

AQUIDNECK ISLAND



O u r S h a r e d V i s i o n

Additional copies of this publication are available from the Rhode Island Sea Grant Communications Office, University of Rhode Island Bay Campus, Narragansett, RI 02882-1197. Order P1529.

Loan copies of this publication are available from the National Sea Grant Depository, Pell Library Building, University of Rhode Island Bay Campus, Narragansett, RI 02882-1197. Order RIU-B-99-001.

This publication is sponsored in part by Rhode Island Sea Grant, under NOAA Grant No. NA86RG0076, and by Alletta Morris McBean Charitable Trust, Prince Charitable Trusts, Prospect Hill Foundation and van Beuren Charitable Foundation. The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of NOAA or any of its sub-agencies. The U.S. Government is authorized to produce and distribute reprints for governmental purposes notwithstanding any copyright notation that may appear hereon.

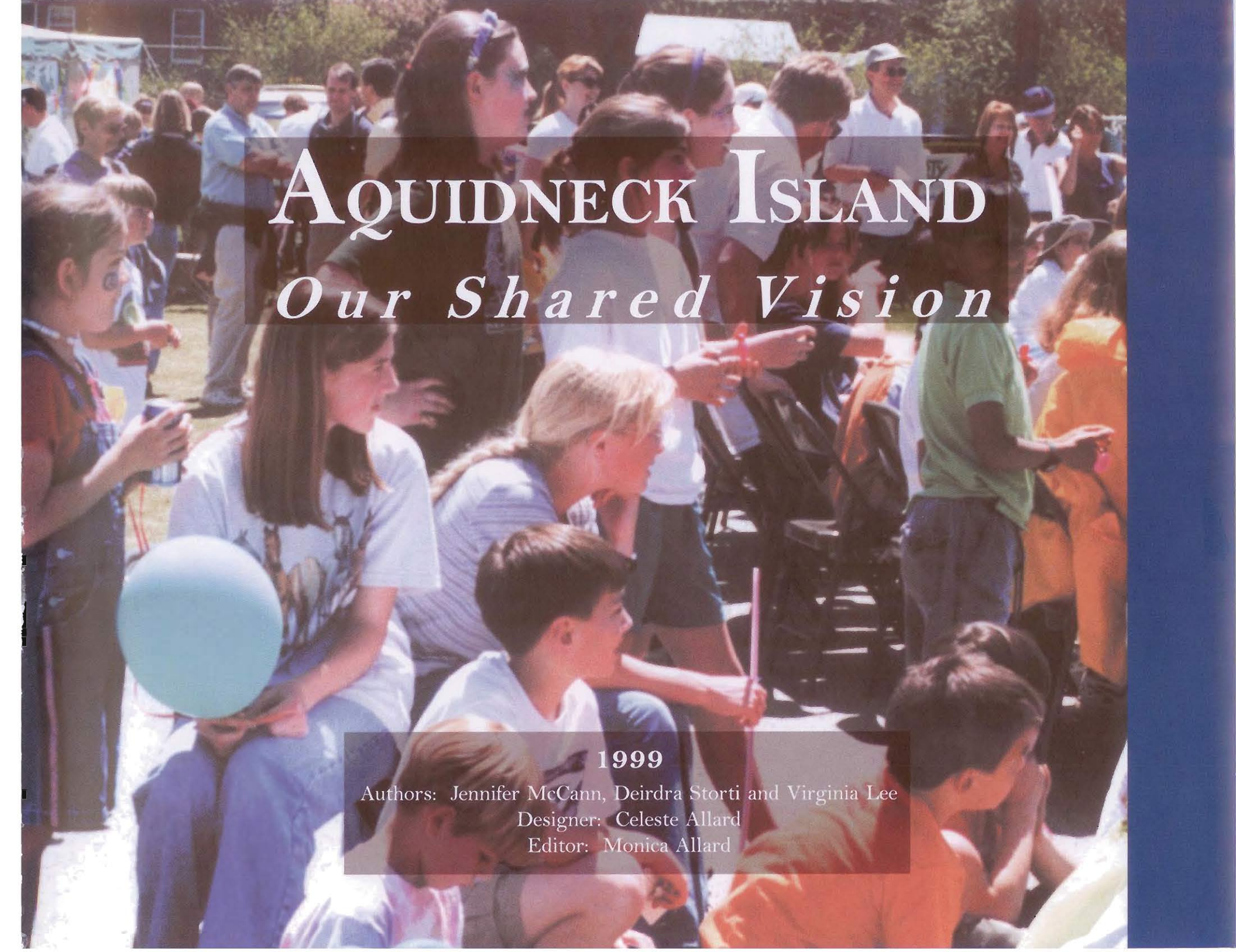
This document should be referenced as:

McCann, J., D. Storti, and V. Lee. 1999. *Aquidneck Island: Our Shared Vision*. Rhode Island Sea Grant. Narragansett, RI. 74 pp.

Aquidneck Island Partnership Coastal Management Report #3304



COASTAL RESOURCES CENTER
University of Rhode Island



AQUIDNECK ISLAND

Our Shared Vision

1999

Authors: Jennifer McCann, Deirdra Storti and Virginia Lee

Designer: Celeste Allard

Editor: Monica Allard





CONTENTS

Creation and Purpose of <i>Aquidneck Island: Our Shared Vision</i>	1
A Livable Landscape	3
Social Well-being	18
A Strong Local Economy	38
Multiple Modes of Transportation	60
Acknowledgments	72

The Creation and Purpose of *Aquidneck Island: Our Shared Vision*

In 1997, members of the Aquidneck Island Partnership realized that open space on the island was disappearing, traffic congestion was increasing, residents were not finding high-skilled employment opportunities, and the New England character of the island was vanishing. If Aquidneck Islanders were to sustain their quality of life, they needed a shared vision for the future.

The urgent need to protect the overall character of the island and resolve issues as one island community prompted the partnership to conduct an extensive process to identify a shared vision for the future. They began by researching visioning efforts that have taken place in other communities around the country. They then held numerous public workshops and one-on-one interviews with organizations and individuals. *Aquidneck Island: Our Shared Vision* captures the ideas, concerns and hopes for the future of the island through its residents' own words.

This vision is presented chapters that define the island and four of its key issues: land use, social well-being, economic development and transportation methods. This document celebrates the organizations and individuals that are already playing an active role in the social, economic and environmental future of the island. To join in these efforts, contact the organizations listed at the end of each chapter.

This document is the voice of the people of the island. Their words have formed this shared vision; their actions will make it a reality.

The purpose of this document is to:

- Celebrate the vision that Aquidneck Islanders believe in and will work towards
- Support organizations that are already working towards achieving the vision
- Serve as a foundation for the development and implementation of future planning efforts

"Aquidneck Island is a place worthy of the utmost care and stewardship."


Richard Youngken, Planner, Newport Collaborative Architects, Inc.



A scenic view of Aquidneck Island, Rhode Island, featuring a large, mature tree in the foreground. Two people are sitting on a rock in the shade of the tree, looking out over a lush green landscape with a town and a church spire visible in the distance. The sky is bright and clear.


A Livable Landscape

"Our vision for Aquidneck Island is a place to enjoy and be proud of, a place where our needs to grow and prosper are balanced with our goals to protect and nourish the environment, and to leave it in good shape for future generations."



Aquidneck Islanders realize that development is important and necessary, but it is occurring at a rate that is not allowing them to preserve the places and qualities that they value the most. Residents would like to see managed growth that promotes a balance between preservation and development. More specifically they would like to:

- Link open space areas so that individuals may walk or ride their bikes from one end of the island to the other
- Preserve access to the coast, including harbors, coves and beaches, so that people may swim, fish or enjoy the incredible sunsets and coastal breezes
- Encourage development that complements the island's New England character



"Active farmland, recreational areas and the coastline would be linked by conservation corridors—greenways. The pattern of open space would buffer and frame appropriate areas for growth."

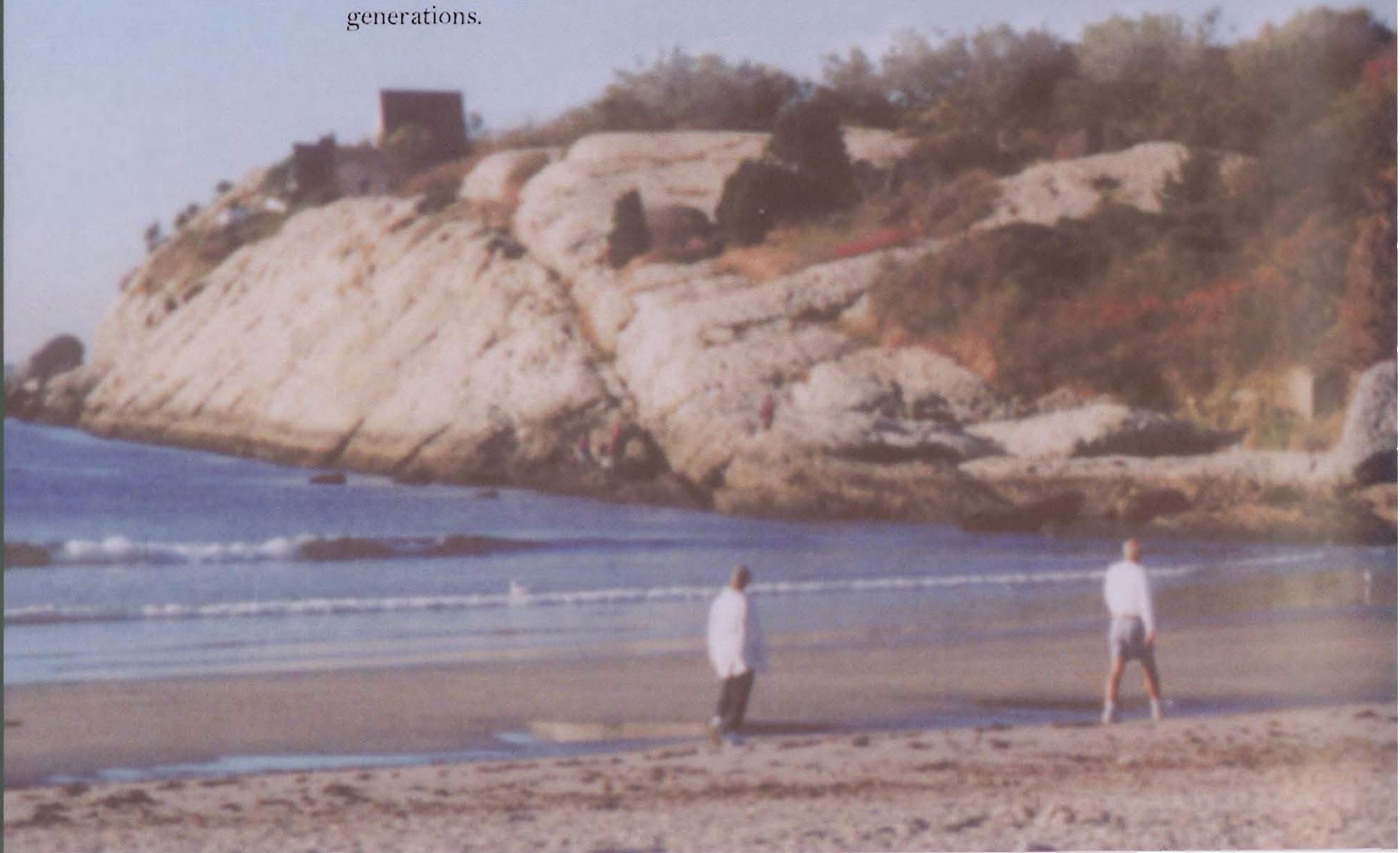
Richard Youngken, Planner, Newport Collaborative Architects, Inc.

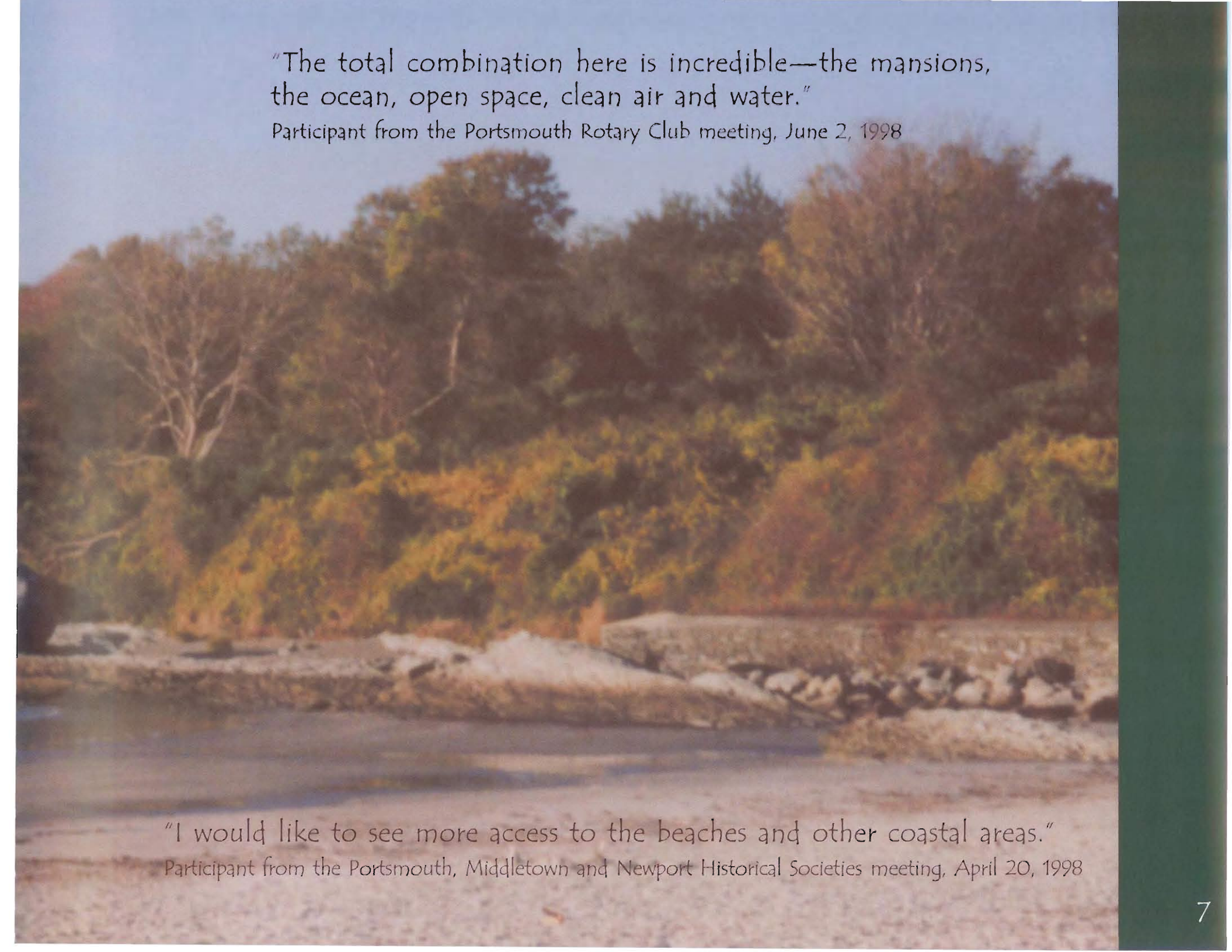
Link Open Space Areas

Watching children play soccer on a Saturday morning in a Portsmouth field, flying kites in a stiff southerly breeze at Brenton Point, swinging at Miantonomi Park, picking strawberries at Sweet Berry Farm, enjoying the solitude while walking around Sachuest Point. Preserving open spaces keeps these activities available to islanders and their children.

Preserve Access to the Coast

Generations of islanders have found opportunities for recreation and reflection at such places as The Glen, Sachuest Point and the island's many beaches. Increasing coastal access for residents as the island develops ensures that these opportunities will be enjoyed by future generations.





"The total combination here is incredible—the mansions,
the ocean, open space, clean air and water."

Participant from the Portsmouth Rotary Club meeting, June 2, 1998

"I would like to see more access to the beaches and other coastal areas."

Participant from the Portsmouth, Middletown and Newport Historical Societies meeting, April 20, 1998

Restore the Health of Coastal Habitats

Mil Kinsella-Sullivan, Common Fence Point Improvement Association

Unless you are a lover of mosquito bites and like the phragmites for what can be hidden there, the salt marsh that is returning to Common Fence Point is a welcome change. In the late 1940s, the Army Corps of Engineers filled in our marsh with dredge spoils from Narragansett Bay. Eventually, 5.14 acres were colonized by the phragmites because the salt water had been choked out. Stagnant water bred mosquitoes, the phragmites were set on fire regularly, and the fish and other wildlife lost their habitat.

After years of complaints about the disturbed area being a dumping site and a mosquito breeding ground, and years of trying to come up with a feasible solution, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM), the State Mosquito Abatement Program, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Save The Bay, and the Town of Portsmouth awarded grants to the Common Fence Point Improvement Association (CFPIA) to restore the site. One partnership led to another, and during the last eight years, we have had an incredible amount of support from our sponsors and from Rhode Islanders. It was the first salt marsh restoration in the state, so enthusiasm ran high.

The CFPIA volunteered its time, and the town and RIDEM helped the association to get the grants and administer them. Others, like the EPA, funded the project. Save The Bay organized a major planting and URI has been monitoring the site for two years. One of the biggest dilemmas was what to do with 22,000 cubic feet of dredge material. Fortunately, the town of Tiverton was happy to receive it for landfill cover.

Other Point residents and I walk around the marsh as often as we can. Managing 40+ acres of beaches, tidal lands and parks takes a lot of effort and coordination. Fortunately, Common Fence Point is a community that understands the importance of working together for the good of the whole. If a group of volunteers from a small community can do it, imagine how much could be accomplished if state and federal governments funded wetland restoration.







Protect Public Access to the Shore

Sid Abbruzzi, Newport Resident

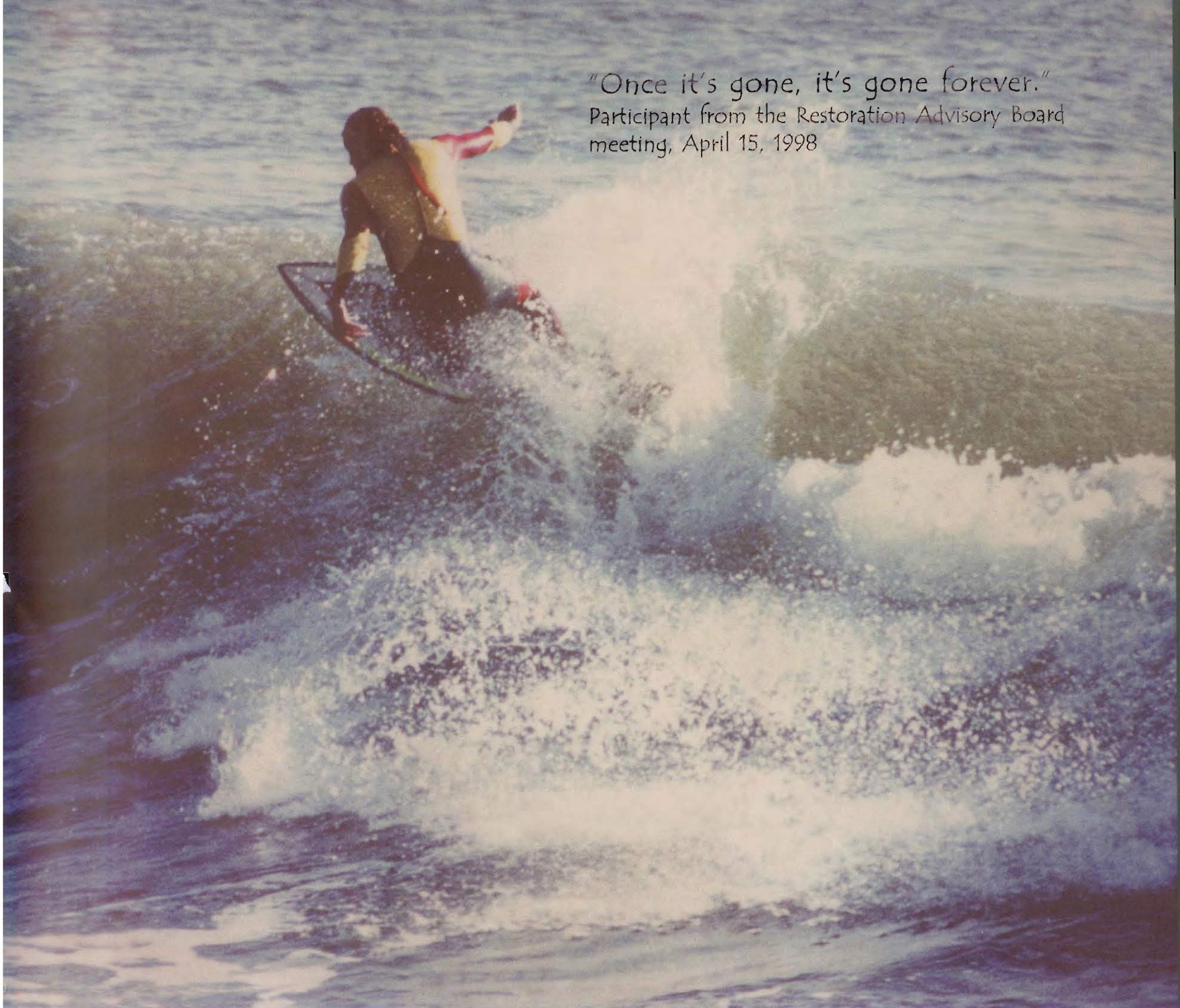
It used to be illegal to surf at many of the major surfing breaks on the island. In Newport, we had a municipal ordinance that controlled where people could access the coast. Even residents couldn't access the stretch from First Beach to Castle Hill without being fined. Yet these were the best surfing spots on the island. To many of us, it seemed absurd that we couldn't enjoy the one thing that made the island so different from any other place we knew.

One night, I decided to keep surfing until the police came and arrested me for breaking the city ordinance. After being summoned to appear in District Court, I was immediately found guilty. I appealed; yet, my petition wasn't recognized until the day of my appearance in Superior Court. The judge reviewed the precedent, found me not guilty, and declared the city ordinance unconstitutional. Since then, all of our surf spots have been on public rights-of-way.

The most effective way to prevent public access from diminishing is to join together and protect those areas that are important to us. Otherwise, Aquidneck Island will reflect communities in Florida and California where privatized development has blocked complete access along the waterfront.



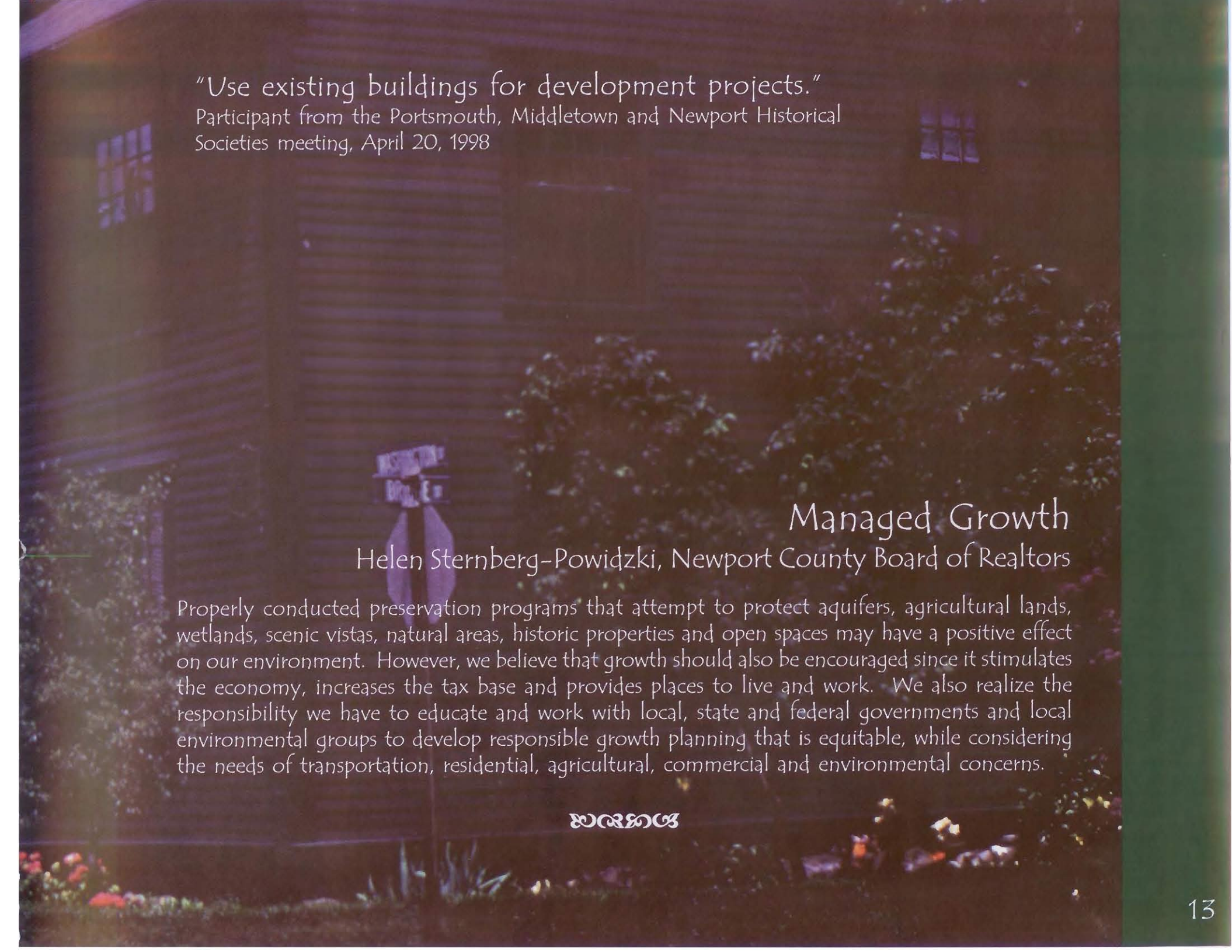
"Once it's gone, it's gone forever."
Participant from the Restoration Advisory Board
meeting, April 15, 1998





Encourage Development That Complements the Island's New England Character

Growth is necessary to build and diversify our economic and social base. Yet, it must be planned in a way that protects the public's safety, enhances the island's beauty and encourages a sustainable economy. By developing in this way, islanders will save scenic vistas, encourage walkable neighborhoods, protect historic sites and promote active community centers.



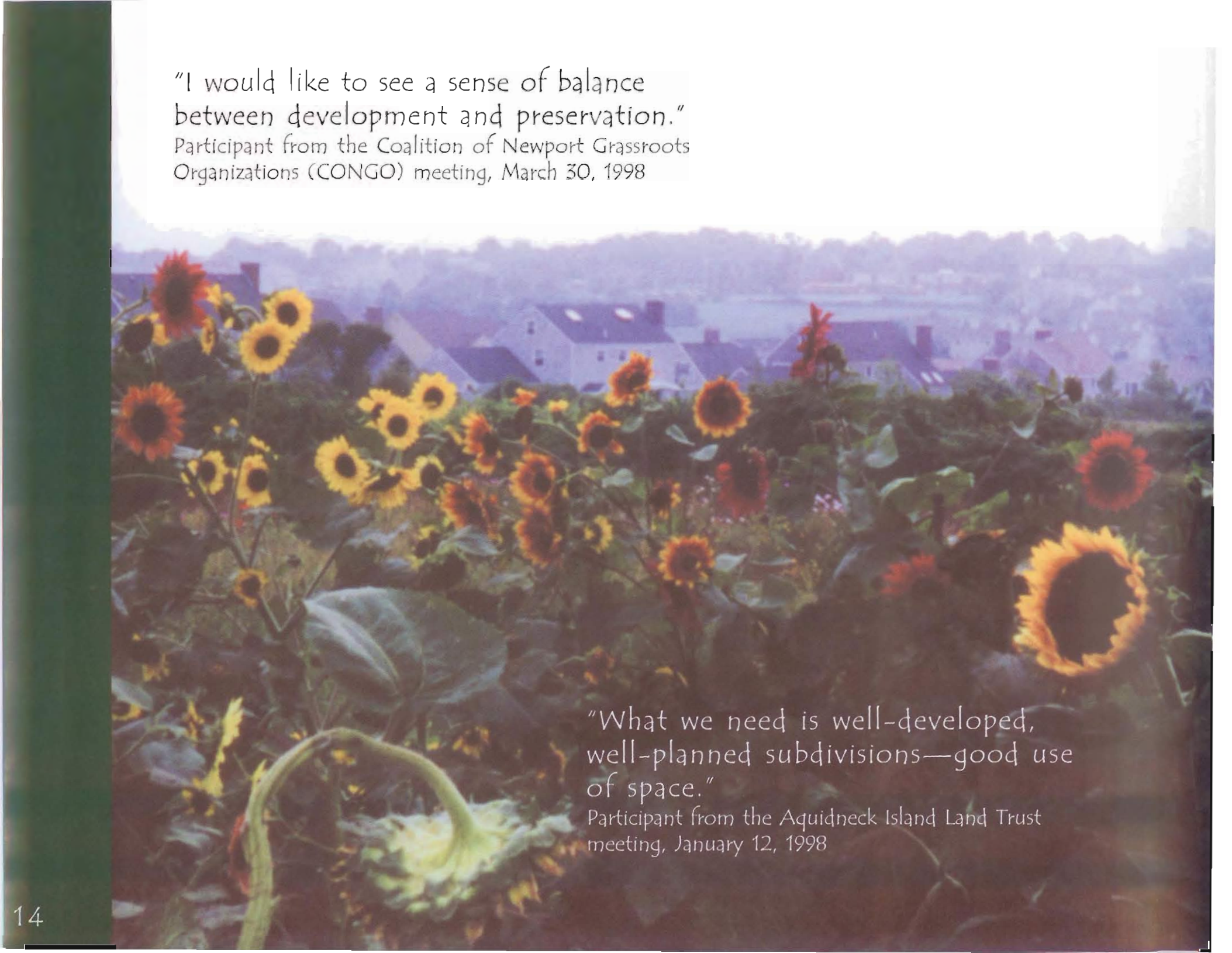
"Use existing buildings for development projects."
Participant from the Portsmouth, Middletown and Newport Historical
Societies meeting, April 20, 1998

Managed Growth

Helen Sternberg-Powidzki, Newport County Board of Realtors

Properly conducted preservation programs that attempt to protect aquifers, agricultural lands, wetlands, scenic vistas, natural areas, historic properties and open spaces may have a positive effect on our environment. However, we believe that growth should also be encouraged since it stimulates the economy, increases the tax base and provides places to live and work. We also realize the responsibility we have to educate and work with local, state and federal governments and local environmental groups to develop responsible growth planning that is equitable, while considering the needs of transportation, residential, agricultural, commercial and environmental concerns.

WARREN



"I would like to see a sense of balance
between development and preservation."
Participant from the Coalition of Newport Grassroots
Organizations (CONGO) meeting, March 30, 1998

"What we need is well-developed,
well-planned subdivisions—good use
of space."

Participant from the Aquidneck Island Land Trust
meeting, January 12, 1998

Shape a Sense of Community

Fred Dallinger, Realtor

We have established a land trust, protected open space and formed an intra-island partnership among Middletown, Portsmouth and Newport. Perhaps now we should look at how we live together and how we can better shape a sense of community among our towns and each other through a new concept in housing. Stuart Staniford-Chen from the Co-housing Network explained it this way:

“Imagine a community where you knew all your neighbors. Where your neighbors would loan you a car if you needed it, or take you to the hospital, or cook dinner for you if you were ill. Think of a place where your children had lots of friends and could safely play [in] the street. Imagine that you came home most nights to eat dinner with friends in the common hall down the road. And think of a place where the houses nestled close together [in] a beautiful natural landscape left as untouched as possible by their presence.”

What this describes is a co-housing community. There are a hundred variations on this basic scheme. Some have taken industrial or commercial buildings and converted them to co-housing. Others did not build their community all at once, but took an existing neighborhood and converted it to co-housing gradually by taking down one wall at a time. Some communities are rural, some are suburban and some are urban. What they all have in common is a fierce commitment to living together in the best way they can. They want to sustain each other and sustain the environment they live in. Co-housing communities, while not for everyone, do offer a new hope for intergenerational living, where people live in a caring community, and where each person is a vital part of the whole community, not an isolated unit.



Get Involved in Ongoing Efforts!

■ The *American Farmland Trust (AFT)* is working to stop the loss of farmland and to promote farming practices that lead to a healthy environment. Contact: AFT, 1200 18th Street NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20036. Tel: (202) 331-7300. Fax: (202) 659-8339. Web site: <http://www.farmland.org>.

■ The *Aquidneck Island Growers' Market* offers island residents locally grown products. The Growers' Market is located at 909 East Main Road, Middletown, and is open Wednesdays (2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.) and Saturdays (9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.). Contact: Lisa Lewis. Tel: (401) 848-0099.

■ The *Aquidneck Island Land Trust (AILT)* is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the open space and natural character of Aquidneck Island. Its goal during the next three years is to preserve 500 additional acres on the island. Aquidneck Islanders can support this effort by becoming members or participating in land trust events. Contact: AILT, 45 Valley Road, Middletown, RI 02842. Tel: (401) 849-2799.

■ The *Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC)* is responsible for managing coastal resources in Rhode Island, including public access to the shore. For more information and a list of current public rights-of-way, contact CRMC. Tel: (401) 222-2476.

Rhode Island Sea Grant Public Access Guide Web site: http://seagrant.gso.uri.edu/riseagrant/AccessGuide/environmental_guide.html.

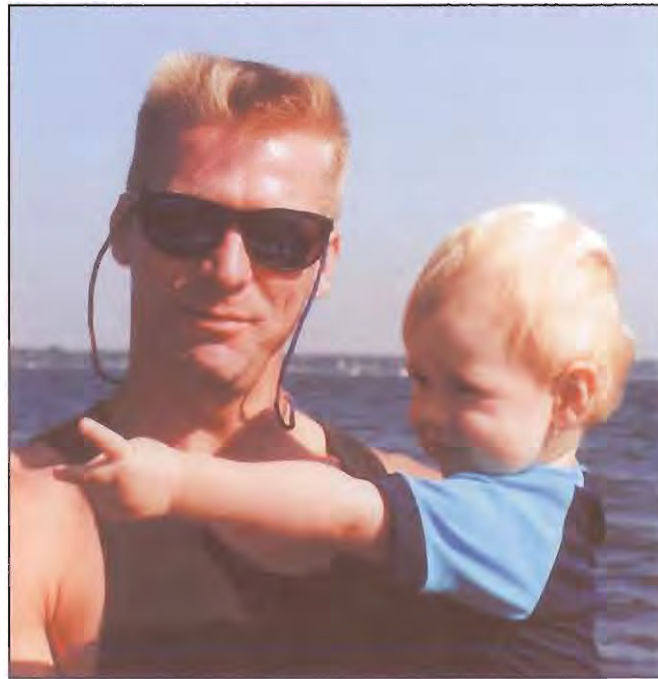
■ *Co-housing Communities* encourage neighbors to live, work and play together. Contact: Fred Dallinger. Tel: (401) 847-5708.

■ The *Eastern Rhode Island Conservation District (ERICD)* is a subdivision of state government that promotes the conservation of soil, water and other resources. Contact: ERICD, 667 Neck Road, Tiverton, RI 02878.

■ The *Environmental Council of Rhode Island (ECRI)* seeks to influence policies and laws that protect and enhance the environment. ECRI provides its members with a forum for sharing information and technical expertise, and provides policy makers and the public with informed opinions and position statements. Contact: ECRI, PO Box 9061, Providence, RI 02940. Tel: (401) 621-8048.

■ *Friends of the Waterfront* is committed to protecting public rights-of-way, historical uses and waterfront views, and promoting increased public access to Newport's waterfront. Tel: (401) 847-1355. Web site: <http://www.newportwaterfront.com>.

■ *Grow Smart Rhode Island* is a statewide initiative organized to represent Rhode Islanders who are



concerned about the state's current development patterns. Contact: Grow Smart RI, 300 Richmond Street, Suite 200, Providence, RI 02903. Tel: (401) 273-5711. Fax: (401) 751-1915.

■ The *National Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program* helps communities protect areas outside the federal domain and without federal ownership. The National Park Service helps groups establish goals, resolve difficult issues and reach consensus on how community resources should be used and managed. Contact: North Atlantic Region, National Park Service, 15 State Street, Boston, MA 02109. Tel: (617) 223-5203. Web site: <http://www.cr.nps.gov>.

■ *The Nature Conservancy (TNC)* is a nonprofit organization that preserves plants, animals and natural communities by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. Contact: TNC, 159 Waterman St., Providence, RI 02906. Tel: (401) 331-7110. Web site: <http://www.tnc.org>.

■ The *Newport Tree Society* offers many programs, including Adopt-a-Spot, tree plantings and Parks-in-Bloom, which are designed to beautify the city. Contact: Newport Tree Society, c/o Scott Wheeler, Newport City Hall, 43 Broadway, Newport, RI 02840. Tel: (401) 848-6496.

■ The *Norman Bird Sanctuary* is dedicated to preserving and protecting habitats for wildlife and educating the public about Aquidneck Island's resources. During the next five years, improving and expanding the current facility will be emphasized in



order to serve better its members and the community. Contact: Norman Bird Sanctuary, 583 Third Beach Road, Middletown, RI 02842. Tel: (401) 846-2577.

■ The *Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's (RIDEM)* mission is to effectively manage, protect and restore the natural resources of the state; prevent environmental degradation; and advocate a conservation ethic among the citizens of Rhode Island. Contact: RIDEM, 235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI 02908. Tel: (401) 222-2771. Web site: <http://www.state.ri.us/dem>.

■ The *Rhode Island Department of Transportation's (RIDOT) Adopt-a-Spot* program encourages individuals and businesses to help beautify a small area in their community. Contact: RIDOT, Adopt-a-Spot, Two Capital Hill, Providence, RI 02903. Or contact Louise Coppola. Tel: (401) 222-2411, ext. 4546.

■ The *Rose Island Lighthouse Foundation* was formed in 1984 to restore and operate the lighthouse. The foundation raises money by allowing individuals to become lighthouse keepers for a week. Tel: (401) 847-4242. Web site: <http://www.roseislandlighthouse.org>.

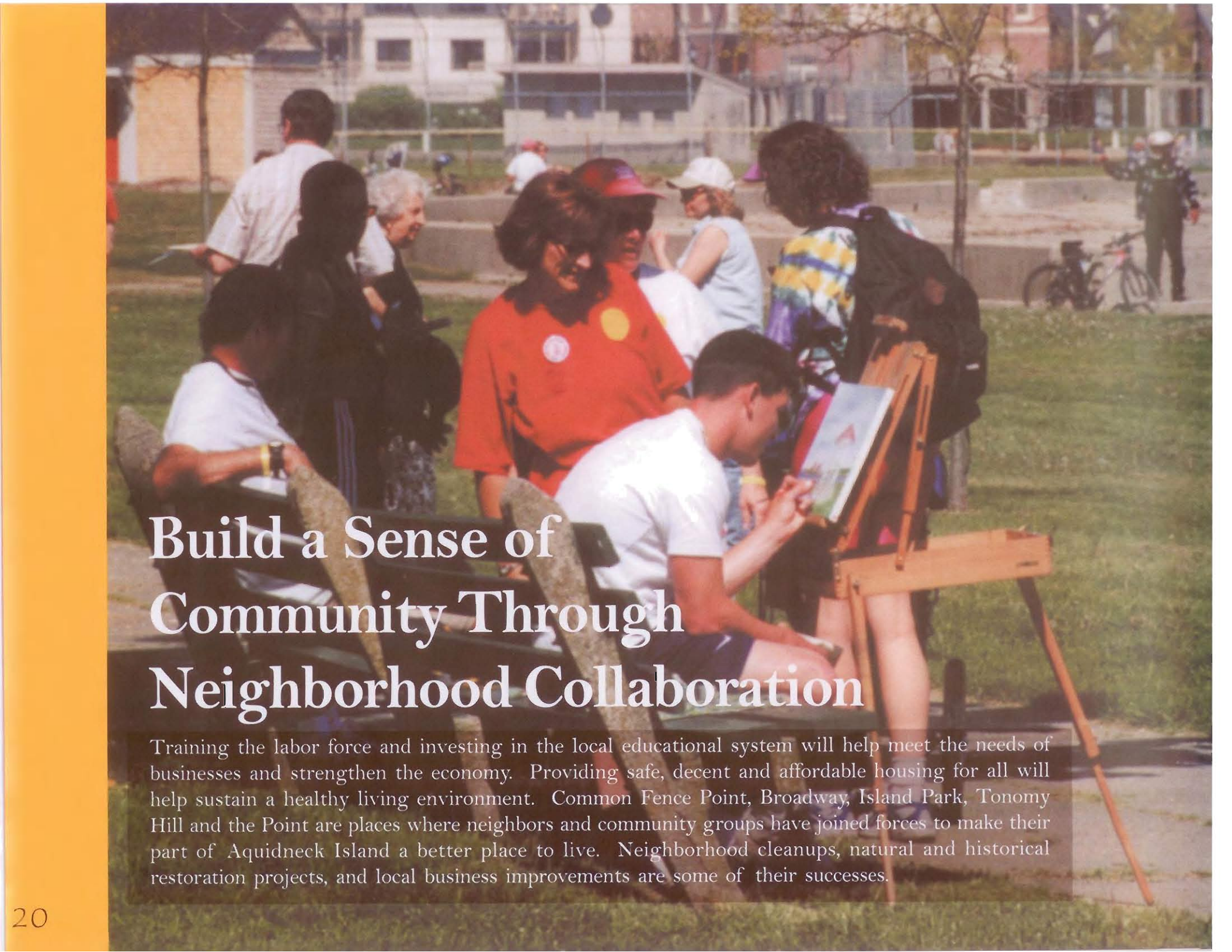
■ The *Trust for Public Land (TPL)* conserves land to help people improve the quality of life in their communities and to protect natural and historic resources for future generations. Contact: TPL, New England Regional Office, 33 Union St. 4th floor, Boston, MA 02108. Tel: (617) 367-6200. Fax: (617) 367-1616. Web site: <http://www.tpl.org>.

A photograph of a child running on a sandy beach at sunset. The child is in silhouette, running away from the camera towards the ocean. The sky is a mix of orange and purple, and the waves are visible in the background. The child's shadow is cast on the sand.

Social Well-being

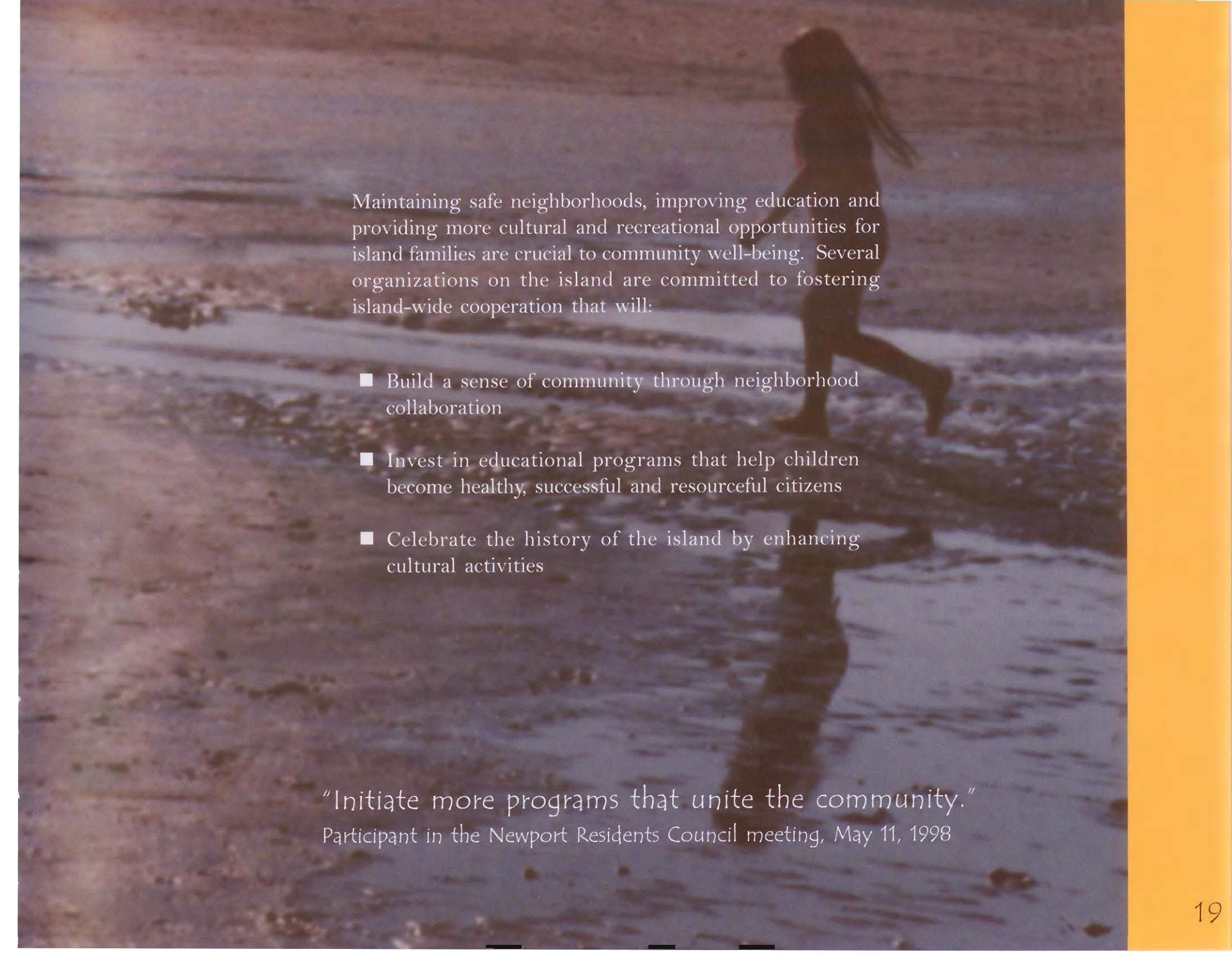
"Our parks, playgrounds and beaches were left to us in trust. In return, our task is to ensure that our community land remains healthy and available to all."

Mil Kinsella-Sullivan, Common Fence Point Resident



Build a Sense of Community Through Neighborhood Collaboration

Training the labor force and investing in the local educational system will help meet the needs of businesses and strengthen the economy. Providing safe, decent and affordable housing for all will help sustain a healthy living environment. Common Fence Point, Broadway, Island Park, Tonomy Hill and the Point are places where neighbors and community groups have joined forces to make their part of Aquidneck Island a better place to live. Neighborhood cleanups, natural and historical restoration projects, and local business improvements are some of their successes.

A person is running on a beach at sunset. The person is in silhouette, running from left to right. The beach is wet, and the person's reflection is visible in the shallow water. The sky is a mix of orange and purple, and the water is dark with some white foam from the waves.

Maintaining safe neighborhoods, improving education and providing more cultural and recreational opportunities for island families are crucial to community well-being. Several organizations on the island are committed to fostering island-wide cooperation that will:

- Build a sense of community through neighborhood collaboration
- Invest in educational programs that help children become healthy, successful and resourceful citizens
- Celebrate the history of the island by enhancing cultural activities

"Initiate more programs that unite the community."

Participant in the Newport Residents Council meeting, May 11, 1998

Build Neighborhood Character

Joanna Sommerville, Newport Resident

I've returned to my hometown, Newport, after being gone for 10 years. It's nice to move about town, encountering familiar faces, as well as return to special places like the beaches and local parks. I took for granted the fresh air, the wide-open spaces and the feeling of safety walking the streets day or night. I like being able to pack a snack and a good book and go out to Fort Adams for the afternoon.

We've re-settled in the neighborhood that I grew up in. Many things have changed, but there is still no place like home. Every year, the neighborhood has a block party to bring out the residents and business owners and to convey to the community all the good things about the Broadway neighborhood.

The improvements in the Broadway area have been well received. I would like to have our area promoted to tourists in the same way as other areas in our city. I envision brochures and maps that include the Broadway shops and historical sites. I would like to be able to say to my many friends who will travel here that they will see street signs that will direct them to Broadway as they exit the bridge.



"We need to build a culture that enables us to come together for both the good of the individual and the good of the whole. In doing this, we will create a community grander than even our greatest dreams."

Peter M. DiBari, Child and Family Services of Newport County



"Talk with each other,
neighbor to neighbor."
Participant from the Newport Residents
Council meeting, May 11, 1998

Foster Safe and Healthy Communities

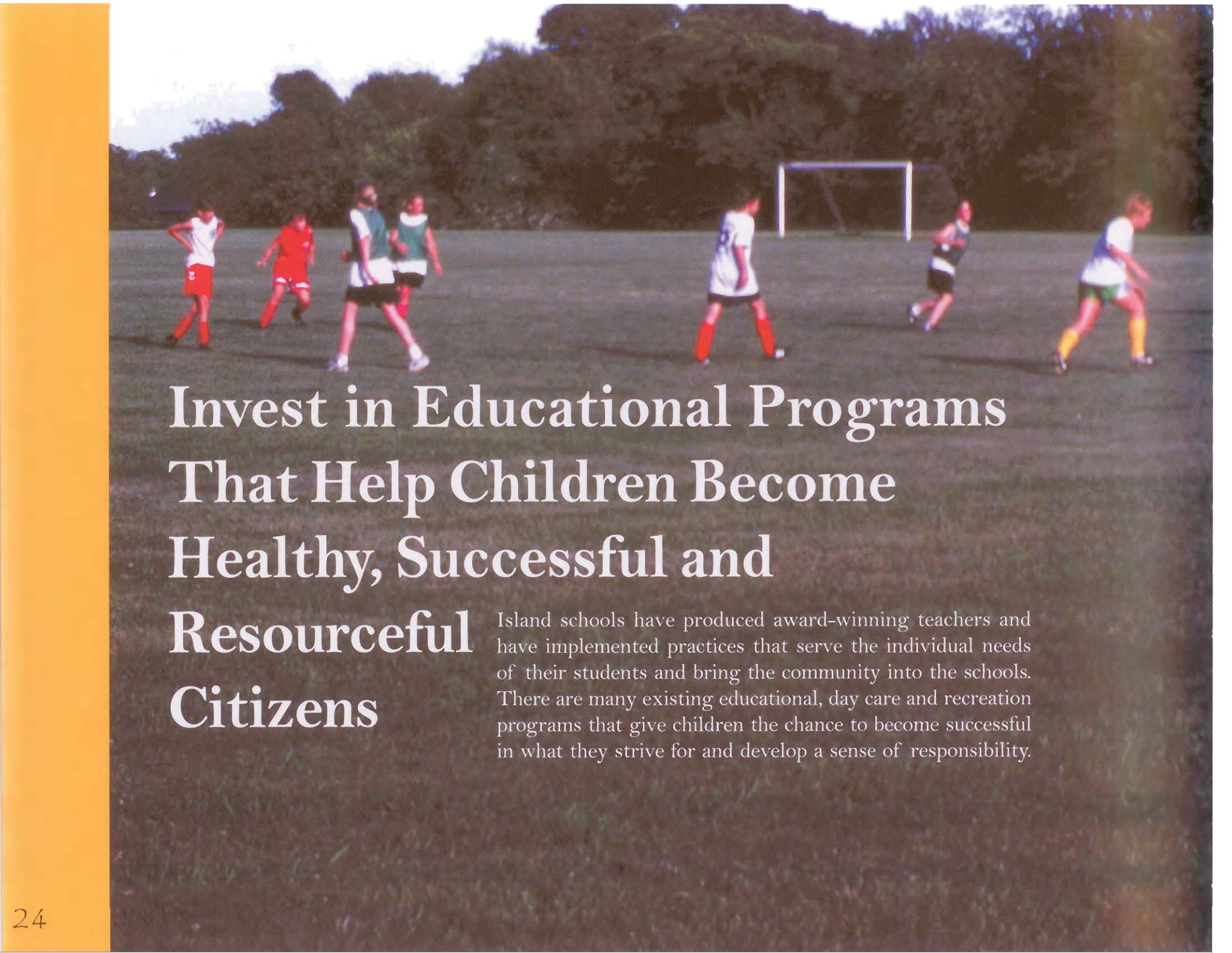
Anne Berman, Church Community Housing Corporation of Newport County

I would like to see islanders work with residents in need to improve their lives. Aquidneck Islanders should invest in safe and healthy communities where underprivileged children can enjoy a backyard, where neighbors help each other renovate their homes and where stable living environments help residents become financially stronger. For instance, first-time homebuyer classes could educate people on paying off debt, managing budgets and establishing down payment funds that will help them qualify for homeownership.

It is essential to develop partnerships that create interdependency among community groups—all to provide better living conditions and quality of life to every resident. Partnerships can build programs that last and promote a strong relationship between islanders, while training and education can create an environment that allows individuals and families to thrive.

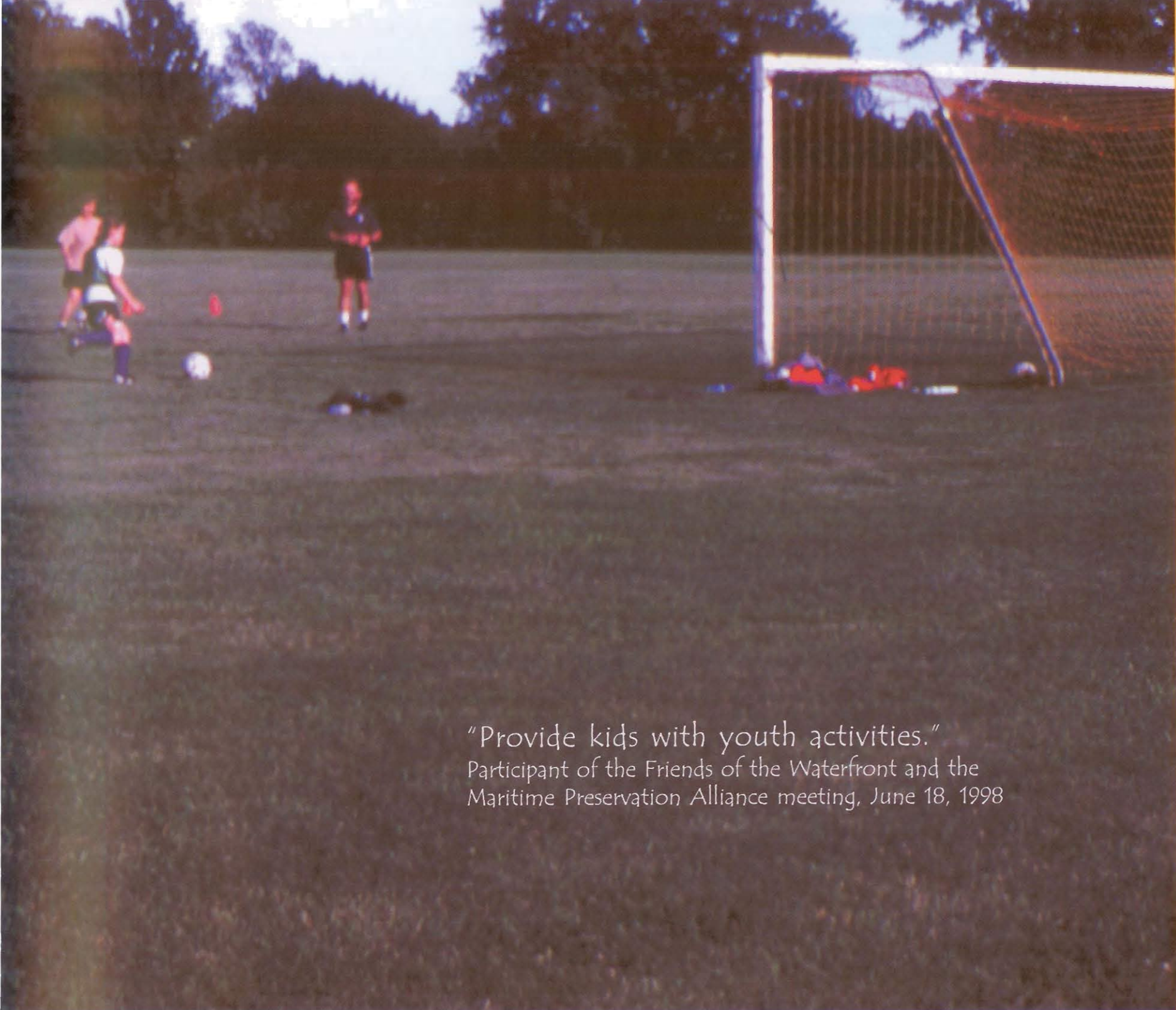


“Provide some spots on the island where people can stop, take in the scenery, learn from informational signs there, and maybe reflect a bit.”
David Brown, Aquidneck Island Planning Commission Member

A group of children are playing soccer on a grassy field. In the background, there is a soccer goal and a line of trees. The children are wearing various colored jerseys (white, red, green, blue) and shorts. The scene is captured in a slightly blurred, action-oriented style.

Invest in Educational Programs That Help Children Become Healthy, Successful and Resourceful Citizens

Island schools have produced award-winning teachers and have implemented practices that serve the individual needs of their students and bring the community into the schools. There are many existing educational, day care and recreation programs that give children the chance to become successful in what they strive for and develop a sense of responsibility.



*"Provide kids with youth activities."
Participant of the Friends of the Waterfront and the
Maritime Preservation Alliance meeting, June 18, 1998*

Foster Successful, Caring Citizens

Terry Gallagher, Newport Housing Authority Maintenance Department

I started Keep It Clean to inspire kids and show them that they can help to improve their community. Over the years, the event has evolved into a community cleanup and celebration with music and a cookout. Many of our employees and friends have volunteered their time and provided prizes.

August 1998 was the ninth annual Keep It Clean Day in Newport's Tonomy Hill and Park-Holm neighborhoods. Over 100 children spent the morning cleaning their yards and streets.

Keep It Clean Day is not just a one-day event about picking up litter. I organized the day so that kids get a sense of accomplishment from working together to reach a goal. This is a way for kids to realize the worth of their community and become responsible for helping one another. Introducing this type of responsibility into children's lives will help them to become successful and caring citizens.



"Promote neighborhood pride with awards for beautification projects."

Participant of the Friends of the Waterfront and the Maritime Preservation Alliance meeting, June 18, 1998



"Keep it Clean helps the morale of the kids and my morale in my daily work in these neighborhoods."
Terry Gallagher, Newport Housing Authority Maintenance Department

Teach Our Youth Marine-Related Skills

Jeff Johnstone, J Boats

In 10 years, I see the local boat-building community more strongly united under the East Bay Economic Initiative. Because of the effectiveness of the initiative, we'll see increased recognition of Rhode Island as the boat-building capital of the world. We'll also boast a successful work-training program that funnels high school students into the boat-building industry.

I'd like to see every kid in Newport County learn how to sail so that it becomes as common as playing soccer is nowadays. Sailing should become a part of every islander's experience, helping connect them with their surroundings while promoting self-confidence, independence and appreciation of our natural resources. Community programs like Sail Newport, International Yacht Restoration School and others could be fully integrated into the public school systems and expanded four- to five-fold over current levels in order to meet demand. Family memberships in these programs (like YMCA memberships) would allow use of boats to those who don't own them.



"We need to provide ourselves and our kids with opportunities to get the skills that will allow us to earn a decent salary."

Participant in the Newport County Board of Realtors meeting, July 8, 1998

An aerial photograph of a crowded festival on a beach. The foreground is filled with a dense crowd of people sitting on colorful towels and blankets. In the middle ground, there are people walking and a yellow canopy. The background shows a harbor with many sailboats and yachts. The text 'Celebrate the History and Culture of the Island' is overlaid in a large, bold, orange font at the top.

Celebrate the History and Culture of the Island

Islandwide efforts can celebrate local history and culture through the purchase of historic buildings, the development of a heritage trail and the organization of music, film and art festivals. Appreciation of this heritage will unite islanders.



Celebrate the Arts

Izabella Casselman, Portsmouth Artist

Newport County has a long-standing tradition of creating functional and fine art. We have makers and designers of furniture, jewelers, boat builders, potters and weavers. We have had landscape artists painting the lushness of Aquidneck Island for the last 200 years. Looking around you can see the many galleries that have opened in the last two decades, the variety of locally produced magazines, both literary and commercial, and the theater companies, all surviving because they fill a variety of needs—both economic and spiritual.

Part of our future depends on remembering our heritage of craftsmanship and the unique beauty of our surroundings.



Get Involved in Ongoing Efforts!

■ **Child and Family Services of Newport County** is dedicated to strengthening families and the communities in which they live. Programs include child care, clinical counseling, transitional housing, a residential volunteer program, elder support services, substance abuse prevention and education, and child welfare services. Contact: Peter M. DiBari, President, Child and Family Services of Newport County, 24 School Street, Newport, RI 02840. Tel: (888) 968-8884, (401) 849-2300.

■ The **Church Community Housing Corporation of Newport County (CCHC)** is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping low- and moderate-income Newport County residents find safe, decent and affordable housing. In collaboration with others, CCHC extends its activities to community and economic development projects that promote well-planned, integrated, stable, safe and healthy communities. Contact: Anne Berman, 50 Washington Square, Newport, RI 02840. Tel: (401) 846-5114.

■ **Coalition of Newport Grassroots Organizations (CONGO)** represents over 40 Newport grassroots

organizations, joined by the common goal of improving quality of life. Those interested in creating a grassroots organization and joining CONGO may do so by contacting

Sally Blackett, CONGO Director, PO Box 864, Newport, RI 02840-0008. Tel: (401) 846-1452. E-mail: saf@cbg.net.



■ **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center** offers educational, social and recreational opportunities to people of all ages and cultures. The center promotes personal growth and well-being for Newport County residents. Contact: The Community Center, 11 Dr. Wheatland Blvd., Newport, RI 02840. Tel: (401) 846-4828.

■ The **East Bay Educational Collaborative** supports personnel development

to create world-class educators and institutions and provides cost-effective administrative services that serve selected special needs populations. Contact: East Bay Educational Collaborative, PO Box 754, Portsmouth, RI 02871. Tel: (401) 683-5151.

■ The ***East Bay School to Career Partnership*** is composed of volunteers who are dedicated to providing support for a regional school to career system. The partnership coordinates efforts that give students academic credentials and certification of work skill competencies to help them succeed in the workplace. Contact: The East Bay School to Career Partnership, c/o Bristol County Chamber Educational Foundation, 654 Metacom Ave. Ste. 2, Warren, RI 02885-2399. Tel: (401) 245-1223.

■ The ***Education Committee of the Newport County Chamber of Commerce*** fosters communication between business and education by creating mentoring, internship and job-shadowing programs for island students. Together with organizations such as the East Bay School to Career Partnership, Rogers Career and Vocation Center, the International Yacht Restoration School, and the Department of Labor and Training, the chamber ensures access to a wide variety of opportunities for students. Contact: Jody Sullivan, Newport County Chamber of Commerce, 45 Valley Road, Middletown, RI 02842. Tel: (401) 847-1608.

■ ***Keep It Clean Day*** is a community event organized every August to provide residents of the Newport Housing Authority with the opportunity to become involved in their



neighborhood. Contact: Terry Gallagher, director, Newport Housing Authority Maintenance Department, One York St., Newport, RI. 02840. Tel: (401) 847-3134.

■ The ***Middletown Historical Society*** works to retain the historic character of Middletown through the preservation of historic documents, artifacts and sites. Contact: Stanley Grossman, Paradise Ave., Middletown, RI 02842, Tel. (401) 849-1870.

■ ***New Visions of Newport County*** is a local community action agency that provides health and human service programs to low-income children and families. Contact: Susan Schenck 19 Broadway, Newport, RI 02840. Tel: (401) 847-7821.

■ The ***Newport Historical Society*** collects documents, records and artifacts that relate the history of Newport County to the public. Contact: Newport Historical Society, 82 Tuoro St., Newport, RI 02840. Tel. (401) 846-0813.

■ ***Newport Partnership for Families*** develops and maintains a coordinated network of services to improve the lives of children and families in the city of Newport. The partnership's priorities include community safety, child well-being, educational success and strong families. Contact: Sharon Carter, PO Box 1098, Newport, RI 02840. Tel: (401) 849-9243.

■ The **Newport Residents Council (NRC)** provides a voice for the residents of the Newport Housing Authority and is committed to providing opportunities for increased resident participation in decision-making processes. Contact: NRC, One Park Holm, Newport, RI 02840. Tel: (401) 849-7321.

■ **Portsmouth Action for Youth** provides activities, events and an after-school program for local children. Contact: 3093 East Main Rd., Portsmouth, RI 02871. Tel: (401) 683-1990.

■ The **Portsmouth Historical Society, Inc.** is a nonprofit volunteer educational organization devoted to the preservation of Portsmouth's historical buildings, sites and artifacts. Contact: PO Box 834, 870 East Main Rd., Portsmouth, RI 02871. Tel: (401) 683-9178.

■ **Saint Joseph's** goal is to eliminate or at least reduce hunger among the needy. Since 1983, Saint Joseph's has been providing food for the underprivileged and a place for companionship. The soup kitchen is open every Monday from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at St. Joseph's Church Hall. A food pantry is also available at the rectory located at 5 Mann Ave., Newport, RI 02840. Contact: Jim Martin. Tel: (401) 849-3635.



■ The **Salve Regina Alcohol Abuse Partnership** includes local representatives who address the problems of abusive and underage drinking. The partnership fosters greater cooperation with local bar and liquor store owners in the area. Contact: Salve Regina University. Tel: (401) 847-6650 ext. 2207. Or contact Harry Harvey. Tel: (401) 846-4205.

■ **The Salvation Army** is an international movement whose efforts include a food pantry, soup kitchen, good neighbor energy fund, after-school and before-school programs (for Newport only), a visitation program, music instruction, scouting-type programs, counseling and Sunday Bible studies. Contact: Captain Steven Kelly, 51 Memorial Blvd., Newport, RI 02840. Tel: (401) 846-3234. Fax: (401) 846-3922. E-mail: sanpt@hotmail.com.

"We need to capture our traditions—maintain farms,
boating and other activities."

Participant from the Restoration Advisory Board meeting, April 15, 1998

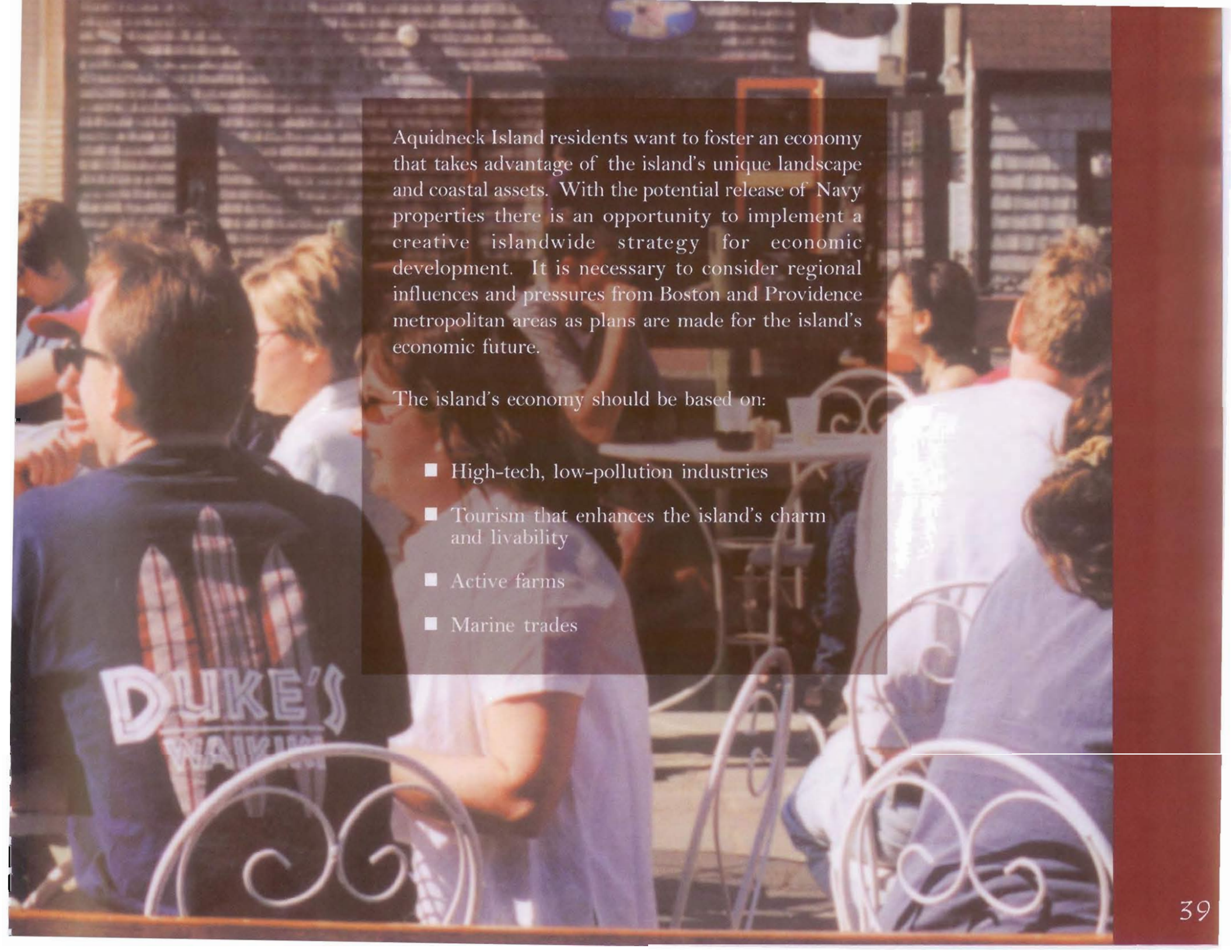




"We need an economic base that will allow people to live *and* work on the island."

Participant from the Restoration Advisory Board Meeting,
April 15, 1998

A Strong Local Economy



Aquidneck Island residents want to foster an economy that takes advantage of the island's unique landscape and coastal assets. With the potential release of Navy properties there is an opportunity to implement a creative islandwide strategy for economic development. It is necessary to consider regional influences and pressures from Boston and Providence metropolitan areas as plans are made for the island's economic future.

The island's economy should be based on:

- High-tech, low-pollution industries
- Tourism that enhances the island's charm and livability
- Active farms
- Marine trades



Attract High-Tech, Low-Pollution Industries

Industries

Aquidneck Island offers management and employees just what they are looking for: a high quality of life. This includes a strong educational system and a good tax rate as well as access to recreational and cultural activities. Protecting these assets will draw businesses that contribute tax revenue, provide high-paying employment opportunities, and are low-maintenance and environmentally sound.

"Provide industry incentives so people can make a living working in the place they live."

Participant from the Coalition of Newport Grassroots Organization (CONGO) meeting, March 30, 1998

Vision for the Year 2015

Peter S. Damon, Past President, Bank of Newport

This is my vision for a bright future for a beautiful place:

Businesses will be attracted to the island by the careful development and maintenance of "corporate parks," artfully located, constructed and supported to provide excellent office, research and light manufacturing space, combined with recreational and exercise facilities. These parks will add to the aesthetic beauty of the island because of their attractive and well-maintained grounds. The general public and visitors will use the walking paths and playing fields integrated with the business structures.

Many employees of these businesses and of the Naval Underwater Warfare Center will commute to Aquidneck Island by public transportation linked through Fall River with Taunton, Boston and Providence. Most commuter parking will be off-island, although local access to Portsmouth, Middletown and Newport residents will be supported. Public transportation will follow the railroad easement with access to the corporate parks, shopping areas and museums. Water taxis will make it possible and convenient to commute from Providence to Newport.

Aquidneck Island will continue to be an environmentally attractive place to live. Successful efforts to provide a single islandwide school system will be followed by joint fire, police and public works departments. These activities will result in greater municipal efficiency.

Efforts will continue to capitalize on the existing waterfront, harbor, beach and open space areas. Likewise, efforts will continue to preserve the architectural and historic heritage embodied in the Redwood Library, the Newport Art Museum and School, the Newport Historical Society, the Preservation Society of Newport County, and the Duke Restoration Trust.



Foster Sustainable Development

Matthew Weaver, Green Light Foundation, Inc.

I am a cofounder of the Green Light Foundation, Inc., and our vision is that environmental protection and economic development work together so that our children will have the opportunity to enjoy the same, if not better, quality of life experienced by our ancestors. There are hundreds of "green" businesses and sustainable business practices that can be initiated if our region unites to support such ventures. Some Rhode Island businesspeople, environmentalists, government officials, land trusts and others are beginning to work towards making these concepts the norm in our decision making for communities and businesses.

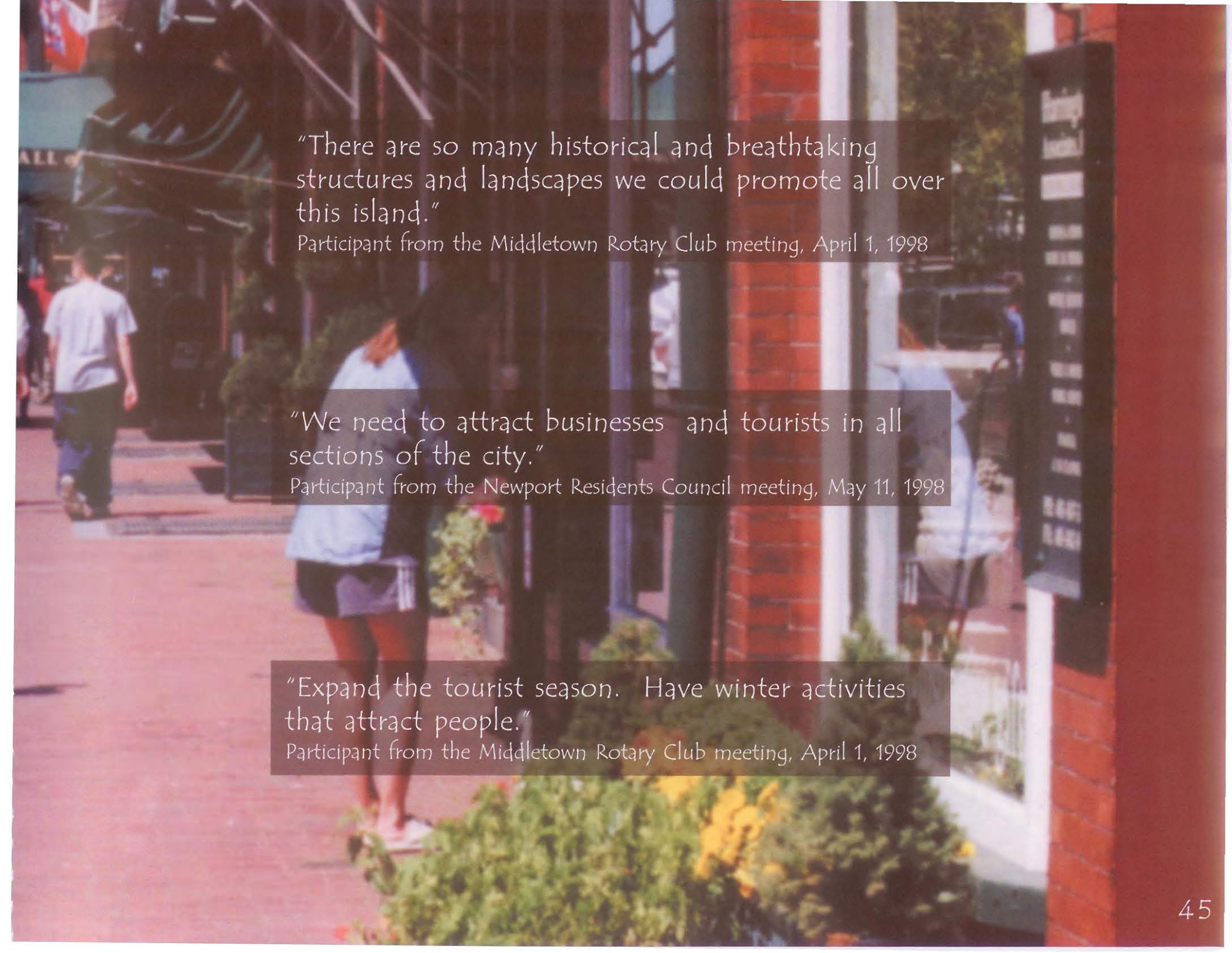
Many people believe that time is limited to preserve open space and protect quality of life due to rapidly expanding populations and suburban sprawl. I want to know that I did all that I could. Protecting the nature of things for our grandchildren is our most important responsibility.



"Small business growth and support should be highlighted as part of the island's economic development plan and vision."

Keith Stokes, Executive Director, Newport County Chamber of Commerce



A photograph of a city street scene. In the foreground, a woman in a light blue shirt and dark shorts is walking away from the camera. To her left, another person in a light blue shirt is walking away. In the background, there is a brick building with a sign that reads "Middletown". The scene is outdoors and appears to be a busy street.

"There are so many historical and breathtaking structures and landscapes we could promote all over this island."

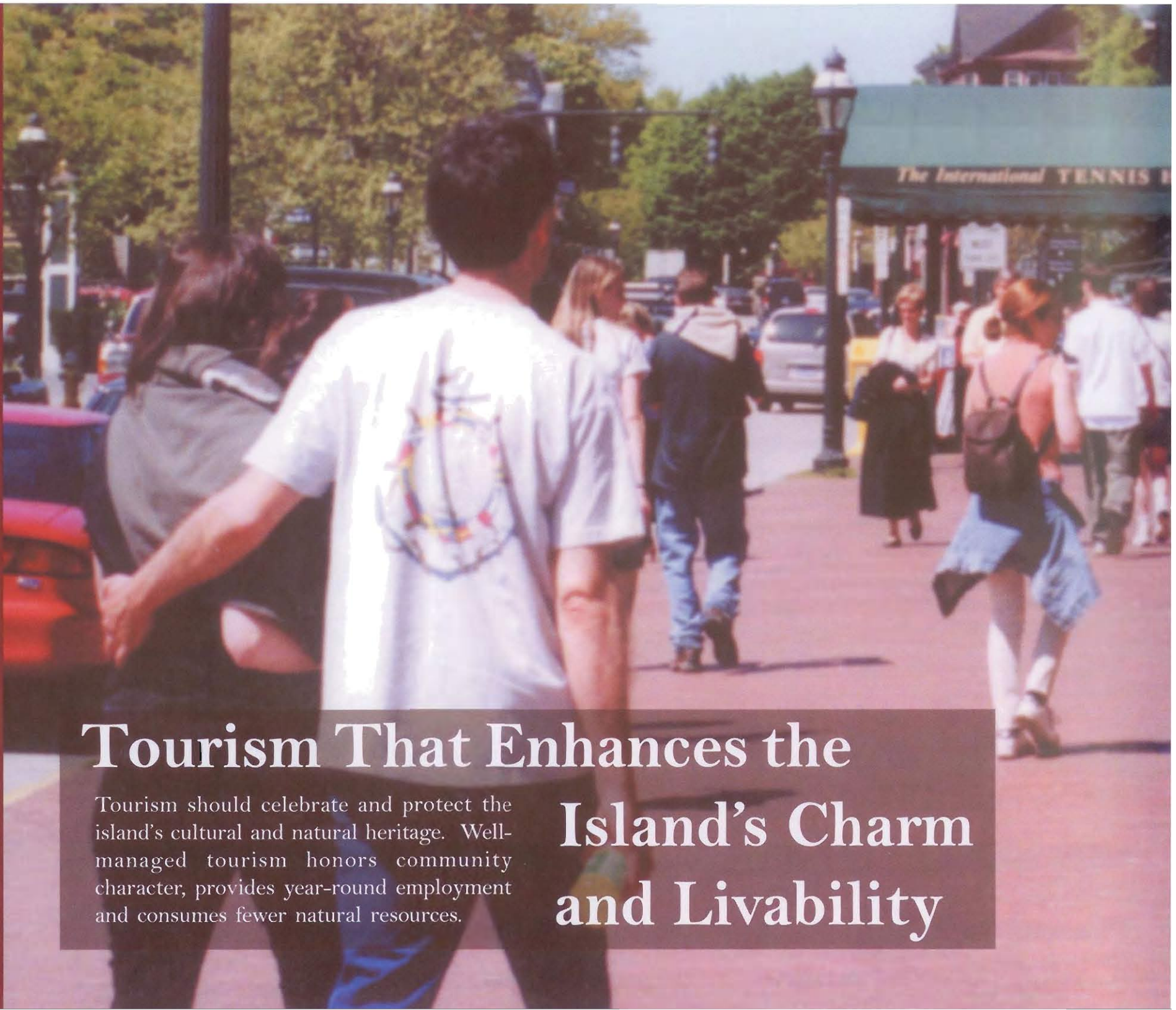
Participant from the Middletown Rotary Club meeting, April 1, 1998

"We need to attract businesses and tourists in all sections of the city."

Participant from the Newport Residents Council meeting, May 11, 1998

"Expand the tourist season. Have winter activities that attract people."

Participant from the Middletown Rotary Club meeting, April 1, 1998



Tourism That Enhances the

Tourism should celebrate and protect the island's cultural and natural heritage. Well-managed tourism honors community character, provides year-round employment and consumes fewer natural resources.

Island's Charm and Livability

Redevelop the West Side of Aquidneck Island

Donald Elbert, National Railroad Foundation and Museum

We envision the west side of Aquidneck Island as having a 13.5-mile linear park, with a rail line running down the middle. The park would extend from downtown Newport to the Sakonnet River railroad bridge. Hopefully sometime in the future, the park would extend beyond Aquidneck Island to and through Fall River, MA, to Freetown, MA, and points east. The corridor would have functional transportation use, consisting of a multiuse rail line, a walking, jogging and in-line skating trail on the west side of the rail line, and a bike-only path on the east side.

The west side could include benches at scenic overlooks, sheltered picnic tables, and plaques with information describing the bay, its ecology and its history. At selected points, there would be mini-information centers that would have comfort facilities and provide walkers and bikers the opportunity to learn about local Native Americans and the bay. Small rail depots and protected rail shelters with bike racks would have information interpreting this segment of American technology. The purpose of the corridor is to provide a recreational and educational opportunity for residents and visitors alike.

WORDS

"I favor a 'maritime zone' for the west side of the island that would mix commercial marine-related uses with small open spaces for parks and public boat launching sites."

Joseph F. McEnness, Newport Resident

Adam Freedman
Elmhurst School

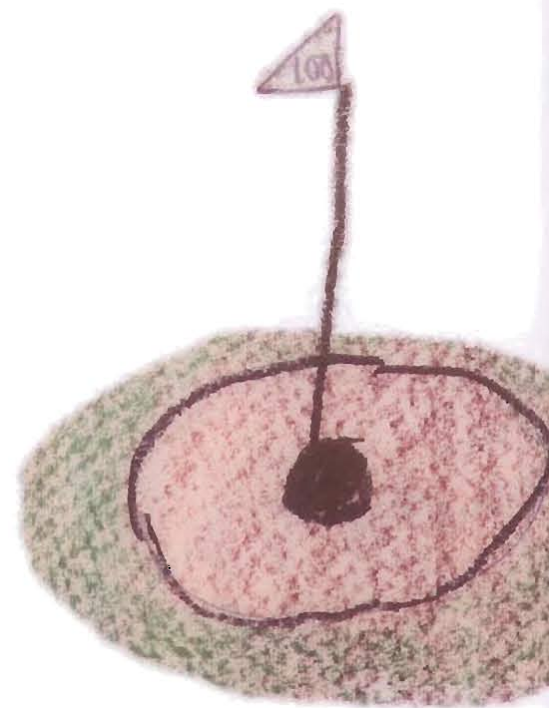


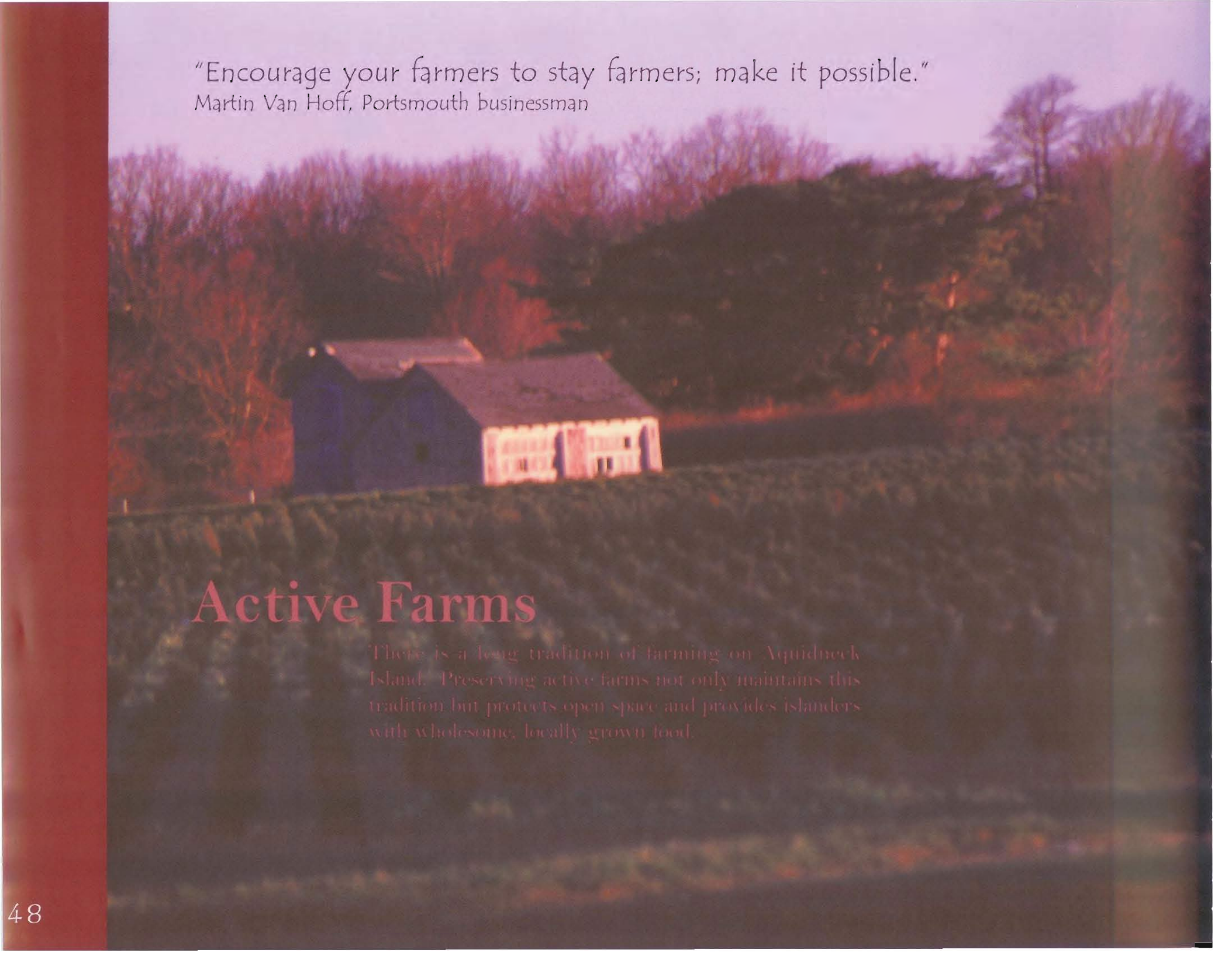
Invest to Enhance Tourism

Evan Smith, Newport County Convention and Visitors Bureau

There are two potential development projects that could significantly enhance tourism on the island for years to come. National travel surveys show that golf is the number one recreational activity requested by business and leisure travelers. Yet our island courses are already near capacity with local play only. Properly planned golf courses could help preserve precious open space and provide important wildlife habitat. New accessibility for public play would help support existing hotels and other travel-related services.

A second potential project would be the development of a well-designed and properly located bike path spanning most of the island. Biking, like golf, is and will continue to be a very important recreational activity for residents and visitors alike.





"Encourage your farmers to stay farmers; make it possible."
Martin Van Hoff, Portsmouth businessman

Active Farms

There is a long tradition of farming on Aquidneck Island. Preserving active farms not only maintains this tradition but protects open space and provides islanders with wholesome, locally grown food.

Live from the Earth

Dorothy Chase and Pat Chase, Chase Farms

Adapting to a changing market and development pressures has been a challenge throughout the years. Some farmers have a narrow vision—they believe they can only farm in a traditional way, which may not be the most successful. These farmers may be forced to sell their farms to developers.

Herbert Manton Chase was an innovative farmer; he knew how to adapt to the trials of farming and he taught his children to do the same. Paying attention to what sells has helped us flourish. For instance, as transportation improved and made produce from Florida and California available to the East Coast, we shifted from growing produce and began to grow bedding plants (annuals and perennials) and trucked them to garden centers from Connecticut to Maine.

We have always made our living from the earth. So, as the seasons change and the economy fluctuates, we do also. When we imagine what this land would look like if we sold it to a developer, it makes us appreciate even more what we have. We realize how lucky we are to still have a working farm and still be able to make our living off the land. Even so, we worry about the future of our farm. Over the years, we have seen our neighbors selling their land because it became too costly to maintain.

We believe education on the general uses and maintenance of farmland is the key to protecting farms. Local residents can help farmers stay in business by shopping at the Growers' Market, but also by supporting policies that protect the necessary activities of farming, such as spraying, mowing and plowing. There is no other way to maintain farmland.



Support Local Farmers

Karen Menezes, Rhode Island Center for Commercial Agriculture (RICCA)

It is getting more difficult to make a living as a farmer, and many times the children of farmers choose other careers. Often, as farmers grow older and find there is no one to take their place, they sell their land to developers and retire on the profits. We cannot blame farmers for selling their land.

My vision for Aquidneck Island is that islanders take the time to better understand and more actively support the local farms. This vision can be achieved in many ways:

- Buy food at the Growers' Market and local farm stands.
- Meet local farmers to develop relationships. If islanders have questions about what kind of pesticides are being sprayed at a farm they should ask the farmer or call RICCA.
- Organize days when residents can visit local farms and learn about necessary farming activities, such as spraying pesticides. This will increase tolerance among neighbors. Louis Escobar, of Portsmouth, has been very good at interacting with residents. Residents were able to return some of his kindness this past summer when his barn burned down and neighbors helped rebuild it.
- Reactivate the Portsmouth Agricultural Commission to help council and municipal board members better understand farming issues.
- Provide potential homeowners with some of the realities about living near a farm before they purchase land: Farmers need to spray their crops with pesticides or spread manure, sometimes early in the morning. Many times farmers must move equipment slowly along East and West Main roads. All of these activities are legal and highly regulated.





"I do not want my children or grandchildren to think that the word 'farm' is synonymous with 'subdivision.'"

Karen Menezes, RICCA

Ensure the Economic Viability of Farming

Nancy Parker Wilson, Greenvale Farm and Vineyards, Portsmouth

The tranquility, the topography, the rich soil, the temperate climate and the water make Aquidneck Island a wonderful place to farm. Farms and open space preserve the quality of life and the character that make Aquidneck Island unique.

Our hope for the future of Aquidneck Island is embedded in our vision for the Greenvale Farm and Vineyards, located along the Sakonnet River in Portsmouth. Our goal is to create a viable future for this historic farm. When Greenvale was built in 1860, it was intended to be a self-sustaining, 50-acre, family-run operation. The same family has transformed Greenvale from a livestock farm 135 years ago to vineyards, now on the National and State Registers of Historic Places. With authentic Victorian buildings and landscaping, along with the carefully restored 19th century farm house, Greenvale is becoming a resource for visitors to learn about farming and historic preservation and enjoy delicious local wines. The response has been thrilling. We are pleased that we have identified a means by which to take advantage of the wonderful growing conditions on Aquidneck Island, to maintain the tradition of this farm in this family and to ensure its viability into the 21st century. My vision for Aquidneck Island is to see more active farming that also integrates education, conservation and recreation into its plan.





A photograph of a person in a red jacket working on the deck of a sailboat. The person is seen from behind, leaning over the railing. The background shows the white sails and rigging of the boat. The overall tone is slightly desaturated with a blueish tint.

Strengthen Marine Trades

The island's unique boating environment—reliable winds, ample cruising grounds, boating events, and boat-building and services—make the area world-renowned. By generating improvements in the marine industry, job security can be provided for local residents, and financial benefits generated for the whole island economy.

A photograph of a ship's deck. In the foreground, a large wooden wheel is visible. Below it, a sign with the word "INTREPID" is partially visible. The background shows the ship's structure and a person standing on the deck.

"Recognize the value of the bay."

*Participant from the Friends of the Waterfront and Maritime
Preservation Alliance meeting, June 18, 1998*

INTREPID

Sustain Traditional Boating Industries

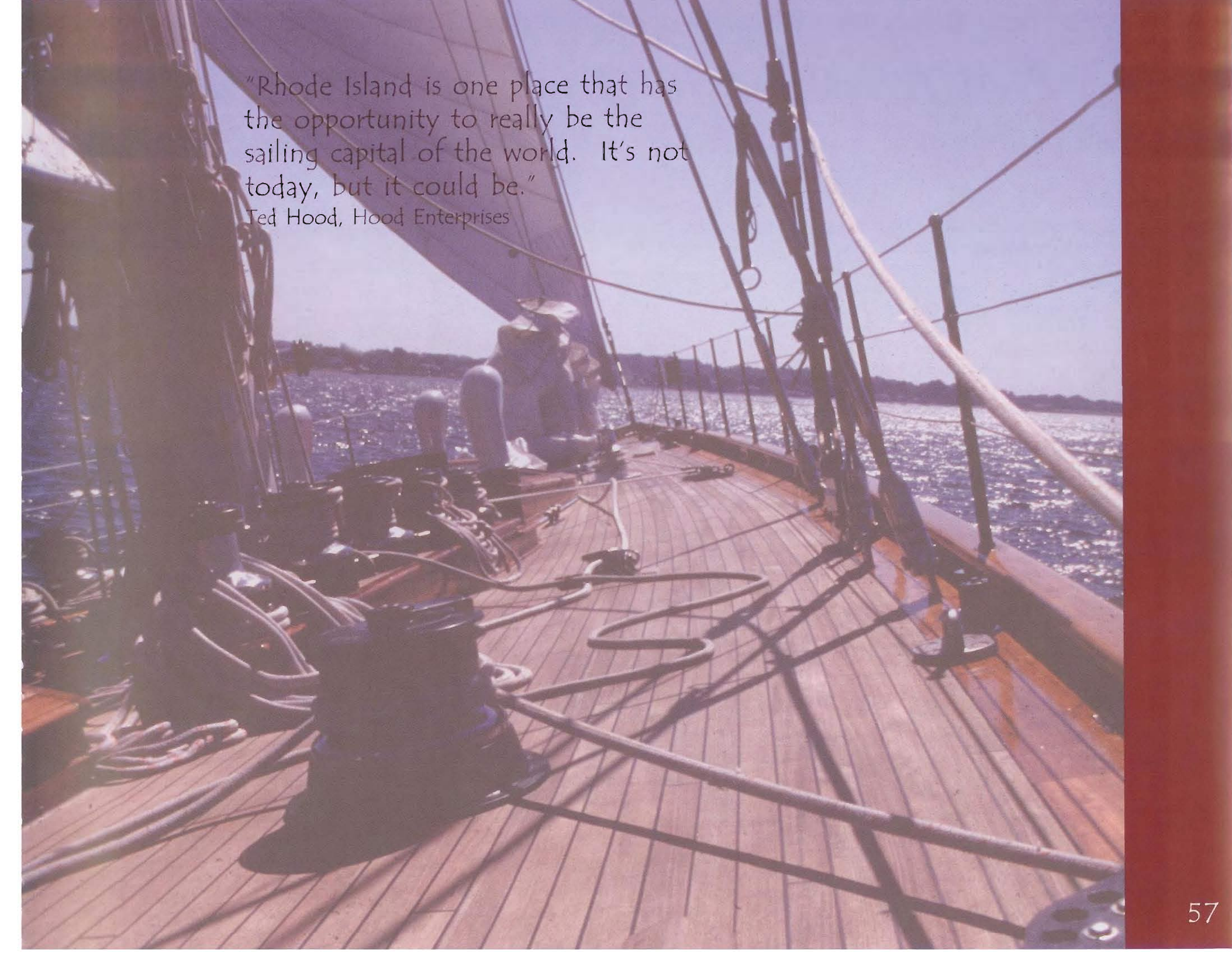
Jeff Johnstone, J Boats

I've lived in Newport since 1981. I also make my living in the boating industry, happily dependent on the quality of Narragansett Bay. My friends say I'm lucky, and I agree. The bay has so much to offer the local and international boater: a rich history, great sailing conditions, and marine products, services and infrastructure that no other seaport can match. In 10 years I would like to be able to say that Aquidneck Island is managing these resources and attributes in a way that is economically, socially and environmentally beneficial. More specifically, I would like to see increased public access to the bay, improved economic well-being of Rhode Island's marine industry and continued preservation of the natural beauty of Narragansett Bay.

More specifically? In 10 years, I'd like to walk around Newport Harbor and see that it has recaptured the feeling of a seaport and not become a megaport. This involves maintaining strict maritime zoning to preserve space for fishermen and other traditional boating service industries. It also involves creating a plan to reduce congestion in the harbor. Cruise ship visits would not exceed current levels. Overflow of transient dockage/moorings could be directed to new facilities in Coddington Cove and Melville. Maybe replace the double-decker loud-speakered tour boats that tear through the harbor with sailing vessels that combine education about the bay with tourist activities. A Navy museum at Coddington Cove featuring moth-balled Navy ships could draw folks to Middletown. Fort Adams could be restored to its former glory, and with the help of the American Sail Training Association, become the home port for several Tall Ships.



"We need an active commercial waterfront."
Sally Blacket, Coalition of Newport Grassroots Organizations
(CONGO) meeting, March 30, 1998



"Rhode Island is one place that has
the opportunity to really be the
sailing capital of the world. It's not
today, but it could be."
Ted Hood, Hood Enterprises

Get Involved in Ongoing Efforts!

■ For a description of the *Aquidneck Island Growers' Market*, see the Get Involved section after the "A Livable Landscape" chapter.

■ The *Aquidneck 2000 - Economic Guide Plan for Aquidneck Island* was developed by local government and business leaders to promote economic prosperity for Aquidneck Island while enhancing the island's quality of life. Contact: Portsmouth Economic Development Commission, c/o Bob Gilstein, 2200 East Main Road, PO Box 155, Portsmouth, RI 02871. Tel: (401) 683-2101.

■ The *Center for Economic and Environmental Development at Roger Williams University* is designed to bring environmental, economic and educational professionals together in a neutral setting to come up with joint solutions for problems facing East Bay communities. The center works towards a sustainable and recession-proof economy and upholds the quality of life built around the bay. Contact: Skip Pomeroy. Tel: (401) 254-3170.

■ *Circle of Industries* is committed to bringing compatibility between ecology and technology. In coordination with Roger Williams University, Circle of Industries meets periodically to promote sustainable economic development. Contact: Matthew Weaver. Tel:

(401) 683-7229. Web site: <http://www3.edgenet.net/~circleofindustries>.

■ The *East Bay Economic Initiative* is a public and private collaboration that promotes economic development through the marine trades industry in the East Bay region. Contact: East Bay Economic Initiative, PO Box 4468, Middletown, RI 02842. Tel: (401) 885-5044.

■ For a description of the *Friends of the Waterfront*, see the Get Involved section after the "A Livable Landscape" chapter.

■ The *Green Light Foundation, Inc.* is devoted to nurturing broad adoption of sustainable environmental technologies in business practices and in individual lifestyles. This creates secure, long-term community employment opportunities while protecting fragile ecological systems. Contact: Greenlight Foundation, Inc., PO Box 816, Newport, RI 02840. Tel: (401) 247-2675. E-mail: greenlftnd@aol.com.

■ The *Maritime Preservation Alliance* is a nonprofit organization striving to preserve, protect and promote Newport's working waterfront and maritime heritage through education. Contact: The Maritime Preservation Alliance, c/o Martin Douglas, PO Box 124, Newport, RI 02840. Tel: (401) 849-6856.



■ The **National Railroad Foundation and Museum** is a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to the preservation, restoration and operation of historic railroad equipment, and the preservation of Narragansett Bay and the surrounding environment. Contact: Donald Elbert, 32 Ocean View Ave, Tiverton, RI 02878. Tel: (401) 624-6951. Web site: <http://www.ocnrr.com>.

■ The **Newport County Chamber of Commerce's** primary mission is to promote a healthy economic climate. The chamber provides business information seminars, site selection and relocation assistance, tourism information services, health care programs, and assistance programs in financing and government affairs. Contact: Newport County Chamber of Commerce, 45 Valley Road, Middletown, RI 02842. Tel: (401) 847-1608. Web site: <http://www.newportchamber.com>.

■ The **Newport County Convention and Visitors Bureau (NCCVB)** is the official tourism, marketing and sales organization for Newport County. Residents of Aquidneck Island can help support and strengthen inbound travel and tourism by assisting the NCCVB as local contacts for larger regional and national groups. Contact: NCCVB, 23 America's Cup Ave, Newport, RI 02840. Tel: (401) 849-8048. Web site: <http://www.gonewport.com>.

■ **Portsmouth, Middletown and Newport Economic Development Commissions.** Each municipality has an economic development commission that responds to issues and proposed projects that may impact the community. Contact your town or city hall for current activities and

how you can get involved. Portsmouth: (401) 688-2101. Middletown: (401) 847-0009. Newport: (401) 846-9600.

■ The **Preservation Society of Newport County** works to preserve some of Rhode Island's finest historic properties and to enhance awareness of the state's architectural and social history. Contact: The Preservation Society of Newport County, 215 Third Street, Newport, RI 02840. Tel: (401) 847-1000. Web site: <http://www.Newportmansions.org>.



■ The **Rhode Island Center for Commercial Agriculture** represents the farming community by providing farmers with advice on farming techniques and informing them of advances in the industry. Contact: Karen Menezes. Tel: (401) 874-7142. Fax: (401) 874-2259. E-mail: RICCA@uriacc.uri.edu.

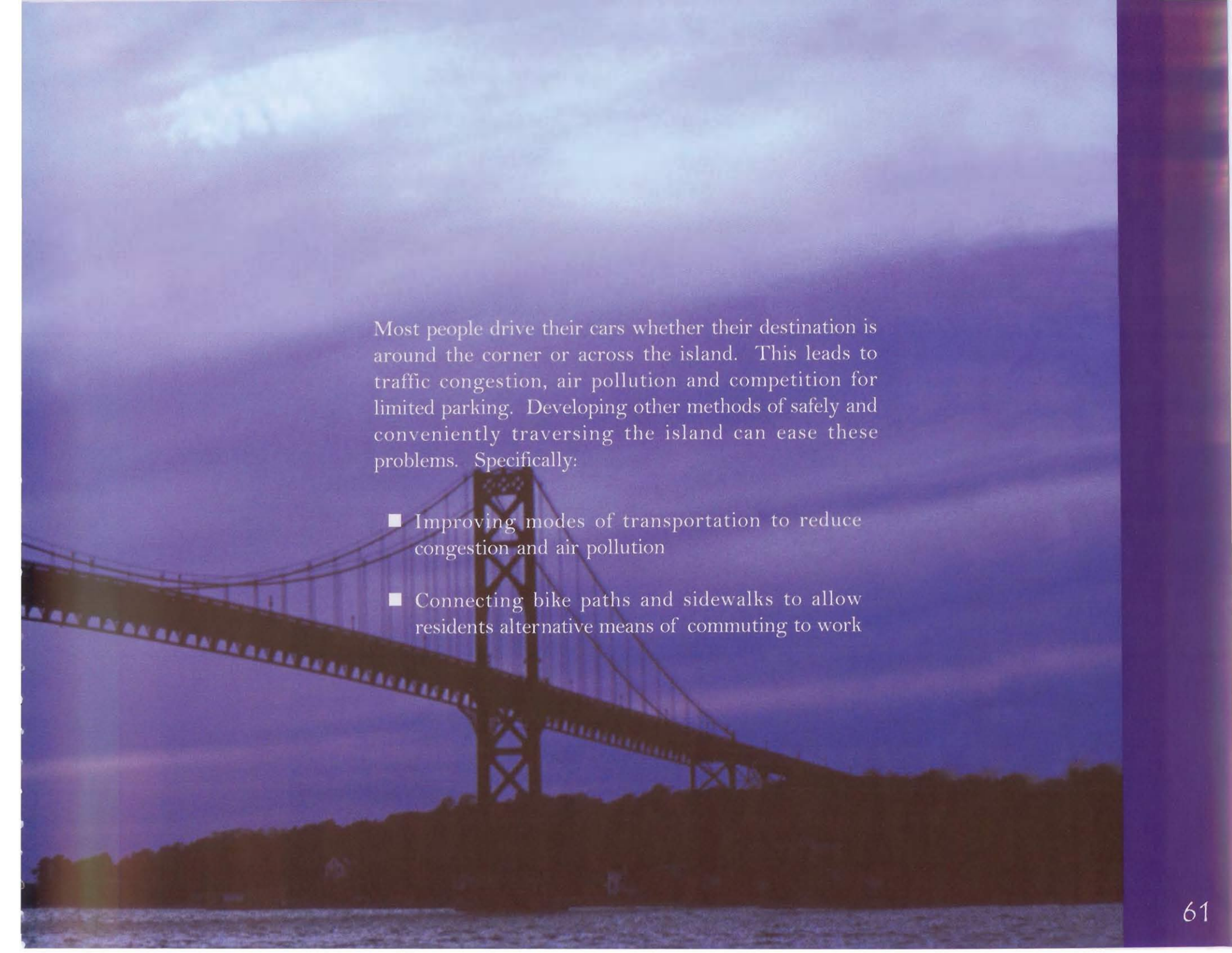
■ The **Restoration Advisory Board (RAB)** at the Naval Station Newport (NSN) helps establish site cleanup plans and priorities. The RAB provides opportunities for citizens to attend meetings as well as to become members. The RAB meets the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Officers' Club. Contact: NSN Environmental Division. Tel: (401) 841-6375. Or contact the NSN Public Affairs Office. Tel: (401) 841-3538. Web site: http://www.cnet.navy.mil/newport/rab_.htm or <http://www.epa.gov/region01/remed/sfsites/newport.htm>.



Multiple Modes of Transportation

"People should have the option of traveling around Aquidneck Island by ferry, rail or any other form of transport. They should not have to be dependent on the automobile."

Keith Stokes, Executive Director, Newport County Chamber of Commerce



Most people drive their cars whether their destination is around the corner or across the island. This leads to traffic congestion, air pollution and competition for limited parking. Developing other methods of safely and conveniently traversing the island can ease these problems. Specifically:

- Improving modes of transportation to reduce congestion and air pollution
- Connecting bike paths and sidewalks to allow residents alternative means of commuting to work

Improving Modes of Transportation

Alternative modes of travel can reduce traffic congestion and parking problems, as well as promote a cleaner atmosphere. Establishing appropriate infrastructure, such as rail lines along the west side of the island, convenient bus routes to neighborhoods and efficient ferry travel from Newport to Providence, can achieve these goals.

"You go to other countries and ferry service is a big thing."
Ted Hood, Hood Enterprises

Alternative Transportation Choices

Karina Lutz, Sierra Club-Rhode Island Chapter

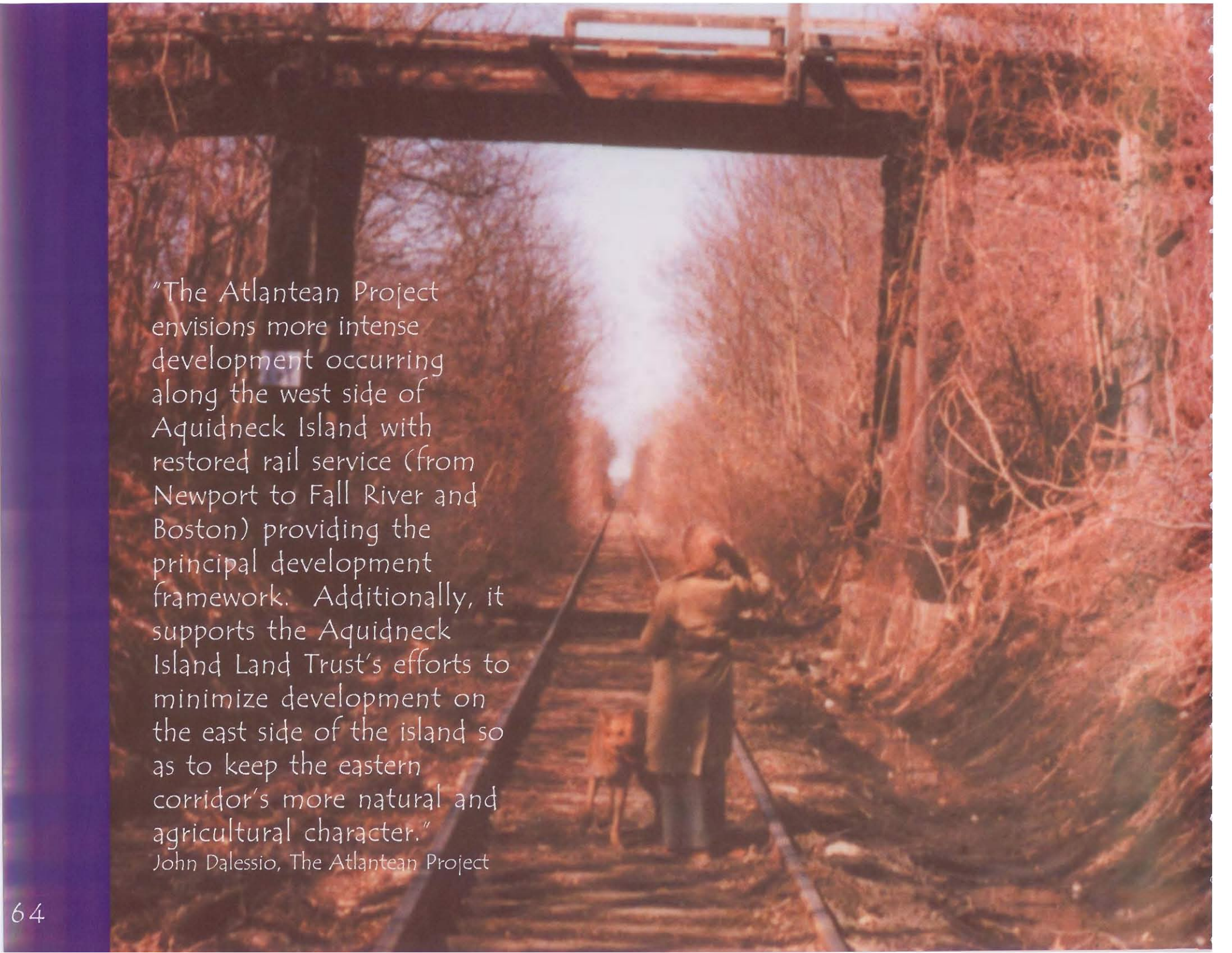
We can have a pedestrian paradise in downtown Newport if we take an integrated planning approach, including reducing auto traffic by providing remote parking and trolley service, rebuilding America's Cup Avenue, slowing traffic to make streets safer for pedestrians, and providing adequate signage, crosswalks and crossing lights.

Islandwide transportation via bike path, bus and train provides healthy, environmentally sound alternatives to the automobile. By focusing new development within a walkable distance from bus and train stops, the bus system will become a viable transportation option.

A continuous bikeway around the island would be a boon to the tourist economy while reducing the impact of tourism on our environment. Linking transportation alternatives to greenways, either through buses or bike lanes on roads, is another complementary vision.



"I can tell if an event is going on in Newport by the traffic flow in Portsmouth. For this reason, I would like to see Aquidneck Islanders become involved in developing an islandwide transportation strategy."
Dr. Robert Quigley, Aquidneck Island Planning Commission



"The Atlantean Project envisions more intense development occurring along the west side of Aquidneck Island with restored rail service (from Newport to Fall River and Boston) providing the principal development framework. Additionally, it supports the Aquidneck Island Land Trust's efforts to minimize development on the east side of the island so as to keep the eastern corridor's more natural and agricultural character."

John Dalessio, The Atlantean Project

A Compact, Transit-Friendly Development Pattern

Allan A. Hodges, American Institute of Certified Planners

The pattern of urban sprawl and highway dependency is well established on Aquidneck Island. It has been permitted locally and incrementally over several decades. To achieve more compact and transit-friendly development in the future, with its consequent environmental and fiscal benefits, is a challenge, but doable. Changes in land-use policy and controls require a joint commitment by the three jurisdictions on the island. They must agree to prepare and implement an effective, comprehensive, land-use and transportation plan for the whole island that also meets their individual needs. Such a plan needs to incorporate a single vision for Aquidneck Island, address inter-jurisdictional development and preservation issues, and change local land-use controls. Such an approach has been implemented elsewhere—such as in the Portland, OR, area—but remains a challenge here nonetheless.

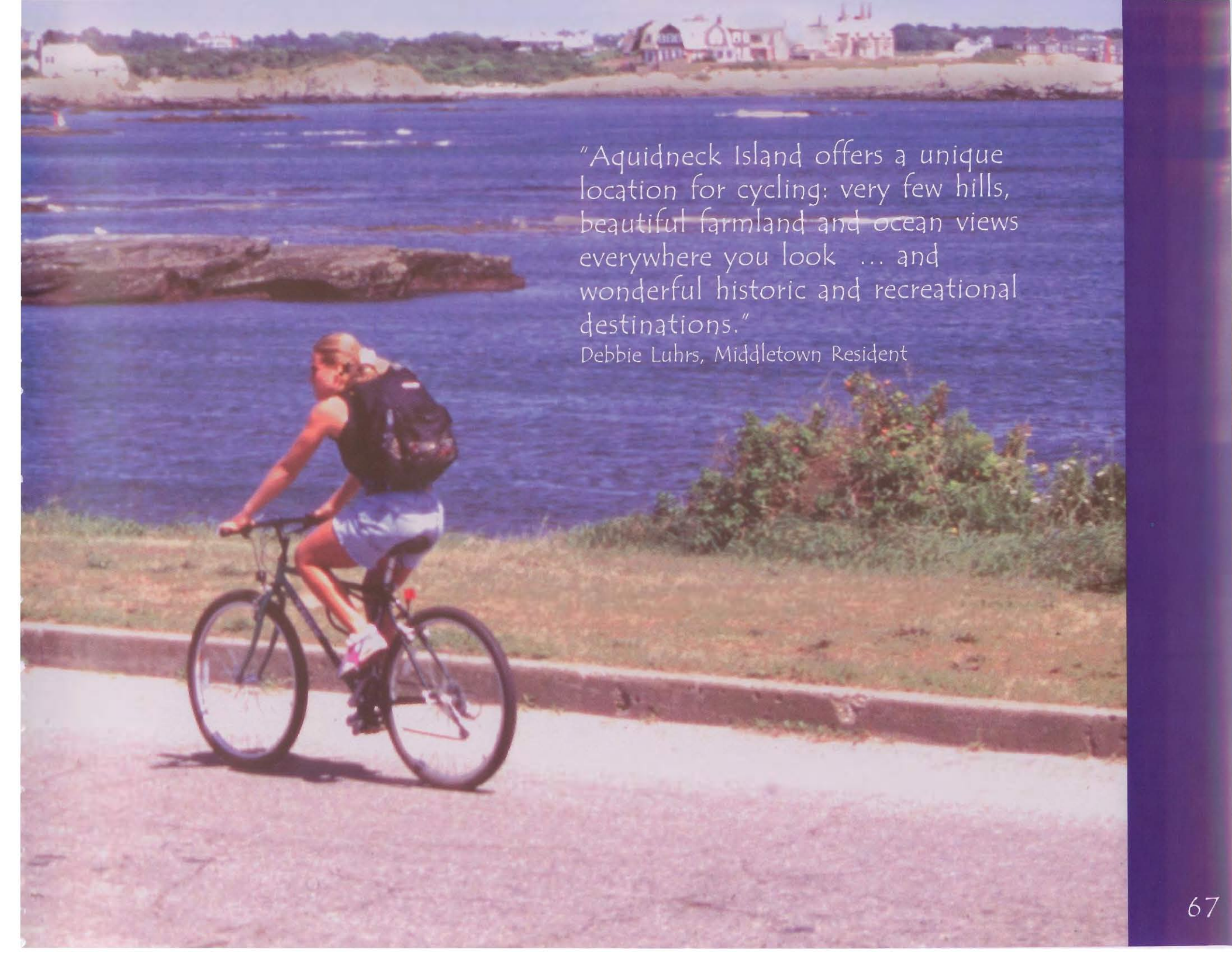
The locations of future public infrastructure, such as highways, transit facilities and services, and water and sewer facilities, also have a powerful cumulative effect on an area's development pattern. Controlling these public decisions within a regional planning context is necessary to prevent future sprawl. Recent transportation actions affecting the island, for example, may have positive impacts in achieving development that is more compact and in reducing traffic congestion. The recent introduction of Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) bus service in Newport and Middletown is a good start at curbing dependence on the automobile. The service, however, needs to be better marketed to islanders and visitors from out of state to increase ridership. The proposed RIPTA high-speed ferry service from downtown Newport to Providence will have some impact in reducing auto use, especially if additional cross-bay routes, such as to Warwick and T.F. Green Airport, could be introduced. Most of all, the potential extension of Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority commuter rail service to Newport via Fall River could persuade workers and tourists to use public transportation. These and other transit improvements will do much to protect the remaining open space resources of Aquidneck Island.





Connecting Bike Paths and Sidewalks

Bike paths such as the East Bay Bike Path and the Cape Cod Rail Trail are popular in several New England communities. Cyclists and walkers enjoy the scenery, avoid automobile traffic, and find the paths generally safe and well-maintained. Many residents want to see the Burma Road Bike Path expanded to connect all parts of the island. The scenic beauty of Aquidneck Island makes it an ideal place for cycling, walking and in-line skating.

A photograph of a person with a backpack riding a bicycle on a paved path. The path is bordered by a concrete curb and a grassy area. In the background, there is a large body of blue water, likely the ocean, with a rocky outcrop in the middle ground. In the far distance, a coastal town with several buildings is visible on a hillside under a clear sky.

"Aquidneck Island offers a unique location for cycling: very few hills, beautiful farmland and ocean views everywhere you look ... and wonderful historic and recreational destinations."

Debbie Luhrs, Middletown Resident

Safely Accomodate Bikes on Our Roads

Bob Anderson, Narragansett Wheelman's Association

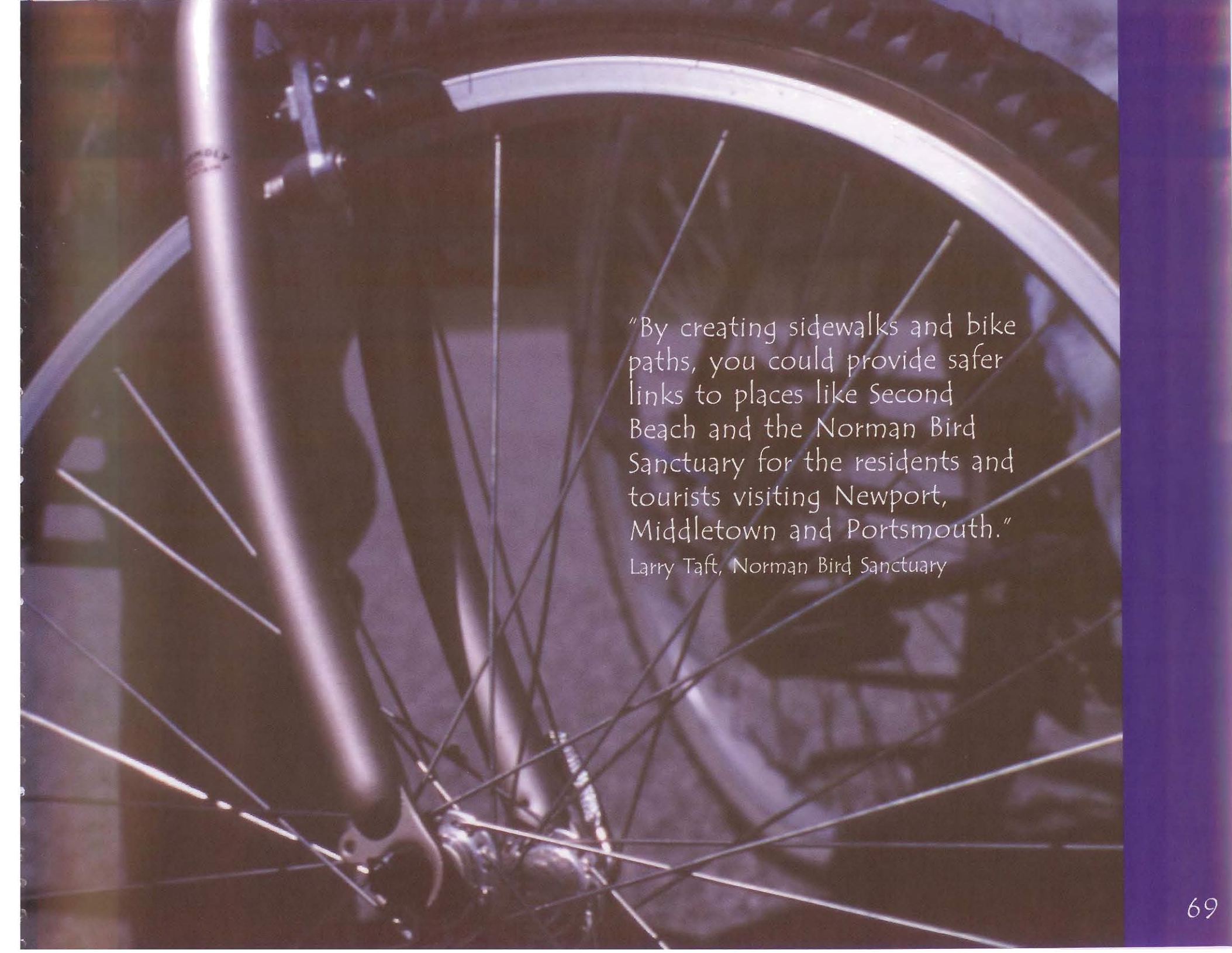
We all spend too much of our lives driving our cars around the island, where there is little space to add new roads, and where increasing car congestion threatens our quality of life. Although effective bus and train transportation can replace cars, bicycles are a lot cheaper. My vision for Aquidneck Island is a place where transportation by bicycle is accepted and encouraged. Achieving this is a simple matter of safely accommodating bicyclists on all public roads, just as every other user is accommodated.

Many main roads, which were designed exclusively for automobiles, today sever any continuous bicycle route linking Aquidneck Island's towns, beaches and shops with our residential neighborhoods. We should target these "bicycle unfriendly" roads for reconstruction to provide wider lanes to better accomodate bicycles in the traffic mix.

Equally important is getting bicyclists to act and be treated as drivers of vehicles. For everyone's safety, bicyclists need to be educated in riding predictably and responsibly, while motorists need to be educated about sharing the road. At the elementary school level, a formal bicycle education program (such as the League of American Bicyclists' "Effective Cycling" program) would teach youngsters safe and responsible bicycling.

My vision is to see just 1 percent of existing transportation funding invested in bicycle safety programs and road improvements. This will have big payoffs for the island. Congestion will ease, air quality will improve and road maintenance costs will diminish (because bikes don't make potholes). Also, kids will be able to get around independently and safely. Finally, there will be health benefits because exercise is a good thing.





"By creating sidewalks and bike paths, you could provide safer links to places like Second Beach and the Norman Bird Sanctuary for the residents and tourists visiting Newport, Middletown and Portsmouth."

Larry Taft, Norman Bird Sanctuary

Get Involved in Ongoing Efforts!

■ The *Aquidneck Island Planning Commission (AIPC)* is active in promoting bicycling as an alternative form of transportation. The AIPC is working with Rhode Island Department of Transportation and the Navy to expand the Burma Road Bike Path and is working with islanders to develop recommendations for a joint Transportation Improvement Program. Contact: AIPC, PO Box 4901, Middletown, RI 02842. Tel: (401) 874-6127.

■ The *Conservation Law Foundation (CLF)* has a communities project to improve the environmental conditions in the cities, towns and villages of New England. CLF is attempting to strengthen those resources that are threatened by highway expansion and sprawl. Tel: (617) 350-0990. Web site: <http://www.clf.org>.

■ The *Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE)* supplies information on today's transportation issues and solutions. ITE members

are professionals responsible for meeting society's needs for safe and efficient transportation. Web site: <http://www.ite.org>.



■ The *League of American Bicyclists* provides information on their effective cycling program. Contact: The League of American Bicyclists, 1612 K Street, Suite 401, Washington, DC 20006. Tel: (202) 822-1333. Web site: <http://www.bikeleague.org>.

■ The *Newport Transportation Ad Hoc Committee* works on traffic issues that concern Aquidneck Islanders. Contact: The Newport Transportation Ad Hoc Committee, 45 Valley Road, Middletown, RI 02842. Or contact: Keith Stokes. Tel: (401) 847-1608.

■ The *Rhode Island Department of Transportation* provides information on transportation legislation and regulations and safety issues. Contact: RIDOT, Two Capital Hill, Providence, RI 02903. Tel: (401) 222-2411. Web site: <http://www.dot.gov>.

■ The **Rhode Island Public Transportation Authority** has developed several programs to ensure that transit service is affordable and meets islanders' travel needs. Transit programs include seasonal services and special features, such as Rack N' Ride, which provides transportation for people and their bikes. To find out information about bus schedules and routes, contact: RIPTA, 265 Melrose St., Providence, RI 02907. Tel: (401) 784-9500. Web site: <http://www.ripta.com>.

■ The **Rhode Island Transportation Reform Alliance** is a project of the Surface Transportation Policy Project and the Sierra Club-RI Chapter. This is an informal coalition that fosters communication among groups and citizens concerned about transportation reform in Rhode Island. Contact: Karina Lutz, Sierra Club-RI Chapter, 10 Abbott Park Pl., 4th Floor, Providence, RI 02903. Tel: (401) 521-4734.

■ The **Sierra Club-RI Chapter** advocates for better transit, for pedestrian and for bicycle facilities, and for transit-friendly development patterns. In addition to protesting destructive road projects, Sierra Club activists encourage RIDOT to

implement the pedestrian and bicycle facilities law that requires many road projects to better accommodate cyclists and walkers. Please alert Sierra Club if any proposed road projects pose problems. Contact: Karina Lutz, Sierra Club-RI Chapter, (401) 521-4734, 10 Abbott Park Pl., 4th Floor, Providence, RI 02903.



■ The **Transportation Improvement Program** funds selected proposals from cities, towns, agencies, organizations and citizens to improve transportation. Contact: Statewide Planning, Dept. of Administration, Division of Planning, One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908. Tel: (401) 222-5772. Web site: <http://www.tea21.org>.

■ The **Transportation for Livable Communities Network** strives to create more livable communities by improving the transportation system. The network fosters an exchange of ideas and information between people who care about community transportation issues. Web site: <http://www.tlcnetwork.org>.

This vision document could not have been achieved without the participation of the following people and organizations:

Visioning Task Force Members:

Robert Driscoll
Michael Embury
Mary Garrett
Debbie Luhrs
Michael Mallinoff
Keith Stokes
Tom Willett

Visioning Participants:

Aquidneck Island Planning Commission
Aquidneck Island Land Trust
Center for Community Character
Circle of Industries
City of Newport
Dunn Foundation
East Bay Economic Initiative
Foundation for Newport
Friends of Sachuest Point
Friends of the Waterfront
Green Light Foundation, Inc.
Maritime Preservation Alliance
Middletown Historical Society
Middletown Rotary Club
Naval Station Newport
Newport Convention and Visitors Bureau
Newport County Board of Realtors
Newport County Chamber of Commerce
Newport Historical Society
Newport Lions Club
Newport Residents Council
Pete and Flo's Diner
Portsmouth Historical Society
Portsmouth Rotary Club
Restoration Advisory Board
Rogers High School

Salve Regina University
Sierra Club - Rhode Island Chapter
Town of Middletown
Town of Portsmouth
Kathy Abbass
Sid Abbruzzi
Robert Anderson
Judy Anderson
George L. Andrade Jr.
Anne Berman
Henry Bernhard
Sally Blackett
Inez Bliven
Fran Briscoe
David Brown
Sharon Carter
Izabella Casselman
Dorothy Chase
Pat Chase
Edward Corcoran
William Corcoran
Beth Cullen
Michael Cullen
Sandy Cummins
John Dalessio
Fred Dallinger
Peter Damon
Peter M. DiBari
Martin Douglas
Jack Doyle
William Dunn
Frank Dwyer
Jan Eckhart
Donald Elbert
Louis Escobar
Vic Farmer
Ted Fischer

William J. Flynn
Terry Gallagher
Glen Gardiner
Kristie Gardiner
James Garman
June N. Gibbs
Robert Gilstein
Erin Goddard
Ray Goddard
Townsend Goddard
Ron Grandchamp
Stanley Grossman
Richard Grosvenor
Herbert Hall
Harry Harvey
Gunther Hausen
Bud Heaton
Allan Hodges
John J. Hoisseman
Rick Hood
Ted Hood Sr.
Sam Howell
Paul Jestings
Charlotte Johnson
Jeff Johnstone
Mil Kinsella-Sullivan
Gerry Kowalczyk
Ken Kubic
David Leys
Nick Logethest
Edward T. Lopes Jr.
Karina Lutz
Jim Martin
Liz Mathinos
Joseph F. McEnness
Frank McGuinness
Michael McMillin

Karen Menezes
 Peter Merritt
 Mary Ellen Mueller
 William Muessel
 Frank Murphey
 Reginald Nalle
 Jack Napolitano
 Natalie Nicholson
 John Nunes
 Paul Nunes
 Don O'Hanley
 Eric Offenber
 John Palmieri
 Patricia Palombo
 Anirudh Pandit
 John Pierce
 Alfred R. Pilotte
 Robert J. Quigley
 Pamela Quinn
 Audrey Rearick
 Sheila Reilly
 Theren Salter
 Karen Salvatore
 Susan Schenck
 Gerry Schriver
 Harrison H. Seveney Jr.
 Charles Silvia

Colin Smith
 Evan Smith
 Daniel Snyder
 Joanna T. Sommerville
 Jim Sprague
 Helen Sternberg-Powidzki
 Keith Stokes
 Everett Stuart
 Jody Sullivan
 Lawrence Taft
 Linda Tatreau
 Jeffrey Thomas
 Shannon Thomas
 John Trifero
 Ann Twomey
 John Twomey
 Martin van Hof
 Elizabeth Watts
 Matthew Weaver
 Denny Wilson
 Nancy Parker Wilson
 David Wixted
 Ellen Wixted
 Jon Wyman
 Richard Youngken
 Edward Zoughlin



Funders

Alletta Morris McBean Charitable Trust
 Prince Charitable Trusts
 Prospect Hill Foundation
 Rhode Island Sea Grant
 van Beuren Charitable Foundation

Aquidneck Island Partnership members:

Aquidneck Island Planning Commission
 Aquidneck Island Land Trust
 Center for Community Character
 City of Newport
 Coastal Resources Center, University of Rhode Island
 Dunn Foundation
 East Bay Economic Initiative
 Eastern Rhode Island Conservation District
 Foundation for Newport
 Green Light Foundation, Inc.
 Town of Middletown
 Town of Portsmouth
 Naval Station Newport
 Newport County Board of Realtors
 Newport County Chamber of Commerce
 Norman Bird Sanctuary
 Preservation Society of Newport County
 Rhode Island Sea Grant
 Sierra Club's Rhode Island Chapter



Photographs courtesy of:

Celeste Allard Cover: East Passage Marine Yachting Center, Portsmouth; p.10: Wave illustration; pp.12-13: Washington St., Newport; p.16: Father and son, Middletown; p.17: Playground, Portsmouth; pp.18-19: Easton's Beach, Newport; pp.24-25: Glen Farm, Portsmouth; p.36: Barber shop, Newport; p.59: Lobsterman, Newport; pp.60-61: Mount Hope Bridge, Portsmouth; p.69: Bike wheel; p.70: Thames St., Newport.

Monica Allard p.34: Goat Island, Newport.

Adam Freedman pp.47-48: Drawing.

Kristie Gardiner Cover: Aquidneck Growers' Market, Middletown; p.14: Sweet Berry Farm, Middletown.

Terry Gallagher Cover, p.27: Keep It Clean Day activities, Newport.

Frank Golet p.9: Taylor Point, Portsmouth.

International Yacht Restoration Society p.29: Boat builders, IRIS, Newport.

Virginia Lee p.22: Founders Brook, Portsmouth.

Anne Madden pp.6-7: Second Beach, Middletown; p.51: Farm, Middletown; p.74: Biking at the beach.

Jennifer McCann pp.i,iv,35: May Fair, Portsmouth; p.3: Salve Regina University, Newport; p.20: Kings Park, Newport; p.37: Fishing, Portsmouth; pp.38-39: Bowen's Wharf, Newport; p.40: Naval Undersea Warfare Center, Newport; pp.44-45: Bellevue Ave., Newport; p.58: The Breakers, Newport; p.62: Cliff Walk, Newport; p.71: RIPTA bus, Newport; p.73: Navy War College, Newport; Boat launching, Portsmouth.

Newport Area Career and Technical Center p.43: Water testing, Newport.

Newport County Convention & Visitors Bureau Cover, pp.66-67: Ocean Drive, Newport; pp.30-31: Newport Jazz Festival; pp.54-55: *Intrepid*; p.57: Deck of *The Shamrock*.

Rick p.11: Sid Abbruzzi surfing, Newport.

Eileen Gorton Shanley p.64: Train tracks, Portsmouth.

Malia Schwartz pp.32-33: Jennifer Tsukayama, Newport.

Deirdra Storti p.62: Goat Island Shuttle, Newport Harbor.

URI/Coastal Resources Center p.2: Satellite imagery.

Tom Willett p.ii: Sachuest Point, Middletown; pp.4-5: Sakonnet Greenway; p.48: Farm field.

Nancy Wilson p.53: Greenvale Vineyards, Portsmouth.



"*Our Shared Vision* is one that may indicate the best course for Aquidneck Island to consider. The three communities, each with its own identity, attractions and personality, should come together for the good of all."

Joseph F. McEnness, Newport resident

"I see the report as a great tool for the various organizations to revisit their objectives."

Gunther Hausen, Project Development Group of Newport

"I think the partnership's *Shared Vision* is an outstanding document, with lots of possible initiatives and outcomes projected. Wouldn't it be wonderful if some of the visions become reality? In any case, the document is a force for inspiring change in political direction."

Peter S. Damon, Bank of Newport

"Thanks very much for allowing us to be a part of this very worthy effort."

Dorothy Chase and Patricia Chase, Chase Farms

AQUIDNECK ISLAND PARTNERSHIP

A project of URI Coastal Resources Center/Rhode Island Sea Grant