



Town of Middletown Planning Department

350 East Main Rd., Middletown RI 02842 (401) 849-4027

MEMORANDUM

Date: May 21, 2018
To: Hon. Robert J. Sylvia, President
Town Council Members
From: Paul A. Croce, Chairman
Middletown Planning Board
Cc: MEDAC
Re: Lower Aquidneck Ave. roadway and streetscape improvements

On March 5th the Town Council held a joint meeting with the Planning Board to discuss design of roadway and streetscape improvements in the lower Aquidneck Ave., Atlantic Beach area. Representatives from VHB, the town's design engineer, provided a presentation of conceptual design plans for potential streetscape improvements. Following the presentation, the Town Council requested that the Planning Board hold a public workshop meeting in order to collect public input on the concept plans. Attached for the Council's consideration are the minutes from the public workshop meeting held on April 30th. That meeting was advertised in the Newport Daily News and on the town's website. Notices were also mailed to all property owners in the business district as well as the abutting residential neighborhoods. We also hand-delivered notices to businesses along the subject section of Aquidneck Ave.

The meeting included a presentation of the background of proposed improvements in the area, including recommendations from the 2007 Atlantic Beach District Master Plan. There was an update on the RIDOT project to modify the Aquidneck Ave. intersections at Valley Rd., Briarwood/Crescent, and Purgatory Rd. (The intersection design concepts were approved by the Town Council on February 16, 2016. RIDOT has indicated that the intersection project will be bid later this year, with construction expected to start in Spring 2019). The bulk of the presentation focused on the proposed design of streetscape improvements, similar to the presentation received by the Town Council on March 5th. There was also an electronic polling exercise seeking public input on some specific questions. Attendees were offered an opportunity to provide comments and ask questions. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation including the polling results is attached for your consideration.

The Planning Board held a follow-up meeting on May 18th to consider the public input received and questions previously provided by the design engineer, and to discuss recommendations to the Town Council. Following discussion, the board voted to recommend that the Town Council authorize the project to proceed to the 30% design phase subject to the following recommendations:

1. The proposed roadway alignment, including 11ft. travel lanes and 4 ft. shoulders is acceptable.

2. The shoulders should be marked as bike lanes.
3. In addition to the crosswalks proposed at the Valley/Aquidneck, Wave Ave., and Purgatory intersections, the board recommends the addition of a crosswalk at Newport Ave.
4. The plan should accommodate potential future transit stops at appropriate locations.
5. The preferred sidewalk material is either standard concrete or exposed aggregate concrete.
6. The board recommends that a grass/planting strip be included between the curb and sidewalk, but only in locations where a minimum 5ft. wide concrete sidewalk can also be provided.
7. Granite curbing should be included in the design, rather than concrete curbing.
8. Decorative, dark-sky compliant street lighting is preferred, rather than standard "cobra head" style lighting.
9. The board supports pursuing the undergrounding of utility lines, with tax increment financing (TIF) as the preferred funding mechanism if use of tax dollars is necessary.
10. The proposal to make Crescent Rd. a one-way street in the northbound direction should proceed as previously endorsed by the Town Council.
11. The project limits should be expanded to include design of improvements extending to the Newport line. The current concept plans end at the Purgatory Rd. intersection.
12. For state highway signs, more attractive alternatives to the standard metal signs and posts should be considered.
13. For the proposed redesigned Aquidneck Ave./Newport Ave. intersection, dedicated right and left turn lanes should be provided for traffic exiting Newport Ave. onto Aquidneck Ave.
14. Any existing stone walls in the project area should be preserved.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations. Please contact me with any questions.



Paul A. Croce, Chairman
Middletown Planning Board