streamlined permitting process for commercial development along the Corridor that complies with the newly adopted design guidelines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promulgation of amendments

Table 4-2. Implementation Table				
ACTION ITEMS	IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	ACTION LEAD	ACTION SUPPORT
TRAVEL IN THE CORRIDOR				
Roadway and Traffic Flow <i>Travel through the Corridor flows logically without delay and navigating as a pedestrian, cyclist, motorist, or passenger is safe and convenient.</i>				
Request a Road Safety Audit from RIDOT to determine issues related to safety and roadway conditions within and adjacent to the Route One Corridor Study Area	Short-term	Plan	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Engineer RIDOT DPW
Collaborate with RIDOT on priority short- and long-term improvements and schedule construction within the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)	Short-term	Plan	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Engineer RIDOT DPW
Work with RIDOT to determine possible funding sources and schedules to implement proposed improvements determined from the RSA evaluation.	Short-term	Plan	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Engineer RIDOT DPW
Adopt zoning requirements for cross access easements between properties for new developments or redevelopment sites to promote good access management techniques and reduce curb cuts on Route One.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council RIDOT
Traffic Signals and Signs <i>Travel through the Corridor is effortless and enjoyable. Wayfinding signage and traffic signals throughout the Corridor are designed and arranged consistently and are easy to read and interpret.</i>				
Work with RIDOT as part of a Road Safety Audit to inventory traffic related and regulatory signs and pavement markings, ensure these meet state standards and MUTCD, are properly located and in good condition, and are consistent throughout the Corridor.	Short-term	Plan	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Engineer RIDOT DPW
Work with RIDOT to inventory traffic signal equipment, ensure these meet current requirements, are properly located and in good condition, and determine appropriateness of timing and phasing of intersection and pedestrian crossing signals.	Short-term	Plan	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Engineer RIDOT DPW
Adopt zoning requirements for access to side streets from properties for new developments or redevelopment sites to promote good access management and divert traffic to existing or proposed signalized intersections.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board
Parking <i>Parking areas and plazas in the Corridor provide appropriate parking capacity and safe pedestrian and vehicle circulation. Parking lots are well designed for parking opportunities, internal circulation, pedestrian paths, and access points that are coordinated.</i>				
Amend the zoning ordinance off-street parking regulations to reflect parking maximums instead of minimum requirements and codify use of parking-demand studies to reduce parking spaces allowed.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board
Incentivize shared parking arrangements to provide adequate parking for small businesses and better utilization of existing parking lots.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board
Amend the zoning ordinance to require more robust use of landscape in the off-street parking regulations including, but not limited to, required buffers, berms, plant material, shade cover and interior landscape requirements.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board
Provide for a condensed review process for the updating of existing parking areas to meet performance standards and sites where existing underutilized parking areas are proposed to be converted to occupied commercial space.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board
Encourage RIDOT to work with the Town and property owners to remove wide curb cuts that promote ingress and egress across a majority of the frontage of the property by closing sections and creating defined ingress and egress points.	Medium-term	Plan	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Engineer RIDOT DPW

Table 4-2. Implementation Table				
ACTION ITEMS	IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	ACTION LEAD	ACTION SUPPORT
Pedestrian Access				
<i>Safe and convenient pedestrian access support residency, business patronage, and public transportation options within the Corridor.</i>				
Use the FHWA Pedestrian and Bicyclist Road Safety Audit (RSA) Guide and Prompt List to work with RIDOT to conduct a bicycle and pedestrian safety audit to determine deficiencies using the FHWA Pedestrian and Bicyclist Road Safety Audit (RSA) Guide and Prompt List..	Short-term	Plan	Planning Office	Planning Board
Coordinate with RIDOT to remove obstacles (such as sign poles, mailboxes, and other semi-permanent objects) from existing sidewalks improving pedestrian and ADA accessibility.	Medium-term	Plan	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Engineer RIDOT DPW
Identify gaps in the sidewalk network through a pedestrian and bicycle RSA and work with RIDOT to plan for and install sidewalks in critical locations to provide continuous and safe pedestrian access through the Corridor.	Short-term	Plan	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Engineer RIDOT DPW
Identify sidewalk areas where ADA required provisions (such as sidewalk width (minimum of a 4-foot clearance), curb ramps, and truncated domes) are lacking and coordinate with RIDOT to upgrade these areas to bring them into compliance.	Medium-term	Plan	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Engineer RIDOT DPW
Amend the zoning ordinance off-street parking regulations and use the site planning processes to require improved pedestrian access and amenities such as seating whenever businesses are updating or redeveloping and new development projects.	Short-term	Plan	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Engineer
Bicycle Access				
<i>Improved bicycle access in the Corridor provides a public health benefit, provides a connection to adjacent residential neighborhoods and other areas of Town, and provides an additional economic benefit to businesses located there.</i>				
Work with RIDOT to conduct a bicycle and pedestrian safety audit to determine deficiencies using the FHWA Pedestrian and Bicyclist Road Safety Audit (RSA) Guide and Prompt List.	Medium-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Engineer RIDOT DPW
Amend the zoning ordinance off-street parking regulations and use the site planning processes to require improved bicycle access and amenities such as bike racks whenever businesses are updating or redeveloping and new development projects.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council
Work with RIDOT to install shared lane and dedicated lane markings and bicycle signage to increase awareness and safety around bicyclists on the Corridor.	Medium-term	Plan	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Engineer RIDOT DPW
Map any shared use or bicycle lanes and markings and ensure such information is available to the public and up to date.	Short-term	Map	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Engineer RIDOT RIDEM
Conduct a bicycle lane study along the Corridor to determine the appropriateness and feasibility of providing bicycle access and amenities.	Medium-term	Plan	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Engineer RIDOT DPW
Consider a complete streets program for Route One, to be phased in through future pavement resurfacing and road reconstruction projects and provide for long-term and continued reinvestment.	Medium-term	Plan	Planning Office	RIDOT Town Council Town Engineer

Table 4-2. Implementation Table				
ACTION ITEMS	IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	ACTION LEAD	ACTION SUPPORT
ADA Compliance				
<i>The Route One Corridor is easily accessible to all, regardless of disability or impairment</i>				
Collaborate with RIDOT on a strategy to identify, plan for, and address ADA compliance issues related to sidewalk access, signage, and other identified issues.	Short-term	Regulation Plan	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Engineer RIDOT
INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE CORRIDOR				
Stormwater				
<i>Environmental resources in the Corridor are protected from contamination through outstanding water quality controls and stormwater management.</i>				
Work with RIDOT and conduct an inventory and analysis of the existing stormwater infrastructure in the Corridor and its condition, and either disconnect or pretreat stormwater prior to conveyance.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Engineer RIDOT RIDEM
Revise stormwater management and site development regulations to require green infrastructure and reduce the amount of impervious surface in all new private and public projects.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Engineer RIDOT RIDEM
Implement a program of incentives for green infrastructure and reduction in the amount of impervious surface at existing uses and as part of redevelopment.	Short-term	Program	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Engineer RIDOT RIDEM
Develop a database of grant funding options for plan, design and construction of green infrastructure and publish it on the Town website.	Short-term	Funding	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Engineer RIDOT RIDEM
Analyze and then implement preferred funding options for Corridor improvements in the public realm.	Short-term	Funding	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Engineer RIDOT RIDEM
Analyze the potential value of developing a public or private stormwater utility.	Short-term	Program Funding	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Engineer RIDOT
Water Supply				
<i>Adequate water remains available in the Corridor to support the Town's preferred level of residential and commercial growth.</i>				
Develop a water conservation program that is specifically aimed at businesses.	Short-term	Program	DPW	Town Engineer Planning Board Town Council
Protect groundwater through use of appropriate stormwater and wastewater management.	Long-term	Various	DPW	Town Engineer Planning Office RIDOT RIDEM Planning Board Town Council

Table 4-2. Implementation Table				
ACTION ITEMS	IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	ACTION LEAD	ACTION SUPPORT
Plan, design and permit improvements and extension of water service as needed including capital funding as part of an update to the Westerly Water Supply Management Plan.	Medium-term	Planning	DPW	Planning Office Town Engineer RIDOT RIDEM RIHEALTH Planning Board Town Council
Construct improvements and extension of water service as needed.	Long-term	Capital Improvement	DPW	Town Engineer Planning Office RIDOT RIDEM Planning Board Town Council
Wastewater Management				
<i>The capacity and maintenance of the wastewater treatment facility supports short- and long-term commercial and economic growth within the Corridor.</i>				
Use wastewater planning analysis to compare and contrast the three strategies	Short-term	Funding	DPW	Town Engineer Planning Board Town Council
Plan, design and permit improvements and extension of sewer service to Dunn's Corners including capital funding as part of an update to the Westerly Wastewater Facilities Plan.	Medium-term	Planning Funding	DPW	Planning Office Town Engineer RIDOT RIDEM Planning Board Town Council
Construct improvements and extensions of sewers to Dunns Corner.	Long-term	Capital Improvement	DPW	Town Engineer Planning Office RIDOT RIDEM Planning Board Town Council
If funding for sewers does not go forward, consider the use of a small-diameter system for parts of the Corridor.	Long-term	Capital Improvement	DPW	Town Engineer Planning Office RIDOT RIDEM Planning Board Town Council
Broadband				
<i>The Corridor provides a competitive and attractive opportunity for both business interests and families through improved broadband capacity</i>				
Develop a telecommunications master plan for the Route One Corridor.	Short-term	Planning	Planning Office	Planning Board Developers and Property Owners
Establish a broadband advisory council.	Short-term	Program	Planning Office	Planning Board Developers and Property Owners
Bring a broadband hub to Route One Corridor	Medium-term	Planning	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council
Amend the zoning ordinance and development regulations and use the site planning processes to require broadband infrastructure as part of development proposals whenever needed.	Ongoing	Program	Planning Office	Planning Board Developers and Property Owners

Table 4-2. Implementation Table				
ACTION ITEMS	IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	ACTION LEAD	ACTION SUPPORT
Consider a complete streets program for Route One, to be phased in through future pavement resurfacing and road reconstruction projects and provide for long-term and continued reinvestment.	Medium-term	Plan	Planning Office	RIDOT Town Council Town Engineer
Undergrounding Cabling and Electrical Infrastructure				
<i>The Town of Westerly is relieved of undue financial burden and responsibility following the underground location of communications and electrical lines along the Corridor.</i>				
Develop a plan for underground utility lines.	Short-term	Planning	Planning Office	Planning Board Developers and Property Owners
Work with existing property owners and developers to underground utility lines.	Long-term	Program	Planning Office	Planning Board DPW Electric Utility Developers and Property Owners
Develop an underground process with the utility companies.	Medium-term	Program	Planning Office	Planning Board Developers and Property Owners
AESTHETICS IN THE CORRIDOR				
Landscaping/Streetscaping				
<i>Landscaping within the Corridor serves multiple functions – treats stormwater, defines travel areas, provides directional clues, supports parking area navigation, and adds enjoyment to the traveler’s experience.</i>				
Draft a set of design standards that provide guidance for landscape design elements for each sub-corridor.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council
Develop local and state support for applying Complete Street principles to the Route 1 Corridor.	Medium-term	Policy	Planning Office	RIDOT Planning Board Town Council
Create a façade or streetscape improvement program to incentivize businesses to upgrade their façade or streetscape.	Medium-term	Program	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council
Amend the zoning ordinance to consolidate landscaping requirements that are currently scattered throughout the ordinance, into a single section for ease of design and implementation.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council Architectural Review Board
Signage				
<i>Circulation and safety within the Corridor is improved with well-designed signage which coordinates signs for branding, advertising, site circulation, pedestrian paths, and access points.</i>				
Amend the zoning ordinance to address sign requirements specifically for the Route One Corridor to create consistency yet appropriate to each sub-corridor.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council Architectural Review Board
Develop design standards for the Corridor that includes a sunset provision for existing nonconforming signage.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council Architectural Review Board
Develop a Route One Westerly brand to create design cohesion through the public realm and ensure that any public infrastructure improvements are also consistent with the Corridor Vision.	Short-term	Plan	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council Architectural Review Board
Develop a sign incentive program that encourages businesses to update and upgrade their signs to meet new requirements.	Short-term	Plan	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council Architectural Review Board

Table 4-2. Implementation Table				
ACTION ITEMS	IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	ACTION LEAD	ACTION SUPPORT
Building Design and Location				
<i>Building design within the Corridor has a consistent look and feel while maintaining important characteristics of the neighborhoods it connects.</i>				
Develop design standards for the Corridor that are reflective of the character of the sub-corridors and adjacent neighborhoods that articulate the Town’s desire for building massing, scale, and location.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council Architectural Review Board
Develop a tax incentive program to encourage property owners to implement new building design criteria as retrofits.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council Tax Assessor
HOUSING IN THE CORRIDOR				
<i>The Route One Corridor includes a broad range of integrated, inclusive, age-friendly, and affordable housing options.</i>				
Amend Corridor zoning to allow increased residential density within the Corridor consistent with sub-corridor characteristics and infrastructure capacity.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council
Create incentives for development of affordable by design housing through public private partnerships, and changes in how multifamily units are assessed.	Short-term	Regulation/Program	Planning Office	Tax Assessor Town Council Planning Board
Amend Corridor zoning to provide an appropriate mix of uses and to allow mixed-use redevelopment to take on various forms within various Sub-corridors.	Short-term	Program	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Engineer RIDOT RIDEM
Establish sub-corridor zoning provisions to protect the existing stretches of single-family detached residential homes from commercial encroachment, inappropriate in-fill development, and changes of use.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council
Strengthen relationships with statewide agencies with access to funding and technical assistance resources for the Corridor and its businesses, such as RI Commerce, RI Small Business Development Center, Ocean State BDA, RI Science & Technology Advisory Council.	Short-term	Program	Planning Office	Planning Board Economic Development Commission
Actively pursue the construction of LMI qualified rental units within the existing sewer service area of the Route One Corridor.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council
Revise zoning ordinance regulations to allow family ownership units (of 1 to 3 bedrooms) such as those designed in 2- to 4-unit or 9- to 12-unit structures consistent with sub-corridor characteristics.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council
Amend the zoning ordinance to consolidate landscaping requirements that are currently scattered throughout the ordinance, into a single section for ease of design and implementation.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council Architectural Review Board
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE CORRIDOR				
Development Framework				
<i>A development environment in the Corridor that encourages projects that benefit the Town and support growth that helps fulfill Westerly’s vision to be a safe, resilient, and compassionate community.</i>				
Use the Focus Areas identified in the Market Analysis to amend Corridor zoning to allow residential, retail, industrial and manufacturing within the Corridor consistent with Sub-corridor characteristics and infrastructure capacity.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council Economic Development Commission
Establish design districts along the Corridor with accompanying design guidelines, creating clear expectations for developers and a standard against which to judge proposed projects.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council Architectural Review Board

Table 4-2. Implementation Table				
ACTION ITEMS	IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	ACTION LEAD	ACTION SUPPORT
Customize the existing design review process for development projects within design districts.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council Architectural Review Board
Incentives <i>The business community understands that the Town of Westerly will facilitate growth and development in a proactive but responsible way that benefit both enterprise and the Town.</i>				
Consider the implementation of one or more Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts at strategic locations along the Corridor where large-scale development is likely or desirable and infrastructure adaptations are needed.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council Economic Development Commission
Consider structured tax abatements for complex redevelopment projects, including those that require environmental remediation or other significant upfront costs that produce public benefits.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council Economic Development Commission Tax Assessor
Consider a rent assistance program for a defined list of desired Corridor tenant types.	Medium-term	Regulation	Town Council	Planning Office
Reduce building permitting and utility hook-up fees for non-formula (i.e., locally owned, non-chain) commercial uses.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council Building Official
Programming and Initiatives <i>The Route One Corridor's brand is recognized as representative of Westerly, communicates the wealth of opportunities available, and supports community-wide connections.</i>				
Fund a staff position responsible for guiding businesses interested in locating in Westerly, identifying and marketing real estate and development opportunities, and proactively identifying candidates for startup activity (organizations and individuals).	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council Architectural Review Board
Engage directly with local property owners, real estate brokers, and developers to understand the local marketplace and identify growth opportunities consistent with the vision for the Corridor.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council Architectural Review Board
Partner with local organizations to facilitate markets, festivals, and other short-term and tactical interventions in the Corridor.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council Architectural Review Board
Partnerships <i>The Corridor benefits from strong partnerships between the Town; business and property owners; local, regional, and statewide organizations.</i>				
Create relationships with provosts, counselors, and advisors at higher education institutions such as Connecticut College, URI, RICC, and the Association of Independent Colleges & Universities of RI.	Short-term	Plan	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council Economic Development Commission
Create relationships with counselors, advisors, and teachers at local high schools, such as Westerly High School and the Chariho Career & Technical Center.	Short-term	Plan	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council Economic Development Commission
Strengthen relationships with statewide agencies that can improve the pipeline of W/MBEs, such as the RI Black Business Association and Center for Women & Enterprise.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council Economic Development Commission
Build on the existing relationship with the Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce to enhance connections to the local business community and improve understanding of their needs and concerns.	Short-term	Regulation	Economic Development Commission	Planning Board Town Council Planning Office
Strengthen relationships with statewide agencies with access to funding and technical assistance resources for the Corridor and its businesses, such as RI Commerce, RI Small Business Development Center, Ocean State BDA, RI Science & Technology Advisory Council.	Short-term	Regulation	Economic Development Commission	Planning Board Town Council

Table 4-2. Implementation Table				
ACTION ITEMS	IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	ACTION LEAD	ACTION SUPPORT
REGULATION AND ZONING FRAMEWORK IN THE CORRIDOR				
<i>Clear, concise, and streamlined approval process for redevelopment and development attracts investment to the Corridor and economic sustainability.</i>				
Develop a Special Corridor District within the zoning ordinance and apply it to the Route One Corridor, replacing the existing zoning	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council
Remove the Bed and Breakfast Overlay from the Route One Corridor area	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council
Remove the Granite Street Overlay	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council
Amend the Subdivision Regulations to create a streamlined permitting process for commercial development along the Corridor that complies with the newly adopted design guidelines	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council
Develop a tax incentive program to encourage property owners to implement new building design criteria as retrofits.	Short-term	Regulation	Planning Office	Planning Board Town Council Tax Assessor