



PLAN 2004
URBAN DESIGN FOR CENTRAL NEWPORT

CITY OF NEWPORT REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
(PROJECT #70316)

PLAN DEVELOPED BY TAYLOR & PARTNERS' TOWN CENTER TEAM

OCTOBER 20, 2004

STRATEGIC ARCHITECTURE, PLANNING, INTERIOR DESIGN



October 20, 2004

Charlotte Yeomans, Chair
Newport Redevelopment Agency
City Hall
42 Broadway Street
Newport, RI 02840

Re: Plan 2004

Dear Madame Chair:

Taylor & Partners Town Center Team is pleased to submit to you Plan 2004. It is the result of a six-month interactive effort to determine the goals and vision of the community and then to formulate a plan that will make it possible realize that vision.

We are providing you with a plan that will serve as a guide to future development of the center of Newport. This conceptual plan is based on specific guiding principles articulated by the Newport community.

- Preservation of historical structures and the historic environment
- Restoration of the urban fabric of the center
- Providing improved access to the history and the harbor that has shaped Newport
- Enhancing the relationship between the center and the harbor
- Creating a walkable and livable environment for residents and visitors alike
- Providing economic benefits to the city and its residents

Plan 2004 does not provide detailed design solutions. It does provide parameters that will guide and mold future development.

Thank you for the opportunity to help shape the next chapter of the center of Newport's history.

Yours very truly,

TAYLOR & PARTNERS, LTD.

Kenneth E. Taylor, AIA



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1. INTRODUCTION

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The Newport Redevelopment Agency, under the auspices of the Newport City Council, solicited proposals in March, 2003, to study the center of Newport. The contract to prepare a preliminary land use, design, and traffic plan in support of the improvement of the urban center of Newport, Rhode Island, was awarded to Taylor & Partners' Town Center Team in March, 2004.



Plan 2004 Study Area

GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

The geographic scope of the urban center district is bounded by Gladys Carr Bolhouse Connector Road (formerly the Goat Island Connector) and Marlborough Street on the north, Washington Street and America's Cup Avenue on the west, Church Street on the south, and Spring Street to the east.

This study in 2004 gives Newport the opportunity to look in detail at its center and decide how to preserve and enhance the environment created in the 365 years since its founding in 1639. The plan also affords the opportunity to coordinate a number of separate initiatives such as the Gateway Center Redevelopment and the Mary Street Parking projects.

PHILOSOPHY

The Town Center Team's philosophy in undertaking this process was straightforward: Let the citizens of Newport share their ideas and concerns and help produce the design. To be worthy of the process, the design should serve the community for future generations and not just provide Band-Aids® for the city's problems of the moment. The plan needs to come from the community, for it is the community that will nurture it through the implementation process, give it life, and live with the results.



Plan 2004 Study Area looking northwest

PROCESS

Taylor & Partners' Town Center Team's work plan for developing Plan 2004 focused on engaging the community in shaping the future of the center:

1. Collect as much information from as many sources as possible, including review of planning studies generated over the past 100 years.
2. Provide current best practices in the area of traffic design, walkability, livability, and urban design.
3. Listen to the community's desires and concerns without prejudging what those interests might be.
4. Present the Newport community with examples of what has been accomplished elsewhere to stimulate their creativity and broaden their outlook.
5. Let the community give voice and shape to the design through value-setting exercises and the public charrette process.
6. Refine the design in the light of additional opportunities and practical limitations of the project area.
7. Document the steps as clearly and completely as possible within the limits of the scope of the project.
8. Synthesize the results into a workable conceptual plan for the town center.

PLAN 2004

Plan 2004 responds to the charge of the Newport Redevelopment Agency to coordinate and integrate the many separate planning initiatives moving forward in the center of Newport. The Plan has gathered from the community its goals and vision and defines parameters for detailed development. Plan 2004 is conceptual in nature and suggests how the center should be developed in detail.

The guiding principles are:

- Preservation of historical structures and the historic environment
- Restoration of the urban fabric of the center
- Providing improved access to the history and the harbor that has played such a pivotal role in shaping Newport
- Enhancing the relationship between the center and the harbor
- Creating a walkable and livable environment for residents and visitors alike
- Providing economic benefits to the city and its residents

The Town Center Team member firms responsible for this report are:

Taylor & Partners, Ltd. Newport, Rhode Island Boston, Massachusetts	Strategic and Master Planning Architecture
Walkable Communities, Inc. High Springs, Florida	Best Practices in Creating Walkable Communities
Carol R. Johnson Associates, Inc. Boston, Massachusetts	Community Planning Landscape Design
Katherine Field and Associates, Inc. Newport, Rhode Island	Landscape Design
Northeast Engineers & Consultants, Inc. Middletown, Rhode Island	Civil Engineering Traffic Studies
Sandra Liotus Lighting Design, LLC Newport, Rhode Island	Lighting Design

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Through the process of helping the community define its vision of the future, Taylor & Partners' Town Center Team has benefited from the thoughts and perspectives of hundreds of people in the Newport community. These people represent diverse elements of the community: Young singles, retired couples, residents and property owners, business owners, state officials, and local planners. Almost 200 of these people actively participated in the Public Charrette held April 2-3, 2004. More specific input and insight were generously provided by:

- Newport Redevelopment Agency
- Newport Redevelopment Agency Advisory Committee
- Newport County Chamber of Commerce
- Members of the Newport City Council

The Newport Redevelopment Agency members are:

- Charlotte Yeomans, Chair
- Keith Stokes, Vice Chair,
- William Corcoran
- David Galvin
- Bart Dunbar

- Bruce Bartlett, Director
- Paige Bronk, Director of Planning, Zoning, Development, and Inspection

Newport Redevelopment Agency Advisory Committee

Organizations represented on the Advisory Committee are:

- Newport Historical Society
- Newport Restoration Foundation
- Washington Square Advisory Commission
- Friends of the Waterfront
- The Point Association
- The Historic Hill Association
- Accessibility Advisory Commission
- Thames Street Merchants' Association
- Brick Market Place Condominium Association
- Brick Market Place Retailers' Association
- Downtown Merchants' Association
- Long Wharf Merchants' Association

In addition, we benefited from a number of individuals who shared their insight into this complex community called Newport, Rhode Island.

- Hank Bernhard, Frank Ray, Esq., and all those involved in the Foundation For Newport's *1997 Newport Harborfront Plan*, ably prepared by WTG Planning and Design. It largely addresses problems outside the geographic scope of this study but remains thought provoking and relevant.
- Lillian Dick, Chair of the Washington Square Commission, who helped us understand the design for the square's renovation and the rationale behind it – and then helped us figure out how it might best be appreciated from Long Wharf.
- Rockwell Stensrud and the Redwood Library Press, who allowed us to read the forthcoming *Newport: A Lively Experiment* in manuscript. It's a grand story and, more important, provided in-depth understanding of Newport's colorful history and development – a history that Newporters acknowledge as one of their most cherished values.
- Pieter Roos, Executive Director of the Newport Restoration Foundation, who shared his encyclopedic knowledge of the city's history and participated in an open-minded and positive fashion when we discussed even more moves for historical houses in Newport.

- Daniel Snydacker, Joan Youngken, Ruth Taylor, and Adams Taylor of the Newport Historical Society, who were generous with their photos, maps, and insight, as well as access to the NHS properties. Photos provided by the NHS are so credited.
- Ralph Carpenter, for sharing his deep perspective on the history of Newport and his knowledge and experience in accomplishing important missions for the city.
- Armin Allen and Trudy Coxe of the Preservation Society of Newport County, for bringing their insight to the Public Charrette in particular.
- Lastly, Catharine Taylor, who used her historian's skills and research gathered while doing a piece for *The New York Times*, collaborating on Section 2, History of Development.

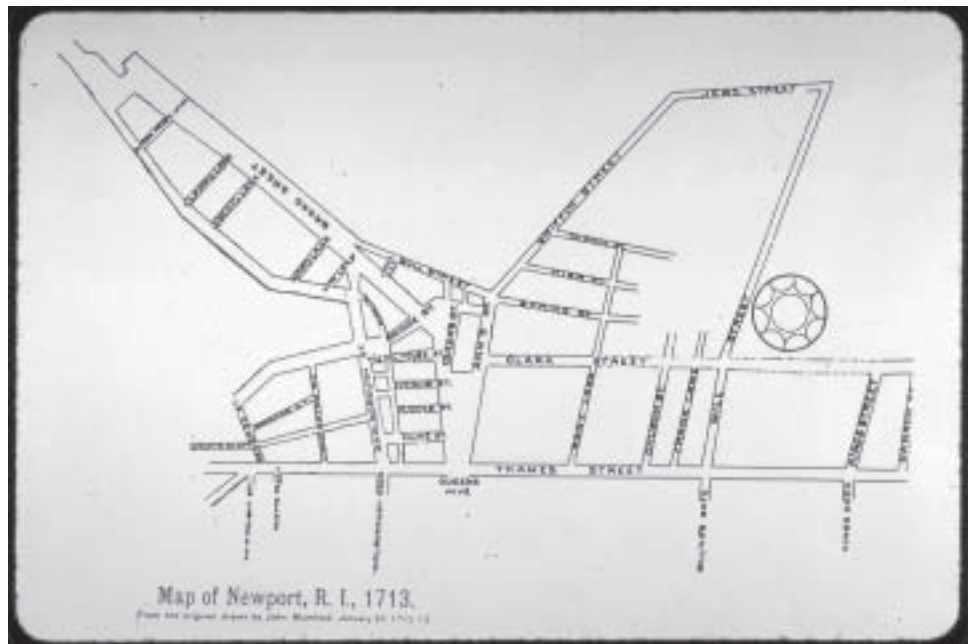
2. HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT

2. HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT

THE FOUNDING

From the beginning, Newport was a planned city. Having decided to break away from Portsmouth in 1639, the nine founders had first to agree to a site and then a general plan of streets and houses. Initially, they thought to settle by what became Easton's Beach, but they soon realized it was far from sheltered and moved on to the harbor that we know today. In May they declared, "...the Towne shall be built on both sides of the spring & by the sea-side Southward."¹ By midsummer they had completed a general plan.

"The new town from the start had its center around the brook running into the harbor, with buildings slowly extending south by the water's edge and northeast inland."² There was no church-centric town green or similar focal point for these anti-Congregationalists. Thames Street – and the wharves that quickly sprouted from it – served as the commercial hub, with residential lots situated closer to the spring that even today hides under Neill Coffey's Citgo service station. "The first settlers gave themselves allotments of various sizes, but each man's grant ordinarily included a house lot by the harbor, a meadow lot, and a much larger tract of arable land."³ Along with Thames, Marlborough was the city's original street, formally laid out in 1654; it led down to Marlborough Dock at the mouth of the river that meandered down the hill. Founder William



NHS (Newport Historical Society) Collections

Coddington's own land was on Marlborough, which soon was lined with major colonial houses (including his own), taverns, and businesses.

What we know as Broadway developed from the path that led to Portsmouth; by 1641 the General Assembly in aid of commerce ordered that the path be made wide enough for cattle to pass. Such infrastructure planning – along with the superb, generally ice-free harbor enjoying ready access to the North Atlantic and the townspeople's entrepreneurial spirit – assured that Newport was one of the colonies' leading commercial ports within four decades.

THE GOLDEN AGE

Over the next century Newport developed a densely woven fabric of streets, with taverns and artisans' cottages cheek-by-jowl with the mansions of mercantile grandees. What we today call "live-work spaces" were the rule, with successful merchants' wharves extending beyond their gardens, and barbers and cabinetmakers practicing their trades at home or in small annexes. The wharves themselves stretched about a mile along the harbor. When the slave trade opened up in the early 18th century, Newport merchants were among the first colonists to take to the triangular trade. The income it and the town's thriving coastal trade yielded assured the citizens the leisure to indulge in cultural endeavors that gave the era its sobriquet of "Golden Age." Early in the 18th century Washington Square (the Parade and Queen Street) and Thames streets were paved in stone, a project paid for with a tax on slaves brought into the colony.⁴

As early as 1730, southern planters, especially Carolinians, started summing in Newport, drawn by a climate kinder and healthier than their own as well as the commercial ties that linked the two areas. So many came that Newport was nicknamed "the Carolina Hospital." At the height of its pre-Revolutionary prosperity, Newport never had 10,000 inhabitants, and many of the sailors among them were away most of the time.

THE REVOLUTION

Yet within this urbanity the seeds of Newport's decline were germinating. At the end of the French and Indian War (1763), the British Crown determined that the Colonies should help reimburse the Treasury for the lucre spent to defend them. The molasses/rum commerce with the Caribbean, which had come to be called "the indulged trade" because of the lax enforcement of British taxes, now found itself facing more rigorous enforcement from Crown revenue officers. And the taxes they were

applying became evermore onerous. Rebellion was inevitable and was brewed right alongside the town's 20 rum distilleries.

Newport spent the Revolution in misery, first under the British occupation, then having to share meager supplies with General Rochambeau's 6,000 altogether more polite troops. Estimates suggest that of the 1,100 houses in Newport before the Revolution, almost half were lost to the British during the Occupation, which lasted nearly three years. Roughly a third of those that survived thanks to many miracles (oversight chief among them) remain today.



The Parade, ca. 1815

NHS Collections

Most of the island's already-precious timber had been burned for firewood by the troops, making postwar rebuilding an extravagant decision. With trade in eclipse, there was little incentive. Indeed, a significant slice of the population had either fled or, as Loyalists, chosen to depart with the British, reducing pressure on housing. The population did not begin to expand noticeably until the 1830s.

1840-1879

By then Newport had realized that "leisure" was to be its most important industry. Summering Southerners were back, followed by Bostonians, New Yorkers, and Philadelphians, feeding an intellectual and artistic renaissance that orbited around figures like William and Henry James, John La Farge, William Morris Hunt, Alexander Agassiz, and Julia Ward

Howe. At the same time the compact town's center of gravity was shifting, with growth to the east in the Kay/Catherine/Old Beach area, where the first real hotel appeared. In the 1850s, Alfred Smith opened development to the south, along the new Bellevue Avenue.



Plan 1859

THE GILDED AGE

The Gilded Age, focused along Bellevue Avenue and in the Cliff Walk area, hardly altered the center of Newport *per se*, beyond the Fall River Line's growing installations on Long Wharf after 1847, followed by the Old Colony Railroad's depot, constructed like its yard on landfill in the Cove north of Long Wharf. The Jamestown Ferry landed not far away, along the "comb" of wharves that backed onto Thames Street. Cast-iron buildings were built to house the merchants of Thames Street, whose trade often depended on orders from "the Avenue."



View of center, 1879



Welcoming Arch on the Parade
NHS Collections

Cottagers otherwise had little impact on the face of the center. Even their philanthropies were largely limited to contributions to the hospital and Alfred G. Vanderbilt's beneficent gesture to the YMCA. So the center was increasingly neglected. Henry James comments "at the indifference and neglect" that the colonial heart of the city suffered, though he breathes "thanks for the absence of positive ravage."⁵



Thames Street at Washington Square (top); and Thames Street, south of Brick Market (bottom)
NHS Collections (both photos)

1920-1960

The 20th century brought more structured town planning, much of it directed at accommodating the automobile, but relatively little was implemented until the 1960's. At least a dozen major plans addressed Newport's urban core. (The issues they raise – and some of the solutions – are almost identical with those raised by participants in the 2004 workshops – a curious continuity.) In 1913 Frederick Law Olmsted, at the behest of the Newport Improvement Association, opined and urged: (1) that the public should have access to the water, (2) that development is destroying Newport's "charming" cityscape, and (3) that "probably the most serious example of inadequate provision for through traffic now found in Newport is on Thames Street." (Though the one-way system has transferred this last problem to Spring Street, it is still with us, as are the two other issues.)



The Arthur A. Shurtleff Plan, 1926

In 1926 the Newport Improvement Association and the Newport Chamber of Commerce commissioned a plan from Boston-based town planner Arthur A. Shurtleff. The report emphasized the importance of maintaining a high degree of visual amenity if the city were to continue to attract summer residents and tourists.

Another significant 20th-century change was the increased naval presence. Wartime buildup (the population reached 60,000+ during World War II) and fleet presence – they both brought gangs of off-duty sailors. Entrepreneurs in the city's deteriorated core were eager to keep them entertained. The results were not necessarily salubrious, doing nothing to make the center a desirable place to live or work.



Aerial photograph of wharves, 1959
Hopf photo, NHS Collections

URBAN RENEWAL/REDEVELOPMENT

At the end of World War II the nation found itself with a burgeoning population generating a major need for decent housing. Existing communities, such as Newport, had endured a 20-year period of depression and war and little or no infrastructure maintenance or improvement. As a result, community buildings and infrastructure were in extremely poor condition.

Decisions had to be made whether to repair and maintain or to demolish and rebuild. Washington developed urban clearance programs, bulldozing slums to make way for new development. The realization that Americans had become dependent on cars for personal transportation and the opinion that the existing streets could not be adapted to meet the demand fed an explosion in freeways, bridges, and parking lots. Rubber-tire buses replaced existing transit systems.



Thames Street between Marlborough Street and the Brick Market

RIHS Collections

The late 1960's brought such state and federal road and urban renewal projects to Newport. At the height of the Interstate highway boom and in preparation for traffic generated by the Pell Bridge, the relief street for Thames Street – America's Cup Avenue – was finally implemented. It sliced north-south along the waterfront, its 98-foot-width (130 feet measuring from the east curb of Thames Street to the west curb of the Avenue) amputating the city functionally, visually, and psychologically from the harbor that gave birth to it. The road's maximum width exceeded the size of many of the residential blocks in the Historic Hill neighborhood on its east side.

The plan for such a relief street had been originally mooted by Olmsted in 1913 and seconded by virtually every planner who studied Newport, though it seems inconceivable that any of them for a moment envisioned the federal government's 60's devotion to treeless, auto-centric, mega-asphalt.



America's Cup Avenue at Brick Market Place

In a parallel effort, urban renewal cleared 22 acres on the west side of Thames Street south from the Brick Market. Establishments like the Blue Moon – every sailor's favored dive – vanished, little lamented. In their place rose the residential and commercial buildings we know today.

The upheaval served to catalyze the nascent preservation movement. The Preservation Society focused its attention beyond the area of this study.

Operation Clapboard brought new life to the Point and the Oldport Association wrought wonders on a shoestring and enthusiasm. As prices for colonial houses rose beyond their means, the gods of preservation sent Doris Duke, whose Newport Restoration Foundation has rescued nearly 70 Newport properties, restoring them and returning them to residential use.

Following an established Newport tradition, innumerable colonial buildings were moved to new sites to protect them. In the late 70's the Restoration Foundation, Trinity Church, and the Newport Redevelopment Agency oversaw clearance (often by moving) to make way for Queen Anne Square. This freed Trinity Church from the dense building – much of it rundown industrial structures – that surrounded and competed with it.

The Newport Redevelopment Authority was the principal agency for remaking the center of Newport. It mediated between local development pressures and the federal programs that funded most of the changes. The NRA was the agent for the redevelopment of Bowen's Wharf and improvements on the Historic Hill, as well as the creation of Queen Anne Square.



Gateway Center and America's Cup Avenue

Its foremost effort in the center was redeveloping Brick Market Place and Long Wharf Mall after the state and federal agencies engineered America's Cup and the new Humphrey J. "Harp" Donnelly III Newport Gateway, Transportation and Visitors Center.

In reviewing the effort 30-plus years later at the recent Public Charrette, the attendees made few suggestions to change the land use of the 60's redevelopment. Mixing residential, retail, and hotel functions remains desirable, with adjustments for additional housing and office functions. Dissatisfaction with the redevelopment focused more on the scale of America's Cup Avenue and the presence of too much surface parking, though the quality of construction of some of the buildings led some to propose that they be replaced.

THE FOUNDATION FOR NEWPORT AND BEYOND

However overscale America's Cup Avenue, it was no remedy for the traffic jams that Newport's growing popularity with tourists generated in the peak summer months. America's Cup's Avenue traffic still had to feed back into the narrow colonial grid. By the 1990's traffic congestion was making the city a less desirable destination, as well as damaging the quality of life for residents. Under the banner of the Foundation For Newport, a major community effort was undertaken to address the problems.



The 1997 Newport Harborfront Plan by WTG Planning and Design

The foundation sponsored *The 1997 Newport Harborfront Plan* to encourage alternate means of transportation by intercepting visitors and others near the off-ramps of the Pell Bridge and directing them to a new Transportation and Visitors' Center. The plan called for major parking structures to capture cars there, where visitors would connect with trolleys and buses for the remainder of their Newport visit. In addition, a water taxi service would move people around the city, freeing the streets. Express ferry service to Providence would also change commuting patterns. In the city center itself, the plan proposed to deemphasize the Gateway Center as a visitors' information center; instead, a conference center and parking were proposed on its site. A final component called for reconfiguring America's Cup Avenue between Church Street and Memorial Boulevard to rationalize the 128-foot right-of-way.

Perrotti Park and the ferry landing have been constructed and are in use, and there is now Providence ferry service, but a full-fledged water taxi system has yet to be realized.

Since *The 1997 Newport Harborfront Plan*, the city has commissioned studies of the Gateway Center, Mary Street, traffic, and parking. Though the City of Newport has entertained proposals for the redevelopment of the Gateway Center, it has not accepted any. Plan 2004 is an effort to look at individual projects being considered for the Gateway Center, Mary Street, and Long Wharf and to integrate them into the community vision that can serve as the framework for future change and improvement in the center.

The *Harborfront Plan* reflected emerging thinking in urban planning, a realization that the automobile had been granted a too determinative role in our society. The freedom and independence it promised had become a license to sit in traffic jams that was both isolating and unsustainable. The new goal is to make the car the servant of the society and to ransom city centers like Newport's from its tyranny, reestablishing human connections, without significantly sacrificing the convenience citizens have come to expect.

(Footnotes)

¹ Edward Field, ed., *State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations at the End of the Century* (Boston & Syracuse: Mason Publishing Company, 1902).

² Sydney V. James, *Colonial Rhode Island: A History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975), pp. 26 and 28.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Carl Bridenbaugh, *Cities in the Wilderness: The First Century of Urban Life in America, 1625-1742* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), p. 157, citing *Newport T. M. Recs.*, 179, 180, 181, 200; *R.I. Col. Recs.*, IV, 191.

⁵ cited in Antoinette F. Downing and Vincent J. Scully, *The Architectural Heritage of Newport, Rhode Island, 1640-1915*, rev. ed. (New York: Bramhall Hall, 1967), p. xvi.

3. COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

3. COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

During the last 40 years, the Newport community has repeatedly examined the city's future roles. The 1965 plan resulted in the redevelopment of the core of the city. It reflected planning approaches current at that time concerning traffic, land use, and design.

Since the redevelopment, a number of forums have explored the goals of the City of Newport. The Newport Comprehensive Land Use Plan generated by the Citizens' Advisory Commission in 1990 and updated in 2002 summarizes them. The goals are recapitulated as follows:

- “Goal 1: Preserve Newport’s history and natural resources and enhance the city:
- Goal 2: Protect and enhance Newport’s neighborhoods:
- Goal 3: Celebrate Newport’s historic and cultural diversity:
- Goal 4: Create a cooperative partnership between Newport’s citizens and government:
- Goal 5: Shared resources and responsibilities with other communities on Aquidneck Island:
- Goal 6: Allow for the orderly, balanced, and responsible growth of the economic and residential uses within Newport:
- Goal 7: Provide for the general welfare of the community: Assure residential and economic vitality through maintenance of the municipal infrastructure:”

With this background, the Newport center urban planning effort in 2004 has focused on planning for the core of the city.

The guiding principles that have come out of the process are:

- Preservation of historical structures and the historic environment
- Restoration of the urban fabric of the center
- Providing improved access to the history and the harbor that has played such a pivotal role in shaping Newport
- Enhancing the relationship between the center and the harbor

- Creating a walkable and livable environment for residents and visitors alike
- Providing economic benefits to the city and its residents

A chronicle of the planning process follows:

**NEWPORT REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
#1 MARCH 23, 2004**

At the outset of the project, the Newport Redevelopment Agency appointed an Advisory Committee composed of one representative from each interested group in the center including:

- Friends of the Waterfront
- Brick Market Place Merchants' Association
- Downtown Merchants' Association
- The Point Association
- Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Long Wharf Merchants' Association
- Washington Square Advisory Commission
- Historic Hill Association
- Newport Restoration Foundation
- Newport Historical Society

The role of the Advisory Committee was to provide both input relative to key issues and feedback on the planning. The first meeting of the Advisory Committee was held at the Gateway Center conference room on March 23, 2004.



Walking Audit led by Dan Burden

NEWPORT URBAN CENTER PLANNING CHARRETTE, APRIL 2-3, 2004

As part of the development of Plan 2004, the Taylor & Partners' Town Center Team conducted the Newport Urban Center Planning Charrette on April 2-3, 2004, to elicit the community's vision for the improvement of the center of the city. Led by Ken Taylor and Dan Burden, the Friday night program concentrating on value setting attracted over 130 people. Ninety people returned for the Saturday session that started at 9:30 a.m. and wrapped up at 4:00 p.m. It consisted of a walking audit, educational session, and a design workshop.

VALUE SETTING, APRIL 2, 2004

Newport residents and merchants attended the value setting session on April 2, 2004. This session successfully defined the fundamental aspirations of the Newport community – as represented by the attendees – and helped produce a set of values with which to evaluate and prioritize options and opportunities.

At the value setting session, each participant had the opportunity to suggest priorities or goals and was given five general votes and one “top” goal vote. The top nine values prized by the participants are listed below with the total number of votes listed to the right. (Similar values and goals were combined for clarity.)

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Votes</u>
1	Connect community to waterfront & harbor better	73
2	Preserve/restore historic character	62
3	Create pedestrian-, bicycle-, and stransit-friendly routes	62
4	Create/enhance parks and open spaces	56
5	Create more attractive parking	47
6	Provide better public amenities (toilets, benches, signage, etc.)	38
7	Encourage stronger local economic development/tax base	37
8	Improve traffic circulation/reduce traffic	30
9	Create housing affordable for residents and local workers	29

The discussions expanded these simple descriptions.

CONNECT THE COMMUNITY TO THE WATERFRONT & HARBOR BETTER

Newport is has long been known as the “City by the Sea.” For much of its history, the chief way to reach the city was by boat. These days, however, this strong connection to the waterfront and waterfront activities like boating and fishing is diminishing. Hotels and timeshares have been built on the waterfront without allowing for view corridors and community access. The desire of the community for better access to the waterfront and nautical activities was attendees’ top priority.

PRESERVE/RESTORE HISTORIC CHARACTER

Newport has perhaps the largest extant stock of colonial buildings in any major town or city in America. Other communities like Williamsburg, Virginia, are largely re-creations of an imagined architectural fabric. Newport is the real thing: a community that through a combination of good luck and happenstance has a significant number of its colonial structures preserved. The value setting participants recognized that this

historic character is one of the features that make the city attractive to residents and visitors.

CREATE PEDESTRIAN-, BICYCLE-, AND TRANSIT-FRIENDLY ROUTES

Newport, like most historic communities, was not designed to accommodate the automobile. During its early history the majority of the residents made their way around town on foot. The proximity of home to office to shop is part of what gave the city its character and what makes it attractive to both residents and tourists today. With its narrow streets, the city cannot accommodate the volume of automobile traffic that is commonplace for many newer conurbations, and it would be a great (almost unimaginable) loss if further broad thoroughfares were cut through the heart of the city.

The alternative is to focus not on the automobile but on pedestrians and bicyclists. These residents and tourists are actually the most valuable to the city. The day-tripper who comes to Newport to whiz (or crawl) 'round Ocean Avenue, never leaving his or her car, contributes little but traffic jams and carbon monoxide.

CREATE/ENHANCE PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Newport is fortunate to have a rich variety of small neighborhood parks and open spaces. The value setting process recognized, however, that more can be done to develop, enhance, and connect these resources.

CREATE MORE ATTRACTIVE PARKING

Though the community, through the value setting process, has placed a priority on improving the provision for pedestrians, bicyclists, and mass-transit users, the vast majority of Newport's visitors arrive by car. The critical step is to convert drivers and their passengers into pedestrians, which means giving them a convenient and affordable place to park their automobiles.

Surface parking situated between sidewalks and buildings separates pedestrians from the very buildings they might have come to see (making walking altogether less interesting) and damages the historic fabric of the city. Alternatives exist, namely parking structures that are central and efficient but that are hidden by "liner buildings," with attractive street façades and even shops, offices, and housing, thus meeting the needs of people and cars at the same time.



PROVIDE BETTER PUBLIC AMENITIES (TOILETS, BENCHES, SIGNAGE, ETC.)

Dan Burden, who has worked with nearly 1,500 communities across the country to set values and promote positive change, noted that Newport is the first community where the need for public restrooms figured so high on the values list. Residents have recognized firsthand the problems that ensue when there is insufficient provision for the needs of both residents and visitors.

ENCOURAGE STRONGER LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/INCREASE TAX BASE

For many communities, the need to stimulate the local economy would have been first, second, and third on any list of priorities. Newport however has the enviable problem (particularly in the summer months) that more people want to come to the city to enjoy its beauty and resources than can be well accommodated. Likewise on the housing front, the value of properties in the city has been rising at four to five times the rate of income. Housing has become unaffordable for many who have grown up and lived their entire lives on Aquidneck Island. Raising real-estate values (and so increasing tax revenues) is therefore much less of an issue in Newport than elsewhere.

At the same time, the seasonal nature of tourism makes operating a business in Newport extremely challenging. Attracting enough staff in summer and enough customers in winter are issues that Plan 2004 must implicitly address to serve the community as well as possible.

IMPROVE/REDUCE TRAFFIC CIRCULATION

While it is clear from the value setting session that reducing traffic by capturing it in improved parking structures is the primary focus of the community, the residents of the city must still get to their homes and businesses. The participants recognized that creating better parking solutions is not sufficient in itself to solve all the automobile problems that the city faces. Evaluating the opportunities to improve the traffic and circulation routes and patterns was a concern that the community properly recognized as an issue that Plan 2004 must address.

PROMOTE CREATION OF HOUSING THAT IS AFFORDABLE TO PURCHASE

Many participants took particular pains to note that they supported the development of housing that is affordable, not the development of “affordable housing”—a term that has often become synonymous with subsidized

housing projects. If the additional housing is to be market-rate, units must necessarily be on the smaller side in order to keep them affordable

Focusing on the construction of two- and three-bedroom units will expand the numbers paying real-estate taxes, but such small units are unlikely to appeal to families that will add to the educational costs burden. Another advantage of smaller units is that they can be integrated more easily with non-residential functions like retail and offices. In traditional cities and towns, there was little demarcation between where people lived and worked. Newport has always had mixed-use zoning, and new development should make full use of it.

The following is a more complete tabulation of all of the suggested goals expressed by the value setting participants, with an accounting of the top votes and general level votes that each item received from the assembled group.

Public Amenities:

	<u>Top</u>	<u>General</u>	<u>Total</u>
Protect historic assets	9	37	46
Recreate historic paving	0	8	8
Create a continuous harbor walk	3	36	39
Create public parks & gardens	2	25	27
Plant trees and create roadside greenscapes	2	14	16
Create public gathering spots	0	13	13
Install gaslights throughout area	0	8	8
Provide public fountains	0	6	6
Provide public art and sculpture	1	11	12
Provide public toilets	3	22	25

Nuisance Mitigation:

	<u>Top</u>	<u>General</u>	<u>Total</u>
Reduce amount of asphalt	4	9	13
Reduce noise pollution from vehicles	1	9	10
Reduce light pollution from streetlights & signs	2	5	7
Provide more trash receptacles (reduce litter)	0	5	5
Reduce traffic	0	4	4
Fix the sewer system	0	4	4
Reduce commercial & city signage	0	3	4
Cut pollution from trucks	0	3	3



<u>Development & Land Use:</u>	<u>Top</u>	<u>General</u>	<u>Total</u>
Making housing that is affordable	6	23	29
Create a performing-arts center	3	11	14
Encourage small-scale development	2	11	13
Promote mixed-use buildings	2	10	12
Put a cap on the number of B&B's	0	1	1

<u>Transportation & Traffic:</u>	<u>Top</u>	<u>General</u>	<u>Total</u>
Provide better bicycle paths & routes	3	16	19
Provide more effective public transit	1	15	16
Create an (electric) trolley system for downtown	1	10	11
Make pedestrians safer	0	4	4
Provide greater neighborhood connectivity	0	4	4
Create more two-way streets	0	4	4
Create a water-taxi system	0	3	3

<u>Parking:</u>	<u>Top</u>	<u>General</u>	<u>Total</u>
Encourage attractive street parking	8	23	31
Parking garage with attractive façade	1	15	16
Utilize church parking for public rather than building a garage at Mary Street	0	1	1

<u>Aesthetics:</u>	<u>Top</u>	<u>General</u>	<u>Total</u>
Promote strong visual connections to water	6	28	34
Promote creation of long views	1	12	13

<u>General values:</u>	<u>Top</u>	<u>General</u>	<u>Total</u>
Focus on needs of Newport residents	1	16	17
Improve safety of area	2	9	11
Provide more good places for children & teens	1	11	12
Make buildings & places ADA accessible	1	7	8
Civility	1	3	4



WALKING AUDIT, APRIL 3, 2004

On Saturday, April 3, Dan Burden led a walking audit of the study area. The purpose was to have the participants look carefully at the condition of the existing environment and hear Dan's assessment of the issues and the opportunities. In spite of rain, 55 people attended the audit, and additional residents joined the group for the educational session and the design workshop.



Walking Audit participants

EDUCATIONAL SESSION, APRIL 3, 2004

At the educational session, Dan Burden addressed the issues raised in the value setting session and the walking audit. He identified means of addressing traffic and parking issues central to the Newport environment. He discussed the merits of roundabouts and road dieting and provided examples of successful applications elsewhere in the country. Walkability and livability were focal subjects.

DESIGN WORKSHOP

The 90 people who attended the Design Workshop divided into nine teams. The team composition was as diverse as possible. Each team then spent 90 minutes creating a plan for the center of Newport, drawing on the value session, the walking audit, and the educational session. Upon completion, each team in succession presented its plan to the group. Some elements were common to many of the teams' designs. Those with the greatest commonality were:

- Open a view corridor from the Colony House to the west end of Long Wharf
- Reduce traffic on America's Cup Avenue from four to two lanes.
- Create a continuous Harbor Walk.
- Redevelop the Gateway Center.
- Create a roundabout at America's Cup Avenue and West Marlborough Street.



Design team at work

- Improve signage in the study area.
- Create a roundabout at America's Cup Avenue and Long Wharf.
- Divert westbound traffic on Broadway to the Visitors' Center via Marlborough Street.
- Redevelop the Long Wharf North site with parking and mixed-use buildings accommodating retail and residential uses.
- Create a roundabout at America's Cup Avenue and Church Street
- Create a safe pedestrian way across America's Cup Avenue from Mary Street to Perrotti Park.
- Provide convenient, safe, public toilets in the study area.
- Create a pocket park at Washington Street and Long Wharf.
- Build residential buildings and a parking structure on the Mary Street parking lot site



Design team at work

The wrap-up summary highlighted the extent to which the design teams agreed on many elements of planning for the center. Subsequent to the April 2-3, 2004, Planning Charrette, the NRA structured a plan to keep the community engaged in the process.

NRA PUBLIC MEETING, MAY 10, 2004

Following the Public Charrette, a public meeting was held on May 10 at Thompson Middle School to summarize and review the findings of the charrette. Eighty people attended. The Town Center Team reported on 13

issues. Before the meeting, consensus had been achieved on 11 of them. The two open issues discussed at the meeting were construction of a parking structure at Mary Street and returning Long Wharf East to use as a street with one-way traffic. The meeting discussed both issues. No dissent was expressed about the Mary Street parking structure. The meeting ended with significant disagreement over the issue of traffic on Long Wharf East.



May 10 meeting

**NEWPORT REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING #2, JUNE 7, 2004**

A second meeting of the Advisory Committee was held at the Newport Police Headquarters conference room on June 7. The Town Center Team reported the status of the planning, including its recommendation that at the outset of the plan implementation the only changes in traffic patterns would be the diversion of Broadway traffic down Marlborough Street to the Visitors' Center and the road dieting and roundabouts on America's Cup Avenue. The only traffic to be permitted on Long Wharf East would be emergency vehicles and an eastbound electric trolley. Attendees endorsed this as a workable strategy. One resident objected to the construction of any parking structure on the Mary Street site.

NRA PUBLIC MEETING, JUNE 14, 2004

This meeting was held at the Colony House to present the draft plan for the center of Newport to the NRA and the public. Approximately 60 people attended. Taylor & Partners presented Plan 2004. A number of issues were discussed, and the draft plan was endorsed without dissent.

SUMMARY OF GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Preservation of historical structures and the historic environment
- Restoration of the urban fabric of the center
- Providing improved access to the history and the harbor that has played such a pivotal role in shaping Newport
- Enhancing the relationship between the center and the harbor
- Creating a walkable and livable environment for residents and visitors alike
- Providing economic benefits to the city and its residents

CITY OF NEWPORT WEBSITE

On July 8, 2004, the city of Newport posted a summary of the draft plan on the city website. The public was encouraged to review the plan and comment. The comments received have been supportive.

The purpose of the process outlined above was to engage the community in determining the focus and priorities for future growth and change in the center of Newport. This is an ongoing process. Plan 2004 provides conceptual guidelines for the detailed development of the components of the plan.

4. PLAN 2004

4. PLAN 2004

Two Newport historical periods provide models for central Newport moving forward.

The first is the Golden Age from 1740-1770, the period when the city was one of the five most important and vibrant in the colonies. The economy was thriving. New ideas manifested themselves in the beginnings of American architecture. The city of nearly 10,000 people was bustling with activity at all levels.

The second, equally relevant period was the rebirth of Newport during the 1830's. The Renaissance of Newport from 1840-1870 was a period of enormous creativity that saw a peak in the literary, artistic, and intellectual life and witnessed the restoration and creation of much of the fabric of the core of Newport, in particular in the Point, the Historic Hill, and Kay-Catherine-Old Beach areas.

Both of these periods saw a robust integration of the patterns of life for Newporters. They typically lived, worked, and played in close proximity and much of their movement was pedestrian. At the same time Newport provided a lively environment for prosperous visitors.



Plan 2004 - Maximum Development

4.1 ZONING, LAND USE, DEVELOPMENT/REDEVELOPMENT

4.1 ZONING, LAND USE, DEVELOPMENT/ REDEVELOPMENT

An urban center that is vibrant and prosperous throughout the day and throughout the year must accommodate a full range of compatible uses, including retail, office, residential, recreational, and civic.

In order to achieve the goals expressed in the Public Charrette in April, 2004, land use in the center of Newport will need to undergo changes:

- Increase density of use
- Reduce surface area committed to parking
- Increase the amount of office space and workspace
- Increase the amount of green space and civic space
- Increase the amount of housing for Newporters

Land use in Newport over the past 365 years has included many of the same functions, with changing emphasis. The early ropewalks, rum distilleries, and other industrial and manufacturing uses have been replaced by hospitality, office, and tourism functions. Taverns and inns have morphed into hotels, timeshares, and restaurants. Wharves to moor commercial schooners have been replaced by dockage and moorings for pleasure boats and by parking lots and parking structures for automobiles. Housing has been a constant in the center, although working within walking distance of home is now uncommon.

One of the profound changes of the last century has been the ascendancy of the automobile and the extent to which parking for it has consumed available land. In the Newport center study area in 2004, 14% of the land area is committed to the automobile, most of it for surface parking fronting public streets. A key goal of Plan 2004 is to reduce the amount of land dedicated to the automobile and to increase the space given over to human activities: working, walking, shopping, playing, recreating, and entertainment. Another goal is to make the center of Newport enjoyable for local residents as well as visitors. This will entail allocating a larger proportion of available land for housing for Newporters.

Activity nodes in the center currently are Washington Square, Thames Street, Perrotti Park, and the Visitors' (Gateway) Center. These nodes are surrounded on the east and north by residential areas and on the south and west by maritime business uses. These nodes and the connections between them form the chassis of the center.



Aerial view of Newport Center

ZONING

Plan 2004 calls for no changes to the current zoning for the center of Newport with one exception. In order to replace the street-front surface parking with mixed-use residential, retail or office buildings, the city should pass a new ordinance that applies only to properties in the center that have surface parking on street frontage. The new ordinance would permit qualified owners to meet their zoning requirements for parking offsite as well as onsite. There are various mechanisms for doing this. Portsmouth, New Hampshire, has a successful program based on a one-

time per space capital contribution to the city's parking fund. This supports the construction of new structured parking spaces that can be turned over multiple times. Any construction permitted under the offsite parking ordinance would be subject to design review and approval.

LAND USE

The public workshops and meetings with land and business owners produced a clear sense of the types of uses that should comprise the development within each part of the city center district:

Retail/Commercial. Some additional retail and commercial space may be supported, but priority should be given to enterprises related to historic tourism and local, indigenous commerce rather than national chain stores. Retail uses are appropriate for street level space in mixed-use structures. Such functions are to be located adjacent to pedestrian and vehicular routes. The scale of proposed retail development should be small, focused on individual stores and shops.

Office. There appears to be a growing market for professional and other office space in the center of Newport. The marketability is contingent on providing convenient parking. These offices could occupy upper levels of liner buildings, as well as other new commercial structures. Live-work spaces should also be encouraged. Loft space is a marketable alternative for the upper levels of new structures.

Hotel/Timeshare. The Public Charrette elicited relatively little interest in or enthusiasm for additional timeshare uses. Some of the groups' design schemes included hotels. It would appear that the two potential sites for a hotel or hotels are the Visitors' (Gateway) Center site and Long Wharf North. Other sites are probably not large enough for a sizable hotel.



Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry

Civic Newport has a number of historic and civic buildings within the study area including the Colony House, Brick Market, Newport County Courthouse, the Gateway Center, and the Newport Fire Department. Efforts should be made to maintain and enhance these structures while allowing office and residential development to grow around them. If a workable alternate site can be found for the Newport Fire Department building at the corner of Marlborough Street and America's Cup Avenue, a move might be considered, permitting the existing structure to be redeveloped or replaced.

The introduction of four roundabouts on America's Cup Avenue affords the opportunity to use their centers for historic statues and monuments or important civic sculpture, pools, or fountains. These are important icons to communicate to residents and visitors alike that they are in an important place, that they have arrived in the historic center of Newport.



Roundabout fountain in Aix-en-Provence

Residential. The Public Charrette participants voiced a strong desire to have additional housing units in the center of Newport. The emphasis was on housing for people who currently live and work in Newport. In keeping with historic patterns, the size and cost of the units should cover a broad range rather than focusing on one income level. In addition, there is a market for live/work units for professionals and artists as mentioned above. Newport can tap this sector in the same ways that have been successful in Providence, New York City, and Boston.

Open Space. Charrette participants also called for additional green space in the form of parks and additional landscaping of the primary streets. The existing metered parking on Long Wharf West should be reduced so that a linear extension of Perrotti Park can be created as well as a pocket park with a harbor lookout at Long Wharf and Washington Street.

Maritime Business. The land west of Washington Street and south of the west end of Long Wharf along the water is zoned for waterfront business. Waterfront business uses should remain on these waterfront sites. It has been suggested that a development similar to San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf be located along Long Wharf on the State Pier.

Restaurants/Sidewalk Cafés. Restaurants with sidewalk cafés should be encouraged to enliven the street life of the center. This is especially true for Long Wharf East and West and Washington Square.

Plan 2004 calls for the following land use changes:

- Increase the public green space by reducing existing metered parking spaces to extend Perrotti Park around the corner of Long Wharf and America's Cup Avenue to the Newport Yacht Club.
- Create civic green spaces in the centers of roundabouts and along Long Wharf to provide for statues, fountains, and memorials that celebrate Newport's history and harbor.
- Shift street-front surface parking to parking structures to make way for mixed-use buildings for retail, office, and housing functions.
- Concentrate parking for workers, residents, and visitors in multistory parking structures that are effectively and attractively screened from public view.

PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT/REDEVELOPMENT

A number of private properties in the center are candidates for redevelopment. If the city passes an offsite parking ordinance, there are potential sites for additional development on the streets of the center.

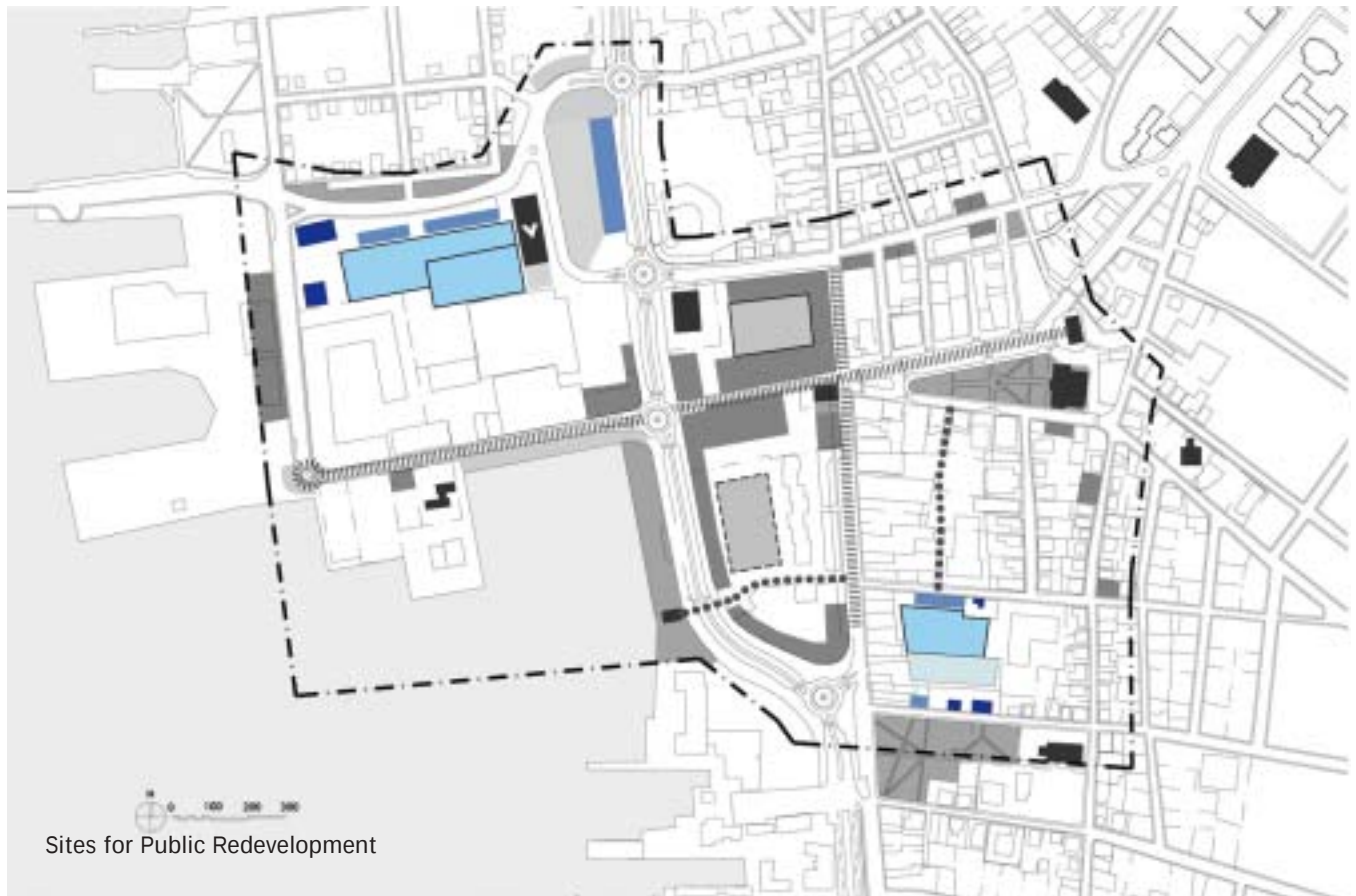
In addition, there are private properties where it may be feasible to build parking structures that would permit additional development as of right. One such property is Long Wharf North, where it may be possible to construct a multilevel parking structure with new mixed-use buildings on Marlborough and Thames streets. The owner might at the same time consider replacing some or all of the existing Long Wharf North buildings. Given the importance of Long Wharf, the height and scale of any new buildings on Long Wharf North should be subject to design review and approval.

The properties on Long Wharf South including Brick Market Place could also be redeveloped, but, given the site and ownership structure, this is less likely.

Owners of all properties in the center should be encouraged to restore, rehabilitate, and improve existing structures. Bowen's Wharf is a successful model for materials, finishes, and level of quality for comparable structures in the study area.

PUBLIC REDEVELOPMENT

Public development in the center will focus on two areas, the Gateway Center and the Mary Street Parking Lot. It is expected that these two sites will be redeveloped by the City of Newport. One function of Plan 2004 is to put these two developments in the context of an urban plan for the entire center. The projects are excellent opportunities for Public-Private Partnerships (PPP's) to encourage private funds to capitalize projects that make a major contribution to the community.



GATEWAY CENTER REDEVELOPMENT

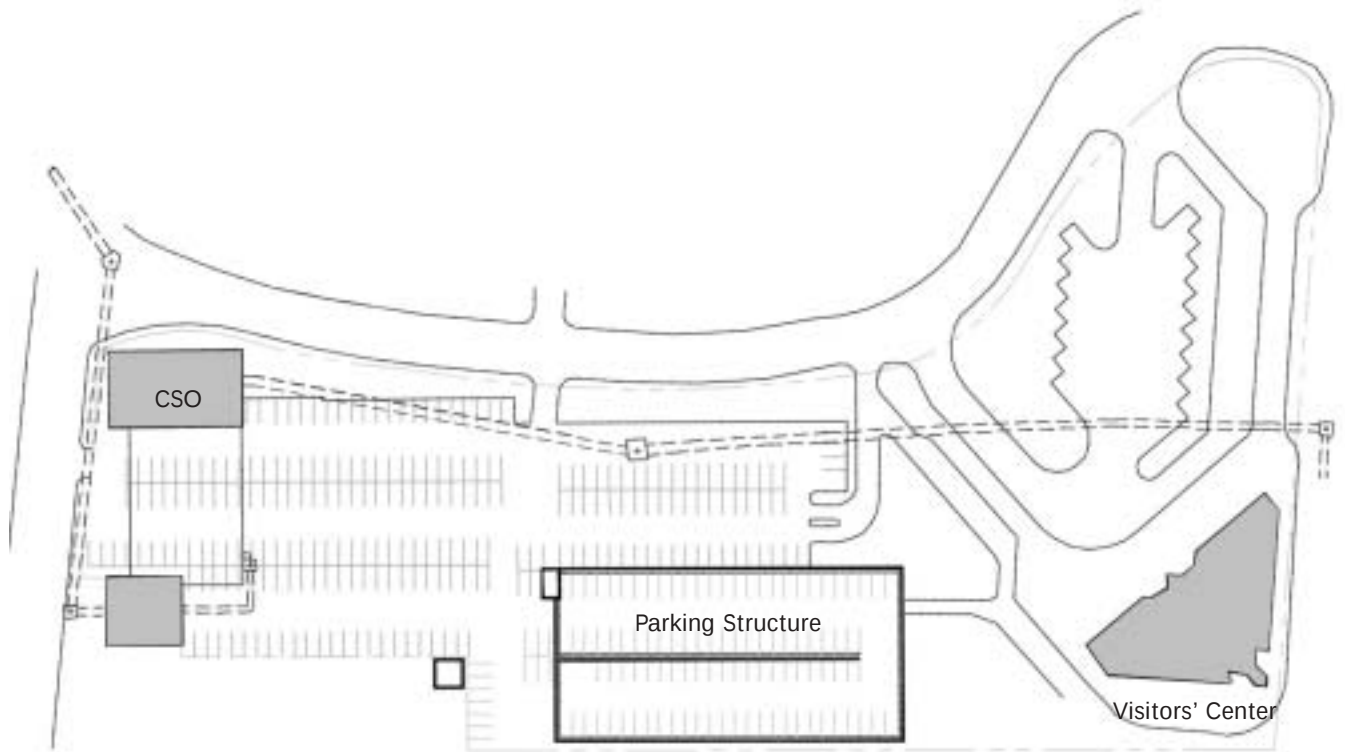
In 1999 Basile Baumann Prost & Associates, Inc., provided the city with the *Humphrey J. Donnelly III Transportation Visitor Center Site Highest and Best Use Analysis*. It provided specific recommendations for the intensified development of the Visitors' Center site. Two scenarios were documented, Scenario A with a 45-foot height limitation and Scenario B with a 65-foot height limitation. The consensus of the Plan 2004 Public Charrette was that the maximum height in the center should be the currently zoned 45 feet. Accordingly, Scenario B would be ruled out because of its proposed 65-foot-high structures.



Scenario A calls for the following development of the 357,192-square-foot site:

- 90,000 square feet hotel (120 beds)
- 49,000 square feet of retail space
- 13,000 square feet for a new Visitors' Center
- 2,000 square feet for a daycare center
- 26,000 square feet for the CSO (including 40 parking spaces)
- 7,800 square feet for 4 RIPTA buses, 10 tour and other buses

There are 450 existing parking spaces onsite plus 40 spaces on the CSO site. By current zoning the program uses above would require 316 spaces plus 10 spaces for short-term parking for the Visitors' Center. The study suggests that the existing parking structure could be expanded vertically by two levels to add 240 spaces; however, the cost of vertical expansion may be prohibitive.



Gateway Center Existing Plan

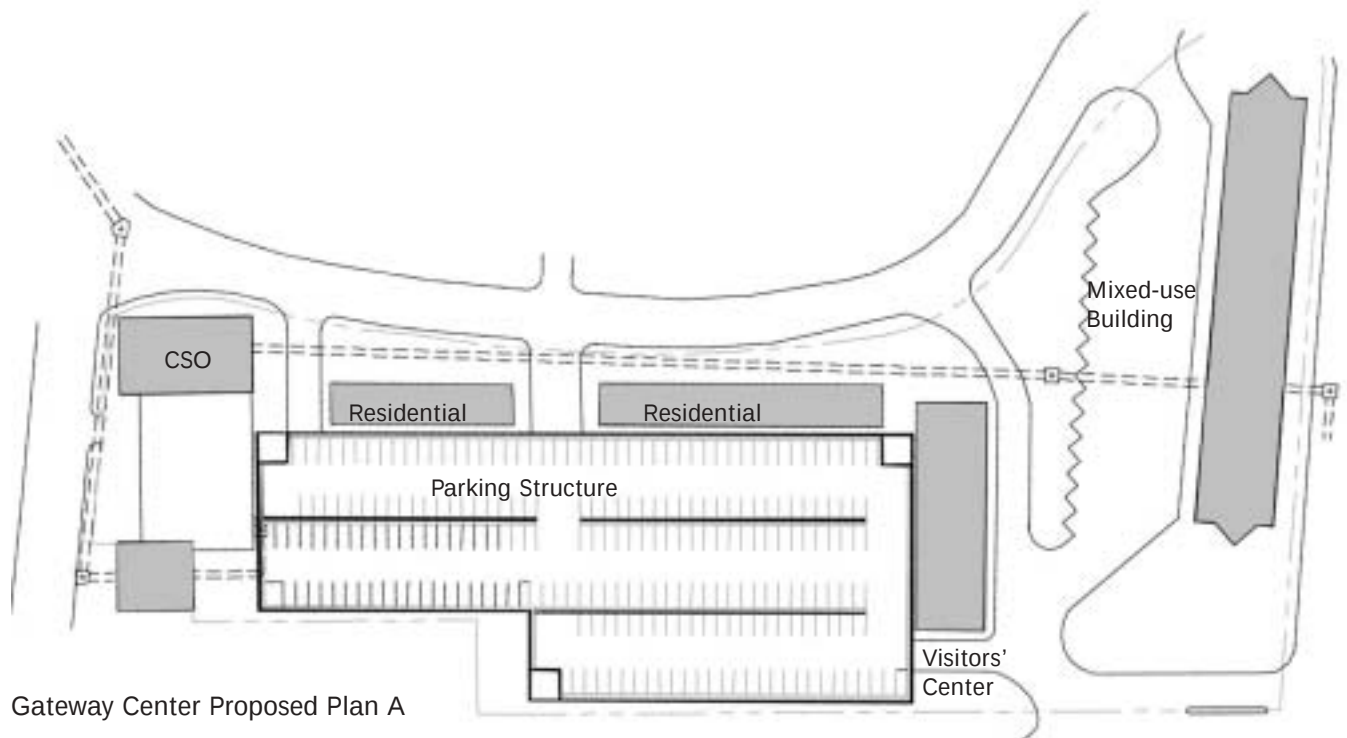
Plan 2004. Plan 2004 recognizes the importance of the Gateway Center site and its potential for flexible growth in meeting the city's goals and needs. It offers mixed-use models for detailed development of the next phase of design for the Gateway Center. In light of the community planning process, Plan 2004 proposes a sample program as follows:

- 75,000 square feet for a hotel (100 beds)
- 10,000 square feet of retail space
- 19,000 square feet of office space
- 20,000 square feet of housing
- 13,000 square feet for the Visitors' Center
- 2,000 square feet for a daycare center
- 26,000 square feet for the CSO (including 40 parking spaces)
- 7,800 square feet for four RIPTA, 10 tour and other buses

Further, Plan 2004 proposes that the existing parking structure would be replaced with a new four-level structure in two or more phases. The new structure would have a capacity of 850 cars. A fifth level could be added within the 45-foot height limit and add another 250 spaces, if needed. Phasing of construction in two or more stages would permit sizing the structure to the demand related to the development of the site and the demands for parking from offsite. The parking structure should be screened from the public ways by buildings, trees, and other landscaping.

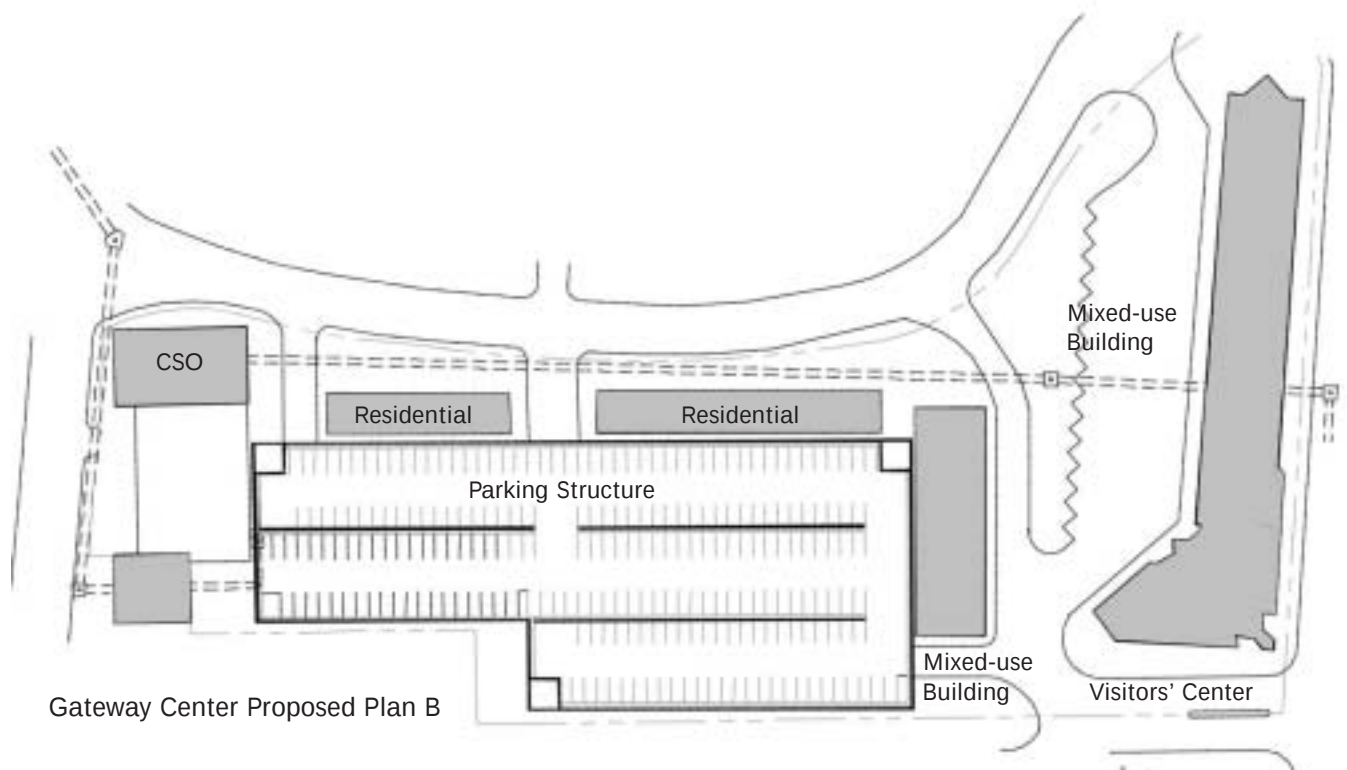
Conceptually, the proposed Gateway redevelopment has six components:

1. A four-story mixed-use building along America's Cup Avenue
2. The relocated RIPTA and bus facility west of the hotel
3. The new 850-car, four-level parking structure
4. The residential, retail and office buildings along the Gladys Carr Bolhouse Connector Road (ex-Goat Island Connector) and on the east side of the new parking structure
5. The existing CSO with 40 parking spaces
6. The Visitors' Center



Gateway Center Proposed Plan A

Alternative Locations for the Visitors' Center. The Humphrey J. Donnelly III Transportation Visitor Center, complete with major tent structures, was constructed 16 years ago as a monument to multimodal transportation. In reality, it has evolved as a highly visible bus station with an adjunct Visitors' Center. The emphasis was clearly on transportation. Today, the situation has reversed. The Visitors' Center should be given the highest visibility. Bus transportation functions would be better served if integrated into the fabric of the city.



In Plan 2004, the transportation center has been shifted to the west, allowing a significant structure to be built up to the street on America's Cup Avenue. Two locations have been identified for the Visitors' Center. The first is in a structure of its own that serves to screen the new parking structure from America's Cup. It would be highly visible to arriving visitors both from Marlborough Street and from the north. The second option is to leave the Visitors' Center in the existing structure and have that building subsumed by the new America's Cup building. This is clearly the more difficult solution architecturally and results in lower visibility for the Visitors' Center from the north. For the purposes of illustrating Plan 2004, the first location has been used in the graphics.

Other factors to consider include:

- **The 60 inch diameter sewer line running from America's Cup Avenue through the middle of the Gateway site to the CSO;**
- **Possibility for relocating Gladys Carr Bolhouse Connector ;**
- **Feasibility of relocating the Fire Department Headquarters to the Gateway site.**
- **All of these factors should be considered in the next more detailed stage of development.**

MARY STREET SITE DEVELOPMENT

The other public site for development in the study area is that of the existing Mary Street 120-car surface parking lot. Frederick P. Clark Associates prepared the *Parking Feasibility Study for Mary Street Garage* in 1985. The site has been under consideration for a parking structure since then. The Clark study recommended a two-level structure to accommodate 220 cars.

Current City of Newport data indicate that the Mary Street parking lot is the most heavily used public parking lot in the city year-round, producing the highest revenue per space. Its central location makes it desirable for shoppers, visitors, workers, and local residents.

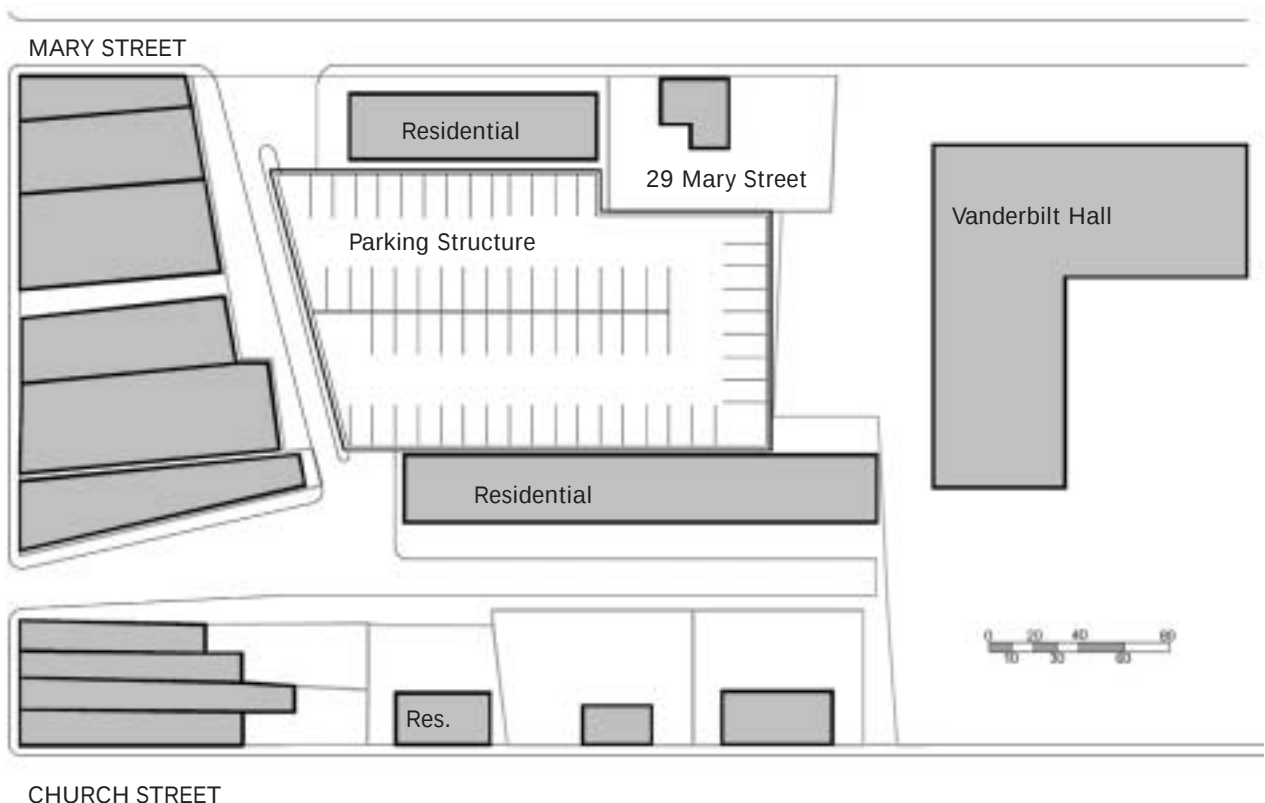


Aerial view of Mary Street site

Plan 2004. Plan 2004 calls for restoring the fabric of the Historic Hill by increasing the density of the area with three new residential structures and replacing the existing 120-car surface parking lot with a new parking structure in the center of the site. The new streetfront buildings will be residential and will be designed and scaled to complement the adjacent historic houses on Church Street and at 29 Mary Street. These buildings will screen the 240-car parking structure from view from the adjacent streets and from Queen Anne Square. The use of such buildings to conceal parking structures has been very successful in a number of cities including Charleston, South Carolina, where a major four-story parking structure is totally screened from King Street by new mercantile buildings.

Plan 2004 proposes the following land use for the Mary Street site:

- 72,000 square feet parking in structure (240 spaces) with appropriate façade and landscape treatment
- 9,600 square feet of residential space on the Mary Street frontage
- 2,780 square feet of residential space in Church Street infill structure.
- 12,600 square feet of residential space on Cotton Court



Proposed Mary Street Site Plan

Historic Houses. The relationship of the new parking structure to the Newport Restoration Foundation's houses at 29 Mary Street and on Church Street is sensitive. Though proposals to move 29 Mary Street were discussed, Plan 2004 proposes to leave the house where it is and build complementary residential liner buildings adjacent to it. As a result, the parking structure in the center of the site will be screened from public view from both Mary Street and Church Street.

Access/Egress. Access and egress for the new parking structure is from Thames Street via Mary Street and Cotton Court. The primary exit from the structure will be through Cotton Court to Thames Street and the new roundabout at Church Street and America's Cup Avenue. A new residential building will be constructed on the site of the existing access drive to Mary Street parking from Church Street. Cotton Court will be extended to the east as a mews for access to a new residential structure screening the south side of the parking structure.



Existing Mary Street



Proposed Mary Street with new residential buildings

ECONOMIC IMPACT

The redevelopment of the Gateway Center and the Mary Street parking lot will have a positive economic impact on city revenues in at least three areas:

1. revenues from land leases to private developers for the sites for development,
2. additional real-estate taxes on new properties (126,000 square feet of additional space at the Gateway Center and 24,980 square feet on the Mary Street site), and
3. new parking revenues from the expanded number of spaces in the parking structures.

Increased density of occupied space on private property will also enhance the real-estate tax base as well as generate more economic activity in the center.

4.2 PEDESTRIAN/ELECTRIC TROLLEY CIRCULATION

4.2 PEDESTRIAN/ELECTRIC TROLLEY CIRCULATION

One of the important goals the community expressed during the Public Charrette was making the center of Newport more walkable. The raw ingredients – history, significant buildings, boats, waterfront – for a lively and stimulating environment that attracts both residents and visitors are already there. The appeal can be substantially improved by providing traffic calming and safe crosswalks across heavily trafficked lanes and by creating a more attractive and functional streetscape. Section 4.4 of the Plan addresses the streetscape issues. This section focuses on creating new pathways that support the community goals.

Plan 2004 proposes four such pedestrian pathways:

- Harbor Walk
- History Walk
- Touro-Mary Street Walkway
- Mary Street-Perrotti Park Walkway

An important adjunct to encouraging people to park their cars and walk is providing localized electric trolley service on primary routes. Trolley service will allow walkers to go farther without worrying how they can get back if tired or laden.



Newly paved walk in King Park

NEWPORT HARBOR WALK

Public access to the waterfront is highly valued by the community as expressed in the Public Charrette. Within the Newport center study area, waterside access exists in the Point at the Gladys Carr Bolhouse Connector and Washington Street but is interrupted by the Newport Shipyard on Washington Street and then by the State Pier. Currently, though the State Pier is open to the public, there is no waterside path, and pedestrian use is not encouraged.

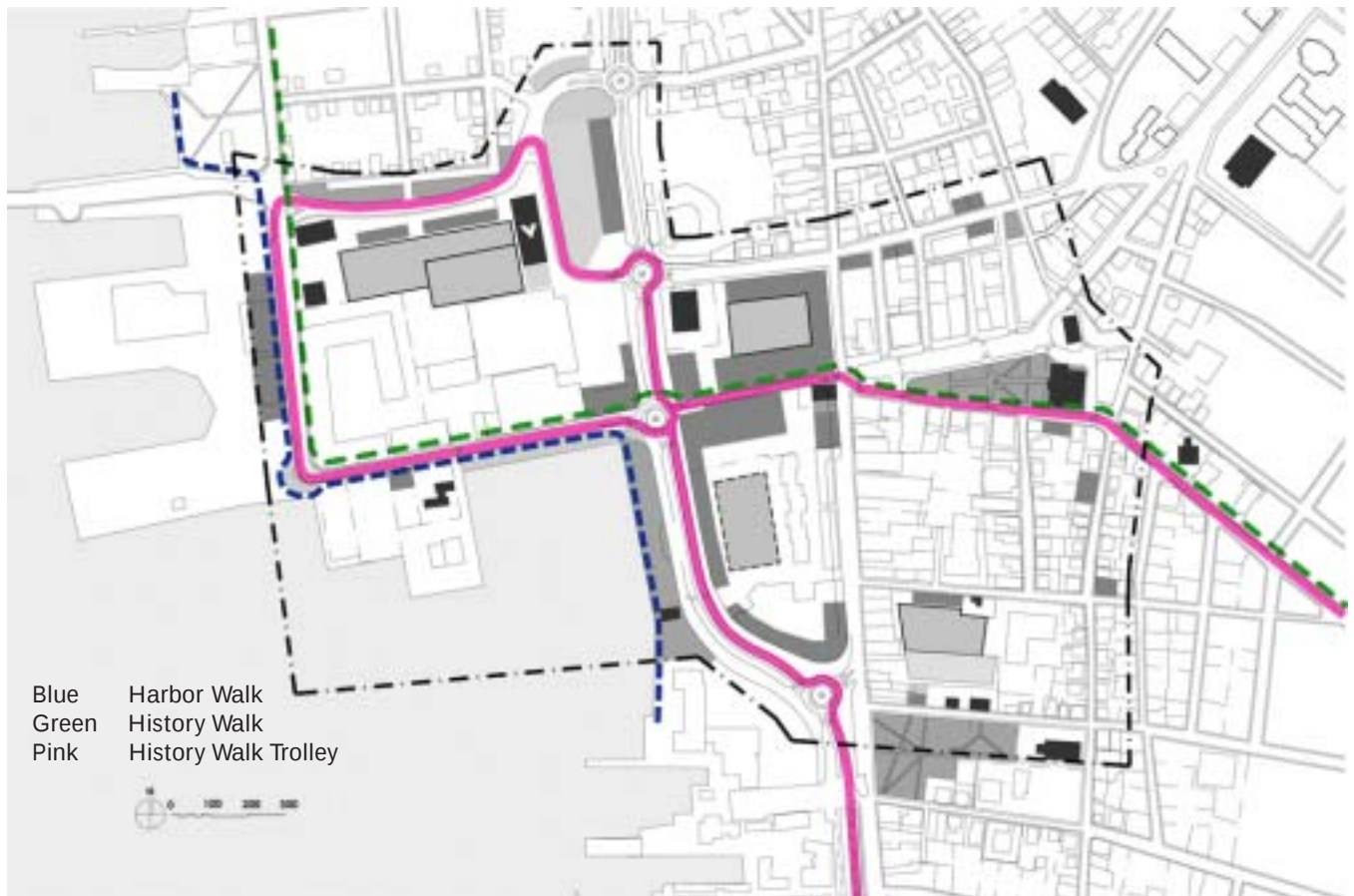
There is waterfront access at Washington Street and Long Wharf at the west end of The Inn on Long Wharf. It is discontinued on the south side

of the Inn on Long Wharf, but the city has been negotiating to close the gap in waterside access. The waterside walkway picks up again east of the Newport Yacht Club along Long Wharf and then south through Perrotti Park, where the Newport Harbor Hotel interrupts it.

Washington Street at Long Wharf
(left); Perrotti Park (right)



Plan 2004 proposes to designate formally the route from Gladys Carr Bolhouse Connector south on Washington Street to Long Wharf, then east to Perrotti Park at America's Cup and south through Perrotti Park as the



Plan of Newport walks and trolley route

Newport Harbor Walk. The route would be marked by pedestal storyboards (kiosks) that give pedestrians information about the historical and maritime significance of the area. Visitors to Newport arriving at the Newport Visitors' Center should be encouraged to use both the Harbor Walk and the Newport History Walk.

Sculpture in Perrotti Park (left); walkway on Long Wharf West (right)



NEWPORT HISTORY WALK

Plan 2004 proposes to designate as the Newport History Walk a route starting at the Hunter House on Washington Street, proceeding south to Long Wharf and east on Long Wharf to Washington Square. From the Gladys Carr Bolhouse Connector to America's Cup Avenue at Long Wharf, the History Walk would coincide with the Harbor Walk. The pedestal storyboards (kiosks) would focus on both history and significant maritime subjects.

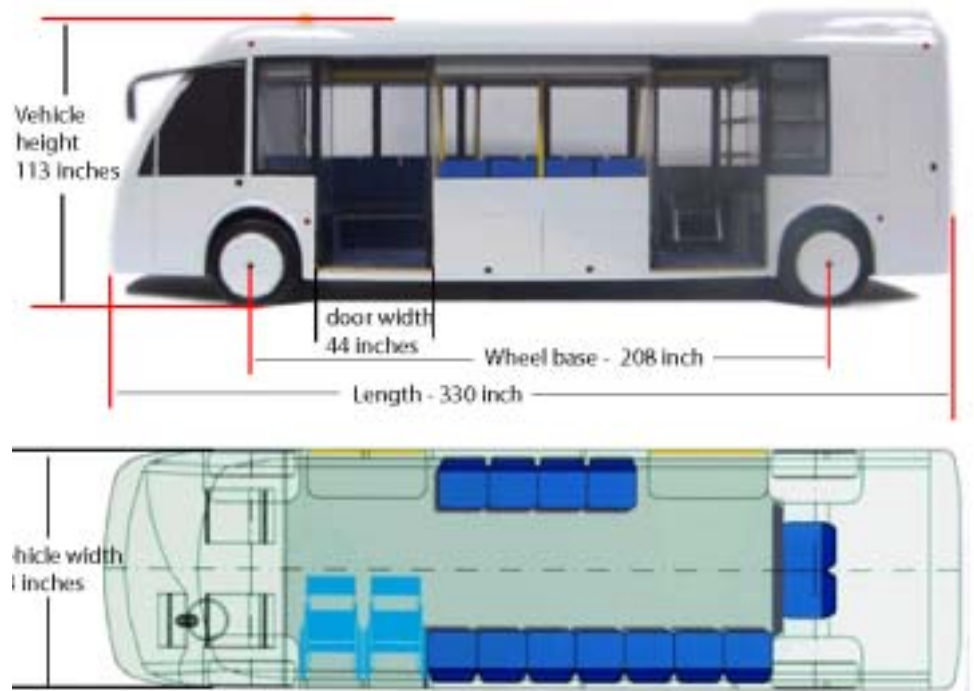
From Washington Square, the History Walk would proceed up Touro Street to Bellevue Avenue and then to Memorial Boulevard. The intent is to highlight the history of the city and put its landmarks into context.

ELECTRIC TROLLEY – HISTORY WALK SHUTTLE

In addition, Plan 2004 proposes an electric minishuttle trolley to encourage pedestrian circulation in the center by visitors, workers, and residents and to discourage drive-park-drive-park usage patterns. The History Walk Shuttle is proposed to supplement pedestrian movement from the Visitors' Center to Washington Square to Bellevue Avenue at Memorial Boulevard and back.

Plan 2004 calls for the implementation of the History Walk Shuttle loop from the Visitors' Center to Washington Street to Long Wharf east through the existing pedestrian mall to Washington Square, up Touro Street to

Bellevue Avenue and Memorial Boulevard, then down Memorial Boulevard to Thames Street, north on Thames Street to America's Cup Avenue back to the Visitors' Center. This electric trolley should have a capacity of 16 to 20 passengers and run every 10 minutes in summer and every 15 minutes during the remainder of the year. The intent of the Harbor Walk, the History Walk, and the electric trolley is to facilitate movement of visitors and residents from the Gateway parking structure to historic Long Wharf to Washington Square and up to Bellevue past buildings important to Newport's history.



Electric Trolley

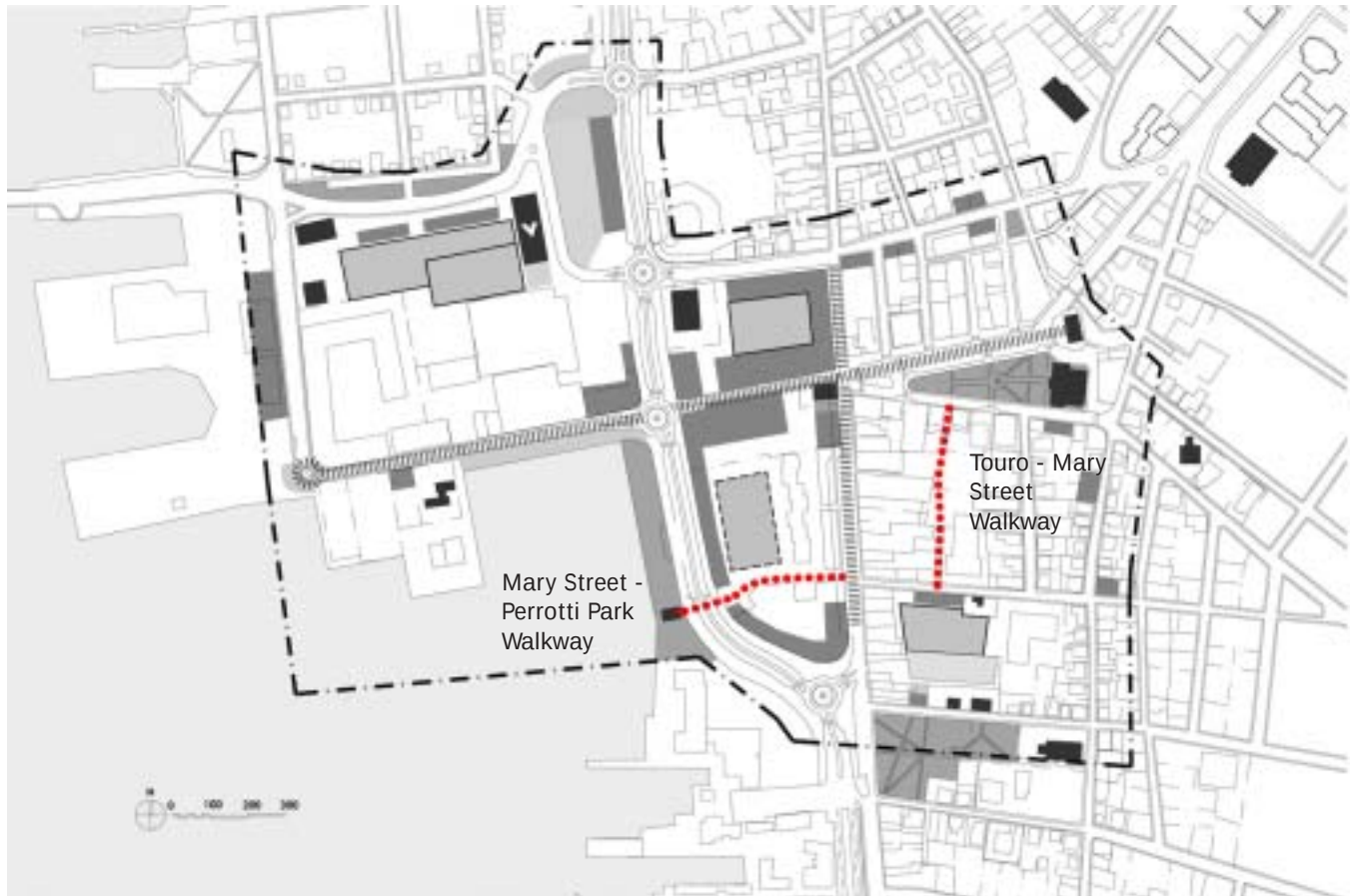
TOURO - MARY STREET WALKWAY

The construction of the Mary Street parking structure will provide parking for increased activity in Washington Square. A safe, well-lighted pedes-

Walkway from Touro Street (left);
Walkway from Mary Street (right)



trian walkway connecting Washington Square and Mary Street would enhance the use of the Mary Street structure by people going to Washington Square.



MARY STREET - PERROTTI PARK WALKWAY

The final important walkway to be implemented is the Mary Street-Perrotti Park Walkway. Historically, Mary Street connected with the water via the wharves at Thames Street. This link was broken by the landfill and

Brick Market Place from America's Cup Avenue (left); Perrotti Park from Brick Market Place



construction of the Brick Market Place and America's Cup Avenue. Currently, there is a walkway through the Brick Market Place parking lot to America's Cup Avenue, connecting to the Newport Harbor Hotel, but there is no crosswalk on America's Cup Avenue. Pedestrians crossing there do so at considerable peril.



Brick Market Place organ grinder

Plan 2004 calls for creating a view easement from the foot of Mary Street to the harbor. In conjunction with this, the current walkway needs to be realigned through the Brick Market Place parking lot to connect with America's Cup opposite the Harbormaster's Quarters in Perrotti Park. At America's Cup, a traffic-calming raised crosswalk should be installed across the roadway to provide safe crossing for the large number of pedestrians who want access between the harbor and Mary Street. Completing this important link will require the cooperation of the owners of Brick Market Place as well as the Rhode Island Department of Transportation.



View to Harbormaster's Quarters from Brick Market Place

4.3 VEHICULAR CIRCULATION, TRANSIT, PARKING

4.3 VEHICULAR CIRCULATION, TRANSIT, PARKING

TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION

HISTORY

Access and movement have been central issues to Newporters since the city's founding in 1639. For the first 300 years, access to Aquidneck Island was largely by boat, and circulation on island was on foot or, until the early 20th century, reliant on horses. (A bridge existed at Tiverton after 1794.) The patterns of circulation were largely to and from the island's access points. In Newport, these were the wharves where people and goods were received and shipped.

Cars and bridges. The two events that had the greatest impact on movement and circulation pattern on Aquidneck Island were:

1. the introduction of street railways late in the 19th century followed by automobiles in the early 1900's, and
2. the construction of bridges, replacing ferry access.

Just as the automobile supplanted the horse, so it also increased pressure for bridges.

In spite of the increase in population of Newport from 10,000 in 1853 to 37,564 in 1950, the street pattern in the center did not change dramatically. The change was in volume.

The Pell Bridge and the Navy Exodus. Two events in the 1960's and 70's had a major impact on traffic patterns in the center of Newport. First, the completion of the Pell Bridge in 1969 meant that the Jamestown Ferry, which had regularly dumped boatloads of cars at Ferry Landing generating traffic stasis, was no longer the primary access from the west. (The Fall River Line had ceased operation in the 30's, unable to compete with the automobile.) Second, the exodus of an important portion of U.S. Navy operations in 1973-74 noticeably reduced military traffic.



America's Cup Avenue. The redevelopment of the center of Newport (1965-1985) brought a dramatic alteration in the street patterns: almost all the buildings west of Thames Street in the center were razed, and landfill permitted a major new north-south route west of Thames Street, America's Cup Avenue, which leads from Farewell Street to Memorial Boulevard. (Memorial Boulevard as we know it did not extend fully down to the waterfront until 1969, when the section west from Bellevue Avenue

known as Levin Street was incorporated into the Old Bath Road that led to Easton's Beach; the Levin Street stretch was widened to link at a right angle with the new America's Cup Avenue.)

Population Fluctuation. Though Newport's population after the departure of much of the naval fleet declined to 26,000 (in 2000) from a war-time peak of 62,000, America's Cup Avenue, a four-lane highway through Newport Center, did not solve the traffic problems. Tourist traffic had replaced military traffic, and prosperity fed an exponential growth in the number of vehicles on the road. Where once visitors might have reached Newport by train or boat, the majority now come in their own cars.

"Event Culture." Festivals and major events in the summer have become major features on the calendar. These gatherings can cause traffic to come to a near standstill, as happened on July 4, 2004, when an estimated 200,000 visitors descended on the city to share the annual fireworks with the newly launched *Queen Mary II*. Such problems can be ameliorated by the use of remote interceptor parking and shuttle service as was done during the Tall Ships Festival in mid-July, 2004, but even that solution impinged on homeowners in the Point.

STUDIES AND PLANS ON THE TABLE

The 1997 Newport Harborfront Plan sponsored by the Foundation For Newport proposed to reduce traffic in the center significantly by intercepting tourist traffic at the Pell Bridge off-ramps and guiding visitors to major parking structures, where they would transfer to trolleys and water taxis to be carried to their Newport destinations.

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) has not acted on the plan to intercept visitors in the North End of Newport. They are currently in the process of redesigning the eastern approaches to the Pell Bridge, and, though major redevelopment and parking structures are contemplated, the interception of traffic at a new North End Visitors' Center is not part of the planning. An additional lane of traffic from Connell Highway to America's Cup Avenue, parallel to the existing train tracks, is envisioned to bring traffic from the Pell Bridge to the existing Visitors' Center.

In the past seven years, two traffic studies have been undertaken for the City of Newport. They are "Recommended Transportation Improvement" by Cambridge Systematics, Inc. (CSI), in September, 1997, and "Conceptual Circulation Study," prepared by Parsons Brinkerhoff Quade and

Douglas (PB), dated August 4, 2000. The focus of both was an area broader than this study's, but both included recommendations for traffic modifications in the center.

The PB study identified two intersections as having the most serious problems: Spring Street at Memorial Boulevard and America's Cup Avenue at Thames Street/Memorial Boulevard. These intersections are outside the purview of this study but are part of the central circulation spine of Newport: Farewell/America's Cup/Memorial, from the Pell Bridge to Easton's Beach.

In its analysis of traffic in Newport, CSI used 1993 RIDOT traffic counts on the major intersections on the Farewell Street/America's Cup/Memorial Boulevard spine from Van Zandt Street to Spring Street. Unfortunately, it did not include key intersections in the current project area, including (1) Broadway and Marlborough, (2) Marlborough and Thames, (3) Broadway/Touro and Thames in Washington Square, and (4) Touro and Spring streets.

PLAN 2004

Plan 2004 centers on issues that were not strongly emphasized in the previous studies, namely, making the center more walkable and livable for visitors and residents. It focuses on improvements in the center including:

- reducing traffic by getting people out of their cars and onto their feet;
- intercepting auto traffic at the Visitors' Center parking structure in order to encourage visitors to tour Newport on foot or by public transit;
- restoring the urban fabric and increasing the density of construction to encourage more people to live and work in the center;
- encouraging visitors and residents to discover the heart of colonial Newport in the Washington Square area on foot rather than steering them toward the currently popular venues along the harbor and Lower Thames Street;
- providing improved accessible parking for residents and visitors;
- diverting extraneous traffic from Washington Square to reduce traffic backups at Thames Street;
- slowing and calming traffic on America's Cup Avenue to provide safer pedestrian crossings and wider sidewalks and to allow bicycle lanes.



America's Cup at Gladys Carr Bolhouse Connector - Before



And after

Visitor Access. Visitors in automobiles arrive in Newport primarily from the Pell Bridge or on Broadway (Route 114). Those who use the Pell Bridge arrive in the center via Farewell Street and America's Cup Avenue. With clearer signage and building visibility and identification, it should be possible to capture more of these visitors at the existing Visitors' Center.

Most of those coming via Broadway (Route 114) currently drive into Washington Square not knowing where they are going. They frequently get stuck in traffic at Thames and Touro streets. A concerted effort needs to be made to direct this traffic to the Visitors' Center, where tourists can either park or obtain a map and directions.



Primary routes to Visitors' Center



Existing intersection of Broadway and Marlborough Street



Proposed diverter island at Broadway and Marlborough Street

Traffic Diversion at Marlborough Street. The most effective way to re-channel Route 114 traffic to the Visitors' Center is to redesign the intersection of Broadway and Marlborough Street. The installation of a traffic island in the center of the intersection and the elimination of angled parking spaces on Broadway east of the intersection, which currently block visibility, would generate a natural path down Marlborough Street to America's Cup Avenue and the Visitors' Center.

Renaming and Re-signing the Visitors' Center. Installing billboard-scale signs for the Newport Visitors' Center and the Newport Visitors' Center Parking would eliminate some of the current confusion about access and location. Short-term parking should be provided for those who do not want to commit to a longer term.



New signage at Visitors' Center

Circulation from the Visitors' Center. A total of 850,443 visitors used the Visitors' Center in 2003, up from 582,387 in 1997 and down from a peak of 926,833 in 2000. To encourage the current taste for historical tourism, the city needs to facilitate the movement of these visitors toward Washington Square. Many of them currently exit the Visitors' Center on foot and move south on America's Cup past Long Wharf, missing Washington Square altogether.

Moving nearly 1,000,000 people through the Visitors' Center to the leading destinations in central Newport is a challenge. The CSI study documented 647 pedestrians crossing West Marlborough Street on America's Cup Avenue between the Visitors' (Gateway) Center and the Marriott Hotel in the two-hour period from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, July 14, 1996. The challenge is to draw a significant number of these people safely across America's Cup Avenue at Long Wharf so they can visit the Brick Market and the Colony House in Washington Square and then move up Touro Street to Bellevue Avenue.

The key ingredients to redirecting traffic to Washington Square are:

3. safe pedestrian crossings,
4. wider and more pleasant sidewalks, and
5. reconfiguring Long Wharf to make it a more appealing thoroughfare.



Crossing America's Cup at the
Visitors' Center

America's Cup Changes. America's Cup Avenue has much more capacity and more and wider lanes than it needs. At the crucial intersection in front of the Visitors' Center it has *seven* travel lanes. The number of lanes can be reduced and the lanes can be narrowed to slow traffic. At the same time, the introduction of roundabouts on America's Cup at:

1. Bridge Street (Gladys Carr Bolhouse Connector Road),
2. Marlborough Street,
3. Long Wharf, and
4. Church/Thames Street

will eliminate the stop-start traffic that characterizes the current flow.

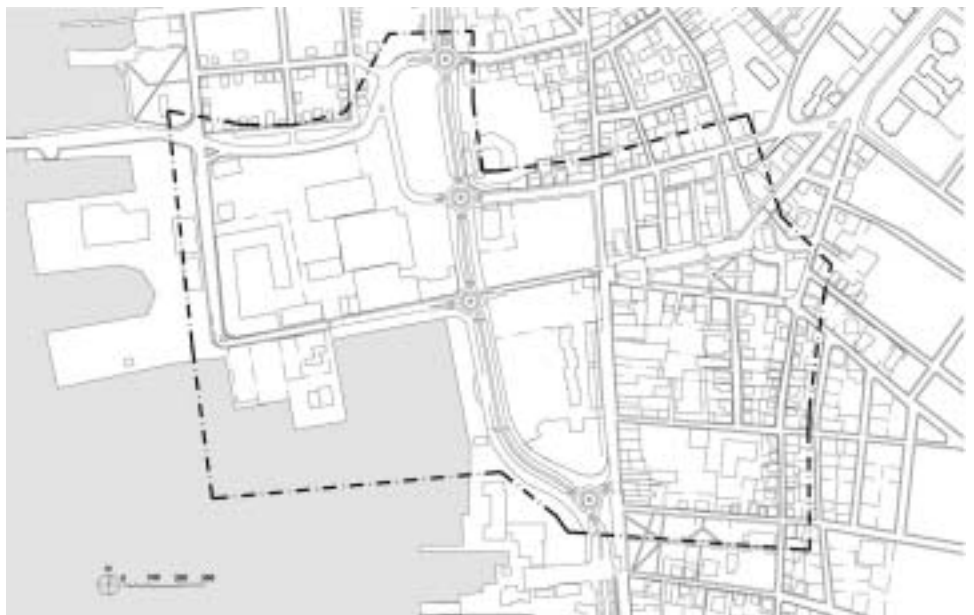
Road Dieting. When more overly wide lanes of traffic are provided than are actually required by traffic volume, several negative side effects result:

- Excess capacity encourages vehicles to travel faster than the designed (or desired) speed, and
- the ability of pedestrians to cross safely is greatly impeded.

The roadway becomes a hostile place. This is precisely the condition that currently exists along America's Cup Avenue.



Existing street configuration



Proposed street configuration

To counteract these problems, thoroughfares can undergo “road dieting,” removing excess capacity. For roads that carry up to 20,000+ vehicles per day, only two travel lanes are required. Narrowing the lanes to 10 feet (where turning is not required) creates a roadway on which drivers will travel more slowly and safely. Proper landscaping can also help to calm traffic.

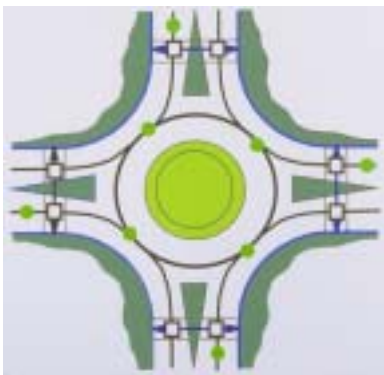
Roundabouts. Well designed roundabouts can both

- increase traffic throughput while reducing speed and
- provide safe pedestrian crossings.

Though this seems counterinstinctive, it has been demonstrated widely in other parts of the United States as well as in the Europe and Australia. Rhode Island's first roundabout was built last year on Route 44 in North Providence.

Unlike “rotaries” (like the one at Connell Highway in Newport), “roundabouts” are smaller, scaled to reduce traffic speed. This in turn allows pedestrians to cross more safely, easily, and quickly. The advantages of roundabouts over signalized intersections include:

- improved safety for pedestrians,
- reduced serious vehicular accidents, and
- improved appearance.



Typical single-lane roundabout

Experiences in other communities have proven that roundabouts significantly calm traffic, reduce wait times, and increase volumes through a given intersection.

Carefully designed roundabouts “throat down” the traffic and provide for safe pedestrian crossings of one lane of traffic at a time. The throughput of the roundabouts will increase because the traffic never comes to a total stop but instead slows appropriately at intersections. The safety record for both pedestrians and vehicles is substantially better for roundabouts than it is for signalized intersections. A not-to-be-underestimated bonus is fuel conservation.

Transit. In addition to the History Walk Trolley, the city should work with RIDOT and RIPTA to investigate a dedicated trolley lane from the Gateway Center to Easton's Beach along America's Cup Avenue and Memorial Boulevard. Historically, a similar route was used to connect the steamship landing at the end of Long Wharf with Easton's Beach. Along with the History Walk trolley, many of the important destinations in the center of Newport would be served.

Bicycle Lanes. As part of the study to reconfigure America's Cup Avenue, bicycle lanes should be designed for safety and accessibility.

A New RIDOT/City of Newport Traffic Plan. The Plan 2004 changes proposed above cannot be implemented in isolation from the rest of the city. An overall traffic plan must be developed that deals with the traffic from the North End to Easton's Beach.

As part of the development of such a RIDOT/Newport citywide detailed traffic plan, the design team should study the feasibility of combining road dieting, roundabouts, and transit lanes. The design team should include experts on road dieting, transit, and roundabout design.



Plan 2004 traffic circulation

Long Wharf. Both of the recent traffic studies recommended opening up Long Wharf to one-way vehicular traffic from Washington Square westward to America's Cup Avenue. The studies in question saw this as providing an escape valve for motorists who had come down Broadway into Washington Square without knowing where they were going. The recommendation of this study is that as much vehicular traffic as possible approaching from the east be directed away from Washington Square



Long Wharf East

down Marlborough Street to the Visitors' (Gateway) Center, where motorists can be separated from their cars.

Plan 2004 does not recommend opening Long Wharf to vehicular traffic. The exception to this is to provide a right-of-way for an electric trolley to move from west to east on the route (the History Walk Trolley, described earlier in Section 4.2). Accordingly, Long Wharf should be engineered to permit one lane of trolley and emergency-vehicle traffic.

Traffic Counts. We recommend that current traffic counts be taken before the end of August, 2004, at Marlborough Street, Broadway, Thames Street, and America's Cup Avenue to provide a peak baseline for evaluating the effectiveness of diverting traffic from Broadway onto Marlborough Street to the Visitors' Center parking structure. An interim traffic island could be installed at Marlborough and Broadway in the spring of 2005. The 2005 volumes could then be compared to the 2004 volumes to quantify the effectiveness of the diversion.



Touro Street at Spring Street

Spring Street-Touro Street Intersection. One of the more perplexing intersections in the study area is the intersection of Touro and Spring streets. The limiting factor to major reconfiguration and improvement is the rights-of-way and the adjacent private property. The key to improving this intersection is obtaining additional area, preferably the entire service station site. This would permit a roundabout and a memorial marking the historic spring at this site. Because of concerns, the issue has been referred to the City Transportation Engineer to study possible near-term improvements.

In summary, Plan 2004 calls for the following modifications in traffic and circulation in the study area:

- Introduction of a traffic island at Marlborough Street and Broadway to divert the bulk of the traffic down Marlborough Street to America's Cup Avenue, the Visitors' Center, and the Center's parking structure.
- Addition of good signage, placed well east on Broadway, directing visitors to this route.
- Reconfiguration of America's Cup Avenue by reducing the number of lanes and introducing roundabouts at Bridge Street, Marlborough Street, Long Wharf, and Church Street.

- Repaving of Long Wharf from Washington Street to Thames Street as a major historic spine, using distinctive paving to signal that visitors have arrived in a significant place.
- Rebuilding Long Wharf from America's Cup Avenue to Thames Street to accommodate both pedestrian and vehicular traffic, providing for emergency-vehicle use and a one-way eastbound electric trolley.
- Repaving of Thames Street from Marlborough Street to Washington Square in granite sets to match the paving on Thames Street south of Touro Street.
- Widening the sidewalk on the east side of Thames Street from Touro to Church streets by narrowing the travel lane.

The attached plans show existing circulation in the center of Newport and proposed modifications. The primary changes are road dieting on America's Cup Avenue and introducing roundabouts in four locations. No modifications to the direction of traffic are proposed. Long Wharf East between America's Cup and Thames will be primarily pedestrian; however, electric trolleys will use the right-of-way as part of the effort to move people from the Visitors' Center to Washington Square.

PARKING

Surface parking in the study area occupies over eight acres. This provides 820 off-street spaces and approximately 175 on-street metered spaces. In order to achieve land-use goals of increasing density of non-parking uses, improving streetscapes with liner buildings, and reducing the land area committed to parking, parking structures will have to replace surface parking lots, and the total number of spaces in the center will need to increase significantly .

Parsons Brinkerhoff Quade and Douglas (PB) studied the existing parking in detail in the *Comprehensive Parking Plan* dated August 4, 2000. The study focused on the management of parking and ways of increasing utilization of city-owned spaces. We concur with the recommendations of the PB study, in particular documenting citywide resources on GIS, getting parking information out to residents and visitors via the Internet and other means, and having citywide parking coordinated and managed by a single agency.

In addition to the PB recommendations, Plan 2004 provides additional structured parking as well as on-street metered parking while reducing the number of surface parking lots fronting city-center streets.



Aerial view of Mary Street parking lot

Plan 2004 for parking provides for increasing both structured and metered parking:

- Constructing a new three-level parking structure on the Mary Street site, which will increase the capacity from 120 spaces to 240 spaces.
- Replacing the existing Visitors' (Gateway) Center parking structure with a new five-level structure to provide parking for up to 1,100 cars on that site (rather than the existing 450 spaces). The replacement should be phased to respond to increasing demand related to development and redevelopment in the area.
- Encouraging the construction of a 300-space parking structure on privately-owned Long Wharf North in conjunction with new development of mixed-use buildings on Marlborough and Thames streets. This would supplant 120 existing surface spaces.
- Adding angled metered spaces on Washington Street between the Gladys Carr Bolhouse Connector Road and Long Wharf.

- Shifting the six parallel spaces on Marlborough Street between Thames Street and America's Cup Avenue from the north side of the street to the south to improve traffic flow and access to the Visitors' Center.



Aerial view of Gateway Center

In addition, PB proposed an integrated parking shuttle and a circulator bus system with two shuttle routes, the 13-mile Preservation Shuttle and the 15-mile Ocean Drive Loop. Plan 2004 supports these shuttle routes and proposes that HOV lanes for transit vehicles be considered on America's Cup Avenue and Memorial Boulevard to speed service. This should be done in conjunction with the detailed review and redesign of the Farewell Street/America's Cup Avenue/Memorial Boulevard route.

4.4 STREETScape, SIGNAGE, LIGHTING



Spring Street

4.4 STREETScape, SIGNAGE, LIGHTING

Plan 2004 has the dual goal of creating more walkable and lively streets and of reinforcing the unique historical and architectural continuum of Newport. Unfriendly streetscapes are one impediment to achieving these goals.

In spite of utility poles and narrow sidewalks, Spring Street in the center comes close to livability in a historic context. On the other hand, Marlborough Street fails in this respect, given the utility poles, sidewalks, and high percentage of street-front surface parking.



Marlborough Street

What makes for “pedestrian appeal,” the hard-to-define something that will get people out of their cars with confidence?

- consistent **sidewalk width**, adequate for two people to walk abreast, pushing strollers, with room for an oncoming pedestrian to pass them. (Utility poles should be limited; where necessary, the sidewalk width should be in addition to them.)
- reasonably **smooth paving**.
- **shade** (from trees, awnings, umbrellas, etc.)
- **benches** on which to pause
- informal places to purchase **refreshments**
- **trash** cans (decent looking and regularly emptied)
- frequent, clean-looking (and genuinely clean), secure public **restrooms** with diaper changing facilities; most if not all of these should be handicapped-accessible
- safe street **crossings** (these need to *feel* safe)
- **curb ramps** for strollers and wheelchairs
- good street **lighting** to permit evening use
- easy-to-read, widely available **street maps** (scaled for the myopic as retirees are serious historical tourists; if advertising is included, it should not distract from the clarity)
- **something at which to look:**
 - **points of interest**, monuments, etc., highlighted by “view corridors,” e.g., the Colony House; natural views, e.g., the harbor
 - **storyboards/kiosks/plaques** that describe and explain such points of interest (with anecdote), and graphically evoke historical events, etc.
 - **street activity** (“people-watching” – fun, but also promotes security)

- possible street **entertainment** (jugglers, musicians, etc.)
- **window-shopping** (and, for most tourists, “*authentic* shopping opportunities”)
- **shops illuminated** at nightfall; promoting safety but also attracting customers and making the area look more vital;
- street-front **restaurants** and sidewalk cafés with displayed menus to peruse against later meals
- **few** – if any – “**boring patches**,” such as seas of surface-parked cars, overlarge buildings with bland, monolithic façades that offer no commercial, historical, or architectural interest
- the knowledge that should the pedestrian walk to the point of exhaustion, the infant start mewling, or the weather turn foul, a (stroller-accessible) **bus or trolley** will come along within minutes to take his or her weary body (and his or her “stuff”) back to the womb-car

The architectural characteristics of the Newport center streetscape are addressed in the next section (4.5). The other elements of the streetscape are addressed in this section, which focuses on what makes a successful, walkable street.

The chart below describes existing characteristics of the principal streets in the center. All could be improved to varying degrees.

Existing Streetscapes

Principal Streets in Center	Utility Poles	Cobra Head Lights	Historic Lights	Street Trees	Parking Lots	Parking Meters
Marlborough Street	Yes	Yes	No	No	5	No
Spring Street - Touro North	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	2	No
Spring Street - Touro South	Yes	Yes	Gas	No	2	No
Broadway - Stone Street East	Yes	Yes	Gas	Yes	0	No
Broadway - Stone Street West	No	No	Gas/Elec	Yes	0	No
Clarke Street	No	No	Gas	Yes	2	No
Mary Street	No	Yes	Gas/Elec	Yes	4	No
Church Street	Yes	Yes	No	No	1	No
Touro Street	No	No	Gas/Elec	Yes	1	Yes
Thames Street	No	Yes	Gas	Yes/No	3	Yes
America's Cup Avenue	No	Yes	No	Yes/No	5	No
Gladys Carr Bolhouse	No	Yes	No	No	2	No
Washington Street	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	3	Yes
Long Wharf West	No	No	No	Yes/No	2	Yes

STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS

Multiple elements of the streetscape make a city walkable and livable. They include:

SIDEWALKS

A key element of walkability is good sidewalks. Sidewalks in the center of Newport are mostly deficient in some respect. A comprehensive and detailed survey needs to be made to develop a long-term plan to improve the sidewalks. They need to be level, accessible, safe, and wide enough for people to pass comfortably. Given zero setbacks and narrow streets, it will not be possible to achieve ideal standards in many places, but there is room for improvement.



PUBLIC (CIVIC) SIGNAGE

The City of Newport has adopted a handsome system of public signage that is easy to distinguish from commercial signage (the navy-blue banner-like signs with white Roman lettering). This program should be further applied in the center to identify important locations and, in doing so, enhance the “branding” of the city. The size, scale of lettering, and location of signs need careful consideration to enhance readability. This public signage program should be expanded to include area street maps for pedestrians, located conveniently, preferably with benches or other seating nearby.



COMMERCIAL SIGNAGE

In addition to Newport’s current signage standards, one form of commercial sign should be encouraged: the bracketed sign extending at right angles from the building above the entrance level. Successful examples of this signage are in evidence in the center, in particular on Spring Street. This system works particularly well for the pedestrian as well as the motorist and should be more broadly adopted. Its scale is compatible with the scale in the center.



PLAQUES, STORYBOARDS, AND HISTORICAL INFORMATION KIOSKS

The center of Newport currently has a number of freestanding plaques (storyboards or kiosks) displaying directional maps and historic information. The system should be standardized and expanded along both the Harbor Walk and the History Walk, utilizing the same graphics, typeface, and color scheme as the public (civic) signage in order to reinforce branding.

STREET TREES

Trees are a very important element of the Newport environment. The colonial houses set on narrow sidewalks with no setbacks afford little opportunity for rows of street trees. On Spring Street and Marlborough Street, it will be more feasible to have the occasional specimen tree between buildings than a continuous row on each side of the street. On the other hand, street trees should be planted along Long Wharf, Washington Street, and the reconfigured America's Cup Avenue.

Newport's trademark beech trees should be favored when planting new specimen trees. In addition, the existing specimen trees in Washington Square and Liberty Square should be nurtured and protected. Both locations are candidates for subtle night lighting.



Liberty Square

LANDSCAPING

A detailed landscape plan should be developed for the center. The guiding principles should be to use plant material that is appropriate to the micro-climate near the water and is relevant to Newport botanically and historically. For example, blue hydrangeas thrive in Newport and look exceedingly well over a long season, while requiring minimal care. Such “local” favorites should be preferred over the more hackneyed “municipal” plantings, as the use of identifiably local planting promotes branding.



Merchants should be encouraged to plant and maintain flowerboxes on buildings where they are appropriate (perhaps by an annual competition). On many of the streetscapes, it may be better to have the plant materials in pots rather than in the ground. Consideration should also be given to having landscaping of interest through the cold months.

STREET FURNITURE



In order to induce people to walk, there need to be comfortable public places to sit. Plan 2004 proposes benches and seating along Long Wharf and in any other locations of interest where space permits. The design of the benches as well as trash containers and other items of street furniture should be simple and easy to maintain.

STATUES/POOLS FOUNTAINS



Newport has an abundance of statues, commemorative plaques, and memorials. The proposed roundabouts on America's Cup Avenue provide an ideal setting for important sculptures that signal to passersby that this is an important place. An alternate location for the statue of Oliver Hazard Perry, who typifies the success of the U.S. Navy, might be in the roundabout at the intersection of Long Wharf and America's Cup Avenue. Likewise, moving the statue of George Washington from the Redwood Library to Washington Square would seem appropriate.

New sculptures, pools, and fountains may be commissioned to celebrate those who have contributed especially to the Newport's history or environment, for example, Doris Duke. The Washington Square Commission is arranging for a replica of the horse trough that stood in Washington Square in the early 1800's. Plan 2004 does not propose specific locations for important new features but suggests that decisions should be made with broad community participation. Design competitions, with entries solicited nationwide, might be held for new works. Plan 2004 does propose a series of pools and fountains in the pedestrian zones of Long Wharf to reinforce the ties to the water.

GENERAL LIGHTING

Street lighting in the center of Newport is primarily from cobra-head fixtures on their own standards or mounted on utility poles. A number of streets have a combination of cobra-head fixtures and historic gas fixtures (see chart), and Washington Square has a combination of historic gas and electric fixtures. A new fixture should be selected to replace the cobra-



head fixtures. On historic streets – Marlborough, Thames, Spring, and Mary – the general illumination should be from historic fixtures like those in Washington Square. On Long Wharf, Plan 2004 proposes a distinctive standard fixture to demarcate the historic wharf. The fixture recommended has been used successfully at Fort Adams

BUILDING LIGHTING

One dramatic way of focusing attention on the important historic structures is to light them carefully at night and, to the extent possible, suppress adjacent extraneous lighting. There is no special lighting currently on the Colony House, Brick Market, or the historic houses in the Washington Square area.



SHOP WINDOWS

Ground-level shops should have show windows with merchandise displayed to encourage window-shopping. Blank walls should be avoided in retail areas. Transparency and visibility enhance security. Shop owners should be encouraged to keep lights on in their show windows in the evening to illuminate the street and add interest.



Public toilet

PUBLIC TOILETS

One of the highest priorities for public amenities expressed by Public Charrette participants was provision of high-quality public toilet facilities at convenient locations in the center. Plan 2004 recommends that the city contract for toilet facilities with one of the available vendors to build, operate, and maintain public toilets. It is proposed that the city toilets be located in highly visible locations adjacent to the exits to major parking structures, where there will be parking attendants during business hours to provide some visual monitoring.

Three locations on city property are recommended:

- Mary Street parking structure exit at Cotton Court
- Visitors' Center parking structure
- Long Wharf at Newport Yacht Club

If the city can negotiate locations on private property, additional locations might include:

- Long Wharf North parking structure on Marlborough Street
- Mid-block on the Mary Street-Perrotti Park Walkway in Brick Market Place
- Touro Walkway at Mary Street

NEWPORT POLICE SUBSTATION

The participants in the Public Charrette felt that a visible presence of the Newport Police would be desirable. Accordingly, a police substation is proposed at the Mary Street-Perrotti Walkway. Alternately, the sub-station could be located at the northwest edge of Queen Anne Square.

SIDEWALK CAFÉS

Sidewalk cafés generate street activities and act as a magnet for pedestrians. They are recommended for as many locations as possible, in particular, Long Wharf East and West and Washington Square.



The Colony House from America's Cup Avenue



View of harbor from Mary Street

VIEW CORRIDORS

Two view corridors should be formalized as legal easements:

- Long Wharf from the Colony House to Washington Street and then to the water, and
- the harbor from the foot of Mary Street, following the route of the Mary Street-Perrotti Walkway.

HISTORIC STREETSAPES

River Lane is a historic passage that evokes the streets of very early Newport. Three streetscapes that deserve detailed attention are the most historic in the center. They are:

MARLBOROUGH STREET

Laid out in 1654, Marlborough Street was one of the city's first two streets. Given its history and the extant historic structures on the street, it has the potential of serving as a fitting introduction to colonial Newport for many visitors. William Coddington's house, the White Horse Tavern, the Great Friends Meeting House, and Liberty Square all figure prominently in Newport's history, as does the Stephen Decatur house (now La Petite Auberge) around the corner on Charles Street. An open space existed on Marlborough Street adjacent to the intersection with Broadway in the 18th century.



Marlborough Street before



And after, with buildings replacing surface parking

Priority for the improvement of Marlborough Street should be given to removal of the utility poles and elimination of the street-front surface parking lots owned by the Bank of Newport, Citizens Bank, and Long Wharf North. Street-front sites should be created for new mixed-use buildings or, better yet, relocated historic houses.

Because the structures are built right up to the street, street trees are not feasible. However, specimen trees should be planted strategically between

the buildings. In addition, the monumental trees in Liberty Square should be showcased at night with lighting.

The south side of the block of Marlborough Street between America's Cup Avenue and Thames Street should be developed as two- and three-story mixed-use buildings reflecting the mercantile buildings on the wharves that have since disappeared.



Marlborough Street (West) before



And after, with buildings replacing surface parking

THAMES STREET

Thames Street south of Touro Street is fully built up and is not likely to be redeveloped anytime soon. On the west side of the street attention should be given to the sidewalk paving and building façades. Street trees on that side of the street provide shade for shoppers. The block of Thames Street north of Washington Square is a candidate for mixed-use buildings to replace the street-front parking.



Thames Street before



And after

The sidewalk on the east side of Thames Street south of Touro Street can be widened to provide for the volume of pedestrians wanting access to the stores. The width of the travel lane can be reduced. As part of the Washington Square project, Thames Street will receive stone pavers from Touro Street to the north side of Washington Square. Plan 2004 proposes to extend the stone pavers on Thames Street to the intersection of Marlborough Street.



Existing sidewalk



Widened sidewalk

LONG WHARF

Fifty feet wide and 2,011 feet long, Long Wharf was the second longest and one of the most impressive structures of its kind in all of the colonies and a town status symbol in the mid-18th century. Burned to the water by the occupying British and rebuilt after the Revolution, it currently is about the same length, even though it now disappears beyond Washington Street into the State Pier.

The State Pier is beyond the boundaries of Plan 2004, but it is time for the City of Newport to enter discussions with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) about integrating that key site into the fabric of the city. It has been suggested that a paver-outline of historic Long Wharf in conjunction with a development similar to San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf might be appropriate.

Because of its history and importance, Long Wharf is the centerpiece of Plan 2004. At the west end, at Washington Street, a pocket park will provide a lookout to the harbor. On-street parking on Long Wharf West will be adjusted to allow for a linear park extending along the water from



Existing Long Wharf East to Colony House

Perrotti Park. Long Wharf East will remain a pedestrian way with access for an electric trolley.

Long Wharf over the years has been entirely subsumed by landfill into the existing street pattern of the city. Plan 2004 proposes to demarcate the location of the original wharf and to emphasize the importance of this right-of-way from the water to the Colony House.



Paving. It will be paved with distinctive paving that will complement the current repaving of Washington Square. The selection of the paving material and paving pattern at the next stage of development should respond to a number of requirements including:

- historic definition
- compatibility with Washington Square
- walkability and accessibility
- visual appeal

Lighting. Street lighting likewise can help define Long Wharf and can help provide an environment appealing to residents and visitors after dark as well as during the day. Criteria to be used in selecting the lighting systems should include:

- Daytime appearance
- Nighttime appearance (high cut-off)
- Proximity to harbor and water
- Appearance from waterside as well as landside
- Lighting levels
- Height and spacing

Street Life Enhancement. A key goal is to increase the life and activity on Long Wharf days and evenings and all seasons of the year. Historically, it was a bee-hive of activity that has since disappeared. Fountains, pools, sidewalk cafes, vending carts, street entertainment should all be encouraged to revive the life of Long Wharf.

The following conceptual sketch suggests how Long Wharf might look in the future.



Existing Long Wharf East



Long Wharf East conceptual plan



Abraham Rodriguez Rivera House,
ca.1722 (now Citizens Bank)

We need to bring visitors to see Newport as a place with character and history. The community workshops listed Newport history and connection to the water as the two most important characteristics of the community to be preserved and enhanced in the revitalization of the center of Newport.

The center of Newport contains much that has survived from the two vibrant ages of its development. A precious treasure of buildings has been preserved from Newport's Golden Age (1740-1770), which provides a hint of the life of that era. The Historic Hill has fine buildings from the 17th through 19th centuries. The Kay/Catherine/Old Beach area, which, developed largely between 1840 and 1880, is chock-a-block with grand Victorians including early work of Richard Morris Hunt and McKim, Mead & White. Together they constitute the grain of the center east and south of Washington Square.

Further, mercantile buildings on Bellevue Avenue such as the King Block (Perkins & Betton, 1893) and the Audrain Building (Price, 1902) serve as excellent examples of how buildings can be designed at an appropriate scale and at the same time introduce variety and architectural interest. These buildings did not copy the Casino and the Travers Block but filled out the streetscape in a very effective way.



Travers Block, Casino, King Block, and Audrain Building on Bellevue Avenue

4.5 ARCHITECTURE, AESTHETICS, BUILDING FAÇADES

4.5 ARCHITECTURE, AESTHETICS, BUILDING FAÇADES

William H. Jordy, the Brown University architectural historian who died in 1997, writes in his recently published Buildings of Rhode Island:

And what's to be said of the heart of the old seaport? Not much architecturally. Newport's wharfs, from Long Wharf to Perry Mill, evolved, from the late 1960s through the 1980s, into a hectic carnival of boutiques, eateries, and hotels. A deliberately nondescript wharf-like vernacular has been cultivated even for outsized hotels, with carved signboards everywhere. Fragments of old stores and commercial buildings of some interest exist along Thames Street, but mostly so gutted, altered, and faked that their integrity is gone. The necessity of routing traffic through a four-lane artery and of providing parking spaces has inevitably destroyed the old scale of things. The new center is all development, needless development, with neither imagination nor regard for public amenity to stamp it as something unique – to make it Newport. If Newport means a crowd of people in a festive, spending mood, then here it is; but for Newport as a place with character and history, one must look elsewhere.



Thames Street looking north

Antoinette F. Downing and Vincent J. Scully, Jr., chronicled Newport's special heritage as an anthology of American architecture. The center of the city has few if any examples of distinguished architecture after the 1930's. Although the redevelopment of 1965-85 continued the tradition of having housing in the center of the city, the quality of the design and construction of the buildings left much to be desired. In particular, the out-of-scale commercial buildings, with their parking lots spread around them like asphalt skirts, are more typical of a suburban highway than a harborfront that has seen more than three centuries of activity. The hotel and timeshare projects on filled land recall little of the historic Newport waterfront.

The architectural opportunities moving forward are primarily in three areas:

- Construction of new mixed-use liner buildings and parking structures to replace street-front surface parking lots.
- Replacement of existing buildings built as part of the 1965-85 redevelopment.
- Construction of new structures on the Gateway Center and Mary Street sites.



Spring Street Mercantile Building

LINER BUILDINGS

These new mixed-use street-front buildings are intended to restore the fabric of the city and to conceal the mass of multistory parking structures while encouraging activity along the streets of the center. The design intent is to size the structures to be compatible with the historic fabric of the center, restoring the scale of earlier street fronts. Any portions of new parking structures visible from public ways should be carefully scaled, detailed, and landscaped to conceal inappropriate mass.

The scale of any new liner buildings or replacement buildings should vary with the street and the adjacent buildings. Current zoning in the center permits a maximum height of 45 feet. Plan 2004 does not call for any increase in that limitation.

MARLBOROUGH STREET

Marlborough Street, along with Thames Street, was one of the earliest streets in Newport. A handful of nationally important historic structures like the White Horse Tavern, Coddington House, and the Great Friends Meeting House remain as well as the Stephen Decatur house around the



Brick Market and the Colony House

corner at 17 Charles Street (currently La Petite Auberge). It is appropriate that Marlborough Street become a new gateway for visitors to Newport. Properly updated, it should impart a sense of the city's history to the visitor.

Any new infill buildings on Marlborough Street between Broadway and Thames Street should be either two- or three-story mixed-use buildings or relocated historic houses. Ideally, two historic houses would be relocated to the parking lots at the rear of the BankNewport and Citizens Bank properties. The appropriate street scale should be similar to that existing on Spring Street between Church Street and Touro Street, with its pleasant mix of two- or three-story historic houses and commercial buildings.

If Plan 2004 is successful, Marlborough Street, between Thames Street and America's Cup Avenue, will have new street-front buildings in place of the existing surface parking lots on the south side of the street. The scale of the buildings in that block should be consistent with the liner buildings on Thames Street around the corner.



Thames Street north of Brick Market

NHS Collections

THAMES STREET

The block of Marlborough Street between Thames Street and America's Cup Avenue and any new construction on Thames Street should recall the scale of the buildings on the west side of Thames Street before they were



Thames Street south of Brick Market
NHS Collections

demolished in the 1960's. They included handsome cast-iron and brick mercantile buildings mostly three stories tall, articulated (and built) as individual buildings, 30 to 40 feet wide. This strategy has been used successfully on King Street in Charleston, South Carolina, to conceal a large mid-block parking structure. Even a larger structure with a single purpose such as either a hotel or office building should have its façades articulated to recall the historic Thames Street mercantile buildings or buildings like the King Block or the Audrain Building on Bellevue Avenue.



King Street, Charleston, South Carolina: liner buildings concealing parking structure



Newport Waterworks Building
NHS Collections

AMERICA'S CUP AVENUE

Any new buildings built on America's Cup Avenue from Marlborough Street south are likely to replace some of the existing 1960's construction. They should be designed to a scale befitting that important, wide water-front boulevard. They should be three to four stories and do not require the same kind of mercantile articulation as Thames Street, although that could be appropriate. The intersection of America's Cup Avenue at Thames Street and Church Street (now occupied by Dansk/Sea Fare) is a prominent site that, if redeveloped, warrants a landmark structure in scale and of distinguished design.



Perry Mill

The block of America's Cup Avenue between the Gladys Carr Bolhouse Connector Road (formerly the Goat Island Connector) and Marlborough Street is a uniquely prominent location at the entrance to the center of the city from the north. Construction on that site (on the existing Gateway Center) should have a landmark presence and should read as a single important building, serving much the same visual function as the Perry Mill Building does at America's Cup Avenue and Memorial Boulevard.

VISITORS' (GATEWAY) CENTER

The architecture of the Visitors' (Gateway) Center should make it readily identifiable from a distance. If the existing Visitors' Center is retained, it needs to be integrated with the mixed-use building on America's Cup Avenue to give it identifiability while fitting comfortably with the new structure. Alternatively, if the Visitors' Center is relocated into a new structure, it might have the scale and massing of the historic Waterworks building demolished on a nearby site. The five-level parking structure will be 45 feet high. It will need to be visually screened from the public ways by the Visitors' Center and buildings (of appropriate height) along Gladys Carr Bolhouse Connector Road.

MARY STREET AND CHURCH STREET

Residential buildings, carefully scaled to provide an appropriate environment for the adjacent historic house, will replace the existing surface parking at the street-front on Mary Street and Church Street. The Mary Street building may step up the hill and be three stories. On Church Street, the residential structure should be similar in massing and scale to the two Newport Restoration Foundation houses next to it and should not exceed two and one half stories.

WASHINGTON STREET

The west side of Washington Street is zoned Waterfront Business and the east side General Business. The Newport Shipyard should be encouraged to build any new structures up to the street line. As much as possible, the structures should reflect historic waterfront functions. Boats in dry-dock or in storage provide visitors a glimpse of current marine activities desirable for the Washington Street frontage.

LONG WHARF

Perhaps the most sensitive site in the center of Newport is the block of Long Wharf connecting Washington Square to America's Cup Avenue.

Given both its importance as the major historic spine of the City connecting the harbor, the Brick Market, and the Colony House as well as its newer role as a major link from the Visitors' Center on America's Cup Avenue to Washington Square, the quality of the environment should be as attractive as possible to residents and visitors.

The scale of the existing one- and two-story commercial buildings is inappropriate for the setting. Replacement structures along Long Wharf between Washington Square and America's Cup should be two to three floors in elevation. Taller buildings would cast deep shadows and create a canyon for pedestrians. The present buildings are each articulated as single block-long façades on a site that historically was occupied by a series of separate buildings of varying heights. In either a redevelopment or a renovation of the existing façades, the buildings should be articulated in 20- to 40-foot modules with full-height street level glass storefronts to encourage both window-shopping and shopping.



Abraham Rodriguez Rivera House,
ca.1722 (now Citizens Bank)

BUILDING MATERIALS

The historic palette of materials for the buildings in the center focused primarily on painted wooden clapboards and later on brick and cast iron for the mercantile buildings. Stone was used in mill buildings and wharf buildings. These materials should remain the primary palette for the buildings in the center. Wooden shingles, popular in other parts of Newport, were less common on the more permanent buildings in the center and should be discouraged. Authentic slate roofs were used in the higher quality buildings in the center and are the preferred roofing material for visible roofs.

5. NEXT STEPS

5. NEXT STEPS

The Newport center design process was successful in getting the community to focus on the challenges and opportunities of creating a livable, workable, and walkable place within the heart of the city. For this process to be truly successful continuing efforts must focus not just on tourists and retailers; Plan 2004 must benefit the entire Newport community. The conceptual plans and proposals made in the preceding sections are the starting point for a process that will take a great deal of time, energy, goodwill, and political strength to implement.

Below are listed a series of initiatives that the Taylor & Partners' Town Center Team believes will be useful in making the conceptual designs a reality. Many of these initiatives can be undertaken for little or no cost and offer manageable steps toward the final goals. For convenience, the proposed actions are grouped in categories:

- Traffic Initiatives
- Redevelopment Initiatives
- Legislative/Policy Initiatives
- Streetscape Initiatives
- Pedestrian Initiatives

The Newport Redevelopment Agency has identified the Mary Street site redevelopment and the Gateway Center as the highest priorities for implementation.

One of the keys to success will be continuous movement forward on a number of fronts, with a number of initiatives, both large and small. Incremental progress needs to be publicized, via the Internet and newspapers. Progress should be tracked on the City of Newport website. This is vital to maintain the community's interest and ongoing support.

TRAFFIC AND PARKING INITIATIVES

PLAN 2004 ACTION #T-01. COMPREHENSIVE CITY TRAFFIC PLAN. (SECTION 4.3)

Develop a comprehensive plan to reduce traffic volume, enhance pedestrian safety, and improve and slow the traffic flow. The City of Newport should initiate a plan for the main circulation spine from the North End to Easton's Beach including the portion of America's Cup Avenue in the Plan 2004 study area. This effort should be undertaken in conjunction with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT).

The professional team undertaking this study should include experts in road dieting, the design of roundabouts, and experts in planning High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes. The plan should address features of Plan 2004 for reconfiguring America's Cup Avenue by installation of roundabouts at four locations, for road dieting, and for lane reduction. In addition, the plan should determine the feasibility of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) or bus-only lanes.

PLAN 2004 ACTION #T-02. MARLBOROUGH STREET TRAFFIC DIVERTER PROJECT. (SECTION 4.3)

Initiate a project to reduce traffic volume in Washington Square by diverting westbound Broadway tourist traffic at the intersection of Broadway and Marlborough Street down Marlborough Street. The intent should be to capture as many visitors to the center as possible at the Visitors' Center and the Gateway parking structure. The effort can be accomplished in phases as follows:

- 1. Traffic Counts.** Traffic counts have been taken on Marlborough Street, Broadway, and Thames Street in the last week of August, 2004. Traffic counts should be taken at the same point before and after an interim diverter island is put in place to yield off-peak volumes.. In August 2005, take traffic counts in the same locations to determine the change in peak traffic flow brought about by the diverter island.
- 2. Interim Project.** Design and build an interim traffic diverter island at Marlborough Street and Broadway.
- 3. Parking Adjustments.** Eliminate angled parking on the north side of Broadway from the City Hall crosswalk west to improve sight lines. To facilitate traffic flow on the block between Thames Street and

America's Cup Avenue, relocate the parallel parking from the north side of the street to the south side.

4. **Signage.** In conjunction with the interim diverter construction, install new signage on Broadway directing traffic down Marlborough Street to the Visitors' Center. Install new signage on the Visitors' Center building and new directional signs on Farewell Street to the Visitors' Center and parking structure. (These should be in keeping with the extant navy-and-white civic signage.)
5. **Change the Name.** The name on the building currently housing the Visitors' Center is the "Humphrey J. Donnelly III Transportation Visitor Center." For the benefit of visitors who do not know the city, it should consistently be referred to in building and directional signage as the Newport Visitors' Center.
6. **Permanent Solution.** After peak traffic counts in August, 2005, assess the success of the interim diverter and make a decision whether to execute a permanent island with an appropriate civic sculpture or memorial. If the diversion is successful, design and build the intersection in its permanent configuration.

REDEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

PLAN 2004 ACTION #R-01. VISITORS' CENTER AND GATEWAY REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT. (SECTION 4.1)

Organize the redevelopment of the Gateway Center as in Section 4.1. Steps for implementation include:

1. **RFP.** If the City proceeds with a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) strategy for the development of the parking structure and liner buildings on the Gateway site, a Request for Proposal outlining the program, scope, and parameters of the project should be created.
2. **Land Survey and Soil Borings.** A detailed land survey and soil boring investigations should be undertaken in order to base the RFP on accurate, up-to-date information.
3. **Plans for CSO.** The City of Newport needs to finalize its plans for the CSO so that they can be coordinated with the proposed development.

4. **Relocation of 60-inch Sewer Line.** The sewer line across the site needs to be relocated to make way for construction of liner buildings.
5. **Bus Terminal Relocation/Electric Trolley.** A program should be finalized with RIPTA and USDOT for the relocation of the existing bus terminal. In addition, the electric trolley service should be coordinated with them.

**PLAN 2004 ACTION #R-02. MARY STREET PARKING PROJECT.
(SECTION 4.1)**

Implement the redevelopment of the Mary Street site as described in Section 4.1. Steps for implementation are:

1. **RFP.** If the City proceeds with a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) strategy for the development of the parking structure and liner buildings on the Mary Street site, a Request for Proposal outlining the program, scope, and parameters of the project including the liner buildings on Mary Street and the one proposed for Church Street should be created.
2. **Land Survey and Soil Borings.** A detailed land survey and soil boring investigations should be undertaken in order to base the RFP on accurate, up-to-date information.

LEGISLATION/POLICY INITIATIVES

PLAN 2004 ACTION #L-01. LINER BUILDING/OFF-STREET PARKING ORDINANCE. (SECTION 4.1)

Initiate the replacement of street-front surface parking as described in Section 4.1. To move this process forward the City Council must enact a new ordinance permitting offsite parking in city parking structures to count against the zoning parking requirements.

After the ordinance is passed, the City should meet with property owners to assess interest in the program and impact on the capacity of public parking structures to be built. A specific effort should be made to encourage owners of surface parking lots on Marlborough Street to take advantage of the program.

The City of Newport should explore the possibility of relocating historic buildings to Marlborough Street and Church Street if any are available.

**PLAN 2004 ACTION #L-02. LONG WHARF VIEW EASEMENT.
(SECTION 4.4)**

Pass an ordinance providing for a legal view easement for Long Wharf from the Colony House to the State Pier.

**PLAN 2004 ACTION #L-03. MARY STREET HARBOR VIEW EASEMENT.
(SECTIONS 4.2 & 4.4)**

Pass an ordinance providing for a legal view easement for the Mary Street–Harbor view corridor.

PLAN 2004 ACTION #L-04. CREATE A BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT. (SECTION 4.4)

Create a Business Improvement District (BID) within the bounds of the Town Center scope area. Under the BID structure, a small property tax surcharge within the given district goes to fund broad initiatives that serve all property owners within the area, authorized by state charter. Early in the project, these monies can go to fund studies. Once the project is completed, BID funds enable a higher level of streetscape maintenance or other projects or promotional activities that are attractive to property owners. Although the BID concept is relatively new to Rhode Island, it has been successfully used in New York City and other urban areas for years. There is a BID being established in Lincoln Square in Providence, and another is being considered for Providence’s Thayer Street area.

**PLAN 2004 ACTION #L-05. IMPLEMENT NEWPORT DESIGN STANDARDS.
(SECTION 4.5)**

Develop and document detailed design standards for the historic center of Newport. These standards need to be different from the design standards in other commercial areas of the city such as the North End.

**PLAN 2004 ACTION #L-06. NEWPORT CENTER DESIGN COMMISSION.
(SECTIONS 4.1 & 4.5)**

Designate a design commission to review and approve the design of all new construction and renovation in the center of Newport. The intent should be to encourage the construction of contemporary buildings and streetscapes that live up to the quality of the best of the past and fit with the scale and proportions of the best of the existing. An excellent example is on Bellevue Avenue where the Casino, the Travers Block, the King Block, and the Audrain Building all have different styles but live together harmoniously. None is a copy of another, but the scale and quality of materials and details are complementary and consistent.

STREETSCAPE INITIATIVES

PLAN 2004 ACTION #S-01. STREETSCAPE MASTER PLAN. (SECTION 4.4)

Commission a master streetscape plan for the center of Newport, detailing all elements of the streetscape. The master plan will permit consistent and coordinated implementation of large and small components.

Because of the special nature of Long Wharf, it should be given priority and a separate focus. The remainder of the center can be upgraded on a full street basis, or block by block, or by system. The intent is to have projects being implemented continuously until the total plan is complete.

PLAN 2004 ACTION #S-02. LONG WHARF IMPROVEMENT PROJECT. (SECTION 4.4)

Design, document, and construct the new Long Wharf streetscape. While the implementation of the Long Wharf improvements described in Section 4 can be phased, the first step is the detailed design of the streetscape from Thames Street west to Washington Street, including the pocket park and lookout there. A Request for Proposal should be issued for detailed design and documentation of the project so that bids can be solicited for the construction. Detailed steps include:

- 1. Coordinated design and construction.** On Long Wharf East, negotiate the design and construction of the streetscape from building wall to building wall with the abutting property owners.
- 2. Relocation of parking on Long Wharf West.** Reduce on-street parking on Long Wharf West from 39 to 15 parallel parking spaces. Provide additional angled on-street parking on Washington Street between Long Wharf and the Gladys Carr Bolhouse Connector.

The construction work might be phased, with the highest priority given to Long Wharf East between Thames Street and America's Cup Avenue. The second phase can be Long Wharf West from America's Cup to Washington Street.

**PLAN 2004 ACTION #S-03. CIVIC MONUMENTS PROGRAM.
(SECTION 4.4)**

Organize a civic monuments program by:

1. cataloguing all existing monuments and their locations,
2. surveying all appropriate existing (i.e., Washington Square) and projected (i.e., roundabouts, Long Wharf, etc.) locations for monuments,
3. analyzing which, if any, monuments would benefit from being moved and what additional monuments are needed and appropriate and who or what they should commemorate, and
4. organizing national competitions to create any monuments that might be lacking.



Perry statue at night

**PLAN 2004 ACTION #S-04. BUILDING AND TREE LIGHTING.
(SECTION 4.4)**

Initiate a program to light significant historical buildings and landmark trees.

1. Identify subjects,
2. document scope and cost of lighting projects,
3. identify funding sources, both capital and operating, and
4. implement the program, phasing as necessary.



Colony House at night

**PLAN 2004 ACTION #S-5. FESTIVALS.
(SECTION 4.4)**

Examine the feasibility of arranging shoulder-season festivals focused on Newport's history against the backdrop of lighted landmark buildings. It should also be possible to consider closing Washington Square to traffic and using it and Long Wharf for a December holiday fair, a Halloween party, or similar events.

PEDESTRIAN INITIATIVES

**PLAN 2004 ACTION #P-01. HARBOR WALK PROJECT.
(SECTION 4.2)**

The City should complete discussions to see if it is feasible to obtain waterfront land held by Fairfield Resorts to expand the Harbor Walk and provide additional green space on Long Wharf. The Walk should be formally designated, and a storyboard/plaque/kiosk program developed.

**PLAN 2004 ACTION #P-02. HISTORY WALK PROJECT.
(SECTION 4.2)**

The specific route of the History Walk should be formally designated, and a storyboard/plaque/kiosk program developed.

**PLAN 2004 ACTION #P-03. TOURO-MARY STREET WALKWAY PROJECT.
(SECTION 4.2)**

The City needs to enter discussions with owners of private property to identify a right-of-way for the walkway. Then the design, documentation, and construction need to be commissioned.

**PLAN 2004 ACTION #P-04. MARY STREET-PERROTTI PARK WALKWAY
PROJECT. (SECTION 4.2)**

The City needs to enter discussions with owners of private property to identify a right-of-way for the walkway. In addition, the City needs to meet with RIDOT and negotiate a safe crosswalk both for the short-term and for the final design. Then the design, documentation, and construction need to be commissioned.

CONCLUSION

These initiatives are consistent with the proposals developed by community members during the Public Charrette process. There are many small projects that will have both immediate and long-term benefit for the community. However small, they maintain the momentum and interest in achieving the overall plan. The continued development and improvement of Newport's urban center will generate significant commercial tax revenue and create a destination that encourages tourists to stop. Most important, it will make the community more livable for its residents.

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