

Chapter VI
Community Services and
Facilities

West Warwick Comprehensive Plan

CHAPTER VI COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

"Shall provide an inventory of existing and forecasted needs for facilities and services used by the public such as, but not limited to, educational facilities, public safety, water, sanitary sewers, libraries and community facilities. The policies and implementation techniques must be identified for inclusion in the implementation program element." -- Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act

VI.1 Existing Conditions, Trends and Projections

Information for this profile was developed through a questionnaire submitted to department heads, and through personal interviews of each department head. State and national standards are used throughout this report to provide a benchmark for comparison, and should not be considered substitutes for sound policy-making based on findings of fact.

Community facilities are buildings, lands and services which serve the public, including schools, libraries, police, fire, utilities, recreational facilities and others. Inclusion of these facilities in the Comprehensive Plan is important because they provide the skeleton for servicing the community (water, sewer) and because land use and changes created by land use impact the community's services and facilities. Development tends to follow the location and quantity of public services, and advance planning of facilities should be coordinated with economic development, housing, transportation, open space and land use objectives.

West Warwick faces a discouraging horizon in terms of its future ability to fund capital improvements. The regional recession, and State and federal budget deficits resulting in lower grant funds, requires the Town continue to rely heavily on the property tax as the vehicle for funding not only operations but also capital improvements. Clearly there is a need for the Town to consider alternative measures for funding capital improvements, and to develop a capital improvement program which is realistic and will meet the needs of a growing population.

Emergency Services - Emergency services in the Town of West Warwick include police, fire and rescue. All are Town funded and operated departments.

Police - The police department is headquartered at 1162 Main Street, adjacent to and in the same structure as the Town Hall and Fire Department. The department is staffed by 51 sworn personnel, including:

- Chief of Police - 1;
- Deputy Chief - 1
- Commander - 1;
- Captains - 3;

- Lieutenants - 3;
- Sergeants - 6;
- Patrol Officers - 29; and,
- Detectives - 7.

Two animal control officers also staff the Department, based at the pound on Hay Street.

Equipment includes 16 cars, two vans, one rescue-type truck and various communications equipment. The rescue-type vehicle is a multipurpose vehicle used by the SWAT team, dive team and for other emergency response purposes.

Calls have increased over the past ten years, primarily due to the increase in the Town's population, as well as the socio-economic diversity of the population. The largest amount of calls are concentrated in the highest density population areas, i.e., Arctic, and business areas also demand significant attention from the Department.

