

CHAPTER 8 CIRCULATION

"Shall consist of the inventory and analysis of the existing and proposed major circulation systems. street patterns and any other modes of transportation in coordination with the land use element. The policies and implementation techniques must be identified for inclusion in the implementation program element."-- Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act.

The transportation system of Little Compton is oriented toward the automobile. The road system consists of state highways and local roads. Access to the Town is limited to three state highways and other collector roads. West Main Road (Route 77) enters the Town in the north western corner and runs the length of the Town terminating at Sakonnet Harbor in the south western part of Town. Numerous Town roads radiate to the east from West Main and eventually intersect with the other north-south running roads including Willow Avenue, South of Commons Road, East Main Road/ Maple Avenue, and Long Highway. A series of roads converge on the Adamsville village area. These include Stone Church Road (Route 179) and Crandall Road (Route 81) from the north, Adamsville road from the east Old Harbor Road from the south and Colebrook Road from the west.

The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) has bus service from Little Compton to Providence. One bus leaves from the Commons at 7:00 a.m. and returns at 5:00 p.m. Ridership is estimated to be around seven people a day. This estimate includes Tiverton residents as well. Local roads are used for bicycle travel in the absence of a bike path. The Town's local roads are also used for limited pedestrian movement. There are no rail or airport facilities in the Town.

8.1 Street Classification

Street classification is the process of grouping streets and highways according to the character of their intended use. Streets and roads can be divided into three major functional classifications arterials, collectors, and local streets. A highway classification system has been developed by the Rhode Island Department of Administration, Division of Planning. Little Compton is considered a rural area, and as such has the following hierarchy of roads.

- Interstate
- Principal arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local

Little Compton's road system consists of major and minor collector roads, and local streets (see Figure 8-1). In general the collector street system functions to conduct traffic from local residential streets to arterials or expressways. Land access should be a secondary function of the collector street system. Collector streets penetrate neighborhoods, distributing trips from arterials through the neighborhood area to the ultimate destination which may be on a local or collector street. In some instances, due to the design of the overall street system, a minor amount of through traffic may be carried on some collector streets. Most often, the collector system provides access to land, and movements for local traffic within residential neighborhoods, commercial areas and industrial areas.

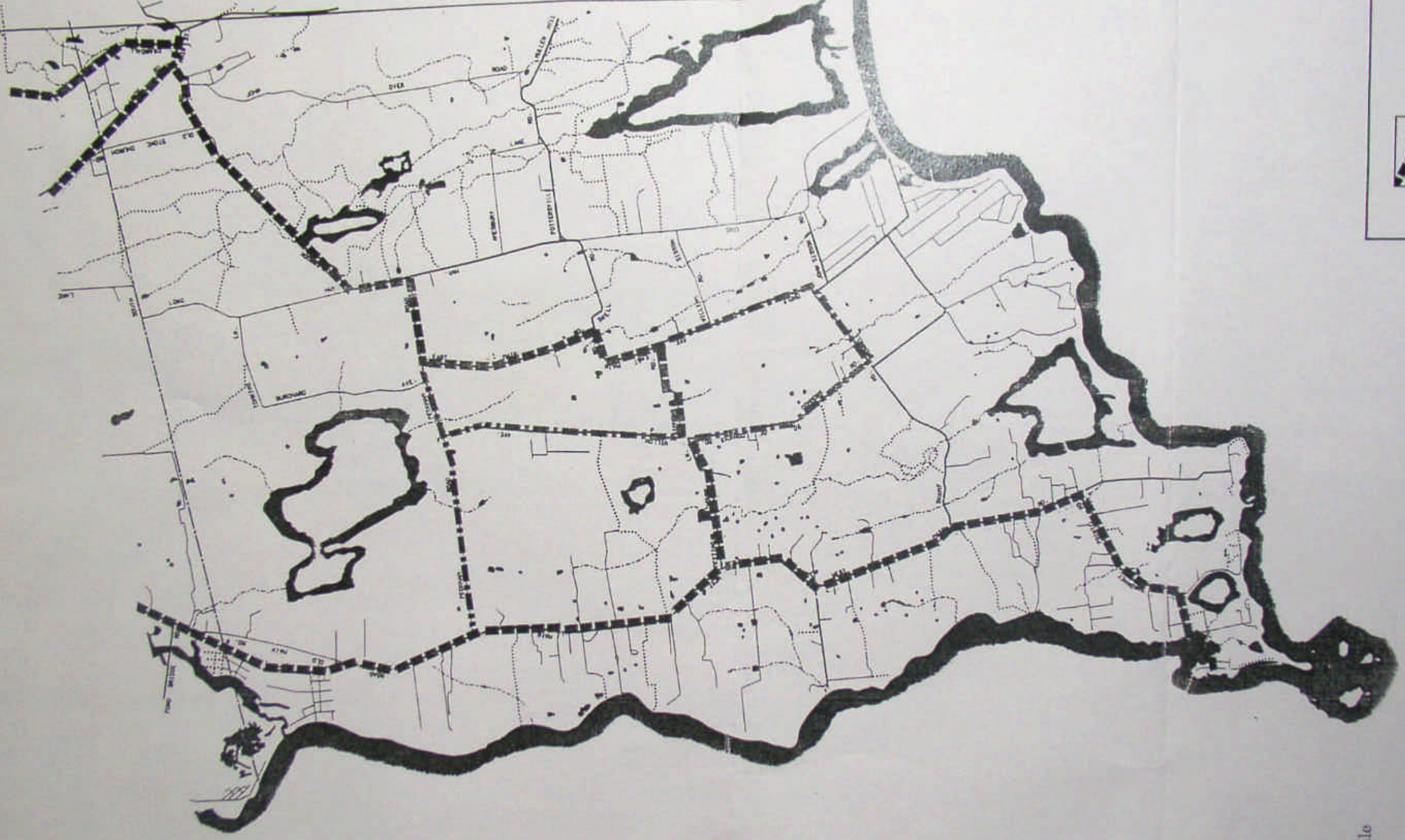
The local street system comprises all roads not included in one of the other systems. Local streets serve primarily to provide direct access between abutting land and the higher order street systems. They offer the lowest level of mobility and usually do not contain bus routes. Through traffic movement on local streets is discouraged.

The Functional Classification map, prepared by the Rhode Island Division of Planning for 1995-2005, identifies the following roads as major collectors:

| Route Name | Miles |
|--|-------|
| West Main Road (Route 77) | 5.40 |
| Stone Church Road (Route 179) | .85 |
| Crandall Road (Route 81) | .55 |
| Meeting House Lane | .85 |
| East Main Road | 1.40 |
| Simmons Road | .50 |
| Peckham Road (east of East Main Road) | .50 |
| Colebrook Road | 1.70 |
| Long Highway (between Peckham Road and Colebrook Road) | .30 |
| Sakonnet Point Road | 1.50 |
| Total | 13.55 |

The following roads are classified as minor collectors:

| Route Name | Miles |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| South of Commons Road | 1.20 |
| Brownell Road | .55 |
| Maple Avenue | 1.00 |
| Mullin Hill Road | .50 |
| Snell Road | .60 |
| Pottersville Road | .90 |
| Willow Avenue | 1.30 |
| Peckham Road (west of East Main Road) | 1.50 |
| Total | 7.55 |



Not to Scale



Source: Highway Functional Classification System for the State of Rhode Island 1995-2005, Division of Planning, RI Dept. of Administration, October, 1988.

Town of Little Compton, Rhode Island
Comprehensive Plan
 Albert Veri & Associates, Inc.

Roadway Functional Classification
 Figure: 8-1

The remaining streets and roads are not classified, and therefore are considered to be local streets. Table 8-1 lists sections of road the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) plans to "turn back" to Little Compton as part of statewide program. Money to assist the municipalities in maintaining these roads was to be provided by the state. Fiscal problems at the state level have prevented the implementation of this program. At some point in the future the program may be funded, and maintenance responsibility of these roads will shift to the Town.

**Table 8-1
State Roads Planned to be Turned Over to Town**

| Road Name | From | To | Approx. Miles |
|--|--------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Colebrook Road | Long Highway | Main Street | 1.8 |
| East Main Road | Peckham Road | Snell Road | 1.1 |
| Long Highway | Peckham Road | Colebrook Road | .3 |
| Meeting House Lane / Simmons Rd./ Snell Rd./Pottersville Rd./ Mullin Hill Road | Route 77 | MA./RI.State-line | 4.9 |
| Peckham Road | Route 77 | Long Highway | 2.2 |
| South of Commons Road | Simmons Road | Brownell Road | 1.3 |
| | | Total Miles | 11.6 |

Source: Rhode Island Department of Transportation, 1990.

The RIDOT Planning Division has collected annual average daily traffic counts (AADT) traffic counts in 1989 at eleven different points in Little Compton and adjacent towns. Table 8-2 lists the volume of traffic and the general location where counts were taken, and Figure 8-2 shows the traffic volumes.

**Table 8-2
Traffic Volumes at Selected Locations**

| Location | AADT | Location | AADT |
|----------------------|-------|--------------------------|-------|
| Colebrook Road | 2,500 | West Main Road south | 1,800 |
| Old Harbor Road | 2,400 | of Meeting House Lane | |
| @ State Line | | South of Commons Road | 1,100 |
| Stone Church Road | 1,100 | East Main Road | 900 |
| West Main Road | 3,000 | Pottersville Road | 800 |
| north of Peckham Rd. | | Peckham Road | 1,300 |
| West Main Road south | | Crandall Road | 3,200 |
| of Peckham Road | 2,200 | (leaving Little Compton) | |

Source: Rhode Island Department of Transportation, 1991.

The four roads which are most heavily traveled are Crandall Road, West Main Road north of Peckham Road, Colebrook Road and Old Harbor Road. Adamsville Road from Westport was not monitored for traffic volumes, but it is believed to have AADT counts equal to that of the more heavily traveled roads in Little Compton.

8.2 Traffic Safety

Traffic safety in Little Compton compares favorably with most of the other towns in the state with comparable populations. Traffic accident data for the years 1984 - 1988 were recorded by the state in the following categories: total accidents, fatal accidents, accidents in injuries, accidents resulting in property damage, total fatalities, and total injuries (see Table 8-3). Little Compton was compared with Jamestown, Foster, Scituate, Charlestown, Exeter, Hopkinton, and Richmond in all of these categories. Little Compton has 7 percent of the population of that group of communities and had only 5 percent of the fatalities and 6% of each of the other categories of accidents.¹

Table 8-3
Total Accidents

| Towns | 1984 | 1985 | 1986 | 1987 | 1988 | Total | % of Total | % of Pop |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|---------------|-------------|
| Little Compton | 52 | 45 | 38 | 38 | 47 | 220 | 6% | 7% |
| Jamestown | 79 | 73 | 103 | 109 | 108 | 472 | 13% | 11% |
| Foster | 76 | 78 | 81 | 80 | 83 | 398 | 11% | 9% |
| Scituate | 96 | 116 | 139 | 163 | 166 | 680 | 18% | 20% |
| Charlestown | 81 | 75 | 101 | 94 | 74 | 425 | 12% | 15% |
| Exeter | 83 | 64 | 85 | 96 | 98 | 426 | 12% | 10% |
| Hopkinton | 107 | 109 | 120 | 129 | 129 | 594 | 16% | 14% |
| Richmond | 86 | 97 | 98 | 80 | 105 | 466 | 13% | 13% |
| Total | 660 | 657 | 765 | 789 | 810 | 3681 | 100% | 100% |

Source: Rhode Island Department of Transportation, 1991.

Accident data obtained from RIDOT provided specific information on the types and locations of traffic accidents in Little Compton for the years 1986, 1987 and 1988.

Intersections and road segments where the most accidents occurred are listed in Table 8-4.²

Based on the data in Table 8-4, the worst traffic hazards in the Town are as follows:

- Main Street Adamsville has several major intersections in close proximity to one another, carries a relatively heavy flow of traffic and is the location of various vil-

¹ Rhode Island Department of Transportation, Planning Division

² Rhode Island Department of Transportation, Planning Division - Accident Location Reporting System, 1986, 1987 and 1988. Accidents listed may have occurred within 300 feet of the noted intersection.

lage functions. Traffic, often traveling at high speeds, enters from Stone Church Road, and traffic from Colebrook Road has poor visibility entering Main Street. There is poor visibility and heavy traffic at the intersection of Crandall Road and Main Street and at the intersection of Old Harbor Road, Main Street and Adamsville Road.

**Table 8-4
High Accident Locations**

| Intersection / Road Section | No. Accidents |
|--|---------------|
| Stone Church Rd. / Colebrook Rd./Main Street | 11 |
| Harbor Road/ Main Street | 3 |
| Crandall Road / Main Street | 4 |
| Peckham Rd. / Willow Avenue | 8 |
| W. Main /Meeting House Lane | 7 |
| W. Main / Peckham Road | 5 |
| Simmons / East Main Road | 5 |
| Old West Main Road /W. Main | 4 |
| Commons Area | 4 |
| Long Highway / Colebrook | 3 |
| So.of Commons Rd. / Brownell | 3 |
| Brownell Rd. / So. Shore Road | 3 |
| Sakonnet Rd. / Warrens Point Road | 3 |
| Peckham / Long Highway | 2 |

Source: Rhode Island Department of Transportation, 1991.

- The second area needing improvement is the intersection of Willow Avenue and Peckham Road. Sight distance west from the Willow Avenue intersection with Peckham Lane is poor due to a steep grade change.
- The intersection of West Main Road (Route 77) and Meeting House Lane has problems stemming from poorly defined rights of way, poor sight distances, and ineffective signage.

Figure 8-2 shows locations of high accident frequency. The following deficiencies were mentioned in Comprehensive Community Plan of 1978 and were generally still in existence at the time of this writing.

1. Problems of sight distance due to vertical street grades or abutting objects, such as stone walls, fences, buildings and vegetation
2. Problems of horizontal street alignment creating sudden curves, combined with poor sight distance.

3. Problems of alignment or design of street intersections which unnecessarily impede or create conflicts in the flow of traffic.
4. Lack of traffic control devices such as signs, signals, channelization, and a lack of speed limit signs on approaches to villages.

Deficiencies have been noted at the following locations:

West Main Road

- Meeting House Lane: sight distance is marginal and stop sign is ineffective.
- Taylor Lane: curve at intersection.
- Warren Point Road: sight distance is marginal on curve at Sakonnet Point Road.

Colebrook Road

- Near John Dyer Road: steep grade combined with curves and exposed culvert.
- At Long Highway: poor sight distances and poor definition of through road.

Maple Avenue

- At Brownell Road: sharp curve.
- At Simmons Road: poor sight distances at merging intersection.

Long Highway

- At Tiverton Town line: two right angle turns.
- At Snell and Mullin Hill Road. inadequate offset of intersection makes merging difficult with poor definition of through road.
- At Peckham Road: merging traffic pattern with marginal sight lines and poor definition of through road.

Peckham Road

- At East Main Road: poor sight distance impeded by slope on a sharp corner.

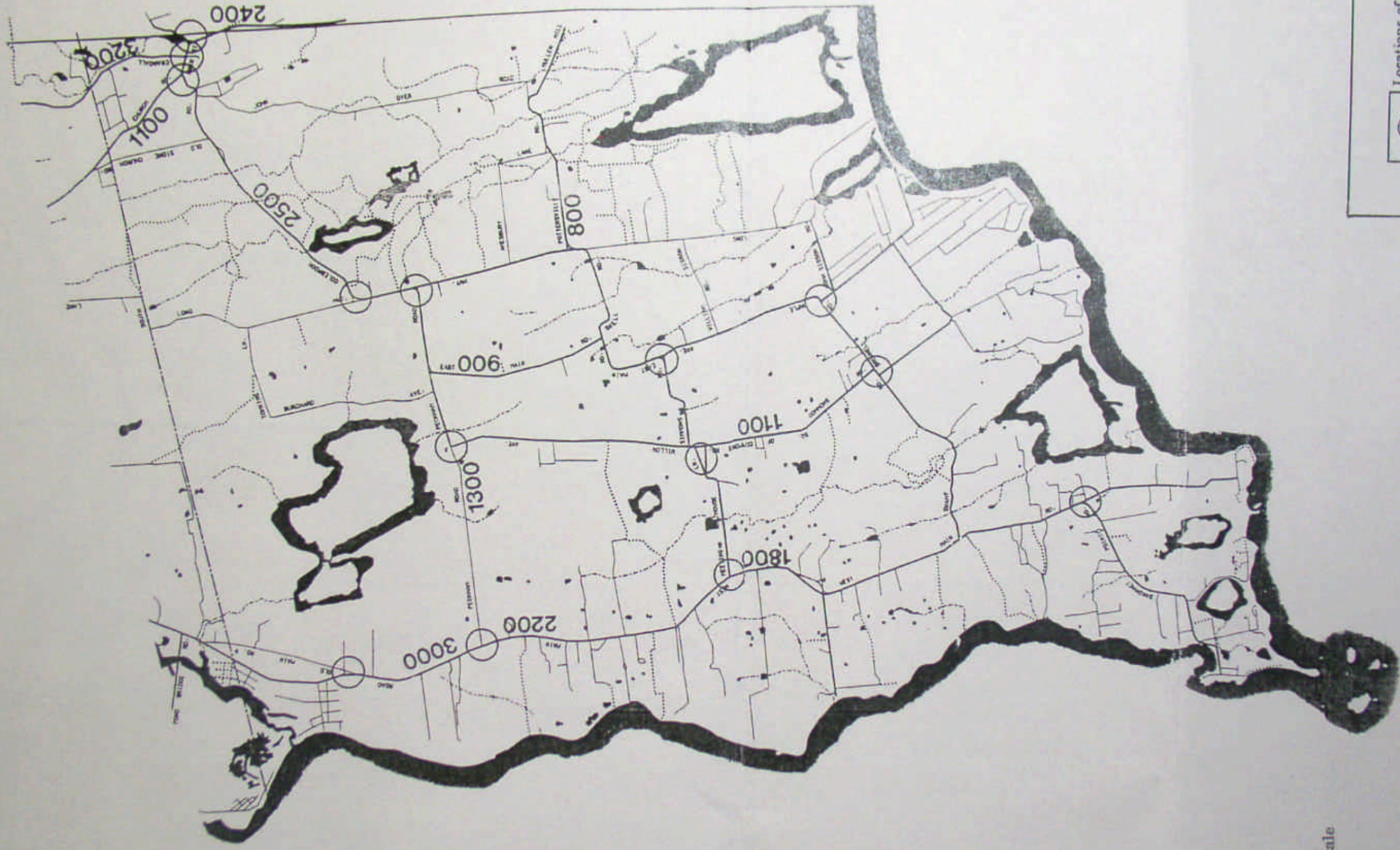
Mullin Hill Road

- At John Dyer Road: vertical and horizontal alignment restricts sight distance.


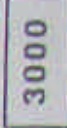
As mentioned in the 1978 plan many of these problems can be easily rectified at a relatively low cost. Improvements include the following:

1. Adding speed limit signs and other speed control measures.
2. Other traffic control signs or signal device, where appropriate.
3. Removal of roadside barriers to sight distance, including brush cutting and tree trimming. **Stone wall removal is to be discouraged.**
4. Intersection and curve realignments.

Many of the intersections mentioned above involve State highways or State-aid highways. The design and implementation of road improvements is the responsibility of the Rhode



Not to Scale

| | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
|  | Locations of High Accident Frequency |
|  | Average Annual Daily Traffic |

Source: RI Dept. of Transportation, 1991.
 Town of Little Compton, Rhode Island
Comprehensive Plan
 Albert Verti & Associates, Inc.

Traffic Volumes and Accidents
 Figure: 8-2

Island Department of Transportation. The remaining roads in the community are the Town's responsibility.

The intersections and sections of road cited most in the citizen survey as presenting traffic safety hazards, in general, did not correspond to those intersections where the most accidents have been occurring. The Commons area cited 55 times in the survey, had only 4 accidents between 1986 and 1988. The intersection of Long Highway and Peckham Road, cited 47 times in the survey had only 2 accidents in three years, and the second most cited intersection, Colebrook and Long Highway, 28 cites, had only 3 accidents. The intersection of East Main Road and Peckham Road, cited 18 times in the survey, had no accidents in the three years from 1986 to 1988.

Familiarity, and the relatively low traffic volumes associated with the intersections cited most in the survey, may explain the disparity between the number of people who perceive an intersection to be hazardous, and the actual number of accidents reported at a given intersection. Other intersections listed as having more than two accidents, were cited in the survey as posing a threat to traffic safety (see survey results for details).

8.3 Scheduled Road Improvements

The Rhode Island Department of Administration, Division of Planning, in conjunction with the Rhode Island Transit Authority, the State Department of Transportation, and the cities and towns, prepares the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). This is a 6 year scheduling document which currently covers the period 1989-1995. It contains a "biennial Element" covering the first two years of the scheduled improvement. The inclusion of a project in the Biennial Element makes the project eligible for federal funding.

Projects submitted by Towns are reviewed by RIDOT's Capital Development Committee and are ranked using the following criteria and weights.

1. Safety considerations - 20 percent
2. Level of service - 15 percent
3. Geometric and structural adequacy - 20 percent
4. Environmental, economic, and social benefits - 20 percent
5. Degree of public commitment - 25 percent

Little Compton does not have any projects scheduled in the most recent TIP. However, there is a project scheduled in the 1987 Highway Improvement Plan which, involves Stone

Church Road, and Adamsville Road to East Road. The design phase of this project is scheduled to begin in 1992, and is scheduled for construction in 1995. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$1,450,000.

The Town spent \$29,418 for road resurfacing in 1990-91 and has budgeted \$30,000 for 1991-1992. All of the 1990-91 allotment for resurfacing was used to replace a 2,400 foot section of Long Highway, in the southern part of Town.

The Town, in recent years has received \$10,000 of state money for road repairs under the local pavement management program. This program was suspended in 1989 because of a lack of funds and has not yet been renewed.

Generally, the major roads in Little Compton appear to be in good shape. Road surfaces are generally free from pot holes. Road shoulders in most places are quite narrow, and do not invite use by pedestrians or cyclists.

Highway projects affecting the Town of Little Compton that are currently in various stages of planning and engineering design are:

- A. CRANDALL ROAD - MODIFIED 3R (reconstruction, resurfacing and rehabilitation) CONSTRUCTION
- B. MAIN ROAD/STONE CHURCH ROAD - MODIFIED 3R

Improvements to roads in Little Compton that are under State jurisdiction will have to meet design standards acceptable to RIDOT. RIDOT will work with the Town to achieve designs in keeping with the rural and village character of the Town.

RIDOT has prepared a Statewide Bicycle System Plan with the aim of linking bicycle-tolerant roadways and independent bike paths in an integrated network.

Recently, RIPTA did an extensive evaluation of their bus routes throughout the State. As a result of this analysis, changes in the areas served and in the frequency of service may occur that affect the Town of Little Compton.

Little Compton is presently served by the State's coordinated paratransit brokerage project, or RIDE Program. This program is designed to coordinate all state funded transportation in Kent, Washington, Newport, and Bristol Counties and the City of East Providence. The RIDE Program acts as a middleman between the State agency purchasing the transportation and the client who receives it. Elderly and disabled residents who live in Little Compton and attend day care and nutrition programs, or need transportation to and from medical appointments qualify for transportation through the RIDE Program. Also, the Little Compton Visiting Nurse's Association and the Newport County Chapter RIARC Center provide transportation to their clientele who live in town.

The TIP, approved for the time of October 1, 1993 to September 30, 1996, included a modified 3R project for Stone Church Road; East Road to Adamsville Road.

8.4 Parking

Provisions for public off-street parking are very limited in the Commons area. A study of the current parking facilities on the Commons revealed that capacity is inadequate and provisions for off-street parking need to be made. Any off-street parking proposed in the area should be designed so as to be as inconspicuous as possible. Berms and vegetative screens should be used to help blend parking lots into the surroundings.

There is on-street parking for approximately 82 cars on the north side of the Commons. Thirty-four of these spaces are located on the north side of the road and the remainder are on the south, along the green and cemetery. The Town Hall and Legion Hall addition are serviced by a small apron parking area. Seven cars parked perpendicular to the road can utilize this lot. Town personnel park vehicles on the lawn between the Grange Hall and the Town Hall and police vehicles are parked on the lawn in front of the Grange. Additional police vehicles and fire equipment are parked in the driveway between the Grange Hall and the police station, and in a paved area in front of the tennis courts. No parking is allowed from the police station west until beyond a school driveway on the east side of the school building. Parking for several vehicles is also found behind the police station. The school off-street parking area provides approximately 30 spaces for school personnel and is also used for the loading and unloading of school buses.

Most activity in terms of vehicle movement seems to be around the Town Hall. The Fire and Police departments have relatively infrequent visits from the public. In general, the parking, though very tight, does seem to adequately serve the public and the personnel who work in the various Town departments on the Commons. However, functions held during business hours at the various municipal and private buildings could tax the limits of the parking capacity depending on the attendance.

Parking in the post office and bank parking lot is limited to 10 or 11 cars. Egress from the lot is dangerous due to the poor sight distance. The lot's proximity to a sharp corner in Meeting House Lane creates this problem. The number of spaces in the lot appears adequate, except at peak hours in the morning when mail is first posted and during July and August when the seasonal population is at its peak. Patrons either utilize on-street parking across from the Post Office, park in private commercial lots near by or in the field beside the Brownell House.

The issue of Parking in and around the Commons was addressed in a 1981 public facilities plan prepared by Michael Holleran and Michael Everett in conjunction with the Little Compton Capital Improvement Committee. Many of the improvements suggested in this plan were, and still are valid solutions which would improve parking at the Commons while maintaining the character of the area. Some of the recommendations include:

- A school employee parking facility located behind Elementary
- School; Town parking behind the Grange and police station; and,
- A Town parking lot behind the post office and bank.

Relocation of the police and fire departments to a new public safety facility on the Peckham lot at the southwestern approach to the Commons may alleviate some of the parking problems specific to this

area. The Town should assess the impacts of this relocation before allocating resources to any of these recommended parking solutions.

Sakonnet Harbor -One of the primary issues in the Harbor area is parking. The policy in the Sakonnet Harbor Master Plan regarding parking, whether expressed or implied through action of land owners, indicates that land in the Harbor area should be used for recreation, open space, residential, and water related commercial activities rather than for parking, and further, that the need for parking in the Harbor acts to limit water side development.

Despite land owners' reluctance to create new parking opportunities at the harbor, two new parking areas were proposed in the plan. Ten spaces were proposed at the head of the harbor and an additional .30 spaces were planned for a portion of a lot on the corner of Pennsylvania Road and Bluffs Head Avenue. With the addition of these new spaces, the total number of parking spaces available at the harbor, including the parking available at the Sakonnet Yacht Club, will be approximately 70. An estimated 50 spaces can be gained at the harbor, if the large lot on Bluff Head Avenue is developed for parking.

8.5 Motor Vehicle Registrations

Table 8-5 shows the number of vehicles registered in Little Compton from 1986 to 1990.

Table 8-5
Motor Vehicles Registered in Little Compton

| Year | No. of Motor Vehicles | % Change |
|----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1986 | 3,539 | |
| 1987 | 3,706 | 4.7% |
| 1988 | 3,788 | 2.2% |
| 1989 | 3,878 | 2.4% |
| 1990 | 3,847 | -0.8% |
| Increase - 1986-1990 | | 308 8.7% |

Source: Rhode Island Department of Transportation, 1991.

The number of registered motor vehicles grew by 8.7 percent between 1986 and 1990. There was a slight decline in the number of registered vehicles between 1989 and 1990, reflecting the poor economic climate. In 1990 there were 1.15 vehicles per resident in Little Compton. Projections by the state Division of Planning estimate there will be 4,420 registered vehicles in Little Compton by the year 2010, a 15 percent increase from the 1990 figure. Because of its location Little Compton's roads are used primarily by local traffic. However, during the summer months the number of vehicles using Little Compton's road system is considerably larger than the 3,847 indicated by state records.³

8.6 Goals

- A. To provide and encourage a safe, convenient and cost-effective transportation system.
- B. Provide a well maintained system of roads linking all areas, of the town village to facilitate daily commerce in the Town of Little Compton.
- C. To provide adequate parking in the Town.

³ Rhode Island Department of Transportation, Planning Division

8.6.a Recommendations

1. Begin the process of developing an official town map using Rhode Island Geographic Information System (RIGIS) mapping as a base map.
2. Actively participate in planning of State and regional transportation systems.
3. Maintain and update the list of projects for inclusion in the State Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
4. Work with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation to achieve workable designs on TIP projects in keeping with the rural and village character of town.
5. Coordinate development of circulation systems with the planned development of the community.
6. Recognize the importance of Little Compton's outstanding historic manmade and natural landscape by protecting to the maximum extent possible shade trees, stone walls, historic buildings and structures, and natural features during the planning, design and construction of new and reconstructed roadways as well as the maintenance of existing roads.
7. Develop and implement a pavement management program to evaluate and prioritize improvements of town streets. Include in the program, an evaluation of drainage conditions.
8. Adopt best management practices (BMP's) as part of road standard in subdivision regulations, and in retro-fitting roadway drainage facilities (see Appendix 8-A).⁴
9. Furnish the Highway Superintendent with adequate funding to maintain the roadways, for snow removal, street sweeping and drainage system maintenance.
10. Encourage the Public Transit Authority to maintain the fixed route bus system servicing the Town of Little Compton.
11. Request that RIDOT investigate the areas in their jurisdiction cited as presenting traffic safety problems, and that substandard intersections be considered when DOT's Division of Planning prepares the 1995-2001 TIP.
12. Encourage the availability of trails, walkways and bikeways to promote and enhance the tourist and recreational values of the town.
13. Encourage the consideration of trails, walkways and bikeways in all development projects.
14. Consider controlling traffic egress from the Post Office corner parking area.
15. Provide sufficient parking and improve safety for employees and visitors of the various Town departments and private businesses on the Commons.
16. Review proposals for new police/fire complex to ensure that adequate parking is provided and safe routing of emergency vehicles is developed.
17. Improve the parking facilities at Sakonnet Harbor

⁴ Land Management Project. Land Use and Water Quality Series, Stormwater Best Management Practices