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I-195 in Providence, Rhode Island: Urban Development or Dislocation?

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“I-195 in Providence, Rhode Island: Urban Development or Dislocation?

By Alec J. Fraggos HIS 490 Honors Thesis in History

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To my mother Jill Fraggos and my late father James ‘Jim’ Fraggos. Thank you for instilling in me a sense of curiosity and wonder.

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Introduction: Joseph 'Joey' Cabral's leap

It was a warm Saturday in July 1952 when twelve-year-old Joseph "Joey" Cabral and his three friends ventured east on India Street toward the Seekonk River. Upon arriving at the Seekonk River Harbor, they stopped to observe the placid water as it hugged base of the India Point Railroad Bridge, or the "Jackknife Bridge," as it was known to locals. The four were in desperate need of relief from the sweltering July humidity, and so swimming in the harbor was on the agenda that humid Saturday afternoon. This was no ordinary summer afternoon, however. On this particular day Cabral unexpectedly embarked on an "informal and unplanned rite of passage into manhood."[1] Better yet, Saturday meant that the train-only activity of the Jackknife Bridge "ceased and… opened to its full height and remained in an upright position all weekend."[2] As the group gazed upon the bridge an idea popped out of one of the young minds; "it was not new or original, but up until then, we had always cast it aside."[3] The boys meticulously sifted through ideas and schemes wondering how they would climb the bridge, how they would jump, and where they would exit the river itself. The group would venture to the top of the bridge, gauge the height from the top to the water, carefully descend down and decide to make the faithful leap in the moment, "or at some later date."[4] Although the plan was carefully crafted, the crew failed to account for a boy named Moose Perry, who "stood a head taller than all the neighborhood boys and outweighed us by at least twenty pounds."[5] Moose also had a paradoxical effect on the boys in that they "feared him,

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[1] Joseph Cabral, "One Giant Leap, Lou Costa Collection on Fox Point" (Providence, R.I, c. -2005 1980), p. 1, Fox Point Stories by Joseph M. Cabral (1 of 3), Box: 27, Folder: 548, Providence Public Library.

[2] Cabral, 1.

[3] Cabral, 2.

[4] Cabral, 2.

[5] Cabral, 2.

envied his prowess and idolized him."[6] Nevertheless, Cabral and his friends immersed themselves into step one of the plan: using all four limbs to scale the bridge itself. As they reached the peak, however, Moose, like a hawk awaiting the return of a sparrow, was "perched on the uppermost railroad tie."[7] Moose forced the boys to choose: "jump or I will throw you over the edge."[8] Yet, the boy's "egos would not allow such a total disgrace… the decision was settled. We would jump."[9] With their fates settled, one of Cabral's more impatient friends, Billy, began to panic and impulsively leapt from the bridge without hesitation. Moose and the three boys hurried to the edge of the bridge and peered over to scan the water for Billy. Seconds later Billy's head pierced the surface, and he made his way "up the river bank and gave us a victory sign."[10] Cabral could no longer prolong the inevitable. He felt Moose's presence over his shoulder, fear and nausea permeated through his body. Cabral held in the back of his mind the biblical verse his mother had told him earlier that day: "idle hands are tools in the Devil's workshop."[11] After a half-hearted "good luck" from Moose, Cabral felt himself drop like a pin into the river, simultaneously promising to himself, "I will never, never, do this again."[12] And in an instant, Cabral disappeared into the depths of the river, his mission accomplished. While making way to riverbank, Cabral spotted an

[6] Cabral, 2.

[7] Cabral, 3.

[8] Cabral, 3.

[9] Cabral, 3.

[10] Cabral, 3.

[11] Cabral, 1.

[12] Cabral, 3.

excited Billy awaiting to celebrate their feat. The two "embraced and jumped around giddy with delight."[13]

Little did Joey Cabral know that the India Point Railroad bridge would one day be, as a *Boston Globe* columnist described it, a "rusty old half a train bridge to nowhere has served only as an obstacle for boaters and a platform for teenage trespassers and mischief-makers."[14] Just as only half the bridge existed after 2002 when it was partially removed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the *Globe* only tells half the story of the bridge's story, and even less about these so-called 'mischief-makers.' Joe Cabral was one of those 'mischief-makers' for about twenty seconds on that Saturday in July 1952. However, who someone like Cabral was outside of being a youthful troublemaker made little difference to the media, and it certainly did not matter much in the documents written by public officials. Nor would it have mattered that Cabral would one day become a husband, a soldier, an invaluable member of the Fox Point community and, a contributor to the memory and continuation of Fox Point's multigenerational history.

For Cabral, leaping from the Jackknife Bridge at India Point was a pivotal step in the process of cultivating his identity as a young man. At the same time in 1952, the city of Providence was also grappling with unexpected changes to its own identity as an industrial producer in the smallest state in the Union. The integration of interstate highways was a fundamental step in the plan to revitalize a declining industrial society in Providence. Highways were constructed, widened, and relocated for a variety of reasons to adapt to the changing needs of the city. During World War II, while many cities focused on creating jobs in the defense industry and alleviating Americans' economic struggles stemming from the

[13] Cabral, 4.

[14] Brian Amaral, "Bridge to Nowhere No More: Railroad Bridge Jutting into Seekonk River from East Providence to Be Removed," *The Boston Globe,* (18 July 2022), N.P.

Great Depression, Providence focused on its need to improve the city's overall circulation. The necessity of improved circulation became painfully evident to the City Plan Commission (CPC) after a dismal evacuation during the 1938 New England Hurricane. The drownings of several motorists and children revealed a dire need for better roads and wider highways. Furthermore, as approximately thirteen feet of water filled sections of Providence, the city began to take seriously the placement of its transportation and industrial infrastructure. The losses of life and damage to infrastructure caused by the hurricane was a brutal reminder of the state's inadequate road transportation system. By 1941, the possibility of the World War finding its way onto U.S. soil brought a panic to Providence city officials that continued into the early 1950s. This panic shaped wartime highway placement and widenings. Additionally, the city's publication of the *Citizen's Defense Manual* reflected the city's fear of yet another failed evacuation effort and a general anxiety surrounding the possibility of warfare within the U.S.

As the aura of panic faded in the postwar years, new, unexpected developments brought a slew of problems within the city. Namely, the loss of industrial production to the South, the lack of any plans for the future organization of the urban landscape, suburbanization, and the subsequent neglect and deterioration of the city's housing stock. The 1950s were defining years in the city's development as it dealt with the decline of its industrial identity. The city ultimately chose to revive industrial production within the city by buying up large tracts of land and subsequently selling them to large industrial producers. In doing so, the city held onto its industrial roots, but at a cost. The melon-sized scoops taken out of Providence's population in the postwar years cannot be overstated as the city has not yet to recover its postwar population levels. This severely limited the city's ability to relieve traffic congestion and prosecute the ever-worsening housing crisis. The revival of industrial

society was also intimately related to the planning and organization of the city as well as the placement of urban highways. The kinds of industry the city sought and did attract was also closely tied to the housing needs within the poorest sections of the city.

By 1956, industrial problems were solved with industrial solutions as the city demolished its older housing stock at a rapid rate. With increases in housing neglect and limited space within the city itself, the Providence Redevelopment Agency (PRA) began indiscriminately tearing down some of the city's oldest and architecturally valuable structures to make room for new housing. The Providence Preservation Society (PPS) emerged in 1956 with a firm commitment to establishing appropriate mechanisms for acquiring, rehabilitating, and preserving historically valuable structures within Providence. As highway construction ramped up after President Dwight D. Eisenhower's signing of the National Interstate and Defense Highways Act in 1956, cities across the country began showing interest in preserving historic structures with highways taking up larger shares of urban space. Consequently, the Providence Preservation Society's efforts to rehabilitate the city's historically valuable architecture resulted in the displacement and out-migration of many individuals and families. Many displaced families were African Americans coming from the South and immigrants from Ireland, Spain, Portugal, and the Portuguese possessions. While industrial revitalization was a key factor in upholding the mid-century economy, Providence was not the visually or aesthetically pleasing city that many American urbanites desired. The Providence Preservation Society was a crucial player in the efforts to make Providence into a city that was not only visually appealing, but a city whose citizens who knew and valued its rich history. The period from 1956 when the Providence Preservation Society was established until early 1966 when interstate highway construction was at its peak contributed mightily to the gentrification of neighborhoods like Fox Point.

As the city dug itself deeper into debt resulting from massive bond issues, the City

Plan Commission's and Providence Redevelopment Agency's chief objectives was the city's safety. Safety would take on a dual meaning in that the city needed to be a place that was physically safe, but also a place that was safe for capital investments. To make Providence a more appealing location for both private and federal investments, the city placed a heavy emphasis on creating spaces for recreation and organizing youth programs. However, the primary mechanism used in achieving these goals was the aggressive implementation of the City Plan Commission's revised 1951 Zoning Ordinance. The city's desire to spark an architectural and industrial renaissance where Providence would revive its industrial past and makes its architectural history visible to its citizens drove urban policy in this period. Moreover, these efforts played no small role in attracting federal funds for the highway and housing projects that vastly altered the urban environment and the communities within it. The objective of this investigation, then, is to look at these changes and analyze how the city was able to reshape the character of the city almost overnight.

The story that emerges in this thesis, then, is one that analyzes how highway infrastructure and aggressive urban planning schemes altered Providence's physical and social identity as an industrial workshop and port city built around the ideals of religious freedom. This investigation is as much about infrastructure as it is about people. Providence is home to two major highways: I-95 and I-195. The pages that follow delve into the role that the construction of I-195 had on Fox Point, a small commercially oriented ethnic enclave that sits on the northernmost part of the Providence Harbor and is bounded by the Providence and Seekonk Rivers. An investigation into I-195 was chosen for several reasons, but the primary reason being that I-195's placement guided the placement of I-95 through the city of Providence. Chapter one explains what Fox Point looked like a year after the start World War II, its economy, and the transit-oriented-development (TOD) system that held the area together. The chapter then considers the extent of panic that the 1938 New England

Hurricane and the war brought to city officials and agencies. The chapter also considers how Providence's urban highway plans were in some ways different from other cities across the country. Chapter two investigates what Fox Point looked like after the conclusion of World War II and the myriad of struggles its people had to endure. The chapter then explores the specific struggles Fox Pointers had to grapple with, including housing deterioration, a lack of basic housing utilities, and traffic. Chapter three examines the struggles and consequences associated with the city's attempts to revive the industrial economy. This aspect seeks to understand how master planning and historic preservation picked up the slack in beautifying Providence. The chapter then dives into a specific case study that describes the ways in which the Providence Preservation Society determined which structures were historically significant. Beyond the historical significance of structures, in the process of preserving buildings, the city was also in the process of preserving the legacy of architects like John Holden Greene. Specifically, the chapter analyzes the roles that city historian John Hutchens Cady played in determining the civic and architectural value of the city's surviving structures. The last portion of the chapter investigates the role that Chicago preservationist Antoinette (Forrester) Downing played in the creation of the PPS and her role in saving Providence's historic architecture. It is important to note that only those surviving structures designed by John Holden Greene are analyzed. The fifth and final chapter investigates two case studies that reflect the ways in which ordinary people in Providence engaged with city government and the city's understanding of the people they represented. The first study investigates how the Providence Youth Progress Board grossly misrepresented the people they claimed to represent. Consequently, these misrepresentative reports were taken seriously by city officials as they sought to employ Providence's youth population in the newly revitalized industrial parks. As a result, many social agencies came to dominate and overlook the individuality of primarily African American and immigrant communities in Providence. The second study

describes how the Adler family- the founders of Adler's Fox Point Hardware Store- resisted the Providence Redevelopment Agency and Mayor Joseph A. Doorley's attempts to rezone and purchase their land. Just as ordinary Rhode Islanders like Joe Cabral had key moments in their own lives that were crucial to their own identities, highway construction in Providence was one of those moments that came to shape the city's future identity. This story analyzes those key moments for both the people of Providence and the city itself.

Chapter 1: A Transit-Oriented Fox Point.

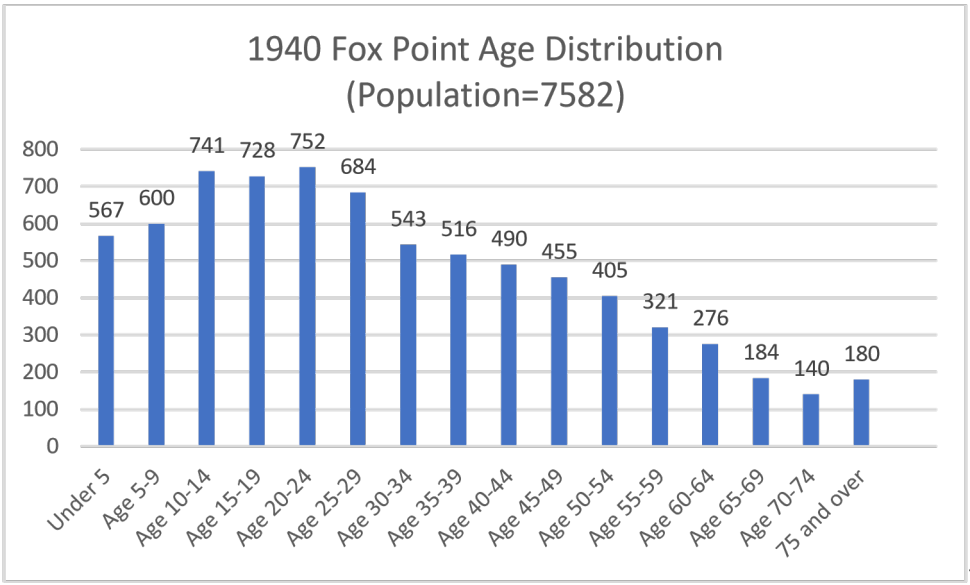
By 1940, Fox Point was home to a population of about 7,600 people and a diverse commercial, industrial, and transit-oriented economy. The area housed a strong working-class community with a rapidly growing Irish and Portuguese population. At the time, an overwhelming percentage of the population found work in factories or as longshoremen on the docks at India Point, the southernmost section of Fox Point. Of the 2,459 employed individuals in Fox Point, 37% worked as operatives in a factory or on the India Point docks.[15] Fox Point enjoyed the luxury of housing an extraordinarily young population that could work the factories and, on the docks, but could also quickly embrace new modes of work. With much of the population in the 15-19 and 20-24 age brackets there was plenty of available labor. However, with the effects of the Great Depression still looming, Fox Point's unemployment rate was at a dismal 14.04%. Much of the transportation, shipping, and industrial infrastructure was still in repair or was destroyed by the flooding caused during the 1938 hurricane. At a time when wage labor was scare, it was of little help that of the 4,194 Fox Pointers over the age of twenty-five, only 346 had graduated high school, and only 120 had completed four or more years of college.[16] Another major struggle for Fox Pointer's was in-house overcrowding. In 1940, the average number of people per dwelling unit in Fox Point was 3.86 people. The city's highest density was in North Providence with 4.49 people per dwelling unit while the city's lowest density was 2.92 people per dwelling unit. Fox Pointers

[15] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "Population and Housing Statistics for Census Tracts: Providence, R.I." (Providence, R.I, 1940), 18, Urban League of Rhode Island, Area Redevelopment Administration, Series 1, Box 1, Providence College Archives and Special Collections.

[16] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 18.

were living in some of the most crowded, under maintained, and oldest housing in the city.[17]

In short, for Fox Pointers living in 1940, life was extraordinarily difficult and the prospect of upward social mobility in the appeared to be a distant hope at best.



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The northern section of Fox Point functioned quite differently in that it was characterized by its residential commercial identity, and a system of what modern urban planners and scholars refer to as transit-oriented-development (TOD). Broadly speaking, TODs seek to embrace an urban layout that prioritize walking and increased public transportation use. In denser urban settings like Fox Point, TODs embrace "mixed land uses that place many destinations close to each other, including small storefront ground-floor retail in commercial districts… and community hubs and civic places that promote social interaction and a sense of belonging."[5] TODs also seek to reuse neglected or abandoned space as often as possible and insofar as it is possible. This is especially true when large plots of land become available or large-scale companies leave the area, especially railroad companies.

[17] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 4.

The various modes of transportation in Fox Point brought people in from all over the city while also supporting the local economy.

[4] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 18. The graphs are my own.

[5] Robert Cervero, Erick Guerra, and Stefan Al, *Beyond Mobility: Planning Cities for People and Places* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2017), 109.

Dozens of local businesses added life and vitality to the Fox Point community. Wickenden Street rendezvous spots included the East Side Bar, Sullivans, Tip Top Tap, and Bovi's Bar, where locals gathered, played hours of pool and endless rounds of craps. For many Fox Pointers, bars provided special refuge from the increased overcrowding in their own homes.[18] Fox Point was also home to a vibrant boxing community, many of whom frequented these local bars. Manny Almeida's Ringside Tavern was among the most popular places for boxers to hangout by the mid 1950s. Rocco 'Rocky Marciano' Marchegiano fought in Providence twenty-eight times before becoming the new World Heavyweight Champion in 1953. Both Harold 'Chubby' Gomes and George Araujo, Fox Point natives and former Lightweight champions, trained and spent considerable time in the area. Even the famous Joe Lewis had trained in Fox Point. Yet beyond fighting, Fox Pointers were committed to recreational activities surrounding organized sports, especially for the local youth. Local parks provided spaces for leisure, recreation, and social engagement. Tockwotton Park, where Vartan Gregorian Elementary School sits today, allowed young boys to engage in football, baseball, and soccer, while young girls gathered to partake in sewing and crafts. Tockwotton was also a popular spot for concerts.[19]

[18] The SPIRIT Program, *"A Wickenden Street Book",* 'Relaxing on Wickenden Street,' Georgine Carle, *By The Spirit Program- Rhode Island Collection, 1985* (Fox Point, Rhode Island, n.d.), 28.

[19] *The SPIRIT PROGRAM, "A Wickenden Street Book",* 'The Fights,' Jeff Cavanaugh, 28.

The area's mix of Irish, Portuguese, and Indian immigrants, as well as African American migrants, added to a diversity of locally owned restaurants and grocers of various stripes hawking all manner of produce, from freshly butchered beef to fish just caught off the shores of Rhode Island. Mama Mia's Pizza, once located at 404 Wickenden Street, opened quite literally because the owner felt that Fox Point needed a pizza place. Conveniently, the clientele at Mama Mia's was primarily young people and students from Brown University.

Sergio's, Mama Mia's local competition, opened on Wickenden because the owner found the neighborhood desirable. Likewise, the Taj Mahal, an immigrant-owned Indian restaurant, opened on Wickenden because the owners heard from a friend that the street was "a good place to open…[and] it was the only good space available." Customers could enjoy anything from poori bread to chicken tandoori, to Gazar Halwa, an authentic Indian pudding. Poori bread was especially popular among younger customers because after the bread is deep fried, it forms into a basketball-like shape that deflates when torn open. [20] Health restaurants included the Oasis Café and Amara's. The former, a popular spot among college students, set up on Wickenden because the building was in good condition and because it had parking spaces in the rear.

Olive and Mario Batista opened the Lisbon Dy Goods store in 1931 upon the arrival of then twenty-two-year-old Mario from Lisbon, Portugal. The couple initially struggled to get the store off the ground while Mario worked extra shifts in various trades, earning $0.25 an hour to make ends meet. Relocating twice on Wickenden Street in the span of roughly 16 years offered little financial relief for the couple. Nevertheless, foot traffic from the

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[20] The SPIRIT Program, *"A Wickenden Street Book",* 'Eating on the Street,' Nicole LaFontaine, Jennifer Ramos, 35.

neighborhood and commuter rails provided a consistent influx of cash that kept the store afloat. Despite not having children of their own, Olive and Mario knew and supported their neighbors and children, supplying anything from food to clothing, and even employment.[21] Just down the street from the Batista's was Archie, whose barber shop opened in 1937. Archie started cutting hair as an amateur until earning his barber's license in 1940. He rented a space for $14 per month, but eventually decided to buy the shop, running it for more than fifty years.

Fox Point's multifaceted identity as a major transportation hub and a multi-ethnic commercial economy was in many ways primarily a consequence of geography and ecological considerations. While India Point had not yet been completely abandoned after the 1938 hurricane, its identity as a major rail hub and trading port was clearly on the decline in the months leading up to World War II. As rail investors looked to the city for future assurances that better flood control and evacuation measures would be implemented, India Point began its slow, but painful decline. The decline of India Point hindered a key source of foot traffic and source of economic growth for Fox Pointers. The city of Providence by the start of the war, especially Fox Point, was faced with the necessity of planning and constructing a cohesive system of roads, bridges, and highways that would serve as panicrelief valves in the event of an unforeseen attack or another natural disaster. The primary relief valves in Fox Point such as South Main Street, Fox Point Boulevard, and Wickenden Street were forced to take on much of the local transportation needs that India Point could no longer provide. Adding to this transportation crisis was the fact that the steamships on the Providence Harbor were being repurposed for the war.

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[21] The SPIRIT Program, *"A Wickenden Street Book",* 'Olive M. Batista,' Tanya Jones and Mary Gray, 40.

Within a year after the end of the New England Hurricane the Providence City Council passed a minor tweak to Rhode Island's General Laws that effectively shifted evacuation safety responsibility and emergency construction powers to the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT). The Emergency Public Works Commission was a national program created in June 1933 to get men back into the labor force by placing them on large public works construction projects.[22] In 1939, a public law abolished the Emergency Public Works Commission which had previously worked under the purview of the state transportation department. Title 37 sections five and six read:

> The department and director shall exercise and perform all the powers, duties, and functions now or formerly exercise by the emergency public works commission, with the exception of the award of contracts for new buildings, which contracts shall be awarded by the department of administration, and the emergency public works commission is hereby abolished.[23]

In April 1940, the City Plan Commission, in conjunction with the transportation department, published its annual report for the year 1941 with an added emphasis on its new role in evacuation safety. The City Plan Commission would publish three two additional reports with the transportation department in the wartime years of 1941-1944. The first section of the City Plan Commission's 1941 report, prior to the letter of transmittal to Mayor Dennis J. Roberts, includes a report with the emboldened and capitalized words 'EMERGENCY AND LONG TERM PLANNING.' Additionally, it is within the three reports from the wartime years that illustrate some of the ways in which urban highway planning in Providence diverged from many of the national trends. As Mark H. Rose and Raymond A. Mohl explain, in *Interstate:*

[22] Rhode Island State Archives, "Rhode Island. Emergency Public Works Commission" (Providence, Rhode Island, 1933), Rhode Island Department of State.

[23] Rilegislature.gov, R.I. General Laws, Chapter 5: Department of Transportation, Title 37: Public Property and Works.

Highway Politics and Policy since 1939, "between September, 1939, when the war opened in Europe, and late 1941, those planning for postwar road building thought mainly in terms of employment."[24] In contrast, according to the emergency and long-term planning report:

> The need for comprehensive city planning in Providence was never more acute than it is at present. For reasons of municipal economy capital expenditures for public buildings, highways, bridges, and other important projects have been curtailed for a number of years. Such practice cannot continue indefinitely. New construction projects very likely will be needed as emergency defense measures during the war. When the war is over a far-reaching program of public works undertakings must be carried out to make up for years of inactivity.[25]

What's most striking it's the City Plan Commission's concrete admittance of years of neglecting the organizational structure of the city. Most American cities in the World War II-era had not been explicitly planned and the idea of organizing cities was still a way down the road for many U.S. cities. Yet, the City Plan Commission was planning not only for the future of Providence's economy, but emergency defense measures (roads, bridges, highways, and so on) were tied up with the city's organization in peacetime. One of the main tasks for the City Plan Commission during 1941 was planning for peacetime while also making the city a safer place, both physically and for capital investments. After years of kicking the can of urban organization down the road, the city would begin a long tradition of competing for the federal funds that would improve its roads, construct its highways, and rehabilitate its neighborhoods. Neglect was in many ways an understatement. By 1941, the last street improvements to occur were the widenings of Fox Point Boulevard and Carleton Davis

[24] Mark H. Rose and Raymond A. Mohl, *Interstate: Highway Politics and Policy since 1939, 3.* ed (Knoxville, Tenn: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 2012), 16.

[25] "Providence City Plan Commission, Annual Report 1941-1943" (Providence, R.I, 1941), 1, Providence Public Library, accessed August 10, 2022.

Boulevard prior to 1930. The city had also left many sections of new roads unfinished, and construction was often shoddy.[26] The report then goes on to posit that:

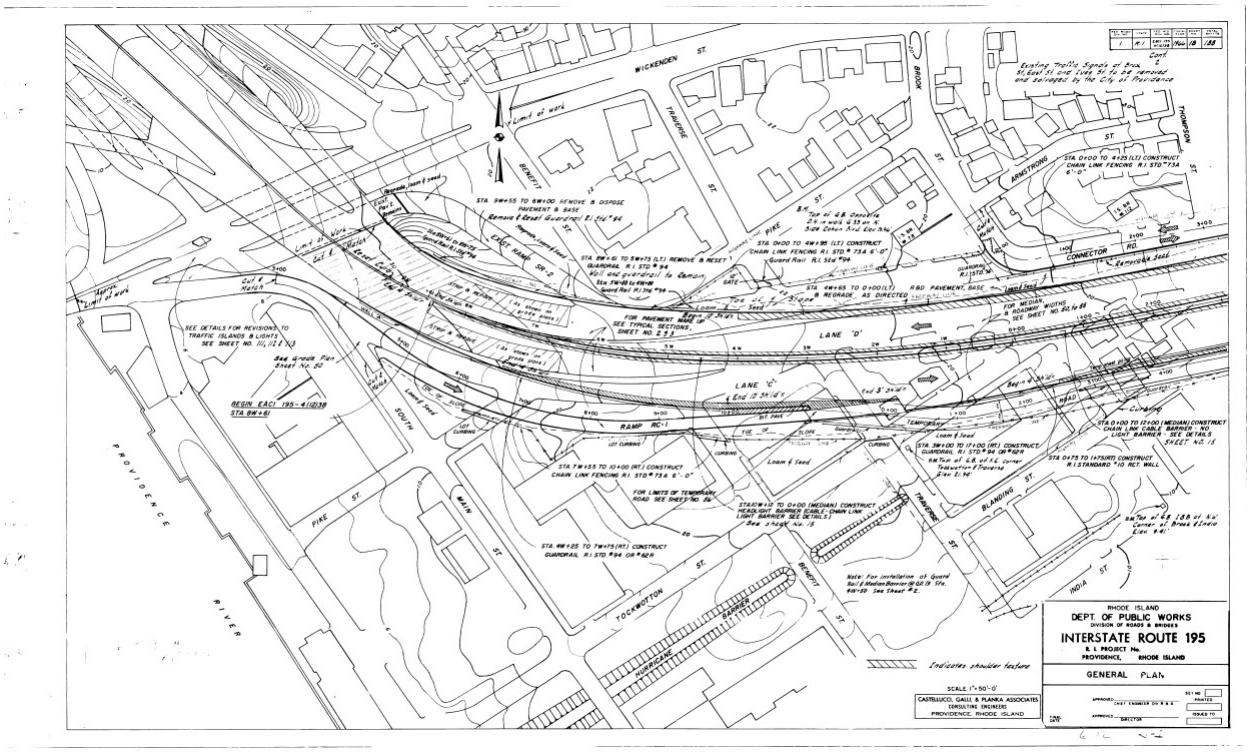
> Providence has no physical plan either for defense or post-war activities. It is therefore far less likely to receive Federal aid in highway and bridge projects than a community with a well conceived, comprehensive plan. Individual projects in the past have been carried out in a haphazard manner as the need has arisen uncoordinated to any master plan. To attempt to build and develop in that manner without a plan involved wasteful extravagance. No private industry could survive under that method.[27]

An important aspect to note is that almost all of Providence's major highways were either planned for or conceived of in the wartime period, even though most of the city's main highways were built more than a decade later. The Commission's construction priority was centered around building large roads and bridges across the various waterways that weaved through the city. In 1941, the Commission planned to construct "an extension of Fox Point Boulevard through the blighted waterfront district to Crawford Square."[28] This was, in essence, the first conception of I-195.

[26] "Providence City Plan Commission, Annual Report 1941-1943" (Providence, R.I, 1941), 1, Providence Public Library, accessed August 10, 2022.

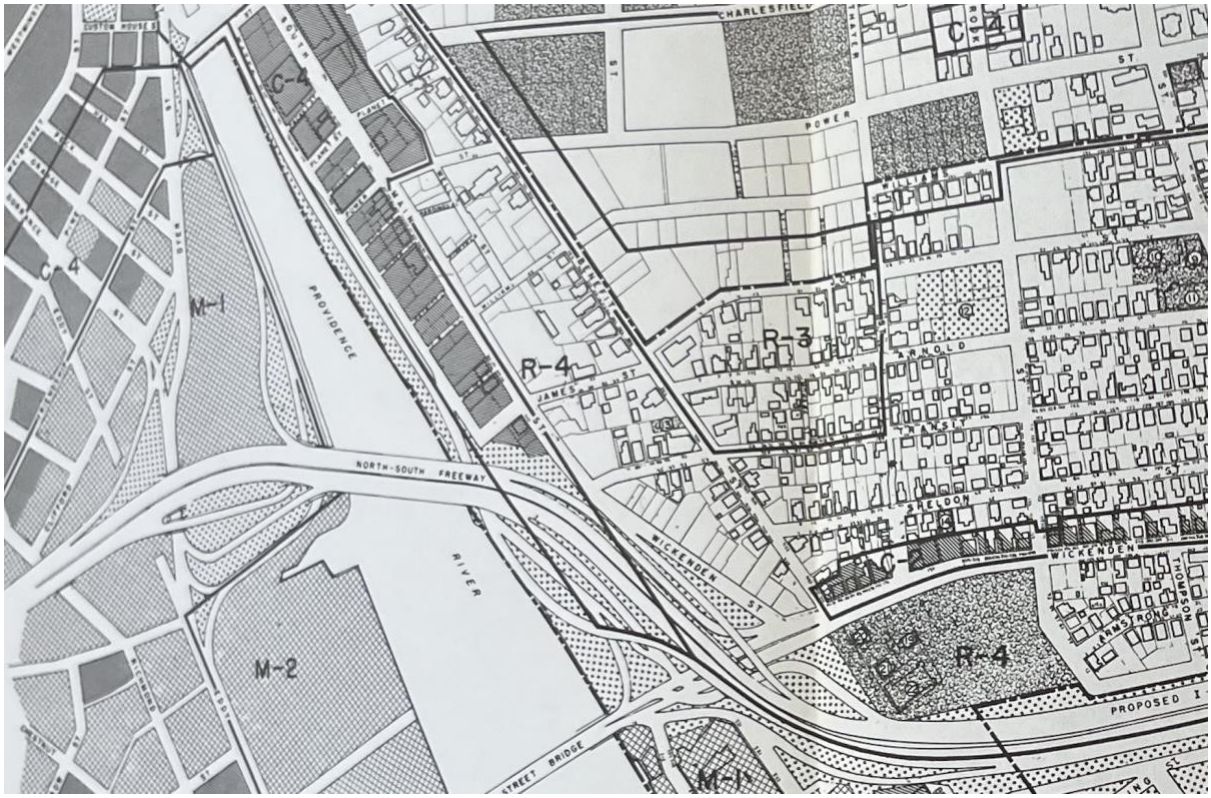
[27] "Providence City Plan Commission, Annual Report 1941-1943,": "Emergency and long term planning," (Providence, R.I, 1941), 1, Providence Public Library, accessed August 10, 2022.

[28] "Providence City Plan Commission, Annual Report 1941-1943," 3.



[29] This is the southern curve of I-195 as planned in 1966. Underneath the major lines marking the placement of I-195 sat Fox Point Boulevard (Fox Point Boulevard was renamed to George M. Cohan Boulevard in the mid 1950s). Notice that the interstate extends from Fox Point Boulevard and is routed directly North, up South Main Street to meet at Crawford Square. The city ultimately chose not to built all the way to Crawford Square as preservation efforts in the College Hill and Benefit Street areas took presecence in the early-mid 1960s. This is addressed in the subsequent chapters.

[29] Castellucci, Galli, & Planka Associates, *Rhode Island Dept. of Public Works Division of Roads & Bridges: Interstate Route I-195.*, 1"= 50'-0' (Providence, Rhode Island: Rhode Island Department of Transportation, 1966), Rhode Island Department of Transportation.



[30] This is a map from the East Side Renewal Project that was organized in 1959-1960. I use this map for the purpose of showing where Crawford Square is. Crawford square is in the top left of the image where the northernmost section of Providence River ends. The 1941 report envisioned I-195 extending all the way up through the shaded area along the east side of the Providence River.

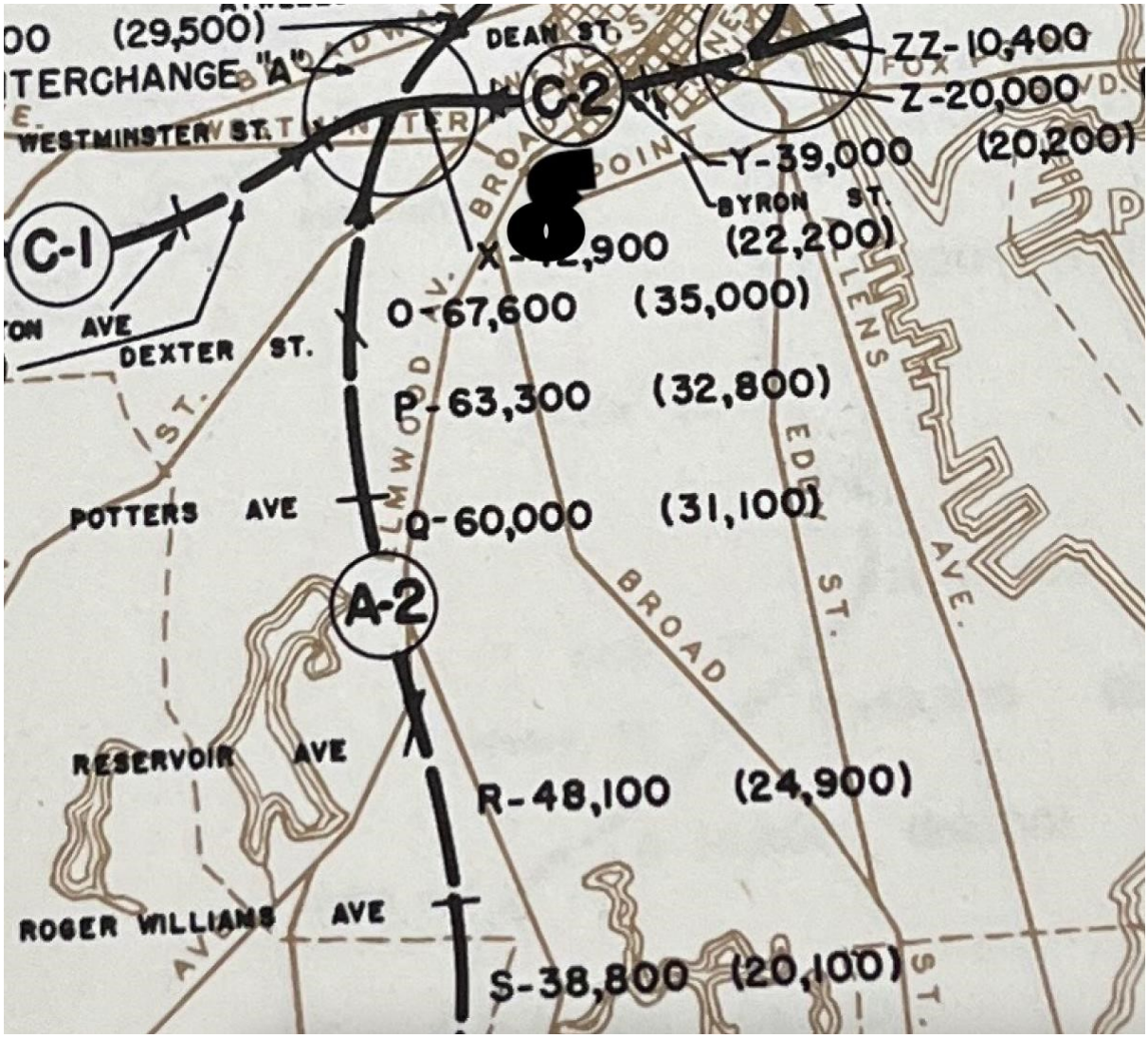
The next major highway was a two-piece plan for a north-south freeway that would essentially connect U.S. Route 1 to downtown Providence. The second construction would then connect U.S. Route 1 to the vertex where Friendship Street and Point Street meet. The Commission conceived of "a wide thorofare from Elmwood Avenue, over West Friendship, Friendship and Clifford Streets."[31] Residential barriers limited the city's ability to connect U.S. Route 1 to Friendship and Point Streets, but the city was ultimately able to connect U.S. Route 1 to Broad Street, less than half a mile north. The vision for the City Plan Commission was to build "a river bridge to the Fox Point Boulevard extension,"[32] to connect to what

[30] Redevelopment Agency, Providence, "East Side Renewal Project" (Providence, R.I, October 1966), Special Collection, Providence Public Library.

[31] "Providence City Plan Commission, Annual Report 1941-1943," 3.

[32] "Providence City Plan Commission, Annual Report 1941-1943," 3.

would eventually become the Point Street Bridge. The original intention was to route the highway through the city to connect to Crawford Square where the Fox Point Boulevard extension would end. The Crawford Street Bridge was intended to provide the crossover route across the Providence River and into the southern section of College Hill. Accordingly, the Point Street Bridge would connect to the Fox Point Boulevard extension, allowing traffic to cross the Providence River and into Fox Point.



[33]Notice Elmwood Street runs north parallel to the proposed I-95 placement (labelled A-2) and intended to connect it to Point Street where the blurb of ink is. This would then allow easy access to downtown and

[33] State Department of Public Works, Public Roads Administration-Federal Works Agency, and Charles A. Maguire and Associates, "Expressway System for Metropolitan Providence, R.I." (Providence, Rhode Island, 1947), Special Collection, Providence Public Library.

would connect to the proposed extension of Fox Point Boulevard (I-195) on the other side of the Providence River.

The Point Street Bridge had already existed for about fifteen years when these proposals were conceived, and because it crossed an essential waterway route in the Providence River, the Point Street Bridge was intended to be a major connection point for major roads and highways through downtown Providence. In short, the City Plan Commission's early highway plans were early preludes to the routes that would eventually be constructed in the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s. However, the Commission did not lose sight of these route's true purpose: providing congestion relief for smoother future evacuations.

A major hinge illustrating the extent to which highway and road-construction were understood as panic-relief valves is highlighted in the 1941 annual report, which was published well within the September 1939 and late 1941 date range Rose and Mohl lay out. The report reads:

> The streets leading to these thorofares, and many of the thorofares themselves, are narrow. There is traffic congestion at rush hours even under normal conditions. What may be expected under the hysteria of mass evacuation? It may be necessary to effect large scale routing of troops and military equipment through Providence.[34]

Here, the city is not only thinking mainly in terms of panic, both on the war front and on the environmental disaster front, but also regarding peacetime congestion levels. This is not to say that the city was not concerned with labor. However, labor was not a primary concern for the city as the losses of human life still loomed heavily in the minds of many city officials

[34] "Providence City Plan Commission, Annual Report 1941-1943," 2.

within both the City Plan Commission and RIDOT. Nonetheless, these plans were geared toward relieving panic in the event of a European invasion or a hurricane.

[35] Flooding at Exchange Place, from the New England Hurricane of 1938, 21 September 1938,

Panic continued to permeate after the Pearl Harbor bombing when the Rhode Island State Council of Defense, under chairman and Governor James Howard McGrath, published a thirty-page pamphlet entitled the *Citizens' Defense Manual.* McGrath, just two years removed from his first job in government as U.S. Attorney for the District of Rhode Island, was a staunch Democrat and a firm believer in maintaining increased taxes to fund New Deal initiatives. The pamphlet, designed to be easily accessible to Rhode Islanders in need, was

[35] John Hutchins Cady, *The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence, 1636-1950.* (Providence, Rhode Island: The Book Shop, 1957), 82.

tailored to educate citizens on Axis Powers-style military tactics. The first half of the pamphlet deals with air raids, containing the spread of an incendiary bomb, and an extensive list of 'do' and 'do nots.' The pamphlet's middle sections contain detailed illustrations demonstrating measures such as shoveling sand to contain the spread of an incendiary bomb. The last sections deal with evacuation and poison gas. The idea of 'labor' does appear as Rose and Mohl's account suggest, however, the kind of work the Civilian Defense Service

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was providing was advertised in the form of duty and compensated by survival. Civilian, duty-centered defense labor in Rhode Island was understood as a mechanism preventing the "interruption of war production."[24] The city was much more concerned with limiting interruptions during the war than it was about providing much-needed jobs for its struggling citizens. That is, if the physical infrastructure was going to pose a safety threat to the public, the city wanted to ensure that its people would not be a further hinderance in the event of another panic.

Chapter 2: Fox Point's postwar Blues, 1945-1955.

By the turn of the mid-century, Fox Point had emerged from the World War with a similar economic situation from the decade prior. The most significant change in the area's economic situation came from the massive drop in the unemployment rate. In 1950 the unemployment rate had dropped from 14.04% in 1940 to 5.65% a decade later.[36] Yet, Fox Pointers were still forced to grapple with a myriad of problems related to the neighborhood's housing stock and the overcrowding of the population within it. Most of the housing in Fox Point consisted of structures having three or four dwelling units, laying the foundations for overcrowding. For instance, of the 2,125 occupied dwelling units in Fox Point, most Fox Pointers lived in single dwelling units with two or more people. Consequently, the area was home to the third highest number of dwelling units housing seven or more persons. Moreover, of those occupied structures, 963 had no private bath and an addition 318 had no running water. Adding to this was the fact that more than half of these structures had no central heating, forcing a heavy portion of the population to revert to liquid fuel or coal.[37]

[36] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "1950 Population and Housing Statistics for Census Tracts: Providence, R.I." (Census, Providence, Rhode Island, 1949), 17, ULRI, City of Providence, 1939-1970, Providence Redevelopment Agency, 1951-1968, Series 1, Providence College Archives and Special Collections.

[37] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 17.

This, however, was not because of any culture of neglect or a lack of housing maintenance as most Fox Pointers were renters and thus were often times at the mercy of landlords who refused to invest in higher quality services for basic housing needs. Accordingly, of the 2,183 total dwelling units in the Fox Point neighborhood, approximately four hundred were owner occupied. With the overwhelming majority of Fox Pointers at the mercy of their landlords, improvements to basic housing necessities would have to be enforced and provided by the city in the future. Moreover, Fox Point had the lowest rent values in the city, with a huge portion of the population paying anywhere from $10-$19 a month, hardly enough for a

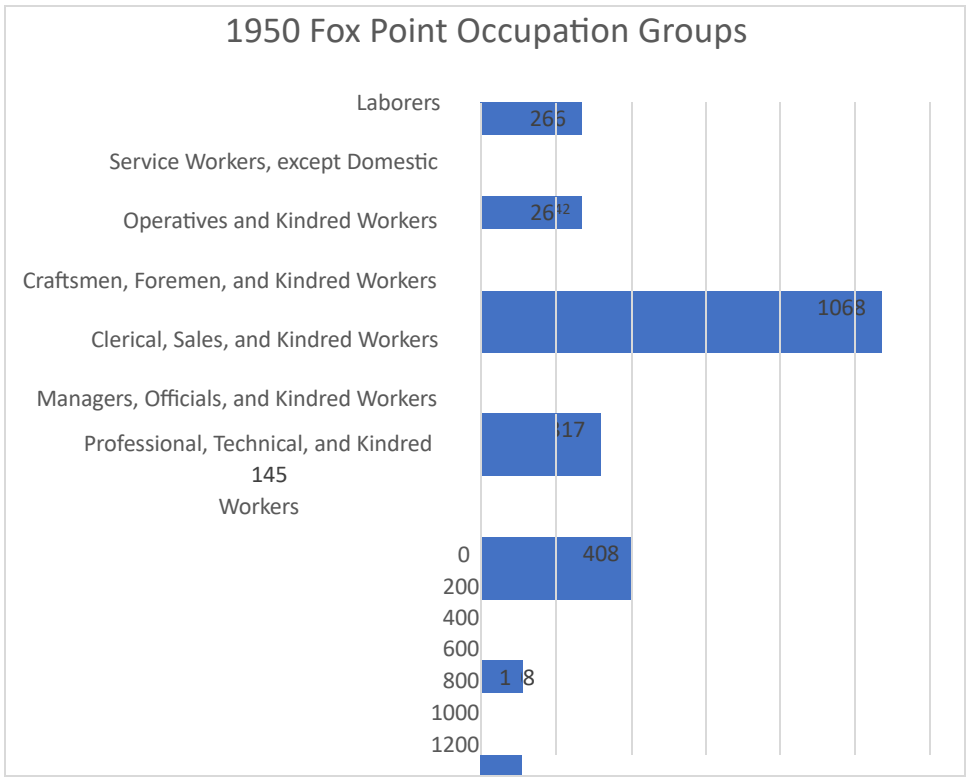
landlord to reinvest in basic water, heating, and cooling services. The last major struggle for Fox Pointers was the fact that Fox Point itself was the oldest part of Providence, and thus had the oldest housing stock. Put differently, by 1950 no new housing structures had been built in the last twenty years. The newest housing in the neighborhood was built in the period from 1920-1939, and in that period only 85 new structures were erected.[38]

Despite having a strong working-class community, Fox Pointers were still among the poorest members of Providence's population. For example, in 1950 Fox Point was home to a total of 2,645 families, with 600 of them making less than $500 a year, and an additional 330 families making between $500-$999 a year. In other words, 35.6% of Fox Point families were making less than $1,000 a year.[39] Fox Pointers were extraordinarily poor in comparison to the rest of the city, and they were even poorer than the average American in 1950. To put this in comparison, the average income for American families in 1950 was $3,300 annually, whereas the average income for Fox Pointers in the same year was $1806. [40] Changes to the major

[38] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 17.

[39] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 9.

[40] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "Current Population Reports: Consumer Income" (Washington, DC, March 25, 1952), U.S. Census Bureau.



occupation groups within the working population were quite unremarkable broadly speaking. At this time, nearly half the labor force was employed in a factory or as an operative. Furthermore, Fox Point's ethnic commercial economy continued to grow as more sales workers and clerks found jobs working for the various small businesses throughout the area.[41]

Perhaps the most remarkable in this period came in the form of the characteristics of the population itself. With increases in the number of people completing high school and four or more years of college, Fox Point's population was becoming increasingly more educated.

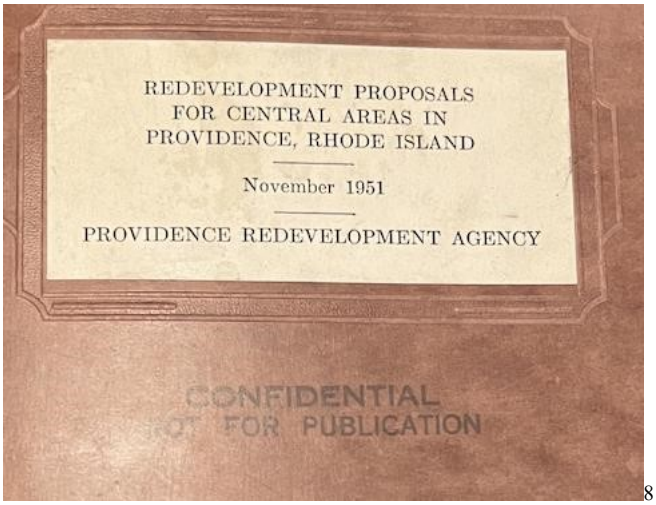
[41] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "1950 Population and Housing Statistics for Census Tracts: Providence, R.I.," 14.

[42] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 14.

Furthermore, with drops in the amount of people finishing school through the eighth grade and in the number of people with no years of school experience, Fox Point was primed for a major demographic shift.

Immigration from the Macaronesia archipelagos of Cape Verde and the Azorean islands, mainland Portugal, and an influx of African American migrants coming from the southern states contributed to a demographic shift in 1950. Within the past decade, Fox Point had lost very few people, but its population was still changing. More than five hundred African Americans moved into the neighborhood, giving Fox Point the second highest African American population in the city with 1,451. This will be significant because most of Fox Point's African American population lived along Benefit and South Main Streets. The former was a hotbed for historic and architectural preservation in the 1960s, while the latter had to be seriously considered when plans for I-195 were still ongoing.

The bulk of Providence's major highways were planned for or conceived of in the wartime era. The PRA spent most of 1950-51 surveying the city's needs and formulating plans for its future economic and physical development. From 1951-59, the PRA, CPC, and the Providence Health Department created the *Redevelopment Proposals for Central Areas in Providence, Rhode Island.* The issue, however, was that this report remained unpublished and unknown to the public until 1959 when it was officially published and made available to the public. Not only that, but these plans were also intended to remain unknowns to the public and the 150-page report explicitly stated its intent to remain confidential.



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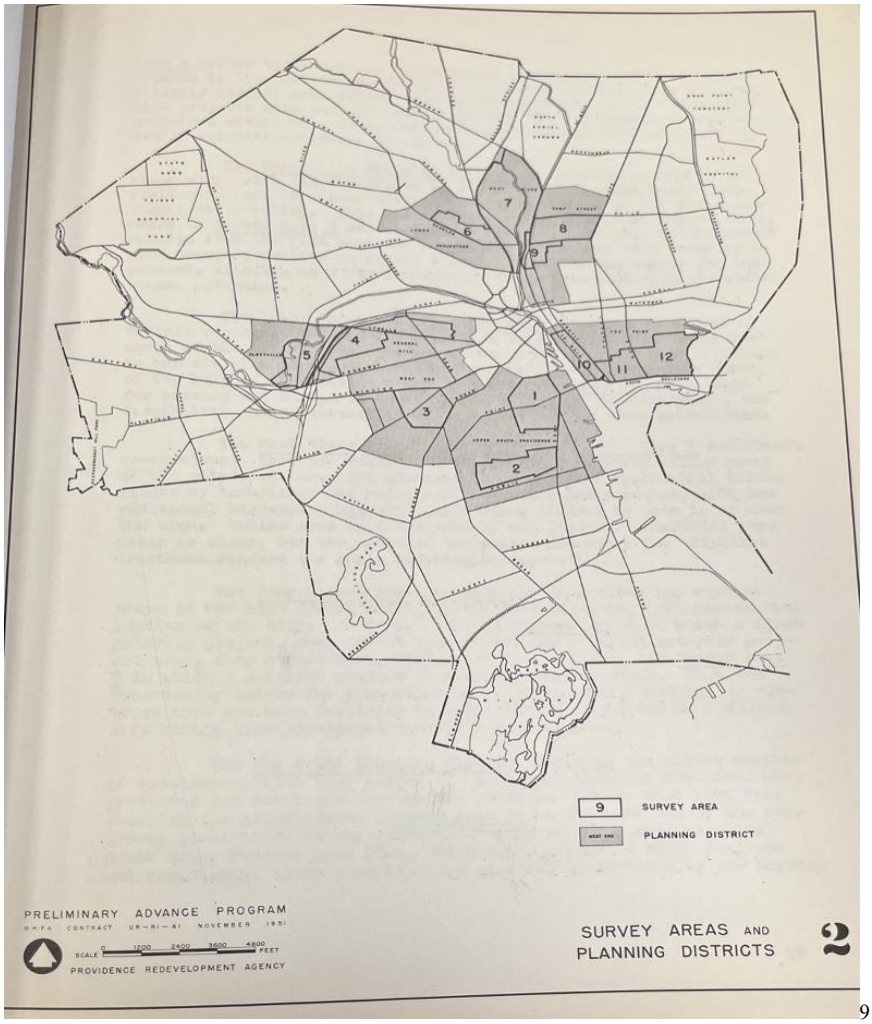
It was this report, along with the publication of the 1959 College Hill Study, and the East Side Renewal Project in the early sixties that governed the future physical and economic development of Providence. The PRA surveyed twelve different areas of Providence, analyzed its needs, and together with the City Plan Commission and the Providence Health Department made subsequent recommendations each area's future development. The survey areas are mapped here:

[8] Providence Redevelopment Agency, "Redevelopment Proposals for Central Areas in Providence, Rhode Island" (Providence, Rhode Island, November 1951), ULRI, City of Providence, 1939-1970, Providence Redevelopment Agency, 1951-1968, Series 1, Providence College Archives and Special Collections. Notice that the report's cover page makes it very clear that this issue was intended to be confidential.



[9]

The vision for the city was centered around creating some kind of physical order that resembled a 'logically bounded' urban landscape.[10] To do this, the report recommended concentrating industrial production in declining residential areas or in other areas of the city that were already industrial in character. Of the twelve survey areas, five were recommended to be areas for new industry, industrial reuse, or places for existing industry to relocate. Areas five, six, and seven were the report's primary targets for industrial revitalization. Area five, the Olneyville section, was "divided in half by a steep slip with old residences on the hill and a mixed industrial-residential use in a poor environment for dwellings in the

[9] Providence Redevelopment Agency, N.P.

[10] Agency, 9.

Woonasquatucket River valley."[43] With the area still having a considerable housing, the city planned to wait until the direction of the area became more clear as it was still largely a residential area, "although in a bad environment in an area rich with industrial re-use potential."[44] Area six was known as the Lower Chalkstone Planning District, however many knew this area as Smith Hill. Smith Hill was particularly important because it was a major through area into Downtown Providence and had large tracts of old land available. As mill neglect increased and large rail infrastructure was left abandoned, the area was "unsuitable for housing and slated for industrial development."[45] Area seven, adjacent to Smith Hill and known as the West River Planning District was the second area slated for a massive increase in new industrial production. The area was especially appealing because it contained a largely isolated pocket of housing and had easy access to the railroads and highway routes that ringed around the area. The report planned to construct "two additional high-speed highway routes… to pass in or near the area… the re-use of the land for industrial purposes in clear."[46]

Areas one and two were known as the Upper South Providence Planning District and was one of the more complex aspects of the report. South Providence was characterized by large-scale jewelry manufacturing centers that were uncomfortably close to the neighborhood's housing stock. Area two endured similar struggles, however the main concern within the area was "a point of invasion into the residential portion of the planning district by junkyards,"[47] as industrial and residential abandonment continued to grow. For these areas, the objective

[43] Agency, 10.

[44] Agency, 10.

[45] Agency, 10.

[46] Providence Redevelopment Agency, 10.

[47] Agency, "Redevelopment Proposals for Central Areas in Providence, Rhode Island," 9.

was to make the areas residential in character through housing rehabilitation, and by relocating industrial production.

Fox Point sections were areas ten through twelve and had to be dealt with differently from the other areas. Because Fox Point is the oldest section of Providence, its historic interest garnered much attention. Moreover, the housing stock that was not necessarily thought of as historically valuable was rapidly decaying due to the fact that almost all of the housing was built prior to 1920. Preservation efforts in Fox Point laid "not in clearance and redevelopment but in the rehabilitation and conservation measures that must be developed for the district as a whole."[48] Furthermore, the ethnic commercial strip on Wickenden and Tockwotton Streets were slated to explicitly "displace the small core of the poorest housing." What's more, the primarily African American enclave on South Main Street was going to be a pocket of new housing that would "replace a mixed business and residential strip that has been slum for generations."[49] This was crucial for a number of reasons. First, this made the construction of the Fox Point Boulevard extension (I-195) up to Crawford Square impossible as the South Main Street area was determined to be a center for architectural and historic preservation. Additionally, the report concretely explained its intention to alter the commercial character of Fox Point that had been developing for over half a century by replacing it with new housing.

Planning for these twelve survey areas was as much about industrial revitalization and housing construction and preservation as it was about making choices about the city's identity. If Providence was to compete with other larger, and more populated states, it had to decide how to integrate its revived industrial identity with automobility and auto-related

[48] Providence Redevelopment Agency, 9.

[49] Providence Redevelopment Agency, 11.

trade. In essence, in Providence found itself at a crossroads in 1951 in that it needed to find a way to emerge from its "obsolete role as a congested self-contained workshop community

and accept its new role as the core of an automobile-era metropolitan district."[50] However, this was not the full-scale leap into automobility as the city still sought to hold onto its transit-oriented style of urban planning. As a result, the city had to solve its parking problem, but it also had to "provide adequate area for the expansion and reconstruction of industrial plants… in district well served by utilities and transportation."[51] With many industrial production centers still present in mixed-character areas, loading and unloading products was primarily done via truck. This meant that the process of loading and unloading was done on the streets of Providence itself, creating major traffic blockages and circulation issues. Traffic alleviation required a multi-step process in which the city would make large tracts of neglected or abandoned land available for big-box industrial producers so that loading and unloading could be done off the streets. This also involved an effort to get industry out of the downtown area and out toward the periphery of the city where it was less densely populated. At the time, Providence had approximately six hundred acres of land "for manufacturing plant sites including accessory warehouse and parking spaces," but proposed that an additional 500 acres be made available for "manufacturing and service industry… to allow for plant modernization and off-street parking."[52] Yet, the construction of more parking lots failed to solve the parking problem.

[50] Providence Redevelopment Agency, 13.

[51] Providence Redevelopment Agency, 13.

[52] Providence Redevelopment Agency, 13-14.

In the spring of 1951, the City Plan Commission published a master plan for parking in downtown Providence that would provide about 3,000 new parking spaces that were 'absolutely essential.' The following year, Providence voters approved a $1,700,000 bond issue to pay for the "construction of two modern garages… and enlargement of a large parking area on the fringe of downtown."[53] One of main reasons Providence roads today have relatively low curbs or no curbs at all was to allow large commercial and industrial vehicles to pull vehicles up on the curb and out of the way of other moving vehicles. The city engaged in a massive project of eliminating and lowering curbs. Efforts to accommodate parking needs and automobility would have important implications not only for Providence's physical landscape, but also regarding how social life functioned within residential neighborhoods. An analysis of the changes in Fox Point is helpful to understanding this. Industrial revitalization was important for the entire city and its people, but as noted earlier, Fox Point's working population was heavily employed by industrial producers, which in many ways made the future employment of Fox Pointers dependent on industrial revitalization's success.

[53] Providence City Plan Commission, *Parking in Downtown Providence* (Providence, Rhode Island, 1950), VII.

Chapter 3: On its head: Moving towards a different Fox Point, 1956-1960.

The 1959 publication of the *College Hill Study* was the culmination of efforts from the federal Urban Renewal Administration, Housing and Home Finance Agency, the City of Providence, City Hall, the CPC, and the PRA. The Providence Preservation Society's (PPS) role was especially important as it was the main body providing local financial support and making decisions regarding which neighborhoods and architects were historically significant. With housing in Fox Point rapidly declining, preservation became the preferred rehabilitation technique for groups like the Providence Redevelopment Agency and the Providence Preservation Society. This was also because, ironically, the twentieth century housing model of "mass production and the use of new materials have altered the character of building construction, of finish and detail."[54] Lessons from other areas of the city where new houses were built amongst housing often times several decades, even centuries older, made "the differences between the well-built and cheaply-built houses… increasingly sharp."[55] With the construction of highways in the near future and the inadequacy of industrially produced housing apparent, deciding which structures to preserve became a chronic challenge. The College Hill area which sits just north of Fox Point was the Providence Preservation

[54] Providence City Plan Commission, "College Hill: A Demonstration Study of Historic Area Renewal." (Providence, Rhode Island, 1959), 75, Special Collection, Providence Public Library.

[55] Providence City Plan Commission, 75.

Society's main target for historic and architectural preservation in housing. The purpose of the study was, among several other features, to stop the Providence Redevelopment Agency's indiscriminate destruction of deteriorating and historically significant housing with the ultimate purpose of creating the "mechanisms for control and judgment of architecture… on a wide scale," and, incorporate "historical architecture preservation into the framework of the

planning, and more specifically, the urban renewal program."[56] In addition to this, historic preservation was to be a major player in the effort to spark an historic and architectural renaissance. This was a renaissance in the sense that the goal of historic preservation was "to communicate the lessons of history, in order that the present and the future may learn from the past." College Hill and Fox Point were intended to be places "where the city's residents can learn from the past."[57] Fox Point was no longer to be the workshop and transit hub that it had been for nearly two centuries. As the oldest section of Providence, by 1959, the neighborhood of Fox Point itself was essentially deemed a historically significant zone. The

[56] Providence City Plan Commission, V, VIII.

[57] Providence City Plan Commission, 2.

ultimate vision was for a historic trail of architecturally and historically significant structures deriving from similar periods and styles along Benefit Street.

[58] Image of Crawford Street Bridge circa 1970. Historic and architecturally significant structures on South Water, South Main, and Benefit Streets (From left to right respectively, on the right side of the Providence River). Also notice that I-195 crosses the Providence River right where the Southern portion of the College Hill Study area began.

[58] "Crawford Street Bridge" (Image, Providence, Rhode Island, C. 1970), Providence Public Library.

[59] This is the College Hill historic zoning map. This image only includes the Fox Point section of the study. Notice that more than half of Fox Point houses structures of historic, architectural, state, or national significance.

[59] Providence City Plan Commission, "College Hill: A Demonstration Study of Historic Area Renewal."

Among the historically significant structures in Fox Point, preserving and rehabilitating Federal, Late Victorian, and Greek Revival houses were the priority. However, as noted in the previous chapter, because most Fox Pointers were renters, tenement housing for the PPS and the city were the biggest hinderance to the historically aesthetic city it was trying to foster. In Fox Point, tenement removal was very much bound up with preserving housing. Early twentieth century tenements in Fox Point were concentrated along Benefit, Brook, North and South Main, and Wickenden Streets. Tenement construction was almost exclusively built in the three-decker wooden style that, for the city and the PPS, was responsible for the "damaged… character of the colonial and early nineteenth century residential neighborhoods."[60]

Yet, the biggest problem for these groups was not necessarily within tenements themselves, but in the relative conservatism of Providence residents during the period. That is, Providence citizens displayed a "constant loyalty to eighteenth century traditions and more especially to its own nineteenth century past."[61] The problem for the Fox Point and College Hill areas was eclecticism. Prior to the twentieth century, architects in Providence were considerably more willing to draw inspiration from a variety of architectural styles without creating structures that could be boxed into specific styles such as 'Renaissance,' 'Georgian,' or 'Gothic.' Put another way, the city placed a high value on architects and structures that drew from a variety of styles for a more visually appropriate neighborhood. The PPS faced a slew of issues within its organizational structure that made for a remarkably undemocratic

[60] Providence City Plan Commission, 36.

[61] Providence City Plan Commission, 70.

process of determining historic and architectural value. A look into the roles that Antoinette Downing and John Hutchins Cady played in determining historic and architectural value is integral to an understanding of how the PPS determined historic value. Downing was born in the small rural town of Paxton, Illinois and upon graduating from the University of Chicago in 1925, she went on to study architecture at Radcliffe College. After finishing at Radcliffe, Downing would then go on to publish an extensive survey of Rhode Island housing entitled *Early Homes of Rhode Island* (1937). Downing's research was among the principal sources that the PPS consulted when determining the historic and architectural value of housing in Providence. Downing was also responsible for creating the mechanisms for preserving the houses themselves. What's more, as one of the first members of the PPS, Downing was the chief authority in planning for preservation and determining which structures should be preserved. Additionally, Downing and her husband George E. Downing were on the College Hill Project staff that was responsible for determining the system for rating historic architecture. Downing's role as a leading member of the PPS and as major figure in determining architectural and historic value in Providence encapsulates her mixed legacy. On the one hand, Rhode Islanders have Downing to thank for her herculean efforts in surveying the hundreds of historic buildings in Providence and preventing their indiscriminate destruction. The mechanisms put forth by Downing were remarkably stable as almost all houses deemed valuable by the PPS remained structurally sound and visually appealing for several decades. On the other hand, as a leading figure in determining who and what was historically valuable gave her extensive authority in influencing the city's future visual appearance. More importantly, the decisions she made in determining which structures were worth saving would have serious consequences for those Rhode Islanders who would eventually be priced out of their own homes as houses that were either rehabilitated by the PPS or were physically marked with a PPS House Marker rapidly soared in value.

While Downing's role in Providence's historic preservation efforts cannot be overstated, she was not alone. In fact, as housing in Providence continued to deteriorate, John Maxon, the Director of the Museum of Art at the Rhode Island School of Design began to panic. It was Maxon's panicking that inspired people like John Nicholas Brown, George L. Miner, and John Hutchens Cady to begin organizing the PPS itself. In February 1956, Maxon explained to John Nicholas Brown, regarding the extent of delay in preservation, that "Time is running out. In fact, it's about five minutes of twelve."[62] The following year, John Hutchens Cady published *The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence, 1636-1950,* in which he laid out the historic importance of buildings in Providence and the extent to which preserving buildings would contribute to saving Providence's architectural legacy. Moreover, as the first and only historian appointed to the PPS, Cady, like Downing, enjoyed considerable influence in determining historic, architectural, and educational value of buildings in Providence. Yet, Hutchens and Downing were not the only figures that were forced to navigate the tension between their own preservation interests and the interests of those living in houses that were deemed historically valuable.

John Nicholas Brown, the Chairman of the PPS Board was living in the Colonel Joseph Nightingale House (also known as the Nightingale-Brown House) on 357 Benefit Street when the PPS began surveying houses slated for preservation. The Nightingale House was not only a prime target for preservation, but it had housed several influential Rhode Islanders and their families. Furthermore, as the largest eighteenth-century wood-from house in the country, the preservation of the Joseph Nightingale House took on an added importance within the PPS. The house was designed by Caleb Ormsbee and completed for the Providence merchant Joseph Nightingale in 1792. Being near the Providence River and the

[62] Providence Preservation Society, "Providence Preservation Society: 25th Anniversary, 1956-1981" (Pamphlet, Providence, Rhode Island, 1981), The Providence Preservation Society.

various wharfs, the Nightingale family was not only among the wealthiest families in Rhode Island, but they were one of the first families to take the risk of building a house of this scale on College Hill.

[63] Colonel Joseph Nightingale House (also known as the Brown-Nightingale House).

The house had experienced quite a few different owners within the first decade of its existence until it had a stable owner. Nightingale would then re-purchase the home in 1790 and would live in the house until he sold it to Nicholas Brown in 1814. The Brown family would then renovate various aspects of the house's interior and made several additions throughout the nineteenth century. While the exterior of the house had retained much of its

[63] Providence Preservation Society, "Mary A. Gowdey Library of House Histories," Historic American Buildings Survey, Nightingale-Brown House (Providence, Rhode Island, August 1961), 357 Benefit Street, Mary A. Gowdey Database.

original features, the Brown family added major features that altered the original interior. However, it was not the ways in which the interior changed that made the Nightingale House a target for preservation, rather, it was the various architects who were asked to design various individual aspects of the house that made it valuable. In 1855, Nicholas's son John

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Carter Brown asked Providence architect Thomas Tefft to design and build a barn with stables, and a carriage house with a bowling alley. In 1864, John commissioned another Providence architect in Richard Upjohn to build his "Bibliotheca Americana" library which is today the basis of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University. Even after Brown's death, his widow commissioned Olmsted & Olmsted to design a garden, however she struggled to maintain it after their son John Nicholas Brown I died in 1901, leaving the house largely abandoned and unused by the Brown family. By early 1920, John Nicholas Brown II inherited the house and once again, redesigned the house in a Colonial Revival style. Brown II commissioned several designers for the completion of a drawing room, a newly redesigned dining room with English paneling instead of the original paint and added a staircase in the main hall. Brown II's wide Anne S.K. Brown added military books and artifacts to the library that would eventually be donated to the Brown University Library. Beyond the fact that the house was one of the oldest and historically significant houses in Providence, the Nightingale House was a prime example of the kind of house the PPS was looking to preserve. Primarily, because several of the city's well-known architects had the opportunity to influence the style of the house, it could not be boxed into a single style of house. The extent of eclecticism allowed the PPS to preserve both architecture and the historical significance of architects themselves. Yet, it cannot be forgotten that at the time of the PPS's founding and surveying, John Nicholas Brown, the Chairman of the board, was living in the Nightingale House. As one of the most historically and architecturally significant houses in the state, the Brown

family would have a vested interest in not only preserving the Brown family legacy, but also an interest in increasing the value of the house itself. Moreover, the Brown family still had much of the original inventory would add $2,569 to the value of the house.[64] The Nightingale House's eclectic nature offered the PPS the opportunity to preserve the legacies of the various

architects whose influence is reflected in the design. This also provided the Brown family with the opportunity to etch their family name into the visual integration of the past and present. Yet, as we will see with the Candace Allen House, the Browns were not the only family interested in preserving their families' legacy.

The period with the greatest emphasis came from the Federal period from 1810 to 1835. Specifically, the College Hill study and Antoinette Downing were looking to preserve the influence of one of Rhode Island's first professional architects John Holden Greene. Greene was known for his keen ability to fuse Georgian and Gothic influences and for fostering "trends toward lightness, and variety in ground plans, elevations and decorative detail."[65] Moreover, because much of Greene's work dominated the College Hill area, his memory was bound up with the memory of the structures he designed. Greene's memory was also bolstered not only by the fact that he was designing historically significant structures, but also because he was designing them for historically significant figures. Greene was also highly influential in designing the many colonial style churches in the area, building off the work of the Scottish architect James Gibbs, who was known for his elegant combinations of Gothic, Adam, and Georgian influences.

[64] Providence Preservation Society.

[65] Providence City Plan Commission, "College Hill: A Demonstration Study of Historic Area Renewal," 36.

Greene worked with other contemporary architects and designers on other projects in the period following the completion of the Sullivan Dorr House, but he was also in the process of designing and completing the Robert Burrough house on 6 Cooke Street in 1816. Greene was also simultaneously designing a house for Robert's brother James Burrough, located on 160 Power Street, and completed in 1818. Robert Burrough's house was significant for several reasons. The first reason being that the house was designed by John Holden Greene and that at one point, the well-known Providence architect Albert Harkness

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had lived in the house for several summers after returning to Providence in 1921. Moreover, in 1824 when the first issue of the "Providence Directory" appeared, Robert Burrough's house had been the only building listed on Cooke Street. The construction of the Robert Burrough house reversed the desolate nature of Cooke Street, igniting a series of new construction on the street in the decades that followed. Beyond this, the only other reason the Robert Burrough House was deemed historically and architecturally significant was because it "represents Providence's domestic Federal architecture at its best and most characteristic: if a single house could evoke that era, this may well be it."[66]

The James Burrough house was somewhat of an outlier in the PPS's preservation efforts as it had very little historical significance and because the house would come to tell the story of an ordinary and generational Rhode Island family. The Burrough family arrived in Rhode Island as English immigrants in the early nineteenth century when James Burrough sailed with first wife Sarah Beverly across the Atlantic on his own personal boat. Sarah was "never quite normal mentally," which required that James monitor her daily. One morning,

[66] Providence Preservation Society, "Mary A. Gowdey Library of House Histories," Historic American Buildings Survey, Robert Burrough House (Providence, Rhode Island, April 1962), 1, 6 Cooke Street, Mary A. Gowdey Database.

James had momentarily dozed off while watching Sarah. Sarah proceeded to flee from James's watch and eventually drowned herself into a nearby body of water. At the time of her death, James was left to raise their five children all the while he remarried in 1826. James and his second wife would raise Joseph, their only son together. The Burrough families were one of few families that had moved into what was still a relatively novel and undeveloped part of College Hill. The completion of these two houses was yet another step forward in Greene's career and sparked increased interest in residential construction in the area. James's Burrough's family and the generations that followed would use the house for a variety of reasons. In fact, James had seen his first pile of coal laying outside his house. Not knowing

what to do with the coal and firmly believing it was simply "hard stone," he set it ablaze. James would then go on to power his house with coal. Additionally, in the room above the kitchen, Joseph's cousin Lucy ran a small school for the neighborhood children. The James Burrough house had been in the family for 96 years and in 1913 Mary and Howard D. Burrough sold the house to Swinehart Tire and Rubber Co. for $500.[67][68]

[67] Providence Preservation Society, "Mary A. Gowdey Library of House Histories" (Providence, Rhode Island, n.d.), Mary A. Gowdey Database.

[68] Providence City Plan Commission, "College Hill: A Demonstration Study of Historic Area Renewal.," 59.

Porch, Dorr House.

Sullivan Dorr House, 1810. Benef

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Among other notable structures designed by Greene or structures in which he was asked to collaborate with other architects, the First Congregational Church (now Unitarian), built in 1816 on Benefit and Benevolent Streets were built in 1816. Greene was also associated with the design of the Candace Allen House (1819) located at 12 Benevolent Street, the Truman Beckwith house (1826) and the twin houses of Cooke and Rufus Greene.[69]

Perhaps Greene's most historically and architecturally influential design was that of the Sullivan Dorr house, located at 109 Benefit Street and completed in 1809. The Dorr house included a raised flat-roofed balustraded central section, lined with portico-style windows and a Palladian window above the porch. The Sullivan Dorr house was especially appealing because the Palladian window was one of the last to appear in Providence. Greene's ability to fuse Gothic details with Georgian motives was another important consideration as his work

[69] Providence City Plan Commission, 60.

often reflected the eclectic nature the PPS was looking for.[70] Moreover, because Sullivan Dorr was the father of Thomas Wilson Dorr, the father of the 1841-42 Dorr Rebellion, the structure took on both architectural and historical significance. Greene was particularly inspired by the Twickenham Villa of Alexander Pope (1688-1744), the English Enlightenment poet and satirist. Although Pope had no affiliation with the state of Rhode Island, he, like Roger Williams and many other early Rhode Islanders endure religious persecution being the son of two Catholic parents. Architectural prestige was closely tied to the many insurrections that sprouted up throughout the New England region and the fight for religious liberty was almost never lost in the minds of Rhode Island preservationists. The commission for the design and construction of the Sullivan Dorr house was a defining moment in Greene's career, not only because the commission slingshot his career forward, but also because this began what would become a lucrative relationship with the Allen family. The Allen family was among the wealthiest families in nineteenth century Rhode Island and Sullivan Dorr's marriage to Lydia (Allen) Dorr in 1804 augmented both the Allen and Dorr family names. This, as we will see, will have important implications for surviving members of the Allen family.[71]

The Candace Allen House located at 12 Benevolent Street was the second major commission Greene received from the Allen family. The house was a square, two-story brick monitor roofed home that once again held onto its eclectic nature in the sense that it had a federal style exterior with features of French design in the interior. The Candace Allen House, however, was highly sought after by the leading organizing figures of the PPS. As the

[70] Providence City Plan Commission, 59.

[71] John Hutchins Cady, *The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence, 1636-1950*, 76.

granddaughter of Lydia Allen, Elizabeth Allen inherited various houses across Providence that were being considered for preservation. In 1818 the then recently widowed Candace Allen bought the house from Crawford Allen. Candace would then live in the house until 1860 when she died, and her nephew Crawford Allen subsequently inherited the property. However, in 1887, Anne C. Allen would marry John Carter Brown, yet another ancestor of the Brown family. As a descendant of the Allen family, Elizabeth owned or was being taxed for various properties held by her family. As the wife of the President of the PPS, the Allen family would take a leading role in the visual and educational restoration of Providence's architectural and historical past. Elizabeth Allen inherited several properties in Providence and in 1941 she inherited the Thomas Whitaker house on 67 George Street. The Thomas Whitaker House was a federal style house designed by John Holden Greene and completed in 1824. In 1954, Elizabeth Allen would donate the house to Brown University in 1954, all but guaranteeing its future maintenance.[72] The Allen and Brown families would, together with Antoinette Downing, establish and fund the PPS. In essence, the descendants of several of Rhode Island's most influential families had a vested interest in preserving their families' legacies. Yet, conflict of interest would be the tip of what would become an iceberg of problems for the PPS.

The central problem for the PPS today and in 1956 was that the Society undertook what it believed to be an objective analysis of Providence's architecture when it explicitly understood the subjective nature of both surveying and rating structures. Cady and Downing were the only sources drawn from when the PPS began to decide which structures were to be

[72] Providence Preservation Society, "Mary A. Gowdey Library of House Histories," Providence Preservation Society Survey, Thomas Whitaker House (Providence, Rhode Island, n.d.), 67 George Street, Mary A. Gowdey Database.

preserved. As the primary source of creating the mechanisms for rating architectural significance, Downing and the PPS believed that "a building should be judged as much as possible in terms of the ideals and intent of its builder."[73] Downing and Cady shared an appreciation for John Holden Greene and his influence on Providence's landscape. The memory of men like Greene, Thomas Tefft, Richard Upjohn, and many more was not only valuable for Cady and Downing, but it was an important aspect for educating the people about Providence's architectural past. The College Still Study, however, would go on to claim that "this objective approach is sometimes difficult to achieve since it requires a knowledge of the styles of building and a recognition of good design and workmanship in terms of the style in question."[74] The understanding that preservation could not take on a purely objective nature was not overlooked, however, its antidote significantly magnified this issue. The PPS implemented a scoring system that could be applied to each of the buildings in question. Each building was given a score on a scale of 0-100. The PPS also understood that "valuations of the sort called for must, to a certain extent, be subjective."[75] Scoring was based on three broad categories, each with smaller sub-categories that were taken into consideration when scoring. The categories were as follows: historical significance, which received a maximum of thirty points; architectural significance, which received a maximum of twenty-five points, and physical and environmental conditions, which could receive a

maximum of fifteen points. However, a structure could earn an additional fifteen points if it

[73] Providence City Plan Commission, "College Hill: A Demonstration Study of Historic Area Renewal," 73.

[74] Providence City Plan Commission, 73.

[75] Providence City Plan Commission, 76.

"greatly strengthens the designs composition of its immediate neighborhood."[76] An additional fifteen points could be added if a modified structure did not cause any "aesthetic harm, and assumes a worthwhile original design."[77] Each house received its own 'evaluation sheet' which included the surveyors' scoring of the building and the building's history. The final categorization scoring system for houses was as follows:

100-70 points= Exceptional.
69-60 points= Excellent.
59-40 points= Good
39-20 points= Fair
19-0 points= Poor [78]

The scoring system was not only quite subjective, but the process of actually surveying each home was remarkably undemocratic. First, the PPS assigned only *one* person to survey and score all 1,350 of the approximately 1,700 buildings in the College Hill Area. The PPS decided that "one person was made responsible for completing the forms for the entire area. This prolonged the data collecting period, but guaranteed that a consistent point of view for evaluations would be maintained."[79] To offset any bias or fatigue that may have set in when the individual surveying, the PPS "found that the one person charged with scoring buildings ought not work too long at one time or his judgments tended to become blurred; two hours at a stretch seemed to be a maximum."[80] Osmund R. Overby, architect and surveyor for the National Park Service would survey each of the 1,350 structures in the College Hill area over

[76] Providence City Plan Commission, 77.

[77] Providence City Plan Commission, 77.

[78] Providence City Plan Commission, 77.

[79] Providence City Plan Commission, 76.

[80] Providence City Plan Commission, 76.

the span of approximately a year. Yet, once again, the PPS found yet another way to transplant Antoinette Downing's influence into the surveying process.

As another barrier to bias and fatigue, the PPS found that an additional surveyor might be of use for Overby. The PPS concluded that "it was also found to be helpful to have another qualified person, particularly the planner charged with the designs for the area, go through the area too, in order to make his own evaluations."[81] The "planner" in this case was none other than Antoinette Downing. Downing was, in short, one of the main founders of the PPS, the primary source of historical and architectural significance of buildings in Providence, and now, she was the only local representative surveying the very buildings she set out to preserve. What's more, in the PPS's charter statement of 1956, the first sentence explicitly states, "The Providence Preservation Society is dedicated to the principle that the evidence of the past is an asset for the future."[82] However, the PPS made it clear that the 'evaluation sheets' were "intended for use by someone relatively conversant with the development of American architectural style. Any group planning to make such an evaluation would do well to call in students of American architecture and local history to set up the data sheets to fit local needs."[83] Put another way, the PPS wanted to ensure that only those with an understanding of American architecture would be able to consult the findings of these surveys. Moreover, the PPS made it clear that if one wanted to understand the Society's process of surveying or its findings, it would receive different data sheets than the ones created by Overby and Downing. Furthermore, the PPS made it abundantly clear that it did

[81] Providence City Plan Commission, 76.

[82] Providence Preservation Society, "Providence Preservation Society: 25th Anniversary, 1956-1981."

[83] Providence City Plan Commission, "College Hill: A Demonstration Study of Historic Area Renewal.," 76.

not want Overby and Downing surveying College Hill structures in public. For this reason, the PPS ensured, in what it believed was in the interest of objectivity, that "the information could be checked and mapped on the same day in the office," and that "the scoring was done in the office."[84] The PPS wanted to keep figures like Downing and Overby off the streets and out of the public view. While keeping them isolated from the public view allowed them to work independently of public, the PPS continued to claim that it sought to disseminate survey information, not only to planners and city officials, but also to the citizens of Providence. "Dissemination of the information should help to create a new climate of pride and interest in local heritage," the College Hill Study argued as it sought to keep surveys and its surveyors out of the public eye. The PPS reflected its desire to inform the public about the results of the College Hill and PPS surveys but did not want the city's population conversing with its surveyors or investigating the results unless they were 'relatively conversant' in the development of American architecture.

The human consequences of preservation were severe, with hundreds of Providence's poorest citizens being forced to relocate as the interiors of historically significant structures was reoriented. As previously alluded to, the people of Providence, especially Fox Pointers, lived in extraordinarily dense conditions. However, as historically significant structures like the Thomas Whitaker House, the Candace Allen House, and the twin houses of Benoni Cooke and Rufus Greene were inherited or purchased by new owners, many of the houses were being used for other purposes, including housing. Many of the College Hill area houses were being rented out to individuals and families, contributing to overcrowding and posing an obstacle to preservation. A majority of historically significant houses had been divided up by property owners and subsequently rented rooms within the structure to individuals, families,

[84] Providence City Plan Commission, 76–77.

and businesses across the city. The Benoni Cooke House was built for Benoni Cooke as a single-family residential structure. However, John Holden Greene built two additional structures adjacent to Benoni Cooke's house, creating a superblock trio of houses, one for

Rufus Greene, and the other was a structure with stables and carriage houses. In 1898, Rufus Greene's house was demolished, and the stables were being used for other purposes, leaving Benoni Cooke's house as the only remaining structure out of the trio. In 1859, Cooke had sold small parcels of the land to Rufus Greene for $13,500 and the remaining portions of the property and the stables were demolished to accommodate the Old Stone Bank. By 1953, the Benoni Cooke house was owned and occupied by the Providence Institution for Savings and was redesigned to include a bank annex with offices, a cafeteria, and a printing shop. In 1995, Brown University purchased the building and remade the bank into a museum. The Benoni Cooke house is now known as the Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, which is both a teaching and research museum.[85]

The James Burrough House endured a similar dilemma in that it was built as a singlefamily dwelling but had housed businesses throughout its lifetime. Additionally, according to a clause in the will of Sarah F. Burrough, stating that when Sarah died, Herbert J. Burrough

(the trustee of the estate), "the estate must be distributed 1/3 apiece to Mary R. Burrough, Howard D. Burrough and Herbert J. Burrough." However, according to the clause, the remainder of the property would remain the exclusive property of Herbert. When Herbert died in 1909 and appointed Howard to administer his parcel of inherited land, Howard went on to sell small parcels of the land to small companies. In 1912, Hoard sold $10 of land to

[85] Providence Preservation Society, "Mary A. Gowdey Library of House Histories," Historic American Buildings Survey, Benoni Cooke House (Providence, Rhode Island, April 1962), 110 South Main Street, Mary A. Gowdey Database.

another member of the Burrough family, and in the following year sold another parcel to Swinehart Tire and Rubber Co. for $500. By 122, Swinehart Tire and Rubber Co. had been sold to Edward A. Stockwell and his wife Anne, who would in 1944, sell their portion of the land to Garrett D. Byrnes. The PPS does not disclose how it acquired the property from the Byrnes family, yet it was still a prime target for a Society that sought to preserve the memory of John Holden Greene.[86]

Antoinette Downing's legacy is undoubtedly a mixed one. As a woman making in the 1960s looking to establish herself in the male-dominated world of architecture, her decision to stand up to Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design's choice to aggressively buy up abandoned or deteriorating houses in the College Hill area was bold and risky. Downing and her husband were harassed and even attacked at Brown University parties for what many mistakenly believed was an attack on education, and in a time when architectural historians were still a relatively new profession, many in the Brown University and RISD community understood Downing's efforts as a danger to the city and its people. Downing was essentially *the* woman who called on men like Nicholas Brown to invest in the College Hill community, and, as a result, by 1985, the city of Providence had invested approximately $20 million dollars into the 750 structures deemed historically and architecturally significant. Even in her old age, when Downing was asked to speak at Brown University annually, she was still subjected to harassment by Brown University students.[87] In

[86] Providence Preservation Society, "Mary A. Gowdey Library of House Histories," May 1962.

[87] Judy Klemesrud, "Her Mission Is Preserving Providence," *New York Times*, May 2, 1985, New York Times Archive, https://www.nytimes.com/1985/05/02/garden/her-mission-is-preserving-providence.html.

the midst of one of the worst housing crises the city of Providence had ever faced, Downing prevented what would have been the widespread destruction of housing at the hands of Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design.

Chapter 4: Preparing Fox Pointers for the Industrial Turnaround and their changing neighborhood, 1960-1966.

To fully understand the extent to which the Fox Point neighborhood had changed during this time period, an investigation into the social values that held the area together is helpful to understanding the effects of the gentrification. The combination of the area's commercial economy and Catholic identity linked Fox Pointers together. Additionally, the local commercial economy closely resembled the teachings of the Catholic Social Thought. The Catholic Church teaches that individuals and families should "seek to work where they live. Those who cannot work at home should at least try to live as close to work (as well as school and church) as possible."[88] In the postwar years until 1966 when the construction of the Fox Point section of I-195 started, the area paralleled the Church's teachings. With Holy Rosary and Saint Joseph's Catholic Churches within walking distance, Irish and Portuguese Catholics transcended the racial and cultural traditions. Holy Rosary served approximately

[88] Tobias J. Lanz, Ph. D, "Economics Begins at Home," in *Beyond Capitalism & Socialism: A New Statement of an Old Ideal* (IHS Press, 2007), 220.

1,500 Fox Pointers and held annual festivals, including the Holy Lady of the Rosary and the Crowning of the Holy Spirit festivals where locals enjoyed a variety of food, music, and entertainment. As an immigrant-founded and bi-lingual church, Holy Rosary provided a space for Irish and Portuguese immigrants alike to cultivate their identities as both Americans and Catholics.

Prior to 1955, six primary education schools dotted the Fox Point area allowing children and teenagers to either walk or take the trolly lines to and from school. However, throughout the fifties and sixties five schools, including the East, Ives, Arnold, and East Manning Street schools were demolished to accommodate the housing shortage. In 1951, Mayor Reynolds asked the United States' Office of Education for a grant to aid in the construction of what would become Fox Point Elementary School. While unsuccessful, Mayor Reynolds turned to H.V. Collins who would begin the construction of the $1.2 million school. By 1954 construction was complete and an opening ceremony was held with keynote speakers Senator T.F. Green and Mayor Reynolds.[89]

Consequently, the construction of Fox Point Elementary School caused Tockwotton Park to be cut in half, but the presence of the Fox Point Boys and Girls Club just across the street provided an invaluable space for after school programs. The demolition of several elementary schools and the subsequent educational consolidation also marked an important transition point into an automobile-oriented city. In 1951, the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) began chartering school buses for elementary, middle, and high school students alike. Students attending magnet and public schools could now be bused across town.[90] Yet,

[89] The SPIRIT Program, *"A Wickenden Street Book,"* 'Millionaire's School,' Robert Duquette, *By the Spirit Program- Rhode Island Collection, 1985*, 24.

[90] The SPIRIT Program, 'Going to school on Wickenden,' 39.

this hurt Fox Point's position as a natural transportation corridor as students living on the opposite side of town were being bused through Fox Point along with those students living in Fox Point itself. The emergence of an automobile-oriented Providence pulled Fox Pointers further away from their churches, schools, and, as we will see, the subsidiary values that bonded commercial life.

The city's efforts to modernize commercial centers like Fox Point worked together with the displacement and disruption of the area's subsidiary economy. The city sought to satisfy both the shopper and the business owner simultaneously. According to the 1951 confidential report, "to satisfy the modern shopper… Providence must encourage the centralization of business in well-distributed shopping centers with adequate transportation

service."[91] Attempts to satisfy the 'modern shopper' were written into the new 1951 city zoning ordinance by requiring that new structures engaged in commercial, manufacturing, or industrial activities to provide adequate spaces for vehicles. This would move loading and unloading away from "the streets where they now impede the free movement of traffic."[92] For small businesses like Adler's Fox Point Hardware or Olive and Mario Batista's Lisbon Dry Goods Store, this was not entirely problematic because the 1951 zoning ordinance did not require them to purchase new land or improve existing land. Further, the ordinance was geared toward preparing for larger, big-box industries, requiring every new commercial or industrial use or structure to "provide a ten by twenty-five-foot loading and unloading space for each 20,000 square feet or fraction thereof in excess of 3,000 square feet."[93] What was

[91] Agency, "Redevelopment Proposals for Central Areas in Providence, Rhode Island," 14.

[92] The City Plan Commission, "For Providence: A New Zoning Ordinance 1948" (Providence, R.I, February 1949), VIII, Special Collection, Providence Public Library.

[93] The City Plan Commission, 21.

problematic, however, was the disruption of a multi-modal transportation network and the shopping habits of Fox Pointers. As the city modernized purchasing techniques such as credit cards and larger businesses moved into the area, necessities became further and further away from home. As a result, by the end of 1954 Fox Pointers "didn't shop like today. When they needed something, they went to the store and took everything they wanted and paid on Friday."[94] Daily shopping habits were replaced with wholesale and retail techniques. The social relationships cultivated with butchers, pharmacists, tailors, and other local specialists withered. More importantly, the ability to take goods on one day and pay on another built a network of trust within Fox Point that was largely broken by the end of the mid-century.

The principles of TOD and those of the Catholic Social Teaching coexisted to build the foundation and character of the post-World War I to mid-1950s Fox Point. However, the breakdown of Fox Point's multi-ethnic small business community can be traced to the integration of the automobile into the dense urban landscape and the subsequent destruction of small businesses for interstate highway construction. This took labor out of the home and often completely out of Providence itself, forcing many Fox Pointers to transition away from the kinds of TODs they had been building for decades. Small businesses strengthened the area's Catholic identity and small business continued to keep the area afloat even as the city destroyed large plots of land for highways. This is because "a thriving business can be a multi-generational affair that can cement family relations and keep family members close to home."[95]

We must be honest about Fox Point's future vitality at this point as the area still relatively unstable both on the economic and housing front. By 1960, Fox Point was still among one of

[94] The SPIRIT Program, *"A Wickenden Street Book,"* 'Life on Wickenden Street in 1955,' Antonio Goncalves, *By The Spirit Program- Rhode Island Collection, 1985*, 22.

[95] Tobias J. Lanz, Ph. D, "Economics Begins at Home," 221.

the toughest places to live in the city and much of the housing was still rapidly deteriorating. The area was still a hotspot for renters with 1,463 of the 2,090 housing units being renter occupied, but several structural improvements in renter occupied structures made for improved living conditions. Yet, even with 1,303 of those structures being rated as having 'sound' plumbing, only 990 had all the necessary plumbing facilities such as running water and a flushable toilet. Further, an additional 208 'sound' structures still lacked other plumbing facilities such as hot water. More importantly, in 1960 Fox Point had the most 'dilapidated' housing structures in the city by a wide margin with 349. The next highest was 202. Fox Pointers also experienced little to no improvement in the overall congestion of the living spaces within housing structures. The area had the second highest average number of persons per room in the city with 229 people living in rooms with 1.01 persons or more. Adding to this was the fact that Fox Point still had the highest average number of rooms per dwelling unit with average of 5.6 rooms per housing structure and 134 housing structures

with eight rooms or more. Fox Pointers were among the most clustered in the city at this time. At the same time, only seven new housing structures had been built from 1950 to March of 1960 when the census was published. All other housing structures had been built in in 1939 or earlier.[96]

Within the decade Fox Point's population had undergone massive shifts with a large influx of new families moving in. Within the two year span between January 1958 and March of 1960, 593 new families moved into Fox Point, and an additional 435 families having moved in in the period between 1954 and 1957.[97] Fox Point's population had also taken a massive

[96] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "1960 Population and Housing Statistics for Census Tracts: Providence, R.I." (Census, Providence, Rhode Island, 1959), 93, ULRI, City of Providence, 1939-1970, Providence Redevelopment Agency, 1951-1969, Series 1, Providence College Archives and Special Collections.

[97] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 108.

dip from 1950 levels, going from 7,464 people in 1950 to 5,848 in 1960.[98] Within that population, African Americans made up a considerably larger portion of the population from the decade prior as African Americans made up 17.65% of the population at the time. Furthermore, with 3,230 'foreign-born' citizens, immigrants made up 55.2% of Fox Point's population.[99] The incoming population was also considerably more educated with only 341 Fox Pointers having no school experience and 230 having completed four or more years of college. While these jumps are not to the scale that they were by 1970, Fox Point's transition from a working-class enclave was already well underway. This change is well-documented by fluctuations in occupation levels and income levels. With increases in professional workers, and drops in industrial employees, Fox Pointers were finding themselves in different

areas of the labor force. Moreover, the drop in laborers, craftsmen, and foremen suggests that Fox Pointers were working less with their hands, and instead in office jobs.[100]

Fox Pointers did in fact get wealthier within the decade, but the area's average income was still below the national average income of $5,400.[101][102] The most notable income changes came within those who found themselves among the lowest earners in the city. With only 104 families making under $1,000 annually, the area experienced a massive 27.83% drop in

[98] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 25.

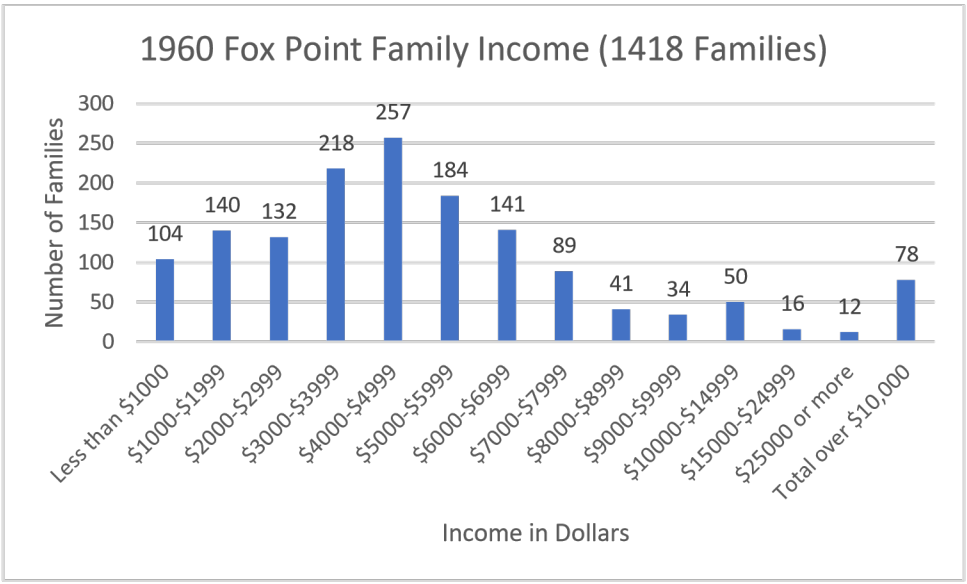
[99] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 25.

[100] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 72.

[101] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "Current Population Reports: Consumer Income" (Census, Washington, DC, June 9, 1961), U.S. Census Bureau.

[102] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 20. Note: graph is my own.

families within that income bracket. Additionally, with 184 families making between $5,000$5,999 annually, there was a 10.18% jump in the number of families making just less or about the same as the national average.



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It must be noted that while Fox Pointers were generally getting wealthier, this came at the cost of its population and working-class character. Also, with 1960 being the first year where the census documented the incomes of African Americans, what emerges is a much bleaker story. While we do not have data on individual African Americans in 1960, we do have

access to the incomes of the 213 families in Fox Point at that time. Of these 213 families, 157 were living on incomes less than the national average, and 27 of which were making under $1,000 annually. It is also noteworthy that no African American family in Fox Point brought in an annual income of $10,000 or more.[103]

The area's general population and age distribution is integral to understanding why Fox Pointers were in many ways dependent on industrial revitalization's success and why revitalization struggled. By 1960, Fox Point no longer enjoyed the large labor pool and extent

[103] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 87.

of youth within the population that it had in the previous two decades. With less people and an increasingly aging population, getting Fox Pointers back into industrial jobs was a struggle from the beginning. With new, wealthier, and more educated families moving in, Fox Pointers were often looking for employment elsewhere. And, with about half its labor force still walking, taking public transportation, or carpooling, Fox Pointers were forced to travel longer distances to work. With jobs at India Point gone, most Fox Pointers moved out simply to relocate closer to the industrial work they could find. Lastly, because Fox Point was not yet the automobile-oriented neighborhood that it would be when I-195's construction started in 1966, those who did own a car had to deal with narrow and largely inadequate roads when travelling within or throughout the city. The next chapter will examine how industrial revitalization impacted Fox Pointers and the City of Providence.

Industrial revitalization in Providence involved buying up large tracts of unused or neglected land and refitting it for large-scale industrial use. Yet, attracting industry to Providence was as much about the economy as it was about providing basic housing needs to its citizens. However, the PRA struggled mightily to attract industry to Fox Point, causing the city to look to the peripheries and neglected areas of the city. Stating in 1960, the PRA began contacting industrial firms in the Fox Point area and offering them pre-relocation services

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prior to the construction of I-195. Offers to relocate India Point industrial producers fell on deaf ears as "nearly all the firms were disinclined to move prior to condemnation and were desirous of relocating in the same general vicinity."[104] The PRA ultimately decided to abandon the idea of industrial revitalization in Fox Point in 1960, and instead looked for areas where it could concentrate industry. By 1961 the Providence Redevelopment Agency

[104] Providence Redevelopment Agency, "1966 Annual Report, Providence Redevelopment Agency" (Annual Report, Providence, Rhode Island, 1966), 35, Urban Renewal- Annual Report- 1966, Providence College Archives and Special Collections.

(PRA) had completed the construction of the West River Industrial Park, which was home to the world's first automatic post office. Starting in 1956 the PRA began surveying and clearing land in the area bounded by Corliss and West River Streets, creating the industrial park as it is today. With entrance points from Charles Street to the south and Branch Street to the north, I-95 bounded the eastern side of the park providing easy automobile and truck access to the various industrial centers. By 1961, approximately 85% of the West River Industrial Park land had been sold. By the end of the year, only thirteen of the 57-acre project had yet to be sold. As previously alluded to, the kinds of industrial production the city attracted was closely bound up with the basic and environmental needs of the population. Many houses in the downtown area and on the periphery of the city did not have central heating, running water, or adequate plumbing. This would change in 1960 when the Cornell-Dubilier Electric Company, a subsidiary of the Federal Pacific Electric Company, purchased seven acres at West River. Cornell-Dubilier broke ground on August 12, 1960, on an 88,500 square-foot plant that employed approximately 1,200 people. With a large-scale producer of electricity, the electric system in Providence quickly modernized as preservation and new housing modernized the city's housing stock. In the same year, the Westinghouse Electric Company submitted construction plans for a warehouse adjacent to the industrial park, located at the corner of Charles and Corliss Streets. Additionally, the duo of Buckley and Scott, Inc and

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Maynard & Company provided other basic housing necessities, with the former being a storm window manufacturer and the latter a distributor of heating equipment. Mack Trucks, Inc. also purchased a $200,000 dollar site in 1960 at West River to operate is service, maintenance, and sales headquarters. As industrial revitalization began to take shape, the city attracted a plethora of industrial producers that could provide rapid employment and provide the city with products that its residents desperately needed. Moreover, by strategically

concentrating large industrial plants near the railroad and I-95, the city's automobile owners and industrial employees could have easy access to the workplace. However, the completion of the West River Industrial Park marked the start of a long tradition of purchasing large tracts of land in densely populated areas. As a result, congestion would get worse as automobile owners were forced to circumnavigate these large plants rather than going directly through them to get to a destination.[105]

The second major project completed by the PRA in 1960 was the Point Street project. As the automobile continued to integrate itself into the urban transportation landscape, the PRA demolished small enclaves of housing for a parking lot. The lot is bounded by Imperial Place, Hoppin Street, South Street, and is situated just east of I-95. As the Jewelry District in South Providence began to reignite, the city needed to provide adequate parking space. Yet, even in the automobile era the PRA struggled to make decisions about which kinds of automobile infrastructure would take precedence. The Point Street project was in fact the culmination of ten years of tension between homeowners, highway advocates, and the PRA. The PRA justified clearing the residential neighborhood housed in the area by explaining that "97 per cent of the homes were substandard." As the state continued to condemn land for the construction of I-95, the City Plan Commission and the transportation department sharply cut

into the PRA's plans for a larger parking lot. The parking lot primarily served one company: Coro, Inc., one of the city's largest jewelry producers.[106][107] However, the condemnation of an

[105] Providence Redevelopment Agency, "1960 Annual Report, Providence Redevelopment Agency," Annual Report (Providence, Rhode Island, October 5, 1961), Urban Renewal- Annual Report- 1960, Providence College Archives and Special Collections. Please not that this report does not include page numbers. The PRA did not begin to add page numbers to their reports until the publication of the 1965 annual report.

[106] Providence Redevelopment Agency, N.P.

[107] Providence Redevelopment Agency, N.P.

entire neighborhood for one company's parking lot sent a clear message to the people of Providence: adapting to automobility would take precedence over the housing crisis.

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The Point Street Project (parking lot) at completion in 1960.

The third major project completed by the PRA was the 117-acre Mashapaug Pond project. With two projects under its belt, the PRA sought to create an industrial revitalization project without funding from the federal government. As the city's debt continued to balloon, the PRA blazed the trail for what it would call "a milestone of self-sufficiency."[108] The chief objectives for the Mashapaug Pond project were to strengthen the area's tax base by clearing residential areas where tax delinquencies were high to bring industrial plants to the area. According to the report, since 1957 the Mashapaug Pond area struggled in "its growth, due to faulty street layout, inadequate utilities, a high ration of unpaved streets, and many other deficiencies."[109] The report also noted that approximately 37.5% of the dwellings in the area

[108] Providence Redevelopment Agency, N.P.
[109] Providence Redevelopment Agency, N.P.

were between forty and sixty years old with an addition 46% of those dwellings lacking central heating. However, what attracted the PRA to the area was the pond's close proximity to the Huntington Expressway and the main line tracks of New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroads. What is important to note is that while the city continued to purchase large tracts of land, it did not lose sight of its transit-oriented-development roots. By strategically placing industry near transportation hubs, highway construction and industrial revitalization remained intimately connected. By November 1961 Providence voters had approved an eleven-million-dollar redevelopment bond issue that would finance the $6,618,500-dollar Mashapaug Pond project with the understanding the park would return about $350,000 dollars annually in real estate taxes. The condemnation for the project required the demolition of 567 structures housing 506 families and a total of 1,550 people.[110]

As the Mashapaug Pond project continued to develop, the gulf between the PRA's vision for the area and the residents of the area continued to widen. For the PRA, the project was "geared to satisfy the needs of Rhode Island as well as out-of-state industrialists who seek sites of five acres or more." Yet, for many living in the area, the provision of thousands of jobs appeared rather tangential to the obvious deterioration of housing in the area. Moreover, many residents did not get the impression that the project was geared toward the socioeconomic betterment of the neighborhood. In a very real sense, Mashapaug Pond residents were correct in their analysis of the PRA's intentions. "The project gives Providence an in-city-frontier; it gives the city an opportunity to compete with suburban and outlying sectors, which have become increasingly attractive to business and industry because

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these sectors have abundant land to offer," the PRA explained. To understand how

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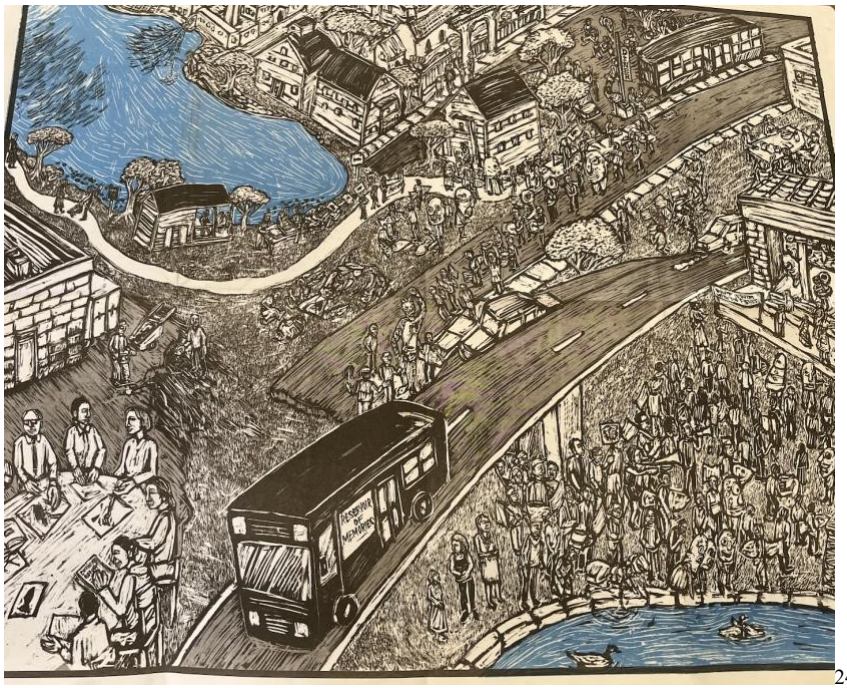
[110] Providence Redevelopment Agency, N.P.

Mashapaug Pond residents understood the consequences and intentions of the project, a look at a drawing by an AS220 artist. AS220 began as an underground art organization for Providence artists looking to disseminate their works. An AS220 artist published a piece entitled *The Reservoir of Memories* in a 1989 AS220 publication:



[24]

The piece includes a tour bus leaving the Mashapaug Pond neighborhood with the title 'Reservoir of Memories' on its side as it drives toward a table of other underground artists each engaging in different pieces of art. The artist includes mass groups of dislocated Mashapaug Pond residents. By drawing the viewers eyes directly to the tour bus and the various roads that dominate the center of the piece, the artist prompts the viewer to consider the human and physical consequences of automobility.

As the city continued its industrial renaissance, Fox Point's main transportation and industrial hub located at India Point remained abandoned. One of the primary reasons for this abandonment was that many industrial and transportation companies were unwilling to invest

[24] Anonymous, *Reservoir of Memories*, 1988-1989, AS220 Collection, Gathered Photocopies of letters to praising AS220, Providence Public Library.

in the area without investments in a hurricane barrier on the Providence River. Once again, lessons from the 1938 Hurricane made India Point into a nightmare for companies looking to make large-scale capital investments. However, by 1960 when industrial and railroad companies were making decisions about the future locations of their infrastructure, many had already decided to relocate. Yet, of the railroad and industrial companies that made it clear that they wanted to stay at India Point, all of them asked the city to provide assurances that a hurricane barrier would be erected at the mouth of the Providence River. The construction of a hurricane barrier was necessary for several reasons. Namely, because waterways weaved through the central business district and because of its natural topography, it sat in a basin that was only about eight feet above sea level in most areas. Additionally, because India Point and the Providence Harbor were still centers for water travel and trade, to preserve these industries the city would inevitably need to invest in flood-prevention infrastructure. Coastal and inner-city flooding of approximately eight feet, along with damage to housing and infrastructure resulting in about $25.1 million in damages caused by Hurricane Carol in August 1954 prompted the city to begin planning for the construction of the Fox Point Hurricane Barrier. While the proposal for the construction of the Fox Point Hurricane barrier was met strong support from state and city officials, and Rhode Islanders, the New Haven Railroad company engaged in an eight-year battle with the city to avoid incurring any relocation costs. In 1960, the New Haven Railroad Company finally "offered oral assurance that the railroad will be willing to relocate once the Fox Point Hurricane Barrier is built, on the condition that the move can be accomplished without any expense to the New Haven."[111] Subsequently, the United States Army Corps of Engineers would begin construction

[111] Providence Redevelopment Agency, "1960 Annual Report, Providence Redevelopment Agency."

immediately after receiving verbal confirmation from the city that the New Haven Railroad would not have incur the costs of relocation. The federal government covered the majority of

the approximately $16.3 million (about $166,213,743 in 2023) cost of constructing the Fox Point Hurricane barrier, with other sources of funding coming from the state and from Providence. The Fox Point Hurricane Barrier's completion in 1966 was and still is perhaps one of the most important and consequential pieces of infrastructure in Providence for several reasons. For one, the barrier protects both the South Providence jewelry district and the central business district from flooding. The barrier also protects much of Fox Point's and College Hill's historic housing and architecture. The Narragansett Electric Power Plant, intended to provide large portions of the population and local businesses with electricity, is also protected by the barrier. However, the completion of the barrier would mark the end of local waterway travel in the downtown area, resulting in many steamship companies relocating further south to deeper waters. The barrier also sharply cut into the city's plans to relocate the New Haven Railroad as it reduced the city's available land by 48 acres and limited the city's capacity to build parking lots beneath the ramps connecting U.S. Route 6 and I-95. Lastly, as the barrier was being constructed, India Point remained in a state of neglect, further hindering Fox Point's natural position as a trade and transit hub.[112]

[112] Providence Redevelopment Agency, "1966 Annual Report, Providence Redevelopment Agency."

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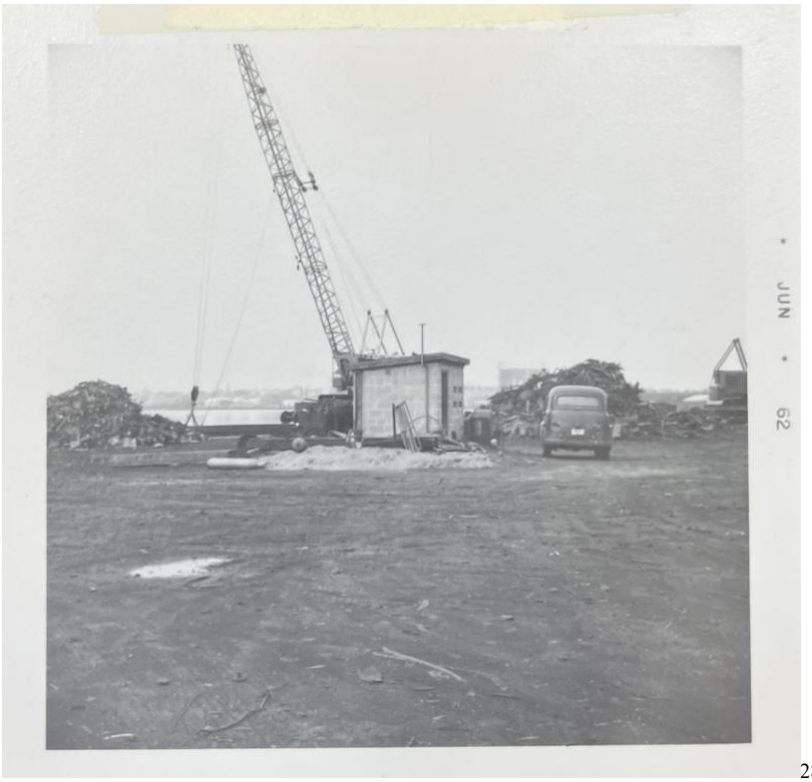
Completed Fox Point Hurricane Barrier in 1966.



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Above: India Point in June 1962. Below: India Point in February 1963.

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[27] United States Corps of Engineers, "Fox Point Hurricane Protection Barrier," An official website of the United States Government, US Army Corps of Engineers: New England District Website, n.d., https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Flood-Risk-Management/Rhode-Island/Fox-Point/.

[28] Louis Costa, "Lou Costa Collection" (India Point, Providence, Rhode Island, June 1962), Lou Costa Collection, Box 23, Providence Public Library.

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[29] Louis Costa, "Lou Costa Collection" (India Point, Providence, Rhode Island, February 1963), Lou Costa Collection, Box 23, Providence Public Library.

Chapter 5: Battling Urban Renewal and the Industrial Renaissance As industrial production rapidly found its way back into Providence, the city made a concerted effort to retrain and employ the city's youth population. the retraining program sought to help young people to find work in the newly revitalized industrial production centers that now dotted the city landscape. The Board made it explicitly clear that this was not a program designed to help young people find work as "engineers, scientists, doctors, dentists, teachers, or registered nurses."[113] As dropout rates continued to rise with youth unemployment, the city sought to create a program that would get the city's youth into the workforce at a rapid rate. Starting in early 1963, the Providence Youth Progress Board, Inc. began working with youth agencies across the city to create a program that would curb youth unemployment. The corporation was founded by a group of local Providence citizens that worked primarily in government, business industry, education, religious, and social agencies across the city. According to the Board, a youth retraining program was necessary because by 1964, "twenty-five (25.35) per cent of our children fail to finish high school. Many who do never take further training to fit them for skilled employment."[114] The purpose of the program was to help Providence's youth take the next step by providing adequate training and aiding in the application process. However, efforts to get the city's youth into the workforce often came at the cost of their individuality and, in some cases, their humanity. The program, while geared toward unemployment, came to view the city's unemployed youth as a burden to be solved by the state. "Neither they [the youth] or the State can afford this appalling waste of productive capacity,"[115] the report explained. Yet, for a program that was designed to alleviate

[113] Providence Youth Progress Board, Incorporated, "Urban League of Rhode Island Collection, City of Providence, 1939-1970." (Annual Report, Providence, Rhode Island, April 15, 1964), 3, ULRI, City of Providence, 1939-1970, Box 4, Providence College Archives and Special Collections.

[114] Providence Youth Progress Board, Incorporated, "Urban League of Rhode Island Collection, City of Providence, 1939-1970."

[115] Providence Youth Progress Board, Incorporated, 1.

youth employment, the Youth Progress Board made several claims regarding human nature, specifically, the nature of young African Americans. For the Board, high African American youth unemployment rates were caused, not only by poverty, but the decisions young people were making within impoverished communities. “They are surrounded by social disorganization, despair and lack of goals,” because, as the report explains, “they live in a narrow world surrounded by disadvantaged, disheartened people who themselves lack training or education.”[116] In short, the Board failed to consider the possibility that the causality could have happened in reverse. For neighborhoods like Fox Point, South Providence, and Randall Square, deindustrialization, housing preservation, and highway construction resulted in the mass relocation of industries that had been there for several decades. Neighborhoods like Fox Point and South Providence understood the local economy as something much more than a places where individuals made an annual income. Rather, the local economies were also centers for socializing and sharing spaces that the community valued, such as parks, churches, and restaurants. Moreover, as industrial production was concentrated in industrial parks across the city, urban dwellers were by necessity required to find access to an automobile. The decline in Providence’s postwar transit-oriented-development scheme also greatly contributed to unemployment rates. For instance, in the year 1951, the United Transit Company (UTC) alone carried over 100 million passengers. By 1966, ridership was down to 20 million per year as the trolley system was neglected and the highway system was being integrated into the urban landscape.[117]

The Board would then go on to explicitly blame African Americans for the deterioration of their communities and the unemployment rate. For the Board, African

[116] Providence Youth Progress Board, Incorporated, 1.

[117] Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA), “RIPTA: History,” State Transportation Website, RIPTA: Rhode Island Public Transit Authority, n.d., https://www.ripta.com/history/.

Americans had been cultivating what it believed was a generational "culture of poverty,"

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where young African American's "family and environmental problems often interfere with the capacity to devote full attention to work." Once again, the Board failed to consider that as the highway system found its way into the urban landscape and trolley ridership declined, families and individuals were forced to find work away from their homes. Yet, the antidote for the 'culture of poverty,' was not to find ways to help African American families, but to teach young African Americas how to "deal with frustration and to eliminate problem solving by impulsive actions."[118] As individuals spent less time working with their families and in their communities, many families in Providence had to abandon the social traditions that held their communities together. This was certainly the case for Fox Pointers as the Catholic Social values that built the local economy around transit-oriented-development were replaced with the automobile. Consequently, social life in areas like Fox Point suffered greatly as people walked less and worked further away from their homes. The Youth Progress Board was much more concerned with creating tangible, economic value for communities like Fox Point and South Providence, instead of providing mechanisms that could build social capital. The issue with the proposal was that it worked under the assumption that the unemployed youth in Providence were a burden that only the state could handle. As a result, the report went on to make sweeping claims about entire communities and in many ways failed to consider that the economies of certain neighborhoods were synonymous with the rest of the city. Youth progress reports like this were taken seriously by city officials and the variety new industrial employers in the city. In an era that viewed the city's unemployed youth as a burden, so too were some of the city's oldest and well-established businesses. An

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[118] Providence Youth Progress Board, Incorporated, "Urban League of Rhode Island Collection, City of Providence, 1939-1970.," 2,3.

investigation into the Adler family's tension with the city and Mayor Joseph A. Doorely, Jr. offers valuable insight into how the Adlers defended themselves from the city's highest ranking officials.

Adler's Fox Point Hardware

The Adlers: "For this reason, it is fair to say that it [Adler's Fox Point Hardware] has earned for itself an important place in the life of the Portuguese-American community in the Wickenden-Ives Street area."[119]

Fred Adler opened Adler's Army & Navy Store in 1919 on a small lot on the southwest corner of Wickenden and Traverse Streets that he would eventually expand into a 4,000 square foot property. When Fred arrived in Fox Point as a Romanian immigrant, the area was poor, with many residents suffering from a lack of hot water, inadequate electricity, or both. Within the following two decades, Fred began to find financial success after enduring the Great Depression. The store took on a flexible character within the community, starting in the post- World War I-era as an Army-Navy surplus store, Fred cultivated a business philosophy that emphasized community and affordability. Fred himself had no military experience or training; in fact, he was trained as an engraver. As a surplus store, Fred became a leading local purveyor, primarily selling general work clothes, overalls, and shirts.

After serving in World War II, Fred's sons Irving and Carl Adler found their way into the family business with Irving working in the store on Wickenden Street. Carl, on the other hand, opened a separate branch in downtown Providence, located on Westminster Street. In 1960, Fred handed over the store to his sons Irving and Carl and they quickly reoriented the business into a hardware store while upholding their father's philosophy. This, however, was

[119] "Joseph A. Doorley, Jr. Papers," (Providence, R.I, n.d.), Doorley, Box 9, Urban Renewal, East Side Renewal Project, Providence College Archives and Special Collections.

because the branch that Carl headed was taken by the city to build I-95. While we do not have any concrete evidence explaining why Fred decided to open the store where and when he did, the years leading up to 1960 and the decades after made it clear that the Adlers wanted to establish a generational business, upheld by strong ties to the community, and built

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on affordable goods. Irving's son Harry began helping around the store at a young age, familiarizing himself with his father's store, and gearing up for a future in business. Yet, when Irving and Carl were tasked with explaining the store's success and the broader growth of Fox Point itself, they never reference themselves as key players in the social and financial growth of the area. In fact, the brothers explained that it was not the city or federal urban renewal programs, but rather "the joint efforts of the Portuguese and Irish,"[120] that lifted the community out of poverty. Furthermore, according to their representative Jacques V. Hopkins, the brothers also attributed their successes to a "willingness to accommodate a Fox Point clientele both in terms of the type of merchandise and their prices."[121]

By the fall of 1966, Adler's Hardware was in its 47th year of business in Fox Point and the Adler family were well-known and respected in the community. Yet, as the East Side Renewal Project's ambitions to adapt to automobility intensified, the store was at risk of being purchased by the City of Providence. As plans for the project began to materialize, it became clear to the Adler's that they needed to get in contact with the city to plead their case for staying in Fox Point. In a series of three proposals, the Providence Redevelopment Agency (PRA) sought to acquire the Adler's land through clever rezoning. On the surface,

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[120] The SPIRIT Program, *"A Wickenden Street Book,"* 'Mr. Adler,' Tony Goncalvez and Marc Bernard, *By the Spirit Program- Rhode Island Collection, 1985*, 13.

[121] "Joseph A. Doorley, Jr. Papers," (Providence, R.I, n.d.), Doorley, Box 9, Urban Renewal, East Side Renewal Project, Providence College Archives and Special Collections.

Mayor Joseph A. Doorley, Jr's. correspondence with the Adler's representative, Jacques V. Hopkins, is quite unremarkable, explaining that his 'personal view' was that he did not want to acquire the Adler's land. Despite Mayor Doorley's respectful tone, within the context of the East Side Renewal Project, one thing is made clear: Doorley's tone masked the kind of duplicitous statecraft that was common in mid-twentieth century urban renewal.

The first proposal quite literally planned to rezone the Adler's out of Fox. Under the city zoning ordinance that was created by the City Plan Commission in 1948 and subsequently approved in September of 1951, the city was provided with the mechanisms to redefine commercial, industrial, and residential standards on a large scale. More importantly, zoning was the primary tool used in urban renewal projects in Providence. Since 1951, Adler's had been considered a C-2 General Commercial Zone. The city defined this as "the community shopping center, serving a considerable segment of the city's population in the distribution of goods and services, but usually not attracting customers from the whole city or from the whole metropolitan area."[122] However, within the context of the East Side Renewal Project, the Providence Redevelopment Agency had rezoned the Adler's land as an R-4 Multiple Dwelling Zone with 'institutional' designation. As an R-4, the land was not only characterized as a space where single, double, and multiple dwellings can appropriately be erected, but also as a space appropriate for "apartment hotels, lodging and tourist homes."[123] Furthermore, with the 'institutional' designation, the city could still leave open the possibility

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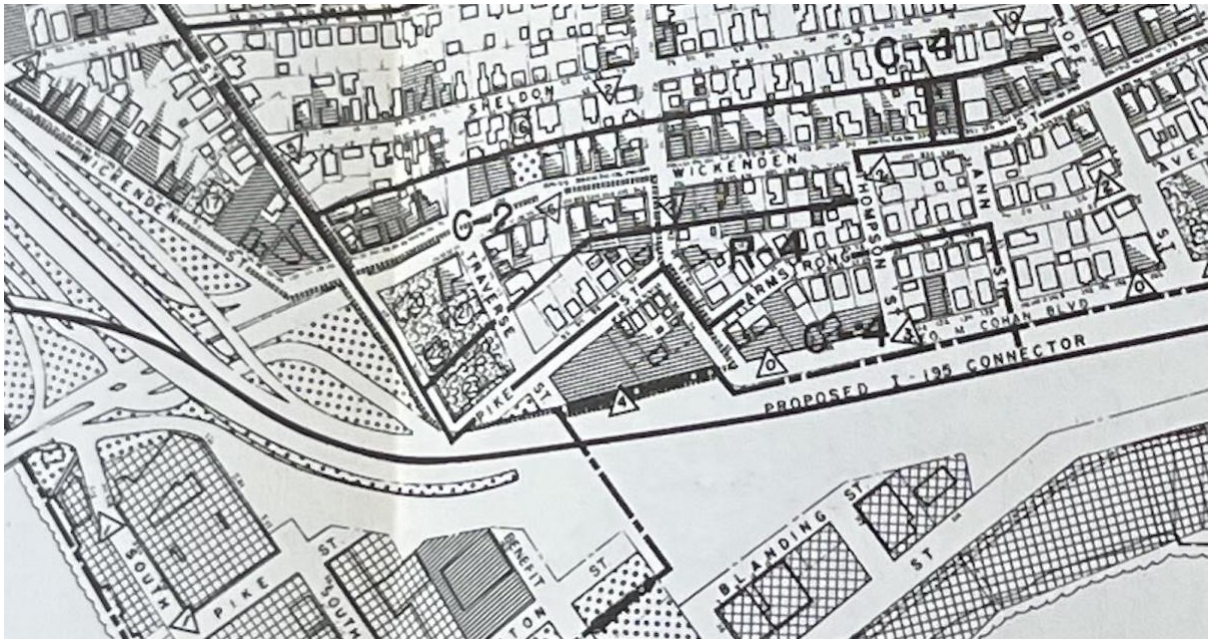
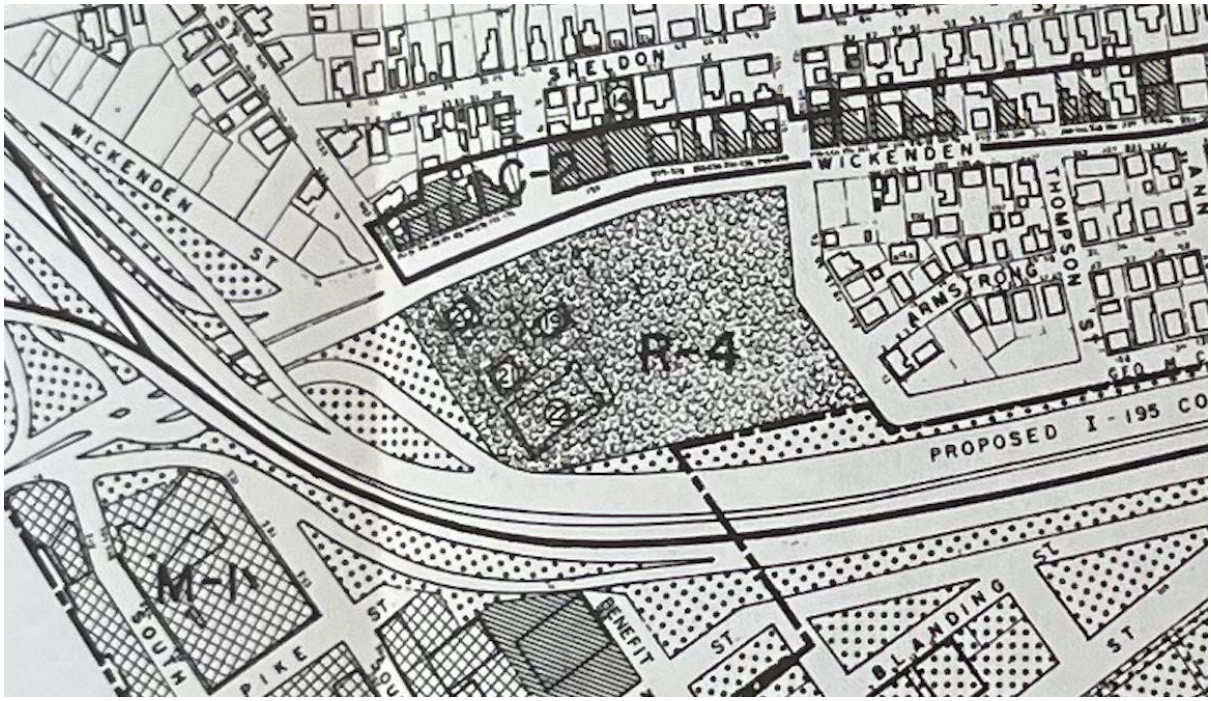
[122] The City Plan Commission, "For Providence: A New Zoning Ordinance 1948" (Providence, R.I, February 1949), VII, Special Collection, Providence Public Library.

[123] The City Plan Commission, VII

of placing public housing on the tract. This would, in effect, cause the Adler's land to fall into the category of 'nonconforming.'



[12]According to the existing city zoning ordinance. Maps included in the East Side Renewal Project. Notice that Adler's, located on the corner of Traverse and Wickenden Streets is a 'C-2.'



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Proposed zoning for the East Side Renewal Project. Notice that the entire section surrounding Adler's and the Holy Rosary Church is proposed to be changed into an R-4 Multiple Dwelling Zone.

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[12] Redevelopment Agency, Providence, "East Side Renewal Project."
[13] Redevelopment Agency, Providence, "East Side Renewal Project."

Upon learning of the renewal project's plans, the Adler family hired Hopkins and began pleading their case to Mayor Doorley. While the Adlers had every reason to challenge the proposal and feel a sense of betrayal, the family instead chose to take an explicitly proactive, solution-oriented stance on the matter. As their representative, Hopkins first contacted Mayor Doorley on the Adler's behalf in October 1966. In a forceful letter that espoused frustration with the city's proposal, Hopkins reflected to Mayor Doorley a strong commitment to the Adler's needs and the future of the land in which their store sat on.

"The Adler brothers, their families, and their mother depend upon the store for their livelihood. They have no other business or source of income," Hopkins maintained while explaining that Esther Adler, wife of the late Fred Adler, had recently been widowed.

Hopkins' main argument, however, centered around the fact that the Adlers believed their store had "earned for itself an important place in the life of the Portuguese American community in the Wickenden-Ives Street area." As a Romanian immigrant in a predominately Portuguese, Irish, and African American section of Fox Point, the years of trust Fred Adler had cultivated among his fellow Fox Pointers would be put to the test. The first place the Adlers looked to for assistance was the Holy Rosary Church, an Irish-Portuguese bilingual Catholic Church adjacent to the Adler's store.

The Adlers hoped that if they were forced to give up their store, they would still be able to influence the future of the land on which it sat. The Providence Redevelopment Agency's (PRA) second alternative was to only acquire the Adler's land to rezone the entire parcel for 'institutional' use without the 'R-4' designation. In rezoning the entire parcel as 'institutional,' the city could still label the Adler's land in a flexible manner. That is, if the city could not find an appropriate 'institutional' use for the land, it could still be rezoned without having to consider the relocation of another business. In fact, the PRA proposed that instead of leaving the land to the city, the land would be acquired by the city and subsequently resold to Holy Rosary for expansion. However, to do so, the PRA required the Church to formulate plans for the parcel that aligned with the objectives of the East Side Renewal Project, and a firm commitment from the Church itself to expand its facilities. Throughout late 1965 and into 1966 the Adlers worked tirelessly with Holy Rosary to formulate expansion plans that were in accordance with the East Side Renewal Project and the methods for its funding. Holy Rosary expressed its interest in using the Adler's land "for a parochial school, a new rectory or a new convent."[124] Holy Rosary and the Building

[124] "From Mr. Jacques V. Hopkins to Mayor Joseph A. Doorley, Jr.," October 14, 1966, Doorley, Box 9, Urban Renewal, East Side Renewal Project, Providence College Archives and Special Collections.

Commission of the Diocese of Providence suffered no shortage of ideas for expansion. The chief impediment for the Church was raising enough money to fund the proposals. Moreover, the idea of a parochial school caused hesitation within the PRA. For the PRA, it appeared "that the building of a school building would have to await a substantial increase in the overall parochial school population in the Fox Point area."[125] Despite numerous proposals and months of working with Holy Rosary, by June of 1966 the Church expressed that it could not formulate any 'firm' commitments to expansion as it became painfully evident that "many years of planning, of fund-raising and, conceivably, an increase in the size of the parish will be required before these building ambitions will be realized. In the meantime, the Adlers' building will have been demolished and the site cleared for use as a parking lot, if indeed it is used at all."[126] Put another way, it was not so much the plans that Holy Rosary formulated, but the lack of a firm commitment to those proposals that caused alarm within the PRA. However, in a stunning turn of events, on October 19th, when the acquisition and demolition of the Adler's land seemed inevitable, Mayor Doorley wrote to Hopkins that he "had been advised by the Chairman of the Committee on Urban Renewal and by certain staff personnel

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that we do, in fact, have an assurance that the property will be developed and that it is no longer an indefinite proposal."[17]

Ultimately, Adler's Fox Point Hardware was never taken by the city. In fact, Holy Rosary was able to expand its facilities without the removing Adler's itself. What frustrated the Adlers was not only the fact that the city the parcel of land they sat on, their land was the only specific parcel proposed for acquisition, but that it appeared to the Adlers that their

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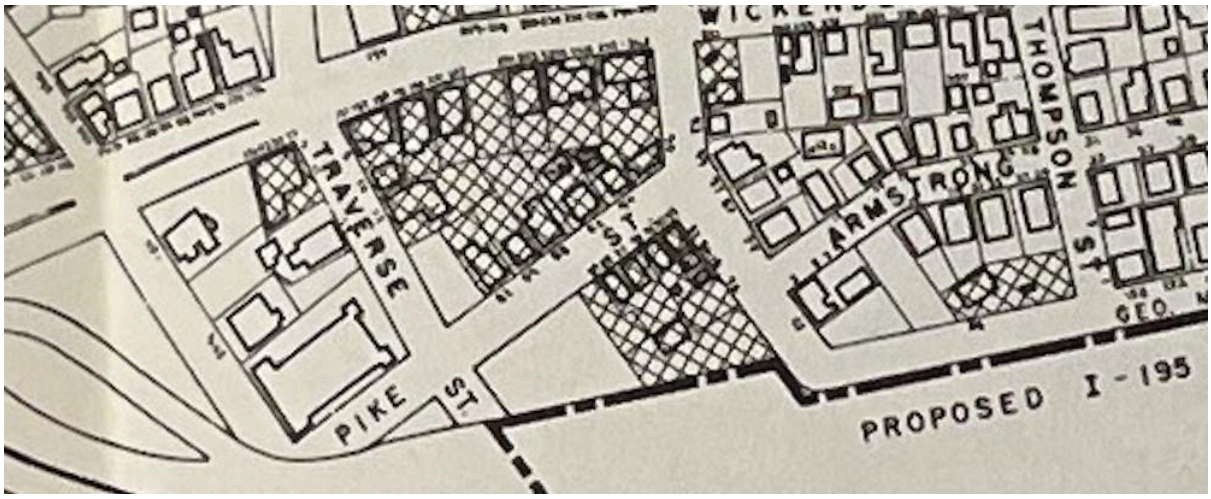
[125] "From Mr. Jacques V. Hopkins to Mayor Joseph A. Doorley, Jr."

[126] "From Mr. Jacques V. Hopkins to Mayor Joseph A. Doorley, Jr."

business was disposable within the Fox Point community. Despite this, simply rezoning the area for 'institutional' use provided no guarantee that the city would in fact resell the land to the Church which explains why the Adlers fought so hard to ensure the Church was fully committed to the endeavor. Furthermore, because Providence experienced a chronic shortage of space, the idea of lingering indefinite proposals for developing the Adler's land was a situation the PRA sought to avoid. For the Adlers, this was forced removal.



[18] 1965 proposal. Areas shaded with the crisscross pattern were scheduled for acquisition by the City of Providence. The Adler's shop is on the parcel of land in the top right corner of the land that is surrounded by Wickenden Street to the north, Traverse Street to the east, Pike Street to the south, and Benefit Street to the west. Notice that it is the only plot of land scheduled for acquisition on the entire parcel.

[17] "From Mr. Jacques V. Hopkins to Mayor Joseph A. Doorley, Jr."

[18] Redevelopment Agency, Providence, "East Side Renewal Project."

The Adlers integrated their keen understanding of Fox Point as a community and the flow of its economy into their plan for the parcel of land. In keeping with Wickenden Street's commercial identity and that of Fox Point, Hopkins argued that "any renewal plan must provide for the continued operation of commercial establishments, such as their own, which

help make up the life of a city neighborhood."[127] To ensure the continued commercial development, the Adlers proposed to remove the 'institutional' designation and to "continue the present commercial zoning on the south side of Wickenden Street."[128] The Adlers were not the only people or group that found the 'institutional' designation inappropriate for the parcel of land. Not only had this section of Wickenden Street been a historically commercial and residential area, but the ideal location on Wickenden Street itself was a major engine driving a booming economy. The Adler's were not only willing to work with the Church, the PRA, and Mayor Doorley since their Westminster branch had been taken for highway construction, they were asking the city what they city had asked of thousands of Rhode Islanders: to remain patient. When the Church's plans remained tentative, the Adlers asked that the city allow them "to stay on Wickenden Street at least until the church is ready to build."[129] The Adler's situation in Fox Point was in many was the exception, not the rule. For many local business owners, the prospect of hiring a lawyer and contacting government agencies was outside their capabilities. The Adlers were not out for themselves, as displayed by the fact that they were willing to work within the restrictive parameters of the East Side Renewal Project and the funding hurdles the Church had to navigate. They understood the value their store held within the Fox Point community and the necessity of offering goods that were affordable while also cultivating a generational business that remains in Fox Point to this day. Lastly, the Adler's

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experiences with the city highlight the ever widening disconnect between city officials and the people they represented.

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[127] 'From Mr. Jacques V. Hopkins to Mayor Joseph A. Doorley, Jr.," October 14, 1966.

[128] "From Mr. Jacques V. Hopkins to Mayor Joseph A. Doorley, Jr.," October 14, 1966.

[129] "From Mr. Jacques V. Hopkins to Mayor Joseph A. Doorley, Jr."

Conclusion: Development or Dislocation?

The implementation of I-195 into Fox Point's urban fabric ultimately has a mixed legacy. On the one hand, Fox Point's character as an ethnic-commercial enclave functioning within a

transit-oriented landscape and held together by Catholic social values was essentially eradicated and the area gentrified. The highway system took labor out of and away from the places that Fox Pointers went to school, played in parks, and prayed in church. Further, the area's identity as a place where multiple modes of transportation and commerce could thrive was replaced with an upper middle-income populace that could afford to rehabilitate architecturally significant housing. By making historically and architecturally significant housing a beautification priority, preservation efforts often priced Fox Pointers out of their homes, forcing thousands to relocate. Adding to this was the fact that highway and industrial construction took up massive plots of land, further exacerbating an already potent housing crisis. By taking up these large plots of land and directing major highway routes into the downtown area, the city made it necessary for travelers to go through the downtown area to get to their final destination. The consequences of industrial and transportation infrastructure placement continue to impact the people of Providence. With industrial strip malls taking up most of the urban space, drivers by necessity must go around, rather than through these large plots of land, concentrating traffic onto the city's widest roads and major interstates. Providence struggled to solve its traffic problem and thus could not create the congestion-free city that it envisioned.

Infrastructure is more than just how we construct things and where we place them. Infrastructure, especially industrial and transportation infrastructure, can have detrimental implications for the social values that hold us together. Fox Pointers endured the brunt of the breakdown of social values. As a predominately immigrant community, Fox Pointers relied on themselves to survive and embraced a commercial subsidiary economy that placed an emphasis on optimizing wealth rather than maximizing it. With language barriers between the Irish and the Portuguese, the Catholic social teachings brought these two groups together when the city sought to wedge divisions between them. By replacing this subsidiary economy

with corporations and modernized small-businesses, Fox Pointers lost the trust they had cultivated for decades. Shopping was no longer the daily social activity that it once was for many Irish and Portuguese Fox Pointers. The placement of I-195 not only cut India Point off from the rest of the city, but it sent a clear message to Fox Pointers: the neighborhood was going to be a through-area, rather than a place where people stopped to explore and shop. Fox Pointers also had to deal with the aggressive land purchasing practices of Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design. Both schools were not necessarily required by the city to provide widespread parking for their staff and faculty. As a result, the Fox Point neighborhood essentially became parking lots for these two schools. As the oldest section of the city, Fox Point was neither ready for, nor designed for, the automobile-oriented urban landscape the city enforced on it. Many areas of Fox Point are inadequately designed as a result, making traffic a chronic problem for the area. Take the placement of the Trader Joes on 435 South Main Street, for instance. Drivers must stay below five miles per hour when navigating the parking lot, which, in New England, is a difficult task to achieve. The lot also struggles mightily to accommodate grocery shoppers walking to their cars and those shoppers already in their automobiles. With pillars all around the interior of the lot, looking left and right for cars and pedestrian traffic can be a nightmare, and a cause for anxiety. On the other hand, the city of Providence was able to make the city into a visually appealing place by cutting out more space for recreation and aesthetically pleasing waterfront views such as the India Point Park. The city was also able to foster a greater sense of civic participation in urban planning in the yeas after 1965 that it did not have in the previous decades. The rise of a woman like Antoinette Downing in a profession and era that was dominated by men must also be considered in light of preservation efforts. Downing's work has sparked serious controversy among the local universities, but it was her work that saved most of College Hill

from becoming the site of endless college dormitories, double-decker parking lots, and strip malls.

While transportation and its infrastructure are not necessarily appealing fields of study, they are vitally important. So much so, that our current president Joseph R. Biden ran his presidential campaign in 2020 on rebuilding our country's crumbling infrastructure. The need for sound infrastructure will never go away. Furthermore, the United States is at a major crossroads right now. Many cities and urban planners are trying to revitalize the transitoriented-development scheme that places like Fox Point had in the World War II-era. Cities like Rio de Janeiro and Barcelona have already destroyed massive stretches of highway to rebuild this transit-oriented scheme. However, TODs come with a lot of baggage. They require a lot of space and they in many ways require people to use their automobiles less. For many, this is no problem, but for others, the automobile is a symbol of personal autonomy, and so cities like Barcelona and Rio are struggling to get people to abandon their cars. Furthermore, because TODs require considerable space, they often times come at the cost of urban populations. Considering this in conjunction with Providence, many cities have not yet found the healthy balance between automobility and public transportation. As Americans, this, in essence, is our task in the coming decades: finding ways to integrate automobility with trains, buses, bikes, trolleys, and walking. This will be no easy task, but, if this story says anything about the kinds of people that call America home, it says that Americans are up for the task if we are willing to answer the call.

City governments exert a considerable influence over the spaces that we value and the spaces that we share with one another. As this story has suggested, this can be beneficial, but it can also be a nightmare. We must understand that not all urban neighborhoods function the same. This simple truth, while obvious, was clearly overlooked by Providence city officials throughout the twentieth century. These same mistakes are still being made in American cities

today. TODs and highways are not silver bullets that can solve our traffic problems, but they are valuable starting points for those looking to improve urban circulation. Much work is still left to be done in American cities, but there is hope. The automobile is still a relatively new phenomenon, and we are still dealing with its consequences. In America, we have been able to construct incredible modes of public and private transportation. Yet, we have not found that balance between public and private transportation, highways and trains, walking and biking. We have all the pieces of the puzzle on the table, our job as Americans is to come to that table and try to paint a new picture of our urban landscapes.

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