



Memorandum

To: Rhode Island Department of
Transportation
Two Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02903

Date: January 20, 2019

Project #: 72900.00

From: Peter Pavao

Re: Reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches Environmental
Assessment- Land Use Technical Memorandum

1. Introduction

The Claiborne Pell Newport Bridge (Pell Bridge) carries State Route 138 between Jamestown and Newport and is the only road connection between Jamestown and Aquidneck Island. The Proposed Action for the Pell Bridge Interchange Project (Project) would provide an enhanced connection from northern Newport to the downtown area, reduce queued vehicle traffic onto the Pell Bridge, reduce traffic in downtown Newport, provide a portion of the bicycle and pedestrian facilities envisioned in the Aquidneck Island Transportation Study, and facilitate the development of the Innovation Hub as envisioned within Newport's Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The Proposed Action (Project) would occur in the City of Newport and Town of Middletown, Rhode Island. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), an Environmental Assessment (EA) is being developed to evaluate the impacts of construction and operation of the redesigned interchange, and subsequent phases of development, on environmental resources.

This technical memorandum describes the existing and future conditions of the topography and land uses proximate to the reconstruction of the Pell Bridge Approaches (the "Project"), in the context of applicable land use controls. This document also identifies the Project's potential land use impacts and appropriate mitigation measures, as necessary.

2. 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 limit of disturbance ("LOD"). This Study Area is based on the extent of the Project and those areas most likely to experience land use impacts due to their adjacency to the Project footprint.

Resource Definition

Topography generally involves the physical arrangement and distribution of natural and man-made features on the earth's surface. However, it is more commonly concerned with elevation contours.

Land use is "the total of arrangements, activities, and inputs that people undertake in a certain land cover type," while land cover is "the observed physical and biological cover of the earth's land, as vegetation or man-made features."¹

Land uses broadly include, and can be a mix of, the following categories:

- Residential
- Agricultural

¹ IPCC. (2007). *Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry*. Retrieved 10 October 2018, from http://www.ipcc.ch/ipccreports/sres/land_use/index.php?idp=45

- Commercial
- Industrial/Manufacturing
- Transportation and Utilities
- Developed Recreation
- Institutional
- Conservation/Open Space
- Undeveloped (unprotected)
- Wetland
- Water

Land use controls 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 land use control is zoning, which generally aims to promote the general welfare of the community, to protect and conserve property values, and encourage the most appropriate use of the land. In Rhode Island, comprehensive plans typically serve as the basis of land use regulations.²

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 from a desktop survey using the City of Newport’s Property Information web map accessed from its GIS Public Portal³ 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 proximate properties. Overall, the Project was evaluated for its consistency with State and local land use goals and plans.

Impacts were further evaluated relative to Project duration, including temporary impacts that would occur during the construction phase and permanent impacts that would occur during the operations and maintenance phase. The significance of various impacts was classified as minor, moderate, or major. Minor impacts include those limited to the LOD, and that would not affect or diminish the use of properties within the Study Area in a measurable way. Moderate impacts include those where the use of properties would be affected in a perceptible or measurable way, but not at a significant scale. Major impacts to land use are those that would be measurable and would significantly change or diminish the use of properties. Identified impacts to land use were further characterized as beneficial or adverse.

² State of Rhode Island. (2014). *Rhode Island General Laws related to Land Use and Planning*. Retrieved 10 October 2018, from http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/local/RIGeneral_Laws_Land_Use%20_Planning.pdf

³ City of Newport. (2018). *GIS Public Portal – Property Information*. Retrieved 10 October 2018, from <http://www.cityofnewport.com/departments/civic-investment-planning/gis-mapping-services/gis-public-portal>

3. Applicable Regulations and Criteria

Federal Regulations

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 north of the Pell Bridge, to the west of 3rd Street and JT Connell Highway along the City's coastline. As they are federally-owned, they are not subject to state or local land use regulations.

State 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. While the State establishes broad land use goals and policies, municipalities define local goals in community comprehensive plans that serve as the basis for land use regulations and implementation.

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.⁴ 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. Rhode Island's State Guide Plan includes 18 elements across the following nine functional areas:

- Economic Development
- Energy
- Historical Preservation and Cultural Heritage
- Housing
- Land Use
- Natural Resources
- Solid Waste Management
- Transportation
- Water Resources

Local Regulations

As noted above, comprehensive plans provide the basis for local land use regulations. For the Study Area and the City at large, this document is 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 categories of 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

⁴ State of Rhode Island. (2018). *State Guide Plan*. Retrieved 10 October 2018, from <http://www.planning.ri.gov/publications/state-guide-plan.php>

function and location, and the remaining two are an open space district and a recreational district.⁵ Within each district, there are specified permitted uses and requirements pertaining to dimensions, lot coverage, building height, and density.

4. Impact Assessment

Baseline Conditions

The following section describes the Study Area in terms of its existing topography and current land uses.

The Study Area, adjacent to Narragansett Bay, is within the Providence, RI—MA Urbanized Area defined by the United States Census Bureau.⁶ Accordingly, it is primarily built-up 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 (please see the Wetlands Technical Memorandum for more information). The elevation of the Study Area is flat and low-lying, 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 roughly 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, including an unnamed stream that is intermittently aboveground, running in a generally northwest direction to Coasters Harbor.

The Study Area mostly consists of commercial and residential land uses. Commercial development, including the RK Newport Towne Center, is predominantly centered along JT Connell Highway. This general land use type also exists on either side of Admiral Kalbfus Road east of Route 138, including the Newport Grand Casino, Mainstay Hotel and Conference Center, and The Newport Daily News. Such developments are generally defined by large setbacks with abundant parking supply. Neighborhood commercial is located to south of the Study Area, near the intersection of W 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 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 includes several low-income/subsidized housing developments such as Bayside Village along 3rd Street south of Dyers Gate Road, Rolling Green Apartments along 3rd Street north of Admiral Kalbfus Road, and Festival Field Apartments along Girard Avenue north of Admiral Kalbfus Road.

⁵ City of Newport. (2018). *Code of Ordinances – Title 17. Zoning*. Retrieved 10 October 2018, from https://library.municode.com/ri/newport/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COOR_TIT17ZO

⁶ United States Census Bureau. (2010). *2010 Census Urban and Rural Classification and Urban Area Criteria*. Retrieved 10 October 2018, from <https://www.census.gov/geo/reference/ua/urban-rural-2010.html>

Other land use types present within the Study Area include institutional (e.g., Common Burying Ground and Island Cemetery), federally-owned parcels (e.g., Naval Station Newport), state-owned parcels (e.g., transportation rights-of-way, including the Newport Secondary Rail Line), and public uses (e.g., the City of Newport's Water Department, Clean City Program [waste management], and the Gateway Visitors Center - the City's primary public transportation hub). Additionally, several parks and open spaces exist within the Study Area, including:

- Coddington Field at JT Connell Highway and Maple Avenue;
- Miantonomi Memorial Park between Girard and Hillside Avenues and north of Admiral Kalbfus Road;
- Newport Dog Park at the south end of JT Connell Highway;
- Third Street Lot along Dyers Gate Road east of 3rd Street;
- Hunter Park on Van Zandt Avenue adjacent to the Newport Secondary Rail Line; and
- Cardines Field at America's Cup Avenue and W Marlborough Street.

Among these parks and open spaces, all but the Newport Dog Park are permanently protected through fee simple ownership or conservation easement.⁷ 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.⁸

There are two primary zoning districts that co-exist in the Study Area, Commercial Industrial (CI) and Residential (R10). Land within and immediately adjacent to the Project's LOD, north of Van Zandt Avenue along JT Connell Highway and Admiral Kalbfus Road, is primarily zoned as CI; Naval Station Newport is also zoned as CI. Parcels between the existing off-ramps at JT Connell Highway and the Narragansett Bay coastline to the west, between the Newport Secondary Rail Line and 3rd Street Extension, and to the east of Girard Avenue are zoned as R10. The R10 district is also located on either side of Farewell Street south of Van Zandt Avenue. General Business (GB) zoning covers a small portion of the Study Area; this zoning district is at the southern end of the Study Area outside of the Project's LOD near the intersection of America's Cup Avenue and W Marlborough Street.

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.⁹ The purpose of this district is to transition residential densities 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

⁷ City of Newport. (2017). *City of Newport Comprehensive Land Use Plan*. Retrieved 10 October 2018, from <http://www.cityofnewport.com/home/showdocument?id=16539>

⁸ RIGIS. (2018). *Local Conservation Areas*. Accessed 17 October 2018, from <http://www.rigis.org/datasets/local-conservation-areas?geometry=-71.394%2C41.5%2C-71.239%2C41.522>

⁹ City of Newport. (2018). *Code of Ordinances – Title 17. Zoning*. Retrieved 10 October 2018, from https://library.municode.com/ri/newport/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COOR_TIT17ZO

the transportation system is adequate and no infringement upon the character of established residential areas will result. The GB district consists of general retail and business uses that complement the existing characters of the neighborhoods in which they operate.

The City of Newport has developed a concept for an Innovation Hub within this district. To accommodate this vision, the City is planning for a "Commercial-Technology (CT)" zoning district. The inclusion of this new district in the City's Zoning Ordinance would require approval from the City Planning Board and City Council.

Impact Analysis

Direct Impacts

The Project 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 Project 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 W 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 70-90 Halsey Street that houses facilities associated with the City's Water Department and Clean City Program. These acquisitions would result in the conversion of the existing land uses to transportation use, as well as require the relocation of residential inhabitants, commercial occupants, and public services. Such conversions represent a moderate adverse impact, as they are measurable (i.e., number of land uses directly converted), but do not significantly alter the overall land use patterns in the Study Area or in the City at large.

Temporary impacts to land use are possible from noise generation, disruptions to traffic patterns, and vehicular and equipment emissions and inhalable dust concentrations occurring during Project construction. Construction activities would increase noise levels at lands adjacent to the Project Area. Increases in noise can affect receptors in land uses such as residences, parks, and schools within the Study Area. Noise increases attributable to the Project, however, would be temporary and are considered minor, as 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.¹⁰

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, however, as RIDOT will work with property owners and the City of Newport in developing 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.

Indirect Impacts

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.

Disposal of the unused right-of-way as surplus property would free up the land for redevelopment by the City or other parties as a separate project independent of the Proposed Action. The Innovation Hub, a concept defined in the City's Comprehensive Land Use Plan, represents one potential redevelopment strategy. The Innovation Hub would feature uses consistent with the intent of the Mixed-Use, Innovation land use designation and the specifications outlined in the CI, R3, Open Space, and Recreational zoning districts, or the CT district (if approved).

The City anticipates that if the Innovation Hub is implemented, the areas north, east, and west of the designated area are likely to benefit and experience re-development because of their proximity (please see the Socioeconomic Technical Memorandum and the Environmental Justice Technical Memorandum for more information).

The stated purpose of the City's proposed Innovation Hub concept is to "provide significant opportunities for land development and economic diversification." It is envisioned 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.¹¹ Additional business types may include ocean,

¹⁰ City of Newport. (2018). *Code of Ordinances – Chapter 8.12. Noise Abatement*. Retrieved 10 October 2018, from https://library.municode.com/ri/newport/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COOR_TIT8HESA_CH8.12NOAB

¹¹ City of Newport. (2017). *Newport Innovation Hub*. Retrieved 10 October 2018, from <http://www.cityofnewport.com/home/showdocument?id=5448>

alternative energy systems, defense (underwater, maritime, and cyber security), and digital industries, along with their supporting sub-sectors.

If the City moves forward with its plans for the Innovation Hub, it is anticipated that the City will perform a district rezoning and facilitate a public solicitation for private partners. The conceptual land use program for the Innovation Hub includes space for office, research and development, hotel, restaurant/retail, and parking uses.

Beyond these considerations, future land uses within the Study Area are generally consistent with existing land uses, except for the "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.

Because JT Connell Highway/Coddington Highway is existing transportation infrastructure and adjacent parcels are already largely developed, no significant development is anticipated from resurfacing this roadway up to West Main Road in the short term. Any new development that did occur due to this improvement would be expected to conform to the City's land use planning and zoning, as potentially amended.

Consistency with State Land Use Plans and Controls

The latest land use element of the State Guide Plan, *Land Use 2025: Rhode Island State Land Use Policies and Plan*, identified the Study Area and surrounding lands as a "Sewered Urban Development Growth Area" on the Future Land Use 2025 map.¹² Such areas are intended to accommodate the State's growth needs, as anticipated through 2025. This growth category is depicted on the map to show the limited areas that have public sewer service available. According to the report, "these fully serviced areas should be regarded as a scarce resource, that absent significant constraints, should be developed, or redeveloped, at higher intensities and densities so as to optimize the significant public infrastructure investment." The conversion of right-of-way to developable land in an area designated for innovative commercial development is consistent with this goal.

The Project's purpose and need is aligned with the latest transportation element of the State Guide Plan, *Transportation 2037* (Interim), which identified the goal of "Maintain the highway and bridge network in a safe, attractive, and less congested condition to carry passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles, government vehicles, and transit vehicles, as well as bicycles and pedestrians."¹³ Associated objectives address the need to address deficiencies, minimize congestion, and increase safety. The new facilities proposed for the Project would reduce congestion and weaving and provide improved accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians. The new facilities would be designed to modern standards to enhance safety.

¹² State of Rhode Island. (2006). *Land Use 2025 – State Guide Plan Element 121*, Report Number 109. Retrieved 10 October 2018, from http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/guide_plan/landuse2025.pdf

¹³ State of Rhode Island. (2017). *Transportation 2037 – Interim Report*. Retrieved 10 October 2018, from <http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/trans/2017/LRTP-37.pdf>

The Rhode Island State Guide Plan - Report 121, Economic Development Element¹⁴ states that communities in Rhode Island are planning strategically for growth and identifying redevelopment areas where future public investments could be made to entice further private investment. Redevelopment areas were examined in 10 municipalities as part of RhodeMap RI, RI Division of Planning's long-range planning effort, and Newport was identified as an urban focus community. RhodeMap RI specifically recognizes the redevelopment potential of the City's North End neighborhood and Report 121 calls out the envisioned Innovation Hub, which overlaps the Project Area, for its economic opportunities.

Consistency with Local Land Use Plans and Controls

The Project's purpose of supporting the City of Newport's economic development plan by providing areas for redevelopment is aligned with the *City of Newport Comprehensive Land Use Plan*, which identifies the future land use of a large portion of Newport's North End as Mixed-Use, Innovation. As previously stated, this area is envisioned as an economic driver for the city 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.¹⁵ This memo further identifies the Project, referred to as the Pell Bridge re-alignment project, as one of the key initiatives towards providing important opportunities for land development and economic diversification.¹⁶

As noted, the Study Area is primarily zoned for uses permitted within the CI district, but also includes the R10 and GB districts. The Project is not inconsistent with such designations, as it does not directly introduce non-permitted uses. The Project also does not introduce incompatible uses; though land use conversions to transportation use would occur, transportation use currently comprises and will continue to comprise a significant portion of the Study Area.

Any new development that indirectly occurs from the Project is expected to be consistent with the *City of Newport Comprehensive Land Use Plan* and the Mixed-Use, Innovation land use designation described therein. It would also be consistent with a future CT district and its specifications, if approved by the City Planning Board and City Council.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the Project would not occur and no significant amount of land would be made available for redevelopment in support of the State and City's economic goals. No direct impacts are anticipated, as changes to existing land uses and overall land use patterns within the Study Area are likely to be limited due to development constraints, including the Pell Bridge ramp right-of-way and surrounding existing land uses that have

¹⁴ State of Rhode Island. (2014). *Rhode Island Rising*, Rhode Island State Guide Plan – Report #121, Economic Development Element. Retrieved 10 October 2018, from

<http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/Econdev/2015/RhodeIslandRisingFinalwReport121.pdf>

¹⁵ City of Newport. (2017). *Newport Innovation Hub*. Retrieved 10 October 2018, from

<http://www.cityofnewport.com/home/showdocument?id=5448>

¹⁶ City of Newport. (2017). *City of Newport Comprehensive Land Use Plan*. Retrieved 10 October 2018, from

<http://www.cityofnewport.com/home/showdocument?id=16539>

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

5. Cumulative Impacts

Based on a review of aerial imagery, land use patterns within the Study Area have not changed significantly since at least 1995.¹⁷ Though the Pell Bridge approaches infrastructure itself would not substantially change such patterns, except for several residential, commercial, and public service property acquisitions, it is anticipated that large-scale redevelopment of currently undeveloped or underdeveloped properties within the Study Area will subsequently occur. No other present or reasonably foreseeable future actions are known, however, that would result in the Project having adverse cumulative impacts to land use within the Study Area.

6. Mitigation

Although the Project is anticipated to convert several residential, commercial, and public service properties to transportation right-of-way, these conversions are considered moderate impacts; they are not anticipated to significantly change land use patterns within the Study Area or the City at large. Related to these land use conversions, RIDOT will work with property owners, including the City of Newport, to ensure fair compensation and relocation assistance. Please refer to the Socioeconomic Technical Memorandum for additional information on property acquisitions and related proposed mitigation.

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. Please refer to the Noise Technical Memorandum, Traffic Technical Memorandum, and Air Quality Technical Memorandum for additional information on such impacts and measures.

7. Regulatory Coordination and Required Permits

As a state agency, RIDOT is not subject to local land use regulations and associated approvals or permitting. However, its actions must be consistent with the goals laid out in the *City of Newport Comprehensive Land Use Plan*. As

¹⁷ Google Earth V 7.1.8.3036. (1995). City of Newport, Rhode Island. Retrieved 10 October 2018.

demonstrated in the previous sections of this technical memorandum, the Project supports the vision laid out by the City of Newport by enabling key economic development opportunities to be realized (i.e., the Innovation Hub in the City's North End).

8. Summary of Impacts

The Project would reconfigure built structures and would include some filling, grading, grubbing (soil disturbance), and vegetation clearing that would commence during the construction phase and persist through operations and maintenance. These changes represent a major impact to the Study Area's topography, which is neither beneficial nor adverse, as most of the existing topography is, and will continue to be, previously disturbed urban land.

The Project would result in a beneficial impact by improving neighborhood connectivity through new and improved north-south linkages. The Project would require the acquisition and subsequent conversion of several privately- and municipally-owned properties to transportation use. These acquisitions represent a moderate adverse impact; they would not result in significant changes to local land use patterns. Construction activities may result in temporary adverse impacts in the form of limited or diminished use of properties within the Study Area from noise generation, disruptions to traffic patterns, and vehicular and equipment emissions and inhalable dust concentrations; however, such impacts are expected to be minimized and mitigated to the extent practicable.

The reconfiguration of the Pell Bridge approaches and ramps would facilitate new development opportunities. Any new development is anticipated to conform to the City's land use planning and zoning, as potentially amended. The Project itself supports State land use, transportation, and economic development goals and is directly consistent with existing zoning.