

PLANNING CHALLENGE GRANT INITIATIVE

2006 PROJECT SUMMARY

FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR THE GATEWAY TO THE SHORELINE DRIVE CORRIDOR AT STRINGHAM ROAD AND SIMONPIETRI ROAD WITH BURMA ROAD DESIGN CONCEPTS.

PORTSMOUTH and MIDDLETOWN

Project Sponsor: Aquidneck Island Planning Commission

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Project Cost: \$37,500 **Challenge Grant Amount:** \$30,000

Completed: June 2007 **Products:** Study Report available at:

<http://www.planning.ri.gov/misc/pcgrants6.htm>

Background

The Aquidneck Island travel corridor has been identified by Statewide Planning as a major travel corridor and has identified goals including: protecting open space and ocean vistas, providing transportation alternatives, and improved bicycle and pedestrian circulation. These and other goals could be addressed in a feasibility study of a realignment of Stringham Road, Simonpietri Drive and a right-of-way study for Shoreline Drive while reinforcing and improving the functionality of Routes 114 and 138 within the corridor.

Objectives and Process

The objective was a feasibility study of the opening of Defense Highway (Shoreline Drive) for public use between Coddington Highway in Middletown and West Main Road, through Stringham Road, in Portsmouth. As part of the study, right-of-way requirements for various configurations of Shoreline Drive were included.

- **Data Collection:** Through a series of interviews and meetings with community and island representatives, Navy officials, area landowners, a steering committee, and public workshops the team learned about area needs, concerns, and visions. Additionally the team collected traffic and accident data in the Coddington Highway/West Main Road/Shoreline Drive/Stringham Drive area.
- **Traffic Safety Analysis:** Through study of the existing traffic flow patterns and accident locations and types in the area, changes in traffic patterns and ways to reduce points of traffic conflict were incorporated into the design process.
- **Education and Public Outreach:** Based on the collected data, an outline of design considerations and potential designs for the main parts of the study was developed. A public meeting was held following each of the public workshops to present formalized designs and area outlines based on the data and the public input for each of the study areas.
- **Right-of-Way (ROW) Requirements:** The right-of-way for the study area needs to accommodate vehicle traffic, pedestrians and bicyclists. Four broad recommendations were made with ROWs ranging from between 50 feet to 80 feet. Two designs were for two travel lanes, and two included four travel lanes. While the decision was made not to build Shoreline Drive for four lanes of vehicle traffic it is important to describe the potential need for the ROW.
- **Pedestrian/Bicycle and Multimodal Networks:** The team examined pedestrian and bicycle accommodations along shoreline Drive; these were included in the ROW requirements. Additionally the existing rail line was included in the planning process as was the potential for any future Melville shuttle or transit station.

Major Findings and Recommendations

North Gateway; Stringham Road: The preferred alternative for the North Gateway is the Lower Roundabout alternative. This alternative provides an opportunity for an attractive gateway located in proximity to the existing Melville marine trade district, proposed marina and condominiums, and to future redevelopment of the Navy tank farms. It also enhances the multimodal corridor formed with the Newport Secondary rail line, the proposed multipurpose trail, and Shoreline Drive. This alignment will provide convenient access to future rail shuttle service at the Melville station, thereby facilitating its use. The location of the approximately 130 foot diameter roundabout at this point eliminates the hairpin turn and allows for flatter grades leading up to and through the roundabout. The probable cost for construction of the North Gateway ranges from \$2.7 to 3.3 million including a 30 percent contingency. This amount does not include any needed right of way acquisition. Design and permitting costs generally range from 10 to 15 percent of construction.

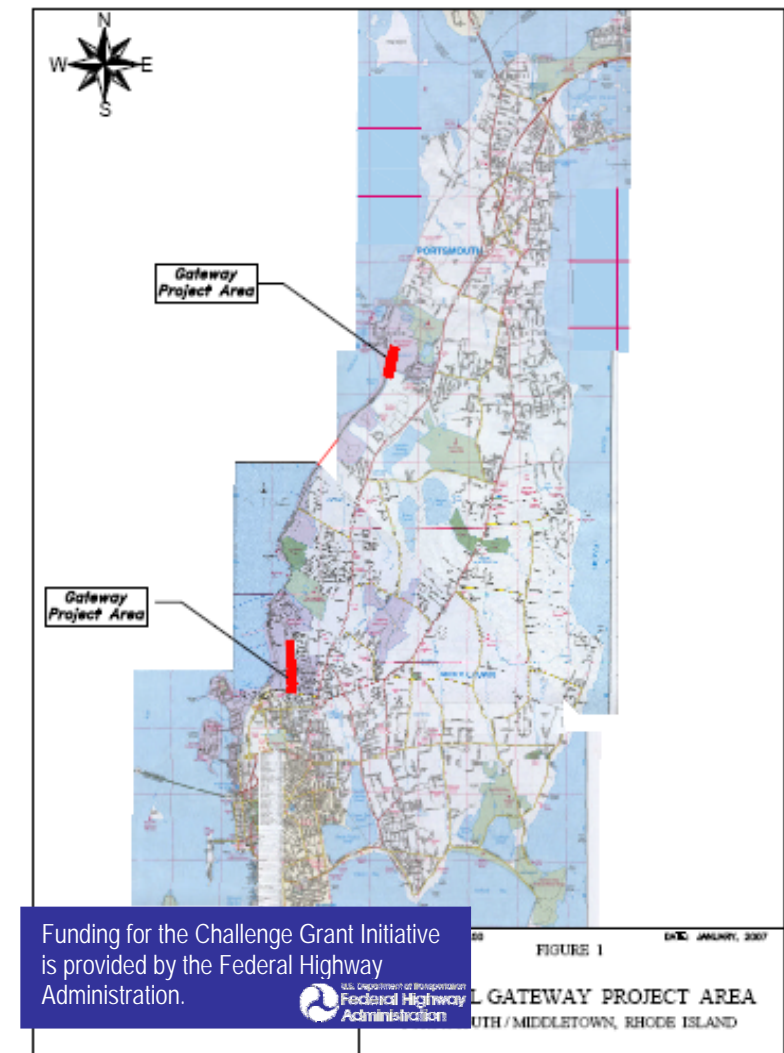
South Gateway; Simonpietri Drive: The conceptual alignment includes a roundabout at the intersection of Coddington Highway and generally follows the existing roadway alignment although further coordination is required with Naval Station Newport prior to selection of a final alignment. This alignment includes reconstruction of 3,880 linear feet of Simonpietri Drive, including new 400-foot roadway. Security mitigation costs may be significant and far exceed roadway construction costs; additionally emergency vehicle access and response time on the base is a major consideration. Based on uncertainties of emergency access road and security costs and based on preliminary information and discussions with the Navy, it is likely that the cost will range between \$20 and 30 million. Any costs associated with the implementation of this project for public access are not expected to be funded by the Navy.

Right Of Way; Shoreline Drive: The right-of-way for the proposed Shoreline Drive area needs to be adequate to accommodate not only vehicular traffic, but also bicyclists and pedestrians. Of the four designs, the two preferred designs are based on a two-lane vehicle roadway. All the proposals incorporate 12-foot wide travel lanes, at least 2-foot wide shoulders, and at least one 5-foot wide sidewalk. The two proposals that have only one sidewalk substitute the second sidewalk with a 10-foot wide shared use path and a 5-foot wide road separation. Roadway cross sections varies from 32 to 64 feet, while the total ROW desired ranges from 50 to 80 feet it was noted that additional ROW would be required for wider facilities and that by acquiring ROW earlier, future costs could be avoided and that there would be greater control over roadway access and adjacent development.

Next Steps

The next steps in this project are dependent on others. Normally the process would enter the next design phase, but in this case all activities will remain on hold until the disposition land is finalized and the security and emergency vehicle access on the naval base can be resolved. The Navy currently owns

much
of the
land



associated with Shoreline Drive, and some of the land need for the roundabout and the connection to Shoreline Drive is owned by private developers. The security and emergency issues could be a major stumbling block, in part because of their nature, and in part because of the costs involved.