

**Town of Warren  
Master Plan  
Phase III Final Draft  
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Presented by:

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## **Phase One: Inventory of Existing Conditions and Trends**

### ***Part A            Introduction***

#### **Chapter 1.    Plan Development**

##### **1.a        The Master Plan Process**

The undertaking of a comprehensive or master planning process requires a great deal of time, research effort, and public participation in order to be successful, but the benefits are important for the long-term vitality and success of a town. Completion of a master plan document helps town officials to promote and guide long-term development in ways that address the major priorities of present and future town residents. Such a document can help make the town more eligible for a host of regional, state, and federal funding sources. Indeed, it is essential to applying for some forms of public and private support. The aim is to foster a desirable mix of new business investors, along with new residents and visitors, while preserving current amenities, homes and jobs. A master plan offers a blueprint of what the long-term economic environment of the town could and should be. *(While planners at the University of Massachusetts typically refer to such integrated studies as comprehensive plans, in this case we have followed the lead of the Town of Warren's Master Plan Committee [MPC] and will refer to this project as following a master plan process.)*

A comprehensive or master plan consists of several major components: plans for land use, open space and recreation, economic development, housing, public facilities and services, infrastructure and transportation, etc. The research process undertaken by the UMass team in this plan document consisted of the following steps:

- Compiling a basic economic, demographic and geographic inventory of the town as well as of the surrounding Quaboag Valley region
- Developing a community profile through interviews and meetings with residents as well as with public officials
- Observing and documenting town landscape features
- Tabulating and analyzing general survey data

We have organized forums for public participation, community visioning, and scenario development in response to these research findings, and we encourage the town to continue to organize such forums for the sake of plan implementation. The research and the responses to it serves as a basis for the final master plan recommendations regarding implementation goals and strategies

The master plan development process undertaken by the Town of Warren in cooperation with the UMass Project Team involved three working phases. Phase I, from September 2004 to February 2005, included data collection, biweekly meetings with the MPC, surveys and interviews with town department heads, and creation of a general survey

distributed to town residents along with census forms in January 2005. From this data we developed our first draft report and presentation of preliminary findings.

Phase II had already begun in part, but was fully underway following our public meeting on March 2, 2005, at which we presented our findings and identified three scenarios (or future visions) of Warren's development over the next several decades. Based on questions and comments at the public meeting as well as on our analysis and assessment of the general survey data, the MPC and UMass Project Team identified the most promising strategies for realizing the potential development scenarios, especially in terms of planning practices, programs, policies, and resources at the local, regional, state, and federal level. We presented findings and identified recommendations for implementation at focus group public meetings in Spring (village center economic redevelopment) and Fall (open space, natural resources and recreation) 2005.

Starting in early 2006, we completed work on Phase III, which consisted of refinements to the master plan, incorporating MPC, official and public responses to the strategic recommendations and implementation goals of the plan draft. The final plan document will be made available in bound hard copy, CD-ROM, and web link formats for the use of town residents and decision-makers.

While this Master plan document will provide a comprehensive collection and organization of relevant data, analysis and assessment of trends, public response, and practical recommendation that is useful to the town, it represents only a beginning, a first step in a long process whereby town officials and residents engage in a dialog regarding the future direction of Warren. In that sense, the document is a lens that serves to focus all that it has observed and examined, enabling Warren residents to see various future prospects more clearly or more closely. Enhanced sight, however, is only a precondition for more effective practice. The MPC and the UMass project team have created a first draft. The Board of Selectmen, the Planning Board, other town agencies, and citizens participating in Town Meeting will, in the end, work together to translate knowledge into new projects and policies, visions into improvements, goals into tangible results. It is also important to have strong leadership in place to coordinate the process of master plan implementation in order for the master plan to be successful.<sup>1</sup>

## **1.b SWOT Analysis and Initial Scenarios**

In the course of our regular meetings with the MPC, the UMass Project Team decided, in consultation with the Committee, to organize four subcommittees, each of which would focus on particular aspects of the master plan process: a History, Culture and Economy Subcommittee; a Natural Resources and Land Use Subcommittee; a Housing and Community Services Subcommittee; and a Transportation and Town Engineering Subcommittee. Each subcommittee came up with survey questions, which were then incorporated into a six-page questionnaire (see Chapter 10). MPC members and town department heads were asked to complete the questionnaire, not as part of a 'scientific'

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<sup>1</sup> Because the master plan is only part of an ongoing public process, any minor inadequacy or inaccuracy in particular details is not a problem and can be readily addressed – this is not an infallible guide to Warren

survey with a statistically significant sample population, but as knowledgeable community representatives whose responses would help us to round out our preliminary research and to identify the most important questions for the two-page general survey distributed to town residents. Discussion within the subcommittees and tabulation of the questionnaire findings provided the basis for a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis of Warren's current conditions. While SWOT is the commonplace term within planning practice, we will hereafter refer to the analytic categories as Advantages, Limitations, Opportunities, and Challenges, avoiding some of the more negative associations of the SWOT categories:

### ***Advantages***

- *Intermediate location* equidistant from Worcester, Springfield, Northern CT; close but not direct access to Route 9, I-90, I-84
- *Intermediate size* not too small, not too big compared to neighboring towns
- *Housing stock* high percentage of older homes; relatively moderate prices
- *Manufacturing base* good potential for redevelopment or reuse of mill sites
- *Undeveloped land* room for future growth, potential new uses for open space
- *Citizen engagement* high voter turnout; town committees; dept. planning

### ***Limitations***

- *Non-central location* less convenient, less efficient transportation connectors
- *Transitional size* too small, too big re: new state mandates, public services
- *Building Inspection* increasing difficulty keeping pace with new construction
- *Manufacturing loss* downsizing, outsourcing, decline as local employer
- *Resistance to change?* mixed views regarding new zoning, taxation, development
- *Coordinated planning* Warren/West Warren centers: separate, competing goals?

### ***Opportunities***

- *Regional cooperation* coordinated approach to education, health, public safety
- *Village centers focus* potential redevelopment, rehabilitation, reuse of buildings
- *Manufacturing niche* light manufacturing, 'clean' industries/technologies?
- *Open space/recreation* historic and scenic amenities, multiple-use facilities
- *Water quality* Quaboag River suitable for all uses except drinking

### ***Challenges***

- *Transportation system* network improvements for long-term access and efficiency
- *New revenue sources* increased funding for mandated and desired services, e.g., schools, public safety, inspection (especially when town population  $\geq 5000$ )
- *Changing economy* need to revise education, infrastructure, zoning, etc. policy
- *Rate of development* fast-growth risks to 'small town' character, quality of life
- *Land use pressures* development impacts on scenic and recreational enjoyment

From the compiling of this SWOT analysis, the UMass project team identified three initial scenarios, or future visions, for Warren's potential development path over the next several decades: the *Reinvented Manufacturing Small Town* (slower rate of growth); the

*Revitalized Village Centers Bedroom Community* (more moderate rate of growth); and the *Regionally-Integrated Economic Attractor* (faster rate of growth). Each looks to address particular limitations and challenges by taking advantage of particular advantages and opportunities. Scenarios represent possibility and choice, not destiny and constraint.

The *Reinvented Manufacturing Small Town* scenario focuses on preserving the historical links between Warren's resident population, land and resource endowment, employment base, and community character. This future vision includes an economic redevelopment strategy involving adaptive reuse of mill complexes and rail lines; upgrade of existing water, power, telecommunication, and transportation infrastructure; and improvement of education and town services to ensure an adequate local knowledge and skill base. Since the goal is to keep jobs and tax revenues in town, this strategy will primarily concentrate new development in existing developed areas, thereby potentially slowing development rates in 'greenfield' (undeveloped) areas of town and relieving pressures on rural landowners. The town's traditional character and scale will best be stabilized in this scenario, though some kinds of development opportunities may be missed as a result.

The *Revitalized Village Centers Bedroom Community* is an intermediate-rate growth scenario, which seeks to moderate and direct recent development trends in more desirable directions. New residents who find Warren appealing because of its affordable housing market and small-town character contribute in the aggregate to trends that may erode those very sources of appeal over the long term. The focus of this future vision is village centers revitalization, wherein economic redevelopment focuses on locally-available goods and services (e.g., shops, restaurants, health and financial services) to keep residents' dollars circulating within the community. Rural enterprises can also benefit from this strategy by means of farmers' markets, sales to local vendors, etc. Redesign of traffic and parking access, along with streetscape and frontage improvements, will help make village centers more convenient and attractive. The town's village center zoning can be adapted to promote relatively concentrated, mixed use development so as to promote open space protection. This strategy assumes a continuing long-term decrease in manufacturing base.

The *Regionally-Integrated Economic Attractor* scenario represents the most dramatic change in current orientation among the three outlined here. In this future vision, the town 'thinks outside the box' and leverages its location and undeveloped land in a bolder way, with significant long-term implications for faster population growth, new residential and commercial development, and demand impact on local infrastructure and services. We will address this strategy in a more speculative way, considering what kinds of destination attractions might best secure Warren's future: e.g., a leisure or recreation facility, transport/distribution hub, regional specialty shopping. Such a faster growth scenario may or may not sharply increase pressures on land and resource use and on town infrastructure and services, depending on the particular development strategy chosen and on town management policies. Whatever the potential economic gains, this future vision is least likely to preserve the longstanding scale and character of Warren, unless the new development is either fully complementary to, or else sharply isolated from, the village

centers. Creating a turnpike interchange or a rail spur to an intermodal transport center would be among the potential major infrastructure projects under this scenario.

### **1.c Previous Plans**

The Town of Warren has engaged in various forms of planning over the past several decades, albeit mostly in a piecemeal, narrowly focused way. Previous plan documents include Subdivision Regulations (1973); Zoning Bylaws (1984, revised 1989 and 1997); along with a Business Improvement Plan; a Community Development Study (PVPC); as well as the master and capital plans of various Town of Warren Departments and Agencies (e.g., Quaboag Regional School District, Police Department, Fire Department). Many of these departmental plans will be discussed at greater length in Chapters 8 and 18 on Municipal Services and Infrastructure. Some key plan documents will also be included in the Appendices

In terms of regional development plans, as Warren falls under the general purview of the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), which produced the 1996 *Economic Conditions and Prospects Study for Central Massachusetts*. The study was prepared in cooperation with the Worcester Area Chamber of Commerce and the Worcester Office of Planning and Community Development, and outlines the general resource conditions and emerging development trends observed among the towns and cities of Central Massachusetts. While the study is a decade old, and there have been significantly demographic shifts since then, many of the basic findings remain relevant. In terms of manufacturing base, manufacturing still constitutes a significant (around 20%) share of regional employment base, with growth in sectors such as biotechnology, photonics, plastics, and electronic components. Many of the firms in those growing sectors have plans to expand or diversify operations. The most significant growth has been in the service sector, especially health care and information processing. Although start-up and small businesses are an increasing part of the regional economy, banks have indicated ongoing difficulties in profitably making smaller commercial loans or sustaining micro-loan programs. From the standpoint of workforce development, approximately a third of firms surveyed indicated having difficulty finding skilled and semi-skilled workers with strong engineering skills within the region. A large majority of firms were unfamiliar with area job training programs, but the Regional Employment Board (REB) has experienced more demand for job training than it has resources to deliver. As for manufacturing capacity and space availability, state and regional economic development officials have noted a regional shortage of fully-serviced industrial land; many companies have had difficulty finding suitably-built and connected land for expansion in their host community or in the region more generally. While water and sewer capacity is sufficient on a regional basis, such infrastructure often does not extend to key parcels of land. Much the same holds for rail and roadway access. The region, moreover, has not done enough to clean up its 'brownfield' (previously used land requiring remediation – see Glossary) sites. Only a limited number of brownfield sites had been cleaned up by the time of the study's publication, limiting their redevelopment or reuse potential. In recent years, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) has also provided significant plan support. Please see Chapter 12 for further discussion.

## **1.d Community Profile**

The community profile of Warren presented below stems from UMass project team research, as well as from the background of previous plans, the assistance of town historians, the discussions of MPC subcommittees and the results of the questionnaire completed by town representatives.

### **1.d.i History and Location**

Throughout its history, residents of Warren (named Western until 1843), Massachusetts have regarded themselves and have been regarded by others as a crossroads of Central and Western Massachusetts, oriented to the larger regional and metropolitan centers of Worcester and Springfield, and, more distantly, Boston and Hartford. Located on the far western frontier of Worcester County, Warren has identified as much with regional neighbors at the eastern edges of Hampshire and Hampden Counties as with its Worcester County seat. The geography of the Quaboag River Valley and its regional waterway network has further contributed to this crossroads identity.

Warren's identity as crossroads has a direct connection to the evolution of transportation corridors and their role in regional economic growth. The Quaboag River served as a means of water transport for agricultural and artisanal goods in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and as a source of power for the manufacturing operations of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. It may well figure as a prominent recreational amenity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The advent of railway transport in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, largely following the east-west course of the Quaboag, served as a land-based, fixed-route conduit for raw materials, manufactured goods, and immigrant workers in a rapidly growing mill town. The late 19<sup>th</sup> century represented a high-water mark in rail transport, manufacturing jobs and town population. Over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the emergence of automotive transport (trucking, commuting) and the construction of paved state and interstate roadway networks, including the Worcester Turnpike (Route 9) and the Massachusetts Turnpike (I-90), contributed to a relative decline in rail transportation, especially passenger travel, as well as in manufacturing employment and town population, a pattern widely seen throughout industrial New England.

Despite these changes, a persistent aspect of Warren's identity and town character stems from its history as a center of manufacturing and technical innovation in Central-Western Massachusetts. Amid an overall decline in the numbers of manufacturing operations and employees in New England, some Warren-based companies nevertheless managed to find market niches that have allowed them to remain in business to the present day. The Knowles manufactory was purchased by town residents after the departure of Knowles in 1897 and became Warren Pumps, a major supplier of pumping and filtration equipment to clients such as the US Navy. The Wm. E. Wright and Hardwick Knitted mills likewise adapted to changing conditions throughout the Great Depression, World War II, and periodic recessions of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The prospective long-term downsizing and relocation of industrial enterprises, however, is a critical question in planning economic redevelopment for Warren in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, especially over the next two decades.

### **1.d.ii Culture and Community Resources**

As with many New England communities, especially those inland and upland, Warren has a town identity influenced on a larger scale in terms of regional features (Quaboag Valley) as well as on a smaller scale in terms of village centers. While Western/Warren historically comprised five village centers, four centered on mills and their waterways, one on a trade and transport roadway to the south, the two that have maintained their distinctive identities and amenities to the present are Warren and West Warren village centers. The traditional role of village centers became less significant with the advent of rail and especially automotive transportation; indeed, three of the five centers declined into irrelevance. Duplication of public facilities and services could be seen as potentially inefficient in the context of 20<sup>th</sup> century population and manufacturing decline. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, however, a resumed increase in population growth and in residential and commercial development may well make the rehabilitation of each village center's character and vitality a desirable long-term strategy as a complement to goals of community planning and open space protection. The Warren Town Common remains a valuable public space and hub of community activity and festivity.

Like many mill towns in the region, immigrant communities have played a significant role in shaping the character of Warren. The mixture of a Protestant Yankee enterprise culture with those of Catholic Irish, French, Polish and other immigrants fostered a new industrially-based civil society. Philanthropic and voluntary civic associations, often organized along religious and ethnic lines, helped newcomers assimilate to life in an American mill town and integrate their culture (clubs, festivals) into the public realm of the town at large. The various denominational churches of course played an important part in sustaining community character; the Catholic churches in particular provided a range of support services to their parishioners. Early forms of community service and social insurance provision emerged from 19<sup>th</sup> century groups such as the Forestry Club, the Rural Improvement Organization and the Library Corporation. As long as population growth and prosperity remained relatively stable, the 19<sup>th</sup> century civil society endured well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The emergence after World War II of a more mobile, spatially-separated culture has accelerated in recent decades, with many communities such as Warren facing a growing influx of new, longer-commuting residents who often look to buy and build larger, costlier and more dispersed homes and who tend to work and shop elsewhere. These trends make the challenge of maintaining a strong sense of town character and community even more pressing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Chapter 2 will bring the discussion of Warren's past into consideration of the town's present regional context.

## **2. Regional Context**

### **2.a Geographic Conditions and Trends**

As mentioned above, Warren is a small rural Central-Western Massachusetts community in the Quaboag Hills and River Valley region, located between Worcester and Springfield in Worcester County. The town borders West Brookfield to the north and east, Brookfield to the southeast, Brimfield to the south, Palmer to the west, and Ware to the northwest. Warren is 24 miles west of Worcester, 27 miles northeast of Springfield, and 64 miles west of Boston. The total area of the town is 27.62 sq. miles. The main routes for accessing the town are Routes 19 and 67, with access to Route 9 northwest of Warren in Ware and northeast in West Brookfield, as well as to Massachusetts Turnpike (I-90) interchanges via Palmer to the west and via Sturbridge to the east. The CSX freight rail line runs through Warren along the Quaboag River, though there is only one functioning rail line and no commuter rail services are offered. There is also limited bus service via the Worcester Regional Transit Authority for the elderly and handicapped.

The location of Warren at the western edge of Worcester County puts it in an unusual situation. Warren's regional identity is influenced by three counties; in addition to being a part of Worcester County, it borders Hampshire County at its northwest corner and Hampden County to the southwest. Although its character and identity shares a great deal with neighboring towns from differing counties, services are generally not shared, and the distance from the county administration of Worcester leaves Warren at the periphery of Central Massachusetts. The effect of this situation on Warren is a relative lack of regional services, such as public transportation, which often leaves the town comparatively 'out of sight, out of mind' in terms of planning focus in Worcester County. As a result, Warren in recent years has been served by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) as well as by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC).

Warren's current land use regulation dates from the 1980s, though revisions to the zoning bylaw approved then were adopted in 1989 and 1997. Further refinements and clarifications are currently under discussion. Warren has three major types of zoning designation, reflecting its longstanding pattern of development: Rural, Residential, and Village Center. The majority of town land is designated Rural, which allows low-density development where there are no absolute or partial development constraints. The village center zones allow mixed (residential, commercial, industrial) uses along the traditional east-west geographical and transportation corridors lining the Quaboag Valley, while the residential zones of development flank the village centers. Please see Chapter 3 for more detailed discussion.

Because of the relative decline in manufacturing, Warren's waterways and riverside lands have recovered from many of the effects of intensive industrial use. Water quality is suitable for most uses. Because of manufacturing concentration, undeveloped land remains abundant, and the town retains buildings and infrastructure that are in reasonably sound shape for improvement and reuse. Despite these endowments, however, the town will need to anticipate potential problems and undertake significant management and

investment decisions regarding land and resource use in order to take advantage of future development opportunities, as will be further discussed in Chapter 4.

## **2.b Economic Conditions and Trends**

When assessing local economic trends, it is important to recognize that the Town of Warren is not a self-contained economic unit, but operates within larger regional, state, national and international economies. Over the last four years, employers located within Warren have employed approximately one-fifth the total number of workers in Warren annually, meaning that the majority of residents work in other communities. This trend is further reinforced by an average increase of 12 minutes in the average daily commuting time of the town's workforce over the last decade. The time spent by residents commuting to and working in other communities limits the opportunity for Warren's commercial establishments to conduct significant business with local residents. Although many residents would welcome additional commercial enterprises, such as restaurants, entertainment venues, pharmacies, or more shopping opportunities in the old town center, the relatively small, dispersed population makes such development a challenge. Commercial uses that focus on basic necessities and services may be better suited for this type of community, rather than destination-determined shopping, such as large, 'big box' retailers. Concentration of development in the town's two village centers and along major transportation routes would increase the likelihood of success, as residents would have more convenient options and fewer dispersed destinations required to shop and obtain necessary goods and services.

As communities in the Central Massachusetts region have navigated the shift from goods-producing to service-providing economies, the nature of the region's businesses has also changed. The backbone of the region's economy has long been the presence and influence of a number of very large employers, often manufacturers in the river towns. In the last 15 years, however, the region has undergone a profound shift, as the number of large employers has diminished, mainly because of changing global market trends, which have resulted in industries relocating to countries where labor is cheaper. As a result, small businesses are becoming an ever-increasing part of the regional economy. Between 1986 and 2001, the rate of business growth has been highest for small and mid-sized enterprises. The impact of this trend toward small and mid-sized businesses will likely be significant in Warren, though perhaps not immediately. While the town may continue to attract larger businesses, decreased regional dependence on large employers and a greater number and mix of employers will result in a regional economy less susceptible to major fluctuations within any particular business enterprise and sector. This shift in business scale should also make Warren a real competitor for mid-sized operations, whose site requirements may not be as challenging to accommodate as those of larger businesses.

While Warren has a stake in the strength and diversity of the overall regional economy in Central Massachusetts, the town must also focus on enhancing its local tax base to provide financial resources for such important public services as its police, fire, schools, etc. Further economic development, achieved through expansion and retention of local

businesses, and balanced with appropriate protection of valued town features, will be in the town's best long-term interest.

### *Major Economic Considerations*

- Warren has substantial undeveloped land available for commercial or industrial use, and an adequate basic level of infrastructure and industrial space is also available in village center districts.
- The economy in Warren has remained relatively steady over the past four years. The number of business establishments and total employment decreased slightly during the recession of the early 1990s, but recovered over the remainder of the decade and has continued to increase in recent years.
- Presently 36.8% of the employed labor is engaged in blue-collar occupations. However, this percentage has been in decline over the last decade. This trend of a decrease in blue-collar occupations as a percentage of occupations has been observed at both the regional, state and national level.
- The 10 largest businesses in Warren accounted for 5.6% of the total tax revenue available to the town in FY05.
- Local business and industries accounted for approximately 7.7% of the total tax base in the FY2004.
- Because of its limited zoning and permitting flexibility and relative lack of business investment incentives, businesses generally perceive Warren as a 'non-business friendly' environment
- Warren will be subject to increasing residential and commercial growth pressures as development moves westward from metropolitan Boston and Worcester along I-90 and northward from Hartford and Springfield along the I-91 and I-84 corridors.

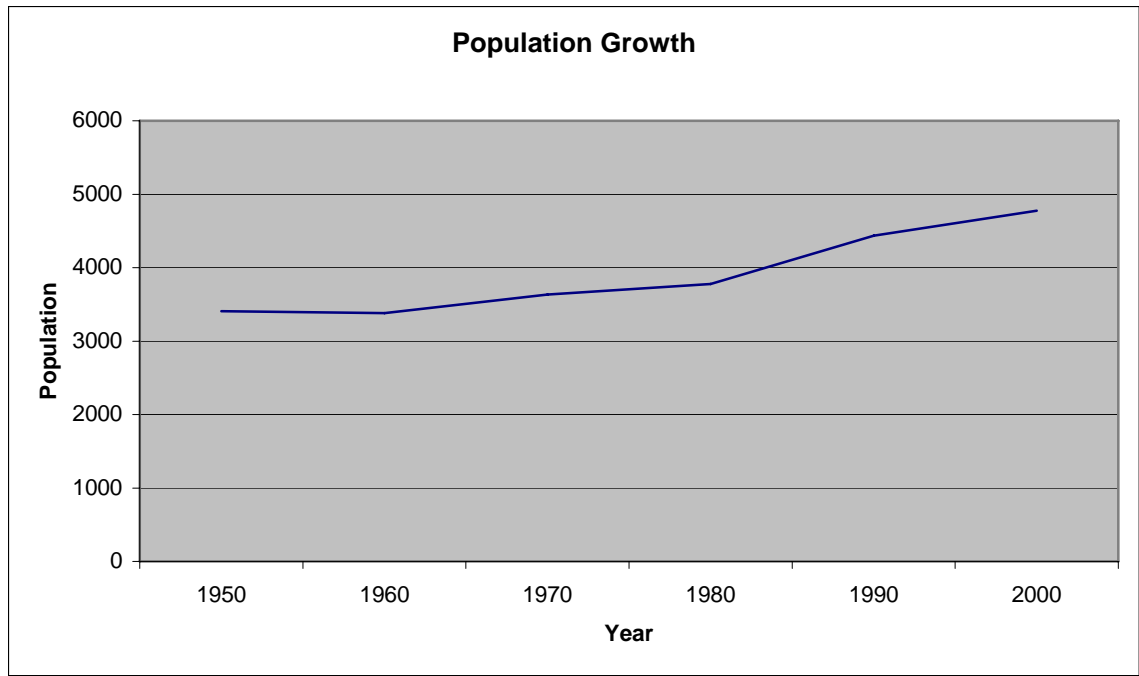
These economic issues will be addressed at greater length in Chapters 5 and 15 as well as in Chapters 6 and 16.

### **2.c Demographic Conditions and Trends**

The population of Warren, 4,776 as of the year 2000 US Census, is approaching 5,000 residents. In addition to causing greater strain on existing resources and services, this threshold will trigger several state and federal mandates, specifically the obligation to construct a jail facility in compliance with various program requirements. Relatively low housing prices and proximity to economic centers like Worcester and Springfield will make Warren increasingly attractive to prospective homebuyers. The phenomenon referred to as 'drive until you qualify' is relevant here, as people who work in regional centers have tended to become priced out of those central areas and thus seek more affordable residences further away from those centers. Others seek moderately-priced homes outside of urban areas because of concerns for safety or quality of life (e.g., small-town character, better public schools, etc.) This effect has been limited to some degree by Warren's relative isolation from direct access via major roads or highways to these regional centers. Building permits issued in recent years support the common perception that people are moving into Warren at a somewhat greater rate, and the steady increase in

overall population also provides support for this view, though the growth is at present not as dramatic as in neighboring communities (e.g., Belchertown). Figure 1 makes clear that population growth in recent decades has been modest but steady.

**Figure 1: Population Growth in Warren 1950-2000**



Source: US Census

Table 1 below likewise shows that except for a significant increase in the rate of growth during the 1980s, population growth has been fairly moderate and stable since the 1970s.

**Table 1: Warren Recent and Projected Population Growth 1970-2020**

Year	# of People	Numerical Change	% Change
1970	3,633	-----	
1980	3,777	144	3.96%
1990	4,437	660	17.47%
2000	4,776	339	7.64%
2010	5,136	360	7.54%
2020	5,640	504	9.81%

Sources: [www.yourtown.boston.com](http://www.yourtown.boston.com)

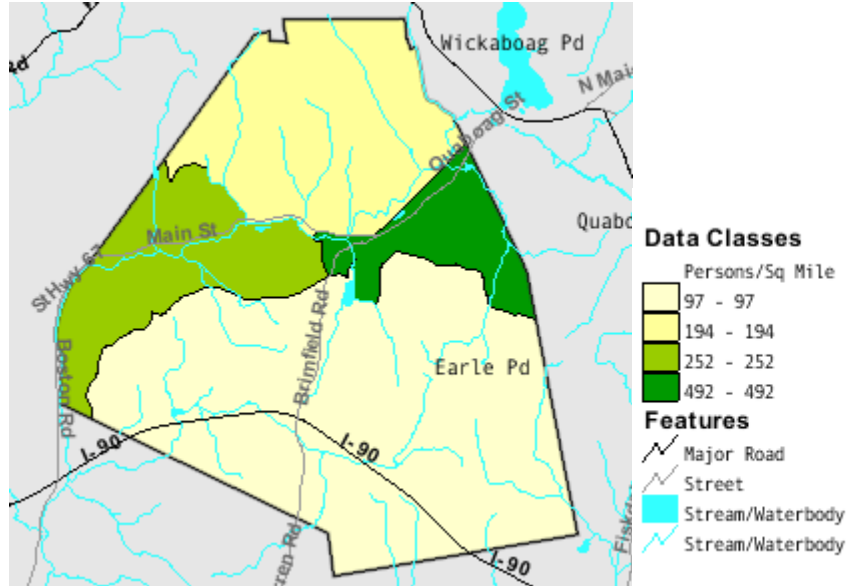
Massachusetts Institute for Social and Economic Research

With a total landmass of 27.53 sq. miles<sup>2</sup>; Warren has an overall population density of 173 people per sq. mile<sup>3</sup>. Map 1 below shows that the village centers of Warren (492 people/sq. mile) and West Warren (252 people/sq. mile) accounting for the most densely populated areas in the town.

<sup>2</sup> [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov)

<sup>3</sup> [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

**Map 1: Population Density Map- Warren (By Block Group) - 2000**

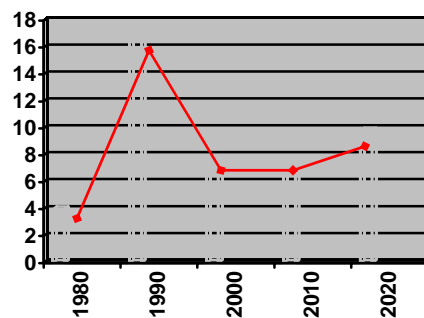


Source: 2000 US Census

#### *Projected and Comparative Trends*

Figure 2 below represent Warren's population growth between 1980 and 2000, as well as projected population growth in 2010 and 2020.<sup>4</sup> Warren experienced higher population growth between 1980 and 1990. Between 1990 and 2000, however, it returned to a more modest rate of 7.64%. According to the Massachusetts Institute for Social and Economic Research, the State's premier statistical forecaster, Warren will continue to experience a similar rate of population growth (7.54%) until 2010. Over the decade 2010 to 2020, however, it is projected to increase to 9.81%, an upward trend over the next 20 years.

**Figure 2: Recent and Projected Population Growth -Warren**



<sup>4</sup> [http://www.umass.edu/miser/population/Documents/age\\_sex\\_mcd\\_county\\_state.xls](http://www.umass.edu/miser/population/Documents/age_sex_mcd_county_state.xls)

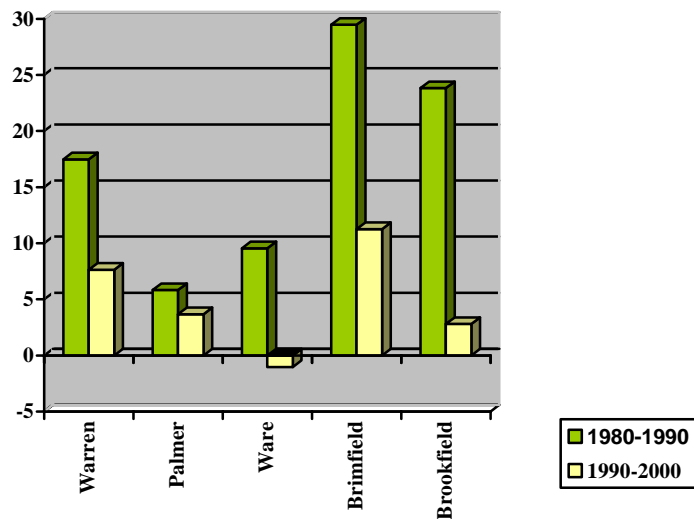
Table 2 and Figure 3 below show that Warren has had rapid growth in its population over the past twenty years; it increased 31.46% from 1980 to 2000. Since 1990, it has increased 7.64 %.<sup>5</sup> Within neighboring communities, a similar trend is noted in Brimfield (population increased 75.09% from 1980 to 2000),<sup>6</sup> whereas Ware experienced negative growth in its population (Since 1990, the population has decreased 1.03%).<sup>7</sup> The relatively lower growth rates for Palmer and Ware have to do in part with their larger populations, of course, and the relatively higher rates for Brimfield and Brookfield likewise reflect their smaller populations. Nevertheless, even allowing for this difference in considering rates of growth, Warren, Palmer and Brimfield have experienced and will likely continue to experience sustained growth, whereas Ware and Brookfield will probably face comparatively flatter growth rates.

**Table 2: Population Growth, Warren and Neighboring Communities**

Year	Warren	Palmer	Ware	Brimfield	Brookfield
1980	3,777	11,389	8,953	2,318	2,397
1990	4,437 (17.47%)	12,054 (5.83%)	9,808 (9.55%)	3,001 (29.47%)	2,968 (23.82%)
2000	4,776 (7.64%)	12,497 (3.68%)	9,707 (-1.03%)	3,339 (11.26%)	3,051 (2.80%)

*Source: www.yourtown.boston.com*

**Figure 3: Population Growth, Warren and Neighboring Communities**



<sup>5</sup> www.yourtown.boston.com

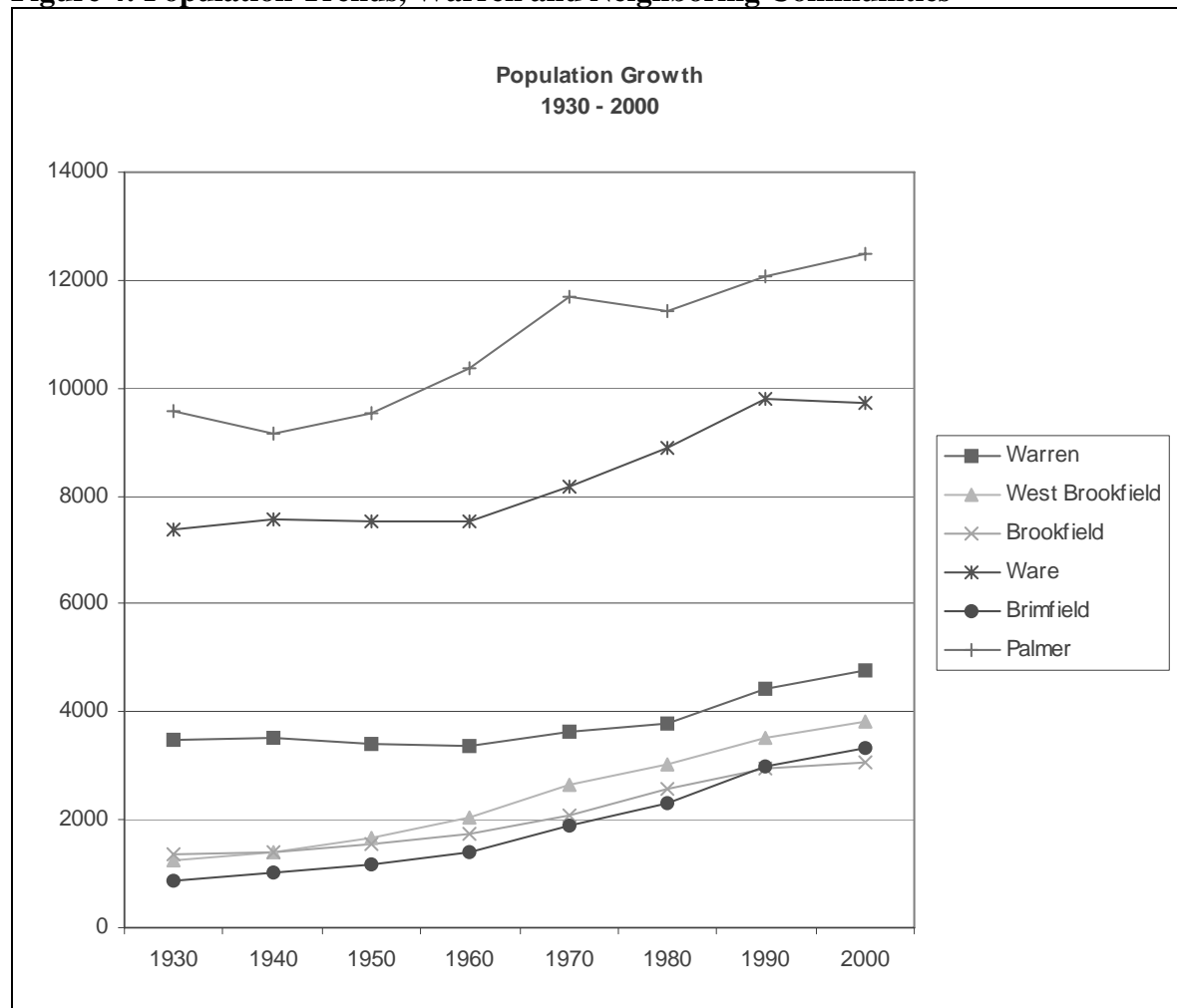
<sup>6</sup> www.yourtown.boston.com

<sup>7</sup> www.yourtown.boston.com

Figure 4 below shows even more clearly the comparative trends of population growth in Warren and its Quaboag Valley neighbors. The comparative access advantage of I-90 to Route 9 is suggested by steeper growth rates in Palmer and Brimfield to the south as compared to flatter growth rates for Ware and Brookfield to the north, with Warren and West Brookfield in the middle.

The median age of Warren residents is approximately thirty-seven years old, in line with State and Worcester County medians. It is worth noting that cities such as Worcester and Springfield have seen a recent decline in non-immigrant population, in part due to rising housing costs, a factor indirectly influencing residential growth in towns such as Warren.

**Figure 4: Population Trends, Warren and Neighboring Communities**

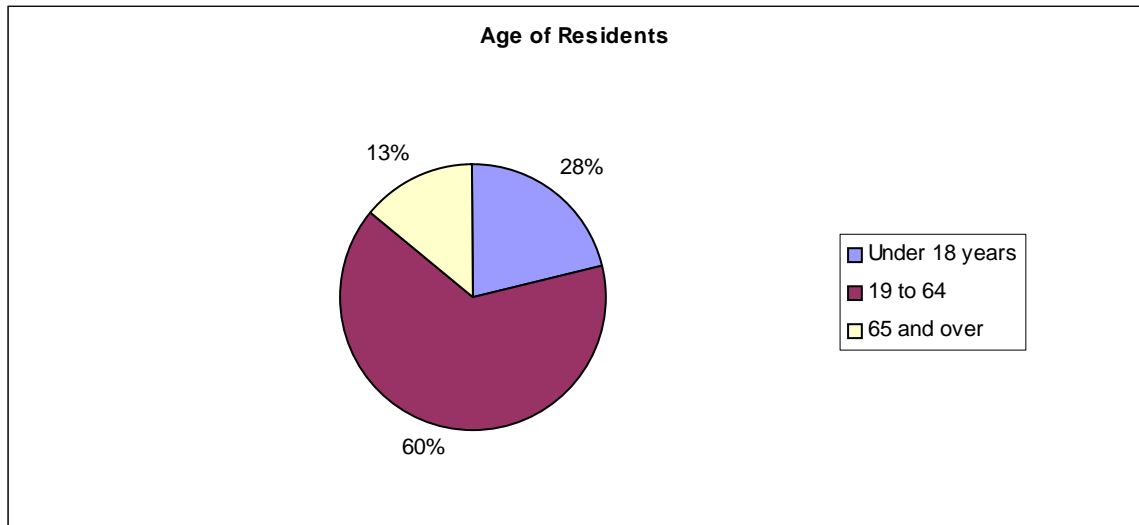


Source: US Census

Although Warren's population has been rising, the number of children enrolled in Warren schools has remained level over the past decade. In 1997 there were 904 students enrolled in K-12, and in 2004 that number had decreased slightly to 896. However, the growth rates for population over 18 years old and under 18 years old have been similar, at 7.6% for 18 and over between the years 1990 to 2000 and 6.6% for under 18 during the same

time period.<sup>8</sup> Figure 5 shows the general segments of age distribution, while Table 3 provides a more detailed disaggregation of the age distribution among Warren residents.

**Figure 5: Age Distribution of Warren Residents**



Source: 2000 US Census

**Table 3: Age Distribution of Warren Residents**

	Total	Percentage
Total population	4,776	100
Under 5 years	276	5.8
5 to 9 years	386	8.1
10 to 14 years	431	9
15 to 19 years	284	5.9
20 to 24 years	228	4.8
25 to 34 years	641	13.4
35 to 44 years	835	17.5
45 to 54 years	607	12.7
55 to 59 years	238	5
60 to 64 years	217	4.5
65 to 74 years	340	7.1
75 to 84 years	194	4.1
85 years and over	99	2.1
18 years and over	3,499	73.3
65 years and over	633	13.3
Median age (years)	36.6	_NA

<sup>8</sup> Source: U.S. Census, 1990, 2000

Table 4 below disaggregates demographic data on the ethnic and racial identification of Warren residents. Much like communities of comparable population size in the state and the region, Warren's residents are overwhelmingly white, albeit of various European national and ethnic backgrounds.

**Table 4: Racial and Ethnic Distribution of Residents in Warren**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Total population	4,776	100
White	4,629	96.9
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	42	0.9
Black or African American	19	0.4
American Indian and Alaska Native	13	0.3
Asian	13	0.3
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0
Some other race	0	0
Two or more races	60	1.3

In terms of overall demographic characteristics, Warren falls largely within the middle range of small to medium sized communities in the state and region. It is experiencing a modest but increasing rate of population growth, lower than its smaller neighbors and nearby bedroom communities but greater than other regional communities undergoing a comparable economic shift from manufacturing to services. As with most Massachusetts towns, Warren has experienced a trend toward 'graying' (higher median age), but recent growth indicates a future potential for more families with young children. Warren is in absolute terms among the lower median income towns in the state, but that is mitigated somewhat by a comparatively lower cost of living and housing.

## ***Part B            Geography***

### **Chapter 3.    Land and Resource Use**

#### **3a.    Background Trends**

The aspects of Warren's identity defined by its landscape character and regional geography originate with the various populations that migrated through and settled in the area, first by the indigenous groups that foraged, fished, hunted and cultivated local flora and fauna throughout the region, then later by British colonists interested in new lands for farming, forestry and other economic uses, followed by American and immigrant arrivals hoping to work in various commercial and manufacturing trades. Until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the advent of the railroad, the primary forms of economic activity were agriculture and limited resource extraction for predominantly local and regional markets. A relatively low population along with technological limitations meant that most of the land in the town long remained unused or minimally-used open space. Agriculture at this time, moreover, encouraged a longer-range, more family-based stewardship of the land.

The development of rail and later automotive transportation served to overcome some of the space and time limitations to integrating towns like Warren into the national as well as international economy. These economic changes likewise influenced land-use patterns and real estate markets, encouraging a more intensified and shorter-term use of resources and a more rapid exchange of property holdings oriented to realizing the 'highest and best value' for private land. Fortunately, a relatively more localized pattern of early industrial development in Warren as in much of New England, the result of water-based power for the mills, tended to concentrate a smaller population along the valley corridor, as compared to the urban centers located on major transport waterways. Consequently, Warren's private and public land has remained predominantly open space. In addition, the traditional pattern of village and town growth in New England, with its shared green or common, established an important precedent for publicly-held and protected land. The demographic trend in recent decades, however, with Warren becoming less a small manufacturing center and more a bedroom community for commuters to jobs in the large urban centers, has placed greater pressure on the town to address the long-term impact on open space.

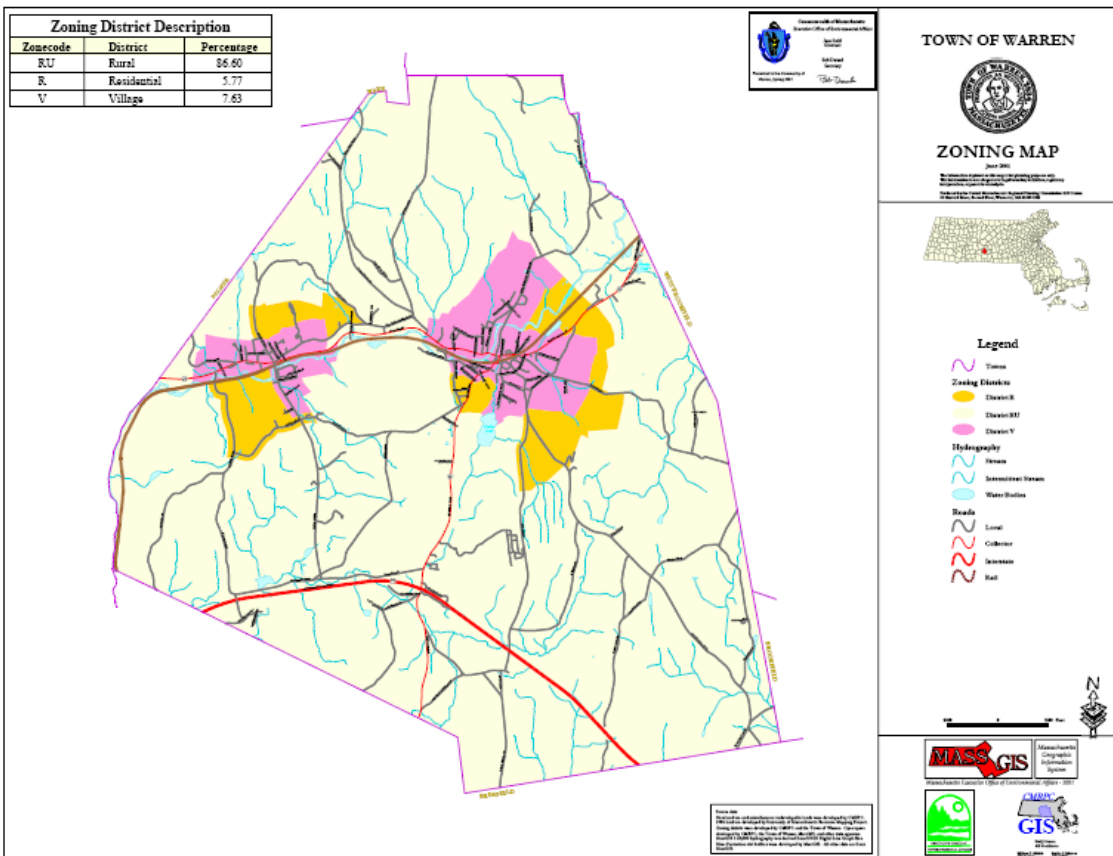
As indicated in Chapter 1, Warren's population growth remained relatively modest in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, then increased much more rapidly in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as a result of industry expanding local employment and rail transport expediting migration of workers into the area. While the population peaked as high as 4700 by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, its concentration in the village centers of Warren and West Warren mitigated the potential impact of population growth on open space. Thereafter, population declined for several decades, troughing at about 3300 in the 1930s. The population growth of the post-WWII decades, returning to a level of just under 5000, has been largely unbounded by localized agricultural uses or industrial concentration, with the result that residential growth tends to be more dispersed and open space-consuming. There is, moreover, an increasing desire among a larger population to access open space

more regularly and intensively for the purposes of recreation. Consequently, Warren now needs to address open space and recreation to a greater extent than ever before. Please see Chapters 4 and 14 for more detailed discussion.

### 3b. Zoning and Subdivision Regulations

The Warren zoning bylaws had their last major reorganization in 1984, with some revisions in 1989 and 1998, as well as proposed revisions currently under consideration by the Planning Board. Current land-use regulations divide the town into three separate zoning districts. The three districts are: Village, Residential, and Rural. The zoning bylaws describe the ways in which residential, commercial, industrial, and other activity are reviewed and permitted, specifically where particular uses are and are not allowed. Map 1 below indicates the location and relative scale of areas included within each of the three zoning districts.

**Map 2: Zoning Districts for the Town of Warren**



Source: MassGIS

The tables below will explain key aspects of the map legend above: zoning classification, dimensional and development requirements, and permitted uses within each zone.

Available, developable town land is predominantly zoned as Rural.

<b>Table 5: Zoning District Description</b>		
<b>Zonecode</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Ru	Rural	86.60
R	Residential	5.77
V	Village	7.63

All structures are subject to parcel-dimension requirements outlined in the bylaws, which specify allowable minimum lot sizes, setback and frontage requirements, utility access and maximum building heights and depths; these requirements vary between the zoning districts:

<b>Table 6: Schedule of Dimensional Requirements</b>			
	<b>Min. Lot Size (sq. ft.)</b>	<b>Min. Lot Frontage (ft.)</b>	<b>Max. Height (ft.)</b>
Rural	45,000	150	35
Residential	30,000	100	35
Village	15,000	100	40

Residential structures are additionally regulated by special dimensional requirements:

<b>Table 7: Special Residential Dimensional Requirements</b>				
<b>Dwelling Type</b>	<b>Min. Lot Size (sq. ft.)</b>	<b>Frontage (ft.)</b>	<b>Setbacks (ft.)</b>	<b>Depth (ft.)</b>
Single Family	n/a	n/a	30	n/a
2-4 Family	40,000	150	50	150
5+ Family	10,000(/unit)	200	50	200

### ***Village Districts (Warren and West Warren)***

A review of allowed uses in the three districts shows that almost all uses are allowed in the Village Districts, with some exceptions where a particular type of use requires a special permit, or a potential undesirable or nuisance use is not allowed:

- Residential – allowed
  - Except for mobile homes or mobile home parks, not allowed
- Commercial – allowed
  - Except for hotels/motels, which require a special permit, or fast food, veterinary hospitals, and contracting businesses, not allowed
- Industrial – allowed for existing industrial sites, including increase in use.

- New industrial, manufacturing, warehouse, or storage facility uses require a special permit.
- Agricultural – allowed
- Automotive – allowed by special permit (including service station, repair garage, salesroom w/indoor storage)
- Institutional, Educational, Recreational – allowed (including nursery, public buildings, nursing homes, hospitals)
  - Recreational uses require a special permit
  - Town sanitary landfill or refuse disposal station not allowed

### ***Residential Districts***

Uses in the Residential Districts are more strictly regulated.

- Residential – allowed (including single-family, duplexes, townhouses, etc.)
  - Multi-family (3+) dwellings, not allowed
  - Mobile home or mobile home parks, not allowed
- Commercial – not allowed
  - Restaurants (except for fast food), allowed
  - Business or professional offices, hotel/motel, crafts, and veterinary/kennel uses, allowed by special permit
- Industrial – allowed by special permit
- Agricultural – allowed
- Automotive – not allowed
- Institutional, Educational, Recreational – allowed by right or special permit

### ***Rural Districts***

Uses in the Rural Districts are even more strictly regulated.

- Residential – allowed
  - Single-family only
  - No new mobile homes or mobile home parks (except within existing mobile home parks occupied for 10+ continuous years)
- Commercial – not allowed
  - Business or professional offices, restaurants (except fast food), crafts, contracting, riding stables or boarding for horses, and veterinary/kennel uses, allowed by special permit
- Industrial – not allowed
  - Special permits allow for warehouse, storage facility, or increase in present use
- Agricultural – allowed
- Automotive – not allowed
- Institutional, Educational, Recreational – allowed by right or special permit

### ***Other Uses***

There are various uses allowed in all zoning districts, either by right or special permit.

- Home-based occupations or accessory uses are generally allowed in all districts, including offices of resident physicians, dentists, attorneys, architects, engineers, real estate or insurance brokers, or practitioners of any other recognized profession or studio of a resident artist or musician. This also includes customary home-based occupations that are operated by a resident on the premises.
- Commercial outdoor recreation establishments allowed by special permit in all zones, as are golf courses, swimming, skating, or tennis clubs.

### ***Wireless Communications***

The zoning bylaws also include a section that covers wireless communications facilities. This section addresses the issue of siting such facilities and the creation of an overlay district. Wireless communication facilities (WCF) and devices are defined and the types and manner in which they are allowed are described in detail. These definitions differentiate between towers, devices such as antennae or dishes, stealth communication facilities (hidden or camouflaged WCF, towers, or devices), and accessory buildings.

Wireless Communications Facility Overlay District (WCFOD):

- Superimposed over existing zoning map
- Boundaries – 500 feet to the north and south of the Massachusetts Turnpike as it passes through the Town of Warren.

Erection or building of WCF, communication devices, stealth facilities, or accessory buildings requires a special permit to be granted by the Planning Board in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the zoning bylaws. Any structure of this type is also restricted by height, visual impact, and other visual or technical specifications set forth in the zoning bylaws.

### ***Earth Removal***

Guidelines and restrictions for removal of earth are also described in the zoning bylaws, covering all districts and applying to all lot owners and relevant persons, including corporations, societies, associations, and partnerships. All earth-removal activities require a special permit, except in the case of operations for any municipal purpose relating to the Town of Warren, customary agricultural, farming, gardening, or nursery operations, or if less than five hundred (500) cubic yards are removed for the purpose of constructing a building, private way, or other intent as specified in a building permit.

### ***Related Plans or Guidelines***

The Town of Warren has a document, ‘Rules and Regulations Governing the Subdivision of Land,’ which includes sections on the site plan review and approval process and on design standards, dating from 1973. They are in need of serious revision and updating.

### **3.c Other Limitations on Use**

The main physical attributes of Warren consist of the Quaboag River, which runs generally east/west through the center of town, a number of ponds and wetlands, and three higher-elevation ranges, the highest of which are Coy Hill at 1170 feet and Mark's Mountain at 1126 feet. These ranges also run in an east/west direction, paralleling the river. These physical features of the town relate specifically to the growth and development capabilities for the future, determining where there are absolute or partial constraints. The abundance of mountainous areas, and resulting steep slopes, and the numerous wetlands, especially to the south, limit a significant portion of the town's open space from future development plans.

In Warren, there are several limitations and challenges to land and resource usage due to land vulnerability and limited funding. Extensive commercial development along much of the Route 67 corridor is limited by absolute and partial development constraints having to do with floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, etc. The Planning Board, in its review and revision of current zoning bylaws, can address some of the larger land and resource use goals for the town in cooperation with representatives of the Parks Commission, the Warren Rural Improvement Association, the Quaboag Valley Chamber of Commerce, and prospective private developers. Together these groups can work to create positive guidelines and protections as well as incentives for desired uses.

The majority of land in Warren is currently undeveloped, approximately 52%, while 23% is developed or absolutely constrained, and 25% is protected, in the forms of river buffers, wetlands, and trusts. A complete summary of a buildout analysis performed by the State is found in Section 3.e below. The amount of land currently used specifically for agricultural purposes and for industrial purposes is relatively small, but agricultural uses are allowed in all the zoning districts and industrial uses are allowed by right in existing industrial areas and by special permit in other areas of the village zoning districts.

#### *Public and Private Land Ownership*

Despite having a significant amount of land under public ownership and management in town (including state agency- and town-owned parcels), the overwhelming majority of available land remains in private hands, albeit much of it limited by absolute and partial geological and hydrological constraints as well as by partial or temporary restrictions on purchase and development by right. For a more detailed mapping and documenting of Warren's public, semi-private and private land holdings, please see the Inventory of Lands (pp. 101-3) and the Open Space Inventory Map (p. 103) in Chapter 14 below.

### 3.d Buildout Analysis

‘Buildout’ is a term used by planning professionals and regulatory officials to analyze and assess a town’s long-term development capacity, as well as the prospective impacts and challenges of developing at or near capacity. Projecting future growth hypothetically from the basis of current zoning and land-use regulation, recent population trends, and available land, a buildout analysis indicates what the infrastructure and service needs of the town would be at full growth. This analysis is *not* a forecast of what actually will be: there are all sorts of practical and logistical reasons why most towns will never grow to anything approximating their hypothetical buildout, e.g., any of the current conditions and trends may change significantly in the future. Warren must choose its rate of growth.

**Table 8: Buildout Analysis Summary <sup>9</sup>**

<b>Buildout completion date: 2001</b>	
<b>Demographic Projections</b>	
Residents	
1990	4,437
Current	4,776
Buildout	20,946
Students (K-12)	
1990	776
Current	879
Buildout	4,631
Residential Units	
1990	1,694
Current	2,014
Buildout	8,836
Water Use (gallons/day)	
Current	411,739.73
Buildout	1,658,900.73
<b>Buildout Impacts</b>	
Additional Residents	16,170
Additional Students (K-12)	3,752
Additional Residential Units	6,822
Additional Developable Land Area (sq ft)	560,094,480
Additional Developable Land Area (acres)	12,858
Additional Commercial/Industrial Buildable Floor Area (sq ft)	458,817
Additional Water Demand at Buildout (gallons/day)	1,247,161
Residential	1,212,750
Commercial and Industrial	34,411
Additional Solid Waste (tons/yr)	9,750
Non-Recyclable	5,902
Recyclable	3,848
Additional Roadway at Buildout (miles)	112

<sup>9</sup>Source: Mass. Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA), Community Preservation Initiative

## **Chapter 4. Open Space and Natural Resources**

### **4.a Background Trends**

#### *Institutional Context*

The primary intent of the 2006 Warren Open Space and Recreation Plan [OSRP] is to meet qualification requirements for open space and recreation funding at the state level. While the current plan also establishes funding eligibility, it is primarily intended as a tool that connects open space and recreation issues to comprehensive town planning. The new plan emphasizes the importance of town-wide support for the OSRP by suggesting action steps for implementation by a range of town boards and commissions.

An Open Space Plan typically supports the following goals:

- Develop an ongoing base of public and private support for the Open Space Plan.
- Promote active smart growth management to protect rural land uses, scenic landscapes, historic sites and community character.
- Encourage more sustainable residential and commercial development to achieve greater maintenance of open space and recreation amenities.
- Plan for the optimum use and accessibility of conservation and recreation resources for Warren residents as well as area visitors.
- Preserve and protect natural resources, area ecosystems and wildlife habitats.
- Improve pedestrian, bicycle and public transportation opportunities for residents.

The previous Warren Open Space Committee adopted a general definition of open space and recreation planning that incorporates local athletic facilities and undeveloped land. This chapter expands that focus to include the impact of other factors affecting open space. Town residents may not immediately consider cultural places and activities to be relevant when addressing open space and recreation planning concerns. Yet these other considerations are significant components of any plan that seeks to connect people with the land on which they live, work and play. It is sometimes easy to take for granted the many important historical and natural resource features in a town, even if one passes by them every day. It is very difficult—and often impossible—to mitigate the loss of such unique features after the fact. By the time a town recognizes the risk of loss, they may already have lost their opportunity to save those special resources and landscapes. That is why long-term visioning and planning are so important for the future of Warren in striking a desirable balance between growth and preservation, progress and tradition.

An Open Space Plan identifies planning opportunities that are currently available, as well as potential opportunities and options for the future (the focus of this chapter).

This plan will help establish guidelines for town officials to consider as they consider prospective land-use decisions. The plan also identifies boards and commissions that may take an active role in achieving short as well as intermediate and long-term objectives of the plan. These guidelines and action recommendations will be discussed in Chapter 14.

### *Regional Context*

Because of its particular landscape features and geographical conditions, along with its location on the western periphery of Central Massachusetts, the town of Warren has identified as much with neighbors at the eastern frontiers of Hampshire and Hampden Counties as with its Worcester County seat. The geography of the Quaboag River Valley and its regional waterway network has further contributed to this crossroads identity. Warren is a small Central-Western Massachusetts community in the Quaboag Hills and River Valley region, located intermediately between regional urban centers in Worcester and Springfield, Massachusetts and in Hartford, Connecticut.

As mentioned in the description of geographical conditions and trends in Chapter 2 above, Warren has retained a number of regional resource endowment advantages that may help the town to achieve a desirable balance between development and conservation. Water quality is suitable for most uses, especially recreational, undeveloped land remains abundant and is subject at present to only moderate pressures, and the town's buildings and infrastructure are in fairly good shape as a baseline for upgrade, expansion and reuse. Indeed, riverfront areas may offer some of the best prospects for improvement of the town's economic base or its recreational amenities, subject to land use constraints in buffer areas (see the section on Environmental Limitations and Challenges below, p. 36). Despite these endowments, however, the town needs to prepare and to plan a coordinated strategy for future land and resource use in order to capitalize on future growth opportunities without an unduly adverse impact on open space and valued landscapes.

Although it declined significantly in relative terms during the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, agriculture was, along with manufacturing, a mainstay of the Warren economy until the 1930s. Regional market commodities like sheep, cattle, fruit and grain were the principal local products until textile and metalworking mills assumed greater importance in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These economic changes subsequently influenced the development of real estate markets and housing construction.

Previously, housing consisted mainly of the farm residences, workers' quarters and owners' homes needed for the local economic activity of the town. A trend of increased residential growth beyond local needs began to emerge in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the advent of an automotive network for trucking and private driving. It is during this period that new housing forms such as bungalows and cottages were first laid out around the village centers. More residential development followed in the 1920s. This growth in private housing stock tended to shift the burden of town services from the business community to town government. Today, most of the town's developed area is residential, with a small number of farms and industrial operations oriented to specialized niches and a limited range of commercial enterprises.

In 1980, the town arranged for its first professional assessment of property value. Newly based on ‘full and fair’ market value, as defined by regional real estate markets, these assessments significantly raised the value of undeveloped open space, what had previously been called “idle and waste land.” Many owners of open space property, as well as of agricultural land, were thereby put under greater pressure to sell to the highest bidder rather than pay the new and substantially higher property taxes. In response to these pressures, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts provides some state-supported alternatives to subdivision development. Chapter 61 allows for land in agricultural use to be taxed at a lower rate than residential and commercial real estate. Likewise for uses such as forestry and recreation; the state intends to protect such ‘renewable’ uses in the interest of environmental and conservation goals. Related to that aim, Chapters 61 A and B offer towns the right of first refusal to purchase lands that will otherwise be converted from traditional uses to new development.

Population in Warren increased from about 3,400 in 1950 to about 3,800 in 1980. Although the town did anticipate the need to preserve open space, the overall long-term impact of this relatively steady population growth, on the environment and the recreation needs of local residents as well as area visitors, may not have been readily apparent at the time. One significant consequence of previously slow growth is that Warren residents have become almost entirely dependent on their cars for transportation. Single-family homes are increasingly dispersed throughout town, with no dedicated pedestrian and/or bicycle network to connect the various neighborhoods and new developments. Outside of school buses, and the vans serving elderly and disabled residents, there is no town-based public transportation system. The new OSRP calls for consideration of the recreation and open-space impact of residential and commercial development while such projects are still in the planning stages. Warren has a relative advantage compared to its regional neighbors in terms of having a higher percentage of land that is not currently in commercial or industrial use and can thus potentially be maintained as open space; on the other hand, that same higher percentage of developable land is also potentially available for residential development, which has in recent decades become the major tax and revenue driver for town population growth in the region.

#### **4.b Topography, Geology, Hydrology**

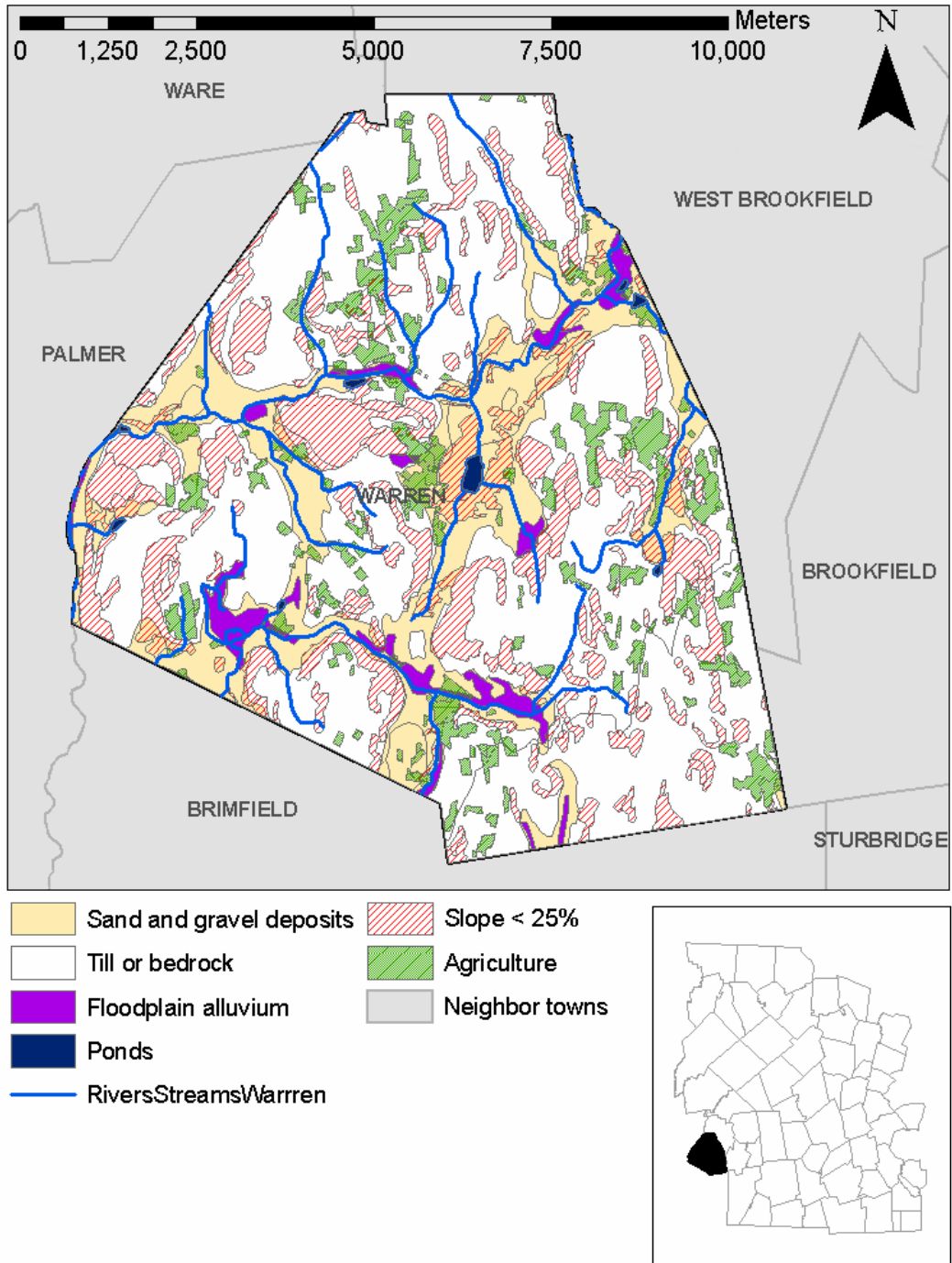
The Chicopee River basin is located in west-central Massachusetts, and is bounded to the west by the Connecticut River basin, to the north by the Miller’s River basin, to the south by the French and Quinebaug River basins, to the east by the Blackstone and Nashua River basins. The basin covers approximately 721 square miles, most of which area is considered part of Central New England Upland, except for the lower Chicopee River section, which is considered part of the Connecticut River Valley (UMass LARP 1996). While the Chicopee River basin did not provide the agricultural and transport advantages of major river valleys like the Connecticut, its location in the hill topography of western-central Massachusetts did offer the advantage of water power for manufacturing. The Quaboag River Valley that has defined Warren’s long-term development is a key part of this Chicopee River Basin

The climate in the region is considered to be of a modified continental type – warm to hot in summer and moderately cold in winter. The mean annual rainfall over the basin as a whole is 44” although this ranges from <40” in the southwest portion to >50” in the upper basin (DEQE 1981). Approximately half of all rainfall results in runoff, averaging 1.6 cubic feet per second (cfs) per square mile annually. About half of the total annual rainfall occurs in March, April, and May, with the maximum occurring in April. The region lies in the path of “prevailing westerlies” and is also subject to cyclonic disturbances that contribute to frequent weather changes. July is generally the warmest month (mean temperature - 67o F), with January and February the coldest (mean - 21o F). Mean monthly precipitation ranges from slightly under 3” in February to over 4” in November (Krejmas and Maevsky 1986).

Most of the basin is considered upland, and consists of rolling hills and valleys generally arranged along a N-S axis, although Warren is distinctive from other New England areas by virtue of the E-W orientation of some of its hills. Elevations range from ~50 feet above sea level at the mouth of the Chicopee River, to ~1720 feet along the basin divide in the Wachusett Mountain State Reservation. This variable topography, combined with surface geology and hydrology, created the water flow that powered Warren’s early industry. Please see Map 3 below for further information.

### Map 3: Soils and Geological Features

SOURCE: MassGIS 2005



Surficial geology in the central and eastern portions of the basin consists generally of uplands underlain by thin glacial till (accumulation of unsorted, unstratified mixtures of clay, silt, sand, gravel, and boulders) and/or bedrock interspersed with relatively narrow valleys where thin to moderately thick deposits of stratified drift and recent alluvium are present. Bedrock underlying the basin consists predominantly of metamorphosed plutonic igneous and sedimentary rocks in the central and eastern portions and unmetamorphosed sedimentary rocks of the Connecticut River Valley in the southwest corner (ECS 1996). (Please see Glossary for definitions of these geological terms.)

Soils in the basin are largely glacial till, except for the Connecticut River Valley region, which mainly derive from glacial Lake Hitchcock (UMass LARP 1996). Glacio-lacustrine deposits are also locally present in valleys in the central and eastern portions of the basin. Thick glacio-lacustrine and glacio-fluvial deposits (see Glossary) are locally present in the southwest portion of the basin. With the exception of that region, soils in the basin are relatively infertile, since most did not develop from bedrock, but instead the parent material was acid crystalline rock deposited by glaciers and glacial melt-water (DEQE 1981). As a result, the region did not have the resource endowments to become an agricultural center competitive with the Connecticut River Valley, indirectly fostering the development of local commerce and manufacturing.

The Chicopee River basin includes 4 main river systems. The Swift, Ware, and Quaboag Rivers each drain areas of approximately 200 square miles; the Chicopee River receives their collective flows, plus runoff from an additional 76 square miles of watershed. US Geological Survey stream-gauging stations are at strategic points along the four rivers.

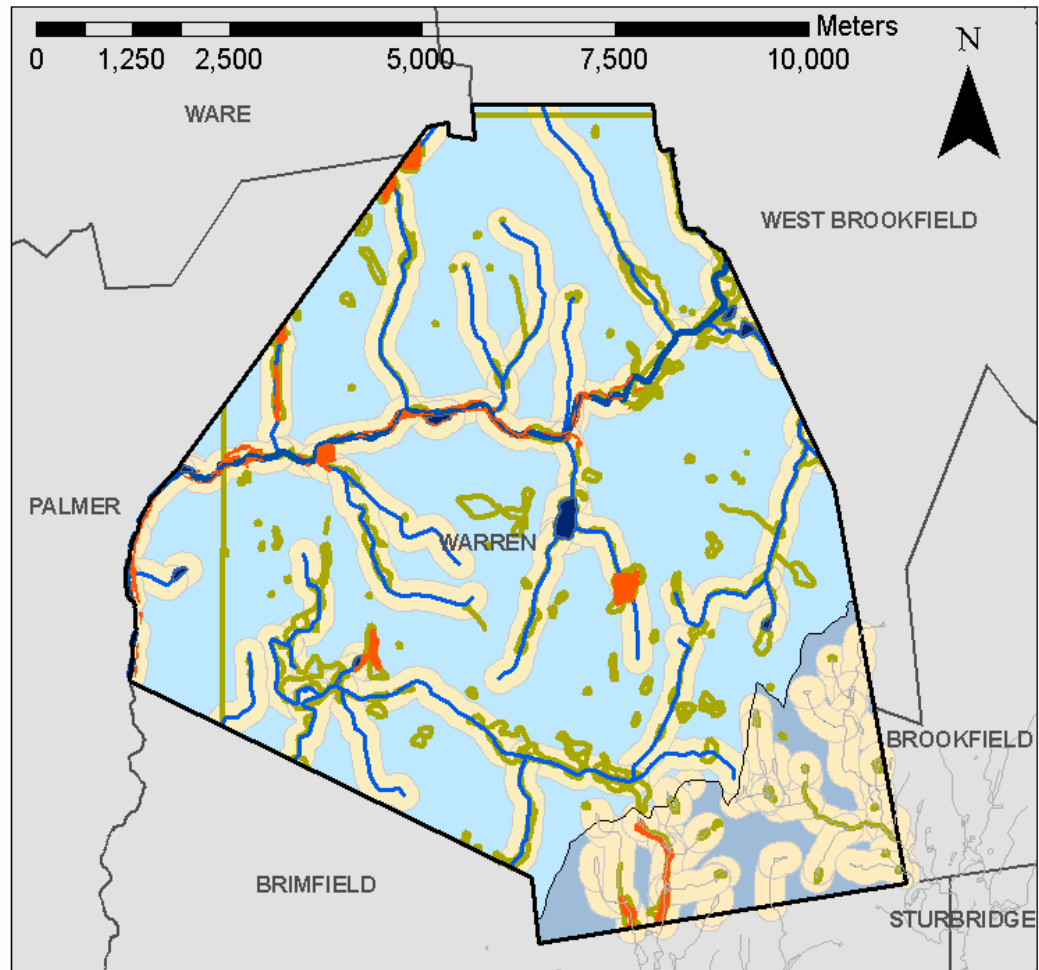
The Swift River drains approximately 215 square miles in the northwest portion of the basin, including all or parts of 11 communities, before joining the Ware River in Palmer. Much of the Swift River drainage is controlled by Windsor Dam and Goodnough Dike, which were constructed in the 1930's to form the Quabbin Reservoir (Quabbin). Many of these rivers and streams were dammed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to intensify water power for industry, though most such dams were dismantled or left to deteriorate with the advent of new power sources and later of manufacturing decline in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Other dams and river-control systems, however, were constructed after World War II to deal with flood risks, such as the 1955 flood in the Quaboag River Valley.

The Ware River drains approximately 218 square miles in 15 communities, from the northeast to the south-central portion of the basin. After receiving the flow of its largest tributary, i.e., the Swift River in Palmer, the Ware flows southerly another .8 mile where it joins with the Quaboag River. This marks the beginning of the Chicopee River.

The Quaboag River originates in Rutland and Paxton, and drains approximately 212 square miles in 18 communities as it flows from east to west through the southern portion of the basin. The Chicopee River starts in the village of Three Rivers (in the Town of Palmer) at the point where the Ware and Quaboag Rivers join. From there, it flows west approximately 18 miles, emptying into the Connecticut River in the City of Chicopee.

## Map 4: Water Resources

SOURCE: MassGIS 2005



### Major basins

Chicopee

Quinebaug

Ponds

Neighbor towns

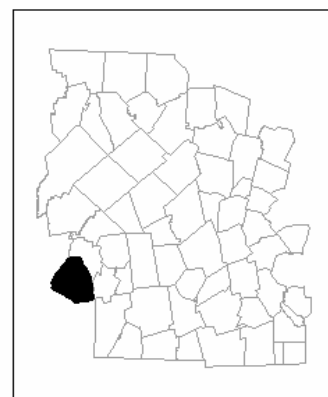
Quaboag

Streams

FEMA Q3- 100 year floodplain

200BufferRivers

National Wetland Inventory



## **Characteristics of the major river systems in the Ware River and Quaboag River Drainage Area Communities**

Ware River Basin 218 square miles

*[alphabetically]*

Barre, Hardwick, Hubbardston, New Braintree, Oakham, Palmer, Petersham, Phillipston, Princeton, Rutland, Templeton, Ware, West Brookfield, Westminster

Quaboag River Basin 212 square miles

*[alphabetically]*

Brookfield, Brimfield, Charlton, E. Brookfield, Leicester, Monson, New Braintree, N. Brookfield, Oakham, Palmer, Paxton, Rutland, Spencer, Sturbridge, Wales, Ware, Warren, W. Brookfield

### **4.c Wildlife Habitat and Fisheries**

According to the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Warren contains two natural communities: Ridgetop Pitch Pine–Scrub Oak and Acidic Rocky Summit/Rock Outcrop. The former community is small and refers to the town's buffer provided by its naturally forested land surplus. An acidic bedrock lines the town ridges, making Warren a hospitable environment to plant communities that can handle extremely severe growing conditions, such as the Pitch Pine and Scrub Oak. Some of this data may be outdated and needs correlation and confirmation with current Division of Forestries data.

The second community is larger in size and remarkably undamaged by recreation, despite its impressive rocky summit. As a rock outcrop community, Warren is also home to several communities of shrubs, scattered grasses, mosses, lichens, and occasional trees tolerant of exposed summits. Oftentimes, these sites are dry with little soil and are of a patch-like quality similar to other ridge top communities.

#### *Upland Wildlife*

The varied landscape in Warren supports a diverse upland wildlife population. As a result, Warren is home to many types of mammals and birds. Among the most widespread in the county are opossums, moles, shrews, bats, hares, rabbits, squirrels, woodchucks, chipmunks, mice, rats, voles, lemmings, coyotes, foxes, raccoons, fishers, weasels, otters, skunks, beaver and minks. Larger species such as black bears, bobcats, deer and moose have also been observed in Warren. As in many suburban communities, the burgeoning deer population has become a nuisance in some parts of town. Residents report that deer are browsing on prized shrubbery during the winter months.

### *Lowland Wildlife*

Today, reptiles and amphibians in this area have drastically declined in number and variety from former times. Therefore, above all else, they are in great need of identification, protection and accommodation if they are to survive in an increasingly human-altered environment. Among some of the survivors are: mudpuppies, salamanders, newts, toads, frogs, snapping turtles, American mud turtles, pond turtles, and various snakes.

### *Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species*

Massachusetts Fisheries and Wildlife has identified a few endangered species in Warren, including the Wood Turtle and the American Bittern. Every action should be taken to protect these creatures' native habitats with Warren.

**Table 9: Natural Heritage and Endangered Species, Wildlife**

Common Name	Species Name	Class	Status
Wood Turtle	<i>Clemmys insculpta</i>	Reptile	Special Concern
American Bittern	<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>	Bird	Endangered

Source: NHESP

## **4.d Open Space Issues**

### ***Agricultural Land***

As the Soils and Geological Features Map (p. 36 above) indicates, Warren, by virtue of its traditionally concentrated residential and industrial-commercial development in the Quaboag River Valley, still has a significant amount of town land classified as being for agricultural use, although the number of working farms is relatively small and has been decreasing in number over time. While some of this agricultural land is currently under Agricultural Protection Restriction (APR) designation (please see the Inventory of Lands and the Open Space Inventory Map in Chapter 14 below), most of it has only limited, temporary protection. Warren will need to decide to what extent it wishes to support agriculture as a significant aspect of its economic and cultural future.

### ***Parks and Recreation***

In addition to the large quantity of undeveloped private land, there are areas of land use and scenic amenity that are held publicly or in a mixture of private and public ownership. The Quaboag River and other stream corridors have the potential to accommodate a wide range of recreational uses (e.g., fishing, canoeing, kayaking, tubing) if issues of access and connectivity can be successfully addressed among neighboring landowners.

Comins Pond is another recreation site enjoyed by town and area residents. Significant landscapes and landmarks, such as Mark's Mountain or larger, longer-established farms and orchards, may require some assistance in terms of protection from development at

variance with preserving their scenic or traditional character, whether through designation for Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR), Transfer Of Development Rights (TDR) or Land Trust Purchase (LTP).

There are also nearly a dozen recreation areas in Warren, sited on town land controlled and managed by the Parks and Recreation Department, among them the Dean/Gendron Field, Cutter, and Tyler parks; facility improvements can help to increase access, use, and variety of activities at those locations. Lucy Stone Park is managed by the Conservation Commission. Residents also have access to the Scottish Meadows Golf Course for additional recreation. The Parks and Recreation Department works to provide playground and athletic facilities and to support recreation programs, such as tennis and swimming. There are recreational trails that are limited to 4x4 trails in W. Warren, maintained by users. There are at present neither integrated hiking/biking trails nor bike paths along village centers street networks.

### ***Historical and Cultural Landscapes***

The Town of Warren is a small rural community. Among Warren's notable physical attributes are its hills, which provide scenic views of the rolling rural landscape, and the Quaboag River, which runs through its center. There are historically and culturally significant landscapes (such as buildings and monuments), mixed farm fields and woodlots in many parts of town. The lowland areas provide views of the hillsides. Scenic views from the Quaboag Regional Middle/High School, the Warren Community Elementary School and the Colonel's Mountain Wildlife Management Area are of particular importance. Mill buildings, representing Warren's industrial past and present, are key features of the landscape as well.

Several historical paths traversing the region also have potential for linking several towns within the county. Among them are the Old Baypath Indian Trail, which could eventually link the Towns of Warren, West Brookfield and New Braintree. Sixteen miles in length, this trail would begin at the Winimusset Wildlife Management Area parking facility on Hardwick Road in New Braintree and would conclude south to the parking area near the Boston Post Road sign in Warren. The start of the trail would link with the Central Ware River Valley Rail Trail, currently under development. Similarly, the Quaboag River Water Trail has potential to link Warren to several surrounding communities. Roughly 12.3 miles in length, the trail could eventually link Warren with West Brookfield, Brookfield and East Brookfield. The trail would begin near the East Brookfield Town Barn, follow the Quaboag River and would conclude along Route 67 in Warren.

### ***Environmental Limitations and Challenges***

As mentioned in Chapter 3 above, promising redevelopment opportunities along the Quaboag River corridor will need to work within absolute and partial constraints based on steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands and other ecological buffers.

There are no officially identified and designated permanent hazardous waste collection or disposal sites in Warren. At one time in the past, the town organized periodic hazardous waste collection days, where residents could dispose of household chemicals and other materials that might otherwise be discarded improperly, but because of lack of response and program costs, those were discontinued. There are a number of sites that require remediation before reuse.

Additionally, privately-owned open space may be vulnerable to environmental stresses and impacts from other forms of development, for example communication towers or extractive enterprises, that are economically beneficial but potentially incompatible with valued landscape features. Careful planning and site plan review help make the goals of economic development and ecological protection more compatible and less competitive for open space and land-based resources.

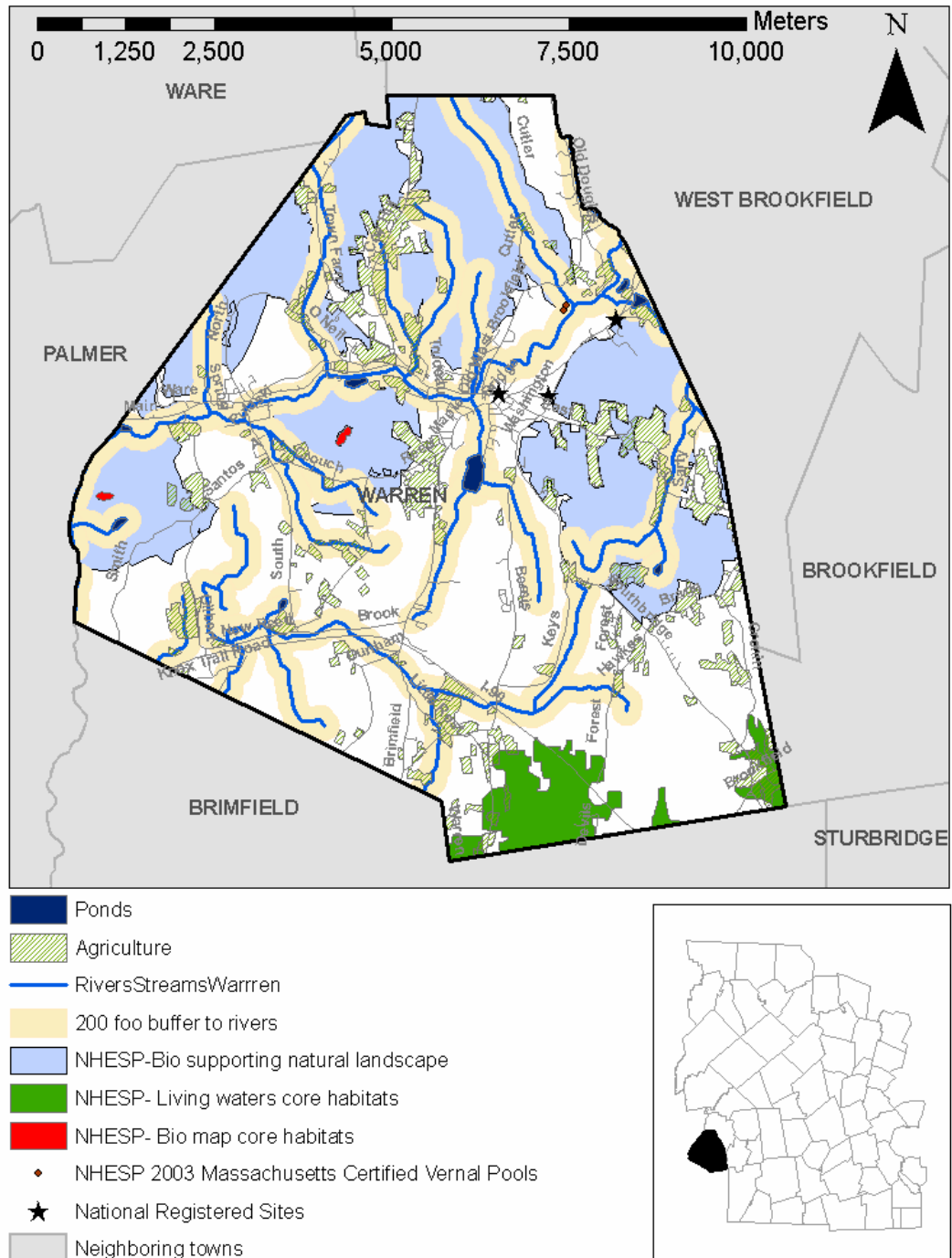
The town sanitary landfill operates on South Street in Warren. The 19-acre property is bordered by vacant wooded lots to the north, east, and south; by South Street to the west; and by a residential lot to the northwest. Though methods of waste disposal were less stringently regulated in the past, today there are no known or suspected impacts to on-site workers or to nearby residents.

Although licensed lawn care services are regulated, individual homeowners are not monitored. Studies have shown a connection between non-point sources of pollution, such as runoff from lawn fertilization, and eutrophication (see Glossary) of surface water bodies. It is not known, however, whether lawn treatment programs have contributed to any specific or significant environmental problems in Warren. Possible approaches to assessment and use management regarding these challenges will be discussed in Ch. 14.

Map 5 below provides a basic summary of the unique ecological and historical-cultural features introduced above. These will be identified and discussed in greater detail in Chapter 14, Sections 14.b and 14.c.

## Map 5: Unique features

SOURCE: MassGIS 2005; Warren OSPR Committee 2005



## ***Part C           Economy***

### **Chapter 5.   Employment and Income**

#### **5.a    Background Trends**

This chapter identifies economic development strategies within the framework of various development and redevelopment opportunities available to Warren, based upon its current economic and geographical situation within the region. These economic development strategies are intended to address the needs and desires of the residents of Warren, Massachusetts, as identified through public forums and surveys and through an analysis of local and regional economic trends and conditions. These potential economic strategies, intended to promote future economic growth, are developed in accordance with the town's core values and long-term community goals.

Warren currently has two village centers, an active mill complex, significant open space, rivers and wetlands, and a steadily growing residential population. The challenges the town is facing include a desire for greater commercial activity, an indeterminate future for manufacturing, building structures that are underused or in need of improvement, and potentially land-consuming greenfield residential development. Additional limitations to growth and development such as zoning by-laws in need of updating and some strong resistance to change within the community must be overcome in order to insure a successful future for Warren.

Warren's identity and town character stems from its history as a center of manufacturing and technical innovation in Central-Western Massachusetts. In the past thirty years, manufacturing has managed to continue operations in Warren, unlike most industries in the rest of the region. The three main manufacturing companies located in Warren that had until recently sustained a market niche for themselves are Warren Pumps and the William E. Wright and the Hardwick Knitted Fabrics textile mills. The Knowles manufactory was purchased by town residents after the departure of Knowles in 1897 and was sold, becoming reorganized as Warren Pumps, now for over a century a supplier of pump equipment to clients such as the US Navy.

The town has a long and proud history as a mill village, although the number of manufacturing jobs has declined significantly during the last couple of decades. The long-term prospects for these manufacturing enterprises is a critical question in planning the economic redevelopment of Warren in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and will bear on decisions regarding which development scenario the town will pursue.

Warren, in attracting new manufacturing business to the town, has many challenges they must overcome, including competition with surrounding towns that have industrial space available, such as Palmer, and a low-clearance rail crossing in Warren Center Village, limiting large truck transportation north and south. This can also be seen as a benefit in keeping heavy traffic away from Warren Center. This chapter includes recommendations that Warren can implement to attract business and to support its manufacturing tax base.

The Town of Warren faces a broad set of challenges to achieving its future growth and development in a manner that meets the goals and desires of its residents. Some of these challenges are unique to Warren, while many are challenges similar to those faced by other communities in Massachusetts and around the United States. The town's economy has historically been based in manufacturing, specifically in the mill industry, and the town's associated working-class character has remained even as its economic and demographic base has shifted in other directions. As the mill industry has decreased as a share of the local economy, there has been limited commercial growth to replace the labor market employment and revenue generated by the mills. The town's commercial and industrial tax base now accounts for only 7.5% of the tax levy. The town's 2004 residential tax rate of \$18.17 ranked 39<sup>th</sup> out of 350 communities in Massachusetts.<sup>10</sup> While the tax rate in 2005 is a more modest \$14.73, high property tax valuation remains a primary concern for local residents.

Improving the town's commercial and industrial tax base is the best way of addressing the current economic situation facing local residents. There are a number of ways in which this may be possible, as will be addressed in Chapters 15 and 16. Development would generally be favored in the two village centers and existing mill complexes, though the town may consider additional development scenarios that target parcels and particular areas that may be suitable and desirable for various types of new development, as identified in the specific development scenarios discussed in 5.c below.

The challenges facing Warren must also be considered in light of regional trends and pressures. As described above, much of the recent growth in population stems from Warren's location near regional centers, lower-priced housing market, and available land that make it increasingly attractive as a bedroom community. Existing development patterns and available services, as well as commercial and industrial destinations in neighboring towns and regions, must also be considered, as they play key roles in the viability of whichever development strategies Warren may consider.

## **5.b Base Analysis and Assessment**

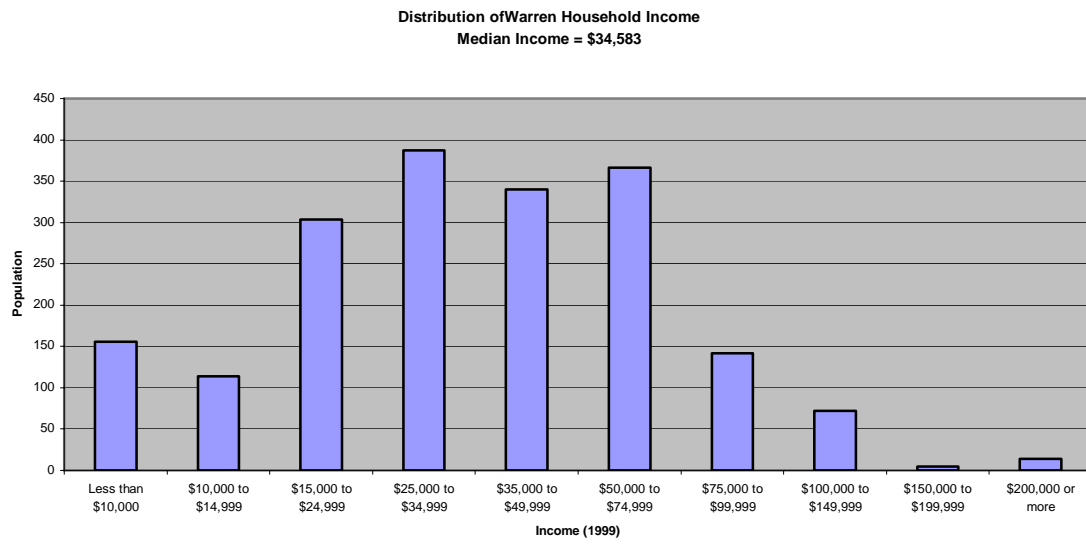
This section discusses Warren's economy from the perspective of comprehensive economic development planning, which includes a comparative analysis of the town's household income levels, labor force characteristics, employment within the community, employment locations, commuting times and distances, and a discussion of the town's recent fiscal performance.

Comparatively, Warren more closely resembles neighboring towns such as Palmer and Ware, with Brookfield an exception that is closer to the median for Worcester County. Figure 6 below offers data for Warren; Figure 7 below shows regional comparisons. Table 10 provides a summary of median family and per capita income differentials among neighboring towns, as well as comparisons with county and state income medians.

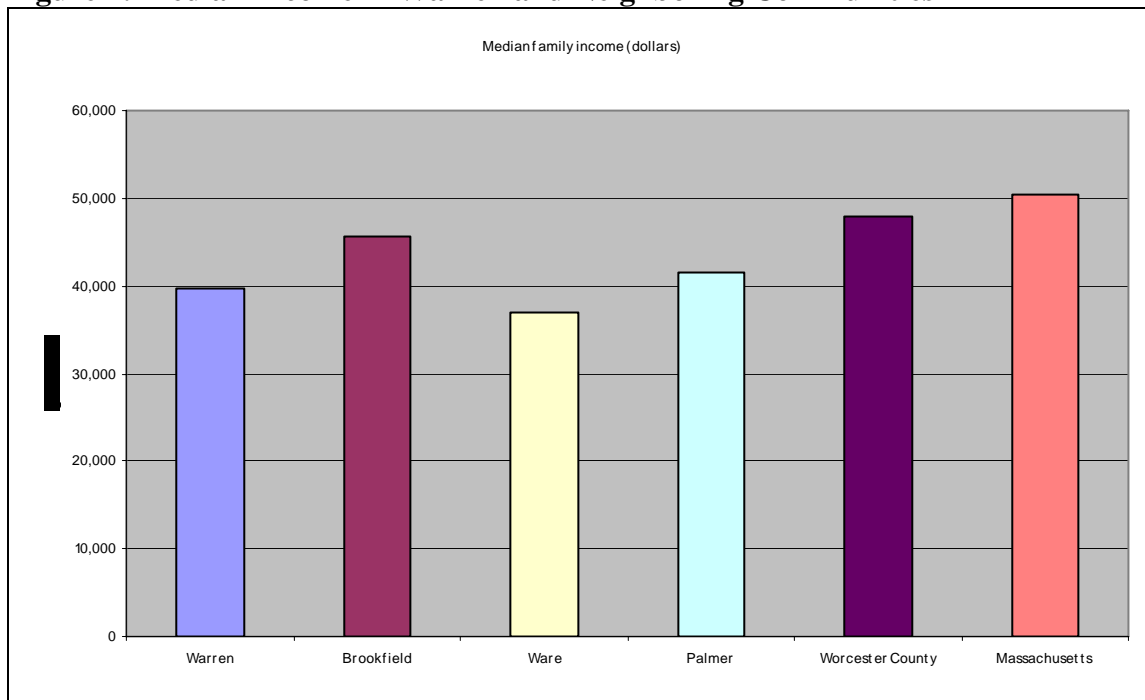
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<sup>10</sup> Source: <http://yourtown.boston.com>

**Figure 6: Household Income Distribution in Warren**



**Figure 7: Median Income in Warren and Neighboring Communities**



Source: US Census

<b>Table 10: Regional Income Comparison</b>		
	Median family income (dollars)	Per capita income (dollars)
Warren	39,598	17,192
Brookfield	45,655	20,144
Ware	36,875	18,908
Palmer	41,443	18,664
Worcester County	47,874	22,983
Massachusetts	50,502	25,952

Source: US Census

**Table 11: Poverty Status in Warren**

POVERTY STATUS IN 1999 (below poverty level)	Total	Percentage
Families below poverty level	66	5.0
Families with related children under 18 years below poverty level	48	6.9
Families with only female head of household below poverty level	40	16.4
Individuals below poverty level	287	6.1
18 years and over below poverty level	197	5.6
65 years and over below poverty level	43	6.9
Related children under 18 years below poverty level	77	6.3

Source: 2000 US Census

Table 11 above presents data on poverty status in Warren, both in absolute terms of total numbers and in relative terms as a percentage of the total for each specific family and age category. Warren falls broadly within the middle range for the state and county, with lower rates of poverty compared to isolated, distressed urban and rural areas, but somewhat higher rates compared with similar small towns and bedroom communities.

**Table 12: Employment Distribution in Warren**

EMPLOYMENT STATUS	Total	Percentage
Population 16 years and over	3,627	100
In labor force	2,330	64.2
Civilian labor force	2,330	64.2
Employed	2,210	60.9
<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>3.3</b>
Percent of civilian labor force		5.2
Not in labor force	1,297	35.8

Source: 2000 US Census

The employment status data in Table 12 indicate that nearly 2/3 of the adult population in Warren is in the civilian (i.e., non-military and non-public as the primary occupation) work force, with the remainder comprising at-home parents, retired, disabled, etc. residents. The unemployment rate relative to the labor force is moderate for the state and county, but relatively low in terms of the overall adult population. Warren, like many other area communities, is experiencing a trend toward an older population, with a decreasing proportion of residents remaining in the labor force.

### *Labor Force Composition*

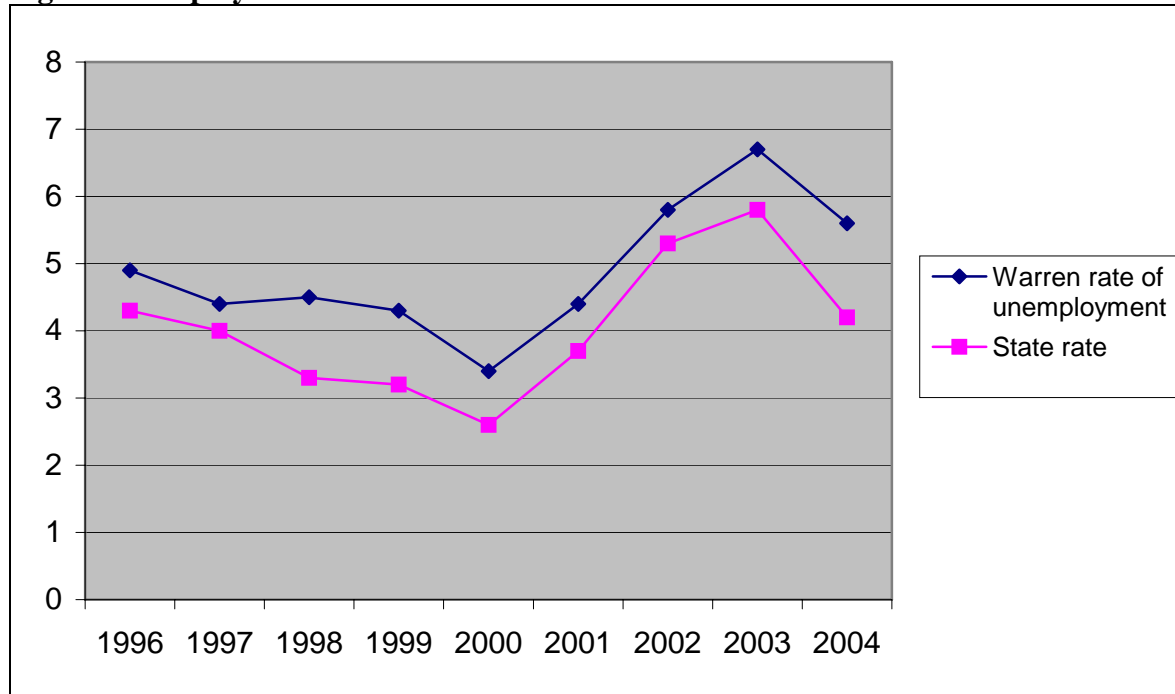
The number of employed Warren residents has grown steadily, but relatively modestly, over the past decade, growing from 2,497 employed people in 1996 to 2,515 people by the end of the decade (an overall increase of roughly 1%). Similarly, Warren's local unemployment rate dropped from 4.9% in 1996 to 3.4% in 2000, after which time it started rising again, reaching 5.6% in 2004. Warren's unemployment rate began to climb in 2002, peaking at 6.7% in 2003. The State as a whole saw a similar jump in unemployment rate. Warren's unemployment rate (as well as State's) has started to decline, declining to 5.6% by the end of 2004. Table 13 and Figure 8 below present the number of employed and unemployed Warren residents from 1996. The table also allows for comparison of Warren's unemployment rate with the State unemployment rate.

**Table 13: Employment Status of Warren Residents**

Year	Total labor force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate	State Rate
1996	2625	2497	128	4.9	4.3
1997	2634	2517	117	4.4	4.0
1998	2544	2430	114	4.5	3.3
1999	2464	2358	106	4.3	3.2
2000	2340	2260	80	3.4	2.6
2001	2357	2253	104	4.4	3.7
2002	2507	2362	145	5.8	5.3
2003	2676	2498	178	6.7	5.8
2004	2665	2515	150	5.6	4.2

Source: Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training.

**Figure 8: Employment Status of Warren Residents**

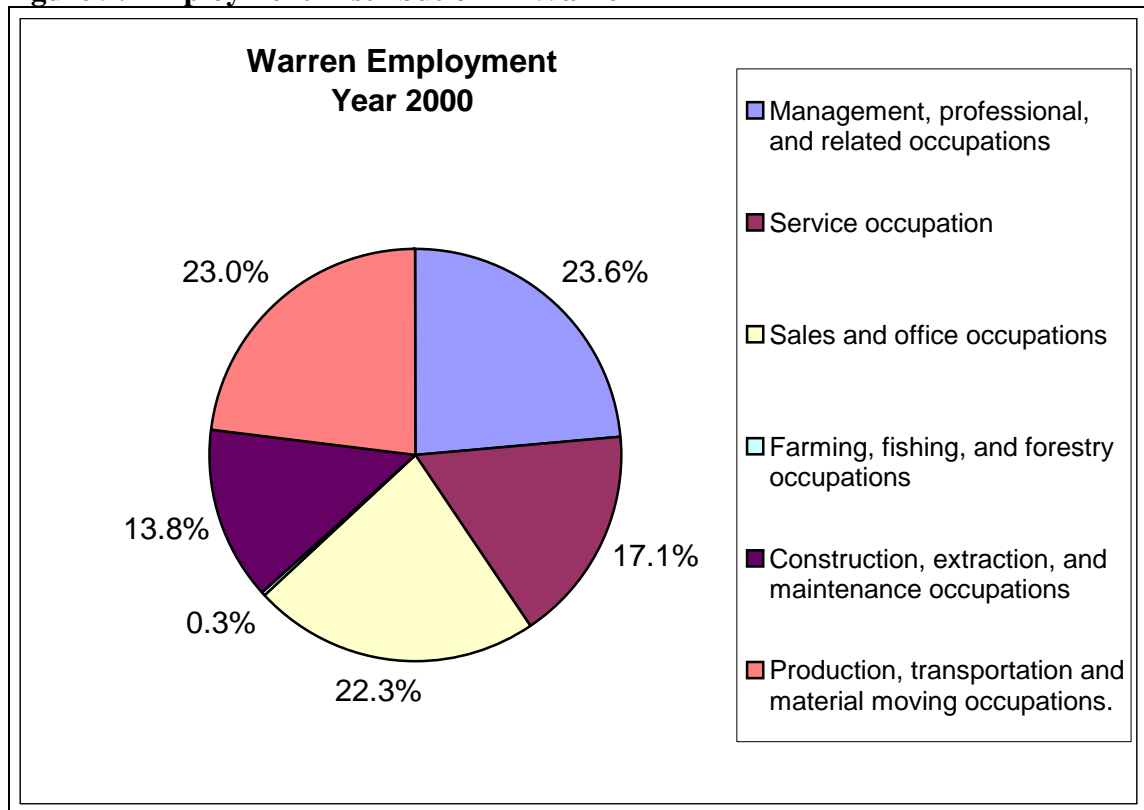


### ***Occupational Profile<sup>11</sup>***

Data from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue indicate that, as of 2003, 36.8% of the employed labor force is in blue-collar occupations, primarily production, transportation and material moving, at 23.0%, followed by construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations at 13.85%. The percentage of people involved in blue-collar or skilled labor declined over the last decade. This decrease in blue-collar occupations as a percentage of occupations has occurred at both regional and state levels. The largest occupational category includes management, professional and related occupations at 23.6%, with sales and office at 22.3%. These are largely white-collar occupations, together comprising 42.2% of the labor force in Warren (Figure 9 and Table 14 below).

Blue-collar employees generally find available work in Warren, Palmer, and Ware; places of employment within 20 minutes of Warren with existing manufacturing, craft, repair and construction industries. White-collar employees generally commute further to employment in Worcester and Hampden counties, where more professional employment opportunities are available. See Figure 10 and Table 15 below for commuting data.

**Figure 9: Employment Distribution in Warren**



Source: US Census 2000

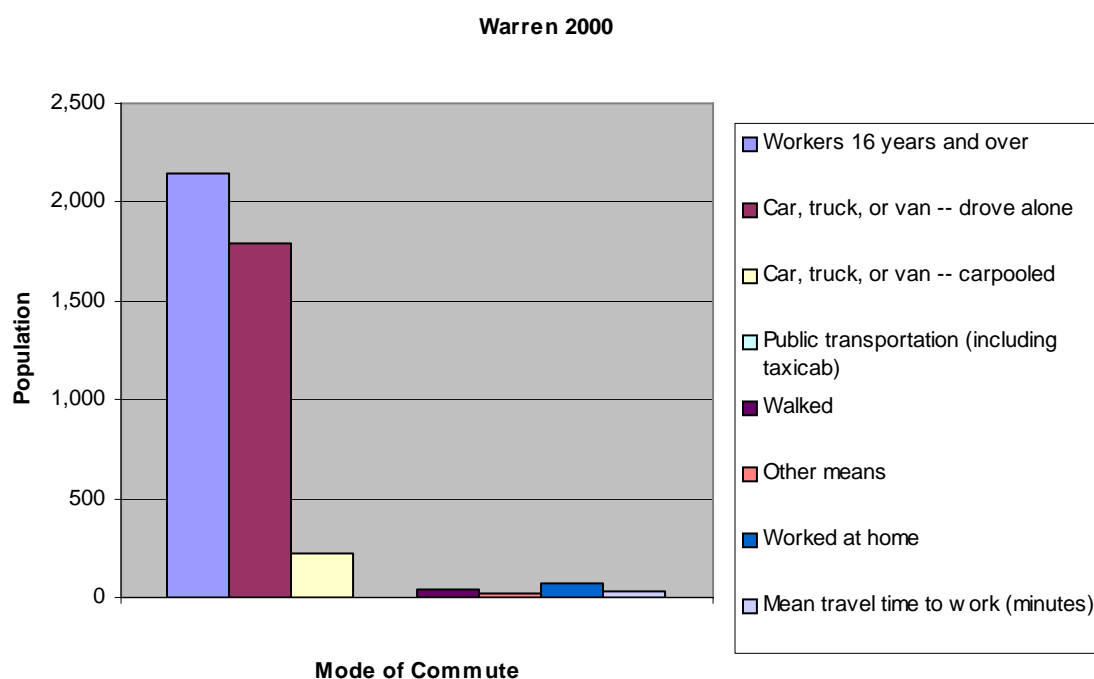
<sup>11</sup> Occupation refers to how Warren residents in the labor force are employed. They may be employed in any town, not necessarily Warren.

**Table 14: Warren Employment, Year 2000**

Occupation	Number	Percentage
Management, professional, and related occupations	521	23.6%
Production, transportation and material moving	508	23.0%
Sales and office	493	22.3%
Service	377	17.1%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance	304	13.8%
Farming, fishing, and forestry	7	0.3%

Source: US Census 2000

**Figure 10: Commuting Modes in Warren**



**Table 15: Commuting Modes in Warren**

	Total	% Percent
<b>COMMUTING TO WORK</b>		
Workers 16 years and over	2,143	100
Car, truck, or van -- drove alone	1,793	83.7
Car, truck, or van -- carpooled	220	10.3
Public transportation (including taxi)	0	0
Walked	42	2
Other means	18	0.8
Worked at home	70	3.3
<b>Mean travel time to work (minutes)</b>	<b>34.4</b>	<b>(X)</b>

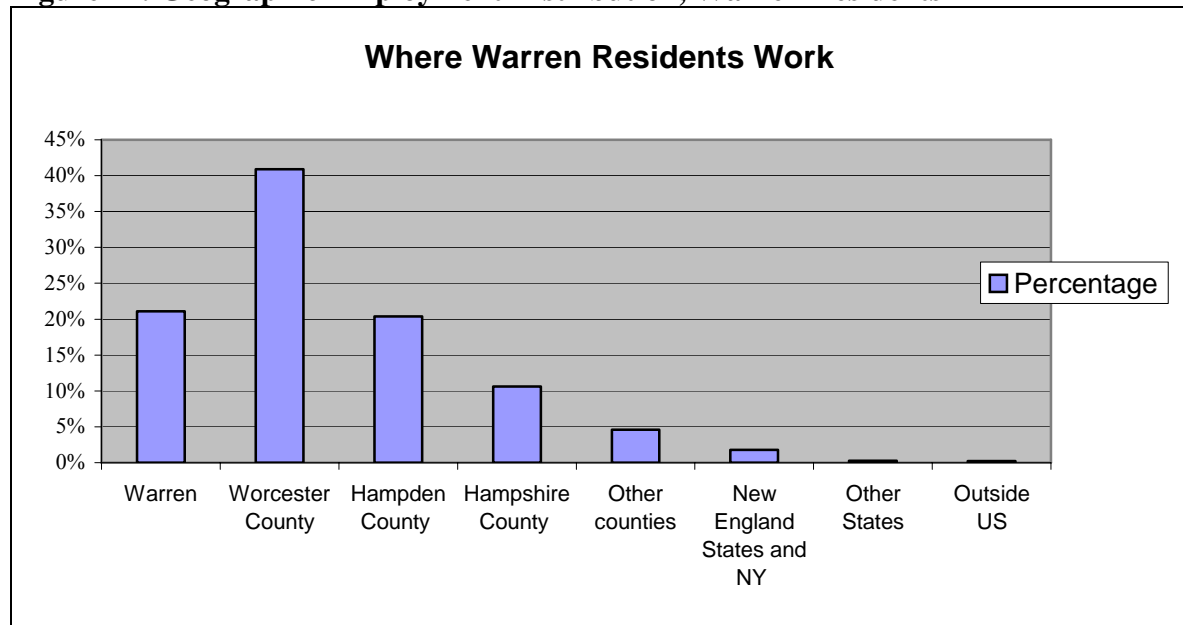
Table 16 and Figure 11 below show that about 60.0% of the Warren labor force works in Worcester and Hampden counties. However, the mean travel time to work for Warren residents has shown a 56.6% change between 1990 and 2000, from 21.9 minutes to 34.4 minutes (this is the 4<sup>th</sup> highest increase in Massachusetts).<sup>12</sup> One assumption that could be made from this increase in commuting time could be that many more residents now have jobs in the surrounding cities and metropolitan region. Anecdotal evidence of an increase in ‘bedroom community’ residents working farther away, in cities such as Boston and Hartford, also contributes to the increased average commuting time.

**Table 16: Warren Work Flow for Over-16 Workers, Year 2000**

Where Warren Residents Work	Number	Percentage
Warren	453	21.1%
Worcester County	878	40.9%
Hampden County	437	20.4%
Hampshire County	227	10.6%
Other counties	99	4.6%
New England States and NY	38	1.77%
Other States	6	0.28%
Outside US	5	0.23%

Source: US Census 2000.

**Figure 11: Geographic Employment Distribution, Warren Residents**



<sup>12</sup> Source: Census Transportation Planning Package (CTPP 2000)

### ***Employment and Wages by Industry In Warren***

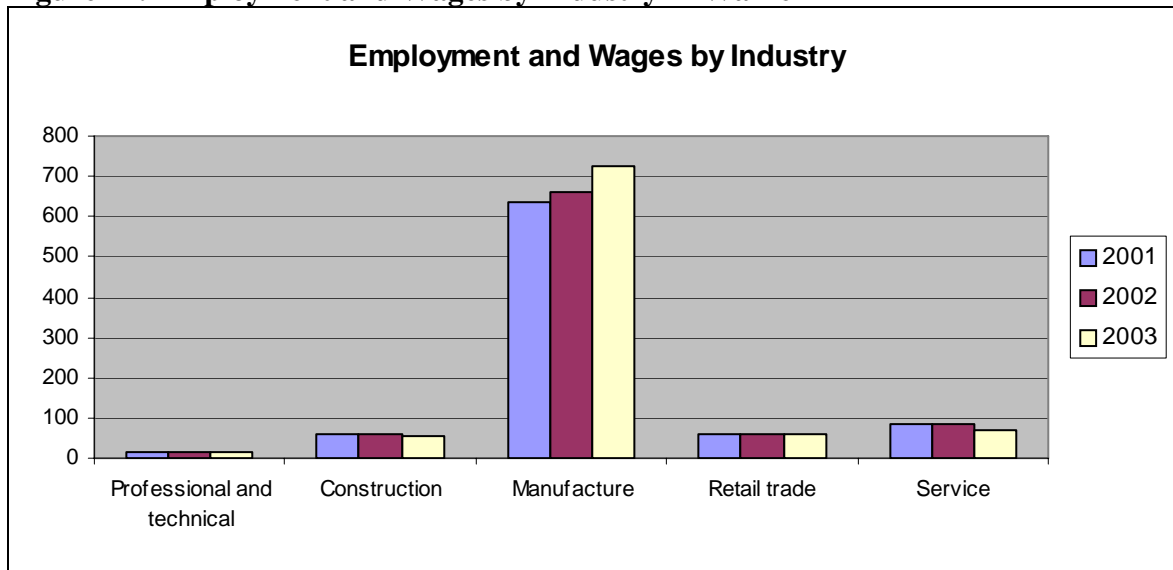
Table 17 and Figure 12 below indicate that the number of businesses operating in Warren has steadily increased over the last three years, while the number of workers (or jobs in Warren) increased by 8.4%. The most notable increase in jobs took place in the manufacturing sector, where the number of such jobs increased by 13.3%. The table also indicates that average weekly wage decreased during the last three years.

**Table 17: Employment and Wages by Industry in Warren** <sup>13</sup>

Year	Ave. weekly wage	Total # of Businesses	Average employment	Professional and technical	Construction	Mfg.	Retail	Service
2001	\$645	69	1,209	15	58	638	62	84
2002	\$643	76	1,246	15	61	663	58	84
2003	\$628	81	1,310	16	53	723	62	70

Source: Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training

**Figure 12: Employment and Wages by Industry in Warren**



The Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training data notes that manufacturing has been on the rebound in Warren for the past three years, in stark contrast to the rest of the region. The town has a long and proud history as a mill village, however, the number of manufacturing jobs declined significantly during the last couple of decades. The previous table indicates there were 1310 jobs in Warren as of the year 2003, with manufacturing jobs accounting for almost 55% of the total jobs and retail jobs accounting for roughly 5%. Although the number of jobs has risen, according to data from the US Census, anecdotal evidence points to downsizing in major manufacturing firms in recent years, according to mill personnel recently interviewed. Also, the decrease in wages

<sup>13</sup> Most recent data available at the time of this report

indicates that less skilled jobs are required or firms are forced to lower salaries to compete in the global market.

The employment categories presented in Table 17 comprise a variety of businesses that fit each category description. Presented below are the various businesses that make up each employment category.

*Construction:* Building, developing and general contracting; heavy construction; and special trade contractors.

*Manufacturing:* Food manufacturing; beverage and tobacco products; textile mills; textile product mills; clothing and apparel; leather and allied products; wood products; paper; printing and related support activities; petroleum and coal products; chemicals; plastics and rubber products; nonmetallic mineral products; primary metals; fabricated metal products; machinery; computer and electronic products; electrical equipment, appliances and components; transportation equipment; furniture and related products; miscellaneous manufacturing.

*Wholesale/Retail Trade:* Durable goods and non-durable goods; motor vehicle & parts dealers; furniture and home furnishing stores; electronics and appliance stores; building material and garden equipment and supply dealers; food and beverage stores; health and personal care stores; gasoline stations; clothing stores; sporting goods, hobby and musical instrument stores; general merchandise stores; miscellaneous retail stores.

*Services:* The Service employment category includes a number of subcategories, including professional, scientific and technical services; administrative support; health care; accommodations and food services; as well as arts, entertainment and recreation.

### **5.c Development Scenarios**

The process by which potential development strategies were identified involved data collection, analysis, public participation, understanding of regional trends, and comparison to towns that have faced similar development challenges. These methods allowed for the creation of three potential development scenarios for Warren based on varying goals and objectives.

The first of these scenarios is the reinvention of Warren as a manufacturing town. The rich industrial history and active, operational mill industry provides a solid base on which to focus future development efforts. The town must work to establish policies, infrastructure, and marketing programs to sustain and attract industrial establishments. Improvements to local infrastructure and the local and regional transportation networks are critical to maintain a strong industrial sector. Additionally, niche industrial markets must be identified that could operate in Warren and be successful in the regional and global economic markets.

The second scenario consists of Warren continuing to encourage residential growth, in a controlled manner, and revitalization of village center areas, specifically the Warren and West Warren village centers. Increasing commercial activity in the village centers will serve to increase commercial contribution to the local tax base, lessening the burden placed on residents through property taxes. This scenario also involves adopting growth management measures, such as improved zoning practices and subdivision control by-laws, that will allow the town to better control the rate and location of residential growth. A key objective of this scenario is to maintain the rural and working class character of the town, but increase the commercial and residential bases by implementing well-defined management strategies.

The third scenario involves the most large-scale change, by identifying and implementing a regional attractor to spur growth and development. A key element of the regional attractor scenario is the creation of a Massachusetts Turnpike interchange to allow for improved access to regional transportation corridors and make Warren more attractive to commercial and residential development. A new interchange would lead to immediate growth and would require careful management to insure that development occurs appropriately in relation to the community's overall goals and objectives. The improved regional access could also open the door to additional attractors, such as the development of a casino or gaming establishment. It is critical however, that the town carefully analyze the costs and benefits of this type of establishment, addressing not only the revenue received, but also the infrastructure and service costs associated with its support.

The development of these scenarios was based on the characteristics and strengths of the town and regional factors that influence development in the area. The scenarios serve as guides to help the community envision different possible futures for the town based on varying goals and objectives. The most likely outcome, and likely most desirable, would be a hybrid of the various approaches involved in these scenarios to achieve a balance of development that provides the economic benefits being sought but also maintains the character and values of the community.

## **Chapter 6. Village Centers Business Environment**

### **6.a Background Trends**

The Town of Warren includes two villages: Warren and West Warren. Both villages are typical of the New England mill villages that developed in the late 1800's and early 1900's. As with many New England mill village towns, the local economy developed in a river valley. Additional commercial development has taken place between Warren and West Warren, and extending east and west on Route 67.

The villages of Warren and West Warren are the main residential, commercial, economic, and social centers of town. Each village offers a mix of commercial and public services, such as small retail shops and restaurants, banks, filling stations, churches of various denominations, post office, fire station, library and public spaces such as parks and playgrounds. Warren Center also houses the Police Department and Town Common, with the Shepard Municipal Building nearby. West Warren Center is home to the Warren Senior Center and a large mill complex directly across the Quaboag River.

The general condition of the two village centers is in most respects adequate but still leaves much room for improvement and upgrading. The infrastructural systems, such as water, sewer and drainage lines, are functional but generally old and in need of repair or replacement. The condition of the roadways and sidewalks, while satisfactory at the moment, will require long-term improvement beyond maintenance in order to satisfy future demand and use. Pedestrian access is limited or made difficult by unclearly marked roadway lines and crosswalks, by deteriorated sidewalks and curbs and by confusing or inadequately controlled traffic patterns.

The long-term structural condition of the buildings comprising the village centers is also an issue worthy of attention. Many buildings are either underused or in some degree of disrepair and there needs to be a more integrated approach to the design and maintenance of the structures. A prime example is the former West Warren Community Hall building, a privately-owned building located near West Warren Center, which is currently vacant and potentially in need of renovation.

Accessibility is another factor to address when looking at the current condition of the village centers. Many buildings, including public buildings such as the Public Library in Warren Center and parts of the Town Hall, are not sufficiently accessible to those with disabilities and must aim to be in compliance with the standards set forth by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This issue is not limited to building access, but also to the sidewalks and roadway intersections, many of which need to be better maintained in terms of access points and curb cuts, so as not to pose challenging or impassable routes for those with disabilities.

Warren's Community Action Statement (CAS) reported the following about Warren Center: *"...A general facelift is needed. Many of the buildings are in need of physical repair, painting, handicapped access, and maintenance. Major façade improvements are*

*needed on a number of buildings. There is no common design character to the buildings. A design for the Village would be an improvement.”* Fortunately, building underuse and under-maintenance are not currently as significant a challenge as they were at the time of the CAS report, but many of the other problems remain significant if not serious today.

Attracting new businesses that are looking to relocate or expand themselves would be an important option for any community wanting to develop its economic base. Warren will be in direct competition with a number of area communities also currently seeking to draw those businesses. For this reason many cities and towns have established business recruitment, marketing, and advocacy organizations to attract these businesses. Warren has several features that would be attractive to outside investors, including potentially available mill space, a history of industrial innovation and enterprise, and a community actively looking for and encouraging commercial development.

## **6.b Village Centers**

### ***Warren Village***

Warren Village is considered the center of the town and provides the most commercial and civic services to the Town of Warren. Main Street, Route 67 runs through the village centers. Most of the buildings face Route 67, Main Street, and Old W. Brookfield Rd., south of Main. Some of these buildings have significant historic and architectural values and may be candidates for recognition by the Massachusetts Historical Commission or the National Register of Historic Places, in addition to those already so designated.

Buildings requiring better maintenance or improvements detract from other buildings and can detract from the character of the Village. There is angled on-street parking and a large parking lot on the south side of Main Street, in front of the former railroad station. There is also parking available behind the building on the north side of Main Street. There is a pedestrian crossing from the Town Hall building to the Spencer Savings Bank, Old W. Brookfield Rd. and West Main, although most of the curbs and sidewalks need to be raised from the road level and are in the need of repair.

The two other significant design features to the Warren Center Village are the rotary and the Town Park or Common. The rotary includes a monument, the Civil War Memorial, in the middle. The traffic patterns around the rotary are complicated and confusing. The Town Common is a large, attractive green with maturing trees and a gentle slope east to west. It is ideally located and suited for the town events and holiday events. It is even within walking distance (2,000 feet) of the most residents of Warren Center Village.

### ***West Warren Village***

West Warren has a much smaller Central Business District than the Warren center village. Commercial uses in the village are located within a short distance from the intersection of Route 67 and South Street, although the Wrights/Hardwick complexes are close by, as is a commercial park. Street parking is available and within one block there are number of services, including the senior citizen center.

### ***Highway Commercial***

On Route 67 there are a number of businesses and services that can be defined as ‘highway commercial.’ For the most part, the businesses here are neat and orderly, have satisfactory signage, provide parking, and offer a service to town residents and people traveling on Route 67. Highway commercial and residential development between Warren and West Warren serves as a link between the two villages, in a general pattern of continuous, but dispersed, development. There are a number of potential development and redevelopment opportunities along this corridor.

## **6.c Village Centers Redevelopment Issues**

The general resident survey, input from the Warren Master Plan Committee, and focus group meetings have helped to identify the following issues in Warren’s village center areas.

- Several underused or under-maintained buildings are perceived as detracting from the area’s overall appearance, but have potential for revitalization.
- The traffic patterns in and around the Warren Center rotary are complicated by the conflicting traffic flows and the railroad underpass.
- The Town Common is underutilized and could use some improved landscaping.
- Basic physical repairs and major façade improvements of the shops in both Central Business Districts (CBDs) are needed.
- The parking currently available at the former Railroad Station and the parking along Main Street both need to be reconfigured, redesigned and enhanced.
- Lack of flexible special-permit village center options in the present zoning bylaws is discouraging new businesses from coming into town.
- The village centers need better gateway identification through distinctive signage, paving or other streetscaping improvements

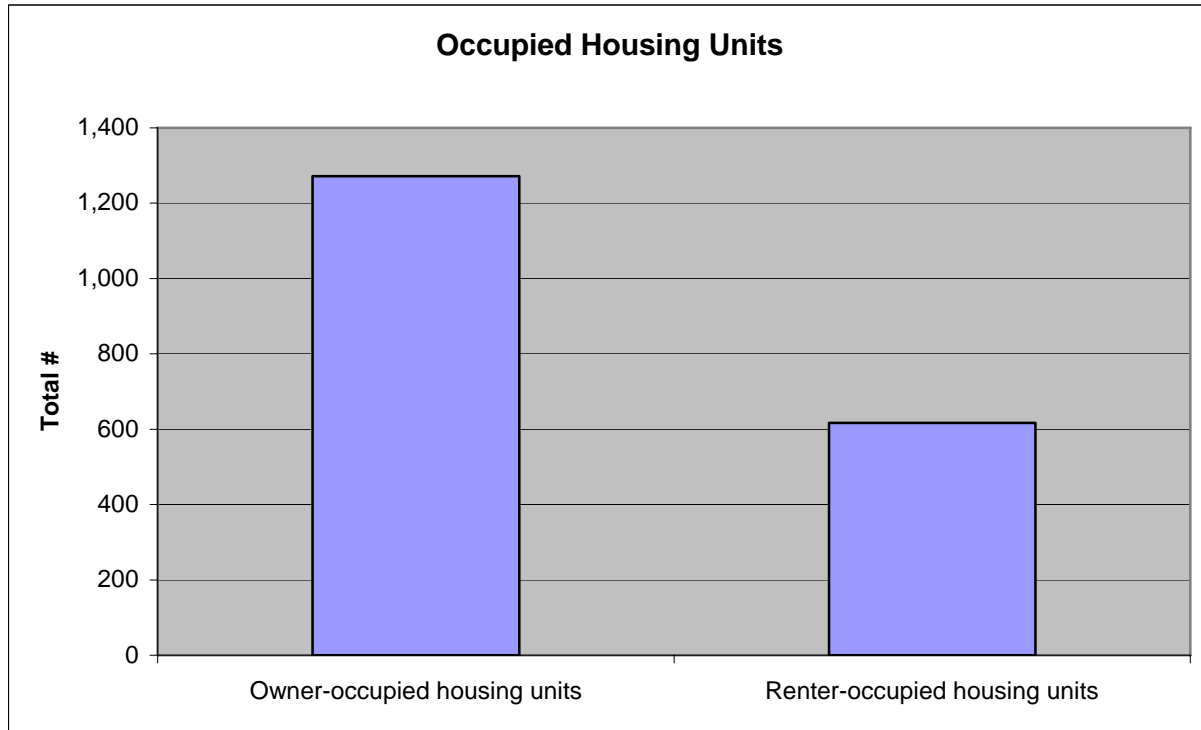
The UMass project team conducted a focus group public forum in Spring 2005 as part of a Regional Planning studio project, with special attention to redevelopment in the West Warren Village area. That choice was designed to complement the work of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), focused in Spring 2005 on the redevelopment of Warren Center Village, using funds from a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to hire a consulting firm and to undertake a public participation process.

**Part D      Demography**

**Chapter 7.    Housing Development and Distribution**

**7.a      Residential Status**

**Figure 13: Housing Occupancy Distribution**



**Table 18: Occupancy, Tenure and Vacancy Distribution**

	Total	Percentage
<b>OCCUPANCY STATUS</b>		
Total housing units	2,014	100
Occupied housing units	1,889	93.8
Vacant housing units	125	6.2
<b>TENURE</b>		
Occupied housing units	1,889	100
Owner-occupied housing units	1,272	67.3
Renter-occupied housing units	617	32.7
<b>VACANCY STATUS</b>		
Vacant housing units	125	100
For rent	47	37.6
For sale only	18	14.4
Rented or sold, not occupied	5	4
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	10	8
Other vacant	45	36

Source: 2000 US Census

Figure 13 above provides a rough graphic comparison between the number of owner- and renter-occupied housing units in Warren, whereas Table 18 provides a more detailed breakdown of total number of housing units, how many of that total are owned or rented, and how many of each of those are occupied or vacant. The data show that there is no shortage of housing units or housing type options in Warren; in fact, vacancy, while not high at present, may be of future concern if there is a high rate of new home construction.

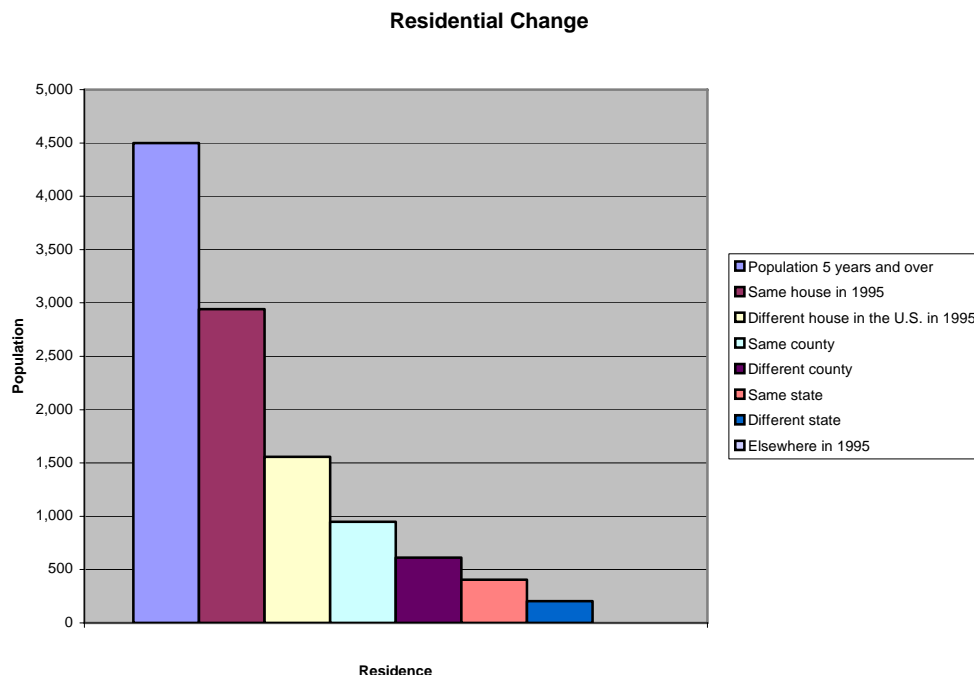
**Table 19: Household Population Distribution**

<b>HOUSEHOLD POPULATION</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Population in occupied housing units	4,768	100
Owner-occupied housing units	3,445	72.3
Renter-occupied housing units	1,323	27.7
Average household size per occupied housing unit	2.52	(X)
Average household size per owner-occupied housing unit	2.71	(X)
Average household size per renter-occupied housing unit	2.14	(X)

Source: 2000 US Census

The data in Table 19 show that, because of large household size in owner-occupied units, an even higher percentage of Warren residents live in owned rather than rented housing, almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the total. Median family size per occupied unit in Warren is broadly similar to (non-urban) area, county and state averages, but the differential between owners and renters is not as wide as elsewhere, and there has been an overall decline in median household size, which has been a general regional trend.

**Figure 14: Distribution of Time and Location of Residential Change**



**Table 20: Distribution of Time and Location of Residential Change**

RESIDENCE IN 1995	Total	Percentage
Population 5 years and over	4,500	100
Same house in 1995	2,941	65.4
Different house in the US in 1995	1,559	34.6
Same county	948	21.1
Different county	611	13.6
Same state	406	9
Different state	205	4.6
Elsewhere in 1995	0	0

Source: 2000 US Census

According to information presented in Figure 14 and Table 20, nearly 2/3 of the total resident population has lived in town for at least five years. Within the roughly 1/3 of those who moved away, the overwhelming majority relocated within the county and nearly all remained within the state. This indicates that, compared with many other growing communities, Warren's residential population has thus far been relatively stable.

## 7.b Housing Conditions

As Table 21 indicates, the total number of single family homes has risen steadily since 1999, with only a slight slowdown in the rate of increase in 2002-2003. Likewise, new home permits, aside from a decrease in 2001-2, have increased fairly consistently over the past 6 years.

**Table 21: Housing Inventory and Permitting**

# Single Family Homes <sup>14</sup>		New Home Permits <sup>15</sup>	
Year	# (% increase)	Year	# (% increase/decrease)
1999	1076	1999	20
2000	1096 (01.9%)	2000	32 (+60%)
2001	1132 (03.3%)	2001	25 (-22%)
2002	1157 (02.2%)	2002	31 (+24%)
2003	1186 (02.5%)	2003	41 (+32%)
2004	1222 (03.0%)	2004	44 (+07%)

Table 22 shows how the overall inventory of housing stock in Warren has grown over the last decade, and also allows for comparison relative to the growth in population. The table, however, only refers to Warren's year-round occupied housing units.

**Table 22: Housing Unit Growth in Warren**

Year	Occupied housing units	Numerical Change	% Change
1990	1694	- - - -	
2000	1889	195	11.51%

Source: 2000 US Census

<sup>14</sup> Source: Warren Tax Assessor

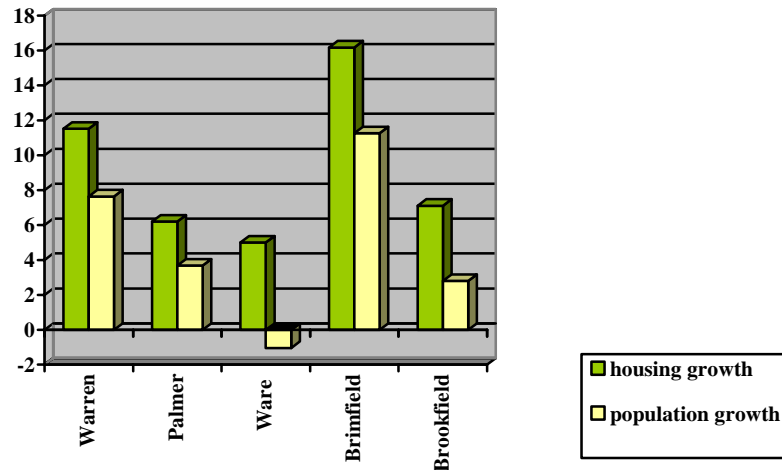
<sup>15</sup> Source: Warren Building Inspector

**Table 23: Housing Unit Growth in Comparable Communities**

Year	Warren	Palmer	Ware	Brimfield	Brookfield
1990	1694	4781	3836	1076	1124
2000	1889 (11.51%)	5078 (6.21%)	4027 (5.0%)	1250 (16.17%)	1204 (7.11%)

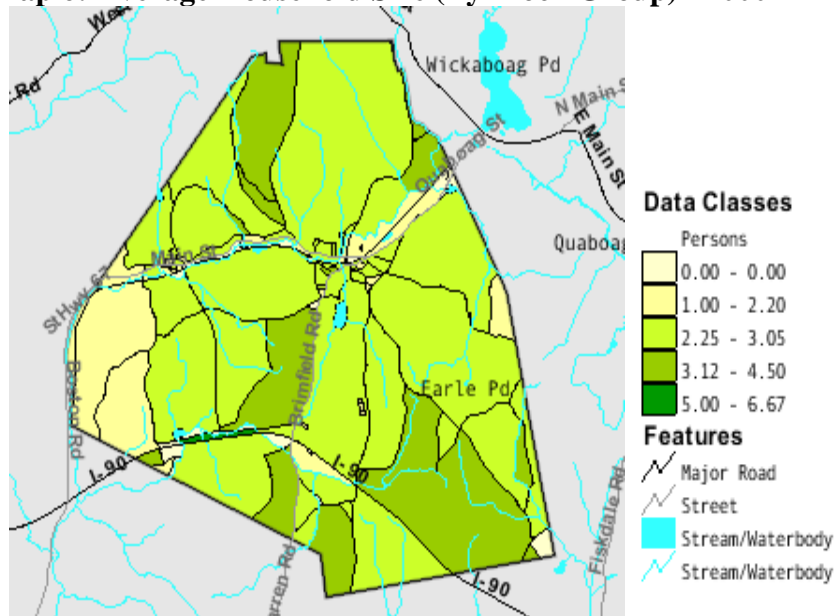
*Source: 2000 US Census*

**Figure 15: Housing Unit Growth to Population Growth, Comparable Communities**



Tables 22 and 23 and Figure 15 indicate that Warren's housing stock is growing faster than its population, in keeping with the national trend towards smaller household sizes. Single parent households and couples with fewer children account for smaller household sizes. US Census data confirm this trend; in 1990, average household size was 2.61, decreasing to 2.52 in 2000, even lower than the national average household size of 2.59.

**Map 6: Average Household Size (By Block Group) - 2000**



*2000 US Census*

Another factor contributing to smaller household sizes is “the graying of America,” i.e., that the nation’s elderly population is expanding. The census data clearly demonstrate that this national trend is also characteristic of Warren; by 1990 the median age was 33.3, increasing considerably to 36.9 by 2000. This figure is slightly higher compared to the national median age of 35.3 for the 2000 census.

**Table 24: Types of Housing Units in Warren**

	# of Units	Percentage of Total
1-unit, detached	1,067	53.0
1-unit, attached	43	2.1
2 units	335	16.6
3 or 4 units	249	12.4
5 to 19 units	138	6.8
20 or more units	30	1.5
Mobile home	146	7.2
Boat, RV, van, etc	6	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>100%</b>

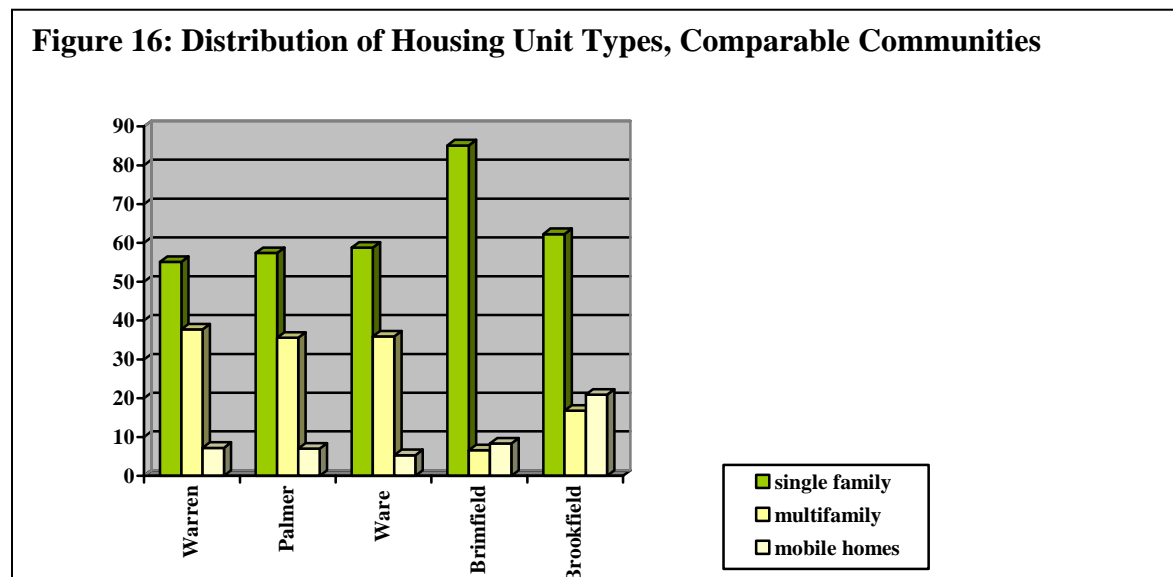
*Source: 2000 US Census*

**Table 25: Types of Housing Units in Comparable Communities**

Town	1-Unit	2-Units	3-4 Units	5+ Units	Mobile Homes
Warren	1110 (55.1%)	335 (16.6%)	249 (12.4%)	168 (8.3%)	146 (7.2%)
Palmer	3100 (57.4%)	777 (14.4%)	589 (10.9%)	556 (10.3%)	380 (7%)
Ware	2553 (58.8%)	581 (13.4%)	683 (15.7%)	289 (6.7%)	231 (5.3%)
Brimfield	1188 (85.1%)	36 (2.6%)	29 (2.1%)	27 (1.9%)	116 (8.3%)
Brookfield	812 (62.3%)	110 (8.4%)	74 (5.7%)	34 (2.6%)	272 (20.9%)

*Source: 2000 US Census*

**Figure 16: Distribution of Housing Unit Types, Comparable Communities**



Tables 24-5 above include all housing units in Warren, including vacant houses and seasonal houses. Table 25 shows that 55.1 % of Warren’s housing stock is single-family

and a little less than 40% is multi-family (among neighboring towns Warren, Palmer and Ware provide the highest percentage of multi-family units).

This breakdown of the housing stock indicates a healthy mix of housing opportunities for Warren residents. (Housing stock breakdown in the neighboring towns of Brimfield and Brookfield shows a disproportionately large portion of single-family housing). The town's housing mixture has been fairly stable over the past decade (by 1990 single family housing made 54.4% and multifamily made 37% of the total housing stock, almost the same as recorded in 2000 census)<sup>16</sup>. Over the period 1990- 2000 the percentage growth of single family homes (12.35%) has been slightly higher than multifamily homes (11.74%) in Warren.<sup>17</sup> Table 27 indicates that Warren, Palmer and Ware fare well in provision of different types of housing opportunities compared to other communities in the region.

**Table 26: Age of Housing Stock in Warren**

<b>Year Structure Built</b>	<b># of Units</b>	<b>% of Housing Stock</b>
1999 to 2004	146	11.9
1995 to 1998	86	4.3
1990 to 1994	139	6.9
1980 to 1989	294	14.6
1970 to 1979	200	9.9
1960 to 1969	151	7.5
1940 to 1959	256	12.7
1939 or earlier	861	42.8
	<b>2014</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: 2000 US Census*

**Table 27: Pre-1939 Housing Stock, Comparable Communities**

<b>Year Structure Built</b>	<b>Warren</b>	<b>Palmer</b>	<b>Ware</b>	<b>Brimfield</b>	<b>Brookfield</b>
1939 or earlier	42.8	32.9	32.3	15.3	31.5

*Source: 2000 US Census*

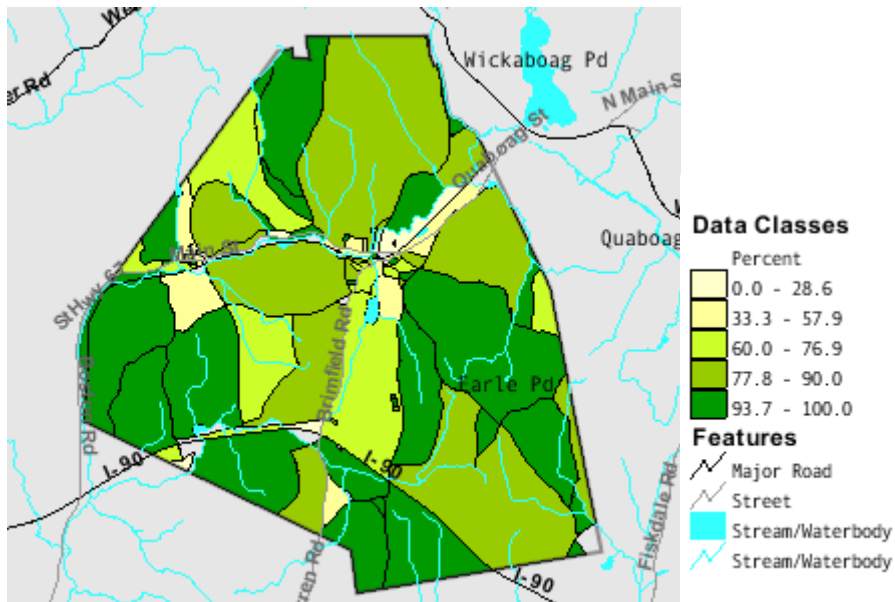
Table 26 indicates that roughly 43% of Warren housing stock was built before World War II. For the other four comparable communities, almost one third of the total housing stock is pre-World War II in Palmer, Ware and Brookfield. Brimfield, however, accounts for the lowest percentage of older housing (15.3%). This is not surprising; Brimfield has one of the highest rates of population and housing unit growth in the region.

With 43% of Warren's housing stock being 60 years old and 55.5% being over 40 years old, it is safe to say that many of Warren's residential dwelling would not fully meet the state's current building code or pass muster with the town Building Inspector.

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.umass.edu/miser/population/Documents/age\\_sex\\_mcd\\_county\\_state.xls](http://www.umass.edu/miser/population/Documents/age_sex_mcd_county_state.xls)

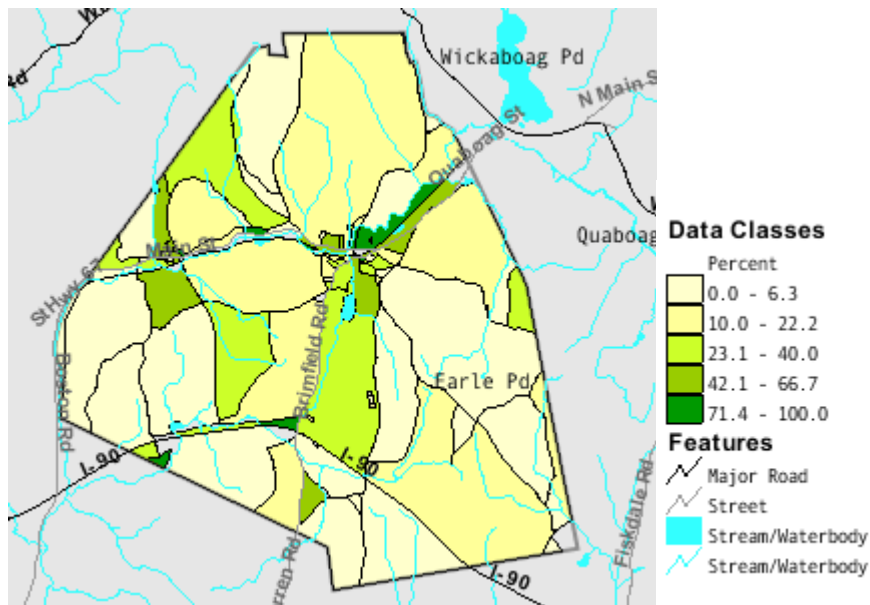
<sup>17</sup> [http://www.umass.edu/miser/population/Documents/age\\_sex\\_mcd\\_county\\_state.xls](http://www.umass.edu/miser/population/Documents/age_sex_mcd_county_state.xls)

**Map 7: Owner-Occupied Units (By Block Group) - 2000**



Source: 2000 US Census

**Map 8: Renter-Occupied Units (By Block Group) - 2000**



Source: 2000 US Census

**Table 28: Types of Occupancy in Warren (Owner/Renter)**

	# of Units	Percentage
Owner Occupied Housing	1272	67.3%
Renter Occupied Housing	617	32.7%

*Source: 2000 US Census*

**Table 29: Types of Occupancy, Comparable Communities (Owner/Renter)**

	Palmer	Ware	Brimfield	Brookfield
Owner Occupied Housing	3,322 (65.4)	2,642 (65.6%)	1,094 (87.5%)	972 (80.7%)
Renter Occupied Housing	1,756 (34.6)	1,385 (34.4%)	156 (12.5 %)	232 (19.3%)

*Source: 2000 US Census*

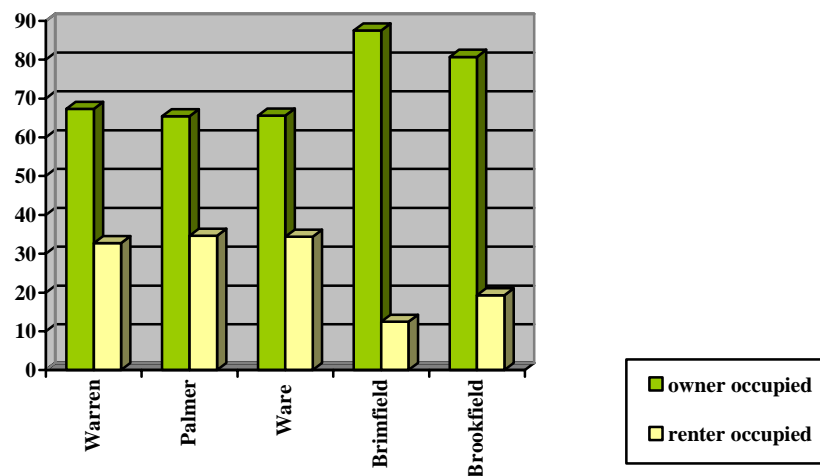
**Figure 17: Types of Occupancy in Comparable Communities (Owner/Renter)**

Table 28 shows that 67.3% of Warren's housing is owner-occupied. Among comparable communities in the region, Brimfield and Brookfield had a higher percentage of owner-occupied housing (87.5% and 80.7% respectively), while Palmer and Ware had a similar percentage of owner occupancy as Warren. The percentage of owner-occupied housing in Warren has remained fairly stable over the last two decades (From 1980-1990 it was 67.17%; it increased slightly to 67.3% by the end of 1990-2000).

In terms of percentage of occupied housing units relative to percentage of vacant units, the 2000 Census reported that 93.8% of Warren's housing units were occupied, indicating a vacancy rate of 6.2% (mostly rental units). This is a reasonable figure as compared to other communities in the region; only Brimfield had a higher vacancy rate (10.5%), while the other comparable communities have vacancy rates ranging from 6% to 7.5%.

Tables 28-9 indicate that Warren, Ware and Palmer provide the largest supply of rental units in the region (approximately a third of their total housing stocks respectively).

**Table 30: Households by Type in Warren (2000)**

	<b># of Households</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Family Household	1287	68.1%
Non-Family Household	602	31.9%

*Source: 2000 US Census*

The table 31 above indicates that Warren has 68.1% family households. This represent a slight decreased since the 1990 census when family accounted for 70.9% of all Warren households. There has been a further increase in the number of households headed by females. The 1990 census counted 206 households headed by females while the 2000 Census counted 229 such households (12.1% of the total family households).

**Table 31: Households by Type, Comparable Communities**

	<b>Palmer</b>	<b>Ware</b>	<b>Brimfield</b>	<b>Brookfield</b>
Family Household	3,329 (65.6%)	2,598 (64.5%)	886 (70.9%)	857 (71.25%)
Non- Family Household	1,749 (34.4%)	1,429 (35.5%)	364 (29.1%)	347 (28.8%)

*Source: 2000 US Census*

It is interesting to note that all the comparable communities have almost the same percentage of family households as Warren. In previous analysis we have noted that the vast majority of the housing stock in these towns consists of single-family homes; it is hence very typical to find higher percentage of married couple households in these communities compared to those where a significant number of multifamily rental units are available.

### **7.c Housing Demand and Needs Assessment**

This analysis will document the demand for housing in Warren, the housing needs of local residents and what is actually available (and affordable) for housing opportunities. The following assumptions were used in this analysis.

- The analysis makes use of year 2000 statistics so that they may be cross-referenced to 2000 US Census data.
- Warren's poverty-level income figure was obtained from the 2000 US Census.
- Housing demand and need was calculated for poverty-level households, low-income households (poverty-level to 50% of the area median income), low-to-moderate income households (50-65% of the area median income), moderate-to-middle income households (65-80% of the area median income), middle-income households (80-150% of the area median income) and upper income households (above 150% of area median income).
- Households making up to 65% of the area median income would not be in the market for buying a home but instead would most likely rent their housing.

- Households making more than 65% of the area median income would most likely be in the market for buying a home.
- For renter households, 30% of annual income typically would go towards rent.
- For homebuyers, 28% of their monthly income typically would go towards home mortgage principal and interest. Homebuyers would also typically make a down payment of at least 10% and have a 30-year mortgage at 7%.
- The number of rental units and their ranges in rent prices is estimated from the 2000 US Census data.
- Year 2000 home sales data was obtained from the website [www.mlspin.com](http://www.mlspin.com) and only qualified homes sales were used in the ensuing analysis.

*Rental Unit Need/Demand Analysis:*

The table below provides an affordability analysis for Warren rental units. The table outlines the various renter income categories, the number of Warren households fitting the income categories, the number of rental units in Warren that are affordable to the various income categories and the deficit/surplus for such rental units.

Table 32 indicates that Warren does not have enough rental units that are affordable to poverty-level households. The 2000 US Census further supports this assertion as 184 rental-housing units (30.2% of the total rental units) in Warren were identified as occupied by households paying more than 30% of their monthly income towards rent. It is generally assumed that renters paying more than 30% of their monthly income towards rent are exceeding their housing affordability.

**Table 32: Rental Unit Need/Demand Analysis**

Income Group	Range of Income	Range of Affordable Rent	# of Households	#of Actual Units	Deficit/ Surplus
Poverty	≤ \$10,000	\$250 and below	156	~ 41	-115
Poverty- to- Low	\$10-14,999	\$250- \$375	114	~131	+17
Low-to- Moderate	\$15-24,999	\$375- \$625	304	~211	-93

*Source: 2000 US Census*

As most rental units are within multi-family dwelling structures, it should be noted that Warren allows two-family housing by right in residential and village districts and multi-family housing (up to 12 units) in the village district only. The bottom line is that Warren has more than enough vacant developable land to accommodate new multi-family housing to provide more rental units.

*Owner Unit Need/Demand Analysis:*

Warren fares much better in terms of homeownership opportunities. There were 58 property sales in Warren during the year 2000, of which 54 were qualified home sales. Table 33 below provides an analysis of demand for homeownership in Warren. This table outlines the various homeownership income categories, the number of Warren

households fitting each category and the median sales price of various types of housing units in Warren for the year 2000.

**Table 33: Homeownership Need/Demand Analysis**

<b>Income Group</b>	<b>Range of Income</b>	<b>Range of Affordable Housing Prices*</b>	<b># of Households</b>
Moderate- Middle	\$25,000-\$34,999	\$97,700-\$136,700	387
Middle- Upper	\$35,000-\$74,999	\$136,700-\$293,000	706
Upper	\$75,000 and up	\$293,000and above	233

*Source: 2000 US Census*

Year 2000 Median Sale Price for Single-Family Home: \$116,500

(48 qualified sales in 2000)

Year 2000 Median Sale Price for Two-Family Home: \$ 99,750

(4 qualified sales in 2000)

Table 33 above indicates that homeownership in Warren is well within reach of all the various income groups that can participate in the homebuyer market (those households that earn at least 65% of the median area income). The median family income in Warren is \$39,598<sup>18</sup> for the Year 2000, with an affordable home purchase price of \$154,700 for the median family income. Of the 54 qualified home sales that took place in Warren during 2000, only eight homes were sold above the median family income affordable purchase price of \$154,700. This means that 46 homes (or 85.5% of the qualified home sales) were sold for less than \$150,000. Thus, housing in Warren is quite affordable.

It should be noted that single-family homes are allowed by right in all three districts of Warren, but that two-family homes are allowed by right in residential and village districts only. According to the MassGIS buildout analysis, there are 12,858 vacant developable acres of land in Warren, enough to accommodate 6,774 new housing lots.

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<sup>18</sup> US Census data

## **Chapter 8. Town Services and Infrastructure: Agencies and Facilities**

### **8.a Taxes and Services**

This chapter of the Master Plan presents a general description of Warren's tax base, municipal facilities and services. This chapter includes information on some of the town's departmental organization structure, staffing, budget, responsibilities, equipment, facilities, programs offered and upcoming capital needs. Before beginning an in-depth analysis of each municipal department, it is important to understand where the town derives its revenue and the tax implications for Warren households (e.g., local tax rate, average single family home tax bill, average single family home assessed valuation, local tax levies and state aid).

**Table 34: Local Tax Rates 2005**

<b>Community</b>	<b>FY2005Tax Rate</b>
<b>Warren</b>	14.73
<b>Palmer</b>	14.62
<b>Ware</b>	15.6
<b>Brimfield</b>	14.4
<b>Brookfield</b>	16.26

Source: Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training

Table 34 above indicates that Warren has a moderately lower tax rate relative to the other comparable communities in the region; Brookfield on the other hand has one of the highest. The next table translates the local tax rate into the average single-family home tax bill for the year 2005.

**Table 35: Average Single Family Tax Rates 2005**

<b>Community</b>	<b>Average Single Family Tax Bill 2005</b>
<b>Warren</b>	\$ 2,490
<b>Palmer</b>	\$ 2,389
<b>Ware</b>	\$ 2,420
<b>Brimfield</b>	\$ 2,851
<b>Brookfield</b>	\$ 2,875

Source: Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training

Table 35 above indicates that Warren has a moderately low single-family tax bill average compared to the overall region; Palmer and Ware have slightly lower average tax bills. The average single-family tax bill in Brookfield was \$385 higher than the average in Warren.

**Table 36: Local Tax Levies 2005, Comparable Communities**

Community	Industrial Tax Levied	Commercial Tax Levied	Total Tax Levy
<b>Warren</b>	\$145,097	\$ 126,859	\$ 4,393,332
<b>Palmer</b>	\$687,996	\$1,017,539	\$11,968,527
<b>Ware</b>	\$324,739	\$ 826,530	\$ 9,044,589
<b>Brimfield</b>	\$ 63,323	\$ 321,931	\$ 4,669,427
<b>Brookfield</b>	\$ 15,531	\$ 129,729	\$ 3,319,053

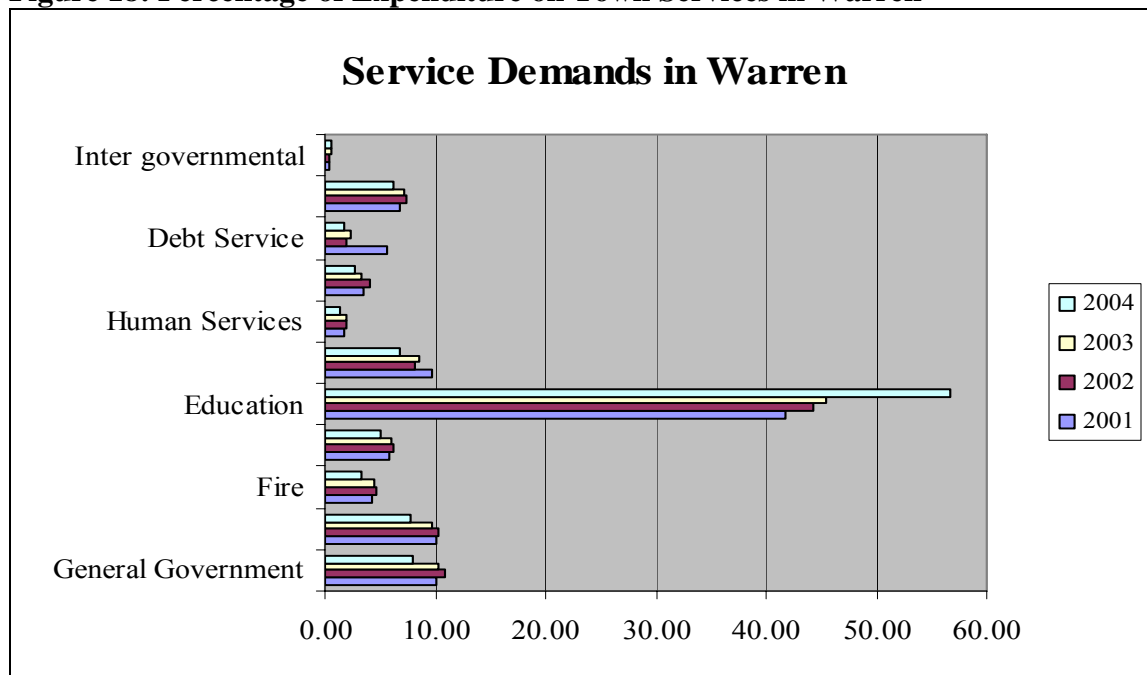
Source: Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training

In terms of the tax dollars generated by economic sector (commercial and industrial), Warren ranks lower compared to other towns in the region. Warren's economic sector accounts for only 6.2% of the town's total tax base, whereas Palmer and Ware have much higher percentages of 14.25% and 12.73% respectively.

### *Service Demands in Warren*

From 2000 to 2004, total municipal expenditure in Warren increased by 41%, from \$4,004,583 in 2000 to \$5,700,643 in 2004. The expenditure for education services has remained one of the most significant during these last five years; rising from 42% in 2001 to almost 56% of the town's expenditure in 2004, with a major contributor to this rise being the renovation and expansion costs of Quaboag Regional Middle/High School.<sup>19</sup>

**Figure 18: Percentage of Expenditure on Town Services in Warren**



Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue

<sup>19</sup> Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue

### ***Private Sector's Contribution to Local Tax Base***

In the fiscal year 2004, Warren levied a total of \$ 4,153,896 in taxes, based on the local tax rate of \$18.18 per \$1000 of the assessed valuation (Warren has a same tax rate across residential, commercial, and industrial uses). Warren homeowners accounted for approximately 86.6% of the total 2004 tax base (\$3,597,273), while the business and the industries accounted for approximately 7.7% of the total tax base (\$ 271,956). The remaining 5.7% was derived from taxes on personal property (\$236,772). The next two tables look at how Warren compares to the similar communities in the region in terms of the commercial and industrial tax base.

**Table 37: Commercial Tax Base Comparison**

<b>Community</b>	<b>FY2004Tax Rate</b>	<b>Commercial Tax Levied</b>	<b>Assessed Valuation</b>	<b>% of Total Tax Levy</b>
<b>Warren</b>	18.18	\$126,859	\$8 mill.	3.5%
<b>Palmer</b>	16.03	\$1,017,539	\$63 mill.	8.8%
<b>Ware</b>	17.86	\$826,530	\$46 mill.	9.57%
<b>Brimfield</b>	18.00	\$321,931	\$17.8 mill.	7.27%
<b>Brookfield</b>	15.73	\$129,729	\$8.2 mill.	4.26%

Source: Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training

This table indicates that Ware's commercial development nets the highest amount of tax dollars of the compared communities, both in terms of actual dollars and percentage of the town's total tax levy. On the other hand, Warren's commercial tax base accounts for one of the lowest in the compared communities. It should be noted that the majority of the Ware commercial enterprises are located in its CBD. As indicated in the chart, Ware has the highest amount of tax dollars. This high level of tax revenue can be attributed in part to 'big box' retailers such as Wal-Mart, making Ware a regional shopping destination. The top ten business taxpayers' combined levies are equal to approximately 99 single-family properties. Although retaining and enhancing Warren's industrial, commercial, construction, real estate and agricultural tax base is vital to maintaining the relative low average single-family property tax bill and thereby helping to pay for municipal services like schools, roads, police, and public assistance, losing one of these major taxpayers would not have an overly adverse effect on the local tax base.

**Table 38: Industrial Tax Base Comparison**

<b>Community</b>	<b>FY2004Tax Rate</b>	<b>Industrial Tax Levied</b>	<b>Assessed Valuation</b>	<b>% of Total Tax Levy</b>
<b>Warren</b>	18.18	\$145,097	\$9.6 mill.	4.2%
<b>Palmer</b>	16.03	\$687,996	\$42.8 mill.	5.95%
<b>Ware</b>	17.86	\$324,739	\$18 mill.	3.76%
<b>Brimfield</b>	18.00	\$63,323	\$3.5 mill.	1.43%
<b>Brookfield</b>	15.73	\$15,531	\$0.98 mill.	0.51%

Source: Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training

**Figure 19: Industrial and Commercial Tax Base Comparison 2004**

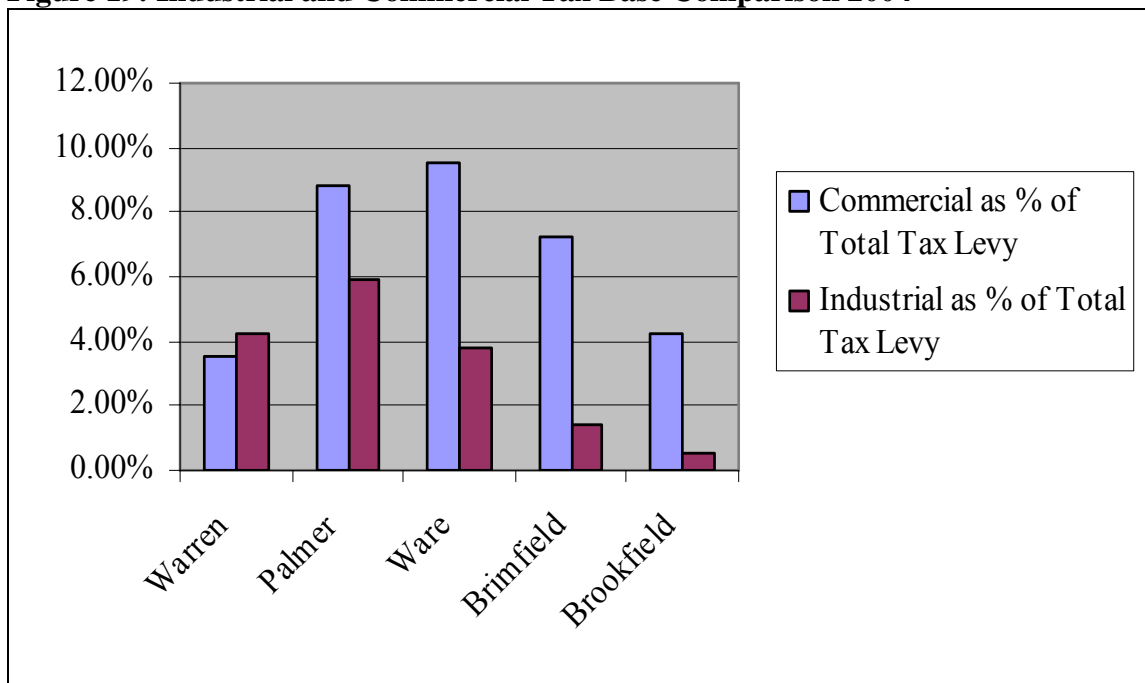


Table 38 and Figure 19 show that Palmer and Warren net the most taxes from industrial development in the region compared to the rest of the comparable communities.

### **8.b Basic Infrastructural Conditions**

The road network in Warren consists of State Routes that traverse Warren in both a north/south and east/west direction and numerous, smaller town-managed roads. Route 67 runs through the village centers, but truck traffic is limited by low clearance under a rail in Warren Center Village at the intersection of Main St. and Route 19, which limits commercial and industrial traffic entering and passing through town. A major element of the road network in Warren is the Massachusetts Turnpike (Interstate 90), running across the southern part of town. However, there is no direct access to the Turnpike via Warren, so residents must take local roads through Palmer to enter and exit. The lack of access currently hinders regional accessibility to local residents, but also has the effect of moderating development. This issue will be addressed in Chapter 15. A freight rail line also parallels the Quaboag River through town, but does not currently service Warren. There is no active rail station in town and no commuter rail service. At one time there existed a rail spur servicing the local mills, however there is no current spur and no remnant of a previously existing spur in the West Warren mill complex area.

Both village centers and immediately surrounding areas are serviced by standard utilities, including water, sewer, electric, natural gas, phone and cable television. In general utility management is the same for both villages, with the exception of water, which is managed by two separate water districts, Warren and West Warren. Additionally, the village of West Warren is partially serviced by a fire protection system that is privately owned and managed as part of the mill complex. These will be discussed in more detail below.

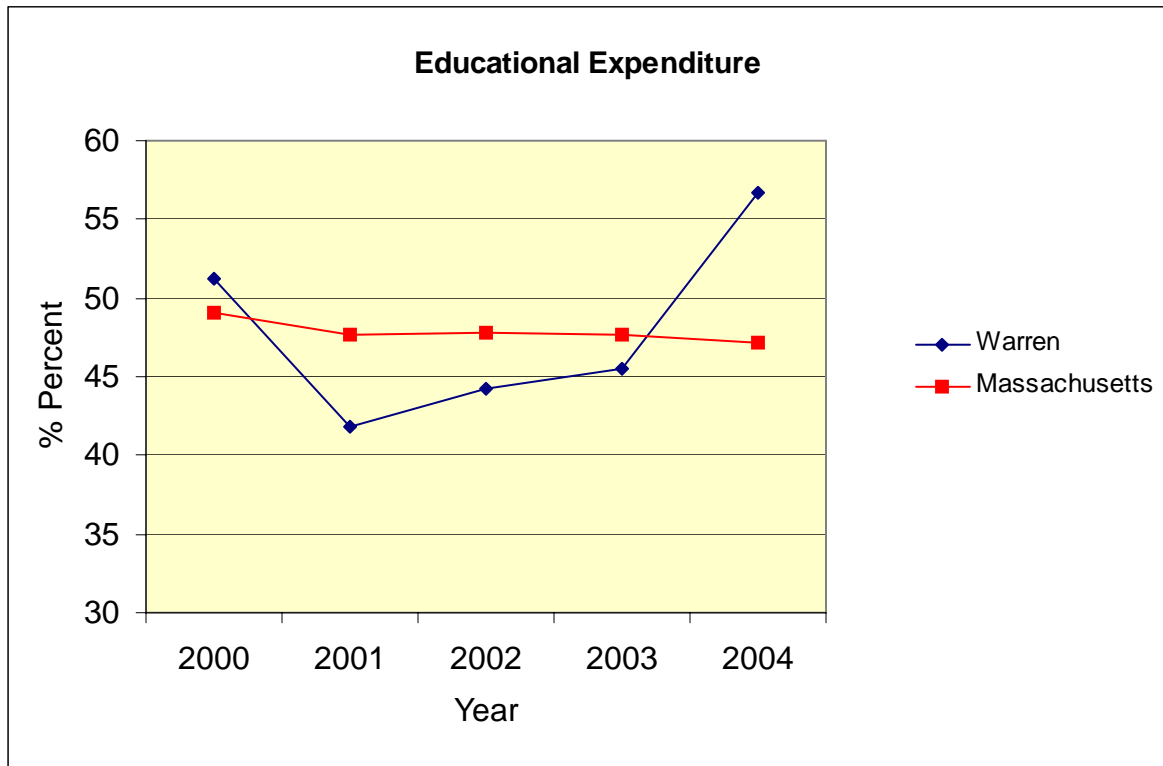
## 8.c Selected Town Departments

### *Education:*

*Organization:* Warren is a partner in the Quaboag Regional School District. The town operates Warren Community Elementary School, located in West Warren. Warren is also served by Quaboag Regional Middle/High School, which is shared with the Town of West Brookfield. The Superintendent of Schools deals with school administration and operations as well as curriculum and programming. The Business Manager deals with financial and budgetary issues. In addition to the School Committee for the district, each school in also has its own School Council of 7-10 members, including the school Principal, teachers, parents and community members.

*Staff:* The district Superintendent and Business Manager oversee the work of department personnel, including an Administrator of Special Education, Special Legal Counsel, Curriculum and Technology Coordinators, secretaries and bookkeepers. District staff also includes educational specialists, health care professionals and service personnel, among others. All the schools in the district have Principals in charge of daily operations and programs, supervising the work of the teachers; the Regional Middle/High School and the Warren Community Elementary School have Assistant Principals as well.

**Figure 20: Educational Expenditure as a Percentage of Town Budget**



*Budget:* The town's most significant expenditure is for education. The amount allocated for education has risen from just over 40% of the total expenditure in 2001 to over 55% in 2004. This increase was a result of the renovation and expansion costs associated with the Quaboag Regional Middle/High School. The regional school district's 2004 budget was approximately \$3,200,000.

*Current and Ongoing Issues:* Warren is responsible for 64% of the operational costs of the Quaboag Regional Middle/High School, with West Brookfield contributing the remaining 36%. The recent renovation and expansion of the Middle/High School has created a significant debt service for Warren, and outstanding issues regarding renovation and expansion costs and problems are preventing access to State funding, creating a significant ongoing expense for Warren, totaling approximately \$6,000,000.

Although Warren's population has been rising, the number of children enrolled in Warren schools has remained stable over the past decade. In 1997 there were 904 students enrolled in K-12; in 2004 that number had decreased slightly to 896. However, growth rates for population over 18 years old and under 18 years old have been similar, at 7.6% for 18 and over and 6.6% for under 18 between 1990 to 2000.<sup>20</sup>

### ***Water Departments:***

#### *Warren Water District*

*Organization:* A three-member district elected Board of Water Commissioners, each elected for a three-year term by registered voters living in the Warren Water District, manages the Water Department. The Water Superintendent is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Department and is appointed by the Board.

*Staff:* The Department is headed by the Water Superintendent, who is EPA certified; there are three part-time staff members and some administrative support staff available as well.

*Budget:* For the fiscal year 2005, the Department had an operating budget of \$300,000.

*Facilities:* The Department's main facility is located on Old West Brookfield Road. There is a pumping station at Comins Pond Road.

Warren is a private water district where the customers pay for the system's operation. It should be noted that currently the water rates are not subsidized; this means that the fees have to be increased or decreased based on the annual budget. The department, however, has some funding available through grants such as CDBG (Community Development Block Grants) and USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) Rural Development Grants. These grants are project-specific and, in the case of the USDA, part of the fund comes in form of a loan that must be paid back once the project is completed. At present

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<sup>20</sup> Source: U.S. Census, 1990, 2000

the department has extended what they can borrow, so that loans have to be paid off before new ones can be applied for.

#### *West Warren Water District*

*Organization:* A three-member district elected Board of Water Commissioners, each elected for a three-year term by registered voters living in the Warren Water District, manages the Water Department. Chartered in 1985, the West Warren Water District was formed as a private water district. Currently, the department has no building or office space available. Most of the operations are run from different locations in West Warren. Doing this saves the department a considerable amount of money that would otherwise go towards paying rent and utility bills.

*Staff:* The Department is headed by the Water Superintendent, who is EPA certified.

*Budget:* For the fiscal year 2005, the Department has an operating budget of \$80,000.

*Facilities:* The Department's main pumping station is located on Route 19. There is a well located on Brimfield Road and a storage tank on Crouch Road (capacity: 0.25 million gallons). The well located on the Brimfield Road went online in 1985. The Department can also utilize a surface water source (Comins Pond) in case of emergencies. Comins Pond is currently not an active water supply source and its water is not treated. The water systems average daily capacity is roughly 70,000 gpd with no significant increase in the summer time peak demand. The department serves about 260 customers at present. The Department uses a metered system to keep track of water usage.

#### *Current and Ongoing projects:*

With the Wright Company in the process of downsizing operations, the department has to address future concerns. (Old water lines in this area are the property of the Wright Company). Laying down new pipes will actually help clarify the issue of ownership. There is feasibility study being carried out for connecting the fire hydrant line with the existing water lines and then extending it further down to Pulaski Street. The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission has applied for CDBG funds to upgrade water and sewer lines in West Warren Village.

#### ***Sewer Department:***

*Organization:* The Sewer Department is managed by a three-member town elected Board of Sewer Commissioners, which meets on a monthly basis. The Sewer Superintendent is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Department. A superintendent for the treatment plant is also appointed by the Board.

*Staff:* The Department's staff consists of four full-time employees.

*Budget:* For the fiscal year 2005, the Department had an operating budget of \$500,000.

*Treatment Plant:* The Town of Warren constructed the present wastewater treatment plant in 1989, which is located in West Warren on West Main St. Treated wastewater is discharged into the Quaboag River. The treatment plant's National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit has to be updated every five years. The current permit will expire on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005; the plant is currently permitted to discharge 1.5 million gallons per day (gpd) of wastewater. The system currently treats an average of 650,000 gallons of wastewater per day. This is well below the system's maximum capacity. The system has no problems with groundwater infiltrating sewer pipes; many of these pipes, although old (around 45 years), are well maintained. There are no problems reported with the system in the event of a heavy storm. The plant also treats industrial wastewater; industries must follow a pretreatment process before they can actually send the water to the plants. The Sewer department is responsible for making sure that this process is being carried out properly. The sludge from the Plant is hauled off by private contractors to the Upper Blackstone Valley (Millbury). The Sewer Department currently does not have a system expansion plan.

*Water Quality Issues:* Lately EPA has been concerned with the amounts of copper discharged by the Waste Treatment Plant. This problem arises from the fact that residential and commercial wastewater is mixed before treatment. EPA is now requiring the department to monitor its discharge of the chemical, resulting in a significant decrease in copper level.

*General Issues Facing the Department:*

- The department does not have a policy on treating industrial wastewater. This could make it difficult for new industries to tie into the existing sewer systems because there is no clear line access available for the new industries.
- The Sewer Department does not have a plan for sewer line expansion, nor has it reserved any excess capacity for future economic development.
- Staffing is a concern at the Waste Treatment Plant.
- Presently the department is barely bringing in enough revenue to cover its operating costs. This has in turn made it necessary to raise service rates.
- Wastewater treatment plant needs a new parking lot and a roof.
- Some of the storage tanks are in need of repairs.

*Fire Department:*

*Organization:* The Board of Selectmen appoints the Fire Chief (under Chapter 48, Section 42), who appoints all other officers of the department.

*Staff:* Including the fire chief, there are three full-time and one part-time employees. There are 34 paid on-call fire fighters who serve as needed. The on-call fire fighters receive an annual stipend and are paid by the hour whenever they respond to emergencies. The Department does not have any clerical support and hires outside contractors for ambulance billing only. The Department is part of the District #7 Fire/

Ambulance Mutual Aid compact, which consist of 26 Worcester County communities and is also a part of the State Mobilization team.

*Budget:* For the fiscal year 2005, the Department had an operating budget of \$274,951.

*Facility:* the current fire stations in Warren and West Warren were built in 1951 and 1952 respectively. In terms of housing the Department's equipment, the stations have adequate storage capacity, but are at near full storage capacity with little or no additional room for new equipment. However, the Department feels that it does not at present require any substations in the outlying areas to address future growth.

*Permits Issued:* Most of the permits issued by the department required onsite inspections. The Department conducts inspections for fire alarms and sprinkler systems for businesses, industries, residences, schools, and day care facilities.

*Programs:* The Department offers fire safety programs to a variety of audiences, particularly school-age children. These programs consist of CPR/ first aid; educational talks and fire extinguisher use. The main target audience includes scout groups, senior citizens, elementary and middle/high school students. Other programs include home safety and escape planning. The fire safety programs are made available through a S.A.F.E. grant from the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services.

*Other Responsibilities:* The Fire Department is the first line of response for hazardous waste spills. The Department will call in the State's regional hazardous materials response team if the spill is more than they can handle. The Department also provides rescue services for auto accidents, rapid intervention teams, as well as emergency medical services and advanced life support assistance.

### ***Police Department***

*Organization:* The Board of Selectmen appoints the Police Chief (under Chapter 41, Section 97A) for a three-year contract. They also appoint all remaining personnel.

*Staff:* The Department has 6 full-time officers (including the Chief of Police), nine part-time police officers, four full-time dispatchers, three part-time dispatchers, and a part-time maintenance person.

*Budget:* For the fiscal year 2005, the Department had an operating budget of \$580,183

*Facility:* The Police Department has its headquarters in the former Town Hall building. While there is a great deal of available room in the building, its existing floor plan and condition are not suitable (without major capital expenditure and structural renovation) for accommodating the growing needs of the department to expand its operations or to meet current and future state requirements in terms of lockup, accessibility, building safety standards, etc.

*Programs:* The department offers several programs to the public, which includes senior citizens, school children and members of the community at large. These include safety programs such as R.A.D (rape aggression defense for women and children) ongoing school safety programs and various community safety outreach initiatives. The cost of these programs is mostly covered by grant funding opportunities, with the balance of the costs coming from police operating funds.

*Issues Facing the Department:* A major issue facing the department is the significant reduction in the availability of funding programs. Most grant-funding programs are available through the United States Department of Justice. Because of heightened security concerns nationwide, the funds previously available to smaller departments are increasingly redirected to larger city and metropolitan departments.

An issue of particular concern is the current police facility. The station lacks handicapped accessibility, adequate locker facilities, has high energy costs associated with the age and condition of the old Town Hall building, inadequate space for its communications functions, for public restroom facilities, and for safe access to the building for arrestees.

It should be noted that once the census population for the town exceeds 5000 people, the police station must have an approved prisoner lockup facility, or the town will be ineligible for various grant-funding programs. It would be impractical and cost-prohibitive to construct a prisoner lockup in the current facility. All lockups must meet State and Federal accessibility, safety and facility guidelines in order to gain approval.

### ***Council on Aging:***

*Organization:* The Council on Aging (COA) currently consists of seven members, appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The COA selects one its members to serve as chairman of the board. The members help form policy on how the senior center will be operated

*Staff:* The staff consists of a Director, a lunch coordinator, and a maintenance person. These three are the only paid personnel at the center.

### ***Budget:***

*Facility:* The facility is in a large room, which can accommodate 120 people; a fully equipped kitchen; and three smaller rooms, one of which is the office. The programs, which are available daily, include cooked meals five days a week, pitch card games on Monday evenings, cribbage on Tuesdays, bingo on Wednesday afternoons, Tai-chi (cost \$3.00) and cribbage on Thursdays. Friday afternoon is also a weekly bingo meeting. A monthly birthday party is given with great entertainment at a cost of only \$5.00 each. The center averages 70 to 80 people each month for this function. A blood pressure clinic is given free each month from Mary Lane Hospital. During the course of the year there are

a variety of the guest speakers touching on various subjects that are of interest and concern for seniors. A bus trip every other month to Foxwoods casino is offered to the seniors for \$20.00; bus trips to other functions are available throughout the year at a moderate cost. Also available is an outreach worker (home visitor) program. This is funded with a grant from the office of Elder Affairs. The center also offers rides for medical appointments to the seniors, which are operated with volunteers who receive a small stipend for providing this service. This service is fully funded by the Town of Warren and is called Medi-van (private car transportation)

## Chapter 9. Transportation: Maintenance and Modification

### 9.a Current Network

One of the most important resources available to a community is the transportation network. A safe, efficient, multimodal transportation system is important for a town's economic development and sustainability. Achieving a balance between network efficiency, safety, and quality of life by realistically planning for the movement of goods, services, and people will help ensure that the town remains economically competitive.

The Master Plan approach is divided into three main areas. First, short-term projects can be addressed through relatively low effort, with current staffing and funding. Middle-range planning addresses projects that may require a little more effort, namely additional recourse allocation, both financially and institutionally. Finally, longer-term projects include major improvements to be addressed by means of a more comprehensive capital planning and investment process. These latter efforts typically require a greater deal of anticipatory or proactive planning, preparation and effort.

Warren has a diverse roadway network, including Turnpike Frontage, State Routes, and local roads. Much of the town's roadway network is maintained by Highway Department workers, employed by the town. There is one signalized intersection, at the intersection of North St. and South St. in West Warren, which is owned and operated by the Massachusetts Highway Department. The lengths of the major collector roadways that provide a high degree of mobility, accessibility and use for inter-city regional travel are:



Route 19 – 3.7 miles

Route 67 – 5.5 miles

Warren's 4.38 miles of Massachusetts Turnpike Frontage (which at 4 lanes = 17.52 lane miles), combined with the town's proximity to Turnpike Interchanges 8 and 9 and high housing prices in the greater Boston area, have started to make Warren a more attractive community not only to those who work in the metropolitan Springfield and Worcester areas but also to those looking for an affordable, albeit long, commute to Boston. Proximity to Turnpike access makes Warren an attractive community for those looking to travel east or west in the state or out of state (e.g., Hartford, CT).

Travel times from Warren to the Massachusetts Turnpike (without traffic delays):

- Interchange 8 - Palmer, MA 20 Minutes
- Interchange 9 - Sturbridge, MA 20 Minutes

Similar to other communities, the combination of available land and Turnpike frontage makes Warren potentially attractive for larger traffic generators (i.e., major roadways). Large traffic generators may significantly impact the transportation network, however, on both a local and regional level. In considering a prospective interchange, Warren may want to address potential network impacts through anticipatory planning.

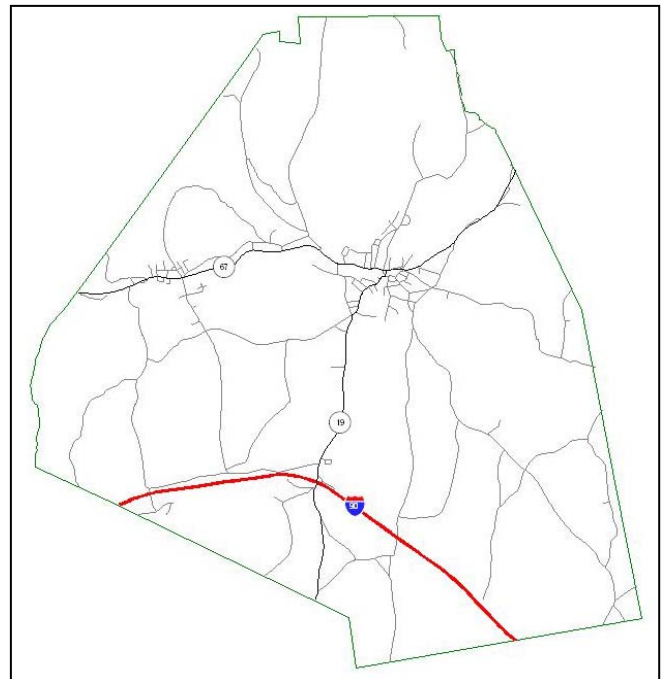
Some short-term improvements fall under the heading of annual maintenance, therefore, if they can be identified, they may be implemented in a routine manner, with very little expense. Furthermore, such improvements may save the town money in the long run, both directly and indirectly. Signage improvements that reduce the number of crashes may have a multitude of additional benefits, e.g., long-term cost savings, encouraging greater walkability. Similarly, operational improvements not only reduce trip travel time, they also have the potential for improving air quality.

Projects that can be easily solved through low-cost improvements may also help increase mobility, reduce congestion, and improve safety. For example, citizens may have concerns about peak-hour traffic at a certain intersections because of the number of left-turning vehicles and lack of adequate space to accommodate waiting vehicles. A simple solution may be to limit access, i.e., install a sign prohibiting left turns during peak hours.

Larger transportation issues may be more complicated, requiring substantial funding, design, and construction. For example, citizens may have concerns about the time and turning required for a tractor trailer to negotiate a corner at an intersection. A revised engineering design and major construction may be required to adequately address the dimensions of the intersection.

#### **Map 9: Warren's Road Network**

One of the first steps in producing any sort of future plan is to inventory the existing transportation system. The goal of the inventory would be to augment and integrate data readily available through the MassGIS website. A Master Plan is an initial step in collecting and creating such a data clearinghouse. It is then the town's responsibility to decide where it would like to invest future resources, a process which can be facilitated through use of Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping. Signs, infrastructure changes (roadway width, guardrail location), and pavement markings are examples of features that may be inventoried and included in the GIS inventory. Although the benefit may not be immediately apparent, the town is in a relatively early stage, and



the high start-up costs to create such a system will be beneficial in the long run.

## **9.b Potential Issues**

### *MUTCD Compliance*

The Manual On Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) is a federal manual that provides standards, guidance and direction for installation of traffic control devices, including but not limited to signs, pavement markings and traffic signals. The Manual has recently adopted a number of compliance dates governing many traffic control devices, including street signs. Compliance dates have been established for street sign size and visibility/legibility. The town should review the Manual and begin to plan for future sign installations, whether it is for replacement or upgrade. Having the opportunity to spread investment out over a number of years as part of the upgrades has a number of advantages, including a financial savings for the town.

Furthermore, the town may wish to review the entire manual, because there are a number of new regulations and standards that the town may not yet have addressed based on its current network organization, e.g., replacing pavement markings. One example of this situation involves new standards for edge-line pavement markings. The requirement for installing edge lines is dependent on current traffic volume. Based on future roadway volumes, however, the town may eventually need to include edge-line markings on many of their roads that do not have said markings. As illustrated above, the town should make every effort possible to begin the phasing in of such requirements.

### *Warren Center Village*

Creating a safe and efficient transportation system for all users is a challenge for any town. Achieving a proper balance of access and mobility in the Warren Center area is a major challenge. Providing mobility through the village center area is Route 67, which runs through the Central Business District (CBD). Complicating mobility is the number of destinations in the village center area visited on a regular basis, as well as the frequency of on-street parking maneuvers.



*Aerial view of Warren Center network*



The Community Development Group, supported by CDBG funding secured by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), hired a consulting firm to present Warren Center Village redesign and redevelopment alternatives that address current traffic and parking issues. This Master Plan document will coordinate its findings and

recommendations with those of this ongoing CDBG project. Beyond the eventual outcome of that project, there are several related issues, including but not limited to:

#### *The area around the Civil War Memorial*

From an operational and spatial perspective, the area around the statue is confusing to negotiate, especially for drivers unfamiliar with local driving patterns. Shorter-term solutions may include delineating preferred travel areas with pavement markers or with curbing. These solutions are relatively inexpensive and may be implemented by town personnel, depending on available resources.

#### *Access Drives/Angled Parking*

Several access drives, including the Spencer Savings Bank drive-through, outlet onto Route 67, in some cases between angled parking spaces, creating a safety concern for drivers exiting parking lots as well as for those traveling on the roadway. Drivers exiting the three access drives must slowly edge their way out onto Route 67 to get a clear view of oncoming traffic. This can be dangerous – the front end of the driver's vehicle is partially in the travel lane



before the driver can determine whether or not an acceptable gap exists in the approaching travel lanes. Even though parking areas adjacent to the access drive are designated 'compact cars only,' there remains an enforcement issue as well as a practical issue. Even if the designation is enforced, compact vehicles in those locations still create a potentially unsafe situation – trunks and hoods can block one's view of the two traffic streams eastbound and westbound.

#### *Intersection of Washington Street and East Street*

This intersection is operationally challenging because of the limited sight distance for drivers traveling southbound on Washington Street. Drivers traveling east on East Street must edge out into the intersection until they can see as much of the approach on their left (Washington Street) as possible. This configuration creates a potentially unsafe situation for those traveling through the intersection.

#### *Intersection of Southbridge Road and Brookfield Road*

There have been a number of complaints related to the intersection of Southbridge Road and Brookfield Road. Short-term solutions have included the addition of a 'Yield' sign on the Southbridge Road approach. Drivers going southwest on Brookfield Road have limited sight distance of the intersection, and as a result, the town has installed a sign 'Dangerous Intersection' on the approach. Both of these approaches, with limited sight distance on Brookfield Road, create an unsafe situation.

#### *Quaboag Regional Middle/High School*

Issues associated with Quaboag Regional Middle/High School are centered on the buses and the students. Because of limited turning radii at the intersection of Old West

Brookfield Road and Route 67, buses can cause weekday delays for vehicles on all approaches. Old West Brookfield Road has some severe changes in horizontal alignment (i.e., twists and turns) and the road width is limited in a number of areas. One of the concerns when students use this road is that they may jeopardize their safety when traveling at excessive speeds.



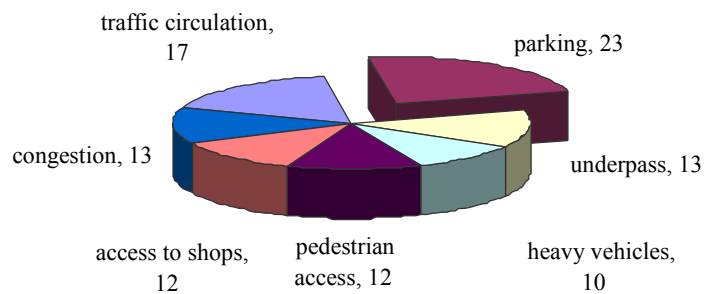
### 9.c Public Concerns

As with the other parts of the master plan, several specific survey questions were generated for the transportation network. There were four major questions regarding the transportation network in town, in which respondents were to rank order their response. The questions posed were: What Warren Center transportation issues are most significant to you? What are the major traffic concerns in the two school areas (Community Elementary and Regional Middle/High School)? What alternate modes of transportation would you favor?

The main issue in Warren Center appears to be parking. The town may wish to further qualify this response with a more refined study or survey that addresses parking turnover rates, occupancy, and the need for specialty parking (e.g., handicap access spaces). After parking, one of the larger areas for concern is traffic circulation. Again, a study could be performed to clarify and specify major issues.

Considering the extent of pavement in Warren center, more short-term improvements, such as pavement markings, may be a precursor to a larger redesign. The remaining issues, with percentages less than 15 percent of the total, include congestion, rail underpass, access to shops, pedestrian access, and heavy vehicles.

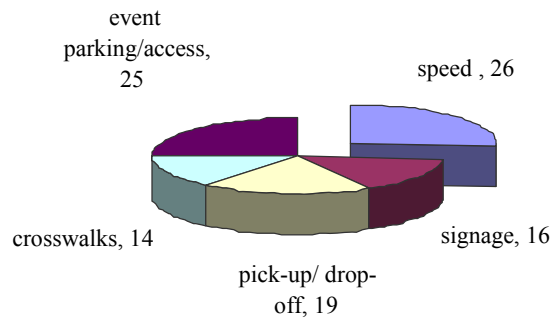
**Figure 21: Most Significant Village Center Issues, %**



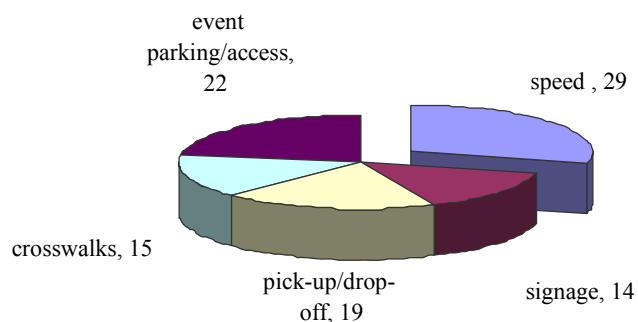
Two questions were posed with regard to the schools in town. Of those who responded with regard to issues near the elementary school, the two most cited issues, at about 1 in 4 for each, are speeding and event parking/access. For both these issues, additional studies are recommended. Realizing that speeding may be a perception issue, there are a number of

passive and active data collection techniques available to quantify the concern. Similarly, event parking/access can be evaluated during those specific intervals through observation and other data collection methods. The remaining issues can be further qualified through additional evaluation, namely pick-up/drop-off, signage, and crosswalks.

**Figure 22: Major Issues Near Elementary School, %**



**Figure 23: Major Issues Near Regional Middle/High School, %**

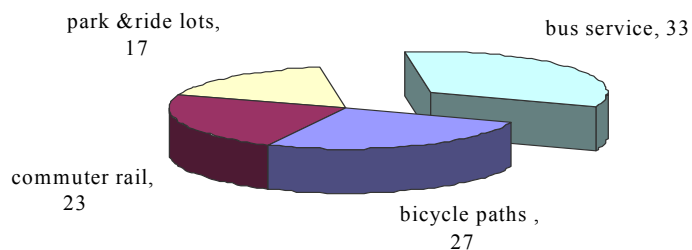


Concerns regarding the Quaboag regional middle/high school, in terms of priority, largely mirror those at the community elementary school. Speeding is the most frequently cited issue at nearly 30%, with event parking/access cited by nearly a quarter of respondents.

Pick-up/drop-off, crosswalks, and signage are lesser though still significant concerns. As with the recommendations for the community elementary school, more specific studies could be performed to further test these perceptions.

A question designed to gauge residents' interest in alternative modes of transportation aimed to identify town residents' preferences. The most widespread interest (1 in 3) was for having regular bus service.

**Figure 24: Favored Alternative Modes of Transportation, %**



Another area with high interest was bicycle paths. Bicycle paths, typically referred to as off-road facilities, could also be interpreted as on-road facilities (bike lanes), with pavement markings delineating a usable road shoulder. Commuter rail to Warren and park and ride lots were of interest as well. At some future point it may become worthwhile to begin to study the feasibility of a commuter rail link and then to consider park and ride lots. Such a development, however, depends on overcoming the limitation of a single rail line through town, currently without stops, and would make sense only in the context of a significant expansion of town population as a result of development scenarios two (revitalized village centers bedroom community) and three (regionally-integrated economic attractor).

(Please see further discussion of these questions and their limitations in the next chapter.)

## ***Part E            Summary***

### **Chapter 10.   Questionnaire, General Survey Results and Public Comments**

This chapter is intended to provide an overview of the perspectives and concerns of the community, which have been identified with the aid of a number of data collection methods. The primary methods include: a questionnaire targeted specifically to town officials and board members; a general survey sent to every household in Warren; public forums and focus groups soliciting input from local residents, business and community leaders; and conversations with members of the community. These forms of participation have been supplemented by historical and demographic research to create a profile of the Town of Warren and to identify the core values and goals of the community.

Public participation has, and will continue to be, a critical component of the planning process. Identification of the various strategies and scenarios available to the town has been based not only on analysis of demographic and economic data, but also on direct feedback from members of the community. This involvement allows for the identification and implementation of plans and strategies that can help to realize the goals and desires of town residents.

The UMass Project Team created a six-page questionnaire that was distributed to MPC members as well as to town officials and commissioners. Rather than a survey, which seeks a large sample response to a limited, focused set of questions in order to generate statistically significant, readily quantifiable data, this broader questionnaire involved a smaller group of respondents asked about a wider, more open-ended range of issues. The intent was to generate a broad-based body of qualitative information, which would help direct the UMass team's subsequent research and develop the more focused general survey, sent to town residents in January 2005. Basic questions in the MPC/town official questionnaire are paraphrased and summarized below; the original full text of the questionnaire and its results can be found in Appendix A.

#### ***Land Use/Natural Resources/Open Space***

1. Which of the following land uses should Warren most encourage?
2. Which of the following approaches should Warren consider regarding the issue of growth or non-growth?
3. If growth is to occur, do you feel it is the responsibility of the taxpayer or the developer to take on the burden of paying for growth related costs such as utility extensions (water, sewer, etc., and utility plant improvement)?
4. Which areas of town are in your view most likely for new residential development?
5. Which areas of town are in your view most likely for new commercial development?
6. Which areas of town are in your view most likely for underused/vacant buildings?
7. Which if any environmental impacts of new development are you concerned about?  
[Water quality (drinking and/or recreation); Open Space; Woodland; Wetland; Historic Buildings; Traffic; Waste; Other (e.g., quality of life, town character, personal security)]

### ***Community Resources/Town Services/Housing***

1. How would you rate the overall quality of housing stock in Warren?
2. How would you rate the overall affordability of housing stock in Warren?
3. What types of new housing do you think ought to be built in Warren?
4. What is your view regarding current or proposed housing developments in your area?
5. What are the main service/facility improvements that you would like to see in Warren?
6. Please rate the adequacy of the following community services and facilities in Warren.
7. Of the services and facilities you considered 'in need of improvement' or 'inadequate/none,' which three should be given the highest priority by the town?
8. Where do you and your family most frequently obtain the following goods/services?
9. From the above list or other, which types of venue for goods/services or do you think are most needed in Warren?
10. Please identify recreational programs or facilities in Warren that you and your family regularly use (e.g., parks, playgrounds, athletic facilities, meeting places).
11. Please identify recreational programs or facilities outside Warren that you and your family regularly use (e.g., parks, playgrounds, athletic facilities, meeting places).
12. How would you rate recreational programs and/or facilities in the Town of Warren?
13. Do you think that the following groups have sufficient recreational and community opportunities in the Town of Warren?
14. What major recreation and/or community improvements would you like to see made in Warren during the next year?

### ***Transportation/Town Engineering***

1. What are the major issues (e.g., traffic volume/flow, safety, access, orientation) regarding the existing transportation network? Please be sure to consider pedestrians, cyclists, etc. as well as drivers:
2. Where are the transportation 'hot spots' - areas/intersections that experience periods of significant difficulty of access or congestion? How much trucking passes through town?
3. Where are the areas/intersections/roadways that are considered to be 'dangerous'? For what reason(s), e.g., speed, visibility, road conditions, etc.?
4. Where are the areas/intersections/roadways that are considered to be in serious need of maintenance/repair? For what reason(s), e.g., heavy volume, climate conditions, funding?
5. Which areas of town are underserved by the current transportation network? Where might be the most promising/desirable areas for new transportation construction?
6. What is needed/desired in the town to foster multi-modal connectivity (e.g., a bike path connecting areas in town; park and ride facilities, bus service)?

### ***History and Culture/Economic Development***

1. How long have you lived in Warren? What has been the biggest change in your time?
2. What do you think are the predominant images or associations people have of Warren (e.g., railroad, manufacturing, ethnic or religious communities, landscape features)?
3. Who are the most knowledgeable (non-committee) people you know about Warren's past or present cultural life (e.g., celebrations, parades, commemorations, monuments)?
4. Which community groups or organizations have done the most to preserve or record Warren's traditional ways of life?
5. What are the most desirable/distinctive aspects of day-to-day life in Warren?

6. What are some disadvantages/disappointments, if any, of day-to-day life in Warren?
7. What are the major changes, if any, that you have experienced in Warren over the past ten years?
8. What do you regard as the major threats, pressures, and challenges to preserving a desirable quality of life and sense of community identity in Warren (e.g., an influx of new and/or transient residents, younger residents moving away, lack of funding/resources)?
9. What are the qualities/distinctive features of Warren you would most like to preserve (e.g., landscape features, scenic views, historic buildings, town centers)?
10. Which of the following descriptions would you most like to see characterize the Town of Warren ten years from now? Small mill town (more or less as it has been); Bedroom community to the adjacent regional centers; community; Adaptable, self-sufficient community with some agriculture, manufacturing, retail; Other (e.g., visitor destination, regional crossroads, etc.)

A General Survey was sent out to 2000 households in Warren at the end of December 2004. The MPC received the overwhelming majority of responses during the month of January 2005, and continued to receive responses through the month of February into early March. The total number of surveys returned was approximately 940, but for a variety of reasons, the project team decided to count 810 of them in our main tabulation. The remainder, while presenting a distribution similar to those in the main tabulation, raised several methodological issues, regarding which the team has erred on the side of caution. The key questions in the survey are paraphrased and summarized below; the original full text of the survey and its results can be found in Appendices B and C.

The General Survey received a response rate greater than 40%, totaling 810 responses, an excellent response rate for this type of survey, which in itself is an indication of the dedication and desire of the residents of Warren to see the Town develop in a manner that meets their needs. Please see Appendix C for a full, detailed tabulation.

1. What do you think should be Warren's approach to new growth and new lands uses?
2. What is your view of the rate of development in Warren over the **past** five years?  
[residential and commercial]
3. What is your preference for the rate of development in Warren over the **next** ten years?  
[residential and commercial]
4. What is your view regarding the desirability of funding affordable housing?
5. How would you rate the quality of each of the following town services?  
[Fire; Police; Board of Health; Public Schools; Water; Sewer; Council on Aging; Library; Building Inspection; Highway]
6. Of these, which town service(s) do you find difficult to access (location, hours, etc.)?
7. What is your view of Warren acquiring and protecting open space?
8. What is your view of Warren encouraging redevelopment of unused mill buildings?
9. Which types of economic redevelopment should Warren most encourage?
10. What in your view should be the major funding/investment priorities for the town?
11. If you favor open space preservation/conservation which uses would you like to see?
12. Which, if any, aspects of Warren would you like to preserve or protect for the future?
13. Where should the town direct financial resources for transportation improvements?

14. What types of new housing do you think ought to be built in Warren?
15. What village center transportation issues are most significant to you?
16. What are the major traffic concerns in the school areas?
17. What alternative modes of transportation would you favor for the town?

In terms of an overall summary of the survey results, respondents favored greater encouragement of new growth and land use by a 2 to 1 margin (roughly 44% to 22%) over those favoring discouragement, with roughly 33% wishing to maintain current rates. When asked more specifically about residential growth and commercial growth, both as perceived in recent years and as preferred for future years, an inverse picture emerged: respondents overwhelmingly (over 8 in 10) regarded residential growth as too fast, and a comparable number (roughly 7 in 10) preferred a slower rate in the future. On the other hand, nearly 8 in 10 considered the recent rate of commercial development to be too slow, and desired (almost 6 in 10) a faster growth rate over the next decade. One might read these responses as indicating strong support for economic development and growth within the village center zoning districts and for management of growth in the residential and rural zones. This complements survey responses regarding open space protection, favored by over 8 in 10 respondents. As for open space priorities, well over half of those responding identified hiking as a top priority, followed by picnic/play areas (nearly half), biking (4 in 10), fishing (3 in 10), and sports facilities (1 in 4).

Economic development, while clearly a preference and priority for a majority of respondents, will require a careful balancing of public and private investment toward the goal of business improvement partnerships. Close to 6 in 10 favored public funding for business improvement as a major priority. An overwhelming majority, however, favored attracting private investment via tax incentives rather than town acquisition as a strategy to encourage redevelopment of unused or underused buildings. As for preferred sectors for economic development, respondents ranked light manufacturing highest (6 in 10), with retail (over half), professional/technical offices and services (roughly 3 in 10 each) and tourism (1 in 4) garnering significant support.

Regarding town services, respondents generally expressed satisfaction, with most giving a good/adequate rating for most municipal departments, especially Police and Fire. The Board of Health (limited staffing, hours) and School District (performance, share of town budget) each received somewhat more mixed reviews. The Warren Public Library was largely well regarded, except for a preference for more hours, space, and access. The lowest level of satisfaction in the survey, albeit still largely positive, was with Building Inspection (performance, timely response) and Highway (maintenance). Recognizing the need to maintain adequate public services to accommodate growth, nearly 6 in 10 survey respondents regarded those services as their top funding priority, with over half likewise identifying public education as important, 4 in 10 citing preservation/conservation and 3 in 10 citing infrastructure. As for preservation/conservation priorities, well over half the survey respondents selected historic buildings as a major priority, followed by farmlands and woodlands (over 4 in 10), parks, and town centers (over 3 in 10).

The final four survey questions, which had to do with ranking preferences for housing types and for transportation concerns or alternatives, produced ambiguous results because respondents answered them in different ways based on different readings of the ranking instructions. Nevertheless, despite the ambiguity, they did produce some valid findings in terms of housing (overwhelming support for moderately-priced single family starter homes, moderate support for duplex and senior housing, and limited support for multi-family and low-income housing) and transportation (see previous chapter for detailed summary).

In addition to the survey, a focus group was held with West Warren residents and business owners to discuss economic development and revitalization of the West Warren village center. The contributions of these participants provided information regarding the history of Warren and its commercial activity, perspectives on recent events and trends, and opinions regarding future development at a level of detail not possible through the survey alone. This public response was critical in helping to identify the path commercial development has taken historically, and the feelings of community members regarding the types of future growth that are both desirable and feasible. Specific anecdotes related to the difficulties in attracting businesses and services, such as medical offices, were brought to light that otherwise may have gone unnoticed in the data-gathering process. The focus group forum included a mapping exercise and a brainstorming discussion. Other means of communication were also critical in the process of information gathering, such as regular meetings with the Warren Master Plan Committee and interviews with local residents and officials. A similar focus group public forum was held in October 2005 to address issues of open space, natural resources and parks and recreation.

This Master Plan document has so far provided an inventory of existing conditions for the Town of Warren, including general geographic, demographic, and economic trends, and specific aspects of local and regional context. Additionally, the basic desires and goals of the community have been identified based on surveys, interviews and other direct interaction planning activities carried out as part of the preliminary research for this plan. Following this profile of the town, the Phase Two component of the report below will identify action steps and strategies, both for comparable small towns in general and for Warren in particular. These strategies will then be incorporated into a detailed elaboration of the scenarios the town may wish to pursue, along with recommendations suggesting how to achieve the development goals and objectives preferred by the community.

## **Phase Two: Implementation Strategies and Recommendations**

### ***Part F            Introduction***

#### **Chapter 11.   Visions and Goals**

Phase One of this Master Plan document represents the culmination of our initial research efforts in collecting geographic, economic, and demographic data to compile a baseline analysis of Warren's past and present conditions as well as recent trend shifts in those areas. This research has been complemented by various forms of public comment, from the MPC in particular and from town leaders and residents more generally.

On the basis of this Phase One inventory of historical and current conditions and ground-truth assessment of likely trends, the chapters to follow in this Phase Two component of the Master Plan will deal with specific, concrete recommendations as to how the town can effectively implement these strategic goals through a deliberate series of action steps. These steps will be discussed in broad, programmatic terms in Chapters 11-19, and then given a summary presentation as action plan matrices (spreadsheets) in Chapter 20. Those plan matrices will organize recommendations according to area of focus (e.g., land use, open space, economic development, housing, infrastructure, etc.), agency responsible for implementation, priority and timeframe

The findings of the first ten chapters have had to do primarily with the elementary facts and figures of Warren's physical, economic, social, and political character over time, projecting from its preceding pattern and pace of development to forecast the likely direction and intensity of its future growth. The ten chapters to follow will begin the long-term process of deliberation and decision-making on the part of town officials and residents alike.

This Phase Two framework will define the organization of action steps in terms of visions and goals. 'Visions' refers to ways of seeing all the elements of the Master Plan in an integrated, comprehensive way: that is the main function of the SWOT analysis and the subsequent development of alternative scenarios for future development. The hope and purpose of those exercises is that officials and residents will be better able to picture in their mind's eye what the town will look like in several decades if it decides to pursue one development path rather than another. 'Goals' likewise indicates the intended or expected outcomes emerging as a result of choices made and actions taken.

Articulation of town visions and goals for the master planning process in Phase Two will then set the stage for a more broad-based and open-ended Phase Three discussion of how to translate the results of the Master Plan into practice, through linkage with local, regional, state and federal institutions that can potentially provide guidance, advice, resources, and funding.

### **11.a Continuing and Sustaining the Master Plan Process**

The Warren Master Plan includes a comprehensive gathering and arrangement of relevant data; analysis and assessment of information from various sources; comment from officials, committee members, and the public; and strategic recommendation. While this plan is useful to the town as is, it only serves to inaugurate a longer-term process, in which town leaders and citizens together discuss, deliberate and decide Warren's future. The plan represents a sort of toolkit, with resources to help guide that process based on the experience and knowledge of all participants. Tools cannot do the work themselves, nor should they – skilled, careful hands must take hold of them to fashion something suitable and desirable. The MPC and the UMass project team have put together the toolkit. The Board of Selectmen, the Planning Board, Town Departments, and Town Meeting members will, as they always have, make the important decisions about the proper direction the town should take. Clear, effective leadership will be needed to ensure a measured, successful implementation of the master plan.

### **11.b Periodic Revision of SWOT Analysis and Scenarios**

A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats, recast by the UMass project team as Advantages, Limitations, Opportunities, Challenges) analysis and three development scenarios emerged from a process of research and public response that reflects the state of the local landscape, economy, revenue base, and housing market in 2005. As development proceeds and as residents, jobs, businesses, etc. come and go in Warren, conditions will change and new circumstances will indicate a need to revise and update those plan elements. Some uncertainties have to do with the choices town officials and residents might make; others involve forces and factors that are beyond the capacity of the town to predict or control; still others the town perhaps can anticipate and plan for, though the specific when and where remains indeterminate. As a result, the SWOT analysis of advantages, limitations, opportunities and challenges will need to be revisited periodically in order to assess how valid they have remained. Much the same is true of the scenarios – specific aspects of them will likely need to be modified in light of subsequent economic events.

### **11.c Community Preservation**

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts enacted the Community Preservation Act in recent years as a means to provide state advice and matching assistance to local governments that seek to achieve specific defined community preservation goals. These goals include protection of open space for the purposes of resource management and/or recreation; preservation of historical and cultural places for the purposes of revitalization and economic redevelopment; and provision of affordable housing options for low- to middle-income residents and prospective buyers. Questionnaire and survey results both showed strong, widespread support for maintaining aspects of Warren's longstanding small-town, working middle-class character, albeit in keeping with a desire for increased economic development opportunities. Adopting the CPA and securing its resources can help communities identify and achieve an appropriate balance.

## **Chapter 12. Regional Coordination and Cooperation, Plan Integration**

By definition, a master plan focuses primarily on the various problems and prospects facing an individual town in identifying and preparing for future growth opportunities and challenges. Town governance is where local home rule is most effective, and so it is chiefly at that level that significant change in land, resource and service use takes place. Nevertheless, a town's master plan must address its larger regional context, especially the conditions and concerns shared with neighboring communities, but also the wider region that influences all the communities within it. A region can be viewed politically, in terms of county governance as well as regional planning agencies; economically, in terms of shared resource and workforce bases as well as infrastructure networks; environmentally, in terms of watersheds, forests, and habitats; or culturally, in terms of shared (and varied) history of migration and settlement. While decisions informed by the master plan will be undertaken at the local level by town residents, the plan can also help encourage a greater degree of regionally-based planning.

The limitation and challenge of Warren's location at the far western edge of Worcester County has the potential to be an advantage and opportunity. The town has received some significant assistance from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, in connection with its Hampshire and Hamden County neighbors, in addition to its established ties with the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission. The goal must be to combine and complement those regional agency resources, developing a more stable 'both...and' relationship rather than a marginal 'neither...nor' status in the future. Both PVPC and CMRPC can help leverage state, federal and nonprofit resources to Warren's benefit, especially if there is a clearly identifiable positive impact regionally for Central and/or Western Massachusetts.

Regional economic cooperation represents a greater challenge, in part because industrial, commercial and real estate markets are generally highly competitive. Despite this, there are some real prospects for achieving economic development and business improvement within a more collaborative partnership. For example, the Quaboag Valley Chamber of Commerce is primarily a clearinghouse for information and advice about area business opportunities, but Warren could explore ways to use its resources more effectively and to enhance its mission and leadership. Similarly, with the Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation and Business Assistance Corporation, which offers help with business loans and planning as well as workforce training and development, Warren can look into how best to locate and take advantage of potential market niches. Finally, the Quaboag Hills Region offers a rubric for promoting landscape tourism and recreation.

Town departments in Warren concerned with public safety and health currently take part in mutual aid and information sharing arrangements with counterparts in neighboring communities. Infrastructure building and capital improvements in telecommunications and information technology capacity can help reinforce and expand this kind of regional coordination. Warren is also already a partner in a regional school district; it would be worth exploring other possible regional links in terms of education and youth programs.

**Part G            Geography**

**Chapter 13.   Land and Resource Use Management**

**13.a    Future Trends**

The zoning bylaws for the Town of Warren are in many respects outdated and are thus in need of revision and approval by the town. Basic bylaws divide the town into three zoning districts, Village, Residential, and Rural, and the associated regulations are either too broad or too restrictive to allow for growth and development that is in line with the desires of the community. Updating the bylaws to allow for more control and flexibility where desired will provide the town with critical regulatory tools that will enable it to attract more commercial development and manage residential growth in patterns that fit with the overall objectives and strategies determined by the town.

Current zoning bylaws, moreover, are inadequate to manage current growth patterns and attract needed commercial business. The bylaws are either too broad, as in the case of the three zoning districts, or too narrow, as with the prohibition of specific types of establishment in town. New zoning districts must be implemented to allow for greater flexibility in targeting particular areas for development. This will also give the town the ability to lift some restrictions, by allowing certain types of generally prohibited uses in targeted districts. Making these changes in conjunction with design guidelines and review processes will still give the town control over aesthetic and character aspects of new development, but allow desired businesses to be established. Additionally, updates to the zoning bylaws will provide better growth management control, allowing the town to effectively balance commercial and residential development.

The town's current zoning, with its three (3) general zoning districts, is not adequate to support the community's desire to stimulate and attract business development in accordance with the community vision and goals. An update to the town zoning by-laws should be considered in order to improve the business development environment and manage future growth. The following zoning options provide a basis for decisions regarding amendment to town zoning by-laws and policies, to be utilized when considering various economic development strategies. These options can be used independently or in combination to create the mix of uses that best meets the needs and desires of the town.

**13.b    Zoning Revisions and Recommendations**

*Establish a Central Business District*

The purpose of creating a Central Business District (CBD) is to promote commercial development and investment within a specific part of the town center(s) in a manner that is in accordance with the community goals. This type of district can allow for particular types or scale of businesses while preventing potentially unwanted or detrimental uses such as larger or more intensive commercial uses, warehousing, or vehicle dependant uses. The CBD should encourage a mixed-use development pattern by defining specific

allowed uses, minimal setback requirements, alternative parking solutions and incorporating design guidelines. The goal is to create a pedestrian-friendly environment offering a mix of uses and an aesthetically unique and pleasing streetscape. Parking should be addressed in a creative fashion, with consideration of the use of on-street parking, parking in the rear of buildings, and shared or public parking solutions set behind or at the periphery of the village centers.

There exist two (2) potential CBD areas in the town, in the villages of Warren and West Warren. In Warren, portions of Main Street, Old West Brookfield Road, Bacon Street, Winthrop Terrace, Bridges Avenue, Parkview Street, Route 19, and Town Hall Plaza should be considered. In West Warren, portions of Main Street, South Street, North Street, Old West Warren Road, Pleasant Street, Highland Street, Albany Street, Central Street, Summer Street, River Street, and Spring Street should be considered.

#### *Establish a General Business District*

A General Business District (GBD) serves the purpose of extending the CBDs to the periphery or outer edges of the village centers. This district would be more flexible with allowed uses than the CBDs but still encourage a mix of uses. Differences could include increased size or floor area ratios (FAR) and less-restricted parking access for businesses. This would allow for a mix of pedestrian and vehicle-friendly commercial development. Many of the same features as would exist in the CBDs could be shared, such as design and signage guidelines.

The main target areas for this type of zoning in the town would be within the existing village zone districts, where commercial uses are already currently allowed, particularly extensions of the portions of streets and roadways described in the Central Business District section.

#### *Establish a Highway Business District*

The purpose of the Highway Business District (HBD) is to manage commercial growth along the major roadways in the town and promote development that meets the town's needs in a manner consistent with community goals and in support of village centers development efforts. Highway business, by nature, will be more vehicle-oriented and therefore allow for more parking than the CBDs and GBDs. Additional parking does not have to come at the expense of aesthetics or desired physical and landscape character, however. Setback requirements are a critical part of this district, as setbacks that are too large (i.e. 50 ft.) will encourage large parking lots in front of buildings. If larger setbacks are desired, they can be accompanied by design guidelines and additional requirements such as road frontage buffer zones (i.e. 20 ft.).

The main transportation corridors of Route 67 and Route 19 would be the target areas for this type of zoning. Sections of these roads should be identified as areas for desired commercial growth with considerations made for existing residential development and open space. Route 67 borders the Quaboag River in many places, subjecting some sections to protected river buffers, and further protection steps may be desired to protect the river's health and aesthetics and views associated with the natural landscape.

### *Establish an Industrial District*

The purpose of the Industrial District is to manage, promote, and assist in the revitalization of industrial activity in the town. The creation of such a district allows the town to protect existing industrial uses and attract potential new industry based on the location of the industrial zone district. Proximity to road and rail corridors and regional cities such as Worcester and Springfield are potential attractions to new industrial business, and large industrial parcels may be desired commodities. Targeting particular areas for industrial use allows for continued industrial contribution to the local economy while containing the use to confined areas, in keeping with the character and goals desired by the community.

Existing zoning allows for industrial use in the village center districts, and while active industrial uses may continue to operate, the town may not want this particular land use in village centers to be a part of future development. Creating the Industrial District allows the town to maintain an industrial base without detriment to the desired town character, particularly in the village centers. The mill complex in West Warren adjacent to South Street is an area that could be targeted as an Industrial District.

### **13.c Light Manufacturing Districts (LMDs)**

A Light Manufacturing District (LMD) can be established to provide for manufacturing or other industrial uses having a lower intensity of activity as compared to heavy manufacturing uses. 'Heavy manufacturing' defines industries that tend to generate noise, traffic and pollutants. Typical uses include chemical and power plants and foundries. The districts are usually located near the waterfront and buffered from residential areas. It is intended that this LMD be located as a buffer between heavy manufacturing uses and commercial or high-density residential uses. Examples of what is allowed in an LMD are: transfer, storage, moving, freight and parcel delivery operation and excavating contractors, warehouses and lumberyards, providing such uses are enclosed by a minimum of 8 foot high fence. Also allowed are plumbing, electrical and general contractor offices and storage yards.

The town can clearly define Light Manufacturing in bylaws and encourage reuse of the local mill complexes. The Light Manufacturing District is intended to provide for limited manufacturing and other light industrial uses within the industrial corridor that are compatible with business parks and adjacent residential areas.

The following uses (listed below), or additional uses determined to be similar by the Board of Selectmen or by the Planning Board, are permitted in the LMD as primary uses:

- (a) Manufacturing and assembly of clothing.
- (b) Manufacturing and assembly of televisions and radios, including parts and components.

- (c) Assembly of electrical appliances such as lighting fixtures, irons, fans, toasters and electric toys, but not including refrigerators, washing machines, dryers, dishwashers and similar home appliances.
- (d) Assembly of electric appliances such as radio and television receivers, phonographs and home motion picture equipment, but not including electrical machinery.
- (e) General office uses (including computer centers), when ancillary to another use listed in this subsection, where an office user shall have less than 2,000 square feet of usable space.
- (f) Publishing facilities.
- (g) Light manufacturing support and service facilities to include activities limited to the servicing of products produced on the parcel or servicing of businesses on the parcel, such as: repair and maintenance of appliances or component parts, tooling; printers, testing shops, small machine shops, copying, and photo engraving.
- (h) Sales at wholesale manufacturers' representatives and sales office, or sales to the ultimate consumer of products made to the customer's orders.
- (i) Engineering, drafting and design facilities, when ancillary to another use listed in this subsection.
- (j) Manufacturing and assembly of business machines, including electronic data processing equipment, accounting machines, calculators and related equipment. Manufacturing and assembly of electrical supplies, such as coils, condensers, crystal holders, insulation, lamps, switches and wire cable assembly, provided no noxious or offensive fumes or odors are produced.
- (k) Manufacturing of scientific, medical, dental and drafting instruments, orthopedic and medical appliances, optical goods, watches and clocks, electronics equipment, precision instruments, musical instruments and cameras and photographic equipment except film.

Of these, alternatives (a), (g), and possibly (h-j) are types of light manufacturing that are most compatible with the existing industrial plant and skill base of Warren workers.

The following uses are conditionally permitted in a LMD, subject to approval of an administrative use permit:

- (a) Laboratories, including commercial, testing, research, experimental or other laboratories, including pilot plants.
- (b) Printing, lithography and engraving.
- (c) Research and development facilities and such facilities that require area available for laboratories to execute product development. Any research and development use may be operated in conjunction with any allowed light manufacturing use or office use.
- (d) Uses typically associated with research and development and light manufacturing for the electronics and semiconductor industries.
- (e) Manufacturing or combining processes of pharmaceutical products, provided no noxious or offensive fumes or odors are produced.

- (f) Manufacturing or combining processes of biological products, provided no noxious or offensive fumes or odors are produced.
- (g) Manufacturing and assembly of computer hardware and software, communications, testing equipment, and electronics equipment.

Of these, alternatives (c) and (d) are types of light manufacturing that are most compatible with the existing industrial plant and skill base of Warren workers.

The following uses are conditionally permitted in a LMD, subject to the approval of a conditional use permit:

- (a) Major or minor open storage.
- (b) Recreational vehicle storage facility
- (c) Public storage facilities.

All these alternatives are types of LMD uses that are compatible with the existing industrial plant and skill base of Warren workers.

The following sample lot requirements are typical for an LMD:

- a. Minimum Lot Size: 10,000 square feet.
- b. Minimum Lot Frontage: 35 feet.
- c. Minimum Average Lot Width: 70 feet.
- d. Maximum Lot Coverage: 40 percent.
- e. Minimum Average Lot Depth: 250 feet.
- f. Special Lot Requirements and Exceptions: *See Gen. Regs. Section 10-1.2720.*

The following sample yard requirements are typical for an LMD:

- a. Minimum Front Yard: 20 feet.
- b. Minimum Side Street Yard: 10 feet.
- c. Minimum Side Yard: None.
- d. Minimum Rear Yard: None.
- e. Special Side and Rear Yard Provision for manufacturing or storage buildings and uses:
- f. Special Yard Requirements and Exceptions:

The following sample height requirements are typical for an LMD:

- a. Maximum Height Permitted: 40 feet.
- b. Maximum Accessory Building Height: 40 feet.
- c. Maximum Height for Fences/Hedges/Walls:
  - (1) Front and Side Street Yard: 4 feet.
  - (2) Side and Rear Yard: 8 feet.
- d. Special Height Requirements and Exceptions:

### **13.d Growth Management**

#### *Expand Site Plan Review*

Site Plan Review approval may be required before issuance of any building, grading, or construction permit within such special districts, if the Planning Board determines that a specific use alters the appearance and character of the property or area or may be incompatible with town regulations, codes and policies. Site Plan Review approval may also be required for enclosures and other barriers in certain circumstances.

#### *Revise Residential Subdivision Regulations*

Subdivision control laws have been enacted in the State of Massachusetts since 1891, and updated regularly since, with the intention of regulating the subdivision and sale of private land and the development of streets and infrastructure associated with the development. Subdivision Control Law is defined as “a comprehensive statutory scheme designed for the safety, convenience, and welfare of the inhabitants of the cities and towns. It accomplishes this purpose by, among other things, regulating the laying out and construction of ways in subdivisions.” Subdivision Control Law is in effect “in any community which has a Planning Board, as defined in Section 81L, the Subdivision Control Law is in effect unless the local legislative body votes not to accept the provisions of the law.”<sup>21</sup>

Towns in Massachusetts have the ability to enact regulations that extend the State’s Subdivision Control Laws, providing a means for managing growth and development to suit the town’s goals and objectives. This ability has been recognized in many communities as a mechanism for protecting open space and encouraging clustered development. This also gives the community better control over where development can occur and a means to manage the amount and rate of growth.

This type of management tool allows for better planning of municipal infrastructure and associated financial implications in addition to helping to determine where development should occur. The amount of currently undeveloped land in Warren makes the town a target for new growth, particularly when lot size is considered. Many parcels could easily be subdivided, allowing for rapid increase in residential growth and a greater impact on infrastructure needs such as roadways, water, and sewer, and other services such as the town’s school budget. Warren’s subdivision regulations date from 1973 and are in need of review and revision to adequately deal with current growth trends.

#### *Establish Open Space Preservation Zoning (Cluster Zoning)*

Open Space Preservation Zoning (OSPZ) is a land-use method that can be implemented to manage growth and development. Typically, the goals of OSPZ are to protect open space and natural resources, agricultural land, and recreation areas. In addition to simply preserving open space, this type of zoning provides another tool for managing infrastructure and density of development.

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<sup>21</sup> Source: <http://www.mass.gov/dhcd/components/cs/sclovweb.pdf>

The type of economic development strategy adopted by the town will be affected in some way by available space or character of the town, and OSPZ or Cluster Zoning is another way of ensuring that those desirable aspects are protected. Infrastructure costs are a key component of the economic benefit from this type of zoning; dense development calls for more efficient use of utilities and roadways. In addition, residential growth management is another way of keeping the tax levy controlled, as outlined in the previous section covering subdivision plans.

## **Chapter 14. Open Space and Natural Resource Conservation**

### **14.a Plan Foundation, Community Vision**

#### *Planning Process and Public Participation*

Because of staff and budgetary limitations, recent efforts to update and implement the Warren OSRP have largely been undertaken by local volunteer committees and students. The Board of Selectmen appointed an OSRP committee in 2004. This group met over several months, conducted a written survey of residents, and generated a basic analysis of their survey findings. In 2005, members of the University of Massachusetts project team took on the task of collaborating on the open space planning process. In tandem with Open Space Survey results and questions related to Open Space from the Master Plan General Survey (see Chapter 10 of the Master Plan for presentation of general survey results); team members conducted an Open Space focus group in October 2005 to solicit more current input from Warren residents. With the assistance of the Conservation Commission, team members contacted members of the previous committee and invited additional participants, representing a range of ages, lengths of residency, neighborhoods and areas of interest, to participate in the Open Space Focus Group. In Fall 2005, the MPC hosted this public meeting for town residents, enabling the project team to identify properties deemed worthy of conservation and protection. Participants were provided with area maps, stickers, and markers to pinpoint destinations and to note background information. Knowledgeable members of the MPC Open Space Subcommittee also provided further relevant information about each of the sites for research purposes.

From ongoing discussions with the Master Plan Committee and the Open Space Public Forum, six categories of concern emerged about the protection and enhancement of open space and recreational resources in Warren. For future meetings, planning areas will be discussed in the context of strengths, limitations, opportunities and challenges. Resident input and written suggestions from the Open Space Public Forum were strongly considered in the development of these community goals.

For the purpose of the Warren Open Space Plan, its long-term goals, objectives and action steps will need to address the following identified areas of concern:

#### *Education and Community Building*

A successful Open Space Plan is dependent on the support of town residents; therefore, the Plan must include actions for educating town residents and involving them in the Open Space Plan process. The benefit is reciprocal: an educated public can make more substantive contributions to the open space planning process, and open space planning allows protected lands to remain a public amenity where such education can take place.

#### *Sustainable Development*

Based on appropriate cooperation among town boards, open space planning should aim to

achieve a balance between the town's long-term economic and environmental goals. Through the cooperative efforts of town boards and committees, careful town planning can achieve both aims, helping to protect Warren from changes that could permanently and irrevocably alter its distinctive local economy, ecology, landscape and character.

#### *Nature and Wildlife Protection*

Warren ecosystems support a wide variety of plant and animal life, some on natural heritage special concern or endangered lists. The town needs to achieve the will and the means to preserve its unique and special habitats for the future. Beyond their natural value, such preserved resources can provide a range of environmental and recreational benefits, and may even contribute to future economic growth.

#### *Community Character*

Warren residents, old and new, overwhelmingly want to preserve and maintain the small-town character and open space aspect of their town, though they also recognize that doing nothing, i.e., opposing all change rather than promoting and managing a desirable pattern and pace of growth and economic development, will not maintain the town's character.

#### *Recreation and Conservation Facilities and Resources*

Warren residents enjoy a variety of indoor and outdoor recreation activities that greatly contribute to the town's quality of life. The analysis of current and future needs will aid in planning for optimum use of all town facilities and resources. In addition, open space planning will identify appropriate sites for expansion or extension of such facilities.

#### *Transportation*

One significant obstacle to fully-accessible recreation opportunities in Warren is the lack of an integrated hiking and biking network. The current network of informal trails, on both public and private land, has been largely defined by recreational motor vehicle use. Integrated trail networks could form the basis of a more comprehensive mixed-use system that would provide numerous benefits to town residents as well as visitors.

Lack of a direct connection to the highway limits opportunities to promote regional recreation in Warren. A Turnpike exit ramp could form the basis of a comprehensive road and trail network, connecting the Mass Pike, village centers, recreation resources and conservation areas. This linkage would have various impacts on Warren, which must be carefully considered in terms of local economic and open space impact.

### **14.b Inventory of Lands of Interest for Conservation and Recreation**

The open space inventory for the Town of Warren is presented in four overall categories: important places, protected land, semi-protected land, and unprotected land. Although it is a work in progress that will require more research and regular maintenance, the

preliminary comprehensive OSRP inventory provides basic resource information.

The sample inventory includes 221 records, a size not easily presented in concise fashion. Each parcel in the inventory was selected from the Assessor's database. To facilitate the process of locating parcels, a spreadsheet was created by parcel code and street name for the Open Space and Recreation Report. This listing contains parcels and corresponding map codes, as well as required land use codes and zoning information. It constitutes a basic starting point of reference, offering only a provisionally selected, representative sampling of desirable land types that warrant consideration as protected sites or areas.

The first of four tables in this chapter identifies areas that contribute to town character. Most of these were suggested by survey respondents, asked to describe areas of visual, cultural or historical value that contribute to Warren's character or sense of place. Three additional tables in this section refer to the remaining categories of land, which were further divided by primary use. The tables present the most pertinent information for each category, including scenic interest, recreation potential and historical significance.

*Important Places:*

The resident survey invited respondents to identify areas that contribute to Warren's overall character or sense of place.

- Scenic views and roads
- Historic structures
- Neighborhoods or sections of town

*Protected Land: 1912 Acres (According to MassGIS layer)*

The category of protected land includes only those parcels with permanent restrictions, including river buffers, wetlands, and wildlife/habitat protection areas.

- Town-owned conservation parcels
- State-owned conservation and recreation parcels
- Parcels with conservation restrictions or agricultural preservation restrictions (APR)

*Semi-Protected Land: 3657 Acres (According to MassGIS layer)*

For the purpose of this report, most town-owned properties are considered semi-protected. Because of current use, it is not likely that these parcels will be developed in the foreseeable future; however, they are not officially nor permanently protected.

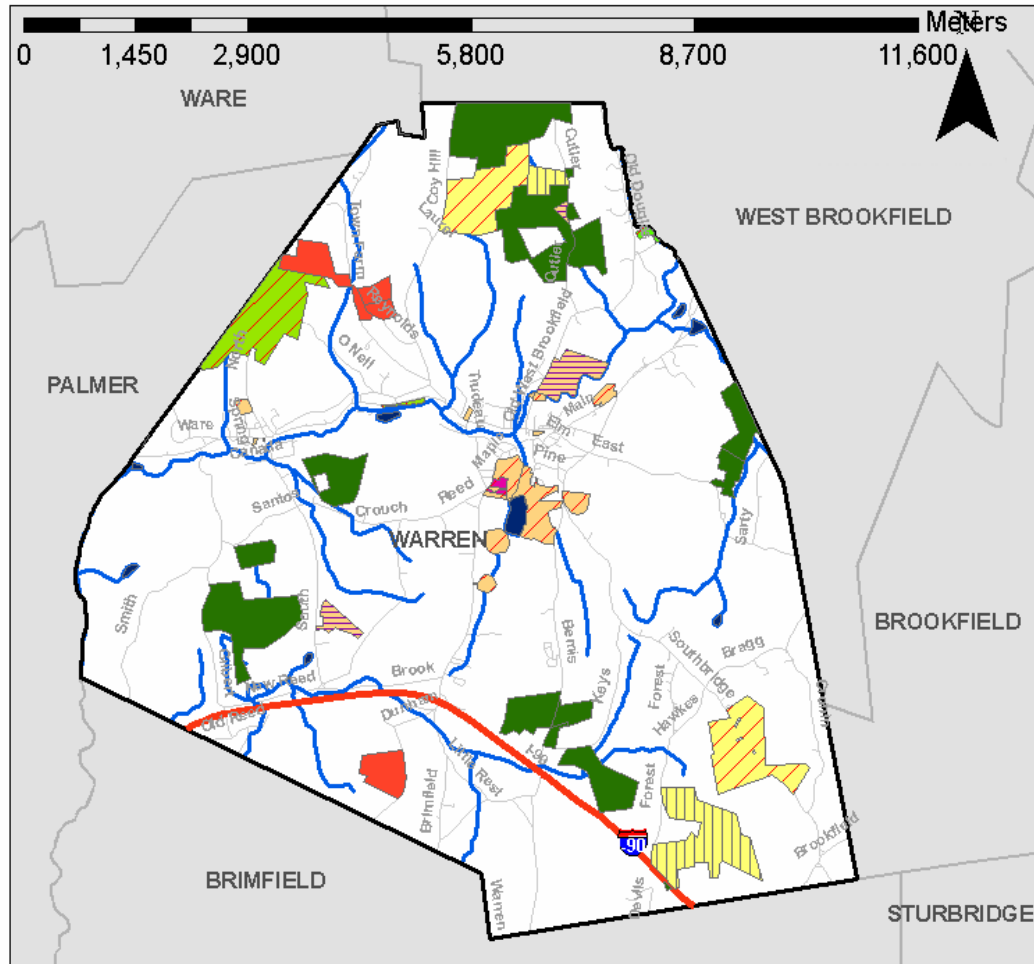
- Public school property (Quaboag Regional School District)
- Town-owned park and recreation sites
- Municipal land
- Housing Authority property

*Unprotected Land: 1872 Acres (According to MassGIS layer)*

Section 14.d below, Analysis of Needs, lists the criteria by which parcels were considered for inclusion in this inventory, including Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B lands.

# Map 10: Open space inventory

SOURCE: MassGIS 2005

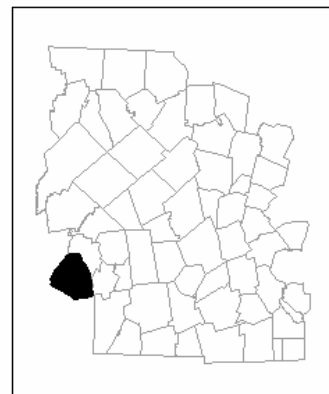


## Ownership

- DCRS
- DFG
- Town and public utility
- Nonprofit
- Private
- Ponds
- Rivers and streams
- Roads

## Level of protection

- In perpetuity
- Limited
- Unknown
- None (sportmen's clubs)
- I-90
- Chapter 61- Forestry
- Neighboring towns



### ***Important Places (Identified in Surveys and Focus Groups)***

- All Major Churches
- Boston Post Road: Franklin Milestones
- Businesses in Village Centers
- Cemeteries: Pine Grove, South Warren
- Charles E. Shepard Municipal Building
- Colonel's Mountain Wildlife Management Area
- Comins Pond
- Community Center
- Cutter Park
- Dean Park
- Devil's Peak
- Gendron Field
- Homes and Businesses 100+ years
- Libraries
- Lucy Stone Park
- Mark's Mountain
- McWhirter Memorial Park
- Mill/industrial complexes
- Old Baypath Indian Trail
- Older farms and orchards
- Quaboag Regional Middle/High School
- Quaboag River
- Quaboag Sportsmen's Club
- Railroad Depot
- Residential districts near village centers
- School Street Memorial
- Scottish Meadows Golf Course
- Town Common
- Town Hall
- Tyler Park
- Veteran's Park
- Warren Community Elementary School

### ***Scenic Roads***

Scenic roads preserve trees and stone walls and the historic integrity of a road. They also protect tree-lined roads from being widened. The Town of Warren has named the following roads as 'scenic roads' (listed alphabetically)

- Brook Road Warren
- Coy Hill Road

- Dunham Road
- East Road
- Gilbert Road
- Knox Trail Road
- North Street
- Old Douglas Road
- Old West Brookfield Road
- Old West Warren Road
- O'Neil Road
- Reed Street
- Sarty Road
- Southbridge Road
- Town Farm Road

### ***Other Historical Places***

Warren has a number of historical sites, buildings, structures and objects that could be considered for commemorative listing. Many of these structures are no longer extant, but some of their former sites could still be identified, marked and protected. (Information from a list provided by Sylvia Buck, Warren Library, date of compilation unknown)

- Twelve pre-1826 domestic buildings
- Five pre-1826 Franklin Milestones (two are listed already)
- Dean Grist Mill, a pre-1826 Industrial building,
- Lower Village Mill site, a pre-1826 Archaeological site
- Twelve residential buildings, if restored to original integrity and context
- Fifteen 1826-1855 domestic buildings
- Crossman's Hall 1826-1855
- Western Railroad Bridge 1826-1855
- Six 1855-1879 domestic buildings
- B & A Freight Depot ca. 1860
- Knowles Steam Pump Office 1812-1830 & 1860
- Comins Saw Mill 1857-70
- Twenty 1870-1898 domestic buildings
- First Congregational Church 1875 (currently Federated Church)
- Warren Village School 1872 & 1890's
- West School, West Warren 1888
- Warren Library 1889
- Boston & Albany Railroad Depot 1870-1898
- Hitchcock Drinking Fountain 1885
- Civil War Monument 1890
- Two 1898-1920 domestic buildings
- Gilbert Road Bridge 1898-1920
- St. Thomas Aquinas School 1898-1911

- Bacon Street Area 1860's – 1890's
- Warren Cotton Mills 1855-1918
- Pine Grove Cemetery 1740-present
- Hodges Corner Cemetery 1780's

***Historic Signs erected by the Warren's Historic Commission at the following sites:***

- #4 Village
- Five signs on Boston Post Road
- Comins Pond and the Planing Mill
- Hodges Corner, South Warren
- Lower Village
- Meeting House
- South Warren Cemetery
- Warren Center Village
- Warren Pine Grove Cemetery
- West Warren

***The National Register of Historic Places***

The National Register of Historic Places is the Nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect our historic and archeological resources. Properties listed in the Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant to American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service, which is part of the US Department of the Interior. Five items have been listed on The National Register: Two 1767 Old Post Road Milestones (listed in 1971), Warren Town Hall (listed in 2001), Warren Public Library and the Federated Church (listed 2004). Three others are under consideration, including the remaining Old Post Road Milestones in Warren.

***Public and Nonprofit Parcels***

- Colonel's Mountain Wildlife Management Area
- Cutter Memorial Park
- Dean Park
- Former Spring Street School Playground
- Lucy Stone Park
- McWhirter Memorial Park
- Quaboag Regional Middle/High School
- School Street Memorial
- Town Common

- Tyler Park
- Veterans Memorial Park
- Warren Community Elementary School
- Warren Landfill
- Warren and West Warren Water District

#### **14.c Analysis of Needs**

##### ***1) Recommended Priority Criteria***

Based on the town's Open Space Forum and Conservation Commission input, citizens of Warren recommend that town boards and commissions use the following criteria to evaluate the desirability of future development proposals. Parcels under development consideration can be rated according to the criteria listed below and assessed by key features and how well they relate to the town's values for preservation within the context of the Open Space Plan. Although scoring will have to be periodically reviewed by the Conservation Commission, all boards and commissions may immediately use the following standards for any parcel under consideration. This section will also include an identification of gaps and limitations in current protection, problem areas, and specific priorities for each of these criteria.

##### ***Town Character Issues***

###### ***Visual Impact***

A development project that will be highly or significantly visible from various vantages in town may significantly impact town character. For example, development of frontage along a historically significant road (19<sup>th</sup> century Post Road for example) would be highly visible. Development on upland parcels that are visible from the lowland, either to the north or the south, would also have a negative visual impact. An example that would not fall under this heading is Wright Mill complex, which, although large in scale, is effectively part of the town fabric and does not detract from the quasi-rural, mill-based image of the town. Areas such as Mark's Mountain or Coy Hill would experience an especially significant visual impact from development according to this criterion, as would the major viewshed areas visible from designated scenic roads. Considerations such as these should inform potential future decisions about telecommunications towers, signage or road construction, for example.

###### ***Historical and Cultural Integrity***

If a proposed project would in any way affect a parcel, site, or building that is recognized as historically significant to Warren, it might have a detrimental impact on town character. For example, a proposal to alter or develop buildings in the vicinity of sites comparable to those listed above would raise concerns in this category. However, with the appropriate guidance, it is possible that actions that could impact historic integrity would not be highly visible. The town would do best to have the local historical commission and local amateur historians provide feedback on such issues to the relevant town boards and serve as an advocate for the preservation of important town features.

The historical features of the West Warren and Warren Center villages along the Quaboag River, which largely coincides with railroad and Route 67 corridors, are more concentrated relative to one another and thus have greater potential to constitute a historic streetscape area, district or corridor. Maintaining and linking the traditional architectural and scenic fabric of the village centers should therefore have high priority, although more isolated places with strong historic significance and integrity should not be overlooked. Also, an integrated approach would give priority to preserving those places identified by current or potential future historic markers.

### *Scenic Features*

In addition to cultural and historical sites, town character also depends upon several scenic features that include historical roads, the river, and the view of the uplands from the lower lying areas. These include stone walls along roads, important trees, agricultural land and similar physical features that may be natural or man-made. That is why trying to extend and link the current scenic road network should be a priority according to this criterion, as should exploring strategies for making the protection of especially scenic agricultural land more permanent (APR, TDR). The scenic views from the Massachusetts Turnpike can likewise contribute to an impression of Warren; this issue may become even more significant in the future if Warren gains an interchange with I-90, which would increase development challenges to the south.

### *Environmental Issues*

#### *Wetlands and Related Resource Areas*

These are areas defined under the local and state wetland statutes and are primarily protected by the Conservation Commission. Developers will have to alter their projects to accommodate the presence of wetlands, streams and significant water features such as vernal ponds. Areas that form a contiguous mass containing significant numbers of these features should be considered for large-scale preservation. There are several areas that combine a number of bordering vegetated wetlands and vernal ponds. Warren has, for example, a significant living waters core (wetland) habitat to the south. Those areas in town where agricultural land, wetland habitat and vernal pool areas either overlap or are adjacent should have highest priority for protection by the Conservation Commission.

#### *Aquifers and Related Water Supply Areas*

Areas of future public water supply are of primary concern. A development that threatens such an area would potentially harm the town's interests in securing a safe alternative water supply to the town's original source. Any impact on private wells, either through non-point pollution or excessive draw, should also be evaluated, depending on the groundwater resources of any parcel in question. The town must clarify which department has jurisdiction regarding individual property owners' allowable draw on private wells. Officials and boards should also revisit standards for septic systems and surface runoff in especially sensitive recharge and supply areas. Warren's bylaws on access to and consumption of water from the Quaboag River likewise need review.

### *Endangered Species*

Although the town has some jurisdiction over development on or near those habitats for endangered species that use wetland areas, there is no comprehensive protection of upland plant and animal species enforced by the Conservation Commission. Town boards should consider available information regarding upland species in evaluating the development potential of parcels. Acquisition and protection priorities should be high for parcels that host an endangered species, particularly if the site is unique to the town. Warren, for example, has intact bio-core (listed species) habitats in the upland areas. (Please see Natural Heritage assessment of endangered species In Section 4.c, Table 9 above.)

### *Wildlife Corridors*

Corridors of open space that connect larger open space parcels serve as travel passages for a variety of wildlife. A relatively small connection within a parcel proposed for development could be an effective corridor, linking two larger protected areas. It is also worth noting that open space corridors generally receive moderate to high priority for state and land trust funding. River and stream beds are corridors that are already protected from development, but where those corridors link to significant parcels of open space land should receive special attention. Also, there are clusters of open space land in the north and south of town, under different types of ownership as well as forms and levels of protection. Expanding and linking these clusters ought to be a priority.

### *Contiguous Wildlife Habitat*

Similar to wildlife corridors, contiguous wildlife habitat allows the connection of several parcels to make an environmentally contiguous parcel. Many species, both endangered and non-endangered, require a minimum amount of undisturbed upland habitat in order to survive. The considerations described above apply to this criterion as well.

### *Prime and Significant Farmland*

The Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture has developed criteria for evaluating agricultural soils, using both the United States Soil Conservation Service's farmland soil assessment and additional criteria. These criteria measure "statewide significant farmland" that may not fall into the prime Class I and II categories established by the SCS. Town agencies should review what prime and statewide significant soils exist on the site of a proposed development to determine whether such soils can be preserved within the context of an economically feasible project. Any proposed change to such areas should take into account ways to preserve at least a minimum portion of such land. Development methods such as Open Space Conservation or Mixed-use Rural Residential Zoning can allow some moderate-impact forms of agriculture to coexist alongside land-conserving higher-density residential development. Warren's current threefold zoning is not sufficient to achieve agricultural preservation and open space protection goals.

### *Recreational Issues*

Parcels are classified according to their recreational potential. Potential is analyzed in

terms of both active and passive recreational opportunities.

#### *Active Recreation*

Parcels need to be evaluated for potential siting of any facilities or structures that might serve the town as recreation sites, such as a recreation centers, playing fields or neighborhood parks. Ratings will be determined by proximity to population to be served, appropriate topography, parking and other vehicular access, as well as other related concerns. A new community center with recreational opportunities has been identified as a potentially desirable addition to the town by residents in surveys and public forums.

#### *Passive Recreation*

The potential for hiking, walking, and bicycle trails needs to be evaluated, especially as it relates to an existing network of connective trails that could be easily upgraded to accommodate town needs. Sites may contain notable natural features that would tie in to educational goals as well as passive enjoyment. Sidewalks, marked street crossings, bike lanes and traffic calming design would achieve a more walkable, bikeable network in the village centers, which could then be connected with access paths to schools, libraries, etc.

### ***2) Summary of Land and Resource Protection Priorities***

Without implementing specific protection recommendations, the development of Warren's remaining open spaces might degrade the natural landscape and harm the community's sense of place. Continued development of residences could cause significant increases in the cost of town services that may or may not be recovered by associated property taxes. Further economic development near the village centers must be encouraged and carefully planned in order to protect the town from the trend of low-density sprawl in the rural zoning districts. Special attention should be paid to the limitations of Warren soils in all development proposals. In addition, changes in state regulations regarding rates of soil percolation and drainage standards need to be taken into account in revisiting Warren's bylaws on septic and stormwater systems.

#### *Privately-Held Developable Parcel in Areas of Interest*

Growth and development pressure on remaining developable land may result in the loss of key parcels near scenic viewsheds, open space areas or familiar Warren landmarks. Several privately-held parcels, for example, are adjacent to existing conservation and recreational lands. Without appropriate oversight and review, development of these properties could potentially limit public access or threaten historically and ecologically important areas. It is in Warren's best interest to identify such parcels and to protect them in the town's long-term land use management strategy. Protection could take the form of alternative development methods or state land trust funding for preserving habitat corridors and contiguous open space.

#### *Rivers, Streams, and Other Water Sources*

Any area with a potential water supply or water resource should be protected from development. It is critical that sensitive watershed areas, such as the Quaboag River system, be protected from future high-impact development. State law already provides

for the protection of river buffers and 100-year floodplains, but potential development of river-based recreation as an economic opportunity can be done compatibly with such basic protection, along with possible further integration of nearby open space parcels.

#### *Farms*

At the public forum, residents expressed a desire to preserve the town's remaining larger farm parcels. Some are permanently protected under the state APR program. Although some farm parcels are temporarily and partially protected under Chapter 61A, others could be developed at any time. Loss of these remaining farm parcels could significantly alter the rural landscape character enjoyed by Warren residents.

#### *Scenic Roadways*

Development pressure can put scenic roadways at risk. Special attention should be paid to protecting remaining open spaces with frontage on scenic roads as well as to extending and linking the scenic road network where possible.

#### *Mountain Areas*

There are numerous privately-held, unprotected areas in the uplands, such as in the Mark's Mountain and Coy Hill areas. Some of these properties have ecological or historical significance. Scenic views may be compromised by continued residential development based on existing zoning. Some parcels overlap with the paths of old trails or border current conservation land. Integrated protection of trails and corridors should be a major priority, as a means of maintaining desirable scenic amenities in Warren.

#### *Habitats at Risk*

It is worth noting that motorized vehicles, such as ATVs and snowmobiles, may pose a danger to wildlife habitat in certain sensitive areas. Important ecosystems need to be identified and protected from such inappropriate uses. This would not impact current sites for ATV use.

### ***3) Summary of Community Needs***

#### ***Recreation Facilities and Resources***

An analysis of recreational facilities and survey results suggested several opportunities for improvement in recreational features and resources.

- Conservation parcels lack amenities—such as defined parking areas, signs and picnic tables—that would encourage more use by residents town-wide. Some of these areas seem to be hidden treasures that are underused by the general public.
- Many existing athletic fields and courts in Warren are in need of an overhaul and routine maintenance. Coordinated use of public athletic fields should allow for regular 'rest' and renovation of all fields. Parks and Recreation could manage access scheduling.
- There is a shortage of indoor space for programs provided by the Recreation

Department and other organizations. The absence of a public pool in Warren and at Quaboag Regional Middle/High School demands significant usage on Comins Pond during peak summer months.

- The Town of Warren offers no ice-skating facilities and only limited swimming opportunities.
- A lack of restrooms at recreation facilities interferes with Warren residents' enjoyment of local leisure activities.
- Town youth are in need of more local activities and events especially on weekends and during school vacations. Hiking and biking are especially important activities.
- With the exception of areas near the village centers, very few Warren roads have contiguous sidewalks. In addition to the long distances, this is one of the reasons that almost all recreation-related trips in Warren are made by car. There are several networks of informal trails throughout Warren on public and private land. These have been defined by recreation vehicles but could potentially be linked to form the basis of a comprehensive hiking and biking network. Connecting Warren's recreational resources, schools and libraries could provide easily accessible and affordable outdoor recreation opportunities for town residents.

### ***Recreation Goals and Objectives***

#### *Set realistic, achievable outcomes in the Open Space and Recreation Plan [OSRP]*

Knowing the restraints of finances and people power, it is critical to write a manageable action plan for the OSRP. Responsibility for specific actions should be delegated to various commissions, increasing the potential for measurable results within a five-year time frame. Although the suggestions in the action plan will likely be altered after the public comment period, it will be necessary to review terms of the OSRP periodically.

#### *Emphasize the Benefits of Recreation*

Most residents are aware of the personal benefits of recreation but many may not be as aware of the potential economic, environmental, and community benefits. Participation in the OSRP Action Plan may prompt town officials to increase their support of the Recreation Department, where the current administrative budget limits the development of new programs and resources. If the Recreation Department receives adequate funding towards its contribution to improving the town's quality of life, then many opportunities—including funding benefits—will continue to be unexplored.

#### *Identify Recreation Opportunities*

The landfill and Quaboag Regional Middle/High School are located next to municipal open space and forested edge. The potential for recreational use of this area is very high and should be investigated as soon as possible. Similarly, near the Colonel's Mountain several informal trails already exist and one path could connect with a nearby ballfield. Formal trails and a maintained campground could increase interest to the area and

provide inexpensive outdoor recreation opportunities. Other potential opportunities may be found in the following areas:

- Fishing at Quaboag River
- Existing (but overgrown) trails on town conservation properties
- Contiguous open spaces may be linked by trails
- Available municipal parcels adjacent to Comins Pond

#### ***4) Management Needs, Potential Changes of Use***

##### *Town-wide participation in the OSRP*

In order to develop the action items of the OSRP, the cooperation and commitment of various town departments and citizens is essential. Basic endorsement of the OSRP by town officials is only the first step; active participation of every member and department will help to direct its goals and objectives.

##### *Management and Maintenance of Conservation Properties*

For a variety of reasons, conservation areas are currently underutilized by the majority of Warren residents. A strategy for capitalizing on the recreation potential of town-owned conservation areas should be devised by the Conservation and Recreation Commissions.

##### *Communication*

In the future, communication between town departments and commissions can help address the management needs uncovered by the OSRP process. Specifically, the Conservation and Recreation Commissions must work closely with the Planning Board to ensure proper consideration of the goals of the OSRP. At present, the Recreation Commission is not responsible for conservation areas and the Conservation Commission's work is primarily related to regulatory functions. Neither commission has the financial or staff capability to maintain conservation sites, some of which are unknown to the general public. Simple and regular communication could improve the chances of finding creative solutions to management problems.

##### *Community Use of School Buildings and Grounds*

Many Warren residents believe that school buildings and properties should be more accessible. To avoid duplication of programs and provide optimal use of resources, there is also a need for more coordination between the Warren Recreation Department and other groups that use school facilities.

##### *Open Space Zoning*

The town has 1,912 acres of protected land, under a variety of forms of ownership and management. Since Proposition 2 1/2, financial limitations have prevented the Town of Warren from purchasing additional conservation land. However, the town may be able to protect additional parcels through planning measures such as the use of cluster or flexible zoning. Some of these parcels abut existing conservation land or provide pedestrian easements. Town officials should consider transferring current OS parcels to the Conservation or Recreation Commission for public enjoyment.

### *Identifying Priority Open Space to Preserve Rural Character*

It is evident that Warren citizens are concerned about maintaining the community's rural character. Although most of Warren currently consists of open, agricultural land and old homesteads, development pressure does have the potential to alter the landscape in less than desirable ways. There are several options for allowing residential development in a way that it maintains the rural character of the town:

Cluster housing allows for building houses closer together than would normally be allowed under the underlying zoning requirements, while preserving the remaining land as open space. Cluster housing appeals to developers because it enables them to build shorter subdivision roads and (where available) extend public utilities at a reduced cost. Cluster housing can help preserve rural character *if* the local bylaw gives the Planning Board the flexibility to determine what areas of the property are to remain as undeveloped open space. Cluster housing can make economic sense for municipalities as it helps reduce infrastructure costs and provide permanent protection of open space. If municipal utilities are required, the lines for such utilities can be extended into a cluster subdivision cheaper than they can be extended down an existing road as part of a conventional development proposal and a portion of the cluster development's open space can be used to provide recreation facilities for the residents instead of the town having to acquire and develop recreational lands.

### *Establish Open Space Preservation Zoning (Cluster Zoning)*

(Please see Chapter 13, Section 13.d Growth Management)

## **14.d Goals And Objectives**

### **Goal 1**

**Educate and build support regarding the Open Space and Recreation Plan.**

#### **Objectives**

- Encourage community-wide involvement in the Open Space and Recreation Plan.
- Encourage regular meetings and communication between town boards, departments, commissions and elected officials.

### **Goal 2**

**Promote pro-active growth management to protect rural character, scenic landscapes, historic sites and community identity.**

#### **Objectives**

- Establish priority areas and target percentages for protection of remaining open space.
- Preserve and publicize cultural and historic places, landmarks and scenic roads.
- Encourage development methods with minimal impact on the town's quality of life.
- Discourage dispersed, low-density, land- and resource-inefficient development.

### **Goal 3**

**Identify and implement strategies for achieving sustainable economic development.**

#### **Objectives**

- Research and comparatively assess long-term land-use, resource, and service demand impacts for various development approaches and for various business and housing types.
- Pursue a study of the fiscal impacts (real estate market, tax base, secondary business) for various economic redevelopment strategies that also includes environmental impacts.

### **Goal 4**

**Plan for optimal use of recreation and conservation resources by residents.**

#### **Objectives**

- Coordinate the management and upgrade of all town resources and facilities.
- Increase low-impact recreation opportunities at existing conservation areas.
- Improve access to all town resources and facilities for the elderly and disabled.
- Coordinate the maintenance and scheduled use of all public athletic fields.
- Provide diverse, high-quality recreation opportunities for residents of all ages and areas of interest.
- Explore various funding opportunities for new or expanded recreation facilities.
- Provide administrative support to the Parks and Recreation Department.

### **Goal 5**

**Preserve and protect natural resources and wildlife corridors/habitats.**

#### **Objectives**

- Protect potential town watershed and water supply (e.g., well) sources.
- Maintain a current environmental inventory of resources and wildlife; develop a management plan for especially sensitive conservation areas.
- Clean up and protect rivers and streams; encourage recreational use and stewardship.
- Utilize conservation areas as recreational amenities and “outdoor classrooms.”
- Establish and enforce permitted uses of conservation and recreation areas to protect wildlife corridors and habitats in the vicinity of Warren neighborhoods.

### **Goal 6**

**Improve pedestrian, bicycle and public transportation opportunities for Warren residents.**

#### **Objectives**

- Investigate the potential for a lane and path network linking open spaces, recreation sites, libraries, schools, and village centers.
- Include a review of area transportation and recreation needs in the approval process for

all proposed residential and commercial development projects.

#### **14.e Action Plan Recommendations**

The following action plan represents a starting point for the establishment of community support. Since the needs of Warren cannot—and should not—be addressed by a select group of citizens or a single committee, the draft action plan was designed to include many boards, commissions, individuals and civic groups. Although the action plan will be modified after the public comment period, all of its suggestions should remain on the table for future consideration.

Upon first review, the action plan may seem overly ambitious. By delegating tasks into more manageable parts, however, the document offers supporting roles for a wide range of commitment levels and areas of interest. To illustrate the distribution of tasks, the action plan items are sorted by responsibility for each board, commission or department.

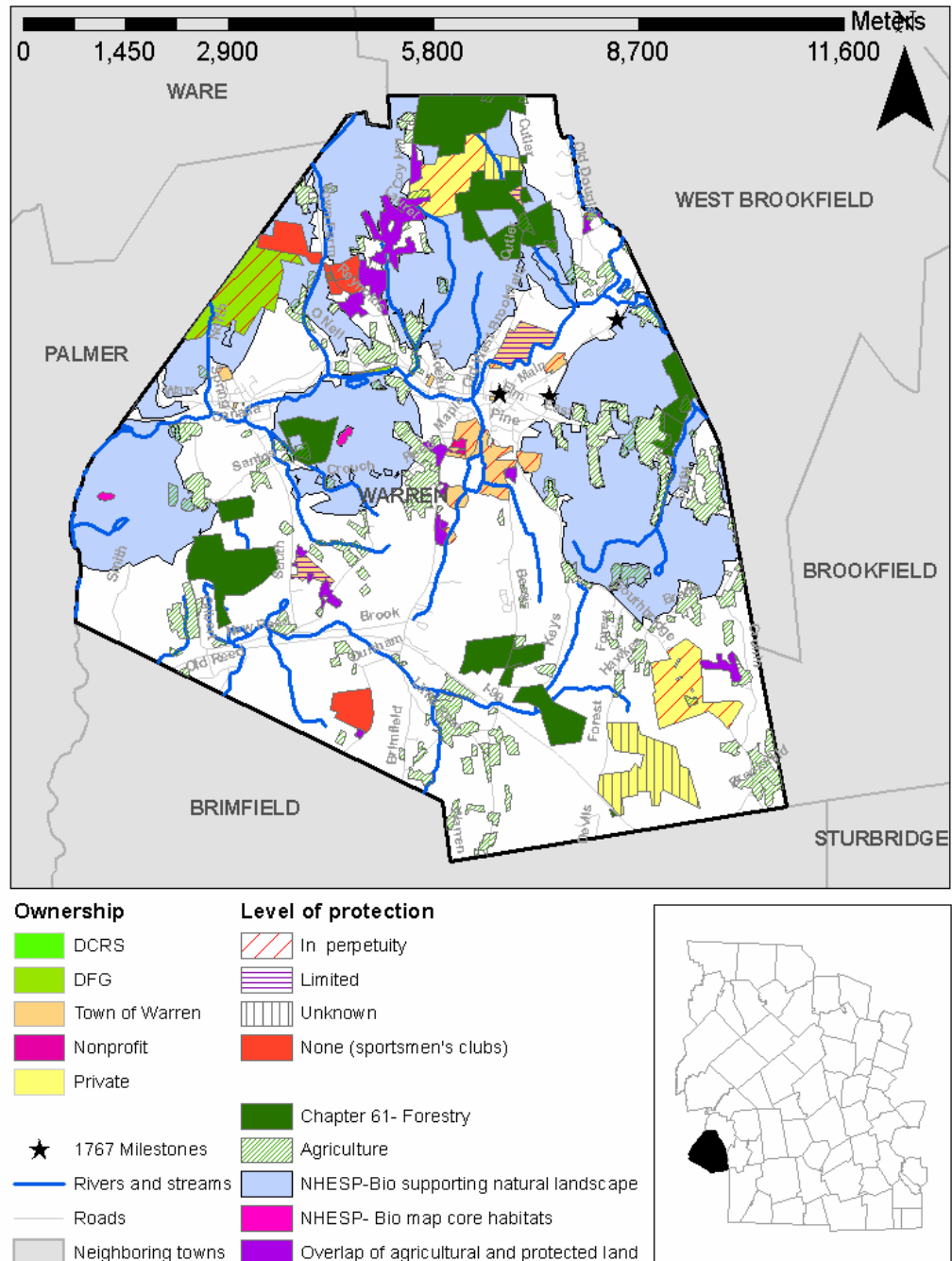
While there are many dedicated volunteers in Warren, there does not seem to be a readily identifiable set of common goals. An important component of the plan is the establishment of joint subcommittees. The hope is that the subcommittee model will replace the prevailing single-interest model of public participation by indicating areas of mutual concern and encouraging cooperation.

The UMass team also prepared a map of the town depicting important existing open space and recreation resources for use by residents and interested citizens (see Map 11: Action Plan Composite Analysis below). The darker purple areas on the map indicate the overlap of several priority criteria (agriculture and protection). Map 12: Overlapping Areas of Concern below identifies even more clearly those places in Warren where 2 to 3 protection priority criteria intersect.

The achievement of even a portion of this plan could yield considerable results for the town. Even the simple addition of OSRP issues to the monthly agenda of one or more boards would make a significant difference. The small and reasonable contributions of numerous groups and individuals can in the long run add up to measurable improvements for the Town of Warren.

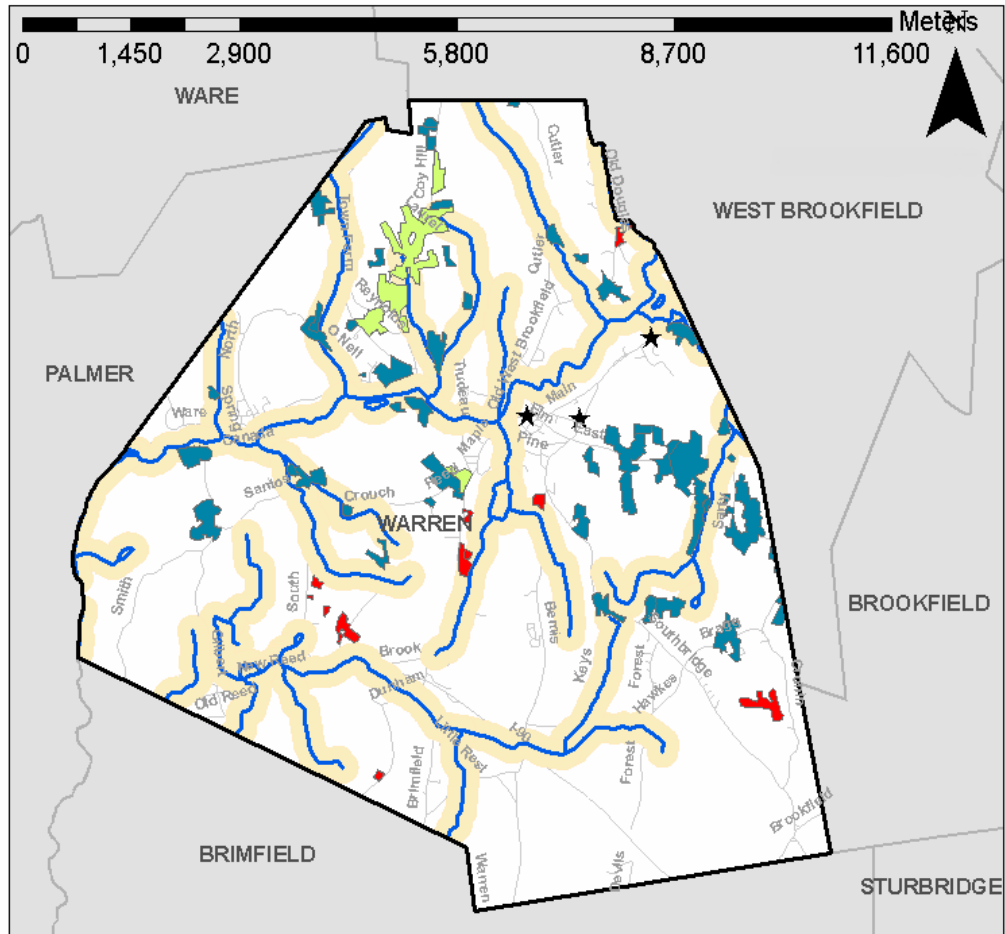
# Map 11: Action plan composite analysis

SOURCE: MassGIS 2005; Warren OSPR Committee 2005

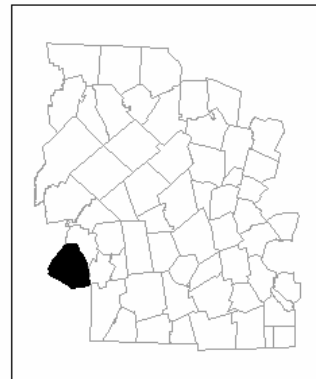


# Map 12: Overlapping areas of concern

SOURCE: MassGIS 2005



- Overlap of agricultural, protected and Bio-core
- Overlap of agricultural and protected land
- Overlap of agricultural and Bio-core land
- ★ 1767 Milestones
- Rivers and streams
- Roads
- Neighboring towns



## ***Part H            Economy***

### **Chapter 15.    Identifying New Employment and Income Sources**

#### **15.a    Industrial Strategies and Structures**

This section presents potential development strategies that can assist Warren in reaching its economic goals and objectives. The critical goals identified by the community include increasing the commercial tax base, attracting new businesses, creating new jobs, and managing the rate of residential growth. The challenges to achieving these goals include the town's location, the decline of the mill industry, competing regional commercial activity, infrastructure and design issues, and outdated zoning bylaws. The strategies and planning tools described in this section will give the community a base of resources from which the town can draw to implement strategies and take actions that will assist the town in meeting its economic development goals.

A successful economic development strategy will not come without some measure of anticipatory and preparatory change, an issue that must be faced by the local community and addressed with forethought to ensure that the character that is so valued can be maintained even as the town grows. Growth itself can also be better managed if the town is prepared to take a careful look at zoning and available growth management strategies and identify a plan that accounts for regional pressures and prepares for opportunities but also protects the core elements of Warren.

An Economic Development Plan establishes a long-term vision for economic growth in Warren that will reinforce the character of the town and contribute to the quality of life for its residents. The social, economic and the physical structure of the town are considered in relation to one another so that Warren can set the best direction for new development and growth. This chapter identifies development opportunities, and organizational structures necessary to improve the town's tax base and support the financial well-being of its business and citizens.

The Economic Development Strategies Plan, developed for Warren by the consulting firm Community and Business Strategies, Inc., maintains that marketing a community is a two-fold process. The first part of the process involves making a list of prospective manufacturing or service companies that are looking to expand or relocate their physical facilities. This will be the most difficult part of the process, since there is no guaranteed way to find such companies. One way to start such an endeavor is to begin with contacts in the types of industries the community has previously targeted. Warren Pumps, Wrights and Hardwick Knitters, for example, are excellent resources for determining compatible related business (e.g., suppliers, specialty tooling, etc.) The second part of the process will be described in the next chapter on village centers revitalization.

### *Identify and Designate Targeted Development Areas*

The town must identify critical areas and parcels that can be targeted for development or reuse. This activity will complement the zoning changes, and make it easier to identify and attract desired commercial or industrial establishments. By identifying the particular areas where growth and re-development can occur, the town will be able to present them to potential businesses and exact controls on them that mesh with the town's character and desires. Some of the areas to be targeted include:

- Village Centers
- Mill Complexes
- Older buildings, particularly adaptive reuse of vacant or historically significant sites
- Infill – Brownfield or other redevelopment sites
- Highway Corridors
- Potential Site of Mass Pike Interchange

### *Develop and Coordinate a Business Marketing Strategy*

In order to attract commercial and industrial development, the town must identify and implement a business marketing strategy to present the benefits of locating in Warren and targeting the right potential businesses. Town government shares some of this responsibility, but the creation of a Community Business Alliance (CBA) or Economic Development Association (EDA) is necessary to pool resources and start business owners and community leaders working together to create an effective strategy. This can also help with identifying funding options for desired marketing programs. State programs and grants are also available to help with marketing the town and revitalizing the local economy. See 15.b below for further discussion of EDAs. QVCC and QVCDC/BAC (see Chapter 12 above) can assist with such strategic development.

### *Establish a Community Business Alliance*

A CBA is an association of business owners, property owners, and community members who join together to evaluate marketing and community needs. The primary goal of establishing a CBA is to encourage town business owners to work together to expand and enhance their individual interests while preserving the community's character and improving the economic status of Warren. Moreover, the CBA helps to educate local residents about the importance of shopping locally as a way to preserve its community character. By banding together in an alliance, businesses are able to increase their influence in the town's economic market. The CBA also initiates and supports new approaches for small business success, hosts networking and educational opportunities for local businesses and the public, and creates opportunities for cooperative advertisement. Overall, a CBA is an effective way to educate and coordinate property and business owners' groups to promote the overall betterment of the business climate, encourage cooperation in serving market demands, and stage promotional events that feature and complement competing sectors of the greater Warren market.

### *Establish a Business Improvement District*

A Business Improvement District is the zoning and regulatory complement to a CBA.

## 15.b Funding Resources

### *Identify and Pursue State and Federal Grants*

There are many State and Federal programs that provide grants and other financial assistance to towns and businesses with the objective of stimulating economic development and growth. Some programs are dependent on the type of situation the town is in, such as funding for Economic Target Areas (ETAs) or Economic Opportunity Areas (EOAs), and others are dependant on the type of project.

### *Economic Development Administration<sup>22</sup>*

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) was established under the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 to generate jobs, help retain existing jobs, and stimulate industrial and commercial growth in economically distressed areas of the United States. EDA assistance is available to rural and urban areas of the nation experiencing high unemployment, low income, or other severe economic distress. The EDA provides direct grants, on a cost-share basis, for projects that will create and retain private-sector jobs and leverage public and private investment in distressed areas. The EDA also provides community and regional economic development assistance for the following program activities:

- Planning and Technical Assistance to build local capacity for economic development programs and projects. This includes assistance for local, state, and regional planning organizations that target distressed rural and urban communities, and for University Centers and other projects that provide technical support for economic development.
- Public works and development facilities to support industrial, commercial, and technology-based employment in eligible areas experiencing significant economic distress.
- Economic adjustment assistance to address severe economic dislocations, natural disasters, or other special needs. In addition, grants may be used to establish revolving loan funds for business retention, expansion, or new enterprise development. Funds are expected to leverage other public and private capital for strategic investments in local capital markets.

At present, Warren's economy does not qualify for this type of assistance, but future shifts in the regional and national economy might make the town eligible for EDA funds.

### *Massachusetts Turnpike Authority*

The Massachusetts Turnpike Authority issues its grants annually in accordance with its enabling statute, which requires the annual issuance of at least \$1.25 million in grants to enhance economic growth through tourism-related commerce.<sup>23</sup> Communities located along the turnpike are eligible to apply for these grants to promote and support tourism.

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<sup>22</sup> Economic Development Administration, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, <http://www.eda.gov>

Grant amounts can range from \$1,000 to over \$75,000 depending on the project type and need.

#### *Loan Programs*

Warren's economic status and development needs may qualify the town for loan programs offered by various State and Federal organizations. There is potential for acquiring low-interest loans to stimulate economic development, depending on the project and need. Additionally, the Town of Warren could establish a loan program for local businesses for improvements, providing a mechanism for business owners make improvements such as façade updates.

#### *Community Reinvestment Act*

The Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) was established in 1977 in response to a growing concern that financial institutions were not seeking out or helping to meet the credit needs of all members of the community, particularly low- to moderate-income earners. The CRA was created to encourage financial institutions to extend credit to all members of the community in a manner that is sound and safe for the bank. The CRA regulates and influences the behavior of banks through an examination and rating system and through the use of public opinion. Banks are examined and rated based on their lending practices within a designated assessment area and the rating takes into consideration the both quantitative and qualitative measures of the lending practices.

In order for banks to maintain high CRA-ratings and good public recognition, many have created CRA Special Lending Programs that are targeted at low- to moderate-income earners seeking loans for purchasing a home or doing home improvement, small business loans to businesses with annual revenue of \$1 million or less, and community development loans. Banks often work in conjunction with local non-profits, CDCs, or municipalities in order to help reach more members of the community. We would encourage the Town of Warren to research banks that include Warren in their assessment area to determine the current CRA ratings and any CRA Special Lending Programs, beginning with banks and other financial institutions.

#### *Business or Community Organizations*

Once established, business or community organizations could contribute funding for marketing and other related activities.

#### *Regional Planning Agencies*

Leverage planning resources available to the town from the CMRPC and PVPC; use their services to assist in identifying funding opportunities. (See Chapter 12 above.)

### **15.c Recommendations Specific to Particular Development Scenarios**

#### ***Scenario 1: The Reinvented Manufacturing Town Scenario***

To reiterate the scenario description from Chapter 1:

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<sup>23</sup> Massachusetts Turnpike Authority, <http://www.masspike.com>

The Reinvented Manufacturing Town scenario focuses on preserving the historical links between Warren's residential population, land and resource endowment, employment base, and community character. This future vision includes an economic redevelopment strategy involving adaptive reuse of the mill complexes and rail line; upgrade of existing water, power, telecommunication and transportation infrastructure; and improvements of education and town services to ensure an adequate local knowledge and skill base. Since the goal is to keep jobs and tax revenues in town, this strategy will primarily concentrate the new development in existing developed areas, thereby potentially slowing development rates in greenfield areas of town and relieving pressures on rural landowners. The town's character will be best preserved in this scenario but some development opportunities may be missed as a result.

### *Promoting Economic Development in Light Manufacturing*

Light manufacturing might be defined as a light (consumer rather than capital goods) industrial business where all processing, fabricating, assembly, or disassembly of items takes place wholly within an enclosed building. Typical items for processing, fabricating, assembly, or disassembly may include but are not limited to apparel, home accessories, food, small machine components, clothing accessories, instruments, computers, and electronic devices.

In general light manufacturing requires no extensive hauling, loading or unloading of material. In addition light manufacturing does not show its effects, such as smoke, noise, odor, and dust beyond the property boundary.

The Town of Warren has a long history of being a mill village; however, the number of manufacturing jobs is on the decline. In 2003 there were a total of 1,310 jobs in Warren, and manufacturing jobs accounted for almost 55% of the total jobs and retail jobs accounting for roughly 5% (Economic Statistical Profile). The long-term prospect for these manufacturing enterprises is a critical question in planning the economic redevelopment of Warren in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Clinton, MA shares similar characteristics with the Town of Warren, such as geographic factors and historical mill activity, and had recently experienced a decline in its manufacturing base. From the most recent data gathered, Clinton's manufacturing base in 2001 had 36 establishments that accounted for about 2,300 employees, and in 2003 there were 29 establishments that employed about 1,900 employees. This decline encouraged Clinton's manufacturing establishments to transform their industrial sector to reflect changing regional and global economic trends.

In light manufacturing, the value added is through the application of skill to physical or raw materials. In the past this skill was only possible through the hire of specialized crafts people. However, in today's economy this skill is captured and applied to the fabrication of the product by a computer program that runs a computerized machine tool. This enables the manufacturing process to be broken down and allows for different people to

learn the skills required to perform a couple of manufacturing steps out of the whole process.

As technology advances in computerization and robotic fabricating equipment, there is increasing pressure on the US light manufacturing sector from foreign competition. Strong American light manufacturing businesses, such as electronics and hand tools, are being trumped by foreign competition. According to *Industry Week* magazine's June 2003 issue, foreign companies invested \$52 billion in China in 2002. Overall, this is causing many American light manufacturing enterprises to go out of business, and in general is decreasing the US industrial production across the board. Another component to this decline in American light manufacturing businesses is that labor costs are generally much lower overseas.

Although there is a large decrease in American light manufacturing business, there are important factors that benefit US companies:

- American light manufacturing companies are closest to end users
- The US government is required to source through American manufacturers

### ***Strategies for LMD Development***

#### *Identify buildings/ parcels available for light industrial use*

Local businesses, residents, and real estate agents should work collaboratively to create an inventory of vacant buildings and parcels that could potentially be used of commercial and light industrial use.

#### *Identify and Target Environmentally Light Industries*

Encourage the establishment of environmentally benign light industries, professions and mom and pop stores that will not negatively impact the rural and aesthetic nature of Warren. The EDA can assist with this goal as well.

#### *Re-zone to Create Industrial Areas to better support mixed-use development*

This will allow Warren to better reuse its mills. Allowing for part of the mills to be used for manufacturing purposes and other areas for small studios and retail shops.

#### *Establish a 'niche market' for Light Manufacturing*

Niche marketing can be highly profitable and a way to sustain light manufacturing in a community. Most companies large and small succeed by tailoring their product to the demands of a geographic area or ethnic group. As well, producing for a niche market is a low-risk way to grow a business and increase its competitiveness<sup>6</sup>. However, when choosing a niche market it is important to determine how your product meets the needs of the community and provides a unique service.

The current local mill manufacturing companies (Warren Pumps and the Wrights and Hardwick mills) have established a niche market for themselves. In the event that these companies leave, Warren should strive to attract other such companies that encompass a niche market that supports the local economy and meshes with local character.

Where speed is important American companies will have the advantage over foreign competitors. The foreign companies will have to think in terms of oceanic transit for their product. As well, state governments attempt to buy locally when possible. Because of this there are key elements that the light manufactured product should entail in order to survive the market and have a competitive advantage. Warren should adjust their light manufacturing to encompass all of these in order to sustain its manufacturing tax base. Those key elements are necessary to create a Light Manufacturing District (LMD) that supports a niche market and is internet accessible.

A town having a well-wired telecommunications system is an important factor to interested businesses that want to relocate. Having access to not only the internet but cell phone reception is key in today's economy. Light manufacturing can be increased and sustained through the internet. This is because the internet can provide a very economical and sensible link to the consumer. The internet is also a viable option for advertisement because of the large number of people that can have access to the product and the low cost to advertise.

*Establish a Special Permit process for "Creative Development" option.*

This would provide for an overlay district that would allow for mixed-use developments of housing, office, and retail. Through the special permit process, the town planning board would approve specific development plans submitted by the developer. Additionally, each development proposed would be subjected to site plan review.

***Revitalized Village Centers Bedroom Community*** [see Chapter 16 below]

***Regionally-Integrated Economic Attractor***

As stated previously in Chapter 1:

The Regionally-Integrated Economic Attractor scenario represents the most dramatic change in current orientation among the three outlined here. In this future vision, the town 'thinks outside the box' and leverages its location and undeveloped land in a bolder way, with significant long-term implications for population growth, new residential and commercial development, and demand impact on local infrastructure and services. We will address this strategy in a hypothetical way only, considering what kinds of destination attractions might best serve Warren's future: for example, leisure and recreation amenities, transport/distribution hub, regional specialty shopping. Such a fast growth scenario may or may not sharply increase pressures on land and resource use and on town infrastructure and services, depending on the particular development strategy

and on town management policies. Whatever the potential economic gains, this future vision is least likely to preserve the longstanding scale and character of Warren, unless the new development is fully complementary to, or at least isolated from, the village centers. Creating a turnpike interchange or a rail spur to an inter-modal transport center would be among the potential major projects under this scenario.

Changes to the scale and character of Warren based on this type of scenario can be offset to some degree by implementation of a combination of the planning methods and actions described in previous sections. Examples might include targeted zoning, design guidelines, and subdivision or clustered development plans. Any plan for a major regional attractor must be based on a sound set of underlying principles and policies that will ensure the future development of the town meets both the needs and desires of Warren's residents. It is important to consider the regional economic strategy as the culmination of a number of efforts to affect major change on the town. A plan must be outlined that describes and prioritizes the steps required to attract, develop, and maintain a regional attractor.

*Potential regionally-integrated economic attractor development strategies:*

1. Massachusetts Turnpike Interchange
2. Casino or other gaming establishment
3. Outdoor recreation or river-based amenities
4. Education satellite (community college, technical school, training center)

Prior to deciding on a strategy to attract a particular type of establishment or industry, there are a number of factors that must be identified and analyzed. Foremost of these factors are the goals and desires of the community. A regional attractor strategy will have significant impacts on the population and character of the community, depending on the particular industry. Investigation of similar attractions in the region must also be carried out. In the same way that any business may carry out a marketing analysis, the town must also confirm the feasibility of an establishment or industry based on the carrying capacity of the region. For example, there are already a number of outlet malls in Massachusetts, the towns of Lee and Wrentham are two examples, so the question of whether or not there is a market for another retail shopping outlet would need to be asked and answered. Similarly, would the business or industry have an interest in development in Warren? Demographics, location, and the local environment, including physical, regulatory, political, and other factors will all be a part of the decision of any company or organization to locate in the town. The economic gain must also be carefully considered, as many businesses or industries appear to be very attractive to a town from a financial perspective, but upon closer inspection the actual gains realized by the town are minimal. Finally, the indirect impacts of the development must be determined. Impacts on infrastructure, traffic, pollution, and population type, such as an influx of students, are examples of this type of impact. As part of the objectives of this plan, we will identify and explore several examples of regional economic attractors and relate them to other communities where similar development has occurred where appropriate.

### ***Massachusetts Turnpike Interchange***

This strategy is highly dependent on factors outside of the town's control, and thus must be considered not only as a desired strategy, but also as a critical factor for various other scenarios. It would be beneficial to the town to plan for effective management of development in the case of a new interchange regardless of the decision to seek out an interchange as a means of stimulating economic growth. Attracting an interchange involves great investment by a number of parties, ranging from the local community, local property owners, local and State politicians and agencies, and the federal government. Significant hurdles that must be overcome are identifying the land on which to build the interchange, placating local property owners that may be displaced by eminent domain, and acquiring funding for the project, the majority of which comes from Federal and State government as well as from the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority.

Warren's location, including just under 5 miles of Massachusetts Turnpike frontage, between Exits 8 and 9, a stretch of unbroken highway approximately 15 miles in length, does make it attractive as a possible site for an interchange. Previous attempts to implement a plan for an interchange have been unsuccessful for a number of reasons, including a lack of consensus on location among local residents and the neighboring towns, in addition to large-scale funding issues. The natural environment is also a consideration in a plan to develop an interchange in Warren, as much of the area adjacent to the Turnpike is wetland and would require filling for development.

If plans were to move forward for a new interchange in Warren, there are some basic management controls that must be implemented by the town to control growth and development. The zoning and growth management strategies outlined in previous sections of this document must be considered and implemented to best serve the goals and objectives of the town. If commercial and industrial development is desired, areas targeted for those uses must be zoned accordingly. For example, a feeder road could be zoned as Highway Business, creating a development corridor focused on commercial development but regulated in a manner that best reflects the character and values of the town. In addition to providing new opportunities for commercial, transportation, distribution, and industrial development, a new interchange would open the town up to significant residential development. Warren's proximity to Worcester, Springfield, Boston, and Hartford make it a prime target for home seekers who work in and around those regional cities. By default, Warren would become a bedroom community, and unless a sound growth management strategy is implemented prior to development of the interchange, growth and development will occur without any control or regulation by the town, putting open space, community character, and town finances in jeopardy.

A primary outcome of an interchange is the opportunity for the town to attract a variety of commercial and industrial uses, and as with control of residential development, it will be imperative for the town to have a plan in place for the desired uses prior to development. If desired uses can be identified ahead of time, necessary regulations and

ordinances can be analyzed, created, modified and approved by the town to prevent unwanted uses from developing without the necessary controls in place.

Related Planning Actions:

- Zoning Updates
- Implementation of Design Guidelines
- Growth Management (Subdivision Control, Cluster Zoning)
- Revision of Capital Improvement Plan
- Business Marketing Initiative

***Casino or Gaming Establishment***

The strategy to develop a casino or gaming establishment is one of the most controversial and misunderstood goals of economic development identified for Warren. The potential impacts are significant and varied, ranging from actual revenue generated for the local community to infrastructure costs to social impacts. Before analyzing the major impacts of development of the casino and gaming industry, the different types of establishments must be understood. Following is a breakdown of various types of gaming establishment:

- Native American Casino
  - Tribal recognition
  - Land acquisition and creation of reservation (sovereign land)
  - Tribe-State compact (allows gaming and determines financial settlements)
  - Development of casino
  - Infrastructure
- Corporate Casino
  - State allowed gaming (change to existing State Law)
  - Land acquisition
  - Development of casino
  - Infrastructure
- State Run Gaming Establishment
  - State allowed gaming (change in law or reliance on charity exemption)
  - State Lottery sponsored
  - Land acquisition or lease of existing space
  - Development or renovation of gaming establishment
  - Infrastructure

The strategy for the town to pursue or embrace a casino is one that must be analyzed in great detail, and a systematic review of the costs and benefits must be carried out. In any case, the initial agreement between host town, landowner and developer is critical to

provide for a significant economic benefit to the town that can offset increased financial and social costs as a result of the development.

Related Planning Actions:

- Revenue sharing agreement negotiation and approval
- Zoning Updates
- Revision of Capital Improvement Plan

### ***Outdoor Recreation or River-Based Amenities***

Warren is fortunate in the amount of undeveloped and protected open space and natural resources contained within its borders. Over 50% of land remains undeveloped, and includes mountains, streams and rivers, ponds and other wetlands, and forest cover. The Quaboag River, running east-west directly through town, is among the cleaner rivers in the State, and affords opportunities for canoeing, kayaking, and fishing, in addition to complementary activities such as hiking and biking trails.

The outdoor recreation industry is one of the largest industries in the United States, and significant revenue can be generated for a town or region by leveraging the available natural assets. River guiding or boat rentals, outdoor leadership or skills training, and campgrounds are just some examples of commercial enterprises that can be based on the natural environment. In addition to direct commercial application of the natural resources, many support businesses and services can complement primary uses. These related businesses range from outdoor gear and apparel stores to restaurants that serve the people attracted to the area for the outdoor recreation.

Having a significant amount of open space and natural assets does not guarantee a large economic gain, however. There are many other elements that factor into the ability to transform a town or region from a non-recreation based economy to an outdoor, service based economy. The primary factor is the availability of similar natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities in the surrounding area or region. Warren's location near the Berkshires to the west and Vermont and New Hampshire to the north, in addition to a significant amount of open space and natural resources in surrounding towns, present a serious challenge to the ability to successfully base an economy on outdoor recreation. The regional competition for the recreation dollar leaves little room for creating a strong enough commercial base on which to build the economic future of the town.

In spite of a competitive market and challenges facing commercial development based on outdoor recreation, there is economic potential. Attracting outdoor-based development, particularly related to the Quaboag River, is possible, and areas along the river should be targeted as potential development sites, for example as put-in sites for boating.

Related Planning Actions:

- Open space protection
- Business marketing and recruitment

### ***Education Satellite***

Another possible regional attraction scenario is the development of an educational institution to the town. Re-use of the mill complex, if the current industry leaves, could possibly provide the infrastructure required for the implementation of either a public or private educational institution. Private technical schools are one possibility, as are satellite programs for State or regional colleges or alternative degree programs. Trade schools, possibly capitalizing on the manufacturing and industrial history of the town may be considered. Tax revenue would be dependent on the type of institution, as public educational institutions are not subject to taxes, however there may be other revenue streams generated by this type of use. An influx of students, faculty, and staff could provide a greater need for commercial services and the institution could also create a labor need. Additionally, an educational institution could serve to stimulate the local economy as businesses may be attracted to or grow as a result of the student population and knowledge base created by the school.

#### ***Related Planning Actions:***

- Zoning updates
- Business marketing and recruitment

## **Chapter 16. Promoting Business Improvement and Revitalization**

### **16.a Business Management, Marketing and Programming**

Beyond these concerns regarding limited economic growth, the main goals of the town have to do with preservation of the character and values of the community and provision of services and amenities desired to achieve a satisfactory quality of life. Many residents feel that attracting new commercial development is a critical component of any plan that will help achieve their basic goals, however they wish to do so without sacrificing the character of their community. In addition to commercial development, the town would like to see the remaining manufacturing base sustained, or alternatively finding new uses for the village centers and mill complexes that would stimulate the local economy if external factors continue to cause a decline in the local and regional industrial sector.

The first part of the redevelopment process was described in the previous chapter. The second part of the process involves communicating with retail and service companies that might have a specific interest in locating in village center areas, as well as potential visitors wanting to travel. Marketing a community is much like marketing a commercial product, which are marketed with an emphasis on matching the product available to the needs and wants of the customer. This is probably the most challenging part of marketing a village center, but it will also more likely be successful.

This concept of marketing can be implemented at the village center scale. The single most important factor that comes into play is to establish strong Central Business District (CBD) leadership and to have a public-private partnership responsible for village center redevelopment. While the town can play a major role in encouraging investment, CBD leadership should be the role and responsibility of the all those who are invested in the area, including property owners, tenants, and residents in addition to government.

The marketing and promotion of the village centers, objectives that include contributions from both the public and private sector, should involve developing and implementing a village centers marketing program. An important goal is to ensure that all citizens recognize the value of the village centers and their tax base and community image, and support investment in the CBDs. Assets of the village centers that could be marketed include a rich industrial history, an active mill complex, a community seeking to attract commercial activity, and available space. Steps can be taken by the town and business owners to assist in attracting business, particularly in making improvements to the infrastructure, such as sidewalks and parking, and updates to storefronts and building facades.

Effective marketing of village centers requires knowing who the target constituencies are, whether businesspeople, investors or visitors, what their wants and needs are, and how their expectations can be met. An effective campaign starts with identifying what diverse activities should be available to bring people to the CBDs. Additionally, the marketing materials should articulate the appropriate physical environment and image. With

appropriate information, effective communication plans, promotions, and uses of various media to convey information can be developed to meet the needs to potential customers.

## **16.b Design Improvements**

### *Establish Design Guidelines and Design Review Process*

Design guidelines can be implemented to help the town achieve its goals related to business development and town character. By establishing design guidelines, the town can ensure that new development meets the aesthetic standards the community is seeking to achieve in the village centers and main transportation and economic corridors. Each district may have its own set of criteria and guidelines, varying between the pedestrian-focused Central Business Districts and the more vehicle-oriented Highway Districts. A common theme should be established that carries over between the districts, while allowing for their basic differences, and meshes the design with the character and values determined by the community. Design guidelines can also provide for greater flexibility in allowed business types, without jeopardizing the character and aesthetics of the town.

The design review process should be established to ensure that new development is meeting the standards set forth in the design guidelines. The review process should focus on building and landscape design and site layout. A consistent set of standards and management of the review process will ensure that intent of the guidelines is carried forward to meet the objectives set out as part of the overall development plan by the community.

### *Establish Signage Guidelines*

Signage is a critical, but often overlooked, element of a community revitalization, development, and design plan. Signage can serve a number of purposes, such as improving visitor and tourist information, stimulating business, improving traffic flow, and contributing to a more aesthetically pleasing streetscape. Well-designed and located signs can improve traffic and attract business by alerting travelers to upcoming landmarks, shops, and services. Additionally, a consistent and attractive signage program will provide the town, and specifically the village centers, with a common style that reflects the character of the town and its residents.

### *Establish Site Plan Review*

A site plan review process complements the zoning by-laws and design guidelines by managing traffic flow, protecting the environment, and ensuring safe and efficient engineering practices. The focus is on technical and structural issues, as opposed to the design guidelines that are focused on aesthetics and character.

### *Design and Aesthetic Improvements*

There are many design and aesthetic changes that can be made within the town, particular to village center buildings and streetscapes that will make the town more attractive to residents, tourists, and current and potential business owners. Updating building facades and signage in a consistent manner will contribute to the creation of vibrant, desirable village center areas, and pairing this with updates to the CBD infrastructure such as

sidewalks and adding urban design features such as more trees and plantings, will establish the town's character and assist in its revitalization.

## **16.c Other Recommendations**

### *Infrastructure Improvements*

A combination of smaller short-term and larger longer-term infrastructure improvements will make the town a more viable incubator for business and industry and make the town more attractive to residents and visitors. Road and parking networks need updating, to make it easier and safer to negotiate the village center areas, both by car and on foot. Adequate utilities must also be provided for business to consider locating in Warren, in addition to standard utilities such as water and power, high-speed data and telephone lines and wireless access.

### *Transportation Network Improvements*

The network connecting a village center consists of links (roadways) and nodes (intersections). When additional demand volume is added to the links and nodes, it may exceed the capacity of a given link or node, and congestion occurs, having a local and regional effect. On the local level, network users moving on the system may become frustrated by inefficiencies. Regionally, late deliveries affect the productivity of businesses within a particular region. Although additional development is vital for a region's economic vitality, it must be phased in at an appropriate rate, ensuring that the network's safe and efficient movement is maintained.

## Chapter 17. Meeting Housing Development and Distribution Goals

### 17.a Rehabilitation of Older Housing

As indicated in Table 26 in Chapter 7, nearly 43% of Warren's housing stock was built prior to World War II. It is quite likely that many of these older residences would not meet today's various housing codes (plumbing, electricity, weather-proofing, building code, etc.). The federal government offers numerous grant opportunities for building rehabilitation, especially when they benefit low and moderate-income families. A brief description of available federal housing rehab grants is provided on the following pages.

- *Community Development Block Grant Program:* This program was developed at the federal level by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The program is implemented at the State level by DHCD. Offered annually, the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) presently has two pots of money available to Massachusetts municipalities: Community Development Fund I (CDF-I) and Community Development Fund II (CDF-II). A community is eligible to apply for one or the other. Warren needs to find out which of these will be applicable to it. Be forewarned that communities interested in applying for CDF funds need to do a substantial amount of advance work prior to submitting a grant application. Eligible activities include: economic development projects that create and/or retain local/regional jobs, community facilities, housing rehabilitation and infrastructure improvements (including sewer and water). A CDF project must either benefit low and moderate-income people, aid in the prevention and/or elimination of slums and/or blight, or meet an urgent condition posing a serious threat to the health and welfare of the community.
- *The Housing Development Support Program:* The Housing Development Support Program is a component of the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program administered by DHCD. The program is designed to assist with project-specific affordable housing initiatives with the emphasis on small-scale projects that might otherwise go un-funded. Typical projects include housing rehabilitation, new construction, reclamation of abandoned properties, elderly and special needs housing, and the conversion of obsolete and under-utilized buildings for housing. Funds can be used for acquisition, rehabilitation, site work and related infrastructure. Projects are limited to a maximum of seven housing units, 51% of which must be affordable to and occupied by low and moderate-income households (up to 80% of the area's median household income). This is a grant program and communities that have been Housing Certified by DHCD receive bonus points totaling 10% of the available points for this program.
- *The Massachusetts Affordable Housing Trust Fund:* The Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) was established by an act of the State Legislature and is codified under Chapter 121-D of the Massachusetts General Laws. The AHTF operates out of DHCD and is administered by the Massachusetts Housing Finance Authority (MHFA) with guidance provided by an Advisory Committee of housing

advocates. The purpose of the fund is to support the creation/preservation of housing that is affordable to people with incomes that do not exceed 110% of the area median income. The AHTF can be used to support the acquisition, development and/or preservation of affordable housing units. AHTF assistance can include:

- Deferred payment loans, low/no-interest amortizing loans.
- Down payment and closing cost assistance for first-time homebuyers.
- Credit enhancements and mortgage insurance guarantees.
- Matching funds for municipalities that sponsor affordable housing projects.
- Matching funds for employer-based housing and capital grants for public housing.

Housing developments financed by the AHTF can include market-rate units, but the Trust Fund cannot be used to support such units. The level of assistance provided by the AHTF to a specific project must be the minimum amount necessary to achieve the desired degree of affordability. Housing units created through the AHTF can be counted towards the town's 10% threshold for affordable housing under Chapter 40-B (see p. 137 below).

- *The Local Initiative Program:* The Local Initiative Program (LIP) is administered by DHCD and was established to give municipalities more flexibility in their efforts to provide low and moderate-income housing. The program provides technical assistance and other non-financial assistance to housing developed through the initiative of local government to serve households below 80% of the town's median household income. The program limits the State's review to the most basic aspects of affordable housing: the incomes of the people served, the minimum quality of the housing provided, fair marketing and level of profit. LIP projects must be initiated by the municipality, either through zoning-based approvals (rezoning, special permits, density bonuses, etc.), financial assistance and/or through the provision of land and/or buildings. LIP projects can include new construction, building conversion, adaptive re-use and building rehabilitation. LIP projects are usually administered at the local level by a local housing partnership or, in the absence of a housing partnership, the Board of Selectmen. Affordable housing units created by a LIP project will be counted towards the municipality's 10% low and moderate-income housing threshold.
- *The HOME Program and the Housing Stabilization Fund:* These programs are offered by HUD (managed at the state level by DHCD) and are designed to support the acquisition and/or rehabilitation of existing structures. Acquisition funds are only available to low-income families. Eligible projects include: property acquisition; housing construction and/or rehabilitation; connecting to public utilities (sewer & water); and making essential improvements such as structural improvements, plumbing improvements and energy-related improvements. These programs are offered every two years. Once again,

interested communities need to do a substantial amount of advance work prior to submitting a grant application.

- *The ‘Get the Lead Out’ Program:* This HUD-sponsored program is managed at the State level by the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency (MHFA). This is a lead abatement program available to single family homes and 2-4 family properties. Offered on an annual basis, these funds are generally easier to apply for than the above referenced CDBG funds.
- *Home Improvement Loan Program:* Another HUD program managed by the MHFA, this program offers funds to eligible owners of one-to-four unit residential properties so that they can make necessary improvements to their residential structures. Eligible improvements include: sewage disposal systems and plumbing needs; alterations and renovations that will enhance property safety; energy-related improvements and repairs designed to bring the structure up to local building codes. Offered on an annual basis, these funds generally have an easier application process than the above referenced CDBG funds.
- *Community Septic Management Program:* This program was developed at the federal level by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and is administered at the State level by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The program makes available to homeowners loan money (at 5% interest) for repairing failing septic systems.
- *Weatherization Assistance:* HUD provides funding assistance to regional non-profit organizations for fuel assistance and weatherization programs. The Worcester Community Action Council, Inc. is the regional agency that provides such services for Worcester County communities. In order to be eligible for the weatherization program, the applicant must receive some form of federal fuel assistance benefits.

## **17.b Senior and Affordable Housing**

### *Senior Housing*

Warren’s over-60 population has grown by 7.5% since 1990, from 586 over-65 residents in 1990 to 630 over-60 residents in 2000. The segment of the town’s population aged 45-54 (i.e., Warren’s next generation of senior citizens) has grown over the last decade. Thus, Warren will be dealing with the issue of elderly housing for some time to come. As Warren’s elderly population is the fastest growing segment of the town’s overall population, (the under 18 years population has actually decreased by 9.1% over the last decade) it could be anticipated that the demand for senior housing will become even more pronounced over the next decade. Many communities in Massachusetts have adopted senior housing bylaws within their zoning framework. Such bylaws can take the form of senior residential communities, retirement communities, as well as assisted living and residential care facilities (both are governed by State regulations).

### *Affordable Housing*

Chapter 40-B states that at least 10% of a community's housing stock must consist of low and moderate-income housing (keep in mind the State's definition). Currently, there are only a handful of municipalities in Massachusetts that have achieved this 10% threshold (only Southbridge and Worcester in the CMRPC region).

According to Department of Housing and Community Development's Ch 40B Subsidized Inventory Report through March 2004, only 3.74% of Warren's housing stock is considered low and moderate income. For municipalities that do not meet the 10% threshold, the practical consequence may be that a developer proposing low and moderate income housing could potentially have the project exempted from local zoning and subdivision requirements and so the development could be built in any zoning district, regardless of compatibility.

**Table 39: Percentage Low-Moderate Income Housing, Comparable Communities**

<b>Town</b>	<b>Warren</b>	<b>Palmer</b>	<b>Ware</b>	<b>Brimfield</b>	<b>Brookfield</b>
% low moderate income housing	3.74%	7.22%	9.38%	6.53%	0.95%

*Source: www.mass.gov*

Table 39 above indicates that Warren has one of the lowest percentages of low/moderate income housing; having a higher percentage than Brookfield, but a lower percentage than Palmer, Ware and Brimfield. Currently there are only 75 housing units counting towards Warren's 10% low/moderate incoming housing unit threshold. The town needs to have another 126 units created in order to reach it goal. It is also important to note here that if the non-subsidized housing continues to be built at faster pace than low/moderate income housing, the percentage of such units will decrease even further.

### **17.c Goals, Objectives, Recommendations**

The analysis for housing stock of Warren carried out in Chapter 7 helped to identify some existing issues. The following objectives are guidelines, which are developed keeping existing issues and future concerns in mind. It is anticipated that the future housing growth in Warren will occur in a controlled manner that is consistent with the town's rural character.

#### ***Objectives***

- The growth of housing should be controlled so that it is proportional to the town's ability to provide municipal services.
- The Town of Warren should seek to meet the State goal of having 10% of its housing stock as available to low and moderate income households.

- The town should encourage developers to incorporate open space designs into new housing projects.
- The town should ensure that housing stock should be developed and maintained in a manner that ensure compliance with the existing building codes and work with the property owners to achieve compliance.

## ***Recommendations***

### *Substandard Housing*

The town should proactively examine its housing stock and work with property owners to identify needed improvements. Once this is done, the town should further investigate the various State grant opportunities to see if they make sense for Warren and its property owners.

### *Affordable Housing*

The town should review its options for providing low and moderate-income housing and make every effort to ensure that 10% of Warren's housing stock consists of low and moderate-income housing. Towards this end, the town should take a closer look at the State's Affordable Housing Trust Fund and the various housing grant programs offered by DHCD.

### *Cluster Housing*

The town should consider a cluster-housing bylaw as a tool for preserving open space in the rural north and south of Warren. In order for such a bylaw to be effective, it must be written in such a way that a developer would prefer to utilize the cluster concept as opposed to the standard subdivision process.

### *Senior Housing*

As more and more of the town population aged it has become imperative that the town give serious consideration as to which kind of senior housing alternative would best suite its elderly population, some of the options could be

- i. Senior residential community.
- ii. Retirement community.
- iii. Assisted living facility.\*
- iv. Residential care facility.\*

\* governed by state regulations.

## **Chapter 18. Upgrading Town Infrastructure, Services and Facilities**

### **18.a Policy and Strategy**

#### *Growth and Tax Impact*

There have been a number of comments in meetings and surveys directed towards general population growth, especially in the rapid growth areas of town (e.g., those that are already densely populated, containing cookie-cutter homes). Some respondents felt that property taxes were already too high and that town services were overburdened, especially by education expenditures. One way of addressing this concern would be through a planned senior community, whereby the town may benefit from the taxes, yet not have to spend as much for school-age children. Housing more senior residents, however, can involve additional town services as well (e.g., emergency response).

Residents also realize the benefits of a commercially-based tax base, yet are wary of having commercial uses outside those that already exist in town.

#### *Revision or expansion of Wireless Communications Facility Overlay District (WCFOD)*

Current zoning restricts wireless communication towers and devices resulting in a lack of cellular or digital wireless phone coverage for the majority of residential and business neighborhoods, including the village centers. Service is generally restricted to the Massachusetts Turnpike corridor and doesn't meet the needs of the local community. This is prohibitive to attracting and maintaining local business and will continue to restrict development as reliance on wireless communication grows. An update to the zoning by-laws or special permitting process to allow for greater flexibility in siting wireless communication facilities and devices that can service the town in addition to the Mass Pike is advisable.

### **18.b Capital Improvement**

#### *Revisit Capital Improvement Plan*

A capital improvement plan (CIP) identifies capital projects to be funded and carried out in a municipality over a planned period of time. Generally, a CIP covers a multi-year period, and accounts for specific projects and their associated budgets and timeframes as well as their priority. In addition to identifying the expenditure, the CIP also specifies how each project will be funded. Optimally, a CIP will be reviewed periodically, usually annually, and adjusted to reflect immediate or unexpected needs and shifts in priority for the town. Coordination with other elements of the planning process, including comprehensive plans and other economic and land-use initiatives is essential for the success of a capital improvement plan.

The purpose of establishing and maintaining a CIP is to manage infrastructure development and maintenance. General projects that fall under a CIP include new municipal buildings or maintenance to existing structures, and creation or maintenance of roadways and bridges, utilities, and public spaces such as parks or the Town Common. High-cost equipment acquisitions should also be covered by the CIP. As Warren has

already implemented a CIP, efforts should be made to follow through on the projects specified and prioritized in the plan, and the plan should be revisited and updated on an annual basis.

A sound capital improvement plan is an important part of the process when creating an economic development strategy for a town or municipality. The financial resources of the town dictate what projects can be accomplished, so creating a plan that prioritizes each project based on need and the amount of expenditure required is critical. Current financial issues, particularly the debt service associated with the Quaboag Regional Middle/High School renovation and expansion costs, are preventing implementation of capital improvements outlined in the current plan. It should be noted that resolution of this issue is largely outside of the town's control. However, until there is resolution it will be difficult to take action on the projects prioritized in the CIP. This is a critical issue for the town, as development that meets the goals and objectives of the town are essentially not possible until this financial situation is resolved. Because infrastructure often determines where development will take place, it is critical to keep the CIP in line with comprehensive and land-use plans. This will prevent new infrastructure from being built in areas that have not been immediately planned in accordance with overall town priorities and growth strategies.<sup>24</sup>

### **18.c Policy Implementation and Service Improvement**

Policies outline the procedures to be followed by decision-makers when addressing residents' questions and concerns. The intent of the policy is twofold, providing a structure for decision-makers to follow while informing citizens of steps and timetables associated with planning projects. The recommended structure of these types of policies is intended to create a framework to be followed by Town of Warren personnel. Such a structure can help ensure that decision-makers are more effective in addressing requests.

#### *Engineering Design, Implementation, and Coordination of Maintenance*

Design plans generated by a consultant are typically bid on and built by local contractors; thereafter the infrastructure or information network may be overlooked until a problem arises. An annual assessment of a network should be conducted by qualified personnel. Additionally, if a problem does arise, qualified personnel should be prepared to respond, and all parties affected should be notified. Warren's various town services departments will need resources adequate to handle these roles.

An organizational plan (e.g., flow chart) should be established, detailing the roles and responsibilities of town departments and personnel. This plan will allow for efficient information sharing between town department heads and personnel. This will ensure that the appropriate departments contact the appropriate consultants and contractors to address issues in an effective, timely way.

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<sup>24</sup> Source:

[http://www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/muns/manuals/PDF/LGRH/LocalGovernmentResourceHandbook\\_6.2.pdf](http://www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/muns/manuals/PDF/LGRH/LocalGovernmentResourceHandbook_6.2.pdf)

Depending on the extent of the problem, many communities may spend a great deal of time investigating citizen's requests. It is highly recommended that the Town of Warren proactively address the issue, which has the potential to reduce the amount of time and money that the staff and others may spend processing and addressing the requests. Similar to the other policy structures recommended herein, it is recommended that the Town of Warren create a structure for addressing service requests. The overall structure may resemble a flow chart, with associated timelines.

#### *Future Funding*

One of the largest challenges that a town faces is identifying funding from many sources for many purposes, such as new construction, maintenance and rehabilitation. It is critical for towns to have an overall assessment of the state of the infrastructure; inherent in the creation of the assessment database is a formula that will allow decision-makers to better rank order the projects, and the overall needs of the town.

Typically, upgrades/improvements are based on the impact that the improvements will have on network operations. Other ways of supporting funding are through performance measures that are not traditionally considered, such as safety. It is not unusual for towns to lack an electronic database or a standard procedure for recording service problems; Warren is not different in that regard. It would be in the town's interest for a system to be created that would allow users to view the number and kind of town service responses geographically.

Through GIS applications, this assessment can be relatively straightforward; problems are typically exposed from a location and database entry perspective. Having a database available would aid decision-makers as they begin to consider projects for future funding, adding objective performance measures that can be used for evaluation.

## Chapter 19. Anticipating Transportation Restructuring and Expansion

### 19.a Network Improvement and Integration

Chapter 9 described Warren's basic transportation network, as well as its current issues regarding access, safety, efficiency and maintenance. That chapter also presented further information and potential solutions (most of which involved further study or survey) derived from interviews, meetings and the general survey. This chapter addresses larger-scale and longer-term issues, and makes more concrete recommendations about future implementation strategies.

#### *Multimodality and Intermodality*

For any transportation network to be successful, it must include multiple modes of moving from place to place and address the effective interconnection of those modes. Intermodal connectivity allows all (including potential) users to benefit from a system that includes multiple means of access. As with any plan, evaluating the existing infrastructure through an inventory of the current multimodal network is essential. The inventory can be performed on a number of levels, from paper plans to electronic resources (e.g., Geographic Information Systems or GIS).

Planning to address the limitations of multimodality and intermodality within the town is essential for the network to be used. Furthermore, this intra-town network must have a regional component as well, providing inter-town connectivity to areas outside Warren. Looking beyond Warren, it is critical for the town to share its inventory with surrounding towns on a collaborative basis. There may be plans underway in surrounding towns that could benefit from connectivity through Warren, or could complement Warren's own plans.

#### *Pedestrian Access*

The town has been successful in maintaining a vehicular network, and a pedestrian network in areas that benefit from the success of efficient pedestrian movement (e.g., the two village centers). Many of these areas appear to have included pedestrians only incrementally as the network evolved, rather than planning for the inclusion of pedestrians comprehensively, realizing that access and connectivity in these areas was necessary for economic vitality and for individuals to easily access popular town amenities.

Moving away from the aforementioned areas, the existing dedicated pedestrian network begins to attenuate, eventually becoming nonexistent, requiring that pedestrians 'share' the roadway with vehicles. This fact of pedestrian access diminishing as one travels outside of the village centers is understandable – why build a system if no one is going to



use it? – however, it is important that decision makers, as they begin to look at growth patterns in developing areas, try to address pedestrians and cyclists as much as drivers.

Depending on the volume and speed of traffic, this may be a difficult feat. If the speeds are such to cause a pedestrian to feel that their safety may be jeopardized, then the road may not be ‘walkable,’ even with a sidewalk. During this process, routes to activities (e.g., libraries, schools, points of scenic or recreational interest) should be identified as areas for potential improvements.

### *Bicycle Lanes and Paths*

There is no current bicycle network in Warren. Cyclists wishing to travel through Warren must ‘share the road.’ As with other communities, this is perfectly acceptable. Similar to the pedestrian network, cyclists should be considered along with drivers and pedestrians as the town begins to look at transportation improvement projects. On the ‘dedicated facility’ level, the town may want to consider investing in a recreational path, which may be used for a myriad of purposes, including connectivity from a major traffic generator (e.g., a school) to densely populated areas (e.g., subdivisions, village centers). Considering current undeveloped land, planning and setting resources aside for such a system would be relatively straightforward and beneficial for all.

Most town residents surveyed or interviewed, however, do not consider creating a multi-use path for recreation and bicycle connectivity a high priority. Instead, they would like to see bicycles included on the existing network, with delineated travel lanes and signage, starting with the state routes first. One short-term solution to enhancing the current ‘share the road’ approach is to try more methodically to include cyclists when network improvements are made.

The town should begin to look at their network and identify roadways that would provide the greatest utility for users (e.g., network connectivity). Once network opportunities have been established, the town should create a capital plan and timetable for implementation.



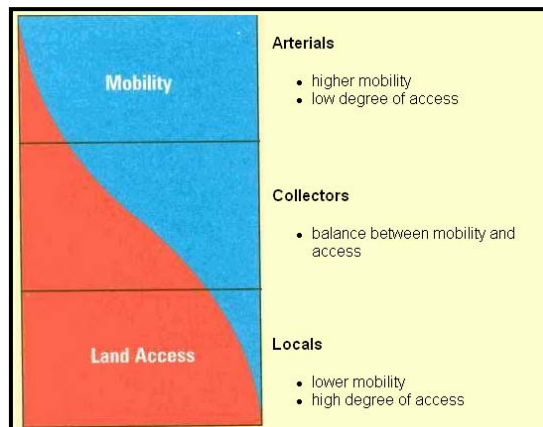
## **19.b Longer-Term Policy Initiatives**

As Warren reviews its transportation infrastructure and plans for the future, there are a number of considerations that must be addressed so that the transportation network continues to perform efficiently. Population growth and development have a direct impact on the network, requiring that these impacts be addressed systematically through policies that are specifically directed towards maintaining a desired, objective operational level. Policies that could be adopted over the next several years are outlined below. Creating policies and approving bylaws provides an opportunity for a designer/contractor

to be sure of meeting the town's standards, and for decision-makers to be able to address needed or desired network growth in a focused, effective manner.

### *Zoning Complements Functional Classification*

Roadways are designed with a specific use in mind, typically referred to as functional classification. There are three major categories of roadways, including arterials, collectors and locals, each defined based on the degree of mobility and land access that each type offers. Ensuring that the original functional classification of the network is maintained, even as services offered in the town shift or expand, is critical for the network's efficiency and safety. Current zoning policies should be reviewed to ensure that they complement the roadway



network, concentrating on areas that are experiencing continuing expansion, and those that have the potential for new development. In the event of proposed changes, appropriate consideration should be given to the transportation network's functional classification. Specifically, will the roadway continue to serve its intended use or will new or expanded uses require roadway modification? Zoning must be flexible in design, encouraging improvement as much as, if not more than, regulating use (see Chapter 13).

### *Site Plan and Subdivision Review Relative to the Network*

The movement of goods, services and people occurs daily on the roadway network, locally and regionally. Efficient, safe movement on the network helps ensure workforce productivity. Municipalities are typically interested in bringing additional development to an area to maintain or expand a tax base, provide jobs for area residents, and offer a certain level of service for the existing residents and businesses. Additional development brings an additional traffic volume that needs to be accommodated on the current network. Development without appropriate planning, evaluation, and mitigation may lead to additional network congestion, create network inefficiencies and maintenance issues, and may lead potential developers to look to other areas that are less congested or more accessible for siting their development (e.g., outside Warren's village center nodes).

### *Level of Service Assessment*

Transportation engineers have modeling techniques and software available for evaluating network performance, including both links and nodes. The models typically incorporate volumes, roadway characteristics (links) and operational characteristics (nodes), resulting in a tangible measure of effectiveness. Additionally, traditional 'trip generation' values are available for different types of proposed development. The number of trips generated by a proposed development may then be distributed accordingly on the network, leading to the generation of a new network model that is then compared to the baseline model.

Engineers have also traditionally used a method of performance evaluation expressed as ‘level of service’ (LOS). The LOS at an intersection is divided into six levels, A through F, directly correlated to the average delay that a driver may experience at a signalized intersection. As delay increases, the level of service degrades, the value changes from A to F. It is generally not advisable to design an intersection that will regularly function at a low LOS, nor is it always possible to design an intersection in such a way that a high LOS of A will be maintained regularly. Bearing in mind the limitations (primarily financial) of building a system that regularly functions with little delay, towns must often find a balance between optimal function and available resources. For example, designing for LOS C during peak hours means that the network will have higher-level functionality during non-peak hours. Warren currently has no major congestion issues, but that may change under some of the proposed development scenarios.

The Town of Warren does not currently have a way of ensuring that the overall network efficiency will be maintained after additional development. Additional vehicles may be added to the network as a result of new development, with possible consequences for the town greater than those for the developer. Criteria for evaluation may be included in the town’s bylaws or roadway regulations that could identify the LOS that will ensure that the network continues to function properly after the development is fully functional.

Evaluation (e.g., traffic study) should include the state of Warren’s network in and around a proposed development, within a pre-defined radius. The study should include the LOS for the intersections within the pre-determined radius during the peak periods (morning, late afternoon, possibly mid-day), for both weekday and weekend. Using the baseline analysis, additional trips would then be added to the network in locations that emulate existing traffic flow patterns. A similar process could be projected for some future year (e.g., 20 years) and a similar study would then be conducted and compared.

A pre-determined limit on the rate or scale of development could be established by the recommended policy criteria, which would allow for minimal degradation of service level by proposed development. Based on future study, any degradation in the LOS exceeding the pre-determined level would have to be addressed. Mitigating measures would be included in the current site plan review process. Warren should consult with other towns to identify and implement their own approach to LOS analysis.

(See [http://www.town.amherst.ma.us/departments/Planning/Article\\_11.pdf](http://www.town.amherst.ma.us/departments/Planning/Article_11.pdf))

### *Access Management*

Although an informal method is currently in place to determine the number of ‘curb cuts’ allowed on a roadway, Warren has no formal policy. Development and re-development require review and approval on a case-by-case basis; however, policy outlines and guidelines should be in place to ensure that (re)development conforms to town goals. In most instances, Warren should aim to limit curb cuts and required shared-use access lanes to adjacent properties as much as is feasible.

Often, consolidation or relocation of a curb cut (e.g., an outlet to a traffic control device) may benefit network efficiency. Consolidating multiple curb cuts should be undertaken

carefully, however, as reducing the number of curb cuts may also increase delays or encourage more aggressive driving. Multiple curb cuts may allow many users to enter the traffic stream, thus reducing potential delays for exiting drivers. Additional curb cuts may also discourage drivers from entering the traffic stream via an inappropriate gap. In the case of Warren, access lanes onto major connector roads in Warren Center village and in the vicinity of the town's schools should be studied according to these criteria.

### *Traffic Calming*

Decision-makers in many communities are beginning to be faced with requests from citizens with regarding the volume and speed of traffic on streets near town centers and schools. Often, citizens are concerned with the cut-through traffic (volume) and the perceived high speeds of vehicles traveling through their neighborhood. A traditional approach that decision makers have followed when addressing requests for speeding has been through the use of one or a combination of what are commonly referred to as the 'three Es,' namely education, enforcement, and engineering. The implementation order of the 'three Es' is as indicated, from least to most expensive to achieve in the short term.

Commonly referred to as traffic calming measures, the engineering portion of traffic calming typically relies on physics, i.e., a change in the horizontal or vertical alignment encourages the driver to slow down. If traffic calming measures are installed by a municipality in a methodical manner, the result will be twofold, research shows that drivers will slow down, and depending on the volume of cut-through traffic, they will be re-directed to the streets that were designed to handle throughput, away from the neighborhoods. Thus in the long-term, engineering may be the most cost-effective.

The overall structure must include all affected parties. There have been a number of documented cases where municipality's first responders have taken issue with the installation of traffic calming measures. Police, fire, and emergency medical technicians need to be brought into the plan creation very early. There are a number of streets/routes that they would like to maintain a suitable response time over, ensuring that their overall response time is kept at or below their predefined level. This can be accomplished by identifying major response routes, as well as setting the precedent that no street, outside those functionally classified as local, will have traffic calming. Also, many police personnel typically like traffic calming measures, they are viewed as self-enforcing, relieving them of the some of the enforcement that they had to perform in the past. The town needs to address whether there are adequate local resources to pursue traffic calming, or if state and federal transportation funds might be available for such projects.

## **19.c Priority Areas and Public Concerns**

### *Public Transportation*

The town does not have a public transportation system. Although there is a demand service for the elderly and a charter bus service that operates in town, there is no fixed-schedule, fixed-route system. A number of survey respondents viewed this as an opportunity; their feeling was that a service should be provided. Similarly, a commuter

rail stop in town was viewed as potentially having a tremendous benefit to Warren and its neighbors, although the fact that the town only has a single rail line poses a significant problem.

#### *Heavy Vehicles*

The low clearance of the railroad underpass near town center on Route 19 limits some large vehicles from traveling north and south. This places heavy vehicle traffic on other roads that may not have been constructed to handle the traffic, as well as encouraging heavy vehicles to travel through neighborhoods, potentially impacting safety.

#### *Maintenance*

The survey respondents viewed the job performed by the Highway Department as good. A couple of concerns centered on the lack of tree pruning or maintenance on roadside vegetation. Although vegetation is cut back once a year, it was viewed as too infrequent. Roadway sightlines would be improved if the maintenance occurred more regularly.

#### *Sidewalks*

Although there are sidewalks in the village center areas, one of the concerns is that they are not maintained. Also, although the network is substantially complete in the village center areas, it is non-existent as one travels from the village areas to some of the surrounding streets. Some of the streets carry a large volume of daily traffic, making sharing the road quite a challenge. Streets should be evaluated to address such concerns. Nearly all areas that are identified as ‘village’ do have sidewalks, and one of the future challenges may be identifying those roadways where money should be spent to improve pedestrian access.

#### *Dangerous Intersections*

There were a number of ‘dangerous intersections’ previously identified and discussed in Chapter 9. It is recommended that the town begin to consider ways in which the above concerns may be confirmed or challenged. This includes having a structure in place that is easily addressable, showing information flow, associated timelines and personnel responsible for addressing the request.

#### *Turnpike Interchange*

Considering the length of the Turnpike in Warren, the committee recognizes the potential for a future interchange. (Please see discussion in Chapter 15 on p. 129)

#### *Roadway Requirements in Subdivision Regulations*

As stated at the outset, the committee members are concerned with retaining the integrity and character of the town. They would like subdivision regulations adopted that make this happen (zoning may need to complement this task).

‘Current’ subdivision regulations were last updated in 1973. Although they are general enough to ensure that quality development is constructed in the town, there are a number of areas that should be addressed before the town finds itself in a position of approving a definitive subdivision plan that does not complement the existing character of the

surrounding area. One example of this is roadway width. One of the most noticeable improvements in a subdivision is the roadway width, or more specifically, the pavement width. In a given area, streets with a wide pavement width may not aesthetically complement the character of the town.

A right-of-way (ROW) width is specified, while no pavement width is specified. Considering the rural character of the town, future subdivision regulations may note a traveled way width that complements the existing character, while conforming to state and federal design guidelines. Furthermore, these industry wide accepted standards should be referenced, to ensure the town accepts a project that meets their standards and will last over time, thereby reducing the town's maintenance cost.

Ensuring that the town is receiving a design that they are pleased with requires a cooperative, proactive approach. On the most simplistic level, the town may wish to consider including provisions in the subdivision regulations that address issues such as pavement width, right of way width, road slope, and other issues such as drainage. Issues such as these complement sound design policies that should be referenced or used, and should be articulate through sound regulations. One of the most important aspects of the revision is to work with a team, including professional engineers who understand the needs and direction of the town.

The subdivision revisions should not be limited to pavement width. It is critical that the town cooperatively work together to proactively address future subdivision development in town, including but not limited to those issues that affect the overall 'feel' of the neighborhood, including issues (including but not limited to) roadway slope, sidewalks, multi-use paths, tree removal and the like.

## **Chapter 20.    General Action Plan and Matrices**

### ***Short-term Plan***

A short-term plan for the Town of Warren should include changes that are easily identified, low-cost, and require only a limited commitment. Immediate needs should be addressed, whether in terms of actual changes, such as minor infrastructure and aesthetic improvements, as should policies that are in need of revision or implementation. Examples of this include beginning the process of updating zoning, initially in a manner that will not have the potential to alter the town in a drastic fashion, and identification of available funding sources for economic development programs. The goal of the short-term planning efforts should be to establish momentum within the community regarding development, to educate residents about potential planning strategies, and to target the most immediate needs that can be addressed with little long-term impact. Short-term changes should serve to make implementation of mid-term and long-term plans feasible, in a manner that is in keeping with the overall community goals and objectives. A plan consisting of easily achievable goals has been established for the period immediately following adoption of the Economic Development Plan:

#### *First 90 Days:*

- Regular newspaper column, optimally in both the *Worcester Telegram & Gazette* and the *Springfield Republican*, covering local issues and proposed planning initiatives
  - Initial term to be weekly or bi-weekly column running for 90 days
- Warren Forums
  - Host periodic open public forums to discuss planning issues
  - Recruit local students (i.e. Quaboag Regional Middle/High School) to run
  - Invite guest speakers to talk about relevant issue
- Ground Truth and Inventory
  - Locate critical parcels and buildings
  - Compile list or database of critical parcels and buildings (i.e. vacant buildings)
- Hold All-Boards Meetings
  - Quarterly meetings including all town boards (e.g., Selectmen, Planning, etc.)
  - Rotate host and agenda between the boards
- Create Town Suggestion Box
  - Provide a means for residents to make suggestions and comments regarding the town and future development plans
  - Possible locations for a drop box may include the Post Offices, banks, or markets

- Establish a Community Web Page and Discussion Board
  - Provide a means of communication for those with internet access to comment on and discuss town plans
  - Post relevant community information, initiatives, and proposals
  - Investigate possibility of establishing community accessible Internet kiosks (possible locations would be the town libraries)
- Coordinate planning efforts with local organizations
  - Clubs, Churches, Taxpayers Association, etc.
- Identify Funding Sources
  - Initially for smaller projects, investigative reports, planning exercises
  - Research grant opportunities
- Present Annual Report at Town Meeting
- Contact and involve prominent local business and property owners
  - Obtain input for potential plans
  - Garner support and create momentum for plans
  - Coordinate development efforts
- Draft Proposed Zoning By-law Changes

### ***Mid-term Plan***

Mid-term planning for the town will involve implementation of a variety of the available development strategies based on community goals and objectives. Specific areas of focus should include zoning updates, capital and other physical improvements, particularly to the village centers, identification of funding sources, and marketing and recruitment efforts to attract commercial and industrial activity. The long-term strategy of development desired will determine the type of changes required, as in zoning practices required for commercial development or residential growth management. Mid-term planning should also focus on strategies and projects that are achievable without significant reliance on large-scale external factors, such as funding and authority for a new Massachusetts Turnpike Interchange or large-scale redevelopment of the existing mill complex. Projects that can be funded by the town or with the aid of available external funding, as with State economic development assistance grants, should be targeted in addition to policy changes and marketing programs. These projects may include infrastructure updates or redevelopment of individual buildings or parcels that the town might acquire or facilitate purchase by organizations such as Community Development Corporations. The strategies implemented in the mid-term should benefit the town on their own merit, but also serve as building blocks for the implementation of long-term development strategies.

*Potential Planning Strategies:*

- Implement zoning bylaw Changes
- Develop grant-writing capacity for the town
- Physical improvements to village centers
- Implement residential growth management policies
- Redevelopment of vacant lots or buildings

***Long-term Plan***

The long-term plan should be the culmination of the implementation of a number of development strategies based on the overall development goals and objectives of the community. The three scenarios described in this document can serve as examples to help members of the community envision potential futures for the town, and particular strategies associated with the scenarios can be adopted. The Town of Warren does not need to adopt one of the scenarios identified; in fact, a hybrid development scenario can be achieved by selecting desired elements of various scenarios. A good example of this is the combination of continued residential growth, increase in commercial activity in the village centers, and sustaining of the manufacturing sector. Long-term plans that require significant change to the town must be implemented in such a manner that adheres to the community character and values. This requires making incremental changes in preparation for the larger-scale changes that might occur with various development scenarios, such as a Turnpike interchange or a major regional economic attractor. The costs and benefits of long-term development strategies must be weighed carefully, as changes made based on those strategies are often difficult to reverse.

## ***Planning Task Action Plan Matrices***

The matrices presented below are divided into specific areas of focus:

### ***Overview of Land Use Regulation (Zoning, Permitting)***

<b>Description</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Update and Revise Subdivision Regulations to Encourage Growth Management Goals	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen. Town Meeting	High	Immediate (ASAP)
Update and Revise Zoning Bylaws to Encourage Reuse/ (Re)development in Village Centers	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen. Town Meeting	High	Immediate (ASAP)
Identify or Draft Model Bylaws Appropriate to Allow Commercial Development	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen. Town Meeting	Moderate-High	Short-term (1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> year)
Identify or Draft Model Bylaws Appropriate to Achieve Industrial Development Goals	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen. Town Meeting	Moderate-High	Short-term (1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> year)
Identify or Draft Model Bylaws Appropriate to Achieve Historical and Open Space Protection Goals	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen. Town Meeting	Moderate-High	Short-term (1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> year)
Study and Assess Effective Zoning Strategies Used by Comparable Towns	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen. Town Meeting	Moderate-High	Short-term (1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> year)
Consider Revising Zoning Bylaws to Include Alternative or Flexible Methods	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Moderate	Medium-term (2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> year)
Consider Revising Zoning Bylaws to	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen,	Moderate	Medium-term (2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> year)

Create Special Economic Overlays	Town Meeting		
Consider Revising Zoning Bylaws to Provide Clustering or Density Bonuses	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Moderate	Medium-term (2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> year)
Consider Revising Zoning Bylaws to Allow Transfer of Development Right	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Moderate	Medium-term (2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> year)
Seek MA Smart Growth/Sustainable Development Resources	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Moderate	Medium-term (2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> year)
Expand Oversight Role and Funding of Planning Board in Permitting	Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Low-Moderate	Mid- to long-term (4 <sup>th</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> year)
Consider Expanded Special Permit Review/Approval	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Low-Moderate	Mid- to long-term (4 <sup>th</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> year)
Consider Site Plan and Design Review to Ensure Quality Development	Planning Board, Building Inspector, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Low-Moderate	Mid- to long-term (4 <sup>th</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> year)

*Natural Resource Management, Open Space Protection*

<b>Description</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Update and Revise Inventory of High-Priority Potential Conservation Land	Conservation Commission, Board of Assessors	High	Immediate (ASAP)
Update and Revise Identification of Land in Watershed or Environmentally-Sensitive Areas	Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Warren/W. Warren Water Districts	High	Immediate (ASAP)
Identify Local, State and Federal Sources (Private, Nonprofit & Public) of Land Conservation Info	Conservation Commission, Planning Board	High	Immediate (ASAP)
Identify Local, State and Federal Funds (Private, Nonprofit & Public) for Land Conservation Work	Conservation Commission, Planning Board	High	Immediate (ASAP)
Identify Vacant or Underutilized Land Close to Currently Protected Land to Expand Open Space	Conservation Commission, Board of Assessors, Town Clerk	Moderate-High	Short-term (1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> year)
Study and Assess Effective Protection Strategies Used by Comparable Towns	Conservation Commission, Planning Board	Moderate-High	Short-term (1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> year)
Consider Revising Zoning Bylaws to Expand Sensitive (e.g., Flood) Zones	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Moderate	Medium-term (2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> year)
Consider Revising Zoning Bylaws to Create Agricultural Districts (General or Overlay)	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Moderate	Medium-term (2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> year)
Consider Revising Zoning Bylaws to Protect Open Space (Cluster or Density Bonus Flexibility)	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Moderate	Medium-term (2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> year)

Consider Revising Zoning Bylaws to Encourage Village Center Infill (e.g., Transfer/Purchase of Development Rights Districts)	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Moderate	Medium-term (2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> year)
Consider Seeking MA Community Preservation Act Funds; Proposition 2½ Override	Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Moderate	Medium-term (2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> year)
Expand Oversight Role and Funding of Conservation Commission	Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Low-Moderate	Mid- to long-term (4 <sup>th</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> year)
Consider Special Permit Review and Approval in Target Protected Areas	Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Low-Moderate	Mid- to long-term (4 <sup>th</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> year)
Consider Site Plan and Design Review to Protect Scenic Viewshed Areas	Planning Board, Building Inspector, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Low-Moderate	Mid- to long-term (4 <sup>th</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> year)
Promote Donation, Bequest, or Town Use of Desirable Land as Payment in Lieu of Taxes	Planning Board, Board of Assessors, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Low-Moderate	Mid- to long-term (4 <sup>th</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> year)
Consider Capital Improvement Fund for Protected Land Acquisition & Mgt.	Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Low	Long-term (5 <sup>th</sup> + year)

*Historical and Cultural Resource Conservation, Parks and Recreation*

<b>Description</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Update and Revise Inventory of High-Priority & Potential Historical and Cultural Sites	Historical Commission, Cultural Council, Board of Assessors	High	Immediate (ASAP)
Update and Revise Identification of Potential Park and Recreation Land Near Existing Parks	Parks Department, Conservation Commission	High	Immediate (ASAP)
Identify Local, State and Federal Sources (Private, Nonprofit & Public) of Site Conservation Info	Historical Commission, Conservation Commission	High	Immediate (ASAP)
Identify Local, State and Federal Funds (Private, Nonprofit & Public) for Site Conservation Work	Historical Commission, Conservation Commission	High	Immediate (ASAP)
Identify Vacant or Underutilized Land or Buildings in Historical Areas	Planning Board, Town Meeting	Moderate-High	Short-term (1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> year)
Study and Assess Parks & Recreation Strategies Used by Comparable Towns	Planning Board, Open Space Committee, Town Meeting	Moderate-High	Short-term (1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> year)
Consider Revising Zoning Bylaws to Create Historical Districts (General or Overlay)	Historical Commission, Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Moderate	Medium-term (2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> year)
Consider Revising Zoning Bylaws to Create Cultural/Arts Districts (General or Overlay)	Cultural Council, Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Moderate	Medium-term (2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> year)

Consider Revising Zoning Bylaws to Allow Parks and Recreation Uses on Expanded Sensitive (e.g., Flood) Zones	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Moderate	Medium-term (2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> year)
Apply for Expanded Scenic & Historical Area Designations as well as (Private, Nonprofit, Public) Funds for Signage	Historical Commission, Cultural Council, Planning Board	Moderate	Medium-term (2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> year)
Consider Seeking MA Community Preservation Act Funds; Proposition 2½ Override	Historical Commission, Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Moderate	Medium-term (2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> year)
Consider Strategies to Promote Farming or River Recreation Tourism Economic Development	QVCC, QVCDC Local Businesses, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Low-Moderate	Mid- to long-term (4 <sup>th</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> year)
Consider Special Permit Review and Demolition Delay in Target Historical Preservation Areas	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Low-Moderate	Mid- to long-term (4 <sup>th</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> year)
Consider Site Plan and Design Review to Protect Cultural Landscape Areas	Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Low-Moderate	Mid- to long-term (4 <sup>th</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> year)
Consider Capital Improvement Fund for Parks Facility Upgrade/Building	Parks Department, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Low	Long-term (5 <sup>th</sup> + year)
Consider Capital Improvement Fund for Creating Hiking/ Biking Lanes, Paths	Parks Department, Hwy. Department, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Low	Long-term (5 <sup>th</sup> + year)

*Economic Development: Reinvented Manufacturing Small Town or Regionally Integrated Economic Attractor*

<b>Description</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Foster Community Business Alliance (CBA)	Board of Selectmen, Business Owners	High	Immediate (ASAP)
Develop Business Strategy with QVCC/QVCDC	Board of Selectmen, Business Owners	High	Immediate (ASAP)
Establish Central Business Districts in Village Centers	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Moderate-High	Short-term (1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> year)
Establish General Business Districts in Village Centers	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Moderate-High	Short-term (1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> year)
Establish Highway Business Districts along 67 and 19	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Moderate-High	Short-term (1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> year)
Establish Light Mfg. District (LMD)	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Moderate-High	Short-term (1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> year)
Targeted Marketing and Recruitment Programs	EDA, CBA	Moderate	Medium-term (2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> year)
Revisit Capital Improvement Plan	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen	Moderate	Medium-term (2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> year)
Expand Wireless Communications Facility Overlay District (WCFOD)	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Moderate	Medium-term (2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> year)
Explore Feasibility of More Direct Access to Route 9 or to Interstate 90	Highway Dept., Planning Board, Police, Traffic Consultant	Low-Moderate	Mid- to Long-term (4 <sup>th</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> year)
Explore Economic Development Association (EDA)	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Low	Long-term (5+ years)

*Economic Development: Revitalized Village Center Bedroom Community*

<b>Description</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Identify Vacant or Underutilized Parcels for Potential Development	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen Assessors Town Clerk	High	Immediate
Research economic development funds opportunities	Board of Selectmen, Planning Board	High	Immediate
Establish a Community Business Alliance (CBA)	Board of Selectmen, Business Owners	High	Immediate
Targeted Marketing and Recruitment Programs	CBA	Moderate-High	Short-term
Update Zoning By-laws to Support Commercial Development	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Moderate-High	Short-term
Establish Design Guidelines and Review Process	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Moderate-High	Short-term
Establish Signage Guidelines	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Moderate	Mid-term
Revise or expand Wireless Communications Facility Overlay District (WCFOD)	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Moderate	Mid-term
Revisit Capital Improvement Plan	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Utilities Dept.	Low-Moderate	Mid- to Long-term
Downtown Modifications and Improvements	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Highway Dept., Business Owners	Low-Moderate	Mid- to Long-term
Improve Traffic Flow and Access	Highway Dept., Planning Board, Traffic Consultant	Low-Moderate	Mid- to Long-term
Parking Improvements	Highway Dept., Planning Board, Police, Traffic Consultant	Moderate	Mid-term

Collaborate with utility and wireless companies to access broadband Internet and wireless communication	CBA, Planning Board, Capital Improvement Committee, Utility Companies	Moderate	Short-term
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## **Phase Three: Next Steps to Achieve Long-term Visions and Goals**

### **Chapter 21. Sustainable Development, Smart Growth, Scenario to Strategy**

The final phase in the master planning process begins with the completion, delivery and presentation of this master plan document. The document is distributed in various forms (bound copies, electronic files, web link) for the review of public officials (Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, etc.) and for residents of Warren, especially participants in Town Meeting. Should these officials and citizens approve the master plan document, the next step is to identify who will exercise leadership in leading and guiding the work of town departments, commissions and committees, as well as of business and voluntary organizations, in implementing the most desirable, suitable and important aspects of the plan presented here. These recommendations are in no way legally or administratively binding; they represent only suggestions and ideas generated through a long process of research, public outreach, and consultation.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has identified ‘sustainable development’ and ‘smart growth’ as objectives for planning on local, regional, and state levels. The aim is to avoid waste, misuse or overuse of natural and human resources; achieve long-term, stable economic growth; and accommodate as many social and community needs as fairly as possible. Appendices D and E list a host of resources, contacts and databases that are available to help towns such as Warren grow in a balanced and managed way. The path from the scenarios and visions outlined in this master plan to the specific, concrete steps and strategies for realizing them in the future will now be marked and followed by the people of Warren and West Warren.

## **Glossary**

**Brownfield:** a previously developed site or area that has been contaminated or otherwise degraded, requiring remediation or cleanup before reuse

**Eutrophication:** the process whereby a water source accumulates waste nutrients from discharge or runoff, significantly increasing levels of algae or other microorganisms

**Glacial till:** soil produced by the historical passage of a glacier, typically consisting of sand, gravel and other coarse geological matter

**Glacio-fluvial:** pertaining to the geological action of glaciers on a river or stream bed

**Glacio-lacustrine:** pertaining to the geological action of a glacier on a lake or pond bed

**Greenfield:** a previously undeveloped or underdeveloped site or area, such as woodland, meadow or less-intensive farmland

**Igneous:** pertaining to geological processes of mineral formation by volcanic activity

**Metamorphosed:** pertaining to geological processes of mineral transformation by means of intense subsurface heat and pressure

**Plutonic:** pertaining to geological processes of igneous mineral formation by deep subterranean volcanic activity

**Sedimentary:** pertaining to geological processes of mineral formation by deposition of silt or other residual matter in an aqueous medium

## **Acronyms**

<b>BAC</b>	Business Assistance Corporation
<b>BID</b>	Business Improvement District
<b>CBA</b>	Community Business Alliance
<b>CBD</b>	Central Business District
<b>CDC</b>	Community Development Corporation
<b>CMRPC</b>	Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission
<b>EDA</b>	Economic Development Association
<b>GIS</b>	Geographic Information Systems
<b>NHESP</b>	Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program
<b>PDR</b>	Purchase of Development Rights
<b>PVPC</b>	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
<b>QVCC</b>	Quaboag Valley Chamber of Commerce
<b>QV CDC</b>	Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation
<b>TDR</b>	Transfer of Development Rights
<b>TIF</b>	Tax Increment Financing

## Appendix A: MPC/Town Official Questionnaire, with Tabulated Results

### Proposed Subcommittees:

Natural Resources/Open Space/Land Use

Community Resources/Public Services/Facilities

Transportation/Town Engineering Issues

History and Culture/Economic Development

### Project Team Contact Person:

Dan Berrien

Rumika Chaudhry

Dan Dulaski

Mark Hamin

### Natural Resources/Land Use Subcommittee

Dan Berrien

1. Which of the following land uses should Warren most encourage? (Check up to three)

13 Commercial/Services

13 Light Manufacturing

4 Single family residential

\_\_\_ Multifamily residential

\_\_\_ Senior/Low-income housing

8 Tourist/Recreation Attractions

8 Professional/Technical office space

14 Agricultural/Conservation

\_\_\_ None

Other (specify): heavy manufacturing/resort casino

2. Which of the following approaches should Warren consider regarding the issue of growth or non- growth? (Check one)

\_\_\_ Develop policies to discourage growth in Warren.

22 Develop policies to direct and manage the growth of Warren

2 Develop policies to encourage growth in Warren

\_\_\_ Neither encourage nor discourage growth in Warren.

Other (specify, e.g., encourage some kinds, discourage other kinds): \_\_\_\_\_

3. If growth is to occur, do you feel it is the responsibility of the taxpayer or the developer to take on the burden of paying for growth related costs such as utility extensions (water, sewer, etc., and utility plant improvement)? (Check one)

\_\_\_ Taxpayer

12 Developer

2 Taxpayer and developers

Other (specify, e.g., bonds, grants, outside funding):private/public partnership and combination of all

4. Which areas of town are in your view most likely for new residential development?

all over	5
farms	5

outlying rural areas	4
Coy Hill area	2
Brimfield Road	1
Griffin Road	1
large acreage in West Warren	1
Mark's Mountain	1
Old West Brookfield Road	1
Rolling Hills property	1
Southbridge Road	1
wetlands conservation land	1
wooded space	1
available land for residential w/in compliance of regulations of total land in town	1

5. Which areas of town are in your view most likely for new commercial development?

Gilbert Road area	3
land near the Massachusetts Turnpike in West Warren	2
none	2
Rte 67 between Warren and West Warren	2
Existing commercial/industrial areas	1
downtown	1
east and west areas of town	1
farms	1
Griffin Road	1
Route 19 West Warren	1
rural areas	1
village areas	1
ww acreage	1

6. Which areas of town are in your view most likely for underused/vacant buildings?

Warren Center	5
villages	4
all of ww	3
Wrights mill	3
Main Street	2
none	1
Route 67	1
Town Hall	1
West Warren mills	1

7. Which if any environmental impacts of new development are you concerned about?

Impact	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not concerned
water quality drinking	12	1	1
water quality recreation	4	14	
open space	12	7	
woodland	10	9	

wetland	8	11	1
historic buildings	7	9	2
traffic	6	11	3
waste mgt	7	8	4
town character		1	
quality of life		3	
personal security		2	
town services		1	

### Community Resources/Buildings Subcommittee Rumika Chaudhry

1. How would you rate the overall quality of housing stock in Warren?

2 Very good 10 Adequate 10 Needs improvement \_\_\_ Inadequate

2. How would you rate the overall affordability of housing stock in Warren?

1 Very good 14 Adequate 5 Needs improvement 1 Inadequate

3. What types of new housing do you think ought to be built in Warren?

14 Single/ 3 Duplex family houses

\_\_\_ Apartments

8 Townhouses/4 Condos

\_\_\_ All of the above

4 Affordable housing

1 None of the above

\_\_\_ Mobile home parks

3 Other(specify) over 55, assisted

living, cluster development

4. What is your view regarding current or proposed housing developments in your area?

too fast too much; outgrowing our resources	3
development is heavy	2
needs to be strategically placed	2
concerned about development of Goldstein land	1
control growth	1
enough is enough	1
needs some restrictions	1
planning control	1
positive	1
potential adverse effects on the town	1
wildlife, water and agriculture business	1
don't mind housing developments if they are monitored properly during construction and planning phases	1

5. What are the main service/facility improvements that you would like to see in Warren?

emergency, fire police expanded	4
public works	4
highway dept	3
police	3
highway barn	2

handicap access	1
health and dental services	1
park maintenance	1
public transportation	1
road improvements	1
transportation	1
underground utility lines in center of town	1
waste management	1
water service	1

6. Please rate the adequacy of the following community services and facilities in Warren:  
(circle one answer for each category.)

	Very good	Adequate	Needs improvement	inadequate
business front		10	11	1
sidewalks		7	14	1
street lighting	2	13	7	
street signage	3	14	5	
drainage		11	9	
waste management	2	14	4	
Health services		3	10	3
parks and recreation	1	10	5	2
Entertainment		1	7	6
Childcare	1	5	10	3
Community		4	7	5

other

public safety

old town hall

schools

7. Of the services and facilities above that you marked in need of improvement or inadequate/none), which three should be given the highest priority by the town?

community centers	7
health services	7
parks/playground	3
entertainment facilities	2
frontages	2
public safety	2
senior living facilities	2
sidewalks	2
child care centers	1
pharmacies	1
repair the roads	1
waste management	1

8. Where do you and your family most frequently obtain the following goods and services? (check under one for each category)

	Warren	Ware	Palmer	Brookfield	Other
medical	2	5	4	6	11
banking	14	1	4	1	2
legal	10			1	7
Automotive	10	1	3	2	3
Construction	13		3		7
Restaurant	10	5	3	3	12
Entertainment			1	1	18
Groceries	9	16	5	3	5
Drugs		14	4		10
Clothing		7		1	15
Hardware		4	1	9	10
Appliances		4			16
Furniture		1			19
Auto parts	2	6	2	5	9

9. From the above list or other, which types of venue for services or goods do you think are most needed in Warren?

drugs/health	9
medical services	9
hardware	5
restaurant	3
entertainment	2
all goods	1
auto parts	1
casino	1
lg industry	1
small business	1

10. Please identify recreational programs or facilities in Warren that you and your family regularly use (e.g., parks, playgrounds, athletic facilities, meeting places):

cutter/dean park	7
athletic faci	5
meeting places	5
playgrounds	4
Colonels Mtn Wildlife area	1
hiking trails Coming Pond	1
none	1

11. Please identify recreational programs or facilities outside Warren that you and your family regularly use (e.g., parks, playgrounds, athletic facilities, meeting places):

athletic fields	2
-----------------	---

parks	2
canoeing	1
children's play groups	1
Greenville Park Ware	1
hike and bike trails	1
hiking	1
meeting places	1
playgrounds	1
Rock House Reservation West Brookfield	1
skate park Sturbridge	1
ski	1
theatre symphony art	1

12. How would you rate recreational programs and/or facilities in the town of Warren?  
 \_\_\_ Very good    10 Adequate    8 Needs improvement    2 Inadequate

13. Do you think that the following groups  
 have sufficient recreational and community  
 opportunities in the town of Warren?

	yes	no	no opinion
child	6	11	2
teens	4	16	
adults	6	12	2
senior	12	7	1
fam	3	13	3

What major recreation and/or community improvements would you like to see made in  
 Warren during the next year?

Other:			
planning for community center	2		
teen facility	2		
adult league sports	1		
community hall bowling, pool tables, roller skating shows	1		
expand young children's activities	1		
more field space	1		
none	1		
playground improvement	1		
professionally equipped hlth spa	1		
purchase parking lot for Cutter Park	1		
transportation	1		

1. What are the major issues (e.g., traffic volume/flow, safety, access, orientation) regarding the existing transportation network? Please be sure to consider pedestrians, cyclists, etc. as well as drivers:

traffic flow downtown warren	7
volume flow	2
heavy traffic on main st Thursdays and sat am	1
increasing traffic flow vs. infrastructure	1
lack of access to turnpike	1
monument in the middle of the road	1
not many places for pedestrians to walk on side roads	1
parking on Main st	1
people drive too fast don't consider others on foot or in road	1
road conditions	1
safety with heavy trucks and construction equipment	1
town center	1
traffic thru town is too fast and not controlled	1
villages	1

2. Where are the transportation "hot spots" - areas/intersections that experience periods of significant difficulty of access or congestion? How much trucking passes through town?

warren town center	7
old W Brookfield rd and main	3
2500 veh on rte 67/trucking 10%	1
intersection route 19 & main	1
main	1
need traffic counts	1
post office section of 67	1
quaboag st	1
school access roads	1
too many to keep town character, not enough for manufacturing	1
trucking is light	1
trucks traveling at high speeds on side roads	1
ww	1
ww historic bridge	1
ww traffic light	1

3. Where are the areas/intersections/roadways that are considered to be "dangerous"? For what reason(s), e.g., speed, visibility, road conditions, etc.?

underpass	7
downtown warren	3
back roads	2
Brookfield	2

main and south st ww	2
apple	1
Center: new Citgo	1
left turn onto Quaboag St./poor visibility traffic crossing river	1
Main St WW	1
monument	1
most roads	1
no curb cuts	1
post office section of 67	1
quaboag road	1
Roger Farm	1
Southbridge road	1
visibility speed and road conditions are problems on side roads	1
Washington street	1
ww	1
ww historic bridge	1

4. Where are the areas/intersections/roadways that are considered to be in serious need of maintenance/repair? For what reason(s), e.g., heavy volume, climate conditions, funding?

rural old and poor drainage high volume	3
downtown bridge too narrow	2
reed road	2
all roads	1
any non major road	1
coy hill road	1
Cronin rod	1
Cutler Road	1
Gilbert road	1
little rest rd	1
most roads except 67	1
quagoag onto rte 67 in center of town	1
sidewalks on 19	1
Southbridge road	1
ware road	1

5. Which areas of town are underserved by the current transportation network? Where might be the most promising/desirable areas for new transportation construction?

all areas	2
develop RR frontage	1
old ww road	1
rural roads	1
town farm rd	1
transportation services: taxi or bus	1

6. What is needed/desired in the town to foster multi-modal connectivity (e.g., a bike path from xx to xx; park and ride facilities, bus service)?

bike path	8
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bus service	5
money	2
RR service for area into Ware, Springfield and Boston	2
conservation & recreations & parks	1
Dean Park, former KOA campground (Colonel's Mt. WMA)	1
ride services	1
shuttle	1
trans services for elderly and those who can't drive any longer	1

## History and Culture/Development Subcommittee

Mark Hamin

1. How long have you lived in Warren? What has been the biggest change in your time?

65 years

61

53

45

40

30 +

28

27

25

20

19

10

5

4

3 1/2

9 months

more housing, people and cars	8
single family homes	3
taxes and home values	2
golf course	1
job losses	1
less industry	1
library West Warren	1
loss of rural roads due to housing developments	1
new plaza	1
no change	1
school district improvement	1

2. What do you think are the predominant images or associations people have of Warren (e.g., railroad, manufacturing, ethnic or religious communities, landscape features)?

old mill town	6
manufacturing	3
rural community	3
stuck in time	2
Wm E. Wrights mills	2

access to Mass Turnpike	1
access to Route 67	1
adequate schools	1
cheap land	1
farming	1
improvement in buildings in the past 5 years	1
landscape features	1
no change	1
no distinct division between West Warren and Warren	1
open space w/minimal zoning	1
Polish groups	1
pretty area to live	1
Quaboag River	1
rail	1
river	1
run down mill town	1
same image	1
Spencer's garage	1
sports championships of Quaboag RMHS	1
town center/common	1
Town Hall	1
Warren Pumps	1
Warrens Sportsmen's Club	1

3. Who are the most knowledgeable (non-committee) people you know about Warren's past or present cultural life (e.g., celebrations, parades, commemorations, monuments)?

Sylvia Buck	7
George Shields	5
Steve Sablack	3
Robert Buck	2
Bev Russell	1
Bill Wright	1
Bob Wilder	1
Cliff Fountain	1
Dave and Steve Delanski	1
Dick Norman	1
Don Mundell	1
Jane Dolan	1
Leona Wrobel	1
Peter Zalewski	1
Phil Accord	1
Phil Allard	1
Ronald Rainka (?)	1
Steve Wadach	1
town historian	1
Ursie Wright	1

4. Which community groups or organizations have done the most to preserve or record Warren's traditional ways of life?

historical society/commission	3
Rural Improvement Society	2
Warren Library	2
cultural community	1
none	1
Parks	1
Planning Board	1

5. What are the most desirable/distinctive aspects of day-to-day life in Warren?

small town	4
peace and harmony	2
quiet	2
accessibility good route in and out	1
friendly neighbors	1
good services	1
laid-back, relaxed atmosphere	1
landscape is beautiful; hills and views	1
left alone, privacy	1
neighborhood atmosphere	1
not much available	1
out of way to goods, services, jobs	1
quality of life	1
railroads	1
rural setting	1

6. What are some disadvantages/disappointments, if any, of day-to-day life in Warren?

out of the way to goods, services, jobs	5
lack of community involvement	2
lack of manufacturing jobs	2
none	2
downtown needs improvement	1
entertainment	1
lack of activities for teens	1
lack of cellular service in village area	1
large parcels of land being divided for housing	1
local politics, non-progressive attitudes	1
no commercial business	1
no medical facilities	1
too many people	1

7. What are the major changes, if any, that you have experienced in Warren over the past ten years?

population growth	4
improved appearance of downtown (but needs more)	2

influx of single family homes w/lq. sq. footage on small lots	2
more traffic	2
farm changed into golf course	1
improved cable services	1
larger grants	1
loss of industry	1
loss of open space	1
loss of road frontage to housing	1
decrease of Wrights tax contribution to town budget	1
newer schools	1
stronger zoning laws	1

8. What do you regard as the major threats, pressures, and challenges to preserving a desirable quality of life and sense of community identity in Warren (e.g., an influx of new and/or transient residents, younger residents moving away, lack of funding/resources)?

lack of participation	2
apathy toward town government	1
became a bedroom community	1
lack of funds due to influx of single family housing	1
lack of leadership	1
lack of planning in all areas	1
lack of professionalism	1
loss of business	1
new residents; rental as opposed to owner residences	1
new residents who don't get involved in town	1
no jobs	1
residents' attitude towards commercial growth too negative	1
school dropout rates, drugs and youth/young adults	1
selling property to developers would take away rural aspect	1
too expensive to maintain small town, no growth in tax base	1
too many people too fast	1
educational needs vs. need for funding of other services; recreation, public safety, roads, sidewalks, senior needs	1
higher taxes more children to teach, less services,	
compromising dept budgets	1
influx of new residents and lack of funds	1
influx of people, undervalued property= high taxes, lack of resources to more improvements	1

9. What are the qualities/distinctive features of Warren you would most like to preserve (e.g., landscape features, scenic views, historic buildings, town centers)?

historic buildings	7
scenic views, hills, river	7
downtowns	3
Town Hall	3
Community Center	2
farms	2
library	2
Mark's Mountain	2

town centers	2
town common	1
industrial business	1
route 67 undeveloped so it doesn't become a commercial strip	1
mill town history	1
open space	1

10. Which of the following descriptions would you most like to see characterize the town of Warren ten years from now?

4 Small mill town (more or less as it has been)

1 Bedroom community to the adjacent regional centers.

1 Retirement community

17 Adaptable, self-sufficient community with some agriculture, manufacturing, retail

Other (e.g., visitor destination, regional crossroads, etc.):

opportunities, tax relief, Turnpike access	1
regional crossroads	1
regional crossroads taking advantage of Mass Turnpike	1
railroad line	1
town needs to put money aside to preserve open space	1
a resort casino which will give everyone employment and have revenue to afford increased services and facilities	1

### Warren Master Plan Survey

In September, the Warren Planning Board and Master Plan Committee contracted with a project team from the University of Massachusetts to undertake a Master Plan study. The current phase of the study includes a survey and public meetings to seek input from residents on the future direction of Warren's development. **Your** input is a vital part of the planning process, which will also help Warren to apply for certain types of funding. Please take a few moments to fill out and return this confidential form. Thank you for your help.

*General:* Resident of ☐ Warren ☐ West Warren *How long?* \_\_\_\_ year(s) Age \_\_\_\_ Own ☐ Rent ☐

*Sex:* M F *Marital Status:* S M D W *School-age children?* (If yes, how many?) \_\_\_\_\_

*Commute to work?* Y ☐ N ☐ *If yes, Time/Distance?* \_\_\_\_ Min \_\_\_\_ Miles *To what town/city?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Occupation:* ☐ Manufacturing ☐ Commercial ☐ Professional ☐ Farming ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

1. *What do you think should be Warren's approach to new growth and new lands uses?*

☐ Strongly Encourage ☐ Encourage ☐ Maintain ☐ Discourage ☐ Strongly Discourage

2. *What is your view regarding the rate of development in Warren over the **past** five (5) years?*

Residential: ☐ Very fast ☐ Somewhat fast ☐ Stable ☐ Somewhat slow ☐ Very slow

Commercial: ☐ Very fast ☐ Somewhat fast ☐ Stable ☐ Somewhat slow ☐ Very slow

3. *What is your preference in terms of rate of development for Warren over the **next** ten (10) years?*

Residential: ☐ Very fast ☐ Somewhat fast ☐ Somewhat slow ☐ Very slow ☐ None

Commercial: ☐ Very fast ☐ Somewhat fast ☐ Somewhat slow ☐ Very slow ☐ None

4. *What is your view regarding the desirability of funding affordable housing?*

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ No Opinion

5. *How would you rate the quality of each of the following town services?*

Fire: ☐ Good ☐ Adequate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Inadequate ☐ No Opinion

Police: ☐ Good ☐ Adequate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Inadequate ☐ No Opinion

Board of Health: ☐ Good ☐ Adequate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Inadequate ☐ No Opinion

Public Schools: ☐ Good ☐ Adequate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Inadequate ☐ No Opinion

Water: ☐ Good ☐ Adequate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Inadequate ☐ No Opinion

Sewer: ☐ Good ☐ Adequate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Inadequate ☐ No Opinion

Council on Aging: ☐ Good ☐ Adequate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Inadequate ☐ No Opinion

Library: \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Good ☐ Adequate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Inadequate ☐ No Opinion

Building Inspection: ☐ Good ☐ Adequate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Inadequate ☐ No Opinion

Highway: ☐ Good ☐ Adequate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Inadequate ☐ No Opinion

6. *Of the list in question 5 above, which town service(s) do you find difficult to access (location, hours)?*

*Please specify which service(s) and how inaccessible* \_\_\_\_\_

7. *What is your view regarding the desirability of Warren acquiring and protecting open space?*

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ No Opinion

8. *What is your view regarding the desirability of Warren encouraging redevelopment of unused mill buildings?*

☐ Town acquisition ☐ Tax incentive ☐ Encourage private investment ☐ Do not encourage ☐ No Opinion

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**For the following questions, 9 thru 13 please check up to three answers for *each* question:**

9. *Which types of economic redevelopment should Warren most encourage?*

☐ Retail ☐ Services ☐ Tourism/Leisure/Recreation ☐ Agricultural ☐ Resource Industry (gravel, wood)

☐ Light Mfg. ☐ Heavy Mfg. ☐ Professional/Technical Offices ☐ Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

10. *What in your view should be the major funding/investment priorities for the town?*

- ☐ Public services (police, fire, etc.)      ☐ Infrastructure (water, sewer, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Public education      ☐ Business Improvement/Development  
☐ Preservation/Conservation      ☐ Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

11. *If you favor open space preservation/conservation which uses would you most like to see?*

- ☐ Hiking Trails   ☐ Fishing      ☐ Hunting      ☐ Sports facilities  
☐ Biking Trails   ☐ Swimming      ☐ Camping      ☐ Picnic and play areas  
☐ Do not favor   ☐ Other (if a particular location, specify): \_\_\_\_\_

12. *Which, if any, aspects of Warren would you most like to preserve or protect for the future?*

- ☐ Historic buildings   ☐ Town Centers      ☐ Public spaces      ☐ Parks  
☐ Farmland      ☐ Woodland      ☐ Wetland      ☐ Waterways  
☐ Other (if a particular location, specify): \_\_\_\_\_

13. *Where should the Town direct future financial resources for transportation improvements?*

**Roadway:**   ☐ Maintenance   ☐ Drainage   ☐ Access   ☐ Bike lanes   ☐ Lighting      ☐ Redesign

**Other:**      ☐ Sidewalks outside the downtown      ☐ None/No opinion

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**Please rank your top answers to *each* of the following questions: 1 = most, 4 = least important.**

14. *What types of new housing do you think ought to be built in Warren?*

- \_\_\_\_ None      \_\_\_\_ Townhouses/Condos      \_\_\_\_ Affordable housing (low to moderate income)  
\_\_\_\_ Single family      \_\_\_\_ Rental Apartments      \_\_\_\_ Senior  
\_\_\_\_ Starter homes      \_\_\_\_ Multi-family units      \_\_\_\_ Handicap accessible  
\_\_\_\_ Duplexes      \_\_\_\_ Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

15. *What downtown transportation issues are most significant to you?*

- \_\_\_\_ Traffic Circulation      \_\_\_\_ Parking      \_\_\_\_ Rail Underpass      \_\_\_\_ Heavy Vehicles  
\_\_\_\_ Pedestrian Access      \_\_\_\_ Access to Shops      \_\_\_\_ Congestion      \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

16. *What are the major traffic concerns in the school areas?*

- |                   | Speed | Signs | Pick-up/Drop-off | Crosswalks | Event Parking/Access |
|-------------------|-------|-------|------------------|------------|----------------------|
| Elementary School | _____ | _____ | _____            | _____      | _____                |
| Quaboag Regional  | _____ | _____ | _____            | _____      | _____                |

17. *What alternative modes of transportation would you favor for the Town?*

- \_\_\_\_ Bicycle Paths   ☐ Commuter Rail      \_\_\_\_ Park & Ride Lots   ☐ Bus Service      \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

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**18. Would you be willing to attend a public forum to discuss the work of the Master Plan Committee and Project Team?**

- ☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Don't Know

**Comments Please Print:**

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The Warren Master Plan Committee **thinks you** for participating in an important part of the Master Plan. Please use separate paper for any additional comments or concerns you wish to make on the survey questions and attach them to the survey. **You may return this survey with the Town Census** in the envelope provided, or you may deposit this survey separately in the same boxes provided for the census in each precinct. **All comments will remain anonymous.** If more than one member of your household wishes to complete a survey, please copy the form or pick up another at the Town Clerk's Office. **Please return your survey by February 1, 2005.**

## Appendix C: Tabulated Results of General Survey

### Q.1 What do you think should be Warren's approach to new growth and new lands uses?

	strongly encourage	encourage	maintain	discourage	strongly discourage	no response
	125	243	257	103	81	76

### Q.2 what is your view regarding the rate of development in Warren over the past five years?

Residential	very fast	somewhat fast	stable	somewhat slow	very slow	no response
	388	264	140	43	21	36

Commercial	very fast	somewhat fast	stable	somewhat slow	very slow	no response
	9	49	177	239	386	90

### Q.3 what is your preference in terms of rate of development for Warren over the next ten years?

Residential	very fast	somewhat fast	somewhat slow	very slow	none	no response
	39	142	369	203	92	59

Commercial	very fast	somewhat fast	somewhat slow	very slow	none	no response
	131	321	223	72	38	98

### Q 4. what is your view regarding the desirability of funding affordable housing?

	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree	no opinion	no response
	92	233	174	185	146	65

### Q 5. how would you rate the quality of each of the following town services?

	good	adequate	needs improvement	inadequate	no opinion	no response
fire	496	239	72	7	68	15
police	454	292	78	14	51	14
health	236	320	156	41	125	20
schools	295	265	156	33	121	19
water	308	129	80	22	213	29
sewer	291	243	53	29	225	33

COA	296	233	45	6	288	23
library	329	242	124	24	142	22
inspection	193	234	129	39	131	21
highway	238	278	237	89	45	19

Q 6. of the list in question 5 above, which town services do you find difficult to access						
	location	hours	no return calls	room for improve	wheelchair	no response
fire			1	4		597
police				3	1	
health		18	8	3		
schools				4		
water		8		11		
sewer				5		
COA				1		
library		40			1	
inspection		4	30	15		
highway			7	20		
Shepard		1		1		
all		8		7	4	
no opinion						
dump				1		
ambulance	1					
dog officer				1		
landfill				2		

Q.7 what is your view regarding the desirability of Warren acquiring and protecting open space?						
	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree	no opinion	no response
	338	337	69	30	105	18

Q 8. what is your view regarding the desirability of Warren encouraging redevelopment of unused mill buildings?						
	town acquisition	tax incentive	private investment	do not encourage	no opinion	no response
	54	180	514	16	96	43

Q.9 which types of economic redevelopment should Warren most encourage?						
retail	services	tourism/ lesisure/recreation	agricultural	resource Industry	light mfg.	heavy mfg.
418	229	210	186	71	478	184

professional/ technical offices		other		no response	
249	pharmacy	2	casino	12	39
	rehab	1	fast food restaurant	3	

all	anything	3	food store	4	river activities
	3	small business	1	hardware store	2
		family center	2	tavern	1

Q.10 what in your view should be the major funding / investment priorities for the town?						
	public services	infrastructure	public education	business improvement	preservation/conservation	
	466	239	422	468	340	

other						no response
road repair	sidewalk repair	improve appearance	sewer	handicap access	refurbish empty bldg	30
21	3	3	1	1	2	
youth services	casino	transfer station	library	highway garage	mass pike access	
1	2	1	1	2	1	

Q. 11 if you favour open space preservation/conservation which uses would you most like to see?						
hiking trails	fishing	hunting	sports facilities	biking trail	swimming	camping
411	229	125	200	312	170	164

Picnic/play areas	do not favor	other				no response
382	49	town tagsale	wildlife preserve	track	youth center	55
		2	4	1	2	
kayaking and canoing	comins road	agriculture	horse riding trails	dog park/horse racetrack	smith road BH&C	
1	2	1	5	3		

Q.12 which, if any, aspect s of Warren would you most like to preserve or protect for future?						
historic bulidings	town centers	public spaces	parks	farmland	woodlands	wetland
426	249	120	307	367	356	183

waterways	other				no response
236		comins pond	eliminate gravel banks	take down old town hall	all
		1	1	1	2
		riding trails	archeological	snowmobiling	library
		1	1	1	1

Q.13 where should the town direct future financial resources for transportation improvements?						
Roadway	maintenance	drainage	access	bike lanes	lighting	redesign
	664	272	82	170	215	90

Other	sidewalks outside the downtown	none	no response		
turnpike access 1	221	71			132

Q 14. what types of new housing do you think ought to be built in Warren?						
	1	2	3	4		
none	135	16	4	65		
townhse./condo	49	73	46	158		
affordable hsg.	133	58	59	135		
single family	351	71	35	65		
rental apartments	36	47	48	141		
senior	185	110	54	50		
first/starter home	131	96	66	69		
multi-family units	20	31	34	176		
accessible	140	74	45	43		
duplexes	29	54	57	141		

	other		no response		responded, not ranked
larger homes	restore old houses	none	middle income	55	118
1	1	3	1 limited		
all	higher priced homes	trailer parks	no low income housing	2	hotel
2	1	6	1 move monument to park		1
		disabled	1		

1

Q.15 what what down town transportation issues are most significant to you?						
	1	2	3	4		
circulation	158	43	18	30		
parking	241	48	26	22		
Rail Underpass	63	29	31	65		
heavy vehicles	41	20	24	64		
ped. access	66	52	30	32		
access to shops	60	44	31	36		
congestion	70	42	31	48		

	other			no response		responded but not ranked
handicap access sidewalk	parking post office	3 way stop underpass	leave as is	147	186	
1	4	1	8			
bar parking so no parking	school bus stops inadeq	truck parking	poor roads	Old men directing traffice	need lights main/oldbrookfield road	
3	2	2	2	2	1	

**Q.16 what are the major traffic concerns in the school areas?**

<i>Elementary School</i>	1	2	3	4	no response	responded but not ranked
speed	155	27	15	26	440	83
sign	53	24	20	39		
pick-up/ drop-off	71	44	20	26		
crosswalks	36	34	21	29		
event parking/access	149	28	22	15		

<i>Quaboag Regional</i>	1	2	3	4	no response	responded but not ranked
speed	195	22	13	17	434	74
sign	40	28	23	31		
pick-up/ drop-off	85	31	20	29		
crosswalks	45	38	26	19		
event parking/access	105	38	20	28		

**Q.17 what alternative modes of transportation would you favor for the Town?**

	1	2	3	4		
bicycle paths	145	42	24	38		
commuter rail	107	37	31	42		
park &ride lots	45	32	31	55		
bus service	226	34	20	27		

	other			no response		responded but not ranked
taxi	turnpike access	elderly bus service	comm rail boston	none	222	154
4	10	3	1	4		
mass pike access	bicycle lanes	van service	kids bus	mail transportation	taxi	
1	1	3	1	1	2	

**Q.18 would you be willing to attend a public forum to discuss the work of the Master Plan Committee and Project Team?**

	Yes	no	don't know	no response
	210	99	544	49

## Appendix D: Commonwealth of Massachusetts Sustainable Development and Smart Growth Resources

Agency	Relation to Sustainability/ Smart Growth	Description
Office for Commonwealth Development		
Commonwealth Capital Program	1,4,7,9 *key below	provides development/preservation incentives - CDBGs
Dept. of Housing and Community Development		
Housing Technical Assistance	3,6	info/referrals to plan for/build aff. Housing
Division of Community Services	1,3,6,8	for self-suff of low-incomes; for downtowns
Massachusetts Downtown Initiative	1,2,8,9	technical help with downtown (re)development
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs	1,2,3,4,5,7,9	
Community Preservation Initiative	2,3,4,6,7	help for community development plans
Office of the Secretary of Environmental Affairs		publishes Secretary's initiatives.
Executive Office of Transportation	7	
Executive Office of Economic Development	8	
Division of Energy Resources	5	under office of consumer affairs?
Rebuild Massachusetts	5	guidance and funding for resource efficiency
Municipal Aggregation Guide	5, (2?)	help to aggregate a town's energy supply
Department of Business and Technology	8	helps to stimulate local economic development
Massachusetts Office of Business Development	8	job creation and retention

### *key to sustainability principles:*

*1 redevelop first*

*2 concentrate development*

*3 be fair*

*4 restore and enhance the environment*

*5 conserve natural resources*

*6 expand housing opportunities*

*7 provide transportation choice*

*8 increase job opportunities*

*9 foster sustainable business*

*10 plan regionally*

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Name of contact</b>	<b>Phone</b>
<b>Office for Commonwealth Development</b>	OCD	Lauren Curtis	(617) 573-1380
<i>Commonwealth Capital Program</i>		Robert Mitchell	(617) 523-1383
		Kurt Gaertner	(617) 626-1154
<i>Department of Housing and Community Development</i>	DHCD		(617) 573-1100
Housing Technical Assistance		Toni Hall	617-573-1351
Division of Community Services	DCS	Tonya Barlow	617-573-1433
Massachusetts Downtown Initiative		Emmy Hahn	(617) 573-1364
Sustainable Development			(617) 573-1350
<i>Executive Office of Env. Affairs</i>	EOEA		(617) 626-1000
Community Preservation Initiative		Kurt Gaertner	(617) 626-1154
<i>Office, Secretary of Environmental Affairs</i>			
<i>Executive Office of Transportation</i>	EOT		(617) 973-7000
Commuter Parking Efforts		Ron Morgan	
<b>Executive Office of Economic Development</b>	EOED	Renee Fry (undersecretary)	(617) 788-3610
Division of Energy Resources	DOER		617-727-4732 617-727-4732
Rebuild Massachusetts		Eileen McHugh	x205
Department of Business and Technology	DBT	Renee Fry	(617) 788-3610
Massachusetts Office of Business Development	MOBD		(617) 788-3610
Central Regional Office		Bobby Matthews	508-792-7506

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### **Websites**

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<http://www.mass.gov/ocd>

<http://www.mass.gov/ocd>

<http://www.mass.gov/dhcd>

<http://www.mass.gov/dhcd/components/cs/default.HTM>

<http://www.mass.gov/dhcd/components/cs/1PrgApps/MDI/default.HTM>

<http://www.mass.gov/envir>

<http://commpres.env.state.ma.us>

[http://www.mass.gov/envir/sus\\_dev/default.htm](http://www.mass.gov/envir/sus_dev/default.htm)

<http://www.mass.gov/portal/index.jsp?pageID=econhomepage&L=1&L0=Home&sid=Eecon>

<http://www.mass.gov/doer>

<http://www.mass.gov/doer/rb-ma/rebuild.htm>

## Appendix E: Commonwealth of Massachusetts Planning Resources

Agency	Program Resources
<b>Office for Commonwealth Development</b>	
<p><i>Commonwealth Capital Program (CC)</i></p> <p><i>How CC works now: municipalities submit an application (and letter from chief elected official) to the OCD <b>and</b> the relevant program manager. The OCD form serves to rate "the overall use of a municipality's powers to promote sustainable development, specifically to advance the state's interests in the following: redevelopment of previously developed areas; sustainable housing production; protection of farms, forests and other priority open space; and public drinking water supply protection." The score given by the OCD represents 20% of a municipality's overall score on its application to a CC grant.</i></p>	<p>Available FY05:</p> <p><a href="#">Public Works Economic Development Program</a> (EOT)</p> <p><a href="#">Community Development Action Grant Program</a> (DHCD - DCS)</p> <p>Transit Node Grant Program (DHCD)</p> <p><a href="#">State Revolving Fund</a> (EOEA - DEP)</p> <p><a href="#">DEP Brownfields Funding</a> (EOEA - DEP)</p> <p><a href="#">Self-Help Program</a> (EOEA)</p> <p><a href="#">Urban Self-Help Program</a> (EOEA)</p> <p><a href="#">Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program</a> (EOEA - DAR)</p> <p>Land Acquisition Programs (EOEA - DCR, DAR, DFG)</p> <p>Off-Street Parking Program (EOAF)</p>
<i>Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)</i>	
Housing Technical Assistance	<b>information and referrals</b> to municipalities, developers, advocates and non-profit agencies in order to plan for or build affordable housing.
Division of Community Services	<p>Information and support.</p> <p>Administers Community Development Action Grant (FY06 deadline was 2/05)</p> <p>-\$\$ for publicly owned or managed community development projects</p>
Community Development Block Grant program (CDBG)	<p>Different areas in which a municipality can apply for grants (and links to the applications):</p> <p><a href="#">Architectural Barrier Removal</a></p> <p><a href="#">Commercial Rehabilitation</a></p> <p><a href="#">Demolition/Clearance</a></p> <p><a href="#">Design</a></p> <p><a href="#">Housing Rehabilitation</a></p> <p><a href="#">Other Housing</a></p> <p><a href="#">Infrastructure</a></p> <p><a href="#">Infrastructure for Downtown</a></p> <p><a href="#">Planning</a></p> <p><a href="#">Public Facilities</a></p> <p><a href="#">Public Social Services</a></p>
Massachusetts Downtown Initiative	Technical assistance. Site visits for non-CDBG-entitled communities. Publishes listing of resources for financial and technical assistance related to downtown revitalization.
Office of Sustainable Development	Robert Mitchell, Ph.D. AICP, Director
<i>Executive Office of Env. Affairs (EOEA)</i>	
Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)	Administers state laws and regulations aimed at preventing pollution, protecting natural resources, promoting safe disposal and recycling of wastes, and ensuring timely cleanup of contamination.

Municipal Services Division	<p>Information and grants for water quality management: "...to preserve water quality and abate pollution by providing financial assistance for municipal water and wastewater infrastructure projects and encouraging implementation of innovative and alternative decentralized solutions to municipal water and wastewater management problems"</p> <p>Administers <i>State Revolving Loan Fund</i> Program : <a href="http://www.mass.gov/dep/brp/mf/srf.htm">http://www.mass.gov/dep/brp/mf/srf.htm</a></p>
Innovative Technology Initiative and Green Business	<p>Provides an initial point of contact for technology developers and to facilitate the review process for innovative technologies.</p> <p>With STEP (Strategic Envirotechnology Partnership: STEP provides a range of services to help developers overcome technology acceptance barriers: business and market planning; clarification of regulations and permitting requirements, expedited permitting; applied research and development, verification of technology performance, and technology demonstration.</p>
Community Preservation Initiative	<p>Can help provide up to \$30,000 in planning services to help communities create a Community Development plan ("CD plan") (per E.O.418). More info at <a href="http://commpres.env.state.ma.us/content/cdplans.asp">http://commpres.env.state.ma.us/content/cdplans.asp</a>.</p>
Community Preservation Act	<p>Allows communities to create a local Community Preservation Fund in the municipality to be used for funds <u>through a surcharge of up to 3% of the real estate tax levy on real property</u> for open space, historic preservation and low and moderate housing. (this act compliments EO418)</p> <p>Also creates a significant state matching fund of more than \$25 million annually - serves as an incentive to communities to take advantage of the provisions of this legislation</p>
Sustainable Development and Urban Environments Agenda	<p>EOEA in conjunction with OCD. Works to ensure that state infrastructure and facilities promote sustainable development, and that state policy and programs, most notably <a href="#">Commonwealth Capital</a> policy, also encourage municipalities to do the same.</p> <p>Primarily discusses brownfield redevelopment as well as general sustainability. An informational resource.</p>
Division of Conservation Services (DCS)	<p>Awards grants (some are CDBG) to municipalities for conservation land acquisition, parkland acquisition, and park development and/or renovation – following creation of an OS and Rec. Plan (DCS gives tech. ass't for this).</p> <p>Works with USDA NRCS Service to provide technical assistance to farmers &amp; public land agencies on sediment &amp; erosion control.</p> <p>Handbooks and guidebooks for land conservation in MA</p>
Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)	<p>Land and water stewardship grants (info at <a href="http://www.mass.gov/dcr/grants.htm">http://www.mass.gov/dcr/grants.htm</a>) . Lakes and Ponds Program provides technical support to help monitor water quality at public beaches, and educational materials about "various lake issues"</p>

	( <a href="http://www.mass.gov/dcr/waterSupply/lakepond/lakepond.htm">http://www.mass.gov/dcr/waterSupply/lakepond/lakepond.htm</a> ). In the past has provided grants to help restore/protect lakes/ponds.
Office of Public/Private Partnerships (OPPP)	Public policy, research.
Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR)	
Division of Ag. Dev. > Bureau of Markets	Technical assistance for people wanting to start farmer's markets. Publishes promotional material about farmer's markets around the Commonwealth. Administers Farmer's Market coupon program (WIC coupons to be used at mkts)
Bureau of Land Use	Supports Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program to protect farmland discourage farmers from selling their land to developers
<i>Executive Office of Transportation (EOT)</i>	
Public Works Economic Development grant	for design/construction of roads, roadways, and other transportation related projects that support economic development (PART OF THE COMMONWEALTH CAPITAL PROGRAM)
<b>Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED)</b>	
<i>Department of Business and Technology (DBT)</i>	"...responsible for creating, retaining and attracting jobs throughout the state by working through its five agencies to offer programs that stimulate economic growth and development." (one of the agencies is the MOBD, below)
Massachusetts Office of Business Development (MOBD)	<p>Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP): designed to stimulate job creation in targeted areas, attract new businesses, encourage existing businesses to expand, increase overall economic development --- <i>(this is the program that deals with Economic Opportunity Areas [EOAs] and Economic Target Areas [ETAs])</i></p> <p>District Improvement Financing Program (DIF): a public financing alternative available to all cities and towns in the Commonwealth. Enables municipalities to fund public works, infrastructure, and development projects by allocating future, incremental tax revenues collected from a predefined district to pay project costs</p>
Central Regional Office	(located in Worcester)
<i>Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation</i>	
Division of Energy Resources (DER)	Tons of alternative-energy/energy management/energy efficiency information

Rebuild Massachusetts	<p>("Locally-driven, volunteer partnership")</p> <p>"provide state support and leadership to Massachusetts communities focusing on energy efficiency and sustainability, stimulate the formation of, and provide ongoing support to existing partners, and disseminate the results as models to communities and stakeholders to stimulate further adoption of resource efficiency as a standard part of planning and implementing community investments."</p> <p>Help with incentives from private sources – primarily for individuals rather than municipalities</p>
Renewable Energy Program	<p>guidebooks, help w/state &amp; fed tax incentives, information, examples of renewable energy in use around the country</p>
Alternative Transportation Program	<p>Info about alternative transportation.</p>
Mass. Clean Cities Coalition (MCCC)	<p>Provides:</p> <p>"Grant Funding Opportunities;</p> <p>Discussion Forums for Alternative Fuels, Vehicles, and Related Infrastructure;</p> <p>Information Pool and Vendor Base;</p> <p>Technical Assistance with Alternative Fuels Projects;</p> <p>Help with Planning and Implementing Alternative Fuels Events;</p> <p>Education and Training for the Safety and Maintenance of Vehicles and Infrastructure"</p>