

Narragansett Landing Implementation Study  
Providence, Rhode Island

*Prepared for*  
The City of Providence

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January, 2003

### **Master Plan Objectives**

The first phase of development needs to test and implement the master plan objectives. These objectives were part of the decision-making that led to the selection of the first phase area between Collier Point Park and State Pier (Narragansett North).

- **Transform the waterfront image as gateway:** Of all the areas on the waterfront some of the most noxious and unsightly are in the Narragansett North area, including the asphalt plant, abandoned oil tanks, and salt pile. These uses need to be addressed in an early phase otherwise it will be difficult to attract new uses and change the character of the waterfront. Some of the more difficult remediation may be required, but again this is a necessary first phase activity to inspire confidence for investment.
- **Create a waterfront boulevard spine:** The redesign of Allens Avenue is a significant component of the first phase and will include the entire corridor from Eddy Street to Thurbers Avenue. In order to allow for phasing and to expedite implementation, the width of the right-of-way will not change, but the character of the corridor will change to accommodate pedestrians and bicycles as well as vehicles.
- **Strengthen the regional open space system:** One of the strengths of the Narragansett North section is the ability to extend the open space improvements on Collier Point and create a coherent waterfront esplanade in a cove between the Point and State Pier.
- **Create windows on the water:** The creation of waterfront parks between Allens Avenue and the water's edge will welcome the larger Providence community into the site and down to the water. The Narragansett North is focused around the Public Street Park. Additional parkland will be available at the foot of State Pier and near Collier Point Park.
- **Provide continuous public access:** Continuous public access is a hallmark of the plan. People will be able to walk through a variety of waterfront environments including a natural vegetated zone near Collier Point, broad formal esplanades in front of the development blocks, special features at Public Street Park, fishing piers that extend out into the water, and boat activity, interpretive features, and restaurants on State Pier.
- **Create value for real estate:** The development parcels are organized around the large open spaces at Public Street Park, Collier Point Park, and State Pier Park. In addition, the placement and massing of each building will maximize views to water and parkland. Parking garages are located in the middle of the block and along the edge of the highway.
- **Plan for a fine-grain mix of uses:** Narragansett North lends itself to residential development, office, retail, cultural, institutional, and/or research laboratories related to the hospital and universities. With this flexibility, the development can respond to market demand and its fluctuations over time. Ideally, the district will include some component of all these activities to generate a lively 24-hour setting along the streets and waterfront parks.

From Collier Point, a soft waterfront edge vegetated with natural plantings along the shore and banks will provide a habitat for birds and other wildlife. A pathway will wind along the top of the bank providing access to a grassy lawn area overlooking Narragansett Bay. This park area will connect Collier Point to the larger waterfront park system, improving access for Providence residents. The medical research campus will be organized around the park to maximize views and create a unique setting.

Blackstone Street will connect to the waterfront edge as a broad tree-lined boulevard. From this point south, the waterfront will become more formal with wide esplanades between the proposed development and the seawall. Improvement to the seawall will shore up the existing edge and create the setting for a gracious walk overlooking the bay. Along the waterfront walkway, green lawns will be shaded by stands of canopy trees. Within these areas could be benches, public art, and open areas for informal recreation.

Small public streets will frame the edge of the esplanade parks, allowing for public parking and additional sidewalk areas on both sides. A row of canopy trees will line the upland side of the road so that open views are maintained across the street and the esplanade to the bay beyond. The width of the waterfront parks accommodates the high velocity flood zone, with development set back away from the wave action and storm surges. With some fill along the waterfront esplanade and streets, the first floor of residential development will be approximately five feet above the sidewalk, suggesting gracious residential stoops, terraces overlooking the parks, and the potential for ground floor restaurants along this edge.

By improving the existing pier structures, Narragansett North will feature a series of long narrow finger piers that reach out into the water. These piers will be ideal for fishing and transient boat moorings and could feature shade structures. Commercial or residential development and permanent marinas are discouraged because of the high velocity flood zone in this area.

At the foot of Public Street, a new two and a half acre park will welcome visitors into the waterfront district. The park will be surrounded by residential development to the north and south, providing "eyes on the park". An office building to the west will have fine views out to the water. A playground will provide a destination for families in the area, adding life and activity to the park. Open lawns and occasional shade trees will offer informal recreation areas. At the waterfront edge, a shade structure overlooks a small inlet or water feature and a set of curved stairs lead down to the water's edge. This area could provide a setting for informal performances or a venue for renting toy sailboats.

The State Pier is seen as a major cultural resource for the City of Providence, a place where many of the City's immigrants landed. The pier should be reclaimed for public access and could feature a cultural destination such as an estuarium or an interpretive museum celebrating its role in the City's past. Waterfront dining would complement this program and create a destination to draw many people to Narragansett Landing to experience the water's edge. The State Pier experience would extend inland along Bay Street to create another significant park area with views from Allens Avenue to the water.

- Vacant or Parking

The predominant uses in Zone 2 are abandoned oil tanks, salt storage, and a ship repair business. The ship repair business is located on land leased from the State of Rhode Island and is a viable use that will need to be moved to an alternative location, such as Quonset Point or elsewhere in the harbor. Oil tank use, salt piles, and other bulk loading should be consolidated in ProvPort.

Zone 3 contains a variety of active commercial and industrial uses including boat repair and metal works, offices, several small warehouses, a service station, a nightclub, a diner, vehicle repair, a hazardous waste processing facility, adult entertainment uses, an asphalt processing plant, plus surface parking/vehicle storage and vacant lots. Issues related to the asphalt processing plant and a hazardous waste processing facility, will need to be addressed in the redevelopment process and may include regulatory requirements, availability of alternative sites, and public acceptance of these uses in other locations. Most businesses within Zone 3 appear to be reasonably healthy and there is less overall abandonment in this area than on the east side of Allens Avenue. Many of the existing office uses in this area could continue to operate during the initial phases of development. Other uses, such as the asphalt plant and the adult entertainment, will continue to discourage investment in the area.

Uses in Zone 4 consist mainly of warehouses and outdoor storage, surface parking and vacant land. Many of the warehouses within Zone 4 are in poor repair and appear to have been abandoned.

Few of the current land uses are compatible with the long-term vision for the study area, which anticipates the relocation of most existing uses. While suitable alternative locations are available within the Providence area for many uses, issues such as regulatory requirements, nuisance impacts and public acceptance will make the relocation of the ship repair facility, asphalt processing plant and hazardous waste processing facility more challenging. The greater number of active businesses within Zone 3 also makes land assembly within this area more complicated.

#### **Building Conditions**

The architecture and condition of existing buildings was compared to contemporary standards for residential and commercial use to identify those with reuse potential. Further, architectural value was assessed to identify buildings for long-term reuse. Three re-use categories were established:

- Long-term Re-use, which comprises buildings that were considered of historic or architectural interest
- Short-term Re-use, encompassing buildings that could be used for office or other use on an interim basis without conflicting with planned new uses within the study area
- Potential Demolition, which are buildings that are recommended to be demolished because of their condition or their incompatibility with planned future uses within the study area.

**Table 7. Conceptual Cost Estimate Summary**

	<b>Total Construction Costs</b>	<b>Indirect Costs (20% of Construction Cost)</b>	<b>Total Project Costs</b>
<b>Land Reclamation</b>	<b>\$25,979,000</b>	<b>\$5,195,000</b>	<b>\$31,175,000</b>
<b>Streets</b>			
- Allens Avenue	\$7,136,000	\$1,427,000	\$8,563,000
- Blackstone Street Extension	\$596,000	\$119,000	\$715,000
- Side Streets	\$5,829,000	\$1,166,000	\$6,995,000
Subtotal Streets	<b>\$13,561,000</b>	<b>\$2,712,000</b>	<b>\$16,273,000</b>
<b>Parks</b>			
- Collier Point Park Expansion	\$1,630,000	\$326,000	\$1,956,000
- Public Street Park	\$3,526,000	\$705,000	\$4,231,000
- Bay Street Park	\$1,741,000	\$348,000	\$2,089,000
- Esplanade North	\$3,432,000	\$686,000	\$4,118,000
- Esplanade South	\$3,255,000	\$651,000	\$3,906,000
Subtotal Parks	<b>\$13,584,000</b>	<b>\$2,716,000</b>	<b>\$16,300,000</b>
<b>Piers</b>			
- State Pier	\$5,066,000	\$1,013,000	\$6,079,000
- North Fishing Pier	\$2,821,000	\$564,000	\$3,385,000
- Central Fishing Pier	\$583,000	\$117,000	\$700,000
- South Fishing Pier	\$1,539,000	308,000	\$1,847,000
Subtotal Piers	<b>\$10,009,000</b>	<b>\$2,002,000</b>	<b>\$12,011,000</b>
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$63,133,000</b>	<b>\$12,625,000</b>	<b>\$75,759,000</b>

**Development Entity**

HR&A recommends that the Providence Redevelopment Agency (PRA) lead the development effort. The PRA is a quasi-governmental agency whose core mission is to develop underutilized areas into productive, tax-generating properties. On a practical level, PRA handles real estate transactions for the City and obtains blighted properties through title foreclosure, negotiated sales, and eminent domain. Given its mission and authority, the PRA is the most logical entity to oversee the real estate transactions and redevelopment activities that will be necessary at Narragansett Landing.

The team envisions that the PRA will act as land developer of the site, assembling sites (through acquisition as further described below), developing infrastructure pursuant to the

- *Years 5-10.* By this time, a commercial anchor, public improvements, and residential activity will have created a site address. PRA will dispose of sites for residential development south of Public Street Park. Approximately 290,000 new square feet of commercial construction, primarily for office use, will be sold to private and non-profit developers along O'Connell Street and along Allens Avenue. To induce investment, PRA will likely offer discounted sales prices and lease rates. As well, the City may choose to undertake piers improvements along the waterfront, beginning with State Pier. If resources are not available, however, these improvements could be postponed until after Year 10.

### **Acquisition Strategy**

X The first step is to obtain site control. In order to ensure that the City retain the flexibility to promote economic development uses over "highest-and-best uses," and to ensure that the design and planning objectives of the Master Plan are achieved, HR&A recommends that, initially, the entire site come under public control by designating all of Narragansett Landing from Collier Point Park to Thurbers Avenue for condemnation pursuant to a Redevelopment Plan.

Phase 1 focuses resources on the parcels between Collier Point Park and State Pier. Sites will be acquired, existing tenants relocated, and sites prepared for development. South of State Pier, PRA will acquire sites and lease back properties to tenants, thereby accruing an annual revenue stream for PRA.<sup>4</sup> From a market point of view, Phase 1's proximity to the City's commercial core and major institutions makes it a logical starting point for redevelopment. The area is characterized by vacant and underutilized industrial activity.

PRA is vested with broad statutory powers pursuant to The Redevelopment Act of 1956 (R.I. G.L. § 45-31 to 45-33) that empower PRA to exercise the power of eminent domain in blighted areas or areas in which there is a strong public interest. Before PRA condemns a property, a Redevelopment Plan is presented for public review and adopted by the Providence City Council. For the City Council to approve the Plan, specific funds must be identified by the PRA to be used for acquisition of the properties.

X As per state norms, PRA will make attempts at negotiated sale with landowners in the Phase 1 area once the Redevelopment Plan is approved. This would likely require a combination of outright taking and "friendly condemnation," i.e. taking through the process of negotiated sale. Eminent domain will be used in this instance to expedite and assure transfer and to clear title to all properties. The Redevelopment Plan will provide both a land acquisition mechanism and a mechanism for assuring the planning and design objectives of the Master Plan are met.

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<sup>4</sup> Annual leasing revenues are estimated at 10% of the assessed values (year 2000) of existing properties.

GIS Reference No.	Street No.	Street	Total Area (ac)	Land Area (ac)	Water Area (ac)	Current Owner	Existing Land Use	Re-use/Demolition Recommendation	Environmental Conditions
022-0351	50	ALLENS AVE	31.1	30.7	0.4	NEW ENGLAND POWER CO	WDBL	Demolition	Medium (suspected)
022-0243	72	ALLENS AVE	0.8	0.8		SIMOURIAN, JOHN A TR	Warehouse	Demolition	Unknown
046-0591	30	HENDERSON	0.9	0.3	0.6	NARRAGANSETT ELECTRI	Vacant/Parking	N/A	Unknown
046-0160	120	ALLENS AVE	18.3	11.6	6.7	SPRAGUE C H + SON CO	WDBL	Demolition	High (petroleum)
046-0128	178	ALLENS AVE	0.5	0.5		CARGIL INCORPORATED	WDBL	Demolition	High (hazardous)
046-0481	164	ALLENS AVE	7.0	2.5	4.5	NORTHEAST PETROLEUM/TWO THOUSAND TWO COR	WDBL	Demolition	High (hazardous)
046-0489	186	ALLENS AVE	2.0	1.7	0.3	NORTHEAST PETROLEUM/GREENE COMPANY?	WDBL	Demolition	High (hazardous)
046-0501	186	ALLENS AVE	3.1	0.1	3.0	NORTHEAST PETROLEUM/GREENE COMPANY	WDBL	Vacant	High (hazardous)
046-0317	206	ALLENS AVE	0.4	0.4		PRIME PROPERTIES RIG	Warehouse	Long-term Re-use	High (hazardous)
046-0319	230	ALLENS AVE	0.2	0.2		CITY TIRE COMPANY	Automotive	Demolition	High (hazardous)
046-0323	80	PUBLIC	0.3	0.3		CITY TIRE COMPANY	Automotive	Demolition	High (hazardous)
046-0325	70	PUBLIC	0.8	0.8		RI, STATE OF	Industrial	Demolition	High (hazardous)
046-0326	242	ALLENS AVE	1.6	1.6		RI, STATE OF	WDSR	Demolition	Unknown
046-0361	60	PUBLIC	10.2	3.3	6.8	RI, STATE OF	WDSR	Demolition	Unknown
047-0804	232	ALLENS AVE	0.8	0.8		RI, STATE OF	WDSR	Demolition	Unknown
047-0803	242	ALLENS AVE	2.7	2.6	0.1	RED BRIDGE PROPERTIE	WDSR	Short-term Re-use	Unknown
047-0805	242	ALLENS AVE (REAR)	1.1	0.4	0.7	RI, STATE OF	WDSR	Short-term Re-use	Unknown
047-0655	252	ALLENS AVE	7.9	4.7	3.1	STABLEX RI INC	Warehouse	Demolition	Medium (suspected)
047-0146	278	ALLENS AVE	7.3	3.2	4.2	DTP INC	Warehouse	N/A	Unknown
047-0148	284	ALLENS AVE	0.8	0.8		RED BRIDGE PROPERTIE	Warehouse	Demolition	Unknown
047-0147	288	ALLENS AVE	8.4	4.2	4.2	MAFFEO, ANGELO C TRU	Warehouse	Demolition	Medium (data)
047-0368	338	ALLENS AVE	16.8	9.6	7.2	CUMBERLAND FARMS INC	Warehouse	Long-term Re-use	Unknown
047-0799	386	ALLENS AVE	2.1	0.7	1.5	CITY OF EAST PROVIDE	Vacant/Parking	N/A	Unknown
047-0601	434	ALLENS AVE	12.3	6.3	6.0	BOLIDEN METREC INC	Vacant/Parking	Demolition	High (hazardous)
055-0426	15	THURBERS AVE	0.3	0.3		CASTLE PROPERTIES LL	Commercial	Outside Analysis Area	Unknown
055-0434	14	LEHIGH	0.9	0.9		BROOMFIELD I AND SON	Industrial	Demolition	Unknown
055-0431	12	LEHIGH	0.3	0.3		BROOMFIELD I AND SON	Industrial	Demolition	Unknown
047-0564	1	WARREN WAY	0.9	0.9		ALWAR EQUITIES INC	Commercial	Short-term Re-use	Unknown
047-0560	14	WARREN PLACE	1.1	1.1		WARREN OIL COMPANY	Warehouse	Demolition	Unknown
047-0519	355	ALLENS AVE	0.6	0.6		WARREN OIL COMPANY	Commercial	Demolition	High (petroleum)
047-0526	27	WARREN PLACE	0.2	0.2		WARREN EQUITIES INC	Warehouse	Demolition	Unknown
047-0808	165	POE	0.1	0.1		AERIAL ADVERTISING	Vacant/Parking	N/A	Unknown
047-0419	329	ALLENS AVE	1.4	1.4		WALCO ELECTRIC COMPA	Vacant/Parking	N/A	Unknown
047-0412	167	POE	0.1	0.1		AERIAL ADVERTISING	Commercial	Demolition	Unknown
047-0662	36	OXFORD	0.1	0.1		CMR REALTY LLC	Commercial	Short-term Re-use	Unknown
047-0319	303	ALLENS AVE	1.3	1.3		WALCO ELECTRIC COMPA	Warehouse	Short-term Re-use	Unknown
047-0376	35	OXFORD	0.5	0.5		ENGINEERED PLASTICS	Commercial	Long-term Re-use	Unknown
047-0801	149	POE	0.1	0.1		ENGINEERED PLASTICS	Vacant/Parking	Demolition	Unknown
047-0274	307	ALLENS AVE	0.2	0.2		ARENA, ROBERT N	Commercial	Demolition	Unknown
047-0228	299	ALLENS AVE	0.8	0.8		VOCCOLA, JOHN M JR	Automotive	Demolition	Unknown
047-0800	141	POE	0.3	0.3		LABELLE, RAYMOND R	Vacant/Parking	N/A	Unknown
047-0816	287	ALLENS AVE	0.2	0.2		DADS REALTY LLC	Vacant/Parking	N/A	Unknown
047-0817	120	POE	0.7	0.7		DADS REALTY LLC	Automotive	Demolition	Unknown
047-0802	125	POE	0.6	0.6		C AND F FAMILY LIMIT	Vacant/Parking	N/A	Unknown
047-0100	265	ALLENS AVE	1.4	1.4		STABLEX RI INC	Industrial	Demolition	Medium (suspected)
047-0807	101	POE	0.3	0.3		HAUN, STEPHEN T	Warehouse	Demolition	Unknown
047-0059	261	ALLENS AVE	0.2	0.2		STABLEX RI INC	Industrial	N/A	Medium (suspected)
047-0058	259	ALLENS AVE	0.1	0.1		STABLEX RI INC	Industrial	N/A	Medium (suspected)
047-0060	145	SHERBURNE	0.1	0.1		STABLEX RI INC	Industrial	N/A	Medium (suspected)
047-0061	149	SHERBURNE	0.1	0.1		STABLEX RI INC	Industrial	N/A	Medium (suspected)
047-0062	153	SHERBURNE	0.1	0.1		STABLEX RI INC	Industrial	N/A	Medium (suspected)

**Land Use Categories**

- Commercial
- Automotive
- Warehouse (including distribution)
- Industrial
- Water Dependent Bulk Loading (WDBL)
- Water Dependent Ship Repair (WDSR)
- Vacant/Parking (including outdoor storage)

**Building Categories**

- Long-term Re-use
- Short-term Re-use
- Demolition



City of Providence

Figure 1: PHASE PLAN

**Narragansett Landing**  
Providence, RI



- 1. Office
- 2. Residential
- 3. Retail/ Restaurant



November, 2002





