



# CHEPACHET VILLAGE

## Revitalization Plan

### Town of Glocester, Rhode Island

December 2020 FINAL





Betty the Elephant was restored through the help of Town Planner, Karen Scott, who was able to obtain a Rhode Island Foundation Community Grant for the restoration, and Beth Decorte, Public Works.

Image source: Town of Gloucester

# Acknowledgements

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**Many thanks to Chepachet Village businesses and property owners!**

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Image source: CivicMoxie, LLC. \*Note that henceforth all unsourced photos in this Plan are by CivicMoxie, LLC.



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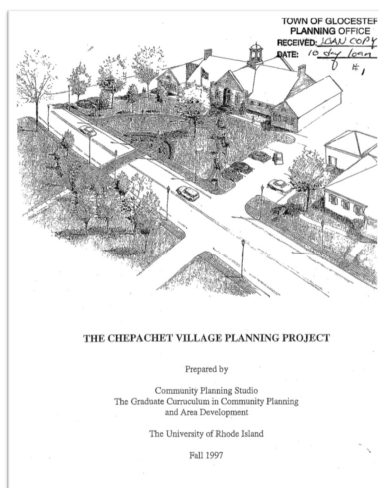
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# 1 – Overview

The purpose of the Chepachet Village Revitalization planning process is to build on all previous planning efforts to develop a targeted revitalization plan for Chepachet Village to create a five-year implementation and investment plan to identify opportunities for scattered site affordable housing integrated within mixed-use development, preserve historic resources, strengthen and expand small businesses, improve recreational resources, improve buildings and infrastructure, implement creative re-use of property, increase tourism and develop infill recommendations. CivicMoxie has been engaged to lead the Town through a process to assess current properties, envision improvements and target investments in Chepachet Village. This revitalization plan will identify what exists today and, using input from business and property owners, recommend innovative ways to redevelop Chepachet Village in compliance with the Town's recently updated Comprehensive Plan through incentives and available funding sources while maintaining its rural character as a historic village center.

## Today's Opportunities

The Town has been working towards the revitalization of Chepachet Village since the early 1990's beginning with the Chepachet Village Planning Project, which outlined goals, recommendations and implementation steps to spur economic and historic revitalization. The Town has been steadily working its way towards implementing the steps outlined in the Plan to create an environment in which the Village's resources can thrive and expand.



Throughout the years, the Town made infrastructure improvements to enhance the visual character of the district in anticipation of attracting private investments and additional economic development opportunities to the Village. The Town, in partnership with other agencies, saw the implementation of over \$15 million

in infrastructure investment contributing to the Village's character as a historic, walkable commerce center including new brick sidewalks and crosswalks, period lighting, street trees, planters, new signage and a new roundabout replacing the only stoplight in the district.

During this time, the Town significantly invested in Gloucester Memorial Park, the largest recreational facility in Gloucester, constructed the Senior Center in Chepachet Village to further increase potential traffic through the business district, and acting as a leader in the revitalization of historic structures in the Village, the Town heavily invested in the historic Town Hall structure and grounds including energy upgrades, new exterior paint, significant landscaping improvements and new signage.

The Town has repeatedly invested its limited funds in improvements to Chepachet Village and made changes to its regulations to ensure that private investment also conforms to the overall vision for the area. While the Town has been driving the implementation of public infrastructure investments and regulatory reforms, many of the structures in the Village have fallen into disrepair. This Revitalization Plan is the next step in the redevelopment process, finding ways to incentivize and assist local property owners to invest in their properties to not only beautify their exteriors but to attract new economic development and new residents to Chepachet Village, while maintaining its rural character as a historic village center.

This Plan provides an inventory including each property located in Chepachet Village, utilizes the existing data from the property assessment to identify the revitalization needs and growth potential of key properties, and develops a targeted, prioritized five-year investment plan targeting specific properties and identifying the appropriate available or anticipated funding sources and/or innovative funding strategies to complete the rehabilitation. The Plan includes the following:

### Section 2: Assessing the Village – Current Conditions

– This section provides a concise summary of existing conditions and current initiatives.

### Section 3: Envisioning a Revitalized Chepachet Village – Vision and Goals

– The vision for the Village is presented here as well as the overall goals and specific strategies to achieve the goals.

### Section 4: Targeted Investment Strategies

– Priority building investments, potential funding sources, and other resources for revitalization of Chepachet Village.

## Brief Timeline of Chepachet Village History

### pre- 1638

The area now called Glocester is inhabited by Native American Nipmucs.

### 1638

Roger Williams receives a deed from the Narragansett Tribe for land that includes the area known today as Glocester. Its location along Putnam Pike and the Chepachet River is key to its ensuing development into a major commercial and industrial center.

### 18th century

Glocester continues to develop mostly as an agricultural center.

### 19th century

The Town grows in commerce and industry, opening stores for groceries, dry goods, and farming equipment. Chepachet Village's concentration of business activity is considered a "thriving little village."

### 1898

The mill holds of Henry C. White and & Son are destroyed in a fire, adversely impacting the Village's economy.

### 1907

The first trolley service to Chepachet from Providence arrives.

### 1924

Trolley is dismantled as auto travel becomes common.

### post- World War II

Glocester and Chepachet Village also experience an influx of new residents and development of suburban communities in its rural setting.

### 1971

Chepachet Village National Register District established.

### 1991

Glocester Local Historic District and Glocester Historic District Commission is established.

### 1996

Glocester Town Council adopts a resolution to become part of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor and accesses funding supporting preservation, education, and heritage projects. Glocester becomes part of the Northern Rhode Island Tourism District.

### 1997

The Chepachet Village Planning Project is completed, setting the stage for the next two decades and more of investments.

## Recent events in Chepachet Village

### 2007

The Town completes Senior Center in Chepachet Village.

### 2008

Renovation of Town Hall in Chepachet Village begins.

### 2012

Village District Zoning is adopted to streamline permitting of mixed-use development in order to encourage adaptive reuse of buildings and the infill of vacant/abandoned properties.

### 2018

Town completes outdoor Pavilion at Kent Field. This complex includes an open air, covered pavilion, parking, landscaping, and restrooms, and hosts many community events.

### 2018

Glocester's 2018 Comprehensive Plan is completed and includes goals and recommendations for the Village.

### 2018-2019

Town applies for and receives \$250,000 grant from the National Park Service's Historic Revitalization Program to launch a sub-grant program within the Village of Chepachet, a National Register District.

### 2019

To assist in the identification of potential investment strategies in a Chepachet Village Revitalization Plan, the Town issues a Request for Proposals for consultant services and selects planning firm CivicMoxie, LLC.

### 2020

Town is awarded a \$400,000 grant from the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (with the Town contributing an additional \$225,000) for significant improvements to Glocester Memorial Park, including rehabilitation and reconfiguration of the basketball courts, construction of a new playground, construction of a new bocce court, additional parking spaces, and a pedestrian connection from the park to Chepachet Village.

### 2020

To assist in the Town's grant review board related to the NPS \$250,000 sub-grant program, the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission awards the Town \$14,000 to hire a historic preservation consultant.

### 2020

The Town begins the selection process for awarding the National Park Service Historic Revitalization subgrants.



## 2 – Assessing the Village - Current Condition

This assessment of current conditions of the Village was compiled using existing data, site visits, and interviews with Town staff, business proprietors and property owners.

### Chepachet Village Analysis

Chepachet Village offers a walkable environment with a significant collection of historic buildings that tell a compelling story of the Industrial Revolution in the town and the state. With its cluster of antiques/gifts businesses and historic buildings, recent and planned improvements to the Pavilion at Kent Field and to Glocester Memorial Park, and consistent infrastructure improvements over the past two decades, the Village provides potential to support existing entrepreneurs and attract new businesses and provide a solid network of destinations for residents and visitors. The map below highlights some key characteristics.

Table 1 – Demographic Overview of Chepachet Village		
Indicator	U.S. Census 2010	ACS 2014-2018*
Population	9,746	10,062
<b>Race / Ethnicity</b>		
% White alone (not Hispanic/Latino)	97.4%	93.1%
% Black/African American	0.3%	1.6%
% American Indian	0.1%	0.1%
% Asian alone	0.6%	1.7%
% Hispanic/Latino of any race	1.3%	2.3%
<b>Housing</b>		
Housing units (total)	4,025	4,238
% Owner-occupied	79.9%	88.2%
Median home value for owner-occupied units (\$)	\$286,000**	\$277,500
Median rent (\$)	\$847**	\$1,031
<b>Households</b>		
Number of Households	3,683	3,748
Persons per household	2.64	2.68
<b>Income &amp; Poverty</b>		
Persons in poverty, %	4.5%	7.5%
Median household income (\$)	\$79,127	\$89,706

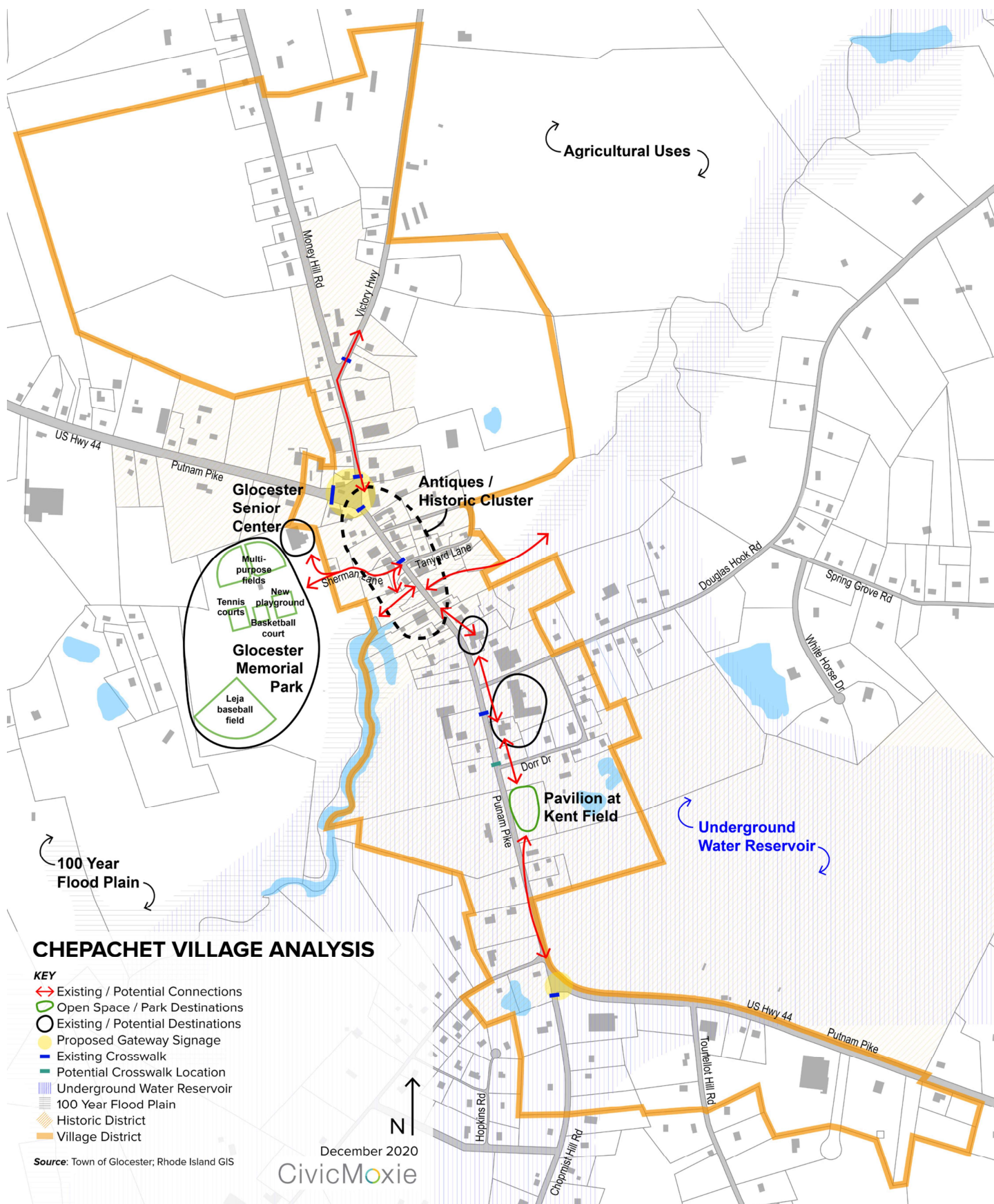
Sources: 2010 U.S. Census,

\*2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

\*\* Indicates figure taken from 2006-2010 ACS estimates.



# Figure 1 – Village Analysis



## 1 Architecture and Historic Character

The Chepachet Village National Register district was established in March 1971 to recognize the village's importance as one of the very early settled communities in the state. It was and continues to act as the Town Center for the Town of Glocester and displays, through its buildings and landscapes, the town's history, character, and community. It is a visually attractive area which can, in capsule form, illustrate the history of the entire state. There are more than 50 structures of historical and architectural significance in this compact historic district, one of which is a structure built in 1799 housing the Brown and Hopkins Country Store. Brown and Hopkins opened in 1809 and claims title to being the oldest continuously operating store in the United States. Like its neighbors, Chepachet had a part in the industrial development which took place in Rhode Island in the post-Revolutionary era and during the early 19th century. Due to its proximity to the Chepachet River, several mills were located in the area. It was a compactly settled point for stops, relays, and service on the stagecoach routes running on the turnpike into Connecticut.

While a notable number of historic buildings remain, many historic structures have been lost – to fires and floods, decline and decay, and more recently to redevelopment. As a result, the Village is now a mix of modern commercial buildings and historic resources.

### Needs and Potential

- There is potential to further highlight the remarkable story of the Industrial Revolution in Chepachet Village and create a strong narrative that weaves together historic buildings, streets, and the larger regional context to strengthen the image of the Village and make it a more compelling destination.
- Targeting catalyst historic rehabilitation projects can support the health of businesses and Village life by enhancing the image of the area.
- There is a particularly attractive cluster of carefully maintained historic structures in the center of the Village, and most visitors are drawn to explore this colorful mix of buildings. Supporting the rehabilitation and maintenance of these structures, as well as making their role in the history of the Village and in the Industrial Revolution in Rhode Island more visible, can support tourism and Village businesses.
- There is an opportunity to work with adjacent property owners to enlarge the existing cluster of historic properties and the corresponding area of interest through physical rehabilitation of nearby structures.
- Other buildings in the historic district need improvements to address their physical conditions and/or restore their historic character.
- While the local historic district works to protect the architectural integrity of the historic buildings in the Village, ensuring that new construction and renovations of existing more modern structures are compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features of those existing historic structures is essential in retaining the Village character in the future.



## 2 Economic Development

Less than 4% of the Town's area is dedicated to commercial and manufacturing activities. The majority of the Town's tax base is made up of residential uses, with limited commercial, mixed-use and industrial operations. Chepachet Village is the primary center of economic activity for this rural community. The business mix in Chepachet was assessed and several business owners were directly interviewed as a part of the economic assessment. Key findings include:

- Retail and service business make up 86% (or 36 of 42) of all establishments;
- Service businesses include health care, financial enterprises (banks, credit unions and insurance agents), professional services, and personal care (barber shop, spa, yoga studio and tattoo parlor);
- There are five food establishments, including full-service restaurants;
- The Village contains 17 retail stores with a specialty niche of seven antique, gift and novelty stores.
- Chepachet's antique niche complements and contributes to the historic character and identity of the Village, providing a regional and visitor destination.
- There are multiple stores that serve basic needs, including a grocery store, large pharmacy, convenience store, liquor store, dollar store, and three auto-related businesses.
- The status of Village businesses is mixed, particularly after reopening following the temporary state-wide closure of non-essential businesses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Certain sectors, such as food-related businesses, have been faring better than others.



### Needs and Potential

- Business owners are interested in ways to work collaboratively with the Town and other parties to draw more customers to the Village through coordinated community events and other methods.
- There is an opportunity for a coordinated marketing strategy highlighting the full range of businesses in the Village.
- The Village has potential to expand business growth by cultivating a business mix that, when supported by historic rehabilitation of properties and strong historic interpretation, can attract more visitors, town residents, and workers to a diverse range of offerings (recreation, historic and educational, antiques, etc.).
- Opportunities exist to fill existing business gaps and add complementary businesses, including food-related, home furnishing, and craft businesses, and professional services.

### 3 Connectivity, Public Spaces and Parking

The Village area is approximately 1.5 miles from end to end with sidewalks available in most areas. It is bisected by Putnam Pike (Route 44), a heavily traveled vehicular roadway. Most areas of the roadway allow on-street parking. Vehicular speed and its steady flow can make on-street parking difficult and impact pedestrians sense of safety. There are also limited areas for pedestrian crossing of Putnam Pike.

Recent and planned investments in public spaces such as the Pavilion at Kent Field and Glocester Memorial Park offer opportunities to increase public enjoyment of these spaces and encourage walking to Village dining and shopping venues.

A number of resources and destinations have off-street parking along Putnam Pike, though not necessarily public parking. The Pavilion at Kent Field, a new civic resource that serves as host to many community events, including concerts and festivals, has a public parking lot. Visitors can park in the Pavilion lot and walk along brick edge sidewalks to Glocester Memorial Park, the Town's largest recreation area, which is undergoing a major renovation.

This walk, past the Library and Town Hall, through the historic core of the Village, which includes restaurants, retail shops and specialty services, is approximately 1/3 of a mile in its entirety.

The Town was recently awarded a \$400,000 grant from the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's (RIDEM) Recreation Development Grant program to fund improvements to the Glocester Memorial Park. These improvements will include rehabilitation and reconfiguration of the basketball courts, construction of a new playground, construction of a new bocce court, additional parking spaces, and a pedestrian connection from the park to Chepachet Village.

#### Needs and Potential

- Creating a safe and secure walking environment is essential to the revitalization of the Village. Look for opportunities to ensure pedestrian safety and a pleasant walkable experience through the use of speed controls, additional pedestrian amenities, and well-maintained facilities year-round.
- With recent and planned investments in public spaces (Pavilion, Glocester Memorial Park), stronger visual and physical connections to link destinations and public spaces could encourage walking and ensure that visitors explore multiple businesses and recreational opportunities, further knitting the Village together.
- Accessible public parking opportunities are essential for business expansion and development. There is potential to define a park-and-walk route, for example, between the Pavilion at Kent Field, Town Hall, and Glocester Memorial Park with signage to include direction, distance, and interest along the way for businesses and storefronts.
- New gateway signage at the anchor points can better define the Village and alert vehicular traffic that they are entering a pedestrian-friendly environment.
- Consistent maintenance of the roadways sidewalks, parking lots, and park paths is needed through all the seasons.

## 4 Planning, Investment, and Infrastructure

As previously noted, the Town has been working towards the revitalization of Chepachet Village since the early 1990's, beginning with the Chepachet Village Planning Project, which outlined goals, recommendations and implementation steps to spur economic and historic revitalization. The Town has made steady progress in implementing the steps outlined in the Plan to create an environment in which the Village's resources can thrive and expand.

Throughout the years, the Town made infrastructure improvements to enhance the visual character of the district in anticipation of attracting private investments and additional economic development opportunities to the Village. The Town, in partnership with other agencies, saw the implementation of over \$15 million in infrastructure investment contributing to the Village's character as a historic, walkable commerce center including new brick sidewalks and crosswalks, period lighting, street trees, planters, new signage and a new roundabout replacing the only stoplight in the district which has significantly improved traffic flow through the Village.

While much of the physical infrastructure necessary to create a vibrant, walkable business district is in place (see Connectivity), a major obstacle to business expansion and development in general is the lack of public water and sewer infrastructure. Engineering and installing individual private wells and wastewater treatment systems on an individual-parcel basis is often cost prohibitive for small business expansion or for new businesses to locate in the Village. Reuse of underutilized spaces, such as second floors, can also be hindered by water and septic requirements and limitations, including for housing.

As shown in the 2005 Chepachet Village Decentralized Wastewater Demonstration Project, there are several different options available to property owners looking to upgrade existing water wells and wastewater systems, depending on a site's size and features. The Demonstration Project included five alternative systems on five parcels that had a variety of site conditions, such as narrow or irregular lot shape, proximity to wetlands, high water tables, steep slopes, etc. The number and mix of buildings and uses on the parcels (e.g., a mixed-use building, multi-family residential, restaurant, etc.) also were factors for determining an appropriate septic system to meet the property owners' and users' needs.

While the Town has been driving the implementation of public infrastructure investments and regulatory reforms, many of the structures in the Village have fallen into disrepair. The Town recently secured a \$250,000 grant from the National Park Service to establish the Chepachet Village National Register District Historic Revitalization Subgrant Program. This program will provide funds to owners of commercial and mixed-use buildings that are contributing structures to the Chepachet Village National Register District for exterior building improvements. This subgrant program will be a key component to an overall sustainable strategy that the Town is committed to implementing to turn Chepachet Village into a showcase of historic preservation and rural economic development. The Town of Glocester was the only municipality to receive these funds nationally, further illustrating the importance of Chepachet Village, not only locally, but nationally. Additionally, the Town was awarded a \$400,000 grant from the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's (RIDEM) Recreation Development Grant program to fund improvements to the Glocester Memorial Park.

### Needs and Potential

- The National Park Service Investment of \$250,000 is an opportunity to leverage private investment in historic buildings.
- This planning process will be essential the Town's pursuit of other complementary funding sources that are periodically available to assist in the revitalization of Chepachet Village, matching each funding source with specific properties in the Village in need of revitalization.
- There are several vacant areas within the Village that offer key in-fill opportunities for housing or mixed-use when developed in accordance with the Historic and Village Overlay Districts.
- New residents in the Village can add vibrancy to the public realm and customers for local businesses.
- Village business and property owners have concerns about growth and improvements because of the limitations presented by private water and septic.



## 5 Regulator Environment

The Town of Gloucester has a Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations that govern development within the Village. There are several overlay districts in the Zoning Ordinance that are applicable to most areas in Chepachet Village.

In 1991, the Town adopted a local historic district and created the Historic District Commission. The establishment of the local historic district ensured the protection of the architectural and historic integrity of the Village. The Historic District Commission (HDC) reviews proposals for all new development in the Chepachet Village Historic District and issues certificates of appropriateness. All buildings are reviewed following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation.

The Town adopted Village District zoning in 2012. The purpose of the Village District is to encourage the development of pedestrian scale mixed-used development, the adaptive reuse of existing buildings and the infill of vacant or abandoned properties in order to create a more vibrant commercial and residential mix while maintaining the historic character of the Village. The Village Overlay District is divided into two sub-districts: the Center District and the Village District. The Center District is characterized by more intense mixed-use development and is focused on walkability. The Village District, located outside of the Center District, is also designed to be walkable but allows more auto-centric businesses.

### Needs and Potential

- The Town's Planning Department and Building and Zoning Department have worked towards the zoning changes to allow for mixed-use redevelopment that would bring vitality to the Village. As part of allowing for these uses, a visual diagram of the building permitting process may assist property owners who have no experience in renovations or redevelopment.
- Likewise, for businesses and groups in town who are unfamiliar with event permits and licenses, an easy-to-follow visual diagram of the process through the Town Council and Town Clerk for applying for permits will aid efforts to host events that bring residents and visitors to the Village.
- To complement the efforts to enhance and maintain the historic resources in the Village, the Town's Planning and Building and Zoning Departments should continue their coordinated review with the Historic District Commission of proposed improvements and new development proposals in the Historic District, for consistent guidance to property owners.

## Special Considerations

Rhode Island, like many states, mandated the closure of non-essential businesses to address the COVID-19 pandemic beginning on March 30, 2020 with a phased reopening that began on May 9, 2020. The loss of revenue in conjunction with continued fixed costs has created financial difficulties for many businesses. The federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), Restore RI business grants and other assistance have helped mitigate these financial impacts and allowed businesses to remain open despite the large loss of revenue. Businesses have also adapted to the pandemic by expanding online sales, curb-side pick-up and delivery, and outdoor venues.

Interviews with business owners and other local stakeholders during July and August indicated mixed recovery experiences among Chepachet businesses after reopening. Some businesses reported that their sales largely recovered or exceeded pre-pandemic levels due to robust online sales, customer loyalty, and customers stocking up on products. Stakeholders also reported the local restaurants were faring well through a combination of outdoor dining and take-out sales. Sales at the Village's antique stores were recovering slowly due to a combination of reduced visitor activity, lower spending with the economic recession, and difficulties securing items with the closure of in-person auctions. Some antique stores noted that sales rebounded very slowly after the last recession and were concerned that a prolonged slump in sales might occur again.

Several factors may slow business recovery in the coming months and into 2021. The extended 24-week period for use of PPP assistance ends in October for many business and PPP funds must be fully used by the end of December to be eligible for forgiveness. Outdoor dining will end with the arrival of colder weather in the fall, reducing restaurant sales. Visitor activity, already reduced by the pandemic, slows in winter months. Finally, the scale and benefits of Chepachet Village's community events, such as the Scarecrow Festival and Candlelight Shopping, will be lessened with state restrictions on event sizes, social distancing needs and customer health concerns about attending community gatherings. Given the on-going impact of the pandemic, the Town, through the Gloucester Business Association should continue to monitor business health and connect Chepachet business owners facing challenges to available resources and support.



- ✓ Face coverings help prevent illnesses like COVID-19 from spreading to others while speaking, coughing, or sneezing.
- ✓ Your face covering can be a scarf, bandana, or a homemade mask.
- ✓ It should cover your mouth AND your nose.

#### FACE COVERINGS OR MASKS SHOULD NOT BE WORN BY:

- ✗ Anyone whose health would be harmed from wearing a face covering.
- ✗ Infants, babies, or children under 2 years old.

As of April 14, 2020: Customers and employees must wear face coverings, per Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo's Executive Order 20-24.



For more information: [health.ri.gov/covid](https://health.ri.gov/covid)

## 3 – Envisioning a Revitalized Chepachet Village - Vision and Goals

### Vision for Chepachet Village

*Chepachet Village is a vibrant commercial and community center of the Town of Glocester. The Village's historic character, buildings, and pedestrian connectivity enhance walkability, provide strong physical and thematic connections to history, stories, and recreation, and support local businesses. Reuse and redevelopment of underutilized buildings and vacant parcels fills in the gaps in activity along the street edge and adds to the vibrancy of the Village. Chepachet Village is a regional destination for antiques, home and craft goods, and artisan production.*

The following goals and recommendations support the Village vision by addressing the needs and potential identified in the assessment presented in Section 2:

#### 1 Architecture and Historic Character

The Village's historic character will be a source of town identity that residents and businesses celebrate and draws visitors. The Town will enhance the existing cluster of historic structures through careful stewardship and compelling storytelling of the Industrial Revolution in the Village.

#### 2 Economic Development

Village businesses will have a strong support infrastructure that encourages collaborative efforts. Business collaboration and marketing programs will promote the Village and expand the customer base to support business viability and growth. The strong cluster of antiques/gift businesses and craftwork spaces, along with a robust series of events and activities, will attract customers to support existing businesses and grow new ventures/relocated enterprises.

#### 3 Connectivity, Public Spaces and Parking

The vibrant Village will have stronger visual and physical connectivity between commercial, recreational, and historic destinations and with the adjacent residential neighborhoods. Parking should be sufficient for businesses and residents but also encourage walking, with signage reinforcing connections and making pedestrian routes clearly evident. Traffic speeds should be controlled to enhance pedestrian safety, along with improved maintenance of pathways and roads to ensure a pleasant environment for residents and visitors year-round.

#### 4 Planning, Investment, and Infrastructure

Vacant and underutilized sites in the Village, including upper floor, rear, and other spaces, can be reused, redeveloped, or host to new development to support a vibrant environment with business and residential spaces. Public spaces and recreation can be further highlighted as regional destinations with creative solutions explored for infrastructure limitations.

#### 5 Regulatory Environment

Permitting and licensing processes should be easy to understand to encourage rehabilitation and reuse of properties, adherence to historic guidelines, and numerous events and activities that all create vibrancy in the Village.

Specific steps and actions for achieving these goals are described in detail below.





## 1. Architecture and Historic Character

The Village's historic character will be a source of town identity that residents and businesses celebrate and draws visitors. The Town will enhance the existing cluster of historic structures through careful stewardship and compelling storytelling of the Industrial Revolution in the Village.

*Chepachet offers an extraordinary collection of historic buildings and landscapes that tell stories that can support a more vibrant Village and a larger market for local businesses. The existing cluster of historic structures and potential of adjacent buildings and parcels to reflect the history of the town offer multiple opportunities to build on the story of the Industrial Revolution in the Village to support businesses and reinforce the character of Chepachet.*

1. ☒ **Village History and Storytelling** – Tell the overall “story” of the Village’s history and support this story with a website presence, visitor links, guided/ walking tours, and interpretive signage.
  - b. ☐ Collaborate with the Gloucester Heritage Society to create a working group for Village history and storytelling efforts. Coordinate efforts with the statewide historic preservation advocacy organization, Preserve Rhode Island, and with the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission.
  - c. ☐ Identify how the story of the Village can be disseminated (signage, pamphlets, website, businesses, through social media, etc.)
  - d. ☐ Create content regarding Village history for signage for buildings and areas, website, visitor centers, etc. Align content and signage with the Blackstone River Corridor National Heritage Area Chepachet walking tour guide. See 3.1.b below for signage recommendations.
  - e. ☐ Identify other “stories” that can be told of the Village in addition to the Industrial Revolution (Betty the Elephant, HASBRO potato head -elephant, the various floods and fires that destroyed most of the village’s historic mills, etc.), and include these as themed maps and walking tour points.
  - f. ☐ Create an updated guide/walking tour of historic sites, buildings, and events, including a map of historic sites and stories and present data more widely about historic resources.
    - i. ☐ Using the Blackstone River Corridor National Heritage Area Chepachet walking tour guide as a foundation, work with local and Blackstone River Corridor organizations to create an expanded tour that includes worker and resident stories.
    - ii. ☐ Create a new self-guided walking tour and map, downloadable from the Town or Gloucester Heritage Society website, that identifies key historic resources in the district. Consider including historic photos to contrast the historic and current appearance of key structures.
    - iii. ☐ Consider using the Falmouth Preservation Alliance (Falmouth, MA) Heritage Map program as a model, which includes artistic renderings of both surviving and demolished historic structures to illustrate change over time. This program also has a fundraising component. For more information, see here: <http://www.falmouthpreservationalliance.org/heritage-map-falmouth-village>

- iv. ☐ In addition to self-guided tours, consider adding thematic guided tours such as photographer tours, art/sketching tours, treasure hunt tours, etc. Recruit local tour guides and charge for these experiences.
- f. ☐ Coordinate with Village efforts regarding signage and consider mandatory interpretive signage for properties receiving grant funding. Town and Heritage Society can provide assistance on sign standards/costs and content.
- g. ☐ Include Chepachet Village in the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council Blackstone Valley Rhode Island Visitor Guide:
  - Museums & History section
  - Eats
  - Art & Galleries (include more antique and specialty stores here)
  - A Fun (suggested) Itinerary (Chepachet Village history)

## 2. ☐ Catalyst Building Restoration and Reuse and Expansion of Historic Cluster

- c. ☐ Support catalyst building restoration and reuse projects that preserve and enhance key historic structures by providing/seeking grants for improvements/interventions for historic structures based on the Priority Map shown in Section 4.
- iv. ☐ Pursue grants and identify funding source information from the The Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission and Preserve Rhode Island.
- v. ☐ Seek support from local and regional foundations.
- vi. ☐ More detailed suggestions are found in Section 4.
- b. ☐ Target adjacent property owners to enlarge cluster of buildings with historic interest and character.
- iii. ☐ There is an opportunity to work with adjacent property owners to enlarge the existing cluster of historic properties and the corresponding area of interest through physical rehabilitation of nearby structures. See Section 4 for recommendations.

## 2. Economic Development

Village businesses will have a strong support infrastructure that encourages collaborative efforts. Business collaboration and marketing programs will promote the Village and expand the customer base to support business viability and growth. The strong cluster of antiques/gift businesses and craftwork spaces, along with a robust series of events and activities, will attract customers to support existing businesses and grow new ventures/relocated enterprises.

*By working together, Village businesses can make efficient use of resources, save money, streamline advertising, and present a strong image to existing and potential customers. Pooling efforts for marketing, promotional activities, and events can have a greater impact than single proprietor efforts. The unique businesses in the Village attract visitors and enhance the special character of the area which can draw visitors and customers. Expanding and strengthening this cluster of themed businesses can support all businesses in the Village by providing more customers and foot traffic and greater regional visibility.*

1. ☐ **Create a Village business group** – A formal or informal group could create coordinated marketing efforts and share supportive initiatives between businesses.

- b. ☐ This group could be under the Gloucester Business Association (GBA) or a joint effort with the Gloucester Economic Development Commission (EDC).
- c. ☐ Convene Village businesses to test their interest in forming a group.
- d. ☐ If interest exists, create core group and recruit additional members.
- e. ☐ Develop a logo or uniform look to materials that are developed.
- f. ☐ Decide on one or two quick action projects to gain traction (e.g., a simple joint promotion, coordinated web links or social media posts).

2. ☐ **Coordinate a Marketing and Business Guide** –

The Village business group would organize, create, and share resources.

- c. ☐ Create a business shopping and dining guide map or other marketing tool to promote all Village businesses.
  - iv. ☐ Create a business map and listing for the Village (internship opportunity).
  - v. ☐ Investigate an open source framework for maintaining a business listing for the Village.
  - vi. ☐ Include map and listing on the Town and/or other local website.
- b. ☐ Organize shared marketing activities/campaign to support all businesses and connect visitors/customers across the Village. These activities will emerge through discussion and buy-in among a critical core of existing businesses.
- iii. ☐ Village business group first develops three to four options for target audience, marketing media/channel and costs.
  - Connect with Rhode Island Commerce and Blackstone Valley Tourism Council programs and resources.
- iv. ☐ Survey businesses on which marketing options to pursue; secure buy-in and financial commitments.
  - Consider using discount cards or handouts, such as the shopping/dining guide, with maps and store/business locations at each business and other Village destinations and offices.
  - Consider adopting a late night or weekend shopping/event/dining experience once per month in the Village. This could be an extension of the existing “Candlelight

Shopping” that now occurs in December.

- v. ☐ Prepare marketing message/themes, ads, and other materials.
- vi. ☐ Implement activities; track and evaluate their impact on business customers and sales.
- vii. ☐ Update/revise activities based on results.

3. ☐ **Recruit Businesses, Users, and Property Owners**

Consider active recruitment of Village property owners and complementary users and businesses.

- d. ☐ Identify properties that can be renovated/leased for artisan or makerspace and other spaces to provide complementary businesses and strengthen the appeal of the existing antiques, craft, historic theme of the business cluster.
- v. ☐ Using the Historic Structures Priorities Map (Fig. 2) and focusing on the core Village area outlined in Section 2 of this plan as guides, do further survey work and due diligence regarding appropriate spaces for artisan and workshops, and other businesses. Conduct outreach to property owners and commercial brokers to identify vacant spaces suitable for new businesses and to gauge their interest in participating in business recruitment.
- vi. ☐ Develop inventory of vacant spaces with key information on their size, location, features, and property owner.
- b. ☐ Recruit artisans and workshop uses for underutilized buildings, outbuildings, and spaces, including second floor spaces in existing Village buildings.
  - iii. ☐ Develop a flier promoting Chepachet as a location for artisan workshops.
  - iv. ☐ Post flier on town website, at Town Hall and Library, and with Village businesses to promote awareness/word of mouth recruiting.
  - v. ☐ Contact and work with Ocean State Artisans to inform their members of the value of locating in Chepachet and available spaces.
- c. ☐ Encourage related businesses to locate in Village (through the Town’s website, engagement with property owners and realtors, active Town staff recruitment of businesses, and networking between businesses).
  - iv. ☐ Using the property assessment and owner outreach (in 3.a) as a foundation for available space inventory, through GBA and Village Business Group, identify target business types to recruit and the value proposition for locating in Chepachet.



- v. ☐ Prepare business recruitment materials, including a one-page information sheet that makes the case for locating in Chepachet, two to three profiles/testimonials of successful recent new businesses and list of recent and future Village improvements/revitalization initiatives. Provide this packet to realtors, property owners and village businesses.
  - vi. ☐ Create a guidance document/graphic showing the steps necessary to open a new business in town.
  - vii. ☐ Add a business recruitment banner and recruitment pages on the GBA website home pages (e.g., “Join our Vibrant Village Business District” or “Build Your Business in Historic Chepachet Village”).
  - viii. ☐ Create a team of “recruitment ambassadors” to promote the Village as a business location and serve as points of contact for entrepreneurs and businesses interested in locating in Chepachet.
- 4. ☐ Events** – Consider sponsoring community and outdoor events and increasing support to existing activities such as the Gloucester Scarecrow Festival and Gloucester Farmers Market, that draw visitors/ shoppers who are already attracted to the types of existing businesses in the district. New events could include an outdoor antiques market, flea market, or antiques appraisal day that would also drive customers to the existing antiques shops.
- e. ☐ Form a GBA/EDC/Village event planning team.
  - f. ☐ Review existing events, keys to their success, and identify seasonal/other gaps in offerings.
  - g. ☐ Develop event ideas and options, including scan of existing regional events and events in other communities.
  - i. ☐ Collaborate with the Town on possible use of public spaces, such as the Pavilion, Gloucester Memorial Park, or others, for new events or expansion of existing events.
    - Collaborate with Village history working group on hosting Blackstone River Corridor National Heritage Area-sponsored events that focus on the Village’s history and increase visibility. Collaborate with Blackstone Heritage Corridor, Inc. (BHC) for planning and funding possibilities.
    - In addition to the one-day of festivities that are part of the Gloucester Scarecrow Festival, consider expanding events and festivities throughout the 14 days of scarecrow viewing. Additional activities could include evening music, a charity walk/run, treasure hunt involving area businesses or historic elements, etc.
  - ii. ☐ Look for opportunities to support public art and culture in the Village, including adding onto existing activities such as Gloucester Summer Concerts, as well as new events, and public art.
    - Create a temporary public art program in collaboration with Village businesses.
    - Collaborate with local organizations to create small events in businesses and public spaces, as well as temporary exhibitions such as “Art on the Walls” at local businesses:
      - o Artist Open Studios (temporary exhibitions in businesses)
      - o Association of Rhode Island Authors (readings, poetry nights)
      - o Other arts groups
    - Consider “Porchfest” type performances at local businesses and public spaces for the Village throughout Spring, Summer, and Autumn.
  - d. ☐ Assess needs, requirements and resources for options, including impact of COVID-19 pandemic; select short list of most feasible events.
  - e. ☐ Formulate plan to add one event per year over next three years.



### 3. Connectivity, Public Spaces and Parking

The vibrant Village will have stronger visual and physical connectivity between commercial, recreational, and historic destinations and with the adjacent residential neighborhoods. Parking should be sufficient for businesses and residents but also encourage walking, with signage reinforcing connections and making pedestrian routes clearly evident. Traffic speeds should be controlled to enhance pedestrian safety, along with improved maintenance of pathways and roads to ensure a pleasant environment for residents and visitors year-round.

*There are complementary uses that can support each other by encouraging customers, visitors, and others to explore throughout the Village through stronger pedestrian and visual links. In addition, connecting resources with available parking along a pedestrian route will encourage visitors to explore more areas of the Village on foot. The Pavilion at Kent Field and Gloucester Memorial Park (GMP) can serve as two pedestrian anchor points, providing public parking and linking complementary community facilities and recreation resources through the center of Chepachet Village. Consistent maintenance of the roadways, sidewalks, streetscape, and parks throughout the seasons can help support a vibrant Village and all of the revitalization efforts in this Plan.*

1. ☐ **Connectivity** – Improving connectivity within and to/from the Village involves mobility, pedestrian safety, wayfinding and signage for pedestrian and vehicular traffic.
  - b. ☐ Physical connections and actions to enhance pedestrian connectivity and safety within and through the Village.
    - iii. ☐ Crosswalks. In order to enhance the pedestrian flow from the east side of Putnam Pike near the Pavilion at Kent Field through the core of the Village businesses to the Gloucester Memorial Park (GMP) on the west side of Putnam Pike, the crosswalks need to be highly visible.
      - Consider a new crosswalk at the Pavilion or Dorr Drive.
      - Institute an art crosswalk program (temporary, annual rotation) to make existing crosswalks more visible.
        - o Possible locations for art crosswalks include Town Hall, Sherman Lane easement connecting to GMP, at the rotary to the north, and near the CVS at the southern end of the Village.
    - iv. ☐ Traffic Calming. Enforcing the existing speed limits and adding traffic calming measures would increase pedestrian safety and improve the district's walkability.
      - Work with Gloucester Police Department regarding enforcement of the existing 30mph speed limit along Putnam Pike within the Village.
      - Request RIDOT review of potential lowering of speed limit to 25mph along Putnam Pike within the Historic District.
      - Review options for adding temporary traffic calming (such as radar speed signs or manual flashing crosswalk signs).
  - b. ☐ Visual connections through wayfinding, signage, and other markers. Coordinated and consistent signage will help draw residents and visitors to/from antique stores, grocery, post office, library, and recreational uses to retail and dining in the Village.
    - iii. ☐ Historic and interpretive signage and maps.
      - Use interpretive historical signage and new map of historic sites created by Village history and storytelling group to encourage pedestrian activity throughout the Village.
      - Coordinate with business efforts to ensure that historical signage, wayfinding, events, and marketing efforts align to create a

- uniform look, a consistent message, and foster connectivity.
  - If the Pavilion becomes a visitor starting point or stop on a walking tour, add signage with historic information and a Village history timeline.
  - Consider developing a historic building marker program using a discreet, consistent, and eye-catching design that includes basic information such as date of construction, builder's name, original owner's name, important past uses, important former residents, etc.
  - Add signage and a public art installation/pavement painting indicating the location of the Chepachet River running under Putnam Pike.
- iv. ☐ Directional signage and wayfinding. To improve the visibility of the Historic District and the key locations in the Village, additional directional signage can help guide residents and visitors both in vehicles and on foot.
- At the Pavilion, add wayfinding/directional icon/map to indicate locations of the Library, Town Hall, Betty the Learned Elephant Potato Head, GMP, and other key historic and notable sites in the Village.
  - As GMP undergoes renovations and discussions with abutters to the Sherman Lane easement occur, use signage, landscaping, public art, and improved sightlines to improve visibility of the Sherman Lane access point and adjacent Town-owned parking from Putnam Pike. Include new access point on all maps.
  - Add directional signage at GMP leading towards Putnam Pike and Chepachet Village.
  - From the south on Route 44/Putnam Pike near the CVS, add directional signage or wording to the State 102 and 44 sign towards Chepachet Village.
  - From the north on Victory Highway and Putnam Pike at the State 102 and 44 signs approaching the rotary, add directional signage to the Village, and in the rotary, as well.
- v. ☐ Gateways. At the northern and southern “ends” of Putnam Pike in the study area, there's an opportunity to have signature signage or artwork as a “welcome” to the Village.
- From the south on Route 44/Putnam Pike near the CVS, add larger and more legible gateway signage at the State 102 and 44 sign towards Chepachet Village.
  - From the north on Victory Highway and Putnam Pike at the State 102 and 44 signs approaching the rotary, add directional signage to the Village, and in the rotary, add a signature and identifying gateway marker or art piece. This can include native landscaping or other interpretive/historic identifier.
2. ☐ **Public Spaces** – The Town has key amenities within the Village that could better connect Putnam Pike, Town Hall, Library, GMP and the Chepachet River.
- c. ☐ Assuming it is a public way, consider clearing out and cleaning up the area around Point Lane, across Putnam Pike from Sherman Lane (and between the Stone Mill and the Masonic Hall), to establish a visual connection to the east along the Chepachet River. If there are ruins, foundations, etc. of the former mill buildings that once stood there, expose and protect these, and provide interpretive signage illustrating what was once there – including a massive, long-gone water tower.
  - d. ☐ Support additional uses of the vibrant public spaces in the Village through events and other activities, including those organized by arts, cultural, and historic groups, the Chepachet Village business group, and other community groups.
  - e. ☐ Improve maintenance of Town-owned public spaces, parks and parking areas.
    - i. ☐ Review the budget and staffing allotted towards maintenance of existing Town-owned spaces and see if there if a complementary volunteer group (such as a “Friends of” for GMP or local Garden Club) can be formed to ask residents and businesses to participate in improvements and maintenance.
3. ☐ **Parking** – While there are public parking areas available in the Village, those spaces can quickly fill up during town-wide events, and busy times for commercial businesses. The Town may consider partnering with property owners and businesses to develop a shared parking scheme for the Village, which may include temporary event parking.

- d. ☐ Conduct a parking inventory of the Village showing all public and private parking and regulatory and cost constraints for same.
- e. ☐ Create a Village parking working group including business and property owners, Town staff, and residents.
- f. ☐ Develop alternatives for sharing parking and list challenges and benefits of same. Address challenges as much as possible.
- g. ☐ Reach out to all business and property owners to present shared parking scheme.
- h. ☐ Adopt shared parking strategy and include a parking map, description, and other relevant information on information boards and with historic and walking maps, as well as online. Develop parking strategies for:
  - Workday
  - Evenings and weekends
  - Special events/holidays



## 4. Planning, Investment, and Infrastructure

Vacant and underutilized sites in the Village, including upper floor, rear, and other spaces, can be reused, redeveloped, or host to new development to support a vibrant environment with business and residential spaces. Public spaces and recreation can be further highlighted as regional destinations with creative solutions explored for infrastructure limitations.

*There is potential to accommodate a portion of new housing demand in Gloucester within the Village to support businesses and add vibrancy to Village, through additional buildings and reuse of existing properties. New infill and the redevelopment of vacant or underutilized sites in the Village can fill in physical gaps and make the pedestrian experience more pleasant while providing desired services, dining, housing, and entertainment. Addressing limitations posed by private septic infrastructure may unlock additional development potential.*



1. ☐ **Priority Properties for Revitalization** – Encourage and assist where possible, the renovation, reuse, or redevelopment of properties within the Village, but particularly those noted in Section 2 and Section 4 that have been identified as priorities for historic, economic development, or urban design reasons.
  - b. ☐ Section 4 includes suggestions of specific priority sites that may or may not be historically contributing for rehabilitation or redevelopment and link to specific uses.
  - c. ☐ Promote Chepachet Village to regional developers who focus on historic properties and districts.
    - i. ☐ Reach out to the RI Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, Rhode Island Commerce, RI Housing, regional banks and others to develop a list of developers that may have an interest in undertaking mixed-use projects in Chepachet.
    - ii. ☐ Work with a RI or Massachusetts university planning, historic preservation or business program to sponsor a class or student project that prepares a plan and feasibility analysis for one or more priority development projects in the Village.
    - iii. ☐ Provide information on development sites and connect them with interested property owners.
  - c. ☐ Encourage the integration of scattered site affordable housing units in Chepachet Village through incorporation into mixed-use development with an equal mix of commercial and residential uses within each building, for example, 2nd floor units above ground floor small businesses. Infill mixed-use structures should be designed and scaled to complement the existing historic structures in the district.
    - iv. ☐ Meet with owners of target sites (historic and other) to gauge their interest in developing or renovating mixed-use structures on their property, or selling to another owner that wants to create mixed-use structures with an equal mix of residential and commercial development, focusing residential units on the 2nd floor above small businesses.
    - v. ☐ Contact area housing developers and contractors to share the map/list of opportunities to create 2nd floor affordable housing units above existing ground floor small businesses and create new infill mixed-use developments with an equal mix of commercial and residential uses within each

building focusing residential units on the 2nd floor above small businesses.

2. ☐ **Programs and Grant Opportunities** – Explore potential funding sources for property owners or the Town to leverage for renovation, reuse, or redevelopment of properties in the Village.
  - c. ☐ Historic properties:
    - iv. ☐ Provide information to existing property owners on the benefit and use of federal state historic tax credits to subsidize investment in historic properties.
    - v. ☐ Adapt existing information and materials to Chepachet with examples relevant to projects in the Village (potential internship project).
    - vi. ☐ See Section 4 for more detailed exploration of potential programs and grant opportunities.
  - b. ☐ Historic and Non-Historic properties:
    - iii. ☐ Work with a local community bank or credit union to create a special loan product for Village infill mixed-use development with a slightly discounted interest rate or other features to enhance project feasibility.
3. ☐ **Water and Wastewater Challenges and Opportunities.**
  - d. ☐ Consider surveying the ages of wastewater systems for properties within the Village.
  - e. ☐ Explore opportunities for package and shared wastewater systems as well as shared public wells as an essential component of growing the business community in the Village
  - f. ☐ Educate property owners of the different possibilities available and opportunities to join with neighboring property owners who are also looking to upgrade existing water wells and wastewater systems.

## 5. Regulatory Environm

Permitting and licensing processes should be easy to understand to encourage rehabilitation and reuse of properties, adherence to historic guidelines, and numerous events and activities that all create vibrancy in the Village.

*The Town's existing permitting process is streamlined and already provides coordination between building, zoning, and Historic District Commission review. Providing guidelines or visual flow charts to illustrate the permitting processes can help the Town's efforts to redevelop and improve properties. Permitting guidelines and flow charts can also make it easier for nonprofit and private organizations to host events in the Village, which can expand business markets and add to vibrancy and visibility*

1. ☐ **Create a Guide for the Town Building Permit Application/Review Process** – Create a graphic flow chart illustrating the permit application and review process to assist property owners who may not be knowledgeable about development but have interest in renovating, reusing, or redeveloping their properties, including upper floors or outbuildings.
  - b. ☐ Provide information, outreach, and assistance to property owners who need guidance around renovation and reuse of upper floor commercial building spaces and outbuildings and mixed-use new or redevelopment projects.
  - c. ☐ Advise property owners about new second floor uses for vacant or underused upper floors and provide assistance in walking through the permitting process to renovate spaces and make them viable for desirable new uses and businesses, such as artisan workshops and production space.
  - d. ☐ Develop a list of potential funding sources, like grants, historic tax credits, and other economic revitalization programs, that could help fund improvements on income-producing properties.
2. ☐ **Provide a Guide for Event Permits and Licensing**  
In an effort to encourage new events, particularly those that support the story of the Village's history and the mix of businesses in Chepachet, create an easy-to-follow chart for the event permitting process.
3. ☐ **Maintain the integrated Historic District Commission review with Town permitting processes** – Continue the Town's integration of Historic District Commission review for construction projects on historic and non-historic properties within the Historic District, including exterior renovations, rehabilitations, reuse, redevelopment, and new development, to ensure continuity with the historic architecture and that new and redeveloped properties are compatible with architectural integrity.
  - d. ☐ While the local historic district works to protect the architectural integrity of the historic buildings in the Village, ensuring that new construction and renovations of existing more modern structures are compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features of those existing historic structures is essential in retaining the Village character in the future.
4. ☐ **Determine what upper floor uses and modifications are possible** – Review the upper floor use precedents and regulations from other municipalities presented at the end of this plan to determine what is possible in the Village.

## 4 – Targeted Investment Strategie

This revitalization plan outlines priority goals and recommendations to continue the Town’s revitalization efforts in Chepachet Village, including ready-to-implement priority strategies so the Town may act on available grants, new initiatives, market conditions, and other opportunities with a road map for action. This plan assures that revitalization strategies are all working toward common goals and provides the background information and rationale for improvements that can be useful in grant applications and moving forward Town initiatives.

To help the Town move forward in tangible ways, this section of includes the following:

- **Priority Parcels – Targeting Investment**
- **Priority Investment Strategies – Specific Improvements for Priority Historic Properties**
- **Funding and Policy Considerations**

### Priority Parcels – Targeting Investment

There are both historic and non-historic sites within the Village that offer significant transformational redevelopment opportunities. Targeted investments in these properties have the potential to benefit the entire Village.

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## Priority Parcels: Historic Structures and Sites

The Town should prioritize building upon the cluster of very well preserved and carefully maintained historic structures on Putnam Pike in the center of the Village that combine to create a recognizable and appealing node of historic character and which can serve as models for other property owners to emulate. Examples of well-preserved/maintained properties include the Job Armstrong Store (1181 Putnam Pike from 1820, owned by the Glocester Heritage Society), the Brown & Hopkins Store (#1179, c.1800, now the Brown & Hopkins Country Store), the Lydia Slocum House (#1177, c.1780-1790, now The Town Trader Antiques), and on the west side of Putnam Pike, the William Hawkins House and Store (#1178 from 1868, now home to the Old Post Office Antique store).

The Priority Historic Sites for Investment in Chepachet Village Map on the next page (Fig. 2) may be used to guide funding and support for improvement and restoration projects.

The list of **Highest Priority** properties, shown on the map in dark green, include:

- 1155-1159 Putnam Pike, Tavern on Main: c. 1800 Tavern & c. 1850 Adjacent House
- 1169 Putnam Pike, Old Stone Mill Antiques: 1814, Lawton Owen Mill
- 1185 Putnam Pike: c. 1800 Double House (historic Glocester Hotel)
- 1187 Putnam Pike: c. 1800 Double House (historic Franklin Bank)
- 1191 Putnam Pike, Village Coin and Bullion: c. 1800 Tavern & mid-19th c.(date unconfirmed) Barn.

The list of **Second Highest Priority** properties, shown on map in light green, include:

- 1167 Putnam Pike, Masonic Hall: c. 1802 Masonic Hall
- Former location of Point Lane (near 1169 Putnam Pike)
- 1177 Putnam Pike, The Town Trader Antiques: c. 1780-1790 House & Commercial Structure (historic Lydia Slocum House)
- 1178 Putnam Pike, Old Post Office Antiques: 1868 House & Commercial Structure (historic William Hawkins House & Store)
- 1179 Putnam Pike, Brown & Hopkins Country Store: c. 1800 House & Commercial Structure (historic Brown & Hopkins Store)
- 1184-1186 Putnam Pike, Lovett's Fine Cigars & Arts plus residences: Utilitarian 20th c. Commercial Building

- 1189 Putnam Pike, c. 1850 Company Store for the Benefit Mill
- 1202 Putnam Pike, c. 1870 Commercial Building (historic Kesteloot's Store)



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This map shows key historic structures and sites that would benefit from investment in rehabilitation efforts to highlight or restore their historic character. Historically-sensitive, but mostly straightforward and sensible, repairs and enhancements of some or all of the identified structures would expand the node of appealing historic structures in the core of the Village, help establish a more contiguous district with a distinctive historic character, and build on the appealing character already established in Chepachet. The list of structures and sites is grouped into a highest and a second highest priority. Properties identified by the project team and recommended for potential improvement were selected based on several criteria, including:

- The historic and architectural significance of the structure(s) and/or site;
- The architectural integrity of the structure or site (that is, the level to which character-defining features have survived);
- The possibility of a significant transformation of the site with historically sensitive improvements balanced with the need for some kind of intervention to help ensure the preservation of historic integrity;
- The potential of a project to have a transformative impact on the wider district; and
- Improvement of the property is in alignment with other economic revitalization and community development goals, including strengthening existing businesses or supporting the creation of new businesses.

Properties identified for potential intervention are divided into two categories – **Highest Priority and Second Highest Priority.**

The list of **Highest Priority** properties represents opportunities for interventions of a moderate to large scope and level of expense that could be particularly transformative for the Village, both in terms of physical improvements to the structures and to the potential economic impact realized by strengthening the businesses located in them, or creating spaces for new businesses. It is recommended that improvements to these properties be pursued first.

The list of **Second Highest Priority** properties represents opportunities for smaller scopes of work and relatively smaller investments on highly-visible, already well-preserved historic buildings, including addressing minor deferred maintenance and other repairs, repainting, signage and lighting improvements, etc. that will encourage their ongoing preservation and support the efforts of property and business owners that are already practicing good stewardship.

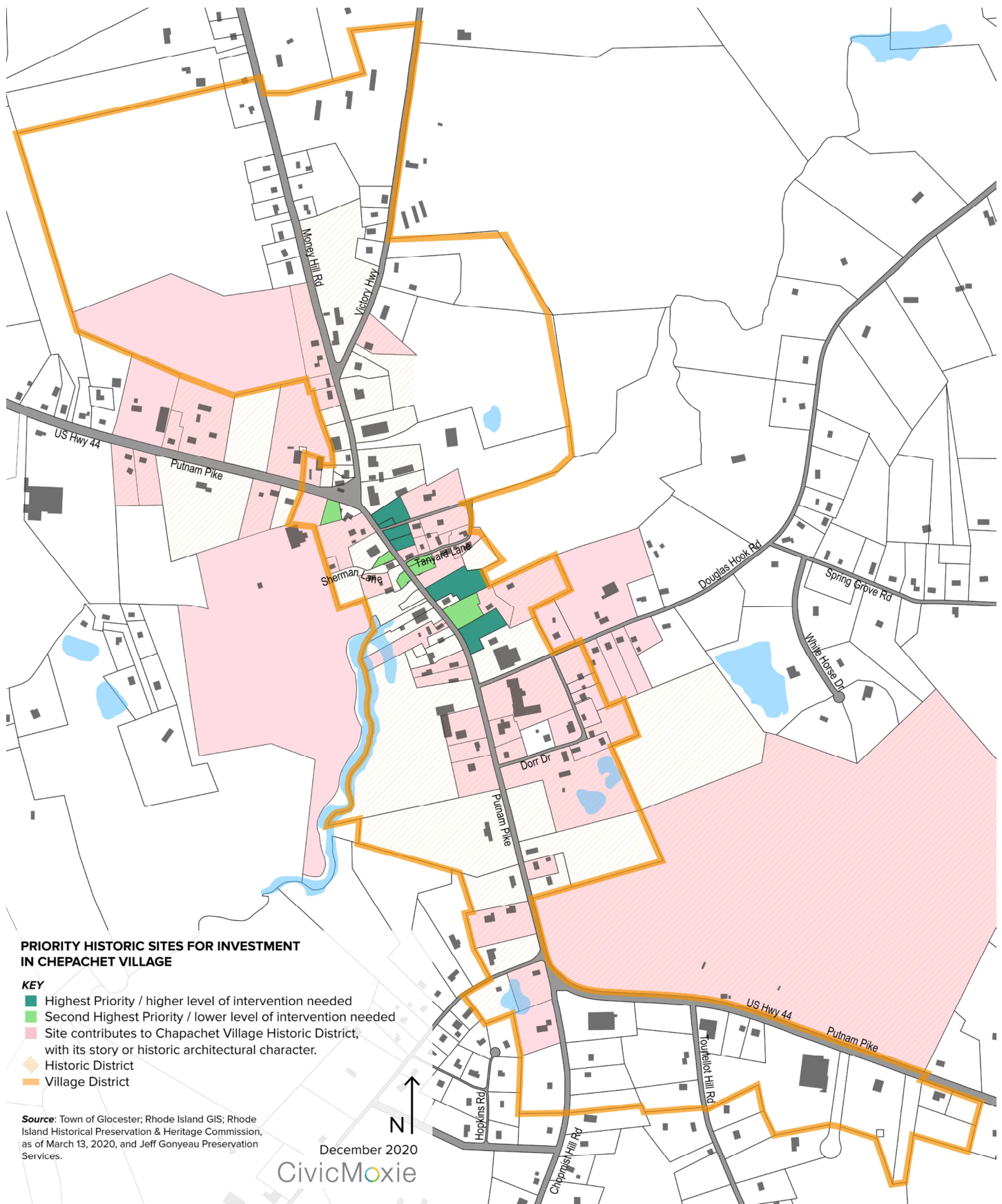
The recommended scopes of rehabilitation and preservation work for each property are provided in this section.

## Additional Priority Parcels

Additional priority sites that may or may not be historically contributing for rehabilitation or redevelopment can offer opportunities for redevelopment and to link these properties to specific uses. Examples of potential sites within Chepachet Village:

- While the Stone Mill at 1169 Putnam Pike is already a priority property that contributes to the NR District, the property has potential to undergo substantial rehabilitation, redevelopment, or expansion beyond the existing structure. The current building is a fragment of what was once a much larger structure, and the site is potentially large enough to support additional construction, if this is deemed feasible.
- The large site in the vicinity of 1195 Putnam Pike contains several structures of various ages and conditions, some of which are contributing elements to the Historic District. Given its size and the poor condition of some of the surviving buildings, this site could be a candidate for reuse once the significance of the existing structures is determined.
- Directly to the north of the 1195 Putnam Pike parcels, the Purple Cat Restaurant site at 1-5 Money Hill Road is also very large, of unclear use, and could represent a site for reuse.
- At the northern end of the district at the intersection of Routes 100 and 102, the former site of The Elms – a historic building that was moved of this site to 23 Money Hill Road in 2016 – is a large, triangular parcel that has potential to be a gateway to the historic Village with complementary architecture.

**Figure 2 – Priority Historic Sites for Investment in Chepachet Village**



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### **Priority Investment Strategies – Specific Improvements for Priority Historic Properties**

The map on the previous page (Fig. 2) identifies priority properties for historic revitalization and rehabilitation funding and efforts. For each priority property, detailed information below includes: a historic photo, where available, a recent photo showing current conditions, and a list of recommended improvements.

## **1<sup>st</sup> Highest Priority Properties**

### **1<sup>st</sup> 1155-1159 Putnam Pike, Tavern on Main: c. 1800 Tavern & c. 1850 Adjacent House**

This parcel includes two structures that are both historic.



Source: Historic image from oldpostofficeantiques.com



#### **Historical Context**

- Tavern and inn, Federal Period, ca. 1800. Built by Cyrus Cook to serve travelers on the new turnpike between Providence and Connecticut. It retains a food service use.
- Local historian, Edna Kent, indicates this location has been called the Stagecoach Tavern and that the inn building appeared to have been built in as many as 5 stages with the original portion of the building – a south-facing center-chimney house probably from the mid to late 18th-c. – obscured by the extended street-facing portions
- Contributes to CVHD.
- This property address is listed only as 1159 Putnam Pike in inventories and surveys.

#### **Current Condition**

- The overall form appears mostly intact; façade is asymmetrical and has a double entry, perhaps built in sections (note articulation in roof surface).
- Early door surrounds and some old clapboards survive, along with some 2-over-2 window sash (from later 19th century; original were 9-over-9, or perhaps 12-over-12).
- Several architectural features have been changed or replaced, including many details of the front porch and most windows.

#### **Potential Scope of Rehabilitation**

- ☐ Remove all canvas awnings, plastic shutters, overgrown shrubs, extraneous signage and lighting.
- ☐ Restore door surrounds; restore simplified or missing front porch details; construct new stairs and consider accessibility upgrades.
- ☐ Paint with a historic paint color scheme.
- ☐ Install new, well-designed signage and lighting.



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**1<sup>st</sup>** Second structure on same parcel:



Source: Historic images from [oldpostofficeantiques.com](http://oldpostofficeantiques.com) and Providence Preservation League

### Historical Context

- Appears to be an early to mid-19th century house, although it is unclear if it is included in any of the historic surveys examined. Contributes to the CVHD. This structure also has an address listed as 1159 Putnam Pike in inventories and surveys.

### Current Condition

- The house seems to be largely intact. It is a 5-bay, slightly asymmetrical structure with two chimneys; the top of the foundation is dressed with large stone slabs. Its unusually close proximity to the south wall of the tavern might indicate that it was built before a possible expansion (to the south) of the tavern.
- Many old clapboards survive; the door hood and the 2-over-2 windows may date from later in the 19th century.

### Potential Scope of Rehabilitation

- ☐ Make any minor carpentry repairs required and repaint in a historically appropriate color scheme.
- ☐ If the house is under the same ownership as the adjacent tavern, coordinate the color schemes of the two buildings.

## 1169 Putnam Pike, Old Stone Mill Antiques: 1814, Lawton Owen Mill



Source: Historic image from oldpostofficeantiques.com

### Historical Context

- Portion of a mill structure that expanded and contracted in size over the course of its active manufacturing use from 1814 to 1969.
- The surviving stone section (itself missing a 3rd floor with belfry) was built by Lawton Owen in 1814 for the Chepachet Manufacturing Company. By the mid-1860s, the mill was expanded with various wooden additions (all demolished in 1982) to become about 4 times the length of the current stone portion.
- A massive water tower and red brick chimney that was part of the mill's powerhouse are visible in historic photos on the south side of the mill along Point Lane. A more recent wooden addition about doubles the stone structure's size.
- Contributes to CVHD.

### Current Condition

- The existing stone portion of the mill is the only historic part of the complex to survive, although it is very distinctive as a rare stone structure.
- The surviving stone walls (save for the north wall along the river and the northernmost portion of the west elevation, which were rebuilt more crudely with smaller stones after a flood destroyed the north wall on Feb. 10, 1867) are finely constructed, with tight joints, angle cut headers, and large half-round stones above the original door openings on the south elevation. There appear to be some older windows throughout the stone portion.
- The modern addition to the rear is wood, although the first floor along Point Lane is faced with stone; it seems like it was never fully finished out, and the quality of the construction is low.
- The building is in relatively poor condition.

- A structural engineer should assess the condition and stability of the load bearing stone walls and determine a scope of repairs; the north wall along the river appears to be in particularly poor condition, with some portions reconstructed using cement blocks.
- The wooden addition is in similarly poor condition and should be assessed to determine if it can/should be retained and repaired.
- The building is relatively lightly used as an antiques store, probably due in part to its poor condition; some portions of the building are underused or not used at all. If repaired – or perhaps expanded – the site could be activated with more (and different) uses.

### Potential Scope of Rehabilitation

- There are several possibilities for intervening, listed here from simpler to more complex.
  - A. Assess the structural stability of the stone portion and repair/stabilize as necessary.
  - B. A) as above + rehab the existing wooden addition (if possible) to reactivate for new commercial use.
  - C. Retain and restore the historic stone portion, but consider a more intensive redevelopment of the site that adds back some of the missing wooden additions (perhaps demolishing the existing addition to make way); with more space, options for a mixed-use, commercial/ residential project could be investigated.

## 1st 1185 Putnam Pike: c. 1800 Double House (historic Gloucester Hotel)



Source: Historic image from [oldpostofficeantiques.com](http://oldpostofficeantiques.com)

### Historical Context

- A double residential building with early commercial uses; Federal Period, ca. 1800.
- 5-bay primary façade with two side by side entries. Portion used by Amasa Eddy as a saddle and harness shop in the mid-19th c. and then by the Eddy family as the Central Hotel and Gloucester Hotel later in the 19th century.
- Contributes to CVHD.

### Current Condition

- Overall form of double house intact. Porch is possibly later. There seems to be a 1-story addition of uncertain age on the north elevation.
- Old 2-over-2 windows (not original, but later 19th-century “upgrades”) and old trim.
- Mostly covered in unpainted cedar shingles with wide exposure, but clapboards visible on side elevation and in 1971 photo in NR nomination form. Porch details are simplified or covered over.
- Generally in good repair, although the unpainted shingles are ahistorical and detract from appearance; clapboards on side elevation need repair and repainting.
- Appears to be totally residential.

### Potential Scope of Rehabilitation

- ☐ Remove cedar shakes and restore original clapboard siding.
- ☐ Uncover original or install appropriate porch details.
- ☐ Paint a historically appropriate color.



**1st 1187 Putnam Pike:**  
**c. 1800 Double House (historic Franklin Bank or Capt. Solomon Owen House)**



Source: Historic image from oldpostofficeantiques.com

### Historical Context

- Likely originally a double residential building with early commercial uses; Federal Period, ca. 1800.
- 7-bay primary façade with two entries with sidelights.
- A portion used for the Franklin Bank (in business 1818-1865/68). Local historian, Edna Kent indicates that this building should be called the Capt. Solomon Owen House.
- Contributes to CVHD.

### Current Condition

- Overall form of double house intact, with unusual saltbox shape.
- Porch is later 19th century addition. Some old clapboard siding and trim, as well as later-19th. c. turned porch posts. Windows replaced. Front doors replaced.
- Generally in good repair; occupied by at least one business, with remainder apparently residential.

### Potential Scope of Rehabilitation

- ☐ Make minor carpentry repairs and repaint in a historically appropriate color.
- ☐ Consider installing higher quality windows (at least with applied muntins).

### Rationale for focusing on 1185 and 1187 Putnam Pike



Rehabbing these two prominent buildings would substantially extend the cluster of sensitively rehabbed historic buildings on the east side of Putnam Pike that begins with the three structures just north of the bridge, connecting them, as well, to the two historic structures at 1189 and 1191 Putnam Pike.



**1<sup>st</sup> 1191 Putnam Pike, Village Coin and Bullion:  
c. 1800 Tavern & mid-19th c. Barn (date unconfirmed)**



Source: Historic image from [oldpostofficeantiques.com](http://oldpostofficeantiques.com)

### Historical Context

- According to the State's survey, this structure is called the Jeremiah Sheldon Tavern & Barn; Federal Period house/tavern ca.1800; barn possibly later. However, local historian, Edna Kent indicates that the name is confused in the survey material with another property to the south – the original portion of 1096 Putnam. Accordingly, 1191 should be called the Parkhurst House, which on the 1895 map shows W.B. Parkhurst as the owner, with the large barn in place attached to the kitchen ell.
- This is one of the few old properties whose primary facade faces south instead of the road.
- Contributes to CVHD.

### Current Condition

- Overall form of house and barn intact.
- House has aluminum siding, and windows were replaced; plastic shutters; some details of (later) porch altered.
- Good state of repair, even with loss of some historic fabric.
- Ell and barn exterior work underway in early 2020. Historic features could be restored.
- Historic photos might show missing architectural details.

### Potential Scope of Rehabilitation

#### House:

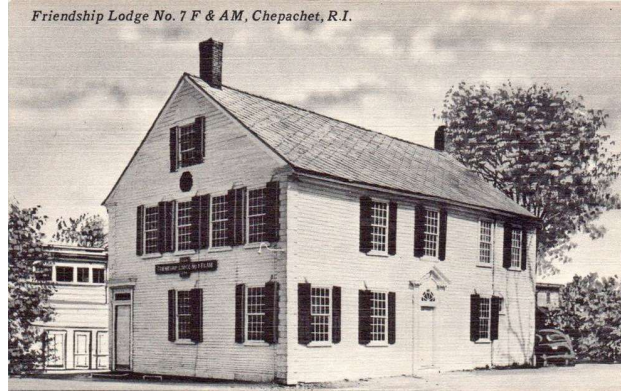
- ☐ Remove artificial siding; repair clapboards if underneath, or install new clapboards.
- ☐ Remove plastic shutters.
- ☐ If possible, replace windows with higher quality (at least with applied muntins).
- ☐ Paint an historically appropriate color.

#### Barn:

- ☐ Remove artificial siding; install wood clapboards where missing.
- ☐ Replace modern garage door with swinging wood doors.
- ☐ Paint an historically appropriate color.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Second Highest Priority Properties

### 2<sup>nd</sup> 1167 Putnam Pike, Masonic Hall: c. 1802 Masonic Hall



Source: Historic image from [oldpostofficeantiques.com](http://oldpostofficeantiques.com)

#### Historical Context and Current Condition

- High style, finely detailed Masonic Hall; Federal Period, ca. 1802.
- Contributes to CVHD.
- Generally in good condition.
- This building retains much of its historic integrity, in spite of the replacement of some key historic details (especially windows, shutters, and doors) with modern materials. Town should work with others, such as Glocester Heritage Society, to search for historic photos that might show missing/altered architectural details.

#### Potential Scope of Rehabilitation

- ☐ Some insensitive changes could be reversed – especially windows, doors, and shutters – if funding were available.
- ☐ Minor carpentry repairs are likely needed.
- ☐ It is important to keep the building painted to keep the building envelope weather tight and to preserve it.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Former location of Point Lane (near 1169 Putnam Pike)



Point Lane today – looking west toward Putnam Pike; Masonic Hall (white) on left and stone mill (with addition) on right. Brick chimney and remains of powerhouse overgrown with vegetation.

### Historical Context

Former location of Point Lane (near 1169 Putnam Pike) - Interpretation Opportunity:

- Site of former mill structures, spread over multiple parcels. Red brick chimney from a former powerhouse for the 1814 Lawton's stone mill remains on overgrown site along the south side of the river.
- Site and remaining building fabric contribute to CVHD.
- Historic maps and photos exist that show several of the missing structures, although their exact arrangement is somewhat confusing to understand.
- Additional photos and maps are available to try to make some sense of this important site, whose history should be interpreted.

### Potential Scope of Rehabilitation and Interpretation

- ☐ Clear site to expose ruins of demolished powerhouse building.
- ☐ Interpret site in some way – through signage with maps and historic photos – to acknowledge lost industrial heritage of town.
- ☐ Repair or stabilize chimney (and other ruins) and provide site lighting.
- ☐ Open up visual access to river to the east.

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**2<sup>nd</sup> 1177 Putnam Pike, The Town Trader Antiques:  
c. 1780-1790 House & Commercial Structure (historic Lydia Slocum House)**



#### **Historical Context and Current Condition**

- Residential and commercial structure; Federal Period, ca. 1780-1790. Known as the Lydia Slocum House. Asymmetrical façade; possibly built in sections; distinctive rear lean-to form visible to street. Façade may feature modern additions of historic-appearing elements.
- Contributes to CVHD.
- In an excellent state of repair and serves as a model to other property owners demonstrating careful stewardship of a historic structure.
- Very well preserved. Overall form seems intact, including rear lean-to. Possible early windows; some old clapboards. Doors and other features may be replacements. Yellow color is distinctive and lends to historic appearance.

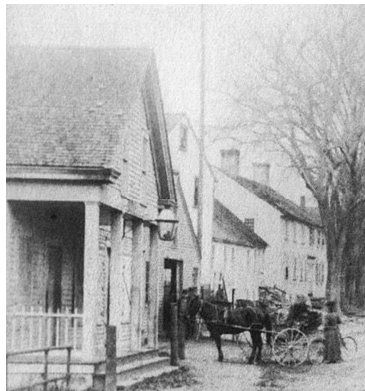
#### **Potential Scope of Rehabilitation**

- ☐ Undergoing some paint touch up in 2020; it is important to keep the building painted to keep the building envelope weather tight and to preserve delicate wooden features.
- ☐ Minor carpentry repairs may be needed; constant attention to wood windows is important and should be encouraged.



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**2<sup>nd</sup> 1178 Putnam Pike, Old Post Office Antiques:  
1868 House & Commercial Structure (historic William Hawkins House & Store)**



Source: Historic image from [oldpostofficeantiques.com](http://oldpostofficeantiques.com)

### **Historical Context and Current Condition**

- Residential and commercial building; late Greek Revival, ca. 1860. Known as W.W. Hawkins House & Store.
- Contributes to CVHD.
- In excellent condition.
- Very well preserved. Overall form seems mostly intact, although street-facing gable was shaved back and porch underneath removed when street was widened.
- Early windows and trim; wood clapboards. Entry doors are modern replacements.

### **Potential Scope of Rehabilitation**

- ☐ Roof might need replacement soon.
- ☐ Upgrade signage to a livelier and/or historic design to soften stark appearance; consider adding exterior lighting (see prominent lantern in historic photo).
- ☐ Consider a new color scheme when it comes time to re-paint that is somewhat softer and enhances historic appearance.

**2<sup>nd</sup> 1179 Putnam Pike, Brown & Hopkins Country Store:  
c. 1800 House & Commercial Structure (historic Brown & Hopkins Store)**



Source: Historic image from oldpostofficeantiques.com

### **Historical Context and Current Context**

- Commercial and residential building; Federal Period, ca. 1800. Built by Timothy Wilmarth as a hattery and residence, used as Brown & Hopkins Store beginning 1809. In continuous use as retail shops of various kinds since then and served as a post office for a time.
- Contributes to CVHD.
- In an excellent state of repair and serves as a model to other property owners demonstrating careful stewardship of a historic structure.
- Very well preserved. Overall form intact, including front porch. Many clapboards and much trim, as well as some windows, appear to be early and possibly original fabric; all should be preserved if possible.

### **Potential Scope of Rehabilitation**

- ☐ Needs repainting, and a historically appropriate color should continue to be used; it is important to keep the building painted to keep the building envelope weather tight and to preserve delicate wooden features.
- ☐ Minor carpentry repairs also likely needed; constant attention to wood windows is important and should be encouraged.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> 1184-1186 Putnam Pike, Lovett's Fine Cigars & Arts plus residences: Utilitarian 20th c. Commercial Building



Source: Historic images from [oldpostofficeantiques.com](http://oldpostofficeantiques.com) and Providence Preservation League

### Historical Context

- This structure holds a prominent portion of the streetscape on the western side of the street, especially its exposed side/north elevation along the adjacent parking lot.
- Utilitarian 20th-century building of no apparent architectural style. Lovett's Fine Cigars & Arts on first floor.
- Does not contribute to CVHD.
- 2-story, flat roofed, mixed use structure with much of exterior fabric – siding, windows, trim, etc. – replaced. Original architectural features unknown.
- It is in a fair state of repair, in spite of jumbled appearance. Business on ground floor, with upper floor residential.
- Town should work with others, such as Gloucester Heritage Society, to search for historic photos that might show missing architectural details.

### Potential Scope of Rehabilitation

- ☐ Rationalize exterior by installing consistent siding (wood clapboards and trim).
- ☐ Install higher quality windows, functional lighting, etc. that will help it harmonize with its historic surroundings.

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**2<sup>nd</sup> 1189 Putnam Pike: c. 1850 Company Store for the Benefit Mill**



### **Historical Context**

- Company Store for the Benefit Mill (which was demolished); Federal Period, ca. 1815.
- Contributes to CVHD.
- Well preserved. Windows and trim appear early fabric and worth preserving. Shingles on side elevation(s) may be newer. Poured concrete foundation on some elevations.
- Local historian Edna Kent indicates that the front of the building was expanded toward the street with an addition, observable by a change in the foundation on the south side, when the building's foundation was replaced with a poured concrete foundation sometime in the 20th century.
- Exterior in generally good repair.
- Town should work with others, such as Gloucester Heritage Society, to search for historic photos that might show any missing architectural details.

### **Potential Scope of Rehabilitation**

- ☐ Should be repainted in a single historically appropriate color.



## 2<sup>nd</sup> 1202 Putnam Pike: c. 1870 Commercial Building (historic Kesteloot's Store)



Source: Historic image from Edna Kent's book *Images of America – Glocester Rhode Island* (Arcadia Publishing, 1998.)

### Historical Context

- Commercial structure, Kesteloot's Store building, ca. 1870, according to official survey records. However, local historian Edna Kent indicates that the building was actually constructed c.1920 as a general store (with residence above) by store owner Charlie Kesteloot, who emigrated to Glocester from Belgium right after WWI.
- Contributes to CVHD.
- Overall massing, with distinctive double gable, survives. Many other exterior details replaced or covered, including windows and siding. Town should work with others, such as Glocester Heritage Society, to search for historic photos that might show missing architectural details.
- In a good state of repair.
- This is a historic building at a gateway to the district. Restoring some of its integrity at this highly visible location would improve the entrance to the district. Adding plantings along the sidewalk edge of the parking area might soften the otherwise stark feeling of the site.

### Potential Scope of Rehabilitation

- ☐ Consider restoring some missing historic features.
- ☐ Consider adding plantings to green the parking area.

## Funding and Policy Considerations

### Funding Sources for Improvements to Historic Structures

Unfortunately, there are relatively few sources of grant funding available for improvements to commercial properties or private residences that are not owned by nonprofit entities. However, it could be possible for a local charitable organization, such as the Gloucester Heritage Society, to create a commercial district beautification and preservation grant program that pools grants it raises from charitable sources which it then re-grants to local property owners to make historically sensitive improvements.

For commercial properties, certain loan programs exist, as well as both state and federal historic tax credits, which are available for renovation or redevelopment projects that are large enough in scope and budget to justify the cost of consultants, lawyers, and other professionals typically needed to take advantage of tax credits.

Information that may be helpful when seeking grants and other sources of funds for improvements/ interventions for historic structures includes:

- **The Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission (RIHPHC)** operates one grant program and serves as a clearinghouse for information on other preservation grants and financial incentives. The RIHPHC keeps information on current grants, historic tax credits, loans, and other sources of funds to support preservation projects on their website. Since some of these funding sources are offered sporadically, the RIHPHC website should be consulted regularly. See [www.preservation.ri.gov](http://www.preservation.ri.gov) for more information, and for general questions about State Preservation Grants, email Katherine Pomplun at [Katherine.Pomplun@preservation.ri.gov](mailto:Katherine.Pomplun@preservation.ri.gov) or call (401)222-4131.

In order of usefulness for the type and scale of rehabilitation projects currently envisioned in Chepachet Village, the funding sources overseen by the RIHPHC as of the writing of this plan are as follows:

- **The Historical Preservation Loan Fund** is available to preserve properties listed on the State Register of Historic Places by providing low-interest loans to public, nonprofit, or private owners. Loan money may be used for needed restoration work or, in some cases, for acquiring and rehabilitating an

endangered historic property. Work must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, and work that has already been completed is not eligible for loan funding. Applications are accepted at any time. To be eligible, a property must be listed in the State Register of Historic Places, either individually or as a contributing part of a historic district. Eligible applications will be evaluated on factors such as the architectural and historical significance of the property, the relative need for the proposed work, and the public benefit of the proposed project. Other considerations include geographic distribution, financial need, and conformance to community planning issues. For more information, visit: <http://www.preservation.ri.gov/credits/loans.php>

- o **The Rhode Island Historic Preservation Tax Credit** helps make preservation work on historic income-producing buildings more affordable. An existing Sunset Provision within the law governing the tax credit was set to end the program by June 30, 2020, but that deadline was recently extended by a year, until June 30, 2021. The credit equals 25% of the cost of approved rehabilitation work for projects that rehabilitate space for a trade or business, and the credit equals 20% of the cost of approved rehabilitation work for residential apartments and condominiums. Most historic buildings that are used to produce income will qualify, such as offices, stores, rental apartments, and factories; development of condominiums may qualify also. (Private one- and two- family residences, social clubs, and tax-exempt properties like schools, hospitals, and churches do not qualify.) Owners must "substantially" rehabilitate their historic building; this means the cost of the project must be greater than the value of the building (not including the value of the land the building occupies). Exterior and interior rehab work qualifies for the tax credit as long as the work meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitating Historic Properties. Eligible projects include work on the roof, exterior walls, windows, foundations, structure, heating, plumbing, electrical system, and interior improvements that are capitalized to the building. New additions to the building, site work, landscaping, and costs of fixtures

and furnishings are not eligible. For more information, visit: <http://www.preservation.ri.gov/credits/commstate.php>

- o The Rhode Island Commerce Corporation (Commerce RI) administers the **Rebuild RI Tax Credit Program**. Most recently, in 2020, the program allocated up to \$15 million in tax credits for projects in the following categories: smaller manufacturers, smaller historic rehabilitation projects, and mixed-use development in an Opportunity Zone or that supports new affordable/workforce housing. Historic rehabilitation projects that develop or adaptively reuse a certified or recognized historic structure qualify for tax credit financing. A streamlined application process (that has no repayment provision) is available for projects of a smaller scale (of under \$1 million in tax credit award). More information, visit: <https://commerceri.com/rebuild-applications/>
- o Unfortunately, as of 2018, the bond-funded **State Preservation Grant** program is on hiatus. Under this program, RIHPHC has awarded grants for capital preservation projects at museums, cultural art centers, and public historic sites located in historic structures. While no funds for this program are available at this time, visit here for more information about this program: <http://www.preservation.ri.gov/grants/spg.php>

Other sources of grant funding for preservation projects, primarily for nonprofit entities, but which could possibly be pooled and re-granted by a local charitable organization, as mentioned above, include:

- o **June Rockwell Levy Foundation** makes grants to nonprofit organizations serving the communities of Providence County, with a preference for northern Rhode Island. For more information, visit: <https://rifoundation.org/grant/june-rockwell-levy-foundation-grants>
- o **Champlin Foundation** provides grants to nonprofit organizations, including capital grants for historic preservation projects. For more information, visit: <https://champlinfoundation.org/what-we-fund/#capital-grants>
- o **Felicia Fund, Inc.** funds projects undertaken by charitable organizations that relate to architecture, decorative art, historic preservation, conservation, and related

educational pursuits. For more information, visit: <https://www.causeiq.com/organizations/felicia-fund,050420703/>

- **Preserve Rhode Island**, the statewide historic preservation advocacy organization for Rhode Island, also provides a certain amount of information about funding sources on their website, along with periodic updates on the status of the reauthorization and funding of the grant and tax credit programs offered by the RIHPHC. See [www.preserveri.org](http://www.preserveri.org) for more information. Preserve Rhode Island also partners with the 1772 Foundation on a grant program.
  - **Rhode Island Matching Grants for Historic Preservation** (a partnership between Preserve Rhode Island and the 1772 Foundation) provides one-to-one matching grants of up to \$10,000 for nonprofits for preservation projects such as exterior painting, masonry repointing, roof restoration, etc. For more information, visit: <https://www.preserveri.org/1772-foundation-grants>
- Local and regional foundations, such as the **Rhode Island Foundation**, are potential sources of project funding. For more information, visit: [www.rifoundation.org](http://www.rifoundation.org)
  - The **Rhode Island Foundation's Community Grants** program provides grants up to \$10,000 for community-making efforts that make unique and important things happen at this intersection. Community Grants have supported community gardens, walking tours, artistic performances, public art, and little free libraries. Nonprofit organizations, municipal governments, public agencies, and volunteer-led groups such as neighborhood and resident associations are eligible to apply. For more information, visit: <https://rifoundation.org/grant/community-grants>

## Workforce Housing Grants and Support

Most housing programs in Rhode Island target low-income households with few resources available for workforce housing that serves households earning above 80% of Area Median Income (AMI). Rhode Island Housing has a Workforce Housing Innovation Challenge ("WHIC") Loan Program to finance new construction or adaptive reuse projects that provide rental housing for households with incomes up to 120% of AMI. With a 0% interest rate and long-term deferred payment of loan principal, the

program provides very attractive financing. Approximately \$7 million in financing was made available statewide under this program in late 2019 with applications due in December 2019. If funding continues to be available, this can be a valuable resource to support investment in Chepachet Village workforce housing.

Other funding sources, including federal CDBG and HOME funds, administered by the state must benefit low- and moderate-income households with incomes below 50% or 80% of AMI. HOME funds can support new homeownership units for households below 80% of AMI. The Neighborhood Opportunities Program, which covers that gap between the rent needed to cover project costs and what residents can afford to pay is targeted to low-wage and very low-income households earning 40% of AMI and to provide supportive housing for disabled and special needs persons that includes essential services.

A second funding option is to create a **Village Workforce Housing Fund** to help address funding gaps needed to build new workforce housing in Chepachet Village, which could be capitalized with businesses and philanthropic contributions. This fund could be administered by a local volunteer board or through the Rhode Island Foundation, if a large charitable gift or endowment is made.

## Second Floor (Underutilized Space) Uses Support<sup>1</sup>

In many commercial districts throughout the state and region, Chepachet Village among them, upper floors of main street commercial buildings or out buildings sit empty or underutilized. Vacancies are the result of a number of factors including cost of renovations, lack of allowable uses per zoning that fit the current market, building code requirements, ADA, and others. Addressing these barriers to activate second floor uses can unlock significant benefits for commercial districts, including new contributions to vibrancy and providing more customers for businesses. In a typical commercial district with two-to-three story buildings, 60% of the square footage of buildings may be underutilized or vacant, which, if activated, can translate into significant potential for new residents and new businesses, while supporting the existing commercial uses in the district.

<sup>1</sup> Some information here has been updated and adapted from information first presented by Susan Silberberg, CivicMoxie at the December 2, 2015 "TA Connect Workshop" hosted by MassDevelopment & DHCD/MA Downtown Initiative on Upper Floor Uses.



Despite these potential benefits, retrofitting and reusing upper floor spaces in particular can be very challenging, and there are no clear pathways forward without addressing complex issues, including:

- Building Code compliance can be impossible without concessions or substitute code measures from public safety officials.
- Cost of retrofits can be cost prohibitive because of infrastructure needs, unseen problems, code compliance, and accessibility measures.
- Less visibility of upper floors makes them difficult to rent for certain businesses, limiting market to residential and service-oriented businesses unless concerted efforts for marketing and a cluster of second floor uses make it the “norm.”

However, current trends toward walkability, makerspaces, and coworking spaces may help support these uses. In addition, Federal Historic Tax Credits are available for rehabilitation and renovation in the Village.

## ***Examples of Successful Upper Floor Use Initiatives***

There are not many smaller upper floor reuse examples, in part, because of the challenges listed above. There are two excellent resources available to better understand the range of projects, challenges, and possible steps:

- ***Upper Floor Reuse Guidebook: A Guidebook for Revitalizing Downtown Buildings*** is an extremely comprehensive overview of upper floor reuse and commercial district revitalization on a larger scale in New York State. <http://www.gflrpc.org/uploads/5/0/4/0/50406319/upperfloorsguidebook.pdf>
- ***The Vacant Upper Floors Project*** is a study examining adaptive reuse in downtown buildings in Pittsburgh. The guide includes five extremely detailed case studies of different buildings renovated for upper floor use. <https://evepicker.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/VUFguide.pdf>

In addition, an example in Rhode Island is AS220, a mixed-use project including upper floor artists workspace and housing, in Providence. The project worked closely with City Hall and provided bare bones space for artists, enabling the project to keep costs down. The solution was to just meet code. <https://tinyurl.com/artistspacedevelopment>

## ***Possible Next Steps for Upper Floor or Underutilized Space Reuse in Chepachet Village***

- Upper floor or underutilized space uses in Chepachet Village will be most likely for the following:
  - Residential
  - Coworking spaces
  - Craft and maker spaces
  - OfficeCraft and maker spaces in upper floors should be a priority because these businesses complement the antique and gift retail cluster in the Village, and because these users, along with artists, require very little build-out renovations, if any.
- Create an inventory of vacant upper floor or other underutilized space in Chepachet Village. Collected information should include size of space, window sizes/light characteristics, size of electrical service, accessibility (stairs, width, etc., landlord eagerness to renovate/rent space, adjacency to other vacant upper floor spaces).
- Identify a few property owners interested in renting or renovating upper floor or other underutilized spaces.
- Review space characteristics with Town building permit officials to determine apparent code compliance issues for these spaces for each category of use (residential, work space/studios). Typical issues in upper floor renovation and reuse in older buildings or out building reuse include:
  - Fire rated enclosure for all stairs and vertical shafts/stairwells
  - Fire rated separation between retail or office and residential uses
  - Exit signage and labeling
  - Two means of egress for some uses
  - Possible need to provide fire sprinklers
  - Adequacy of natural light and operable windows for residential uses
  - Additional infrastructure – water, wastewater/septic
- Reach out to regional craft guilds and creatives listings such as the Fayerweather Craft Guild ([www.fayerweathercraftguild.com](http://www.fayerweathercraftguild.com)) and Networks Rhode Island ([www.networksrhodeisland.org/artists](http://www.networksrhodeisland.org/artists)) to find a potential market for upper floor spaces.
- Provide technical and “matchmaking” assistance to property owners with regard to:
  - Connecting them with potential renters
  - Understanding Historic Tax Credits available
  - Code compliance

- o Streamlined permitting
- o Marketing of any businesses on upper floors to general public (as part of overall Chepachet Village promotions, particularly related to antiques/craft/making/arts cluster of offerings)

## Moving Forward!

The Town of Gloucester has been working towards the redevelopment and revitalization of Chepachet Village since the early 1990's beginning with the Chepachet Village Planning Project, which outlined issues, goals, recommendations and implementation steps to spur the economic and historic revitalization within Chepachet Village. The Town has been steadily implementing the steps outlined in the Plan to create an environment in which the Village's resources can thrive and expand.

The Town has invested its limited resources in the Village over the past several decades, all in preparation for a more comprehensive revitalization coupling housing, economic development, recreation, historic preservation and tourism. This Revitalization Plan builds on the remarkable success of the Town in obtaining and leveraging grants and funding programs that continue toward improving the Town's public spaces and streetscapes, particularly in and adjacent to the Village's Historic District. This Plan offers a roadmap for continued revitalization work. It includes a checklist of actions to achieve the Town's vision for the Village and a detailed guide to investment priorities for property-specific initiatives.

The Town is poised to see major revitalization in the Village of Chepachet. By implementing the action items and projects outlined in this plan, the Town will see transformational rehabilitation, establishing Chepachet Village as a showcase of historic preservation and rural economic development.

