

**City of Newport
Department of Planning and Economic Development
Staff Report to the Planning Board**

Zoning Amendment

Meeting: July 12, 2021
Applicant: City of Newport
Petition: Amend the zoning ordinance and zoning map to establish the Innovation Hub;
create a float zone

Several attempts to change the zoning in the North End Commercial Neighborhood to encourage economic development have been initiated over the years. In 2019, the City decided it needed to zero in on land use in the North End to substantiate the zoning amendment. The North End Urban Plan (NEUP) was prepared by the Planning Board and adopted by the City Council on February 10, 2021. Since that time, in line with the 2004 and 2017 Comprehensive Plans, the proposed ordinance to create a float zone was tweaked to reflect the NEUP. Additional changes were made to the “base” zoning proposed in 2020 to reflect the adopted NEUP.

The end products were developed by staff in the Department of Planning and Economic Development and a working group of Planning Board members with consultation from the City Solicitor with the intent to implement the zoning regime laid out in the North End Urban Plan. Public and citizen oversight involvement in the approval process is critical to ensure the final regulations reflect the city’s vision.

Both the floating zoning amendment and the “base” utilize Land Development Projects to ensure future real estate investments are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan while providing a streamlined approval process through float zoning or unified development review, respectively. Every other municipality in Rhode Island has Land Development Projects. Adding this regulatory scheme to Newport will provide an effective regulatory tool many developers, lawyers, and experts are familiar with, as well as robust public hearing mechanisms for public notice and participation.

This staff report is presented given the most recent knowledge available at its date of publishing. Portions of it may become obsolete or require update as the Planning Board’s review process further unfolds.

Standards of Review

The following standards include analysis prepared by staff and is provided for the Board’s consideration in accordance with the below mentioned required considerations and findings. The Planning Board is not obligated to accept this analysis, and it may be amended, altered or rejected at the Board’s discretion.

Purposes of zoning

In making this finding of general consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Board must recognize and consider the purposes of zoning, as presented in the Newport Zoning Ordinance, section 17.04.20 of the Newport Code of Ordinances, and Rhode Island General Law § 45-24-30:

(A) Promoting the public health, safety, and general welfare.

- Currently, residential uses are prohibited in the Commercial-Industrial zone for health and safety reasons. The Commercial-Industrial zone is a heavy industrial zone with many permitted uses incompatible with residential uses. In order to open up the Innovation Hub for mixed-use development, the proposed Innovation Hub zone creates subdistricts to balance heavy industrial and residential uses.
- Additional dimensional requirements seek to maximize vehicular safety in an area that serves as the landing point for the Newport Pell Bridge.
- By increasing development potential, there is significant opportunity to enhance the general welfare. Additionally, protections are provided to provide for development with environmental enhancement.

(B) Providing for a range of uses and intensities of use appropriate to the character of the city and reflect current and expected future needs.

- The Commercial-Industrial zone is largely strip retail “grayfield” and ripe for redevelopment. The subdistricts protect existing industrial uses and the removal of residential areas from consideration through the NEUP protects residential areas. The realignment of the Newport Pell Bridge approaches will create additional parcels for redevelopment.

(C) Providing for orderly growth and development which recognizes:

(1) The goals and patterns of land use contained in the comprehensive plan;

- The intent of this zoning amendment is to provide for orderly growth and development that implements the goals and patterns of land use contained in the comprehensive plan. The 2017 Comprehensive Plan was created and amended to achieve this idea.

(2) The natural characteristics of the land, including its suitability for use based on soil characteristics, topography, and susceptibility to surface or groundwater pollution;

- The proposed zoning includes language addressing these concerns in sections 100.

(3) The values and dynamic nature of coastal and freshwater ponds, the shoreline, and freshwater and coastal wetlands;

- The proposed zoning includes language addressing these concerns in sections 100.

(4) The values of unique or valuable natural resources and features;

- The zoning amendment excludes Miantonomi Park, which is explicitly mentioned in section 17.66.060. The Urban Village subdistrict promotes active recreation on the waterfront at the former Navy Hospital.

(5) The availability and capacity of existing and planned public and/or private services and facilities;

- Some of the largest roads in Newport are in this area. The area is well served with private services. The City Yard is in this area. A new fire station is being planned for this area and a branch library is being explored. Additional necessary infrastructure is being prioritized.

(6) The need to shape and balance urban and rural development; and

- The zoning amendment creates opportunity for additional urban development to meet Newport’s growth needs.

(7) The use of innovative development regulations and techniques.

- A floating zone is innovative, as are Land Development Projects and unified development review.

(D) Providing for the control, protection, and/or abatement of air, water, groundwater, and noise pollution, and soil erosion and sedimentation.

- The proposed zoning includes language addressing these concerns in sections 100 and 110.

(E) Providing for the protection of the natural, historic, cultural, and scenic character of the city or areas therein.

- This amendment provides for protection of the natural, historic, cultural, and scenic character of the city by excluding the most prominent areas in the vicinity from the amendment, limiting building heights to preserve views, and requiring open space and encouraging green stormwater infrastructure.

(F) Providing for the preservation and promotion of agricultural production, forest, silviculture, aquaculture, timber resources, and open space.

- This amendment requires open space in most developments, with the opportunity for the open space to be used for agriculture, urban forest, and aquaculture.

(G) Providing for the protection of public investment in transportation, water, stormwater management systems, sewage treatment and disposal, solid waste treatment and disposal, schools, recreation, public facilities, open space, and other public requirements.

- The amendment encourages alternative transportation, which will protect RIDOT's recent investments in the Pell Bridge approaches. The same project invests in the Elizabeth Brook stormwater system. The amendments' strict stormwater requirements will protect this investment. The amendments protect Miantonomi Park.

(H) Promoting a balance of housing choices, for all income levels and groups, to assure the health, safety and welfare of all citizens and their rights to affordable, accessible, safe, and sanitary housing.

- The amendments promote a balance of housing choices, particularly with the bonus for workforce housing. As housing in the area does not exist currently to any substantial degree, new housing will be constructed to accessible, safe, and sanitary standards, protected from heavy industrial uses.

(I) Providing opportunities for the establishment of low- and moderate-income housing.

- Creating additional areas for housing at densities supportive of the type of development desired by low and moderate-income housing developers will provide opportunities for the establishment of low- and moderate-income housing.

(J) Promoting safety from fire, flood, and other natural or unnatural disasters.

- The requirements in sections 100 will promote safety from fire, flood, and other natural or unnatural disasters.

(K) Promoting a high level of quality in design in the development of private and public facilities.

- The review process for development and interconnectedness with the NEUP promotes a high level of quality in design in the development of private and nonmunicipal facilities.

(L) Promoting implementation of the comprehensive plan of the city adopted pursuant to Title 45, Chapter 22.2 of the General Laws.

- See the general consistency with the Comprehensive Plan analysis, below.

(M) Providing for coordination of land uses with contiguous municipalities, other municipalities, the state, and other agencies, as appropriate, especially with regard to resources and facilities that extend beyond municipal boundaries or have a direct impact on that municipality.

- This amendment is made in line with State regulations and based on the policies of other municipalities in Rhode Island. The Commercial-Industrial zone will remain along Coddington Highway as a buffer to Middletown.

(N) Provide for efficient review of development proposals, to clarify and expedite the zoning approval process.

- The amendment utilizes development plan review, Land Development Projects, float zones, and unified development review to provide for efficient review of proposals to clarify and expedite the zoning approval process.

(O) Provide for procedures for the administration of the zoning ordinance, including, but not limited to, variances, special-use permits, and, where adopted, procedures for modifications.

- See above.

RIGL § 45-24-30 (16) Provide opportunities for reasonable accommodations in order to comply with the Rhode Island Fair Housing Practices Act, chapter 37 of title 34; the United States Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 (FHAA); the Rhode Island Civil Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, chapter 87 of title 42; and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), 42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq.

- The Innovation Hub will be the most accessible zone in Newport through the ability of new development to be constructed, to ADA standards. The addition of housing to the area will support fair housing practices.

Required finding

General consistency of the proposal with the Comprehensive Plan including the goals and policies statement, the implementation program, and all other applicable elements of the comprehensive plan

Relevant goals, policies, and actions as outlined in the goals and policies statement and implementation program include:

Goal LU-1 – To provide a balanced city consisting of residential, commercial and employment uses consistent with the character, environmental resources and vision of the community.

The development patterns required by these amendments will create “a vibrant, forward-looking and welcoming community built upon a strong sense of place and cultural heritage. Residents and visitors alike [will] enjoy the [zoning district] for its ... boating traditions, walkability, community diversity, and quality of life.” This amendment “chart[s] a course for our future that embraces and encourages innovative growth and development, taking an active role in the stewardship of our architectural and natural resources, and an enhanced quality of life, all while we maintain our unique historic and cultural assets that are the foundation of our character.”

These amendments are the launchpad to the City’s objectives outlined on pages 1-7 and 1-8 and a significant step forward in addressing the issues outlined in Table 1-3.

Policy LU-1.1 – The City shall support implementation of efforts to diversify, redevelop and enhance the city’s north end in collaboration with appropriate federal, state, regional, and private stakeholders, with a focus on developing employment opportunities, especially for young adults.

These amendments will go a long way towards diversifying, redeveloping, and enhancing the city’s north end in collaboration with appropriate federal, state, regional, and private stakeholders, with a focus on developing employment opportunities, especially for young adults. Additional work will be needed to further this policy.

Policy LU-1.3 – The City shall work with state regional agencies and private property owners to maintain viable maritime uses and public access within the city’s harbor area, while also supporting uses necessary to accommodate tourism.

The redevelopment of the former Navy Hospital will be overseen by the Planning Board. Permitted uses support maritime uses and public access.

Policy LU-1.4 – The City shall maintain design standards to protect historic structures, maintain the heritage of the community, and maintain views and access to the harbor and waterfront areas.

Goal OSR-1 – To provide a range of appropriate open space and outdoor recreational amenities for use by residents and visitors.

Policy OSR-1.1 – The City shall protect and enhance its open spaces for public enjoyment and benefit.

Action OSR-1A – *Selectively seek out creative partnerships with private, non-profit and institutional organizations to share costs, benefits and revenues, especially where such collaborations will help to accomplish near term, high priority objectives.*

Goal OSR-2 – *To provide a connected system of open space and outdoor recreational amenities throughout the City that are strategically linked to transportation, public facilities, neighborhoods and appropriate private facilities.*

Action OSR-2A – *Seek opportunities to improve and/or expand open space and recreation in the City's north end.*

Goal OSR-3 – *To protect and enhance public access to shoreline and waterfront areas.*

Policy OSR-3.1 – *The City Shall enhance and protect public access to the shoreline and waterfront areas through recreational sites, public rights-of-way, and access easements.*

Action OSR-3A – *Evaluate all projects (new construction and renovations) to ensure appropriate public access is maintained.*

Action OSR-3B – *Evaluate all projects (new construction and renovations) to protect viewsheds of*

Policy NR-2.5 – *The City shall protect scenic vistas.*

shoreline and waterfront areas from public spaces.

Goal HC-1 – *To identify, protect, and enhance the City's cultural and historic resources.*

The use of the NEUP, building height limits, and open space requirements in the amendments support this policy.

Policy LU-1.5 – *The City shall encourage the use of the Floating Zone in the Mixed Use, Waterfront and Mixed Use, Innovation future land use designations. This could include the use of form or character base codes, alternative performance-oriented development standards, mixed uses, and other development and planning techniques that will support a vibrant and flexible economic opportunity area.*

The float zone amendment is the first step in implementing the floating zone overlay. It includes alternative-performance development standards for use, building height, and parking. The Land Development Project process will support a vibrant and flexible economic opportunity area. The character code is incorporated as design guidelines for Comprehensive Plan consistency findings.

Policy LU-1.6 – *The City shall encourage upgrading, beautification, revitalization, and environmentally appropriate reuse of existing commercial areas.*

These amendments encourage the upgrading, beautification, revitalization, and environmentally appropriate reuse of the Innovation Hub area.

Policy LU-1.7 – *The City shall protect the existing character of residential neighborhoods while encouraging local neighborhood business.*

These amendments protect the existing character of residential neighborhoods while encouraging local neighborhood business.

Policy LU-1.8 – *The City shall require lighting designs that are designed to minimize glare, light trespass, enhance energy conservation and to maintain dark skies.*

Action LU-1D - *Lighting used on public and private lands should be integrally designed as part of the built environment and should reflect a balance for the lighting needs with the contextual ambient light level and surrounding nighttime characteristics of our community. This includes:*

- *The lighting designers should consider utilizing pre-curfew and post-curfew lighting designs with automatic control systems to eliminate excessive light during nonactive hours of site and building operation.*
- *Full cut-off fixtures and shielding should be utilized to effectively control glare and light*

trespass.

- *Architectural lighting should only be utilized to highlight special features or to enhance public safety. Lighting of expansive wall planes and roofs should be avoided.*
- *Landscape lighting should only be utilized to accent landscaping, be pointed away from property lines, and fixtures shall be shielded to minimize light trespass on adjacent properties or public spaces.*

Policy T-4.3 - The City shall design street and public parking area lighting that improves safety, energy efficiency, protection of the night skies (dark sky protections) and environmental soundness. Development Plan Review / Land Development Project review of most developments will ensure these standards are met.

Action LU-1A – Update City’s Zoning Ordinance to add Mixed Use designations compatible with the designations included in this Comprehensive Plan.

Action LU-1B – Actively pursue implementation of all North End redevelopment projects and related initiatives.

Action LU-1C – Update City’s Zoning Map

Action LU-2E – In redeveloping the city’s North End, implement low impact storm water design practices to the maximum extent practical.

Action LU-2G – Upon completion of the Shoreline Change SAMP, incorporate, as appropriate, its recommended tools for planning and land use permitting and into applicable plans, regulations, programs and procedures.

These zoning amendments are an important milestone for these actions.

Goal LU-2 – To develop a planning framework that helps the city respond to the impacts of sea level rise, storm surge and increased flooding.

Action T-1E – Promote tree canopy in the North End urban communities to help combat climate change.

Action T-4A – Incorporate LID storm water management approaches into street design.

Policy WA-9.2 – The City will strive to implement innovative measures, such as Green Infrastructure, to manage storm water.

Action WA-9D – Continue to include LID and other green infrastructure in City street design and improvement projects.

Action NHCC-1C – Utilize opportunities associated with the Pell Bridge ramp realignment project and new development to manage/mitigate stormwater and sea level rise.

Action NHCC-1E – Continue to educate local citizens, property owners and business interests regarding the impacts of climate change, the costs of dialing to adapt and mitigate and the options available to successfully overcome the challenges.

These amendments develop a planning framework that helps the city respond to the impact of sea level rise, storm surge, and increased flooding, serving as a model for the rest of the city. They also utilize opportunities associated with the Pell Bridge ramp realignment project and new development to manage/mitigate stormwater and sea level rise, as identified in subsections 17.65.100(B) and (C). The Coastal Hazards Risk Assessment required in Subsection 17.65.100(C) is an important tool in implementing this Action NHCC-1E.

Goal LU-3 – Achieve the vision put forth by the North End Urban Plan.

The proposed amendments are very consistent with the North End Urban Plan. The NEUP was written with this zoning scheme in mind.

Policy LU-3.2 – The City shall promote outstanding design in the Innovation District that supports current and future issues and needs.

Action LU-3A - Require high-quality urban design elements for development within the North End, and embrace Newport’s existing context – history, geography, climate, economy and architecture – as a source of inspiration for contemporary design within the Innovation Hub.

Action LU-3B - Utilize the North End Urban Plan, Appendix A -Character-based code, as design guidelines to guide appropriate design within the Innovation Hub.

Policy T-2.6 – The City shall support public/private planning that would improve the appearance of Newport’s four primary entry ways, creating a greater sense of arrival and welcome.

Policy HC-1.10 – The City shall utilize and capitalize on its architectural character and cultural heritage to promote economic growth.

Section 100 of both amendments promotes outstanding design.

Policy LU-3.3 – The city shall prioritize development that creates jobs in accordance with the North End Urban Plan.

Action LU-3C - Seek uses that bring new higher paying jobs to Newport and provide opportunity for growth, and work with residents to secure those jobs,

Action LU-3F - Encourage a mix of supportive uses in the North End reflective of the community’s wants and needs.

The permitted uses support development that creates jobs, while allowing supportive uses.

Policy LU-3.4 – The City shall work to mitigate educational, wealth, opportunity, and geophysical disparities through public process and community benefits.

Action LU-3E – For Development within the Innovation Hub:

- Determine the impact of development projects on residential areas and identify benefits that may help mitigate any negative impact.
- Provide community benefits that are informed by and improve the quality of life for residents.

Action LU-3G - Develop an understanding of factors that contribute to displacement and implement solutions such as taxation measures, community benefits or other development incentives to support neighborhood stability and mitigate displacement.

Section 17.66.070 and Subsections 17.65.100(A), (D), (E), (G), (I), and (J) and 17.66.100(A) and (C) provide procedures for community benefits.

Goal ED-1 – To develop a robust and diverse economy, providing suitable employment opportunities for residents, and a stable tax base.

Policy ED-1.1 – The City shall support key economic drivers while also seeking to attract and grow its technology sector and businesses that represent new and innovative concepts and technologies.

Policy ED-1.2 – The City shall work to implement the Innovation Hub plans.

Policy ED-1.5 – The City shall build upon thriving sectors to develop ... a more substantial year-round tourism economy.

Action ED-1A – Pursue coordinated implementation of the Pell Bridge re-alignment, the Westside Master Plan, the Innovation Hub, Navy Hospital site redevelopment, Hope VI housing completion, the Sheffield Incubator, CCRI and other north end economic development projects and initiatives.

Action ED-1B – Continue to aggressively pursue opportunities to leverage climate change and resiliency as a key part of the City’s economic development and diversification initiatives.

Action ED-1K – Continue efforts to develop workforce capabilities in collaboration with educational and business entities.

Action ED-1M – Ensure new development in the North End is consistent with city goals regarding climate change and environmental stewardship and includes support and job-training programs for residents.

Action NR-5A – Fully integrate the City’s natural resources into the City’s developing Innovation Hub and related economic diversification plans and activities.

These amendments support diverse economic growth in the North End, as stipulated in the Comprehensive Plan.

Action ED-1J – Continue to support streetscape projects in mixed use arterial corridors.

Goal T-1 – To provide a comprehensive, multimodal transportation system for all users.

Policy T-1.2 – The City shall provide traffic calming measures on local/residential streets and require new developments (or projects) that share roadways with residential areas to integrate traffic calming methods as part of site design.

Policy T-1.7 – The City shall seek improved pedestrian and bicycle accommodations in the North End.

Action T-1C – Safely accommodate bicycles as a mode of transportation.

Action T-1D – Coordinate with RIDOT to improve regional connections and optimize multimodal transportation development opportunities within the North End.

Action T-1G – Consider the traffic demands of vehicular traffic through the North End and apply traffic calming strategies.

Policy T-2.7 – The City shall create more transportation options for visitors and residents.

Action T-2B – Work to implement local actions needed to accomplish applicable State and regional mobility strategies.

Action T-2D – Pursue completion of the Pell Bridge access re-alignment and related land disposition and redevelopment, including the incorporation of facilities for alternative modes (biking, transit, and walking paths) consistent with the concepts contained in the West Side master plan.

Policy T-4.2 – The City shall identify and promote Transit-Oriented Development in areas that can support the regional transit system and related plans (North End).

Action T-4B – Continue to create multi-modal, mixed use corridors along major arterial streets within the city through the uses of “complete streets” practices

Action T-4C – Design bike and pedestrian facilities into street improvement plans and link these into the larger regional network of bike, pedestrian and transit systems.

Action T-4D – Promote the development of strategically located mixed use nodes (i.e. North End and the City’s historical urban core area).

Action T-4C – Continue to endorse and promote transportation options, particularly during peak tourism season.

The requirement of Comprehensive Plan consistency for most developments will ensure these important transportation Goals, Policies, and Actions are implemented.

Goal ED-2 – To protect and enhance the City’s maritime related businesses.

Policy ED-2.1 – The City shall consider the impacts of plans, programs, investments, regulations and other factors influencing or potentially influencing the viability of its maritime businesses and will take appropriate actions to avoid or mitigate negative impacts.

Action ED-2A – Continue to give high priority to water-related uses on the waterfront within the City harbor area.

Action ED-2B – Promote, secure and improve public access to the shoreline.

Action ED-2C – Evaluate current land use regulations and permit procedures to identify modifications that would promote and protect maritime business on appropriate sites.

These amendments support maritime-related businesses and give high priority to water-related uses on the waterfront that promote, secure, and improve public access to the shoreline.

Goal ED-3 – To provide efficient and effective government services to encourage economic development.

These amendments provide regulations and processes that encourage economic development.

Policy ED-3.6- The City shall use energy efficiency, conservation and renewables as strategic economic assets.

Goal EN-1 – To make Newport a leader in energy conservation and renewable energy use.

Policy EN-1.6 – The City shall work with energy providers to improve the reliability and cost effectiveness of our energy system and to reduce risk from threats.

Goal EN-2 – To enhance the understanding of City staff and community members on energy-efficient practices.

Policy EN-2.2 – The City shall make Newport a leader and innovator in energy efficiency.

Goal EN-3 – To support a robust and economically viable range of renewable energy options within the community.

Policy EN-3.1 – The City shall support business and employment opportunities within the emerging sector of renewable energy resources.

Action EN-3A – Develop and/or amend or refine zoning regulations at regular intervals and design standards for private wind systems, solar and other renewable energy systems.

Action EN-3C – Provide targeted zoning incentives for the use of renewable energy where such use does not conflict with other City goals, policies, and objectives.

These amendments use energy efficiency, conservation, and renewables as strategic economic assets that enhance resiliency, as identified in the section 17.65.020 and subsection 17.65.100(I).

Goal H-1 – To preserve and protect existing housing resources in the community.

The limits of the map amendment protect existing housing resources in the community.

Action H-1F – Explore funding a Housing Trust Fund that would incentivize and/or complement other funds to create affordable housing.

Goal CFS-7 – To maintain a superior public library system.

Policy T-3.3 – The City shall explore traffic impact revenue associated with appropriate developments.

Action T-5A – Evaluate the potential to establish parking areas outside of the main tourist areas and use transit to move visitors into and around the community.

Policy EN-3.2 – The City shall encourage public-private partnerships with utility companies and business entities to facilitate a broad development, distribution and use of renewable energy resources and associated technologies.

Action NHCC-1F – Solicit support from the corporate community, federal and state government, local and regional institutions, neighborhood groups and others for climate change initiatives.

Community benefit agreements can be utilized to fund a housing trust fund, a branch library, offset of traffic impacts, produce energy, provide excess parking for park-and-ride purposes, or fight climate change, for example.

Goal H-2 – To preserve and enhance existing moderate workforce and low moderate income (LMI) housing.

Policy H-2.1 – The City shall emphasize the provision of housing that is priced to meet the needs of Newport's workforce.

The permitted density will support workforce housing.

Goal H-3 – *To reduce the percentage of seasonally vacant homes and increase neighborhood stability and vitality*

Policy H-3.2 – *The City shall identify and implement actions to enforce short term rental regulations. Guest houses will not be permitted in the Innovation Hub and hotels are conditionally permitted.*

Goal H-4 – *To expand housing to address Newport’s senior population.*

Policy H-4.1 – *The City shall support market based efforts to accommodate the City’s gaining population, both in terms of new housing options and assistance to allow aging homeowners to remain in their homes.*

Action H-4A – *Create incentives for developing and/or converting units to meet the needs of senior citizens.*

The increased density will incentivize housing production that will meet the needs of Newport’s seniors.

Policy NR-2.7 – *The City shall manage the protection of trees in the city to maintain the city’s designation as a designated “Tree City”.*

Policy NR-3.2 – *The City shall communicate with the public and landscape industry regarding resilient and sustainable methods of landscaping practices.*

Subsection 17.65.100(D) supports these policies.

Goal HC-3 – *To foster a climate that supports the continuation of Newport as a home for the artisan and creative artist.*

Policy HC-3.3 – *The City shall support efforts to retain and attract artists and craftspeople to live and work in Newport.*

The allowance of live-work spaces as permitted uses supports space for craftspeople.

Action WA-4B *Achieve a target rate of residential average annual water use of no more than 65 gallons per capita per day.*

The density allowed by these amendments will reduce average annual water use per capita per day.

Goal NHCC-1 – *To be a resilient community, protecting its citizens, property and economy from the evolving threat of climate change and its associated hazards.*

Policy NHCC-1.2 – *The City shall take local actions to ... both adapt to and mitigate ...climate change and its impacts.*

Action NHCC-1A – *Maintain an active leadership role within the state, region and nationally with respect to climate change mitigation.*

The development requirements in sections 100, particularly Subsections 17.65.100(B)-(E), (I), (J), and 17.66.100(A) support the implementation of these actions.

Other applicable elements:

Incorporation by Reference of the North End Urban Plan:

The proposed zoning amendments are fully consistent with the North End Urban Plan. The Innovation subdistricts were consolidated in zoning for efficiency.

Future Land Use Map:

The proposed zoning amendments are fully consistent with the Future Land Use Map.

Local Economic Development Plans, Programs and Incentives:

The City of Newport has moved forward to develop an Innovation Hub concept which will leverage Newport's unique opportunities in resilience, ocean, and defense areas with its proximity to the U.S. Naval facility, academic institutions (like the MET School and the new CCRI campus), and Newport's extensive array of coastal assets. Land use plans, utilities, transportation, zoning, and other tools will be aligned to support this important effort. The North End Urban Plan details the land use and development requirements of the North End and identifies utilities, transportation, and other investments to facilitate economic development.

These zoning amendments align zoning in support of the Innovation Hub concept.

North End Commercial Neighborhood:

The North End Commercial neighborhood is also home to the plan for the Newport Innovation Hub. The goal of this plan is to redesign the Claiborne Pell Bridge and develop the newly available land into a hub of businesses with a focus on innovation, sustainability, and civic economic development. The North End Urban Plan outlines the vision for the Innovation Hub, as well as abutting areas.

These amendments support the Innovation Hub.

Planning Department Recommendations

The following recommendations have been prepared by staff and are provided for the Board's consideration. The Planning Board is not obligated to accept these recommendations, and they may be altered or rejected at the Board's discretion.

In reviewing the Comprehensive Plan for consistency with the proposed amendments, staff can think of no action the City could take that would more greatly implement the Comprehensive Plan than the adoption of these zoning amendments. Therefore, staff recommends consensus is built on these amendments through the public comment process and they be adopted with any requisite changes to achieve broad community support.