Urban Narrative and Reinvention in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer: Creating an Effective Gateway to a Vital New Bedford

by

Noah B. Koretz

Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in City Planning at the

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ABSTRACT

New Bedford, Massachusetts famously experienced two major waves of prosperity, as the worldwide capital of the whaling industry in the early 19th century, and then as a major textile production center decades later. It continues to be one of the most important fishing ports in North America, but the fishing industry has not been enough to support the city’s economy, and its fortunes have deteriorated in the post-industrial era. This thesis examines the role that the redevelopment of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, one of the city’s post-industrial neighborhoods, plays in the city’s revitalization efforts.

New Bedford is fairly close to the economic hub of Boston/Cambridge, but it is not currently connected to these cities by passenger rail. The South Coast Rail project, long planned but faced with perennially elusive funding, will connect New Bedford to Boston via a new multi-modal transit hub on the edge of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. Now one of the most underdeveloped regions of New Bedford, Hicks-Logan-Sawyer has large expanses of developable land, beautiful mill buildings, and a waterfront location. Most importantly, with the construction of the rail, Hicks-Logan-Sawyer will function as the gateway to the city for tourists, residents, and participants in New Bedford’s existing and emerging industries. There is currently no clear vision of how to generate interest in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer in the near future, and this thesis asks what Hicks-Logan-Sawyer needs become a successful gateway to a revived city. On a conceptual level, this thesis explores Hicks-Logan-Sawyer’s role in New Bedford’s image and how that affects its status as a gateway. On a more granular level, it suggests interventions that allow Hicks-Logan-Sawyer to effectively function as a physical and conceptual gateway to the rest of the city, and how New Bedford can use the neighborhood as a catalyst to actively promote a new chapter of the city’s storied narrative. It explicitly addresses the ways in which a new gateway to the city at Hicks-Logan-Sawyer finds its place in support of broader forces of revival occurring city-wide, including new creative and industrial uses and a well-preserved downtown beginning to show signs of life after many years of decline.

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I would like to dedicate this thesis to the people of New Bedford in the spirit of excitement about good things to come.
The railroad approaching what will be Whale's Tooth Station with Wamsutta Mills on the left; photo by author
1 INTRODUCTION

As the United States becomes increasingly urbanized and interconnected due to advances in transportation, telecommunications, and computing, small post-industrial cities are being left behind major knowledge-based economic centers. When looking at cities that are currently successful, however, we often talk about corridors or regions where economic growth and prosperity are taking place, rather than specific locations in a vacuum. Urban economic theorist Richard Florida writes about the increasing importance of the mega-region in determining place-based prosperity. In his words:

“The future of urban development belongs to a larger kind of geographic unit that has emerged over the past several decades: the megaregion. People around the globe are crowding into the world’s most promising megaregions—the concentrations of population that encompass several cities and their surrounding suburban rings—that have grown swiftly in recent years.” (2011, 142)

The largest such megaregion in the United States is what Florida refers to as “Bos-Wash,” more commonly known, at least in Amtrak parlance, as the Northeast Corridor: the large urban area running up the eastern seaboard from Washington, DC and its suburbs to Boston and its suburbs. Florida notes that this area has a yearly economic output of $2 trillion, greater than Great Britain or France, and is home to some 50 million residents (Id.). Noted urban planners Peter Calthorpe and William Fulton write that the single most important component of economic success is access to networks of all kinds. Consistent with Florida's notion of a megaregion, networks must operate in what Calthorpe calls a “network metropolis”: a region where networks can be active without too much travel or long distance communication. (2001, 19).

While the Northeast Corridor megaregion (or network metropolis) encompasses the massive economic engines of the Washington, New York, and Boston metropolitan areas, even the most casual observer of a map will notice many other cities sprinkled between and around these big three. Many of these older, interstitial cities are past their economic prime—vestiges of transportation and industrial needs that no longer exist. While some of the largest of these cities, such as Philadelphia, Baltimore, have their own metropolitan areas, many of the smaller post-industrial cities on the Northeast Corridor are within the larger, healthier metropolitan regions of Boston and New York.

The phenomenon of small post-industrial cities remaining developmentally stagnant despite their proximity to major economic powerhouses within a megaregion is particularly pronounced in Massachusetts, where suburban bedroom communities surrounding Boston and Cambridge are interspersed with small post-industrial cities past their economic prime. MassINC, an independent
think tank for public policy, has identified many of these cities as “Gateway Cities”: midsize urban centers that anchor regional economies that used to be heavy in manufacturing and have since been harmed by broader shifts to a knowledge-based economy. Of the eleven original Gateway Cities, as defined by MassINC and the Brookings Institute, all but three are located in eastern Massachusetts, relatively close to Boston. (Muro et al. 2007).

The significance of proximity of these Gateway Cities to Boston can be seen in the housing prices in Boston, Cambridge, and their close-in suburbs. Boston and Cambridge drive the Massachusetts knowledge economy, but they are also heavily constrained in terms of real estate development, due to both geography and a restrictive regulatory environment. This is evident in the housing market. As Richard Florida writes, “Extreme real estate prices also hinder the ability of places to attract and amass new talent. Thirty years ago, a young researcher at MIT... could find affordable housing near campus. Today, it is hard to imagine how a young scientist could afford to buy housing within a ten-mile radius of any of those schools. I know professors—mid-career people in their forties with families—who cannot buy in. They’re forced to move from apartment to apartment as their rentals turn into condos.” (2008, 141). Indeed, in a study of housing prices from 1950-2000, real estate experts Joseph Gyourko, Todd Sinai, and Chris Mayer, found that Boston ranked seventh in the United States in terms of annualized price growth among metropolitan areas where scarce land has led to “a bidding-up of land prices and a sorting of high-income families relatively more into those desirable, unique, low housing construction markets.” (Gyourko, et al. 2006, Table 1). Further, the Economic Policy Institute issued an economic report card finding that Boston ranked first in the nation as of 2005 in terms of annual family budget required to meet basic needs. A large part of this was due to the required housing budget, which was larger than anywhere but San Francisco. Most importantly, the needed annual family budget of $64,656 was “$20,000 higher than in metro areas that compete with Greater Boston for industry and jobs,” such as Austin, Chicago, and Charlotte. (Id., 17)

This last point is critical. Commentators from Jane Jacobs to Richard Florida have noted the need for cheap real estate, both for housing and businesses, to sustain innovation, start-ups, and the creative economy. In the face of constricted supply and inflated demand for real estate in the central, healthy cities within the mega-region, Gateway Cities should be in a particularly good position to offer the advantages of an urban environment without the hefty price tag. While the Gateway Cities continue to suffer from disinvestment, several have managed to capitalize on their location to promote redevelopment in their urban core, particularly close to commuter rail and highway connections to other parts of the region with thriving economies. Indeed, major real estate developers such as Trinity Financial and Forest City have met with great success re-imagining historic urban neighborhoods in Gateway Cities close to these transportation connections. Six of the original Gateway Cities, as defined by MassINC, are within the MBTA Commuter Rail network which services the Boston metropolitan area. Two more, New Bedford and Fall River, are also in
eastern Massachusetts, but not currently connected to Boston by passenger rail.

This discussion is particularly timely for New Bedford. The city was once the worldwide capital of the whaling industry and then one of the country's most successful textile cities. Despite its storied history, New Bedford has languished throughout the 20th century as its economy relied on the shrinking fishing industry. New Bedford offers a unique and attractive urban environment: an historic and walkable downtown, a vibrant culture and growing arts scene, rents far below the Massachusetts average, a harborfront location with a hurricane barrier, and an abundance of underutilized and vacant space in former textile buildings. However, together with its neighbor, Fall River, New Bedford has languished in part due to lack of connectivity to the Boston metropolitan area to its north. This is unfortunate considering how close the city is to Boston, as traffic currently makes the journey unpredictable. (See Figure 1). When interviewed, Derek Santos at the New Bedford Economic Development Council, said that the majority of New Bedford residents want the South Coast Rail to become a reality. Governor Deval Patrick has pledged $1.8 billion to complete the project as part of his most recent transportation plan, but the legislature did not fully fund the plan. When exactly the rail project will be funded remains a question, but this makes it all the more important to plan in advance, to fully capture the value of this infrastructure when it does arrive.

When the South Coast Rail does come to New Bedford, two stations are planned in the city. The first, King's Highway, would involve the redevelopment of a low-density strip mall, and is primarily surrounded by low-density, single-family neighborhoods. Plans call for new TOD-style development surrounding that station, but many believe this is many years off and somewhat aspirational given the current state of demand in the city. On the other hand, the second station, Whale's Tooth, has the opportunity to be truly transformative for New Bedford. It will be located within walking distance to the historic downtown to the south, and adjacent to the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer neighborhood, sandwiched between Route 18 and the harbor (see Figure 2). At the northern terminus of the city's Designated Port Area ("DPA"), Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is comprised mostly of underutilized mill buildings with tested redevelopment potential, as well as vacant harborfront land suitable for flexible uses and open land available for new buildings. The City has recognized that the location of a multimodal transportation center at Whale’s Tooth Station within a few blocks of the Route 18/I-195 juncture would give New Bedford the opportunity to truly create a new gateway to the city, capitalizing on its unique architecture, existing infrastructure, connection to Boston, and cheap, flexible space. Hicks-Logan-Sawyer has been isolated from the neighborhoods around it for decades by urban renewal-era elevated highways, and until months ago, much of its land was tied-up in casino options that prevented the type of redevelopment that occurred in New Bedford’s nearby downtown and in other mill areas to its in north. In this way, the neighborhood is in a unique position to serve as a laboratory for industrial redevelopment in conjunction with the planned multimodal station.
Research Questions

This thesis looks at Hicks-Logan-Sawyer to examine how this central, soon-to-be connected post-industrial neighborhood might be imagined so that New Bedford can better capitalize on its location within more successful Boston region.
Specifically, it asks what New Bedford will need in order to assure that Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is positioned to be a vibrant gateway city. With this main question comes more specific questions that must be answered. How can New Bedford best capitalize on existing assets in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, such as its mill-era infrastructure, its waterfront location, its historical architecture, and its cheap flexible space? Precisely what type of interventions are needed, and what can the city do to promote those interventions to those in Eastern Massachusetts who might be looking for an affordable, distinctive urban environment to locate a residence or business?

This thesis picks up where previous planning efforts have left off, addressing issues of urban design, streetscape, connectivity, the democratization of public space, and the role of urban narrative in successful placemaking. In an era of astronomical real estate prices in Boston and Cambridge, particularly with respect to space that is flexible enough for residential, innovation, and creative economy uses, I will examine what interventions are necessary in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer in order to position New Bedford to capture some of that demand in advance of the South Coast Rail's arrival. It is my hypothesis that through targeted interventions in these areas, the city can prime Hicks-Logan-Sawyer for private investment around the installment of the Whale's Tooth Station, and better utilize its post-industrial assets and vast space to compliment the surrounding residential neighborhoods, the working waterfront, and the heart of downtown New Bedford to the south. I will establish what this means in terms of the broader narrative of the city and determine how Hicks-Logan-Sawyer can be the focal point for a cohesive image of the city. I will discuss how Hicks-Logan-Sawyer can serve as a gateway, not just physically, but also, figuratively, to the city's historical assets and future potential.

This thesis begins by examining relevant aspects of New Bedford history that led to the current conditions in the city, as well as previous planning efforts to shape the city's future. It then focuses specifically on Hicks-Logan-Sawyer: its industrial rise and decline and its position as a potential harbinger for a new wave of success for New Bedford. It analyzes previously planning efforts in the neighborhood and then looks into planning and urban design theories that might offer a better approach for creating change in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. Drawing from these theories, the thesis looks at the city's narrative and vision as exhibited in its economic development initiatives and demonstrates how that can be expanded and enhanced by a new gateway neighborhood. The thesis proposes specific interventions that set the stage for Hicks-Logan-Sawyer to be the gateway to a revived city. It then recommends ways in which the City can promote positive change and imagery in New Bedford, both through affirmative marketing and architectural interventions. Finally, it will conclude with some immediately implementable suggestions to better make use of existing human capital in New Bedford to quickly generate interest in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer and activate space within the neighborhood.
Figure 2: New Bedford Map highlighting neighborhoods, points of interest, and the distance/walk time radius from the Whale's Tooth Station site; Base image courtesy of Google Earth.
New Bedford is situated on the Southeastern Coast of Massachusetts along a harbor on Buzzard’s Bay, about 50 miles from Boston and 28 miles from Providence. New Bedford today has the feeling of being one of New England’s forgotten places: the economy is stagnant, the city is shrinking, and social problems abound. This sense of being left behind, almost explicitly acknowledged by Governor Patrick in his insistence on prioritizing the South Coast Rail to connect it to Boston, is amplified by contrast to the city’s history. Architectural remnants lay testament to the bygone era of New Bedford’s place in the engine room of the American whaling and textile industries. From the historic downtown to the docks, to the multitudes of giant mill buildings and the streets of three-deckers built to house immigrants and workers, New Bedford is defined by its architecture and its tight urban fabric, and it is primarily its physical form that reminds us today of why the city once was, and can be again, a place of opportunity.

**Whaling Era**

From 1815 to 1855 New Bedford was the richest place in the world in terms of per capita income (Nugent 2009, 144) (Gittell 1992, 94). If that fact seems startling, a glimpse into the development of the city will make it less so. New Bedford became the world capital of the whaling trade between 1812 and 1830. By 1857 the city had a fleet of 329 whaling ships, employing over 10,000 people. (Clayton and Whitley 1979, 21) (see Figure 1). While the New Bedford whaling industry waned in the late 1880’s, its legacy left the city with an unusually diverse population. The enormous geographical range of whaling voyages ensured that many foreigners, especially non-Europeans would end up in New Bedford’s port, which was the fourth largest in the country in terms of volume during the whaling era. (Heath 2001, 25). Famously, Ishmael, in Herman Melville’s classic *Moby Dick*, arriving in New Bedford from Manhattan, was surprised not just by his roommate Queequeg, but by the diversity of men from foreign lands throughout the city:

In thoroughfares nigh the docks, any considerable seaport will frequently offer to view the queerest looking nondescripts from foreign parts... But New Bedford beats all Water Street and Wapping. In these last-mentioned haunts you see only sailors; but in New Bedford, actual cannibals stand chatting at street corners; savages outright; many of whom yet carry on their bones unholy flesh. It makes a stranger stare. (2008, 70).

During the whaling days, New Bedford saw an influx of African-Americans arriving from the south, as well as permanent West Indian, Cape Verdean, Azorean, Madeiran, and European immigrants (Clayton and Whitley 1979, 31). Slavery was eradicated in the city by 1785. Bolstered by the needs of the whaling industry, the city became a haven for free African Americans and fugitive slaves. Indeed, Frederick Douglas himself found work on the New Bedford waterfront as an escaped slave.
(Id. 31-32). While the whaling industry declined, fishing remained a mainstay of the culture, identity, and economy of the city. Immigrants from the Portuguese islands are a central part of this narrative. As New Bedford native Kingston Heath writes:

Growing up in New Bedford always seemed at once a world apart and world within. The world within was composed of my Portuguese American identity that played out along the wharves lined with fishing boats, where immigrants from the Azores, Madeira, and Cape Verde Islands drew upon their experience with the sea and carried on their traditional ways in their adopted home. (2001, 6).

New Bedford's connection to the Azores is particularly strong. Because of its unique geographical position as an archipelago in the middle of the Atlantic ocean, the Azores became a regular resupplying port for whaling boats bound from New Bedford and Nantucket. By the 1820's many of the crew members on the whaling ships hailed from these islands. By the late 1880's packet ships made quarterly trips to the Azores. After the decline of the whaling industry Azorean immigrants remained in New Bedford to work in the fishing industry and eventually in the textile mills. (Id., 165-166). Waves of Azoreans and other Portuguese immigrants continued to arrive in New Bedford into the 20th Century. By 1980, over sixty percent of the city's residents indicated Portuguese descent on the Census. (Gittell 1992, 94).

The fortune and excess of the whaling era left an indelible mark on the urban landscape of the city. As Melville writes in *Moby Dick*:

The town itself is perhaps the dearest place to live in all of New England. It is a land of oil true enough: but not like Canaan; a land, also, of corn and wine. The streets do not run with milk; nor in the springtime do they pave them with fresh eggs. Yet, in spite of this, nowhere in all America will you find more patrician-like houses; parks and gardens more opulent, than in New Bedford. (2008, 71-72).

The historic downtown of the city stretches approximately from Elm Street in the north to Walnut Street in the south, bounded by the working waterfront to the east and County Street to the west. This was the center of the business district: housing banking, trade, and other businesses that supported the whaling industry. Today, much of it is preserved as a National Park (see Figures 2-3). The residential wealth was exhibited along County Street and its environs, as the titans of whaling set up large homes in a new neighborhood (Heath 2001, 25-28). These sections of the city are architecturally reminiscent of other wealthy New England ports of the era, such as Edgartown and Nantucket Village. The downtown area has narrow, charming cobbled streets and the patrician estates along County Street are mostly built in the neoclassical and Greek Revival Style. (Id., 27-30). While, as we will examine, much of this architecture and urban fabric is well-preserved, it is the
combination of this era of architecture and that of the textile era that makes New Bedford unique. New Bedford has both the classic New England charm of Nantucket and the gritty industrial feel of a mill town.

Figure 1: Image of New Bedford harbor and skyline during the whaling era; Old Dartmouth Historical Society (1975): painting by Albert Van Beest, owned by the MFA, Boston

Figure 2: Map of Downtown New Bedford

Figure 3: The historic whaling-era downtown; photo by author
Industrial Era

New Bedford's first textile mill, Wamsutta Mills, opened in 1847 in the heart of what is now the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer neighborhood, located purposefully close to the harbor. (see Figures 4 and 5). By the 1880's, with whalers needing to travel further and on longer journeys, the whaling industry had declined in profitability, and whaling those with whaling fortunes began to invest them heavily in textiles. (New Bedford Economic Development Council 2008, 10). New Bedford families with money to invest found that the city's location and climate offers significant advantage for textile production. New Bedford has high humidity for the region, which presents operational advantages for allaying friction caused by cotton manufacturing, and its ocean-front location produces milder winters and cooler summers than many neighboring New England cities (McMullin 1976, 20).

The excesses and superlatives of New Bedford's status in the whaling industry were replicated in textiles and related manufacturing. Between 1880 and 1910, the textile industry, and correspondingly, the population, grew immensely in New Bedford. During this period, New Bedford ranked among the top twenty-five manufacturing cities in the nation, and third in the nation, behind Fall River and Lowell, in number of cotton spindles in operation. The population grew from 26,845 to 96,652, largely a result of European and Quebecois immigrants arriving to work in the mills (Heath 2001, 44-45). By 1920, New Bedford had a higher percentage of its workforce in cotton textile manufacturing than any other city in the country, with over 100,000 people working the looms. (McMullin 22).

Geographically, the city expanded north and south, with the North End and South End neighborhoods absorbing the majority of both factory construction and new housing for immigrant workers. Dense, tight urban fabric resulting from the coexistence of mill buildings and housing in these bookends of the city became a critical feature of the city, both physically and socially. Physically, what began as brick and wooden tenements and workers cottages in neighborhoods alongside the mills, and was eventually developed into entire neighborhoods of triple-deckers as company-built housing gave way to buildings built as income-producing housing built by private landlords.¹ The mill buildings sat within walking distance of the tenements, mostly at the water's edge on the harbor and the Acushnet River. By 1920 there were seventy textile mill buildings in operation. Today there are over one hundred mill buildings still standing, mostly still clustered along the waterways. (New Bedford Economic Development Council 2008, 10-11).

Socially, while the North and South Ends became "labels for the working-class industrial neighborhoods located at the distant reaches of the city" (Heath 47), the wealth in the city was concentrated downtown and on County Road. During New Bedford's industrial period, white-collar

¹ For a fascinating and detailed account of the architectural history of workers' housing and triple-deckers in New Bedford, see Kingston Heath's The Patina of Place.
Figure 4: Early rendering of the first Wamsutta Mills Building; Source: Heath (2001), courtesy of The Standard Times/Spinner Publications

Figure 5: Photograph showing the Wamsutta Mills and Hicks-Logan-Sawyer across the railroad tracks where the Whale's Tooth Station will be built; you can see worker housing in Acushnet Heights to the left; Source: Heath (2001), photo by Joseph G. Tirrell, courtesy of Spinner Publications
professions were associated with native-born residents who largely lived and worked downtown, while immigrant blue-collar workers primarily lived to the north and south. Because the urban infrastructure downtown had been built for whaling and was not of sufficient scale to convert to textile production, the mill buildings, and therefore the workers, resided outside the central downtown area. This pattern remained into the 20th century, with the North and South Ends being primarily associated with immigrants and working-class populations and white-collar industries occupying the historic downtown. (McMullin 1976, 52-53). In present day New Bedford, this physical and social stratification has manifested itself in troubling ways, as historic preservation and efforts to image the city have focused overwhelmingly on whaling-era New Bedford and its historic downtown to the exclusion of the city's other, and equally important, golden age of growth and prosperity. Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, home of the Wamsutta Mills, is at the epicenter of the industrial North End, and is a crucial connector between the area north of downtown and downtown New Bedford, both literally and in terms of the broader narrative of the city.

Post-Industrial Decline, Urban Renewal, And Downtown Preservation

As with whaling, the textile era was also destined to come to an end; an urban economy is not likely to survive over the long term producing only one thing. While managing to hold off competition from southern textile plants for decades by focusing on fine and luxurious textiles, the New Bedford textile industry was decimated in the late 1920's and 1930's by a combination of southern competition, the Great Depression, and a high-profile workers' strike. A full 60% reduction in the textile work force occurred during this period. (Gittell 1992, 96). While a small number of textile manufacturers still exist in the city (notably, Joseph Abboud still runs a factory close to Hicks-Logan-Sawyer), many of the old mill buildings now sit vacant or are in nominal use. Writes Kingston Heath about the impact of industrial decline on the city:

Similarly, the symbiotic link between mill and mill housing was broken with the closing of the mills. As a result, the north and south ends of the city, which once had been stable immigrant industrial neighborhoods, lost the economic support vital to their social operation. As inhabitants of a newly depressed factory town, New Bedford's citizens developed a different self-image... The generations of New Bedford youths that followed the Depression years never experienced the gritty vibrancy of seventy textile mills signaling their productive potency in clouds of smoke from coal-fed engine houses. Instead, they inherited the despair of decline and the physical remnants of an industrial landscape undergoing wrenching change. These generations were part of New Bedford's history, but not part of its triumph. (2001, 4-5).

New Bedford's current suitability for rebirth is bolstered by the fact that urban renewal policies did not destroy the dense whaling and industrial-age urban development of the roughly one hundred
years proceeding it. Unlike in Boston, where urban renewal policies resulted in “slum clearance” that raised entire neighborhoods, the urban fabric in New Bedford was largely spared from the bulldozer during this era. Urban renewal came to the city late and resulted in selective clearance and rehabilitation, not full-scale destruction of entire swaths of the city in favor of heavy-handed modernism. (McCabe and Thomas 1995, 29) The major development projects in New Bedford stemming from the urban renewal were the South and North Terminal Renewal areas as well as the United Front Homes housing project in the West End. (Bullard 1974, 30-32). Importantly, city leaders were skeptical of urban renewal from the outset, and those projects that did occur focused on commercial and industrial reuse of residential areas instead of the traditional urban renewal focus on Modernist residential development. (Hollander 2012, 6-7).

In fact, federal urban renewal funding was actually used for historic preservation of downtown New Bedford. (Hollander 2009, 151). A local group, the Waterfront Historic Area League (WHALE), was instrumental in saving the downtown during this era. WHALE helped create a Section 40C Historic District downtown, which prevented developers, including the New Bedford Redevelopment Authority, from changing the exterior of buildings without getting permission from the Historic District Commission. WHALE purchased buildings in the Historic District near the New Bedford Whaling Museum and became the largest landowner in the area. (Bullard 1974, 53). John Bullard, a 1974 MCP graduate from MIT, wrote his thesis on “Collective Private Urban Renewal in New Bedford’s Historic District.” In his thesis, Bullard suggests that formerly competing local groups invested in preservation in the downtown present a coordinated effort for preservation and improvement of the downtown. After graduation, the groups hired him to lead this effort. (McCabe and Thomas 1995, 62). Eventually, in 1996, the Waterfront Historic District became the New Bedford Whaling National Historic Park, covering 34 acres of downtown New Bedford: the culmination of Bullard’s vision. (Hollander 2012, 12). Important and unique, and consistent with Bullard’s view, the National Historic Park is mostly comprised of non-Park Service land. The streetscape within the park’s boundaries is jointly maintained by the Park Service, the city, and private landowners. Bullard was insistent that New Bedford’s downtown not become merely a historic relic for tourists (in the mold of Old Sturbridge Village), but include active businesses and residences within the historical fabric. Indeed, in his thesis, Bullard writes:

There are four ways to increase income potential in the district. The vacant space could be rented out as offices and residences; vacant land could be built upon; sales could be increased and existing rents could be increased. Needless to say there must be a reason for this. What are the advantages of locating in the district? Proximity to transportation (road, rail or water), to the fishing fleet and downtown, to the source of tourism all combine as advantages for certain businesses…The unusualness of the area make it the place to live and assert one’s independence from urban sprawl and cardboard houses. ‘they don’t build things today the way they used to.’ If the roads are built, if the fishing fleet survives, if the
buildings and services are improved, if tourism is developed, the historic district would be very valuable to some people." (1974, 60).

Bullard's ideas were prescient for the time, and, as this thesis will explore, his fundamental understanding of the income potential of the historic downtown is similarly relevant today to the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer district and the Whale's Tooth Station.

Historic preservation efforts in New Bedford have largely focused on whaling-era buildings and infrastructure, and have mostly ignored the working-class industrial historical areas in the North End and South End. Almost all of the dedicated historic district space in New Bedford encapsulates neighborhoods that are associated with this earlier history, with the exception of small project-oriented districts for the Wamsutta Mills and Whitman Mills sites, as well as part of the historically working-class Acushnet Heights neighborhood (see Figure 6).
Urban renewal policies with respect to roads are also a critical component of the current condition of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer and the rest of the New Bedford. WHALE convinced the New Bedford Redevelopment Authority to run the “downtown connector,” the stretch of highway that is now Route 18, along North Front Street, not along North Second Street, which would have cut through the heart of the historic downtown. (McCabe and Thomas 1995, 44). If slum clearance was one regretful product of the urban renewal era, urban highways were a second, and while WHALE’s efforts to save the downtown were crucial to New Bedford’s long-term viability, the resulting placement of Route 18 is problematic. In its current configuration, Route 18 is a six-lane limited access highway that runs north along the eastern edge of the city, separating the downtown from the waterfront. More troublesome, as it heads north to connect with I-195, it becomes elevated and serves as a barrier between Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, immediately to the north of downtown, and the Acushnet Heights neighborhood directly adjacent on west. Hollander writes that the Route 18 project is “renowned for how it effectively split the city in two, particularly separating the downtown from the waterfront.” (Hollander 2012, 9). See Figure 9 on Page for a visual representation of these barriers.

WHALE has recently worked to make the pedestrian connection across Route 18 more viable downtown, and various planning efforts have discussed the “boulevardization” of Route 18 in places or continuously all the way north to Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, but grade changes and existing infrastructure make that difficult. Lack of connectivity to the rest of the city is one of the main reasons why Hicks-Logan-Sawyer continues to languish undeveloped.

**Current Economic Conditions of New Bedford**

While New Bedford has unique cultural, infrastructural, and historical assets, it is currently confronting economic and social problems that are similar to other Gateway Cities in Massachusetts, as well as other post-industrial cities across the United States and Europe.

Although New Bedford’s population has been shrinking since the beginning of the Great Depression, it is still the fourth largest city in Massachusetts. New Bedford remains a predominately blue-collar town that has not overcome the decline of its two staple industries: textile manufacturing and fishing. Both industries have experienced a particularly precipitous decline since the 1970’s, but continue to be two of the largest business sectors in the city. (HR&A 2008, 25). Several large clothing and sporting equipment manufacturers remain, including Joseph Abboud and the Acushnet Companies, which owns the golf brand Titleist. Despite onerous federal regulations that close fishing grounds and limit the number of days boats can fish each year, the fishing industry is still a major source of income for the city, as it has been since the whaling days. The city is currently the highest value fishing port in the United States, but the fishing industry can only employ roughly
3% of the workforce (Id., 58). New Bedford is also a significant seafood processing center, with plants lining the harbor, but this industry supports only around 1,000 workers, many of them recent immigrants. (Id., 68).

Unsurprisingly, with such a historically blue-collar workforce, educational achievement in New Bedford is generally low. As of 2008, public schools were routinely underperforming and the high schools were showing graduation rates far below the state average. (Id., 18-19). Only 11% of New Bedford’s residents hold bachelor’s degrees. (VHB 2010, 2-3)

Despite these rather dismal statistics, the city is promoting several areas of economic growth, including health care, tourism, and marine science. (HR&A 2008, 4-8). The city already has a strong creative economy, which has been bolstered by the conversion of industrial buildings into artist live-work space and the downtown redevelopment of the Star Store into a satellite campus for the graduate arts programs at UMass Dartmouth. Arts-related cultural attractions downtown include AHAI, a monthly arts festival, and the Zeiterion Theater, a regional attraction that brings national music and performance acts to New Bedford. (Id., 5). New Bedford is also positioning itself to be the center for the East Coast offshore wind industry. According to Derek Santos at the New Bedford Economic Development Council, this will be a growing sector and New Bedford can position itself to be a center for staging, shipping, and manufacturing of wind turbines. As such, an important part of any plan for revitalization of industrial areas of the city should include the flexibility for clean manufacturing facilities suitable for the offshore wind industry.

**South Coast Rail and the City**

Ahead of the South Coast Rail’s arrival in Southeastern Massachusetts, the affected communities, the Commonwealth, and several regional planning agencies, aided by a consulting team led by Goody Clancy, developed the *South Coast Rail Economic Development and Land Use Corridor Plan* (the “Corridor Plan”). The plan is meant to address four major questions:

1. Where should new development be supported?
2. What land, open space and environmental assets represent the highest priorities for protection?
3. What kind of development can be attracted to areas around new stations?
4. What kinds of tools can communities use and the state provide to better plan for their futures? (Goody Clancy 2009, 6)

The plan notes that “more than 40,000 households and over 55,000 jobs lie within one mile of proposed transit stops, offering many commuters the option to walk or bike to the train.” (Id., 8). The plan claims that “[t]he extent to which commuter rail can help promote and support concentrated development near rail stations in urbanized areas is a primary economic development
Figure 7: Diagram of Whale’s Tooth Station as planned with callout notes from the plan; diagram courtesy of the South Coast Rail Economic Development and Land Use Corridor Plan

objective of the South Coast Rail project” (Id., 33). It notes demographic and lifestyle trends that favor transit-oriented development, and specifically mentions Hicks-Logan-Sawyer as an area for private-sector investment around incoming rail stations.

The Corridor Plan designates both forthcoming stations in New Bedford as “Priority Development Areas” for TOD. The Corridor Plan notes the proposed intermodal nature of the Whale’s Tooth Station and the fact the city wants to see mixed-use development surrounding the station, and it
describes pedestrian connectivity to the “Clasky Park Neighborhood” as a problem. (Id., 48). It provides conceptual plan-view sketches of the Whale’s Tooth Station in context (see Figures 7 and 8), and notes the gateway potential for Hicks-Logan-Sawyer due to Route 18, I-195, and the Whale’s Tooth Station. It indicates a “Development Program” for 500,000 SF of commercial space and 1,400 housing units for Hicks-Logan-Sawyer that would be connected to the construction of the station. (Id., 76).

New Bedford’s employment doldrums are strongly related to its isolation within the state and its lack of transportation options. Many residents must leave New Bedford to find work outside of New Bedford, and as of 2000, 31% of the city’s residents worked outside of greater New Bedford (HR&A 2008, 25). According to the Corridor Plan, the South Coast area, including New Bedford and Fall River, has experienced higher unemployment rates than statewide averages because of a lower concentration of growing industries and lack of a skilled work force. As such, despite low land and housing costs, employers needing an educated work force have not located there. The plan claims that passenger rail does not currently reach the population that needs it the most (Id., 32).

As such, commuter connectivity is a major economic benefit of the South Coast Rail project. This is true both because the Boston and Cambridge markets will have access to a broader labor pool and because, even when daily commutes are not involved, commuter rail service would prevent the current variability in travel time to Boston for business meetings at peak travel times. (Id., 33-35). Economic consultants who worked on the Corridor Plan estimated that over 50% of the gains related to South Coast Rail service would occur in communities in the southern tier of the corridor (including New Bedford) and roughly 25% would occur in Boston and Cambridge. (Id., 35). This shows the enormous impact that rail connectivity would have integrating the South Coast area into the rest of eastern Massachusetts.

Real estate data shows why this connection is particularly important. New Bedford is not currently fully capitalizing on one of its biggest assets- its low cost of real estate compared to the urban core of Boston and Cambridge to the north. The State of the Cities, a 2006 planning study on revitalization strategies for smaller Massachusetts cities, found that:

Historically, New Bedford has been linked regionally from east to west along the southern coast of Massachusetts, stretching from Fall River to Wareham into the Cape and to Rhode Island, rather than a more northern orientation toward Boston. The expansion of the Boston economy has begun to embrace Taunton but has not yet reached New Bedford. (CHAPA 2006, 30).

The increased connectivity that will be provided by the South Coast Rail, as well as the reliability of that connectivity can better enable New Bedford to capitalize on this situation in order to create
economic development and increase its tax base. Offering a possible answer to the question of how young urbanites can afford Boston's bloated housing costs, New Bedford offers homes with a median sale price 34% lower than the state average and rental units with a median rental rate 33% lower than the state average. Housing costs are generally 50% lower than in the Greater Boston area. (Id., 3) The HR&A report specifically notes the potential for New Bedford to capitalize on the exceptional housing affordability in the city to attract new companies (Id., 31). Local politicians also see the crucial link between jobs in Boston and cheap housing in New Bedford. State Representative Paul Shmid of nearby Westport told the Standard-Times in a January 6, 2013 article entitled “2013 is the year of commitment to South Coast Rail” that the “commuter rail to Fall River and New Bedford is an important part of creating jobs. There are a lot of young people that Boston needs in the workforce and who can’t afford Boston.” Similarly, in a December 6, 2012 article in the same paper entitled “Mitchell hopes to integrate rail and terminal projects in New Bedford,” New Bedford Mayor John Mitchell said that the rail connection has “enormous potential to integrate [New Bedford’s] economy with the rest of the state.”

Residents and officials of New Bedford are cautiously optimistic about the South Coast Rail project. According to Derek Santos, residents support the rail connection to Boston but are not confident that it is going to happen in the near future. Financing has, and continues to be, a major concern regarding the rail project. Governor Deval Patrick has been a major proponent of the project and earlier this year pledged $1.8 billion for the project in his broader transportation bill. As of April 2, 2013, the Massachusetts legislature decided not to fully fund Governor Patrick’s plan. The Massachusetts House transportation finance plan only provides for $500 million, with the Senate calling for $800 million, not enough to cover major new infrastructure projects like the South Coast Rail. According to Martine Powers’ April 2, 2013 article in The Boston Globe, “Mass gets scaled-back transportation plan,” some legislators insist that the lack of funding is not meant to kill the South Coast Rail project but rather the goal was to focus on “putting the current Department of Transportation operating budget on more stable financial footing” so that “the state will better be able to fund large-scale expansion projects in the coming years.” Others are not as optimistic that the project will get started in the near-term. It is certainly still on the table, but plans remain in limbo until Massachusetts decides to specifically fund the project. At the time of writing, the funding issue is still playing out in state government.

A notable issue for potential commuters to Boston is travel time. According to Derek Santos, current projections have the rail taking around 1.5 hours from Whale’s Tooth to South Station in Boston. Exact routing of the rail has not been finalized, however, nor have schedules. The growing popularity of rail commuting between Boston and other Gateway Cities, show how commute times might be optimized. For instance, commuters from Worcester to Boston have helped make the Framingham-Worcester commuter rail line one of the busiest in Massachusetts, with ridership meant to increase 30% by 2030. In an October 11, 2012 article in The Boston Globe, Jaclyn Reiss writes
that the MBTA plans on running additional trains each day and by running some trains express from Worcester to cut down on the slow commute time caused by numerous stops. A Worcester to Boston trip is currently scheduled at approximately 1.5 hours on the timetable, equivalent to a projected New Bedford to Boston trip. Another major factor in slow MBTA service is the fact that tracks are owned and designed for freight rail companies, which also means that freight trains have the right of way over passenger, adding unpredictability into the timetable. The MBTA recently took a major step in addressing this problem by acquiring the Framingham-Worcester line from CSX, a freight company. The MBTA will now invest in track improvements that will optimize the rail infrastructure for its passenger trains, which will cut up to 20 minutes off some trips. The deal between the MBTA and CSX also gives the MBTA control over track in South Boston and the 37 mile line that will run to New Bedford and Fall River, giving potential commuters reason for optimism that the long trip between New Bedford and Fall River will be reduced right off the bat.

**Hicks-Logan-Sawyer and the New Gateway to the City**

In order to fully capitalize on the addition of the South Coast Rail, New Bedford needs to promote and further develop what it has to offer on its end of the rail connection. As is Governor's Patrick's intention, the South Coast Rail will help move New Bedford out of physical and economic isolation and into the broader network metropolis. As will be examined in this thesis, to capitalize on the rail project, infrastructural improvements are not enough. New Bedford needs to provide a physical and metaphorical gateway to the city around Whale's Tooth Station and use that gateway to present itself as a good place to live and work. Hicks-Logan-Sawyer can be that gateway.

One must look at the social and geographic narrative of the city and develop a vision that not only draw on its past, but positions it towards the future. The Hicks-Logan-Sawyer neighborhood is at the crux of this narrative and must be the departure point for New Bedford's projection of its narrative towards the outside world. To start, this state of affairs is physical. As the City acknowledges, Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is already the major gateway to the city, and it will only be made more so by the construction of Whale's Tooth Station. The main highways into the city, I-195 and Route 18, already connect in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. The Whale's Tooth Station, which will not only be the terminus for the South Coast Rail, but will be the new hub for local and regional bus service in and out of New Bedford will be located on the southern edge of the neighborhood. Regardless of a visitor's means of transportation to New Bedford, Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is the area that will greet him.

Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is a 95 acre wedge between the elevate Route 18 on the west and the harbor on the east. The southern boundary of the neighborhood is an empty rail yard where the Whale's Tooth Station will be built and the northern edge of the Designated Port Area, which is lined with viable fish houses. The Whale's Tooth Station will provide the opportunity for a link from Hicks-Logan-
Sawyer to downtown New Bedford immediately to the south (see Figure 8). Much of the land in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is currently industrial or formerly-so. The two landmark industrial complexes, Wamsutta Mills and Revere Copper, which have both existed in their present locations since the mid-1800’s, are now no longer in use for industrial production. A portion of Wamsutta Mills has already been developed into housing whereas the Revere Copper complex is largely vacant, having finally been shuttered in 2008. Until recently, a casino developer, Northeast Resorts, held options on this property as well others in the neighborhood, but these options recently expired, according to Derek Santos. The Revere Copper site is particularly important because it abuts the harbor but does not provide access to it for the rest of the neighborhood.

While there are a number of smaller buildings of various types, including a few side streets of dilapidated multifamily buildings, the most striking buildings in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer are its mill-era industrial buildings. The concentration of these buildings is remarkable, as well is their almost universal redevelopment potential. Pursuant to the City’s 2008 Historic Mill Inventory, all remaining mill buildings in New Bedford were scored for redevelopment potential (including transportation access and site location), site and structure condition, and historical significance. There are a total of 19 mill buildings in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, 14 of which were found to be advantageous or highly advantageous for redevelopment. Of those, 8 were either completely vacant or used as warehouses as of 2008. (New Bedford Economic Development Council 2008, 18). For an analysis of urban design conditions in the neighborhood, see Figure 9.

The neighborhood straddles of I-195, which is elevated through the neighborhood. To the north of I-195, a new Market Basket supermarket lies on the old Fairhaven Mills site, and another industrial building, the Ropeworks, has been redeveloped as artist live-work lofts. From here, the neighborhood blends into the North End, which is still a predominately Portuguese and Hispanic neighborhood. Route 18 cuts off the neighborhood from the city on its western edge, and North Front Street connects the neighborhood to the working waterfront to the south, and ultimately, to downtown New Bedford. Largely because of these physical barriers and the casino options, the neighborhood has for the most part languished in a state of abandonment and underuse.

Although large tracts of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer are empty, the only existing open space amenities are a small playground next to the I-195 embankment and a park on the farther northern edge of the neighborhood, beyond I-195, which was recently built as a brownfields redevelopment project on a former mill site (Hollander 2009, 164). The number of underutilized, re-developable mill buildings, and the availability of space show the great potential that the neighborhood has to fulfill its role as the gateway to the city. Recognizing this potential, the City and the Governor’s Executive Office of Housing & Economic Development (EOHED) have designed Hicks-Logan-Sawyer a “Growth District” as part of its Growth Districts Initiative. This initiative identifies areas appropriate for significant new growth and works to make them “development ready” with respect to local
Figure 8: Connectivity from Whale’s Tooth to Hicks-Logan-Sawyer and downtown, as envisioned by the South Coast Rail Economic Development and Land Use Corridor Plan; diagram courtesy of that plan
Figure 9: Hicks-Logan-Sawyer Detail Map; created by author, base image courtesy of Google Earth
permitting state permitting, site preparation (including brownfields remediation), infrastructure improvements, and marketing” so that they are highly attractive for competitive new development. (Massachusetts Smart Growth Energy Toolkit).

The current state of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer leaves much to be desired as the city’s primary gateway, but it has enormous potential for transformation. The City, aware of this potential, has commissioned several planning studies on Hicks-Logan-Sawyer specifically. Preliminarily, it commissioned the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer Smart Growth Waterfront District: Vision Plan and Regulatory Strategy to establish a vision and regulatory strategy for the neighborhood. Subsequently, it commissioned the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer Master Plan, which was completed in 2008. The Master Plan dealt with specifics about building preservation and site planning in the neighborhood, and recognizing the difficulty of financing development in New Bedford, was paired with a District Improvement Financing (“DIF”) Plan.

This thesis will examine these planning efforts and then asks, considering New Bedford’s narrative and its future goals, what else is needed in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer to prime it to be a vibrant and successful gateway for the city in time for the South Coast Rail project to reconnect New Bedford and Boston. First, a photo analysis of current conditions in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is provided to give better context for the analysis of the planning efforts and the recommendations that follow.
Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is a difficult place to describe. Its industrial infrastructure, waterfront location, large empty spaces, and hard edges are visually pronounced. What follows is a photographic tour of the neighborhood, presented to give a sense of the current conditions of the neighborhood, as well as opportunities for interventions. The tour starts at the southern edge of the neighborhood, at the future site of the Whale’s Tooth Station, and explores some of the neighborhood’s most interesting structures and spaces. All photos were taken by the author.

North Front Street looking north into Hicks-Logan-Sawyer from the future site of the Whale’s Tooth Station; the industrial infrastructure creates a compelling gateway visual from this vantage point.

The original Wamsutta Mills building has been converted to loft-style apartments. Its large surface parking lot is in the foreground. Wamsutta Mills is close to Whale’s Tooth and has been cited in previous planning studies as part of the TOD around the station.
The western edge of the redeveloped Wamsutta Mills property abuts the hard edge created by Route 18. The streetscape improvements are part of the site redevelopment.

This is the largest unrenovated building in the Wamsutta Mills complex; the building is partially occupied by a welding shop and a maid service.
Two more views of the unrenovated building in the Wamsutta Mills Complex show a large amount of currently vacant space in the foreground. The bottom photo shows the renovated apartment building in the background.
This is a view of North Front Street looking north with the Wamsutta Mills complex on the left and the southern edge of the former Revere Copper Complex on the right.

An empty parking lot sits next to a vacant mill building at the Revere Copper site along North Front Street.
The Revere Copper site contains buildings of multiple sizes and shapes, mostly vacant. The above building directly fronts North Front Street.

"The Icehouse" is one of the most well-known and distinctive buildings on the Revere Copper Site. Past planning efforts have called for its reuse as a community amenity.
The fire pond behind Wamsutta Mills is surrounded by mill buildings, some of them vacant. It is currently polluted and not publicly accessible, but it would make an excellent amenity if cleaned up and landscaped.

The distinctive building on the east end of the fire pond is currently occupied by Oberon Company, a manufacturer of eye safety protection for industrial uses.
A large mill building runs along Kilburn Street and is visible from I-195. Space in the building is currently for lease, but parts of it remain vacant. Tenants include an antique store and both transitional living and outpatient drug treatment centers.

The eastern edge of the above building has waterfront access, north of the Designated Port Area, which means that it is available for non-industrial/fishing uses.
I.

This is a view of the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer waterfront from across the harbor. Most of the waterfront in the neighborhood is behind the Revere Copper Complex and currently inaccessible to the public.

Looking south from the end of Kilburn Street, one can see the harborfront in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer north of the DPA. Abandoned buildings in the Revere Copper Complex with waterfront access are visible on the right.
A Junk lot sits with an abandoned building in the background at the corner of North Front Street and Kilburn Street.

As one travels north on North Front Street past the major factory complexes, the buildings get smaller. A number of abandoned storefronts in distinctive buildings line North Front Street.
A lot sits vacant at the corner of North Front Street and Washburn Street. The northwest corner of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer consists of low-density commercial and industrial buildings, largely dilapidated housing, and empty lots.

This photo shows more empty space and housing in the northwest corner, looking north straight through to Hicks Street from Logan Street.
The only public open space in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is a small park with a basketball court and swingset up against the I-195 embankment at the corner of Belleville Ave and Washburn Street.

Walls separating Kyler's Seafood plant from Washburn Street are painted in bright colors, suggesting the possibility of murals and public art elsewhere in the neighborhood.
The I-195 underpass on Belleville Ave frames the mill building on Kilburn Street and the brightly painted walls on Washburn Street in front of it.

This is a view of the I-195 underpass on North Front Street leading to the North End.
The Ropeworks is at the northern edge of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer across I-195 on Sawyer Street. This former mill building has been renovated and now houses artist live/work lofts.

A large Market Basket now exists on the site of the former Fairhaven Mill, which has been torn down. While the loss of a historic mill building is lamentable, the grocery store provides a major amenity for existing residents in the area, as well as new populations that might move in.
A new Taco Bell is also part of the Fairhaven Mill redevelopment, creating a suburban strip along Coggeshall Street along with a McDonald's and 7-Eleven. This type of low-density, undistinctive, suburban-style development does not serve to add to the distinctiveness of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer.

This park, on a remediated brownfield site formerly occupied by the Pierce Mill, is on the northern side of Sawyer Street and serves as a boundary between the northern edge of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer and the North End.
Hicks-Logan-Sawyer has been subject to planning efforts for decades, but the neighborhood has taken on a renewed importance in recent years as plans for the South Coast Rail and the Whale's Tooth Station have solidified. The City and the New Bedford Economic Development Council have contracted with numerous consultants to produce new plans for Hicks-Logan-Sawyer in advance of the South Coast Rail. In 2005 Goody Clancy produced the *Hicks-Logan-Sawyer Smart Growth Waterfront District: Vision Plan and Regulatory Strategy* (the "Vision Plan"), which was followed by the *Hicks-Logan-Sawyer Master Plan* created by the BSC Group in conjunction with RKG Associates, along with a related District Improvement Financing ("DIF") Plan. These planning efforts led to the adoption, in 2008, of the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer Interim Planning Overlay District which is still in effect today for the area of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer south of I-195.

The Interim Planning Overlay District ("IPOD"), which was suggested in the *Vision Plan* and enacted by city ordinance in 2008, is perhaps the most tangible regulatory outcome of the most recent planning efforts thus far. The IPOD regulates all development in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer south of I-195 until the city has “adequate time to implement new permanent zoning regulations consistent with Hicks-Logan-Sawyer District Master Plan,” which was also adopted that same year. The IPOD creates a comprehensive, expedited permitting process, where development proposals are presented in coordination with the broader Hicks-Logan-Sawyer redevelopment. The IPOD is designed to be flexible and its Design and Development Guidelines subject to creative interpretation so long as the general intent is met. The IPOD’s guidelines for development projects encompass some of the most important concepts from the planning process, including a project’s relationship to public spaces, its setting in the historic context with respect to key mill buildings, and its relationship to the waterfront north of the Designated Port Area. Notably, the district has no dimensional regulations, allowing for review on a case-by-case basis. The guidelines specifically provide that development should support land uses that will utilize and encourage usage of the Whale’s Tooth Station.

**Hicks-Logan-Sawyer Smart Growth Waterfront District: Vision Plan and Regulatory Strategy**

The preliminary *Vision Plan* of 2005 was limited in scope. Goody Clancy was charged with creating a new strategy for the development of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer at the crossroads of I-195 and the future commuter rail station. The goal of the plan is to turn the old industrial neighborhood into an unconventional smart growth waterfront district, supporting mixed-use redevelopment. It provides a schematic layout for a smart growth district adjacent to the transportation assets and prescribes a regulatory strategy to make it happen. The plan discusses a number of reasons why Hicks-Logan-
Sawyer is a prime location for smart growth, including the lack of buildable greenfields in New Bedford, the presence of existing infrastructure on the site, and the need to restrict sprawling suburban development elsewhere in the South Coast region. Despite the neighborhood’s state of disinvestment, the plan identifies major assets in its analysis: the gateway location, the waterfront, distinctive mill buildings, and city and water views.

The plan aims to provide “sufficient flexibility in land uses to allow the City to welcome unforeseen opportunities, while at the same time establishing a regulatory framework that is sufficiently robust to shape the character of the public realm.” (Goody Clancy 2005, 7). Goody Clancy makes some major contributions to the advancement of thinking about the neighborhood, including recommending against the original proposed use of the site as an urban industrial park. The plan mentions the overabundance of industrial land in southeastern Massachusetts and instead plants the seed for flexibility in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. The plan clearly acknowledges Hicks-Logan-Sawyer's potential as the city’s main gateway, noting that a redeveloped, vibrant neighborhood would be visible for those entering the city from I-195. The plan also insightfully recognizes the power and importance of the public realm in reshaping the neighborhood. Noting the deteriorated condition of the streetscape and public infrastructure in the neighborhood, the plan calls for investment in streets and sidewalks, the creation of gateway signage, and the need to use the mill buildings to frame public spaces. Importantly, the stated vision recognizes the need for public space connection to the waterfront above the northern terminus of the Designated Port Area on Wamsutta Street.

The smart growth vision that the plan proposes for Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is best summarized in the diagram on the following page (see Figure 1). The image shows that Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is to be divided into four sub-districts: Transit-Oriented Development (“TOD”), Gateway Reinvestment Districts, Marina District, and Port Transition. The TOD sub district encompasses the Wamsutta Mills campus, which is the closest part of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer to the proposed commuter rail station. The Gateway Reinvestment Districts are those that are visible from I-195 and contain a mix of high-quality and dilapidated buildings.

New Bedford’s Designated Port Area (“DPA”) is immediately south of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. The Marina Sub-District is meant to capitalize on the portion of waterfront north of the DPA-designated zone for public access, a marina, and a mix of uses that are harmonious with each other and with the existing working waterfront. The Port Transition Sub-District incorporates an existing seafood processing plant, which represents the critical role that the working waterfront plays in the New Bedford economy. As explained by Frank Mahady of FXM Associates when interviewed, maintenance of the working waterfront is crucial in New Bedford. New Bedford processes a higher dollar value of seafood than any other port in the country, and its plants process both the local groundfish and scallop catch as well as seafood caught and shipped from far afield. Any attempt to create a mixed-use district on the waterfront in New Bedford must not negatively affect what is
still primarily a working waterfront. On the other hand, this is what makes Hicks-Logan-Sawyer so unique; so long as the two fish houses currently operating in the district are not disturbed, Hicks-Logan-Sawyer can capitalize on being one of the only waterfront locations in the city located outside the DPA, allowing for recreational and public access uses that are prohibited elsewhere.

As is evident from Figure 1, the smart growth vision also examines circulation. Its major contribution is the establishment of streets that access the waterfront in the northern section of the Marina District. The waterfront in this portion of the site is located behind several industrial complexes and mostly cannot be accessed from a public right of way. This idea of creating and extending a public-access street grid to provide both physical access and view corridors to the water was echoed in later planning efforts. The plan notes the importance of the public realm and

Figure 1: Overall “Vision” schematic from the Vision Plan showing circulation and division into sub-districts; courtesy of Goody Clancy
prescribes written proposed character attributes for each block.

The regulatory portion of the Vision Plan has largely been implemented. The plan suggests the creation of an urban renewal plan and a DIF plan. The subsequent Hicks-Logan-Sawyer Master Plan is not technically an urban renewal plan but it is designed to be adapted into one should New Bedford seek to use urban renewal powers to redevelop Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. The Vision Plan explores several possibilities of zoning schemes that can be used to promote smart growth. It advises against traditional Euclidean zoning as well as more traditional special permit processes. It warns that Planned Unit Developments (“PUDs”) might result in inward looking developments within the district and finds that underlying zoning is so inefficient for promotion of a mixed-use smart growth district that a simple overlay will not be sufficient to promote its vision of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. The plan suggests that form-based code should be the basis for new permanent zoning for Hicks-Logan-Sawyer given “its emphasis on flexibility in land uses tied together by a cohesive public realm.” (Id., 39). The plan suggests an IPOD district as a temporary measure to guide development while permanent zoning is contemplated. The IPOD as implemented incorporates this suggestion in conjunction with the Master Plan.

To summarize, the highlights of the Vision Plan include:
1. The creation of a smart growth district for mixed-use development;
2. Calling for the neighborhood to serve as a gateway and recognizing the need for flexibility;
3. Recognition of the importance of the waterfront north of the DPA
4. Division of the neighborhood into different sub-districts; and
5. Recognition of potential for use of urban renewal powers in the future.

The Hicks-Logan-Sawyer Master Plan

The Hicks-Logan-Sawyer Master Plan, developed three years after the Goody Clancy Vision Plan, offers a detailed site plan for the neighborhood, complete with extensive phasing analysis. Following the suggestion presented by the Vision Plan, the Master Plan is designed to be incorporated into a formal urban renewal plan if the city decides to do so (it has not at this point), which would give the city leverage to work directly with developers to accomplish projects. In its own words, the Master Plan’s aim is “to provide a blueprint for future development in the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer District.” The plan notes the potential for Hicks-Logan-Sawyer to become a destination and contribute to the tax base by attracting employers and development. It states an important list of goals including historic preservation, business development, mixed-use development, internal circulation, connectivity, and expansion of public places. The Master Plan was a result of a rigorous public process that involved numerous community meetings. It is important to note however, that it was hard to receive public input from residents of the neighborhood itself because at the time of planning very few people actually lived there. The Master Plan was created before the Wamsutta Mill conversion brought many
new residents into the neighborhood. At the time, the only two major areas of residences within the district were the Ropeworks lofts on Sawyer Street, for which a representative attended the planning meetings, and a group of dilapidated houses on Hicks Street owned by the owner of the tire recycling business down the street. These buildings house primarily Latin American immigrants who work at the tire recycling business and the fish processing plants in the DPA.

The Master Plan includes a relatively thorough analysis of existing conditions and a summary of the market analysis done by RKG Associates, an economic consulting group. The BSC Group developed two alternative site plans for Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, one based primarily on the preservation and adaptive reuse of historic mill buildings and one premised mostly on new construction. It sought public input on these two plans in order to create a hybrid that represents the final site plan. The final site plan, reproduced on the following page, is intensely prescriptive, precisely laying out new buildings and enumerating old ones to be preserved (see Figure 2).

BSC is also meticulous in redesigning the street grid, highlighting a major strength of the firm, which is traffic engineering. There is also great emphasis on accessibility to I-195. BSC briefly discusses the importance of streetscape improvements and provides abstract precedent photos to suggest what the streetscape character might be like.

The Master Plan is thorough in its analysis of phasing and implementation. It identifies potential development areas based on market conditions and the availability of public funding. It calls for development of the Wamsutta Mills area adjacent to the Whale’s Tooth Station first and the waterfront second, followed by the remaining infill. The last piece to be redeveloped would be the area around Hicks Street, as this would be the only segment of redevelopment where residents would be displaced. It also provides a thorough analysis of public funding sources that might be used to bolster development in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer.

To summarize, the highlights of the Master Plan include:
1. A thorough analysis of existing conditions;
2. Public input on different development scenarios;
3. A detailed site plan showing existing and new buildings;
4. A redesign of the street grid for better traffic flow;
5. Detailed phasing suggestions; and
4. A comprehensive list of potential funding sources.
Figure 2: Final Site Plan from the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer Master Plan; courtesy of BSC Group
Analysis of the Vision and Master Plans

The Vision Plan and the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer Master Plan provide a useful basis to guide New Bedford in the redevelopment of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. The plans are largely consistent; for the most part, the Master Plan builds on the more schematic and conceptual ideas in the Vision Plan. Two critical components of the Vision Plan that did not carry over to the Master Plan are the importance of flexibility and the focus on Hicks-Logan-Sawyer as a gateway to the city. Further, the Vision Plan suggests that a form-based code is eventually adopted for Hicks-Logan-Sawyer but the Master Plan does not address the desired form and relationship of spaces. The site plan presented the Master Plan is so precisely prescribed that it might make it more difficult for an unanticipated or innovative redevelopment project to take shape in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. In addition to this discussion of flexibility and the concept of this area as a gateway to the city, there are specific elements in each plan that are worth discussing as the city looks to move forward with development.

Analysis of The Vision Plan

There is a benefit to evaluating the existing plans to determine the best course of action for future planning of the area. The Vision Plan presents an important first pass at providing a new framework for thinking about Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. While the reasoning behind establishing sub-districts is sound, the plan does not adequately address how the districts, which all share borders with other city neighborhoods, physically and narratively connect to those neighborhoods. In this sense, the plan seems to accept the current physical barriers between Hicks-Logan-Sawyer and the abutting neighborhoods rather than recommending ameliorative action to soften them. With the circulation plan as shown, the planned districts within Hicks-Logan-Sawyer are treated separately when, in fact, the flexibility of the urban fabric and the consistency in urban form is one of the greatest attributes described elsewhere in the plan. This is particularly pronounced for the Wamsutta Mills and Revere Copper complexes, which, according to the plan, are located in different districts and separated by North Front Street, which is labeled as “Truck Route” in Figure 1. The Wamsutta Mills and Revere Copper complexes are the largest two built assets on the site and each is adjacent to a critical edge (Whale’s Tooth Station and the waterfront, respectively). Connectivity between these assets should be emphasized. The labeling of North Front Street as a truck route is particularly problematic, in that this is the main road running through Hicks-Logan-Sawyer connecting it to the north and south of the city. Cyclists and pedestrians regularly use this street to commute to work at the processing plants in the DPA south of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. North Front Street’s status as the connection between Hicks-Logan-Sawyer and the historic downtown and the working waterfront make the character of its streetscape critical in establishing an effective smart growth district around the Whale’s Tooth Station (see Figure 3).
Figure 3: Diagram of the relationship and proximity between Wamsutta Mills, Revere Copper, the future site of Whale's Tooth Station, and the portion of the waterfront available for development, showing North Front Street as the seam binding the neighborhood together; image by author, base map courtesy of Google Earth

Analysis of the Master Plan

The Master Plan does not explicitly acknowledge the sub-districts in the Vision Plan, but its site planning efforts seem to conform to the sub-district parameters. One function of the sub-districts that was lost is the importance of making it clear to the working waterfront that the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer planning process was appropriately buffering and leaving undisturbed the fish processing plants within the district. Also lost was the explicit diagrammatic notion of sightlines into the neighborhood from I-195. The lack of emphasis on the status of the neighborhood as the gateway to the city is problematic. Laudably, the Master Plan includes an improved street network within Hicks-Logan-Sawyer to provide better access to the waterfront and make the blocks mimic the scale of adjacent neighborhoods. The Vision Plan concept of this neighborhood as a gateway to the city is not discussed in the Master Plan. The Master Plan discusses the use of Logan Street to connect the Acushnet Heights to the west of the project site to the way to the waterfronts and
mentions improvements of an existing pedestrian footbridge of Route 18, but does not zoom in to
collection points to examine ways that the gateway effect can actually be achieved. The connections
are shown in plan form, but individual access points are not specifically examined. While focused
extensively on where to add streets, the Master Plan does not emphasize improvements to North
Front Street, which is the main artery through the neighborhood. Aside from a pedestrian path by
the mill pond, the Master Plan does not show how the neighborhood will connect with the Whale's
Tooth Station.

While the Master Plan meticulously lays out the future of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer from a standpoint of
individual building projects and phasing, it stops short of addressing some of the most pernicious
intricacies of the site in any sort of detail: the edges, streetscapes, and connections that physically
and symbolically tie Hicks-Logan-Sawyer to the rest of the city--ties that are weak or non-existent
in the aftermath of decades of neglect and the physical isolation imposed by the elevated highways.
Making Hicks-Logan-Sawyer the new multi-modal gateway to the city is made problematic elevated
highways that block it off from the rest of the city and by the steep grade change on the western
edge of the neighborhood. While many would like to see the “boulevardification” of the highways,
as is happening with Route 18 by the historic downtown, this process is not currently expected to
extend as far north as Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. As such, further planning efforts must deal with the
major connectivity issues presented by the urban renewal-era legacy of Route 18 and I-195, and they
must do so directly and in a creative and cost-effective way. While the Master Plan acknowledges the
streets that connect through to other parts of the city, its site planning efforts occur fully within
the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer site and ideas for better connectivity between the “gateway to the city”
and the city itself are mostly absent from the plan. While the Master Plan lists safety and streetscape
improvements to underpasses under the elevated highways as implementation projects under the
“Action Plan,” an examination what those might look like or how they might fit into the overall
vision for the neighborhood is outside the scope of the plan.

Further, one might worry that the placement of buildings and the phasing of the projects to create
them might be overly prescriptive. None of the proposed redevelopment areas are tied to particular
developers; the buildings are laid out without knowing who will build them, what they will look like,
and what temporary measures might be necessary to stabilize the neighborhood while individual
projects are being phased in. Much of what makes Hicks-Logan-Sawyer unique compared to other
neighborhoods is the flexibility for multiple-uses, availability for infill development, and suitability
for non-DPA waterfront uses. As subsequent chapters will examine, the highest and best use of
land in the neighborhood might change over the long lifetime of the buildout of the plan. Thus, an
overly rigid site plan might actually harm growth in the area in the long term.

Placemaking is lacking throughout the Master Plan. There is no imagery to suggest what Hicks-
Logan-Sawyer might actually be like when build-out is complete. The plan is detailed and
meticulous in terms of site planning and phasing, but it falls short in elucidating a vision for how the neighborhood will feel and how it will connect to the rest of the city. The section of the plan supposedly dealing with vision does not actually discuss a vision per se, but launches immediately into a list of goals. While many of the goals are critical, there is no overarching sense of what the plan is trying to accomplish in terms of creating an actual place. One reads the Master Plan knowing what might go where but without a feel of what the remade neighborhood will actually be like or how the city might market the neighborhood as a new gateway to the city. Importantly, the Master Plan does mention branding as an implementation principle, including physical attributes like signage, gateways, and streetscape improvements, but only does so in a paragraph. The details of what this brand might be and how it ties into the broader narrative of the neighborhood and the city is beyond the scope of the Master Plan.

The Master Plan focuses so heavily on site planning that it leaves some important questions open. How would the neighborhood be seen from I-195 and the rest of the city? How would a commuter using the Whale’s Tooth Station experience the neighborhood? What would it be like to take North Front Street north or south either by car or as a pedestrian or cyclist? How would the public sphere interact with the buildings both old and new? What types of interventions would generate the type of interest in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer that would make it an effective gateway? As a preliminary matter, understanding the desired image and character of the neighborhood is much more critical than deciding what buildings, in what shape, go where.

To summarize the most important concerns expressed herein about existing planning:
1. There is a lack of clarity in both plans concerning connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods;
2. The importance of flexibility and the neighborhood's gateway status get lost in the Master Plan;
3. Neither plan recognizes the importance of North Front Street in the neighborhood context;
4. The site plan is too rigid given the conditions of the neighborhood;
5. Nothing addresses the activation of space while awaiting improved market conditions; and
6. The Master Plan lacks imagery and placemaking, failing to articulate a coherent vision for the neighborhood.

Next Steps for Creating an Effective Gateway

Hicks-Logan-Sawyer planning is a puzzle that is missing several major pieces—pieces that should be filled in prior to the arrival of the South Coast Rail to make the most of the great potential that the construction of the station will present for the city. With the construction of the Whale’s Tooth Station, most travelers to the city, whether they arrive via rail, bus, or by private car via the interstate, will encounter Hicks-Logan-Sawyer as their first glimpse of the city. Building on the Vision Plan and the Master Plan, the next step is to understand how this gateway neighborhood fits into the broader narrative framework of the city and how it can be utilized to further the city’s success in the future.
To revitalize Hicks-Logan-Sawyer one must have an understanding of how its status as a gateway is not just physical, but also symbolic. Hicks-Logan-Sawyer’s mill buildings are reminiscent of the halcyon days of New Bedford industry. Can these hulking mills, once a symbol of prosperity and opportunities for immigrants be reutilized to usher in a new era of prosperity? It is important to ask how the New Bedford’s narrative connects to Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, both in terms of what the area means to the city’s past and how the neighborhood can be reprogrammed to further or readjust that narrative. If Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is going to be a true gateway to the city, its internal character is critically important. The character of the neighborhood must tie in to the city’s past and bring it forward towards the future. Inexpensive, tactical, and effective interventions must be imposed to ensure that Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is a connected, flexible, and desirable interface between New Bedford and the outside world, and in order to generate interest in the neighborhood from both in and outside the city. The City must take proactive steps to ensure that Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is the launching pad for its ambitions.

In these ways, additional planning efforts need to take shape. Derek Santos at the New Bedford Economic Development Council, the organization that serves as the primary catalyst for major planning efforts in New Bedford, acknowledged that some of the connectivity and streetscape issues have purposefully not yet been completed. The City has to allocate scarce resources and external funding for the South Coast Rail has been elusive. The casino options on much of the land in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer were not released until months go. Now the time is ripe to address many of these issues. Beyond deciding what gets built and how to phase it, there must be a clear vision and narrative about what Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is to become and how it connects both physically and metaphorically to the rest of New Bedford and the rest of Massachusetts.

Before addressing the issue of the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer narrative and further interventions that will be useful to revitalize the area, it is important to understand that the planning approach most recently used in the Master Plan is not the only way to approach planning processes and urban design problems. There are several schools of planning and urban design theory that, in this case, offer guidance as to how approach the creation of a gateway in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer.
5 URBAN DESIGN THEORY AND A NEW CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR HICKS-LOGAN-SAWYER

The Hicks-Logan-Sawyer Master Plan demonstrates a traditional master planning approach—a planning process using community input to arrive at a detailed site plan with identified phasing. The criticism of these planning efforts provided in the preceding chapters suggests that this traditional approach is not the only or even the ideal way to look at Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. This thesis will draw from several other theories about how to solve planning and urban design challenges in order to suggest interventions that might better generate interest in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer and help establish it as a physical and metaphorical gateway to New Bedford. The three theories presented here, city imaging, tactical urbanism, and everyday urbanism, are not necessarily a complete substitute for traditional master planning in this case, but rather offer a complimentary, flexible approach for making an immediate impact on New Bedford that might make some of the rigid phasing of the Master Plan ultimately unnecessary or generate the market for some of the moral capital-intensive development contemplated therein.

City Imaging

The theory of city imaging is rooted in Kevin Lynch’s seminal book, The Image of the City. Lynch looks at the city through the eyes of those who experience it, through mental imagery and memory. He is concerned with the legibility of the physical environment: the ease of recognition of coherent patterns. Lynch believed that legibility is not just important for finding one’s way. It can also fulfill an important function in creating a sense of place and a structure for collective knowledge, memories, and understanding. (Lynch 1960, 2-6). City features create public images that are accessible to everyone who lives and works in the city. Lynch defines imageability as “that quality in a physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer.” (Id., 9).

More recent scholarship has suggested how city imaging can be used to create infrastructure and events that generate interest in places. Some have written specifically about how imaging is tied to the concept of place-based narrative. Sam Bass Warner and Larry Vale write that city imaging is the process of “constructing visually based narratives about the potential of places.” They view imaging as a way of understanding and designing urban places, one that acknowledges the creation of place-based metaphors and attachments, and that focuses on the promotion of place. (Vale and Warner 2001b, xv). In this sense, unlike a traditional planning process, which might focus on access, uses, and site planning, imaged-based design focuses on the story of a place in terms of creating meaning and value in that place. Dennis Frenchman writes that looking at urban design through the lens of imaging is particularly powerful and important in historic and culturally significant places, such as New Bedford, because “by definition they are associated with stories and events,” as well
as in industrial environments, because such places are a part of our shared national experience. (Frenchman 2001, 261). To Frenchman, association with a clear and compelling narrative is just as important as physical distinctiveness in the creation and promotion of place.

Designers can produce specific interventions that create and further the image of a city. Some interventions, such as highly-visible iconic architecture, can create a shared metaphorical experience that suggests the values or opportunities present in a place. For example, the race to build skyscrapers in financial centers in Asia was in part meant to signify that those cities were clean, modern and open for business. (Ford 2001, 128). Such major, permanent interventions are of course not mutually exclusive from traditional planning, but rather represent a different way of looking at process. On the other hand, there are more bottom-up, often ephemeral, community-based techniques to control the city image that often happen outside the usual planning process. Community-based public art, such as murals and sculptures, can be utilized by communities to help steer their own narrative and imagery. Deborah Karasov writes that “if the skilled muralist continues to probe for hidden histories—the underlying tensions of a place and its people—a more profound image begins to emerge, based on lived experiences rather than imposed ideas and stereotypes.” (Karasov 2001, 348). Further, ephemeral and temporal events are often the antithesis of traditional site planning and have often been neglected by planners in favor of the permanent urban fabric. Ephemeral events can often be a good first step in the planning process, using public programming as a way to bring people into space. Ephemeral events can shape the image of the city for people just as permanent infrastructure can. (Schuster 2001, 387). Such programming is often affordable and easy to organize within the community, and can provide imaging in places where no market exists for more permanent development.

**Tactical Urbanism**

This last point is also a major tenet tactical urbanism. Tactical urbanism is largely based on the work of the Street Plans Collaborative in Miami and New York. Tactical urbanism is the idea that small-scale improvements are an excellent first step for creating vitality in a place, and that local people can cheaply and effectively test new ideas before substantial political and financial investment is made. (Lydon 2011, 1). Tactical urbanism is a deliberate urban design methodology and is defined by the following five characteristics:

1. A deliberate, phased approach to instigating change;
2. An offering of local ideas for local planning challenges;
3. Short-term commitment and realistic expectations;
4. Low-risk, with a possible high reward; and
5. The development of social capital between citizens, and the building of organization capacity between public/private institutions, non-profit/NGOs, and their constituents. (Id., 1-2)
Mike Lydon of Street Plans Collaborative, describes Tactical Urbanism as “making plans without the preponderance of planning” and says that “…tactical urbanism is most effective when used in conjunction with long-term planning efforts that marry the urgency of now with the wisdom of patient capital.” (Id., 2). In that sense, for New Bedford, tactical urbanist interventions are needed to compliment the long-term planning efforts that are described in the Master Plan. The long time frame of the Master Plan, combined with the uncertainty of investment and the urgency of creating a gateway in advance of the South Coast Rail, make tactical urbanist interventions, particularly cheap, ephemeral ones, useful in the short-term to generate interest in the neighborhood before the long-term planning efforts can be realized. While tactical urbanist interventions can be performed by both official and unofficial actors, the DIY possibilities for cheap, ephemeral interventions in neighborhoods with large amounts of vacant space and little market demand suggest many possibilities in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, some of which can utilize the existing creative community in the city and will be explored in this thesis.

Everyday Urbanism

The third strain of urban design theory relevant here is everyday urbanism. Everyday urbanism is more contrary to traditional planning than the other two theories discussed here. Margaret Crawford of UC Berkeley describes everyday urbanism as standing in contrast to “the carefully planned, officially designated, and often underused public space that can be found in most American cities.” (Crawford 2008, 6). Everyday urbanism is critical of traditional planning as being based on abstract principles, and acknowledges “fragmentation and incompleteness as inevitable conditions of postmodern life.” (Id., 10). The main idea of everyday urbanism is to embrace the organic, seemingly quotidian aspects of a place in order to create interventions that result in interesting public space. Rather than a distinct methodology, everyday urbanism seeks to develop, in a sense, a kit of parts: a collection of ideas to be employed via place-specific concepts. (Id., 14).

While in some ways, everyday urbanism might seem antithetical to planning for a revived Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, some of its techniques can be used in the short term to help activate space and generate interest in the neighborhood. While tactical urbanists explicitly acknowledge that their interventions are part of a larger effort that will eventually phase in more permanent planning, everyday urbanists reject high design and constrained planning efforts. For instance, architect John Kaliski writes that the present, common aspects of a city, often ignored by designers as ugly or boring, show the potential for a city design “that eludes classical aspirations of symmetry, order, and control.” (Kaliski 2008, 106). That said, some of the interventions proposed by both tactical urbanists and everyday urbanists create similar results. For instance, everyday urbanist John Leighton Chase is a proponent of small public spaces on major streets, as these spaces provide a free public benefit, are infinitely flexible, slow down the urban pace, humanize the street, and encourage diverse social encounters. (Chase 2008, 118-119). Such interventions might be called “parking days” or
“parklets” by tactical urbanists, but the same principles apply. Everyday urbanism is relevant to Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, as it is to many post-industrial landscapes, in that much of the distinctiveness of neighborhood is in what already exists there without the intervention of prescriptive design. The old signs, worn buildings, and awkward spaces give Hicks-Logan-Sawyer its distinctive feel, one that should be utilized, not destroyed, in order to generate interest in the neighborhood.

While not every aspect of these three theories of urban design are compatible with each other or relevant to New Bedford and Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, together these theories provide a framework for thinking about high impact interventions that are practical, marketable, and flexible, and therefore able to make an immediate impact generating interest in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. In some respects, all these theories celebrate the ordinary are modest and derived from conventional wisdom. When planning gets too exact and scientific, the opportunity to capitalize on more straightforward opportunities is sometimes lost. The importance of each of these theories here is that they all call for placemaking— they are rooted making places unique and emphasizing the best assets of a place when deciding on planning protocol.

The first step for Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is imaging: exploring how the neighborhood fits into the city’s narrative such that it can be an effective gateway to the city. Once the narrative is established, interventions consistent with that narrative should be explored. Such interventions should draw on the theory presented in this chapter to utilize the best of what already makes Hicks-Logan-Sawyer unique, and focus on what is achievable in the short term to activate the neighborhood. Finally, interventions are not useful in a vacuum if nobody knows about them—they need to be marketed and promoted both within New Bedford and outside of it, consistent with the established city narrative. Such a framework will be critical for revitalizing Hicks-Logan-Sawyer in a way that is seldom provided for in traditional planning, and can precede, catalyze, or even obviate the more rigid, capital-intensive development and phasing provided in the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer Master Plan.
This chapter will explore how the concepts of urban narrative and city imaging discussed in the previous chapter can be applied to Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. It will focus on how Hicks-Logan-Sawyer fits into the broader city narrative of New Bedford, and how it can be conceptualized in order to further that narrative while cementing its own status as the gateway to the city.

Hicks-Logan-Sawyer cannot be viewed in isolation. The first step to establishing Hicks-Logan-Sawyer as a successful gateway to the city is to examine how it fits into the broader context and narrative of New Bedford. This can be accomplished by taking the strategy articulated in the Vision Plan and the site plan presented in the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer Master Plan, and placing them in the context of New Bedford's history and future prospects. This broader narrative is necessary to create a salable, compelling vision that can inform interventions as the next step in the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer planning efforts and better equip the neighborhood to capitalize on its resources.

New Bedford's industrial era is inextricable from the broader city narrative. The city narrative is tremendously important for a historically-significant city. Dennis Frenchman, who was instrumental in the revitalization of Lowell, thinks about city narrative in the following way: “[The] city is experienced by its users as a system of meanings and narratives as well as of physical forms, and these narratives are significant in determining the legibility of a city to its inhabitants and visitors.” He writes that “[i]t is no wonder that cities and the private sector have invested heavily in historical areas, not only as museum settings but to serve a wide variety of functions from retail shopping to affordable housing. In the process, the stories and places of the city have become more sharply defined and the city overall more imageable.” (2001, 261). Frenchman says that the economic potential of historic places and their tie to city narrative has been specifically important for the revitalization of declining industrial cities and districts. To define a narrative, the “real value and impact are in the improved image of the place and its ability to attract, people, investment, and jobs, many not related to heritage at all.” (Id., 262).

The Importance of Industrial Infrastructure to Narrative

The use of historical narrative is not lost on New Bedford. The National Park and the Whaling Museum, which focus on the city’s pre-industrial maritime history have been critical to the preservation and renewed vibrancy of the historic downtown. New Bedford has been less successful capitalizing on its industrial-era narrative. While cities like Lowell are seen as synonymous with the textile industry, New Bedford’s narrative seems to get stuck on whaling. In the Historic Mill Inventory, the New Bedford Economic Council writes that “[a]s a result of their lack of famous
associations and their functional design, during the past decades most of New Bedford’s industrial buildings have been overlooked as historic resources, unlike the whaling era mansions early preservationists valued for their associations with famous individuals and a romanticized whaling industry. (2008, 12). It is easy to see how the industrial narrative has traditionally been overlooked based on the city’s timeline. The decline of the whaling industry did not scar the urban fabric of the city; whaling money was invested in textile mills and a new golden age began. By contrast, the physical destruction brought on by the decline of the industrial era is everywhere. While underutilized and empty mill buildings line New Bedford’s waterfront as a reminder of how far the city has fallen, the question is how their symbolism can be repurposed to show hope for the future and how their roots in innovation can also be useful for 21st century innovation.

The bias towards whaling-era history is evident in New Bedford’s network of historic districts (see Figures 1 and 2). The map shown earlier as Figure 6 in Chapter 2, shows that the vast majority of the area in the city that is protected by historic districts is associated with whaling-era infrastructure. Bedford Landing, the Central New Bedford Historic District, and the County Street Historic District represent the heart of the whaling-era city. The North Bedford Historic District, the Acushnet Heights Historic District, and the Howland Mill Village at least include some of the working-class homes associated with industrial expansion. However, very few of the city’s multitudes of historic industrial buildings fall within protected districts: only two mill developments, Wamsutta Mills and Whitman Mills have been designated as historic districts. New Bedford needs to incorporate its industrial-era history and infrastructure into the city’s wider narrative. Not only is this a natural extension of the whaling narrative—the textile mills were built with whaling fortunes, populated with immigrants that reinforced immigration patterns dating back to whaling, and used the same water-related resources—but it is also critical to the city’s regeneration.

A City-Wide Vision

The importance of industrial infrastructure for the City is something that various actors are now beginning to realize. The city’s narrative of where it has been and where it is going is represented in the city-wide New Bedford 2020 Master Plan. The section entitled “Charting Our Course: A Vibrant Seaport Community,” states, as its version of New Bedford’s narrative:

This vision of New Bedford is one that began nearly 250 years ago. In the mid-1700s, Joseph Rotch purchased 13 acres of land along our deep harbor, establishing the whale fishery that transformed the small village into a thriving port. A century later, the boon of the textile industry swelled our population, supported the development of vast new ethnic neighborhoods, and expanded the city’s growth to the north and south. Within the last century, the emergence of commercial fishing and processing secured our national prominence as a center of global commerce, wholly connected to the sea. Today, our
Figures 1 and 2: These photos show the drastic difference between the historic downtown (above) and North Front Street in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer (left) reflecting the difference between preservation priorities for urban fabric from different eras; photos by author

Figure 3: The working waterfront has always been and continues to be an indelible part of the New Bedford image; the city's narrative is inseparable from its maritime heritage; photos by author
commercial fishing fleet, recreational, and research vessels have replaced the hulking whaling ships of the past. Our historic mill buildings, that once contained thousands of spinning looms, are being preserved and transformed for new uses. While whaling and textiles no longer fuel an economy that drives the success and growth patterns of the city, our identify as a vibrant and ethnically diverse seaport community holds fast. (VHB 2010, 3-1).

The excerpt above is a fairly representative narrative of New Bedford. Since the City has recently put its imprimatur on this narrative, it is important, when considering Hicks-Logan-Sawyer redevelopment, to focus on two aspects of the stated vision. First, the City finally acknowledges the importance of industrial infrastructure in the narrative. As Pease wrote in his 1918 history of the city, “Now the tall chimneys of the cotton mills have assumed the place they occupied in the picture, telling of the decline of the whaling business and the progress of the cotton industry which is now on the top wave of success.” (1918, 28). Since that time the industrial story in New Bedford has been one of decay. It is critical that the revitalization and reuse of the industrial infrastructure is once again being folded into the broader city narrative. Second, the city’s narrative cannot be separated from the sea; everything the plan mentions in this section can be tied, in one way or another, back to the water, which is the lifeblood of New Bedford’s identity (see Figure 3).

The New Bedford 2020 plan emphasizes several important growth sectors for New Bedford’s future including the increasing prominence of creative industries and the emergence of the offshore wind industry. Combined with offering new transit-accessible residential opportunities, these are both areas for which the city’s industrial narrative and infrastructure, particularly in and around Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, is highly important for success.

The Versatility of Mill Buildings and their Neighborhoods

Just as New Bedford’s industrial historical narrative is an extension of its whaling-era history, Hicks-Logan-Sawyer should be planned and promoted to compliment the historic downtown, not to compete with it. While downtown New Bedford’s revitalization continues to fuel the growth of restaurants and stores, the area is poorly suited for creative industries and other uses requiring flexible space. Historic preservation ensures that building envelopes remain protected and static. Indeed, the reason why industrial development originally occurred in the North and South Ends of the city is because the textile industry needed large new buildings to function. These buildings today represent a currently underutilized resource not present in the historic downtown. In his famous book, How Buildings Learn, Stewart Brand writes:

> Warehouses and factories that were built between 1860 and 1930 are endlessly adaptable. They are broad, raw space—clear-spanned or widely columned, with good natural illumination and ventilation and high ceilings of 12 to 18 feet. The floors, built strong
enough for storage or to hold heavy machinery, can handle any new use. Their heavy timbers and exposed brick appeal to the modern eye. Architectural ornament, if any, is likely to be modest and therefore appreciated. The buildings are honest, generic, sound, and common. They welcome any use from corporate headquarters to live/work studios. (1995, 108-109).

The industrial area along the waterfront in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer still fulfills a complimentary role that is distinct from that of the downtown. Stephen W. Ward, who has written extensively on marketing and promoting post-industrial areas states:

The majority of these most distinctive characteristics of post-industrialism are found in the downtown/central areas. A really successful post-industrial city will, however, have pushed these characteristics outward, typically into adjoining waterfront, dock or former industrial areas. In addition to the usual mix of activities characteristic of the post-industrial city, here will usually be found high income housing, either as new build or in adapted older structures. This will offset the long established trend to population decline, offering further support local services in the heart of the city. (1998, 189-190).

These warehouses and factories offer multiple opportunities for the revitalization of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer and a re-visioning of the city beyond the neighborhood's borders. While some options are contemplated in previous planning efforts, it must also be determined how revitalization strategies relate to New Bedford’s story about where it has been and where it will be in the future.

Case Study: Lowell and Haverhill

Several similarly situated communities in Massachusetts have capitalized on their distinctive industrial infrastructure, waterfront location, affordable prices, and proximity to transit to attract new demographics to help revitalize their post-industrial economies. The mill towns of Lowell and Haverhill are creating gateway districts of their own via revitalization of mill buildings in proximity to transit connections.

In Lowell, a public-private partnership led by Trinity Financial, a developer from Boston, and the City, is currently in the process of redeveloping the Hamilton Canal District, 15 acres of vacant and underutilized industrial land. As with Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, plans call for a mixed-use district with a combination of restored factory buildings and new architecture. The Hamilton Canal District is located between Gallagher Terminal, Lowell’s multimodal commuter rail station, and the historic downtown, which has seen waves of revitalization during the past few decades. As such, the Hamilton Canal District has “gateway” ambitions similar to Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, and it is explicitly designed to better connect the rail station to the downtown. Eventually the goal is for Hamilton Canal District to blend into downtown, and to provide a friendly route to get there, but not compete with it. As such, the two areas are complimentary. The Hamilton Canal District is designed to offer office and residential space but not retail space, so as not to dilute the commercial success of downtown Lowell.
The process is more streamlined than the proposed Hicks-Logan-Sawyer redevelopment; the City lined up the developer for the entire site beforehand and planned the development as a partnership. This offers the advantage of entrusting an entire pre-approved development, avoiding the problem of meticulously creating a site plan without having developers for individual parcels on board. When interviewed, Adam Baacke, Lowell’s Assistant City Manager and Director of Planning and Development, described the situation as a prize to the developer for an onerous task: if the developer could create an acceptable consensus-oriented plan for the entire district, the City would entitle the whole thing with a new form-based code. The Hamilton Canal District Master Plan uses photography and rendered imagery to make the district come alive and specifically examine how new development will fit with historically significant structures (see Figures 4 and 5). The plan recognizes the value of historic infrastructure in placemaking. For instance, it calls for wall remnants critical to the history of the area’s industrial canals to be incorporated into new buildings constructed on the site. Renderings specifically show the reader how the Hamilton Canal District will serve as a gateway and connector between the Gallagher Terminal.

Figures 4 and 5: Sketch-up and rendering from Hamilton Canal District Master Plan show a mix of old and new buildings as a multi-modal gateway to downtown Lowell from across the canals; Images courtesy of Trinity Hamilton Canal District Ltd. Partnership, Fort Point Associates

Figure 6: Appleton Mills, which has been successfully absorbed in the market; photo by author

Figure 7: One of the several canals that the Hamilton Canal District intends to span to create a gateway to downtown; photo by author
and the historic downtown. The development is currently in progress, with Appleton Mills, a pair of live/work loft retrofits, already developed, and another factory conversion, No. 110 Canal Street, near completion (see Figures 6 and 7). These projects have also utilized historic rehabilitation tax credits as the key to their financing. As Kathleena Conti reported in The Boston Globe on January 12, 2012, since 2000, downtown building conversions in Lowell have raised $2.4 in new property tax revenue. As of 2012, mill redevelopment has created 2,000 new housing units in the city.

While the public-private partnership between Trinity and the City of Lowell is streamlining the redevelopment process for the entire Hamilton Canal District, New Bedford need not be concerned that such district-wide coordination is necessary to receive success in such an environment. In Haverhill, individual developers have been successful redeveloping large mill complexes within walking distance to the downtown and the commuter rail station. According to Conti's article, since factory redevelopment began in Haverhill, the city has attracted 850 new residents into converted buildings that are 95% occupied, and it has raised approximately $557,000 per year in new property tax revenue.

Conti writes that while the conversion process in Haverhill has been largely developer driven, the City set up the regulatory framework to make it possible. In 2004, most of the old shoe factories (Haverhill's textile equivalent) downtown remained empty. The city rezoned most of the western portion of the downtown near the rail station as a 40R Smart Growth District. Meant to promote smart growth in Massachusetts by creating pre-approved high-density zones that will be attractive for developers, 40R provides direct cash payments to municipalities to create overlay districts that do so.3 (CHAPA 2006, 5). Since that time there has been $150 million in investment and the creation of 500 new residential units in these buildings.

The three major mill complex redevelopments, Forest City’s Hamel Mill Lofts, and Beacon Communities’ Haverhill Lofts and The Cordovan at Haverhill Station, specifically advertise their location within walking distance to the rail connection to Boston and they discuss the ties to the city’s industrial history and architecture in promotional materials. Forest City’s website specifically speaks to the Hamel company’s historical role in revolutionizing footwear and states that the “individual buildings have undergone a complete historic renovation to create lofts apartments that are a celebration of history and a commitment to the future.” According to Baacle, the City took a hands-off approach to these developments, giving the developers wide latitude to pursue their projects.

The buildings that have been renovated to create Appleton Mills in Lowell and the Hamel Mill and Haverhill Lofts in Haverhill are similar to the mill buildings found in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer and elsewhere in New Bedford. Walkability to Whale’s Tooth Station will only increase the desirability of Wamsutta Mills and encourage other similar developments in the area. Further, Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is likely

1 While not using a 40R zoning in the Hamilton Canal District, Lowell used it on a property immediately adjacent to the district, resulting in the construction of the Hamilton Canal Lofts, another mill conversion with 200 residential units, and gallery and community space. (CHAPA 2005, 90-91).
Residential and Mixed-Use

Residential reuse of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer's mill buildings is envisioned in the *Hicks-Logan-Sawyer Master Plan* and has already started. Notably, a portion of the Wamsutta Mills was recently subject to a $36 million renovation, which created 130 construction jobs and resulted in a new home for 200 loft residences, an antique collaborative, and a glass museum. (VHB 2010). Residential redevelopment of mill buildings is an important extension of New Bedford's historical narrative. The Wamsutta Mills redevelopment builds on the physical and demographic past of the industrial city to create opportunities to attract new populations to the city and expand its tax base, cultural life, and socio-economic diversity. Said Larry Curtis, CEO of WinnDevelopment, in Katheleen Conti's January 12, 2012 *Boston Globe* article “The old mill towns have a competitive leg up over suburban communities for several reasons. One, there's a back-to-the-cities movement. Two, they have this great potential housing stock in the old mills that can be done quicker and more competitively than building [in the suburbs].” Two mill buildings, Wamsutta Mills, which is fully residential, and the Ropeworks, which is artist live-work lofts have already been successfully redeveloped (see Figures 8 and 9).
When interviewed, Frank Mahady of FXM Associates, one of the leading economic development planners in the region, observed that people moving into redeveloped buildings in New Bedford come largely from outside of the city. As he put it when interviewed, “the people who are going to live in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer are going to come from elsewhere, not from [the adjacent neighborhood] Acushnet Heights.” Mahady thinks that the opportunity to offer unique residences at a relatively low cost in reused mill buildings combined with the proximity to the Whale’s Tooth Station can over time create a vibrant housing market that is attractive to people from outside of New Bedford. According to Mahady, the quality, distinctiveness, and affordable cost of residences in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer can attract outsiders who had not previously considered Hicks-Logan-Sawyer at all. Indeed, according to Mahady, The Regency, an apartment building in downtown New Bedford recently renovated by Trinity Financial leased up 120 units in only six months, and only around 44% of the new residents were previously residing in New Bedford. Mahady thinks that residential developments in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer will attract an even higher percentage from out of town.

Commercial uses can be part of the mix as well, and the opportunity to create a true mixed-use

Figure 8: The Ropeworks, which has been converted to artist live/work lofts; photo by author

Figure 9: The Wamsutta Mills building that has been converted into residences; photo by author
waterfront neighborhood is unique to Hicks-Logan-Sawyer because of the DPA designation requiring the maintenance of the working waterfront to the south of the neighborhood. While the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer Master Plan contemplates such residential and mixed uses, it does not specifically tie them into the city's narrative. Offering such a vision is not a physical or metaphorical stretch. New residential demographics attracted by mill redevelopment are in a sense new immigrants to the community. While those who flocked to the employment opportunities in the mills originally populated neighborhoods surrounding Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, new populations will be attracted to those same buildings for the opportunity to live in spacious apartments in a distinctive, well-connected urban environment for a fraction of the cost of Boston or Cambridge.

While the mills of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer were an immigration gateway in generations past, its residual infrastructure can be reused and expanded upon to create a new gateway for new populations.

Emerging and Creative Industry Re-Use

In addition to residential uses, mill buildings in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer can provide a fertile ground for emerging industries and arts-related uses that cannot physically exist downtown. Arts have become a major part of the city's narrative. The Downtown New Bedford Revitalization and Redevelopment Study, created by Utile and FXI Associates, notes in its market study:

A majority of local artists reportedly unofficially utilize space in the City's numerous former mill buildings to accommodate their live/work needs. Artists typically seek large spaces, good light, unique atmosphere, and inexpensive rents; mill buildings with large windows, high ceilings, loading docks, architectural features and $4 to $5 per square-foot pricing are particularly attractive live/work spaces for these reasons. While there may be some Downtown commercial buildings with suitable space for office-based creative entrepreneurs, many artists and artisans have specific space requirements that would be difficult to meet in most Downtown buildings due to building code and safety regulations. (2009, 65).

The Ropeworks live/work lofts in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer are an example of these market forces described in the planning study, but the potential for the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer mills to be re-used extends beyond this one project. Creative and digital economy uses demand unfinished and flexible space that can adapt to individual needs at a low cost. (Id., 64). The downtown urban fabric, most of it protected by the National Registry, cannot accommodate the live/work uses or cheap studio space that artists require. Downtown New Bedford is also running out of space for public outdoor art installations, and as one artist puts it, there is a far greater supply of artists eager to create public art than space to in the downtown to put it. When UMass Dartmouth purchased the Star Store, an old department store in downtown New Bedford and moved its graduate programs in the College of Visual and Performing Arts to that location, many young artists were drawn to the city (and to the
enormous studio and gallery spaces afforded MFA students in the Star Store), but many graduates and other artists are without adequate space to live and work affordably in the constrained spaces available elsewhere in the inelastic envelope of downtown.

Similarly, business incubators want low-rent raw space; start-up business can rent small, unfinished spaces and improve and expand as their needs change. (Brand 1995, 30). The New Bedford 2020 Master Plan explicitly ties in creative economy growth to the city’s narrative, stating that “[t]oday we view the creative economy not as a separate arts and culture initiative, but as a leading edge growth sector that represents significant potential for job creation and revitalization, and as the most effective way for us to tell the stories of our past, present, and future through art, culture, and emerging creative enterprises.” (VHB 2010, S-5)

When interviewed, Frank Mahady of FXM Associates saw several major potential categories of business demand for reused mill buildings within Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. The first is the type of creative economy use discussed above that requires attractive, reasonably-priced flex space. The second, which has been discussed less frequently in planning literature, is what is referred to as “hidden tech.” Hidden tech involves home-based small tech businesses. Increasingly those involved in hidden tech are looking to get out of their homes, but do not want to invest in traditional office space. Mahady’s studies have found that this demographic is usually looking for rents at $3-$5 per square foot, which can be made available in mill buildings in older, industrial areas like Hicks-Logan-Sawyer..

The variety of possible reuses for mill buildings in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer and elsewhere in the city ties strongly back into the city’s narrative. The areas north and south of downtown were originally created as places for innovative industries and for those workers employed by those industries. The excellent urban fabric and cultural amenities of downtown New Bedford are a compliment to the flexible industrial space outside of the historic center. For the city to project an image of progress, its mill buildings must be treated as a historical asset equal to the whaling-era fabric. New Bedford is unique among Massachusetts cities in presenting both the whaling-era downtown and large-scale industrial infrastructure. The first provides the cultural, culinary, and municipal services to draw residents and business to the city. The latter provides the cheap, raw space that creative uses and industries can re-occupy to reinvigorate the city’s storied industrial history to capture new uses. New Bedford is at a great competitive advantage because it has both the preserved historic downtown and an abundance of flexible space in the industrial buildings surrounding it.

Offshore Wind Industry

To be consistent with the city’s overall visioning presented in New Bedford 2020, the narrative of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer must tie back into the sea. Fortunately, there is now a perfect opportunity
for it to do so. New Bedford is positioning itself to be the staging ground for the emerging offshore wind industry on the Eastern Seaboard. The potential connections to the city's history are profound. Energy was the industry that first put New Bedford on the map, as whale oil was used as fuel worldwide. New neighborhoods at the northern and southern ends of New Bedford first developed when money from that fuel source was used to create major textile mills that used the water to power the looms. With the development of offshore wind, New Bedford can revitalize these same neighborhoods by again looking to the sea to produce energy, this time in a forward-looking and sustainable way. In Forbes Magazine, Peter Kelly-Detwiler writes that "those abundant winds upon which the whalers sailed have themselves now become the source of energy. And unlike the whales—hunted into nearly irreversible decline—the offshore wind resources are inexhaustible." (Kelly-Detwiler 2013, 1).

The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center ("MassCEC"), a public-private partnership, is currently managing the development of the New Bedford Marine Commerce Terminal in the South Terminal area of New Bedford. This will be the first facility in the nation designed to support construction, assembly, and deployment of offshore wind farms. The terminal is being reconstructed to handle large specialty marine cargo and bulk and container shipping related to the wind industry. There are strong positive indicators for the capacity for offshore wind on the eastern seaboard: offshore wind permitting and leasing processes are in place in nine states along the eastern seaboard, and the U.S. Department of Energy predicts 43,000 jobs in the offshore wind industry by 2020 and that 25% of the nation's projected offshore wind that can be captured is off the northeast coast. (MassCEC) (Kelly-Detwiler 2013). In Massachusetts, Governor Patrick is planning for 2,000 megawatts of wind energy in Massachusetts by 2020 (enough to power almost 500,000 homes per year if operating at full capacity) and Cape Wind will begin staging its construction operations out of New Bedford in 2014 (MassCEC) (Kelly-Detwiler 2013) (National Wind Watch). Jim Gordon, CEO of Cape Wind, recognizes the narrative tie-in for wind power in New Bedford, remarking that "with whaling, New Bedford used to be the energy capital of the world. New Bedford banks financed the transcontinental railroad. We have the opportunity to develop an expertise in offshore wind that takes its rightful place with other Massachusetts industries like biotech, education, and computers." (Kelly-Detwiler 2013, 5).

The New Bedford Marine Commerce Terminal is designed to adapt and grow with the industry. The port facilities are being built in anticipation of technology that does not yet exist. For now, offshore wind in the northeastern United States will use turbine components manufactured in Europe and the electrical assembly, staging, and freight distribution will be handled out of New Bedford. The goal is eventually to create capacity for manufacturing in New Bedford, which would create cost savings between 18-25%. Kelly-Detwiler writes that "[e]verybody from local shipbuilders to machine shops could benefit from the economic ripple effects" (2013, 4).
When interviewed, Derek Santos stressed the importance of maintaining flexibility to create manufacturing jobs for turbine components in New Bedford. As with the *Forbes* article, he predicts that what will start as assembly, transport, maintenance, and deployment for offshore wind will after a few major projects turn more towards manufacturing and production. Santos notes that the City is looking at the entire harbor between the hurricane barrier at the southern end of the city and I-195 for potential offshore wind-related uses. He specifically sees Hicks-Logan-Sawyer as a neighborhood with the potential to integrate new high-tech manufacturing associated with the wind industry into a neighborhood with residential and other new development. Such industrial uses in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer could help preserve existing factory buildings and add new ones.

The narrative tie-in for offshore wind uses for Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is significant. The intermingling of industry and residential and commercial development has been a longstanding feature of New Bedford's landscape. Textile manufacturing did not pollute to the extent of many 19th century industrial uses. In cities like New Bedford, entire neighborhoods of worker housing developed next to the mills. Acushnet Heights and the North End were originally developed to house workers in the mills in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer and north along the Acushnet River. These neighborhoods were severed from the mills by the development of elevated highways during the urban renewal period of the 1950s and 1960s. The reintegration of residential and industrial uses in these neighborhoods serves an important narrative objective while making good economic sense, especially now that mill buildings have proven themselves so adaptable for multiple uses. Indeed, an even more extensive mix of uses is now possible due to the popularity of mill buildings for residential and retail reuse and the emergence of clean tech.

**A New Gateway for New Bedford**

Further, the role of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer as the envisioned gateway to New Bedford gives it significant importance in terms of positioning the city to establish itself as the offshore wind industry hub for the Eastern Seaboard. Offshore wind will likely once again bring big industry and major corporations to the city. Both the rail link to Boston through Whale's Tooth Station and the entrance to the city from I-195 and Route 18 will take on increasing significance as people travel to New Bedford to do business. While private flights can land at the New Bedford Regional Airport, those doing business relating to the offshore wind industry accessing the city on commercial flights will utilize the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer gateway either because of the rail connection or highway connections to the airports in Boston and Providence. Successful redevelopment in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer will show off beautiful mill buildings, innovative new architecture, and waterfront access to business visitors coming to the city and demonstrate the innovation and progress present in the city.

While the initial industrial infrastructure for the offshore wind port facilities are being built in the South Terminal on the other end of the city, the image that the city projects for Hicks-Logan-Sawyer
must compliment that development. Offshore wind will bring new businesses, from the major manufacturing facilities discussed above, to smaller businesses that capitalize on small segments of the industrial market. In addition to port and manufacturing infrastructure, New Bedford will undoubtedly need to office space if the offshore wind industry takes off as projected. The location of most of the intermodal transportation options out of the city in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, as well as the abundant open space and redevelopable mill buildings in the neighborhood, make it a much more suitable location for office development than the South End. The small scale of the whaling-era buildings downtown and their historically-protected facades make them unsuitable for new office uses in the same way that FXM found them unsuitable for creative industries, particularly if industrial and office uses need to be combined. Hicks-Logan-Sawyer offers moldable space and an existing commitment on the part of the City to flexibility as to use regulation. Hicks-Logan-Sawyer and the South Terminal can recapture their textile-area status as the economic engines that bookend downtown New Bedford by offering different but complimentary development options.

The Narrative Continues

In this way, like with residential redevelopment and emerging markets, the immigrant narrative of the city can again be recaptured in its original spatial form. As the northern and southern peripheries of the city originally developed to house the influx of immigrants that arrived in New Bedford to work in the textile mills, these areas can again serve “immigrants,” not just human but also commercial. Offshore wind, as well as creative industries, fit perfectly into the narrative of New Bedford reinventing itself while still looking to the sea. Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, as the city’s gateway and its original industrial area, is an important staging ground for this to happen. With an idea of how Hicks-Logan-Sawyer fits into the broader city narrative, this thesis will now turn to the topic of interventions. Building on the highly prescriptive Hicks-Logan-Sawyer Master Plan, how can the city inexpensively and effectively reintegrate the neighborhood back into the city and prime it to fulfill the its role as the gateway to a revitalized New Bedford?
Figures 10-15: A sample of the fully or partially vacant mill building in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer ready to be repurposed for the city's future; photos by author
7 GATEWAY CREATION THROUGH CONNECTIVITY AND STREETSCAPE

For Hicks-Logan-Sawyer to fulfill its physical and narrative purpose as the multi-modal gateway to New Bedford, it is necessary to make infrastructure interventions so that the neighborhood can actually function as a gateway. While connectivity to areas outside of the city will be improved by the South Coast rail, those people using Whale's Tooth and Hicks-Logan-Sawyer as an entry-point to the city need to arrive somewhere distinctive offering an excellent sense of place and appropriate wayfinding to other important areas of the city. Derek Santos of the New Bedford Economic Development Council identified good connectivity between the Whale’s Tooth Station and other parts of the city as a major determinate of the success of the rail connection.

As Peter Calthorpe writes in Regional City, corridor types of all scales are important and need to be built in balanced proportions and well-connected with each other. (2001, 59) Elevated highways and the adjacent working waterfront prevent Hicks-Logan-Sawyer from having any sort of wayfinding legibility to the rest of the city, even in areas where it is physically connected. It is natural, and probably preferable, for Hicks-Logan-Sawyer to remain a neighborhood distinct from the North End, Acushnet Heights. After all, these neighborhoods have a different fabric and different character from Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. For Hicks-Logan-Sawyer to serve as a functional gateway, however, it needs to be legibly connected to the working waterfront, downtown New Bedford, and the rest of the city. Since major costly infrastructural changes in the highway system are not on the horizon, New Bedford needs to do this affordably and visually, making attractive connections under highway overpasses, providing sightlines in and out of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, and improving the streetscape in a way that legibly connects it to the rest of the city.

Drawing from the ideas of tactical and everyday urbanism while furthering the narrative of the city, this chapter will propose specific interventions that will help create a strong gateway to the city and reinforce positive city-wide development and aspirations. These interventions target specific opportunities based on conditions present in the neighborhood, including:

1. Turning barriers created by the elevated highways into an asset;
2. Capitalizing on views from points of transit;
3. Making appropriate improvements to streetscape infrastructure on North Front Street;
4. Focusing on multi-modal transportation within the neighborhoods; and
5. Creating programmable streetscapes.

**Elevated Highways**

Perhaps the most formidable connectivity issues for Hicks-Logan-Sawyer and the Whale's Tooth
Station are the physical barriers created by Route 18 and I-195 which are elevated roadways on two critical edges of the neighborhood. I-195 is the main east-west interstate in southeastern Massachusetts. Route 18 is only a spur, and it was constructed to connect the South Terminal to the highway to the north. According to Frank Mahady, this road was primarily intended to serve the seafood industry; seafood processing and packing on the waterfront have always been heavily dependent on reliable, timely truck access. Currently, while still used for trucks, Route 18 is also the easiest way to access downtown New Bedford for drivers coming into the city from I-195 or Route 140 and trucks routinely use North Front Street instead of Route 18 to access I-195.

Both Route 18 and I-195 are currently being reconstructed in portions, but it does not appear that this will diminish their roles as barriers between Hicks-Logan-Sawyer and the areas to the north and west. The City is trying to remedy the barrier that Route 18 presents between the historic downtown and the waterfront, where Route 18 is at-grade but supports highways speeds. A boulevardification project is currently underway for this downtown stretch of Route 18, but under current plans, this project stops to the south of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. (Scope of Work). Similarly, improvement projects for I-195 will not bring the interstate down to grade, nor would it be good practice to, as this would further destroy connectivity.

**Current Barriers**

There are currently four ways that the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer streets connect to the rest of the city to the north and the west. (see Figure 1). North Front Street and Belleville Avenue connect to the north and Logan Street connects to the east (see Figures 1-8). All three of these connections occur under an elevated highway overpasses. The fourth connection is a pedestrian bridge much further south at Pearl Street, directly across from where the Whale’s Tooth Station is to be constructed. In conjunction with reconstruction of several railroad bridges in preparation for the South Coast Rail, the Commonwealth plans to reconstruct the dilapidated pedestrian bridge. According to the TIGER Grant application for the project, “[t]he station’s signature structure will be the new foot and bicycle bridge spanning Route 18 that will become the city’s welcoming gateway symbol.” The application continues on to state that the bridge will be “highly visible to commuters, visitors, and residents” and that it will be well-lit and will be within walking distance of the downtown. It is an encouraging that the South Coast Rail planners are looking at issues of connectivity, particularly on a pedestrian scale.

There are also two connections to the south from within the neighborhood. Acushnet Avenue runs south abutting Route 18 until it meets with Herman Melville Boulevard at MacArthur Drive downtown. Herman Melville Boulevard, which becomes North Front Street at Wamsutta Street is perhaps the most important thoroughfare in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, as it connects the waterfront and downtown New Bedford to the entirety of the neighborhood. It is the only north-south connection that passes under Route 195 to Sawyer Street and the North End beyond. The street is a heavily
trafficked road, utilized by workers commuting to the waterfront by car and bicycle, as well as trucks and other traffic accessing I-195 and the North End from southern portions of the city. North Front Street runs down the middle of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer and most existing building complexes have frontage on it.

Figure 1: Diagram showing connectivity problems related to elevated highways; base map courtesy of Google Earth

Figure 2: To the left is Route 18 elevated to the west of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer; photo by author
Looking into H-L-S...  Looking out....

Figures 3 and 4: Belleville Avenue

Figures 5 and 6: North Front Street

Figures 7 and 8: Logan Street
Creating Physical and Narrative Gateways

A major challenge in connecting Hicks-Logan-Sawyer to the rest of the city as a gateway is how to deal with the hard edges presented by the elevated highways. Because it currently does not look like any significant portion of the elevated highway structures will be removed as a result of the various planned improvement projects, the city needs a solution that is cost-effective, and that works well with the current infrastructure. In the Action Plan section, the *Hicks-Logan-Sawyer Master Plan* calls for “streetscape and safety improvements” for these underpasses but does not further elaborate. (BSC Group 2008, 5-6).

Improvements to the underpasses shown on the previous pages should be flexible, visually appealing, and distinctive. The benefit of an artistic intervention for the Wamsutta Street, North Front Street, and Belleville Avenue underpasses in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer would be significant. Light fixtures could adorn existing infrastructure at minimal cost. Members of the city’s already blossoming arts community could design fixtures that represent aspects of New Bedford’s narrative and identity. Symbolically, the installations would represent an era of renewal, promise, and connectivity for the city. The installations would tie Hicks-Logan-Sawyer together as a neighborhood and reconnect neighborhoods that were historically part of a single narrative. Based on the existing underpasses on these street connections, installations could also create an interesting urban design impact, by providing visually-appealing literal gateways to the neighborhood that serves as the broader gateway to the city. These intersections frame unique aspects of the urban fabric, and light installations would draw attention to these places and help residents and visitors notice Hicks-Logan-Sawyer as both distinct and connected. Upon entering or exiting Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists will feel like they are in an area of importance.

Similar ideas were proposed for the North End by Utile in its 2010 *Upper Acushnet Planning Study*. The North End suffers from connectivity issues similar to Hicks-Logan-Sawyer based on the same urban renewal legacy. I-195 and the cloverleaves that connect it to Route 18 sever Upper Acushnet Avenue, which is the commercial spine of the North End, from lower Acushnet Avenue in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. The *Upper Acushnet Planning Study* provides several examples of possible installations to signal one’s arrival in the North End on Upper Acushnet Ave from the void created by the I-195 cloverleafs (see Figures 9 and 10). The plan calls for a “large-scale gateway element” consisting of “simple vertical elements that can play host to multiple interpretations of the ‘gateway’ when different material or content is strung between them.” While the gateways here are freestanding, and those in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer will adorn existing infrastructure, the gateways can be coordinated to provide artistic interpretation of the role that each area has played in New Bedford’s narrative. The investment in art installations will aid in placemaking and signal to the public that New Bedford is ready to enter a new era of internal and external connectivity and progress.
Figure 9: Acushnet Avenue North End Gateway Rendering; from Upper Acushnet Avenue Planning Study by Utile, Inc. Architecture + Planning

Figure 10: Acushnet Avenue North End Gateway Rendering; from Upper Acushnet Avenue Planning Study by Utile, Inc. Architecture + Planning, artwork installation design by Janet Echelman as represented in that plan
Case Study: The I-35 Gateway Makeover Project

While there are multiple examples of projects that turned passages under elevated highways into community assets, one of the most relevant is the elegant but simple I-35 Makeover Project in Austin, Texas.

Interstate I-35 runs north/south as an elevated highway through the middle of Austin. It was long perceived as the unofficial barrier between affluent West Austin and economically disadvantaged East Austin, whose residents have traditionally been largely minority populations. The mission of the I-35 Makeover Project was to focus on the negative impact that large infrastructure projects can have on local communities. (Tuma 2010). In this case, the design was meant to turn the elevated highway, which symbolized class divide for most of Austin’s recent history, into a visual attraction and a gateway between the two parts of the city. Completed in 2011, the project creates a parking area under I-35 between 6th and 8th Street. Most notably, it includes LED light fixtures that illuminate the area of the underpass for better pedestrian connectivity, especially after dark. The installation was provided by the Arts in Public Places Program. The visual component of the light fixtures turns what used to be a barrier into an attraction and a gateway, symbolizing better connectivity between East and West Austin along 6th Street, one of the city’s most important commercial corridors. (Alberts 2010) (Meltzer 2010) (Galligan 2010).

The key takeaways from the I-35 Makeover Project for New Bedford are:
1. Infrastructural barriers that stratify space can be transformed into welcoming gateways with cosmetic interventions;
2. Such interventions need not be complicated; and
3. Local artistic talent can be utilized to create such interventions.

Figure 11: Photo of the I-35 Makeover Project from street level at night; photo courtesy of Foda Studio
Views from Points of Transit

Another way to turn the elevated highways from a constraint into an opportunity is to capitalize on the views they afford. The sightlines over Hicks-Logan-Sawyer on I-195 and Route 18 show mill buildings and water in the background. There is a currently unrealized potential to capitalize on this condition as a means to show off Hicks-Logan-Sawyer as the city's new gateway. Current signage in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer visible from the highway does little to indicate that Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, or the city itself for that matter, is a dynamic or interesting place (see Figures 13 and 14).

As a neighborhood that has fallen out of its place in the city's narrative, signage, artwork, and structures visible from both the highways and from Whale's Tooth (see Figure 15) station to spur interest in the neighborhood. Tasteful signage can be juxtaposed with mill buildings and new architecture to indicate arrival in an important place and new architecture can be targeted to be visible from the highways. This would be consistent with the original ideas in the Vision Plan to create two gateway subdistricts with visibility as the goal, as well as with the Master Plan's recommendations for signage. In the next chapter, we will examine what this might look like in terms of new or temporary architecture that builds on New Bedford's narrative.
Figures 13 and 14: The current signage in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer that is visible from the I-195 overpass; signage does little to indicate anything new or innovative happening in the city; photos by author.

Figure 15: The view of up North Front Street north into Hicks-Logan-Sawyer from the proposed site of the Whale’s Tooth Station offers excellent factory views; photo by author.
Streetscape Infrastructure

Finally, public investment in streetscape will be critical for priming Hicks-Logan-Sawyer and the area around the Whale’s Tooth Station to be successful for development. Streetscape was touched on briefly in the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer Master Plan, but as Derek Santos of the New Bedford Economic Development Council said when interviewed, the City was not planning to focus on it more extensively until the Whale’s Tooth Station was closer to becoming a reality. Santos suggests that the streetscape issue is one the city would like to see addressed. He said that streetscape infrastructure always creates value: it leads to private investment, which leads to job creation and the expansion of the commercial tax base. He also stresses the importance of this infrastructure with respect to the experiences of pedestrians and bicyclists. Other cities have found that improve streetscapes provide an important tool for boosting economic development. For instance, in an October 24, 2012 article in the New York Daily News, Pete Donohue writes of a New York City mayor’s study that has used sales tax data to show that retail sales and occupancy rates of commercial buildings are much better in parts of the city where streetscape improvements such as pedestrian plazas and bicycle lines have been completed. Similarly, a study by the Victoria Transportation Policy Institute found that streetscape improvements geared towards walkability offer a high economic return on investments for cities. (Litman 2011).

Incorporation of Thematic Units into North Front Street

In New Bedford, the city has focused on streetscape in other planning studies, and many good elements can be drawn from these efforts. Hicks-Logan-Sawyer should share streetscape elements with other historic districts to increase the seamlessness of the city’s historical narrative but these elements should also be unique elements to help establish the neighborhood as a destination and a fertile ground for business and industry in its own right. This design framework is rooted in Kevin Lynch’s The Image of the City. Lynch writes that city districts have “thematic units” of three to four urban design factors that are held in common while other factors are varied. Urban design factors can include “continuity of color, texture, or material, of floor surface, scale or façade detail, lighting, planting or silhouette.” (1960, 103-104). While Lynchian analysis might conclude that Hicks-Logan-Sawyer and other neighborhoods are separate districts, the concept is directly applicable to the creation of physical and narrative continuity between neighborhoods that is necessary in New Bedford.

The incorporation of both continuity and uniqueness is perhaps most important along North Front Street. As mentioned above, North Front Street is the only street that connects Hicks-Logan-Sawyer to both the north and south, and it serves as the major thoroughfare through the neighborhood and for those traveling between downtown New Bedford, the waterfront, and the North End. Streetscape elements from the whaling-era infrastructure in downtown New Bedford should be
incorporated onto North Front Street with the addition of factors uniquely applicable to Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. Happily, excellent streetscape analysis for downtown New Bedford has already been provided by Utile Architecture + Planning in its Downtown New Bedford Revitalization and Redevelopment Study (the “Downtown Study”). Outside of the national park, which has its own unique streetscape, the Downtown Study focuses on streetscape elements in the remainder of downtown New Bedford, deemed the “Central Business District,” and suggests that the streetscape become “more formalized as the standard design and consistently implemented to extend the vibrancy of downtown...into surrounding neighborhoods.” (Utile 2009, 18). The continuous elements that Utile suggests include sidewalks comprised of granite curbs, brick continuity strips, and concrete walking surfaces. Utile suggest that street furniture and trees will be placed within the continuity strip and recommends the use of Washington street lamps. Compared to standard cobraheads (see Figures 16-18), the Washington street lamps provide a historic feel and provide better light for pedestrians. (Id., 20).

Figures 16-18: Images (from left) of Washington and Cobrhead lamps along with an aerial of the streetscape elements Utile suggests for downtown; photos from Downtown New Bedford Revitalization and Redevelopment Study, Utile, Inc. Architecture + Planning

The streetscape elements that Utile suggests for downtown can be utilized on North Front Street, which is currently a relatively blank slate. Sidewalks are in poor condition and their existence is inconsistent along the length of the street. Even where they still do exist, the concrete is crumbling, decreasing functionality and adding to the perception of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer as disinvested (see Figures 19-21). Much of the street is unlit, save for the occasional cobrahead lamp. Cyclists and pedestrians are often forced to walk in the street amidst heavy traffic due to the dilapidated and inconsistent condition of sidewalks. While these basic streetscape elements can remain consistent from downtown up through Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, showing the narrative continuity between these different parts of the city, the large factory complexes and abundance of open space in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer are opportunities for distinctive streetscape features that would not work in the tighter urban fabric of downtown New Bedford. Washington-style street lamps have also been used around the Wamsutta Mills redevelopment, so their use on North Front Street will be consistent with that streetscaping as well.
Figure 19: Poorly maintained sidewalk on North Front Street; photo by author

Figure 20: Poorly maintained sidewalk on North Front Street; photo by author

Figure 21: Sidewalk disappearing along North Front Street amidst heavy traffic; photo by author
Maintaining Multimodal Transportation within the Neighborhood

One important aspect of the North Front Street streetscape will be the adequate provision of space for enjoyable, practical, and safe transportation for pedestrians and cyclists. Derek Santos noted when interviewed that new road planning projects in New Bedford now always involve consideration for bicycle transportation. While previous planning efforts have mentioned the importance of bicycle infrastructure to access downtown for new residents that will be attracted to TOD in the area, North Front Street is currently being used as a cycling corridor for different a demographic - the largely immigrant workforce in the seafood processing plants that access the working waterfront by bicycle from neighborhoods in the North End (see Figure 22). Bicycling is a powerfully democratizing form of transportation in urban areas; it is cheap, efficient, healthy, and environmentally friendly. These characteristics benefit all demographics in a city. Since it is already used for bicycling and because the current infrastructure is in such disrepair, North Front Street provides an excellent opportunity for New Bedford to introduce signature bicycle infrastructure. A practical, equal access transportation option in a part of the city that will symbolize both the industrial history and rebirth is a perfect narrative fit for Hicks-Logan-Sawyer.

Figure 22: A man rides his bicycle north into Hicks-Logan-Sawyer from the fish plants on North Front Street; pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure is currently non-existent on this stretch of busy road; photo by author
Programming Street Space

A unique advantage presented by the loose urban fabric and large spaces in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is the opportunity to creatively program space along North Front Street to help activate it and provide it with a unique sense of place. Unlike in downtown New Bedford, there is room for more extensive, creative street furniture, small pocket parks, and other community-oriented features. Because the neighborhood generally lacks public open space, there is significant potential for success for open space activities along North Front Street once the neighborhood starts to be redeveloped, particularly those that connect to and make use of the open space amenities already planned along the waterfront north of the DPA and at the revitalized fire pond north of Wamsutta Mills.

Further, in the spirit of making the most of its urban renewal-era constraints, the City could take advantage of the fact that Route 18 essentially runs parallel to North Front Street in order to temporarily shut down North Front Street for events without disrupting freight traffic coming to and from the working waterfront. As discussed in a prior chapter, the tactical urbanism movement is focused on improving livability at a small scale through incremental, often temporary improvements. Many tactical urbanist interventions, such as Open Streets, Play Streets, Parklets, and Pop-Ups involve temporary street closures and have proven successful in other communities. Such events might be especially effective in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer given the popularity of street fairs and festivals in other parts of the city and the marketing of loft space within the neighborhood to the creative class. (Lydon 2012). Traditional events held within proximity to Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, such as the Working Waterfront Festival, can be expanded to include additional events in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, especially once the Whale’s Tooth Station is installed and wayfinding to events from the station becomes important.

Creation of gateway and streetscape infrastructure improvements, as well as the utilization of temporary events and flexible space is a cost-effective way to promote New Bedford’s image. Indeed, this is both critical as part of the city’s narrative and important to establish the area as the gateway to a new New Bedford that is fertile ground for new industries and new populations. To recap, recommended improvements include:

1. Artistic installations in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer that highlight local artistic talent;
2. Signage better capitalizing on views from transit access points;
3. Streetscape improvements on North Front Street consistent with downtown New Bedford;
4. Pedestrian and bicycle-friendly streets; and
5. Opportunities for temporary programming, especially along North Front Street

The photo in Figure 23 shows the current conditions along North Front Street in the Heart of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. The rendering in Figure 24, based on the same photos, shows the same
streetscape with many of the interventions mentioned above.

Figure 23: North Front Street facing north; photo by author
Figure 24: This rendering shows the same photo as Figure 23 with streetscape improvements based on the elements and ideas discussed in this chapter; rendering by author, mural in background by street artist D*Face exists in Los Angeles.
8 PROMOTING THE GATEWAY

It is not enough for New Bedford to simply establish a gateway. The city needs to promote it. While the physical infrastructure, addition of new industries, and rail connection to Boston are an incredible opportunity for New Bedford, the City must also affirmatively promote this new chapter of the city’s story. It will look at the history of problems with perception between Boston and New Bedford residents and then look at ways the City can promote Hicks-Logan-Sawyer by proactively marketing the area, and the city in general, by promoting its opportunities, as well as providing visual indicators to those traveling to New Bedford that they have arrived in a place of opportunity.

Container architecture installations and site pre-vitalization are provided as ways that New Bedford can physically promote Hicks-Logan-Sawyer in advance of the South Coast Rail and before full buildout is possible pursuant to the Master Plan. The Hicks-Logan-Sawyer Master Plan calls for a twenty-year phasing period for the complete plan even assuming everything called for in the plan is feasible and on schedule. As Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is incrementally developed, the City needs an immediately implementable way to signal its status as an emerging gateway, particularly in conjunction with the commuter rail connection and the development of the offshore wind and growing arts industries. Hicks-Logan-Sawyer would benefit from temporary, affordable interventions that forward the city narrative even before the Master Plan build-out is fully complete. An iconic architectural gesture, using shipping containers to tie into the core of the city’s seafaring essence could be created prior to full redevelopment of the neighborhood to send a strong rebranding signal to those who might be attracted to New Bedford for residential, commercial, or industrial redevelopment.

Proactive Marketing in New Bedford

The rail connection is an excellent opportunity for New Bedford to focus on strengthening its brand to improve its regional exposure and image, and to attract the type of investment that will strengthen both New Bedford and the bond between New Bedford and Boston. Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is the clear place to start: it will serve as the gateway to the city and it presents a fresh canvas for branding and promotion. There are several important aspects to improving Hicks-Logan-Sawyer’s brand so as to signal its status as an emerging gateway to a city that is reinventing itself. The first aspect is marketing. Promoting the city must not simply focus on the tourist and recreational opportunities that the city has to offer, but be a proactive marketing strategy of New Bedford as a place to live: an affordable, accessible city with great urban amenities.

Ties to Boston: A Two-Way Perception Problem

It is no secret that New Bedford and Boston have had a tumultuous connection in recent years.
Suspicions run both ways. News reports in Boston media about New Bedford too often focus on the negative—issues like failing schools and crime. On the other side, many New Bedford residents perceive their corner of the state as forgotten, especially as money for infrastructure improvements in New Bedford was funneled to Boston for projects like the Big Dig. For instance, according to a December 7, 2003 article by David Kibbe in The Standard-Times, some blame bloated Big Dig financing, favoring Boston even amidst staggering costs, for putting what is now the South Coast Rail Project on hold for years. Governor Patrick’s persistent commitment to the South Coast Rail today is in part a response to the perception that the South Coast region has languished disconnected for years while investment has poured into other parts of the state.

Envy and blame of Boston in New Bedford run much deeper than infrastructure. Faced with economic decay in the 20th century, and isolated from Boston’s success in transforming itself into a post-industrial economy, many in New Bedford have blamed Boston for its troubles. Tufts University’s Justin Hollander found that many New Bedford residents thought that Boston was, in essence, dumping its low-income residents on New Bedford as its own economy improved. The oft-repeated storyline was that it became hard for absentee landlords to rent tenements after the mills closed, so they brought in Section 8 voucher holders from Boston. One resident told Hollander: “there have been a lot of changes in New Bedford, you used to know all your neighbors, could walk on your street. Boston fixed up its neighborhoods and sent them all down here.” Although Hollander heard this story many times, his research suggests that it does not have a factual basis. (Hollander 2013a). All the same, the feeling of being left behind as Boston prospers is a consistently present and troubling piece of the broader city narrative, and one that the South Coast Rail can help correct. New Bedford should seize the opportunity of the rail link to Boston to improve and reinforce the relationship between the cities. Increased exposure and dialogue can help to eliminate the type of urban legend discussed by Hollander. The rail connection will bring new people and companies to New Bedford and will help the city achieve its vision of a vibrant, diverse city that is a leader in creative arts and the offshore wind industry. It will also help New Bedford residents access amenities and opportunities in Boston. The re-connection to Boston by rail should invite a new vision of a positive, mutually beneficial relationship.

Case Study: Live Baltimore and Lowell Marketing

Baltimore is one post-industrial city that has benefited tremendously from its proximity to another major economic center. Downtown Baltimore is only about an hour’s train ride from Union Station in Washington, DC. Like Boston, Washington is bolstered by a strong economy that has led in recent years to astronomical real estate prices in the city. Many in Baltimore saw this as an opportunity for revitalization in their own city—offering an attractive urban environment proximate to Washington at a fraction of the cost. One organization in particular, Live Baltimore, has taken advantage of this situation. A non-profit that has existed in various forms since 1997, Live Baltimore is funded...
by community partners including local foundations and the City of Baltimore itself. It is a marketing organization designed to promote living in Baltimore, stem population loss, and promote the positive attributes of living in the city. It also acts as a clearinghouse for information for renters and home buyers.

Steve Gondol, the Executive Director of Live Baltimore, has been extensively engaged in its efforts to market Baltimore both in general and specifically to Washington residents. When interviewed, Gondol explained that he breaks the marketing targeted towards Washington into two components: identifying the market and making those identified aware of opportunities. To identify the market, Gondol looked at neighborhoods near the two Baltimore train stations (Penn and Camden) and identified neighborhoods within a 5 to 15 minute walking distance from those stations. In some of those neighborhoods, including Charles North, Belvedere, and Greenmount West, Gondol has seen new developments spring up that are particularly directed towards those who use the commuter rail. Marketing materials for new buildings, much like in Haverhill, specifically mention walkability to the commuter rail.

It is one thing for Baltimore to have high-quality, affordable urban neighborhoods, but if people in Washington are not aware of the opportunities, nobody will come. To raise awareness, Live Baltimore has engaged in a variety of tactics. Notably, it embarked on an advertising campaign in the DC Metro aimed at grabbing commuters’ attention by showing the contrast in housing affordability—how much you can get for your money—between Baltimore and Washington. Live Baltimore then followed up on the advertising by hosting events in Washington, including information sessions and happy hours, to give Washington residents intrigued by the advertisements an opportunity to interact with the Live Baltimore staff and Baltimore residents who make the commute to Washington. According to Gondol, the commuter rail connection to Washington is a valuable part of the Baltimore renaissance story but not the sole reason the city has seen a comeback. While it is hard to get specific data on how effective Live Baltimore’s marketing efforts with respect to commuting have been, data given to Live Baltimore by the Maryland Transit Authority indicate that commuter rail ridership numbers between Baltimore and Washington are high.

Like Baltimore, and more directly analogous to New Bedford, Lowell has also engaged in proactive marketing to encourage new residents. The Lowell Division of Planning and Development has spent over $500,000 on advertising and has used marketing consultants to find exposure in Boston and other New England news outlets. (Marketing Downtown Lowell). When interviewed, Adam Baacke, the Assistant City Manager and Director of Planning and Development for Lowell, spoke of a strategy similar to that employed by Live Baltimore. Lowell’s marketing has been aimed at accomplishing two goals: reaching an appropriate audience and getting Boston media outlets to cover those events. For instance, Lowell would send city employees and real estate developers and brokers to run events at trendy bars in Boston and
The Hicks-Logan-Sanyer Master Plan, lists four “implementation principles,” the final of which is entitled “Create and Promote the Hicks Logan Sawyer District Brand.” It reads:

The HLS District’s uniqueness as a waterfront mixed-use district could be used to make it a destination for residents in and around New Bedford as well as the region. Clearly defined street signage, consistent gateways, attractive buildings, streetscape improvements, and pleasing business signage could all add to HLS District’s Character. (BSC 2008, 5-2).
Effective branding does not mean simply building infrastructure and waiting. New Bedford needs to proactively market itself as a place to live and do business. Since, whether by highway or rail, Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is the first part of “urban” New Bedford many people see, the marketing of its redevelopment is especially important.

New Bedford can learn a lot from the experiences of Baltimore and Lowell. Like Lowell, New Bedford has a strong tradition of tourism marketing, so it would not be hard to expand its tourism marketing to focus on those who might be interested in living in New Bedford. Because New Bedford is often negatively perceived in Boston, both advertising in the city and hosting live events would likely effectively promote new living and business opportunities in conjunction with the South Coast Rail construction. In New Bedford, the time frame is convenient for such a marketing endeavor because the Whale’s Tooth Station is still years away, but multiple redevelopments in and around Hicks-Logan-Sawyer including Wamsutta Mills, Ropeworks, The Regency, and several other mill conversions along the Acushnet River are already stabilized. As such, marketing efforts could get ahead of the South Coast Rail to promote New Bedford in Boston in advance. When the commuter rail opens, the City can recruit residents of existing redevelopment projects to meet with a new wave of potential new residents in Boston. Further, New Bedford has excellent regional cultural draws such as the Whaling Museum, the Zeiterion Theater, and Aha! Nights. As the city’s gateway, Hicks-Logan-Sawyer has the opportunity to create a striking impression on those who visit those attractions and consider the city in a different light. As with Lowell, proactive marketing can reinforce that cycle.

In discussing the similarities and differences between Baltimore and New Bedford, Steve Gondol opined on how an effective marketing campaign could be established in a smaller, less developed city than Baltimore. In marketing New Bedford as a viable alternative to Boston for those who rely on Boston’s economy but are looking for a less expensive urban alternative, Gondol, when interviewed, presented several suggestions for how to rethink marketing. Since New Bedford is significantly smaller than Baltimore, Gondol suggests possibly starting with a designated current employee, either at the City itself or at the New Bedford Economic Development Council and pair that person with a marketing consultant. Gondol posits that the pair would want to do a marketing study on the image of New Bedford in Boston; focus groups could be asked what would make them want to live in New Bedford. Gondol says the team should determine the strongest point of New Bedford, in terms of attracting new residents from Boston, and then work out from there. Ideally there should be neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the train station where dining and culture already exists. While New Bedford does not have as many amenities near the Whale’s Tooth Station as Baltimore might have near its commuter rail stations, downtown New Bedford is close, as are a number of good restaurants (and a new grocery store) on Coggeshall and Sawyer Streets in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer on the northern side of I-195. This suggestion further supports the idea that the King’s
Highway Station should be left alone until the area in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer around Whale’s Tooth is thriving— the City should not try to do too much at once. Gondol suggests that marketing efforts will need funders for at least 3-5 years and powerful city figures backing the program. Given that New Bedford enjoys strong political leadership and the New Bedford Economic Development Council has already shown strong commitment to revitalizing Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, strong support from local leadership will likely already exist.

Further, New Bedford already has an excellent platform with which to start immediately incorporating information about living in New Bedford – its tourist marketing. The almost exclusive focus on tourism marketing in New Bedford is endemic of a broader problem for post-industrial cities. Local government experts Gerald Frug, David Barron, and Richard Ford write:

It is not hard to understand why the tourist city has proved to be so appealing. It has been especially attractive in the post-industrial era because it does not require a city to convince people to move to the city to live. A city simply has to entice temporary visitors, and they can be directed to those parts of the city in which the evidence of the post-war urban crisis can largely be kept from view. From this perspective, the emergence of the tourist city is symptomatic of urban decline and a reflection of disparate political influence within the city. (2010, 806).

New Bedford has traditionally focused its tourist marketing on small slices of the city, but now there is more to promote both downtown and in outlying neighborhoods. The industrial areas of the city, once synonymous with decay are now places of opportunity. In New Bedford, the City’s Office of Tourism & Marketing, in partnership with the New Bedford Economic Development Council, maintains an impressive website, “Destination New Bedford” (www.destinationnewbedford.org). Destination New Bedford is an attractive, comprehensive site with detailed information about the arts, historical and cultural attractions, restaurants, shopping, recreational opportunities, festivals, and special events. Currently, the focus is on tourism operations and on downtown, not in bringing new residents and businesses to the city. To expand the scope of this project slightly to begin promoting the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer gateway would not be onerous. That the Wamsutta Mills renovation and the Ropeworks artist live/work lofts are already successful prior to the South Coast Rail gives the Office of Tourism & Marketing material to work with ahead of time, so that by the time Whale’s Tooth is operational, the new gateway way to the city will already be in the process of being promoted.

Not only can Destination New Bedford provide information about moving to New Bedford for both people and companies, but it can provide additional information so that visitors can explore areas of the city like Hicks-Logan-Sawyer that are off the tourist circuit but available for growth and reinvigoration. Figure 1 shows a pamphlet on Acushnet Avenue in the North End that could provide a template for the endeavor. The map clearly and attractively highlights culinary attractions.
in the neighborhood. A similar format could easily be adapted to highlight mill conversions, waterfront access points, galleries, and event spaces. The insert map is particularly useful, showing how close the North End is to the tourist-trafficked area downtown and showing in a gestural sense how to make the trip. Small marketing interventions like these work well to integrate non-downtown city assets into the tourist fold and the holistic historical narrative that makes the city interesting, which as Adam Baacke described above, helps promote the city as a livable place.

When outsiders think of New Bedford as a quaint historic, artistic place only appropriate for a day or weekend visit, they are missing the opportunities that exist for distinctive housing and flexible office or creative space, much of it planned to be within walking distance of Whale’s Tooth Station. Marketing efforts that proactively promote the city and tie New Bedford’s past to its future through Hicks-Logan-Sawyer will better highlight the true opportunities presented by the South Coast Rail connection and the gateway to the city. In order to proactively market New Bedford’s future, as opposed to its history, there has to be something there to market. Representative architectural interventions and pre-vitalization can provide an iconic new image to Hicks-Logan-Sawyer even before the build-out envisioned in the Master Plan is realized.

Figure 1: The brochure developed by the New Bedford Economic Council available on www.destinationnewbedford.org for the Acushnet Ave. corridor in the North End
Use of Container Architecture

The long time frame estimated to complete the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer redevelopment presents problems with respect to branding the neighborhood as a gateway in conjunction with the South Coast Rail project. This thesis has examined ways in which New Bedford's future plans tie into its history, be it attracting new populations because of affordable, distinctive housing options, developing creative industries, or becoming a regional or national hub for the offshore wind industry. It has also examined how Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, as a new gateway to the city, can both physically and metaphorically represent the convergence of these forces. Incremental interventions such as underpass gateways, streetscape improvements, and proactive marketing are critical to set up the area for success, but building and site activation within the neighborhood must also occur in the neighborhood in the relative near term in order to promote the gateway.

Studies have found that a major component to revitalization efforts aimed to attract visitors to industrial towns has typically been:

the development of a major new physical facility (concert hall or museum, for example) in order to provide a focal point and catalyst for developers, media coverage and tourists alike. (Gold and Ward 1994, 106)

While such revitalization efforts that offer major culture amenities (often known the Bilbao Effect after the impact that the Guggenheim Bilbao had in Basque Country) have been well-documented, New Bedford already has its major museum draw in the Whaling Museum. This attraction is located within a historic context. The Whaling National Historical Park is a critical cultural asset, but its goal is not to suggest that New Bedford is making bold gestures indicative of its future. Stephen V. Ward, writes, in Selling Places, that to market themselves, re-invented cities usually want public art, the “refurbishment, repackaging and re-use of major historic structures,” and new signature trophy buildings that can serve as grand visual statements. (1998, 193-194). He writes:

[The] essential point about all these devices—the flagship developments, the use of design, the references to the past and the use of public art—was that the form and spaces of the post-industrial city had to be striking and imageable. Whether in the city marketer’s brochure or the lens of the tourist, the intention was to signal change in an arresting and eye-catching way. (Id., 194).

Hicks-Logan-Sawyer already contains some reuse of historic structures and more is planned.

2 Delays in funding for the South Coast Rail due to current political wrangling likely won’t alleviate these concerns because they will also delay the timeframe for investment around the station and make some of the interventions discussed herein all the more important.
Certainly, enough redevelopable mill buildings exist for much of the neighborhood to be comprised of this type of asset. While much of the publicly accessible art is located downtown in galleries and in association with the UMass Dartmouth Star Store Campus, artists will be drawn to mill redevelopments in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer and already populate the Ropeworks. Artists too confined by the limited opportunities for public art downtown will head north. Additionally, the New Bedford Museum of Glass is located in Wamsutta Mills. What New Bedford still needs is a new flagship development: one that serves as a visual cue that is both consistent with the city's narrative and which also presents an opportunity for public art in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. Building such a project in an era of depressed real estate markets and a twenty-year incremental build-out period for the neighborhood will present challenges. While the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer Master Plan calls for a number of new buildings to be built in the neighborhood, there have been virtually no new buildings of note built anywhere in New Bedford in the last several decades, let alone any that could be considered in any way iconic; the City needs to be realistic about what is feasible in the short-term. The solution to this conundrum could lie in container architecture and site pre-vitalization.

Architecture that uses shipping containers as building blocks has increased in popularity in recent years. While it can seem faddish in some circumstances container buildings can provide a modular, cost-effective, visually striking way to make an architectural statement in the right context. Considering New Bedford's market constraints and its need to activate Hicks-Logan-Sawyer while full development is phased-in, container architecture is a perfect way for the city to do something innovative in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer.

A container architecture installation would provide an outstanding narrative tie for the city's history and future. While the City's whaling days are over, the fishing industry is still a major part of New Bedford's economy and an even bigger part of its identity. New Bedford's vision for the future is also tied to the sea, especially with respect to the offshore wind industry and the continued importance of fishing. New Bedford's narrative specifically involves its status as port. From the whaling era onwards, New Bedford has been a fishing port of international importance. Today, even as jobs in the industry dwindle, it is the number one fishing port in the country. Further, as the South Terminal gets developed for wind, New Bedford could eventually see manufacturing jobs, but its initial primary purpose is as a port and a staging area for offshore wind installation and maintenance. The location of the majority of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer above the designated DPA provides the opportunity to build container architecture on actual waterfront property intermingled with historic buildings (Figures 2 and 3).

As such, container architecture has strong narrative value for New Bedford. Writes Jure Kotnik in Container Architecture, "Before becoming part of a house, a container probably sailed the oceans and visited the world's largest ports..." (2008, 20). Similarly, the editors of Container Atlas write that "[t]he globalized container box evokes certain associations: the image of a well-traveled item
is automatically linked with the raw atmosphere of a busy port... The more striking the building solutions using (freight) containers, the stronger the associative effect of the containers appears to be.” (Slawik, et al. 2010, 10). As discussed, people coming to New Bedford on business because of the wind industry are likely to arrive via the interstate or at Whale’s Tooth Station. If they are greeted by striking container architecture, it will symbolize that Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is a gateway that both looks to New Bedford’s history and to its future opportunities involving the sea. Shipping containers are already part of the neighborhood’s post-industrial landscape (see Figures 4 and 5) so using them as a narrative tie-in is not a stretch.

Figures 2 and 3: The physical and narrative tie to water is a significantly underutilized asset in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. The harborfront (left) behind Revere Copper is outside of the DPA and could thus be available for a wide variety of uses. The Wamsutta Mills fire pond (right), is surrounded by distinctive mill buildings and could be an additional water-based asset if cleaned up; photos by author

Figures 4 and 5: Shipping containers already form a part of the landscape in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. Creating an architectural or artistic installation using them as materials would build on the existing industrial, waterfront feel of the neighborhood, consistent with everyday urbanism; photos by author
Container architecture also has parallels to the New Bedford narrative in terms of renewability. While New Bedford has a long history of providing energy, the whaling industry declined in part because it was so unsustainable. With offshore wind, New Bedford can once again be a hub of energy production, this time using a sustainable model. Container architecture can be built out of recycled artifacts, which symbolizes sustainability and reuse. Indeed, this is a symbol for the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer gateway more generally as well. Industrial buildings once used for one purpose will now be recycled to be used for another.

Shipping container architecture is also a great fit for Hicks-Logan-Sawyer due to the city's financial constraints. Shipping containers are sturdy, weather-resistant, prefabricated, mass-produced, cheap, and mobile. (Kotnik 2008, 14). A used shipping container typically costs $1,500. Writes Jure Kotnik about the cost-saving potential of container architecture:

> Using shipping containers for construction purposes can... result in lower prices and consequently a more accessible architecture, as well as help solve tight-budget problems. The low costs of this type of construction is also due to the system's modular nature, which enables, structures to be dis-assembled, moved, and then reassembled quickly with ease. (2008, 14).

Thus, an iconic structure could be affordably assembled in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer and could be moved or repositioned if and when the permanent new development envisioned in the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer Master Plan comes to fruition. Further, container architecture need not be placed on a foundation cast into the soil, which is perfect for a demand-uncertain area and also where brownfields are likely to exist. (Id., 15). Even if container architecture might not be consistent with the full build out contemplated in the site plan in the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer Master Plan, structures can be assembled now to create a symbolic gateway in advance of the Whale's Tooth Station connection and removed, modified, or repositioned later in conjunction with development efforts (or if they become a productive and beloved part of the cityscape, they can remain permanently). Large open spaces currently exist that can be activated by container architecture in advance, or even instead, of more permanent buildout (see Figures 6-10).

Finally, in addition to their practicality, container projects can be exactly the type of iconic architecture that is needed in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, both to reestablish connectivity to the rest of the city and the rest of Massachusetts, and to aid in marketing that connectivity. Virtually all container architecture installations have received media attention. (Id., 10). The Container Atlas states that container architecture can now boast a "progressive and intelligent image." (Slawik, et al. 2010, 10).
Jure Kotnik writes that:

Container architecture has drawn attention mainly from people close to the world of design, fashion, architecture, and those who can appreciate fresh and trendy concepts. Because fresh and trendy is what container definitely are, since this is what the media has made them to be. A container has everything such people could want; it is mobile, autonomous, flexible, environment-conscious and has the charisma of a true cosmopolitan. (2008, 20)

As such, container architecture is an excellent way to signal that New Bedford is open for business and ready to be put back on the map, both in terms of its connection to the Boston area but also in terms of homegrown art and industry. Container structures are not merely artistic. They are functional as well. As the offshore wind industry grows and associated companies look to develop office space in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer close to transit connections, an iconic container building would be an ideal office setting. The containers can be used as workspaces that can be expanded or moved as the needs of emerging industries change. Containers can be moved, repositioned, or aggregated for continued use should the city attract a major wind turbine manufacturer. With offshore wind and other port-related uses again abutting the waterfront by the northern and southern parts of the city, New Bedford's narrative of industrial and immigrant growth outside the historic downtown will be rejuvenated.

Figures 6-10: Examples of some of the numerous large voids in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer that could be activated by container architecture; photos by author
Case Study: Container Architecture

Container architecture has proliferated around the world. While many container installations are temporary and ephemeral, many have become beloved features of cityscapes and have endured as part of the permanent urban fabric. Here are several examples of successful container architecture projects that have specific features that make them relevant as precedents for New Bedford and Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. All images are from the books *Container Architecture* (Kotnik 2010) and *Container Atlas* (Slawik et al. 2010) and were taken by multiple photographers as referenced in those books. Descriptions are based on elements described in those books.

Figures 11-13: The Freitag bag flagship store in Zurich includes sales, presentation, and stockroom space. Its 17 containers are held together with fasteners for easy dismantling. The tower is an iconic beacon on the skyline and is designed to have visibility from and to an adjacent elevated highway and railyard, as well as nearby lakefront. Its location in an industrial neighborhood next to rail and road transportation hubs makes it relevant as a precedent for Hicks-Logan-Sawyer.
Figures 14 and 15: The headquarters of Platoon, a creative firm in Berlin is built out of four shipping containers nestled among more traditional urban fabric. The building has an outdoor space on the roof including a swimming pool shaped like railroad tracks. Such an installation could form the headquarters of a wind energy or creative industry start-up in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, and a rooftop pool would have harbor views.

Figures 16 and 17: The Wijn of Water Restaurant is located on the bank of the Maas River in Rotterdam. The restaurant is made out of eight shipping containers and is specifically designed to be a temporary location, lasting until a permanent restaurant space is available. The tower serves as a landmark, while the lower containers are set up to shield al fresco diners from wind. Such a temporary restaurant could be set up in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer along the portion of the waterfront north of the DPA. This could serve as experimental space and help attract residents and visitors to the area.
Figures 18-22: The Orbino gallery in Naverna, Netherlands (above and left) and the GAD Gallery in Oslo (left and below) are good examples of minimalist, temporary container installations (the Orbino has been relocated twice) used for gallery space. Both are designed specifically to coexist with elements of their industrial harborfront locations. The GAD installation is designed to be light and airy in a way that plays off the sea. The installations' locations in cold, wet climates shows that similar infrastructure is possible in New Bedford. Similar structures in New Bedford could offer a dramatic foil to the more traditional mill buildings already existing, while providing the same flexibility of raw space usable for New Bedford's burgeoning artistic community.
Figures 23-27: The installations shown here, from Spain, Belgium, and the Netherlands show that containers can be utilized for external performance space, such as theater or a circus, or can simply be part of the landscape as sculpture. Perhaps the first container installation in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer can fall into this category. The City need not identify a tenant or an indoor use - it can start the reactivation of space through container architecture by simply putting up a large eye-catching sculpture that ties into the areas' fishing and seafaring history and compliments its more historic architecture by creating something new but complimentary.
Site Pre-Vitalization Through Temporary Uses

To create and market an effective gateway in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, its vast spaces must be activated. Because there is so much space in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, and because planners have anticipated a long, incremental process to fully redevelop the whole neighborhood, it is important to consider temporary uses that will bring positive attention and visitors to the district. Such temporary uses can be incorporated into container architecture installations, themselves flexible and ephemeral forms.

The tactical urbanism movement has created a concept, “Pre-Vitalization,” which is highly useful in thinking about ways to promote Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. If the end goal for Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is reactivation and revitalization, pre-vitalization is the “temporary re-activation of a previously inactive, underutilized parcel of land.” (Lydon 2012, 27). This can be viewed as a transition period; rather than just states of vacancy and underuse on one end and full build-out on the other, pre-vitalization offers a transition period where value can be built for both the land itself and the neighborhood in which it sits. Pre-vitalization’s goal is to “generate needed revenue for the land owner/developer, raise the community’s awareness about the site’s long-term potential, and to build community while supporting local entrepreneurs.” (Id., emphasis added). The importance of pre-vitalization in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is related to its status as a gateway. Even though some Hicks-Logan-Sawyer buildings (for instance, Wamsutta Mills) have already been revitalized, a pre-revitalization regime will activate the space around them before the whole neighborhood is revitalized, which will increase property values, create a market for land, and provide flexible visually-interesting space for small vendors and the art community. The Tactical Urbanism Manual suggests multiple pre-vitalization uses that can occur on a site before a permanent building (or in many cases here, the renovation of a building) is possible, including studios, art exhibitions, festivals, meetings, markets, beer gardens, and micro-retail. (Id.).

Importantly here, pre-vitalization strategies can be used in conjunction with container architecture. Because container architecture can itself be ephemeral, spaces can be temporarily activated using
structures or clusters of containers. While the end goal is to create the market for the type of full build-out presented in the Master Plan, container architecture's temporary and modular nature can help alleviate concerns that smaller vendors and artists involved in pre-vitalization be pushed out when real estate values increase. The amount of underutilized space in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer leaves room for container structures to be moved and repositioned as the market demands. The city could commit to leaving at least a portion of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer permanently available for container architecture so that it remains both part of the visual landscape and a venue for those who might not have access to more permanent architecture for their business.

Case Study: DeKalb Market

A good example for Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is DeKalb Market in Brooklyn. DeKalb Market is a flea market housed in a cluster of reused shipping containers in Downtown Brooklyn. According to Jacob Osterhout and Amanda Sigman in their New York Daily News article on June 10, 2012, it played host to a variety of vendors and entrepreneurs, including jewelry-makers, bakeries, clothing boutiques, eateries, an urban farm, and performance space. The market was successful, but was forced to move in 2012 due to planned development of an apartment building and department store. While this development was quite controversial in the neighborhood, it highlights the flexibility of using container architecture for pre-activation. The market now plans to relocate elsewhere in Brooklyn. Eldon Scott of Urban Space, the organization that runs DeKalb Market, told the Daily News on June 28, 2012 that "because the market is made with shipping containers, [Urban Space] can carry out the move ‘in record time…leave a minimal environmental footprint and cause minimal disruption to vendors and patrons…” Such a market could provide an important opportunity to activate Hicks-Logan-Sawyer while the city waits for developers to develop particular parcels, while at the same time providing a distinctive venue for local artisans and entrepreneurs. The market could be moved to accommodate the development of new buildings as provided in the master plan and would visually complement the existing mill buildings and the iconic container structure discussed in the section above. If successful enough (the real estate market New Bedford does not provide the same type of pressure that it does in Brooklyn) such an installation could become a permanent fixture of the landscape.

The key takeaway from the DeKalb Market is that even vibrant pre-vitalization efforts can be temporary, and can serve to provide intensive activation without the capital commitment of building a permanent development on a site. If eventually the market exists to develop the site, such an intervention can be reconfigured or moved to another nearby location.
Through targeted marketing, as well as the creation of an iconic structure and the use of temporary activation techniques in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, New Bedford can promote the distinctive features and unique opportunities of the neighborhood while priming it for further redevelopment and cementing its status as the new gateway to the city. New Bedford needs to proactively market itself as a place to do business and live, not just as a place to visit as a tourist. While such marketing schemes are not mutually exclusive, New Bedford must get out in front of its image. With downtown New Bedford almost entirely built out, Hicks-Logan-Sawyer offers the gateway connection, flexible mill buildings, and vast waterfront space for the city to truly create something new and different there. As David Spillane of Goody Clancy pointed when interviewed, part of the appeal of Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is that it feels raw and unfinished. Using container architecture to further the experience of the gritty, industrial side of the city compliments the quaint downtown and offers opportunities not available there but still in close proximity to its amenities. Using historical connections to create something different in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer and affirmatively promoting such ideas will put the neighborhood well on its way to achieving what was imagined in earlier planning efforts and setting New Bedford apart as a gateway city with an enduring vision, rooted in its past.
9 MOVING FORWARD

New Bedford's history is at once unique and emblematic of many small post-industrial cities. Unlike most other such cities, its status, with Nantucket, as the epicenter of the world whaling industry was followed by a continuing tradition as an internationally important fishing port. Throughout the 20th century, however, it developed many of the same problems as its peers: a stagnant economy, population loss, a lack of educational achievement, and ensuing crime and social problems. Compared to many its peers, New Bedford's history dazzles, but it unfortunately slipped into the doldrums affecting many small northeastern cities that have not transitioned to the information economy.

Now, as some post-industrial cities start to experience an urban renaissance, New Bedford should rightfully be leading the pack. Its urban core was largely spared from the bulldozer during the Urban Renewal. It offers distinctive architecture from multiple eras, from sprawling Victorian mansions to urban apartments in converted mill buildings. Its harbor, overflowing with boats from commercial fishing fleets, is stunningly picturesque. UMass Dartmouth, by moving its graduate arts programs into downtown New Bedford, participated in and further catalyzed an artist and retail renaissance that continues to grow. Perhaps most importantly, New Bedford is located less than 60 miles from Boston, where the economy is booming and real estate prices are extremely high.

That New Bedford has not fully lived up to its potential is at least in part due to poor connectivity. Unlike all other significant post-industrial cities in Eastern Massachusetts save for its neighbor Fall River, New Bedford is not connected to Boston via commuter rail. This is both a physical problem and a gestural one- it symbolizes the languishing of the South Coast region while other parts of Massachusetts have seen explosive growth. Now with the South Coast Rail project planned, if the Commonwealth is eventually willing to fund it, New Bedford has an opportunity to reconnect with Boston to substantially aid in the renaissance that has already been started by the artist community and other small businesses. While ground zero for New Bedford's resurgence has been downtown, the inflection point for the connection to Boston is at the planned Whale's Tooth Station and in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is an unusually moldable canvas; its empty lots and underutilized buildings providing a large quantity of flexible space in a city that is otherwise mostly built out. Quintessentially New Bedford, the neighborhood's harborfront location and hulking mill buildings offer regeneration opportunities that closely fit into the city's narrative.

A place so seeped with history deserves a vision that is unordinary and forward thinking. The city is lucky to have New Bedford Economic Development Council driving its planning efforts. The organization clearly understands what is needed to steer New Bedford towards a prosperous future, and its insistence on bold new ideas, such as turning New Bedford's port infrastructure into the premier staging ground for the East Coast offshore wind industry, are vital to the city's future. The
planning that has been done for Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, however, while containing important insight and analysis fails, to create a tangible vision for how to intervene in the short term to make Hicks-Logan-Sawyer a vibrant and dynamic gateway to New Bedford.

The interventions for Hicks-Logan-Sawyer described in this thesis, be they based on the theories city imaging, tactical urbanism, everyday urbanism, or some elements of each, all work towards a common goal: priming the neighborhood to become one of the city's most vibrant, an area that capitalizes on history and looks aggressively to the future to provide an attractive gateway to the city. These interventions proposed here are in some respects modest, suggesting the capitalization on existing space, infrastructure, and resources, much of which is unique. For Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, this thesis takes the everyday urbanist view that what has evolved naturally in the neighborhood, including its raw atmosphere, is what has the potential to make it most exciting. On the other hand, the approach here is novel. This thesis seeks to shift the short term focus from the conventional master planning that has been done and focus on a different kind of planning that is more concerned with connecting to narrative and activating space than on planning what type of building or use is appropriate for each place in the neighborhood.

The lack of existing residents and large amounts of open space in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer give the city greater than average flexibility to mold the neighborhood to fit its agenda. By seriously examining how Hicks-Logan-Sawyer fits into New Bedford's urban narrative, and using that information to help determine what the neighborhood should become, the city should arrive at the conclusion that Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is a place for newcomers and new ideas: a place to be bold. The existing industrial infrastructure and waterfront location can be capitalized on to generate excitement and new ideas.

Next Steps

While waiting for the South Coast Rail to come in and for the offshore wind industry to take off, the long-term major economic boosts that Derek Santos describes as "home runs," plenty of incremental change can happen in the meantime to make Hicks-Logan-Sawyer a more vibrant, interesting place, and prime it to become the new gateway to the city. While some of the interventions described in this thesis require public infrastructure and real estate developers to take action, there are immediate steps that can be taken to bring vitality to Hicks-Logan-Sawyer.

Mill Occupant Inventory

First, the City needs to take inventory of what exists in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer at the moment. While the mill buildings and properties were all inventoried several years ago, it would be useful to know going forward who is occupying what space and for what purpose. If the goal is creating and active
gateway, the City should build on the entrepreneurial capital that already exists in the area. Walking around Hicks-Logan-Sawyer one can see the beginnings of some of the ideas expressed in this thesis taking shape- the occupation of parts of large hulking mill buildings for small businesses that might need cheap and flexible space (see Figures 1 and 2). For instance, there are multiple small industrial shops involved with metals and fabrication that rent space in some of the larger mill buildings. The City and the Economic Development Council should take inventory of these businesses and start a dialogue among them to better map out how space in some of the larger mill buildings is currently utilized. Although, compared to denser parts of the city, the number of businesses and residents in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is small, the City and the Economic Development Council should work with those that are there to create a neighborhood organization that can work with the City help forward the vision for the neighborhood.

Coordination with Art Institutions

Second, the City and the Economic Development Council should tap into the enormous resources of the art community and UMass Dartmouth. The potential impact of the art community surrounding UMass Dartmouth on Hicks-Logan-Sawyer revitalization is enormous. While many students and professors live, work, and shop downtown, many are involved in public art that does not have a place in this quaint, legally-protected neighborhood. When interviewed, Leslie Macklin, a current MFA student at UMass Dartmouth, who has been significantly involved with public art in New Bedford, explained that while all the action of the arts scene is downtown around the Star Store Campus, the downtown has basically already run out of space for additional student public art projects. Post-bach students at UMass Dartmouth are required to complete art installations in public space in New Bedford, and it has become very difficult to get students into appropriate spaces--yet the focus still remains downtown.

UMass Dartmouth would be an obvious leader in expanding art-related interventions in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. They have the talent; Hicks-Logan Sawyer has the space... and not just any space. The possibilities for public art amidst the backdrop of abandoned industrial space are endless. Many of the interventions discussed in this thesis, including temporary event spaces, gateway installations,
innovative signage, and container installations could be part of the arts curriculum at UMass Dartmouth. Other related organizations around the downtown arts scene are also showing interest in such large-scale public art. For instance, Ugly Gallery, described as one of the most innovative galleries in New Bedford, with a largely young, local following, has recently created a public art project called #wheresthelove?, which involves images printed on a wall downtown (see Figure 3). Such cheap, ephemeral art would go a long way towards getting people excited about Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. To eventually be an effective gateway people have to want to go there, and the downtown art world is bursting with talent that could use an urban canvass just down the road. As art happens in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, the community will be drawn to it, especially since groups that promote art in the community, such as Ahal and Artworks! already exist. Currently the events run by these organizations are almost entirely downtown, but such groups could be instrumental in expanding their geographic scope, and would be followed by other artists looking for high-quality, flexible space to live, work, and create.

This can happen on a small scale starting immediately. The City or the Economic Development Council should designate a point person to be a liaison to the art community, to help artists identify available space that would further the gateway vision of the neighborhood. Someone in an official capacity with knowledge of opportunities should interface regularly with UMass, Ahal, and Artworks! to streamline the process of bringing artistic talent and those who promote it into Hicks-Logan-Sawyer. The Economic Development Council has already shown leadership on this issue. Its Creative Economy Task force visited eight cities in 2007 to learn lessons about what to do to further support the creative economy. After meeting with officials and members of the art communities in cities such as Providence, Portsmouth, and Lowell, the Task Force recommended that better infrastructure be set up to create partnerships and coordinate efforts between city government and the art community. (Knowles 2008). For instance, if an artist in New Bedford is looking to create public art in Hicks-Logan-Sawyer, he or she should know who (either an individual or an office) at the City or the Economic Development Council to contact in order to easily identify opportunities within the neighborhood. Further, this process can be coordinated with the City’s proactive marketing function to streamline the advantages of activation in the neighborhood. An example of such a public arts clearinghouse function already exists in Lowell, with the city-affiliated non-profit Cultural Organization of Lowell ("COOL"). New Bedford can look to COOL for guidance, and

Figure 3: #Whereisthelove? installation, downtown New Bedford; photo courtesy of the Ugly Gallery
indeed the Task Force met with its Executive Director on its visit.

The two immediate interventions presented here work together. The inventory of businesses within Hicks-Logan-Sawyer will help the City identify potential co-location synergies within the mill buildings that are not just mutually beneficial for existing business, but could also bring artists and new businesses into the fold. For instance, it might be useful for a sculptor to co-locate with a metal fabrication shop to share knowledge, resources, equipment, and machinery. This could also help integrate the downtown-based art community into parts of the city that are more traditionally working class. The main point here is possibility. With excellent space and infrastructure, Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is ready to be curated. With coordination and good leadership, Hicks-Logan-Sawyer could be active and exciting when the South Coast Rail finally rolls into town.

In these ways, the city can immediately focus on starting to create connections between Hicks-Logan-Sawyer and the rest of the city and creating a democratizing public realm. Downtown New Bedford is charming and unlikely to change from its current physical form. Hicks-Logan-Sawyer can compliment this as a laboratory not for staid, traditional, proscribed development patterns, but for temporary architecture, event space, and new companies and industries. Hicks-Logan-Sawyer is where the city can innovate in order to show the rest of the world those assets and highlight the potential for the city to resume its position of greatness and connection to the forces that are leading the resurgence of urban areas nationwide.
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