

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the study about?

The Aquidneck Island Planning Commission (AIPC) conducted a comprehensive study of the transportation system on Aquidneck Island. The study reached across all modes of transportation (bus, rail, bike, pedestrian, auto, etc.) to create a balanced plan for making modal connections and transportation improvements consistent with sound land use planning – all in an effort to increase overall mobility, modal choice, and safety for our residents, businesses, employees and visitors while decreasing traffic congestion and its negative impacts on our environment, economy and quality of life.

What is the outcome of the study?

The study has resulted in the development of a balanced, comprehensive Multi-Modal Transportation Master Plan for Aquidneck Island that will guide the investment of future funds into its transportation system. The Master Plan includes a series of immediate, short, mid, and long-range transportation improvements suitable for inclusion into municipal and statewide capital improvement programs.

What was the study area?

The study area included the entire island, its communities (Newport, Middletown, and Portsmouth, RI), Naval Station Newport, and its major transportation facilities including the roadways as shown graphically at <http://www.vhb.com/aquidneck/studyarea.asp> and as summarized below.

- Route 114 (West Main Road/Bristol Ferry Road)
- Route 138 (East Main Road)
- Turnpike Avenue
- Burma Road/Defense Highway/Stringham Road
- America's Cup Avenue
- Memorial Boulevard
- Coddington Highway/JT Connell Highway
- Admiral Kalbfus Road
- Route 138A (Aquidneck Avenue)
- Route 214 (Valley Road)

The Island's modal and intermodal facilities and right-of-ways were also included in the scope including major transit hubs, rail lines, bicycle and pedestrian ways, and ferry facilities.

How was the project funded?

The project was federally funded through a grant awarded to the AIPC by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) and the Rhode Island Department of Administration's (RIDOA) Statewide Planning Program (SPP).

Who conducted and managed the project?

The AIPC managed the project in close coordination with its project partners, which include its member communities of Newport, Middletown and Portsmouth as well as RIDOT and the Statewide Planning Program.

The AIPC hired the consulting firm of Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB) of Providence, RI, through a very competitive selection process, to conduct the study. The consultant and study process was guided by a Technical Steering Committee (TSC) comprised of federal, state, regional and local agencies and officials. The study also provided avenues of communication with Aquidneck Island legislators, local elected officials, and all interested community and business organizations. The TSC provided a forum for community involvement and input into the study.

Who was on the Technical Steering Committee?

The TSC was represented by the following communities, agencies, and organizations:

- Aquidneck Island Planning Commission (AIPC)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Newport, Middletown, and Portsmouth
- Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT)
- Rhode Island Department of Administration Statewide Planning Program (SPP)
- Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA)
- Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM)
- Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority (RITBA)
- Naval Station Newport
- Newport County Chamber of Commerce
- Newport County Convention and Visitor's Bureau
- Rhode Island Sierra Club

How can the public get involved?

There have been numerous opportunities for the public to become involved throughout the study process. There have been three (3) Public Workshops throughout the study process that were advertised on the study website and in the local media. The fourth Public Meeting is scheduled for May 4th, 2011. At any time during the project, the public could ask questions, post comments or participate directly in an online survey on the project website (<http://www.vhb.com/aquidneck/>).

What about public interest groups and stakeholders?

Key stakeholders were interviewed as part of the study process, including but not limited to the following individuals, entities, and organizations:

- Municipal planners/engineers
- Municipal police chiefs or traffic/safety officers
- State police
- Old Colony Railroad
- Newport Dinner Train
- Sierra Club
- Grow Smart RI
- AARP
- Elected officials
- Elderly and ADA advocacy groups
- Bicycle groups

When is the next public workshop/meeting?

The final Public Workshop is scheduled for May 4th, 2011 from 6 pm to 8 pm at the Community College of RI (CCRI), One John H. Chafee Boulevard, Newport, RI.

What are the major study tasks?

The Aquidneck Island Transportation Study was organized into six (6) tasks:

Task 1 – Outreach and Community Vision: Public Involvement and Participation. Task 1 established the framework for the study – goals, objectives, evaluation/screening criteria, and included Public Participation throughout the study.

Task 2 – Technical Investigation (Data Assembly and Analysis): Task 2 included the collection of pertinent data on existing and proposed transportation and development conditions including integrated non-automobile transportation modes.

Task 3 – Transportation Improvement Alternative & Integrated Scenarios: Task 3 involved the development of transportation

alternatives (including a no-build scenario) suitable for future implementation that meet the stated study goals and objectives.

Task 4 – Evaluation of Alternative Transportation Improvements & Integrated Scenarios: Task 4 included the detailed evaluation of transportation improvement alternatives and integrated land use scenarios for the future years of 2020 and 2030.

Task 5 – Transportation Improvement Plan: Task 5 included the development of a Transportation Improvement Plan that is a compilation of recommendations resulting from the analysis and community input.

Task 6 – Plan Implementation: Task 6 involved developing an implementation plan for the recommended Transportation Improvement Plan.

When will the study be completed?

The study period is approximately 24 months, with a scheduled completion of May 2011, however, many fast-tracked recommendations have already been implemented.

What is the next step in the process?

The study began in May 2009. As of April 2011, the Study Team has taken all of the comments received from the first three Public Workshops and developed recommendations for the Island's transportation system. These include transit system enhancements, improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, safer and more efficient vehicle flow on roadways/intersections, and sustainable policies for the future.

These recommendations will be discussed and publically vetted at the final Public Meeting, scheduled for May 4th, 2011 from 6 pm to 8 pm at the Community College of RI (CCRI), One John H. Chafee Boulevard, Newport, RI.