

# Greenwich Bay Special Area Management Plan

## Public Access

Public access is essential so that residents and visitors can take advantage of the many recreational opportunities along Greenwich Bay. The Greenwich Bay watershed provides areas to swim, clam, boat, and engage in other water-dependent activities. Many residents work in the area and depend on access to the water for their livelihoods.

### What are the key findings?

- Under the Rhode Island constitution, the citizens of Rhode Island “shall continue to enjoy and freely exercise all the rights of fishery, and the privileges of the shore ... including but not limited to fishing from the shore, the gathering of seaweed, leaving the shore to swim in the sea and passage along the shore...” below the mean high water mark. (Constitution of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, Article I, Section 17)
- Greenwich Bay offers three types of public access to tidal waters:
  - Publicly-owned lands, such as state and municipal parks,
  - CRMC designated rights-of-way (ROWs), and
  - Access identified in municipal harbor management plans, such as street ends.
- There are at least 22 CRMC designated ROWs and 10 other public access sites along Greenwich Bay and its coves. Numerous additional ROWs are also listed in the municipal harbor management plans.
- Of the 32 public access sites, there are at least 6 public boat ramps available. In addition, at least 5 private boat ramps are available to the public for a fee.
- Marinas can serve as limited public access sites. Certain marinas already provide some public access freely or for a minimal charge.

### What are the issues?

- Traditional public access is being lost to private development along the Greenwich Bay shoreline.
- Many designated public access sites have insufficient parking and “no parking” signs posted, or are blocked or poorly maintained.
- Many public boat ramps are frequently too shallow at low tide to launch boats easily. Few public ramps meet current boat ramp design standards with the exception of the Oakland Beach ramp.
- Liability, theft, and vandalism concerns prevent many marina owners from providing open public access.

### What are the SAMP’s goals?

Maintain existing public access and increase future access to Greenwich Bay.

### What are the recommended actions in the SAMP?

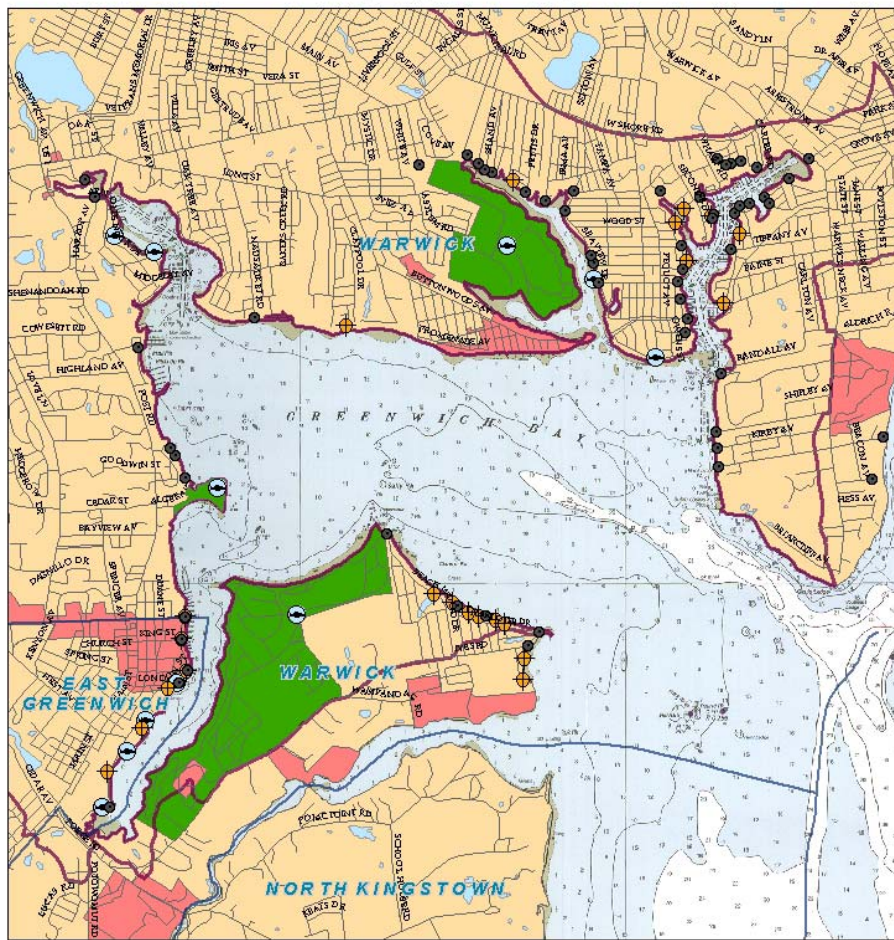
Type of Action	Who will Implement?
<b>POLICIES</b>	
Designate public access sites contained in the East Greenwich and Warwick Harbor Management Plans.	CRMC
Ensure all permitted activities maintain public access at CRMC designated ROWs and along the shoreline.	CRMC
Encourage marinas to provide for public access in their permits and thus receive limited liability protection.	CRMC
Post signs at all public ROWs.	CRMC, Municipalities
Remove “no parking” and “no trespassing” signs from municipally designated ROWs.	Municipalities
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
Designate more public ROWs.	CRMC, Municipalities
Increase budget for ROWs designation and legal research.	CRMC
Post signs at willing marinas that clearly state public access is available under limited conditions.	Marinas
Educate the citizens of Warwick and East Greenwich about their rights in respect to	CRMC

Type of Action	Who will Implement?
accessing the shore.	
Post a list of CRMC and municipally designated ROWs at East Greenwich Town Hall and Warwick City Hall.	CRMC, Municipalities
Improve parking availability at appropriate public access sites.	Municipalities
Explore potential of FEMA as a funding source for the creation of new public access and maintenance, protection, and restoration of current public access.	Municipalities
Develop greenways and limited permeably paved areas along East Greenwich's highly developed waterfront as public access.	Town of East Greenwich

### How does public access relate to other issues in the SAMP?

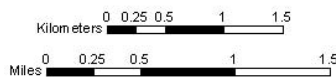
Public access is necessary to take advantage of the recreational opportunities in Greenwich Bay. It also is essential for maintaining an economically viable commercial fishery and developing the area as an attractive location to visit.

### Greenwich Bay Rights-of-Way to the Shore



**Legend**

- CRMC designated ROW
- Harbor Management Plan ROW
- Publicly-owned coastal access
- Historic district
- Publicly-owned open space
- Municipal boundary
- Watershed boundary



Data courtesy of City of Warwick Harbor Management Plan, Town of East Greenwich Harbor Management Plan, Coastal Resource Management Council (CRMC), RI Sea Grant, and RI Geographic Information Systems (RIGIS).



All data projected to Rhode Island State Plane Feet, NAD 1983, WGS 1984.  
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 Produced by Joshua Frederikson, URI Coastal Resources Center.

