



Request for Information:

West Main/Coddington Redevelopment Area

March 9, 2020

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1. Introduction

Project Notice

The Town of Middletown, Rhode Island (“the Town”) is issuing a Request for Information (RFI) to seek information from potential developers interested in a mixed development opportunity on a 15.27-acre site known as the West Main/Coddington Development Center (Center), located on the west side of West Main Road (Route 114).

Through this RFI, Middletown seeks to engage one or more developers with exceptional experience and capability to share their concepts for transforming the Center into a vibrant, attractive, mixed-use area, capitalizing on its relatively dense development pattern, available land under public ownership, good transportation access, and available utilities.

2. Context: About Middletown

Middletown is located on vibrant Aquidneck Island, between the communities of Newport and Portsmouth. Bounded by the Narragansett Bay on the west, the Sakonnet River on the east, and Rhode Island Sound on the south, Middletown is an ocean community with many seaside amenities, mild winters, and comfortable summers. Middletown is semi-agricultural with a diverse landscape, delicate sand dunes broken up by a partially rocky coastline, and snow white beaches.

Middletown’s excellent highways and bridges place the community in a favorable location, and the Town is easily accessible from nearby Massachusetts and local Rhode Island municipalities. It is an attractive location for both industry and residence, with excellent land available for industrial development. A diverse labor force and convenient transportation facilities further encourage business development.¹

See Appendix B for detailed demographic data for the tracts surrounding West Main/Coddington, Middletown, Newport County, and Rhode Island.

¹ <https://edc.middletownri.com/town-facts/>

3. Development Opportunity Description: The Middletown Advantage

3.1 Highlights of the Development Opportunity

Middletown is located in Newport County, RI and is in the heart of the Greater Newport region and is poised to attract investment due to its stable conditions and increasing demand to enhance facilities for the benefit of existing residents and the attraction of new residents. With over seven million tourists visiting the region this year, the Center property is a high value investment opportunity.

Highlights of the West Main/Coddington site include:

- **High Visibility:** Located at the intersection of two prominent roads, the Center offers high visibility and easy access.
- **Available Infrastructure:** Pre-existing available utilities on the site and a strong transportation infrastructure in the region make the Center easily accessible and ready for development.
- **Land Under Public Ownership:** All existing properties are currently under control of the Town, and would not need to be parceled out.
- **Relatively Dense Development Pattern:** The community has a strong preference for mixed-use development, and the already dense development pattern of the area sets a positive precedent for mixed-use.

3.2 Community and Regional Trends

Local Market Specializations and Industry Clusters

Middletown boasts a large concentration of jobs in the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services industry, with nearly a quarter of all private jobs in this sector. Other industries highly concentrated in Middletown are related to the tourism industry, with 16% of private jobs in Accommodation and Food Services and 14% in Retail Trade. An additional 12% of jobs in Middletown are in the Health Care and Social Assistance industry.²

The largest employer in Middletown and the surrounding area is the Naval Station, which accounted for 16,686 jobs in Newport County in 2015.³ The Naval Station Newport

² Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, 2018 Annual

³ <https://commerceri.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/MilitaryBaseandInstallations.pdf>

(NAVSTA Newport), located throughout Newport County, is the largest Department of Defense presence in the state or Rhode Island. NAVSTA provides enormous economic impacts – “according to a recent study from the Southeastern New England Defense Industry Alliance, the Defense Cluster, which includes jobs directly attributed to the facility, and those that support it, was responsible for 29,196 jobs, which represents 6.2 percent of total employment based in Rhode Island.”⁴

Retail and Business Real Estate

There are currently three industrial and corporate parks located in Middletown: Aquidneck Corporate Park, Newport Corporate Park, and Enterprise Center. Real estate brokers and regional businesses have noted the need for additional and flexible office space. Middletown is experiencing challenges similar to other regions as large format retail developments see store closings and vacancies, while smaller stores and boutiques seem to be flourishing. While additional services for potential residents of the development and nearby neighborhoods would be welcome, “big box” retail is not a desirable use of the space.

Capacity for Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Efforts at innovation-based economic development in the County include Innovate Newport,⁵ a coworking space in Newport designed to spark innovation and build community, and 401 Tech Bridge,⁶ a partnership between the Navy and the State to allow for day-to-day collaboration with industry and academia. Additionally, there are numerous innovation incentives at the state level – for both planning and implementation – encouraging companies to work together to problem-solve, develop talent, and share ideas.⁷

Small business lending in Newport County is trending upward, with lending historically surpassing Rhode Island and the United States. From 2010 to 2017, Newport County had \$465 million in small business loans.

State and Local Incentives

Rhode Island offers a number of incentives in the form of tax credits, including the “Qualified Jobs Incentive” tax credit, “Rebuild Rhode Island” tax credit, and tax increment financing.⁸

⁴ <https://www.connectgreaternewport.com/workforceandindustry>

⁵ <http://innovateneport.org/about/>

⁶ https://www.secnav.navy.mil/aqility/Pages/tb_401.aspx

⁷ <https://commerceri.com/incentives/innovation-incentives/>

⁸ <https://commerceri.com/incentives/tax-credits-and-financing/>

Additionally, Middletown offers a tax incentive program for new businesses and business expansion in the Town of Middletown. Businesses adding jobs in Middletown, constructing new buildings, or making significant investments in existing buildings are eligible.⁹

Other Recent and Proposed Developments:

- **Hotels:** An influx of hotel development has found its way to Newport County recently, with new properties, including the re-branded Wyndham Newport in Middletown, providing support for the region’s strong tourism industry. In the high season, hotel occupancy in Newport tops 90 percent.¹⁰
- **Newport Grand Casino:** The Rhode Island-based Carpionato Group purchased the shuttered Newport Grand Casino last year, with plans to redevelop the 23-acre site into mixed-use office space, housing, retail, and hotels. The site is only about two miles from the West Main/Coddington Center.¹¹
- **Former Benny’s Site:** Just a little over a mile up the road from the West Main/Coddington site, the Carpionato Group has also purchased the former Benny’s Home and Auto Store, with plans to redevelop into space for a BayCoast Bank and a Riverhead Building Supply, ultimately attracting more retailers to West Main.¹²
- **Newport Pell Bridge:** Development plans are underway to reconfigure the Pell Bridge Interchange. The current proposal would free up 20-30 acres for future development in Newport’s north end, potentially for use as an “Innovation District.” Goals for the project also include increasing connectivity between and within the Island, accommodating alternative transportation, and reducing traffic congestion.

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Infrastructure and Assets

Strong transportation infrastructure is in place in the region, with options for rail, ferry, car, and air travel.¹⁴ Public transportation is available in Middletown via the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA), with a bus stop on West Main adjacent to the site, making it a particularly accessible area.

⁹ <https://edc.middletownri.com/middletown-business-incentives/>

¹⁰ <https://www.newportri.com/special/20190520/more-hotels-are-coming-to-newport-but-who-will-fill-them>

¹¹ <https://turnto10.com/news/local/developer-to-unveil-100m-plan-for-newport-grand>

¹² <https://www.newportri.com/news/20190813/plan-for-former-bennys-location-in-middletown-taking-shape>

¹³ <http://www.pellbridge-ea.com/default.asp>

¹⁴ <https://commerceri.com/advantages/transportation-infrastructure/>

4. Subject Area and Existing Conditions

4.1 The Site/Location

The West Main/Coddington Development Center is approximately 15.27 acres, located on the west side of West Main Road (Route 114). The site consists of four publicly owned parcels that are targeted for potential redevelopment (shaded in yellow in image 1 below). These parcels include:

- 1) **Former Navy Lodge:** 3.24 acres at the corner of West Main Road and Coddington Highway, currently vacant following demolition in 2004. The site is a level grass field with some existing mature trees along the street frontages.
- 2) **West Main Road Recreation Complex:** 4.21 acres, containing a baseball diamond (Pottsy Field), open play fields, a basketball court, and a parking lot.
- 3) **Middletown Public Library:** 2.79 acres, with a single one-story library building, parking, and community gardens. The library is in the process of evaluating a move to a new site.
- 4) **Former JFK Elementary School:** 5.03 acres, containing two connected one-story structures with parking areas and playground. While the school ceased to function as an elementary school in 2009, it is currently used for adult education and houses Newport early childhood classes, which are scheduled to end in 2020.

The Navy Lodge Site has approximately 370' of frontage along Coddington Highway and approximately 418' along West Main Road. The rest of the Center is mostly accessed from West Main Road with two driveways serving the John F. Kennedy School, one driveway serving the Town Library, and one driveway that is shared between the library and recreation area.

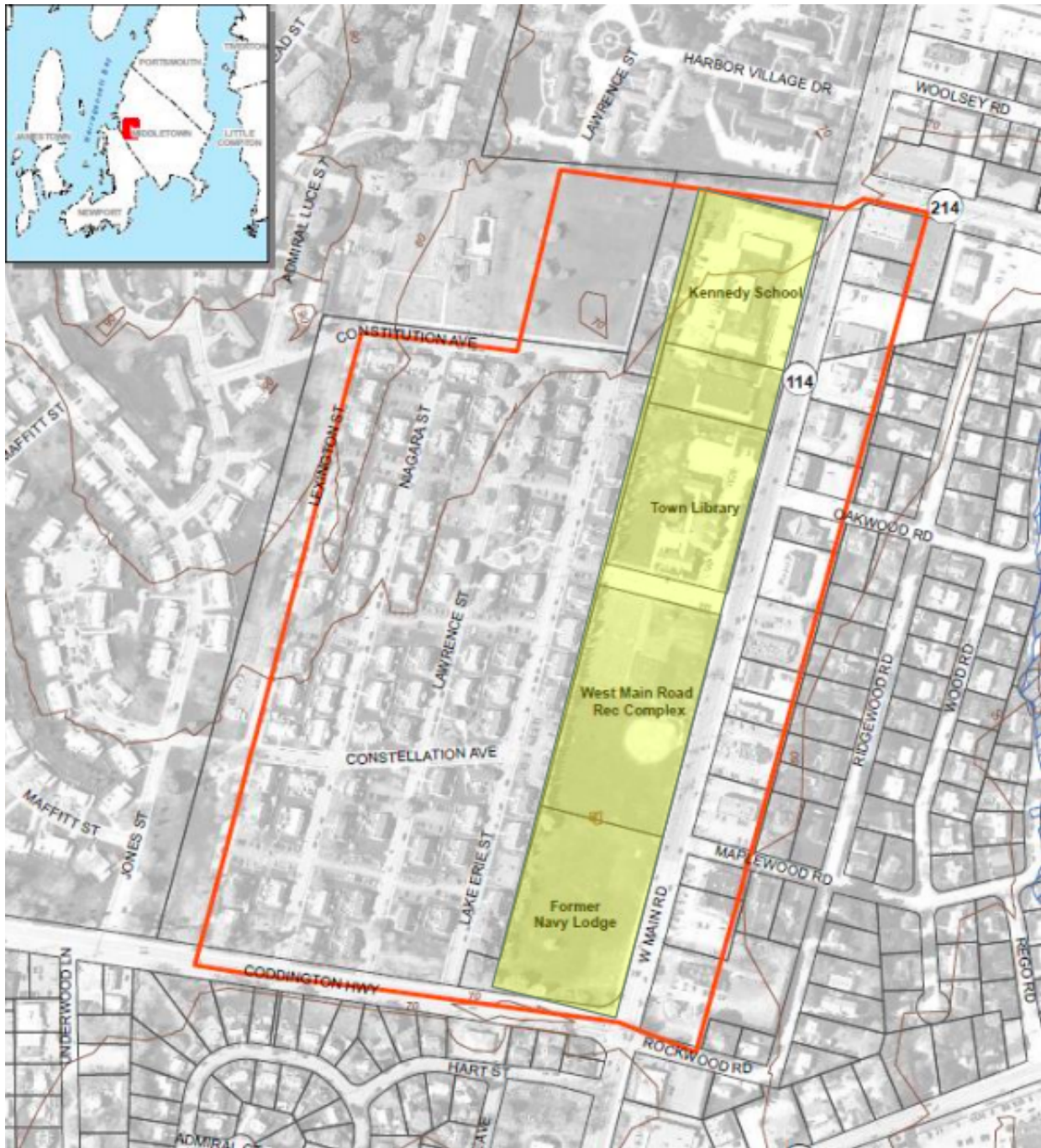


Image 1: The Site | Source: [Matrix Design Group in 2014](#)



Image 2: The Site | Source: Town of Middletown GIS and [Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Inc.](#)

Top: Looking northeast along West Main Road; Bottom left to right: J.F.K. Elementary School, Middletown Public Library, West Main Road Recreation Complex, Former Navy Lodge Property

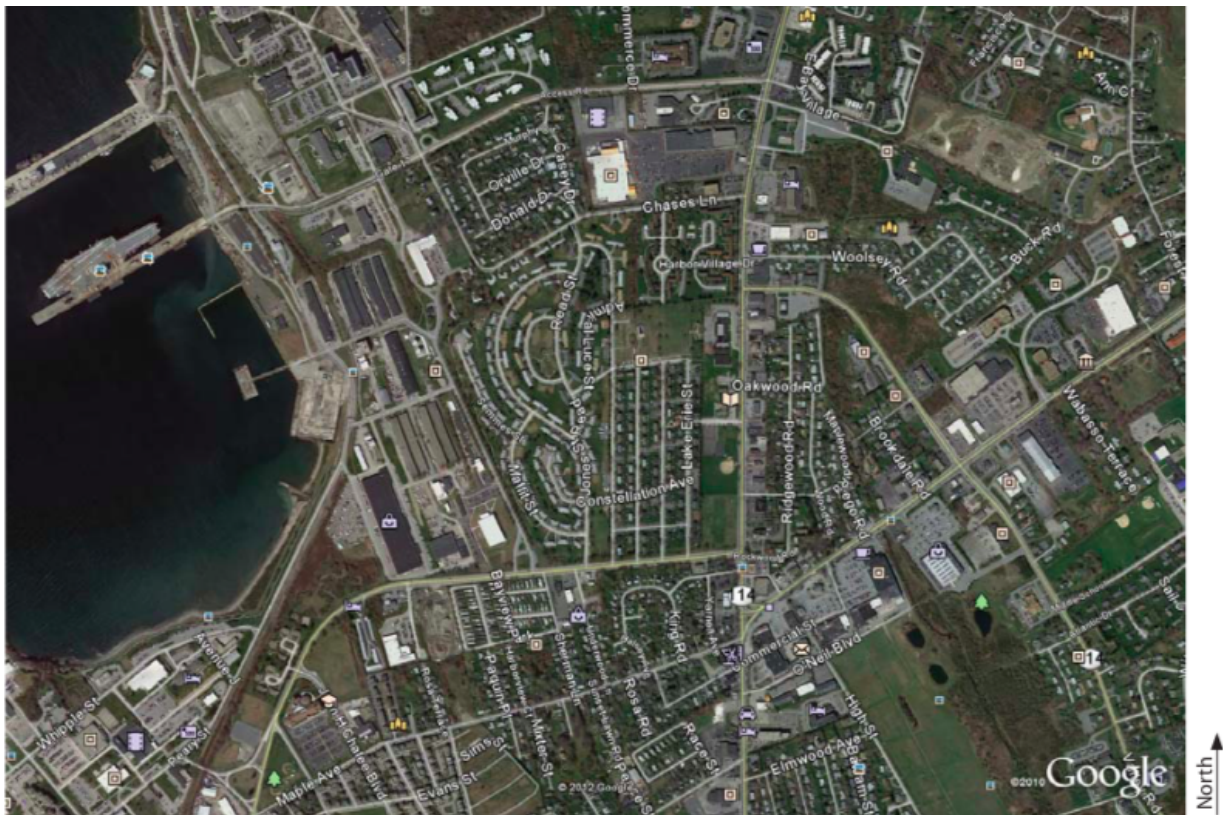


Image 3: Site Vicinity | Source: [Matrix Design Group in 2014](#)

4.2 Land Use

The Town's Generalized Land Use Map identifies the four properties that make up the site as well as the adjacent properties to the west as "Government", with "Apartments" to the north and "Commercial" along the east side of West Main Road.

Adjacent existing land uses (partially outlined in red in image 1) are:

- North: Harbor Village, a multi-family residential neighborhood.
- East: Approximately 16 individual parcels developed with a variety of commercial and retail uses in mostly one-story structures (on the east side of West Main Road).
- South: A few small businesses opposite the Navy Lodge site and some single-family residential lots that are part of a larger neighborhood further southwest, with no direct access onto Coddington Highway.
- West: The Landings, a multi-family residential neighborhood, formerly Navy Housing and now privately owned.

4.3 Existing Conditions

Topography

The site is very level with slight elevation transitions from 70 feet above mean sea level at West Main Street and Coddington Highway to approximately 60 feet above mean sea level in the park. Delineation of a 100 year floodplain does not affect any of the property within the planning area.

Vegetation

Deciduous trees and other landscaping line most of the west side of West Main Road to screen the parking areas for the school, library, and park. Manicured turf makes up the open areas west of the school, around the library, recreation field, and former Navy Lodge site.

Drainage/Hydrology

There are no designated drainage ways or designated detention facilities on the property. There is a storm water inlet near the southwest corner of the site in Coddington Highway R.O.W.

Existing Structures

Existing structures include the Town Library and Kennedy School, with minor structures such as equipment sheds, restrooms, dugouts, backstops and field lighting standards within the park. The Navy Lodge site has a small concrete pad, water feed vent, and telephone utility shed; all within easements.

Existing Utilities

Domestic Water (24" line) and Sewer (6" line) service is located within West Main Road (24" water line, 6" sewer line) and Coddington Highway (12" water line, 12" sewer line). Overhead power lines run along the entire east side of West Main Road and the north side of Coddington Highway.

5. Development Goals and Potential Uses

Previous planning studies — by [Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Inc. in 2011](#) and [Matrix Design Group in 2014](#) (see Appendix A) — and numerous community meetings have already identified possible compatible land uses and needs that this site can serve. While both previous studies concluded that some mixed-use development would be the preferred outcome of the site, community members continue to express various other ideas about the space, including — but not limited to — goals listed below.

[Vibrant Town/Community Center](#)

A Town Center that offers common space for community gatherings, strong urban design, a Town “gateway,” and improved pedestrian experiences. This Center might also retain some level of municipal-related use.

[Mixed-Use Development](#)

Provide office or residential uses above retail, creating density, encouraging investment, and promoting alternative forms of transportation.

[Affordable and Workforce Housing](#)

Multi-family housing units, available for rent or purchase at affordable prices. See *appendix C for a Housing Profile of Middletown*.

6. Request for Clarification and Submittal Instructions

Through this RFI, Middletown seeks respondents interested in development opportunities for the Center. **The resulting goal of the RFI process is to engage one or more developers in further discussion about the site.** This step is not a formal Request for Proposals (RFP), and will not result in the selection of a developer for the property. A formal procurement process will follow any conversations that result from this RFI.

6.1 Timeline

- March 9: RFI Issued
- March 20: Questions Due
- March 25: Q&A Published
- April 6: Responses Due
- April 30: Selection of Candidates for Further Discussion

6.2 Request for Clarification

Requests for clarification of the intent or content of the RFI, and any other questions from prospective respondents regarding the Project or this RFI, must be submitted to the Town in writing via email.

All questions must be submitted in writing by email, no later than Friday, March 20, 2020, 5:00 p.m. EST, directed to the following:

Ron Wolanski, AICP, Planning Director
rwolanski@middletownri.com

The Town shall post on its website (<https://planning.middletownri.com/>) any and all questions and responses by Wednesday, March 25, 2020, 5:00 p.m. EST.

6.3 Submittal Instructions

All submittals shall provide information related to the elements listed in sufficient detail to allow an informed RFI process. Incomplete submissions may be rejected at the sole discretion of the Town. Submissions may be mailed, emailed, or hand delivered to:

Ron Wolanski, AICP, Planning Director
Town of Middletown
350 East Main Rd.
Middletown, RI 02842
rwolanski@middletownri.com

All materials submitted to the Town in response to the RFI will become the property of the Town and will be used by the Town in any aspect of the project, and, unless specifically exempted, should be considered to be public records.

Submission Requirements

An RFI submittal should include as many of the following elements as possible, applicable, and available:

A. Transmittal Letter:

- a. Letter that identifies the lead Entity, contact person, and contact information for the team or other partners.

B. Project Understanding and Approach to the Project:

- a. Statement of interest demonstrating a commitment to and a vision for the redevelopment of the West Main/Coddington Center.
- b. Statement describing an overall concept for the Center that integrates design, program, and operations.
- c. Renderings, drawings or other visuals that depict and demonstrate the proposed development concept.
- d. Organizational structure and engagement approach proposed for the project.

C. Project Leadership and Team:

- a. Identification of lead Entity, partners, and team firms or organizations, including description and location for each firm/ organization, and any MBE/WBE designations.
- b. Resumes of the team's principle individuals and description of their roles and responsibilities in the proposed redevelopment project.

D. Statement of Experience and Qualifications:

- a. Provide examples of similar size/type of projects in similar settings, including project description, project cost, financing strategy, size, location, tenant mix, year, lead individual role, public/private partnerships if any, and development contact information and/or website.

E. Financial Approach:

- a. A comprehensive discussion of an approach to financing any initial development and the ongoing operations, including any innovative revenue strategies and/or scenarios that might require additional public investment.

Project Objectives to Address in Submission

A. Building and Site Development:

- a. Create physical assets (renovations and/or new facilities) that will support viable economic activity and promote business growth and job creation, and that can be sustained in the years to come.
- b. Bring the Center into productive use for the community with universal accessibility.
- c. Highlight the “gateway” element of the Center and connect the buildings to their site and surrounding developments.
- d. Identify and describe any potential infrastructure upgrades or additions needed at the site.
- e. Review any zoning considerations or changes for the site.

B. Operational and Financial Structure:

- a. Describe multiple funding sources that could be used to provide financially sustainable development, while providing space which could be for business, community, cultural, or educational functions at rents commensurate with those uses.
- b. State proposed techniques for the mixed-use of the West Main/Coddington site, considering the market realities of the area to inform strategy for site and building development.

6.4 General Terms and Conditions

The Town reserves the right to amend or modify the RFI at any time during the process, prior to the date and time which responses are due. All amendments and modifications will be posted on the Town’s website in the form of an Addendum. It is the responsibility of the respondent to check the website.

The Town reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to reject any or all responses proposals or parts of any and all responses; re-advertise this RFI; postpone or cancel, at any time, this RFI process; or waive any irregularities in this RFI or in the responses received as a result of this RFI.

The Town reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to determine the appropriate next steps. The Town may also issue a new RFI with project modifications based on information learned from the initial round or other changing circumstances, or may terminate or suspend the process at any time. The Town reserves the right to reject all submissions, or to cancel this solicitation at any time.

Appendix A: Previous Studies and Plans

[West Main/Coddington Development Center Master Plan, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Inc., 2011](#)

[Middletown Town Center Planning Studies, Matrix Design Group, 2014](#)

Appendix B: Key Demographic Data

(all data sources are ACS 2018 5-year estimates, unless otherwise noted; “West Main/Coddington Tracts” refer to the four census tracts surrounding the site: 402, 403.02, 403.03, and 403.04)

Population

With a population of just over 16,000, Middletown has remained stable over the past ten years, decreasing less than half a percent since 2014, and accounting for about 20 percent of Newport County’s total population. The four census tracts surrounding the development site (“West Main/Coddington Tracts” 402, 403.02, 403.03, and 403.04; outlined below) contain about 64 percent of Middletown’s population, and three of the tracts have been growing in population over the past five years.

Figure 1: West Main/Coddington Tracts

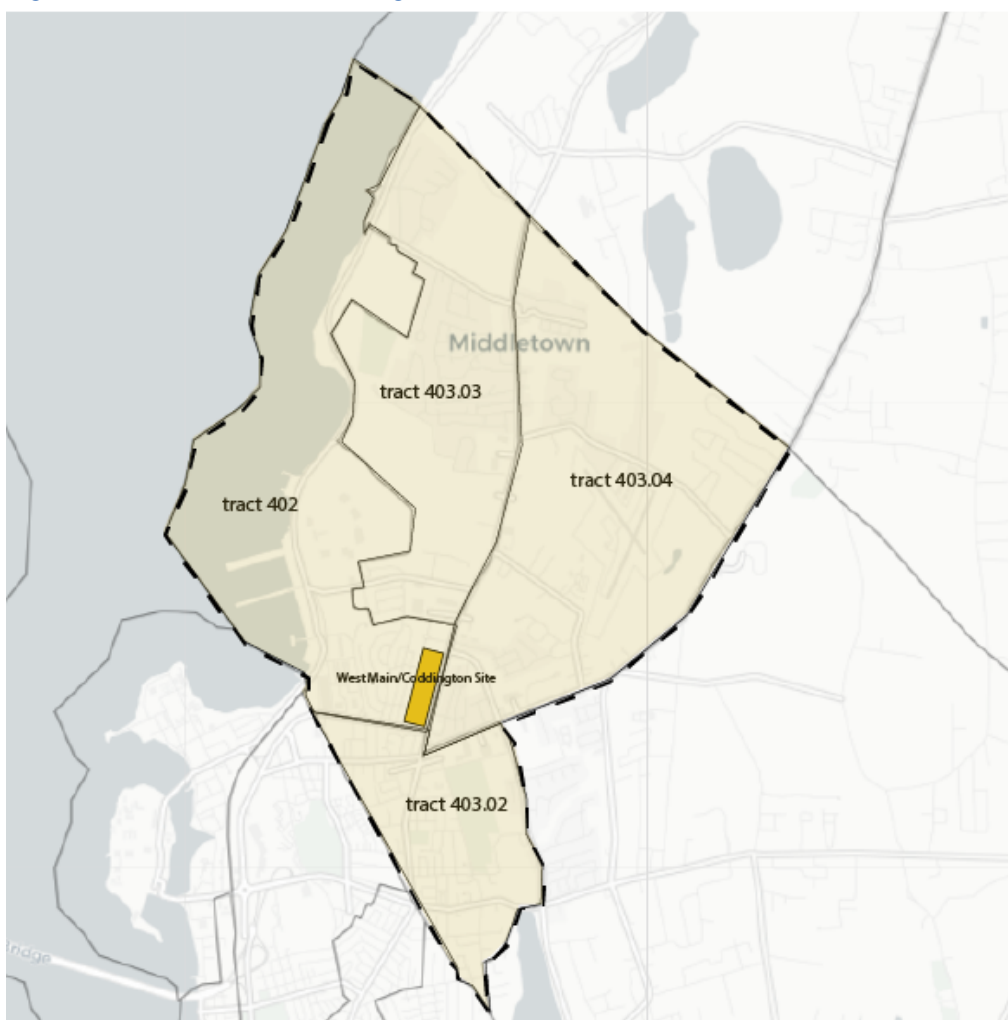
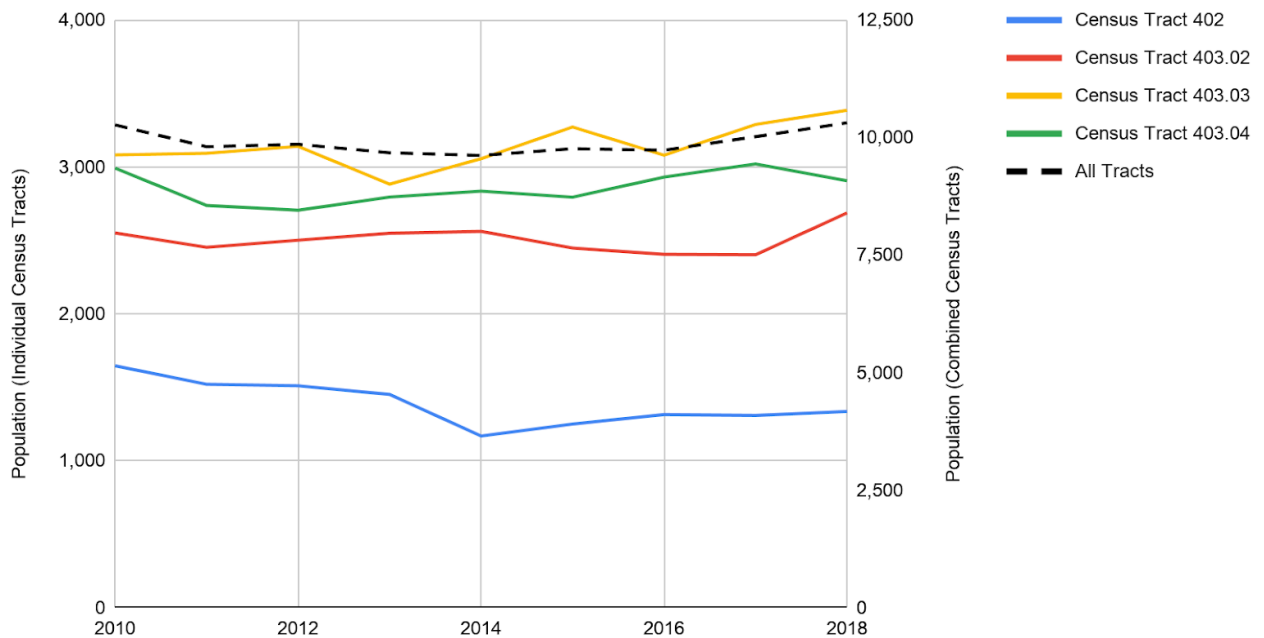


Figure 2: Population Over Time

	West Main/Coddington Tracts	Middletown	Newport County	Rhode Island
2010	10,270	16,362	83,253	1,056,389
2011	9,804	16,224	82,765	1,053,959
2012	9,856	16,151	82,503	1,052,471
2013	9,677	16,148	82,545	1,051,695
2014	9,620	16,081	82,772	1,053,252
2015	9,763	16,057	82,663	1,053,661
2016	9,730	16,042	82,714	1,054,491
2017	10,019	16,100	83,204	1,056,138
2018	10,314	16,078	83,075	1,056,611

Figure 3: Population Change in Census Tracts Surrounding West Main/Coddington Site



Age

Middletown, like Newport County, has a slightly older population than the state of Rhode Island, with 19 percent of residents in retirement age. However, the tracts surrounding the development site are slightly younger, following similar demographics as the United States as a whole.

Figure 4: Population by Age (Number and Percent of Total)

	Total All ages	Youth Under 24 years	Young Workers 25 to 44 years	Older Workers 45 to 64 years	Retirement Age 65 years and older
West Main/Coddington Tracts	10,314	3,132	3,007	2,657	1,518
		30%	29%	26%	15%
Middletown	16,078	4,393	4,025	4,633	3,027
		27%	25%	29%	19%
Newport County	83,075	22,403	19,131	24,191	17,350
		27%	23%	29%	21%
Rhode Island	1,056,611	323,423	266,288	292,690	174,210
		31%	25%	28%	16%
United States	322,903,030	104,456,959	85,331,186	83,876,304	49,238,581
		32%	26%	26%	15%

Race and Ethnicity

Also similar to Newport County, Middletown has a larger portion of White Non-Hispanic residents – 80 percent – than the US or the state of Rhode Island. Yet the tracts surrounding the development site are more racially diverse, with larger proportions of African American and Hispanic residents – 8 percent and 9 percent, respectively – than Middletown or Newport County; and a larger percent of foreign-born residents – 16 percent – than the US or Rhode Island.

Figure 5: Population by Race and Ethnicity (Number and Percent of Total)

	White Non-Hispanic	African American Non-Hispanic	Asian Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	Other Non-Hispanic
West Main/Coddington Tracts	7,486	819	386	883	740
	73%	8%	4%	9%	7%
Middletown	12,860	911	386	1,078	843
	80%	6%	2%	7%	5%
Newport County	71,280	2,649	1,632	4,693	2,821
	86%	3%	2%	6%	3%
Rhode Island	767,727	59,001	35,128	158,858	35,897
	73%	6%	3%	15%	3%
United States	197,181,177	39,715,917	17,367,169	57,517,935	11,120,832
	61%	12%	5%	18%	3%

Figure 6: Percent Foreign-Born

West Main/Coddington Tracts	16%
Middletown	10%
Newport County	7%
Rhode Island	14%
United States	13%

Poverty and Household Income

The median household income in Middletown is \$69,562 – about \$6,000 higher than the Rhode Island average and \$9,000 higher than the US average. 9 percent of residents live below the poverty level – compared to 13 percent in Rhode Island and 14 percent in the US.

Figure 7: Percent Poverty and Median Household Income

	% Population Below Poverty Line	Median Household Income
West Main/Coddington Tracts	N/A	N/A
Census Tract 402	9%	\$46,875
Census Tract 403.02	8%	\$69,491
Census Tract 403.03	10%	\$65,625
Census Tract 403.04	8%	\$66,331
Middletown	9%	\$69,562
Newport County	9%	\$77,237
Rhode Island	13%	\$63,296
United States	14%	\$60,293

Education and Unemployment

Newport County boasts a highly educated population, with 48 percent of residents 25 and older holding a bachelor's degree or higher. In Middletown, this number is slightly lower – 44 percent – but is still higher than the state's average of 33 percent. Salve Regina University, Roger Williams University, and the Community College of Rhode Island (Newport County Campus) are all within close proximity of Middletown; and the University of Rhode Island is only 17 miles away.

The unemployment rate is lower in Newport County and Middletown than in the state and country – with only 5 percent of the civilian labor force over 16 unemployed in Middletown, compared to 6.1 percent in Rhode Island.

Figure 8: Education and Unemployment

	% Bachelor's Degree or Higher, 25+	Unemployment Rate*
West Main/Coddington Tracts	35.4%	N/A
Middletown	43.7%	3.6%
Newport County	47.9%	3.5%
Rhode Island	33.3%	4.1%
United States	31.5%	3.9%

*Rhode Island City, Town, and Sub-State Labor Force Statistics, 2018 Annual Average, <http://www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/laus/town/town.htm>

Appendix C: Housing Profile

The average household in Middletown is 2.3 persons. 52 percent of homes are owner-occupied – fewer than in Newport County and Rhode Island – and there is a 13 percent vacancy rate, slightly lower than Newport County’s rate of 17 percent. 67 percent of housing stock is single-family homes and 28 percent multi-unit, compared to the state of Rhode Island, with 58 percent single-family units and 41 percent multi-units.¹⁵

According to a 2019 HousingWorks Rhode Island report, the median price of a single family home was \$375,000 in 2018, an 8 percent increase from 2013. This requires an income of \$107,655 to afford, translating into 31 percent of owners being cost-burdened. The average two-bedroom rental cost \$1,579 in 2018, a 12 percent increase from 2013. The income needed to afford this average rent is \$63,160, translating into 52 percent of total renters being cost-burdened. “Much of the new projected housing unit demand will need to be affordable to moderate and lower income households.”¹⁶

¹⁵ 2018 ACS 5-year estimates

¹⁶ <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1hrYgrJeQFonKLTix603VKSbV3MAvAXMx>