
ATLANTIC BEACH DISTRICT MASTER PLAN

Phase 1: Information Gathering and Analysis

*A Report to: Middletown Planning Board
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Prepared by:



Maguire Group Inc.
225 Chapman Street
Providence, RI 02905



Gates Leighton & Associates, Inc.
865A Waterman Avenue
East Providence, RI 02914



MAGUIRE GROUP INC. was founded in 1938, and since that time has grown to become one of the nation's leading Architectural, Engineering, Planning and Construction Management firms. Over 330 professionals and support staff, located in 12 offices throughout the Northeast and the U.S. Virgin Islands, provide a full complement of services. For more information about Maguire, please visit our Web site at www.maguiregroup.com. For more information about this report, please contact: David R. Westcott, AICP, 272-6000, extension 222 or DWestcott@MaguireGroup.com.



Gates, Leighton & Associates, Inc. (GLA) is a professional landscape architectural consulting firm serving clients throughout New England and in select international locations. Their expertise covers a broad spectrum of quality projects. GLA concentrates on urban streetscape design, parks and resorts, commercial development, environmental analysis, and site planning. They also design highways and parkways, industrial sites, schools, public buildings, botanical and zoological gardens. GLA has designed award-winning historic sites, monuments, signage, and residential estates.

Atlantic Beach District Master Plan Phase 1: Information Gathering and Analysis

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Phase 1: Information Gathering and Analysis

This report culminates the first phase of the Atlantic Beach District Master Plan study. Information gathering and analysis tasks are complete and this report provides the findings and conclusions from these tasks.

The Atlantic Beach District boundary, as determined by the Middletown Planning Board, follows Aquidneck Avenue from the lighted intersection at Valley Street, south to Purgatory Road. It extends along Purgatory Road from the municipal town line with Newport east to Crescent Road. Wave Avenue and Crescent Road are part of the study area. Properties that abut these roads and fall into the Limited Business or Traffic Sensitive District zones, as identified by the Middletown Zoning Map, are included in the Atlantic Beach District.

The Middletown Planning Board has established the following vision for the district:

...to become a more pedestrian-oriented, attractive and vibrant commercial village to serve the influx of seasonal visitors, the surrounding residential neighborhoods, and the town.

The following goals were adopted to achieve this vision:

- Develop and implement safety and aesthetic improvements to promote pedestrian activity that will support local small businesses, including streetscape improvements and pedestrian circulation throughout the district;
- Study traffic flow and parking within the district to provide safety and efficiency
- Identify opportunities to capitalize on the proximity of the district to beaches, hotels and other attractions for the benefit of local residents and the town business tax base
- Identify options to promote private development that will be consistent with the vision for the district, including opportunities to promote an appropriate mix of uses and building and site design.

Data Gathering

Municipal Data

The Middletown Planning Department provided geographic information system (GIS) data and 2005 aerial orthophotography. These were used to develop working base maps. To supplement this data, new and proposed developments not shown on the orthophotography were added and recent design plans for the Dunlap Wheeler Park were obtained to be incorporated into concept alternatives (Phase 2). The Town also provided a traffic study prepared for the developer of a proposed hotel in the district.

City of Newport

The City of Newport was contacted to obtain any information relevant to the study area and to participate in meetings and workshops. Outreach was done to the Planning, Public Works, and Parks, Recreation and Tourism Departments. Because Aquidneck Avenue and Memorial Boulevard are state-maintained roads (Route 138A), traffic data were not available from the city for these roads. The Newport Water Department is concluding studies relating to water quality concerns at Easton Pond. These reports will be available in the near future and will be reviewed as they relate to the Atlantic Beach District Master Plan. The Newport County Chamber of Commerce was also approached and asked to participate.

State of Rhode Island

Data were also collected from the state. The Department of Transportation (RI DOT) provided plat maps for the right-of-way along Aquidneck Avenue. These maps show the state highway line and dimensions within the state ROW. Also available were construction plans for improvements to the roadway, which show a wealth of information including lane widths, sidewalk widths, radii, and other roadway dimensions.

Data from the Rhode Island Geographic Information System (RIGIS) Program were used to supplement the municipal GIS, particularly:

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) floodplain data
- RI Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) public access points and coastal features
- Historic and cultural points
- Conservation parks and lands of state, local, and non-governmental agencies
- Wetlands
- Soil characteristics
- RI Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) bus routes and stops (June 2006)
- Bike paths

Field Visits

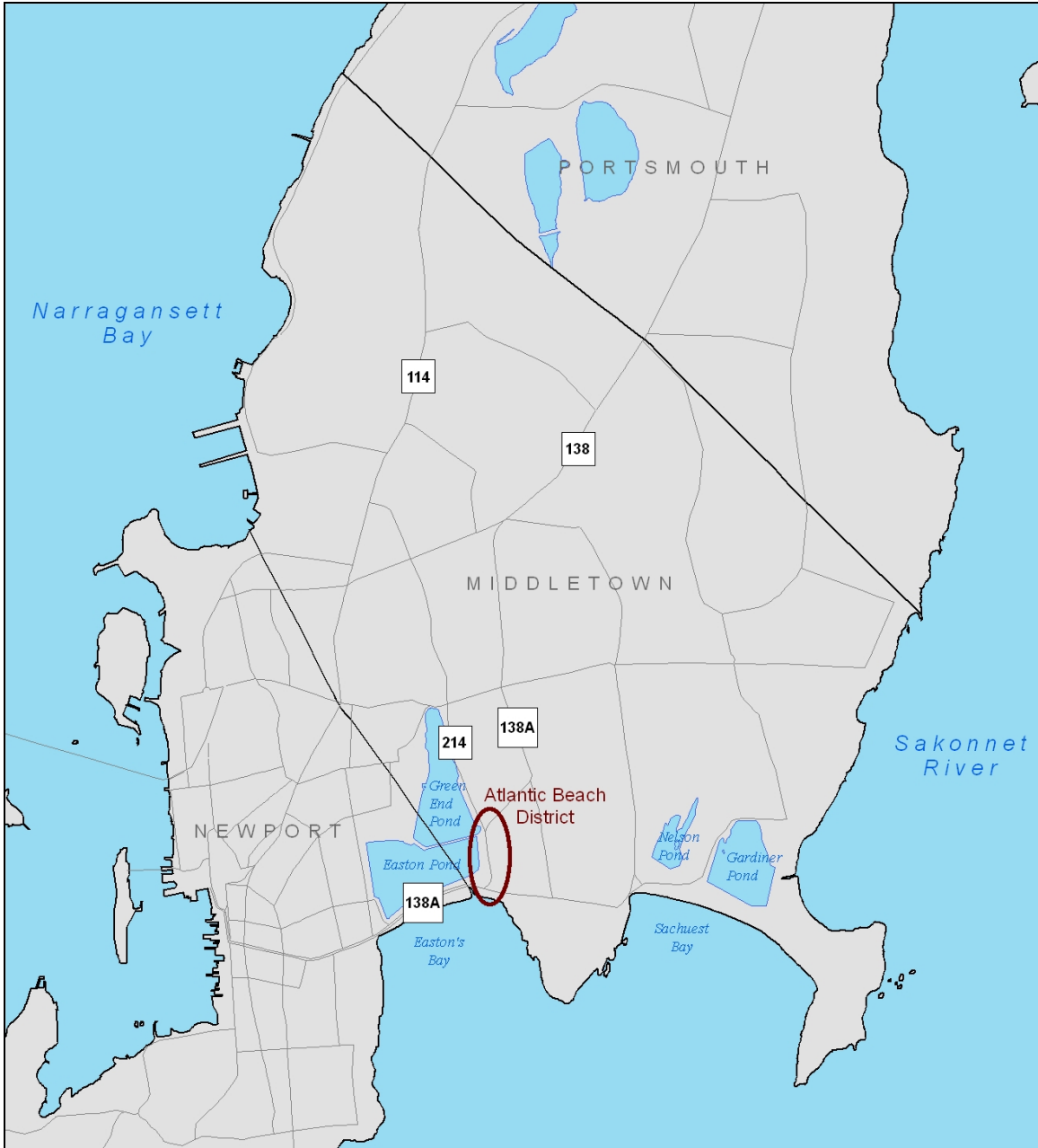
The project team conducted field visits of the area on December 12 and January 11. Field notes and photographs documented the visits.

Data Analysis

Findings

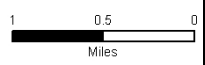
Base Maps

The base maps used for analysis are provided in the Appendix. The Atlantic Beach area is located in the southern end of Middletown, abutting the municipal boundary with Newport (Figure 1). The Atlantic Beach District begins in the north at the merge of Valley Road (Route 214) and Aquidneck Avenue (Route 138A) (Figure 2). North of this intersection is the Aquidneck Island Office Park. The district is bordered by Easton Pond, which is part of the Newport public water supply system, to the west.



ATLANTIC BEACH DISTRICT MASTER PLAN

**Figure 1
LOCATION MAP**



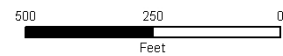
Data sources: Middletown GIS and RIGIS

Disclaimer: Some of the data herein was created by the Town of Middletown (the "Town") or acquired by the Town from other sources. The data are preliminary and have not been thoroughly reviewed, certified by a licensed engineer or surveyor, and/or accepted by the Town of Middletown. The Town, or the Town's other data providers shall not be liable to the user or subsequent transferees of said data for any damages including, without limitation, incidental or consequential damages, resulting from the user's use of or inability to use the original or modified data contained herein. All use of and reliance on this data, or modified data shall be at the user's sole risk and for general planning purposes only.



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**Figure 2
DISTRICT BOUNDARIES**



Data sources: Middletown GIS and RIGIS
Aerial: 2005

The pond is surrounded by a berm with a toe drain that floods periodically. There is a rough walking path along the top of the berm which can be reached by crossing the toe drain via makeshift plank bridges.

Purgatory Road crosses west/east along the southern end of the district from the municipal boundary. Memorial Boulevard extends from Newport to Crescent Road where the district ends. Route 138A continues via Purgatory Road from the north (Aquidneck Avenue) and west into Newport on Memorial Boulevard. Wave Avenue is completely within the district on the southwest end and Crescent Road enters into the district from Purgatory Road at the southeast. Briarwood and Newport Avenues are perpendicular to Aquidneck Avenue and connect to the residential neighborhood that borders the district to the east. Atlantic Beach is located at the southern end of the district where it abuts Easton's Beach (also known as First Beach).

Aquidneck Avenue is the major through-way of the district. It is a two-lane road with a posted speed limit of 25 miles per hour. The roadway has sidewalks that average about four-foot wide on both sides and there is no on-street parking. The right of way (ROW) ranges from 40 feet to 50 feet in width.

Memorial Boulevard from Newport into Middletown merges from two lanes into one at the town line, where it becomes Purgatory Road. Purgatory Road continues as a two lane road and has four-foot wide sidewalks from the town line to Aquidneck Avenue and no sidewalks beyond that. There is no parking allowed on Purgatory Road. The ROW ranges from 38 feet wide near Crescent Road to nearly 54 feet at the town line.

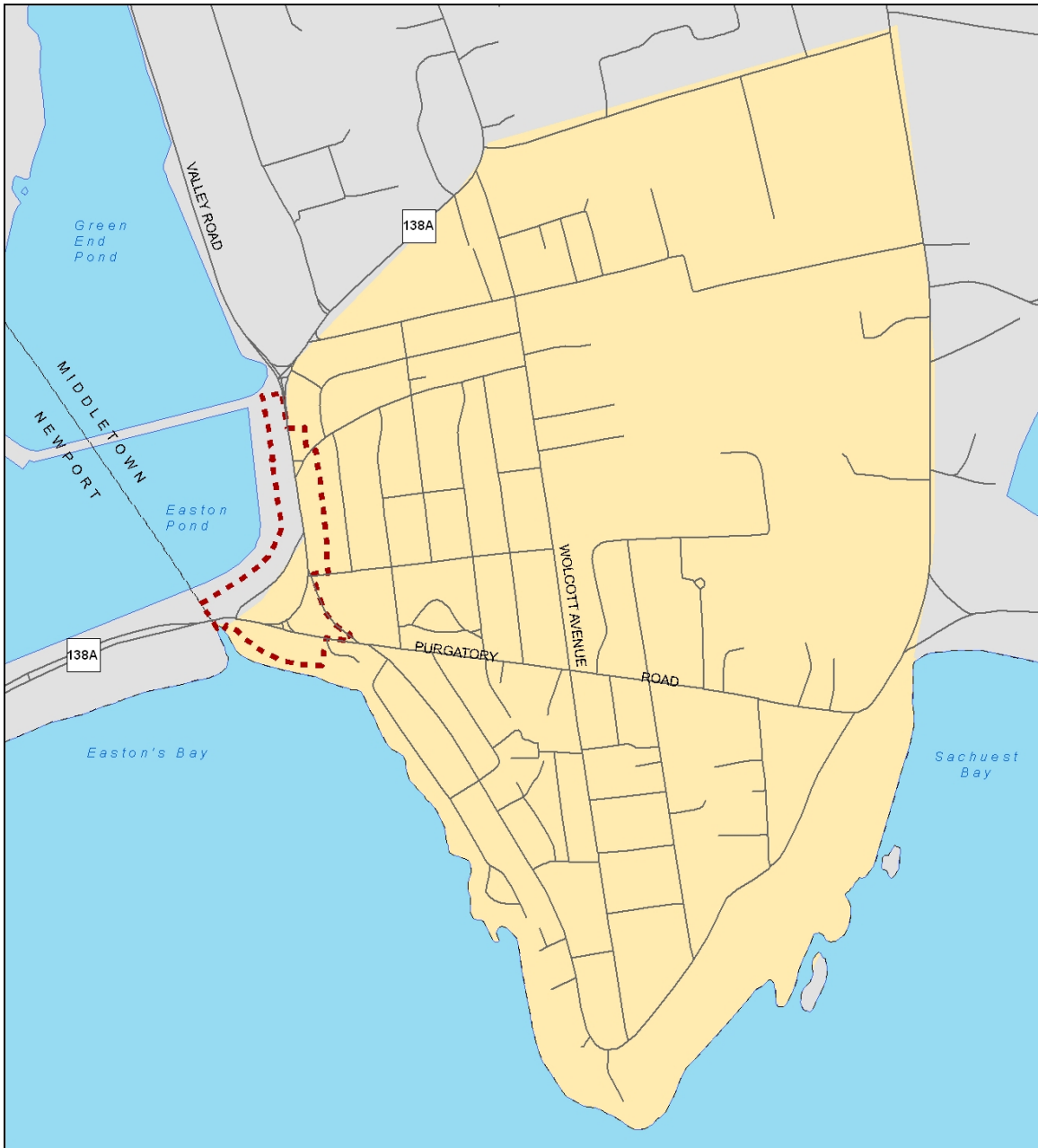
The intersection of Purgatory Road and Aquidneck Avenue is a signalized intersection. Westbound traffic on Purgatory Road is controlled by the signal and directed to Aquidneck Avenue northbound. Eastbound traffic on Purgatory Road is merged with traffic from Aquidneck Avenue southbound onto Purgatory Road.

Wave Avenue and Crescent Road are both two-lane roads without sidewalks. Neither has lane stripes and there is no parking allowed on either side. The ROW of Wave Avenue varies from 40 feet 52 feet wide. Crescent Road's ROW is narrower at 24 feet wide.

According to the 2000 Census, the population of the adjacent residential neighborhoods shown in Figure 3 was 2,314. There were 1,176 dwelling units, single and multi-family structures. Of these units, about half (52%) were owner-occupied (property owner lived on the property), one third (36%) were rented, and the remaining 12% were vacant. Vacant is defined by the US Census as either available for rent with no occupant, seasonal rental, or other condition where no one lived at the property.

The district is a mix of small businesses and residences. While the business types are diverse, the majority of the commercial space is occupied by restaurants and hotels/motels. Most have on-site parking. Other businesses include office space, service sector businesses (i.e. gasoline station, laundry) and retail/convenience. The residences within the district are also diverse in their occupancy, including owner-occupied residences, year-round rentals, seasonal rentals and seasonally occupied units.

The Atlantic Beach District is a coastal community. Most of the district is located within the 100-year floodplain and/or velocity zone, as delineated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) (1992). Natural features in the district and its vicinity include Easton Pond and the stream



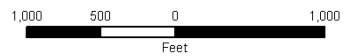
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**Figure 3
2000 CENSUS GEOGRAPHY**



Legend

- Roads
- ▭ Municipal Boundary
- Surface Water
- Census Tract 404 Block Group 003



Data sources: Middletown GIS and RIGIS

that abuts the berm, marine rocky shore and coastal beach. The RI Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) classifies the southwestern area of the district as barrier beach with a hard shoreline feature, identified as a revetment and bulkhead from Atlantic Beach to Easton’s Beach.

Regulations and Policies

Local

The district is zoned **Limited Business** (Figure 4). According to the Middletown Zoning Ordinance, the types of businesses permitted would be neighborhood-oriented, such as convenience or day-to-day shopping needs, and specialized business uses. Residential uses and hotels are also allowed by special use permit from the Middletown Zoning Board of Review. Most professional services and office-oriented businesses are allowed. Dimensional requirements for the Limited Business Zone are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Dimensions for Principal and Accessory Buildings in the Limited Business Zone

	MINIMUM LOT SIZE		MAXIMUM PERCENTAGE OF LOT TO BE OCCUPIED	MAXIMUM HEIGHT OF BUILDING		MINIMUM YARD DIMENSION			ACCESS. BUILDINGS MINIMUM DISTANCE IN FEET TO	
	AREA (S.F.)	WIDTH/FRONT-AGE (FT)	PRINCIPAL & ACCESS. BUILDINGS	PRIN. (FT.)	ACCESS (FT.)	FRONT (FT.)	SIDE (FT.)	REAR (FT.)	SIDE LOT LINES	REAR LOT LINES
Single-family dwelling	10,000	100	25%	35	15	10	15	30	20	10
Two-family dwelling	15,000	120	25%	35	15	10	20	30	20	10
Multi-family dwelling structure	40,000	150	30%	35	20	10	25	40	25	10
Miniature Golf, driving range, pitch & putt, etc.	80,000	200	20%	40	20	10	30	50	25	5
Small-scale Shopping center	20,000	120	25%	40	20	10	20	50	25	5

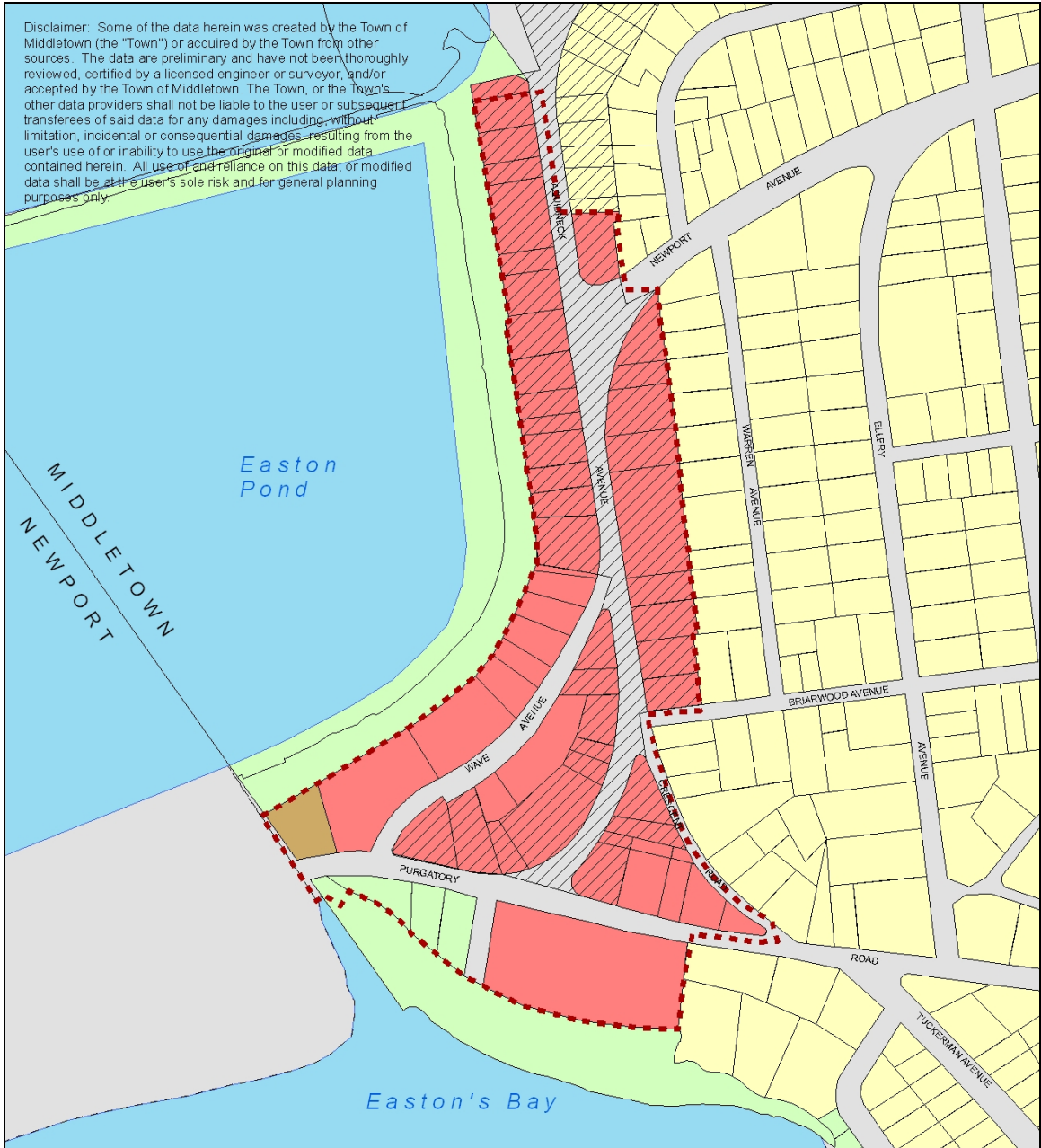
Source: Middletown Zoning Ordinance, October 30, 2006

The abutting neighborhood is zoned R-10, which is a medium-high density area. In this zone, minimum lot size for a single-family residence is 10,000 square feet, or 4.4 dwelling units per acre.

The Atlantic Beach District is also contained within a **Traffic Sensitive District** (TSD). The Town has established the TSD for the following purposes:

- To facilitate movement of traffic along major roadways in a safe and orderly manner
- To reduce the number and increase the spacing of driveways which may disrupt traffic flow
- To reduce infringement on the rights of the public to travel roadways in a safe manner, while at the same time providing for adequate ingress and egress to properties
- To protect public safety along major thoroughfares where accidents have frequently occurred.

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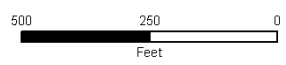
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**Figure 4
ZONING**



Legend

- Surface Water
- Approximate parcel boundaries
- Atlantic Beach District
- Limited Business
- Open Space
- Public
- High Density Residential (R-10)
- Traffic Sensitive District



Data sources: Middletown GIS and RIGIS

The minimum lot frontage in the TSD is to be 300 feet and only one driveway or curb cut per original lot (should lots be merged) is permitted.

The **Sign Ordinance** outlines what signs are permitted and sets standards for their appearance. Being in a TSD also imposes specific requirements and dimensional standards for signs for the Atlantic Beach District (Table 2). Signs are required to be at a smaller scale, made of wood or metal, and may have no more than three colors. Signs with interior lighting are prohibited.

Table 2. Dimensional Standards for Signs in the Limited Business District

FREESTANDING POLE SIGNS	
Height (maximum feet)	12
Area (maximum square feet)	12
Ground Clearance (minimum feet)	7
OTHER FREESTANDING SIGNS	
Height (maximum feet)	4
Area (maximum square feet)	24
Ground Clearance (minimum feet)	0

Source: Middletown Zoning Ordinance, October 30, 2006

The Town of Middletown has established **Commercial Development Design Standards** that apply town-wide. The local zoning ordinance outlines the objectives of the town with regards to site design (layout, parking, circulation, utilities, exterior lighting and infrastructure), architecture (building elements and materials), landscaping (plantings, trees, screening, buffers and views), environmental impacts and signage.

The **Off-Street Parking and Loading Ordinance** also affects businesses within the district by establishing the allowable number of off-street parking and loading facilities by business type (Table 3). This ordinance sets standards for these improvements, including location, minimum and maximum number of parking spaces, and dimensional requirements. Typical requirements that would apply to the Atlantic Beach District, based on the existing land uses, would be the following:

Table 3. Minimum and Maximum Off-Street Parking Requirements for Selected Land Uses

Type of Use	Minimum Parking Spaces Required
Gas Station/Mini Mart	1 space for each employee plus 4 fore each service bay
Restaurants, taverns, etc.	1 space for each 3 persons of total capacity
Small Scale Shopping Center	3 for each 1,000 sf of gross leasable floor area
General Retail	4 spaces for each 1,000 sf of gross leasable floor area
Offices (professional services)	3 for each 1,000 sf of gross leasable floor area
Hotel/Motel with restaurant/meeting room	5 spaces plus 1 space per unit
Hotel/Motel only	4 spaces plus 1 per unit
Residential Dwelling	2 spaces per dwelling

Source: Middletown Zoning Ordinance, October 30, 2006

As previously stated, much of the Atlantic Beach District is located in the 100-year floodplain and parts are in the velocity zone. These areas are subject to regulations under the town's **Floodplain Ordinance**. The ordinance requires new development and substantial improvements to meet the building inspector's requirements for building construction. The lowest occupied floor, including the basement, must be above the level of the base flood elevation or the structure must be flood-proofed according to the Rhode Island State Building Code. In the Atlantic Beach area, the base flood elevation ranges from 13 to 19 feet above mean sea level (NGVD) in the southern and western portions of the district (Figure 5). In general, the land surface ranges in elevation from sea level at the beach to roughly 20 feet above sea level at the northern limits. Since the average elevation within the district is about 10 feet, or 3 to 9 feet below 100 year flood elevation, most new structures must have elevated first floors.

State Jurisdiction

Aquidneck Avenue is a state road designated Route 138A. Therefore, any proposed improvements or changes on the road ROW will require participation by **Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT)** for implementation, both administratively and financially. RIDOT has expressed a willingness to support municipalities that develop master plans for a roadways. While no specific improvements are presently proposed within Atlantic Beach, it is reasonable to assume that, within the next 20 years, RIDOT will undertake roadway improvements in the area. Having a District highway plan can assist RIDOT in its decision-making process; provide guidance and show that the town is proactive. For example, RIDOT can consult a master plan when approving Physical Alteration Permits, which are required when a new curb cut is proposed on a state roadway. Additionally, RIDOT must also ensure that sidewalks on state roadways are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). To be ADA compliant, sidewalks must at least provide a minimum width free of obstructions and be equipped with curb ramps. Sidewalk reconstruction within the District will be necessary to provide ADA compliance.

Environmentally, the Atlantic Beach District falls within jurisdiction of the Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) and the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC). Projects affecting inland wetlands are reviewed and approved by RIDEM. Projects that may affect wetlands in the vicinity of the coast are reviewed and approved by CRMC. The boundary between CRMC and RIDEM jurisdiction, as show in Figure 6, follows Aquidneck Avenue from Valley Road south, then Crescent Road to the southeast. Projects that may affect coastal features, shown in Figure 7, and all projects that are within 200 feet of a coastal feature, must be reviewed and approved by CRMC. CRMC reviews projects for their impacts on wetlands, natural resources, water-dependent uses in the area, and public access to the coast.

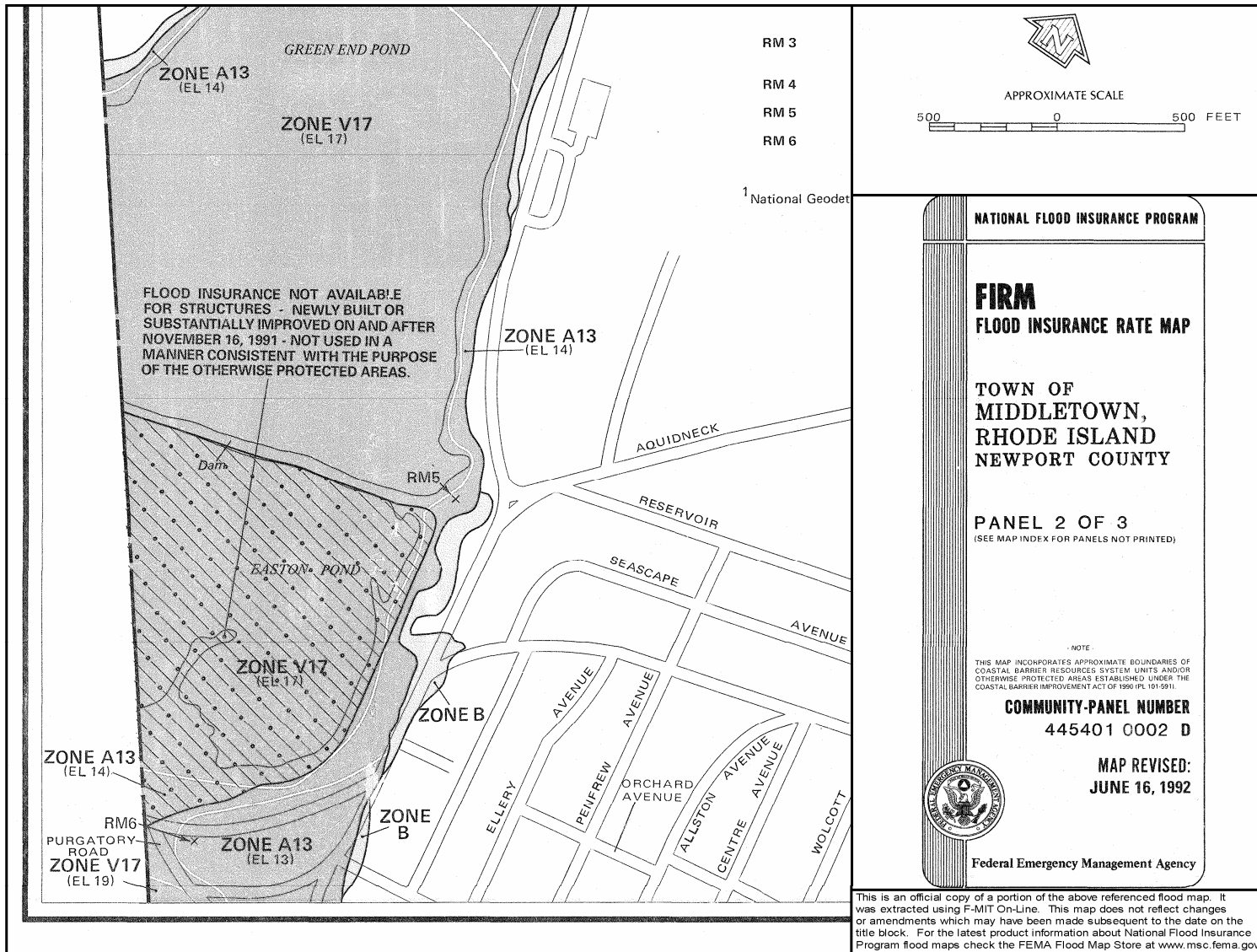


Figure 5. FEMA FIRM, June 16, 1992

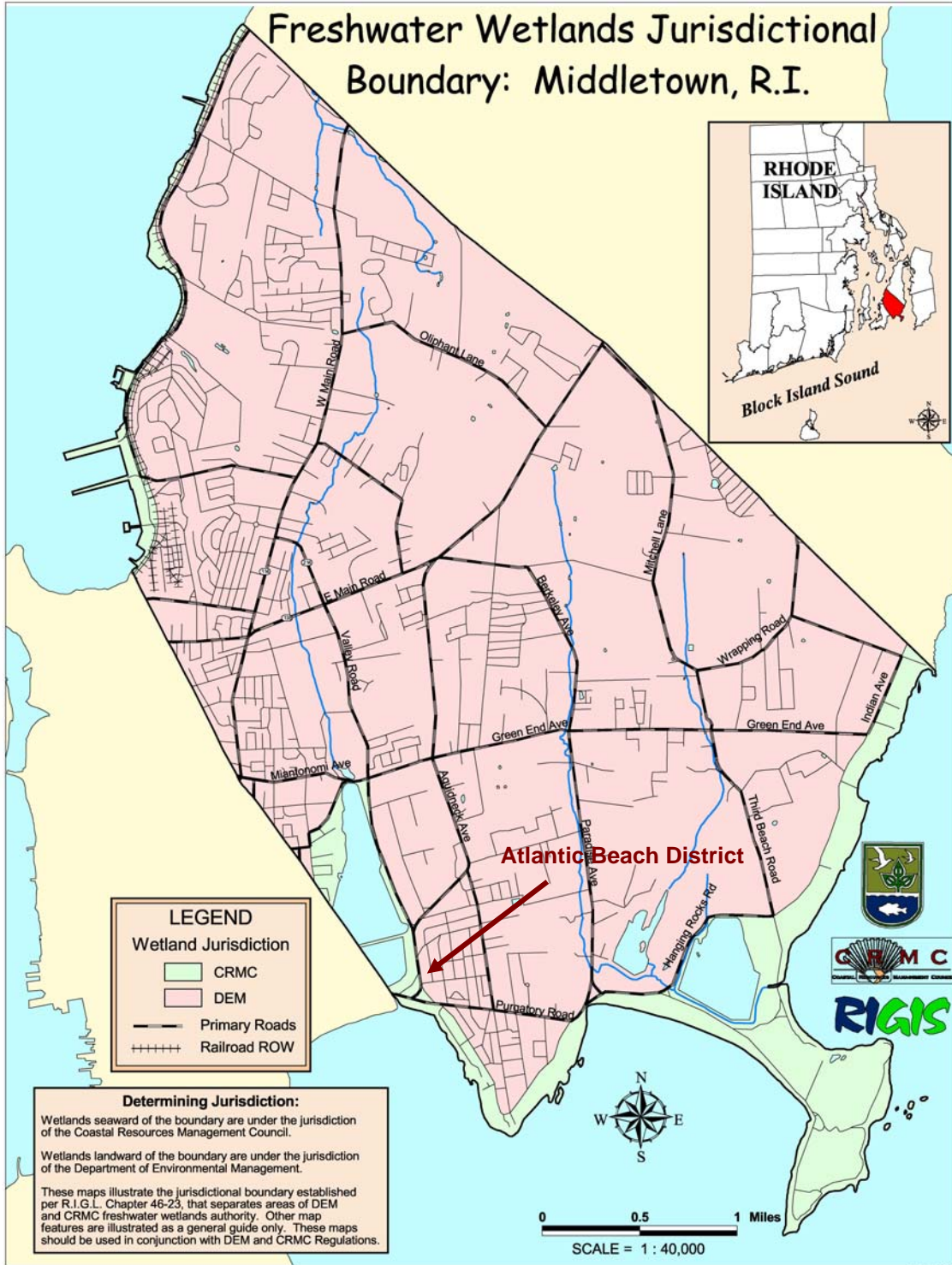
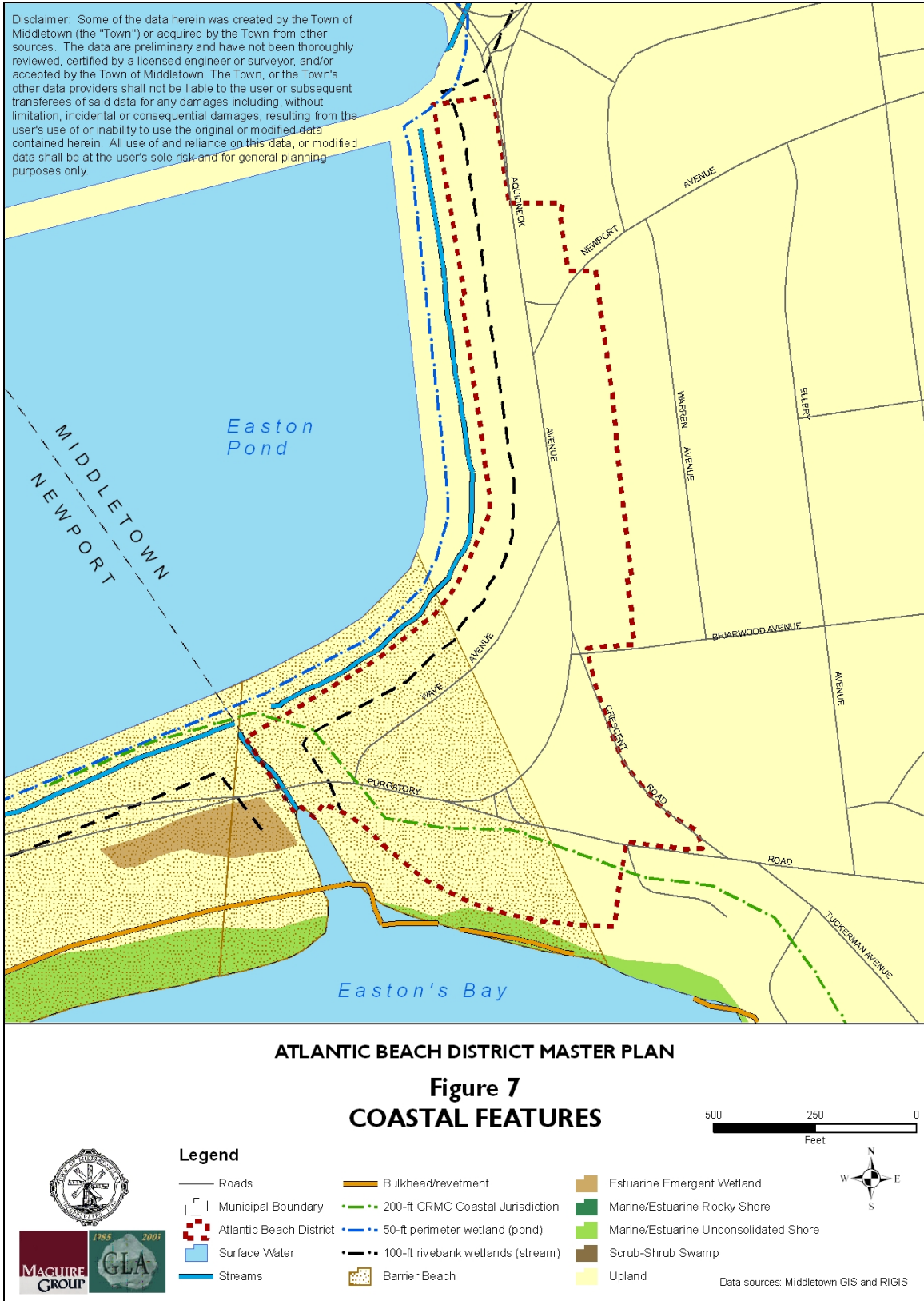


Figure 6. Freshwater Wetlands Jurisdictional Boundary between CRMC and RIDEM in Middletown



Public Input

A public workshop was held to solicit public involvement in the development of the Master Plan. In preparation for the public workshop, properties located within the district boundaries received a letter introducing the study and letting them know that they would be receiving a phone call from the hired consultant to discuss the issues of the Atlantic Beach area. The letter also invited them to contact the hired consultant themselves, if they chose to. Numerous business and property owners were reached and several telephone and personal interviews were conducted. As previously mentioned, representatives from the City of Newport and the Newport County Chamber of Commerce were also contacted. The Newport Daily News also ran a story to publicize the event on February 22, 2007

The first public workshop was held on February 28, 2007 with approximately 60 attendees representing the business and residential property owners within the district and the adjacent neighborhoods. There were also representatives from the City of Newport (Planning Department) and the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission. Maguire Group Inc. and Gates Leighton and Associates gave a brief presentation to explain the goals and objectives of the master plan study, the delineated boundaries of the Atlantic Beach District, and an overview of the public input activities. This was followed by an open floor discussion by attendees to state their views of the study and district in front of the larger group. Then the participants were asked to visit four stations set up at each corner of the room.

Station 1: “This place right here”

Participants were asked to identify specific master plan issues and mark them on a 22” x 36” printed aerial photograph of the district. Specific questions to participants focused on movement through the area (traffic, pedestrians and bicycles), land uses that existed and were needed, and focal points. Viewing the aerial photograph of the district gave participants a different perspective of the area. Marking the maps as a group allowed for discussion of issues and possible solutions that would be considered acceptable by the public.

Station 2: “Spend \$1 Million”

Participants were asked assign dollar amounts, or percentages of a total of one million dollars to areas where improvements should be made in the district. A pre-defined list was provided that included the focus areas of the study and additional space was provided to allow participants to write in their own suggestions.

Station 3: “Other Places”

Participants were asked to name other places they have visited that they felt the Atlantic Beach District could be like or is currently similar to. They were also asked about building styles they prefer, for example which buildings they liked or did not like in the district, in town or on Aquidneck Island. Again, this discussion among the group allowed for dialogue between participants.

Station 4: “Before and After”

Participants were asked to sketch something within the district they felt needed improvement on one side of a paper. They were then asked to draw a sketch showing how they felt it could be improved on the other. Participants were then asked to describe their sketches to the facilitator and to the group at the station. The group then discussed the concepts provided.

Summary

The input received from the public workshop was two-fold. First, and most importantly, it provides public involvement, which is essential in the planning process. Perceptions and opinions of the area, both good and bad, assist in the development of concepts and recommendations. Secondly, it either confirmed or negated the issues identified in the field. What one person sees as an impediment may be an asset to another.

As with most public opinion sessions, there were some contradictory views presented and a few statements were of questionable veracity or were outside the scope of this study. Overall, however, the participants were eager to contribute and provided excellent information that will prove invaluable in developing a Master Plan for the District. Statements from the workshop are provided here as a record of the meeting.

Access Management

- Access to residences in the district needs to be maintained.

Aesthetics/Landscaping

- There needs to be more landscaping, specifically at the intersection of Valley Road and Aquidneck Avenue.
- Utilities should be put underground.
- The area needs more elements to make it attractive.
- Landscaping should screen parked cars.

Building and Site Design

- Maintain the views and vistas of the water by leaving the spaces between buildings (Aquidneck Avenue to Easton Pond) (small scale).
- Keep buildings set back from the sidewalk.
- Public safety issues need to be considered in building placement and design.
- The new hotels have established a theme with their scale and style and they should be used as references.
- The shingle style is attractive and appropriate for the area.

Circulation/Traffic

- Traffic volume was not specifically seen as a major issue in the area, but circulation problems were reported.
- Heavy traffic is typically seen fewer days as the “season” gets shorter – June through August and mostly on the weekends.
- Crescent Road is used as a short cut to avoid the light at Aquidneck Avenue.
- It is difficult to make a left onto Aquidneck Avenue from Briarwood Avenue.

- Wave Avenue is also used to avoid the light at Aquidneck Avenue.
- The traffic lane changes need to be addressed before considering more businesses.
- Maybe Wave Avenue should be one-way south and Aquidneck Avenue should be one-way north.
- Do away with the merge from Memorial Boulevard to Purgatory Road.
- Make Wave Avenue the through street and Aquidneck Avenue pedestrian only.
- Speeding is an issue on Wave Avenue.
- There was discussion of running a shuttle from the area to Newport – doesn't have to necessarily be RIPTA, availability of Newport Trolley.
- Wave Avenue should be more perpendicular to Aquidneck Avenue.
- Make the intersection of Aquidneck Avenue and Purgatory Road more of a T-intersection with a right turn only lane from the west.
- When traffic is heavy on Aquidneck Avenue, people cut through the neighborhood, using Wolcott or Elery Avenues.

Land Uses

- Weekly rentals in the adjacent neighborhood are concentrated along Purgatory Road and in the Easton's Point neighborhood.
- There need to be hotels that can accommodate longer stays.
- More hotels are not needed.

Master Plan Document and Preparation

- Participants were concerned that eminent domain might be used to implement the master plan and did not favor use of eminent domain in the District.
- Where will the money come from to implement the plan?
- What is the timeframe to develop the plan?
- The study is too focused because the area is a pivotal point between several areas in Middletown, almost like a gateway. This role needs to be expanded.
- How realistic can our expectations be that the plan will be implemented?
- The master plan needs to have implementation strategies.

Other comments

- Local hotel owners should send patrons to restaurants in the area.
- Local hotel owners should also encourage their patrons to leave their cars by taking cabs into Newport or by walking to local businesses.

Parking

- Aquidneck School on Reservoir Avenue is used as parking for the beach and bars/restaurants in the area.
- New businesses will not be attracted to the area if there is no parking.
- Some suggested parking garages others did not want them considered.
- Memorial Boulevard in Newport should be narrowed to two lanes and the other two lanes on the northerly side abutting the pond should be parking lot.
- The Town should purchase properties behind commercial areas to provide parking.

- Business owners tell their employees to park in the neighborhoods and there is little enforcement of existing parking regulations. Would a shuttle bus be appropriate?
- Questions were raised if parking could be shared with Newport at Easton's Beach.

Public Spaces

- Accurate locations of public rights-of-way in the area needed to be clearly marked.
- Fix Dunlap-Wheeler Park.
- There needs to be a footbridge from Easton's Beach parking lot to Dunlap-Wheeler Park.
- Make parking at Dunlap-Wheeler Park for residents only.

Signage

- There needs to be better signage on Memorial Boulevard into Middletown as the roadway goes from two lanes into one.
- Existing traffic signing is ineffective – people are not yielding on Purgatory Road and it is unclear that Rt 138A continues north.
- Traveling south of Aquidneck Avenue north of the district, traffic is directed through the district and downtown Newport to access the Newport Bridge.
- A signage ordinance for the district would bring a sense of place. Malibu was mentioned as an example.

Walkability/Pedestrians

- The area should be enjoyed by the neighborhood by making it easier to walk around and safer.
- There needs to be more pedestrian links between the neighborhood and Aquidneck Avenue.
- The sidewalks are not wide enough and how do you create more space to make them wider.
- Put a walkway on the berm around Easton Pond.
- It is difficult for pedestrians to cross at crosswalks because cars do not stop.
- It is difficult to cross at the Aquidneck Island/Purgatory Road light.
- The sidewalks are in horrible condition.
- The crosswalk in front of Easton's Point Pub is too dark at night.
- Crosswalks should stand out more, textured, etc.

Water Quality

- Will the water quality issue be addressed by the time this study is done?
- Beach contamination needs to be addressed.
- Cover or reroute the pond overflow.
- Pipe the overflow underground into the ocean.

Participants in the public workshop were sincere and helpful. They were passionate about their concerns and seemed clearly able to articulate what they felt defined the District as a place. There was a lot of agreement on the issues at the workshop even though the concepts presented and the solutions proposed varied widely.

Conclusions

The Atlantic Beach District serves the seasonal visitors to the area and the abutting residential neighborhoods in two different ways. Existing businesses, such as the hotels, provide an atmosphere for tourists who want to experience a beach neighborhood and low-key vacation. Many business owners know each other and some proprietors recommend other establishments in the area, so there is a sense of an informal business community within the district. Residences frequent local businesses as well, helping to sustain them in the off season. During the public workshop, there was a sense that the area has the basis to be a thriving commercial area, and the businesses and residences want to see more attention paid to improving circulation, both for pedestrians and traffic, and improving aesthetics and landscaping. Equally important, people want to maintain views of Easton Pond and the beaches and clearly define links and access to them. These are the natural features that give this area a sense of place and should be used as a stepping-stone in the development of conceptual designs.

Table 4 provides a summary of the key findings of the information gathering and analysis phase of the Atlantic Beach District Master Plan study.

Table 4. Information Gathering and Analysis Summary

Focus Area	Existing Conditions	Issues of Concern
Congestion and Traffic Flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aquidneck Avenue is a state roadway (Rt 138A). ▪ Local roadways in the district are Crescent Road and Wave Avenue ▪ Overlay zone: Traffic Sensitive District (TSD) ▪ Purgatory Road from Newport (Memorial Boulevard), two lanes into one 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Crescent Road, Briarwood and Aquidneck Avenues meet awkwardly ▪ Crescent Road used as a cut-thru street to avoid light at Purgatory Road and Aquidneck Avenue ▪ Wave Avenue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A cut-thru street to avoid Aquidneck Avenue/Purgatory Road light ○ At an angle with Purgatory Road ○ Speeding ▪ Deliveries to businesses need to be considered ▪ The light at Aquidneck Avenue and Purgatory Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lane identification for the left turn from Aquidneck to Purgatory can be unclear ○ Traffic on Purgatory traveling eastbound does not merge with traffic from Aquidneck Avenue (left turn) ▪ Neighborhood streets are used to avoid intersection of Aquidneck Avenue and Purgatory Road when traffic is heavy ▪ Signing directing traffic is unclear
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parking exists for individual businesses ▪ No on-street parking on any streets within the area ▪ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parking on lawns and sidewalks ▪ Some businesses have limited parking to none ▪ In the summer, Aquidneck School on Reservoir Avenue is used for parking (grass area/athletic fields) ▪ Business employees parking on neighborhood streets ▪ Enforcement of existing parking regulations
Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sidewalks along Purgatory Road to Aquidneck Avenue, along Aquidneck Avenue to Valley Road ▪ No sidewalks on Wave Avenue and Crescent Road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encroachment of buildings into sidewalk blocks “view corridor” and limits width of sidewalk significantly ▪ Sidewalks are not ADA compliant (curbs, width) ▪ In some locations no buffer/clear definition between pedestrian and car spaces (gas station, parking lots) ▪ Sidewalks need to be clearly defined ▪ Crosswalks are not yielded to, not very well light at night
Land uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Zoned for Limited Business and abuts R ▪ Mix of uses – hotels, restaurants, limited retail, residences ▪ Abuts residential neighborhoods ▪ Beaches – Atlantic and Easton’s (First) ▪ Easton Pond ▪ Dunlap-Wheeler Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The park can be used to a greater advantage ▪ The public access points need to be clearly defined ▪ The public has an interest in making use of the berm around Easton Pond as a public ROW

Focus Area	Existing Conditions	Issues of Concern
Building Design, Signs, and Landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Newly built structures have a similar style – wood-shingled exteriors reminiscent of colonial New England ▪ Mix of building styles ▪ Adopt-a-spot is maintained locally ▪ Some businesses and residences have landscaping (shrubbery, plantings) ▪ Some business signs are internally light and non-conforming – grandfathered; also greater height 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As buildings are renovated, they need to incorporate similar design elements ▪ Landscaping elements need to be introduced ▪ Views of the pond and bay need to be maintained as new developments are proposed
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lighting is “cobra-style,” overhead on utilities poles (west side of Aquidneck Avenue) ▪ Mailboxes are within sidewalk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No trash receptacles ▪ Lighting is for car traffic and not pedestrians

Next Phase

The next phase in developing the Atlantic Beach District Master Plan is the assemblage of preliminary concepts based on the vision, goals, field observations and public input. Ideas from the public will be considered and reviewed for feasibility in this phase, including parking strategies, the realignment of roadways, traffic circulation, pedestrian links and a walking path on the berm abutting Easton Pond. Proposed concepts will be reviewed with the Middletown Planning Board prior to presentation to the public for comment. It is anticipated that this meeting will provide additional comments for revisions and final document preparation.