

Cranston Mixed-Use Centers and Corridors

Existing Conditions & Preliminary District Boundaries

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Introduction

Cranston, RI, is a city of over 82,000 residents and the third largest city in Rhode Island by population and by number of jobs. Immediately bordering Providence, the state's capital and main employment center, and Warwick, the home of T.F. Green International Airport, Cranston is well-positioned for development focused on increasing housing and access to transit and encouraging economic development. Past and ongoing planning efforts, both at the state and local levels, recognize this. For example, leading up to the publication of the 2014 [Passenger and Freight Rail Supplement](#) to the state's Long Range Transportation Plan, Cranston had been considered as a potential site for a new MBTA Commuter Rail Station alongside Pawtucket/Central Falls, which ultimately won out as a recommended location. This interest and support for transit and transit-related development is also reflected in Cranston's 2012 Comprehensive Plan, which recognized mixed-use and transit-oriented development opportunities, especially in the industrial area and rail yard between Elmwood Avenue and Wellington Avenue and near properties at the I-295/Rt. 37 intersection.

Today, the City's 2024 Comprehensive Plan specifically ties this kind of development to other goals, including economic development, smart growth, sustainability, and walkability. Cranston also has representatives participating in Grow Smart RI's first [Main Street Learning Cohort](#), a program stemming from a [statewide initiative](#) focused on supporting the revitalization, growth, and promotion of thriving "main streets" in Rhode Island.

With the 2008 development of Chapel View, Cranston has seen that blending housing, retail, and employment in a mixed-use development can outperform conventional development across multiple measures, including walkability, historic preservation, and city tax revenue generation. Increased walkability can support mobility for residents of all ages and abilities, while historic preservation strengthens community identity. Expanding mixed-use development can also boost City revenue, as higher concentrations of residential and commercial uses generate more tax revenue per acre. In addition, these developments can provide cost savings for maintenance of roads, utilities, and sidewalks by serving more people within a smaller area. As a result, mixed-use developments support the City's revenue-generating model while enhancing quality of life for residents.

While transit is a key ingredient for this kind of development, Cranston is more broadly interested in fostering mixed-use development within key centers and along key corridors. This blend of residential, commercial, cultural, and/or industrial land uses is envisioned to support the development of housing, contribute to a sense of place and community, and help the City in meeting its economic and sustainability goals

The Cranston Mixed-Use Centers and Corridors project is funded through the [RIHousing Transit Oriented Development Zoning \(TOD\) Program](#). The program, jointly administered by the Department of Housing and RIHousing, provides funding to support the creation of local districts that enable additional housing development in proximity to transit.



With this funding, the City is working to accomplish the following tasks:

- Identifying areas (focusing on corridors and neighborhood centers) within the City that have the potential to support mixed-use development
- Determining boundaries for up to three proposed mixed-use zoning districts
- Drafting zoning amendment language
- Engaging with the public, key stakeholders, and the City Plan Commission

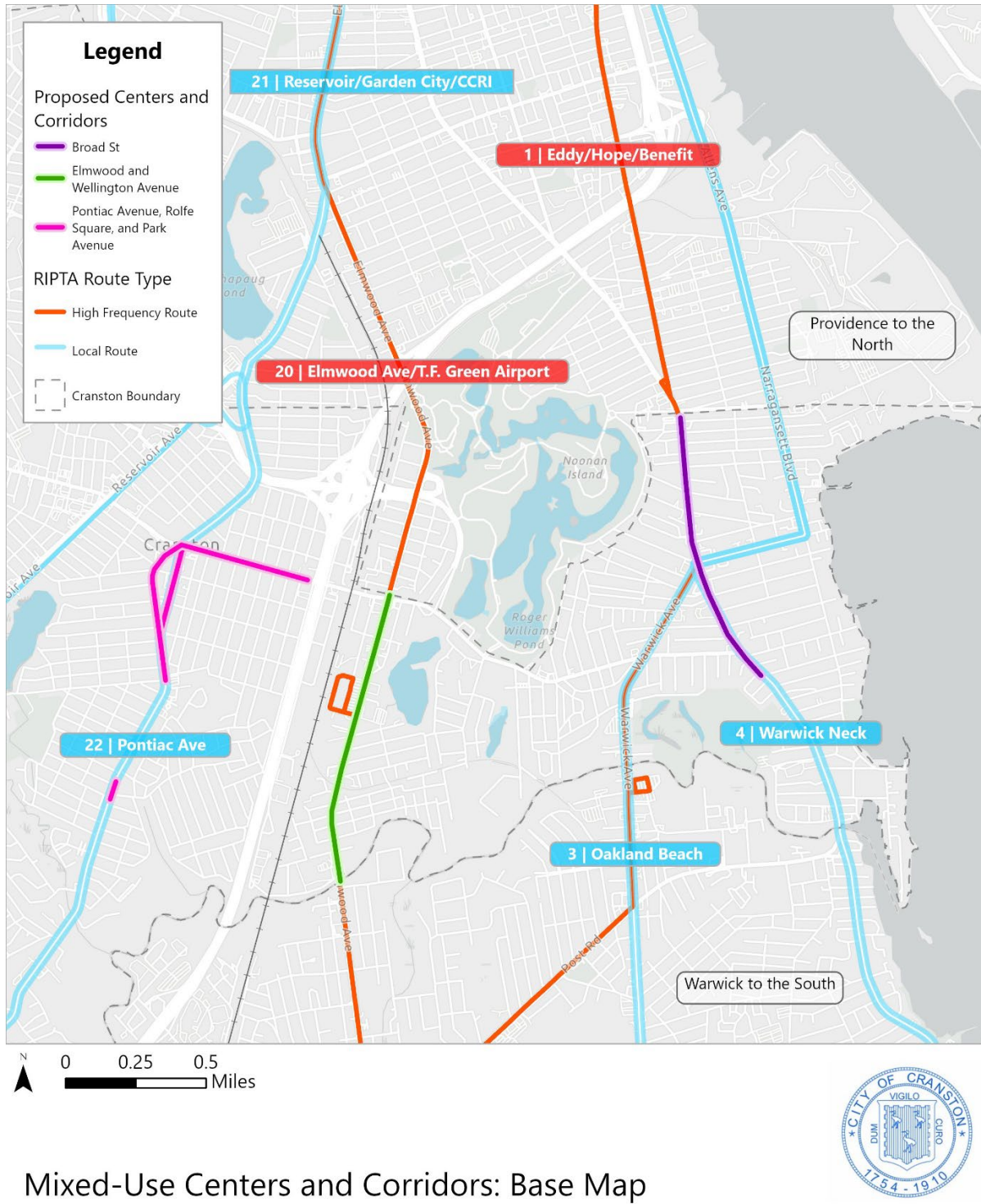
Proposed Mixed-Use Centers and Corridors

The following summary memo outlines the process by which the following proposed mixed-use centers and corridors were selected (see **Figure 1**):

- Pontiac Avenue, Rolfe Square, and Park Avenue
- Elmwood Avenue and Wellington Avenue
- Broad Street

The selection of these corridors was informed by a process that included a comprehensive document review, collection of data about existing conditions, review of existing zoning regulations, a project kick-off meeting and site walk, and guidance from City Planning Department staff. A summary of the process and evaluation framework is provided in the following sections.





Mixed-Use Centers and Corridors: Base Map

Figure 1. Proposed Mixed-Use Centers and Corridors



Existing Conditions

DOCUMENT REVIEW

The project team reviewed past planning efforts to understand existing policies, visions, and recommendations related to mixed-use centers and corridors in and around Cranston. This section summarizes key findings from this review.

Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) Metro Connector Study (2025)

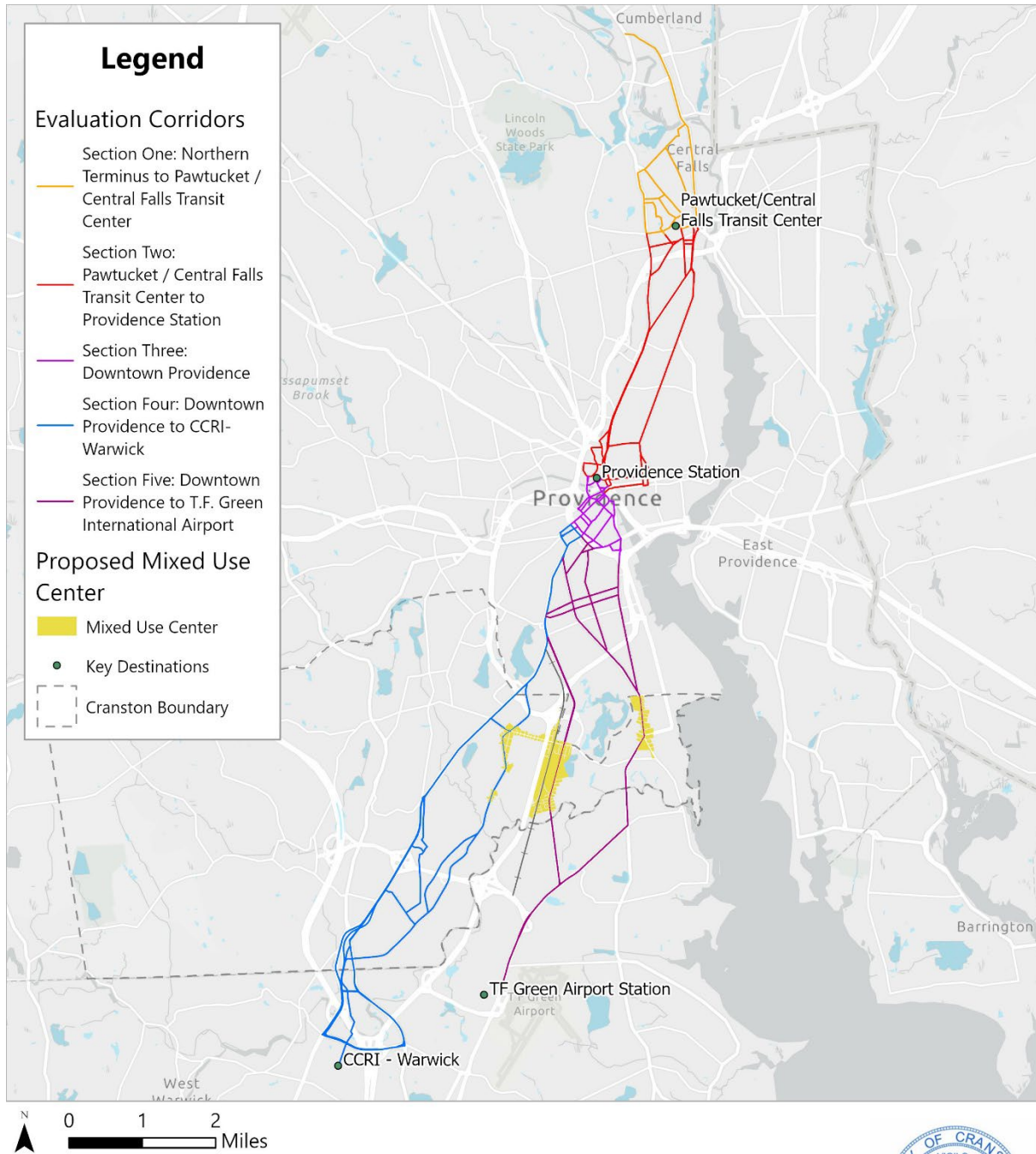
The [Metro Connector Study](#) is a high-capacity transit alternatives analysis led by RIPTA in collaboration with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) and local municipalities, including Cranston. One of the primary goals of the study is to grow transit ridership by connecting high-demand areas with service that is competitive with driving in terms of speed and reliability. To this end, the study is evaluating options for fast, frequent, and reliable transit, specifically Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) or Light Rail Transit (LRT), to connect major regional hubs.

MIXED-USE CENTERS AND CORRIDORS RELEVANCE

Two of the five initial proposed route sections traverse Cranston, as shown in **Figure 2**. Section 4 included Pontiac Avenue while Section 5 included Elmwood Avenue.

A secondary evaluation has further analyzed specific potential route alignments and transit modes throughout these five sections. As shown in **Figure 3**, Broad Street and Elmwood Avenue are now being considered for either light rail (LRT) or bus rapid transit (BRT). The project began in Spring 2024 and is expected to identify a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) route and transit mode by mid-2026.





Metro Connector Sections

Figure 2: Metro Connector Sections



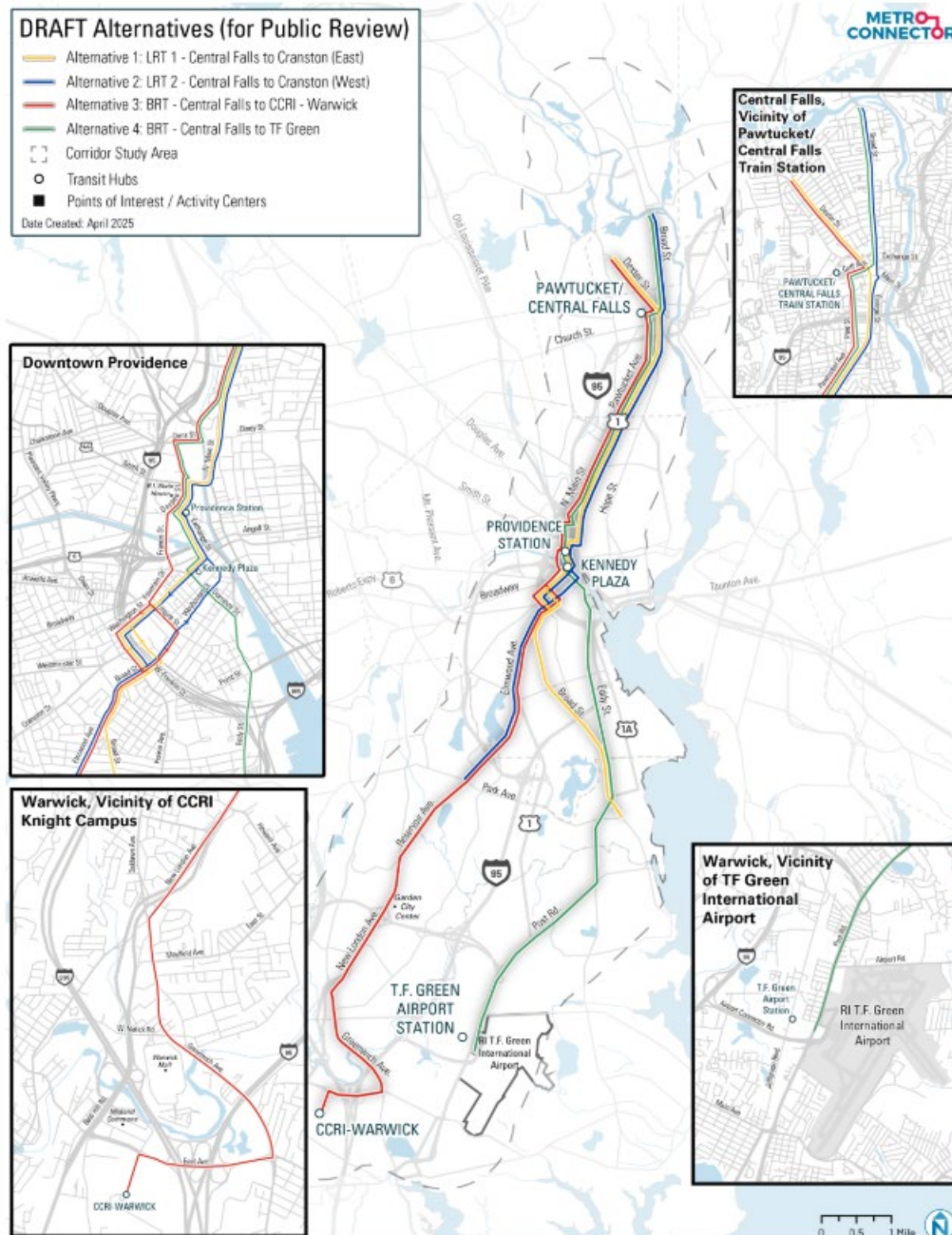


Figure 3. Current Alignment Alternatives



Cranston Safety Action Plan (2025)

Adopted by the City Council in December 2025, the [Cranston Safety Action Plan](#) (SAP) is a data-driven strategy developed with funding from the federal Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program. The plan identifies a "High Injury Network" (HIN) and 14 priority project areas where investments in engineering and design can most effectively reduce roadway fatalities and serious injuries.

MIXED-USE CENTERS AND CORRIDORS RELEVANCE

The recommended projects relevant to the proposed mixed-use centers and corridors are listed in **Table 1** and shown in **Figure 4**.

Table 1. SAP Recommended Projects

Recommended Project	Potential Countermeasures	Implementation Timeline
<p>5. Park Avenue (Cranston City Hall to Route 10)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with Cranston High School to better leverage Elsie Street and High School Avenue for school pick-up and drop-off • Repaint faded crosswalk markings • Install ADA accessible curb ramps with detectable warning strips where missing at crosswalks • Study pedestrian crossing volumes and install RRFBs at top crossing locations Daylight crosswalks, intersections, and driveways using parking restrictions or curb extensions • Install buffered bicycle lanes east of Doric Avenue • Study potential lane reduction near Route 10 to allow space for continuous bicycle lanes at pinch point • Reconfiguration of the Park Avenue and Route 10 intersection is included in RIDOT project TIP ID 3007. • Redesign the intersection at Pontiac Avenue to address complaints of faulty traffic lights, considering a potential conversion to a roundabout. • Redesign the intersection at Elmwood Avenue and address signal timing issues. 	<p>Short Term</p>



<p>9. Broad Street (Montgomery Avenue to Park Avenue)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daylight crosswalks, intersections, and driveways using parking restrictions or curb extensions • Repaint faded crosswalk markings • Install ADA accessible curb ramps with detectable warning strips where missing at crosswalks • Adjust crosswalk locations to allow ADA accessible curb ramps, moving away from utility poles and storm drains • Extend median noses to create pedestrian refuges • Clarify operations at the intersection of Broad Street/Norwood Avenue/US-1A, in coordination with RIDOT Safety • Install buffered bicycle lanes 	<p>Short Term</p>
<p>10. Broad Street (Park Avenue to Narragansett Street)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daylight crosswalks, intersections, and driveways using parking restrictions or curb extensions • Study pedestrian crossing volumes and install RRFBs at top crossing locations • Add pedestrian crossing signs at crosswalks. • Repaint faded crosswalk markings • Adjust crosswalk locations to allow ADA accessible curb ramps, moving away from utility poles and storm drains • Install pedestrian-scale lighting at crosswalks • Prohibit on-street parking in intersections • Install reflective center line delineators and reflective strips on utility poles around curves • Conduct an engineering study to consider redesigning intersection with Post Road/Narragansett Street as a standard T- intersection • Install buffered bicycle lanes 	<p>Medium Term</p>



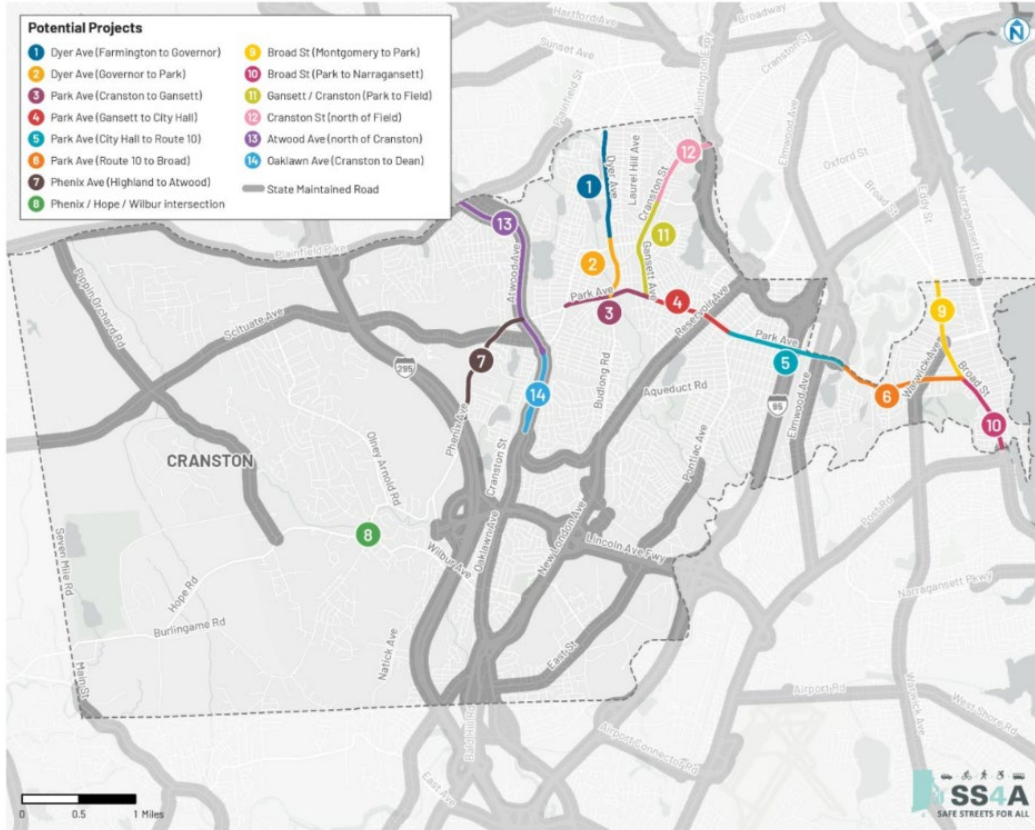


Figure 4. Priority Project Locations

Moving Forward RI 2050 (2025)

Adopted by the State Planning Council in November 2025, [Moving Forward RI 2050](#), also known as the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), serves as the state’s 25-year Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and State Guide Plan Element 611¹. The plan establishes a \$10 billion blueprint for the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) investments for federal fiscal years 2026–2035. The [Passenger and Freight Rail Supplement](#) to the LRTP outlines how rail infrastructure may be incorporated into Rhode Island’s long-range multimodal vision.

¹ The State Guide Plan (SGP) is a collection of legally binding goals, policies, and strategies that provide a framework for Rhode Island’s future. Each “Element” (such as Element 611 for Transportation) addresses a specific area, such as land use, housing, or the environment, to ensure consistency between municipal and state-level planning.



MIXED-USE CENTERS AND CORRIDORS RELEVANCE

Several of the LRTP's goals, objectives, and projects are related to, or could impact the transit service on the proposed mixed-use centers and corridors. For example, the Elmwood Avenue Corridor Project, which spans Providence, Cranston, and Warwick, aims to implement paving, traffic safety, and connectivity improvements for all modes.

The supplement establishes a critical nexus between rail infrastructure and land use. It explicitly identifies Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) as a primary mechanism for rail investments to positively reshape the urban fabric.

The supplement confirms that the Amtrak Northeast Corridor (NEC) remains the state's "main rail freight corridor." In Cranston, this corridor is situated within the industrial spine adjacent to Elmwood Avenue. To expand regional transit access for Eastern Cranston, the plan proposes a "temporary, high-level side platform" at Wellington Avenue. While the Wellington Avenue platform remains a documented goal, the RIDOT Rail Plan (2026 Update) identifies the Westerly Station upgrades and the Amtrak stop at T.F. Green (Warwick) as the immediate "low-hanging fruit." These projects are currently prioritized for rail expansion due to their potential for immediate regional impact and alignment with existing federal funding opportunities.

Cranston Comprehensive Plan (2024)

Adopted by the City Council on September 2024, the [Comprehensive Plan 2024](#) serves as a twenty-year blueprint for growth and land use, balancing resident needs with the protection of the City's resources and character. Most importantly, it functions as the legal foundation for all municipal zoning and land-use regulations. By Rhode Island state law, all zoning amendments, including the potential mixed-use designations explored in this study, must remain consistent with the goals and policies outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. At the time of writing, the City is continuing to amend the 2024 Comprehensive Plan's goals, policies, and actions.

MIXED-USE CENTERS AND CORRIDORS RELEVANCE

The plan identifies "Eastern Cranston" as the city's "urban economy" node. This designation highlights the area's potential for high-intensity investment, adaptive reuse, and redevelopment, particularly in the industrial zones near I-95. Two potential mixed-use corridors, **Elmwood Avenue** and **Pontiac Avenue**, are within this area and present unique opportunities for growth.

In addition, the plan includes the following relevant points:

- **Pontiac Avenue and Rolfe Square:** The plan emphasizes the redevelopment of village centers at Rolfe Square as a key economic development goal (Policy ED-13). This is also reflected in the Cranston Safety Action Plan (2025), which identifies the need for improved pedestrian connectivity and traffic calming to support urban nodes.



- **Elmwood Avenue:** The plan identifies the Elmwood/Wellington Avenues area as a primary candidate for "mixed-use planned development" in preparation for future rail service. This area is targeted for "smart growth" to balance development intensity with community aesthetics (Policy ED-12, TC-28, LU-24; Action REF. ED-13, TC-18, TC-22).
- **Broad Street:** Recognized for its historical development as Arnold Road, the corridor is a focal point for maintaining high-density residential character (designated for Neighborhood Commercial Services, which encompasses C-1, C-2, and C-3 zoning districts) while addressing the "auto-centric" nature of the existing network.
- **Transportation Improvements:** Chapter 11 (Transportation and Circulation) sets goals to improve traffic flow in commercial centers (Goal TC-1), correct safety deficiencies citywide (Goal TC-2), and further develop cross-city bike corridors (Goal TC-9).

Transit Forward RI 2040 (2020)

Adopted by the State Planning Council in December 2020, [Transit Forward RI 2040](#) is the state's first comprehensive Transit Master Plan (TMP). Developed as a collaboration between RIPTA, RIDOT, and the Division of Statewide Planning, the plan provides a 20-year roadmap to modernize travel through expanded mode choice and high-frequency service.

MIXED-USE CENTERS AND CORRIDORS RELEVANCE

The plan identifies the Providence-Cranston-Warwick axis as a region with high transit potential, requiring service upgrades to compete with driving travel times (see **Figure 5**). The plan also includes the following specific transit recommendations related to the proposed mixed-use corridors and centers:

- **Pontiac Avenue:** The plan identifies Route 22 as a primary route into the urban core. It is also targeted for the Frequent Transit Network, with a goal of 15-minute service spans during peak periods or most of the day (see **Figure 5**).
- **Elmwood Avenue:** The plan identifies Route 20 as a key route into Downtown Providence. The plan envisions upgrading this route into one of six new Rapid Bus lines, in addition to the southern portion of the R-Line. As a Rapid Bus service, it will offer a higher quality of service than local buses by incorporating several "premium" features while operating in mixed traffic. Key features for this route could include a combination of the following elements:
 - *Unique identity and Branding*
 - *Premium Stations*
 - *Real-Time Passenger Information*
 - *Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Technologies*
 - *Effective Connections*
 - *Transit Signal Priority*



- **Broad Street:** The plan recommends a new Crosstown Route (N11 Cranston/Park Ave) to allow non-downtown-centric travel, connecting Broad Street to the broader regional network without a transfer at Kennedy Plaza. Targeted for the Frequent Transit Network, this route aims for 15-minute service frequencies during peak hours or throughout most of the day. The plan emphasizes improving stop access and integrating N11 into the state's new network of Mobility Hubs, which serve as the primary entry points and connecting nodes for the regional public transportation network (see **Figure 6**).



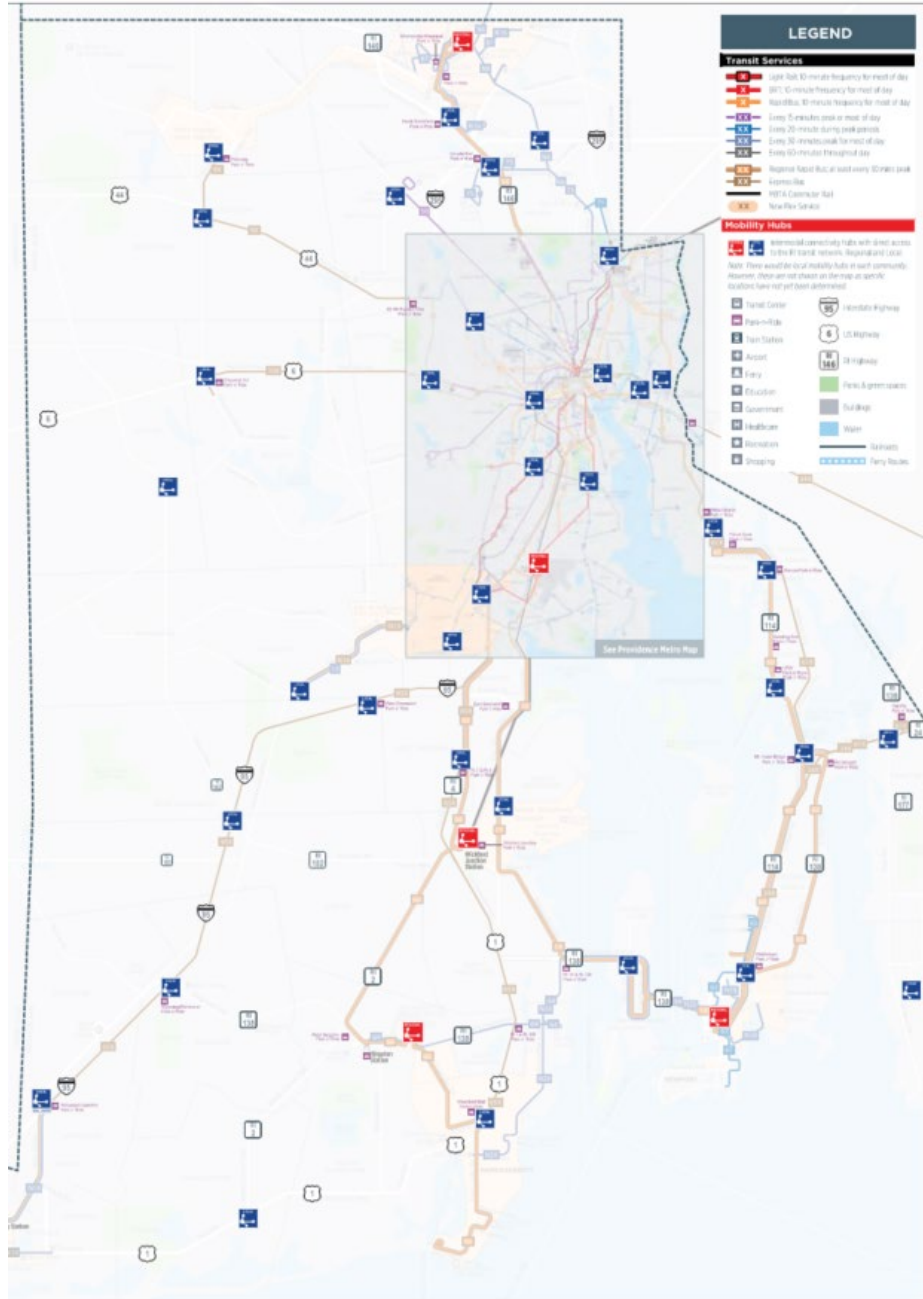


Figure 6. Community and Regional Mobility Hubs



Evaluating the Potential for Transit-Oriented Development in Rhode Island (2018)

This study and report were produced collaboratively by the Community Partnerships Center at Roger Williams University, GrowSmart RI, and Housing Works RI. This effort focused on identifying prime areas for transit-oriented development across Rhode Island, in support of the Transit Master Planning process, which was in-process at the time of writing. The report includes a range of regional and national case studies, the results of a multi-variate geospatial mapping exercise for Rhode Island, and an analysis and comparison of five TOD sites in Rhode Island.

MIXED-USE CENTERS AND CORRIDORS RELEVANCE

A multi-criteria evaluation of population, housing, and employment density identified Cranston as having “high potential” for TOD as shown in **Figure 7**. Cranston was one of only ten areas within the state that met all three criteria thresholds.

Cranston is also called out in an assessment of railroad right of way with existing sewerage areas, as shown in **Figure 8**. Cranston is one of six areas that are already sewerage and have inactive rail opportunities.

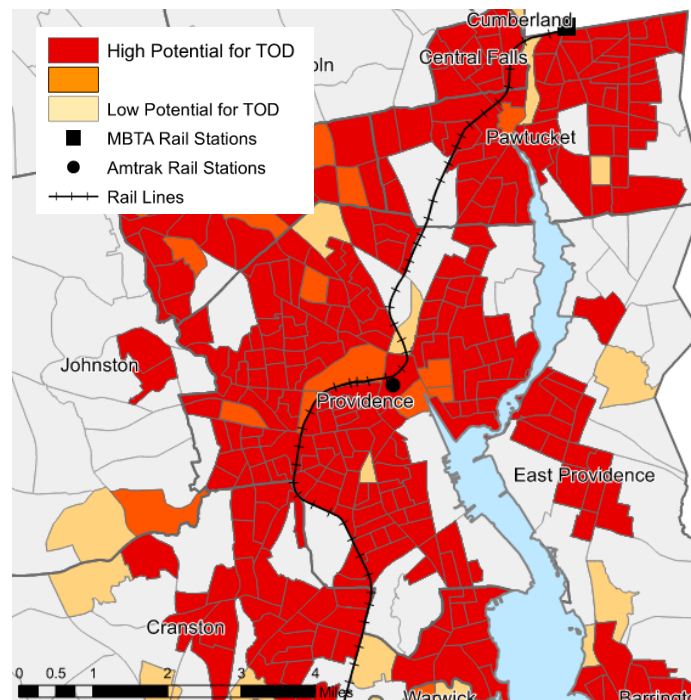


Figure 7. Identifying Potential Areas for Transit-Oriented Development in Rhode Island



Figure 8. Railroad Right of Way with Existing Sewered Areas in Rhode Island

DATA COLLECTION

In addition to reviewing recent and ongoing plans and policies, the project team assembled a variety of spatial data within Cranston, including the following categories of information:

- Land use and zoning
- Anticipated development
- Population and employment
- Socioeconomics and demographics
- Existing and planned transportation networks
- Key community destinations
- Environmental barriers (such as wetlands or flood zones)
- Historic areas

A series of maps overlaying some of this key information is provided in the **Proposed Mixed-Use** section of this document.

EXISTING ZONING

The City of Cranston has 16 zoning districts, each with its own set of standards and regulations tailored to the character, type, and intensity of development desired. **Table 2** notes which districts are located within a half mile of the proposed mixed-use centers and corridors. The colored cells indicate the areas that include the zoning district.

Table 2. Existing Zoning Within Half Mile of Proposed Mixed-Use Centers and Corridors

Zoning Category	Zoning District	Zoning Description	Broad Street	Wellington Avenue/Elmwood Avenue	Pontiac Avenue/Rolfe Square/Park Avenue
Residential	A-6	Single-family dwellings on lots of minimum areas of 6,000 square feet			
	A-8	Single-family dwellings on lots of minimum areas of 8,000 square feet			
	B-1	Single-family and two-family dwellings			
	B-2	Single-family, two-family and multi-family dwellings			
Commercial	C-1	Office business			
	C-2	Neighborhood business			
	C-3	General business			
	C-4	Highway business			
	C-5	Heavy business, industry			
Industrial	M-2	General industry			
Open Space	S-1	Uses containing high proportion of open space or natural character			

Some of Cranston's existing zoning districts already include components that support mixed-use development, including allowing for a mix of housing and land use types, medium to high density development thresholds, and multi-story buildings. For example, according to the City's [Table of Principal Uses](#), two-family and multi-family dwellings are allowed by right in the B-2, C-1, and C-2 zoning districts, and residences above first-story businesses are allowed by right in C-1, C-2, and C-3 districts. Higher maximum lot coverages, low minimum yard requirements, and smaller minimum lot areas are also supportive of mixed-use development, since they support higher-density and more compact development, open more doors for smaller builders and developers, and can result in a more diverse built environment. **Table 3** details the requirements for those zoning districts within a half mile of the proposed mixed-use centers and corridors. Note that the maximum building height is consistent across the city, capping out at 35 feet for most districts.



Table 3. Schedule of Intensity Regulations for Zoning Districts Within Half Mile of Proposed Mixed-Use Corridors

District	Min. Lot Area (sq. ft.)*	Min. Lot Width (ft.)	Min. Yards (ft.)			Max. Lot Coverage (%)	Max. Building Height
			Front	Rear	Side		
S-1, A-80	80,000	200	40	100	20	10	35
A-8	8,000	80	25	20	10	30	35
A-6	6,000	60	25	20	8	30	35
B-1 and B-2 (single-family)	6,000	60	25	20	8	35	35
B-1 and B-2 (two-family)	8,000	60	25	20	8	35	35
B-2 (multi-family)	See formula § 17.20.090	See formula § 17.20.090	25	20	8	50	35
C-1	6,000	60	25	20	8	60	35
C-2	6,000	60	25	20	8	60	30
C-3	6,000	60	0	20	0	100	35
C-4	12,000	120	40	20	8	50	35
C-5	10,000	80	30	20	8	60	35
M-2	60,000	200	40	30	25	60	35

KICK-OFF MEETING AND SITE WALK

On January 23, 2026, Kittelson joined representatives from the City Planning Department, the City Plan Commission, RIPTA, and several local employers and property owners to discuss mixed-use development in Cranston and to visit locations with potential for mixed-use development.

Following the initial discussion, hosted at RISE Engineering on Elmwood Avenue, members of the group proceeded to walk and/or drive portions of the Elmwood Avenue, Pontiac Avenue, and Broad Street corridors, to observe the existing land uses and built environment.

This visit resulted in a few key takeaways:

- RISE, a key employer in Cranston, is interested in expanding and feels optimistic about co-locating their industrial uses with housing, restaurants, and other commercial uses.
- RIPTA is interested in increasing bus frequency along several key corridors in Cranston, including Elmwood Avenue and Broad Street, and sees potential for a future cross-city route along Park Avenue.
- There is a desire to avoid rezoning areas that are currently zoned for single-family residential.



- A “one-size-fits-all” approach to rezoning will not be possible among these potential centers and corridors. Rather, the City will need to approach each area differently based on the context, streetscape, and existing development patterns.
- Current transit ridership and frequency is important, but transit-readiness is not only defined by existing transit service. Mixed-use development also has potential to increase ridership and promote higher frequency.



Figure 9. Crossing Park Avenue at Wellington Avenue



Figure 10. Walking along Rolfe Square, where existing neighborhood signs, brick walkways, and pedestrian lighting contribute to a "main street" feel





Figure 11. Existing commercial businesses on Broad Street



Figure 12. Site walk participants were transported between sites via van

Mixed-Use Evaluation Framework

A data-driven evaluation framework was employed to help identify potential mixed-use centers and corridors.

The evaluation began with documenting factors that influence the feasibility of mixed-use development, including land use context, economic potential, and transit access. A framework was developed to analyze potential locations across six categories. Organizing the analysis into distinct categories allowed for the establishment of quantitative metrics, providing measurable and comparable data to support the assessment. See **Appendix A** for a detailed explanation of the framework methodology.

METHODOLOGY

The data used to inform the evaluation came from a variety of sources, including the US Census Bureau, RIPTA, the Cranston RI GeoHub, RIGIS, and field observations.

Prior to data collection, the project team identified six key evaluation categories. These helped to guide data collection and the creation of metrics for analysis. The key categories were:

- 1. Existing and Future Transit Potential:** The metrics that were evaluated focused on the current and future transit potential, which included transit ridership and frequency of service, as well as transit-supportive infrastructure such as sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, and bike facilities.
- 2. Economic Potential:** Mixed-use development is most viable where there is market demand for housing and workforce. To evaluate this, the team considered employment and residential density, the presence of community resources, and existing land uses to identify opportunities for private investment and joint development.
- 3. Land Use/Developmental Potential:** This category considered supportive land uses and areas of potential, such as vacant or underutilized properties, publicly owned properties, or larger lots.
- 4. Equity:** Certain populations are more likely to benefit from mixed-use development. These include populations who are under 16 or over 65, zero-car households, and populations below the poverty line, all of whom are more likely to rely on public transit.
- 5. Supportive Metrics:** The creation and development of mixed-use districts should be done in a way that integrates well with the existing community fabric. To this end, the framework considered consistency with adopted plans and feedback collected during the site walk.
- 6. Potential Barriers:** The development of new mixed-use districts is not risk-free or barrier-free. As such, the evaluation considered potential conflicts with wetlands, conservation areas, historical sites, or significant barriers, such as the railroad tracks or interstate highway.



Alignment with Comprehensive Plan Requirements

While the Cranston Comprehensive Plan covers a broad spectrum of municipal operations, the following goals are rooted in its legal basis. These statutory goals can be tied directly to how the potential for mixed-use development was evaluated within Cranston, as shown in **Table 4**.

Table 4. Legal Basis for the Comprehensive Plan and Alignment with Mixed-Use Development

Legal Basis	Alignment with Evaluation Framework
Orderly Growth and Development: Promote growth that recognizes the natural characteristics of the land, its suitability for use, and the availability of services and infrastructure.	This aligns with the evaluation of supportive land uses and development potential.
Economic Vitality: Foster an economic climate that increases quality job opportunities and the overall economic well-being of the municipality.	This supports the analysis of employment density and public-private partnership potential.
Housing Diversity and Affordability: Promote the production and rehabilitation of year-round housing to achieve a balance of choices for all income levels and age groups.	This informs the equity metrics, focusing on zero-car households and populations below the poverty line.
Resource Protection: Protect the natural, historic, and cultural resources of the City, including open space and recreational resources.	This is mirrored in the "Potential Barriers" category of this evaluation, which accounts for wetlands, historic, and conservation areas.
Performance-Based Standards: Encourage the use of innovative development regulations and performance-based standards to promote land suitability and balanced land uses.	This provides the mandate for the specific mixed-use zoning amendments which will result from this project.
Sustainable Infrastructure: Upgrade aging infrastructure systems, including transportation and utilities, to meet current and future needs.	This supports the analysis of existing and future transit potential, with a focus on ridership and supportive multimodal facilities.



RESULTS

The results of the evaluation framework are summarized in **Table 5**. Because mixed-use area suitability is context-specific, results were evaluated among the three study corridors relative to each other rather than compared to other cities or benchmarks. For each metric, the potential areas were categorized as having high (green), medium (yellow) or low (red) potential for mixed-use development.



Table 5. Mixed-Use Evaluation Framework Results

Category	Metric	Pontiac Avenue, Rolfe Square, and Park Avenue ¹	Elmwood Avenue and Wellington Avenue ²	Broad Street ³
Existing and Future Transit Potential	Average boarding/alighting of transit stops	104 boarding and 114 alighting	339 boarding and 257 alighting	178 boarding and 200 alighting
	Frequency of bus service(s) in the area	1 Route (22) ~50 minutes	1 Route (20) ~15 minutes	3 Routes (1, 3, 4) ~ 30 minutes
	Density of existing bus stops (stops per mile)	18.0	6.6	22.4
	Potential for future transit	Potential crosstown bus route (N11) via Park Avenue	Potential for expanded rail transit Potential crosstown bus route (N11) via Park Avenue Potential Metro Connector Alignment	Potential Metro Connector Alignment
	Number of existing grade crossings	16	9	23
	Existing sidewalks	Both Sides	Both Sides	Both Sides
	Existing dedicated bike facilities or trail infrastructure	0 miles	0 miles	0 miles (Bike lanes two blocks east on Narragansett Blvd)
Economic Potential	Number of jobs with direct access to the area	4,838	6,053 (including across 1-95)	4,080
	Number of community resources (e.g. parks, medical offices, grocery stores, social services, schools) with direct access to the area	7	1	10
	Number of people with direct access to the area	7,699	7,081	8,180
	Potential for public/private joint-development opportunities to leverage transportation investments	Low	High	Low



Category	Metric	Pontiac Avenue, Rolfe Square, and Park Avenue ¹	Elmwood Avenue and Wellington Avenue ²	Broad Street ³
Land Use/Development Potential	Vacant or underutilized properties (acres)	18.7	37.9	34.4
	Publicly owned properties (acres)	20.5	15.0	14.8
	Future land use is supportive	Mix of residential and neighborhood/commercial services	Special Redevelopment Area	Mix of residential and neighborhood/commercial services
	Current zoning is supportive of higher density, larger lots, or multi-story	High	Medium	High
Equity	Percentage of population below the poverty line	13%	12%	10%
Equity	Percentage of workers who drive to work	87%	86%	73%
	Percentage of population under 18	21%	25%	17%
	Percentage of population over 65	14%	12%	19%
	Percentage of households with zero cars	6%	5%	12%
Supportive Metrics	Consistency with adopted neighborhood/community plans	Medium	High	Medium
	Site walk feedback	High	High	High
Potential Barriers	Intersection with wetlands, conservation areas	2	0	3
	Scale of impacts to historical properties/areas	0	0	1
	Magnitude/severity of major barriers that must be mitigated for access to the station for all users	Greenspace	Interstate 95, Railroad tracks	Greenspace and nature conservation, Pawtuxet River
	Number of third-party agreements potentially required	1 - FHWA	3 - FHWA, Amtrak, City of Providence	1 - City of Providence

¹ The analysis for Pontiac Avenue was completed prior to the addition of Park Avenue; the calculations are representative of the area within a half-mile of Pontiac Avenue from Park Avenue to Branch Avenue, and thus includes a smaller portion of the corridor than is ultimately proposed for mixed-use development.



² The majority of metrics for the Elmwood and Wellington Avenues area are representative of the area within a half-mile of the corridor, but not inclusive of areas to the west of Interstate 95; it was assumed that the highway serves as a significant barrier to access.

³ The analysis for Broad Street is representative of the area within a half-mile from Montgomery Avenue to Bridge Street, and thus includes a larger portion of the corridor than is ultimately proposed for mixed-use development.



A tally of high, medium, and low scores helped to compare the results across the three potential mixed-use centers and corridors. Ultimately, the three potential areas scored similarly, as shown in **Table 6**, but for different reasons.

Table 6. Mixed-Use Evaluation Framework Results

Score	Pontiac Avenue, Rolfe Square, and Park Avenue	Elmwood Avenue and Wellington Avenue	Broad Street
High	10	14	12
Medium	13	6	11
Low	3	6	3

The Elmwood and Wellington Avenues area had the highest number of high scores relative to the other two sites. This is supported by the concentration of potential redevelopment opportunities along the corridor, higher rates of existing transit use, job density, and the possibility of passenger rail expansion. Opportunities for private investment may be more viable in this former industrial area, and the large parcels may be more conducive to larger residential developments. More frequent and comfortable pedestrian crossings across the highway and train tracks could further facilitate increased multimodal accessibility.

Broad Street had the second-highest relative score, as the corridor has strong transit connections with three bus routes. Other strengths include the number of at-grade crossings, existing bicycle and trail access, the number of community assets, vacant parcels, and demographics.

Pontiac Avenue, Rolfe Square, and Park Avenue had the lowest total number of high scores but had the second-highest proportion of medium scores. Due to a single transit route with 50-minute headways, it has the lowest transit ridership, as well as limited potential for new transit modes. However, it has relatively high access to amenities and jobs and does not intersect with conservation or historic areas. Lastly, the commercial core of Pontiac Avenue and Rolfe Square provides a strong foundation on which to build additional mixed-use development.



Proposed Mixed-Use District Boundaries

Following the above review, the project team, in coordination with the City Planning Department, developed the following proposed mixed-use zoning district boundaries. The proposed mixed-use district boundaries aimed to include areas that could be developed in such a way as to support the City's stated goals and integrate with the current community fabric. Maintaining continuity of Cranston's historical features is important as misaligned density can create land uses that negatively alter an area. Thus, extending the proposed mixed-use zoning districts into neighborhoods that are not supportive of increased density was avoided. Key factors influencing the proposed boundaries included:

- Access to current and future transit lines
- Supportive zoning and future land use
- Current residential zoning

Figure 13, **Figure 14**, and **Figure 15** show the parcels included in the proposed mixed-use centers and corridors. Parcels with hatched lines represent proximal areas that are currently zoned only for single-family residence. The possible inclusion of these parcels is aimed at enhancing the continuity of future mixed-use development, which in turn can support economic, transit, and density outcomes. A summary of existing zoning and lot sizes within each of the proposed districts is included in **Table 7**.

Table 7. Proposed Mixed-Use Districts

Details	Pontiac Avenue, Rolfe Square, and Park Avenue	Elmwood Avenue and Wellington Avenue	Broad Street
Existing Zoning	A6, B1, B2, C1, C2, C3	A6, B2, C5, M2	B1, C1, C2, C3, S1
Total Acreage	62.5 acres	179.0 acres	68.6 acres
Minimum Lot Size	0.014 acres	0.004 acres	0.03 acres
Maximum Lot Size	2.47 acres	10.8 acres	12.4 acres
Average Lot Size	0.19 acres	0.38 acres	0.28 acres



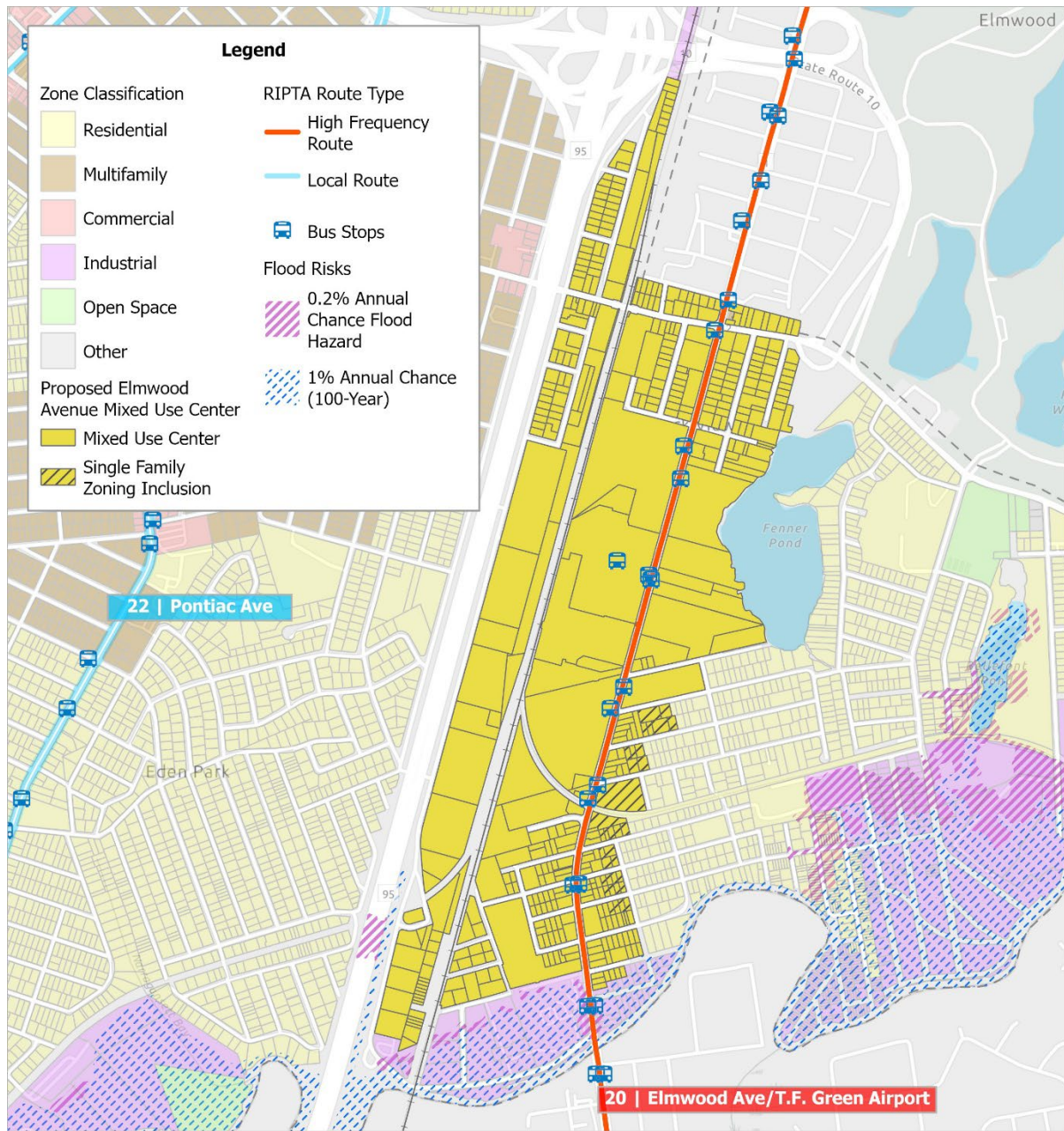


Mixed-Use Centers and Corridors: Pontiac Avenue, Rolfe Square, and Park Avenue



Figure 13. Proposed District Boundaries: Pontiac Avenue, Rolfe Square, and Park Avenue



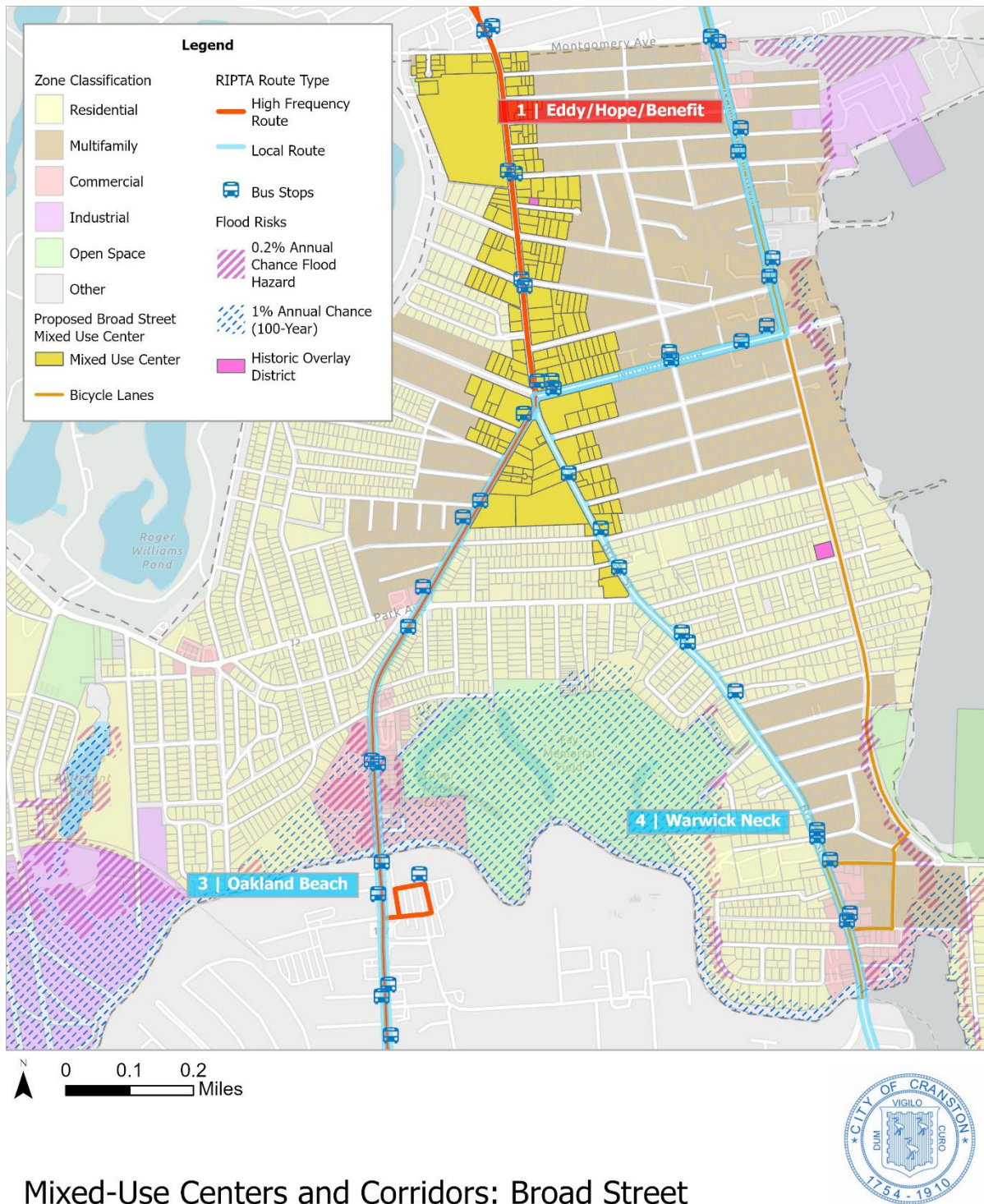


Mixed-Use Centers and Corridors: Elmwood Avenue and Wellington Avenue



Figure 14. Proposed District Boundaries: Elmwood Avenue and Wellington Avenue





Mixed-Use Centers and Corridors: Broad Street

Figure 15. Proposed District Boundaries: Broad Street



Next Steps

The project team will begin drafting proposed amendments to the zoning ordinance, including the permitted uses and development standards for each district. The proposed amendments may include a range of options for each of the districts based on context. They will be aligned with the Comprehensive Plan and reflect existing zoning language as much as possible. As part of this exercise, the project team will consider an appropriate phasing plan for implementing mixed-use centers and corridors in Cranston. Phasing will be in alignment with other ongoing planning efforts, including RIPTA's Metro Connector Study and Cranston's Comprehensive Plan.

This process will not happen in a vacuum. The City is committed to engaging area residents, businesses, public officials, and property owners in a way that will contribute to the success of this project. Opportunities for public engagement will be organized around key decision points so that the public's time is used wisely and effectively.

A public meeting will be planned for mid-June. This will be an opportunity to explain the benefits of mixed-use development, share the proposed mixed-use centers and corridors, and gather feedback on specific proposed zoning amendments.

The public meeting will have the following objectives:

- Reiterate high-level benefits of mixed-use development and a history of mixed-use development in Cranston
- Introduce proposed mixed-use centers and corridors
- Explain proposed zoning amendments
- Provide reassurance regarding impacts to municipal services and costs
- Provide visual references for what future development could look like, via renderings, historic photos, and/or precedent images of peer communities

Following the public meeting, the project team will make adjustments to the proposed mixed-use centers and corridors, as well as the specific zoning amendments, before proceeding to coordinate with the City Plan Commission to formally propose the amendments and proceed with a public hearing.



Appendix A – Mixed-Use Evaluation Framework Details

The majority of the data used in this analysis—including U.S. Census data, City of Cranston datasets, Rhode Island GIS data, RIPTA ridership and route information, and environmental risk data such as flooding—were compiled and analyzed in ArcGIS. ArcGIS is a geographic information system (GIS) software used to create, manage, and analyze spatial data. It enables users to visualize geographic patterns, assess spatial relationships, and support planning and decision-making processes. These datasets were mapped to identify areas of potential opportunity within the study corridors.

Transit data were obtained from RIPTA. Average boarding and alighting values were calculated for all stops along bus routes located within the identified mixed-use districts. Transit density was measured as the number of stops per mile, and information on potential future transit routes was also obtained from RIPTA. Dedicated bicycle and trail infrastructure was analyzed by calculating the number of miles of facilities that connect to or intersect the mixed-use areas.

A desktop review was conducted to supplement the spatial analysis. A desktop review is an evaluation performed to support data collection from a physical site visit and is supported by existing data sources, documents, and digital records. The desktop review helped identify the number of at-grade crossings and the presence of existing sidewalk infrastructure.

Economic potential was assessed using OntheMap² data, U.S. Census data, and land use analysis. Identifying economic potential is important because employment centers and businesses create destinations that support transit corridors. Employment data were analyzed within a 0.5-mile radius of the corridors, reflecting an approximate 10-minute walking distance commonly used to define a walkable transit catchment area. Land use patterns were also examined to identify opportunities for public-private partnerships and joint development that could leverage transportation investments.

² OntheMap is a web tool to report and visually show US Census data. <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>



Land-use development potential is a critical consideration in mixed-use planning, as the absence of supportive land uses can limit the success of mixed-use area projects. To evaluate development potential, GIS parcel data from the City of Cranston were mapped in ArcGIS to visualize both existing zoning and future land-use designations. Publicly owned properties, including city-owned buildings and parks, were identified. Vacant and underutilized parcels were identified through spatial analysis. Vacant parcels were defined as parcels with no intersecting building footprints, while underutilized parcels were defined as developed parcels with a building coverage ratio (BCR) below 0.15. BCR was calculated by dividing the total building footprint area by the total parcel area using parcel geometry. The analysis was conducted on full parcels prior to clipping, and results were summarized for parcels of at least one acre located within the 0.5-mile mixed-use district walkshed.

Equity considerations were incorporated because improved access to high-quality transit can reduce barriers to employment, services, recreation, and healthcare. Census tract data from the U.S. Census Bureau were used to evaluate demographic indicators including poverty rates, zero-vehicle households, age distribution, and the proportion of residents who drive to work. These layers were clipped to the half-mile buffer surrounding the mixed-use areas to approximate demographic conditions within the walksheds.

Supportive planning metrics were also evaluated by reviewing whether mixed-use opportunities aligned with existing adopted plans and future development visions. A site visit was conducted to supplement the desktop review, as online data sources may be outdated or may not capture important on-the-ground conditions. The site visit took place on January 23, 2026, and included the corridors of Elmwood Avenue, Pontiac Avenue, and Broad Street.

Potential environmental and physical constraints were also considered. Mixed-use development should avoid flood-prone areas, minimize impacts to historic districts, and reduce environmental risks where possible. GIS analysis was used to identify flood zones, green space, parks, and physical barriers such as highways, water bodies, and rail corridors.

Details on the methodology and data source for each metric are included in **Table 8**.

Table 8. Evaluation Framework Calculation Methods and Data Sources

Metric	Methodology	Data Source
Average boarding/alighting of transit stops	Calculated average boardings and alightings for bus stops along the routes within the mixed-use areas	RIPTA
Frequency of bus service(s) in the area	Averaged frequency across all applicable routes	RIPTA
Density of existing bus stops (stops per mile)	Counted the number of stops per mile	RIPTA



Metric	Methodology	Data Source
Potential for future transit	Examined evidence for future proposed transit routes	Document Review
Number of existing grade crossings	Counted the number of at-grade pedestrian crossings	In-person and Google Earth
Existing sidewalks	Observed the presence of sidewalks	In-person and Google Earth
Existing dedicated bike facilities or trail infrastructure	Analyzed the miles of dedicated bike facilities that were present that connected to the area	Rhode Island Geographic Information System (RIGIS)
Number of jobs with direct access to the area	Utilized OntheMap census data to determine the number of jobs	OntheMap Census data
Community resources	Downloaded and mapped the locations of community resources, including libraries, grocery stores, and hospitals	RIGIS and Cranston RI GeoHub
Number of people with direct access to the area	Clipped census data to within a half-mile of the areas of interest, giving an approximate number of people	US Census
Potential for public/private joint-development opportunities to leverage transportation investments	Examined parcel size, ownership, and land use to determine partnership potential	Cranston RI GeoHub
Vacant or underutilized properties (acres)	Selected parcels with no buildings and parcels with buildings covering less than 15% of the land	Cranston RI GeoHub
Publicly owned properties (acres)	Identified publicly owned parcels	Cranston RI GeoHub
Current future land use is supportive	Examined future land use	Cranston RI GeoHub
Current zoning is supportive of higher density, larger lots, or multi-story	Examined future land use	Cranston RI GeoHub
Equity data	Clipped census data to within a half-mile of the areas of interest, giving an approximate number of people	US Census
Consistency with adopted neighborhood/community plans	Examined community plans for mixed-use potential	The City of Cranston
Site Walk Feedback	Analyzed on-site conditions and site walk feedback	In-person workshop
Intersection with wetlands, conservation areas	Used GIS to identify wetland and conservation areas	Florida Geographic Data Library
Scale of impacts to historical properties/areas	Examined GIS layers	RIGIS
Magnitude/severity of major barriers that must be mitigated for access to the station for all users	Inspected barriers within the community	RIGIS and Cranston RI GeoHub
Number of third-party agreements potentially required	Examined ownership of land to identify possible partnership requirements	RIGIS and Cranston RI GeoHub

