

## IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

### 6.1 Introduction

To make them more readily accessible, implementation items from the previous seven plan elements are repeated in this section. Each item has been designated short (under 2 years), medium (2 to 4 years), or long term (over 4 years) to indicate a recommended timeframe for these actions. Additionally, some items are labeled ongoing.

### 6.2 Economic Development Implementation Program

The focus of this program should be used to foster positive economic growth for the town in the future that is consistent with its rural character, is purposeful, while complementing the positive elements of the community. There are four major elements to this program. They are:

- Economic diversification
- Expanded services to town residents
- Supporting development that is consistent with the historic and rural nature of the community
- Support for the agricultural and home industries that exist in the community

It is no secret to town residents that the continued reliance upon residential development as the mainstay of the economy will result in increased tax burdens upon all town residents. It is also apparent that new and long time residents alike are finding it increasingly difficult to keep pace with the town's rising tax rate, a situation that has been complicated by the recent downturn in the economy.

While residents are concerned with development and its impacts, they also are asking that increased services be made available to them. The challenge of providing those services in a way that enhances the character of the community, rather than detracts from it, will be addressed further on in this document.

Exeter has many positive elements that make it an attractive place to live and work. It is blessed with an overabundance of natural resources in addition to high quality recreational facilities. It is time to use these natural features to the advantage of the town and market them as a reason to visit the community, recreate here and purchase locally produced goods and services. Home industries are prevalent in the community and should be promoted in a controlled and environmentally sensitive manner.

To accomplish these and other goals, it is recommended that the town take full advantage of its positive environment and history; embracing an economic plan that complements rather than competes with it. The town should support commercial and

industrial growth of the type, location and scale that is consistent with the town. It should take advantage of the Town's access to I-95, as well as pursue the development of village areas and commercial centers that are of a scale and design consistent with its rural character.

This community must recognize economic growth as positive and seek ways to enhance it through cooperation with other South County communities and the State of Rhode Island. It has to understand the local economy and build upon its strengths for the benefit of all existing and future town residents.

The Exeter Economic Development Commission has drafted many of the recommendations presented here. The Commission presented a report to the Town Council on January 23, 1992. The report contained many ideas for future consideration. Many of these ideas are consistent with those developed by the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee.

The economic development program presented here is divided into two components. They relate to the zoning initiatives the town should pursue to control and mold future development and secondly, other economic development initiatives that can be undertaken to foster economic opportunity in the town. The first area of discussion relates to zoning initiatives. In presenting this section, the intent is to provide a regulatory structure for the future that presents control mechanisms and opportunities to support development that is consistent with the character of a rural environment.

In addition, present zoning that is inconsistent with this approach is also identified. The main focus of this section relates to the recommendation that Planned Development be encouraged to develop village centers containing a mix of residential and commercial uses. This concept was discussed in previous elements of the plan and will be reintroduced here. Also, industrial-zoning initiatives will be discussed that promote industrial growth that is marketable and sensitive to the environmental constraints that exist in the community.

The second component of the plan relates to other initiatives available to the town outside of the regulatory environment. These relate to future planning initiatives that seek to prepare the town for its economic future, while taking advantage of its numerous assets to its own advantage.

The following are the specific zoning initiatives recommended for the town.

### 6.2.1 Planned Development

Two types of Planned Districts are recommended. The first type, a Village Center or Village District, which would encourage pedestrian efficiency and clustering of town

facilities in a traditional New England style setting, should be considered if deemed appropriate at some future date. The second type of planned development, Planned Industrial and Commercial Zoning Districts would relate directly to industrial and commercial growth in areas deemed suitable for such development.

Two types of Planned Industrial and Commercial Zoning Districts are recommended. One would allow the development of light commercial or industrial uses in a mixed commercial environment, while the second district would be designated as "Special Use Districts" for the Ladd Center and the Dorrset Mill concentrating on heavier industrial and commercial use.

***Administrative Responsibility:** Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Exeter Economic Development Commission, and Town Council. Medium term*

### 6.2.2 General Commercial and Industrial Growth

Industrial - The area zoned for industrial use and should remain as such with concentration along the I-95 corridor.

Commercial - Controls over site development, signage, parking location and screening, signage and buffers should be instituted through a review process. The purpose of the review would be to insure commercial development be less intensive and more residential in appearance, blending and not competing with, the historic and rural nature of the community.

Areas where commercial uses currently exist are recommended to be integrated with light business/residential uses to buffer these existing uses with those more characteristic of a rural community.

***Administrative Responsibility:** Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Exeter Economic Development Commission, and Town Council. Short term.*

### 6.2.3 Development Plan Review

This process would be utilized to enforce the expanded controls to be contained in the future zoning ordinance with respect to the development of commercial and industrial properties. Specific performance and design standards need to be implemented to control development in the future in such a way as to make such growth complement the rural character of the community. Standards with respect to building design, site layout, signage, parking, etc., should be an integral part of such an ordinance.

***Administrative Responsibility:** Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Exeter Economic Development Commission, and Town Council. Medium term*

#### 6.2.4 Other Economic Initiatives

The purpose of this section is to provide mechanisms that enhance and build on the local economy of Exeter. At the same time they serve to preserve important elements that are critical to maintaining the character of the town. In addition, long-term economic initiatives are presented to position the town to not only understand its local economy, but to be positioned to react to change and market conditions.

#### 6.2.5 Home Occupations-Cottage Industries

There are a number of Exeter residents who are self-employed, operating small businesses from their homes. Many of these businesses relate to the raising of livestock, pets and crops, in addition to the arts and crafts industries, landscaping services, day cares, and other businesses such as small printing shops, wood sales etc. These activities should be encouraged as a vital part of a rural economy. There is the need however for control over such industries to prevent them from infringing upon the property rights of others or from potentially having an adverse impact upon the environment. Control mechanisms and alternatives for such businesses need to be provided when they outgrow their existing locations or threaten the surrounding environment, natural or otherwise. The zoning ordinance must be updated to provide controls relative to the uses allowed, their size, hours of operation, number of employees, etc.

Specific performance standards must be established to allow such industries to flourish in a responsible fashion. In addition, the investigation of available support services for such industries and potential outlets for the goods and services produced needs to be identified. Consideration for a farmer's outlet where such items could be displayed in a central setting on a regular basis has merit. Such a site could be the location of the Exeter Days celebration. What is important is that the talents, goods and services produced by town residents be marketed in a positive manner. This can occur in a central setting or be part of an expanded effort on the part of the town to attract visitors to the community.

The next recommendation, relative to the investigation of the potential to support an Economic Incubator site, relates directly to dealing with the potential for growth in the Cottage Industry area.

***Administrative Responsibility:*** Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Exeter Economic Development Commission, and Town Council. Medium term.

#### 6.2.6 Incubator Space

As home occupations prosper and outgrow their environment, one of two things happens: They either move to a new location or continue to operate in a constrained environment that may begin to have a negative impact upon their immediate neighbors. For those who cannot afford to move their families and businesses to another location, the availability of incubator space is an attractive alternative. Incubator space is typically located in industrial complexes and designated for new or growth industries that cannot afford to purchase a site or pay high rental or lease costs. Services are shared among incubator tenants such as work processing, secretarial, cleaning and other common needs. Subsidies are typically involved from the government (federal or state) to support such businesses. Sources could include the federal Community Development Block Grant Program, the Farmers Home Administration or the Economic Development Administration.

For a town such as Exeter, there appears to be a need for two types of incubator space: that associated with the more traditional, factory-type location; and a second, geared toward agricultural interests. On the manufacturing side, the *Dorset Mill* would appear to be an ideal site for such an activity. At present there are a variety of tenants in the facility and it lends itself nicely to such an activity. On the agricultural side, space may be more difficult to come by. Investigation in the potential lease of underutilized farmland or the outright purchase of land should be undertaken. Like the manufacturing incubator, the agricultural incubator would also provide the opportunity for shared services and cost for items such as feed, medical care, fertilizers, etc.

*Administrative Responsibility: Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Economic Development Commission, and related civic organizations. Medium term.*

### 6.2.7 Tourism

Without question, Exeter is and will continue to be an extremely attractive place for people wishing to enjoy its rural atmosphere, visit any one of its numerous recreational or sporting locations, or just to enjoy a bicycle ride or walk through its peaceful surroundings. Tourism is a big business in Rhode Island, generating millions of dollars in revenue a year. These revenues are not those solely associated with money spent at recreational activities alone, but the spin-off effect these attractions generate to surrounding businesses that are located near these facilities. Exeter must recognize its potential as a recreational and rural attraction and market itself to both in state and out of state visitors who may be attracted to the numerous activities that exist in the town. At the same time the town must enhance its position as an attractive tourism location by taking steps on its own to improve its position.

Several ideas are included in this plan relative to the establishment of a bicycle trail system, hiking trails, village centers, historic preservation activities, farmland

preservation, the marketing of its cottage industries etc. These activities and attractions must be packaged and marketed effectively to promote tourism and an industry in the town. Coordination with the State Department of Economic Development and the activities of the South County Tourism Council should take place to ensure that Exeter's attractions are highlighted among those listed in the materials produced by these agencies. Also, the town should seek to attract recreational developments that are consistent with existing town activities.

The establishment of a Visitors Center at the Hall School, Town Clerk's Office or at the new town hall is recommended to provide tourists with information concerning the town and its attractions. Maps, a town history, local goods and products listings, and other items of interest could be made available at the center.

***Administrative Responsibility:*** *Exeter Economic Development Commission, Town Council, and Planning Board. Long term.*

#### 6.2.8 Farmland Preservation

The maintenance of existing farmland in agricultural use or as open space is critical to the preservation of the town's rural character. To do so will require the availability of incentives to local farmers that are finding it harder and harder every year to support their families from the revenues generated from farming. The town should investigate methods to preserve farmland such as providing reduced assessments through the Farm, Forest and Open Space Act, that provides reduced assessments to farmers who guarantee that their land will be dedicated to agricultural uses for an extended period of time. Other approaches could include the purchase of development rights from farm owners to maintain these lands as open space. Local contributions to such funds are typically required through general revenue collections or bonds.

***Administrative Responsibility:*** *Conservation Commission, Tax Assessors, Town Council, and Planning Board. Short term.*

#### 6.2.9 General Economic Development Planning

While the development of this Comprehensive Plan involved substantial research into the local economic condition of the town, its aim was general in nature and did not investigate any one element in detail. As an example, the analysis of the potential for future economic development was not accomplished, nor was a review of detailed 1990 Census information. The town should make economic development planning and strategy formulation a priority by developing a detailed profile of the community which includes an inventory of available sites for future development or re-development. In addition, the town should clearly understand the local and regional market to take advantage of the opportunities it presents in the future.

What will it take to make Exeter an attractive place for industry in the future? How can the town benefit from its many attractions and generate a wholesome tourism industry? These are but two of many questions that would be answered through the development of an Economic Development Strategy Plan that deals with these questions and others relative to the steps necessary to promote Exeter within the region and the state. The Planning Board and Town Council should take an active part in this process.

*Administrative Responsibility: Town Council and Planning Board. Long term*

### 6.3 Land Use Implementation Plan

#### 6.3.1 Overview

The implementation of the recommendations included in the Land Use Element will require a series of actions to accomplish the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. The following provides the structure for what would be required to accomplish the necessary revisions to the zoning ordinance, the zoning map and the creation of supplemental ordinances to support the future land use plan. The key groups involved in this action program include:

1. The Town Council
2. The Planning Board
3. The Zoning Board
4. Conservation Commission

#### 6.3.2 Planning Board Responsibilities

The Planning Board will be responsible for the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. This would involve constant coordination with all local officials to determine the course of action required to either implement the recommendations as presented, or delay action because of changing circumstances. The Planning Board would be responsible for making suggested changes on a yearly basis to the plan and its implementation. By keeping track of necessary changes to the plan on a regular basis, the plan can be easily updated without an extensive effort by any one individual or committee. The Planning Board should also prepare a written annual review in preparation for Comprehensive Plan updates.

#### 6.3.3 Amendment to Zoning Ordinance and Map

To comply with state legislation, the Town should undertake a comprehensive revision of the zoning ordinance and zoning map as necessary:

Zoning Ordinance Revisions

The Planning Board, working with the Town's legal staff and potentially with a zoning consultant, will prepare amendments to the zoning ordinance as necessary. Other individuals who may provide assistance would include the Building Inspector, the Conservation Commission and the Zoning Board.

Zoning Map Revisions

At the same time or shortly after the process has begun to revise the zoning ordinance, revisions to the map should begin. Updating the map will be the responsibility of the Planning Board and Town Council. Final approval lies with the Town Council.

The Town should consider the creation of new zoning districts such as:

Rural/Environmental (RE) -5 Acres

The purpose of this land use category is twofold; one, it is established to protect groundwater aquifers within the town; second, it is utilized to maintain the rural character of the lands adjacent to Arcadia Park and Beach Pond. The five-acre or Rural/Environmental Category is located directly above the aquifers themselves that are not either included in state property such as the Upper Wood River system or are already protected from future development because they are included in land owned by the Audubon Society (Queens River). The portions of the areas not covered in this way are indicated as Rural/Environmental.

Low Density/Environmental (LD/E) -4 Acres

This four-acre minimum lot size category dominates the eastern half of the town that is home to an extensive Aquifer Recharge area associated with the Queens River, as well as having numerous tributary brooks and their associated hydric soils. In general, soil constraints and the presence of this extensive recharge area associated with this regional water supply demand that development is limited and responsive to the potential impacts it may have on these high quality resources. As a result all areas within the recharge areas are now indicated for low-density residential use.

Medium Low Density (MLD) -3 Acres

This district is found in those areas of reduced environmental constraints to the east of the New London Turnpike. These areas lie outside of the aquifer and its recharge areas dominating that area adjacent to the Richmond border with a second area in the northeast portion of the town adjacent to the Towns of East Greenwich and North Kingstown.

Medium Density (MD) -2 Acres

There are four areas of Medium Density identified in the town. Including the area adjacent to Arcadia Village, just over the town line from Richmond; the area around Boone Lake; the area between I-95 and Route 3 to the rear of the current business zone;

finally the area extending outside the Queens River Aquifer, between Mail Road and Wolf Rock Road. In all cases the proposed land use designation matches existing land use and zoning.

#### Light Business/Residential District (LB/R)

Limited to both the Route 3 and Route 2 areas, this district would allow the development of low intensity commercial uses such as residences, home occupations, medical/professional offices, veterinary services, real estate offices, antique shops, farm stands and "sit-down" restaurants. The overall intent is to provide a buffer to the existing general business uses that exist by allowing the development of rural type uses that are more rural and residential in appearance and developed under specific Development Plan review criteria. As with all future commercial development, performance standards will be required with respect to site design, drainage, signage, landscaping, screening, facade treatment, circulation, access, noise and glare, etc. Over time, it is expected that these new uses will dominate the existing retail uses on Rt. 3.

#### Industrial Development (I)

One change is suggested with respect to future industrial land use: rezone the industrial land in the southeast part of town to residential as it lies over the Chipuxet Aquifer and its potential use for industry could have a negative impact on this groundwater reservoir. The remaining areas that are presently zoned for industry would remain as is.

The intended uses to be allowed in these industrial areas are intended to be light as opposed to heavy in nature, the kind of industry that does not require processing waters or that generate obnoxious fumes or other detrimental omissions or dangerous byproducts. In general they are to be consistent with the rural character of the town and be governed by strong site and development standards.

#### Institutional/Public Uses (I/P)

The purpose of identifying institutional type uses, as a separate category is to identify the fact that they exist as such and will likely remain institutional for the foreseeable future. The institutional properties include: the Town Clerk's Office; the fire, communications and rescue stations, including the new site on Route 2; the school properties; and the large state-owned cemetery properties. The one remaining institutional property that is not identified is the Ladd Center, due to its indeterminate future and the fact that it is treated in a separate part of Section 7.3.

#### Open Space (OS)

The open space designation identifies state lands and other lands held for recreation and conservation purposes, such as those owned by the Audubon Society. The purpose of this designation is to protect against the conversion of these lands to another use inconsistent with that now in existence. Other lands that are purchased or controlled by

the town or others (i.e., Land Trust or other conservation group) can be added to this category over time. The town should continue to identify important lands for acquisition in the future that result in the protection of valuable natural resources, the preservation of prime farmlands, provide public access or support the creation of a town-wide open space system. Mechanisms available include Fee Simple Purchase, the acquisition of easements, outright donation, preferred taxing, or the Transfer or Purchase of Development Rights.

#### 6.3.4 Planned Districts

Consider the creation of Planned District to regulate the uses in specific, unique geographic areas. Four planned districts are recommended. They include:

1. Village Center Districts
2. Industrial Planned Development
  - General
  - Ladd Center Development District
3. Commercial Planned Development
4. Special Use Districts

These four districts have been identified because of the unique opportunity they present with respect to the future development of village centers in the community, in addition to promoting planned development of future industry, commerce and the Ladd Center itself. In defining these districts, the intent is to foster development that is both consistent with the rural character of the community and sensitive to the constraints of the natural environment. Also, included is the realization that quality commercial, industrial and institutional uses can help reduce the tax burden being felt by the local taxpayer in the town.

The Ladd Center has been included in this section because of the importance its future development has to the community from an economic and environmental standpoint. The center has the potential to provide economic opportunity for the town that is consistent with its interest to protect its valuable natural resources while at the same time providing potential tax base diversification. The potential for a public water system also exists should the state wish to dispose of this facility.

##### 6.3.4.1 Planned Village Center Districts (PVD)

Planned Village Districts create locations where a mixture of activities can take place that are typical of rural development. These locations are intended to house a wide variety of uses, such as public administrative, open space and recreational areas, retail and service establishments, office uses, residences and other support activities. The village center should have a scale that is human and attractive. These village centers need to be planned to provide for pedestrian and vehicular traffic circulation. Their size and scale must match the setting in which they exist and the constraints that are

present. The purpose of PVDs is to offer an alternative strip development. Village centers is also provide a living environment for individuals and families while allowing for employment opportunities.

Village centers should be convenient to the public in terms of the delivery of public and private services. They should be located on major roadways and accessible to the population centers of the town. Their additional purpose is to provide services in centralized locations as opposed to having strip commercial type development that create more traffic as people are forced to make stops at various locations to purchase required goods and services.

The ultimate size, design and mix of uses associated with these districts must be the subject of further study, as a comprehensive analysis must be made of the village settings themselves to determine the extent of the development constraints that exist in their particular micro setting. Beyond the physical or environmental constraints, there is the question of the type of mix of uses that should be located at any of the districts.

Village Districts can potentially involve multiple property owners who should to be brought into the process if the establishment of these districts is to become a reality. The town may wish to take an active part by offering incentives to potential property owners in such districts or by contributing land or offering some other level of assistance.

#### 6.3.4.2. Planned Industrial Development

Development of planned light industrial facilities, subject to specific design and performance standards and Development Plan Review, should be encouraged. Such districts would allow for a mixture of uses including light industry, utility, offices, miscellaneous services, agricultural uses, institutional uses, public uses, medical facilities, etc. Application for a Planned District of this type may be the subject of a “change of zone” approval granted via the Town Council.

Once the District is established, specific design standards would have to be established with respect to property access, landscaping, parking and buffer requirements. Performance standards would also apply, as they would for any industrial uses, and include provisions for lighting, noise, vibration, air and water pollution, odors, hazardous materials production and storage, solid waste and waste water management, erosion control, public safety, etc. The Planning Board under the Land Development Project section of the Zoning Enabling Act should perform this review.

#### 6.3.4.3. Planned Business Development

This district is recommended to provide control over the development of large parcels for commercial purposes. It provides the town with ability to require master

development plans for circulation, site layout, environmental control, fire protection, etc. Specific performance standards can be applied to the development.

#### 6.3.4.4. Special Use Districts

Given the unique nature of the Ladd Center and the Dorset Mill as sites for future mixed-use development and the relationship of such future uses to the natural environment, it is recommended that special regulations be promulgated for these sites. These regulations would recognize the sensitive environmental constraints that exist, while addressing the past history of these facilities in determining future use requirements.

##### 6.3.4.4a Ladd Center District

The purpose in establishing such a district as a stand alone district in the zoning ordinance and on the future land use map is to indicate the town's position and concern with respect to the future development of this site by the state or others. The town is also preparing for the potential that the property may be sold by the state to private parties. While the district regulations would be similar in nature to those established for general industrial planned development, there are other important considerations, particularly with respect to the Queens River and its associated Class GAA Aquifer (EPA Designation).

The town's position with respect to the level of treatment required on this site must be clearly enunciated in the zoning ordinance as well as its position with respect to the location of on-site wastewater disposal systems. In addition to this concern, special attention must be given to the stormwater system that exists and its potential impact upon the receiving waters.

While it is anticipated that the site could support a wide variety of uses, uses that could produce hazardous byproducts or require the storage of potentially dangerous materials that could infiltrate the groundwater reservoir must not be allowed.

In general institutional uses, research and development facilities, educational facilities, office uses, light manufacturing and others of a similar nature would be appropriate. It would appear appropriate that any future development of this center would be subject to review under the Environmental Impact Requirements presented further on in this element.

##### 6.3.4.4b Dorset Mill District

This property is presently zoned RE-2 (Residential/2 acre minimum lot size). It has been in industrial use for many years and has been identified as a potential site for an industrial incubator for the town. In designating the site Special Use, it would be subject to expanded performance standards to be established specifically for this site while also being subject to the Development Plan Review Process.

Future use of the site would be controlled to prevent the type of uses that may have an adverse impact on the Chipuxet Aquifer. The site lies in its recharge area. In addition to this recommendation, it is also suggested that the town promote this site for Planned Industrial Use, which could contain a mixture of uses including office and support services that would have less of a potential impact on the environment. This site is recommended for light industry only. The protection of the historic character of the mill would be a second major consideration.

#### 6.3.5 Development Plan Review

To control impact from development the Town should adopt the Development Plan Review requirements and process (RIGL 45-24-49) as a part of the Exeter Zoning Ordinance. Town's Land Development and Subdivision Regulations would then contain the process for the Planning Board to review all projects in accordance with the process set out in the Zoning Enabling Act. Specific information will be required of the developer, including site layout, proposed topographic changes, parking and loading layout, signage, landscaping, etc. During the Development Plan Review the Planning Board will determine whether other regulations come into play.

#### 6.3.6 Performance Standards

Performance Standards controlling noise, odor, light, vibration, hazardous materials (either produced or stored), stormwater and wastewater disposal are recommended for future commercial and industrial development with respect to impact a development may have on adjacent properties or on the natural and cultural environment of the town.

#### 6.3.7 Environmental Impact Requirements

It is recommended that the town establish environmental review criteria for large residential, commercial, mixed use or industrial projects. The developer will provide an analysis of the impact a development will have on the natural environment, town services, social and economic environment, farmlands, open space and recreation, construction impacts, visual impacts etc. This requirement is meant to supplement the general requirements of new performance standards established.

#### 6.3.8 General Improvements to the Zoning Ordinance and Land Development and Subdivision Regulations

It is recommended that the Zoning Ordinance and the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations be revised to incorporate the specific changes recommended in this Comprehensive Plan. Specific areas of concentration should address revising the current parking, loading, and signage regulations while including provisions for

Planned Development, Performance Standards, Development Plan Review, Overlay Districts, Historic District Zoning, and other recommendations made in this document. *Short and medium term goal.*

#### 6.3.9 Conservation Developments

It is recommended that the Town adopt amendments to its Land Development and Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Ordinance to provide for Conservation Development. This type of land development project utilizes prescribed site planning techniques to conserve open land, protect site features and provide flexibility in the siting of structures, services and infrastructure. Conservation Development regulations should augment the regulations adopted in 2000 for Rural Residential Compounds. These amendments are intended in part to provide for more effective conservation of open land on a community-wide basis and to contribute to a greenway system within the Town.

### 6.4 Housing Implementation Program

#### 6.4.1 Overview

While it is difficult to strike a balance between the Town's goals and objectives, this plan seeks to provide the basis for developing a variety of housing types for all present and future residents of the Town of Exeter.

#### 6.4.2 Future Housing Development

While large lot development is thought to provide protection to the environment, it can in fact detract from it. Large lot zoning forces developers to utilize sensitive natural areas as part of their density calculations, in turn detracting from the rural environment of the town by taking on the appearance of suburban subdivisions. A return to "village districts," that were so much a part of Exeter's rural environment in the late 1880's, would be a method to combat this residential, land gobbling sprawl and decrease the price of houses.

It has become apparent that mobile homes represent a substantial portion of the town's older housing stock, which according to the 1990 Census now stands a 12.9% (247) of all housing units. According to the Exeter Planning Board, the actual figure has increased to 375 and represents 20% of the Town's housing stock. It is also apparent that mobile homes represent a serious problem with respect to the maintenance of minimum property standards. These older structures are difficult to rehabilitate according to South County Community Action who interact with owners wishing to improve their units through their housing rehabilitation programs. There is a need to more closely

regulate the development of more units in the town, while providing a long-term solution to affordability for these residents.

### **Planned Historic Town or Village Center Districts**

The intent of this provision is to permit the development of Planned Districts in the town that meet criteria as outlined in the Land Use Element. A mix of commercial, service and residential uses would be allowed, with the density of development dependant on the availability of services to an area and the environmental constraints that exist. A village district might be much different in appearance in western Exeter than one in eastern Exeter, depending on the constraints. Because of the density more affordable housing could be produced. Primarily couples and small families would utilize housing within a village center.

The town should also encourage the development of village center development geared toward elderly housing. Assisted living facilities and/or town houses situated close to services reserved for elderly and handicapped residents would be an asset to the Town.

All developments of this type would be subject to Development Plan Review by the Planning Board, the Conservation Commission and other appropriate town boards, commissions and service providers.

*Administrative Responsibility: Town Council, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Highway Supervisor, and Public Safety. Officials. Medium term.*

### **Expanded Housing Rehabilitation Activities**

The town's Minimum Housing officer and Building officials should actively work with the South County Community Action program and the Farmers Home Administration (FMHA) and other applicable agencies, to expand housing rehabilitation in the Town of Exeter for lower income tenants or homeowners. All activities should be focused toward the creation of a revolving loan program to help fund this activity into the future. The expansion of this activity could be the responsibility of a Housing Board, which is further defined in the Affordable Housing section of this plan.

*Administrative Responsibilities: Building Inspector, Minimum Housing Officer, Town Council, and Housing Board. Long term.*

## Conversion of Mobile Homes/Trailers

Mobile homes on individual lots represent a significant portion of the housing stock in the Town of Exeter. The 1990 Census indicates that 12.9% of all homes are mobile homes. The Census further points out that most of these units are occupied by owners (88%), and local records reflect as many as 375 of these units to date. These structures present a difficult problem for the town because many of the units are in poor condition, according to the representatives of South County Community Action staff who have visited many units in the town as part of their housing rehabilitation work.

It is recommended that the town pursue the development of a program that would fund, using the equity or value of the land on which these properties are located, the construction of new housing units at these sites to replace these mobile homes with units of standard construction. Funding for such a program could be pursued through RIHMFC, FMHA, the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program and other sources identified by the Housing Board. The existing mobile homes could serve as temporary shelters for these families while construction took place.

***Administrative Responsibility:** Housing Board, Town Council, and Legislation. Long term*

## Development of Housing Board

It is recommended that the town consider the creation of a Housing Board to further identify housing needs in the town and to coordinate housing programs and outreach activities. The board would investigate the resources available to promote affordable housing for low- to moderate-income families, disabled and elderly audiences in the area through the various agencies and programs that exist and to develop a program for housing improvement and development. The members of this board would also be responsible for the implementation of the various recommendations included in this element relative to affordable housing.

***Administrative Responsibility:** Town Council, Planning Board, interested members from nonprofit and governmental agencies. Long term.*

## Housing Land Trust

It is recommended that the town support efforts of the Action Community Land Trust (ACLT). The Trust is being utilized to ensure the long-term affordable housing for low- to moderate-income families, disabled and elderly audiences through rental and home ownership options. In retaining ownership of

properties, the ACLT would ensure their long-term affordability. As a non-profit, ACLT is eligible for funding from a number of sources, including the federal Department of HUD, RI Housing, and the Farmers Home Administration. Additional funding may also be available from local Foundations as well. The town could consider using its town-owned properties and the Reynolds Trust Fund as potential resources if it participated.

***Administrative Responsibility:** Town Council, South County Community Action, Housing Board, and Action Community Land Trust. Long term.*

#### **Accessory Apartments**

To increase the supply of rental housing in the community, particularly for the elderly and disabled, it is recommended that the town allow the construction of accessory apartments on conforming lots by Special Use permit, subject to restrictions relative to on-site disposal requirements, size of the unit, number of bedrooms, etc. Typically such units are restricted to a size of 600 Square Feet or less.

***Administrative Responsibility:** Planning Board, Zoning Board. Short term.*

#### **Expand Section 8 Housing Voucher/Certificate Program**

Whenever possible the Town, through the Town Council, should support the efforts of the South County Community Action agency to access additional units under these programs for the low and moderate- income families in the community. Such support includes assistance with rental surveys that are required to petition the federal government for rent increases where they are required to meet existing market conditions.

***Administrative Responsibility:** Town Council. Long term.*

#### **Conservation Subdivision Developments**

The Town should consider amending its Land Development and Subdivision Regulations and its Zoning Ordinance to adopt provisions for conservation subdivision design. As part of these amendments, the Town will encourage a mix of dwelling unit types and price ranges in new residential developments. The Town will also make provisions for granting density bonuses to encourage developers to provide needed housing types.

## 6.5 Facilities and Services Implementation Plan

### 6.5.1 Overview

The future Facilities and Services element presents recommendations with respect to seven areas of public service in the community. No new services are recommended at this time, although the consideration for new or expanded services is suggested, in the future as well as recommendations where improvements can be made in the delivery of existing services. The future funding of services is also addressed, with respect to the cost associated with the demands placed on services by new or expanded development.

What has become apparent is the difficulty in continuing to provide services to town residents supported only with tax dollars. Ever-increasing costs, particularly those associated with education, have had a dramatic impact on the tax rate, and subsequently on the cost of living in the town. Also, as the tax rate rises, so does the taxpayers demands for improved or new services. While Exeter is still in many ways a rural community, there is a need, given the growth the Town has experienced over the last ten years in particular, to improve services to the Town's expanding population, while making plans now for the future population of the Town.

The following provides recommendations for future public services and facilities. Given the nature and scope of the Comprehensive Plan, these recommendations will, in some cases, be general in nature and in many cases will indicate a need for further study or evaluation on the part of the Town.

In fact, for a growing community like Exeter, planning for the future needs of the Town will be an ongoing process, requiring a substantial commitment on the part of the Town of volunteer time or professional assistance. It is recommended that the Town consider funding a full time planning position to address this need.

### 6.5.2 Impact Fees

It is recommended that the town adopts and implements an "Impact Fee" ordinance to assess developers for their fair share of the costs to be incurred by the town as a result of the new development. New development places an additional burden on the town in terms of the need to provide its new residents with an education, adequate recreational opportunities, safe roads, quality library services, adequate waste disposal systems, public safety services and efficient town government. Typically, as new development occurs, the developed property is added to the tax rolls and the new residents are taxed to contribute their fair share to support the delivery of services. Generally speaking, the property taxpayers do not contribute enough money, nor can they, to support the need for expanded services to these individuals. The end result is that the Town must increase the tax rate or seek bonding approval to cover these costs.

The purpose of an Impact Fee is to cover the cost of capital improvements required as a result of new development. A fair share assessment is required for each new development. To institute an Impact Fee requires that an in-depth analysis be undertaken to determine the actual need for and cost of the new services or facilities generated as a result of a new development. The analysis must be complete and based on a clearly defined program of study starting with an inventory of existing facilities to determine the surplus or deficiency with respect to the level of existing services. This is typically followed by a determination as to the future needs for facilities in town based upon "Buildout." The cost associated with the development of new facilities is determined, and finally a formula of cost application is developed.

The feasibility analysis conducted as the basis for imposing an impact fee must be thorough and well documented, as several impact fee ordinances have been struck down by the courts due to the lack of a firm basis for charging the fee. An excellent example of a feasibility study is the one developed by the City of Cranston Planning Commission staff. Responsibility for developing such an ordinance would be for the following Town leaders, working in coordination with a professional planner who could help assure that the final Impact Fee structure can withstand legal challenges. In addition, the on-going implementation of the impact fee program must be professionally staffed for consistency and legal defensibility.

***Administrative Responsibility:** Planning Board, Superintendent of Schools, Fire and Rescue Officials, Highway Supervisor, Librarian, Recreation Director, Town Council. Medium term.*

### 6.5.3 Development Plan Review

It is recommended that the Town adopt a Development Plan Review process. This was created under the Land development and Subdivision Review Enabling Act (RIGL 45-24-49) and allows the Town to incorporate this process into its Zoning Ordinance and then into the Planning Board's regulations for the process of review. These specific regulations relate to submission requirements and administrative procedures. Details with regard to site development standards, environmental protection, soil erosion, drainage, signage and the general request for plans and other data are included as part of the ordinance. The Planning Board is charged with this Development Plan Review process, but also receives input from others who have a particular area of expertise with respect to development or who can provide valuable information such as the local public safety officials, school department, building officials, Conservation Commission, and Highway Supervisor.

***Administrative Responsibility:** Planning Board, Town Council, and Building Inspector. Short term.*

#### 6.5.4 Public Safety

The evaluation of the Public Safety function led to several conclusions. While police protection was rated as fair to inadequate by those responding to the Comprehensive Plan Survey, the Town should continue to rely on State Police service for the meantime, until financing is available to support some other level of service. To help prevent crime on the local level, expand the Neighborhood Crime Watch Program to more areas within the Town. Continued financial support is recommended for the volunteer fire, rescue, and dispatch services to maintain the excellent level of service provided by these agencies. To further support the efforts of the volunteer fire fighting force, require the installation of fire prevention support structures to aid in the fighting of fires where water access is a problem.

##### 6.5.4a Improved 911 Staffing

The maintenance of an up to date and accurate 911 system for a rural community like Exeter is critical to the provision of public safety services in a timely and accurate fashion. Given the rural nature of the town, a missed address can result in the public safety service provider traveling a substantial distance trying to find the injured party, fire location, etc. This can be critical in a life safety situation. To ensure that the Town's system is maintained and updated regularly is a task requiring more than a volunteer effort. It is recommended that the town continues its 911-coordinator position to improve the 911 system in general, including the ordinance and numbering system, while making sure that all properties are on the system. Close coordination with the volunteer fire chiefs and the state coordinator is recommended.

*Administrative Responsibility: Town Council and Planning Board. Short term.*

##### 6.5.4b Continue Financial Support of Fire, Rescue and Dispatch Service Providers

The town should continue to support the financially prudent delivery of these public safety services, including the construction of a new fire fighting facility on Route 2 in the southern part of the town. The development of this facility will serve to provide coverage to an area that falls outside of the service radius normally recognized in national standards. This area of the town has also seen significant development over the last ten years and will be the focus for future development as well.

*Administrative Responsibility: Town Council. Medium term.*

##### 6.5.4c Create an emergency management plan with the assistance of the RI Emergency Management Agency

The Town should create an emergency management plan that covers probable events that will impact Exeter. This plan can detail coordination between agencies, assign responsibilities in emergency scenarios and set up protocols for rehearsals and logistics.

The RI Emergency Management Agency has funding available for municipalities to create such plans.

*Administrative Responsibility: Town Council, Public Safety Committee, State Police, Fire and Rescue Units, School Committee and Administration. Medium term.*

#### 6.5.4d Require the Installation of Water Storage Tanks and Dry Hydrants

The lack of a town water supply places a tremendous burden on the volunteer fire departments. Access to a water supply is critical to the success of their efforts. In some locations in the town, there are no natural sources of water available that the fire departments can easily access, and they are forced to rely on their abilities to bring water to the fire themselves. Sometimes water exists, but is difficult to access due to winter conditions (ice). To help with this problem, it is recommended that the subdivision regulations be revised to require the installation of Underground Water Tanks and Dry Hydrants. The use of these two items will ensure that water is available to the fire fighting force when needed under any circumstance. The requirement for the installation of these structures would be triggered by the establishment of standards developed by the volunteer fire fighting personnel that would be applied to new developments. If water were not readily accessible, the developer would be required to install one or both of these devices.

*Administrative Responsibility: Volunteer Fire Companies and Planning Board. Short term.*

#### 6.5.4e Investigate Increases to State Police Protection

It is evident that the majority of people who responded to the Comprehensive Plan Survey did not find the existing level of service provided by the State Police to be adequate. This was not to say that the general abilities of the force were inadequate, but that the area of coverage and manpower limits of the force make it impossible for them to provide the level of service people feel is needed today. While it would be difficult to fund the establishment of a Town-run police force at this time, it is recommended that the Town investigate numerous options with respect to public safety.

These options for the future could include the establishment of an Exeter Police Department or having Resident State Troopers assigned to the Town or some other structure to provide expanded service. A possible option to be investigated is the viability of a regional police force, where the town could buy into an existing department (i.e., Richmond, S. Kingstown, N. Kingstown or West Greenwich) or purchase services from an adjacent community. The demand will continually rise for increased coverage in the future.

While this evaluation is underway it is also recommended that the town encourage the expansion of the Neighborhood Crime Watch Program and supplement this effort with other educational information on fire safety, burglary protection and techniques, elderly awareness, and drug abuse prevention.

*Administrative Responsibility: Town Council, School Committee, and Planning Board. Long term.*

#### 6.5.5 Develop a Strategic Plan for the School System

A review of present enrollment figures and anticipated future enrollment projections show that the existing school system, particularly the elementary grades, will continue to grow in the foreseeable future, taxing the capacity of the Lineham and Metcalf Schools. In the next few years the capacity of these facilities will be reached, according to the projections made by the Superintendent of the school system. Immediate action is required to deal with this situation.

The Town should support the "Steering Committee" that has begun the process of developing the strategic plan to address future facility needs. Members from the following groups should be included on the committee:

- School Committee
- Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent
- Building Official
- Teachers
- Non-Certified Staff Members
- Students
- Elected Representatives
- Business Leaders
- The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee
- Parents
- Community Based Organizations
- Planning Board

The plan to be developed would evaluate existing and future facility needs, explore options for facility use and/or development, set goals, develop an action and implementation plan. This should be done with input from parents and students. A strict timeline must be established to ensure that the plan is accomplished in a timely fashion. A six-month timeline is recommended. Options to be considered would include investigating the use of the Ladd Center, or the development of a totally new facility, preferably in the eastern part of Exeter.

*Administrative Responsibility: Superintendent of Schools and School Committee. Short term.*

#### 6.5.6 Public Library

The existing town library, located adjacent to the Town Clerk's Office, cannot serve the town's existing population given its current size limitations and the subsequent impact this has on its ability to house an adequate number of books and other publications and at the same time accommodate visitors in comfort. The existing 450 square foot facility is over 3,000 square feet short of that recommended for a town the size of Exeter.

Even with its shortcomings, the library still manages to have a circulation of over 8,000 items per year and was cited in the Comprehensive Plan Survey, as an existing service the population would support for increased funding in the future. Funding for improved library services ranked third behind roads and police in terms of a service people would support for additional funding.

#### 6.5.6a Expansion of the Library

Improvements to the library's facilities would certainly make it a more attractive facility for local residents who would be more inclined to visit and utilize the library if it were modernized and expanded. The proper way to commence the process of library expansion is to conduct a needs assessment to evaluate the Town's needs for library programs and services. Plans for expansion are then predicated on the results of this needs assessment. Possible solutions might be to expand into the old Town Hall, as well as to alternatives such as a new facility or a regional facility.

Given the need for a new Town Hall in the not too distant future, it is recommended that once that facility is completed (see Municipal Facilities section) that the existing building be totally rehabilitated and be considered for an expanded library facility. Such improvements might include a complete redesign of the interior of the building and its systems (electrical, heat/air) while being made handicapped accessible. The creation of such a facility would provide the opportunity to expand services to the residents in the town, while increasing the library holdings and other related services. This facility could also serve as the repository for the historical records of the town in a rehabilitated, climatically controlled environment. The present location of the facility is convenient to the largest populations in Town being located in the eastern half of the town. Coordination of this effort should include working with the State Department of Library Services and the R.I. Historic Preservation Commission to identify potential funding sources other than the local budget. Fundraising activities could also be undertaken to support the development of this facility. Another possibility is co-location with an educational institution such as the High School.

**Administrative Responsibility:** *Manton Free Public Library Board of Trustees, and Town Council. Medium term.*

#### 6.5.6b Increase Number of Holdings Per Capita

Expand holding per capita to at least 3.8 per person (National Average).

**Administrative Responsibility:** *Manton Free Public Library Board of Trustees, and Town Council. Short term.*

#### 6.5.7 Highway Department

The major recommendations associated with improvements to this functional element of town government are related to the establishment of a Roadway Management System to address future improvements to local roads in a systematic manner, based on a full evaluation of existing conditions, the existing function of the roadway and the potential impact future development will have on the system. Almost two thirds of the people who responded to the Comprehensive Plan Survey found road maintenance to be fair to inadequate. They also cited road maintenance as the number one area where they would support the increased expenditure of town funds to improve local roads. The Roadway Management Program will serve to utilize the limited resources of the town in the best way possible.

A second major recommendation with respect to the Highway Department function relates to a requirement that the design of new and rehabilitated drainage systems be subject to a town policy that recognizes the need to eliminate non-point source pollution. To accomplish this policy, specific stormwater improvement requirements would be made within an officially adopted Stormwater Management Plan, that addresses requirements for new developments, the rehabilitation of existing stormwater systems and specific policies associated with the reconstruction of state roadways in the town.

#### 6.5.7a Storm Water Management Plan

A major sub-element of the Roadway Management Program, this Plan would be developed in association with the RIDOT and in concert with the Roadway Management Program to identify a system of required improvements associated with the need to limit or remove the negative impact drainage can have on local waterways. The plan will include a "Zero-Net Run-off" Policy (no increase in run-off from what occurs at present) for all new developments. The plan will also call for the use of "Best Management Practices" in the design of drainage systems. Refer to DEM booklet for standards.

*Administration Action: Highway Supervisor, Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Town Council, and RIDOT. Medium term.*

#### 6.5.8 Solid Waste Management

There are three major elements of concern associated with the present solid waste system in the town. They relate to the following:

- The need to reduce the volume of waste being brought to the facility;
- Controlling the amount of commercial waste;
- The need to expand the existing recycling program and to eliminate yard waste from the waste stream.

The town regularly pays excess fees to the R.I. Solid Waste Management Corporation because it exceeds the volume cap assigned to the Town by that agency. Any reduction in volume will result in the net decrease in these overage payments.

To evaluate the above cited problems, it is recommended that the town develop a Solid Waste Management Plan that would deal with the issues previously identified, as well as the existing operation of the transfer station, including its management, funding, use restrictions, etc.

A town-wide composting program should be investigated as an integral part of this management plan as yardwaste will not be allowed to be disposed at the state landfill in the future. Composted materials have been used as a soil enhancement material for municipal parks and recreation facilities.

Further evaluations could include petitioning the Rhode Island Solid Waste Management Corporation for an increase in the volume cap applied to the town. In addition, the distribution of educational materials promoting composting and recycling shall be made available.

*Administrative Action: Highway Supervisor, Conservation Commission, Planning Board, and Town Council. Short term.*

#### 6.5.9 Municipal Facilities

The Town of Exeter is in dire need of a new Town Hall facility. The existing Clerk's Office, located on Rt. 102, has outlived its function for this purpose. The facility is too small to effectively handle the business of the town, the meeting space is inadequate and the site does not have the potential for expansion to accommodate a facility of the size the town requires. In selecting a new site for such a facility, the Town created a Town Hall Committee to look for an appropriate site and to determine the size of the facility based upon the needs of the town. This is an important element of such a

decision because the development of a new Town Hall must be done in such a way as to ensure that such a facility meets the needs of the town now and in the future. It must be designed to have the potential for expansion in the future.

Another critical element relates to the location of such a facility within the context of the Town and the ultimate function it serves in terms of its contribution to the fabric of the community. There has been a wealth of support for the development of a "Town Center," and much discussion has taken place with regard to where such a facility would be located in addition to what other type of uses would be allowed. It has been envisioned that such a facility would be a center of activity in the town, providing in addition to municipal administrative services, recreational opportunities, housing, and village scale support services. Architectural control over the look and feel of the center is critical to ensure that the center is developed in a style consistent with the rural character of the town.

In evaluating potential sites for such a center, several considerations were given extensive consideration. They related to the convenience of such a facility to the residents of the community and those doing business in town, that the center fit into the overall community in terms of its scale and location, and finally that the development of such a center be sensitive to the natural and historic environment.

Numerous locations are being considered including the Ladd Center, Rt. 3, Rt. 102 and Rt. 2. In evaluating these locations for possible sites for a Town Center, certain criteria were developed:

- a. That it be located in an area convenient to the greater part of the town's population
- b. That the site be characterized by development consistent with a town center
- c. The potential for water service (from the Ladd Center) to support more concentrated development
- d. There be an established neighborhood adjacent to this site
- e. It be located near a major intersection or interstate highway system

To begin the process of developing such a town center it is recommended that the original Building Committee be reorganized to include members of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, as well as members of the Town Council and Planning Board. Their charge would be to develop a concept plan for the Town Center, with professional assistance that would layout the location of town facilities, while identifying locations for support services as well as potential housing locations. The committee would be responsible for developing the design standards to be applied, while investigating options to control the land identified for this use. Included in this investigation would be the potential for bringing public water to this site.

*Administrative Responsibility: Town Hall Committee, Town Council, Planning Board, Conservation Committee, and Historic Commission (See Natural and Cultural Resources Element)*

#### 6.5.10 Water

The preservation of the groundwater supply in the town has been identified as one of the highest priorities of this community. The town's reliance on this natural resource will continue long into the future. To address this issue, one recommendation is presented. Develop a future plan for water availability from the Ladd Center.

##### 6.5.10a Water/Waste Water Management Plan

The development of such a plan will serve to address the future needs of the town with respect to its water supply and the treatment of wastewater. The plan will address the potential acquisition or control of existing systems (such as Ladd); the identification and protection of future water sources for the Town; the adoption of ordinances and regulations to control future growth that might impact water resources; and establish the ability to address existing problems where a condition exists that threatens the Town's water supply or that of a particular neighborhood. Major elements of the plan would include:

- An Aquifer Overlay Protection Ordinance
- The Option of Establishing Water/Waste Water Management Districts
- Well Head Protection Standards
- A Plan for Acquiring Sites for Future Water Supply
- The Adoption of More Stringent Controls Over the Installation of On Lot Wastewater Systems in the Town
- An Educational Program on Water Conservation and On-Site System Maintenance

*Administrative Responsibility: Conservation Commission, Planning Board, and Town Council. Short term*

##### 6.5.10b Access to the Ladd Center Water System

The use or control by the Town of the Ladd Center's water system could provide an excellent resource in the future, particularly with respect to the need to provide water to areas where concentrated development exists or future development is anticipated. It could also be used as a resource to promote economic development, where water availability can make a location more attractive to a potential investor. Finally, access to such a system can be used to address a potential threat to the environment, where on site sewage system failures could ultimately impact groundwater resources.

To address these potential situations, it is recommended that the Town, when it is economically feasible, make every effort to utilize this facility in the future as the basis for a town-operated facility. Purchase could be funded by municipal bonds, the Impact Fee, or federal funding (grant or loan) from agencies such as the Farmers Home Administration, the Economic Development Administration (EDA), etc.

If the purchase option is not available due to its rejection by the state, the Town should pursue the use of the system through some other type of arrangement. A potential scenario might be that the town pays for the installation of water lines to a residential area (i.e., Cedar Grove) where the resident would be charged a user fee based on a given formula. The fee would cover the service provided and the cost of extending the line over time. Such a system could be used to service residential areas, commercial properties, industries, etc.

*Administrative Responsibility: Planning Board, Town Council, and Local Legislators. Long term*

## **6.6 Natural and Cultural Resources Implementation Plan**

### **6.6.1 Natural Resources**

#### **6.6.1a Aquifer Protection Overlay District**

It is recommended that the Town establish an Aquifer Protection Overlay District to encompass wellheads, aquifers and recharge areas that provide groundwater for Exeter and would help to protect groundwater resources shared by Exeter and adjacent communities. Specific regulations would be established to control:

- Storage and use of petroleum hydrocarbons
- Application of road-salts
- Allowable impervious coverage
- Storage and use of hazardous materials, including herbicides and pesticides
- Point source pollution
- Drainage facilities

*Administrative Responsibilities: Town Council, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission. Short term.*

#### **6.6.1b Regulations for Earth Removal**

The Town should establish specific regulations for the commercial removal of soil, with soil defined so as to include, but not be limited to boulders, cobbles, sand, gravel, and loam. The Town should revise its existing earth removal ordinance and include it in the Town's Zoning Ordinance. The regulations should specifically address:

- Excavation methods
- Transportation of materials
- Daily removal quantities
- Total project quantities
- Erosion/sediment control practices
- Site rehabilitation

*Administrative Responsibilities: Town Council, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission. Medium term.*

#### 6.6.1c High Water Table Overlay District

The Town should establish a High Watertable Overlay District for those areas composed of hydric soils (watertable 0" - 18") and areas of seasonal high (watertable 36"). It is recommended that development within hydric soils be prohibited. Development within seasonal high watertables should be controlled as concerns the installation of individual septic systems and use/storage of hazardous materials/petroleum hydrocarbons/hazardous materials.

*Administrative Responsibilities: Town Council, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission. Medium term.*

#### 6.6.1d Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Regulations

It is recommended that Exeter incorporate into its Zoning Ordinance regulations that dictate methods for the prevention of soil erosion and sedimentation from site work. The regulations should incorporate Best Management Practice (BMP) policies. The regulations should be drafted in concert with the Soil Conservation Service - Southern Rhode Island Conservation District.

*Administrative Responsibilities: Town Council, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission. Short term.*

#### 6.6.1e Waste Water Management Districts

Consider establishing Wastewater Management Districts for the purpose of preventing pollution caused by failing septic systems. The Districts would provide a process to educate the public whereby individual septic systems are inspected for proper maintenance and pumping. The cost of the inspections and pumping might be defrayed by the property owner either through a special tax or settling of an annual fee.

*Administrative Responsibilities: Town Council, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission. Long term.*

#### 6.6.1f Regulations Concerning Prime Farmland Conversion

Institute regulations that encourage the continued use of prime farmland for the preservation of open space, natural habitats and agricultural purposes.

*Administrative Responsibilities: Town Council, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission. Medium term.*

#### 6.6.1g Environmental Performance Standards

It is recommended that Environmental Performance Standards be incorporated into the Town's Zoning Ordinance & Subdivision Regulations. The standards would institute a Best Management Practice (BMP) policy requirement. Where available and deemed adequate, Federal and State standards could be incorporated. Lacking existing standards, the Town would establish its own requirements. Specific areas to be governed would include, but not be limited to:

- Alterations within areas where soils are shallow to bedrock
- Establishment of vegetative buffers
- Air/Noise pollution
- Drainage (i.e., establish a "no net runoff increase" policy)

*Medium term.*

#### 6.6.1h Environmental Impact Requirements

Incorporate an Environmental Impact (EI) requirement for large residential, commercial and industrial projects. The policy should establish minimum thresholds for an EI requirement. Such thresholds can include: total house lots (for residential); total gross floor space (for commercial/industrial); percent of impervious cover; percent of total parcel alteration; and, particular proposed usage. Drafting such a requirement will require assistance from trained planing and legal staff, so that the requirements will be legally defensible.

*Administrative Responsibilities: Town Council, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission. Medium term.*

#### 6.6.1i Steep Slope Overlay District

Establish regulations governing alteration of sites having grades in excess of 15%. The regulations should specifically address methods for soil removal, stabilization and erosion control.

*Administrative Responsibilities: Town Council, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission. Medium term.*

#### 6.6.1j Forest Preservation

The Town should designate the Planning Board or Conservation Commission to be responsible to disseminate information regarding state or federal government 'Forest Legacy Programs.' The program, under the auspices of the U.S. Forestry Service, provides monies for landowners to sell certain rights to the federal government. Such a program helps protect tracts of land threatened by development and/or sub-division into smaller parcels.

*Administrative Responsibilities: Town Council, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission. Medium term.*

#### 6.6.1k Farm, Forest and Open Space Act

It is recommended that the Town review its present tax assessment practices under the Act. Efforts should be made to determine if the current tax incentives are adequate to promote continued agricultural uses of applicable land.

*Administrative Responsibilities: Town Council, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission. Medium term.*

#### 6.6.1l Agricultural Preservation

In addition to recommendations 5.5.7g and 5.5.7k, the Town should investigate other means and methods for preserving agricultural land. These could include establishment of an Agricultural Land Trust and a mechanism for the transfer of development rights.

*Administrative Responsibilities: Town Council, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission. Medium term.*

#### 6.6.1m Regulations Pertaining to Livestock Control

The Town should establish regulations regarding the control of livestock and other farm animals. Appropriate animal population densities such as those developed by the Soil Conservation Service should be set to prohibit potential environmental and health hazards from disease and waste material. Siting of livestock populations in areas adjacent to waterbodies and adjacent to and/or over groundwater resources should be controlled. Specific management plans for waste material disposal should be required.

*Administrative Responsibilities: Town Council, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission. Long term.*

#### 6.6.1n Town-Wide Map of Potential Conservation Lands

The Town has prepared and adopted a Town-Wide Map of Potential Conservation lands as part of this Comprehensive Plan (See Map 5.7.A, Recreation, Conservation and Open Space areas). This Map can play a central role in ensuring that the open space designated in new residential developments, and through various open space protection and acquisition strategies, will form part of a larger open space network comprising parts of several contiguous parcels. The mapping program and inventory data developed as part of the South County Greenspace Protection Project was used to develop this Map.

*Administrative Responsibilities: Town Council, Planning Board and Conservation Commission. Medium term.*

#### 6.6.2 Cultural Resources

##### 6.6.2a Undertake further investigation, documentation and evaluation of historic resources

In order to understand the history of Exeter more fully and to update the survey of important resources, the historical survey of the Town should be updated in cooperation with the RI Historical Preservation Commission.

*Administrative Responsibility: Town Council. Medium term.*

##### 6.6.2b Establish the Exeter Historic District Commission

It is recommended that the Town establish a Historic District Commission under Section 45-24.1-1 of the RI General Laws. The purpose of establishing such a Commission is to have a body directly responsible for all preservation activities in the town. This will include the development and adoption of a Historic Overlay District Ordinance to afford control over the future disposition of individual properties or those contained in a Historic District. They will also be responsible for developing standards of review within the context of the law, while also becoming an integral part of the Site Plan Review process.

In general the Commission will act as the preservation conscience of the Town, promoting the recognition of these sites and structures, the general history of the town while directing all other preservation efforts to enhance the town's history for all future residents.

*Administrative Responsibility: Town Council and Planning Board. Long term.*

#### 6.6.2c Adopt Historic District Zoning

Once the Commission is established, one of their first responsibilities will be to develop a Historic District Zoning Overlay District. The purpose of such a zone will be to control changes to the exterior of structures covered by such zones to ensure their preservation as historic sites. The first step in adopting such zoning is to add a Historic Overlay District Zone to the Town's Zoning Ordinance. The ordinance would set standards that include design guidelines, approval and rejection time frames for proposals affecting such properties. Regulations regarding demolition, signage, setbacks, height and other site design criteria would be applied. Coordination in establishing the ordinance and the district with the RI Historic Preservation Commission is suggested. Historic District Zoning has been recognized by the courts, and is upheld in the court of action if the regulations are not subjective and are applied in a reasonable manner.

In order to guard against incompatible construction, preservation design guidelines should be as specific as possible in order to avoid misinterpretations of the existing ordinances and to protect the commission charged with historic preservation from legal encounters. These design guidelines are established for the character of additions to historic buildings and for the design on new structures in historic context. These set guidelines may control the height, materials, signage, setbacks, proportions, and architectural styles. The U.S. Department of Interior publishes design guidelines and standards for the National Register that many communities have used.

*Administrative Responsibilities: Town Council, Planning Board, and Historic District Commission. Long term.*

#### 6.6.2d Apply for Certified Local Government Status

Local governments can be partners in the State and National Historic Preservation Program. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 established a nationwide program of financial and technical assistance to preserve historic sites in response to wide-scale destruction of historic resources. A local government can participate in this program when they enact a protective historic preservation ordinance and appoint a professionally qualified commission as well as meeting other Federal and State standards. A local government that receives such certification is known as a "Certified Local Government" or "CLG."

Certified local governments assist in nominating properties to the National Register of Historic Places and they are eligible to receive grants from the RI Historic Preservation

Commission to carry out preservation projects. The following is a list of benefits of becoming a Certified Local Government:

- Special grants from State Historic Preservation Officers
- Local historic preservation expertise recognized by State and Federal Agencies
- Technical assistance and training from State Historic Preservation Officers
- Participation in nominations to the National Register of Historic Places
- National Historic preservation assistance network: publications, professional assistance
- Information exchange with State Historic Preservation Officers
- Participation in statewide preservation programs and planning

Obtaining status as a Certified Local Government can help a local government encourage, develop, and maintain its local preservation efforts, as well as benefiting both economically and socially in the rehabilitation of a community's historic properties and landmarks.

#### 6.6.2e Establish a Town Record Center

The Town should establish a Records Center in the renovated Town Clerk's office and/or in a new town hall building. Historic land evidence records and other significant meeting records and documents (i.e., Town Council Meetings, reports and other important papers and documents) would be stored and updated constantly to preserve a permanent record of the town. Records of this nature tend to be lost or destroyed, making it difficult in future years to compile complete accurate records.

At the same time, it is recommended that the town seek a student intern from the University of Rhode Island to work with the town to establish its Records Center. The intern could also be utilized to develop a historic structure and site inventory for the town, possibly to be included in the computer system. This would provide an easy reference to identify properties that may be threatened due to development, road construction, etc.

*Administrative Responsibility: Town Council, Town Clerk, and Planning Board. Medium term.*

#### 6.6.2f Establish Town-wide Park and Heritage System

Create a Historic Pathway through the Town as an educational and recreational resource tied into a Town bicycle/pedestrian path. It is recommended that this town-wide corridor be established so that it links recreational sites and historic landmarks through a defined path system. This system would be an element of the Pedestrian/Bicycle Improvements identified in the Circulation Element.

***Administrative Responsibility:*** Recreation Director, Planning Board, Town Council, and Conservation Commission. Long term.

6.6.2g Create a Heritage Education Program for Exeter

As a standard component of elementary education, the town should include as part of its American History Curriculum, a segment on the History of Exeter and West Greenwich as a part of the K-6 curriculum. A part of this effort should include teachings related to the importance of historic preservation as an element of one's life.

***Administrative Responsibility:*** Exeter-West Greenwich School District. Medium term.

6.6.2h Create a Development Review Process for Historic/ Archeological Sites

A review of historic and archaeological resources should be accomplished during the Site Plan Review Process. The specific historic and archaeological sites can be identified through materials and maps developed by the RI Historic Preservation Commission and RIGIS. Further coordination is recommended with the Narragansett Indians to identify sites of potential historic significance to the Tribe.

***Administrative Responsibility:*** Town Planner. Medium term.

6.6.2i Educate the Public about the History and Resources of Exeter

Consider town financial support for the publication of the historic survey developed for Exeter by the Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission. The Exeter Historic Society should form a rotating or lending museum for permanent or temporary exhibit.

***Administrative Responsibility:*** Exeter Historic Society. Long term.

6.6.2j Establish Town-wide Cemetery preservation program

Create a Town-wide Cemetery preservation program that combines Town resources with private efforts. Assess condition of all cemeteries and identify stewards for maintenance. Educate Exeter residents about the cemeteries and use in local historical educational programs. Team with local garden and civic organizations to maintenance programs and cleanups.

***Administrative Responsibility:*** Town Council and Conservation Commission. Long term.

## 6.7 Circulation Implementation Plan

### 6.7.1 Revise subdivision roadway design standards

The Town's current subdivision regulations do not base current roadway design standards on the function the road is meant to serve. Rather, a standard is applied to all roadways irrespective of function. Such an approach does not serve to enhance the rural character of the Town, but tends to homogenize it by establishing a series of streets with no diversification or relationship to the rural nature of the community. Future roadway designs should follow function, rather than a broad standard. To do so, it is recommended that the subdivision roadway design standards be revised to reflect a standard of function based upon nationally accepted standards for design, geometry and safety.

The actual design requirements established for roadways, including cartway width, curb or shoulder, sidewalk or graded area and total right of way will be established by a review of available resource materials. One such guide is the *Subdivision and Site Plan Handbook*, David Listoken and Carole Walker, 1989. It is a recognized standard for subdivision street design and other related regulations. The tables present dimensional requirements for a variety of street functions and levels of development intensity. Specific definitions of development intensities are found in this document.

A second potential standard for review is the American Society of State Highway and Transportation Officials (A.S.H.T.O.) document entitled, "A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets," 1990. It includes recommended roadway widths for local streets and roads based on Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volumes and design speeds. Another publication which can assist the Planning Board in reviewing and developing standards for streets in new subdivisions is *Residential Streets*, third edition, Walter M. Kulash, Principal Author, American Society of Civil Engineers, National Association of Home Builders, Urban Land Institute, Institute of Transportation Engineers, 2001.

In summary, the regulation of new street development in addition to the reconstruction of existing streets are recommended to be based on their function, and follow the guidelines indicated. This is important from a traffic safety standpoint as well as clearly defining the purpose of roadways in a community.

*Administrative Responsibility: Planning Board and Highway Supervisor. Medium term.*

### 6.7.2 State Roadway System

#### 6.7.2a State System Improvements

The State of Rhode Island, through its Rhode Island Department of Transportation, manages an extensive program of highway improvements throughout the State. This

program provides funding to improve both state roads and other roads on the State-Aid system. This work is accomplished through a program called the T.I.P. or Transportation Improvement Program. Local communities can petition the state to improve roads on the system, which are then included in a six-year program.

#### 1. T.I.P. Priorities/Local Goals and Objectives

To successfully accomplish the desired improvements to state and other roads on the state-aid system, it is imperative that the town's portion of the T.I.P. accurately reflects the goals of the town. In addition to having the projects listed, it is equally critical that the town negotiate with the RIDOT to develop a scope of work that addresses not only RIDOT's needs but those of the town itself.

There is only one project presently on the T.I.P. for Exeter:

- Wolf Rock RR Crossing Elimination

Scheduled for Right-of-Way Acquisition/Construction for fiscal year 1990-1991, this project has also been delayed. The proposed bridge construction was eliminated due to environmental constraints, resulting in other scenarios being evaluated for the project. The possibility of employing cul-de-sacs was also discussed, but that would present a conflict with delivery of public services and safety. Currently, the possibility of tunneling is being investigated.

- Other Projects in the System

Improvement to Route 102 and Exeter Road are currently within the T.I.P. cycle, but no schedule has yet to be programmed within the six-year timeline. Once again, every effort should be made to protect the rural character of these roads, especially that of scenic Route 102. Beyond these four projects there are presently no other active projects within the Town.

The following is a list of roads in Exeter that are included in the Federal Aid System.

- \_ Nooseneck Hill Road (Route 3)
- \_ South County Trail (Route 2)
- \_ Ten Rod Road (CT SL to Route 3)
- \_ Victory Highway
- \_ Bridge Road
- \_ Exeter Road
- \_ South Road
- \_ Arcadia Road
- \_ Proposed RI 138

The Town must prioritize these federally aided roads in a systematized fashion to determine which to petition the state for improvements.

Exeter's roadway system is an integral element of the Town's rural character. A tremendous increase in population (22.6%) since 1980 has resulted in many of Exeter's

roads requiring improvements. Surrounding South County communities have also followed Exeter's population trends, thus adding additional strain upon the roadway network. Planning of these facilities involves a comprehensive analysis of the ability of the transportation network to accommodate future changes in demand with minimal cost and negative impacts for the community.

The following local roads were identified in the Comprehensive Plan Public Opinion Survey, and by the CPAC as requiring the most improvement due to condition or design:

- \_ Liberty Road
- \_ Mail Road
- \_ New Road
- \_ Stony Lane

The Town should petition the State through the Department of Administration, Planning Division, to include these roads on the Federal Aid System.

*Administrative Responsibility: Town Council, Planning Board, and Highway Supervisor. Medium term.*

## 2. Intersection Priorities

The following intersections, including both state and local roads, were identified in the Comprehensive Plan Public Opinion Survey, and by the CPAC as needing improvements:

- \_ Nooseneck Hill Road (Rt. 3) and Victory Highway (Rt. 102)
- \_ New Road and Ten Rod Road (Rt. 102)
- \_ Ten Rod Road (Rt. 102) and South County Trail (Rt. 2)
- \_ Ten Rod Road (Rt. 102) and Sunderland Road

Similar to the T.I.P. process, the Town should prioritize these intersections and petition the state through the Statewide Planning office that they be included for improvement. It is important that the Town stresses this fact to the RIDOT in an effort to access federal and state funding to improving these intersections.

*Administrative Responsibility: Town Council, Planning Board, and Highway Supervisor. Medium term.*

## 3. Bridge Priorities

The Comprehensive Bridge Improvement Plan indicates that Exeter has seven bridges included on its Implementation Schedule. Table 5.6K lists these bridges along with the facility carried.

Table 5.6.K  
Bridges Scheduled for Improvements

<u>Name</u>	<u>Facility Carried</u>
Breakheart Brook	Austin Farm Road
Midway Trail	Midway Trail
Lewis City	Austin Farm Road
Browning Mill	Old Nooseneck Hill Road
Falls River	Austin Farm Road
Midway	Midway Trail
Frosty Hollow Road	Frosty Hollow Road

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation, through its highway improvement program, has placed additional emphasis upon bridge inspection and maintenance. The Town should coordinate with the Highway Supervisor and School Department to determine which bridges require improvements, repairs or additional capacity. This can be accomplished through the Roadway Management Program. The Town should petition the state just as they would for a road improvement project through the T.I.P. process.

***Administrative Responsibility:*** Highway Supervisor and Superintendent of Schools. Medium term.

#### 6.7.2b Development Plan Review

Major development projects should be subject to Development Plan Review process with respect to their potential impact on the existing roadway system. The Town can establish this process by using state enabling legislation and adopting the Development Plan Review into its zoning ordinance. Then the Planning Board can amend its procedures to establish this review process. Information critical to such an analysis includes:

- \_ Type and square footage of development
- \_ Projected peak hour traffic generated by the development
- \_ An analysis of the Level of Service at the entrance point and adjacent intersections
- \_ The existing traffic counts, speed and peak hour counts at the frontage roadway
- \_ The need, or lack of, for a signalized entrance at various levels of build-out
- \_ Accident data in the immediate vicinity of the site (3 yrs. minimum)

***Administrative Responsibility:*** Town Council and Planning Board. Medium term.

### 6.7.3 Pedestrian/Bicycle Improvements

#### 6.7.3a Overview

An important element of a rural circulation system relates to the development of a non-vehicular transportation system. This system provides recreational alternatives for bicyclists, hikers and horseback riders who wish to exercise, visit recreational sites or areas of natural beauty while being able to access local services by an alternative means of transportation.

Such a system must be integrated and comprehensive and be developed over time as the opportunity for expansion presents itself. It should be an integrated system connecting to other forms of transportation and be funded through public and private contributions.

The system would utilize a combination of local roadways, existing pathways and new facilities dedicated to the Town for such purposes. It would serve to support and promote the Town as a recreational center and support efforts toward that end. Two major elements would serve to form the basis for such a system. They would include hiking and riding trails and bicycle facilities.

It is recommended that the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations be amended to require that pedestrian and bicycle facilities be considered in overall subdivision design, and constructed where necessary and desirable.

#### 6.7.4 Hiking and Riding Trails

The establishment of a hiking and riding system would require an inventory of existing facilities, private and public, while identifying potential connecting links to such facilities. The inventory could include local roads (maintained or unmaintained) existing pathways through public and private properties and key points of interest or destinations to be identified. The pathways could include such historic routes as the New London Turnpike and Ten Rod Road. New connecting links could be gained through acquiring easements through private properties or through the dedications of open space in association with revised land use regulations requiring such dedications.

***Administrative Responsibility:** The establishment of such a system and the means by which it is created would be undertaken by a Task Force to include recreation enthusiasts, historians, interested planning board members, conservationists and private and public recreation officials. Medium term.*

### 6.7.5 Bicycle Facilities

Bicycling has become a major recreational activity across the county and is a favored form of exercise to Exeter residents and those who visit the community to experience its natural beauty. The state has undertaken an aggressive bicycle facilities development program to establish such a system throughout the state. To date, the East Bay Bicycle Path has been established which connects the City of Providence to its East Bay neighbors of East Providence, Warren, Bristol and Barrington. Other systems have been planned for the Blackstone River, Route 116 in Lincoln, the South Shore Facility in Charlestown and South Kingstown, in addition to North Kingstown and Narragansett. The Town of Exeter offers an excellent site for the establishment of a bicycle trail system and should pursue the study for such a system in the Town.

The State of Rhode Island has prepared the Statewide Bicycle System Plan with the aim of linking bicycle-tolerant roadways and independent bike paths in an integrated network. In Exeter, the State Bicycle System Plan includes Route 102, South County Trail (43<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division Memorial Highway) and Nooseneck Hill Road as bicycle-tolerant roadways in Exeter.

### 6.7.6 Scenic Roadways

These roadways contain the significant scenic areas which are included in "A Survey of the State's Scenic Areas" comprised by the RI Department of Environmental Management in the Rhode Island Landscape Inventory, January 1990. The following is a summary of those sites in Exeter by roadway, name and description:

Route	Name	Description
2 & 102	Ten Rod Road/ So. County Trail	Undulating Topography/ Woodland and Open Farm Fields
2	Turf Farms	Excellent views across open Turf farms
102	Ten Rod Road/ Hallville Road	Undulating Topography Woodland and Open Farm Fields
	New London Turnpike	Distinctive Wetlands & Turnpike
	Tug Hollow	Topography
Rt. 165	Ten Rod Road	Scenic Road through Arcadia Management Area

### 6.7.7 Scenic and Historic Highway Designations

Exeter residents have expressed a concern that maintaining the rural character of the Town is of primary importance to them. They are particularly concerned with the future development of Rt. 102 and Rt. 165, the Town's scenic east/west connecting route. In addition, they have placed a high priority on preserving the historical character of the Town through the preservation of important elements that link the Town to its past. From a circulation standpoint, two actions are recommended: the designation of a roadway in Exeter as a Scenic Highway through the RIDOT, and the identifying of a Historic Transportation Corridor through local zoning initiatives.

### 6.7.8 Scenic Highway Designation

To control future development, while maintaining the character of roadways that are important to the history and fabric of the community it is recommended that Route 165 be the subject of a petition to the RIDOT to designate it for inclusion in the State's Scenic Roadway System. Route 102 has already received this designation.

The Scenic Highway designation must be supported by zoning restrictions to ensure that their value as scenic resources is maintained. This can most easily be accomplished through the establishment of an overlay district, which would include specific controls over development along these roadways.

***Administrative Responsibility:** Planning Board, Town Council, and Conservation Commission. Short term.*

### 6.7.9 Historic Highway Zoning

While Route 165 may be eligible for Scenic Highway designation through the RIDOT, another roadway, the New London Turnpike, must also be preserved as an historic link to the Town's past as a major part of a transportation corridor connecting New London, Connecticut, to Providence. Specific standards for development and use of this roadway should also be developed that will serve to preserve its character, while establishing specific preservation restrictions to maintain it as part of the Town's historical development. It has already been identified for inclusion in the Bicycle Path System as a key element that links recreational uses to historical development. Specific design standards should be applied to its use as an accessway that will maintain its historical character.

***Administrative Responsibility:** Town Council, Planning Board, and Town Council Conservation Commission. Medium term.*

## 6.7.10 Mass Transit

### 6.7.10a RIDE

It is recommended that the Town meet with representatives from RIDE to potentially expand the services currently provided to area seniors who may wish to access regional Senior Centers. RIDE service should also be expanded to assist disabled residents. *Medium term.*

### 6.7.10b Park & Ride/Car-Pooling

It appears that the two vacant lots in the vicinity of the Route 3 and the Victory Highway intersection are presently being used for car-pooling. The Town should determine who is using the lots for this activity and support their efforts at car pooling by providing improved facilities and/or funding through the appropriate State agencies. *Medium term.*

### 6.7.10c RIPTA Service

The Town should petition RIPTA to conduct a Ridership Study at the two lots presently utilized for car-pooling in Exeter and North Kingstown to determine the potential for expanded or new service to these facilities. *Medium term.*