

## RICH Task Force - Vision Statement

Our vision is to weave Richmond's historic villages into a single, vibrant community celebrated as a sanctuary for both adventure and tranquility. We will be a strategic center where families and businesses thrive by embracing our rich heritage, valuing sustainable growth, and enjoying a balanced life that is close to everything yet away from it all.

---

### Supporting Principles of the Vision

This vision is built on four core principles derived from the town's identity:

- **Community & Connection:** To foster a deep sense of pride and connection among residents, where the unique character of the historic mill villages of Hope Valley, Wyoming, Carolina, Shannock, and Usquepaug contributes to a unified town identity.
- **Heritage & Pride:** To safeguard and celebrate our history as a living tapestry of historic mill villages, attracting heritage tourists and artisan businesses that honor our past.
- **Adventure & Recreation:** To be the starting point for adventure in Southern Rhode Island, leveraging our natural assets like the Wood and Pawcatuck Rivers to attract eco-tourists, outdoor enthusiasts, and recreation-focused businesses.
- **Sustainability & Growth:** To cultivate a thriving local economy that balances commerce with conservation, attracting eco-conscious companies, supporting local entrepreneurs, and prioritizing sustainable development practices that protect our rural landscape.

- **Improve Walkability and Traffic Flow**

- **Develop a Traffic Calming and Circulation Study:** For Carolina and Wyoming, implement a study to design and pilot **traffic calming measures** (e.g., curb extensions, lane narrowing, or mini-roundabouts) to slow down vehicles and encourage drivers to stop rather than just passing through.
- **Establish Village-Wide Sidewalk and Pedestrian Connectivity Plan:** Prioritize and seek funding (grants, TIF, etc.) for the installation of **new sidewalks** in Carolina and Wyoming, with a focus on connecting key areas like historic buildings, potential water landings, and the core of Wyoming.
- **Optimize and Expand Parking Infrastructure:** In Carolina, Shannock, and Wyoming, conduct a **parking inventory and strategy assessment** to identify and develop off-street, shared, or diagonally configured public parking areas, especially near potential retail/amenity spaces, while improving pedestrian routes from these lots.

- **Boost Commercial and Retail Viability**

- **Create a Retail Recruitment and Incentive Program:** Launch a targeted program offering **financial incentives** (e.g., tax abatements, low-interest loans, or master lease/incubator programs) to attract key amenity businesses—like a grocery store, restaurants, or coffee shops—to fill the gaps in Carolina and Wyoming.
- **Develop 'Destination' Placemaking and Marketing:** Utilize the villages' existing strengths (Arts, Historic Buildings, Riverfront) to establish cohesive visual identities and create **branded gateway signage and wayfinding**. Market the villages as a "Destination for South County residents" and a "stopover for those on I-95".

- **Preserve Historic Character and Manage Development**

- **Establish Architectural Standards and Design Review:** For Wyoming and the mixed-use areas, enact **architectural design standards** and a review process to ensure new commercial development and retrofitting of plazas (like Chariho) are consistent with or complementary to the historic village character.
- **Create a Historic Building Rehabilitation Fund and Outreach Program:** Specifically for Carolina and Shannock, establish a **grant or tax credit program** to encourage private owners to invest in the upkeep and adaptive reuse of historic structures.
- **Form a Village Development Coalition:** Address apathy for change by creating a **Public-Private Partnership (P3) coalition**—involving residents, local businesses, and potential mid-size developers—to mediate interests, foster community buy-in, and drive forward implementation of the action plan.

- **Address Utilities and Environmental Risks**

- **Conduct an Infrastructure and Utilities Assessment:** Prioritize the assessment and planning for the **upgrading and extension of aging utilities**, particularly water lines and power lines, to support planned commercial development, especially in the larger parcels of Wyoming.
- **Establish Floodplain and Environmental Risk Mitigation Strategy:** Develop a strategy to address environmental and economic risks associated with the **riverfront/water landing areas** (e.g., canoeing/kayaking) to ensure new amenities (like a water landing/retail restaurant) are sustainably built and protected from potential environmental risks.