



**SOUTH KINGSTOWN:
DESIGNING A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY**





IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF SOUTH KINGSTOWN RESIDENTS

The Healthy Places by Design project sought to strengthen land use, transportation and urban design policies and ordinances that guide the decision making process for the built environment to be more supportive of health, particularly as it relates to physical activity and healthy eating.

The town in which you live has an impact on your health. There are a lot of ways your town can help you and your family to be healthier by making the healthy choice the easy choice. With the goal of identifying how the Town of South Kingstown could support healthier lifestyles, the Town applied for and was granted funding for the Healthy Places by Design project.

Healthy Places by Design is a pilot project of the Rhode Island Department of Health's (HEALTH) Initiative for a Healthy Weight Program, which sought to assist communities in implementing changes to local policies in support of physical activity and access to healthy foods. Healthy Places by Design awarded funding to three municipalities, one urban, one suburban and one rural, and their community-based organization partners through a competitive process. South Kingstown was awarded funding to be the rural community. The grant began in August 2011 and concluded in April 2012.

The main focus of the Healthy Places by Design project was to seek community input on local needs, issues and solutions related to physical activity and access to healthy foods, and then to make policy changes to support healthier lifestyles. The Town of South Kingstown partnered with the South County Branch of the YMCA of Greater Providence to assist with public outreach and engagement. Residents helped assess the Town by participating in a health survey and focus groups.

In addition, residents participated in a series of informative workshops, stakeholder meetings, hands-on feedback sessions, and a week-long Healthy Community Summit. Community members identified existing problem areas, engaged in the process of developing innovative policy strategies and advised Town leaders on possible changes to the South Kingstown Comprehensive Community Plan, the Zoning Ordinance, and other policies. The project team learned a great deal from South Kingstown residents, which assisted in the creation of a comprehensive and far-reaching action plan for implementation.

The Town of South Kingstown has a detailed process to build a town with healthier residents. Some Town improvements will be made through policy amendments and changes to the Comprehensive Community Plan. Grassroots working groups have come together and the community members will also continue the work to improve the Town. Moving forward, the Healthy Places by Design project will continue through working groups of community stakeholders and residents. In addition, it will be evaluated for effectiveness and used as an example for other Rhode Island communities who wish to make policy changes in support of physical activity and access to healthy foods. The policies that will be enacted as a result of the efforts of Healthy Places by Design will lead to a South Kingstown that is more supportive of physical activity and access to healthy foods, making the healthy choice the easy choice for South Kingstown residents.

What Residents Told Us (Sources are listed on the final page)

Residents, overall, were happy with the direction of South Kingstown in terms of supporting healthier living. However, they did find areas that could be improved. ⁽¹⁾

During the Healthy Community Summit, residents indicated on their exit interviews that the experience was positive, they felt they had been heard, opinions were openly expressed, and that the community was engaged. ⁽¹⁾

During the Healthy Places by Design project, more than 500 residents were engaged through surveys, focus groups, workshops, meetings, and interviews. ⁽¹⁾



SOUTH KINGSTOWN FACTS

LOCATION: Located on the south coast of Rhode Island, South Kingstown is bordered by Narragansett to the east, Exeter and North Kingstown to the north, Charlestown and Richmond to the west, and the Atlantic Ocean to the south (Town of South Kingstown).

SIZE: 56.8 square miles of land area; 36,352 acres (Town of South Kingstown)

RESIDENTS: 30,639

HOUSEHOLDS: 10,316

MEDIAN AGE IN YEARS: 35.7

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$73,759 (in 2010 Inflation-adjusted dollars – American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates)

LIVING BELOW THE POVERTY LEVEL: 1,900 individuals (2008-2010 American Community Survey – US Census Bureau)

RACIAL BREAKDOWN: 90.9% White; 2.2% Black or African American; 2.7% Asian; 1.2% American Indian and Alaskan Native; 3% Other or Multiple Race

HOUSING: 72.6% are owner-occupied units and 27.4% are renter-occupied units.

OPEN SPACE: The Town has nearly 11,165 acres of protected open space, representing more than 30.7% of our land mass as of July 2011 (Town of South Kingstown).

COMMUTING TO WORK: 75.5% commuted alone; 9.8% carpooled; 3.3% used public transportation (excluding taxicab); 6.7% walked; .3% other means; and 4.4% worked from home (2008-2010 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates).

PUBLIC SPACES: There are 19 town-owned public spaces, of which 13 have playgrounds and one has a dog park (Town of South Kingstown).

BEACHES: South Kingstown has 10 miles of beaches, of which a third of a mile is available for public use at its Town Beach in Matunuck, and .7 miles and 102 acres are available at East Matunuck State Beach (Town of South Kingstown).

WILLIAM O'NEILL BIKE PATH: From Kingston Station to Narragansett, the South County Bike Path stretches approximately 7.8 miles (Rhode Island Department of Transportation).

** Data Source in this fact box is from the US Census 2010 unless otherwise noted.*

Funding for this initiative came from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act's Communities Putting Prevention to Work Award to the Rhode Island Department of Health. Please note that for the purposes of this report, we use the terms "residents" and "citizens" interchangeably to refer to the residents and citizens of South Kingstown. Given the sample size, the results of this community assessment do not necessarily apply to all residents of South Kingstown. For the purpose of the resident survey, the term neighborhood is defined as the area within a ten minute walk (or half mile) from home.

What Residents Told Us

Sixty-six percent of residents surveyed have participated in Town meetings. ⁽²⁾

Seventy-nine percent of residents surveyed were willing to work with policy makers to make changes in the community. ⁽²⁾

Fifty-five percent of respondents believe that Town officials are willing to make positive changes in their community. ⁽²⁾



ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY: Public Meetings

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We believe that effective community change processes should not happen *to* the people, but *with*, the people of South Kingstown. Throughout the Healthy Places by Design project, community engagement was a priority. There were numerous opportunities for residents to discuss obstacles to healthy living in South Kingstown and identify potential solutions to those obstacles. Resident input truly drove the direction of this project. This page details the various ways in which the public was engaged.

THE PROJECT KICKOFF MEETING

The citizens of South Kingstown were invited to Town Hall to see a brief presentation about the project. Participants were then asked to identify areas for improvement as well as share their vision of changes the Town could create to make South Kingstown a healthier place.

PUBLIC WORKSHOP SERIES

Led by Grow Smart Rhode Island, four workshops were held in order give the public more information on the topics that were presented and allowed for public discussion. Workshop titles were: Making Our Community More Walkable and Bikeable, Planning and Designing Mixed Use Centers, Making it Easier to Get Healthy Food, and Keeping Farms and Local Food in Our Future.

HEALTHY COMMUNITY SUMMIT

The Healthy Community Summit was a week-long interactive event that brought together residents, project team members, community leaders, and Town officials. During the opening meeting, information gathered through the community health assessments was shared by the Planning Department and the project team. Community members were asked to identify how their community may or may not support healthy living and share ideas to improve South Kingstown. After listening to the feedback from the opening meeting, the team went to work drafting policies and graphics addressing the residents' thoughts and ideas. Community members were invited to tour the workspace during an open house at the mid-point of the Summit, to see the work of the project team in progress. During the closing meeting, the public was invited to learn the results of the Healthy Community Summit. Attendees were able to see the concepts and designs the team created for improvements within the Town as well as possible revisions to policies in support of a healthier community.

What Residents Told Us

They enjoyed the maps, visuals, and they felt like their voices were heard. ⁽¹⁾

Residents liked the participation of attendees, encouragement from the community, and the respect community members were given. ⁽¹⁾

CHLI participants felt crossing guards are consistently present to ensure the ability of students to cross the street safely near their schools. ⁽³⁾

ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY: Health Assessments

THE COMMUNITY HEALTHY LIVING INDEX

The Community Healthy Living Index (CHLI) assessment, developed by YMCA of the USA, is a way of understanding one's stage of development within the process of creating sustainable change in support of healthy living. The CHLI compares this process to the work of planting an apple orchard. Just as a farmer starts small by planting seeds and then provides appropriate care for each state of the trees' development until harvest, the Y believes that all communities have the potential to be nourished through the process of change until they become an environment that strongly supports healthy eating and active living.



Nourishing
a Root System

The CHLI engages community residents and stakeholders to assess the policy and physical environment of a community based on opportunities for physical activity and access to healthy food. Over a period of two months, the CHLI facilitators held six assessments, engaging 56 participants. Each assessment group participated in two meetings and a week-long observation period.

South Kingstown CHLI Results: Nourishing a Root System

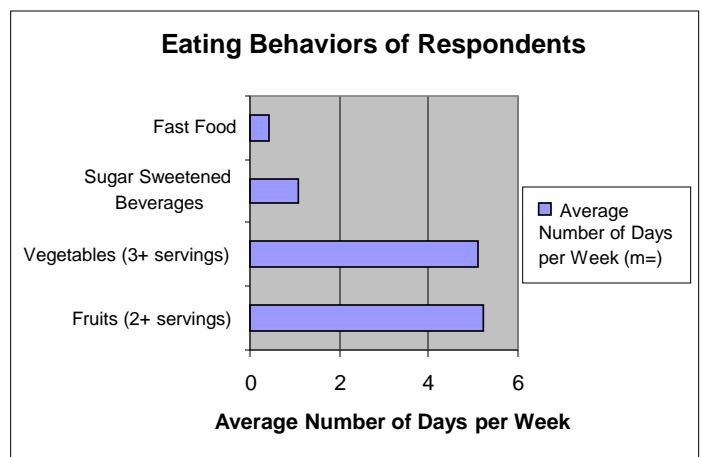
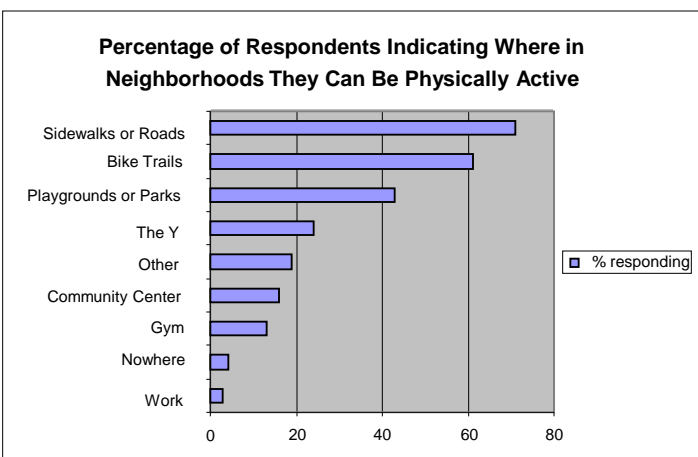
Efforts up to this point have provided roots for growth such that the Town is halfway to *Harvesting the Rewards* of a healthy community. There are many opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity, however there are also areas for improvement. At this stage of development, it's important to celebrate these successes, and also to continue to encourage the growth necessary for a rich harvest - there is still a lot of work ahead. Some results of the assessment are detailed throughout this report. The full report can be found on the Town's website listed below.

THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RESIDENT SURVEY

The Town of South Kingstown, working with South County YMCA and the Rhode Island Department of Health, sought to understand residents' exercise and eating behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs through the administration of a resident survey.

The survey was open for responses from October 7 to October 28, 2011. Three hundred and fourteen complete surveys were returned. Results of the full survey are also detailed throughout this report. The full report can be found on the Town of South Kingstown's project website at

<http://www.southkingstownri.com/town-government/municipal-departments/planning/healthy-places-design>.



What Residents Told Us

As of May 2011, 1,591 individuals living in South Kingstown received Supplemental Nutrition Program benefits (formally Food Stamps). (4)

Seventy-four percent of residents felt bike trails were easily accessible. (2)

Low-income respondents (those with a yearly income less than \$25,000) surveyed were less likely to agree that bike trails were easily accessible (sixty-four percent). (2)

ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY: Reaching All Populations

In recent decades, the United States has made great progress in improving individual and community health and reducing health disparities across our nation. However, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continually acknowledges that health disparities by “race and ethnicity, income and education, disability status, and other social characteristics still exist^[1].” Given this reality, the Healthy Places by Design team felt it was a priority to engage all populations in South Kingstown, including traditionally underrepresented populations, to fully understand the health of the community. As we looked at community health issues, such as access to healthy food or access to recreation, it was important that we considered first, *are these resources available in the community*; and second, *are they accessible to **all** community members*.

In order to gather enough information to accurately assess the health of South Kingstown, we needed the input of a diverse range of community members throughout the assessment process. The Healthy Places by Design project team collaborated with the Johnnycake Center of Peace Dale, Thundermist Health Center and The Center (the South Kingstown Senior Center) to engage residents of all income levels and ages including low-income and elderly populations. The project team also engaged members of the South County YMCA including young people involved in the YMCA’s teen Leaders Club, ensuring that the youth voice was included in the process. In addition, the web address for the South Kingstown Community Health Survey was shared via postcard mailing to randomly selected residents across the Town. Recognizing not all residents have access to the internet, paper copies of the survey were made available at nine locations throughout town: the three South Kingstown libraries, the Neighborhood Guild, the South County YMCA, The Center, Town Hall, Thundermist Health Center and the Johnnycake Center of Peace Dale.

To ensure Healthy Places by Design project recommendations would be reflective of the needs of all community members, we needed participation representative of all community members in public meetings including the Healthy Community Summit. When determining the schedule and locations of public meetings, the Healthy Places by Design project team utilized multiple strategies to maximize community participation. Public meetings were announced in local papers and on web-based forums. Flyers for all public meetings were distributed both electronically via email and in paper copy via community partners and local businesses. To accommodate residents’ schedules, meetings were held both in the evening and during the day at multiple locations in the community. Childcare and transportation services were also available for participants. Lastly, project coordinators were continually available to meet one-on-one with any community residents who wished to participate but could not attend meetings.

[1] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *Health Disparities and Inequalities Report*. United States: 2011.



What Residents Told Us

Forty-five percent of all respondents disagreed that the sidewalks were well-maintained. ⁽²⁾

Low-income respondents disagreed that the sidewalks were well-maintained at a rate of seventy-nine percent. ⁽²⁾

Eleven percent of all residents surveyed felt tobacco products were advertised a lot in their neighborhood compared to low-income residents responding at a rate of twenty-one percent. ⁽²⁾

ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY: Common Themes for Change

The intention of this project is to create policies that support built environment changes to increase physical activity and access to healthy food. This aligns with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Rhode Island Department of Health (HEALTH) that have both recently moved towards policy and environmental change in order to have a larger public health impact.

The South Kingstown Healthy Places by Design project sought to change the environment in order to make the Town of South Kingstown healthier. By identifying the residents' barriers to healthier living, then removing those barriers (such as improving sidewalks, calming traffic, changing Town policies, etc.), it is the hope of this project that the residents will lead happier, healthier lives.

The residents of the Town indicated that, overall, they were happy with the direction of South Kingstown in terms of supporting healthier living. However, they did find areas where improvements could be made. Residents told us they consider safety for walkers and bikers to be a major issue and a significant obstacle for residents who wish to walk and bike more frequently. The Bike Path is seen as a critical, central resource in Town that supports walking and biking and there are great recreational amenities in South Kingstown which need to be promoted better and made available to people of all income levels.

In addition, residents felt that the Town sees healthy, locally grown food both as an important part of a healthy lifestyle and also a key industry that can promote the local economy. However, they also stated that the biggest barriers to accessing healthy food are affordability and the lack of walkable locations that sell healthy food. In the community, there is interest in increasing the days and times that farmers' markets are open. Furthermore, residents felt that there is a need for more educational resources regarding accessing healthy food and supporting local agriculture.

Finally, the residents articulated the importance of embracing and preserving the history and beauty of South Kingstown's villages, while encouraging appropriate development and supporting a healthy lifestyle of residents.

This report will further examine these themes and discuss strategies, created by residents, to change the environment (both the physical environment and policies) in order to improve the health of our residents. The following page contains the Health Infrastructure map, which was created during the South Kingstown Healthy Community Summit. It details many of the themes listed above.



Common Themes:

1. *Improving walking and biking*
2. *Improving access to recreation*
3. *Improving access to healthy food and supporting local agriculture*
4. *Improving our villages and neighborhoods*

What Residents Told Us

Residents learned that many people shared the same concerns surrounding a healthy lifestyle and improvements to areas of Town can support that way of life. ⁽¹⁾

Attendees enjoyed learning about the availability of local resources and the Town's commitment to improve access to recreation and healthy foods. ⁽¹⁾

Residents also learned that others in the community had similar ideas to make the Town more walkable and bikeable. ⁽¹⁾

WALKING AND BIKING: Findings



PLANNING FOR WALKING AND BIKING

Over the past decade, South Kingstown has begun to return to designing development around people, not just the automobile. When the William O'Neill Bike Path opened in 2000, the citizens had a new outlet for exercise. In 2011, the bike path expanded for a third time, allowing residents to travel from Kingston Station to Narragansett. The Town of South Kingstown offers opportunities for all comfort and skill levels, but still has opportunities to improve walking and biking.

STRENGTHS

The historic, compact scale of Wakefield and Peace Dale villages provides great social, cultural, recreational, and economic benefits

to all South Kingstown residents. The two villages, with their connected street networks and mixture of workplace, retail, housing, and civic land uses, allow bicycling and walking to be practical modes of transportation because many destinations may be reached efficiently without using a car.

To this last point, the importance of the O'Neill Bike Path should not be underestimated. It is a recreational and transportation amenity that not only provides a critical non-motorized link between the villages, but also offers a connection to many destinations throughout South County,

including Narragansett to the east, and an Amtrak station to the west. Further south in Matunuck Beach, lower traffic volumes, recreational opportunities and scenic views offer an attractive environment for cycling, especially during the warmer months.

CHALLENGES

Barriers to increasing bicycling and walking in South Kingstown include occasionally poor pavement conditions (such as High Street); a visible lack of adequate bicycle parking in the village centers and at other community destinations; the need for connected context-appropriate on-street bikeways; and the absence of way-finding and safety signs, save for those streets intersecting with the O'Neill Bike Path. Additionally, Dale Carla Corners is intimidating to those not traveling in an automobile. Limiting the future growth of such auto-centric land use patterns, and retrofitting existing areas to be more human-scaled in their design, would provide long-term economic and active transportation benefits.



What Residents Told Us

Residents surveyed walk or bike for transportation an average of one day per week. (2)

Low-income respondents surveyed (those with a yearly income of less than \$25,000) are relying on walking or biking more, an average of two days per week. (2)

Eighty-eight percent of residents surveyed feel safe from *crime* when "walking or riding my bike." However, only forty-seven percent of residents feel safe from *traffic* when walking or bike riding. (2)

1 West Kingston Train Station
Issues: Lack of parking; need for covered bike racks

2 Ministerial Road
Issues: Lack of parking, missing sidewalks, and no shoulders

3 Route 138
Issues: Missing sidewalks; no shoulder

4 South Road at Mountain Laurel Drive
Issue: Signage needed

5 Route 108
Issues: Missing sidewalks; signage and signals not maintained

6 Kersey Road
Issues: Missing sidewalks; no crosswalks; stop treated as yield

7 Spring Street
Issue: Poor sidewalks

8 Old Tower Hill Road
Issues: Missing crosswalk and pedestrian light

9 Woodruff Avenue
Issues: Missing sidewalk; needs pedestrian light (No photo available)

10 Allen Avenue
Issue: Needs sidewalk

11 High Street
Issues: Too narrow; needs traffic calming; needs bike path

12 Main Street
Issues: Cars parked too close to crosswalks; needs mid-street marking/refuge

13 Route 1
Issue: No pedestrian crossings

14 Route 1 at Matunuck Exit
Issue: No pedestrian crossing

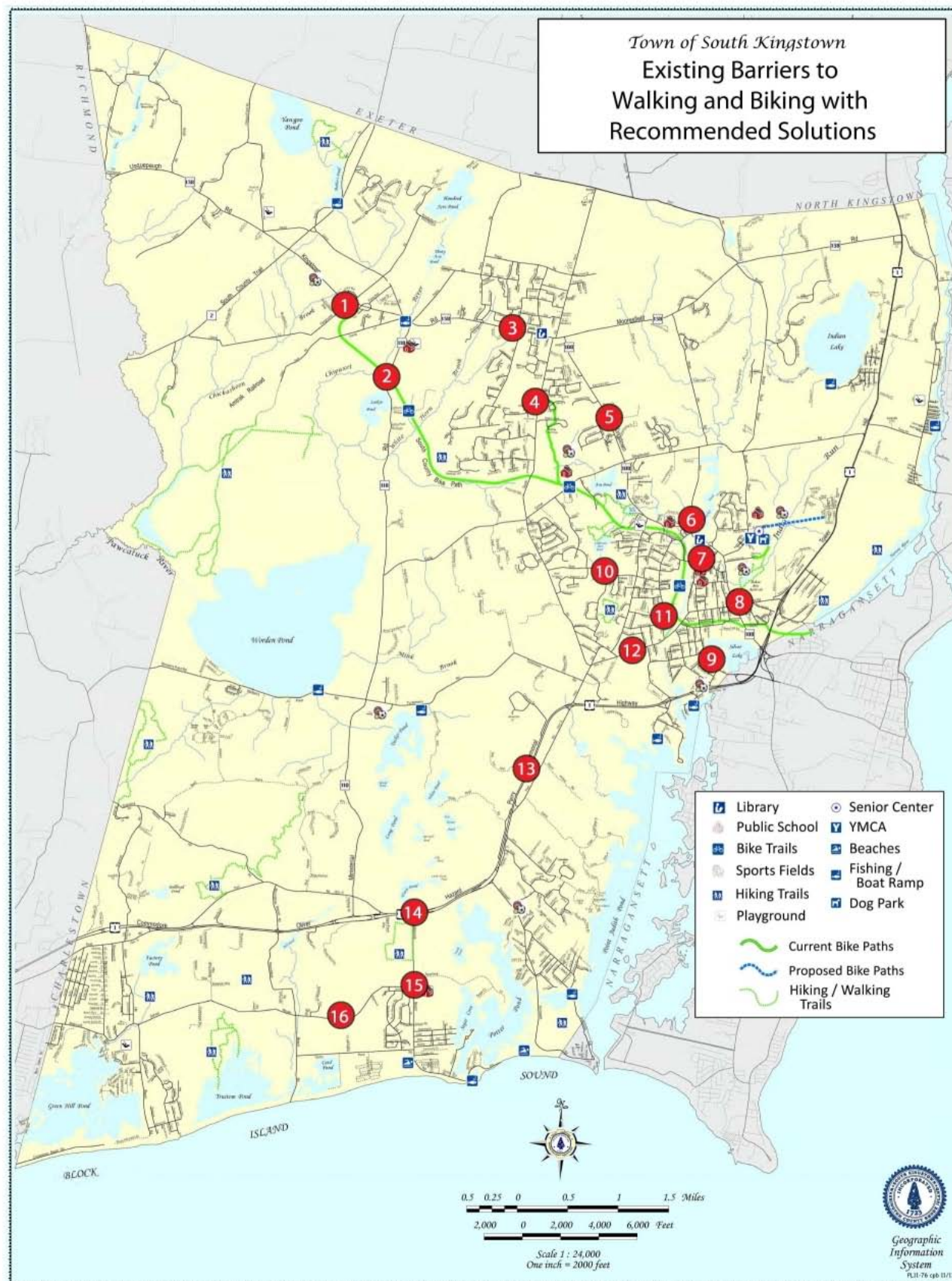
15 Matunuck Beach Road
Issue: Needs sidewalk?

16 Matunuck School House Road
Issues: Needs crosswalks at Matunuck Beach Road; needs signage and markings for bicycles

Existing Conditions

Existing Barriers to Walking and Biking

During the South Kingstown Healthy Place by Design project, residents identified areas for improvement. The above map illustrates some barriers to walking and biking in the Town as identified by residents.



Bike Amenities

- Bike Lockers
- Covered Bike Racks

Bike Path Amenities

- Lighting
- Directional Signage
- Designated Parking

Bike Lanes and Routes

- Striped and Marked Bike Lane
- Shared Road Arrows (Sharrows)
- Curbed Bike Lane
- Bike-Friendly Drainage
- Protected Shoulder
- Highlighted Bike/Car Conflict Points
- Bike Route Signage

Bike Crossings and Intersections

- Highlighted Crossings
- Colored Ramps
- Crossing Lights and Signage

Pedestrian Crossings

- Raised Crosswalks
- Improved Crosswalk Painting
- Textured Crosswalks
- Mid-Crossing Signs
- Refuge Islands

Share the Road Signs

- Alert Ramp
- Mixed Use Context

Sidewalks

- Residential Context

Potential Solutions

What Residents Told Us

Not all potential solutions are appropriate for all barriers or for particular areas in South Kingstown. Improvements must be weighed carefully. In considering potential solutions, decision makers will take into account equal access for all community residents and the need to preserve the rural and historical character of the Town. The potential solutions above are possible changes to remove the barriers to walking and biking.

WALKING AND BIKING: Moving Forward

NEXT STEPS

Residents identified two major goals for improving the enjoyment and safety of cycling for residents of South Kingstown. The strategies to achieve these goals are listed below and are just a sampling of the many that have been collected. All the input and strategies proposed by residents have been and will continue to be considered by the Town.

WALKING AND BIKING RECOMMENDATIONS

Walking and Biking Goal 1: Increase safety and connectivity of pedestrian and bicycle networks.



- A. The South County YMCA will collaborate with local community partners to establish an annual Bike Day as a free community event open to all residents. Bike Day will be hosted by the YMCA on Saturday, April 14, 2012, in partnership with the Town Recreation Department, Friends of the William C. O'Neill Bike Path, local bicycle commercial establishments, the South Kingstown Police Department, and other community partners.
- B. The Town will continue to evaluate existing pedestrian and bicycle networks by working with the Sierra Club of Rhode Island, the Friends of the William C. O'Neill Bike Path, and other interested parties to evaluate the community's existing pedestrian and bicycle networks to establish priority improvement areas. These groups will conduct additional walk and bike audits similar to those held as part of this project and advise the Town of their findings.
- C. Increase pedestrian safety and connectivity in village areas through consideration of traffic calming and street crossing improvements on State right-of-ways such as bulb-outs, mid-crossing signage, mid-crossing refuge islands and ladder striping of crosswalks. Consider striping, signage and other non-structural treatments for Town roads where appropriate.
- D. Develop Comprehensive Community Plan amendments to recognize the importance of pedestrians and bicycles in transportation planning as a means to provide an equitable transportation system for all residents including seniors, youth, and low-income populations who may not have equal access to car transport.
- E. Consider infrastructure improvement recommendations from the Healthy Places by Design project within the Town's decision making process for the development of the Capital Improvement Program.
- F. The Town Planning Department will continue to work with the Public Services and Parks and Recreation Departments, Planning Board, and Healthy Places by Design Working Groups to increase efforts to maintain, repair, and build new pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in priority areas.



What Residents Told Us

There was a need for increased walking and biking options between villages. ⁽¹⁾

Forty-nine percent of the surveyed residents in Peace Dale and Wakefield disagreed with the statement that there are sidewalks on most of the streets in their neighborhoods. ⁽²⁾

Residents identified the need for more bicycle racks. ⁽¹⁾ Three bike racks, which were donated to the Town, will be installed in the Spring of 2012.

WALKING AND BIKING: Moving Forward

WALKING AND BIKING RECOMMENDATIONS (Continued)

- G. Require that new developments be designed to increase connectivity to adjoining neighborhoods and villages.
 - I. Require multi-modal trip generation analysis for major subdivisions and land development plans.
 - II. Develop Subdivision and Land Development Regulations amendments to incorporate design standards for infrastructure improvements regarding pedestrian and bicycle circulation for both on-site facilities and connections to adjoining neighborhoods and villages.
- H. Develop Subdivision and Land Development Regulations amendments to require the installation of attractive bicycle parking facilities for residential developments of six units or greater or for any commercial development requiring development plan review.
- I. The Town will identify appropriate locations for and provide attractive bicycle parking facilities near municipal buildings and open spaces that serve the general public on a daily basis.
- J. The Town Planning Department will work with the South Kingstown School Department to pursue programming and community partnerships that support safe walking and biking to school.



Walking and Biking Goal 2: Promote street design that is safe, attractive and efficient for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders.

- A. The Planning and Public Services Departments will coordinate the selection of a Town road to potentially serve as a pilot project for use of on-road bike markings and signage. The purpose of the pilot road will be to develop consensus on the design and implementation of bike-friendly infrastructure for other Town roads moving forward.
- B. The Town will assess additional locations throughout Town for improvements to bike infrastructure. Bike markings and signage improvements will focus on the intersections between the William C. O'Neill Bike Path and the street network as well as the locations identified through the ongoing walk audits.
- C. Develop Land Development and Subdivision Regulation Amendments to encourage new development, redevelopment, and roadway improvements that are consistent with the Complete Streets concept as supported by the Town Council resolution.
- D. Highlight the importance of pedestrians and bicycles in transportation planning in order to reduce or calm traffic, provide additional access options, and enhance community character by including it as a goal in the Comprehensive Community Plan.
- E. Continue to collaborate with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, the University of Rhode Island, and all affected elements of the community to enhance roadway conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists in future transportation and infrastructure related projects.

What Residents Told Us

Eighty percent of surveyed residents felt neighborhoods are generally free of litter. (2)

Eighty percent of respondents felt parks, playgrounds and trails were well-maintained. (2)

Low-income respondents were less likely to agree (sixty-eight percent) that parks, playgrounds, and trails were well-maintained. (2)

ACCESS TO RECREATION: Findings

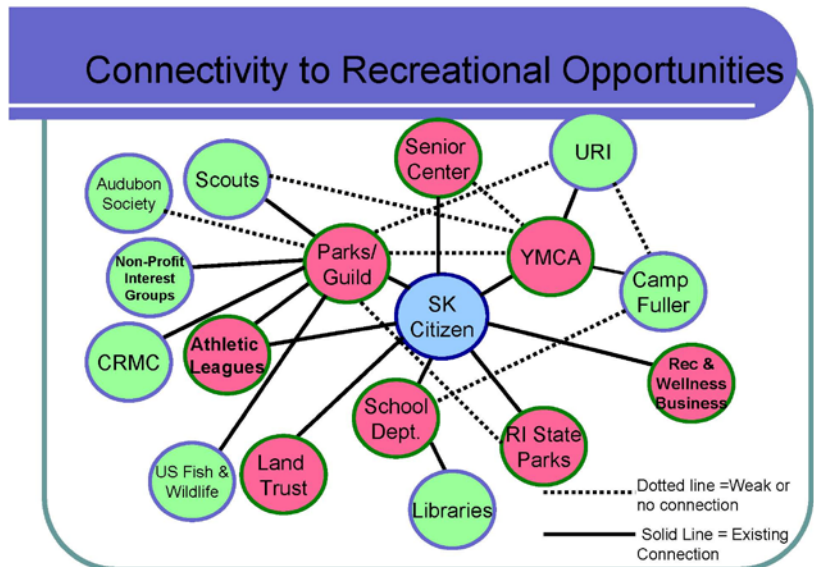


A TRADITION OF RECREATION IN THE COMMUNITY

The South Kingstown Parks and Recreation Department was created in 1939 to provide parks and recreation programs and services. Currently, the Department offers over 1,000 recreation programs and classes annually for all ages and interests. In addition to managing the Neighborhood Guild, it also manages the Peace Dale Office Building, Stepping Stone Preschool, an extensive park system, the William C. O'Neill Bike Path, the Town Beach, and the Old Mountain Field in-line skating facility and skateboard park.

Approximately 67% of the South Kingstown Parks and Recreation Department's annual operating budget is generated by program fees, facility operations, trust funds, and grants and donations. The remainder of the budget is provided by local tax support.

In addition to the Town's recreational choices, residents enjoy numerous other programs. For example, the YMCA offers opportunities for a healthier lifestyle including swimming, summer camp, state-of-the-art fitness center, exercise classes, and sports. Other nonprofit organizations, such as the University of Rhode Island, the South Kingstown Land Trust, and the Sierra Club, as well as for-profit health clubs and sports training facilities, also offer residents recreational opportunities. The diagram below, which was created during the Healthy Community Summit, details some of the many recreational agencies and their connectivity to each other. One of the goals of this project is to examine these connections and find ways to strengthen them which will, in turn, create more accessible and enjoyable recreational opportunities for South Kingstown residents.



What Residents Told Us

On average, residents surveyed exercise for 30 minutes or more four days per week. (2)

Swimming pools, golf courses, snow and ice sport arenas, and facilities open for walkers during off-hours were reported to be less available in the community in terms of both physical presence and accessibility by people of all income levels. (3)

Citizens reported enjoying many of the natural hiking trails, such as those at Trustom Pond, Tri-Pond Park, and the South Kingstown Land Trust. (1)

ACCESS TO RECREATION: Moving Forward

STRENGTHS

- The third phase of the Bike Path has been completed allowing walkers and cyclists to travel from Kingston Station to Narragansett, approximately 7.8 miles.
- There are 19 Town-owned public spaces, of which 13 have playgrounds and the Broad Rock Playfields has a dog park. Eighty percent of residents surveyed feel that the parks, playgrounds, and trails are well-maintained.

CHALLENGES

- Concerns are safety, graffiti, trash, and loitering, mainly concerning the Bike Path.
- We need a better way to promote recreational opportunities.
- There are recreational opportunities which exist beyond some residents' means and there is a lack of awareness regarding available financial aid or the aid is not sufficient.

NEXT STEPS

The Town of South Kingstown wants to make sure residents have access to recreational opportunities. During our project, the residents had many ideas to address basic recreational needs as well as long-term goals for recreation. This implementation section was formed by the citizens of the Town and will help guide the development of recreational opportunities into the future.

ACCESS TO RECREATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Recreation Goal 1: Plan for and implement strategies for a greenways network that is accessible by all residents.

- A. Develop amendments to the Comprehensive Community Plan and South Kingstown Greenways Master Plan to encourage the development of recreational green spaces within walking distance of all homes in the community. The Town, the South Kingstown Land Trust, and community residents will be engaged in the process of identifying gaps in the recreational greenways network to prioritize where additional open spaces and connections are needed.
- B. Develop Land Development and Subdivision Regulation Amendments to encourage new development to set aside green space that is well designed in terms of pedestrian compatibility and functionality.



What Residents Told Us

Thirty-eight percent of residents exercise in their neighborhood. (2)

During fiscal year 2010-2011, the Friends of South Kingstown Parks and Recreation, in collaboration with the Department of Parks and Recreation, awarded \$4,500 in recreational scholarships allowing 60 individuals to participate in recreational opportunities. (5)

The residents surveyed said their barriers to exercise included: no sidewalks / sidewalks are poorly maintained (twenty-two percent), not having time (nineteen percent), not having parks or playgrounds in neighborhood (nine percent), and being too tired (ten percent). (2)



ACCESS TO RECREATION: Moving Forward

ACCESS TO RECREATION RECOMMENDATIONS (Continued)

Recreation Goal 2: Plan for and implement strategies to raise awareness of resources and design/redesign existing and future facilities to be safe and functional for all users.

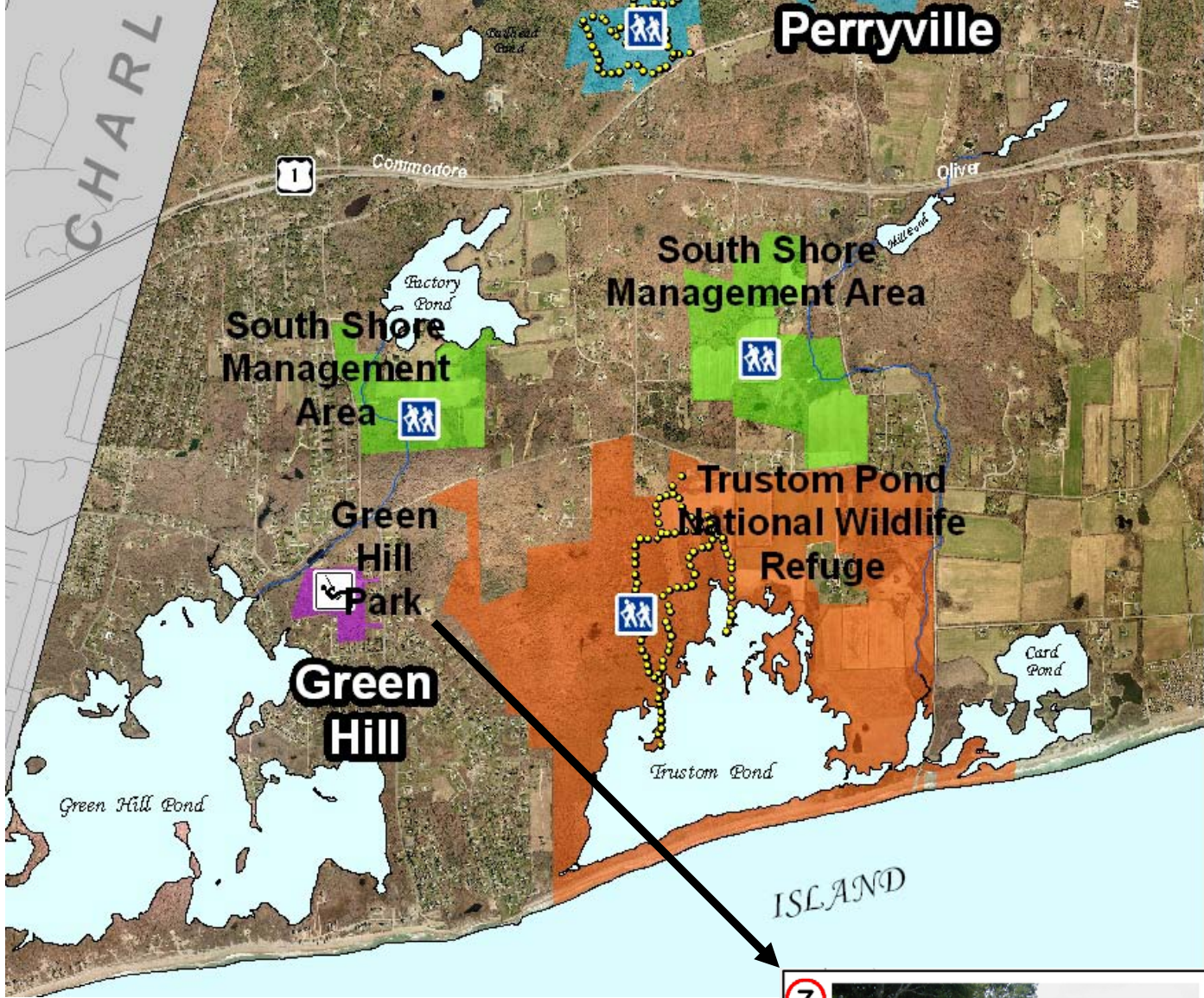
- A. The Town will develop an interactive web-based map of all public recreation facilities in Town to increase awareness of and accessibility to existing resources. This interactive map will use a mix of visual and narrative information to provide a highly user-friendly guide for residents and visitors. This web-based map (see web shot at right) will be available on the Town website beginning in May 2012.
- B. Increase awareness of financial aid and scholarship opportunities for recreation programming throughout the community. In order to allow residents of all income levels access to recreational opportunities and programs, the Town Recreation Department will partner with the South County YMCA to evaluate new methods for communicating financial aid opportunities.
- C. Amend existing Comprehensive Community Plan language to further support the ongoing process of assessing and improving programming for existing recreational facilities. This will include providing capital improvements and programmatic emphasis that ensures that facilities and programs adequately address the needs of all user groups.
- D. Promote existing and create additional recreational programs for teens and older children.
- E. The Town will continue to work with the South Kingstown School Department and other community civic institutions to support and expand, where feasible, the shared use of space to increase the accessibility of existing recreational facilities during non-school hours.
- F. The Town will work with the South Kingstown Land Trust and South Kingstown School Department to create an educational program in which students will develop a basic orientation to map skills using our Town's map and the various recreation locations in the community.
- G. The Town will assess existing underutilized open space resources to determine the potential for creating additional passive recreational opportunities for area residents.

The South Kingstown Community

The Town has numerous public recreation facilities that are open year-round and accessible to people of all income levels. ⁽³⁾

The residents are pleased that the University of Rhode Island has health-related programs that are available to the public, such as the ice rink, fitness center, and pool, although there is a fee. ⁽³⁾

The Center, which serves the elderly population, provides physical fitness programs daily. It also collaborates with South County Hospital to provide health screenings several times per week. ⁽⁵⁾



A new interactive, web-based map can be found at the link below beginning in May 2012. This map will allow residents and visitors to find recreational opportunities existing in the Town.

<http://www.southkingstownri.com/town-government/municipal-departments/planning/healthy-places-design>



GREEN HILL PARK

The Town of South Kingstown purchased twenty acres of land adjacent to Green Hill Beach Road in 1998 for the development of a community park. Green Hill Park opened for public use in the spring of 2003 and contains a playground, picnic area, two tennis courts, basketball court, multi-purpose field, and nature trails.

What Residents Told Us

Residents expressed a desire to have the Town's walking trails published. (1) The Town will respond with the above interactive web-based map.

CHLI participants felt that less than forty percent of the Town employs street safety measures to support walking and biking, such as traffic calming (speed bumps, road narrowing, etc.) and crosswalk counters. (3)

Overall, forty-five percent of respondents report no barriers to physical activity. When broken into income categories, only thirty-one percent of low-income residents responded having no barriers to being physically active. (2)

ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD: Findings



of farming in South Kingstown is aquaculture. Perry Raso, a shellfish aquaculturist, and owner of the Matunuck Oyster Farm has paved the way for aquaculture in South Kingstown. The map on the following page, created during the South Kingstown Healthy Community Summit details Food Access and Availability in the Town.

STRENGTHS

- With local farms, residents have access to locally grown, fresh produce.
- Purchasing locally grown produce directly helps our economy in South Kingstown.
- We have a year-round farmers' market
- South Kingstown is the home of the University of Rhode Island, a Land Grant Institution, with more than 16,000 students and a history of volunteerism.

CHALLENGES

- Cost is a barrier to healthier eating. As of January 31, 2012 the Jonnycake Center had a total of 2,076 families registered for services, including food, clothing, and basic necessity assistance.
- Restaurants have a lack of healthy choices.
- Not enough community gardens.

** The Southern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce contributed some history facts to this page.*

KEEPING FARMING IN OUR FUTURE

Southern Rhode Island has always flourished in the farming industry. Its first major crop was flax, soon expanding to include vegetables with potatoes taking the lead for many years, now turning to the production of turf in more recent years. Measured by net revenues, greenhouse and nursery products are the leading source of income for Rhode Island farmers. Milk is the second most important source of agricultural income followed by eggs, sweet corn, cattle and calves and potatoes.

Four new trends are sweeping the agricultural industry. First is the increased demand for organic farm produce. Farm income from the growing, processing, and marketing of organic food and fiber products became one of the fastest growing segments of the

United States during the 1990s. Second are new trends in Farmers' Markets featuring sale of fresh and local produce. Third are State priorities supporting farm to school linkages and last are initiatives to enhance marketing of agricultural products on the Internet.

While New England's coast has been legendary for fishing it wasn't until 1930 that commercial fishing come to prominence in South County. Commercial fishing continued to advance in importance with the construction of the Jerusalem breakwater in the mid 1930s. Today, with ever-increasing restrictions on fishing, many local fishermen are struggling.

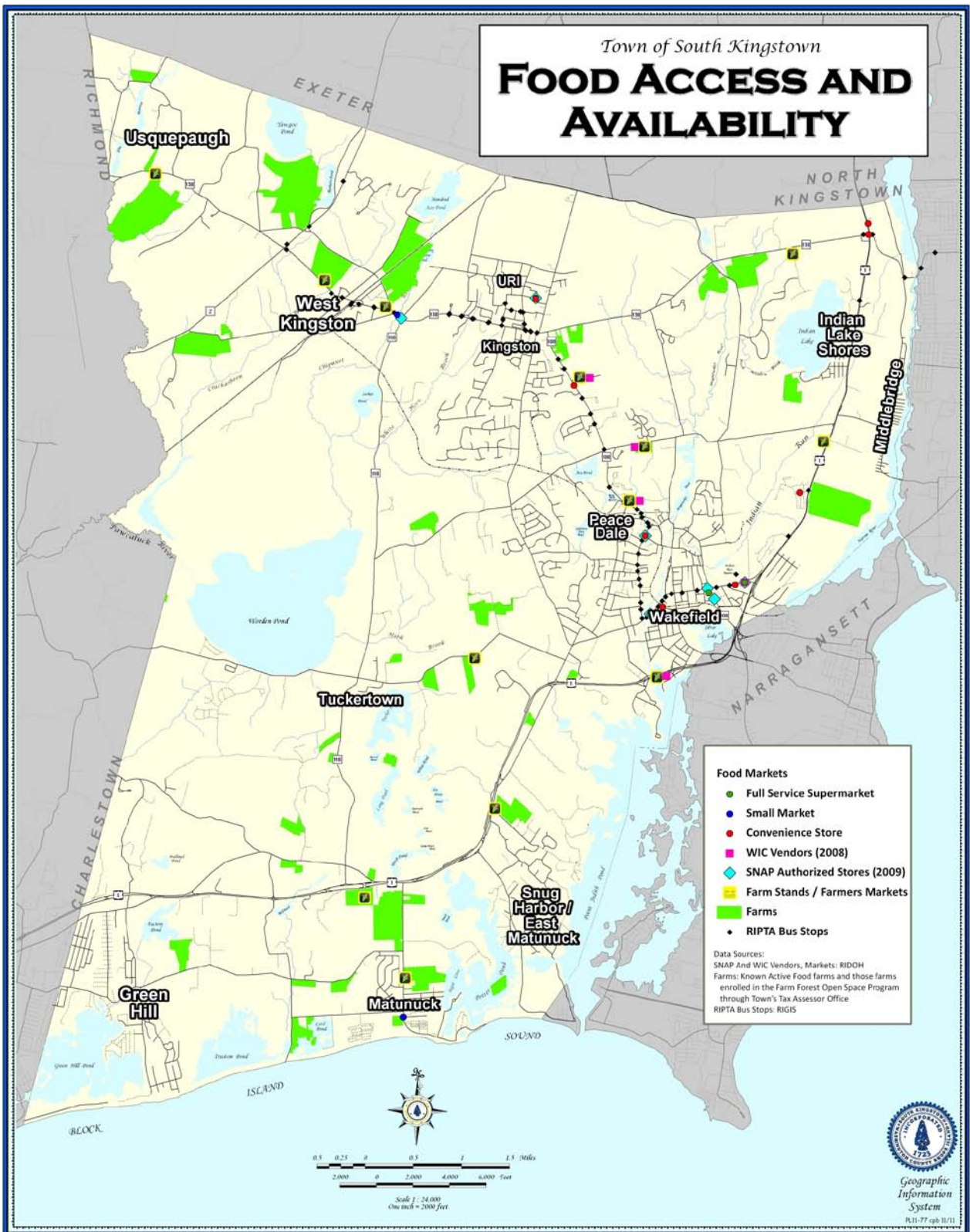
Finally, one of the newest areas

What Residents Told Us

Forty-eight percent of residents garden at home and three percent garden in a community garden. (2)

Sixty-seven percent of residents living outside of Peace Dale and Wakefield reported that there is no store that sells groceries in their neighborhood. (2)

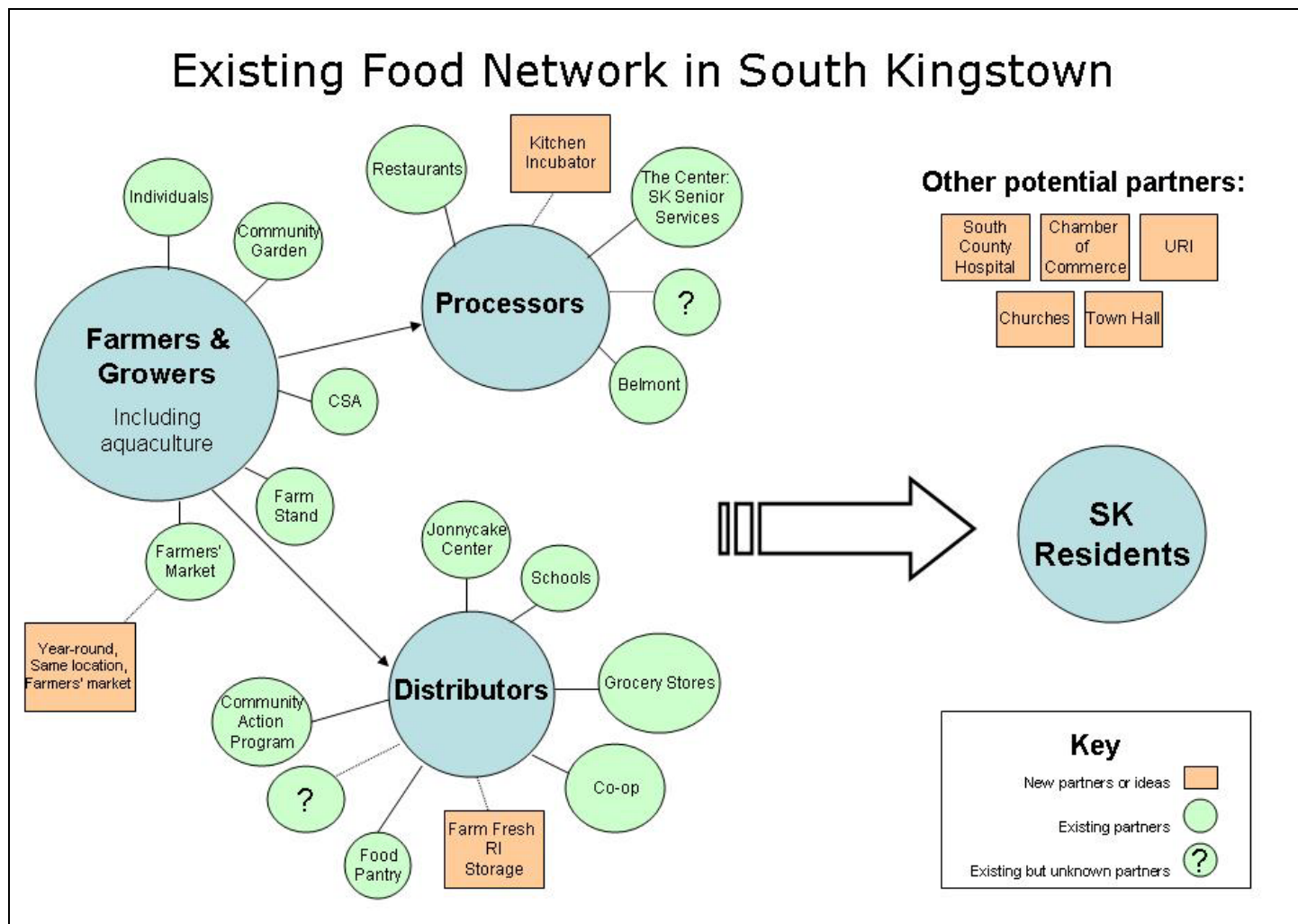
Seventy-eight percent of residents most often go to a supermarket for groceries. The majority of respondents (ninety-five percent) get to that store by driving. (2)



Food Access and Availability Map

Like other maps featured throughout this report, the Food Access and Availability Map was created as a result of the South Kingstown Healthy Places by Design project. Access to healthy food can be limited by access to transportation, access to farmers' markets and farm stands, access to markets and convenience stores, and monetary limitations, etc. The above map details some of the resources available to South Kingstown residents.

ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD: Findings



Access to Healthy Food and Supporting Local Farms

The Existing Food Network in the South Kingstown graphic above is about connections between local agriculture, affordability, and access. By expanding opportunities that currently exist and creating additional partnerships, the food system in South Kingstown can grow. Currently involved are farmers and growers, processors (people who cook or prepare food), distributors (people who sell or distribute food), and residents (people who eat). New partnerships can be fostered and connections made to increase access for all residents.

ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD: Moving Forward

NEXT STEPS

Similar to other focus areas, the agricultural history of the Town and the needs of its citizens make access to healthy food and supporting local agriculture an important issue. Thankfully, the Town, local farmers, the Rhode Island Department of Agriculture, the University of Rhode Island Feinstein Center for a Hunger-Free America, the Jonnycake Center, and other agencies are working towards addressing the issue in South Kingstown.

ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD RECOMMENDATIONS

Healthy Food Goal 1: Maintain and expand allocations for agricultural lands and uses within the community.

- A. Conduct an audit of existing policies and land use ordinances regarding agricultural activities for consistency with the goals of Healthy Places by Design and the Rhode Island Agricultural Partnership's Five Year Strategic Plan to ensure the viability of farming and to support a local food system.
- B. After conducting the above audit, consider amendments to identified policies and ordinances to improve the support of agricultural activities and uses within the community.
- C. Develop a resolution for consideration by the Town Council stating that the Town is supportive of a local food system that includes sustainable local agriculture and aquaculture activities.

Healthy Food Goal 2: Promote and encourage the development of healthy food resources.

- A. The Town will work with community partners to identify all existing healthy food resources throughout the community such as farmer's markets, community gardens, sites available for small-scale agriculture, community kitchens, food-based business incubators, and compost facilities. The purposes for identifying all healthy food resources are two-fold:
 - I. To create a guide of information on existing resources that will be made available to the public.
 - II. Identify opportunities to build local collaborations amongst food growers, processors, distributors, and other stakeholders.
- B. Develop an agreement between the Town and the University of Rhode Island to increase food security and share educational resources and expertise. This agreement will serve as the basis for an ongoing partnership between the Town and URI to coordinate the necessary resources.



What Residents Told Us

Sixty-six percent of residents surveyed had no barriers to purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables in South Kingstown. ⁽²⁾

However, when broken into categories, only 41% of low-income respondents had no barriers. ⁽²⁾

While twenty-five percent of all survey respondents found cost to be a barrier, fifty-two percent of low-income respondents indicated cost is a barrier when purchasing fruits and vegetables. ⁽²⁾



ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD: Moving Forward

ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD RECOMMENDATIONS (Continued)

- C. Promote collaborations between area food establishments and local farmers that will foster the purchase of local foods by these businesses. This may include establishing incentives for restaurants and markets to buy locally grown agriculture, increasing awareness of local co-ops and community-supported agriculture and examining how local farmers can expand their activities and markets.
- D. Encourage the School Department and the University of Rhode Island to expand existing programs by incorporating local and healthy foods (including organic) into meal programs at school facilities.
- E. Develop draft regulatory incentives to promote the establishment of grocery stores, small markets, and other healthy food outlets within identified village or dense residential areas. Such incentives may take the form of reduced application fees for food related projects and allowing healthy food outlets as accessory uses in commercial and mixed-use developments.
- F. Develop Comprehensive Community Plan Amendments to recognize the importance of supporting an equitable local food system for all residents including low-income populations who may not have equal access to healthy foods based on cost or accessibility.
- G. Assess Town-owned lands to determine the feasibility of developing new or expanding existing community gardens.
- H. Develop Comprehensive Community Plan amendments and subsequent ordinances to allow for the cultivation of locally grown foods on private residential and commercial lots, including home-based food production, where appropriate.
- I. Develop regulatory incentives for the inclusion of food-based resources such as community gardens and small-scale agriculture within new developments and subdivisions.

What Residents Told Us

CHLI participants felt that the majority of the stores have fresh fruit and vegetables of acceptable quality, low-fat products and whole grain products available. ⁽³⁾

CHLI participants reported that seventy percent of food stores offer healthy foods and were identified as being easily accessible by foot, bike, and/or public transportation. ⁽³⁾

CHLI participants stated that sixty-one to eighty percent of local food stores provide price incentives (ie: coupons, sales) for healthy food and beverages. ⁽³⁾

VILLAGES AND NEIGHBORHOODS: Findings



PLANNING FOR THE VILLAGES AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Planning for villages is a critical piece to supporting South Kingstown's community character, economic welfare, and overall health – both for its citizens and the environment. Villages are often places that a community uses to identify itself and to strengthen its unique sense of place. The most commonly known villages in South Kingstown are East Matunuck, Green Hill, Indian Lake, Kingston (home of the University of Rhode Island and the train station), Matunuck, Middlebridge, Perryville, Snug Harbor, Tuckertown, West Kingston, and Usquepaugh. The villages with the highest populations are Peace Dale and Wakefield.

STRENGTHS

The residents value the villages for providing a walkable environment for basic services and needs such as schools, churches, doctors, shopping, work, recreation, Bike Path, food markets, entertainment, busing etc. In addition, the villages provide an enhanced sense of place and centers of activity, as well as enhanced safety through “eyes on the street.” Furthermore, residents like the historic architectural details of the village “centers” that help create a sense of a classic New England small town.

CHALLENGES

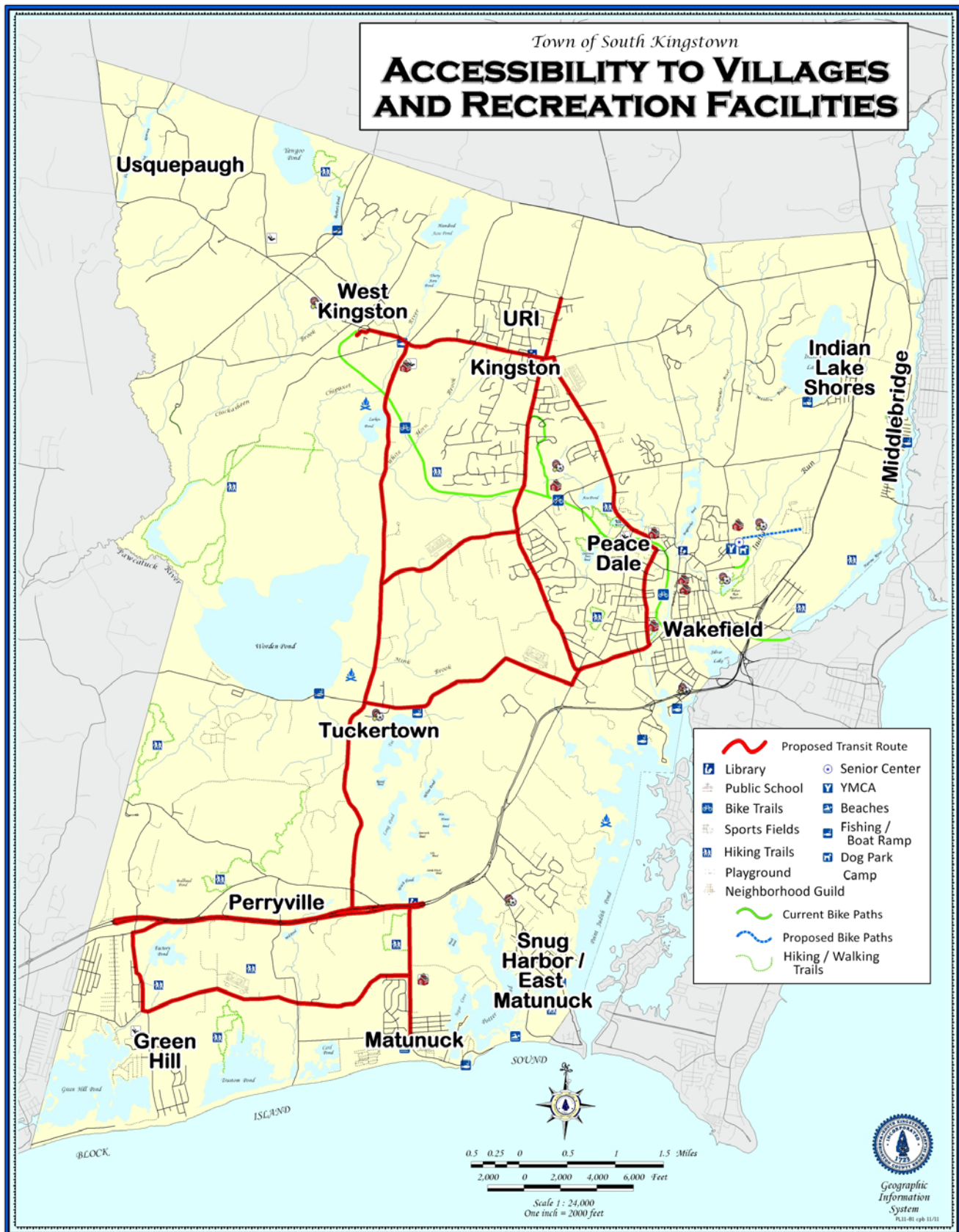
In the village centers of Peace Dale and Wakefield, it's difficult for most residents to do all their shopping without using a vehicle. (See next page for the residents' proposed trolley system.) Also, the residents of South Kingstown were concerned with pedestrian and cyclist safety. In addition, they viewed the vacant storefronts as an area that needed to be improved. Residents also expressed that multiple architectural styles did not promote a interconnected feel in the village centers.

What Residents Told Us

Forty-seven percent of *all* respondents agreed that there are places within walking distance for services like dry cleaning, groceries, post office, or library. ⁽²⁾

About sixty-two percent of respondents living in Peace Dale and Wakefield agreed there were services available within walking distance. ⁽²⁾

Forty-six percent of low-income respondents agreed that there were services within walking distance. ⁽²⁾



Accessibility to Villages and Recreation Facilities

Residents embrace the historic character of the villages. During the South Kingstown Healthy Community Summit, residents expressed their desire to have the villages connected more through public transport, allowing for less traffic in the villages and a cleaner environment. In addition, enhanced public transport would allow better access to healthy options such as recreational opportunities or markets. Furthermore, those attending the Summit expressed concern over the traffic that could be associated with the potential expansion of commuter rail coming to the Kingston Station. The above map details the routes the residents proposed to connect the villages and address their needs.

VILLAGES AND NEIGHBORHOODS: Moving Forward

NEXT STEPS

The Town will preserve architecture and landscaping to enhance a pedestrian environment and encourage this in new development and redevelopment. In addition, the Town will look at all projects (such as the projected commuter rail service at West Kingston) with a “complete streets view” where all users of the environment are considered such as pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, as well as residents/business owners. Furthermore, the Town will study the residents’ suggestion of a trolley system (see previous) to improve connectivity among the villages.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MIXED-USE/COMMERCIAL DESIGN:

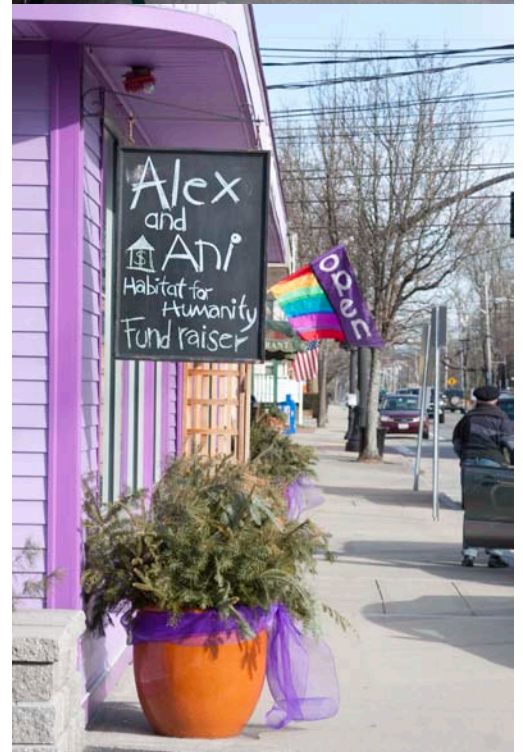
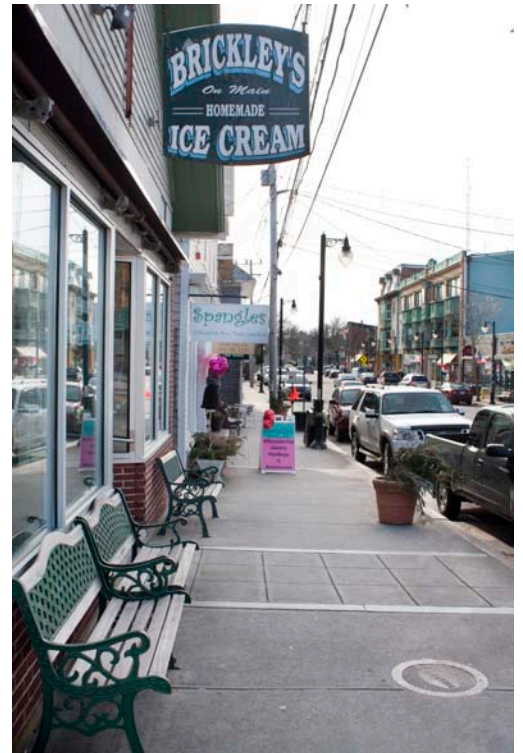
When presented with proposals for mixed-use or commercial properties, the Town will encourage projects to include inviting, walkable environment with sidewalk amenities such as landscaping, street trees, benches, awnings, lighting, etc. In addition, the Town will continue to promote small-scale commercial spaces to support “mom and pop” businesses and embrace our village atmosphere. Furthermore, where appropriate and at appropriate levels, the Town will encourage “infill mixed-use development” for Wakefield and Peace Dale.

The use of traditional architectural styles and materials (such as wood and brick) create a cohesive, warm, and inviting atmosphere and will be encouraged by the Town in proposals. Also, the Town will encourage projects that promote residents parking once and having the ability to walk to multiple destinations for their errands or activities.

Large-scale redevelopment and infrastructure upgrades can improve pedestrian conditions and community character on Old Tower Hill Road. The Southern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce has pledged to perform a study to examine business owners’ thoughts and ideas to improve the connectivity of the area. The Town will then take these suggestions and incorporate them into any conversations with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation regarding improvements to the area.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESIDENTIAL DESIGN:

When considering residential design, the Town will continue to integrate protected open space as part of the development, promote inviting architectural features (such as porches and landscaping), and install sidewalks in new developments as appropriate. The following pages shows the result of the visual preference survey, which supported the above recommendations.



What Residents Told Us

Eighty-seven percent of respondents agreed that in their neighborhoods there are attractive outdoor areas. ⁽²⁾

Eighty-two percent of residents felt that besides the streets, there were places to be physically active in their neighborhoods. ⁽²⁾

Many residents felt that the bus system was not meeting the needs of the residents. For example many don't live near a bus route. ⁽³⁾

VILLAGE DESIGN

Positive Examples of EXISTING BUILDINGS in South Kingstown

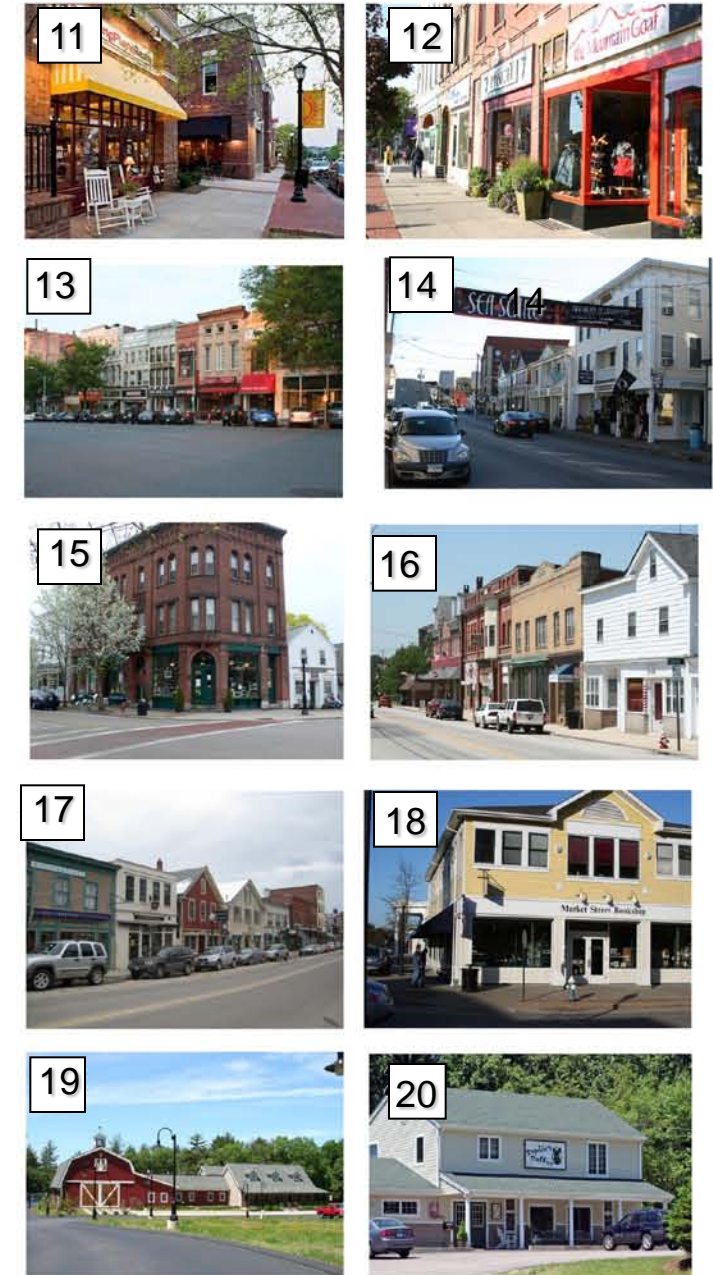


Positive Examples of RESIDENTIAL DESIGN from Other Towns



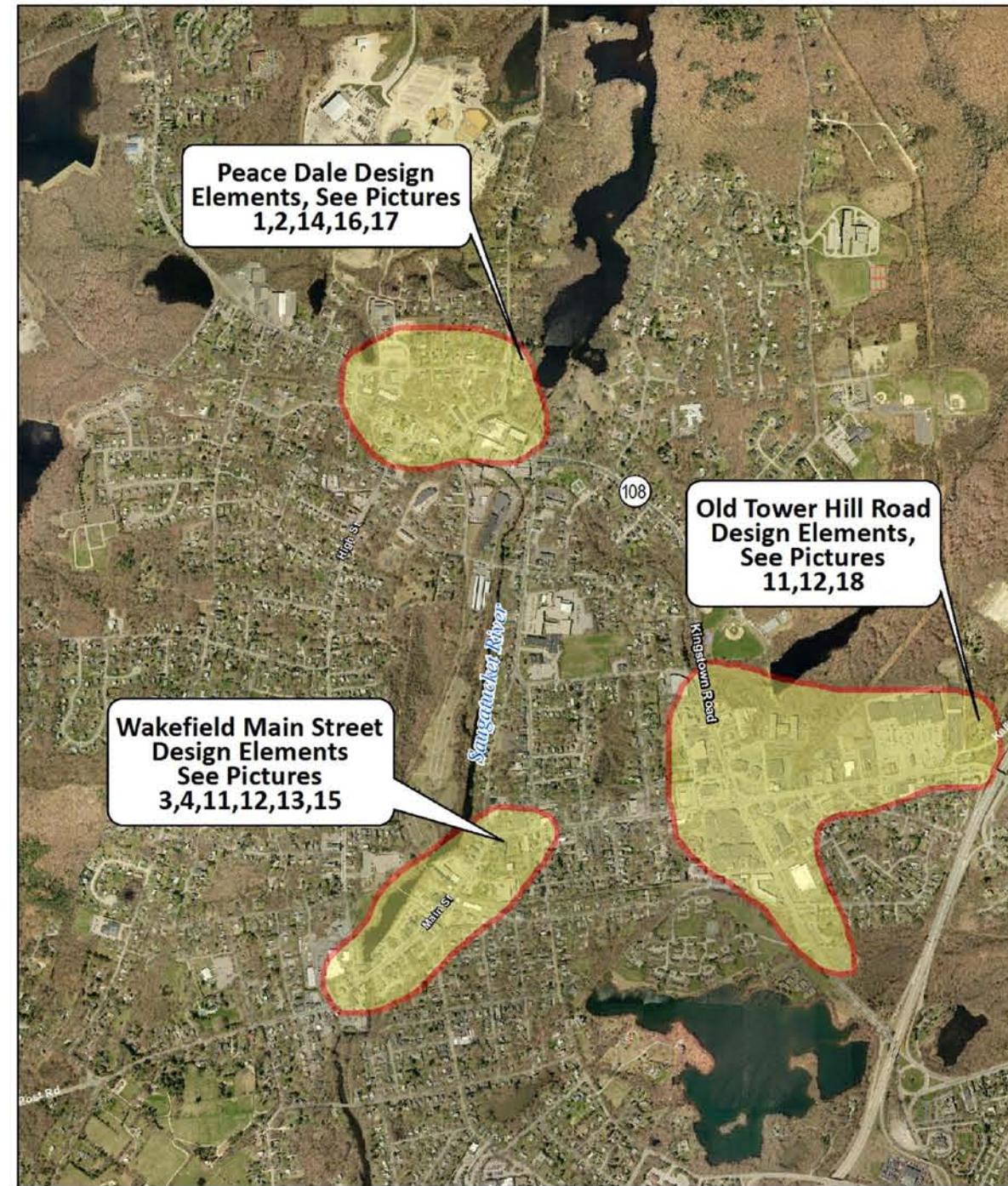
Images 7-10 above represent types of residential development that may be appropriate for "infill" development within the village core areas and surrounding neighborhoods.

Positive Examples of RESIDENTIAL DESIGN from Other Towns



Images 19-20 above represent types of mixed-use/commercial development that may be appropriate for locations outside the village core areas.

Photo Credits: Dodson Associates, Ltd and Horsley Witten Group Inc.



Village Design

This graphic was developed from public feedback received during the South Kingstown Healthy Community Summit on November 15, 2011. Community members selected images representing the types of development they feel positively about and would like to see more of in South Kingstown. Some of these preferred design types exist locally, while some are from other towns. Participants then selected the locations where those development types are most appropriate in Town.

Some public comments regarding design elements for mixed-use/commercial development are:

- Create an inviting, walkable environment with sidewalk amenities.
- Develop small-scale commercial spaces supporting "mom and pop" businesses.

Some public comments regarding design elements for residential development are:

- Integrate protected open space as part of development.
- Install sidewalks in new developments as appropriate.

For more public comments on design elements, refer to page 25.

VILLAGES AND NEIGHBORHOODS: Moving Forward

VILLAGES AND NEIGHBORHOODS RECOMMENDATIONS

Villages and Neighborhoods Goal 1: Encourage a compact mixed-use development pattern within the existing village areas as appropriate.

- A. The Town, interested business owners, and community members will explore the potential for expanding public trolley service throughout South Kingstown with a focus on connecting the village areas. The Town will assess the feasibility of new routes for trolley service based on desired destinations identified through the Healthy Places by Design outreach process.
- B. The Town and the Southern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce will collaborate with area business owners and other interested parties to define a vision for Old Tower Hill Road and Dale Carlia Corners. This effort will focus on strategies for increasing pedestrian access and improving building and site design aesthetics. The group will explore next steps for providing incentives for the redevelopment of commercial property and infrastructure improvements within the existing State right-of-way.
- C. The Town will engage the community to plan for the potential future expansion of commuter rail service to Kingston Station. Initial planning efforts will focus on assessing the possible impacts of increased commuter traffic in the area while considering site constraints such as ground water protection, historic preservation issues and parking limitations.
- D. The Town will conduct a vacant or underutilized parcel assessment to better understand infill and redevelopment opportunities in the village areas of Wakefield, Peace Dale, and the Old Tower Hill Road corridor. Following this assessment, the Town will develop policies and regulations to promote new use, reuse, rehabilitation and expansion of underutilized or vacant structures or parcels.



Villages and Neighborhoods Goal 2: Encourage building and site design that supports pedestrian, bicycle and transit activity in an uninterrupted fashion.

- A. Explore the potential for adopting form-based codes or design standards in appropriate areas to support pedestrian-oriented building design and the integration of a mix of uses.
- B. Consider Subdivision and Land Development Regulations amendments to strengthen the application of building design standards in village areas that support pedestrian, bicycle, and transit activity. Potential regulatory amendments may include:
 - I. Require building design to support and encourage pedestrian activity.
 - II. Require pedestrian connections among sidewalks and pathways, buildings, open spaces, and parking areas within new development.
 - III. Require pedestrian level lighting throughout the site, along all pedestrian pathways, and at all building entrances.
 - IV. Require the separation of pedestrian areas and building service areas, when possible, such as dumpsters and service entrances.
 - V. Utilize an access management approach to limiting non-residential curb cuts on primary streets wherever feasible.
 - VI. Prohibit large parking areas from being located between buildings and the sidewalk.
 - VII. Promote use of traditional architectural styles and materials (such as wood and brick) to create a cohesive and inviting atmosphere.
- C. Develop Subdivision and Land Development Regulations amendments to require the installation of pedestrian amenities along existing building frontage in village areas, such as attractive landscaping, building design, street furniture and other options as deemed necessary by the Planning Board.

What Residents Told Us

Some residents wanted areas in Peace Dale to be “revitalized,” especially vacant businesses and lots. ⁽¹⁾

Residents generally felt that the local stores were great for shopping. Many expressed they would like to see more options, but at an appropriate “village-scale.” ⁽¹⁾

Many residents expressed pride in their village centers. ⁽¹⁾

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The South Kingstown Healthy Places by Design project has identified numerous opportunities for improving community health as it relates to the built environment. This report outlines several project recommendations regarding the topic areas of Walking and Biking, Access to Recreation, Access to Healthy Foods, and Villages. Some of these recommendations can be pursued immediately, while some will require a long-term vision. The Town and the South County YMCA have identified the following vehicles of achieving implementation of the project recommendations:

- Establish Community Working Groups to assist with advancing the immediate, short-term recommendations identified within this report.
- Develop Comprehensive Community Plan amendments and revise other Town documents and ordinances as necessary to achieve long-term recommendations identified within this report.

COMMUNITY WORKING GROUPS

The preliminary framework of the Community Working Groups has already been established as one outcome of the Healthy Places by Design process. The initial focus of these groups is to pursue the immediate next steps necessary to implement the short-term recommendations identified within each of the four topic areas. Each Community Working Group will establish a work plan that will outline timelines and responsible parties for tasks such as taking inventory of existing conditions, collaborating with community partners on programming initiatives, and addressing other actions that may emerge through its meetings. These work plans will serve as a guide for action and communication of potential outcomes and products.



What Residents Told Us After the Healthy Community Summit

There needs to be more traffic calming measures taken throughout Town. (1)

The Comprehensive Community Plan needs to value walking and biking. This has been talked about before, but more action is needed. (1)

Attendees of the Healthy Community Summit also liked the great turnout and the sharing of ideas. (1)



PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Comprehensive Community Plan Amendments

Many project recommendations included in this report will require consideration of changes to Town policy, specifically through amending the South Kingstown Comprehensive Community Plan (Plan). Policy amendments are an important component in providing a long-term, sustained focus on these important planning and community health issues.

Once the Plan is amended, State law requires that the Town must pursue implementation where feasible. Changes to the Plan may result in changes to municipal operations or amendments to Town ordinances and regulations. The Plan is also an important tool to communicate specific local goals and objectives to State and federal agencies to establish future collaborations.

The first step in the process to amend the Plan is for the Planning Department to work with project partners to develop “draft” amendments. These amendments will detail proposed additions or revisions to the various Elements of the Plan in terms of goals, policies and implementation strategies. Once crafted, the draft amendments are forwarded to the Planning Board and Town Council for formal consideration.

The Planning Board and Town Council will hold public hearings on the proposed amendments; these may be conducted separately or in a joint session. All such hearings are open to the public and interested community members are encouraged to attend and participate. Under the Town’s procedures both the Planning Board and Town Council must approve an amendment for it to become part of the Plan. To comply with State regulatory requirements the Town Council must also adopt any Plan amendment as a local ordinance.



What Residents Told Us After the Healthy Community Summit

Residents enjoyed the Healthy Places by Design project but want to see action in the items proposed. (1)

Residents would like to embrace the ocean and waterways into our healthy lifestyles. (1)

Residents were excited that many of their recommendations were going to be considered for inclusion in the Comprehensive Community Plan. (1)

IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF SOUTH KINGSTOWN RESIDENTS

The Healthy Places by Design project sought to strengthen land use, transportation and urban design policies and ordinances that guide the decision making process for the built environment to be more supportive of health, particularly as it relates to physical activity and healthy eating.

Residents took the time to attend workshops and meetings, complete surveys, and take part in focus groups and interviews. Never before have the residents had such an opportunity to directly impact the planning and development of the Town. The Town of South Kingstown is not going to let their concerns and ideas be forgotten.

As federal, State, and local funds become available, the Town pledges to apply for funding to implement the ideas developed by the residents for a healthier Town. In addition, the Comprehensive Community Plan will continue to be amended to support healthier living. Furthermore, as road projects and development opportunities arise, the Town will refer to the residents' ideas and the updated Comprehensive Community Plan, then design accordingly. Does this mean the Town will change overnight? No, but it will be continuously improved upon, and over time, will provide the residents with even better recreational opportunities, a more walkable and bikable community, better access to healthy food, and an overall healthier Town.

For more information on the project, or to see the maps, additional resources, and the appendix, please click on the Town of South Kingstown's project website at

<http://www.southkingstownri.com/town-government/municipal-departments/planning/healthy-places-design>

Data Sources Referenced:

1. The exit interviews from the South Kingstown Healthy Community Summit
2. The Rhode Island Department of Health Survey
3. The Community Healthy Living Index
4. URI Feinstein Center for a Hunger Free America
5. The Town of South Kingstown



What Residents Told Us After the Healthy Community Summit

The local stores and restaurants should offer more healthy options. (1)

Residents believe that connecting the many organizations that exist in Town would encourage additional services and bring the community together. (1)

Residents enjoyed the positive energy of the project and the collaboration of the residents, businesses, nonprofits, and Town agencies. (1)



Thank you to all the residents and community agencies that took part in the Healthy Places by Design project. The listing below is just a sample of the nonprofit organizations that contributed their expertise and time to the project. Together, we can make the Town of South Kingstown a healthier place to live.

The South County Branch of the YMCA of Greater Providence *The mission of the YMCA of Greater Providence is to build healthy spirit, mind and body for all, through programs, services and relationships that are based upon our core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. The Branch's 6,500 active members are working towards a healthier lifestyle.*

The Jonnycake Center *serves those in need with clothing, food, and household items. It received 115,531 pounds of food from the RI Community Food Bank and 10,568 pounds from the community for the Center's clients from Nov 2010 to Oct 2011.*

Thundermist Health Center *provides affordable quality health care and support for social services to the community. In calendar year 2010, the South Kingstown location provided services to 6,893 clients, 33% of which were uninsured.*

The University of Rhode Island *encompasses 1,103 acres in South Kingstown, and graduated more than 3,400 undergraduate and graduate students last year. Embracing its Land Grant beginning and agricultural roots, the University donated more than 50 tons (100,000 lbs) of produce to the Rhode Island Community Food Bank.*

The South Kingstown Land Trust *conserves and protects the natural resources and open spaces of our town for the enduring benefit of our community. The Land Trust has acquired ownership or conservation rights of over 2,450 acres of natural resource lands with over 135 projects representing more than \$15 million in donated and purchased value. With over 700 members, and six trails, which are open to the public, the Land Trust is a valuable asset to the Town of South Kingstown.*

The Sierra Club *is inspired by nature and its members work together to protect our communities and the planet. The Sierra Club is America's oldest, largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization. The Rhode Island Chapter has more than 2,500 dedicated members.*

The Southern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce *supports and enhances the business community of southern Rhode Island and promotes opportunities for the growth and development of its member businesses. The Chamber serves a membership of more than 600 businesses (profit and nonprofit) and takes the lead in transforming South Kingstown into an engine of economic development and diversity in southern Rhode Island.*

South County Hospital *an independent, non-profit, 100-bed acute care hospital at the center of South County Hospital Healthcare System. The modern facilities include all private patient rooms for the comfort of patients and their families. Serving southern Rhode Island since 1919, the South County Hospital Emergency Department is the third busiest in Rhode Island, averaging more than 30,000 visits each year.*

The South County Tourism Council *is the official Southern Rhode Island agency charged by statute to plan, promote and market the region.*

Grow Smart Rhode Island *advocates sustainable economic growth that builds upon and strengthens Rhode Island's exceptional quality of place. The organization works to achieve: revitalized, walkable urban town centers, housing options and affordability, expanded transportation choices, a vital agricultural sector, and responsible stewardship of natural resources.*

Cover Photo: Susan Stiles, a South Kingstown resident, showing a portion of the crop at the Community Garden at Broad Rock Middle School.