
NEWPORT TREE, PARK, AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

FEBRUARY 2017



Newport Open Space Partnership



Newport
Tree and
Open Space
Commission

**Aquidneck
Land Trust**



Special thanks to the Newport Health Equity Zone for sharing data and input to inform this Master Plan!

Cover Photograph ©Alexander Nesbitt

SASAKI

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February 2017

Dear Friends:

Newport enjoys a world renowned reputation for its natural beauty, historical and architectural heritage, cultural resources, and legendary harbor and coastline. Trees, parks, open spaces, view corridors, and wide open vistas contribute greatly to the quality of life for Newporters and the appeal of Newport to its visitors. These elements are equally crucial to the economic vitality of the City.

With such a wealth of attributes, it is easy to take them for granted. And yet with the relentless pressure of development, protection of these key assets becomes vital. Incredibly, Newport has not had a comprehensive parks and open space master plan since the Olmsted plan of 1913. An inventory, needs assessment, and Master Plan of Newport's trees, parks, and open space is long overdue and crucial to the protection and enhancement of these essential assets to life in Newport.

The Newport Open Space Partnership was formed to work with the greater community to bring such a plan to reality. The Partnership would like to express our sincerest thanks to the hundreds of individuals and organizations whose ideas and insights shaped the Newport Tree, Parks & Open Space Master Plan. This was a truly a collaborative effort, and public input was a critical component of this planning process.

Our community's interest and commitment to trees, parks and open spaces was demonstrated by an unprecedented depth and level of public involvement and collaboration. Over 45 local nonprofits and private foundations, the City and State, and hundreds of private citizens supported this historic effort to envision a better future for Newport. Between 100 and 150 people attended each of our public planning meetings, online surveys received over 500 responses, and a partnership with the Health Equity Zone provided extensive input from Newport neighborhoods that often lack meaningful representation in planning efforts.

We have been gratified to find a very simple, broadly-shared understanding across the many organizations and individuals responsible for the stewardship of Newport's natural and cultural resources: the management of our public parks and open space can and should meet national best practice standards. The incredible heritage that is in our care demands nothing less. This document, and the civic engagement and consensus building required to create it, is a pivotal step in the right direction.

We hope this plan will inspire you to dream about the many ways in which our shared open spaces can shape the life of our community for the generations to come. And we hope you will continue to work side-by-side with us to bring this plan to life.

Sincerely,


Charles Allott, Esq.
Executive Director, Aquidneck Land Trust


Thomas Ardito
Executive Director, Aquidneck Island Planning Commission


Lily Dick
President, Newport Tree Society


Rocky Steeves
Chairman, Newport Tree & Open Space Commission


Dawn Euer, Esq.
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Executive Summary

A forward-looking vision that will sustain and enhance Newport's trees, parks, and open spaces, ecologically, culturally, economically, and socially for generations to come.

The implementation of this comprehensive, public-driven plan will ensure the long-term sustainability of Newport's trees, parks, and open spaces, enhancing quality of life, mitigating social and health inequity, improving community prosperity, and creating a greener Newport. Inspired by and building upon Olmsted's 1913 Vision, the citywide vision integrates current and future needs to provide a balance of open space, recreational opportunities, protected natural habitats, and a healthy citywide tree canopy.

Newport's parks, open spaces, and urban forest play important roles in the community and region's culture, economy, and environmental system. The future vision will ensure the stewardship of a diversity of parks, providing a balance of active recreation, passive enjoyment activities, and natural areas. It improves connectivity to the city's historic waterfront, and ensures all

neighborhoods are connected with safe cycling and walking access.

Today in Newport, areas such as Northern Newport¹ require an increase in access to open space, recreational opportunities and trees. Still, while Central and Southern Newport have better access to parks and amenities, many historic or beloved elements such as the Harbor Walk and Ocean Drive are in need of repair and re-visioning. Enhancing habitat and creating healthier ecological connections are also key.

The plan seeks to both reinvest in historic open spaces and helps to ensure a more equitable distribution of open space amenities across the city for the future.

The citywide vision ensures the future success of Newport through economic sustainability, improved transportation, and safe and reliable access to trees, parks and open spaces.

¹ Northern Newport includes the North End and Broadway neighborhoods



Middletown

Navy Property

RAIL WITH TRAIL

NORTHERN NEWPORT IS A KEY ZONE FOR ADDING NEW PARKS, TREES, RECREATION, & WATERFRONT ACCESS

Navy Property

Miantonomi Park

NEW PUBLIC WATERFRONT PARK AT NAVY HOSPITAL

Harbor Walk

HARBOR WALK IMPROVEMENTS

Easton's Beach

Easton Bay

Cliff Walk

Fort Adams State Park

Brenton Point State Park

CONNECTED NETWORK FOR BICYCLING

Vision

- Waterfront Walk
- Easton Pond Walk
- Blue Trail: 2008 West Side Master Plan
- Existing Cycling Route
- Proposed Cycling Route
- Rail with Trail
- Water Taxi Route
- Proposed Parks
- Parks + Other Public Open Space
- Natural Areas
- Cemeteries
- Downtown
- Underserved Zone for Open Space
- Street Trees

0 0.25 0.5 mile

Guiding Principles

These five principles underlie all Master Plan recommendations, supporting a more resilient, connected, and equitable open space system. These principles are the result of public and stakeholder input paired with national standards-based analysis.

A Connected System

Walking and bicycling links between parks, neighborhoods, and other destinations; greenways, welcoming streetscapes, and green and blue connections



Great Parks & Open Spaces

Activation and amenities, balancing active recreation, passive enjoyment, civic and social space, and environmental needs



An Equitable System

A tree, park, and open space system where all citizens have a voice, and all neighborhoods have convenient access to open spaces, recreation opportunities, a healthy community forest, and the waterfront





A Resilient System

Environment, ecology, tree canopy, wildlife habitat; a system prepared for changing sea levels and climate conditions



A Living Legacy

*An enduring/sustaining system.
Legally protected open space*

IMPLEMENTING THE VISION

From the start, this Master Plan has been a collaborative effort undertaken by a coalition of residents and city, community, and state representatives. The success of this plan will require building on this momentum, and continuing to grow a culture of stewardship for Newport's trees, parks, and open spaces.

Key Projects and Elements:

- Miantonomi Park Enhancements
- Upgrading Basic Park Infrastructure
- New North End Parks, Trees, Recreation, and Waterfront access
- Public Waterfront Park: Navy Hospital Redevelopment
- Harbor Walk Enhancements
- Planning for Sea Level Rise
- Rail with Trail
- Connected Bicycle and Pedestrian Network with Green, Welcoming Streets
- King Park/ Spencer Park
- Special Focus on Trees
- Legal Protection for Open Space

Implementation elements:

- Consistent, best-practice process for public input into future decision-making
- Integrated decision-making with guaranteed public involvement that considers sea level rise, historic legacies, and the diverse roles of trees and open space
- Balancing investments with long-term revenue
- Funding, revenue, and sustainable operations
- Building on and expanding existing public/private partnerships

Introduction

A Vision for Trees, Parks, and Open Space

PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

In 1913, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. created an open space plan for Newport, which greatly shaped how Newport developed over the past century. Now, more than a century has passed, and the lasting legacy of this plan is clear. Many of our beloved green and blue spaces like Miantonomi Park are the result of Olmsted's vision. This Master Plan looks ahead to the next century, providing a vision for the long-term sustainability and stewardship for the city's parks, open spaces, and trees.

Driven by community feedback, the master plan builds off of Newport's rich historic legacy to create a bold vision for Newport's civic realm in the next century. The plan includes a wide range of recommendations across the city, with overlapping and diverse program opportunities. This approach balances interests in historic preservation, economic development, and environmental preservation including habitat protection and climate change. The plan also provides recommendations for meeting the community's social and recreational needs.

With this in mind, this document identifies five overarching themes: Great Parks and Open Spaces; An Equitable System; A Connected System; A Resilient System; and A Living Legacy. These themes address areas of need and opportunities, identified in the Newport Open Space Partnership Existing Conditions & Analysis Report. In order to realize each theme, several recommendations, including key projects and supporting actions, have been identified. Each theme is described in more detail in dedicated chapters within this document, concluding with recommendations for implementing the vision, including implementation strategies.

Importantly, just as public engagement has been at the core of this process, the Master Plan includes recommendations to build on this momentum. The proposed Integrated Open Space Management Strategy for future open space, park, and tree decision-making is a best-practice public outreach framework for assuring public input into future processes. This framework will support equitable decision-making through a consistent input process, helping cultivate stewardship and public engagement for years to come.



What is Open Space?

- City Parks
- State Parks
- Other Public Open Spaces
- Conservation Land
- Beaches
- Squares & Civic Spaces
- Harbor Walk
- Cliff Walk
- Driftways
- Boulevards
- Sidewalks
- Cemeteries
- Trees
- Streetscapes
- View Corridors



Overview of the Planning Process

The Master Plan began with the first phase: parks and open space inventory and analysis. Existing conditions, needs, opportunities, strengths, and deficiencies were documented, and a public outreach strategy was developed to maximize public participation throughout the process. As part of the data-gathering in phase one, the MyNewport online mapping survey was launched, and additional public input was solicited at the project's first community meeting.

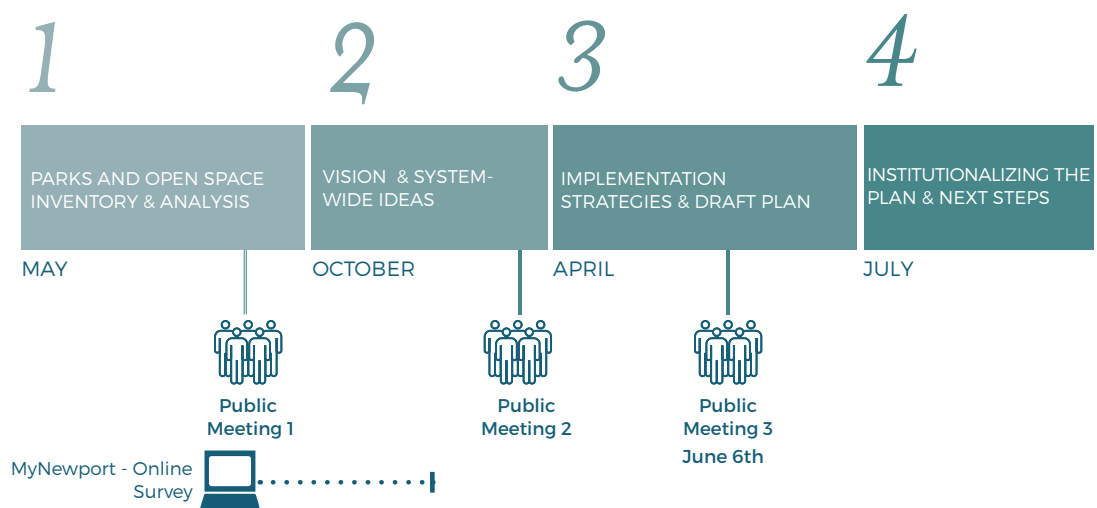
The second phase focused on Vision & System-Wide Ideas. Based on input from the survey and first public meeting, the key elements of the future vision were identified, and three proposed framework concepts were developed, presenting opportunities for enhancing Newport's waterfronts, neighborhood parks, and mobility network. The draft vision statement and three framework concepts were presented at the second community meeting.

The third phase of the project combined the three framework concepts into a draft master plan framework based on public input received after the second community meeting. Implementation strategies were

identified for the projects proposed in the draft plan. The draft plan framework, proposed projects, and implementation strategies were presented at the third community meeting.

The fourth and final phase of the project focused on institutionalizing the plan and next steps. Priority projects, identified by public input, are documented with accompanying implementation strategy recommendations.

Embarking on a plan of this range and magnitude require the guidance, input, and support of many. The planning process is guided by the Newport Open Space Partnership, comprised of representatives from the City of Newport, Newport Tree & Open Space Commission, Aquidneck Land Trust, Aquidneck Island Planning Commission, and the Newport Tree Society. In addition to guidance and input from the Partnership, a Steering Committee and several Advisory Committees provided input based on their expertise with Newport's parks, open spaces, and trees. Most importantly, community input drove the focus of the plan.



ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Several Advisory Committees provided guidance and assistance during the Master Plan project:

- **Green Space Advisors**
- **Open Space Advisors**
- **Environmental Advisors**
- **Communications Advisors**

These committees met periodically to provide input on operations, connectivity, preservation, partnership opportunities, sea level rise, sustainability, air and water quality, habitat, and community engagement. They helped to identify key opportunities and challenges and review preliminary findings.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee met many times throughout the duration of this process, helping guide and review the development of ideas. The multifaceted group collectively shares responsibility for the stewardship of Newport's trees, parks, and open spaces. The Steering Committee included the five partner organizations of the Newport Open Space Partnership as well as additional local experts, representing organizations like the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) and the Coastal Resources Center (CRC) and Rhode Island Sea Grant at the University of Rhode Island's Graduate School of Oceanography.

Who is the Newport Open Space Partnership?

The **City of Newport** is primarily responsible for the planning and maintenance of city-owned parks and open spaces. **The Newport Tree & Open Space Commission** is a city commission responsible for the protection of the city's urban forest, which includes trees on publicly- and privately-owned land and advises the city on open space matters. **The Aquidneck Land Trust** works to preserve and steward Aquidneck Island's open spaces for the lasting benefit to the community while connecting people to the lands that define the Island's natural character. **The Aquidneck Island Planning Commission** is a nonprofit organization working in partnership with communities to preserve and improve the Island's environment, economy, and quality of life. Finally, the **Newport Tree Society** was founded in 1987 to protect, maintain, and regenerate Newport's fabled, citywide public and private urban forest.

Public Input

Public input from the community was critical to the development of this plan. It identified the needs and desires of the community and generated the excitement, interest, and support needed to carry this plan through implementation.

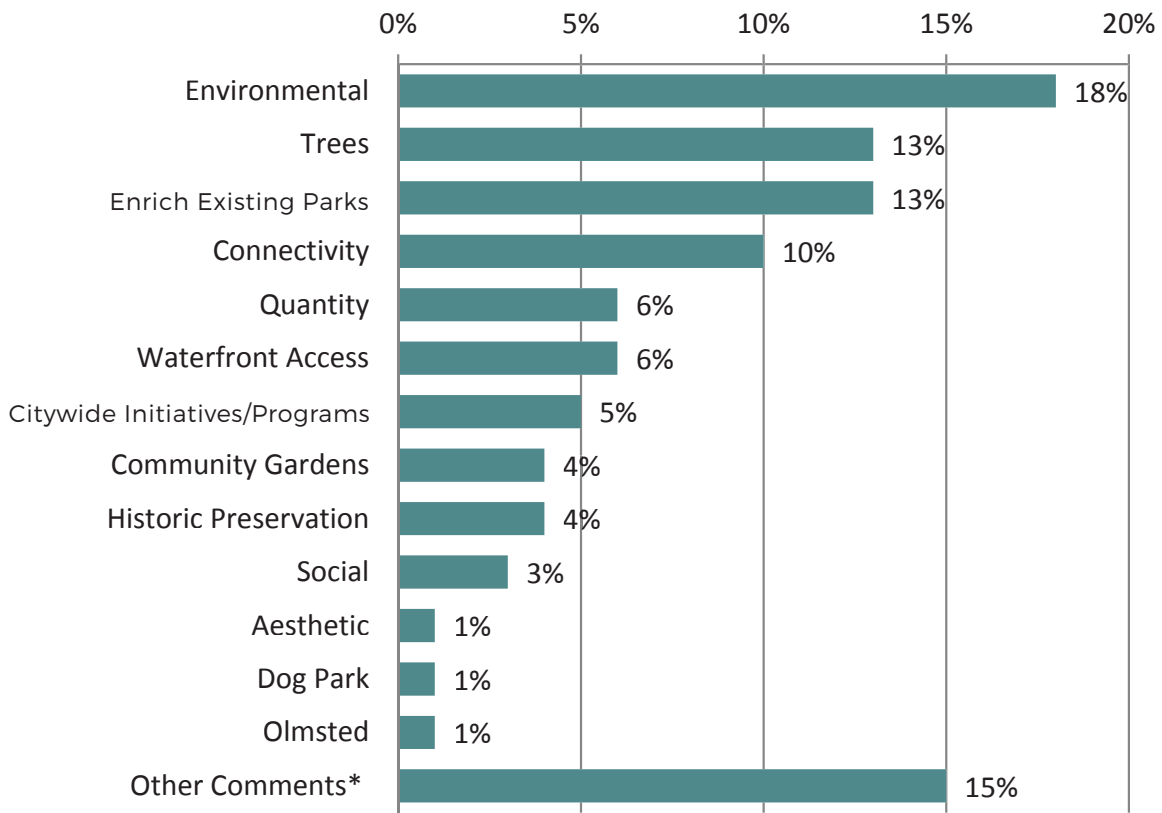
Three public meetings, scheduled at strategic milestones in the planning process, were opportunities to present information to the community, answer questions, and solicit feedback about the project. To support these meetings, a project website hosted the presentation materials and included opportunities to give feedback online. An online mapping survey, MyNewport, allowed community members to provide location-specific suggestions, requests, and comments. Finally, additional survey information collected by the Newport Health Equity Zone helped to inform additional wants and desires from the Broadway and North End neighborhoods, which are presently severely under-served by parks, open spaces, and trees.

PUBLIC MEETING 1

The first public meeting was held on September 14, 2015. An estimated 150 people attended the meeting at the Pell School. Early in the evening, attendees were invited to circulate through an open house, where presentation boards introduced the planning process and depicted Newport's past open space plans, current open space offerings, and future open space threats from sea level rise and storm inundation. The evening's presentation focused on similar themes and included additional analysis about the community's present and future access to parks, open space, and trees. Following the meeting, attendees were invited to share their ideas about Newport's historic legacy, current needs, and future resilient network. All of the community feedback was categorized by topic, from which key themes emerged. Top themes included: Environment, Trees, Enrich Existing Parks, Connectivity, Quantity of Parks, and Waterfront Access. These feedback-driven themes established community priorities for the plan. A complete list of feedback received at all public meetings is available in the appendix.



Top Themes: Percent of Comments



*diverse, difficult to categorize

PUBLIC MEETING 2

The community reconvened at the Pell School for the second public meeting on January 28, 2016. This meeting focused on framework options, different opportunities for enhancing the city’s trees, parks, and open spaces. The three options were developed from community feedback and focused on the waterfront, neighborhood parks, and connectivity. Approximately 140 people attended this meeting, and an additional 23 people provided feedback digitally in an online survey following the open house.¹ This meeting followed the same format as the first: attendees participated in an open house and listened to a presentation describing three framework concepts for the future of Newport’s parks and open spaces. Attendees were encouraged to provide feedback on the vision for Newport as well as improvements proposed in the three concepts.

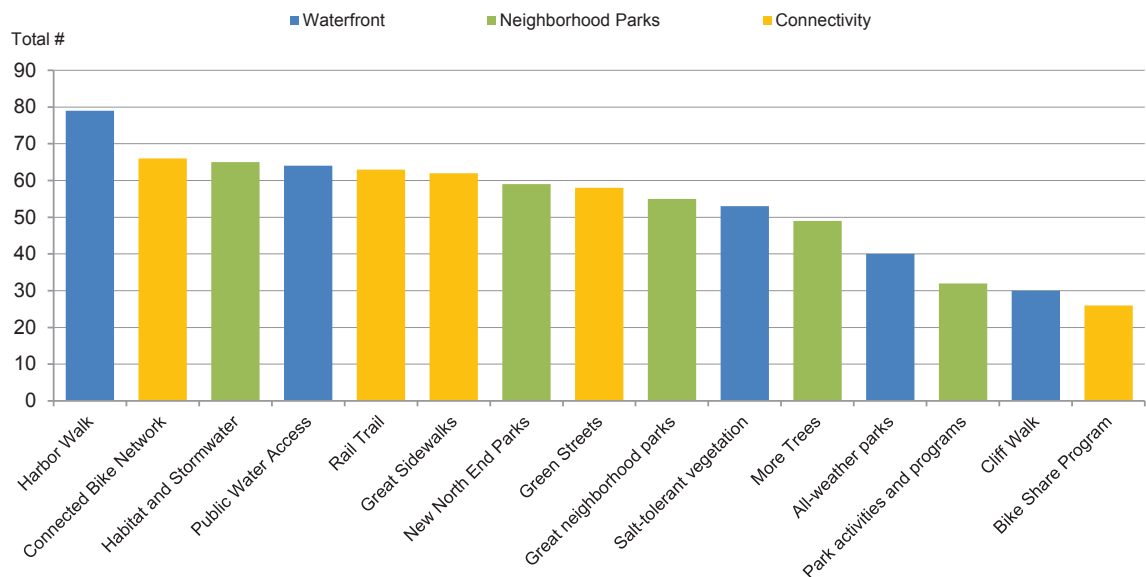
Key takeaways from the feedback received after the second public meeting include strong support for connectivity improvements of all varieties and for many purposes (mobility, stormwater management, habitat) and improvement of public access to the waterfront, with most participants supporting an improved Harbor Walk.

Key priorities:

- Waterfront connectivity
- Walking & bicycling connectivity
- Environmental opportunities: shade & trees, habitat, green infrastructure
- Activating parks, especially waterfront parks

¹ This online survey was identical to the feedback cards used at the Pell School meeting. This provided an option for residents who could not attend the meeting to still provide feedback. The presentation was also posted online.

Overall priorities



PUBLIC MEETING 3

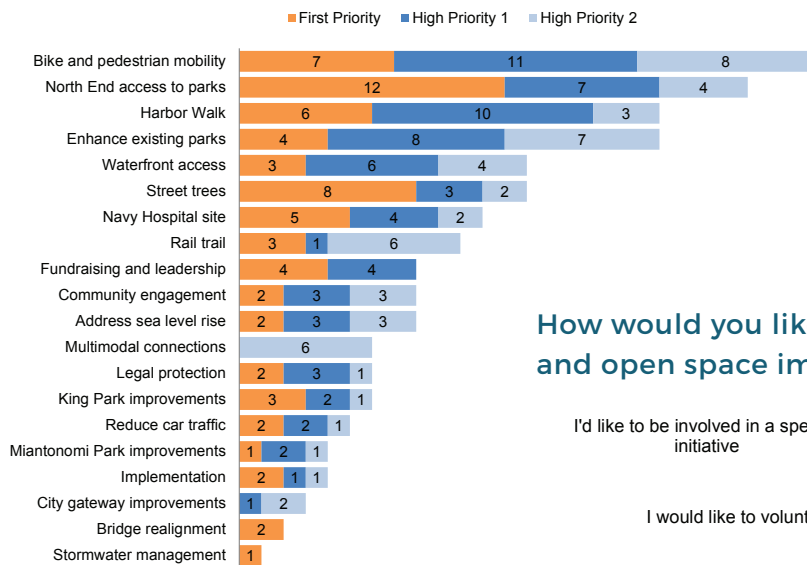
The third public meeting was held on June 6, 2016, again at the Pell School. Following the same format as the previous public meetings, the open house and presentation included information about the preferred vision for Newport, including draft planning principles supported by key recommendations and proposed projects. Approximately 100 people attended the event, and 54 completed the feedback cards. An additional 31 community members participated online following the meeting.

Attendees were invited to provide feedback prioritizing projects and recommendations, and the future of public process as the plan moves towards implementation. The most popular top priority was to improve North End access to parks. The highest overall priority (combining first-, second-, and third-

priority projects) was improving bike and pedestrian mobility, corroborating earlier support for improved connectivity. Many respondents noted that improving bike and pedestrian mobility would also improve North End access to parks in other areas of the city.

Residents also provided feedback on the planning process and recommendations for future engagement. Respondents generally felt that the process worked well, and were happy with the opportunity to provide feedback. Moving forward, they would like to see additional meeting formats and locations, though were satisfied with the frequency, time, and location of the meetings held to date.

The most important thing to do FIRST is: Two other HIGH-PRIORITY items are:



How would you like to be engaged in future parks, tree, and open space improvement processes?



MYNEWPORT

Supporting these three community meetings, an online mapping survey, called MyNewport, consisted of two parts. The first part included an interactive mapping exercise where respondents were able to place “positive” icons, “neutral” icons, and “needs improvement” icons with associated comments on specific locations on a map of Newport. The second part of the survey was a traditional question-and-answer style survey soliciting information about preferred open spaces and activities. The online survey was opened in September and closed in December. Respondents were also asked to answer some questions about themselves in order to track demographic representation across the city. In total, 551 people participated in the question-and-answer portion of the survey, and 191 people participated in the online mapping portion of the survey.

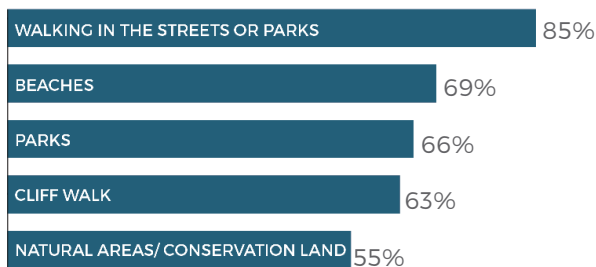
Survey respondents overwhelmingly stated that their favorite open spaces were regional destinations such as the Cliff Walk, Fort

Adams, and Brenton Point. King Park and Morton Park finish the top five favorite spaces. Passive recreation, including walking, enjoying views or access to the water, relaxation, and socializing, was the overall top activity for respondents. Map areas with positive icons support the answers to the survey questions, with many positive icons clustered around regional destinations such as Fort Adams, Brenton Point, and the Cliff Walk.

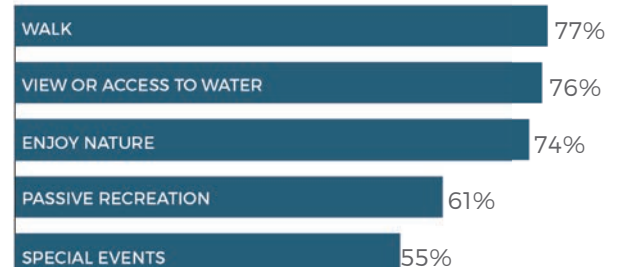
Areas identified as “needing improvement” include the North End and Downtown, with many suggestions to expand open space offerings in the North End and improve maintenance and waterfront connections in open spaces Downtown.

Responses from the MyNewport survey informed the creation of the three framework concepts and proposed projects. Full documentation of feedback received in the survey is available in the appendix.

Favorite things to do or places to visit outside in Newport:



Favorite things to do in Newport’s parks and open spaces:



Future Priorities:

1. Park maintenance
2. Walking and bicycling
3. Trees and shade
4. Harbor Walk
5. Number of parks/overall acreage
6. Cliff Walk

Favorite Parks (votes):

- | | |
|------------------|------|
| 1. Cliff Walk | (83) |
| 2. King Park | (35) |
| 3. Fort Adams | (30) |
| 4. Morton Park | (24) |
| 5. Brenton Point | (20) |

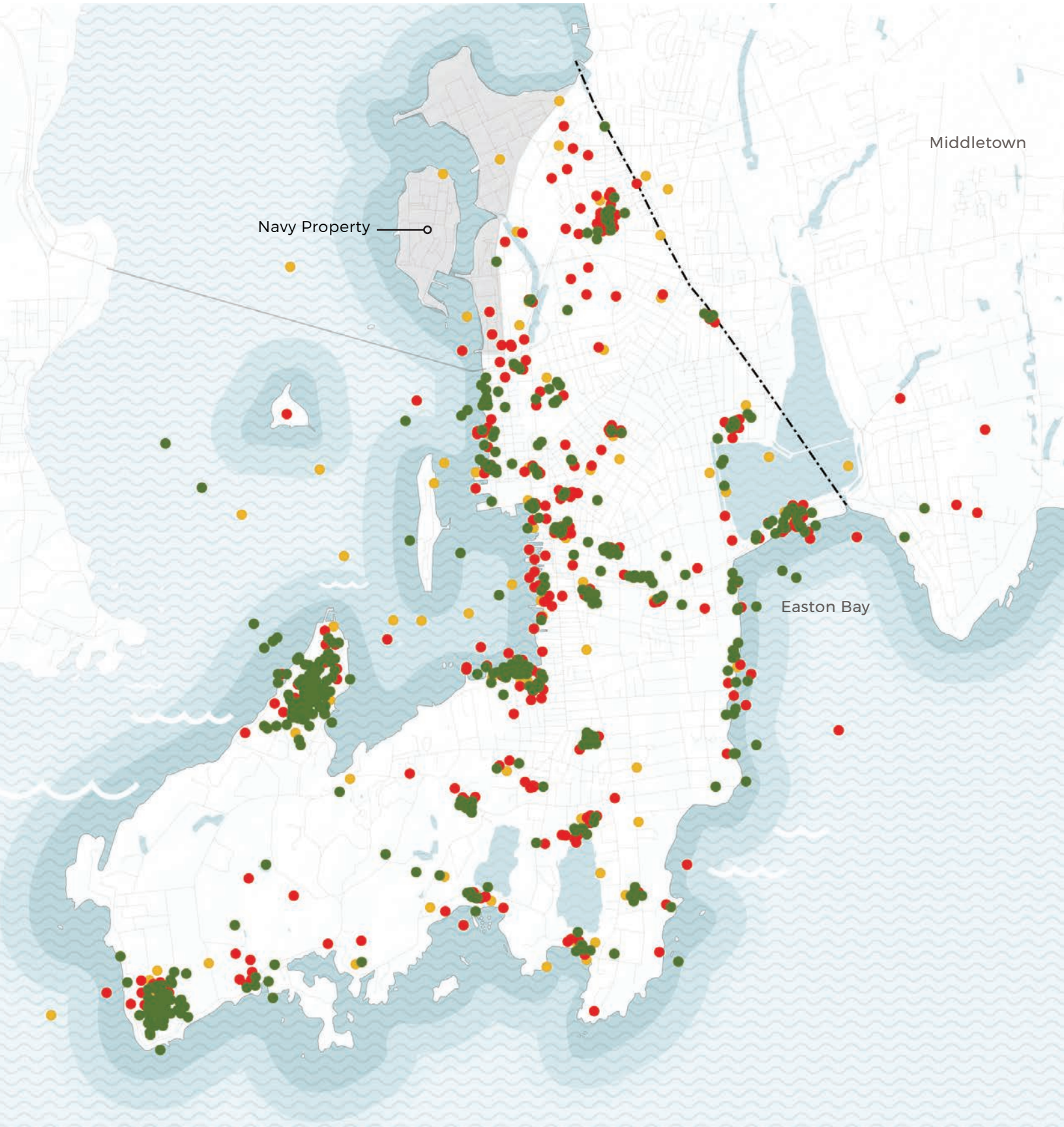
Needs Improvement (votes):

- | | |
|--------------------|------|
| 1. King Park | (34) |
| 2. Equality Park | (29) |
| 3. Miantonomi Park | (26) |
| 4. Harbor Walk | (20) |
| 5. Storer Park | (20) |

Key Stakeholders

Great open spaces, waterfronts, trees, and public rights-of-way benefit much more than just park users. Many people throughout Newport and the surrounding community will enjoy the improvements proposed in the Master Plan. Key stakeholders include Newport residents, including children, who will benefit from improved access to local and regional destinations through the creation of new parks and improved connectivity, as well as improvements to existing parks. Other key stakeholders include neighborhood groups, local businesses, and the yachting community.

City of Newport taxpayers will benefit from proposals to reduce stormwater runoff through more trees and implementing green stormwater management techniques. Green space reduces the strain on the sewer system and clean waters, lowering the need for treatment infrastructure. The city itself will benefit as the park, tree, and open space improvements support economic development and increase tax revenue from higher property values and increased tourism spending. Finally, local wildlife and migrating species will benefit from cleaner water and more habitat created as a result of this plan.



MYNEWPORT – SELECT COMMENTS

Successful Elements

“Visited here [Fort Adams State Park] multiple times this year for great events. Beautiful spot, amazing views, well organized.”

“The new paths around Easton’s Pond are outstanding!”

“Cliff Walk is a treasure for all to enjoy.”

“I love that [King Park] is an area where I can bring the dogs! Thank you for having SOME access to the water for our pets in the summer.”

“I am all for any wildlife habitat conservation efforts, as usually those sensitive areas include wetlands, that serve as natural buffers for flooding.”

Other Ideas

“Future planning/design for King Park will need to accommodate sea water - coastal storm surge and higher sea levels. Maintenance & upgrade plans will need to address this to ensure future use of the park’s amenities.”

“Would [Aquidneck Park] be a good location for a community garden?”

“[Morton Park] could be a good location for a dog park because there is a lot more space. However, don’t want to block the kids sledding hill.”

“More attention should be paid to the streets, drift ways. Byways, boulevards and avenues as open spaces to be expanded beautified and enjoyed.”

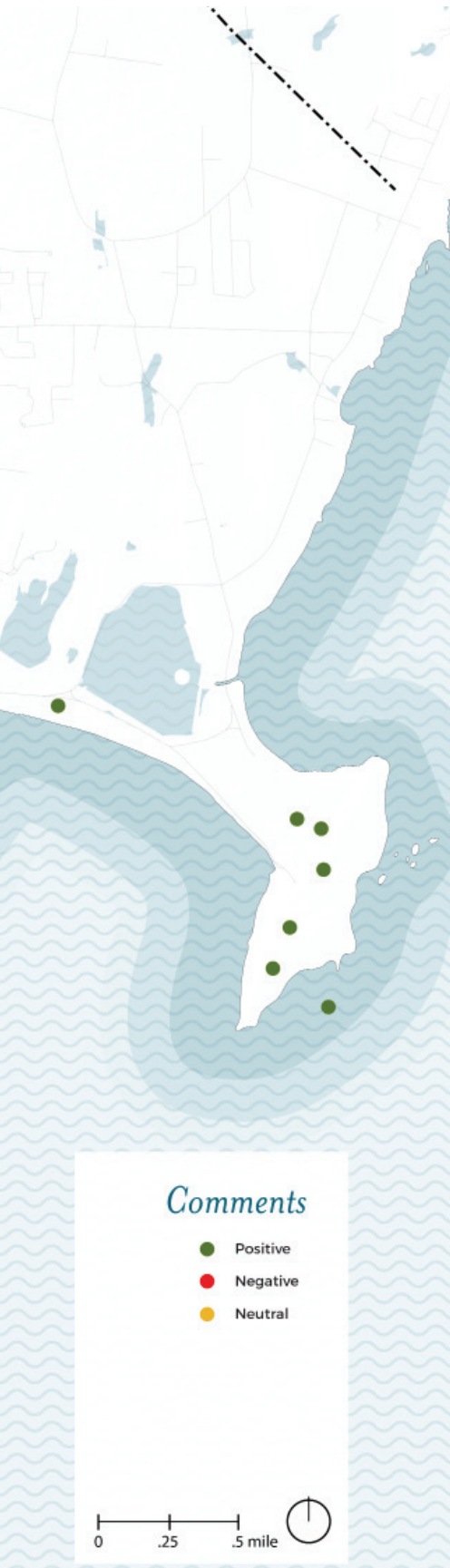
Opportunities for Improvement

“The north end needs more open space. Miantonomi Park could/should be expanded.”

“I have been interested in visiting Ballard Park but have no concept of where to park, where to enter, etc. Signage would be helpful.”

“Future planning/design for King Park will need to accommodate sea water - coastal storm surge and higher sea levels.”

“Access to the waterfront both physical and the view corridors need to be better protected in perpetuity.”





*Summary of
Existing Conditions*

Existing Conditions

The foundation of this Master Plan was a comprehensive analysis of the current state of Newport's assets. The goal of this existing condition inventory and report was to document Newport's trees, parks and open space, highlighting key opportunities and challenges.



The analysis process included:

- An inventory of Newport's parks and open spaces
- Needs assessment and level of service analysis comparing open space and recreation availability in Newport to national standards
- Analysis of sea level changes, environmental considerations, legal protection status, and historic identity
- Input from Advisory Groups, stakeholders, and the Steering Committee
- Public feedback at the first community meeting

The process yielded several key themes and opportunities useful in shaping the future of Newport's trees, parks, and open space network. Key findings by theme included:

Equity: How can all parts of the city equally enjoy great open spaces, recreational elements, trees, and passive enjoyment opportunities. Today, while many neighborhoods of Newport enjoy easy access to waterfronts and open spaces, some areas such as Northern Newport¹ show greater gaps. The gaps are apparent when demographics and population are taken into consideration; the North End contains only 7.5% of the city's park space and 18% of the city's playgrounds yet 44% of the city's population lives there.

¹ "Northern Newport" includes the North End and Broadway Neighborhoods.

Park Activation and Amenities: How can amenities and programming further enrich the experience of Newport's parks and open spaces? Improved signage, park enhancements, seating, paths, accessible zones, stormwater management, and additional shade are opportunities to improve park visitor experiences.

Connectivity: How can access to and between parks, the waterfront, and neighborhoods be improved for bicyclists and pedestrians? Currently Newport is only home to two stretches of bicycle lanes. Public input has shown a desire for a more connected greenway network, where multi-modal streets, designated bike lanes, and green infrastructure provide connections throughout the city.

Living Legacy: Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. 1913 plan helped shape the future of the city, recommending a framework for the establishment and preservation of open space, boulevards, and greenways. Today, many street connections and the urban forest reflect the influence of Olmsted. This plan, in tandem with legal protection, is an opportunity to preserve Newport's rich legacy, while also addressing current and emerging needs.

Resiliency: How can Newport's parks be prepared for future changes in climate, sea level rise, and storm surge from coastal storms? Today key zones such as King Park are already feeling the effects of climate change; Downtown and the North End are next in line. There is a need to adapt these zones to sea level rise and climate change through the use of innovative design, salt-

tolerant plant species, and wildlife habitat creation. Newport's system of parks, open space, and trees provides a key opportunity to act as an urban stormwater sponge, which has the potential to help absorb rainfall and also clean water.

Habitat and Natural Systems: Planning for trees, parks, and open space in Newport must consider natural systems, promoting functional ecological habitat and green connections. How can Newport's green spaces and trees support the ecological needs of the city, as well as the recreational needs of residents and visitors?

An Enduring System: Newport's trees, open spaces, and waterfronts are defining features of the city; yet, they also face challenges from tight budgets and development pressure. Many of Newport's beloved open spaces are not permanently protected, and older trees in the city, like its Centennial Beeches, are nearing the end of their lifespans. Open space preservation and a strategy for the next generation of Newport's urban forest are critical considerations for the master plan. Newport's public open spaces, including city-managed sites and two state parks, also face fiscal challenges. Maintenance needs are high and have increased for the Newport Buildings, Grounds, and Forestry division with the addition of schools to their responsibility. Parks staff are increasingly asked to do more with fewer resources. What are the opportunities to create a fiscally sustainable system to provide more support for maintenance?

Citywide Vision

Citywide Vision

This Master Plan provides a vision for preserving, protecting, and enhancing Newport's trees, parks, and open spaces for future generations

Through a comprehensive vision to expand and enhance Newport's parks and open spaces, the city's residents can ensure a sustained plan for generations to come. Combining Olmsted's 1913 Vision with current needs, the citywide vision improves the quality of life for Newport residents and provides a balance of open space, recreational opportunities, and a healthy and diverse tree canopy.

Newport's parks, open spaces, and urban forest play important roles in the community and region's culture, public health, economy and environmental system. The future vision will ensure the stewardship of a diversity of parks, providing a balance of active recreation, passive enjoyment activities, and natural areas. It improves connectivity to the city's historic waterfront, and ensures all neighborhoods are connected with safe cycling and walking access.

Today, areas such as Northern Newport require an increase in access to open space, recreational opportunities and trees. Still, while Central and Southern Newport have better access to parks and amenities, many historic elements such as the Harbor Walk and Ocean Drive are in need of repair and re-visioning. The plan seeks to both reinvest in historic elements and create a more equitable distribution of open space amenities across the city for the future.

The citywide vision ensures the future success of Newport through economic sustainability, improved transportation, and safe and reliable access to parks and open spaces.

Principles

These principles emerged through public feedback, conversations with stakeholders, and analysis of the current state of Newport's trees, parks, and open space.



Great Parks & Open Spaces

Activation and amenities



An Equitable System

Open space, recreation, and tree access for all residents



A Connected System

Walking and bicycling



A Resilient System

Environment, ecology, tree canopy, and wildlife habitat



A Living Legacy

An enduring/sustaining system. Legally protected open space

Key Projects and Elements:

- Miantonomi Park Enhancements
- Upgrading Basic Park Infrastructure
- New North End Parks, Trees, Recreation, and Waterfront Access
- Public Waterfront Park: Navy Hospital Redevelopment
- Harbor Walk Enhancements
- Planning for Sea Level Rise
- Rail with Trail
- Connected Bicycle and Pedestrian Network with Green, Welcoming Streets
- King Park/ Spencer Park Enhancements
- Special Focus on Trees
- Legal Protection for Open Space
- Integrated Open Space Management Strategy





Master Plan Vision

This Master Plan provides recommendations to strengthen Newport’s green and blue networks, providing greater resiliency for future environmental changes, cultivating increased stewardship for trees and open spaces, and creating a more equitable, connected city.

Northern Newport: The main goal for Northern Newport is to improve access to open space, recreational opportunities and tree canopy. To accomplish this, priority projects include a new waterfront park on the former Navy Hospital land (the only opportunity for waterfront access in the North End), Miantonomi Park enhancements and long-term stewardship, improved connectivity between open spaces and schools, increased tree canopy coverage, and the development of a Rail-to-Trail network. The rail trail implementation will be a long term project, but can begin with “the first mile”; connecting downtown to the northern city limits. Pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly connections could help link neighborhoods and parks with the rail trail.

Central: While Newport’s west side is renowned for its Cliff Walk, central Newport and the downtown contains great opportunities at the Harbor Walk. The Harbor Walk is re-imagined as a connected system of piers and boardwalks along the historic waterfront for tourists and residents to enjoy. The Harbor Walk improvements will help create more accessible, safer cycling streets and improve tourism, but should be planned for amid future sea level rise projections. Additional opportunities in Central Newport exist with the extension of the walking trail around Easton’s Pond with cooperation from the Town of Middletown.

Southern: Expansive estates, state parks, and private beaches define the lands of Southern Newport. Although much land is privately-owned, the area also offers some of the most expansive public parks and scenic drives / vistas. In this area, the citywide vision promotes the enhancement and preservation of habitat and natural areas through permanent easements to protect public access, improvements to Ocean Drive, a scenic cycling route, and planning for predicted sea level rise. Improvements should be done in coordination with RIDEM, which manages Fort Adams and Brenton Point State Parks.

*Great Parks &
Open Spaces*

Great Parks & Open Spaces

Parks, open spaces, and trees play critical roles in the life of communities – socially, environmentally, culturally, and economically. Recommendations in this chapter aim to enhance Newport’s open spaces, active recreation, and passive enjoyment opportunities.

In Newport, great open spaces come in all sizes and share many common characteristics. Visual and physical **connections to water** define many of Newport’s beloved open spaces like King Park, Battery Park, and many others. Growing waterfront access is also a key goal especially through expanding the Harbor Walk and waterfront public access and creating the only waterfront access opportunity in Northern Newport through the creation of the public waterfront park on the Navy Hospital site.

In coastal parks like Brenton Point and Fort Adams and inland parks like Ballard and Miantonomi, **habitat and ecology** play important roles. **Historic legacy** is also a key theme across Newport’s trees and open spaces. Importantly, **legal protection status** must be secured to ensure that open spaces are permanently protected for future generations. Currently, only a few parks and open spaces are permanently protected.¹ Portions of Miantonomi and many other significant parks, open spaces, and view corridors are not legally protected.

Open spaces must provide a **balance of areas for passive enjoyment, active recreation, social gathering, and habitat**. Sometimes this balance occurs within a single open space like at Miantonomi Park; other times, the balance occurs across multiple parks. **Comfort and safety** are foundational attributes of any successful open space. **Trees and shade** play important roles in creating a comfortable space, while also providing home to wildlife, cleaning air, and helping absorb stormwater.

Currently, opportunities exist to expand tree cover at many parks, including Braga Park and Murphy Field. **Basic infrastructure** like benches, sidewalks, restrooms, and consistent entry signage add to the use of open spaces, but in many parks, these features could be improved to create a more welcoming, enjoyable park experience.

Great parks also depend on a financially-sound open space management system. **Economic sustainability** is key to fund high quality maintenance, replacement and renovations, and capital projects. Today, Newport’s maintenance teams work hard to keep our open spaces well maintained, but the team is significantly undersized and underfunded for the large number of open space acres they are responsible for.

Key Projects:

- **Miantonomi enhancements** **E** **C** **P** **R** **LL**

Relevant Principles:

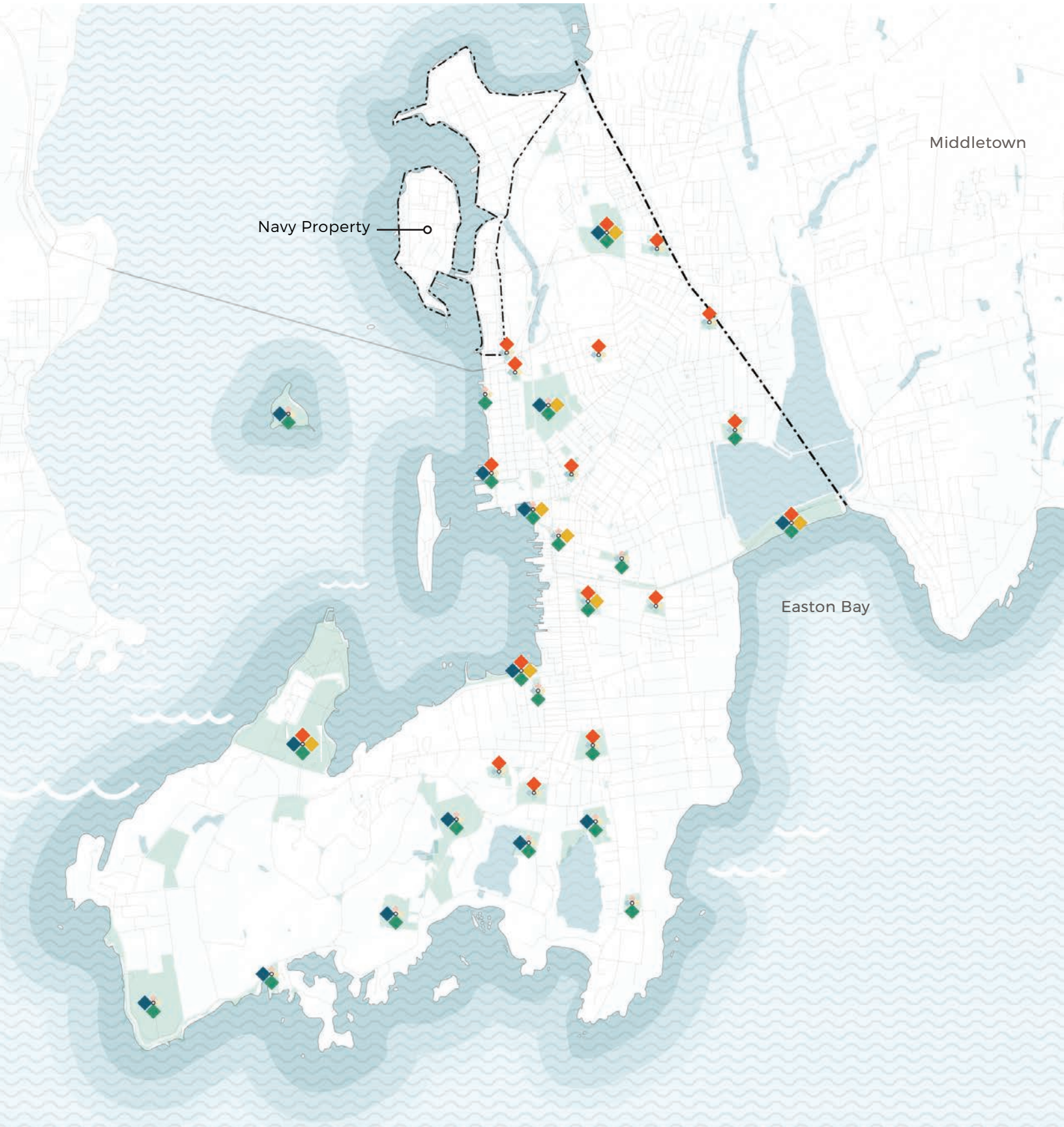
- E** An Equitable System
- C** A Connected System
- P** Great Parks & Open spaces
- R** A Resilient System
- LL** A Living Legacy

Faded symbols mean a principle is less relevant for that project.

Supporting Actions:

- Secure legal protection to preserve open spaces permanently (See Chapter 9 - Living Legacy)
- Upgrade amenities and basic infrastructure, including restrooms, benches, lighting, water fountains, trash and recycling receptacles
- Strengthen waterfront connections and public access through the Harbor Walk, Navy Hospital site redevelopment, King Park improvements, bridge realignment, and resiliency enhancements (see Chapter 7 – A Connected System and Chapter 8 – A Resilient System).
- Enhance wildlife habitat and improve environmental health (See Chapter 8 – A Resilient System)
- Increase activity and programming in parks, helping them become more vibrant gathering spaces; for example, Miantonomi and Hunter Parks
- Improve and expand recreation opportunities, especially the skate park, track, soccer, and basketball, as well as adding playgrounds in the North End
- Continue upgrading playgrounds and increasing ADA accessibility and universal design
- Identify new revenue sources, partnerships, and maintenance opportunities (See Chapter 10 - Implementation)
- Identify a permanent home for the dog park and relocate it
- Support and expand Friends' Groups, volunteering, and stewardship
- Follow-up planning: Landscape Guidelines for parks and open spaces, including addressing signage, building off of recent city-led initiatives. Seek public input about the balance of consistent elements across Newport's open spaces and supporting diverse neighborhood character.
- Follow-up planning: Management Plans for open spaces that embody best practices
- Follow-up planning: Planning for safe neighborhood connections and welcoming city gateways. See also chapter 7 for more information about connectivity
- Increase guaranteed public engagement in future decision-making with the Integrated Open Space Management Strategy (see Chapter 10 - Implementation)
- Big events at Fort Adams State Park: consider 1) opportunities to continue promoting alternative transportation like improved bicycle and water transportation connections between Downtown Newport, Providence, and Fort Adams, 2) options for events to generate revenue for state and local parks, 3) balancing park and lawn health with event use. See sidebar on page 45 for more details.

¹ (Previous page) Aquidneck Land Trust (ALT) Easements currently protect only five open spaces completely and two more partially, permanently protecting only 180 acres of open space in Newport. Easements protect King Park, Spencer Park, Morton Park, Gooseneck Cove, and Braga Park. Parts of Almy Pond's shoreline, including the Spouting Rock Drive parcel, and portions of Miantonomi Park are protected. The remainder of the open space area at Miantonomi Park is owned by the Newport Housing Authority, and could be redeveloped if permanent legal protection is not attained.





OPEN SPACE ROLES

Parks and open spaces play many roles in Newport, acting as civic and cultural hubs, wildlife habitat and key environmental spaces, places to play and recreate, and areas for peaceful passive enjoyment. Balancing these needs within open spaces and across Newport’s overall open space network creates a diverse, well-balanced system.

Key Projects & Opportunities

KEY PROJECT: MIANTONOMI ENHANCEMENTS

Miantonomi Park plays a critical role in Northern Newport from many perspectives – offering key recreation, gathering space and passive enjoyment, wildlife habitat, and tree canopy in a dense urban neighborhood.

Plans to regrade a portion of the park are already underway, which will allow locations for informal soccer and other field sports. In addition to these improvements, other potential improvements include:*

- Restoring the Tower and adding interpretive signage
- Repair existing stone wall
- Improved signage and wayfinding, in keeping with historic identity of park
- Playground retrofits for universal design and ADA
- Improved walking and bicycling connections to the park from adjacent neighborhoods and the Pell School
- Increased programming, including trail walks, bird watching, community gardens, environmental education, and preservation of historic Revolutionary War-era elements/artifacts.



Miantonomi Park – Potential improvements



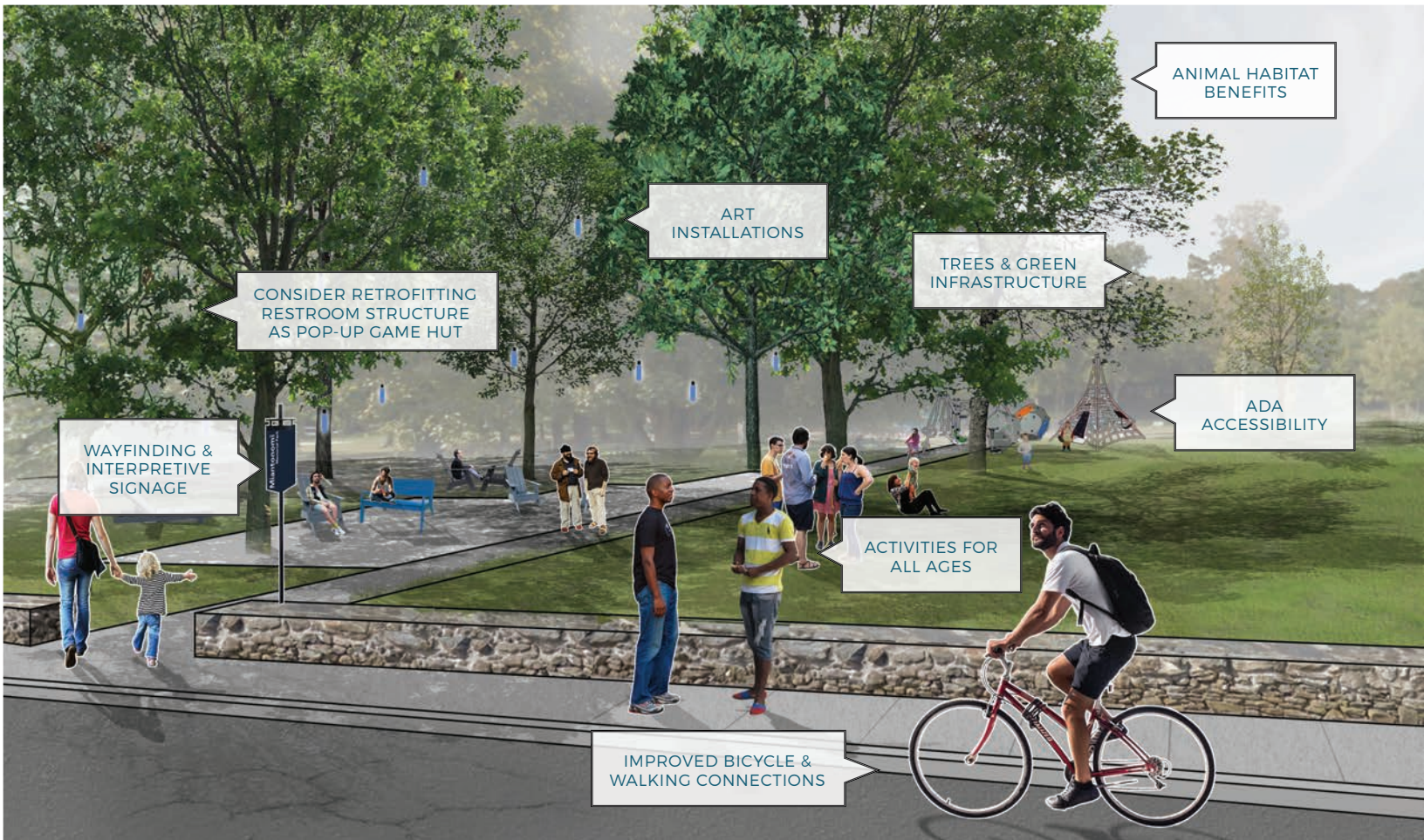
Miantonomi enhancements, continued:

- Increase green infrastructure - for example, more trees, swales, storage under fields, and/or low mow areas
- Habitat enhancements, including low-mow along edge of forests, allowing a more natural transition from forest to meadow
- New restrooms
- Retrofitting restroom structure as pop-up game hut. For example, Nelson A. Rockefeller Park in Battery Park City (New York City) offers free ping pong and billiards tables, and additional sports equipment and board games are available for rent from the parkhouse.
- Public art
- Basic infrastructure upgrades: for example, benches, picnic tables, sidewalk, drinking fountains, and bicycle parking
- Consider path through Miantonomi that would provide a safe connection from Festival Field Housing to the Pell School and other destinations east of the park, increasing the ability of students and families to walk to school

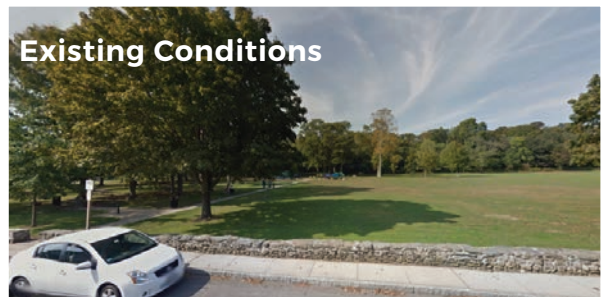
*All of these ideas would be possible within the park's deed restrictions.

Key Partners:

- City of Newport Miantonomi Memorial Park Commission
- City of Newport Buildings & Grounds Division
- Health Equity Zone
- Newport Public Schools
- Newport Housing Authority



Miantonomi Park – Potential Enhancements



ENHANCING PASSIVE ENJOYMENT & UPGRADING BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE

In many open spaces today, basic infrastructure like benches and paths does not match the overall high quality of Newport's parks. Upgrading these amenities is an opportunity to improve the visitor experience, while providing a consistent identity for open spaces that reflects historic and neighborhood character. Passive enjoyment of parks will be enhanced through these improvements.

Recommended basic enhancements:

- Increase trees and shade
- Develop a consistent family of park furnishings to enhance the user experience and park identity, such as benches, signage/wayfinding, restroom facilities, water fountains, and trash and recycle receptacles. These elements can reflect neighborhood character, while also providing a cohesive identity for Newport's open spaces. Landscape Guidelines are recommended to develop the recommended family of furnishings.
- Improve sidewalks: repair uneven surfaces and consider adding additional paths in neighborhood and community parks to connect park elements (improves ADA accessibility across park and improves user experience)



Aquidneck Park Today. The Reading Garden project will add additional shade to the park.

Example: Aquidneck Park

The proposed **Centennial Reading Garden** shows an example of enhancing passive enjoyment at an existing park. The plan for the garden includes shaded sitting areas, low-maintenance plantings, and Wi-Fi. Adjacent to the Newport Public library, the garden will serve as an outdoor reading room and extension of the library.

For more information: <http://www.newportgardenclub.org/centennial/>

PASSIVE ENJOYMENT NEEDS SUMMARY

- Waterfront access in Northern Newport
- 2-3 covered picnic structures in Northern Newport
- Additional picnic tables and gathering spaces, especially in Northern Newport
- Community gardens
- Wildlife viewing and environmental education programs - especially in Miantonomi Park and open spaces in Critical Area
- Additional shade and trees
- Additional benches
- Safe and well-maintained sidewalks and paths
- Preservation of waterfront views and growing public access easements
- Activate underutilized parks to increase positive use and enjoyment (ex. John Clarke Park and MLK Park)
- Green infrastructure to absorb and clean stormwater

Best Practices for Special Event Management

Special events can be opportunities to expose new residents and visitors to Newport's parks, but they can also take their toll on park lawns and strain existing infrastructure.

Practices to protect parks from over-use from special events include:

- Large events burden turf and can strain staff
- Create scheduling regulations. For example:
 - » Piedmont Park (Atlanta, GA): maximum 5 major events per year
 - » Golden Gate Park (San Francisco, CA): no more than 1 multiple-day event per month in the same grass area; events must be at least 1 week apart
- Designate specific areas for events
- Reinforced turf or other improvements to increase durability
- Prohibit event infrastructure in tree drip lines
- Require measures to protect turf, tree roots, and other park elements
- Require recycling of waste
- Use fees to help recover costs for additional maintenance, security, etc. Ensure fees are sufficient to cover costs, so special events do not further strain the park system's budget.

IMPROVING ACTIVE RECREATION

Overall, Newport's recreation amenities are well-aligned with demand; however, a few specific areas are in need of attention.

Areas for play and exercise for Newporters of all ages are important to promote healthy lifestyles. Several areas to enhance active recreation exist in the city.

The Rogers High School Track requires significant improvements to make it functional, and finding a new, permanent home for the skate-park is a necessity. Additional soccer fields and basketball are needed to match demand, especially in Northern Newport.

Playground upgrades have been underway and should continue, ensuring that high-quality play opportunities are available for Newport's youngest residents. Improvements to make open spaces more accessible should continue to remain a priority, and universal design should be incorporated into playground upgrades.

In addition, growing Newport's bicycle network will promote active transportation, providing more safe and connected bicycle routes between destinations. The proposed Rail with Trail could be an especially important link in Northern Newport.

Management Plan development and park upgrade planning will be opportunities to further gather public input about how to best improve active recreation across the city, while also balancing with habitat and passive enjoyment needs.



ACTIVE RECREATION NEEDS SUMMARY

- 2-3 playgrounds in Northern Newport
- 2 basketball courts in Northern Newport
- 2 soccer fields in Northern Newport
- 1 baseball field in Northern Newport
- 1-2 tennis courts in Northern Newport
- Splash pad in Northern Newport
- Increasing active transportation in Northern Newport, including safe bicycling and walking connections within and beyond neighborhood
- Replace Rogers track & improve soccer field (including lighting)
- Relocate the skate park
- Continue to increase ADA and universal access across all parks and open spaces, especially including playgrounds.
- Coggeshall Playground: ADA improvements and other upgrades
- MLK Park: Additional funding secured for 2-5 yr playground
- Murphy Field improvements: basketball court improvements, playground renovation, and addressing historic slide
- Freebody Park: lighting, backstop renovations, and consider converting to artificial turf
- Cardines Field: funding for improving ADA accessibility and other renovations in progress
- Braga Park: backstop replacement, playground renovation, opportunities for adult fitness stations and additional walking trails, drainage/ green infrastructure improvements
- Vernon Park: tennis court resurfacing
- Adding mountain biking somewhere in Newport

An Equitable System

An Equitable System

All residents should have practical access to great parks, recreation, passive enjoyment opportunities, and the waterfront in all neighborhoods.

Access to these basic amenities should not depend on where someone lives in Newport. Today, some parts of Newport benefit from a diversity of parks and waterfront spaces; other parts of the city, especially Northern Newport (the North End and Broadway neighborhoods), have much fewer opportunities. These gaps are especially notable when demographics and population size are taken into account. The North End includes 44% of Newport's population and 53% of children and youth under 14. Yet it contains only 7.5% of the city's park space and 18% of the city's playgrounds.

Key Projects:

- **Public waterfront park:
Navy Hospital Redevelopment** E C P R LL
- **New Northern Newport Parks
(includes North End and Broadway neighborhoods)** E C P R LL

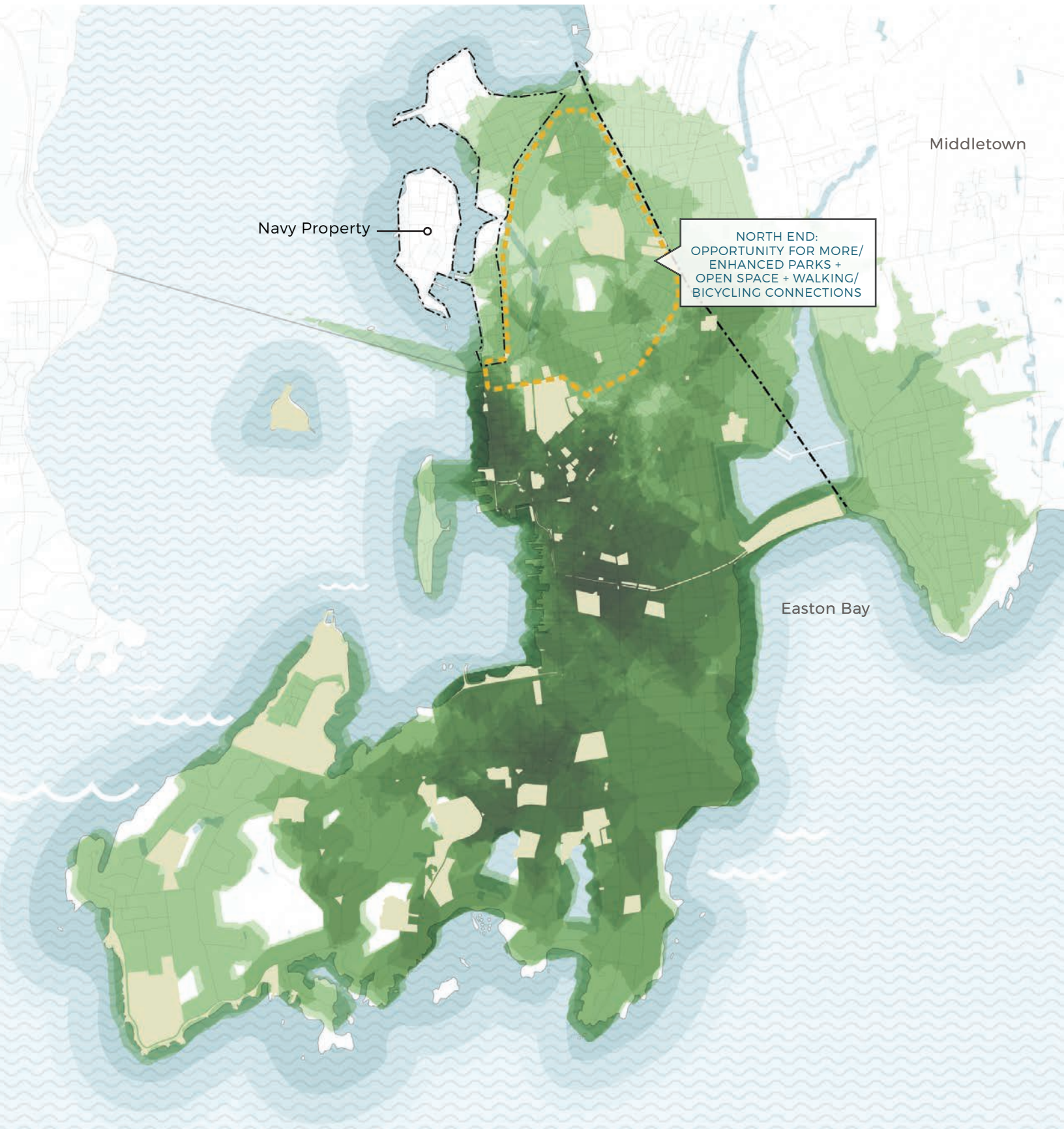
Relevant Principles:

- E** An Equitable System
- C** A Connected System
- P** Great Parks & Open spaces
- R** A Resilient System
- LL** A Living Legacy

Faded symbols mean a principle is less relevant for that project.

Supporting Actions:

- Add public waterfront access in Northern Newport
- Adopt policies for integrating open space within public and private development
- Work with the Newport Housing Authority and other housing providers to increase active play areas in North End developments
- Increase equity and ensure the public has a voice in open space decision-making
 - » Ensure future planning processes include a special focus on reaching under-represented populations, including Northern Newport residents as well as younger members of the community. See Chapter 10 – Implementation for a recommended outreach framework for future park improvements that includes best practices for promoting diverse input and equity.
 - » Ensure future planning processes reach key stakeholders, including abutters, neighbors, and area residents most likely to use and enjoy the proposed open space.
- Develop programs to provide scholarships / grants for outdoor & recreation programs for low income residents
- Continue working towards ADA accessibility
- Ensure permanence by preserving open spaces through conservation easements and deed restrictions
- Increase access to recreation in Northern Newport. See Chapter 5 Great Parks for more details on recommended Miantonomi Park improvements.
- Improve safe bicycling opportunities in Northern Newport, better connecting residents with open spaces and waterfront access outside of their neighborhoods. The Rail with Trail would significantly help with this; see Chapter 7 for more details on this recommended project.
- Leverage current planning efforts to increase public open space and waterfront access in Northern Newport neighborhoods; all planning in this part of Newport should look for opportunities to address unmet open space and recreation needs for residents.



The darker the green, the greater the access to different parks and open spaces. Many areas of southwestern Newport show up as light green because they only have access to either Brenton Point or Fort Adams.



"It appears that Newport already has a reasonably satisfactory area and distribution of parks in the central and southern sections, but is almost totally lacking in park land north of Washington Square.

Only about three acres of park land now exist in this section, although 50 percent of the permanent population of Newport now lives there, and almost all the present and future development of the city must of necessity be northward for the simple reason that there is little other opportunity."

- Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., 1913

A GREENER NORTHERN NEWPORT

The North End and Broadway neighborhoods lack sufficient access to trees, parks, and recreation opportunities. This is the only part of Newport without public waterfront access. Additional open space and recreation amenities should be targeted to these neighborhoods, and the Navy Hospital Redevelopment should include a public waterfront park.

Projects & Opportunities

KEY PROJECT: NEW NORTH END PARKS

With a need for at least 30 acres of new neighborhood parks, identifying additional open space opportunities is critical. These new parks should be distributed across the North End and Broadway neighborhoods, located in areas with less park access or on waterfronts where possible. These parks should provide additional playgrounds and recreation opportunities.

Key Partners:

- Newport Health Equity Zone
- Newport Housing Authority and other providers of affordable housing
- Aquidneck Land Trust
- Miantonomi Park Commission
- Sankofa Community Connection
- City of Newport Planning Board
- City of Newport Tree and Open Space Commission
- Off Broadway Neighborhood Association
- Alliance for a Livable Newport
- Newport Department of Civic Investment
- CCRI
- Bike Newport
- Newport Tree Society
- Point Association
- Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission
- Newport Public Schools



Splash Pad



Open Space



Waterfront Access

CHECKLIST FOR NORTHERN NEWPORT NEEDS*

Future planning and development in Northern Newport neighborhoods should work to meet these critical needs:

- 30 acres of neighborhood parks
- Waterfront access
- 2-3 playgrounds
- 2 basketball courts
- 2 soccer fields
- 1 baseball field
- 1-2 tennis courts
- Additional picnic tables and gathering spaces, including 2-3 covered picnic structures
- Splash pad
- Community gardens
- Wildlife habitat protection and viewing and environmental education programs
- Increasing active transportation throughout the neighborhood
- Safe bicycling and walking connections with the rest of Newport
- Safer sidewalks/connected sidewalk network

*Source: Master Plan Needs Assessment, with input from Health Equity Zone survey & Master Plan meetings, survey, and subcommittees

KEY PROJECT: NAVY HOSPITAL REDEVELOPMENT

The redevelopment of the Navy Hospital site is a critical opportunity for increasing public open space and public waterfront access in Northern Newport. Planning for this site should ensure that future development preserves the public waterfront access shown in the Environmental Impact Analysis options, ties into the Westside Master Plan's proposed Blue Trail, and provides a northern connection and extension of the Harbor Walk.

Providing public open space is critical not only for supporting community needs, but also to maximize economic value for Newport as a whole. Well designed and connected open space can increase property values and redevelopment potential well beyond this site. Well-considered redevelopment of this site can help unlock development further inland as well by helping inland areas feel more connected to the waterfront. Public open space is a key part of this process.

Key Partners:

- Newport Health Equity Zone
- City of Newport Planning Board
- Naval Station Newport
- City of Newport Tree and Open Space Commission
- Newport Department of Civic Investment
- Friends of the Waterfront
- Sankofa Community Connection
- Point Neighborhood Association
- Alliance for a Livable Newport



A public waterfront park is an integral component of the Navy Hospital site redevelopment



A new public waterfront park at the Navy Hospital site would expand the Harbor Walk to Northern Newport, while also providing new opportunities for water access, recreation, relaxation, and open field activities for residents. Aquaculture and habitat enhancement along the shore could improve the ecological health of the site and help provide habitat for local wildlife and migrating species. This could be a place for research and monitoring, linked to the coastal resilience focus of nearby development.



Existing Navy Hospital Site

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

Beyond these key projects, significant opportunities exist to add to open space and recreational access in Northern Newport. Opportunities for near-term improvements include adding informal play fields at Miantonomi Park (see Chapter 5 - Great Parks for more about recommended Miantonomi Park enhancements).

In addition, several planning efforts are underway in Northern Newport including the North End Plan and Innovation Center for Integrated Resilience. These efforts should consider opportunities for increasing public open space and green infrastructure. As bridge realignment progresses and additional planning and development occurs, additional opportunities for open space should be investigated. In all planning, efforts should be made to ensure areas designated as public open space are well located and easily accessible - not just leftover spaces that remain after all other decisions have been made. Planning should also consider long-term sea level rise, ensuring that areas identified for meeting recreation needs are not wetlands or will become flooded in future with rising sea levels.

Connectivity is also an important consideration; safer walking and bicycling connections are needed to support open space access in the North End and Broadway neighborhoods. Recommendations for improving walking and bicycling connectivity include:

- Improving connectivity between Pell School and Miantonomi Park
- Improving east-west connectivity via Miantonomi Park (ex. Path from Festival Fields Housing to Pell School)
- Implementing the first mile of the Rail with Trail with related connections to improve connectivity and link to Downtown
- Improve access to recreation just outside of neighborhood like Hunter Park



Improved Access to Open Space

Parks as Economic Development

Preserving and enhancing open space is a sound investment in a city's future prosperity. Parks play important economic roles in their communities, with direct financial benefits to municipalities and also offering a broad range of economic benefits for residents associated with quality of life and ecosystem services. Many parks, from Smale Park in Cincinnati to the Rose Kennedy Greenway in Boston have shown that open space contributes to economic development rather than taking away from it.

Municipal governments financially benefit from an increased property tax base due to increased or improved open space. The Trust for Public Land has found that great parks raise neighboring property values by 15%, increasing city property tax revenue.² Many recent urban parks have contributed to greater increases in property values. In Pittsburgh, neighborhoods adjacent to riverfront parks with recent investments experienced a 60% increase since 2001, whereas other neighborhoods saw a 32%

increase.³ Where parks provide stormwater management, water filtration, and storm protection, they can also reduce the need for other more costly infrastructure.

The financial benefits of open space also include revenue generated on-site, such as through venue rentals, parking and concessions. For example, Smale Park in Cincinnati, includes a brewery and restaurant which generates over \$300,000 a year for the city in rent and income taxes.¹ Parks are also economic engines for cities more broadly. Public waterfronts generate tourism revenue through water activities such as boat tours and rentals and retail spending near waterfronts. The area near Riverpark in Chattanooga, Tennessee has seen the creating of over 100 businesses since the park's creation. Given the links between physical activity and health, residents using public parks for recreation may be able to reduce health-related expenses as well as those spent on leisure activities.

Sources:

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http://city-egov.cincinnati-oh.gov/Webtop/ws/council/public/child/Blob/31011.pdf;jsessionid=AE21C11D2262D8491172FEB87A51BFEF?rpp=-10&m=1&w=doc_no%3D%27201001229%27
<http://www.mysmaleriverfrontpark.org/moerlein-lager-house.htm>
2. Measuring the Economic Value of a City Park System, The Trust for Public Land
3. "Three Rivers Park Economic Analysis," Sasaki for Riverlife (2015)



Parks are a tool to leverage private investment.

A Connected System

A Connected System

A key element of Olmsted's 1913 Plan was the creation of great boulevards. This Master Plan suggests building on that legacy, and further expanding green streets and promoting greater transportation choice across the Newport.

Sidewalks, greenways, blueways, and trails provide low-impact pedestrian and bicycle connections to Newport's historic built environment for residents and visitors. Presently, it can be challenging for residents and visitors to safely move around Newport without driving. Uneven sidewalk conditions and limited bicycle lanes make walking and bicycling difficult. This compels many people into their cars for even short trips and isolates residents without a car from convenient access to many of the local and regional destinations within the city. For example, Fort Adams and Brenton Point State Parks are located in the southern part of the city, and accessing these regional parks from the North End would be difficult for all but expert bicyclists. Expanding the bicycling network and making bicycling safer, will improve access between neighborhoods. Public transit is available but limited to a few routes. Connectivity is also about access to and along the water; expanding water taxi service, integrating with the Blue Trail, and enhancing the Harbor Walk are all connectivity improvements.






A key recommendation of this Master Plan is that **bicycling and walking, along with other alternative transit modes like trolleys and water transportation, grow as viable transportation options** in Newport. Improving the connectivity of these modes of transportation increases access, provides a recreational amenity, promotes healthy living through increased physical activity, and reduces congestion and pollution associated with personal cars. Additional social and environmental benefits exist as well. Improving the quality of the pedestrian realm by creating **green streets** with plantings and furniture encourages the streets to become social spaces and connects a sustainable stormwater management system.

Key Projects:

Harbor Walk 
(see also Chapter 8 - A Resilient System
for more about the Harbor Walk and rising seas)

Rail with Trail 

Relevant Principles:

-  An Equitable System
-  A Connected System
-  Great Parks & Open spaces
-  A Resilient System
-  A Living Legacy

Faded symbols mean a principle is less relevant for that project.

Supporting Actions:

- Develop a Citywide Bicycle Plan to develop recommendations for creating a connected and safe network for bicyclists which connects major destinations, open spaces, and neighborhoods across the city; implement additional signage to increase driver awareness of pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Improve Ocean Avenue, Brenton Cove Shore, East Passage of Narragansett Bay, and Bellevue Avenue with signage, plantings, traffic calming measures, additional roadside activity like enhanced pull-offs to reduce vehicular speeds, and occasional recreational events that celebrate the historic, scenic, Ten Mile Drive.¹
- Foster a culture of shared streets in Downtown Newport, ensuring that pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers can all safely use and enjoy the rights-of-way.
- Building on the wayfinding signage that already exists in the Newport, add signage guiding residents and visitors to safe bicycle routes and other alternative transit options for reaching major destinations and open spaces.
- Plan for increasing tree plantings along sidewalks throughout Newport. Additional study will be needed to site trees so they can thrive in tight spaces, which are common to Newport's historic and narrow rights-of-way.
- Support a summer bike share program to ease traffic congestion during the high-peak traffic months and raise awareness about alternate modes of transportation. Encourage tourists to see Newport's sites by bicycle, enhancing the experience of exploring the city and also reducing traffic congestion.
- Complete missing links in the Easton's Pond Loop to extend Newport's trail network.
- Improve connectivity to the waterfront in Northern Newport by creating a new waterfront park with the redevelopment of the Navy Hospital site and expanding multi-use pathways, bicycle lanes, and sidewalks to improve Northern Newport's connections to Newport's regional destinations outside of their neighborhood.
- Improve water transportation routes to encourage public transportation in a special and inviting way.
- Improve sidewalks and boulevards to create greenways with additional street trees and plantings, accessible design, crosswalks, and signage, particularly at major intersections and city gateways. Admiral Kalbfus, for example, is a key city gateway that could be enhanced to provide a more welcoming experience.

¹ <http://www.oceandrivenewport.com/>





A CONNECTED CITY

Expanding walking and bicycling opportunities throughout Newport, this plan builds on Olmsted's great boulevards. Green, welcoming streets connect residents with parks, open spaces, and other destinations. The Rail with Trail provides much-needed connectivity in the North End and connects it to Downtown. The Harbor Walk expands public waterfront access.

Projects & Opportunities

KEY PROJECT: RAIL WITH TRAIL

Many of Newport’s streets are either too narrow to accommodate bicycle lanes or too busy to feel comfortable for most bicyclists. One significant opportunity to expand safe bicycling and walking opportunities in the North End is the creation of a Rail-with-Trail or Rail-to-Trail along the Newport Secondary rail corridor, proposed in the State of Rhode Island’s Transportation Improvement Plan.¹ The proposed “First Mile” would link CCRI in the North End with Gateway Center Downtown. Supporting elements include creating spur shared-use paths that connect from neighborhood streets to the Rail-with-Trail and integrating traffic calming and complete street features along Adm. Kalbfus Road and JT Connell/Coddington Hwys.

The rail right-of-way could be improved with a paved shared-use² path, comfortable lighting levels, and planted areas for stormwater infiltration, and could comfortably fit next to the existing tracks.³ The multiuse path would provide safe connections for bicyclists and pedestrians between Downtown and parts of the North End, and it would improve access within the North End between residential areas, shopping, and parks. Possible trail spurs / access easements could connect to popular retail, recreation, and transit destinations. The Rail-with-Trail could also encourage economic development through redevelopment of adjacent parcels, as the increased bike- and foot- traffic will drive demand for cafes, restaurants, and retail in the area.

Over time, the trail could be extended north, through Middletown and Portsmouth.

¹ The first mile of rail right-of-way is wide enough to allow Rail with Trail, or Rail to Trail could be a less expensive option if the rail does not need to be preserved. The existing right-of-way includes the rail tracks and open space buffers between the rail and adjacent properties.

² “Shared use” means the path is shared by bicyclists, pedestrians, and other non-motorized uses.

³ With a “Rail with Trail” alignment, a fence would be needed between the path and the railroad tracks.



Rail with Trail Vision

Key Partners:

- City of Newport Authority
- Aquidneck Island Planning Commission
- RIDOT
- RIPTA
- The Point Association
- Newport Health Equity Zone
- Newport Housing
- Old Colony Rail Line
- Bike Newport
- Newport Tree Society
- Newport Open Space Commission
- Navy
- Abutters



Existing Right of Way



Potential alignment (AIPC & Bike Newport)

KEY PROJECT: HARBOR WALK

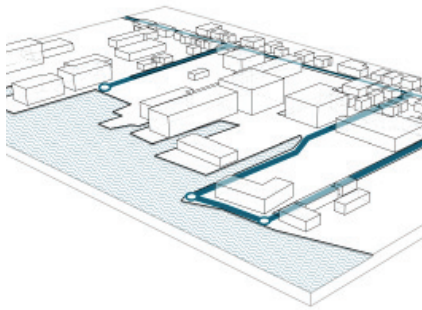
Throughout Newport's nearly four-hundred-year history, the Harbor has been a significant part of Newport's identity. Once a thriving colonial seaport, it is now a bustling tourist destination. The Harbor Walk is an opportunity to further expand public access to Newport's waterfront. Today, the Harbor Walk exists through certain waterfront parcels along the harbor adjacent to America's Cup Avenue and Lower Thames Street, but connectivity is limited, especially through the retail core in Downtown. It lacks the "critical mass" of connected segments to fulfill its potential role in Newport. Building on Olmsted's vision of a more publicly accessible waterfront, this master plan recommends continuing to expand public access through a contiguous Harbor Walk over time.

Creating a fully continuous Harbor Walk will take time, but significant opportunities exist in the near-term to improve public access. Considering Thames Street as a significant Harbor Walk spine, with spurs or loops linking to the waterfront, would provide greater clarity of the route and help increase business for shops and restaurants along Thames Street. Then, over time, as the Harbor Walk grows, it can become a more continuous waterfront path. Planning for future Harbor Walk extensions or enhancements will need to consider sea level rise. Perhaps floating boardwalks could even provide a flexible option for adapting to rising seas!

Future growth opportunities include extending to the north of the Newport Pell Bridge from Van Zandt Avenue/Washington Street. The Navy Hospital Redevelopment is a significant opportunity for a northern terminus for the Harbor Walk, creating a much needed public water access point and connection to the neighborhoods and businesses in Northern Newport.

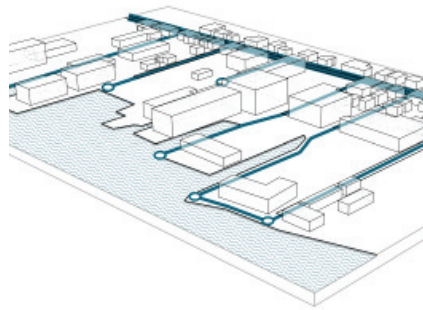
Near term opportunities: Expand access to the waterfront

- Harbor Walk Weekends: Create an event celebrating the Harbor, with activities at different points along Thames St and the waterfront. Interested property owners can participate and allow temporary access. The goal is to demonstrate the benefits of additional public access to water, promoting property owners to consider allowing public access more frequently.
- Increase Harbor Walk tours - Create a docent program for Friends of the Waterfront members or others to allow for weekly or monthly tours of the Harbor.
- Increase access for public parcels, for example, State Pier
- Activate and improve Perrotti Park to offer information for visitors in the central area of the park that was once designed for this purpose. For example, the statue in Perrotti Park has a space for Harbor Walk information
- Activate the Armory/Maritime Center and IYRS site through additional programming
- Improve public rights-of-way connecting Thames Street to the Waterfront. Today, many connections do not feel welcoming and it is not clear which alleys or access points are public and lead to the Harbor.
- Historic Rights of Way: Research and enforce opportunities from public access guaranteed by King Charles Charter (1663) and RI CRMC's designated Shoreline Public Access points.
- Thames St. Improvements: In connection with Thames Street Planning currently underway, consider opportunities to



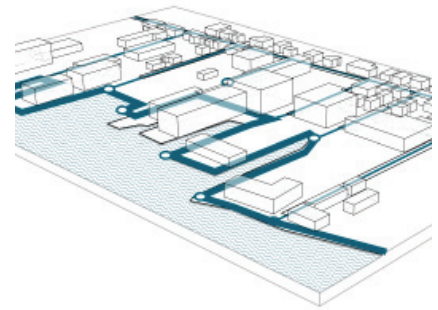
Harbor Walk Alignment Today

Non-uniform access points to waterfront, unclear connections to Thames Street.



Near-Term Vision

Increased access to Waterfront, Focus on Thames Street as a programmed corridor with key moments to water.



Long-Term Vision

Continuous public access along Downtown waterfront with connections to the activity along America's Cup and Lower Thames Street.

improve connections to Harbor Walk. For example, signage or distinct pavement patterns could highlight points for public waterfront access from Thames Street.

- Follow-up planning: Develop a more detailed plan for the future of this open space, including preferred future alignment that takes sea level rise into account. Investigate funding opportunities including the Maritime Fund, creating a BID, zoning incentives, and other sources. (For more about the Harbor Walk and sea level rise, see Chapter 8 - A Resilient System.)
- Begin upgrades to southern portion of Harbor Walk, improving surfaces to be ADA accessible and considering integrating distinct identity markers into the path. Additional enhancements should include adding more environmental signage and using materials and furnishings durable to sea level rise & salt spray.

Over-time: Focus on creating a continuous Harbor Walk

- Develop consistent expectations for easements to ensure easements have identical terms.
- Develop an incentive toolkit to encourage landowners to provide permanent public access. In return for permanent public access easements, this toolkit could include, for example, parking relief, height

bonuses, or infrastructure deals (such as installing catch basin or helping with dredging).

- Consider ordinance requiring setback and public easement for variances for waterfront properties
- For waterfront parcels, use planned urban development zoning or flex zoning to allow for creation of public access along waterfront.
- Continue to monitor and adapt to sea level rise, changing sea levels, or coastal inundation impacts from storms.

Key Partners:

- Local Businesses and landowners
- City of Newport Planning Board, Harbor Walk Commission, Waterfront Commission, and Department of Civic Investment
- Friends of the Waterfront
- The Point Association
- Friends of King Park
- Newport Chamber of Commerce
- Alliance for a Livable Newport
- Newport and Bristol County Convention and Visitor's Bureau
- Discover Newport

Sea Level Rise & the Harbor Walk

Future development of the Harbor Walk must take into account climate change and sea level rise. Materials should be durable to salt-spray and inundation; concrete, stone and easily replaceable wood infrastructure can be good options. Vegetation, too, must be able to thrive in these conditions; salt- and heat-tolerance are critical requirements. Species such as Cordgrass and Spartina Grass can help mitigate storm surge and promote clean water ecosystems. Through innovative design, the Harbor Walk can be developed in a resilient and sustainable manner, while reflecting the historical and cultural charm of Downtown Newport.



Harbor Walk Opportunities



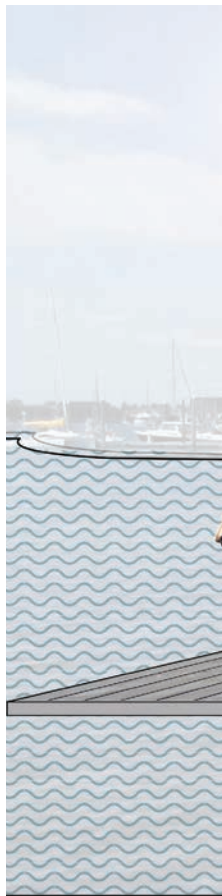
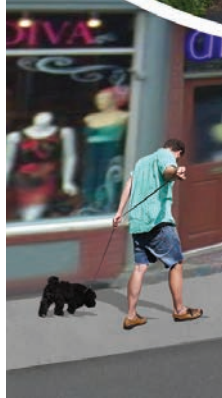
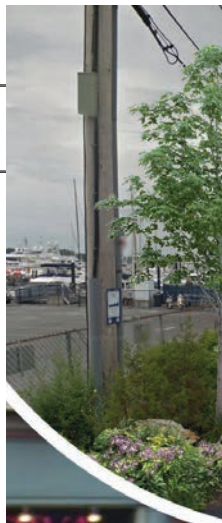
Lee's Wharf Today

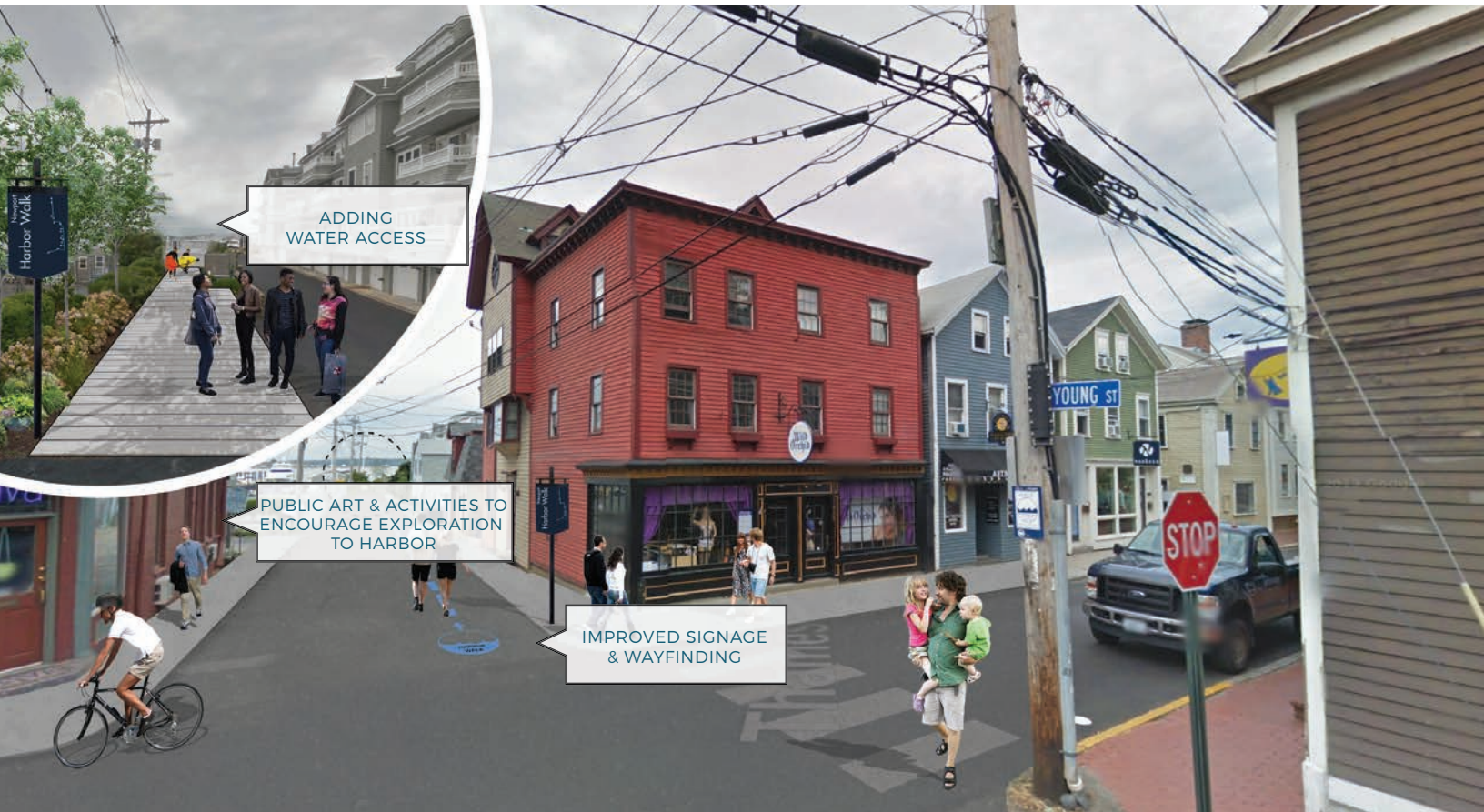


Thames Street Today



The Harbor Walk Today





ADDING WATER ACCESS

PUBLIC ART & ACTIVITIES TO ENCOURAGE EXPLORATION TO HARBOR

IMPROVED SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING



COMFORTABLE LIGHTING LEVELS

INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE

ADA ACCESSIBILITY

BRANDING OPPORTUNITIES

AQUATIC HABITAT

MATERIALS AND FURNISHINGS DURABLE TO SEA LEVEL RISE & SALT SPRAY

FOSTERING A CULTURE OF SHARED STREETS: DOWNTOWN

To make walking and bicycling viable and attractive transportation options in Newport, downtown streets must be welcoming and safe for all modes of transportation. With the narrow rights-of-way of Downtown's streets, there is not always room for a separate bicycle lane; shared streets are an opportunity to improve safety for multiple modes of transportation in a limited space.

In Downtown Newport, Thames Street is already a bustling destination for shopping, dining, and people-watching, especially in the summer. Given its unique role in Newport's economy and culture, Thames Street and its connecting streets deserve a thoughtful approach to the public realm and open space. Planning that is underway for Thames and Spring Street is an opportunity to create a more welcoming space for pedestrians and bicyclists, while also sharing the road with vehicular traffic. Recommendations below could be integrated into the current planning initiative for these streets, as well as considered for other streets in Downtown Newport.

While a roadway design and reconstruction can be a major project, it is important to consider a phased or incremental approach that allows the city to test new ideas. Crosswalks or other markings on the ground can be signage and wayfinding too, incorporating work by local artists or presenting a motif that repeats throughout the downtown area.

Future studies could explore making pedestrian and bicycle networks more welcoming and safer. Strategies could include, for example:

- Use special pavers and paving patterns to cue drivers to slow down
- Integrate bike lanes and paths
- Incorporate strips of pavers with different textures and high contrasting colors or other solutions to guide the visually impaired

Possible Quick Wins:

- Treat relatively low-cost interventions such as enhanced crosswalks as pilot/ demonstration projects
- Partner with local businesses and other organization for parklets and/ or expanded outdoor seating areas, as well as increased bike parking; for example, a bike rack turns 1 parking space into 10 spots for bicycles
- Use the street as part of seasonal events and festivals to build a sense of the street as part of the city's public open space



*Boise, Idaho
Opened 2003*



*Argyle Streetscape Project, Chicago
Rendering: Site Design Group*

GREAT NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS

Neighborhood streets are important public, open spaces for the city and can be a great asset for recreation and mobility. Improving connectivity on Newport’s neighborhood streets requires attention to the condition of sidewalk and street infrastructure as well as to the vegetation that makes streets attractive and comfortable for multi-modal use. In addition, green infrastructure on neighborhood streets can have numerous financial and ecological benefits in terms of increased property values, lower energy costs, stormwater capture, and wildlife habitat. “Green infrastructure” can be as simple as more trees, and it can also include features like swales and rain gardens to absorb rainfall.

Recommendations for trees and other green infrastructure:

- Set a quantitative target for preserving and increasing street trees on neighborhood streets, such as replacing each tree removal with two new trees
- Ensure that new street trees are biologically diverse and have various lifespans; the “10-20-30 rule” is a rule of thumb that an urban tree population should include no more than 10% of any one species, 20% of any one genus, or 30% of any family
- Where the right of way is very narrow, partner with adjacent land owners to plant trees on private property that can shade the right of way
- Expand opportunities for residents to act as stewards of streets, such as by sponsoring new trees or committing to watering young trees

Recommendations for walking and biking access:

A citywide bicycling plan and streetscape guidelines are needed to address neighborhood streets, walkability, and safe bicycling connections. These planning efforts could explore, for example:

- On streets with very narrow sidewalks explore opportunities to consolidate sidewalks to one side and replace one side with green infrastructure; one well-maintained sidewalk that can accommodate uses such as wheelchairs and strollers is better than two inaccessible sidewalks
- Opportunities for traffic calming, which could include raised intersections or special pavers to slow down vehicles without enforcement.
- Adding bike racks and/or bike share stations into residential areas
- Where bike lanes may not be necessary or possible on side streets, sharrows or bicycle signage can contribute to a culture of biking



Lockerbie Square, Indianapolis



Portland, OR



Charleston, SC



Montreal



Savannah, GA

SCENIC DRIVE: OCEAN AVENUE IMPROVEMENTS

Ocean Avenue is already a destination for vehicle drivers, and improving conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians would greatly strengthen connectivity across southern Newport. Ocean Ave. has the potential to be a great “scenic ride” rather than a “scenic drive.”

Today, the road poses challenges for bicycle and pedestrian safety. In the foreseeable future, safety improvements such as signage or road markings could mitigate these challenges. In the long term, constructing a bike lane wherever possible within the constraints of the right of way would provide a more permanent solution. A citywide bicycle plan is an opportunity to further evaluate and make recommendations for improved bicycle safety along Ocean Ave.

Signage and Road Markings:

- Add signage asserting a bicyclist’s right to the road; signs that read “Bicycles May Use Full Lane” are preferable to “Share the Road” signs
- Use shared lane markings, also known as sharrows, to further show that the road is a bicycle route
- Reduce speed limits, adopt traffic calming measures, and consider opportunities to visually narrow the roadway; for example, granite curbs, low-lying shrubs, or short split-rail fences contribute to the sense of a narrower road, which has been shown to reduce vehicular speeds
- Install custom signage and mile markers to identify Ocean Ave. as a scenic bike route and drive

Expanded Roadside Activity:

- Rather than relying on speed limits, traffic could be slowed to a safer speed with more activity alongside the road
- Enhance pull-offs and scenic overlooks with signage, seating, and bike racks

Celebrating Ocean Ave for Recreation:

- Study and pilot a once-weekly or once-monthly closure of Ocean Ave. to through-traffic as a fun event for all ages. This event could include the full loop, or a portion of it. See the next page for examples of temporary road closures in Seattle and Cambridge.
- Successful events in other cities are sometimes branded and actively promoted by the city, but can also be successful without a marketing effort
- One opportunity could be hosting a community festival along Ocean Ave., such as a scenic block party or “Bike the Drive” event
- Enhance scenic overlooks and the parking around Brenton Point State Park with paving, food trucks, and programming such as nature talks

Key Partners:

- Rhode Island Department of Transportation
- Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
- City of Newport
- Bike Newport



**Case Study:
Seattle's Lake Washington Boulevard**

- Closed to motor vehicles select Sundays during the summer – approximately 12-15 per year
- Currently in its 48th year
- Promotion includes Parks and Recreation website, social media, and flyers
- Average Daily Traffic Counts are equal to approximately 18,000



**Case Study:
Memorial Drive, Cambridge**

- “Riverbend Park” is created on summer Sundays when Memorial Drive is closed to motor vehicles
- Closed to motor vehicles Sundays from 11:00am to 7:00pm from the last Sunday of April until the 2nd Sunday of November
- Typically unprogrammed but also a site for special events
- Began as a citizen initiative and demonstration project in 1975; weekly closures were formalized by state legislature in 1985
- Average Daily Traffic Counts are equal to approximately 19,000

BIKE SHARE

A seasonal bike share program during the summer months would present an opportunity to raise awareness of bicycling as a means of transportation (through bold branded bicycles, parking, and signage), increase access to bicycles and bicycle paths for visitors and residents, and reduce traffic congestion during the busy season. The seasonal nature of bike sharing could complement Newport's seasonal population swells in the summertime, and could provide an additional tourist attraction for the city, particularly if complemented by suggested routes near other tourist attractions and restaurants.

Several funding and management structures presently exist with a variety of bike share companies that operate in other cities. The Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, a non-profit organization, provides resources for cities exploring bike share possibilities, including evaluations of the available business and operating models.

Case Study: Aspen, Colorado Community-Supported Bike Share

WE-cycle is a community-supported bike share program operating in Aspen, Basalt, and Glenwood, Colorado. It began as a way to provide complementary transportation options to the car, bus, and personal bike in small resort towns that are trying to manage traffic congestion, environment, and health challenges.

Passes entitle riders to unlimited 30-minute rides within city limits, with additional fees for overtime uses. Passes range from \$9 for a day pass to \$50 for a season pass. The program runs seasonally during the spring, summer, and fall.

The bike share program enabled 21,000 rides in 2015, seeing 100% growth over 2013. There were 2,600 unique riders, with an average of 121 rides per day. In 2015, there were 526 season pass holders, accounting for 62% of the riders.

Quick Facts:

- 92% Own their own bike
- 90% Use WE-cycle for commerce
- 67% Take trips into town they would not have taken otherwise
- 62% Of rides are taken by Roaring Fork Valley locals
- 48% Take spontaneous trips
- 47% Ride with the environment in mind
- 36% Of rides replace car trips

Sources:
http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/pdf/Programs_Promote_bikeshareintheus.pdf
<https://www.we-cycle.org/>



Aspen, CO



Aspen, CO

A Resilient System

A Resilient System

Newport is known for its expansive ocean views and historic character. Sited on a peninsula with areas of low-lying land, the city must plan for a future with changing environmental conditions and sea levels.

This Master Plan places a significant focus on strengthening Newport's trees, parks, and open spaces as a resilient system. A citywide network of trees, green infrastructure, and park design enhancements is a nature-based approach to adapt to the effects of climate change and rising sea levels. Design recommendations aim to ensure the preservation of historic views and vistas, waterfront development, and Newport's historic waterfront, while also providing protection against coastal flooding, storm surge, and other consequences of climate change.

Key Projects:

King Park/Spencer Park **E** **C** **P** **R** **LL**

Special Focus: Trees **E** **C** **P** **R** **LL**

Relevant Principles:

- E** An Equitable System
- C** A Connected System
- P** Great Parks & Open spaces
- R** A Resilient System
- LL** A Living Legacy

Faded symbols mean a principle is less relevant for that project.

Supporting Actions:

- Plan for sea level rise, through natural enhancements to the most exposed open spaces today and planning ahead to address future vulnerabilities
- Increasing nature-based solutions to absorb stormwater and help clean water, including planting more trees, preserving more open space, and piloting aquaculture programs
- Adopt low mow practices: This strategy significantly reduce maintenance burdens and improve the ecological function of lawns; consider adopting this strategy for small underused open spaces like traffic islands, as well as for steep slopes, edges of forests, and other broad areas of open spaces where possible
- Spouting Rock Drive parcel: regrade and enhance site to improve water flow and add habitat value
- Encourage new development to include green infrastructure such as bioswales, rain barrels, or native plants to retain and absorb stormwater that falls on site
- Consider opportunities to promote green infrastructure use in the Comprehensive Plan
- Update the zoning code including revising definitions for lot coverage to further promote green infrastructure adoption
- Enact a landscape ordinance to limit expanses of impervious lot cover, including parking lots.







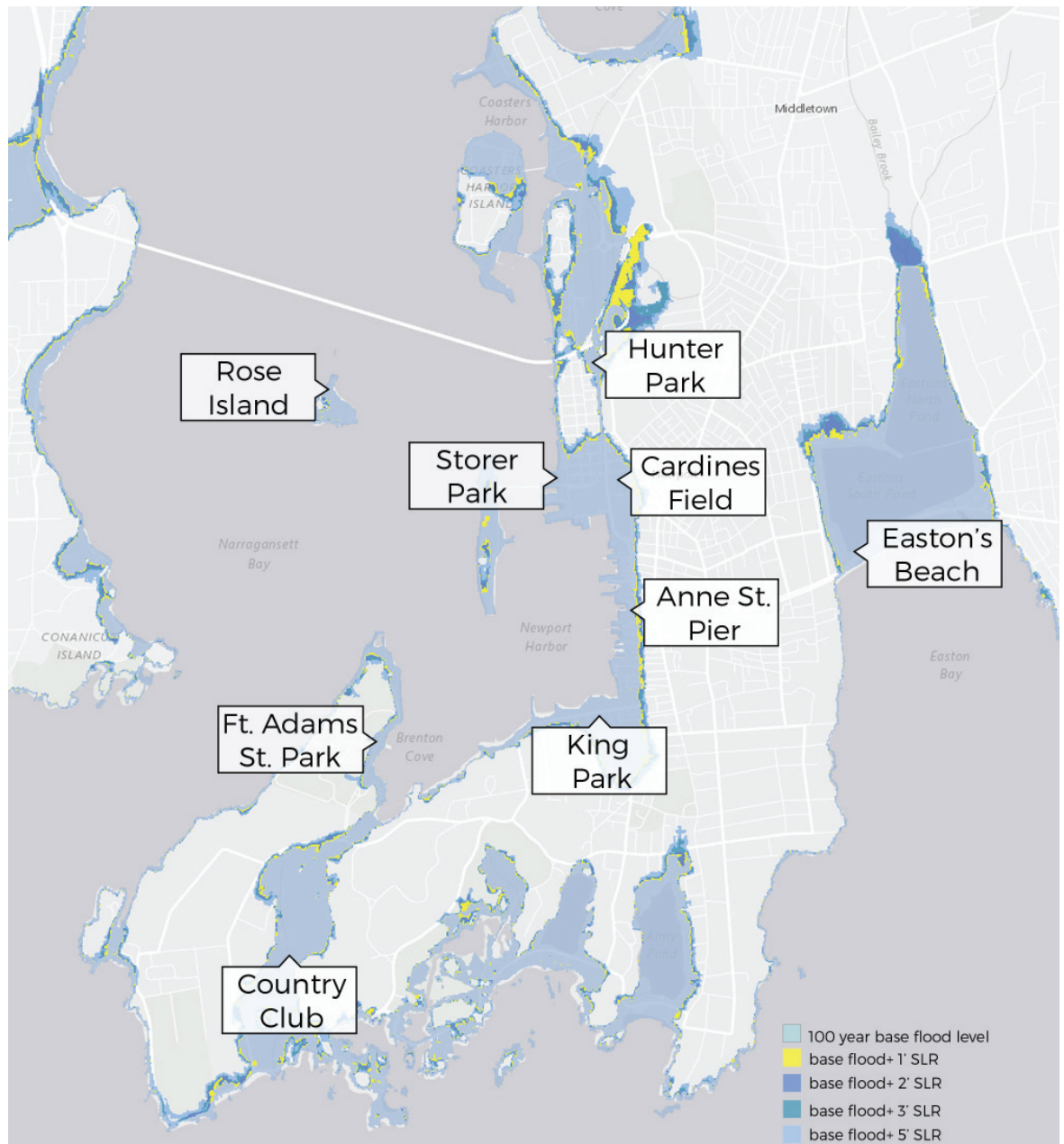
A RESILIENT SYSTEM

Improvements to waterfront parks to prepare for climate change and sea level rise creates a more resilient system. Open spaces also support wildlife habitats and a healthy environmental system. This is particularly important because Aquidneck Island is in the Atlantic Flyway and provides an important resource for migrating birds.

Flooding and Anticipated Sea Level Rise

Many of Newport's parks and open space are vulnerable to flooding during storm events. This issue will escalate as sea levels rise. The maps on these pages show areas of current and future vulnerability.

100-YEAR FLOOD (WITH SEA LEVEL RISE)



Current Sea Level Rise Projections

Projected increases in sea level above 2015 sea level:

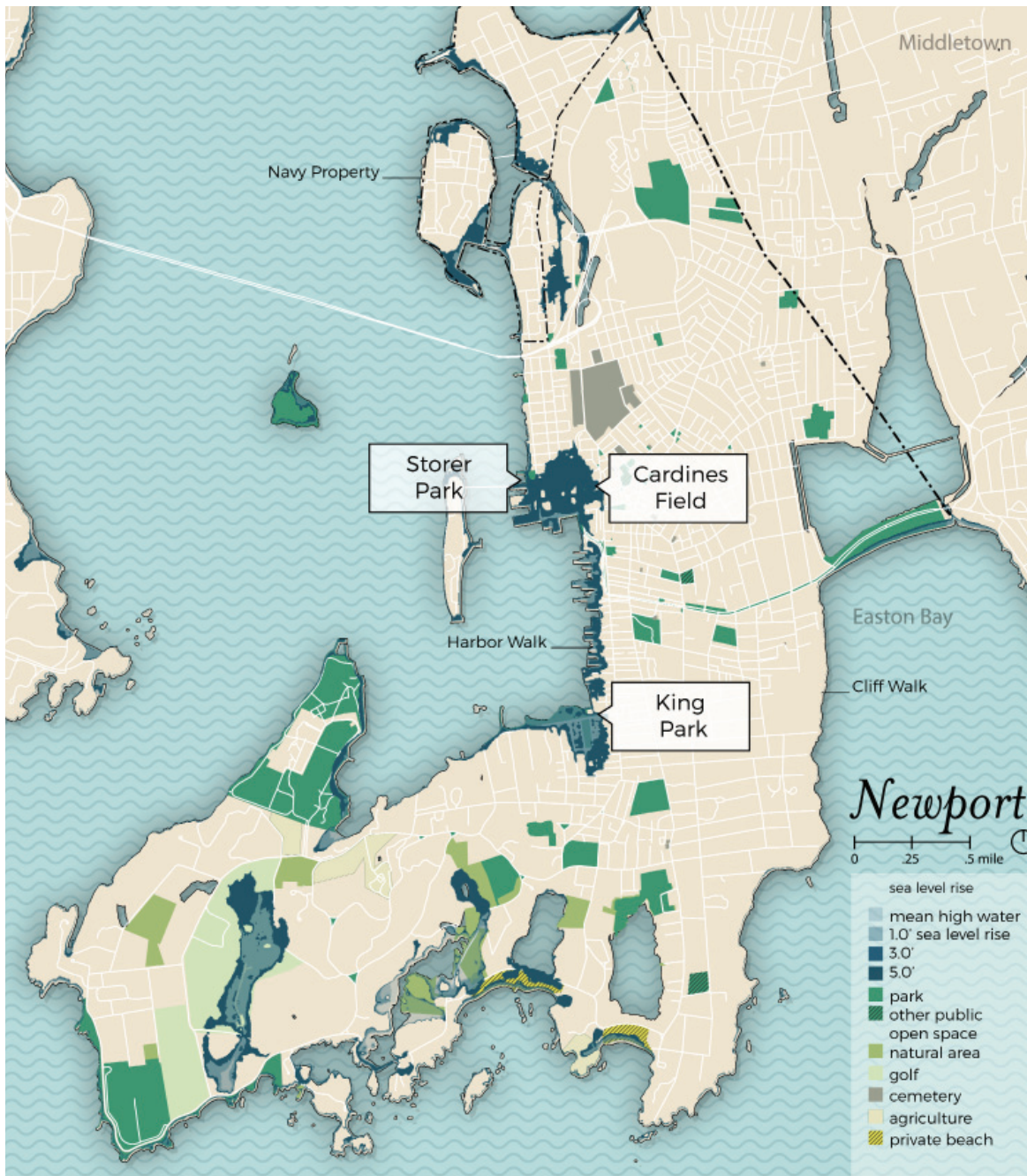
2030: 0.6+ feet sea level rise

2050: 1.7+ feet sea level rise

2100: 6.5+ feet sea level rise

Source: USACE and NOAA,
<http://corpsclimate.us/ccaceslcurves.cfm>

SEA LEVEL RISE PROJECTIONS



Source: "Modified bathtub" coastal inundation analyses conducted by the NOAA Coastal Services Center and the RI Division of Planning. <http://corpsclimate.us/ccaceslcurves.cfm>
 See Existing Conditions report for more detailed information

Planning for Sea Level Rise

Based on current projections⁷, the most significant impacts of sea level rise on Newport's parks and open spaces will not be seen until later this century. King Park and Spencer Park, however, are already seeing the impacts of rising seas, and efforts to retrofit these open spaces should be undertaken soon. Gooseneck Cove is also a very vulnerable open space; the road through this sensitive area will be impacted with only 1 foot of sea level rise. Over time, recreation assets like ball fields and playgrounds should be relocated inland, but in most cases, these measures will not be needed until late this century. As newer projections are released, this timeline should be reevaluated.

With the highest projections today, sea level rise will have significant impacts on Storer Park and the Point Neighborhood near the Downtown and nearby areas by late century, including the Gateway Center area, areas west of America's Cup, about halfway between Thames Street and the Harbor, and areas near Spencer Park in the 5th Ward. Planning should begin soon for these areas, ensuring that future development is preparing for high seas and coastal flood risk in the future.

In the near-term, flooding associated with significant storms poses a more significant threat to Newport's parks, trees, and open spaces, even some that are further inland. For example, Hunter Park and the most of the proposed Rail with Trail would flood during a 100 year flood today, without any additional sea level rise. For reference, the 1938 Hurricane in Newport was the equivalent of a 100 year storm. With sea level rise, flooding from major storms will extend further inland, but in most cases the increase is slight because of the shape of Newport's topography.

⁷ USACE & NOAA Projections (<http://corpsclimate.us/ccaces/curves.cfm>) & RI CRMC's Stormtools Web-based Mapping Tool (<http://www.beachsamp.org/%20resources/stormtools/>)

Near-term recommendations (within next 5 years):

- **Gooseneck Cove:** undertake a more detailed study of this open space that considers ecology as well as future public access. The current road will be underwater at high tide with 1' of sea level rise (currently projected as early as 2035-2040)
- Renovations at **King Park** and **Spencer Park** to prepare for rising seas
- **Landscape Guidelines:** This follow-up planning process should include salt-tolerant planting species for coastal parks as well as durable materials and furnishings that take potential for flooding into account
- Begin to **update plants, furnishings, and other elements** of coastal parks as they need to be replaced based on Landscape Guidelines recommendations
- **Plan for flooding** in open spaces within 100 year floodplain (material selection, etc.). All park management plans should include a sea level rise chapter that details the life cycle of the park and how it is affected by storm surge and sea level rise.
- **Harbor Walk Planning:** Develop a more detailed plan for the future of this open space, including studying the potential of sections to be elevated to protect inland areas from coastal flooding. Develop a preferred future alignment that takes sea level rise into account (possibly focusing more on Thames Street as a permanent Harbor Walk through Downtown, with spurs that extend outwards to provide water access). Investments in creating a permanent, waterfront Harbor Walk

should plan for inundation at high tide by late century inland of Thames Street.

- On-going **education** for public, property owners, etc.
- Other **planning efforts** including identifying locations for elevation, buffers, living shoreline, armored shoreline, floodable development, as well as poststorm damage assessment/cleanup efforts

Long-term (2020 - 2040)”

- Continue to monitor updated projections for sea level rise; some late century recommendations may need to be implemented sooner if projections continue to increase
- Monitor health of southern ponds and wetlands
- Develop a phasing strategy to relocate coastal playgrounds, fields, and basketball courts to inland locations
- Develop a plan for Gateway Center and Cardines Field
- Update Harbor Walk Planning as needed based on newer projections



King Park: Salt Spray Effect

Green Infrastructure in Newport

Across Newport, several green infrastructure projects are underway or in discussion. Some of these are part of the University of Rhode Island's Green Infrastructure Project (RI GRIP).

- **Broadway redesign:** Focus is on incorporating bioswales and permeable pavement along the street.
- **Marine Ave:** Proposed space utilizing bio-retention basins and a permeable paving path as access to the Cliff Walk.
- **City Yard:** Improvements made to reduce impervious surfaces and to add recharge zones (areas that focus on allowing the ground to absorb more rainfall).
- **Pine Street Driftway:** Preliminary discussion with Save the Bay about the potential for a future green infrastructure opportunity.
- **40 Steps:** Planned installation of gravel-lok permeable paving.

Exposed Assets & Inundation Progression

Sea Level Rise

Parks & Open Space	1-2' <small>(as early as 2050)</small>	3' <small>(as early as 2065)</small>	5' <small>(as early as 2085)</small>	Notes
Gooseneck Cove				Road inundated with 1' SLR (as early as 2035-2040); significant impacts on coastline in this area as sea levels increase; impacts on hydrology and area ecology should be a topic of future study
Rejects Beach				Impacted significantly by SLR - about 1/3 of beach lost with 1' SLR, 2/3 with 2' SLR, and all impacted with 3'-5' SLR
Easton's Beach				MHHW shifts inland about 25-30' with each one foot increase in SLR; by 5' SLR (not anticipated earlier than 2085), MHHW is at the edge of the parking lots and walkway
King Park				Western parts of park impacted with 2' SLR (as early as 2050-2055); entire park underwater by 3' (as early as 2065-2070)
Harbor Walk, including Maritime Center				Harbor Walk - sections impacted with 1-2' SLR (2035-2055); significant portions impacted with 3'; virtually all impacted by 5' SLR; Maritime Center impacted with 2' SLR (as early as 2050-2055)
Driftways				Waterfront edges impacted with 1-3' SLR (2035-2070)
Storer Park				Edges of pier impacted with 1-2' SLR (2035-2055); 75% of park impacted with 5' SLR (not anticipated before 2085)




Coastal Flooding during Major Storm

Today's Flooding: Exposed during 100 year storm	Future Flooding: Exposed to flooding during 100 year storm with 5' SLR (as early as 2085 with current projections)	Parks & Open Space
		Gooseneck Cove
		Rejects Beach
		Easton's Beach
		King Park
		Harbor Walk, including Maritime Center
Walnut Street and south exposed during current 100 year flood; Chestnut, Cherry, and Pine only impacted at edge		Driftways
		Storer Park


































Legend

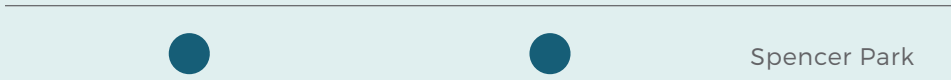
SLR = Sea level rise above 2015 levels

MHHW = Mean higher high water, which is the average of the daily highest high tide

-  Not flooded
-  Partially Flooded
-  Significantly Flooded

Methodology: Using NOAA Projections (High Curve) (<http://corpsclimate.us/ccaceslcurves.cfm>) & RI CRMC's Stormtools Web-based Mapping Tool (<http://www.beachsamp.org/%20resources/stormtools/>), we looked at when flooding inundated parks and open space

				
Spencer Park				Full park impacted with 3' SLR (as early as 2065-2070)
Sea Level Rise				
Parks & Open Space	1-2'	3'	5'	Notes
Perrotti Park				Edges impacted with 3' SLR (as early as 2065-2070); entire park impacted with 5' SLR (not anticipated before 2100)
Mary Ferrazzoli Park				Parts of Mary Ferrazzoli Park & adjacent sections of Long Wharf and Washington St impacted with 3' SLR; full park impacted with 5' (not anticipated before 2085)
Cardines Field				Impacted with 5' SLR (not anticipated before 2085)
Rail with Trail				Southern end of proposed Rail with Trail near Gateway Center - significantly impacted with 5' SLR (not anticipated before 2085)
Fort Adams State Park				Eastern shore (primarily east of Fort Adams Drive), including significant amounts of parking lots impacted with 5' SLR (not anticipated before 2085)
Navy Hospital				Shoreline impacted slightly with 2' of SLR (erosion impacts?) Pier impacted with 5' SLR (not anticipated earlier than 2085), but rest of parcel is more elevated and not exposed. With 5' of SLR, 3rd Street is inundated, immediately to the northeast of the Hospital Parcel.
Cliff Walk				Walk itself is high enough to avoid inundation, but potential for increased erosion caused by SLR below is a topic considering further study
Rose Island				Upland areas of island above even 5' SLR (exception is a part of the northeastern part of the island, which is exposed with 3' SLR), but not clear if higher sea levels at edges of island will increase shore erosion
Battery Park				Not significantly exposed



Spencer Park




Coastal Flooding during Major Storm

Today's Flooding: Exposed during 100 year storm	Future Flooding: Exposed to flooding during 100 year storm with 5' SLR (no earlier than 2100 with current projections)	Parks & Open Space
		Perrotti Park
		Mary Ferrazzoli Park
		Cardines Field
		Rail with Trail
Edges impacted, including parking lot; harbor flooding extends inland to edge of fields		Fort Adams State Park
Pier exposed	Most of site exposed (except central portion just south of western wing of main hospital building)	Navy Hospital
A few southern stretches impacted	A few southern stretches impacted	Cliff Walk
Most of island	Most of island	Rose Island

Legend

SLR = Sea level rise above 2015 levels

MHHW = Mean higher high water, which is the average of the daily highest high tide

-  Not flooded
-  Partially Flooded
-  Significantly Flooded

Methodology: Using USACE Projections (<http://corpsclimate.us/ccaceslcurves.cfm>) & RI CRMC's Stormtools Web-based Mapping Tool (<http://www.beachsamp.org/%20resources/stormtools/>), we looked at when flooding inundated parks and open space

A RESILIENT SYSTEM

	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Braga Park	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Not significantly exposed
Sea Level Rise				
Parks & Open Space	1-2'	3'	5'	Notes
Easton's Pond	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Not significantly exposed. Protection of potable water source should be a priority.
Brenton Point	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Not significantly exposed (only very edge of shore is impacted)
J. Martin Park	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Not significantly exposed
Van Zandt Pier	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Unable to be determined with Stormtools
Almy Pond	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Not exposed until 7' of SLR (not anticipated before 2100)
Lily Pond	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Not exposed until 7' of SLR
Spouting Rock Drive parcel	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Not exposed; 7' inundates waterfront edge of parcel to about 100' inland
3rd Street Playground	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Not exposed
Hunter Park	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Not exposed
Dog Park (Current location on JT Connell Hwy)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Not exposed
Queen Anne Square	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Not exposed
Ballard Park	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Not exposed

Only southern parking lot flooded	All of park south of playground
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Coastal Flooding during Major Storm

Today's Flooding: Exposed during 100 year storm	Future Flooding: Exposed to flooding during 100 year storm with 5' SLR (no earlier than 2100 with current projections)	Parks & Open Space
		Easton's Pond
Only beyond Ocean Ave exposed	Road and edge of park exposed	Brenton Point
		J. Martin Park
		Van Zandt Pier
		Almy Pond
		Lily Pond
Only very edge projected to flood; most of open space is above flood height	Only very edge projected to flood; most of open space is above flood height	Spouting Rock Drive parcel
		3rd Street Playground
Tennis courts, playground, and most of field	Entire park	Hunter Park
		Dog Park (Current location on JT Connell Hwy)
Thames St, parking, and brick sidewalk on edge of park exposed	Western ~80' exposed with 5' SLR	Queen Anne Square
Flooding reaches western edge	Flooding reaches western edge of park	Ballard Park

Legend

SLR = Sea level rise above 2015 levels

MHHW = Mean higher high water, which is the average of the daily highest high tide

- Not flooded
- Partially Flooded
- Significantly Flooded

Methodology: Using USACE Projections (<http://corpsclimate.us/ccaces/curves.cfm>) & RI CRMC's Stormtools Web-based Mapping Tool (<http://www.beachsamp.org/%20resources/stormtools/>), we looked at when flooding inundated parks and open space

Projects & Opportunities

KEY PROJECT: KING PARK / SPENCER PARK UPGRADES

One of the first spots in the city impacted by sea level rise, today aspects of climate change are already visible in King and Spencer Parks. Heavy salt-overspray and periodic flooding impact areas of lawn, and the sea-wall is heavily eroded. Over time, sea level rise is anticipated to increase, inundating both parks by mid to late in the century. Phased relocation of recreational amenities at King Park like the playgrounds and ball fields should be considered over the next ten to fifteen years as sea level rise projections are updated.

In the near-term, recommended changes at King Park and Spencer Park include:

- Infrastructure repairs, including the sea wall (unless determined to be replaced with a vegetated edge)
- Introduce drought- and salt-tolerant plant species such as Spartina grass, Cordgrass and Allegheny Serviceberry. These species not only provide a vegetated public landscape, but a natural buffer against sea-level rise, as well as wildlife habitat.
- Introduce educational signage and programming to teach about rising seas and changing environmental conditions
- Investigate the creation of more off-shore habitat like oyster reefs, providing new wildlife habitat and also helping to slow waves during storm surges
- Maintain historic water views and public water access
- Integration of Harbor Walk improvements through the park



King Park Today: Impact of Higher Seas



King Park Seawall



MAINTAIN
HISTORIC
OCEAN VIEWS

BREAKWATERS/
OYSTER HABITAT

MAINTAIN
ACTIVE + PASSIVE
WATER ACCESS

SALT-TOLERANT
VEGETATION

STORM BUFFER
VEGETATION:
CORDGRASS

Key Partners:

- Friends of King Park
- City of Newport Tree and Open Space Commission
- City of Newport Buildings & Grounds Division
- State of Rhode Island
- Newport Tree Society
- Department of Environmental Management
- Newport Energy and Environment Commission
- Save the Bay
- University of Rhode Island Coastal Resources Center
- Coast Guard
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Abutters and Stakeholders
- Waterfront Commission
- Salve Regina University
- New York Yacht Club
- Ida Lewis Yacht Club

KEY PROJECT: SPECIAL FOCUS – TREES

Newport's history is ingrained in the urban forest. Weeping, Copper, and Fernleaf European beech trees are among the many historic elements from the Gilded Age. An inherent focus on trees helps ensure the long-term health and sustainability of the city's urban forest canopy.

Current forestry initiatives within the city are centered around the organizing principle of Newport's citywide arboretum. The Newport Arboretum connects public and private tree planting in a well integrated, cooperative effort to create a world class urban forest.

Tree planting programs offered through the city's Department of Forestry and The Newport Arboretum allow for all residents to be involved in urban tree canopy development efforts. Including the Specimen Tree Restoration Program, Commemorative Tree Program and Bare Root Tree Program all allow for residents to be involved in urban tree canopy growth efforts. For example, the Specimen Tree Restoration Program promotes the planting of trees through the donation of a free tree on one's private property in exchange for a commitment to attend a tree planting and educational workshop. All future planning must follow and enhance these initiatives and ensure the integration of the urban forest while maximizing its effects.

Looking into the future, enhancing and preserving the urban forest is critical. Updating the current inventory of trees and forest land and focusing on becoming a Level

III Professional Accreditation for a citywide arboretum are a few important elements. Planning must focus on not only completing the citywide inventory but putting forth an urban forest plan promoting the protection, enhancement and evolution of Newport's tree population.

Key recommendations:

- Focus on cultivating a more diverse urban forest, which is more resilient to disease and pests. Consider focusing on new trees that are salt-tolerant near the waterfront or within flood zones, and look for opportunities to increase species that are more heat-tolerant. Environmental outlooks suggest that Newport's climate will warm in the future, so taking steps now to diversify the urban forest in anticipation of these changes will ensure Newport's trees are able to withstand warmer weather.
- Provide funds needed to upgrade the existing citywide tree inventory. Encourage private and institutional landowners to enter tree information for their properties as well. The inventory, when completed, provides a baseline measure for current tree canopy cover.
- Based on the tree inventory, develop future targets or policies around tree canopy improvements. Consider setting targets for the different neighborhoods of Newport, rather than a single target for the full city. All neighborhoods should strive to improve the tree canopy; a citywide target alone could encourage the addition of trees in southern Newport where greater space exists for trees,

while leaving behind neighborhoods like Downtown and the North End. Setting targets by zone (North, Downtown, Central, and Southern Newport) or by neighborhood would ensure all residents can enjoy a great urban forest. In addition to or as an alternative, other methods for documenting tree canopy goals include establishing a citywide or neighborhood framework, working with volunteer groups to document current tree canopy and promoting urban forest growth through educational programs.

- Initiatives, public funding and grants focused on promoting the urban forest
- Graphically represent tree benefits to residents of each neighborhood. Interpretative signage as well as tree identification tags help educate the public about individual tree species. The Newport Arboretum provides an interactive online mapping tool in which inventoried trees can be selected and one can view their individual environmental benefits.
- Provide incentives for residents to be involved in urban tree canopy growth initiatives. Online interactive tools can focus on tree growth games and interactivity for friendly digital competition
- Increase awareness around Newport's tree planting programs

Key Partners:

- City of Newport Tree and Open Space Commission
- City of Newport Buildings & Grounds Division
- Newport Tree Society and Arboretum
- Alliance for a Livable Newport

Examples of Tree Canopy Targets

City	Existing	Target	Timeline
Seattle, WA	18%	30%	
Orlando, FL	22%	30%	
Providence, RI	23%	30%	by 2020
New York, NY	24%	30%	by 2030
Oakland Park, FL	15-20%	30%	
Portland, OR	31%	33%	
Baltimore, MD	20%	40%	by 2036
Milwaukee, WI	21.5%	40%	by 2023
Chattanooga, TN	22%	40%	
Leesburg, VA	27%	40%	by 2031
Roanoke, VA	35%	40%	by 2013
Fairfax County, VA	41%	45%	by 2037
Annapolis, MD	41%	50%	by 2036
Savannah, GA	44%	50%	
Columbia, PA	43%	56%	by 2036

The Value of Trees

Promoting the health of the urban forest ensures individual tree health and the urban forest as a whole. Today Newport is 35.5% impervious surface, the equivalent of 13.5 Fort Adams State Parks or 61 Miantonomi Parks. In comparison, Newport has a total of 2,200 acres of open space, and only 120 of those acres are permanently protected.

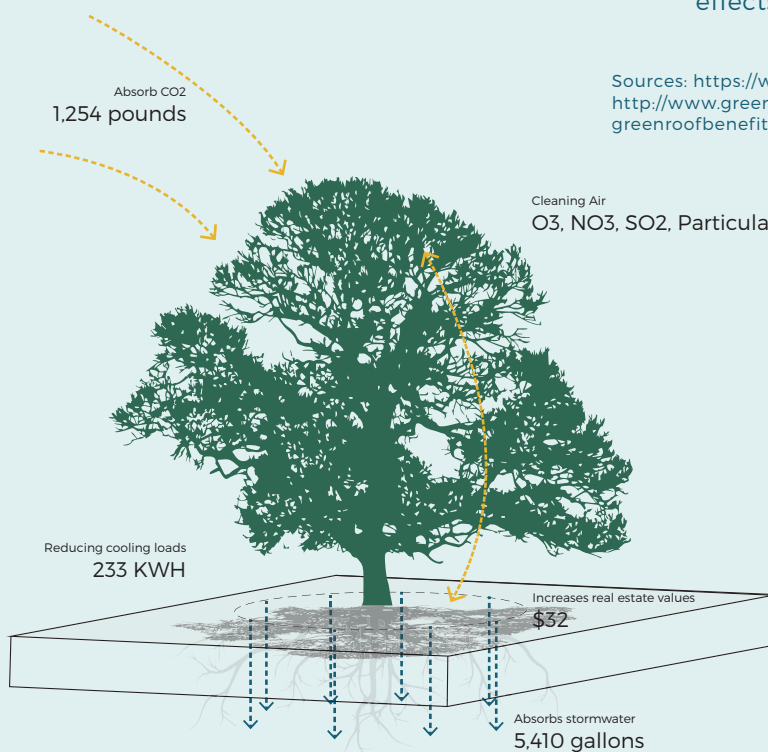
Newport's trees each provide a wide range of benefits. For example, one large oak tree in Miantonomi Park absorbs over 5,400 gallons of stormwater a year and provides around \$250 a year in benefits through carbon sequestration, cleaner air and cooling effects. When these impacts are considered cumulatively for all of Newport's tree canopy, the important role trees play in the environmental and human health of the city is clear.

Economic Benefits of Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure not only benefits the ecosystem but the economy as a whole:

- Elements such as green roofs, bioswales, tree planting and permeable paving cause a dramatic reduction in the amount of stormwater entering stormwater treatment plants and our natural water bodies. On average, in the summer a green roof can absorb 70-90% of precipitation that falls on them.
- Green infrastructure and green buildings generate a dramatic reduction in energy consumption and energy bills when installed correctly. Cooling and heating systems can be dramatically altered. Studies have shown extensive green roof networks can reduce air conditioning costs by over 75%.
- Reductions in nitrogen dioxide, ozone, carbon dioxide and air particulate matter all contribute to increased air quality, reduction in greenhouse gas effects and improved human health.

Sources: <https://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure/> and <http://www.greenroofs.org/index.php/about/greenroofbenefits>



\$248/ year
in benefits

1 tree
large oak
Miantonomi Park

KEY STRATEGIES FOR PROTECTING & ENHANCING WILDLIFE HABITAT

Planning for the future of a resilient community requires focusing on preservation and enhancement opportunities:

- Conserve and protect habitat to ensure the preservation of wildlife, plant communities, and ecosystem functions as climate conditions change. In Newport this could include additional preservation of lands surrounding Lily and Almy Ponds as well as Gooseneck Cove. Preserving land allows species to migrate in response to shifting habitat caused by rising water levels or other climate impacts.
- Increase knowledge around climate change and its impacts to the surrounding environment. Interpretative signage around the city in key zones can introduce Newport residents to the effects climate change is having on their neighborhoods as well as key actions they can take.
- Reduce non-climate stresses to local fish, wildlife, and vegetation. For example, focus on protecting core habitat areas from encroachment or impacts from adjacent development.
- Ensure active and passive enjoyment do not overwhelm the environmental uses of open space. Limit adverse human-caused impacts on open space and water quality.
- The Atlantic Flyway is a critical national bird migration route, and Aquidneck Island is a stopover for birds before or after flying over Long Island Sound. In parks and other public open spaces, promote the cultivation of native species that are preferred by local species and migrating birds. As many as 170 bird species have been observed in Brenton Point State Park and 126 in Miantonomi Park.¹ Additional native plantings beneficial to birds could further enhance these open spaces as wildlife habitat. Educational materials can also encourage private residents to plant these kinds of species in their own yards, further adding to the habitat network.
- Restore and promote natural hydrological connections; for example, Gooseneck Cove improvements reconnected this marsh and improved water quality.
- Protect potable water sources. Easton's Pond is a backup water source and can serve as an educational model for the protection of the watershed.
- Expand tree canopy and promote the use of green infrastructure throughout the city. Trees and other green infrastructure absorb and clean stormwater, helping improve water quality in the Harbor, Newport's ponds, and other water bodies.
- Land conservation should focus on preserving as large areas as possible and creating connections between these core habitat areas.
- Support conservation initiatives and land preservation across Aquidneck Island as a whole. The ecological health of Newport's open space network depends on connections with other open spaces on Aquidneck Island and around Narragansett Bay.

¹ Source: eBird, an online bird checklist program founded by Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society (ebird.org)

Critical Area

The Critical Area in Newport is defined by the R-120 and R-160 zones established in the Newport zoning code and map, and are often referred to as the Ocean Drive district. Properties in this area help embody the character of Newport, including the natural, scenic, historical, and economic qualities. The Critical Area Review is a development plan review process that helps protect the natural resources in this district, to minimize adverse impacts of development on vegetation, soil erosion, water quality, natural habitats, and scenic quality. A low-mow strategy in the Ocean Drive district could have a positive impact given the large lot sizes in this area.



Source: <http://www.cityofnewport.com/departments/zoning-inspections/critical-area-review>

LOW MOW STRATEGY

Lawn mowing requires significant time and effort by the city maintenance team. Small, scattered open spaces in particular require disproportionate resources because larger mowers are unable to be used. “Low mow” is a strategy of replacing mowed lawns with different grass species, which require mowing only once or twice per year. This practice significantly reduces maintenance needs and also creates a more ecologically functional habitat.

Small open spaces, like traffic islands along Beacon Hill Road, could be converted entirely to low-mow spaces. In larger parks, steeper slopes, edges of woods, or less-used spaces could be zones for low mow. If a path passes through a low-mow zone, a five to ten foot buffer zone can be mowed on either side of the path. Management Plans are an opportunity to identify potential areas for adopting low-mow practices.

As low-mow areas are implemented, education and signage can help park users understand this technique. Without signage, visitors may wonder why some areas are not being mowed; signage or brochures can explain that less frequent mowing can create a better home for butterflies and other wildlife, and that low mow is a deliberate maintenance strategy.



No-Mow Zone: Promotes Wildlife Habitat

Implementing low-mow: Site preparation is critical to successful establishment of no-mow lawns. First, the ideal time to seed is in the fall. Fescue grasses germinate best during these cool, damp months whereas most weeds germinate in spring. Once a site is selected the next step is to remove all existing grasses and weeds. Next, the site should be graded as needed. This is also the time to add any necessary amendments to the soil. The site should be tilled and finely graded for firm seed-to-soil contact. Apply the seed, and then rake the seed lightly into the tilled soil, and roll to firm it.

During the first two or three years of establishment the grasses will need additional care. This will mostly focus on controlling weed development. Additional mowing may be required to suppress weed growth until grasses are fully established. Low-mow grasses should not be fertilized as this will promote weed growth.



MLK Park, Buffalo, New York

Minneapolis Parks & Recreation Board: An example of management standards for lawns and open space

The Minneapolis Parks & Recreation Board uses three management standards for their open spaces: athletic field maintenance, general parkland maintenance and natural area maintenance.

- **Athletic Field:** Maintained on a daily to weekly basis. Grass height will be maintained at a height of 2.5 to 3 inches for designated athletic fields.
- **General Park Turf Maintenance:** Maintained on a less frequent basis than athletic turf. Grass height can exceed 5" at times but will be cut back to 3" on a regular basis as time and weather allows. This standard is applied to most of the park system.
- **Reduced Mowing in Natural Areas:** Park natural areas include parklands that are maintained on an infrequent basis. These areas are located primarily within the regional parks and include some lands within neighborhood parks. Sites converted to prairie grasses, storm water ponds and shoreline buffers are managed in collaboration with the Environmental Operations Section.

A Living Legacy

A Living Legacy

Newport's parks reflect the rich history of the city, from its early years as a colonial harbor to the Gilded Age to today.

In 1913, Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. painted a vision for Newport leaving behind a legacy plan for the city and its open space. This plan included comprehensive new parks, green boulevard connections, and the creation of iconic spaces such as Miantonomi Park that still thrive today. Newport's urban forest also reflects the city's earlier historical moments. Centennial Beech trees, planted during the Gilded Age, have contributed to the lush green character common throughout much of the city.

The Newport Trees, Parks and Open Space Master Plan plays a critical role in ensuring these historic plans and elements are a guiding element in the future of Newport's growth. This plan builds upon Olmsted's framework and the Coastal Resources Management Council designated rights-of-way, recommending additional improvements to further meet Newport's needs. In this sense, Newport's trees, parks, open spaces, and driftways become a living legacy, reflecting Newport's rich past while continuing to thrive as vibrant green and blue spaces into the future. Key to this is ensuring the permanent legal protection of Newport's open space, as well as growing a culture of stewardship in the city.

Key Projects:

Expanding legal protection for Newport's open spaces



Cliff Walk Improvements



Integrated Open Space Management Strategy



Relevant Principles:

E An Equitable System

C A Connected System

P Great Parks & Open spaces

R A Resilient System

LL A Living Legacy

Faded symbols mean a principle is less relevant for that project.

Supporting Actions:

- Increase funding and revenue to support park maintenance, restorations, and improvements
- Complete cultural landscape reports for historic parks to ensure historical elements are documented and maintained
- Cemeteries: complete needed headstone and sculpture restoration
- Restore historic plaques and monuments throughout the park system (including, for example, replacing the historic plaques at Miantonomi Park)
- Cultivate stewardship of trees, parks, and open spaces through opportunities to provide input into planning and encourage volunteering, Friends Groups, and a tree and open space conservancy.
- Grow and renew Newport's trees, ensuring the next generation forest continues to contribute to a greener city. Diversify tree species, select salt-tolerant species in coastal areas, and consider species overall that will thrive even in warmer climatic conditions. These actions will grow a more resilient forest that is better prepared for changing environmental conditions, sea level rise, and pest or disease outbreaks.
- Continue to expand Newport's tree canopy, improve scenic boulevards, and complete other improvements that build on Olmsted's vision
- Driftways are historic waterfront public access points. Maintain and enhance them as key water access points and view corridors.





BUILDING ON OLMSTED'S LEGACY

This Master Plan builds on Newport's rich historic legacy, ensuring its trees, parks, and open spaces can continue to support the economic, cultural, and environmental health of the city and its residents. Recommendations aim to help historic parks adapt to climate change, close missing gaps in the open space network and tree canopy, and to legally protect Newport's open spaces.

Projects & Opportunities

KEY PROJECT: LEGAL PROTECTION FOR OPEN SPACE

Securing permanent legal protection is critical to ensure open spaces are safe from future development or encroachment. Where possible, view corridors should also be included in legal protections against encroachment, as these unique assets contribute to Newport's overall character.

Protecting parks with a conservation easement over a deed restriction, or upgrading a deed restriction to a conservation easement, provides the best legal protection for open space. Deed restrictions have no inherent formal specifications, and can be written with vague language susceptible to re-interpretation at a later date. This means land protected by a deed restriction runs the risk of being lost to development. Land conserved with a perpetual conservation restriction that is held by a qualified holder organization other than the landowner (such as the Aquidneck Land Trust), is not susceptible to this risk. The conservation easement sets specific standards and does not allow for development. The qualified third party also serves as a check and a balance to the landowner should any use restrictions be called into question in the future.

Currently, only nine of Newport's city-owned open spaces are permanently protected. Aquidneck Land Trust (ALT) Easements protect the following parks and public open spaces:

- King Park
- Spencer Park
- Morton Park
- Gooseneck Cove,
- Braga Park
- Miantonomi Park
- Coggeshall School
- Rovensky Park
- Sunset Hill
- Parts of Almy Pond's shoreline, including the Spouting Rock Drive parcel



Today, only a handful of Newport's open spaces are permanently protected

KEY PROJECT: CLIFF WALK

Sited along the Eastern shore of Newport, the Cliff Walk is a world-class public path combining the natural beauty of the Newport historic shoreline with the mansions of the Gilded Age. Running 3.4 miles, approximately two-thirds of the Cliff Walk is in easy walking conditions, while the southern end becomes more rugged and natural.

Future improvement opportunities include adding additional access points through its central and southern sections, and considering introducing a shuttle or other transit opportunity connecting between the two ends of the Cliff Walk. Enhancements to the Rhode Island Public Transportation 67 line along Bellevue and the Mansions could also increase access.

Key Partners:

- Newport Historical Society
- Newport Restoration Foundation
- Preservation Society of Newport County (Newport Mansions)
- Cliff Walk Commission
- Abutters
- Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council
- Aquidneck Land Trust
- Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
- Rhode Island Public Transit Authority
- Coastal Resources Management Council
- Rhode Island Department of Transportation
- Spouting Rock Beach Association
- City of Newport
- Salve Regina University



View of Easton's Beach from the Cliff Walk



*Implementing
the Vision*

Integrated Open Space Management Strategy

The Tree, Parks, and Open Space Master Plan is only the beginning of public input. This year-long master plan process has included robust public participation that has guided the development of key projects and priorities for the next five to ten years and beyond. Next, public input must continue as additional planning and implementation proceeds. Maximizing the success of Newport's trees, parks, open spaces, view corridors, and waterfronts depends upon all residents having a voice in major decisions. This proposed management and outreach infrastructure outlines a framework for future decision-making.

Goals:

- Create a standardized process that guarantees public input for significant tree, park, and open space decisions
- Increase long-term stewardship, engagement, and support for Newport's trees, parks, and open spaces
- Build upon and sustain momentum and interest in parks planning from the Master Planning process
- Increase feedback at the beginning of processes (planning, visioning, design processes for major improvements) rather than at the very end (maintenance, replacement, adaptation)
- Increase transparency
- Promote more equitable decision-making
- Provide guidance about which types of decisions are improved with public input and which should be internal (greater efficiency for routine decisions)

- For public input processes, review participant demographics to ensure proportionate representation from all groups. Seek out input from underrepresented groups.

Different levels of engagement for different kinds of decisions:

Designing, operating, and maintaining Newport's trees, parks, open spaces, and waterfronts requires many decisions. Some decisions are big, creating significant impacts; many other decisions are small. This "Levels of Engagement" framework ensures public input is incorporated into decision-making. It proposes that major decisions include significant public input, while suggesting that routine operations and maintenance decisions can proceed more efficiently without direct input.

The key to ensuring that public desires are fully reflected in all decisions - both large and small - is maximizing input into planning processes. Management Plans will follow this Master Plan and will include detailed specifications regarding the maintenance and operation of individual parks and open spaces. Management Plans will then be the guide for future management and operations. In this way, public input is incorporated early during the planning stage, allowing future management and operations decisions to be guided by public input without requiring additional meetings or outreach processes. This proposed approach both maximizes public input while facilitating more efficient routine operations and maintenance.

Online Trees, Parks, and Open Spaces Bulletin Board

The creation of an online Trees, Parks, and Open Spaces Bulletin Board supports this process. This online tool will act as a clearinghouse for information about Newport's tree, park, open space, and waterfronts. It can advertise public meetings, include copies of presentations and final documents, provide information about implementation decisions, and share volunteer opportunities. It should include a digital version of the Master Plan's Implementation Strategies, updated over time to show progress and future engagement opportunities. The Bulletin Board increases transparency in decision-making and acts as a record of public input and decision-making, promoting greater institutional memory. The Bulletin Board could be hosted on Engage Newport or on a dedicated tree, park, and open space website hosted by the Newport Open Space Partnership.

In addition, internal decision-making about routine maintenance should always follow the guidance of previous planning, including Management Plans and the principles of the Trees, Parks, and Open Space Master Plan. To record and track decision-making and progress, detailed records and metrics should be kept. This process is a shift from current procedures which are not guided by plans. To allow the new model to work in the future, decisions should be made based on the guidance of plans that are deeply rooted in public input.

Equity & Outreach

Newport is a diverse community, and ensuring that decision-making reflects the needs and input of all kinds of residents is critical. Cultivating a successful tree, park, and open space system is not possible without diverse input. Otherwise, decision-making only reflects the opinions of some of Newport's residents.

Not everyone is able to attend traditional public meetings, so additional outreach strategies must be incorporated. The Master Plan process has found that two groups who tend to be less engaged in traditional planning are residents in the North End and Broadway neighborhoods and younger residents. Our team benefited significantly from input shared by the Health Equity Zone Collaborative, and future planning can learn from this effort to increase diverse participation.

Tactics for increasing public meeting participation by under-represented groups:

- Schedule public meetings at convenient times (after work or weekends) and in convenient locations (ex. close to a bus stop and close to where target group lives)
- Offer food and childcare
- Provide incentives for residents who attend (ex. Raffle, gift cards, etc.)
- Advertise with flyers and in newsletters and alert neighborhood leaders to ensure residents hear about meetings

Reach beyond traditional meetings. Opportunities include:

- Park user surveys
- Focus groups
- Weekend activities
- Attend existing events like weekend festivals, summer camps, etc.
- City as Play¹ and other non-traditional outreach methods
- Connect with other outreach efforts – ex. Health Equity Zone Collaborative
- Connect with neighborhood leaders and existing groups
- Participate in school tabling opportunities to reach parents
- Online engagement opportunities

¹ City as Play is an outreach method pioneered by James Rojas. In City as Play, participants build their ideal future using simple objects. This fun and accessible approach can be used with all ages or in multiple languages. For more information see: <https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/urban-planner-james-rojas-reminds-us-to-shut-down-the-powerpoint> or <http://www.placeit.org/about.html>

Communications Resources for Under-Represented Groups:

1. Contacts and media for increasing participation by 18-24 year olds
 - » CCRI and Salve:
Salve has an “Environmental Studies” major, and a class is helping with a Cliff Walk survey project. Contact for Environmental Studies program: Dr. Jamison Chase
 - » Newport Housing Authority
 - » Sankofa Community Connection
 - » What’sUpNewp
 - » Newport Buzz
 - » Coffee shops

2. **Contacts for increasing diversity of participation:**
 - » The King Senior Center
 - » Newport Housing Authority (Rhonda Mitchell, Director)
 - » Newport Health Equity Zone Collaboration, including Women’s Resource Center
 - » Sullivan Family Center
 - » Boys and Girls Club
 - » Martin Luther King Center
 - » Newport County YMCA
 - » Newport Public Schools
 - » Newport NAACP
 - » Newport Affirmative Action Commission

Best Practices for Outreach

- **Schedule meetings to encourage broader participation:** Meetings should be scheduled no earlier than 6 pm to allow more opportunities for working individuals to participate. Weekend meetings can also be good options for reaching individuals who are balancing multiple jobs. Open houses or other opportunities for drop-in outreach can also provide greater flexibility.

- **Develop an outreach strategy with multiple methods:** One size doesn’t fit all! Utilize a combination of outreach tactics to maximize input reach; for example, community meetings, online opportunities, weekend events or input sessions, focus groups, surveys of park users, etc. Following an event, post copies of materials presented promptly on the project website so anyone who was unable to attend can access the information.

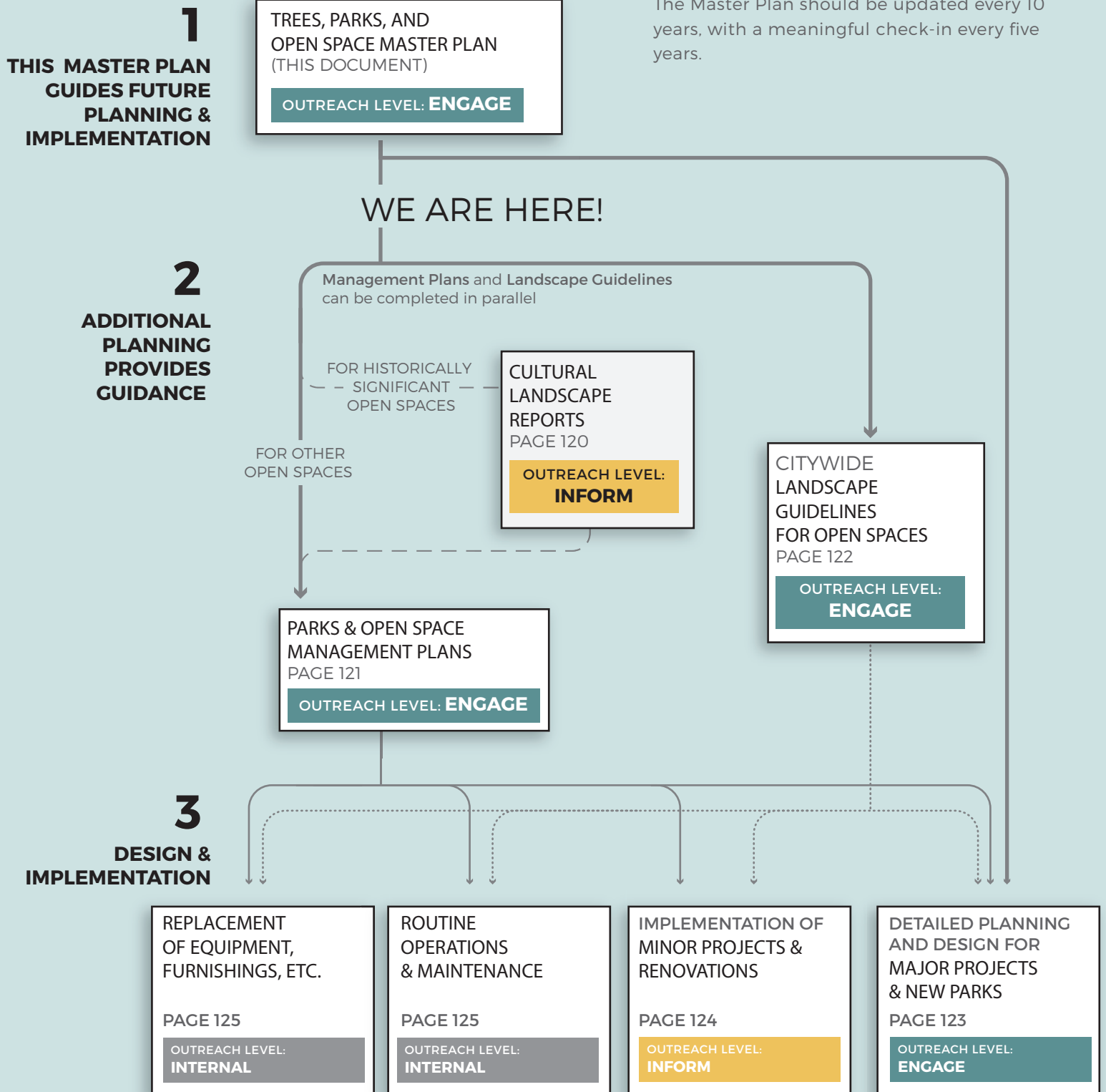
- **Listen carefully and openly:** Fostering an open-minded process is critical. Remind facilitators that their role is to learn information and ensure everyone has a chance to participate and share views. Structure meetings to ensure everyone has a chance to share their opinions, for example, small group discussions or written feedback ensures that quieter voices are heard, too.

- **Promote informed input:** Provide information needed to educate public on pros and cons of different options to allow for more informed feedback.

- **Stretch to reach underrepresented groups:** Observe who is and is not attending traditional outreach opportunities. Incorporate additional methods to reach neighborhood groups who are not represented.

Framework for Planning

The city will use this Master Plan to guide future planning and implementation. The flowchart below describes the next steps of planning and implementation and their relationship to one another. The following pages describe the different levels of outreach appropriate to different parks improvements and outline each step in more detail. Public input is integrated throughout. The Master Plan should be updated every 10 years, with a meaningful check-in every five years.



Outreach Levels & Process Framework

OUTREACH LEVELS BY ACTION TYPE

	Internal Decision-making	INFORM	ENGAGE
Goal	Allow for more efficient decision-making for routine maintenance and operations guided by previous plans with public input	Provide transparency in decision-making	Receive input to inform decision-making
Types of Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Routine operations & maintenance ◦ Actions related to public safety* <p>*Exception – actions that will have a significant impact on a significant element of a park or open space then follow "Inform" level (significant elements determined with public input during Management Plan)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Minor improvements, renovations, or replacements ◦ Routine operations, maintenance, and public safety actions that impact significant elements ◦ Cultural Landscape Reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Parks Master Plan ◦ Management Plan Development ◦ Landscape Guidelines ◦ Other significant planning efforts ◦ New parks or open spaces ◦ Major renovations
Tactics	Guided by previous planning, projects that result from internal decision-making should record metrics, principles, & other documentation as necessary	<p>Online Tree, Parks, and Open Space Bulletin Board</p> <p>Postings in parks and open spaces</p>	<p>Community meetings, open houses, focus groups, surveys, park user interviews, etc.</p> <p>Online Tree, Parks, and Open Space Bulletin Board, flyers, postings, and other tactics to advertise outreach</p>

Adapted from the Spectrum of Public Participation, International Association for Public Participation (http://www.iap2.org/associations/4748/files/IAP2%20Spectrum_vertical.pdf)

Other Planning

Other planning efforts in Newport that impact trees, parks, and open spaces proceed in parallel. Data and outputs from these processes can be used to inform implementation decisions.

- Bicycle planning
- Habitat planning
- Streetscape guidelines
- Active recreation plan

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT Detailed reports for historic open spaces that document their historic significance and key elements

At a glance

Prerequisites

None

Who prepares

Consultant

Approved by

Newport Buildings and Grounds Division

Implementation monitored by

Newport Buildings and Grounds Division

Level of public input

■ Inform

Update schedule

Part 1: None
Parts 2&3: With each major project

Recommended Process

9-12 MONTH PROCESS



The format of a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) generally follows National Park Service guidelines and includes the following parts:

- **Introduction**
- **Part 1:** Site History, Existing Conditions, and Analysis and Evaluation
- **Part 2:** Treatment
- **Part 3:** Record of Treatment
- Appendices, Bibliography, and Index

Part 1 should be completed sooner to guide for future planning. Parts 2 and 3 should be completed each time a major project/renovation impacts a park that has a CLR.

Decisions about the long-term management, treatment, and use of historic parks should be grounded in an understanding of their historic significance. A Cultural Landscape Report is a professional evaluation and documentation of the characteristics and features that make a landscape historically significant based on National Register criteria.¹ The Cultural Landscape Report also includes a recommended treatment, or approach to management – Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration or Reconstruction, as defined by the Secretary of the Interior.

Completed for open spaces with historical significance before the development of a Management Plan for the open space, the Cultural Landscape Report acts as the key resource for identifying historically significant elements of the Management Plan.

An initial list for consideration for Cultural Landscape Report:

The first part of the CLR, “Site History, Existing Conditions, and Analysis and Evaluation” should document the historical significance of the landscape and other features, describe the

¹ A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques. U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service, 1998.

existing conditions of the landscape, and compare the site history and existing conditions to determine if existing features are of historical significance.

The “Treatment” section defines management objectives for the park, describing the preservation strategy for historic features or characteristics documented in Part 1.

The “Record of Treatment” section documents what interventions were actually made and if any interventions differed from the recommendations of the original Cultural Landscape Report. Depending on the timeframe, the Record of Treatment may be a chapter in the CLR or could be published at a later date as an appendix.

The first step in preparing a Cultural Landscape Report is to assemble a multidisciplinary team of qualified professionals. The team typically includes cultural resource specialists such as anthropologists, architectural historians, architectural conservators, archivists, curators, historians, historical architects, historical landscape architects, landscape historians, and object conservators. Depending on the site, the team may also include a horticulturist, botanist, or other natural resource professionals.

Whereas the research and analysis in Part 1 is typically prepared by the consultant team, Part 2 is a more collaborative effort with between the consultants and park management and staff. Part 3, the Record of Treatment, may be prepared by a historical landscape architect, project manager, contractor, or park staff.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORTS (DRAFT LIST)

Cultural Landscape Reports should be completed for parks and open spaces with major historic significance. Newport Building and Grounds Division and NOSP should identify city-owned parks and open spaces that should have a Cultural Landscape Report completed. A preliminary draft list includes:

Aquidneck Park

Battery Park

Cardines Field

Cliff Walk

Easton’s Beach

Freebody Park

Miantonomi Park

Morton Park

Storer Park

Touro Park

Washington Square

Driftways

Cemeteries

MANAGEMENT PLANS Reports outlining maintenance practices, policies for events, activities, and amenities, access solutions, and preservation.

At a glance

Prerequisites

Cultural Landscape Report required for historically significant parks*

Who prepares

Friends Group, city, or Consultant

With input from

Parks staff, friends groups, neighborhood associations, and public

Approved by

Newport Buildings and Grounds Division

Implementation monitored by

Newport Buildings and Grounds Division and Friends Group, if relevant

Level of public input

■ Engage

Update schedule

Every 5-7 years or more frequently if significant changes prompt

Recommended Process

9-12 MONTH PROCESS



A management plan should identify and describe:

- **Existing conditions**, including the history, physical, and natural resources of the park.
- **Goals and expectations**, such as increased visitor numbers or greater biodiversity. Identification of significant elements.
- **A set of actions** to take to work towards the stated goals.
- **Methods for measuring and reporting progress**

Most city-owned land larger than three-quarters of an acre need management plans, though cemetery management would be detailed in a Cemetery Master Plan. Historically significant open spaces should also have management plans with a foundation in a Cultural Landscape Report.

Management plans can play many roles, including¹:

- Consultation, involvement and consensus: Resolve conflicts of interest or encourage community involvement.
- Continuity and capacity: Guide future management and describe the management required to achieve objectives
- Preparing for change: Identify future requirements or external factors that may affect the site.

¹ Adapted from "A guide to producing green space and park management plans" CABE Space.
* For more on Cultural Landscape Reports, see p. 120

In Newport, there are three management plans: Almy Pond Land Management Plan (2001), prepared by the city, and includes detailed information about the site; the six-page Miantonomi Park Management Plan (2005), prepared by a consultant focusing on future actions without documentation or analysis of existing conditions; and Ballard Park (2007), also prepared by a consultant.

- Information and recording: Achieve comparability of data collection and recording
- Framework for decisions: Ensure management objectives are clearly established
- Setting standards: Set benchmarks to measure delivery and performance
- Strategic planning: Strengthen communication and ensure a balance of provision
- Action planning: Create cost estimates and prioritize a sequence of improvements.

In preparation of future management plans, the Newport Open Space Partnership should consider:

- **Internal vs. external expertise:** Plans may be prepared by the city or by an external consultant. In either case, park staff should be involved in the process
- **Available time and resources:** Detailed background information can be valuable, but a concise plan can also be effective for guiding future decisions.
- **Audience:** Information must be clearly organized, including maps and photos, so that those not involved in the process can quickly understand key points.

PARK MANAGEMENT PLANS (INITIAL LIST)

All city-owned open spaces larger than three quarters of an acre should have a management plan:

Abbruzzi Field
 Ann Street Pier & Maritime Center
 Aquidneck Park
 Ballard Park
 Battery Park
 Braga Park
 Cardines Field and Playground
 Cliff Walk
 Coggeshall Park
 Easton's Beach
 Edward Street Playground & MLK Park
 Elm Street Pier and Boat Ramp
 Freebody Park
 Hunter Park
 King Park
 Miantonomi Park
 Morton Park
 Murphy Field
 Perrotti Park
 Queen Anne Square
 Rogers High School
 Storer Park
 Third Street Playground
 Touro Park
 VanZandt Pier
 Vernon Park

LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

Standards for furnishings, materials, plant palette, signage/wayfinding, and other park elements.

At a glance

Prerequisites

None

Who prepares

Consultant

With input from

Parks Staff
Stakeholders
Public

Approved by

Newport Buildings and Grounds Division

Implementation monitored by

Newport Buildings and Grounds Division and NOSP

Level of public input

■ Engage

Update schedule

Every 10-15 years

Landscape guidelines can provide visual continuity and functional consistency. Landscape guidelines often include:

- Plant recommendations
- Furnishing specifications
- Ecological standards
- Maintenance requirements

Different parts of a city may have different landscape guidelines or more or less stringent versions of the same guidelines. This can help address individual microclimate and functional needs.

Recommended Process

9-12 MONTH PROCESS



To develop a recommended palette of park furnishings, Landscape Guidelines are recommended as a follow-up planning process. Landscape guidelines encourage visual unity and functional consistency, creating a distinctive and pervasive sense of place appropriate for Newport. Landscape Guidelines support the upkeep and maintenance of existing park landscapes and contribute to the design of new spaces to establish a premier sense of place and identity. Most importantly, the guidelines should grow out of a robust engagement process of meetings and workshops including park leadership and staff as well as the public.

The goal of landscape design guidelines is to achieve a comprehensive open space system that is memorable and unique, economical and practical to maintain, responsible to functional and environmental constraints, and in which all parts of the system relate to each other to establish an integrated whole. The guidelines do not prescribe specific designs for park and open spaces, but rather establish a design direction and series of performance objectives for landscape character.

Landscape guidelines provide principles and goals for open spaces, including their parking and entrances/gateways. In addition, they include recommendations for objects, materials, and planting in open spaces. Landscape Guidelines can help provide a framework for the unification of these elements across the park. Guidelines prescribe both the composition quality standard for the element itself, as well as principles for the arrangement and siting of elements. For Newport, the elements could include:

- Planting: species, composition, character, irrigation, and maintenance
- Furnishings: seating, lighting¹, trash and recycling receptacles, signage, and bicycle facilities
- Ecological system: management practices and stormwater management

Durability to changing environmental conditions and reflecting historic identity will be key considerations in the selection of preferred elements. These guidelines apply to trees, parks, and open spaces. There is an opportunity to separately develop streetscape guidelines or other standards for Newport.

¹ Only for parks and open spaces that are open at night.

NEW PARK/OPEN SPACE OR MAJOR RENOVATION

At a glance

Prerequisites

Parks and Open Space Management Plans and Cultural Landscape Reports (when applicable)

Who prepares

Consultant

With input from

Parks Staff
Stakeholders
Neighborhood Groups
Public

Approved by

The City of Newport

Implementation monitored by

Newport Buildings and Grounds Division and NOSP

Level of public input

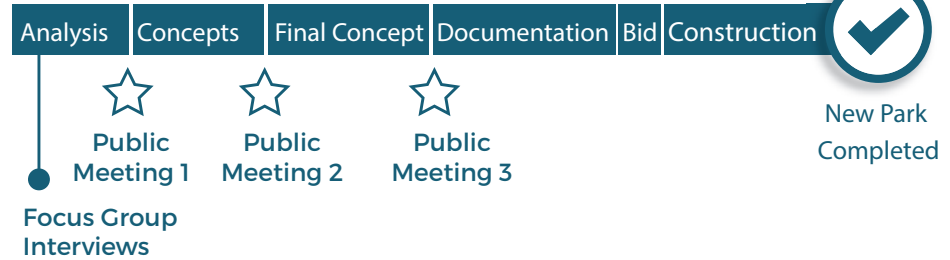
■ Engage

Update schedule

N/A

Recommended Process

TIMELINE VARIES



This Master Plan is identifying major projects based on public feedback. Now, detailed plans and design for individual parks or open spaces may commence. Detailed planning and design for major projects and new parks should include¹:

- **Steering Committee:** To guide the process and ensure stakeholders are involved
- **Community Outreach:** To inform the community and seek input at critical decision-making points in the process. This should include a broad range of engagement opportunities, including community meetings, surveys, focus groups, and other forms of engagement. Attempts should be made to reach a broad cross section of the community, including a project page on the Trees, Parks, and Open Space Online Bulletin Board.
- **Analysis:** Identify community needs and preferences, as well as the opportunities and constraints of the park site. Public engagement to review the analysis, set goals and vision, and identify desired programming.
- **Concepts:** Develop two or more design concepts for the proposed park or renovation project should be developed, incorporating the findings from the earlier phase of work. These concepts should then be presented to the community for input.
- **Draft Schematic Concept:** Select a preferred concept based on public feedback for further development with more detail.
- **Final Schematic Concept:** Refine the draft schematic concept based on public feedback, document the final plan, and present to the public.
- **Design Development and Construction Documents:** Provide a clear and coordinated description of all aspects of the design, including to-scale drawings and preliminary cost estimates.
- **Bid Process and Construction:** Solicit construction bids to select a preferred Construction Manager to oversee construction of the final design, ensuring conformity with the construction drawings, specifications, and standards.

¹ City of Hamden Phases of Design & Construction. http://hamden.com/filestorage/43/79/Stages_of_Construction.pdf

MINOR RENOVATION

At a glance

Prerequisites

Management Plan
CLR (if historically significant)
Landscape Guidelines

Who prepares

Buildings and Grounds Division

Implementation monitored by

NOSP

Level of public input

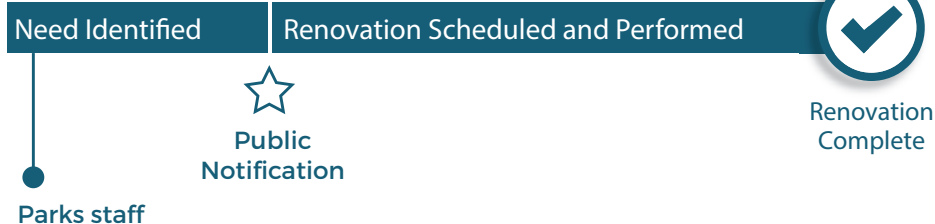
■ Inform

Update schedule

N/A

Recommended Process

TIMELINE VARIES



Minor renovations include, for example, installation of sidewalks or path repairs, landscaping, recreation field or court relocation/repair, replacement of irrigation systems, utilities, or mechanical facilities, and actions that comply with laws or requirements or repair to facilities affected by severe weather issues.¹

Typically, minor renovations are a standard item in a capital improvement plan or were unpredicted and require immediate attention. Minor renovations may cause minor disruption in the use of parks and open spaces, so it is necessary to inform the public of these actions when practical and

possible. Notifications can include press releases, social media posts, e-mail listserv messages, and signage posted at the park or open space.

In almost all cases, minor renovations do not substantively change the amenities offered in a park or open space. Minor renovations should conform to Management Plans, which reflect public input. As such, minor repairs do not require a full community outreach process, whereby community input is solicited to inform decision-making.

¹ Denver Parks and Recreation Public/Community Outreach Policy. [https://www.denvergov.org/Portals/747/documents/policy/PECAN%20Policy%20\(2\).pdf](https://www.denvergov.org/Portals/747/documents/policy/PECAN%20Policy%20(2).pdf)

REPLACEMENT OF EQUIPMENT, FURNISHINGS, ETC.

At a glance

Prerequisites
 Management Plan
 CLR (if historically significant)
 Landscape Guidelines

Who prepares
 Buildings and Grounds

Implementation monitored by
 NOSP

Level of public input
 ■ Internal Decision-making

Update schedule
 N/A

Recommended Process

TIMELINE VARIES



Over time, equipment and furnishings suffer from wear and tear and exposure to the elements. As these pieces reach the end of their useful life, they should be replaced in an efficient and timely manner.

Replacement equipment and furnishings should be in accordance with the Landscape Guidelines and Management Plans.

ROUTINE OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

At a glance

Prerequisites
 Management Plan
 CLR (if historically significant)
 Landscape Guidelines

Who prepares
 Buildings and Grounds

Implementation monitored by
 NOSP

Level of public input
 ■ Internal Decision-making

Update schedule
 N/A

Recommended Process

TIMELINE VARIES



Routine operations and maintenance include actions like turf/lawn care, irrigation, disease and insect control, repairs to existing facilities and amenities, inspections, litter removal, and other tasks that do not substantively change the amenities or functions of the park.¹

Completion of these tasks ensures parks and open spaces meet the general park standards outlined in the Management Plans and that community assets are preserved. Because substantive changes to parks and open spaces are not made in the course of these tasks, additional community outreach is not necessary.

¹ City of Glendora Park Maintenance Manual

Partnership Opportunities

Implementing the diverse recommendations of this Tree, Park, and Open Space plan will require a team effort and new partnerships. Listed here are a range of organizations who could help bring this Vision to life.

The Newport Open Space Partnership has the potential to be a consistent, strong ally for the city in the long-term enhancement of Newport’s trees, parks, and open spaces. Next steps for this organization are to further define a framework and model for future collaboration.

Government:

- City of Newport Affirmative Action Commission
- City of Newport Buildings & Grounds Division
- City of Newport Cliff Walk Commission
- City of Newport Community Development Program
- City of Newport Department of Civic Investment
- City of Newport Energy and Environment Commission
- City of Newport Harbor Walk Commission
- City of Newport Harbormaster
- City of Newport Historic District Commission
- City of Newport Miantonomi Memorial Park Commission
- City of Newport Planning Board
- City of Newport Planning Division
- City of Newport Public Services
- City of Newport Recreation Department
- City of Newport Tree and Open Space Commission
- City of Newport Waterfront Commission
- Housing Authority of Newport
- Naval Station Newport
- Newport City Council
- Newport Public Schools
- Newport Public Utilities

- Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission
- RI Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC)
- RI Department Of Environmental Management
- RIDEM - Office of Water Resources

Neighborhood Associations:

- Bellevue Ocre Point Neighborhood Association
- Castle Hill Neighborhood Association
- Historic Hill Association
- NAACP
- Off Broadway Neighborhood Association
- Point Association
- Top of the Hill Association

Nonprofit, Advocacy Organizations, and Others:

- 1772 Foundation
- Alliance for a Livable Newport
- Aquidneck Growers' Market
- Aquidneck Island Planning Commission
- Aquidneck Land Trust
- Audubon Society
- Bike Newport
- Broadway Merchants' Association
- Clean Ocean Access
- Clean Water Action
- Edward King House
- Friends of Ballard Park
- Friends of King Park

- Friends of the Waterfront
- Grow Smart Rhode Island
- Newport Architectural Forum
- Newport Art Museum
- Newport Historical Society
- Newport Restoration Foundation
- Newport Tree Society and Arboretum
- Redwood Library and Athenæum
- Sankofa Community Connection
- Save our Open Space
- Save the Bay
- The Cultural Landscape Foundation
- The Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center
- The Preservation Society of Newport County
- Waterfront & Thames St. property owners and businesses

Higher Education:

- Roger William's University School of Architecture Art and Historic Preservation
- University of Rhode Island Department of Landscape Architecture
- Salve Regina University Cultural and Historic Preservation
- University of Rhode Island's Graduate School of Oceanography – Rhode Island Sea Grant
- University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Oceanography – Coastal Resources Center
- Community College of Rhode Island

Revenue and Funding Opportunities

Creating a fiscally sustainable park system is key, where long-term maintenance, acquisition, and capital investments are balanced by healthy revenue and fiscal support.

Listed here is a large range of funding and revenue opportunities that are used across the county. Hiring a dedicated grant write could help support additional revenue streams.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT: GENERAL FUNDING SOURCES

General Fund

General Obligation Bond

LOCAL GOVERNMENT: DEDICATED FUNDING SOURCES

Landing and Boarding Fees for Cruise Ships

Development Impact fees

- Park Impact Fees (typically assessed based on number of bedrooms)
- System Development Charges (one-time fee on new development to fund infrastructure)

Cash-in-Lieu of Open Space Requirement

Boulevard Tax

Dedicated Sales Tax

Facility Authority

Value Capture

Tax Increment Financing (TIF), also known as a Tax Allocation District

Business Improvement District

Real Estate Transfer Fee

Revolving Funds, e.g. Clean Water State Revolving Fund and Facility Plan Loan Program

Stormwater Utility Fee

Transient (Hotel) Occupancy Tax

Wheel Tax

REVENUE CAPTURE

Land Leases/Concessions

User Fees

Capital Improvement Fee

Corporate Naming Rights

Corporate Sponsorships

Maintenance Endowment Fund

Gift Catalog

PRIVATE FUNDING SOURCES

Business/Citizen Donations

Voluntary Donation through City Tax Bill ("I'd like to donate \$____ to a park fund")

Private Foundation Funds

Scholarship Programs

Nonprofit Organizations

Conservancy or Friends Organization

Land Trust

Conservation District

Parks Foundation

Greenway Foundations

Homeowner Association Fees

Lease Back

FEDERAL AND STATE PROGRAMS

Recreation Acquisition and Development Grants (Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management)

Recreational Trails Program (Federal Highway Administration; funding administered by Rhode Island Dept. of Transportation)

America the Beautiful Grants (Funding from USDA Forest Service administered by Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management)

Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (National Parks Service)

Land and Water Conservation Fund (National Park Service)

Regional Coastal Resilience Grant Awards (NOAA Office for Coastal Management)

Historic Preservation Fund (National Park Service; awarded by the R.I. Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission)

Community Development Block Grant (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; administered by Rhode Island Department of Administration - Office of Housing and Community Development)

State Bond Issues

GRANT PROGRAMS

Kodak American Greenway Grants (Eastman Kodak Company, the Conservation Fund, and the National Geographic Society)

People for Bikes Community Grant Program (previously Bikes Belong Coalition)

Community Tree Planting Grants (Alliance for Community Trees)

Global ReLeaf Grant Application (American Forests)

National Wildlife Federation

Corporate foundations and sponsorship, such as REI

VOLUNTEER SOURCES

Adopt-a-Park

Tree Planting Program

Neighborhood Park Initiatives

Adopt-a-Trail

Community Service Workers

Corporate partnerships

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

In additions to revenue and financial opportunities, incentives and donations can also support park fiscal health.

Implementation Strategies

Implementation priorities are broken down into discreet projects that can be implemented over time.

NOSP

Define the role and objects and formalize management structure of the organization which will continue the work of the Newport Open Space Partnership by implementing and updating the Master Plan.

Continue to support the city in enhancing Newport's trees, parks, open spaces, streetscapes, and waterfronts

Create a revenue strategy / fee adjustments for facility rentals

Assist the city with revenue / operations plan

Adopt-a-Spot Program

LAND ACQUISITION

Acquire additional Northern Newport site(s) for open space and recreation

Incrementally acquire land to expand / improve parks and recreation

EASEMENTS

Secure a permanent easement for Aquidneck Park

Secure a permanent easement for Perotti Park

Continue to add additional easements to protect open spaces

MASTER PLAN

Implementation Strategies Review/Update: evaluate implementation strategies list with new needs

Master Plan Update; special focus on sea level rise

FOLLOW-UP PLANNING

Create an online parks, trees, streetscapes, and open space bulletin board

Create Management Plans: Phase 1, Start with parks including size, level of funding

Create Management Plans: Phase 2, Complete plans

Create Landscape Guidelines

Create Streetscape Guidelines

Create Cultural Landscape Reports: Phase 1, Start with parks that are culturally important

Complete Cultural Landscape Reports

PLANS

Integrate with Comprehensive Plan

Ensure public open space is included in Navy Hospital site

Integrate Harbor Walk access, street trees, and green infrastructure with Thames St planning

Continue to support implementation of expanded parks, open space, trees, green infrastructure, and expanded walking/ bicycling opportunities through other City Planning efforts

POLICIES & ORDINANCES

Create Harbor Walk overlay & approval of incentives / ordinances

Revise zoning code definition to encourage green infrastructure

TREES

Complete tree inventory

Set targets/goals for tree canopy and begin implementing

HARBOR WALK

Establish a Harbor Walk Subcommittee

Improve Harbor Walk with programming and activation

Create a Harbor Walk Master Plan

Focus on increasing permanent public access easements to the Harbor Walk

Improve Harbor Walk, using updated sea level rise information to encourage protective improvements that increase access to water

ENHANCED CONNECTIVITY

Establish a Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee

Rail with/to Trail: Additional Planning

Rail with/to Trail: Phase 1, First Mile

Rail with/to Trail: Phase 2, Extensions

Create a citywide Bicycle Plan

Focus on improving sidewalks, city gateways, adding street trees, and expanding bicycle network

Finish Easton Pond Walking Loop

Implement a Bike Share Program

Improve Cliff Walk access

NORTHERN NEWPORT

Acquire and design new Northern Newport Park(s)

Create connection from Miantonomi to Pell School

Build new Northern Newport park(s)

Improve Northern Newport connectivity

EXISTING PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Enhance Miantonomi Park

Relocate skatepark

Replace Rogers track & improve soccer field (including lighting)

Program Queen Anne Square, IYRS park, Armory, John Clarke Park, MLK Park, and Rovensky Park

Enhance pocket parks and plazas in downtown district

Relocate and expand dog park

Kingston Playground - repurpose/sell

Additional basic park upgrades (see Appendix for complete list)

CEMETERIES

Create a Cemetery Master Plan

Cemetery Restoration: Phase 1

Cemetery Restoration: Phase 2

RESILIENT HABITAT & ENVIRONMENT

Implement a low-mow program - prioritize traffic islands and other rarely-used mini-parks, introduce meadows, wildflowers, and daffodils

Monitor Sea Level Rise projections

Create a sea level rise adaptation action plan (should be completed sooner if projections significantly change)

Implement GRIP (Rhode Island Green Resilient Infrastructure Project)

Next Steps

This plan presents a bold vision and ambitious implementation strategies to propel the future of Newport's trees, parks, and open spaces. Intended to be a living document, a process for progress reports and plan updates is suggested.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Though the implementation timeline for the plan has a 10-year+ duration, regular evaluations and updates will help ensure the plan stays on track and remains relevant. Formal progress reports should be conducted by the Newport Open Space Partnership (or similar group) on an annual basis. Progress reports would include a review of the previous year's implementation strategies and initiatives including status reports for ongoing progress or obstacles. Reports should also review the potential upcoming implementation strategies for the next two years to ensure that the plan reflects the current needs and goals of the community. Implementation strategies could be re-prioritized based on current funding availability, community needs, and governmental or non-profit support.

PLAN UPDATES

Every five years, a more comprehensive plan update would incorporate findings from other plans related to trees, parks, and open space in order to set new priorities. These may include Cultural Landscape Reports, plans for major new parks or open spaces, and management plans.

As part of the master plan update, a more formal update of the needs assessment would be appropriate to ensure that future planning efforts stay relevant and focused. This would include new population data and information gathered during community engagement events, as well as any relevant updates to program offerings or major park renovations.

EXAMPLES OF PARKS & OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE PROCESSES

City	Update Timeline
Boulder, CO	Annual progress reports, major plan updates every 3 years
Rochester, MN	Constant minor updates
Midland, MI	Major plan updates every 5 years



