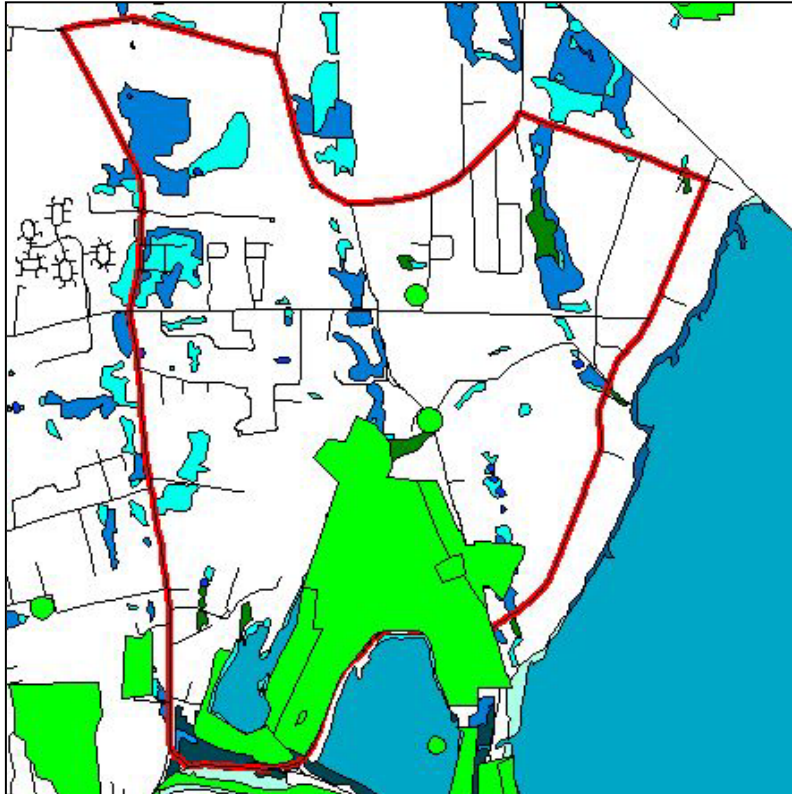


THE PARADISE LOOP SCENIC HIGHWAY STEWARDSHIP PLAN

MIDDLETOWN, RHODE ISLAND



The Town of Middletown
Rhode Island Scenic Highways Board

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The Paradise Avenue Loop Stewardship Plan
Middletown, Rhode Island

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THE PARADISE AVENUE LOOP STEWARDSHIP PLAN

A STEWARDSHIP PLAN

The Paradise Loop Scenic Highway in Middletown, Rhode Island traverses an area of natural beauty, historic significance, recreational opportunity, and cultural importance. Designated to be included in Rhode Island's Scenic Highway program in 1993, the Paradise Loop is one of the state's most picturesque roadways, and preserving its character is the focus of this corridor management plan.

Located in a rapidly growing community, the Paradise Loop is well-preserved, and despite some recent subdivision development of former farm property, has not suffered any significant impacts to its overall character. This plan will assess how local citizens and government can work to protect, manage, and enhance this scenic highway so that future travelers through Middletown will be able to experience the history and scenery that is evident to today's roadway users.

The Paradise Avenue Loop Corridor Management Plan will focus on preserving the remaining agricultural uses and open scenery that are essential to the heritage of Middletown, coordinating natural, historic, and recreational resources to attract visitors to the scenic highway, and providing necessary amenities and direction to motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

THE ROAD AND ITS CONTEXT

Location

This scenic highway runs a loop of approximately 7.25 miles in the southeast corner of Middletown, on Aquidneck Island. Segments include:

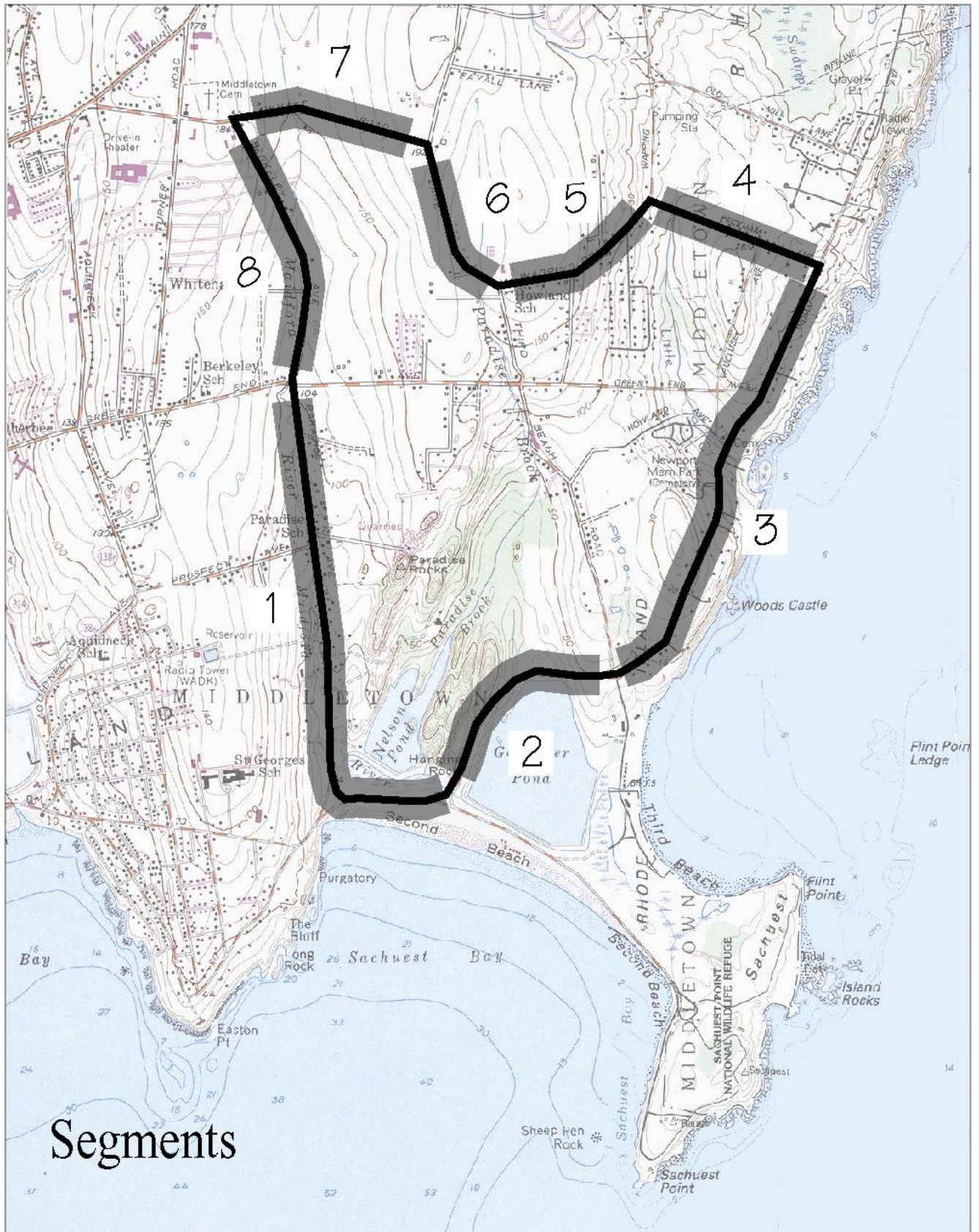
- | | |
|---|---------|
| 1) Paradise Avenue from Green End Avenue to Hanging Rock Road | 1.3 mi. |
| 2) Hanging Rock Road to Third Beach Road | 1.1 mi. |
| 3) Indian Avenue from 3 rd Beach Road to Peckam Avenue | 1.5 mi. |
| 4) Peckam Avenue to Wapping Road | .6 mi. |
| 5) Wapping Road to Mitchell's Lane | .6 mi. |
| 6) Mitchell's Lane to Wyatt Road | .5mi. |
| 7) Wyatt Rd to Berkeley Avenue | .7 mi |
| 8) Berkeley Avenue to Green End Road | .9 mi |

Newport is just one mile from the loop at its southwestern most point, and Portsmouth is less than 400' from its northeastern corner. Providence is 20 miles distant, as the crow flies.

The roadway passes through a variety of landscapes, from the shoreline of Second Beach and Sachuest Bay, to historic residences along Indian Avenue, to gently rolling farmland, to neighborhoods of newer homes. Pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists traveling the scenic highway enjoy a narrow roadway punctuated by stretches of canopy trees, stone walls, and open vistas.

Several natural resource attractions mark destination points along or near the loop, including the Norman Bird Sanctuary, Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge, and Purgatory Chasm. In addition, historic sites and recreational areas offer multiple opportunities for visitors to stop and enjoy activities along the loop.

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CORRIDOR CHARACTER

The land elevations in this area vary from sea level to 114 feet. The gently rolling land contains some of the most fertile soils in Rhode Island. The roads wind through residential communities, which date from the mid-nineteenth century to the twentieth century. Land behind the homes opens to pastures and cultivated agricultural fields, nursery production fields and newly-abandoned farmland. The southern portion of the road winds through the lowlands between Second Beach, Third Beach, Gardiner Pond and Nelson Pond. This area is dominated by salt marsh grasses, wooded wetland, and the dramatic granite outcroppings known as Hanging Rock. The Peckham Brothers stone quarries are located a short distance from Paradise Avenue – this commercial mining activity has been a Middletown tradition since the mid nineteenth century.

***Segment 1: Paradise Avenue from Green End Road
To Hanging Rock Road: 1.3 mi.***

Located in the Maidford River watershed, Paradise Avenue is a rural town road that features historic homes, beautiful laid stone walls, and a mature tree canopy along its length. This stretch of roadway was originally nominated alone, as a scenic highway, to which the rest of the loop was later added. Travel along Paradise offers views of farmland and notable historic residences, and at its southern end, St. George’s school and the Rhode Island Sound. The Paradise School, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is located here, along with Paradise Park and Boyd’s Windmill (moved here from Portsmouth).



Near Gardiner Pond

***Segment 2: Hanging Rock Road to Third Beach Road
1.1 mi.***

Dominated by expansive water views, beach vegetation (marsh grasses, rosa rugosa, beach plum, etc.), Hanging Rock, and the Gothic Revival steeple at St. George’s Chapel atop a hill, this stretch of the highway is picturesque, and has inspired painters to record its beauty from the earliest settlements here.

The parking areas along Second Beach are incongruous with the spectacular surroundings, particularly at the gazebo where highway guardrails have been placed on each side of the structure. Blue-painted, 55 gallon garbage barrels, seasonal port-a-potties, and prominent overhead wires likewise detract from the setting. The road width here is at its widest, with travels lanes divided by a double yellow stripe and a solid white line marking a narrow shoulder. Accordingly, this stretch is the most trafficked of the loop.



Gazebo



Second Beach

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Moving northeast, away from the beach, the roadway environment quickly changes from open coastline to an enclosed, curving route that is situated with the Norman Bird Sanctuary on the left and the Gardiner Pond Reservoir on the right. The road cuts through a distinct change in elevation near the sanctuary – a chain link fence contains the vegetation and marks its boundary. The landscape is entirely natural, and the road is narrower again, marked by a single yellow median and white stripes at the edges of pavement.



Looking east on Paradise



Hanging Rock

Segment 3: Indian Avenue to Peckham Avenue: 1.5 mi.

Upon crossing Third Beach Road onto Indian Avenue, a change in character is signaled by the presence of stately, Shingle-style homes, reintroduction of overhead wires, and a sign indicating a “25 mile speed limit” that is “radar controlled.” This exclusive residential neighborhood extends the length of the tree-lined Indian Avenue, where views down to the Sakonnet River can be seen across estate lands, vineyards, and farm fields. Exceptional 19th century architecture typifies this segment, as the St. Columba’s Chapel exemplifies.



Indian Avenue view

At a little less than one-half mile from the start of Indian Avenue is Taggart’s Ferry Road, a public access point. In addition, at the intersection of Indian Avenue and Peckham Avenue, there is a dirt road abutting a farm property that is a public beach access point. Extending on Indian Avenue, to the north of the scenic highway at this point, is a marked bike route.

Segment 4: Peckham Avenue to Wapping Road .6 mi.

The start of Peckham Avenue, near its intersection with Indian Avenue, provides some informal parking on the dirt shoulder of the road for the beach access point across the intersection. Traveling west, the landscape changes into one of more modest homes and open farmland. The road itself becomes more rural in character, without any lane markings, and largely absent of signage.

Segment 5: Wapping Road to Mitchell’s Lane .6 mi.

Near the intersection of Peckham and Wapping is a country view down Little Creek Lane, a hard-packed dirt road lined by a stone walls and trees. As one proceeds down Wapping, the roadway is framed by canopy trees on each side, with occasional views of farmland.



Little Creek Lane

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Segment 6: Mitchell's Lane to Wyatt Road ***5 mi.***

Views traveling on this segment are of open farmland on the north side of the roadway, as modest homes line the southern edge. A light blue warehouse houses a compost facility amid a vast expanse of farmland. At the intersection of Mitchell's Lane and Wyatt Road, there is a playground area with associated parking. Near this location is one of the few crosswalks that are on the loop highway.



Mitchell's Lane

Segment 7: Wyatt Rd to Berkeley Avenue ***7 mi***

This short segment of the scenic highway is characterized by agricultural use on both sides of the pavement, nearly uninterrupted by any other type of land use. The roadway is divided by a single yellow line with grass meeting the paved area on both edges. Stone walls and trees line properties. The Town operates soccer fields here, and the Aquidneck Island Land Trust holds a conservation restriction on the land. There is parking available at this site, as well as a concession stand. Views to the south along this stretch look beyond farm fields to recent residential developments on Berkeley Avenue and a cell tower can be seen in the far distance. At the intersection of Wyatt and Berkeley is a town fire station, police station, department of public works, and two cemeteries.



Wyatt Road

Segment 8: Berkeley Avenue to Green End Road ***.9 mi***

At the start of this segment, farming continues to occupy the east side of the road (protected by the Aquidneck Island Land Trust), yet it quickly becomes clear that this area has experienced substantial residential subdivision development.

Shortly upon traveling down Berkeley Avenue, there is a marked absence of street trees, which makes utility poles appear prominent. Although the local Tree Committee has planted trees in this area, they are set well back from the roadside due to the presence of wide drainage swales. The subdivision roads that intersect the scenic highway seem disproportionately wide, and have bituminous curbing with sidewalks on at least one side of the street. The historic property, Whitehall, is located just off the scenic roadway. It has associated parking for about 20 cars.



Berkeley Road & Green End Avenue

SPATIAL EXPERIENCE

Because this scenic roadway follows a looping route, the experience of it varies per the direction one is traveling. Following is a brief description of the overall character of the route, traveling clockwise and counterclockwise.

Driving around the loop clockwise from the intersection of Wyatt Road and Berkeley Avenue:

The roadway traverses rolling fields and open space. A single row of trees lines the road to the north but the southern side is unscreened and offers views of open fields and boundary walls. As Wyatt Road turns to Mitchell's Lane, the road is flanked on both sides by residential development. Lawns and private landscapes extend to the edge of the roadway. There are no memorable views. Immediately after crossing Paradise Brook, views of a nursery open up to the north. Single rows of trees line the road screening out the houses set back from the road edge. This condition persists from Wapping Road through Peckham Road to the intersection with Indian Avenue.

Indian Avenue brings a dramatic shift in the experience. Long views of the Sakonnet River and Little Compton to the east are found frequently along Indian Avenue. St. Columba's Chapel, a small stone building, marks the intersection of Vancluse Avenue. A number of larger residences line both sides of the roadway, but are either screened by a row of trees or are set back in the woodlands to the west.

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Emerging from a woodland area, the road winds inland and down past Hanging Rock and its surrounding woodlands and wetlands. The corridor opens up significantly in a traverse across the marshlands between Nelson Pond and Second Beach. Here, there are dramatic views of St. George's School on the ridge straight ahead and of Gray Craig across Nelson Pond to the north.

As the corridor turns north at the intersection of Paradise Avenue, low roadside vegetation gives way to rows of trees and dense wetland vegetation. The surrounding tree cover forms a narrow green corridor and canopy. This tree-tunnel experience is punctuated by views to the west of the Maidford River and the Paradise School.

After crossing the large and open intersection with Green End road, Paradise Avenue turns into Berkley Avenue, where the roadside character is primarily residential. A large subdivision dominates views to the east. Whitehall, an historic property and significant architectural landmark is situated on the west side of the roadway. Finely crafted stonewalls mark the entrance to this historic property, a distinction which separates it from the surrounding recent residential development. The drive from Whitehall to the Fire Station and intersection with Wyatt Road offers views of rolling hills and open space to the east, completing the loop in the clockwise direction.

Counterclockwise From the intersection of Wyatt Road and Berkley Avenue:

Driving the Paradise Avenue Loop counterclockwise brings a different set of experiences. Traveling south on Berkley Avenue, views to the east are of rolling fields. Quickly the character of the corridor becomes residential. Houses and subdivisions screen the views to the east, while the Maidford River runs a course parallel with the roadway to the west. Berkley Avenue turns into Paradise Avenue. The Roadside character here consists of tree tunnel conditions alternating with views of the Maidford River. Traveling clockwise offers a more accessible view of the historic Paradise School building.

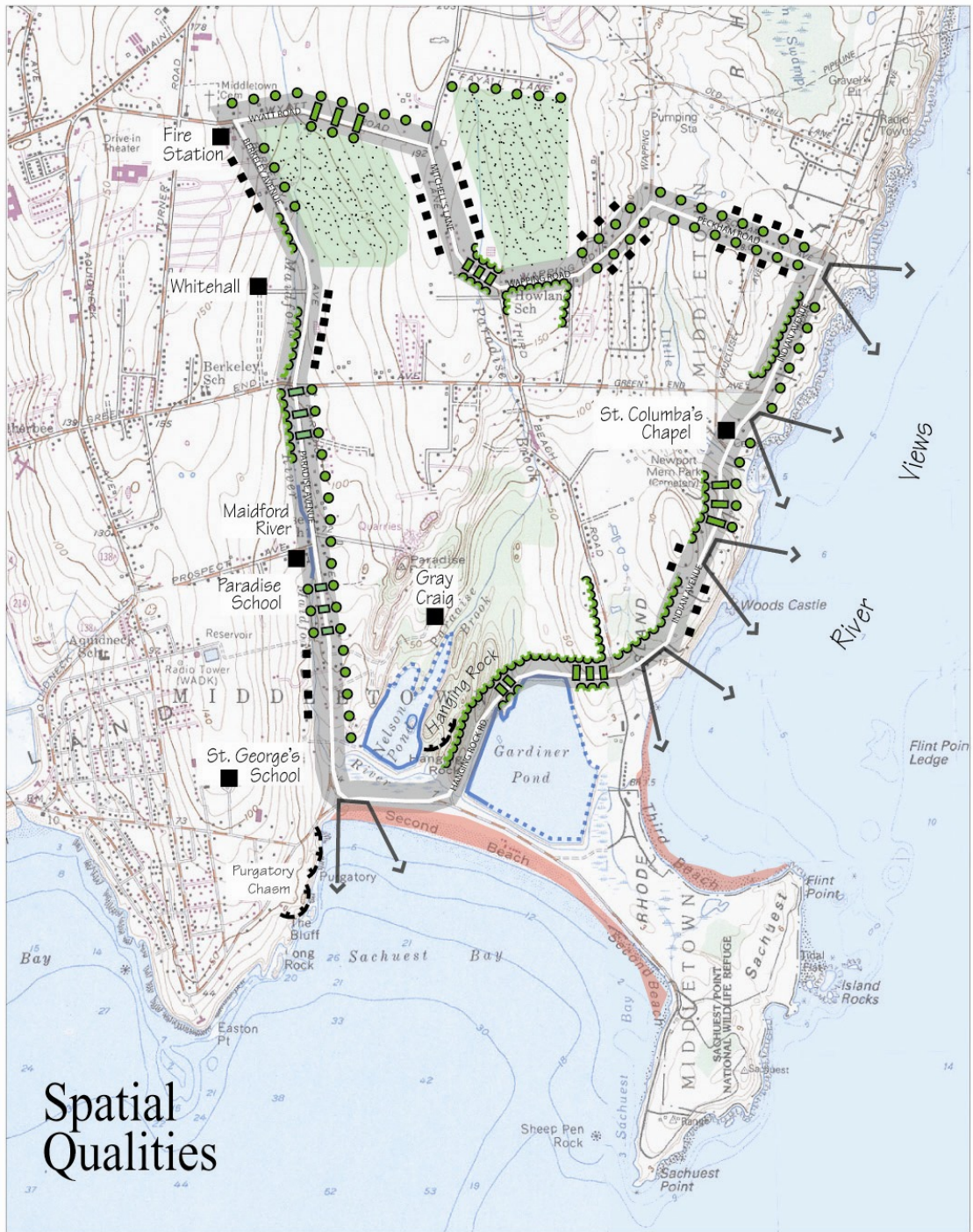
As Paradise Avenue reaches Second Beach and Hanging Rock Road, long views of Narragansett Bay and the Purgatory Chasm bluffs open up directly ahead to the south, and St. George's school can be seen up on a ridge to the west.

Turning east onto Sachuest Point Road offers beach access via the Second Beach parking lot. Views of Hanging Rock are straight ahead. The corridor narrows as it winds through the tall grasses and wetlands, beneath the face of Hanging Rock and enters a forested tunnel. In this transition, woodlands close in on the experience of open space.

This woodland transition marks the beginning of Indian Avenue. The varied topography here leads to a series of changes in the visual experience. As the road arcs around the shoulder of a small hill, views of the Sakonnet River open up to the east. Descending into the shallow *Little Creek* drainage, the woodland edges close in on the corridor. St. Columba's Chapel, an historic architectural landmark and a neighboring vineyard also line the Indian Avenue segment of the loop.







At the intersection of Peckham Road, the corridor turns west and is flanked by rows of trees on both sides, which screen out residences as well as surrounding open space. A gap in the tree cover on Wapping Road offers views of nursery lands to the north. Residential development obscures views along Mitchell's Lane. The final leg of the loop is a tree-lined traverse across rolling fields and open space.

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Spatial Qualities

KEY:

- | | | | | | |
|---------|-------------------------|---|-------------------|---|------------------|
| ■ | Architectural Landmark |  | Fields/Open Space |  | Tree Tunnels |
| ■ ■ ■ ■ | Residential Development |  | Woodland Edge |  | Long Views |
| | |  | Row of Trees |  | Natural Landmark |

SCENIC VIEWS AND VIEWSHEDS

The Paradise Avenue loop features a good deal of variety in the types of scenic views its travelers will experience. They range from a curving roadway being framed by an overhanging canopy to expansive views of the Atlantic Ocean to majestic, hill-top views of St. George's chapel. In general, traveling the loop in a counter-clockwise direction will afford the best views.

Scenic view of Atlantic Ocean

At the intersection of Paradise Avenue and Hanging Rock Road is an open view of Second Beach that stretches to include the Sachuest Wildlife Preserve. This scene is best seen by those entering the scenic highway from Newport, as the road descends down Purgatory Road to the beach area. While there is not enough space for motorists to stop in this area, walkers and bicyclists can use a 6-8 foot shoulder to look out at the ocean and beach. All of this land is protected from development, thus the view should remain for future generations to enjoy.



Scenic beach view

View of St. George's Chapel from Paradise Avenue

St. George's Gothic Chapel sits atop a hill overlooking the scenic highway. As a result, there are several vantages from which the architectural gem can be viewed; one especially picturesque outlook is from near the end of Paradise Avenue, where it meets Hanging Rock Road, about 1.3 miles from Green End Avenue. Here, framed by lush roadside vegetation, the Chapel appears, a serene monument reaching towards the sky above.



View of St. George's

View from Hanging Rock

A trail from the Norman Bird Sanctuary leads up to the top of Hanging Rock, from where another spectacular view of the beaches, ocean, and reservoir can be seen. This view has inspired artists throughout time, and can be seen in several paintings by LaFarge and others. In addition, Hanging Rock is known to have been a favorite haunt of Bishop Berkeley, a noted 18th century cleric, and owner of Whitehall, a now historic residence off of Berkeley Avenue.



LaFarge's "Last Valley"

Purgatory Chasm

Slightly to the southwest of the scenic loop on Tuckerman Avenue is Purgatory Chasm, a geological formation where the ocean dramatically crashes in and out of the deep rock crevices. Measuring about 10 feet wide, 50 feet deep and 120 feet long, this opening in a conglomerate rock ledge is a good example of erosion due to wave action. Together with Hanging Rock and Paradise Rocks, Purgatory Chasm is among the state's most "interesting and important geological features." (RI Historical Preservation Commission)

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“Hopelands” Vineyard & Farm Fields on Indian Avenue

About 4/10ths of a mile south of its intersection with Green End Avenue, Indian Avenue takes on an agricultural character, with farms and vineyards dominating the eastern side of the roadway. Beautiful views of these planted fields in the foreground stretching downhill towards the Sakonnet River in the background can be seen. In private ownership, it is extremely important to the scenic highway that these views be preserved and protected from development.

Farmland along Mitchell’s Lane and Wyatt Road

Acres of active farmland line both Mitchell’s Lane and Wyatt Road, causing travel through this part of the scenic highway to seem particularly peaceful and pleasant. The farm on the north side of Mitchell’s Lane is planted over ½ linear mile from the road edge, with the vista ending at a row of mature trees in the distance. The view is only interrupted by the blue, corrugated metal farm structure near the street.

Farms and open space on Wyatt Avenue line both sides of the roadway. Stone walls and trees likewise exist alongside the edges of the land. Here, however, the distant scene includes a view of recent residential subdivisions as well as a cell tower, providing a jarring reminder of the encroachments that are impinging on the rural landscape. The Aquidneck Island Land Trust has protected much of this land, within the bounds of their Sakonnet Greenway Project, from further development.

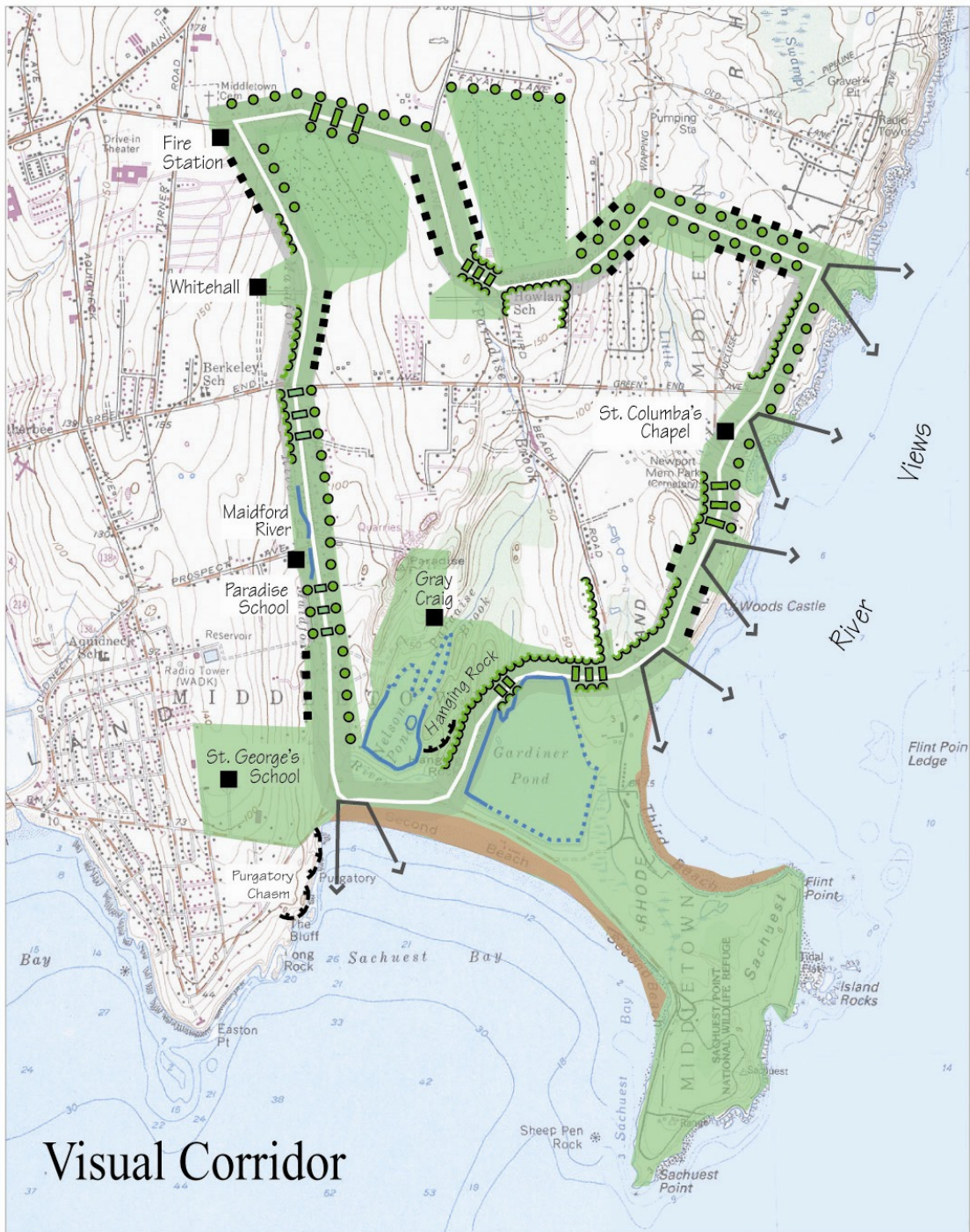


Hopelands Vineyard



Peckham Road

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Visual Corridor

KEY:

- Architectural Landmark
- ■ ■ Residential Development

- Visual Corridor
- Woodland Edge
- Row of Trees

- Tree Tunnels
- Long Views
- Natural Landmark

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Stone Walls, Fences and Guard Rails

The Paradise Avenue loop highlights some of the finest stonewalls on Aquidneck Island. The northern portions of the scenic roadway corridor are characterized by “rough walls” or “boundary walls” that reflect the agricultural heritage of the island, many of them having served as property line markers or boundaries for farm roads.

Formal stonewalls are also key components of the Paradise Avenue Scenic Roadway Corridor. Indian and Paradise Avenues exhibit some of the more refined stone work. In some cases old boundary walls, traditionally built of fieldstone, have been repaired, in others more formal walls have been constructed from flatter more regular stone. One of the best examples of this type of stonework can be found on Paradise Avenue, marking the entrance to the Whitehall Historic Property.

Short sections of Indian and Paradise Avenues are lined with wooden split rail fences. Steel guardrails exist in isolated instances on Hanging Rock Road and on Paradise Road along the Maidford River.



Trees & Woodlands

Throughout the Paradise Avenue Loop, the roadway is annotated by low roadside vegetation and over-arching tree cover. Single rows of regularly spaced trees line the roadway through out the loop. On Wyatt Avenue and Berkley Avenue, trees are widely spaced allowing for frequent viewing opportunities. On Paradise Avenue and Peckham Road, trees are closely spaced, creating a screen or visual boundary between the road and bordering landscapes.

On Indian Avenue, from Hanging Rock to the intersection of Green End Avenue, the mature, generally contiguous, woodlands on the west side of the road are essential to the character of the loop. There are two instances where woodlands are on both sides of the road, which provides the experience of driving through a mature eastern hardwood forest.



Drainage Swales

A variety of swale conditions characterize the Paradise Avenue Loop. The Maidford River runs along the west side of Paradise Avenue from the intersection of Green End Avenue to the Paradise School, forming a natural drainage swale. Hanging Rock Road, surrounded by wetland areas, has no drainage swales. Those along Indian Avenue, Peckham Road, Mitchell's Lane and Wyatt Road vary from manicured shallow swales to rough drainage ditches.

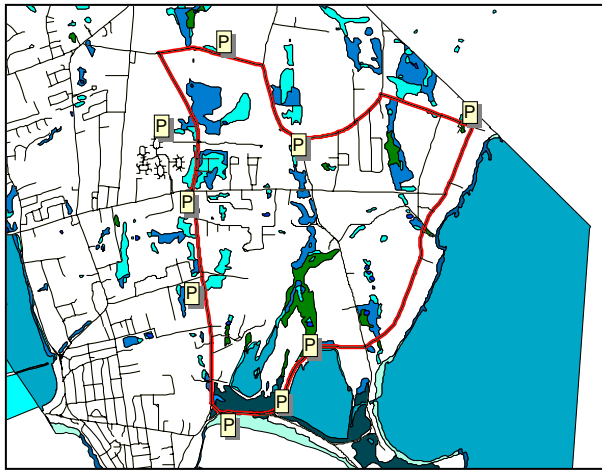
Overhead Utilities

Overhead utilities are a visual constant throughout the loop, with the exception of sections on Hanging Rock Road between Gardiner Pond and Hanging Rock and a short stretch along Wyatt Road. The absence of overhead lines in these two areas allows uninterrupted viewing of adjacent agricultural lands and natural areas. There are situations along Paradise Avenue and Wapping Road where utilities and rows of healthy trees share the roadway corridor, raising concerns about the quality of tree care by utility maintenance workers.



PARKING AREAS

There are several small parking areas/pull-overs along the length of the loop route, in addition to large parking lots located on the edges of Second and Third Beaches. Following is a list of current parking areas, by segment:



Parking Areas

<u>Segment</u>	<u>Area</u>
1.	Green End Avenue and Paradise Avenue Paradise Park
2.	Second Beach Norman Bird Sanctuary Gardiner Pond (not legal)
3.	Taggart's Ferry Road
4.	Peckham: Beach Access
576.	Playground @ Wapping & Mitchell
7.	Town Soccer Fields The Gaudet Middle School lot
8.	Whitehall

As illustrated on the map, this parking is well distributed, and likely provides an adequate number of spaces to accommodate scenic highway travelers. However, directional signage to these spaces, construction or delineation of the spaces themselves, and conditions for their use need to be addressed before they will effectively function for scenic highway travelers.



Parking permit gazebo



Green End Avenue Gateway



Mitchell's Lane & Wapping Road

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Gateways

Gateways in the middle of a loop are different from those at ends of a linear route; unlike a gateway that marks a start or end point, loop gateways mark areas of transition, significant intersections, and /or destinations. Much of a loop's appeal to travelers is the inherent opportunity to offer an infinite number of beginning points and return to the start without having to backtrack.



THE PARADISE AVENUE LOOP STEWARDSHIP PLAN

Primary intersections, which connect the scenic roadway corridor to the more heavily traveled Aquideck island roads are natural gateways. These access points are noted on the diagram by larger circles. Each of these intersections promotes and encourages easy access to the corridor experience.

- ◆ The intersection of Purgatory Road / Paradise Avenue / Sachuest Point Road, serves as a gateway to the Paradise Avenue Loop and as an access point for Second Beach. Currently, a gazebo located at the fork in the roadway between Hanging Rock Road and Sachuest Point Road is seasonally occupied with parking attendants, and features some informational signage. The beach is a stopping point in all seasons, and as such, should serve as a place where information and facilities associated with the scenic highway are located.
- ◆ The intersection of Green End Avenue / Paradise Avenue / Berkeley Avenue is also a potential primary gateway. This wide intersection is host to many travelers making their way from Route 138A and 214 to the beach, as Green End Avenue is the most direct, east-west through street that traverses across the middle of Middletown. However, because of the flow of through traffic on Green End Avenue and its scale, size and openness, the intersection separates the scenic roadway rather than joining it. While traffic volumes at this location do not appear to be high, it has the potential of being a dangerous intersection for visiting drivers on the scenic roadway.

Secondary intersections, noted on the diagram by smaller circles, link the Paradise Avenue Loop to local island roads. At many of these intersections, drivers must change direction in order to stay on the scenic roadway. Tertiary intersections include turn-offs for residential streets and subdivision roads.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

The scenic corridor winds through an area of Middletown rich in historic resources. Eighteenth century agricultural field patterns remain evident throughout the corridor. The stone walls, scattered eighteenth century farmsteads, and interior open space reveal the land settlement pattern which characterized this part of Middletown until the mid nineteenth century. This cultural landscape, coupled with the natural beauty of the surrounding water and wetlands, drew many nineteenth century artists to paint “Paradise Valley” during the mid to late nineteenth century. The area was a popular picnic area and a favorite carriage ride from nearby Newport.

The topography of Paradise Valley has changed dramatically since the nineteenth century. The development of St. George’s School on the west, the quarrying of the high rock ridges to the north, and the development of Second Beach, Third Beach, and the ponds developed by the Newport Water Works (Gardiner Pond and Nelson Pond) have dramatically changed the landscape since 1850, but the land nevertheless retains its picturesque mix of the natural and the man made.

PARADISE AVENUE (SEGMENT 1)

Most of the structures along this road date from the mid nineteenth century. Originally developed as farmland, this part of Newport (later incorporated as Middletown) with its natural features such as Hanging Rock and Purgatory Chasm, became a favorite option for summer homes. Somewhat removed from the bustle of Newport, and yet equally accessible to the water, the neighborhoods north of Second and Third Beach developed as small and large genteel summer homes of the well to do. Paradise School, at the intersection of Prospect Avenue, served the local year-round populace into the twentieth century. Today it is leased and opened to the public by the Middletown Historical Society.



Paradise School

GREAT ROCK OR PETER ROCK (SEGMENT 1)

Located at the Peckham Quarry, this rock was the highest point at this end of Aquidneck Island. As such it was a favorite look out post during the American Revolution. According to legend, Isaac Barker sent messages to the American Army in Little Compton during the 1778-1779 period when British and Hessian troops occupied Aquidneck Island.

GRAY CRAIG (SEGMENT 1)

This home replaced an earlier structure built for Mitchell Clark in the mid nineteenth century. The present house was built for the Van Buren family in 1926, with landscape designed by Ferruccio Vitale. The house façade and its expansive front lawn form the backdrop to Nelson’s Pond from Second Beach.

NELSON’S POND (SEGMENT 1 & 2)

The north edge of this pond has changed very little since the eighteenth century. Its southern and western sides, however, were dredged and diked beginning in 1882, making the pond wider and deeper, in an effort to expand its capacity as a source for the Newport Water Works system. This expansion eliminated the swampy marshes that once constituted the east side of the pond, and the water lily patches so favored by John LaFarge. The pond nevertheless remains a significant scenic resource along the corridor, and provides a dramatic foreground to the Gray Craig estate, built for the Van Burens in 1926.

The Pond continues to be an active source of drinking water for Middletown.



Hanging Rock

HANGING ROCK (SEGMENT 2)

The rugged natural beauty of hanging rock has appealed to visitors since the eighteenth century. Bishop George Berkeley, who built his

THE PARADISE AVENUE LOOP STEWARDSHIP PLAN

residence at nearby Whitehall, made frequent visits to Paradise Rocks and Hanging Rock during his stay in Middletown. It is said that he wrote *Alciphron*, one of his best-known works, here. The area was a favorite painting spot for nineteenth century impressionist painters who often stayed at the nearby Norman farm or local residences in nearby Middletown and Newport. John LaFarge was perhaps its most famous painter.

GARDINER'S POND (SEGMENT 2)

This pond was originally an irregular shaped pond with numerous rivulets leading into and out of the pond. Beginning in 1889, the pond was regularized on all sides and nearly doubled in size by dredging and diking, eliminating the marshy wetlands, which expanded and contracted with the natural level of the water. Like Nelson's Pond, this continues to be an active drinking water reservoir for Middletown.

The Gardiner Pond Shell Midden is Middletown's best known archeological site, has revealed shell deposits and other artifacts that date to prehistoric occupation by Native Americans.

NORMAN FARM AND BIRD SANCTUARY (SEGMENT 2)

George Norman owned this farm, also known as Paradise Farm, in the mid nineteenth century. Norman was the owner and developer of the Newport Water Works, and as such, was largely responsible for taming and harnessing the water contained in both Nelson Pond and Gardiner Pond. Norman's daughter, Mabel Cerio, a painter and benefactor of the arts, entertained John LaFarge and other nineteenth century painters who came to stay and paint Paradise Valley, the Hanging Rocks, and other landscape features surrounding the farm. Today the property is operated as the Norman Bird Sanctuary, a wildlife refuge and sanctuary with paths through field and forest, including a trail down to Hanging Rock

INDIAN AVENUE (SEGMENT 3)

Like Paradise Avenue, this area became a popular alternative for summer homes to the busier life of Newport proper. Winding along a ridge overlooking the Sakonnet River, the road parallels the course of the river, offering tremendous views past the large single family homes to the water. Houses along the road were erected between 1850 and 1930, with a few notable more recent infill structures. Hopelands, built in the 1920's, is the home of the large local vineyard. The vineyard provides a genteel agricultural contrast to the heavily landscaped homes with their expansive green lawns lining both sides of the road. St. Columba's Chapel (formerly Berkeley Memorial Chapel) is a picturesque stone chapel midway down the street. It was constructed in 1884.

MITCHELL LANE, WAPPING ROAD AND WYATT ROAD

(SEGMENTS 5, 6 & 7)

More than any other part of the scenic loop, this area best reflects the agricultural history of the island. Nursery fields, open pastures and recently overgrown fields offer scenic views across the gently rolling hillsides. Many of the farmhouses and their outbuildings have been destroyed, making way for more recent residential development.

However, the pastoral quality of the lanes remain in their diminutive widths, the scattered lines of roadside trees, and in the stone walls lining the roads and crossing through the open space, and in the open fields and nursery plats which remain.

Sources

For historic images of Paradise Valley and the Middletown scenic corridor, see James L. Yarnall's *John LaFarge in Paradise: the Painter and his Muse* (Newport: William Varieka Fine Arts, 1995), the collections at the Middletown



Gardiner's Pond



Norman Bird Sanctuary



St. Columba's Chapel

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Historical Society, the collections at the Newport Historical Society, the Preservation Society of Newport County, and the Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission publications on Middletown and Newport.

CIRCULATION/TRAFFIC /SAFETY ISSUES

The entire scenic highway is open to travel in each direction; two-way traffic, combined with a narrow pavement width (ranging from approximately 22 to 28 feet) for most of the loop, makes pedestrian and bicycle travelers compete for space with autos. Although all users can comfortably travel the scenic highway on its less trafficked segments, areas that experience higher volumes are likely to be less safe for non-motorized users. Their safety is an essential challenge for this scenic highway.



Traffic on Purgatory Road

Traffic volumes and movement are seasonally problematic, and otherwise not notable issues in this area. However, automobile traffic has grown between 39 percent and 80 percent since the early 1990s. On the busiest summer days, typically Fridays in July, traffic can be as high as 31 percent greater than the AADT.

- Hanging Rock Road at Gardiner Road: The annual average daily traffic (AADT) for the road increased 56 percent between 1990 and 2000 (an increase from 640 to 1,000 vehicles per day), and July traffic (monthly average daily traffic—MADT) is approximately 20 percent higher than the AADT.
- Indian Avenue: The AADT increased from 860 vehicles per day (vpd) to 1,200 vpd (39 percent) since 1990, and the MADT is 20 percent higher at 1,440 vpd.
- Peckham Avenue: The road saw a 26 percent decrease in overall AADT between 1991 and 2000, with the AADT dropping from 680 vpd in 1991 to 500 in 2000. July MADT is about 20 percent higher, about 600 vpd.
- Sachusett Point between Third Beach and the end: The AADT increased from 510 vpd to 900 vpd (80 percent) since 1990. Duly July the MADT is approximately 1,100 vpd, 20 percent higher.
- Wyatt Road: Traffic volumes stayed about the same between 1995 and 2000 (1,900 vpd), but July MADT volumes are approximately 2,284 vpd, 20 percent higher.

During heavy summer visitation, slow moving traffic along Paradise Avenue and Hanging Rock Road is not uncommon. June, July, and August consistently rank as the highest accidents months.

Local residents observe a summer increase in cars using Wapping Road as a northbound alternative to Aquidneck, and cite frequent speeding along sections of straight-away (i.e. Berkeley, Paradise). Plans to resurface Sachuest Point Road from the gazebo by the federal Fish and Wildlife Service are being completed, and the Town intends to extend this project to the end of Paradise Road.

Outside of the summer months, the Maidford River causes occasional flooding, which can close down Paradise Avenue from Berkeley Avenue – according to residents, the Maidford has not been cleaned for many years, thereby exacerbating this problem.

This 8 mile scenic loop is perhaps best enjoyed walking or bicycling. As stated above, both types of users must share the travel space of vehicles, as narrow and non-existent side lanes are characteristic of the loop. The standard 8' wide travel area with a 2' shoulder for bicyclists is not achievable in many places due to roadside drainage ditches, walls, and other obstacles. In addition, the edges of pavement in several areas are in poor condition, another hazard to cyclists. Most of the route does, however, provide ample room for emergency pull off purposes, which is often used by walkers who can sidestep off the pavement for on-coming cars. In addition, many of the streets that intersect the scenic highway are enjoyed by walkers, runners and cyclists, Prospect Avenue (location



Paradise Road shoulder

THE PARADISE AVENUE LOOP STEWARDSHIP PLAN

on two sides by a guardrail, a more welcoming presence could be created by substituting landscape and/or a wooden rail (if necessary for protection) for the guardrail. The Second Beach parking area might set aside a few spaces for scenic roadway users to park and walk or bike the route, and other amenities (toilet, water, concessions) could be located within a new, multi-purpose structure at this location. Landscaping the edge of the parking area as it meets the street, providing well-placed benches, bike racks, and permanent, attractive trash barrels would help create a favorable gateway impression. Improving the Second Beach area in both form and function is one of the greatest unrealized opportunities on the loop.

The intersection of Green End Avenue / Berkeley Avenue / Paradise Avenue should be reconfigured, to enhance the scenic roadway experience. The treatment and layout of the new traffic pattern should make it safer for drivers on the Paradise Avenue Loop to cross Green End Avenue, while accommodating existing traffic patterns and requirements for emergency vehicles.

The intersection of Green End and Paradise Avenues is, at present, little more than pavement. Travelers stopped at this intersection have few clues, other than the sign indicating “Paradise” avenue, that they are entering an area of scenic beauty. An opportunity to capture and direct those who stop at this highly used junction can be taken advantage of through the use of signage, landscaping, and perhaps even the location of a new, low-impact/seasonal use, such as a farm stand. Given the ample room these rights of way provide, there is likewise a good opportunity to reconfigure and/or re-stripe this interchange to make it safer/friendlier for bicyclists and pedestrians by creating/indicating separate “zones” for their comfort outside of the car travel lanes—guardrails extending round intersection corners here currently prevent pedestrians from crossing in safe locations. If possible, the creation of one or several planting islands within the intersection might improve the appearance, safety, and function of this important interchange.

The potential for a third gateway, at either the Berkeley and Wyatt or Wapping and Mitchell’s Lane intersection should be further explored. Both are stopping points in the loop, and both have facilities nearby that might contribute to the loop’s experience (parking at the Aquidneck Land Trust’s soccer fields, the Gaudet School lot, or at the playground; both locations could offer bike racks, water, and/or restrooms, etc.). In both locations, travelers have the choice of continuing on the scenic highway or progressing on to a different local roadway. And, both areas could support informational signage, attractive landscaping, and scenic views. Opting for one over the other must consider how travelers use the roadway and where to best service their needs. The installation of wooden guardrails is recommended for these in order to define these intersections as gateways to the corridor.

In order to best promote the use of the parking areas along the loop, they should share a common system of signage, availability, and appearance to create another piece of a cohesive identity for the scenic highway. Differing ownership might be an obstacle to such a system, but any effort to coordinate these resources would be an improvement to the status quo of disorganized, hard to discern spaces. Promotion of



Gazebo, guardrail



Green End and Paradise Road



Town Notice Board/Pkg. area at Paradise/Green End



Playground pkg.

THE PARADISE AVENUE LOOP STEWARDSHIP PLAN

a location map, providing bicycle racks at each area, adding informational signage and/or materials at each lot, landscaping, and transforming ill-defined “pull-over” areas into organized spaces would help scenic highway travelers plan their activities along the loop.

Trees and Maintenance:

There are residential sections on Berkley Avenue and Mitchell’s Lane where a single row of trees could help provide screening and create a boundary between the public roadway and private landscapes.

Maintenance of overhead utility lines, particularly along Wapping Road and Paradise Avenue, where lines and trees share the roadway corridor, should take into account the value that the rows of trees lend to the character of the roadway.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Use

The roads through the corridor are narrow and vary little in their topography. Drainage swales and stone walls near the road edges provide little room for bicycle trails or rest areas. Speeds through the loop remain relatively slow, and the relative isolation of the area nearly eliminates speeding commuter traffic. Nevertheless, even with implementation of suggested improvements, heavy traffic during the summer months will witness cars, bicycles, and pedestrians competing for room on the roadway.

The popular shoreline route along Hanging Rock Road can be greatly improved for these varying modes of transportation. With some modification, the right of way appears wide enough to accommodate a bicycle lane along this limited stretch. Shifting the roadway slightly to the north might enable aesthetic and safety improvements along the parking lot.

Better control of entry and exit to the Second Beach parking lot (“surfing area” at Paradise and Purgatory) would improve safety for all those who move through this landscape. At present, this lot allows access along its entire length during non-fee paying times, with a rope hung across barrels marking the boundary during fee collection hours. A pedestrian path might also be created at the lot’s edge, along with an effort to landscape this transition to the street.

The entire loop’s length should be examined for the integrity of the roadway shoulder, as this area is usually where cyclists ride during busy traffic. Loose gravel and cracking pavement are potentially dangerous hazards.

A number of trails along the scenic loop are available to pedestrians. Norman Bird Sanctuary, the Gardiner Pond reservoir, the Aquidneck Island Land Trust properties, Paradise Park, and Sachuest Point Wildlife Refuge are a few of these. Potential future connections, such as a trail along the Maidford River, from Paradise Park to Reservoir Avenue, and from the Newport National golf course to the beach would enhance available choices for walkers. As with bicyclists, pedestrians walking along the scenic highway’s roadside must pay attention to possible conflicts with cars.

Landscape Interpretation

Within the loop are several opportunities to park, rest and get off a bicycle to take advantage of the scenery and the cultural landscape history of the corridor. At these important locations exist opportunities for interpretive signs, self-guided brochure stations, and other devices. These locations include the parking areas near Second Beach, Third Beach, Purgatory Chasm, the Norman Bird Sanctuary, the Howland School, the rest area at the corner of Green End Avenue and



Soccer field entrance



Walkers in the distance, Paradise Road



Bicyclist on the Loop

THE PARADISE AVENUE LOOP STEWARDSHIP PLAN

Paradise Avenue, the Middletown Historical Society building, and others.

The dike surrounding Gardiner Pond is a popular walking trail, and offers an excellent opportunity for panels illustrating the landscape of the nineteenth century painters. The Churchyard on Indian Avenue offers a contemplative spot to pause and reflect on the summer homes and the 19th century development of the area. The Peckham Brothers Quarry offers the opportunity for understanding the industrial heritage of the island. However because this remains an active industrial work yard, interpretation of this industry might better be reflected in signs placed along the road or in the Middletown Historical Society lot.

The farms along Wapping Road and Wyatt Lane offer the opportunity to understand the eighteenth century settlement of the island and its agricultural heritage. The scenic natural beauty of Hanging Rock, Paradise Rocks, Purgatory Chasm and the marshes, dunes and sandy shores of the two beaches offer the opportunity to understand the ecosystems of the island, their role in the Atlantic flyway, and the importance of island land stewardship.

Non-Developable Areas

The Town of Middletown, in partnership with the State of Rhode Island, the Aquidneck Island Land Trust, the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, private property owners and others, has worked to preserve the open spaces in this area. Thus far, over 1,000 acres of land in this general area (the scenic highway encompasses about 2.3 square miles, or 1,472 acres) is open and protected from development. Following is a list and map of these spaces, according to the Rhode Island 1990 SCORP data provided by RI GIS:



Aquidneck aerial

Property Owner	Acres
Norman Bird Sanctuary	450.0
Sachuest Pt. National Refuge (USFWS)	228.0
Aquidneck Island Land Trust	161.6
Middletown Soccer Fields	14.0
Sweet Berry Farm	77.6
Braman Farm	12.6
Nunes Farm	51.0
Sweet Berry Farm Inc./Borges	6.4
St. George's School	49.0
Second Beach	40.0
Newport Water Department	37.3
Nelson Pond-(NWD)	20.0
Gardiner Pond-(NWD)	14.3
Newport Water Dept. No. 2	3.0
Public Land – Gray Craig Property, Paradise Park	17.3
Sachuest Point Camp	3.4
Boys' Club	0.7
Middletown Stables	3.0
Third Beach Club	4.0
Purgatory Chasm D.O.T	8.4
Navy Beach Club	4.0
TOTAL	1006.7

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Protected Land

KEY:

- Wetlands
- Public Land
- Scenic Highway
- Ponds
- Protected Open Space
- Aquidneck Island Land Trust

PROTECT

In addition to the remaining developable land along the loop, it is critical to protect the stone walls and trees that contribute to route consistent scenic quality. Protection of historic stone walls is one of the stated goals in the Town's 1992 Comprehensive Community Plan.

The walls and trees along Paradise Avenue appear to be in good condition, in contrast to those on Wyatt. The stone wall along Wyatt Road's southern side is failing, and it seems as though several trees have been felled over the years, leaving a uneven pattern of plantings. This area should be protected from further deterioration through regular maintenance and repair of the wall and replanting the street line.

If additional subdivision development is proposed, it should be strictly regulated to complement the scenic highway, and not cause the negative impact of its predecessors. Subdivision roadways that intersect the scenic road should minimize pavement width, be planted with street trees of 3" minimum caliper, avoid installation of unnecessary utilities (street lighting), and be lined with homes of good quality construction that reflect the area's character. Incentives to preserve open space with any development should be seriously considered.



Subdivision street

TOURISM/RECREATION

There is strong potential for enhancing the scenic highway's function as a recreational area: the bicycle loop, pedestrian paths, greenway links, natural and historic resources all could be better identified. With minimal improvements, this scenic highway could significantly increase its attractiveness.

The scenery, flat terrain, and variety of destinations on this loop circuit translate into great potential for a popular bicycle touring destination. Likewise, trails and resources are not coordinated to capitalize on their collective attraction – the one apparent effort at recreation promotion in the area is the American Heart Association's "Pathway to Health," marked by subtle signage along Second Beach.



Walk to Health

Suggestions to enhance the scenic highway's recreation use include:

- ◆ Create a information brochure listing views, sites, and amenities, including:
 - Parking areas
 - Bicycle rack locations
 - Food, water, and restroom availability
 - Historic sites: Whitehall, Paradise School, St. Columba Chapel, Grey Craig House, St. George's School and Chapel, Middletown Cemetery, Peckham Quarry, Hanging Rock
 - Natural Resource sites: Purgatory Chasm, Norman Bird Sanctuary, Nelson's Pond, Gardiner Pond & Shell Midden, Gray Craig conservation land, Second Beach, Sachuest Wildlife Refuge.
 - Walking Trails and Rights-of-Way to the beach: Norman Bird Sanctuary, Gardiner Pond, Aquidneck Island Land Trust properties (incl. Golf course), Gray Craig conservation area, Paradise Park, Peckham Road Public Access, Taggart's Ferry Road public



Public Access Point - Peckham Road

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access, Second Beach, St. George's, and Sachuest Wildlife Refuge.

- ◆ Create a signage program throughout the loop, directing visitors to resources. Design signage to be clear and easy to read, yet ensure that it does not detract from the scenic quality of the road.
- ◆ Provide amenities to encourage visits: bicycle racks at all destinations, water at key locations, etc.



Paradise windmill

POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE

The Town of Middletown, in partnership with the State and Federal agencies and local non-profit groups, has been actively working to protect land in this area from becoming more developed. As referenced above, approximately 50-60% of the acreage in the area of the scenic highway is protected open space. There are, however, several ways by which the integrity of the Paradise loop could be seriously impacted in future, if proper safeguards are not taken.

The farmland that has frontage along much of the route is not entirely protected from development. Identifying ways to preserve the practice of agriculture in Middletown is one of its Master Plan's goals – some of the implementation strategies suggested includes “developing syndicates of governmental and private funding sources to purchase development rights.” These purchases are critical to shaping the future of the scenic loop, and should be considered among this corridor management plan's top recommendations.

Any proposed development should strive to preserve important features of the scenic highway such as stone walls, roadside street trees and vegetation, and, wherever possible, scenic vistas. Current subdivision regulations may require roadway widths and sidewalks that result in out of character developments and should be critically examined to identify opportunities to improve upon current standards.

INTRINSIC QUALITY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

1. Create a land protection strategy for remaining developable parcels in the scenic highway area.

- ◆ Foster ongoing working relationship between the Aquidneck Island Land Trust, the State's Department of Environmental Management, and the Town of Middletown for the purpose of joining forces to plan for the permanent protection of agricultural lands. Share information to develop an acquisition strategy that inventories all open land along the scenic highway, and raise and identify available funding for purchase.
- ◆ Schedule ongoing communication with land owners to inform them of any benefits available to farmers and to stay current with possible changes in land use.
- ◆ Consider a zoning change from R-60 to an Agriculture/Conservation zone whose purpose is to preserve farming and conserve land, and requires increased lot size (3-5 acres/single family).
- ◆ Consider allowing cluster subdivisions in the low density R-60 zone (currently allowed in medium-high density residential districts).

2. Develop an interpretive plan that describes the scenic highway's natural, historic, and recreational resources.

- ◆ Involve leaders from the Town, the RI Historical Preservation Commission, the Department of Environmental Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Aquidneck Island Land Trust, and RI Scenic Highways BoaRoad
- ◆ Describe and locate resources along and near the Paradise Loop, identify ways to distribute this information through signage, written materials, organized tours, etc.

3. Provide necessary amenities to attract bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists to the loop.:

- ◆ Develop accurate maps of sites, views, trails, and amenities along and near the loop. Make them available at popular stops – i.e. Second Beach gazebo, Sachuest Point Visitor's Center (opening soon), Whitehall, Aquidneck Soccer Fields, public beach access points, etc.

THE PARADISE AVENUE LOOP STEWARDSHIP PLAN

- ◆ Improve parking areas with landscaping, signage, and other amenities, and clearly illustrate lots on scenic highway materials.
 - ◆ Place bicycle racks in all parking areas, and near walking trails.
 - ◆ Ensure the Town's DPW regularly sweeps the roadway's edge clean of debris.
 - ◆ Identify (Town responsibility) where water fountains or spigots are available (Second Beach, soccer fields, Paradise Park (?), Norman Bird Sanctuary (?))
 - ◆ Identify (Town responsibility) appropriate picnicking areas and provide (and regularly empty) trash receptacles or publicize a "carry in carry out" policy)
- 4. Create an identity for the scenic highway at its gateways.**
- ◆ Design improvements to Second Beach, the Green End Avenue/Berkeley intersection, and possibly a third gateway location. Using a combination of signage, landscaping improvements, and visitor amenities, cause travelers to stop and consider their entry/exit to the scenic highway.
 - ◆ Work with the Town, appropriate state agencies, and private partners to fund proposed improvements.
 - ◆ Develop a long-term strategy to maintain the gateways' appearance, possibly through local volunteer organizations (i.e. "adopt a spot" – see #6 below).
- 5. Develop a maintenance plan and landscaping guidelines for the length of the Scenic highway:**
- ◆ Vegetation that needs an annual maintenance plan, including a protective measures for significant elements. The trees along side of the road that forms a tunnel of vegetation, particularly along Paradise Avenue and Hanging Rock Road should be carefully maintained. The large weeping willow tree in front of the DPW property on Berkeley Road should be preserved.
 - ◆ Work with the Norman Bird Sanctuary to remove the chain link fencing along Hanging Rock Road and plan to maintain vegetation in this area.
 - ◆ Selectively trim and/or clear vegetation along the Maidford River to pursue development of a potential path.
- 6. Describe how on-going public participation will be achieved in the implementation of scenic highway management objectives.**
- ◆ Create a local "Adopt a Spot" program similar to one sponsored by the Department of Transportation by which volunteer groups assume responsibility for assigned sites along the route for a two year renewable period. In exchange, small-scale, tasteful signage recognizes the group's contribution.
- 7. Create a schedule of responsibilities for implementation:** Several agencies will be involved in the effective implementation of this management plan, and will conduct together a continuing assessment of its progress. These include:
- ◆ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Managers of Sachuest Wildlife Reserve.
 - ◆ Department of Transportation: Scenic Roadways Board: conducts reviews upon Town's request.
 - ◆ Department of Environmental Management: Participant in purchase of open space and development rights.
 - ◆ Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission: may play an advisory role in appropriate conservation treatments of the historic properties, as well as providing information for the development and location of interpretive materials.
 - ◆ Aquidneck Island Land Trust: Owner and manager of several properties in the area.
 - ◆ Town of Middletown: Owner and stewards of several properties along the highway, responsible for operation, maintenance and improvements.

ACTION PLAN

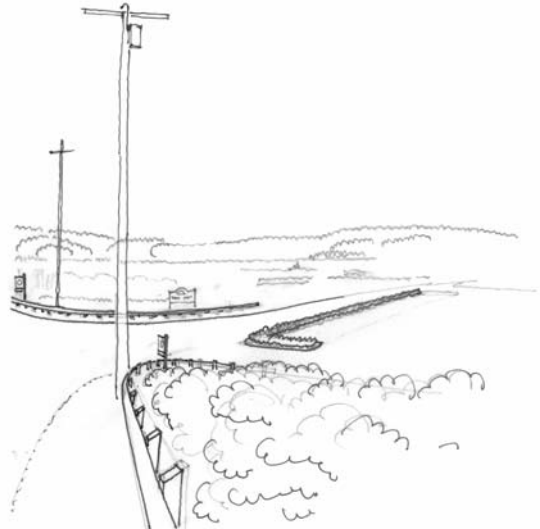
Following represents three groupings of physical improvements taken from the above recommendations which focus on the Loop's gateways. Implementation of these recommendations will result in a dramatic improvement in its character.

Second Beach Gateway



EXISTING CONDITIONS

The intersection of Paradise Avenue, Purgatory and Sachuest Point Roads is the southwest gateway to the Paradise Avenue Loop. It is characterized by expansive paved surfaces for parking and roads as well as magnificent views of the surrounding coastal environment.



PROPOSED ENHANCEMENTS

Add wooden guard rails, SRB signs and plantings to mark gateway, to reduce the visual impact of the parking areas and to define the roadway. Add islands separating parking from road and mark the edge with wooden guardrail and Beach Rose hedge.

Second Beach Pavilion



EXISTING CONDITIONS

The existing shelter at the intersection of Hanging Rock and Sachuest Point Roads does not appear permanent, associated parking is not well defined and the combined facility does not compliment the site and could present more information about the surrounding sights



PROPOSED ENHANCEMENTS

Add wooden guard rails to protect and define the site. Construct permanent pavilion on stone pavers with mosaic orientation map, and include informational panels and area maps. Add flag poles to mark and celebrate the site. Define gravel parking areas and introduce Beach Rose screen plantings.

Looking East at Wapping and 3rd Beach Roads



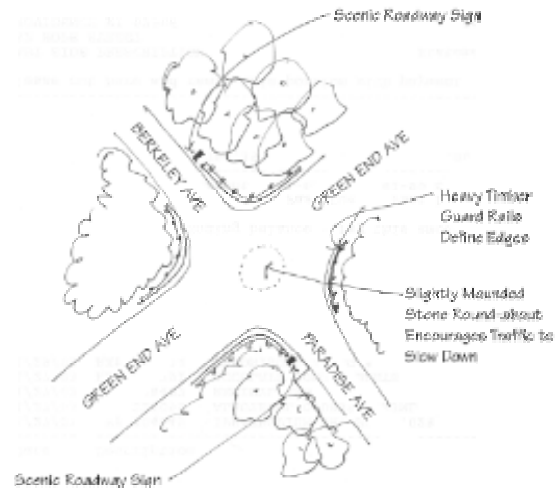
EXISTING CONDITIONS

The intersection of Mitchell's Lane Wapping Road and Third Beach Road offers public parking for visitors to the Scenic Roadway as well as access to adjacent recreation fields and playground. Grass edges, steel guard rails, Holland Park sign and chain link fences are visible at the edge of the road.

PROPOSED ENHANCEMENTS

Replace existing steel guard rail with new, longer wooden guard rail. Mark Scenic Roadway with two (2) SRB signs for Wapping Road (east) and Mitchell's Lane (west). Add row of shade trees at the back of the parking lot and along playground fence line.

Green End Gateway



EXISTING CONDITIONS

The intersection of Paradise / Berkeley / Green End Avenues is the western gateway to the Paradise Avenue Loop. Its scale, size and openness are inconsistent with the prevailing character of the Scenic Roadway. Its edges are not clearly defined, there are steel guardrails and above ground piping that detract from scenic views.

PROPOSED ENHANCEMENTS

Replace existing steel guard rails with new, longer wooden guard rails marking the edges of all four (4) quadrants and screening out the above ground piping.

Mark Scenic Roadway with two (2) SRB signs for north and southbound traffic on Berkeley and Paradise Avenues. Work with Middletown public safety officials to design a slightly mounded, mountable, circular stone round-about at the center of the intersection that would encourage traffic to slow down, go around it, and reduce the visual extent and impact of this extensive paved area.

Wyatt Road and Berkeley Avenue



EXISTING CONDITIONS

The intersection of Berkeley Avenue and Wyatt Road serves as the primary gateway to the Paradise Avenue Scenic Roadway for travelers coming from the north. Grass edges, several signs to historic sites and public safety facilities. No indication of Scenic Roadway.

PROPOSED ENHANCEMENTS

Mark gateway to Scenic Roadway with wooden guardrail, two (2) Scenic Roadways Board signs. Mount signs for historic sites on SRB sign posts.

Consider adding horizontal carved sign to wooden guardrail announcing: "Paradise Avenue Loop Scenic Roadway", to coordinate with existing "Middletown Police" sign. (n.b. goal of gateway signage should be to complement existing Middletown Police sign - not to compete with it).

Southbound on Berkeley Avenue



EXISTING CONDITIONS

Stone wall and distant view of preserved open space are dramatic and welcome visitors to the Scenic Roadway. Unscreened views of parking and public works facilities on the opposite side of the road detract from the scenic view.

PROPOSED ENHANCEMENTS

Selective low growing evergreen shrubs and carefully placed shade trees on the west side of the road in this area would reduce the visual impact of the public works facilities, while ensuring visibility of vehicles entering and exiting those facilities.

APPENDIX A:

**The Rhode Island Scenic Roadways Board – 11 Members
RI Statutes Chapter 24-15 Section 24-15-10**

1. Director of the Department of Transportation
2. Director of the Department of Environmental Management
3. Chairperson of the Historic Preservation Commission
4. Designee of the Audubon Society of Rhode Island
5. Appointee of the Senate majority leader
6. Appointee of the Senate minority leader
7. Appointee of the Speaker of the House of Representative
8. Appointee of the House of Representatives minority leader
9. Designee of the Rhode Island Builders Association
10. Appointee of the Governor
11. Appointee of the Governor