



MIDDLETOWN
Rhode Island

TOWN OF MIDDLETOWN

Comprehensive Community Plan

February 2026 - **DRAFT**

v.2.13.2026

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Thank you to the community members who attended a meeting, completed a survey, and shared your ideas and feedback about Middletown's future. Your input was invaluable to shaping this plan.

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1.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

Middletown’s Comprehensive Community Plan (Comprehensive Plan) provides a long-term vision and accompanying guiding framework that sets forth the goals, policies, and actions needed to achieve the community’s future vision. This Plan was developed in collaboration with the community and reflects shared goals for a variety of planning topics including housing, transportation, economic development, natural and historic resources, facilities and services, land use, and natural hazards and resilience.

Comprehensive planning in the State of Rhode Island is governed by Chapter 45-22.2 of the Rhode Island General Laws, entitled the “Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act.” Local comprehensive plans serve as the basis for land use regulation and establish an implementation program for achieving a community’s stated goals and desires. Local comprehensive plans are reviewed by the State, and when approved, become binding on state agencies by requiring conformance of their programs and projects to the local comprehensive plan. The Act requires that municipalities prepare a comprehensive plan every ten years, and report to Statewide Planning every five years on the status of implementation. Plans may be amended as needed.

Middletown faces a range of challenges—from preserving its environmental assets and addressing the impacts of climate change to improving housing affordability and economic sustainability in partnership with its neighboring Aquidneck Island communities. While complex, many of these challenges are interrelated and present opportunities that can support the Town’s growth and long-term resilience. This update to the Town’s 2014 Comprehensive Community Plan acknowledges these interconnected issues and charts a coordinated path forward, helping to guide local decision-making and public investment over the next 10 to 20 years.

Plan Process & Public Participation

The Plan was informed by feedback from Middletown’s Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC) and a public engagement process that took place over a year. The process included multiple public surveys and workshops, interviews with Town staff, and monthly meetings with the CPUC, which were open to the public, with recordings and presentations posted online following the meetings.

The public’s participation in Middletown’s Comprehensive Plan update also builds on recent outreach efforts conducted as part of the Town’s Housing Element update, a separate initiative funded through the Rhode Island Municipal Technical Assistance Program (MTAP). As part of that effort, a public workshop was held on February 15, 2024, to gather community input on Middletown’s housing vision and goals. In April 2024, the Town launched the Middletown Housing Study survey, which received over 500 unique responses related to housing needs, preferences, and priorities.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Results from the survey can be found in the Appendix along with the results from the other surveys conducted during the broader Comprehensive Plan engagement process.



ENGAGEMENT SNAPSHOT / ENGAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS

- 1 Visioning Forum
- 1 Strategies Workshop
- 1 Housing Workshop
- 1 Draft Plan Open House
- 3 Online Surveys
- Monthly Committee Meetings
- 175+ unique inputs
- 136 survey responses + 500 responses from housing study
- 80+ in-person engagement



Middletown Comprehensive Plan Visioning Forum Workshop, January 21, 2025

KEY FINDINGS

- Throughout the public engagement process, participants continually stressed the importance of focusing on open space and recreation, housing, and natural resources over the next ten years.
- Preserving and expanding the Town's recreational assets, open space, and natural resources is a shared community priority, and it is something residents expect to be considered and balanced alongside development and other priorities. Residents want Middletown to continue to have opportunities and spaces that bring community members together and appeal to multiple generations.
- Improving transportation, specifically roadway and intersection infrastructure, to reduce traffic and congestion and improve safety for all users was another major theme from residents, businesses, and municipal staff. Many participants also expressed the need to increase the Town's pedestrian and bicycle network through sidewalk improvements, the expansion of trails and bike lanes, and other safety measures. A significant proportion of comments specifically noted that ongoing roadway maintenance and addressing traffic issues on West Main Road and East Main Road and other busy roads should be top priorities. Advocating for better public transit was also cited as a need across Middletown and Aquidneck Island.
- Like elsewhere in Rhode Island and across the country, providing enough affordable and suitable housing continues to be a significant challenge. Middletown is no exception, and the community wants to increase the affordability and variety of its housing stock to serve a greater diversity of incomes and housing needs. Community members expressed particular concern about increasing housing opportunities for families and workforce households, those who earn too much for subsidized affordable housing but not enough to afford market-rate housing. Additionally, short-term rentals were cited as an issue impacting year-round housing and essential for the Town to monitor and address as needed.
- Participants expressed the need to revitalize many of its commercial areas which have historically served a strong retail and commercial base, but are becoming increasingly vacant and less suitable for today's hybrid work environment and newer more rapidly growing industries such as innovation and technology, professional services, and blue economy.
- Participants would like to see greater diversification in Middletown's economy and action to attract employers in sectors with higher paying jobs.
- Continued community feedback spoke to making Middletown more friendly to families by expanding programming and recreational opportunities for kids and families, improving the quality of local schools, and ensuring the local housing can accommodate young and growing families.
- A substantial proportion of community input spoke to the importance of prioritizing climate resilience throughout all aspects of Town planning and decision making. Protecting the beaches and shoreline, addressing stormwater and inland flooding issues, and acting proactively to reduce vulnerability to future sea level rise were all cited as core community concerns.
- Maintaining a balance between development and land preservation for conservation, open space, and recreation was also identified as a core community priority.

Changes from the Previous Plan

The 2025 Comprehensive Plan builds on the recommendations of the previous plan by continuing to encourage infill and mixed-use development in core commercial areas and in areas of town that stand to benefit from a greater variety of complementary uses. It also focuses strategies on redeveloping and revitalizing underutilized retail and commercial sites across town and creating opportunities for transformation of the Town's many larger-scale retail and office developments. The shift in retail dynamics and consumer behaviors necessitates rethinking the form of commercial uses and how greater flexibility can be created in land use practices to better accommodate new and emerging industries that have different space and location needs than more traditional office and commercial uses.

This plan focuses more on climate adaptation and resiliency than the previous plan. Middletown's coastal areas must adapt to sea level rise and the entire town must improve resiliency to more frequent, more intense storms and heat events.

Housing issues also receive greater emphasis in this plan. Two issues have emerged as major concerns for many residents: increasing housing prices (especially since the COVID-19 pandemic starting in 2020) and growing numbers of short-term rentals which reduce the stock of year-round housing. Rhode Island Housing's Municipal Technical Assistance Program (MTAP), which funded the initial work on the housing element, addressed these and other housing-related issues prior to the rest of the comprehensive planning process.



2.

COMMUNITY VISION

Community Vision

The following vision statement, developed by the Middletown CPUC and shaped by input from community feedback, establishes a clear direction for the Town's policies and investment moving forward. Additional topic-specific vision statements were also created to guide the Plan's nine focus areas.

Plan Vision Statement:

Middletown will preserve its quality of life for all generations as a safe, welcoming, and resilient community with a valued natural environment, distinctive cultural heritage, a strong and diversified local economy, access to a wide range of housing, recreation, and transportation options, high-quality education, and sound and collaborative governance.

Topic Vision Statements:

Practice good stewardship of the water, land, and air to preserve, protect, and restore our environment for this and future generations.

Support an abundance of diverse natural areas which offer recreational opportunities while preserving agricultural lands, wildlife habitat, sensitive ecosystems and water quality.

Ensure that Middletown remains a desirable place to live by promoting sound growth and quality development which preserves and protects the natural environment, rural landscapes, beaches, and established neighborhoods.

Provide a safe, efficient, accessible, and sustainable multi-modal transportation system that meets the diverse mobility needs of residents, workers, and visitors while maintaining the scenic quality of our community.

Support long-term economic development opportunities and living-wage job creation; high caliber education and training of the workforce; a positive business environment; and the long-term viability of agricultural businesses.

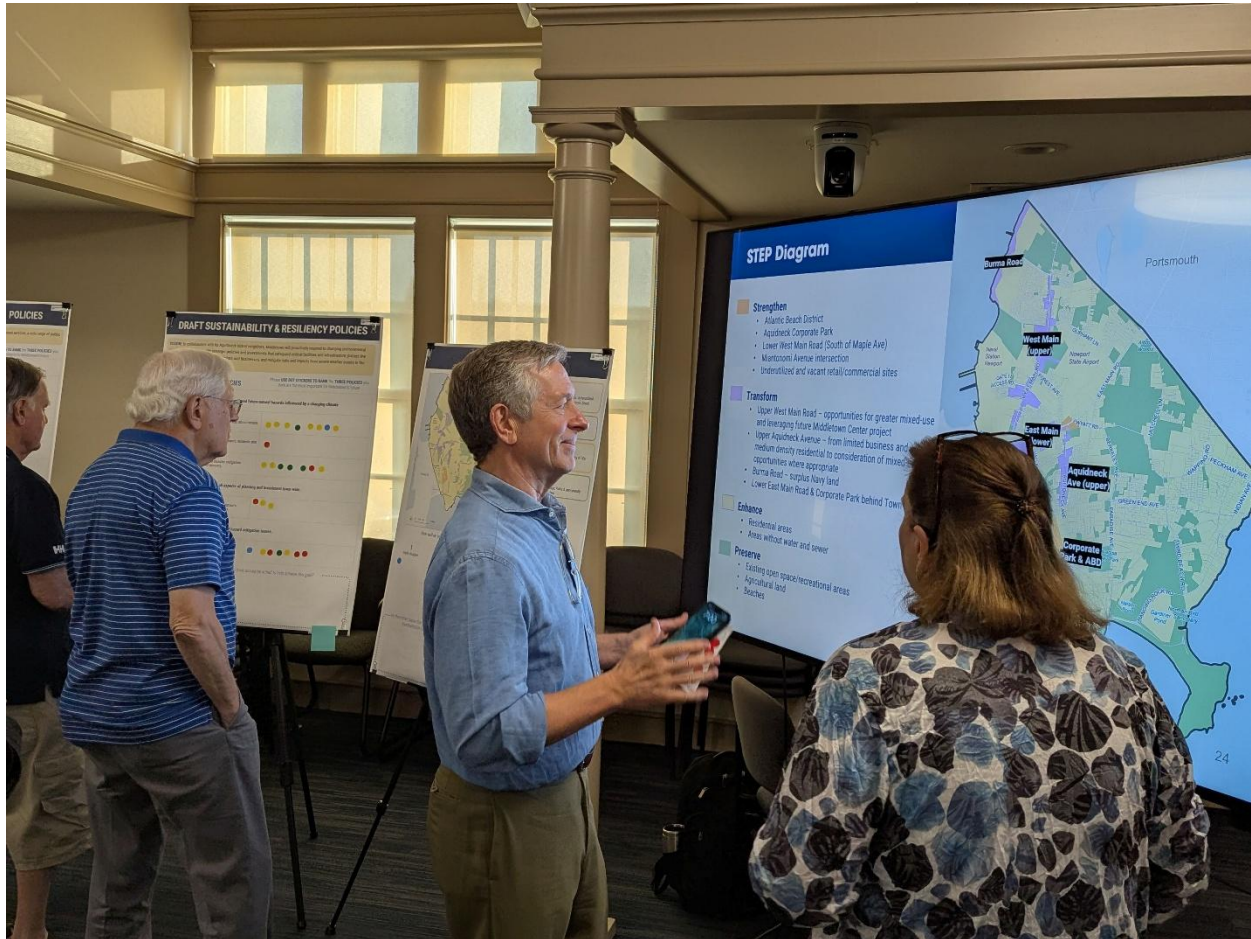
Preserve Middletown's historic resources and value cultural enrichment as key components of the Town's future growth, economy, character, and appeal.

Provide residents with high-quality and responsive government services, a wide range of public facilities, and the necessary public utilities to support a desired quality of life.

Provide a diverse range of housing that includes attainable and varying housing options for all life stages and income levels, while at the same time preserving the cherished qualities that give Middletown its coastal character.

Proactively respond to changing environmental conditions with strategic policies and investments that safeguard critical facilities and infrastructure, protect lives and property, and mitigate risks and impacts from severe weather events in the near-and long-term future.

Each of the Plan’s nine focus areas outlines specific goals and policies designed to guide Middletown toward achieving its community vision. These goals and policies directly address the key issues and opportunities identified through the existing conditions analysis, as well as insights and feedback shared by the community throughout the process. These goals and policies come together with specific action items in the Implementation chapter to provide a roadmap for town staff to implement the plan.



Middletown Comprehensive Plan Draft Policies Workshop, June 12, 2025



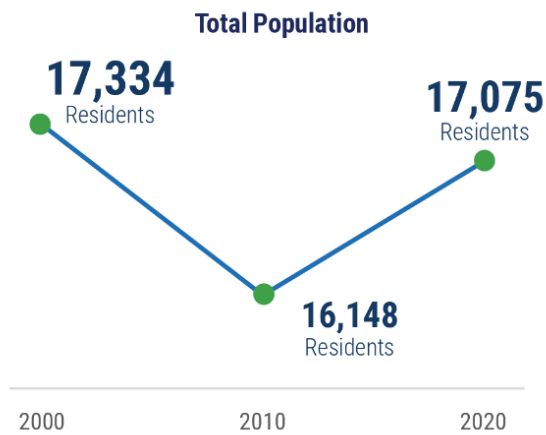
3.

**MIDDLETOWN
AT A GLANCE**

Middletown At A Glance

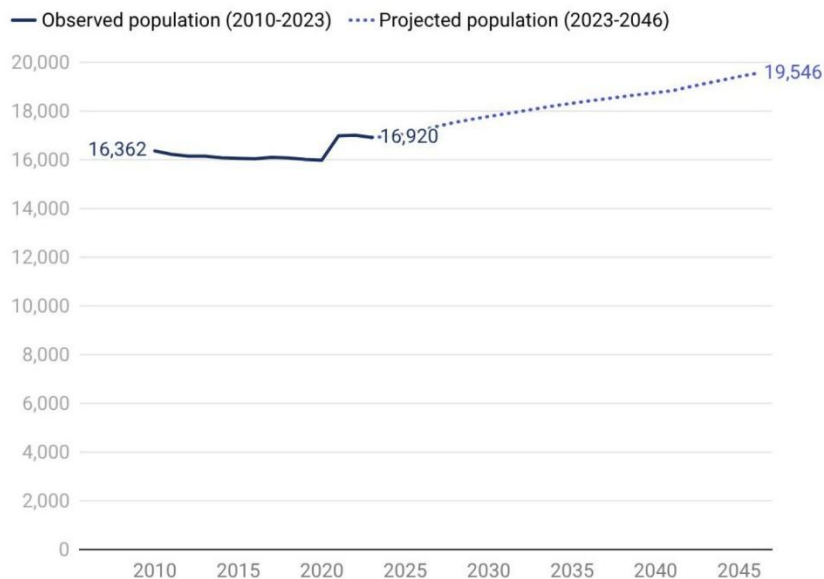
POPULATION

Middletown's population has been increasing since 2010 after experiencing a decline between 2000 and 2010. Based on the latest decennial census, today, the town is home to 17,075 people and is projected to grow by about 16% over the next twenty years.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000-2020 decennial census data.

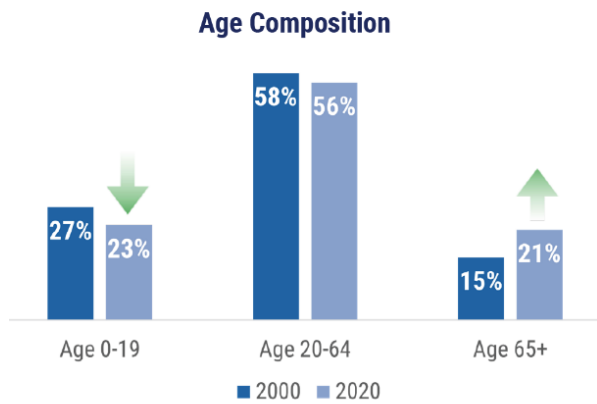
Middletown population trend and projection



Source: 2010-2023 Census American Community Survey 5-year.

AGE COMPOSITION

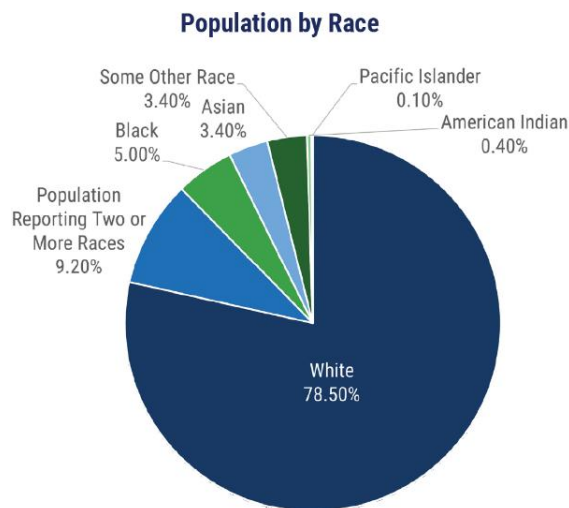
The median age is 43.5 years, up from 42.8 years in 2010. The number of residents that are younger than 20 or between ages 35 and 49 has dropped considerably. Children under the age of 20 make up 23% of the population, representing a 15% decline since 2000. Seniors over the age of 65 now make up 21% of the population, which represents a 40% increase from 2000.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2020 decennial census data.

RACE, ETHNICITY, & LANGUAGES

Middletown’s population is predominantly white at about 79% of the population. The second highest racial category is two or more races (9.2%). About 8% of the population is Hispanic or Latino of any race. About 13% of households speak a language other than English at home. Spanish and Indo-European languages are most common.

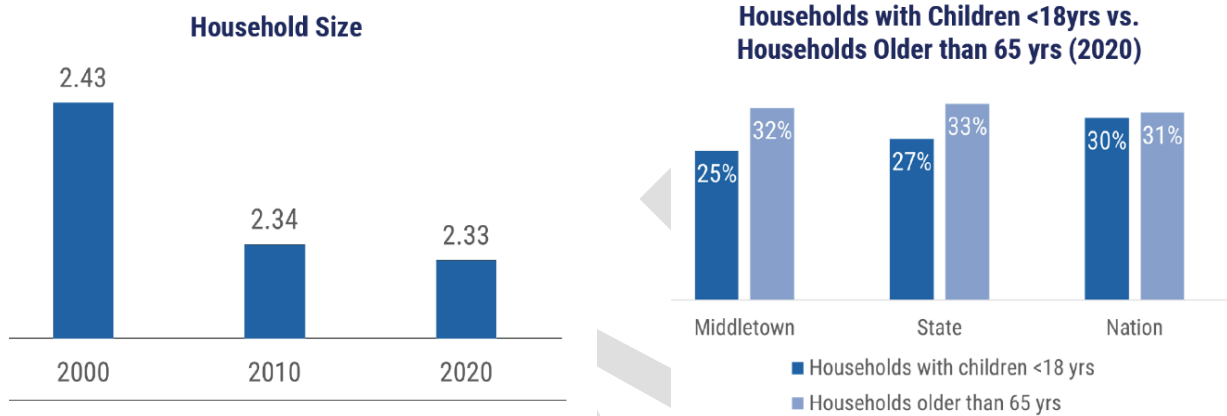


Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2020 decennial census data.

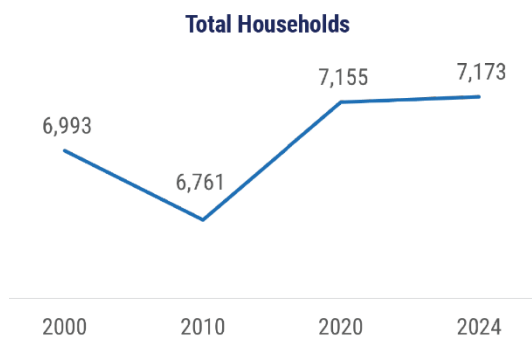
HOUSEHOLDS

The number of households in Middletown has increased by 6% since 2010 while the average household size has decreased. Today, the average household size in Middletown is 2.33, which is smaller than both the state (2.4) and national (3.14) average.

One-third of households include someone age 65 years or older and 25% have one or more members under 18 years old. About 58% of households are family households with two to four members. Just over one-



quarter of households are one-person households.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2020 decennial census data.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000-2020 decennial census data; ESRI data 2024.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000-2020 decennial census data.

HOUSING STOCK

Middletown’s housing stock has increased by 8.5% since 2000; about 61% is single-family. At present, about 12% of the units are vacant. The share of owner-occupied housing units exceeds renter-occupied by approximately 18%. This has a direct correlation to a greater share of renter-occupied cost-burdened* households (50%) compared to owner-occupied (34%), indicating affordability challenges for renters, as documented in the 2025 HousingWorks RI Housing Fact Book.

*Cost-burdened refers to households that spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs.

Total Housing

Total Housing Units	8,255
Single-Family	61%
Two-Family or greater	39%

Housing Tenure

Total Housing Units	8,255
Occupied ownership units	59%
Occupied Rental units	41%

Source: U.S. Census ACS 5-year data, 2023.

Age of Middletown's Existing Housing Stock

Year built	Units	Share
Permitted 2020 or later	775	9%
Built 2010 to 2019	277	3%
Built 2000 to 2009	285	3%
Built 1990 to 1999	871	10%
Built 1980 to 1989	1,332	15%
Built 1970 to 1979	1,096	12%
Built 1960 to 1969	1,148	13%
Built 1950 to 1959	1,118	12%
Built 1940 to 1949	665	7%
Built 1939 or earlier	1,394	16%

Housing Occupancy

Total Housing Units	8,255	
Occupied Units	7,237	87.7%
Vacant Units	1,018	12.3%
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	514	50.5%
For rent	356	35%
All other vacant	79	7.8%
For sale, only	28	2.8%
Sold, not occupied	26	2.6%
Rented, not occupied	15	1.5%

Source: U.S. Census ACS 5-year data, 2023.

MEDIAN INCOME

Median household income in Middletown has been rising. According to the 2025 HousingWorks RI Housing Fact Book, produced at Roger Williams University, which uses U.S. Census 2019-2023 ACS data, the median household income is \$97,650- an increase of nearly 40% since 2010. Despite this, about 9% of households are below the federal poverty level.

EDUCATION

Approximately 48% of residents hold a bachelor's or higher with nearly 22% holding a graduate or professional degree. About 7% hold an associate's degree.

EMPLOYMENT

Most residents work in white collar industries (70%), with 17% working in services and 13% in blue collar sectors. According to ESRI data*, as of 2024, the unemployment rate is 2.8%.

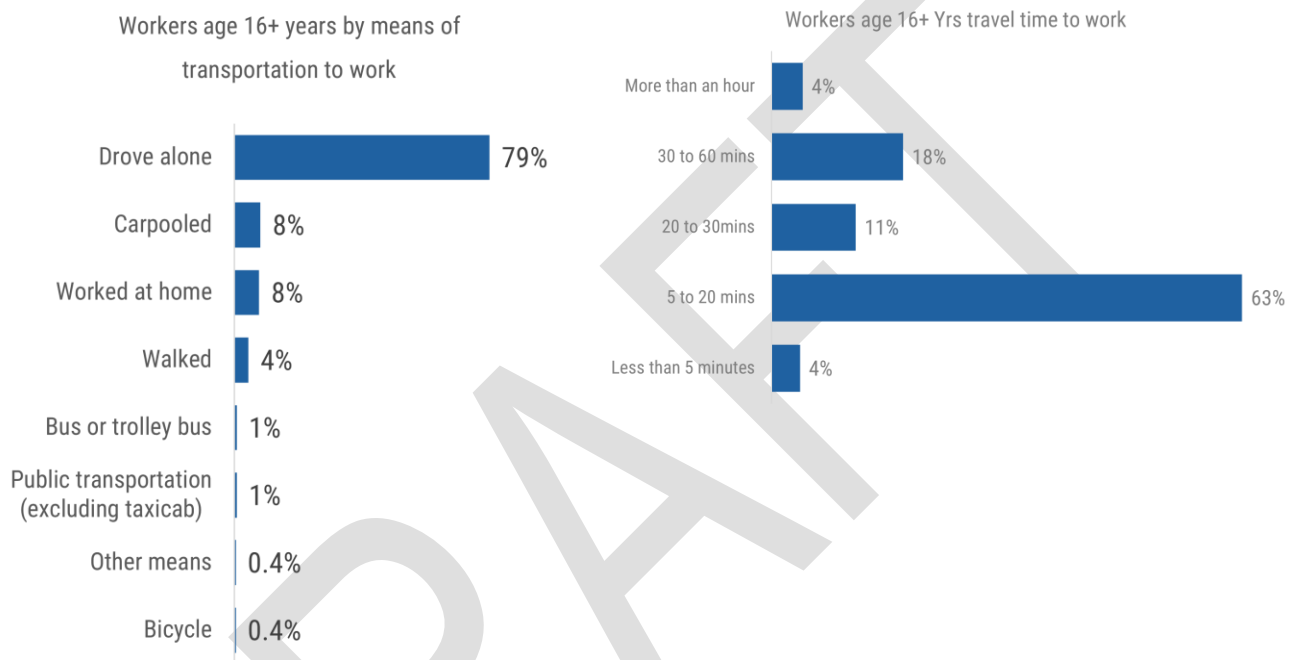
**Note: ESRI data uses a combination of ACS data and other data sources for its data calculations and forecasts.*



Source: Esri-Data Axle (2024), Esri-MRI-Simmons (2024), ACS (2018-2022), 2023 Ocean State Accelerates

COMMUTE

Most trips in Middletown are made by car, with walking, biking, and transit accounting for a small share. About one-third of trips are people returning home, while work, shopping, and recreation each make up around 20%. Middletown attracts commuters due to its job density, with 79% of residents driving alone to work. The majority of commutes are under 30 minutes.



Source: 2018-2022 American Community Survey



ENTERING
Middletown

4.
LAND USE

Overview

Land use planning is central to shaping how Middletown grows, preserves its natural and cultural assets, and meets the evolving needs of residents, businesses, and visitors. The way land is used and managed influences nearly every other element of this comprehensive plan—from housing affordability and transportation connectivity to economic development, natural resource and open space protection, and climate resilience.

Middletown’s existing land use patterns reflect its historic development as well as emerging opportunities for thoughtful future growth and transformation. While the Town strives to maintain a balance between its coastal and agricultural landscapes, residential neighborhoods, and commercial corridors, it also recognizes the need to attract and guide new development in order to make progress toward the community’s future vision and goals.

Many of Middletown’s commercial properties present opportunities for adaptation and integration of greater mixed-use to maintain economic competitiveness and facilitate more pedestrian friendly environments. Expanding opportunities for housing where utilities capacity exists and where the property can support the housing development can help Middletown offer a greater diversity of living options and increased affordability. Executing a coordinated land use and development strategy will support greater connectivity, smart growth, and enhancement of the Town’s continued appeal for the long-term.

This chapter highlights existing land use patterns, identifies needs and opportunities, and presents strategies to align future development with Middletown’s goals and the other objectives of this Comprehensive Plan. The accompanying Future Land Use Plan illustrates many of these core strategies and provides a blueprint for the Town to manage growth and investment in alignment with community values.

A Vision for Land Use

Middletown will ensure that the community remains a desirable place to live by promoting sound growth and quality development which preserves and protects the natural environment, rural landscapes, beaches, and established neighborhoods. We will balance the protection of our scenic and natural landscapes with new development while enhancing resiliency and meeting residents’ needs for a strong local economy.

Existing Context

EXISTING LAND USE

Middletown’s 16 square miles are made up of 95.5% land and 4.5% water. Residential land uses make up the largest use category, representing 40% of land, while commercial, industrial, and mixed-use make up significantly less, about 6% collectively.

4 | LAND USE

About 20% of Middletown is agricultural land and 14% is forest land and open space. Institutional and developed recreation land account for 4% and 4.8%, respectively. A very small proportion, just 0.2%, of land is categorized vacant.

Commercial, industrial, mixed-use, and high-density residential uses are concentrated in the western part of town along East Main Road, West Main Road, Aquidneck Avenue, and in the Aquidneck Corporate Park. The majority of agricultural lands and open space is located in the eastern part of town and towards the south near Sachuest Point.

Naval Station Newport (NAVSTA) comprises 264.5 acres of land on Middletown’s western shoreline just north of the Newport town line. This represents about 61% of institutional land uses in town. The remaining is made up of schools, including the St. George’s School, the public library, and other municipal buildings.

Other notable land uses include the 86-acre Aquidneck Corporate Park between Valley Road and Aquidneck Avenue that features a variety of mixed land uses and the 221-acre Newport State Airport, primarily used for corporate and private aviation.

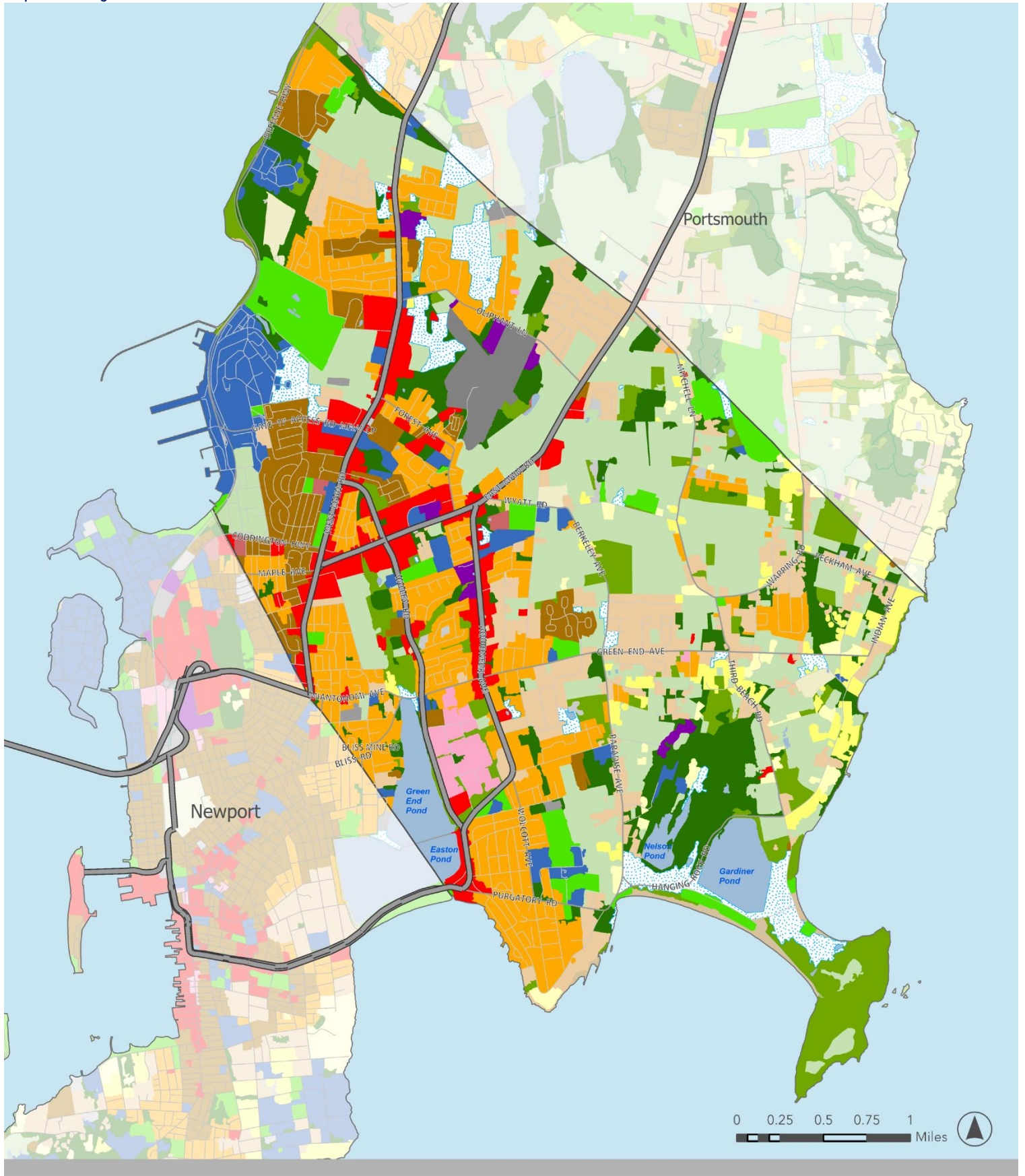
Table 1: Existing Land Use

Middletown’s Existing Land Uses

Land Use Category	Acreage	% of Total Land Area
Residential	3,992	39%
Agricultural Land	2,061	20%
Forest Land	797	8%
Brushland	571	6%
Mixed Urban Land	569	6%
Commercial and Services	485	5%
Water	467	5%
Institutional	431	4%
Wetland	370	4%
Transportation, Communication and Utilities	260	3%
Barren Land	103	1%
Industrial and Commercial Complexes	95	0.9%
Industrial	49	0.5%
Transitional Areas	39	0.4%
Mines, Quarries and Gravel	10	0.1%
Total	10,298	100%

Source: RIGIS, 2020.

Map 1: Existing Land Use



Existing Land Use

- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Low Density Residential | High Density Residential | Agricultural | Beaches | Vacant land |
| Medium Low Density Residential | Commercial | Forest Land | Water | Wetland |
| Medium Density Residential | Institutional | Open Space | Transitional Areas | Transportation and Utilities |
| Medium High Density Residential | Industrial | Developed Recreation | Cemeteries | |
| | Mixed Use | Airports | | |



Source: Middletown GIS
 Date: 10.23.2024
 Existing Conditions Report

EXISTING ZONING

Middletown's Zoning Ordinance includes fourteen zoning districts and three overlay districts (Watershed Protection District, Atlantic Beach District, and Floodplain Overlay District). Accompanying Traffic Sensitive districts for each base zone function to provide adequate and safe access onto major thoroughfares within certain areas of town.

Most of Middletown falls within a residential zoning district while just 5% of land is zoned for commercial and 4% for light industrial uses. The Open Space zoning district makes up 16% of the town and 10% falls within the Public district.

Single-family dwelling units are permitted by right in all residential districts as well as the Limited Business, Office Business, and Atlantic Beach Overlay Districts. Two-family dwellings are allowed by right in the Residential Multifamily district and the R-10 and R-20 residential districts. Multifamily developments of three to six units are only allowed by special permit in the RM and LB districts. Multifamily dwelling projects, including condos, are only permitted in the RM district by special permit. Senior independent living facilities are permitted in the R-10 through R-60 zoning districts by special permit. Mobile homes and trailers are only permitted in the MT district.

Mixed-use residential and commercial within the same building are permitted in the GB, LB, OB, and Atlantic Beach Overlay districts, while multi-building mixed-use development projects with three residential units or greater are only allowed in the GB, LB, and Atlantic Beach Overlay districts. The concentration of higher-density development and non-residential uses in the western part of Middletown, along major thoroughfares, reflects the town's zoning ordinance and map.

Table 2: Zoning Districts

Middletown's Existing Zoning Districts

Zone	Zone Name	Acreage	% of Total Land Area
R-40	Low Density Residential	1,429	17%
R-20	Medium Density Residential	1,299	16%
OS	Open Space	1,280	16%
R-60	Low Density Residential	916	11%
R-10	High Density Residential	892	11%
P	Public	814	10%
R-30	Medium Density Residential	696	8%
LI	Light Industrial	304	4%
LB	Limited Business	141	2%
RM	Residential Multi-Family	126	2%
OB	Office Business	114	1%
OP	Office Park	106	1%
GB	General Business	60	1%
MT	Mobile Home/Transient Trailer	12	0%
ABD	Atlantic Beach District Overlay	3	0%
Total		8,194	100%

The following provides an overview of Middletown's zoning districts:

Residential Districts (7)

Low Density Residential (R-60): Provides low density residential areas and areas for agricultural use.

Low Density Residential (R-40): Provides residential areas which are suited for large lot single-family development, agricultural and certain other uses.

Medium Density Residential (R-30): Provides residential areas which are located in rural areas of town or where environmental conditions preclude smaller single-family lot sizes, and where agricultural and certain other uses may be established.

Medium Density Residential (R-20): Provides residential areas suitable for development but where intensive non-residential uses are restricted.

High Density Residential (R-10): Provides a wide range of urban housing types within the central built-up areas of town where water and sewer service is provided.

Residential Multifamily (RM): Provides areas for multifamily housing, including apartments and condominiums, meeting certain design and site planning requirements; and where complementary non-residential uses may be allowed.

Mobile Home/Transient Trailer (MT): Established to provide areas for mobile home parks and transient trailer parks.

Commercial Districts (4)

General Business (GB): Provides areas for most retail, wholesale, and service businesses, serving both local as well as regional markets. Within the GB District, mixed-use development projects are also allowed as an option to provide for village-style development of a mix of uses, including multifamily residential, small-scale retail, office, and public uses, while preserving open space, and to limit commercial sprawl.

Limited Business (LB): Provides areas for day-to-day localized shopping needs, convenience shopping services to neighborhood areas, and limited specialized business uses in certain parts of town. Within the LB District, mixed-use development projects are also allowed as an option to provide for village-style development of a mix of uses, including multi-family residential, small-scale retail, office, and public uses, while preserving open space, and to limit commercial sprawl.

Office Business (OB): Provides areas for planned office parks, light industrial and research centers and professional office buildings.

Office Park (OP): Provides a park-like setting for office uses, certain industrial uses, and miscellaneous compatible uses.

Light Industrial (LI): Provides areas for light industry and non-manufacturing businesses, heavy commercial uses, automotive and mechanical services, and outdoor storage uses.

Open Space (OS): Reserves certain areas for conservation of natural resources and open recreational and institutional uses

Public (P): Provides for major public lands owned by federal, state or municipal governments. The purpose of this district is to provide zoning controls if the public use is abandoned or the land is sold for private use.

Traffic Sensitive: Identifies districts where special regulations regarding lot width/frontage shall apply. They are intended to provide for adequate and safe access onto major thoroughfares within the town.

Overlay Districts (3)

Atlantic Beach Overlay: Informed by the 2007 Atlantic Beach District Master Plan and Comprehensive Plan, the overlay district serves to transform this area into a more pedestrian-oriented, attractive and vibrant mixed-use village to serve the influx of seasonal visitors, the surrounding residential neighborhoods, and the town.

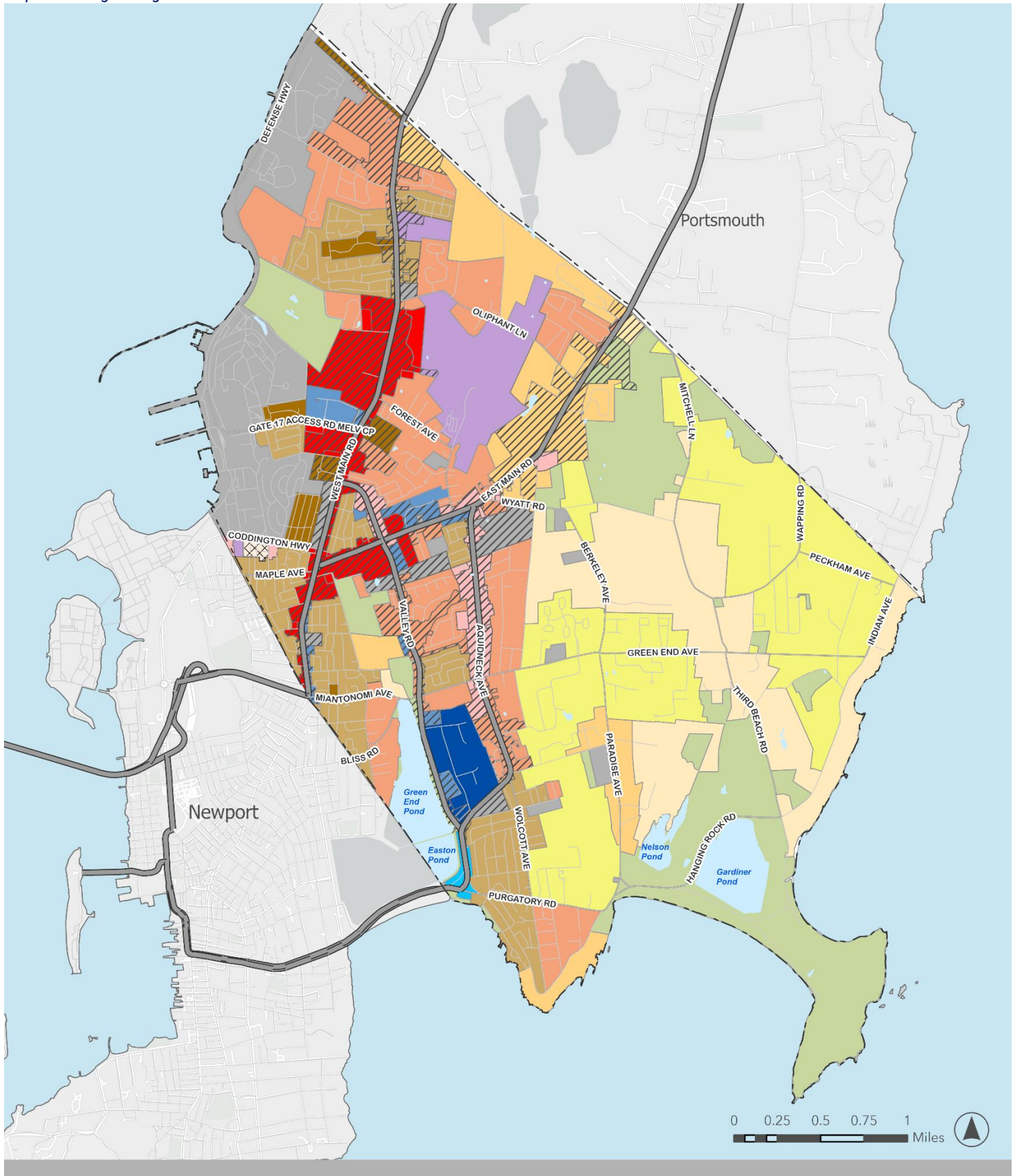
Floodplain Overlay District: The district includes all special flood hazard areas within the Town of Middletown designated as Zone A, AE, V, or VE on the Newport County Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) and Digital FIRM issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the administration of

the National Flood Insurance Program. The overlay is meant to ensure public safety; minimize hazards to persons and property from flooding, to protect watercourses from encroachment, and to maintain the capability of floodplains to retain and carry off floodwaters.

Watershed Protection District (WPD): Identifies areas where development has the potential to adversely impact ground and surface public drinking water supplies. WPD Zone 1 includes areas within 200 feet of a tributary to a public drinking water supply or with hydric soils, and prohibits certain high-risk uses while requiring a special use permit for most other types of development. Zone 2 includes the remainder of water supply watersheds and requires review for uses with higher risk to the drinking water supply.

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Map 2: Existing Zoning



Existing Zoning

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|---|
| GB (General Business) | OB (Office Business) | P (Public) | R-40 (Low Density Residential) | R-20A (Traffic Sensitive Medium Density Residential) | RMA (Traffic Sensitive Low Density Residential) |
| GBA (Traffic Sensitive General Business) | OBA (Traffic Sensitive Office Business) | PA (Traffic Sensitive Public) | R-30 (Medium Density Residential) | R-10 (High Density Residential) | ABD (Atlantic Beach District) |
| LB (Limited Business) | OP (Office Park) | R-60 (Low Density Residential) | R-30A (Traffic Sensitive Medium Density Residential) | R-10A (Traffic Sensitive High Density Residential) | Mobile Trailer |
| LBA (Traffic Sensitive Limited Business) | OPA (Traffic Sensitive Office Park) | R-60A (Traffic Sensitive Low Density Residential) | R-20 (Medium Density Residential) | RM (Residential Multi-Family) | Roads |
| LI (Light Industrial) | OS (Open Space) | | | | Highways |
| LIA (Traffic Sensitive Light Industrial) | OSA (Traffic Sensitive Open Space) | | | | Town Boundaries |



Source: Middletown GIS
 Date: 11.11.2024
 Existing Conditions Report

DEVELOPMENT TRENDS / PLANNED FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Over the last twenty years, Middletown has experienced a decline in its agricultural, forest, institutional, and vacant land as residential and industrial land uses have increased. Commercial, mixed-use, and recreational land use have also increased modestly over this time period.

The anticipated West Main Road and Coddington Highway redevelopment project will transform 15 underutilized acres of Town-owned land into a mixed-use development that might include residential, office, retail, recreational spaces, and housing. A potential public-private partnership could transform the corridor and support job creation and enhanced public amenities in addition to increasing municipal tax revenue.

Table 3: Land Use Change Over Time

Land Use Change Over Time

Land Use Category	2003-04 Acreage	2020 Acreage	% Change
Transitional Areas (urban open)	17	39	130%
Power Lines (100' or more width)	5	10	116%
Industrial (manufacturing, design, assembly, etc.)	33	49	49%
Softwood Forest (>80% softwood)	3	4	36%
Low Density Residential (>2 acre lots)	82	104	27%
Medium Low Density Residential (1 to 2 acre lots)	182	218	20%
Wetland	325	370	14%
Medium Density Residential (1 to 1/4 acre lots)	965	1,089	13%
Medium High Density Residential (1/4 to 1/8 acre lots)	1,419	1,570	11%
Commercial (sale of products and services)	456	485	6%
Developed Recreation (all recreation)	465	494	6%
Brushland (shrub and brush areas, reforestation)	539	571	6%
Sandy Areas (not beaches)	38	40	5%
Railroads (and associated facilities)	40	42	4%
Airports (and associated facilities)	128	132	3%

Land Use Change Over Time (continued)

Land Use Category	2003-04 Acreage	2020 Acreage	% Change
Waste Disposal (landfills, junkyards, etc.)	6	6	1%
Commercial/Industrial Mixed	90	91	1%
Water	463	467	1%
Other Transportation (terminals, docks, etc.)	61	61	0%
Roads (divided highways >200' plus related facilities)	2	2	0%
Mines, Quarries and Gravel Pits	10	10	0%
Cemeteries	53	53	0%
Beaches	40	40	0%
Rock Outcrops	23	23	0%
Orchards, Groves, Nurseries	102	100	-2%
Mixed Forest	150	147	-2%
Idle Agriculture (abandoned fields and orchards)	108	105	-3%
High Density Residential (<1/8 acre lots)	1,054	1,010	-4%
Cropland (tillable)	1,482	1,381	-7%
Institutional (schools, hospitals, churches, etc.)	465	431	-7%
Pasture (agricultural not suitable for tillage)	523	475	-9%
Deciduous Forest (>80% hardwood)	818	646	-21%
Vacant Land	71	22	-69%
Commercial/Residential Mixed	0	4	*
Ground-mounted Solar Energy Systems	0	3	*
Water and Sewage Treatment	0	3	*
Total	10,220	10,298	

Source: *RIGIS, 2020.*

Needs & Opportunities

CATEGORY	NEEDS	OPPORTUNITIES
Smart Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revitalize vacant and underutilized properties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop tools and mechanisms to support the redevelopment and reuse of vacant and underutilized properties into desired community uses.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balancing the preservation of open space with new development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to focus on smart growth strategies that prioritize the redevelopment, adaptive reuse, and revitalization of already developed areas
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address development pressures on unprotected undeveloped land, especially agricultural land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with local conservation organizations and property owners to put protection measures in place
Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rethinking single-use commercial/retail areas to better fit the needs of shifting and evolving markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many existing commercial, retail, and office spaces offer opportunities for blue economy uses
Island-wide planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening the relationship between the Town and federal government and institutional uses on the west side of the island. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in regional planning and collaboration to proactively engage island-wide partners in common development goals

FUTURE LAND USE

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) provides a long-term guide for how land in Middletown should develop or redevelop in alignment with the community’s vision and goals. Working in tandem with other elements of the Comprehensive Plan, it establishes the foundation for future land use decisions, public and private investments, and zoning updates.

This FLUM does not depict substantial changes from the previously adopted version. This updated version incorporates changes that reflect recent development activity, supports recommendations in other sections of the comprehensive plan, and strengthens support for mixed-use as a preferred development pattern in certain areas.

The “mixed-use” designation has been added to all properties previously designated as “General Business” and “Limited & Office Business.” The updated Future Land Use Plan now refers to these designations as “General Business/Mixed-Use” and “Limited & Office Business/Mixed-Use”. Mixed-use development continues to be supported by both the community and the Town as a strategy for infill and redevelopment within existing commercial corridors. As commercial buildings age into less competitive space or as spaces remain vacant for extended periods, property owners are increasingly considering other options. Mixed-use developments with neighborhood-scale retail can improve transitions between the Town’s commercial areas and residential neighborhoods, while also reducing short local trips between these areas.

The “High Density Residential” use designation has been applied to the northeast side of West Main Road in the vicinity of Marshall Lane, replacing the former “Industrial” designation to reflect the Rosebrook Commons development project.

The “Corporate Park” designation has been renamed to “Research & Innovation Park” to support its desired future as a more flexible, amenitized, and diverse commercial district. Traditional large-scale office and corporate parks can be less competitive within today’s economy, where businesses increasingly seek adaptable office and light industrial spaces that support innovation and evolving business models. Key sectors on Aquidneck Island, including the blue economy, research and development, and defense, depend on versatile facilities that can be tailored to their specialized needs. To remain competitive as a business location, Middletown must ensure its limited commercial areas keep pace with these shifting market demands.

A new “Mixed-Use Village” designation has been created to encourage coordinated village-style development across multiple adjacent parcels. This designation supports a mix of uses including multifamily residential, small-scale retail, office, and public uses. It encourages publicly-accessible open space and compact development patterns. Applied as an unmapped “floating” designation, it signals the Town’s intent to guide coordinated, cross-parcel mixed-use projects in areas best suited for this form of development.

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS

General Business/Mixed-Use - This designation provides for retail, wholesale, and service businesses that serve both local and regional markets. Mixed-use development projects are also allowed as an option to provide for village-style development of a mix of uses including multifamily residential, small-scale retail, office, and public uses, while preserving open space and limiting commercial sprawl.

Limited & Office Business/Mixed-Use - This designation provides for day-to-day local shopping needs within neighborhood areas, professional offices and limited specialized business uses in certain areas. Mixed-use development projects are also allowed as an option to provide for village-style development of a mix of uses, including multi-family residential, small-scale retail, office, and public uses, while preserving open space and limiting commercial sprawl.

Research & Innovation Park - This designation allows for office and light industrial uses in a campus-like setting with a specific focus on supporting high-tech and defense related industry uses.

Industrial/Light Industrial – This designation supports light industry and non-manufacturing businesses, heavy commercial uses, automotive and mechanical services and outdoor storage uses, primarily close to the Newport Airport.

Airport – This designation applies to the Colonel Robert F. Wood Airpark, also known as Newport State Airport, which is owned and operated by the Rhode Island Airport Corporation (RIAC). The airport area includes nine parcels that are used by airport facilities or to protect runway approach airspace.

Institutional – This designation includes major public lands owned by federal, state and municipal governments or their agencies, and quasi-public institutions. It provides zoning controls if the public use is abandoned or the land is sold for private use. This land use category is generally zoned Public under the Town's zoning regulations.

Low Density Residential - This designation preserves low density residential areas in rural parts of town for large lot single-family development and agricultural use. It reflects 40,000 to 60,000 square foot minimum lot sizes typically.

Medium Density Residential - This designation preserves medium density residential areas in parts of town where environmental conditions do not allow for smaller single-family lot sizes and where agricultural and certain other uses may be permitted. It reflects 20,000 to 30,000 square foot minimum lot sizes typically.

High Density Residential - This designation allows for a range of more intense housing types such as multifamily (apartments and condominiums), mobile homes and trailer parks, as well as one- and two-family structures, within the central built-up area of town where public water and sewer is provided. This category includes the R-10, Residential Multifamily, and Mobile/Transient Trailer zoning districts.

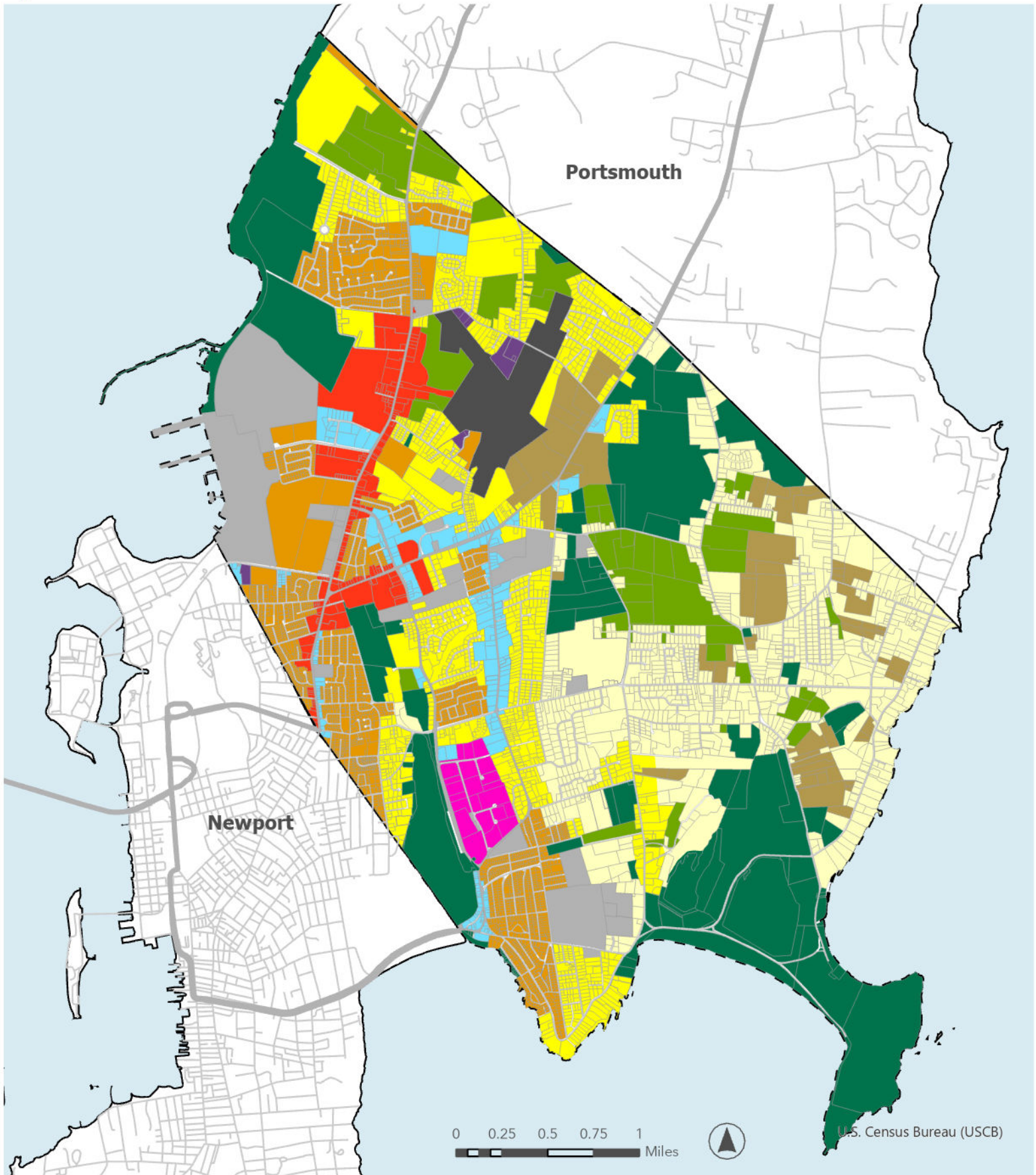
Active Agricultural Use – This category is one of three future land use open space designations and includes agricultural lands currently zoned residential that the Town and community would like to remain as active agriculture use. The designation does not intend to take away any of the landowners' development rights or access to collateral but rather convey the Town's intention for preferred future use.

Protected Agricultural and Open Space Lands – This designation typically includes agricultural and open space lands protected through conservation easements.

Publicly-Owned and/or Zoned Open Space – This designation includes lands acquired and owned by the Town, State or federal government for open space preservation. These areas fall within the Town's open space zoning district.

Mixed-Use Village – This floating designation encourages village-style development of a mix of uses across multiple parcels. Uses can include multifamily residential, townhomes, small-lot single-family, small-scale retail, office, and public uses. It encourages publicly-accessible open space and compact development patterns. In the future, this designation can be applied to identify specific areas where the Town intends for more coordinated mixed-use development and cross-parcel coordination in development.

Map 3: Future Land Use 2035



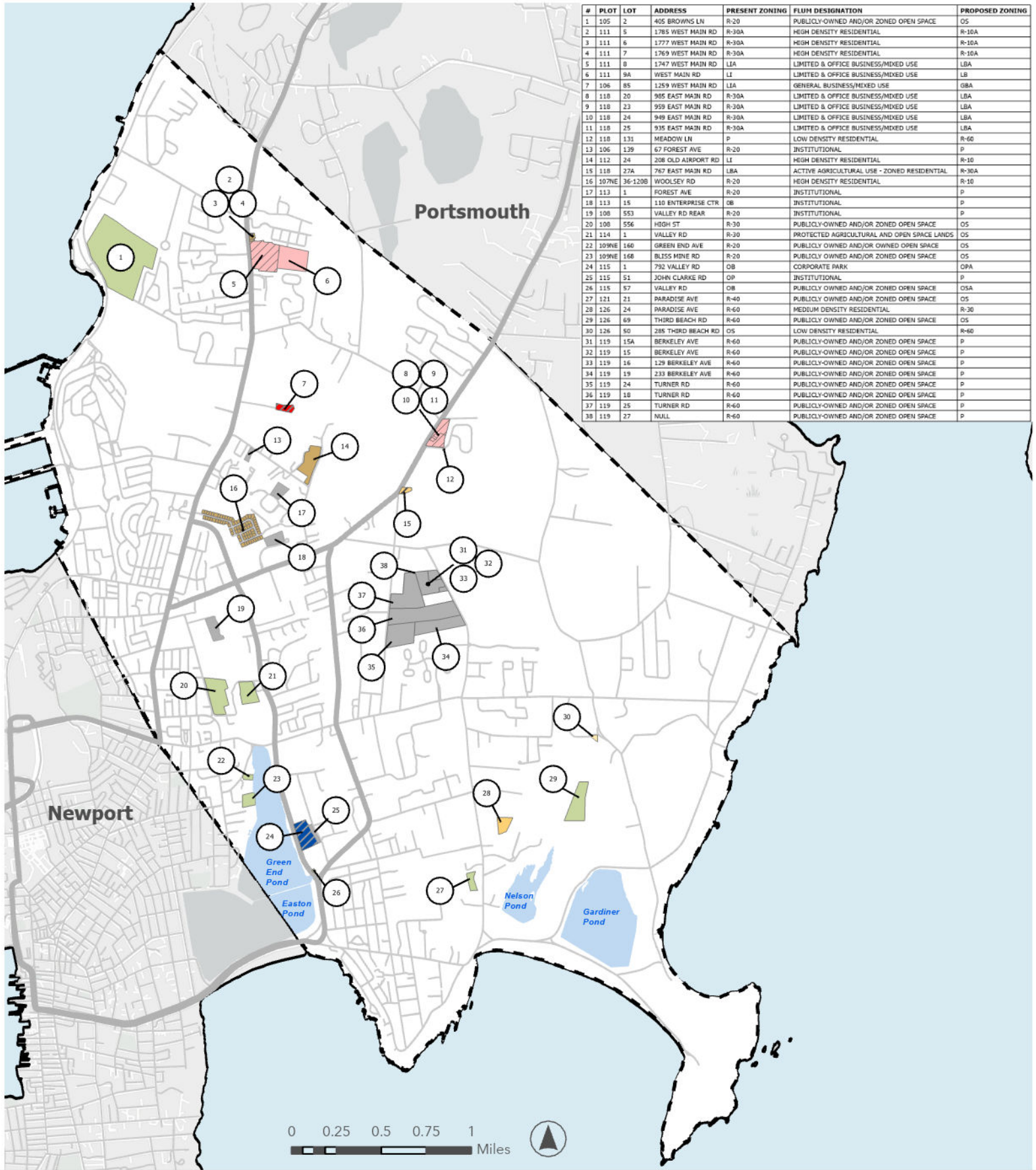
Future Land Use 2035

- | | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---|
| Town Boundaries | High Density Residential | Limited & Office Business/Mixed-use | Industrial/Light Industrial | Protected Agricultural and Open Space Lands |
| Low Density Residential | General Business/Mixed-use | Research & Innovation Park | Airport | Publicly-Owned and/or Zoned Open Space |
| Medium Density Residential | Institutional | Active Agricultural Use - Zoned Residential | Highways | |



Source: Middletown GIS
Date: 03.03.2026
Future Land Use

Map 4: Zoning Changes Consistent with Future Land Use Map



Existing Zoning

- GB (General Business)
- OB (Office Business)
- P (Public)
- R-30 (Medium Density Residential)
- R-10 (High Density Residential)
- ABD (Atlantic Beach District)
- GBA (Traffic Sensitive General Business)
- OBA (Traffic Sensitive Office Business)
- PA (Traffic Sensitive Public)
- R-30A (Traffic Sensitive Medium Density Residential)
- R-10A (Traffic Sensitive High Density Residential)
- Mobile Trailer
- LB (Limited Business)
- OP (Office Park)
- R-60 (Low Density Residential)
- R-20A (Traffic Sensitive Low Density Residential)
- RMA (Residential Multi-Family)
- LBA (Traffic Sensitive Limited Business)
- OPA (Traffic Sensitive Office Park)
- R-60A (Traffic Sensitive Low Density Residential)
- R-20 (Medium Density Residential)
- R-20A (Traffic Sensitive Medium Density Residential)
- RM (Residential Multi-Family)
- LI (Light Industrial)
- OS (Open Space)
- R-40 (Low Density Residential)
- R-20A (Traffic Sensitive Medium Density Residential)
- RMA (Traffic Sensitive Low Density Residential)
- LIA (Traffic Sensitive Light Industrial)
- OSA (Traffic Sensitive Open Space)
- R-40 (Low Density Residential)
- RMA (Traffic Sensitive Low Density Residential)
- Roads
- Town Boundaries
- Highways



Source: Middletown GIS
Date: 03.03.2026
Zoning

Goals & Policies

LU-1. Support smart growth redevelopment that improves Middletown's character, economy, and quality of life

LU-1.1. Promote a land use and development framework based upon smart growth principles.

- a. *Coordinate transportation investments and land use policies to encourage compact, walkable, transit-supportive development.*
- b. Take appropriate steps to ensure that the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map are consistent with the Future Land Use Plan
- c. *Explore establishing the Atlantic Beach District as a State-recognized growth center.*
- d. *Continue exploring opportunities for smart growth redevelopment in the State-recognized growth center at West Main/Coddington.*

LU-1.2. Prioritize the redevelopment, adaptive reuse, rehabilitation, and revitalization of vacant and underutilized commercial properties.

- a. *Identify areas of town with capacity for greater mixed-use development and direct future infill and mixed-use development towards these identified areas to create the critical mass necessary to create a complete and vibrant neighborhood.*
- b. *Consider adopting incentives to attract desirable development and redevelopment in areas of town with existing infrastructure.*

LU-1.3. Enhance the aesthetics of our structures and built environment.

- a. *Invest in streetscape improvements on Town-owned roads and encourage improvements on State-owned roads and in new developments.*
- b. *Encourage the planting of appropriate native street trees that contribute to the town's tree canopy, and the preservation of existing trees in new developments.*
- c. *Uphold the town's commercial design standards that require the use of traditional colonial architecture and quality natural building materials that are historically accurate; review and revise as needed.*

LU-2. Protect natural resources through proactive and sustainable land use planning

LU-2.1. Work to conserve and connect lands, natural resources, important soils, and agricultural land that have conservation values that benefit the community.

- a. *Identify and prioritize environmentally sensitive areas.*
- b. *Purchase and protect environmentally sensitive land, where feasible and available.*

- c. *Preserve land as greenways and blueways, utilizing land trusts, conservation foundations, and government agencies as potential partners.*
- d. *Acquire development rights with land trusts and private/public land preservation organizations to agricultural parcels.*

LU-2.2. Ensure development has a minimal impact on scenic resources, which provide quality of life for residents and visitors.

- a. *Maintain an inventory of scenic resources.*
- b. *Consider scenic resources when reviewing the type, location, and intensity of land uses.*
- c. *Implement projects and programs that enhance views at publicly accessible viewpoints.*

LU-3. Maintain island-wide collaboration with other municipalities and anchor institutions

LU-3.1. Continue to participate in regional planning efforts with partners and neighboring communities.

- a. *Continue participation with Aquidneck Island Land Trust (AILT) resilience planning effort.*
- b. *Continue participation with Connect Greater Newport.*

LU-3.2. Support opportunities for appropriate redevelopment of the West Side which benefit the Town and residents while also considering the goals of the U.S. Navy, Coast Guard, and NOAA.

- a. *Continue to engage local and regional partners in discussions about compatible and appropriate uses around military land.*
- b. *Encourage future defense-related research and development and other compatible uses in appropriate locations that are proximate to existing facilities.*
- c. *Implement planned redevelopment of excess Navy land in line with findings of forthcoming Aquidneck Island and NAVSTA Compatible Use Study.*



5.

HOUSING

Overview

Housing plays a crucial role in the livability and prosperity of a community as well as its residents' social determinants of health. Not only does a home's location impact quality of life, but the condition and cost of a home also significantly influence physical and mental health which can impact educational outcomes and job performance. The 2021 and 2022 RI Life Index (RI Life Index, 2023), a scoring system produced by Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island and the Brown University School of Public Health that measures social determinants of health, indicate worsening scores across all determinants. The most significant ones being housing affordability and cost of living, which are performing poorly in both urban and suburban/rural communities in Rhode Island.

More than a third of Rhode Island households are cost burdened as home prices and rents continue to rise. Cost-burdened households spend 30% or more of their household income on housing. Limited new housing development across the state compounds these issues by creating a very limited housing supply. The COVID-19 pandemic and post-pandemic housing landscape have further exacerbated issues of housing insecurity, revealing a 72% increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness since 2019. In recent years, the RI State legislature has taken steps to lay the groundwork for addressing housing needs and affordability across the state, including amendments to state law with the goal of streamlining procedures and reducing the regulatory burdens on housing development.

The Town of Middletown is committed to building upon its past efforts while pursuing new goals and policies to continue supporting quality housing and expand opportunities for affordable housing development. The housing chapter assesses Middletown's current housing stock, examining it through the lens of affordability, community goals, and projected future housing needs.

Additional details and analysis of Middletown's housing stock and action plan is available in Appendix 1.

A Vision for Housing

Middletown will strive to provide a diverse range of housing that includes attainable and varying housing options for all life stages and income levels, while at the same time preserving the cherished qualities that give Middletown its coastal character.

The Community will support:

- Smaller mixed-use and multifamily housing on underutilized properties along our commercial corridors
- Design guidelines for new housing that are in keeping with the unique character of our town
- Housing opportunities that connect more residents to public transportation
- Housing efforts that seek to preserve loved open spaces across Middletown

Existing Context

EXISTING HOUSING STOCK

Middletown’s housing is distributed around town with higher density on the west side and along the main commercial corridors, where historically much of the residential construction has taken place. Older housing units were constructed on lots smaller than what current zoning permits. Land zoned for residential use in this area is zoned for higher density (four units per acre on average). The central part of the town is zoned for medium density residential but does contain some areas of higher density residential development. Lower density housing development is on the eastern side of town where there is limited public water and sewer service, and lot sizes are typically one or more acres. Housing in this area is scattered among many of the town’s agricultural and conservation lands.

There are 8,225 dwelling units in Middletown, most of which are detached single-family units. About 39% are two-family units or greater and 59% are comprised of ownership units. The housing stock includes more three-bedroom units than other sizes. Nearly all studio to one-bedroom units are rentals, but two-bedroom units are more evenly balanced between owner-occupied and rental. Owner-occupied units tend to be detached single-family while all larger multifamily units are rentals.

Middletown’s periods of highest construction activity were between 1950-1999 and before 1940. As a result, the median age of Middletown’s housing stock is 55 years (1969 median build year). Since 2000, comparatively few net-new units have been built, but over the last five years, housing production has started increasing as evidenced by recent building permit records. A higher share of multifamily units have been built in recent years than most of the decades prior.

About 88% of Middletown’s housing units are occupied by year-round residents, while nearly 13% are considered vacant or only occupied for a portion of the year. Middletown’s 12.6% vacancy rate suggests seasonal homes and short-term rentals continue to make up a significant proportion of the local housing stock. Units with seasonal, recreational, and occasional use contribute to more than half of Middletown’s vacancy rate. This continues the trend of prior decades which have seen an increasing share of Middletown homes being purchased as second homes for occasional use or short-term rentals.

To help manage short-term rentals, Middletown adopted a short-term housing ordinance that requires all rental units that are occupied for thirty-one days or less to apply for a permit of registration and inspection. Additionally, it regulates where short-term rentals are a permitted use.

Table 4: Housing Units

Total Housing

Total Housing Units	8,255
Single-Family	61%
Two-Family or greater	39%

Table 5: Housing Tenure

Housing Tenure

Total Housing Units	8,255
Occupied ownership units	59%
Occupied Rental units	41%

Source: U.S. Census ACS 5-year data, 2023.

Table 6: Age of Housing Stock

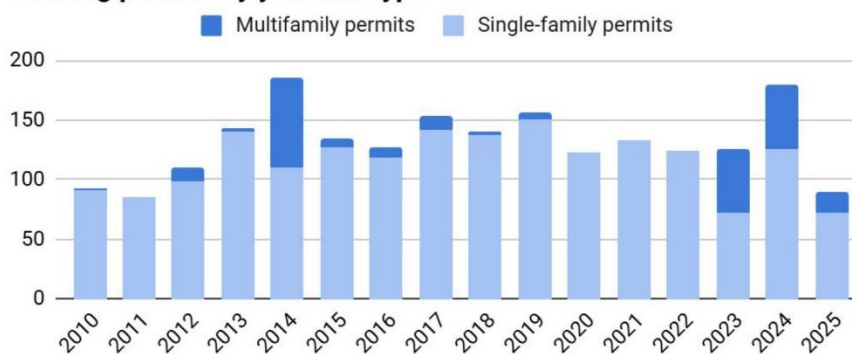
Age of Middletown's Existing Housing Stock

Year built	Units	Share
Permitted 2020 or later	775	9%
Built 2010 to 2019	277	3%
Built 2000 to 2009	285	3%
Built 1990 to 1999	871	10%
Built 1980 to 1989	1,332	15%
Built 1970 to 1979	1,096	12%
Built 1960 to 1969	1,148	13%
Built 1950 to 1959	1,118	12%
Built 1940 to 1949	665	7%
Built 1939 or earlier	1,394	16%

Source: 2023 Census ACS 5-year, 2020-2025 Census Building Permit Survey.

Figure 1: Approved Building Permits 2010-2025

Building permits by year and type



Source: 2023 Census ACS 5-year, 2020-2025 Census Building Permit Survey.

Table 7: Housing Occupancy

Housing Occupancy

Total Housing Units	8,255	
Occupied Units	7,237	87.7%
Vacant Units	1,018	12.3%
<i>For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use</i>	514	50.5%
<i>For rent</i>	356	35%
<i>All other vacant</i>	79	7.8%
<i>For sale, only</i>	28	2.8%
<i>Sold, not occupied</i>	26	2.6%
<i>Rented, not occupied</i>	15	1.5%

Table 8: Change in Seasonal Housing Units

Seasonal Housing Units

Year	Total Seasonal Housing Units	Percent of Total Housing Units
1990	81	1.1%
2000	193	2.5%
2010	339	4.4%
2020	522	6.5%
2021	603	7.2%
2023	514	6.2%

Source: U.S. Census ACS 5-year data, 2023 (all charts).

Please reference the Appendix for additional analysis and inventory of Middletown’s housing stock.

HOUSING COSTS

According to the 2025 HousingWorks RI Housing Fact Book, produced at Roger Williams University, in 2024 the median single-family home price in Middletown was \$725,000, up 80% from 2019.

In addition, average home sale prices in Middletown increased more rapidly since 2020 than over the previous several years, especially among higher-priced homes. While in some parts of the country, prices began stabilizing in 2023, this is not the case yet in Middletown.

The average asking rent for a newly occupied unit in Middletown has been rising for the past decade at a pace that began to accelerate in 2020 and has not yet stabilized. According to the 2025 Housing Fact Book, the average two-bedroom rent is \$2,430, up 23% from 2019. This includes units that were leased long ago under different market conditions.

Limited housing supply paired with high demand has driven prices up across the country and state and the dynamics in Middletown are no exception. As a coastal town close to Providence and Boston, Middletown is an attractive place to live. The COVID-19 pandemic and rise of remote work has further escalated the cost of housing and preferences towards suburban living over more urban areas. This has created greater competition, further escalating home prices in response to high demand and a high willingness to pay from prospective home buyers. These trends can be observed in Middletown's home prices between 2020 and 2023. While this has increased property values for existing homeowners, it has significant implications for local housing affordability.

DRAFT

Figure 2: Sales Price and Asking Rent Trends

Home Sales Prices in Middletown 2012-2023

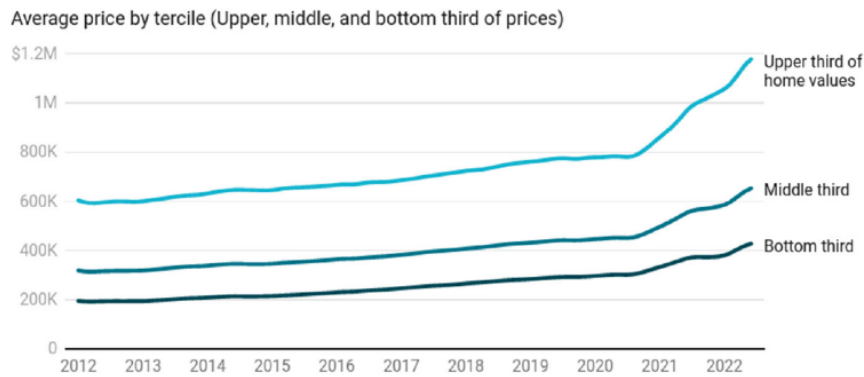


Chart: CommunityScale • Source: Zillow, CommunityScale • Created with Datawrapper

Source: Zillow ZHVI, 2012-2023.

Average Asking Rent in Middletown 2015-2023

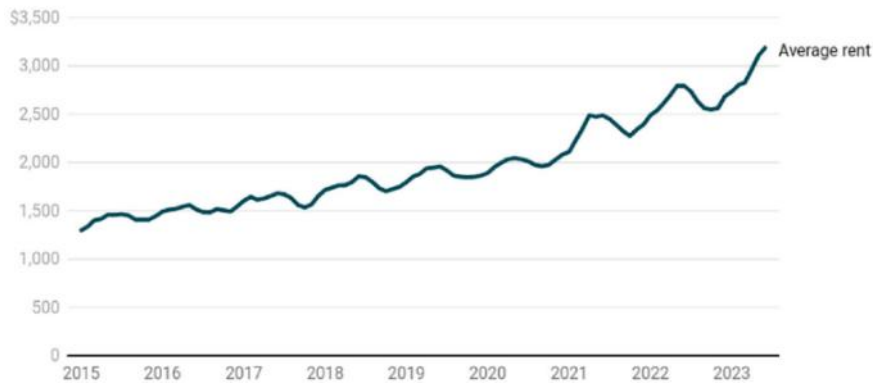


Chart: CommunityScale • Source: Zillow, CommunityScale • Created with Datawrapper

Source: Zillow ZORI, 2015-2023.

COST-BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS

Like nearly all places in the country, Middletown includes a number of cost-burdened households that have not found housing they can comfortably or stably afford.

As observed in the 2025 HousingWorks RI Housing Fact Book, there are about 2,818 cost burdened households in Middletown. Among owner households, 34% are cost-burdened while half of renter households are cost-burdened. Note these figures are based on 2019-2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates. More recently available 2023 data highlights slightly different numbers but a similar proportion of cost burdened households, about 36%. Severely cost-burdened households, those who spend 50% or more of their income on housing, make up approximately 52% of Middletown’s cost burdened households.

Table 9: Cost-Burdened Households

Cost-burdened low and moderate income (LMI) households			Tenure of cost-burdened LMI households		
LMI household type	Total	Percent of total cost-burdened households	LMI household type	Total	Percent of total cost-burdened households
Total cost burdened households	2,663	100%	Total cost burdened households	2,663	100%
Cost-burdened LMI households	1,284	48%	Cost-burdened LMI households that rent	1,259	47%
Severely cost-burdened LMI households	1,379	52%	Cost-burdened LMI households that own	1,404	53%

Source: U.S. Census ACS 5-year, 2023 data.

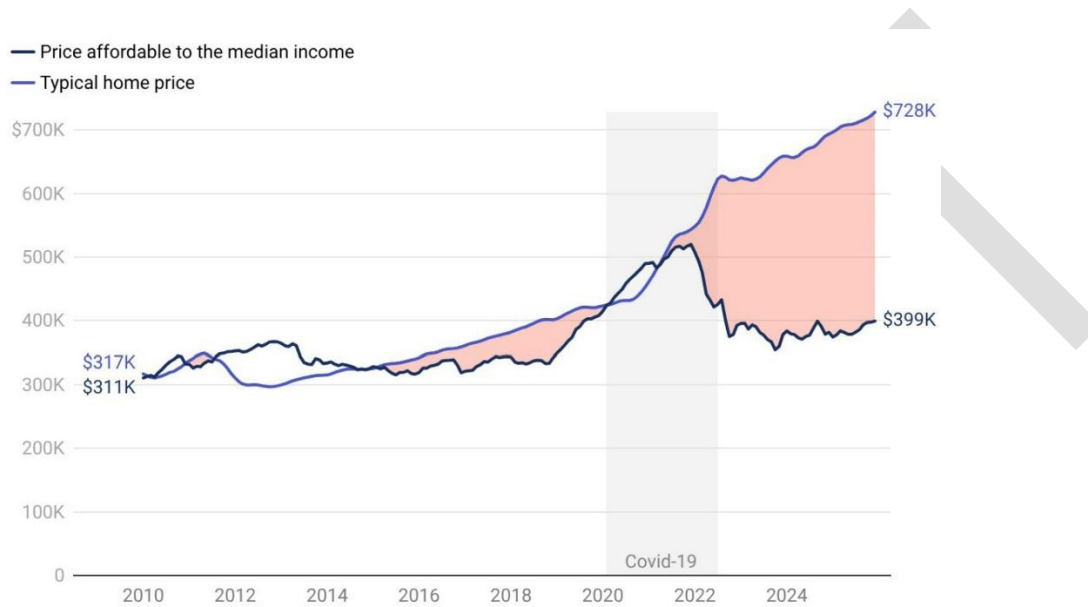
In Middletown, the cost of a median price home has not been affordable to a household earning the median income for many years. Currently, the median price is more nearly double what the median income could afford if buying today.

According to the 2025 Housing Fact Book, the median single-family home price is \$725,000 which is affordable to households earning \$226,500 or more. That number is based on 2024 data. The Figure below uses a combination of ACS, housing market, and transaction data to capture conditions through the end of 2025. The gap between median home price and the home value affordable to a household earning median income illustrates a growing attainability gap within the Middletown community. This means there is a higher barrier to entry for first-time homebuyers and increased risk that an existing resident might be priced out of the community if they choose or need to move to a different house.

Figure 3: Listing Price vs Household Earnings

Median Listing Prices in Middletown Compared to Median Household Earnings

Can a household with a median income afford a median home price?



Notes: Affordability calculation assumes a maximum housing cost of 30% household income, including the following factors: current interest rate, 20% down payment, mortgage insurance (PMI), property tax, property insurance.

Source: 2010-2023 Census ACS 5-year, HUD, FRED, CPI, Zillow.

EXISTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Senior housing

Subsidized housing for seniors is provided at two locations in Middletown. The 49-unit Forest Farm Assisted Living Facility provides supportive housing for low-income frail elderly. It was developed under a demonstration program for alternatives to institutional care sponsored by Rhode Island Housing, the Department of Elderly Affairs, and the Department of Human Services; and is subsidized through the Low-Income Tax Credit Program (LITC).

West House provides 49 subsidized rental units for very low-income elderly residents. HUD Project Rental Assistance is used to cover the difference between the HUD-approved operating cost per unit and the tenant’s rent. Project Rental Assistance contract payments can be approved for up to five years. Contracts are renewable based on the availability of funds. A 54-unit expansion has been recently completed.

Disability Housing

Low and moderate-income individuals with special needs are served by 94 beds at several group homes, 15 units subsidized under the HUD 811 program at Villa Nia, and additional subsidized units at Freedom Apartments. Disability housing locations include:

- Villa Nia
- Freedom Apartments
- Forest Avenue

Transitional Housing

Emergency and transitional housing in Middletown is provided by two non-profit organizations. Lucy's Hearth is an agency that provides shelter and services to women with children who are homeless. The shelter, which has 30 beds in 9 family bedrooms, is at full capacity 95% of the time; in addition, there is a waiting list for families needing the shelter. Child and Family Services of Newport provides eight transitional units for homeless families.

Subsidized Housing Units

Middletown's local housing stock includes a mix of supportive housing supported by HUD programs such as Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) and Housing Choice Vouchers. For households with particularly low incomes, these units can represent one of the only housing options available to them.

While most of these programs are funded indefinitely, LIHTC units are only required to remain cost-restricted for up to 30 years. After that "expiration" date, the units may convert to market-rate costs, effectively ending their affordability for low-income households.

LOW-TO-MODERATE INCOME HOUSING

Rhode Island’s Low and Moderate Income Housing Act requires at least 10% of each community’s housing supply to consist of income-restricted units. Communities that do not meet this standard are subject to comprehensive permit applications for developments containing at least 25% affordable units which can override zoning controls like density, parking, bedrooms, and floor area.

About 6.1% of Middletown’s housing stock satisfies the law’s requirements. Of the 460 LMI units, 264 are rental units, 34 are ownership units, 54 are group home beds, and 108 are federally voucher-supported. Of these units, 98 are elderly housing, 268 are family units, and 94 are units for special needs. Several ongoing projects, along with others in the development pipeline, are expected to add new affordable housing units. Additional information and analysis on Middletown’s low-to-moderate income housing is available in the Appendix.

Table 10: Low- to Moderate- Income Housing Stock

Existing Low Moderate-Income Housing

Unit Type	Total Units	Percent
Rental	264	57%
Ownership	34	7%
Group Home Beds	54	12%
Federal voucher supported	108	24%
Total	460	6.1%

Source: Office of Housing and Community Development, State of Rhode Island 2024

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PIPELINE

As of October 2025, 425 multifamily housing units have been approved for development with some projects already complete, several in-progress. Another 186 units are anticipated through two future projects.

In-Progress Projects

- *Rosebrook Commons*: mixed-use project with 81 market-rate units and 63 affordable units on West Main Road.
- *East Main Road Affordable Housing*: comprehensive permit project for 36 affordable units on East Main Road
- *Polo Center/Samuel's Realty*: mixed-use project with 60 market-rate units on Aquidneck Avenue
- *Prescott Point*: expansion project that will add 20 market-rate units to existing condo development on West Main Road
- *CCE Development*: adaptive reuse project that will convert commercial buildings into 22 market-rate units at the former Grange site on East Main Road (two projects)
- *59 Aquidneck Avenue*: adaptive reuse project that will convert a commercial building into six market-rate units on Aquidneck Avenue
- *50 Enterprise Residences*: adaptive reuse project that will convert a commercial building into 82 market-rate units off of Enterprise Drive
- *Aquidneck Commerce Center*: adaptive reuse project will convert a commercial building into seven market-rate units on Aquidneck Avenue

Planned Projects

- *West Main/Coddington Redevelopment*: anticipated mixed-use development project with market-rate and affordable units at the corner of West Main Road and Coddington Highway

Completed Projects

- *Aquidneck Crossing/Irongate*: recent mixed-use project with 12 market-rate units on East Main Road
- *Aquidneck Commerce Center*: recent mixed-use project with 12 market-rate units on Aquidneck Avenue
- *West House Senior Housing Expansion*: recent expansion project that added 54 affordable senior units
- *St. George's School*: recent faculty housing project with six market-rate units on Purgatory Road

In addition, 32 market-rate single-family homes have also been approved for development.

Needs & Opportunities

CATEGORY	NEEDS	OPPORTUNITIES
Variety/Suitability of Housing Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A greater variety of housing options beyond single-family homes. ▪ More smaller units for young professionals and seniors who may be interested in downsizing. ▪ Increased options for seniors who want to age in place ▪ Monitor the proportion of short-term rentals which can reduce the availability of year-round housing opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An increasingly aging population and decline in family households and household size indicates a potential preference shift away from larger homes towards smaller homes and low/no maintenance options like rentals ▪ Expanding the supply of smaller, more flexible housing options can meet the needs of young professionals and seniors looking to downsize, while freeing up larger homes for young families ▪ Take advantage of Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) regulations to expand housing stock, support homeowners, and provide more affordable options
Housing Costs & Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manage rising housing costs (for owners and renters) relative to median household income. ▪ Reduce the proportion of cost-burdened households, paying 30% or more of household income on housing. Low-and-moderate (LMI) households are especially impacted. ▪ Increase the supply of workforce housing for households between 60-80% AMI. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increasing interest in mixed-income and multifamily housing ▪ The shared need and interest in increasing workforce and affordable housing across Aquidneck Island communities creates opportunities for collaboration and innovation ▪ Growth of Coast Guard and NOAA operations at Newport NAVSTA will create greater demand for worker housing and therefore potential opportunities to partner in increasing local housing stock.
Production & Supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Address the high cost of development, especially 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revise zoning to ease density restrictions and allow mixed-use

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	<p>related to workforce and affordable housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase housing available to accommodate projected population growth and new residents interested in relocating to Middletown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cultivate relationships with housing partners to support new housing development ▪ Work with the State and others to identify funding resources to help offset the costs of development
New Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create opportunities for new development despite limited available developable land ▪ Balancing the community's prioritization of open space preservation with development of remaining available land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Redevelopment or conversion of vacant and underutilized commercial or retail sites ▪ Explore greater use of ADUs and subdivision of large lots
Affordable Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased funding to support the need ▪ Improve public perceptions of affordable housing to minimize opposition to its development ▪ Reduce public opposition to affordable housing proposals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public-private partnerships ▪ Highlight local successful affordable and mixed-income housing projects to obtain community buy-in ▪ Achieve the State's 10% low-and-moderate income housing requirement to strengthen local authority over comprehensive permits

Goals & Policies

Middletown's housing goals and policies focus on expanding the variety of housing options available to its existing and future residents while working towards State goals for the provision of low- and moderate-income housing. Middletown recognizes the need to expand and increase the accessibility of its housing stock while also continuing to prioritize sustainable development that improves quality of life and preserves the Town's character.

H-1. Protect existing supply of affordable housing

H-1.1. Monitor existing affordable housing stock.

- a. *Maintain a detailed affordable housing inventory and work with owners and other partners in an effort to preserve expiring units.*

H-1.2. Support creation of low- and moderate-income housing units from existing development.

- a. *Investigate conversion of mobile home parks into cooperatives.*
- b. *Investigate the potential to expand existing affordable housing developments including Lucy's Heart and Oxbow.*
- c. *Pursue the redevelopment, conversion, and adaptive reuse of vacant or underutilized structures into affordable housing units.*
- d. *Investigate potential to increase density of existing multifamily developments.*

H-2. Provide a variety of housing options that are attainable to and accommodating for all income levels, age groups, and abilities

H-2.1. Support development of special needs housing.

- a. *Continue to support subsidized housing for special needs individuals through Community Development Block Grants and other available funding.*
- b. *Apply/advocate for ADA federal and state funding for access and safety improvements for residential units occupied by elderly and disabled tenants/owners.*

H-2.2. Support development of senior housing and opportunities for aging in place.

- a. *Continue to provide CDBG funding to assist in creating housing for senior citizens.*
- b. *Continue to support development of Senior Independent Living Facilities as defined in the Zoning Ordinance.*
- c. *Allow for the adaption of accessory dwelling units to low- and moderate- income housing.*
- d. *Continue to grant tax exemptions to seniors; allow tax deferments for elderly; and freeze taxes for low-income seniors.*

H-2.3. Support development of affordable family and multifamily housing.

- a. *Provide for affordable housing for households up to 120% Area Median Income (AMI) in Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance.*
- b. *Encourage a mix of unit sizes, number of bedrooms, and unit typologies in market rate and low- and moderate-income housing developments.*

H-2.4. Increase the number of year-round rental properties.

- a. *Incentivize the rehabilitation of unused or underutilized buildings and large homes into multifamily dwellings and rental units.*
- b. *Encourage and incentivize the development, adaptation, and use of accessory dwelling units and seasonal properties as year-round and long-term rentals.*
- c. *Continue monitoring the supply of short-term rentals (STRs) and consider additional actions if deemed necessary.*

H-3. Increase supply of workforce housing

H-3.1. Promote the development of workforce housing.

- a. *Continue to pursue adoption of Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance with density bonus.*
- b. *Explore implementation of a municipal subsidy program with a multi-tiered incentives structure and identify potential funding sources.*
- c. *Prioritize affordable homeownership programs in CDBG applications.*
- d. *Permit forms of housing that are affordable without subsidies, such as multifamily housing, mobile homes and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).*
- e. *Promote development of new rental housing by allowing multifamily and mixed-use development where appropriate in the Zoning Ordinance.*

H-4. Reduce housing costs while promoting more sustainable development

H-4.1. Advance lower housing costs through the waiving of associated Town fees for low-and-moderate income housing development.

- a. *Develop standards and process for waiving or reducing building permit and other fees for affordable housing projects.*

H-4.2. Encourage mixed-use and transit-oriented developments.

- a. *Create incentives for developers of mixed-use developments to create low- and moderate-income housing units.*
- b. *Allow mixed-use by-right in appropriate areas including second-story residential over commercial properties.*

- H-4.3. Encourage infill development and conversion of existing structures or underdeveloped properties into affordable housing.
- a. *Identify areas suitable for infill development/redevelopment.*
 - b. *Consider reducing restrictions on lot sizes, setbacks, lot coverage, height, and parking requirements to encourage infill.*
 - c. *Continue to investigate municipally and privately owned properties which could be considered suitable sites for the development of affordable residential units.*
- H-4.4. Advance the use of energy efficiency and climate resiliency measures in building design and construction to decrease long-term housing costs.
- a. *Enforce energy efficient building codes.*
 - b. *Promote energy efficiency programs.*
 - c. *Require green infrastructure and other flood mitigation measures in new development.*

H-5. Promote safe, connected, and accessible development close to public transit

- H-5.1. Integrate affordable housing into the community.
- a. *Ensure affordable units are integrated with market-rate units in new developments whenever feasible, to avoid the concentration of units in specific areas of town.*
 - b. *Require inclusionary units be on-site whenever feasible.*
- H-5.2. Consider characteristics of surrounding area when reviewing plans for affordable housing.
- a. *Encourage the siting of affordable housing near existing services, public transit and employment opportunities.*
 - b. *Encourage developments for elderly and special needs housing to be easily accessible to municipal, commercial, and medical facilities as well as transit.*

H-6. Make progress toward the State's 10% requirement for low- and moderate-income housing

- H-6.1. Ensure coordination of affordable housing activities.
- a. *Maintain an affordable housing committee to implement the affordable housing plan and review the plan's progress annually.*
- H-6.2. Identify potential locations for comprehensive permit developments and collaborate with local affordable housing developers to achieve mutual goals.
- a. *Continue use of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) funding for programs that create low- and moderate-income units in Middletown supported by the community.*

- b. Further evaluate the higher priority identified sites for comprehensive permit development and identify potential for-profit and non-profit development partners.*

H-6.3. Secure funding for affordable housing.

- a. Monitor and pursue federal, state, and local funding opportunities for development of affordable housing.*
- b. Advocate for increase in project-based rental subsidies tied to Middletown housing units.*
- c. Explore establishing an affordable housing trust fund.*
- d. Work with RI Housing, neighboring communities, and other affordable housing partners to maximize the availability of federal and state resources like the Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG).*

H-6.4. Advocate for fair and effective affordable housing legislation at the state level

- a. Participate in review and update of current affordable housing legislation in partnership with other municipalities.*

H-7. Promote housing opportunities that support economic development by prioritizing the redevelopment of underutilized commercial, residential, and/or vacant spaces in commercial areas

H-7.1. Locate housing near existing services and facilities, employment opportunities, and transportation.

- a. Coordinate streetscape improvements like sidewalks, crosswalks, bicycle facilities and other amenities so they facilitate maximum affordable housing opportunities.*

H-7.2. Prioritize the redevelopment of underutilized commercial and/or vacant spaces into mixed-use and multifamily housing.

- a. Identify commercial areas suitable for mixed-use development.*
- b. Identify a range of uses that would complement housing and best accomplish Middletown's economic development goals.*
- c. Incentivize preferred mixed-use developments with density or other bonuses.*
- d. When commercial buildings are adaptively reused for multifamily housing, explore further opportunities to convert excess parking area into additional housing.*



6.

**ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

Overview

Middletown's local economy is robust and diversified, with a wide range of employers and sectors represented, including significant facilities and installations operated by major regional and national agencies and organizations. While the Navy base directly and indirectly drives a significant share of Middletown's employment and economic activity, other industries such as hospitality, retail, and healthcare are also well-represented. Town staff and leadership should maintain ongoing dialogue and collaboration with all of Middletown's local businesses and agency representatives to help preserve their contributions to the economy and help them grow.

Based on market and real estate trends, Middletown should plan for new development in the industrial, hospitality, and multifamily housing sectors. Retail and office are less likely to contribute to new development but should be reinforced through planning and policy to protect their current share of jobs and tax base in the community.

Middletown's economic growth and development should be balanced with consideration for the natural environment and local character that helps define the community's identity. This includes preservation of Middletown's agricultural heritage by reinforcing farms and related businesses as an essential part of the town's economic story.

While Middletown's local economy is thriving in its own right, the town's future success also relies on factors and forces acting at a regional scale. In partnership with adjacent communities, Middletown should continue to participate in Aquidneck Island-wide planning and collaboration around economic, resilience, transportation, and other fundamental issues that impact Middletown and its neighbors together.

The Economic Development chapter analyzes employment and investment trends, inventories local needs and opportunities, and details goals and policies for future economic growth and prosperity.

A Vision for Economic Development

Middletown will support long-term economic development opportunities and living-wage job creation; high caliber education and training of the workforce; a positive business environment; and the long-term viability of agricultural businesses.

Existing Context

MIDDLETOWN'S EMPLOYMENT BASE

Middletown's employment base includes a wide variety of jobs across most industry sectors. Professional and technical services, accommodation and food services, and retail trade represent the largest sectors with the highest proportion of employees and employment establishments. Future employment growth in Middletown will be driven in large part by new installations at NAVSTA Newport planned by the US Coast

Guard and NOAA, which are anticipated to bring hundreds of new staff and their families to the region, many likely settling in Middletown.

Table 11: Employment by Sector

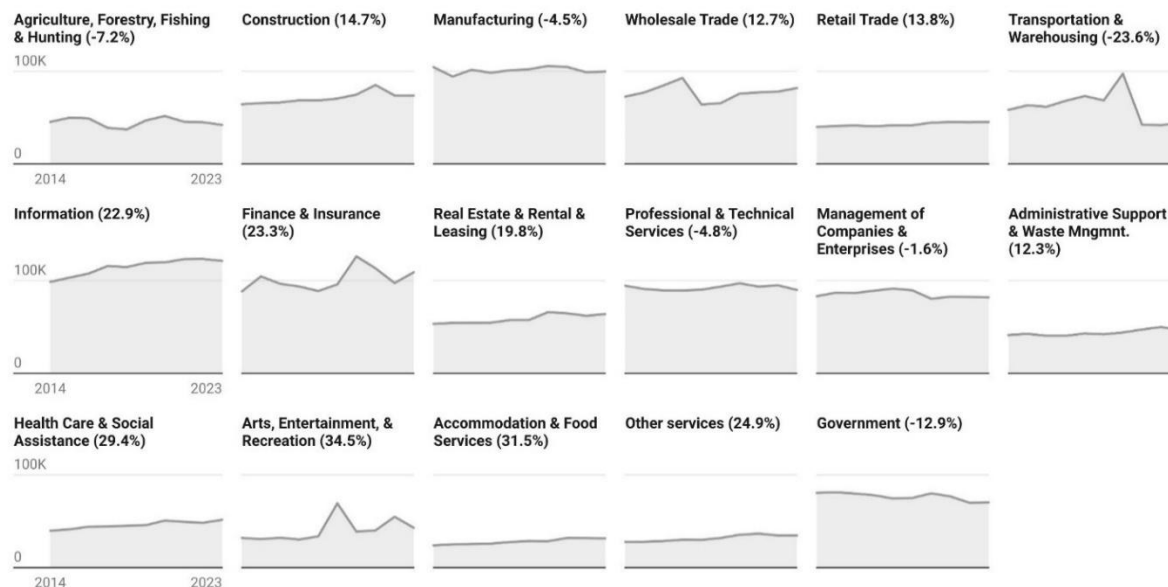
Employment by Sector

Sector	Employees	Employers	Average Wage
Professional & Technical Services	2,629	163	\$87,350
Accommodation & Food Services	1,664	99	\$30,504
Retail Trade	1,369	93	\$44,049
Health Care & Social Assistance	1,160	94	\$49,963
Manufacturing	627	17	\$96,813
Government	616	15	\$68,070
Construction	542	77	\$71,704
Management of Companies & Enterprises	531	8	\$79,550
Finance & Insurance	494	46	\$105,853
Other services (except Public Admin)	476	73	\$33,574
Administrative Support & Waste Mngmnt.	446	64	\$45,102
Educational Services	229	21	\$59,632
Wholesale Trade	179	44	\$79,456
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	148	16	\$41,661
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	133	37	\$62,098
Transportation & Warehousing	121	14	\$43,222
Information	109	18	\$117,802
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	83	6	\$40,910
Total	11,556	907	\$63,565

Source: RI Department of Labor and Training Data 2024

Sectors in Middletown with the largest inflation-adjusted wage growth from 2014 to 2023 include some with comparatively low wage levels—like Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation (34.5%) and Accommodation & Food Services (31.5%)—and others with much higher wage levels—like Finance & Insurance (22.3%) and Information (22.9%). Other sectors have seen decreasing wages, such as Transportation & Warehousing (-23.6%) and Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting (-7.2%).

Table 12: Wage Growth by Sector (inflation adjusted)



Created with Datawrapper

Source: Rhode Island Department of Labor & Training, 2014-2023.

Federal Government & Defense Industry

Middletown’s economy is heavily influenced by the Navy and serves as a major business center for contract service companies that support naval activities. Over the years, changes in Navy operations and defense spending have impacted local population and economic dynamics as well as job availability.

Naval Undersea Warfare Center: A longstanding anchor of the local and regional economy, the Naval Undersea Warfare Center (NUWC) provides research, development, test and evaluation, engineering, and fleet support center for submarine warfare systems and other systems associated with undersea warfare. NUWC has gradually grown its employment base, salaries, and financial commitments to small businesses. As of 2023 it employed 3,585 government civilian employees and 57 military members. Additionally, it spent over \$354 million on small business contracts with Southern New England companies. The majority (92.5%) of NUWC’s contract obligations paid for new services in Rhode Island, demonstrating the institution’s extensive impact in the state’s economy.

Table 13: NUWC Employment

Naval Undersea Warfare Center Employment

	2021	2022	2023
Military staff	28	31	57
Full-time civilian staff	3,579	3,576	3,585
Contractors	2,930	2,404	2,990
Total employment	6,537	6,011	6,632
Small business obligations	\$255M	\$299M	\$354M
Average civilian salary	\$107,000	\$109,000	\$115,000

Source: Naval Undersea Warfare Center, 2021-2023.

Naval War College: Located at Naval Station Newport, the U.S. Naval War College is the oldest institution of its kind, with a mission “to educate tomorrow’s leaders, inform today’s decision-makers, and engage with allies and partners on all matters of naval power in order to preserve the peace, respond in crisis, and win decisively in war.” The College is an international destination for military officers, faculty, and researchers and contributes significantly to the local economy through employment, contracts, and academic partnerships as well as indirect impacts such as hospitality.

NOAA Marine Operations Center: In May 2024, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) broke ground on a new headquarters for the Marine Operations Center-Atlantic (MOC-A), one of its three main operations centers for its fleet. MOC-A and its associated fleet collect data, perform research, and other activities to protect marine mammals, coral reefs, historic shipwrecks, commercial fisheries, and better understand climate change. Co-located with NUWC at Naval Station Newport, the MOC-A will be completed in 2027 and employ about 210 workers, including 50 active duty and 160 civilians.

U.S. Coast Guard Homeporting: The U.S. Coast Guard plans to homeport four USCG Heritage Class Offshore Patrol cutters (OPCs) at NAVSTA Newport with ships arriving between 2029 and 2034. The project will include the construction of a new combined maintenance and administration facility. It is anticipated to bring 500 military and 800 family members to the area to support the project. USCG would like to house personnel close to the base which will bring an influx of new residents to Middletown and other Aquidneck Island communities.

Marine Trades

Rhode Island’s extensive coastline has attracted marine businesses for many decades. The boat builders, sail makers, hardware and component manufacturers, riggers, marinas and other services have made the state a center of expertise and destination for marine trades and related activities. Middletown’s coastal location is no exception and continues to be an ideal location for businesses operating in and supporting

these marine trades. This industry is expected to continue to flourish over the next decade as NAVSTA, the U.S. Coast Guard, and NOAA increase their operations in Middletown.

Tourism

Middletown's beaches, natural resources, proximity to Newport, and central location between Boston and New York create a strong foundation for its tourism industry. It is no surprise that hospitality industries that support tourism are major contributors to Middletown's economy, most notably accommodations, dining, and shopping. Approved short-term rentals (STRs) also play a role in the tourism economy, though monitoring their impact on the year-round housing supply is important. Tourism will support Middletown's economy as visitors continue to seek out its beaches, recreational opportunities, and access to Newport.

Retail

Middletown has historically hosted the majority of the retail industry on Aquidneck Island. Changing retail dynamics and consumer behaviors will likely necessitate reimagining what these spaces can be and adapting them to meet new space needs of emerging and growing industry sectors.

Agriculture

Though not a major source of employment or tax base, agriculture remains an important part of Middletown's culture, community, and sense of place. Several local farms operate farm stands, pick-your-own access, and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) services.

PROPERTY TAX BASE

Single-family homes make up 66.09% of Middletown's property tax base. Commercial properties are the next highest contributor at 15.34%, followed by 2-5 family properties at 7.91%, and 6+ unit apartment complexes and condominium properties at 7.27%.

The diagram on the next page depicts assessed value per acre by use to illustrate the relative differences in tax contributions across Middletown's different neighborhoods, commercial corridors, and employment centers. Taller bars indicate parcels valued at more per acre than lower bars.

Higher assessed properties tend to be concentrated near the town line with Newport, close to Middletown's beaches and in the Atlantic Beach District, and along the commercial corridors on West Main Road and Aquidneck Avenue.

Middletown's largest tax contributors make up just under 5% of Middletown's total assessed taxable land valuation.

Relative Tax Base Contributions (assessed value/acre)

Figure 4: Assessed Value Per Acre

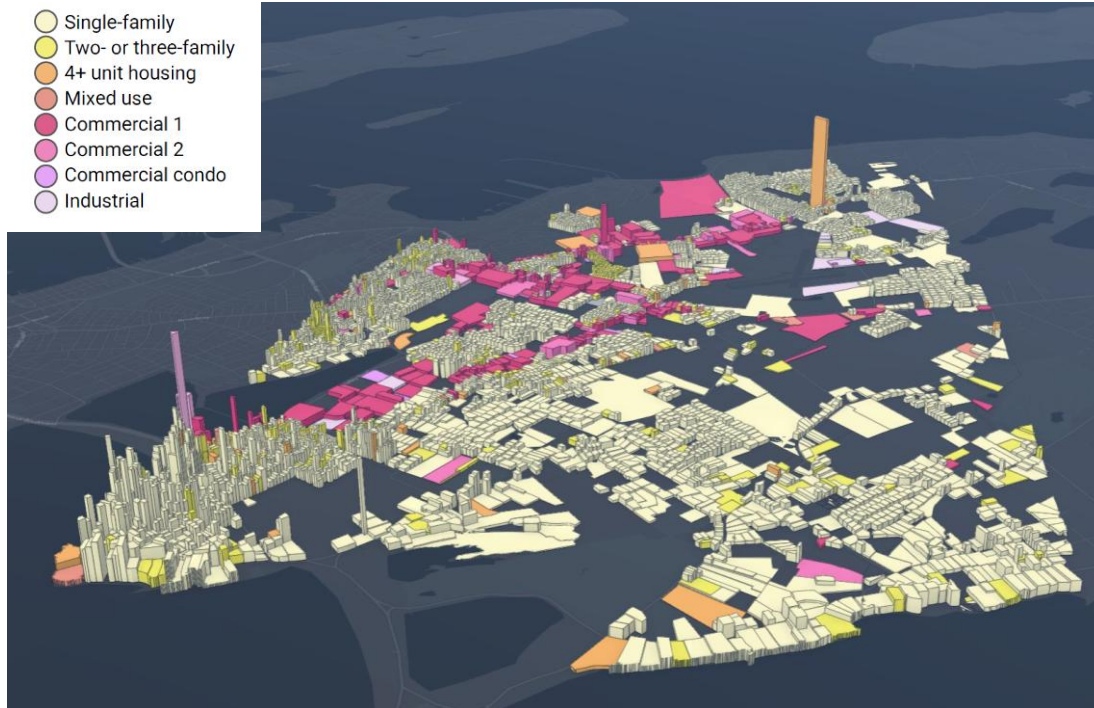


Table 14: Property Tax Contributors

Property Tax Contributors by Land Use

Use	% Total Taxable	Total Assessed value	Total Acres	Total \$/ Acre
Single-family	67.4%	\$3,595,174,200	2,805	\$1,281,487
Commercial	13.8%	\$737,104,300	709	\$1,039,643
Other residential (4+ family, condos)	8.0%	\$428,059,500	281	\$1,522,371
2-family	6.8%	\$360,425,800	232	\$1,554,225
Other, developed	1.1%	\$59,463,700	114	\$523,045
3-family	0.9%	\$50,227,900	56	\$897,652
Unknown	0.9%	\$48,790,900	647	\$75,378
Industrial	0.5%	\$28,509,900	100	\$286,434
Vacant	0.4%	\$19,949,500	154	\$129,911
Farm/Forest	0.1%	\$6,253,500	848	\$7,373
Utility	0.0%	\$552,000	4	\$129,032
Total		\$5,333,959,200		

Top Ten Tax Contributors by Total Assessed Value of Holdings

Taxpayer	Assessed Valuation
Ox Bow Associates	\$43,787,400
Middletown Associates	\$29,418,700
Newport Landings LLC	\$26,115,800
Aquidneck Group LLC	\$25,191,500
Wave Pond Hotel, LLC	\$24,900,300
SMG Northgate LLC & BF Northgate LLC	\$24,533,300
Seaview Inn LLC	\$22,254,000
Brookwood Properties Subsidiary LLC	\$22,204,700
Middletown Self-Storage LLC	\$18,115,100
Harbor Village Apartments LLC	\$17,807,400
Total	\$254,328,200

Source: Town of Middletown.

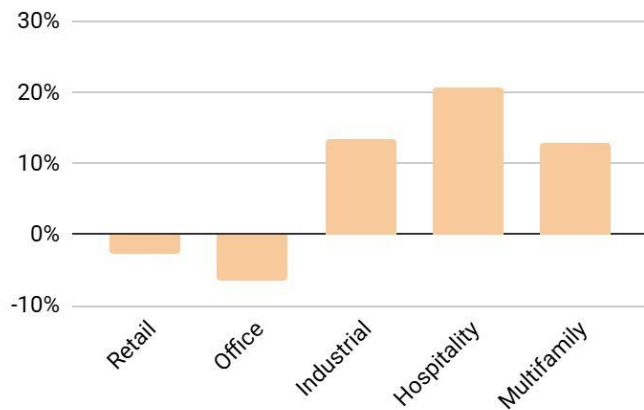
PROSPECTS FOR GROWTH

In general, there has been relatively little new construction in Middletown and Newport County for the past decade. Vacancy rates for existing properties in all economic sectors are generally quite low, indicating a relatively stable market without much growth.

Comparing current revenue metrics to ten-year averages is another way to gauge a sector's potential for growth. As of January 2025, industrial, hospitality, and multifamily all currently exhibit meaningfully higher revenue rates than their recent averages, suggesting the market for new development in these sectors is improving. Retail and office show the opposite trend, suggesting the market for new development in those sectors is declining.

Figure 5: Change in Revenue Metrics by Property Type

Change in Key Revenue Metric, current compared to 10-year average (inflation adjusted)



Source: CoStar.

Needs & Opportunities

CATEGORY	NEEDS	OPPORTUNITIES
Economic Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foster and grow local businesses. ▪ Maintain the naval base as an economic and workforce anchor. ▪ Critical infrastructure that supports economic stability and growth. ▪ Mixed-use development to mitigate impacts from a declining retail market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The naval base continues to expand and attract new investment, creating direct and indirect opportunities for job growth and local economic benefits. ▪ Compared to the state overall, Middletown has a particularly high concentration of knowledge sector jobs. ▪ Residents support the idea of transformative mixed-use development, such as along West Main Road.
Economic Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More attainable housing options for local workforce, including existing and potential employees. ▪ Maintain coordination with the naval base as it continues to grow and change. ▪ Protect the Atlantic Beach district from rising environmental threats. ▪ Maintain a sustainable balance between different economic sectors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Middletown’s tax base is diversified across many employers and landowners. ▪ Promote more higher density housing options, such as two-family and multifamily which offer particularly high fiscal returns per acre. ▪ Several sectors that are underrepresented in Middletown’s economy have been growing recently, such as manufacturing and wholesale trade.
Workforce development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fill jobs at local employment centers with qualified candidates. ▪ Develop the next generation of skilled workers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitate job placement for local workforce. ▪ Take advantage of local schools and community

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		colleges to teach in-demand technical skills
Industry clusters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage growth and investment in Middletown’s primary sectors, such as technology and defense. ▪ Attract new growth in emerging tech and knowledge sectors. ▪ Support growth in the local tourism and hospitality sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The professional and technical services sector continues to grow at a fast pace. ▪ The industrial, hospitality, and multifamily housing sectors exhibit strong growth prospects in Middletown.
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preserve existing farmland. ▪ Support transitions to sustainable and resilient agricultural practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agriculture is an important component of Middletown’s identity that the community is interested in maintaining and supporting.
Island-wide Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coordination with the City of Newport and Town of Portsmouth on mutually beneficial economic development initiatives ▪ Coordination with local organizations that focus on island-wide economic development concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The recent Aquidneck Island Hazard Mitigation Plan (Appendix 2) and the Aquidneck Resilience effort represent successful precedents for multi-jurisdictional collaboration. ▪ Launched in 2018 by the Greater Newport Chamber of Commerce, the Connect Greater Newport initiative offers coordinated support for new and existing businesses across the region.

Goals & Policies

ED-1. Promote a diverse and expanded local economy in balance with the natural environment, recreational resources, and rural-coastal character that makes Middletown a desirable community

- ED-1.1. Create equitable conditions that support the growth of existing businesses and attract new businesses to Middletown.
- a. *Conduct a business survey to identify barriers and opportunities for existing and prospective local businesses*
 - b. *Actively promote Middletown as a destination for employers to invest and grow, emphasizing its economic advantages and high quality of life*
 - c. *Increase effort to capitalize on Middletown's tourism potential*
- ED-1.2. Offer attractive and flexible local incentive packages to complement state and federal incentives that may be available.
- a. *Inventory potential local incentive programs that encourage investment in Middletown's businesses and people*
 - b. *Engage with local employers and major landowners to identify specific incentives that might encourage new investment*
- ED-1.3. Capitalize on unique redevelopment opportunities from NOAA and Coast Guard deployment to NAVSTA Newport.
- a. *Convene regular working sessions with NAVSTA representatives, local economic development officials, and Connect Greater Newport*
 - b. *Help align NAVSTA growth needs and opportunities with local resources such as development sites, business partners, and recommendations from the Aquidneck Island NAVSTA Compatible Use Study*
- ED-1.4. Invest in the critical infrastructure necessary to support a robust and diversified economy.
- a. *Inventory and prioritize infrastructure needs by land use, such as commercial, industrial, and residential*
 - b. *Pursue state and federal grants to help fund infrastructure projects that unlock economic development opportunities*
- ED-1.5. Integrate mixed-use development in commercial areas to reinforce their economic viability and fiscal stability, such as the East Main Road, West Main Road, Aquidneck Avenue corridors, and the Atlantic Beach district.
- a. *Amend zoning to enable or improve the financial viability of mixed-use development and adaptive reuse projects*
 - b. *Inventory potential redevelopment sites and promote them to developers capable of realizing the community's vision for these areas*

- c. *Investigate opportunities to underground utilities during redevelopment or major roadway projects to increase resiliency and improve the aesthetic appeal of commercial areas.*

ED-2. Promote economic resiliency to both emerging and longstanding challenges in the market and business environment

ED-2.1. Expand housing options and attainability to help attract employers and workforce talent at all income levels, from working class to knowledge sector.

- a. *Promote housing production that meets the needs and preferences of workers across income and skill levels*
- b. *Conduct periodic surveys of local employers to understand workforce housing needs and opportunities*

ED-2.2. Engage with elected officials to help preserve local jobs and investment at the naval base.

- a. *Regularly meet with elected officials to promote Middletown's economic development goals as a priority in naval base employment and procurement policies*

ED-2.3. Protect the Atlantic Beach district from rising environmental threats.

- a. *Provide technical support and incentives to district businesses interested in retrofitting their property for better environmental resilience*
- b. *Integrate economic development perspectives and metrics as part of resiliency planning and investment in this area, such as the undergrounding of utilities.*

ED-2.4. Maintain a sustainable balance between commercial, industrial, housing, open space, and other uses.

- a. *Preserve areas for viable commercial and industrial activities*
- b. *Increase zoning capacity for higher density housing types in appropriate locations which preserve more land for other uses and also tend to offer a higher fiscal return to the Town*
- c. *Engage with major local employers frequently to understand risks and trends that could undermine businesses and explore proactive ways the Town can support as needed, especially among sectors experiencing recent job losses and wage decline*

ED-3. Foster collaboration between business and local educational institutions to develop a trained workforce

ED-3.1. Assess workforce skills gap and support programs and strategies to meet identified needs.

- a. *Conduct periodic surveys of local employers to identify skills gaps and employment needs*
- b. *Partner with local schools and community colleges to promote career pathways in area industries like marine trades, defense, engineering, and hospitality*

ED-4. Retain and expand existing industry clusters and cultivate new emerging clusters in high-paying industries

ED-4.1. Promote economic growth and job creation in technology, defense, and homeland security sectors.

- a. *Explore incentives to attract and retain employers that create stable jobs for local residents.*
- b. *Promote housing production that meets the needs and preferences of these workers, making Middletown a more attractive place for them to live and work.*

ED-4.2. Promote growth and opportunities in marine trades and other high-wage industries

- a. *Explore incentives to attract and retain employers that create high-skill, high-wage jobs for local residents.*
- b. *Promote housing production that meets the needs and preferences of these workers, making Middletown a more attractive place for them to live and work.*

ED-4.3. Support economic growth and job creation in the local tourism and hospitality industry

- a. *Explore incentives to attract and retain employers that create stable tourism and hospitality jobs for local residents.*
- b. *Identify sites that could support new hospitality development and amend zoning and future land use maps as needed to promote this investment.*

ED-4.4. Review and revise existing zoning and development regulations, including the Office Park district, to increase flexibility and better support the growth of emerging industries

- a. *Amend zoning regulations to allow and streamline review and permitting processes for development and expansion of facilities engaged in emerging industries, including by adding allowable uses that reflect recent sector trends.*
- b. *Consider zoning and other incentives that promote new investment in innovative industries.*

ED-5. Preserve the economic vitality of agriculture

ED-5.1. Increase farmland protection efforts and support agricultural businesses.

- a. *Convene periodic roundtables of local agriculture stakeholders to discuss needs and opportunities.*

- b. Explore incentives that encourage private investment in new and existing agriculture businesses.*
- c. Promote agricultural businesses and events in Town communications.*

ED-5.2. Facilitate the adoption of farm-friendly ordinances.

- a. Periodically interview agriculture business leaders to understand potential conflicts and misalignments between their needs and local regulations.*
- b. Amend zoning regulations to enable and promote current agricultural business models and practices.*

ED-5.3. Support efforts toward farming sustainability and resilience.

- a. Identify and promote incentives and loan programs that help stabilize local agricultural businesses and manage environmental and economic risks.*
- b. Identify and promote incentives for local agricultural businesses to transition to low-impact practices such as pertaining to chemical use and run-off.*

ED-6. Continue to advance Aquidneck Island-wide collaboration on mutually beneficial economic development initiatives

ED-6.1. Coordinate with the City of Newport, Town of Portsmouth, and Connect Greater Newport to support and attract emerging industries.

- a. Convene regular working sessions with leadership from all three island municipalities to discuss mutual economic development goals and potential collaborative initiatives.*
- b. Inventory economic and employment assets and resources that could be coordinated between municipalities to attract employers in emerging industries that would benefit all three regardless of the municipality they settle in.*

ED-6.2. Collaborate with the Newport Naval Station, Coast Guard, and NOAA to advance shared goals and support growth and innovation of complementary defense and maritime industries.

- a. Convene regular working sessions with agency representatives and local economic development officials.*
- b. Maintain an inventory of each agency's short- and long-term growth plans and identify ways Middletown and local stakeholders can both support and benefit from them.*

ED-6.3. Coordinate with local organizations focused on economic development, including Greater Newport Chamber of Commerce, Connect Greater Newport, Discover Newport, and others.

- a. Convene regular working sessions with leadership from these agencies and establish shared near- and long-term economic development goals.*
- b. Collaborate on Island-wide and regional economic development planning efforts.*



7.

TRANSPORTATION

Overview

Middletown's transportation network includes major through-roads, local neighborhood streets, sidewalks, transit stops, trails, and limited bicycle facilities. Parts of this network are within the Town's control, while others are within the jurisdiction of RIDOT. All of it, however, influences how people perceive the ease or difficulty of getting around and their safety while doing so.

Middletown's location on Aquidneck Island means that a significant portion of vehicles on West Main Road (Route 114) and East Main Road (Route 138) are passing through between Newport and Portsmouth as local or regional trips. This regional influence adds to local congestion but is out of Middletown's control.

While driving is the primary mode of transportation for most households in Middletown, walking, biking, and taking transit are still critical components of a complete transportation network. These alternative ways of getting around help households reduce transportation costs, increase physical activity for residents, and also reduce vehicle congestion. Improvements to these networks can encourage more residents to take trips without getting in a vehicle.

This chapter recommends strategies to improve Middletown's transportation network, mindful of RIDOT's role on most major roads and RIPTA as the transit authority.

A Vision for Transportation

Middletown will strive to provide a safe, efficient, accessible, and sustainable multi-modal transportation system that meets the diverse mobility needs of residents, workers, and visitors while maintaining the scenic quality of our community.

Existing Context

ROADWAY SYSTEM

Although most of the roadway miles are locally-owned and maintained, major corridors are under RIDOT jurisdiction. This includes East and West Main Roads, which anchor the roadway network and serve as the town's major north-south travel corridors as well as the primary commercial areas. Many of the town's major roadways experience significant traffic volumes throughout the day, especially during peak commute hours. A large portion of this traffic is caused by drivers passing through Middletown on their way to other destinations. Middletown and Aquidneck Island's location, access to beaches, and bridge connections between southwest and eastern Rhode Island and Massachusetts make it a highly-traveled corridor for residents, commerce, and visitors throughout the year.

Tourist traffic, although seasonal, places a significant demand on roadways like Paradise Avenue, Third Beach Road, and others that provide access to the beaches. Not only does the seasonal traffic tax roadway capacities, it also creates safety risks that affect the neighborhoods through which it traverses. Traffic on

neighborhood roads to the beaches has increased significantly over the last decade placing a burden on residents of adjacent neighborhoods and local law enforcement. Increased traffic during the summer also creates an increase in cut-through traffic into other neighborhoods as drivers look to circumnavigate congestion, often at high speeds on narrow, winding local roads, raising safety issues.

Table 15: Roadway Inventory

Roadway Inventory

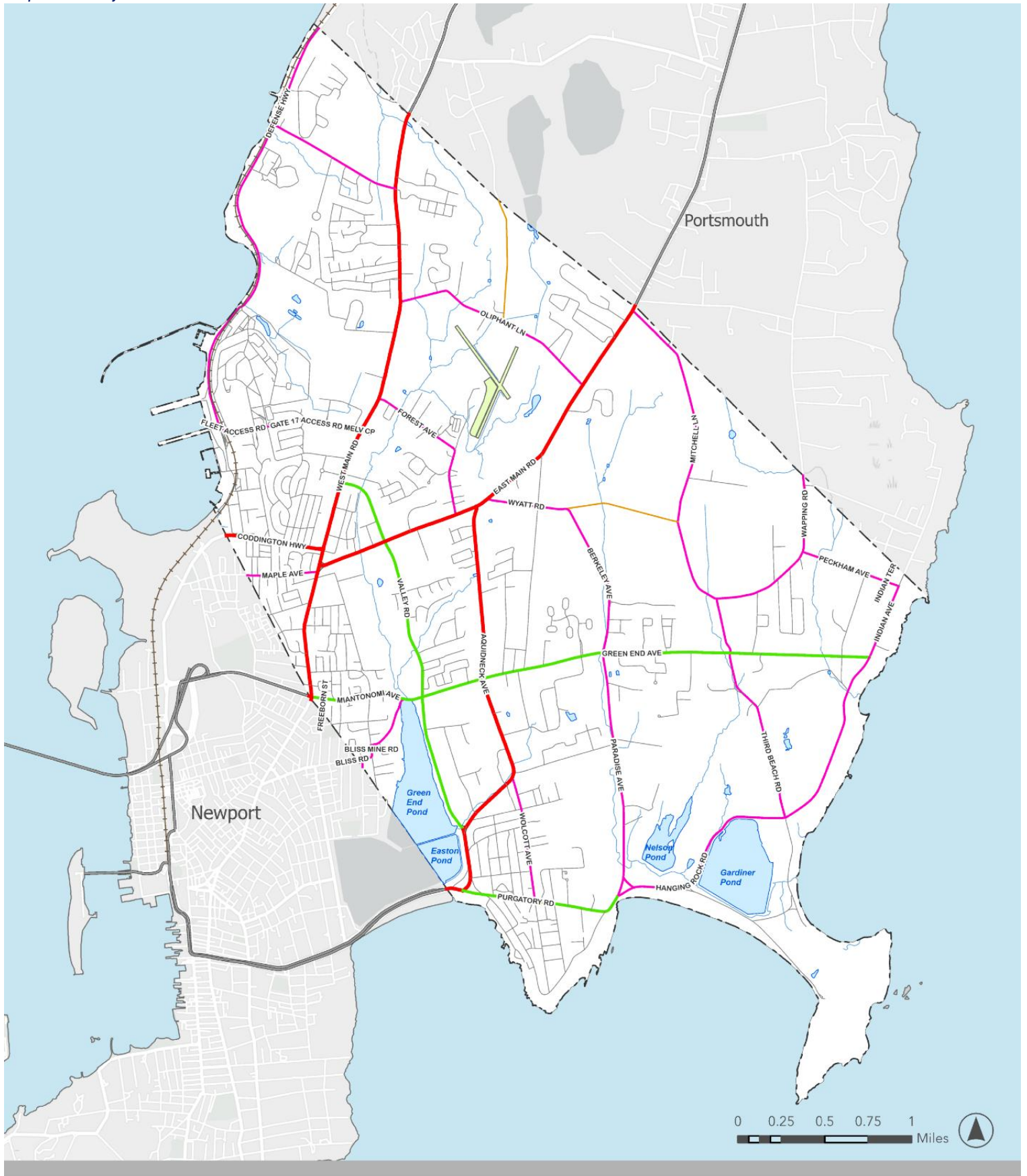
Road Name	Road Type	Jurisdiction	Description
West Main Road (Route 114)	Principal Arterial	RIDOT	A four-lane principal arterial running in a north/south direction along the west side of Aquidneck Island. West Main Road serves as a major access point between Mount Hope Bridge/ Sakonnet River Bridge (Route 24) and Newport. In each travel direction, West Main Road is a two lane roadway with narrow 1-foot shoulders for most of its length. Land use is a mix of residential and commercial. The majority of West Main Road has a posted speed limit of 35 mph. The West Main Road corridor, north of Two Mile Corner, is one of the busiest on the island, carrying 32,200 vehicles per day.
East Main Road (Route 138)	Principal Arterial	RIDOT	A principal arterial roadway running in a north/south direction along the east side of Aquidneck Island, linking the Sakonnet River Bridge (Route 24) to the north with Two Mile Corner to the south. In Middletown, East Main Road is a four-lane principal arterial with two travel lanes and narrow 1-foot shoulders in each direction. The majority of East Main Road has a posted speed limit of 35 mph.
Coddington Highway	Principal Arterial	RIDOT	A principal arterial roadway running primarily in an east/west direction linking West Main Road with JT Connell Highway. Coddington Highway serves as a major access point between West Main Road and Naval Station Newport, the Pell Bridge, and Newport. Coddington Highway has a travel lane and a shoulder in each direction and a center turn lane from West Main Road to the CCRI campus in Newport. From there the roadway is known as J.T. Connell Highway and has one lane in each direction. Land use is a mix of residential and commercial. The posted speed limit is 25 mph.
Aquidneck Avenue (Route 138A)	Principal Arterial	RIDOT	A two-lane principal arterial roadway that runs in a north/south direction linking East Main Road with Memorial Boulevard and the Atlantic Beach District to the south. Aquidneck Avenue consists of one travel lane with a shoulder varying from 2 to 10-feet wide in each direction. The shoulder is signed "Share the Road" for bicyclists at various segments. Upper Aquidneck Avenue, however, has five foot wide bike lanes from East Main Road to Green End Avenue. Land use is primarily commercial north of Green End Avenue and south of Valley Road and primarily residential between Green End Avenue and Valley Road. The posted speed limit is 25 mph.
Valley Road (Route 214)	Minor Arterial	RIDOT	A two-lane minor arterial roadway that runs in a north/south direction, linking West Main Road to Aquidneck Avenue, serving the Atlantic Beach District and Aquidneck Corporate Park. Valley Road consists of one travel lane with a shoulder 2 to 6-feet wide in each direction. Valley Road flares to two travel lanes at major intersections. Land use is primarily commercial to the north of East Main Road, a mix of residential of commercial between East Main Road and Green End Avenue, and commercial uses south of Green End Avenue. The posted speed limit is 35 mph north of Green End Avenue and 40 mph south of Green End Avenue. Reconstruction of the Valley Road and Green End Avenue intersection was completed in 2012.

Table continued on next page

Road Name	Road Type	Jurisdiction	Description
Purgatory Road and Sachuest Point Road	Minor Arterial	Town of Middletown	Provide access to the beaches, are adequately designed to accommodate present and anticipated traffic demand. However, improvements need to be made to better accommodate pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Planned reconstruction of Purgatory Road will include a sidewalk and bike lanes for the entire length of the road. Parking along Purgatory Road and Sachuest Point Road should not be allowed as it contributes to traffic congestion and restricts emergency vehicle access.
Miantonomi and Green End Avenues	Minor Arterial	Town of Middletown	Provide the main east-west access in town. The "Y" intersection at Miantonomi and Green End Avenue is hazardous and has been the source of several accidents. A traffic study to provide solutions for intersection improvements is recommended. A roundabout has been considered for this location but there are right-of-way constraints. At a minimum, better signage is required for westbound traffic approaching the intersection on Green End Avenue.
Burma Road (Defense Highway)	Major Collector	United States Navy	A two-lane major/urban collector roadway that runs in a north/south direction, linking Stringham Road in Portsmouth with the Gate 17 Access Road. Burma Road serves as a major access point between Navy operations and West Main Road. Burma Road consists of one travel lane with a 4-foot shoulder in each direction and a posted speed limit of 35 mph. The shoulder is signed "Share the Road" for bicyclists for the entire length of the roadway. The Newport Secondary Rail Corridor runs parallel to the roadway. There is an at-grade crossing in the vicinity of the Wanumetonomy Golf and Country Club (north of the Gate 17 Access Road) where the railway then follows along the east side of Burma Road. Burma Road has the potential to add additional carrying capacity and serve as an additional north south corridor on the island but currently is lacking connections that would make it a viable alternative. It has been envisioned as "Shoreline Drive", a scenic roadway, in the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission's West Side Master Plan.
Forest Avenue	Major Collector	Town of Middletown	A two-lane primarily residential collector road which experiences a significant amount of cut-through traffic as it is one of only three roadways in town which provides access between West Main Road and East Main Road. A portion of the road is the Forest Avenue School Zone which increases the importance of enforcing posted speed limits.
Oliphant Lane	Major Collector	Town of Middletown	Provides a northern connection between West Main Road and East Main Road and is characterized by a variety of land uses including residential, agricultural, and industrial.



Map 5: Roadway Functional Classification



Roadway Functional Classification

- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local Roads
- Airport Runway
- Railroad ROW
- Rivers
- Highways
- Town Boundaries



Source: RIGIS
 Date: 01.10.2025
 Existing Conditions Report

BUS TRANSIT

Middletown is served by RIPTA bus routes 60, 63, and 64. Route 60 runs north and south, connecting Aquidneck Island communities to Providence. The route travels through Middletown along the East Main Road and West Main Road corridors. Route 63 connects the Middletown Stop & Shop shopping center to the Newport Gateway Center via West Main Road and Broadway. Route 64 connects the Newport Gateway Center to the University of Rhode Island Kingston Campus and provides service through Middletown along West Main Road and Coddington Highway. While these routes offer connectivity to select destinations, they are limited in frequency, inaccessible, lack amenities, and do not serve the east side of town.

RAIL TRANSIT

Middletown was historically served by the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad, with passenger service ending in 1938 and freight continuing into the 1970s. The rail line runs along the western shore of Aquidneck Island from Newport's Gateway Center to the former Sakonnet River crossing in Portsmouth. Today, the Newport and Narragansett Bay Railroad operates scenic excursions on the remaining segment of the line, which includes Middletown. Although the original connection to the mainland via the Sakonnet River Railroad Bridge no longer exists, there are ongoing discussions about restoring rail connectivity to support future passenger service.

AIR

The Newport State Airport is a general aviation airport located in Middletown and provides aviation services for corporate and local business aviation needs. There is no scheduled passenger airline service provided. The Rhode Island T.F. Green International Airport in Warwick serves commercial air transportation needs for residents and businesses for the region.

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE

Despite the town's high auto dependency, it is committed to expanding multi-modal transportation options throughout town, specifically the expansion and connection of its bicycle and pedestrian network.

Sidewalks are present on some streets, but many areas lack them entirely. Where sidewalks do exist, most are inaccessible due to the absence of ramps and obstructions. Additionally, most sidewalks are narrow and positioned close to the road, particularly those on larger arterial and collector roads, such as East Main Road, West Main Road, and Valley Road. Sidewalk infrastructure is limited in the eastern half of Middletown, with segments only on a few roads such as Wapping Road and in certain residential subdivisions. There is no sidewalk infrastructure connecting to the beaches or many of Middletown's parks and open spaces. Furthermore, the town lacks a continuous sidewalk and bicycle network linking the majority of schools.

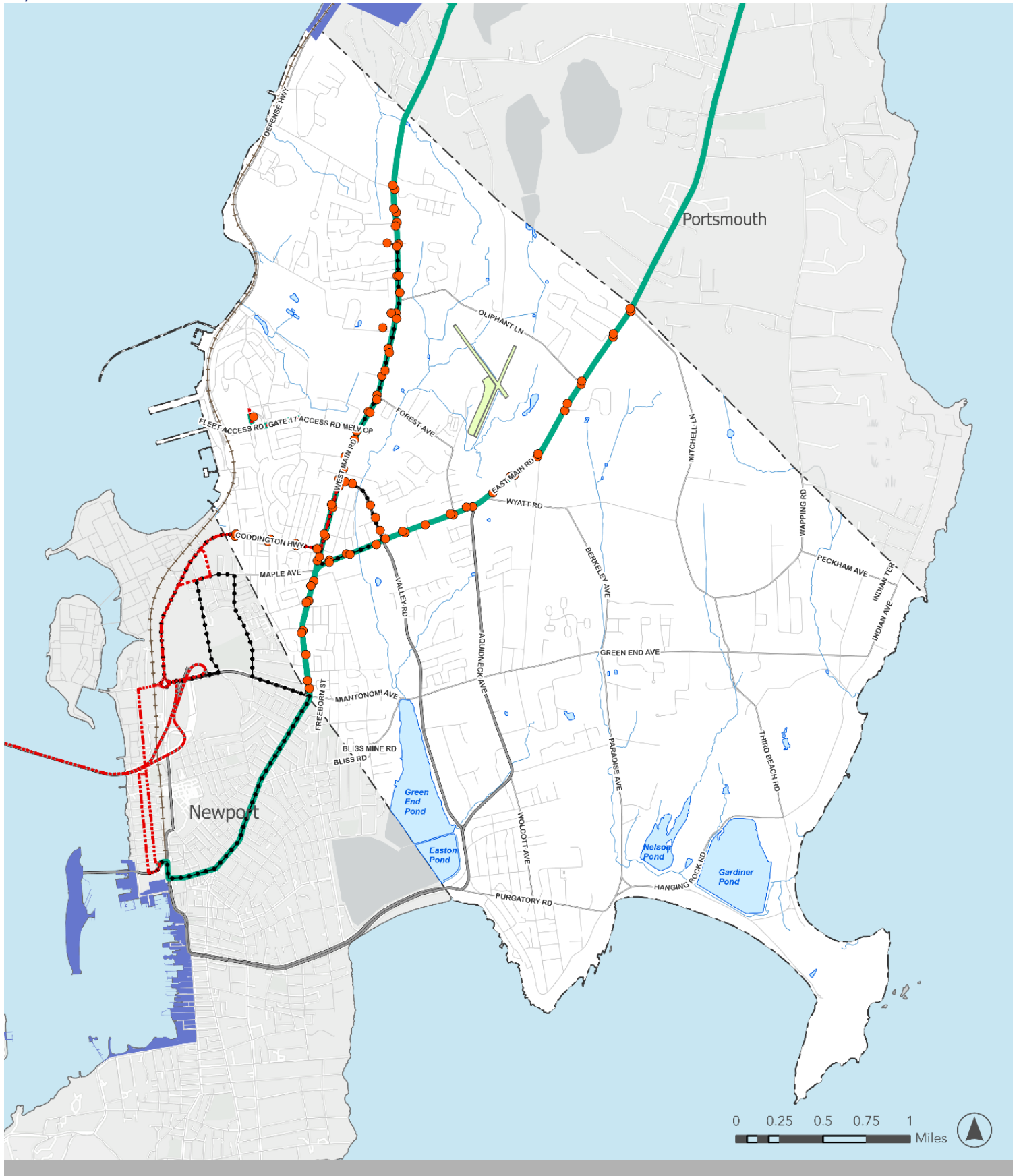
Middletown, like most of Aquidneck Island, also has very limited bicycle facilities. There is one shared-use path along Coddington Highway and two five-foot-wide bike lanes on Upper Aquidneck Avenue. Bicyclists

must use roads and streets alongside vehicle traffic. Most trips require some cycling on high traffic and high speed arterial and collector roads where conditions are unpleasant and unsafe.

Middletown's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee is actively working with the Town and other local stakeholders and partners to close gaps in the town's bicycle and pedestrian network by improving related infrastructure for safer, more accessible, and sustainable conditions for multi-modal transportation in Middletown. Ride Island, a collaboration of local organizations advocating for alternative transportation infrastructure and services, is also working to improve Aquidneck Island's potential for active transportation through the creation of an island-wide network of paths for walking and biking (the Aquidneck Island Bicycle Network Implementation Plan). Several roads in Middletown were identified as priority corridors for the future bike network, including West Main Road, East Main Road, Defense Highway, Purgatory Road, Valley Road, Green End Avenue, and Paradise Avenue.

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Map 6: Public Transit



Public Transit

- Bus Routes
- Route 60
- Route 63
- Route 64

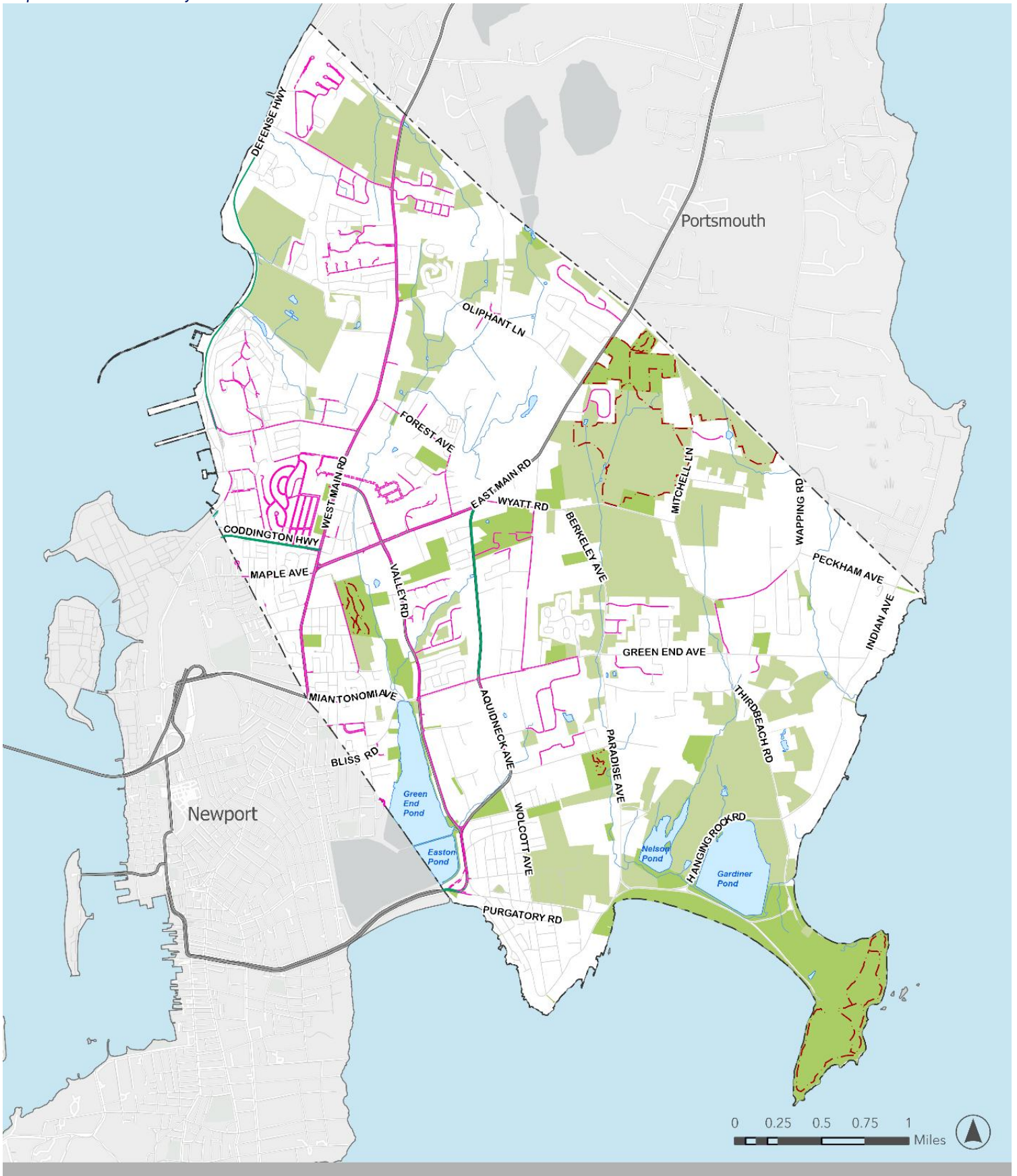
- Ports and Commercial Harbors
- Airport Runway
- Bus Stops

- Railroad ROW
- Rivers
- Roads
- Highways
- Town Boundaries



Source: RIGIS
 Date: 01.10.2025
 Existing Conditions Report

Map 7: Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure



Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure

- Bicycle Path/ Lane
- - - Pedestrian Path/ Trail
- Sidewalks
- Privately-Owned Open Space
- Publicly-Owned Open Space
- Rivers
- Roads
- Highways
- Town Boundaries



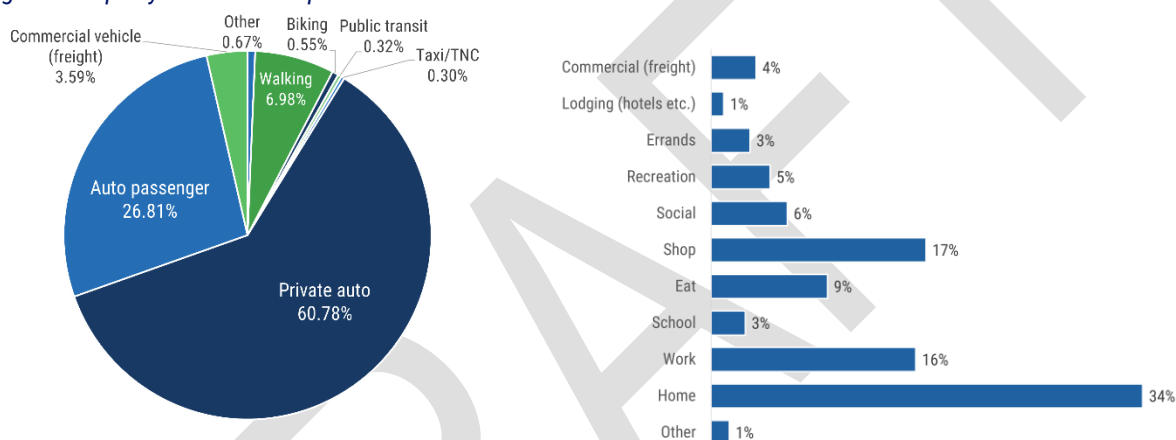
Source: RIGIS
 Date: 01.15.2025
 Existing Conditions Report

TRAVEL AND COMMUTE PATTERNS

Most daily trips in Middletown are made by car or commercial vehicle. Walking and biking play a limited role with 7% of trips made by walking and less than 1% of trips by bicycling. Less than 1% of trips are made by transit, taxi, or another transportation network company (TNC).

Roughly one third (34%) of the trips are trips returning home after visiting other destinations. Trips to work and trips to shopping or errand destinations together make up a little over a third (16% and 20%, respectively). Trips for recreation, dining, or for social purposes make up 20% of trips. Commercial trips, including heavy freight, make up 4% of trips.

Figure 6: Trips by Mode and Purpose



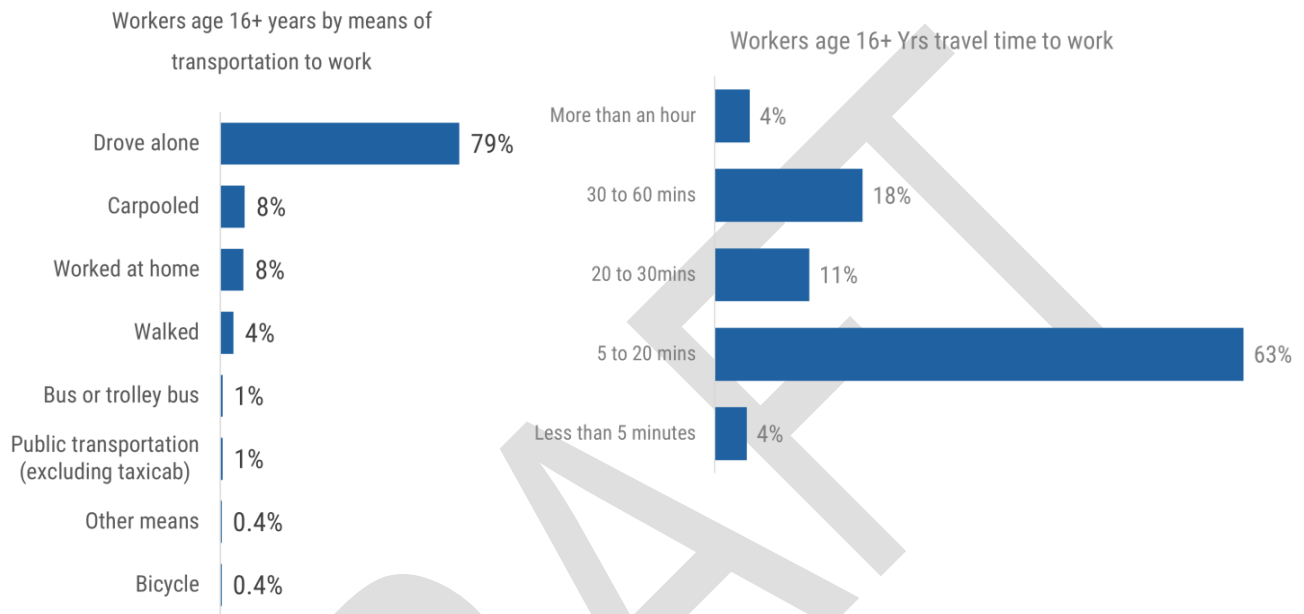
Source: ACS 2018-2022, Replica 2023.

Middletown has more jobs than workers making it a commuting destination for many employees that live elsewhere in the region. As a result, Middletown’s roadway system is highly utilized by commuters traveling to and from town as well as cut-through commuters traveling to other destinations across Aquidneck Island and beyond. About 79% of Middletown’s working residents commute alone by car and an additional 8% carpool. Another 8% work from home, a significant increase from pre-pandemic. A substantially smaller proportion walk to work (4%), about 2% take public transportation, and less than 0.5% bike. Most residents commute 30 minutes or less to work (74%) with the majority commuting between 5 and 20 minutes.

As one of the main commercial corridors, West Main Road sees the highest volume of trips with about 26,500 trips in each direction every day. About 53% of these trips are considered pass-through trips with start and end destinations outside of Middletown. East Main Road also supports 10,700 trips each day with greater outbound trips. Aquidneck Avenue typically sees 8,300 trips each day in both directions. During the weekday morning commute, volumes are typically highest in the southbound direction while in the afternoon, northbound volumes are typically higher. The corridors also experience some pedestrian traffic

along commercial segments. The greatest number of bike trips occur on East Main Road between Aquidneck Avenue and the intersection with West Main Road, suggesting this segment plays a key role in connecting bicyclists to other parts of town.

Figure 7: Commute Characteristics



Source: ACS 2018-2022, Replica 2023.

Needs & Opportunities

CATEGORY	NEEDS	OPPORTUNITIES
Infrastructure Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General maintenance and improvements to roads and intersections Consistent funding to support routine road maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue grant opportunities Redesigning roads with Complete Street principles Incentivize developers to include sidewalk/streetscape improvements in new development projects
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address traffic and congestion on East Main Road and West Main Road which leads to cut-through traffic on smaller roads (impacts safety) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore use of Defense Highway/Burma Road as an alternative north-south connection Improve site access management by placing greater emphasis during site plan review
Pedestrian & Bicycle Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, especially sidewalks, bike lanes, and other safety measures, to increase safety, access, and connectivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close gaps in the existing bike/ped network by creating strategic connections between key destinations Take advantage of upcoming state and municipal road infrastructure projects to integrate bike/ped improvements
Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better connectivity across Middletown and Aquidneck Island as a whole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain public use of Burma Road and integrate multi-modal infrastructure to support bicycle and pedestrian circulation Pursue a direct connection of Defense Highway/Burma Rd. to Coddington Highway
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased frequency and improved local and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing connections and frequency of local transit service, as well as to off-

	regional connections of public transit	island destinations such as Providence, the Wickford Train station and Fall River MBTA commuter rail station would help promote greater transit use
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Goals & Policies

T-1. Enhance safety for all modes of transportation

T-1.1. Support a connected and accessible local street network that allows for the safe and efficient movement of traffic by all modes.

- a. *Implement recommendations identified in Middletown Safe Streets for All Action Plan.*
- b. *Promote a Complete Streets approach to design and renovation of local roadways that enhances safety and mobility of all users.*
- c. *Promote the use of advanced technology for traffic management.*
- d. *Limit impact of traffic on local streets by utilizing traffic calming techniques where appropriate.*
- e. *Work with RIDOT in planning, permitting, and design of projects that improve traffic flow.*
- f. *Advocate for RIDOT to implement appropriate access management controls on arterial roadways, including limiting direct access to major roadways such as West Main Road and East Main Road.*
- g. *Identify strategies to reduce the number and severity of crashes occurring on local roads.*
- h. *Advocate with NAVSTA-Newport to consider staggered work hours to distribute commuter traffic over more hours and reduce peak congestion.*

T-1.2. Preserve and extend the life of Town-owned and -managed transportation infrastructure.

- a. *Continue to maintain the Pavement Management Program and Sidewalk Condition Inventory.*
- b. *Track and coordinate investments in the transportation system to minimize duplicate efforts and costs. For example, if sidewalks, bicycle paths, drainage, curbs, sewers, etc. are planned, they should be installed during a single scheduled repair period for the road.*

- c. *Coordinate with RIDOT and utility companies on any work occurring on town roads. Complete all utility and roadwork, including emergency repairs, so that the new road surface is consistent with the old surface.*

T-2. Promote walking and biking as attractive alternatives for short trips and as recreational opportunities

T-2.1. Create walkable neighborhoods with a safe, convenient, and pleasant pedestrian environment.

- a. *Inventory priority streets for the installation of new sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike facilities to include in Capital Improvement Program (CIP).*
- b. *Require construction/ rehabilitation of sidewalks as part of any roadway construction or reconstruction project where appropriate.*
- c. *Require street connectivity to existing street network when possible and when new subdivisions and roads are proposed.*
- d. *Require safe pedestrian accessibility to commercial developments.*
- e. *Encourage sidewalks within new residential developments, and where desirable offer incentives to developers to create walking and/or bicycle paths.*
- f. *Continue to develop and promote land use and zoning policies that support transit-oriented development with housing, retail, and jobs co-located with each other near transit.*
- g. *When there is enough space, provide a landscaping strip along sidewalks to buffer pedestrians from traffic and as a place to accommodate snow.*

T-2.2. Encourage safer bicycle transportation through the development of protected bike lanes, shared-use paths, and connected bicycle infrastructure.

- a. *Support implementation of priority corridors and projects identified in Ride Island Plan, including connection of missing links between suitable roads for bicycles.*
- b. *Support design, permitting, and construction of Shoreline Bikeway (Burma Rd), an off-road shared use path along Newport Secondary Rail and Navy right-of-way.*
- c. *Support development of a dedicated shared-use path along East Main Road.*
- d. *Support development of a shared-use path along West Main Road.*
- e. *Advocate that state transportation projects incorporate pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Submit projects for inclusion in the state's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as appropriate.*
- f. *Provide destination/guide signing for bicyclists.*
- g. *Support public education on shared road etiquette and safety for bicyclists and drivers.*

T-3. Promote transit improvements to enhance rider experience and help mitigate traffic congestion.

T-3.1. Advocate to improve and promote the public transit system and services and ensure that the system meets the mobility needs of all citizens.

- a. *Work with RIPTA to upgrade and expand bus service across town to include greater frequency and coverage of residential and commercial activity nodes.*
- b. *Advocate for RIPTA to improve regional connections between Aquidneck Island, Providence, the Wickford Junction train station, and the Fall River MBTA commuter rail station.*
- c. *Coordinate with RIPTA to invest in transit user facilities including bus shelters and benches.*
- d. *Encourage RIPTA and RIDOT to make improvements in bus stop operations and safety such as bus pullouts and sidewalk/crosswalk upgrades, coordinate crosswalks with major bus stops.*
- e. *Encourage RIPTA to provide real-time bus information to mobile phones.*
- f. *Encourage development patterns that promote transit use.*
- g. *Increase awareness of RIPTA RIDE shuttle service to better support seniors and disabled residents in accessing essential services.*

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8.

NATURAL AND ECOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Overview

Middletown's natural environment is central to its identity, economy, and quality of life. Its unique natural and ecological resources reinforce the community's coastal and rural scenery while providing vital ecosystems that contribute to flood protection, clean air and water, wildlife habitat, and community health. Protecting and restoring these natural systems is a core community priority, valued both for their intrinsic importance and for their role in supporting the goals of the other planning topics outlined across this comprehensive plan.

Middletown's variety of open space and coastal resources support climate resilience and hazard mitigation both in town and across Aquidneck Island. Its rich farmland and inland water resources contribute to the area's local food system and drinking water security. Its scenic landscapes and conservation areas offer valuable recreational opportunities that support Middletown and Aquidneck Island's tourism economy and overall community well-being. Ensuring that natural resource conservation is integrated into housing, transportation, infrastructure, and economic development decisions is essential for preserving Middletown's distinctive character and fostering long-term community resilience.

This chapter inventories Middletown's significant natural resource areas, identifies key challenges and opportunities, and outlines strategies for their ongoing stewardship and consideration in future land use and development decisions.

A Vision for Natural & Ecological Resources

In recognition that the health of our citizens and our local economy are dependent on the health of our environment, local government practices in Middletown will reflect good stewardship of the water, land and air. The Town and its residents will choose to act collectively, individually, and collaboratively with neighboring communities to preserve, protect and restore our environment for this and future generations.

Existing Context

Middletown's location on Aquidneck Island makes for a rich natural environment with diverse ecological resources, including several different ecosystems such as salt marshes, wetlands, farmland, and forested areas. Its proximity to Narragansett Bay provides valuable marine resources and supports a variety of fish and shellfish species. Middletown also contains several freshwater ponds, rivers, and streams that contribute to the local water supply and serve as important habitats. Middletown's natural and ecological resources support both wildlife and recreational activities, making them integral to the town's environmental and economic well-being.

LOCAL TERRAIN

The Narragansett Basin, which covers much of Eastern Rhode Island, was formed from sedimentary rock approximately 300 million years ago. Weathering and erosion over time combined with glaciation have created Middletown's physical landscape of gently rolling terrain and nutrient-rich soil. Elevation ranges from sea level to 250 feet at Slate Hill on East Main Road near the Portsmouth town line. Middletown's shoreline features rocky coast along its Atlantic side, including at Second and Third Beaches. Several outcropping of conglomerate rocks with pronounced faces and parallel ridges and ravines make up unique geologic features in the southern portions of town and are commonly known as Paradise Rocks, Hanging Rock, and Purgatory Chasm.

COASTAL WATER RESOURCES

Middletown is bordered by Narragansett Bay to the west, the Sakonnet River to the east, and Rhode Island Sound to the south, providing extensive access to coastal water resources. Most of Middletown's immediate coastal areas are conservation areas or characterized by low-intensity uses, including low-density residential, primarily for recreation. A portion of Narragansett Bay adjacent to NAVSTA Newport on the western shore of Middletown actively functions as an industrial waterfront for naval activities and associated work.

The Rhode Island Coastal Resource Management Council (CRMC) oversees the preservation, protection, development, and restoration of many coastal areas throughout the state, including the west side of Aquidneck Island through Special Area Management Plans (SAMP).

Occasionally, Newport and Middletown's coastal waters and beaches experience high bacteria levels following intensive precipitation events. On average, dangerous levels of bacteria occur three to four times a year, resulting in beach closures to protect public health.

INLAND WATER RESOURCES

Middletown falls within four major watersheds associated with Bailey Brook, Paradise Brook, Maidford River, and Nelson Pond. These watershed basins drain southward towards the coast, where they connect to Easton's/Green End, Gardiner, and Nelson Ponds, which are drinking water supply reservoirs owned by the City of Newport. These three large ponds and smaller ponds make up Middletown's inland surface water resources in conjunction with several rivers and streams. Two minor watersheds, Narragansett Bay and Little Creek, drain east to west and west to east, respectively, into Narragansett Bay and the Sakonnet River. All of Middletown's rivers and streams experience occasional flooding during intensive or extended rainfall events. Low-lying areas adjacent to waterways are especially vulnerable. Middletown's inland water resources also face water quality issues caused by stormwater runoff from adjacent development, and in some areas, agricultural operations. Bailey's Brook, Little Creek, Maidford River, and Paradise Brook are considered impaired water bodies (Category 5 in Rhode Island Section 303(3) Lists of Impaired Waters) that require a TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Loads) plan.

WETLANDS

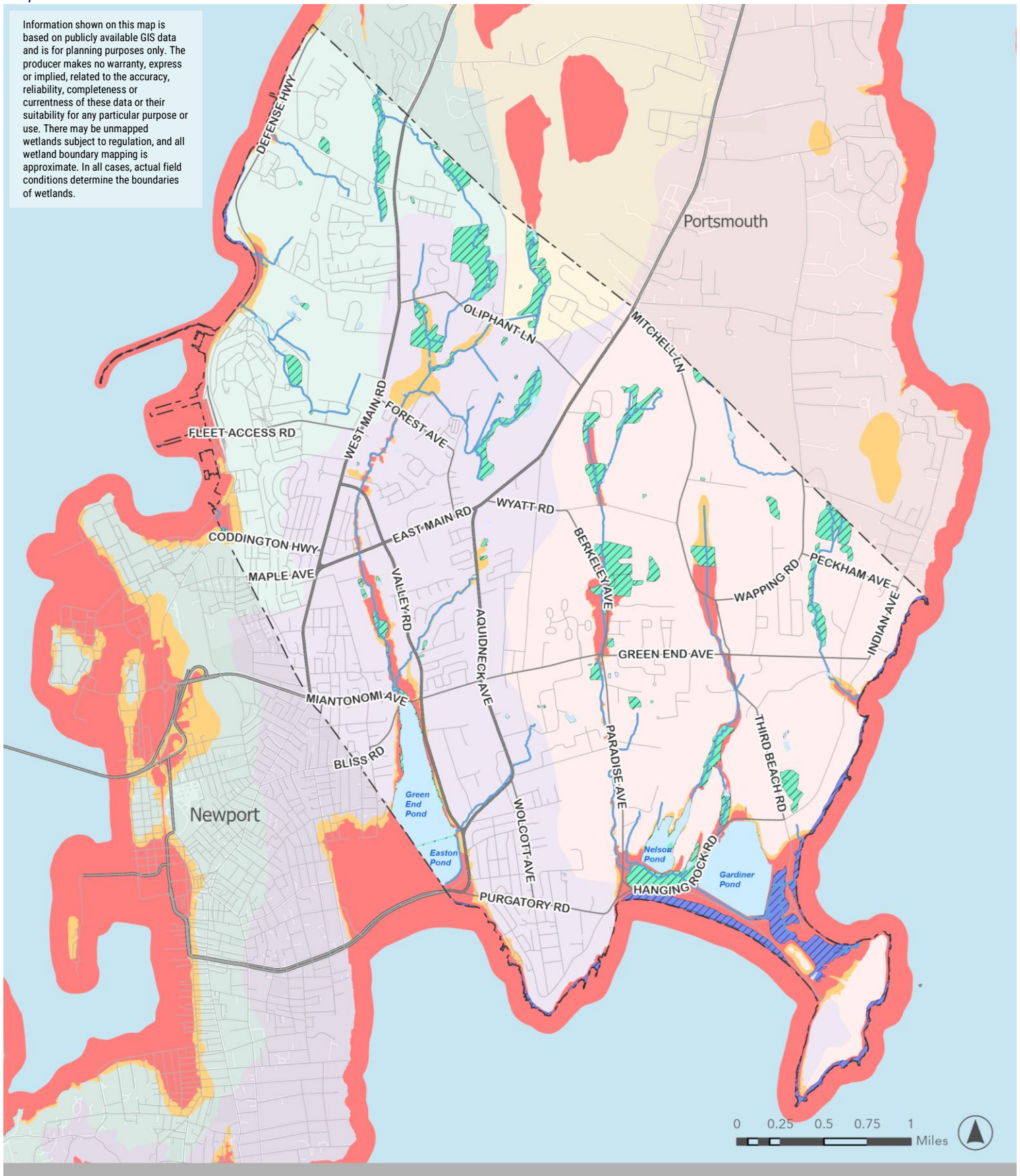
Middletown contains about 467 acres of water and 370 acres of wetlands. Wetlands make up about 4% of land area and are scattered throughout town but are primarily concentrated towards the north and east as well as along the coastline. Middletown's wetland resources provide not only nutrient and food resources for a variety of plant and wildlife species, but also important habitats including nesting sites and breeding grounds for both terrestrial and aquatic species. In addition, they serve as valuable protective buffers around water resources, protecting drinking water and mitigating coastal flooding and shoreline erosion.

Middletown's salt marshes play an essential role in maintaining the town's coastline as well as providing additional recreation and educational opportunities. The 45-acre Sachuest Saltmarsh, located within the Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge, is home to hundreds of plant and animal species and serves as a major stopover for migratory shorebirds and waterfowl.

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Map 8: Water Resources

Information shown on this map is based on publicly available GIS data and is for planning purposes only. The producer makes no warranty, express or implied, related to the accuracy, reliability, completeness or currentness of these data or their suitability for any particular purpose or use. There may be unmapped wetlands subject to regulation, and all wetland boundary mapping is approximate. In all cases, actual field conditions determine the boundaries of wetlands.



Water Resources

- Freshwater Wetland
- Saltwater Wetland
- Rivers
- Ponds
- Upper East Passage Watershed
- Lower East Passage Watershed
- Aquidneck Island-Frontal Atlantic Ocean Watershed
- Sakonnet River Watershed
- 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
- 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
- Roads
- Highways



Source: RIGIS
Date: 01.02.2025
Existing Conditions Report

FORESTS

Most of Middletown's original forest land was converted to agriculture use between the 17th and 20th centuries as farming grew and persisted as a prominent industry throughout the region. As a result, the remaining forest vegetation is comprised of abandoned fields in a variety of reclamation stages and forests of immature hardwoods. These ecosystems contribute to the cycling of soil nutrients, absorb stormwater and reduce runoff, and help to maintain the water quality of surface and groundwater resources. They also provide additional open space and recreation opportunities as well as scenic value that contributes to Middletown's semi-rural landscape and character.

FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

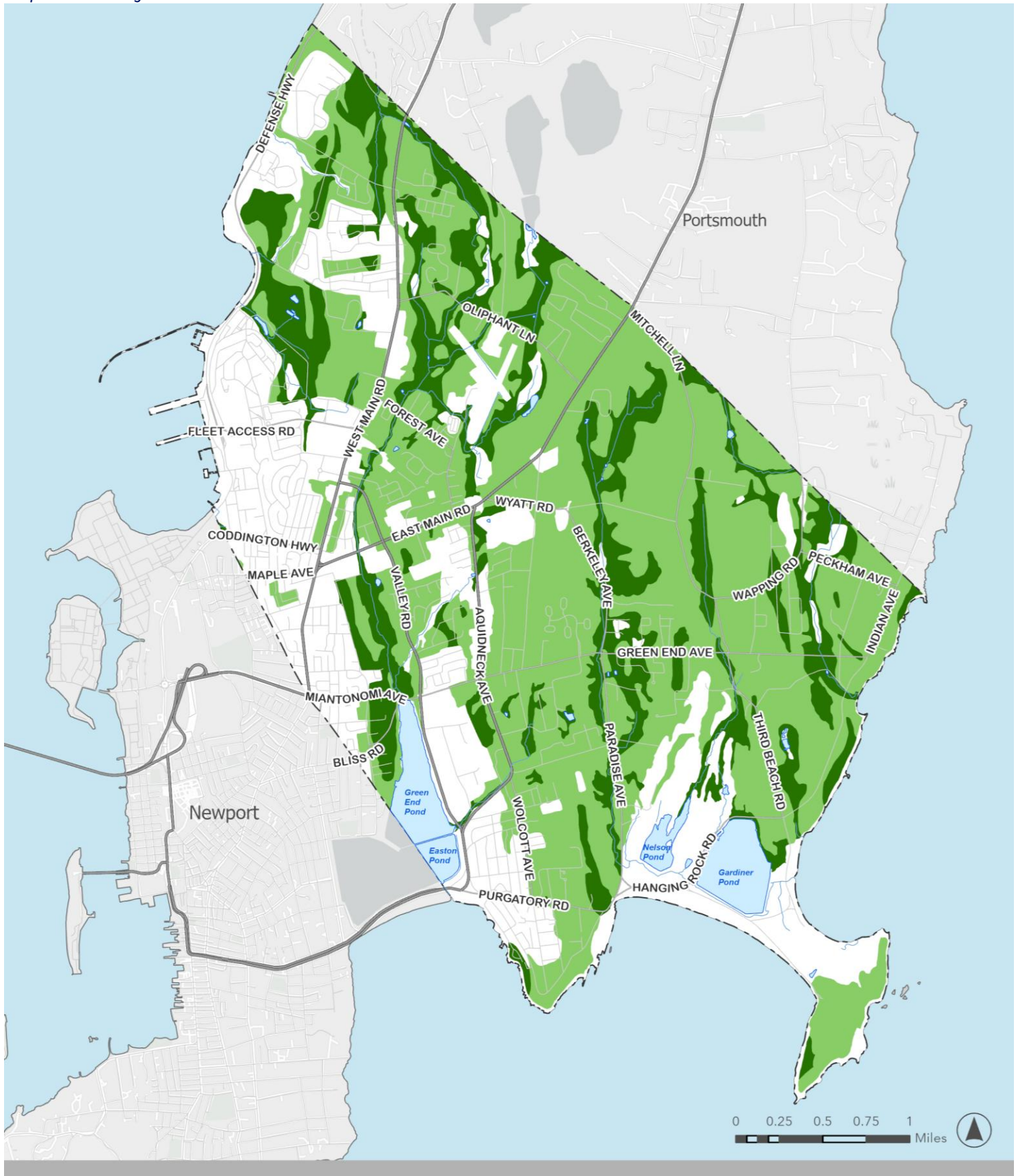
Middletown's coastal and inland ecosystems provide significant habitats for a variety of terrestrial and aquatic species. Forests and fields provide habitats for fox, deer, raccoon, rabbit, coyotes, and other similar mammals, while wetlands and salt marshes serve as breeding grounds for reptiles, fish, amphibians, birds and insects. Birds are abundant, especially during the breeding season when more than 70 species can be accounted for. Additionally, during migration seasons, as many as 220 different bird species may flock to Middletown en route to warmer destinations for winter. Some of these species include the piping plover, saltmarsh sparrow, snowy owl, harlequin duck, as well as the insect species monarch butterfly. The Norman Bird Sanctuary, Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge and Aquidneck Island Land Trust properties play a crucial role in conserving wildlife habitat for these species and other bird, plant, and animal varieties.

Areas by Bailey Brook near the Newport State Airport, Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge, Norman Bird Sanctuary, and most of the eastern part of town are designated Natural Heritage Areas. Rare and endangered species have been identified in these areas, making them crucial habitats to protect. Middletown also contains several unique natural communities listed by the RI Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) including marine intertidal rocky shore, maritime bluff, and maritime shrubland.

AGRICULTURE

About 20% of Middletown's land area is comprised of agricultural land. Not only do these lands play an economic role, but they also provide important ecosystems for soil nutrient recycling and stormwater infiltration. Once a larger proportion of town, the total acreage dedicated to agriculture has been decreasing as land is converted for residential development. There are several farms that span a total of 571 acres. Three farms—Simmons Farm, Perry Farm, and Sweet Berry Farm—are permanently protected through RI DEM's Farmland Protection Program and will remain in agricultural use. Additional farmlands are protected through AILT conservation easements. Unprotected farmland may continue to see conversion to other land uses as determined by individual property owners.

Map 9: Valuable Agricultural Soils



Agricultural Soils

- Prime Farmland
- Important Farmland
- Rivers
- Roads
- Highways
- Town Boundaries



Source: RIGIS
 Date: 01.15.2026
 Existing Conditions Report

Needs & Opportunities

CATEGORY	NEEDS	OPPORTUNITIES
Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued conservation and preservation of significant natural habitats, wildlife species, and farmland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen relationships with Aquidneck Island Land Trust and other conservation organizations to increase land acquisitions and conservation easements across town
Mitigation of Development Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve stormwater management practices to protect water quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand implementation of green stormwater infrastructure and low-impact development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address environmental challenges at Easton’s Pond (water quality, flooding, sea level rise) that are impacting the beach, adjacent roads, and local drinking water supply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with City of Newport and Newport Water on mitigation and resilience strategies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitigate impacts of septic systems on groundwater and surface water resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a wastewater management district to help residents maintain or replace aging septic systems

Goals & Policies

NR-1. Protect and restore freshwater and coastal resources and ecosystems

NR-1.1. Continue to protect and preserve the town's freshwater resources, including the public drinking water supply.

- a. *Identify sources of nonpoint source impairment of surface water bodies through the Phase II Stormwater Management Program Plan (SWMPP) planning process and work to implement the recommendations of the SWMPP.*
- b. *Continue appropriate oversight of development in the Watershed Protection Districts, including requiring a special use permit for more intensive types of development, particularly in soils with poor drainage.*
- c. *Meet the water quality management standards under the direction of the RI DEM Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Program.*
- d. *Enforce stormwater regulations and require best management practices (BMPs), particularly in sensitive watershed areas.*
- e. *Increase inspections and create a condition index of constructed stormwater drainage systems and BMPs, and promote proper maintenance of these facilities.*

NR-1.2. Protect, preserve, and rehabilitate the shoreline, beaches, sand dunes, and coastal ecosystem.

- a. *Evaluate existing protection strategies.*
- b. *Conduct a coastal engineering assessment and inventory coastal engineering structures to evaluate conditions.*
- c. *Develop a shoreline protection plan to increase shoreline resilience in vulnerable areas. Consider the range of nature-based, living shorelines, green, grey, and hybrid approaches.*
- d. *Develop Beach Management Plan(s) to ensure long-term planning for the resilience of Sachuest Beach and other public beaches and sand dune systems.*
- e. *Continue the use of Mobi Mats to prevent walking on beach grass and dunes.*

NR-2. Preserve and protect Middletown's plant and animal ecosystems.

NR-2.1. Protect native wildlife and native plant species.

- a. *Using the Town's open space protection scoring and prioritization policy, support the preservation and conservation of open space in watersheds, along the shore, and in other environmentally sensitive areas through acquisition, conservation easements, and purchase of development rights.*

- b. Preserve and/or establish natural resource connections such as greenways, blueways, and wildlife corridors in partnership with land trusts, conservation foundation, and government agencies.*
- c. Promote use of conservation subdivision when farmland and other undeveloped land is being converted to residential use.*

NR-2.2. Preserve existing forested areas and expand tree canopy.

- a. Using the Town's open space protection scoring and prioritization policy, permanently protect forested areas through acquisition and conservation easements in partnership with AILT and other local organizations.*
- b. In conjunction with the Middletown Tree Commission efforts, establish a plan for planting, maintaining, and replacing trees in public spaces.*
- c. Require developers to retain existing trees when possible and to provide deciduous street trees.*

NR-2.3. Reduce invasive species.

- a. Encourage the planting of native trees and plants.*
- b. Develop a preferred list of plant species for use in reviewing landscaping plans during development plan review.*
- c. Develop an early detection and rapid response plan (EDRR) for invasives.*
- d. Collaborate with local organizations pursuing invasives removal both in Middletown and across Aquidneck Island.*
- e. Develop a public education campaign and training program to support identification of invasive species and early intervention.*



9.

**OPEN SPACE
AND
RECREATION**

Overview

Open spaces offer both individual and collective benefits that contribute to a healthier, more connected community. They provide opportunities for recreation, physical activity, and time in nature that supports physical and mental well-being. At the same time, open spaces serve as shared environments where residents can come together, fostering social connection, civic engagement, and a stronger sense of community. Middletown is fortunate to have a variety of open and recreational spaces that are beloved and highly utilized by residents, visitors, and a range of community organizations. These spaces play an important role in protecting natural resources, supporting biodiversity, and building climate resilience. Additionally, the scenic and recreational value of these spaces contributes to the local economy and reinforces Middletown's appeal as a desirable place to live, work, and visit.

Continuing to preserve and strengthen Middletown's existing open space and recreational resources alongside new development was a key theme shared by community members throughout the process. This chapter provides an inventory of Middletown's key recreation, conservation, and open space assets, identifies challenges and opportunities, and highlights strategies to enhance and expand these resources to better serve the community's evolving needs.

A Vision for Open Space & Recreation

Open space within Middletown includes an abundance of diverse natural areas which offer recreational opportunities while preserving agricultural lands, wildlife habitat, sensitive ecosystems and water quality. Residents value an active and healthy lifestyle and will have access to quality recreation programs, facilities, beaches, parks and trails offered by the town.

Existing Context

A variety of parks, natural areas, and recreational facilities make up Middletown's open space and recreational offerings. The town has maintained a strong network of open spaces from coastal beaches to inland community parks and trails. Of Middletown's total land area, 31% is open space, 56% of which is protected and 44% unprotected.

About one-third of Middletown is
open space



31%

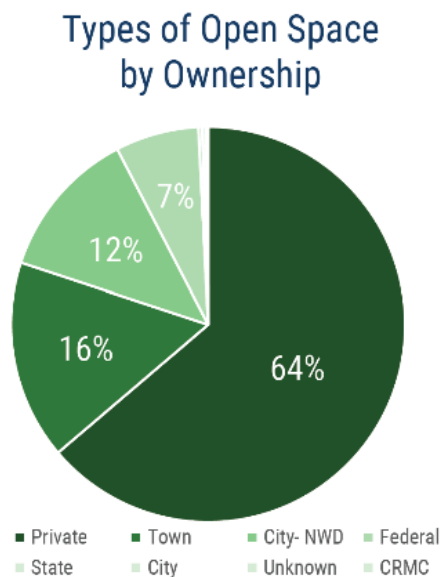
Open Space

Agricultural lands make up about half of the Town’s open space, with a substantially smaller proportion (13%) dedicated to parks and recreational open spaces like playgrounds and playing fields. The remaining (37%) includes conservation lands and other non-built open spaces including areas used for watershed protection and open space within subdivisions.

The Town of Middletown owns 503 acres or 16% of these spaces, while private entities, the City of Newport’s Water Department, and the federal government own the rest.

The eastern half of town has a greater proportion of open space than the west primarily due to the presence of large swaths of agricultural and conservation land.

Figure 8: Open Space by Ownership



ACTIVE RECREATION

Middletown’s Department of Public Works oversees the maintenance of Town-owned recreational fields and facilities in partnership with the School Department. It also oversees beach maintenance and operations.

Throughout the year, several youth sports leagues, run by private organizations, work with Middletown’s Facilities Director to schedule use of various public facilities. Middletown’s active recreation resources consist of well-utilized playing fields and courts, playgrounds, and other recreational facilities and accompanying programming. These resources include:

Public:

- Linden Park (multi-use fields and playground)
- Wyatt Road soccer fields
- West Main Recreational Complex (softball field, basketball courts)
- School playing fields
 - High School (baseball, softball, indoor basketball court, soccer fields, multi-use fields, indoor gymnasium)
 - Gaudet Middle School (baseball, football, walking/running track, tennis, basketball, playground, multi-use fields, indoor gymnasium)
 - Aquidneck School (baseball, softball, playground, multi-use fields)
- 6 playgrounds located at the Aquidneck School, Forest Avenue School, Linden Park, Howland Park, Oliphant School, and Gaudet Middle School

Private:

- Newport National Golf Course – 200 acre golf course on Mitchell’s Lane
- Wanumetonomy Golf & Country Club – golf club between West Main Road and Defense Highway
- Newport Equestrian Academy – Equestrian center that offers riding lessons, trail rides, and summer camp, in addition to boarding horses.
- St. George’s School playing fields and courts
- Newport County YMCA – community recreational organization and facility that offers a range of programs, classes, and services designed to promote wellness, community engagement, and personal growth for all ages.

PASSIVE RECREATION

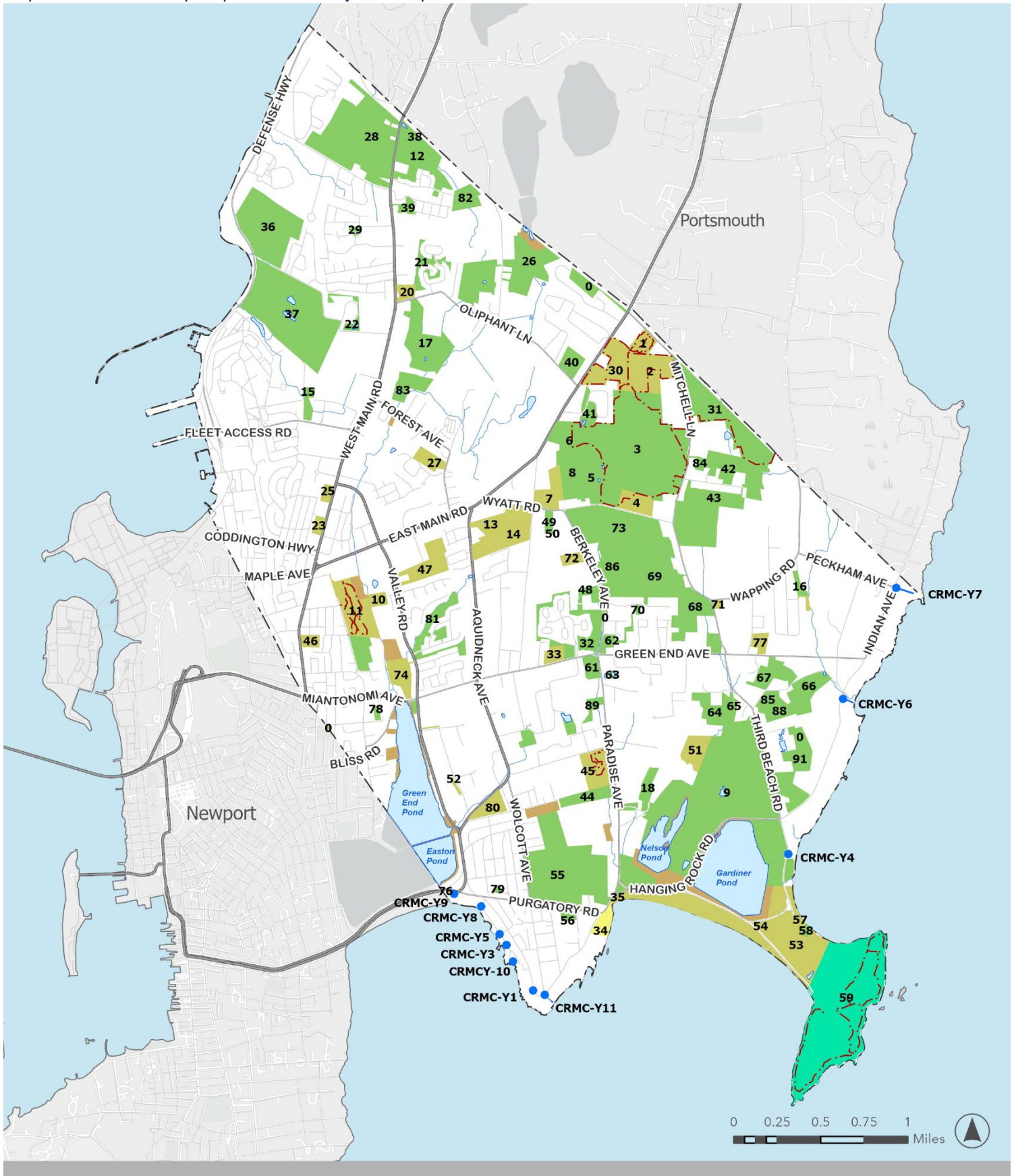
Middletown’s numerous parks and open spaces provide opportunities for a variety of passive activities, such as walking, hiking, enjoying scenery, and observing wildlife. Some of these key resources include:

- Paradise Valley Park – includes walking trails, picnic areas, and the historic Boyd Windmill across 15 acres off Paradise Avenue.
- Middletown Valley Park – A former 45-acre farmland turned park that offers scenic walking trails and is located between High Street and Valley Road.
- Albro Woods – a 9-acre wooded community park near Middletown’s northern border that includes walking trails and connects to the Sakonnet Greenway.
- Dunlap Wheeler Park – a 1.3-acre waterfront park with scenic views of the Atlantic Ocean and Easton’s Beach.
- Howland Park – includes basketball and tennis courts, picnic facilities, and a playground at the corner of 3rd Beach and Wapping Road.
- Demery Memorial Park – includes open field area off the western segment of Green End Avenue.
- Norman Bird Sanctuary - a 325-acre wildlife refuge with seven miles of trails, diverse habitats, and scenic views, offering education and recreation for nature enthusiasts.
- Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge – includes walking trails, scenic views and birdwatching opportunities.

PUBLIC SHORELINE ACCESS

The state recognizes several public rights-of-way to the shore in Middletown. The Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) identifies ten paths to the shore that provide pedestrian access.

Map 10: Recreation and Open Space Resources by Ownership



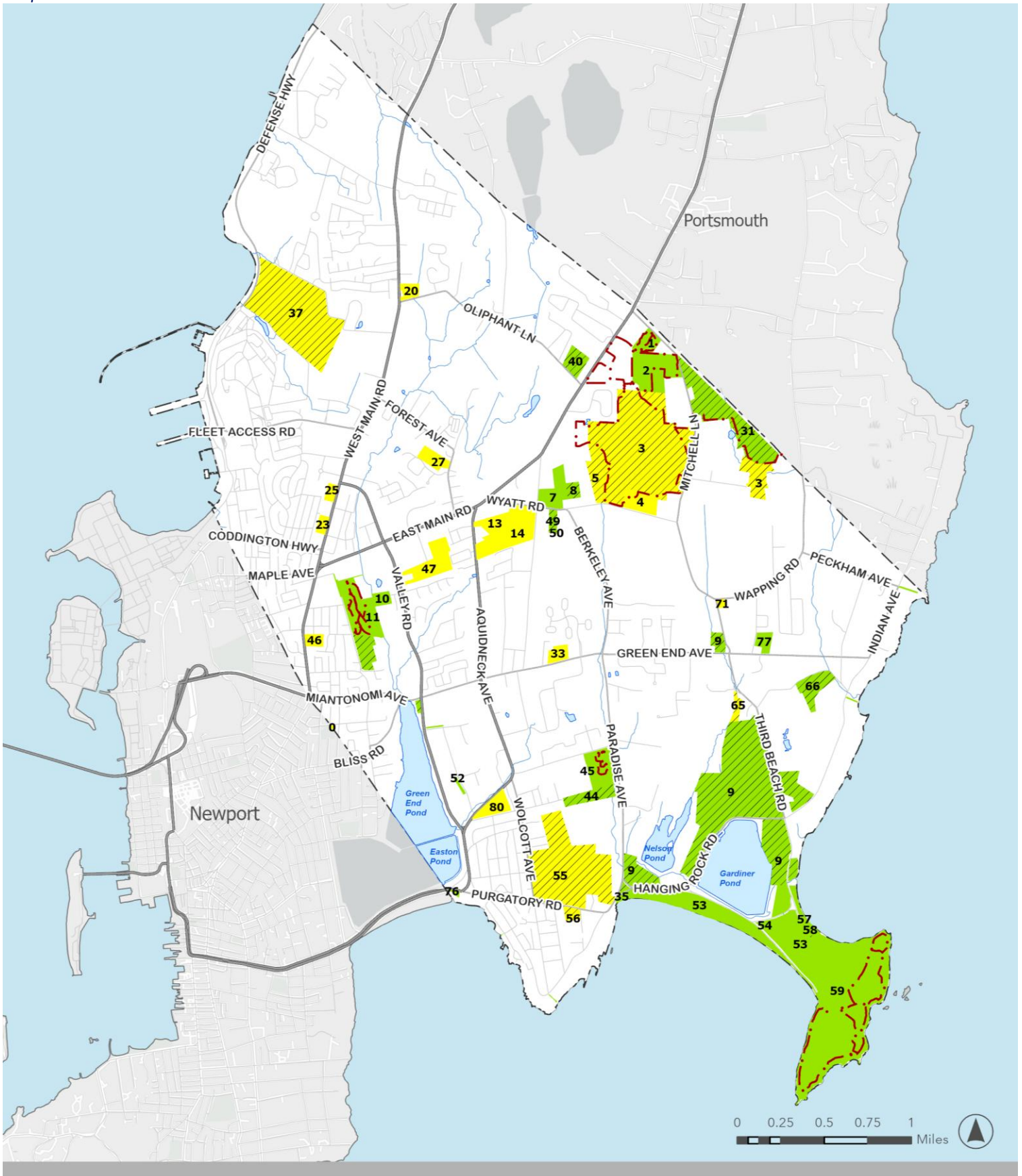
Recreation and Open Space by Ownership

- | | | |
|---|---|-----------------|
| FEDERAL | CRMC | Roads |
| STATE | CRMC Designated Rights-of-Way to the Shore | Highways |
| TOWN | Trail | Rivers |
| CITY | | Town Boundaries |
| PRIVATE | | |



Source: Middletown GIS
 Date: 01.10.2025
 Existing Conditions Report

Map 11: Recreation Resources



Recreation Resources

- Public Active Recreation
- Private Active Recreation
- Public Passive Recreation
- Private Passive Recreation
- Trail

- Rivers
- Roads
- Highways
- Town Boundaries



Source: Middletown GIS
 Date: 01.10.2025
 Existing Conditions Report

Table 16 Recreation and Open Space Resources (includes resources for both Map 9 and Map 10)

Map ID	Name
1	Albro Woods
2	Tibbetts Farm
3	Newport National Golf Course
4	Wyatt Road Soccer Fields
5	Aquidneck Gun Club
6	Newport Vineyards
7	Middletown Cemetery
8	Corey Sears Farm
9	Norman Bird Sanctuary
10	Sweet Flag
11	The Valley
12	Kesson Farm Open Space
13	Multipurpose Fields
14	Gaudet School
15	Subdivision Open Space
16	Porter Road Lot
17	Crystal Spring Water Co.
18	Grey Craig Subdivision Open Space
19	Newport Water Quality Ponds
20	Oliphant School
21	Subdivision Open Space
22	Westridge Condominiums Open Space
23	West Main Road Rec Complex
24	Jordan Open Space (NWD)
25	Kennedy School
26	Cousens Farm
27	Forest Ave School
28	Simmons Farm
29	Unity Drive Subdivision Open Space
30	Boulevard Nurseries
31	Bittersweet Farms Open Space
32	Whitehall Condominium Open Space
33	Berkley-Peckham Field
34	Purgatory Chasm
35	Second Beach (Surfer's End)
36	St. Columba's Cemetery
37	Wanumetonomy Country Club
38	Prescott Farm
39	West Meadow Subdivision Open Space
40	St. Mary's Church Open Space
41	East Meadow Subdivision Open Space
42	Commonwealth Farm
43	Webster Farm

9 | OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

44	Olaynack Farm
45	Paradise Valley Park
46	Linden Park
47	Middletown High School
48	RI Colonial Dames
49	Jewish Community Cemetery
50	Historic Cemetery
51	Grey Craig
52	Aquidneck Corporate Park
53	Second Beach (Sachuest Beach)
54	Second Beach (Campground)
55	St. George's School
56	St. George's Courts
57	Third Beach
58	Third Beach Lot
59	Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge
60	Newport Water Dept
61	Sakonnet View Subdivision Open Space
62	Foxgrove Commons Subdivision Open Space
63	Trout Farm Subdivision Open Space
64	Clubhouse Partners
65	Newport Equestrian Center
66	Newport Memorial Cemetery
67	Silvia Farm
68	Thurston Farm Subdivision Open Space
69	Sweet Berry Farm
70	Wyndham Hill Subdivision Open Space
71	Howland Park
72	Berkeley Ave Open Field
73	Bailey Farm
74	Sullivan Property
75	Newport Historical Society
76	Dunlap-Wheeler Park
77	Demery Memorial Park
78	Green End Fort
79	Renfrew Park Open Space
80	Aquidneck School
81	Valley View Subdivision Open Space
82	Peckham Farm
83	Autocenter Conservation Easement
84	Easy Street Farm
85	Arnaw
86	Randall
87	Gray Craig Water Resource Conservation Easement
88	John Peabody Third Beach Road
89	Warner Preserve

90	Newport Water Dept
91	ALT Owned Conservation Easement
92	Newport Water Dept
93	Water Quality

DRAFT

TRAILS

Middletown has 14 miles of walking trails, many of which are found within existing parks and conservation lands. A portion of the Sakonnet Greenway Trail, developed by the Aquidneck Island Land Trust (AILT), the longest continuous nature trail on Aquidneck Island, crosses through Middletown near Albro Woods. The trail passes through recreational areas, active farmland, wetlands, and forest land in both Portsmouth and Middletown, and allows for pedestrian access. Middletown Valley Park, Paradise Valley Park, Norman Bird Sanctuary, and Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge provide additional trails for recreational use.

CONSERVATION LAND

Notable conservation lands include the 233-acre federally-owned Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge and the 263-acre privately-owned Norman Bird Sanctuary, which provide scenic coastal views and wildlife habitats. The City of Newport and the Newport Water Department also own several parcels in Middletown for watershed conservation purposes. Additional land is preserved for agriculture use and protected under AILT conservation easements and is not accessible to the public. AILT plays an integral role in the preservation and stewardship of open spaces in Middletown and across Aquidneck Island as a whole. Since its founding, the land trust has conserved 2,816 acres of open space across 99 properties, about 11.5% of Aquidneck Island. In Middletown, 897 acres of public and private lands are protected by AILT-owned conservation easements.

BEACHES

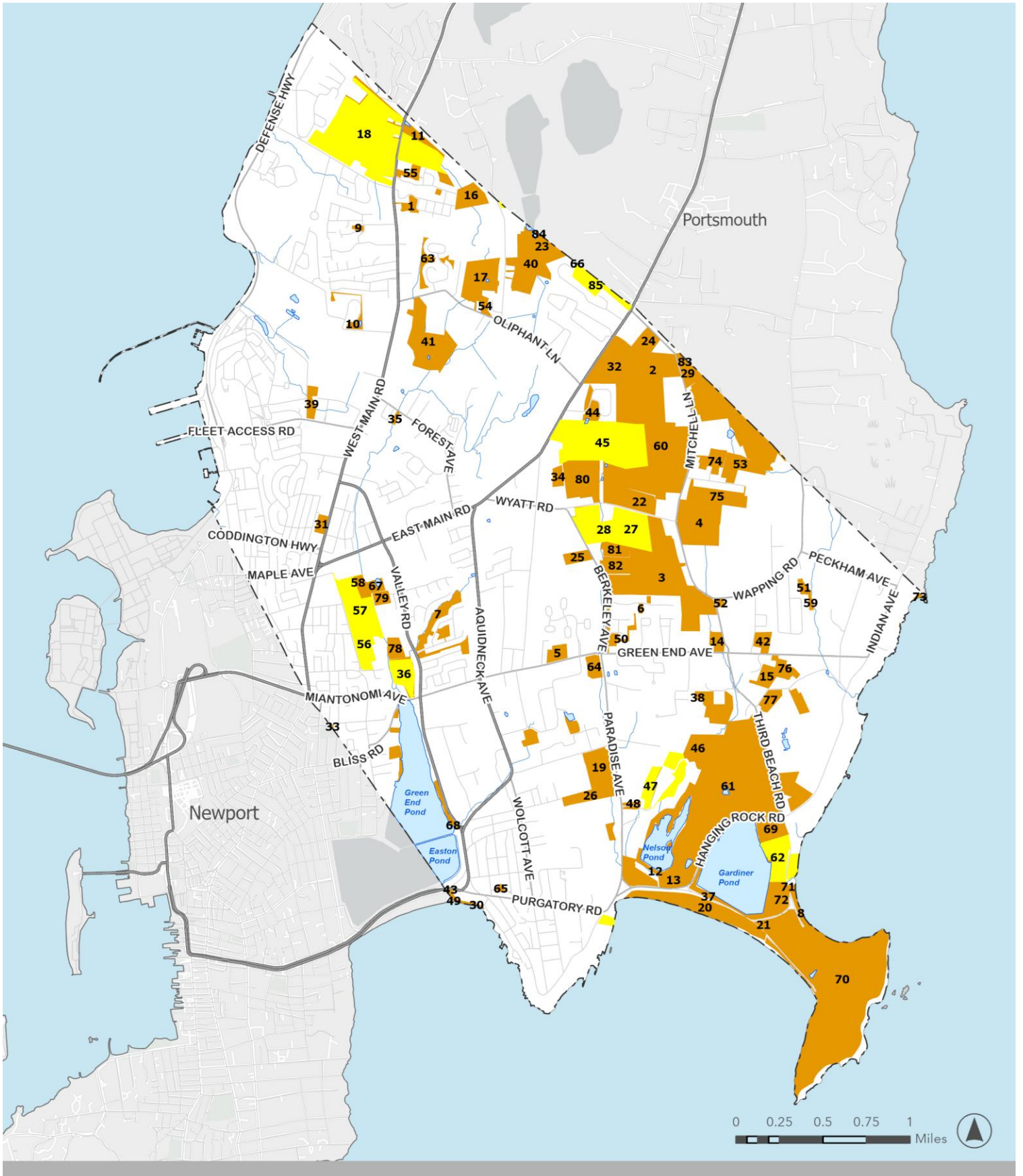
Middletown's extensive beach areas are an invaluable asset to the community that enhance quality of life and provide significant recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. Middletown's beaches comprise 74 acres.

A small portion of Atlantic Beach, which is connected to Newport's Easton's Beach (aka First Beach), is in Middletown and also open to public use. Additional public access to the shore is provided by several small parcels that have been designated as rights-of-way to the shore by the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC).

Sachuest Beach, locally known as Second Beach, is a 1 ¼-mile-long public beach that includes saltwater swimming, a picnic area, saltwater fishing, kayaking, a facilities building, a concession stand, surfing, and windsurfing. Middletown's Second Beach Family Campground is located across the street and offers camping May through October.

Third Beach is a public beach that offers swimming, fishing, bird watching, kayaking, a boat ramp and picnicking. There is also abutting private beachfront property, some of which is available for public use.

Map 12: Conservation Land



Conserved Land

- Conserved Land (State)
- Conserved Land (Local)

- Roads
- Highways
- Rivers
- Town Boundaries



Source: Middletown GIS
 Date: 01.10.2025
 Existing Conditions Report

Table 17 Conserved Lands

Map ID	Name
1	West Meadow
2	Tibbetts Farm
3	Sweet Berry Farm
4	Webster Farm
5	War Memorial Field
6	Wyndham Hill
7	Valley View
8	Third Beach
9	Unity Drive
10	West Ridge Condo Association
11	Simmons Farm
12	Nelson Pond
13	Maidford River
14	Paradise Brook
15	Silvia Farm
16	Peckham
17	Sanctuary
18	Simmons Farm
19	Paradise Valley Park
20	Second Beach
21	Second Beach Campground
22	Wyatt Rd Soccer Fields
23	Sisson Pond
24	Albro Woods
25	Berkeley Field
26	Braman Farm
27	Bailey Farm
28	Bailey Farm
29	Bittersweet Farms
30	Atlantic Beach
31	Anchorage Playground
32	Boulevard Nurseries
33	Vernon Park
34	Newport Vineyards and Winery
35	Forest Ave Wetland
36	Green End Pond
37	Gardiner Pond
38	Clubhouse Partners
39	Commerce Drive
40	Cousens Farm
41	Crystal Spring Water Company
42	Demery Park
43	Dunlap-Wheeler Park

44	East Meadow
45	Newport Vineyards and Winery
46	Grey Craig
47	Grey Craig
48	Grey Craig
49	First Beach / Eastons Beach
50	Fox Grove Commons
51	Harrison
52	Howland Park
53	Idle Hour Farm
54	Ivy Homeowners
55	Kesson Farm
56	Kempenaar Valley
57	Kempenaar Valley
58	Kempenaar Valley
59	Little Creek Access
60	Newport National Golf Club
61	Norman Bird Sanctuary
62	Norman Bird Sanctuary
63	Huntington Farm
64	Sakonnet View
65	Renfrew Park
66	Wicks Nursery
67	Kempenaar Valley
68	Green End Pond
69	Norman Bird Sanctuary
70	Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge
71	Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge
72	Sachuest Point National wildlife Refuge
73	Pebble Beach
74	Easy Street Farm
75	Mitchell Land
76	Silvia Farm
77	Arnaw Aquidneck Island Land Trust Easement
78	The Valley
79	The Valley
80	Sears Farm
81	Aquidneck Island Land Trust Easement
82	Aquidneck Island Land Trust Easement
83	Aquidneck Island Land Trust Easement
84	Elshant Preserve
85	Lawton Valley

Needs & Opportunities

CATEGORY	NEEDS	OPPORTUNITIES
Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improvements to existing recreational spaces to better serve community needs, especially for youth and families ▪ Identify locations for new fields to meet demand/interest ▪ Greater year-round recreational opportunities and programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assess community recreational needs through update to Town’s 2010 Recreation, Conservation, and Open Space Master Plan ▪ Increase recreational offerings for youth and families ▪ Explore the potential of vacant properties for a new community center
Open Space & Trail Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continued preservation of open space ▪ Expansion of local trail network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create connections between open space resources ▪ Partner with developers, Aquidneck Island Land Trust, and other organizations to create new public open spaces, trails, and trail connections ▪ Use road improvement projects as an opportunity to develop multi-use paths
Waterfront Amenities & Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase public access to the shoreline ▪ Protect beaches and shoreline from impacts of climate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collaborate with the Navy to preserve open space and create more recreational opportunities on the West Side, specifically along Burma Road. ▪ Align resilience planning with open space preservation and restoration to maximize both environmental resilience and recreational opportunities

Goals & Policies

OS-1. Maintain, improve, and expand recreational facilities to meet the community's recreation needs

OS-1.1. Implement and maintain an updated Recreation, Conservation, and Open Space Master Plan designed to fulfill the short- and long-term needs of the community.

- a. *Perform a community needs assessment for open space and recreation.*
- b. *Update the 2010 Recreation, Conservation, and Open Space Master Plan every ten years.*

OS-1.2. Continue to maintain and improve Town-owned recreational and open space areas and facilities.

- a. *Develop management plans for Town properties that include maintenance standards for land, facilities, and staff.*
- b. *Improve access to Town facilities for people with disabilities.*
- c. *Pursue grant funds to improve facilities .*
- d. *Provide maps and wayfinding signs for open space and recreation parcels; publicize on Town website and update as needed.*
- e. *Facilitate creation of "Friends" groups for community stewardship of recreational and open space resources.*

OS-1.3. Expand the network of parks and open spaces in all neighborhoods as opportunities arise.

- a. *Identify potential sites for new open spaces, playing fields, pocket parks, and other recreational facilities.*
- b. *Work with developers to facilitate the development of new recreational and open space amenities.*
- c. *Apply for state and other funding to support identified recreation and open space acquisitions.*

OS-2. Expand and enhance the trail system in Middletown

OS-2.1. Expand, enhance, and connect the trail network in Middletown.

- a. *Establish multi-use trails and bike lanes to connect neighborhoods to Town's open space and recreational resources.*
- b. *Support development of Shoreline Drive/Burma Road multi-use path.*
- c. *Support implementation of Ride Island Plan's priority corridors.*

- d. Identify opportunities to improve pedestrian connections between park facilities and neighborhoods.*
- e. Support expansion and enhancement of trails in conservation lands and the network between properties in partnership with community organizations.*

OS-2.2. Establish connections between open space parcels to create an integrated network of green corridors.

- a. Identify opportunities to provide connections between existing open space parcels, including strategic acquisitions.*
- b. Partner with Aquidneck Island Land Trust, Norman Bird Sanctuary, Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge, and other organizations to support and leverage acquisition efforts using the Town's open space scoring and prioritization policy.*

OS-3. Preserve and improve coastal access and recreational amenities

OS-3.1. Preserve and protect Second and Third Beach by maintaining and enhancing current facilities and level of use.

- a. Provide quality facilities, amenities, and programs for all users.*
- b. Assess needs to safeguard from projected impacts of climate change.*

OS-3.2. Preserve and protect public access to the shoreline.

- a. Recognize and publicize public rights of way and commons to the shore.*
- b. Acquire shoreline property valuable for public use, as it becomes available.*
- c. Implement the recommendations in the West Side Master Plan and subsequent planning documents, to preserve shoreline property such as surplus Navy land along Narragansett Bay.*



10.

**CULTURAL AND
HISTORIC
RESOURCES**

Overview

Cultural and historic resources help shape a community's identity, offering a tangible connection to its past and a sense of continuity across generations. The unique circumstances, traditions, and stories of a place gradually create a distinct local character that is reinforced by its historic buildings, structures, and landscapes. Middletown's many significant historic and cultural resources offer residents and visitors opportunities to learn and engage with the area's local heritage and history. Preserving Middletown's historic sites and cultural landscapes has long been a community priority. These resources contribute to the town's quality of life, support its rural and coastal identity, and play a vital role in the local economy through tourism and cultural programming.

This chapter identifies Middletown's key historic and cultural assets, highlights current challenges and opportunities, and outlines strategies to preserve, promote, and integrate these resources into future growth and planning efforts.

A Vision for Cultural & Historic Resources

Middletown will be known as a community that preserves its past and values cultural enrichment opportunities for its residents and visitors. The town and its residents will recognize cultural and historic preservation as a key component to the town's future growth, economy, character, and appeal.

Existing Context

BRIEF HISTORY

Middletown was founded in 1743 when it separated from Newport. Its fertile soil attracted farmers who cleared the land and used stones from the soil to build stone walls as fences and boundary markers, some of which are still visible today. During the Revolutionary War, the Middletown-Newport boundary was a contested area, and traces of that fortification are also still visible. Middletown remained rural throughout the 1800s, providing a summer escape for wealthy echelons living in industrial cities.

During the 1900s, and especially from World War II onward, the United States Navy had a growing presence in Middletown. Coddington Cove became a Navy port and new residential and commercial development followed to support service members and their families. Middletown's population peaked in 1970 at 29,290 people due in large part to the Navy presence. Navy operations began declining in the 1970s and continued through the 1990s, with the population stabilizing between 16,000 and 19,000 people. Starting in 2005, Naval Station Newport experienced growth as training commands relocated from other bases to Newport. More recently, the Navy, Coast Guard, and NOAA announced plans for new facilities, which are expected to drive further growth.

HISTORIC PLACES & LANDSCAPES

Middletown has fourteen sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Historic places of note include Bailey Farm, Whitehall, Boyd's Windmill, Witherbee School, and the Stonybrook Estate Historic District. Seventeen archaeological sites and 87 identified historic heritage structures are also scattered across town generally in proximity to existing waterbodies. Two primary fortifications from the Revolutionary War remain in Middletown located at Green End Fort and Redoubt St. Onge at the end of Vernon Avenue. There are also 54 historic cemeteries in town.

CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES

Middletown also contains several historic landscapes identified by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission. These landscapes encapsulate both vernacular and designed varieties that represent historically significant landscapes and include the following sites:

- Rhode Island Nurseries, 644 East Main Road
- Gray Craig, 1924-28, 75 Gray Craig Road
- Green End Avenue Agricultural Landscape- 3 Farms at 1498 Green End Avenue, 1499 Green End Avenue, & Howland Avenue
- Sonnenhof, 1914-1919, 14 Indian Avenue
- Hopelands, 1927-1930, 165 Indian Avenue
- Stonybrook, 1928, 500 Indian Avenue
- Mitchell Lane Rural Landscape – Chapman Farm (373 Mitchell's Lane), James Smith Farm (798 Mitchell's Lane), Ogden Farm (Mitchell's Lane & Wyatt Road)
- St. George's School, 1902, 372 Purgatory Road
- Lazy Lawn, Angell Cottage, 1842, 528 Third Beach Road
- King-Norman Farm, 583 Third Beach Road
- West Main Road Agricultural Landscape - Middletown's Northwest Corner – Coggeshall - Simmons Farm

The 8.3-mile Paradise Loop Scenic Highway runs along Paradise Avenue, Berkeley Avenue, Wyatt Road, Mitchell's Lane, Wapping Road, Peckham Avenue, Indian Avenue, and Hanging Rock Road. The scenic loop traverses areas of natural beauty, historical significance, recreational opportunity, and cultural importance. It also includes several points of interest along the route including Indian Avenue's historic Victorian houses, the Norman Bird Sanctuary, Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge, Second Beach, and Purgatory Chasm. The route benefits residents and visitors, serving as a component of the local road network and activity for tourists visiting the area.

Table 18: National Register of Historic Places

Listed National Register of Historic Places in Middletown

Name	Location	Category	Listed Date
Bailey Farm	373 Wyatt Rd.	Building	6/4/1984
Boyd's Windmill	Prospect Ave.	Building	1/26/2001
Clambake Club of Newport	353 Tuckerman Ave.	Building	11/7/1995
Gardiner Pond Shell Midden	Address Restricted	Site	4/12/1985
Hamilton Hoppin House	120 Miantonomi Ave.	Building	8/16/1996
Joseph, Lyman C., House	438 Walcott Ave.	Building	5/2/1975
Murphy, Dennis J., House at Ogden Farm	641 Mitchell's Ln.	Building	12/13/2007
Paradise School	Paradise and Prospect Aves.	Building	5/5/1978
Smith-Gardiner-Norman Farm Historic District	583 Third Beach Rd.	District	6/16/2008
St. Columba's, the Berkeley Memorial Chapel	55 Vaucluse Ave.	Building	8/1/2022
St. George's School-Church of St. George, Little Chapel, and Memorial Schoolhouse	372 Purgatory Rd.	Building	11/12/2004
Stonybrook Estate Historic District	501-521 Indian Ave and 75 Vaucluse Ave.	District	9/1/2009
Van Rensselaer, Alexander, House	1 Ichabod Ln	Building	6/4/2018
Whitehall	Berkeley Ave.	Building	4/28/1970
Witherbee School	Green End Ave.	Building	11/27/1989

Source: National Register of Historic Places, 2024.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The Middletown Historical Society oversees the preservation of the town's history and its historic landmarks. It is volunteer-run and has managed several preservation projects since its establishment in 1976, including the Middletown War Veteran's Memorial Park. It also runs public education programming throughout the year to bring people together to learn about and safeguard the town's local heritage.

CULTURAL RESOURCES AND INSTITUTIONS

Middletown's cultural institutions include its public library, schools, houses of worship, and engaged network of nonprofit and community organizations. Important institutions include:

- Public Library

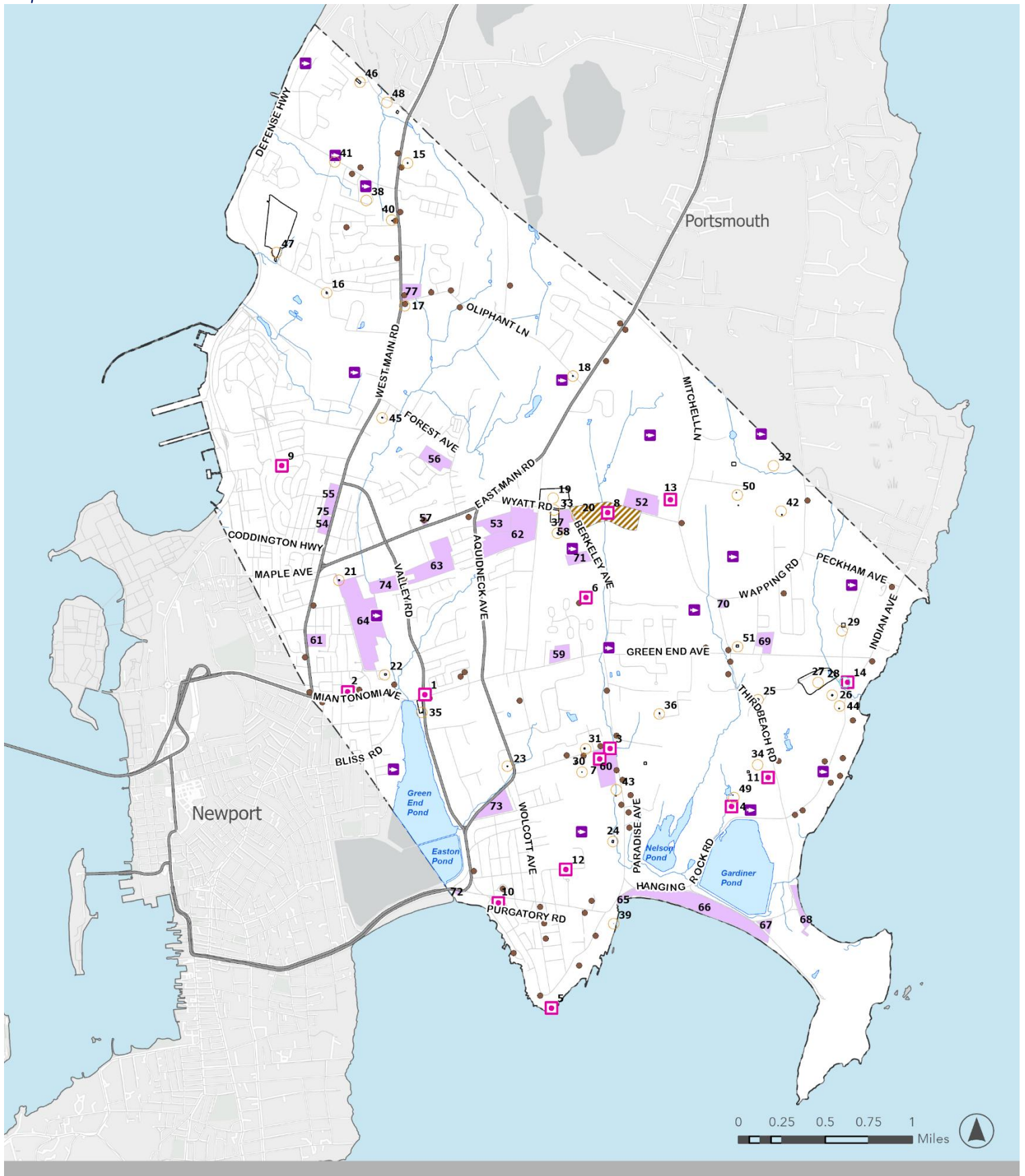
- Norman Bird Sanctuary
- Middletown Historical Society
- Newport County YMCA
- Potter League for Animals
- Sachuest Point Wildlife Refuge

ADDITIONAL AREAS OF HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INTEREST

- Indian Avenue in the eastern part of Middletown along the Sakonnet River is a one-quarter-mile section of winding, tree-lined, and relatively quiet road between Green End Avenue on the north and Third Beach Road on the south. Along it are about a dozen noteworthy Late Victorian and early 20th-century summerhouses and a picturesque stone chapel erected in 1884. Most of the houses are situated east of the road and offer views of the river and ocean.
- At the northwest corner of Wyatt Road and Mitchell's Lane is the Mitchell's Lane Historic Site, about 125 acres of farmland centered on a 2-1/2 story, late Victorian, cross-gable farmhouse and several large, wood-shingle outbuildings. The district, which includes the former Ogden Farm and small portions of adjacent farmland, is an important surviving link to Middletown's agricultural heritage.
- Along the southern part of Paradise Avenue, for a distance of about one mile, are several dozen residences, including some noteworthy structures, most dating from the mid-19th century. To the present day, Paradise Avenue has maintained its quiet, residential character, unaffected by modern intrusions; and its many fine, early homes are an important part of Middletown's history.
- In the south-central part of Middletown north of Second Beach, the Paradise Rocks Historic area is a largely undeveloped area of generally north-south trending rock ridges, including Paradise Rocks and Hanging Rocks. On an island devoted largely to agricultural, residential, commercial, and industrial uses, the Paradise Rocks area is a superb and unique natural enclave. In the 18th century, Bishop George Berkeley made frequent visits by carriage to Paradise and Hanging Rocks while living in Middletown and was said to have written 'Alciphron' here, one of his best-known works.
- Along West Main Road, at the town line, partly in Middletown and partly in Portsmouth, is Prescott Farm. The property, developed by the Newport Restoration Foundation, comprises a group of restored buildings, including a house, a small building once used as a guardhouse, a country store, a windmill in Middletown and the Overing House in Portsmouth.
- In the northwest part of Middletown, along both sides of West Main Road and part of Greene Lane, is a rural tract centered on several old farms. This area, with its farm complexes and undulating fields bounded by stone walls, is one of the few surviving agricultural areas on the island.
- "Whitehall", the home of Bishop George Berkeley from 1729-1731, the Anglo-Irish philosopher, located on Berkeley Avenue, now a museum house.

- Green End, now known as Card's Redoubt (1778): the remains of an earthwork in a pine grove at the rear of 218 Boulevard marks the site of MacKenzie's Green End or Card's Redoubt, once part of a line of defenses built by the British in 1778 around Newport.
- Jutting out into the Atlantic Ocean is a slightly elevated, rocky peninsula, known as Sachuest. It was an island at the end of the last ice age, but currents deposited sand and gravel that created Second Beach and Third Beach and connected the island to the mainland. The peninsula is owned by the federal government and is now known as the Sachuest Point Wildlife Refuge and offers a visitors center and trails.
- Purgatory Chasm is a natural chasm, or cleft, in the cliffs along Sachuest Bay. The opening in the conglomerate rock ledge is about 10 feet wide, 50 feet deep, and 120 feet long. Purgatory is of geological importance because the chasm is a good example of erosion due to wave action and because of the conglomerate beds, of "stretched pebbles and boulders", which were flattened and elongated by compression millions of years ago. Initials and dates inscribed in a layer of sandstone, dating from the 18th century, indicate that Purgatory was known from an early time.
- A sinuous mound of earth and a grassy open area with a steep slope to the east, mark the site of Redoubt St. Onge, a Revolutionary War defense work. Colonial and French troops constructed the redoubt in 1780 to protect the French, under Rochambeau, from an attack by English forces out of New York.
- Naval Undersea Warfare Center at Coddington Cove (buildings 103, 105, 107, 111, and 131) includes several structures built during and after World War II, including the former Newport Airport Hangar; research, development, testing and evaluation buildings; and support buildings. Many of these are bombproof structures of massive reinforced-concrete construction with heavy overhanging roof projections.
- The Old Colony Railroad which runs along the west side of the town provided both freight and passenger service up until the collapse of the Fall River Line Steamship Company and the competition offered by trucks. It is a valuable, one-of-a kind feature, and besides its importance as a cultural resource it is also a transportation asset that should be maintained.
- The Peckham Bros. Quarry, the only active quarry in Middletown, has been operated by the Peckham family since 1844 and is one of the oldest operating quarries in the United States. It is located in an area generally known as Paradise Rocks, where stones and gravel had been taken for paving roads as early as 1701.
- The Crystal Spring is a natural spring that has provided drinking water to the residents of Middletown since 1907.
- The "mile marker" at Two Mile Corner.

Map 13: Historic and Cultural Resources



Historic and Cultural Resources

- Historic Districts
- Community Amenities
- Cemetery Boundary
- Historic Cemetery Location
- National Historic Register Sites
- Archaeological Sites
- Historic Heritage Structures
- Rivers
- Roads
- Highways
- Town Boundaries



Source: Middletown GIS
 Date: 01.10.2025
 Existing Conditions Report

Table 19 Historic & Cultural Sites

Map ID	Name
1	Witherbee School
2	Hoppin Hamilton House
3	Paradise School
4	Gardiner Pond Shell Midden
5	Clambake Club Of Newport
6	Whitehall / Bishop George Berkeley House
7	Boyd's Wind Grist Mill
8	Bailey Farm
9	Taylor-Chase-Smythe House
10	Lyman C. Josephs House
11	Paradise Farm
12	St. George's School
13	Murphy House At Ogden Farm
14	St. Columba's Chapel
15	Coggeshall/Chase Lot
16	Pardon Brown Lot
17	Holy Cross Church Cem.
18	Joshua Anthony Lot
19	Middletown Cemetery
20	Gideon Bailey Lot
21	George Irish Lot
22	Richard Card Lot
23	Felix Peckham Lot
24	Nicholas Easton Lot
25	Philip Smith Lot
26	Taggart-Potter Burial Ground
27	Newport Memorial Park
28	Berkeley Memorial Cemetery
29	Obadiah Holmes Lot
30	Henry Tew Burying Ground
31	John Peckham Lot
32	Samuel Allen Burial Ground
33	Jewish Cemetery
34	Gardiner/Hopkins Lot
35	Clement Peckham Lot
36	Barker Burying Ground
37	Salisbury Stoddard Lot
38	Oliver Durfee Lot
39	A.G. Lawrence Memorial
40	Dea William Taggart Lot
41	Thomas Coggeshall Lot
42	Thomas Coggeshall Lot
43	Benjamin Sheffield / Mowry Lot

44	Maj William Taggart
45	Gould-Briggs Lot
46	Joshua Coggeshall Lot
47	St Columba Cemetery
48	John Coggeshall Lot
49	Robert Weidington Lot
50	Wood Lot
51	Peabody Lot

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Needs & Opportunities

CATEGORY	NEEDS	OPPORTUNITIES
Community Identity & Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand offerings and increase promotion of local cultural experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with local organizations, institutions, and businesses to expand community events and programming
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase visibility and promotion of Middletown’s historic and cultural assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Middletown Historical Society to increase awareness and appreciation of Middletown’s history and historic assets Develop objective criteria to better engage property owners in the ongoing identification and restoration of existing historic and cultural resources

Goals & Policies

HR-1. Preserve Middletown’s diverse historic resources

HR-1.1. Preserve, protect, and restore historic buildings, structures, cemeteries, and archeological sites in Middletown.

- a. *Work with local groups such as the Middletown Historical Society to establish a historic home heritage program or voluntary “historic plaque” program to identify historically significant structures and landscapes.*
- b. *Reconsider adoption of incentive program to encourage preservation of historically significant buildings through review and revision of proposed incentives language.*
- c. *Review the Town’s development review process and amend as needed to strengthen historic resource protection.*
- d. *Enforce the Stone Wall ordinance and Development Plan Review and Conservation Development design process.*

HR-1.2. Preserve and protect the Town's historic landscapes, including but not limited to, farms and agricultural land.

- a. *Partner with other governmental and private funding sources to purchase development rights to farms and other areas of traditional use of the land as opportunities arise.*
- b. *Consider zoning and subdivision standards and incentives for the preservation of open space, greenways, agricultural land, and scenic vistas as part of the development process.*

HR-1.3. Preserve and celebrate Middletown's history.

- a. *Establish a public outreach and educational program in partnership with local historical organizations to increase awareness of Middletown history and historical assets—including indigenous and pre-colonial history—to residents and visitors.*
- b. *Partner with organizations such as the Middletown Historical Society, the Preservation Society of Newport County, Newport Historical Society, Rhode Island Historical Society, and Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission to promote the continued identification and preservation of historic documents, photos, records, and other historical resources.*
- c. *Integrate local history and culture elements into parks and shared spaces through public art.*

HR-2. Promote Middletown's cultural resources as a key part of the Town's character

HR-2.1. Preserve and promote Middletown's full cultural heritage and supporting institutions.

- a. *Continue to sponsor valued community activities and events.*
- b. *Partner with and support local businesses and organizations like the library, school district, and NGOs to enhance and expand community events, experiences, and opportunities.*



11.

FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Overview

High-quality public services and well-maintained community facilities are essential to the health, safety, and overall well-being of residents. Middletown's investments in schools, emergency services, public buildings, utilities, and infrastructure play a critical role in supporting its residents' daily lives and shaping the town's capacity to grow sustainably and equitably.

The public services and facilities Middletown provides impact the housing that can be developed, the jobs and businesses that decide to locate in town, the degree of access and mobility residents and visitors have, and the town's ability to prepare for and respond to environmental hazards. Ensuring that public facilities and infrastructure are adequate, efficient, and accessible will be key to achieving the goals and objectives cited across this plan's chapters as well as Middletown's long-term community vision.

This chapter evaluates Middletown's current public services and facilities, identifies gaps and future needs, and outlines strategies for maintenance, improvement, and long-term planning.

A Vision for Public Facilities & Services

Middletown will strive to provide residents with high quality and responsive government services, a wide range of public facilities and the necessary public utilities to support a desired quality of life.

Existing Context

Middletown is governed by a seven-member Town Council and an appointed Town administrator. Town departments provide high-quality and responsive services that include a variety of public facilities and public utilities to support the quality of life for all residents. Middletown's departments include:

- Building & Zoning Department
- Planning & Economic Development
- Finance Department
 - Human Resources
 - Shared Financial Services
- School Department
- Senior Center
- Assessment/Collections Department
- Town Administrator
- Library
- Public Affairs
- Public Safety
 - Police
 - Fire
- Town Solicitor
- Town Clerk
- Information Technology
- Shared Facilities

- Community Outreach
- Public Works Department
 - Sewer
 - Refuse/Recycling
 - Parks
 - Beach (seasonal)
 - Campground (seasonal)
 - Highway Division
 - Engineering
 - Stormwater

PUBLIC SAFETY

Middletown Fire Department

Middletown's Fire Department is located at 239 Wyatt Road, adjacent to the Public Works Department. It provides fire prevention, fire suppressant, disaster management, emergency medical treatment, and public education services across the community. The Department maintains a minimum staffing level of one Captain, four Firefighters, and one Dispatcher per shift year-round. In 2016 the town completed a department renovation project that created a more efficient space for all fire department emergency apparatus, firefighters, and office staff. The project also created a new training room that additionally serves as a community meeting room for the town.

The Aquidneck Island Emergency Volunteer Alliance (AIEVA) provides additional volunteer support to Newport, Middletown, and Portsmouth during disasters and emergencies by operating a regional emergency shelter run by the American Red Cross at the Gaudet School in Middletown.

Police Department

The Middletown Police Station is located at 123 Valley Road. It employs 42 sworn officers including two School Resource Officers (SROs), supported by four full-time and two part-time civilians. The Department also serves as the location of the emergency operations center when activated during major crises and includes a community meeting space. In 2023 the Department received 27,075 calls for service of which 2,044 incident reports were taken and 626 arrests were made.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Middletown's Public School System includes two elementary schools, one middle school, one high school, and one administrative building. Total student enrollment for the 2024-2025 school year for pre-

kindergarten through 12th grade was 1,860. This is down 13.6% from the 2018-2019 school year. Total enrollment is projected to moderately increase starting in the 2026-2027 school year.

Middletown Public Schools also serve families homeporting at the Naval Station Newport. Yearly enrollment varies, but a recent NAVSTA Newport Impact Analysis suggests an average military enrollment of just under 23% of the district's student body. Approximately 1,300 military and family members are expected to arrive between 2029 and 2034 on assignment to NAVSTA Newport which will have a direct impact on local schools in Middletown, Newport, and Portsmouth.

Aquidneck Elementary School: Constructed in 1954, with additions in 1955 and 1994, the school is situated on a 10.6-acre site and offers K-3 elementary education, with a capacity of 311 students. The 2025-2026 school year enrollment was 296.

Forest Avenue Elementary School: Located on a ten-acre site, the school was constructed in 1957 with additions and remodeling done in 1994 and 2008. It provides K-3 elementary education with a capacity of 309 students. The 2025-2026 school year enrollment was 290.

J.H. Gaudet Learning Academy: Located within the Gaudet Middle School, the learning academy offers 4th and 5th-grade elementary education to a student body of 281. 2025-2026 school year enrollment was 276.

J.H. Gaudet Middle School: The Gaudet Middle School was constructed in 1968 on a 33-acre site. It provides 6th through 8th-grade education with a 456-student capacity. The 2025-2026 school year enrollment was 405.

Middletown High School: Constructed in 1961, Middletown High School is located on a 22.45-acre site. It provides education for 9th through 12th grade and has a capacity of 548 students. The 2025-2026 school year enrollment was 492.

In order to maintain the high quality of public education in Middletown, the Town is in the process of consolidating and upgrading its school facilities through a series of three upcoming construction projects. A new 211,085-square-foot combined middle-high school, located at the existing Gaudet Middle School site, is now under construction. It will serve approximately 1,000 students in grades six through twelve. The existing High School building will be repurposed into a consolidated elementary school for grades two through five and administrative and maintenance offices for the school district. The Forest Avenue Elementary School building will be converted into an early childhood learning center for pre-kindergarten through first grade. The Aquidneck Elementary School will be closed. The new middle-high school broke ground in Spring 2025 and is expected to be completed by Fall 2027.

TOWN FACILITIES

Town Hall

Located at 350 East Main Road, Middletown's Town Hall houses the Town Administrator's Office, the Town Clerk's Office, the Planning and Economic Development Department, the Building and Zoning Department, the Finance and Human Resources Department, and the Tax Assessor's Office. Land evidence records are also located on site in a records vault. Town Hall was built in 1885 and renovated in 1940 and 1989. With the planned relocation of joint town/school finance offices to 110 Enterprise Center, the building is currently

adequate for the functions of municipal government. However, there is no room for expansion and parking is limited.

Department of Public Works

Located at the corner of Wyatt Road and Berkeley Ave., the site includes administrative offices for all DPW services, buildings for equipment storage and maintenance, road salt storage, and limited materials storage.

Public Library

Located at 700 West Main Road, the Middletown Public Library is a community staple that provides a variety of services for all ages and free access to information, technology, materials, and on-site and virtual programming. The library's collection of physical materials is made up of 64,000 items of which 90% are books and periodicals and the remainder comprised of audio/visual materials and a Library of Things. Almost half of Middletown residents hold library cards, which is higher than the state average of 33%. Visits per capita are also high, equating to about 5.5 visits per year per resident. Library usage has surpassed pre-pandemic levels with the largest growth in the use of electronic materials (up 28% from 2019), followed by participation in programming, and technology use—specifically accessing WIFI and printing.

A 2018 assessment of municipal buildings highlighted the library's need for substantial repairs. Subsequent conversations established the need for a new library of up to 30,000 square feet and built for maximum flexibility. In October 2024, the Town purchased 110 Enterprise Center for the new library site. Planning and implementation of the library construction project is underway.

Senior Citizen Center

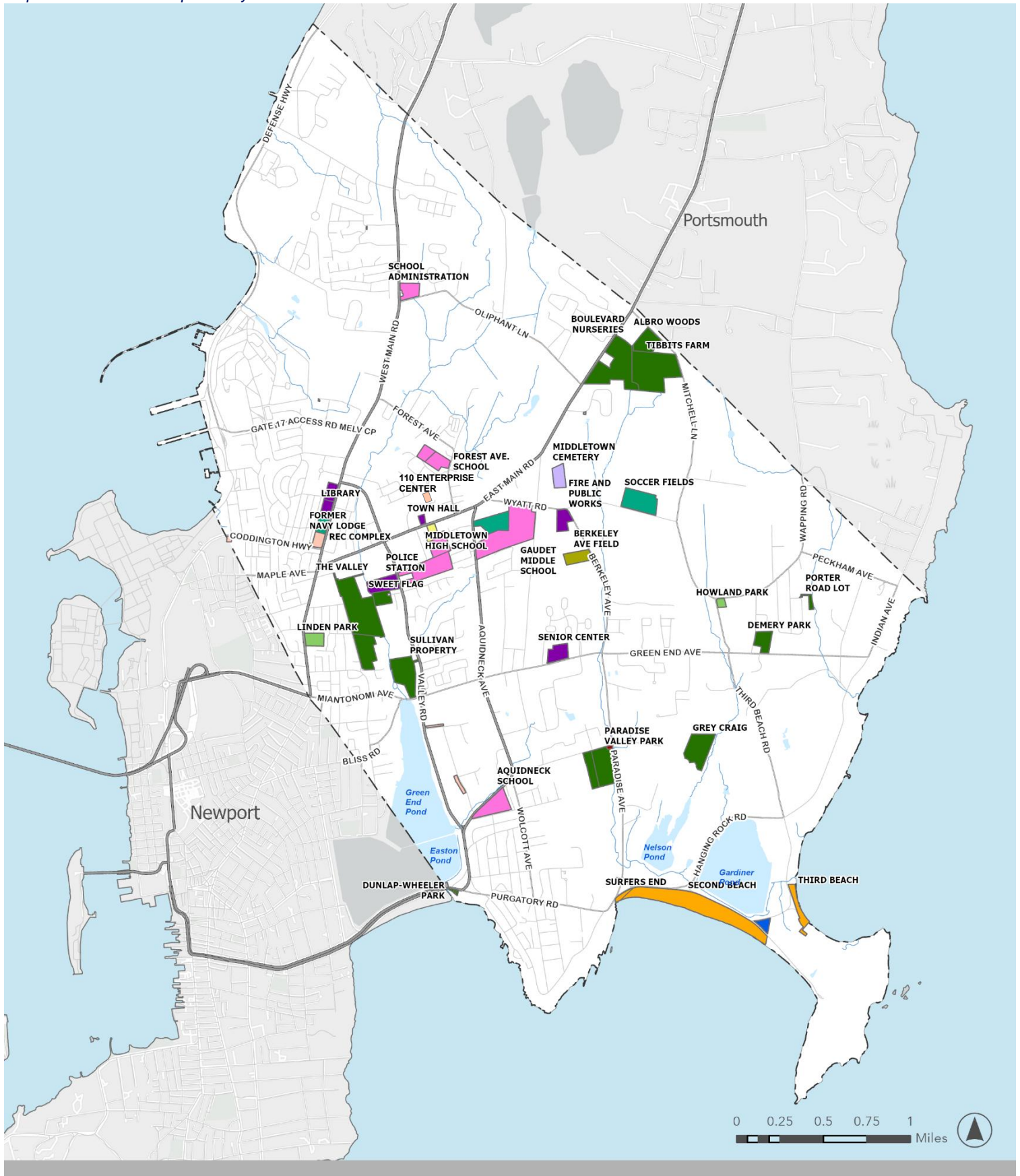
The Senior Citizen Center is located at 650 Green End Avenue and offers a variety of programs and services designed to support the physical, social, and emotional needs of Middletown's older adults. The Center's programs, available to residents 55 years and older, include meals, transportation, educational programming, social services, fitness classes, entertainment and recreational activities, a thrift shop, and health screenings.

Middletown's senior population has grown considerably over the last twenty years, with residents aged 65 and older making up 21% of the community. As this demographic continues to grow, expanding the senior center, both its facility and services, will likely be needed to keep up with increasing demand.

Second Beach Pavilion

The Town's Second Beach Pavilion serves beachgoers throughout the summer, offering amenities such as a concession stand, deck, restrooms, changing areas, picnic tables, and shade structures. In addition, the beaches host a number of community activities, such as camp-o-ramas, concerts, family days, Cars and Coffee, and special event parking both during the beach season and off-season. The facility has served the community for more than fifty years and is in need of upgrades. Its location within an active dune area on Second Beach, however, presents challenges due to permitting restrictions and increasing vulnerabilities to storm surge and sea level rise.

Map 14: Town-Owned Properties by Use



Town Owned Properties by Use

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| AFFORDABLE HOUSING | CONSERVATION | PUMP STATION | Highways |
| AGRICULTURE | HISTORIC | RECREATION | Town Boundaries |
| BEACH | MUNICIPAL | SCHOOL | Rivers |
| CAMPGROUND | OTHER COM/IND/INST | Roads | |
| CEMETERY | PARK/PLAYGROUND | | |



Source: Middletown GIS
 Date: 01.10.2025
 Existing Conditions Report

INFRASTRUCTURE & MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Water

Middletown's public water system is owned and managed by the City of Newport's Water Department. The system distributes water to approximately 75% of homes in Middletown as well as all of Newport, and a small section of Portsmouth. Its 200 miles of distribution piping serves approximately 14,500 retail customers across Aquidneck Island, including ten connections with the Naval Station Newport. Nine surface water reservoirs throughout Aquidneck Island, Tiverton, and Little Compton supply water to the system. As surface water reservoirs, they face potential water quality risks from stormwater runoff and sea level rise, particularly for those located in coastal zones, such as North and South Easton Ponds.

Much of the water infrastructure on Aquidneck Island, including in Middletown, was installed 50 to 100 years ago. As pipes age, they become more prone to failure with consequences ranging from hidden leaks to main breaks which impact the delivery of drinking water to commercial and residential users. The failure of aging transmission mains, which transport water from water supply reservoirs to water treatment plants and throughout the greater system, can be especially catastrophic and regular inspection and testing of these transmission mains is critical to identify deficiencies and mitigate risk.

The pressure system Newport Water uses to distribute water throughout the system also presents vulnerabilities. If pump station and valve facilities, which are used to transfer water between pressure zones, experience failure, the resulting cascading effects could significantly impact the Island's water supply. Close monitoring of these facilities and the addition of redundancy would reduce single points of failure and strengthen overall system reliability.

Sewer

Middletown's 60-year-old municipal sewer system covers approximately 70% of town and predominantly serves areas on the western, more populated side of town. The more rural areas towards the east side of town rely on private septic systems. All sewage from the Middletown system flows to the Newport Wastewater Treatment Facility on Connell Highway in Newport.

The town continually works to maintain and upgrade its aging sewer system's infrastructure to maintain reliable services. To increase the system's capacity and reduce excessive sewer flows during wet weather, Middletown is exploring the feasibility of a West Side Sewer Diversion project at the Coddington Highway pump station. The project, which is still in initial planning, would expand the pump station to take on more wastewater from the mid-section of town as well as some wastewater that currently flows through the NAVSTA Newport system.

Stormwater

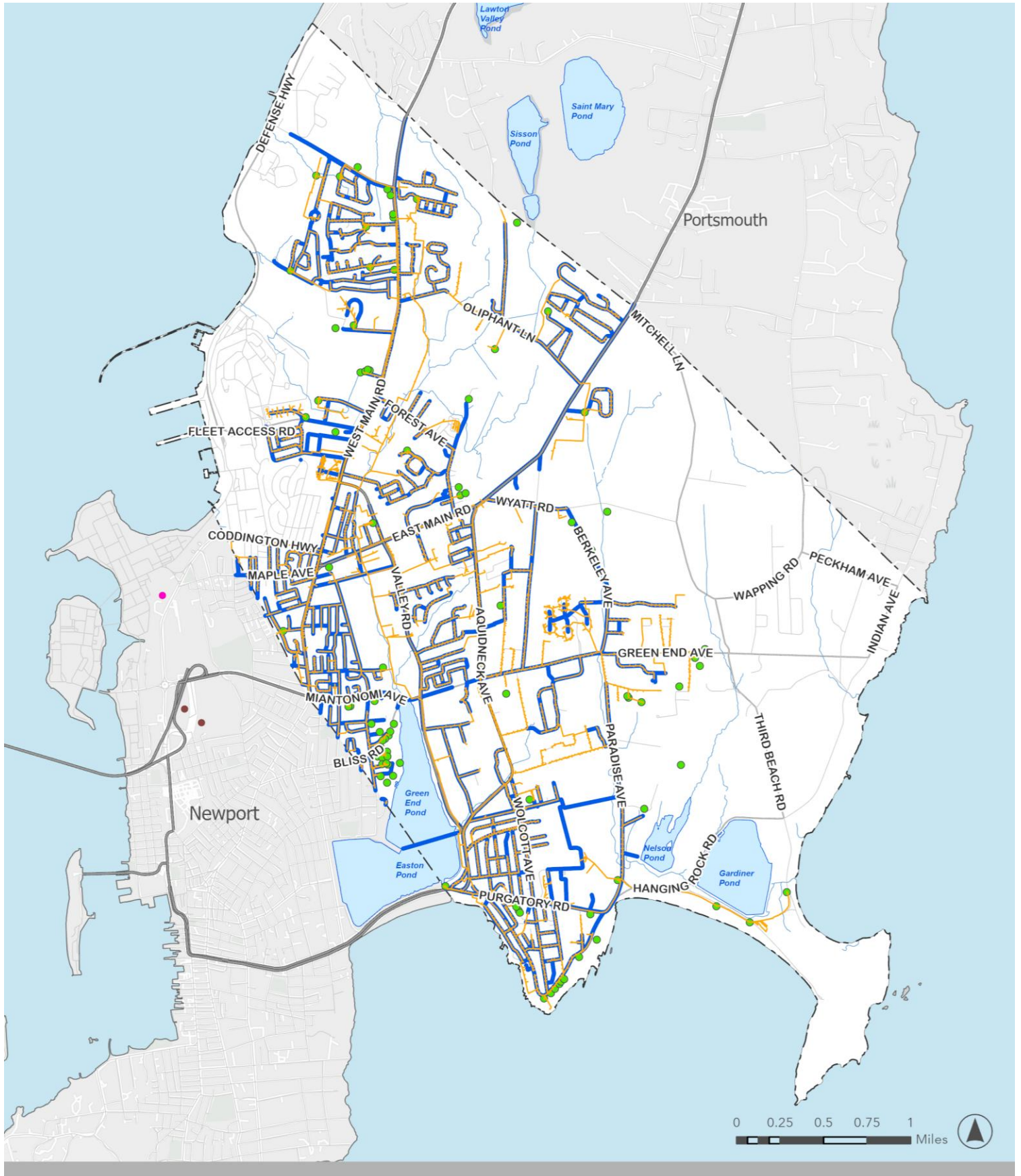
Middletown manages its stormwater program through a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit under the Rhode Island Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (RIPDES). Its initial MS4 permit was issued in 2003. The Town's stormwater program is funded through its general fund and is increasingly underfunded while issues associated with water quality, flooding, aging infrastructure, and deferred

maintenance continue to increase. Because of this the Town is exploring the creation of a stormwater utility to create a dedicated funding source to upgrade its stormwater system.

Stormwater management has continued to be a challenge for the town due to deferred infrastructure maintenance and evolving stormwater regulations. Discharge during extreme rain events at the Wave Avenue pump station on the town line with Newport is especially problematic and a source of bacteria which is flushed out onto Easton's Beach. The Town has worked over the past several years to make improvements to the collection system which has resulted in significant reduction in the number of these discharge events.

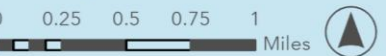
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Map 15: Utility Infrastructure



Utility Infrastructure

- Sewer lines
- Water Lines
- Pump Stations
- Active Solid Waste Facility
- Sanitary Wastewater Treatment Facility
- ▭ Potable Water Reservoir
- Rivers
- Roads
- Highways
- Town Boundaries



Source: Middletown GIS
 Date: 01.10.2025
 Existing Conditions Report

Waste Management

The town provides curbside collection of refuse, recycling, and yard waste for residents on a weekly basis through its Refuse Collection Department. Its Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) Curbside Refuse Collection Program emphasizes recycling by requiring residents to pay an annual user fee to participate and purchase PAYT trash bags to dispose of non-recyclable waste. Since its inception in 2007, Middletown's PAYT program has achieved some of the highest recycling rates in the state. In 2023, Middletown generated about 4,200 tons of trash and 2,087 tons of recycling, yielding a recycling rate of 35.3% and an overall diversion rate of 47.3% (RIRRC, 2023). As an alternative to the program, residents can also contract with a private disposal service for solid waste pick-up.

In addition to curbside services, Middletown also offers bulk waste pickup and special collection events, such as household hazardous waste disposal days. All non-recyclable refuse is taken to the Central Rhode Island Landfill in Johnston, RI, which is managed by the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation (RIRRC). Recyclables, yard waste, and household hazardous waste are also taken to the facility for proper disposal or recycling at one of the facility's four other operation areas.

The RI Central Landfill is projected to run out of space in ten years, so Middletown and other communities will need to plan for alternative refuse disposal locations. In the short-term, the Town is exploring the feasibility of implementing a curbside compost program to increase the diversion of food waste.

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Needs & Opportunities

CATEGORY	NEEDS	OPPORTUNITIES
Infrastructure Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address deferred maintenance of the Town’s stormwater system Provide upgrades and greater efficiency in the wastewater management system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update town-wide stormwater management plan and stormwater regulations Create dedicated funding for stormwater management Continue planning and design for rerouting of wastewater flows to the Coddington pump station
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect drinking water resources at Easton’s Pond from nonpoint-source pollution, flooding, and sea level rise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with City of Newport and Newport Water on mitigation and resilience
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More spaces for community gathering and public meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create designated community meeting spaces at new public library location
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Routine and proactive maintenance of Town-owned facilities and infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centralize and coordinate maintenance and operations planning across town departments and facilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the burden on RI Central Landfill which is expected to run out of space in ten years, and address the resulting increased cost to the Town for waste disposal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify alternative solutions for waste management, such as municipal composting and increased recycling.
Costs & Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased funding to support the improvement and expansion of municipal services and public facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore potential grant opportunities to support improvements and expansion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage the rising cost of municipal services, especially for public safety, debt service, and infrastructure maintenance 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Diversification of Town’s tax base 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand opportunities for commercial and industrial uses
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increasing staff recruitment and retention 	

Goals & Policies

FS-1. Provide cost-efficient services and well-maintained facilities

FS-1.1. Deliver high-quality services in a cost-effective manner.

- a. *Develop a comprehensive maintenance and improvement plan for all Town-owned buildings, facilities, and land.*
- b. *Maintain and implement Strategic Plans for providing Town services, update as needed.*
- c. *Optimize use of existing public facilities and Town-owned land and sustain prior investments in infrastructure.*
- d. *Reduce municipal energy costs through electrification and retrofit of municipal facilities.*
- e. *Continue to coordinate with Newport Water to plan for and meet future water needs of the community.*
- f. *Conduct a water and sewer infrastructure study along West Main Road to identify the capacity enhancements needed to accommodate and encourage higher density development and advance the recommendations of the Aquidneck NAVSTA Compatible Use Study.*

FS-1.2. Pursue grant opportunities and explore additional revenue sources to help offset the Town’s service delivery costs.

- a. *Evaluate all current Town property leases for opportunities to renegotiate terms that are more beneficial to the Town.*
- b. *Enhance grant research and grant writing capacity to support Town departments applying for grant opportunities.*

FS-1.3. Continue to provide economical and environmentally sound solid waste and recycling management that exceeds the state’s minimum recycling rate of 35% and minimum diversion rate of 50%.

- a. *Identify options for future solid waste disposal.*

- b. Continue to promote public awareness through community education programs that reduce solid waste, increase recycling, and ensure the proper disposal of household hazardous waste.*
- c. Identify options to locate and manage a town composting facility or service.*

FS-1.4. Improve town-wide stormwater management to reduce impact on water resources, infrastructure, and the environment.

- a. Update Town's Stormwater Management Plan.*
- b. Revise ordinances related to stormwater management to require green infrastructure in private and public projects (Chapter 151: Construction Site Runoff Control and Chapter 153: Storm Water Management).*
- c. Increase funding for stormwater management through establishment of stormwater utility.*
- d. Integrate green infrastructure during road improvement projects, the installation of pedestrian rights-of-way, and surface parking areas.*
- e. Coordinate with neighboring towns, RIDOT, and State to reduce non-point source pollution within local watersheds.*
- f. Implement West Side Sewer Diversion project to more efficiently transmit sewer flow to the Newport treatment plant and reduce the overreliance on the Wave Avenue Pump Station .*

FS-1.5. Support and expand inter-governmental cooperation, efficiency, and transparency within Middletown and across Aquidneck Island.

- a. Establish working groups to improve collaboration and communications between Committees, Town Departments, and the public.*
- b. Continue to implement E-Town Hall to make public information, permitting, and other functions available electronically on the Town's website.*
- c. Issue annual comprehensive plan progress reports to track and communicate progress towards community goals and the plan's implementation action items.*
- d. Coordinate with other Aquidneck Island communities on island-wide initiatives for transportation, land use, public infrastructure, and climate resilience.*

FS-1.6. Seek to collaborate with NAVSTA Newport to enhance efficiency in providing sewer and water services on the west side of town.

- a. Work with regional partners to implement the recommendations of the NAVSTA Newport compatibility study.*

FS-2. Support public safety services and facilities

FS-2.1. Maintain and expand public safety facilities, resources, and personnel as needed to meet community needs.

- a. *Utilize data and program performance measures to monitor outcomes from public safety efforts.*
- b. *Investigate with the Newport Water Department expansion of the public water system to provide enhanced fire protection coverage.*
- c. *Investigate the establishment of a seasonal police satellite precinct at the beach.*

FS-3. Provide high-quality education and enrichment for all ages

FS-3.1. Ensure that school programs meet the educational needs of all students and residents, and facilities have adequate capacity to accommodate enrollment and programming demands.

- a. *Provide school facilities that support year-round community utilization by all residents for recreation, meeting space, and other uses.*
- b. *Work with consultant to review school curriculum and provide recommendations for improvement.*
- c. *Continue investigating opportunities to support workforce development in cooperation with local businesses.*

FS-3.2. Continually improve access and connectivity to the library and other Town facilities and services.

- a. *Periodically evaluate demand for library services, including resource needs and programming, and modify programs as needed.*
- b. *Explore opportunities to add new centralized community facilities and gathering spaces such as a community center or similar facility.*



12.

NATURAL HAZARDS AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Overview

Changing climate conditions throughout the northeastern United States are shifting temperatures and precipitation patterns, leading to more severe storms, heat waves, prolonged droughts, and coastal and inland flooding. According to regional and global trends, sea level rise is also projected to have an increasing impact on coastal locations like Rhode Island over the next several decades.

In recent years, Middletown has taken several measures to plan for climate change and take action for increased climate resilience, including the development of a Hazard Mitigation Plan (2019), Middletown Climate Resiliency Planning & Financing Strategy (2023), Middletown Resilience Actions (2024), Growing Regional Resilience Coordination on Aquidneck Island (ongoing), and participating in the creation of the new 2025 Aquidneck Island Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (Appendix 2).

Middletown is already experiencing many of these impacts and faces several challenges to long-term climate resilience given its island location. As identified in the Climate Resiliency Planning & Financing Strategy, large and highly impervious shopping centers and parking lots in the western section of town contrast with the rest of the town's historic farmlands, beaches, wetlands, and open space. The extensive commercial development along State-owned and -maintained West Main and East Main Road provides important commercial services but also contributes to roadway flooding and impacts the water quality of Bailey Brook and two drinking water reservoirs, North and South Easton's Pond. The Atlantic Beach District plays a critical role in the local economy and tourist sector, but also faces a higher risk from sea level rise, storm surge, and stormwater runoff than other parts of town. Additionally, agricultural activities and residential development in Middletown's more rural areas have occurred close to important tributaries for the town's water reservoirs and contributes to flooding and water quality issues.

The Natural Hazards and Climate Resilience chapter illustrates the areas in Middletown that are particularly vulnerable to these risks and threats so the community can target resiliency investments and plan for changing conditions in the future.

A Vision for Sustainability & Climate Resilience

In collaboration with its Aquidneck Island neighbors, Middletown will proactively respond to changing environmental and climate conditions with strategic policies and investments that safeguard critical facilities and infrastructure; protect the lives and property of its residents, visitors and businesses; and mitigate risks and impacts from severe weather events in the near- and long-term future.

Existing Context

CLIMATE CHANGE TRENDS & NATURAL HAZARDS

The Aquidneck Island Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) identifies hurricanes and nor’easters, coastal flooding, erosion, sea level rise, street flooding, riverine flooding, and winter storms and ice as the largest climate hazards facing Middletown and the surrounding region. Other hazards include strong winds, extreme temperatures, wildfire/bushfire, tornado, drought, lightning and hail, and earthquakes. As the impacts of climate change continue to unfold, the frequency and severity of climate-related hazards are likely to increase, leading to greater exposure across Middletown and an increased risk of impact or damage to its infrastructure, services, residents, ecosystems, and other assets.

Table 20: Climate Hazards

Identified Climate Hazards Facing Middletown and Aquidneck Island

Hazard	Probability of Future Occurrence	Damage Extent	Level of Concern/Risk Rank
Hurricane/Nor’easter	Highly likely	Extensive	High
Flooding (heavy rain, runoff, flash, inland, high tide, storm surge)	Highly likely	Serious	High
Severe Winter Weather	Highly likely	Serious	High
High Wind	Highly likely	Minor	Medium
Drought	Likely	Serious	Medium
Heat Wave	Highly likely	Minor	Medium
Extreme Cold	Likely	Minor	Medium
Sea Level Rise	Highly likely	Serious	Medium
Lightning/Thunderstorms/Hail	Highly likely	Minor	Low
Brushfires	Highly likely	Minor	Low
Dam Failures	Possible	Serious	Low
Tornadoes	Unlikely	Serious	Low
Earthquakes	Possible	Serious	Low

Source: Aquidneck Island Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP), 2025.

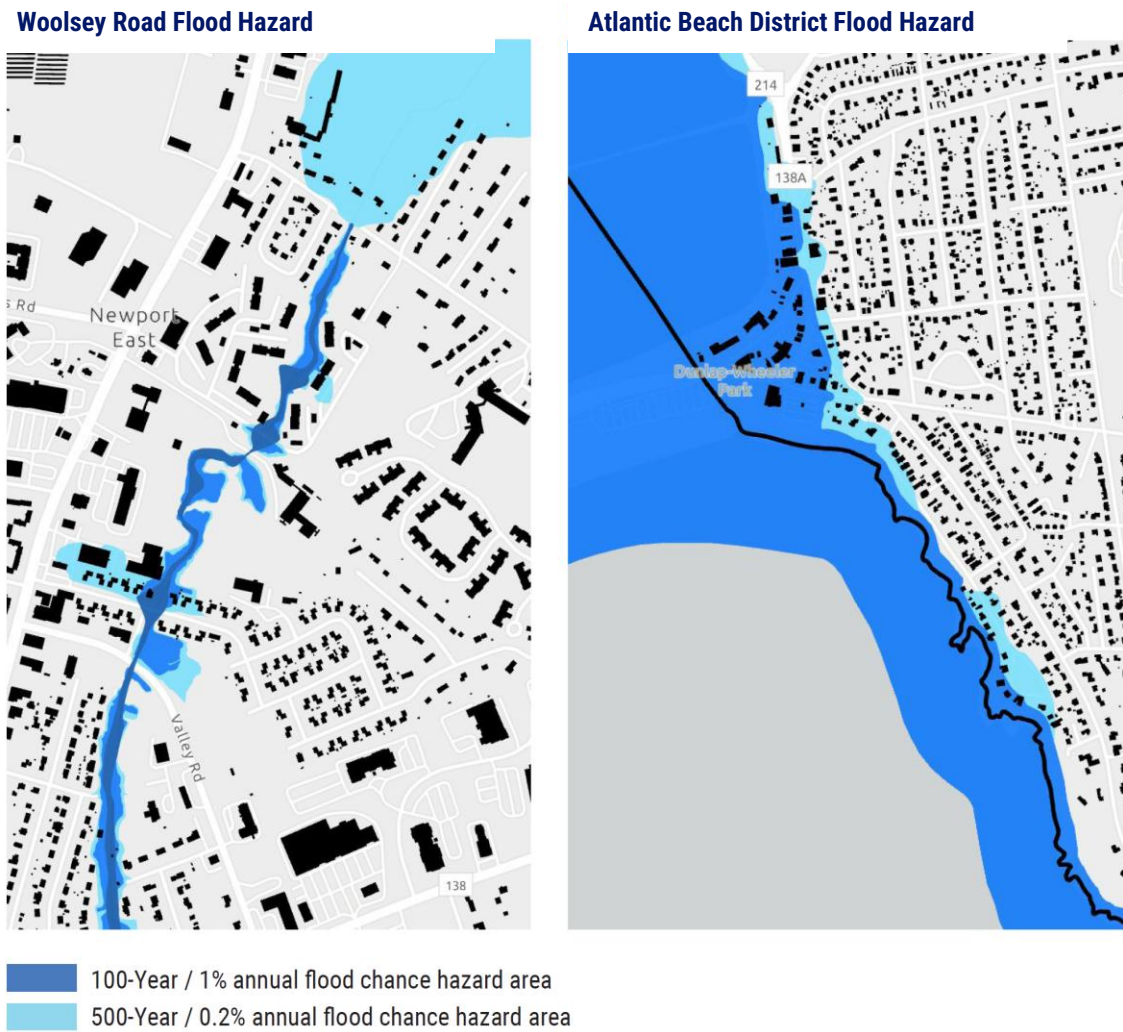
IMPACTS & EXPOSURE

Flooding

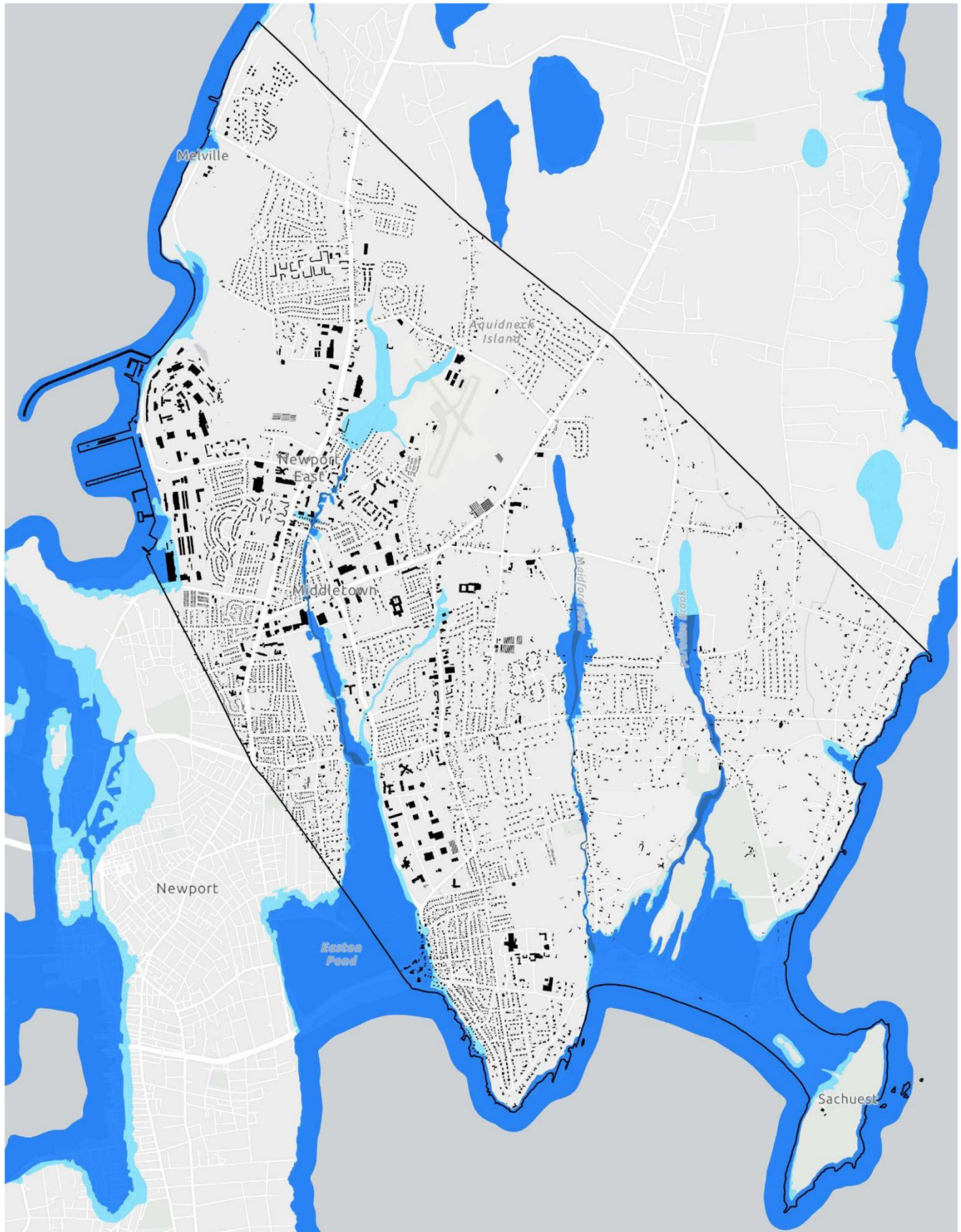
Middletown's coastal and low-lying areas adjacent to ponds, rivers, and streams face the greatest vulnerability to flooding. Areas surrounding Easton's Pond, Green End Pond, Nelson Pond, Gardiner Pond, Bailey Brook, the Maidford River, and Paradise Brook are in existing floodplains, falling within FEMA's 100-year and 500-year flood hazard areas.

Over 300 structures are located within these flood hazard areas and at least 112 of these structures are identified as housing.

Figure 9: Flood Hazard Area Details



Flood Hazard



- 100-Year / 1% annual flood chance hazard area
- 500-Year / 0.2% annual flood chance hazard area

Structures close to Bailey Brook and in the Atlantic Beach District are especially likely to experience flooding during both 100-year and 500-year flood conditions.



Middletown’s entire coastline also falls within the 100-year flood hazard area and experiences occasional flooding. Sea level rise is projected to expand the boundary of this flood zone.

Areas in proximity to ponds and beaches are likely to experience increased flood risk as sea levels rise. Middletown’s western shoreline, particularly around NAVSTA Newport, and the Atlantic Beach District will also face increasing impacts from coastal flooding.

Figure 10: Change in Flood Hazard Area Detail

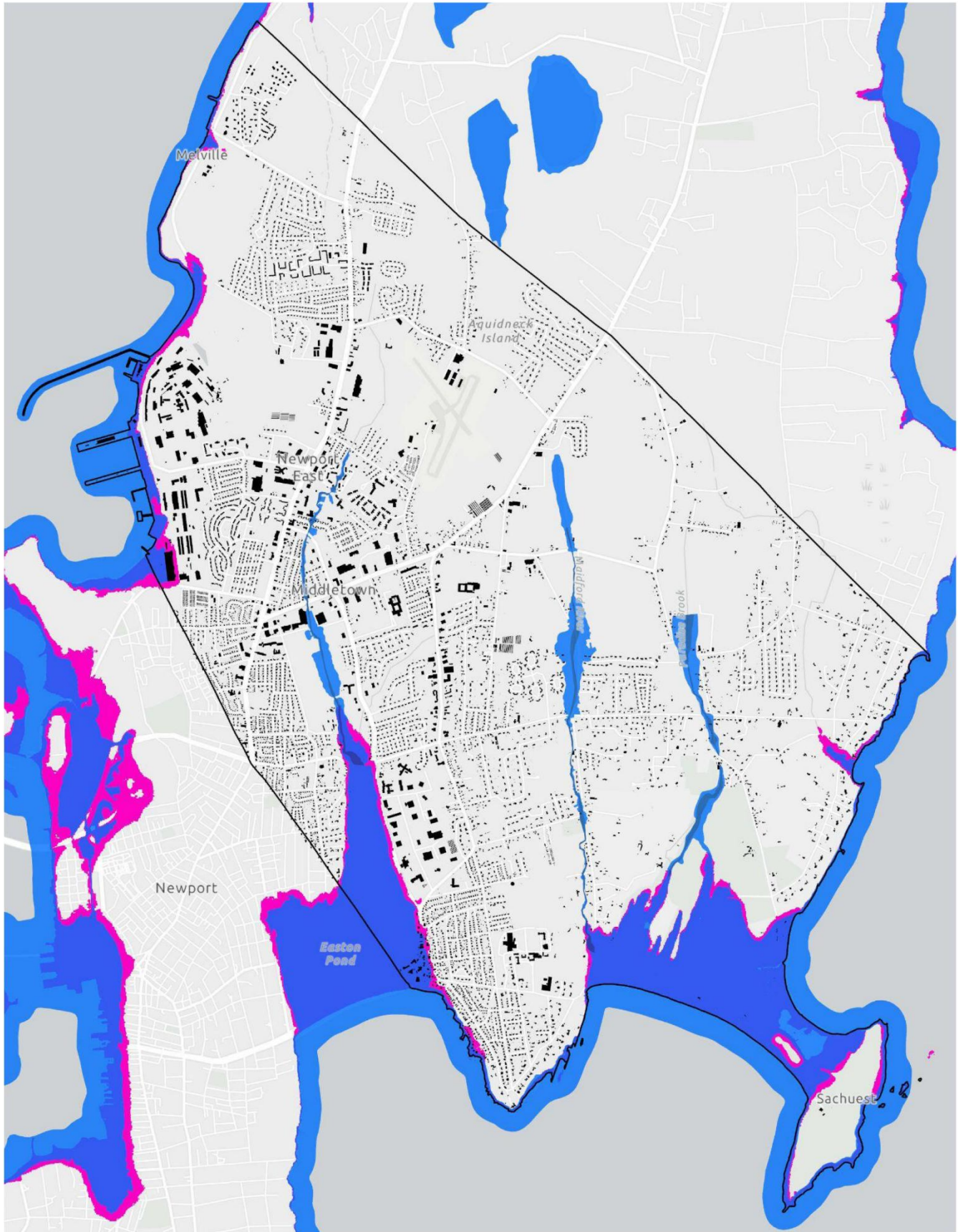
**Change in Flood Hazard Near Atlantic Beach District
due to Sea Level Rise**



-  Additions to 100-year flood zone after 5' sea level rise
-  Present-day 100-year FEMA flood hazard area

Change in Flood Hazard due to Sea Level Rise

Coastal Flood Hazard



- Additions to 100-year flood zone after 5' sea level rise, all
- Present-day 100-year FEMA flood hazard area

Sea Level Rise

Middletown’s coastal areas are expected to experience greater inundation as sea levels continue to rise. The areas around Second and Third Beach are especially vulnerable and likely to start seeing regular inundation with just a one-foot increase in sea levels. Regular inundation will reduce the usable area of the beaches and impact wildlife habitats. Sea level rise also threatens the four nearby drinking water reservoirs that supply the island. Mitigation measures will be needed to protect them, such as the work being planned at Easton’s Pond.

Coastal Erosion

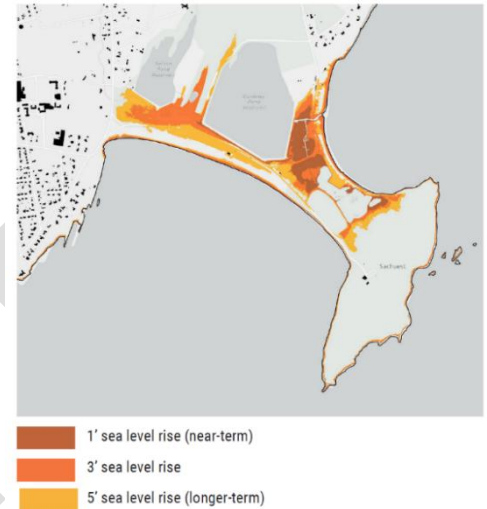
Coastal erosion is a byproduct of sea level rise, storm surge, changing currents, and tidal activity. Middletown’s southern coastline is projected to experience significant erosion through 2100. Parts of Second, Third Beach, and Easton’s/First Beach are expected to experience change as soon as 2030.

Hurricane Storm Surge

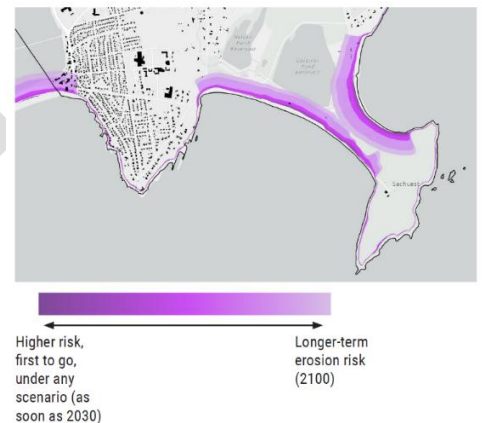
Flooding and inundation from hurricanes and nor’easters also pose risks for many coastal areas, particularly around Easton’s Pond, Second and Third Beach, and sections of Middletown’s western shoreline adjacent to the NAVSTA Newport. The Atlantic Beach District and the area around Aquidneck Avenue and Easton’s Pond are particularly vulnerable, facing storm surge risk in any hurricane intensity.

Figure 11: Climate Impacts

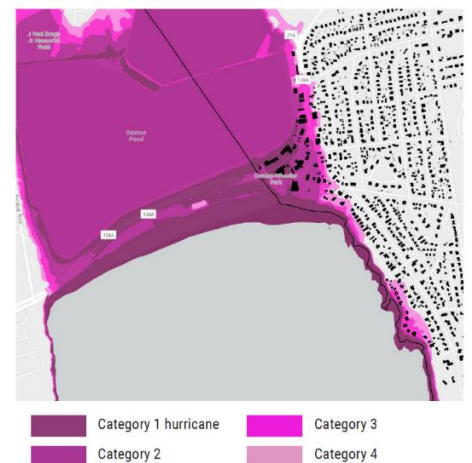
Beach Inundation from Sea Level Rise



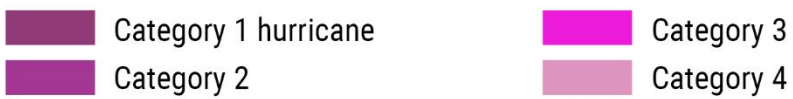
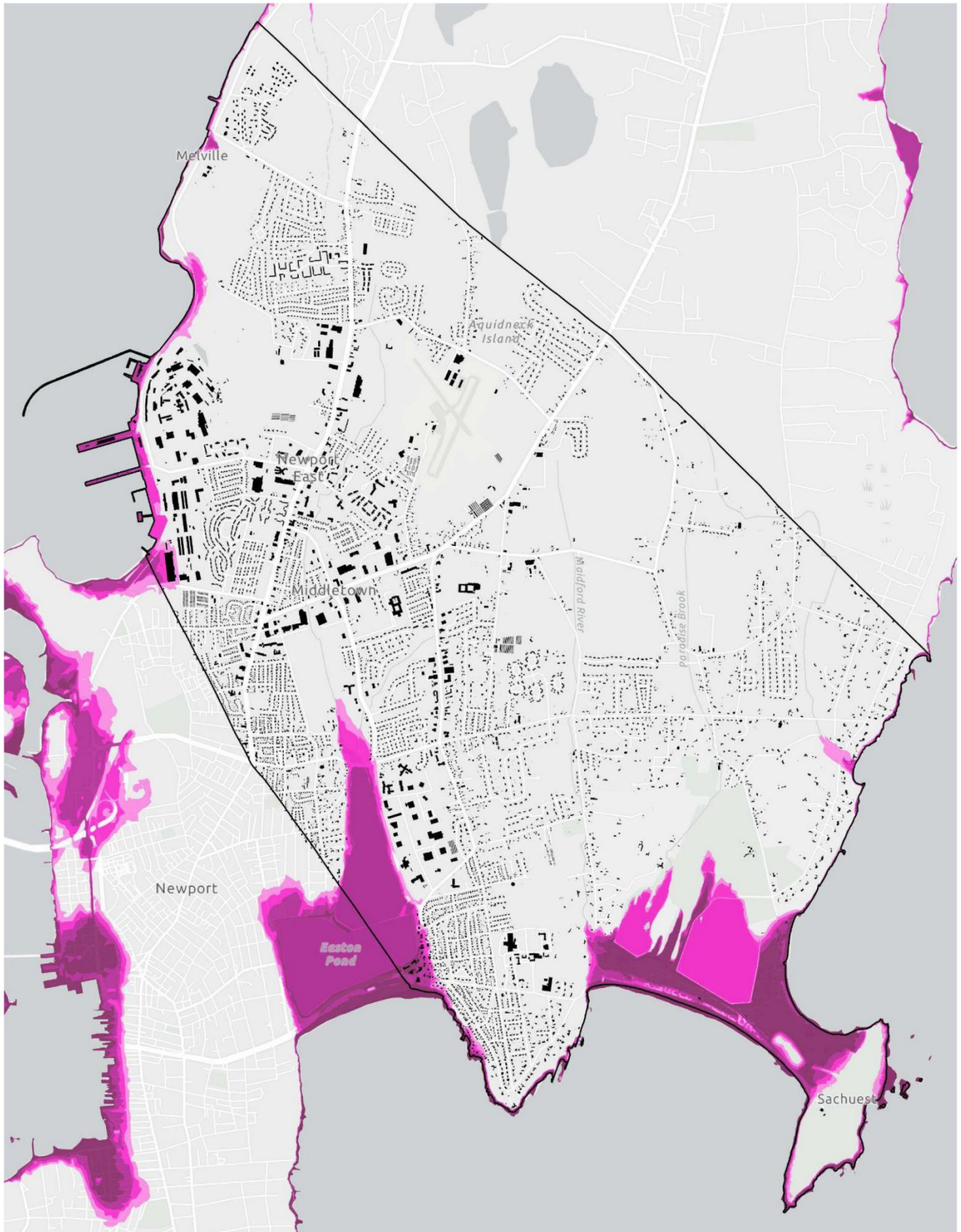
Coastal Erosion



Aquidneck Avenue Hurricane Surge



Hurricane Storm Surge



Heat

Despite Middletown's high proportion of more rural land, several areas are susceptible to heat island effect due to extensive impervious surfaces and limited trees. The heat island effect causes places with large amounts of dark surfaces, like parking lots and rooftops, to get hotter during the day and stay warmer overnight compared to areas that have more vegetation or light-colored surfaces. It intensifies the impact of heat waves, especially for vulnerable people like the elderly and young children.

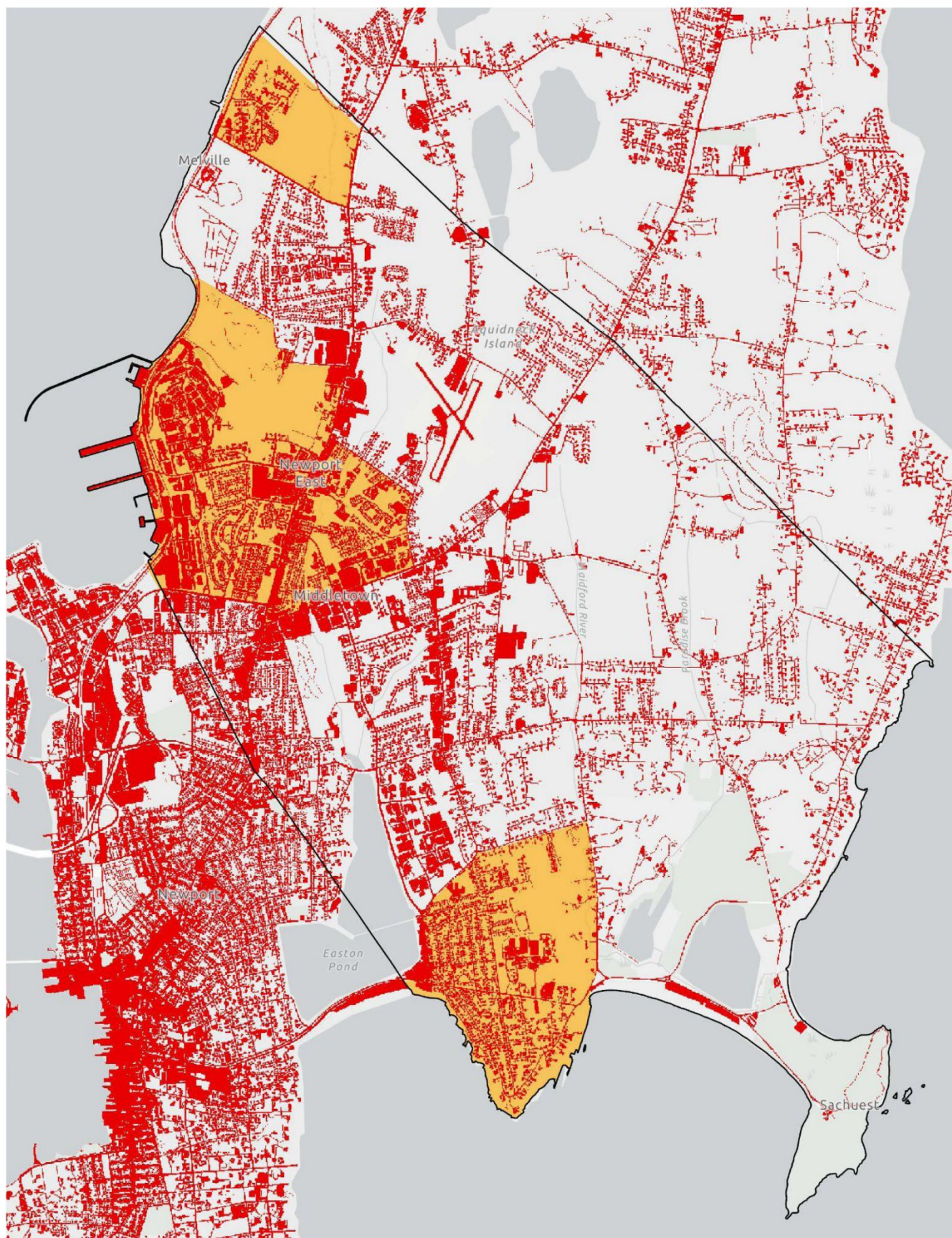
The more developed western half of town has a higher concentration of impervious surfaces and larger gaps in its tree canopy, which create conditions for a greater heat island effect. The West Main Road and East Main Road corridors, Aquidneck Avenue, Atlantic Beach District, and NAVSTA Newport are especially susceptible during hot summer days. The heat island effect is less pronounced in the eastern half of the town, where there is less development density and a greater proportion of green spaces and continuous tree canopy.



Ongoing Resilience Planning Efforts

Middletown participates in Aquidneck Resilience, an island-wide initiative dedicated to developing actionable strategies and implementing projects that strengthen the region's ability to prepare for and respond to increasingly frequent and severe weather events. The initiative is a collaboration between the City of Newport, the Towns of Middletown and Portsmouth, and Naval Station Newport, and is coordinated by the Aquidneck Island Land Trust. Together, these partners are addressing key challenges such as flooding, sea-level rise, water quality, and stormwater management. Completed and ongoing projects under this initiative include the 2025 Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (Appendix 2), the forthcoming Aquidneck Island Climate Resilience Plan, and the ongoing Almy Pond Wetland Restoration.

Source: <https://www.aquidneckresilience.org/>; <https://ait.org/our-work/#aquidneck-resilience>

Impervious Surfaces and Heat Island Effect



-  Census tracts with largest tree canopy gaps
-  Impervious surfaces - higher likelihood of heat island effect

Needs & Opportunities

CATEGORY	NEEDS	OPPORTUNITIES
Preparation and Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protect critical facilities and infrastructure. ▪ Protect people and property. ▪ Protect the beaches from accelerated erosion and disappearance. ▪ Address risks from new and emerging threats such as increased rainfall and heat events. ▪ Grants and assistance for homeowners and small businesses to help adapt property and investments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Residents and stakeholders are generally aware of climate-related risks and supportive of mitigation measures. ▪ Middletown has already taken important steps toward better climate resilience. ▪ Leveraging natural systems as a complement to constructed mitigation measures.
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Anticipate how climate-related risks will change and evolve in the future. ▪ Consideration of resilience across Town investments. ▪ Planning for disaster mitigation preparedness at an island-wide level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Residents and stakeholders are generally supportive of proactive planning to manage climate-related risks. ▪ The local hazard mitigation plan is up-to-date. ▪ The island-wide Hazard Mitigation Process successfully integrated issues and opportunities across all three Aquidneck communities. ▪ Middletown’s relatively high elevation for a coastal community suggests sea level rise and storm surge will not become significantly more pronounced in the future.

Goals & Policies

NH-1. Proactively prepare for current and future natural hazards influenced by a changing climate

NH-1.1. Safeguard Middletown's critical facilities and infrastructure.

- a. *Ensure that existing critical facilities are protected or otherwise improved to function in hazard and disaster situations, such as its reservoirs, beaches, bridges, and sanitary sewer system, including pump stations.*
- b. *Design all new public buildings to include stormwater management best practices including the use of pervious materials, green roofs, and natural drainage systems.*
- c. *Ensure that new facilities are sited in areas that are not prone to flooding or other hazards.*

NH-1.2. Protect the lives and property of Middletown's residents and businesses, especially in highly vulnerable areas such as the Atlantic Beach District.

- a. *Ensure that there is adequate funding and administrative support to implement the recommendations in the Aquidneck Island Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan.*
- b. *Establish a Middletown Resilience Committee to support implementation of the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, public education, and coordination across Town departments and committees.*
- c. *Educate the public to better understand the concept of community resilience and the meaning of probabilities and risk, especially for stream and coastal flooding.*
- d. *Ensure vulnerable coastal populations receive proper communications before, during, and after storms and are aware of evacuation procedures, location of shelters, and transportation options.*

NH-1.3. Proactively plan for appropriate disaster mitigation preparedness, response, and recovery.

- a. *Integrate strategies and recommendations from the Hazard Mitigation Plan into local planning and emergency response policies and protocols.*
- b. *Integrate strategies and recommendations from the forthcoming Aquidneck Island Climate Resilience Plan into local planning initiatives.*

NH-2. Integrate resiliency into all aspects of planning and investment townwide

NH-2.1. Direct resiliency measures to preserve Middletown's economic, historic, cultural, and natural assets.

- a. *Invest in resiliency infrastructure and planning to mitigate environmental risks to commercial areas and employment centers.*

- b. Promote resilience and sustainability best practices in new development and reinvestments in existing development.*
- c. Encourage stormwater drainage improvements that reduce runoff and increase the permeability of the built environment.*
- d. Improve the municipality's stormwater management system to enhance infiltration and expand stormwater retention areas.*
- e. Update and implement the Harbor Management Plan as needed.*

NH-3. Address island-wide resilience and hazard mitigation issues

NH-3.1. Continue regional collaboration and coordination on resilience planning and investment.

- a. Continue to participate in and collaborate with AILT's regional resilience and mitigation planning and implementation efforts.*
- b. Ensure consistency between the regional and local Hazard Mitigation Plan, the Comprehensive Plan, Special Area Management Plans (SAMPs), and municipal land use regulations.*
- c. Strengthen regional economic resilience and harness opportunities for innovation through collaboration across Aquidneck Island partners.*



13.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Overview

The successful realization of this comprehensive plan depends on a clear, actionable approach to implementation. The Town will prioritize recommendations based on available resources, community needs, and strategic opportunities, translating the plan’s vision into concrete actions over the next ten years. Implementation will involve collaboration among town departments, boards and committees, and community partners. By integrating the plan’s recommendations into annual budgeting, capital improvement planning, and policy decisions, the Town will ensure that each step taken aligns with the broader goals established in this document. Periodic progress updates will share information with residents about plan implementation to support transparent communication.

Recognizing that community needs and circumstances evolve, the Town intends to revisit the comprehensive plan after five years. This staff review will assess progress on key initiatives, evaluate the effectiveness of implemented strategies, and identify any new challenges or opportunities that have emerged. Through this process, the Town can adjust its course as needed—refining priorities, updating recommendations, and reaffirming its commitment to the community’s long-term vision. This cyclical approach ensures that the comprehensive plan remains a living document, responsive to change and focused on measurable results.

The table below lists the comprehensive plan’s policies and actions organized by goal. Related goals are noted to demonstrate the interconnectedness of many issues. The lead responsible party is typically a Town department, and any partner(s) are noted to highlight the collaboration needed. The estimated timeframe is provided for general guidance, but the Town will be responsive to funding availability and unexpected opportunities that may arise over time.

Table Format

#. Goals

#-A Policies

Implementation actions

RELATED GOALS – identifies other goals that are also supported by each policy

LEAD – identifies the lead entity (or entities) responsible for carrying out the policy or action, typically a Town department.

PARTNERS – identifies any other Town departments, boards, commissions, or other entities that assist the lead entity in carrying out the policy.

WHEN – identifies the general timeframe to begin implementation. “Ongoing” are regular, sustained efforts that should continue over the life of the plan. “Near-term” denotes 1-3 years, “mid-term” denotes 4-6 years, and “long-term” more than 7 years. Timelines may shift based on funding availability, staff capacity, or other impacts.

Acronyms

AILT – Aquidneck Island Land Trust

BPAC - Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee

COD – Middletown Community Outreach Department

DPW – Middletown Department of Public Works

EMA – Middletown Emergency Management Agency

Fire – Middletown Fire Department

MEDAC - Middletown Economic Development Advisory Committee

Police – Middletown Police Department

RIDEM – Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

RIDOT – Rhode Island Department of Transportation

RIPTA – Rhode Island Public Transit Authority

DRAFT

The following implementation program expands upon the goals, policies and action items identified in each of the plan’s elements by identifying key stakeholders and timelines.

LAND USE				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
<i>A. Strategy</i>	<i>Goal #</i>	<i>Lead Town Dept</i>	<i>Other Town Dept(s) or boards, if any</i>	<i>Ongoing Near-term Mid-term Long-term</i>
Land Use Vision: Middletown will ensure that the community remains a desirable place to live by promoting sound growth and quality development which preserves and protects the natural environment, rural landscapes, beaches, and established neighborhoods. We will balance the protection of our scenic and natural landscapes with new development while enhancing resiliency and meeting residents’ needs for a strong local economy.				
Goal LU-1: Support smart growth redevelopment that improves Middletown’s character, economy, and quality of life				
1.1. Promote a land use and development framework based upon smart growth principles. a. Coordinate transportation investments and land use policies to encourage compact, walkable, transit-supportive development. b. Take appropriate steps to ensure that the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map are consistent with the Future Land Use Plan c. Explore establishing the Atlantic Beach District as a State-recognized growth center. d. Continue exploring opportunities for smart growth redevelopment in the State-recognized growth center at West Main/Coddington.		Planning Department	Planning Board	Ongoing; mid-term
1.2. Prioritize the redevelopment, adaptive reuse, rehabilitation, and revitalization of vacant and underutilized commercial properties. a. Identify areas of town with capacity for greater mixed-use development and direct future infill and mixed-use development towards these identified areas to create the critical mass necessary to create a complete and vibrant neighborhood.	H-7	Planning Board	Planning Department	Mid-term

LAND USE				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
b. Consider adopting incentives to attract desirable development and redevelopment in areas of town with existing infrastructure.				
1.3. Enhance the aesthetics of our structures and built environment. a. Invest in streetscape improvements on Town-owned roads and encourage improvements on State-owned roads and in new developments. b. Encourage the planting of appropriate native street trees that contribute to the town's tree canopy, and the preservation of existing trees in new developments. c. Uphold the town's commercial design standards that require the use of traditional colonial architecture and quality natural building materials that are historically accurate; review and revise as needed.		Planning Board	Planning Department DPW	Ongoing
Goal LU-2: Protect natural resources through proactive and sustainable land use planning				
2.1. Work to conserve and connect lands, natural resources, important soils, and agricultural land that have conservation values that benefit the community. a. Identify and prioritize environmentally sensitive areas. b. Purchase and protect environmentally sensitive land, where feasible and available. c. Preserve land as greenways and blueways, utilizing land trusts, conservation foundations, and government agencies as potential partners. d. Acquire development rights with land trusts and private/public land preservation organizations to agricultural parcels.	NR-1, NR-2	Planning Department	Planning Board AILT Open Space & Fields Committee	Ongoing
2.2 Ensure development has a minimal impact on scenic resources, which provide quality of life for residents and visitors. a. Maintain an inventory of scenic resources.		Planning Department	Planning Board	Ongoing

LAND USE				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Consider scenic resources when reviewing the type, location, and intensity of land uses. c. Implement projects and programs that enhance views at publicly accessible viewpoints. 				
Goal LU-3: Maintain island-wide collaboration with other municipalities and anchor institutions				
<p>3.1. Continue to participate in regional planning efforts with partners and neighboring communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continue participation with Aquidneck Island Land Trust (AILT) resilience planning effort. b. Continue participation with Connect Greater Newport. 	ED-6, NH-3	Planning Department	<p>MEDAC</p> <p>Town Administrator</p> <p>Connect Greater Newport</p>	Ongoing
<p>3.2. Support opportunities for appropriate redevelopment of the West Side which benefit the Town and residents while also considering the goals of the U.S. Navy, Coast Guard, and NOAA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continue to engage local and regional partners in discussions about compatible and appropriate uses around military land. b. Encourage future defense-related research and development and other compatible uses in appropriate locations that are proximate to existing facilities. c. Implement planned redevelopment of excess Navy land in line with findings of forthcoming <i>Aquidneck Island and NAVSTA Compatible Use Study</i>. 	ED-6	Planning Department	<p>Planning Board</p> <p>MEDAC</p> <p>Connect Greater Newport</p>	Ongoing; Mid-term

HOUSING				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
<i>A. Strategy</i>	<i>Goal #</i>	<i>Lead Town Dept</i>	<i>Other Town Dept(s) or boards, if any</i>	<i>Ongoing Near-term Mid-term Long-term</i>
Housing Vision: Middletown will strive to provide a diverse range of housing that includes attainable and varying housing options for all life stages and income levels, while at the same time preserving the cherished qualities that give Middletown its coastal character.				
Goal H-1: Protect existing supply of affordable housing				
1.1. Monitor existing affordable housing stock. a. Maintain a detailed affordable housing inventory and work with owners and other partners in effort to preserve expiring units.		Planning Department	Affordable Housing Committee	Ongoing
1.2. Support creation of low- and moderate-income housing units from existing development. a. Investigate conversion of mobile home parks into cooperatives. b. Investigate the potential to expand existing affordable housing developments including Lucy's Heart and Oxbow. c. Pursue the redevelopment, conversion, and adaptive reuse of vacant or underutilized structures into affordable housing units. d. Investigate potential to increase density of existing multifamily developments.		Planning Department	Affordable Housing Committee Planning Board Town Council	Mid-term; long-term
Goal H-2: Provide a variety of housing options that are attainable to and accommodating for all income levels, age groups, and abilities				
2.1. Support development of special needs housing. a. Continue to support subsidized housing for special needs individuals through Community Development Block Grants and other available funding. b. Apply/advocate for ADA federal and state funding for access and safety improvements for residential units occupied by elderly and disabled tenants/owners.		Planning Department	Planning Board Town Council	Ongoing

HOUSING				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
<p>2.2. Support development of senior housing and opportunities for aging in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continue to provide CDBG funding to assist in creating housing for senior citizens. b. Continue to support development of Senior Independent Living Facilities as defined in the Zoning Ordinance. c. Allow for the adaptation of accessory dwelling units to low and-moderate income housing. d. Continue to grant tax exemptions to seniors; allow tax deferments for elderly; and freeze taxes for low-income seniors. 		Planning Department	Planning Board Town Council Tax Assessor	Ongoing; near-term
<p>2.3. Support development of affordable family and multifamily housing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide for affordable housing for households up to 120% Area Median Income (AMI) in Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance. b. Encourage a mix of unit sizes, number of bedrooms, and unit typologies in market rate and low- and moderate-income housing developments. 		Planning Department	Planning Board Affordable Housing Committee Town Council	Ongoing
<p>2.4. Increase the number of year-round rental properties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Incentivize the rehabilitation of unused or underutilized buildings and large homes into multifamily dwellings and rental units. b. Encourage and incentivize the development, adaptation, and use of accessory dwelling units and seasonal properties as year-round and long-term rentals. c. Continue monitoring the supply of short-term rentals (STRs) and consider additional actions if deemed necessary. 		Planning Department	Affordable Housing Committee Town Council	Mid-term
Goal H-3: Increase supply of workforce housing				
<p>3.1. Promote the development of workforce housing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continue to pursue adoption of Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance with density bonus. 	ED-2	Planning Department	Planning Board	Ongoing

HOUSING				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Explore implementation of a municipal subsidy program with a multi-tiered incentives structure and identify potential funding sources. c. Prioritize affordable homeownership programs in CDBG applications. d. Permit forms of housing that are affordable without subsidies, such as multifamily housing, mobile homes and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). e. Promote development of new rental housing by allowing multifamily and mixed-use development where appropriate in the Zoning Ordinance. 			<p>Affordable Housing Committee</p> <p>Town Council</p>	
Goal H-4: Reduce housing costs while promoting more sustainable development				
<p>4.1. Advance lower housing costs through the waiving of associated Town fees for low-and-moderate income housing development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop standards and process for waiving or reducing building permit and other fees for affordable housing projects. 		Planning Department	<p>Building Inspection Department</p> <p>Town Council</p>	Near-term
<p>4.2. Encourage mixed-use and transit-oriented developments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Create incentives for developers of mixed-use developments to create low- and moderate-income housing units. b. Allow mixed-use by-right in appropriate areas including second-story residential over commercial properties. 	LU-1	Planning Department	<p>Planning Board</p> <p>Town Council</p>	Mid-term
<p>4.3. Encourage infill development and conversion of existing structures or underdeveloped properties into affordable housing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify areas suitable for infill development/redevelopment. b. Consider reducing restrictions on lot sizes, setbacks, lot coverage, height, and parking requirements to encourage infill. 		Planning Department	<p>Planning Board</p> <p>Town Council</p>	Near-term; mid-term

HOUSING				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
c. Continue to investigate municipally and privately owned properties which could be considered suitable sites for the development of affordable residential units.				
4.4. Advance the use of energy efficiency and climate resiliency measures in building design and construction to decrease long-term housing costs. a. Enforce energy efficient building codes. b. Promote energy efficiency programs. c. Require green infrastructure and other flood mitigation measures in new development.	NH-1	Planning Department	Planning Board Building Inspection Department Town Council	Ongoing; near-term
Goal H-5: Promote safe, connected, and accessible development close to public transit				
5.1. Integrate affordable housing into the community. a. Ensure affordable units are integrated with market-rate units in new developments whenever feasible, to avoid the concentration of units in specific areas of town. b. Require inclusionary units be on-site whenever feasible.		Planning Department	Affordable Housing Committee Planning Board Town Council	Ongoing
5.2. Consider characteristics of surrounding area when reviewing plans for affordable housing. a. Encourage the siting of affordable housing near existing services, public transit and employment opportunities. b. Encourage developments for elderly and special needs housing to be easily accessible to municipal, commercial, and medical facilities as well as transit.	T-2	Planning Board	Planning Department	Ongoing
Goal H-6: Make progress toward the State’s 10% requirement for low- and moderate-income housing				

HOUSING				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
<p>6.1. Ensure coordination of affordable housing activities.</p> <p>a. Maintain an affordable housing committee to implement the affordable housing plan and review the plan's progress annually.</p>		Affordable Housing Committee	<p>Planning Department</p> <p>Town Council</p>	Ongoing
<p>6.2. Identify potential locations for comprehensive permit developments and collaborate with local affordable housing developers to achieve mutual goals.</p> <p>a. Continue use of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) funding for programs that create low- and moderate-income units in Middletown supported by the community.</p> <p>b. Further evaluate the higher priority identified sites for comprehensive permit development and identify potential for-profit and non-profit development partners.</p>		Planning Department	<p>Affordable Housing Committee</p> <p>Town Council</p>	Ongoing; mid-term
<p>6.3. Secure funding for affordable housing.</p> <p>a. Monitor and pursue federal, state, and local funding opportunities for development of affordable housing.</p> <p>b. Advocate for increase in project-based rental subsidies tied to Middletown housing units.</p> <p>c. Explore establishing an affordable housing trust fund.</p> <p>d. Work with RI Housing, neighboring communities, and other affordable housing partners to maximize the availability of federal and state resources like the Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG).</p>		Affordable Housing Committee	<p>Planning Department</p> <p>Town Council</p>	Ongoing; mid-term
<p>6.4. Advocate for fair and effective affordable housing legislation at the state level.</p> <p>a. Participate in review and update of current affordable housing legislation in partnership with other municipalities.</p>	LU-3	Town Council	<p>Planning Department</p> <p>Affordable Housing Committee</p>	Ongoing
<p>Goal H-7: Promote housing opportunities that support economic development by prioritizing the redevelopment of underutilized commercial, residential, and/or vacant spaces in commercial areas</p>				

HOUSING				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
<p>7.1. Locate housing near existing services and facilities, employment opportunities, and transportation.</p> <p>a. Coordinate streetscape improvements like sidewalks, crosswalks, bicycle facilities and other amenities so they facilitate maximum affordable housing opportunities.</p>	LU-1, T-2	Planning Department	Planning Board	Ongoing
<p>7.2. Prioritize the redevelopment of underutilized commercial and/or vacant spaces into mixed-use and multifamily housing.</p> <p>a. Identify commercial areas suitable for mixed-use development.</p> <p>b. Identify a range of uses that would complement housing and best accomplish Middletown’s economic development goals.</p> <p>c. Incentivize preferred mixed-use developments with density or other bonuses.</p> <p>d. When commercial buildings are adaptively reused for multifamily housing, explore further opportunities to convert excess parking area into additional housing.</p>	LU-1, ED-2	Planning Department	Affordable Housing Committee Planning Board	Ongoing; near-term; mid-term

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
<i>A. Strategy</i>	<i>Goal #</i>	<i>Lead Town Dept</i>	<i>Other Town Dept(s) or boards, if any</i>	<i>Ongoing Near-term Mid-term Long-term</i>
Economic Development Vision: Middletown will support long-term economic development opportunities and living-wage job creation; high caliber education and training of the workforce; a positive business environment; and the long-term viability of agricultural businesses.				
Goal ED-1: Promote a diverse and expanded local economy in balance with the natural environment, recreational resources, and rural-coastal character that makes Middletown a desirable community				
1.1. Create equitable conditions that support the growth of existing businesses and attract new businesses to Middletown. a. Conduct a business survey to identify barriers and opportunities for existing and prospective local businesses. b. Actively promote Middletown as a destination for employers to invest and grow, emphasizing its economic advantages and high quality of life. c. Increase effort to capitalize on Middletown’s tourism potential.		MEDAC	Planning Department Town Administrator Town Council	Near-term
1.2. Offer attractive and flexible local incentive packages to complement state and federal incentives that may be available. a. Inventory potential local incentive programs that encourage investment in Middletown’s businesses and people. b. Engage with local employers and major landowners to identify specific incentives that might encourage new investment.		MEDAC	Planning Department Town Administrator Town Council	Mid-term; long-term
1.3. Capitalize on unique redevelopment opportunities from NOAA and Coast Guard deployment to NAVSTA Newport. a. Convene regular working sessions with NAVSTA representatives, local economic	LU-3	Planning Department	MEDAC Town Administrator Town Council	Ongoing

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
<p>development officials, and Connect Greater Newport.</p> <p>b. Help align NAVSTA growth needs and opportunities with local resources such as development sites and business partners and recommendations from the Aquidneck Island NAVSTA Newport Compatible Use Study.</p>				
<p>1.4. Invest in the critical infrastructure necessary to support a robust and diversified economy.</p> <p>a. Inventory and prioritize infrastructure needs by land use, such as commercial, industrial, and residential.</p> <p>b. Pursue state and federal grants to help fund infrastructure projects that unlock economic development opportunities.</p>	FS-1	Planning Department	<p>MEDAC</p> <p>Town Administrator</p> <p>Town Council</p>	Mid-term; long-term
<p>1.5. Integrate mixed-use development in commercial areas to reinforce their economic viability and fiscal stability, such as the East Main Road, West Main Road, and Aquidneck Avenue corridors and the Atlantic Beach district.</p> <p>a. Amend zoning to enable or improve the financial viability of mixed-use development and adaptive reuse projects.</p> <p>b. Inventory potential redevelopment sites and promote them to developers capable of realizing the community's vision for these areas.</p> <p>c. Investigate opportunities to underground utilities during redevelopment or major roadway projects to increase resiliency and improve the aesthetic appeal of commercial areas.</p>	LU-1, H-5	Planning Department	<p>Planning Board</p> <p>Local Utility Companies</p> <p>Private Developers</p>	Ongoing; near-term
<p>Goal ED-2: Promote economic resiliency to both emerging and longstanding challenges in the market and business environment</p>				

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
<p>2.1. Expand housing options and attainability to help attract employers and workforce talent at all income levels, from working class to knowledge sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Promote housing production that meets the needs and preferences of workers across income and skill levels. b. Conduct periodic surveys of local employers to understand workforce housing needs and opportunities. 	H-3	Planning Department	Affordable Housing Committee MEDAC	Ongoing
<p>2.2. Engage with elected officials to help preserve local jobs and investment at the naval base.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Regularly meet with elected officials to promote Middletown’s economic development goals as a priority in naval base employment and procurement policies. 	LU-3	Town Administrator	MEDAC Town Council	Ongoing
<p>2.3. Protect the Atlantic Beach district from rising environmental threats.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide technical support and incentives to district businesses interested in retrofitting their property for better environmental resilience. b. Integrate economic development perspectives and metrics as part of resiliency planning and investment in this area, such as undergrounding of utilities 	NH-1	Planning Department	AILT/ Aquidneck Resilience	Mid-term
<p>2.4. Maintain a sustainable balance between commercial, industrial, housing, open space, and other uses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Preserve areas for viable commercial and industrial activities. b. Increase zoning capacity for higher density housing types in appropriate locations which preserve more land for other uses and also tends to offer a higher fiscal return to the Town. 	LU-1	Planning Department	Planning Board MEDAC	Near-term; mid-term

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Engage with major local employers frequently to understand risks and trends that could undermine businesses and explore proactive ways the Town can support as needed, especially among sectors experiencing recent job losses and wage decline. 				
Goal ED-3: Foster collaboration between business and local educational institutions to develop a trained workforce				
3.1. Assess workforce skills gap and support programs and strategies to meet identified needs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Conduct periodic surveys of local employers to identify skills gaps and employment needs. b. Partner with local schools and community colleges to promote career pathways in area industries like marine trades, defense, engineering, and hospitality. 	FS-3	MEDAC	School Department Planning Department Town Council	Ongoing; near-term
Goal ED-4: Retain and expand existing industry clusters and cultivate new emerging clusters in high-paying industries				
4.1 Promote economic growth and job creation in technology, defense, and homeland security sectors. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Explore incentives to attract and retain employers that create stable jobs for local residents. b. Promote housing production that meets the needs and preferences of these workers, making Middletown a more attractive place for them to live and work. 		MEDAC	Planning Department Town Administrator	Mid-term
4.2. Promote growth and opportunities in marine trades and other high-wage industries. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Explore incentives to attract and retain employers that create high-skill, high-wage jobs for local residents. b. Promote housing production that meets the needs and preferences of these workers, making Middletown a more attractive place for them to live and work. 		MEDAC	Planning Department Town Administrator	Mid-term

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
<p>4.3. Support economic growth and job creation in the local tourism and hospitality industry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Explore incentives to attract and retain employers that create stable tourism and hospitality jobs for local residents. b. Identify sites that could support new hospitality development and amend zoning and future land use maps as needed to promote this investment. 		MEDAC	<p>Planning Department</p> <p>Town Administrator</p>	Mid-term
<p>4.4. Review and revise existing zoning and development regulations, including the Office Park district, to increase flexibility and better support the growth of emerging industries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Amend zoning regulations to allow and streamline review and permitting processes for development and expansion of facilities engaged in emerging industries, including by adding allowable uses that reflect recent sector trends. b. Consider zoning and other incentives that promote new investment in innovative industries. 	LU-1	Planning Board	<p>Planning Department</p> <p>Town Council</p>	Near-term
Goal ED-5: Preserve the economic vitality of agriculture				
<p>5.1 Increase farmland protection efforts and support agricultural businesses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Convene periodic roundtables of local agriculture stakeholders to discuss needs and opportunities. b. Explore incentives that encourage private investment in new and existing agriculture businesses. c. Promote agricultural businesses and events in Town communications. 	LU-2	MEDAC	<p>Town Administrator</p> <p>Planning Department</p>	Ongoing; mid-term
<p>5.2. Facilitate the adoption of farm-friendly ordinances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Periodically interview agriculture business leaders to understand potential conflicts 	LU-2	Planning Board	<p>Planning Department</p> <p>Town Council</p>	Ongoing; mid-term

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
<p>and misalignments between their needs and local regulations.</p> <p>b. Amend zoning regulations to enable and promote current agricultural business models and practices.</p>				
<p>5.3. Support efforts toward farming sustainability and resilience.</p> <p>a. Identify and promote incentives and loan programs that help stabilize local agricultural businesses and manage environmental and economic risks.</p> <p>b. Identify and promote incentives for local agricultural businesses to transition to low-impact practices such as pertaining to chemical use and run-off.</p>		MEDAC	Town Administrator Planning Department	Mid-term
Goal ED-6: Continue to advance Aquidneck Island-wide collaboration on mutually beneficial economic development initiatives				
<p>6.1. Coordinate with the City of Newport, Town of Portsmouth, and Connect Greater Newport to support and attract emerging industries.</p> <p>a. Convene regular working sessions with leadership from all three island municipalities to discuss mutual economic development goals and potential collaborative initiatives.</p> <p>b. Inventory economic and employment assets and resources that could be coordinated between municipalities to attract employers in emerging industries that would benefit all three regardless of the municipality they settle in.</p>	LU-3	Planning Department	Town Administrator MEDAC Connect Greater Newport	Ongoing
<p>6.2. Collaborate with the Newport Naval Station, Coast Guard, and NOAA to advance shared goals and support growth and innovation of complementary defense and maritime industries.</p>	LU-3	Planning Department	Town Administrator MEDAC	Ongoing

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Convene regular working sessions with agency representatives and local economic development officials. b. Maintain an inventory of each agency’s short- and long-term growth plans and identify ways Middletown and local stakeholders can both support and benefit from them. 			Connect Greater Newport	
<p>6.3. Coordinate with local organizations focused on economic development, including Greater Newport Chamber of Commerce, Connect Greater Newport, Discover Newport, and others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Convene regular working sessions with leadership from these agencies and establish shared near- and long-term economic development goals. b. Collaborate on Island-wide and regional economic development planning efforts. 	LU-3	MEDAC	Planning Department Town Administrator	Ongoing



TRANSPORTATION				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
<i>A. Strategy</i>	<i>Goal #</i>	<i>Lead Town Dept</i>	<i>Other Town Dept(s) or boards, if any</i>	<i>Ongoing Near-term Mid-term Long-term</i>
Transportation Vision: Middletown will strive to provide a safe, efficient, accessible, and sustainable multi-modal transportation system that meets the diverse mobility needs of residents, workers, and visitors while maintaining the scenic quality of our community.				
Goal T-1: Enhance safety for all modes of transportation				
1.1. Support a connected and accessible local street network that allows for the safe and efficient movement of traffic by all modes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Implement recommendations identified in <i>Middletown Safe Streets for All Action Plan</i>. b. Promote a Complete Streets approach to design and renovation of local roadways that enhances safety and mobility of all users. c. Promote the use of advanced technology for traffic management. d. Limit impact of traffic on local streets by utilizing traffic calming techniques where appropriate. e. Work with RIDOT in planning, permitting, and design of projects that improve traffic flow. f. Advocate for RIDOT to implement appropriate access management controls on arterial roadways, including limiting direct access to major roadways such as West Main Road and East Main Road. g. Identify strategies to reduce the number and severity of crashes occurring on local roads. h. Advocate with NAVSTA-Newport to consider staggered work hours to distribute commuter traffic over more hours and reduce peak congestion. 		Planning Department	Public Works	Ongoing; mid-term
1.2. Preserve and extend the life of Town-owned and -managed transportation infrastructure.	FS-1	Public Works		Ongoing

TRANSPORTATION				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continue to maintain the Pavement Management Program and Sidewalk Condition Inventory. b. Track and coordinate investments in the transportation system to minimize duplicate efforts and costs. For example, if sidewalks, bicycle paths, drainage, curbs, sewers, etc. are planned, they should be installed during a single scheduled repair period for the road. c. Coordinate with RIDOT and utility companies on any work occurring on town roads. Complete all utility and roadwork, including emergency repairs, so that the new road surface is consistent with the old surface. 				
Goal T-2: Promote walking and biking as attractive alternatives for short trips and as recreational opportunities				
<p>2.1. Create walkable neighborhoods with a safe, convenient, and pleasant pedestrian environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Inventory priority streets for the installation of new sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike facilities to include in Capital Improvement Program (CIP). b. Require construction/ rehabilitation of sidewalks as part of any roadway construction or reconstruction project where appropriate. c. Require street connectivity to existing street network when possible and when new subdivisions and roads are proposed. d. Require safe pedestrian accessibility to commercial developments. e. Encourage sidewalks within new residential developments, and where desirable offer incentives to developers to create walking and/or bicycle paths. f. Continue to develop and promote land use and zoning policies that support transit-oriented development with housing, retail, and jobs co-located with each other near transit. g. When there is enough space, provide a landscaping strip along sidewalks to buffer 	LU-1	Planning Department	Public Works Planning Board	Ongoing; near-term

TRANSPORTATION				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
pedestrians from traffic and as a place to accommodate snow.				
<p>2.2. Encourage safer bicycle transportation through the development of protected bike lanes, shared-use paths, and connected bicycle infrastructure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support implementation of priority corridors and projects identified in <i>Ride Island Plan</i>, including connection of missing links between suitable roads for bicycles. b. Support design, permitting, and construction of Shoreline Bikeway (Burma Road), an off-road shared use path along Newport Secondary Rail and Navy right-of-way. c. Support development of a dedicated shared-use path along East Main Road. d. Support development of a shared-use path along West Main Road. e. Advocate that state transportation projects incorporate pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Submit projects for inclusion in the State's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as appropriate. f. Provide destination/guide signing for bicyclists. g. Support public education on shared road etiquette and safety for bicyclists and drivers. 	OS-2	Planning Department	Public Works BPAC RIDOT	Ongoing; mid-term; long-term
Goal T-3: Promote transit improvements to enhance rider experience and help mitigate traffic congestion				
<p>3.1. Advocate to improve and promote the public transit system and services and ensure that the system meets the mobility needs of all citizens.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Work with RIPTA to upgrade and expand bus service across town to include greater frequency and coverage of residential and commercial activity nodes. b. Advocate for RIPTA to improve regional connections between Aquidneck Island, Providence, the Wickford Junction train station, and Fall River MBTA commuter rail station. 		Planning Department	BPAC RIPTA RIDOT	Ongoing; mid-term; long-term

TRANSPORTATION				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Coordinate with RIPTA to invest in transit user facilities including bus shelters and benches. d. Encourage RIPTA and RIDOT to make improvements in bus stop operations and safety such as bus pullouts and sidewalk/crosswalk upgrades, coordinate crosswalks with major bus stops. e. Encourage RIPTA to provide real-time bus information to mobile phones. f. Encourage development patterns that promote transit use. g. Increase awareness of RIPTA RIDE shuttle service to better support seniors and disabled residents in accessing essential services. 				

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NATURAL RESOURCES					
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN	
<i>A. Strategy</i>	<i>Goal #</i>	<i>Lead Town Dept</i>	<i>Other Town Dept(s) or boards, if any</i>	<i>Ongoing Near-term Mid-term Long-term</i>	
<p>Natural & Ecological Resources Vision: In recognition that the health of our citizens and our local economy are dependent on the health of our environment, local government practices in Middletown will reflect good stewardship of the water, land, and air. The Town and its residents will choose to act collectively, individually, and collaboratively with neighboring communities to preserve, protect and restore our environment for this and future generations.</p>					
<p>Goal NR-1: Protect and restore freshwater and coastal resources and ecosystems</p>					
<p>1.1. Continue to protect and preserve the town’s freshwater resources, including the public drinking water supply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify sources of nonpoint source impairment of surface water bodies through the Phase II Stormwater Management Program Plan (SWMPP) planning process and work to implement the recommendations of the SWMPP. b. Continue appropriate oversight of development in the Watershed Protection Districts, including requiring special use permit for more intensive types of development, particularly in soils with poor drainage. c. Meet the water quality management standards under the direction of the RI DEM Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Program. d. Enforce stormwater regulations and require best management practices (BMPs), particularly in sensitive watershed areas. e. Increase inspections and create a condition index of constructed stormwater drainage systems and BMPs, and promote proper maintenance of these systems. 	LU-2	Public Works	Town Council Planning Department	Ongoing; Near-term	
<p>1.2. Protect, preserve, and rehabilitate the shoreline and coastal ecosystem.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Evaluate existing protection strategies. 	OS-3	Public Works	Planning Department	Near-term; Ongoing; Mid-term	

NATURAL RESOURCES				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Conduct a coastal engineering assessment and inventory coastal engineering structures to evaluate conditions. c. Develop a shoreline protection plan to increase shoreline resilience in vulnerable areas. Consider the range of nature-based, living shorelines, green, grey, and hybrid approaches. d. Develop Beach Management Plan(s) to ensure long-term planning for the resilience of Sachuest Beach and other public beaches. e. Continue the use of Mobi Mats to prevent walking on beach grass and dunes. 			Beach Commission	
Goal NR-2: Preserve and protect Middletown’s plant and animal ecosystems				
<p>2.1. Protect native wildlife and native plant species.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Using the Town’s open space scoring and prioritization policy support the preservation and conservation of open space in watersheds, along the shore, and in other environmentally sensitive areas through acquisition, conservation easements, and purchase of development rights. b. Preserve and/or establish natural resource connections such as greenways, blueways, and wildlife corridors in partnership with land trusts, conservation foundation, and government agencies. c. Promote use of conservation subdivision when farmland and other undeveloped land is being converted to residential use. 	LU-2	Planning Department	Open Space & Fields Committee Conservation Commission Town Council	Ongoing
<p>2.2. Preserve existing forested areas and expand tree canopy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Using the Town’s open space scoring and prioritization policy permanently protect forested areas through acquisition and conservation easements in partnership with AILT and other local organizations. b. In conjunction with the Middletown Tree Commission efforts, establish a plan for 	LU-2	Town Council	Tree Commission Conservation Commission	Ongoing

NATURAL RESOURCES				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
<p>planting, maintaining, and replacing trees in public spaces.</p> <p>c. Require developers to retain existing trees when possible and to provide deciduous street trees.</p>			<p>Open Space & Fields Committee</p> <p>AILT</p>	
<p>2.3. Reduce invasive species.</p> <p>a. Encourage the planting of native trees and plants.</p> <p>b. Develop a preferred list of plant species for use in reviewing landscaping plans during development plan review.</p> <p>c. Develop an early detection and rapid response plan (EDRR) for invasives.</p> <p>d. Collaborate with local organizations pursuing invasives removal both in Middletown and across Aquidneck Island.</p> <p>e. Develop a public education campaign and training program to support identification of invasive species and early intervention.</p>		Public Works	<p>Tree Commission</p> <p>Open Space & Fields Committee</p> <p>AILT</p>	Near-term; ongoing

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION					
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN	
<i>A. Strategy</i>	<i>Goal #</i>	<i>Lead Town Dept</i>	<i>Other Town Dept(s) or boards, if any</i>	<i>Ongoing Near-term Mid-term Long-term</i>	
Open Space and Recreation Vision: Open space within Middletown includes an abundance of diverse natural areas which offer recreational opportunities while preserving agricultural lands, wildlife habitat, sensitive ecosystems and water quality. Residents value an active and healthy lifestyle and will have access to quality recreation programs, facilities, beaches, parks, and trails offered by the Town.					
Goal OS-1: Maintain, improve, and expand recreational facilities to meet the community's recreation needs					
1.1. Implement and maintain an updated Recreation, Conservation, and Open Space Master Plan designed to fulfill the short-and- long-term needs of the community. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Perform a community needs assessment for open space and recreation. b. Update the 2010 <i>Recreation, Conservation, and Open Space Master Plan</i> every ten years. 		Town Administrator	Open Space and Fields Committee Planning Department Planning Board	Near-term	
1.2. Continue to maintain and improve Town-owned recreational and open space areas and facilities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop management plans for Town properties that include maintenance standards for land, facilities, and staff. b. Improve access to Town facilities for people with disabilities. c. Pursue grant funds to improve facilities. d. Provide maps and wayfinding signs for open space and recreation parcels; publicize on Town website and update as needed. e. Facilitate creation of "Friends" groups for community stewardship of recreational and open space resources. 	FS-1	Town Administrator	Open Space and Fields Committee Planning Department	Near-term; mid-term	
1.3. Expand the network of parks and open spaces in all neighborhoods as opportunities arise.		Planning Department	Open Space and Fields Committee	Ongoing; mid-term	

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify potential sites for new open spaces, playing fields, pocket parks, and other recreational facilities. b. Work with developers to facilitate the development of new recreational and open space amenities. c. Apply for state and other funding to support identified recreation and open space acquisitions. 				
Goal OS-2: Expand and enhance the trail system in Middletown				
<p>2.1. Expand, enhance, and connect the trail network in Middletown.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establish multi-use trails and bike lanes to connect neighborhoods to Town’s open space and recreational resources. b. Support development of Shoreline Drive/Burma Road multi-use path. c. Support implementation of Ride Island Plan’s priority corridors. d. Identify opportunities to improve pedestrian connections between park facilities and neighborhoods. e. Support expansion and enhancement of trails in conservation lands and the network between properties in partnership with community organizations. 	T-3	Planning Department	Open Space and Fields Committee AILT	Mid-term; long-term
<p>2.2. Establish connections between open space parcels to create an integrated network of green corridors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify opportunities to provide connections between existing open space parcels, including strategic acquisitions. b. Partner with Aquidneck Island Land Trust, Norman Bird Sanctuary, Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge, and other organizations to support and leverage acquisition efforts utilizing the Town’s open space scoring and prioritization policy 	T-3	Planning Department	Open Space and Fields Committee	Near-term

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
Goal OS-3: Preserve and improve coastal access and recreational amenities				
<p>3.1. Preserve and protect Second and Third Beach by maintaining and enhancing current facilities and level of use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide quality facilities, amenities, and programs for all users. b. Assess needs to safeguard from projected impacts of climate change. 	NH-2	Beach Commission	<p>Planning Department</p> <p>Public Works</p>	Ongoing; mid-term
<p>3.2. Preserve and protect public access to the shoreline.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Recognize and publicize public rights of way and commons to the shore. b. Acquire shoreline property valuable for public use, as it becomes available. c. Implement the recommendations in the West Side Master Plan and subsequent planning documents, to preserve shoreline property such as surplus Navy land along Narragansett Bay. 		Town Council	<p>Planning Department</p> <p>Beach Commission</p>	Ongoing; long-term

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HISTORIC RESOURCES				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
<i>A. Strategy</i>	<i>Goal #</i>	<i>Lead Town Dept</i>	<i>Other Town Dept(s) or boards, if any</i>	<i>Ongoing Near-term Mid-term Long-term</i>
Cultural & Historic Vision: Middletown will be known as a community that preserves its past and values cultural enrichment opportunities for its residents and visitors. The town and its residents will recognize cultural and historic preservation as a key component to the town’s future growth, economy, character, and appeal.				
Goal HR-1: Preserve Middletown’s diverse historic resources				
<p>1.1. Preserve, protect, and restore historic buildings, structures, cemeteries, and archeological sites in Middletown.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Work with local groups such as the Middletown Historical Society to establish a historic home heritage program or voluntary “historic plaque” program to identify historically significant structures and landscapes. b. Reconsider adoption of incentive program to encourage preservation of historically significant buildings through review and revision of proposed incentives language. c. Review the Town’s development review processes and amend as needed to strengthen historic resource protection. d. Enforce the Stone Wall ordinance and Development Plan Review and Conservation Development design process. 		Town Administrator	<p>Planning Department</p> <p>Middletown Historical Society</p> <p>Town Council</p>	Mid-term
<p>1.2. Preserve and protect the Town’s historic landscapes, including but not limited to, farms and agricultural land.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Partner with other governmental and private funding sources to purchase development rights to farms and other areas of traditional use of the land as opportunities arise. b. Consider zoning and subdivision standards and incentives for the preservation of open 	LU-2	Town Administrator	<p>Town Council</p> <p>Open Space & Fields Committee</p> <p>AILT</p>	Ongoing; mid-term

HISTORIC RESOURCES				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
space, greenways, agricultural land, and scenic vistas as part of the development process.				
<p>1.3. Preserve and celebrate Middletown’s history.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establish a public outreach and educational program in partnership with local historical organizations to increase awareness of Middletown history and historical assets—including indigenous and pre-colonial history—to residents and visitors. b. Partner with organizations, such as the Middletown Historical Society, the Preservation Society of Newport County, and Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission to promote the continued identification and preservation of historic documents, photos, records, and other historical resources. c. Integrate local history and culture elements into parks and shared spaces through public art. 		Town Administrator	Town Clerk Middletown Historical Society MEDAC	Ongoing; near-term
Goal HR-2: Promote Middletown’s cultural resources as a key part of the Town’s character				
<p>2.1. Preserve and promote Middletown’s full cultural heritage and supporting institutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continue to sponsor valued community activities and events. b. Partner with and support local businesses and organizations like the library, school district, and NGOs to enhance and expand community events, experiences, and opportunities. 		Town Administrator	Town Clerk Middletown Historical Society MEDAC	Ongoing

FACILITIES AND SERVICES				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
<i>A. Strategy</i>	<i>Goal #</i>	<i>Lead Town Dept</i>	<i>Other Town Dept(s) or boards, if any</i>	<i>Ongoing Near-term Mid-term Long-term</i>
Facilities & Services Vision: Middletown will strive to provide residents with high quality and responsive government services, a wide range of public facilities and the necessary public utilities to support a desired quality of life				
Goal FS-1: Provide cost-efficient services and well-maintained facilities				
<p>1.1 Deliver high-quality services in a cost-effective manner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop a comprehensive maintenance and improvement plan for all Town-owned buildings, facilities, and land. b. Maintain and implement Strategic Plans for providing Town services, update as needed. c. Optimize use of existing public facilities and Town-owned land and sustain prior investments in infrastructure. d. Reduce municipal energy costs through electrification and retrofit of municipal facilities. e. Continue to coordinate with Newport Water to plan for and meet future water needs of the community. f. Conduct a water and sewer infrastructure study along West Main Road to identify the capacity enhancements needed to accommodate and encourage higher density development and advance the recommendations of the <i>Aquidneck NAVSTA Compatible Use Study</i>. 		Town Administrator	Town Council Public Works Library School Department Newport Water	Ongoing; near-term; mid-term
<p>1.2 Pursue grant opportunities and explore additional revenue sources to help offset the Town’s service delivery costs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Evaluate all current Town property leases for opportunities to renegotiate terms that are more beneficial to the Town. 		Town Administrator	Town Council Public Works	Mid-term

FACILITIES AND SERVICES				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Enhance grant research and grant writing capacity to support Town departments applying for grant opportunities. 				
<p>1.3. Continue to provide economical and environmentally sound solid waste and recycling management that exceeds the state’s minimum recycling rate of 35% and minimum diversion rate of 50%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify options for future solid waste disposal. b. Continue to promote public awareness through community education programs that reduce solid waste, increase recycling, and ensure the proper disposal of household hazardous waste. c. Identify options to locate and manage a town composting facility or service. 		Public Works		Ongoing; Near-term
<p>1.4. Improve town-wide stormwater management to reduce impact on water resources, infrastructure, and the environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Update Town’s Stormwater Management Plan. b. Revise ordinances related to stormwater management to require green infrastructure in private and public projects (Chapter 151: Construction Site Runoff Control and Chapter 153: Storm Water Management). c. Increase funding for stormwater management through establishment of stormwater utility. d. Integrate green infrastructure during road improvement projects, the installation of pedestrian rights-of-way, and surface parking areas. e. Coordinate with neighboring towns, RIDOT, and State to reduce non-point source pollution within local watersheds. f. Implement West Side Sewer Diversion project to more efficiently transmit sewer flow to the Newport treatment plant and reduce the overreliance on the Wave Avenue Pump Station. 	NR-1	Public Works	<p>Planning Department</p> <p>Town Administrator</p>	Near-term; mid-term; long-term

FACILITIES AND SERVICES				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
<p>1.5 Support and expand inter-governmental cooperation, efficiency, and transparency within Middletown and across Aquidneck Island.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establish working groups to improve collaboration and communications between Committees, Town Departments, and the public. b. Continue to implement E-Town Hall to make public information, permitting, and other functions available electronically on the Town’s website. c. Issue annual comprehensive plan progress reports to track and communicate progress towards community goals and the plan’s implementation action items. d. Coordinate with other Aquidneck Island communities on island-wide initiatives for transportation, land use, public infrastructure, and climate resilience. 	LU-3	Town Administrator Town Council	Planning Department IT Department Connect Greater Newport	Ongoing; Near-term
<p>1.6. Seek to collaborate with NAVSTA Newport to enhance efficiency in providing sewer and water services on the west side of town.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Work with regional partners to implement the recommendations of the NAVSTA Newport Compatibility Study. 		Public Works	Planning Department NAVSTA	Mid-term
Goal FS-2: Support public safety services and facilities				
<p>2.1. Maintain and expand public safety facilities, resources, and personnel as needed to meet community needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Utilize data and program performance measures to monitor outcomes from public safety efforts. b. Investigate with the Newport Water Department expansion of the public water system to provide enhanced fire protection coverage. 		Town Administrator	Public Works Police Department Fire Department	Ongoing; Near-term

FACILITIES AND SERVICES				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
c. Investigate the establishment of a seasonal police satellite precinct at the beach.				
Goal FS-3: Provide high-quality education and enrichment for all ages				
<p>3.1. Ensure that school programs meet the educational needs of all students and residents and facilities have adequate capacity to accommodate enrollment and programming demands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide school facilities that support year-round community utilization by all residents for recreation, meeting space, and other uses. b. Work with consultant to review school curriculum and provide recommendations for improvement. c. Continue investigating opportunities to support workforce development in cooperation with local businesses. 		School Department		Near-term; ongoing
<p>3.2. Continually improve access and connectivity to the library and other Town facilities and services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Periodically evaluate demand for library services, including resource needs and programming, and modify programs as needed. b. Explore opportunities to add new centralized community facilities and gathering spaces such as a community center or similar facility. 		Library		Ongoing

NATURAL HAZARD AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
	<i>Goal #</i>	<i>Lead Town Dept</i>	<i>Other Town Dept(s) or boards, if any</i>	<i>Ongoing Near-term Mid-term Long-term</i>
<p>Natural Hazard/Resilience Vision: In collaboration with its Aquidneck Island neighbors, Middletown will proactively respond to changing environmental and climate conditions with strategic policies and investments that safeguard critical facilities and infrastructure; protect the lives and property of its residents, visitors and businesses; and mitigate risks and impacts from severe weather events in the near- and long-term future.</p>				
<p>Goal NH-1: Proactively prepare for current and future natural hazards influenced by a changing climate</p>				
<p>1.1. Safeguard Middletown’s critical facilities and infrastructure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ensure that existing critical facilities are protected or otherwise improved to function in hazard and disaster situations, such as its reservoirs, beaches, and bridges. b. Design all new public buildings to include stormwater management best practices including the use of pervious materials, green roofs, and natural drainage systems. c. Ensure that new facilities are sited in areas that are not prone to flooding or other hazards. 		Town Administrator	<p>Planning Department</p> <p>DPW</p> <p>Middletown EMA</p>	Ongoing
<p>1.2. Protect the lives and property of Middletown’s residents and businesses, especially in highly vulnerable areas such as the Atlantic Beach District.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ensure that there is adequate funding and administrative support to implement the recommendations in the Aquidneck Island Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. b. Establish a Middletown Resilience Committee to support implementation of the Aquidneck Island Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, public education, and coordination across Town departments and committees. 		Town Council	<p>Planning Department</p> <p>Town Administrator</p>	Ongoing

NATURAL HAZARD AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Educate the public to better understand the concept of community resilience and the meaning of probabilities and risk, especially for stream and coastal flooding. d. Ensure vulnerable coastal populations receive proper communications before, during, and after storms and are aware of evacuation procedures, location of shelters, and transportation options. 				
<p>1.3. Proactively plan for appropriate disaster mitigation preparedness, response, and recovery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Integrate strategies and recommendations from the Hazard Mitigation Plan into local planning and emergency response policies and protocols. b. Integrate strategies and recommendations from the forthcoming Aquidneck Island Climate Resilience Plan into local planning initiatives. 		Town Administrator	Town Council Planning Department Middletown EMA	Mid-term
Goal NH-2: Integrate resiliency into all aspects of planning and investment townwide				
<p>2.1. Direct resiliency measures to preserve Middletown’s economic, historic, cultural, and natural assets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Invest in resiliency infrastructure and planning to mitigate environmental risks to commercial areas and employment centers. b. Promote resilience and sustainability best practices in new development and reinvestments in existing development. c. Encourage stormwater drainage improvements that reduce runoff and increase the permeability of the built environment. d. Improve the municipality’s stormwater management system to enhance infiltration and expand stormwater retention areas. e. Update and implement the Harbor Management Plan as needed. 		Planning Department	Town Council	Ongoing

NATURAL HAZARD AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE				
GOAL/STRATEGY	RELATED GOALS	LEAD	PARTNERS	WHEN
Goal NH-3: Address island-wide resilience and hazard mitigation issues				
<p>3.1. Continue regional collaboration and coordination on resilience planning and investment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continue to participate in and collaborate with AILT's regional resilience and mitigation planning and implementation efforts. b. Ensure consistency between the regional and local Hazard Mitigation Plan, the Comprehensive Plan, Special Area Management Plans (SAMPs), and municipal land use regulations. c. Strengthen regional economic resilience and harness opportunities for innovation through collaboration across Aquidneck Island partners. 	LU-3	Planning Department	AILT/Aquidneck Resilience	Ongoing

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