



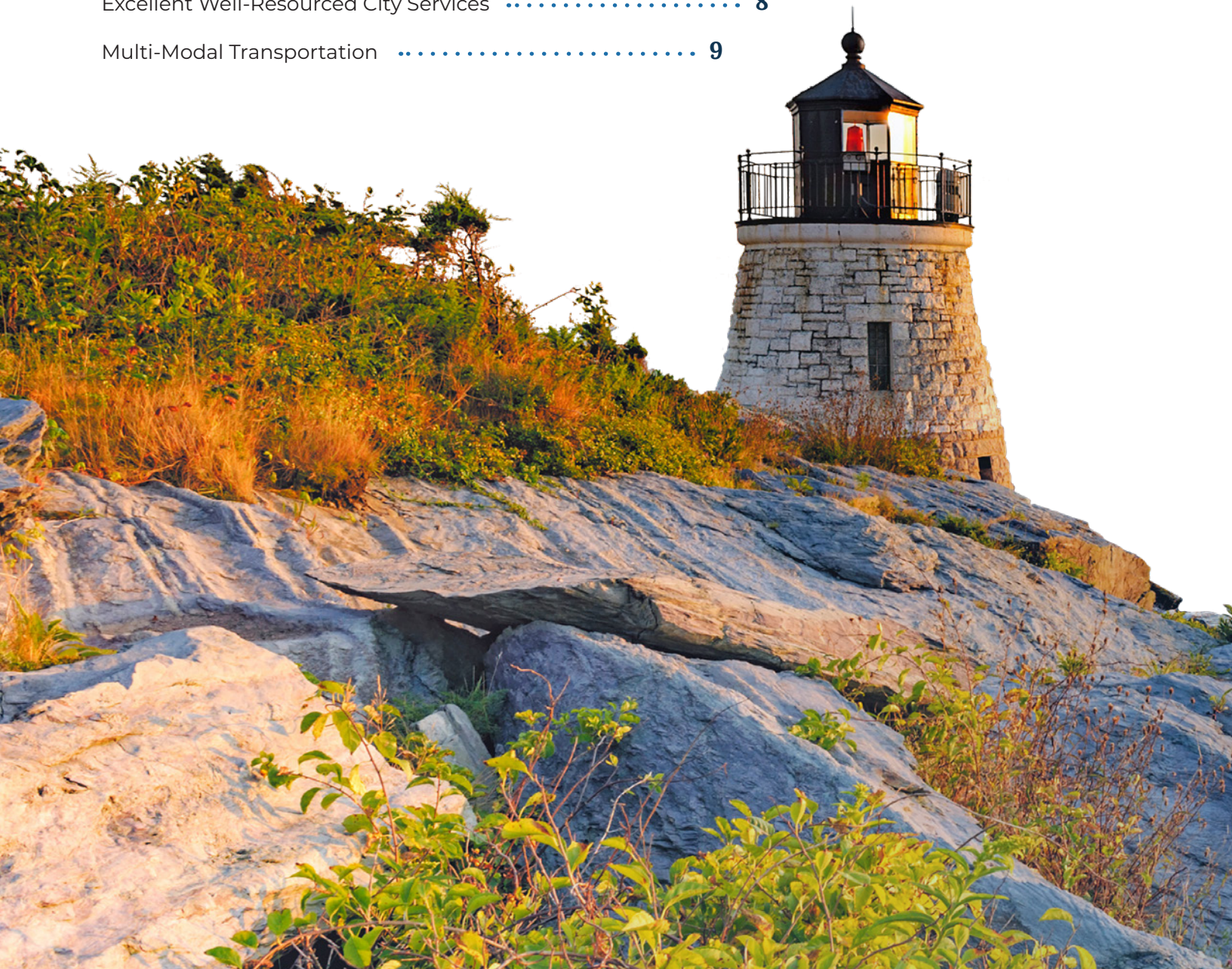
The
CITY OF NEWPORT
Rhode Island

Strategic Plan

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The Newport Community

Newport is a coastal city in Rhode Island, located at the southern tip of Aquidneck Island on Narragansett Bay. It is known for its scenic views, rich history, well-preserved architecture, maritime heritage, and unique cultural events.

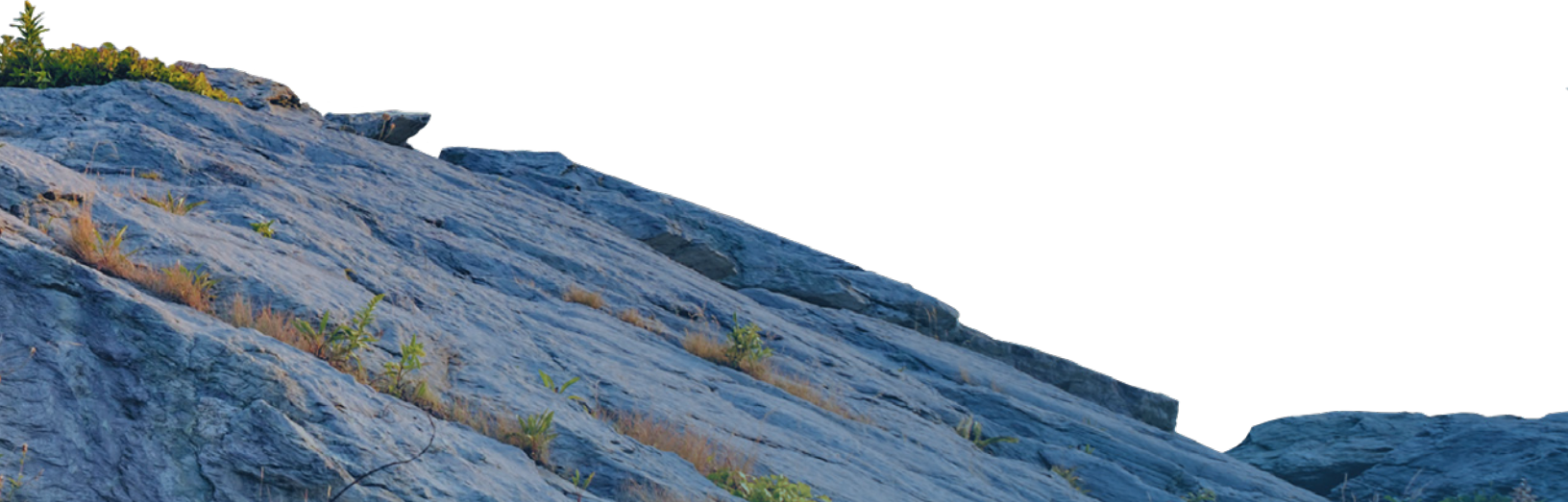
Founded in 1639 and incorporated in 1784, Newport’s strategic location along the coast quickly turned it into a bustling seaport and one of the most important colonial cities in America. To this day, Newport’s culture and economy continue to be tightly linked to the sea. The Naval Station Newport is a significant employer for the region, the fishing and maritime industry plays an essential role in Newport’s local economy, and the Newport Harbor Walk serves as a valued community gathering space and economic center lined with retail and dining options.

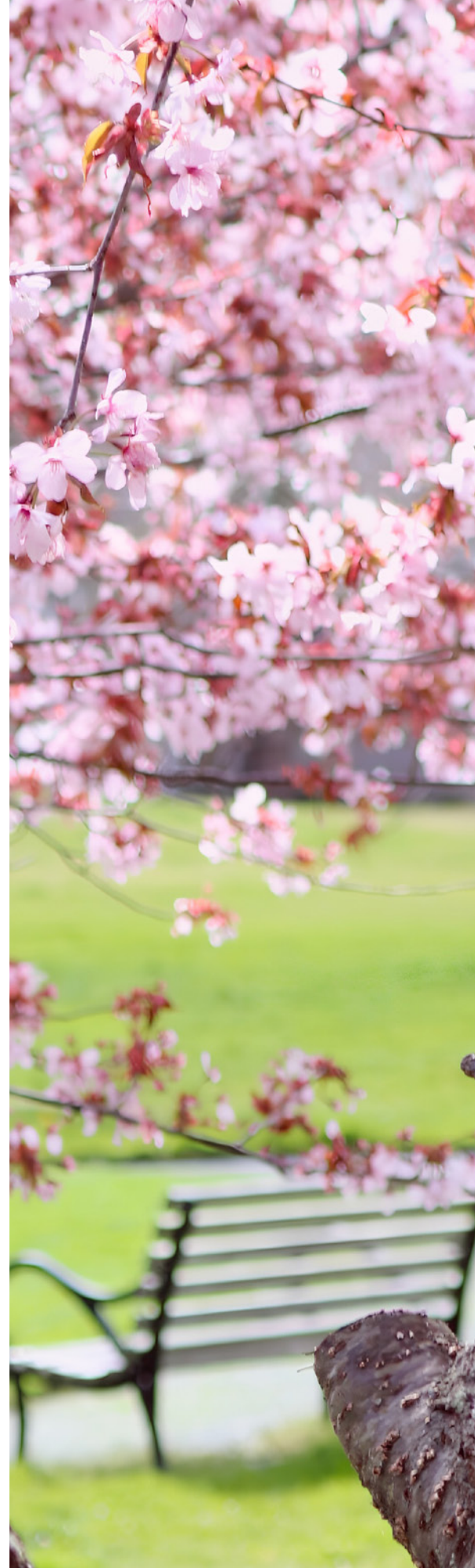
The cultural scene in Newport is vibrant, with various art galleries, museums, historic architecture from the colonial period and Gilded Age, and music festivals, including the Newport Folk Festival and Newport Jazz Festival. The City also offers recreational opportunities and attractions for residents and visitors to enjoy, such as America’s

Cup Races, which draws sailing enthusiasts to Newport from around the world, amenities like the picturesque Cliff Walk, Gooseberry, and Easton’s Beach, as well as the expansive Fort Adams State Park and Brenton State Park, all adding to the City’s charm and appeal.

The City of Newport is home to approximately 25,163 residents who care deeply about their community and the success of their City. According to the U.S. Census, Newport’s population is becoming more racially diverse and younger. Between 2010 and 2020, the number of residents who identify as Hispanic or Latino increased from 9% to 13%. Meanwhile, the median age of Newport residents has decreased since 2010, from 38.5 years to 35.2 years, with the largest age group in the City being adults aged 25–29 years.

Although the median income in Newport (\$77,092) is growing, Newport has more residents who meet the federal poverty criteria than the rest of the state. According to the 2021 ACS, 15.5% of Newport residents meet the federal poverty criteria, while 10.8% of residents meet the federal poverty criteria statewide.





The Strategic Planning Process

The process used to develop the plan was designed to:

- Identify priorities of the City Council
- Ensure alignment of Department workplans and the Citywide Strategic Plan
- Prioritize implementation of the Strategic Plan

Newport's strategic planning process included input from a diverse group of stakeholders, including:

- 1-1 Interviews and workshops with City Council
- Listening sessions with City Board and Committee members
- Workshops with senior City staff
- Two phases of online community engagement with a total participation of more than 1,000 interested parties

The City of Newport initiated a strategic planning process in 2023 to update its 2018 Strategic Plan and guide the direction of the City for the next three to five years.



Newport's Desired Future State

This Strategic Plan serves as a guide for future decision-making and provides a structure for the City to conduct periodic reviews to ensure that strategic outcomes, goals, strategies, and their associated key performance indicators remain relevant over time. The implementation of this Strategic Plan will move the City of Newport toward its desired future state:

Newport's Vision for the Future

Newport is a world-renowned and inviting city by the sea, distinguished by a diverse community, a vibrant culture, and outstanding quality of life for residents.

Strategic Outcome Areas

Strategic outcomes represent what must go well in order for the City of Newport to achieve its vision for the future. These five strategic outcomes were designed to provide a framework for addressing issues and aligning goals and strategies that will ensure progress towards the City's desired future state.



Thriving Economic Development

Newport strives to develop a diversified year-round economy with equitable opportunities for growth.



Resilient Infrastructure

Newport strives to ensure a comprehensive, well-managed, and resilient public infrastructure, with bold investments and innovative approaches.



Outstanding Educational Outcomes

Newport strives to deliver a high-performing educational system that equitably fosters innovative approaches to life-long learning, quality jobs, and robust career pathways that prepare our community to live engaged, healthy, and rewarding lives.



Excellent and Well-Resourced City Services

Newport strives to provide excellent, reliable, and well-resourced City services that meet the needs of the community.



Multi-Modal Transportation Network

Newport strives to connect our community through a variety of safe, reliable, convenient, and innovative transportation options.

Recent Accomplishments

Prior to the finalization of this Strategic Plan, the City of Newport recently accomplished the following goals and strategies:

Housing

- ✓ Developed and implemented a Two-Tier Residential Tax program to provide property tax relief to year-round residents
- ✓ Increased registration fees to cover the cost of short-term rental enforcement
- ✓ Hired a Short-Term Rental Administrator to support the City's existing Short Term Rental Compliance Officer
- ✓ Adopted Zoning Ordinances restricting Short Term Rentals in Residential Zones
- ✓ Published a map of registered short-term rentals

Transportation

- ✓ Adopted a Master Transportation Plan
- ✓ Accelerated improvements to streets and sidewalks by doubling the repaving budget and securing state matching funds
- ✓ Completed traffic calming improvements for Hillside Avenue
- ✓ Improved resident access to parking by providing two hours of free resident parking at all meters and extending beach season parking by three months

Economic Development

- ✓ Adopted new Planning and Zoning standards to guide more equitable development in the North End

Infrastructure

- ✓ Established a Chief Resiliency Officer
- ✓ \$98.5M Infrastructure Bond will go for Voter Approval November 2024
- ✓ Established a dedicated Grant Coordinator

Education

- ✓ Made education a Council priority and included education in the Strategic Plan as a strategic outcome
- ✓ Established a plan to provide resources to support extracurricular programming for students (Learn 365)

Public Safety

- ✓ Increased foot and bike patrols among police officers
- ✓ Hired a new Police Chief
- ✓ Improved ordinances regarding motor vehicle noise to be more enforceable

Good Government

- ✓ Developed a Strategic Plan via public process
- ✓ Identified short-term Council priorities
- ✓ Created and maintained a dashboard for City Council priorities
- ✓ Reorganized the City government into three super departments: Public Safety, Administrative Services, and Resilience and Sustainability

The remaining sections of this document outline specific goals, strategies, and key performance indicators related to each of the five strategic outcomes identified during the strategic planning process. These will be tracked by the City to ensure future progress.





Thriving Economic Development

Newport strives to develop a diversified year-round economy with equitable opportunities for growth.

Goals and Strategies:

Housing

- Work with Rhode Island Housing to do a housing study to inform future strategies
- Identify vacant parcels suitable for housing
- Update residential zoning
- Develop a policy for accessory dwelling units in appropriate zones
- Develop Coggeshall School as housing
- Tax short-term rentals as commercial properties
- Levy a 2% impact fee on short-term rentals
- Support programs that foster home ownership
- Pursue state funding for housing

Economic Development

- Plan for the next phase of the North End
- Identify DOT plans for property disposition
- Identify key hurdles to property acquisition and site preparation
- Establish a process for Community Development Agreements
- Provide resourcing to support development of North End
- Proceed with acquisition of Navy Hospital Property
- Continue to develop and build on the good working relationship with the Navy for North End Development
- Continue to work with the BRPAC on North End Pad Readiness
- Provide staff liaison to attend certain programs at Innovate Newport to promote small business, blue economy businesses, and incubator and start-up businesses
- Identify options for reuse of the Maher Center

Key Performance

Indicators (KPIs):

- Percent of annual increase in short-term rental registration fees
- Percent of annual increase in short-term rental community impact fees
- Percent of households that pay 30% or more of income on housing
- Homeownership rate for all Newport households
- Percent change in the number of affordable housing units created
- Number of businesses per 1,000 population
- Commercial vacancy rate
- Retail sales per capita
- Number of new businesses by type
- Percent of annual increase in sales tax revenue



Resilient Infrastructure

Newport strives to ensure a comprehensive, well-managed, and resilient public infrastructure, with bold investments and innovative approaches.

Goals and Strategies:

- Fund and implement the City's Resilience and Sustainability Department
- Conduct an assessment and development of a Long-Term Resilience and Sustainability Plan
- Adapt the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to address the impact of climate change
- Update the Comprehensive Resiliency Plan (Hazard Mitigation Plan)
- Coordinate pursuit of federal funding
- Utilize state funding resources
- Implement traffic calming measures
- Improve broadband speeds and access through federal funding

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Community survey question: Percent of residents who are satisfied with access to parking
- Community survey question: Percent of residents who are satisfied with access to broadband
- Percent change in the number of traffic accidents
- Percentage of City-owned vehicles using renewable energy
- Percent change in the number of stormwater flooding events due to system capacity



Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Average daily school attendance rate
- Number of joint meetings held between the City Council and School Committee per year
- Public high school graduation rate
- Community survey question: Percent of residents rating public schools as excellent or good
- Percent of students participating in extracurricular programs (by grade)



Outstanding Educational Outcomes

Newport strives to deliver a high performing educational system that equitably fosters innovative approaches to life-long learning, quality jobs, and robust career pathways that prepare our community to live engaged, healthy, and rewarding lives.

Goals and Strategies:

- Improve student attendance
- Work with School Committee to develop a long-term plan to ensure quality public education opportunities for Newport's residents
- Develop and support a Joint Community Center with Middletown to support the Learn365 program, among other programs
- Hold regular joint meetings between the City Council and the School Committee to enhance school performance



Excellent Well-Resourced City Services

Newport strives to provide excellent, reliable, and well-resourced City services that meet the needs of the community.

Goals and Strategies:

Good Government

- Hire and evaluate the City Manager
- Implement comprehensive pay plan to encourage and support recruitment and retention efforts for City employees
- Coordinate with State Legislators
- Identify appropriate cybersecurity initiatives that are supported by federal grants
- Evaluate opportunity to add licensing module as part of the on-going ERP implementation
- Support the Council's Revenue Review Committee
- Implement safety improvements at public buildings

Public Safety

- Efficiently deploy police services by implementing evidence-based policing
- Continue to publish the Annual Police Department Report
- Implement noise trailers to improve enforcement of noise violations
- Implement speed and red-light cameras
- Improve community engagement with the Police Department
- Focus on public safety recruitment by exploring regional testing, bonuses, extensive advertising, and promotions

Community Relations

- Identify locations for self-serve kiosks for customer services (permits, applications, etc.)
- Digitize searchable documents
- Implement the Language Line to improve service access for non-English-speaking residents
- Have bilingual poll workers at every polling site
- Improve diversity of poll workers

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Bond rating
- Full-time employee turnover rate (by department)
- Annual training hours per employee
- Community survey question: Percent of residents rating public safety as excellent or good
- Employee survey question: Percent of City employees who would recommend working for the City to a friend



Multi-Modal Transportation

Newport strives to connect our community through a variety of safe, reliable, convenient, and innovative transportation options.

Goals and Strategies:

- Identify grant funding to implement the Keep Newport Moving Transportation Plan
- Continue to work with City departments and state partners to identify federal transportation infrastructure grants
- Identify locations for additional electric vehicle charging spaces
- Update the Pavement Management Inventory
- Transition City ROW permit process to be part of the City's building permit process
- Work with Ride Island Program to extend bike access island-wide
- Coordinate with the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority on Safe Streets for All Grant



Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Percent change in total miles of bike facilities (bike lanes, protected bike lanes, buffered bike lanes, neighborhood greenways, and off-street pathways)
- Percent of streets with sidewalks
- Percent of residents who commute to work by car alone
- Community survey question: Percent of residents who are satisfied with public transportation options
- Overall Pavement Condition Index (PCI)
- Percentage of street miles with PCI score under 35



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This plan was facilitated by:

