

# Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches

Newport and Middletown, Rhode Island



**March 2020**

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Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches  
Newport and Middletown, Rhode Island

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Submitted Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c) and 23 U.S.C. 138

U.S. Department of Transportation

Federal Highway Administration

And the

Rhode Island Department of Transportation

3/13/20

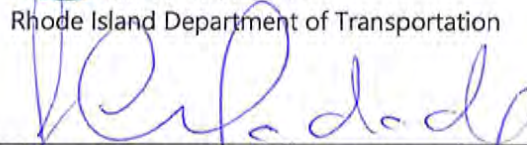
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## List of Acronyms

ACS	American Community Service
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AIPC	Aquidneck Island Planning Commission
AITS	Aquidneck Island Transportation Study
APE	Area of Potential Effects
AST	Aboveground Storage Tank
ATR	Automatic Traffic Recorder
BCC	Birds of Conservation
BCID	Bat Call Identification
BFE	Base Flood Elevations
BMPs	Best Management Practices
CAAA	Clean Air Act Amendments
CBRS	Coastal Barrier Resource System
CCRI	Community College of Rhode Island
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
CERCLIS	Compensation and Liability Information System
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CI	Commercial Industrial
CLUE	Corridor Land Use Evaluation
CMF	Crash Modification Factors
CMZ	Coastal Zone Management
CNEs	Common Noise Environment
CO	Carbon Monoxide
CO <sub>2</sub>	Carbon Dioxide
CRMC	Coastal Resources Management Council
CRMP	Coastal Resource Management Program
CT	Commercial-Technology
CWA	Clean Water Act
CZM	Coastal Zone Management
dBA	Decibels
DFW	Division of Fish and Wildlife
DPW	Department of Public Works

EA	Environmental Assessment
EDR	Environmental Database Resources
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EJ	Environmental Justice
ELUR	Environmental Land Usage Restriction
EO	Executive Order
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ERM	Environmental Resource Map
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FIS	Flood Insurance Study
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FPPA	Farmland Protection Policy Act
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
HSG	Hydrologic Soil Group
HSM	Highway Safety Manual
I/CDEC	Industrial/Commercial Direct Exposure Criteria
I/M	Inspection and Maintenance
IPaC	Information for Planning and Consultation
ITE	Institute of Transportation Engineers
LESA	Land Evaluation and Site Assessment
LID	Low Impact Development
LiMWA	Limit of Moderate Wave Action
LOD	Limits of Disturbance
LOS	Level of Service
LSI	Limited Surface Investigation
LUHPPL	Land Used with Higher Potential Pollutant Loads
LUST	Leaking Underground Storage Tank
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MgCl <sub>2</sub>	Magnesium Chloride
MOE	Measure of Effectiveness
MS4	Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System
MSAT	Mobile Source Air Toxics

NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAC	Noise Abatement Criteria
NAVD	North American Vertical Datum
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program
NHL	National Historic Landmark
NLEB	Northern Long-Eared Bat
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NOx	Nitrogen Oxides
NPDES	National Pollution Discharge Elimination System
NPL	National Priorities List
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
PAH	Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons
PM	Particulate Matter
R.I.G.L	Rhode Island General Law
R10	Residential
RACR	Remedial Action Closure Report
RAWP	Remedial Action Work Plan
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
RDEC	Residential Direct Exposure Criteria
RIDEM	Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
RIDOT	Rhode Island Department of Transportation
RIESAPA	Rhode Island Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Act
RIHPHC	Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission
RINHHP	Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program
RIPDES	Rhode Island Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
RISDISM	Rhode Island Stormwater Design and Installation Standards Manual
RITBA	Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority
SAMP	Special Area Management Plan
SEMS	Superfund Enterprise Management
SF	Square Feet
SHWS	State Hazardous Waste Sites
SIP	State Implementation Plan

SIR	Site Investigation Report
SMP	Soil Management Program
SPF	Safety Performance Functions
SVOCs	Semi-Volatile Organic Compounds
SWF/LF	Solid Waste Facility's and Landfill
SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
TNM	Traffic Noise Model
TOY	Time of Year
TPHs	Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons
TSCA	Toxic Substances Control Act
UCL	Upper Concentration Limit
UESPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USDOT	United States Department of Transportation
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey
UST	Underground Storage Tank
VHT	Vehicle Hours Travelled
VMT	Vehicle Miles Travelled
VOCs	Volatile Organic Compounds
WNS	White-Nose Syndrome
WQC	Water Quality Certification



## Project Parties

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation is the applicant and project sponsor as defined under 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 771.107.

The Federal Highway Administration is the Federal lead agency for the project as defined under 23 CFR 771.107.

## Preparers

This Environmental Assessment was prepared by Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (Providence, Rhode Island; Watertown, Massachusetts; and New York, New York offices).

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## Changes Between Draft EA and Final EA

This Final Environmental Assessment incorporates several minor changes to the Draft Environmental Assessment published in November 2019. These changes provide updates and/or clarifications to the information in the Draft EA and do not affect the findings of the environmental analysis. They include:

- Section 5.4, Wetlands and Waters of the U.S. and State, “Wetland Functions and Values” subheading (page 45): A reference has been added to the description of wetland functions and values in Technical Appendix B4.
- Section 5.6, Water Quality/Stormwater, subsection 5.6.1 “Study Area and Methodology” (page 48, paragraph 2): The description of the Study Area has been clarified.
- Section 5.9, Cultural Resources, subsection 5.9.3 “Existing Conditions” (pages 56 and 57): The text in this subsection has been revised to reflect concurrence by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC) that the Old Colony and Newport Railroad, including specific individual features within the project’s Area of Potential Effect (APE), is not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Section 6.4, Wetlands and Waters of the U.S. and State, subsection 6.4.1, Direct Impacts (pages 103-105): Additional information and context have been provided on functions and values of the wetlands that would experience direct impacts from the project to address compliance with Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands.
- Section 6.9, Cultural Resources, subsection 6.9.1 “Direct Impacts” (page 112, first paragraph): Text in this subsection has been updated to note that RIHPHC has concurred that the Proposed Action would have No Adverse Effect on historic properties within the APE.
- Section 7.4, Wetlands and Waters of the U.S. and State (page 142): Added information on efforts to avoid and minimize wetland impacts.
- Section 7.9, Cultural Resources (page 145): This section has been updated to note recommendations from RIHPHC for future coordination and documentation efforts related to historic resources within the APE.
- Section 7.13, Noise and Vibration (pages 146-147, second paragraph): This section has been updated to note the potential to provide a solid snow fence in some areas of the proposed alignment, which could reduce noise at adjacent properties.
- Chapter 9, Public Involvement: This chapter has been updated to incorporate public involvement associated with the EA public comment period.
- Section 11.1, Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act: This section has been updated to reflect coordination with RIHPHC on Section 106 compliance subsequent to publication of the Draft EA.

- Section 11.8, Compliance with Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands (page 175): Added references to subsections of Chapters 5, 6, and 7 where compliance is addressed.
- Appendix B9, Cultural Resources: This appendix has been updated to reflect coordination with RIHPHC on Section 106 compliance subsequent to publication of the Draft EA. Correspondence with RIHPHC has been included as an attachment.
- Appendix B17, Property Acquisition Analysis: This appendix has been updated to reflect a potential property acquisition.
- Figures showing Proposed Action: Figures ES-1, 3-1, 6-5 thru 6-8, and 8-2 have been updated to display proposed access to RK Newport Towne Center and Waste Management.

## Executive Summary

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) is proposing to reconfigure the ramps on the Newport approach of the Claiborne Pell Bridge (Pell Bridge), which spans the East Passage of Narragansett Bay to connect the City of Newport with the Town of Jamestown. The proposed action, known as the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches (the Project), is intended to improve traffic circulation, reduce queuing, and improve safety; reconnect the neighborhoods segmented by the current highway infrastructure; and support the City of Newport's economic development plan by maximizing land area for redevelopment.

The defined Limits of Disturbance (LOD) for the Project include the Pell Bridge approach roadway system, which serves local travel between Downtown Newport, Naval Station Newport, Aquidneck Island, southern Rhode Island, Connecticut, and southeastern Massachusetts. The Project Area extends from Farewell Street at Van Zandt Avenue on the south to the driveway of RK Shopping Plaza on the north, and from Admiral Kalbfus Road at 3rd Street on the west to Malbone Street and Girard Avenue on the east. This area includes the ramps and approach roads on the east end of the Pell Bridge, Admiral Kalbfus Road, J. T. Connell Highway, and Farewell Street.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), RIDOT undertook an alternatives analysis that evaluated seven action alternatives and a No Action Alternative to arrive at the Proposed Action. The impacts of the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative are evaluated in this Environmental Assessment (EA). The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), as the lead federal agency for this Proposed Action, is responsible for aiding RIDOT in developing this EA and its supporting documentation, approving the EA for public dissemination, and making a NEPA determination of either a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or a decision to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

A portion of the project included in this Environmental Assessment was determined by FHWA and RIDOT to have independent utility from the remainder of the project and has

been advanced by RIDOT to obtain a Categorical Exclusion (CE) under NEPA. The proposed improvements along J.T. Connell Highway, north of RK Plaza driveway, include state of good repair and safety improvements which can be implemented without the remainder of the Proposed Action being advanced. Due to the availability of funding and completion of a separate NEPA CE for these improvements, they will be constructed prior to the other improvements described in this EA.

## **Proposed Action**

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to reconstruct the Pell Bridge approach ramps to improve traffic circulation, reduce queuing, improve safety, reconnect the neighborhoods segmented by the current highway infrastructure, and support the City of Newport's economic development plan by maximizing land area for redevelopment.

The Proposed Action (Figure ES-1) would address traffic congestion by realigning the approach roads to provide sufficient storage for vehicle queuing and accommodate future traffic volumes resulting from expected growth in the area. Advanced traffic signal systems would be provided to help process the varying traffic demands resulting from Newport's tourism-based economy. Vehicles would be queued on lower-speed roadways, rather than on the high-speed bridge as they are under existing conditions. The proposed design would also soften the horizontal curve radius for the off-ramp, which is projected to decrease the number of accidents that result in fatalities or serious injuries. The existing rotary would be converted to a modern roundabout, which is expected to result in less severe crashes.

The Proposed Action would provide connectivity for all road users, including bicycles and pedestrians. Shared use paths are proposed along the Newport Secondary railroad, Admiral Kalbfus Road, and JT Connell Highway. This would provide off-road facilities throughout the study area and connectivity between Newport's North End and Downtown. At path crossings, enhanced pedestrian crossing treatments would be provided to lessen pedestrian exposure and risk. A surface parking facility is also proposed to offer satellite parking, which would allow both residents and visitors to Newport the ability to use alternate modes of transportation. In addition to the traditional park-and-ride for commuter use, visitors would be able to park outside of Downtown Newport and be shuttled in, saving time and reducing congestion.

With the realignment of the approach roads and removal of excess transportation infrastructure, 20 to 30 acres of land would be made available for new development opportunities. Any new development would be a separate undertaking from the Proposed Action and would be expected to conform to the City's land use planning and zoning, which anticipates the redevelopment of this area. The Proposed Action itself would support State land use, transportation, and economic development goals and is consistent with existing zoning. Table ES-1 provides a summary of the impacts and mitigation anticipated for each resource area evaluated under the Proposed Action.

**Table ES-1 Summary of Proposed Action Impacts and Mitigation**

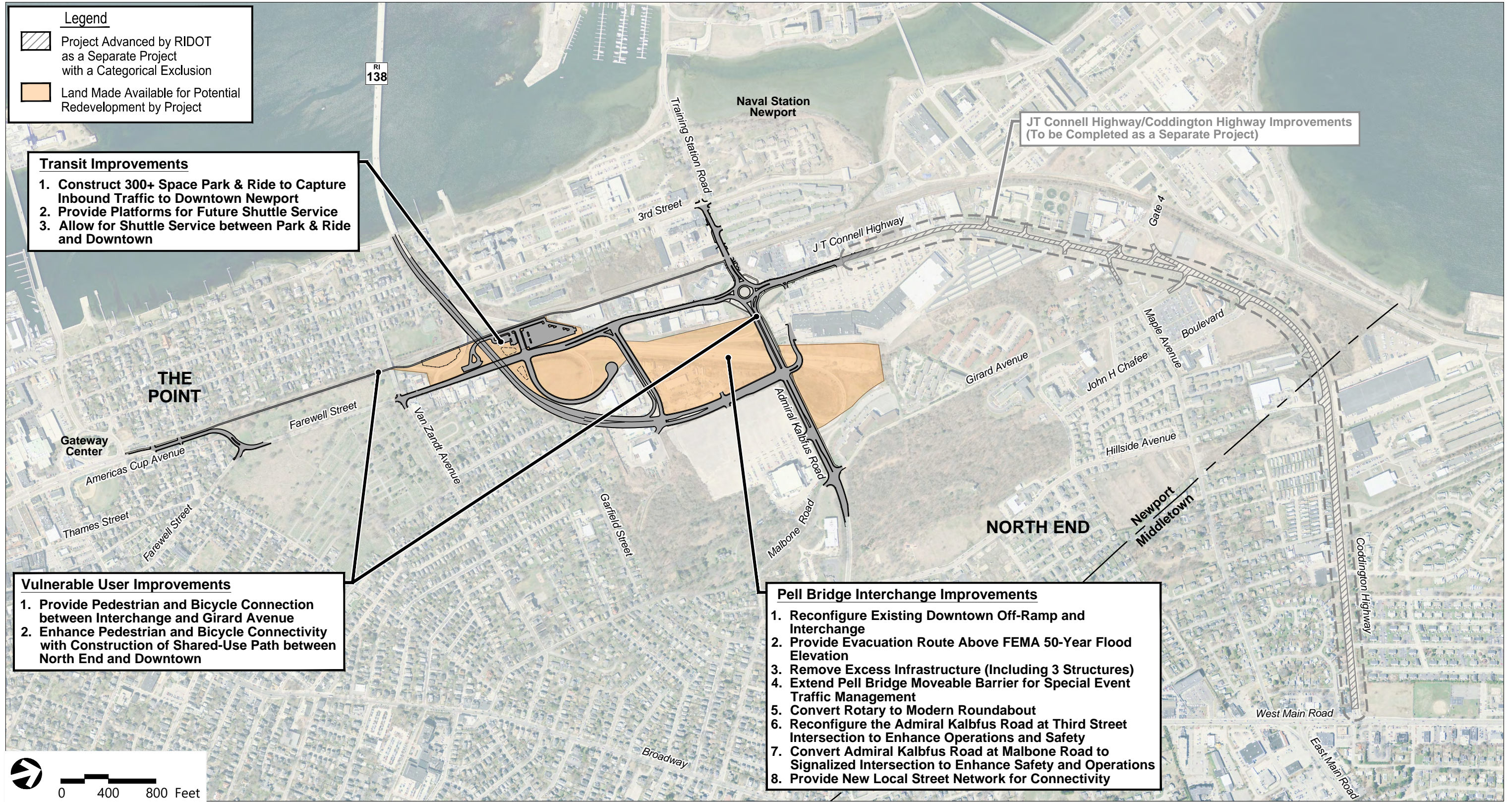
	Direct Impact	Indirect Impact	Cumulative Impact	Mitigation
<b>Transportation Network</b>	Changes in ramp location and geometry would affect traffic patterns in the vicinity of Pell Bridge. These changes would reduce congestion and improve safety compared to existing and No Action conditions.	Traffic pattern changes would not alter regional access, only local movements and access within the project Study Area. These connectivity changes are not expected to change regional travel patterns.	No adverse cumulative transportation impacts.	Mitigation not required or proposed.
<b>Land Use</b>	Project would result in the acquisition of up to three residential and two commercial properties (220,000 s.f.), which would be converted to transportation uses. Temporary road closures during construction would change traffic patterns and property access.	Project would result in beneficial indirect impacts by freeing up approximately 20-30 acres of land for uses consistent with the City's land use planning and zoning department.	No present or reasonably foreseeable future actions currently known that would result in in adverse cumulative impact to land use.	Mitigation not required or proposed.
<b>Farmlands/Soils</b>	No prime or unique farmland soils are located within the LOD.	None identified.	None identified.	Mitigation not required or proposed.
<b>Wetlands and Waters of the U.S and State</b>	Project would require filling of approximately 0.5 acres of wetland under USACE and State RIDEM jurisdiction, and an additional 0.7 acres of mostly developed 50-foot Perimeter Wetland (upland buffer) protected under the RI Freshwater Act.	Impacts may occur to wetlands on RIDOT and City of Newport property located outside of the LOD that would be decommissioned, sold, and redeveloped by others in the future: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sedimentation in wetlands adjacent to the Project LOD.</li> <li>• Project construction and operation within unregulated adjacent uplands.</li> <li>• Temporary disturbance to wetland wildlife habitat functions adjacent to the LOD.</li> <li>• Potential for hydrologic modifications to wetlands adjacent to the LOD.</li> </ul>	The Proposed Action would contribute to the historical trend of wetland filling within the Study Area.	Proposed compensatory mitigation would include restoring existing wetlands in the Study Area and potentially replacing some wetland functions and values at an offsite location.
<b>Floodplains</b>	No adverse impacts to the floodplain associated with increased flood elevations, wave heights, wave setup, or wave runup associated with the Proposed Action.	Nearly the entire Study Area is located within the existing 1% floodplain, but development is restricted by the alignment of the Pell Bridge access ramp. Removal of the ramp would allow additional development in the floodplain.	The cumulative impact of sea level rise with the removal of the Pell Bridge approach ramp, which currently acts as a barrier, could result in higher future coastal flood elevations east of Route 138.	
<b>Water Quality/Stormwater</b>	There would be a minimal increase in impervious surface within the Study Area along with corresponding increases in stormwater runoff and pollutant loading.	Future redevelopment of surplus right of way could result in increases in impervious surface, runoff volumes, and pollutants.	The overall amount of impervious surface in the Study Area is likely to increase, along with runoff and pollutant loads.	Implementation of required stormwater controls and Best Management Practices (BMPs) for the Proposed Action and future redevelopment will reduce pollutant loading, provide groundwater recharge and reduce peak flows to the surrounding drainage outfalls.
<b>Coastal Resources</b>	Construction-phase and permanent effects to coastal resources from stormwater runoff, impacts to wetlands, disturbance to vegetation and open space, and erosion and sedimentation are anticipated to be minor.	Potential for indirect impacts from future development of surplus right of way. Future redevelopment of land would be required to comply with RICRMP and SAMP Coastal Determination.	Future cumulative effects to the coastal zone are anticipated to be minor.	Mitigation not required or proposed.

	Direct Impact	Indirect Impact	Cumulative Impact	Mitigation
<b>Federally Threatened or Endangered and State Natural Heritage Species/Bio-Diversity</b>	The Proposed Action includes components that would be considered potential stressors to Northern Long-Eared Bats (NLEB); however, acoustic survey results indicate the probable absence of the NLEB, and therefore the Project is not anticipated to have any effects on NLEB. The Study Area does not provide habitat suitable to roseate tern or MBTA-listed species, therefore it is unlikely that the Project will have any effect on these species	No indirect impacts to threatened and endangered species are anticipated.	None identified.	Mitigation not required or proposed.
<b>Cultural (Historic and Archeological) Resources</b>	No National Register-eligible historic resources would be affected by the Proposed Action. Phase IA and Phase IB surveys have identified no archaeological sites or features; no archaeological impacts are anticipated.	The APE is generally fully developed, and no historic resources are expected to be displaced due to redevelopment of surplus right of way.	None identified.	Mitigation not required or proposed.
<b>Environmental Justice &amp; Socio-Economics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adverse impacts would occur due to noise levels that exceed the FHWA Noise Abatement Criteria in minority and low-income areas.</li> <li>• Travel times and delays would improve and safety would be enhanced for all roadway users.</li> <li>• Project would have a beneficial effect by improving connectivity to the City's North End neighborhood.</li> <li>• Overall, no disproportionately high and adverse effects on environmental justice populations are anticipated as a result of the Proposed Action.</li> </ul>	Project would result in the potential for future redevelopment, which would result in future employment opportunities for people in the area.	Improved access and redevelopment, in conjunction with proposed redevelopment of the Newport Grand, would provide economic development benefits in the area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noise mitigation has been determined not to be feasible and/or reasonable according to RIDOT standards.</li> <li>• For property acquisitions within identified environmental justice geographies, RIDOT will work with property owners to ensure fair compensations and relocation assistance.</li> <li>• RIDOT will work with property owners to employ best management practices and other requirements to minimize or mitigate construction impacts.</li> </ul>
<b>Visual Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beneficial impacts to visual quality would occur in the JT Connell Highway commercial area (both north and south of the rotary) and residential neighborhoods on Girard Avenue and west of Farwell Street. Visual impacts in other portions of the Study Area would be minor.</li> </ul>	The reconfiguration of the Pell Bridge on/off ramps and removal of excess highway structures would open land formerly occupied transportation infrastructure. RIDOT plans to dispose of unused right-of-way as surplus property, which is expected to result in new development that would be visible from within the Study Area.	Together with development of the proposed Innovation Hub, the Project is expected to have a beneficial impact.	New developments on land made available after completion of the Proposed Action should be designed to interface visually with the redevelopment of adjacent parcels.
<b>Air Quality</b>	The Proposed Action is not expected to cause or contribute to an exceedance of the NAAQs, and no local air quality impacts are anticipated.	Reduction in traffic congestion in the Study Area is expected to reduce regional pollutant emissions.	The Project's improvements to congestion would contribute to an anticipated overall reduction in mobile source pollutant emissions due to increasingly restrictive regulations on vehicle fuel consumption and emissions nationwide.	Mitigation is not required or proposed.
<b>Noise and Vibration</b>	Design-year noise levels would approach or exceed the Noise Abatement Criteria or exceed the substantial increase criterion of 10 dBA or greater in several portions of the Study Area.	None identified.	None identified.	Noise mitigation has been determined not to be feasible and/or reasonable according to RIDOT standards.



	Direct Impact	Indirect Impact	Cumulative Impact	Mitigation
<b>Hazardous Materials</b>	The exposure of subsurface soils containing contamination above RIDEM thresholds could result in adverse public health effects for workers and people living or working nearby in locations where excavation or other intrusive construction activity is anticipated. The removal and disposal of contaminated materials in accordance with state and Federal regulations may have a beneficial impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If previously undiscovered contaminants were encountered during construction, it could affect ongoing remediation of existing subsurface contamination or produce new sources.</li> <li>• Redevelopment of land formerly occupied by ramps and other infrastructure could disturb identified or unidentified hazardous materials.</li> </ul>	None identified.	During construction activities, BMPs and other regulatory requirements would need to be followed to mitigate potential impacts. RIDOT and its contractors would be required to follow a Remedial Action Work Plan.
<b>Climate Change/Resiliency</b>	No direct impacts are anticipated. Current and future storm surge conditions, on top of an estimated three feet of future sea level rise, would occasionally inundate the area.	No indirect impacts are anticipated.	None identified.	Potential mitigation strategies include maintaining infrastructure for optimal performance, increasing redundancy by providing alternate routes, protecting the shoreline infrastructure through engineered solutions, increasing bridge deck elevations or lowering road profiles to allow for overwash, or relocating structures away from the vulnerable coastal area.

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Aerial Source: RIGIS



Figure ES-1  
Proposed Action  
Project Components

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# 1

## Overview

### 1.1 Project Summary

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) is proposing to reconfigure the ramps on the Newport approach of the Claiborne Pell Bridge (Pell Bridge), which spans the East Passage of Narragansett Bay to connect the City of Newport with the Town of Jamestown. The proposed action, known as the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches (the Project), is intended to improve traffic circulation, reduce queuing, and improve safety; reconnect the neighborhoods segmented by the current highway infrastructure; and support the City of Newport's economic development plan by maximizing land area for redevelopment.

The defined Limits of Disturbance (LOD) for the Project include the Pell Bridge approach roadway system, which serves local travel between Downtown Newport, Naval Station Newport, Aquidneck Island, southern Rhode Island, Connecticut, and southeastern Massachusetts. The Project Area extends from Farewell Street at Van Zandt Avenue on the south to the driveway of RK Shopping Plaza on the north, and from Admiral Kalbfus Road at 3rd Street on the west to Malbone Street and Girard Avenue on the east. This area includes the ramps and approach roads on the east end of the Pell Bridge, Admiral Kalbfus Road, J. T. Connell Highway, and Farewell Street.

The Pell Bridge accommodates approximately 27,000 vehicles per day across the East Passage of Newport Bay on Route 138. The bridge connects the City of Newport on Aquidneck Island to the Town of Jamestown on Conanicut Island. This area, known as the Aquidneck Island Travel Corridor, has experienced growing travel demand. The City of Newport comprehensive plan and the report *Creating a Model for National Resilience*

identified a series of potential improvements to reduce congestion queuing, and crashes on the bridge ramps and nearby roadways.

Figure 1-1 shows the regional context of the Project Area in relation to the state of Rhode Island.

## 1.2 Project Background

In June 1999, RIDOT solicited proposals for design engineering services to re-design the Pell Bridge approach roads and ramps in Newport. The project limits were from America's Cup Avenue, at the southern end, to just north of the rotary on J. T. Connell Highway. On the west, the project limits extended from the edge of the existing railroad tracks east to the Newport Grand site driveway. Major concerns that the project was intended to address were the backup of eastbound traffic over the Pell Bridge destined for Downtown Newport; the disconnection of JT Connell Highway, which resulted in a circuitous route for vehicular traffic; the lack of connections for pedestrians or bicyclists between the north side of the City and downtown Newport as well as decreasing the roadway infrastructure to free up developable space within the City.

Between 2002 and 2006, various public workshops were conducted, which presented two preferred alternatives to the public. The City of Newport convened a Citizens Advisory Committee to review the alternatives and provide input to RIDOT. The City could not endorse one concept over another; therefore, the Project was put on hold.

While the project was on hold, the Rhode Island Office of Statewide Planning began an initiative to identify critical travel corridors throughout Rhode Island. Through this initiative, the Aquidneck Island Travel Corridor was identified as a major travel corridor of statewide significance, and long-range goals were established for the corridor out to the year 2020. The corridor was cited as a contributing factor to the economic vitality of Aquidneck Island and the state of Rhode Island as a whole.

In 2009, in order to plan for anticipated growth on Aquidneck Island, the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission (AIPC) undertook the Aquidneck Island Transportation Study (AITS), a comprehensive multi-modal transportation plan for the entire island transportation network. This study included traffic counts, destination surveys, public meetings, and observations of current traffic patterns. In addition, the study reviewed various proposed developments, community comprehensive plans, and transportation improvements that were being planned for the island, including the reconfiguration of the Pell Bridge approach ramps. The AITS summarized two years of coordinated planning efforts by Island residents, business owners, elected officials, municipal officials, advocacy groups, and state and federal agency representatives. The current Project is intended to implement the following recommendations from the AITS:

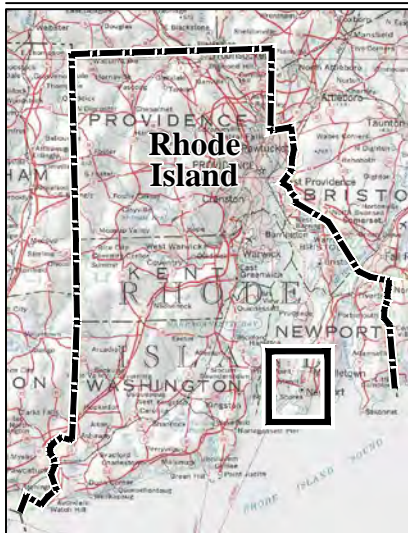
- › Reconfiguration of the ramp system to/from Pell Bridge to reduce vehicle queues on the bridge due to traffic exiting to Downtown Newport.

- › Construction of a new connection from JT Connell Highway (near the Pell Bridge ramps) to Halsey Street and Admiral Kalbfus Road, following an alignment along the south and east edges of the DPW property and west of the Newport Grand site.
- › Construction of a traffic signal or roundabout at the intersection of Admiral Kalbfus Road at Malbone Road/Girard Avenue due to the number of observed crashes at this location.

The Project, as currently proposed, reflects the evaluation of numerous alternatives over a period of nearly 20 years since it was first initiated. Chapter 4 provides a description of these alternatives and how they were evaluated. The Proposed Action incorporates substantial feedback from stakeholder outreach throughout the process. Stakeholders that have been involved include, but are not limited to, the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority (RITBA), the City of Newport, United States Navy as well as Newport residents and commuter groups. Figure 1-2 summarizes the property owners of the Project area.

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Project Location Key



Source: USGS Quadrangles

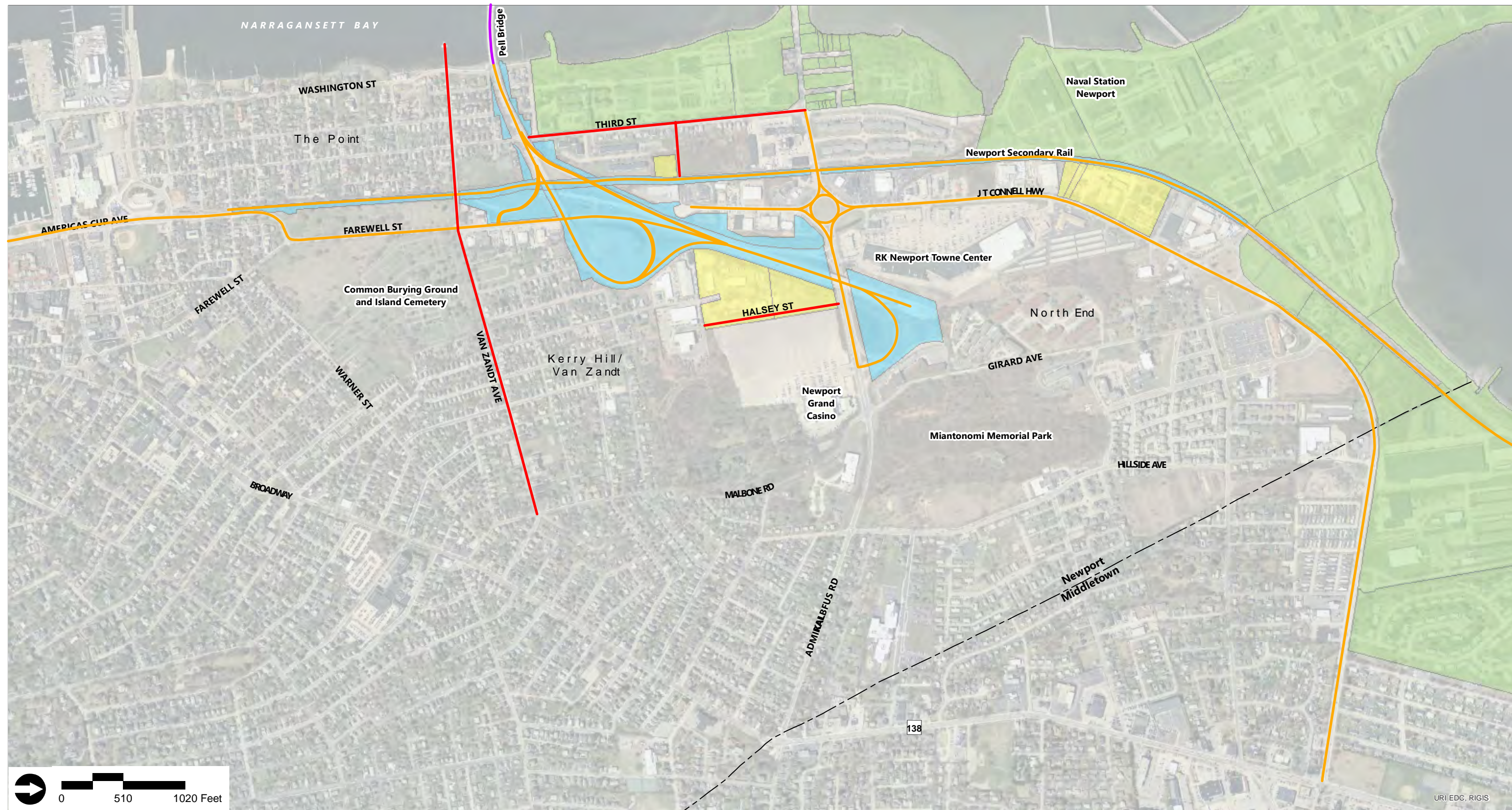


Figure 1-1  
Project Location Map



Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches  
Newport/Middletown, Rhode Island

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Source: RIDOT, RIGIS, City of Newport

**Legend**

— — Municipal Boundary

**Property Ownership**

- City of Newport
- Rhode Island Department of Transportation
- United States of America

**Jurisdiction**

- Rhode Island Department of Transportation
- Rhode Island Bridge and Turnpike Authority
- City of Newport



Figure 1-2  
Project Area Ownership and Jurisdiction

**Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches  
Newport/Middletown, Rhode Island**

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# 2

## Purpose and Need

### 2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Project is to reconstruct the Pell Bridge approach ramps to provide:

- › Improved traffic circulation, reduced queuing, and improved safety;
- › Reconnection of the neighborhoods segmented by the current highway infrastructure, including improved vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle connections; and
- › Support of the City of Newport's Comprehensive Land Use Plan and associated economic development goals by maximizing land area for redevelopment.

### 2.2 Need

As described in Chapter 1, the initial effort to redesign the Pell Bridge ramps began in 1999. Major concerns that the project was intended to address at that time were the same as they are today: the backup of eastbound traffic destined for Downtown Newport over the Pell Bridge; the disconnection of JT Connell Highway, which resulted in a circuitous route for vehicular traffic; the lack of connections for pedestrians or bicyclists between the north side of the City and downtown Newport; and the large amount of land occupied by the roadway infrastructure, which reduces developable space within the City.

The lack of available storage on the Downtown Newport off-ramp results in substantial congestion and queuing onto the Pell Bridge, causing Route 138 to operate below its functional capacity, and has been observed to cause safety concerns. Existing queues can approach a mile long during the AM peak hour, and are expected to increase substantially

by 2040. The discontinuous local roadway network, which was never completed following the initial construction of Route 138 in the 1960s, restricts connectivity throughout Newport neighborhoods and Aquidneck Island for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists. In addition, the City of Newport has identified the need for economic development measures to counter stagnant growth and declining population, and proposes to implement these measures through the creation of an "Innovation Hub" on right-of-way freed up for development by relocation of the Pell Bridge ramps. The Project's importance has been identified in multiple Federal acts that have provided funding for its planning, design and construction.

## 2.3 Additional Background

***Project Status: The Project has been identified as a key transportation need in Newport and the state for the last two decades.***

The initial effort to redesign the Pell Bridge ramps began in 1999. Major concerns that the project was intended to address at that time were the same as they are today: the backup of eastbound traffic destined for Downtown Newport over the Pell Bridge; the disconnection of JT Connell Highway, which resulted in a circuitous route for vehicular traffic; the lack of connections for pedestrians or bicyclists between the north side of the City and downtown Newport as well as reducing the amount of roadway infrastructure to free up developable space within the City. The 2009 Aquidneck Island Transportation Study reaffirmed these needs, and included participation by Island residents, business owners, elected officials, municipal officials, advocacy groups, and state and federal agency representatives. As discussed below in Section 2.2.5, the Project would facilitate economic development envisioned for Newport's North End in the City's 2017 Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

Construction of the Project is slated to begin in 2020, pending satisfactory completion of the NEPA process and associated Federal and state approvals. In recognition of the Project's importance, a Federal appropriation for \$20 million of the approximately \$40 million construction cost was awarded in December 2018.

***Capacity and Roadway Deficiencies: The lack of available storage on the Downtown Newport off-ramp results in substantial congestion and queuing onto the Pell Bridge, causing Route 138 to operate below its functional capacity, and has been observed to cause safety concerns.***

The Pell Bridge carries approximately 27,000 vehicles per day on a typical day, but the volumes increase by up to 30% during the summer, which is peak tourism season in the City of Newport and a major contributor to the City's economy. The increase in vehicles leads to substantial queuing and congestion along Route 138 eastbound. The queuing consistently extends back onto the Pell Bridge, which creates unsafe conditions that have led to an increased number of crashes in this area. RIDOT and RITBA have serious concerns with the queuing on the bridge due to the crash history at this location. With the continuous need for residents and tourists to access Aquidneck Island, transportation and safety are a major priority of Project stakeholders.

RIDOT constructed the existing off-ramp from the Pell Bridge to Downtown Newport during the original design of Route 138 in 1963. The ramp was intended to be a temporary facility

that would only be used until the permanent ramp was complete. However, the project was halted once the initial Pell Bridge interchange and off-ramp system were complete, truncating the ramps and roadway to downtown Newport and the highway to the north end of Aquidneck Island. As a result, Route 138 and the planned connection across Aquidneck Island from the north to Route 24 in Portsmouth were never completed.

The existing Pell Bridge ramp system and approaches were evaluated for conformance with current AASHTO Design Criteria and the RIDOT Highway Design Manual. The evaluation concluded that the geometric condition of the existing off-ramp to Downtown Newport does not meet current design standards, contributing to the congestion, queuing, and delays experienced along the eastbound side of the Pell Bridge. The primary existing deficiency is related to the minimum radius of the curve of the ramp, as shown in **Table 2-1**.

**Table 2-1 Geometric Assessment – Existing Pell Bridge**

AASHTO Criteria	AASHTO Recommended Standard	Existing Condition <sup>1</sup>
Minimum Curve Radius	371'	250'

Source: AASHTO Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, 2011 Edition, RIDOT Highway Design Manual 2008, & survey by VHB

1 RIDOT guideline for determining design speed states that the design speed is the posted speed limit plus 5 mph for roadways with a posted speed limit less than 40 mph in an urban area

In addition to the ramp’s failure to meet current design standards, it lacks sufficient storage for vehicles, especially during the summer months with the influx of tourist traffic. Vehicles are observed to be queuing back onto Route 138 from the intersection of the off-ramp with JT Connell Highway, a distance of approximately 4625 feet.

Table 2-2 shows the vehicle queues for the existing weekday condition based on traffic counts collected in mid-July, during the height of the peak summer season. By 2040, traffic volumes are expected to have increased due to planned population and employment growth in the area. If the off-ramp and connecting street network remain in their current layout, congestion will increase substantially, and queues will grow longer than the existing condition. Table 2-3 compares the weekday queue lengths between the existing and future 2040 conditions. As shown, the queues along the Downtown Newport off-ramp are expected to increase by nearly a quarter-mile between the existing and future 2040 conditions, stretching nearly one and one-quarter miles from the JT Connell Highway intersection.

**Table 2-2 Summary of Existing Weekday Queue Lengths**

Location	Peak Hour	Queue Length (feet)	
		Average Queue	Maximum Queue
Downtown Newport Off-Ramp	AM	3085	4624
	PM	1383	2429

**Table 2-3 Comparison of Existing and Future 2040 Weekday Queue Lengths**

Location	Peak Hour	Queue Length (feet)			
		Average Queue		Maximum Queue	
		Existing	2040	Existing	2040
Downtown Newport Off-Ramp	AM	3085	4741	4624	6394
	PM	1383	2198	2429	3683

The queuing described above has been shown to cause an increase in vehicular crashes along the ramp and Route 138. Over a five (5) year study period, there were 47 crashes due to queuing on Route 138. Nearly 80 percent were rear-end type crashes, the most frequent type of crash resulting from queuing. The crashes that are attributed to the queuing on Route 138 account for nearly 15 percent of total crashes throughout the entire Project Area. RIDOT and RITBA are concerned with the number and severity of crashes that have occurred at this location. With traffic volumes predicted to increase in the future, there is an increased potential for these rear-end crashes, especially with the lack of available storage along the Newport off-ramp to Route 138.

While the most severe safety concerns associated with the Pell Bridge are those related to the Downtown Newport off-ramp, there are several other safety concerns throughout the Project area. These include a substantial number of vehicle crashes at the off-ramp to Admiral Kalbfus Road due to the horizontal curve, and crashes at the signalized intersections throughout the Project area as well as crashes involving pedestrians and bicycles on Project area roadways.

As congestion grows, travel speeds are expected to be slower and delays throughout the Project area are expected to increase because of high traffic volumes coupled with the limited capacity under the existing and future 2040 conditions. Table 2-4 presents a comparison of the existing and 2040 traffic conditions. Traffic speeds during weekday evening peak hours are expected to decrease by nearly 10 miles per hour (mph) by 2040 as a result of the increased traffic volumes. Conditions may be worse than the results presented in the table below during periods of high seasonal traffic or special events in Newport.

**Table 2-4 Comparison of Existing and Future 2040 Project Limit Network Measures of Effectiveness**

Peak Hour	Existing Peak Hour Volume <sup>1</sup>	2040 Peak Hour Volume <sup>1</sup>	Average Speed <sup>2</sup>		Total Delay <sup>3</sup>	
			Existing	2040	Existing	2040
AM	4,341	5,500	20	16	96	216
PM	6,228	6,462	22	13	205	253

Sources: VISSIM 8. Vehicle Network Performance Evaluation Results. Average of 10 model runs.

- 1 Total Vehicles Traveling within the Study Area Roadway Network (Vehicle per hour)
- 2 Average Speed (Miles per hour)
- 3 Total Delay (hour)

***System Linkage: The discontinuous local roadway network restricts connectivity throughout City of Newport neighborhoods and Aquidneck Island for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists.***



Construction of the existing ramps created a “broken link” in the local roadway network that the Project would address. Route 138 was originally envisioned to continue north across Aquidneck Island and connect into Route 24 in Portsmouth. As noted above, the Pell Bridge interchange was constructed in 1963 with the intention to extend the highway to the north; however, the project was halted and the extension to Route 24 was never constructed. As a result, the transportation network near the bridge is discontinuous and inefficient at moving traffic, particularly as traffic volumes have increased over time. Re-establishing network connections is critical to improving traffic circulation and efficiency.

Neighborhoods throughout the City of Newport are also disconnected as a result of the existing ramp and roadway infrastructure. Route 138 creates a barrier between the North End and Downtown Newport neighborhoods as well as The Point and the Off-Broadway neighborhoods. The discontinuous network forces drivers to navigate neighborhood streets to reach their destinations rather than continue on JT Connell Highway. Reconfiguration of the ramps would help to restore neighborhood connections as well as improving traffic flow.

The existing highway infrastructure in this area was not constructed to accommodate pedestrians or bicycles, thereby limiting multi-modal access throughout Aquidneck Island. An inventory of sidewalks along Project area roadways, conducted as part of the AITS, deemed the sidewalks along JT Connell Highway and Admiral Kalbfus Road to be sparse, and noted that the sidewalk segments that do exist were in fair or poor condition. There are limited opportunities for pedestrians to cross in marked crosswalks or at locations with pedestrian signal equipment. At existing marked crosswalks, the roadways have at least three lanes, which increases pedestrian exposure and in turn increases the potential for vehicle-pedestrian accidents. Because of the high traffic volumes, the Project area is suitable for experienced bicyclists, but not beginner or novice bicyclists, as there are no existing on-road facilities. As previously noted, congestion is expected to increase by 2040, which will make connectivity considerably worse for pedestrians and bicyclists. The lack of connectivity also has a negative impact on economic development in the Project area due to the lack of access to, from, and between developable properties.

***Legislation: The Project’s importance has been identified in multiple Federal acts that have provided funding for its planning, design and construction.***

To date, the Project has been allocated \$25 million in federal funding in recognition of its importance to the community and the state. In the 2005 transportation law (SAFETEA-LU), RIDOT received an initial \$5 million earmark to help jump-start the state and local planning process and obtain some of the rights of way needed to move the Project forward. Most recently, in December 2018, an additional \$20 million was secured in the fiscal year 2018 appropriations law through the “Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development” (BUILD) grant program. A letter from Rhode Island Senator Jack Reed in support of the grant application highlighted the importance of the Project as follows:

*Besides bringing deteriorating transportation infrastructure into a state of good repair, the project will improve the flow of traffic onto several state and local roads, and it will improve safety by reducing queuing on and off the bridge. The improvements will also improve access to Newport’s world renowned tourist attractions and events, as well as to other economic centers on Aquidneck Island, including Naval Station Newport, the Naval War*

*College, and the Naval Undersea Warfare Center. Most significantly, the project will open up 30 acres of land within a recently designated opportunity zone for redevelopment by the City of Newport as the anchor for the Newport Innovation Hub. This will be a campus for applied research and commercialization for start-up and existing innovation companies, focused on resilience, ocean, and defense technologies.*

***Social Demands/Economic Development: Stagnant growth and declining population in the City of Newport have created economic development needs that the City has addressed in its land use plans by identifying redevelopment opportunities in the Project area.***

The City of Newport's population has seen a steady, consistent decline since the 1980s. Between 2000 and 2015, the population dropped by 8 percent; by 2040, it is expected to have declined by nearly 30 percent from its 2000 level. At the same time, the median age is steadily increasing: the number of residents over 55 grew by 17 percent from 2000 to 2010, while those under 55 decreased by 13 percent in the same period. Employment growth has been stagnant in recent years, with a net loss of over 600 jobs between 2000 and 2014. Jobs in the City are generally concentrated in a few sectors, including educational services, health care, and social assistance (24.7 percent of the total) and arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation and food services (20.8 percent). Because the City accommodates an estimated 3.5 million tourists each year, primarily in the summer, the economy experiences seasonal peaks and valleys.

In response to these trends, the City has identified economic development initiatives that will diversify the local tax base, provide employment for residents, leverage existing technical and human capital, improve city capital facilities, and otherwise support and promote a healthy economy. These initiatives are described in the Economic Development element of the City's Comprehensive Land Use Plan, adopted in February 2017. The North End of the City, near the Project area, is identified as an opportune location for future development that would "address the needs of the community, innovate, re-position, leverage and otherwise move the City forward." Building on the anticipated reconfiguration of the Pell Bridge ramps, the plan designates a 67-acre area surrounding the interchange—including the approximately 30 acres of right-of-way that would become available as a result of the Project—as an "Innovation Hub." The Innovation Hub is envisioned as an economic driver that will bring together government, research, educational, and private investment partners to create employment through incubator/accelerator type businesses focused on global resiliency and climate change issues.

The future development envisioned for the state-owned right of way after removal of the bridge ramps would be undertaken by individual developers and authorized by land use actions on the part of the City of Newport. Thus, it would not be a direct impact of the Project; however, the Project would indirectly facilitate this development, which is expected to be consistent with the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The resulting indirect and cumulative impacts are described in Chapter 6 of this EA. The traffic analysis in Section 6.1 accounts for an increment of potential future development; however, because the nature of full buildout is still unknown, some local roadway improvements may be necessary to address the impacts of developing specific sites.

# 3

## Proposed Action

The Proposed Action includes a number of different improvements, which are described briefly in the following sections. Chapter 4 provides information on the alternatives that were evaluated in order to identify the Proposed Action.

### 3.1 Interchange Improvements

The Proposed Action would remove the existing highway infrastructure and associated ramps to reconnect existing roadways and create a new local roadway network. The Proposed Action would remove the existing Downtown Newport off-ramp, which would eliminate the existing queuing on the Pell Bridge (Route 138) by providing sufficient storage in the local street network for vehicles to safely queue when entering Downtown Newport during peak conditions. The new off-ramp would connect to the new local roadway network, and elimination of the existing off-ramp would vacate right-of-way that could be used to create new areas for developable parcels in the future. The extension of Route 138 to Halsey Street would also allow for the extension of the existing moveable barrier system from the Pell Bridge abutment to the first intersection off the ramps, which would assist the City of Newport in traffic management for evacuation and special events.

### 3.2 Vulnerable User Improvements

Pedestrian and bicycle accommodations would be incorporated into the Proposed Action. The Project would remove one of the two existing rail lines along the Newport Secondary Rail Corridor to install a shared-use path between Downtown Newport and Admiral Kalbfus Road. In addition, pedestrian and bicycle improvements, including sidewalks and a shared

use path, would be installed along Admiral Kalbfus Road between Girard Avenue and JT Connell Highway. Pedestrian and bicycle improvements are also proposed on JT Connell Highway between Admiral Kalbfus Road and West Main Road. The improvements include a shared use path on the east side of the highway from the roundabout to the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) campus, then on-street bike lanes from CCRI to West Main Road.

### **3.3 Multi-modal Alternative Improvements**

Multi-modal improvements would also be incorporated into the Proposed Action. A park-and-ride of approximately 250-300 parking spaces would be constructed along JT Connell Highway, north of Route 138, which would allow both residents of and visitors to Newport the ability to use alternate modes of transportation. In addition to the traditional park-and-ride for commuter use, visitors could choose to park outside of Downtown Newport and be shuttled in, saving time and reducing congestion. The Proposed Action would allow multiple options for park-and-ride users to travel the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile trek to downtown Newport. The proposed shared path along the rail corridor abuts the park-and-ride, allowing users to walk or bike to downtown. An on-street shuttle service could also be provided to transport users to downtown amenities or provide a connection to the Gateway Transit Center. RIDOT is also considering a pilot program for a shuttle service along the Newport Secondary Rail Corridor. The shuttle service would require a platform to access the train, which would be a temporary structure during the pilot program but may become permanent if the shuttle service were extended past the pilot phase.

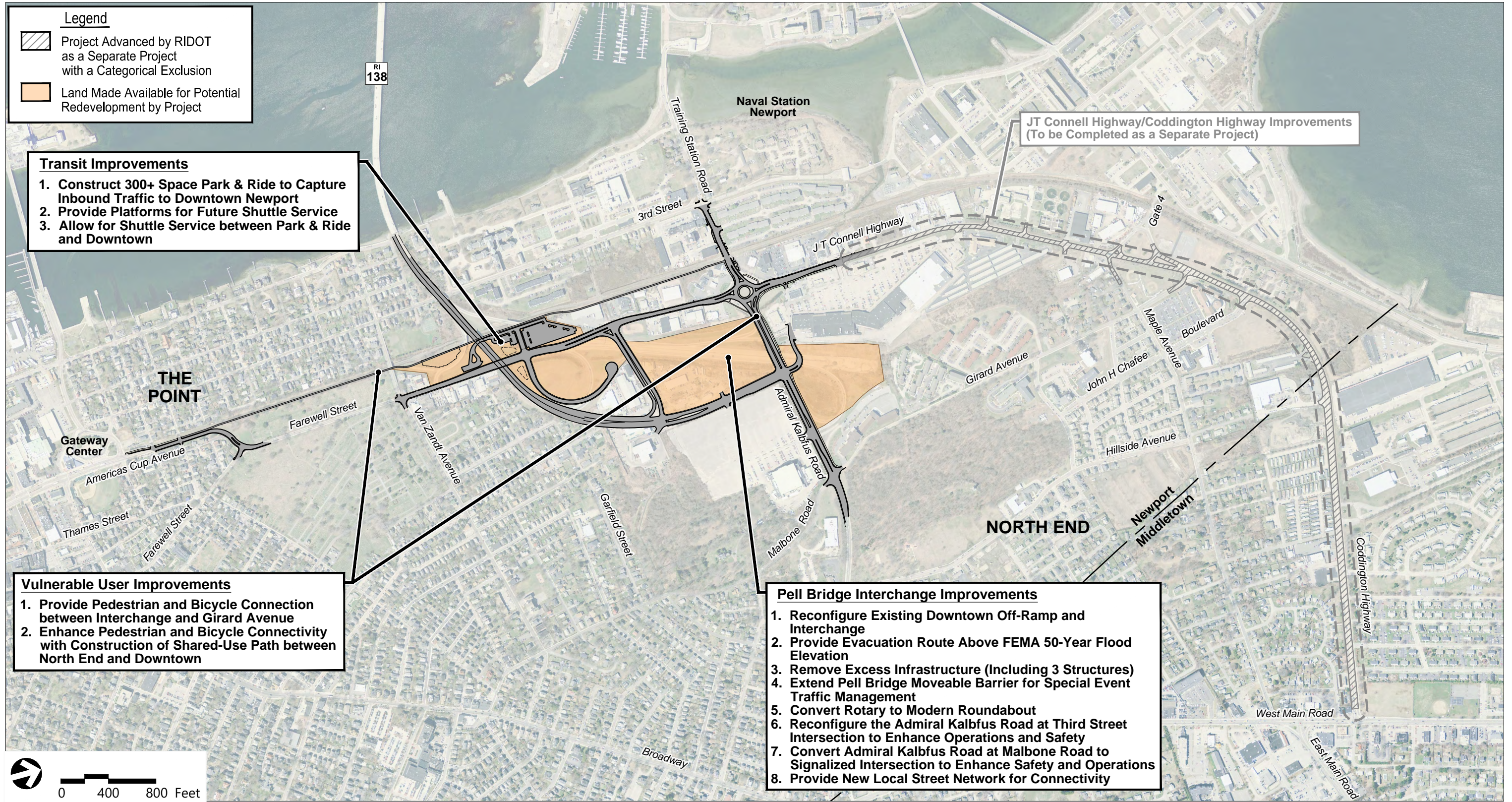
### **3.4 Admiral Kalbfus Road Safety Improvements**

Based on safety concerns, the intersection of Admiral Kalbfus Avenue with Girard Avenue/Malbone Street, which is currently an unsignalized intersection with side street stop control, would be converted to a signalized intersection. The existing signalized intersection with 3<sup>rd</sup> Street would be upgraded with the installation of an exclusive left-turn lane to increase safety and alleviate congestion during peak periods. The Newport Secondary at-grade crossing would be upgraded to incorporate the latest safety features. In addition, the existing rotary would be reconstructed into a modern roundabout, which will reduce the existing footprint.

### **3.5 JT Connell Highway Improvements**

Proposed improvements to JT Connell Highway include the resurfacing of the roadway between RK Towne Plaza and West Main Road. Additional low-cost safety improvements are also proposed along the corridor, including restriping the roadway to narrow the travel lanes in order to reduce travel speeds and realigning intersections along the corridor to improve sight distance.

Figure ES-1 shows the Proposed Action's components in more detail.



Aerial Source: RIGIS



Figure 3-1  
Proposed Action  
Project Components

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# 4

## Alternatives Analysis

RIDOT began evaluating alternatives for reconstructing the Pell Bridge approach ramps in 1999. The primary objective was to alleviate existing congestion entering Downtown Newport by processing vehicles more efficiently while still planning for future growth in the City. In addition, the City had expressed an interest in removal of the existing roadway infrastructure from the abrupt termination of Route 138 in order to free up developable land. Between 2002 and 2006, several alternatives were reviewed and presented to stakeholders, but none of these alternatives were selected to advance the design process. In 2008, new alternatives were identified and brought to the Newport City Council and stakeholders for review, but no alternatives were endorsed, and the project was put on hold.

In 2009, the Aquidneck Island Transportation Study (AITS) provided the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission (AIPC) with a set of recommended potential transportation improvements and a proposed development plan for Aquidneck Island, including the area surrounding the Pell Bridge approach ramps. Since 2009, several more alternatives have been developed and reviewed by stakeholders to incorporate additional project elements that may not have been considered during the AITS.

The range of potential solutions evaluated represents different ways to address the existing and projected future deficiencies of the Study Area roadways, as described in Chapter 2, Purpose and Need. From 1999, when the Project was originally initiated, to the present, RIDOT has considered over twenty alternatives. These were narrowed to seven alternatives to be compared as part of the initial screening, along with a “no action” alternative. After the initial screening, the remaining alternatives were evaluated against a more specific set of criteria, which resulted in the recommendation of a single alternative for the Project.

The following subsections summarize the evaluation process that led to the identification of the Proposed Action.

## 4.1 Initial Screening

As described above, more than 20 alternatives identified since 1999 were narrowed to seven initial alternatives for the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approach Ramps project. These alternatives were screened using general criteria that included:

- › Project Transportation Benefits (Operational and Capacity Improvement)
- › Developable Land
- › Right-of-Way
- › Visual Impacts
- › Environmental Impacts

The roadways within the Study Area were reviewed both individually and as part of a complex transportation network within the area. Because the Study Area is the entrance to Aquidneck Island from the west, changes to roadways in this area can have a large effect on the City's overall roadway network. The screening process examined opportunities to improve traffic flow and decrease congestion throughout the roadway network, while improving safety for all users (i.e. vehicles, pedestrian, bicyclists) and reconnecting streets that had been severed by the original ramp construction.

Table 4-1 summarizes the alternatives considered for the initial screening. All of the alternatives, with the exception of No Action, include the construction of a shared-use path along the rail corridor, a park-and-ride, sidewalks and bicycle features on Project area roadways, and the reconnection and resurfacing of JT Connell Highway/ Coddington Highway from the RK Towne Plaza to West Main Road. The alternatives were evaluated to compare their performance on the criteria listed above and to identify additional constructability constraints. The results of the analysis are summarized in Table 4-1 and shown in Figures 4-1 through 4-6.



**Table 4-1 Summary of Initial Screening Results**

Alternative/Description	Screening Results	Carried Forward?
No-Action: Maintain existing infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Significant amount of traffic would queue from the Downtown Newport off-ramp on to the Pell Bridge (Route 138), with a queue length of nearly 1.25 miles</li> <li>› No developable land created</li> <li>› JT Connell Highway remains disconnected</li> <li>› Existing elevated highway remains</li> <li>› No pedestrian and bicycle improvements</li> </ul>	Yes
Alternative 1: Maintain existing elevated highway and construct loop off-ramp to Downtown Newport.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Downtown off-ramp queues would decrease slightly compared to the No Action and provide free flow operations onto JT Connell Highway from Route 138</li> <li>› New structure constructed</li> <li>› Least amount of developable land created</li> <li>› Existing elevated highway remains</li> <li>› Widening required on JT Connell Highway would impact 8+ business frontage/properties (5,095 s.f.)</li> </ul>	No
Alternative 2: Similar to Alternative 1, except existing elevated highway and Admiral Kalbfus off-ramp would be removed and a ramp constructed to JT Connell Highway from Route 138 eastbound.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Similar to Alternative 1</li> <li>› Second least amount of developable land created</li> <li>› Removes elevated highway to create local street network</li> <li>› Removes traffic signals and rotary to install modern roundabouts which improve traffic operations</li> <li>› Widening required on JT Connell Highway would impact 8+ business frontage/properties and impact City of Newport properties. (82,985 s.f.)</li> </ul>	Yes
Alternative 3A: Existing elevated highway would be removed and existing Downtown Newport off-ramp reconstructed to carry vehicles on a new roadway built on the rail corridor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Reconstructed Downtown off-ramp would provide continued flow and sufficient area for queuing</li> <li>› Additional capacity exiting to Downtown Newport</li> <li>› Moderate amount of developable land created</li> <li>› Increased noise for a significant number of residential properties along the new roadway</li> <li>› Potential impacts to cultural resources (cemetery)</li> <li>› ROW widening required on JT Connell Highway would impact 8+ business frontage/properties and impact City of Newport properties. (105,570 s.f.)</li> </ul>	No
Alternative 3B: Similar to Alternative 3A, except the Downtown Newport off-ramp would remain in the existing location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Existing Downtown off-ramp would remain with installation of traffic signal</li> <li>› Wider roadways would be created between developable parcels, resulting in longer crossings for pedestrians</li> <li>› ROW widening required on JT Connell Highway would impact 8+ business frontage/properties and impact City of Newport properties. (105,570 s.f.)</li> <li>› Van Zandt Avenue restricted to westbound right-turns only and closed on eastbound approach—this restriction would prevent</li> </ul>	No

Alternative/Description	Screening Results	Carried Forward?
	residential neighborhoods from accessing Route 138 and disconnect the neighborhoods east and west of Farewell Street	
Alternative 3C: Similar to Alternative 3A, except the Downtown Newport off-ramp would be removed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Wider roadways would be created between developable parcels, resulting in longer crossings for pedestrians</li> <li>› ROW widening required on JT Connell Highway would impact 8+ business frontage and impact City of Newport properties. (105,570 s.f.)</li> <li>› Closely spaced traffic signals at the end of Pell Bridge off-ramp at JT Connell Highway are not preferred but would operate suitably</li> </ul>	No
Alternative 4A: Existing elevated highway and existing off-ramps to Downtown Newport and Admiral Kalbfus Road would be removed. A local road network would be created between Halsey Street and JT Connell Highway.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Eliminates congestion and queuing on the Pell Bridge and provides sufficient spacing between traffic signals</li> <li>› Roadways would be narrower than Alternative 3, which would improve walkability between developable parcels</li> <li>› Maximum developable land</li> <li>› 42 businesses impacted by ROW required for ramp alignment and impact City of Newport properties. (161,120 s.f.)</li> <li>› Off-ramp alignment shifted towards residential properties, but elevated highway removed</li> <li>› Horizontal curve at end of bridge ramps minimized to increase safety (reduction in roadway departure crashes)</li> </ul>	No
Alternative 4B: Similar to Alternative 4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Similar to Alternative 4A</li> <li>› Second highest amount of developable land</li> <li>› Minimizes ROW impacts to businesses compared to Alternative 4A, but would have ROW impacts for 2-3 residential properties and 1 business and impact City of Newport properties. (219,915 s.f.)</li> </ul>	Yes

## 4.2 Detailed Screening

Three alternatives were identified for detailed quantitative assessment after the initial screening: No Action, Alternative 2, and Alternative 4B. The Vissim traffic simulation model was used to calculate queue lengths, travel speeds, and delay for each of the alternatives as a measure of future congestion. These results were then compared with those for the No Action alternative. The two action alternatives reduced queue lengths significantly compared to No Action by providing efficient traffic signal timing and/or improving the geometry of the Downtown Newport off-ramp.

**Table 4-2 Estimated Weekday Queue Length Comparison**

Location	Peak Hour	Queue Length (feet)					
		Average Queue			Maximum Queue		
		No Action	Alt. 2	Alt. 4B	No Action	Alt. 2	Alt. 4B
Downtown Newport Off-Ramp	AM	4741	114	169	6394	534	486
	PM	2198	69	132	3683	442	442

**Table 4-3 Estimated Roadway Network Speeds and Delay Comparison**

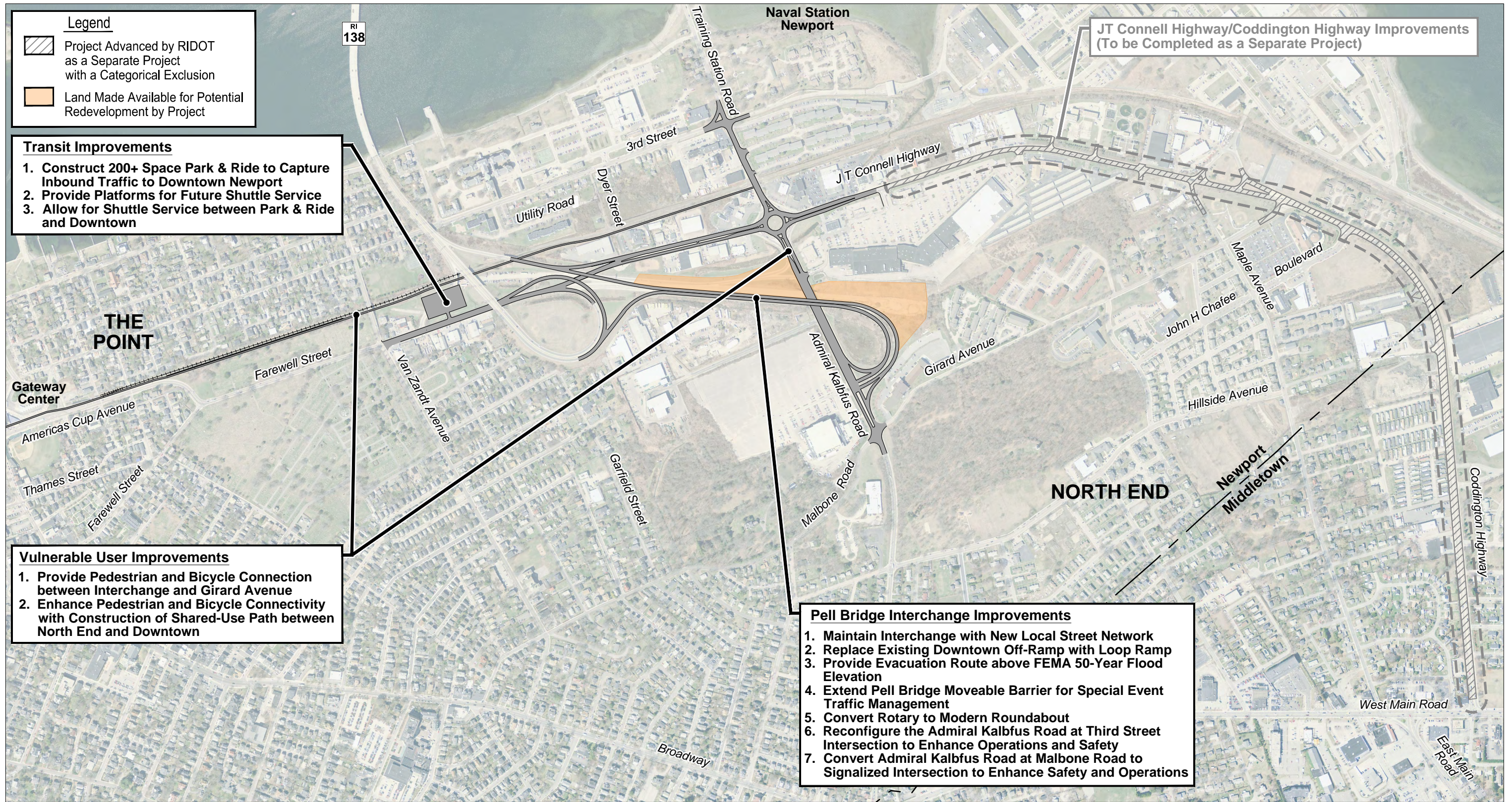
Alternative	Average Speed (mph)		Total Delay (seconds)	
	AM	PM	AM	PM
No Action	16	13	216	253
Alternative 2	22	18	74	138
Alternative 4B	25	20	94	169

The results shown in Tables 4-2 and 4-3 were used to compare the two action alternatives in order to identify the Proposed Action. The factors considered included:

- › Alternatives 2 and 4B performed similarly in reducing delays throughout the Project Area.
- › Average speeds would be higher under Alternative 4B, compared to Alternative 2.
- › The queue lengths for Alternatives 2 and 4B would be over a mile less than the No Action Alternative for the maximum queue length during the morning peak hour.
- › The maximum queue for Alternative 4B would be less than for Alternative 2.
- › Alternative 4B would create better opportunities to expand the pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure because it would provide a new local roadway network by reconnecting JT Connell Highway and creating a new access road between JT Connell Highway and Halsey Street.
- › Alternative 4B would also provide significantly more area than Alternative 2 to convert to developable land in the future in support of the City of Newport's economic development goals.
- › Alternative 4B would have fewer visual impacts than Alternative 2 because it would remove three structures, while Alternative 2, would install two new structures for the revised ramp configuration.

Based on the considerations described above, Alternative 4B was determined to best meet the purpose and need of the project and was carried forward as the Proposed Action for the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches.

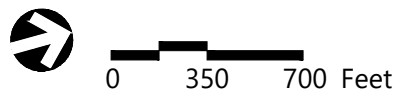
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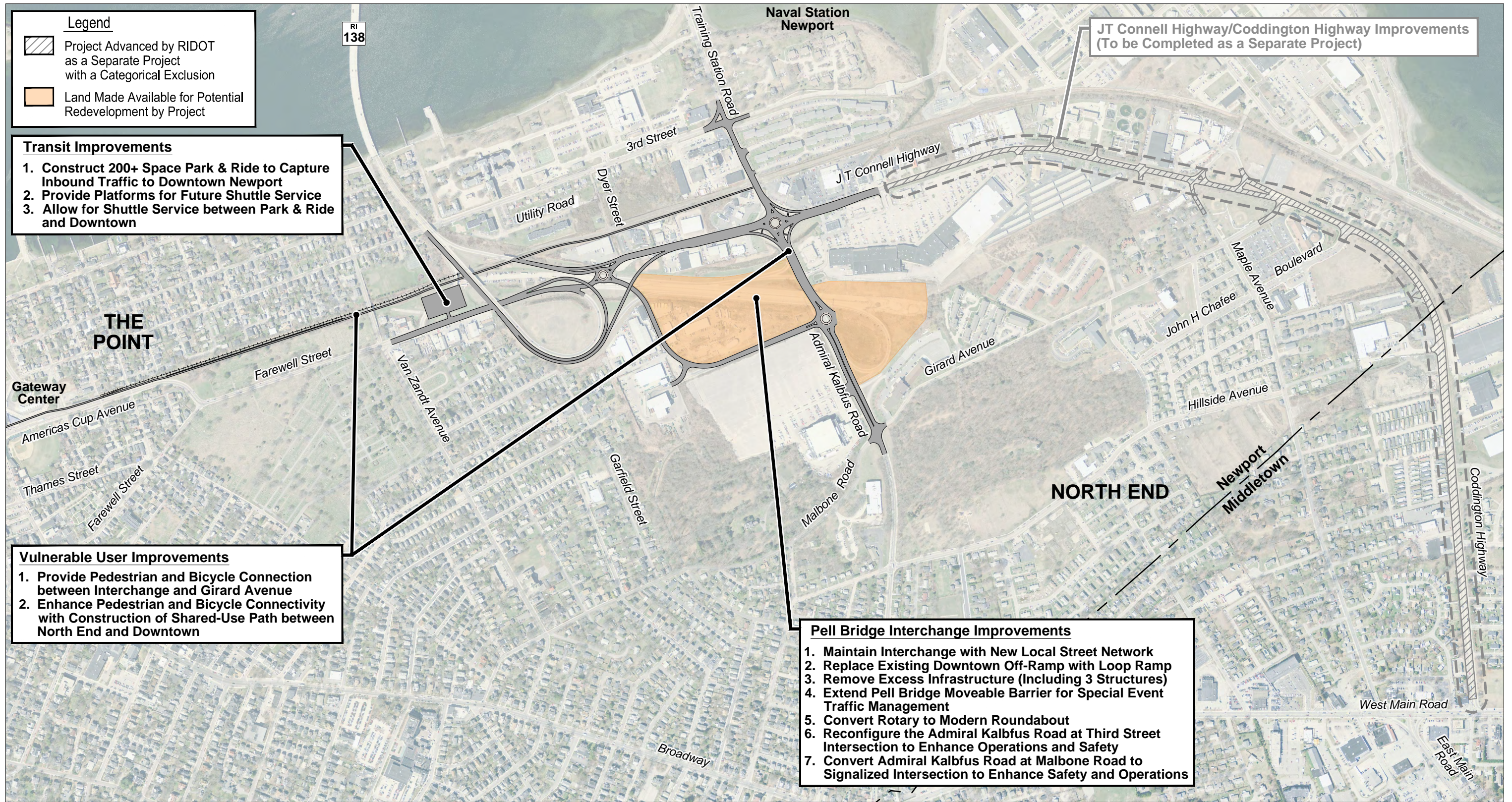
Aerial Source: RIGIS



Figure 4-1  
Alternative 1



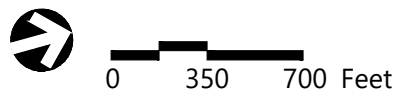
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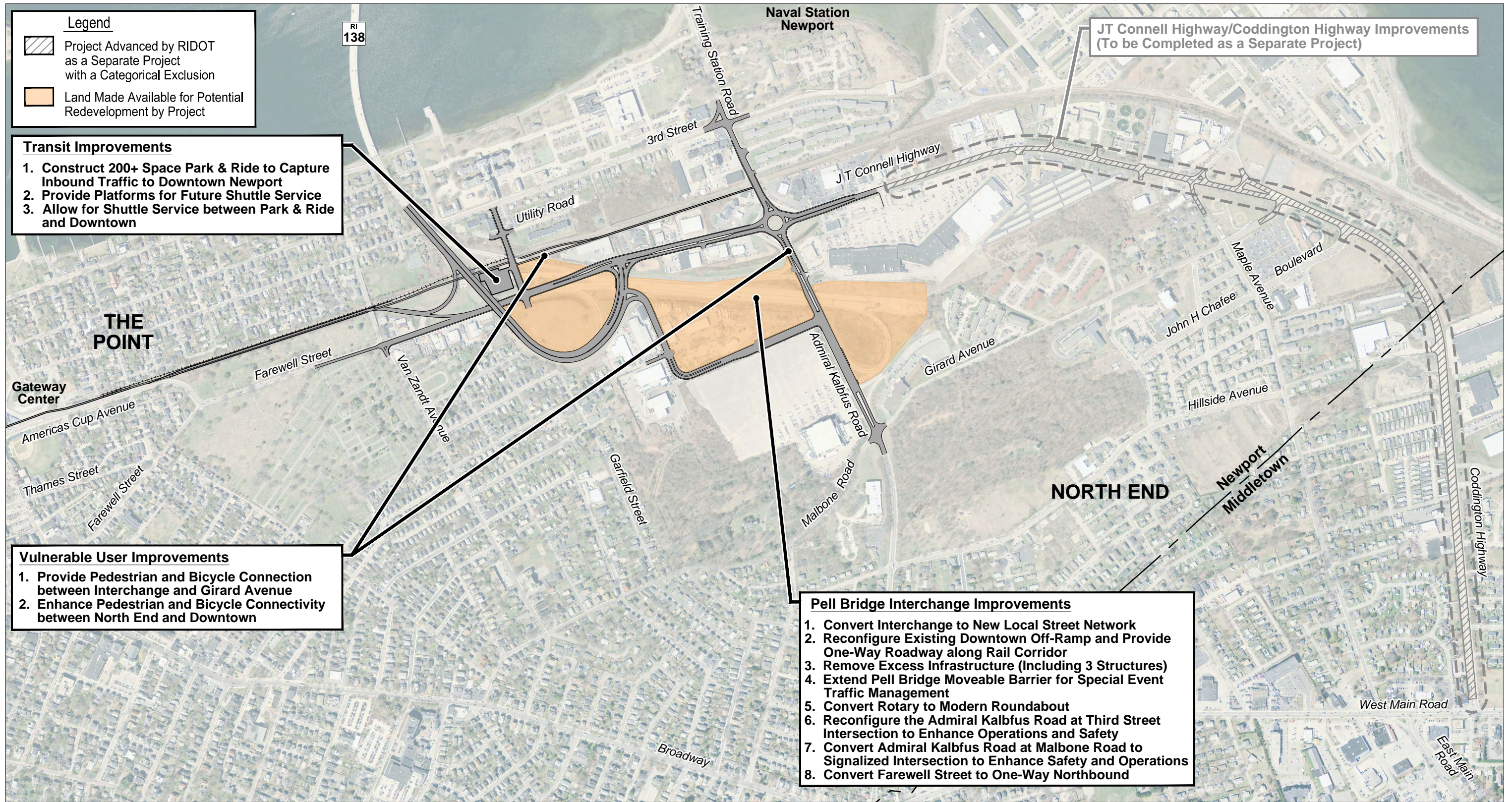


Figure 4-2  
Alternative 2



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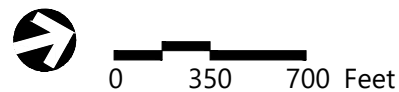




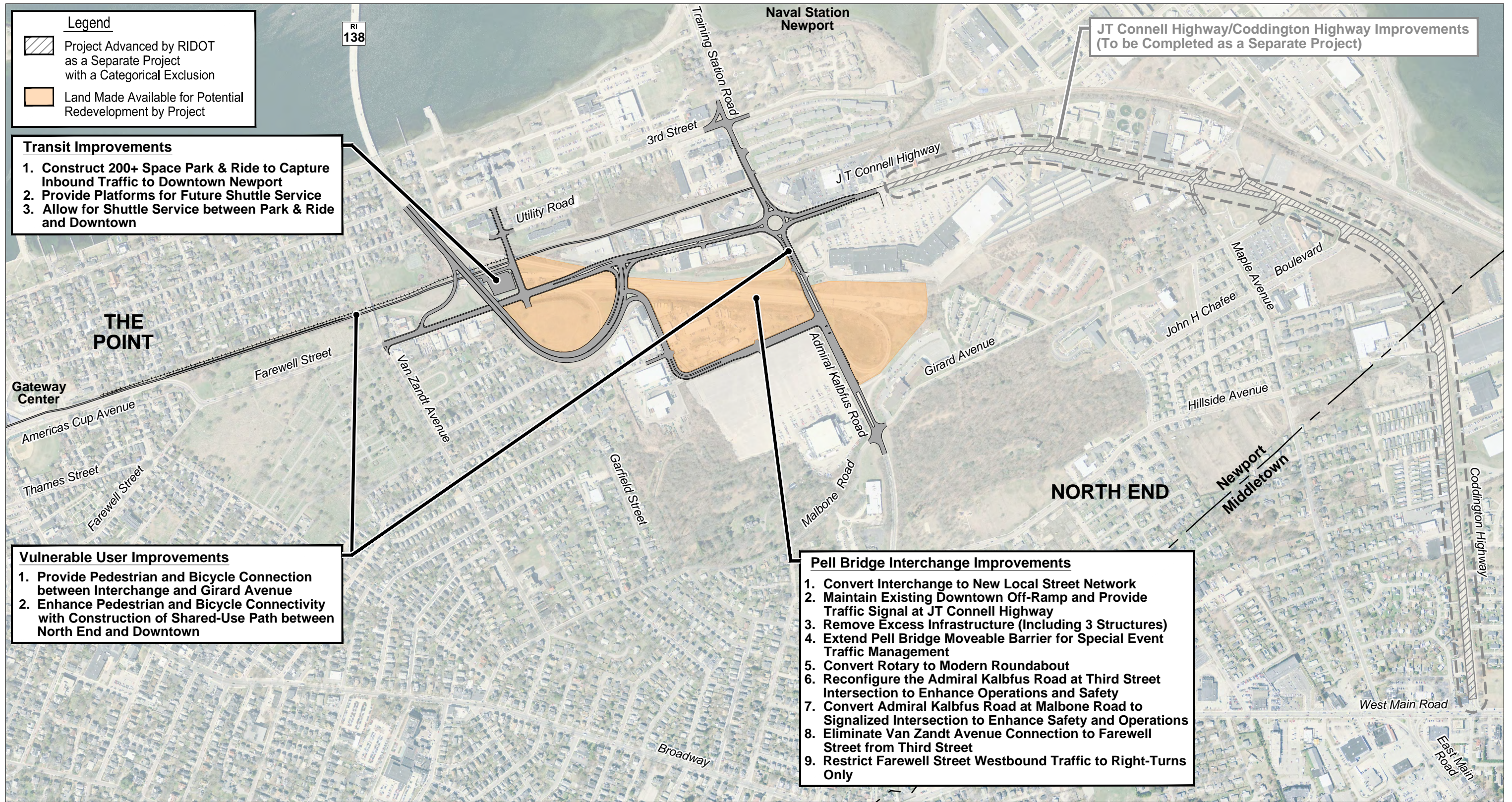
Aerial Source: RIGIS



Figure 4-3  
Alternative 3A



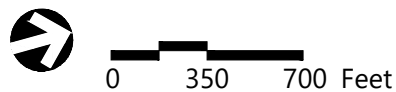
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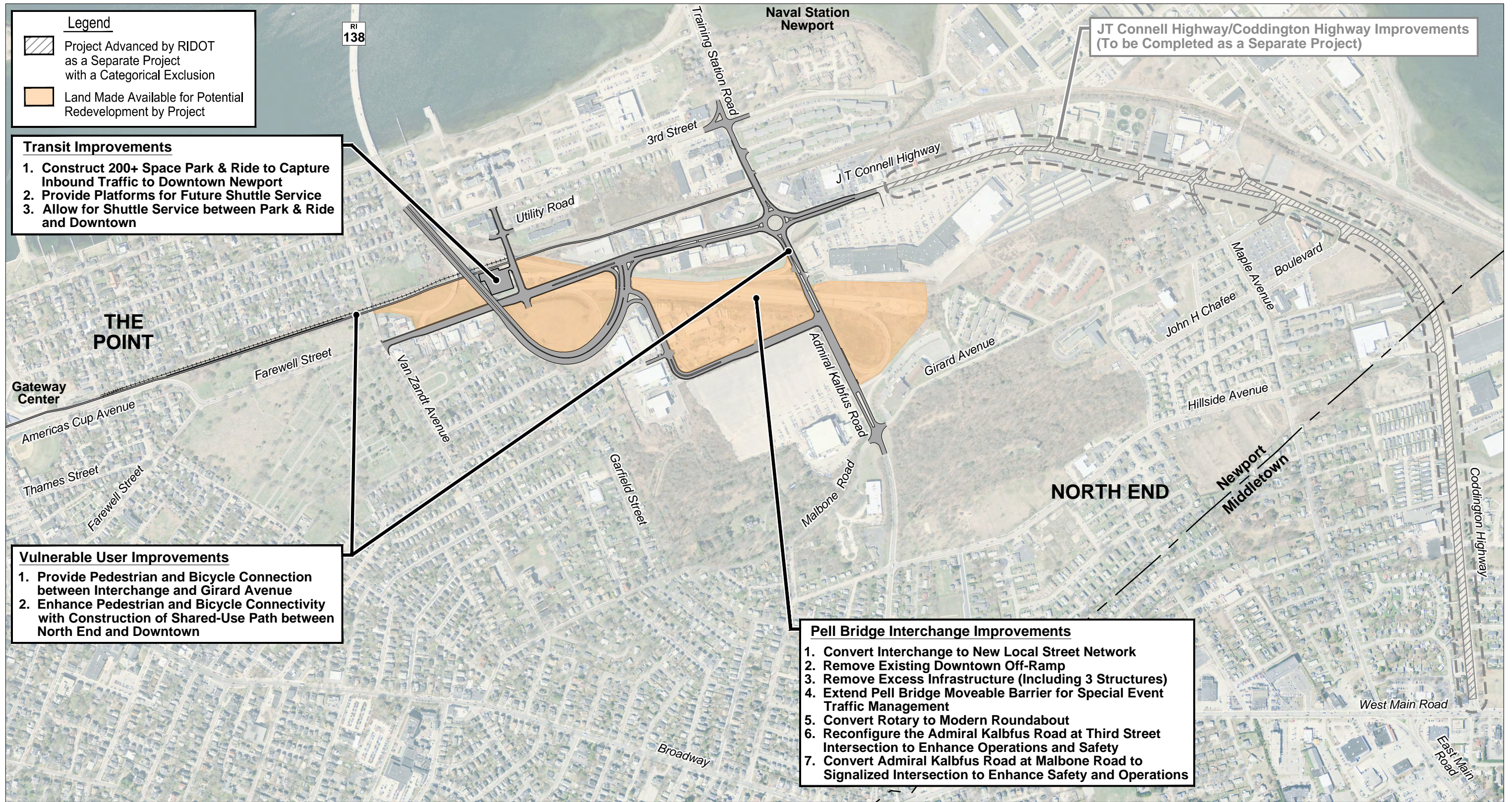
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Figure 4-4  
Alternative 3B



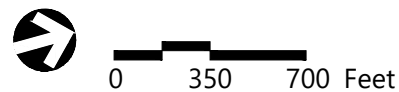
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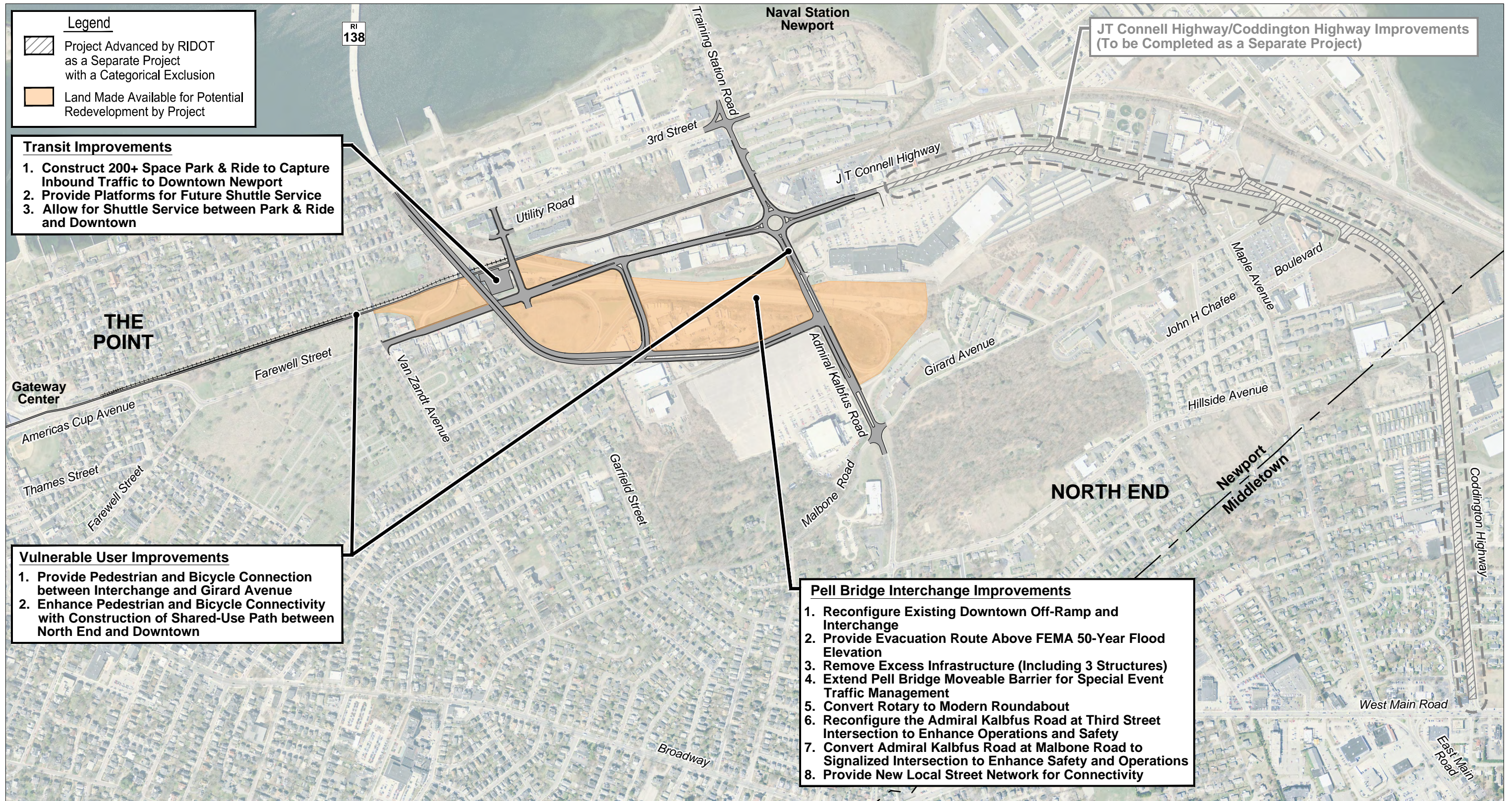
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Figure 4-5  
Alternative 3C



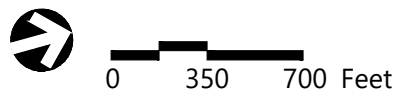
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Aerial Source: RIGIS



Figure 4-6  
Alternative 4A



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# 5

## Affected Environment

This chapter discusses the existing social, economic, and environmental setting of the Project area as well as identifying environmentally sensitive features in the corridor. This information provides a basis for understanding the impacts of the Proposed Action, which are described in Chapter 6.

### 5.1 Transportation Network

Please refer to Appendix B1<sup>1</sup> for the Transportation Technical Memorandum, which provides additional information on the transportation analysis.

#### 5.1.1 Study Area and Methodology

##### Study Area

The Pell Bridge approach roadway system includes major corridors for local and regional travel between Downtown Newport, Naval Station Newport, Aquidneck Island, southern Rhode Island, Connecticut, and southeastern Massachusetts. The Study Area extends from Farewell Street at Van Zandt Avenue on the south to the driveway of RK Shopping Plaza on the north, and from Admiral Kalbfus Road at 3rd Street on the west to Malbone Street and Girard Avenue on the east. This area includes the ramps and approach roads on the east end of the Pell Bridge, Admiral Kalbfus Road, J. T. Connell Highway, and Farewell Street. Many of

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<sup>1</sup> Analysis in the Technical Appendices was completed prior to the development of the EA and is based on an earlier version of the project design. Subsequent to the appendices being finalized, the project design changed, which resulted in rerouting of traffic. The EA analysis is based on the updated design.

the Study Area roadways are designated hurricane evacuation routes. Figure 5-1 illustrates the Study Area roadways and intersections.

### **Methodology**

To identify current traffic flow characteristics, daily and hourly traffic counts were collected in July 2017 and supplemented with traffic volume data from prior studies. Typically, summer traffic counts are not preferred as a basis for analysis; however, given the higher traffic volumes associated with summer tourism Aquidneck Island, a summer count program was appropriate. Weekday morning and afternoon peak period manual turning movement counts were collected between 7:00 AM and 9:00 AM and between 4:00 PM and 6:00 PM. 48-hour Automatic Traffic Recorder (ATR) counts were also collected during the weekday throughout the Study Area.

Capacity analyses were conducted for the existing and future signalized intersections in the Study Area. For this study, the capacity analyses were completed using VISSIM microscopic traffic simulation software (Version 8). For future traffic conditions, background growth of 0.25 percent per year was applied to the existing conditions to project traffic volumes for the 2040 No Action Alternative. The growth factor used was based upon the Rhode Island Statewide Planning model as well as recent census data.

Traffic trips generated by operation of the Proposed Action were derived from trip generation rates published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). These trips were added to the 2040 No Action Alternative to develop the 2040 Proposed Action traffic volumes.

## **5.1.2 Applicable Regulations and Criteria**

Guidance documents referenced for traffic include the Highway Capacity Manual, RIDOT Traffic Design manual, and the ITE Trip Generation Manual.

## **5.1.3 Existing Conditions**

### **Traffic Volumes**

#### ***Traffic Data Collection***

Evaluation of the morning and evening peak period turning movement counts shows that the morning peak hour for the Study Area occurs between 8:00 AM and 9:00 AM, and the evening peak hour occurs between 4:00 PM and 5:00 PM. Figures 5-2 through 5-4 summarize the existing daily, weekday morning, and evening peak hour traffic volumes, respectively.

#### ***Seasonal Fluctuation***

Due to the unique travel characteristics of Aquidneck Island and the City of Newport specifically, seasonal fluctuations in traffic are an important consideration in the traffic analysis. Consistent with RIDOT and FHWA, the Aquidneck Island Transportation Study (AITS)

adopted a practice of using the 30th highest hourly traffic volumes to represent summer peak season travel.

### ***Origin-Destination Study***

An origin-destination study was conducted to better understand traffic patterns in the Study Area and to calibrate the VISSIM microsimulation model. The data was collected by StreetLight Data, Inc using vehicle probe data, a massive volume of geospatial information created by mobile phones, GPS devices, connected vehicles/trucks, and more.

### ***Pedestrians and Bicycles***

The AITS included an inventory of the sidewalks in the Study Area, including a visual rating as either in good condition or fair/poor condition. Based on this inventory, the sidewalks along JT Connell Highway and Admiral Kalbfus Road are in fair/poor condition.

The existing bicycle system on Aquidneck Island is described in RIDOT's publication *A Guide to Cycling in the Ocean State 2011-2012*. The guide indicates that there are no roadways within the Study Area that are designated by RIDOT as "most suitable roads" or "suitable roads" for bicycle travel. "Most suitable roads" are defined as those with adequate (wider) shoulders, while "suitable roads" have less adequate (narrower) shoulders.

### ***Public Transportation***

Bus service through the Study Area is provided by RIPTA. Gateway Center, located south of the Pell Bridge in Downtown Newport, is the hub for RIPTA service in Newport. RIPTA bus service consists of six routes, two of which (Routes 14 and 64) use the existing bridge and ramps.

### ***Safety Assessment***

#### ***Historic Crash Trends***

Crash data for the assessment area was provided by the RIDOT Traffic Research Unit for the five-year period between January 1, 2012 and December 31, 2016. The crashes were reviewed by severity and crash type. Severity is measured using the KABCO method, which assigns a severity type to each crash. K-type crashes result in a fatality, A-type crashes result in an incapacitating injury, B-type crashes result in an evident injury, C-type crashes result in complaints of pain, and O-type crashes result in property damage only.

Throughout the Study Area, 453 crashes occurred over the five-year analysis period. Of those crashes, less than 1 percent were K-type crashes, 1 percent were A-type crashes, 5 percent were B-type crashes, 20 percent were C-type crashes, and the remaining 73 percent were O-type crashes. Based on the review of the crash data, trends were identified at key locations within the Study Area as shown in Figure 5-5.

## **Traffic Operations**

### **Observed Traffic Operations**

To fully characterize existing traffic operations and deficiencies, existing traffic conditions were observed in the field along the Pell Bridge approaches and within the Study Area. This information was used to develop the base conditions for calibrating the VISSIM traffic simulation model.

Specific highlights of the traffic observations are presented below.

- › Vehicle queues on the Pell Bridge eastbound off-ramp to JT Connell Highway (Downtown Newport exit) often back up onto the Pell Bridge, impacting the mainline traffic going to Route 138/Route 114/Route 24 (Middletown and Portsmouth). This is often caused by the combination of weaving off-ramp traffic and occasional vehicle queues on JT Connell Highway extending through the off-ramp as they approach the Van Zandt Avenue traffic signal.
- › Due to the single lane approach on Farewell Street northbound, long delays and vehicle queues are experienced during the weekday evening peak hour. At times, northbound through vehicles are blocked by northbound left-turning vehicles waiting for gaps in southbound traffic.
- › The vehicle queues on Admiral Kalbfus Road often spill into adjacent intersections. This includes the eastbound and westbound approaches at the Newport Towne Center south driveway/Pell Bridge eastbound on-ramp, the Newport Rotary, and Halsey Street. Due to heavy volumes traveling down JT Connell Highway toward Pell Bridge and Downtown Newport, the Admiral Kalbfus eastbound queue often extends to the Newport Rotary and westbound left-turns extend to Halsey Street during the evening peak hour.
- › Due to the constraints at the Newport Towne Center south driveway/Pell Bridge westbound on-ramp and the heavy traffic exiting Naval Station Newport, eastbound Admiral Kalbfus Road approaching the Newport Rotary often experiences a backup beyond the railroad track and extending to the 3rd Street traffic signal.
- › Vehicle queues on the JT Connell Highway northbound and southbound approaches at Newport Towne Center main driveway are long due to heavy through traffic in a single lane during the weekday evening peak hour.
- › Traffic entering and exiting Malbone Road/Girard Avenue experiences delays during peak periods due to the large radii on all corners, which create a confusing, wide-open intersection. The lane-drop traveling eastbound through the intersection is also a contributing factor to confusion and delay. This makes it difficult for pedestrians and motorists to cross the intersection.

### **Traffic Operations Analysis**

To quantify existing traffic operations, the Study Area roadways and intersections were modeled and analyzed using VISSIM microscopic traffic simulation software (Version 8). Because of its extensive modeling and analysis capabilities, the VISSIM model provides a more comprehensive evaluation of complex transportation facilities, such as the freeway ramp system network with closely spaced signalized, unsignalized, and roundabout/rotary

intersections, compared to traditional traffic analysis methodology based on the Highway Capacity Manual.

The Study Area roadways and intersections shown in Figure 5-1 were included in the VISSIM simulation model. Although there are several minor side streets and driveways along JT Connell Highway and Admiral Kalbfus Road within the Study Area, the traffic volumes entering and exiting them are relatively low based on field observations, and therefore were not included in the model.

The evaluation criteria used to analyze the Study Area roadways and intersections are based on the measures of effectiveness (MOEs) provided by the VISSIM traffic simulation model. Typical MOEs used for an operations analysis include vehicle throughput, delay, average speed/travel time, level of service, and queue length.

All model results reported in this evaluation are based on an average of ten model runs (each based on a unique random seed value) to accurately model the random nature of traffic. To ensure that the model results accurately reflect real-life conditions, the existing conditions results were calibrated using collected data and observations. All calibration thresholds were met; the results from the calibrated VISSIM model are consistent with the operational conditions observed in the field during the peak hour periods.

### **Intersection Operations Summary**

The calibrated existing conditions VISSIM model was used to characterize the existing travel conditions in the network. Overall, most intersections in the network operate well at level of service A and B. Critical intersections showing existing deficiencies include:

- › JT Connell Highway at Pell Bridge eastbound off-ramp
  - Weekday Morning: LOS F, critical movement EB
  - Weekday Evening: LOS F, critical movement EB
- › Admiral Kalbfus Road/Training Station at 3<sup>rd</sup> Street
  - Weekday Evening: LOS E, critical movements EB, NB
- › Admiral Kalbfus Road at JT Connell Highway
  - Weekday Evening: LOS E, critical movement EB

The VISSIM model delays, travel speeds and estimated LOS for existing weekday morning and evening peak hour conditions are summarized in Table 5-1. Detailed intersection MOEs are provided in Appendix B1.

Roadway operations are primarily characterized by travel speed. Lower travel speeds indicate longer travel times and increased delay. Because of the closely spaced intersections and congested roadway network, the traffic interactions between intersections can restrict and/or meter the traffic upstream and downstream of an intersection. The average speed for each of the Study Area roadway segments is illustrated in Figure 5-6 and Figure 5-7 for the morning and evening peak hour periods, respectively, to help illustrate the overall level of congestion within the Study Area.

**Table 5-1 Existing Weekday Conditions**

Intersection Control Type	Intersection	Peak Hour	Existing Condition		
			Delay <sup>1</sup>	LOS <sup>2</sup>	LOS E/F Movements
Stop Controlled	J. T. Connell Highway at Pell Bridge EB off-ramp	AM	> 100	F	EB L/R
		PM	71	F	EB L/R
Signal Controlled	J. T. Connell Highway/Farewell Street at Van Zandt Avenue	AM	14	B	
		PM	14	B	
Signal Controlled	J. T. Connell Highway at Newport Towne Center Main Drive	AM	19	B	
		PM	19	B	
Signal Controlled	Admiral Kalbfus Rd/Training Station Road at 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street	AM	11	B	
		PM	75	E	EB L/T/R and NB R
Roundabout/ Rotary <sup>3</sup>	Admiral Kalbfus Road at J. T. Connell Highway	AM	5	A	
		PM	47	E	EB L/T/R
Signal Controlled	Admiral Kalbfus Road at Newport Towne Center South Drive/on-ramp	AM	11	B	
		PM	22	C	
Stop Controlled	Admiral Kalbfus Road at Halsey Street	AM	3	A	
		PM	18	C	NB L/R
Signal Controlled	Admiral Kalbfus Road at Newport Grand Drive/off-ramp	AM	18	B	
		PM	18	B	
Stop Controlled	Admiral Kalbfus Road at Girard Avenue/Malbone Road	AM	3	A	
		PM	8	A	NB L/T/R

Source: VISSIM 8 Node Evaluation. Compiled by VHB based on the average of 10 VISSIM model runs.

1 Delay = Vehicle delay expressed in seconds per vehicle

2 LOS = Estimated level of service

3 LOS criteria for roundabout/rotary are the same as LOS criteria for unsignalized intersection

## 5.2 Land Use

Presented below is a discussion of regulations and existing conditions pertaining to land use and topography. Please refer to Appendix B2 for the Land Use Technical Memorandum, which provides additional information on these topics.

### 5.2.1 Study Area and Methodology

#### Study Area

The Study Area for land use was defined as a 1/10-mile-wide buffer around the Project's LOD. This Study Area was defined to include those areas most likely to experience land use impacts due to their proximity to the Project footprint.

#### Methodology

To identify and describe the topography of the Study Area, United States Geological Survey (USGS) topographic maps were consulted. Existing local land uses and zoning were obtained

through a desktop survey using the City of Newport's Property Information web map, accessed from its *GIS Public Portal*, and associated internet searches. Details of applicable zoning classifications were obtained from the City's Zoning Ordinance, Title 17 of the City of Newport Codified Ordinance. Community land use goals and intended future land uses were retrieved from applicable State Guide Plan element reports and *the City of Newport Comprehensive Land Use Plan*. Potential impacts to land use were assessed by evaluating the Project's LOD and the larger Study Area in terms of existing and future land uses, as well as current zoning districts. Impacts such as roadway relocations and property acquisitions, along with those resulting from construction activities, were evaluated based on their potential to directly affect the use of intersected or nearby properties. Overall, the Project was evaluated for its consistency with State and local land use goals and plans. The analysis included temporary impacts that would occur during the construction phase and permanent impacts that would occur during the operations and maintenance phase.

## **5.2.2 Applicable Regulations and Criteria**

There are federally-owned properties within the Study Area; however, there are no applicable regulations that govern their use. These properties, which are tax-exempt, are affiliated with Naval Station Newport and are located north of Pell Bridge to the west of 3rd Street and JT Connell Highway along the City's coastline. Because they are federally owned, they are not subject to state or local land use regulations.

As established by *the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act*, enacted in 1988 and amended in 2011, Rhode Island recognizes that cities and towns make most development and land use decisions. According to the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act, municipalities are required to adopt plans that implement local goals and support implementation of goals identified in the *State Guide Plan*. The State reviews local comprehensive plans and, when approved, these plans become binding on state agencies. This process requires state agencies to conform their programs and projects to local comprehensive plans, which provide the basis for local land use regulations. For the Study Area and the City at large, development is guided by the City of Newport Comprehensive Land Use Plan, adopted by the Newport City Council in 2017.

The primary vehicle for land use regulation in the City of Newport is the City's Zoning Ordinance. The City's zoning includes 16 zoning districts, nine of which are variations of residential use that are primarily differentiated by allowable density. Five zoning districts are variations of commercial use that are distinguished by function and location, and the remaining two are an open space district and a recreational district. Within each district, there are specified permitted uses and requirements pertaining to dimensions, lot coverage, building height, and density.

## **5.2.3 Existing Conditions**

### **Topography**

The Study Area, adjacent to Narragansett Bay, is within the Providence, RI-MA Urbanized Area defined by the United States Census Bureau. The area is largely developed with

buildings and structures of various sizes and proportions. The surface itself generally consists of graded, excavated, or otherwise previously disturbed materials derived from glacial till or fill materials, and was previously cleared for agricultural purposes (refer to the Wetlands Section for more information). The Study Area is flat and low in elevation, with areas that were historically filled wetlands. Northeast, east, and southeast of this area, the land slopes up to the east in a series of hills and ridgelines running from Miantonomi Hill and Memorial Park to the North Burial Ground. West of the Study Area, the land gradually slopes to Newport Harbor and Narragansett Bay. An unnamed stream, which flows intermittently aboveground, runs in a generally northwest direction to Coasters Harbor.

### **Land Use**

The Study Area consists mainly of commercial and residential land uses, which are generally defined by large setbacks with abundant parking supply. Neighborhood commercial uses are located in the southern part of the Study Area, near the intersection of West Marlborough Street and Thames Street.

Residential land uses are composed of densely developed single-, two-, and multi-family housing developments. The Point and Kerry/Hill Van Zandt neighborhoods, located to the south and southeast of the Pell Bridge ramp right-of-way, respectively, contain a mix of densely developed housing primarily consisting of single-family units. Multi-family housing within the Study Area is concentrated within the North End commercial and residential neighborhoods, which are generally north of the Pell Bridge ramp right-of-way and east of Newport's border with the Town of Middletown. The North End neighborhoods include several low-income/subsidized housing developments. Other land use types present within the Study Area include institutional, federally owned parcels associated with Naval Station Newport, state-owned parcels, and public uses.

There are also several parks and open spaces within the Study Area. Among these parks and open spaces, all but the Newport Dog Park are permanently protected through fee simple ownership or conservation easement. The City of Newport owns Coddington Field, Third Street Lot, Hunter Park, and Cardines Field. Miantonomi Memorial Park is under two conservation easements; the City of Newport is the management organization for the portion north of Beacon Street and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Protection owns the easement for the remainder.

### **Future Land Use**

Much of the Study Area is within a 67-acre area identified by the City of Newport as the "Innovation Hub," which is designated in the City of Newport Comprehensive Land Use Plan as a "Mixed-Use, Innovation" land use. As noted in the Comprehensive Plan, the Innovation Hub was envisioned as a way to realize the City's economic development goals using land no longer needed for right of way after the Pell Bridge re-alignment, which would "provide significant opportunities for land development and economic diversification."

The Innovation Hub is envisioned by the City as an economic driver that brings together government, research, educational, and private investment partners to create employment through incubator/accelerator type businesses focused on global resiliency and climate



change issues. Additional business types may include ocean, alternative energy systems, defense (underwater, maritime, and cyber security), and digital industries, along with their supporting sub-sectors.

Outside the Innovation Hub, future land uses within the Study Area are generally consistent with existing land uses, except for a “Light Industrial” designation of properties associated with Naval Station Newport. There are no current plans, however, to close or consolidate operations at Naval Station Newport.

### **Zoning**

There are two primary zoning districts in the Study Area: Commercial Industrial (CI) and Residential (R10). According to the City’s Zoning Ordinance, the R10 district is intended for medium density residential development in areas that extend outward from the highest density development located within the urban core. The purpose of this district is to transition residential development from high density to lower densities. The CI district was designed to consist exclusively of city-wide business and industrial uses, with the intention of concentrating such activities in areas where the transportation system is adequate and no infringement upon the character of established residential areas will result. Also present in the Study Area is the GB district, which consists of general retail and business uses that complement the existing characters of the neighborhoods in which they operate.

Related to the Innovation Hub, the City of Newport Comprehensive Land Use Plan states that the Mixed-Use, Innovation land use designation is only affiliated with the CI, R3, Open Space, and Recreational zoning districts. The City is planning for a “Commercial-Technology (CT)” zoning district that would better accommodate the various uses, activities, and services envisioned for this future land use. The inclusion of this new district in the City’s Zoning Ordinance would require approval from the City Planning Board and City Council.

## **5.3 Farmland/Soils**

A summary of existing conditions related to farmlands is presented below. Please refer to Appendix B3 for the Farmland/Soils Technical Memorandum, which contains additional information on this topic.

### **5.3.1 Study Area and Methodology**

#### **Study Area**

The Study Area for assessing the Project’s potential impact to farmlands was defined as the Project’s LOD. This encompasses lands around the Pell Bridge ramp and approaches in the City of Newport, along with associated roadways including Admiral Kalbfus Road, JT Connell Highway, and Halsey Street, as well as the Newport Secondary Rail Line.

#### **Methodology**

To identify the presence of prime and important farmland within the Study Area, data were obtained from the Web Soil Survey, a database of soils and soil characteristics that is

maintained by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). This information was cross-referenced with current aerial imagery and the City of Newport Comprehensive Land Use Plan to understand existing and future development patterns within the Study Area.

### **5.3.2 Applicable Regulations and Criteria**

The Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA), passed as part of the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981, is intended to minimize the impact Federal programs have on the unnecessary and irreversible conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses. It assures that to the extent possible, federal programs are administered to be compatible with state, local units of government, and private programs and policies to protect farmland.

For the purpose of FPPA, farmland includes prime farmland, unique farmland, and land of statewide or local importance. Farmland subject to FPPA requirements does not have to be currently used for cropland. It can be forest land, pastureland, cropland, or other land, but not water or urban built-up land. The Secretary of Agriculture, along with the Rhode Island Department of Administration's Division of Planning, has identified lands in Rhode Island that meet the requirements for such classifications. Federal actions are subject to FPPA requirements if they have the potential to irreversibly convert (directly or indirectly) prime farmland, unique farmland, or land of statewide or local importance to non-farm use. There are several exemptions under the FPPA, which include lands already in or committed to urban development or water storage. Farmlands are considered to be already in development if they are located within "urbanized areas" identified by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Any Federally-funded or -assisted project that includes lands subject to the FPPA is required to consult with the local office of the NRCS or U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Service Center and submit Form AD-1066 to support a land evaluation and site assessment (LESA). This assessment, performed by NRCS, establishes a farmland conversion impact rating score that is meant to inform a project's alternatives development.

### **5.3.3 Existing Conditions**

The Study Area includes mapped prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance. Approximately 3 acres of Pittstown silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, which is rated as prime farmland, is within the Project's LOD between the RK Newport Towne Center and Newport Mini Storage Center along JT Connell Highway and the Festival Field Apartments and Bridgeview Condominiums along Girard Avenue. This area is currently undeveloped, but is envisioned for future mixed use, innovation development according to the *City of Newport Comprehensive Land Use Plan* (see section 5.2, Land Use, for more information).

Newport silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, is another prime farmland found within the Study Area. Less than 1 acre of this soil type exists within the Project's LOD, located within the transportation right-of-way along Admiral Kalbfus Road just past its intersection with Malbone Road.

Stissing silt loam, which is rated as a farmland of statewide importance, comprises approximately 2 acres of the Study Area. This soil type is north of Dyers Gate Road behind

residential properties that abut 3rd Street and within properties owned by an electric utility (Narragansett Electric Company d/b/a National Grid). The Newport Secondary Rail Line, which runs in a north-south direction, intersects this area. Stissing silt loam is also found in the area occupied by the Pell Bridge Route 138-Admiral Kalbfus Road off-ramp. Both locations are within a larger area that the City of Newport has identified for future mixed use, innovation development.

## 5.4 Wetlands and Waters of the U.S. and State

This section describes the Study Area, analysis methodologies, and baseline conditions for wetlands and waterway resources that may be affected by the Proposed Action. Please refer to Appendix B4 for the Wetlands and Waterways Technical Memorandum, which contains additional information on this topic.<sup>2</sup>

### 5.4.1 Study Area and Methodology

#### **Study Area**

The Project would be located on Aquidneck Island in Newport and Middletown, Rhode Island. The Study Area for wetlands and waterways includes 137 acres of an urbanized coastal watershed that drains into Narragansett Bay near Coasters Harbor Island. The Study Area extends from Bridge Street in Newport at the southern end to Coddington Highway in Middletown to the north. The western limits are located where the Pell Bridge ramps reach Aquidneck Island near Washington Street; the eastern limits are located near the intersection of Admiral Kalbfus Road and Girard Avenue in Newport, and the intersection of Coddington Highway and West Main Road in Middletown. The Study Area includes portions of Route 138, Admiral Kalbfus Road, JT Connell Highway, other connecting roads, and adjacent lands. See Appendix B4, Wetlands and Waterways Technical Memorandum, for additional information.

#### **Methodology**

##### ***Baseline Conditions***

Wetland and waterway resources within the Study Area were mapped and characterized to identify baseline conditions using a combination of field investigation and GIS mapping. Within the Study Area, wetlands were field delineated following the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 1987 Manual and the Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Northcentral and Northeast Region (version 2). Previously delineated wetland boundaries in the Study Area were reviewed and re-delineated as necessary in September 2017. Additional wetland delineations were completed in June and September

<sup>2</sup> Analysis in the Technical Appendices was completed prior to the development of the EA and is based on an earlier version of the project design. Subsequent to the appendices being finalized, the project design changed, reducing the limits of disturbance (LOD) and impacts to wetlands. The EA analysis is based on the updated design.

2018 to cover expansions of the Study Area. Appendix B4 contains more information on wetland delineation and mapping.

Field notes were collected on soil, vegetation, and hydrologic conditions within delineated wetlands. Photographs and notes on conditions along the wetland boundary and interior were also collected. All wetlands within the Study Area were characterized following the wetland classification system developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) *Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States*, commonly referred to as the Cowardin classification system, after the name of its primary author.) Wetlands functions and values were assessed based on a descriptive, best professional judgement approach, with reference to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) New England District's *The Highway Methodology Workbook Supplement: Wetland Functions and Values - A Descriptive Approach*. This publication defines wetland functions and values, and provides a descriptive methodology for conducting evaluations. Additional information about wetland functions and values can be found in Appendix B4.

### ***Direct and Indirect Effects Analysis***

Potential impacts to wetlands and waterways were assessed by projecting the Project's LOD over the wetlands and waterways Study Area base map. Impacts, such as filling, grading, clearing, or adjacent upland disturbance, were evaluated based on potential for direct effects to wetlands and waterways (i.e., effects within the LOD) and indirect effects (i.e., effects outside of the LOD). Impacts to wetlands and waterways resulting from redevelopment of decommissioned City and RIDOT land by others as a result of the Proposed Action were considered in the analysis of indirect effects. The analysis included temporary effects that would occur during the construction phase and permanent effects that would occur during the operations and maintenance phase.

### ***Cumulative Effects Analysis***

Cumulative effects include past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, including federal and non-federal actions. The spatial boundaries for the cumulative effects analysis in the Study Area were defined by the area where wetland field delineations were completed. The temporal limits of the effects analysis span from 1939 to 2030. These dates were selected because 1939 is the earliest year that aerial photographs of the Study Area are available for estimating the historic extent of wetlands, and because 2030 is the current planning horizon for the Rhode Island Office of Statewide Planning. The extent of wetlands within the Study Area in 1939 was mapped using aerial photo interpretation. The acreage of wetlands in 1939 and present-day within the Study Area was calculated using GIS to assess cumulative wetland loss from 1939 through present-day. Changes in functions and values were also estimated based on historic and present-day conditions using aerial photo interpretation and recently collected field data to establish baseline conditions. See the Wetlands Technical Memorandum for additional information.

## 5.4.2 Applicable Regulations and Criteria

### Federal

The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has jurisdiction over waters of the United States, which include waterways and adjacent wetlands, through §404 of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA). Wetlands and waterways within the Study Area are also regulated in accordance with the following federal and state requirements:

- › Executive Order 11990 of 1977 (Protection of Wetlands) requires federal agencies to avoid destruction and modification of, or construction within, existing wetlands where there is a practicable alternative.
- › Under Section 401 of the CWA, any applicant for a federal license or permit to conduct any activity that may result in a discharge into navigable waters must provide a certification from the state in which the discharge originates (401 Certification). In Rhode Island, Water Quality Certification is obtained via application to the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) Office of Water Resources.
- › Section 404 of the CWA regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, and Section 401 of the CWA specifies additional requirements for permit review on the state level.

### State

The State of Rhode Island has jurisdiction over freshwater wetlands and waterways, promulgated under the *Rules and Regulations Governing the Administration and Enforcement of the Freshwater Wetlands Act* (Rules). The Freshwater Wetlands Act is administered by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM). The Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) has jurisdiction over coastal wetlands and replaces freshwater regulatory jurisdiction of the RIDEM in certain coastal areas under the Rules and Regulations Governing the Protection and Management of Freshwater Wetlands in the Vicinity of the Coast (Coastal Wetland Rules). Freshwater wetlands jurisdiction falls to the CRMC in the western portions of the Study Area (generally including areas west of the existing railbed) and to the RIDEM in the eastern parts of the Study Area.

## 5.4.3 Wetland and Waterway Resource Definitions

Resources addressed in this EA include wetlands and waterways subject to federal jurisdiction, as well as freshwater wetlands regulated by the state of Rhode Island. Some state-regulated wetlands have jurisdictional limits that may extend beyond federal limits. Coastal resources subject to the regulation of the CRMC and resources within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map 1 percent annual chance floodplain (formerly referred to as the 100-year floodplain) are also located within the Study Area, but are addressed separately in Sections 5.5 and 5.7.

Waters of the United States under the jurisdiction of §404 of the federal Clean Water Act include all waters which are used, or were used in the past, or may be susceptible to use in interstate or foreign commerce, including all waters which are subject to the ebb and flow of the tide; all interstate waters, including interstate wetlands; and all other waters such as

intrastate lakes, rivers, streams (including intermittent streams), mudflats, sandflats, wetlands, sloughs, prairie potholes, wet meadows, playa lakes, natural ponds, or drainage ditches leading to regulated Waters of the U.S., the degradation or destruction of which could affect interstate or foreign commerce (33 CFR Part 328).

Freshwater wetlands regulated by the RIDEM under the *Rules and Regulations Governing the Administration and Enforcement of the Freshwater Wetlands Act* include swamps, marshes, bogs, forested or shrub wetlands, emergent plant communities, and other areas dominated by wetland vegetation and showing wetland hydrology. In addition to these vegetated wetland communities, the RIDEM regulates activities in and around waterways and open water bodies, including rivers, streams, ponds, Special Aquatic Sites, and Areas Subject to Storm Flowage (ASSF). The Rules also provide the authority to regulate floodplains as freshwater wetlands (see Section 5.5). More information on the types of wetlands, waterways, and waterbodies regulated by the RIDEM is provided in the Wetlands and Waterways Technical Memorandum in Appendix B4.

#### 5.4.4 Existing Conditions

##### Wetlands

A total of 25 wetlands and ASSFs, one manmade stormwater treatment wetland, and one stream were field delineated in the Study Area. The wetlands identified belong to the non-tidal palustrine system of the Cowardin classification method (Federal Geographic Data Committee, 2013). Estuarine wetlands occur outside of the Study Area along the shoreline of Narragansett Bay. Palustrine systems are terrestrial and extend into areas inundated by less than six feet of water for at least part of the year. Areas with greater water depths are classified as deep-water habitats, which are absent within the Study Area. The three common classes within the palustrine system are forested wetlands (PFO), scrub-shrub wetlands (PSS), and wetlands dominated by emergent plants (PEM). Twenty-one of the 26 palustrine wetlands in the Study Area are of the PEM class. Sixteen of these belong to the *Phragmites australis* subclass, and five belong to the persistent emergent subclass, meaning that dead vegetation remains standing until the next growing season. Of the remaining emergent wetlands, two are classified as a mixed class with PSS broad-leaved deciduous components, two are classified as PSS broad-leaved deciduous, and one is classified as PFO broad-leaved deciduous.

Wetland soils within the Study Area generally consist of graded, excavated, or previously disturbed materials derived from glacial till or fill materials. However, native, organic wetland soils are present within some wetlands that are remnants of historically larger wetland areas. Historic aerial photography from 1939 indicates that most of the Study Area was previously emergent wetlands or wetlands that had been cleared for agricultural purposes and ditched to improve drainage. Subsequent urban development has resulted in conversion of most of this former wetland area to developed urban land. Where wetlands remain within the Study Area, most are constructed linear ditches populated with invasive plant species. These wetlands function as drainage swales, or remnants of formerly more extensive wetlands. The hydrology of most of the wetlands within the Study Area is

classified as saturated or seasonally flooded. Some of the excavated ditches within Study Area wetlands may be semi-permanently flooded.

### **Waterways**

Wetlands contained within channels that are not dominated by trees, shrubs, or persistent emergent vegetation belong to the Riverine system of the Cowardin classification method. The one unnamed riverine wetland (A-S1) identified in the Study Area includes a lower perennial stream where the gradient is low and water velocity is slow, with an unconsolidated bottom of cobble and gravel. Existing site conditions and review of historic aerial photographs demonstrate the stream has been extensively ditched, culverted, and altered. The 1939 aerial photography shows the stream had either been ditched and straightened by that time or was created as a ditch for agricultural drainage purposes.

Stream A-S1 is not on the state's May 2015 303(d) List of Impaired Waters, and meets RIDEM Water Quality Standard B. Currently, the stream begins at a culvert outfall located approximately 350 feet southeast of the existing railroad bed crossing vicinity where the stream was delineated. The channel is approximately eight to ten feet wide, has been ditched and straightened, and drains to the northwest directly into Narragansett Bay approximately 420 feet from the existing railroad bed crossing. In hydrologically up-gradient areas of the watershed, Wetlands A-3, A-4, A-6, A-7, and A-11 contain stagnant ditches that may have been part of the same original drainageway, based on review of 1939 aerial photographs. Under present-day conditions, these ditches probably drain to the existing stream channel via subsurface culverts.

### **Wetland Functions and Values**

The wetlands in the Study Area have sustained historic alteration and fragmentation by urban development in Newport and Middletown. In many cases all that remains of former wetland systems are drainage channels that parallel roadways and bridge ramps designed to convey flows away from infrastructure. Wetlands have also been created in deep railroad cuts where drainage has not been effectively maintained. The existing levels of wetland functions and values provided by Study Area wetlands were assessed and reported in Table 3 of the Wetlands and Waterways Technical Memorandum in Appendix B4. Principal functions provided by wetlands within the Study Area are limited to water quality functions, including sediment and toxicant retention and nutrient removal and transformation. Runoff from the urbanized impervious surfaces within the Study Area typically contains high concentrations of sediment, toxicants, and nutrients. The stagnant ditch character of many of the Study Area wetlands provides a sink for runoff and the potential to attenuate these pollutants through sediment trapping, nutrient uptake by plants, and toxicant transformation through microbial processes.

Other functions to which wetlands contribute at a lesser degree in the Study Area include flood flow alteration, groundwater discharge/recharge, and provision of wildlife habitat. Many of the wetland ditches in the Study Area have constricted culverted outlets, allowing them to collect and temporarily hold surface runoff and provide some flood flow reduction. Such functions are limited, however, by the small area of the wetlands and their limited capacity to store runoff. Wetlands in the Study Area also intersect with the saturated zone of

the subsoil, but the extent to which significant groundwater discharge or recharge occurs is limited by the small size of the wetlands and the dense till substrates that function as an impermeable layer or aquitard.

Wildlife habitat functions are provided at a low level because most of the wetland habitats are dominated by *Phragmites australis* and other non-native invasive species that provide limited habitat value. Invasive plant species can impact the diversity of local species by changing the conditions of the environment. This can include affecting soil nutrient quality and nutrient cycling as well as changing the light and microclimate levels in the invaded patches, depending on colony sizes. Invasive species patches can result in monotypic colonies of low-quality food, cover, shelter and basking sites for wildlife. The existing Study Area wetlands do have the potential to support small mammals and birds that live in urban settings, as well as insects, small amphibians, and reptiles tolerant of disturbed environments.

## **5.5 Floodplains**

Provided below is a discussion of the floodplains identified and assessed within the Study Area. Please refer to Appendix B5 for the Floodplain Technical Memorandum, which provides additional information on this topic.

### **5.5.1 Study Area and Methodology**

#### **Study Area**

The project Study Area is located within a low area draining northwest to Coasters Harbor within Narragansett Bay. As described in Section 5.4, an unnamed stream flows across this area from the southeast to the northwest. The primary flooding source within the Study Area is coastal flooding due to storm surge and high tides. Route 138 crosses the Study Area running north-south along a raised embankment, providing limited protection from coastal flooding to the east. Although the Study Area is largely sheltered from wave action by Coasters Harbor Island to the west, there are two potential sources of coastal flooding: storm surge and wave setup from the northwest, via Coasters Harbor; and wave runup overtopping the low ridge west of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.

#### **Methodology**

A coastal transect model was developed in accordance with guidance from the "Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico Coastal Guidelines Update" from February 2007 (2007 Update) developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This is the same methodology used by FEMA to develop coastal flooding models for the Effective Flood Insurance Study (FIS) for Newport Country. The results of the coastal model analysis were used to estimate flood elevations and wave heights, evaluate the protection of the Project site, and estimate any changes in flood risk to neighboring properties due to the Proposed Action.



### 5.5.2 Applicable Regulations and Criteria

Under Executive Order 11988 Section 2. (a)(2) (EO11988), federally-financed projects located within the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)-designated 1% floodplain are required to be designed to minimize potential harm to, or within, the floodplain and are required to prepare and circulate a notice containing an explanation of why the action is proposed to be in the floodplain.

The federal Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 and the Flood Insurance Reform Act of 1994 require federally-regulated and insured lenders to mandate the purchase of flood insurance for properties located within an area having special flood hazards for the term of the loan. Any future development within the Project area located within the 1% floodplain would be subject to this requirement.

Under the 2007 Rhode Island Fresh Water Wetlands Act (the Act), the 1% floodplain is designated as a wetland. However, the floodplain is defined in Section 2-2-20(3) of the Act to apply only to areas subject to flooding associated with rivers, streams, or other flowing bodies of water; areas subject to coastal flooding are not considered to be freshwater wetlands. Accordingly, the Act does not apply to the 1% floodplain within the Study Area.

The Coastal Development Regulations of the Aquidneck Island SAMP require projects to minimize flood impacts and shoreline erosion by requiring that the "Coastal Greenway" shoreline land area be maintained and managed to protect resources from coastal flood hazards. In particular, areas identified as high hazard wave areas (Zone VE) should be preserved as open space. The LOD for the Proposed Action does not extend into any areas designated as Zone VE on NFIP flood hazard maps, or into any areas identified as Zone VE based on the site-specific coastal flooding model. As a result, the requirements of the Aquidneck Island SAMP are not applicable.

Pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws Section 46-23-6, the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) is authorized to develop and adopt freeboard calculations for proposed development within the coastal floodplain. The CRMC requires all applicants proposing construction within flood hazard zones to demonstrate that all applicable portions of the Rhode Island State Building Code (RISBC), and more specifically RISBC-8, are met. Any future building development within the flood zone in the Study Area may be subject to additional RISBC floodplain construction requirements.

Chapter 15.24 of *the City of Newport Code of Ordinances* requires permits for all projects that meet the definition of development, not just "building" projects. Development projects include any filling, grading, excavation, mining, drilling, storage of materials, or temporary stream crossings. If the construction or other development within a special flood hazard area is not covered by a building permit, all other non-structural activities shall be permitted by either the CRMC and/or RIDEM, as applicable.

### 5.5.3 Existing Conditions

The Study Area is located within the 1% floodplain according to the NFIP flood insurance rate map (FIRM) Panel 44005C0089J (2013), with associated base flood elevations (BFE) of 13 feet and 12 feet North American Vertical Datum (NAVD) 88. The Study Area is located

between two FEMA transects: Transect 38 (approx. 0.5 mile north of the Study Area) and Transect 39 (approx. 0.3 mile south of the Study Area). The current Effective FEMA FIS for Newport County estimates 1% Floodplain elevations and areas by interpolating between two coastal transect models located outside of the Study Area, and as such does not reflect the distinct coastal flooding behavior within the Study Area.

## **5.6 Water Quality/Stormwater**

Provided below is a discussion on the water quality and stormwater issues related to the project Study Area. Please refer to Appendix B6, Water Quality/Stormwater Technical Memorandum, for additional information.

### **5.6.1 Study Area and Methodology**

#### **Study Area**

The Study Area is limited to the Project LOD with a 10-foot buffer to define the limits of water quality requirements as they relate to RIDEM regulations in terms of soil disturbance. The stormwater analysis includes flow into the Study Area of the surrounding watershed, including overland flow, closed and open drainage systems, and natural streams. The stormwater design will take these flows into account to maintain or improve peak flows and potentially improve stormwater and flood storage throughout the area.

#### **Methodology**

The amount of impervious surface within the Study Area was used to estimate relative increases in runoff volume and peak flow for each of the receiving wetlands and the receiving water body. The Stormwater Technical Memo has calculated changes in impervious surface area based on conceptual design plans. When designs are complete, the changes to impervious surface cover will inform the amount of water quality volume that must be treated and the types of structural best management practices (BMPs) that should be implemented within the Study Area.

### **5.6.2 Applicable Regulations and Criteria**

The Proposed Action is subject to the following regulations:

- › Rhode Island Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (RIPDES): Addresses water pollution by regulating point sources that discharge pollutants to waters of the U.S. Requires permits for discharges from construction activities that disturb one or more acres, and discharges from smaller sites that are part of a larger common plan of development or sale. Additionally, RIDOT requires a large site Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to be prepared for projects that disturb more than one acre.
- › Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 401/404: The Proposed Action may require work in Waters of the United States; consequently, authorization under these regulatory programs will be required. RIDEM will review the Proposed Action for a Water Quality Certificate (WQC) under Section 401 of the CWA. If any fill is proposed within waters of

the United States, the Proposed Action will also require Section 404 authorization by the USACE, as described in Section 5.5.

- › Rhode Island Stormwater Design and Installation Standards Manual (RISDISM): The RISDISM defines redevelopment as work that requires disturbance down to an erodible surface of 10,000 square feet (SF) or more of existing impervious area. The Proposed Action would exceed this threshold, so the design is required to incorporate stormwater treatment measures to comply with the RISDISM.
- › RIDOT Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Consent Decree: Section 16 of the Consent Decree between RIDOT and the EPA concerning the implementation of their MS4 Program specifies that for RIDOT new construction or reconstruction projects (the Proposed Action is considered reconstruction in accordance with the Consent Decree) must address water quality improvements. The Consent Decree specifies that reconstruction projects that will discharge any pollutants of concern to an impaired water body segment directly or indirectly shall implement structural stormwater controls and may implement enhanced non-structural best management practices (BMPs) that will, to the maximum extent practicable, support the achievement of the pollutant load reduction and other requirements of the Consent Decree.

### 5.6.3 Existing Conditions

As described above, the Study Area was defined as a ten-foot offset from the outermost edge of the new impervious surface. Wetland and waterway resources within the Study Area were mapped and characterized to identify baseline conditions using a combination of field investigation and GIS mapping.

The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has mapped many soil types within the Study Area. Soils in the existing roadway network are mostly fill soils that are Udorthents – Urban Land complex and have a Hydrologic Soil Group (HSG) A rating. Areas that are developed with retail and parking lots are classified as Urban Land and are not assigned a Hydrologic Soil Group. The remaining area, excluding the wetlands, contains various Newport and Pittstown soils assigned a Hydrologic Soil Group (HSG) C rating. These soils have a slow infiltration rate when wet. They consist chiefly of soils that have a layer that impedes the downward movement of water or soils of moderately fine texture.

Historic aerial photography from 1939 indicates that most of the Study Area was previously emergent wetlands or wetlands that had been cleared for agricultural purposes and ditched to improve drainage. Subsequent urban development has resulted in conversion of most of this former wetland area to developed urban land. Where wetlands remain within the Study Area, most are constructed linear ditches populated with invasive plant species. These wetlands function as drainage swales, or remnants of formerly more extensive wetlands. The hydrology of most of the wetlands within the Study Area is classified as saturated or seasonally flooded; some of the excavated ditches within Study Area wetlands may be semi-permanently flooded. More information on wetlands can be found in Section 5.5.

## **5.7 Coastal Resources**

Provided below is a discussion on the coastal resources identified within the Study Area. Please refer to Appendix B7, Coastal Resources Technical Memorandum, for more information.

### **5.7.1 Study Area and Methodology**

#### **Study Area**

The Study Area for evaluating coastal resource effects is the LOD for the Proposed Action, which includes portions of Route 138, Admiral Kalbfus Road, JT Connell Highway, and other connecting roads. Adjacent land currently owned by RIDOT and the City of Newport that would be divested and made available for future redevelopment by others is also considered.

#### **Methodology**

CRMC guidance, applicable Coastal Resource Management Program (CRMP) policies and performance standards, Aquidneck Island Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) goals and objectives, and Aquidneck Island SAMP coastal development standards were used in the coastal resources analysis. The spatial boundaries for the cumulative effects analysis include the Project's LOD, plus additional adjacent land currently owned by RIDOT and the City of Newport likely to be redeveloped because of the Project. The temporal limits of the effects analysis include present day through 2030. These dates were selected because development within the coastal zone from present day forward is potentially subject to a federal Coastal Zone Consistency Determination, and because 2035 is the current short-term planning horizon for Rhode Island. The analysis assumed that redevelopment of Study Area land divested by RIDOT and the City of Newport following implementation of the Proposed Action would be completed by 2030.

### **5.7.2 Applicable Regulations and Criteria**

Federal regulations applicable to the Proposed Action include the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA; 16 U.S.C. 1451-1464; Public Law 92-583). and the Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA; 16 U.S.C. 3501-3510; Public Law 97-348). Activities proposed by RIDOT related to the Pell Bridge Project will require a Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Consistency Determination from the CRMC due to the Proposed Action's location within the Coastal Zone as identified in the RICRMP and the Aquidneck Island SAMP. The CZM Consistency Determination will evaluate the Proposed Action against applicable CRMP performance standards, Aquidneck Island SAMP goals and objectives, and Aquidneck Island SAMP coastal development standards. Many of the Aquidneck Island SAMP goals focus on setbacks to coastal resources, public shoreline access, and preserving and establishing coastal greenways along the shoreline, which are not applicable to the Proposed Action because it is not a shoreline development project. However, other goals of the SAMP are applicable to the Proposed Action, such as managing impervious surface coverage, use of low-impact development techniques to manage stormwater runoff, and open space.

### 5.7.3 Existing Conditions

Coastal resources within the Study Area are protected under the CBRA and the CZMA. These statutes require that the FHWA follow procedures for ensuring that a proposed action is consistent with approved coastal zone management programs.

#### **Coastal Barrier Resources Act**

The CBRA defines "undeveloped coastal barriers" as geological features including bay barriers, barrier islands, and other associated aquatic resources including wetlands, marshes, and estuaries that protect landward aquatic habitats from the detrimental effects of direct wind and wave action. Under the CBRA, the USFWS was tasked with the preparation of maps depicting areas designated for protection. The John H. Chafee Coastal Barrier Resource System (CBRS) includes all areas designated for protection under the CBRA. The Study Area does not contain any coastal barriers mapped in the John H. Chafee CBRS, based on review of the USFWS CBRS mapping.

#### **Coastal Zone Management Act**

The CRMC administers the CZMA for the state. Rhode Island's Coastal Zone includes the entire state. The regulatory authority of the state's CZMA agency extends 200 feet inland from any coastal feature, and the Study Area for coastal resources does not occur within 200 feet of a coastal feature. However, the Rhode Island CRMC defines the Coastal Zone as "the area encompassed within the state's seaward jurisdiction (three miles) to the inland boundaries of the state's 21 coastal communities." Within these communities, CRMC exercises its federal consistency requirement over direct federal activities or federally sponsored activities that are reasonably likely to affect any coastal use or resource within the CRMC's jurisdictional area. The Pell Bridge project will therefore require a federal CZM Consistency Determination from the CRMC.

In some areas, CRMC coastal zone jurisdiction is expanded to include those areas within the watershed boundaries of certain coastal estuaries. These watershed areas are regulated under SAMPs; the Study Area is located within the Aquidneck Island West Side SAMP. Project activities that are potentially subject to CRMP policies and standards include site work/excavation; road, bridge, and parking lot work; and wetland and waterway impacts.

As described in Section 5.5, CRMC and RIDEM have established boundaries defining the limits of CRMC and RIDEM freshwater wetland jurisdictions. In the Study Area, the inland limit of CRMC jurisdiction over freshwater wetlands generally follows the existing railbed near the western limit of the Study Area. Freshwater wetlands falling under the jurisdiction of the CRMC are present within the Study Area and are addressed in Section 5.5. Because the Project Area includes areas falling under the jurisdiction of both CRMC and RIDEM, the two agencies will confer to determine whether state regulatory review of all Project Area wetland impacts will be delegated to just one of the two agencies, or if each agency will review wetlands within its defined area of jurisdiction.

## 5.8 Federally Threatened or Endangered and State Natural Heritage Species/Biodiversity

Presented below is a discussion of Federally and state-listed species in the Study Area. Please refer to Appendix B8, Threatened and Endangered Species Technical Memorandum, for additional information.

### 5.8.1 Study Area and Methodology

#### Study Area

The Study Area includes the LOD for the Proposed Action and a corridor width of 200 feet on either side of the LOD. This is the area that may experience project impacts with the potential to affect Federal or state-listed species and their associated habitat.

#### Methodology

To assess if any Federal or state-listed species are potentially present within the Study Area, information was evaluated from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) Tool and the RIDEM online-Environmental Resource Map (ERM) and consulted with the RIDEM Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) regarding RIDEM's bat survey records. Consultation with the USFWS was initiated on October 9, 2018 through a request for an official species list from the IPaC Tool; the LOD of the Proposed Action was applied as the Project Location. The Official Species List was generated by the New England Ecological Services Field Office, located in Concord, New Hampshire. The state-listed species within the Study Area on October 9, 2018 were identified by overlaying the Natural Heritage Area within the RIDEM Environmental Resource Map. Consultation with RIDEM DFW's bat management specialist occurred on February 9, 2018.

### 5.8.2 Applicable Regulations and Criteria

The following Federal and state regulations are applicable to threatened and endangered species in the Study Area:

- › The Endangered Species Act (ESA; 16 U.S.C. § 1531 et seq.), passed by Congress in 1973, provides a program for the conservation of threatened and endangered plants and animals and the habitats in which they are found (USFWS, 2017a). Under Section 7 of the ESA, federal agencies must consult with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) when any action the agency carries out, funds, or authorizes (such as through a permit) may affect a listed endangered or threatened species (USFWS, 2017a; NOAA Endangered Species Conservation).
- › The 4(d) Rule was established in 1975 to extend the protections of the ESA to federally threatened species by directing the USFWS to issue regulations deemed necessary and advisable to provide for the conservation of threatened species (Levin et al., 2018). A Final 4(d) Rule specific to "take" prohibitions for the northern long-eared bat (NLEB) was published in the Federal Register on January 14, 2016 (USFWS, 2016). Take prohibitions

identified in the Final 4(d) Rule for the NLEB are meant to protect maternity colonies, hibernating bats, and the areas that bats use as they enter and leave hibernation sites.

- › The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA; 16 U.S.C. 703-712), passed in 1918 and amended in 1972 to include birds of prey, protects migratory birds.
- › The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (Eagle Act; 16 U.S.C. 668-668c), enacted in 1940 and amended several times since, prohibits anyone from taking bald or golden eagles.
- › The Rhode Island Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Act (RIESAPA; Rhode Island General Law Title 20, Chapter 37) provides additional state protections to federal and state endangered plants or animals.
- › The Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program (RINHP) was established in 1979 to catalogue the state's rare flora and fauna (RIDEM et al., 2015). If any state-listed species occur within a Study Area and the related proposed action is subject to other environmental regulations promulgated by the RIDEM and/or the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council, then coordination between the RINHP and the lead agency will be necessary to determine if an effects determination on the state-listed species can be made based on the project's description, or if survey efforts and mitigation are required.

### 5.8.3 Existing Conditions

The Official Species List generated by IPaC indicated that there are two listed species with the potential to occur within the Study Area: the NLEB, which is federally threatened, and the roseate tern (Northeastern subspecies; *Sterna dougallii dougallii*), which is federally endangered. Background information for each species is provided below. The Official Species List did not identify any critical habitats within the Study Area.

#### Northern Long-eared Bat Description and Habitat Requirements

The NLEB is a medium-sized bat that was listed under ESA as a threatened species due to drastic population declines of up to 99 percent in the northeast (USFWS, 2015a). This decline has largely been attributed to the disease known as white-nose syndrome (WNS).

According to the most recent (2018) USFWS Summer Survey Guidelines (Guidelines) for NLEB and Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), suitable summer habitat for NLEB consists of a wide variety of forested/wooded habitats where they roost, forage, and travel and may also include some adjacent and interspersed non-forested habitats such as emergent wetlands and adjacent edges of agricultural fields, old fields and pastures (USFWS, 2018b).

The Study Area is within a highly urbanized area of Newport that contains the major interchanges linking to the Pell Bridge, industrial and commercial areas, and residential areas north, south, and west of the interchange area. While there are few contiguous blocks of vegetated habitat, suitable summer habitat as defined by the Guidelines is present within the Study Area. These areas include a privately-owned 15-acre block of forest that is located between the Newport Grand Casino, Malbone Road, and Halsey Street; Miantonomi Memorial Park, a 32-acre public recreational park owned by the City of Newport, located east of Girard Avenue; and fragmented forested areas adjacent to roadways and residential

areas. According to the Guidelines, trees found in highly-developed urban areas (e.g. street trees and downtown areas) are extremely unlikely to be suitable habitat (USFWS, 2018b).

NLEB spend the winter months in hibernacula that include caves, mines, and other semi-enclosed areas that provide constant temperature, high humidity, and no air currents (USFWS, 2015a). There are no known hibernacula sites within or adjacent to the Study Area.

### **Roseate Tern Description and Habitat Requirements**

The Roseate tern is a medium-sized tern that breeds in tropical locations in the Caribbean and in some scattered colonies in the temperate northern Atlantic (Cornell Lab of Ornithology). Roseate terns tend to nest in mixed colonies with common terns (*Sterna hirundo*), which can afford them protection due to the common terns' more aggressive anti-predator behavior (Gochfield et al., 1998). There is no suitable roseate tern habitat within the Study Area.

### **MBTA-protected Species**

The Resources List prepared by IPaC listed 27 migratory birds protected by the MBTA that have the potential to occur within the Study Area. These 27 species are of particular concern either because they are listed on the USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern (BCC) list or because of other regulations that warrant consideration for the species, such as the Eagle Act. The BCC list was created because of a 1988 amendment to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act that mandated that USFWS identify species, subspecies, and populations of all migratory nongame birds that, without additional conservation actions, are likely to become candidates for listing under the ESA (USFWS, 2015b).

### **RIDEM ERM Review Results**

There are no Natural Heritage Areas mapped within the Study Area. Consultation with the RINHP is not necessary for the Proposed Action.

### **RIDEM DFW Consultation Results**

The Project Biologist consulted with the lead bat biologist, Charles Brown, at the RIDEM DFW in February 2018 to obtain details concerning the RIDEM's NLEB survey efforts and to ascertain if there are records of NLEB within the Study Area. The RIDEM DFW has been performing mist net surveys and inspections of hibernacula in Rhode Island since 2011 to perform bat species composition surveys. The RIDEM DFW also bands bats to track population size and movements of different species. There are no records of the NLEB within the Study Area or within the larger City of Newport. Rhode Island does not host large numbers of hibernating bats because there are no mines or natural caves that bats can use for hibernation. However, some manmade structures within Newport County provide suitable conditions for small hibernacula populations. The only three hibernacula known to host NLEB in Rhode Island are located in Jamestown to the west of the Pell Bridge. RIDEM does not currently conduct surveys to locate NLEB maternity roosting trees and does not maintain records of known maternity roosting trees.



## **NLEB Acoustic Survey Results**

The Project Biologist conducted Presence/Probable Absence Acoustic Surveys targeting NLEB between August 6 and 8, 2018. Call data were auto-classified with Bat Call Identification (BCID) East Version 2.7d. Species recorded during the survey include big brown bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*), eastern red bat (*Lasiurus borealis*), hoary bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*), and silver-haired bat (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*). The software did not auto-classify any calls as NLEB or any other Myotis species. It also did not classify any calls as tri-colored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*), which is currently being considered for listing under the ESA (USFWS, 2017c). Qualitative analysis confirmed two calls to be the eastern red bat, both during the first night of surveying at Sites 2 and 3. The survey results indicate the probable absence of NLEB within the Study Area. The complete Acoustic Survey Report is included in Appendix B8 and will be submitted to USFWS as part of the Section 7 consultation process. <https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/ecosystems/index.asp>

## **5.9 Cultural (Historical and Archaeological) Resources**

Provided below is a summary of cultural resources in the Study Area. Please refer to Appendix B9, Cultural Resources Technical Memorandum, for additional information.

### **5.9.1 Study Area and Methodology**

#### **Study Area**

The Area of Potential Effects (APE) is “the geographic area within which the undertaking may cause changes in the character of or use of historic properties if any such properties exist” [36 CFR 800.16(d)]. A historic property is defined as “any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in, or eligible for inclusion in, the National Register maintained by the Secretary of the Interior” [36 CFR 800.16(l)]. An aboveground historic property survey was prepared for the Project’s APE, which encompasses the LOD and all properties within one-tenth-mile of the LOD.

#### **Methodology**

The methodology for the survey of aboveground and subsurface resources was designed to locate and identify all properties, including districts, buildings, structures, objects, and sites, within the APE that are listed or may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). Background research, windshield surveys, field surveys, Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC) inventories, and archaeological analyses were conducted.

### **5.9.2 Applicable Regulations and Criteria**

The Project is required to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, and the implementing regulations of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (36 CFR 800) and Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (49 USC 303).

The proposed Project has been determined to be an "undertaking" subject to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Therefore, RIDOT, in conjunction with the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission (RISHPO), will need to assess potential Project impacts to aboveground and subsurface resources through the application of the Criteria of Adverse Effect, per 36 CFR 800.5(a)(1),(2). Should RIDOT recommend that the potential exists for an adverse effect to one or more historic resources, consulting parties will work to avoid, minimize or mitigate any adverse effects of the Project pursuant to 36 CFR 800.5(e) and 800.9.

### **5.9.3 Existing Conditions**

#### **Historic Resources**

Background research and subsequent field survey concluded that the APE encompasses one National Historic Landmark District, two properties listed in the National Register, and two properties determined eligible for listing in the National Register. Within the APE, there are also four properties (three buildings and one railroad) that are at least 50 years old, were not previously surveyed, and appear potentially eligible for listing in the National Register.

Of the three historic buildings within the APE that were evaluated for listing in the National Register, one building (62 Van Zandt Avenue) is recommended as eligible for listing. A National Register Eligibility Evaluation was compiled for the Old Colony and Newport Railroad and submitted to RISHPO, which concurred that the railroad is ineligible. The evaluation is discussed further below.

#### **Archaeological Resources**

No archaeological sites were identified during the Phase I Archaeological Survey.

#### **Previously Identified Historic Resources within the LOD**

- › Newport Historic Landmark District (NHL 1968, amended 2008; NR #68000001)
- › Van Zandt Avenue Bridge (CDOE 1994)

#### **Previously Identified Historic Resources within One-Tenth-Mile Radius of the LOD**

- › Common Burying Ground and Island Cemetery (1974, NR #74000044)
- › Miantonomi Memorial Park and WWI Memorial Tower (1969, NR #69000003)
- › United States Naval Hospital Newport Historic District (CDOE 1998)

#### **Historic Resources Recommended Eligible within the APE**

RIHPHC inventory forms were compiled for the three buildings and one railroad within the APE that were identified as 50 years or older, not previously surveyed, and appearing potentially eligible for listing. Construction dates were estimated based on visual observation, supplemented by available historic maps and atlases, aerial images, and ownership history. Basic information was collected for each property to identify historical significance and patterns of settlement, and to understand the relationships between the

current built environment and historical development of the neighborhood bounded by Van Zandt Avenue, Malbone Road, Garfield Street, and Route 238. Of the properties evaluated within the APE, the property at 62 Van Zandt Avenue, a four-bay-by-two-bay Georgian-style residence completed in 1753, retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. It is recommended as eligible under Criteria A and C with significance at the local level.

**Historic Resources Determined Ineligible within the APE**

The Project proposes a bike corridor extension along a portion of the Old Colony and Newport Railroad, which would result in the partial removal of the track structure. A National Register of Historic Places Eligibility Evaluation (included in Appendix B9) was prepared to assess the eligibility of the Old Colony and Newport line in its entirety. The evaluation concluded that the railroad as a whole is not eligible for listing in the National Register due to a loss of integrity in the areas of setting, materials, workmanship, design, feeling, and association.

RISHPO concurred with the overall finding regarding the railroad, but indicated that certain surviving elements of the railroad could be potentially eligible for listing individually. One of these elements, the Pell Bridge on- and off-ramps, is within the project APE. Further evaluation of these ramps determined that they belong to a category of post-1945 concrete and steel bridges that has been determined non-eligible for the National Register. This determination was made as part of a 2014 memorandum from RIDOT to RIPHC entitled *Technical Memorandum No. 1—Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Program Comment Issued for Streamlining Section 106 Review Actions Affecting Post-1945 Concrete and Steel Bridges*. Correspondence with RISHPO documenting this determination is included in Appendix B9.

**5.10 Environmental Justice & Socioeconomics**

Provided below is a discussion on the environmental justice communities and socio-economic conditions in the Study Area. Please refer to Appendix B-10, Environmental Justice Technical Memorandum, for additional information.

**5.10.1 Study Area and Methodology**

**Study Area**

The Study Area for the environmental justice (EJ) analysis was defined as a 0.25-mile-wide buffer around the Project’s LOD. This is the area most likely to experience environmental impacts due to its adjacency to the footprint of the Proposed Action. The Study Area is comprised of the following 13 intersecting census block groups:

- › 440050412001      › 440050403021      › 440050405003      › 440050411001
- › 440050402002      › 440050405001      › 440050406004      ›
- › 440050402001      › 440050405002      › 440050410001      ›
- › 440050403042      › 440050406001      › 440050411003      ›

## Methodology

Data from the latest American Community Survey (ACS) (2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates) informed the identification of minority and low-income populations. The EPA's Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool (Version 2018), along with a windshield survey of the Study Area and reputable internet sources, informed the identification of public and subsidized housing.

To determine whether potential impacts from the Proposed Action would have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on affected EJ communities, this analysis referred to the U.S. DOT and FHWA EJ Orders (described in the following subsection) to determine whether any identified adverse effect would be predominantly borne by a minority and/or low-income population; or would be suffered by the minority or low-income population and be appreciably more severe or greater in magnitude than the adverse effect that would be suffered by non-environmental justice populations. Adverse effects include those negative effects that impact individual or cumulative human health or environmental effects. Where applicable, these analyses were supplemented by analyses under *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*, which require comparing the selection rates of different ethnic/racial groups to determine if there is likely a disparate impact as a result of a project.

### 5.10.2 Applicable Regulations and Criteria

Environmental justice has its origins in Executive Order (EO) 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations*, which President Clinton issued in 1994. According to this EO, "each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations." Further, EO 12898 requires each Federal agency to develop an agency-wide environmental justice strategy that identifies and addresses disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on these populations.

Issued in 2012, USDOT Order 5610.2(a), *Final DOT Environmental Justice Order*, sets forth the policy to consider environmental justice principles in all DOT programs, policies, and activities, and describes objectives for integrating environmental justice into the agency's planning and programming, rulemaking, and policy formulation. It also identifies steps to prevent disproportionately high and adverse effects to minority and low-income populations through environmental justice analyses conducted as part of Federal transportation planning and NEPA provisions and the measures to be taken to address such effects if anticipated.

FHWA Order 6640.23A, *FHWA Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*, establishes the policies and procedures for FHWA to use in complying with EO 12898. The order encourages complete participation in the transportation decision-making process by any potentially affected minority and low-income communities. Such participation is encouraged from planning through implementation of the project; if the potential for discrimination is identified, action is required to eliminate that potential.

Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, each Federal agency is required to ensure that “no person on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” Federal guidance provides methodologies to determine whether there are disproportionate impacts among particular groups. More information on these methodologies and how they were applied to the Project are found in Appendix B-10.

Effective June 26, 2009, RIDEM issued its *Policy for Considering Environmental Justice in the Review of Investigation and Remediation of Contaminated Properties*. This policy provides for the proactive consideration of environmental justice relative to site investigations and property site remediation projects to enable all communities to have meaningful input in environmental decision-making regardless of race, income, national origin or English language proficiency. RIDEM has identified Environmental Justice Focus Areas throughout the state, which are block groups in which the percentage of minority or low-income residents is high enough to rank in the top 15 percent of block groups statewide.

### **5.10.3 Environmental Justice Outreach**

RIDOT has engaged with local EJ communities during planning of the Project, and will conduct further outreach as part of the NEPA process and subsequent public involvement efforts during final design and construction. Two public meetings targeting environmental justice geographies were held at the Florence Gray Center at 1 York Street in census block group 440050405.001. Outreach for these two meetings was advertised in local newspapers and at community centers in both English and Spanish. The first of the two meetings discussed the existing conditions in the Study Area along with the goals of the Project. The second meeting was to present the seven action alternatives and to receive public input on the alternatives. Input received from these meetings informed elements of the project design, including additional safety improvements and pedestrian and bicycle accommodations. More information is provided in Appendix B-10.

### **5.10.4 Existing Conditions**

#### **Environmental Justice**

As described above, the Study Area contains 13 census block groups that intersect with a 0.25-mile buffer around the Proposed Action’s LOD. The characteristics of these census blocks with respect to environmental justice are described below.

#### **Minority Geographies**

The thresholds for identifying minority geographies are either the minority population percentage within a census block group exceeding 50 percent or a minority population 10 percent greater than the average minority population percentage of the State of Rhode Island at 16.8 percent. Therefore, the meaningfully greater threshold is a minority population percentage greater than 26.8 percent. Among the 13 census block groups within 0.25 mile of the Project’s LOD, only one has a minority population percentage greater than 50 percent,

while five additional census block groups have minority populations meaningfully greater than the State average.

Across the Study Area, approximately 67 percent of the population is White, 9 percent Black or African American, 13 percent Hispanic or Latino, 2 percent Asian, 1 percent American Indian & Alaska Native, and 10 percent foreign-born.

### ***Low-Income Geographies***

Low-income geographies were identified as census block groups that have a median household income at or below the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (*HHS*) poverty guidelines based on their average household size (rounded to the next highest whole number). Average household sizes in the Study Area range from 2 to 3. According to *HHS*, the 2018 poverty guidelines for 2 and 3-person households are \$16,460 and \$20,780, respectively. Based on this threshold, two of the census block groups in the Study Area qualify as low-income geographies. These include block group 440050405.001, which has a median household income of \$19,453, and block group 440050410.001, which has a median household income of \$15,924.

In addition to the identification of low-income geographies above, there are many public or subsidized housing developments – some senior housing - within the Study Area. These developments are largely concentrated in the City of Newport’s North End neighborhood. They include, but may not be limited to:

- › Newport Heights, generally bounded by Maple Avenue and Sunset Boulevard and bisected by John H. Chafee Boulevard
- › Park Holm, generally located east of Hillside Ave and north of Eisenhower Street
- › 9 Tilley Avenue
- › Mumford Manor, 39 Farewell Street
- › Festival Field, 90 Girard Avenue
- › Ahepa 245 Apartments, 87 Girard Avenue
- › Coddington Point Condominiums, 231 Maple Avenue
- › 50 Washington Square
- › Harbor House, 111 Washington Street
- › Bayside Village, 143 3rd St
- › Rolling Green Village, 195 Admiral Kalbfus Road

In addition to the housing developments listed above, a mobile home park, Bay View Park, is situated along Coddington Highway, east of Sherman Lane.

### ***Geographies with Linguistic Isolation and Limited English Proficiency Persons***

In addition to the identification of minority and low-income geographies, this analysis provides data on linguistic isolation and limited English proficiency for the purposes of informing the Project’s public engagement efforts.

Linguistic isolation is defined as the percent of people living in households in which all persons older than 14 years of age who speak a non-English language and identify as speaking English less than “very well” according to the U.S. Census. Linguistic isolation within the Study Area is reported to be as high as 9 percent (block group ID 440050406.001). According to the latest ACS estimates, the prevalent non-English language spoken at home within the Study Area is Spanish (13 percent of persons age 5 and above), though Indo-European languages such as Albanian, Lithuanian, Pashto, Romanian, and Swedish (2 percent); Tagalog (1 percent); and French (1 percent) are also spoken. The City of Newport is also known to have a large population of native Portuguese speakers (1 percent city-wide).

Based on DOT Title VI guidance, limited English proficiency persons are defined as persons with “limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English.” For the purposes of this study, limited English proficiency persons were defined as those individuals age five years and older who identified as speaking English less than well (“not well” or “not at all”) based on ACS data. According to ACS estimates, there are approximately 269 limited English proficiency individuals in the Study Area, or approximately 2 percent of the Study Area residents age five and older.

### ***RIDEM Environmental Justice Focus Areas***

The Study Area intersects with an Environmental Justice Focus Area established by RIDEM. This area encompasses census block groups 440050405.001 and 440050412.001.

### **Socioeconomics**

#### ***Demographic and Economic Indicators***

There are 14,432 persons living within the Study Area, a total that has remained relatively stable since 2010. The median age in the Study Area is 35.3 years old, which is younger than the state median at 40.7 years, Newport County at 45.3 years, the City of Newport at 36.9 years, and the Town of Middletown at 44.8 years. For information on minority and low-income status, please see the Environmental Justice discussion above.

Whereas 58 percent of occupied residential units in Rhode Island are owner-occupied, only 31.4 percent of the units in the Study Area are occupied by their owners, with the remainder occupied by renters. The median home value in the Study Area (\$321,284) is higher than the state median home value (\$265,245) by 21.1 percent, but is lower than values in the other reference geographies and 36.9 percent lower than the City of Newport as a whole (\$439,785). There are 6,143 households within the Study Area, with a median income of \$57,144. This is lower than the median household income of the state at \$58,972, Newport County at \$76,030, the City of Newport at \$65,134, and the Town of Middletown at \$72,786. Per capita income in the Study Area is lower than all reference geographies at \$32,311. The unemployment rate in the Study Area (3.4 percent) is the same as Newport County and lower than the state at 5 percent and the Town of Middletown at 4.2 percent, but higher than the City of Newport at 2.7 percent.

#### ***Community Facilities and Public Services***

Within the Study Area, there are four educational facilities, 19 parks, six religious institutions, four medical facilities, and two community centers. Access to community facilities close to the Project's LOD is generally inhibited by the condition of existing surface transportation infrastructure, including sidewalks along JT Connell Highway and Admiral Kalbfus Road that are in fair/poor condition based on an inventory conducted as part of the Aquidneck Island Transportation Study.

There are also a number of public services within the Study Area. The City of Newport Water Division is responsible for drinking water, and the Water Pollution Control Division is responsible for wastewater treatment. The City's water distribution system also serves Middletown, and the City provides wastewater treatment on a wholesale basis to Middletown. Waste collection is managed by Clean City Newport in Newport and by the Refuse Collection Department in Middletown. National Grid is the primary electric and gas utility provider for both the City of Newport and the Town of Middletown. Within the Study Area, there is one fire station at 63 W Marlborough Street and one police station at 120 Broadway.

## **5.11 Visual Resources**

Provided below is a discussion on the visual resources within the Study Area. Please refer to Appendix B11, Visual Resources Technical Memorandum, for more information.

### **5.11.1 Study Area and Methodology**

#### **Study Area**

The Study Area for visual impact was defined as a 1/4-mile-wide buffer around the Project's LOD. This area is the most likely to experience visual impacts due to its adjacency to the Proposed Action footprint.

#### **Methodology**

Potential visual impacts of the Proposed Action were considered based on an understanding of local topographic conditions, land uses, location and configuration of existing buildings, and location and extent of existing landscape features.

The visual impact of a project represents the aesthetic effect that it has on those who experience it visually; this includes the residents of adjacent neighborhoods, workers in adjacent commercial districts, and visitors who pass by the site by vehicle, bicycle, or on foot throughout the day. The visual appearance of a project is central to the overall impact it has on its surrounding environment.

Factors that control visual impact generally involve property use restrictions (i.e., defining allowable uses and standards for such uses) to ensure compatibility among existing uses, as well as between existing and newly introduced uses. The most common visual impact control is zoning, which typically includes restrictions on building height, setback, etc. In Rhode Island, comprehensive plans typically serve as the basis of visual impact regulations.



### 5.11.2 Applicable Regulations and Criteria

NEPA requires federal agencies to undertake an assessment of the environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making decisions. Visual impacts are included among those environmental effects. FHWA's *Guidelines for the Visual Impact Assessment of Highway Projects* (FHWA 2015) was reviewed and used to guide the visual impact analysis.

### 5.11.3 Existing Conditions

The visual setting of the Study Area can be summarized as follows:

- The commercial area along JT Connell Highway north of the rotary includes a strip mall supported by a large surface parking lot, restaurants, cafes, auto-body shops, and other small businesses.
- The area near the intersection of Admiral Kalbfus Road and Girard Avenue contains a hotel and conference center, along with multiple condominium complexes to the north. The visual setting includes the existing exit ramp and overpass, which is currently also being used as de facto highway maintenance storage.
- South of Admiral Kalbfus Road and east of Farewell Street is a low-density suburban residential neighborhood consisting of detached single-family homes. The project site is only visible from certain locations within this neighborhood: specifically, looking north along Butler Street and Prescott Hall Road, and looking west along Garfield Street, each of which has a terminus abutting the existing bridge approach.
- South of Admiral Kalbfus Road and west of Farewell Street is another low-density suburban residential neighborhood consisting of detached single-family homes. The only part of the project site that is visible within this quadrant is Block E, which can be seen from Hunter Park and Van Zandt Avenue.
- Bayside Village is a low-income housing complex located just north of the Pell Bridge westbound on-ramp from JT Connell Highway. This project-based Section 8 community lies between 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and the decommissioned Old Colony and Newport Railroad line.
- The commercial area along JT Connell Highway south of the rotary contains a variety of businesses such as storage, auto-body shops, and restaurants. This area, located between Admiral Kalbfus Road and the cul-de-sac at Van Zandt Avenue, is within view of many of the Pell Bridge ramps and structures.

## 5.12 Air Quality

Provided below is a discussion of existing air quality resources in the Study Area. Please refer to Appendix B12, Air Technical Memorandum, for additional information.

## 5.12.1 Study Area and Methodology

### Study Area

Air quality is considered using two distinct study areas. The local Study Area considers pollutant concentrations at the microscale. The local air quality Study Area for the Proposed Action mirrors the intersection Study Area from the transportation analysis, as local air quality is most likely to change at intersections affected by the Proposed Action. The regional study area for air quality encompasses Newport County, where the Proposed Action is located, and is informed by the extent of the regional transportation study area. This regional study area is congruent with the geographical boundaries the EPA uses to designate the attainment status of criteria pollutants.

### Methodology

The air quality study included a local (microscale) air quality analysis of carbon monoxide (CO) to demonstrate compliance with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) (see Section 5.12.2 for more information on applicable regulations). The microscale analysis evaluated the evening peak hour, as volumes and delays across the study intersections were worse than those during the morning peak hour.

A mesoscale assessment was undertaken to assess the effect of the Proposed Action on regional air quality. All the vehicle emission factors used in the mesoscale analysis were obtained using EPA's MOVES2014a emissions model. The emissions calculated for this air quality assessment include Tier 3 emission standards as well as Rhode Island-specific conditions, such as the state vehicle registration age distribution and the statewide Inspection and Maintenance (I/M) Program. Oxides of nitrogen (NOX), volatile organic compounds (VOC), particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) and carbon dioxide (CO2) were considered. The daily vehicle miles travelled (VMT), the vehicle hours travelled (VHT) and link speeds for the Proposed Action were estimated through the traffic study assessment (VISSIM model).

The Proposed Action has low potential *Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSAT)* effects and, therefore, requires qualitative analysis only.

## 5.12.2 Applicable Regulations and Criteria

The Clean Air Act (CAA) is the primary statute that sets the nation's air quality standards for pollutants. The act protects the quality of the nation's air resources at both the federal and state level. It establishes the NAAQS, which set criteria for specified pollutants (known as "criteria pollutants") to maintain human and environmental health. These pollutants include carbon monoxide (CO), lead (Pb), nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), and particulate matter (PM), which includes PM with a diameter of 2.5 microns or less (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) and PM with a diameter of 10 microns or less (PM<sub>10</sub>). Of these pollutants, ozone, sulfur dioxide, and lead are not substantially or directly emitted by motor vehicles. In addition, analyses of transportation emissions generally consider oxides of nitrogen (NO<sub>x</sub>) rather than NO<sub>2</sub>.

EPA designates areas as either meeting or not meeting the NAAQS. An area with measured pollutant concentrations that are lower than the NAAQS is designated "attainment," and an area with pollutant concentrations that exceed the NAAQS is designated "nonattainment." Once air pollutant concentrations in a nonattainment area are reduced to levels that meet or are below the NAAQS, the EPA re-designates the area as a "maintenance" area. In nonattainment and maintenance areas, the state is responsible for developing a State Implementation Plan (SIP) that describes how the area will attain and maintain the standards by reducing pollutant emissions.

The 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) include a Transportation Conformity Rule that restricts federal funding to highway or transportation projects that do not conform to an applicable SIP. The responsibility of transportation conformity determination is vested in the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and state Department of Transportation, in this case RIDOT. The CAAA and the SIP require that a proposed project not:

- › Cause any new violation of the NAAQS;
- › Increase the frequency or severity of any existing violations; or
- › Delay attainment of any NAAQS.

### 5.12.3 Existing Conditions

Background pollutant concentrations were obtained from RIDEM, which maintains a network of ambient air monitors across the state. Background concentrations are added to project emission sources to determine the total pollutant concentration at a receptor location for comparison to the NAAQS. The background concentrations were obtained from the RIDEM Annual Monitoring Network Plan. Concentrations were chosen from the highest design values recommended by the network plan. Table 5-2 shows the background concentrations for pollutants that were considered in the air quality modeling, which are those directly emitted by motor vehicles. All background concentrations comply with the NAAQS, and the Study Area is designated as Attainment by the EPA.

**Table 5-2 Background Concentrations**

Pollutant	Units	Averaging Period	Background Concentration	NAAQS Standard
Carbon Monoxide	ppm	8-hour	1.8	9
	ppm	1-hour	3.0	35
Ozone	ppm	8-hour	0.070	0.070
Particulate Matter 2.5	µg/m <sup>3</sup>	Annual	9.3	12
	µg/m <sup>3</sup>	24-hour	24.5	35
Particulate Matter 10	µg/m <sup>3</sup>	24-hour	52	150

Source: Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management.

### 5.13 Noise and Vibration

Provided below is a discussion on noise and vibration in the Study Area. Please refer to Appendix B13, Noise Technical Memorandum, for additional information.

### **5.13.1 Study Area and Methodology**

#### **Study Area**

The Study Area for this resource assessment includes noise-sensitive land uses such as residences, schools, a health clinic, cemeteries, and recreational land uses within 500 feet of the roads that would be improved by the Proposed Action. This Study Area was determined to include all noise-sensitive receptor locations where noise levels may exceed the abatement criteria and where noise mitigation may be warranted. The Study Area roadways extend from Farewell Street at Van Zandt Avenue on the south to the driveway of RK Shopping Plaza on the north, and from Admiral Kalbfus Road at 3rd Street on the west to Malbone Street and Girard Avenue on the east. This area includes the ramps and approach roads on the east end of the Pell Bridge, Admiral Kalbfus Road, JT Connell Highway, and Farewell Street.

#### **Methodology**

The methodology for evaluating noise includes identifying noise-sensitive land uses, conducting measurements at key receptor locations, and modeling noise at all receptors within the study areas. Noise levels were predicted at all receptors using the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Traffic Noise Model (TNM) version 2.5. In areas where noise levels would approach or exceed acceptable thresholds, noise abatement measures such as noise barriers were evaluated.

Noise levels for this analysis are described in terms of A-weighted decibels, abbreviated as dBA. A-weighted decibels are an expression of the relative loudness of sounds as perceived by the human ear. A change of 3 dBA is generally the smallest difference perceptible to the human ear, while a change of 10 dBA is perceived as a doubling or halving of loudness. In addition, noise measurements are expressed as an equivalent continuous sound level (Leq), which represents the average sound energy of a fluctuating noise source (like traffic) over a period of time. Variable sounds like traffic noise are often measured in terms of Leq, which is essentially an average of sound levels over a given time period.

### **5.13.2 Applicable Regulations and Criteria**

The highway noise analysis was prepared in accordance with FHWA noise regulations, 23 CFR 772 (Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic and Construction Noise), and the RIDOT Noise Abatement Policy approved in June 2011. The RIDOT Noise Abatement Policy applies to all highway construction projects that receive federal aid or are otherwise approved by the FHWA. Under the policy, a Type I project is defined as one that includes one or more of the following:

- Construction of a highway in a new location
- The physical alteration of an existing highway that results in substantial horizontal or vertical alterations
- The addition of through-traffic lanes

- The addition of auxiliary lanes
- The addition or relocation of interchange lanes or ramps
- Restriping to add through-lane capacity
- Substantial alterations to toll plaza, or rest stops

Substantial vertical alteration is defined as changes to a highway elevation that would expose the line-of-sight between a receptor and the traffic noise sources. Substantial horizontal alteration is defined as relocating a highway so that the distance between the highway and the closest receptor is half or less that of the existing condition. If any portion of a project is determined to be a Type I project, then the entire project area is considered a Type I project. The Proposed Action meets the definition of a Type I highway project due to the addition of through-traffic lanes and substantial alteration of existing roadways. As a result, it is necessary to evaluate highway noise levels in accordance with FHWA regulations and the RIDOT policy.

FHWA has established noise abatement criteria (NAC) to help protect public health, welfare and livability from excessive vehicle traffic noise. Table 5-3 shows the FHWA Activity Categories, the description of the types of land uses within each category, and the NAC based on loudest-hour Leq noise levels. When noise levels approach or exceed the NAC, then abatement (mitigation) must be considered. These abatement criteria apply to design-year noise conditions for a proposed project, regardless of whether the project would increase or decrease noise conditions compared to the existing or No Action condition.

RIDOT defines noise levels "approaching the NAC" as those that are 1 dBA below the FHWA NAC. For example, if design-year noise levels would be 66 dBA Leq at a residential receptor, they would be considered to approach the NAC of 67 dBA Leq, and noise abatement would need to be considered. RIDOT also defines a substantial increase in noise as an increase in design-year noise levels that is greater than 10 dBA compared to existing levels. A substantial noise increase does not depend on whether the design-year noise levels approach or exceed the absolute NAC. Potential noise abatement measures must be considered for areas where noise levels approach or exceed the NAC and/or where there would be a substantial increase.

**Table 5-3. FHWA Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC)**

Activity Category	Loudest-Hour Noise Level (Leq)	Description of Activity Category
A	57 (Exterior)	Lands on which serenity and quiet are of extraordinary significance and serve an important public need and where the preservation of those qualities is essential if the area is to continue to serve its intended purposes.
B*	67 (Exterior)	Residential.
C*	67 (Exterior)	Active sport areas, amphitheaters, auditoriums, campgrounds, cemeteries, daycare centers, hospitals, libraries, medical facilities, parks, picnic areas, places of worship, playgrounds, public meeting rooms, public or nonprofit institutional structures, radio studios, recording studios, recreation areas, Section 4(f) sites, schools, television studios, trails, and trail crossings.
D	52 (Interior)	Auditoriums, day care centers, hospitals, libraries, medical facilities, places of worship, public meeting rooms, public or nonprofit institutional structures, radio studios, recording studios, schools, and television studios.
E*	72 (Exterior)	Hotels, motels, offices, restaurants/bars, and other developed lands, properties or activities not included in Categories A-D or F.
F	--	Agriculture, airports, bus yards, emergency services, industrial, logging, maintenance facilities, manufacturing, mining, rail yards, retail facilities, shipyards, utilities (water resources, water treatment, electrical), and warehousing.
G	--	Undeveloped lands that are not permitted.

\*Includes undeveloped lands permitted for this Activity Category

Source: 23 CFR Part 772, Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise.

### 5.13.3 Existing Conditions

Noise monitoring was conducted to characterize existing sound levels in the Pell Bridge Study Area. Monitoring was conducted at 19 receptor locations that are representative of noise exposure throughout the Study Area. Noise measurements were collected in two sessions during December 2017 and June 2018 in conformance with FHWA noise monitoring guidelines. Traffic counts were conducted during the measurements, including volumes, vehicle mix (automobiles, medium trucks, and heavy trucks), and observations of operating speeds. The predominant noise source in the Study Area included vehicles on the Pell Bridge approach (State Route 138) and on other major roadways such as Admiral Kalbfus Road and JT Connell Highway. Existing noise levels ranged from 51 to 66 dBA Leq at all locations with most receptors near 60 dBA Leq.

For purposes of analysis, the Study Area was subdivided into 13 Common Noise Environments (CNEs). CNEs are groups of receptors within the same NAC category that are exposed to similar noise sources and levels, have similar traffic volumes, mix and speed, and have similar topographic features. Each of the 13 CNEs contains receptor locations that are sensitive to highway noise.

Table 5-4 shows the loudest-hour existing noise levels at all CNEs. Existing noise levels range from 35 to 67 dBA Leq at all receptors. The loudest existing noise conditions are generally within CNEs B, D, K and M.

**Table 5-4 Existing Noise Level Summary**

CNE	Activity Category	Location	Existing Noise Levels (Leq, dBA)
A	B	America's Cup Avenue/ Farewell Street	56-61
B	B	Third Street (South of Van Zandt Avenue)	48-66
C	B/C	Sycamore Street	53-63
D	B	Cypress Street	60-65
E	B	JT Connell Highway/Van Zandt Avenue	46-63
F	B/C	Third Street (North of Van Zandt Avenue)	51-60
G	D	Newport Naval Health Clinic	50 (15 interior) <sup>A</sup>
H	B	Rolling Green Apartments	60
I	E	Mainstay Hotel	55
J	B/C/D/E	Newport Community College/Reliance Row	46-63 (28 interior) <sup>A</sup>
K	B	Bayview Park/King Road	45-67
L	B	JT Connell Highway (north extent)	47-59
M	C	Braman Cemetery and Island Cemetery	51-64

Source: VHB, 2018.

A Interior sound level in parenthesis assuming 35 dBA outdoor-to-indoor noise reduction for masonry building with double-pane windows

## 5.14 Hazardous Materials

Provided below is a discussion of existing hazardous materials in the Study Area. Please refer to Appendix B14, Hazardous Materials Technical Memorandum, for additional information.

### 5.14.1 Study Area and Methodology

#### Study Area

The Study Area includes the area within an approximately 1/8-mile radius of the LOD for the Proposed Action. Several Corridor Land Use Evaluations (CLUEs) were completed that collectively encompass the entire Study Area, and a Limited Subsurface Investigation (LSI) was completed within a significant portion of the area.

#### Methodology

CLUEs completed in 2013 and 2017 were used to assess the potential for oil and hazardous materials (OHM) in soils and groundwater within the Study Area. The 2013 CLUE identified several properties where a release of OHM had been documented or where overt evidence of a release or threat of release was identified. As a result, limited subsurface investigations in the vicinity of properties that were identified to have a potential to impact the Study Area were recommended. The 2017 CLUE determined that, overall, there were no significant changes to the findings of the 2013 CLUE and that the previous scope of work for the proposed subsurface investigation would sufficiently evaluate the environmental concerns documented in the CLUEs.

In November and December 2017, forty-four (44) soil borings were advanced and sixteen (16) groundwater monitoring wells were installed in the Study Area. Soil and groundwater samples were submitted for laboratory analysis for a variety of analytes. In October of 2018, a CLUE was performed for an additional area of proposed milling and paving along JT Connell Highway and Coddington Highway. The CLUE identified documented releases of OHM or observations of use/storage of OHM at properties located in close proximity to the additional review areas that may have the potential to impact future construction.

Information contained in Environmental Database Resources, Inc. (EDR) reports and additional publicly available environmental resources were reviewed for this analysis.

### **5.14.2 Applicable Regulations and Criteria**

The EPA is the federal governing body for environmental health in the United States; however, EPA relies on state regulations for small cleanups and other regulatory actions. The agency undertakes large-scale cleanups under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, or CERCLA (40 CFR Parts 300, 311, 355, 370, and 373, often referred to as the "Superfund" program). Superfund sites are contaminated by hazardous waste and have been placed on the National Priorities List (NPL) based on their threat or potential threat to human health and/or the environment. EPA may also manage cleanups for hazardous waste sites that have been abandoned and where no potentially responsible party can be identified, or in situations where the potentially responsible party is not able to finance cleanup operations due to bankruptcy or other financial issues. EPA also regulates hazardous substances under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA, 40 CFR Parts 240299) and the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA, 40 CFR Parts 745, 761, and 763).

Within Rhode Island, RIDEM is the primary governing body for environmental regulations. RIDEM's Bureau of Environmental Protection is responsible for preventing and minimizing pollution to, and monitoring the quality and overseeing the restoration of, water, air, and land. This includes oversight of the storage and management of oil and/or hazardous materials, as well as the assessment and remediation of contaminated sites. Such work is governed by the Rules and Regulations for the Investigation and Remediation of Hazardous Material Releases (DEM-DSR-01-93, as amended, also known as the Remediation Regulations). In addition to the Remediation Regulations, other programs within RIDEM, such as the Office of Water Resources, also have regulations and guidelines that are applicable to the Proposed Action. These include the Regulations for the Rhode Island Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (RIPDES), which establish discharge limitations for various activities, including point source discharges to receiving waters resulting from dewatering of construction sites.

### **5.14.3 Existing Conditions**

This section summarizes the types of hazardous material contamination or potential contamination that have been identified during previous studies for the Proposed Action.



### **Corridor Land Use Evaluation (CLUE), 2013**

A CLUE was completed to assess the potential for OHM in soils and groundwater within the Study Area at the request of RIDOT. The observations and conclusions of the 2013 CLUE were ultimately updated and summarized in a second CLUE in October 2017, described below.

### **CLUE, October 2017**

Review of historical aerial photographs and Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps indicates that portions of the Study Area were developed prior to 1884 for both residential and commercial uses, as well as the Old Colony & Newport Railroad. Site development in the area continued for over a century until the present-day conditions were reached. The existing ramps for the Pell Bridge were constructed between 1963 and 1968.

As part of the CLUE, a windshield survey was conducted to identify obvious signs of oil and hazardous material storage and other indications of environmental degradation. Some of the notable observations during the site reconnaissance are summarized below.

- › There are multiple gasoline and/or automobile service stations adjacent or in close proximity to the Study Area.
- › Viking Tours is located at the terminus of Connell Highway. The facility contains several garage bays for storage of buses and trolleys. A large concrete vault/tank is located in a fence enclosure in the parking lot.
- › A large aboveground storage tank (AST), possibly around 10,000 gallons, was observed behind the Waste Management Facility building at 65 Halsey Street.
- › The City of Newport Department of Public Works (DPW) stores various heavy machinery and construction-related supplies and debris on the property located at the western side of Halsey Street at the intersection of Admiral Kalbfus Road. The survey noted dumpsters, concrete structures (jersey barriers, etc.), soil piles, brick piles, plows, and sander trucks at the property.
- › The Newport Grand property at 150 Admiral Kalbfus Road includes a large building and associated paved parking area. The property, which is listed on the EDR report as "Jai Alai," has an Environmental Land Usage Restriction and is known to be located over a portion of the former Newport City Dump.
- › Two plastic aboveground storage tanks, size uncertain, of magnesium chloride (MgCl<sub>2</sub>) were observed adjacent to the Old Colony and Newport Railroad tracks.
- › Two residential properties are located at the corner of JT Connell Highway and Van Zandt Avenue. At least one of the homes appears to have a home heating oil storage tank, based on observations of vent and fill pipes along the side of the house.

The CLUE identified a number of properties that were listed on various databases associated with the release, storage and/or handling of OHM and were located in close proximity to the LOD. Listed databases included State Hazardous Waste Sites (SHWS), Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Generators and Non-Generators, Underground Storage Tanks (USTs), Above Ground Storage Tanks (ASTs), Leaking Underground Storage Tanks (LUSTs)

and Solid Waste Facilities and Landfills (SWF/LFs). Based on these findings, the following properties may have the potential to affect or be affected by the Proposed Action:

- › 105 Admiral Kalbfus Road – Rolling Green Village Apartment
- › 150 Admiral Kalbfus Road – Jai Alai/Newport Grand/Newport City Dump
- › 9 Connell Highway – Providence Gas Newport Division/Aardvark Antiques
- › 10 Connell Highway - Fred's Texaco/K and K Food Mart
- › 88 Connell Highway – Viking Tours of Newport/Haslam Texaco
- › 111 Connell Highway – U-Haul International
- › 138 JT Connell Highway – Shell Service Station
- › 163 JT Connell Highway – Mobil Gasoline Station
- › 166 Connell Highway – Barry Pontiac Buick, Inc.
- › 199 Connell Highway – R.K. Festival Shoppes/Walmart/Newport Mall/Stop & Shop
- › 65 Halsey Street – Newport Transfer Station/Safeway System, Inc./Waste Management of Newport
- › 80 Halsey Street – Newport Public Works Garage/City of Newport Igloo
- › 143 Third Street – Bayside Village
- › 58 Van Zandt Avenue – B & C Auto/Bridge Citgo

Based on the findings of the CLUE, subsurface investigations, including drilling, soil sampling, monitoring well installation and groundwater sampling, were conducted to understand and characterize the subsurface conditions throughout the Study Area.

#### **Limited Site Investigation (LSI), November and December 2017**

The LSI included the advancement of forty-four (44) soil borings, sixteen (16) of which were constructed as groundwater monitoring wells, in November and December of 2017. The LSI was completed in areas expected to require excavation for Project construction based on the preferred layout at the time the investigation was completed. Soil and groundwater from the borings and wells were analyzed and compared to applicable RIDEM regulatory criteria set forth in the Remediation Regulations. Overall findings regarding soil and groundwater sampling and analysis have been summarized below.

#### ***Soil Data***

- › Total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) were detected in all but six of the soil borings. Two of the borings exceeded applicable RIDEM Residential Direct Exposure Criteria (RDEC). The highest TPH value, 31,000 mg/kg, was present in boring B-16 from 5 to 7.5 feet below grade, and was the only exceedance of the RIDEM Industrial/Commercial Direct Exposure Criteria (I/CDEC), which also exceeded the Upper Concentration Limit (UCL). All other detections of TPH were below the RIDEM criteria.
- › PCBs were analyzed in three of the 44 borings. PCBs were detected in two of the three samples but did not exceed applicable RIDEM criteria.

#### ***Metals***

- › Arsenic was detected above RIDEM RDEC and the I/CDEC in 24 of the 44 borings. The highest concentration of arsenic in soil, 29 mg/kg, was detected at boring B-22 from 5 to 7 feet below grade.
- › Lead was detected above applicable RIDEM RDEC and/or I/CDEC in 16 of the 44 borings. The highest concentration of lead in soil, 3,600 mg/kg, was detected at boring B-26 from 7.5 to 10 feet below grade.
- › Copper was detected in every soil sample; however, only boring B-16, in which copper was reported at 9,700 mg/kg from 0 to 2.5 feet below grade, exceeded the RIDEM RDEC.
- › Antimony was detected in several borings but was only detected above the RIDEM RDEC at boring B-26 from 7.5 to 10 feet below grade. All other detections were below applicable RIDEM standards.
- › Thallium was detected in several borings but was only detected above RIDEM RDEC at boring B-1 from 7.5 to 10 feet below grade. All other detections were below applicable RIDEM standards.
- › Various other metals were detected above the laboratory detection limits throughout the Study Area; however, all these detections were below applicable RIDEM criteria.

#### ***Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)***

- › Various VOC constituents were detected in 24 of the 44 soil borings. It should be noted, however, that in nine of those borings, the only detections were for acetone and/or methylene chloride. Both constituents are common laboratory contaminants, as they are used for various cleaning processes.
- › Naphthalene was the only constituent that was detected above RIDEM RDEC criteria. Naphthalene was detected in boring B-26 from 7.5 to 10 feet below grade at a concentration of 120 mg/kg, exceeding the RIDEM RDEC.

#### ***Semi-Volatile Organic Compounds (SVOCs) and Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs)***

- › Various SVOC constituents were detected in 21 of the 44 soil borings.
- › Benzo(a)anthracene, benzo(a)pyrene, benzo(b)fluoranthene, benzo(k)fluoranthene, benzo(g,h,i)perylene, chrysene, dibenzo(a,h)anthracene, fluoranthene, indeno(1,2,3-cd)pyrene, phenanthrene, and pyrene were detected in several of the borings at concentrations above the RIDEM RDEC.
- › Benzo(a)anthracene, benzo(a)pyrene, benzo(b)fluoranthene, benzo(k)fluoranthene, dibenzo(a,h)anthracene, and indeno(1,2,3-cd)pyrene were detected in several of the borings at concentrations above the RIDEM I/CDEC.

#### ***Groundwater Data***

- › A variety of VOC constituents were detected in monitoring wells MW-3 and MW-15; however, all of the detections were below applicable RIDEM GB Groundwater Objectives.
- › Other than MW-3 and MW-15, several VOC constituents were also detected in seven of the 14 remaining monitoring wells. All these concentrations were at levels below applicable RIDEM GB Groundwater Objectives.

- › Although no groundwater concentrations were reported above the applicable Remediation Regulation objectives, some compounds were detected at levels that would likely exceed RIPDES discharge limitations, thereby requiring a Remediation General Permit should dewatering and a point source discharge to a surface water be proposed. Additional testing would be necessary to address RIPDES permit applicability and groundwater treatment requirements. Alternatively, impacted groundwater, if removed from the subsurface during dewatering activities to facilitate construction, could be containerized, characterized, and transported off-site to a licensed disposal facility.

### **CLUE, October 2018**

A CLUE was completed in October 2018 that included an additional portion of the Study Area, based on some changes in the project layout. This area includes the entrance to the R.K. Center shopping plaza at 199 JT Connell Highway, proceeding north until the road becomes Coddington Highway and ultimately ending at the intersection of West Main Road and Coddington Highway in Middletown. Land uses in this area includes, but are not necessarily limited to, commercial properties (restaurants, shopping plazas, a brewery, a storage facility, etc.), residential properties, the Community College of Rhode Island's Newport Campus, the Newport Water Pollution Control Plant, and Naval Station Newport.

The CLUE concluded that the following properties were listed on various databases associated with the release, storage and/or handling of OHM and were located in close proximity to the LOD. Listed databases included the Superfund Enterprise Management System (SEMS) Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Information System (CERCLIS), RCRA Generators and Non-Generators, SHWS, UST, AST and LUST. Based on these findings, the following properties may have the potential to affect or be affected by the Proposed Action:

- › 10 Coddington Highway – Getty Service Station #68002 (a/k/a Middletown Getty Inc.)
- › Farewell Avenue & Conrail Tracks – Newport Naval Educational and Training Center (and DOD/NETC/Coddington Rubble Fill)
- › 350 Coddington Highway (RIPTA Facility garage & pumping station)
- › 1 John H Chafee Boulevard – Community College of Rhode Island – Newport Campus
- › 312 JT Connell Highway – Newport Biodiesel Inc. (a/k/a Moriarty's LLC)
- › 286 JT Connell Highway – Bell Atlantic (Nynex; Verizon New England/Maintenance Facility; National Grid Property – Newport)
- › 250 JT Connell Highway – City of Newport Water Pollution Control Plant (a/k/a City of Newport WWTF; United Water)

## **5.15 Climate Change/Resiliency**

Provided below is a discussion on climate change, sea level rise, and resiliency in the Study Area. Please refer to Appendix B15, Climate Technical Memorandum, for additional information.

### 5.15.1 Study Area and Methodology

#### Study Area

The Study Area for inventorying the road structures subject to sea level rise includes the area around the Pell Bridge ramp and approaches in the City of Newport; associated roadways including Admiral Kalbfus Road, JT Connell Highway, and Halsey Street; and the Newport Secondary Track Rail Line.

#### Methodology

Several studies and analyses pertinent to the region were used to understand the anticipated climate conditions in Newport. These studies included:

- › Federal Highway Administration Order 5520: Policy on Transportation System Preparedness and Resilience to Climate Change and Extreme Weather Events
- › U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Highways in the Coastal Environment: Assessing Extreme Events
- › National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Centers for Environmental Information, Rhode Island State Summary
- › Vulnerability of Transportation Assets to Sea Level Rise (Technical Paper 164, Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning)
- › Vulnerability of Municipal Transportation Assets to Sea Level Rise and Storm Surge (Technical Paper 167, Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning)
- › Advanced STORMTOOLS: Online mapping program for estimating coastal inundation in Rhode Island under various scenarios
- › City of Newport's Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2016 Update
- › City of Newport's Comprehensive Land Use Plan, 2017

### 5.15.2 Applicable Regulations and Criteria

The Rhode Island CRMC recently began requiring sea level rise analyses for projects subject to coastal hazards. According to final rule *650-RICM-20-00-1.1.6(I)*, new roadway projects that occur within CRMC's jurisdiction will now require the submission of the CRMC coastal hazard application worksheet.

In 2014, FHWA Order 5520 established a policy on preparedness and resilience to climate change. This Order requires "incorporating consideration of climate change and extreme weather event preparedness and resilience in all FHWA programs, policies, and activities within the framework of existing laws, regulations, and guidance."

There are no current federal statutes that require federally-funded or -assisted projects to be built to withstand increases in sea level rise.

### 5.15.3 Existing Conditions

#### Sea Level Rise

Sea level rise is caused by thermal expansion of sea water and the addition of fresh water from melted land ice, both impacted by changing climate conditions. Rising sea level is a problem for coastal communities like Newport, as it increases the risk for flooding and the landward extent of storm surge during hurricanes and Nor'easters.

Although the Study Area has a general elevation of less than 20 feet (NAVD88), the coastal topography along Narragansett Bay restricts the landward impact of sea level rise. With a rise of three feet, impacts would be limited to the immediate coastal area. An exception occurs where an unnamed stream enters the bay just west of the 3rd Street Extension. The STORMTOOLS online mapping tool estimates that three feet of sea level rise would inundate the area along the stream at the end of Rolling Green Road.

According to the analysis done by the Rhode Island Department of Administration, State Highway 138 East/West and the on-ramp to Route 138 West are not vulnerable to three feet of sea level rise. The Newport Secondary Track in Newport would also not be directly impacted by up to three feet of sea level rise.

#### Storm Surge

The impacts of storm surge from a 1 percent annual chance storm (100-year event) would likely extend inland into the entire Study Area even without any sea level rise. However, it is worth noting that the project is located outside of the Limit of Moderate Wave Action (LiMWA) and damage from wave action is predicted to be negligible.

The STORMTOOLS online mapper visually displays the extent and elevation of the 100-year storm surge with three feet of sea level rise. Using this mapping data, the flood depth during a major storm surge event at the Admiral Kalbfus/JT Connell Highway rotary is estimated to be 7.59 feet above current ground elevation. The flood depth at the end of the local business access road is estimated to be 3.09 feet above ground elevation. It is anticipated that under three feet of sea level rise, storm surge would flood at-grade access to the elevated road structures.

#### Extreme Temperatures

Between 1895 and 2011, air temperatures in New England increased by almost two degrees Fahrenheit. By 2050, it is anticipated that Rhode Island cities such as Newport will experience 40 days of extreme heat a year, which is four times the current average of 10 days. Longer and hotter heat waves may lead to more pavement cracking or road buckling.

#### Warmer Sea Surface Temperatures

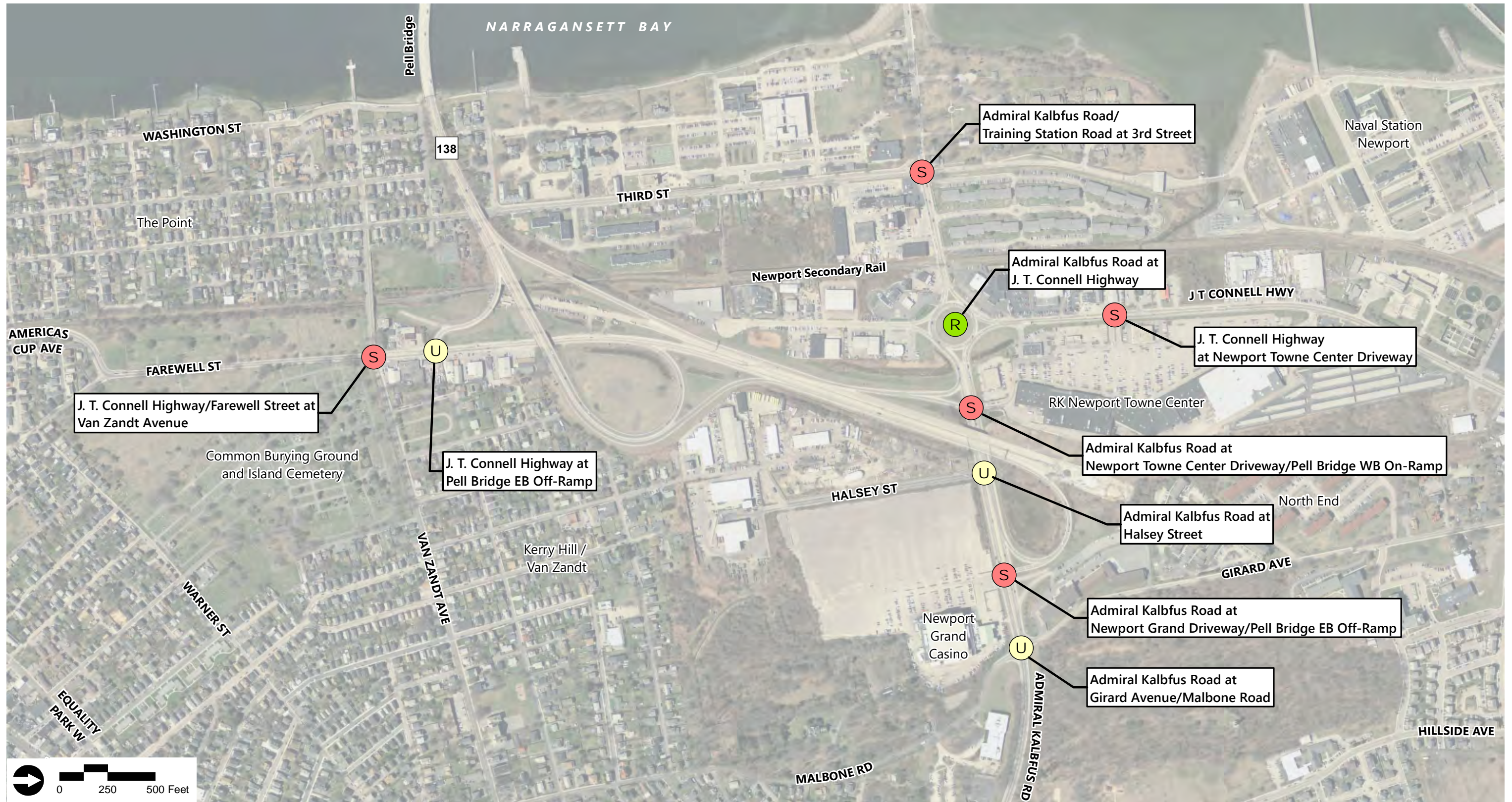
The average global sea temperature has generally risen from 1880 to 2015. During the past three decades, sea surface temperatures have been consistently higher than at any other time during the recorded period. The average ocean surface temperature is projected to rise through the early 21st century based on a range of greenhouse gas emission scenarios.

### **Increased Rainfall**

As climate patterns change, Rhode Island is predicted to see an increase in annual precipitation and a greater number of extreme precipitation events. This could lead to more frequent washouts of unpaved surfaces and rutting of paved surfaces. carried forward as the Proposed Action for the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches.

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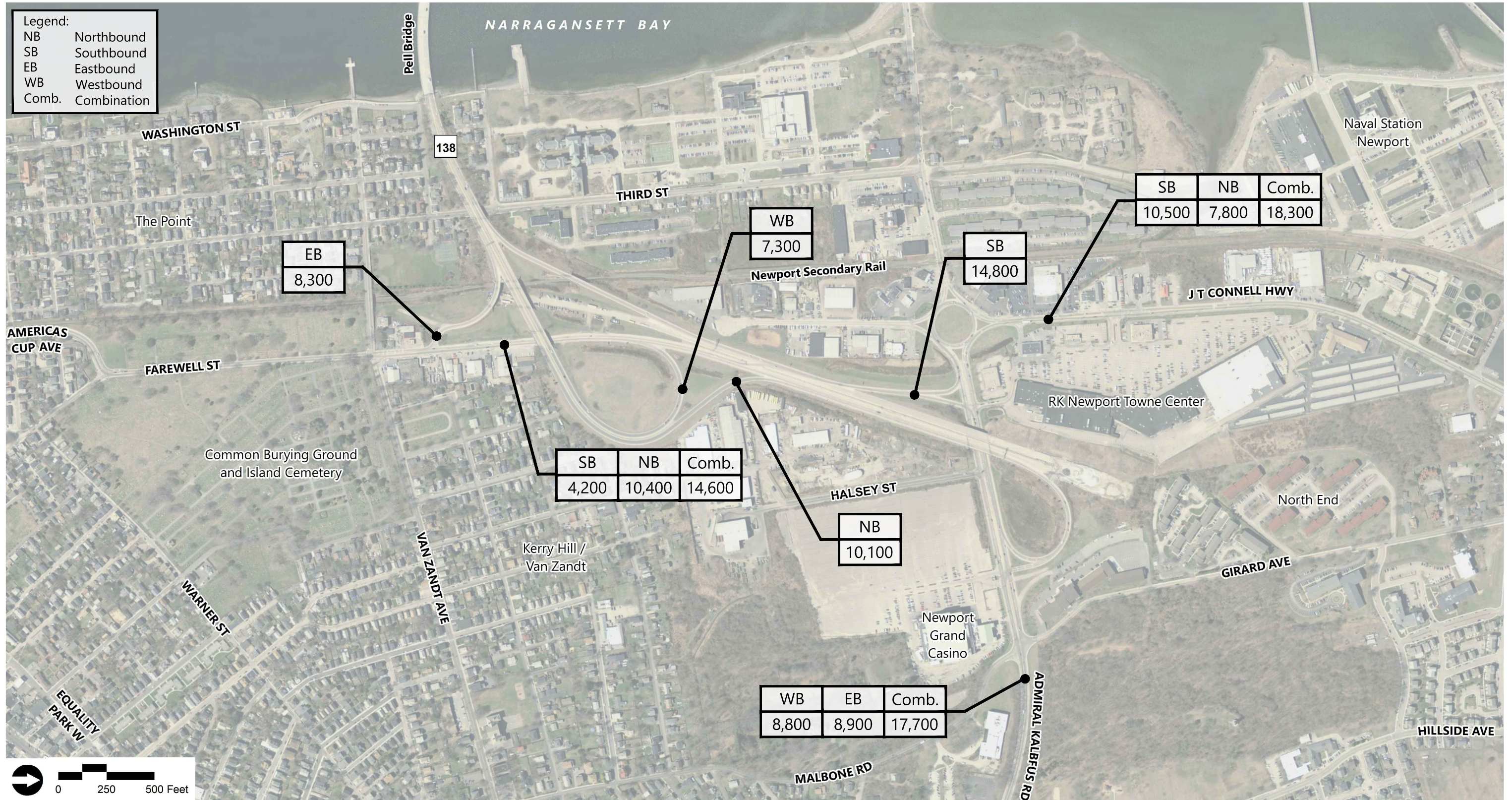
Aerial Source: RIGIS



Figure 5-1  
Study Area Intersections

**Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches  
Newport/Middletown, Rhode Island**

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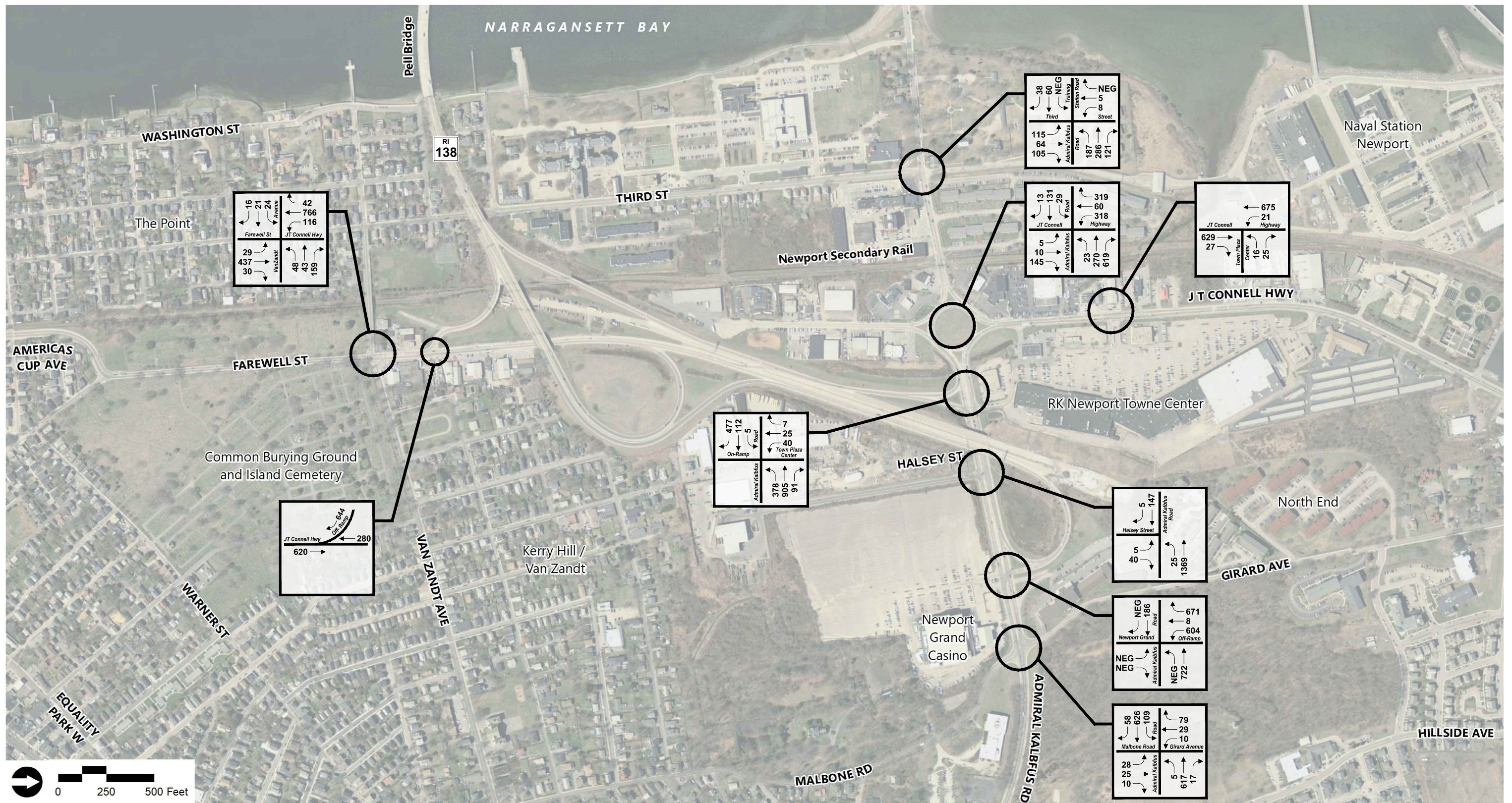
Aerial Source: RIGIS  
 Data Sources: Collected by Precision Data Industries LLC, compiled by VHB.

Note:  
 All volumes shown represent vehicles per day.



Figure 5-2  
 Existing Average Daily Traffic

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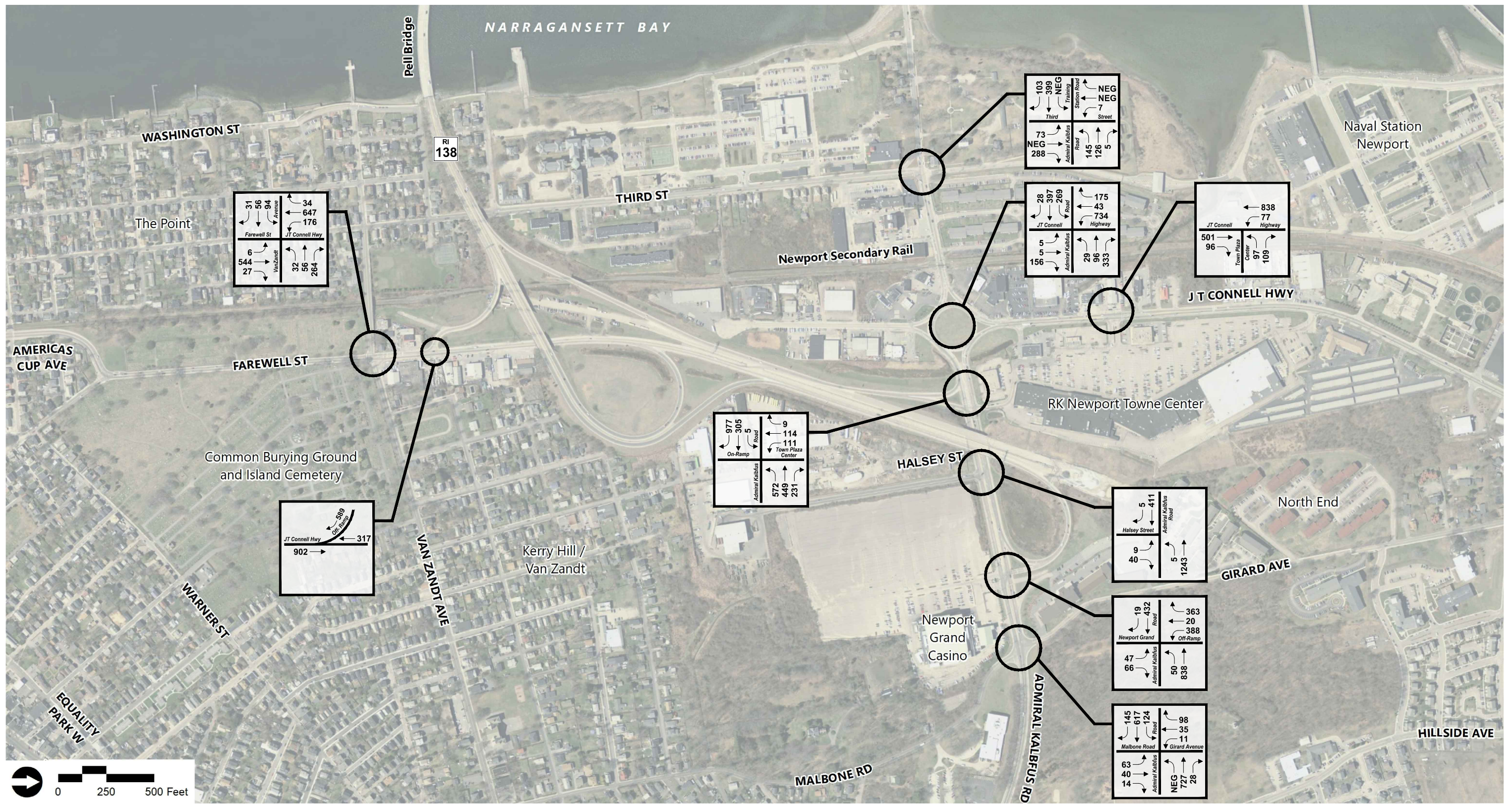
Aerial Source: RIGIS  
 Data Source: Collected by Precision Data Industries LLC, compiled by VHB



Figure 5-3  
 Existing Conditions  
 Weekday Morning Peak Hour Traffic Volumes

**Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches  
 Newport/Middletown, Rhode Island**

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Aerial Source: RIGIS  
Data Source: Collected by Precision Data Industries LLC, compiled by VHB

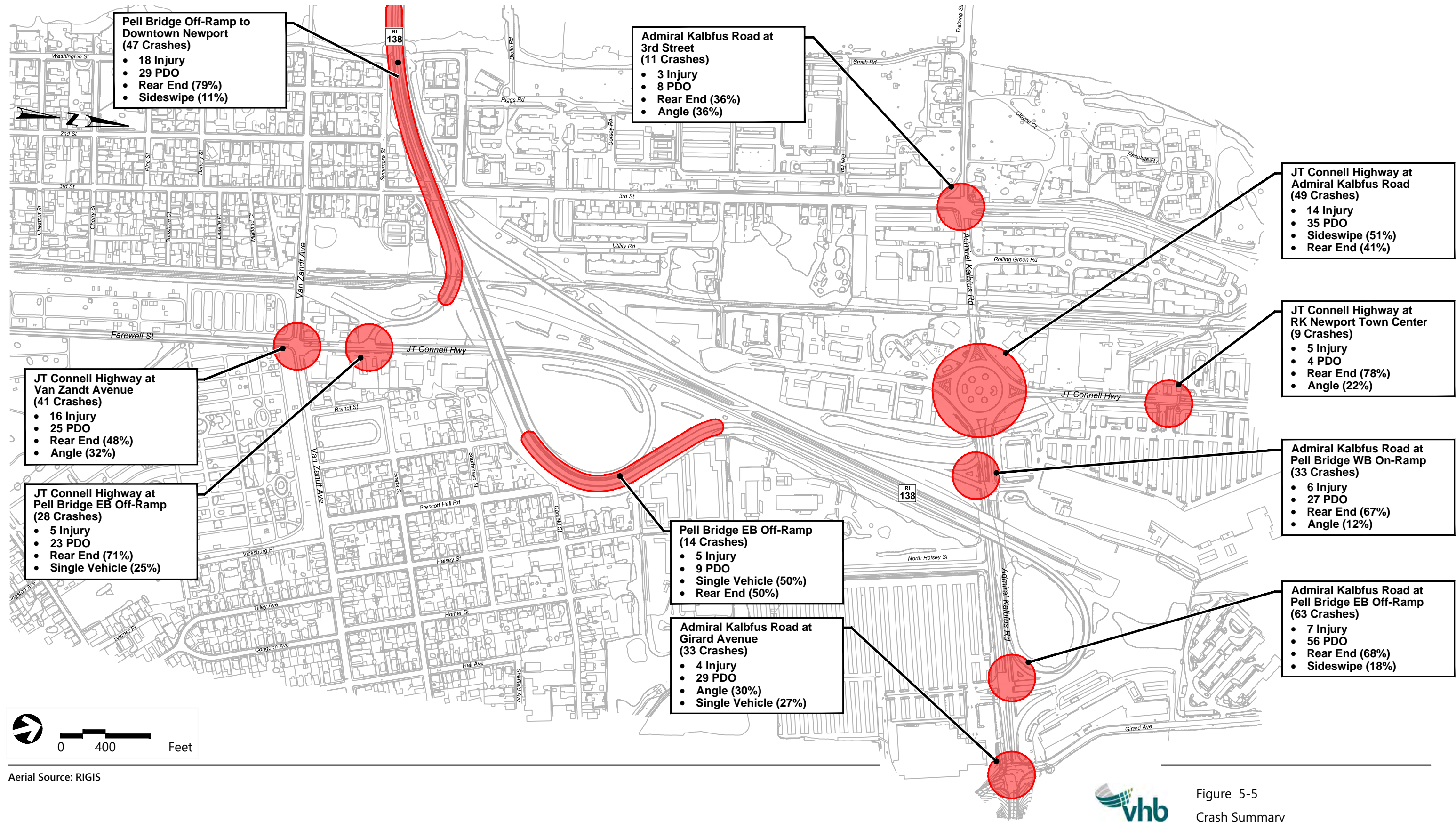


Figure 5-4  
Existing Conditions  
Weekday Evening Peak Hour Traffic Volumes

Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches  
Newport/Middletown, Rhode Island

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Aerial Source: RIGIS



Figure 5-5  
Crash Summary  
Existing Conditions

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Aerial Source: RIGIS  
 Source: VISSIM 8 Node Evaluation. Compiled VHB Based on Average of 10 VISSIM Model Runs.

**Intersection Operations**

- Level of Service A/B
- Level of Service C/D
- Level of Service E/F

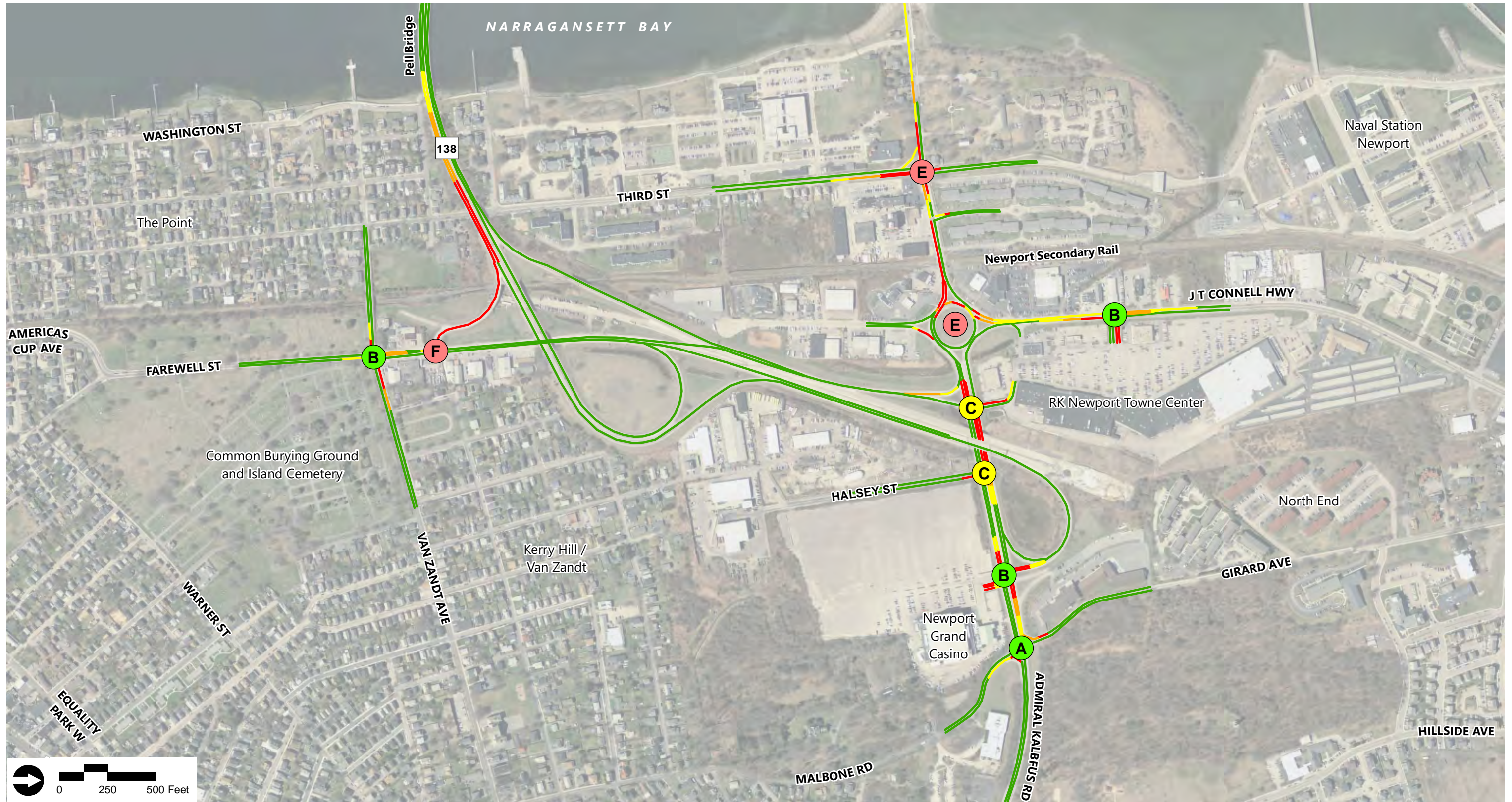
**Existing Morning Average Speeds**

- 0-10 MPH
- 11-15 MPH
- 16-25 MPH
- >25 MPH



Figure 5-6  
 Network Operations  
 Existing Conditions  
 Weekday Morning  
**Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches  
 Newport/Middletown, Rhode Island**

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Aerial Source: RIGIS  
 Source: VISSIM 8 Node Evaluation. Compiled VHB Based on Average of 10 VISSIM Model Runs.

**Intersection Operations**

- Level of Service A/B
- Level of Service C/D
- Level of Service E/F

**Existing Evening Average Speeds**

- 0-10 MPH
- 11-15 MPH
- 16-25 MPH
- > 25 MPH



Figure 5-7  
 Network Operations  
 Existing Conditions  
 Weekday Evening  
**Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches  
 Newport/Middletown, Rhode Island**

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# 6

## Environmental Consequences

This section describes the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the Proposed Action on the affected environment using the methodologies discussed in Chapter 5. The impacts of the Proposed Action were used to then develop the potential measures that could be taken to mitigate these impacts, which are described in Chapter 7.

### 6.1 Transportation Network

#### 6.1.1 Direct Impacts

##### **No Action**

This section establishes the 2040 “No Action” condition to provide a 2040 baseline condition against which potential impacts of the Proposed Action can be evaluated. Projected future traffic volumes without the Proposed Action were developed by applying an annual growth rate to the existing volumes to account for background growth in traffic, population, and planned development projects.

Historic data suggests a growth rate of 0.44 percent per year on roadways within the Study Area, and growth on the Pell Bridge of 0.55 percent per year (approximately 0.5 percent overall). These annual growth rates take into account some development in the area, in particular the North End Master Plan and the Innovation Hub. While planning for this project, the City of Newport has refined the development program for the Innovation Hub and identified potential parcels that would be created by the reconstruction of the Proposed Action and redevelopment of the Newport Grand. Under the No Action Alternative, these development opportunities would not come to fruition.

An average annual growth rate of 0.25 percent was applied to existing volumes to project the 2040 No Action traffic volumes. This growth rate represents a rate about half of the rate suggested by historical data. A rate of 0.25 percent annually until the year 2040 is a very conservative estimate of population and ambient traffic growth. While there could be some years of strong growth, it is conservative to assume that growth of 0.25 percent annually can be sustained over the next 20 years.

The 2040 No Action traffic volumes are illustrated in Figure 6-1 and Figure 6-2. More detailed discussion of the additional traffic generated by the Innovation Hub and the redevelopment of the Newport Grand is provided under the 2040 Proposed Action discussion.

### ***Traffic Operations Analysis***

As described in Chapter 5, the calibrated VISSIM traffic simulation model was used as a base to test and evaluate future transportation conditions by adjusting roadway geometry, where needed, and traffic conditions. Figures 6-3 and 6-4 show the morning and evening peak hour traffic operations results.

### ***Intersection Operations Summary***

Under the No Action condition, traffic operations will continue to deteriorate at critical locations. As shown in Table 6-1, the Pell Bridge eastbound off-ramp will continue to operate at LOS F, with queues extending further on the Pell Bridge during both the morning and evening peak periods.

Under the No Action condition, travel time and delays are expected to increase, and the average speed is expected to decrease. As illustrated in Figures 6-3 and 6-4, the average speed on the Pell Bridge eastbound approach, JT Connell Highway, and Admiral Kalbfus Road would all decrease due to growing traffic volumes.

## **Proposed Action**

### ***Trip Generation***

As described in Chapter 3, the Proposed Action would involve the reconstruction of bridge ramps, construction of new roadway, intersection improvements to reconfigure the Pell Bridge approach roads and ramps to eliminate/reduce the existing queuing onto Pell Bridge, and improvements to traffic circulation and connections through the project area while providing land area for redevelopment. The new roadway connections and intersections would provide alternate connections and access. However, due to limited regional north-south and east-west connections, the traffic pattern changes would alter only local movements and access within the Study Area. The Proposed Action is not projected to change regional travel patterns.



**Table 6-1 2040 No Action Weekday Conditions**

Intersection Control Type	Intersection	Peak Hour	Existing Conditions			2040 No Action		
			Delay <sup>1</sup>	LOS <sup>2</sup>	LOS E/F Movements	Delay <sup>1</sup>	LOS <sup>2</sup>	LOS E/F Movements
Stop Controlled	J. T. Connell Highway at Pell Bridge EB off-ramp	AM	> 100	F	EB L/R	> 100	F	EB L/R
		PM	71	F	EB L/R	> 100	F	EB L/R
Signal Controlled	J. T. Connell Highway/Farewell Street at Van Zandt Avenue	AM	14	B		16	B	
		PM	14	B		16	B	
Signal Controlled	J. T. Connell Highway at Newport Towne Center Main Drive	AM	19	B		22	C	
		PM	19	B		28	C	
Signal Controlled	Admiral Kalbfus Road/Training Station Road at 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street	AM	11	B		14	B	
		PM	75	E	EB L/T/R and NB R	> 100	F	EB L/T/R and NB R
Roundabout/Rotary <sup>3</sup>	Admiral Kalbfus Road at J. T. Connell Highway	AM	5	A		7	A	
		PM	47	E	EB L/T/R	62	F	EB L/T/R WB L/T/R SB L/T/R
Signal Controlled	Admiral Kalbfus Road at Newport Towne Center South Drive/on-ramp	AM	11	B		16	B	
		PM	22	C		28	C	WB L
Stop Controlled	Admiral Kalbfus Road at Halsey Street	AM	3	A		5	A	
		PM	18	C	NB L/R	42	E	WB L/T NB L/R
Signal Controlled	Admiral Kalbfus Rd at Newport Grand Drive/off-ramp	AM	18	B		19	B	
		PM	18	B		26	C	
Stop Controlled	Admiral Kalbfus Road at Girard Avenue/Malbone Road	AM	3	A		3	A	
		PM	8	A	NB L/T/R	26	D	WB L/T NB L/T/R

Source: VISSIM 8 Node Evaluation. Compiled by VHB based on the average of 10 VISSIM model runs.

- 1 Delay = Vehicle delay expressed in seconds per vehicle
- 2 LOS = Estimated Level of service
- 3 LOS criteria for roundabout/rotary is the same of LOS criteria for unsignalized intersection

To estimate the traffic impacts of the Proposed Action, it is necessary to determine the traffic volumes that may be generated due to new development that would occur on the parcels no longer needed for road right-of-way. The potential traffic generated by this development would depend on numerous factors such as the size of the future parcels, the building program, access, and the economic climate (which will dictate the redevelopment timeline). As a result, traffic from future redevelopment of these parcels was not evaluated in the 2040 traffic analysis. Due to the uncertainty in the development timeline and the preliminary nature of the building program, it is assumed that only a 300-space Park and Ride and the planned redevelopment of the Newport Grand site with a 250-room hotel and 150,000 square feet of retail space, would occur in the same time frame as the Proposed Action.

Using ITE Trip Generation regression equations/rates for each land use, the morning and evening peak hour vehicle trips for the redeveloped areas were estimated and are summarized in Table 6-2.

**Table 6-2 Trip Generation Summary**

Parcel	Acres	Land Use	Gross Square Footage	AM Peak Hour			PM Peak Hour		
				Total	Enter	Exit	Total	Enter	Exit
D	5	Park & Ride (LUC 090)	<b>300 spaces</b>	214	169	45	188	47	141
E	3	Open Space	-						
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>		<b>733,000</b>	214	169	45	188	47	141
<b>Newport Grand</b>									
Newport Grand		Hotel (LUC 310)	<b>250 rooms</b>	120	71	49	161	82	79
		Retail (LUC 820)	150,000	227	141	86	734	352	382
		<b>Total</b>	<b>150,000</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>895</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>461</b>

Source: ITE Trip Generation Manual

Not all the traffic generated by the redevelopment would be new traffic on Study Area roadways. A portion of the vehicle trips generated would be drawn from the existing traffic stream passing through the area in the form of pass-by trips. Pass-by trips are vehicle trips already in the network that would visit destinations in the redeveloped areas en route to another destination. These trips are not additional trips added to the network, but rather existing trips which are reflected in the Proposed Action traffic volumes. In order to present a conservative analysis, 40 percent of the traffic generated by the new commercial/retail uses was assumed to be pass-by trips.

The traffic generated by the redevelopment is assigned to the Proposed Action Condition roadway network based origin-destination data, field operations, and local knowledge of the traffic patterns in the area.

### **Traffic Volumes**

The 2040 Proposed Action traffic volumes were determined by adding new and pass-by trips to the No Action 2040 traffic volumes. This includes the redistributed 2040 traffic volumes and the traffic volumes generated by the proposed Park and Ride and the redevelopment of the Newport Grand. A new traffic signal on JT Connell Highway located just north of the Pell Bridge approach ramp will be installed to provide access to the Park & Ride. A new traffic signal will also be installed on Halsey Street to provide access to the Newport Grand property and an easement to the waste management facility. The Proposed Action morning and evening peak hour traffic volumes are illustrated in Figure 6-5 and Figure 6-6, respectively.

### **Traffic Operations Analysis**

As described in Chapter 5, the calibrated VISSIM traffic simulation model was used as a base to test and evaluate future transportation conditions. The model was adjusted to evaluate the proposed roadway improvements and future traffic conditions. The VISSIM model was

updated to reflect the Proposed Action roadway network, the projected changes in traffic flow resulting from the redistribution of traffic, and the projected traffic volumes generated by the redevelopment. The revised VISSIM model was used to project 2040 conditions during the weekday morning and evening peak hour and the results of the operational analysis.

The results of the 2040 Proposed Action conditions are summarized in Table 6-3 and depicted in Figures 6-7 and 6-8. With the proposed improvements, the existing queuing on the ramp to Downtown Newport would be eliminated and/or shifted to the new ramp connector. Delays and queues at JT Connell Highway at Van Zandt Avenue would continue to increase. Degraded operations at this location are attributed to increased traffic flow along JT Connell Highway (improved throughput), new traffic generated by the Newport Grand redevelopment and Park and Ride, and a lack of capacity improvements at the intersection with Van Zandt Avenue.

By improving the operations along JT Connell Highway and Admiral Kalbfus Road, the delays and queue at the intersections along these corridors would decrease. All Study Area intersections are expected to operate at an overall LOS D or better.

The proposed reconstruction of the existing rotary at JT Connell Highway at Admiral Kalbfus Road into a modern roundabout and the new roadway network system would introduce more traffic northbound on JT Connell Highway approaching the intersection. The reconstructed roundabout would also introduce signalized pedestrian/bicyclist crossings of the northern and western legs of the roundabout as part of the proposed shared-use path.

The southern Newport Towne Center driveway is currently signalized with Admiral Kalbfus Road. Due to the proximity to the roundabout, this intersection is proposed to be closed and the access will be relocated to serve as the northern leg of the Admiral Kalbfus Road intersection with Halsey Street.

### **Predictive Crash Analysis**

The Highway Safety Manual (HSM) predictive methodology was used to compare the No Action Alternative with the Proposed Action using projected traffic volumes for 2040. The HSM predictive methodology uses Safety Performance Functions (SPFs) and Crash Modification Factors (CMFs) to predict crash frequency at a roadway facility as a function of traffic, geometrics, and roadside characteristics. A review of the results shows that the Proposed Action is expected to reduce fatal and injury crashes by 36 percent compared to the No Action alternative. Property damage-only crashes were predicted to be reduced by 4 percent between the Proposed Action and No Action alternatives.

**Table 6-3 2040 Proposed Action Weekday Conditions**

Intersection Control Type	Intersection	Peak Hour	2040 No Action			2040 Proposed Action		
			Delay <sup>1</sup>	LOS <sup>2</sup>	LOS E/F Movements	Delay <sup>1</sup>	LOS <sup>2</sup>	LOS E/F Movements
Stop Controlled	J. T. Connell Highway at Pell Bridge EB off-ramp	AM	> 100	F	EB L/R	<b>Remove Existing Off-Ramp</b>		
		PM	> 100	F	EB L/R			
Signal Controlled	J. T. Connell Highway/ Farewell Street at Van Zandt Avenue	AM	16	B		26	C	
		PM	16	B		35	D	<b>WB L/T/R</b>
Signal Controlled	J. T. Connell Highway at Newport Towne Center Main Drive	AM	22	C		3	A	
		PM	28	C		9	A	
Signal Controlled	Admiral Kalbfus Road/Training Station Road at 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street	AM	14	B		7	A	
		PM	> 100	F	<b>EB L/T/R and NB R</b>	4	A	
Roundabout/ Rotary <sup>3</sup>	Admiral Kalbfus Road at J. T. Connell Highway	AM	7	A		5	A	
		PM	<b>62</b>	F	<b>EB L/T/R WB L/T/R SB L/T/R</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>B</b>	
Signal Controlled	Admiral Kalbfus Road at Newport Towne Center South Drive/on-ramp	AM	16	B		<b>Remove Signal and Convert to Right-in/Right- out</b>		
		PM	28	C	<b>WB L</b>			
Stop Controlled	Admiral Kalbfus Road at Halsey Street/Newport Towne Center South Drive	AM	5	A		16	B <sup>4</sup>	
		PM	<b>42</b>	E	<b>WB L/T NB L/R</b>	24	B <sup>4</sup>	<b>SB L/T/R</b>
Signal Controlled	Admiral Kalbfus Road at Newport Grand Drive/off-ramp	AM	19	B		4	A <sup>5</sup>	
		PM	26	C		18	B <sup>5</sup>	
Stop Controlled	Admiral Kalbfus Road at Girard Avenue/Malbone Road	AM	3	A		11	B <sup>4</sup>	
		PM	26	D	<b>WB L/T NB L/T/R</b>	13	B <sup>4</sup>	
Signal Controlled	Halsey Street at Newport Grand / Parcel B	AM	<b>N/A</b>			4	A	
		PM				7	A	
Signal Controlled	Halsey Street at New Ramp Connector	AM	<b>N/A</b>			16	B	
		PM				11	B	
Signal Controlled	JT Connell Highway at New Ramp Connector	AM	<b>N/A</b>			29	C	
		PM				25	C	
Signal Controlled	JT Connell Highway at Park & Ride / Parcel C-D	AM	<b>N/A</b>			3	A	
		PM				5	A	
Signal Controlled	Farewell Street at America's Cup Avenue	AM				6	A	
		PM				7	A	

Source: VISSIM 8 Node Evaluation. Compiled by VHB based on the average of 10 VISSIM model runs.

1 Delay = Vehicle delay expressed in seconds per vehicle

2 LOS = Estimated level of service

3 LOS criteria for roundabout/rotary are the same as LOS criteria for unsignalized intersection

4 A new traffic signal would be installed under the Proposed Action conditions

5 The off-ramp from Pell Bridge would be removed under the Proposed Action conditions

### **6.1.2 Indirect Impacts**

Operation of the Proposed Action is expected to result in indirect impacts on traffic in the Study Area. With the completion of the improvements, a significant amount of land would be opened for redevelopment where the existing roadway infrastructure is today. This redevelopment would generate additional trips, which would increase traffic volumes and congestion on Study Area roadways. Any redevelopment of this land would be separate from the Proposed Action and later in time; therefore, these impacts would be indirect and were not modeled in the traffic analysis for this EA.

When the City of Newport's Innovation Hub redevelopment building program and timeline have been determined, additional analysis will need to be performed to determine how the additional trips generated by the development would affect the operational performance of the Proposed Action. Based on the results of the capacity analysis presented above, it is expected that additional roadway and intersection improvements may be required to support the full buildout of the redevelopment parcels. Depending on the size of the developable parcels, the building program, and access, the additional improvements needed may include widening of JT Connell Highway and/or extending Halsey Street north to connect with JT Connell Highway/Coddington Road.

### **6.1.3 Cumulative Impacts**

Past human activities that have demonstrably affected the Study Area include the construction of the Pell Bridge and Route 138. Prior to the construction of Route 138, the area was farmland with little infrastructure. After the construction of Route 138, the area around the interchange began to develop with commercial and residential development, as well as public facilities such as the City of Newport's Department of Public Works on Halsey Street.

The Proposed Action would improve traffic flow, travel time, and safety compared to No Action, resulting in a betterment. Therefore, it would not have the potential to add to or worsen impacts associated with past, present, or foreseeable future actions. Based on this evaluation, the Proposed Action would have no adverse cumulative transportation impacts to the Study Area.

## **6.2 Land Use**

### **6.2.1 Direct Impacts**

#### **No Action**

Under the No Action Alternative, the Project would not occur, and the land currently occupied by the existing ramps would not be made available for redevelopment in support of the City's economic goals. Changes to existing land uses and overall land use patterns within the Study Area are likely to be limited due to physical constraints on development, including the Pell Bridge ramp right-of-way and surrounding existing land uses that have

various ownership (public and private) and include several conservation restrictions (i.e., permanently protected open spaces).

### **Proposed Action**

The Proposed Action would alter the topography of the Study Area, as it would reconfigure built structures and include some filling, grading, grubbing (soil disturbance), and vegetation clearing that would commence during the construction phase and persist through operations and maintenance. These impacts are considered minor and neither beneficial or adverse, as most of the existing topography is, and will continue to be, previously disturbed urban land.

The Proposed Action would have a beneficial impact by improving neighborhood connectivity through the creation of new north-south linkages. These linkages would better connect the City's North End neighborhoods to Downtown by way of a reconnected JT Connell Highway and an improved Newport Secondary Rail Line that includes a shuttle with connected park and ride and walking/bike trail. Neighborhood connectivity would also be supported through safety enhancements associated with the resurfacing of JT Connell Highway/Coddington Highway to West Main Road.

Roadway reconfigurations would require acquisition of several privately- and publicly-held properties. These acquisitions, which may be complete or partial depending on final concept design, include up to three residential properties along Halsey Street between Garfield Street and Columbus Way; up to two commercial properties, including an unoccupied commercial building at 60 Halsey Street and the Waste Management – Newport Hauling & Transfer Station at 65 Halsey Street; and the municipally-owned parcel at 70-90 Halsey Street that houses facilities associated with the City's Water Department and Clean City Program. These acquisitions, totaling approximately 220,000 square feet, would result in the conversion of the existing land uses to transportation use, as well as requiring the relocation of residential inhabitants, commercial occupants, and public services. Such conversions represent a moderate adverse impact but would not significantly alter the overall land use patterns in the Study Area or in the City at large. A summary of the proposed property acquisitions for all alternatives, including the Proposed Action, is included in Appendix B-17.

During construction of the Proposed Action, temporary impacts to land use are possible from noise generation, disruptions to traffic patterns, and air quality impacts related to vehicular and equipment emissions and inhalable dust. Construction activities would increase noise levels at land uses adjacent to the Study Area, which could affect receptors such as residences, parks, and schools. However, noise increases attributable to the Proposed Action would be temporary and are considered minor; construction activities would conform to Chapter 8.12 – Noise Abatement of the City of Newport Codified Ordinance, which includes restrictions for the purposes of protecting public health and welfare and quality of life. These restrictions include maximum permissible sounds levels by time of day for receiving land uses based on the sensitivity of those land uses to increased noise and have quantitative limits for construction that would occur at night and on weekends.

Project construction may result in the temporary closure and/or detouring of roadways within the Study Area; driveway access may also be impeded during construction. These impacts may limit the use of properties within the Study Area by creating an inconvenience for property owners and disrupting commercial operations. These temporary impacts would be minor in intensity and RIDOT will work with property owners and the City of Newport to develop a traffic management plan to minimize land use impacts during construction.

Construction activities could also impact the function of land uses within the Study Area because of increased air emissions from construction vehicle and equipment usage, as well as from ground-disturbing activities. Such impacts, however, would be temporary, and their intensity is considered minor given planned mitigation measures including effective control measures to limit airborne particulate matter and dust during construction, wetting of exposed soil, covering of trucks and other dust sources, and other best practices as practicable.

### **6.2.2 Indirect Impacts**

The reconfiguration of the Pell Bridge approaches and ramps, including the consolidation and removal of excess highway infrastructure, would open land formerly occupied and constrained by such infrastructure to new development. RIDOT intends to dispose of the unused right-of-way (which would total approximately 20 to 30 acres, depending on final design and excluding an appropriate amount of property to be reserved for the proposed project and its future maintenance) as surplus property. This would be a beneficial indirect impact, freeing up the land for uses consistent with the City's land use planning and zoning and its economic development goals. Future development of this land would be independent of the Proposed Action and would occur after its completion; the locations, sizes, and uses of new development would be based on then-current planning and zoning, property owner objectives, and market forces at the time of development.

For any surplus property not reserved for the proposed project or its future maintenance, RIDOT will dispose of this property in accordance with the approved procedures governing such disposals (Title 37, Chapter 6 of the General Laws); for land that was acquired with Federal funds, any land disposition will be in accordance with 23 CFR 710.403 and 710.405. Unless otherwise provided for in the aforementioned regulations/laws, land dispositions will be made in exchange for the payment of Fair Market Value at the time of sale.

### **6.2.3 Cumulative Impacts**

Based on a review of aerial imagery, land use patterns within the Study Area have not changed significantly since at least 1995. Though the Proposed Action itself would not directly change land use patterns, except for several property acquisitions, it is anticipated that large-scale redevelopment of surplus property remaining after completion of the Proposed Action would cause a substantial change in land use patterns in the Study Area. This change would be consistent with local planning and zoning, and therefore is not considered adverse. No other present or reasonably foreseeable future actions have been identified that would result in adverse cumulative impacts to land use within the Study Area.

## **6.3 Farmland/Soils**

### **6.3.1 Direct Impacts**

#### **No Action**

Under the No Action Alternative, the Proposed Action would not be constructed. Extant prime farmlands and lands of statewide importance within the Study Area would continue to exist as under current conditions; development of these lands is unlikely given that they are constrained by existing transportation right-of-way and existing land uses. If these lands became available for new development, such development would be expected to conform to the City's planning and zoning and is not likely to include commercial agricultural operations.

#### **Proposed Action**

Although prime farmlands and farmlands of statewide importance are present within the Study Area, the Proposed Action is not expected to result in an adverse impact to these resources as defined by the FPPA. These lands are already in or committed to urban development and are within the Providence, RI – MA Urbanized Area defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. Accordingly, they are exempted from the FPPA and not subject to the provisions therein.

The Proposed Action is not expected to result in the beneficial use of the prime and important farmlands within the Study Area with regard to agricultural production, commercial or otherwise.

### **6.3.2 Indirect Impacts**

The reconfiguration of the Pell Bridge ramp and approaches would facilitate new development opportunities by making land currently occupied by infrastructure available for redevelopment. Some of this redevelopment would occur in areas mapped as prime farmland or farmland of statewide significance. However, as described above, these lands are committed to urban development and within the Providence, RI – MA Urbanized Area, and therefore are not subject to the FPPA. The Proposed Action is not expected to result in the beneficial use of the prime and important farmlands within the Study Area for agricultural production.

### **6.3.3 Cumulative Impacts**

Because the Study Area is within an urbanized area identified by the U.S. Census Bureau, and because associated lands are not subject to the provisions of the FPPA, no cumulative impacts to farmlands are anticipated from the Project.



## 6.4 Wetlands and Waters of the U.S and State

### 6.4.1 Direct Impacts

#### No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no demolition or construction of transportation infrastructure and no divesting of land currently occupied by such infrastructure. Direct or indirect effects to wetlands and waterways would be avoided.

#### Proposed Action

Approximately 0.5 acre of wetlands and ASSFs within the LOD would be directly affected by project construction and operation. Direct, permanent, adverse effects to wetlands primarily involve the placement of fill within the wetland, resulting in its permanent loss. These effects would commence during the construction phase and persist through project operation. Project construction and operation would avoid direct impact to the one perennial stream identified within the Study Area. More information on wetland impacts of the Proposed Action is provided in the Wetlands and Waterways Technical Memorandum in Appendix B4.

As shown in Table 6-4, seven wetlands would experience impacts under the Proposed Action. Due to the highly altered and fragmented states of these wetlands, the only principal wetland functions and/or values that would be diminished by the project are water quality functions associated with sediment/toxicant retention and nutrient removal/retention/transformation. Other functions provided at lesser levels (secondary functions) that may be adversely affected include groundwater discharge/recharge, flood flow alteration, and marginal wetland wildlife habitat. As shown in the table, Wetlands A-9 and A-11 provide water quality as a principal function, and approximately 0.04 acres of these wetlands would be lost as a result of the Proposed Action.

While not a federal resource, an additional 0.7 acres of mostly developed 50-foot Perimeter Wetland associated with Wetlands A-1 and A-8, regulated under Rhode Island's Freshwater Wetlands Act, would also be affected by construction and operation of the Project. It is anticipated that parts of the Perimeter Wetland associated with Wetland A-1 may be impacted by redevelopment after the existing ramps are removed. Most of this Perimeter Wetland is presently paved, and the redevelopment could include the revegetation of a portion of this state resource that would improve upon the existing condition.

The Project's direct, permanent effects to wetlands would constitute a measurable and perceptible loss of wetlands and wetland functions, but not at a significant scale constituting a major effect. The intensity of direct, permanent adverse effects to wetlands resulting from project construction and operation is therefore considered moderate. Due to the small area of unavoidable wetland loss and the highly altered and fragmented nature of the affected wetlands, their loss would not affect the quantity or quality of water supply. The surficial geology of Aquidneck Island and the extensive area of filled wetland in the project area precludes a significant groundwater recharge or discharge function. Much of the Study Area is in a flood zone, but the extreme flooding that poses a risk to public safety is associated

with the wave runup heights of coastal storms, which would not be affected by freshwater wetland filling.

**Table 6-4 Summary of Impacted Wetlands**

Wetland Feature ID <sup>1</sup>	Cowardin Classification <sup>2</sup>	Dominant Vegetation	Approximate Acreage (Acreage Impacted)	Highway Methodology Functions and Values <sup>3</sup>	USACE 404 Clean Water Act Jurisdictional Feature <sup>4</sup>	Rhode Island Wetland Classification <sup>4</sup>
A-2	PEM5B	Common reed ( <i>Phragmites australis</i> )	0.06 (0.01)	STR, NR	Yes	Emergent Plant Community (EPC)
A-9	PEM5E	Common reed	0.63 (0.00)	<b>STR, NR</b> , FF, GW, WH	Yes	EPC
A-10	PSS1B/PEM5B	Common reed	0.34 (0.31)	STR, NR, GW, WH	Yes	EPC with contiguous ASSF
A-11	PEM5E	Common reed	0.38 (0.04)	<b>STR, NR</b> , FF	Yes	EPC wetland ditch
A-12	PEM5E	Common reed	0.06 (0.03)	STR, NR, FF	Yes	EPC wetland ditch
A-13	PEM5E	Common reed	0.18 (0.10)	NR, STR, FF	Yes	EPC wetland ditch
A-21	PEM1E	Yellow nutsedge ( <i>Cyperus esculentus</i> ), Common reed	0.003 (0.003)	STR, NR	No	ASSF

The wetlands within the Study Area exist in an urban setting and do not support the long-term productivity of natural systems and/or plant or animal biodiversity, as most are overrun by the invasive species common reed (*Phragmites australis*) and are nearly monocultures. Some wildlife species do utilize common reed; however, the fragmented pattern of these wetlands and their close association with existing highways and roads precludes most wildlife use. The wetlands would will be directly impacted do not provide other public benefits such as scientific study or recreation.

Proposed alterations of freshwater wetlands will require authorization from the RIDEM Freshwater Wetlands Program with the Rhode Island Freshwater Wetlands Act, the *Rules and Regulations Governing the Administration and Enforcement of the Freshwater Wetlands Act* (250-RICR-150-15-1), and the *Rules and Regulations for the Protection and Management of Freshwater Wetlands in the Vicinity of the Coast* (650-RICR-20-00-02). Projects proposing fill in Waters of the US must also seek authorization from the US Army Corps of Engineers pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Under these regulatory programs, applicants must define the purpose and need for the project and demonstrate that the project is not

random, unnecessary or undesirable, and that the wetland impacts have been avoided, minimized and/or mitigated to the maximum extent practicable.

As required by federal and state regulations, efforts have been made to avoid or minimize impacts to wetlands wherever possible. Components of the project such as parking lots and the replacement dog park have been sited and/or scaled to avoid direct impact to wetlands. Measures incorporated into the Proposed Action to minimize impact include elevated sections of multiuse path to span wetlands and the use of retaining walls to limit impact associated with slopes. Impacts to wetlands during construction would be minimized through the development of a site-specific Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan, which will be part of the RIPDES General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater from Construction Sites. Section 7.4 provides information on measures proposed to mitigate for unavoidable impacts to wetlands resulting from the Proposed Action.

#### **6.4.2 Indirect Impacts**

Indirect effects to wetlands from the Proposed Action may include:

- › Filling of wetlands outside the Proposed Action's LOD on lands that would be decommissioned, sold, and redeveloped by others in the future.
- › Sedimentation in wetlands and streams adjacent to the Project LOD.
- › Project construction and operation within unregulated adjacent uplands.
- › Temporary disturbance to wetland wildlife habitat functions adjacent to the LOD.
- › The potential for hydrologic modifications to wetlands adjacent to the LOD.

Wetland or waterway impacts that result from future redevelopment of decommissioned RIDOT and City of Newport land that is made available by the Proposed Action would constitute indirect project impacts. The extent of such potential impacts is currently undefined. Any redevelopment would be required to conform to federal, state, and local regulations requiring the avoidance or minimization of impact and mitigation of any impacts that remain.

Indirect, temporary, and adverse effects to wetlands adjacent to the LOD could also occur during project construction because of sedimentation when adjacent upland soils are disturbed. These temporary effects are considered minor because the wetland areas that may be affected by sedimentation are small, and erosion and sedimentation will be managed using Best Management Practices (BMPs) during construction in accordance with applicable state and federal regulations.

Unregulated adjacent uplands (i.e., those associated with wetlands not classified as bogs, swamps, or marshes under Rhode Island state law) would be permanently affected by excavation, fill, grading, vegetation removal, and redevelopment. The affected adjacent uplands have previously been developed or disturbed by construction within the Study Area, so effects are expected to be minor because there would be no new development of intact, undeveloped adjacent uplands.

Wildlife inhabiting wetlands adjacent to the LOD and construction area may be temporarily disturbed by project construction noise and activities. However, project construction would

occur in an area that is already intensely developed with busy roadways and significant noise, so any indirect, adverse construction-phase effects to adjacent wetland wildlife habitat would be temporary and minor.

Project grading and modification of impervious surface coverage may result in changes to surface runoff or groundwater hydrology with the potential to affect the hydrology of wetlands adjacent to the LOD. These permanent, indirect hydrologic effects to adjacent wetlands are expected to be minor, given the current highly developed landscape context

### 6.4.3 Cumulative Impacts

Based on review of historical georeferenced aerial photographs available through RIGIS, in 1939 an estimated 63 acres of the Study Area was wetland. In that year, a network of ditching for surface water management and drainage through wetlands that resembled salt marsh, freshwater marsh, wetland pasture, or hayfield. The stream delineated in the Study Area during 2017 was already ditched and straightened in the 1939 aerial photographs and extended further south and east into the Study Area than under present-day conditions. The wetlands were abutted by a mix of developed urban land, an apparent landfill, and upland agricultural fields.

Wetland field investigations completed in 2017 and 2018 in the Study Area revealed that wetlands currently constitute approximately 6.6 acres of the Study Area, meaning that approximately 56.4 acres of wetlands, along with their associated functions and values, were lost between 1939 and 2018. This loss constitutes approximately 90 percent of the estimated 63 acres of wetlands that existed in the Study Area in 1939, and losses of the following assumed functions and values based on evaluation of the historic state and present-day site conditions:

- › Wildlife habitat;
- › Production export;
- › Groundwater discharge/ recharge;
- › Flood flow alteration;
- › Sediment/ toxicant/ pathogen retention; and
- › Nutrient removal/ retention/ transformation.

The Proposed Action would result in permanent, direct effects to an additional 0.5 acres of wetland, which is approximately 0.8 percent of the Study Area's estimated 1939 wetland acreage of 63 acres, and 7.5 percent of the 6.6 acres of wetlands that presently exist. An additional 0.7 acres of previously developed 50-foot Perimeter Wetland (regulated upland) by the state would also be permanently affected. Of the original estimated 63 acres of wetlands located within the Study Area, 6.1 acres (9.7 percent) would remain following construction of the Proposed Action. Additional indirect wetland and waterway impacts related to future development on land made available after completion of the Proposed Action may include filling of additional wetlands, construction-phase erosion and sedimentation, redevelopment of adjacent uplands, construction-phase disturbance to wildlife habitat functions, and modifications to watershed drainage and runoff. Other reasonably foreseeable future actions that could affect the existing Study Area wetlands and

their functions or values by 2030 include other development and land alterations that could adversely affect wetlands or waterways by fill, grading, or vegetation removal, or by development of adjacent uplands, sedimentation, or stormwater and hydrologic modifications.

Based on these past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, the Proposed Action is expected to contribute to a cumulative adverse effect on Study Area wetlands and waterways. Existing state and federal wetland regulatory systems require that impacts to wetlands and waterways be avoided and minimized to the extent practicable before they can be permitted. Stormwater management and construction phase BMP's provide measures for managing and mitigating stormwater and erosion and sedimentation effects related to construction and postconstruction runoff. Collectively, these avoidance, minimization, and mitigation requirements are expected to reduce the magnitude of cumulative wetland and waterway impacts in the Study Area.

## **6.5 Floodplains**

### **6.5.1 Direct Impacts**

#### **No Action**

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no demolition or construction of transportation infrastructure and no divesting of RIDOT or City of Newport land occupied by such infrastructure. Direct or indirect effects on the existing floodplain would be avoided.

#### **Proposed Action**

Modeling completed for this analysis indicates that the Proposed Action would not result in adverse impacts to coastal floodplains associated with increased flood elevations, wave heights, wave setup, or wave runup. The results of the Wave Height Analysis for Flood Insurance Studies (WHAFIS) and Technical Advisory Committee for Water Retaining Structures (TAW) model runs are presented in Appendix B. Changes in proposed grading within the Study Area would result in approximately 4.9 acres being removed from the floodplain, and approximately 12.9 acres being added to the floodplain. The area added is primarily due to removing the raised embankment carrying the existing Pell Bridge roadway approach ramps; roadway elevations range from 12 to 26 feet NAVD88 under existing conditions, but the surrounding area is almost entirely below the base flood elevation (BFE). Because there is no specific design plan in place for the potential new parcels that would be created on property surplus under the Proposed Action, future floodplain areas were calculated by assuming that grading in these areas would be set at the same elevation as the surrounding roadway.

### **6.5.2 Indirect Impacts**

Nearly the entire Proposed Action area is located within the existing 1% floodplain, but development is restricted by the alignment of the Pell Bridge access ramp. By opening more

land to development, the Proposed Action could have the indirect effect of increasing the flood risk liability of the City of Newport. More development and infrastructure within the 1% floodplain would place a greater burden on emergency services during and after a coastal flooding event and would increase the costs to repair damaged infrastructure following the event. However, site-specific grading for the new parcels created from surplus right-of-way could be raised by fill to move these areas out of the 1% floodplain. It is estimated that approximately 15 acres of the intermediate areas between proposed roadways could feasibly be raised above the BFE of 12 feet NAVD88, resulting in a net reduction of the 1% floodplain within the Study Area.

### 6.5.3 Cumulative Impacts

Increased storm rainfall intensity associated with climate change would result in greater riverine flooding associated with the unnamed stream flowing through the Study Area, and this could be exacerbated by increased impervious cover and fill from parcel development. However, the flood elevations and extents associated with the unnamed stream are negligible compared to coastal flooding, and therefore these changes would not be predicted to have a cumulative impact on the 1% floodplain.

Future increases in sea levels will exacerbate coastal flooding by raising stillwater elevations, increasing the area of the 1% floodplain. Similar to existing conditions, the Proposed is not predicted to contribute to a cumulative effect on flood elevations from sea level rise, but the specific area inundated would be affected by proposed grading within the limit of work.

As a consequence of higher stillwater elevations from sea level rise, more coastal structures will be submerged during coastal flood events, and the effects of breaking wave action and wave setup will extend further inland. Modeling indicates that the limits of significant wave action (Zone VE) and limit of moderate wave action (LiMWA) will remain seaward of the Proposed Action area, but wave setup effects will propagate further into the area. The existing raised embankment carrying the Pell Bridge approach ramp serves as a barrier against wave setup propagating further eastward, but this embankment would be removed under the Proposed Action grading design. The cumulative impact of sea level rise with the removal of this barrier could result in higher future coastal flood elevations east of Route 138.

## 6.6 Water Quality/Stormwater

### 6.6.1 Direct Impacts

#### No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no demolition or construction of transportation infrastructure and no divesting of RIDOT or City of Newport land occupied by such infrastructure. Therefore, direct or indirect effects to the existing stormwater controls would be avoided.

**Proposed Action**

Stormwater resulting from an increase in impervious surfaces can impact downstream waters by altering natural channels and impacting water quality. Downstream channels can be altered by increases in runoff volumes, increases in peak runoff discharge rates, and/or greater runoff velocities. Impacts to water quality may include increases in suspended and deposited sediments that adversely affect aquatic life. Sediment also transports other pollutants including nutrients, metals, and hydrocarbons. Sediment can also reduce the capacity of a water body, causing flooding. Project construction can also result in stormwater impacts, particularly erosion and sedimentation in runoff from disturbed soils.

Because some existing roadway structures would be removed to offset the new structures that would be built, the increase in impervious surface within the Study Area is expected to be minimal. Stormwater best management practices (BMPs) would be used to minimize pollutants in runoff during project construction and operation. Therefore, only minor impacts to water quality and stormwater are expected to result from the Proposed Action.

**6.6.2 Indirect Impacts**

The Proposed Action would make available between 20 and 30 acres of decommissioned RIDOT and City of Newport land for redevelopment near the Pell Bridge interchange area. Redevelopment projects have the potential to increase impervious surface, which can lead to negative effects on stormwater quality and the receiving water bodies. These effects are the same as those described above under Direct Impacts. In addition, based on the anticipated traffic volumes generated by new development, the Study Area and associated land available for development would be defined as a land use with higher potential pollutant loads. In order to treat this area, the Rhode Island Stormwater Design and Installation Standards Manual (RISDISM) requires specific Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce the higher pollutant loading. These BMPs and compliance with other RIDEM stormwater regulations would treat and reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff and would ultimately have the indirect effect of improving water quality of the receiving water bodies within the Study Area.

**6.6.3 Cumulative Impacts**

Historical development in the Study Area has increased the amount of impervious surface and introduced pollutants into receiving water bodies. Development has also reduced the extent of wetlands in the area, along with the water quality functions that they provide. However, recent development, as well as the Proposed Action, must comply with RIDEM stormwater regulations, which are designed to manage stormwater runoff flows and provide treatment to reduce pollutant loads in receiving waters. Future development in the Study Area must also follow these regulations. As a result, the Proposed Action and other reasonably foreseeable projects are expected to contribute to a betterment of existing conditions in the Study Area by reducing pollutant loading, providing groundwater recharge, and reducing peak flows to the surrounding drainage outfalls.

## 6.7 Coastal Resources

### 6.7.1 Direct Impacts

#### No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no demolition or construction of transportation infrastructure and no divesting of RIDOT or City of Newport land occupied by such infrastructure. Therefore, direct or indirect effects to the existing coastal resources would be avoided.

#### Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would result in construction and redevelopment activities within Rhode Island's designated coastal zone. These activities have the potential to affect coastal resources through stormwater runoff, impacts to wetlands, disturbance to vegetation and open space, and erosion and sedimentation. The Proposed Action activities would be reviewed by the CRMC relative to performance criteria in CRMC guidance that are applied as part of the Project's Federal Coastal Zone Consistency Determination.

Specific CRMC policies, goals, objectives, and standards relevant to the Proposed Action are described in Section 5.7. These include applicable CRMP policies and performance standards, Aquidneck Island SAMP goals and objectives, and Aquidneck Island SAMP coastal development standards, all of which will be considered as part of the Project's Federal consistency review. The CRMC will evaluate the Proposed Action for conformance with these policies, goals and objectives to protect the coastal zone, and ensure consistency with Rhode Island's coastal zone management plan. Therefore, construction-phase and permanent effects to coastal resources are expected to be minor.

### 6.7.2 Indirect Impacts

The Proposed Action does not include any activity that would directly affect coastal waters, coastal resources, or shoreline features, or that would involve work within the 200-foot contiguous area. Indirect effects to such areas related to the Proposed Action may include stormwater runoff, impacts to freshwater wetlands, disturbance to vegetation and open space, and erosion and sedimentation.

Construction of the Proposed Action would result in land currently owned by RIDOT and the City of Newport being divested and made available for future development by others. Future redevelopment on this land would also be located in Rhode Island's designated coastal zone and, depending on the scope of any specific future project, may require a Coastal Zone Consistency Determination. Projects requiring a Consistency Determination would also need to meet applicable policies, goals, and standards of the CRMP and the Aquidneck Island SAMP. Projects that do not trigger the need for a Consistency Determination are assumed to be small enough in scope that they would not have any significant effects to the coastal zone. Therefore, future indirect effects of future development on the coastal zone are anticipated to be minor.



### **6.7.3 Cumulative Impacts**

Because the direct and indirect impacts of the Proposed Action are expected to be minor, they would not contribute to cumulative impacts to coastal resources in the Study Area.

## **6.8 Federally Threatened or Endangered and State Natural Heritage Species/Biodiversity**

### **6.8.1 Direct Impacts**

#### **No Action**

The No Action Alternative would have no direct or indirect impacts to any threatened or endangered species because there would be no change to the existing environment.

#### **Proposed Action**

The Proposed Action includes components that would be considered potential stressors to NLEB. However, review of available data and the acoustic survey results indicate the probable absence of the NLEB; therefore, the Proposed Action is not anticipated to have any effects on NLEB.

Roseate terns prefer rocky coastal islands or beaches with suitable vegetative cover for nesting. The Study Area does not include this type of habitat; therefore, it is unlikely that roseate tern would occur within the Study Area. It is not expected that the Project would have any effect on this species.

On January 2, 2019, RIDOT requested concurrence from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) that the Project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the NLEB and roseate tern. USFWS concurred with this determination on March 18, 2019.

### **6.8.2 Indirect Impacts**

Because the NLEB is not anticipated to occur within the Study Area and there is no suitable habitat for the roseate tern, no indirect impacts on threatened or endangered species or state natural heritage species are anticipated.

### **6.8.3 Cumulative Impacts**

The Proposed Action would have no direct or indirect impacts on threatened and endangered species. As a result, the Proposed Action is not expected to contribute to cumulative impacts on these species.

## 6.9 Cultural (Historic and Archaeological) Resources

### 6.9.1 Direct Impacts

#### **No Action**

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no negative impacts to historic or archaeological resources.

#### **Proposed Action**

##### ***Historic Resources***

On February 6, 2020, RIHPHC concurred that the project would have No Adverse Effect on historic properties within the Project APE. Correspondence between RIDOT and RIHPHC is included as an attachment to Appendix B9.

##### ***Archaeological Resources***

Phase 1A Archival Research was conducted to determine the archaeological sensitivity of two loci: the first along the former Old Colony and Newport Railroad, where a proposed bike corridor extension would be located, and the second adjacent to the RK Newport Towne Shopping Center. The assessment indicated that the proposed bike path extension is adjacent to the Braman Cemetery (a contributing property to the Newport Historic Landmark District). In addition, the location adjacent to the RK Newport Town Shopping Center is sensitive for the presence of pre-contact archaeological deposits due to its proximity to RI-940. RI-940 is a late-Archaic-period site that was the subject of a Phase II Archaeological Site Evaluation in 1982. According to the Phase II report, the site was eligible for listing in the National Register (SUNY Binghamton Public Archaeology Facility Cultural Resource Management Report Phase I & Phase II I-895, Rhode Island 1982: 302). However, the accompanying RIHPHC Archaeological Site Inventory form notes the site as "Destroyed."

Phase IB archaeological testing was completed October 1-3, 2018, in the two loci. A total of 27 shovel test pits were dug in a linear transect at ten-meter intervals along the proposed bike path corridor adjacent to the cemetery. These pits exposed bedrock and/or standing water, and none contained natural strata. Four shovel test pits yielded a total of five historic-period artifacts within disturbed soils. Due to the low density and low diversity of the artifacts recovered, as well as the poor integrity of the deposits, these finds are not likely to yield significant information about past land use. A total of 29 shovel test pits were dug along a ten-meter grid in the open field east of the RK Newport Town Center. Modern materials and recent trash were recovered in these shovel test pits. No archaeological sites or features were identified in either location. No further archaeological investigations are recommended.

### 6.9.2 Indirect Impacts

The Proposed Action would facilitate future development opportunities within the APE by vacating land that would then become available for redevelopment. Because redevelopment

would occur on land that is presently vacant, it is expected to avoid impacts to historic resources within the APE.

### **6.9.3 Cumulative Impacts**

Based on a review of aerial imagery, historic resources within the APE have not changed significantly since at least 1995. The Proposed Action itself would not substantially change or alter known historic resources. No other present or reasonably foreseeable future actions are known that would result in adverse cumulative impacts to historic resources within the APE. In addition, because no archaeological sites were identified during the Phase I Archaeological Survey, no adverse cumulative impacts to archaeological resources within the APE are expected.

## **6.10 Environmental Justice & Socioeconomics**

### **6.10.1 Direct Impacts**

#### **No Action**

##### ***Environmental Justice***

Under the No Action Alternative, the Project would not occur. As a result, minority and low-income populations within the Study Area would not experience the anticipated benefits of the Proposed Action, which include improved safety on local surface transportation infrastructure; multimodal access for all roadway users (transit, bicyclists, pedestrians); and traffic circulation and connections. The community also would not see related enhancements to community connections and cohesion resulting from such improvements.

No adverse impacts to environmental justice populations are anticipated under the No Action Alternative. It is important to note, however, that noise levels under the No Action Alternative would be similar to existing conditions.

No land would be made available for redevelopment in support of the State and City's economic goals under the No Action Alternative, and no related employment opportunities for minority and low-income populations would be realized.

##### ***Socioeconomics***

Under the No Action Alternative, the Project would not occur. Community connectivity and cohesiveness would continue to be impeded by the presence of the existing highway infrastructure; the local roadway network would not be reconnected or improved, and no new multimodal transportation options would be introduced to the Study Area. Development potential within the Study Area would continue to be limited by the Pell Bridge ramp right-of-way. No significant amount of land would be made available for redevelopment, and therefore, the Study Area would not fully realize any economic potential.

## **Proposed Action**

### ***Environmental Justice***

Potential effects (burdens and benefits) on minority and low-income populations from transportation projects generally encompass changes to community cohesion (i.e., access to community facilities and services), employment, the community tax base or property values, and aesthetics, as well as traffic patterns, safety, and options. Additionally, burdens of transportation projects can include residential or commercial displacements or the degradation of environmental conditions as they relate to noise, air quality, water quality, and hazardous materials.

To determine whether potential impacts from the Proposed Action would have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on environmental justice communities, this analysis referred to the U.S. DOT and FHWA EJ Orders (described in Section 5) to determine whether any identified adverse effect would:

- 1) Be predominantly borne by a minority and/or low-income population; or
- 2) Be suffered by the minority or low-income population and is appreciably more severe or greater in magnitude than the adverse effect that will be suffered by non-environmental justice populations.

The anticipated impacts of the Proposed Action on environmental resource categories related to human health or environmental effects, including social and economic effects, are summarized below.

- **Noise:** The noise analysis identified 31 residential receptors where noise levels would either exceed the FHWA Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) to protect public health, welfare and livability from excessive vehicle traffic noise or where the Proposed Action would cause a substantial increase in noise. These impacted receptors are predominantly within identified minority and low-income areas and a geography where a low-income population was identified, and thus represent adverse impacts on minority and low-income populations. For details of these noise impacts, please see Section 6.13 and the Noise Technical Memorandum.
- **Air Quality:** Based on the FHWA categorical hotspot finding, the Proposed Action is not anticipated to have direct significant adverse air quality impacts. For more information on the expected impacts of the Project on air quality, please see Section 6.12 and the Air Quality Technical Memorandum.
- **Water Quality:** The Proposed Action would result in a minor increase in impervious surface area, which can impact downstream water and associated water quality. Impacts to water quality may include increases in suspended and deposited sediments; sediment transports other pollutants including nutrients, metals, and hydrocarbons. For more information on the expected impacts of the Project on stormwater, please see Section 6.6 and the Stormwater Technical Memorandum.
- **Hazardous Materials:** Contaminated subsurface soils containing total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPHs), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), semi-volatile organic

compounds (SVOCs), and metals above RIDEM thresholds have been identified in the Study Area in locations where excavation or other intrusive construction activities are anticipated. There is some potential for new releases to occur or to be identified during construction, such as a release of oil or diesel from construction equipment. The Proposed Action LOD intersects with an identified Environmental Justice Focus Area, and accordingly, all appropriate notification measures will be taken as per RIDEM's Policy for Considering Environmental Justice in the Review of Investigation and Remediation of Contaminated Properties. For more information on the expected impacts of the Project on hazardous materials, please see Section 6.14 and the Hazardous Materials Technical Memorandum.

- **Land Use:** The Proposed Action, along with its required property acquisitions, is not expected to significantly change local land use patterns or impede the functions of existing land uses. It would be consistent with State and local land use planning and would have the beneficial impact of better connecting land uses within the Study Area through new or improved north-south linkages. No disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations are anticipated. For more information on the expected impacts of the Project on land use, please see Section 6.2 and the Land Use Technical Memorandum.
- **Traffic:** Travel time and delays would improve as a result of the Proposed Action. Existing queuing on the ramp to Downtown would be eliminated and/or shifted, though delays and queues at JT Connell Highway at Van Zandt Avenue would continue to increase due to increased traffic flow along JT Connell Highway, new traffic generated by redevelopment, and a lack of capacity improvements at the intersection with Van Zandt Avenue. Accordingly, no adverse impacts are anticipated from a traffic perspective, and there would be no disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations. These populations would benefit from improved safety; the provision of multimodal access for all roadway users (transit, bicyclists, pedestrians); and improved traffic circulation and connections near the Study Area. For more information on expected impacts on traffic, please see Section 6.1 and the Traffic Technical Memorandum.
- **Climate:** Based on a review of climate change studies and analyses pertinent to the region, the Proposed Action LOD is not vulnerable to impacts from 3 feet of sea level rise, though current and future storm surge conditions in addition to 3 feet of sea level rise would occasionally inundate the area. The Proposed Action itself is not expected to worsen anticipated impacts from climate change in the Study Area, including for its minority and low-income populations, and is therefore, not expected to have disproportionately high and adverse effects. For more information on the implications of climate change relevant to the region, please see Section 6.15 and the Climate Technical Memorandum.
- **Cultural Resources:** As part of the Section 106 consultation process, RIDOT is working with the identified consulting parties to assess potential effects to historic properties within the Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the Proposed Action. For more information on the scope of the Section 106 process, please see Section 6.9 and the Cultural Resources Technical Memorandum.

As the only environmental resource category with an adverse impact, noise requires further analysis under Title VI. Based on the noise analysis described above and detailed in the Noise and Vibration Technical Memorandum, approximately 85 individuals (0.6 percent of the population of the Study Area) would be adversely impacted by the Project. Applying the percentages of individuals by race and ethnicity within the Study Area, it is estimated that of the impacted individuals, 54 persons would be white, five would be African American, 15 would be Hispanic or Latino, and one would be Asian. These values all represent less than 1 percent of each of these racial and ethnic groups within the Study Area. Further analysis using the Title VI “four-fifths rule” calculations (see Appendix B-10) determined that the impacts on Hispanic or Latino individuals are not likely to be significantly disparate because the number of individuals potentially affected would be very small.

### ***Socioeconomics***

#### Residential and Commercial Displacements

The Proposed Action would require the acquisition of several privately- and publicly-held properties. These acquisitions, which may be complete or partial depending on final concept design, include up to three residential properties along Halsey Street between Garfield Street and Columbus Way, up to two commercial properties including an unoccupied commercial building at 60 Halsey Street and the Waste Management – Newport Hauling & Transfer Station at 65 Halsey Street, and the municipally-owned 70-90 Halsey Street, which houses facilities associated with the City’s Water Department and Clean City Program. These acquisitions represent a moderate adverse impact relative to their potential for displacements, but are expected to be conducted fairly, consistently, and equitably in accordance with 49 CFR Part 24 requirements.

#### Community Connectivity and Cohesion

The Proposed Action would have a beneficial impact by improving neighborhood connectivity through the creation of new north-south linkages. These linkages would better connect the City’s North End neighborhood, including to Downtown by way of a reconnected JT Connell Highway and an improved Newport Secondary Rail Line that includes a shuttle with connected park and ride and walking/bike trail.

#### Community Facilities

The Proposed Action is not anticipated to alter existing community facilities or the services they provide. Local surface transportation improvements, such as the resurfacing of JT Connell Highway/Coddington Highway to West Main Road, are expected to improve access to these facilities.

#### Public Services and Utilities

The Proposed Action is not expected to interfere with or place new demands on public services. Although it includes the acquisition of properties dedicated to waste management (i.e., Newport Hauling & Transfer Station at 65 Halsey Street) and the City’s Water Department and Clean City Program at 70-90 Halsey Street, these services are expected to be accommodated elsewhere.

Because the Proposed Action is transportation-based, its stationary-source energy requirements would be minimal. Any additional streetlighting and electronic signage above current conditions are expected to be easily accommodated by the local electric utility company and would not impact the provision of electric service to the community.

#### Demographics

The Proposed Action would not directly result in significant shifts of population and housing into or out of the Study Area. Although it would result in the acquisition of up to three residential properties and up to two commercial properties, such properties represent a fraction of the total number of properties within the Study Area. Because the Proposed Action would be entirely composed of new or improved surface transportation infrastructure, it will not directly result in added employment.

#### Tax Base and Property Values

The acquisition of several privately- and publicly-held properties within the Project's LOD represents a moderate adverse impact to the community tax base. As these properties represent a fraction of the total properties within the City of Newport, however, their acquisition and subsequent removal from the municipal tax roll is not anticipated to significantly reduce the City's property tax revenues.

The Proposed Action is not anticipated to negatively affect property values within the Study Area, as the neighborhood has largely developed around the Pell Bridge approaches and ramps since construction of the bridge commenced in 1966.

#### Temporary Construction Impacts

Construction activities would likely result in temporary disruptions to local businesses, particularly along JT Connell Highway, by impeding access due to potential roadway closures or detours and Project-related traffic congestion. Such impacts, however, would be temporary, and their intensity is considered minor, as RIDOT will coordinate with local business owners to minimize related impacts

### **6.10.2 Indirect Impacts**

The Project would indirectly result in new development opportunities associated with the anticipated "Innovation Hub." Any new development is not expected to have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on minority and low-income populations, as such development would conform to the City of Newport's existing and future land use planning and regulations. New development opportunities as a result of the Proposed Action are expected to result in new employment opportunities for people living in the Study Area.

### **6.10.3 Cumulative Impacts**

No past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions are known that, when combined with the Proposed Action, would result in adverse cumulative effects to human health and

the environment, including social and economic effects, within the Study Area. Accordingly, no disproportionately high or adverse cumulative effects on minority and low-income populations are anticipated.

## **6.11 Visual Resources**

### **6.11.1 Direct Impacts**

#### **No Action**

The No Action Alternative would have no direct or indirect impacts to any visual resources because there would be no change to the existing environment.

#### **Proposed Action**

The Proposed Action would affect visual resources in portions of the Study Area, as identified in Section 5.11. These impacts are described below.

#### ***JT Connell Highway Commercial Area (north of rotary)***

From those locations where the site can be seen, there would be a moderate and beneficial visual impact. Although Admiral Kalbfus Road would not undergo significant grade adjustments, the rotary would be redesigned.

#### ***Girard Avenue Hotel and Residences***

The project would have a significant visual impact on this area due to demolition of the existing Route 138/Route 238 exit ramp and the terminus of Route 138/Route 238, which is currently being used as a de facto highway maintenance storage. These changes, in addition to the preservation/enhancement of wetlands within the perimeter of the existing exit ramp, would have a major, beneficial visual impact within this area.

The project may lead to development north of the existing exit ramp. This development will be located directly adjacent to existing structures (i.e. the hotel and the condominiums to the north). Thus, the visual impact on these neighbors will be major, limiting views to the west and south.

#### ***Newport Grand Casino Site***

The new bridge approach (being constructed in place of the existing Halsey Street) would run along the western edge of the Newport Grand Casino site, and the large parking lot that supports it. The infrastructure realignment would have a minor visual impact on this area, as the geometry of the new approach would not be dissimilar from that of the current-day Halsey Street, except that it would be characterized by a gradual upward slope from north to south.

#### ***Suburban Neighborhood East of Farewell Street***



The Proposed Action area is only visible from certain locations within this neighborhood: specifically, looking north along Butler Street and Prescott Hall Road, and looking west along Garfield Street, each of which has a terminus abutting the existing bridge approach. The visual impact of the Proposed Action in this area would be minimal, because the elevation of the bridge approach at this location would not be significantly adjusted.

#### ***Suburban Neighborhood West of Farewell St***

The only part of the project site that would be visible within this area can be seen from Hunter Park and Van Zandt Avenue. The existing exit ramp that currently allows eastbound drivers to exit onto Farewell Street would be replaced with a new open space amenity, expanding Hunter Park, which would be available for active and passive recreational public use. This revitalization represents a positive visual impact on this area.

#### ***Bayside Village***

The Proposed Action would convert the decommissioned rail line running east of this complex into a trail supporting pedestrian and bicycle activity and tying into the new park-and-ride multimodal hub. The Proposed Action would have some visual impact on this quadrant; however, it would be limited by the vegetated buffers running along either side of the rail line.

#### ***JT Connell Highway Commercial District (south of rotary)***

This area would be substantially affected by the Proposed Action. The rotary would be reconstructed as part of the project, and the stretch of the JT Connell Highway south of the rotary will be reprogrammed and extended southward to connect with Farewell Street. These changes would result in a substantial increase in the volume of traffic passing through the area. The visual impact would be major and beneficial, since the street (currently in poor condition) would be newly paved, and outfitted with contemporary markings, pavers, and equipment.

### **6.11.2 Indirect Impacts**

The reconfiguration of the Pell Bridge approaches and ramps, including the consolidation and removal of excess highway infrastructure, would open land formerly occupied and constrained by such infrastructure to new development. RIDOT intends to dispose of the unused right-of-way as surplus property that could be developed consistent with the City's land use planning and zoning, including proposed structures. This development would result in new buildings that would be visible from various locations within the Study Area. It is anticipated that architectural and landscape design guidelines would be employed to ensure that edge conditions for the new development would be visually attractive, so that it would be compatible with existing development in adjacent areas.

### **6.11.3 Cumulative Impacts**

Based on a review of aerial imagery, visual resources within the Study Area have not changed significantly since at least 1995. The Pell Bridge approach infrastructure itself would not

have a major visual impact on the surrounding community; however, the anticipated redevelopment of the area would have a substantial beneficial impact. No adverse cumulative impacts to visual resources are anticipated.

## **6.12 Air Quality**

### **6.12.1 Direct Impacts**

#### **No Action**

Under the No Action scenario, traffic volumes and congestion will increase, which would result in higher emissions of multiple criteria pollutants.

#### **Proposed Action**

All study intersections were compared to the acceptable parameter ranges allowed for by the FHWA Categorical Hotspot Finding to determine their compliance with transportation conformity regulations with the Proposed Action. The results of the analysis show that all intersections would comply with the acceptability criteria of the FHWA Categorical Hotspot Finding. As such, the Proposed Action is not expected to cause or contribute to an exceedance of the NAAQS, and no local air quality impacts are anticipated.

### **6.12.2 Indirect Impacts**

The Proposed Action is expected to reduce traffic congestion across the Study Area. This reduction in congestion and improved network operations would indirectly result in the reduction of regional pollutant emissions. Mobile source pollutant emissions are expected to be reduced compared to existing and No Action conditions. Emissions reductions under the Proposed Action would range from 0.01 to 0.38 tons per year for NO<sub>x</sub>, VOC, PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> when compared to No Action. Reductions in CO<sub>2</sub> would range from 528 to 1,009 tons per year when compared to No Action. Overall, the Proposed Action would provide a net benefit, reducing emissions compared to No Action. As such, no adverse indirect air quality impacts are anticipated.

### **6.12.3 Cumulative Impacts**

There are no known reasonably foreseeable future actions that would substantially affect air quality conditions in the study area. Nationwide, mobile source pollutant emissions are expected to decrease with time due to increasingly restrictive regulations on vehicle fuel consumption and emissions. As such, mobile source pollutant emissions in the Study Area in the design year are expected to be less under existing conditions. The Proposed Action is expected to provide a net benefit and reduce pollutant emissions compared to the existing and No Action conditions, helping to offset any increase of emissions that might occur from other projects. Therefore, there would be no adverse cumulative air quality effects.

## **6.13 Noise and Vibration**

### **6.13.1 Direct Impacts**

#### **No Action**

No Action noise levels would be similar to existing conditions, ranging from 35 to 67 dBA Leq at all receptors. General background growth in traffic volumes would result in a small increase in noise of approximately 0.2 to 0.3 dBA, which is not considered a perceptible increase.

#### **Proposed Action**

Design-year noise levels would approach or exceed the Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) or exceed the substantial increase criterion at several Common Noise Environments (CNEs), including:

- › CNE B – Third Street (South of Van Zandt Avenue)
- › CNE D – Cypress Street
- › CNE E – JT Connell Highway/Van Zandt Avenue Neighborhood
- › CNE K- Bayview Park/King Road

Design-year noise levels would approach or exceed the NAC, or there would be a substantial increase in noise of 10 dBA or greater, at a total of 31 residential receptors. Noise abatement must be considered for all CNEs where design-year build noise levels would exceed the NAC, even if the Proposed Action would reduce future noise levels. Mitigation for noise impacts is discussed in Chapter 7.

### **6.13.2 Indirect Impacts**

There are no indirect noise effects anticipated for the Proposed Action.

### **6.13.3 Cumulative Impacts**

There are no known future actions that would affect long-term operational or short-term construction noise conditions in the study area. Therefore, there would be no significant adverse cumulative noise effects.

## **6.14 Hazardous Materials**

### **6.14.1 Direct Impacts**

#### **No Action**

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no ground disturbance and therefore less opportunity for workers and other people in the vicinity to be exposed to contaminants in soil or groundwater. In addition, no potential would exist for hazardous material releases

during construction. However, there would also be no opportunity to address the contamination identified in the vicinity of the proposed improvements by removing contaminated soil and groundwater.

### **Proposed Action**

Contaminated subsurface soils containing elements and metals above RIDEM thresholds have been identified within the Study Area in locations where excavation or other intrusive construction activity is anticipated. Properties located adjacent to or in close proximity to areas where only surficial roadway disturbances (i.e., milling and paving) are currently anticipated could potentially impact the project if the construction scope of work changes and more intrusive work is implemented. The exposure of hazardous materials could result in adverse public health effects for workers and people working or living nearby. However, any hazardous materials encountered would be handled and disposed of in accordance with applicable regulations, as described in Section 7.14. The Proposed Action may also result in a beneficial impact if it results in the removal and disposal of contaminated materials in accordance with state and Federal regulations.

#### **6.14.2 Indirect Impacts**

Potential indirect impacts could occur if the Proposed Action were to affect ongoing remediation of existing subsurface contamination or would produce additional sources of contamination or waste materials. This is currently not anticipated to occur, but could be the case if previously undiscovered contaminants are encountered during construction. Another potential indirect impact, albeit unlikely, is the accidental mismanagement of regulated soil or groundwater waste materials outside the Study Area, such as dumping of contaminated, regulated soils at an unlicensed facility or location. In addition, redevelopment of land formerly occupied by ramps and other infrastructure could disturb identified or unidentified hazardous material sites in these areas.

#### **6.14.3 Cumulative Impacts**

The Proposed Action is not expected to contribute to adverse cumulative OHM impacts in the Study Area. Direct and indirect effects associated with the Proposed Action implementation would be mitigated via RIDEM-approved work plans, methodologies (e.g., stockpile management, dust monitoring, construction oversight by an environmental professional), and an Environmental Land Usage Restriction (ELUR). Therefore, any adverse effects should be minimized, and/or beneficial impacts would result after proper disposal or capping (via engineered controls) of contaminated materials (i.e., soil, groundwater, and debris) and legal restriction of the future property usage via the ELUR is completed.

## **6.15 Climate Change/Resiliency**

### **6.15.1 Direct Impacts**

#### **No Action**

The Study Area is not vulnerable to impacts from three feet of sea level rise. Current and future storm surge conditions, on top of the three feet of sea level rise, would occasionally inundate the area.

#### **Proposed Action**

Conditions with the Proposed Action would be similar to those under the NO Action Alternative.

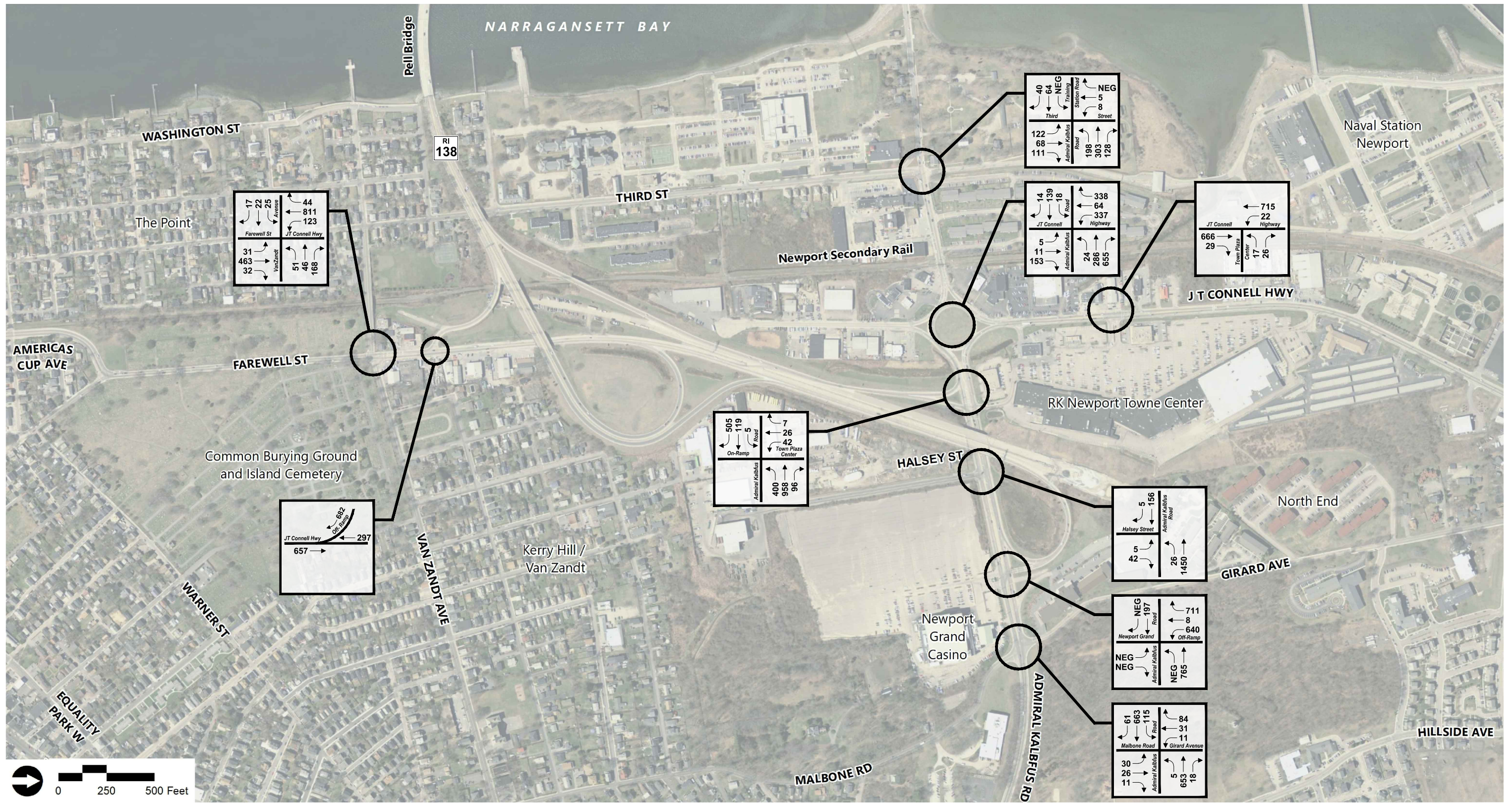
### **6.15.2 Indirect Impacts**

The Proposed Action would not have any measurable indirect impact on future rising sea levels, increased rainfall amounts, or other expected climate changes.

### **6.15.3 Cumulative Impacts**

Rising sea levels and storm surge could impact future development in the area, but the Proposed Action would not contribute to these impacts. Therefore, there are no cumulative effects for climate under the Proposed Action. carried forward as the Proposed Action for the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches.

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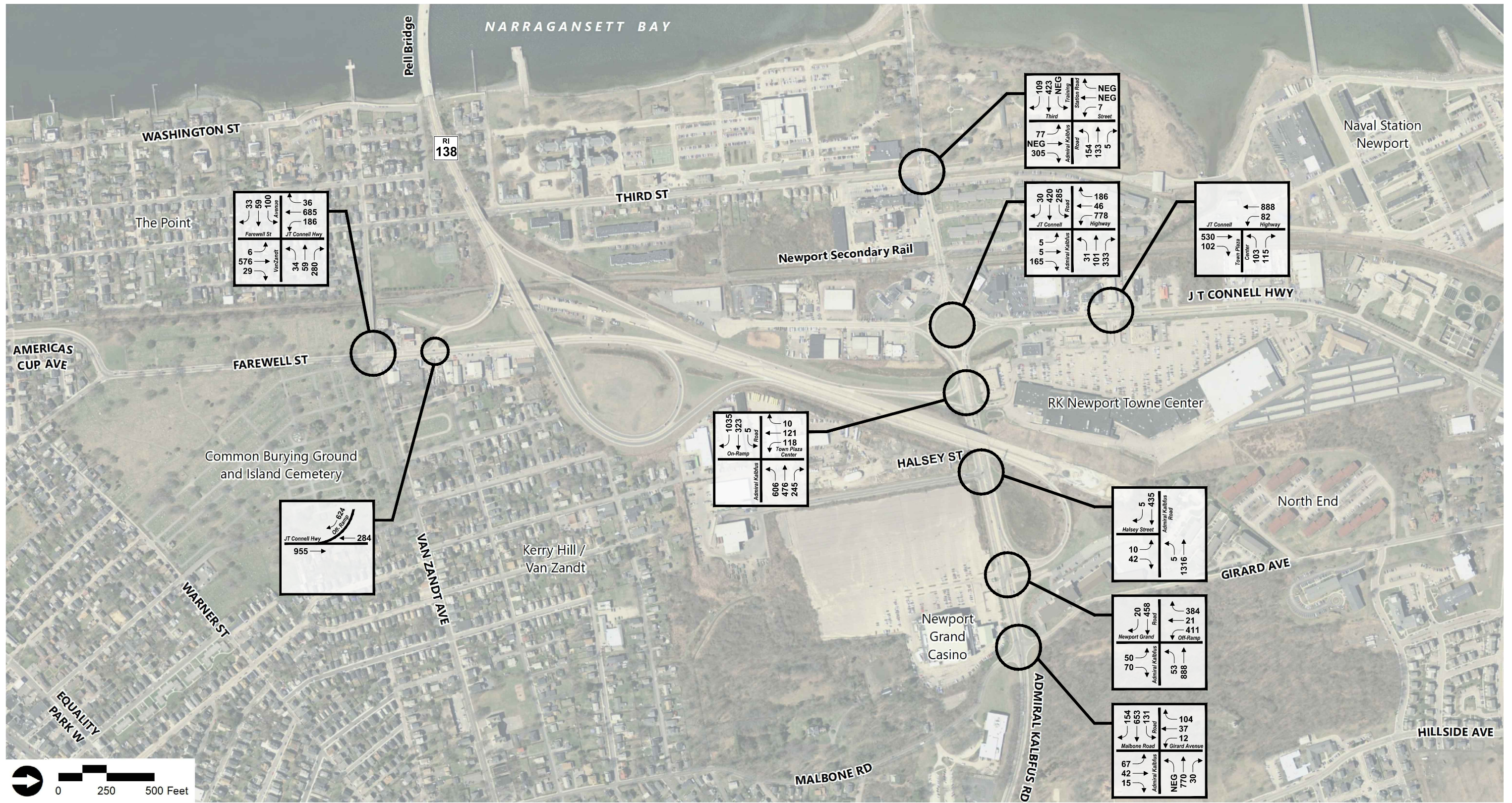
Aerial Source: RIGIS



Figure 6-1  
 2040 No-Action Condition  
 Weekday Morning  
 Peak Hour Traffic Volumes  
**Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches  
 Newport/Middletown, Rhode Island**

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Aerial Source: RIGIS



Figure 6-2  
 2040 No-Action Condition  
 Weekday Evening  
 Peak Hour Traffic Volumes  
**Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches  
 Newport/Middletown, Rhode Island**

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Aerial Source: RIGIS  
 Source: VISSIM 8 Node Evaluation. Compiled VHB Based on Average of 10 VISSIM Model Runs.

**Intersection Operations**

- Level of Service A/B
- Level of Service C/D
- Level of Service E/F

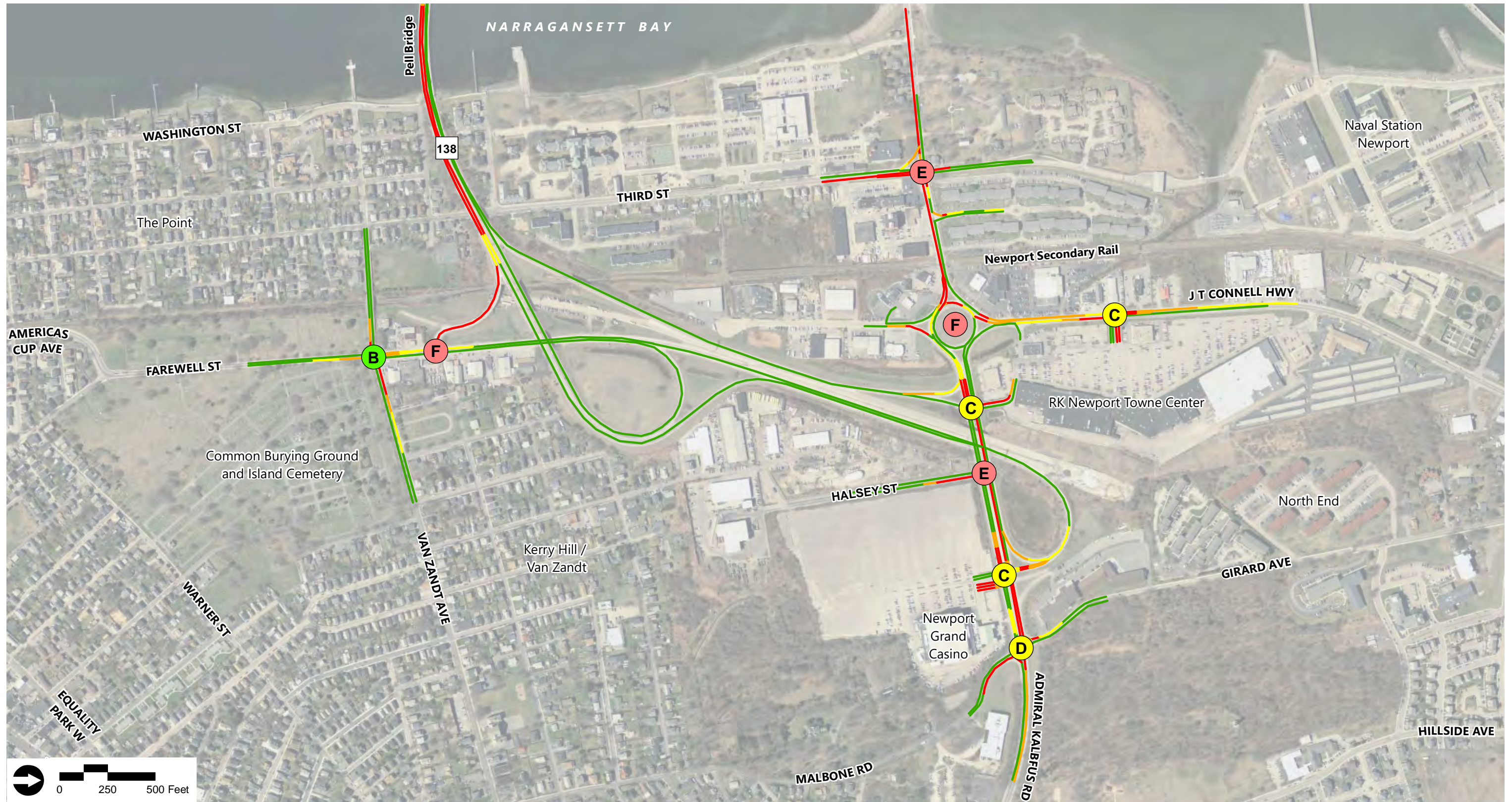
**No-Action Morning Average Speeds**

- 0-10 MPH
- 10-15 MPH
- 16-25 MPH
- >25 MPH



Figure 6-3  
 Network Operations  
 No-Action Conditions  
 Weekday Morning  
**Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches  
 Newport/Middletown, Rhode Island**

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Aerial Source: RIGIS  
 Source: VISSIM 8 Node Evaluation. Compiled VHB Based on Average of 10 VISSIM Model Runs.

**Intersection Operations**

- Level of Service A/B
- Level of Service C/D
- Level of Service E/F

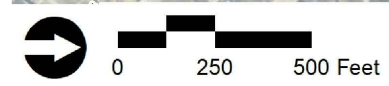
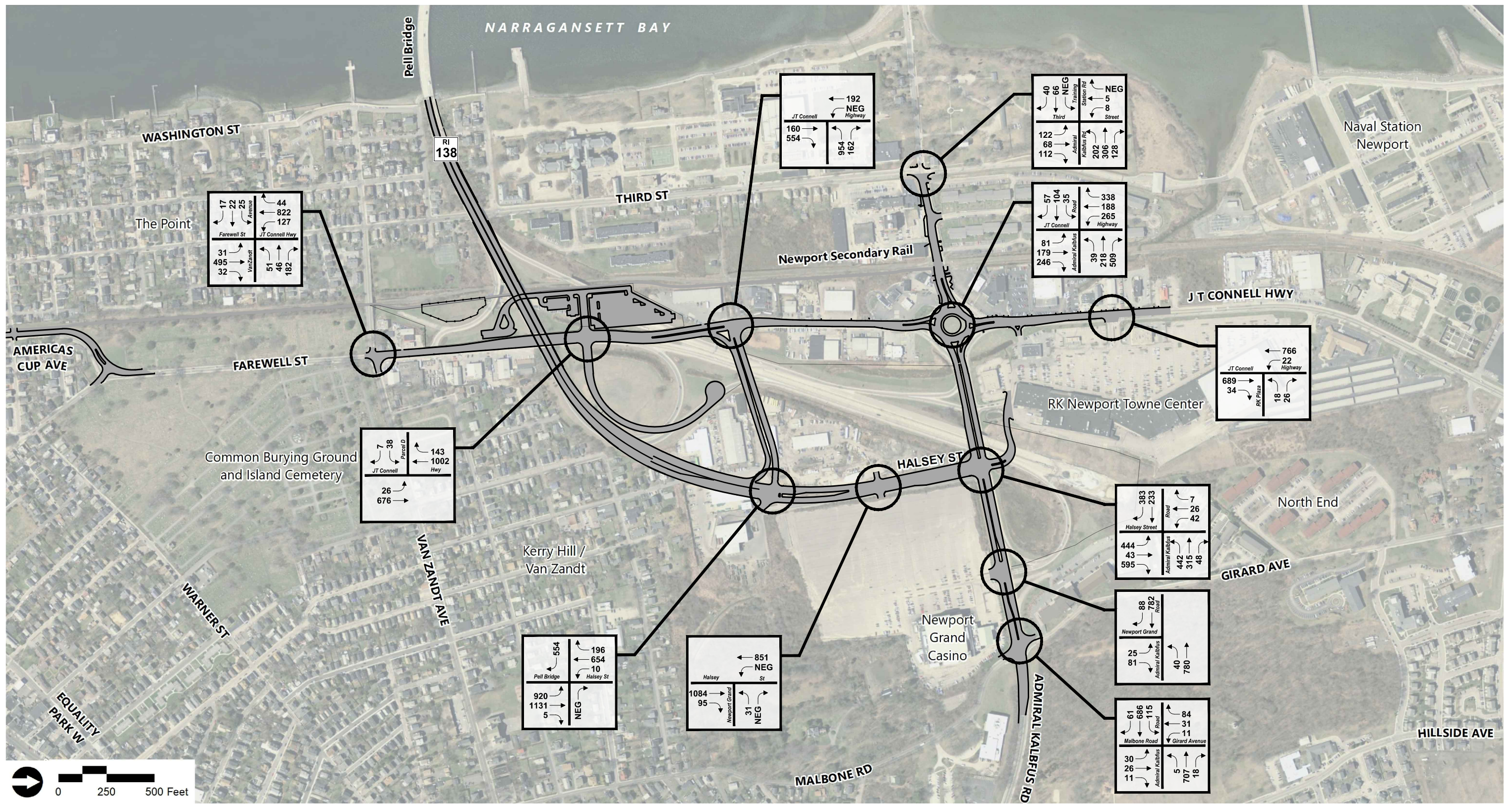
**No-Action Evening Average Speeds**

- 0-10 MPH
- 10-15 MPH
- 16-25 MPH
- >25 MPH



Figure 6-4  
 Network Operations  
 No-Action Conditions  
 Weekday Evening  
**Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches  
 Newport/Middletown, Rhode Island**

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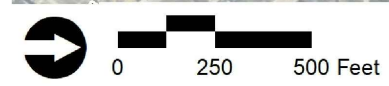
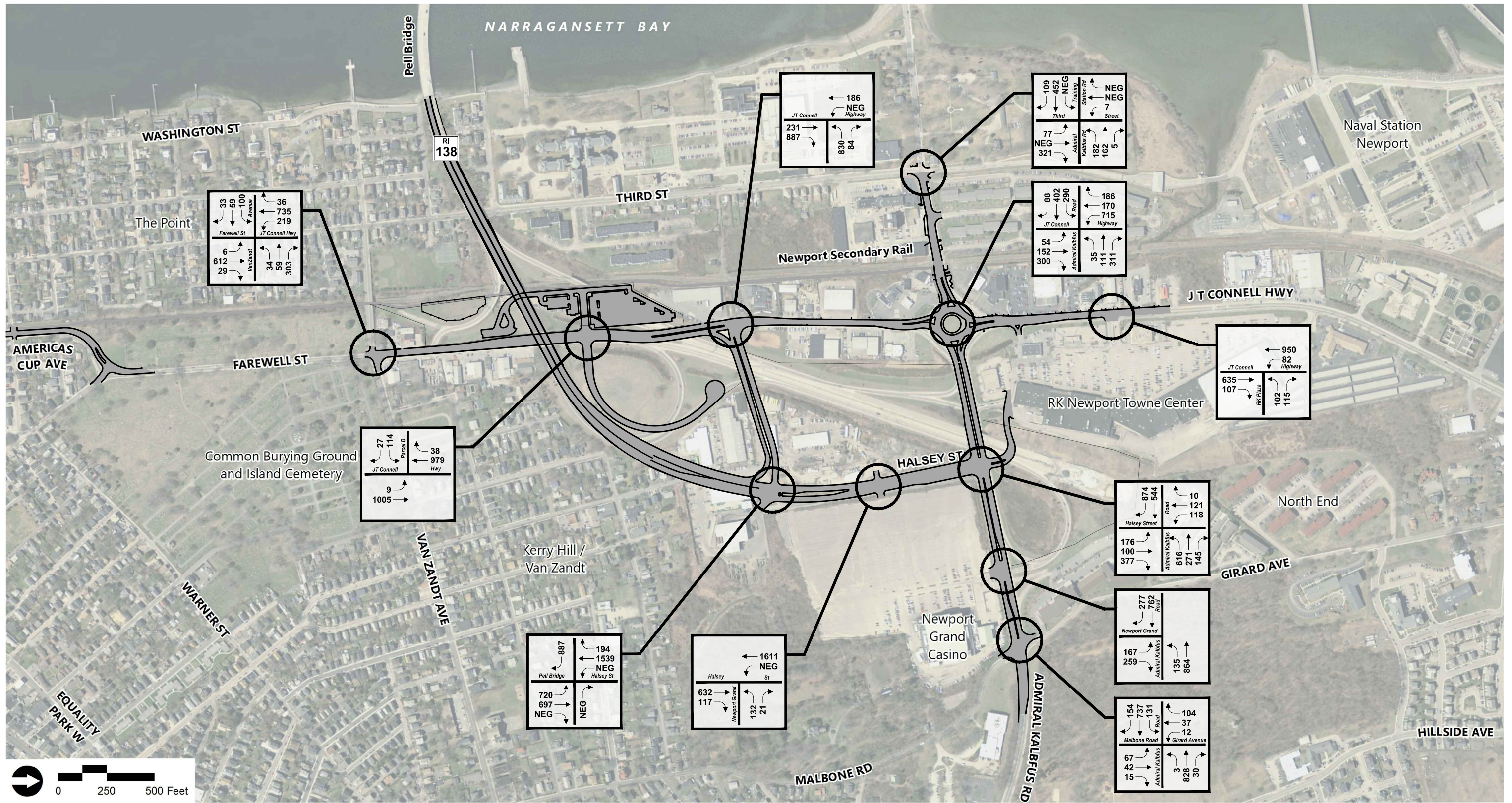
Aerial Source: RIGIS



Figure 6-5  
 2040 Proposed Action  
 Weekday Morning  
 Peak Hour Traffic Volumes  
**Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches  
 Newport/Middletown, Rhode Island**

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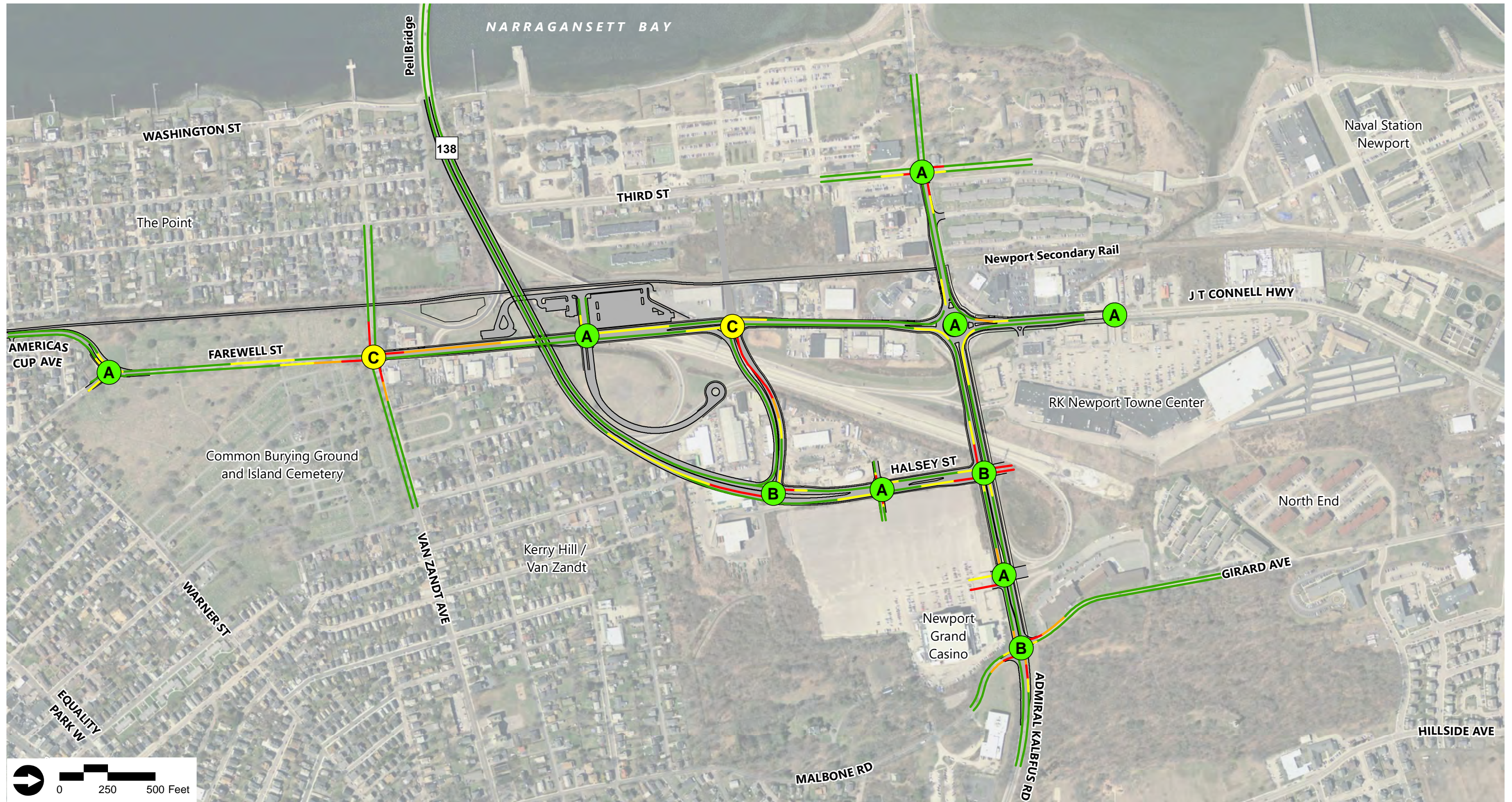


Aerial Source: RIGIS



Figure 6-6  
 2040 Proposed Action  
 Weekday Evening  
 Peak Hour Traffic Volumes  
**Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches  
 Newport/Middletown, Rhode Island**

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Aerial Source: RIGIS  
 Source: VISSIM 8 Node Evaluation. Compiled VHB Based on Average of 10 VISSIM Model Runs.

**Intersection Operations**

- Level of Service A/B
- Level of Service C/D
- Level of Service E/F

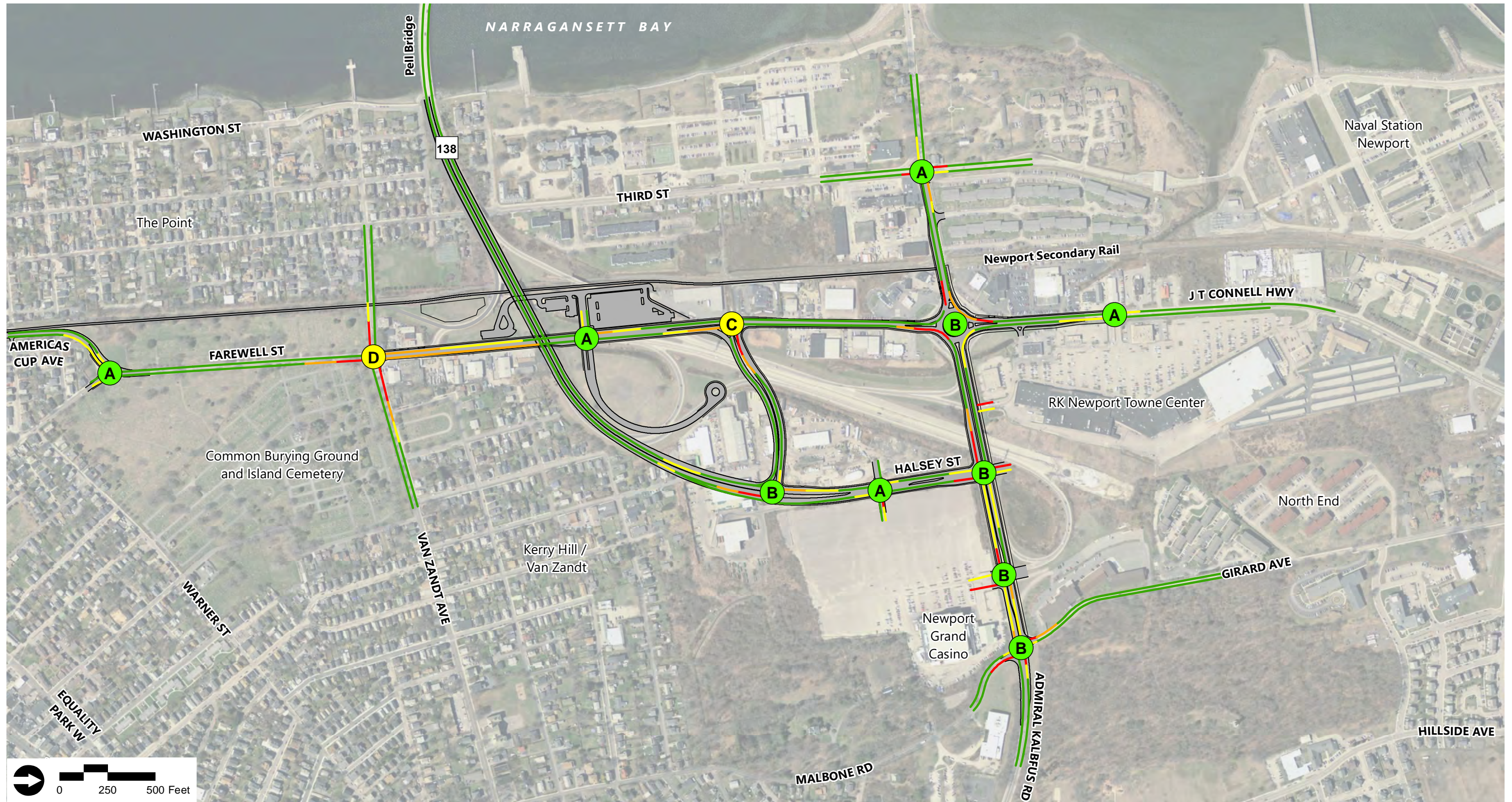
**Proposed Action Phase 1 Morning Average Speeds**

- 0-10 MPH
- 10-15 MPH
- 16-25 MPH
- >25 MPH



Figure 6-7  
 Network Operations  
 Proposed Action Conditions  
 Weekday Morning  
**Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches  
 Newport/Middletown, Rhode Island**

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Aerial Source: RIGIS  
 Source: VISSIM 8 Node Evaluation. Compiled VHB Based on Average of 10 VISSIM Model Runs.

**Intersection Operations**

- Level of Service A/B
- Level of Service C/D
- Level of Service E/F

**Proposed Action Phase 1 Evening Average Speeds**

- 0-10 MPH
- 10-15 MPH
- 16-25 MPH
- >25 MPH



Figure 6-8  
 Network Operations  
 Proposed Action Conditions  
 Weekday Evening  
**Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches  
 Newport/Middletown, Rhode Island**

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# 7

## Mitigation

This section discusses potential mitigation measures for the impacts expected to remain after minimization and avoidance measures have been incorporated into the design of the Proposed Action.

### 7.1 Transportation Network

Mitigation for transportation impacts was not warranted, since the Proposed Action would provide positive benefits to the transportation network through reductions in congestion and improved circulation.

### 7.2 Land Use

Although the Proposed Action is anticipated to convert several residential, commercial, and public service properties to transportation right-of-way, these conversions are considered moderate impacts, as they are not anticipated to significantly change land use patterns within the Study Area or the City at large. RIDOT will work with property owners, including the City of Newport, to ensure fair compensation and relocation assistance.

The strip takings from the lots and reconfiguration of access makes maneuverability to and around 65 Halsey Street difficult such that RIDOT anticipates the need to restore parking spaces that they currently use off-site as well as enhanced access from the newly configured roadway network.

The redevelopment of property no longer needed for right-of-way may result in impacts during construction (noise, dust, visual clutter, vegetation removal) and operation (traffic, air

quality, changes in visual form and community character). Any significant adverse impacts are expected to be mitigated as part of land use and permitting approvals for individual future development projects.

Because construction activities may temporarily impact the use of properties within the Study Area due to noise generation, disruptions to traffic patterns, and vehicular and equipment emissions and inhalable dust concentrations, associated minimization and mitigation measures may be required.

### **7.3 Farmland/Soils**

Because no adverse impacts are anticipated, no mitigation is required for farmlands.

### **7.4 Wetlands and Waters of the U.S and State**

As noted in Section 6.4, efforts have been made to avoid or minimize impacts to wetlands wherever possible. Components of the project such as parking lots and the replacement dog park have been sited and/or scaled to avoid direct impact to wetlands. Measures incorporated into the Proposed Action to minimize impact include elevated sections of multiuse path to span wetlands and the use of retaining walls to limit impact associated with slopes. Impacts to wetlands during construction would be minimized through the development of a site-specific Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan, which will be part of the RIPDES General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater from Construction Sites.

In some areas, wetland impacts cannot be avoided because of the geometric requirements of roadway design to ensure safety. The loss of approximately 0.5 acre of wetland would require compensatory mitigation to replace the lost wetland area and functions. The urbanized site context and the prevalence of wetlands dominated by invasive species presents a management challenge for on-site compensatory mitigation through wetland enhancement, restoration, or preservation. Once invasive wetland species are established, their control can be difficult, requiring extensive time to implement and fund. The urbanized site context is also space-constrained and not conducive to re-establishment of effective upland buffers or the landscape connectivity needed to create, restore, or enhance certain wetland functions such as wildlife habitat.

Notwithstanding these concerns, the potential for wetland restoration has been identified at a historically filled site on the west side of JT Connell Highway consisting of an abandoned restaurant property and an adjacent, undeveloped property that is mostly wetland (Wetland A-24). This site presents an opportunity for fill removal to restore a buried wetland and restore areas of Wetland A-24. While common reed is present in the existing wetland, it is a discrete population that could be controlled. The restored wetland replace the wetland area lost and the principal water quality functions lost by Proposed Action construction and operation at this site. The combined preserved/enhanced wetland area and restored wetland would also provide some wildlife habitat function.

To address the presence of invasive species at the mitigation site and comply with the requirements of Executive Order 13112, Invasive Species, an invasive plant survey will be



conducted and an Invasive Plant Management Plan (IPMP) will be prepared to control invasive species. The plan will include the following:

- Description of treatment areas, including identification of targeted invasive plant species
- Proposed methods of treatment for each species or area along with herbicide application methods and rates (if applicable)
- Methods for disposing of invasive plant material
- Monitoring and retreatment schedule
- Proposed performance metrics

Mitigation may also be achieved through implementation of onsite post-construction stormwater management BMPs to further offset the loss of principal water quality maintenance wetland functions, including sediment/toxicant retention and nutrient removal/retention/transformation. The loss of wetland acreage and non-principal functions including groundwater discharge/recharge, flood flow alteration, and wildlife habitat, could also be addressed through offsite mitigation at appropriate locations where there is a high likelihood for success, habitat connectivity, and effective upland buffering. This could potentially be achieved through a permittee-sponsored mitigation project including restoration of degraded or filled wetlands, enhancement of existing wetlands, preservation of wetlands and upland buffers, or even the creation of wetland acreage. Mitigation of temporary construction-phase effects related to sedimentation within wetlands and waterways would be achieved through implementation of construction BMPs to control soil erosion and sediment transport.

Opportunities also exist to restore segments of the culverted and ditched stream that flows through the Study Area to restore stream ecology. Currently, this drainage discharges into the Study Area stream segment that drains into Coaster's Harbor. Stream channel restoration and daylighting may be best suited as a potential mitigation option for wetland and waterway impacts related to potential future redevelopment of land divested by RIDOT and the City of Newport that will be implemented by others. The restored stream could become an attractive and functional landscape feature within the future redevelopment areas.

Authorization for Proposed Action impacts to wetlands and waterways that are regulated under Section 404(b) of the federal Clean Water Act will require Pre-Construction Notification under the USACE's State of Rhode Island General Permit 18, as the total impacts to federally regulated wetlands and waterways will exceed 5,000 square feet. Agency coordination and consultation will be required with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Coastal Resources Management Council, the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, and the Narragansett Indian Tribe. The mitigation will comply with Compensatory Mitigation for Losses of Aquatic Resources; Final Rule 4/10/08; 33 CFR Parts 325 and 332. Approval will also be required by the state agency with jurisdiction over freshwater wetlands, which may be the RIDEM and/or the CRMC.

## **7.5 Floodplains**

Nearly the entire Proposed Action area is located within the existing 1% floodplain, and under proposed grading conditions a majority of the Study Area would remain within the 1% floodplain. The modeling indicates that there would be no predicted increase in the 1% floodplain elevation associated with the Proposed Action. Because the floodplain within the study area is associated with coastal flooding and not riverine flooding, any gain or loss of floodplain storage has no effect on flood elevations for adjacent properties. Therefore, no compensatory floodplain storage mitigation is required.

The Proposed Action would provide a route to access the Pell Bridge that is above the FEMA 50-year flood elevation with 1 foot of freeboard.

As discussed in Section 6.5, it is assumed that the new development parcels made available by completion of the Proposed Action would be graded to the same elevation as the surrounding roadway. Indirect and cumulative impacts related to development of these parcels can be mitigated or reduced by designing site grading, building floor elevations, and utility infrastructure to provide adequate freeboard above the current and predicted future 1% floodplain elevation.

## **7.6 Water Quality/Stormwater**

Mitigation for water quality and stormwater impacts can be achieved through implementation of onsite post-construction stormwater management BMPs, which would reduce pollutant loadings and help to perform wetland functions, including sediment/toxicant retention and nutrient removal/retention/ transformation. Sedimentation within wetlands and waterways would be reduced through the use of construction BMPs to control erosion. The proposed mitigation includes Low Impact Development (LID) practices that may include grass swales, sedimentation forebays, and bioretention areas. Grass swales are well suited to treat highway road runoff due to their linear nature. Existing and proposed drainage plans have been developed based on conceptual plans. The preliminary plans have selected, sited, and sized BMPs based on the anticipated changes in impervious surface cover within the Study Area. All work will be in compliance with the RIDOT Stormwater Consent Decree.

## **7.7 Coastal Resources**

Minor impacts to coastal resources will be mitigated through implementation of construction phase BMPs, use of LID measures where feasible, post-construction stormwater management, and by minimizing and mitigating unavoidable impacts to wetlands.

## **7.8 Federally Threatened or Endangered and State Natural Heritage Species/Biodiversity**

The Proposed Action involves several stressors that have the potential to negatively impact NLEB. However, because no threatened or endangered species are expected to be present

within the Study Area, no impacts are anticipated. However, coordination and consultation with USFWS would occur during construction to minimize the potential for impact. Measures potentially include:

- › Modification of aspects of the Proposed Action (e.g., temporary work areas, alignments) to the extent practicable to avoid tree removal in excess of what is required to implement the Proposed Action safely.
- › Apply time of year (TOY) restrictions for tree removal (during pupping season between June 1 and July 31), or limit tree removal to 10 or fewer trees at any time of year within 100 feet of the existing road/rail surface and outside of documented roosting/foraging habitat or travel corridors; visual emergence survey must be conducted with no bats observed.
- › Limit tree removal to that specified in project plans and educate contractors on restricted clearing limits and how they are marked in the field (e.g. install bright colored flagging/fencing prior to any tree clearing to ensure contractors stay within clearing limits).
- › Do not remove trees that are documented NLEB roosts that are still suitable for roosting; or trees within 0.25 miles of roosts; or documented foraging habitat any time of year.
- › Perform any bridge removal, replacement, and/or maintenance work during the winter hibernation period unless a hibernating colony of bats is present.
- › If assuming presence of bats, or if bridge assessment or P/A surveys suggest presence of bats, safeguard suitable roosting habit so they are maintained. Suitable roosting sites may be incorporated into the design of a new bridge.
- › Direct temporary lighting away from suitable habitat during the active season.
- › When installing new or replacing existing permanent lights, use downward-facing, full cut-off lens lights (with same intensity or less for replacement lighting); or for those transportation agencies using the BUG system developed by the Illuminating Engineering Society, the goal is to be as close as possible to 0 for all three ratings with a priority of "uplight" of 0 and "backlight" as low as practicable.

## **7.9 Cultural (Historic and Archaeological) Resources**

As described in Section 6.9, no direct, indirect, or cumulative adverse impacts to cultural resources are anticipated as a result of the Project, and mitigation is not required. However, in its February 2020 letter concurring with RIDOT's finding of No Adverse Effect on cultural resources, RIHPPHC made two recommendations: (1) that RIHPPHC have the ability to review and comment on detailed project plans as they relate to the Common Burying Ground, and (2) that a National Register of Historic Places Nomination be completed for the Claiborne Pell Bridge. RIDOT will continue to coordinate with RIHPPHC as the project moves forward.

## **7.10 Environmental Justice & Socio-Economics**

As the Noise subsection notes, RIDOT reviewed the feasibility and reasonableness of noise abatement measures based on standard criteria in its Noise Policy. The criteria address 1)

engineering feasibility, 2) viewpoints of benefited receptors, 3) cost effectiveness, 4) acoustic feasibility, and 5) date of development. Based on RIDOT's review, noise abatement measures would not be feasible and reasonable for impacted receptors in identified environmental justice geographies. For residences on JT Connell Highway near Bay View Park, it is not feasible to significantly alter the alignment of JT Connell Highway or institute speed or truck restrictions to these local roads, and noise barriers are not feasible due to pedestrian access needed for these residences. Although noise barriers would be feasible for receptors near the intersection of Garfield Street and Halsey Street, such barriers would not be reasonable based on cost.

The Proposed Action would require property acquisitions within identified environmental justice geographies. RIDOT will work with property owners to ensure fair compensation and relocation assistance in accordance with 49 CFR Part 24 requirements.

Construction activities may impact the use of properties within identified environmental justice geographies in the Study Area due to noise generation, disruptions to traffic patterns, and vehicular and equipment emissions and inhalable dust concentrations. Such impacts are temporary and not considered to be significantly adverse. However, RIDOT will continue to work with property owners and employ best management practices and other requirements to minimize or mitigate these impacts. RIDOT will provide outreach to minority and low-income communities in the Study Area, including informational handouts, translated materials, etc., as part of the NEPA process and during final design and project construction.

RIDEM's environmental justice policy will be followed for necessary and relevant outreach, communications, and involvement activities related to contaminated sites.

## **7.11 Visual Resources**

The removal of the elevated roadway and ramps would be an improvement to visual resources in the Study Area; therefore, no mitigation is necessary. Indirect visual impacts would result from subsequent redevelopment of the land made available after completion of the Proposed Action. This new development should be designed to interface visually (and functionally) with the redevelopment of adjacent parcels (e.g. Newport Grand).

## **7.12 Air Quality**

Because no significant adverse air quality impacts are anticipated, mitigation is not required.

## **7.13 Noise and Vibration**

Design-year noise levels would approach or exceed the NAC, or would result in a substantial increase in noise of 10 dBA of greater, at a total of 31 residential receptors. Design-year noise levels are predicted to approach or exceed the NAC in several areas, including the Third Street, Cypress Street, JT Connell Highway/Van Zandt Avenue, and Bayview Park/King Road CNEs.

For the Third Street CNE, noise abatement would not be feasible and reasonable for residences on Third Street south of Van Zandt. It is not feasible to alter the alignment of Third Street or institute speed or truck restrictions to these local roads and noise barriers are not feasible due to pedestrian access needed for these residences.

Noise abatement would not be feasible and reasonable for residences on JT Connell Highway near Bayview Park. It is not feasible to significantly alter the alignment of JT Connell Highway or institute speed or truck restrictions to these local roads, and noise barriers are not feasible due to pedestrian access needed for these residences.

For the remainder of the impacted CNEs, noise barriers would be feasible and would meet the requirements to provide at least 5 dBA of noise reduction to 100% of impacted receptors and some of the barriers could provide at least 10 dBA to 50% of benefited receptors. However, none of the noise barriers would be reasonable, as they would not meet the Cost Effectiveness Index criterion of \$30,000 per benefited receptor. Therefore, no mitigation for direct, indirect, or cumulative noise impacts is proposed.

In some areas, such as CNE E near Garfield Street and Prescott Hall Road, the proposed alignment is slightly elevated and in close proximity to residences in this area. Therefore, it may be necessary to construct a solid wall snow fence to minimize the potential for plows to push snow onto these properties. Such a solid wall snow fence would also be effective in reducing noise at these properties.

## **7.14 Hazardous Materials**

During construction activities, BMPs and other requirements would need to be followed to mitigate potential hazardous material impacts. From a regulatory perspective, RIDOT and any selected contractors/sub-contractors will be required to follow a Remedial Action Work Plan (RAWP), which details specific measures to be taken by the contractor, the process for handling and managing impacted materials (soil and groundwater), and specifications on the construction of any cap, if needed. The measures outlined below have been provided as a general guideline and may change once the RAWP is written and submitted to the RIDEM for comment following the Site Investigation Report (SIR):

- › During construction activities, the contractor will monitor construction to document that soil management activities are properly conducted. Operating logs and photo-documentation will be kept and submitted monthly and/or upon the completion of the Proposed Action. These logs will be the primary documentation for compliance and mitigation of impacts.
- › All excavated material which requires stockpiling will be temporarily stockpiled on 6-mil polyethylene sheeting and covered with 6-mil polyethylene sheeting in a contractor-designated stockpile area onsite. This procedure will reduce the possibility of entrainment of the soil by wind or erosion of the stockpile from precipitation. This procedure will also reduce the potential for contact with the stockpile by members of the public by restricting access to exposed soils.
- › All reasonable precautions will be taken to prevent the excessive generation of dust during soil excavation, stockpiling, loading, and other soil handling activities. Work at

the site must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations, including the RIDEM Air Pollution Control Regulations, and specifically Regulation No. 5 regarding control of fugitive dust. Dust control measures must be implemented, as required, to prevent airborne particulate matter from leaving the site at all times. Dust control measures (e.g., wetting soils) shall be implemented on an as needed basis (i.e. visual evidence of airborne dust) throughout the Proposed Action. All stockpiles shall be inspected daily to ensure compliance with RIDEM Air Pollution Control Regulations. Periodic inspections of the site will be conducted to ensure all dust control measures are in place. This information will then be recorded in the Operating Log. Dust control measures will help to mitigate entrainment of impacted soils via wind to reduce potential impacts to nearby receptors.

- › Prior to the start of excavation activities, installation of sediment and erosion controls will be required. A stabilized construction entrance, or entrances if multiple entrances to the Study Area are needed, to reduce the tracking of soils into the area roadways will also be installed. The construction entrance will be installed consistent with the Rhode Island Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Handbook (2014).
- › Any remediation waste generated will be managed in accordance with state and federal requirements and disposal documentation will be provided to RIDEM. If excess soil is generated, the material will be characterized via sampling for disposal parameters and disposed of at a permitted facility. Any disposal manifests, bills of lading, or other transportation documentation (e.g., disposal facility weight slips) will be included in the Remedial Action Closure Report (RACR).
- › Upon completion of the Proposed Action, a RACR will be submitted to the RIDEM summarizing field activities that were completed and overall compliance with the RAWP.
- › An Environmental Land Usage Restriction (ELUR) will be recorded for contaminated properties or portions of such properties as necessary. The ELUR and associated Soil Management Plan (SMP) will be finalized by RIDOT within 60 days following RIDEM's approval of the RACR. A recorded copy of the ELUR is expected to be forwarded to RIDEM within 15 days of filing, and successful completion of the soil management activities documented in the periodic Operating Logs will be used to demonstrate compliance with the work plan. All information associated with these actions will be submitted to RIDEM as required.

## 7.15 Climate Change/Resiliency

The Proposed Action will not have a measurable impact on changing climate conditions. Potential mitigation strategies, according to the Federal Highway Administration, include maintaining infrastructure for optimal performance, increasing redundancy, such as providing alternate routes, protecting the shoreline infrastructure through hardened or soft engineered solutions, increasing bridge deck elevations or lowering road profiles to allow for overwash, or relocating structures away from the vulnerable coastal area. The Proposed Action provides a route to the Pell Bridge that is above the FEMA 50-year flood elevation with 1 foot of freeboard.

# 8

## Section 4(f) Programmatic Evaluation for a Net Benefit to a Section 4(f) Property

### 8.1 Introduction

Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (DOT Act) requires DOT agencies to consider certain properties when making transportation improvements. These properties, collectively referred to as Section 4(f) properties, include publicly-owned parks, recreation areas, wildlife or waterfowl refuges, and publicly- and privately-owned historic sites listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. In the event that a project requires the incorporation of land from a Section 4(f) property in order to meet its purpose and need, this incorporation is called a “use.” The purpose of a Section 4(f) evaluation is to document and conclude that there are no “feasible and prudent” project alternatives that avoid the “use” of a Section 4(f) property while meeting the project purpose and need. According to 23 CFR 774.17, “a feasible and prudent avoidance alternative is one that avoids using Section 4(f) property and does not cause other severe problems of a magnitude that substantially outweighs the importance of protecting the Section 4(f) property.”

The Proposed Action is a federally-assisted transportation improvement project on existing and new alignments that would use land from one Section 4(f) property, the Newport Dog Park. Upon consideration of the impacts of the Proposed Action, RIDOT and FHWA have determined that the project meets the criteria for a “Section 4(f) Evaluation and Approval for Transportation Projects That Have a Net Benefit to a Section 4(f) Property” (hereafter referred to as a “net benefit programmatic evaluation”). According to the FHWA, a net

benefit to a Section 4(f) property is achieved when "...the transportation use, the measures to minimize harm and the mitigation incorporated into the project results in an overall enhancement of the Section 4(f) property when compared to both the future do-nothing or avoidance alternatives and the present condition of the Section 4(f) property, considering the activities, features and attributes that qualify the property for Section 4(f) protection." The criteria for determining a net benefit are described in Section 8.3 below.

## 8.2 Study Area and Methodology

The value of parks and recreation areas to the City of Newport is described in the City's most recent land use plan: "The open spaces in Newport today play many important roles in the city, providing recreational, social, cultural, aesthetic, economic, environmental, and community benefits. The wide variety of open spaces available to City residents is one of the defining characteristics of Newport, well known for its scenic views." The plan attributes a similar value to the City's many historic sites, noting that they serve to "...enrich and maintain Newport's sense of place and authentic historic character, now and for future generations."

The Study Area was defined by the extent of the Proposed Action's anticipated noise impacts (i.e., areas where the day-night average sound level [DNL] would reach or exceed 60 decibels [dB]) (refer to Figure 8-1, Section 4(f) Properties Study Area). The Study Area was developed based on changes in noise levels because increased noise constitutes the largest geographic effect with the potential to impair the activities, features, or attributes that qualify a property for protection under Section 4(f). This Study Area encompasses the Project's limits of disturbance (LOD), which include all areas that would be physically impacted by construction activities such as grading and paving, plus an additional 200-foot buffer. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping was used to identify properties where a Section 4(f) use (as defined in Section 8.3 below) could occur. In addition to GIS mapping, publicly available information provided on the City's website (e.g., planning documents and maps) were reviewed to develop a detailed understanding of these properties.

The evaluation of alternatives that avoid the "use" of Section 4(f) properties includes a determination of whether those alternatives meet the project's purpose and need. Chapter 2 of the EA provides a detailed discussion of the need for the Project. The purpose of the Project is to reconstruct the Pell Bridge approach ramps to provide:

- Improved traffic circulation, reduced queuing, and improved safety,
- Reconnection of the neighborhoods segmented by the current highway infrastructure, and
- Support of the City of Newport's economic development plan by maximizing land area for redevelopment.

## 8.3 Applicable Regulations and Criteria

Section 4(f) refers to a section within the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 that provides for consideration of park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites during transportation project development. When a project requires land from



a Section 4(f) property, the law describes it as a "use." Except as set forth in 23 CFR 774.11 and 774.13, a "use" of Section 4(f) property occurs:

- (1) When land is permanently incorporated into a transportation facility;
- (2) When there is a temporary occupancy of land that is adverse in terms of the statute's preservation purpose as determined by the criteria in 23 CFR 774.13(d); or
- (3) When there is a constructive use of a Section 4(f) property as determined by the criteria in 23 CFR 774.15.

The statute, and subsequent Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidance, identifies three main types of "use" of Section 4(f) properties, as defined below:

Permanent incorporation/permanent easement: This involves a right-of-way acquisition of Section 4(f) land as part of a transportation project, or a permanent easement on the Section 4(f) property for transportation or related purposes. In the case of permanent incorporation, the transportation agency or project sponsor directly purchases the property, and the property sustains a permanent impact—typically, changing from a Section 4(f) property to a transportation facility. With a permanent easement, although the underlying ownership of the land may remain with the original owner, the transportation owner acquires a permanent interest in some portion of the property that disrupts its Section 4(f) function.

Temporary occupancy: During the construction of a highway project, a temporary occupancy of a Section 4(f) property may be necessary for activities such as regrading slopes or to provide staging or access areas. Depending upon conditions, such activities – even though temporary in nature – may be considered adverse in terms of the Section 4(f) statute's preservation purpose, and therefore would be considered a Section 4(f) "use." This could occur if the land is subject to temporary or permanent adverse changes, such as contour alterations, removal of mature trees and other vegetation, or disruption of facilities or activities on the property. Once the easement is no longer needed, the Section 4(f) property must be restored to the condition in which it was originally found.

Constructive use: Constructive use involves an indirect impact to the Section 4(f) property of such magnitude as to effectively act as a permanent incorporation. In this case, the project does not physically incorporate the resource but is close enough to it to severely impact important features, activities or attributes associated with it, and to substantially impair it. Constructive use may include impacts such as noise, access restrictions, vibration, ecological intrusions and visual impacts.

When a Federally funded transportation project will use Section 4(f) property, a Section 4(f) approval by the FHWA is required. If the "use" results in no adverse effect on the activities, features, or attributes qualifying a park, recreation area, or refuge for protection under Section 4(f), or results in a Section 106 determination of "no adverse effect" for historic properties—then FHWA makes a *de minimis* determination. If the project would have a greater than *de minimis* impact on the property, a written evaluation must be prepared and submitted to FHWA for approval. There are two types of evaluations—an individual evaluation and a programmatic evaluation. An individual evaluation may be submitted either as an independent document (for categorical exclusions) or as a section of an Environmental

Impact Statement (EIS) or an Environmental Assessment (EA)/Finding of no Significant Impacts (FONSI). A programmatic evaluation may be used only for projects that meet the application criteria of one of the five nationwide programmatic evaluations that have been approved by FHWA. Both types of evaluations describe the Section 4(f) property, the proposed use of the property, avoidance and minimization alternatives, other impacts associated with the alternatives, coordination with the official(s) with jurisdiction, and measures to minimize harm.

As described in Section 8.1, the Proposed Action is being evaluated as a Section 4(f) net benefit programmatic evaluation. This programmatic evaluation applies under certain circumstances in which the following criteria are met:

- › The proposed transportation project uses a Section 4(f) park.
- › The proposed project includes all appropriate measures to minimize harm and subsequent mitigation necessary to preserve and enhance those features and values of the property that originally qualified the property for Section 4(f) protection.
- › The official(s) with jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) property agree in writing with the assessment of the impacts; the proposed measures to minimize harm; and the mitigation necessary to preserve, rehabilitate and enhance those features and values of the Section 4(f) property; and that such measures will result in a net benefit to the Section 4(f) property.
- › The FHWA determines that the project facts match those set forth in the Applicability, Alternatives, Findings, Mitigation and Measures to Minimize Harm, Coordination, and Public Involvement sections of this programmatic evaluation.

Completion of this net benefit programmatic evaluation does not exempt the Project from compliance with NEPA, conducting public outreach and involvement, or other Federal or state environmental requirements that are applicable to the Project.

## 8.4 Baseline Conditions

The following section describes the Section 4(f) properties that are located within the 200-foot buffer Study Area (Figure 8-1 – Section 4(f) Properties Study Area). The properties include parks and recreational areas, historic properties, and historic cemeteries. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Information for Planning and Consultation Tool – National Wildlife Refuge Lands and Fish Hatcheries data layer, there are no wildlife or waterfowl refuges within or near the Study Area.

### 8.4.1 Parks and Recreational Areas

#### **Newport Dog Park**

The Newport Dog Park is an approximately 0.5-acre public recreational open space located on Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT)-owned land in an industrial area at the southern terminus of JT Connell Highway in the North End Commercial neighborhood.

Although the property is owned by RIDOT, it is managed by the City of Newport. According to the *City of Newport Comprehensive Land Use Plan*, this dog park is classified as "single use space," which is a fenced recreational open space that has a singular focus in mind (pp. 8-10). It is the only approved site in the City of Newport for dogs to be off-leash. The dog park also features a separate enclosed area that is restricted to dogs under 25 pounds. The dog park is only accessible to users from JT Connell Highway, where street parking is available in an area along the fence line. The Newport Dog Park lies entirely within the Proposed Action LOD.

### **Third Street Playground**

The Third Street Playground is a 0.28-acre playground located in the North End Commercial neighborhood on state-owned land.<sup>3</sup> The playground is categorized as a "Mini Park" and includes a playground structure, multiple benches and picnic tables. The park is fenced in with an opening for sidewalk access off Third Street. There does not appear to be designated vehicle parking for users. This park is within a densely populated area of Newport, and is approximately 24 feet outside the Proposed Action LOD.

### **Harbor Walk**

The City of Newport has a designated recreational trail that follows the border of Newport Harbor. This sidewalk trail, called the Harbor Walk, offers scenic water views and goes through Newport's Historic District. The Harbor Walk is just over 5 miles long; the portion that is closest to the Proposed Action LOD follows along Washington Street. The northernmost end of the trail stops approximately 260 feet from Pell Bridge at the corner of Cypress Street. The Harbor Walk is immediately adjacent to the Proposed Action LOD.

### **Hunter Park**

Hunter Park, located on Van Zandt Avenue at the corner of 3rd Street, is classified as a "Neighborhood Park" and lies within The Point neighborhood. Parking is available to users on Dyers Gate Road off 3rd Street. There do not appear to be any pedestrian access points to the park from the sidewalk on Van Zandt Avenue. Because of its location, this nearly 2.5-acre park is a valuable recreational resource to northern Newport, which notably has a low supply of open space according to the *City of Newport Comprehensive Land Use Plan* (pp. 8-2). Hunter Park is classified as conservation land and is owned and maintained by the City of Newport (pp. 9-12). The park currently offers a playground, baseball field, basketball courts, picnic tables, soccer, tennis courts, and other large open fields. Planned upgrades to the park include improvements to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations, restoration of the tennis courts, and conversion of another tennis court into three pickleball courts. Hunter Park is approximately 12 feet outside the Proposed Action LOD.

<sup>3</sup> Mini parks, or pocket parks as they are also referred to, are defined as less than one acre and may include traditional open spaces, traffic islands, waterfront parks, and driftways. These parks can help address the open space needs of those in dense urban areas.

### **Cardines Field and Playground**

Cardines Field, located at 24 America's Cup Avenue, is believed to be one of the oldest ballparks in the United States and has been called "a small urban gem of a ballpark". The ballpark is located in the Downtown neighborhood of Newport and has been owned by the City since 1936. A summer collegiate baseball team, the Newport Gulls, moved to Newport in 2001 and currently uses Cardines Field as their home field. The 2.73-acre ballpark has the capacity to seat 3,000 people, has a concession stand and restrooms, and there is street parking available nearby, as well as access to public transportation facilities. Cardines Field is located within the Newport Historic Landmark District, which is discussed below under Historic Properties. Cardines Field is approximately 117 feet outside the Proposed Action LOD.

Immediately adjacent to the northeast of Cardines Field at the corner of Bridge Street and America's Cup Avenue, the Cardines Playground provides benches, handicap vehicle parking, and a fully wheelchair-accessible play structure. This public play area is entirely fenced in and parking is available along nearby streets. Cardines Playground is within the Downtown neighborhood and is easily accessible for residences in the nearby area. Cardines Playground is approximately 10 feet outside the Proposed Action LOD.

### **Edward G. Goldberg / Coddington Field**

Edward G. Goldberg Field, located at 245 Maple Avenue, is an approximately 2.85-acre facility owned by the City of Newport. The Edward G. Goldberg Little League Field is also referred to as the Louis "Duke" Abruzzi Little League Complex, or Coddington Field. The facility consists of two Little League baseball fields, restrooms, bleachers, a field shed, and on-site parking. According to tax records, the property has been owned by the City of Newport since 1962. Edward G. Goldberg / Coddington Field is approximately 8 feet outside the Proposed Action LOD.

### **Lexington Street and Coddington Highway Playground**

This unnamed property is located within Middletown, Rhode Island, at the junction of Lexington Street and Coddington Highway. The parcel is approximately 1.7 acres, and contains a large grassy field, benches, and a small playground. The property is immediately east of the U.S. Navy Center; according to the Middletown Office of Geographic Information System, the parcel is half owned by Newport Landings LLC and the United States. There is no designated vehicle parking for the playground; however, street parking is available. This property is located between two apartment complexes, Coddington Cove (Navy-owned service member housing) and Landings Apartment Community (privately-owned). Lexington Street and Coddington Highway Playground is approximately 7 feet outside the Proposed Action LOD.

## 8.4.2 Historic Properties

### **United States Naval Hospital Newport Historic District**

The United States Naval Hospital Newport Historic District is located north of the project area, and partially overlaps the Proposed Action LOD. The 14.1-acre property is a waterfront site between 3rd Street and Coasters Harbor. This historic district has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register.<sup>4</sup> For additional information on the United States Naval Hospital Newport Historic District, see Appendix B9 to the EA for the Cultural Resources Technical Memorandum.

### **Newport Historic Landmark District**

The Newport Historic Landmark District is located at the south end of the Study Area and is bounded by Van Zandt Avenue, Newport Harbor, Thames Street, Pope Street, William Street, Bellevue Avenue, Bull Street, Broadway, and Kingston Street. This historic district is listed in the National Register, and partially overlaps with the Proposed Action LOD. For additional information on this historic district, see Appendix B9 to the EA for the Cultural Resources Technical Memorandum.

### **Van Zandt Avenue Historic Railroad Bridge**

The Van Zandt Avenue Bridge spans Van Zandt Avenue between 3rd Street and Farewell Street and is located within the southern portion of the Study Area. The bridge forms the northern boundary of the Newport Historic Landmark District and was constructed in the early 1930s by the City of Newport to replace an earlier structure. The Van Zandt Avenue Bridge has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register. For additional information on this bridge, see Appendix B9 to the EA for the Cultural Resources Technical Memorandum. Van Zandt Avenue Bridge lies entirely within the Proposed Action LOD.

### **Miantonomi Memorial Park and World War I Memorial Tower**

This 38.6-acre community park has a history dating back to the colonial era and was listed in the National Register on June 23, 1969. The park is approximately bounded by Girard Avenue on the west, Admiral Kalbfus Road on the south, Hillside Avenue on the east, and Sunset Boulevard on the north. It is the largest city-owned park in Newport, providing hillside bay views, a playground, trails, picnic tables, grills, volleyball, and other recreational activities. It is also a spot for large community cookouts and dog walking. The park also features a World War I stone tower memorial, dedicated in 1929 on the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Rhode Island. Miantonomi Memorial Park and World War I Memorial Tower is immediately adjacent to the Proposed Action LOD.

<sup>4</sup> The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 authorizes the National Park Service to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources.

### 8.4.3 Historic Cemeteries

Two historic cemeteries are located within the Study Area. Common Burying Ground encompasses approximately 9 acres and was given to the City of Newport in 1640. It is the oldest public cemetery in the City. The City of Newport owns and maintains the Common Burying Ground under the direction of the Building and Grounds Supervisor with assistance from the Historic Cemetery Advisory Commission. Island Cemetery consists of approximately 22 acres and is privately owned. The two cemeteries are listed in the National Register under one listing and have a combined total of over 5,000 graves, many of which have colonial-era headstones. Both of these cemeteries are immediately adjacent to the Proposed Action LOD.

## 8.5 Impacts of the Proposed Action on Section 4(f) Properties

Under the Proposed Action, existing highway infrastructure and associated ramps would be removed to reconnect existing roadways and create a new local roadway network (refer to Figure 8-2). This work would require the “use” of one Section 4(f) property: the Newport Dog Park. The reconfiguration of Farewell Street (Route 238) and JT Connell Highway would result in a permanent conversion of the entire 0.5-acre Newport Dog Park to roadway right-of-way use, as the dog park lies partially within the LOD and any remainder would not have sufficient access to maintain the property’s use as a park. This would constitute a direct “use” of this Section 4(f) property, because park land would be permanently incorporated into a transportation facility.

To mitigate for elimination of the park, it would be replaced at a new location with a similar facility. RIDOT has coordinated with the City of Newport on the replacement park’s location and features, and the City has concurred that the new facility would satisfactorily replace the activities, features, and attributes of the existing park. Section 1.7, Mitigation, provides information on the location and amenities of the proposed replacement facility.

The Proposed Action was also evaluated for its potential to result in a constructive use of Section 4(f) properties, as defined above in Section 1.3. For noise to be considered as a contributing factor to a constructive use determination, the noise level must be high enough to substantially impair the use and enjoyment of the Section 4(f) property. The types of situations in which the FHWA has determined that a noise-related constructive use would occur include:

1. If a project would affect the ability to hear a performance at an outdoor amphitheater,
2. To sleep in a campground,
3. To enjoy a historic site where quiet is a recognized attribute of the site’s significance,
4. To enjoy an urban park where serenity and quiet are significant attributes, or
5. To view wildlife in an area intended for such.

The FHWA has determined that a noise-related constructive use does not occur:

1. If the predicted noise levels with the proposed project do not exceed the FHWA Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC), or

2. If the increase in noise due to the proposed project (compared to the No Build condition) is 3 A-weighted decibels (dBA) or less, even if the noise levels do exceed the FHWA NAC.

Appendix B13, Noise Technical Report, includes a quantitative evaluation of noise levels for existing conditions, the No Action Alternative, and the Proposed Action. Noise levels under the Proposed Action would not approach or exceed the NAC, and noise levels would not increase by more than 3 dBA relative to the No Action Alternative at any Section 4(f) properties. Therefore, there would be no constructive use related to noise under the Proposed Action, and no other aspects of the Proposed Action would have the potential to substantially impair the use and enjoyment of any Section 4(f) properties in the Study Area.

## 8.6 Alternatives Analysis

### 8.6.1 Requirements for Evaluating Avoidance Alternatives

As described above, the “use” of Section 4(f) property is prohibited unless there is no feasible and prudent avoidance alternative. Because the Proposed Action would require the “use” of the Newport Dog Park, this net benefit programmatic evaluation must analyze potential avoidance alternatives. An avoidance alternative is considered prudent and feasible if it avoids using the Section 4(f) property and does not cause other severe problems of a magnitude that substantially outweighs the importance of protecting the Section 4(f) property. An avoidance alternative is not feasible if it cannot be built as a matter of sound engineering judgement. According to 23 CFR 774.17, an alternative is not prudent if:

- (i) it compromises the project to a degree that it is unreasonable to proceed with the project in light of its stated purpose and need;
- (ii) it results in unacceptable safety or operational problems;
- (iii) after reasonable mitigation, it still causes:
  - (A) Severe social, economic, or environmental impacts;
  - (B) Severe disruption to established communities;
  - (C) Severe disproportionate impacts to minority or low-income populations;
  - (D) Severe impacts to environmental resources protected under other Federal statutes;
- (iv) it results in additional construction, maintenance, or operational cost of an extraordinary magnitude;
- (iv) it causes other unique problems or unusual factors; or
- (vi) it involves multiple factors in paragraphs (i) through (v) of this definition, that while individually minor, cumulatively cause unique problems or impacts of extraordinary magnitude.

FHWA requires that a net benefit programmatic evaluation consider the following three alternatives to avoid the “use” of Section 4(f) property:

- › Do nothing.

- › Improve the transportation facility in a manner that addresses the project's purpose and need without a use of the Section 4(f) property.
- › Build the transportation facility at a location that does not require use of the Section 4(f) property.

The analysis of the Proposed Action and the three avoidance alternatives is presented in the following sections.

## 8.6.2 Avoidance Alternatives

In accordance with FHWA's guidance, this section analyzes the required list of three avoidance alternatives.

### **No Action (Do-Nothing) Alternative**

Under the No Action Alternative, the existing infrastructure would be maintained, and no "use" of Section 4(f) properties would occur. However, the No Action Alternative would not meet the Project's purpose and need. The northern and southern portions of JT Connell Highway would remain disconnected, and the existing elevated highway would remain unaltered. As a result, traffic flow would not be improved, and congestion would remain an issue, as a significant amount of traffic would queue from the Downtown Newport off-ramp onto the Pell Bridge (Route 138), a distance of nearly 1.25 miles. The ramps would continue to serve as barriers to reconnection of the severed street grid, and the surrounding neighborhoods would remain segmented by the highway infrastructure. In addition, the No Action Alternative would not create developable land and would not provide any pedestrian and bicycle improvements to project roadways. Because it fails to meet the Project's purpose and need, the No Action Alternative is not feasible and prudent, and is not a viable avoidance alternative.

### **Improvements That Address Purpose and Need Without Use of Section 4(f) Property**

Due to the fact that the Project is designed to improve existing infrastructure, alleviate congestion, and process vehicles efficiently, any alternative that met the Project's purpose and need would require the construction of roadway and bridge improvements within a geographically constrained area. The Pell Bridge ramps serve as the entrance to Aquidneck Island from the west; the surrounding area is fully developed with urban land uses, including residences, businesses, and parks. The constraints posed by these surrounding land uses, coupled with the roadway geometry needed to achieve the Project's transportation objectives, limits the potential to avoid Section 4(f) properties through engineering design measures. In addition, because Route 138 provides the island's sole access and egress to and from the west, traffic diversions or other traffic management measures are not practicable as a means of alleviating the need for new infrastructure.

Under the Proposed Action, relocation of the dog park is required due to the realignment and southward extension of the JT Connell Highway and the eastward extension of Dyres Street. The two extended streets would intersect in the approximate location of the existing park. These improvements are essential to one of the project's purposes: reconnecting the



neighborhoods segmented by the current highway infrastructure. Shifting these roadways to avoid the dog park would result in the need to acquire multiple properties for right-of-way, resulting in substantial adverse community impacts and potentially requiring the use of other Section 4(f) resources:

- A westward shift of JT Connell Highway would displace commercial businesses to the north of the Dyres Street alignment, place traffic in close proximity to the proposed bicycle/pedestrian path, and require the use of land from the Third Street Playground and Hunter Park, two Section 4(f) properties located west and southwest of the existing loop ramp.
- An eastward shift of JT Connell Highway would require the displacement of commercial properties east of the existing alignment, and would also reduce the amount of land available for redevelopment. This would be contrary to another of the project purposes, which is to maximize land area for redevelopment in support of the City's economic goals.
- In addition to these adverse impacts, avoidance of the existing dog park would represent a substantial missed opportunity to benefit a Section 4(f) property, as described in Sections 1.7 and 1.8 below.

Based on the considerations above, avoidance of the Newport Dog Park by using engineering design or transportation system management techniques is not considered feasible and prudent.

#### **Construction At a New Location That Does Not Require Use of the Section 4(f) Property**

As described above, any alternative that met the Project's purpose and need would require the construction of roadway and bridge improvements within a geographically constrained area. The existing ramps provide the connection between the Pell Bridge—a significant piece of infrastructure that cannot be moved without substantial cost and impact—and a densely developed portion of downtown Newport. Residential neighborhoods lie immediately southeast of the existing southern loop ramp, while commercial businesses surround other portions of the ramps. Hence, the existing RIDOT right-of-way is the only area in which the ramps can be relocated without displacement of a substantial number of residences and/or businesses, disruption of community cohesion, and greater potential for impacts to Hunter Park, the Third Street Playground, and a portion of the Harbor Walk, which are other Section 4(f) properties. Constructing the transportation facility at a new location that does not require use of the Newport Dog Park would therefore result in substantial adverse social and economic impacts.

### **8.6.3 Findings**

The alternatives analysis demonstrates that there are no feasible and prudent avoidance alternatives to the "use" of the Newport Dog Park, which is located within RIDOT-owned property. To meet current design standards, provide appropriate roadway geometry, and minimize impacts to environmental, cultural, and community resources, all feasible and prudent action alternatives would require that the replacement ramps be located within the

RIDOT-owned property surrounding the existing ramps. The avoidance alternatives either would not meet the purpose and need, or would result in greater adverse impacts to environmental, cultural, and community resources. They would also forego the opportunity to provide a benefit to a Section 4(f) property by moving the dog park to a new and improved location. Therefore, the Proposed Action is the only feasible and prudent alternative, and will result in a clear net benefit to the Section 4(f) property.

## 8.7 Mitigation and Measures to Minimize Harm

To meet the requirements codified in 23 CFR 774.17, all possible planning to minimize harm or mitigate for adverse impacts has been incorporated into the Proposed Action. In coordination with the City of Newport, RIDOT has determined that the Newport Dog Park would be replaced in kind at a location south of Route 138, just east of Hunter Park and adjacent to the Old Colony and Newport Railroad, where the eastbound off-ramp to JT Connell Highway is currently located. Preliminary design plans are depicted in Figure 8-3, Section 4(f) Mitigation: Newport Dog Park Relocation. The parcel of land is owned by the State of Rhode Island and would be maintained by the City of Newport.

The new dog park would be slightly larger than the existing Newport Dog Park, with approximately 0.64 acre of fenced-in space, as compared to 0.54 acre for the existing facility. User access to the new dog park would be improved compared to the existing Newport Dog Park location, which is only accessible via the northernmost portion of JT Connell Highway and only offers unmarked street parking. The new location would be closer to The Point and Kerry Hill/Van Zandt neighborhoods, and closer to Downtown Newport. Ample, free parking of over 300 spaces total would be available at the three "park and ride" lots. In addition, bicycle racks would be installed near the relocated dog park to accommodate bicyclists. The proposed shared-use path that would be constructed along the Old Colony and Newport Railroad line would provide pathway users with access to the dog park as well. Further detail of the dog park features and amenities, such as benches, landscaping, pathway locations connecting the dog park to the shared use path and parking lots, and a separate enclosure for small dogs, will be determined at a later date, through continued coordination between RIDOT and the City of Newport.

On July 31, 2019, the Newport City Manager, the official with jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) resource, concurred with the Section 4(f) use and confirmed that, based on the advantages described above, the proposed replacement location and amenities for the Newport Dog Park will enhance the significant features and values of the park and will result in a net benefit to the park when compared to the existing conditions. A copy of this concurrence is included in **Attachment A**. The required coordination and public involvement efforts that support the City's concurrence are described in Section 1.9.

## 8.8 Comparison of Park Function and Value With and Without the Proposed Action

In addition to determining that there are no feasible and prudent avoidance alternatives, a net benefit programmatic evaluation must also consider the function and value of the Section 4(f) property before and after implementation of the Proposed Action. This section

describes the physical and functional relationship of the Section 4(f) property to the community in order to demonstrate the net benefit, or enhancement, to the Newport Dog Park.

The Newport Dog Park is a significant resource to the community, as it is the only approved site in the City of Newport for dogs to be off-leash. On December 5, 2018, the City of Newport formally confirmed the significance of the Newport Dog Park as a resource under Section 4(f); a copy of the letter is included in **Attachment A**. Despite its significance, however, the park suffers from circuitous access, limited parking, and a location directly adjacent to the busy ramp.

The Proposed Action would relocate the Newport Dog Park to mitigate for the loss of the existing facility. The activities, attributes, and features of the new dog park would be enhanced and upgraded from those of the existing park. The relocation would provide a number of benefits to the surrounding area or community:

- The new dog park location would be more accessible to park users, with access provided from a through street (the realigned JT Connell Highway) rather than a dead-end street.
- Access for pedestrians and bicyclists would be greatly enhanced compared to current conditions because the park would be adjacent to the proposed bicycle/pedestrian path along the Old Colony Railroad line.
- There would be increased parking availability, with approximately 300 spaces available at the adjacent park-and-ride facilities.
- The new dog park would be larger than the existing park, comprising approximately 0.64 acre compared to 0.54 acre for the existing facility.

Overall, relocation of the existing Newport Dog Park under the Proposed Action would enhance the current features of the park and its value to users.

## 8.9 Public Involvement and Regulatory Coordination

Several federal, state, and local agencies, as well as other stakeholders, are providing input on the Project. The FHWA, as the lead Federal agency, is responsible for the NEPA process and compliance with Section 4(f). RIDOT, as the applicant, is responsible for managing and preparing the EA. Cooperating Agencies for the Project include the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority, the City of Newport, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The applicant has coordinated with several other agencies and with local stakeholders to discuss alternatives and measures to minimize harm to Section 4(f) properties.

Meetings have been held periodically throughout the development and planning process for the Project, with various federal, state, and local agencies, as well as with the general public. Table 8-2 below summarizes the public workshops held to date.

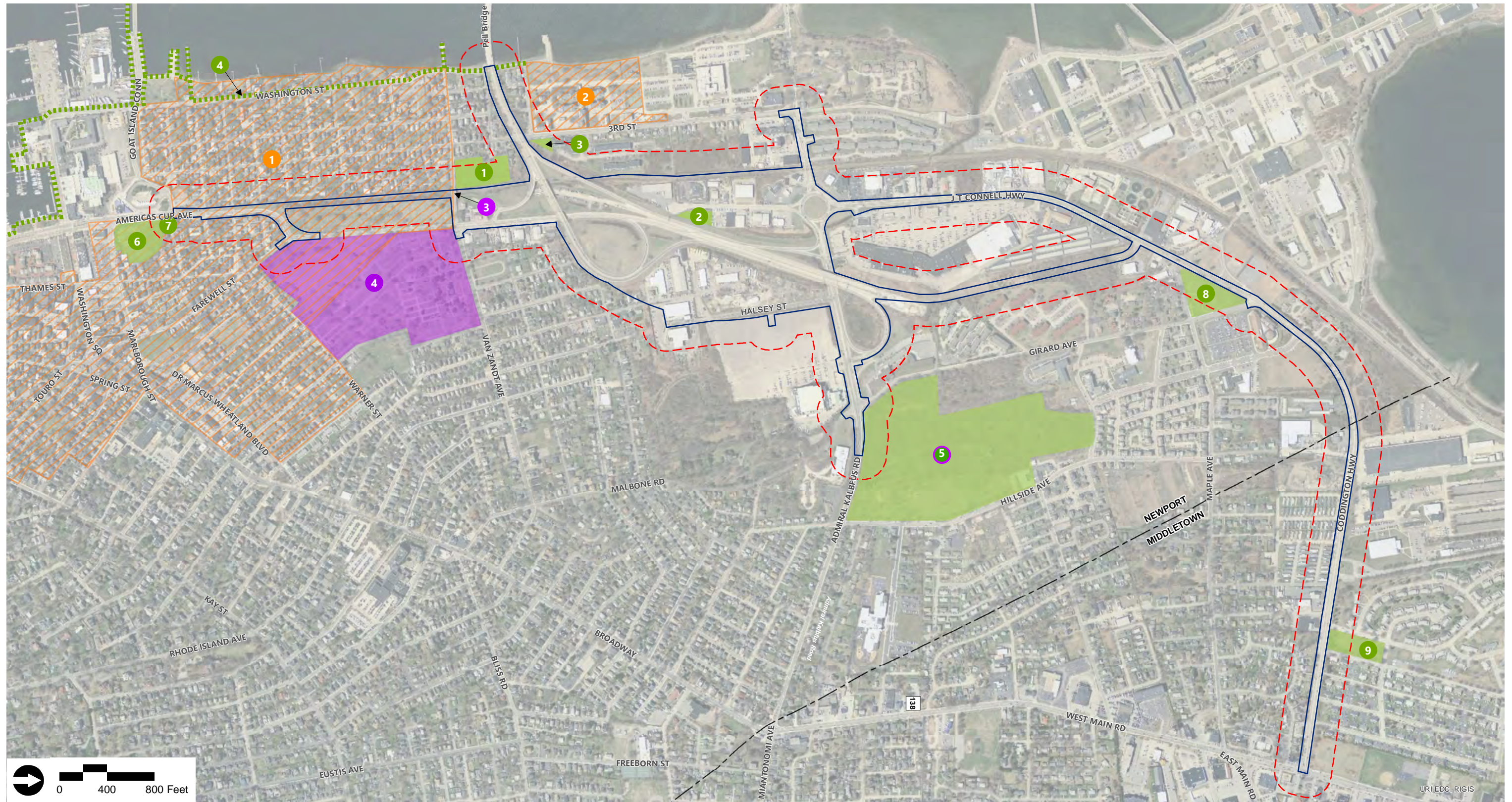
**Table 8-2 Public Workshops on Reconstruction of Pell Bridge Approaches**

Date	Topic	Location	Attendance
March 1, 2018	<b>Workshop #1</b> Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches	Newport City Hall	150 people
July 17, 2018	<b>Workshop #2</b> Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches	Newport City Hall	125 people

These two workshops afforded the public the opportunity to hear details on the Project and submit comments to RIDOT. In addition, on April 2, 2019, RIDOT representatives met with users of the Newport Dog Park at the Newport Public Library and discussed their needs for the relocated park. RIDOT also accepted comments throughout the Project planning process by U.S. mail and an online portal on the Project website.

Comments on Section 4(f) properties generally included:

- › Questions and suggestions regarding plans for the Old Colony and Newport Railroad, bicycle and pedestrian path;
- › Protection of the historic districts, specifically the potential for increased vehicular traffic to impact these Section 4(f) properties;
- › Relocation of the Newport Dog Park, with suggestions to move the park to a safer area with limited traffic access, and create a larger dog park that is well maintained;
- › Suggestions to install a linear park along the proposed bicycle and pedestrian path; and
- › Preserving pedestrian and bicycle access to and from Section 4(f) properties, specifically those within The Point neighborhood.



Source: RIDOT, RIGIS, National Register of Historic Places Database (NRHP Database), Historic American Building Survey (HABS)

**Legend**

- Limit of Disturbance
- - - Study Area
- Parks/Recreation
- Harbor Walk
- Historic Districts
- Historic Cemeteries

**Section 4 (f) Properties**

**Parks/Recreation**

- 1 Hunter Park
- 2 Newport Dog Park
- 3 3rd Street Playground
- 4 Harbor Walk
- 5 Miantonomi Memorial Park and World War I Memorial Tower
- 6 Cardines Field

- 7 Cardines Playground
- 8 Edward G. Goldberg/Coddington Field
- 9 Lexington Street and Coddington Highway Playground

**Historic**

- 1 Newport Historic District
- 2 United States Naval Hospital Newport Historic District (Eligible for listing in National Register)
- 3 Van Zandt Avenue Historic Railroad Bridge (Eligible for listing in National Register)
- 4 Common Burying Ground and Island Cemetery
- 5 Miantonomi Memorial Park and World War I Memorial Tower



Figure 8-1  
Section 4(f) Properties Study Area

**Reconstruction at Pell Bridge Ramps  
Newport/Middletown, Rhode Island**

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Source: RIDOT, RIGIS, National Register of Historic Places Database (NRHP Database), Historic American Building Survey (HABS)

**Legend**  
**Section 4(f) Property**  
Newport Dog Park



Figure 8-2  
Proposed Action  
Section 4(f) Impact

**Reconstruction at Pell Bridge Ramps  
Newport/Middletown, Rhode Island**

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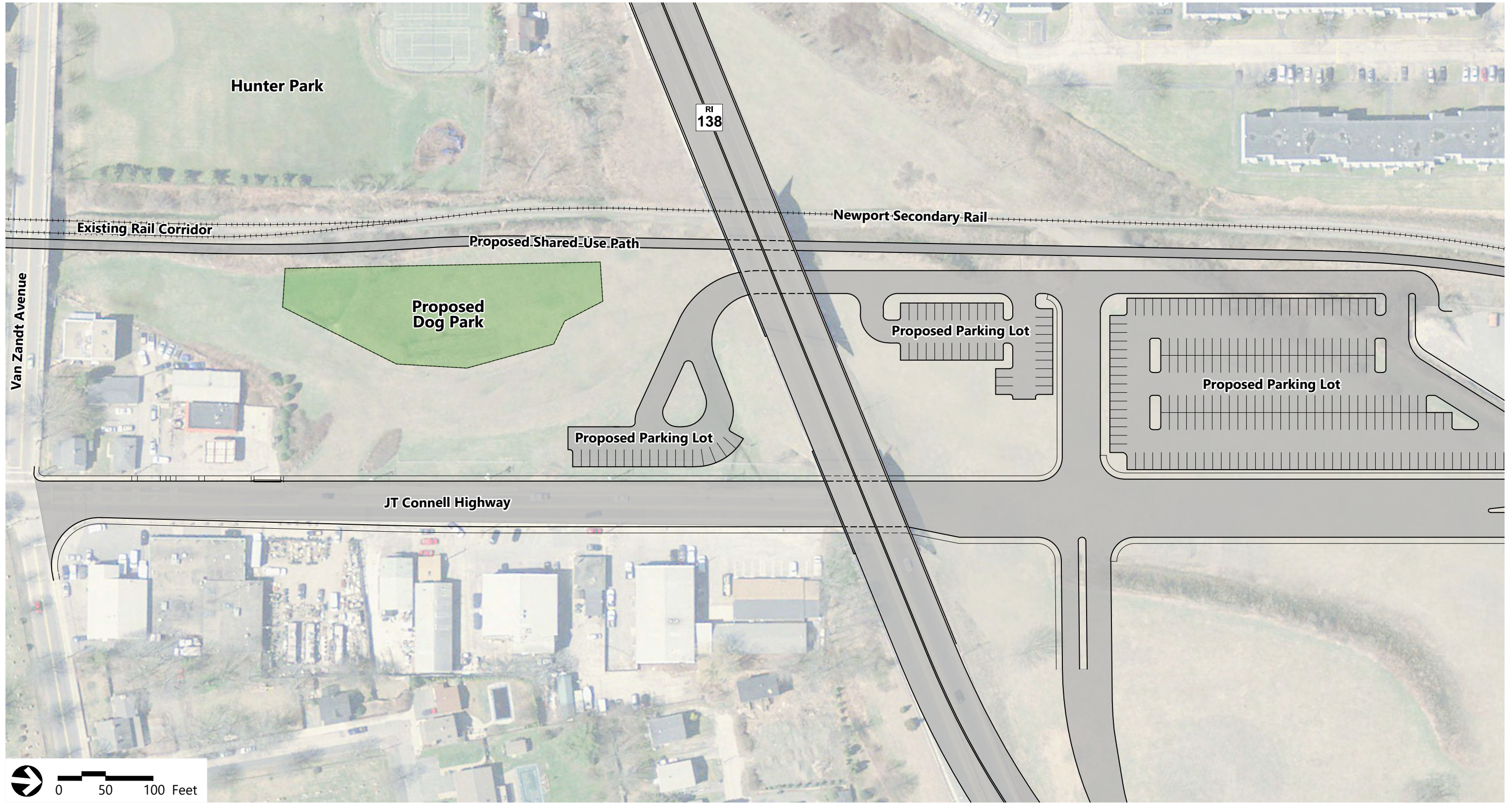


Figure 8-3  
Section 4(f) Mitigation:  
Newport Dog Park Relocation

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# 9

## Public Involvement

Major transportation actions that require documentation of NEPA compliance must include early coordination and public involvement efforts in accordance with 23 CFR 771.111, and, in the case of Environmental Assessments, must comply with the applicable requirements of 23 CFR 771.119. For this EA, the public and agency coordination has included the efforts discussed below and in the following sections.

RIDOT identifies outreach goals and objectives for public involvement based on the specific circumstances of a particular transportation project. The public involvement that has been developed for this Project focuses on information exchange and discussion of the Project through its various stages.

Early outreach activities for the Project focused on understanding the existing and ongoing stakeholder issues and concerns. A list of key stakeholders and other interested or potentially affected parties is updated regularly on the status of the project. In addition to this targeted outreach, public workshops were held in the City of Newport to discuss the Project with officials and residents, including residents of neighborhoods with environmental justice (EJ) populations as described in Section 5.10. In addition, RIDOT has coordinated with several business and property owners within the Project study area.

### **Organizations and Associations**

- › Bike Newport
- › Discover Newport
- › Halsey Tradesman Condominium Association

- › Kerry Hill Neighborhood Association
- › Newport North End Neighborhood Association
- › Off-Broadway Neighborhood Association
- › Point Neighborhood Association

Key public involvement activities in support of the Project include:

- › Initial Project Notification (Press Release): January 2017
- › Project Notification and Informational Letter: An outreach effort by RIDOT was intended to provide outreach and project information to abutters (tenants) to the Project Area.
- › Project Webpage: A website was prepared to provide information on the project background, EA process, key stakeholders and cooperating agencies, public workshop documents, and project status. A comment form was provided on the site to allow the public to submit feedback on the project. Formal comments on the EA could also be submitted on the website during the Draft EA comment period.
- › Public Workshops: RIDOT hosted four public workshops to discuss the project (two on existing conditions evaluation and two on alternatives analysis) in March and July 2018.
- › Public and Agency Review of EA: The Draft EA was issued on November 20, 2019, and was available for comment until January 23, 2020. The EA was posted online at [www.pellbridge-ea.com](http://www.pellbridge-ea.com); printed copies were available for reference at the Newport City Hall, Newport Public Library, and Florence Gray Center in Newport and at RIDOT and FHWA offices in Providence. A public hearing on the Draft EA was held on December 12, 2019, at Newport City Hall. Comments on the EA could be submitted to RIDOT online or by mail. RIDOT and FHWA received a total of 139 comments on the Draft EA.

Appendix A provides the public involvement materials from the public workshops and EA public hearing. Appendix C includes the comments submitted on the Draft EA, along with responses to those comments.

# 10

## Agency Coordination

As the project sponsor, RIDOT reached out to federal, state, and local agencies as well as local organizations that may have interest in the Project. The agencies listed below have been involved in the development of this Environmental Assessment.

### **Federal Agencies**

- › Federal Highway Administration (Lead Agency)
- › Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 1
- › United States Navy – Naval Station Newport
- › U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

### **State Agencies**

- › Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council
- › Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
- › Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission
- › Rhode Island Public Transit Authority
- › Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority

### **City Agencies**

- › Newport City Council
- › Newport City Planning & Engineering Departments
- › Newport Department of Public Works
- › Newport Historic Preservation Commission

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# 11

## Permitting and Regulatory Review

### 11.1 Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act

State-level review is required by the RIHPHC under R.I.G.L. 42:45 et seq. The Project is also required to comply with federal laws including NEPA, Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (49 USC 303), and Section 106 of the NHPA of 1966, as amended, and the implementing regulations of the ACHP (36 CFR 800). As described in Sections 5.9, 6.9, and 7.9 of this EA, RIDOT has consulted with the Executive Director of the RIHPHC/RISHPO to identify measures that would avoid, minimize, or mitigate any adverse effects of the Project on aboveground and surface historic and archaeological resources pursuant to 36 CFR 800.5(e) and 800.9. Correspondence between RIDOT and RIHPHC is included as an attachment to Appendix B9.

### 11.2 Compliance with Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act

The Section 4(f) evaluation for the Proposed Action is provided in Chapter 8 of this EA. One Section 4(f) property, the Newport Dog Park, would be acquired for transportation right of way and replaced in a new location. RIDOT has coordinated with the City of Newport on the replacement of the Newport Dog Park's location and features, and the City has concurred that the new facility would satisfactorily replace the activities, features, and attributes of the existing park.

### **11.3 Endangered Species Act Section 7 Consultation**

An Official Species List was obtained pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) on October 9, 2018 via a request through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) Tool. The Official Species List was generated by the USFWS New England Ecological Services Field Office, located in Concord, New Hampshire and indicated that there are two listed species with the potential to occur within the Study Area: the northern long-eared bat (NLEB), which is federally threatened, and the roseate tern which is federally endangered. Roseate tern habitat is not present within the Study Area and an acoustic survey targeting the NLEB resulted in the probable absence of this species within the Study Area.

On January 2, 2019, RIDOT requested concurrence from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) that the Project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the NLEB and roseate tern. USFWS concurred with this determination on March 18, 2019. The concurrence letter is included in Appendix C to this EA.

There are no State-listed species of state-concern, state-threatened, or state-endangered mapped within the Study Area, therefore consultation with the Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program (RINHP) was not necessary. The Project is not anticipated to have any impact on State-listed species.

### **11.4 EPA Sole Source Aquifer Program**

The Sole Source Aquifer Program is authorized by Chapter 1424(e) of the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974. Projects that receive federal financial assistance and propose work which may contaminate a groundwater resource that the USEPA has designated as a Sole Source Aquifer are required to notify the USEPA Sole Source Aquifer Coordinator to assess the risk the project proposes to groundwater contamination. The RIGIS maintains a coverage for USEPA-designated sole source aquifers in Rhode Island.

The public water on Aquidneck Island is provided by a network of surface water reservoirs and there are no Sole Source Aquifers on Aquidneck Island. Therefore, this regulation is not applicable.

### **11.5 Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers**

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System was created in 1968 (Public Law 90-542; 16 U.S.C. 1271 et seq.) and establishes methods for evaluating and providing Federal protection to preserve certain rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values in a free-flowing condition.

Rhode Island has approximately 1,392 miles of river, but no designated wild and scenic rivers and none within the project study area.

### **11.6 Clean Water Act Section 401**

Section 401 of the CWA specifies additional requirements for permit review on the state level. Any applicant for a federal license or permit to conduct any activity that may result in a



discharge into navigable waters must provide a certification from the state in which the discharge originates (401 Certification). Interstate water pollution control agencies having jurisdiction over navigable waters at the point where the discharge originates may issue a permit in lieu of the state. In Rhode Island, Water Quality Certification (WQC) is obtained via application to the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) Office of Water Resources.

## **11.7 Clean Water Act Section 404**

The Proposed Action proposes direct impacts to wetlands and waterways that are protected under Section 404(b) of the federal CWA and will require federal authorization from the USACE. The Project proposes impacts greater than 5,000 square feet and less than 1 acre and is eligible under the USACE's State of Rhode Island General Permit 18 under Preconstruction Notification. Agency coordination and consultation will be required with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Coastal Resources Management Council, the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, and the Narragansett Tribe.

Impacts to state-protected freshwater wetlands for Project impacts will require authorization from the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. As a linear project located on both sides of the CRMC and RIDEM jurisdictional boundary, the CRMC determined that the RIDEM shall serve as the freshwater wetland review agency for the Project. An Application to Alter a Freshwater Wetland will be filed with the RIDEM for this Project. .

## **11.8 Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands**

Executive Order 11990 requires that each Federal agency, to the extent permitted by law, shall avoid undertaking or providing assistance for new construction located in wetlands unless the head of the agency finds (1) that there is no practicable alternative to such construction, and (2) that the proposed action includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to wetlands which may result from such use. Given the geometric requirements for ramp construction, the boundaries of the existing right-of-way, and the need to minimize property acquisition and displacement, no practicable alternative exists that would completely avoid wetland impacts. Section 5.4 of this EA describes wetland resources and functions and values in the Study Area; Section 6.4 details the anticipated direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the Proposed Action; and Section 7.4 describes a variety of measures to minimize harm to wetlands affected by the Project. Compliance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act will also ensure that wetland impacts are avoided, minimized, and/or mitigated to the greatest extent feasible.

## **11.9 Clean Water Act Section 402**

The USEPA, in 1972, created the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program. The CWA prohibits anybody from discharging "pollutants" through a "point source" into a "water of the United States" unless they have an NPDES permit. Authorization for states, tribes, and territories is through a process that is defined by CWA Section 402 (b) and 40 CFR Part 123.

USEPA authorized Rhode Island to implement the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Program through the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 402 (b) and 40 CFR Part 123 on September 17, 1984. The Rhode Island Pollution Discharge Elimination System (RIPDES) Program is the backbone of the state's water pollution control strategy, which includes developing and enforcing permit limitations for municipal and industrial wastewaters, storm water, and combined sewer overflows discharged directly to the waters of the state, as well as industrial wastewaters discharged to municipally-owned treatment facilities.

### **11.10 Coastal Zone Management Act**

The Project will have to file for federal consistency certification under Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Section 307 of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended. To certify that the activity complies with the state's CZM program for activities affecting the state's coastal area.

### **11.11 Environmental Justice**

USDOT Order 5610.2(a), Final DOT Environmental Justice Order, sets forth the policy to consider environmental justice principles in all DOT programs, policies, and activities, as well as describes the objectives of how environmental justice is to be integrated into the agency's planning and programming, rulemaking, and policy formulation.

Effective June 26, 2009, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's ("DEM's") issued its Policy for Considering Environmental Justice in the Review of Investigation and Remediation of Contaminated Properties. This policy provides for the proactive consideration of environmental justice relative to site investigations and property site remediation projects to enable all communities to have meaningful input in environmental decision-making regardless of race, income, national origin or English language proficiency.

### **11.12 Executive Order 13112, Invasive Species**

Executive Order 13112 of February 3, 1999 (Invasive Species), calls upon Federal departments and agencies to take steps to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species, and to support efforts to eradicate and control invasive species that are established. Section 5.4.4 of this EA discusses the presence of invasive non-native species, including *Phragmites australis*, in wetlands within the Project study area. Section 7.4 describes how the restoration of existing degraded wetlands in order to mitigate for Project impacts may help to reduce the prevalence of invasive species. Section 7.4 also identifies the use of an Invasive Species Management Plan (IPMP) to address the existing populations of invasive species during wetland restoration.

# 12

## Distribution List

The EA was made available in hard copy at various locations within the City of Newport. The EA was also posted on the Project website which includes a comment form for the agency and public review. Notice of the public comment period and public hearing was made by public notice in several newspapers and on various local websites, including *The Newport Daily News*, *Newport This Week*, *Providence Journal*, and *Providence en Espanol*, during the 30-day comment period. The list below contains the locations where the hard copies of the EA were available for review.

- › RI Department of Transportation, 2 Capitol Hill, Providence
- › US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration – RI Division, 380 Westminster Street, Suite 601, Providence
- › Newport City Hall, 43 Broadway, Newport
- › Newport City Library, 300 Spring Street, Newport
- › Florence Gray Center, 1 York Street, Newport

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# 13

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"Rhode Island 2017 Annual Monitoring Network Plan" Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. Office of Air Resources. July 5, 2017.

United States Environmental Protection Agency Laws and Regulations, US Code of Federal Regulations 40 Title 40: Protection of Environment. <http://www2.epa.gov/laws-regulations/regulations#find>.

U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, Air Quality Transportation Conformity website:  
[http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air\\_quality/conformity/policy\\_and\\_guidance/cmcf/intersection\\_form.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air_quality/conformity/policy_and_guidance/cmcf/intersection_form.cfm)

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MOVES2014a (Motor Vehicle Emission Simulator), November 2016, US EPA, Office of Mobile Sources, Ann Arbor, MI.

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## **Appendix A: Public Involvement**

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# Appendix A: Public Involvement

## Includes:

- › A1: Public Meeting #1, March 2018
  - Presentation
  - Attendees
  - Comments Received
  
- › A2: Public Meeting #2, July 2018
  - Presentation
  - Attendees
  - Comments Received
  
- › A3: Public Meeting #3, December 2019
  - Presentation
  - Attendees

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# Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches

Public Workshop# 1

March 1, 2018



# Agenda

- Project Purpose and Need
- Project Components
- Project Timeline
- Environmental Assessment (EA)
- Existing Conditions Evaluation
- Public Input
- Next Steps
- Open House

- Project Purpose
  - Improve safety and connectivity for all road users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles
  - Create parcels for development
- Project Need
  - Reduce vehicular congestion and queuing on Pell Bridge
  - Improve connectivity between Newport's North End and Downtown areas for all road users
  - Spur economic development

# Project Components

- Consolidate and remove existing highway infrastructure
- Reconnect JT Connell Highway
- Provide connectivity between JT Connell Highway and Third Street
- Provide connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists between Admiral Kalbfus Road and America's Cup Avenue
- Provide park & ride and transit opportunity between Pell Bridge Interchange and Gateway Center





# Project Study Area



# Project Timeline

- Existing Conditions Data Collection & Analysis – Summer/Fall 2017
- Hold Public Workshop #1 – Early 2018
- Develop Alternatives Analysis – Spring 2018
- Hold Public Workshop #2 – Spring 2018
- Submit Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) & 30% Design Plans for FHWA Review & Public Comment – Fall 2018
- Submit Final Environmental Assessment – Winter 2018/Early 2019
- Obtain a Finding of No Significant Impact from FHWA – Early 2019
- Submit Final Design – Spring/Summer 2019
- Advertise Project/Construction – Winter 2019 thru 2022

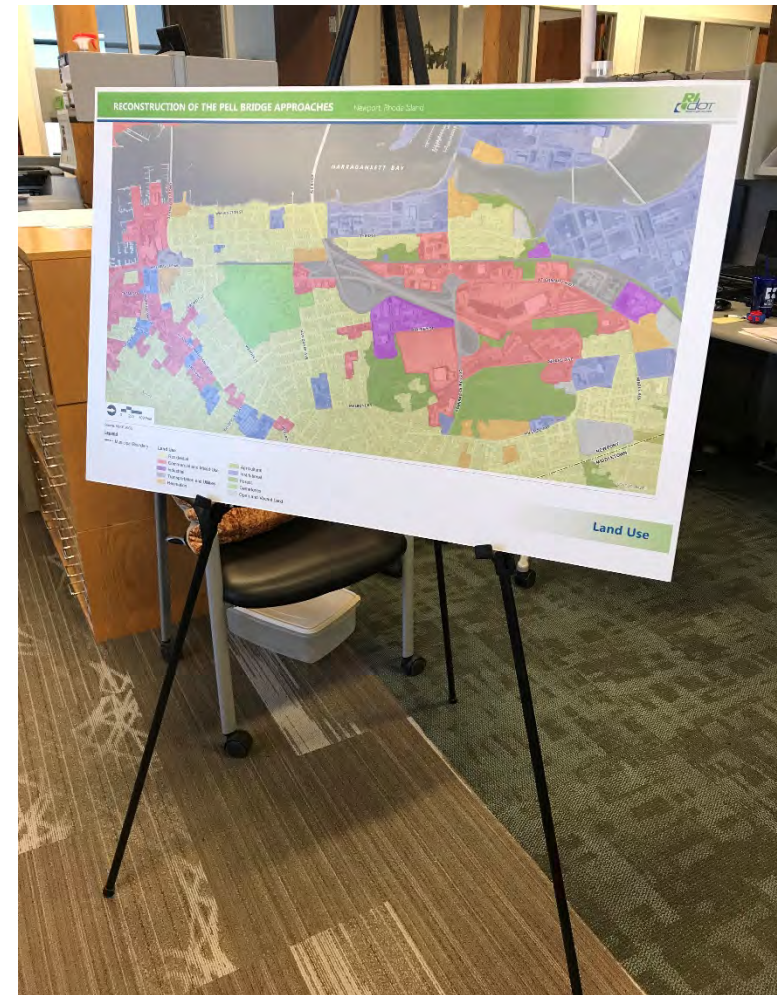
- Environmental Assessment (EA)
  - Identify and evaluate adverse environmental impacts of the Proposed Action, positive or negative
  - Identifies the Project's purpose and need, as well as a reasonable range of alternatives
  - Describes mitigation measures, if needed
  - Process encourages public review and comment

# Examples of Environmental Resources Described and Evaluated

- Wetlands
- Floodplains
- Biodiversity
- Threatened & Endangered Species
- Air Quality
- Land Use
- Environmental Justice
- Socioeconomic Conditions
- Public Health & Safety
- Noise & Vibration
- Transportation
- Cultural Resources
- Parks & Recreation
- Solid & Hazardous Waster
- Greenhouse Gases/Climate Change

# Environmental Resources for Discussion

- Station 1 – EA Process and Schedule
- Station 2 – Land Use & Environmental Justice
- Station 3 – Noise & Community Facilities
- Station 4 – Traffic & Safety
- Station 5- Wetlands & Waterways
- Station 6 – Conservation Areas
- Station 7 – Historic Resources



- Public input is critical at this stage of the project
  - To identify existing issues
  - Concerns of the project
- Input may be submitted:
  - In person tonight – see comment box
  - By mail – address provided on the comment form
  - Using the online portal – web link provided on the comment form



Thank you for participating!

Provide your comments about the topics discussed at the Workshop by March 31, 2018.

**Mail comments here:**

RIDOT, c/o VHB  
1 Cedar Street, Suite 400  
Providence, RI 02903

**Submit comments online here:**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PellBridgeProject>



- Comment period open to March 31
- Develop Alternatives Analysis – Spring 2018
- Hold Public Workshop #2 – Spring 2018
- Submit Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) & 30% Design Plans for FHWA Review & Public Comment – Fall 2018
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**Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches – Newport, RI  
Public Workshop #1 – March 1, 2018**

**Sign-in Sheet**

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Skye Levin	VHB	
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David Fish	RIDOT	
Steven Soderlund	RIDOT	
Sue Courtemanche	VHB	
Bill Desantis	VHB	
Robert Clinton	VHB	
Chelsea Glinka	VHB	
Julia Meier	VHB	
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**Sign-in Sheet**

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**Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches – Newport, RI  
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**Sign-in Sheet**

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**Sign-in Sheet**

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**Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches – Newport, RI  
Public Workshop #1 – March 1, 2018**

**Sign-in Sheet**

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**Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches – Newport, RI  
Public Workshop #1 – March 1, 2018**

**Sign-in Sheet**

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Sandi Warner		sandiwarner@warnerrealtygr.com

Reconstruction of Pell Bridge Approaches - Public Workshop #1 Comments

Respondents	Responses	Tags	
1	<p>Thank you for extending the deadline for comments.</p> <p>My neighbor had an idea: put an attractive barrier on 3rd St to allow residents to get to Cypress, but not to drive through all the way on 3rd. Allow pedestrian traffic to walk through. This will also reduce the traffic load on the residential neighborhood..</p> <p>I have already signed up for updates but have yet to receive anything from RIDOT on this project by email - just wanted to let you know.</p>	Third Street	
2	REQUEST TO SEND IN US MAIL HARDCOVER PAPER COPIES TO 09272017 AND 03192018 TO BEING STACK HOLDER		
3	<p>I would like to feel safe crossing the street close to the dump, it is scary. I'd like to see more lights along Admiral Kalbfus close to the shopping center. I'd like to see a connection along the railroad tracks for a bike path/walking path/I want to make sure buisnesses and housing is not affected. I'd like the sidewalk to be wide enough for wheelchairs. It would be nice to see more crosswalks or raised bumps like Broadway.</p>	Bike/Ped	
4	What is being planned to enable and encourage local pedestrian and bicycle traffic in the area of the approaches?	Bike/Ped	
5	<p>To what extent will this project be implementing state-of-the-art "Smart Traffic Management With Real Time Data Analysis" with the goals of reducing traffic congestion, saving lives as rescue wagons transit to/from Newport Hospital, and preventing and catching crime? If this project is supporting a future innovation zone, then it would be reasonable for one to expect project features and functions to reflect high levels of innovation.</p>	Innovation	
6	Yes		
7	<p>I am a business owner in the Newport County Tradesmen Center, located at 64 Halsey Street. After following the process of the proposed project and several iterations of this project over the years, I believe that it will ultimately be a major improvement to the traffic patterns in this area and has the potential to spur additional development in the area. However, I have several questions in regard to both the construction phase of this project, as well as the final design. In both cases, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss the impacts this project will have on my business and the other businesses in the Newport County Tradesmen Center in greater detail. I can be reached by email at trmcgrath@riclambake.com or at my office at 401.847.7743</p>	Small Businesses	
8	<p>I would like to attend a workshop that lays it all out. As of right now my main concern is whether the approaches will help to lessen the traffic on upper Admiral Kalbfus Road (the section from Hillside Avenue to East Main Road). Or is it likely to increase traffic in that area.</p>	Admiral Kalbfus Road	
9	who is going to do it?	Who is doing work?	
10	<p>My question is what is being proposed with revamping the ramp. Not sure what the objective is &amp; why they are revamping. Will it eliminate or fix the back up on the bridge for cars taking the downtown exit during the summer or tourist season as this is the only problem that I can see.</p>	Downtown Ramp	
11	Any updates since the meeting. Please put my E Mail on the contact list.	Updates	
12	YES! Please take great care in the aesthetics of the off ramps into Newport. Trees, berms, perhaps a water feature. We want those crossing the bridge to feel they are entering into a world class city	Ramps	
13	Please put me on the list as a project stakeholder.		
14	<p>I co-own a condo at 33 Van Zandt Ave., Newport The Van Zandt Ave. bridge and adjacent sidewalks and railings are in terrible disrepair. I am concerned about how the approaches will affect local traffic on Van Zandt (east of FarewellSt.), how emergency vehicles will be happened, and what if anything will be done to the railroad tracks running under the bridge and adjacent to the cemetery.</p>	Van Zandt	
15	<p>It appears that a major goal of this project is to reduce backups occurring in the slow lane on the bridge for those taking the downtown Newport exit to Farewell Street, usually occurring on long holiday weekends, Boat shows, Jazz / Folk festivals, etc. * For safety on these occasions the overhead digital bridge sign should read something like "CAUTION Proceed Slowly - Traffic is stopped on the bridge" (To avoid rear end collisions). Any time I go to a popular event in any city I always expect long traffic lines and I am never disappointed. Ex: Providence Convention Center, Foxboro Patriots, Cape Cod, The Big E in Springfield, etc. Common sense, large crowds vs. entrance to small town streets. These are mostly people out for fun on a weekend or on vacation and don't need to get there in 2 minutes.</p> <p>I am always very grateful that the outside bridge lane allows local business people like myself, delivery vehicles, rescue vehicles, residents and those continuing on to the North to move through this area smoothly at all times. Most tourists will not park far away and take a shuttle. I think the nearer to downtown Newport an appealing park &amp; shuttle lot is located, the more use it will see. A very direct, obvious and stress free entrance off the bridge into the parking area is also a strong selling point. The area where the bridge contractors currently have their office trailers and equipment set up to me would be it. PLEASE KEEP THAT TOURIST CROWD AWAY FROM THE EXISTING CONNELL HWY ROTARY AT ALL COSTS !</p> <p>*On another issue, if you have ever observed the traffic around the existing rotary on Connell Hwy. during any one of the many morning graduation ceremonies or events held on the Navy Base, you will see hundreds of cars in line waiting to pass through the security check point at Navy Base Gate 1.</p> <p>The traffic jam begins at 6:45 am and lasts for hours during the morning work commute. The line extends all the way back from Gate 1 to the rotary, blocking all 3rd St. traffic and deadlocking the rotary. Cars are backed up on Connell Hwy. almost to Rt 114 and the flow of traffic trying to get to the Pell Bridge west on-ramp is also cut off. Many vehicles will cut through the adjacent RK Center mall parking lot to get around the rotary congestion. FYI: It has been this way long before the current bridge repair work began. My business building is located right alongside the 2nd bridge off ramp and my house is at the top of Admiral Kalbfus Road, so I see the traffic patterns in this area all day, every day. Thank you, Paul Donovan</p>	Signage	

## Reconstruction of Pell Bridge Approaches - Public Workshop #1 Comments

Respondents	Responses	Tags	
16	At the Newport City Hall meeting would have like to briefly hear from each one of the individuals after the general introduction and before people were allowed to go the the stations to talk to the individuals. A brief introduction of there name, what they did, and questions they usually get asked.  In regards to the Pell Bridge: -can the immediate exit that dumps off at the Citgo station be eliminated? -would like to see roundabout where 138 meets 238. A four way roundabout travel in all directions work. -Is landscaping taken care of during this project to make the whole area less of an eye sore?	Roundabout	
17	The approaches arent the problem. Its the constant lane closures	Lane closures	
18	put in a bike lane!!!!	Bike facilities	
19	Can I get a copy of the posters? My email is cornelia.mueller@navy.mil. I would like to brief my command.	Posters	
20	Make it accessible to pedestrians and bike riders please!	Bike/Ped	
21	Need to include unless you did already bicycle access to the Pell Bridge	Bike facilities	
22	Bike and pedestrian access between the north and south sides of admiral kalbfus Should be considered a top priority for this project.	Bike/Ped	
23	RIDOT needs to make a deliberate and focused effort to engage North End residents in the planning process – not just distributing flyers but making contact with residents to explain the project and to address questions of how the project will affect the neighborhoods along Admiral Kalbfus Highway. In addition, the ramp realignment should eliminate rotaries and restore the grid that was dismantled during the original bridge construction. In addition, connectivity is essential, both for pedestrians and bicyclists deep into the North End neighborhood, as well as making sure that local residents as well as tourists have seamless public transportation into downtown Newport as a result of this project.	Bike/Ped	Adjacent Neighborhoods
24	Will the access to the Newport Tradesmen's Center remain open during the construction process	Newport Tradesman Center	
25	After reviewing the Environmental Assessment posters at the March 1 public meeting, the Pell Bridge Project should reflect community aspirations including improved pedestrian connectivity. More specifically, the project could simultaneously function as green infrastructure. The landscape could serve as a giant "sponge" for major flood events, as well as open space. This would compliment the goals of the innovation hub, which aims to leverage resiliency technologies. The Pell Bridge Project should not be designed in isolation of other increasingly relevant environmental concerns.	Bike/Ped	
26	yes		
27	One thing on my mind is how work is almost always being done on the Pell Bridge. So almost always the Newport end has a clutter of machines, materials, workers' cars, etc. ... looks like a junk yard. Why not get real and have a landscaped area for this?!	Road to Nowhere	
28	Reducing rush hour traffic, providing more buses route 14 so that schedule isn't needed, departures on the half hour. have last departure from Newport later than 4:30 (too early) Schedules don't work with traffic.	Transit	
29	Has a preliminary draft of the EA been prepared, or is this workshop part of the scoping process?  I am not able to attend the meeting and am hoping to get a detailed description of the preferred alternative - in graphical figure/plan format if possible. Given that many Newport homeowners and stakeholders are seasonal residents, I would recommend providing the public with online information in addition to the workshops during the public comment period.	Detailed handouts	
30	Please ensure that this project takes into account a potential bike trail link to the north (Coddington Highway).	Bike facilities	
31	yes		
32	yes		
33	Where do I find design and or plans to view online please?		
34	As a longtime resident who's seen the increase in traffic, failure to stop, and speeding along 3rd St over the last ten years, I am staunchly against anything that would further endanger our neighborhood. Whatever solution is identified MUST protect residents. We need to be able to back out of our driveways, cross the street, have children safe at school bus stops - these are all things that are often difficult now, and if the off ramps are not carefully designed to protect the neighborhood, they will be impossible later. This is a historic residential neighborhood with narrow one-way streets - please do not turn it into a major commuting route.	Third Street	

Reconstruction of Pell Bridge Approaches - Public Workshop #1 Comments

Respondents	Responses	Tags	
35	<p>Considering the proximity to homes in the area, what will be done to ensure dirt and debris is contained?</p> <p>Will construction be done at night?</p> <p>When is construction projected to end?</p> <p>How will construction effect traffic on 3rd St?</p> <p>How will businesses in the rotary be affected?</p> <p>What is the anticipated impact on traffic at the rotary, given the delays which were experienced due to roadway construction on the bridge this past year?</p> <p>Will the dog park be relocated and if so to where?</p>	Third Street	Dog Park
36	How will this affect traffic on Third Street? (both north and south of the current exit ramp?)	Third Street	
37	Living in the Point, "north end" I am a concerned neighbor about the impact of this project and the traffic patterns with the navy, tourists, and local.	North End	
38	Vehicles entering the bridge coming from Newport seem to have two lanes to choose from, and that the lane coming from Middletown will yield. When in fact, it is one lane coming from Newport, and one lane coming from Middletown that will come together to form two lanes. There are no markings that the Newport on ramp is one lane only, and it extremely dangerous. There is one sign indicating that the lanes are to join side by side, but at that point, someone could already be traveling in the "non" lane, while someone is also coming from Middletown and result in a bad accident.	Signage	
39	No questions yet but from what I have seen, it looks like it will be an improvement.		
40	That the STATE FUNDS and STATE ENGINEERS "will not" create a "world class" entrance, but rather a utilitarian and functional entry to Newport. This should be both an "homage to the history of the city" as well as a "grand entrance" to let people KNOW they have ARRIVED in a "world class destination"!	World class destination	
41	I haven't seen what the proposal is but I am glad to see it moving forward.		
42	As a commuter, I can't stress how helpful it would be for you all to stop bridge work during rush hour in the morning. Many people from Aquidneck Island like myself commute to Providence or beyond every day. The construction adds a lot of time to an already-long commute. If you could just wait until 8:45-9AM, it would enormously benefit residents of the island who leave every morning as well as workers who come to the island to work every day. In the summer, the sun comes up around 4:30 in the morning. What if you could work from 4:30-7 and pause from 7-8:45? Please consider the impact this has on our daily lives. Many workplaces do not accommodate changes in schedules due to problems like bridge construction.	Hours of work	
43	I am a resident of the "Point" and have witnessed the traffic tie-ups over the past decade at the first ramp exit f rom the bridge that leads to downtown and empties onto Connell Highway. These tie-ups occur on weekends and holidays during the warm weather, and result in traffic being backed up onto the Pell Bridge and congestion at the intersections of Van Zandt and Connell Highway. As I interpret the plans, shown on-line, there will be no change in this exit. Consequently, the tie-ups we experience o summer weekends will continue. I have been told that when the bridge was being built they had plans for this exit road to divide - one lane of traffic headed downtown to pass under the Van Zandt bridge and connect to America's Cup Avenue; the other lane to empty onto Connell Highway. These plans were blocked when the Penn Central Railroad refused to give up their rights to the tracks, even though they were not being used at that time. Currently the tracks between Van Zandt and Bridge Street are being used for "dinner trains", etc. There appear to be 3 passages under the Van Zandt bridge, but the alternate plan only requires one lane for t he southbound traffic. In summary, I feel the currently proposed revisions of the ramps will not relieve the congestion associated with the first exit leading to downtown Newport. I would hope that officials will explore the idea that this exit be split and the southbound traffic exit would utilize a new road under the Van Zandt bridge that would connect to America's Cup Avenue new Poplar St. Otherwise, it appears to me that taxpayers will pay a considerable amount of money for revised ramps that may not relieve the most congested exit.	Downtown Ramp	
44	Fort Greene on the Conservation Areas/Open Space figure is also called Battery Park	Open space	
45	What is the possibility of restoring the unnamed stream/channel that drains out near the Third Street Extension bridge? This person also expressed interest in creating wetland mitigation areas.	Wetland issues	
46	If the dog park is impacted by the proposed design then the City/RIDOT should rebuild a new one in a safe area with limited traffic access. It should also be larger and better maintained than the existing dog park.	Dog park	
47	A couple of folks from the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission brought up concerns of historic areas prone to flooding (referred them to Alisa) and also asked how the Aquidneck Island Transportation Plan would factor into the interchange design. One woman (Allison?) specifically wanted Bill Desantis' take on the issue.	Drainage	
48	A linear park should be installed along the proposed bike path/rail road ROW to create more green space.	Green space	
49	Can the project incorporate elements of the Meadowlands project that is being conducted in New Jersey (e. g. create wetland "sinks" to hold flood waters, etc.)	Flooding	



## Reconstruction of Pell Bridge Approaches - Public Workshop #1 Comments

Respondents	Responses	Tags	
50	Provide lots of signage so that when people exit the Pell Bridge to the parking area they know they can easily park and ride or park and walk to Newport (bike and ped path). If the Rt. 95 Welcome Centers ever reopened have information and well informed staff to explain the route and the distances, etc.	Signage	Bike facilities
51	When redesigning the Pell Bridge approaches make provisions for future bike/ped path attached to the Pell Bridge (like the Golden Gate and Brooklyn Bridge for example) to make a world class biking/walking experience.	Bike facilities	
52	Do not eliminate existing entrance to Downtown Newport.	Downtown Ramp	
53	A handout covering the detailed information presented at this meeting would have been helpful. I will try to obtain this information on the DOT website. It's hard to generate meaningful comments without access to the data generated to date, e.g. traffic counts at intersections, etc.	Detailed handouts	
54	Suggests a linear park along future bikepath / RR tracks.	Bike facilities	
55	Please combine the Connell Highway (north) TIP with this project so there won't be a 2-lane bottleneck from the new rotary to the Middletown Town line.	Connell Highway	
56	I have attended two workshops by RIDOT, my previous comments again. This format is very labor intensive and does not work. People with hearing loss can't get any information due to background noise so the station concept is useless. With so many people varying levels of knowledge - we all need to get the same information at the same time! Also it would be helpful to hear questions and comments from our neighbors. Thank you. Plus violates ADA principles for hearing loss. Plastic water bottles are \$\$\$ and bad on the environment. No one is going to get dehydrated in one hour! Single use plastic has to go! Question: what happens to Washington Street extension - will it connect with the naval hosp. property? Tunnel under the ramp?	Washington St Extension	
57	Community vision not yet developed. Access, open space, mobility, safety, econ opport., amenities, housing, connectivity, etc. Bridge realignment and supportive element. How was the project purpose and need developed?	Community vision	
58	I wish to express my sincere thanks to you and your colleagues for working for a more livable Aquidneck Island.	Thank you	
59	Having been involved to some degree with railroad operations in that area for about 20 years, my primary interest is in how the project may impact future rail use in the corridor. As you have no doubt seen, and is shown on the flood hazard map, stormwater flooding is a continuing problem in the rail corridor south of Admiral Kalbfus Blvd. Your Maintenance Div. folks did a major ditch cleaning some years back, which was quite helpful. However since much vegetation has grown back into the ditches, coupled with the extremely flat grade, the flooding is back in force now. A lateral conduit that flows east under the tracks and under the Newport Playhouse parking lot is once again plugged, which is part of the problem. The flooding not only is a problem for train movements, but tends to short out the track diode for the grade crossing signals at Adm'l. Kalbfus Blvd., activating the signals & gates blocking vehicle traffic. Hopefully, the Pell Bridge Ramps project will conduct a full drainage study for the entire area, leading to ditches and conduits sized for both the significant impervious area in the watershed and the very flat grades. Another major drainage issue, for the planned bikeway, is in the Point Section where the rail line is depressed in a significant cut. There the cemetery to the east provides some stormwater and groundwater runoff, but more importantly the numerous dead end streets to the west of the rail line dump copious volumes of water down onto the rail line. The rail line becomes a river, flowing south, during heavy rains due to the extremely limited size of the single trackside ditch. This is the area where the City's old sewer line along the west side of the tracks used to flood with water regularly until several years ago when the manhole covers were raised above grade by the City. I'm not sure if the Pell Bridge Ramps project includes this portion of the bikeway project, so maybe this drainage issue is of concern only to that project. Aside from the drainage aspects of the Pell Bridge Ramps project, I'm concerned about an old conceptual drawing from a few years ago that depicted one or more new rail grade crossings south of Adm'l Kalbfus Blvd. Specifically, in that drawing it appeared a new street and rail crossing was proposed for the currently paper street portion of Dyre St. (next to the Newport Playhouse) Adding new grade crossings, whether for vehicles or bike paths, is counter to long standing national safety efforts to remove grade crossings on rail lines. Adding new grade crossings: 1.) adds serious safety issues for all users; 2.) introduces the federally mandated train horn use issue (an environmental issue); and 3.) adds significant long term, continuing maintenance costs for the rail line operator and owner.	Drainage	Bike path
60	We would like for a certain percentage of employees to be pulled from the neighborhood directly impacted by this upcoming operation. What better way to foster a sense of connectivity, unity and belonging!	Workforce from Neighborhood	
61	I do not support a connector road between 3rd Street and Connell Highway, Newport. The increased traffic would be devastating to the historic.	Third Street	
62	I am concerned about the land of the former dump.	Former dump	
63	NUWC is a great economic generator for the island and nearby commuters. Direct access from the bridge to NUWC would cut down on lots of traffic delays.	NUWC	
64	Land behind the mall should be utilized. Local businesses will survive with local people.	Land behind Mall	
65	I have concerns about traffic and water. My backyard abuts the off-ramp. Right now it is not too bad, if you have all the bridge traffic going pass my yard that would be a problem. The fumes from the cars would be awful. I don't think this is your answer. Not to mention if I sit outside and I do in the summer, I will be able to wave to people. No privacy in my yard. This part of town has ongoing water issues.	Off-Ramp	

Reconstruction of Pell Bridge Approaches - Public Workshop #1 Comments

Respondents	Responses	Tags	
66	<p>The highway is to be finished to the north around the Newport Mall to Coddington Highway and the bridge ramp to the south down the R.R. tracks connecting America's Cup Avenue, which is in direct line with the Newport Bridge. RT. 138 was and is to be moved to Coddington as originally promised. Three projects (Newport Bridge, Goat Island Connector and America's Cup Avenue) were rolled into one and the last stage has not been completed. The time has come to finish the job! Satellite parking by the North End, bike and walking path is to be completed. The land behind the mall belongs to the people of Newport and the State of Rhode Island and is needed since the rotary area is in a flood zone. In addition, the land adjacent to the mall which was purchased in 1998, should be shoved off for the four lane road (divided), the same way the Rt. 403 connector in North Kingstown was done with the school. By capturing the traffic including extensive commuter traffic, frees up Adm. Kalbus to reconnect those neighborhoods so bikes and walkers can cross the road, since major traffic will be reduced. There is now a public grade school within sight of this current busy road. This stretch is most densely populated stretch of Rt. 138, which runs east-west, but turns north-south at One Mile Corner at the Newport / Middletown line. The land behind the mall as nothing to do with the mid-island or interstate highway since it was purchased as an outlet for this connector road, keeping options pointing towards Burma Road, but eitherway linking Coddington Highway with the Bridge. Even Post Road in Warwick with roundabouts has an important bypass as its main component.</p>	Proposed Redesign	
67	<p>Concerned with the Park-N-Ride. Just want to stay "in the loop".</p>	Park N Ride	
68	<p>My suggestion is to consider redirecting the first off ramp heading east to go under the Van Zandt overpass. The new exit roadway should be as far left as possible parallel to rebuilt RR tracks and a new bike path to the far right. A sound barrier wall should be erected at the top of the embankment. At Poplar, Elm and Bridge St. crossings synchronized traffic lights should be installed.</p>	Van Zandt	
69	<p>The railroad tracks to Hunter Park, which is directly across from Sycamore Street would be ideal for the bicycle and walking path. Safety would be insured by using this route. Dyers Gate Street, adjacent north to Hunters Park would be next in line. In addition, one option finishing the Newport Bridge Access Road, also known as the Newport Bridge ROW. Approximately 3 or 4/10th of a mile to the northwest around the mall as planned and only 2 or 3/10th of a mile to the south down the railroad tracks finishes the original project.</p>	Bike Path	
70	<p>Originally, DOT told Newporters, that a new road be built next to Connell Highway, which would connect with Coddington Highway. In essence, it would connect three highways and move RT 138 to Coddington and remove traffic from Admiral Kalbus, which was never intended to be RT 138 on a permanent basis. This would leave many options open for the future on the west side of the island and allow the two neighborhoods in the north end to be connected with the removal of the heavy traffic on Admiral Kalbus. The missing link described above, is the 6th and final section, which was started well over 100 years ago. Hundreds upon hundreds of structures were destroyed carving wide swaths throughout many neighborhoods of the city. The so-called "highway land" behind the mall as Newporters call it - happens to be the final section. Of course, there are many other valuable assets required, such as satellite parking, rail, etc. As stated, capture the traffic and disperse it accordingly. Other than some tweaking, the existing infrastructure with elevated roadway, ironically is above any storm of the century surge and any future waterline. However, there is something valuable for everyone, with very little give or take needed to accomplish the goals.</p>	Land behind Mall	
71	<p>Pell Bridge Entry/Exit Redesign: 1) Bridge entry going North on Connell (no change); 2) Bridge exit with viaduct over reunited Connell. After viaduct, bear left to enter Connell, continuing straight from Viaduct leads parallel to RR track under Van Zandt bridge to downtown Newport; 3) Bridge exit to North on Connell; 4) Bridge entry going South on Connell; 5) Connell from bridge entries/exits to Middletown line expanded as minimum to three lanes: center lane for left hand turns only; 6) Business above and below the circle enhanced with dedicated service lanes and entry/exit access to Connell; 7) Entry from a business directly into the circle and exit from the circle directly into a business is eliminated.</p>	Proposed Redesign	



# Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches

Public Workshop #2

July 16, 2018

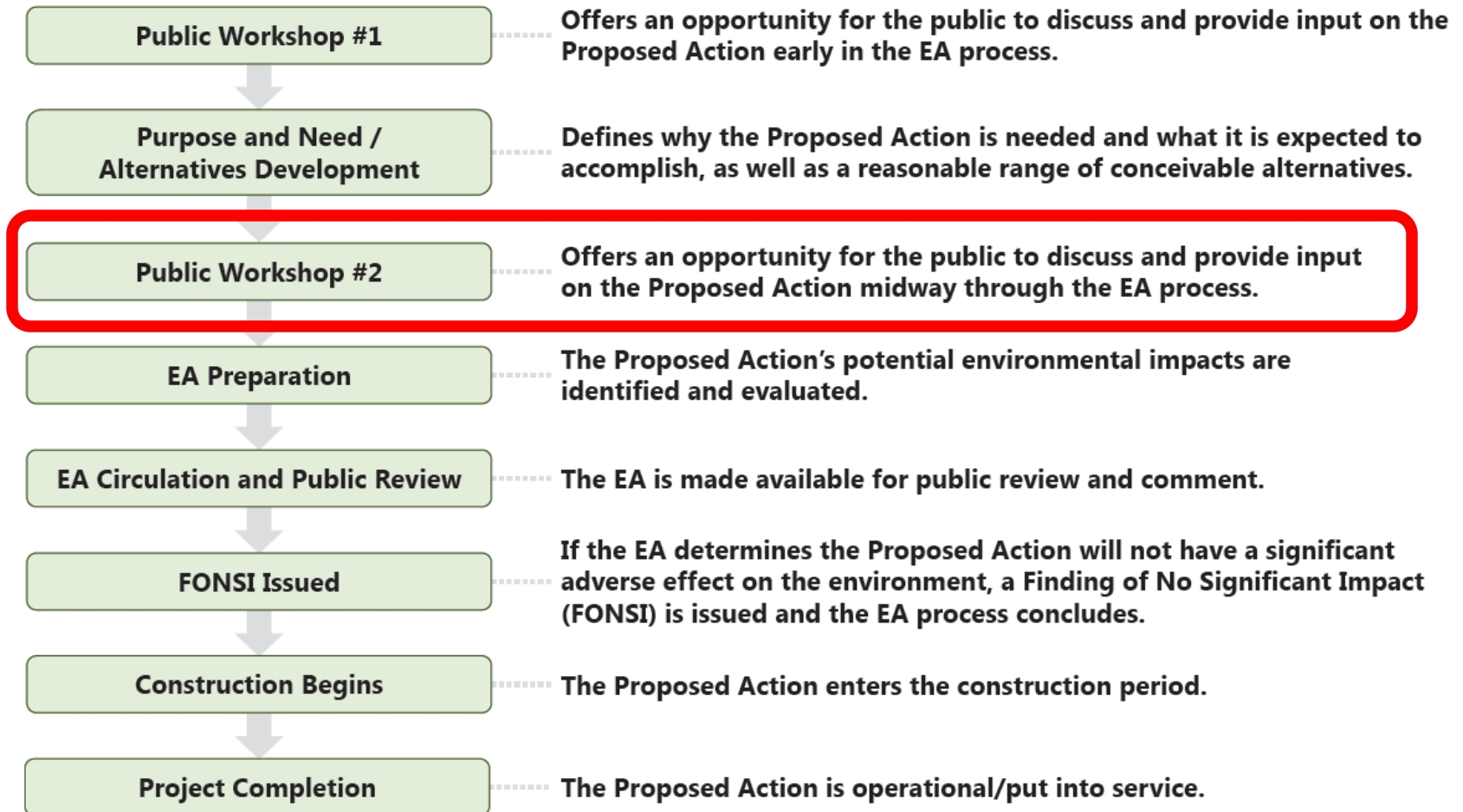


# Agenda

- Project Purpose and Need
- Environmental Assessment (EA) Process
- Public Meeting #1 Survey – Input Summary
- Project Components
- Overview of Alternatives
- Public Input
- Project Website
- Next Steps
- Open House

- Project Purpose
  - Improve safety and connectivity for all road users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles
  - Create parcels for development
- Project Need
  - Reduce vehicular congestion and queuing on Pell Bridge
  - Improve connectivity between Newport's North End and Downtown areas for all road users
  - Spur economic development

# Environmental Assessment (EA) Process and Schedule



- Over 70 comments received. Majority of topics focused on:
  - Bike Facilities
  - Pedestrian Connectivity (Especially to North End)
  - Third Street Used as a Cut-Thru
  - Local Business Impact
  - Traffic Congestion/Ramps Queuing onto Bridge
  - Drainage/Flooding
  - Developable Land

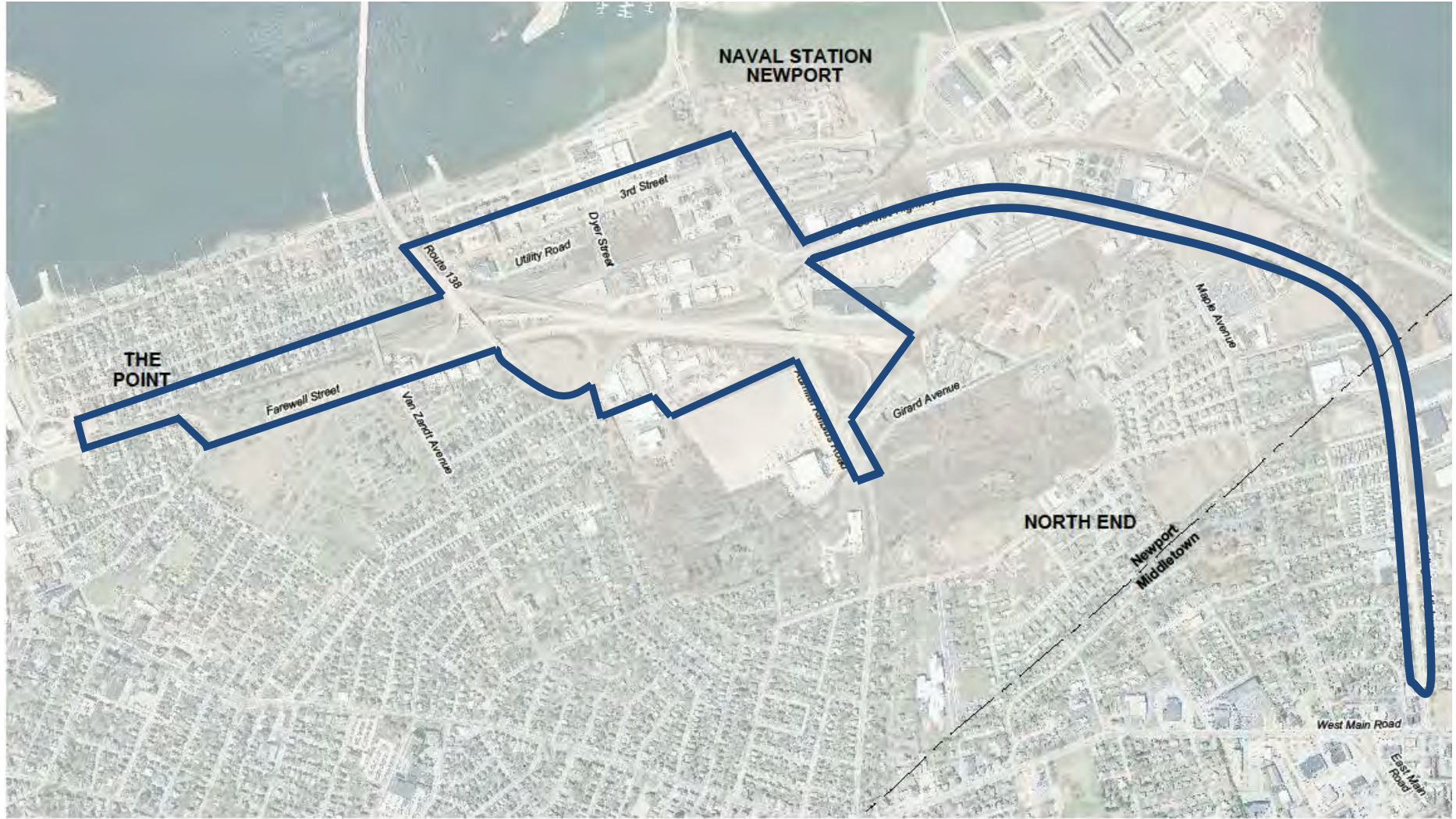
# Project Components

- Consolidate and remove existing highway infrastructure
- Reconnect JT Connell Highway
- Provide connectivity between JT Connell Highway and Third Street
- Provide multi-modal connectivity between North End and Gateway Center
- Provide park & ride and transit opportunity between Pell Bridge Interchange and Gateway Center



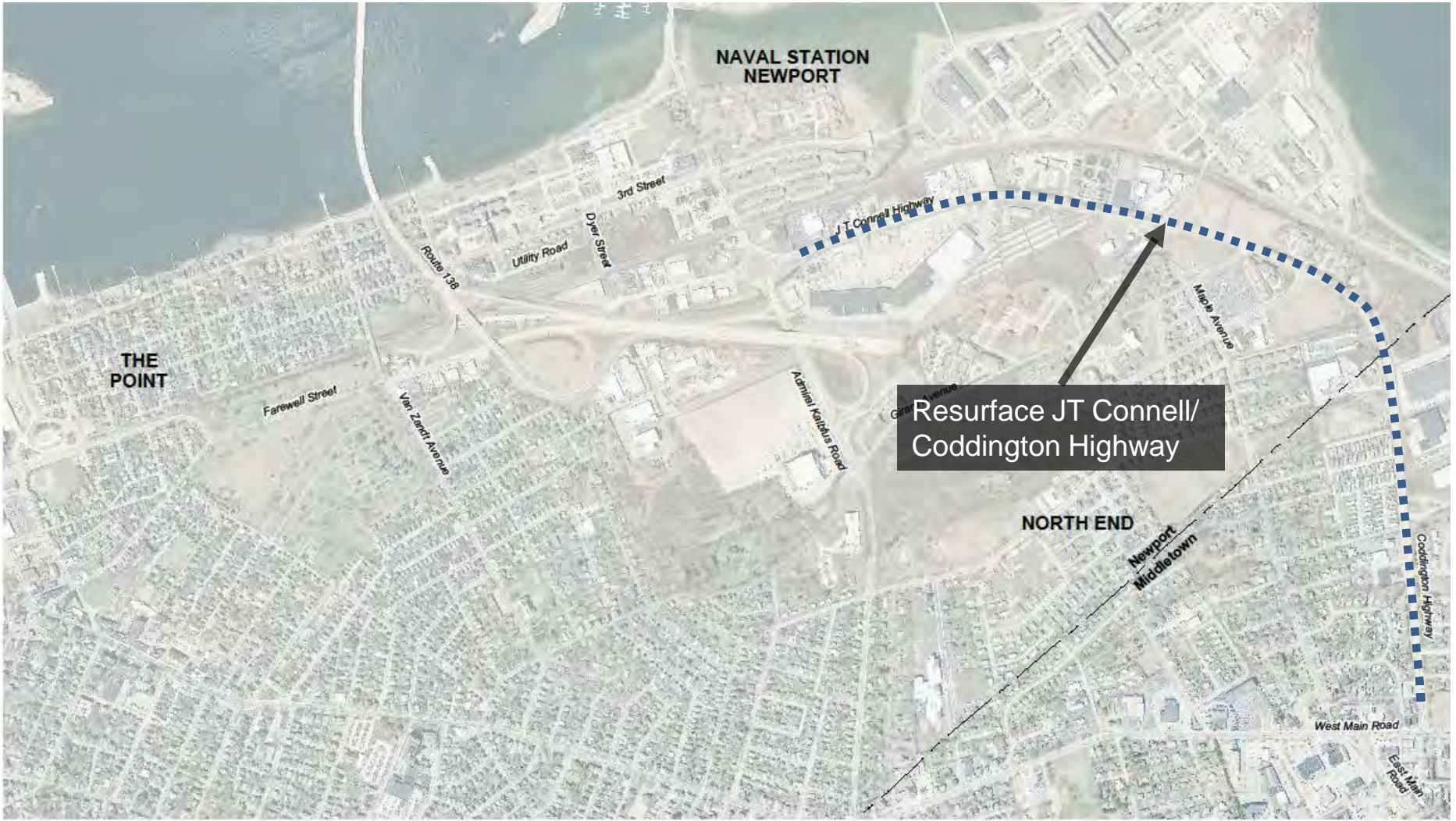


# Project Study Area

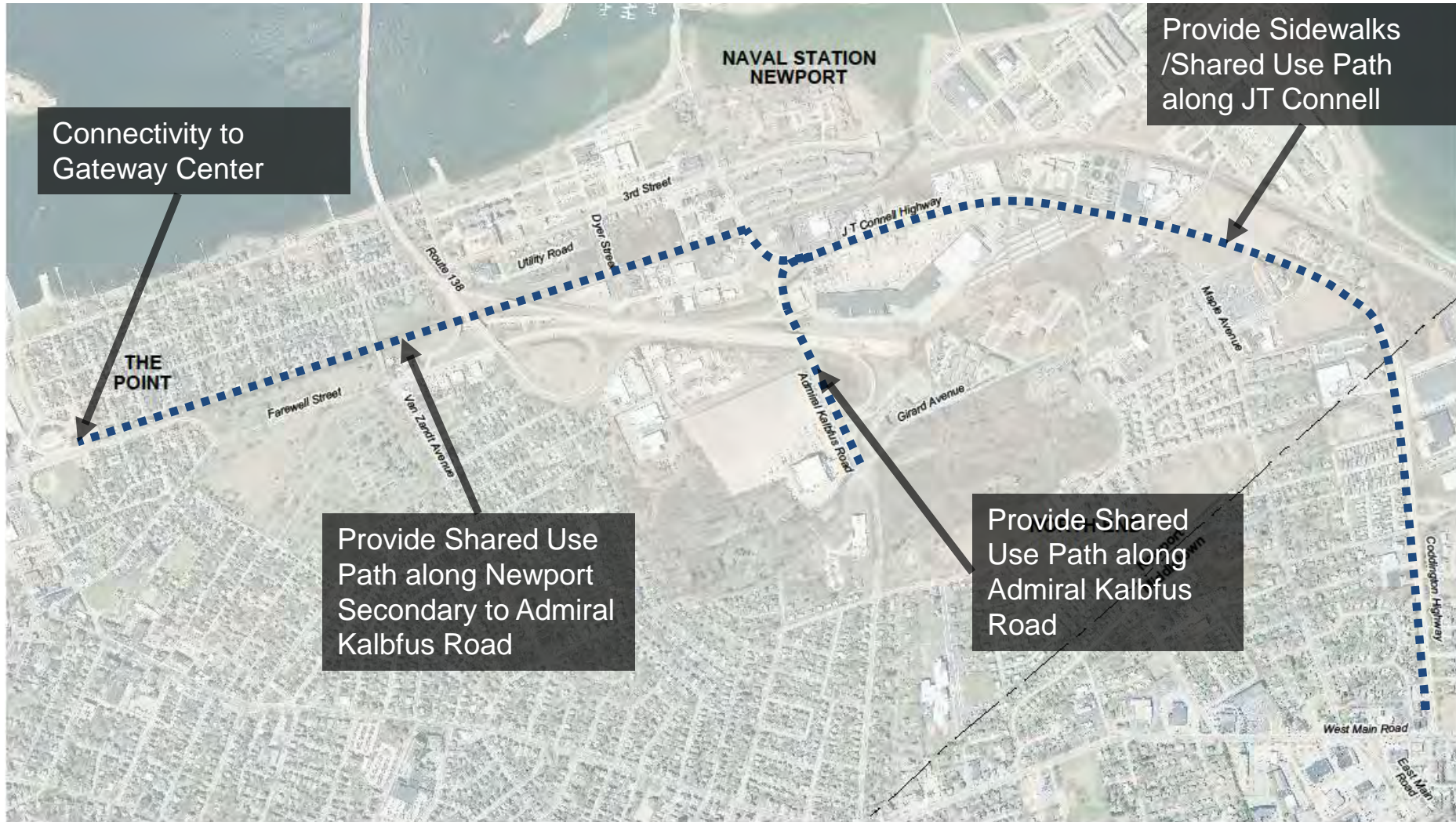


- JT Connell Highway Resurfacing
- Pedestrian/Bicycle Connectivity
- Future Shuttle Service along Newport Secondary
- Admiral Kalbfus Road Safety Improvements
- Interchange Area Realignment
  - Alternative 1: Maintain Freeway/Interchange
  - Alternative 2: Partial Interchange/Local Street Network
  - Alternatives 3A-B-C: Local Street Network
  - Alternatives 4A-B: Local Street Network

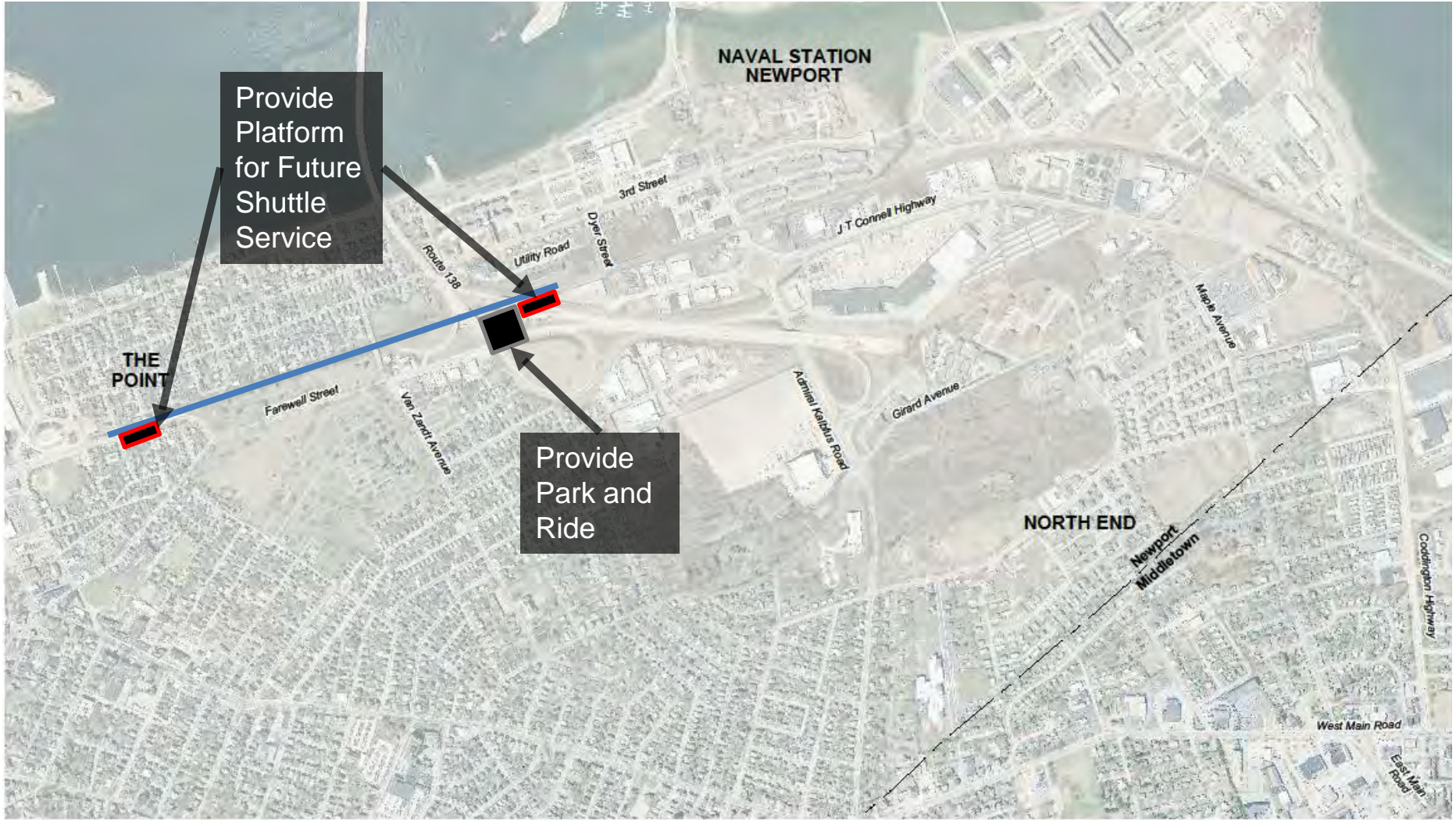
# JT Connell Highway Resurfacing



# Pedestrian/Bicycle Connectivity



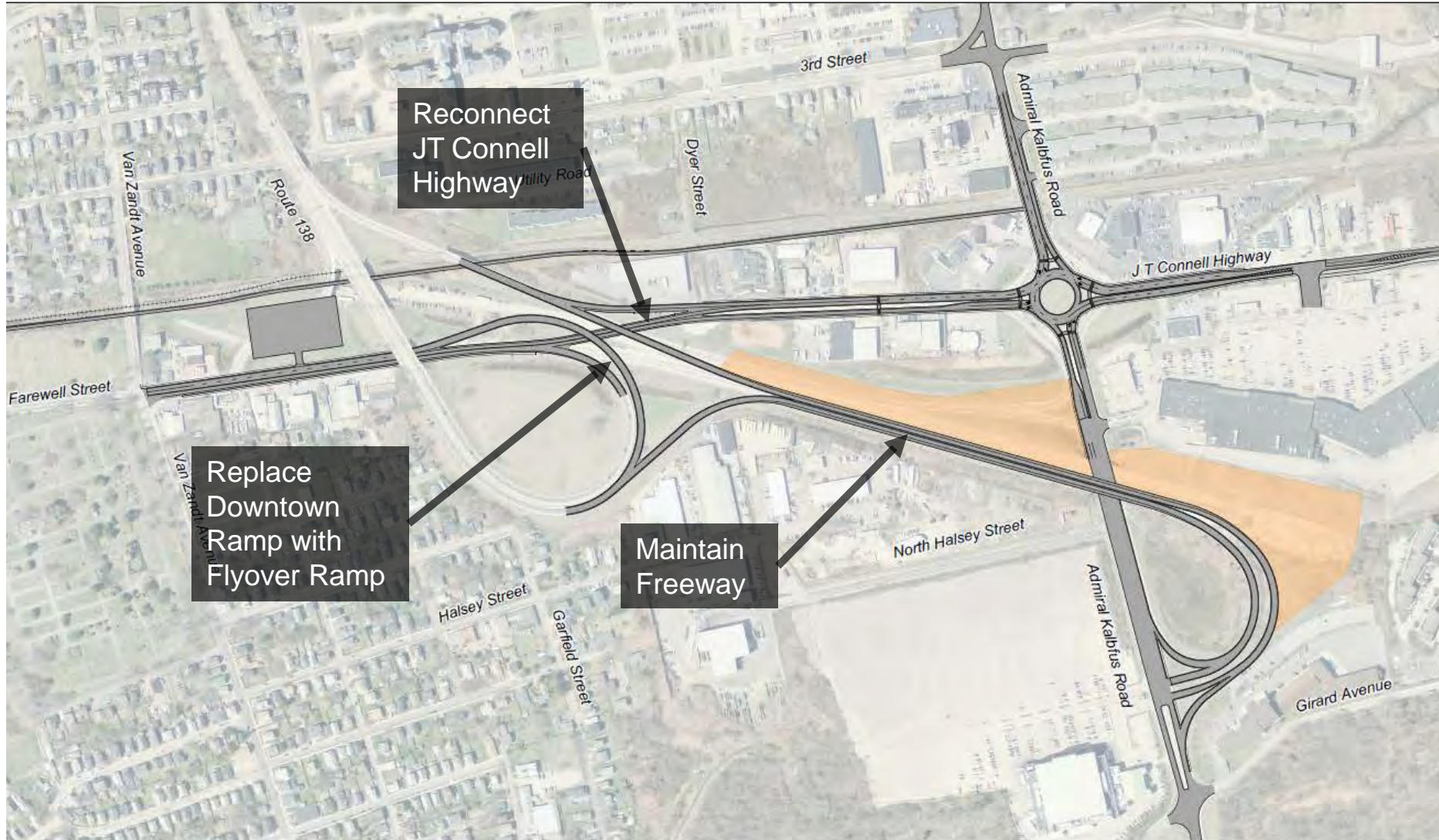
# Future Shuttle Service along Newport Secondary



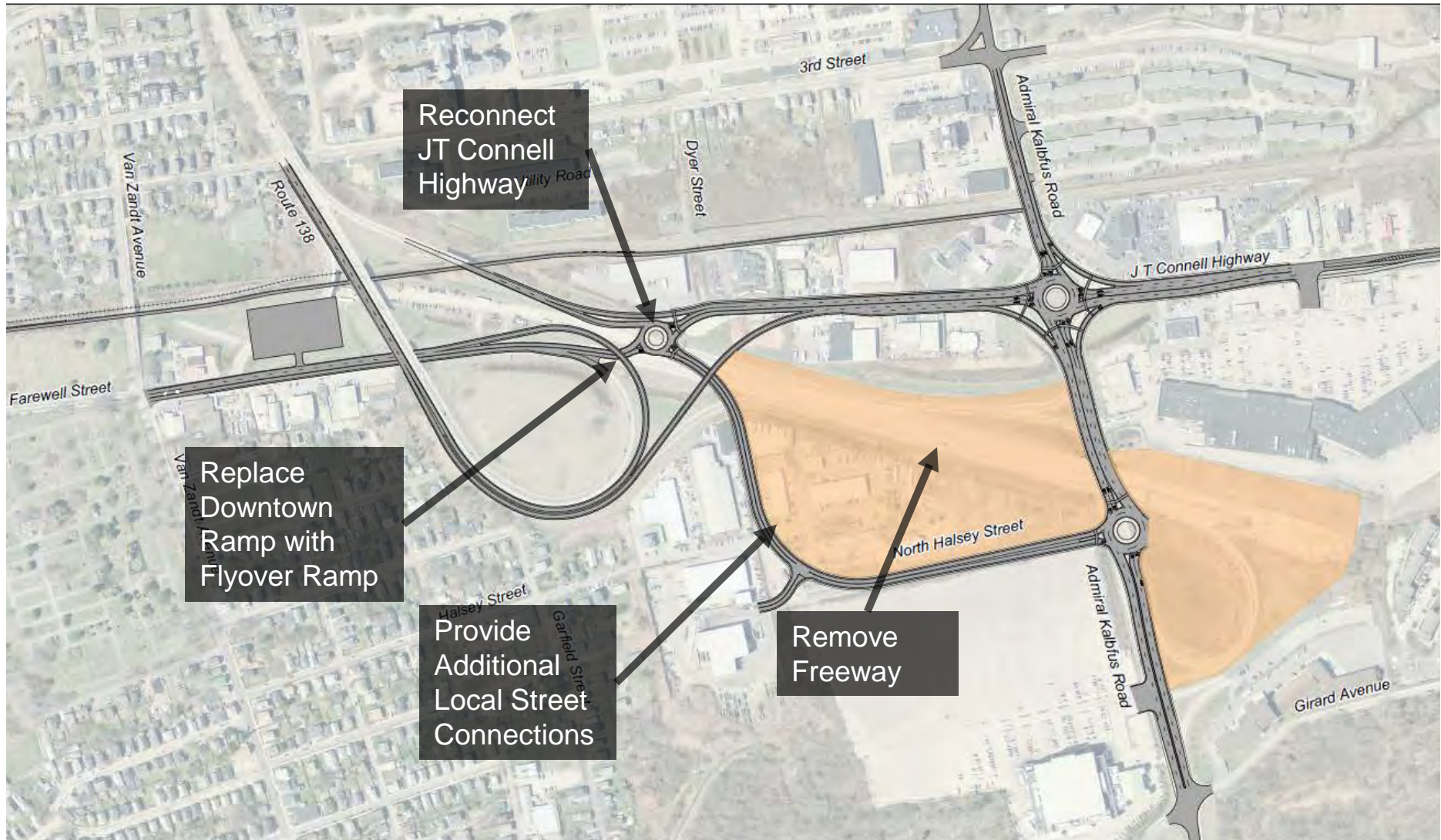
# Admiral Kalbfus Road Safety Improvements



# Interchange Area – Alternative 1

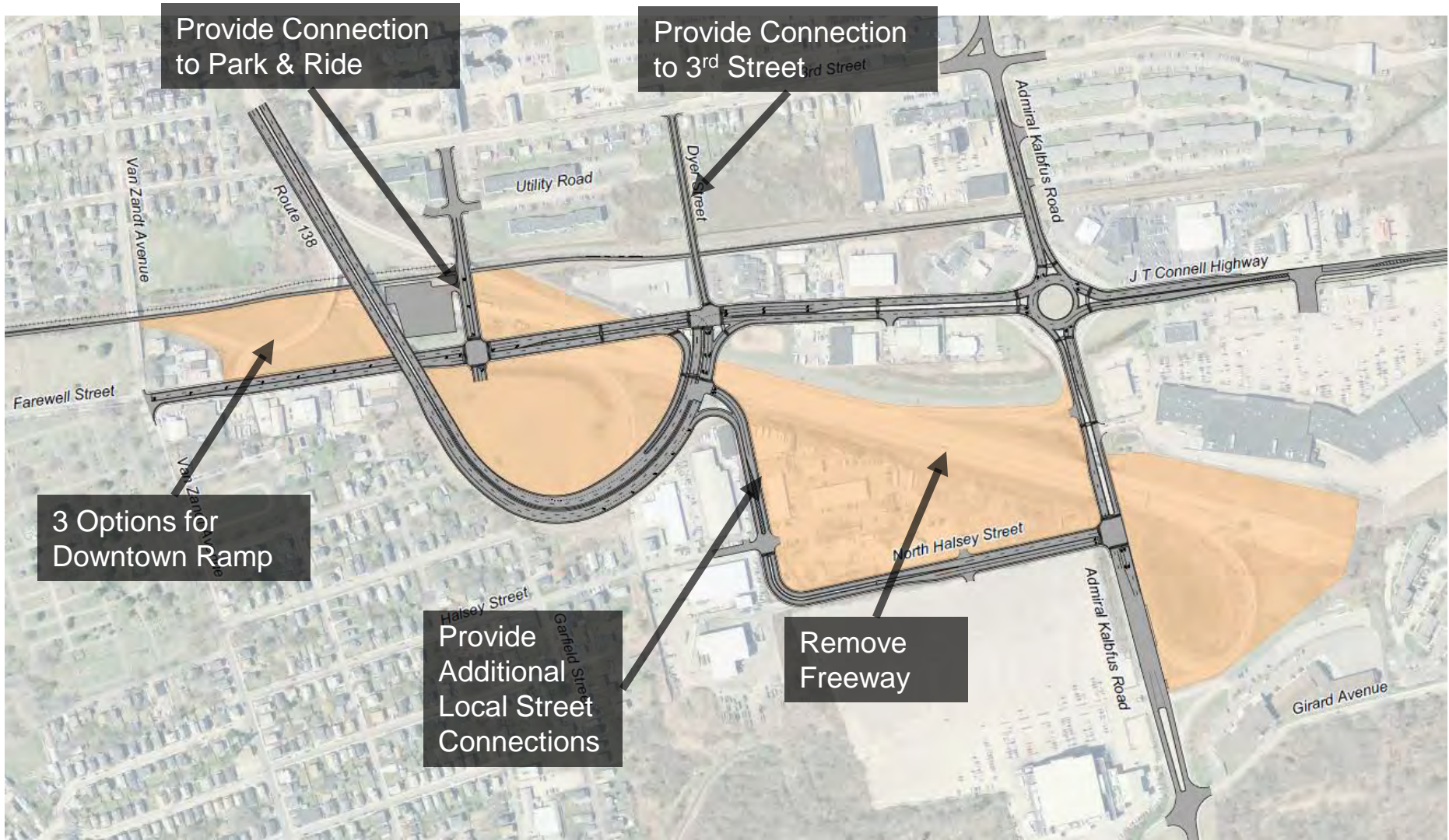


# Interchange Area – Alternative 2

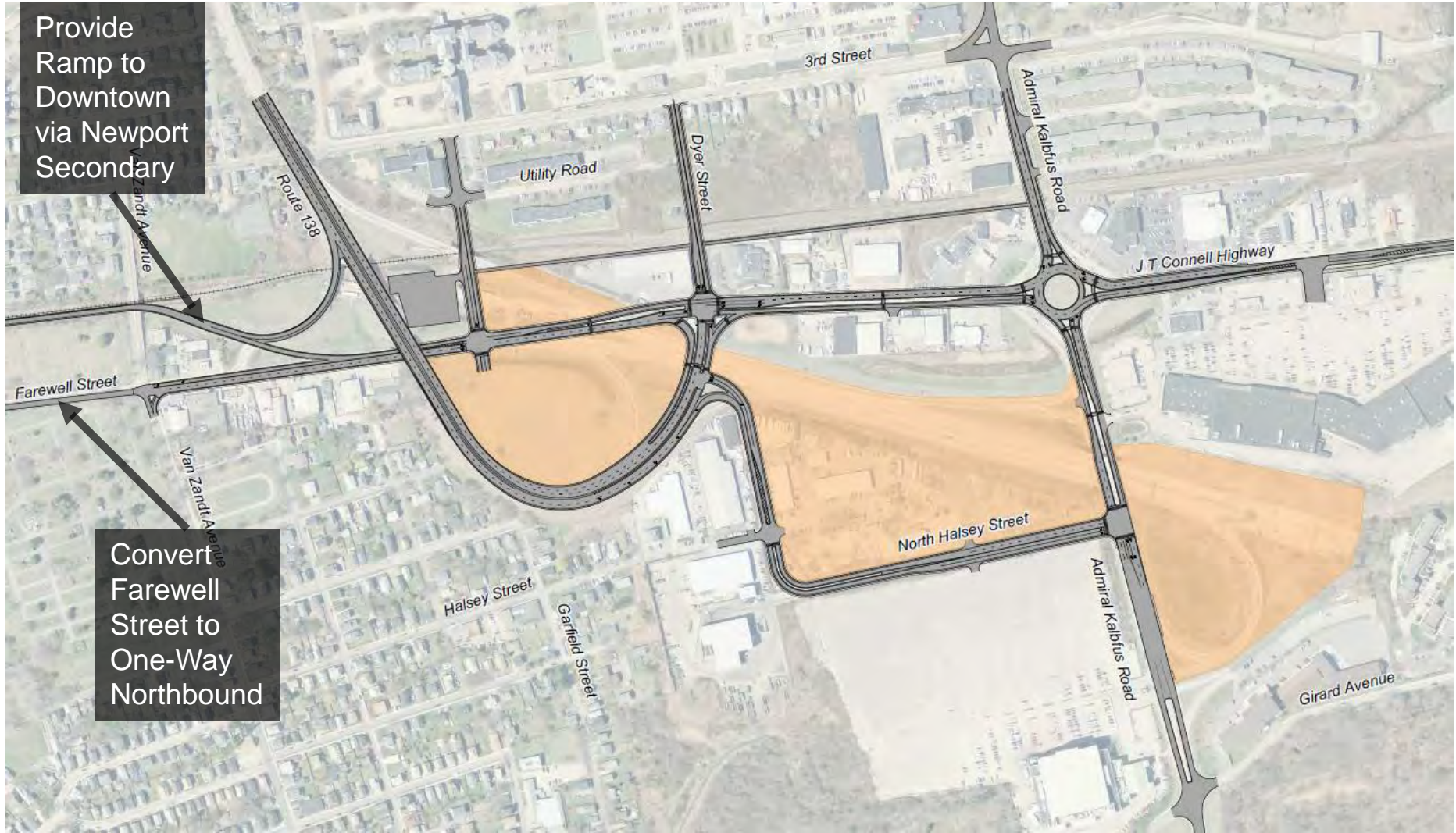




# Interchange Area – Alternative 3



# Interchange Area – Alternative 3A



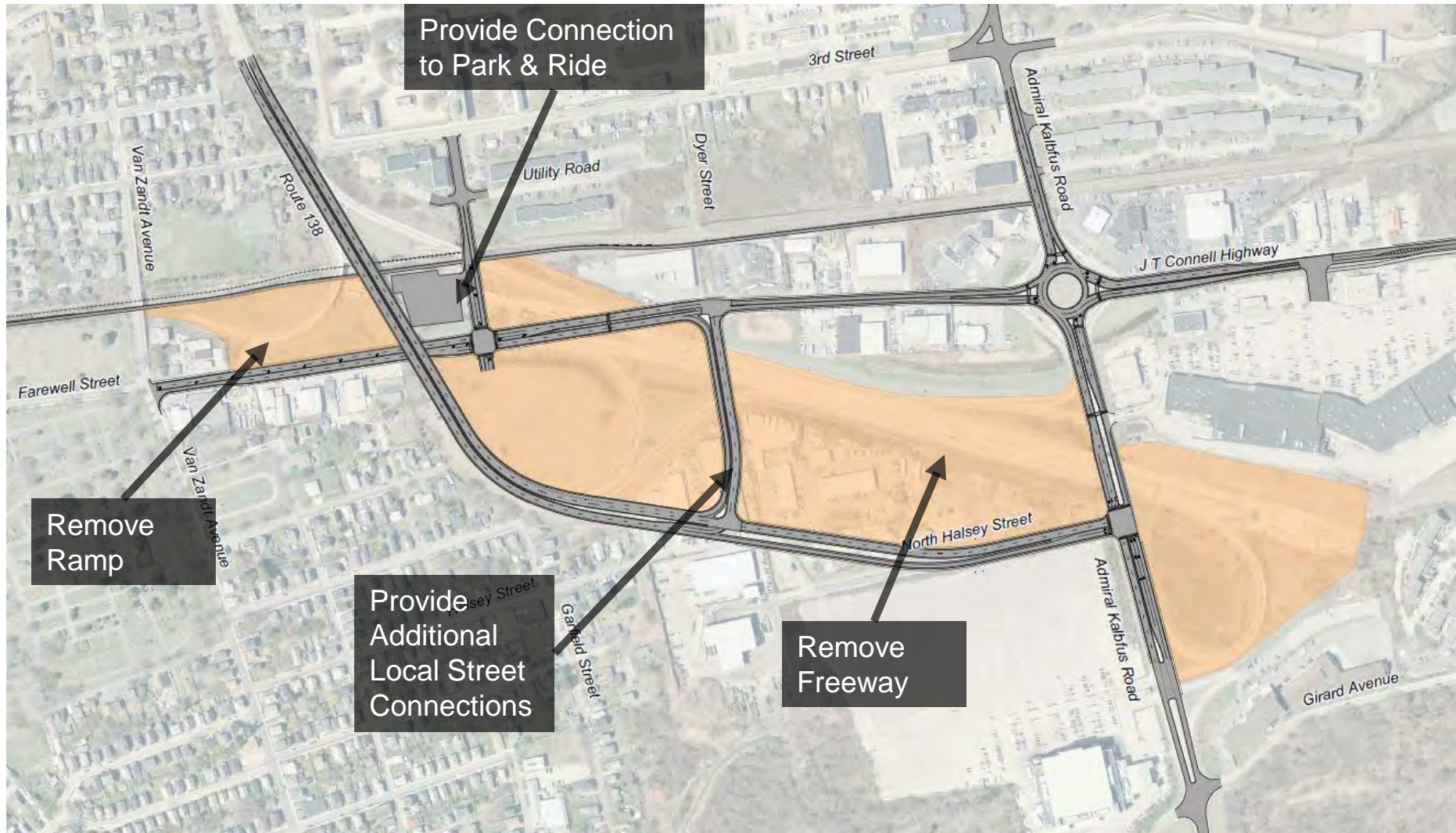
# Interchange Area – Alternative 3B



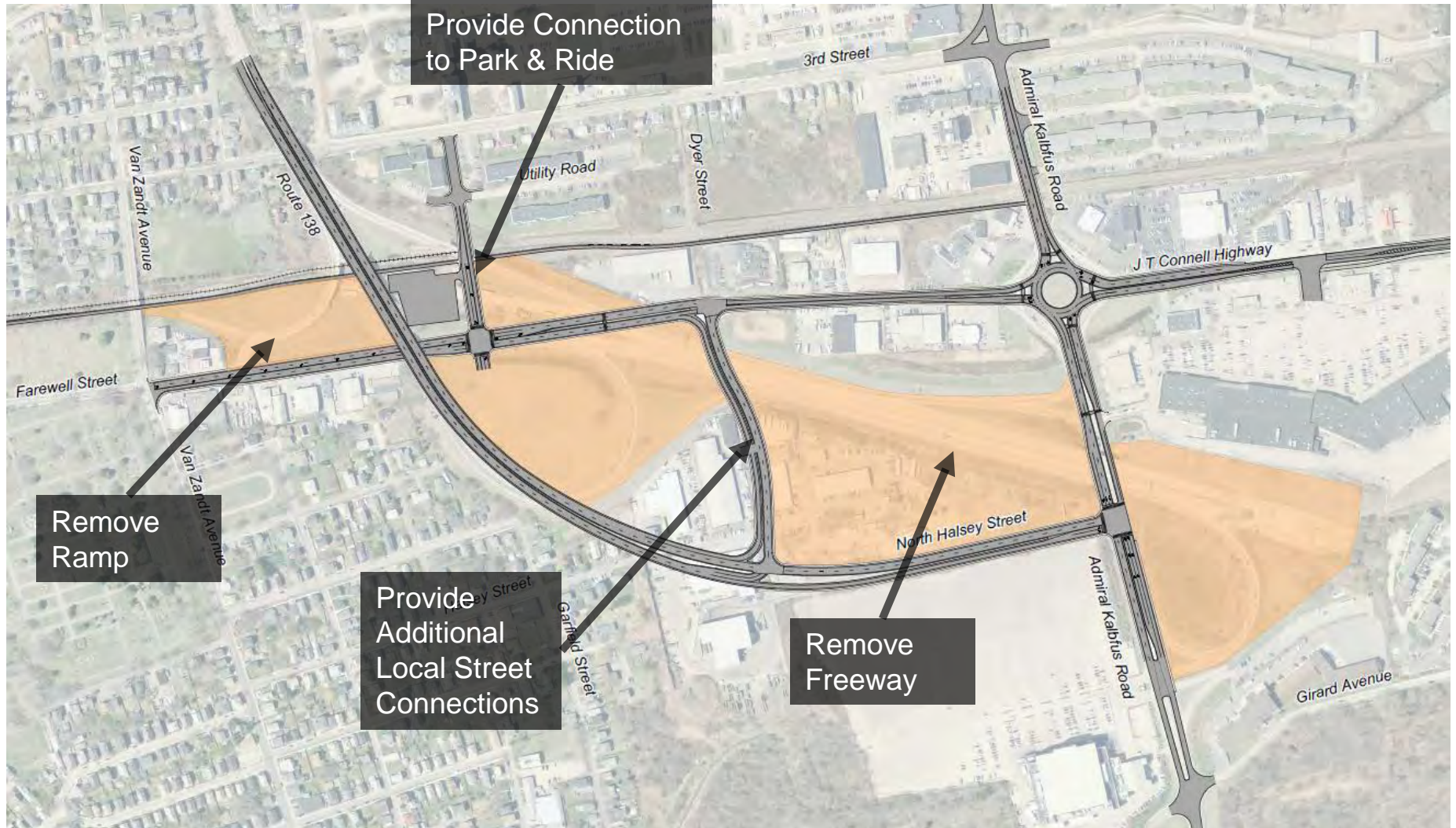
# Interchange Area – Alternative 3C



# Interchange Area – Alternative 4A

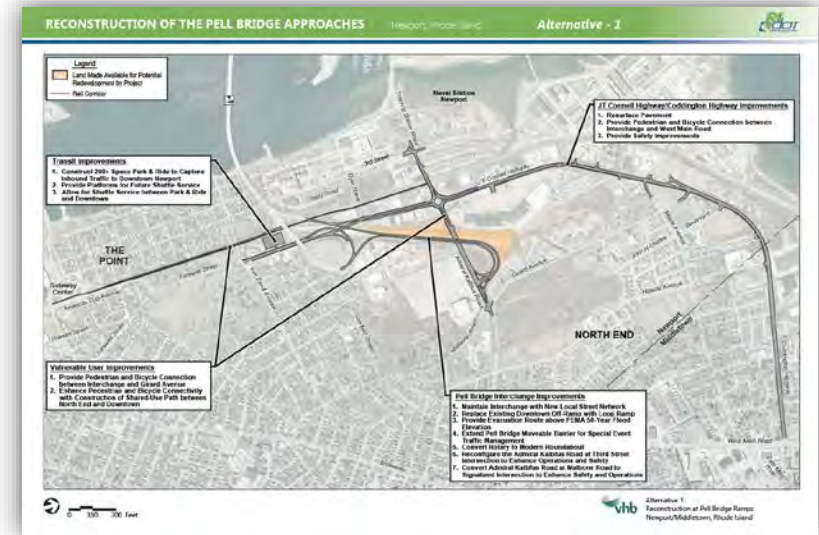


# Interchange Area – Alternative 4B



# Alternatives Analysis for Discussion

- Station 1 – Alternative 1
  - Station 2 – Alternative 2
  - Station 3 – Alternatives 3A, 3B, and 3C
  - Station 4 – Alternatives 4A and 4B
- 
- Each station has:
    - Graphic of Alternative
    - Project Constraints and Benefits



**RECONSTRUCTION OF THE PELL BRIDGE APPROACHES** *Alternative - 1*

Project Constraints	
Noise	• Potential decrease in noise levels near existing downtown off-ramp, which is proposed to be removed.
Environmental Justice (EJ)	• Temporary construction impacts.
Floodplains	• Evacuation route infrastructure was designed to be above 50 year FEMA flood elevation and accommodates for sea level rise during project service life.
Wetlands	• 0.2 acres of wetlands impacted.
Visual Impact	• Elevated highway remains. • New elevated downtown flyover ramp.
Right-Of-Way	• None
Oil and Hazardous Materials	• The project will need to go through the RDEM Site Remediation process, including completion of the Site Investigation, public notices, and a remedial action work plan and closure report. • The proposed remedy will be to cap the area with roadway, sidewalks, and landscaped areas. Any excavated material that cannot be re-interred beneath capped portions of the project will need to be properly managed, stockpiled, sampled, and shipped off site for proper disposal.
Traffic Pattern Impacts	• IT Cornell Highway will be reconnected to Farewell Street (vehicles no longer need to use freeway segment) • Downtown traffic will be rerouted to the proposed flyover ramp.
Project Benefits	
Traffic	• Eliminates congestion on Pell Bridge during typical peak periods. • Allows for traffic management during special events. • Travel time will decrease to the Naval Station Newport and destinations North of Pell Bridge. • The proposed Park and Ride with Future Shuttle service removes vehicles from traveling downtown.
Environmental Justice	• Enhances pedestrian and bicycle facilities. • Neighborhood connectivity and walkability.
Safety/Connectivity	• Mitigates crashes on the bridge caused by congestion. • Provides off-ramp pedestrian and bicycle facilities, connecting the North End to Downtown. • Allows for pedestrian crossings throughout small portions the interchange area within the local street network.
Developable Land	• 8.2 acres made available for potential redevelopment. Actual developable land within these area still to be determined.

- Public input is critical at this stage of the project
  - Concerns/comments on alternatives for consideration
- Input may be submitted:
  - In person tonight – see comment box
  - By mail – address provided on the comment form
  - Using the online portal – web link provided on the comment form



Thank you for participating!

Provide your comments about the topics discussed at the Workshop by August 20, 2018.

**Mail comments here:**

RIDOT, c/o VHB  
1 Cedar Street, Suite 400  
Providence, RI 02903

**Submit comments online here:**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PellBridgeApproachesAlternatives>



## RECONSTRUCTION OF THE PELL BRIDGE APPROACHES

### Environmental Assessment (EA)

HOME

ABOUT

TIMELINE

FAQ

DOCUMENTS

USEFUL LINKS

SITEMAP

Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) is reconfiguring the Pell Bridge Interchange. The following pages give a brief history along with pertinent information about the environmental assessment (EA), Project timeline, and public outreach.



#### Project Status

- Finalized the first steps of the process including scoping, purpose and need development, and existing conditions
- Determining alternatives to include within the EA

#### Upcoming Events

- July 16, 2018 - Public Workshop at Newport City Hall
- July 17, 2018 - Public Workshop at Florence Gray Center

Please consider completing the survey below with your questions, concerns and comments about the

- Project Updates
- Meeting Materials/ Graphics/Reports
- Link to Survey
- [www.pellbridge-ea.com](http://www.pellbridge-ea.com)

- Fall 2018/Early 2019
  - Submit Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) & 30% Design Plans for FHWA Review & Public Comment
- Late Winter/Early Spring 2019
  - Submit Final Environmental Assessment
- Summer 2019
  - FHWA issues determination
- Winter 2019 thru 2023
  - Advertise Project/Construction

Pell Bridge Workshops - Summer 2018

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Pell Bridge Workshops - Summer 2018

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Pell Bridge Workshops - Summer 2018

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## Reconstruction of Pell Bridge Approaches - Public Workshop #2, Summer 2018

### Public Comments

Responses	Tags
Yes	
I feel like some of these choices are going to crush home values in the point.	Home values
<p>I am in favor of approaches designed to minimize traffic in town through the use public transportation or bike paths. The town is being overloaded with traffic as more bedrooms are made available through new hotels and rental houses and we need to give day visitors easy parking options outside of town.</p> <p>I am against any plan that funnels traffic through the Point neighborhood, especially 3A which essentially rips the privacy away from 100+ houses along the train tracks.</p> <p><del>of Council Highway Resurface - don't wait. It needs doing NOW. It is currently dangerous for bikes. and it is in all the proposals anyway.</del></p>	
<p>A 200 space carpark is a drop in the ocean to what is needed. Use more of the freed up land and make it much larger. Capture day visitors and have parking include a round town jump on and off trolley service in their parking fee.</p> <p>Option 4 is the best opportunity to direct beach traffic over the hill and onto valley road to free up town - though I can imagine shops will not be keen on this.</p> <p>option 3 - too many turns and choke points. Fuggedaboutit</p>	
<p>wherever possible.</p> <p>I am extremely opposed to option 3b's elimination of the connection between Farewell and Third St. at Vanzandt. That connection helps relieve pressure through the southern portion of The Point, and traffic through the roundabout at peak times for Naval Station Newport's main gate and gate 2. I'm also not a fan of making Farewell one way. Why do that? I see no benefit.</p> <p>In whatever plan is selected I am in favor of traffic flowing well, but not at high speeds. Areas optimized only for speed of cars and trucks is uncharming, often unsafe for bicyclists and pedestrians, and generally unpleasant. I strongly recommend reviewing Dan Burden's guidelines for walkability. If there is true interest in revitalizing the north end, optimizing purely for cars is not the way. We need to optimize for multiple modes of transport, with special attention to NOT having the motorized vehicles absolutely dominant.</p> <p>Also, getting rid of the raised ramp to nowhere seems like a great idea. Bringing things back to ground level and reducing the freeway and industrial lot vibe of that area would seem to bring things back to human scale, which would make the area more attractive to nicer types of development.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>	Bike paths
<p>continuous conduit could not be better suited for a present and future space dedicated to pedestrian, bicycle, and "tourist rail" interests. I'm sure that many cities and towns across the nation could only dream of already existing space such as this and it's potential. For us to casually consider using even part of this space for a bridge exit traffic solution would be a travesty of urban planning. Using the easiest and possibly cheapest answer for Pell Bridge Approach upgrades now will, sadly, squander a "once in a city's lifetime " priceless opportunity."</p>	
<p>No - only I wonder if this will now provide an opportunity to allow bikes to cross the Pell Bridge as well.</p>	
<p>Yes,comments;We should have a exit Ramp to merge down by the doggy park and dinner Theater an come out onto the rotary .</p>	
<p>I do understand that the bridge realignment will increase safety on the bridge for all. I support the increased safety and am glad for that focus. However, I am deeply troubled that many of the options presented (I have attended 3 public forums) will increase risk and decrease safety in Newport's oldest neighborhood. The Point is a geographically small neighborhood with 3 narrow main streets, 2 one way 1 both way. Houses are very close to each other, in some cases only feet apart. Most residents walk rather that drive through the neighborhood. The idea that a plan could be adopted that would purposely increase traffic in this small, congested neighborhood is beyond comprehension. To imagine massive amounts of autos hoping to find a short cut in and out of the city being directed into these 3 streets is to imagine the decline and possible destruction of one of the oldest neighborhoods in the United States. Accessing this neighborhood is not a viable option to support bridge safety, in fact it is a despicable way to solve one problem, create another, and then walk away saying "not my problem".</p>	The Point

Responses	Tags
<p>Alternatives 3a, 3b, and 3c as well as Alternative 4a and 4b will increase traffic northbound on Third Street and South bound on Second Street through small historic neighborhoods. There should not be any access to bridge on or off ramps on Third St south of Admiral Kalbfus Blvd other than bike traffic. No busses to or from the Park and Ride should be allowed on Third Street. Buses are already too large, too noisy and too frequent for the narrow streets and densely populated neighborhood.</p>	Third St.
<p>Yes</p>	
<p>Yes, I would like to understand how these proposals will affect the density of traffic on Third St, particularly in the Point area. As I look at several of these proposals, there seems that there will be a substantial vehicular increase in what we who live on the street currently call I-3.</p>	Third St.
<p>Yes. Alternative 1 seems to be the obvious choice because it requires the least amount of new construction. So, I will limit my comments to that alternative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I do not think that the Admiral Kalbfus/Malbone interchange needs to be "signalized", the current layout allows for safe traffic flow of *vehicles*. Resources would be better spent on adding a pedestrian crosswalk, with press-on-demand signal lights. Additionally, a high-curb sidewalk is badly needed on the northern 1/4 mile of Malbone to avoid injuries - there is frequent pedestrian traffic there.</li> <li>- The "Park and ride" is a great idea. The shuttle service will have to be frequent though, in order to encourage usage. Having this parking be close to the train tracks is crucial so that, if it turns out to be popular, there can be consideration of a short, perhaps open air, seasonal rail line (on the order of Loon ski resort). This will help to further reduce road traffic. If rental scooters/bikes are going to be available there, consideration should be given to a "bike path" along the train tracks.</li> <li>- There is a large unused portion of 138 eastbound that is currently used for construction storage or something. This would be a great location for "special event" parking with shuttle connection service. This is almost no cost.</li> </ul>	
<p>Given that one of the objectives of the project is to increase pedestrian and bicycle access in Newport - I am surprised and concerned as a resident of Van Zandt Ave to see that access to the Point may be eliminated under proposal 3B. I strongly support the objectives of the overall project and welcome a more efficient traffic pattern and management for the Pell Bridge. I sincerely hope it doesn't come at the detriment to the residents of Van Zandt Ave.</p>	The Point
<p>I "vote" for Alternative #1 for the reconstruction of the Pell Bridge approaches.</p>	
<p>I prefer alternative 4b or 4a. These appear to have a more simple approach to traffic flow.</p>	
<p>1. Third Street is already overburdened; do not add any connectors between it and any other roadways. 2. Roundabouts, not signaled intersections, are the only rational option. 3. Multiple parking areas should be created along the rail right-of-way; the goal is to capture as many cars as possible before they come into town. 4. The rail corridor must be reserved for future non-automotive options. 5. The Farewell exit ramp should be reserved for transit vehicles only.</p>	Third St.
<p>The great cities of the world have bridges that are accessible to pedestrians and bicycles. Examples include the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges in New York City. Paris. Venice. Stockholm. Even Portsmouth has the walkway on the Sakonnet River Bridge. So why can't Newport join this illustrious company? The old excuse about the expansion gratings bring top wide is insufficient as an unattached surface could simply sit atop them without impeding or the free movement of the gratings. Like the steel plates universally used to cover construction holes in roads everywhere. I want the Newport Bridge to be crossable by pedestrians and bikes. Otherwise we are not that great a city.</p>	Bikeway on bridge
<p>Will it include bike lanes?</p>	Bike lanes
<p>I like 3B!</p>	
<p>I submitted comments earlier but missed the connection on Alternative 3A that I questioned.</p>	
<p>In review of the data available on • www.pellbridge-ea.com it is unclear of the traffic improvements/impacts associated with each alternative. There are existing volumes provided but it is unclear when those volumes were taken and what the peak hours are. Were Saturday peak hours determined? What do the traffic volume projections look like and how does the potential for additional development adjacent to an already busy area impact the future traffic. All of the Alternative 4's do not appear like they will improve traffic in the least bit they just provide a lot more area for it to queue. Has consideration been given to directing downtown Newport traffic under the VanZant RR bridge and abandoning RR if required. In each of the options it appears that a majority of the traffic is being directed away from downtown Newport rather than to it.</p>	
<p>When Re-configuring the exit lanes off the Pell Bridge. We should have in the final plans a Ramp that runs down through the road that now has U-haul and the dinner Theater and comes out onto the Rotary. That would put the run off "Traffic" in a much safer spot to maneuver around. ', Dale R. Clark/Newport, R.I. # 401-308-2501</p>	
<p>Yes, where can I find images and conceptual plans for the six alternatives? I was unable to attend the workshop.</p>	
<p>3a seems to provide the best access in and out of the harbor area. Alternative 1 would also be acceptable.</p>	

Responses	Tags
<p>We are long term and year-round residents of the Point and would like to offer our support for either Proposal #1 or #2.</p> <p>Our concern about both proposals #3 and #4 is that the planned access roads to upper Third Street at Dyer St (and elsewhere) will either intentionally or inadvertently funnel traffic on peak (summer) days away from the main Farewell Street entrance road to the town and into/through the Point section. This would create dangerous traffic volume in the neighborhood for pedestrians, cyclists and other drivers as these streets are narrow, heavily parked, not generally not intended to handle anything more than local traffic. In addition, we are particularly concerned about Proposal 3b, which would also close vehicular traffic over the Van Zant bridge. This bridge provides vital access to point residents to Broadway - including the Newport hospital. A couple of years ago we needed to get to the emergency room at the hospital and did so quickly and directly via Van Zant. It would be dangerous and very unfortunate if this proposal were chosen as all residents of the point (including those in the northern end) would be forced to take a longer and more circuitous route via the southern exits.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>	The Point
<p>I live on Summer St in Newport. As a resident I support Alternative 3A and have the following comments. 1) the volume of bridge traffic on Summer St/Van Zandt Ave has increased noticeably. This is in part due to the online navigation systems that direct drivers to the shortest routes through neighborhoods and bypassing main thoroughfares established to handle through traffic. (Try google map directions from Jamestown RI to St. Michaels Country Day School in Newport for an example). Alternative 3A effectively overcomes this issue by keeping through traffic on main roads. 2) I drive frequently from my house to The Point via the Van Zandt Ave bridge. Please do not eliminate Westbound traffic on Van Zandt to Third St. New roads should not divide and separate neighborhoods. We have seen the effects of this (Rte 93 in Boston, America's Cup Ave in Newport) and closing the Westbound access does exactly that. I suggest eliminating the left turn on to Van Zandt as you drive North on Farewell. Most of those drivers are heading to the Navy Base (gate 1 or the Naval Health Clinic) and will be able to use Dyer St for that purpose. With 3A there are fewer cars exiting the Bridge and turning East on to Van Zandt, so the delay for Northbound drivers to accommodate the left turn arrow can be eliminated or reduced. 3) Traffic headed North to Middletown and Portsmouth should be encouraged to use JT Connell Highway with a direct route, and not Admiral Kalbfus Road. Admiral Kalbfus is residential, JT Connell is commercial so the alignment and links should favor connections to JTConnell. Alternatives 4 do not do this, and 3 does, but still accommodates the needs of Bridge users going west towards the Aquidneck Corporate Park. 4) I have serious concerns about relocation of the Waste Management trash transfer facility and the Tradesmen Center. Nobody will want the trash transfer facility relocated to their neighborhood., so leave it there. The Tradesmen Center is already an economic center of activity, what is the point of eliminating it to create new redevelopment, which could have environmental issues? I see Alternatives 3 as better than 4 on this. 5) lastly, I would like to see separate bike routes versus shared routes on streets. Perhaps the southbound lane on Farewell that is eliminated in 3A could be a separate bike path? This would need further refinement but the potential is there. Thank you.</p>	
<p>Please give tremendous considerations to GPS and what it will do to routing of traffic. This issue affects traffic flows and needs to be factored into your calculations. There is also no discretion with it's function for what type of vehicle it is sending on our small, historic streets. . . . it treats SmartCars the same as 55 foot tractor trailers.</p>	GPS
<p>Yes. Is this the only question on the survey? Are you looking for my questions/comments here, or just that I have some and will be contacted? Its not clear.</p> <p>Living in immediate neighborhood off bridge ramp, I believe it is critical that not being cut off from the Point area is critical. Walkability (safely!) is very very important in this town. Some options include a light rail (trolley?) for moving tourists into town from a remote parking lot - I would be concerned if that is economically viable. Currently, Hall Ave is used as a cut through from bridge to hospital (too many cars and higher speeds than a small neighborhood street should have), please factor that in.</p>	The Point
<p>I hope this project will go smoothly and not wind up being a catastrophic traffic jam like so many other projects in Rhode Island.</p>	
<p>Yes but I would like to see the ideas first</p>	
<p>If there's a "shuttle" to visitor center,where are the visitors going to park, possibly in J.town?</p>	Shuttle
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Getting around bike is extremely difficult</li> <li>- "I drive a motor scooter and it is nearly impossible to get around on Connell. I once tried to go down Admiral and it was a terrible experience, I was thinking I am going to get killed."</li> <li>- "My main concern is the roads and the kids, I have seen way too many get killed by drivers."</li> <li>- "Once upon a time streets were made for people and horses, now it just seems to be made for cars."</li> <li>- Protective barrier that allows a physical protection between the vehicles and the bikers/walkers</li> <li>- "In Portland OR, they have areas like Connell highway and they built enclosed bridges above the roads so people can bike and walk on top while drivers drive underneath."</li> <li>- "The roads are so uneven, how can walkers/bikers even get around safe?"</li> <li>- "Double-layer" bridge, that allows people to walk and and ride bikes while feeling safe and secure.</li> <li>- We don't want Connell to end up without sidewalks like East Main Road.</li> <li>- What is DOT's definition of a 'shared use path?'"</li> <li>- RIDOT needs to actually think about how people are going to cross and place it on these boards.</li> <li>- "A pedestrian bridge would be awesome there"</li> </ul>	Peestrians & Bikes



Responses	Tags
<p>We really believe that an expansion of the parking garage needs to happen. On Plan alternative 2 we feel that an expansion behind the Newport Storm Brewery that has a road that never was finished.</p> <p>An overpass for pedestrians and bikers, an over pass by Festival Fields for Pedestrians and biker</p> <p>Shuttle bus instead the train</p> <p>redirect traffic with good visible signs diverting traffic from Admiral Kalbfus road</p> <p>Connell hwy need to have smoother roads to take travelers</p> <p>What about speed bumps to help slow traffic?</p> <p>WhAT ABOUT BUMP OUTS ON ADMIRAL KALBFUS</p> <p>We would like to see a more detailed path and how its going to look like as the design</p> <p>We know that they all have the shuttles, but what about adding a bus shuttle or use the rails to commute more types of motorized vehicles</p> <p>plenty of crosswalks ar needed</p> <p>WHat about a sunken road by festival fields?</p> <p>What is the guaranteed that the sidewalks will be sanded or salted</p> <p>Who will be the owner taking care of this road? We know is state owned, but immediately, who will do the up keep?</p> <p>If it's connecting 138 and 114, isn't it a state hwy?</p> <p>Multi use roads for all users</p> <p>SHared use paths that has to have speed restrictions for all users</p> <p>Metal barriers along to convert sidewalks into share used or multi use paths</p> <p>The current sidewalks are unsafe now as it is for pedestrians</p> <p>No crosswalks around the rotary</p> <p>Concerns for pedestrians to cross safely</p> <p>How is the the tighter circle help reduce the speed</p> <p>The path from Connell HWY for pedestrians to cross to get to the shuttle safely</p> <p>A pedestrian bridge should be considered</p> <p>A roundabout will never be save</p>	<p>Bikes, pedestrians, shuttle</p>
<p>We don't want JT Connell Highway to end up without sidewalks.</p> <p>We want Admiral Kalbfus to be less busy--less of a dangerous intersection.</p>	<p>Pedestrians</p>

Responses	Tags
<p>A resident that drive a handicap-scooter and it is not safe to get around the rotary  How do you connect north end residents with the rest of the city  Another residents that is handicap need to make sure the city sidewalk is safe for wheel chairs  Elderly can not walk safely to cross to the mall  The traffic to the navy gate one is backed up in the am and pm  No traffic light on the four corners on Girard and Admiral Kalbus Road  Share use road must include cars, bikes and handicap scooters  Bikes have been using the sidewalks to because vehicles do not stop for bikes  railing to keep bikers safe and keep them safe</p> <p>Share use roads must keep all users safe as they use the roads  The current plans are not connecting the north end residents to the downtown Newport  Maybe develop a strip made of rubber to make a barrier to keep individual users safe from each other  What ever happened to the the exiting road the was supposed to originally end into Middletown?  We are in favor of the #4 concept  When fixing the road the patch work here in and there in not the best material  How do we make sure that once you fix your roads that the city follows through in finishing the connecting streets  What about the lefted overpass for bike path and walks to avoid going into the traffic?  Develop a different right of way for pedestrians and bikes to get through safely.  we don't want connell hwy to end up without sidewalks  cross to the elementary school through connell hwy is too dangerous</p>	
<p>1) Where are the bicycle/pedestrian accommodations/infrastructure? Are they all adjacent to the road? What other designs/locations are being considered?</p> <p>2) How does this plan improve/reduce/maintain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- connectivity of north end with the rest of the city?</li> <li>- access to north end businesses by people walking, biking or driving?</li> <li>- MY access to priority destinations - as a North Side resident? as a Point resident?</li> <li>- multiple safe/calm routes in and out of our neighborhoods?</li> <li>- vehicle traffic through our neighborhoods?</li> <li>- air quality in our neighborhoods?</li> <li>- storm water runoff?</li> <li>- safe passage for people biking or walking?</li> <li>- transit access?</li> </ul> <p>3) With this design, how do I get from my home (North Side, Point, and other) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stop &amp; Shop, Walmart</li> <li>- Storer Park</li> <li>- the Navy Base</li> <li>- CCRI</li> <li>- Miantonomi Prk</li> <li>- Pell School</li> <li>- Thompson Middle School</li> </ul>	Pedestrians
Testing email	
Test	

Responses	Tags
<p>My comments have to do with an eye to the future and the dispersing of traffic in the direction of their destination. Because I consider this project a very important project with lasting consequences I would ask that you do not discard these ideas until you have read all of my comments. Considering day traffic to the beach (which constitutes the bulk of the traffic) it is not necessary to put the people/cars into stop and go traffic thru America's Cup Blvd. (something that can add 45 minutes of unnecessary time to reach the beaches).</p> <p>I would retain ALTERNATIVE 1  I would add the following additions:  Just before the current off ramp I can see a bifurcation: the first road on the left going behind the shopping ctr &amp; storage to a rotary that would include J.T. Connell Highway, Coddington Highway and Maple Ave.  At that bifurcation just before the off ramp at Casino there would be a second road going directly between The Best Western Motel and the apartment complex across Girard Ave. directly into the hillside (underground) of Miantonomi Park. Even though it is a memorial park one needs only to look at this same efficiency approach was done in Boston (Boston Common Garage)...the oldest park/common in the US with more than significant historical value...absolutely NOTHING WAS DISTURBED ON THE SURFACE OF THE PARK.  The beach traffic could park in the underground &amp; be shuttled to either First, Second or Third Beaches during the season. The shuttle busses would have easy access and avoid traffic with direct routes as follows:  Easton's Beach: Miantonomi Parking Girard Ave, to Malbone Road to Bliss Rd. to Eustis Ave. to Easton's Beach.  Second Beach: Miantonomi Road to Green End Rd. to Paradise Rd.  Third Beach: Miantonomi Road to Green End R. to Third Beach Rd</p> <p>The 200 car parking garage is OK, but because of the narrow roads the location presents problem of entry and exit...I think better location would be immediately on Halsey St. Start with a car park for 200 and it has space to be increased to car park for 800. Shuttles have quick access to Newport downtown. I strongly discourage sending traffic into downtown Newport when their destination is the beaches.</p>	
Yes	
4B looks like the best option	
<p>For designs 1 &amp; 2 , the Park &amp; Ride would be large, ugly and intrusive as an entrance into Newport. Not a good first impression to Newport.</p> <p>All the Design 3 (A,B &amp;C) are totally unacceptable as they materially impact the quality of life for the Point Section:</p> <p>Design 3A, completely devalues 3rd Street properties by using the rail tracks as one way into town with noise, trucks and pollution for the entire neighborhood. Although some sort of barrier wall was spoken about, I am sure it would be ugly and intrusive. The entire concept is completely incongruous with an historical neighborhood.</p> <p>Design 3C create gross inconvenience for residents of the Point Section wishing to leave their neighborhood. With no access to Van Zandt going East, residents in the Northern part of the neighborhood would have to head South on Second Street to cross over at Elm or Poplar Streets thus increasing traffic and pollution on all these streets. Furthermore, a safety issue is created by blocking off Van Zandt as access to Newport Hospital would be impeded adding valuable time to emergency calls or getting people to medical care in a timely fashion. In terms of Van Zandt West being a right turn only, this a complete inconvenience for Point residents it creates the question of "How do I get home now?" Across Vicksburg, West on Warner then across Farewell, this is ridiculous.</p> <p>Design 3C, creates a confusing and ugly ramp system with possible back-ups at Dyer Street. It does though mask the Park &amp; Ride with the ramp system.</p> <p>Designs 4A &amp; 4B, are the best alternatives as they do not intrude on the Point section in any way, they mask the Park &amp; Ride with the ramp system and especially 4B provides more local road access. Either one of these designs is the best for all involved and affected by this effort. Thank you</p>	

Responses	Tags
<p>Impact upon the existing 'Dog Park' located south of 105 JT Connell Highway; is consideration given to protecting this facility or making a suitable alternative available? All 'improvements' related to the roadway appear to impinge on the parks current location; assurances are needed for continued availability of this facility!!!</p>	Dog park
<p>My concern is that all of these plans, to varying degrees, will unequivocally push significant additional traffic through the small, quiet streets of The Point, both heading into and out of Newport, whether this is the intended result or not.</p> <p>It is incomprehensible to me that part of the \$40 million dollar solution/improvement, is to divert portions of the bridge traffic, and all traffic, into a tiny, historically intact, residential neighborhood. If it is not a specific diversion of traffic, it is clear this will be an outcome, so this is knowingly being done.</p> <p>Specifically, my concerns are the added access roads onto 3rd Street and the updated intersection at the end of 3rd Street by the Navy Base, and how these will turn 3rd Street and the rest of the Point into heavily traveled access roads into and out of City.</p> <p>My Comments &amp; Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Please do not add access roads onto 3rd Street and please do not redo the intersection at the end of 3rd Street by the Navy Base such that it encourages traffic flow down 3rd Street (either way, to or from the Navy Base).</li> <li>•As for connectivity, 3rd Street is only approximately 1 mile long as is and there are already 5 ways to access it (both ends, Elm, Poplar and Van Zandt). Unless there is a specific intent of trying to push Bridge traffic and additional traffic to 3rd Street, then there does not seem to be a reason from a connectivity standpoint that there needs to be even additional roads into 3rd Street.</li> <li>•Please use "No-Entry" and "One-Way" signs to keep traffic out of the Neighborhood. I would much rather be personally inconvenienced getting to and from my house, than have 3rd Street turn into a heavily trafficked road</li> <li>•Why not re-open the Connell highway access to the Navy Base instead of further building up the Navy Base entrance also that leads into a residential neighborhood?</li> <li>•Why is a park &amp; rail system not more significantly at the forefront of this project when traffic headed into in to downtown Newport is already too much? With multiple new hotels soon to be built in downtown Newport, among countless other things, this is only certain to worsen.</li> </ul> <p>I choose Alternative # 2, as the best of these options.</p> <p>I would hope this is used as a starting point, working to minimize the impact on the Point, businesses, and focus on a park and rail system from the get go that holds a significant number of cars. 200 isn't a blip on the raider on Newport summer weekend.</p> <p>Thank you for accepting public comments. I sincerely hope you will heed the concerns of this neighborhood into your decision-making process.</p>	Third St.
<p>After reviewing all of the plans, it appears that option one will be the safest and most logical construction plan if one has to be chosen. Currently there is nothing wrong with how the road works. That said, I desperately urge the city and ea to heed the words of Warwick's police chief just the other week where he came out and said the rotaries were not a good idea in the city. They have made traffic and accidents worse. As a former resident of Warwick, and someone who helps manage a business in Warwick I can attest the roataries have driven business out of the downtown area, people cannot figure out how to get from point a to point b, and petrified of the roataries because drivers do NOT understand how to use them. Don't be stupid like Warwick.</p>	
<p>I drive to Newport 5 days a week and although initially I thought why change something that already works I did review the proposals. Of the proposed alternatives alternative 1 appears to be the most functional. It appears that this would improve the interchanges with the Newport Bridge hopefully improving the merging onto and off of the bridge. This alternative also does not introduce additional rotaries that increase traffic accidents. I used to live in Warwick and the rotaries that the city added increased traffic and increased traffic accidents. It is a reason that many people no longer drive to or through Warwick.</p> <p>Although alternative 1 does not provide the city the largest area land to sell, there are some improvements to accessibility of the bridge and to Newport and Middletown this seems to be the best option.</p>	
<p>I like the idea of alternative 2 the best. It still provides access on and off the bridge at multiple points, but seems to simplify it. I also like that it looks cleaner and frees up space for something other than roadways.</p>	

Responses	Tags
<p>In reviewing the 4 proposals listed- I am in favor of proposal 2 as it strikes a balance between ease of access while freeing up a large amount of new land for potential development. I have reservations about the alternate proposals for different reasons on each.</p> <p>Proposal 1 has too little new land area freed up for the amount of work being done and is too similar to the existing configuration.</p> <p>Proposal 3A and 3B have huge impacts on the flow around the point and Van Zandt. They are too heavily skewed toward pushing vehicles into town. Yes there are days when traffic is heavy. The year-round residents are penalized all year in the service of handling the extreme traffic on half a dozen summer weekends.</p> <p>3C is harder to assess- it would appear that there is great deal of land area but traffic possibly being canalized into too few options-</p> <p>Proposal 4 provides the greatest amount of new area but in appearance looks like it penalizes traffic heading into town too much with a complex turn. I prefer a better balance between flow and new space. Proposal 4 is listed as containing new local streets for connectivity. I am strongly in favor of this in any of the proposals as it prevents the new land being gobbled by a single mega-project. I prefer a traditional city of many smaller structures organically building a new neighborhood or industrial area.</p>	
<p>I would think having a new parking area as indicated in Alternative 1&amp;2 would be a nightmare of a congestion issue for local traffic trying to just get home. Alternative 4 seems worse, for different reasons. Reworking Option 3 would seem the best (and perhaps cheapest/fastest-to-construct alternative). You should consider a few tweaks, however, as two feeder roads going into America's Cup Avenue isn't going to go well. Allow Farewell to still feed as it does now, in addition to the proposed feed.</p>	
<p>As a daily commuter to Newport via the downtown area, I am painfully aware that the congestion is caused by the Van Zandt intersection. Alternative 3A is the only option that appears to significantly benefit commuters to the downtown area. 3B would help as well and seemed like it could be implemented immediately with signage and enforcement. Most of the other options appear to add time to a daily commute. Please don't spend millions of dollars and make my commute worse! Please address the problem at Van Zandt. Sending commuters like me through a series of roundabouts only to get back to Van Zandt is a horrible idea.</p>	
<p>As a resident of the Point, living on Second Street, we object to any proposals that would increase traffic in the Point. Therefore we oppose Alternative 3 and 4 and could only support Alternatives 1 or 2</p>	The Point
<p>Like alternative 2</p>	
<p>This process of picking an option must be delayed until further traffic studies can be conducted.</p> <p>While at the presentation of plans at the Newport city hall, I spoke to a woman involved in the traffic studies. When I asked her why a study had not been done at 3rd st and VanZandt corner she said that that was too far out of the area to be done at this time. That once a plan was picked a study might be done there.</p> <p>You must study the traffic at that intersection or you simply DO NOT have a full picture of the daily routines and traffic patterns in the area. That corner will be one of the most traveled corners. As well as Van Zandt at second.</p> <p>Further.</p> <p>Any effort to increase movement of traffic off the bridge quicker only moves the traffic into residential areas. Newport is not setup for the traffic it currently has.</p> <p>Though a 200 car park and ride MAY help. It doesn't not look far enough into the future. If the state of RI and Newport wishes to continue to be a tourist destination, it should look at free parking (read 1000 cars) and a non stop shuttle service loop to all the popular areas. Much like ski towns in the west.</p> <p>Lastly. The 200 person park and ride on third st directly adjacent a low income housing apartment complex is asking for trouble. Litter and petty crime will eventually deter people from using the lot as it is intended. The burden will fall to Newport in order to maintain it and police to patrol it. And how does a Parking lot fit in with the potential High Value real estate should the Navy Hospital open up to development?</p> <p>Thank you.</p>	Traffic Study
<p>I am not in favor of disconnecting access on Van Zandt from Farewell to Third St. I use that route to bike to Hunter field. Either 4A or 3C seem like good solutions to me.</p>	
<p>I own and reside at #34 Admiral Kalbfus Road. I find nothing that addresses the traffic impact East of Malbone Road. Will there be a traffic study? Will there be signage directing vehicles heading North to use Connell/Coddington Highways? What traffic calming techniques are contemplated to mitigate traffic impact East of Malbone Road?</p>	Traffic Study
<p>I believe that the Farewell Van Zandt intersection should have a pedestrian bridge installed for safety reasons.. It is a nightmare to cross there now.. You should widen the northeast corner of Van Zandt and Farewell so there is room for cars turning right off of Van Zandt onto Farewell north to make the turn without traffic backing up at light.. Pedestrian safety is a big concern here.. I live 2 blocks away and it is difficult to walk across Farewell and Van Zandt to get to Point section and the parks and bay.. It is Real bad on a Bicycle.. You are taking your life in your hand to cross.... Thank you..</p>	Pedestrians

Responses	Tags
We have about approx. four tractor trailers and five 26k GVW trucks coming and going seven days per week. Can I assume that our truck traffic will continue to have access. What delays due to this work should I expect?	
<p>For "storing" the traffic backup on the Pell Bridge approaching Newport I prefer the loop concept in Alternative #2. There will always be some backup in the summer months. Putting it on the loop is a simple solution that gets it entirely off neighboring streets.</p> <p>The bicycle/pedestrian path along the RR tracks is dear to the hearts of many Newporters. PLEASE do not mess it up with a vehicular roadway (also a very bad solution to the traffic backup storage). I do like the idea of a train shuttle from parking area. I love trains and a really cute version with appropriate sound effects would encourage people to park and ride. Also, making the parking area attractive would be a big help - food trucks? Well-designed restrooms? Benches for waiting? Water fountains?YES!!</p> <p>Finally, I do not see how any of the alternatives improve the situation we have now with the North End being separate from the rest of Newport. I realize that future development may address this problem but hope you will take a look at adding more sidewalks and bike access from the heart of the North End, east of Miantanomi Park.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>	Pedestrians/ Bike
Bike and pedestrian access. Good, safe, well thought out bike and pedestrian access. Even if it will not link to anything right now it will make it easier for future projects to build off of and help improve RI's overall bike infrastructure.	Pedestrians/Bik
Yes, please keep traffic out of our historical neighborhood.I live in the Point neighborhood and I love the charm of it. Putting traffic down the train tracks would cause noise and pollution too close to our houses.	The Point
Yes	
Yes	
Since the major issue is cars why not construct parking facilites to complement current ones and create a flow which maximizes their use.	
<p>I prefer Alternative two. It seems to have better flow of traffic with fewer stops.</p> <p>I am concerned about how people who park will be transported downtown. Is this train or bus? I Am completely opposed to buses running next to bike and pedestrian path. Motorized vehicles defeat the whole purpose of a pleasant path to town!</p>	
Yes	
<p>I appreciate the meeting set for the Point neighborhood last week at St Johns. It was very helpful and many of our questions were answered. There are several concerns I would like to point out as I reviewed the drawings once again.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Development of the Utility road and Dyers Gate road accessing 3rd street across from the former Navy Hospital- the roads in the Point neighborhood are already over used with no ability to handle large vehicles (inclusive of SUVs). The road is narrow as it is as it enters the Point neighborhood and large vehicles literally get stuck trying to turn onto the streets. Washington Street is predominantly a 2 way street now where cars must accommodate each other while passing in large vehicles. Using these roads as access to downtown, which the new access will invite, is unthinkable given the fact that the roads predate the car and were never meant to handle the traffic even to those of us living there.</li> <li>2. left hand turn in design 4- a backup from the bridge seems significant where vehicles are to cross over west bound bridge traffic to access downtown. It appears to be a light. My concern is that the backup onto the bridge will be as bad as it is now. The right hand exit would, mercifully, be eliminated to Farewell Ave. but the left lane would come to a complete stop to accommodate the traffic crossing over west bound traffic to access downtown?</li> <li>3. Light rail from designated parking area- concept seems workable from the allocated parking lot area. It does NOT work when adding the concept of joining it with both a pedestrian path AND bike path. The idea of joining the light rail and Americas cup into one large thoroughfare would defeat the purpose of introducing you to the feel of a small colonial village. The width of the road required seems to have the appearance of a six lane highway. Joining pedestrians and bikes to the mix just seems dangerous. One of our current problems is that many people are sight seeing while they drive and cannot possibly dedicate the attention required to the road for pedestrians and bikers. Many cyclists have been hit while riding in a designated "share" lane, my son included. Newport needs a dedicated hike &amp; bike path with dedicated and protected lanes.</li> <li>4. We want to be ensured that homeowners on the North End of Point have the ability to enter and exit the Point on Van Zandt avenue. Some plans restrict that. The light remaining green on Farewell for long periods of time to accommodate the new traffic pattern also complicates access to our homes.</li> <li>5. Finally, a concern about GPS- how can the online map service be brought current with the eventual development of the Pell Bridge realignment? Your concept of guiding drivers with signage is somewhat naive as most drivers will defer to the instructions provided by their GPS. I see this as a problem waiting to happen (for all designs).</li> </ol>	GPS, The Poin

Responses	Tags
Yes, please can we put a bike path on that bridge? Can put a sky walk hanging off as a bike path so bikers can enjoy and feel safe across the bridge. I myself drove a bike over that bridge and wouldn't do it again in these conditions. Much easier to get more people to get off and on the island, especially bikers that want to discover more of beautiful Bristol.	Bike paths
<p>As a resident of the Point Neighborhood, I am disappointed to see that Option 3A (the old "lets put a road where the train tracks are" idea) is still being considered.</p> <p>This bad idea has been around a long time. That it is still being considered over greener, less car-based alternatives like the rail shuttle with a bike and pedestrian path makes it feel like all the talk of smarter alternatives is just a smoke screen so the DOT can say, "We looked at these alternatives before we went a road down the tracks, but we went with the road because the more ambitious plans cost more and are harder to get approved, and this got us a bunch of money to spread around in the shortest time while the gettin' is good".</p> <p>Newport's downtown is already permanently disfigured by the decision from the 1960's to divorce the town from its waterfront with a 4-lane road and to move or demolish historic buildings in the process to "free up space" so that architectural gems like the Brick Market and the Newport Harbor Hotel could be built in their place.</p> <p>(Sure, the town lost a huge part of its historic identity, but hey, developers got paid. Hopefully, we remember and learn from that.)</p> <p>Now, 50 years after that mistake, Option 3A threatens to route traffic heading downtown through The Point: A quiet, historic neighborhood that, by accident, design, or the political clout of JT Connell managed to survive the last round of "major improvements" mostly intact.</p> <p>It is apparent that paving the railroad right of way would help shift the summer Pell Bridge backups onto surface streets. I guess from the DOT's point of view, that is safer than the current situation, but this does nothing to change the ultimate cause of that backup -- namely, that the traffic has nowhere to go or park once America's Cup backs up.</p> <p>So with Option 3A, in addition to the noise and pollution when traffic is moving 9 months out of the year, The Point would get to experience the joy of hosting traffic jams with all of the attendant noise and pollution of stuck vehicles every summer.</p> <p>Prove me wrong: Don't go with the cheapest, least ambitious plan that only shifts the problem of bridge traffic to a historic, residential neighborhood.</p> <p>Be smart: Make it more attractive to park outside of downtown than it is to drive there. Show people a revitalized North End neighborhood that will need the exposure to be successful.</p> <p>The North End needs that attention to realize its potential, whereas the Point doesn't need or want it at all. We want to be left alone in our beautiful, quiet neighborhood, and the negative impact on our lives and property values guarantees that there will be a fight if the DOT decides to go with Option 3A, so please, save all of us the trouble, and show that government is actually capable of realizing one of the more ambitious, smarter plans that will give the North End the chance it needs thrive.</p>	The Point
Yes	
The best alternative is a variation on #2. Alternatives 3-4 do not address all the issues well	
Include bike lanes, bike shoulders and easy bike crossings in the design, please.	Bike lanes
Yes	
Yes. One of my concerns is related to access to the Point from Van Zandt Ave. Many residents from neighboring streets use Van Zandt to access the pier, waterfront and numerous parks in the area. Please preserve this access.	The Point
Please please make sure there is a bike lane, well marked	Bike lanes
I am concerned my daily commute onto the island will be longer. I am concerned there is no real plan to connect downtown newport to the East Bay bike path and make the island truly bike friendly.	Bike lanes
Yes, my house is in the Point, it abuts the railroad tracks. I am very concerned about this project and how it will effect my house. Were there any decisions made at the Aug 13th meeting? Thanks	The Point
Please ensure pedestrians and bicyclists are adequately addressed in the options. We need to options for people to get out of their cars.	pedestrians/Bik

Responses	Tags
<p>Please ensure that bike and pedestrian lanes are considered at the front and during the entire planning process. I've attended two planning sessions on the bridge ramp realignment and alternative transportation are mere mentions but obscurely represented in any renderings. The inclusion of bike and pedestrian lanes should be a mainstay to ensure connection to the East Bay Bike Trail, Blackstone Blvd. and eventually the Blackstone Valley trail. This provides safety and economic boost when people feel they can ride continual in a safe environment.</p>	<p>pedestrians/Bik</p>
<p>yes</p>	
<p>Yes. Approaches 3 (all) and 4 are highly unacceptable as they will cause safety and environmental issues for The Point area of Newport. Alternative 2 has merit. Please do not push Bridge issues into Newport issues as a result of counterproductive solutions.</p>	
<p>I attended the workshop at Guild Hall in The Point last night. It doesn't appear as though RIDOT is taking into consideration traffic, safety and pollution issues this options 3&amp;4 particularly will cause the Point residents. This is the largest collection of pre-revolutionary homes in the US. The residents are multi-generation elderly to young families with children and everything in between and would put their quality of life and home values in jeopardy. Furthermore the streets in The Point that would be affected are either one-way or can only pass a vehicle in one direction at a time, such as, Washington, Poplar and Elm. These streets are already impassible at many points of the day, and closing off Van Zandt to the North will make it far worse. Lastly, your diagrams show the new light rail train going to the Gateway Center. It stops today at the faux train station at bridge. Do you plan to extend it? If so when the train is blocking bridge, Elm and Poplar, there will be no access to the Point streets. I am apposed adamantly to the alternatives 3 &amp; 4 as most all residents of the Point seem to be. I do thank Sky and Jody for attending the meeting, being open to the discussions and providing insight.</p>	
<p>Yes</p>	
<p>Fully understanding and appreciating the priority need to design a solution that will improve traffic safety on the bridge as well as improved traffic flow it is important that these points also be taken into careful consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Ingress and egress to and from The Point neighborhood via Van Zandt street must remain open and accessible to the point residents.</li> <li>B. Plans 3 A, B and C all would result in a significant increase of traffic through The Point creating both safety and quality of life issues for the point residents. These options as designed would negatively impact both safety and quality of life in The Point.</li> <li>C. All proposals include a parking lot to accommodate up to 200 vehicles. The lot size should be planned to allow for future expansion in subsequent years. Newport will continue to grow as will the need for this type of solution</li> <li>D. The rail system to transport people from the lots to the Gateway center is critically important. Without a highly efficient people moving system the lots will be useless.</li> <li>E. Plan 2 ( with some modification ) presents the most viable design to accomplish the two priorities as stated as well as assuring the least disruption to the historic point neighborhood</li> <li>F. Effort should be made to research Best Practice/Best Demonstrated solutions that have been designed for similar situations in the country. I am sure there is much to be learned from other cities experiences on what worked and what did not.</li> </ul> <p>I appreciate the efforts to inform and educate the neighborhood as well as the opportunity to provide this input.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Dick Desrochers</p>	



Responses	Tags
<p>I understand that RIDOT can't solve all the problems that I'm going to mention. There's a finite amount of space so you cannot invent places to put roads, the traffic is never ending, and drivers are trying to go to many places. In a way, I kind of think of this project is like trying to push an elephant through a straw.</p> <p>That said, my largest concern is the impact to the Point neighborhood. A big part of the problem in the Point is the lack of effort by the city to enforce existing traffic laws. BUT this project is part of the solution. There are too many ways that these options provide a means for traffic to drive through the Point, which means those alternative routes will be on apps and drivers of all kinds of vehicles will use them. I already told both Skye and Jodie about the 18-wheelers who drove across the Van Zandt bridge the other day, one of which made a painful turn to head north on 3rd St – these vehicles should never have been there but we have to remove it as an option or it will continue to happen.</p> <p>How can this be addressed? You may be able to do some of these things, and maybe you can't:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Find a way to keep this historic neighborhood out of the apps as an alternative route. The fact that it's presented to drivers is why there are 18-wheelers driving through the neighborhood. I imagine that this is a problem common to old neighborhoods all over the state, so learning how to connect with these people to remove these neighborhoods from the alternative route planning might be well worthwhile.</li> <li>•If state and local government cannot get the historic neighborhood de-listed from the apps, then the plans need to be constructed in such a way that either there's a physical barrier to through traffic such as bisecting 3rd St at Cypress so that trucks have no reason to try to go through the neighborhood, or the traffic flow needs to avoid presenting the neighborhood as an alternative route that will bring inappropriate vehicles in so that they will use those narrow one-way streets as a by-pass – that's where RIDOT comes in. One of my neighbors objects to that approach because she doesn't want to drive around, but I go to the base often and I'd be willing to go around if it means a safer area with less traffic.</li> </ul> <p>I applaud the gentleman who asked if you'd looked at the solution in Charleston. There's no reason to reinvent the wheel and there are historic cities elsewhere that have already been dealing with these issues. In the software world, I always maintained that plagiarism is an art form – why can't it be for these problems?</p>	The Point
Yes	
Yes	
Yes . I	
<p>I prefer option 1 or 2 because options 3 and 4 impact future railroad operation flexibility and sound levels. Options 3 and 4 call for installation of one or two new railroad grade crossings. These have the potential to add neighborhood sound impacts due to the required train horn soundings. Also, the presence of the new crossing(s) could negatively impact rail operations -- eliminating areas that trains could pause at without disrupting vehicle traffic at the new crossings. On a national level, the main safety focus for years has been to eliminate road crossings, not build new ones.</p> <p>Also, I believe this project should include the installation of a double ended siding to restore the ability to run locomotives around trains and stage train meets north of the depot area. The installation of the bikeway in the Point area, requiring the removal of the one of existing two tracks, eliminates the aforementioned rail operations flexibility. A new double ended siding in the project area would restore the existing flexibility.</p> <p>Drainage --- As most people know, drainage in the project area is very challenging due to the very flat gradient of the drainage structures and the high percentage of imperious surfaces in the project area. Of major concern to me is the frequent flooding that now occurs on the rail line in the area between Poplar St, and Van Zandt St. Currently numerous stub-end streets west of the rail line dump storm water directly down onto the rail line. The only ditch (very small()) is on the east side of the tracks. Storm water floods over the tracks to get to this undersized ditch. Major drainage work will need to be done in this area to keep the rail line and bikeway from regularly flooding.</p>	
Yes	

Responses	Tags
<p>As a resident of The Point and specifically a homeowner on 3rd Street, I am distraught over how these plans will impact traffic in the Point, specifically 3rd Street being used as a cut through and even more so as a planned increased roadway. Not just in it's final outcome, but during construction. The small, quaint neighborhood that is the Point, that residents paid a premium to buy into, is one of the most historically intact neighborhoods in America.</p> <p>My primary question is:</p> <p>What is being done to protect The Point from increased traffic and to preserve the historic integrity of the neighborhood?</p>	<p>The Point</p>
<p>I am a resident of the Point neighborhood, with a background in engineering. I have closely evaluated all of the proposals and while I understand that every plan, to include doing nothing, has impacts on resident and visitors, I assess that Alternative 3A will provide the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Using the existing railroad right-of-way and making Farewell St one way is the only alternative that will reduce congestion. Extending JT Connell Highway and opening Dyer St will facilitate movement of traffic to the Naval Base and West Main. While I understand that Alternative 3A may will bring traffic closer to the Point residents close to the railroad right-of-way, overall, it should reduce traffic within the Point and improve overall traffic conditions to and from the downtown area. Thanks for the opportunity to review and comment on the plans. Carl Tiska</p>	
<p>Could you please let me know where to go to see the different alternative and cast a vote for my preference?</p>	
<p>Reference Alternative 1 Assumptions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Entrance to bridge coming North on Connell remains: it's the fastest, most efficient way to reach the bridge from downtown NPT. It also provides quick exit from park&amp;ride and entrance to bridge/138 West.</li> <li>2. Van Zandt bridge remains and is refurbished. Connell highway is 3 lanes, center lane left-turn-only, in front of park&amp;ride to provide trolley return easier access and easier exit to bridge/138 West for patrons of park&amp;ride.</li> <li>3. Connell highway is 3 lanes wide, center lane left-turn-only, all the way to Coddington. It certainly appears that provisions were made for this sometime ago but it was not completed.</li> <li>4. Access to businesses North and South of the circle need to be more organized: currently many vehicles access businesses haphazardly driving off/on curbs to achieve access.</li> <li>5. Removal of direct access of businesses to and from the circle: this is a safety imperative.</li> </ol> <p>Recommendations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. As the most efficient way to relieve traffic back-up on the bridge, strongly recommend that after traffic completes the flyover to downtown NPT, provide a highway split at this point so that traffic can proceed South on Connell as alternate 1 shows but also traffic can proceed directly to downtown NPT along the RR track encountering the first traffic light at America's Cup (AC) and Gladys Carr Bolhouse (GCB).</li> <li>2. Make a smoother U-turn road transition for traffic turning right from AC to GCB to 3rd St. This U-turn is currently possible but street connections are very disjointed and road surface conditions are extremely poor. This improvement would better facilitate access to Elm and Poplar streets which would be no longer connected to AC.</li> </ol>	
<p>Having a traffic light at the corner of Malbone/Girard Avenues and Admiral Kalbfus Road will help with local access, but the traffic impact actually may be greater in the future. I'm raising the question of air quality and measurements of particulates, and whether those are part of the EA.</p> <p>Calling bike and pedestrian access to downtown Newport (or development in the footprint of the existing Pell Bridge ramps) a promotion of "environmental justice" via economic access is a shallow abstraction at best: access to what jobs, and against what metric/benchmark? And what about improved public transportation between the North End and the rest of the city? The project is meant to manage private transportation, while somehow persuading some tourists to park and take a bus or trolley into town. What about a bus/trolley route through the proposed "park-and-ride" that includes existing residents?</p> <p>Responding to the Environmental Assessment in its current form before August 24 is crucial. I am concerned that despite DOT's reassurances to the contrary, any comments received after August 24 will be collected, categorized, and reported as mandated "input" without any actual effect on design.</p>	

Responses	Tags
<p>Yes. I live on Third Street. I object to removing the ramp to downtown. I approve of 3A and 3B, but not 3C. I am also not a fan of ugly flyovers. A new roundabout and road resurfacing are positive aspects of the plan.</p>	
<p>The 'north end' of Third Street is quite dangerous for pedestrians due to vehicle volume and speed along with the lack of well-maintained sidewalks. (When I refer to the 'northern end' of Third Street, I am referring to the stretch north of the ramp and Cypress Street up to Training Station Road.)</p> <p>Due to the layout of the roads, the majority of pedestrians walk on the east side of Third Street (opposite side from the Navy Medical Clinic). However, there are not sidewalks along portions of the road and some sidewalks that are present are in disrepair. Therefore, lots of the pedestrians walk in the road. I live in this area on Third Street, so I notice the large number of people walking in the street every day (including during the winter when it's sleeting and snowing! So dangerous!).</p> <p>There is a larger sidewalk on the west side of the street (the side with the Navy Medical Clinic), but most pedestrians do not walk on this side of the road. This is because most pedestrians using the street are not visiting the medical clinic. Therefore, they do not need to cross. Plus, crossing is quite difficult during peak hours of the day (7am-7pm) when traffic can be quite heavy. Again, as a resident on this street, I can attest to this. I walk on the Navy Medical Clinic property almost every day, and you would be amazed by how long I wait to cross the street (with a baby carriage and dog no less). Often times, when we do cross the street, we're jogging during a break in the traffic, so I understand why pedestrians do try to cross to the side of the street with a sidewalk.</p> <p>As an adult, I am very cautious about walking on our street and crossing our street. However, I worry about the many small children who walk and bike up and down Third Street. There are lots of kids in our neighborhood who walk and bike in our street due to the sidewalk set up. If this was a more residential street, it would be less of an issue. Since this section of Third Street carries so much traffic (that almost always travels over the 25 mph limit), it's an accident waiting to happen.</p> <p>I am so happy to learn about the inclusion of a bike and walking path on the railroad tracks. I think this will provide a wonderful alternative for pedestrians traveling between the North End and the Point/Downtown instead of along the northern stretch of Third Street. However, I propose also including some additional safety measures for pedestrians along the northern section of Third Street to protect the many residents who will still walk and bike on this section of the road.</p> <p>First, I request that you consider adding sidewalks along the entire east side of the northern section of Third Street.  Second, I request that you fix the sidewalks on the west side of the northern section of Third Street. This will eliminate the need for pedestrians to walk in the road.  Third, I request that you consider including a cross walk in the street near the entrance to the Navy Medical Clinic. This will provide safety for pedestrians who use Third Street to get to the clinic and allow safe crossing amidst the heavy flow of traffic.  Fourth, I request that you consider including a stop sign or speed bumps along the northern section of Third Street to slow the traffic and keep drivers more alert.</p> <p>Thank you for considering my input. I am very excited about the potential for this new project, and I am optimistic that the improvements will make pedestrian travel in the north end a much safer experience.</p>	Pedestrians
<p>Option 3A is a clear winner by maintaining traffic flow into Downtown while reducing traffic on Farewell. Note that it should be designed to ideally preserve the opportunity for a future rail link along Old Colony RR. Preserving a scenic and direct route is important for Newport as a tourist destination. I am available as a free consultant for this project based on my urban planning and real estate experience.</p>	
<p>I cannot believe that the city of Newport in good conscience would consider eliminating the NCTC I&amp;II, we have been a cornerstone in the Newport Trades since 1983  Joseph Yoffa past owner of Yoffa Woodworking 1984-2018 unit I &amp; C at 62 Halsey Street and still property owner of these two unit rented by new owner Calderwood Millwork</p>	
<p>Yes</p>	
<p>I'd like to see how the rail/trail bike path runs from the Visitors center to CCR - this could be the first piece of the puzzle and would serve to connect the north side to downtown Newport.</p>	

Responses	Tags
Are the graphics available somewhere online to review and consider in a more thoughtful manner than the Newport City Council Chamber/scrum?	
My vote goes to alternative 1. Parking, shuttles, and a bike route will Eli ante so much traffic congestion and increase resident use.	
would like to learn more about the proposals and which one's are considered most likely to be implemented as they directly impact me.	
At last weeks meeting we were told that the various maps would be on line, but no website was given. Can you let me know where I can find the maps for plans 1 through 4 ?	
Why are the images of the project not attached here??? Give me another chance to view it before I answer a servey.	
Yes, as an owner of a unit at the "Newport County Tradesmen Center," 64 Halsey St, which would be directly affected by several of the options under consideration.	
yes	
Yes, worried about traffic, increased commuting time, noise, crime, and my property value decreasing. I have never been notified about meetings or workshops and my property abuts the railroad tracks.	
Any further traffic coming to Third Street is not wanted by Point Residents	
After the public workshops, will there be a way for the public to veto/vote any of the proposed alternatives, instead of leaving it up to the state?	
In Alternatives 1 and 2, will the park and ride be accessable via the old southbound ramp from Kalbfus Road toward the Newport Secondary?	
The priority of the project should be to keep the automobile traffic moving in a safe manner. The "bike Nazi's" and their nutty ideas should be put aside in the interest of automobile traffic. The bridge was build for cars not bikes. Our employees and customers rely on quick safe transit.	
Not at this time	
I wasn't able to attend the workshop. I just wanted to voice my hope and request that pedestrian and bike access be worked in to future plans for the bridge and the roadways leading into it. It is such a huge opportunity for the community and all who visit here. Thank you.	

Responses	Tags
<p>In my opinion, it is critical to the hundreds of families in the Van Zandt Avenue corridor to have access to the water by way of the VZ bridge. Improving connectivity is sited as a primary purpose of the project. If the VZ bridge is impeded by free flowing traffic the only access for a great distance is cut off for all residents living along Van Zandt Avenue and all the cross streets (and probably a wider area). Newport is a special place because of access to the water. It seems a shame to sacrifice our identity to allow cars to get into town more efficiently.</p> <p>In the near future the Navy Hospital property will be improved and the waterfront will be a huge part of that improvement. Easy access for nearby neighbors by way of the VZ bridge is critical.</p> <p>The signage in the east bound lane as vehicles approach Newport may be a large part of the problem. Until the America's Cup event a few years ago a driver had the "Scenic Newport" option (exit to Farewell) or the "Fall River" option. It is improved now but a better solution would be closer to Alternative 4 and include smarter signage that would direct drivers not heading for downtown away from Farewell.</p> <p>Another advantage to Alternative 4 is that the traffic is directed through a business/commercial zone that may not be as busy on a weekend (when most traffic problems happen).</p> <p>The Van Zandt bridge serves a critical water access function and should not be compromised.</p>	
<p>I could not attend the only 1-hour workshop and I could not find any information (presentation, figures depicting alternatives etc, technical studies etc.). Please direct me to a web site where I can download this information so I can provide meaningful feedback or email me the information.</p>	
<p>Before closing roadway access of Van Zandt Avenue across Farewell, please conduct several volume studies of the number of vehicles using this intersection. There is no alternate intersection within a block or two. To cross this area would require going well out of the way for a local resident. If one of the purposes of the project is to increase connectivity between north and south Newport, stopping cross Farewell traffic on Van Zandt will only create a new disconnect between east and west Newport. The city maintains multiple (4 or 5) public boat launch ramps in the Point for all residents. If the cross-Farewell route on Van Zandt is closed, the safest route is removed. Trailering a boat down narrow and winding alternative residential streets could lead to more accidents.</p>	Traffic Study
<p>Has any consideration been given to the possibility of using the parking lot at the Newport Grand for the "park and ride" portion of the redesign. I have never seen this parking lot full in the years that I have lived on the island, and with the addition of a parking garage and a robust shuttle system to the Gateway, Mansions, Beaches, etc. the total amount of traffic on lower Aquidneck could be reduced dramatically.</p>	
<p>Several of these proposals have large park and ride lots. Given the lack of success of convincing drivers to park and ride at the Gateway center why would we expect this one to be any more successful</p>	
<p>I have lived on Halsey Street for 30 years. We fought with the city of Newport for TWELVE YEARS to dead end our street. I do not want to have the return of traffic to our streets and would strenuously object to any option that includes a disturbance to our hard fought current situation. I would also want to see pedestrian traffic diverted away from Halsey as there is an unsavory element committing vandalism and theft as crimes of opportunity due to the dead end.</p>	
<p>Where are the proposed designs?</p>	
<p>What is the results of traffic analysis for incoming and outgoing traffic at peak conditions (summer music festivals, rush hour) for each option? What is the impact of bridge lane closures during repair periods? What are the expected delay times?</p>	Traffic Study
<p>yes</p>	
<p>Please provide link to an aerial graphic (overlay) of the proposal.</p>	
<p>How will this affect the storm water flow on Garfield St. Our basement already floods tremendously.</p>	
<p>I would like to learn more about the proposed plans and project timetable.</p>	
<p>I vote for #9. These all miss the point of simplifying ramps and maximizing use of available land for non-roadway use. I propose having both entry and exit to Newport Bridge follow the path of the current on-ramp from the north, meeting at a roundabout by the Connell Highway dog park and Farewell Street. Eliminate all other ramps. Gain 80% of the area now squandered by poor planning in the past.</p>	

Responses	Tags
<p>The set referred to as alternative 4 are the only ones that seem to make sense to me. The others either only address getting to Newport but not from Newport or create a complex interchange that will result in confusing and somewhat unpredictable traffic patterns.</p>	
<p>Alternative 1 (picture 4) seems to be the most efficient to me. However, at the end of the day, the city needs to find alternatives to having so many visiting cars descend on the city in the first place. We can not keep widening the roads to accommodate more cars. There needs to be more focus on better inter-city public transport/shuttles and encouraging people to leave their cars at a park n' ride or at home all together! The noise, pollution and annoyance is only going to get worse unless this is addressed.</p>	
<p>Discussed it and we like the Interchange Area Option 1. We like that out of all the options for a few reasons. 1st and foremost: That it addresses evacuation route infrastructure and allows better traffic management (although for big events I agree with Melissa that it would be great if they could offer public transportation/shuttles for visitors). 2nd: Traffic is not rerouted through residential streets. 3rd: Eliminates the need for additional traffic lights. 4th: Reduction of noise level.</p>	
<p>How about a Park N' Ride lot by the bridge ramp exit, with a rail shuttle to the Visitors Center? It works in airports and large stadiums.</p>	
<p>Ryan, thanks for spending so much airtime on this very critical issue for our city. I agree with what Rep Carson said on the radio, we must ALL be very vigilant, pay close attention, do our homework, add our voice to the public conversation -- and get very involved in the planning stage of this potentially life-changing project. To that end, as mentioned on a previous thread regarding the proposed bridge ramp realignment alternatives, it is essential that local elected officials on our City Council -- prior to the RIDOT sending THEIR preferred option to the Feds for approval -- study maps, weigh-in, discuss openly, and carefully deliberate. Then, they must VOTE on the one alternative of the 7, (or is it 8?) they believe will yield the best results -- for all stakeholders -- residents, tourists, commuters, and business owners alike. Only then, will citizens be able to hold policy-makers accountable, and be assured that this complicated, multi-year (mini-BIG-dig) construction project is handled thoughtfully, efficiently, and expeditiously -- with LOCALS in mind!</p>	
<p>Here is my analysis of the bridge proposals; I favor option #1. It provides smooth access on a "clover leaf" which ramps off and onto the bridge for downtown traffic, without the mess of the present off ramp existing onto two-way traffic, while having to contend with customers existing and entering the gas station at the foot of the ramp. It provides connection to the JT Connell Highway south of the rotary, relieving congestion around the present bridge on-ramp at Admiral Kalbfus. I would propose a second exit ramp onto Connell Highway also south of the rotary. This facilitates traffic going downtown, north and south onto and off JT Connell and east and west onto and off Admiral Kalbfus, accommodating both visitor and local traffic in the area and beyond. Additionally, most of the infrastructure is already in place. If you really wanted to relieve traffic congestion around the rotary you could do two things 1.) Extend the "Admiral Kalbus Highway Extension" straight to an exit and entrance ramp just south of Maple Street and 2.) Ask the Navy to open the gate across from Maple St.</p> <p>The reasons I do not like options 2.), 3.), and 4.) are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.) There are too many rotary and traffic-light bottlenecks.</li> <li>2.) There are unnecessary connections leading traffic to Third Street.</li> <li>3.) Unnecessary connections to local roads.</li> <li>4.) And I do not see a great deal of development land being freed up anyways. What remains of open land should probably be used for wetland and open space.</li> </ol> <p>As a local group, I think we need to have more opportunities for discussion so that we can come to a consensus on the most favorable option.</p>	
<p>Thanks, I think we need the opportunity to hear each other in an open forum with DOT feedback. The previous meetings were setup with a trade show format and they were not conducive to an exchange of local ideas. Does DOT have numbers for the traffic capacity of Pell Bridge itself and the capacity of various configurations?</p>	
<p>Yes...Judy...I agree -- it is very important that the RIDOT share ALL the data they're collecting. And offer meetings that are designed to hear (and record) end-user input. There was no scribe at any of the three workshops I attended -- nor --were they recorded. They put the onus on the public to submit comments -- one directional! It is also essential that our City officials deliberate and VOTE on which alternative is best for the majority. This project can't be rushed. The maps that are displayed at each DOT public opportunity are terribly hard to decipher. We need to understand the intended traffic pattern adjustments...BEFORE the RIDOT forwards THEIR preferred alternative to the Feds for financing approval. Nextdoor neighbors -- contact your Ward and At Large City Council reps -- as well as -- your Senate and House elected officials -- ask them to shepherd this project so that the public can trust that most beneficial outcome results....ask them to keep ALL stakeholders in mind as they discuss each of the 7 or 8 alternatives.</p>	

Responses	Tags
<p>Option 3c looks great to me. I like that it provides several alternatives for the traffic to flow depending on their destination (W.Main/Broadway or JT Connell Highway). The intent here is to reroute traffic away from the roundabout (the current rotary) and relieve congestion at that intersection.</p> <p>One end goal that I desire from this project is to increase connectivity between the North End and the rest of Newport. Designing Admiral Kalbfus and the rotary in such a way that will allow pedestrians to traverse those areas safely will go a long way to that goal.</p> <p>Options 4 a/b do not sit well with me. Both alternatives cut right through existing homes, which would require the current residents to be removed.</p> <p>Option 2 is super confusing and reroutes much of the traffic through the rotary and makes it larger, effectively cutting off all pedestrian access through that area. This should be avoided if possible.</p> <p>If I understand correctly, options 1 and 2 were old proposals created in the 1990s and early 2000s respectively. They were trotted out again without much revision. Options 3 and 4 are designed with more recent traffic studies and design guidelines in mind.</p>	
<p>I'm seeing more traffic on revamped local roads in #3 &amp; #4 therefore making pedestrian use more dangerous in the area of Admiral Kalbfus.</p> <p>In option 3C, there seems to be a stop light at the end of the ramp which will create a bottleneck. And north and southbound traffic toward Connell Highway will go through the rotary anyway. The backup around the rotary comes from the Navy Base gate at Third St. To relieve this I would ask the Navy to open the former gate at Maple Street to take northbound traffic directly in and out.</p> <p>Option #1) routes visitor traffic directly in and out of downtown on the two way (exit and entrance ramp) "cloverleaf". The commuter/park n ride lot will be connected to downtown by a walking, bicycle and shuttle path under the railroad bridge on VanZandt Street. They are already removing the tracks which will be a "greenway" path to Admiral Kalbfus, west of the rotary.</p> <p>And again, option #1 needs a second exit on the cloverleaf, exiting onto the road south of the rotary straight off to the rotary. As long as the road heading south from the rotary "butts" Farerwell Street, everything should work smoothly.</p>	
<p>Keep the thoughts --suggestions --pros/cons -- coming! Be sure to ask the City Council to publicly deliberate ALL alternatives -- and VOTE -- before the "nameless" persons/committee who work for the RIDOT choose for us.</p> <p>Send your request for an open public process to:  Patricia A. Cofield, Administrative Assistant to the City Manager and Mayor,  Email: pcofield@cityofnewport.com; Office: (401) 845-5437.  Ask her to distribute your message to all 7 City Councilors.</p> <p>State Officials at the DOT have little local skin in the game, and certainly are not the day-to-day end users. LOCAL voices need to chime in to ensure the "most preferred" option is chosen...PRIOR to it being sent off to the Federal Highway Administration for approval and funding.</p>	
<p>Options 1 and 2 appear to be putting lipstick on a pig. Embellishing the existing problems won't make them go away. There are far too many "moving parts" - potential failure points.</p>	

Responses	Tags
<p>Navy is concerned with traffic impacts during the construction period; the Navy preference is that work that will impact traffic be limited to non-peak hours. Alternative #2 is Navy preferred alternative. Alternative #3 is Navy least preferred alternative.</p> <p>Review Philosophy/Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What alternative offers the Navy the most effective means of automobile transportation to the installation from Pell Bridge, as well as the most effective means of automobile transportation from the installation to Pell Bridge.</li> <li>• Traffic Lights perceived to slow traffic down.</li> <li>• Roundabouts perceived to keep traffic moving.</li> <li>• More viable routes preferred over single route.</li> <li>• Proximity to potential future developed area/traffic congestion.</li> </ul> <p>Alternative #1</p> <p>PRO:</p> <p>Entering the Installation: No significant route change, viable secondary route via Van Zandt Ave</p> <p>Leaving the Installation: One traffic light at 3rd Street, Expedient route to bridge, Viable secondary route via Van Zandt Avenue</p> <p>CON:</p> <p>Entering the Installation: Indirect route to installation, Two to three traffic lights</p> <p>Leaving the Installation: None observed</p> <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future economic development could negatively affect traffic routes to/from installation from congestion perspective</li> </ul> <p>Alternative #2</p> <p>PRO:</p> <p>Entering the Installation: Expedient route to installation, One traffic light at 3rd Street, Viable secondary route via Van Zandt Avenue</p> <p>Leaving the Installation: Expedient route to bridge, One traffic light at 3rd Street, Viable secondary route via Van Zandt Avenue</p>	



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<p>CON:            Entering the Installation: None observed            Leaving the Installation: None observed            Other:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future economic development primarily away from traffic routes to/from installation.</li> </ul> </p> <p>Alternative #3            PRO:            Entering the Installation: Several viable secondary routes            Leaving the Installation: Several viable secondary routes            CON:            Entering the Installation: New major intersection with traffic light to traverse complex traffic route            Leaving the Installation: New major intersection with traffic light to traverse complex traffic route            Other:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future economic development more than likely to negatively affect traffic routes to/from installation from congestion perspective</li> </ul> </p> <p>Alternative #4            PRO:            Entering the Installation: Several viable secondary routes            Leaving the Installation: Several viable secondary routes            CON:            Entering the Installation: New major intersection with traffic light to traverse            Leaving the Installation: New major intersection with traffic light to traverse            Other:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future economic development more than likely to negatively affect traffic routes to/from installation from congestion perspective.</li> <li>• Replacement of new controlled intersection with roundabout could simplify/improve access to/from the installation.</li> <li>• Not as complex as Alternative 3</li> </ul> </p>	

Responses	Tags
<p><b>Personal Property</b>            Not withstanding all of my community involvement, I am also the owner of two lots which directly border the Newport Secondary Track. My property is located between a point just south of the Walnut Street Bridge abutment and Willow Street. I have owned the property since 1978. The combined frontage of my property along the railroad is approximately 155 feet. The distance from my property line is approximately four feet from the current west rail of the west track. I am happy to see this upgrade being done. However, I am also very concerned that while all of this work is being done, problems are being experienced, and the abutters are not being informed as to the plans, problems and progress.</p> <p><b>Specific Concerns</b>  <b>Environmental</b></p> <p>On Tuesday, August 21st, I attended a meeting which was held by the RIDOT at the Newport Public Library. The meeting was chaired by Jody Richards, RIDOT Project Manager. There was one representative from the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. The purpose of the meeting was to inform the public about the environmental studies being conducted for the Pell Bridge Realignment project. When I went to the identified project website: <a href="http://www.pellbridge-ea.com">www.pellbridge-ea.com</a>, I saw that the project area includes the Newport Secondary Track area from Admiral Kalbfus Avenue to the Gateway Center in Newport. Therefore I asked questions as to what environmental testing had been done to date on the area of the Newport Secondary Tracks south of the Walnut Bridge abutments. I was told, by a VHB consultant, that there had been no environmental testing in the area south of the Pell Bridge replacement area thus far. They told me that testing in the area where the work is currently being done is scheduled in the next two weeks.</p> <p>I informed them that the project is already underway:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grass which had covered the tracks as a result of a long standing agreement that I had made many years ago with RIDEM has been stripped, therefore exposing the ties and the materials between the ties.</li> <li>• Tracks (80lb rails) are in the process of being removed and loaded onto the Old Colony &amp; Newport flatcar.</li> <li>• The plan is to remove all of the ties next.</li> </ul> <p>The representative from RIDEM was very surprised to learn that this project had already started.</p> <p>In additional to the soil not being tested, I have the following concerns:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There is a <b>storm water ditch</b> which runs along the East Side of the railway. It dumps into a catch basin at the northeast corner of the Poplar Street intersection. This ditch collects all of the waer which come onto the railway from both the cemetary on the east side and the streets on the west side.</li> <li>2. I would like to know where the water goes from that collector especially if it is being compromised by this current construction project.</li> <li>3. When we get heavy rain, the water floods the tracks, especially to the North of the Walnut Street Bridge abutment. That flooding is exacerbated by a clogged 10 inch drainpipe which is between the East track and the East track.</li> <li>4. We have reason to believe that this flooding causes occasional flooding of the basement in my building at 1 1/2 Willow Street.</li> <li>5. I am trusting, with the removal of the East track along the bridge abutment, that this problem will be resolved.</li> </ol>	

Responses	Tags
<p><b>Potential Damage to Sewer Line</b> As I previously reported, there is a main sewer line which runs under the West track. There is a manhole located in the center of the west track directly to the east of my back house, i.e. 1 1/2 Willow Street. I know from previous experience that the sewer line runs under the West track from a point south of the Van Zandt Bridge to a point south of Elm Street. It then crosses in a diagonal direction under the railroad depot and goes onto Gladys Bolhouse Boulevard (formerly Bridge Street). I also have been informed that this 'clay' sewer line is only buried about 3 feet below that rail bed. When there were rails and ties spreading the load over the sewer line, I had less concern that the sewer line would be ruptured. I am now very concerned that during this project, the equipment which will be used to construct the new track may be too heavy for this sewer line. I do not want to think of the mess and expense to the City of Newport that would result from a sewer line rupture. I would like someone with more civil engineering experience to review this issue and put my mind at ease.</p> <p><b>Installation of the new tracks</b> I have been told that there will be two tracks going to the depot from somewhere south of the Walnut Street Bridge abutment. I have been provided with a copy of the plan. However, it does not seem to take into consideration the location of the planned Bike Path. I have already requested that the necessary railroad switching equipment not be placed in front of "Stacy House", my 1725 colonial house, i.e. #1 Willow Street. I have been told by the Newport Dinner Train operator, Eric Moffett that it will be placed somewhere to the north of the midline of my properties. I fully understand that it needs to be south of the Walnut Street abutment so as to provide for the future "bike path". I am getting conflicting information as to the location of this switching equipment. Questions as to the scope of the rail replacement; I would also like to know how much of the west track will be replaced from Walnut Street to the North.</p> <p><b>The plans for the Bike Path</b> I have been trying to get more information regarding the specific plans for the "First Mile Bike Path". I would like to know the scope of the project, the funding source, and the estimated project time table. I had asked AIPC staff for information but I have not gotten any answers. Specifically, I would like to know how the bike path will tie into the current configuration of America's Cup Avenue. Will the bikes exit the path to the North or to the South of the Walnut Bridge abutment? Will the abutment be removed? How will northbound bike riders cross the very busy, but already accident prone, Americas Cup Avenue to enter the bike path. I am very happy to know that my 2001 plan might actually become a reality.</p>	

Responses	Tags
<p>I wanted to provide you with concerns/comments that I provided to RIDOT via their online survey. As a member of the more informed public it is difficult to provide comments on the proposed alternatives based on the limited information available on <a href="http://www.pellbridge-ea.com">http://www.pellbridge-ea.com</a>. In reviewing the data RIDOT only provides existing peak hour volumes, but they do not state where the data comes from or at what time of year they were taken. Additionally they do not provide the times of the peak hours. There is no mention the existing of Peak Saturday Hours during the summer. If one of the main Project Needs that is listed is the reduction of vehicular congestion and queuing on Pell Bridge, how can existing Peak Saturday hours during the summer be ignored or at least not presented. For each alternative it is unclear what the proposed traffic volumes would be and what the grade of each intersection would be. It is also unclear if the potential for future development on the parcels was taken into account. In almost every case the traffic is being pulled away from Downtown Newport, with the exception of Alternative 3A. Alternative 4A and 4B appear as though they may actually cause more issues than they solve. While it is important to take all users of the area into account, it is unclear if they are taking one of the main needs of the project into account. With out additional information to review it appears that Alternative 3A would be the most likely to meet all of the project needs.</p>	
<p>Having attended a few of these work-shops over the past 20 years I am aware of the many concerns that will be presented. My real concern this time is that RIDOT is probably quite serious in their intention to move forward with a road system; and their priority will likely be coordinated with City Hall's agenda which I've heard is to make a mini convention center on the city parking lot near bus station. Having said that, I think that all eyes should be leveled at the over-all big plan because it will destroy the Point. In fact the mini convention center would be in complete violation of national historic regulations/guidelines that call for a "buffer zone" between a highly developed commercial area and a designated historic district.</p> <p>I hope you will be able to attend to prepare for any adverse effects this eventual system may have on the Point. A couple of possible concerns are: using Second Street to flow directly into the city parking lot at the bus station...this actually was on its way to happening about 8-10 years ago when a very attractive little "ticket booth" was designed by an architect and construction had begun; I brought it to the reps attention then and he managed to stop the project. I am very concerned that any access to the Point from the "off ramps" be discouraged because of potential traffic. I also am concerned that the "off ramps" not interfere with any proposed use of the NAVY base property in question because I strongly support Dawn Euer's proposal to have a "park" located on the Navy land (and hopefully it will be close to the bridge)...I applaud her work on the "park" and of course we would not</p>	
<p>I live on Summer St in Newport. As a resident I support Alternative 3A and have the following comments. 1) the volume of bridge traffic on Summer St/Van Zandt Ave has increased noticeably. This is in part due to the online navigation systems that direct drivers to the shortest routes through neighborhoods and bypassing main thoroughfares established to handle through traffic. (try google map directions from Jamestown, RI to St. Michael's Country Day School in Newport for example). Alternative 3A effectively overcomes this issue by keeping through traffic on main roads. 2) I drive frequently from my house to the Point via the Van Zandt Ave bridge. Please do not eliminate Westbound traffic on Van Zandt to Third Street. New roads should not divide and separate neighborhoods. We have seen the effects of this (Rte. 93 in Boston, Americas Cup Ave in Newport) and closing the westbound access does exactly that. I suggest eliminating the left turn on to Van Zandt as you drive north on Farewell. Most of those drivers are heading to the Navy Base (gate 1 or the Naval Health Clinic) and will be able to use Dyer Street for that purpose. With 3A there are fewer cars exiting the Bridge and turning east onto Van Zandt, so the delay for northbound drivers to accommodate the left turn arrow can be eliminated or reduced. 3) Traffic headed north to Middletown and Portsmouth should be encouraged to use JT Connell Highway with a direct route, and not Admiral Kalfus Road. Admiral Kalbfus is residential, JT Connell is commercial so the alignment and links should favor connections to JT Connell. Alternated 4 do not do this, and 3 does, but still accommodates the needs of Bridge users going west towards the Aquidneck Corporate Park. 4)I have serious concerns about relocation of the Waste Management trash transfer facility and the Tradesman Center. Nobody will want the trash transfer facility relocated to their neighborhood, so leave it there. The Tradesman Center is already an economic center of activity. What is the point of eliminating it to create new redevelopment, which could have environmental issues? I see Alternatives 3 as better than 4 on this. 5) Lastly, I would like to see separate bike routes versus shared routes on streets. Perhaps the southbound lane on Farewell that is eliminated in 3A could be a separate bike path? This would need further refinement but the potential is there.</p>	

Responses	Tags
<p>1.) While the flow to downtown Newport was the main interest of the represented community on Monday , it is but one aspect of the overall bridge-approach project. The efficient flow of all bridge traffic must serve greater Aquidneck Island, encompassing the Navy base, Middletown, and Portsmouth.</p> <p>2) It's unfortunate that an Interstate-grade highway bridge empties to local congestion. There is now the opportunity to take a 50-year view toward the best transportation solutions for associated, island-wide traffic. Since the time of the Romans, it has been well established that efficient roadways promote economic development, and we should endeavor to support these goals.</p> <p>3) Of the 7 current alternatives, I believe that #2 has the best basis of improving thru-traffic flow to points north and east through Connell/Coddington Highway and 1-mile corner. Since the greatest daily congestion is for the Navy Base and NUWC, that's a crucial focus.</p> <p>4) Of particular interest, #2 also provides the longest, most gradual space for Newport-downtown queuing, which best solves the current stacking problem on the bridge's roadway. It was helpful that you pointed out the dangers of stopped traffic in the right lane while cars in the left lane speed by at 50-or-so mph.</p> <p>5) The flyover lets the both the northbound and southbound traffic existing from the bridge slow down at about the same rate as they enter the curbed roadway together. This mitigates the speed discrepancy between the two lanes of the exit roadway noted just above.</p> <p>6) Both #1 and #2 incorporate the southbound flyover that was introduced in the bridge ramp planning in 2006. #1 keeps the current extension over Admiral Kalbfus to the signals, as well as westbound loop exit opposite the about-to-be-ex-Newport-Grand's parking lot. Alternative 1 provides RIDOT's and VHB's due diligence of showing a breadth of options, but I believe it's clear that keeping the existing northerly extension of #1 is a non-starter.</p> <p>7) They flyover still delivers downtown bounng Newport traffic to the Farewell Van Zandt traffic light. As you pointed out, the limitation here on southbound traffic into Newport remains status quo. While south of this intersection is outside of the scope of RIDOT's current bridge approach project, Farewell Street's construction needs to be kept in the City's planning as an unsolved problem.</p> <p>8) At any rate, it appears fundamental that the existing downtown ramp is to be eliminated, and any alternatives that inclue it are non-starters. I believe that they are just another due diligence matter to be put aside.</p> <p>9) Alternatives 1-4 progress from more free-flowing freeway ramps to a group of local roads. Alternatives 4a &amp; 4b incorporate multiple intersections with high volumes of traffic making left turns.</p> <p>10) For example, cars for downtown Newport encounter thir first left turn not far from the current exit - only partially solving the bridge stacking problem. Then, the downtown traffic makes a left turn at the same intersection on Connell Highway as the newly opened up, local north/south traffic, significantly interfering with it. Bridge entry from the south has to make 2 right turns at intersections with other traffic, instead of the existing unobstructued loop entrance. There are 2 options for bridge entry from the rotary, but they both involve extra, competing intersections.</p> <p>11) Alternative 4a &amp; b evidently create a few more acres of developable ground space, but, in my opinion at too high a cost of obstructing traffic flow. I believe that the congestion caused by high-volume left turns and added intersections are fatal flaws that make Alternatives 4a &amp; b counter-productive.</p> <p>12) I'll comment on Alternatives 3 a, b, &amp; c separately next week. I believe that they have a few elements worth developing, along with some that are non-starters - particuarly the proposed use of the railway corridor for the southbound bridge exit in 3A. That goes back to RIDOT's 2006 proposal that raised strong objection from the Point neighborhood.</p> <p>13) In the interest of sharpening focus on the more worthy options, I am supportive of Alternative 2 as a productive plan, subject to further improvements. I think that some elements of the 3-series are worthy of consideration, while others aren't. For reasons stated above, I think that Alternatives 1 and 4 should be the first to be eliminated from further consideration.</p>	
<p>I have been a Newport resident living on Washington St. since 1972. I have been in the traffic tie-ups and have witnessed the tie-ups over many years. When we first moved here, we became friends with Newport's City Manager, who was involved with early planning in the 70's. I often asked why the unfurnished exit (first exit on the Newport side) had not been completed and the answer was that the Penn-Central had conrtol of the railroad tracks and was unwilling to give up control, even though the rails were not being used and the railroad bridge at the northern end was not functioning. Over the years since, vehicle traffic has increased, and it would appera that RIDOT released some of the land they controlled. Today, on certain holidays, special events in Newport, graduations at Brown, URI and Salve, and "good" beach days, there are tie-ups at the eastern end of the bridge; as a result "natives" and others choose to use the second exit. (It is for this reason, the traffic count at the two exits in Newport at the busy times may not reflect the dirvers' choice of exits). Recently I have attended two RIDOT open meetings in Newport at which times DOT indicated they are proposing closing the first exit in Newport (eastern end of bridge) and expanding exit options at the end of the bride. I have concerns about closing this exist:</p> <p>1. Ambulances from Jamestown would not have access to Van Zandt and would be delayed.</p> <p>2. By diverting all the traffic to the second exit that joins Admiral Kalbfus Road, I sense this area will be overwhelmed. I am retired, and do a lot of shipping in this area, which can be very busy at various times of the day. The reason for the congestion is that is no easy way for drivers using the bridge to gain access to West Main Road. (One partial solution would be for the state to gain aces to Navy property between Coggeshall Ave near CCRI and the Navy Piers).</p> <p>In summary, I suggest the State maintain the first exit, until the entire project is complete and then reassess the traffic patterns before giving up access to this exit. This exit is convenient for those living on the "point" and is a primary exit for visitors whose destination may be hotels, restaurants or sporting events. These visitors would lively be out of traffic flow once they reach their destinations. I recently crossed the new Tappan Zee Bridge, It was an extension project, done in a timely manner, and seems to have unlocked a major bottle neck and they deserve accolades. There are many hurdles RIDOT will face, but it is important that RIDOT solve the problem in a timely fashion.</p>	<p>Do not remove first exit to newport</p>
<p>We abut the wetlands behind 3rd Street (directly across from Marine Clinic). That area floods with storms and can come dangerously close to flooding. Concerned that you consider any input that would funnel more water into those wetlands.</p>	<p>Overflow wetlands</p>

Responses	Tags
Hold future meetings in larger facilities. Spread out info to decrease congestion and noise. Thank you for continued chances to learn and comment.	
Traffic currently backs up to gateway from Van Zandt tonight on way in 5:30 Tuesday night.	Backed up traffic
Please share all 4 alternatives in a virtual format. The current maps are VERY difficult to use as tools to compare and contrast options. Hard to scroll and analyze all the various suggested changes. Thank you!	Virtual format for alternatives
There are bike and pedestrian highways and bridges that exist in the world independently of car roadways. This is what I used to get around while living in Copenhagen. Keep in mind the best route for cars does not necessarily follow the best routes for bikers/peds. You could split them up, recombine them, or whatever you please. But a flyover ramp for bikers/peds could be best option, \$ probably a ground-breaking structure to have in the US. It would likely be the first ever. Don't be afraid to make people bike a little hill.	Bike/ped flyover
Option 4B looks best - bike/ped accommodations are key and open space/developable land is too. Make sure this shared-use path is protected from the roadway and has all appropriate signage.	
Alternative 1 has the least impact on the locals. Lives in Sec. 8 - walks from off Girard to Downtown - keeps infra similar to existing to safely walk from North End to Downtown.	
I am a resident of Newport and have some concerns about the new ramp being proposed for Pell Bridge. I am a frequent bike rider. I am hoping you are taking steps to make access to local roads around the ramp bike friendly. This means dedicated lanes for bikes with signage indicating that. Also needed are <b>highly visible</b> bike and pedestrian crosswalks. I travel to Boulder, Colorado frequently and they have an excellent crosswalk system. A pedestrian or biker must push a signal button then within seconds yellow lights that are mounted high on poles on both sides of the street start flashing indicating an intention to cross. Drivers are required to stop until the crosswalk is clear in their lane. The system seems to work very well there. Given the narrow streets and lack of parking we need to encourage more people to walk or ride bikes. Putting in the necessary infrastructure would go a long way to helping this happen.	Bike friendly roads
typically make this trip about 5 times a week and my primary mode of transportation is by car. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings.	
My name is Jennifer Carlson and I reside at 26 Eisenhower Road, Newport, RI. Regarding the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches Project, I am most concerned about getting from my home to Newport. I typically make this trip about 4 times a week and my primary mode of transportation is me. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings.	
trip about 2 times a week and my primary mode of transportation is walking/bus. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings.	
make this trip about 7 times a week and my primary mode of transportation is by foot with my 1 year old son in his carriage. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings.	
My name is Latarchia Wright and I reside at 34 Eisenhower Road, Newport, RI. Regarding the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches Project, I am most concerned about getting from my home to work. I typically make this trip about 25 times a week and my primary mode of transportation is by my car. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings. I have witnessed numerous accidents at the corner of Hillside and Admiral Kalbfus Road with just 2 lanes. I wouldn't want to see what's going to happen with more lanes!	
My name is Daines Lawton and I reside at 32 Jade Way, Newport, RI. Regarding the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches Project, I am most concerned about getting from my home to shopping centers. I typically make this trip about 8 times a week and my primary mode of transportation is by walking/bus. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings.	
My name is Heidi Natal Castro and I reside at Admiral TY/Rolling Green, Newport, RI. Regarding the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches Project, I am most concerned about getting from my home to work. I typically make this trip about 2 times a week and my primary mode of transportation is by walking. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings.	
My name is Sonya Smith and I reside at 21C Rolling Green (Admiral TY), Newport, RI. Regarding the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches Project, I am most concerned about getting from my home to work/food shopping. I typically make this trip about 15-20 times a week and my primary mode of transportation is by walking. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings.	

Responses	Tags
<p>My name is Jeannette DelValle and I reside at 23 Truman Road, Newport, RI. Regarding the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches Project, I am most concerned about getting from my home to Naval Base/Stop &amp; Shop. I typically make this trip about __ times a week and my primary mode of transportation is by walking and driving. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings.</p>	
<p>My name is Andres Victores and I reside at 216 Parkholm, Newport, RI. Regarding the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches Project, I am most concerned about getting from my home to work. I typically make this trip about __ times a week and my primary mode of transportation is by walking and bus. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings.</p>	
<p>My name is Barbara Vargas and I reside at 19 Parkholm, Newport, RI. Regarding the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches Project, I am most concerned about getting from my home to _____. I typically make this trip about 6-7 times a week and my primary mode of transportation is by walking and bus. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings. I walk with a walker and its hard enough getting across Admiral Kalbus as it is.</p>	
<p>My name is Kimberly Rodrigo and I reside at 19 Truman Road, Newport, RI. Regarding the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches Project, I am most concerned about getting from my home to work. I typically make this trip about 10 times a week and my primary mode of transportation is by walking. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings.</p>	
<p>My name is Lucille Greene and I reside at 33 West Evens, Newport, RI. Regarding the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches Project, I am most concerned about getting from my home to work and downtown. I typically make this trip about 5 times a week and my primary mode of transportation is by car. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings.</p>	
<p>My name is Octavia Boyd and I reside at 29 Truman Road, Newport, RI. Regarding the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches Project, I am most concerned about getting from my home to school/work/shopping. I typically make this trip about 10+ times a week and my primary mode of transportation is by walking. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings.</p>	
<p>My name is Kaleema Cargill and I reside at Bayside Apartments, Newport, RI. Regarding the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches Project, I am most concerned about getting from my home to work at EBCAP. I typically make this trip about 6 times a week and my primary mode of transportation is by walking. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings.</p>	
<p>My name is Milton Albee and I reside at 49 Truman Road, Newport, RI. Regarding the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches Project, I am most concerned about getting from my home to work. I typically make this trip about 6 times a week and my primary mode of transportation is by car/walking. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings.</p>	
<p>My name is Jessaem Neuquez and I reside at Gould Street, Newport, RI. Regarding the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches Project, I am most concerned about getting from my home to North Kingston. I typically make this trip about 7 times a week and my primary mode of transportation is by car. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings.</p>	
<p>My name is Glenna Price and I reside at 60 Warner Street, Newport, RI. Regarding the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches Project, I am most concerned about getting from my home to work on my bike. I typically make this trip about 6 times a week and my primary mode of transportation is by bike and walking. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings.</p>	
<p>My name is Pauline Perkins-Moyer and I reside at 24 Burnside Ave., Newport, RI. Regarding the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches Project, I am most concerned about getting from my home to the North End. I typically make this trip about 6 or more times a week and my primary mode of transportation is by car. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings.</p>	

Responses	Tags
<p>My name is Catrina Greene and I reside at Parkholm, Newport, RI. Regarding the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches Project, I am most concerned about getting from my home to Downtown. I typically make this trip about 5 times a week and my primary mode of transportation is by walking with kids. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings.</p>	
<p>My name is Tiffany Doyle and I reside at Coddington Point, Newport, RI. Regarding the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches Project, I am most concerned about getting from my home to school/work. I typically make this trip about 10 times a week and my primary mode of transportation is by car. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings.</p>	
<p>My name is Kathleen Melberg and I reside at 31 Truman Road, Newport, RI. Regarding the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches Project, I am most concerned about getting from my home to the local area, stores, and family walks. I typically make this trip about 5 times a week and my primary mode of transportation is by walking with my children and bus. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings.</p>	
<p>My name is Kellie Banks and I reside at 90 Girard Avenue, #7, Newport, RI. Regarding the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches Project, I am most concerned about getting from my home to South Kingstown. I typically make this trip about 4 times a week and my primary mode of transportation is by car. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings.</p>	
<p>My name is Caroline Purdy and I reside at 90 Girard Avenue, #55, Newport, RI. Regarding the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches Project, I am most concerned about getting from my home to Downtown. I typically make this trip about 5 times a week and my primary mode of transportation is by car. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings.</p>	
<p>My name is Lizmarie Figueroa and I reside at 90 Girard Avenue, #45, Newport, RI. Regarding the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches Project, I am most concerned about getting from my home to Stop &amp; Shop. I typically make this trip about 7 times a week and my primary mode of transportation is by walking. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings.</p>	
<p>My name is Vanessa Soares and I reside at 30 Eisenhower Road, Newport, RI. Regarding the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches Project, I am most concerned about getting from my home to bring daughter to school at Rogers. I typically make this trip about 5 times a week and my primary mode of transportation is by car. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings.</p>	
<p>My name is Jason Diaz and I reside at 30 Eisenhower Road, Newport, RI. Regarding the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches Project, I am most concerned about getting from my home to work at Walmart. I typically make this trip about 6 times a week and my primary mode of transportation is by car/walking. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings.</p>	
<p>My name is Emerson Davis and I reside at 122 Parkholm, Newport, RI. Regarding the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches Project, I am most concerned about getting from my home to _____ I typically make this trip about 100 times a week and my primary mode of transportation is by walking or biking. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings. That road is like a racing car that can speed at their own past! The cops are there some times by field gets most of their time. But now they got new head people running it - so then is not so much need for cops then. But I won't give up on making our roads safe for kids/adults.</p>	
<p>My name is Robert Silvia and I reside at Parkholm, Newport, RI. Regarding the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches Project, I am most concerned about getting from my home to doctors downtown. I typically make this trip about 3 times a week and my primary mode of transportation is by car. I am very concerned about how this project will impact my ability to walk and bike safely in my community. I hope that the project will prioritize safety improvements that improve the conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Please keep me informed about the status of the project and notify me of future public and stakeholder meetings.</p>	



Responses	Tags
<p>Thank you for suggesting that this just-drawn proposal for the Pell-Connell roadway system be made immediately available to City and State planning personnel. Please share this drawing and email with Joe Nicholson, Sarah Atkins, Bill Ricchio, Jody Richards, Skye Levin and any other key people for timely attention, I give my apologies for not having yet had the time to communicate with any of you directly. I'll provide further comments in the next few days. Meanwhile, Susan was at my presentation of the attached proposal drawing to the Point Association Board on Tuesday evening, 4 Sept., and can describe its main points. I've taken a 50-year view toward critiquing and proposing solutions for the most practical and efficient traffic flows from the lower end of Connell Highway (at Van Zandt) to Coddington Highway, as well as minimizing the impact of future use of Adm. Kalbfus east. Principal compelling goals, interpreted from RIDOT's "About the Project" website page, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimize bridge queuing and disparate speeds between lanes approaching Newport-Middletown exits;</li> <li>• Re-connect Connell Highway;</li> <li>• Improve convenience and safety for pedestirans and cyclists;</li> <li>• Provide public transit connection between Pell Bridge interchange and downtown Newport;</li> <li>• Support Newport's economic development by creating new commerical space along Adm. Kalbfus Rd. and east of Connell Highway</li> </ul> <p>I've prepared a draft of detailed comments about all 7 of the RIDOT/VHB proposals that were presented for public comment in July. I'll clean them up and send them separately. In short, I believe that Alternative 2 stands out as the significantly best proposal of this set. I've built on Alternative 2 in 2 steps. The first kept the direct northbound ramp onto Connell Highway. After working with it in my CAD to-scale drawings, I think this ramp has drawbacks that can be served better by my next step, using the extended and upgraded Halsey to connect to both Admiral Kalbfus Rd and to Connell Highway. This is attached as Alt 2B-DP. (My initials are to identify the source as outside of RIDOT/VHB). I've also introduced signal-controlled intersections where traffic flows are most concentrated. Explanation of these warrants more description than I can do here; I'll send those separately. I believe that they will do the best job of metering the rates of competing traffic flows at these points. This drawing of Alt 2B-DP includes 2 significant features that I understand aren't part of the current project, but I highly recommend that they be constructed as soon as the will and the funding can be raised. They can be added onto the primary traffic circulation and intersections proposed here. One is a specific, truly Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC). Per the note on the drawing, a high-ceilinged ground level is dedicate to: traffic circulation for a local bus stop and entrance/exit to parking on the 3 upper levels; local rail shuttle; secondary visitors center w/restrooms; and a bike and pedestrian facilities (incl. potential bike share depot). 3 parking decks acoomodate approx. 600 cars by nominally doubling the length of the Gateway Center garage's basic configuration.</p> <p>The other is a means of relieving congestion on Northbound Connell Highway with a bypass that other Newporters have suggested in the present round of public review. I understand that there is available land for this between the Connell Hwy shopping center (and storage facility) and the Festival Field apartments. It would exit at the top end of the storage units, where there appears to be an existing right-of-way. Nearly all traffic will be turning right there onto Connell to continue toward Coddington Highway. No southbouth left turn from Connell to this bypass is allowed, as it would cause a difficult choke point on Connell Highway. This would be northbound only to greatly facility traffic that just wants to get out of the interchange area toward Middletown and Portsmouth without being inhibited by the retail strip of Connell Highway. It would, at the same time, reduce the traffic burden on the retail strip by relocating a large share of northbouth through traffic from the bridge.</p>	

Responses	Tags
<p>primary but are not reflected in the designs. The designs represent motor traffic and promise bike and pedestrian accommodation later. It shouldn't be assumed that the location of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure will be added on or even adjacent to the road. We should consider the entire project area to determine what spaces will accommodate all modes safely and comfortably. Additionally, the connections to city sidewalks, parks, and paths just beyond the project limits should be addressed to ensure connectivity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Please have a look at this workshop report from Lynn, Massachusetts.</b> This level of consideration should inform the roadway design. Some of the most relevant pages address: households with no car; pedestrian and bicycle facilities and facility designs; and what facilities might work in their project area. We do not have to hold for the design stage to introduce the facilities that the project managers are already considering. Now is the time.</li> <li>• <b>Traffic volume reports</b> are vital to understanding the recommendations, but the reports provided are difficult to interpret and lack context. When were the traffic volumes recorded? What day of the week, and what season of year? We want to make our plans in the best interest of resident livability when we are adjacent to residential areas.</li> <li>• <b>Along with traffic volume, we need to consider existing levels of comfort for bicyclists and pedestrians</b>, along with projected demand based on points of interest. The studies should be addressing all road users, their safety, flow, destinations, and improved accommodation from the outset. Additionally, the final plan has to recognize the important corridors and intersections outside and adjacent to the project area.</li> <li>• <b>The plan should advance the goals of the Newport Comprehensive Land Use Plan and the Open Space Plan.</b> These alignments with these City plans should be sought, noted, and shared.</li> <li>• <b>The plan should be made with intentional attention to the long-term future</b> – thinking 30, 40, 50 years out - considering known and projected weather, transportation modes, traffic patterns, and development.</li> <li>• <b>Gather a Project Advisory Board to continue to represent/oversee as plans move forward</b> – and to keep it moving forward. Nothing need delay or derail the project. This Advisory Group can assist with assembling the list of recommendations according to existing plans – STIP, LRTP, Bike Mobility Plan, Open Space Plan, Comprehensive Land Use Plan.</li> <li>• <b>Solicit information from other entities with relevant plans in the vicinity.</b> This recommendation goes beyond listening sessions, it is the active collecting and consideration of planning that is relevant in terms of location, traffic flow, pedestrian and bicycle activity, residential and commercial development and more, and includes these offices/agencies and more: Newport Office of Civic Investment, RIPTA, the Navy, City of Newport Public Services (re other road projects), Bike Newport, City Parks, Aquidneck Land Trust, Newport HEZ, RK Properties, Carpionato Group, Discover Newport, Newport &amp; Narragansett Bay Railroad, Newport Housing Authority, Trinity Management, and others.</li> <li>• <b>This project is our opportunity to demonstrate innovative creative contemporary planning</b> and forward thinking – let's make it the best it can be and a model for the island, the state, the region!</li> </ul>	

Responses	Tags
<p><b>SPECIFIC DESIGN ELEMENTS:</b> Roundabouts, side paths, and other infrastructure elements that support vulnerable road users can now be based on contemporary best practice facilities in place in other cities, as in the workshop report from Lynn Massachusetts referenced above. A road trip by the project managers, consultants, and primary stakeholders to experience these designs first hand would enhance the expertise to make the best recommendations for our conditions.</p> <p>1) <b>The 200-space parking lot is not sufficient</b> to accommodate drivers who shift to other transportation modes into the city. By comparison the three parking lots at the Steamship Authority in Falmouth accommodate a total of 5500 cars for people leaving their cars behind headed to Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. The design studies should recognize/reference the different mode shifts that are being considered along with some predictions of usage. What modes are in the works? Bike Share, People Movers, City Shuttles. Where is that vision expressed?</p> <p>2) <b>The road originally planned to run north between Festival Field Apartments and the RK Newport Shopping Center is a potential method for channeling a high volume of outbound traffic</b> out of town efficiently, without using Admiral Kalbfus or the rotary, and bypassing both the Point and the North Side neighborhoods. This option needs to be considered and addressed.</p> <p>3) <b>Traffic should be diverted away from neighborhoods.</b> High volume traffic should be directed onto Connell Highway and potentially onto the road referenced in (2) above. Plans should include calm and comfortable connections and passages into/ out of the neighborhoods.</p> <p>4) <b>The intersection of Malbone Road, Girard Avenue, and Admiral Kalbfus Road represents the eastern limit of the project area and requires very focused attention for vulnerable road user passage.</b> This intersection is currently one of the most dangerous in the city while also a site of concentrated vulnerable road user activity. It represents the nexus of neighborhoods, schools, businesses, residences, and Miantonomi Park – and it is also part of the direct connect between the First Mile Bikeway and the North Side neighborhoods.</p> <p>5) <b>Extend the project area east to West Main Road</b> in order to provide the necessary traffic calming and pedestrian-safe measures along Admiral Kalbfus Road in consideration of the adjacent neighborhoods, residences, park activity, and safe routes to schools.</p>	



# Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches

Public Information Meeting – Proposed Action Overview

December 12, 2019



# Agenda

- Environmental Assessment (EA) Progress Status
- Overview of Public Outreach
- Project Purpose and Need
- Overview of Proposed Action
- Public Comment Options
- Breakout

## Environmental Assessment (EA) Process and Schedule

Public Workshop #1

Offers an opportunity for the public to discuss and provide input on the Proposed Action early in the EA process.

Purpose and Need /  
Alternatives Development

Defines why the Proposed Action is needed and what it is expected to accomplish, as well as a reasonable range of conceivable alternatives.

Public Workshop #2

Offers an opportunity for the public to discuss and provide input on the Proposed Action midway through the EA process.

EA Preparation

The Proposed Action's potential environmental impacts are identified and evaluated.

EA Circulation and Public Review

The EA is made available for public review and comment.

- Public Input and Comment Period Round #1: Spring 2018
  - City Hall Public Meeting
  - North End Neighborhood
- Over 70 comments received. Majority of topics focused on:
  - Traffic Congestion/Ramps Queuing onto Bridge
  - Pedestrian Connectivity (Especially to North End)
  - Third Street Used as a Cut-Thru
  - Local Business Impact
  - Drainage/Flooding
  - Bike Paths

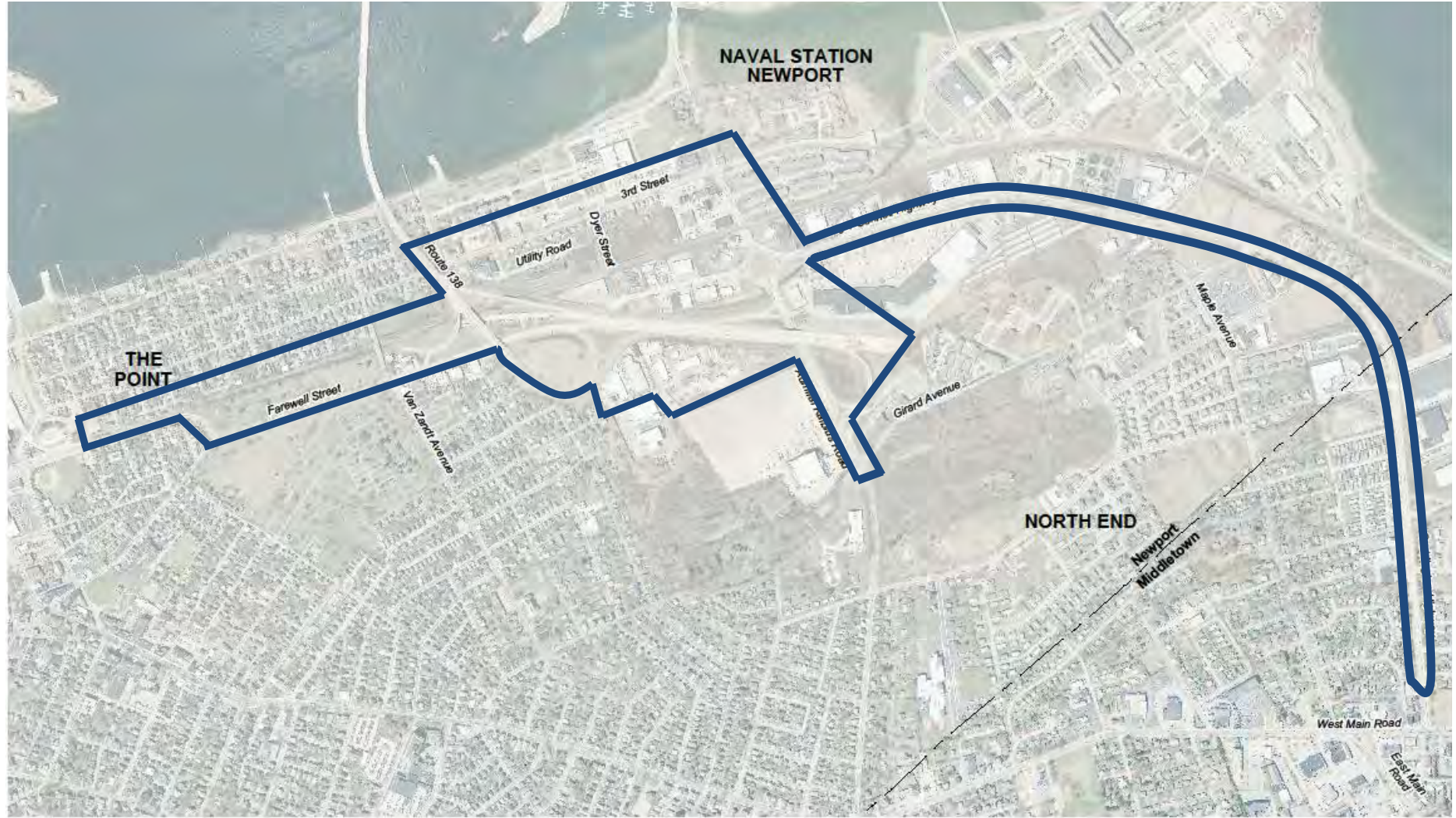
- Project Purpose
  - Improve safety and connectivity for all road users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles
  - Create parcels for development
- Project Need
  - Reduce vehicular congestion and queuing on Pell Bridge
  - Improve connectivity between Newport's North End and Downtown areas for all road users
  - Spur economic development



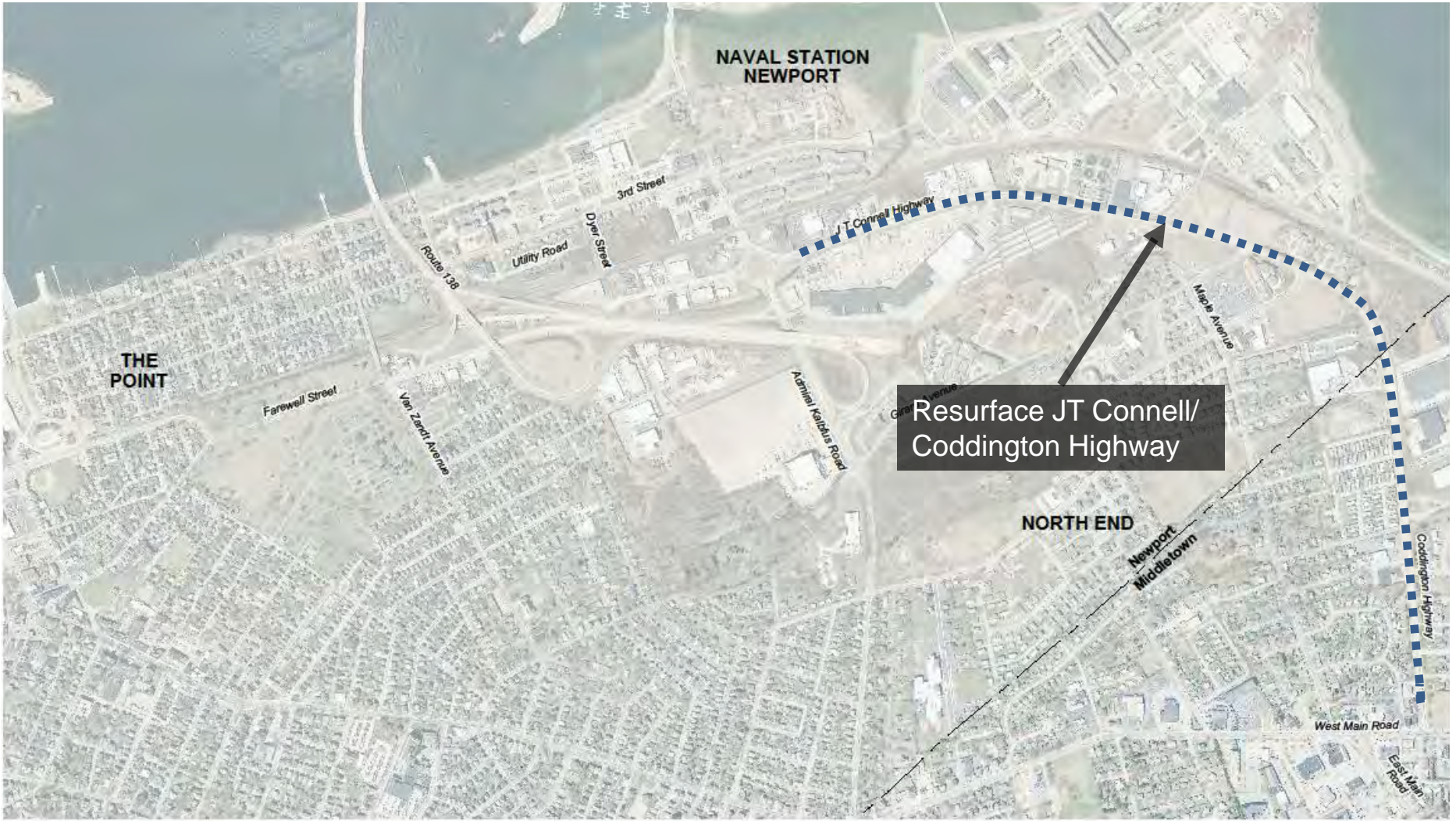
- Seven Alternatives Developed (Alternative 1, 2, 3A, 3B, 3C, 4A & 4B)
- Public Input and Comment Period Round #2: Summer 2018
  - City Hall Public Meeting
  - North End Neighborhood
  - Off-Broadway Neighborhood
  - Point Neighborhood Meeting
  - Newport Chamber of Commerce
- Received over 100 comments on the design alignments

- Major Stakeholders
  - City of Newport
  - RITBA
  - Naval Station Newport
- Other Important Stakeholders
  - Local Neighborhood and Community Groups and Bike Newport
  - Business Abutters
  - Newport Chamber of Commerce
  - Nearby Towns
  - Discover Newport

# Project Study Area



# JT Connell Highway Resurfacing – Separate Project



Resurface JT Connell/  
Coddington Highway

# Existing



# Safety



# 1950's Layout



# Proposed Action





# Existing Circulation – North End / Downtown



**North End to Downtown**

**Downtown to North End**

# Proposed Circulation – North End / Downtown



**North End to Downtown**

**Downtown to North End**

# Existing Circulation – Pell / North End



**Pell Bridge to North End**

**North End to Pell Bridge**

# Proposed Circulation – Pell / North End



**Pell Bridge to North End**

**North End to Pell Bridge**

# Existing Circulation – Pell / Downtown



**Pell Bridge to Downtown**

**Downtown to Pell Bridge**

# Proposed Circulation – Pell / Downtown



**Pell Bridge to Downtown**

**Downtown to Pell Bridge**

# Proposed Traffic Signal System



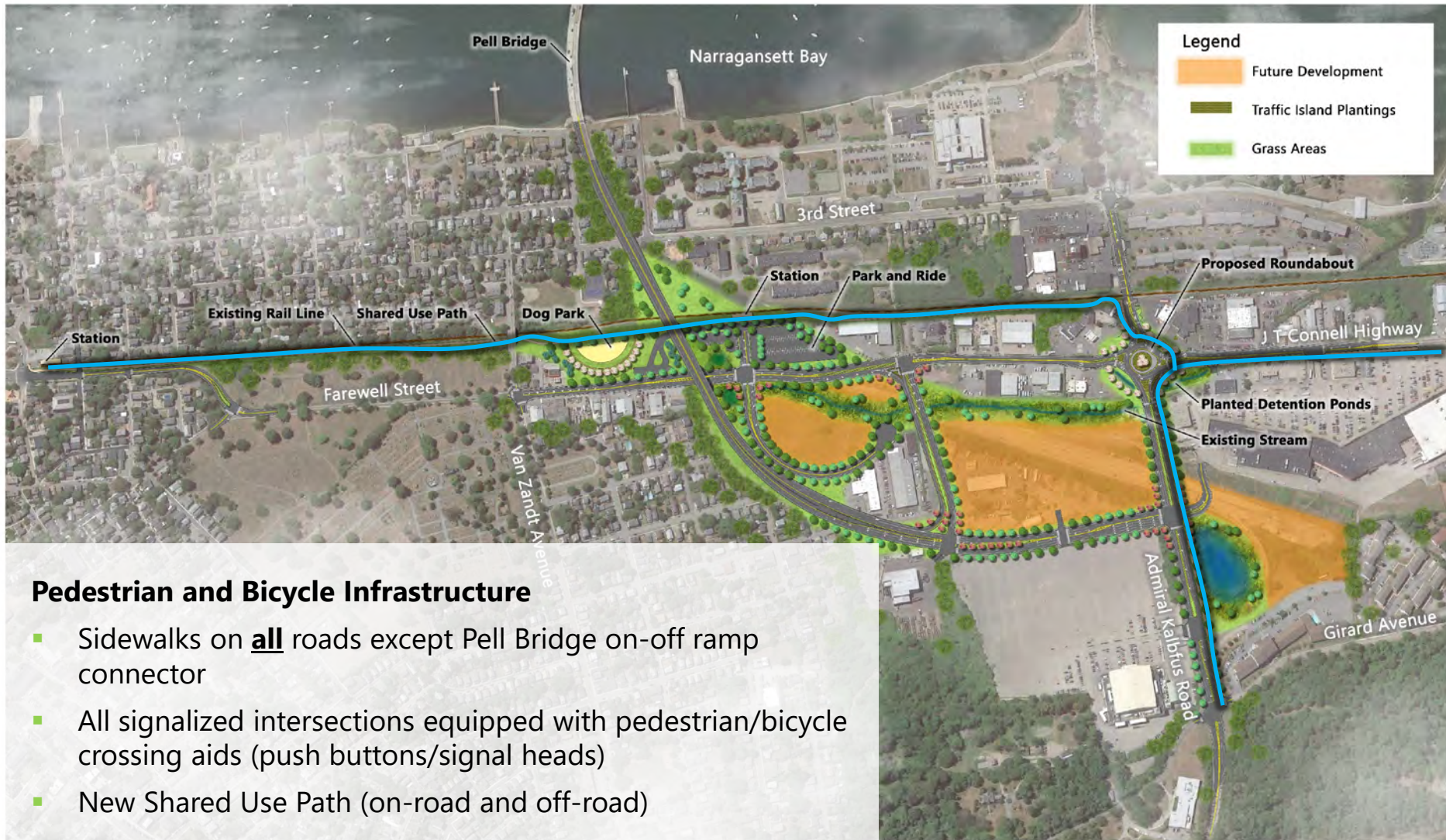
# Proposed Circulation – Adaptive Signal System

- Accommodate all roadway users
  - Vehicle, freight, pedestrians, bicyclists
- Continued land use
- Limited transit capacity
- UTCS service life consideration
- Ability to support emerging transportation technologies (CV)
- Increase average speeds
- Reduce delay/emissions
- Reduce stops
- Faster automatic system response to accidents/emergency events





# Proposed – Pedestrian and Bicycle



## Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure

- Sidewalks on **all** roads except Pell Bridge on-off ramp connector
- All signalized intersections equipped with pedestrian/bicycle crossing aids (push buttons/signal heads)
- New Shared Use Path (on-road and off-road)

 **Proposed Shared Use Path**

# Proposed – Admiral Kalbfus Road Safety Improvements

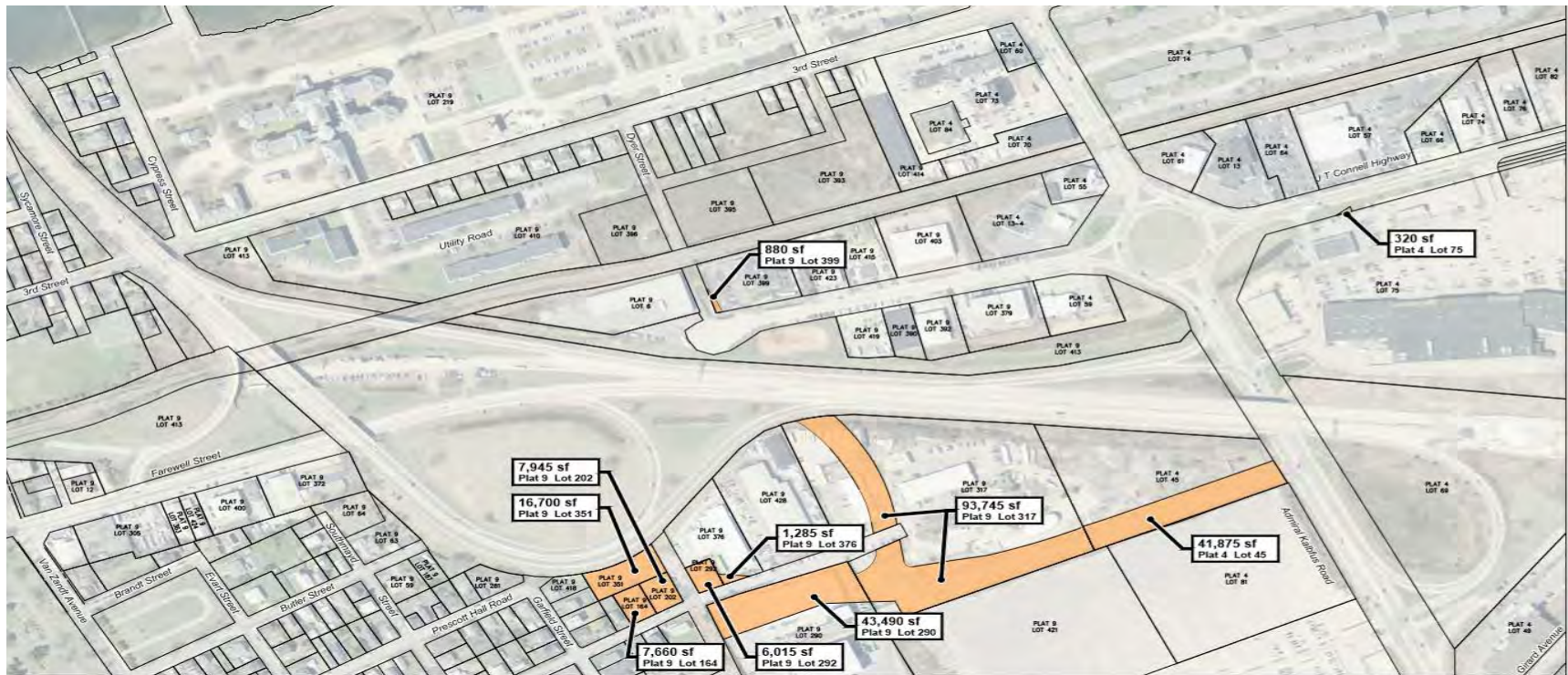


- Install turn lane at 3<sup>rd</sup> Street
- Upgrade at-grade rail crossing
- Convert rotary to roundabout
- Remove off-ramp with skewed right turn lane (cause of most crashes)
- Install signal at Malbone Street/Girard Avenue

# Proposed – Transit Features/Dog Park

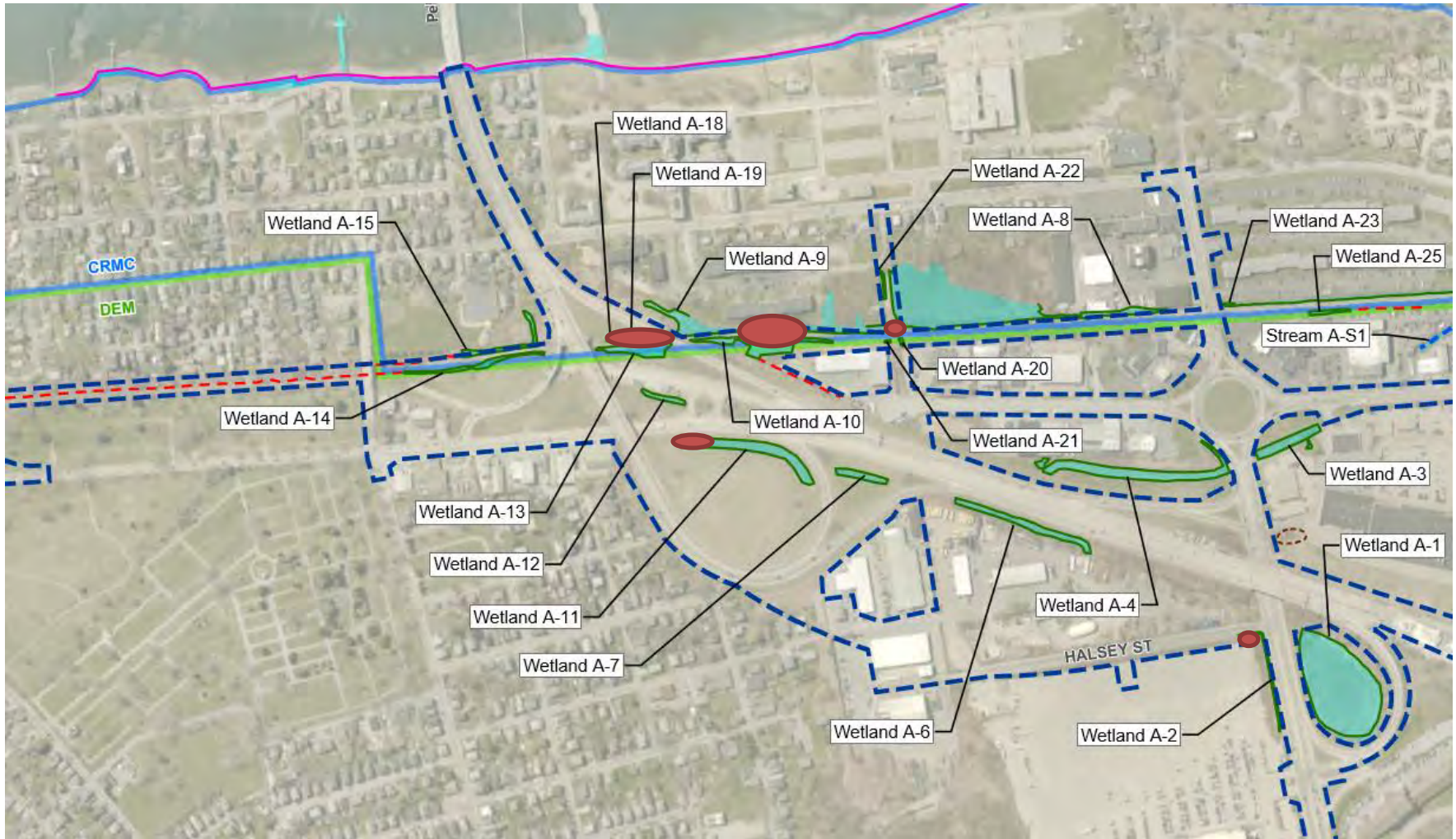


- 250-300 space surface park and ride
- Platform for potential future shuttle service along existing rail
- Relocated dog park
- Connectivity to shared use path



- Permanent Acquisitions and Temporary Easements will be required for this project.
- The ROW impacts based on the proposed alignment are provided in the Draft EA and the referenced appendix.
- RIDOT will conduct additional outreach to the nearby property owners so that you understand the process.

# Wetland Impacts



 Impacted wetland

- Construction Access/Impacts
  - Maintain access to businesses.
  - Work off-peak times and utilize night work where necessary.
  - No detours thru residential neighborhoods.
  
- Noise
  - Limit night work where possible in any residential areas
  - Consider noise deterrents where roadway is moving closer to residential properties.

- Drainage/Stormwater
  - Will design to latest requirements per RIDOT Consent Decree
- Floodplains
  - Providing access to/from bridge above 50 year flood elevation including sea level rise
- Health & Safety
  - During construction, activities are monitored onsite, mitigated as needed, and will follow all regulatory requirements (RIDEM, CRMC)

- Public input is critical and encouraged thru entire stage of the project
  - Concerns/comments on elements or impacts of proposed action
- Input may be submitted:
  - In person tonight – see comment box or via online portal
  - By mail – address provided on the comment form
  - Using the online portal at home – web link provided on the comment form
- The deadline for comments on the Draft Environmental Assessment is December 23, 2019. Those comments will be formally responded to in the Final Environmental Assessment.
- Our project website will remain open for any additional input for the project team.



## RECONSTRUCTION OF THE PELL BRIDGE APPROACHES

### Environmental Assessment (EA)

HOME

ABOUT

TIMELINE

FAQ

DOCUMENTS

USEFUL LINKS

SITEMAP

Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) is reconfiguring the Pell Bridge Interchange. The following pages give a brief history along with pertinent information about the environmental assessment (EA), Project timeline, and public outreach.



#### Project Status

- Finalized the first steps of the process including scoping, purpose and need development, and existing conditions
- Determining alternatives to include within the EA

#### Upcoming Events

- July 16, 2018 - Public Workshop at Newport City Hall
- July 17, 2018 - Public Workshop at Florence Gray Center

Please consider completing the survey below with your questions, concerns and comments about the

- Project Updates
- Draft EA
- Meeting Materials/ Graphics/Reports
- Link to Survey
- [www.pellbridge-ea.com](http://www.pellbridge-ea.com)

- Winter 2020
  - Respond to comments, modify design as necessary based on public input and work in conjunction with FHWA to develop the Final Environmental Assessment (EA).
  - FHWA issues determination.
- Late Winter 2020 through Fall of 2020 – Advance Design and Continue Public Outreach. Develop plans, specifications and estimates and advertise project.
- Construction anticipated to begin in Spring/Summer 2021 and extend thru 2024.

# Proposed Action Impacts/Elements for Discussion

- 3 Stations - each station has:
  - Existing Conditions
  - Preferred Alternative



**Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches – Newport, RI  
Public Information Session – December 12, 2019**

**Sign-in Sheet**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b> (Resident, Company, etc.)	<b>Email or Phone</b> (for future contact)
Steve Sabo	Bike Ped Commission	Sabos909@gmail.com
Chris Martin	Bike Newport	Chris.martin78@gmail.com
Eric March	Newport Dinner Train	info@trainsri.com
Rex LeBeau	HEZ	rlebeau@wrcnbc.org
Peter Martin	Resident	petermartin@stacyhouse.com
Ned Anderson	Resident	Nedanderson@cox.net
Aaron Jasper	Business Owner	aaronjasper@gmail.com
Francis Silvia	Resident	fyinri@gmail.com
Joseph Yoffa	Resident	Joeyoffa@gmail.com
Kathy O'Neill	Resident	Mommatea@hotmail.com
Mariane Perry	Resident	401-846-1143
R Abbinant	Resident	-
Mark Amoello	Resident	-
Eric Milne	Resident	401-641-4302
Casey and Larry Farley	Resident	Larryfarley@yahoo.com
Jean Quinn	Resident	Jeanquinn20032003@yahoo.com
Maureen Cronin	Resident	mcronin@e-worldways.com
Thomas O'Neill	Resident	thomasdennisonneill@gmail.com
Karl Olsen	Resident	thevikinggroup@aol.com
Garnett Trierweiler	Waste Management	gtrierwe@wm.com
Turner Scott	Attorney	tscott@millerscott.com
Ken Gallison	Bridge Liquors	bridgeliquors@gmail.com
Melissa Pattavina	Resident	m.pattavina@me.com
John Gobis	Resident	jackgobis@me.com
Peter Friedrichs	Newport City Planner	pfriedrichs@cityofnewport.com
Michael Behan	Resident	mjb@behanbros.com
Allegra Brosco	Resident	allegrabrosco@gmail.com

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**Sign-in Sheet**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b> (Resident, Company, etc.)	<b>Email or Phone</b> (for future contact)
Deb Bailey	Resident	Debbie_bailey@hotmail.com
Bari Freeman	Bike Newport	bari@bikenewportri.org
Lola Herrera-Ximonet	Resident	lolahexi@gmail.com
Chip Quinn	Resident	chipquinn@yahoo.com
Rendall Shore	Business Owner	rwshore@gmail.com
Aurora Cammarata	Resident	Acammarata32@gmail.com
Carlos Machado	FHWA	-
Doug Powers	Resident	Powers.ndp@gmail.com
Stephanie Winslow	Resident	Stephwinslow17@gmail.com
Beth Cullen	Resident	bethcullen@cox.net
Megan Canley	Resident	401-662-1709
Elizabeth Cohen	Resident	401-849-3864
Martin Cohen	Resident	401-849-3864
Nathan Phelps	Resident	401-848-7413
Brian Stinson	Resident	401-585-4640
Jean Flynn	Newport Daily News	401-380-2360
Dawn Euer	RI Senate	Sen-euer@rilegislature.gov
Sue Pashko	Resident	Envision@att.net
Bill Cooper	Resident	Wjc515@cox.net
Don Elbert	Resident	Don.hawk43@gmail.com
Allison McNally	AIPC	amcnally@aquidneckplanning.org
Michelle Gilmer	Resident	Michelle.gilmer@reveis.com
Ross Cann, AIA	Resident, Planner	RCann@a4arch.com
Steve Faraone	Waste Management	SFaraone@wm.com
Gregory Farris	Waste Management	Gregoryfarris1942@gmail.com
Matthew Hembree	Waste Management	matthewhembree@rocketmail.com
Sheila Desrochers	Resident	Sdesrochers1@cox.net

**Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches – Newport, RI  
Public Information Session – December 12, 2019**

**Sign-in Sheet**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b> (Resident, Company, etc.)	<b>Email or Phone</b> (for future contact)
Steve Berlucchi	Planning Board	sberlucchi@hotmail.com
Jim Madson	Resident	Jamesmadson56@gmail.com
David Pedrick	Resident	david@pedrickyacht.com
Michael Holmes	Carpenters / Labor	Mholmes@nasrcc.org
Terri Flynn	Public	tflynn@middletownri.com
Ralon Cawley	Resident	P2pcawley@gmail.com
Megan Cawley	Resident	Mma72676@aol.com
Timothy Towey	Resident	Ttowey64@gmail.com
Tim Harrington	Resident	jtimh@hotmail.com
Jenn and Brian Amaral	Resident	Kevinlynn21@gmail.com
Kelly Moran	Resident	kelgabmo@gmail.com
Leigh Schoberth	PSNC	Lschoberth@psnc.org
Jane Rheir	Resident	Jfrheir.1@gmail.com
Jerry R Hobbs	Resident, RIBike.org	Jerry.hobbs@ribike.org
Doug Sabetti	Resident	doug@newportsolarri.com
Santiago Neville	Resident	Santiago.r.neville@icloud.com
Mark Amorello	Resident	olleroma@gmail.com
Jann Medeiros	Property Owner	jannmed@aol.com
Peter M Janaros	AIPC / Cliff Walk Resident	Peter.janaros@icloud.com
Jeanne Napolitano	City Council	jeannemarien@aol.com
Lynn Ceglie	City Council	ceglie@gmail.com
David McCurly	Resident	Davidmccurdy7@gmail.com

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## **Appendix B: Technical Memos (Under Separate Cover)**

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## Appendix B: Technical Memos (Under Separate Cover)

### Includes:

- › B1: Transportation
- › B2: Land Use
- › B3: Farmland/Soils
- › B4: Wetland and Waters of the U.S and State
- › B5: Floodplains
- › B6: Water Quality/Stormwater
- › B7: Coastal Resources
- › B8: Federally Threatened and Endangered Species/Biodiversity
- › B9: Cultural (Historic and Archaeological) Resources
- › B10: Environmental Justice & Socioeconomics
- › B11: Visual Resources
- › B12: Air Quality
- › B13: Noise and Vibration
- › B14: Hazardous Materials
- › B15: Climate Change/Resiliency
- › B16: Secondary and Cumulative Impacts
- › B17: Property Acquisition Analysis

**Note:** Analysis in the Technical Appendices was completed prior to the development of the EA and is based on an earlier version of the project design. Subsequent to the appendices being finalized, the project design changed, resulting in rerouting of traffic and reducing the limits of disturbance (LOD) and impacts to wetlands. The EA analysis is based on the updated design.

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## **Appendix C: Comments and Responses on the Draft EA**

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## Appendix C: Comments and Responses on the Draft EA

### Includes:

- › Common Comments and Responses
- › Response to Comments
  - Comment Response Matrix
  - Letter Responses to Stakeholders

## Comments and Responses on Draft EA

The Draft EA was issued on November 20, 2019, and was available for comment until January 23, 2020. The EA was posted online at [www.pellbridge-ea.com](http://www.pellbridge-ea.com); printed copies were available for reference at the Newport City Hall, Newport Public Library, and Florence Gray Center in Newport and at RIDOT and FHWA offices in Providence. A public hearing on the Draft EA was held on December 12, 2019, at Newport City Hall. Comments on the EA could be submitted to RIDOT online or by mail.

RIDOT and FHWA received a total of 140 comments on the Draft EA, the majority of which were submitted online. Online comments and some of the mailed comments were entered into a matrix that shows the commenter's name, the text of the comment, and RIDOT's response. Several longer comments that were sent by mail were responded to with letters from RIDOT. Both the comment matrix and the comment letters with responses are provided in this appendix.

A number of the comments on the EA included common topics that were mentioned by multiple individuals. These topics were identified and responded to as "Common Comments" 1 through 16, which are shown on the following pages. Comments in the matrix that pertain to these topics are referred back to the appropriate Common Comment response(s). Comments that do not pertain to any of the Common Comment topics are responded to individually in the matrix.

## Common Comments and Responses

**Common Comment 1: The Downtown Newport ramp should be maintained because it would provide better traffic operations than the proposed solution and would make access less convenient to some neighborhoods.**

**Comments that identify this topic: 1, 9, 38, 43, 44, 45, 49, 60, 74, 75, 77, 114**

**Response:** As described in Chapter 1 and Section 5.1 of the Draft EA, queuing on the downtown ramp is a significant source of congestion and delay as well as a safety concern. Traffic analysis shows that the Proposed Action would improve operations substantially compared to existing and No Action conditions. While the distance of travel would increase slightly, the travel time is projected to decrease significantly due to added capacity. Removing this off-ramp and the related congestion would result in a decrease in crashes due to the queue on the bridge.

**Common Comment 2: The new design will result in more congestion than existing conditions.**

**Comments that identify this topic: 8, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24, 33, 44, 49, 51, 60, 69, 74, 76, 78, 80, 85, 90, 98, 103, 106**

**Response:** Traffic modeling done for the project projects that traffic operations would improve with the Proposed Action compared to existing conditions and No Action. Please see Section 6.1 of the EA and Appendix B2 for details.

**Common Comment 3: Businesses in the Tradesman’s Center will be adversely affected by the project.**

**Comments that identify this topic: 5, 26, 29, 34, 39, 83, 105, 109**

**Response:** RIDOT is working with business owners on an ongoing basis as project design proceeds, with the goal of maintaining adequate access to businesses during project construction and operation.

**Common Comment 4: The project would not do enough to improve connections between the North End and the rest of Newport.**

**Comments that identify this topic: 53, 79, 84, 86, 92, 100, 104**

**Response:** The Proposed Action provides a more direct connection for both motorized and non-motorized traffic. The Proposed Action would reconnect JT Connell Highway and would include a shared-use path that provides an off-road facility (along the Newport Secondary, Admiral Kalbfus Road, and JT Connell Highway) for pedestrians and bicyclists between Downtown Newport and the North End.

**Common Comment 5: The project needs to improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities and safety in the study area. Many people walk to their destinations**

**and current conditions are unsafe. Also, non-motorized facilities in the study area should be improved overall.**

**Comments that identify this topic: 40, 48, 51, 52, 53, 54, 56, 66, 69, 77, 79, 82, 84, 86, 87, 92, 102, 104, 110, 111**

**Response:** Enhancing pedestrian and bicycle safety is an important goal of the project. The design adds sidewalks and a shared-use path as well as improved pedestrian crossings of major streets. RIDOT continues to work with the City and stakeholders to optimize the proposed facilities as the design progresses. As described in Chapter 3 of the Draft EA, pedestrian and bicycle accommodations incorporated into the Proposed Action would include a shared-use path between Downtown Newport and Admiral Kalbfus Road along the Newport Secondary Rail Corridor; sidewalks and a shared-use path along Admiral Kalbfus Road between Girard Avenue and JT Connell Highway; and improvements on JT Connell Highway between Admiral Kalbfus Road and West Main Road, including a shared-use path on the east side of the highway from the roundabout to the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) campus, then on-street bike lanes from CCRI to West Main Road.

**Common Comment 6: The project will increase traffic in residential neighborhoods.**

**Comments that identify this topic: 6, 12, 61, 67, 68, 75, 107, 124**

**Response:** The proposed design's traffic patterns are similar to existing condition along Admiral Kalbfus Road and JT Connell Highway, north of the rotary. The increased traffic volumes along this corridor result primarily from traffic growth generated by adjacent properties. JT Connell Highway, between the rotary and the Downtown Newport off-ramp, will see an increase in traffic as a result of being reconnected. The Proposed Action does not include any new roadway connections that would result in traffic diverting through The Point neighborhood or along Girard Avenue.

**Common Comment 7: The project will have impacts on low-income and environmental justice communities.**

**Comments that identify this topic: 11, 69, 92, 95**

**Response:** Section 6.10 of the EA evaluated the potential for impacts on low-income and minority populations in the study area. Although some environmental justice populations exist in the study area would experience effects from the projects, these effects are not expected to be disproportionately high and adverse.

**Common Comment 8: Alternatives 1 and/or 2 would be better solutions than the proposed action (Alternative 4b) .**

**Comments that identify this topic: 17, 30, 39, 44, 62, 98**



**Response:** As described in Chapter 4 of the EA, Alternative 4b was evaluated as one of seven alternatives in an initial screening, and was identified along with Alternative 2 as the best options to proceed into more detailed analysis. In the detailed screening, Alternatives 2 and 4B performed similarly in reducing delays throughout the project area. However, Alternative 4B would have a shorter maximum queue than Alternative 2, would create better opportunities to expand pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, would provide significantly more area to convert to developable land, and would have fewer visual impacts. Based on these considerations described above, Alternative 4B was determined to best meet the purpose and need of the project and was carried forward as the Proposed Action.

**Common Comment 9: The park-and-ride should be larger, and a shuttle from the park-and-ride to Downtown Newport should be implemented immediately to reduce traffic and parking congestion downtown.**

**Comments that identify this topic: 3, 11**

**Response:** The park-and-ride is designed to maximize capacity within state right-of-way while avoiding wetlands. Expansion of the park-and-ride may be considered in the future if demand warrants. However, any such expansion would likely be led by the City of Newport. The operational logistics of transport between the park-and-ride and Downtown Newport (shuttle, rail, etc.) are being studied under a separate project.

**Common Comment 10: Homes and businesses should not be relocated for this project.**

**Comments that identify this topic: 34, 69, 77, 95, 102, 103, 116**

**Response:** The design has been developed to minimize the need for relocation of homes and businesses; RIDOT will seek additional opportunities to avoid relocation as design progresses. Displaced property owners will be compensated at fair market value, and displaced residential and business tenants will receive relocation assistance in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970.

**Common Comment 11: The Department of Public Works should not be relocated, or an alternate site needs to be identified in the EA.**

**Comments that identify this topic: 26, 47, 88, 105**

**Response:** The City is currently evaluating multiple locations for the relocation of the DPW and Utilities Departments. The viability of the sites and the funding sources for the relocation are to be determined by the City. RIDOT is coordinating with the relocation of the DPW facilities and the right-of-way actions associated with the site. Construction may be phased such that the relocation of the DPW facilities is not required at the time when construction commences, but later in the project timeline.

**Common Comment 12: Construction impacts will be substantial and need to be mitigated.**

**Comments that identify this topic: 20, 52, 55, 71**

**Response:** Construction impacts for each environmental topic studied are described in Chapter 6 of the Draft EA; mitigation is described in Chapter 7. RIDOT will work with the community to provide information on the construction process and to minimize and mitigate impacts. Measures to minimize impacts include providing clear detours, flagging and alternate access; limiting hours of construction in residential areas and requiring contractors to use noise reduction methods; controlling dust by covering and/or vegetating exposed areas; and reducing pollutants in runoff through the use of silt fences or other methods.

**Common Comment 13: People could be exposed to hazardous materials disturbed during construction.**

**Comments that identify this topic: 52, 69, 95**

**Response:** Section 6.14 of the EA describes the potential for impacts related to hazardous materials. As noted in that section, contaminated subsurface soils have been identified within the Study Area in locations where excavation or other intrusive construction activity is anticipated. However, any hazardous materials encountered would be handled and disposed of in accordance with applicable regulations, as described in Section 7.14 of the EA. The Proposed Action may also result in a beneficial impact if it results in the removal and disposal of contaminated materials in accordance with state and Federal regulations.

**Common Comment 14: Please identify the properties that would be acquired to construct the project.**

**Comments that identify this topic: 21, 28, 32, ,37, 76**

**Response:** The properties that would be acquired under the Proposed Action are identified in Section 6.2 and Appendix B17 of the EA. They include up to three residential properties along Halsey Street between Garfield Street and Columbus Way; up to two commercial properties, including an unoccupied commercial building at 60 Halsey Street and the Waste Management-Newport Hauling and Transfer Station at 65 Halsey Street; and the municipally owned parcel at 70-90 Halsey Street that houses facilities associated with the City's Water Department and Clean City Program.

**Common Comment 15: Several commenters suggested improvements outside the study area and/or that would not meet the purpose and need of the project.**

**Comments that identify this topic: 2, 4, 27, 66, 81, 91, 99**

**Response:** The suggested improvements are beyond the scope of the EA analysis. As stated in Chapter 1 of the EA, the purpose of the Proposed Action is to reconstruct the Pell Bridge ramps to improve traffic circulation, reduce queueing, improve safety, reconnect the neighborhoods segmented by the current highway infrastructure, and support the City of Newport's economic development plan by maximizing land area for redevelopment. Improvements that would not meet this purpose were not considered in the environmental analysis.

**Common Comment 16: Several commenters expressed concerns regarding the redevelopment of properties remaining after removal of the existing ramps or preferences for the future use of these properties.**

**Comments that identify this topic: 33, 36, 76**

**Response:** The City of Newport has designated the land that would be vacated by removal of the existing ramps for future development as part of an "Innovation Hub." The specific future development program will be determined by the City and would include additional opportunities for public comment. Please see Sections 5.2 and 6.2 of the EA for additional information.

## Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches

Newport and Middletown, Rhode Island

No.	Name	Comment	Response
1	Rocky Steeves	As a Point resident who enjoys easy access to the bridge from my home via van Zandt I would prefer an option that would give easier access from Farewell so please don't eliminate that offramp and put an on-ramp near there as well.	Please see the response to Common Comment 1.
2	Kraig Ruth	They should stick to the original plan and build a highway across Aquidneck Island. East Main Road and West Main Road are too dangerous and slow. Build a highway similar to the one that crosses Jamestown.	Please see the response to Common Comment 15.
3	Stephanie Szneke	I like the preferred design, it is the most efficient.	Comment acknowledged.
		Please provide the maximum amount of spaces possible for the park and ride. Maximum noted is 300 parking spaces...it would make sense to make that as large a number as possible. This is our one chance to keep as many vehicles as possible out of downtown Newport. And there MUST be alternative transportation modes incorporated into this project, or else the park and ride will be useless.	Please see the response to Common Comment 9.
4	Theodore Pietz	This project presents a very unique opportunity to link Coddington Highway to Burma Road (via Simon Pietri drive on the very eastern edge of the Naval Station in exchange for taking over Burma Road) would greatly alleviate the amount of "through traffic" on East and West Main Roads in Portsmouth and Middletown.	Please see the response to Common Comment 15.
5	John MacGowan	I'm very concerned that using the last conceptual drawing to be added last year is now presented as the first and then repeated two more times in a row making it look as the favored plan? It wrecks all of the tradesman units at 64 Halsey Street, features the compacting station as our gateway to Newport and al lines itself adjacent to the newest development at old Slots casino. To say somethings smells here is my concern.	Chapter 5 of the Draft EA describes the alternatives that were analyzed for the Pell Bridge ramp replacement and identifies Alternative 4B as the Proposed Action. Please see the response to Common Comment 3 for a discussion of impacts on the Tradesman's Center.
6	John Sperling	What is the plan to mitigate traffic East of the Malbone Rd-Girard Ave intersection?	Please see the response to Common Comment 6.
7	David Kohnen	I support this project, but only if the historic sites are protected along with those which are eligible (i.e. Navy Hospital, Railroad Bridge, and Miantinomi WWI Tower).	As described in Section 6.9 of the EA, the Proposed Action would not result in adverse effects to historic sites on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
8	Sandra Barnett	Please do not change the rotary on Admiral Kalbfus Rd. It works really well to keep traffic moving!	Please see the response to Common Comment 2.
9	Patrick Kelley	The proposed elimination of the downtown off ramp, while targeting at reduced queue lengths measured in peak July weekend period (probably during the Folk Festival) will have a significant unintended impact on Admiral Kalbfus Road and Broadway. The estimated 2040 volume of 6,462 vehicles per hour will now use Admiral Kalbfus to Broadway as the primary route to downtown. This will significantly increase travel times for local users throughout the year as compared to the current Farewell Street to Van Zandt route and also significantly increase traffic delays on the single lane roads of Admiral Kalbfus and Broadway. The traffic congestion model should be extended to include impact along these extended routes. A better alternative would be to address the cause of queuing which is the stop sign at the bottom of the ramp and the stop light at the corner of Farewell and Van Zandt.	Please see the response to Common Comment 1.
10	Phil Harnois	I used to live in Newport and now regularly go there throughout the year as a Narragansett resident - I think re-designing this infrastructure is a great idea. In my opinion, none of the designs suggest a negative impact to what's already there (or lack of what's there) that would outweigh the improvement.	Comment acknowledged.
		After reviewing the proposed options - my thought is that designs "3A" and "3B" that retain the downtown off-ramp should be of the lowest design preference. That off-ramp is a major congestion issue and so long as it's there, in any form, travelers coming off the bridge will use it even if there is an alternate route. I think it should be removed and traffic forced to rotate through the north-end and then to downtown as the other designs suggest. This will also make sure people actually see what's in the North End instead of being able to avoid it and could help invigorate local business or investment there.	Comment noted. Alternative 4B was identified as the preferred alternative and is the Proposed Action evaluated in the EA.



**Reconstruction of the  
Pell Bridge Approaches**  
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No.	Name	Comment	Response
11	Barbara Costello	I think this looks like a good plan overall.	Comment acknowledged.
		I am concerned about how well the low-income areas will be treated in terms of compensation or alternative housing especially during the construction period.	Please see the response to Common Comment 7.
		I would also really like to see additional park and ride spaces in the area. Three hundred spots is totally insufficient to make a significant impact on traffic in the city during busy weekends. It would be so nice if Newport could create a shuttle bus system that would make cars unnecessary for weekend visitors -- I'm thinking of resort towns like Park City, UT that have free shuttle buses in town. That would make Newport so much easier to get around for tourists and so much more livable for residents.	Please see the response to Common Comment 9.
12	Claire Rich	I looks like there will be a road added from the new parking area right though Bayside Village apartment complex.  This area has a lot of children and floods with every rain. How will the impact the local residents?  I live in one of the houses between Dwyer and this new road. I am very concerned that this will drastically increase the traffic in the quiet neighbor hood.	No new road is proposed through the Bayside Village complex. As described in Section 6.5 of the EA, the Proposed Action is not expected to affect flooding in the area. Please see the response to Common Comment 6 regarding neighborhood traffic.
13	Lockett Ford Ballard, Jr.	Like the proposed changes. Makes sense.	Comment acknowledged.
14	Andrew Green	This is complicated project I am sure- but, my main shout is for a BIKE PATH- they have one in Bristol and warren and it has transformed their quality of life. This linked to the car park and easy access into Newport- pedi cabs, taxis busses. trolleys from the main car park- but mainly THE BIKE PATH is needed. When cars go park themselves the bike path will be used even more! thank you	Comment acknowledged. As described in the EA, the Proposed Action would include a shared-use path from the proposed park-and-ride into downtown Newport along with other pedestrian and bicycle connections.
15	Tj provost	Have lived here 40 years. Pretty much the flow of things as far as traffic during both summer and winter. I like the first draft. It flows in all directions without too much stopping involved or for 1st time visitors, to much thinking to get where you are going. Nice work	Comment acknowledged.
16	Leilani Dimond	I am concerned that this project will seriously disrupt traffic in and out of Naval Station Newport and Naval Health Clinic New England. The only access now is from the roundabout at admiral kalbfus st. Lines will back up across the entire base at critical times at the end of work day, and across town in the morning. It may make it impossible to get to the medical clinic during construction, and if traffic is permanently rerouted to third street, a small residential road, congestion will be bad. Please closely look at the potential impacts on the navy population here and how the change in traffic will affect the thousands of people who work on base or visit it daily.	Please see the response to Common Comment 2. As described in EA Section 6.1, the Proposed Action is expected to improve traffic operations overall.
17	Brig Stevenson	Hello, I am a concerned Newport resident that is deeply frustrated with the chosen alignment. I find it hard to understand how, under the chosen alignment, it appears that adding 2 intersections is going to reduce traffic more than by adding ramp structures. I agree that the current ramp alignment is in dire need of improvement, but I find the chosen alignment much worse, and believe that adding intersections will have a negative impact on safety in contrast to grade-separated options. I understand the town's desires to tear down the 'freeway to nowhere' but I believe that that freeway is what provides a speedy connection between Downtown Newport and the North End, and that adding many intersections will further separate the northern half of the island than unite it.	Please see the response to Common Comment 2.
		In conclusion, I deeply encourage the town and RIDOT to reconsider alignments 1 and 2 as I believe that it is they that will reduce traffic on the bridge, not the chosen alignment. I notice that appears that the main opposition of the town and state to choose alignments 1 and 2 is simply the cost, and I find this egregious because the state's infrastructure is significantly lacking and the fact that the state wants to spend as little money as possible on it is deeply troubling to me as it also appears that the town and state's only priorities are building more hotels just to collect more tax revenue, when nobody considers the impact they might have on our state's already crumbling infrastructure. If the state really is worried about costs, then I would like to finish off that I don't care if a new alignment is tolled, as long as it is better than the current situation of which the chosen alignment is definitely not. This project is the state's chance to prove to its constituents that it does believe in fixing its transport network versus spending elsewhere. Thank you, and may here more from me later.  -Sincerely, A Concerned Newport Resident	Please see the response to Common Comment 8.

No.	Name	Comment	Response
18	Nancy Tiska	I want to thank Jody and the team for taking time to visit the impacted communities earlier this year and explain their strategies for the new Pell Bridge Realignment project. I looked at the proposed plan and although there were other things I wanted to see (use of the old railroad line as a road and closure of Van Zandt St Bridge), overall, the plan looks really good. It moves traffic off the bridge effectively and with the closure of the short existing exit ramp, prevents the long traffic queues on the bridge and onto Farewell St. It also streamlines the base traffic coming off the bridge in the mornings (by eliminating the short exit ramp). The addition of a park and ride lot is a plus too. I was also happy to see no additional access points into the Point neighborhood. The streets in the neighborhood are already very narrow and congested enough. Thank you all for your hard work and perseverance, it will be worth it! We look forward to the completed project! Nancy and Carl Tiska	Comment acknowledged.
19	LouAnn lorenz	Where is there a picture of what you are proposing? The picture on your site is how it is today. Where is there a sketch of what you are proposing?	Please see Figure ES-1 in the Executive Summary section of the Final EA for a graphic showing the Proposed Action.
20	Edward anderson	I live at the bottom of Halsey street. Will you buying residential properties? I don't like the idea of living in a massive construction zone for years.	As described in Section 6.2 and Appendix B-17 of the Draft EA, up to three residential properties on Halsey Street between Garfield Street and Columbus Way would be acquired for right-of-way. Please see the response to Common Comment 12 regarding construction impacts.
21	Kelly Fickenworth	Several North End businesses, home owners and property owners are concerned about their properties being taken by the state by 'emminate domain'. What are the probabilities of this action; and, which properties ( inclusive) will be affected by 'emminate domain' ?? Please respond so that all affected taxpayers can prepare impact statements and prepare to have to move due to 'emminate domain'. Thank you for your honest reply.	Please see the response to Common Comment 14.
22	James Rugh	I am very disappointed in this design. It would make it harder for those who simply want to get to Newport as they will have to wait for a signaled intersection with traffic headed to the Naval Station. For those crossing the bridge to reach the Naval Station this will make commuting ever more difficult. They will have to line up to make a left turn at the signal at Adm Kalbfus. In the morning this will result in a huge back-up.	Please see the response to Common Comment 2.
		Finally, building a 300 space commuter lot is a waste of money since on opening there will be no shuttle service. Past events have shown that regardless of how limited or expensive parking is, those coming to Newport will not park remotely and wait for a bus.	Comment noted.
		And as for bike paths, another waste of money in an area mainly serving people heading to jobs or visitors to Newport.	Comment noted.
		Scrap this pan and go back to the drawing boards. Make it quicker and easier to (1) get to and from Newport (visitors) and (2) quicker and easier for workers and staff at Naval Station Newport to get to and from the base. This plan fails both.	Comment noted.
23	Theodorus Slee	It is great to see that there is a proposal to update the "bridge to nowhere" but, I feel the proposed plans are missing the mark. There is a much simpler update that will accomplish the desired result that hasn't been offered. I'd be happy to share my rendering but this comment format doesn't allow for attached images. Aside from this, I wonder how Farwell St and the section of the roadway between Van Zandt and America's cup Ave will work with the additional traffic. By directly connecting the JT Connell rotary to Farwell it will create a more convenient pathway to direct more traffic into town (which I think is great). Although, with the use of navigation software and apps I fear these will send more cars down sidestreets through the Point and up Van Zandt to Broadway to avoid the congestion that could be created.	Please see the response to Common Comment 2.
		I do highly agree with the need for Light Rail on the island and am happy to see this being utilized to get as many people to park their cars outside of town and take a form of public transit in. That said, I think the Light Rail should be a larger component of this overall project (ie minimum design specifications, provide a rail yard within the land freed up, larger bus terminal, etc.).	Shuttle service between the proposed park-and-ride and downtown Newport, including the mode (rail, bus, etc.) is being studied as part of a separate project.
		I would also suggest reducing the width of Admiral Kalbfus Rd to 2 lanes west of Malbone (except for turning lanes into plazas and side streets). Please feel free to contact me and I'll be happy to share the rendering I've created.	Please see the response to Common Comment 2.

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No.	Name	Comment	Response
24	Richard Cromwell	The design is a good concept. It takes parts of the initial designs and makes it better. I do not understand how the flow off the bridge will be faster to the traffic circle and to Newport. The morning traffic to the base will have to go thru a stop light? before the circle? How will the Newport Traffic flow in. Thru the same traffic light? and then around the circle? All in all much better and simpler.	Please see the response to Common Comment 2.
25	Mary Jo Valdes	I am beyond pleased with the proposed plan. It's respectful of the abutting neighborhoods. It diffuses the heavy traffic off the Pell Bridge. It takes into consideration the needs of cyclists and pedestrians. It encourages visitors to park outside of downtown and take other modes of transportation into Newport. It lessens the damage to our historic cemeteries by closing the exit ramp onto Farewell Street. It frees up acres of land for productive use. And on and on . . . Well done!	Comment acknowledged.
26	Aaron Jasper	<p>To all: Newport Residents, Newport City Councilors, RI State Senators and Representatives, RI federal Senators and Representatives</p> <p>Residents and businesses of Newport should look carefully at the proposed realignment of the Newport Bridge ramps.</p> <p>The re-alignment of the bridge ramps, as proposed, will be bad for Newport residents, businesses and taxpayers.</p> <p>The proposed new roads and their construction will have a seriously bad effect on all the businesses in the Newport County Tradesman's Centers at 62 and 64 Halsey Street. These businesses include several plumbers, electricians, cabinet makers, iron workers, boat repair services, a distributor of sailing yacht hardware and electronics, a sailmaker and, of course, McGrath Clambakes kitchens and office.</p> <p>These businesses employ more than 100 full time skilled workers (and many part time workers) and provide services and products to clients all over New England.</p>	Please see the response to Common Comments 3 and 11.
		<p>The proposed re-alignment would eliminate the Newport off-ramp and send all traffic to Admiral Kalbfus road.</p> <p>When coming over the bridge to go anywhere south of Admiral Kalbfus road into Newport, we want to continue to come off the current off-ramp and head South onto Farewell Street. Not be sent to Admiral Kalbfus Road.</p> <p>Don't eliminate this off ramp.</p> <p>If the City wants more commercial property to develop, eliminate the overpass over Admiral Kalfus Road.</p> <p>In order to eliminate the overpass over Admiral Kalbfus and the road to nowhere, all that is needed is to continue the bridge off ramp going to the North alongside the on ramp, which begins at Admiral Kalbfus opposite the RK Town (Stop and Shop) Plaza exit/entrance.</p> <p>It would also be quite possible to curve these roads to intersect the rotary at Connell and Admiral Kalbfus, thus eliminating the traffic light at Admiral Kalbfus for the ramp access roads.</p>	Please see the response to Common Comments 3 and 11.
		Finally, the Newport Public Works Department should stay right where it is. There is no better place within Newport. Relocation would be expensive and an unnecessary cost to Newport and RI taxpayers.	Please see the response to Common Comments 3 and 11.

No.	Name	Comment	Response
27	William Fitzgerald	It would be good for all if the proposed bike path and pedestrian path be expanded to Burma Rd. This could connect downtown Newport to Melville. The old RR tracks should be utilized as bike path and a pedestrian path. An example is the Bristol bike path which is used for recreation and pleasure for many.	Please see the response to Common Comment 15.
28	Lauren DeSantis	How close is the planned exit ramp going to be to my house? Which houses will be demolished? Will there be noise abatement? I can see and hear the bridge traffic from my house currently. If it gets closer there will be a substantial increase in noise. You keep referring to Halsey Street in the article, but anything after the dead end is North Halsey Street. There is a city ordinance that separates them. Will there be any more meetings for public comment?	The exit ramp will be 60 to 100 feet from the house. Please see the response to Common Comment 14 for information regarding properties to be acquired. The public comment period for the Draft EA was extended to January 23, and there have been additional outreach and meetings regarding the EA since this comment was posted. RIDOT will continue to work closely with impacted project neighbors through the right-way-process and through construction of the project.
29	Donald Lee	Looking at your site map it looks like the tradesman center will be taken. That's good by me as I'm looking to retire anyway.	Please see the response to Common Comment 3 regarding the Tradesman's Center.
30	Francis Donal O'Brien	I live in the Point area of Newport. Alternatives 1, 2, and 3a provide some improvement for getting on and off the bridge and reconnecting Connell Highway to the city. Alternatives 3b, 3c, 4a, and 4b make bridge access much more difficult with little compensating benefit, as far as I can determine.	Please see the response to Common Comment 8.
31	Blake A. Banky	Newport Biodiesel has 10 tractor trailers coming and going from our facility everyday. Additionally, we have smaller trucks coming in and out all day long. We embrace Newport's desire to adapt to our community's growing profile, so we understand the need for a traffic change. That said, we need to be assured that our truck traffic will still be able to utilize the Pell Bridge and a route to our facility during the project. To cut us off is to put us out of business, as we can't idle our plant and survive.	The Proposed Action would maintain access to and from the Pell Bridge during project construction and operation.
32	Jeremiah	It looks like the off ramp is going over my kitchen. I'd really prefer not to live under an overpass. Are there any options that would prevent this situation? Thank you.	Please see the response to Common Comment 14 for information regarding properties to be acquired. RIDOT will work closely with all impacted project neighbors on acquisition and relocation of required properties.
33	victor Grenon	If people will not allow development on the Newport Grand property, why free up more space right next to it? Also, it appears the queuing will just be moved further down the ramp. Right now traffic can take the exit off the bridge and merge on to Farewell quite smoothly which appears would not be the case with the redesign. Also the queuing on the existing ramp really isn't bad at all except for a few Saturday mornings in the summer. I've commuted everyday via this route for 20 years now and the ramp is fine the way it is. The redesign could also possibly slow traffic for people headed North which hasn't been a problem in the past. Thank you for taking the time to read this.	Please see the response to Common Comment 16 regarding future redevelopment of the ramp area and the response to Common Comment 2 regarding traffic operations with the Proposed Action.
34	John Greichen Jr	I am quite concerned a lead option appears to impact 42 small businesses. Rhode Island does a poor job in general of attracting business. The wrong choice here will just reinforce that perception. Some options have minimal business impact and should be weighed accordingly. Thank you for your efforts.	Please see the response to Common Comments 3 and 10.
35	Carl Tiska	Thanks for your work on the bridge realignment. I believe that the option that you selected will achieve your objectives of eliminating traffic backups on the bridge, while also improving the flow of traffic coming into Newport and reducing the traffic passing through the Point neighborhood. I appreciate the fact that you allowed residents to provide input into the process. I look forward to the new traffic pattern.	Comment acknowledged.
36	Michael Sullivan	Consider that the 'land made available for potential redevelopment' include significant green space/parks...if the intent of the project is to reduce congestion, then don't pile on more buildings...leave some significant space open & green for people to enjoy...a great park for staging areas to conduct 5k/10k/half marathon events...our very own 'Newport Mall'...not the shopping type...maybe a pond with a water feature?	Please see the response to Common Comment 16.



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No.	Name	Comment	Response
37	Megan Cawley	My family lives at 53B Halsey st., a quiet dead end street. It is a perfect neighborhood for my husband, our 7 year old daughter and myself. What does the restructuring of the bridge off ramp/highway mean to us? How will we be impacted? How will it effect the property value? (I am guessing I know the answer to that one) How about the property taxes? This public comment period needs to be extended to let the residents of Newport digest this restructuring project. We need time to do our research to allow us to provide educated comments on this project. For many of us, this is the holiday season. A time for Family and Friends and holiday traditions. We should not be spending the December of 2019 holiday season wondering and researching what the proposed restructuring project means to us, the residents of Halsey St.	The public comment period was extended to provide additional time outside of the holiday season. Please see the response to Common Comment 14 for information regarding properties to be acquired.
38	Barry Atkinson	I like the plan to have multiple exits off of Rt 138 when heading East off the Newport bridge into Newport, however I think the existing lone off ramp should remain in some shape or form. One from a familiarity perspective of occasional visitors and two from the fact the queuing the traffic to a longer line on the extension just makes for longer lines. Multiple exits help! Thank you!	Please see the response to Common Comment 1.
39	Lindsey Turowski	In reviewing the plans, I only see option 1 and 2 as productive and viable. Access to the south end should not be slowed down or changed. Only 1 and 2 provided off-ramps that will give direct access to downtown and many residential areas. Folks that live here do not need longer commute times, they need shorter. By the looks of option 3 and the many alternatives the commute times will increase not decrease.	Please see the response to Common Comment 8.
		I also have an issue with displacing the many businesses that are successfully operating in the tradesman complex area.	Please see the response to Common Comment 3.
40	Father Thomas O'Neill	<p>People with little or no access to an automobile who live or need to shop in the vicinity of Admiral Kalbfus are even now exposed to the noise, the exhaust and the hazards of large volumes of rather fast moving traffic of all sizes, speed limit signs notwithstanding.</p> <p>Many people there are not affluent and have limited options in their choice of where they can live.</p> <p>I believe that there is among other matters an environmental hardship in this situation.</p> <p>The redevelopment of the area presents an opportunity to improve the quality of life for all, especially the most vulnerable by taking measures to calm and divert the traffic that people on foot, in wheelchairs or on bicycles encounter.</p> <p>Making this effort in behalf of vulnerable citizens would be a blessing for all. Not doing so would be a tragedy.</p>	Please see the response to Common Comment 5.
41	Amy	Make sure the 2 project underpasses are well lit - these locations should feel safe and bright. They present great opportunities for murals. Look at what the City of Somerville, MA has done under I-93.	Comment noted.
43	Lisa Weyandt	<p>These proposed plans are highly problematic for residents of Newport! The plans disregard residents of the 5th ward, Thames Street, Ocean Drive, and the Kay-Catherine districts as well as many others by routing us essentially to middletown to arrive at our homes.</p> <p>The current downtown ramp exit MUST remain. It should be updated, but remain. A second ramp/route similar to the ones proposed would be an alternative route.</p> <p>The residents of Newport need to be a priority not simply the tourists.</p>	Please see the response to Common Comment 1.

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No.	Name	Comment	Response
44	Ronald De Yoe	<p>Comments reference the "plan" as stated in November/December Newport Daily News issues and other local papers. Comments as follows :</p> <p>1. For traffic coming North from downtown Newport on Farewell to Connell to gain access to the bridge, MAINTAIN THIS RAMP AS IS; THIS IS A PROVEN, FAST, EFFICIENT, NO DEVELOPMENT COST BRIDGE ACCESS.</p> <p>2. For traffic coming over the bridge trying to go to downtown Newport, the plan seems to indicate that this traffic is lead to a short loop terminating at a traffic light on Connell, then having to make a left-hand turn to go South on Connell to reach downtown Newport. At this same traffic light, traffic coming South from the round-about on Connell must make left-hand turn to enter the bridge. HOW DOES THIS SHORT OFF RAMP EXTENSION WITH TRAFFIC LIGHT TERMINATION PROVIDE FOR THE REDUCTION OF THE TRAFFIC BACK-UP SO FREQUENTLY ENCOUNTERED ON THE BRIDGE? AS A MINIMUM WITH THIS OFF RAMP, WOULDN'T A FLYOVER OVER CONNELL THEN MERGING WITH CONNELL ON THE RIGHT SIDE, AS DEFINED IN ALTERNATIVE ONE, ALLEVIATE THIS PROBLEM ?</p> <p>3. For traffic coming South on Connell from the round-about, WHY WOULD'NT THE DIRECT ENTRANCE TO THE BRIDGE FROM CONNELL AS DEPICTED IN ALTERNATIVE 1 BE SO MUCH MORE TRAFFIC-HANDLING EFFICIENT, CONSIDERING THE HEAVY TRAFFIC FROM THE NAVAL BASE AS WELL AS THE INCREASED TRAFFIC FROM THE IMPROVED CONNELL/CODDINGTON CONNECTION? THIS ELIMINATES THE THE TRAFFIC LIGHT AND LEFT-HAND-TURN FOR ACCESS TO THE BRIDGE BY THE CURRENT PLAN.</p> <p>4. MAKE THE HIGHWAY CONNECTIONS HEADING NORTH IN ALTERNATIVE 1 TO ADMIRAL KALBFUS BUT ADJOINING ADMIRAL KALBFUS AS DEPICTED IN ALTERNATIVE 4B.</p> <p>5. Although the park&amp;ride can reduce some of the downtown Newport traffic, many visitors will continue to seek downtown parking and of course the large hotels provide parking. Additionally two more large hotels are already under construction and a third under consideration will provide parking. This further increases the traffic to downtown Newport. To accommodate this traffic, make the following improvements:</p> <p>a. make a short right-hand turn lane turning right from Van Zandt to North on Connell.</p> <p>b. Provide a pedestrian bridge over Connell from the East side of Connell to West side of Connell mating with the high point of Van Zandt RR bridge. The traffic light at Connell would only have to control auto traffic, no separate time for pedestrians.</p> <p>c. Ease right-hand turn from Farewell to Americas Cup. Provide expansion of Americas Cup into two lanes immediately after rounding the corner from Farewell to Americas Cup.</p> <p>d. Widen the intersection at Americas Cup and Bridge St with a dedicated Left-turn lane onto Bridge St and Two forward lanes mating with the two forward lanes in front of the bus station.</p>	<p>Please see the response to Common Comment 1.</p> <p>Please see the response to Common Comment 2.</p> <p>Please see the response to Common Comment 2.</p> <p>Please see the response to Common Comment 8. Alternative 1 would bisect otherwise developable land and therefore would not meet the purpose and need of the project.</p> <p>As described in Chapter 5 of the EA, a number of alternatives were evaluated for the project. Alternative 4B, now the Proposed Action, was determined to best meet the project's purpose and need.</p>
45	Anna Besler	<p>Will all traffic be coming into Newport through admiral kalibus, Broadway - North End? That area is already congested. ACTUAL locals live there. Will the current exit still be available in addition to the new one?</p>	<p>The current exit would no longer be available. Traffic operations are predicted to improve as a result of the Proposed Action. Please see the response to Common Comment 1.</p>
46	Louisa Boatwright	<p>There needs to be a North End Committee created that works with RIDOT, City Council and Our State Senator and State Reps. This Committee should include local residents that have Urban Planning skills, Construction knowledge, and residents committed to residential needs in North End &amp; Point while developing opportunities for economic growth as our Comprehensive Plan outlines.</p>	<p>The City is currently working with a consultant to develop a North End Master Plan, which will address the future of development and economic growth in the area.</p>
47	Louisa Boatwright	<p>I believe the Municipal garage and water dept. moves need a plan. Either keep them somewhere on this land area or identify an alternate site. This project needs a Committee like the School Building Committee required but the State to make educated recommendations along a time line to keep this project moving forward.</p>	<p>Please see the response to Common Comment 11.</p>

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No.	Name	Comment	Response
48	Laura Rossier	My name is Laura, and I live in Newport, RI. As the reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches Project approaches, I am most concerned about how people from the north end are going to be able to get around better. My mom, brother and I walk and take the RIPTA bus occasionally, and if the construction starts it'll be more difficult for us when we take the bus, as well as it being more unsafe trying to walk there since traffic will be redirected and we have to try and be more cautious, watching out more for cars so we don't get hurt. The trip is usually done about 2-3 times a week and the primary way of getting there is walking. I'm also very concerned about the conditions of the sidewalks and how it's so hard trying to walk from where I live to the store. The sidewalk by Hill Mart is in horrible condition and it's hard for people with wheelchairs, baby carriages, and people who can't walk well. It's also difficult trying to cross over in the same area, you're trying to cross in the cross walk, but since there's no cross signal and no lights there, it'll take someone about 5 to 10 minutes, tops, to wait for maybe someone to stop, or for no cars to come to be able to cross. It's still unsafe to try and cross at that spot and someone could get really hurt. I feel like we shouldn't have to wait for the whole project to be done, before our streets get fixed for us, that it would be better to work on bettering the streets, adding crosswalk signals, and lights, to places that need, as well as making better biking lanes.	Please see the response to Common Comment 5. Enhancing pedestrian and bicycle safety is an important goal of the project.
49	Doug Powers	The queuing on the Pell bridge is only an issue during certain times of the day, in the Summer, on weekends. Other than the ongoing construction on the bridge itself, my wife and I don't see this as a problem that needs a \$60M solution. But, being realists, we know that leaving things alone is not going to be the answer RIDOT and the State and the City will accept. So, 1) Leave the "Downtown Newport" off-ramp alone. It will serve to filter some of the traffic that will certainly queue when it gets to Admiral K. Put up a sign that says "Local Traffic" and camera toll anyone who doesn't have the appropriate transponder (say \$10) for trying to circumvent what you are hoping to achieve 2) Way too many new lights to make this plan try and work. We know they are "smart lights", but the fact of the matter is that this number will create a traffic nightmare. One is needed at Admiral K and Malbone, however. 3) And for those "locals" who now need to circle around, many are going to go up Admiral K to the lights at West Main/Broadway. Those lights are already a nightmare to get through and the increased traffic will only make it worse. 4) And do you really think shuttles for visitors will really work as imagined? Many families come to enjoy our city. Families have kids, pets, strollers, gear etc. They want to hit the beach. They want to stay in hotels or BnB's. They want to drive down Ocean Drive. They want to drive and park at their destination, not some number of miles away. Realistically, they will be turned off by this new transportation model and the City revenues will fall. How often do you envision these shuttles running in the Summer? How many people can get on board? We have seen no real studies about this, other than the wild hope that this will work. So, we will go from the "road to nowhere" to the "zombie parking lot" as very few people will use it. We would write more, but sadly, we don't think anyone would be listening. Just don't ask us to belly up more of our burdensome tax dollars to support any part of this. Thank you.	Please see the response to Common Comment 1.  Please see the response to Common Comment 2.  Comment noted.
50	Donald G Elbert Jr.	Traffic congestion on Aquidneck Island is big problem. RIDOT should focus on measures which reduce vehicular traffic. There was little or no mention of a shuttle train from the rail platform\parking lo, shown on the plans. The rail shuttle should be in place before the commencement of major construction.	Shuttle service between the proposed park-and-ride and downtown Newport, including the mode (rail, bus, etc.) is being studied as part of a separate project.

No.	Name	Comment	Response
51	Paul Marshall	<p>Thank you in advance for taking the time to read, analyze and respond to my comments and those of other concerned or invested citizens. Below please find the list of my concerns. In response, I'd like to know what is being done to work through these problems</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Based on the release of the new design and from my limited urban development experience it seems to me that this only will extend the 'Queuing' down the off ramp and off the bridge. The stop light at the end of the bridge with the left hand turn before that doesn't seem like a useful transportation design - especially when the goal was to reduce queuing.</li> </ol>	Please see the response to Common Comment 2.
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. How did the Carpionato group where the old Grand Casino was get an entrance/exit lane on the off ramp into their property. Not only does this seem like lobbying money affected this decision, it also directly doesn't help with the essential goal of this realignment which was to reduce queuing on the bridge.</li> </ol>	<p>The alignment of the ramps from the Pell Bridge was based on geometry, improving safety and connectivity, minimizing impact to properties, and making land potentially available for the City redevelopment. The design proposes an additional entrance along the alignment to the future development of the Newport Grand site to mitigate potential future congestion along Admiral Kalbfus Road, given that only one entrance to Admiral Kalbfus currently exists for a large site area. A significant amount of the public input received during outreach requested efforts to reduce the amount of traffic along Admiral Kalbfus; as a result, a signalized intersection to the new ramp alignment was proposed.</p>
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. In the released design, it looks like the off ramp is further into the abutting neighborhood more than the current off-ramp. How will noise, pollution be addressed? And shouldn't the beautification, noise walls and other mitigation methods be addressed to this neighborhood in the plan?</li> </ol>	Please see Sections 6.12 and 6.13 of the EA for discussions of air quality and noise impacts of the Proposed Action. Impacts on visual resources are discussed in Section 6.11.
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Bike/Pedestrian Path - the current design only includes a bike path on the west side of the highway and doesn't not connect the North End of Newport to downtown. This is a HUGE mistake and oversight that needs to be directly addressed.</li> </ol>	The Proposed Action includes a number of pedestrian-bicycle improvements; please see the response to Common Comment 5.
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Lastly, the EA includes that in regard to climate change/resiliency that the there will be "No direct impacts anticipated. This is due to the fact that the study uses a 3-foot future sea level rise prediction." Current sea-level rise predictions have a 3-foot rise in the next 15-20 years. Shouldn't we be adjusting for the 80 to 100 year mark and what FEMA, CRMC and others are predicting which is a 7-10 foot sea-level rise?</li> </ol> <p>Thank you, Paul</p>	As described in Appendix B15 to the Draft EA, the climate change analysis followed the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) Coastal Hazard Analysis Application Requirements (660-RICR-20-00-1.1.6(I)), which use the NOAA sea level rise high curve as adopted by CRMC.

## Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches

Newport and Middletown, Rhode Island

No.	Name	Comment	Response
52	Nycole	I am a North End resident and have been for the past 8 years. I have some concerns regarding the realignment project - how will the construction effect the residents living in the area? Digging up the ground will likely create breathing problems for people with asthma and other breathing conditions. Are there protections in place for the residents? If so, what are they? If not, why not?	Please see the responses to Common Comment 12 on construction impacts and Comment 13 on hazardous materials.
		As a person who has some transportation issues and currently walk or get a ride to where I need to go, I am also concerned about pedestrian safety. Areas like Marlboro with no sidewalks, crosswalks or street lighting at night as well as the intersection of Marlboro and Girard Ave are unsafe for anyone walking, biking or in a wheelchair and frequent traffic accidents occur there. Can there be some priority taken for making these areas that already exist as safe as possible to utilize as a way for residents and visitors to travel safely?	Please see the response to Common Comment 5.
		Will the bridge project be completed in stages or all at once? What is the timeline for construction? Thank you for taking the time to read and respond to the residents of Newport .	The construction of the project is planned to occur in several phases, dependent on the final design. The project would be bid under one construction contract and is expected to be completed in less than four years.
53	natalie	I have two questions... 1.what key safety issues are going to be solved with this bridge project in the NORTH END? 2. What are the key advantages of the project...pertaining to the NORTH END?	Please see the response to Common Comment 4 regarding connections to and from the North End and Common Comment 5 regarding pedestrian and bicycle safety.
54	Phyllis Mulligan	I am commenting on the Pell Bridge Realignment. My concern is that there are not safe ways for the general public walking or riding bicycles to get to where they are going. There should be bridges or over passes to connect the North End to the rest of the city. Safety is very important to us living here in the North End. Our children have to cross busy streets just to go to school. Getting to and from the grocery store is very haphazardness to your health. The sidewalks don't even exist in some places. Please take into consideration that we still have to live here when all is said and done. Thank you for listening. Sincerely, Phyllis Mulligan	Please see the response to Common Comment 5. Enhancing pedestrian and bicycle safety is an important goal of the project.
55	Sydney Harris	Unwanted' human-induced' dissonance is the cause of over one million healthy years of life lost in Europe alone [the figure does not include industrial workplaces]. The burden of environmental noise from planes, trains, large vehicles and other city sources is linked to issues such as stress, loss of productivity, and difficulty communicating. Some of the more serious conditions related to said noise pollution are cardiovascular disease and cognitive impairment in children. Authors of a study completed by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2011 concluded that "there is overwhelming evidence that exposure to environmental noise has adverse effect on the health of the population and ranked traffic noise second among environmental threats to public health (the first being air pollution)." I have attached the link to the study. <a href="https://www.who.int/quantifying_ehimpacts/publications/e94888/en/">https://www.who.int/quantifying_ehimpacts/publications/e94888/en/</a>	Comment noted. Noise impacts of the Proposed Action are described in Section 6.13 of the Draft EA.
		Although it was stated that there will be no detours in residential neighborhoods, which I am hoping will be honored, the construction of the road will cause transportation congestion and delays for those who live in the North End and are trying to commute to work. The construction will indubitably cause people to be late for work, which could lead to an issue with their employer that god forbid could result in them losing their jobs. This project will put peoples' livelihoods and health at risk and needs to be thought over with CAREFUL CONSIDERATION for all the ways in which those in the vicinity will be affected; relocation and reimbursements alone will not solve the issues this project will create for the people of this community. - Sydney Harris Community Health Worker	Please see the response to Common Comment 12.
56	Elizabeth Davis	I live in the North End of Newport and I walk everywhere to get where I need to go. I am most concerned about keeping people safe. I want the Pell Bridge ramp project to keep people safe. I see lots of crashes at the intersection of Girard, Malbone, and Admiral Kalfbus. I want that intersection to be safe, with sidewalks on both sides of the street, street lights all around so that everyone can see clearly at night. I also want stop lights there. I want RIDOT to keep their promises and perform this project well based on resident's comments.	Please see the response to Common Comment 5 regarding pedestrian safety. As described in Chapter 3 of the Draft EA, the project also incorporates many design measures to enhance traffic safety.



**Reconstruction of the  
Pell Bridge Approaches**  
Newport and Middletown, Rhode Island



No.	Name	Comment	Response
57	Brian G. Bardorf, Esq.	<p>David W. Fish Administrator of Project Management Rhode Island Department of Transportation Two Capitol Hill Providence, RI 02903</p> <p>Re: Reconstruction of Pell Bridge Approaches</p> <p>Dear Mr. Fish: We represent the Newport County Tradesmen’s Center Condominium I Condominium Association and the Newport County Tradesmen’s Center Condominium II Condominium Association located at 62 and 64 Halsey Street, TAP 9, Lots 376 and 428, consisting of 62 businesses serving Newport County (collectively, the “Tradesmen’s Centers”).</p> <p>As you are likely aware, this firm and representatives of the Tradesmen’s Centers have had multiple discussions regarding the project with representative of the RIDOT.</p> <p>On December 10, 2019, we met with RIDOT representatives Jody Richards and David Walsh at 62 Halsey Street. Also present at the meeting was Rick Rhodes of the engineering firm VHB.</p> <p>At that meeting, all of the concerns of all of the businesses located at the Tradesmen’s Centers of the Proposed Action were explained in detail to Mr. Richards, Mr. Walsh and Mr. Rhodes. I provide below a brief summary of those concerns discussed at the December 10, 2019 meeting.</p> <p>A major concern of the Tradesmen’s Center is access and internal traffic flows. The Proposed Action eliminates all access from Halsey Street – access that was guaranteed by the City of Newport via a Consent Judgment entered in Newport Superior Court in 1995. The access being proposed by the Proposed Action does not allow for delivery trucks to access the individual business units. The businesses are very concerned about access during what will be years of construction.</p>	<p>It is the intent of the proposed action to provide a new connecting roadway from a signalized entrance from J.T. Connell Highway to improve access and safety. The new access road could be designed to potentially provide parking for the businesses as many of the existing businesses appear to utilize city property. Site access to businesses will also be maintained during construction and RIDOT will provide public notification to ensure the public is updated on construction related traffic impacts.</p> <p>Please see the full response in the letter dated March 5, 2020 and included in Appendix C.</p>
	Brian G. Bardorf, Esq. (Cont.)	<p>Another major concern is the proposed 1,300 sq. ft. taking from Lot 376. The taking is directly in front of an active loading bay. That loading bay will be rendered completely useless and inaccessible if the current access routes are altered as proposed.</p> <p>The Proposed Action also eliminates crucial public parking that is currently used by the hundreds of employees and clients of businesses at the Tradesmen’s Centers.</p> <p>The Proposed Action also further isolates the Tradesmen’s Centers. It is already a challenge for clients to find and access the Tradesmen’s Center. The Proposed Action exacerbates this problem.</p> <p>There is also the concern of safety risks and noise that will be caused by major surrounding the Tradesmen’s Centers with major roadways.</p> <p>In summary, the Tradesmen’s Centers are vehemently opposed to the Proposed Action as presented. The changes create a real risk of businesses closing their doors, with no realistic options to relocate anywhere in the City of Newport.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>BARDORF &amp; BARDORF Brian G. Bardorf</p>	<p>Please see the previous response.</p>

No.	Name	Comment	Response
58	Kate McPherson	<p>Save The Bay has a few questions directly related to the VHB Memorandum dated March 15, 2019 from Peter Pavao.</p> <p>1. In Section 3: under Methodology: Baseline Conditions (page 5) The last sentence of this paragraph states " Wetlands within the remainder of the Study Area were mapped using the RIGIS wetlands mapping". The language used makes it unclear as to whether some wetlands within the study area were not field delineated following U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 1987 Manual and the Regional Supplement, and that some wetlands were delineated using a variety of methodologies, and/or some wetlands may or may not be flagged onsite. We ask that all wetlands be delineated onsite by a qualified wetland professional.</p>	<p>As described on page 5 of the Wetlands Technical Studies Memorandum, all accessible wetlands were field delineated by a qualified wetland professional using the Corps 1987 Manual and Regional Supplement. The boundaries of wetlands and portions of wetlands located on private property to which direct access was unavailable were estimated using aerial photo interpretation and RIGIS mapping.</p>
		<p>2. In Section 3: under Methodology: Direct and Indirect Effects Analysis (page 8) The memo mentions "Impacts to wetlands and waterways resulting from redevelopment of decommissioned City and RIDOT land by others as a result of this project were considered in the analysis of indirect effects." We were unable to find any details related to this secondary development. Can you please share information related to wetland impacts of the land made available for potential redevelopment by project?</p>	<p>As described in Chapter 2 of the Draft EA, redevelopment of land vacated by the existing ramps would be undertaken by individual developers and authorized by land use actions on the part of the City of Newport. Such development would not be a direct impact of the Proposed Action, and since it has not yet been proposed, its impacts cannot be quantified. New development would be subject to applicable federal, state, and local regulations protecting wetlands.</p>
		<p>3. In Section 3: under Methodology: Cumulative Effects Analysis (page 9). The memo states that "potential impacts to wetlands associated with the redevelopment of the decommissioned transportation infrastructure are difficult to quantify due to the absence of a plan of development". The impacts should be quantified and disclosed. Without this information, on what basis are the impacts presumed to be minor? Any plan for redevelopment by the city should be shared. This sentiment that the future impacts to wetlands are presumed to be minor is also expressed in section 4: Impact Assessment, under Effects Analysis: Direct Effects (page 15) and appears to have no basis.</p>	<p>Please see the response to the previous comment.</p>
		<p>4. In Section 6: Mitigation (page 18) It appears that no mitigation plans have been developed and shared for the loss wetlands. A comprehensive mitigation plan must be developed as part of the environmental impact statement. Mitigation for both the 0.85 acres of proposed wetland loss and the 2.2 acres of state perimeter wetland should be included, with at least 2:1 mitigation for these losses.</p>	<p>A detailed wetland mitigation plan will be developed in conjunction with project final design and permitting.</p>
		<p>Also, within the Draft Environmental Assessment, dated November 2019, on figures 3-1, 4-1, 4-2, 4-3, 4-4, 4-5, and 4-6 the shaded "land made available for potential redevelopment by project" includes wetlands delineated in the VHB Wetland memorandum referenced above. It is particularly important to depict non-wetland area as "available for potential redevelopment" to meet the assumptions of the memo that future wetland impacts associated with future development are expected to be minor.</p>	<p>The shaded land in the referenced maps includes both wetland and upland areas.</p>
59	Denise McBride	<p>I travel from home to work in the North End about 16 times a week. I have looked at the Pell Bridge design choice and I am concerned about traffic speed on Admiral Kalbfus Rd. To limit the speed, I think it should have a speed bump to slow the traffic down. The traffic on Admiral Kalbfus moves very fast and makes the road dangerous.</p> <p>I see there will be a Park and Ride in this design plan. Will it be free for the public to park there? Or will it be a costly fee? One we all can afford? I would like it to be free.</p> <p>Please keep me informed about the project status and future public meetings. Thank you.</p>	<p>The frequency of the proposed traffic signals will help minimize the speed on Admiral Kalbfus Road. Speed bumps are not proposed, as they can create a safety hazard on roads of this type and may impede road maintenance and emergency vehicle access. No fee is currently proposed for use of the the park-and-ride.</p>

No.	Name	Comment	Response
60	Eric Milner	<p>PLEASE RECONSIDER THIS DESIGN! It's weakest point is clearly failing to address the traffic into and out of downtown Newport. You can not install three additional intersections to traffic inbound to Newport without significant impact, no matter how smart the signalling is. Please witness the traffic entering the bridge from the ramp off of Admiral Kalbfus. Under this plan inbound Newport traffic will now have to compete with and cross that traffic. Inbound Newport traffic will also compete with JT Connell traffic just to get to the current off ramp location. PLEASE NO! The reluctance of the Point District to inbound traffic on the current rail line is understandable but manageable with sound barriers. Two lanes in on the rail line (one from JT Connell( and two lane existing on Fairwell (one continuing to JT Connell) is THE solution to traffic into and out of Newport. At a minimum please consider keeping but redesigning the current off ramp to the downtown, at least that won't make the situation worse. Also please consider having a forum for and with daily commuters, they seem to be left out of this discussion.</p>	<p>Please see the response to Common Comments 1 and 2.</p>
61	Tom Kane	<p>I reviewed each of the alternatives presented. Several of these alternatives include a box that states open more access to public streets. I am very concerned if this means opening a new or existing main road to the neighborhood streets. I've lived on Halsey Street for the past 37 years. It was a quiet neighborhood when we purchased then became a high traffic area once the tradesman condos were built. The traffic got even worse when the new access road from city yard to Admiral Kalfus was built. Our neighborhood worked over a decade with a number of councils to close Hasley to commercial and cut through traffic. The result was an immediate improvement to our lives. Any option that opens traffic from a new or existing main road will have destructive impact on those who live in the area. I strongly urge that any choice made in constructing this new access protect neighborhoods from the onslaught of traffic that is surely going to harm our daily lives. I am very much in favor of seeing new access and exits for the bridge but all traffic should be confined to roads designed for handling such traffic and not on city streets. Please give the same consideration to those of us who live east of the bridge that it appears is being given to those who live on the point. Our lives and property have as much meaning as theirs</p>	<p>Please see the response to Common Comment 6.</p>
62	MARK MCOSKER	<p>December 20, 2019 RE: The Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches in Newport and Middletown, Rhode Island. To All Interested Parties:</p> <p>I want to comment on these plans to carry traffic through this very beautiful and very busy part of Aquidneck Island, which in my opinion is the main objective here. I want to state that in my opinion and as explained below, ALTERNATIVE 2 of these plans seems to be the best plan for this great part of Newport. There will be some people made uncomfortable by the changes coming, some may have to be inconvenienced terribly, and possibly it could change some people's lives not necessarily for the best. We must all consider this, be sensitive, and at the same time understand – this area needs to be improved in every aspect.</p> <p>All other projects in conjunction with or in relation to this one can truly only do good for this part of Newport and Middletown. I believe the people in charge of completing this project have the best intentions and will work very hard to get this right. The additional benefits from the traffic changes necessary will leave land to improve for light use commercial and business space, additional residential options, public open spaces, parking, other forms of transportation integration, and in general, a better route and flow of traffic of all forms through and around this area.</p> <p>I believe the best plan as shown in the Draft Environmental Assessment, November 2019 by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation and the United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration is "ALTERNATIVE 2". With a couple of tweaks, ALTERNATIVE 2 resolves and greatly improves the main objective here, the flow of traffic to and from the Newport Bridge, to and from downtown Newport, and through this North end area to other points on the island and beyond.</p>	<p>Please see the response to Common Comment 8.</p>



No.	Name	Comment	Response
	MARK MCOSKER (Cont.)	<p>ALTERNATIVE 2 seems to rid us of the “dead-ending” of traffic and resulting congestion that history seems to show happens at this East end of the bridge - whether it is the stop sign at the end of the Downtown Newport exit coming off the eastbound side of the Newport Bridge, or the “bridge to nowhere” as I like to call it - the overpass bringing downtown Newport traffic and eastbound bridge traffic to Admiral Kalbfus Road.</p> <p>ALTERNATIVE 2 most effectively carries and continues the flow of traffic off the Newport Bridge and to either Farewell Street to get to downtown Newport, or to go North and East bound using either JT Connell Highway or Admiral Kalbfus Road. It rids us of the “bridge to nowhere”. It opens up that space even more. It leaves the train tracks essentially untouched. It basically leaves the 3rd Street and the Admiral Kalbfus Road areas alone. ALTERNATIVE 2 also leaves some space for Newport Bridge maintenance equipment.</p> <p>It seems the original general intentions in constructing these roads in this area was to get through traffic to flow seamlessly to and from the Newport Bridge and use JT Connell Highway to Route 114, West Main Road. That was and still is the intended “through route”. Those are the roads that are wide enough and that do not pass through as much residential area. ALTERNATIVE 2 does this best. What should also be considered here is changing the Routes some, resulting in possibly combining Route 138 with Route 114 somehow where they pass through this area, and use the originally intended and entirely more sufficient highways to handle the tremendous amount of traffic passing through this area each and every day (i.e. use JT Connell Highway as opposed to Admiral Kalbfus Road for the majority of traffic).</p> <p>I hope for the best in this project and greatly anticipate its completion and future improvements in this area of our beautiful Aquidneck Island.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Mark D. McOsker 97 Malbone Road Newport, RI 02840 (401) 965-9790 mcosker@cox.net</p>	Please see the response to Common Comment 8.
63	Evan Smith	As part of a comprehensive signage plan, I would suggest adding at least one large sign that says "Welcome to Aquidneck Island" . Currently there is not sense that you have arrived on an island. An attractive sign would add a sense of place.	Comment noted. The City would be responsible for adding such signage.
64	Kristine Hendrickson	In reading other public commentary and speaking with local business owners, the impact to individual businesses such as those in the tradesmen center are not clear particularly when calculating the change in traffic pattern and the estimated time to reach destinations during peak periods (summer etc.) Am I missing how this has been addressed? I know it is a concern for several organization and businesses in particular. Please elaborate. How many businesses will be impacted and close or have to relocate? Which ones? How are you working with organizations like Connect Greater Newport directly to address concerns of small business owners and where is this publicized? Thank you.	Coordination with individual home owners and business owners has been initiated and will continue throughout the design and construction phases of the project.
65	Richard Cromwell	This is a good design. It captures the good points from the preliminary designs. Much thought and consideration is done. This project needs to move to the next stage. We need to get on with this good idea.	Comment noted.
66	Mary	<p><b>SIGNIFICANT TRAFFIC CALMING AND TREE PLANTING, AND MORE TIME TO EXPLAIN THE PLAN</b></p> <p>Please allow more time to explain the plan further before cementing this plan: Newport needs more time to consider and understand your plan, perhaps until April 2020 or even longer. I am uncomfortable with what appears to be directing traffic off the bridge more towards the malls and Middletown rather than towards downtown Newport. I fear businesses in the old city may suffer.</p> <p>Consider making the North End more pedestrian friendly, reducing traffic lanes from 4 to 2, implementing traffic calming, with only one lane of traffic in each direction, with wide sidewalks and perhaps parallel parking and bike lanes on either side, on Admiral Kalbfus, especially between Gerard AVenue and Halsey Street so residents of the North End can walk more safely and comfortably along the area and cross the street to the malls, both the existing one and the new Carpionato one. Please factor in the planting of strong tall shade trees to make walking on hot days more feasible, and to beautify the area.</p>	Reducing the number of lanes for vehicle traffic would increase congestion, which would conflict with the project purpose. Please see the response to Common Comment 15 and also the response to Common Comment 5 regarding pedestrian and bicycle safety. Landscaping will be developed as part of the detailed project design.
67	Mark Marosits	At the prior public meeting, the public was assured that there would be no adverse traffic impact on the Point neighborhood, especially the through streets of Third and Second. We continue to look for those assurances and proactive barriers, as more traffic would have a highly adverse impact on the stock of historic homes, curated trees and gardens as well as quality of life. We are also hoping that the State and City will work together on creating a larger parking/transit hub to minimize overall traffic in to Newport.	Please see the response to Common Comment 6.

No.	Name	Comment	Response
68	Todd Stuart	I believe that significant consideration must be given to protecting the Point neighborhood from excess through traffic coming on and off the bridge during high season. Second, Third and Washington streets run through a purely residential neighborhood. Already in the summer local hotel vans and buses drive down Washington to avoid traffic on America's Cup Blvd. This is a problem which could get far worse if thought isn't given to setting up the new bridge access in a way which discourages it.	Please see the response to Common Comment 6.
69	Cynthia Moreno	I am concerned about several things regarding the Reconstruction of Pell Bridge project. I am concerned about the impact on the residents and businesses around this area. Many of us, primarily our transportation is walking. I am worried about the impact of the conditions and ability to walk in safety on the sidewalks, especially during and after snow, which now is horrific and very unsafe, and could be worse especially during construction. Also, it sounds like you are bringing your traffic difficulties to our way, the North End. Will you be displacing low-income families and will you be responsible for moving them somewhere that is affordable? And businesses we have become accustomed to being closed go where? Also the opening of the ground, the dust, the dirt, and the contamination, how are you going to keep us safe from any pollution that comes out? Change isn't always good, and change shouldn't be scary and dangerous.	Please see the responses to Common Comment 5 regarding pedestrian and bicycle safety, Common Comment 2 regarding traffic, Common Comments 7 and 10 regarding low-income communities and displacements, and Common Comment 13 regarding hazardous materials.
70	Buddy Croft	<p>The Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority has been participating in the Newport Pell Bridge ramp redesign process for over ten years. We have advocated all along for safety improvements that will reduce the traffic congestion on the bridge which would reduce the number of accidents.</p> <p>The elimination of the scenic Newport exit (or the provisions for a more direct alignment to America's Cup Ave.) has always been important to the Authority to ensure there is not a traffic "backup" onto the bridge.</p> <p>The plans we have seen over the past year have consistently shown the elimination of this ramp and we fully support that initiative.</p> <p>The plan now takes all traffic toward Admiral Kalbfus Road with a left-hand turn to JT Connell Highway to get into Newport. The Authority is supportive of the overall configuration however we have significant concerns with the number of signalized intersections within the alignment. We feel that the signals along the new roadway to Admiral Kalbfus Road should eliminate any "left-hand turns" into the properties to the east of the roadway. The concern is the excessive stacking of vehicles this may cause on the bridge.</p> <p>We are happy to review any pre and post modeling showing improvements in the condition that may cause us to withdraw our concerns. In addition, we will be happy to continue meeting with RIDOT as they proceed with this important project.</p> <p>RITBA is sending this letter along to be sure to officially respond to the Environmental Assessment Publication and request for comments.</p>	Please see the full response in the letter dated January 31, 2020 and included in Appendix C.

No.	Name	Comment	Response
71	Jennifer Amaral	<p>In the Executive Summary it is stated that, " Vehicles would be queued on lower-speed roadways, rather than on the high-speed bridge as they are under existing conditions." Where is it envisioned that queuing will occur? As a resident of Admiral Kalbfus Rd, I am concerned that the proposed ramp realignment design will funnel more traffic past my house. This would then increase the quantity of cars and duration that they will sit in front of my house waiting for traffic lights to turn. Is this design expected to increase the number of cars being queued on Admiral Kalbfus Rd?</p>	<p>The area where the majority of queuing is anticipated is at the intersection of the relocated ramp and new connector, at Van Zandt and JT Connell Highway. See Appendix B1, Figures 10, 11, 15, 16 for traffic analysis data. Additional traffic or queuing are not expected on Admiral Kalbfus Road for the design year. The traffic analysis included in the EA shows future conditions which include a growth factor network-wide. The growth rate was estimated after discussions with the City on planned and future projects.</p>
		<p>In relation to the Air Quality, it was stated in the Executive Summary that, "Reduction in traffic congestion in the Study Area is expected to reduce regional pollutant emissions." While this is a plus, the residential area of Admiral Kalbfus Rd is not within the study area. With queuing of vehicles expected on lower-speed roadways (potentially Admiral Kalbfus Rd), how will this affect the air quality for residents of those areas? Has this been considered and what would be done to mitigate adverse impacts?</p>	<p>Queuing is not expected in any residential area along Admiral Kalbfus Road, and therefore there would be no impact to air quality in those residential areas..</p>
		<p>With the current ramp set up I can bypass the downtown Newport traffic by taking the other exit. Does this new design allow for minimal queuing and congestion for the commuters that do not want to go downtown?</p>	<p>The design allows for multiple routes to get to areas other than Downtown. There would be some queuing during the peak hours for all destinations, but the overall travel time throughout the study area is projected to decrease.</p>
		<p>No noise mitigation was identified to be used during construction. Is construction expected to occur during the day or night? What noise impacts are expected in relation to the area residents?</p>	<p>Please see the response to Common Comment 12.</p>
72	Aaron Jasper	<p>Where will Newport Public Works go? I recently visited the planning department at city hall to look at the proposed re-alignment plan for the Newport Bridge on and off ramps. The first thing to leap out when viewing the proposed plan was the elimination of the public works department. When I asked the folks in the planning office where public works would go, they had no answer. The plan also eliminates several houses and takes land from the Newport County Tradesman's Centers as well as Waste Management. It appears that as much useful land is lost as is gained by this project. The only folks who will gain by this project will be the owners of the Newport Casino property, since all vehicles coming to Newport will be forced to drive by the new entrances to this property, even if they are headed to downtown Newport. If the planners of this project really want to improve traffic flow in and out of Newport, they could extend Connell Highway to Farewell Street and bring the bridge on and off ramps to this road. Eliminating the bridge to nowhere and freeing up all the land this overpass and attendant highways occupy. They would also not eliminate the off ramp to Newport that currently exists. All traffic would move better right now if the DOT would immediately institute the smart traffic lights that they say will improve traffic flow. Where will Newport Public Works go? Aaron Jasper Newport, RI</p>	<p>Please see the full response in the letter dated February 14, 2020 and included in Appendix C.</p>

No.	Name	Comment	Response
73	Aaron Jasper	<p>To all: Newport Residents, Newport City Councilors, RI State Senators and Representatives, RI federal Senators and Representatives and RIDOT</p> <p>Residents and businesses of Newport should look carefully at the proposed realignment of the Newport Bridge ramps.</p> <p>The re-alignment of the bridge ramps, as proposed, will be bad for Newport residents, businesses and taxpayers.</p>	<p>Please see the full response in the letter dated February 14, 2020 and included in Appendix C.</p>
	Aaron Jasper (Cont.)	<p>The proposed new roads and their construction will have a seriously bad effect on all the businesses in the Newport County Tradesman's Centers at 62 and 64 Halsey Street. These businesses include several plumbers, electricians, cabinet makers, iron workers, boat repair services, a distributor of sailing yacht hardware and electronics, a sailmaker and, of course, McGrath Clambakes kitchens and office.</p> <p>These businesses employ more than 100 full time skilled workers (and many part time workers) and provide services and products to clients all over New England.</p> <p>The proposed re-alignment would eliminate the Newport off-ramp and send all traffic to Admiral Kalbfus road.</p> <p>When coming over the bridge to go anywhere south of Admiral Kalbfus road into Newport, we want to continue to come off the current off-ramp and head South onto Farewell Street. Not be sent to Admiral Kalbfus Road.</p> <p>Don't eliminate this off ramp.</p> <p>If the planners of this project really want to improve traffic flow in and out of Newport, they could extend Connell Highway to Farewell Street and bring the bridge on and off ramps to this road. Eliminating the bridge to nowhere and freeing up all the land this overpass and attendant highways occupy.</p> <p>Finally, the Newport Public Works Department should stay right where it is. There is no better place within Newport. Relocation would be expensive and an unnecessary cost to Newport and RI taxpayers.</p> <p>Aaron Jasper Newport, RI</p>	<p>Please see the full response in the letter dated February 14, 2020 and included in Appendix C.</p>

No.	Name	Comment	Response
74	Nathan Phelps	<p>Based upon lifelong experience navigating Newport and careful consideration of the proposed plan, it is my firm conviction that the enduring physical limitations of Farewell Street become the primary cause, and the primary obstacle, to resolving current traffic congestion on the bridge.</p> <p>This plan does not directly apply resources to significantly increase or improve the handling capacity of Farewell Street. It does not endeavor to improve or direct construction of a new, single "Downtown Newport" off-ramp. It does not create any additional vehicular route to provide support of relief anywhere south of the bridge.</p> <p>Bypassing development of a "Downtown Newport" off-ramp, the plan itself expands in scope, impacting areas remote of the single, critical point of failure. Removal, relocation, remotely stacking, pre-merging, redirecting, and reintroducing the same volume of traffic right back to Farewell Street.</p> <p>The increased scope and expense of this plan, devoid of a correction applied to the failing off-ramp, and incapable of improving capacity of Farewell Street, endeavors to placate ineffectiveness by developing alternate modes of transportation.</p> <p>With limited commitment of resources, limited objectives, limited intent, limited purpose, as well as limited and remote access, this only perfects incomplete transfer of visitors to the city center, which in turn limits convenience, usefulness, and sustainability.</p> <p>The momentum of expansion creates negative impact, displaces city services, dislocates existing businesses, removes residential dwellings from the inventory, ignores preservation of existing functional structures, decreases potential net gains in the area, introduces and facilitates higher volumes of traffic into the Malbone and 2nd Street neighborhoods and without any reservations to accommodate incentive for improving future infrastructure opportunities.</p> <p>The vetting process for this proposal has also been altered, compromising discourse, eliminating cooperative process and representative advocacy for the greater amount of stakeholders in the city at large.</p>	<p>Please see the responses to Common Comments 1 (regarding removal of the Downtown Newport exit) and 2 (regarding traffic congestion). As described in Chapter 4 of the Draft EA, RIDOT evaluated multiple design alternatives for their ability to meet the project's purpose and need, and Alternative 4B (now the Proposed Action) was determined to best accomplish this goal.</p>
75	Jamie Lawton	<p>I would really hate to see the removal of the current ramp onto Farewell/JT Connell. While I can see that it is a source of congestion, mainly on summer weekend days, as some one who lives very close to this ramp, I would hate to have to drive all the way around Admiral Kalfbus all of the time (read - when I am driving home from work at 10PM and there is no traffic or in the middle of winter when there is no traffic, etc) Right now, I use the northbound exit when traffic is heavy in the summer and it is a win-win situation b/c tourists don't realize you can take both exists so they are stuck in traffic while locals know how to avoid it. If all traffic is forced to Admiral Kalfbus, then you are basically removing the 'secret exit' locals use and putting us into the melee of Newport tourist traffic.</p> <p>Maybe the farewell exit could be maintained but closed during heavy times? Or a \$10 electronic toll could be charged (free for those who live or work in Newport) to encourage non-locals to use the Admiral Kalfbus exit.</p> <p>That aside, I worry about the traffic the Admiral Kalfbus only exit would put into the Malbone neighborhood and onto Broadway (already congested). Once the tourists exit on Admiral Kalfbus, if they do not park in the lot (which they won't - they will not want to have to travel so far w/o their cars to get to downtown) - where is it anticipated they will go?</p>	<p>Please see the responses to Common Comment 1 regarding the Downtown Newport ramp and Comment 6 regarding traffic in residential neighborhoods.</p>

No.	Name	Comment	Response
76	Jeff	<p>Communications from RIDOT about this project have been vague and difficult to comprehend. Options were presented to the public and you informed the public of your choice using something called a "draft environmental assessment". That may mean something to you but it was clear as mud to me. Once I figured out what the intent of your communication was, I tried to read the "EA" online. Again, clear as mud. So I went to the library to read a hard copy, which did help. I was unable to attend the public meeting but did watch it online. Frankly, I learned more by reading the articles in Newport This Week. Most of the meeting was a re-hash of old news. As for the actual plan: I am ok with eliminating the Newport exit. It will keep the Point accessible via Van Zandt and will stop trucks/buses from using Van Zandt/Summer St as the main route to Middletown. It will dramatically increase the traffic at the other exit but I do not see that you have streamlined how that traffic will enter the local street grid. If anything, you have added more traffic lights which although they will be "synchronized", they will still stop traffic at some point. Currently the traffic coming on the island can merge onto Admiral Kalbfus &amp; head towards the rotary. Why eliminate the merge and replace it with traffic lights. Considering that all vehicles will now use one exit, it seems counter productive to eliminate merges &amp; use traffic lights. It's still not clear to me what commercial activities will have to relocate. Tradesman Center, Public Works, Transfer Station? What is the cost to taxpayers to relocate these activities? Newport needs a commercial/light industrial zone. It does not need ANOTHER retail-restaurant-hotel zone. I sense that this project is more about creating a new development in the North end of the city than it is about facilitating traffic safely and quickly off/on the Bridge to/from the State Routes (138, 114, 138A) with as few stops as possible. As traffic increases in 10-30 years we will have a situation like we used to have on the Bourne Bridge on Cape Cod. Rotaries (still) and traffic lights (remember old Route 6 leading to the Bridge) will slow traffic to the point where we have so much congestion people will avoid the area.</p>	<p>Please see the responses to Common Comment 2 regarding traffic congestion, Common Comment 14 regarding displacements, and Common Comment 16 regarding future use of properties no longer needed for the bridge ramps.</p>
77	shelley mahood	<p>We live here so we should be the drivers of any change - not the tourists, not the rich people who have summer homes, not the commercial businesses that are taking over our little town, not the State. Please address 4 problems:            1 - we need an exit at Farewell St or that comes into town, not push everyone to the north end so some rich investors can get all the traffic - it is totally inconvenient and cuts our town in half at Adm Kalbfus            2 - it's too expensive and too much impact on those small business in the Halsey area - leave them alone and quit creating costs for taxpayers to move the city services            3 - we want running, biking, stroller, roller blading, walking trails - it is a huge benefit to citizens and THE one reason that I considered NOT moving to Newport when I retired from the military - the Mt Vernon trail from Washington monument to Mt Vernon in Arlington VA is a perfect model for how people like to live with parks and trails for people of all ages - this redesign is not sufficient            4 - is there a doggie park?            Thanks for your consideration. It must be incredibly difficult to balance all the interests, but I believe the people who actually live here should drive any changes. And perhaps we don't want the change to begin with. Perhaps we need to review the genesis for the change and determine if it is truly needed.</p>	<p>Please see the responses to Common Comment 1 regarding the Downtown Newport ramp, Common Comment 10 regarding residential and business displacements, and Common Comment 5 regarding pedestrian and bicycle facilities. As described in Chapter 8 of the Draft EA, the Newport Dog Park would be replaced in a new location as part of the Proposed Action.</p>
78	James Rugh	<p>I have two comments. I think that for people heading into Newport from the bridge there are too many traffic lights. I understand you are looking at "smart" lights but I am skeptical they will work as envisioned. There are walker/bike buttons at all the lights that would seem to defeat the smart lights.</p> <p>Second, I think the remote parking platforms are a waste of taxpayer money. The first thing should be to actually install the trolley or people mover. Until them, there will be little or not use of the platforms and lot. In the past the City of Newport has insisted on costly remote parking/shuttles for major events in the city. In general, these have been very underused. Many people coming off the bridge either (a) work in Newport, (b) are coming for a vacation, or (c) are "daytrippers." Unless you would right downtown the trolley option will be of no interest. Same for people coming for a few days. They want to drive to their hotel or lodging and will not use a remote lot. That just leaves day trippers. If they are only interested in downtown Newport, or willing to ride city buses, they will want to drive into town. they also do not want to walk to the platform in Newport, which is a long walk from the bars and restaurants, and then have to shuttle out to their car after a day and/or evening in Newport. Putting in once small part of a modern transportation plan simply will not get the use it needs to succeed. Drop the platforms from your plans at this time and leave that for a future time when people could actually get around Newport easily and seamlessly.</p>	<p>Please see the response to Common Comment 2 regarding traffic congestion. The potential shuttle operation is being studied as part of a separate project.</p>

No.	Name	Comment	Response
79	Evan Goldin	<p>Hi all,</p> <p>My family has been on Adquickneck Island since long before the Pell Bridge was built, and I'm very excited to see changes coming to the Pell Bridge landing on the island. It's likely a once-in-a-lifetime change to improve access and design, and I'd like to see the rebuild make the area as safe and welcoming as possible for all modes — where today, it's largely a highway onramp designed for maximum speed of vehicles.</p> <p>With the mass adoption of electric scooters, electric skateboards and electric bikes, modeshare is set to change dramatically on the island in the next few decades, at least outside of the winter. I would like the new design to include some important components:</p> <p>North End Separation - The design should address the connectivity between the North End and the rest of Newport.</p> <p>Shared Use Paths - Shared use paths and bike lanes referenced in these preliminary designs should be separated from motorized traffic. Bike "lanes" on roads, next to cars, are not enough. I want places young children and the elderly can ride and feel safe.</p> <p>Safe Pedestrian and Bike Crossings - There needs to be an appropriate number of safe, considerate, and well-designed crossings for pedestrians and bicyclists across the east-west Admiral Kalbfus corridor and north-south Connell Highway corridor.</p> <p>Explore Alternative Distribution of Traffic Away from Admiral Kalbfus - The proposed design does not distribute traffic away from the Admiral Kalbfus corridor. An additional project is needed to see this urgent need accomplished.</p> <p>Thanks for the chance for input. Let's make sure we prioritize safety and all-mode access in this project, so that visitors know — as soon as they arrive — that they should get around by bike, scooter, skateboard, etc before trying to drive by car.</p> <p>- Evan</p>	<p>Please see the responses to Comment 4 regarding connections from the North End to the rest of Newport and Common Comment 5 regarding pedestrian and bicycle facilities and safety. Chapter 3 of the Draft EA contains additional information on the design of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The Admiral Kalbfus Road corridor is the primary route between One Mile Corner and the Pell Bridge. Additional connections outside the scope of this project would be needed to reduce traffic on Admiral Kalbfus Road.</p>
80	Chris Kracik	<p>Why is there the "cut-off" road between the end of the ramp and Connell Highway (towards the park &amp; ride) in addition to the two left turning lanes at the end of the ramp (near WalMart)?</p> <p>Lose the cut-off (which will likely cause huge headaches) and add a round-about at the end of the ramp. Two smooth flowing round-abouts will have traffic headed to Newport smoothly. Traffic Signals will be the death of this proposal, and solve nothing. You will have people racing to the end of the ramp, cutting each other off, as there will still be backups headed onto the island well onto the ramp.</p> <p>Better yet, why not have the end of the ramp meant to direct people North extend behind WalMart and tie into Connell Highway near Newport Craft Brewing.</p> <p>Again, traffic signal lights will doom this project.</p>	<p>Please see the response to Common Comment 2. A roundabout at the location suggested could increase right-of-way requirements and wetland impacts when compared to the footprint of a traditional signalized intersection. RIDOT may consider a roundabout as part of the final design if it has operational benefits and doesn't require additional environmental impacts of ROW.</p>
81	Cheryl Dodd	<p>There should be a safe way to get on and off the Jamestown bridge. Also to connect Aquidneck Island. Getting from Newport to Portsmouth safely</p>	<p>Please see the response to Common Comment 15.</p>
82	William Gamble	<p>I support and reiterate all of the comments concerning pedestrian and bicycle access. The day of automobile exclusive dominance should be over replaced by a better more accessible and earth friendly plan that represents the inhabitants of all Newport, not just the transients.</p>	<p>Please see the response to Common Comment 5.</p>
83	Dennis	<p>It is critically important to ensure ease of travel in and out of the Newport Tradesman Center at 64 Halsey St. This is a vital center that is home to many local service businesses. It is also important to protect the very existence of the Tradesman Center that local residents and businesses rely upon. There are no alternatives in Newport County for relocating these businesses to.</p>	<p>Please see the response to Common Comment 3.</p>

No.	Name	Comment	Response
84	Liza Burkin	<p>Hello. It is absolutely crucial to the future environmental and economic health of Newport that the Pell Bridge Ramp Realignment project include the following:</p> <p>North End Separation - The design should address the connectivity between the North End and the rest of Newport. This is necessary to correct the wrongs of the past, which placed a physical barrier (Admiral Kalbfus) between the low-income residents of the North End and the economic and community life of the rest of the city.</p> <p>Shared Use Paths - Shared use paths and bike lanes referenced in these preliminary designs should be separated from motorized traffic. This is necessary to promote safe, convenient, and comfortable alternatives to driving in Newport, which is necessary to reduce carbon emissions and protect people who cannot or choose not to drive.</p> <p>Safe Pedestrian and Bike Crossings - There needs to be an appropriate number of safe, considerate, and well-designed crossings for pedestrians and bicyclists across the east-west Admiral Kalbfus corridor and north-south Connell Highway corridor. Without this, we will be recommitting to the status quo of a car-oriented, divided, and unequal city.</p> <p>Explore Alternative Distribution of Traffic Away from Admiral Kalbfus - The proposed design does not distribute traffic away from the Admiral Kalbfus corridor. An additional project is needed to see this urgent need accomplished.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>	<p>Please see the responses to Comment 4 regarding connections from the North End to the rest of Newport and Common Comment 5 regarding pedestrian and bicycle facilities and safety. Chapter 3 of the Draft EA contains additional information on the design of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.</p> <p>The Admiral Kalbfus Road corridor is the primary route between One Mile Corner and the Pell Bridge. Additional connections outside the scope of this project would be needed to reduce traffic on Admiral Kalbfus Road.</p>
85	Drew Fernandez	<p>One of the biggest problems is Farewell street, it is only 2 lanes and narrow the traffic gets bogged now in both directions. Multiple lanes that lead to Farewell will only get clogged and slow if there is no expansion of Farewell or an additional roadway into Newport</p> <p>I am hopeful that the design of the Pell Bridge approach project address the following four issues:</p>	<p>Please see the response to Common Comment 2.</p>
86	Joshua Carlin	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.Address the connectivity between the North End and the rest of Newport;</li> <li>2.Shared Use Paths - Shared use paths and bike lanes referenced in these preliminary designs should be separated from motorized traffic;</li> <li>3.Safe Pedestrian and Bike Crossings - There needs to be an appropriate number of safe, considerate, and well-designed crossings for pedestrians and bicyclists across the east-west Admiral Kalbfus corridor and north-south Connell Highway corridor; and</li> <li>4.Explore Alternative Distribution of Traffic Away from Admiral Kalbfus - The proposed design does not distribute traffic away from the Admiral Kalbfus corridor. An additional project is needed to see this urgent need accomplished.</li> </ol> <p>Thank you. Josh Carlin 401.855.0372</p>	<p>Please see the responses to Comment 4 regarding connections from the North End to the rest of Newport and Common Comment 5 regarding pedestrian and bicycle facilities and safety. Chapter 3 of the Draft EA contains additional information on the design of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The Admiral Kalbfus Road corridor is the primary route between One Mile Corner and the Pell Bridge. Additional connections outside the scope of this project would be needed to funnel traffic off of Admiral Kalbfus Road.</p>
87	Thomas Waugh	<p>I support maximum consideration for vulnerable road users (bikers, pedestrians, etc.) in the layout of Newport Bridge entrances, exits, and approaches.</p>	<p>Please see the response to Common Comment 5.</p>
88	Allan Hodges FAICP	<p>I support the Proposed Action. After 20 years of studies, it is time to move on and construct the improvements. I am glad that you are preserving the Newport Secondary rail corridor for at least rail shuttle use. I am curious as to why the northerly extension of Halsey Street between the shopping plaza and the apartments on Girard Avenue was not considered. It was originally proposed by then Parsons Brinckerhoff (now WSP) when the firm prepared the North End Master Plan for the City in 2006/7. The traffic analysis then showed that this additional north-south roadway would relieve congestion on Coddington Highway and at the "modern" roundabout at the interchange. Finally, where would the City's DPW facility be relocated?</p>	<p>Although the northern extension of Halsey Street is not part of the Proposed Action, it may be developed as a separate project in the future. Please see the response to Common Comment 11 regarding relocation of the DPW facility.</p>
89	Ross Cann	<p>It is hard to know precisely which plan is best for ALL of Newport residents, but it is easy to know that the most vocal critics are those with a special interest which most likely only aligns with their interest. Be strong to fight for the solution that people fifty years from now will look back upon positively! You will have the quiet approval of the many as you overcome the strident views of the few.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>



No.	Name	Comment	Response
90	Karen O'Brien	<p>Living in the south end of town, I like having the two exits off the bridge. The first exit allows me three ways to get home. 1. Take a right at Farewell light and go thru the point, then America's cup. 2. Go straight thru the light and either go America's cup or lower thames st. and use Washington Sq. to get to Bellevue (or go straight and connect to America's cup) 3. Left at light on Van Zandt. I can then choose Van Zandt to Broadway or cut thru Vicksburg. If I take the second exit due to traffic then I typically pick up Malbone rather than use Admiral Kalbfus (138) all the way to Broadway. If everything is going to direct to a traffic circle then just have one spoke to head east to be able to eventual to south, then congestion is going horrible for me to get home. Especially if the developers get even a 1/3 of what they want to do with the Newport Grand property. When the base gets out of work, late in the day will be even more congested. West Main traveling onto Broadway on weekday mornings if already backed up. If the plan is have all of the bridge traffic come up Admiral Kalibus (138) to Broadway then it will be totally blocked. I feel it best to leave an exit ramp to Farewell Street. Are there any hard numbers as how many base and NUWC workers travel over the Newport Bridge and how many travel north by 114 and 138?</p>	<p>Please see the response to Common Comment 2 regarding traffic congestion. Additional information on traffic impacts can be found in Section 6.1 and Appendix B1.</p>
91	Stephanie Winslow	<p>Thank you for the extended comment period! It was difficult to study this plan in 30 days in addition to all of the development projects currently happening in Newport.</p> <p>I like the look of the design, but am hardly inspired or optimistic. I truly believe that we should have a different, more future oriented, innovative goal, than to simply make the status quo (driving a car to Newport) easier and "safer".</p> <p>Anyone who doesn't live in Newport, especially state legislators who rely on the tourism revenue our city generates, thinks of Newport as just a place to play. Some want easier, quicker access. Some want more tourism dollars. The reality is that Newport residents bear an enormous burden of traffic, noise, air, and water pollution already. We constantly battle to keep our city an accessible, livable community. No other RI communities or organizations offer to park visitors and shuttle or ferry them here. Why is that? No incentives, I suppose.</p> <p>I would like to see the Pell ridge realignment project scope expanded to think beyond simply new, safer roads and a bike path. How can we make it easier to bring tourists, commuters, and residents here in efficient, eco friendly ways that have less impact on our fragile city? If you only make it easier to drive a car here, more and more people will do just that, and continue to degrade the experience of everyone as we sit and idle in choking traffic. Newport can't handle more cars; riding a bike and walking our tiny streets have become dangerous. If we find smarter ways to move people, all of Rhode Island will benefit.</p> <p>I look forward to your ideas!</p>	<p>Plase see the response to Common Comment 15.</p>
92	Julie DiBari	<p>We live in Newport for part of the summer to make rental home repairs and updates and we rent our Newport home the rest of the year. It is important to me that our tenants live in a vibrant city that cares about the health and well being of all of its residents. The most important thing to me about the Pell Bridge realignment is that it connects the North End of the city to the rest of the city, primarily through accessible bike and walking paths that can be safely used by every age from families with young children to seniors. My consulting firm The Capacity Group has conducted assessments with residents in the neighborhood and we have found that residents are currently nearly completely cut off from all their city has to offer by dangerous roadways and a lack of walking and bike paths, as a well as a lack of sufficient public transportation to key areas such as downtown shopping, the historic districts, beaches, and the Newport County YMCA. There is also a lack of small businesses in the area that are amendable to local entrepreneurs versus commercial land set aside primarily for big box stores providing low wage jobs. This is also an opportunity to undo a great injustice as many non-white individuals were historically kept from purchasing homes in other areas of the city, and this neighborhood was purposefully ignored by government officials in the past. The focus that Newport has always had on pride of place and the beauty and character of the city was not to be found in dealings with the North End outside of one wonderful effort to improve the affordable housing after it had been left stagnant for far, far too long. It is time to address these historical wrongs and connect this neighborhood purposefully, beautifully to the rest of the city, creating social cohesion, cultural and economic vibrancy that will benefit all residents for decades to come.</p>	<p>Please see the responses to Common Comment 4 regarding connections between the North end and the rest of the city; Comment 5 regarding bicycle and pedestrian facilities; and Comment 7 regarding effects on low-income and minority communities.</p>
93	shelley mahood	<p>The more I think about this, the more I realize the whole project should be cancelled. There's no real value added and instead it will cause lots of chaos with businesses having to move, City of Newport organizations having to find new locations, and taxpayers being required to pay for all this change. This has been a satisfactory situation for many years and does not need to be changed....and certainly NOT to the extent you are proposing. I do not want to pay for this project. I do not agree that business must move to accommodate this project. I do not want City of Newport infrastructure to be affected. Please stop the project. As a citizen and resident of Newport, I do not support this effort at all.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>

No.	Name	Comment	Response
94	The Newport Health Equity Zone Transportation Working Group	<p>(Do to the character limit in this comment field, we will be mailing you the unabridged version.)</p> <p>The Newport Health Equity Zone’s (HEZ) Transportation Working Group advocates for transportation justice in the North End and Broadway neighborhoods of Newport. We envision a Newport where everyone can walk, wheel, bike, or ride the bus from their homes to the places they need to go within the city and nearby towns. Our working group consists of residents of the North End and Broadway neighborhoods, HEZ staff, and representatives from our partner organizations Bike Newport, Working Cities, and Grow Smart RI.</p> <p>In regards to the Environmental Assessment results to Pell Bridge Approaches Preferred Alternative 4B, we have some concerns related to livability, safety, traffic, connectivity, and active transportation infrastructure:</p> <p>We understand the design of the 4B plan is only 30% complete. As more details unfold, we want bike and pedestrian connectivity and safety to be a priority. Sidewalks must be wide enough to safely accommodate users traveling in both directions, users in wheelchairs or other mobility devices, users with children and babies in strollers. The sidewalks must be of high quality so as to remain smooth and safe for decades. The crosswalks must be signalized and allow plenty of time for users to cross, especially users such as seniors, people with disabilities, and children, who may need more time to cross the street. We expect to see safe, ADA accessible, well-constructed and maintained pedestrian overpasses in the most heavily trafficked areas of the project site, such as where the ramp connects to Admiral Kalbfus Road and six lanes of traffic spanning Halsey Street. The sidewalks and bike lanes must connect to the neighborhoods and provide a network of connectivity between the North End and the rest of Newport.</p>	Please see the full response in the letter dated February 14, 2020 and included in Appendix C.
	The Newport Health Equity Zone Transportation Working Group (Cont.)	<p>As the 4B design stands currently, connectivity is only improved by the direct connection of Farewell Street to the rotary and from the shared use path in the rail corridor to shared use paths on Admiral Kalbfus Road and JT Connell Highway. We are excited to see these improvements, and want to see improved connectivity between the neighborhoods on either side of Admiral Kalbfus Road. The current design funnels all traffic intending to leave Newport onto Admiral Kalbfus Road, with six lanes of traffic dumping vehicles either east or west onto Admiral Kalbfus Road. We would like to see the main route out of Newport be through the rotary and up JT Connell Highway, not east on Admiral Kalbfus Road. This could be accomplished with clear signage and optimized signal lights to channel the flow of traffic to JT Connell Highway. The concurrent improvements to JT Connell Highway will likely also enhance the favorability of this route out of Newport. We would also like improvements to be made to the localization of the eastern part of Admiral Kalbfus Road, to make it a slower, safer transportation route similar to Van Zandt Ave. We would like to see a road diet – narrowing of the vehicle lanes, speed humps, additional signalized cross walks, and bike lanes on both sides of the street along the entire corridor from the Malbone Road/Girard Ave intersection to the intersection of Broadway/West Main Road. This would greatly improve the connectivity of the residential areas on both sides of Admiral Kalbfus Road. Right now this road serves to segregate this area of concentrated poverty from prosperous downtown Newport. It is imperative to environmental justice standards that the Pell Bridge 4B Preferred Alternative address this disparity and improve connectivity between the two sides of Admiral Kalbfus Road.</p> <p>The State of Rhode Island’s Department of Transportation has an obligation to minimize the negative effects of highway changes on historically oppressed residents, including people of color, people with disabilities, and people with low incomes. Please mitigate the health impacts.</p>	Please see the full response in the letter dated February 14, 2020 and included in Appendix C.

No.	Name	Comment	Response
95	Newport Health Equity Zone Transportation Working Group	<p>Part 1 To Whom It May Concern:</p> <p>The Newport Health Equity Zone’s (HEZ) Transportation Working Group advocates for transportation justice in the North End and Broadway neighborhoods of Newport. We envision a Newport where everyone can walk, wheel, bike, or ride the bus from their homes to the places they need to go within the city and nearby towns. Our working group consists of residents of the North End and Broadway neighborhoods, HEZ staff, and representatives from our partner organizations Bike Newport, Working Cities, and Grow Smart RI.</p> <p>In regards to the Environmental Assessment results to Pell Bridge Approaches Preferred Alternative 4B, we have some concerns related to livability, safety, traffic, connectivity, and active transportation infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The residents of the North End in places such as Newport Heights, Festival Field, Bayside Apartments, and the Admiralty Apartments are in close proximity to the construction zone, with the project expected to span multiple years. Given the history of the 4B project site as a dump for many kinds of waste, we have significant concerns about resident safety and health impacts once construction opens up this toxic ground. According to recent asthma maps from the RI Department of Health produced by the Hassenfeld Child Health Innovation Institute at Brown University, the highest concentrations of Newport children hospitalized for asthma live in the North End and Broadway neighborhoods. We want strong environmental safe guards so that dust and chemicals will not be released into the air, where they will cause further asthma and other health problems for the residents who live in the North End, including the high population of children and seniors.</li> <li>•We appreciate that RIDOT has promised no detours of traffic will occur in the neighborhoods during construction. Since many residents of the North End rely on walking and biking (to places such as work, school, and bus stops), we want to see active transportation routes preserved safely throughout the construction process.</li> <li>•The 4B project site overlaps with local businesses and residences that will face displacement should the project receive a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). RIDOT has assured the public that these businesses and individuals will receive enough notice to relocate and will be compensated well. Highway and development projects often disproportionately affect those with the least resources – people of color, people with low incomes, etc. – which could happen here. Per the environmental justice standards required in this project, we request RIDOT ensure that those affected by displacement will not suffer. We ask that you take into account the disparate impact displacement will have on communities of lower resources.</li> </ul>	<p>Please see the responses to Common Comment 13 regarding hazardous materials; Common Comment 7 regarding effects on low-income and environmental justice communities; and Common Comment 10 regarding relocation.</p> <p>Please see the full response in the letter dated March 6, 2020 and included in Appendix C.</p>

No.	Name	Comment	Response
96	Newport Health Equity Zone Transportation Working Group	<p>Part 2, continued from Part 1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•We understand the design of the 4B plan is only 30% complete. As more details unfold, we want bike and pedestrian connectivity and safety to be a priority. Sidewalks must be wide enough to safely accommodate users traveling in both directions, users in wheelchairs or other mobility devices, users with children and babies in strollers. The sidewalks must be of high quality so as to remain smooth and safe for decades. The crosswalks must be signalized and allow plenty of time for users to cross, especially users such as seniors, people with disabilities, and children, who may need more time to cross the street. We expect to see safe, ADA accessible, well-constructed and maintained pedestrian overpasses in the most heavily trafficked areas of the project site, such as where the ramp connects to Admiral Kalbfus Road and six lanes of traffic spanning Halsey Street. The sidewalks and bike lanes must connect to the neighborhoods and provide a network of connectivity between the North End and the rest of Newport.</li> <li>•We are concerned that existing RIPTA bus stops might be relocated. We would like to see RIPTA bus stops added in the key places residents might like to visit. These places include: the dog park, the park and ride, the Walmart shopping center, the former Newport Grand site, and the corporate park at the end of the cul-de-sac. We want these bus stops to have shelters to protect users from the elements, for the shelters to be in safe locations with several feet of distance from the road, and for the shelters to be attractive and well-maintained.</li> <li>•As the 4B design stands currently, connectivity is only improved by the direct connection of Farewell Street to the rotary and from the shared use path in the rail corridor to shared use paths on Admiral Kalbfus Road and JT Connell Highway. We are excited to see these improvements, and want to see improved connectivity between the neighborhoods on either side of Admiral Kalbfus Road. The current design funnels all traffic intending to leave Newport onto Admiral Kalbfus Road, with six lanes of traffic dumping vehicles either east or west onto Admiral Kalbfus Road. We would like to see the main route out of Newport be through the rotary and up JT Connell Highway, not east on Admiral Kalbfus Road. This could be accomplished with clear signage and optimized signal lights to channel the flow of traffic to JT Connell Highway. The concurrent improvements to JT Connell Highway will likely also enhance the favorability of this route out of Newport. We would also like improvements to be made to the localization of the eastern part of Admiral Kalbfus Road, to make it a slower, safer transportation route similar to Van Zandt Ave. We would like to see a road diet – narrowing of the vehicle lanes, speed humps, additional signalized cross walks, and bike lanes on both sides of the street along the entire corridor from the Malbone Road/Girard Ave intersection to the intersection of Broadway/West Main Road. This would greatly improve the connectivity of the residential areas on both sides of Admiral Kalbfus Road. Right now this road serves to segregate this area of concentrated poverty from prosperous downtown Newport. It is imperative to environmental justice standards that the Pell Bridge 4B Preferred Alternative address this disparity and improve connectivity between the two sides of Admiral Kalbfus Road.</li> </ul>	Please see the full response in the letter dated March 6, 2020 and included in Appendix C.
97	Newport Health Equity Zone Transportation Working Group	<p>Part 3, continued from Part 2</p> <p>We appreciate that RIDOT has explicitly stated commitments related to active transportation infrastructure, connectivity, construction, and displacement in this alternative. We know that our requests for improvements in these areas will be thoughtfully considered. The State of Rhode Island’s Department of Transportation has an obligation to minimize the negative effects of highway changes on historically oppressed residents, including people of color, people with disabilities, and people with low incomes. Given the demographic realities of Newport’s North End, it is imperative that the environmental and health impacts for these populations be mitigated.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Rex LeBeau On behalf of the Transportation Work Group Newport Health Equity Zone</p>	Please see the full response in the letter dated March 6, 2020 and included in Appendix C.

## Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches

Newport and Middletown, Rhode Island

No.	Name	Comment	Response
98	Richard Klaffky	<p>1. These should be major positive improvements. However my preference is for Alternative 2 because it provides a more continuous flow of traffic coming off the bridge both for those cars going into town and for cars going through to West Main. I have concern that Alt 4 would funnel all bridge traffic to the one light at Amiral Kalbfus and create a large back up conflicting with traffic going to the RK plaza, and going from Admiral Kalbfus to the bridge westbound.</p> <p>2. My experience has been that the worst backups have occurred leaving town on Farewell Street. With only a single lane having to go through the intersection at Farewell and Van Zant, traffic can quickly back up very badly especially if a left turn is allowed from Farewell onto Van Zant.</p> <p>3. Not a substantive construction issue but I hope the word "highway" can be changed from both Connell Highway and Coddington Highway. These are not high speed streets and they have many stops and intersections with city streets. The word conveys the wrong impression of what to expect on these streets.</p>	Please see the responses to Common Comment 2 regarding traffic congestion and Common Comment 8 regarding other alternatives evaluated in the Draft EA.
99	Mike Cullen	Could facilities to charge electric vehicles (EVs) be included in the design of the 250-300 car parking lot at the end of the bridge? A "quick charge" amenity would boost Newport's ability to participate as an "EV Tourism" destination and should encourage EV drivers to park their car in this lot vs driving into downtown Newport to find one of the city's six charger locations.	Please see the response to Common Comment 15.
100	Natalie Harris	Looking at the "30" percent drawing that was shown at the Florence Gray meeting with Jodi Richards on 1/15/2020 , I NOTICED A VERY LARGE PART OF THE NORTH END IS NOT CONNECTED! (Hillside Ave and Admiral Kalbfus rd) also (Maple ave and Connell Hwy) the project cuts off right before those access points are reached. Posing a safety issue for those who live in these areas which are largely populated with families that have young children, seniors, also families that use walking as their only form of transportation. The shared use paths that are being shown in the diagram only reflect it starting from the corner of Admiral Kalbfus rd and Girard ave to the downtown area/ Connell Hwy down near Walmart to downtown area. The people coming from Hillside and Maple ave areas will..(A) WALK IN THE STREET WITH THEIR CHILDREN considering snow and not shoveled side walk/curb areas or (B) STRUGGLE WITH THE TERRAIN WITH THEIR WALKERS,STROLLERS,WHEELCHAIRS ETC.	Please see the response to Common Comment 4. Although Hillside and Maple Avenues are outside the project limits, the concerns expressed in the comment regarding those streets are being or have been addressed as part of other projects.
101	Nancy and Carl Tiska	<p>Dear Jody,</p> <p>We would like to thank your team for coming to Newport to address the community back in December (at City Hall). We found the meeting to be very informative and the presentation on the number of accidents reported on the short bridge off-ramp and at the corner of Van Zandt Ave and Farewell Street was truly eye-opening. We're not sure why anyone would balk at the closure of the short off-ramp after seeing your presentation.</p> <p>Most neighbors we've spoken to seem to be concerned about their own minor inconveniences rather than community safety.</p> <p>Once again Jody, we would like to than you and your team for your excellent work and we look forward to the eventual completion of the realignment project.</p> <p>Nancy and Carl Tiska</p>	Comment acknowledged.
102	Judith A. Byrnes	<p>I agree with the all the comments by Bike Newport.</p> <p>In addition, I am opposed to the dislocation of the existing Tradesman Center and the Waste Management/Clean City resources. Relocation would not only be very very expensive (who would pay?) but what how will services be continued during construction?</p> <p>There are underground gas tanks, special decks including weight scales at the Waste Management site which would be costly in terms of time an money if they were to be moved. And where would they be moved to?</p>	Please see the responses to Common Comment 5 regarding pedestrian and bicycle facilities and safety and Common Comment 10 on relocations.
103	Ann E. Rossman	I think the final proposed plan is very good!! I do have a concern about the roundabout vs. the existing rotary. I personally have found roundabouts very difficult and thought they were determined not to be the best solution. Also, we need to keep the Waste Management facilities within Newport city limits. Perhaps they could be assisted in redesigning/reconfiguring those facilities to take up less land. Your extensive work on this project is impressive.	The proposed design would reduce traffic congestion compared to existing and No Action conditions, as described in the response to Common Comment 2. Please see Common Comment 10 for a discussion of relocation.
104	Stephanie Winslow	I'm very concerned about how this project intends to mitigate traffic (especially large trucks) on Admiral Kalbfus Rd. Admiral Kalbfus is easily one of the busiest roads in Newport and could easily be one of the worst for speeding commuters who routinely and easily top 40mph. The most significant issue is that this road is the proverbial "train tracks" of Newport, dividing the tourists, second home owners, and wealth in the South end from the subsidized housing, strip malls, elementary school, and people of color in the North end. There has long been talk of reconnecting the North and South ends of Newport. However, until large vehicles and commuter traffic is rerouted to JT Connell Highway and West Main Rd, raised crosswalks and police radar are installed, this road will only get worse. It's already impossible to ride a bike here, and people rarely walk because of the speeding cars. Please don't forget about this critical piece of the project! It will require participation from Middletown (who is keen on redeveloping the corner of JT Connell and West Main!) so coordination must happen soon. Thank you kindly.	Please see the responses to Common Comment 4 on improving connections between the North End and the rest of Newport and Common Comment 5 about pedestrian and bicycle facilities and safety.



**Reconstruction of the  
Pell Bridge Approaches**  
Newport and Middletown, Rhode Island



No.	Name	Comment	Response
105	Aaron Jasper	<p>Newport residents beware!            The proposed bridge ramp re-alignment is going to permanently increase your property taxes and do little or nothing to alleviate traffic during Summer weekends in Newport and force you to drive halfway to Middletown to get home coming from Jamestown.            DOT's plans will result in eliminating Waste Management's facilities so all trash will have to be trucked off island. Taxpayers will be picking up the extra cost.            DOT's plans call for eliminating Newport's public works facility and moving it to someplace unknown at the cost of many millions of taxpayer dollars.            DOT's plans will have a negative effect on access to the many businesses at the Newport County Tradesman's Centers. Some may have to move or may even close down, eliminating good paying jobs and ceasing to pay taxes in Newport.            Much of what DOT is trying to accomplish could be done by upgrading signage (have they never heard of zipper merge signs?) and installing so called smart traffic lights on all intersections from Connell Highway to Wellington Avenue.            They could even eliminate the "bridge to nowhere" and re-connect Connell Highway with minimum changes to existing roads.            Residents! It's time to call/email your city councilors and state representatives and tell them to do their duty and put the brakes on the DOT's misguided plans.            Here is where to submit comments to DOT:  <a href="https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=mV5cNo_260uJ2avstBsaG5QjLJNBHVHjHjLpU3RhUNktVQkVPM0QyQUIZTVUxVTNESk45ODIWUi4u">https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=mV5cNo_260uJ2avstBsaG5QjLJNBHVHjHjLpU3RhUNktVQkVPM0QyQUIZTVUxVTNESk45ODIWUi4u</a>            Aaron Jasper            Newport</p>	<p>Please see the responses to Common Comments 3 and 11.</p>
106	Diane Winslow	<p>Without more of an effort to reroute traffic on to Connell Highway and into Middletown and away from Admiral Kalbfus this plan does little to ease congestion through NEWPORT.</p>	<p>Please see the response to Common Comment 2.</p>
107	Jessica Holden	<p>Please take into consideration the already heavy traffic coming and going down third street with few stop signs and no speed bumps causing higher speeds. There are many homes and families in this area that do not want this to be more of a cut through. Keep the feel of a neighborhood and not a commercial zone.            Thank you,            Jessica Holden</p>	<p>Please see the response to Common Comment 6.</p>
108	Beth Cullen	<p>Concerned about the lack of sound barriers in the Washington Street, Bayside, Sycamore areas. In the " Highway Noise Technical Report" -- section 6, page 27, we learn that the justification for a sound barrier doesn't meet you criteria. Yet, on the north side of the bridge, the Cypress Street area does. The data is too close to not have some sort -- size and materials to be decided -- of sound protection. The time is right to do it right! We've lived next to the bridge since 1991, the noise is an issue...why not do something to correct the problem, now? Neighbors have voiced concern...I hope they have sent their comments to you. A petition is forthcoming. Than you!</p>	<p>As described in the Highway Noise Technical Report (Appendix B13) and Section 7.13 of the Draft EA, areas that would approach or exceed the federal Noise Abatement Criteria under the Proposed Action were considered for mitigation. Noise barriers were not feasible in two of these locations, and were feasible but did not meet cost-effectiveness criteria in the other impacted location.</p>

No.	Name	Comment	Response
109	Erin Donovan-Boyle	<p>The Greater Newport Chamber of Commerce is generally supportive of the bridge ramp realignment project as an opportunity to diversify the local economy, open up the area to some potential redevelopment and increase walkability and connectivity between the North End and downtown area.</p> <p>Our regional economic development division, Connect Greater Newport, which is a collaboration of seven municipalities in Newport and Bristol Counties, has implemented a robust business, retention and expansion program to address barriers that are limiting the region’s economic stability. These barriers are largely a result of the regions location and include cost, space, access and talent. The realignment of the Newport Pell Bridge ramp has created both excitement and concern amongst some local businesses as the proposed design has great potential, but also may add to the already existing barriers. The businesses in the Tradesmen Center on Halsey Street in Newport are in the heart of the ramp relocation and will be greatly impacted. Although, the plans for the realignment promise to free up land for future development, those located within this center have expressed concern that it will be at their expense.</p> <p>The businesses located within the Tradesmen Center are particularly valuable to Newport and the region for two reasons. There is a significant shortage of tradesmen and these industries account for some of the higher paying jobs in the region. There are 19 documented businesses located within the tradesman center with over 100 full-time year-round employees and over 50 part-time or seasonal employees. It is estimated that they generate more than \$20M in revenue annually. The Tradesmen Center is largely made up of businesses that fall under the construction and manufacturing industries, which accounts for only 4.2% of jobs in the city of Newport and pays \$15,500 to \$17,000 more than the per capital median wage. 19% of jobs in these industries within the City are located within the center.</p> <p>Leadership at Connect Greater Newport has met with businesses at the Tradesmen Center to understand their concerns and support their future success. Through these meetings we learned that the businesses located on Halsey Street are there because the units are cost effective, have efficient space and are easily accessible. We also learned that the worst-case scenario for these business owners would be limited access to their units due to tourism traffic. The majority of businesses within the center use the space as a small office and to store supplies, but their work is completed off site. As tradesmen their revenue is contingent upon billable hours. Traffic congestion will slow travel time resulting in reduced time at a job site and therefore limiting revenue.</p> <p>The project will impact each individual business differently, but the effects can have a broader impact on the region. The Greater Newport Chamber of Commerce would like to ask RIDOT to please consider the impact this facility has on the City of Newport and the Greater Newport region. We also ask that you listen to the business owners who collectively have hundreds of years of experience. They know what is best for their business and need our support to ensure their future success.</p>	Please see the response to Common Comment 3.
110	Lola Herrera-Ximenez	<p>I would like that Admiral Kalbfus was a street not only for the traffic, also for the people, and there will be more lights, less traffic or more slow, so that will allow to integrate the neighborhood because people feel more safe walking or biking at the streets.</p> <p>Additionally I would like Malbone Rd and Girad Avenue are safer to cross and also allow us to walk or bike safe to whatever we need to go.</p> <p>Traffic more slow and a shared road with people and bikes in all the project.</p> <p>Thanks.</p>	Please see the response to Common Comment 5 regarding pedestrian and bicycle facilities and safety. The frequency of the proposed traffic signals will help minimize the speed on Admiral Kalbfus Road. Several signal-protected pedestrian crossings are proposed along the Admiral Kalbfus corridor, along with a shared-use path connecting to the proposed shared-use path to downtown.

No.	Name	Comment	Response
111	Rex LeBeau	<p>To Whom It May Concern:</p> <p>Thank you so much for the comment extension. I appreciated the extra time to review the implications of the preferred design. I've lived in Newport for almost 13 years in a quiet section of the Third Ward while working in the North End. I walk to places downtown but the commute to work is too far to walk in a reasonable amount of time, so to decrease my carbon footprint and get some exercise, I ride my bike to work as much as possible.</p> <p>I'm excited for the new shared use path along the train tracks and the bike/ped improvements to the western part of Admiral Kalbfus Rd, as well as the JT Connell Highway bike lanes and new sidewalks promised. As someone who works in the North End, I see the plan's connectivity improvements to the western side of Newport very clearly. I do not see how the preferred 4B design connects residents in the Newport Heights/Park Holm area to Town Center or across Admiral Kalbfus Rd. The signalized intersection at Malbone/Girard will help, but none of the project extends east of that intersection.</p> <p>In the proposed design, Admiral Kalbfus Road still acts as a segregating barrier, cutting part of the North End off from the rest of Newport. It's unclear to me if traffic on Admiral Kalbfus will be reduced from this design. I'd like to see measures taken insure all nonlocal traffic coming off the bridge will head west to the rotary. I'd like to see bike lanes, wider sidewalks, speed bumps, and one lane of traffic in each direction on Admiral Kalbfus from the Halsey St ramp to Broadway. This would localize the road completely. The project area would need to be extended. If connectivity is so important, and if far-reaching JT Connell Highway improvements and even America's Cup are included in the full concept of the bridge ramp redesign, why not also extend those improvements where they are most needed by the residents of the North End?</p> <p>The North End has the highest population of people in Newport that do not own cars. Bike and pedestrian infrastructure is the definition of connectivity in this area. This means reducing vehicle traffic and improving bike/ped infrastructure and safety so that the existing arteries are usable and safe for all. I bike a convoluted and time-consuming route from my home to work because that route is localized and relatively safe. I'd like to see the Pell Bridge Ramp 4B design improve connectivity and safety for the entire North End.</p>	<p>The preferred option depicted in the EA is conceptual; final design elements will be modified to provide an optimal configuration. The concerns in the comments are noted and will be analyzed for inclusion in final design. Additional coordination with project neighbors and stakeholders will continue throughout the design process. Several signal-protected pedestrian crossings are proposed along the Admiral Kalbfus Road corridor, along with a shared-use path connecting to the proposed shared-use path to downtown. The City is currently preparing a North End Master Plan, which will address future development extending further into the North End. Please see the response to Common Comment 5 in regard to North End connectivity. Additional traffic or queuing are not expected on Admiral Kalbfus Road for the design year.</p>
112	T.R. McGrath	<p>I am the owner of units 1 thru 5 at the Newport County Tradesmen Center I (64 Halsey). I believe that the preferred design #4B will have adverse impacts on the properties and operations of the businesses located at 64 Halsey Street.</p> <p>The following are some of my concerns</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Reversing the entrance to 64 Halsey St from Halsey street to a new access road from the west will restrict trucks and emergency service vehicles from circumnavigating the building. The current layout of the building on this lot was designed to allow large trucks and fire department vehicles to drive completely around the building.</li> <li>2) Parking for employees and customers of the Tradesmen Center looks to be eliminated or severely minimized.</li> <li>3) Because the #4B ramp system would loop around 64 Halsey St., access would be severely restricted during major traffic backups such as accidents on the bridge and peak tourism season and large special events.</li> <li>4) Drainage - adverse effects from changes in the road system could increase the risk of flooding at 64 Halsey St., which is already located adjacent to a flood zone.</li> <li>5) Access to and operations of the businesses at the Tradesmen Center will be severely hindered during the construction phase of the project. The new west road conceivably can not be built until after the new ramp is built and the old ramp is removed. Once construction has started, it is unclear if the businesses at 64 Halsey St. would be able to access their properties at all until near the conclusion of the project.</li> </ol> <p>Regarding the Design as it pertains to the North End of Newport:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) I believe this project has not addressed one of the most significant intersections that is the cause of major traffic and accidents, Van Zandt Ave. at Farewell St. RIDOT's own information lists this intersection as having the third most accidents over 5 years of all the intersections within in the project. This design does not alleviate the traffic choke point at Van Zandt &amp; Farewell.</li> <li>2) Plan #4B has too much unnecessary takings of private land by eminent domain.</li> <li>3) Relocation of the City Yard and City Water Department would add significant cost to the taxpayers of Newport.</li> <li>4) Removal of the Waste Management transfer station will have significant cost ramifications on future waste hauling contracts with the City of Newport.</li> </ol>	<p>As you know, RIDOT has conducted outreach meetings with yourself as well as the other owners at the Tradesmen's Center. We will continue to work with the owners to address these concerns and provide refinements to improve access (for all vehicle types and sizes) and circulation within the site as well as to the Admiral Kalbfus Road and JT Connell Highway. The intersection at Farewell Street is limited on widening due to the cemetery on both sides of the roadway. Although the Proposed Action would not completely alleviate the "choke point" at the intersection of Van Zandt Avenue and Farewell Street, a new signal coordinated with the new ramp network would be provided, which should help improve the flow of traffic. Your comments regarding the City Yard and Waste Management facility as well as your suggested alternatives are noted.</p>



No.	Name	Comment	Response
	T.R. McGrath (Cont.)	<p>Suggested alternatives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) RIDOT should consider a hybrid of plan #2 and #3A.</li> <li>2) In particular, #3A utilizes a connection for southbound traffic exiting the bridge to ride along the rail corridor and bypass the intersection at Van Zandt Ave &amp; Farewell St. This system would also allow for traffic management northbound of Farewell Ave during peak tourism season and large special events.</li> <li>3) Plan #2 keeps the existing westbound on-ramp for the bridge. The westbound on-ramp alleviates southbound traffic travelling from the north to the bridge.</li> <li>4) Plan #4B routes all traffic to the bridge through one intersection creating a new potential choke point.</li> <li>5) Any plan should consider a scenic Newport exit that utilizes the rail corridor and the existing westbound on-ramp to the bridge. This would provide for 2 exits from the bridge and 2 on-ramps to the bridge, leaving at all times 1 of the 2 available in the event of an accident or major traffic.</li> <li>6) Considering the above, the utilization of North Halsey St. would not be needed, nor the taking of the City Public Works complex.</li> </ol> <p>Respectfully, T.R. McGrath</p>	
113	Cheryl McLarney	<p>Plans to decrease traffic coming into Newport are not disclosed. Electric buses? to transport people around Newport...any consideration for this? Are there plans to mitigate traffic on Admiral Kalbfus?</p>	<p>The intent of the project is not to prevent traffic entering Newport, but to more efficiently process the traffic. The buses that run through the area are operated by RIPTA and the use of electric buses is dictated by their policy. The reduction of traffic impacts is discussed in Section 6.1 of the EA.</p>
114	Cheryl and Tim Farrey	<p>My husband and I are opposed to closing the current first ramp off of the bridge. We have viewed the proposed traffic flow both online and at the library. We also drove the way it would take us when we drive over the bridge to our home. We feel there will be more traffic back up with the elimination of the first ramp and it will take us at least 5 minutes more. The only advantage that we can see would be to the proposed new development in the North end.</p>	<p>Please see the response to Common Comment 1.</p>
115	Paul Opperman	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The proposed action does not significantly increase north/south pedestrian connectivity between the project area in the vicinity of Halsey St. North and neighborhoods to the south off Van Zandt Ave. The improvements along Farewell St / Connell Hwy run parallel to the existing route along 3rd st, and still require at least one crossing of the main bridge offramp. Extending the pedestrian (or ped/bike) path along the modified Halsey ramp to the end of Halsey St. South, with a verge/setback from the roadway, would reduce the walking distance to under half and directly connect with new pedestrian networks in the new development areas. This allows pedestrians from a densely populated area to reach new developments with minimal conflicts with bridge traffic flows, potentially reducing pedestrian demand at the primary bridge offramp intersection signals. Extending the path beyond Halsey to Prescott Hall, Butler, or Farewell/Connell would further improve the pedestrian accessibility to the area. With an adequate crossing of Farewell, this extended path could connect with the shared use path in the rail corridor and increase alternate mode east/west connectivity between the new development and the Point neighborhood, along with points downtown.</li> <li>2) The street network design should encourage vehicle traffic to use Connell Hwy as the primary access to the rotary. The EA Figure 6-5 shows approximately 3 times as much traffic turning left from Halsey onto Adm Kalbfus towards the rotary as turns right from New Connector to Connell Hwy. Using road and signage design to bring more traffic down the New Connector should reduce the conflicting flows on Adm Kalbfus at Halsey and keep traffic moving east/west. Right turn on red at Connell toward the rotary could help reduce backups caused by rotary-bound traffic, compared to left turns on Adm Kalbfus. Bridge-bound traffic from the rotary should be encouraged to exit on Connell to turn left on New Connector to reduce the southbound/westbound conflicts at Halsey and New Connector, and allow for more queuing on the New Connector instead of the ramp.</li> </ol>	<p>Additional pedestrian access and wayfinding signage will be considered for inclusion into the final design. JT Connell Highway between the new connector road and the rotary is limited to one lane in each direction to avoid major impacts to the businesses along this segment. To accommodate the traffic demand from the bridge, traffic needs to be spread out between Admiral Kalbfus Road (where it exists today) and JT Connell Highway.</p>
116	Bridget Butlin	<p>I would like to have on record that I object strongly to the proposed DOT plan for the re-configuration Pell Bridge Approaches. The proposal to eliminate Newport's Waste Management's facilities should not be considered as a viable option. Neither should the elimination of the current Public Works facility, which would cause multiple extra costs in relocation of the facility. I hope the DOT will consider some of the simpler and less costly options for the Pell Bridge Approaches project. Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>	<p>Please see the response to Common Comment 10 regarding residential and business relocation.</p>

No.	Name	Comment	Response
117	Bardorf & Bardorf , PC	<p>We represent the Newport County Tradesmen's Center Condominium I Condominium Association and the Newport County Tradesmen's Center Condominium II Condominium Association located at 62 and 64 Halsey Street, TAP 9, Lots 376 and 428, consisting of 62 businesses serving Newport County (collectively, the "Tradesmen' s Centers"). As you are likely aware, this firm and representatives of the Tradesmen's Centers have had multiple discussions regarding the project with representative of the RIDOT. On December 10, 2019, we met with RIDOT representatives Jody Richards and David Walsh at 62 Halsey Street. Also present at the meeting was Rick Rhodes of the engineering firm VHB. At that meeting, all of the concerns of all of the businesses located at the Tradesmen's Centers of the Proposed Action were explained in detail to Mr. Richards, Mr. Walsh and Mr. Rhodes. I provide below a brief summary of those concerns discussed at the December 10, 2019 meeting.</p> <p>A major concern of the Tradesmen' s Center is access and internal traffic flows. The Proposed Action eliminates all access from Halsey Street - access that was guaranteed by the City of Newport via a Consent Judgment entered in Newport Superior Court in 1995. The access being proposed by the Proposed Action does not allow for delivery trucks to access the individual business units. The businesses are very concerned about access during what will be years of construction. Another major concern is the proposed 1,300 sq. ft. taking from Lot 376. The taking is directly in front of an active loading bay. That loading bay will be rendered completely useless and inaccessible if the current access routes are altered as proposed. The Proposed Action also eliminate s crucial public parking that is currently used by the hundreds of employees and clients of businesses at the Tradesmen' s Centers. The Proposed Action also further isolates the Tradesmen's Centers. It is already a challenge for clients to find and access the Tradesmen's Center. The Proposed Action exacerbates this problem.</p> <p>There is also the concern of safety risks and noise that will be caused by major surrounding the Tradesmen' s Centers with major roadways. In summary, the Tradesmen' s Centers are vehemently opposed to the Proposed Action as presented. The changes create a real risk of businesses closing their doors, with no realistic options to relocate anywhere in the City of Newport.</p>	<p>Please see the full response in the letter dated March 5, 2020 and included in Appendix C.</p>
118	Joseph Nicholson, City Manager	<p>The Proposed Action moves the Pell Bridge Approaches out of the FEMA floodplain, creating a safer evacuation route. This is a significant and vitally important improvement that better provides for the safety of Newport's residents and visitors.</p> <p>The Proposed Action includes the acquisition of three residential and two commercial properties. and affects Newport's City Yard where the City's Public Services and Utilities Departments are currently housed. Relocating this facility is complicated. The facility requires a site that is a minimum of 8 acres, and a location outside of the FEMA floodplain. In a densely developed City with limited land resources, finding a suitable site is challenging. The City is currently investigating every alternative and option available for relocation of the City Yard and we look forward to meeting with Rhode Island Department of Transportation's Real Estate Division for further discussions as this process continues.</p> <p>Understanding that the Proposed Action is currently at an early design phase, the City emphasizes the importance of considering drainage issues at all points in the design process. The proposed project area is located at the bottom of a significant watershed and should be looked at as a component of a larger system. The information provided with in the Draft EA is silent on how the drainage will be addressed.</p> <p>The City's Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2017 has identified the future land use of the parcels within the project area as mixed-use development. which may include office, retail and residential uses. The City has recently contracted for consulting services for the creation of a North End Urban Plan, which will help to define the character of the area. How the Newport Approach presents as part of this environment is of critical importance. It will be a significant visual resource to the area and should be designed to interface visually and functionally with the development of adjacent parcels. The City looks forward to working with DOT on the design of this new entrance to the City and on the project's effective reconnection of the North End neighborhood to downtown Newport.</p> <p>While the Proposed Action provides additional vehicles storage space on the Newport Approach, the existing City street network will be negatively impacted by the introduction of additional vehicles. The Draft EA states that the intention is to have "vehicles queued on lower speed roadways, rather than the high-speed bridge." The Level of Service (LOS) at the intersection of JT Connell/ Farewell/Van Zandt is predicted to decrease resulting from the Proposed Action, during both the morning and afternoon peaks, and there is concern about the increased stress on the JT Connell/ Farewell/Van Zandt intersection.</p> <p>The proposed geometry of the new Approach alters the proximity of vehicles to nearby residential dwellings, and results in noise impacts to a neighborhood that previously had limited impacts. To address this, the City would support a speed limit reduction on both the Bridge and the Approaches, along with the installation of landscape material in the affected area. All new streets should adhere to Green and Complete Street standards. to the extent practicable. This will mitigate noise, vibration and water quality/stormwater impacts.</p>	<p>Please see the full response in the letter dated February 14, 2020 and included in Appendix C.</p>

No.	Name	Comment	Response
	Joseph Nicholson, City Manager (Cont.)	<p>The proposed location of the new Approach will eliminate an informal pedestrian and bike access to the Tradesmen center from the surrounding neighborhood via Halsey Street. A pedestrian underpass could be considered at this location to provide continued access and support the City's multimodal transportation goals.</p> <p>The proposed cul-de-sac design for vehicle access to the Tradesmen center is completely foreign to both the existing and proposed development patterns of the City and should be reconsidered as the design process moves forward.</p> <p>The existing rail corridor and the width of the bridge at Van Zandt are likely insufficient to accommodate a shared use path that would include pedestrians, bicycles and rail cars. Providing safe and accessible pedestrian and bike paths is a priority for the City, and multimodal transportation is an important component of the development of the abutting proposed mixed-use zone. We agree with the consultant's determination that the rail is not culturally or historically significant. It might be beneficial for DOT to explore alternatives to a full rail corridor.</p> <p>Although the conclusion of the cultural resource section states the project will not substantially change, alter, or have an adverse impact on known historic resources, the City remains concerned about potential intangible impacts on historic resources particularly from an increase in traffic. For example: an increase in traffic on Farewell Street creates more emissions which could potentially harm gravestones in the Common Burial Ground. The proposed park and ride and reuse of the existing rail corridor, as a multiuse path to bring visitors into Newport, may alleviate some of these potential adverse impacts on historic resources within the area of potential effect (APE). The City requests to review the technical report generated by the Phase I archaeological survey and any reports generated by the intensive field survey and research evaluating properties within the APE.</p> <p>Absent from the Proposed Action are the improvements to Dyer Street, as shown on Alternatives 3, 3A and 38. This connection is critical to the City's plans for future redevelopment in the area and should be included in any plan moving forward. if feasible.</p> <p>Landscape design is a n important component in aesthetics, the mitigation of noise impacts and in addressing the effects of climate change. The Project's landscape design shall be reflective of an historic coastal community, functional, and attractive.</p> <p>In order to support future efforts to enhance the JT Connell Highway corridor and provide pedestrian and bike access across and to the roadway, converting the existing rotary to a signalized intersection rather than a modern roundabout should be considered.</p> <p>The City strongly urges DOT to consider including in the design the further extension of Halsey Street north toward Maple Avenue. This would provide direct access to JT Connell Highway and further support reconnection of the North End neighborhoods.</p>	Please see the full response in the letter dated February 14, 2020 and included in Appendix C.
119	Christopher R. Scott, C.R. Scott Marine Woodworking Co., Inc.	<p>I own three Condo Units #6, 7, &amp; 8 at the 64 Halsey Street Tradesman Center. I am very concerned of the impact of this bridge ramp realignment project will have on my business and my property.</p> <p>By placing the entrance to our 64 Halsey Tradesman Center at the West end of the property, it will make it difficult, to impossible, for large box trucks and tractor- trailers to back up along the North side of our building to make deliveries. There is a building on our property that is at the Northwest corner of the property and will prohibit tractor-trailers and make it very difficult for large box trucks to backup along the North side of our building; from the proposed entrance on the West end of our property. This would have a serious negative effect on our businesses and devaluate our property. We depend on a lot of deliveries by tractor trailer and large box trucks. Presently tractor trailers are able to back in along the North and South sides of our building from the East entrances off of Halsey Street.</p> <p>I don't see how traffic back up on the bridge is going to be reduced by this ramp realignment project. By adding three fairly close together intersections, with signal lights, in way of getting to downtown Newport from the bridge, will create more of a traffic backup problem than there is presently on the bridge. The present downtown Newport off ramp only has one traffic light to contend with. It will also make it more difficult to get to the 62 and the 64 Halsey Tradesman Centers from the Bridge, from JT Connell Highway and from Admiral Kalbfus Road when there is high traffic volume coming off the bridge.</p> <p>This ramp realignment project is going to cause a huge interruption to businesses in the vicinity of the construction. It will make it more difficult for customers and vendors to get to and from our local businesses due to detours and traffic backups caused by the construction.</p>	Please see the response to Comment 112. The final design for the project will include refinements to access and circulation on the Tradesmen's Center site to enable continued use by large trucks.

No.	Name	Comment	Response
	<p>Christopher R. Scott, C.R. Scott Marine Woodworking Co., Inc. (Cont.)</p>	<p>Why can't the State DOT, by eminent domain, take the Waste Management garage building and some of the HUGE UNUSED Newport Grand parking lot that is now owned by the Carpionato Group and redirect the off ramp through their parking lot. This means moving the proposed intersection for the off ramp at Admiral Kalbfus road a little to the East. Again, the off ramp would run through the old Newport Grand parking lot. The Tradesmen Centers could keep their present entrances from the East off of the new connection between the off ramp and IT Connell highway. The State could also utilize some of the Carpionato parking lot for the Visitor's Park &amp; Ride. This scenario might even save the Federal Government and the State a lot of money and prevent a lot of distress that would affect the Tradesmen Center Owners. I don't understand why this scenario hasn't been already proposed?</p> <p>This is a project that doesn't need to be done. I don't understand the Federal Government and this State, in their way of thinking, in apportioning funds for road projects. Why can't the money that would be spent on this ramp realignment project be re-allotted to repaving the roads in this State which are in desperate need of repair.</p> <p>In closing; it will make access to our properties very difficult and impossible. It will devalue our properties. It will be a huge interruption to the businesses in the area. It is a project that doesn't need to be done when the money should be used to repave our roads which are in desperate need of repair.</p> <p>I am asking our RI State DOT, Senators, Representatives, City Mayor, and City Council Members to please either stop or re-think this project before it causes a lot of harm to the local businesses.</p>	
120	Russ Matuszek	<p>While this project is way overdue to alleviate traffic and modernize the area, I have one major concern about the proposed 300-car park and ride that is part of this project. This proposed park and ride is being built right at the doorstep of a for-profit tour company, Viking Tours Of Newport, which owns the existing parcel and building abutting the proposed park and ride to north. In addition to Viking Tours gaining an unfair competitive advantage against other transportation and jitney operators that currently exist in Newport, this new park and ride lot allows the potential for Viking Tours to monopolize the city's tourism industry based on the proposed location of the new lot and the traffic patterns that will ensue. The RIDOT should not be engaging in the practice of favoring certain business while destroying others. Even furthering their competitive advantage, Viking Tours has the financial resources and square footage in their existing building to add their own "Tourist Information Center" and thus compete with Discover Newport's Visitor's Center (formerly, Newport And Bristol County Convention and Visitor's Bureau). The potential for abuse would then exist for Viking Tours to whitelist and show favoritism towards certain Newport restaurants, mansions, hotels, tour companies, and other activity vendors throughout the city. Discover Newport was sanctioned by the RI General Assembly in 1988 as a non-profit quasi-public, agency to promote tourism in a fair and equitable manner throughout Newport. DNs revenues are derived from parking fees collected at their Visitor's Center parking garage located at 23 America's Cup Ave. Other DN revenues are derived from commissions on tour ticket sales, hotel reservations, and mansion passes. Any form of competition against Discover Newport would undermine the revenue stream which funds the operation, and over time, the Discover Newport Visitor's Center could cease to exist as well. The traffic patterns in the Pell Bridge realignment proposal would force all visitors coming into and exiting Newport to drive right in front of this new park and ride, and thus, skip the downtown Visitor's Center altogether. This could deprive visiting consumers of their free market choice because at that point, they would have never known of the existence of the Discover Newport Visitor's Center. Furthermore, a park and ride adjacent to a company that labels its vehicles "Newport Trolley" would confuse out-of-state consumers into thinking that Viking Tours is the official transit authority of Newport, thus, depriving the non-profit quasi-public RIPTA of much needed revenues. RIPTA is the only General Assembly sanctioned transit authority in the entire state. While a park and ride would make sense at this location, safeguards need to be added to ensure one company doesn't monopolize the Newport tourism industry. One safeguard would be for RIDOT to take the Viking Tours existing terminal by eminent domain and move the Newport RIPTA facility to the location abutting the new park and ride, which would be a perfect match.</p>	<p>The location of the park and ride was selected to provide a visible location for transportation users heading downtown in order to help with vehicle congestion by providing alternative modes of transportation. The proximity of the rail line and future shared use path allows the Department to maximize the number of transportation alternatives. The park and ride will be maintained and managed by RIDOT. In regards to commercial operations, the park and ride will be free and no private operation may charge for parking at the facility. In accordance with state law the park and ride is designed "...so as to facilitate the safe and convenient transfer of persons traveling in passenger vehicles to and from high occupancy vehicles and/or public mass transportation systems including rail." As long as activities meet the intended use in accordance with the general law,</p>

No.	Name	Comment	Response
	<p>Russ Matuszek (continued)</p>	<p>The sale of the existing RIPTA facility would offset the cost of eminent domain. Another safeguard would be for the DOT to allow the Discover Newport Visitor’s Center to construct a satellite ticket office at the new park and ride location. But at the very least, the RIDOT should establish rules for this new park and ride. One rule would be that RIPUC authorized tour companies and jitney services would also be able to operate from the new park and ride, leveling the playing field for the existing transportation companies in Newport. Thank you for reading my concerns.</p>	<p>the Department supports transportation users parking and utilizing high occupancy vehicles or public transportation to mitigate congestion which does not preclude or favor any particular business. Based on outreach with the community, there is an urgent need for additional parking beyond downtown. The park and ride will serve to supplement parking and not replace the Visitor’s Center as many users will still prefer to park closely to the downtown destination rather than utilizing alternative modes of transportation. The Department previously met with Discover Newport and will continue to coordinate with the agency as the design advances to ensure proper wayfinding signage is utilized along the project alignment to help direct tourists. In addition, RIDOT works closely with RIPTA and it is anticipated that RIPTA service will be provided at the park and ride as well as any additional stops within the project area to maximize the use of transit bus riders.</p>

No.	Name	Comment	Response
121	Steve Sabo	<p>The City of Newport Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC) has reviewed the Pell Bridge Approaches Project Environmental Assessment (EA) draft report, released last month. After several meetings among members of our commission, community advocacy groups, local residents, and representatives of both RIDOT and VHB, we wish to register a series of comments and concerns regarding this project and the associated EA.</p> <p><b>Community Cohesiveness and Connectivity</b> Newport BPAC applauds RIDOT project management for expressly stating a goal of increasing connectedness between Newport’s North End community and the rest of the city. We strongly support this project objective and wish to see additional design measures considered to achieve an outcome where the North End community is no longer disconnected from the rest of our town via high vehicle traffic along Admiral Kalbfus Road, JT Connell Highway, and the intersecting rotary. Newport’s North End has long been separated from the rest of the city by heavily used roads with inadequate pedestrian infrastructure. This separation, specifically the north/south divide along Admiral Kalbfus Road, is apparent in demographic differences between neighborhoods on either side of this barrier (B10a-Pell Bridge EA Technical Studies Memo-Environmental Justice, Figure 1). The state has both a responsibility and a unique opportunity to address this socioeconomic divide and help repair the inequities caused to the North End by decades of separation.</p> <p><b>Traffic Flow Increase Along Admiral Kalbfus</b> Although only modest differences exist in the estimated traffic volume along Admiral Kalbfus Road between the no-action model and the proposed (4B) model, we feel that the project design is missing the opportunity to redirect traffic that currently travels along Admiral Kalbfus and turns north towards Middletown at the intersection with Broadway. By making efforts to redirect a portion of this traffic through the roundabout and onto JT Connell Highway, RIDOT would take a step towards alleviating a major barrier to community cohesion. Tractor-trailers and box trucks exiting the Pell Bridge to make deliveries along the commercial corridor of West Main Road should be targeted specifically and redirected along JT Connell Highway. This could be achieved by simple signage or through other traffic calming measures along Admiral Kalbfus Road, and would make Admiral Kalbfus Road more easily crossable, and less disruptive to residents living along and near the roadway.</p> <p><b>Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure</b></p>	<p>The preferred option depicted in the EA is conceptual; final design elements will be modified to provide an optimal configuration. The concerns in the comments are noted and will be analyzed for inclusion in final design. Additional coordination with project neighbors and stakeholders will continue throughout the design process. The Admiral Kalbfus Road corridor is the primary route between One Mile Corner and the Pell Bridge. Additional connections outside the scope of this project would be needed to reduce traffic on Admiral Kalbfus Road.</p>
	Steve Sabo (Cont.)	<p>BPAC is supportive of RIDOT plans to construct a shared use bicycle and pedestrian path along the project corridor. Removing vulnerable road users from motor vehicle lanes will be a great step towards a safe and usable passage between downtown Newport and the North End community. RIDOT should consider and adapt National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) design standards for moving these vulnerable road users through busy intersections where the shared use path meets high traffic roads. Of specific concern to our Commission is the proposal to place HAWK crosswalks along the roundabout where JT Connell Highway and Admiral Kalbfus Road intersect. Designing the roundabout in such a way that either motor vehicles or pedestrian traffic must stop movement and wait at a signal in order to continue towards their destination is counterproductive to the design objectives of a roundabout feature and may cause dangerous situations. RIDOT should consider other solutions, including pedestrian bridges at this intersection to facilitate safe and efficient travel of both motor vehicles and pedestrian traffic.</p> <p>As this project moves past the 30% design phase, we hope that RIDOT will work closely with community organizations such as BPAC, Bike Newport, and the Newport Health Equity Zone (HEZ) to develop a robust network of crosswalks, sidewalks, shared use bike paths, and other pedestrian infrastructure elements that will connect the North End community to the rest of our city. These improvements should be made in the existing project work area, and should connect with infrastructure outside of this zone.</p> <p>Connecting downtown Newport with RK Plaza is a start but is not sufficient. If RIDOT wishes to create community connectivity then these improvements must extend to the neighborhoods along Admiral Kalbfus, Malbone Road, and Girard Road where the resident population can make use of them.</p>	

No.	Name	Comment	Response
122	David Pedrick	<p>Thank you for being generous with your time today to interact with the Halsey Street tradesmen’s group today. FYI, I was invited by the group as an interested contributor to the bridge ramp planning. I live in the Point and will be affected personally, for better and worse, by aspects of the re-design, but I believe that the plan that you and your colleagues have produced is an overall, well-chosen design. I support it, and encourage consideration of some comments that I offer here.</p> <p>1. Because the ultimate bottleneck is the Farewell/Van Zandt intersection, the stacking backup on inbound Newport traffic during peak times won’t go away. Rather, it’s a matter of mitigating where it backs up. It would be good if smart intersection signals can avoid obstructing local through-traffic on the newly connected Farewell St to the roundabout. Perhaps smart metering of the new Farewell St signals can minimize the damage that bridge traffic into downtown Newport will do to local southbound traffic between the new E-W connector and Van Zandt St. Suggestions about that follow. (Although this is a bigger issue for general traffic overall, it’s a “for worse” feature for returning from the bridge to The Point, caused by closing the existing downtown exit – which I nonetheless support.)</p> <p>2. The biggest drawback that I see in the plan is requiring 2 left turns at high-demand intersections to get from the eastbound bridge ramp to southbound Connell/Farewell. These are major challenges to maximizing through-put, while figuring out how to minimize delays to other users of the intersection. The flow of traffic headed westbound onto the bridge from Admiral Kalbfus at the new Halsey St intersection will be competing with the eastbound arriving traffic headed to downtown Newport at the intersection for the new E-W connector road. You’ve no doubt studied this, and I hope have solutions in the smart signal controls to which you’ve referred.</p> <p>3. In my opinion, the re-design appears to do little to improve queuing time to get from the eastbound bridge to Van Zandt. It moves the queueing off the bridge itself to new, ground-level roadways which I recognize has been a fundamental goal of the re-design. I favor maximizing the stacking of vehicles in the westbound lanes of the new connector by dedicating 2 lanes for traffic to downtown, with a double left-turn lane from west to south on the new Farewell extension. (I think this might not be included in the plan shown today.) I suggest adding a third, right-hand lane in the E-W connector for through traffic to Farewell/Connell Highway, headed toward the roundabout and intermediate businesses, as well as to Viking Tours and The Newport Playhouse.</p>	<p>The preferred option depicted in the EA is subject to refinement during final design to provide an optimal configuration. The concerns in the comments are noted and will be analyzed for inclusion in final design. Additional coordination with project neighbors and stakeholders will continue throughout the design process. Any refinements to the design are expected to remain within the project's limits of disturbance and to avoid environmental impacts beyond those identified in the EA.</p> <p>"Smart" signal systems are proposed for this project to help meter traffic between intersections and avoid bottlenecks at any one intersection. A short slip lane was investigated to allow right turning vehicles from the E-W connector northbound. The amount of vehicles that may use this turn didn't warrant additional widening and environmental impacts. A channelized right-turn pocket may be considered as the design progresses.</p>

No.	Name	Comment	Response
	David Pedrick (Cont.)	<p>4.I continue to advocate for the future development of a truly intermodal transportation center on the west side of Farewell/Connell between the new E-W connector’s intersection and the gas station at the roundabout. As I’ve recommended before, this would include a high-ceilinged ground floor for all forms of public transit, including a platform for the planned light-rail shuttle, as well as visitor’s services and rest rooms. 3 decks of parking structure above the public transit level could accommodate roughly 600 cars. I recognize that this is beyond the scope of the current project, and would require the purchasing of private property, but I mention it now as another reason the build the third west-bound lane noted above.</p> <p>5.The detailed roadways plan that you showed today at the Tradesmen’s meeting incorporates a double left-turn from the bridge’s east-bound ramp to the new E-W connector. I suggest that the additional left lane be stretched more toward the bridge, to provide more room for stacking cars that await the left turn onto the E-W connector. I imagine that smart signaling can maximize the stacking on the E-W connector, while clearing the inbound ramp roadway as much as possible. At the same time, I encourage metering the left turn traffic from the west end of the E-W connector onto southbound Connell/Farewell to maintain as much smooth, timely traffic flow to Van Zandt as possible.</p> <p>6.Instead of having the existing right-lane blockage on the bridge (in a sometimes long, single lane), with left-plan traffic whizzing by at 50 mph or so, the problem shifts to having stopped traffic at the left-turn exit to the E-W connector. Consequently, right-lane traffic will whiz by stopped left-lane vehicles at significant speed – still a hazard, although, relative to the status quo, with a shorter back-up in the left lane, or lanes, depending on how backed-up that intersection gets. I imagine you’ve looked at how to mitigate the hazards, but it still presents risks.</p> <p>7.As another future wish-list item, I’d like to see the northbound bridge-ramp traffic be able to continue up a right-of-way behind the RK shopping center, exiting at the north end of the storage facility. I understand that the City retains a right of way to exit onto Connell Highway there. That would remove much mid-island traffic from Connell Highway from the roundabout to north of the heavy commercial district. The exit from the right of way to Connell Highway would be relatively benign, perhaps requiring a signal for northbound traffic control. I recommend NOT having a left-turn onto this right-of-way due to the mess it would make by adding a dedicated left-turn cycle here. It seems easy enough for southbound traffic to travel unimpeded to the roundabout for travel to all points, including entering the bridge at either the new E-W connector or at the Adm Kalbfus/Halsey intersection.</p> <p>8.By the way, it was inadvertent that I was invited to the Tradesmen’s meeting today. Before you arrived, and during the meeting at which I tried to respect my guest status, I encouraged the group to not look narrowly at their existing premises, which have their own constraints, but to look at opportunities to expand the tradesmen’s space into newly opened up property. I was suggested that they shift their focus toward creating improved premises, parking and service vehicle access, with minimum disruption to the currently-built business quarters. Thus, my question about how to go about the conversion of the state-owned roadway land into productive commercial space.</p> <p>I believe this addresses my significant concerns. I hope you find my comments helpful in improving the next stage of planning.</p> <p>Thanks for your dedication to this project, and for your efforts to incorporate public review and comment.</p>	<p>Any expansion of the park and ride or shuttle service is beyond the scope of this project. The length of the left turn lanes have been optimized using traffic micro-simulation software. The design will incorporate speed feedback signages and other speed mitigation measures to help slow vehicle speeds as then come off the bridge and enter the local street network. A future road extending beyond Admiral Kalbfus Road, behind RK Plaza, is beyond the scope of this project.</p>



No.	Name	Comment	Response
123	Tom Hockaday	<p>First, I want to thank you and your colleagues at RIDOT for your efforts during the discussion and review of plans to date for the Pell Bridge Realignment plans. On behalf of the Point Association, I greatly appreciate your efforts to reach out for input, your willingness to be available for neighbors to learn more and ask questions, and RIDOT's willingness last month to extend the deadline for comments to enable more residents to learn more and offer comments on the plan.</p> <p>As President of the Point Association of Newport, I realize that there is still much work to be done on the plan -- and the process is not over yet. There will be additional stages of the plan, and opportunities for the community to weigh in with their thoughts and opinions. But as President of Newport's largest and most active neighborhood association, I want ensure that RIDOT understands our concerns and desire to continue to be involved in discussion on the plan. Please continue to work with the community and our various neighborhoods as plans move forward.</p> <p>As we have discussed before, the Point Neighborhood feels strongly that the integrity of our historic residential neighborhood be maintained, and that NO plan proposed by RIDOT encourages and/or enables people to use the roads through the Point as "short cuts" to get to their destination. Any RIDOT plan that allows for additional access to Third Street only encourages more traffic in our neighborhood, which would be detrimental to the neighborhood, the residents, and the community.</p> <p>The current plan presented does not allow for new access roads to Third Street -- and we support the plan to not allow new access to the Point. We strongly encourage RIDOT to ensure that no future plans will allow for the addition or expansion of roads that would increase traffic in our historic and residential neighborhood. The removal of the South bound exit off Pell Bridge is a positive step to also ensure that access to the Point as a "short cut" to downtown is discouraged. We applaud that decision, and urge you to maintain the removal of a south bound exit off the bridge in future plans.</p> <p>The Point neighborhood also is supportive of the concept of a "Hike and Bike" path, as well as a potential commuter train (or "people mover") to provide for parking outside of the downtown area, and a method for transportation to the Visitor's center. Those are good ideas and concepts, and both deserve to be part of the plan. However, the details of each are important and need to be discussed with not only the neighborhoods, but with other interested and affected parties to ensure we have a safe, productive, and environmentally sensitive plan for each. I urge RIDOT to provide as many specifics on these plans as soon as possible and to engage with interested parties and those affected to ensure the best plan for the community.</p> <p>Finally, I hope that RIDOT will continue to reach out to the community over the next months as plans proceed to the next phase. It is critical to ensure proper public involvement and participation in the process. If we all work together on this very important infrastructure plan for Newport, it will be a better plan, and one the community will herald for decades to come.</p> <p>Thanks again for your efforts to date, and I look forward to continuing to work with you as the plan moves to next phases.</p>	<p>The preferred option depicted in the EA is conceptual; final design elements will be modified to provide an optimal configuration. The concerns in the comments are noted and will be analyzed for inclusion in final design. Additional coordination with project neighbors and stakeholders will continue throughout the design process.</p>
124	William Farrell	<p>Thank you for your efforts on this project and for the extension. As a resident of the Point neighborhood of Newport I am concerned about additional traffic in what is a residential neighborhood and the impact that would have on our beautiful streets. Any changes to the bridge should include affordable mass transit along with parking for those who do choose to drive to Newport.</p>	<p>Please see the response to Common Comment 6 regarding concerns about traffic in residential neighborhoods. Mass transit is not part of the scope of this project; however, the proposed park-and-ride would accommodate approximately 300 vehicles.</p>
125	Ann McMahan	<p>I am on the Board of the Point Association in Newport and I want to thank you for extending the deadline for comment. I basically like the simplicity of the design. I also like that there appears to be a roundabout at the intersection of Training Station Road and Third Street. That will help the traffic flow from the Base after work as well as give us on the Point a way to take an easier left.</p> <p>The City of Newport is contemplating either repairing the Van Zandt Bridge OR tearing it down. I would like you to consider the impact that taking the VZ Bridge down would have on the access for Point Residents to the Point and also to the impact it would have on the proposed bike path and people mover.</p> <p>I appreciate all of the meetings you and your staff have put into explaining the options during this process. I hope we achieve all or most of our goals.</p>	<p>Comment acknowledged. The Proposed Action is independent of the City's project for the Van Zandt Bridge, which is being evaluated separately.</p>
126	Brian M. Stinson	<p>Due to the length of the comment, please see attached letter in it's entirety .</p>	<p>The preferred option depicted in the EA is conceptual; final design elements will be modified to provide an optimal configuration. The concerns in the comments are noted and will be analyzed for inclusion in final design. Additional coordination with project neighbors and stakeholders will continue throughout the design process.</p>

No.	Name	Comment	Response
127	David Pedrick (Part 2)	<p>Although my time outside of work this month has been limited, a few additional points have come to mind for emphasis. Please consider these in your further development.</p> <p>a. I think that there are two keys to success in the use of the proposed new E-W connector for bridge traffic into downtown Newport. The fundamental one is the use of the connector as a buffer for stacking high-volume, inbound traffic. The other is to meter the flow of bridge traffic onto Connell Highway judiciously, using smart left-turn signal controls at the intersection of the connector onto Connell. I imagine that your team is well ahead of me on this, but I'd like to contribute a few thoughts.</p> <p>b. The opening of Connell Highway will be a welcome restoration of thru traffic – as long as it doesn't get bottlenecked! Local Southbound traffic on Connell is especially vulnerable to lack of free flow, with a long stretch between the connector and Van Zandt St. I suggest holding stacked traffic in the E-W buffer with limited releases that will minimize the stacking on Connell at the Van Zandt light. With no other option for southbound traffic to get from Adm Kalbfus to Farewell St, it will be essential to let local traffic get from the roundabout into downtown without being slammed by an invasion of bridge traffic..</p> <p>c. Local Connell Highway traffic flow through the intersection itself will have significant waiting times for left turn interference. It seems that there will be 3 stages in the intersection's signal cycle – through-traffic for locals, a dedicated left-turn stage for bridge traffic to Connell southbound, and a dedicated left-turn stage for southbound Connell traffic from the roundabout to enter the bridge ramp via the E-W connector. The two left-turn stages will halt northbound Connell through-traffic, so the ratio of the two left-turn stages to the one for through-traffic needs to fairly accommodate the local through-traffic. I believe that southbound through-traffic will be easier to accommodate.</p> <p>d. I repeat my recommendation of 2 lanes in the stacking buffer of the E-W connector for downtown-bound traffic, plus a third, through lane on the right to get to Connell Highway, as well as to the Viking tours property, The Newport Playhouse, U-Haul and other businesses south of the roundabout. It will also provide a choice of getting to the roundabout other than by Adm Kalbfus.</p> <p>e. I recommend a double-lane left turn onto Connell Highway to minimize the cycle time for a smart-signalized allotment of bridge traffic. Include enough lanes on Connell to get to the Tradesmen's Center efficiently and the parking area at that intersection. Then zipper-merge the traffic between there and Adm Kalbfus.</p> <p>f. Please consider, specifically, that Point-bound traffic will now have to contend with serious stacking to get home via Van Zandt. The alternative of getting home via the top end of Third St will still be there, but I think that there will be more competition to contend with due to the new ramp routing.</p> <p>g. The burden on the roundabout and Connell Highway north of it would be greatly relieved if northbound through traffic from the bridge ramp could use the potential Halsey St extension behind the shopping center to expedite traffic to the north via Coddington Highway. Please put a priority on developing that soon.</p>	<p>The preferred option depicted in the EA is conceptual; final design elements will be modified to provide an optimal configuration. The concerns in the comments are noted and will be analyzed for inclusion in final design. Additional coordination with project neighbors and stakeholders will continue throughout the design process. Please see response to comment 122 for detailed responses.</p>
	David Pedrick (Part 2) (Cont.)	<p>h. The Tradesmen's Center could be expanded and improved by dedicating the entire "island" of land between Connell Highway and the bridge ramp roads for this particular purpose. There seems to be a demand for increased tradesmen's space in the City, and this freed-up parcel would be logical for creating such economic development. I suggest to the City that the preliminary planning of buildings and efficient access roads would be good to get started, in collaboration with the tenants of the existing Tradesmen's Center, and perhaps others who desire such space. I suggest that the wetland along Connell Highway be landscaped closely parallel to Connell Highway to maximize the useful land space of the overall property, in the course of restoring the wetlands after the current Road to Nowhere is removed.</p> <p>I look forward to learning more about your ongoing planning for the proposed bridge ramp and locally affected roadways.</p>	<p>RIDOT will continue to work with the owners to address these concerns and provide refinements to improve access (for all vehicle types and sizes) and circulation within the site as well as to the Admiral Kalbfus Road and JT Connell Highway.</p>
128	Nancy Scott	<p>As a concerned Newport citizen and a resident of the Point I would like to thank you for the countless hours of research and public discussion that you and your colleagues have put in to determine the best solution to the Pell Bridge offramps.</p> <p>I have two major concerns:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The traffic pattern through the Point. It is imperative that no new cut throts be allowed to enter or exit the Point. This viable historic neighborhood must be preserved at all costs and adding more traffic certainly does not accomplish this. Eliminating the off ramp that connects with Van Zandt will help, but access to the Point for residents must not become overly complicated.</li> <li>2. The final solution for the off ramps must fit into long range plans for the development of the North End. This must include a parking garage and easy (free) transportation for visitors to downtown Newport. Also take into serious consideration the bike trail.</li> </ol> <p>Thank you for keeping us informed-please continue to solicit resident input.</p>	<p>No new road is proposed through the Point Neighborhood. The City is currently working with a consultant to develop a North End Master Plan which will address the future of development and economic impact growth of the area.</p>

No.	Name	Comment	Response
129	John Broughan	<p>As a member of the Point Association and long time residents in our special neighborhood, I want to thank RIDOT for listening to our concerns when the original plans were presented earlier last year. In reviewing the most recent plan, it does appear that RIDOT did seriously consider our objections to those issues in the multiple early drawings that offered or might have encouraged access through our quiet neighborhood by commuters and visitors.</p> <p>As a result we are cautiously optimistic that the ongoing planning will also protect Newport's neighborhood, including our Point streets from any unnecessary or additional traffic as a result of the realignment project.</p> <p>We also appreciate the additional time afforded us during the holidays to review the most recent published plan, and hope our continuing working relationship and shared communication will provide a final plan that benefits all Newport residents and as well as the many visitors who so enjoy our special city.</p>	<p>Comment noted; additional coordination with project neighbors and stakeholders will continue throughout the design process.</p>
130	Lisa Brew	<p>As a Point resident I would like to thank all those involved with this process. I am happy to see that The Point has not been looked at as a "go through" area to access downtown. It is always a concern that additional traffic will make its way through the Colonial streets which were always best suited for horse and buggies in there day. It is very unfortunate when larger vehicles unknowingly find themselves trying to maneuver through our streets only to find that the layout does not allow them to easily negotiate the area. The roads are narrow and the street parking narrows this even further. I strongly believe that removing the south bound exit ramp, as is currently shown, will eliminate this issue entirely.</p> <p>I would like to see more information provided regarding the Hike/Bike path. It is a wonderful idea but concerns arise with the layout and how the design would be made suitable and safe for all those using the tight space- pedestrian/bikes/motor vehicles. The lite rail line also seems to be a responsible way to handle the large number of people traveling in and out of the downtown area. Again, more information on this particular traffic solution would be appreciated.</p> <p>I look forward to the final developments of the bridge realignment and appreciate the extended deadline offered to respond to the plan provided.</p>	<p>The shared-use path will provide usable width in accordance with industry standards; no motor vehicles will be allowed on the path.</p>
131	Paul P Donovan	<p>I offer the following regarding the Pell Bridge Approaches Project :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.) I strongly feel that Alternatives 3A, 3B,3C, 4A, 4B, etc. are over-engineered, extremely disruptive and far more costly than what is needed to achieve the established goals.</li> <li>2.) I do agree 100% with the proposed location for the Park &amp; Ride lot and the Bicycle &amp; Pedestrian connection.</li> <li>3.) I support using Alternative Plan #2 as a design basis, but completely eliminate the proposed new section of roadway that would run through the Newport City Yard and along the west side of the old Newport Grand property.</li> <li>4.) This modified plan would greatly reduce, if not completely eliminate the backup of traffic on the Pell bridge. It will direct all traffic bound for downtown Newport to pass by the Park &amp; Ride Lot, and would also allow those heading to points north to continue on toward the existing Connell Highway rotary area, which can be significantly upgraded to improve the flow of traffic.</li> <li>5.) The main entrances into the Waste Management Facility, the Newport City Yard, the Newport County Tradesmen Centers and Newport Grand property should remain on Admiral Kalbfus Road.</li> <li>6.) The Newport Grand property could possibly add a 2nd service drive entrance from the existing service road leading into the Waste Management Facility, etc. if needed.</li> <li>7.) A pair of new smart traffic lights can be added at the Newport Grand property entrance and at the intersection of Admiral Kalbfus Road, Girard Avenue and Malbone Road, for improved traffic flow and safety.</li> </ol> <p>In closing,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a.) I do not believe the City of Newport voters would approve required funding for new buildings for the Water Dept. &amp; Public Works Facilities in a new location, at a time when the Newport school system is in such dire need of tax dollars.</li> <li>b.) Any disruption to the Waste Management Facility operation, will result in a significant increase in operational costs which would be passed down to the taxpayers.</li> <li>c.) I believe with the proper design, the RIDOT and the City of Newport can provide for the creation of new business in the North End, without eliminating or burdening the existing North End businesses.</li> </ol>	<p>Comments noted. RIDOT is working closely with owners and tenants of impacted properties as the design progresses.</p>

No.	Name	Comment	Response
132	Marianne Durgin	<p>The Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority has been participating in the Newport Pell Bridge ramp redesign process for over ten years. We have advocated all along for safety improvements that will reduce the traffic congestion on the bridge which would reduce the number of accidents.</p> <p>The elimination of the scenic Newport exit (or the provisions for a more direct alignment to America's Cup Ave.) has always been important to the Authority to ensure there is not a traffic "backup" onto the bridge.</p> <p>The plans we have seen over the past year have consistently shown the elimination of this ramp and we fully support that initiative.</p> <p>The plan now takes all traffic toward Admiral Kalbfus Road with a left-hand turn to JT Connell Highway to get into Newport. The Authority is supportive of the overall configuration however we have significant concerns with the number of signalized intersections within the alignment. We feel that the signals along the new roadway to Admiral Kalbfus Road should eliminate any "left-hand turns" into the properties to the east of the roadway. The concern is the excessive stacking of vehicles this may cause on the bridge.</p> <p>We are happy to review any pre and post modeling showing improvements in the condition that may cause us to withdraw our concerns. In addition, we will be happy to continue meeting with RIDOT as they proceed with this important project.</p> <p>RITBA is sending this letter along to be sure to officially respond to the Environmental Assessment Publication and request for comments.</p>	<p>RIDOT will continue to coordinate with RITBA through the finalization of the design and share the traffic model as it is refined.</p>
133	Peter Janaros	<p>Thanks for all your efforts to seek and receive public comment on the project. Many in Newport have commented on RIDOT's excellent outreach efforts. Thanks for taking time to talk with me directly about the project. Please consider my comments below.</p> <p>My comments are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Traffic from the bridge into Newport headed downtown will have to go through three traffic signals before reaching the Van Zandt Ave. signal. Despite adaptive traffic lights, this does not appear to be an improvement of traffic circulation or safety (key goals of this project). Previous design alternatives used a simple loop without traffic signals to get traffic to the same location. The planned approach/design, having many moving parts that must work well together, appears fragile in that a minor issues could cause major disruptions. I'm all-too-familiar with those major disruptions from my time at RITBA.</li> <li>- Strongly recommend that an upgrade to the traffic signal at Van Zandt Ave. be considered. As traffic volumes increase, the level of service deteriorates at that location. That intersection is critical for nearby neighborhood's efficient movement around the city and merits serious consideration for an upgrade.</li> <li>- The plan shows the current Public Works complex as "future development". However, as I understand it, the utilities building is the only funded relocation of the plan (without a designated new location). The remainder of the entire Public Works complex relocation would have to be funded by the city IF the city could find a suitable alternative location. Suggest that the utilities building be relocated on the existing Public Works complex and that the complex be left in its current location. This would avoid cost to the city for complete relocation and potential environmental problems associated with moving public works. Recommend eliminating that parcel designation as "future development".</li> <li>- The plan addresses potential hazardous waste issues in a general manner. Those of us who grew up here know that the entire area was an open dumpsite/incinerator without environmental safeguards. I understand that the plan calls for contingency funds being made available during construction should hazardous-waste be encountered. Contingency funds made available during construction don't address likely costly delays and contractor delay claims. Finding unknown environmental hazards in the middle of a construction project is very undesirable and should be avoided at all costs. Strongly recommend more detailed environmental testing before contracts are let to allow mitigation/cleanup and design to proceed in a cost-effective, organized manner. Also, designing the project with the least amount of site disruption possible should be key direction/guidance for all designers.</li> <li>- The plan allows for flexibility of future road use through the rail corridor south of Van Zandt Ave. The idea has merit, however, I would like to see the use of that corridor for a road into the city in the current plan. That would alleviate many of the traffic circulation issues this project is trying to address. Farewell street could then become two lanes leaving downtown.</li> <li>- The plan shows potential future extension of Halsey Street across Admiral Kalbfus Road intersection to the right-of-way East of the shopping center. Excellent planning for the future.</li> </ul> <p>Thank you for all your hard work and your consideration of these comments.</p>	<p>As described in the EA, the Proposed Action would improve traffic circulation and safety in accordance with the project purpose and need. The traffic signal at Van Zandt would be upgraded as part of the project. The City is currently examining several sites for feasibility to relocate the Public Works and Utilities Department. A Site Investigation Report is being developed as part of the project permitting process that includes sampling and analysis of the contaminated soils throughout the study area. Contingencies will be included in the contract to cover hazardous materials if and when they are encountered. The existing rail line is not anticipated to be used for roadway construction.</p>

No.	Name	Comment	Response
134	Bari Freeman	<p>BIKE newport is an advocacy and education organization in Newport, RI with a focus on equitable and safe access to bicycles and bicycle network connectivity. This letter is in response to the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the reconstruction of the Pell Bridge approaches issued on 11/24/19.</p> <p>First, we want to thank you for prioritizing the realignment of the Pell Bridge approaches in Newport, as the ramps are historically a source of congestion and safety issues, as well as a contributor to the separation and isolation of Newport’s North End neighborhoods.</p> <p>We are asking RIDOT to commit to the components that the Draft EA refers to as “vulnerable road user improvements”, to guarantee multiple safe and calm routes connecting the North End with the rest of the City, and navigable by all modes of transportation, including cycling and walking.</p> <p>We seek clarification/confirmation regarding these issues to be addressed in more advanced design stages:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. North End Separation. Preferred Alternative 4B does not correct or alleviate historic and current barriers to community cohesion on Admiral Kalbfus Road. Admiral Kalbfus Road in its current configuration creates a division between the North End and the rest of Newport with both safety and social/environmental justice implications. The EA is required to address economic justice in two ways: 1) correction of existing conditions that isolate and segregate communities, and 2) new design that enhances and elevates community cohesion. What considerations are underway to alleviate this divide, as required by federal environmental justice requirements?</li> <li>2. Shared Use Paths. We would like assurance that all bike and pedestrian accommodation will be separated by barriers from motorized traffic for the safety of vulnerable road users, and in keeping with standards set forth in the draft RI Statewide Bicycle Mobility Plan, due for adoption in early 2020. Sidewalks should be wide enough for families, wheelchairs and other mobility enhancers. Can we confirm that the shared use paths and bike lanes referenced in these preliminary designs will be separated from motorized traffic?3.Safe Pedestrian and Bike Crossings. In addition to crosswalks, the project areas can include pedestrian/bicycle bridges as well as surface signaled crossings. Attention should be paid to ADA compliance, design, materials, weather protection, long- term sustainability, and creative components that create a fully welcoming atmosphere. Will there be an appropriate number of safe, considerate, and well- designed crossings for pedestrians and bicyclists across the east-west Admiral Kalbfus corridor and north-south Connell Highway corridor?</li> <li>4. Explore Alternative Distribution of Traffic Away from Admiral Kalbfus. The proposed design (4B) does not distribute traffic away from the Admiral Kalbfus corridor. As discussed in (1) above, this corridor has been identified as a primary source of community divide and community concern for several decades. With the proposed design, traffic continues to be encouraged to travel east-bound on Admiral Kalbfus Road. In this plan, there is no indication of traffic calming in this area. It will remain at least as problematic, if not more. Are DOT and the City considering another north-south channel off the bridge to distribute traffic away from Admiral Kalbfus? Is a northern extension of Halsey Street - between the RK shopping center and Festival Field to Connell Highway possible as a separate but related project? Finally, given the proximity of this/any proposed routes to residences, will we always consider the air quality implications of a proposed roadway on resident health?</li> </ol> <p>We believe that considerations of design and connectivity must address equitable access to bike and pedestrian infrastructure that connect with each other and with the upcoming “First Mile” shared use path in the rail corridor, as well as resident mobility, safety, access, air quality, noise, and other impacts. We appreciate the DOT’s commitment to community engagement ensuring that residents are aware of road design plans in advance and have the opportunity to respond.</p> <p><i>Thank you for your attention and for your consideration of the public’s comments.</i></p> <p>Here is my statement on the matter of Admiral Kalbfus Rd.</p> <p>People with little or no access to an automobile who live or need to shop in the vicinity of Admiral Kalbfus are even now exposed to the noise, the exhaust and the hazards of large volumes of rather fast moving traffic of all sizes, speed limit signs notwithstanding.</p> <p>Many people there are not affluent and have limited options in their choice of where they can live.</p> <p>I believe that there is among other matters an environmental hardship in this situation.</p> <p>The redevelopment of the area presents an opportunity to improve the quality of life for all, especially the most vulnerable by taking measures to calm and divert the traffic that people on foot, in wheelchairs or on bicycles encounter.</p> <p>Making this effort in behalf of vulnerable citizens would be a blessing for all. Not doing so would be a tragedy.</p>	<p>Please see the full response in the letter dated February 14, 2020 and included in Appendix C.</p>
135	Thomas O'Neill	<p>People with little or no access to an automobile who live or need to shop in the vicinity of Admiral Kalbfus are even now exposed to the noise, the exhaust and the hazards of large volumes of rather fast moving traffic of all sizes, speed limit signs notwithstanding.</p> <p>Many people there are not affluent and have limited options in their choice of where they can live.</p> <p>I believe that there is among other matters an environmental hardship in this situation.</p> <p>The redevelopment of the area presents an opportunity to improve the quality of life for all, especially the most vulnerable by taking measures to calm and divert the traffic that people on foot, in wheelchairs or on bicycles encounter.</p> <p>Making this effort in behalf of vulnerable citizens would be a blessing for all. Not doing so would be a tragedy.</p>	<p>The preferred alternative provides access for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users with an attempt to calm traffic to the greatest extent possible.</p>

No.	Name	Comment	Response
136	Dave Baker	<p>This letter will serve as our objection to the "Proposed Action" [Alternative 4B], based the Nov. 2019 "draft Environmental Assessment" report. We believe the report is based on an insufficient study area and the analysis is incomplete, since it did not account for all the existing traffic patterns; the existing stormwater and/or wetland conditions outside the study area, all of which will impact the Project and the Proposed Action. Without taking these existing conditions into account, the draft EA and Proposed Action are inherently flawed. By way of a history, RK rescued the property at 199 JT Connell Highway in 1996 turning the then defunct Newport Mall into a vibrant shopping experience. RK undertook a risky redevelopment that has contributed significantly to both the Newport community as an efficient and accessible location to shop for daily supplies, but also is a significant source of tax revenue for the City of Newport. In addition, the shopping center has been a significant job creator over the years, employing over 2,000 people from the community. As has been heavily documented in the news recently, significant challenges exist for the retail shopping industry today. To counteract these seismic changes, our shopping center needs every possible advantage to compete against traditional competition, such as the existing and proposed shopping centers in Middletown and Fall River, but also from the increased competition from internet retailers. In fact, numerous tenants have already complained to us about these impacts and are unsure if they can remain on the Island. Such departures would be catastrophic for the community with the loss of shopping alternatives leading to less competition overall, the loss of low- skilled year-round jobs for many residents of Newport, and the loss of tax revenue for the City.</p> <p>Therefore, RK Centers strongly objects to the complete removal of the signalized entrance to this vibrant shopping center, at Admiral K.albfus Road, shown in the "Proposed Action" (figure 3-1). This signalized entrance includes one of the main pylon signs for the shopping center's tenants and is the key truck access road for all our tenant's deliveries; RIPTA buses routes and visiting RVs and tour buses. The complete loss of one of our two "protected" driveways entrances will negatively affect the shopping center's traffic; our real estate values, our tenant's business's, as well as create the perception of a more difficult shopping experience for all visitors.</p> <p>One of the greatest principles of real estate is location, which is made up of visual identification, overall drive time and ease of access. The closure of a major access point to the shopping center would greatly reduce the positive economic impact that Newport has enjoyed since RK Centers redeveloped this site.</p> <p>Secondly, the stated goal of the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches (the Project), is it is intended to improve traffic circulation; reduce queuing, improve safety; reconnect the neighborhoods segmented by the current highway infrastructure, and support the City of Newport's economic development. In our opinion, eliminating our signalized entrance at Admiral Kalbfus Road will significantly worsen each of those identified Project goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Right Turn in From the Pell Bridge: RIDOT recognizes that design of the proposed entrance to the WM site under the Option needs to be modified to accommodate a right turn in for trucks using the site. That concept is not included in the Environmental Assessment. We have yet to see or review that proposal and expect that it will result in additional site impacts or the inability to safely access and utilize the site for current operations.</li> <li>▪Traffic Flow: A circulation road around the site perimeter is essential for 53-foot trailers that haul solid waste from the site. That circulation road would be cut off by the Option. The access shown on the Option does not allow for proper access and it will provide an unsafe condition for all users of the exit ramp.</li> </ul>	<p>Please see the full response in the letter addressed to Mr. David Katz and dated February 18, 2020 and included in Appendix C.</p>

No.	Name	Comment	Response
	<p>Dave Baker (Cont.)</p>	<p>Please consider our position as you continue to refine and finalize your Draft Environmental Assessment report and Proposed Action. Please feel free to have your staff reach out to RK Centers staff at 781-320-0001 to discuss any of these topics, as you advance the Project. Thank you for your time and consideration. RK Centers also feels that the defined Limits of Disturbance (LOD) and the corresponding analysis of each of the design alternatives is based on too small a study area. Not only does the draft report skip over the traffic flow at our Northern most driveway altogether, but it also ignores how the internal drive aisles inside RK Newport connects the roads and neighborhoods, and provides additional ways that motorists access the Pell Bridge approaches. Not including all of the entrances into the RK Newport Shopping Center, and studying how the "internal" transportation network functions as secondary means to connect to the Pell Bridge approaches; the surrounding neighborhoods, and the surface roads during peak traffic; during road/utility construction, or during emergencies along JT Connell Highway, is flawed.</p> <p>The draft EA report also leaves out the critical section of JT Connell Highway (from our center, signalized entrance off IT Connell Highway, up towards our northern most entrance to RK Newport, by the Motel 6 and the Wastewater Treatment Plant). This area was excluded from the study area and has been separated from the Project, based on the fact that "limited surface improvements" are being planned by RIDOT, which are projected to be completed prior to the start of the "Bridge" Project.</p> <p>That is not a valid reason to not study these critical areas for their traffic and stormwater impacts, and to fully coordinate those findings into both Projects. Having been monitoring the JT Connell Highway "planned surface improvements" for twenty years, RK Centers takes issue with the stated timing of any JT Connell improvements, as well.</p> <p>The draft EA report technical memo for the Project studied the appropriate "design point" for the stormwater Outlet, but it ignored more than half the contributing watershed, flowing to this design point. The Project area and the JT Connell improvements stormwater drainage will all flow towards this one design point, at Naval Station Newport. This drainage route is already impaired by the railroad bed, and a lack of maintenance due to jurisdictional issues, between the State and U.S. Waters. Not including these critical stormwater and wetland areas in the Project study and how the line between State and U.S. waters has prevented the ongoing maintenance of the existing drainage facilities, or how that will be addressed in the future, reduces the success of the Proposed Action's stormwater management design, in this area.</p> <p>In conclusion, the draft EA Report is based on too small a study area for traffic; stormwater, and wetland impacts. Not including all of the entrances into the RK Newport Shopping Center or endeavoring to understand how the internal drive aisles function, as secondary connections to the Pell Bridge approaches; the surrounding neighborhoods, and the surface roads during peak traffic periods; road construction, or during emergencies is flawed.</p> <p>To then advocate a "Proposed Action" plan that eliminates one of the main signalized entrances into a vibrant shopping center without presenting an alternative means of access, is flawed. To not have a safe "signalized" entrance for our customers; truck deliveries, RIPTA buses, tourist RVs and local tour buses to access the shopping Center from the South, is flawed. We urge the FHA and RIDOT and expand the limits of the study for the project to include the areas and topics, mentioned above. We also feel strongly that the signalized entrance to the RK shopping center at the South, must remain. Short of that option, RIDOT and their consultant should contact and work cooperatively with RK Centers staff to work thru the design of that area, so as to reduce the negative impacts to our property values and operations.</p>	<p>Please see the full response in the letter addressed to Mr. David Katz and dated February 18, 2020 and included in Appendix C.</p>
<p>137</p>	<p>Chris DeSantis, Waste Management</p>	<p>The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) is currently proposing "Alternative 4B" as the preferred option (the "Option") for the above referenced project. Please accept this letter as Public Comment from Waste Management of Rhode Island, Inc. ("WM").</p> <p>WM expects that, if the Option is implemented as currently proposed, the hauling facility and transfer station at 65 Halsey Street in Newport would close. The resulting negative impacts for Newport residents, local businesses, and the City of Newport itself are significant and not adequately considered in the draft Environmental Assessment. These impacts to local businesses, Newport residents, and the City of Newport include, among other things, loss of the following services now provided by WM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Two free 500-pound drop offs per year for homeowners;</li> <li>•Discounted disposal rate for renters;</li> <li>•Free mattress recycling;</li> <li>•Free yard waste drops off;</li> <li>•Environmentally friendly single stream recycling drop-off, and;</li> <li>•In partnership with the City of Newport, a commercial recycling service for small businesses.</li> </ul> <p>Without firm and specific mitigation measures that would allow WM to continue to operate both during and after construction of the Option, the Option would result in the following impacts to the facility which would prevent continued safe and efficient WM operations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Maintenance Building Eliminated: The truck maintenance building is an integral part of our operations, not only for truck parking, equipment maintenance and off-loading of materials, but also for critical indoor storage and early morning truck start-ups. This 40,000 square foot building will be completely wiped out by the Option.</li> </ul>	<p>Please see the full response in the letter dated March 5, 2020 and included in Appendix C.</p>

No.	Name	Comment	Response
	Chris DeSantis, Waste Management (Cont.)	<p>▪Safety: Separation of employee cars from traffic flow by trucks and heavy equipment is eliminated by the Option.</p> <p>▪Employee Parking: This is eliminated by the Option.</p> <p>▪Truck Parking and Container Storage: Truck parking and container storage is essential for WM operations. Much of it is eliminated by the Option.</p> <p>▪Single Point of Access: Only one, constrained point of access is provided for the entire WM site under the Option. The proposed access point will not only limit critical site access and egress which is required for all operations, it would also require relocation of the existing truck scale and associated buildings. Given the existing grade changes on the site, providing for just a single point of access would also effectively eliminate any possibility for a relocated perimeter circulation roadway, without which the site cannot function.</p> <p>WM holds a State permit for the solid waste transfer station that cannot be assigned to a new location, i.e. this facility cannot be relocated. The cost of such a closing would be felt beyond WM. For instance, if the Newport facility were no longer available, an estimated 10,267 truckloads of waste annually would have to be transported to the R.I. Resource Recovery Facility at the Johnston landfill, a 60- mile trip that would likely require at least two hours of time. Not only does this equal 20,500 hours of lost time for residents, businesses and City personnel, it is extremely ill-advised from an environmental and sustainability perspective.</p> <p>The increased fuel and greenhouse gas emissions, vehicle maintenance, and road wear and tear from an additional 616,000 miles of travel would be significant. If Newport were to lose a local transfer station option, the City would have no option but to transfer those costs back to Newport residents. It should be noted that these 10,267 truckloads represent only local businesses, contractors and Newport residents' volumes. It does not include an additional 8,299 truckloads hauled by Waste Management collection vehicles.</p> <p>Site modifications would be required as part of this taking of private property and there have been no discussions about value for the property that would be taken, the cost of reconstructing lost buildings, the cost of necessary site improvements, loss of ongoing business, or the implications of eminent domain proceedings. Before the public comment period on the draft Environmental Assessment ends, WM respectfully requests a full discussion with RIDOT regarding the mitigation measures RIDOT will take to assure that WM operations can continue at 65 Halsey Street during and after construction of the Option. Those mitigation measures should be set forth clearly in the Environmental Assessment record. Otherwise, the cost benefit analysis in the Environmental Assessment record must be augmented fully to document the serious negative economic and social impacts that the Option would cause as the result of cessation of WM operations.</p> <p>With all the outstanding issues left unresolved by the hurried process, it has become clear that RIDOT's December 23 deadline is inadequate. We would recommend that RIDOT acknowledge the Newport City Council's request for an extension beyond the Holiday Season, then work constructively to seek an option that better serves the public good.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p>	Please see the full response in the letter dated March 5, 2020 and included in Appendix C.
138	Tim Harrington	<p>Pell Bridge Ramp Comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.Trying to get good responses from the public between Thanksgiving &amp; New Year's is unrealistic.</li> <li>2.The North End development and the Ramps should be considered together.</li> <li>3.Potentially there are about 100 acres of basically vacant land on about 10 tax map properties including Newport Grand, Ramps as proposed, Naval hospital, Newport Public Works &amp; Transfer Station, vacant Newport Daily News property &amp; Melbone Estate land. Could be several hundred million dollars of development.</li> <li>4.RIDOE really would like a regional high school for at least Newport &amp; Middletown (Portsmouth?). The best place in Newport would be the North End since most students are from that area and it is close to Middletown. It is also close to RICC campus which could admit brightest students to some classes while in high school.</li> <li>5.The Waste Transfer Station should be moved to the huge amount of excess polluted land along Burma Road [Division Highway]. That polluted land in fact will "never" get cleaned.</li> <li>6.The Ramp Plan as proposed [4-b] is pretty good. It should consider the above items. The drawing should use "arrows" on the roadways to show traffic flow direct. The drawing for the existing Ramps should clearly show the existing underpasses and clearly indicate which ones will be used in the new ramps and which ones will be removed.</li> <li>7.East &amp; West Main Roads are the only major Island corridors off to the North. They are very unsafe, have utility poles etc. very close to the road, have no breakdown lane or safe spots. Burma Road is a possibility to be expanded for a future corridor.</li> <li>8.For the Ramp relocation if emanate domain is needed don't be cheap which might result in lawsuits over unfair compensation. On a 55 million dollar project a couple of million more for full fair value compensation would eliminate legal costs &amp; delays, and other excess expenses. ["Time is money"]</li> <li>9.Is a parking deck or just parking surface under consideration? Depending on which past &amp; current drawing was looked at there is confusion.</li> <li>10.As to smart traffic lights &amp; AI be prepared hackers and malware.</li> </ol>	Please see the response to Common Comment 15.



No.	Name	Comment	Response
139	Trudy Coxe, Preservation Society	<p>Thank you for providing The Preservation Society of Newport County ("Preservation Society") the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed Newport Pell Bridge realignment. As the design process continues, we look forward to opportunities to provide further comments to ensure the best design for Newport's residents and visitors.</p> <p>The Pell Bridge Realignment Project is a significant investment in Newport's transportation planning at an integral corridor of regional and local travel. This project will enable the city to realize the goals and recommendations in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan, including efforts outlined in the draft EA document to improve traffic circulation, safety for all users, and connectivity between Newport's neighborhoods.</p> <p>Newport welcomes 3.5 million visitors annually; many are drawn to its historic character. The proposed local-street network rather than a freeway-style interchange, is more in sync with Newport's sense of place. The Preservation Society encourages involved parties to remain vigilant throughout the design process to ensure that thoughtful and appropriate design elements, traffic signals and signage are implemented to alleviate traffic congestion, reduce the impact on existing residential and help carry Newport's visitors and residents to their desired destinations.</p> <p>The Preservation Society supports the investment in all road users, including pedestrians and bicycles, and public transportation. Careful consideration should be given to not only accommodating all road users but how the various transportation modes interact - i.e., uninterrupted sidewalks, protected bicycle lanes, signaled crossings, etc.</p> <p>The park-and-ride concept is a positive addition to the realignment project that could be utilized by daily-commuters and seasonal-visitors. It may decrease the number of individual vehicles traveling Newport's streets and thus contribute to reduced traffic congestion city-wide. However, based on our experience from managing parking at our properties, we believe that the proposed parking capacities are insufficient to meeting Newport's current and future visitor needs. We encourage further exploration within the design to accommodate parking for a greater number of vehicles to capitalize on this feature.</p> <p>Thank you in advance for your consideration. As the steward of the Newport Mansions, The Preservation Society is invested in the quality of life for those who live, work and visit this historic city. We look forward to project updates and future opportunities to provide comment. Please contact me or Preservation Policy Associate, Leigh Schoberth, with any questions via (401) 847-1000.</p>	<p>The preferred option depicted in the EA is conceptual; final design elements will be modified to provide an optimal configuration. The concerns in the comments are noted and will be analyzed for inclusion in final design. Additional coordination with project neighbors and stakeholders will continue throughout the design process.</p>
140	Everett Stuart, RIARP	<p>RE: Pell Bridge Approaches, Environmental Assessment comments</p> <p>Having reviewed the recently released Draft Pell Bridge Approaches Draft Environmental Assessment the Rhode Island Association of Railroad Passengers (RIARP) offers the following comments:</p> <p>A.) We applaud the proposed preservation of the rail line into downtown Newport. We view the Newport Secondary rail line as a very valuable asset, both for the proposed local shuttle into Newport but also for expanded use up Aquidneck Island in the future. The inclusion of a rail passenger loading platform and associated parking lot in the proposed project is commendable. Preservation of the line also allows for the continued economic contribution of various tourist rail operations, such as the dinner train.</p> <p>B.) Of greatest concern to us is the impact of the proposed pedestrian — bike path in the rail corridor. The path can provide benefits to the local population but should be constructed in a way that does not hinder rail operations. To allow for continued use of the rail line and allow for significantly expanded use we offer the following observations:</p> <p>1.) It is imperative that two tracks be preserved in the downtown section, from end of track north to a location roughly opposite Walnut St. Even though at the moment there is only one track into the station, until very recently there were two. Retaining two tracks would provide operational flexibility for two trains to be in the station at the same time. For example, a local shuttle might be unloading at the same time as a train destined for further north is loading. This area is very tight — with homes to the west and Americas Cup Ave. to the east. However, we anticipate with creative design the path can be fit in without placing it on one of the two traditional track alignments. The Americas Cup pavement might need to be slimmed down to make this fit.</p>	<p>Please see the full response in the letter dated February 14, 2020 and included in Appendix C.</p>

No.	Name	Comment	Response
	Everett Stuart, RIARP (Cont.)	<p>2.) To provide for rail operational flexibility we ask that a double ended (passing) siding be included in the area around the proposed transit loading platform. This would allow a non-shuttle train to pass one stopped at the platform. Also, among other possibilities, it could provide a space for track maintenance equipment to briefly “clear” the main line for other rail traffic. And, should locomotive hauled coaches be in use, the passing track would also provide an opportunity for a locomotive to be “run around” the train, to change ends.</p> <p>3.) The section of line from Poplar St. north to about VanZandt St is subject to flooding during large storms. From personal observation, I have seen large amounts of stormwater cascading down into the rail cut from the stub end streets to the west, flowing over the ties as a small river. The existing small trackside ditch is seriously inadequate, especially if tree branches and leaves impede flow. The very flat topography coupled with the existence of a sewer main line on the west side of the track are major impediments to providing added runoff capacity. Also, a small section of the rail cut is through bedrock and this area contributes some groundwater flow, from the east, during the wet season We hope the proposed project will address these drainage issues benefiting both the rail operations and bikeway.</p> <p>We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this major project and anticipate the associated rail improvements will be done so as to expand the use of rail to solve transit issues on Aquidneck Island.</p> <p>Everett Stuart, Director at Large, RIARP</p>	<p>Please see the full response in the letter dated February 14, 2020 and included in Appendix C.</p>



Department of Transportation  
Two Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02903

Office 401-222-2450  
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February 14, 2020

Joseph J. Nicholson, Jr., Esq.  
Newport City Manager  
43 Broadway  
Newport, RI 02840

Dear Mr. Nicholson,

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) has received your letter dated December 13, 2019 submitted during the public comment period for the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches project. Based on our review of your letter, we have the following responses:

**Comment:** *The Proposed Action moves the Pell Bridge Approaches out of the FEMA floodplain creating a safer evacuation route. This is a significant and vitally important improvement that better provides for the safety of Newport's residents and visitors.*

**Response:** Your comment is noted and to clarify the Proposed Action would provide a route to access the Pell Bridge that is above the FEMA 50-year flood elevation with 1-foot of freeboard.

**Comment:** *The Proposed Action includes the acquisition of three residential and two commercial properties and affects Newport's City Yard, where the City's Public Services and Utilities Departments are currently housed. Relocating this facility is complicated. The facility requires a site that is a minimum of 8 acres, and a location outside of the FEMA floodplain. In a densely developed City with limited land resources, finding a suitable site is challenging. The City is currently investigating every alternative and option available for relocation of the City Yard, and we look forward to meeting with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation's Real Estate Division for further discussions as this process continues.*

**Response:** It is noted that the proposed action impacts the Water Department building, related storage areas and the existing bus parking area. RIDOT will continue to work with the city to mitigate real estate impacts as the design advances.

**Comment:** *Understanding that the Proposed Action is currently at an early design phase, the City emphasizes the importance of considering drainage issues at all points in the design process. The proposed project area is located at the bottom of a significant watershed and should be looked at as a component of a larger system. The information provided within the Draft EA is silent on how the drainage will be addressed.*

**Response:** Stormwater drainage is an important part of the project and the proposed improvements and mitigations are detailed in the Stormwater Technical memo provided in Appendix B.

**Comment:** *The City's Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2017 has identified the future land use of the parcels within the project area as mixed-use development, which may include office, retail and*

*residential uses. The City has recently contracted for consulting services for the creation of a North End Urban Plan, which will help to define the character of the area. How the Newport Approach presents as part of this environment is of critical importance. It will be a significant visual resource to the area and should be designed to interface visually and functionally with the development of adjacent parcels. The City looks forward to working with DOT on the design of this new entrance to the City and on the project's effective reconnection of the North End neighborhood to downtown Newport.*

**Response:** Your comment is noted and RIDOT will continue to work with the City as the design is advanced.

**Comment:** *While the Proposed Action provides additional vehicle storage space on the Newport Approach, the existing City street network will be negatively impacted by the introduction of additional vehicles. The Draft EA states that the intention is to have vehicles queued on lower speed roadways, rather than the high-speed bridge.<sup>1</sup> The Level of Service (LOS) at the intersection of JT Connell/Farewell/Van Zandt is predicted to decrease resulting from the Proposed Action during both the morning and afternoon peaks, and there is concern about the increased stress on the JT Connell/Farewell/Van Zandt intersection.*

**Response:** The Proposed Action utilizes JT Connell as a new main north-south connection into downtown Newport which is predicted to see an increase in additional vehicles. In order to mitigate the additional congestion, a new signal is proposed at the JT Connell/Van Zandt intersection which will be connected to the proposed smart grid system which will help manage queues efficiently.

**Comment:** *The proposed geometry of the new Approach alters the proximity of vehicles to nearby residential dwellings, and results in noise impacts to a neighborhood that previously had limited impacts. To address this, the City would support a speed limit reduction on both the Bridge and the Approaches, along with the installation of landscape material in the affected area. All new streets should adhere to Green and Complete Street standards to the extent practicable. This will mitigate noise, vibration and water quality/stormwater impacts.*

**Response:** The EA addresses noise mitigation and the Department will work with the City and consider these recommendations as the design is advanced.

**Comment:** *The proposed location of the new Approach will eliminate an informal pedestrian and bike access to the Tradesmen center from the surrounding neighborhood via Halsey Street. A pedestrian underpass could be considered at this location to provide continued access and support the City's multimodal transportation goals.*

**Response:** The comment is noted and will be considered as the design is advanced.

**Comment:** *The proposed cul-de-sac design for vehicle access to the Tradesmen center is completely foreign to both the existing and proposed development patterns of the City and should be reconsidered as the design process moves forward.*

**Response:** The comment is noted and final details of the access road will be determined in final design and based on input from the Tradesmen Center and City.

**Comment:** *The existing rail corridor and the width of the bridge at Van Zandt are likely insufficient to accommodate a shared use path that would include pedestrians, bicycles and rail cars. Providing safe and accessible pedestrian and bike paths is a priority for the City, and multimodal transportation is an important component of the development of the abutting proposed mixed-use*

zone. We agree with the consultant's determination that the rail is not culturally or historically significant. It might be beneficial for DOT to explore alternatives to a full rail corridor.

**Response:** The Proposed Action includes a shared use path along the rail corridor.

**Comment:** *Although the conclusion of the cultural resource section states the project will not substantially change, alter, or have an adverse impact on known historic resources, the City remains concerned about potential intangible impacts on historic resources particularly from an increase in traffic. For example: an increase in traffic on Farewell Street creates more emissions which could potentially harm grave stones in the Common Burial Ground. The proposed park and ride and reuse of the existing rail corridor as a multiuse path to bring visitors into Newport, may alleviate some of these potential adverse impacts on historic resources within the area of potential effect (APE.) The City requests to review the technical report generated by the Phase I archaeological survey and any reports generated by the intensive field survey and research evaluating properties within the APE.*

**Response:** Your comment is noted and the City was included as a consulting party as part of the Section 106 process and was previously sent the Phase 1 Report. Additional copies are available if needed. Please refer to the Cultural Resources Technical memo for additional information.

**Comment:** *Absent from the Proposed Action are the improvements to Dyer Street as shown on Alternatives 3, 3A and 38. This connection is critical to the City's plans for future redevelopment in the area and should be included in any plan moving forward if feasible.*

**Response:** The Department understands the need for the City to have additional east-west connections for future redevelopment. Additional connections were considered in the alternatives evaluation but were not included in the Proposed Action as it was considered beyond the purpose and need of the project at this time as well as the scope of the project provided in the state transportation improvement program. However, the proposed design does not prohibit future connections as the area is developed.

**Comment:** *Landscape design is an important component in aesthetics, the mitigation of noise impacts, and in addressing the effects of climate change. The Project's landscape design shall be reflective of an historic coastal community, functional, and attractive.*

**Response:** Your comment is noted and the Department will work with the City on landscaping elements as the design is advanced.

**Comment:** *In order to support future efforts to enhance the JT Connell Highway corridor and provide pedestrian and bike access across and to the roadway, converting the existing rotary to a signalized intersection rather than a modern roundabout should be considered.*

**Response:** RIDOT is generally supportive of roundabouts due to the safety benefits. The comment is noted and will be considered as the design is advanced.

**Comment:** The City strongly urges DOT to consider including in the design the further extension of Halsey Street north toward Maple Avenue. This would provide direct access to JT Connell Highway and further support reconnection of the North End neighborhoods.

**Response:** The extension was considered in the development of the Proposed Action, however it was determined in conjunction with FHWA that the extension was beyond the purpose, need and scope of the project. The extension is proposed as a potential future mitigation.

Should you have any questions please contact me at 563-4216 or by email at [jody.richards@dot.ri.gov](mailto:jody.richards@dot.ri.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jody Richards". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jody Scott Richards, P.E.  
Project Manager II  
Rhode Island Department of Transportation



Department of Transportation  
Two Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02903

Office 401-222-2450  
Fax 401-222-3905

February 14, 2020

Ms. Bari Freeman  
Executive Director  
62 Broadway  
Newport, RI 02840

Dear Ms. Freeman,

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) has received your letter dated December 23, 2019 submitted during the public comment period for the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches project. We appreciate the input that Bike Newport has provided and have the following responses below:

**Comment:** *North End Separation. Preferred Alternative 4B does not correct or alleviate historic and current barriers to community cohesion on Admiral Kalbfus Road. Admiral Kalbfus Road in its current configuration creates a division between the North End and the rest of Newport with both safety and social/environmental justice implications. The EA is required to address economic justice in two ways: 1) correction of existing conditions that isolate and segregate communities, and 2) new design that enhances and elevates community cohesion. What considerations are underway to alleviate this divide, as required by federal environmental justice requirements?*

**Response:** The limits for the Pell Bridge Ramps project along Admiral Kalbfus extend from approximately Third Street to the intersection of Girard Avenue/Malbone Road. Along this alignment, the roadway provides access to the Navy Base, RK Plaza (Walmart and Stop & Shop), Mainstay Hotel, the future Newport Grand development as well as several other businesses so this is an important east-west connection. The design provides safety improvements which includes a new signal at Girard and Malbone which will not only slow traffic through the intersection but also provide a safe pedestrian crossing. All of the proposed signalized intersections will be updated with a new signal which will provide a safe crossing of Admiral Kalbfus for vulnerable users. In addition, a new shared use path separated from traffic will extend from Girard Avenue west to the Newport Secondary rail corridor and subsequently to the existing rail station in downtown. Given these improvements, the Department believes that the connectivity of the area for local citizens will be significantly improved.

**Comment:** *Shared Use Paths. We would like assurance that all bike and pedestrian accommodation will be separated by barriers from motorized traffic for the safety of vulnerable road users, and in keeping with standards set forth in the draft RI Statewide Bicycle Mobility Plan, due for adoption in early 2020. Sidewalks should be wide enough for families, wheelchairs and other mobility enhancers. Can we confirm that the shared use paths and bike lanes referenced in these preliminary designs will be separated from motorized traffic?*

**Response:** The Proposed Action includes a separated shared use path along Admiral Kalbfus, JT Connell and along the existing Newport Secondary railroad corridor.

**Comment:** *Safe Pedestrian and Bike Crossings. In addition to crosswalks, the project areas can include pedestrian/bicycle bridges as well as surface signaled crossings. Attention should be paid to ADA compliance, design, materials, weather protection, longterm sustainability, and creative components that create a fully welcoming atmosphere. Will there be an appropriate number of safe, considerate, and well-designed crossings for pedestrians and bicyclists across the east-west Admiral Kalbfus corridor and north-south Connell Highway corridor?*

**Response:** Your comment is noted and all of the signals within the project site include signaled crossings.

**Comment:** *Explore Alternative Distribution of Traffic Away from Admiral Kalbfus. The proposed design (4B) does not distribute traffic away from the Admiral Kalbfus corridor. As discussed in (1) above, this corridor has been identified as a primary source of community divide and community concern for several decades. With the proposed design, traffic continues to be encouraged to travel east-bound on Admiral Kalbfus Road. In this plan, there is no indication of traffic calming in this area. It will remain at least as problematic, if not more. Are DOT and the City considering another north-south channel off the bridge to distribute traffic away from Admiral Kalbfus? Is a northern extension of Halsey Street - between the RK shopping center and Festival Field to Connell Highway possible as a separate but related project? Finally, given the proximity of this/any proposed routes to residences, will we always consider the air quality implications of a proposed roadway on resident health?*

**Response:** The comment is noted. As indicated, the Proposed Action includes a new signal at Girard and Admiral Kalbfus which helps slow traffic through the intersection. An extension was considered extending north behind the RK shopping center but it was determined in conjunction with FHWA to be beyond the scope of for this project. However, the design has been developed to allow the potential for a future connection as it is viewed as a possible future mitigation for congestion as the area develops. In regards to your final question, environmental impact is considered in the NEPA process which is completed for all RIDOT projects.

Should you have any questions please contact me at 563-4216 or by email at [jody.richards@dot.ri.gov](mailto:jody.richards@dot.ri.gov).

Sincerely,



Jody Scott Richards, P.E.

Project Manager II

Rhode Island Department of Transportation





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February 18, 2020

Mr. David Katz  
Executive Vice President  
RK Centers  
50 Cabot Street #200  
Needham, MA 02494

Dear Mr. Katz,

We have received your letter dated December 13, 2019 submitted during the public comment period for the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches project. As you may know, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) has conducted outreach meetings with representatives from RK Centers due to the proximity of the RK Newport Shopping Center to the new realignment.

Based on a review of your letter, we have noted your concerns regarding the removal of the signal entrance, potential traffic impacts and the stormwater impacts along JT Connell as well as the area east and upgradient of your parcel. We note the following:

- 1.) As you have indicated, the proposed action proposes to remove the existing signal and entrance at the on-ramp along Admiral Kalbfus since the existing on-ramp will be removed. However, we have previously noted your concern and have proposed a new signalized entrance on Admiral Kalbfus at the intersection of the off-ramp just east of the existing signal. This new entrance is provided on the "Illustrative site plan" provided on our website at [www.pellridge-ea.com](http://www.pellridge-ea.com) and will be included in our final EA document.
- 2.) The proposed work on JT Connell will involve resurfacing the roadway, replacement of drainage structures and construction of a new shared use path. Overall, we anticipate a reduction of impervious area due to reducing the width of the roadway in some areas as well as reducing unused pavement areas along the alignment. The reduction of impervious areas and use of infiltration areas should help improve the existing stormwater conditions.
- 3.) Regarding the overall traffic conditions, the traffic analyses in the draft EA does consider the potential for increased traffic as part of the project from JT Connell and Coddington Highway. As a result, the existing roundabout is updated to a modern roundabout to improve the function and reduce speeds for safety.
- 4.) In regards to the overall drainage and considering areas outside of the study area, we feel the project will be an overall benefit since it includes daylighting wetland areas, new drainage and infiltration areas and reducing the amount of impervious area. It should also be noted that as areas are developed along the alignment such as at the Newport Grand property, the projects will be designed to modern stormwater regulations which will reduce the flow downgradient during precipitation events.

We recognize that RK Centers is an important stakeholder in the project and we will continue to work with your company including follow-up meetings to help address your concerns.

Thank you for providing your input on the project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jody Richards". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jody S. Richards, P.E.  
Project Manager II  
Division of Project Management  
Rhode Island Department of Transportation



Department of Transportation  
Two Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02903

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January 31, 2020

Mr. Buddy Croft  
Executive Director  
Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority  
One East Shore Road  
P.O. Box 437  
Jamestown, RI 02835-0437

Dear Mr. Croft,

We have received your letter dated December 23, 2019 submitted during the public comment period for the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches project. We note that the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority (RITBA) has been a strong advocate for the project for many years to improve the safety for the transportation users utilizing the Pell Bridge.

As you know, RITBA is an important stakeholder in the project and RIDOT has conducted several coordination meetings with RITBA during the EA process. It is the Department's understanding that you fully support the removal of the downtown ramp as well as the proposed new alignment identified as our "proposed action" in the draft EA document.

We note for the record that RITBA has concerns regarding the new signalized intersection along the proposed alignment and the potential for excessive stacking of vehicles on the Pell Bridge. The current proposed action plan is based on a pre-30% design and the Department will work with RITBA to provide additional traffic modeling to help address these concerns. We look forward to continuing to work together as we advance the design.

Thank you for your leadership and advocacy for the project and we wish you the best in your retirement!

Sincerely,

Jody S. Richards, P.E.  
Project Manager II  
Rhode Island Department of Transportation



Department of Transportation  
Two Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02903

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February 14, 2020

Ms. Jean Riesman  
HEZ Strategy Specialist  
1 York Street  
Newport, RI 02840

Dear Ms. Riesman,

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) has received your letter dated January 17, 2019 submitted during the public comment period for the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches project. We appreciate your thoughtful and detailed comments on the project. Your letter provided several recommendations and our responses are provided below:

**Recommendation:** *Revise the Design for Admiral Kalbfus Road so that it will no longer be a functional barrier between the North End and the rest of the city.*

**Response:** Your comment is noted and the Department will continue to work with the HEZ as the project is advanced. We note that the limits for the Pell Bridge Ramps project along Admiral Kalbfus extend from approximately Third Street to the intersection of Girard Avenue/Malbone Road. Along this alignment, the roadway provides access to the Navy Base, RK Plaza (Walmart and Stop & Shop), Mainstay Hotel, the future Newport Grand development as well as several other businesses so this is an important east-west connection. The design provides safety improvements which includes a new signal at Girard/Malbone which will not only slow traffic through the intersection but also provide a safe pedestrian crossing. All of the proposed signalized intersections along Admiral Kalbfus road within the project area will be updated with a new signal which will provide a safe crossing of Admiral Kalbfus for vulnerable users. In addition, a new shared use path separated from traffic will extend from Girard Avenue west to the Newport Secondary rail corridor and subsequently to the existing rail station in downtown. Given these improvements, the Department believes that the connectivity of the area for local citizens will be significantly improved.

**Recommendation:** *Guarantee that pedestrian, bicycle, green infrastructure, and multi-modal transportation options will remain integral to the project, irrespective of future budgetary pressures.*

**Response:** The Proposed Action includes a separated shared use path along Admiral Kalbfus, JT Connell and along the existing Newport Secondary railroad corridor. In addition, a park and ride is proposed which will allow for the potential for multi-modal transportation options. These improvements are an important part of the project and the project is fully funded in the Statewide Transportation Improvement program.

**Recommendation:** *Establish the proposed parking lot as the core of a full transportation hub, with enough initial parking spaces for a viable pilot project as well as sufficient investment to deliver robust public-transit connections for commuters and for residents as well as tourist-oriented services.*

**Response:** The Proposed Action proposes a park and ride of approximately +/-300 spaces. We understand the community supports a larger parking facility such as a parking garage to reduce the number of vehicles in the city. However, the project scope as provided in the Statewide Transportation Improvement program did not include a parking garage facility nor is there sufficient budget for such a facility at this time. In addition, given the lack of information and study on whether a parking facility will be successful, it appears more prudent to begin with a surface park-and-ride lot in order to help gauge demand as the area develops. We note that the design does not preclude construction of a parking facility in the future.

**Recommendation:** *Mitigate construction impacts not only for drivers but also for the North End's "vulnerable users" by minimizing dust and noise and make all temporary crossings safe for all users.*

**Response:** RIDOT projects must comply with our standard specifications which include dust and noise requirements, traffic/pedestrian management requirements as well as any regulatory agency requirements including Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM).

**Comment:** *Provide full and fair compensation/relocation to tenants as well as property-owners not only in cases of project-related displacements but also wherever post-project permanent noise levels will exceed FHWA standards,*

**Recommendation:** Compensation for relocation/acquisition will be provided in accordance with the Uniform Act of 1970. Copies of the RIDOT relocation and acquisition program brochures are included on the project website [www.pellbrdge-ea.com](http://www.pellbrdge-ea.com) and proposed acquisition parcels are provided in the EA. A noise evaluation was conducted as part of the NEPA process and mitigation is discussed in the EA.

**Recommendation:** *Acknowledge, as a matter of both candor and respect to the North End's existing residents, the project's prospective negative indirect cumulative impacts on the North End, when access neither to future jobs nor to affordable housing are part of any verifiable agreement related to future development.*

**Response:** The NEPA process examines both the positive and negative benefits a project will have in the physical and human environment. The Department believes the project will have a significant benefit to the community as various safety improvements for all transportation users will be undertaken. It should be noted that the citizens of the North End have been important stakeholders in the project and the Department has held several outreach meetings in the community. The input collected improved the design and the citizens and HEZ will continue to be utilized as a resource for input as the design advances. We note that the City of Newport will be responsible for future development and are developing a North End plan which we understand will help guide thoughtful development.

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Should you have any questions please contact me at 563-4216 or by email at [jody.richards@dot.ri.gov](mailto:jody.richards@dot.ri.gov).

Sincerely,



Jody Scott Richards, P.E.  
Project Manager II  
Rhode Island Department of Transportation



Department of Transportation  
Two Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02903

Office 401-222-2450  
Fax 401-222-3905

February 14, 2020

Mr. Everett Stuart  
Director at Large, RIARP  
P.O Box 8645  
Warwick, RI 02888-0645

Dear Mr. Stuart,

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) has received your letter dated December 16, 2019 submitted during the public comment period for the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches project. We appreciate your thoughtful and detailed comments on the project. Based on a review, our responses are provided below:

**Comment:** *We applaud the proposed preservation of the rail line into downtown Newport. We view the Newport Secondary rail line as a very valuable asset, both for the proposed local shuttle into Newport but also for expanded use up Aquidneck Island in the future. The inclusion of a rail passenger loading platform and associated parking lot in the proposed project is commendable. Preservation of the line also allows for the continued economic contribution of various tourist rail operations, such as the dinner train.*

**Response:** Your comment is noted.

**Comment:** *Of greatest concern to us is the impact of the proposed pedestrian- bike path in the rail corridor. The path can provide benefits to the local population but should be constructed in a way that does not hinder rail operations. To allow for continued use of the rail line and allow for significantly expanded use we offer the following observations: 1.) It is imperative that two tracks be preserved in the downtown section, from end of track north to a location roughly opposite Walnut St. Even though at the moment there is only one track into the station, until very recently there were two. Retaining two tracks would provide operational flexibility for two trains to be in the station at the same time. For example, a local shuttle might be unloading at the same time as a train destined for further north is loading. This area is very tight - with homes to the west and Americas Cup Ave. to the east. However, we anticipate with creative design the path can be fit in without placing it on one of the two traditional track alignments. The Americas Cup pavement might need to be slimmed down to make this fit.*

**Response:** The Proposed Action is designed to allow for a shared use path and to continue use of the rail corridor for potential transit opportunities. We have conducted outreach meetings with the operator of the Dinner Train to ensure use is not impacted. As the design is advanced, RIDOT Transit will provide input on the final layout of the tracks.

**Comment :** *To provide for rail operational flexibility we ask that a double ended (passing) siding be included in the area around the proposed transit loading platform. This would allow a non-shuttle train to pass one stopped at the platform. Also, among other possibilities, it could provide*

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*a space for track maintenance equipment to briefly "clear" the main line for other rail traffic. And, should locomotive hauled coaches be in use, the passing track would also provide an opportunity for a locomotive to be "run around" the train, to change ends.*

**Response:** The Proposed Action is currently at a 30% preliminary design and final details as discussed above have not yet been determined. Your comments will be considered as the design is advanced.

**Comment:** *The section of line from Poplar St. north to about VanZandt St is subject to flooding during large storms. From personal observation, I have seen large amounts of stormwater cascading down into the rail cut from the stub end streets to the west, flowing over the ties as a small river. The existing small trackside ditch is seriously inadequate, especially if tree branches and leaves impede flow. The very flat topography coupled with the existence of a sewer main line on the west side of the track are major impediments to providing added runoff capacity. Also, a small section of the rail cut is through bedrock and this area contributes some groundwater flow, from the east, during the wet season We hope the proposed project will address these drainage issues benefiting both the rail operations and bikeway.*

**Response:** Your comment is noted and will be considered in the final design of the Proposed Action.

Should you have any questions please contact me at 563-4216 or by email at [jody.richards@dot.ri.gov](mailto:jody.richards@dot.ri.gov).

Sincerely,



Jody Scott Richards, P.E.

Project Manager II

Rhode Island Department of Transportation





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Two Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02903

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February 14, 2020

Mr. Aaron Jasper  
2 Martin Street  
Newport, RI 02840

Dear Mr Jasper,

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) has received your comments submitted during the public comment period for the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches project. We appreciate the input that you have provided and have the following responses below:

**Comment:** *The proposed new roads and their construction will have a seriously bad effect on all the businesses in the Newport County Tradesman's Centers at 62 and 64 Halsey Street. These businesses include several plumbers, electricians, cabinet makers, iron workers, boat repair services, a distributor of sailing yacht hardware and electronics, a sailmaker and, of course, McGrath Clambakes kitchens and office. These businesses employ more than 100 full time skilled workers (and many part time workers) and provide services and products to clients all over New England.*

**Response:** Business outreach has been an important part of the project and RIDOT has conducted several outreach meetings with the owners of the Tradesman Center. The Tradesman Center owners are important stakeholders in the project given their proximity to the project alignment. The current proposed alignment proposes to improve the access to the center by way of a signalized entrance from JT Connell. During the outreach meetings, we have noted that the property owners are concerned with access, internal traffic flows, parking, noise, safety as well as potential impacts during construction. We note that this is a preliminary design and the Department will work with the owners of the Tradesmen Center which will include follow-up meetings to further discuss these concerns as the design advances. During construction, access to all the businesses will be maintained and the owners will be kept up-to-date with project updates via our project stakeholder list.

**Comment:** *The proposed re-alignment would eliminate the Newport off-ramp and send all traffic to Admiral Kalbfus road. When coming over the bridge to go anywhere south of Admiral Kalbfus road into Newport, we want to continue to come off the current off-ramp and head South onto Farewell Street. Not be sent to Admiral Kalbfus Road. Don't eliminate this off ramp.*

**Response:** The existing off-ramp to downtown is proposed to be removed due to the safety issues associated with this ramp and the resulting queuing on to Pell Bridge. It is important to note that the proposed alignment does not send all traffic to Admiral Kalbfus. Vehicles heading south to downtown Newport would utilize a new off-ramp extending to JT Connell Highway and then continue south onto Farewell Street.

**Comment:** *If the planners of this project really want to improve traffic flow in and out of Newport, they could extend Connell Highway to Farewell Street and bring the bridge on and off ramps to this road. Eliminating the bridge to nowhere and freeing up all the land this overpass and attendant highways occupy.*

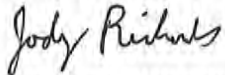
**Response:** This is exactly what the Proposed Action proposes which is extend JT Connell Highway south to Farewell Street which will now serve as the main north-south connection into Newport. As part of the project, the Proposed Action removes the "bridge to nowhere" and associated impervious pavement.

**Comment:** *Finally, the Newport Public Works Department should stay right where it is. There is no better place within Newport. Relocation would be expensive and an unnecessary cost to Newport and RI taxpayers.*

**Response:** The Public Works Department is not anticipated to be relocated by the proposed alignment. The current proposed alignment impacts the Newport Water Department Building and RIDOT will be working with the City to relocate the building. The brochures which explain compensation and the RIDOT relocation and property acquisition process are provided on our project website [www.pellbridge-ea.com](http://www.pellbridge-ea.com).

Should you have any questions please contact me at 563-4216 or by email at [jody.richards@dot.ri.gov](mailto:jody.richards@dot.ri.gov).

Sincerely,



Jody Scott Richards, P.E.  
Project Manager II  
Rhode Island Department of Transportation



Department of Transportation  
Two Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02903

Office 401-222-2450  
Fax 401-222-3905

March 5, 2020

Brian G. Bardorf, Esq  
Bardorf & Bardorf, PC  
36 Washington Square  
Newport, RI 02840

Dear Mr. Bardorf,

We have received your letter dated December 20, 2019 submitted during the public comment period for the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches project. It is the Department's understanding that your firm represents the owners of the Tradesmen's Center located at 62 and 64 Halsey Street. As you have indicated, RIDOT conducted outreach meetings with the owners and we recognize that they are important stakeholders in the project given their proximity to the project alignment.

Based on our outreach meetings, site access and internal traffic flows are very important to the owners. The site visits conducted to the property noted the difficulty of travel across the unsignalized Halsey/Admiral Kalbfus intersection. As a result, it is the intent of the proposed action to provide a new connecting roadway from a signalized entrance from JT Connell to improve access and safety. The new access road could be designed to potentially provide parking for the businesses as many of the existing businesses appear to utilize city property. Site access to businesses will also be maintained during construction and RIDOT will provide public notification to ensure the public is updated on construction related traffic impacts.

In regards to the internal traffic flow of the existing property, the proposed action is currently at a preliminary design stage and the exact width of the new alignment is approximated and will be determined in final design. As the design is advanced, the proximity to the existing building and any loading bays will be maximized to minimize right-of-way impacts. RIDOT Real Estate will work with the property owners to address any right of way impacts or acquisitions required for the project.

The Department will continue to meet with the owners of the Tradesmen Center to further discuss their concerns and work together in the final design process.

Sincerely,

Jody S. Richards, P.E.  
Project Manager II  
Division of Project Management  
Rhode Island Department of Transportation



Department of Transportation  
Two Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02903

Office 401-222-2450  
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March 5, 2020

Mr. Chris DeSantis  
Area Vice President  
Waste Management  
26 Patriot Place, Suite 300  
Foxboro, MA 02035

Dear Mr. Desantis,

We have received your letter dated December 20, 2019 submitted during the public comment period for the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches project. As requested in your letter, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) extended the public comment period for the draft EA and we have conducted outreach meetings with Waste Management.

We recognize that Waste Management is an important stakeholder in the project and we have noted your concerns regarding potential impacts to the maintenance building, site access, traffic flow, safety, parking for employees and container storage. During the outreach meetings, the design team and RIDOT Real Estate have discussed site modifications/mitigation due to the concerns raised in your letter and gave an overview of the state real estate process of acquisition and compensation. The proposed action is only at a preliminary design stage and RIDOT will continue our coordination meetings with Waste Management to address your concerns as the design advances.

Sincerely,

Jody S. Richards, P.E.  
Project Manager II  
Division of Project Management  
Rhode Island Department of Transportation



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Two Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02903

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March 6, 2020

Rex Lebeau  
Health Equity Zone  
Transportation Working Group  
1 York Street  
Newport, RI 02840

Dear Rex,

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) has received the letter submitted by the Transportation Working Group of the Newport Health Equity Zone during the public comment period for the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches project. We appreciate your thoughtful and detailed comments on the project. In response to your letter, we have the following responses:

**Comment:** *The residents of the North End in places such as Newport Heights, Festival Field, Bayside Apartments, and the Admiralty Apartments are in close proximity to the construction zone, with the project expected to span multiple years. Given the history of the 4B project site as a dump for many kinds of waste, we have significant concerns about resident safety and health impacts once construction opens up this toxic ground. According to recent asthma maps from the RI Department of Health produced by the Hassenfeld Child Health Innovation Institute at Brown University, the highest concentrations of Newport children hospitalized for asthma live in the North End and Broadway neighborhoods. We want strong environmental safeguards so that dust and chemicals will not be released into the air, where they will cause further asthma and other health problems for the residents who live in the North End, including the high population of children and seniors.*

**Response:** All RIDOT projects must comply with our standard specifications which include dust requirements of the contractor during construction as well as any regulatory agency requirements including the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM).

**Comment:** *We appreciate that RIDOT has promised no detours of traffic will occur in the neighborhoods during construction. Since many residents of the North End rely on walking and biking (to places such as work, school, and bus stops), we want to see active transportation routes preserved safely throughout the construction process.*

**Response:** Detours and lane restrictions will be within the limits of the project site and no detours through adjacent neighborhoods are anticipated.

**Comment:** *The 4B project site overlaps with local businesses and residences that will face displacement should the project receive a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). RIDOT has assured the public that these businesses and individuals will receive enough notice to relocate and will be compensated well. Highway and development projects often disproportionately affect those*

*with the least resources – people of color, people with low incomes, etc. – which could happen here. Per the environmental justice standards required in this project, we request RIDOT ensure that those affected by displacement will not suffer. We ask that you take into account the disparate impact displacement will have on communities of lower resources.*

**Response:** Compensation for relocation/acquisition will be provided in accordance with the Uniform Act of 1970. Copies of the RIDOT relocation and acquisition program brochures are included on the project website [www.pellbridge-ea.com](http://www.pellbridge-ea.com) and proposed acquisition parcels are provided in the EA.

**Comment:** *We understand the design of the 4B plan is only 30% complete. As more details unfold, we want bike and pedestrian connectivity and safety to be a priority. Sidewalks must be wide enough to safely accommodate users traveling in both directions, users in wheelchairs or other mobility devices, users with children and babies in strollers. The sidewalks must be of high quality so as to remain smooth and safe for decades. The crosswalks must be signalized and allow plenty of time for users to cross, especially users such as seniors, people with disabilities, and children, who may need more time to cross the street. We expect to see safe, ADA accessible, well-constructed and maintained pedestrian overpasses in the most heavily trafficked areas of the project site, such as where the ramp connects to Admiral Kalbfus Road and six lanes of traffic spanning Halsey Street. The sidewalks and bike lanes must connect to the neighborhoods and provide a network of connectivity between the North End and the rest of Newport.*

**Response:** Connectivity which includes bike and pedestrian connectivity is an important part of the project. Based on our project outreach, RIDOT identified connectivity in the purpose and need of the project. Pedestrian overpasses will be considered during final design, however RIDOT prefers providing ADA compliant, signalized at-grade crossings for our vulnerable users.

**Comment:** *We are concerned that existing RIPTA bus stops might be relocated. We would like to see RIPTA bus stops added in the key places residents might like to visit. These places include: the dog park, the park and ride, the Walmart shopping center, the former Newport Grand site, and the corporate park at the end of the cul-de-sac. We want these bus stops to have shelters to protect users from the elements, for the shelters to be in safe locations with several feet of distance from the road, and for the shelters to be attractive and well-maintained.*

**Response:** RIDOT coordinates with RIPTA on all projects where bus operations may be impacted. RIDOT has previously met with RIPTA on this project and will continue to meet during final design to ensure bus stops are provided in safe locations in accordance with the RIPTA design guide and situated in locations to provide the most benefit to bus users.

**Comment:** *As the 4B design stands currently, connectivity is only improved by the direct connection of Farewell Street to the rotary and from the shared use path in the rail corridor to shared use paths on Admiral Kalbfus Road and JT Connell Highway. We are excited to see these improvements, and want to see improved connectivity between the neighborhoods on either side of Admiral Kalbfus Road. The current design funnels all traffic intending to leave Newport onto Admiral Kalbfus Road, with six lanes of traffic dumping vehicles either east or west onto Admiral Kalbfus Road. We would like to see the main route out of Newport be through the rotary and up JT Connell Highway, not east on Admiral Kalbfus Road. This could be accomplished with clear signage and optimized signal lights to channel the flow of traffic to JT Connell Highway. The concurrent improvements to JT Connell Highway will likely also enhance the favorability of this route out of Newport. We would also like improvements to be made to the localization of the eastern part of Admiral Kalbfus Road, to make it a slower, safer transportation route similar to Van*

*Zandt Ave. We would like to see a road diet – narrowing of the vehicle lanes, speed humps, additional signalized cross walks, and bike lanes on both sides of the street along the entire corridor from the Malbone Road/Girard Ave intersection to the intersection of Broadway/West Main Road. This would greatly improve the connectivity of the residential areas on both sides of Admiral Kalbfus Road. Right now this road serves to segregate this area of concentrated poverty from prosperous downtown Newport. It is imperative to environmental justice standards that the Pell Bridge 4B Preferred Alternative address this disparity and improve connectivity between the two sides of Admiral Kalbfus Road.*

**Response:** The comment on improved connectivity is noted. In regards to signage, the Department anticipates including signage to identify JT Connell Highway as the main route north from the ramps which may reduce trips east along Admiral Kalbfus. Although the area east of Malbone/Girard Ave is beyond the limits of the project, RIDOT has included a new signal at the intersection of Malbone/Girard Avenue which will not only allow a safe signalized crossing for vulnerable users but also slow traffic through this intersection. Signalized crossings which are proposed along Admiral Kalbfus improve connectivity of the community by providing safe access to residents who may not have vehicles.

Should you have any questions please contact me at 563-4216 or by email at [jody.richards@dot.ri.gov](mailto:jody.richards@dot.ri.gov).

Sincerely,



Jody Scott Richards, P.E.

Project Manager II

Rhode Island Department of Transportation