

City of East Providence Comprehensive Plan









2025-2035

CITY OF EAST PROVIDENCE
RHODE ISLAND
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DECEMBER 1, 1958

East Providence Comprehensive Plan

2025-2035

Prepared by:

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Bowman

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INTRODUCTION

The East Providence Comprehensive Plan sets the course for our future. It expresses our aspirations as a community to protect and support what we love about living in East Providence. The Comprehensive Plan looks at where we are, where we want to go, and how we're going to get there. It helps us be proactive and strategic about what happens in East Providence over the next 20 years. Because it outlines our future path, it will be used to guide public and private investments. It shows what we want to preserve, what needs to be strengthened, and what could be transformed to meet current and future needs of residents and the business community.

The Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act (RI General Laws § 45-22.2-5) requires Rhode Island cities and towns to prepare a comprehensive plan consistent with the Act.[1] The plan is approved by the East Providence Planning Board and adopted by the City Council, and therefore serves as an official policy framework for decisions around public and private investments. Local land use decisions must be consistent with this Comprehensive Plan. The City has maintained a Comprehensive Plan since 1994, updating it in 2004 and 2010, and most recently in 2024.

Who uses the Comprehensive Plan?

City Departments use it to …

- Help prioritize decisions
- Support funding and grant requests
- Inform capital improvements
- Place our decisions in historical context
- Advocate for residents and local businesses

City Council and **City Boards** and **Commissions** use it to ...

- Serve as a strategic framework for decision making
- Inform regulatory decisions and investment of public funds

Residents and **Community Groups** use it to ...

- Guide their volunteer activities so that everyone in the City is rowing in the same direction

Private Developers use it to…

- Understand the community's vision

The **State** uses it to . . .

- Learn about East Providence's priorities and use them to inform state plans

What's in the Comprehensive Plan?

As directed by the Act, a comprehensive plan is organized around nine elements. In addition, the East Providence Comprehensive Plan includes two additional topics:

1. Land Use
2. Recreation
3. Natural Resources and Conservation
4. Housing
5. Historic and Cultural Resources and the Arts
6. Economic Development
7. City Services and Facilities
8. Transportation and Connectivity
9. Natural Hazards and Climate Change
10. Sustainability
11. Waterfront District

[1] Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act (RI General Laws § 45-22.2-5) available at http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE45/45-22.2/45-22.2-5.htm.

While discussed individually, there are important connections and overlapping issues among these topics. Therefore, each chapter highlights these connections to show the interrelated nature of this policy framework.

Each chapter of the Comprehensive Plan is organized with the following sections:

Snapshot

This section is a summary of existing conditions using available data from federal, state, and local sources like the US Census American Community Survey, Rhode Island Division of Planning, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, and studies and reports conducted by various City departments, among others. It sets the stage for where we were when the plan was drafted.

What We Heard

This section summarizes public input from all the different activities and opportunities discussed in the Public Engagement process. It talks about where the community wants to go.

Challenges and Opportunities

This section is organized into overarching themes that encompass a challenge, opportunity, or both. It describes how the City can meet these challenges or build on the strength of an opportunity to meet the needs of City residents and the business community.

Moving Forward

This section describes how the City will meet the needs of the community and address future challenges. It lists specific goals, policies, and actions for the topic.



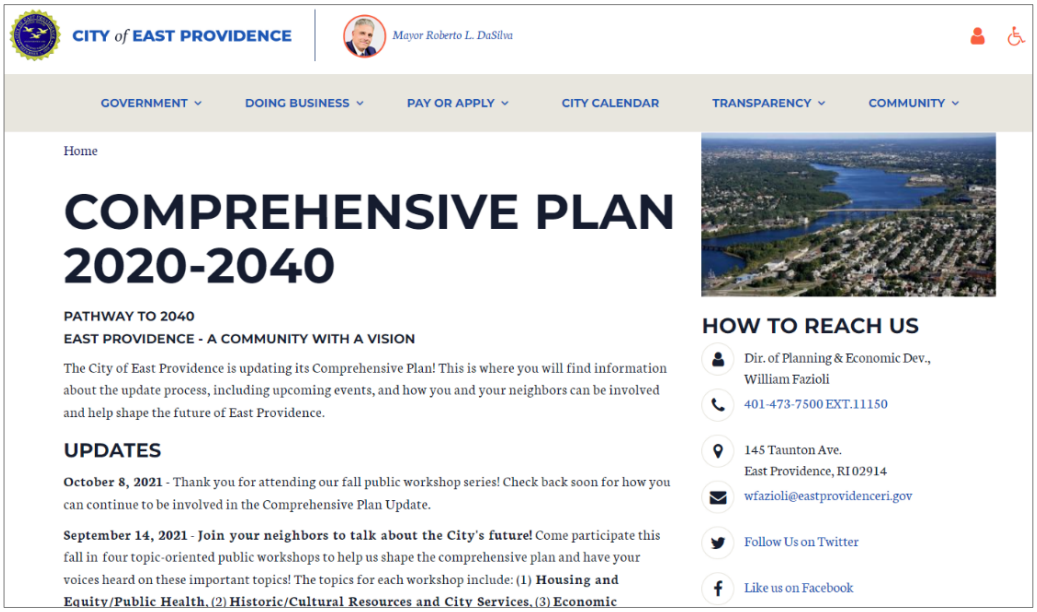
Pomham Rocks Lighthouse. Photo credit: Krista Moravec

Public Engagement Process

As an expression of the City's future, the Comprehensive Plan is developed with the community. To hear from residents and the business community, the City used a multi-pronged approach of digital and in-person activities. The public engagement process began in late 2020, as the world was deep into the COVID-19 pandemic. Orders issued by the Governor of Rhode Island restricted public gatherings, including municipal public meetings, and virtual meetings became the norm. This led to many challenges in reaching residents, but the City was creative and used the tools it had through its website and social media to push the word about events and surveys. These efforts are summarized below. Specific issues and feedback received are found in Appendix A and detailed in each chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

Comprehensive Plan Webpage

A page was dedicated to the Comprehensive Plan on the City's website, which was revamped at the end of 2020. Upcoming events were posted and materials from public meetings, such as handouts and presentation slides, were available. The site also had a Comprehensive Plan Frequently Asked Questions and links to city reports and studies that helped inform the process.



Meetings with City Boards and Committees

It was important to hear from the City's boards and committees to understand the issues and challenges they see in East Providence and approaches to help them meet their goals. Discussions were held with the Planning Board, Economic Development Commission, Historic Commission, Conservation Commission, and the Mayor's Community Advisory Board.

Ward Meetings

Given continued restrictions on in-person gatherings, a series of virtual public workshops was held for each of the City's four wards in April 2021. Attendance was small at all meetings, but discussions were rich and identified common issues.

	Date	Attendance
Ward 1	April 1, 2021	5
Ward 2	April 8, 2021	8
Ward 3	April 15, 2021	14
Ward 4	April 22, 2021	16
TOTAL		43

Attendees were asked:

- What needs to be protected for future generations to appreciate and enjoy? Why?
- What is doing okay, but needs support or investment to reach its full potential? What types of investments?
- What should be transformed and re-imagined? What would this transformation look like? What are some opportunities or challenges to make this transformation happen?

Because of the low attendance, the community survey (see below) was reopened to solicit more feedback.

Topic Workshops

The City sponsored four workshops at the East Providence Senior Center in September and October 2021. Each workshop covered specific topics:

Date	Topics
September 28, 2021	Housing, equity, and public health
September 30, 2021	Historic and cultural resources and City services
October 5, 2021	Economic development, Waterfront District, and transportation
October 7, 2021	Recreation, open space, natural resources, and climate change

During these meetings, issues heard through the community survey, staff interviews, board and committee meetings, and other input were discussed. The discussions were used to confirm what had been heard to date, identify what was missing, and think about new opportunities for the City. Maps and other materials were available. Ideas the City was considering on how to move forward were also presented. Discussion in small groups focused on the following questions:

- Do you agree with the current and future issues presented? What's missing?
- Do you agree with the direction for moving forward presented? What's missing (new projects or initiatives)?
    - For each strategy or policy consider… Where can/should this be applied? Which residents would benefit the most?
    - How do we get this done? Who should be involved (city reps and community groups)?
- What do you consider priorities?

Attendance ranged from 20 to 30 people per workshop. In addition to the general public, attendance included representatives of the business community, city departments, City Council, city boards and committees, and local community groups. This cross-section led to meaningful discussion that offered different perspectives.

A summary of the workshop is found in Appendix A.

Community Surveys

Two surveys were conducted. The first was a community survey available from January through April 2021. It was promoted through the City's website and Comprehensive Planning page, postcard mailers in the monthly utility bill, the City's and Mayor's social media, advertisements in local papers (The East Providence Post and The Reporter), and announcements at local board and committee meetings. English,

Portuguese, Spanish, and Creole versions of the survey were available, and paper copies could be requested from the Planning and Economic Development Department. The survey was reopened in June 2021 to give East Providence residents additional time to provide their feedback. When the survey was reopened, questions about the COVID-19 response were omitted to shorten and streamline the survey. Additionally, many of those pandemic-related questions were less pressing because vaccines were available, and people were returning to work and school in person. The survey was permanently closed July 30, 2021, with a total of 468 responses. However, not all responded to every question.

The second survey targeted the City's youth. It was available from June 2021 through July 2021. It was promoted through the City's website and Comprehensive Planning page, the City's local schools, and local youth programs. Paper copies could be requested from the Planning and Economic Development Department. Only a total of 24 people took the survey, and not all responded to every question.

Summaries of both surveys are found in Appendix A.

City Boards and Commissions

Throughout the update process, City boards and commissions were engaged to understand the issues and challenges they face in meeting their goals and objectives as a body. Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan requires the work of not only city departments but decisions and guidance from such municipal entities as the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Economic Development Commission, and Historic District Commission, among others.



Seekonk River and Henderson Bridge. Photo credit: City of East Providence

A Vision for Our City

During the public engagement process, residents were asked about how they hope to see the future of the city. Below are few of the responses.

> *If you were gone for 20 years and returned to East Providence, what would you like to see?*
>
> 1. Vibrant, robust, attractive business corridors that are full of eateries, small shops, and congregation spaces. 2. Clear evidence of the city's encouragement of entrepreneurship and of the city's role in building opportunities and movements that support these entrepreneurs and their small businesses. 3. Vibrant and engaging spaces for young professionals to meet and build community….
>
> Community activities, clean functional roads and parks. More inclusive spots near water. More land dedicated to wildlife. Less expensive housing.
>
> Diverse inclusion being something East Providence is known for.
>
> I would love to see a vital city engaged with its residents because the city had provided great schools and libraries and green, recreational areas, supported small businesses, and had focused on the critical work needed to manage climate change.
>
> If I were gone for 20 years, I would like to see East Providence returning to a place of recognition from tourists around the country. EP used to be a popular tourist destination with the inclusion of Crescent Park, however with the absence of this park and the city's waterfront attractions, it's nationwide-popularity and recognition has substantially decreased. In 20 years, I would hope these attractions would return in a modern style, to create a greater sense of pride among the community.

Through the different public outreach activities, residents and business owners were asked about the City's future, and what they would hope to see. The following statements pull all those ideas and aspirations together.

> *All residents participate in an open and transparent discourse with decision makers about policies and decisions that impact their daily lives and the future of the city.*
>
> *All residents, regardless of age, ability, income, or circumstance, live in a home they can afford and maintain, in a safe neighborhood with access to economic opportunities that support a healthy and prosperous life.*
>
> *The City's most vulnerable residents have access to critical services that meet basic needs, programs that foster better health, and opportunities to help improve their circumstances in life and fully participate in the community.*
>
> *The City provides high quality services, facilities, and infrastructure to meet the needs of a growing, diverse community through smart and sustainable management.*

Municipal facilities, infrastructure, and operations consume less energy through energy efficiencies and renewable energy alternatives.

The business community is thriving through a collaboration with municipal government that fosters equitable, sustainable economic prosperity for businesses of all sizes.

Residents of all ages and abilities live active lifestyles because they have access to walkable and bikeable neighborhoods, safe parks to play and exercise, and places to gather as a community.

The community embraces its cultural assets, institutions, and organizations, which represent its different traditions, values, and customs.

Residents and businesses get around the city using a modern multimodal system that offers convenient and safe ways to walk, bike, and take public transportation with less reliance on cars.

Historic structures and sites are preserved or reused in a way that maintains their historic and cultural significance while adapting to modern needs.

Residents, businesses, and city government work together to reduce the community's impact on the natural environment through conservation and stewardship.

The waterfront has resilient development that offers housing and economic opportunities complemented with public access to the shoreline, community spaces, and natural areas.

Natural ecosystems and landscapes provide critical environmental, social, and economic benefits to the community that include clean air and water, connections to nature, and climate change mitigation.

The community is resilient, quickly responding to and recovering from natural hazards and public health events.



East Bay Bike Path. Photo credit: City of East Providence

THE PEOPLE OF EAST PROVIDENCE


Youth Arts Month at Weaver Library. Photo credit: Robert Perry

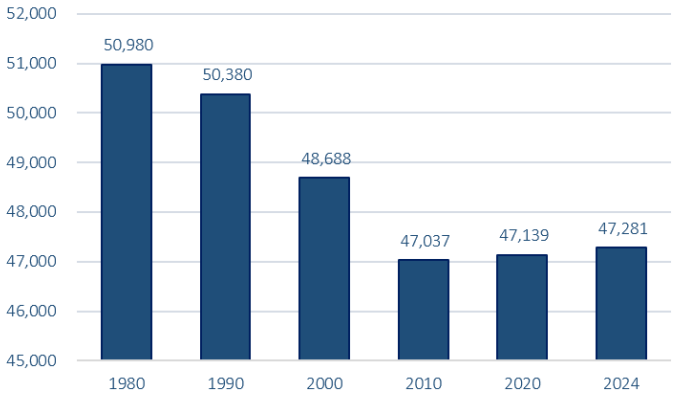
Understanding who lives in the City and how that composition is changing gives the decision makers guidance on its future needs for housing, social services, recreation, transportation, and other factors that contribute to a resident's quality of life. Attributes of a population that are important to consider are size, age, racial and ethnic background, income and wealth, and special needs. Shifts in these characteristics in East Providence and the state can give insight into trends and changing preferences.

The following provides a brief snapshot of the City's residents. More detail on the implications of these data and trends are discussed in more detail in the individual elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

Growth

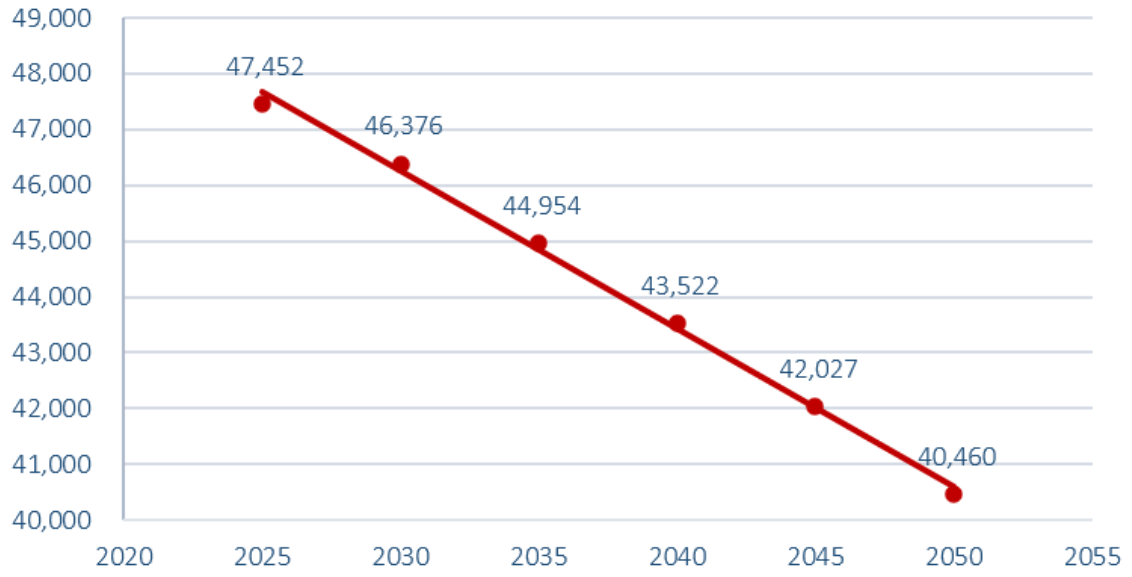
Between 1980 and 2010, East Providence experienced no growth and lost 8% of its population (Figure P.1). The City's population has stabilized and increased slightly to 47,281 in 2024. Projections made by the state anticipate the City's population to continue to decrease by 15% by 2050 (Figure P.2), however, today, those projections require some ground truthing. Over the last decade, the City may have turned a corner, with a small increase in population. Residential development recently constructed, in progress, under review by the City, or proposed could create over 2.000 new housing units, including an estimated 340 units that are long-term affordable. Further, updates to the zoning code in 2021 allow for mixed use development with residential components along key commercial corridors. This encourages the creation of more diverse housing types, including affordable options that can attract new residents to the City.

Figure P.1 East Providence Population, 1980-2024



Source: US Census, American Community Survey

Figure P.2. Population Projections, 2025—2040



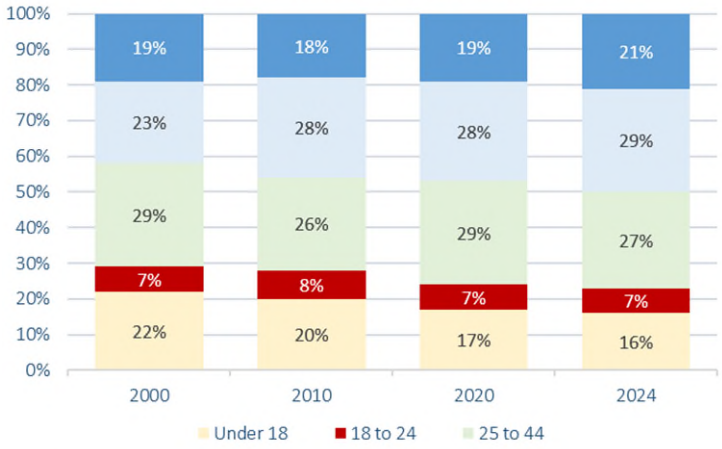
Source: RI Statewide Planning Program, 2025

Age

Much of the population leaving the City during the early 2000s were young people and families. The median age of residents went from 39.6 years in 2000 to 45.1 years in 2024. Median age increased by a full 4 years in just the period between 2019 and 2024. As shown in Figure P.3, the proportion of residents between the ages of 25 and 44 and children under age 18 decreased by 2% and 6%, respectively. With the loss of these younger residents, those between the ages of 45 and 64 increased by 7%.

By 2024 , the proportion of school age children continued to decrease, and that of people between the ages of 25 and 44 decreased by 2%.

Figure P.3. Changes in Proportion of Age Groups, 2000-2024



Source: US Census, American Community Survey

Race, Ethnicity, and Ancestry

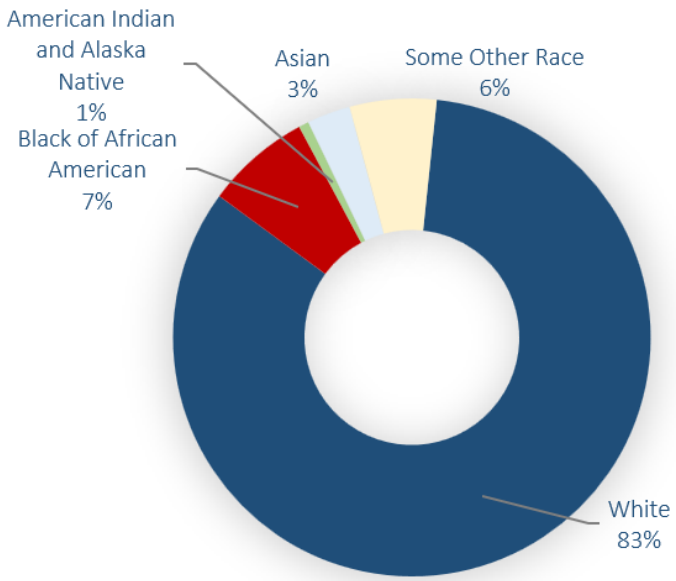
Most East Providence residents identify as White. People of color identify themselves predominately as Black or African American, Asian, or some other race. 7% identify as Hispanic or Latino of any race.

The City's population has large communities from Portugal, the Azores, Maderia, and Cape Verde. About 12,500, or 26.5%, have Portuguese ancestry, and 2,100, or 4.5%, identify as Cape Verdean.

Employment

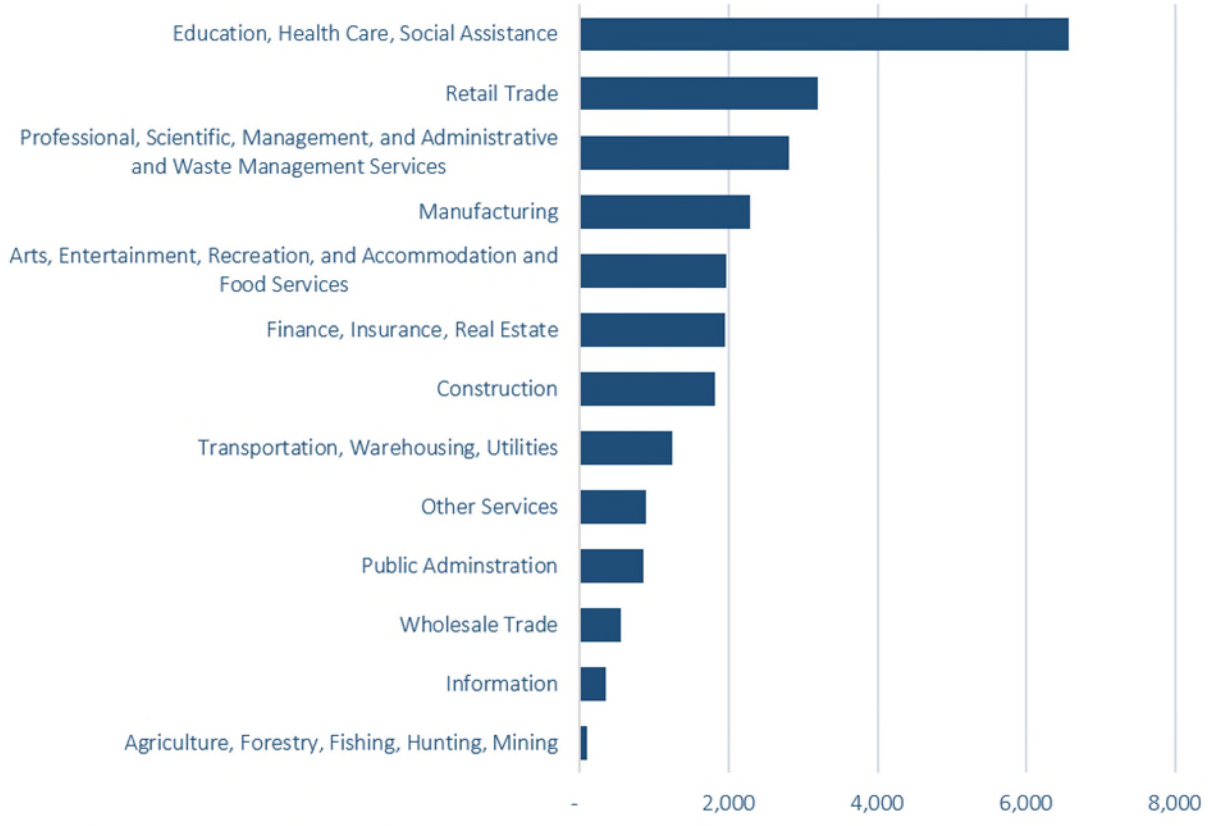
Employment of East Providence residents 16 years and older cuts across a wide range of occupations. As shown in Figure P.5, nearly 30% of residents are employed in occupations classified as "education services, health care and social assistance." Other occupations with high employment are retail trade, and "professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services."

Figure P.4. Race as Identified by Residents



Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates 2024

Figure P.5 Occupations of Employed East Providence Residents 16 Years and Older, 2024



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024

Education Attainment

Educational attainment refers to the highest level of education completed. Over the last 15years, more East Providence residents 25 years and older were finishing high school and continuing their education (Table P.1). In 2010, nearly 10% of residents had less than an 9th grade education. In 2024 , that number dropped by 4.7%, indicating that more residents completed high school and received their diploma or its equivalency. Since 2010, more residents have completed Associate's degrees (+ 2%), Bachelor's degrees (+ 3.9%), or Graduate or other professional degrees (+ 4.9%). Receiving a high school diploma (or its equivalency) and obtaining higher education degrees increases employment opportunities and access to higher paying jobs for residents.

Table P.1 Change in Education Attainment of East Providence Residents 25 Years and Older, 2010-2024

	2010	2024	Change
Less than 9th grade	9.8%	5.1%	-4.7%
9-12 grade, no diploma	11.0%	6.4%	-4.6%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	31.6%	32.6%	1.0%
Some college, no degree	17.8%	15.4%	-2.4%
Associate's degree	6.9%	8.9%	2.0%
Bachelor's degree	14.2%	18.1%	3.9%
Graduate or professional degree	8.6%	13.5%	4.9%

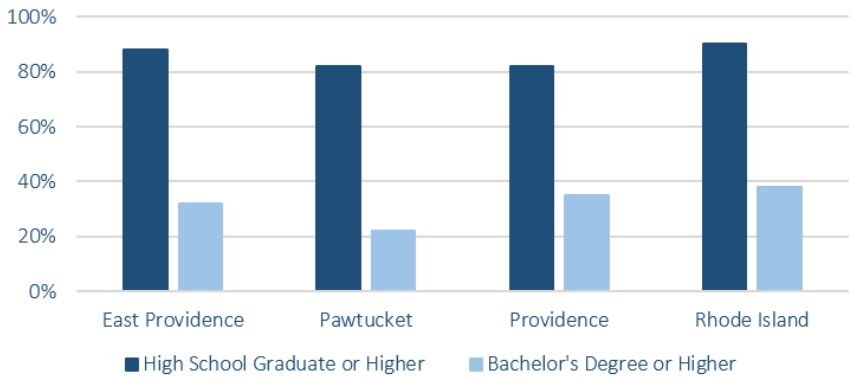
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010 and 2024

East Providence residents are generally achieving the same level of education as those in neighboring cities (Figure P.6). The City has a slightly higher percentage of residents with a high school diploma or higher than Pawtucket and Providence. Both East Providence and Providence have a higher percentage of residents with a Bachelor's degree or higher than Pawtucket. All three cities have lower education attainment than the state as a whole.

Income and Poverty

Table P.2 shows the median incomes for East Providence, neighboring cities, and the State of Rhode Island over the past 14 years. Compared to the state as a whole, East Providence has retained a lower household income.

Figure P.6. Educational Attainment of Residents 25 Years and Older in East Providence, Pawtucket, Providence, and Rhode Island 2024



Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates 2024

Table P.2. Median Household Income for East Providence, Pawtucket, Providence, and Rhode Island, 2010 and 2024

	2010	Inflation-Adjusted 2024 dollars*	2024	Difference
East Providence	$50,319	$71,621	$75,912	$4,291
Pawtucket	$40,198	$57,215	$64,338	$7,123
Providence	$36,925	$52,556	$61,797	$9,241
Rhode Island	$54,902	$78,144	$87,796	$9,652

CPI Inflation Adjusted Calculator available at https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl.

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010 and 2024

Collectively, Rhode Island household incomes have risen by about $9,600 when adjusted for inflation. In East Providence, household incomes have remained relatively flat. East Providence has retained a higher household income than its neighbors since 2010, however, residents in Providence and Pawtucket, especially, have outpaced the City in building wealth. When adjusted for inflation, household income rose over $7,000 in Pawtucket and nearly $10,000 in Providence since 2010.

While overall incomes are not significantly increasing, data in Table P.3 show poverty conditions are improving slightly in East Providence, but the rate remains high. Just over 10% of East Providence households in 2024had incomes below the poverty level, lower than the State of Rhode Island as a whole, and only 0.2% decrease from 2012. Poverty rates for children under the age of 18 years have decreased significantly from 17% in 2012 to 13% in 2019, however, rates for adults have shown little improvement.

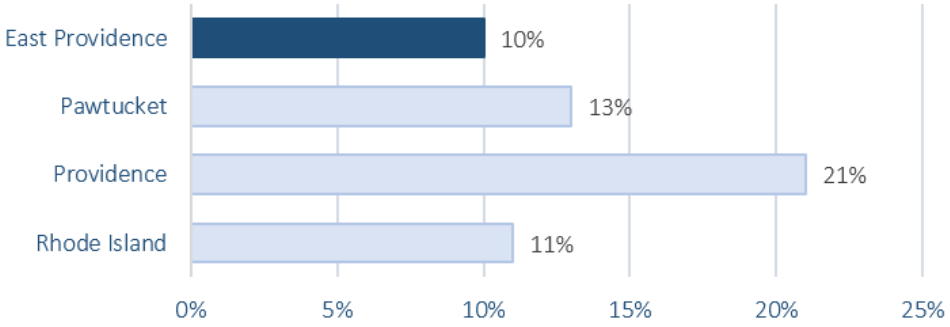
Table P.3. Percentage of Age Group Living Below the Poverty Level, East Providence and Rhode Island, 2012 and 2024

	East Providence 2012	East Providence 2024	Rhode Island 2024
Percent of Total Population Below Poverty Level	10.3%	10.1	11.2
Under 18 years	17.0%	12.7%	14.3%
18 to 64 years	8.0%	8.4%	10.4%
65 years and over	10.4%	13.4%	10.5%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2012 and 2024

Compared to neighboring cities and the state, poverty rates in East Providence are lower than Pawtucket, and nearly half that of Providence, but only slightly behind the state as a whole.

Figure P.7. Poverty Rates for East Providence, Pawtucket, Providence, and Rhode Island, 2024



Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates 2024

HOUSING

Everyone needs a home. Providing residents with opportunities to have attractive, safe, affordable homes keeps our City strong, including our neighborhoods, schools, and businesses. East Providence should be a place where people who are born here or who move here are able to find places to live throughout their lifetimes – an apartment after graduation, a family's first home, or downsizing for empty-nesters or retirees. The type of housing available, how much it costs, how well it is kept up, and how accessible it is to the things we need each day (work, school, shops, services, etc.) are what make good homes.

This chapter supports and embodies the goals of the following State Guide Plan elements related to housing stock and the development of housing:

- 121: Land Use 2025: Rhode Island State Land Use Policies and Plan
- 421: State Housing Plan
- 423: Rhode Island Five Year Strategic Housing Plan (2006-2020): Five Thousand in Five Years

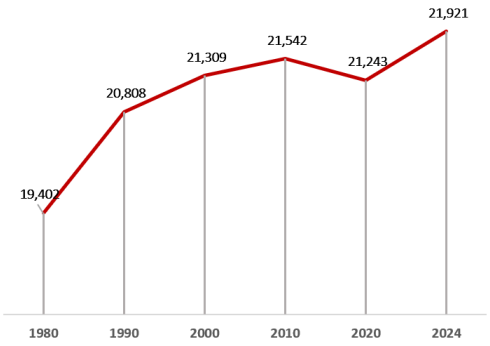
Snapshot

The City of East Providence offers a range of housing options from single-family dwellings located in traditional residential neighborhoods to multi-family dwellings located in or near commercial corridors. The City is working to meet demographic changes by increasing the diversity of available housing in locations that can take advantage of parks, bike paths, commercial corridors, and other amenities.



Examples of multifamily homes. Photo credit: Zillow.com

HOUSING UNITS 1980-2024



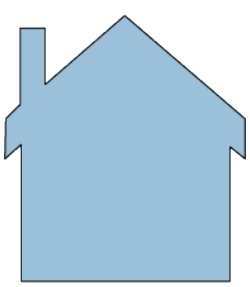
Up 13% since 1980

Occupied Housing Units: **20,836**

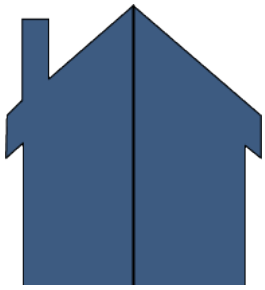
Vacant Housing Units: **1,085**



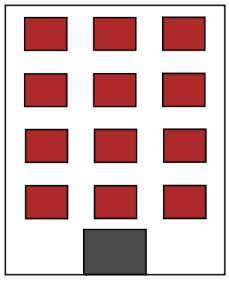
7,939 units are renter occupied



Single-unit detached
11,726
54%



Single-unit attached and 2-4 units
4,428
21%



Multi-family (5+ units)
4,607
22%

Like the State and region, East Providence is in the midst of a housing crisis that is affecting its residents and economy. The housing stock in East Providence has increased by 13% since 2000. The City's vacancy rate of 4.9% is just below what is typically considered a healthy rate of 5% to 8%. The State's vacancy rate of 2.6% shows the lack of available housing currently on the market. Seasonal homes make up a very small portion of the total housing stock (less than 1%) and do not appear to be a significant occurrence in East Providence. The owner occupancy rate is just over 60%, about the same as Rhode Island overall. The City's housing stock is also similar to Rhode Island overall, with about the same percentage of single-unit detached homes, slightly more multi-family in buildings of five or more units, and slightly fewer townhouses and 2-4 unit buildings. The City has a healthy mix of housing compared to its neighbors.

Household and Housing Characteristics

Household Characteristics


Single family home. Photo credit: RedFin.com

The average household size in East Providence has decreased from 2.33 to 2.23, mirroring a similar trend statewide. This trend helps explain why the City's population has remained relatively stagnant despite increases in the number of housing units. Married couple households with children continue to decrease sharply, falling by 21% since 2010. Single-parent households have also decreased by 26%. Another interesting point is that while the number of people living alone has increased by 9%, the number of people 65 years and older living alone has increased significantly by 44%. At the same time, the population under 65 living alone fell by nearly 500 people – a decrease of over 10%. While part of this is probably driven by the City's aging population, it also suggests that it is either difficult or undesirable for adults younger than 65 to live alone. We can infer that other types of households are on the rise, including non-married couples, multi-generational households without children, and unrelated groups of people living together. All this suggests that while East Providence already has a relatively healthy diversity of housing types, there is going to continue to be a very strong demand for alternatives to single-family homes built for families with children. The trends also show that there is a demand for senior housing to accommodate those over 65. Data shows that housing affordability is an issue for all age groups, with fewer single adults being able to afford to live alone, and seniors in need of housing that meets their needs.

Table H.1. Household Characteristics, 2010-2024

	2010	2024	Percent Change
Average Household Size	2.30	2.23	-3%
Average Family Size	3.04	2.96	-3%
Households with children under 18	5,246	4,364	-17%
Married couple with children under 18	3,199	2,526	-21%
Single-parent households	1,546	1,141	-26%
Householder living alone	7,212	7,856	9%
Householder living alone 65 years or older	2,578	3,716	44%

Source: U.S. Census 2010 STF 2 and American Community Survey 2024

Age of Structures and Building Permits Issued

Like many Rhode Island communities, East Providence has an aging housing stock, as seen in Table H.2. There are many historic homes in the City built prior to World War II, but the largest contingent of homes was built in the post-war years of the 1950s, '60s, and '70s. Since then, new home construction has declined significantly, as East Providence became largely built out. Only approximately 3%of the City's housing stock was built since 2000. However, Census data can sometimes miss the conversion of existing buildings into residential apartments, a type of redevelopment that has become more common in East Providence recently.

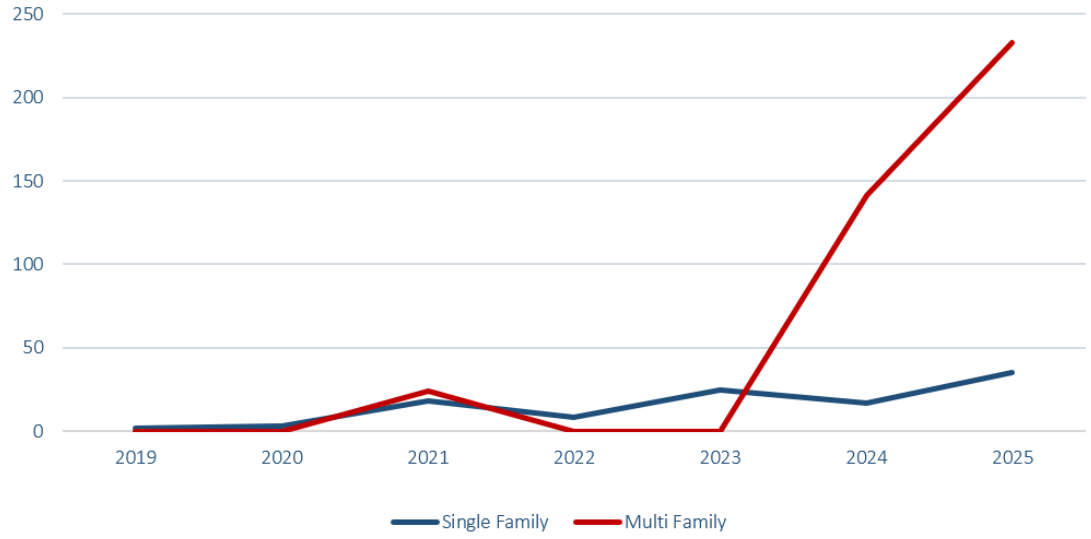
Table H.2. Age of Housing

1939 or Earlier	%	1940-1959	%	1960-1979	%	1980-1999	%	2000-2009	%	2010 - 2019	%	2020 or later	%
5,531	26.5%	5,518	26.5%	5,628	27.0%	2,521	12.1%	1,006	4.8%	534	2.6%	98	0.5%

Source: American Community Survey 2024

The decline of housing construction over the past several decades has contributed to the lack of available housing today. While new housing construction has been steadily declining since its peak in the 1950s, it fell to a crawl after the Great Recession of 2008 and remained that way for the next decade, as seen in Figure H.1. As recently as 2020, only three building permits were issued for single-family dwellings with none issued for multi-family dwellings. However, development activity has picked up s, since 2020, particularly with the construction of the Kettle Point community in the Waterfront District, and Christine Apartments on Wampanoag Trail. New multi-family units are being developed at rates that have not been matched in decades, while the numbers of new single family home permits have been increasing more modestly.

Figure H.1. Building Permits Issued by the City, 2019-2025



Source: City of East Providence Building Department

In an effort to address the housing crisis, the City currently has approximately 2,000 dwelling units that are either under construction, have been permitted, or are currently in the permitting process. The

largest of these are the Metacomet Golf Course redevelopment, which proposes nearly 900 units, and the East Point Development, which consists of nearly 400 units.

Table H.3. Building Permits Issued by the City, 2019-2025

Year of Permit Approval	Single Family	Multi Family	Total Units
2019	2	0	2
2020	3	0	3
2021	18	24	42
2022	8	0	8
2023	25	0	25
2024	17	141	158
2025	35	233	268

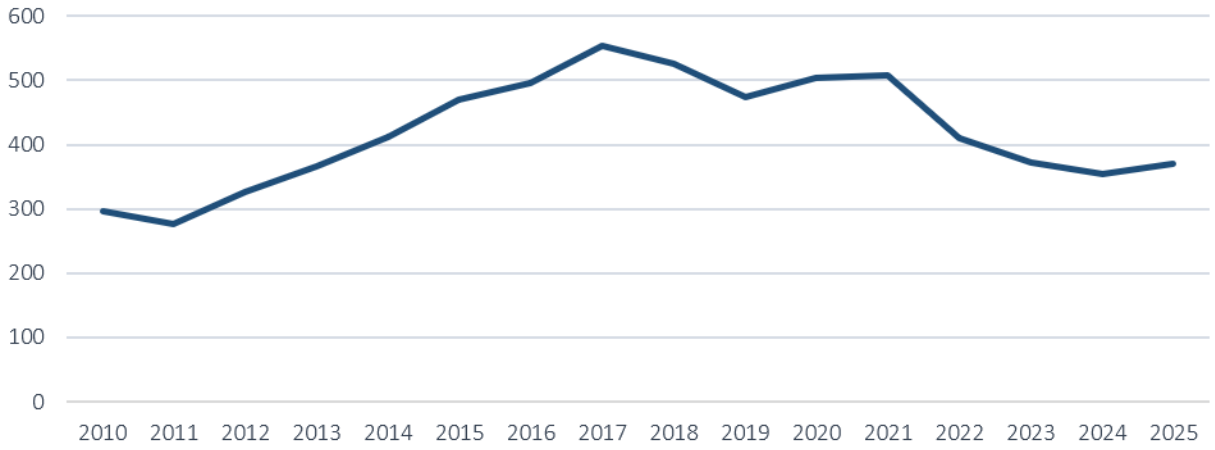
Source: City of East Providence

Housing Costs

Sale and Value of Homes

As the nation entered the Great Recession in 2008, Rhode Island and most states in New England and throughout the country experienced high unemployment rates, stagnant wages, tighter lending requirements for home mortgages and a significant drop in the sale and value of homes. As can be seen in Figure H.2, the sale of single-family homes in the City was on a downward until2011 but has largely been trending upward since then. The number of sales has decreased since 2021, largely due to skyrocketing housing prices and rising interest rates.

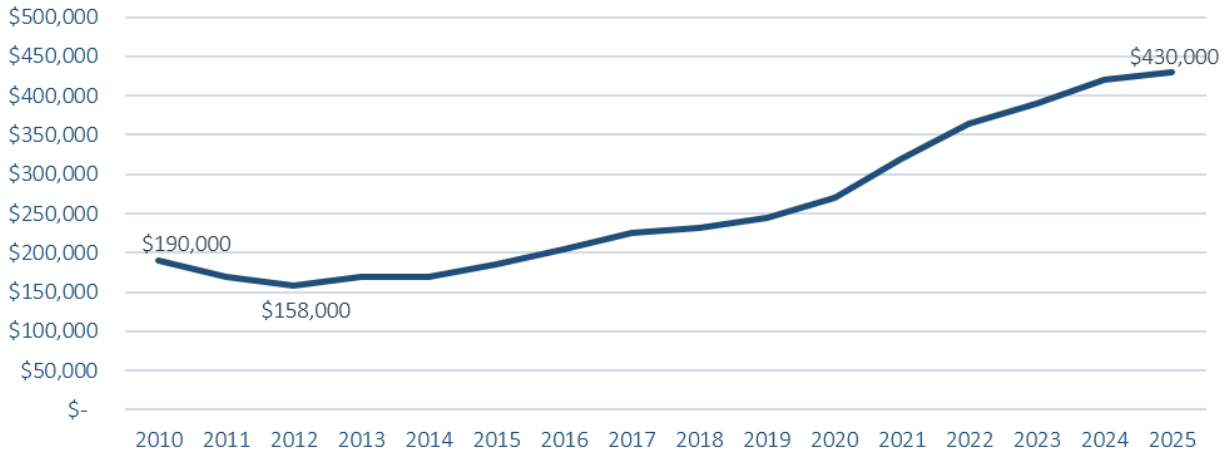
Figure H.2. Number of Single-Family Home Sales 2010-2025



Source: RI Realtors Statewide MLS

The value of single-family homes decreased significantly throughout the recession, from a peak of $260,000 in 2005 to a low of $157,500 in 2012. However, home prices have - more than doubled since 2012 as seen in Figure H.3. While single family home prices in East Providence are lower than those in Rhode Island as a whole, prices in the City have risen at a higher rate. As will be explored further in this chapter, this rise in housing prices is far outpacing increases in the median household income. Single family home prices spiked 121% between 2010and 2024, but median household incomes have only increased 51%.

Figure H.3. Median Sale Price of Single-Familly Homes 2010-2025

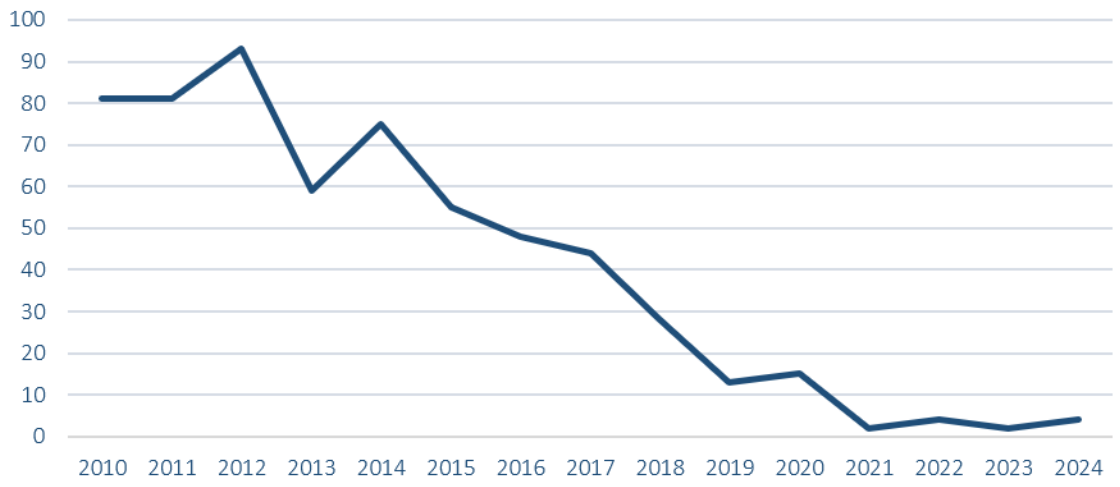


Source: Rhode Island Realtors Statewide MLS

Sale of Distressed Properties

The Rhode Island Realtors Statewide MLS maintains a database on the sale of distressed properties, which is defined as properties that have been conveyed as a short sale or foreclosure. The annual number of the City's single-family sales that have been conveyed as distressed properties has been trending down since it peaked in 2009 during the recession and has been falling steadily since 2014 (Figure H.4). In 2014, HousingWorks RI reported that the City was ranked 16th among Rhode Island municipalities for the percentage of foreclosed properties within a municipality's mortgaged housing stock. In that year, almost 20% of home sales were distressed. As of 2024 , only 4% of home sales were distressed. This is a very positive trend and a good sign for the local economy. At present, City staff observes no noticeable concentration of abandoned residential properties in any areas of the City.

Figure H.4. Sales of Distressed Properties, Single-Familly Homes, 2010-2024



Source: RI Realtors Statewide MLS

Rental Costs

For the past 10 years and more, the cost of rent has been increasing steadily in East Providence (Table H.4). Whether for one, two, or three bedrooms, rental rates have consistently increased year over year. From 2015 through 2025, two-bedroom rents increased by 92%. As is the case with single family home prices, rental rates are also increasing at a much greater rate than incomes over this same period.

Table H.4. East Providence Average 2-Bedroom Rental Prices, 2015-2025

Year	Avg. 2-Bedroom Rental Price
2015	$1,232
2016	$1,252
2017	$1,225
2018	$1,432
2019	$1,630
2020	$1,684
2021	$1,694
2022	$1,933
2023	$2,156
2024	$2,316
2025	$2,370

Source: Rhode Island Housing Rent Survey

Housing Affordability and Problems

Cost Burden

One of the best sources of data on local housing needs, including cost burden, is the Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) developed by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and based on American Community Survey data. While the last set of data, gathered for 2018-2022, is now somewhat out of date, it does give a snapshot of housing needs in East Providence as it recovered from the recession and the City started to see a sharp increase in housing costs. "Cost burden" refers to any household paying more than 30% of its income on housing. "Severe cost burden" refers to any household paying more than 50% of its income on housing. Table H.5 summarizes cost burdened households of various kinds within East Providence. The statistics are based on the HUD Area Median Family Income or HAMFI. This is calculated by HUD for each jurisdiction and will not necessarily be the same as other calculations of median incomes (such as a simple Census number), due to a series of adjustments that are made by the agency.

Table H.5. Cost Burden Households in East Providence, 2018-2022

	Number of Households	Percent
# of Cost Burdened Households	6,720	32.9%
# of Severely Cost Burdened Households	2,865	14.0%
# of LMI Cost Burdened Households	5,930	61.6% of LMI households
# of LMI Severely Cost Burdened Households	2,825	29.4% of LMI households
# of LMI Cost Burdened Households that are renting	3,655	61.7% of LMI Cost Burdened Households
# of LMI Cost Burdened Households that own their home	2,270	38.3% of LMI Cost Burdened Households

Source: Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS),2018-2022

The fact that one third of all households in East Providence are cost burdened should be a concern for the City. Whether people choose to, or are forced by circumstances, to spend more than 30% of their incomes on housing, this means they have less disposable income to spend both on other necessities such as food and health care, and at local shops, restaurants, and service providers. In other words, the entire economy is impacted.

It should come as no surprise that LMI households (making less than 80% of the Area Median Income) have much higher rates of cost burden than the average household. Over 60% are cost burdened, and nearly one third are severely cost burdened, significantly limiting the amount of income they have available for other expenses. It is also no surprise that while just under 40% of East Providence residents live in rental households, about 62% of cost burdened LMI households do. That said, 38% of cost burdened LMI households are homeowners, perhaps reflecting retirees on a fixed budget or people who choose to live where they do in spite of the burden on their incomes.

Housing Problems

The CHAS data track four different housing problems, including: incomplete kitchen facilities, incomplete plumbing facilities, more than 1 person per room, and cost burden greater than 30%. Table H.6 captures households with at least one such problem, organized by renters verses owners and by household income. The numbers in the "Percent" column represent the percent of households in each category with at least one housing problem. For example, " 1,520" represents 64.1% of all renter households earning less than 30% HAMFI.

Table H.6. East Providence Households With At Least One Housing Problem, 2018-2022

Household Income	Households with at least 1 housing problem	Percent of Households in Income Group
RENTERS		
≤ 30% HAMFI	1,520	64.1%
> 30% - ≤ 50% HAMFI	1,460	84.6%
> 50% - ≤ 80% HAMFI	880	51.5%
> 80% - ≤ 100% HAMFI	165	28.2%
> 100% HAMFI	80	4.7%
Total	**4,105**	**50.8%**
OWNERS		
≤ 30% HAMFI	650	74.7%
> 30% - ≤ 50% HAMFI	755	70.2%
> 50% - ≤ 80% HAMFI	865	46.3%
> 80% - ≤ 100% HAMFI	395	28.3%
> 100% HAMFI	410	5.8%
Total	**3,075**	**25.0%**

Source: Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), 2018-2022

It is no surprise that income generally correlates with housing problems. The lower a household's income, the more likely it is to have at least one housing problem. For owners and renters alike, households making over 100% HAMFI (which includes about 45% of all households in East Providence) have very little exposure to housing problems.

Affordability Gap

What is a moderately priced home for East Providence? The HousingWorks RI 2025 Fact Book reports a median sale price of $420,000 for single-family homes in East Providence (for 2025), with a monthly mortgage payment of about $3,576. The annual income needed to make this monthly mortgage affordable (i.e., 30% of a household's income) is $143,048. According to the U.S. Census, the City had a median household income of $75,912 which is *well* below the household income needed to prevent housing from becoming a cost burden.



Apartments in East Providence. Photo credit: Rent.com

As for rental homes, the HousingWorks RI 2025 Fact Book reports that the average rent paid for a two-bedroom apartment in East Providence is $2,370. The annual income needed to make this monthly rent affordable is $94,800, which is well above the City's median household income.

As noted above, the price of housing has continued to increase significantly with incomes not keeping pace. While rents are rising at a slower rate, there continues to be a growing gap between incomes and rents. Further, according to the American Community Survey, the poverty rate in East Providence has increased from 9% to 10% between 2010 and 2024. The bottom line is that the average home in East Providence is currently out of reach for the average household, whether owning or renting, and this gap is growing each year.

Table H.7. Housing Costs in East Providence

City's Median Household Income	$79,660
Typical monthly housing payment for a $420,000 house	$3,576
Household income needed for a $420,000 house to be affordable	$143,048
Average monthly rent for a two-bedroom apartment	$2,370
Household income needed for $2,370 rent to be affordable	$94,800

Source: HousingWorks RI 2025 Fact Book and U.S. Census

Low-Moderate Income Housing Data and Compliance

Rhode Island General Law, Chapter 45-53, "The Rhode Island Low and Moderate Income Housing Act" finds a shortage of affordable housing throughout the State and requires all 39 municipalities to provide housing opportunities for low and moderate income (LMI) individuals, families, and those with special needs. In order for residential units to be designated as LMI housing units, they must be subsidized by a federal, state, or municipal government and must remain affordable through a land lease and/or deed

restriction for not less than 30 years from initial occupancy. All municipalities must maintain a minimum of 10% of their housing stock as LMI housing.

As of 2025, Rhode Island Housing reported 2,357 LMI housing units in East Providence (Table H.8), with over half of those units reserved for the elderly. Over the past several years, the City has gained several units reserved for families and lost units reserved for those with special needs. The City has met the requirements of the Act with LMI housing units now comprising 10.95% of the City's housing units As described below, over 1,200 units are in progress of construction, under review, or proposed. Of those, 65 are identified as long-term affordable. New LMI units need to target those with the greatest need, families or people with special needs.

Table H.8. LMI Housing Units in East Providence ,

Number of housing units in 2025	21,769	
Housing units that qualify as LMI	2,357	-
LMI housing units reserved for the elderly	1,273	54% of LMI units
LMI housing units reserved for families	990	42% of LMI units
LMI housing units reserved for persons with special needs	94	4% of LMI units
% of total housing stock as LMI income housing	10.95%	-

Source: Rhode Island Housing, LMI Housing by Community 2025

What We Heard

What the community highlighted as the City's challenges, opportunities, and needs:

- East Providence is a desirable place to live because of its central location to local and regional employment, shopping, and services.
- Assets that contribute to the quality of life in East Providence includes the East Bay Bike Path, great public library, new high school, and the many parks.
- There is a strong sense of community that gives residents pride in the City.
- Even though East Providence is more affordable that neighboring communities, it is becoming more expensive to live here. Increases in housing costs push out young families, seniors, single people, and lower-income residents.
- There is a need for more affordable housing in locations that have access to transit, shopping, and services to make it easier for residents without cars to get to where they need to go.
- Residents are looking for more diverse housing types to the standalone single-family homes. These include homes with two or more bedrooms accessible to families and multi-generational households.
- There are opportunities to reuse and redevelop existing commercial and industrial buildings for housing.
- Entrepreneurial residents are looking for more flexible live/work spaces to help manage housing costs as well as grow their new businesses.

- The City's older housing stock adds costs for maintenance and upkeep. Rental housing is often in poor condition.
- Housing needs to be more accessible for those with disabilities.

Challenges, Needs, and Opportunities

It is in the City's best interest to make sure all residents are able to live in safe, decent homes that meet their needs and are affordable for their incomes. Investing in new housing as well as renovating the existing housing stock and converting existing buildings into residential or mixed-use is an important component of a community's economic growth with significant tangible social and economic benefits. While there are many challenges to meeting the City's housing needs, such as recessions, fluctuations in the housing market, and adapting to a post COVID economy, the opportunities inherent in having a diverse, safe, and accessible housing stock make it worth the effort.

Meet the Need for Diverse Housing Options

Alternative Housing Types for Changing Households

While the City's population has increased slightly since 2010, it is roughly 3,000 below the number of residents in 1980. Considering this decrease in the City's population, and the recent increase in housing permits, it is fair to wonder whether East Providence needs any more housing. However, as stated in this chapter, housing costs have continued to rise for the City's residents. Average household size continues to fall, meaning that more housing units are needed for the same number of people.



Small-scale single family home. Photo credit: CDNHomes.com

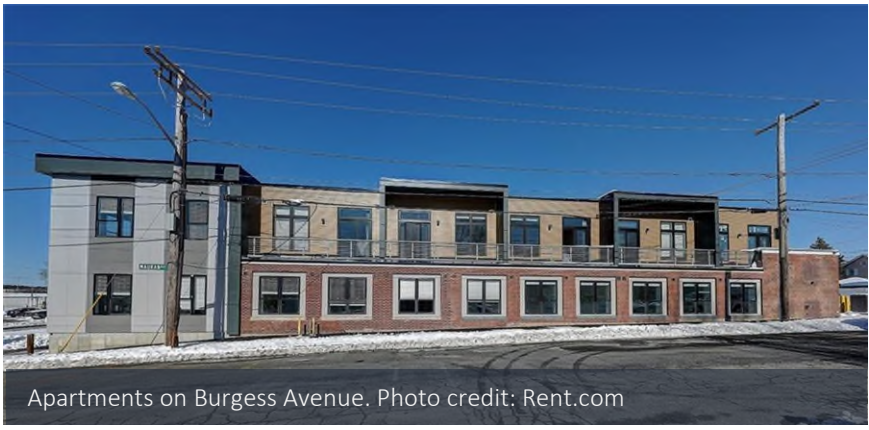
These trends suggest that there is a demand in the City's housing market for non-traditional types of housing. The vast majority of the City's existing housing stock was built to accommodate a workforce that was dependent upon the automobile for work, travel, and leisure activities, and as a result, the City has many residential neighborhoods characterized by single-family homes located on parcels that range in size from 5,000 to 10,000 square feet with a driveway in the side-yard. This type of housing will continue to be in demand, and it will be important to continue investing in this existing housing stock to make it attractive for the next generation of owners.

However, there is a growing segment of the City's population for whom single-family detached homeownership is undesirable, impractical, or unaffordable. As noted, East Providence's senior population is growing, particularly seniors living alone. Obviously not all these seniors live in single-family homes, but for those who do, many will need smaller housing alternatives with less maintenance in the immediate future. The data also shows that the number of adults under the age of 65 living alone has decreased sharply, suggesting a need for shared housing alternatives and more affordable rental and ownership options for working adults. There is a long tradition of multi-generational households in East

Providence, and anecdotally many young adults are living with their parents, grandparents, siblings, and/or other relatives. More diverse housing is needed to allow families to live together but have their own spaces. Young families and young adults in general are struggling to find homes in East Providence that meet their needs and are affordable. East Providence used to be a good place to find a relatively affordable home within easy commuting distance of Providence, but prices are becoming more and more out of reach. Additionally, a growing proportion of young adults are not looking to buy a single-family home with a yard but would prefer a smaller home with less maintenance located in an area within walking distance of shops, restaurants, schools, parks, transit, and other amenities.

What does this mean for needed housing types in East Providence? In brief, it means there is demand for homes in between single-family detached houses and large apartment buildings, such as:

- 2-6 Unit Homes: Also known as "missing middle" housing, this could include townhouses, stacked two-family homes, triple deckers, or small apartment buildings. These types of housing tend to be more naturally affordable than single-family homes and provide a lot of flexibility for different types of households. They can be built new, renovated, or converted from other existing buildings.


Apartments on Burgess Avenue. Photo credit: Rent.com

- Accessory Dwelling Units: Also known as "in-law apartments" or "granny flats," accessory dwelling units allow homeowners to build small apartments attached to their homes or in a detached structure in their yards. These units can help multi-generational families live together and also provide naturally more affordable rental housing.
- Mixed-Use and Live/Work Spaces: These are spaces where residential apartments or condos are built over commercial uses or where residents are allowed to run a business from their homes. This type of housing can help revitalize and provide customers for struggling commercial corridors while also providing opportunities for entrepreneurs.
- Micro-Units: These are generally rental apartments of 500 square feet or less, which due to their small size can be naturally affordable. When located in a neighborhood close to shops, restaurants, parks, and other amenities, these can be very attractive to young adults looking for their own place without being isolated.

Locations for More Housing

In general, the housing alternatives described above make sense in downtown or neighborhood centers. Downtown East Providence and its established commercial corridors are capable of absorbing a lot of new mixed-use and residential development, through smaller scale infill and redevelopment/reuse of existing vacant or underutilized buildings. Such development takes advantage of existing utility lines and infrastructure, provides housing for people who want or need to be less dependent upon the automobile and use transit, helps take pressure off developing the City's remaining green spaces and single-family neighborhoods, and supports local businesses.

Further, as discussed above, many younger and older adults alike want to live in walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods with access to restaurants, shops, services, and transit. Until recently, this is something that East Providence had a limited supply of, but efforts to reform zoning and promote mixed-use development have been paying off and are starting to help meet this demand. Mixed-use is now allowed in the following overlay districts:

1. Taunton Avenue Overlay District from Walnut Avenue to Irving Avenue.
2. Waterman Avenue Overlay District from Massasoit Avenue/North Brow Street to Pawtucket Avenue.
3. Warren Avenue Overlay District from Waterfront Drive Boyd Avenue.
4. Riverside Square Overlay District from Riverside Square to Crescent View Avenue.

Additional opportunities may also exist throughout the city, including sections of Newport Avenue, Willett Avenue, Pawtucket Avenue and Broadway, all of which could accommodate more housing alternatives.

Economic Development

The City's retail corridors and neighborhood centers are opportunities to incorporate housing, particularly smaller rental units in mixed use buildings. See this element for more details.

Transportation & Connectivity

Walking and biking connections between neighborhoods and commercial areas, parks, and other amenities increase activity in these areas and make them more accessible. Neighborhoods can be further enhanced by more accessible and convenient public transportation. See this element for more details.

Maintaining Today's Homes for the Next Generation

East Providence has a relatively old housing stock – nearly 85% of homes were built before 1980. While this historic housing stock adds to the City's character and charm, it can also lead to public health issues such as exposure to lead-based paint, asbestos, poor indoor air quality, and general disrepair. It is a great thing that East Providence already has a diversity of housing types, but these homes must be in good condition and updated to be more energy efficient and meet contemporary needs if they are going to be attractive options for the next generation. Thousands of homes in East Providence would benefit from full energy retrofits, including insulating the entire building, sealing off air leaks, and installing more sophisticated HVAC systems — ideally powered by renewable energy sources.

Maintaining existing housing also needs to consider those that are more susceptible to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change. Neighborhoods in low lying areas along the shoreline or in or near rivers and streams are most at risk, particularly from flooding. Homes along the bluffs in Riverside are also susceptible to wind and erosion.

Addressing all these needs can be expensive, and the City needs as many tools as possible to help owners reinvest in their properties. Without additional financial assistance or incentives, this can lead to continued disinvestment in these properties and buildings. There are many existing programs at the local, state, and federal level to help homeowners maintain and improve their homes, most notably through

the City's use of its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. However, many people don't know about these programs or how to combine all the various funding sources. The City serves as a compiler of this information and helps residents and business owners navigate the details.

Even if all these existing resources are utilized, they are frankly a drop in the bucket compared to the needs for reinvesting in our aging housing stock. Additional resources are sorely needed from both the state and federal governments.

Historic & Cultural Resources & the Arts

The City has several historic neighborhoods that demonstrate different architectural periods. It will be important to preserve significant structures and guide property owners how best to make improvements. See this element for more details.

Natural Hazards & Climate Change

There are neighborhoods in East Providence more vulnerable to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change, including the increased intensity and frequency of severe storms and more temperature extremes throughout the year. See this element for more details.

Low to Moderate Income (LMI) Housing

As discussed above, East Providence is in compliance with Rhode Island's Low-Moderate Income Housing Act. Why should the City consider further increasing its supply of LMI housing?

Housing affordability is not an isolated issue to solve on its own. It is tied directly to economic development, transportation, and more. The more people's incomes improve, the more they can afford to spend on housing. The more housing is located in walkable neighborhoods near jobs and shopping, the more people can save on transportation. And again, the less people spend on housing the more they can support the local economy with other purchases. At the same time, the more successful the City is at making East Providence an attractive place to live, the more higher-income people may move to the City, which can put even more pressure on housing costs to rise, making LMI homes all the more important.

In short, the whole economy benefits when housing is "affordable" – whether because it is LMI or just affordable to you based on your income. Maintaining or exceeding 10% of the City's housing stock as LMI means that as the market rate prices for housing go up and down, East Providence has a core of homes that will stay affordable for the long term. Statistically speaking, as noted above, about 14% of households in East Providence are severely cost burdened (spending more than 50% of their income on housing). The need for LMI housing, therefore, clearly exceeds 10%. Finally, while the City has a good deal of LMI housing for seniors, it has far fewer options for families and people with special needs.

Table H.10 lists recent projects that include LMI units. The most successful strategy for creating LMI units has been partnering with non-profit developers. The City needs to develop more tools, such as incentives and inclusionary zoning requirements, to maintain its mandatory requirement as well as continue to meet affordable housing needs of residents.

Table H.9. LMI Units Recently Constructed or In Progress

Project Name	Strategy	Ownership/ Rental	Total Number of Housing Units	Number of LMI Units	Status as of 2025
Ivy Place	Partnering with non-profit developer for new construction	Ownership	13	10	Completed
Residences at Riverside Square	Partnering with non-profit developer for new construction	Rental	16	16	Completed
Sutton Place	Partnering with non-profit developer to redevelop existing units	Rental	36	36	Completed
Platter-Watters School Complex	Partnering with non-profit developer for new construction	Ownership/ Rental	14	6	Under construction
Center City Apartments	Partnering with non-profit developer for new construction	Rental	144	144	Under construction
East Point	Partnering with non-profit developer for new construction	Rental, LGBTQI+ seniors	392	39	Under construction
Metacomet Golf Course redevelopment	To be determined	To be determined	890	89	Development locally approved by Waterfront Commission

Source: East Providence Department of Planning and Economic Development

Addressing Homelessness

According to HUD's Point in Time Count, on any given night in 2025, about 2,400 persons were homeless Rhode Island, living in shelters, on streets, or in transitional housing for homeless people. According to the organization Crossroads Rhode Island, the state experienced a staggering 394% increase in unsheltered homelessness between 2020 and 2024.

Shelter is a basic human need. However, the market alone cannot provide the housing types, affordability, and supportive services often needed to prevent or remedy homelessness. Homelessness is not always a visible problem in East Providence, and quantifiable data is often scarce, However, the City must be mindful of this issue.

The East Bay Coalition for the Homeless is the primary source of local assistance for homelessness prevention and assistance. It helps families get access to safe, affordable housing combined with case management, financial counseling, and connection to mainstream resources. Services are individualized and designed to help families achieve and maintain financial stability.

Foster Forward also provides additional services and resources for those without permanent homes. Foster Forward's Your Way Home program works to find permanent housing for homeless youth between the ages of 18 and 24 who have aged out of foster care. Foster Forward also operates a drop-in center for young people who are experiencing homelessness or home instability, located on South Brow Street in East Providence. At the center, youth, whether in the foster care system or not, can access a food pantry, washer and dryer, shower, emergency clinical supports, and other services and resources.

Considerations for Regulatory Change

One of the City's greatest tools to allow and encourage a range of housing types is its Zoning Ordinance. Changes in zoning can make it easier for developers or individual homeowners to build the types of housing East Providence needs most. Flexible residential zoning allows housing to evolve over time and meet our changing needs. As noted above, recent changes to the City's Zoning Ordinance have made it easier to develop mixed use along many of the City's commercial corridors. This has been a great opportunity to better meet demand for housing alternatives. In addition, the City may consider the following:

- Expand where two-family homes are allowed and make them easier to build.
- Allow smaller multi-family dwellings in more zoning districts compared with where all multi-family dwellings are allowed today.
- Allow larger scale multi-family or mixed-use housing in more zoning districts.
- Establish an Inclusionary Zoning policy consistent with state law in other areas of the City outside of the Waterfront District.

Understand the Connection between Housing, Opportunity, and Equity

How Housing Impacts Opportunity and Equity

As discussed above, many people and families across the City struggle to afford a home that is safe, healthy, and connected to the resources they need: good schools, jobs that pay living wages, safe and reliable transportation, and high-quality health care. Almost 15% of households in East Providence spend more than half of their income on housing. This often forces people to forego other necessities, including food and medicine. Others are forced to live on the streets or in homeless shelters. Housing insecurity is not evenly distributed across the population, disproportionately affecting people of color, older people, and those living on low incomes. As rents continue to rise much faster than wages, more and more working people and families are finding it harder to find high-quality, affordable homes.

High-quality, stable housing is central to the health and wellbeing of all people. It helps foster relationships and opportunities in communities, limits chronic stress, and allows families to support positive child development. Research shows that substandard housing, on the other hand, contributes to injury and illness, such as asthma, heart and lung disease, and cancer, while poor neighborhood conditions can make it harder to play and exercise outdoors, buy healthy food, and access good jobs, schools, and transportation.[2] Where people grow up and live plays a huge role in their life outcomes, along with their incomes, education, community connections, and social relationships. Together, these factors are known as the "social determinates of health."[3] Ultimately, if East Providence hopes to address inequity, whether by race, class, or age, it must address the City's affordable housing shortage and make sure all its neighborhoods are safe and offer opportunities for a good life.

Health Equity

Where people live, both in terms of their homes and their neighborhoods, plays a huge role in their health. East Providence is fortunate to have a Health Equity Zone (HEZ) Collaborative dedicated to ensuring equitable health outcomes for every neighborhood in the City. The Collaborative consists of a diverse group of community residents, community-based organizations, municipal and state government, local businesses, and faith-based groups. The goal of the Collaborative is to assess the health needs in East Providence and develop an action plan to improve health outcomes, with actions funded by the state, the City, and other resources. The HEZ action plan focuses on five major topics:

- Build Awareness – There are many existing services and supports for residents of East Providence, but people don't always know where to look. HEZ is a clearinghouse of information.
- Promote Resiliency – Develop neighborhood networks that can respond to emergency needs and address housing insecurity (i.e. make sure people don't fall into homelessness).
- Improve Access to Health Services – Many people are not getting the health services they need, particularly for mental and behavioral health and diabetes. Work on closing the gaps between health needs and services.
- Support Health and Wellness Across the Lifespan – Expand education and training related to expectant mothers, families with young children, youth, and seniors to bolster pre-natal health, physical activity, healthy relationships, and good eating habits.

Strengthen HEZ Capacity and Structure – Make sure the Collaborative has the resources to achieve these goals.

[2] http://www.commissiononhealth.org/PDF/e6244e9e-f630-4285-9ad7-16016dd7e493/Issue%20Brief%202%20Sept%2008%20-%20Housing%20and%20Health.pdf
[3] https://www.cdc.gov/socialdeterminants/index.htm

Targeted Strategies for Neighborhoods

Each neighborhood in East Providence has different strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, different targeted strategies and investments are needed to make sure each neighborhood is safe and offers opportunities for affordable housing and a healthy life.

The City has started to address this through a recent report commissioned from HousingWorks RI, *Devising an Opportunity Investment Strategy for East Providence* (February 2020). Using and adapting a methodology from the Public and Affordable Housing Research Corporation (PAHRC), this report analyzes statistics for each Census Tract in East Providence to determine indicators for Labor Market Access, Educational Opportunities, Transit Access, Health Outlook, and Neighborhood Quality. Based on these indicators, each Census Tract (which roughly correlate with areas of Rumford, Riverside, and the City Center) is categorized for the type of housing and community development investments it needs most. For example, a well-off neighborhood with higher rents may benefit from direct subsidy of more LMI housing, whereas a less well-off neighborhood with homes and commercial centers in disrepair might benefit more from investments in renovations and building upgrades. The goal of this report is to inform a Strategic Housing Plan for the City that acknowledges the social determinants of health and seeks to increase access to opportunity in all neighborhoods.

Moving Forward

For each goal, the City of East Providence will implement the following policies and actions to meet the opportunities and challenges for Housing.

Goal H1: Preserve the quality of the existing residential neighborhoods while encouraging growth.

Policy H1.1: Establish mixed-use overlay zoning in carefully selected areas of the City's commercial corridors to allow higher densities, mixed-use districts, and non-traditional forms of housing such as live/work spaces and mixed-use developments.

A. Evaluate the performance of existing mixed-use overlay districts to ensure they are producing the types of housing and development desired. Consult with local property owners and developers who have developed or renovated under the overlay standards and seek their advice on any needed regulatory adjustments.
B. Identify additional areas of the City, including Pawtucket Avenue, Willett Avenue, Broadway, and Newport Avenue, that might be able to accommodate mixed-use overlay zoning.

Policy H1.2: Continue and expand the City's efforts to reinvest in East Providence's existing housing stock.

A. Evaluate and expand existing grants or revolving loan programs, including the Community Development Division's housing rehabilitation programs, to help homeowners and rental property owners reinvest in their properties. Consider targeting a portion of funds for specific hard-to-finance needs like group residences for seniors and adults with disabilities. Seek other sources of grants and financing to couple with any local and CDBG assistance.
B. Consolidate and regularly update and publicize a list of federal, state, and local services and resources available to help East Providence property owners maintain and improve their

homes, including information related to homes located in flood plains and coastal areas, and actively promote these resources to residents and business owners. (Ongoing)

C. Continue to invest federal, state, and local funds into grants or loans for energy efficiency and climate resiliency improvements, and actively market these resources to private property owners. (Ongoing)

D. Support and promote the use of state, national, and local utility programs that would provide significantly more financing and design assistance for retrofitting existing homes, such as the Weatherization Assistance Program and National Grid energy efficiency services, and consider actively advocating for future state or federal legislation or programs that would increase such assistance. (Ongoing)

Policy H1.3: Strive to ensure all homes and neighborhoods in East Providence are safe, healthy, and sustainable and that everyone has equitable access to opportunity.

A. Continue to support the work of the East Providence HEZ and help to implement its action plan. (Ongoing)

B. Continue the East Providence Lead Safe Program and financing programs available to property owners and residents to make their homes lead safe, energy efficient, and overall environmentally safe to live. (Ongoing)

Policy H1.4: Strive to ensure the foreclosure rate in the City remains low and that foreclosed properties are quickly put back to productive use.

A. Continue to monitor and conduct periodic site visits of foreclosed properties. (Ongoing)

Policy H1.5: Ensure smooth and compatible transitions from mixed-use and commercial corridors to neighboring residential areas.

A. Evaluate current standards for landscaping and other techniques to ensure they can adequately buffer these areas from adjacent residential neighborhoods.

B. Explore zoning options for allowing "missing middle" housing types (2-6 units per building) adjacent to mixed-use overlay areas, in order to increase housing opportunities while providing a transition from higher density mixed-use to lower density residential areas.

Goal H2: Increase housing options in proximity to parks, bike paths, public transit, and commercial corridors.

Policy H2.1: Coordinate zoning for housing alternatives with public amenities.

A. Prioritize establishing new mixed-use overlay zoning and zoning for "missing middle" housing in proximity to parks, bike paths, and public transportation corridors.

B. Where housing alternatives are desired away from these amenities, prioritize investments in sidewalks, parks, bike paths, and transit options before or in conjunction with new housing development. (Ongoing)

Policy H2.2: Encourage adaptive reuse of existing structures for residential purposes, as appropriate, in order to preserve the City's existing fabric.

A. Continue to actively market the development opportunities within mixed-use overlay zones to property owners and developers. (Ongoing)
B. Identify buildings in the mixed-use overlay zones the City deems to be most appropriate for residential or mixed-use conversion and include this in marketing materials.
C. Develop an institutional reuse policy that would permit the adaptive reuse of existing institutional buildings such as schools, churches, etc. for multi-family residential where the underlying zoning would not otherwise allow this.

Goal H3: Decrease the number of cost burdened households.

Policy H3.1: Continue to coordinate with federal, state, local, for-profit, and non-profit housing organizations to maintain and expand LMI housing opportunities.

A. Seek assistance from non-profit housing developers to identify appropriate sites for new LMI housing opportunities, utilizing federal technical assistance and other grants. Prioritize projects that meet the needs of families and people with special needs.
B. Continue to explore City-owned property appropriate for the development of LMI or mixed-income housing. (Ongoing)
C. Continue to partner with local non-profit developers to purchase and renovate existing multi-family properties, and deed restrict them as LMI housing. (Ongoing)
D. Continue to conduct an annual inventory of East Providence homes that qualify as LMI per state law. At least five years prior to the expiration of any deed restriction, develop a plan for renewing the deed restriction.

Policy H3.2: Continue to coordinate with the East Providence Housing Authority to ensure its fiscal health and local control over public housing management.

A. Seek ways to expand the inventory of Housing Authority homes, through construction of new properties, redevelopment of existing properties, or the purchase and deed restriction of existing private market apartment buildings. (Ongoing)
B. Develop a capital improvement plan to ensure that all Housing Authority homes are retained and invested in to support future generations of East Providence residents. Fully utilize federal, state, and institutional grants and financing.

Policy H3.3: Seek to eliminate homelessness in East Providence.

A. Develop protocols with City departments, including Public Safety, East Bay Coalition for the Homeless, and other local homeless service providers for connecting unhoused people in our community with services.
B. Monitor data on individuals and households most at risk of homelessness, including those with very low-incomes, mental illness, and drug addiction. Continue to invest in City services and connect to non-City services to help prevent these populations from slipping into homelessness, particularly rental and mortgage assistance, legal assistance, counseling and advocacy, and anti-eviction programs and policies. (Ongoing)
C. Identify partners to expand the current stock of transitional and permanent supportive housing in East Providence. Collaborate on seeking funding and financing to move projects forward.

Policy H3.4: Increase awareness of and access to housing support resources available to East Providence residents.

A. Coordinate efforts with Rhode Island Housing to advertise and increase local participation in the agency's programs for first-time homebuyers, rental assistance, etc.
B. Maintain a link to the Rhode Island Housing website on the City's website, and at least once a year seek to reach out to renter households in East Providence with information on home ownership programs.

Policy H3.5: Encourage housing options for the City's elderly population, including opportunities to age in place, that are compatible with the limits of their resources and their ability to live independently.

A. Partner with local non-profit developers to take advantage of financing for affordable senior housing through the HUD 202 program.
B. Conduct a market study for the need for additional assisted living facilities in East Providence, and actively share this information with assisted living providers in the region.
C. Continue property tax exemptions for the elderly and research opportunities for other special needs households. (Ongoing)

Policy H3.6: Research options for zoning and other regulatory reform that will expand housing alternatives.

A. Expand where two-family homes are allowed and consider reducing or eliminating the required increase in lot size so long as other dimensional and parking standards are met. Allow this for new homes as well as conversion of existing homes.
B. Create a new use category for 3-to-6-unit multi-family dwellings and increase where these are allowed compared with multi-family dwellings today.
C. Allow larger scale (7+ unit) multi-family or mixed-use housing by right in more commercial zoning districts and by special use permit in more residential zoning districts.
D. Establish an Inclusionary Zoning consistent with State law outside of the Waterfront District, whereby developments of a certain size are required to provide a certain percentage of LMI units. Consider enforcing this everywhere in the City, or at least in targeted mixed-use areas.
E. Adopt an accessory dwelling unit ordinance that is consistent with State enabling legislation.
F. Investigate amending zoning regulations to reduce minimum off-street parking requirements for larger multifamily residential developments.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

East Providence supports a diverse job base by attracting new high-quality industries to the City while maintaining a wide variety of existing businesses. New industry should respect existing neighborhoods, maximize the use of existing infrastructure, and strengthen the City's tax base. Local economic development should also support the local workforce and reduce economic disparities within the community. Giving residents the opportunity to take advantage of higher paying jobs coming into the City builds wealth and upward mobility, and enhances the City's skilled labor pool for potential businesses.

Economic development within the City is dependent on East Providence being a desirable place to do business and also an attractive place to live for workers. Key components that support business growth and development include affordable and diverse housing options, efficient and sustainable public infrastructure and services, and a regulatory framework that is streamlined for business development, but also protects the City's natural, cultural, and historic resources that contribute to the quality of life of residents.

This chapter supports and embodies the goals of the following State Guide Plan elements related to economic development:

- 118: Rhode Island Rising: A Plan for People, Places, and Prosperity
- 121: Land Use 2025: Rhode Island State Land Use Policies and Plan

Snapshot

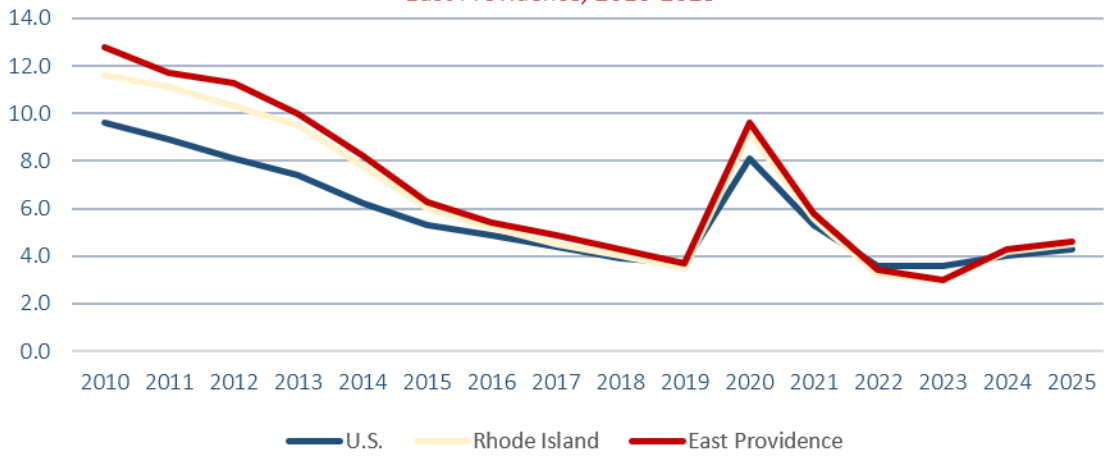
The Local Workforce

The local workforce is comprised of City residents 16 years and older. Understanding its characteristics, such as current employment, educational attainment, and age, can help focus efforts that prepare residents for career advancement and securing higher-paying jobs that will improve their quality of life. The local workforce also supports local businesses with needed skills for growth and expansion as well as attracts new businesses to the East Providence that will grow its commercial tax base.

Unemployment

Unemployment is an indicator of overall economic health. The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (RIDLT) statistics showed a steady decline in local unemployment from 2012 until 2020, when the COVID-19 Pandemic led to a considerable increase at the local, state and national levels. In recent years, the local unemployment rate has again fallen reaching an average of 4.6% in 2025. East Providence's unemployment rate is now aligned with that of the state and country.

Figure ED.1. Unemployment Rates in the U.S., Rhode Island, and East Providence, 2010-2025



Source: RI Dept. of Labor and Training (Rhode Island & East Providence), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (U.S.)

2020 started strong, but the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in stay-at-home orders issued by the Rhode Island Governor's office requiring non-essential businesses, especially retail and service operations, to temporarily close. Restrictions were lifted in phases from May through the summer, but capacity limits were still imposed on restaurants and entertainment venues to ensure social distancing. Restrictions were lifted as the population became vaccinated starting in December 2020, and by May 2021 people over the age of 12 years were eligible for one of three available vaccines. This trend continued through the end of the year and into 2022. Table ED.1 shows the fluctuation in unemployment through 2020 and into 2021. , During this period, Rhode Island and East Providence experienced higher rates of unemployment than the nation as a whole.

Table ED.1. Unemployment Rates in 2020, 2021 and 2025 (Not Seasonally Adjusted), U.S., Rhode Island, and East Providence

2020				2021				2025			
Month	U.S.	Rhode Island	City	Month	U.S.	Rhode Island	City	Month	U.S.	Rhode Island	City
January	4.0	4.1	4.5	January	6.8	8.5	8.7	January	4.4	5.1	5.2
February	3.8	4.0	4.3	February	6.6	7.9	8.0	February	4.5	5.6	5.7
March	4.5	5.0	5.4	March	6.2	7.2	7.5	March	4.2	4.7	4.8
April	14.4	17.9	18.5	April	5.7	5.1	5.1	April	3.9	4.0	4.1
May	13.0	16.2	16.4	May	5.5	5.5	5.6	May	4	4.1	4.0
June	11.2	12.3	12.5	June	6.1	5.8	6.2	June	4.4	4.0	4.2
July	10.5	11.5	11.8	July	5.7	5.8	6.3	July	4.6	4.4	4.7
August	8.5	13.0	13.3	August	5.3	6.1	6.6	August	4.5	4.6	4.6
September	7.7	10.2	10.3	September	4.6	4.8	5.0	September	4.3	3.7	3.6
October	6.6	6.5	6.8	October	4.3	4.1	4.5	October	n/a	n/a	n/a
November	6.4	7.7	8.0	November	3.9	4.0	4.2	November	4.3	4.7	4.7
December	6.5	7.8	8.1	December	3.7	3.4	3.7	December	4.1	4.5	4.6
Annual Average	8.1	9.4	9.7	Annual Average	5.3	5.6	5.9	Annual Average	4.3	4.5	4.6

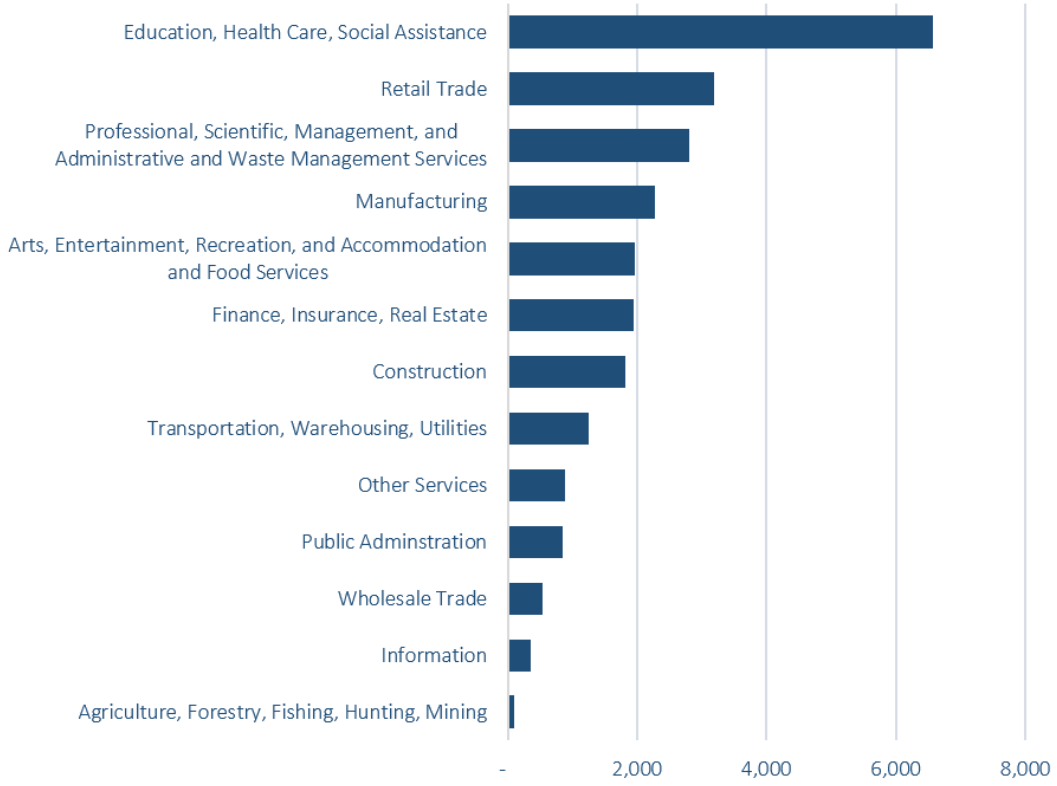
Source: Unemployment Rate/Labor Force Statistics (LAUS), RI Department of Labor and Training (Rhode Island & East Providence), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (U.S.)

Employment by Industry Classification

Examining occupations of residents can help highlight potential sectors that provide high employment opportunities for the City. For example, if a high number of residents are working in manufacturing, but manufacturing represents a small piece of the local economy, the City may be missing an opportunity to build that sector locally. East Providence residents are employed in a wide range of occupations. As shown in Figure ED.2, nearly 30% are in occupations classified as education services, and health care and social assistance. Other occupations with high employment are:

- Retail trade.
- Manufacturing.
- Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services.
- Arts, entertainment, and recreation and accommodation and food services.

Figure ED.2. Occupations of Employed East Providence Residents 16 Years and Older, 2024



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024

Educational Attainment

Educational attainment refers to the highest level of education completed and can also help to illustrate characteristics of the local workforce relative to potential industries. Over the last 14 years, more East Providence residents 25 years and older were finishing high school and continuing their education (Table ED.2). In 2010, nearly 10% of residents had less than a 9th grade education. In 2024 , that number dropped to 3.4%, 5.1% and more residents completed high school and received their diploma or its equivalency. Additionally, more residents completed Associate's (+ 2.0%), Bachelor's (+ 3.9%), or Graduate or other professional degrees (+ 4.9%). Receiving a high school diploma (or its equivalency) and obtaining higher education degrees increases employment opportunities and access to higher paying jobs for residents. For potential businesses considering investment in the City, it creates a more desirable pool of potential employees.

Table ED.2. Change in Education Attainment of East Providence Residents 25 Years and Older, 2010-2024

	2010	2024	Change
Less than 9th grade	9.8%	5.1%	-4.7%
9-12 grade, no diploma	11.0%	6.4%	-4.6%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	31.6%	32.6%	1.0%
Some college, no degree	17.8%	15.4%	-2.4%
Associate's degree	6.9%	8.9%	2.0%
Bachelor's degree	14.2%	18.1%	3.9%
Graduate or professional degree	8.6%	13.5%	4.9%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010 and 2024

Income and Poverty

Benefits from public investments in the local economy should be felt by the community as a whole. As the local economy grows, so should opportunities for employment and higher incomes for residents. Table ED.3 shows the median incomes for the City and the State of Rhode Island over the past 14 years. For the state, household incomes have risen by about $ $9,600 when adjusted for inflation. In East Providence, household incomes have remained relatively flat with increases at approximately 50% of the state's.

Table ED.3. Median Household Income for Rhode Island and East Providence, 2010 and 2024

	2010	Inflation-Adjusted 2024 dollars*	2024	Difference
East Providence	$50,319	$71,621	$75,912	$4,291
Rhode Island	$54,902	$78,144	$87,796	$9,652

CPI Inflation Adjusted Calculator available at https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl.

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010 and 2024

While overall incomes are not increasing, data suggests that poverty conditions are improving slightly in East Providence. Approximately 10% of East Providence households in 2024 had incomes below the poverty level, which is lower than the State of Rhode Island (Table ED.4). This was a slight decrease from 2012. While the City's percentage of children below the poverty level has decreased since 2012, the percentage of seniors has increased from 10.% to 13.4%.

Table ED.4. Percentage of Age Group Living Below the Poverty Level, East Providence and Rhode Island, 2012 and 2024

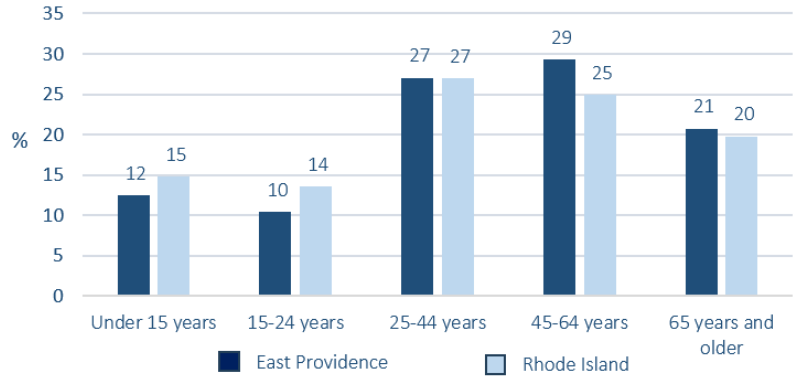
	East Providence 2012	East Providence 2024	Rhode Island 2024
Percent of Total Population Below Poverty Level	10.3%	10.1%	11.2%
Under 18 years	17.0%	12.7%	14.3%
18 to 64 years	8.0%	8.4%	10.4%
65 years and over	10.4%	13.4%	10.5%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2012 and 2024

Resident Age

East Providence's workforce population skews older. The median age in 2024 was 45.1 years, which is higher than that of the state (40.6 years). More than half of the City's population was between the ages of 25 and 64 years (Figure ED.3). Compared to Rhode Island, East Providence has a smaller portion of youth and young adults (ages 15 to 24 years) and a slightly higher percentage of residents over the age of 65.

Figure ED.3. Distribution of Age Groups in East Providence and Rhode Island, 2024



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024

The East Providence Economy

Industry Profile

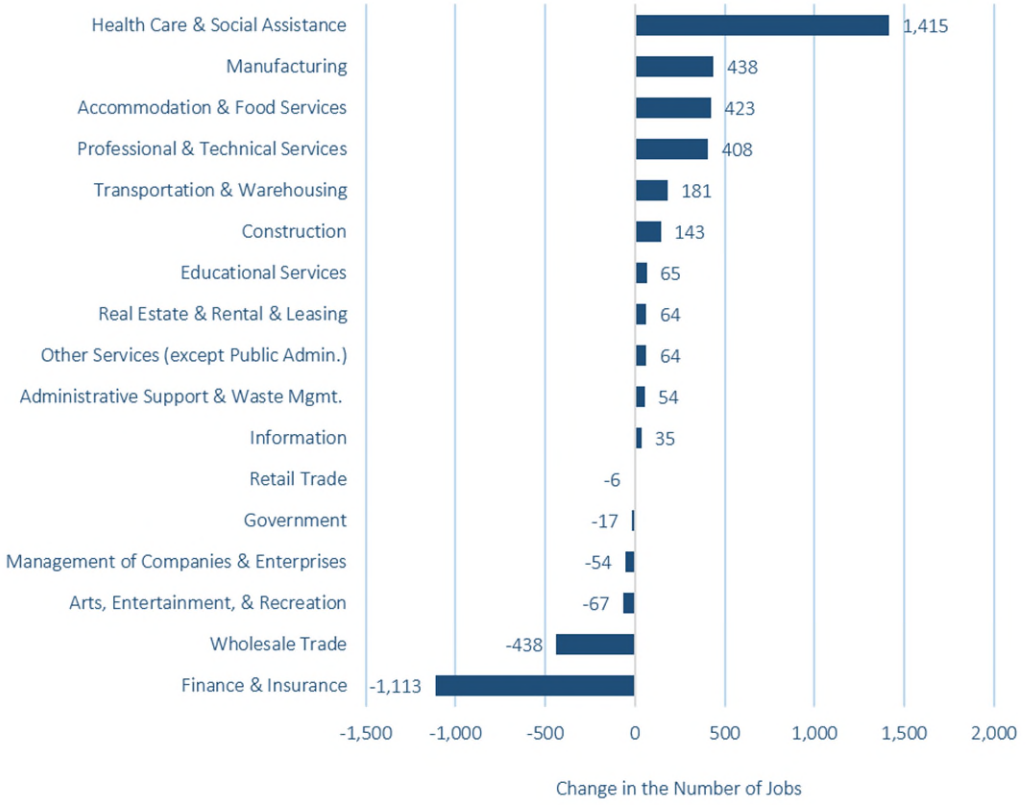
According to the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (RIDLT), in 2025, East Providence's five most prominent industry sectors, in terms of employment, were health care and social assistance, manufacturing finance and insurance, , e, accommodation and food services, and retail trade. Combined, these five sectors represented 60% of the City's employment.

As shown in Figure ED.4, health care and social assistance, , manufacturing, accommodation and food services, and professional and technical services are the industries that have experienced the most growth in East Providence over the last 15 years. The greatest gains during this period were in the field of

health care and social assistance (1,415 jobs) while the greatest losses were in finance and insurance, with more than 1,113 jobs.

Comparably, statewide, in that 10-year period, Rhode Island experienced the fastest growth in accommodation and food services, professional and technical services, health care and social assistance, construction and transportation and warehousing. It saw the biggest loss of jobs in "other services (excluding public administration), the information sector, and manufacturing . Historically, manufacturing has been a major employer in the City. In 2002, the average employment in this sector by East Providence establishments was 3,600,[4] .While this sector declined through the early 2000s, there has since been a modest increase in employment since then due to the growth of high tech manufacturing companies such as Aspen Aerogels, Eaton Aerospace, and Igus.

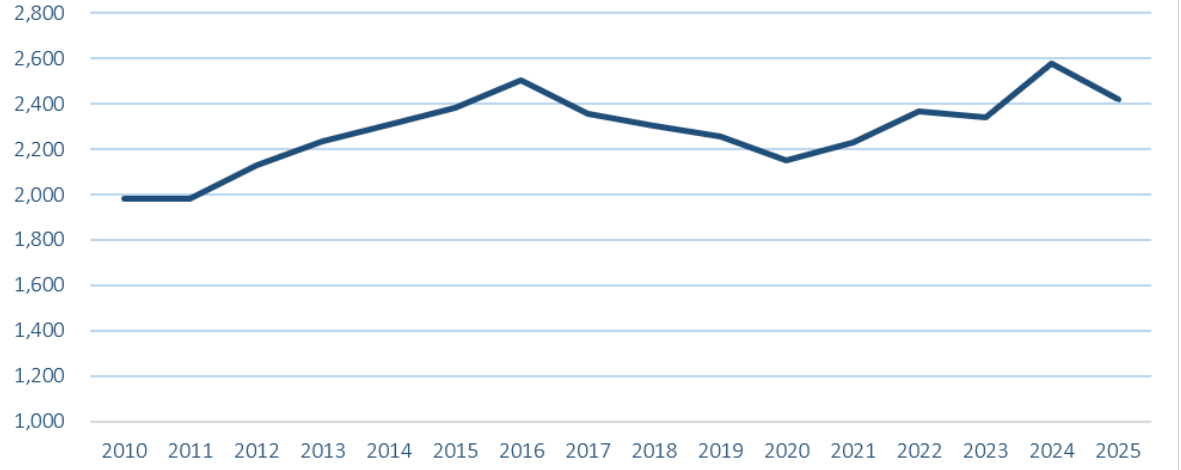
Figure ED.4. Change in the Number of Jobs by Employment Sector, East Providence, 2010-2025



Source: RI Dept. of Labor and Training Quarterly Census of U.I.-Covered Employment and Wages and City and Town Annual Reports

[4] Rhode Island Department of Labor & Training Quarterly Census of U.I.-Covered Employment and Wages City and Town Annual Report, 2002

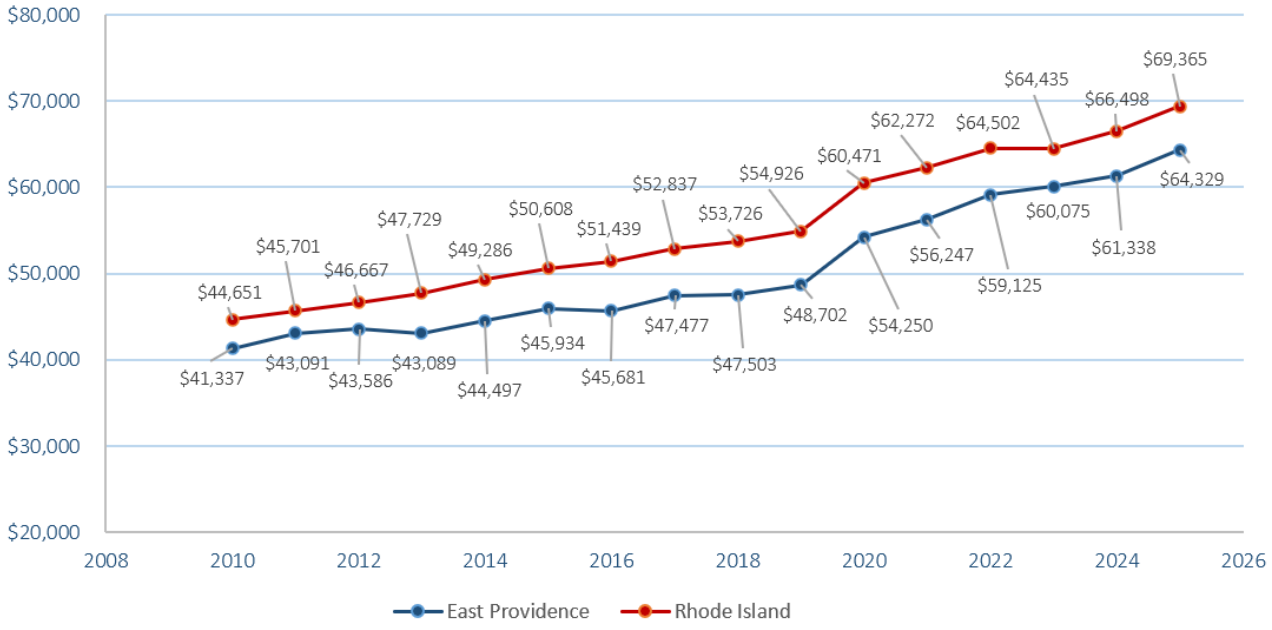
Figure ED.5 Number of Manufacturing Jobs in East Providence, 2010-2025.



Source: RI Dept. of Labor & Training Quarterly Census of U.I.-Covered Employment and Wages City and Town Annual Reports, 2010

Total wages of businesses in East Providence tend to pay moderate to low wages. Low wages are particularly evident in the accommodation and food services and retail trades. Overall, East Providence wage data for all industries show East Providence lagged between six and twelve percent behind Rhode Island from 2010 to 2025. (Figure ED.6).

Figure ED.6. Average Annual Wages of Businesses Located in East Providence and Rhode Island 2010-2025



Source: RI Dept. of Labor & Training Quarterly Census of U.I.-Covered Employment and Wages City and Town Annual Reports, 2010-2025

Commercial and Industrial Centers

Economic development activities concentrate along the City's major roadways, in neighborhood retail centers, in traditional industrial and office parks, and in the City's Waterfront District.

Major Commercial Corridors

The City's major commercial corridors are dominated by retail, services, restaurants, and other commercial uses. These include:

- Newport Avenue
- Pawtucket Avenue from Taunton Avenue to Veterans Memorial Parkway
- Warren Avenue
- Taunton Avenue
- Waterman Avenue

Establishments are located in shopping centers or have a larger building footprint (8,000 to 15,000 square feet). The roadways are car-oriented, typically four lanes with limited opportunities for pedestrians to cross. These corridors are also along RI Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) bus routes.

Neighborhood Centers and Corridors

Neighborhood centers and corridors are commercial areas that primarily serve adjacent residential areas. Establishments are smaller, 2,500 to 5,000 square feet. Multifamily or mixed-use buildings are also found in these areas. Roadways are typically two lanes with on-street parking. These include:

- Taunton Avenue from I-195 to Six Corners
- Warren Avenue from Valley Street to Pawtucket Avenue
- Riverside Square

Waterfront District

This element outlines the key goals and objectives of the Waterfront District and future planning for economic, civic, residential, and recreational opportunities.

Industrial and Office Parks

East Providence has three primary industrial parks:

- Narragansett Park Drive Industrial Park – Located off Newport Avenue
- Westminster Industrial and Office Park – Located in the vicinity of Catamore Boulevard
- Commercial Way Area Industrial Park – Located off Waterman Avenue and Taunton Avenue

Some corridors in the City, including easterly portions of Waterman Avenue and Dexter Road, also accommodate industrial and large office and service facilities. Collectively, these parks are home to dozens of industrial, commercial office, and service industry uses and are an important part of the City's economic vibrancy.

Waterfront District

In 2003, the City adopted the East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Plan (Waterfront Plan), at which time it was incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan. The Waterfront Plan articulates a vision with strategies to transform over 300 acres of the City's underutilized waterfront along the Providence and Seekonk Rivers. The vision hopes to achieve a diverse mix of land uses, including

commercial, office, medium and high density residential, light manufacturing, entertainment and hospitality, civic, and recreational uses, particularly those oriented towards the water. The Plan calls for high quality design in terms of purpose, planning, architecture, and materials, and those that are sensitive to historical and community concerns. Development within the Waterfront District, in the aggregate, should be self-sustaining and improve current site conditions while protecting and enhancing the natural environment and providing the public with improved access to the East Providence coastline. Full buildout of the Waterfront District will generate millions of dollars in new tax revenue and create thousands of temporary and permanent jobs that will provide a strong infusion of new revenue that will create a more stable and diverse local economy in East Providence. The East Providence Waterfront Commission is a quasi-public governmental organization that oversees the development within the Waterfront District.

What We Heard

What the community highlighted as the City's challenges, opportunities, and needs:

- The City actively promotes economic development opportunities available in East Providence and markets itself to new businesses.
- The City has a strong existing commercial and industrial tax base.
- The City supports local businesses with a variety of programs and access to different business development opportunities. The City made recent hires to meet the demands of providing these services.
- People are looking to "experience" places. The City should build on its historic, cultural, and natural resources to sustainably develop these resources to support existing businesses and create new economic development opportunities.
- The City has a growing arts community supported by the East Providence Arts Council. These artists bring opportunities for new businesses and employment.
- For many years there have been empty storefronts and vacant properties along the City's major commercial corridors. Many of these buildings are dated shopping plazas and large, single-use buildings surrounded by parking.
- Recently there has been a growing interest in East Providence with new, small businesses opening around the City.
- The new high school that opened for the 2021-22 school year includes spaces and technology for training and skill development for students as they enter the workforce.
- The City's commercial and retail areas need a more cohesive design to improve the appearance of these areas and make them more attractive to new businesses and customers.
- There is support by the community to invest in infrastructure (roads, fiberoptics, water, sewer, etc.) to help attract new businesses to the City and retain those already here.

Challenges, Needs, and Opportunities

Aging Retail Corridors

Many buildings along the City's major retail corridors, Taunton, Pawtucket, and Newport Avenues, have vacancies. Spaces vary in size from small storefronts in shopping centers to larger standalone commercial buildings. All are surrounded and separated by parking lots. It is easy to assume these vacancies are a result of increased online shopping accelerated by the significant shift to e-commerce during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020/2021. However, East Providence's retail corridors have been struggling for extended periods of time, and there may be other reasons for vacancies:

- Regional shopping centers in Seekonk and Attleboro absorb a significant amount of retail and restaurant commerce.
- Properties may lack investments to upgrade buildings or the overall site by the owners.
- The general area itself may not be desirable to new businesses because of aesthetics.
- These corridors do not provide a positive driving experience. They are four-lane roadways with minimal shoulders, giving drivers cues to drive at faster speeds.
- Each commercial building has its own entrance, creating multiple driveways where cars enter and exit along the roadway. This leads to congestion and driver conflicts.

The challenge is making these areas more attractive to new businesses and investors and exciting for visitors. There are opportunities and assets to build on. Taunton, Pawtucket, and Newport Avenues are all serviced by regular RIPTA bus routes, which provide an alternative to driving. Three routes connect at the Wampanoag Plaza at the corner of Taunton and Pawtucket Avenues. Discussions around a RIPTA hub just north of the plaza on Pawtucket Avenue that includes a bikeway connection to the Henderson Bridge can provide more connections without cars.

All roadways in these commercial corridors have sidewalks, however, the pedestrian experience is not positive. There are no buffers from the vehicular traffic such as landscaping or trees, including the absence of a roadway shoulder in most cases. This also creates little space for safe bike riding. Sidewalks are separated from commercial buildings by parking lots, which do not have a safe pathway for pedestrians to get to businesses. Crosswalks exist at traffic lights, but often

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)

BIDs are organizations formed by private property owners and businesses within a legally constituted city district. Members pay a special tax to cover the expense of providing their BID with services beyond what the local government offers in their area. The legalities of forming a BID vary from state to state, but the organizations are often created simply by the approval by a majority of local business and property owners, by those who control a majority of the land area, or by owners responsible for the majority of the fees assessed.

BIDS… can range in size and scope. Some are independent of local government, having almost complete autonomy to finance, construct, and manage specific projects, while others are dependent on local government, created only to raise revenue for specific projects. The benefits of belonging to a BID vary. Some BIDs simply supplement the district's maintenance offerings, providing extra sanitation and landscaping services, while others expand into economic and community development.

- Project for Public Spaces

vehicular left and right turns conflict with pedestrians. Too many driveways along the roadway also present conflicts. Promoting more ways to walk and bike to and through these corridors will help reduce car traffic and promote healthier lifestyles for those that live nearby who shop and work here.

Another bright opportunity for these corridors is daily traffic passing through. These corridors are home to several established retail stores, restaurants, and services frequented by City residents, both from adjacent neighborhoods and city-wide. Equally, they are part of the commute to some of the City's major employers. For example, just south of the corner of Pawtucket and Taunton Avenues is East Providence High School, which is attended by more than 3,000 students and hundreds of administrative personnel, faculty, and other support staff. The Narragansett Industrial Park is located off Newport Avenue, the home of several businesses including Zoll Medical. Many employers are looking for locations that offer their employees nearby retail, recreation, and other opportunities to make themselves more competitive in attracting workers.

Redeveloping these corridors will require a comprehensive approach that takes into consideration mobility, aesthetics, public spaces, and economic markets, as well as shifting the perspective of these corridors away from being strictly retail. Opportunities for offices and housing can also help revitalize these areas and bring vibrancy. The City has updated zoning in commercial areas to allow for mixed use development (see below). This rezoning may provide an opportunity for these aging retail corridors as well. Each has different challenges and needs but all may need additional incentives to attract developers. A corridor revitalization plan for each of these areas would establish an understanding of barriers and layouts and provide clear vision of what the community wants the area to look like and the types of uses it needs. Engagement of property owners, businesses, and residents is key in this process. A revitalization plan will outline specific regulatory changes, design standards, public infrastructure, incentives for developers, and financial tools, if appropriate. This process may lead to the establishment of a local business improvement district as well. This type of framework will help local decision makers guide public and private investments towards a shared vision.

Transportation & Connectivity

There are several investments in the City's transportation network that can incentivize investments into these aging corridors, including a potential RIPTA Hub on Pawtucket Avenue and redesign of Six Corners. Creating Green Complete Streets add multiple benefits to the area. See this element for more details.

Housing

These corridors represent an opportunity to add needed affordable housing, particularly "missing middle" options, through infill and mixed use development. See this element for more details.

Blighted and Substandard Areas

Blighted and substandard conditions exist in East Providence in all locations that have experienced changes in demand for a class of use at scale, in particular the Waterfront District as there is no longer the same demand for commercial and industrial uses in the area. Similarly, there are large swaths of real property that are no longer in the same scale of use or demand by the fossil fuel industry, in particular the area spanning between Pawtucket Ave and Wampanoag Trail. In addition, there are areas near the coastline throughout Riverside that were formerly used as second homes and beach cottages which have transitioned to year-round housing and the difference in use has created atypical infill issues and corresponding acute examples of blight. Similar conditions of spot blight exist throughout the city, where faulty platting, substandard site conditions, deteriorating improvements and/or substandard construction create substandard conditions that may spread if not addressed. These aforementioned areas should be designated for redevelopment.

Neighborhood Centers

Neighborhood centers can be the heart of a community, supporting local economic vitality, building community pride, and providing a space for more diverse housing options. While the City lacks a defined downtown, there are smaller commercial corridors and neighborhood centers that serve nearby residential areas with a concentration of retail and services. Many of these areas are a mix of former historic villages or neighborhoods that have been redeveloped through the decades. For many years, these areas saw little investment and storefronts were empty.

Recently, the City is being "discovered" by new residents, particularly young families, because of its proximity to Providence and relative affordability. Property owners are seeing opportunities and investing in these neighborhood centers. The most notable are:

- Taunton Avenue from Walnut Avenue to Irving Avenue
- Watchemoket Square along Warren Avenue from Waterfront Drive to Pawtucket Avenue
- Waterman Avenue from Massasoit Avenue/North Brow Street to Pawtucket Avenue
- Riverside Square

One of the barriers to creating more vibrant, mixed use neighborhood centers was the zoning regulations, which prohibited residences in these predominately commercial areas. In 2016, the City adopted the Main Street and Neighborhood Overlay District for the Taunton Avenue Main Street corridor and the Riverside Square Mixed Use/Downtown Overlay District with the intent of opening opportunities for mixed land uses in these areas. The overlay districts allow for flexible development with higher density (e.g. multifamily and mixed-use buildings) by expanding allowable uses, reducing onsite parking requirements, and offering more lenient dimensional requirements to accommodate more residential units. In 2021, the overlay districts were updated and expanded to include the Warren Avenue and Waterman Avenue corridors.

While updating the regulations can help facilitate property improvements and infill development, neighborhood centers could also benefit from more focused planning that works with residents to establish a vision to guide these investments in a targeted way. A neighborhood vision plan lays out the specifics, such as types of uses and activities residents would like to have in the area, needed pedestrian and/or bike amenities, and safety concerns, among other issues. It can also articulate development design standards, the design of or need for public spaces, and other ways to improve aesthetics. As with the larger retail corridors, incentives to attract private investments will be needed. Through the Comprehensive Plan update process, the City heard from the public on these issues, and a more focused effort with residents can help address their concerns.

Transportation & Connectivity

Walking and biking connections between neighborhoods and commercial areas, parks, and other amenities increase activity in these areas and make them more accessible. These areas can be further enhanced by more accessible and convenient public transportation. See this element for more details.

Housing

Neighborhood centers are an opportunity to add smaller, more affordable housing types, including rental options. See this element for more details.

A Skilled Local Workforce

Secure employment profoundly impacts our quality of life and social wellbeing. Residents living in poverty, unemployed, and underemployed have added stress and uncertainty in their ability to meet basic needs for food, housing, and transportation. People of color are more likely to experience these conditions and have been historically excluded from opportunities for upward economic mobility. As the cost of housing and other needs continues to rise, we see the growing disparities within our own community. Investing in a skilled local workforce helps residents build wealth and income needed to meet these costs. Investment requires collaboration with local employers to understand their workforce training needs and partnering with education and training institutions to connect residents with programs.

Partnering with colleges and universities is one way to connect residents with training opportunities. In 2021, the City and Roger Williams University formally entered into a collaborative agreement to provide educational programs to the residents of East Providence. These opportunities include dual enrollment opportunities with high schools, workforce development programs, and degree completion programs. The agreement offers reduced tuition rates for East Providence residents who enroll in educational programs offered under the University College. Examples of programs that have been available include:

- Carpentry Apprenticeship Program
- Construction Management Certificate Program
- Electrical Apprenticeship Program
- Hydroponics Cultivator Certificate Program
- Project Management Certificate Program

As a new program, the City will track its success. It will be important to understand overall participation by residents and job placement. Targeted promotion to residents that are lower income to participate can maximize the impact of this effort.

The City can continue work with local business organizations, such as the East Providence Area Chamber of Commerce, to understand the demand for workers needed by business community to help match residents with jobs. This could be in the form of job postings and training opportunities.

Additional workforce development opportunities lay with the East Providence School District. The East Providence High School Career and Technical Center[5] offers students programs that prepare them for post-secondary training or to enter directly into the workforce in one of nine high growth/high wage fields:

- Automotive Technology
- Computer Science
- Construction
- Culinary Arts
- Electrical Technology
- Forensic Science
- Graphic Design
- Health Occupations & Dental Assisting
- Pre-Engineering

Students engage in hands-on authentic coursework in the Center's state-of-the-art facility using the tools of the trade and earning industry credentials as they progress. Students can also take advantage of work-based learning opportunities and in some cases earn post-secondary credits through their coursework.

STEM is an interdisciplinary and applied approach that is coupled with hands-on, problem-based learning. Its main goal is to develop a system of education that assigns greater emphasis toward learning opportunities in the fields of math, science, and technology, fields that are projected to be the areas of greatest job growth and wage opportunities. STEAM references the approach of including art and design into the STEM equation. The main goal is to infuse creativity into the concept of technological innovation.

Of note, in an increasingly technologically advanced world, proficiency in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education is considered essential for student success. In addition to integration in school curriculum, some municipalities are also linking STEM/STEAM programming with makerspaces in their public libraries. The State of Rhode Island Office of Library and Information Services offers resources and examples of existing municipal spaces statewide for other communities to set up their own makerspaces.[6]

[5] East Providence High School Career and Technical Center: https://eastprovidencectc.com/.
[6] https://olis.ri.gov/tech/steam.php

Support for Local Businesses

The City weaves direct support for local businesses into its operations at City Hall. The Department of Planning and Economic Development is responsible for promoting the City as a good location for investment in both the establishment of a new business and the expansion of an existing business. It does this, in part, through membership in economic development organizations such East Providence Area Chamber of Commerce and the Northeast Economic Development Association and participation in conferences and trade shows. The Department assists businesses with permit review questions and provides information on available commercial properties in the City. The Department staff, which include three economic development planners, also support to the East Providence Economic Development Commission, which includes the administration of the City's economic development programs, including its commercial loan and microloan programs and tax stabilization program, described in more detail below.



PACE Ribbon Cutting. Phot credit: EP Economic Development Commission

The Department of Planning and Economic Development also coordinate with the East Providence Waterfront Commission Executive Director for development activities happening in the Waterfront District. Both entities are discussed in more detail below.

Business assistance programs administered through the department include the following:

- Commercial Loan Program

  The City offers a low interest loan program for either commercial or industrial businesses to finance the acquisition, construction, and improvements of land or buildings and for the purchase of capital equipment. The Commercial Loan Program is available to businesses currently located in or relocating to East Providence.

- Commercial Microloan Program

  The East Providence Commercial Microloan Program is intended to finance startup expenses, operating expenses, and/or to purchase assets for businesses with 10 or fewer employees which are unable to obtain a loan through banks and other commercial lending sources. The Economic Development Commission plays an active role in the application process by assisting with the preparation of loan applications, including the creation of a business plan and ongoing "mentoring" assistance after a loan is granted.

- Tax Stabilization Program

The City has maintained a municipal tax stabilization program since 1998. Tax stabilization is regulated under Rhode Island State law which prescribes the limits for property tax stabilization on new construction. In East Providence, eligible improvements that can receive tax abatement include the development of multi-family housing, hotel development, and for businesses expanding more than $500,000 in tangible property and add 10 new jobs after the approval of the tangible tax stabilization.

- Storefront Improvement Program

  From 2022 to - 2024, the City offered funding to qualified businesses for improvements to their storefronts using funds awarded to the City by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Storefront grants to both owners and tenants of commercial properties were used to improve or restore the original character of the business' building, increase its visibility, and improve the business' foot traffic.

- Take It Outside

  In 2022, the City received funds from the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation as part of its "Take It Outside" grant program. The City used these funds to help small local businesses purchase items necessary to increase outdoor operations as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This includedchairs, tents, heat lamps, tents, outdoor Wifi systems, power sources, lighting, and other items. Funds could also be used to cover security and insurance costs, as appropriate.

The City should also investigate other incentives to revitalize main street properties throughout the City including tax stabilization bonus incentives for hiring local residents.

East Providence Economic Development Commission

The Economic Development Commission is comprised of nine members appointed by the City Council. Its role is to promote the local economy and tasked with responsibilities, including:

- Work with the City Council and Mayor on all matters concerning economic development in the City.
- Advertise the economic advantages and opportunities of the City.
- Study, investigate and appraise economic conditions and trends affecting the City's industry, business, and commerce.
- Collect data and information as to the type of industries best suited to the City.
- Compile, coordinate, and distribute information about available areas suitable for commercial development in the City.
- Aid the City in the attraction of new businesses and encouraging the expansion of existing industries and businesses.

- Work with industries and businesses in the City to address areas of concern and develop solutions that promote a health and productive environment for economic development.

The Commission has a standalone website (eastprovidencebusiness.com) from the City's municipal site to promote and market East Providence as a place to do business. It also works with City officials to distribute funds associated with the City's incentive programs.

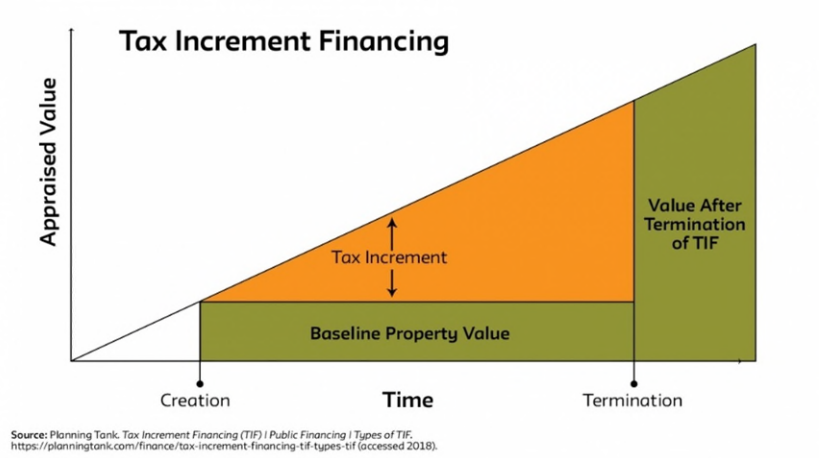
The redevelopment envisioned for the waterfront in the **Waterfront Plan** has a number of activities including, but not limited, to road construction and associated public improvements, extension of utilities, acquisition of properties, and rehabilitation of structures. In order to achieve these development objectives, the City Council adopted a TIF Project Plan for the purposes of implementing a strategy to utilize TIF to finance public infrastructure improvements within the Waterfront District.

East Providence Waterfront District Commission

The East Providence Waterfront Commission is charged with facilitating the transformation of the City's waterfront into a fully community integrated mixed-use district that represents a model for urban revitalization. The Commission's focus is to effectuate the goals and objectives of the East Providence Waterfront District Plan (2003) and define the redevelopment of the East Providence waterfront for the next 100 years. The Commission is staffed by a Waterfront District Executive Director.

Tax Increment Financing

The City offers developers in the Waterfront District the option of Tax Increment Financing, or TIF. TIF is a value capture revenue tool that uses projected increased local property tax revenues from an anticipated development to fund improvements at a site. The TIF creates funding by borrowing against the future increase in the property tax revenue. The TIF is established over a period 20 to 25 years, during which time all incremental property tax revenue above the base property value at the time the TIF is established go into the TIF.[7]



Source: Planning Tank. *Tax Increment Financing (TIF) | Public Financing | Types of TIF.* https://planningtank.com/finance/tax-increment-financing-tif-types-tif (accessed 2018).

TIF can be used for land assembly and acquisition, demolition, infrastructure development, to match federal grant sources, and to provide developer incentives. Local governments benefit from higher property tax revenues once the bonds are retired and may receive more wage taxes if the development project results in the creation of new jobs. TIF can also advance broader policy objectives, such as Minority Business Enterprise/Women's Business Enterprise MBE/WBE programs, linkage programs such as affordable housing, and public amenities such as open space.

[7] Center for Innovative Finance Support. Federal Highway Administration. Available at https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ipd/value_capture/defined/tax_increment_financing.aspx.

New and Growing Economic Opportunities

Through the involvement of the City's Economic Development planners in local, regional, and state business organizations and the advocacy of the East Providence Economic Development Commission, the City keeps apprised of emerging economic opportunities and interest in the City by new businesses. As noted earlier, growing industries in East Providence are in the health and social assistance, finance and insurance, and manufacturing, and this trend may continue. These sectors were different from the growing sectors in the state as a whole, which included professional and technical services, administrative support and waste management, and management companies and enterprises. Therefore it is difficult to project what new industries will gain momentum in the next 20 years in the City. There are, however, key opportunities that have been presenting themselves. Additionally, the City will continue to support local businesses in their growth but also provide space for new opportunities as they become available.

Traditional Parks and Industrial Areas

The City will continue to invest in its traditional industrial and office parks and industrially zoned areas to ensure that businesses have access to state-of-the-art public infrastructure and services. There are a limited number of parcels of adequate size to accommodate larger manufacturing or warehouse operations. Therefore, as a general policy, the City looks to retain the land dedicated to more intense commercial and industrial uses to support the tax base.

Waterfront District

The Waterfront District represents important new opportunities for economic development as well as for housing, recreation, civic uses, environmental cleanup, and transportation alternatives. Development within the District is guided by the *East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Plan* (2003).

Shared Workspaces

An important lesson learned from the COVID-19 pandemic is that workers do not necessarily have to be face-to-face all the time to be productive at their jobs. As a result, there may be more demand for more flexible office space. Employers may become more open to staff working remotely, but the home office is not the most productive environment for everyone. Creating flexible co-workspaces can provide employees with a local place to separate from home, but without a long commute. The use of shared workspaces has been a common practice for many years, particularly for start ups, to lower rent costs.

Maker Spaces

Similar to shared workspaces, small-scale creative manufacturing by individuals often referred to as "makers" is an industrial category that is dramatically different than the traditional post-war manufacturing model. Makers focus on engineering-oriented product development such as electronics, robotics, 3-D printing, and other computer-related manufacturing processes. Makers also are engaged in more traditional activities such as metalworking, woodworking, and traditional arts and crafts. Often, activities are completed in a loosely structured, communal setting within a building set amongst older unused and underutilized industrial spaces. These makerspaces create community and allow people to share ideas as well as resources and equipment, which can be expensive for individuals to acquire on their own. These spaces become incubators and accelerators for business startups. Examples of maker space in East Providence include:

- Studio 55 includes a classroom office area, woodshop, up to 10 workbench spaces, a product showroom, and outdoor work area.
- The Fuller Creative Learning Center hosts educational programming, demonstrations, and discussion. Technology and other resources are available to residents, including sewing machines, arts and crafts supplies, a 3D printer, laptops, and a recording studio.

The Watchemoket Square Arts District described below is a recent effort to encourage these types of spaces in East Providence. Adding this type of use to the City's aging commercial corridors is another way to bring vitality and interest to those areas and spark investment.

Clean Energy

Clean energy is energy that comes from sources with zero (or near-zero) emissions that pollute the atmosphere, such as wind, solar, biomass, and geothermal. Clean energy industries are businesses that support the production and development of clean, renewable energy and energy efficiency. Sectors range from research and development, engineering, distribution, manufacturing, construction, operations, and maintenance. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, the clean energy industry generates hundreds of billions dollars in economic activity across the world and is expected to grow rapidly in the coming years.[8]

The Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER) reports that the state's clean energy sector employed over 16,000 workers at the end of 2019, a 77% increase from 2014. The core of clean energy activity in the state is primarily jobs associated with installation, maintenance, and repair. Wind and solar capacity across the state is expected to increase and lead to more economic opportunities. Overall, OER finds that clean energy jobs provide a sustainable wage for workers, particularly in communities with high unemployment. While entry-level positions do not require extensive formal education (vocational or technical postsecondary training), clean energy employers still had diffi culty finding qualified workers in 2019. Reasons cited were lack of experience or training, small applicant pool, and difficulty finding industry-specific knowledge or skills.[9] The City should consider how this gap might be closed through local educational initiatives (see *A Skilled Local Workforce*).

In addition to examining job training and education, the City should assess its capacity to grow the clean energy sector. Two renewable energy production facilities are located within East Providence:

- The solar plant on the former landfill property on Forbes Street. CME Energy and Hecate Energy, working cooperatively to develop a lease agreement with the City, constructed a 3.7 MW Solar Project on the former landfill. Completed in June 2014, the solar plant is currently delivering clean electricity to thousands of people in Rhode Island through energy sales to National Grid under a 15-year power purchase agreement. The developers have a long-term Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with National Grid to expand the project with an additional 4 MW of power capacity at the landfill property.

[8] https://www.energy.gov/clean-energy

[9] *Rhode Island Clean Energy Industry Report* (2020), available at http://www.energy.ri.gov/cleanjobs/2020/RICEIR%202020%20Report.pdf

- The brownfield site located on Dexter Road. This facility is a 6,000-panel solar panel array that produces clean energy for RIPTA. Under a remote net energy agreement with Kearsarge Energy, RIPTA will receive credit for power generated by the installation. RIPTA estimates the purchasing the energy credits will save it at least $250,000 a year in electricity costs.[10] Kearsarge Energy used grant funds from the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation to remediate the site.


Dexter Road Solar Panel Array. Photo credit : EP Waterfront Commission

These are just two examples of active renewable energy facilities in East Providence. The clean energy sector also includes businesses that support the construction of facilities. The South Quay site in the City's Waterfront District will be a staging area for the construction of offshore wind facilities. In its proposal, the developer plans to engage the Career and Technical Education Center at the East Providence High School to create a curriculum of studies specific to the offshore wind industry.[11] This is a great example of how the City can connect East Providence's workforce to new job opportunities with good wages in the community.

The Arts as an Economic Driver

According the to the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, in 2023 , arts and cultural production accounted for 3.3% of Rhode Island's economy,



The Loof Arts Festival. Photo credit: East Providence Arts Council

[10] https://www.ripta.com/ripta-cuts-costs-with-renewable-engergy-solar-farm-collaboration/
[11] https://www.eastbayri.com/stories/south-quay-site-in-ep-would-be-home-to-new-offshore-wind-port,89128

contributing over 17,000 jobs.[12] These jobs were associated with arts and cultural production, such as the performing arts, museums, publishing, motion pictures, and arts retail - essentially originators of ideas and content associated with arts and culture. Not only are these establishments creating revenue and local jobs, they also stimulate other business activity in the surrounding area by attracting customers that will also visit restaurants and retail shops. Furthermore, these creative endeavors contribute to the pride of place in our community.

The champion for the arts as an economic driver in the City is the East Providence Arts Council (EPAC). EPAC is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization made up of City residents dedicated to creating a thriving arts community in East Providence. Its goal is to promote the development of vibrant art displays created by local artists in the City's public spaces. EPAC sponsors a yearly music and arts festival (The Looff) and various events throughout the year that showcase area artists. EPAC also seeks to create an environment that encourages local theatrical and dance performances and work with local businesses to promote the display of local art. EPAC acts as a liaison to City Hall to bring to their attention the needs of the artistic community.

The redevelopment of Watchemoket Square is an opportunity to build a distinct place where local artists can create a community and thrive as entrepreneurs. The Square is unique with connections to the City's future as a gateway to the Waterfront District, but also to its past and its importance to early indigenous people as part of the Sowams Heritage Area and the industrial and maritime history of upper Narraganset Bay. In the *Watchemoket/Waterfront Gateway Placemaking and Multi-modal Access Improvements* study, revitalization is guided by the following principles:

- Prioritize pedestrians: Create a walkable area with safe connections.
- Embrace bicyclists: Build connections between the East Bay Bike Path and the George Redman Linear Park.
- Celebrate art: Create a focal point for public art and the arts community.
- Honor the past: Raise awareness of the American Indian and colonization history of the region as well as the waterfront's industrial and maritime beginnings.
- Showcase the Waterfront: Create a gateway to the City's Waterfront District.

Strategies in the plan include addressing circulation for pedestrians, bicyclists, and cars, creating a destination for arts and culture, supporting local businesses, and capitalizing on the waterfront setting.

[12] https://nasaa-arts.org/nasaa_research/creative-economy-state-profiles/#

An outcome of the Watchemoket Square study is the establishment of the East Providence Arts District. The designation exempts writers, composers, and artists residing within the District from state personal income tax derived from their art. The District creates an incentive for local artists to choose to live, create, and sell their artwork here. Looking ahead, the City can consider public investments that support businesses and artists in the District. Concepts like shared workspaces described above can also benefit artists creating their work, which can lead to collaboration and mentorship within the community. There may be notable spaces that support this type of environment, and the City may act as a liaison to help communications between property owners and artists. Business development and other training for artists can also help them be successful. These types of programs can be coordinated with those that are discussed in developing a skilled workforce earlier.



Photo credit: Watchemoket Square, EP Chamber of Commerce

Tourism

Tourism in East Providence is supported by its growing arts community, cultural assets, historic sites, and recreational opportunities. The City recently became a member of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council (BVTC), which brings the City into the fold of a regional effort to market the Blackstone Valley as a premier destination. BVTC promotes and supports events, festivals, attractions, businesses, museums, historic sites, and the arts throughout the Blackstone Valley. As a member, the City is now eligible for state funding opportunities earmarked for communities to promote local tourism.

The growing arts presence and the events sponsored by the EPAC create visitor interest in East Providence. EPAC organizes its own events, like The Looff at Crescent Park, and has also worked with the Rhode Island Folk Festival (formerly the Providence Folk Festival) to find it a new home at Crescent Park. Both of these events attract hundreds of visitors to the City. The Arts District creates an opportunity to showcase local artists. Pop up installations, exhibits, block parties, and festivals are all ways to create unique happenings.

Visitors are also interested in having cultural experiences. Residents of East Providence are proud of their Portuguese and Cape Verdean ancestry and sharing their culture. There are many Portuguese markets, bakeries, and restaurants throughout the City. Both the Portuguese and Cape Verdean communities hold festivals and celebrations honoring their traditions that attract people from around the region. The annual East Providence Heritage Days is attended by thousands of residents and visitors and promotes the City's diverse culture through music, arts, and education. 2022 was its 40th year.

East Providence also has many other attractions that generate tourism. Historic properties such as the Crescent Park Looff Carousel, Hunt's Mill, and John Hunt House, are also linked with recreational resources like the East Bay Bike Path, Crescent Park, and Ten Mile River Greenway. Finding ways to link these resources together physically with walking and biking amenities or through signage and marketing materials, will create connections for visitors.

Historic & Cultural Resources & the Arts

The City has significant structures, sites, and districts that contribute to the history of the City and the region. See this element for more discussion of these resources.

Transportation & Connectivity

Walking and biking connections between neighborhoods and commercial areas, parks, and other amenities increase activity in these areas and make them more accessible. These areas can be further enhanced by more accessible and convenient public transportation. See this element for more details.

Open Space & Recreation

The City offers diverse recreational opportunities and conservation areas, including playgrounds, ballfields, walking trails, and bike paths. The City's Recreation Department also hosts community events throughout the year. See this element for more discussion of these resources.

Moving Forward

For each goal, the City of East Providence will implement the following policies and actions to meet the opportunities and challenges for Economic Development. Many goals and policies in other elements support economic development, such as Transportation and Connectivity, Housing, and Waterfront District.

Goal ED1. Foster a positive and supportive business environment and promote the City as a "good place to do business."

Policy ED1.1. Ensure capacity of City staff and the East Providence Economic Development Commission to implement policies and actions of the City's Comprehensive Plan; encourage the Economic Development Commission's interaction with local businesses, the East Providence Area Chamber of Commerce, and RI Commerce.

A. Assess the capacity of City staff to meet future economic development needs and determine if additional staff is warranted or contracted services should support staff on an as-needed basis. Regularly revisit this capacity assessment to identify the need for any changes.

Policy ED1.2. Communicate with the business community to understand economic development issues, business needs, marketing of the City, and approaches to improve the overall business environment.

A. Attend regular meetings and events of the East Providence Area Chamber of Commerce and local trade and merchant associations. (Ongoing)
B. Survey businesses annually to understand current needs and trends.
C. Review City financial and incentive programs to ensure they are accessible, are meeting business needs, and are achieving desired results.
D. Review and update marketing materials and efforts to ensure they are current in data and format. (Ongoing)

Policy ED1.3. Increase the participation and inclusion of local businesses that meet the definition of minority and/or woman owned business, which also assist other disadvantaged business owners like people with disabilities and veterans.

A. Connect with local businesses owned by women, people of color, people with disabilities, and veterans, among others, to understand unique challenges and opportunities that can help their businesses grow (see 1.2.B above).
B. Encourage and support local businesses to become state-certified as women- and minority-owned businesses (WBE and MBE). (Ongoing)
C. Establish a policy that promotes the use of local MBE and WBE on city-funded and sponsored projects and programs.

Policy ED1.4. Continue to invest in public improvements within the City's industrial and office parks to ensure that the businesses operating within these facilities can remain competitive.

A. Coordinate directly with property owners and tenants to identify needed infrastructure upgrades and improvements at the City's industrial and office parks. Prioritize needs and establish a schedule for implementation, including funding options.
B. Identify opportunities for improved signage and wayfinding.
C. Incorporate commercial areas and recreational opportunities into marketing materials to promote industrial and office parks to new tenants.

Policy ED1.5. Support businesses that want to be greener and more sustainable in their operations.

A. Provide targeted financial assistance through the use of CDBG funds, City Commercial Loan Program, the Waterfront District Green Business Initiative, and other City programs. (Ongoing)
B. Connect business with state and federal resources that can help fund greener approaches to doing business. (Ongoing)

Goal ED2. Target vacant or underutilized parcels, aging commercial corridors, and neighborhood centers to promote development and redevelopment investments.

Policy ED2.1. Use diverse financing mechanisms to support economic revitalization of significant development parcels. These may include federal Economic Development Administration (EDA), Housing and Urban Development Section 108 funding, and RIDEM brownfield cleanup grants.

A. Identify key undeveloped or underutilized properties that can have a significant impact on the City's tax base. Prioritize and connect with owners to discuss barriers to development. Research and identify potential funding options appropriate for each site.
B. Maintain list of target parcels and update as needed. (Ongoing)
C. Keep apprised of new funding opportunities from state and federal sources. (Ongoing)

Policy ED2.2. Continue to administer the tax incentive programs for new development and research possible new tax relief and other types of incentives that provide benefits to the community from economic development projects.

A. Review existing programs to ensure they are achieving desired outcomes and truly benefiting the community.
B. Consider incentives that prioritize city residents for job openings, training, or other employment opportunities.
C. Evaluate new programs to ensure they result in equitable development that benefits all community members. In addition to local employment and training opportunities, benefits may also include the creation of affordable housing to avoid displacement and parks and other community facilities that increase public access.

Policy ED2.3. Work with local businesses, property owners, and neighborhood residents in aging retail corridors and struggling neighborhood centers to develop more focused strategies for investments.

A. Conduct studies that articulate a clear vision of what the community would like to see in distressed areas of the City. Use the findings of HousingWorks RI's *Devising an Opportunity Investment Strategy for East Providence* to target areas that need more support with investments.
B. Prioritize areas and develop a schedule for study development.
C. Determine support for Business Improvement Districts to help businesses pool resources for area improvements, marketing, and other efforts.
D. Undertake revitalization study of Newport Avenue.

Goal ED3. Support diverse economic opportunities while protecting important commercial and industrial assets.

Policy ED3.1. Maintain existing industrial zoned districts, including the South Quay property,. and discourage the rezoning of prime industrial properties to include residential uses

Policy ED3.2. Work closely with Rhode Island Commerce to identify emerging and target industries that match the assets of East Providence.

A. Identify opportunities within the City for locating emerging industries.
B. Develop and refine marketing strategies to attract these industry types.

Policy ED3.3. Promote the arts as an economic driver for the City.

A. Implement the strategies of the *Watchemoket/Waterfront Gateway Placemaking and Multi-modal Access Improvements* study.
B. Develop materials to promote the Arts District to local and area artists. Work closely with EPAC and others to connect with local artists and makers.
C. Identify opportunities to support training and business development for local artists.
D. Promote local events of the arts communities, including festivals, music, theater, galleries, and other venues. (Ongoing)

Policy ED3.4. Promote the City as a tourist destination by showcasing its arts, cultural, and historic assets.

A. Begin participation in programming and events sponsored through the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council to attract visitors to the City.
B. Develop marketing materials, both print and electronic, to highlight the City's attractions and destinations. Collaborate with local businesses, resource managers, and others in their development.
C. Develop city-wide wayfinding and signage around a common theme that links resources and destinations. Link with signage program developed for historic properties.

Policy ED3.5. Attract and support clean energy industries.

A. Identify key properties that can accommodate renewable energy opportunities. Review regulations to determine barriers, performance standards, and other requirements, as needed.
B. Work with local business and trade organizations to market these spaces and opportunities to develop this sector in East Providence.

Policy ED3.6. Create opportunities for co-workspaces, maker spaces, and other flexible environments that accommodate changing office space and workspace preferences and needs.

A. Work with business and industry groups, higher education institutions, East Providence School District, and East Providence Arts Council, among others, to understand space needs and desirable amenities for these types of spaces.
B. Based on this understanding, identify areas and buildings within the City that could support these types of spaces.
    - Find opportunities to build in existing spaces.
    - Consider what new public investments might be needed to develop interest in these locations, such as utility upgrades and streetscape improvements.
    - Review local regulations to understand any barriers that might exist in establishing these types of spaces and consider adopting performance standards.
    - Develop financial incentives to attract developers.

- Help activate spaces by coordinating collaborations between educational institutions and property owners. These can be temporary or permanent spaces.

Goal ED4. Support a skilled East Providence workforce to help address disparities and build economic security among residents.

Policy ED4.1. Connect East Providence residents with training opportunities that lead to higher paying, more secure jobs.

A. Work with RIDLT and local and regional technical training, such as New England Institute of Technology, MotoRing Technical Training, and East Providence Career and Technical Center, to provide training opportunities for East Providence residents in emerging industries. Prioritize people of color, lower income, unemployed, and underemployed residents.
B. Develop relationships with the state's higher education institutions to incentivize participation by East Providence residents in training and educational programs. Prioritize people of color, lower income, unemployed, and underemployed residents.
C. Support relationships between the East Providence School District and higher education institutions to encourage student enrollment. Prioritize students of color and those from lower income households.
D. Invest in the East Providence Career and Technical Center to establish and strengthen existing programs, particularly STEM/STEAM programs, that train East Providence youth in emerging careers.
E. Use relationships with business and trade organizations to connect East Providence residents with employment, apprenticeship, and/or mentorship opportunities.
F. Understand the barriers for full employment over and above skill development and make connections between these needs and residents' success. Examples may include lack of affordable housing, needed childcare, special training, occupational therapy, or access to transportation. Collaborate with local, regional, and state partners to identify existing support programs that can meet needs and/or gaps. Partners may include East Providence Health Equity Zone, East Bay Community Action Program, Rhode Island Housing, RIDLT, RIPTA, and others. (Ongoing)

CITY SERVICES & FACILITIES

The City provides direct services on a daily basis to thousands of residents at over a dozen facilities. Business performed at City Hall, visitors to the library, recreation at outdoor facilities, and learning in the classroom are just a few examples of these incredibly important daily municipal services. Other services that are also critical to the well-being of the community include public safety and public works. Special groups like the East Providence Housing Authority and Senior Services also help to support some of East Providence's more vulnerable populations.

Roads and Sidewalks	TRANSPORTATION & CONNECTIVITY
Recreation	RECREATION
Stormwater Management	NATURAL RESOURCES
Climate Resilience	NATURAL HAZARDS & CLIMATE CHANGE
Energy	SUSTAINABILITY
Waste Reduction	SUSTAINABILITY

Because the scope of these services is so broad and complex, the Comprehensive Plan does not examine the needs of every municipal service in the context of this document. Further, those needs that are specifically discussed in the Comprehensive Plan are spread throughout the document in various elements (see inset). This element provides a discussion of the overall capacity of the City to provide services and broader principles regarding how services are provided (e.g., communication and transparency).

This chapter supports and embodies the goals of the following State Guide Plan elements related to municipal infrastructure, facilities, and services:

- 119: Solid Waste 2038: Rhode Island Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan
- 120: Energy 2035: Rhode Island Energy Plan
- 121: Land Use 2025: Rhode Island State Land Use Policies and Plan
- 721: Rhode Island Water 2030

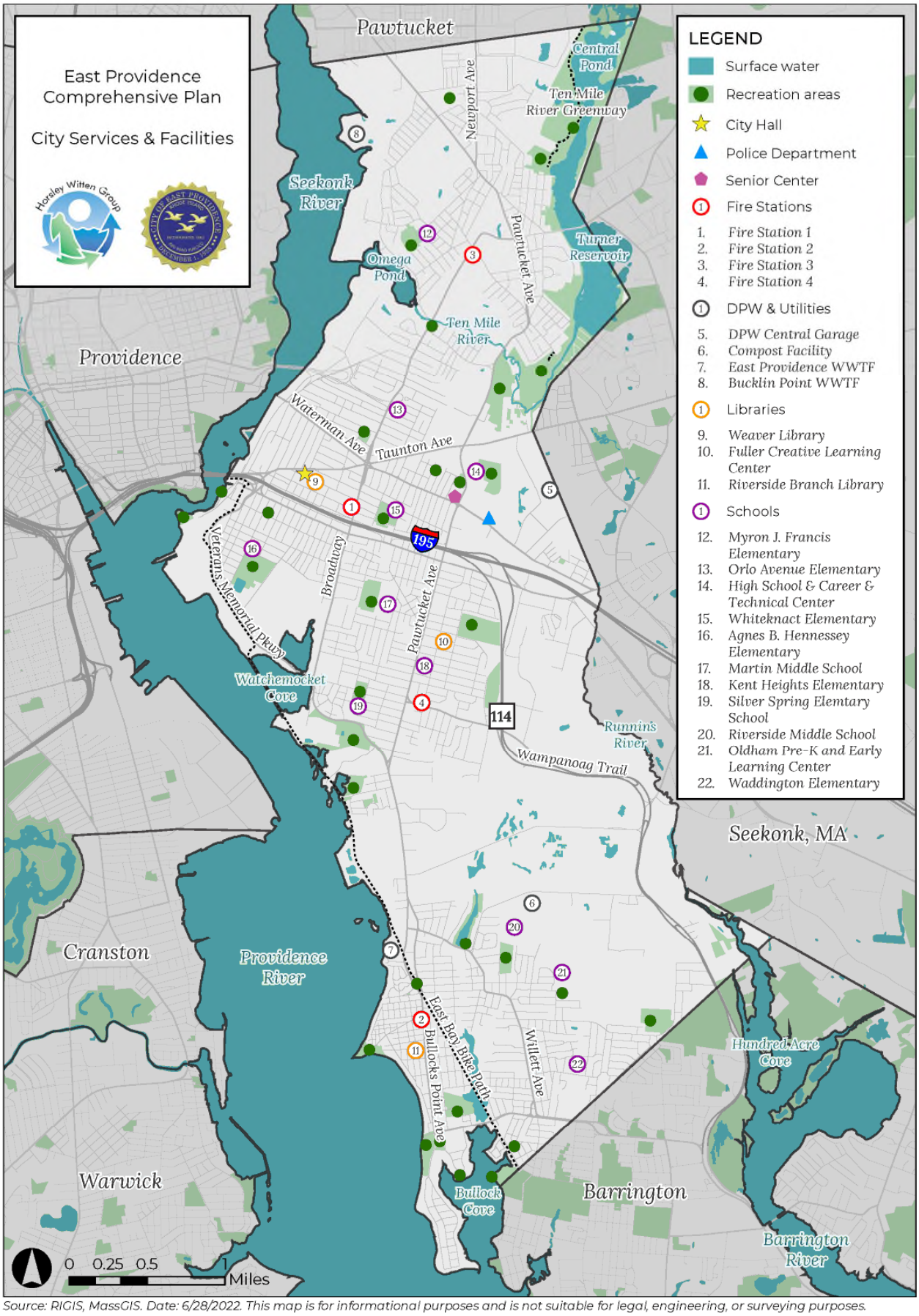
Snapshot

Map CSF.1 shows the distribution of municipal services and facilities throughout East Providence. Each is provided in more detail in the sections that follow.

Public Safety

Police Department

The East Providence Police Department is comprised of the Office of the Chief of Police and four major organizational components: Patrol Division, Detective Division, Operations Division, and Services Division. Numerous specialized units such as the Traffic Unit, Juvenile Unit, Prosecution Unit, Vice Unit, Training Unit, Community Policing Unit, and the Office of Professional Standards and School Resource Officers work within these divisions to provide a wide array of law enforcement services. The City's Harbormaster



Source: RIGIS, MassGIS. Date: 6/28/2022. This map is for informational purposes and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

Map CSF.1. Municipal Services in East Providence

operates within the Department's Patrol Division. The Police Department is currently authorized to maintain 97 sworn officers and 23 civilian personnel; these include dispatch personnel and clerks.

The main central Police Station is located at 750 Waterman Avenue, which contains the combined dispatch facility for Police and Fire, and an operations room that could be used as a back-up City Emergency Operations Center in the event of a major incident or damaging storm event. The department also has an office at the Senior Center staffed by its Community Policing Sargent. The department's Office of Professional Standards and its Accreditation Manager are located at City Hall.

Fire and Rescue Services

The East Providence Fire Department is comprised of 120 members under the direction of the Chief of Department. The Fire Department is responsible for fire control, suppression, and prevention. It also provides emergency medical services to the residents of East Providence. The Department's role has expanded over the years, where it now is responsible for mitigating all hazardous materials incidents, providing marine protection and safety along the entire coastline and all inland waterways, handling all types of technical rescues including vehicle extrication, high-angle rescue, and confined space rescue emergencies. The Department has four stations, as listed in Table CSF.1.

Table CSF.1. East Providence Fire Stations

Fire Station	Address	Year Built
Fire Station 1*	913 Broadway, in the Central City area	1931
Fire Station 2	329 Bullocks Point Avenue, Riverside	1974
Fire Station 3	30 North Broadway, Rumford	2003
Fire Station 4*	66 Wampanoag Trail, in the Kent Heights Section	1954

**Complete renovations complete in 2012 with an Assistance to Firefighters Grant award.*

In-service apparatus consists of consists of five engine companies, two ladder companies, three advanced life support rescue vehicles, and additional support apparatus including a special hazards vehicle, a HazMat vehicle, a boat, and foam trailers.

Emergency Management Agency

The East Providence Emergency Management Agency (EPEMA), a division within the Fire Department, plans and prepares for natural and manmade disasters. The agency educates the public, coordinates evacuations and the opening of shelters, and provides weather support for the City. EPEMA works closely with other federal, state, and local agencies, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency, and the Rhode Island Department of Health, as well as nonprofits like the Red Cross on emergency management initiatives and response efforts. It also serves as the City's Floodplain Coordination Office.

EPEMA played a pivotal role during the COVID-19 pandemic. It managed the City's response, distributing masks and test kits and facilitating safety improvements in City buildings. The division also established and administered a large regional vaccine clinic within with support from the RI Emergency Management Agency and RI Department of Health. It also offered vaccines at City events. Over 43,000 vaccine doses were provided through EPEMA.

The City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is located at Fire Station 3 in Rumford. The EOC is the central location for City leaders to coordinate information, resources, and response during an emergency event like a hurricane or severe storm. It is furnished with communication and other equipment needed for a coordinated response to emergency situations in the City.

Department of Public Works

The Department of Public Works operates primarily out of a large complex at 60 Commercial Way near the Seekonk line. Included here is the City's Central Garage (fleet maintenance), along with the Highway, Parks, Recycling, and Water Utilities Division offices. Also at the complex are storage sheds including a large salt shed, fuel pumps, and an area to collect recyclable material. Numerous City vehicles including cars, trucks and heavy equipment are stored on the property.

Water Utilities Division

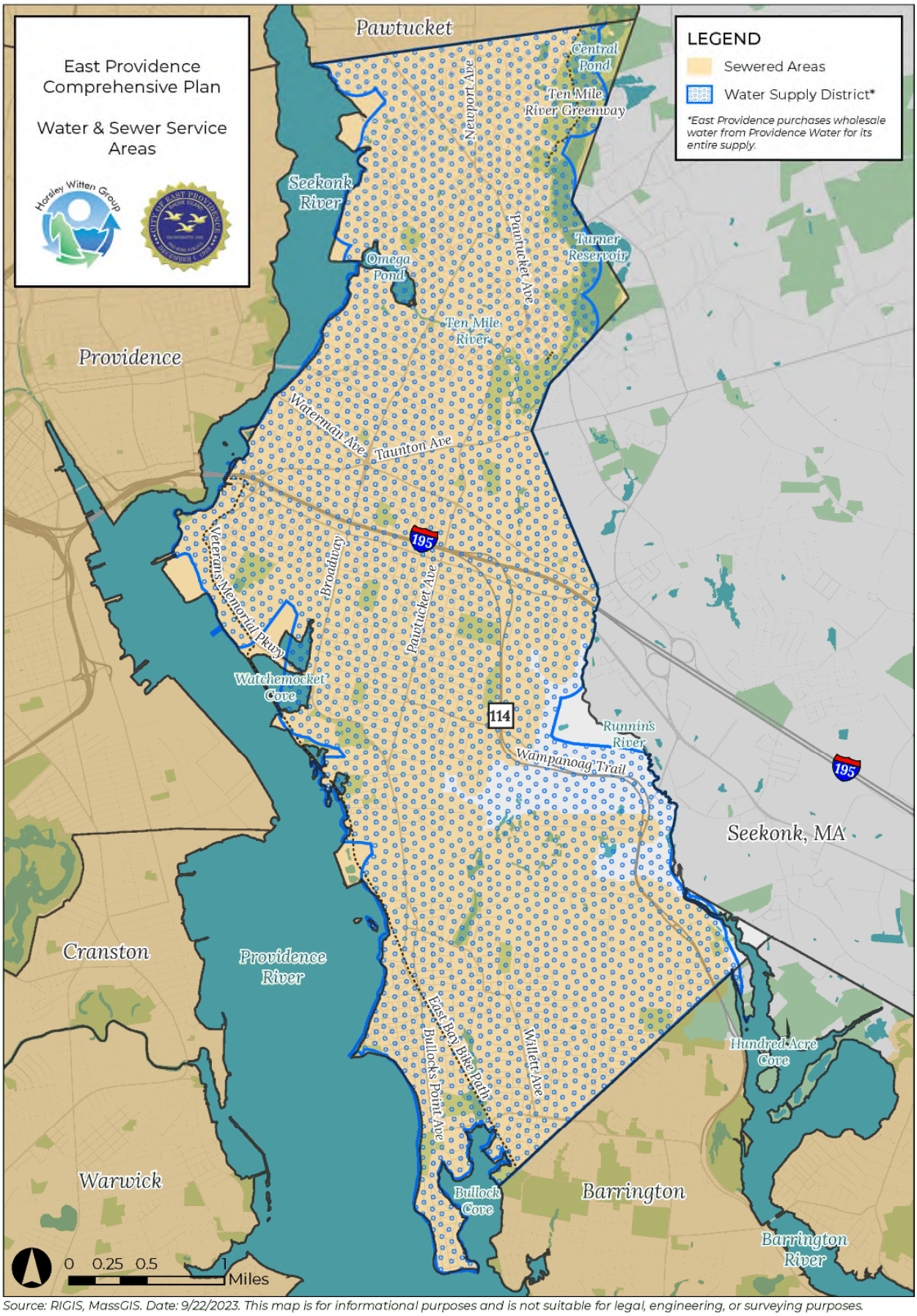
Water supply management for the City of East Providence is provided by the Water Utilities Division of the City's Department of Public Works. Nearly all buildings in East Providence along with a small number of residences in Barrington are served by the East Providence Water Utilities Division (Map CSF.2). In 2013, there were just under 15,000 service connections, and 96% were residential users. There are no planned expansions of the water system.

Prior to 1970, the City's drinking water came from the Turner Reservoir and by wells along the reservoir property. Over time, upstream sources of pollution resulted in the reservoir water being unsuitable for drinking after basic treatment, prompting infrastructure changes during the 1960s, which enabled connection to the Providence Water System in 1970. Since that time, the City has been served by the Providence Water Supply Board (hereafter Providence Water), which is supplied by the Scituate Reservoir via two pipelines crossing below the Providence River. The City purchases on average between 1,457 to 1,815 million gallons of water each year from Providence Water to satisfy an average daily demand of up to 3.99 million gallons per day.[13]

Wastewater Treatment

East Providence is nearly 100% served by sewer lines and the City is working on expanding to those very few areas that do not have access to sewer service (Map CSF.2). The northern portion of East Providence, along with most of northeastern Rhode Island, is served by the Narragansett Bay Commission (NBC)'s Bucklin Point Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF), located off Campbell Avenue in Rumford. This is the second largest wastewater facility in the State; only the Fields Point WWTF in Providence (also an NBC facility) is larger. The NBC also owns and operates one pump station in East Providence, located near Omega Pond.

[13] East Providence Water Supply System Management Plan Executive Summary (2017)



Source: RIGIS, MassGIS. Date: 9/22/2023. This map is for informational purposes and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

Map CSF.2. Existing Water and Sewer Service Areas

The East Providence Water Pollution Control Facility, serving roughly the southern two thirds of the City, is located on Crest Avenue off Bullocks Point Avenue in Riverside. This facility is City-owned but operated by Suez Water. In 2010-12, the facility underwent a significant upgrade, which included new pump stations, increasing the size of pipes to reduce overflows, and increasing overall capacity to account for anticipated development in the Waterfront District. Recent improvements to improve resilience of the plant to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change include relocation of panels and electric infrastructure out of the lower parts of buildings and additional backup power for the treatment plant.

Engineering Division

The Engineering Division, with offices at City Hall, is responsible for roadway, sewer (see section immediately above), water, and stormwater drainage plans and improvement projects. Division staff perform numerous projects in these areas, significantly reducing the need for outside consultants. The Division reviews land development projects and performs topographic, boundary, and utility surveys for City projects including the Forbes Street Solar Project.

Stormwater Management

The lead responsible party for the City regarding stormwater management is the Department of Public Works Engineering Division. Since 2004, the City of East Providence has complied with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's General Permit for Storm Water Discharge from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4). These regulations were designed to control potential stormwater pollutants. Being a mixed urban/suburban community, the City has a relatively high amount of impervious surface, which generates high volumes of polluted stormwater runoff.

The following are the six minimum control measures which will help clean-up the environment and improve the water quality:

1. Public Education and Outreach
2. Public Participation and Involvement
3. Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
4. Construction Site Runoff Control
5. Post-Construction Runoff Control
6. Good Housekeeping Measures for Municipal Operations

Educating residents is a critical component of the City's Stormwater Management Program Plan. The City participates in annual shorefront cleanups, inserts information in water bills, hands out fliers during the eco-depot drop off days, and teams with Save the Bay to install "Don't Dump" plaques on stormwater catch basins. Other measures include signs requesting pet owners to pick up after their dogs and to not feed the local population of geese.



Drains to Bay. Photo credit: Krista Moravec

A primary goal of City development plan review is to limit the amount of impervious surface within developments and properly manage both the quantity and quality of stormwater. This is consistent

with the latest Rhode Island Stormwater Design and Installation Manual. During building inspections, erosion control and sedimentation control measures are monitored to make sure the contractor is controlling sediment migration.

The City currently has three street sweepers, a clam shell catch basin cleaning truck and a vac/jet truck used to clean catch basins and pipes. City streets are swept a minimum of twice per year; more as needed. Approximately 700 catch basins are cleaned annually. Outfalls discharging water during dry weather periods are monitored periodically to check for potential illicit connections.

Waste Management and Recycling

The Refuse/Recycling Division of the City's DPW is responsible for the oversight of all residential rubbish, recycling, yard debris, and appliance collection programs. It is funded through the City's general fund. The Division manages the Forbes Street Compost Site and the automotive motor oil and antifreeze collection program located at the Public Works Garage on Commercial Way with the assistance of Highway personnel. The City's Refuse/Recycling Coordinator oversees litter prevention and collection programs including Earth Day events in the spring and shoreline cleanup activities in the fall. The Division is also responsible for the oversight of rubbish and recycling collection contracts for all School Department facilities, and provides resources for education curriculum, classroom presentations, and field trips upon request.

The City contracts a private hauler for curbside trash and recycling pick up. Residents receive City-issued bins. Trash is collected weekly and recycling biweekly. Recycling is required by ordinance with enforcement fines. Trash will not be collected if recycling bins are not curbside. The City sends out a brochure every year with recycling and rubbish collection, drop off information, and recycling guidelines. The information is distributed with City water bills in January and extras are made available for residents at the library, City Hall, division events, and other City offices.

Beginning July 1, 2012, every city or town that enters into a contract with the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation (RIRRC) to dispose of solid waste is required to recycle a minimum of 35% of its solid waste and to divert a minimum of 50% of its solid waste. RI municipalities commonly measure these against their Mandatory Recycling Rate (MRR) and rate of Overall Material Diversion (OMD), respectively. In 2021, East Providence reached a MRR rate of 54.0% and OMD rate of 54.4%, exceeding both benchmarks. Per the City's agreement with the RIRRC, for recycling over 25% of total solid waste, the City pays less per ton and receives a rebate for disposal costs.

The City has worked with RIRRC to host "Eco Depot" household hazardous waste collection events, and has also hosted e-waste collections facilitated by a private Rhode-Island based company.

Highway Division

East Providence has 160 miles of City streets within its 13-plus square mile land area. Roadways in the region are subject to many stresses other than everyday traffic including heavy rainstorms, snow and ice, and countless winter freeze-thaw cycles. Additional maintenance considerations exist in urban settings where stormwater infrastructure is widespread. In East Providence, this includes 66 miles of drainpipe, 3,000 catch basins, and 1,300 manholes. For a number of years, improvements to City streets were performed on only a very limited basis, but that has changed very recently as more capital funding for road projects has become available.

There are roughly 90 miles of sidewalks of varying quality in East Providence, including those along state highways. This counts the length of each sidewalk along road segments which have one on both sides. While the condition of City sidewalks does vary, many are in reasonably good shape. Efforts have been made to improve sidewalks in areas with heavy foot traffic where degradation has taken place due to settling where there is asphalt, or due to upheaval from tree roots that affects both asphalt and concrete sidewalks.

Snow removal in East Providence is performed in-house and is not reliant on outside contractors. Parks Division staff assists the Highway Division with snow removal and treatment for icy roads.

Parks Division

The Parks Division of the Department of Public Works maintains 15 neighborhood parks and playgrounds along with outdoor tennis and basketball courts, and playing fields for baseball, soccer, and football. It is also responsible for the upkeep of Crescent Park and Looff Carousel grounds. The division supports the Conservation Commission with trail maintenance at the City's conservation areas. It also maintains landscaped areas and grounds of public buildings, such as City Hall, the library branches, and public safety buildings, as well as other city public spaces, including two historic cemeteries, traffic islands, large flowering planters throughout the city, and part of the Blackstone Valley Bikeway. The Division also oversees and cares for approximately 8,300 public trees located in parks, playgrounds, schools, conservation areas, and streets.



Vinter Avenue Neighborhood Park. Photo credit: Krista Moravec

The Parks Division is managed by the assistant superintendent, who reports to the Director of Public Works. The crews are supervised by two lead workers. Grounds maintenance at parks, public buildings and athletic fields is provided by four landscape laborers and three drivers/equipment operators. The City's urban forest is sustained by two Rhode Island -licensed Arborists. Park playground equipment, shelters, structures, signage, and other amenities are installed and maintained by a landscape construction/repair specialist.

East Providence School District

Buildings and Facilities

The East Providence School District oversees 11 public schools, including one high school and career and technical school, two middle schools, seven elementary schools, and one pre-Kindergarten school. The former East Providence Career and Technical Center building at 1998 Pawtucket Ave is now the School Administration Building.

Table CSF.2. Public Schools in East Providence

School	Address	Grades Served	Year Built
East Providence High School and East Providence Career and Technical Center	2000 Pawtucket Avenue	9-12	2021
Martin Middle School	11 Brown Street	6-8 and Pre-K	1977
Riverside Middle School	179 Forbes Street	6-8	1966
Myron J. Francis Elementary School	64 Bourne Avenue	K-5	1989
Orlo Avenue Elementary School	25 Orlo Avenue	K-5	1957
Whiteknact Elementary School	261 Grosvenor Avenue	K-5	1958
Hennessey Elementary School	75 Fort Street	K-5	1952
Kent Heights Elementary School*	2680 Pawtucket Avenue	K-5	1950, 1985, 2003
Silver Spring Elementary School	120 Silver Spring Avenue	K-5	1968
Oldham School **	60 Bart Drive	Pre-K	1964
Waddington Elementary School	101 Legion Way	K-5	1952

** Additions to Kent Heights Elementary School were made in 1955 and 1985, and the remaining original 1928 section was torn down and replaced in 2003.*

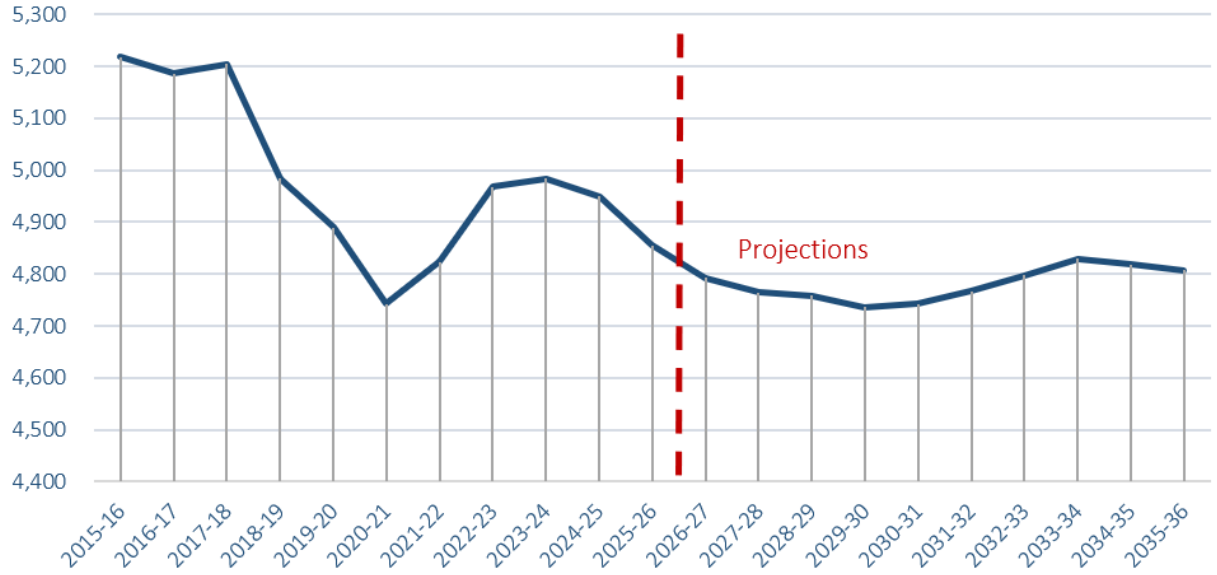
*** Formerly Meadowcrest School, renamed Oldham School in 2013 when the original 1952 Oldham school was closed.*

The new East Providence High School opened to students in the 2021-22 school year. This was the first major school construction for the district in decades. To manage other capital improvements, the district maintains a five-year Facilities Strategic Plan that focuses on continued investment in existing buildings and facilities. The current plan covers 2020 to 2025. A significant project is the reconstruction of Martin Middle School, which will require the district to explore funding options, hold community meetings, and coordinate with the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE).

Student Enrollment

Over the past ten years, student enrollment has decreased from 5,200 to 4,855 students. Ten-year projections prepared in 2025 show a 1% decline in students between 2025-2026 and the 2035-2036 school year (an 8% decrease since 2015-2016. Projections are based on trends in real estate sales, new home construction, local births, residents that move into and out of the City, and other factors at the time projections are made. .

Figure CSF.1. Historic and Projected K-12 School Enrollment for the East Providence School District, 2015-16 to 2035-36 School Years



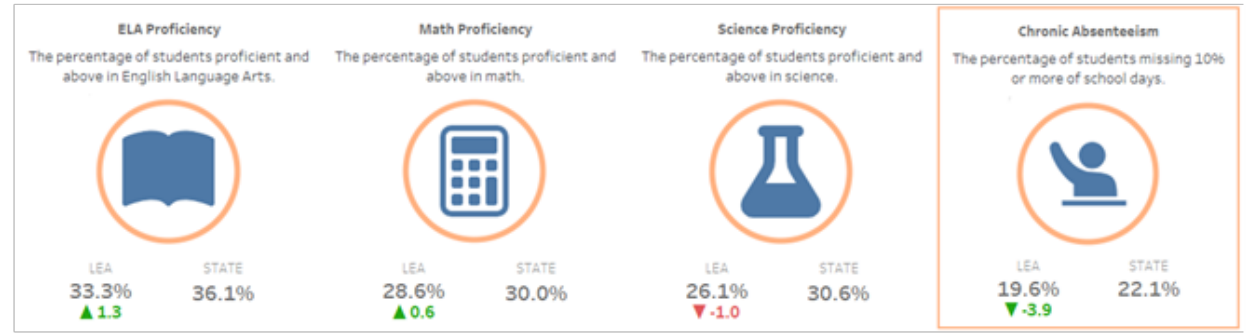
Source: New England School Development Council 2025-26 Enrollment Projection Report

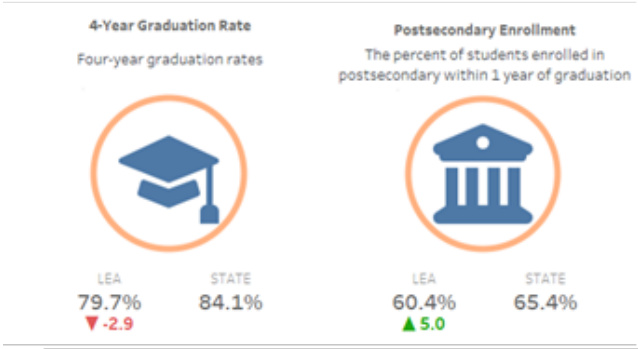
School Performance

RIDE evaluates public school districts through an annual "report card."[14] It looks at student performance, school-level spending, and school climate and culture.

[14] Rhode Island Department of Education "School and District Report Cards." Available at https://ride.ri.gov/students-families/ri-public-schools/school-district-report-cards.

Figure CSF.2. East Providence School District at a Glance, 2024-25

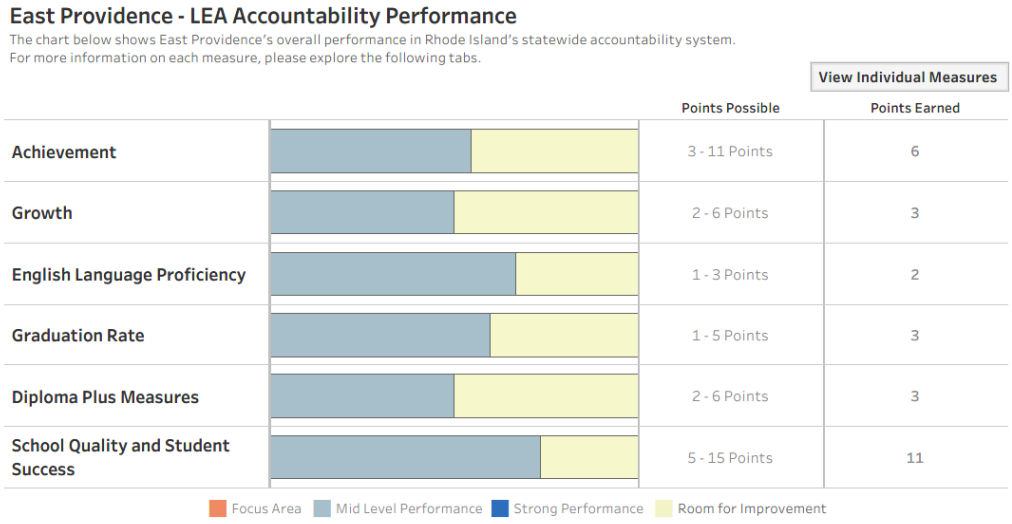




Source: RI Department of Education School and District Report Cards

School accountability takes into consideration test scores, graduation rates, chronic absenteeism of teachers and students, and other parameters. According to RIDE, the East Providence School District has room for improvement. As shown in Figure CSF.3, support for English learners to increase language proficiency should be a priority focus area. RIDE reports that only 33% of English learners in the district meet their target for growth in English proficiency. Students at the High School and both Riverside and Edward R. Martin Middle Schools have the greatest need.

Figure CSF.3. East Providence School District Accountability Performance, 2024-2025



LEA – local education agency (e.g. district)

Source: RI Department of Education School and District Report Cards

Recreation Department

The Recreation Department oversees the use of the City's parks, playground, and athletic facilities and operates the East Providence Activities and Recreation Center. The Department conducts programming for City residents of all ages and also offers numerous activities with residents with functional needs. Recreation also offers summertime waterfront music events and movies nights in Crescent Park. See the Recreation Element for more detailed information on the City's parks and recreational facilities and programming.

Recreation

See this element for the inventory of the City's parks, playgrounds, and playing fields and more details on community needs for recreational opportunities.

Senior Center

The East Providence Senior Center, accredited by the National Institute of Senior Centers, serves individuals 55 years of age or older, or any-age individuals with disabilities. It is located at 610 Waterman Avenue at its corner with Pawtucket Avenue and accessible by four public bus routes. The Senior Center facility was significantly upgraded in the early 2000s. It is a tri-level complex consisting of an information/ reception area, fitness center, library, coffee café, computer lab, multi-purpose room, seminar room, dining room, gift shop, administration offices, health center and billiards room. The property also includes open lawn areas and a paved walking path.

Offerings at the center are diverse, including exercise programs, games and crafts, computer classes, and guest speakers on a variety of topics. Daytrips are organized to museums, concerts, and other destinations. Appointments for counseling through the State Health Insurance Assistance Program are available for Medicare-eligible individuals, their families, and caregivers. The center also has regularly scheduled medical and health services available onsite, such as a nurse, nutritionist, and medical laboratory. A monthly newsletter keeps residents current on what's happening that the center.



Grab-and-Go groceries for seniors during the COVID-19 pandemic at the EP Senior Center. Photo credit: Rich Dionne, EastBayRI.com

The Center also provides transportation services for seniors using vans it shares with the Recreation Department. Arrangements are made to pick up seniors in the morning to bring them to the Center and return in the afternoon. There are also opportunities to bring riders to local shopping centers.

The City provides the main source of funding for the Senior Center, which employs a full-time director, a registered nurse, an administrative assistant, and an elder resource specialist. Part-time positions include

a dining room manager, a receptionist, and van drivers. Over 100 volunteers work in the capacity of wait staff, recreational leaders, cashiers, librarians, advisory board members, and receptionists.

Within the Senior Center property are two additional City buildings, the Sweetland House and Breed Hall. The Sweetland House is home to the Police Department's Office of Professional Standards and the Community Policing Unit. Both buildings are available for meeting space and have been used as flex space when construction is occurring at other facilities.

East Providence Public Library



Weaver Library. Photo credit: Kenneth C. Zirkel, CC BY-SA 4.0

The City operates two libraries: the Weaver Library (the City's main library) at 41 Grove Avenue, and the Riverside Branch Library at 475 Bullock's Point Avenue. The former Rumford Library Branch on Pawtucket was declared surplus in 2012. It was sold to a private individual and has since been converted into a residential home. The East Providence libraries provide equal access to materials and services to facilitate self-education, promote lifelong learning, ignite curiosity, and foster an informed citizenry. Given the meteoric rise in electronic information, libraries in general have necessarily become much more than locations to borrow books, read newspapers and magazines, and research hard-copy volumes. In addition to these functions, East Providence libraries offer community spaces for patrons to gather, learn, and even be entertained. Computers and digital technology are available at both locations for public use, and the outdoor grounds at Weaver and the Riverside Branch are Wifi hotspots. Programming is also available in English as a Second Language, financial literacy, and more. The library system also offers job and career resources. Extensive scheduled programming is offered year-round for all ages, as well as outdoor events during the summer including a concert series and a weekly farmers market.

The former Fuller Branch at 260 Dover Avenue was repurposed and now is the Fuller Creative Learning Center. The center provides community space for workshops, classes, and other activities. There is a full kitchen and other resources, including sewing machines, recording studio and equipment, laptop computers, and a 3D printer. The Library runs year-round hands-on and DYI programs at the center for all ages.

Other Municipal Buildings and Facilities

East Providence City Hall, located at 145 Taunton Avenue and built in the late 1970s, is the administrative and business hub of the City. Offices and services found at City Hall include the Mayor's office and the City Clerk's office along with the Finance (including Treasury and Assessment offices), Planning and

Human Resources Departments. Public Works Department offices for the Engineering Division, the Public Buildings Division, and Zoning/Building Inspection are also located at City Hall. The East Providence School Department Administration is now located in the newly constructed East Providence High School.

As the point of service for most public services, City Hall receives many visits from members of the public, business interests, and others. The City Council, Planning and Zoning Boards, and other municipal boards, committees, and commissions meet at City Hall, largely after business hours. Heavy building use, the reconfiguration of offices over the years, and changes in building code requirements have resulted in the need for some infrastructure improvements. Several improvements have been completed including carpet replacement to address both wear and fire resistance, the installation of energy efficient interior lighting, and HVAC upgrades. Additional desired infrastructure improvements include a full-service generator for the building, replacement of more carpeting and ceiling components, additional HVAC work, and security enhancements for the building and property.

Social Service Groups and Organizations

Table CSF.3 lists some of the many nonprofit and faith-based organizations in East Providence and region that help the City's more vulnerable residents acquire the resources and support to meet daily needs.

Table CSF.3. Select Nonprofit and Faith-based Organizations Offering Support Services to East Providence Residents

Organizations	
Boys and Girls Club of East Providence	Minority Elder Task Force
Bread of Life Food Pantry	Rhode Island Food Bank
Capital Good Fund	RI Elder Info
Centers for Justice	Riverside Congregational Church
East Bay Community Action Program	Tap-In Barrington
East Bay Heating Assistance Program	The Elisha Project
East Providence Housing Authority	United Way Rhode Island
Good Neighbors Inc.	Veterans Inc.
Homes RI	We Share Hope
Jules Hope Chest	

The East Providence Health Equity Zone (HEZ) Collaborative is dedicated to ensuring equitable health outcomes for every neighborhood in the City. The Collaborative consists of a diverse group of community residents, community-based organizations, municipal and state government, local businesses, and faith-based groups, many that are listed in Table CSF.3. The goal of the Collaborative is to assess the health needs in East Providence and develop an action plan to improve health outcomes, with actions funded by the state, the City, and other resources.

The HEZ Action Plan focuses on five major topics:

Build Awareness – There are many existing services and supports for residents of East Providence, but people do not always know where to look. HEZ will be a clearinghouse of information.

Promote Resiliency – Develop neighborhood networks that can respond to emergency needs and address housing insecurity (i.e. make sure people do not fall into homelessness).

Improve Access to Health Services – Many people are not getting the health services they need, particularly for mental and behavioral health and diabetes. Work on closing the gaps between health needs and services.

Support Health and Wellness Across the Lifespan – Expand education and training related to expectant mothers, families with young children, youth, and seniors to bolster pre-natal health, physical activity, healthy relationships, and good eating habits.

Strengthen HEZ Capacity and Structure – Make sure the Collaborative has the resources to achieve these goals.

Community Development Division

The City's Community Development Division within the Planning and Economic Development Department identifies priority needs for East Providence neighborhoods through community input, relevant studies and plans, and current available data. Among other responsibilities, the Division oversees funding allocated to the City from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. CDBG funds are used to financially assist various projects, agencies, and programs throughout the City, including those administered by some agencies and organizations listed in Table CSF.3. Funds must be used in accordance with HUD regulations and approval by the City Council. To remain eligible for HUD funding, the Division prepares and monitors the City's Five-Year Consolidated Plan to ensure administrative and program compliance with the regulations governing the CDBG Program.

The Division also oversees the City's Home Improvement Program. The program offers grants, no-interest deferred payment loans, and low-interest loans to owner-occupied and qualifying rental properties in East Providence. Eligibility is based on income and other factors. The Home Improvement Program is also available to homeowners in need of emergency repairs, building and health code violation repairs, and/or other repairs required to improve the safety, accessibility and energy efficiency of their home. The program is nearly self-sustained through loan repayments.

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Division was responsible for the Housing Assistance Program. Starting in early 2022, the program helped eligible tenants and homeowners who experienced financial hardship due to COVID-19 and were at risk of eviction or foreclosure that might result in becoming homeless. Owner-occupied landlords were also eligible for this program and could initiate assistance on behalf of their tenants. Homeowners could receive up to three months of mortgage payments to avoid foreclosure, and tenants could receive up to three months of rent payments to stay in their current residence.

What We Heard

What the community highlighted as the City's challenges, opportunities, and needs for city services and infrastructure:

- By voting for the bond to construct a new high school, residents demonstrated their continued support for investing in public education. The new facility, which opened for the 2021-22 school year, brings opportunities to not only existing students and faculty, but to the City as a whole by attracting new families.
- While the new high school is seen as an opportunity and strength, residents point out the lack of investment in other school facilities.
- Public safety (police and fire) is highly regarded and considered a strength for the City.
- City libraries are an important asset to residents.
- The City needs to continue to upgrade and repair its infrastructure, including roads, bridges, water, and sewer, as well as buildings and other facilities.
- A sustainable funding source to support long-term maintenance of the city's infrastructure, buildings, and facilities is needed.
- While the outreach of the Mayor's office through social media and other communications is helpful, the City needs to ensure transparency.
- The City should ensure it is using diverse methods of reaching residents because many are not using social media.
- Residents are looking for opportunities for participation in city government, such as public comment with new developments and projects.
- Through the COVID-19 pandemic, residents felt virtual meetings worked well, making it easier to attend.
- The City should consider new technology in its services and facilities, and if there are more opportunities to do business with the City online.
- More collaboration with local social service agencies needs to be done to reach and help the City's more vulnerable residents, such as the homeless, isolated and homebound residents, and others.

Challenges, Needs, and Opportunities

Sustaining Services and Infrastructure over the Long Term

Providing high-quality and efficient municipal services that meet the needs of the community is a consistent, long-term goal of the City. This includes investments in physical infrastructure, buildings, and other facilities as well as sustaining staff capacity with training and needed resources to provide services.

The City Council continues to support investments in the upgrade and maintenance of its infrastructure, facilities, and services through the City's annual capital budget and five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP).[15] Each year, municipal departments (except the East Providence School District which has its own budget overseen by the School Committee) submit requests of prioritized needs for inclusion in the annual budget and upcoming five-year period. These requests are compiled and ranked based on these prioritizations to create the City's CIP for the next five fiscal years, starting on November 1. CIP projects range from renovations at city buildings like HVAC systems, roofs, and windows, to equipment purchases, roadway improvements, and park renovations. Many of these projects are leveraged with state and federal grants.

For the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, it was important to assess the long-term needs and challenges of serving the community. The following provides an assessment of broader challenges and opportunities in meeting those needs.

Public Safety – Fire Department

While the City's population has been relatively flat over the last 20 years, the total annual calls for service to the fire department have increased 65% from 1990 to 2022, with a 10% increase experienced in the last five years alone. In the last two years, the department responded to 12,846 calls for service in 2021 and increased to 12,984 in 2022. Approximately 70% of all calls annually are for the delivery of emergency medical services (EMS), of which, the department has experienced a 149% increase in these types of calls for service from 2002 to 2018. The remainder of the departments calls for service annually, include, approximately 3% for fires, and the remaining for hazard removals, alarm activations, assisting the elderly, and other public service needs. Staffing and apparatus at all stations are not meeting national standards (staffing per capita) and more staff members require higher levels of EMT training to respond to the growing EMS service demands. The department continuously applies for and receives grants to help train personnel, acquire equipment and apparatus, and to address other needs.

All fire stations need expansion; however, Station 1 (Broadway) has no room for expansion onsite. Station 2 (Bullocks Point Avenue) should be replaced because it does not meet national fire station design standards, which no longer allow two-story buildings and does not provide gender-neutral or separate gender-friendly hygiene and sleeping facilities. The site itself limits the construction of a new facility.



Fire Station 1. Photo credit: Kenneth C. Zirkel, CC BY-SA 4.0

Being able to respond to emergency calls quickly, particularly for the Fire Department, is also a logistical concern, specifically for calls on the east side of Route 114 (Wampanoag Trail) where the roadway is a divided highway. Station 2 or Station 4 (Wampanoag Trail) respond to these calls but do not meet the benchmark

[15] https://eastprovidenceri.gov/budgets

eight-minute response time consistently. Relocating Station 2 or siting a new station to cover the Trail should be considered.

For the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, the biggest challenge for public safety is meeting the demands of added growth in the City. For the Fire Department, staffing and apparatus at responding stations, such as Station 1 (Broadway) and Station 3 (North Broadway), should have capacity to increase staff levels and apparatus for future demands.

Emergency Management

The Fire Department's Emergency Management Division will continue to play an important role helping the community plan for and recover from a major emergency or disaster, both natural hazards like severe storms, but also public health events similar to the COVID-19 pandemic. To do this, it will maintain emergency plans including Continuing of Government and Operations and conduct all hazard, evacuation, and pandemic-specific planning on an ongoing basis. To support these hazard mitigation and general emergency management activities, the division will pursue grants as available.

The City is making investments in a new police substation at Pierce Field.

Water Supply

As part of their 2017 Water Supply System Management Plan, the Water Utilities Division developed five-year and 20-year water demand projections based on 2013 data (Executive Summary link). These projects are found in Table CSF.4 below. The projections were made based on a review of current trends, 2010 U.S. Census data, RI Division of Planning figures, and the 2015 East Providence Comprehensive Plan. The Division is not projecting water supply shortages over the 20-year time frame based on these projections. In the event of an emergency such as a catastrophic water main break, the Division has emergency interconnections with the Pawtucket Water Supply Board. These interconnections were last used in 1995 on the occasion of a break in the Providence Water transmission line.

Table CSF.4. Projected Municipal Water Demand (millions of gallons)

Water User Category	2013 Avg. Daily Demand	2018 Projected Avg. Daily Demand	2018 Projected Total Annual Use	2033 Projected Avg. Daily Demand	2033 Projected Avg. Daily Demand
Residential	2.68	2.61	953.31	2.46	896.60
Commercial	0.49	0.48	174.45	0.45	164.07
Industrial	0.25	0.25	92.70	0.25	92.70
Government	0.03	0.03	12.26	0.03	12.26
TOTAL	3.45	3.37	1,232.72	3.19	1,165.63

Source: City of East Providence Water Supply Management Plan (2017) Executive Summary, Table 3, page 10

In 2020, the City and Bristol County Water Authority (BCWA) moved forward with constructing a new emergency interconnection at the southern end of East Providence. The new connection will link the two East Providence Cross-Bay Pipelines and the BCWA East Bay Pipeline to provide an emergency water supply from Providence Water to either utility.

Wastewater Management

As noted earlier, the East Providence Water Pollution Control Facility underwent a significant upgrade in 2011-12, and meets projected demands in the areas it serves. Odor from the plant is still an issue that impacts nearby residents, and the City continues to work with Suez to mitigate the causes.

There are small areas within East Providence consisting of a handful of properties which are not connected to the City's sewer lines. These areas include several properties along and near Hospital Road south of Forbes Street in Riverside, and a few properties in the general area of the corner of Taunton and Pawtucket Avenues. The latter area has a discontinuity in sewer lines along the two roadways resulting in a few commercial buildings along Taunton Avenue and several homes having individual systems. Connecting these properties to the City's system is not a high priority though it remains a long-term goal.

Schools

The new East Providence High School opened to students in the 2021-22 school year. Given school enrollment is not projected to increase, the need for additional school buildings is not anticipated. As noted earlier, the East Providence School District will continue investments that upgrade existing buildings and facilities. A significant project of the district's five-year Facilities Strategic Plan is the reconstruction of Martin Middle School. Starting in 2023, the district will explore funding options, hold community meetings, and coordinate with the Rhode Island Department of Education.

Public Health and Social Wellbeing

Incorporating public health and social wellbeing into the Comprehensive Plan gives East Providence the opportunity to show the connections between our built and natural environments and our emotional and physical health. Through this lens we gain important perspective on material covered in other elements, and references are provided in the following discussion. Focusing on public health and wellbeing forces our policy makers to see connections that are not always readily apparent. Understanding these links allows federal, state, and local government entities to be proactive by developing strategies that prevent public health problems rather than just treating them. Historically, addressing negative trends at the local level initially focused on issues related to community development and local planning. Today, this focus has expanded across many departments and policy decision makers, including the Public Works, Recreation, Police, Fire, and School District, among others.

Through the examination of public health issues, we also recognize that local policies and programs can prove multiple benefits. For example, a new sidewalk that connects a neighborhood to a park encourages residents to be more active by walking instead of driving. This also reduces air pollution and traffic congestion. Public health policy discussions also help community leaders and planners understand who specifically benefits and who could be impacted by from new policies or projects. Thinking back to the example of a new sidewalk, this project will have a greater benefit if the sidewalk is installed in a community where residents have lower incomes, and few have cars. The new sidewalk can provide easier access to a needed resource through a means that is affordable and safe. This is a simplistic example but illustrates how actions recommended throughout the Comprehensive Plan can also impact and improve public health in an equitable way.

Age-Friendly City

AARP reports that roughly 90% of adults ages 65 and older want to stay in their homes and/or communities, to "age in place."[16] To do so has financial implications as well as physical, mental, and emotional challenges. Cost of living, limited mobility, access to healthcare resources, and social isolation are all important determinants of health and social wellbeing for older residents.

East Providence has always had a significant proportion of its residents over the age of 65, about 20% of the City's total population since 2000. This can partially be attributed to generations of families staying in the city.

What is an age-friendly community?

Communities that promote the health, participation, and security of older adults are described as "age-friendly." Efforts to improve age-friendliness have been underway around the world thanks to global agencies like The World Health Organization (WHO) and state- based agents for change such as Age-Friendly Rhode Island. These groups work to enhance the lives of older citizens through partnerships between public service agencies, advocacy groups, businesses, and educational, faith-based, and cultural organizations.

- Age-Friendly Rhode Island (agefriendlyri.org)

A broader view of East Providence as an age-friendly city needs to evaluate and overcome barriers faced by older residents and build on and support existing opportunities.

Affordable Homes

With limited budgets, older residents are often looking to downsize into smaller, more affordable homes. Equally important, many seniors age into disabilities. Access to homes that are designed for those that have limited mobility or other disabilities represent important needs for an aging population. Opportunities such as using universal design or homes for one-level living are discussed in the **Housing Element**. Not only are these types of homes desirable by older residents, but residents of all ages with disabilities.

If an older resident with disabilities is unable to move to a new home, adapting and maintaining their existing home presents other financial and logistical challenges. Finding ways to assist residents improve the accessibility of their existing home through the City's home improvement grant and forgivable-loan programs is one approach.

Over 3,000 residents 65 years and older live alone. Also discussed in the **Housing Element** is the need for more shared housing alternatives for multigenerational households. These types of structures allow families to live together but have their own spaces.

Transportation

East Providence is fortunate to be serviced by public transportation. Four RIPTA bus routes transect the city along the major corridors, including a sheltered stop at the East Providence Senior Center (see **Transportation and Connectivity Element**). RIPTA's RIde Paratransit Program offers service for people with disabilities that prevent the use of fixed-route buses. The paratransit program provides door-to-door service and requires advance reservations.

[16] See https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/about/info-2018/aarp-livable-communities-preparing-for-an-aging-nation.html.

In addition, the Senior Center also coordinates transportation using Recreation Department buses to bring East Providence seniors to the center as well as scheduled service for local shopping and medical appointments. The Recreation Department also uses these buses to support its Special Needs Program, which provides door-to-door transportation for its outings (see Accessible City below). Demand is high for these buses, and continued maintenance and upkeep of the vehicles is a consistent need for the department.

Social Networks

The East Providence Senior Center offers a gathering place for older residents as well as support and resources for seniors and their caregivers. It has a busy calendar of events and services, described earlier (see Snapshot above). A challenge for the Senior Center in the future is meeting the expectations of the next generation of seniors while still providing "traditional" services such as adult day care, meals, and transportation services. Baby Boomers are generally considered to be more active and educated than the generations that preceded them, indicating that traditional senior service offerings may not be adequate to meet their needs and preferences. For example, Baby Boomers may be looking for different types of activities like education seminars or advanced fitness classes. In other states like Massachusetts, many centers are considering "rebranding" themselves to appeal to a broader audience to meet this shifting demand.

Accessible City

People with disabilities are diverse demographically and have a wide ranges of public health needs. Individuals with physical and mental disabilities often find themselves compromised in their ability to earn a living wage and can also face very high medical or regular care costs. In East Providence, 14.7% of all residents have a disability, and nearly 70% of the City's population 65 years and older have a disability (Table CSF.5). As shown in, Table CSF.6 most residents with a disability experience an ambulatory difficulty (having serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs), independent living difficulty (because of a physical, mental, or emotional problem, having difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor's office or shopping), or cognitive difficulty (because of a physical, mental, or emotional problem, having difficulty remembering, concentrating, or making decisions). While ambulatory and independent living difficulties are primarily reported by residents 65 years and older, cognitive difficulties are across age groups.

Table CSF.5. East Providence Residents with Disabilities by Age

	Total Population	With a Disability	% With a Disability
Total population	46,773	6,872	14.7%
Under 5 years	2,196	32	1.5%
5 to 17 years	6,376	372	5.8%
18 to 34 years	10,835	711	6.6%
35 to 64 years	18,547	2,719	14.7%
65 to 74 years	4,507	931	20.7%
75 years and over	4,312	2,107	48.9%

Source: American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates (Table S1810)

Table CSF.6. East Providences Residents with a Disability by Age

Disability Type by Detailed Age	Total Population	Number of Residents	% of Total Population
With a hearing difficulty	-	**1,490**	**3.2%**
Population under 18 years	8,572	0	0.0%
Population 18 to 64 years	29,382	530	1.8%
Population 65 years and over	8,819	960	10.9%
With a vision difficulty	-	**844**	**1.8%**
Population under 18 years	8,572	41	0.5%
Population 18 to 64 years	29,382	328	1.1%
Population 65 years and over	8,819	475	5.4%
With a cognitive difficulty	-	**2,806**	**6.3%**
Population under 18 years	6,376	295	4.6%
Population 18 to 64 years	29,382	1,723	5.9%
Population 65 years and over	8,819	788	8.9%
With an ambulatory difficulty	-	**3,780**	**8.5%**
Population under 18 years	6,376	24	0.4%
Population 18 to 64 years	29,382	1,699	5.8%
Population 65 years and over	8,819	2,057	23.3%
With a self-care difficulty	-	**1,600**	**3.6%**
Population under 18 years	6,376	229	3.6%
Population 18 to 64 years	29,382	549	1.9%
Population 65 years and over	8,819	822	9.3%
With an independent living difficulty	-	**2,720**	**7.1%**
Population 18 to 64 years	29,382	1,343	4.6%
Population 65 years and over	8,819	1,377	15.6%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2014-2019

To provide a platform for supporting the needs of residents with disabilities, the Comprehensive Plan highlights issues of accessibility and improving access and usability of resources and facilities.

Accessible Homes

As noted earlier, homes that are designed for those that have limited mobility or other disabilities not only meet the needs of East Providence's older residents, but also those with disabilities of all ages. A focus on universal design will make homes accessible to all people, regardless of whether they have a disability or not (see **Housing Element**).

Accessible Public Facilities and Services

City buildings and facilities, as well as services provided, are required to meet the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This includes City Hall, libraries, schools, and recreational areas, among other public spaces. The City makes every effort to ensure these places continue to be accessible and addresses noncompliance issues as needed.

As discussed in the **Recreation Element**, the Recreation Department supports diverse programs for youth, adults, and seniors with disabilities. Round trip door-to-door transportation is provided at a charge for all

activities. Activities include dine out, movies, coffee hour, "Mystery Ride," dancer-size, bingo, and day trips and special events on Saturdays. These are valuable programs that promote inclusiveness of all residents. More discussion about accessible recreational facilities and programs can be found in this element.

Mobility offers independence, therefore sidewalks and other infrastructure for pedestrians need to be compliant with ADA as well. As the City works to upgrade its sidewalks and crosswalks and adds new pedestrian facilities, it will focus on creating experiences that are accessible and comfortable for users of all abilities and ages (see **Transportation and Connectivity Element**). Also discussed under the **Transportation and Connectivity Element** are building connections to public transportation, including bus stop locations, available shelters, and conditions around bus stops that make them accessible for people with disabilities. It is important to ensure that options are accessible to all potential users and to accommodate people with diverse abilities.

Gathering Places


Summer Concert at Crescent Park. Photo credit: Krista Moravec

As noted earlier, the City continues to focus on long-term maintenance and upkeep of its facilities and buildings through the CIP and other state and federal funding opportunities. But some public spaces and buildings are more than just physical places, but social connections for residents. The City's libraries, schools, playgrounds, and ballfields bring neighbors together formally and informally. They are places where they see each other regularly through common activities, like drop off and pick up at school, and events such as guest speakers at the library. Specific places like Pierce Field and Crescent Park are more than just athletic facilities or a park, but are places where residents celebrate as a community (like 4th of July fireworks and Heritage Days) and honor local achievements and milestones (graduation and prom photos and wedding ceremonies).

Residents are connected to these places because they contribute to quality of life in East Providence and tell the story of the City. The **Historic and Cultural Resources and the Arts Element** discusses cultural resource mapping, which identifies places that bring pride in the community and define East Providence. Many city residents express their love of local libraries, schools, and neighborhood parks and the events and activities that happen there. The mapping exercise not only identifies these important places but brings the different people and organizations together that make them so successful. It is important that these places receive continued support to sustain their vitality and contributions to the City.

As discussed in the **Recreation Element**, a larger investment residents call for is a new recreation and community center. In the early 2000s, the Recreation Center located at the East Bay Community Action

Program's building in Riverside closed. Without a place for youth programming, a recreation center was temporarily opened within the Senior Center in 2019, though it has been challenging to accommodate the different types of users. In 2002 and 2004, City residents voted in favor of financing a new recreation center. In 2021, the City began investigating opportunities for a new community and police wellness center that would be open to residents and members of the City's Police Department.

Health Equity

Vulnerable populations are groups of residents that are either more susceptible to negative health impacts because of a physical condition or have been shown to suffer certain negative impacts disproportionately. Nationwide, groups most vulnerable or at greater risk to public health concerns are the elderly, children, low-income residents, racial and ethnic minorities, those with chronic health conditions, and those with disabilities. Through the East Providence HEZ Collaborative, the City can help identify and target services and resources to its more vulnerable residents.

It is important to recognize that improving public health and addressing health equity span many issues of the Comprehensive Plan, from safe and affordable housing, accessible transportation options, and a clean environment. Therefore, it is important that health equity is part of the City's decision-making process in determining where services and opportunities are located within East Providence and who has access to them.

Transparent and Efficient Government

Leveraging Technology

A "smart city" is defined in many ways, but in basic terms, it is a place that uses technology to improve quality of life without negatively impacting the community or the environment. This technology might improve the delivery of municipal services (e.g. online tax payments), create new opportunities for public engagement (e.g. online surveys), enhance operations (e.g., maintenance), create more effective information exchange, facilitate business development (e.g., e-permitting), or generally increase everyday quality of life for residents (e.g. report-it apps).

Public Services

From a municipal government perspective, East Providence has started to embrace technology. Through its website, a resident can pay a bill or taxes or apply for employment, permits, city licenses, or a library card, among other items. The public can also request a wide ranges of services from the City (animal control, housing code violations, municipal court questions, rubbish/bulky item collection, etc.) or report a problem (sidewalk issue, sewer or water issue, potholes, downed trees, etc.) through online platforms. Residents can enroll in the City's community notification system and receive information during an emergency or critical community alerts via text and/or email. An app is in the works to help ask questions of and request services from the City in a way that is easier and faster.

The City needs to continue investigating technology and offering new services and improving access to municipal information online. The 2021 revamp of the City's website improved organization and provides a platform for continued growth in an online presence.

With the advances that come with communicating and delivering services online, the City must address the inequitable access that still exists. Accessibility for people with disabilities, such as those with hearing or sight impairments, must be considered as these platforms are developed. The availability of information in different languages should also be incorporated. And there are still many residents that do not have access to or knowledge of new technology at a level that would allow them to take advantage of these types of services. As the City plans for further advancements, in-person accommodations should still be available and convenient.

Technology at City Hall

Incorporating new and innovative technology to support municipal staff in its day-to-day work is also an investment the City needs to continue. For example, management of information and data collected through online services requires ongoing investment in software and training for staff. Further, sharing information among departments can help build efficiencies. Understanding the data individual departments are already collecting can support other departments in planning for future investments like the CIP or other long-range strategic efforts. Data management systems, such as a web-based GIS platform, can create a shared data environment where users can monitor new information, analyze trends, and track progress towards meeting long-term goals.

With the increased use of technology comes the need to address cybersecurity. Every municipal department is vulnerable to bad actors, and the City must be diligent in protecting its information technology (IT) infrastructure. Creating a culture of awareness by City staff to understand the latest cyber threats and vulnerabilities requires ongoing training as well and dedicated staff focused on keeping current on ways to protect the City's IT infrastructure. Investment in ever evolving software/data protections is also a necessary ongoing expense.

Smart Cities

The American Planning Association (APA) defines a "smart city" as on that "equitably integrates technology, community, and nature to enhance its livability, sustainability, and resilience, while fostering innovation, collaboration, and participatory co-creation." It outlines a framework of three distinct but interconnected smart city "ecosystems" to help planners better understand smart city systems:

- Gov tech is the use of technology to increase the efficiency of municipal operations and services, represented by municipal government, local public agencies, and regional, state, and federal entities.
- Civic tech is the use of technology to increase public engagement, participation, and co-creation, making government more accessible to residents and vice versa, represented by the people who live, work, and play in the city or community, community groups, and nonprofit organizations.
- Urban tech is the use of technology to improve the built environment and urban infrastructure to serve the needs of people, businesses, and government, represented by technology companies, entrepreneurs and tech developers, investors, and businesses.

"Smart Cities: Integrating Technology, Community, and Nature" APA PAS Report 599 (December 2021)

Communication and Transparency

The work of local government is performed in large part to serve the interests of the residents, businesses, and institutions in the community. Accordingly, decision making at the government level must be well-documented, participatory, accessible, and transparent. Further, the increasing complexity of

issues faced by communities like East Providence and the speed at which information is produced make effective communication between city government and the public very challenging.

The City uses multiple avenues to disseminate information and communicate with the public, including social media, email notifications, newsletters (electronic and print), postings on the City's website, and articles in local print media like the monthly *Reporter*, which is delivered to every East Providence household, and the free, weekly *East Providence Post* available at local retail establishments. Even with these different approaches, there are still residents not being reached. The City must continue to check in on how successful it is in reaching the public and be creative on how it can connect with residents and businesses on important projects and issues happening in East Providence.

One of the larger hurdles is the general public's understanding of how local decisions are made. The City has many boards and committees with different levels of authority, from advisory to granting permits to changing local laws. Educating residents and businesses how projects are reviewed and who is making decisions at what point in the process is an ongoing effort. Developing ways to inform residents about ongoing projects, where they are in the review process, and who they can participate is an important objective of the City.

Civic Engagement

Civic engagement has many definitions, but broadly speaking, it describes when individuals or a group address issues of public concern for the betterment of a community through active discourse. Effective civic engagement at the local level builds trust, helps to curb misinformation, increases transparency, and identifies problems that could otherwise go unnoticed. Equally important, it builds community. Diverse and inclusive opportunities for engagement in local government create a more resilient community because they capture a broader spectrum of residents. Residents want to be confident that their voices are heard, but not everyone can participate at the same level through traditional means.

Civic engagement happens wherever there are people. Yet, some communities have a strong culture of engagement where residents, organizations, government, and others recognize and value engagement and community-decision making. In these communities, we see fewer intractable problems and a higher quality of life. Communities with inclusive civic engagement—where everyone has a place at the table to define, direct and implement public services and amenities—experience greater equity, display greater civic pride, and exhibit stronger civic responsibility.

- National Civic League

Through the COVID-19 Pandemic, virtual meetings were the sole way of holding City boards and committees as well as public information meetings, public hearings, and other City business. Social media usage also increased. As time when on, technology and the public's comfort and usage of it improved. But as the City transitions back to in-person meetings and events, it should evaluate whether there are some advantages to maintain some level of virtual presence. And while virtual meetings increased public participation, there is still a portion of the community where technology is a barrier because of lack of or limited access to resources or knowledge of how newer technologies function.

Effective engagement requires iterative exchange between local government, residents, businesses, and institutions. Forums, workshops, open houses, websites, traditional and social media, and surveys are all tools the City uses to disseminate information and collect public opinion. The City must continuously evaluate the methods it uses to engage the public and share information to help the community learn

about municipal projects and initiatives and ask questions. There are many reasons why residents disengage, including lack of trust and perceived lack of transparency. Barriers also exist for many to get to meetings, such as work schedule, need for childcare, and lack of transportation. Diverse approaches are critical to success, mixing technology with traditional pen-and-paper and face-to-face discussion, as well as holding meetings in the evening or on weekends, offering childcare, and ensuring meetings are held at a place that is accessible by public transportation. The City should also consider location of a meeting that is safe and welcoming, such as a neighborhood school, place of workshop, or social club.

Moving Forward

For each goal, the City of East Providence will implement the following policies and actions to meet the opportunities and challenges for City Services and Facilities. Also see other elements, such as Transportation and Connectivity, Recreation, Natural Hazards and Climate Change, Natural Resources, and Sustainability for additional policies and actions.

Goal CSF1. Maintain high quality and cost-effective municipal services and infrastructure in East Providence.

Policy CSF1.1. Maintain and improve public infrastructure through cost-efficient repairs and upgrades.

A. Use the East Providence School District Strategic Plan to continue needed maintenance, capacity, and safety improvements at City schools to create a modern teaching environment for students, teachers, and administrative staff. Seek municipal and outside funding sources necessary to make these improvements. (Ongoing)

B. Ensure that City facilities are accessible for all users, including buildings, recreational sites, and other public spaces. Use the principles of Universal Design to develop inclusive places.

C. Seek funding to complete sewer line connections where they are discontinuous along Taunton Avenue and Pawtucket Avenue near their intersection.

D. Maintain and/or seek funding for continued improvements to the City's water system, including additional water main cleaning and lining.

E. Replace aging water system infrastructure, including outdated residential water meters to reduce the amount of water usage that is unaccounted for. (Ongoing)

Policy CSF1.2. Ensure a continued strong public safety system to maintain a safe city for all residents.

A. Investigate, then support, security enhancements at City facilities, particularly at City Hall, to enhance safety for the visiting public and for City staff.

B. Maintain staffing levels and training for the Police and Fire Departments that meet national standards.
    - Ensure that departments have adequate staffing to meet demands of new development within the Waterfront District.
    - Continue to move forward with the Community Police Station at Pierce Memorial Field.

C. Evaluate and plan for upgrades and/or replacement of the City's fire stations to meet national standards.
    - Evaluate two potential locations for new fire stations: one to respond to calls on the eastern side of Wampanoag Trail and/or replace Station 2, and another to cover new development in the Waterfront District.

D. Support a program of vehicle and equipment replacement for police and fire services to avoid the need for on-the-spot emergency procurements at high costs.

E. Support community policing and other community-based public safety initiatives. (Ongoing)

Policy CSF1.3. Invest in smart technology and information infrastructure that supports equitable and efficient city services to residents and the business community.

A. Evaluate online services currently offered by the City to ensure they are accessible and meeting efficiency objectives. Identify areas of improvement and new opportunities.

B. Develop a strategic plan to create and maintain a comprehensive list of data points currently managed by each municipal department. The strategic plan should define the parameters for data points, how data points will be used to measure progress in reaching local goals and objectives, and different ways in which departments can share and support the collection of data. State and federal requirements, restrictions, and obligations regarding data sharing must be followed.

C. Identify which data from every municipal department can be digitized into the municipal GIS database. Determine if data, based on privacy and other sensitive information, can also be incorporated into the City's GIS online portal.

D. Develop an approach to provide free Wifi access at City facilities where it is currently not available and where residents frequently gather, including City Hall, schools, and recreational areas.
    - Prioritize facilities in the City's lower-income and more vulnerable neighborhoods.
    - Look for opportunities to partner with local internet and broadband providers.

Policy CSF1.4. Develop procedures and protocol for the acquisition and dispensation of City property.

A. Maintain an inventory of properties that may be of interest to expand or provide new City Services & Facilities, for example a new or expanded fire station.

B. Maintain a database of City-owned properties where there is dispensation interest and keep the status of those properties updated.

C. Develop and document a step-by-step process of City property dispensation.

Goal CSF2. Support the services, agencies, and programs that create the City's social network.

Policy CSF2.1. Maintain and improve municipal services that offer social and community enrichment.

A. Continue to evaluate the needs for seniors today and in the future to determine if existing programming and services in the community, including through the City and region, are meeting or will continue to meet those needs. Consider needs around housing, lifelong

learning, recreation, social interaction and stimulation, and health and wellness, among other issues. (Ongoing)

B. Identify opportunities for a community and/or recreation center that serves multiple generations, including the proposed police wellness center. Ensure a new community center addresses the health monitoring needs of the community, enables workforce development programming, and provides recreational and educational opportunities to East Providence residents. (Ongoing)

C. Maintain library services geared toward the entire community including youth and adult programming, equal access to technology, and summer outdoor community events including farmers markets and music events. (Ongoing)

Policy CSF2.2. Support local and regional agencies and organizations that provide the City's most vulnerable residents with needed services and assistance.

A. Continue to remain eligible for the City's CDBG Program funding allotment and support agencies that address high priority community needs through these funds. (Ongoing)

B. Work with the East Providence HEZ, and local non-profit service providers, to integrate public health issues into the local decision-making process that directs public and private investments in the City. .

C. Continue to partner with local and regional agencies and organizations to connect residents with needed services. (Ongoing)

Goal CSF3. Ensure transparent communication with the public and support active participation in government.

Policy CSF3.1. Use appropriate strategies to effectively communicate with residents and business owners.

A. Evaluate the ways in which the City communicates with and receives input from the public. Ensure that strategies maximize citizen engagement across multiple platforms.
   - Determine the strategies that could be strengthened and new technology available that improves access.
   - Ensure that information coming out of City Hall is accessible for people with disabilities and is available in multiple languages.
   - Ensure that information coming out of City Hall is accessible for people with disabilities and is available in multiple languages. (Ongoing)

Policy CSF3.2. Assure that residents have the information, tools, and opportunities needed to actively participate in government.

A. Develop an online clearinghouse of ongoing proposals and projects under review by the City, including the anticipated review process, status of review, and ways the public can provide input (e.g., board or committee meeting dates).

B. Support training of existing and new City staff in meeting facilitation and public engagement techniques (high and low tech) to ensure effective communication before, during, and after public meetings, workshops, and other City-sponsored events.

C. Develop an outreach strategy to increase the diversity of City boards and committees.

D. Understand reasons for low to moderate participation in public meetings, workshops, and other City-sponsored events. Design a meeting that encourages attendance and a more diverse representation of the City.
    - Consider offering food, childcare, and other reasonable incentives to encourage attendance.
    - Hold meetings in places that are neighborhood-based (school, social club, faith-based space, park) to promote a welcoming and safe environment for attendees.
    - Consider the day of the week and timing of meetings, and if evenings and weekends may be options.
    - Consider how accessible to a meeting site: is it accessible for people with disabilities? Is it accessible by public transportation?
    - Evaluate the process by which meetings and workshops are advertised or promoted and identify ways to reach residents that typically do not participate in City-sponsored events.
    - Demonstrate an inclusive meeting by making sure the process for the event is clear, describing when and how the public can participate and voice their ideas during the meeting.
    - Consider sign and/or language interpreters.
    - Use multiple strategies to engage the public, using in-person events and online options. Think about different technology and how user-friendly they are.

TRANSPORTATION & CONNECTIVITY

The City's transportation network connects where we live with where we shop, work, learn, and play, both within East Providence and in the region. The network becomes a thread that connects other elements of the Comprehensive Plan. While the predominant way to get around the city is by car, more people are choosing to walk, cycle, and take transit. Creating safe, efficient, and accessible ways to take advantage of these different opportunities are important to quality of life for residents.

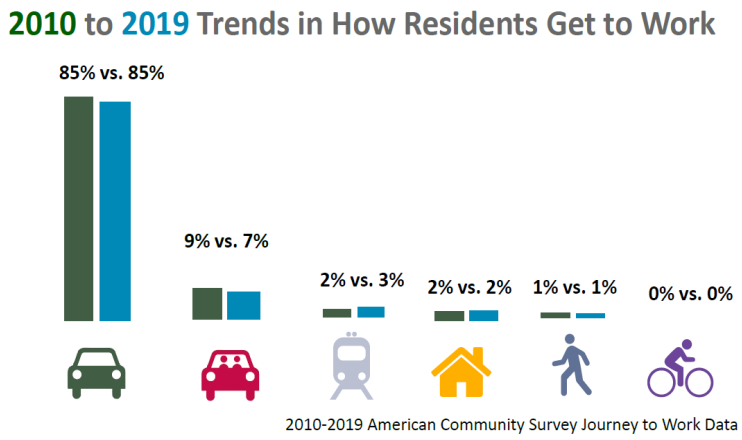
This chapter supports and embodies the goals of the following State Guide Plan elements related to transportation:

- 117: Rhode Island State Rail Plan
- 121: Land Use 2025: Rhode Island State Land Use Policies and Plan
- 123: Moving Forward RI 2040: Long Range Transportation Plan

Snapshot

The City of East Providence's transportation system is representative of an essentially built out community with a long defined pattern of major thoroughfares providing access to stable neighborhoods and their connected street networks. Many of these neighborhoods, and the associated street networks, have been in place for decades and, in some cases since the 19th century. Historically, the City's street networks were designed to accommodate the automobile, the dominant form of transportation since the early to mid-20th century.

Figure T.1. How East Providence Residents Get to Work, 2010 and 2019

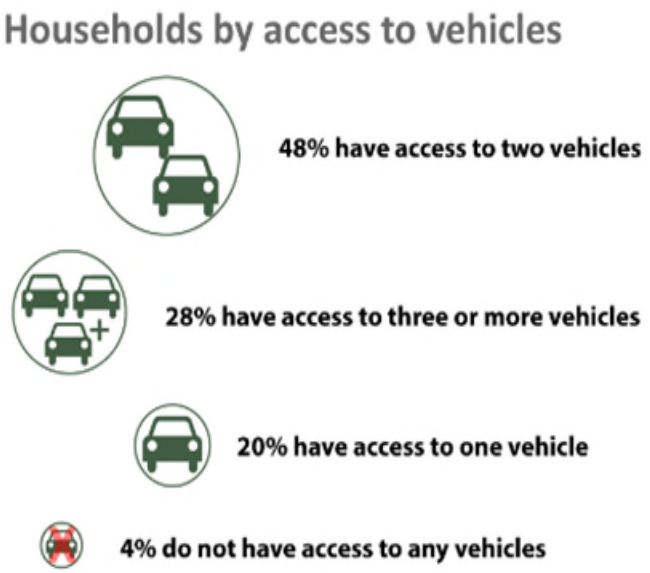


Current usage of transportation modes other than the automobile is low, as seen in Figure T.1, with only about 3% of residents commuting by public transit, 1% commuting by walking, and statistically, 0% commuting by biking in 2019. Additionally, approximately 4% of households do not have access to a vehicle, as seen in Figure T.2.[17] Developing strategies so that people feel safe and comfortable choosing alternative modes to driving is an important aspect of improving mobility options for all ages and abilities

[17] U.S. Census American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2014-2018).

in East Providence. Providing options for non-automobile modes of transportation will also be increasingly important given the City's growing senior population that will become increasingly less independently mobile over time.

Figure T.2. East Providence Households with Access to Vehicles



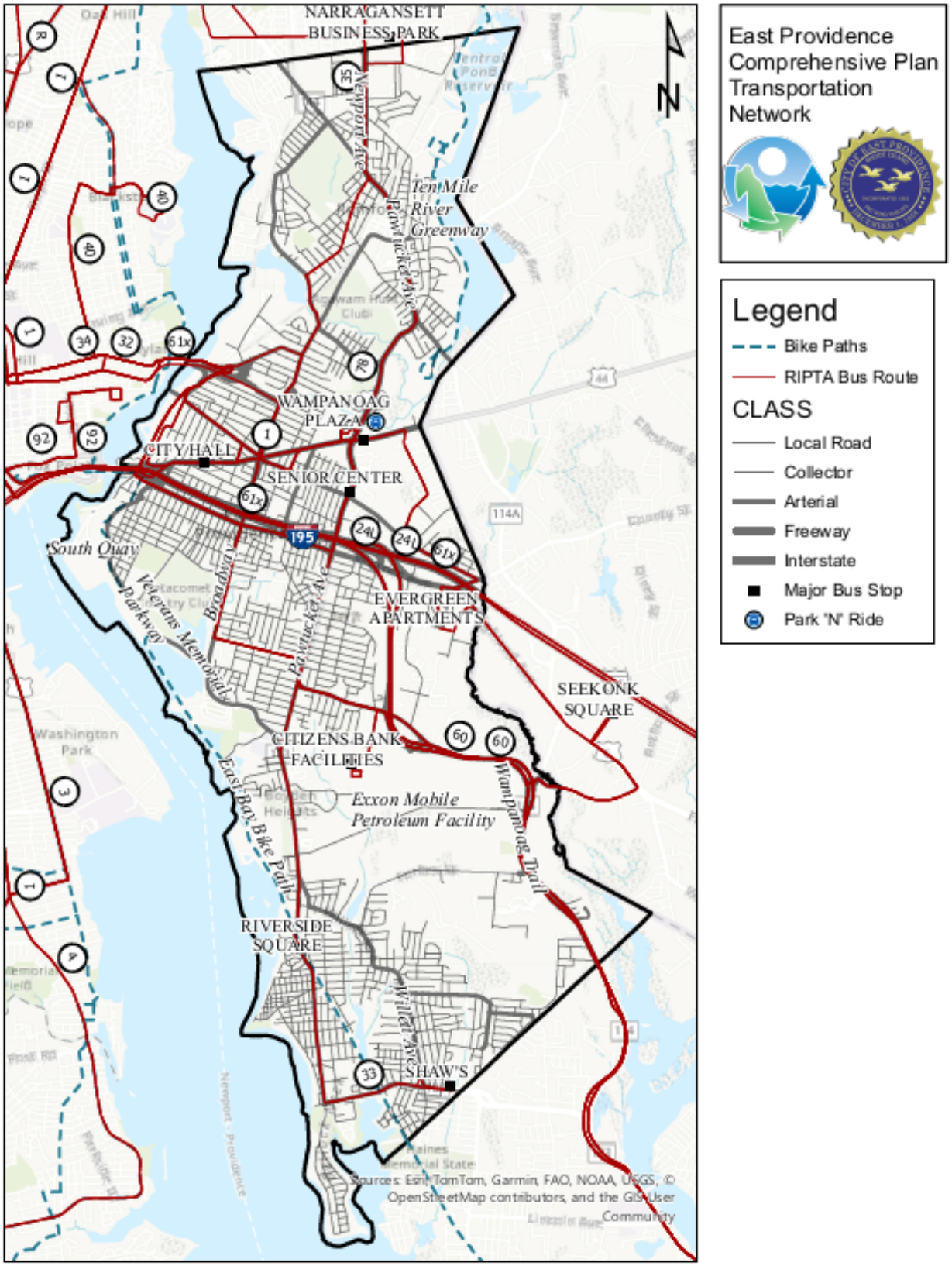
Source: 2010-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The existing transportation network, comprised of roadways, bus lines, sidewalks, and bicycle paths, is depicted in Map T.1. The City's roadway network provides adequate vehicular access to certain locations within the City, most notably along the central east/west corridor of the City in the vicinity of Interstate-195. Efficient access to certain portions of Riverside is also provided via the East Shore Expressway/ Wampanoag Trail (Route 114). The street network within East Providence neighborhoods and the several multi-use paths that run through the City provide a foundation upon which to strengthen multimodal connectivity for walkers and bikers. Mass transit within the City is provided through the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) with several bus-lines serving the City. Despite the available bus service, the lack of a well-defined centrally located mass-transit hub in the City poses a challenge to encouraging the use of mass transit services to and within East Providence. While the existing bus routes in the City are primarily geared toward moving people to specific commercial locations where shopping and employment opportunities are concentrated, there are still areas within the City where transit accessibility is limited.

Roadways

Roadway Types

East Providence is comprised of several different types of roadways, which provide differing levels of access within and beyond the City. The types of roadways range from interstate, which provide access and connectivity to surrounding states, such as Massachusetts, to local roads, which facilitate neighborhood connections. Rhode Island Statewide Planning establishes the functional classification of roadways, which determines the jurisdictional responsibilities. Interstates, freeways and expressways, most principal arterials and some minor arterials are maintained by the State, while collectors and local roads fall under the jurisdiction of the City. Maintenance of City owned roadways in East Providence is conducted by the Department of Public Works Highway Division. State owned roadways in East Providence are maintained by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT). The majority of the City's roadways are classified as local (51%) and collectors (28%). The number of miles within the City of each roadway class is summarized in Table T.1.



Map T.1. East Providence Transportation Network

Table T.1. 2005 -2015 Roadway Functional Classification Mileage, City of East Providence Roads

Classification	Roadways in East Providence	Mileage* (% of total)
Interstate	I-195	2.56 (2%)
Freeways & Expressways	East Shore Expressway and Wampanoag Trail	3.55 (2%)
Principal Arterials	Henderson Bridge, Veterans Memorial Parkway, Bullocks Point Ave; Crescent View Ave; Pawtucket Ave; Willett Ave; Wampanoag Trail; Newport Ave; Taunton Ave; Waterman Ave	15.03 (9%)
Minor Arterials	Broadway; Bullocks Point Ave; Crescent View Ave; Highland Ave; Massasoit Ave; Mink Rd; North Broadway; Newman Ave; Roger Williams Ave; South Broadway; Warren Ave; Waterman Ave; Pleasant St	13.37 (8%)
Collectors	Bishop Ave; Bourne Ave; Brightridge Ave; Burnside Ave; Centre St; Elm Ave; Estrell Dr; Ferris Ave; Forbes St; Grassy Plain Rd; Greenwood Ave; Hall St; Martin St; Massasoit Ave; Metropolitan Park Dr; North Brow St; New Rd	46.43 (28%)
Local Roads	Streets that primarily provide access to residential neighborhoods in the City but also local access to some commercial and industrial properties.	approximately 85 miles (51%)
Total Mileage		**166 miles**

** Mileages taken from Statewide Planning Technical Paper 155. Local road estimates provided by City of East Providence Engineering Division*

A summary of key corridors (i.e., principal arterials) that provide access through the City is provided below.

- **Taunton Avenue:** Considered one of the most important gateway corridors in the City and with strong linkages to the Six Corners intersection, the Taunton Avenue corridor represents one of the City's most important economic development opportunities.
- **Pawtucket Avenue:** Pawtucket Avenue serves as the City's primary north/south roadway corridor, providing transportation connections from the Pawtucket/East Providence city line to Riverside.
- **East Shore Expressway (Wampanoag Trail):** The East Shore Expressway/Wampanoag Trail (Route 114) is an important State highway that carries a significant number of vehicles traveling from Providence and Center City East Providence, to the Riverside section of East Providence and points south, including Barrington, Bristol and Warren.
- **Veteran's Memorial Parkway:** This roadway provides a link between Watchemoket Square and the Washington Bridge and the Riverside Square neighborhood.

Scenic Roadways

In 1992, the State designated the Veteran's Memorial Parkway as a Scenic Roadway under the State's Scenic Roadway Program. The Roadway was designed by the Olmstead Brothers firm in the early 20th Century and is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The Veteran's Memorial Parkway represents a truly unique transportation experience in the urban/suburban core. This roadway, however, serves as a major north/south corridor, delivering thousands of automobiles from Riverside to the I-195 corridor daily. Design plans for the City's waterfront properties in the vicinity of the Parkway have proposed potential improvements to mitigate expanding traffic numbers, the potential for congestion delays and visual impacts to the Parkway. The City will continue to emphasize preservation of

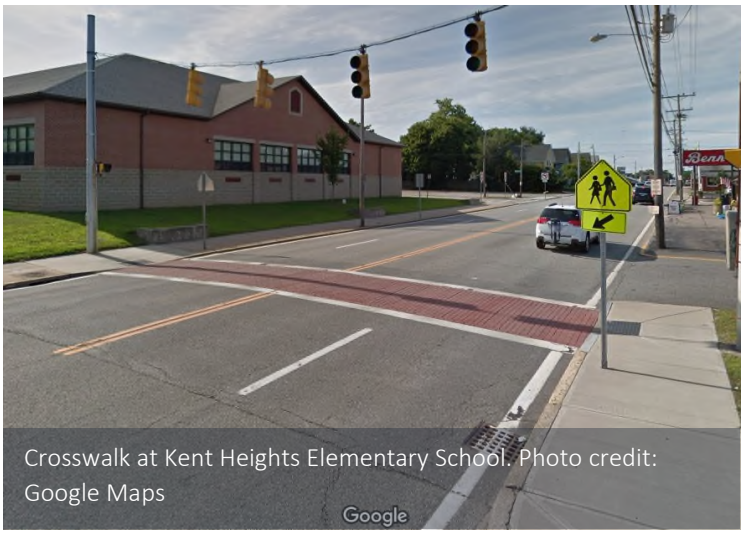
the Parkway's scenic character while recognizing that careful design options must be considered in order to maintain safety and transportation efficiency.

Bridges

The City of East Providence has 35 listed bridges under the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) National Bridge Inventory (NBI). RIDOT is responsible for the periodic inspection of all FHWA NBI bridges in the State of Rhode Island. Thirty-three of the 35 bridges are owned by RIDOT while two on the list are privately owned. Based on the current FHWA National Bridge Inventory, 13 of these bridges are considered to be in good condition, 18 of these bridges are considered to be in fair condition and four are considered in poor condition.[18] A poor condition, or structurally deficient bridge, is not considered by RIDOT to be unsafe. These bridges are, however, subject to careful monitoring and repair that allows them to safely accommodate the expected traffic volume. The ultimate fate of these bridges is their eventual replacement at some point in time. An example of a structurally deficient bridge in East Providence is shown in the inset above. This bridge was replaced by RIDOT in 2014 as was a nearby adjacent bridge that passes over Warren Avenue, which was also deemed structurally deficient. A number of structurally deficient bridges in East Providence have been either replaced or rehabilitated in recent years by RIDOT. The data from the National Bridge Inventory database shows improvement, from 31 East Providence's bridges in fair condition to 18 now listed as fair. It is important to note that the replacement of the Henderson Bridge with a new bridge crossing will upgrade its condition from poor to good.

Walking

Getting around on foot in East Providence depends almost exclusively on the availability of sidewalks. Neighborhoods vary as it relates to the availability of sidewalks. Older, higher density neighborhoods in the center of the City tend to provide sidewalks along the majority of their roadway networks, with varying conditions. Conversely, areas of the City constructed in more recent times, with generally lower densities, tend to have fewer roadway areas with sidewalks. As a result of decades of development that catered primarily to the efficient movement of automobile traffic, pedestrian facilities were often regarded as a secondary priority and in most cases sidewalks, crosswalks and other pedestrian oriented improvements were either not completed or were inadequate to serve the purpose of safely accommodating pedestrians on our roadway networks.



Crosswalk at Kent Heights Elementary School. Photo credit: Google Maps

The City's Land Development and Subdivision Review Regulations require the installation of sidewalks along the frontages of new subdivisions within the City. Waivers may be requested through the subdivision process, and are traditionally granted in neighborhoods

[18] https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/nbi.cfm, accessed November 2020.

where no or few sidewalks exist, but in some cases where public schools, recreation facilities and other public amenities are nearby, sidewalks are required to be installed as a matter of public safety.

The City has an existing Pedestrian Plan that analyzed and weighted 16 generators of pedestrian traffic, ranging from census data to the locations of bus stops and civic facilities, to derive a map depicting priority areas for pedestrian safety improvements. This information along with available sidewalk mapping forms a good baseline to inform the future of pedestrian enhancements in the City.

Biking

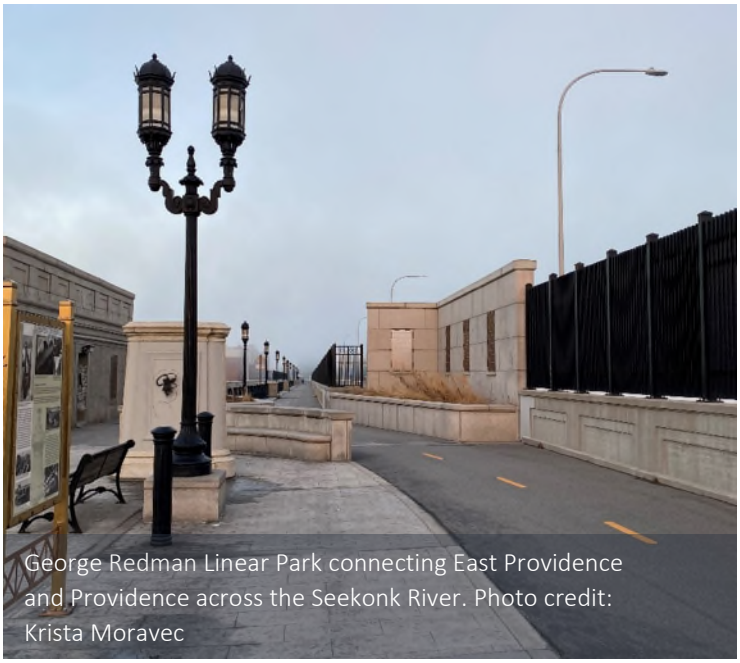
The City of East Providence is fortunate to have several high quality bicycle and greenway facilities within its borders; however, the on-street bicycle network generally lacks dedicated bicycle facilities. Many of the City's through-streets are not bike-friendly, being heavily traveled and relatively narrow considering their traffic volume. On-street parking is common, with numerous curb cuts for side streets and commercial uses. Nonetheless, bicycle commuters are evident on City streets, particularly in the northern portion of the City between the Henderson Bridge and the Seekonk border.

East Bay Bike Path

The East Bay Bike Path is the first multi-town bike path built in Rhode Island and is nationally recognized as one of the finest dedicated bike path facilities in the country. It travels 14.5 miles from India Point Park in Providence through the City of East Providence (comprised of 5 miles) to Independence Park in Bristol, passing many state and local parks and recreation areas.

George Redman Linear Park

Completed in 2015, RIDOT transformed the long deficient bikeway crossing on the Washington Bridge between Providence and East Providence into a first-class bikeway and linear park. The project replaced the sub-standard bridge for cyclists and pedestrians that was in place for many years. Through a $22 million contract, RIDOT rebuilt a portion of the original Washington Bridge that carried the former narrow bikeway and a portion of the Interstate highway into the desirable and highly functional crossing for pedestrians and bicyclists. The linear park features a separate bikeway and walking path, scenic overlooks, park benches, flag poles, decorative lighting and landscaped planters. The project also restored the historic, multi-arch granite façade of the Washington Bridge and two operator's houses from which the original drawbridge was controlled. The new linear park is named in honor of George Redman after the late East Providence resident who was instrumental in making the East Bay Bike Path a reality more than 30 years ago, and who tirelessly advocated for bike path development across the state.



George Redman Linear Park connecting East Providence and Providence across the Seekonk River. Photo credit: Krista Moravec

Ten Mile River Greenway

The Ten Mile River Greenway was built in 2004 to connect Slater Park in Pawtucket to the Kimberly Ann Rock Athletic Field in East Providence at a distance of 2 miles. It is one of the few bike paths in Rhode

Island that was not built along a former rail corridor. This means the path follows the natural contour of the land and provides a very scenic ride along rolling terrain on the banks of the James Turner Reservoir and Central Pond. The completion of a one-mile extension connecting Slater Park to the Daggett Athletic Fields was completed in 2014. As part of the RIDOT State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) Minor Amendment #2[19], the remaining segments of the Ten Mile River Greenway project were moved from study and design to construction in 2025.

Public Transportation

RIPTA Bus Routes

East Providence is served by six Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) bus routes, outlined in Table T.2. RIPTA routes are mainly focused on providing access to major commercial destinations within East Providence, downtown Providence, and regional destinations providing multimodal connectivity such as the Attleboro Commuter Rail Station and Downtown Newport Gateway Center. RIPTA recently updated Routes 32 and 34 to provide more efficient transit connections from East Providence to the high-density Route 6 retail corridor in Seekonk, Massachusetts. The Route 6 corridor is widely used by East Providence residents who now have an alternative to person vehicles.

Table T.2. East Providence Bus Routes

Route Number	Route Name	Inbound Destination	Outbound Destination within East Providence	Complete RIPTA Route Destination	Via Routes*
32	East Providence/ Wampanoag/ Seekonk Square	Kennedy Plaza	Lifespan	Seekonk Square Mall	Warren Ave., Broadway, Martin St., Pawtucket Ave., Wampanoag Trail
33	Riverside	Kennedy Plaza	Shaw's Willett Avenue	Shaw's Willett Avenue	Taunton Ave., Pawtucket Ave., Crescent View Ave.
34	East Providence	Kennedy Plaza	Evergreen Apartments	Seekonk Square Mall	Warren Ave., Pawtucket Ave., Taunton Ave., Commercial Way, Waterman Ave., Highland Ave., Catamore Blvd.**
35	Rumford	Kennedy Plaza	Newport Avenue at Pawtucket City Line	South Attleboro, MA Train Station	Henderson Bridge, Waterman Ave., Six Corners, N. Broadway, Roger Williams Ave., Wilson Ave., Newport Ave.
60	Providence/ Newport*	Kennedy Plaza	Wampanoag Trail near Barrington Town Line	Downtown Newport Gateway Center	I-195, East Shore Expressway, Wampanoag Trail
78	Beverage Hill/Newport Avenue	Kennedy Plaza	Newport Avenue at Pawtucket City Line	Downtown Pawtucket Transit Center	Henderson Bridge, Waterman Ave., Six Corners, Taunton Ave., Pawtucket Ave., Newport Ave.

** Within the confines of the City of East Providence*

*** Includes stops at the East Providence Park and Ride Facility located on Taunton Avenue*

RIPTA RIDE Program

The RIDE Program is RIPTA'S ADA Complimentary Paratransit Service required by federal law under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Reservations are required for individuals who wish to utilize RIDE services. Paratransit service provided under ADA is available for an individual whose disability either prevents independent use of the fixed route system or prevents travel to or from bus stops. Under

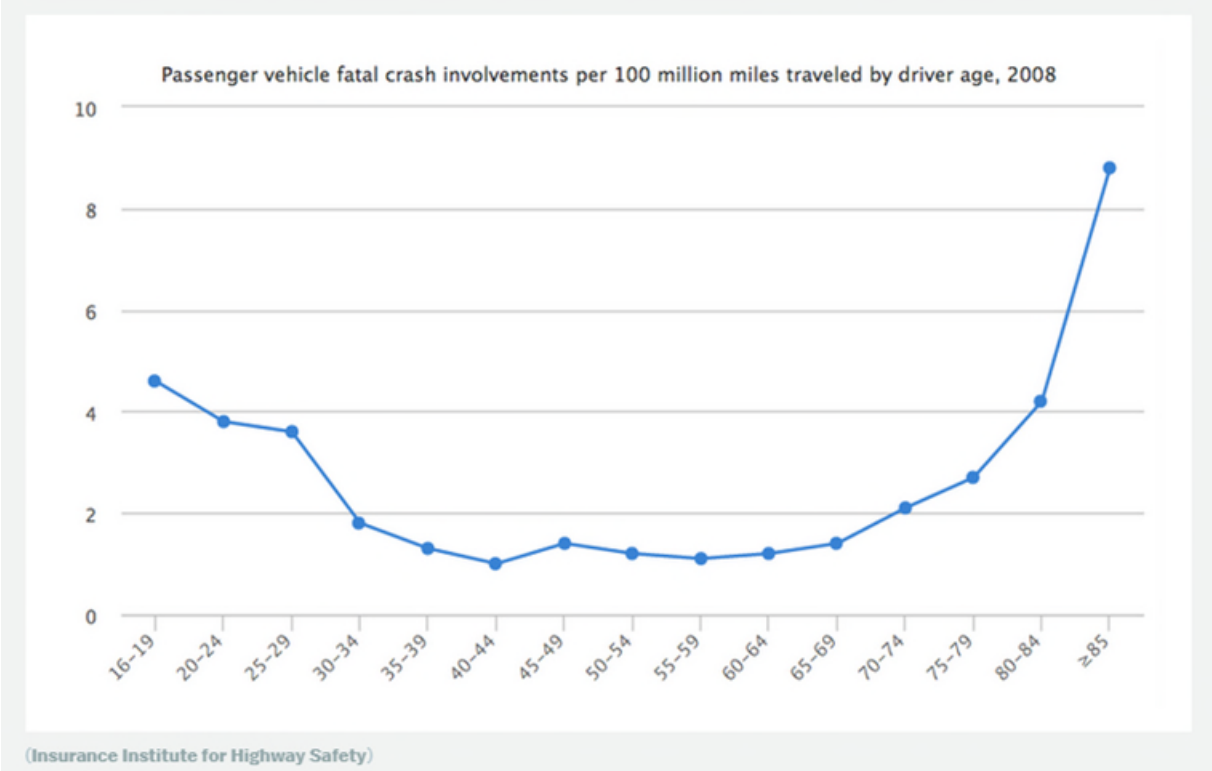
[19] http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/tip/2022/STIP-Amendment-2.pdf

federal regulations, ADA Paratransit Service must operate within a 3/4-mile corridor on either side of a fixed bus route. ADA service operates during the same hours that the fixed route bus runs. RIDE trips can be scheduled for any purpose as late as the day before the date of travel. Standing Orders, which are trips that occur on a daily or weekly basis such as trips to work or school may be scheduled. One drawback to the RIDE paratransit system is its accessibility to a broad market of users who do not have access to an automobile, most notably seniors who for a variety of reasons, primarily as a matter of safety, are no longer able to drive. Due to restrictions, including minimum distance from a bus line and the fact that the paratransit system is often cash strapped due to reduced funding formulas for public transit, the system struggles to meet the needs of elderly and handicapped populations.

East Providence Senior Center and Senior Transit Services

As reported by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (Figure T.3), as seniors age, their risk of involvement in fatal car crashes increases dramatically. Seniors who lose the ability to drive their cars, become reliant on friends, family or professional caregivers to assist them in meeting their daily transportation needs on a long term basis. Without this assistance, many seniors are often forced to either move from their homes into the homes of relatives or friends or move into some form of assisted living facility. There are currently efforts to increase transit services to meet senior's basic needs as they age in their homes.

Figure T.3. Source Insurance Institute for Highway Safety



The East Providence Senior Center offers daily door-to-door transportation services to seniors who wish to visit the Senior Center for the various activities and events it offers at the Senior Center. Senior Center staff call all riders in the morning with a pickup confirmation. Riders are required to inform the Center one day in advance of their plans to utilize this service. As stated in **Recreation**, vans for this service are

shared with the City's Recreation Department, which also uses the vans to provide transportation for programs and services offered through the recreation department. A transit service to assist seniors with grocery shopping was started in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Using the same drivers and vans as the Senior Center transit service, members of the Senior Center can sign up for shared rides to Wampanoag Plaza or Shopper's Town. The City anticipates keeping this service in place post-Covid, but has identified a need for upgraded vehicles that are ADA accessible.

Medical Transportation Management, Inc.

Medical Transportation Management, Inc. (MTM), a for profit company that provides medical related transportation services to those 60 and older, and adults with disabilities under 60 who meet certain criteria. MTM in Rhode Island operates under contract with the Rhode Island Department of Elderly Affairs. Transportation is available for medical appointments and tests, adult day care, kidney dialysis, cancer treatments, and senior center/community meal site Cafes. There is a $2 one-way fee per ride. Reservations are made no less than 48 hours in advance for any appointment.

PACE Rhode Island

PACE Rhode Island (PACE-RI) is a non-profit health care provider serving permanent residents of Rhode Island 55 and older who qualify for Medicare and Medicaid. PACE-RI's services assist qualifying adults with chronic health needs to continue to live at home, by operating a bus service to transport PACE-RI members to and from their medical appointments. PACE-RI has four locations in the state of Rhode Island, including its headquarters in East Providence.

RIPTA Park and Ride

Managed by RIDOT and RIPTA, Park & Ride facilities are strategically located parking lots, either privately or state owned, that are free of charge to anyone who parks a vehicle and commutes by transit or in a carpool. The City of East Providence has one Park and Ride facility located on Route 44 (Taunton Avenue), approximately halfway between the Pawtucket Avenue/Taunton Avenue intersection and the Seekonk, Massachusetts, border that is serviced through RIPTA's Bus Route Number 34. The Park & Ride facility has the potential to be expanded and RIPTA strategic plans have expressed the need to improve and grow its park and ride facilities through the addition or expansion of park and ride locations, introduction of more frequent and mid-day bus service, installation of passenger amenities at these locations, improved signage, expansion of the guaranteed ride home program and efforts to increase *Ecopass* participation, RIPTA's employee transit pass program.[20] The City's Park & Ride facility receives little use, partly due to its generally inconvenient location. The Henderson Bridge Improvements Phase 2 project has the potential to increase the use of the Park and Ride. Phase 2 includes the completion of a Henderson Parkway from Massasoit Avenue to beyond Broadway, with conceptual plans for the Henderson Trunk Line Service that would extend the project's terminus to Pawtucket Avenue. Through this project, the feasibility of creating a transit-only connection between the Pawtucket Avenue terminus of the Henderson Bridge project to the Park and Ride should be evaluated to increase attractiveness of the existing Park and Ride facility by providing more direct transit access.

[20] https://www.ripta.com/bus/

Parking

On-Street Parking Conditions

The City's on-street parking standards are codified under Chapter 18, Article X of "Vehicles and Traffic" within the Revised Ordinances of the City of East Providence. Within this Article, there are several sections that list parking restrictions for specific streets within the City including parking that is prohibited at all times as well as time restrictions varying from 20 minutes to 120 minutes. The Article also includes restrictions associated with on-street parking of commercial vehicles. Since East Providence is an essentially built-out City, with a substantially complete roadway network, most of the on-street parking restrictions associated with City streets have been in place for many years and in some cases, many decades.

Two areas of the City have been identified with distinct parking needs:

- **Watchemoket Square:** As this area develops and becomes a regional destination, the provision of adequate parking is a concern. The City recently acquired a property at the corner of Potter Street and Warren Avenue from State of Rhode Island to create public parking lot. An evaluation of parking existing and future supply and demand is warranted to understand how to best provide and manage parking in this area.
- **Riverside Square:** This center of neighborhood activity has competing uses for curb space between bus stops, on-street parking, and future potential for bicycle facilities. It will be important to evaluate the parking needs of the Riverside Square area and how they can best be accommodated through both on-street and off-street parking areas.

Off-Street Parking Conditions

Off street parking standards for the City of East Providence are administered under Chapter 19 (Zoning), Article IV, Division 11 entitled "Off-street Parking Regulations" within the Revised Ordinances of the City of East Providence. These requirements were revised in 2008 based upon research on actual parking demands for a variety of land use categories and to reduce the burden of the parking regulations. Additional modifications to off-street parking were also completed in 2022 to reflect changing conditions for parking demand and to promote investment along the City's primary commercial mixed-use corridors. Off street parking requirements for the various land use types identified by City Ordinance are codified under Section 19-284 which dictates the number of off-street spaces required for the specified use. For example, office uses of greater than 40,000 square feet are required to provide one off-street parking space per 500 square feet of Gross Floor Area (GFA). As another example, retail establishments are required to provide one space per 500 square feet of GFA plus one space for every employee. These are two examples of a varied index of parking requirements established for the purposes of providing reasonable accommodation for parking demand for each of the described uses under this ordinance section.

Parking management strategies, such as reduced parking requirements, shared parking, and transportation demand management can be required or incentivized through zoning to help reduce the number of people accessing the area by vehicle.

In effort to provide more flexible parking requirements in-line with City goals for land use and development, the City has created a Zoning Overlay Ordinance. This ordinance allows for a 50% reduction

of the off-street parking requirement for mixed-use developments in the overlay district. The overlay districts include Taunton Avenue, Warren Avenue, Waterman Avenue, and portions of Bullocks Point Avenue in Riverside.

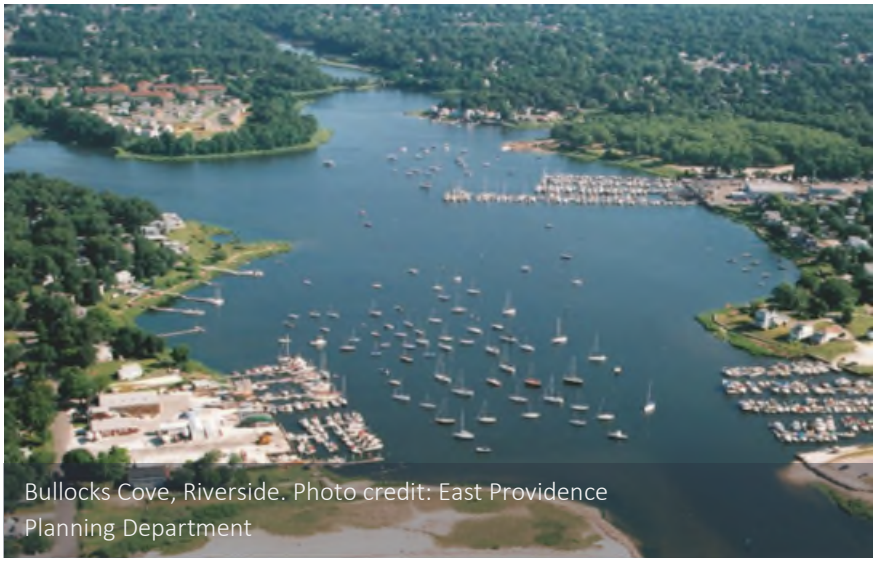
Economic Development

Revitalizing the City's neighborhood centers support local economic vitality, build community strength, and provide a space for more diverse housing options. How to accommodate the parking needs of businesses and residents is an important issue that impacts quality of life in these areas. See this element for more discussion on parking management strategies and reducing car traffic by encouraging other ways to get to these places by walking, biking, or taking the bus.

Freight Routes

Trucks are a critical component in moving goods through our region and are vitally important to serving East Providence's economy. The I-195 corridor that passes through East Providence is a crucial part of the regional and national ground transportation infrastructure. The completion of the I–way project in Providence has improved conditions for moving truck freight and automobile traffic through the I-195 corridor. Proposed improvements to the I-195 Taunton Avenue/Warren Avenue Interchange will improve access to the waterfront and allow for more efficient access to the waterfront for commercial truck deliveries to the waterfront district. Roadways like Waterfront Drive have been designed to efficiently accommodate trucks and provide relief from truck traffic on thoroughfares where commercial trucks can be disruptive to residents and commercial businesses along these corridors.

Freight rail remains an important part of the City's transportation network. Providence and Worcester Railroad maintains two rail corridors within the City that provide freight rail service to a small number of commercial/industrial customers in the City. There is potential, however for freight rail service expansion along the City's industrially zoned corridors in the future.



Bullocks Cove, Riverside. Photo credit: East Providence Planning Department

Marine Facilities

As would be expected, the City of East Providence's coastal location has played an important role in shaping the City's marine based economy over the decades. For more than a century, the City's waterfront has been dominated by commercial and industrial uses. From the mid to late 19th Century, East Providence was known as a port of commerce, with clipper ships transporting goods to and from, all over the world. Later in the 19th Century, and into the latter part of the 20th Century, East Providence became a major petroleum-centric waterfront with large tracts of the City's waterfront dedicated to the storage, refinement, and distribution of petroleum products. Today,

only two facilities currently import and store petroleum products for distribution in the region via waterborne oil tanker delivery, Exxon/Mobil and Sprague Energy. While these facilities and the shipping that delivers these products, will remain an important commerce activity for the foreseeable future, the City's primary focus in the future will be geared more toward recreation oriented uses and the development of facilities that will support recreational boating and water related activities.

Marinas and Moorings

Currently there are five marinas located fully or partially within the waters of East Providence: The Oyster House Marina (60 boat slips), East Providence Yacht Club (24 slips), Bullocks Cove Marina (49 slips) Peterson's Marina (24 slips) and Cove Haven Marina (with 175 of the 357 slips within the East Providence's jurisdictional waters). These marinas are a vital part of the City's recreational boating heritage most notably within Bullocks Cove.

There are a total of seven mooring fields located in City waters with the majority of all mooring permits issued to mooring fields located in Bullock Cove. The remaining mooring fields are located outside of Bullock Cove along the shoreline of the Providence River. There are approximately 240 permitted moorings within these registered mooring fields.

Boat Launching Facilities and Public Docks

The City has four boat launching facilities located in City waters at Bold Point Park, Sabin Point Park, Richmond Point and Haines Park. The facilities at Bold Point, Sabin Point, and Haines Park are all heavily used for the launching of small recreational vessels into the City's waters. In addition, there is now a public fishing pier located at Sabin Point Park, that is heavily used by local fishermen.

What We Heard

What the community highlighted as the City's challenges, opportunities, and needs:

- The neighborhood centers of East Providence provide an opportunity to re-evaluate traffic patterns in the City to make it feel more connected, despite it being split by I-195.
- It is important to support new transportation infrastructure for all modes and people in already developed areas of the City to improve safety and provide more transportation choices for getting around without a vehicle.
- Improving connectivity to community amenities such as local businesses (doctors, convenience stores), schools, residential areas, and recreational areas is a top priority for residents.
- Improving walkability is important to residents. Walkability is seen as a way to improve quality of life, address environmental sustainability, and help build community around commercial centers. Priority areas for improving walkability include schools and commercial centers, Taunton Avenue at City Hall, the Six Corners intersection, Waterman Avenue, Riverside Square, and Watchemoket Square.
- Approximately 50% of survey respondents reported walking regularly, and 25% as biking regularly (at least once a week). Respondents are interested in walking and biking more frequently if the City invests in alternative transportation infrastructure.
- Approximately 50% of survey respondents view sidewalks and street crossings as only somewhat accessible or not accessible. Improving ADA accessibility on sidewalks and at crossings is

important not just for connecting people to the destinations they are walking to, but for connecting to transit.

- Access to parks and open space is important, and could be used to link walking and biking facilities to help create a connected network.
- Supporting electric vehicle charging and preparing for driverless cars were also seen as ways to promote sustainability.
- Residents value the off-street bicycle paths within East Providence as a community amenity, but would like to see better on-street biking connections from the East Bay Bike Path to both residential and commercial areas to support tourism and economic development. Specific locations for improving connections to/from the bike path include Riverside Square and down Bullocks Point Avenue.
- Improving and maintaining the condition of roadways and sidewalks is also important to residents. Residents would like to see multimodal improvements incorporated into City and State roadway projects. Almost all survey respondents reported that they view streets and sidewalks as being in fair or poor condition.
- Improving multimodal safety particularly around schools and in neighborhoods, is a priority.
- Promoting a positive walking and biking culture and providing education for all road users is an important aspect of creating a more multimodal City.
- Improving public transportation options is important for supporting residents and the business community. Community members would like to see a transit hub in East Providence to better connect to other areas via bus, more direct bus routes, and local shuttle system to connect to schools, recreation centers, and employment centers.
- The waterfront is viewed as an asset for the community. Ensuring safe, convenient access to new development in this area, particularly Watchemoket Square, for all people and modes is a priority. The community would like to see options such as shuttle buses, trolleys, or water taxis explored to reduce driving to these areas.

Challenges, Needs, and Opportunities

Projects Improving Access into the City

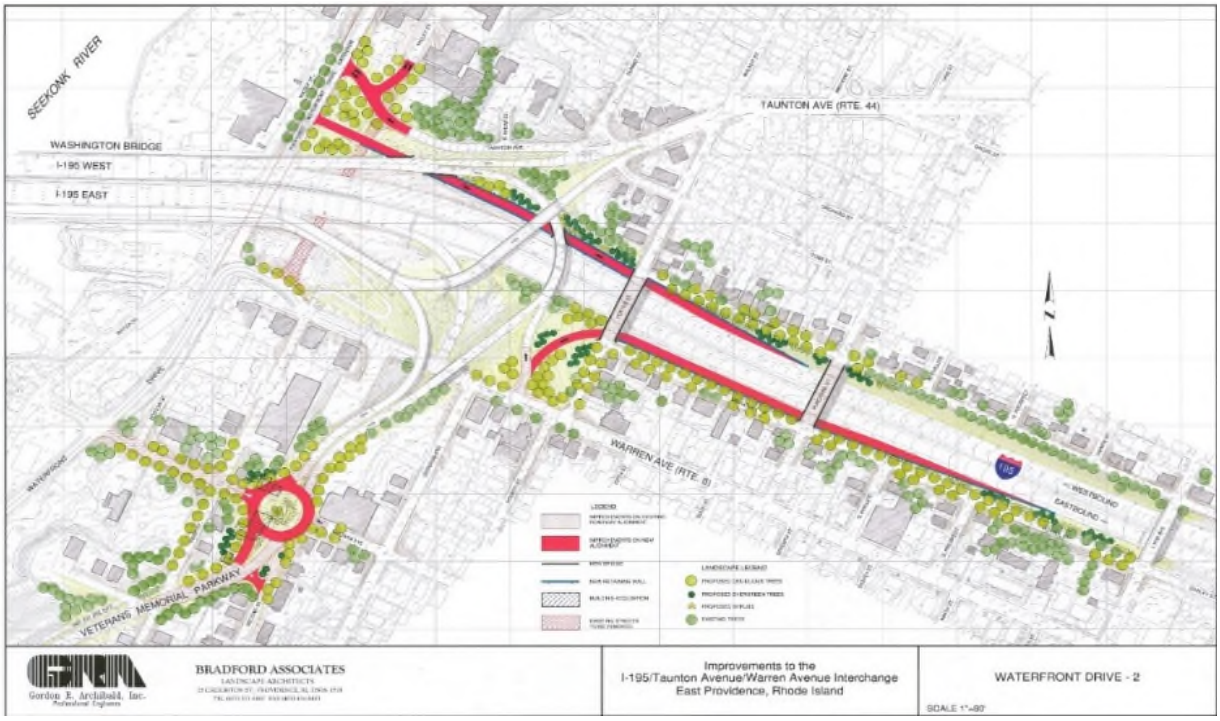
The City of East Providence has a number of key transportation and circulation projects in various stages of planning, development, and completion that will play a pivotal role in improving access into the City and the areas it is targeting for investment and redevelopment. With better traffic circulation and access, they open areas up for economic development and housing opportunities.

Reconstruction of Westbound Washington Bridge

On December 11, 2023, the westbound travel lanes of the Washington Bridge, which carries 90,000 vehicles a day, was shut down by RIDOT in an emergency closure, due to a critical failure of bridge components. In the days that followed, commuters sat for hours in traffic, snarling side roads and the Henderson Bridge. RIDOT subsequently allowed westbound travel on some of the eastbound bridge lanes, However, the Taunton Ave., Warren Ave. and Veterans Memorial Parkway entrance ramps have all remained closed. This has significantly increased congestion near the remaining westbound entrance ramps at Broadway and Pawtucket Ave. The shutdown of the westbound bridge has increased congestion on local streets and throughout the Providence metropolitan area. The shutdown, especially during the first few weeks, was a significant burden on residents, businesses and first responders. Congestion mitigation measures near the Broadway access ramps have included lane restriping and police presence during peak periods. This project is expected to be completed in 2028.

Washington Bridge/I-195 Improvements: Taunton Avenue/Warren Avenue Interchange

A major impediment to the development of the City's waterfront from industrial to mixed use has been the lack of adequate access to the waterfront from the City's segment of the I-195 interstate. The Washington Bridge/I-195 Improvements project will add an exit ramp connecting I-195 westbound to Waterfront Drive. This will enable direct waterfront access, reducing vehicular trip time to the waterfront and also enable better bike, pedestrian, and transit access. The improved access will support new development along the waterfront and Watchemoket Square and help to divert trips away from congested areas, such as the Six Corners intersection. Construction of this interchange has begun, but has since been delayed due to the unexpected Washington Bridge reconstruction project described above.



Original preferred design for I-195 Taunton Avenue/Warren Avenue Interchange. Source: East Providence Planning Department, GRA

Henderson Bridge

Previously an overbuilt six-lane crossing, Henderson Bridge has reconstructed to reduce the bridge's size and convert its interchanges to at-grade intersections. These intersections include a new roundabout on the eastern landing of the bridge in East Providence. The project also added separated bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure that connects to existing on-street and off-street networks. The smaller bridge footprint requires less maintenance, while providing better access to future development in the area, tying it in with the goals of the Waterfront Drive project. Up to 25 acres of land will be made available through this redevelopment, potentially aiding economic growth. Phase 2 of the Henderson Bridge Improvements project was moved to design and construction in the RIDOT STIP Amendment #2. Phase 2 includes the completion of the Henderson Parkway at North Broadway, with the potential of a Phase 3 with a terminus at Pawtucket Avenue through the Henderson Trunk Line Service project.

Gateway Improvements

Several corridors in East Providence serve as a point of entry for visitors and provide an opportunity to create gateways into the City. Gateways should be reflective of a vibrant city with a welcoming atmosphere that depicts prosperity and community pride. Currently, several gateway centers in the City are in need of improvements in attaining that goal. The City should identify and prioritize its gateway corridors and develop a plan for completing physical improvements at the major entryways to the City. Provisions for appropriate regular maintenance of these gateway sites is also critical. Currently only two gateway roads provide a welcome sign: the Taunton Avenue gateway at I-195 and a sign at Pleasant Street.



Construction of Henderson Bridge and new roundabout in East Providence (November 2023). Photo credit: VHB.com

Improved Circulation and Safety

For the better part of the 20th Century, East Providence and the State of Rhode Island designed their roadways to accommodate as many cars as possible, as efficiently as possible. As traffic volumes continued to increase, roadways became wider, traffic moved faster, and the infrastructure once dedicated to walking and biking faded away. In recent years, both East Providence and the State have worked to shift this focus to one that is less singular. The efficient movement of high volumes of automobile traffic remains a high priority for the community, particularly during peak travel times. However, techniques to re-establish a vibrant network of transportation infrastructure that can accommodate walking, biking, scooting, and public transportation is now understood to be integral to the health of East Providence's residents and local economy. To achieve this level of transformation in the community will require a commitment to both broad policy and strategic investment.

Complete and Green Streets

Complete and Green Streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Complete and Green Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work. Incomplete streets – those

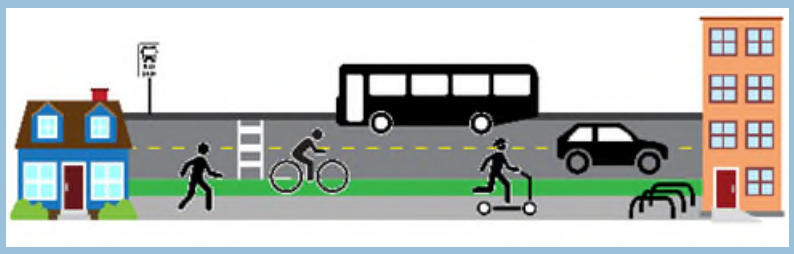
designed with only cars in mind – limit transportation choices by making walking, bicycling, and taking public transportation inconvenient, unattractive, and, too often, dangerous.[21]

The City is challenged by limited funding to maintain and upgrade roadways, and so many of the City's roadways are currently in poor condition and lack multimodal facilities that provide safe methods of travel for all people. There is an opportunity for the City to be proactive in allocating and prioritizing funds to improve the condition and maintenance of the public right-of-way, including streets, sidewalks, crosswalks and pedestrian signals, bicycle lanes, and bus stops. In addition to basic roadway improvements, there is a need for safety improvements and streetscape enhancements. Safety improvements may include advanced warning signage, curb extensions, pedestrian refuge islands, or separated bicycle facilities. Streetscape enhancement may include the incorporation of street trees and landscaped buffers, which also can trap and contain stormwater and reduce street flooding and remove pollutants before discharging into local waterways. Enhancements can also include pedestrian-scale lighting and street furniture to create a more welcoming and attractive environment for pedestrians and a "sense of place" in East Providence. In all projects, increasing accessibility for people with disabilities should be a high priority. It is important to note that in some instances, not all modes can be accommodated along a street, but all should be considered and evaluated for opportunities to increase accessibility and safety.

Benefits of Complete Streets

Shifting even one vehicle trip per day or week to walking, biking, or transit has cumulative benefits for a community, including:

- Improved air quality through congestion and emissions reductions
- Supporting a healthy lifestyle and public health goals
- Reducing parking demands and associated costs
- Enhancing sense of neighborhood community



Several major thoroughfares in East Providence are automobile-centric roadways that are generally uninviting to pedestrians. Segments of Taunton Avenue, Pawtucket Avenue, and the entire length of Newport Avenue are examples of roadways that would fit within the definition of incomplete streets. Certain segments of Broadway, Waterman Avenue, and Warren Avenue have areas that would be considered unwelcoming to pedestrians, bicyclists, and those using public transit. Even Veterans Memorial Parkway, which is flanked by the East Bay Bike Path, is characterized by high vehicle speeds, making it difficult for pedestrians and cyclists to cross and access the bike path from points east. These can be considered priority of incorporating Complete Street elements. See more discussion under **Walking and Biking Connections** about creating city-wide walking and biking networks.

[21] Source: Smart Growth America

Traffic Calming and Road Diets

Under certain circumstances, a roadway is capable of redesign in a manner that helps to reduce traffic speed and also incorporate multimodal design elements. One method that has become increasingly accepted and utilized is the "road diet" technique. A road diet is a technique in transportation planning whereby a road is reduced in number of travel lanes and/or effective width, in order to achieve systemic circulation improvements. For example, these improvements could include the installation of a central turning lane and dedicated bicycle lanes. The City of East Providence and RIDOT have utilized the road diet technique to improve traffic circulation and achieve traffic calming along portions of Pawtucket Avenue, most notably between Taunton Avenue (Route 44) and Pleasant Street. Road diet techniques have also been successfully utilized on Bullocks Point Avenue in the Riverside Square section of the City. The technique assists in reducing hazardous traffic conditions and has become an accepted practice in achieving traffic calming along many busy thoroughfares. The City should continue to examine other arterial roadways in the City where the use of this technique can be employed without adversely affecting traffic flow. Coordination with the RI Dept. of Transportation will be required.

Case Study: Pawtucket Avenue

This roadway contains a number of commercial, residential and institutional uses that include private and public school facilities, the City's Senior Center, single and multi-family residential uses and a variety of other uses that are important contributors to the City' economy. Pawtucket Avenue also serves as an important bus transit route in the City. While this roadway contains sidewalks along nearly its entire length, Pawtucket Avenue is not currently regarded as a pedestrian friendly thoroughfare.

Resurfacing, as well as limited sidewalk replacement and handicapped ramp installation, is include in the state's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) for 2025-2027. Further improvements are needed to improve pedestrian conditions, such as replacement of degraded sidewalks along segments of the roadway, the installation of additional pedestrian crossing points (crosswalks) at various locations, and the installation of pedestrian amenities, including benches and other facilities that will create a more welcoming environment for pedestrians. Due to the roadway's design and high traffic volume, bicycle use along this corridor should not be encouraged.

Access Management

Most roadways in East Providence have been developed and have evolved incrementally over time to reflect changing development patterns. Over the decades, roadway systems have been constructed to serve the varied developments that have been built, and in some case re-developed, for both commercial and residential developments. As a result of this incremental development, numerous curb-cuts and driveways have been created to serve the various uses located along the City's major roadways and arterials. The City should investigate the potential to reduce and consolidate curb-cuts along major thoroughfares as a means of reducing roadway hazards and improving overall traffic circulation. Improvement to retail commercial corridors, in particular, could dramatically improve safety and reduce

congestion. Circulation corridors that could benefit from access management planning include portions of Newport Avenue, Pawtucket Avenue, and Taunton Avenue.

Case Study: Taunton Avenue

The primary commercial corridors of the City experience significant congestion issues during peak commute hours due to existing circulation patterns, which pose an impediment to economic development and transportation efficiency for both businesses and residents. There is opportunity for the City to re-think how vehicular access and circulation is provided, which may result in better balancing access provided between vehicles and alternative modes of transportation, walking, biking, and public transportation.

Taunton Avenue is a tale of three streets. At City Hall, it has a "downtown" feel with a mix of uses close to the sidewalk, on-street parking, and an overall comfortable walking experience. Taunton Avenue as it enters Six Corners, described earlier, becomes less inviting to walk because it was primarily designed to move traffic through easily. From Six Corners to the state line, Taunton Avenue is four lanes with shopping centers, standalone retail stores, and car dealerships. In this area, traffic flow is hindered because of the many driveway access points into these establishments and local street crossings. Included in the heavy volume of traffic on Taunton Avenue are bus and heavy commercial vehicle traffic that pose problems in relation to noise, perception of safety for pedestrians, and wear and tear on the road. This portion of Taunton Avenue would benefit from access management strategies. Several RIPTA bus routes travel Taunton Avenue. Adding landscaping that buffers pedestrians from traffic, can also create a more pleasant pedestrian environment for walkers and transit users.

Cut-Through Streets

While key corridors are highly used to travel around the City, local roadways are susceptible to experiencing cut-through traffic to avoid heavy traffic, long delays at traffic signals, or other transportation related obstacles. They are frequently used by motorists familiar with the local geography and some degree of cut-through driving can be expected in any community. Cut-through driving can become a problem when an inordinate number of vehicles begin to use a roadway beyond its reasonable capacity, significantly impacting residents living along the road. In some cases, large trucks are utilizing local streets to access industrial or commercial areas, creating noise, excessive roadway degradation, and other negative impacts to the neighborhood. Summit Street and Walnut Street are two examples of local streets that are used as a short cut connection between Taunton Avenue and Waterman Avenue.

East Shore Expressway/Wampanoag Trail Safety Improvements

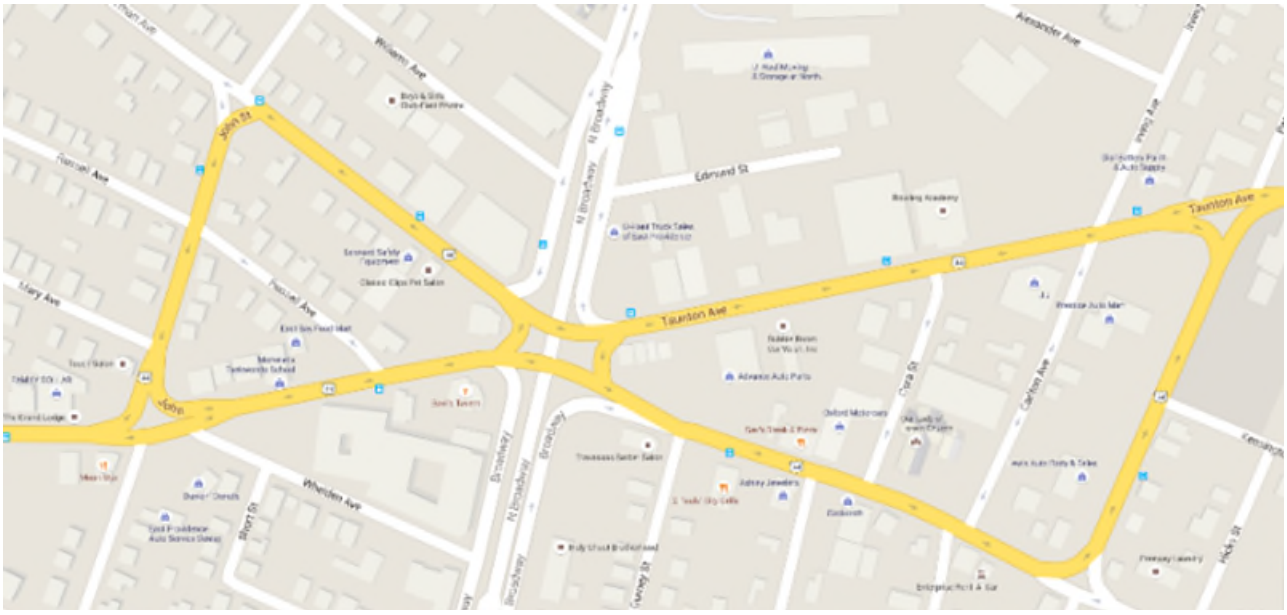
The 1.1 mile East Shore Expressway segment of the roadway is similar to an Interstate in design with restricted access and ramp structures that are typical of those found on Interstate freeways. Posted speed limits on the East Shore Expressway are 50 miles per hour. The Wampanoag Trail segment of the highway is a divided highway with multiple access points to local roadways and median U-turn ramps and a single signalized traffic signal intersection at Mink Street. Posted speed limits on the Wampanoag Trail are 45 miles per hour. Actual traffic speeds on the Wampanoag Trail, however, are often higher than the posted limits due to the physical design of the roadway. Higher traffic speeds translate into more hazards

as a result of slower traffic entering onto the highway from the area's local roads inefficient and unsafe U-turns and a poorly designed traffic signal at Mink Street.

As a result of previously identified design deficiencies, this roadway often experiences serious accidents that contribute to congestion delays and serious injuries. The City has petitioned the State on several occasions to complete improvements to reduce these hazards including the installation of a traffic signal at Forbes Street, the installation of roundabouts and the re-alignment of the U-turn ramps to increase safety. Resurfacing is funded and scheduled to take place between 2024 and 2026.

Six Corners Intersection

Six Corners is an important transportation node within the City, where three of the most heavily traveled roadways in the City, Taunton Avenue, Waterman Avenue and Broadway converge into a confusing mix of connections. The Six Corners intersection includes one-way connector streets and ramps that move traffic in an efficient manner for those familiar with the configuration, but leave drivers who are unfamiliar with the roadway alignment confused and often lost or misdirected. In addition, the one-way alignments associated with this traffic circulation pattern have, debatably, caused unintended consequences of stunting commercial development along key connection points in the vicinity of Six Corners, most notably along the Taunton Avenue segment east of the Six Corners intersection.



Source: Google Maps

Six Corners Current Alignment

Other Hazardous Intersections

The City of East Providence contains several high-volume intersections that are considered hazardous due to a variety of factors including vehicular congestion, complex traffic movements and other roadway design factors unique to each particular intersection. Several of the City's most hazardous intersections include:

- Pawtucket Avenue/Warren Avenue
- Pawtucket Avenue/Taunton Avenue
- Warren Avenue/South Broadway
- Willett Avenue/Crescent View Avenue



Intersection of Pawtucket Avenue and Warren Avenue.
Source: East Providence Planning Department

Biking and Walking Connections

An impediment to bicycle and pedestrian connectivity at the city-wide scale is I-195, which creates a significant physical divide running east-west through the City. Despite this, there are several existing strengths and opportunities related to walking and biking upon which the City can create a connected network. Bicycle paths and greenways provide opportunities for bicyclists and pedestrians, but they are limited by the challenging roadway network that lacks dedicated facilities for both modes, particularly major arterials, and collectors. Many of the City's streets are not bike friendly, as they are relatively narrow with high traffic volumes.

Another opportunity is that the City is at walkable scale, and there is a desire among residents to create a more walkable environment. Walking and biking connections can be expanded in areas with the greatest demand, such as around schools, libraries, recreational facilities, and commercial areas to reduce the number of vehicle trips and so also support the City's sustainability goals.

Expanding the Biking Network

The City has demonstrated a commitment to improving bicycling conditions in East Providence with its support of the East Bay Bike Path and the installation of custom bike racks in select locations. Continuing projects like these at both large and small scales will be important as the City continues to work expanding biking opportunities. With a growing interest in cycling, the East Providence Planning Department also sought feedback on the bicycle network. Bicycle enthusiasts and local community groups provided thoughts for improvements on the existing trails and for potential paths.

The following proposed facilities can facilitate the creation of a connected network.

Trail from Henderson Bridge North

This proposed trail would start at the Henderson Bridge, continue to Omega Pond by the eastern shore of the Seekonk River and follow the rail beds north. Such a trail can potentially be part of a bigger vision for a future River Road project in Providence that connects the two parallel bicycle paths that run on opposite shorelines.

First Street Connection

For two weeks in July 2021, this pilot project included installation of a striped 11-foot wide, two-lane bike lane that was separated from the roadway by flexible bollards and mountable rubber curbs. The project was intended address bicycle safety concerns from the George Redman Linear Park from the Washington Bridge at Warren Avenue to the East Bay Bike Path. The pilot project required one-way establishing vehicular traffic on First Street and detoured northbound traffic to Waterfront Drive to get to Warren Avenue, and southbound traffic to detour to the exit ramp from I-191. After complaints from businesses on First Street and drivers that use First Street to connect between Valley Street/Warren Avenue and Veterans Memorial Parkway, the bike lane was removed, and two-way traffic restored in less than a week. Without this project in place, bicycle safety is still a concern and the City will continue to work with residents and businesses to find a solution. Alternatives to the First Street Bicycle Connection have been discussed, most notably within the Watchemoket Square Study completed by Beta Group in 2021. An alternative connection that directs bicycles to the intersection of Warren Avenue and Waterfront Drive, then southerly to Boston Street and Mauran Avenue is possibly a viable alternative route that will provide a safer, albeit less direct connection between the Redman Linear Park and the East Bay Bike Path entrance at First Street and Veteran's Memorial Parkway.



Alternative Pedestrian/Bicycle Path Connection. Source: Watchemoket Waterfront Gateway, Placemaking and Multi-modal Access Improvements Study. East Providence Planning Department, May 2021.

Ten Mile River Greenway Extension

Now moved to the design construction phase in the RIDOT STIP Amendment #2 referenced previously, this project would link Hunt's Mills to the Ten Mile River Greenway. A Providence connection also is possible using the DOT-owned green space left over from the planned eastward extension of the Washington Expressway to the Washington Bridge. RIDOT has also researched the possibility of creating connections between the Ten Mile River Greenway using the currently active East Junction railroad line that runs from the Henderson Expressway to Narragansett Park Drive. Completed in 2005, the report assesses the potential for connecting this segment of rail corridor to the existing Ten Mile River Greenway as a shared rail bicycle facility.

Henderson Bridge to Pawtucket Avenue

Bicycle facilities were constructed as part of Phase 1 of the Henderson Bridge project. A goal is to provide additional connections between the Henderson Bridge, Broadway, and Pawtucket Avenue. This would also provide a transit connection, discussed further in the Planned Transit Improvements section as the Henderson Bridge Trunk Line Service.

City-Wide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

- In an effort to expand the City's bicycle and pedestrian network in the most efficient, safe and cost-effective manner, a Citywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was recently developed and adopted through a Statewide Planning technical assistance grant. The plan analyzes current conditions and includes several recommendations for priority sidewalk locations, short and long term bicycle connection improvements and new policies and programs. A main goal heard from the public is to provide additional connections from the City's neighborhoods to the East Bay Bike Path. The Citywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan identifies appropriate locations for the following types of facilities: "Bicycle friendly roadways" – roadways that provide ample shoulder to accommodate bicyclists and so do not need additional facilities. The Dexter Road Connector segment of Waterfront Drive has been identified as a bicycle tolerant roadway due to its wide shoulders and relatively low traffic volumes.

- Bicycle boulevards - generally low-speed, low traffic volume, local roadways.[22] Bicycle boulevards incorporate design elements that are intended to appeal to casual, inexperienced and younger bicyclists who may not otherwise be willing to ride on roadways due to safety concerns. A bicycle boulevard also represents a relatively low-cost alternative to the construction of dedicated bicycle paths and greenways.

- Dedicated bicycle lanes - likely most appropriate along major arterials to expand connectivity of the bicycle network to locations such as schools, bus stops, commercial centers, parks and open space, and off-street paths. The City has already modified portions of Crescent View Avenue to include a dedicated bike lane to improve access from the East Bay Bike Path to nearby attractions like the Looff Carousel and Crescent Park. Where possible, these may be physically separated from vehicular traffic.

[22] https://nacto.org/publication/urban-bikeway-design-guide/bicycle-boulevards/signs-and-pavement-markings/

- Off-road path – dedicated space completely separated from motor vehicle traffic. The East Bay Bike Path is an example of an off-road path.

Expanding the Pedestrian Network

While East Providence has sidewalks in most neighborhoods and along major streets and corridors, many of them are in disrepair, lack connectivity, and are unsafe. Residents want a more walkable city. The City has successfully sought and received funding from RIDOT for several important pedestrian rehabilitation projects to address these issues that are planned or in progress:

- Warren Avenue (between Broadway and Pawtucket Avenue)
- Pawtucket Avenue (between Taunton Avenue and Veteran's Memorial Parkway)
- Bullocks Point Avenue (south of Riverside Square)
- North Broadway (between the Ten Mile River and Greenwood Avenue)
- Willet Avenue
- Newport Avenue
- Riverside Square
- Waterfront District

As priorities, these enhancement projects promote community pride, serve to bolster the local business economy, and dramatically reduce hazards for the walking public.

Another priority is improving walking safety near and around the City's schools. East Providence successfully completed improvements to sidewalks and crosswalks in the area of Kent Heights Elementary School, and additional projects are proposed to improve sidewalks in high-traffic areas near both Kent Heights and Myron Francis Elementary Schools. These improvements along with relevant school safety programming represent an excellent opportunity to promote walking and physical activity among students of those schools, and to accomplish infrastructure improvements to improve safety for the school communities and area residents alike.

As described above, the Citywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan establishes a prioritization schedule to address pedestrian connectivity issues. A Complete Streets Program, as discussed earlier, would help with setting priorities and leveraging funding.

Enhanced Transit Service and Access

While transit is provided to concentrated shopping and employment areas, and with convenient service to Providence, internal circulation to destinations within the City is limited. Additionally, lack of an adequate RIPTA transit hub has been identified as an impediment to enhancing and incentivizing use of public transit service. Given the City's age demographics, there is also an increasing need to provide non-automobile transportation options for seniors.

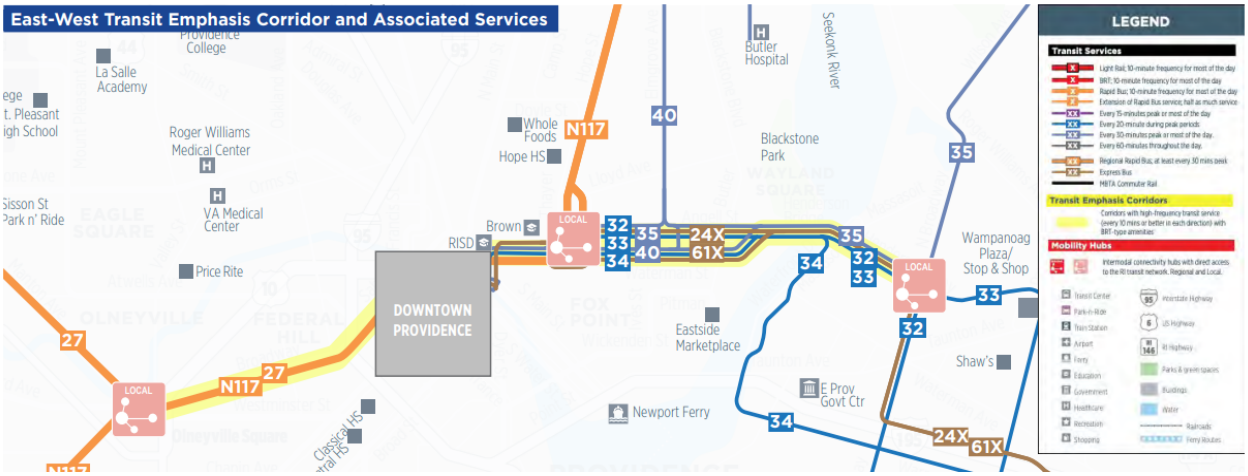
Planned Transit Improvements

The City is well positioned to enhance transit service, as RIPTA is supportive of making transit investments in East Providence, including service improvements between the Henderson Bridge and Pawtucket Avenue (a transit emphasis corridor) and creating a transit hub on Pawtucket Avenue in the Six Corners

area. Improvements to the RIPTA Park and Ride facility or a relocation of the existing facility on Taunton Avenue are also opportunities to enhance transit access.

RIPTA's Transit Forward 2040 Master Plan

RIPTA's Transit Forward 2040 Master Plan[23] identifies several planned improvements for transit service in East Providence. These include the establishment of a community mobility hub (transit hub), an east-west transit emphasis corridor that would connect Olneyville Square in Providence to East Providence, and a loop service in East Providence. In addition to these improvements, the plan recommends more frequent service, longer service hours, and faster service, as demand for service is highest in urban areas, including East Providence.



East-West Transit Emphasis Corridor as shown in RIPTA's 2020 Transit Master Plan

Henderson Bridge Trunk Line Service/Transit Hub

An east-west transit emphasis corridor, as proposed by RIPTA, would link RIPTA Routes 32, 33, and 35 from Providence to an East Providence transit hub via a Henderson Bridge trunk line service. The City is working with RIPTA to create a connection between the Henderson Bridge and Pawtucket Avenue by acquiring land between the two locations. This connection would enable RIPTA bus routes to more easily connect between the Henderson Bridge and the Six Corners intersection, a major transit destination within the City. A transit hub as proposed is anticipated to be located on Pawtucket Avenue in between Office Parkway and the Stop & Shop driveway. The ridership data and combination of trip generators associated with the commercial uses in the area, combined with the centralized location of this intersection support the establishment of a substantial transit hub at this location. The acquisition of this property and the construction of boulevards and roundabouts is expected to benefit transit operations and help divert traffic away from the high volume Six Corners intersection.

[23] https://transitforwardri.com/pdf/TFRI%20Recs%20Briefing%20Book-Final%20201230.pdf

RIPTA Loop Service

In an effort to improve the local bus network, RIPTA is considering the possibility of implementing looped bus services. These services could better serve commuters moving within the City to access local jobs and retail and service centers. Looped bus services would be located primarily within the Central City section of the City and would possibly include looping routes that would incorporate the existing RIPTA 32 and 34 bus routes. See more discussion below.

Connecting Transit with Employers

Collaborating with the City's larger employers and businesses in major employment centers can help reduce traffic congestion. Transportation demand management (TDM)[24] works to reduce congestion on our roadways by promoting other options (walking, biking, or transit) to get into and through the City. Focusing on commuters into East Providence is one way to tackle this issue and apply TDM strategies with some impact.

For some larger employers and businesses in major employment centers, there are limited connections to RIPTA stops for their employees. New transit investments, like new hub locations and a possible local loop, can create new links, but there will continue to be gaps that deter employees from using RIPTA to commute into East Providence. The City can work with local employers and RIPTA to understand employees commuting patterns and think of creative TDM strategies to fill these gaps. Examples include:

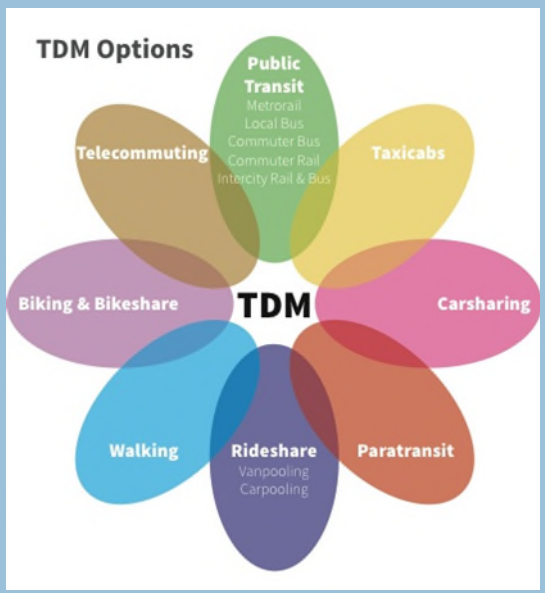
- Shuttle service between transit hub(s) and employment center (scheduled or on-demand)
- Bike and scooter rentals at hubs (coordination with Complete Streets and creating a complete biking network)

These strategies require public and/or private investments. The City can also consider establishing incentives for businesses to create carpool programs for employees and other ridesharing options.

While there is a Park & Ride facility on Taunton Avenue, it is only serviced by one RIPTA bus route and has low usage. It

Transportation Demand Management

At its most basic level, TDM is a program of information, encouragement, and incentives provided by local or regional organizations to help people know about and use all their transportation options to optimize all modes in the system – and to counterbalance the incentives to drive that are so prevalent in subsidies of parking and roads. These are both traditional and innovative technology-based services to help people use transit, ridesharing, walking, biking, and telework.



- Mobility Lab

[24] https://mobilitylab.org/about-us/what-is-tdm/

appears to be focused on accommodating commuters going into Providence, not staying the City. There could be opportunities to rethink this facility and discussing different approaches with RIPTA could make better use of the site.

Economic Development

Transportation is inherently linked to economic development. Ensuring safe and convenient access for all modes and people to the destinations they need and want to go is essential for supporting community amenities and businesses. See this element for more discussion on these opportunities in neighborhood centers, commercial corridors, and building tourism in East Providence.

Water Taxi Services

The City's proximity to Providence and the redevelopment plans associated with the City's Waterfront Special Development District, including the development of hundreds of new residential units and dozens of new commercial properties, creates the potential for the development of a viable water taxi industry that could provide convenient connections between East Providence and the City of Providence. There are also opportunities through the City's membership with the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council to connect to Pawtucket and Central Falls.

Moving Forward

For each goal, the City of East Providence will implement the following policies and actions to meet the opportunities and challenges for Transportation and Connectivity. Many goals and policies in other elements support economic development, such as Economic Development, Housing, and Waterfront District.

Goal T1. Continue to promote the development of a well maintained and attractive roadway network that efficiently serves the community.

Policy T1.1. Ensure that existing roadways are adequately maintained and improved to provide safe and reliable transportation circulation for all residents, using all modes of travel.

A. Continue to develop a roadway rehabilitation program that inventories the roadway network, level of improvements required, and potential funding sources. (Ongoing)
B. Strive to be consistent with the State's Freight and Goods Movement Plan. (Ongoing)
C. At the local level, identify corridors not identified within the Rhode Island Freight and Goods Movement Plan where truck traffic should be restricted and identify corridors that should be designated as truck routes to reduce the wear on local roadways and minimize negative impacts to residents.

Policy T1.2. Support projects that seek to improve circulation patterns in the City to reduce congestion, foster economic growth, and improve quality of life. Complete a review of the City's local roadways that may be susceptible to cut through traffic and assess measures such as raised crosswalks/intersections, traffic circles, roadway narrowing or traffic diverters to reduce or eliminate the volume of cut-through drivers.

A. Study the City's arterial roadway network and identify specific measures to improve safety and traffic flow (e.g., controlling access points, synchronizing traffic signals, reducing speed limits, development of roundabouts at appropriate intersections, etc.).

B. Work with RIDOT to study the feasibility and potential benefits of redesigning the traffic pattern at the Six Corners intersection of Taunton Avenue and Waterman Avenue as a means of improving traffic flow, creating a more inviting environment for pedestrians, and supporting efficient economic development opportunities in the immediate vicinity of this intersection.

C. Investigate access management techniques, including the potential to reduce and consolidate curb-cuts along major thoroughfares, as a means of reducing roadway hazards and improving overall traffic circulation. Priority corridors for employing access management include Newport Avenue, Pawtucket Avenue, and Taunton Avenue. Work with RIDOT on the planning and implementation of any such measures on state roads.

Policy T1.3. Establish gateway corridors to reflect that East Providence is a vibrant, welcoming city with community pride.

A. Develop a gateway corridor prioritization plan for physical improvements.

B. Develop comprehensive street landscaping and signage control provisions for the City's major transportation corridors. Use the *Watchemoket/Waterfront Gateway Placemaking and Multi-modal Access Improvements* study as an example for other parts of the City.

C. Allocate funding for regular maintenance of gateway sites.

Goal T2. Promote the development of projects and initiatives in the City that enhance multimodal transportation options.

Policy T2.1. Redesign existing thoroughfares to incorporate multimodal elements.

A. Identify viable locations for effective traffic calming techniques and road diets to reallocate the right-of-way from vehicles to all modes more equally.

B. Coordination with RIDOT will be required for road-diets on roadways under RIDOT jurisdiction. Seek funding to perform preliminary engineering design to elevate projects on the state's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP).

Policy T2.2. Support a Complete and Green Streets approach to redesign and improvement of major corridors.

A. Draft a Complete and Green Streets Policy for approval by the City Council to demonstrate the City's commitment to providing safe access for all users.

B. Complete a City-wide evaluation and prioritization of streets to identify priorities for Complete Streets projects.

C. Assess corridors that have been previously identified as priorities for multimodal improvements for consistency with an established Complete Streets Policy and prioritization plan. These roadways include: Taunton Avenue, Pawtucket Avenue, Newport Avenue, Broadway, Waterman Avenue, and Warren Avenue.

Policy T2.3 Support public and private development projects that are likely to reduce reliance on the automobile as the primary form of transportation.

A. Ensure that the development of City-led plans and other planning initiatives support diverse modes of transportation including pedestrian, bicycle, and transit. (Ongoing)
B. Investigate incentivizes to developers/employers to adopt transportation demand management (TDM) strategies to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips. This could include strategies such as preferential parking for carpools, enhanced/secure bicycle parking, priced-parking instead of free parking, and/or subsidized transit passes.
C. Work with RIPTA to expand the guaranteed ride home program, which can be used by employers to encourage employees to take alternative modes of transportation to work.

Policy T2.4 Foster a positive walking and biking culture through programs and policies that educate all road users on roadway etiquette and law and the benefits of walking and biking.

A. Work with City departments such as the School Department, Recreation Department, and Police Department to create educational materials that promote a positive walking and biking culture (roadway etiquette, benefits of walking and biking, etc.) that can be posted online or in City buildings and host community events.
B. Organize or include City participation in walking and biking events. Community events may include walk and bike to work or school days, bike workshops where community members can learn how to size and fix a bike, or a walking tour of different neighborhoods of East Providence.
C. Install bike racks at City facilities including City Hall and other buildings, parks, and schools to both make it easier to bike and create an awareness of biking. Find ways that will encourage businesses to do the same to create a network city-wide.

Goal T3. Improve the City's streets, roadways, bicycle paths and greenways to create a safer and more enjoyable environment for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Policy T3.1. Pursue strategies that improve pedestrian related facilities and pedestrian-scale roadway design.

A. Identify needs and prioritize roadways for the installation of new curbing, sidewalks, and safety enhancements throughout the city.
B. Promote the continued repair and replacement of sidewalks, pedestrian connections, and safety enhancements through capital improvement programming, during roadway reconstruction projects, and through the approval process for newly proposed developments/redevelopment. Potential safety enhancement may include high visibility crosswalks and pedestrian crossing signage, raised crosswalks, pedestrian refuge islands, curb extensions, and pedestrian hybrid beacons. (Ongoing)
C. Complete an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) audit of pedestrian crossings within the City to improve accessibility to public and private facilities for those with mobility impairments.

D. Work with the School Department to pursue opportunities to promote student safety through programs as funding becomes available.

E. Implement the recommendations of the completed Safe Streets For All (SS4A) Action Plan. (Ongoing)

Policy T3.2. Pursue strategies that improve bicycle connectivity and safety throughout the City.

A. Develop a comprehensive city-wide bicycle master plan to put forward a strategy for system-wide improvements that will enhance the bicycling safety and connectivity in East Providence for people of all ages and abilities. Consult with the City's larger employers and businesses in employment centers to identify ways to accommodate and encourage employees to bike to work. This plan could be combined with the update to the Pedestrian Plan (see above).

B. Work with RIDOT to expand existing and new bike path and greenway facilities in East Providence. These include expanding the Ten Mile River Greenway from Kimberly Ann Rock Complex south to the Hunt's Mill Historic Site, connecting the East Bay Bike Path with the Ten Mile River, studying the feasibility of a bike path in the State's "Seekonk River Crossing" right-of-way, and evaluating opportunities for bike paths in other underutilized open land.

C. Coordinate with neighboring communities including Providence, Pawtucket, Barrington, and Seekonk, Massachusetts to examine opportunities for inter-municipal bicycle and regional bike network connections.

Policy T3.3 Expand funding for bicycle and pedestrian facilities to both enhance safety and improve connectivity for people of all ages and abilities.

A. Incorporate pedestrian and bicycle facility enhancement funding into the City's capital improvement budget.

B. Seek additional state and federal funding opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian facilities and safety enhancements. Potential funding opportunities include the Municipal Road and Bridge Revolving Fund and Community Development Block Grants. (Ongoing)

Goal T4. Continue to promote a high-quality public transit system that meets the needs of our residents, workers, and visitors.

Policy T4.1 Pursue the creation of a centralized transit hub(s) in East Providence to make transit more attractive and easier to use.

A. Work with RIPTA to advocate for the full design and construction of the east-west transit emphasis corridor on the Henderson Bridge trunk line service to connect the Henderson Bridge and Pawtucket Avenue. This will require minimal land acquisition and the construction of boulevards and roundabouts.

B. Work with RIPTA to locate a high-quality transit hub in East Providence to support the use of transit and create a centralized location within the City to access transit services. Pawtucket Avenue between Office Parkway and the Stop & Shop driveway has been identified as a priority location to improve transit service to this commercial area.

Policy T4.2 Work with RIPTA to enhance and/or expand transit service within the City of East Providence and to improve connectivity of transit services.

A. Work with RIPTA to identify transit service options that best meet the needs of East Providence residents, workers, and visitors. This includes evaluating the potential for several previously identified strategies:
    - Extending bus service to the Seekonk, Route 6 retail corridor
    - Providing a local bus service, or looped transit corridor, to make transit a more viable option for local trips. High priority locations for local transit access include retail shopping corridors, larger employers, and employment centers.
    - Reviewing all RIPTA proposals for changes to service, and where appropriate, submit written comments during the public notice period expressing concerns and interests of the City and its residents.
    - Advocating for more frequent and mid-day bus service as well as more direct bus service to destinations in East Providence.
B. Work with the City's larger employers and employment centers to increase worker connections to transit as well as walking and biking amenities to reduce car trips into the City.
C. Develop incentives for developers to improve transit infrastructure through implementing elements such as bus turnouts, transit shelters, and accessible bus stop improvements in new and revitalized private developments, and within the public right-of-way, where appropriate.
D. Work with RIPTA to improve or study the feasibility of relocating its Park & Ride facility on Taunton Avenue to better serve riders through the installation of passenger amenities and improved signage, such as real time arrival information.

Policy T4.3. Promote aging in place through reviewing options for increasing transit and mobility options for the growing senior citizen population in East Providence.

A. Work with RIPTA to inventory existing bus shelters, bus stop signage and amenities, and upgrade facilities as needed to meet ADA-accessibility requirements. Implement best practices of the Rhode Island Bus Stop Design Guide. Identify where upgrades can be made as part of roadway construction projects/streetscape improvements or by developer commitments when parcels are redeveloped.
B. Evaluate the feasibility of establishing a City funded para-transit service in a manner that best serves the mobility needs of elderly and disabled residents.
C. Explore options for partnering with ride share companies, such as Uber and Lyft, to provide new options for seniors and other transit dependent populations to secure affordable transportation services for trips such as shopping, doctors' appointments, and other essential needs.

Policy T4.4. Stay aware of new technologies for electric, connected, and automated vehicles that can be used to strengthen the public transit system.

A. Continue to stay up-to-date on autonomous vehicle technology and anticipate potential ways to implement the technology, such as through shuttles that can serve both transit dependent populations and those who choose not to drive a car. (Ongoing)

B. Work with the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources to identify opportunities to expand use of electric vehicles (EV) in City fleets and for City-run shuttle services and provide EV charging stations at municipal buildings.

Goal T5. Develop parking standards that are in harmony with the needs of the community.

Policy T5.1 Analyze the City's existing parking inventory and parking needs in the City's neighborhood centers to provide the right balance between parking and other land uses.

A. Develop and maintain an inventory of the municipal parking supply, including all City-owned or operated facilities.
B. Complete parking utilization studies in neighborhood centers to understand how on-street and off-street parking is used. This will inform the type of parking to provide to meet user needs (long-term, short-term, resident, etc.), where parking can be reallocated to other uses, and how parking can be best managed in area of high demand to encourage turnover and support businesses. Two priority areas identified for parking utilization studies are Watchemoket Square and Riverside Square.

Policy T5.2 Develop parking management strategies that support the land use, economic development, and streetscape goals of the City.

A. Review the effectiveness of the existing Zoning Overlay Ordinance to determine if and where incentives and flexibility should be expanded to continue to support right-sized parking requirements that best fit demand.
B. Review the effectiveness of shared parking in the City's Zoning Ordinance and revise, if necessary, to expand use of shared parking agreements among facilities that operate during different times of day.

Goal T6. Explore the development of waterborne transportation options in cooperation with other metropolitan Providence communities.

Policy T6.1 Encourage improvements to the waterborne transportation system, including dredging and removal of impediments to waterborne transportation.

A. Work with the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council to explore the development of waterborne transportation options, such as marine taxi services, in cooperation with other metropolitan Providence communities.
B. Continue to promote the completion of an updated Harbor Management Plan that addresses key waterborne transportation issues. (Ongoing)
C. Work with appropriate state and federal agencies to remove impediments to navigation in the coastal waterways of East Providence including the removal of abandoned pier footings, sunken hulks, and other hazards that may affect safe navigation. (Ongoing)
D. Work with appropriate state and federal entities to assure that dredging of the navigable waters within East Providence is completed on an on-going basis. (Ongoing)

RECREATION

Just like our water and sewer systems, parks are essential public services. They provide social, economic, and environmental benefits to the community, contributing to the health and social wellbeing of residents. Parks are vital to establish and maintain a high quality of life, and access to parks and recreational amenities makes East Providence a more desirable place to live. The City offers diverse facilities and programming for residents of all ages to be physically active, which reduces stress, lowers blood pressure, and can address rising rates of obesity. The City's parks also provide space for social connections among neighbors, family, and other social groups.

This chapter supports and embodies the goals of the following State Guide Plan elements related to recreation:

- 121: Land Use 2025: Rhode Island State Land Use Policies and Plan
- 152: Ocean State Outdoors: State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
- 155: A Green Path: Greenspace and Greenways for Rhode Island's Future

Snapshot

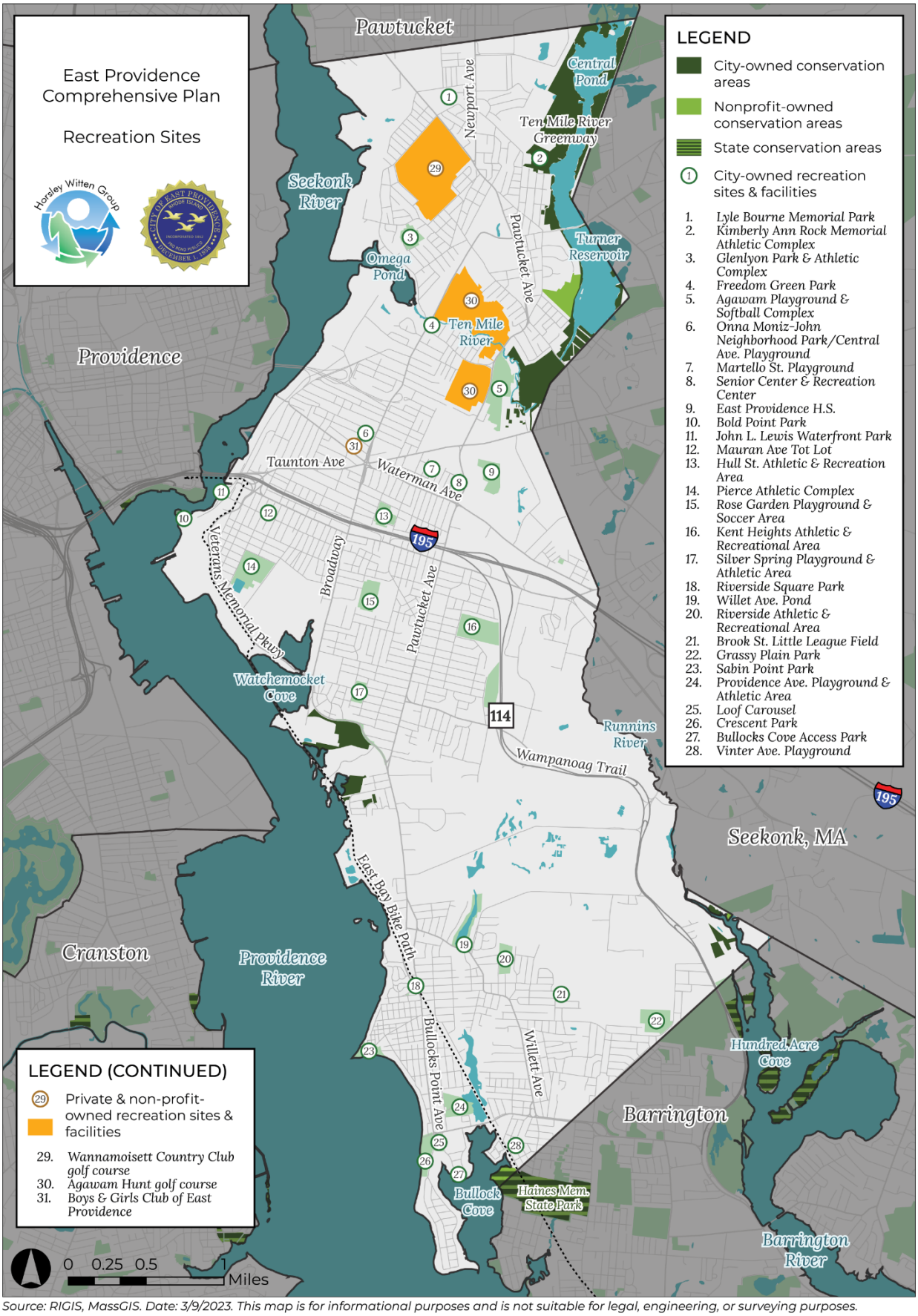
Discussed in this element are the City's recreational facilities, including parks, playgrounds, playing fields, memorials, and other public spaces. Combined with a lengthy tidal shoreline, the Ten Mile River system, and the City's conservation areas, which are all discussed in the **Natural Resources Element**, these assets provide ample opportunities for residents to be active. Many recreational spaces are also connected to historical and cultural amenities, which are the focus of the **Historic and Cultural Resources and the Arts Element**.



Winter programs through the City. Photo credit: EP Recreation Department

City Recreation Areas

Map R.1 shows parks, playgrounds, ballfields, and other public spaces in East Providence and Table R.1 inventories the amenities offered at City owned and managed recreational spaces.



Source: RIGIS, MassGIS. Date: 3/9/2023. This map is for informational purposes and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

Map R.1. Parks and Recreation Areas

Table R.1. East Providence Recreation and Park Amenities.

	Play Equipment	Baseball	Softball	Soccer	Basketball	Tennis	Picnic Area	Walking Path
Agawam Playground & Softball Complex	X		X		X			
Brook St. Little League Field		X						
Glenlyon Park & Athletic Area	X	X		X	X	X		X
Grassy Plain Park	X	X						
Hull St. Playground & Recreation Area	X	X	X	X	X			X
Kent Heights Playground & Athletic Area	X	X		X	X	X		X
Kimberly Ann Rock Athletic Complex		X	X				X	
Lyle Bourne Memorial Park	X				X			X
Martello St. Playground	X							
Mauran Ave. Tot Lot	X							
Onna Moniz-John/ Central Ave. Park	X				X			X
Pierce Stadium & Athletic Complex	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Providence Ave. Playground & Athletic Area	X	X	X		X			
Riverside Athletic & Recreation Area	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Rose Garden Playground & Soccer Area	X			X				X
Sabin Point Park	X				X		X	X
Senior Center Complex				X				X
Silver Spring Playground & Athletic Area	X	X	X	X	X			
Vintner Ave. Playground	X				X		X	

Source: East Providence Parks Division

The City's two major recreation complexes are highlighted below.

Pierce Athletic Complex

The Pierce Memorial Stadium and Athletic Complex has been a focal point of the City since its construction in the 1930s by the Works Project Administration. Since 1939, it has been the site of numerous recreational events, including rodeo and circus shows, boxing bouts, professional soccer matches, and Independence Day fireworks displays. The facility is currently home to both East Providence High School and area university athletics. It is host to the annual Heritage Festival, which boasts a 30-year production history of regional, national, and international talent in the music industry, as well as many cultural events.



Fourth of July Celebration at Pierce Field. Photo credit: East Bay Newspapers

The Pierce Memorial Stadium and Athletic Complex is open to the public year round, except for Christmas and New Year's Day. Tennis and basketball courts are available with lighting provided until 9:30 pm from mid-April to mid-November. See Table R.1 for available amenities.

East Providence High School

At the time of this Comprehensive Plan Update, the new East Providence High School building was recently completed, though its associated athletic facilities were still underway, which will include a new synthetic turf football stadium and regulation track, a halftime facility, tennis courts, and new lighted fields for softball, baseball, and lacrosse. The home of high school sports will shift from Pierce Memorial Stadium to this new facility upon completion.

Other City Parks

In addition to recreational facilities and playgrounds, the City also maintains a variety of parks and other types of public spaces that provide access to the water, commemorate significant events and people that have impacted East Providence, and/or offer passive recreational opportunities.

Bold Point Park

Bold Point Park sits at the mouth of the Seekonk River and has excellent views of the Providence skyline and waterfront. The property includes a Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) boat launch site and parking for vehicles and trailers. Outdoor waterfront concerts have been held at the park since 2019 and attract numerous visitors during the warmer months. The park is roughly 3.7 acres in size.

Bullocks Cove Access Park

This two-acre park at the southern tip of Carousel Drive includes a gazebo and offers public access to Bullocks Cove. The park has a good view of the cove and Narragansett Bay.

Crescent Park/Charles I.D. Looff Carousel

Crescent Park is a scenic 10-acre site located across from the Looff Carousel on Bullocks Point Avenue. The park offers scenic views across Narragansett Bay and northward to the Providence skyline. Visitors can enjoy the park's walking paths, colorful landscaping, large lawn areas, picnic tables, and beach. The park hosts a variety of community and regional events, including the Recreation Department's Summer Concert series, the Looff Arts Festival, and the Rhode Island Folk Festival.

The Looff Carousel is a National Historic Landmark and one of the few remaining attractions from the amusement park that occupied this site for much of the 20th century. The park includes a lawn area used for seasonal events, such as carnivals and car rallies. A popular seasonal take-out seafood concession stand also remains from the amusement park.

Freedom Green Park

Measuring one acre, this attractive neighborhood park is located adjacent to the Ten Mile River at North Broadway and Centre Street and is a popular kayak and canoe launching point. The park includes a gazebo along with memorial benches and stones dedicated to the victims of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack. The park is generously maintained by the Agawam-Hunt Golf Club.

John L. Lewis Waterfront Park

This pocket park is located along the Seekonk River and features views of Bold Point Park, Washington Bridge, and Providence's India Point Park. The park includes a small picnic area.

Riverside Square Park

Riverside Square Park is at the junction of the East Bay Bike Path and the Square's center at Bullocks Point and Turner Avenues. The park offers seating for bike path users looking to take a rest and visitors to the adjacent ice cream stand, coffee and pastry shop, pizzeria, and other eateries. The community supported the installation of public art in and around the park, which includes a mural and sculptures. Local businesses and residents hold community events in the park, such as an annual Christmas Tree lighting.



Crescent Park. Photo credit: Krista Moravec

Sabin Point Park

Sabin Point Park is a scenic neighborhood park in Riverside. Visitors have extensive views southward into Narragansett Bay and northward up the Providence River, where both the Pomham Rocks Lighthouse and Providence skyline are visible. The 4-acre park includes a playground, basketball courts, open-air pavilion, fishing pier, seasonal offshore dock, picnic tables, and walking paths. The Riverside Renaissance Movement has taken an active interest in this park, adding a memorial walkway and maintaining garden areas.



Sabin Point Park. Photo credit: Krista Moravec

Townie Pride Park at Jones Pond

Following improvements to this long-neglected area just south of Pierce Field, Townie Pride Park has seen an increase in activity since 2016. Property improvements include ADA-compliant walking paths, a promenade area overlooking Jones Pond, native perennial gardens, and boulder retaining walls along the steep slope between Fifth Street and the pond. Stormwater discharge is treated using enhanced low-impact development (LID) treatment installations that remove sediments and reduce nitrogen levels prior to entering Jones Pond. Neighborhood residents have been supportive of the improvements at the park.

Willett Pond Park

This 13-acre park at the heart of the Riverside neighborhood includes a walking trail around the pond, offering excellent waterfowl and wildlife viewing opportunities. Willett Pond is on the designated trout waters list and stocked by RIDEM each spring; fishers should check RIDEM regulations to ensure they are following all trout stamp and freshwater fishing license rules.

Recreation Programming & Events

The Recreation Department provides year-round leisure time services to the community. Programs include activities for preschool, youth, adults, and functional needs populations. The Department also produces several seasonal special events, including the Dolly Searle Memorial Golf Tournament, Annual WinterFest Tree Lighting and Santa's Arrival, Turkey Trot Road Race, Summer Concert Series, and Independence Day Celebration. The Recreation Department is responsible for the coordination, scheduling, and permitted use of all activities held at 20 ball fields, 12 outdoor tennis courts, 28 outdoor basketball courts, Agawam Softball Complex, Hunt's Mills recreation area, 15 neighborhood parks, three conservation areas, and the Recreation and Activities Center.

Adult Recreation Programs

The Recreation Department offers a wide variety of adult programming for city residents. From passive recreation, cultural events, and fitness classes, the demand for adult activities is high as many adults are

seeking to improve their physical condition and find social outlets at an affordable cost. The Recreation Department schedules facility hours and program times that allow adults to weight train and exercise while children attend their respective activities. Additionally, many adults keep abreast of recreation programs and events by registering to receive "Recreation News" emails which presently has over 1,500 subscribers.

Summer Camp Program

The Recreation Department's youth summer program has evolved over time from a multiple site system to a single location "day camp" headquartered at the Pierce Athletic Complex. The modification was made to better meet the childcare needs of East Providence's working families. To combat the "summer learning loss" phenomenon, the youth summer program features hands-on learning throughout the traditional camp day. The Recreation Department collaborates closely with the East Providence School District, the YMCA, and numerous social agencies to provide a vibrant and engaging camp experience for children of all ages. A Summer Camp Community Garden has also been developed.

Special Needs Program

The department supports diverse programs for youth, adults, and seniors with disabilities. Round trip door-to-door transportation is provided at a charge for all activities. Activities include dine out, movies, coffee hour, "Mystery Ride," dancer-size, bingo, and day trips and special events on Saturdays.

Multi-Use Greenways

East Providence's multi-use greenways stretch along the coastline and inland along Central Pond, offering important passive recreation opportunities and scenic vistas. The greenways connect users to recreational spaces, athletic fields, and other destinations in the city and region, and enable alternative forms of transportation.

East Bay Bike Path

The northernmost five miles of the extremely popular 14.5-mile East Bay Bike Path are located within East Providence and offer users excellent vistas of the waterfront and City. The completion of the George Redman Linear Park alongside the Washington Bridge in 2015 reestablished the bike path connection between East Providence and Providence. Local amenities along or close to the bike path include the City-owned Boyden Heights Conservation Area, the Looff Carousel, and Crescent Park.

Ten Mile Greenway

The Ten Mile Greenway is officially a segment of the larger Blackstone River Valley Bikeway, although it is currently disconnected. Once the Blackstone River Valley Bikeway is complete and the Ten Mile Greenway is connected, East Providence will be part of a regional 48-mile bike path that traverses the Blackstone River Valley southward from Worcester, MA. The Ten Mile Greenway runs northward from the Kimberly Ann Rock Athletic Complex in Rumford alongside Central Pond to Slater Memorial Park in Pawtucket.

East Providence Recreation Center

In the early 2000s, the East Providence Recreation Center located at the East Bay Community Action Program's building in Riverside closed. It temporarily moved to the East Providence Senior Center in

2019, with access to a community room, game room, and fitness equipment. Staff offer a variety of ongoing programming and events, including youth programs like sports, crafts, homework help, and community service projects, school vacation day camp, and "kids night out" with supervised activities from 6-9 pm.

Senior Center

The East Providence Senior Center serves individuals 55 years of age or older and individuals of any age who are disabled. Full-time staff consists of a director, an administrative assistant, and an elder resource specialist; the Center relies heavily on part-time and volunteer staff. The Center consists of various meeting, recreation, and office spaces. Specific spaces within the Center include a fitness center, library, café, dining room, computer lab, administration offices, and health center. The Center directly provides or arranges outreach, information, referral, socialization, education, health services, transportation, volunteer opportunities, nutrition, fitness, and recreation services and programming. The Ocean State Senior Dining Program, a federally funded food assistance program for senior citizens and individuals with disabilities, provides daily meals at the Center. The City is the main source of funding for the Senior Center.

Municipal Park and Recreation Area Maintenance

The Parks Division within the Department of Public Works is responsible for the maintenance and improvement of roughly 320 acres of parks and open space resources across East Providence. Maintenance services at recreation facilities include weekly grass mowing "in season;" ballfield maintenance; tree and shrub planting, pruning, and removal; litter and graffiti removal; play equipment installation and repair; fence installation and repair; and complete park renovations. As part of playground maintenance, the Parks Division is phasing out the use of sand around and under play structures as funding becomes available and replacing it with engineered wood fiber to better protect equipment and improve sanitation per current ADA guidelines.

Volunteers and private partners supplement the City's work to maintain and improve its parks and open space. Residents and "Friends of" groups contribute to the upkeep of these important pieces of their neighborhoods. Past volunteer efforts have helped rehabilitate basketball and tennis courts and playgrounds. Gatherings around Earth Day inspire clean ups as the weather gets warmer and parks become more active.

State and Private Facilities

Several private and state facilities also provide recreation spaces and programming for East Providence residents and visitors.

Haines Memorial State Park

While mostly in the Town of Barrington, Haines Memorial State Park juts slightly into East Providence at the top of Bullocks Cove. It is accessible by the East Bay Bike Path. Amenities include 33 picnic sites with a fireplace, two baseball



Dock at Haines Memorial State Park. Photo source: Parksinmytown.com

fields, and a dog park. Ballfields and picnic areas are rented through the Town of Barrington. The Park also includes an accessible boat ramp and restrooms.

East Providence Boys & Girls Club

The East Providence Boys & Girls Club is a community-based agency serving youth through after-school and summer programs. Programs include those focused on homework assistance, technology, career exploration, job assistance, sports and recreation, art, and leadership development. The Club is home to a multi-purpose room, 25-yard pool, programming and game rooms, day care center, kitchen, and administrative offices. Its summer camp facilities are provided at Camp Crosby in Bristol.

Greater Providence YMCAs

The Greater Providence YMCA Newman Branch in nearby Seekonk, MA offers a full range of programs. Amenities include a swimming pool, fitness center, outdoor playground, and playing fields. The Newman YMCA is a long-time provider of before- and after-school childcare. Some East Providence residents also use facilities at the YMCA Bayside Branch in Barrington.

Golf Courses

Two private golf clubs are in East Providence: Wannamoisett Country Club and Agawam-Hunt Golf Club. These facilities require membership. In 2021, Metacomet Golf Course was sold, and the new owners sought a zone change to redevelop the property as mixed-use. See more discussion about this project under Land Use.

What We Heard

What the community highlighted as the City's challenges, opportunities, and needs:

- East Providence's diversity of parks, recreation areas, and playgrounds is an asset to residents. The East Bay Bike Path is one of the City's premier recreational assets.
- The City's recreation programming and events offer youth, adults, and seniors diverse opportunities to recreate and connect socially.
- Residents support investments to maintain and improve the City's existing recreation spaces (staffing, public restrooms, recreation equipment, tree plantings, etc.). Long-term planning should guide future investments and management.
- Residents are interested in new recreation opportunities, such as a skatepark, community garden, dog park, or community center.
- Residents would like the City to look into the possibility of remediating brownfields (contaminated, vacant sites) so they can safely be used as recreation sites.
- Increasing opportunities to walk and bike in the city is a high priority for residents. There are opportunities to use walking and biking paths to direct users to local destinations by improving signage and expanding connections between destinations (including connections between recreation spaces).
- There is a need to provide more equitable access to recreational resources. East Providence's resources are generally well-distributed across the city, but some spaces are difficult or unsafe to visit on foot or bike or need improvements for ADA accessibility.
- There is a need to improve access to the waterfront (coastal and inland) to create visibility and foster stewardship.

- There are opportunities to partner with surrounding communities and organizations to connect and steward regional recreation assets.
- There are opportunities to install educational signage and incorporate wildlife-friendly practices into recreation spaces (no-mow zones, natural plantings, etc.).

Challenges, Needs, and Opportunities

Strategic Planning

Historically, communities have relied on the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standards to guide the number and type of recreational opportunities offered for residents. In 2019, NRPA shifted away from its standards, which were developed in 1996, and established its NRPA Park Metrics.[25] NRPA collects performance data through a survey of park and recreation agencies around the country. It releases an annual Agency Performance Review to present key findings from the survey, providing park and recreation metrics on budgets, staffing, and more. Park and recreation agencies can use this data to see how they compare to their peers and identify best practices. NRPA stresses that one size does not fit all. Because they vary in size, location, and needs, each community is unique, and that should drive the amenities and programs offered.

Table R.2 highlights some metrics from the NRPA 2021 Agency Performance Review of East Providence's peer communities (municipalities with a population between 20,000 and 49,999). For some facilities, the City appears to be in line with communities of similar size, while for others it is not. But as NPRA notes, these comparisons are only a starting point. Using this information and other metrics, the City should consider developing a more strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan that analyzes each facility to understand level of service, physical condition, maintenance and operation needs, and opportunities for new programming and amenities. A master plan is developed with significant public input that can be collected through focus groups, surveys, workshops, and other methods. A plan typically includes recommendations that identify critical upgrades or improvements, estimated costs, and other operation and management needs. It can be an important tool to prioritize resource allocation for new facilities, maintenance, upgrades, programming, and other services and build public support for future investments.

Table R.2. NRPA Metrics of Peer Communities Compared to East Providence.

Type of Facility	Median Number of Residents per Facility: Population 20,000 – 49,999	Number of Facilities in East Providence	Median Number of Residents per Facility in East Providence (47,483)
Playgrounds	2,961	16	2,968
Basketball courts	7,000	17	2,793
Tennis courts	4,819	5	9,497
Rectangular fields: Multipurpose	7,400	9	5,276
Diamond fields: baseball, youth	5,099	10	4,748
Diamond fields: softball, youth	9,891	7	6,783
Rectangular fields: soccer, youth	3,433	8	5,935

[25] https://www.nrpa.org/publications-research/ParkMetrics/

Source: 2021 NRPA Agency Performance Review

The City may also want to consider site-specific master plans for certain properties that are in most need of attention. One example is the Pierce Memorial Stadium and Athletic Complex. With the construction of athletic facilities at the new East Providence High School, high school sports will no longer be held at the complex. This opens the site to new opportunities. Long-range strategic planning will obviously include the major community events that take place there throughout the year, but it will also help identify investments into the property that could support new users.

Maintenance and Upkeep

Prioritization

Maintaining high quality park and recreation amenities and services to all residents is a challenge for all communities, and the Parks Division and Recreation Department work together to ensure that facilities are high quality, safe, and meeting community needs. Amenities in East Providence are diverse and at times require different resources and equipment for their upkeep. The City prioritized facilities for improvement and rehabilitation based on current needs, age of infrastructure, and updated safety requirements and considerations. The Parks Division uses this prioritization to request funding from the City's Capital Improvement Program for park improvements and equipment purchases. These efforts can be the starting point for more long-term strategic planning for operation and maintenance needs, as discussed earlier.

Playgrounds and recreation areas are also available to the public at the City's schools after school hours and during school vacations. The East Providence Public School District oversees these facilities. For example, reconstruction of Martin Middle School will also include upgrades to the recreation facilities associated with the school

Sustainable Practices

The Parks Division uses many environment-friendly practices in the upkeep of City parks and recreation areas. For example, grass is mixed with clover in areas not used for recreational activities. Clover fixes atmospheric nitrogen in nodes along its root, which directly benefits the grasses by fertilizing the soil naturally. Healthier grasses require less watering. The City should evaluate its maintenance practices and equipment to determine when more sustainable approaches that use less energy and resources might be appropriate. These might include:

- Use more natural landscaping with native, drought tolerant plants.
- Use integrated pest management (IPM) strategies to minimize the use of chemical pesticides to control plant and insect pests. IPM is an ecologically-based approach to pest control that helps maintain strong and healthy plants.
- Reduce turf to only those areas essential for recreational and other types of activities.

Educating the public on best practices and the City's goal of having a lesser impact on the environment can set expectations and build support for investments in and use of more sustainable strategies.

Funding and Other Support

State and private funding and partnerships are an important part of supporting maintenance and upkeep activities. These opportunities require continued research and coordination, and the City could benefit

from a dedicated staff person to identify and pursue the diversity of funding from state, federal, and nonprofit sources available to the City.

Volunteers are a big support system for neighborhood parks. These individuals bring the community together to paint and repair equipment, help install new amenities, and do general clean up, among other activities. Their dedication shows the value and importance of these spaces to the quality of life in the City and will continue to be supported.

The City should also investigate opportunities to partner with local businesses and other entities to help with upkeep of adjacent parks or public spaces. An example is Freedom Green Park, which is a City-owned property maintained by the private Agawam-Hunt Golf Club. This type of maintenance partnership may be worthwhile to investigate for other City-owned public spaces.

Inclusive and Accessible Parks

Equitable Access to Parks

According to the Trust for Public Land, 75% of East Providence residents live within a 10-minute walk to a park.[26] This is a positive metric that shows how accessible recreational opportunities are for city residents. Having a playground, basketball court, or place just to be outside within your neighborhood adds to the quality of life for residents by providing a place to be active as well as a gathering place for neighbors. We also recognized the importance of being near a neighborhood park during the COVID-19 Pandemic. With limited places to go, people flocked to area parks and conservation areas to get outside.

Historically, lower income areas and people of color have lacked high quality parks. This includes safe, welcoming, and well-maintained parks that are designed and offer programming to meet the needs of neighborhood residents. Parks play an important role in the community; beyond just places to be active, they present opportunities to reach and communicate with residents about important issues in their neighborhood. How residents use their local parks can vary across the City.

Therefore, while many residents in East Providence have the ability to walk to a park, the City should understand if these facilities are perceived as safe and welcoming, offer amenities residents would like, and if investments are, in fact, being made equitably throughout the City. The Urban Institute highlights key points around park equity that communities should keep in mind as they plan for and invest in their parks.[27] Below are some of those takeaways:

- Engaging the community early and often can catalyze the community's sense of ownership, ensure parks meet their needs, and support sustainable management of park assets.
- Citywide equity frameworks can help guide park priorities and investments in ways that engage and benefit historically neglected communities.
- Addressing equity is complex and requires a multilayered approach, but parks can be one place where cities lead the way.
- This is a learning journey. No community has all the answers, but practically all are eager to learn and to share with others.

[26] https://www.tpl.org/city/east-providence-rhode-island

[27] The Urban Institute, *Investing in Equitable Urban Park Systems: Emerging Funding Strategies and Tools*, July 2019

Prioritizing neighborhoods most at risk in the City is a great starting point to understand the relationship between parks and equity in East Providence. An evaluation requires extensive community engagement, both in determining what is needed and in the design or redesign of a facility or its programming. A Parks and Recreation Master Plan can involve this type of targeted engagement as well. There could also be opportunities to connect with residents on other issues around public health and social wellbeing, such as access to healthy food or transportation needs. The East Providence Health Equity Zone is working in the City's most at risk neighborhoods and can help make connections with residents there.

People with Disabilities

Creating inclusive parks also means ensuring park and recreation programs, facilities, and services are accessible for people with disabilities. According to the U.S. Census American Community Survey, nearly 15% of East Providence residents have a disability, which includes hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, and independent living difficulties. Most have an ambulatory difficulty, meaning they have difficulty walking or climbing stairs. Nearly half of residents 75 years and older have a disability. This is true for 5.5% of children under the age of 18.

Table R.3. People with Disabilities in East Providence

Age	Number of People with a Disability	Percent of Age Group with a Disability
Under 5 years	0	0.0%
5 to 17 years	320	5.5%
18 to 34 years	802	7.4%
35 to 64 years	2,795	14.6%
65 to 74 years	1,016	22.0%
75 years and over	1,850	45.8%

Source: American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates (Table S1810)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires parks and recreational facilities to be accessible with features such as accessible parking spaces, seating, routes, toilet facilities, and play equipment as well as programming and events. As the City updates these spaces, addressing facilities not meeting ADA standards is a priority.

More broadly, in order for people with physical and cognitive disabilities to fully participate, the physical environment, program structure, communication methods, and social components of parks, recreation areas, and programming need to be accessible. The Recreation Department's Special Needs Program is a great example of where the City is successful in creating opportunities for people with diverse abilities, and will continue.

Accessible Design describes a site, building, facility, or portion thereof that complies with the minimum accessibility standards as set forth under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Architectural Barriers Act, or local building code. Accessible Design has the distinct purpose of meeting the environmental and communication needs of the functional limitations of people with disabilities. Accessible design aims at minimum requirements to achieve usability.

Universal Design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design (Center for Universal Design, 1997). The term Universal Design was first coined by architect and advocate Ron Mace, who was the Director of the Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University. While Accessible Design is focused on the needs of people with disabilities, Universal Design considers the wide spectrum of human abilities. It aims to exceed minimum standards to meet the needs of the greatest number of people.

National Center for Accessibility, Indiana University, Bloomington

Looking ahead, using the principles of "universal design" can give the City a more comprehensive view of all users of a facility to create an inclusive park or program. Universal design does not focus on adaptation or specialized design but aims to exceed the minimum standards to accommodate the greatest number of people, those with and without a disability. Universal design principles include:[28]

1. Equitable use: design that is useful to people with diverse disabilities.
2. Flexibility in use: design for a wide range of people.
3. Simple and intuitive: design that is easy to understand regardless of knowledge.
4. Perceptible information: design that communicates information easily.
5. Tolerance for error: design that minimizes hazards.
6. Low physical effort: design that requires minimum sustained effort.
7. Size and space for approach and use: design that is sized for the space.

Engaging diverse park and program users who may typically engage in planning for parks and recreational areas, including people with disabilities, lower income residents, and people of color, can help the City understand larger needs. As facilities are upgraded, this type of engagement can be valuable in increasing new amenities and building public support for new investments. Again, this can be part of developing a comprehensive Park and Recreation Master Plan, if appropriate.

Walking and Biking Connections

Walkable and bikeable neighborhoods provide health, environmental, and financial benefits, making it easier to get around and fostering a greater sense of community. Maintaining and improving walking and biking access to recreational areas increases these benefits to residents. As noted above, 75% of city residents live within walking distance of a park, but how safe and accessible is that route? The Transportation and Connectivity Element talks about the need to improve the links from residential areas to parks as well as to libraries, schools, and commercial areas.

East Providence also has access to a premier, regional bike path. Building connections between the East Bay Bike Path and City parks and other nearby attractions can help raise awareness of these opportunities and encourage people to access them by bike or on foot. Some of this has been done with signage and information kiosks for conservation areas and historic features along the bike path. Bike lane markings were also installed along Crescent View Avenue that connect the bike path to Crescent Park and Crescent Park.

Transportation & Connectivity

Improving walking and biking safety is a priority City-wide. There are strengths and opportunities to create a connected network, including links to parks and conservation areas. See this element for discussion on how the City would like to make neighborhoods more walkable and bike-friendly.

[28] https://projects.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/index.htm

Public Access to the Waterfront

The City's shoreline presents both challenges and opportunities from a recreation standpoint. In many cases, industrial uses along the Providence and Seekonk Rivers polluted the rivers over the years, degraded their appearance, and limited public access. Yet, the opportunity to take advantage of the waterfront by providing access and preserving views exists. Water quality improvements in Narragansett Bay have increased its appeal and the potential range of recreational uses.

The Waterfront District Master Plan promotes improving public access to the water. The East Bay Bike Path travels through the central and southern areas of the district along the Providence River. There are also three public access points within the district to access the shoreline: Bold Point Park, John L. Lewis Waterfront Park, and the Kettle Point Pier.

The Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) is responsible for 13 "Rights-of-Way" to the water, largely through very narrow strips of land between residential parcels. All of these are located in the Narragansett Terrace area of Riverside along Terrace Avenue on the west and Riverside Drive on the east. The City continues to work with CRMC to maintain these areas for public use and access.

There are 32 additional City points of public access to the shore, including rights-of-way and ends of improved streets and paper streets. These are found in the chart below, and are available on the City's Harbor Commission website. Most are in Riverside, with the remainder scattered along the Seekonk River in central and northern East Providence. Numerous other opportunities to access the shoreline are found along the State-owned East Bay Bike Path right-of-way where it abuts the shore.

Canoeing and kayaking are also popular on the Seekonk and Providence Rivers and Bullocks Cove. Kayak enthusiasts have expressed interest in dedicated take-out and put-in areas to portage around the dams on the Ten Mile River. This interest will likely continue with the completion of the Fish Ladder project and continued trail development and other passive recreation improvements at Hunt's Mills.

Waterfront District

Through the Waterfront District Special Area Management Plan the City encourages development and redevelopment projects to consider and incorporate public access to the waterfront to the greatest extent practical.

Resilient Park Design

When we think about parks and recreation, we do not necessarily think about climate change. But parks can play a key role in helping the City become more resilient to climate threats. Nature-based solutions (NBS) (also referred to as "green stormwater infrastructure") incorporate features like plants and landscape design to manage, store, and filter stormwater. They replace the use of storm drains and underground pipes to collect stormwater and remove pollutants. They also enhance the adjacent natural environment. NBS could include designing a parking lot with pervious material, using native plants to capture stormwater in an open area, or planting more trees. These types of installations have multiple benefits, such as reducing pavement and decreasing air temperatures. Incorporating NBS into parks and recreation areas adds to the benefits these amenities already provide to a neighborhood, plus help it be

more resilient to climate change impacts. For example, projections indicate more intense and more frequent severe storms. In a managed way, NBS installed in parks can help mitigate flooding in surrounding neighborhoods by absorbing rainwater.

Another aspect of design the City should be considering is the impact of sea level rise and storm surge on its parks and recreation areas. Discussed in the **Natural Hazards and Climate Change Element**, several facilities will be impacted by sea level rise, including Bold Point Park, portions of the East Bay Bike Path, and Sabin Point Park. Storm surge from a severe storm like a Category 3 hurricane would affect additional areas. Planning for these impacts should include design elements that focus on mitigation (designing a park to reduce the anticipated impacts) or adaptation (changing the way we use a park or a space within a park to accommodate anticipated impacts). Either way, the City should include parks as it evaluates climate threats to it critical infrastructure and services. This is also discussed in the **Natural Hazards and Climate Change Element**.

Finally, as residents call for more access to the waterfront, the design of these new spaces should take into consideration the impacts of climate change and creating safe and accessible parks along the shoreline.

Natural Resources

The City recognizes the importance of the City's natural resources to the quality of life in East Providence. NBS and other approaches will help address water quality concerns, as well as offer other environmental, economic, and social benefits. See this element for more discussion.

Natural Hazards and Climate Change

Ensuring that critical infrastructure and services are resilient to the anticipated impacts of climate change and natural hazards is a priority. See this element for more details on how the City is planning for adaptation and mitigation.

New Recreational Opportunities

Through the engagement process for the Comprehensive Plan, the City learned that residents continue to look for more parks and recreational spaces, and these spaces should be a balance of opportunities across all age groups, from toddlers to seniors. It is also important to recognize that preferences and community needs for recreation evolve over time. What may have been popular with one generation, can wane with the next. This requires the City to continuously check in with residents and park users. A Parks and Recreation Master Plan can be an opportunity to identify the need for additional spaces because of over-use or where residents are looking for new types of activities. For example, facilities at the new high school could open up the Pierce Memorial Complex to accommodate growing demand for more outdoor sports fields. This, however, would require additional investment in the complex to meet those needs. As the City plans for new recreational parks and spaces, we should consider designs that maximize flexibility, allowing spaces to shift over time to accommodate new uses.

A larger investment residents call for is a new recreation and community center. In the early 2000s, the Recreation Center located at the East Bay Community Action Program's building in Riverside closed.

Without a place for youth programming, a recreation center was temporarily opened within the Senior Center in 2019, though it has been challenging to accommodate the different types of users. In 2002 and 2004, City residents voted in favor of financing a new recreation center. In 2021, the City began investigating opportunities for a new community and police wellness center that would be open to residents and members of the City's Police Department. The East Providence Community Center is scheduled to open in 2026.

With the help of a grant from the RI Department of Health and the Environmental Protection Agency's Southeast New England Program, the City and State plan on designating Crescent Park as a public swimmable beach in 2027. While this designation would have been unthinkable decades ago, water quality in Upper Narragansett Bay has improved to the extent that residents will soon be able to directly enjoy this resource for the first time in approximately one hundred years.

Finally, building connections from the City's parks and recreational areas to other destinations in East Providence can increase public awareness of recreational opportunities. The interpretive sign program being developed for select historic properties discussed in the Historic and Cultural Resources and the Arts Element is a great example of how to increase knowledge about the people and places of East Providence's history. Some of the City's parks and conservation areas overlap with these sites. There can be opportunities to build on this program and highlight other recreational areas with wayfinding signage.

Moving Forward

For each goal, the City of East Providence will implement the following policies and actions to meet the opportunities, needs, and challenges for Recreation. Many goals and policies in other elements support planning for these conditions, specifically Natural Resources, City Services and Facilities, Historic and Cultural Resources and the Arts, Transportation and Connectivity, and Waterfront District, and may not be specifically listed here. See these elements for additional actions that support recreation planning.

Goal R1. Support the design, operation, and maintenance of high-quality parks, recreation facilities, and programming.

Policy R1.1. Perform long-range planning for the operation and management of City parks and facilities.

A. Develop a Park and Recreation Master Plan to understand level of service, physical condition, maintenance and operation needs, and opportunities for new programming and amenities at the City's parks and recreation areas. Develop this plan with targeted community outreach to ensure an inclusive process that reaches diverse user groups, including people with physical and cognitive disabilities, lower income residents, and people of color, among others.
B. Create a master plan for Pierce Memorial Complex to address long-term maintenance and upgrade needs to maintain its status as the City's premier recreation and community destination.

Policy R1.2. Ensure the sustainable maintenance and operations of City parks and recreation areas.

A. Evaluate current maintenance practices and equipment. Identify where more sustainable practices can be used. Educate the community about the importance of using more

sustainable maintenance and operation practices to develop support for new investments in equipment and training.

B. Maintain a priority list of improvement and rehabilitation needs at City parks and recreation areas until a Parks and Recreation Master Plan is developed.

C. Promote capital projects with reasonable impact on operations and on maintenance costs. (Ongoing)

Policy R1.3. Use local partners to support recreational opportunities.

A. Reach out to businesses with employees that regularly use local recreational areas or have spaces near these sites. Look for sponsorships to support maintenance activities or programming.

B. Identify private benefactors or interest groups that might be interested in sponsorships of recreational events.

C. Continue to work with and support residents and community groups in the upkeep and maintenance of neighborhood parks. (Ongoing)

Policy R1.4. Create new recreational opportunities and enhance those at existing parks and recreation areas.

A. Continue support for City-sponsored recreational and cultural events organized by the Recreation Department, such as the Dolly Searle Golf Tournament, Fourth of July celebration, outdoor concerts, annual tree lighting, Winterfest, Turkey Trot Road Race, and others. (Ongoing)

B. Develop a biannual (every two years) survey to understand resident needs for recreational facilities, activities, and programming.

C. Identify opportunities in parks to incorporate elements that create interest and encourage gatherings, either formally or informally. Include public art, pavilions, benches, and other features. Use a biannual survey to understand community preferences.

Policy R1.5. Ensure that existing and future parks are designed to be resilient to natural hazards and climate change.

A. Upgrade existing parks and recreation areas to be resilient to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change, including, but not limited to, erosion, sea level rise, increased flooding, storm surge, and increased heat, among others.

B. Develop standards to design new parks city wide to be resilient to impacts of climate change and add to the resiliency of the neighborhoods in which they are located.

Goal R2. Create a network of accessible, safe, and inclusive parks and recreation areas and associated programming.

Policy R2.1. Provide accessible and inclusive parks, playgrounds, and other recreation areas, including programming, for all users of all ages.

A. Upgrade equipment and amenities at parks and recreational areas not meeting ADA standards.
B. Incorporate the principles of universal design in new park and facility development and identify opportunities to add elements to existing parks and recreation areas.
C. In addition to meeting the needs of users with physical disabilities, find opportunities to add amenities that meet the needs of users with cognitive and sensory disabilities.

Policy R2.2. Ensure the equitable distribution and connections to parks, recreation areas, and programming in all parts of the City.

A. Assess the geographic distribution of parks and recreational areas and identify neighborhoods that are more than a quarter mile from a resource. Overlay existing trails, sidewalks, and bicycle amenities to determine if resources can be reached by walking and biking and the accessibility and safety of these routes.
B. Engage residents in at-risk neighborhoods to understand their park and recreation needs, how welcoming and safe residents perceive existing public spaces, and what could make these spaces safer and more usable.
C. Improve connectivity of City recreation areas with other destinations in East Providence, such as high employment areas, historic and cultural sites, and commercial areas, through enhanced pedestrian and bicycle route planning and implementation. See Transportation and Connectivity Element.

Policy R2.3. Maintain public access to coastal waters and inland water bodies that provide potential scenic vistas, observation points, and opportunities for water-based recreation.

A. Utilize the City's Waterfront District Development Plan to guide responsible development in the Waterfront District and improve public access to the shore. (Ongoing)
B. Engage local water sport and recreation enthusiasts to improve direct water access. Provide facilities to support specific water-related activities including kayaking, sailing, and fishing.
C. Enforce all ordinances that prohibit the blocking, impeding or private annexing of CRMC rights-of-way, City rights-of-way, and platted roadways that provide access to the City's coastline. (Ongoing)
D. Improve Bold Point Park to bring it up to the standard of Sabin Point Park with regards to park condition, amenities, and open views.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Natural resources are a crucial element in the wellbeing of the community and should be protected for their economic, environmental, and social benefits to the City. These benefits include visual, passive recreational, and aesthetic qualities; habitat for local wildlife; and reducing the impacts of storms and other natural hazards. These resources are finite and irreplaceable. Our natural resources have an impact that extends beyond the bounds of the City and should be viewed in both their local and regional context.

This chapter supports and embodies the goals of the following State Guide Plan elements related to natural resources:

- 121: Land Use 2025: Rhode Island State Land Use Policies and Plan
- 155: A Greener Path: Greenspace and Greenways for Rhode Island's Future
- 156: Urban and Community Forestry Plan
- 161: Forest Resources Management Plan
- 721: Rhode Island Water 2030

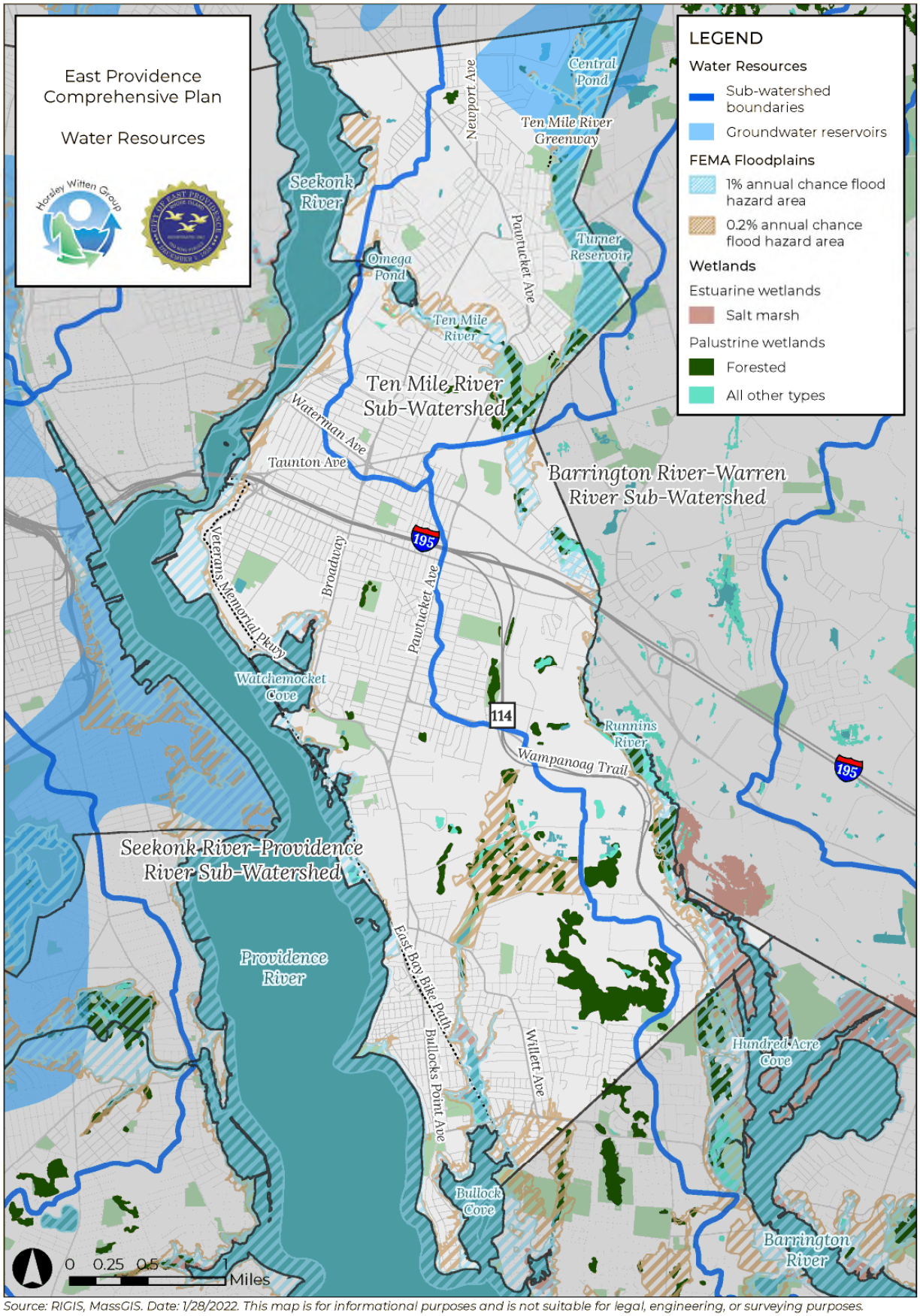
Snapshot

Natural Resources Inventory

Watersheds and Surface Waters

A watershed is an area of land that drains to the same lake, river, ocean, or other waterbody.[29] East Providence is within the Narragansett Bay Watershed, which encompasses most of Rhode Island, interior southeastern Massachusetts, and part of Worcester County in Massachusetts. There are three principal sub-watersheds in East Providence (Map NR.1). Several of East Providence's surface water bodies are impaired and fail to meet water quality standards due to pollution. Some of these water bodies have officially designated Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), which is the "maximum amount of a pollutant allowed to enter a waterbody so that the waterbody will meet and continue to meet water quality standards for that particular pollutant."[30] Common pollutants in an urban environment like East Providence include bacteria, metals, and nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus. TMDLs also specify pollution and reduction targets so that water quality standards can be met.[31] More detail about specific pollutants impacting the water quality of local water bodies is provided below.

[29] NOAA, https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/watershed.html, Accessed 12/20/2021
[30] USEPA, https://www.epa.gov/tmdl/overview-total-maximum-daily-loads-tmdls, Accessed 12/3/2021.
[31] Ibid.



Source: RIGIS, MassGIS. Date: 1/28/2022. This map is for informational purposes and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

Map NR.1. Water Resources

Seekonk River-Providence River Sub-Watershed

This sub-watershed encompasses close to half the City's area and includes most of the population. The sub-watershed includes small streams and other drainage flowing directly into the Seekonk and Providence Rivers and upper Narragansett Bay via Bullock Cove or Allin's Cove in Barrington.

The water quality of the Seekonk and Providence rivers are impacted by combined sewer overflows (CSOs) from the Narragansett Bay Commission's wastewater treatment facilities in Rumford (Bucklin Point) and ProvPort in Providence. CSOs contribute to pollution in the rivers during and shortly after times of significant rain.

Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO)

"At the turn of the century, most urban areas across the nation built sewer systems to carry rain water and sewage in the same pipe. This is called a combined sewer. During dry weather conditions, the sewer system works fine. But, during heavy rain storms, these combined flows frequently exceed the capacity of the sewer system and overflow into local rivers and Narragansett Bay. This is a combined sewer overflow."

- Narragansett Bay Commission

The Narragansett Bay Commission's multi-phase CSO Project is designed to store these overflows from the Providence side of the river to the extent possible, then treat this contaminated water prior to releasing it back into the Providence River. Phase I of this project was completed in 2008 with Phase II completed in 2015. Phase III started in 2021 and focuses on the construction of a 2.2-mile long tunnel about 125 feet underground that will collect and transport storm-related sewage overflows to the Bucklin Point plant for treatment before entering open water.[32] Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) in its *State of Rhode Island 2018-2020 Impaired Waters Report* notes that the need for TMDLs for these waterbodies will be revisited after upgrades to the wastewater treatment systems are complete.

Ten Mile River Sub-Watershed

This area, comprising most of northern East Providence away from the immediate Seekonk River shore, drains into the lower-most portion of the Ten Mile River and ultimately into the Seekonk River. The entire Ten Mile sub-watershed encompasses an area of about 54 square miles, most of which is upstream in Massachusetts and Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Turner Reservoir, which used to be the City's source of drinking water, has eight current TMDLs for its northern (i.e., Central Pond) and southern sections that were first established in 2014.[33] The Ten Mile River, whose headwaters begin in Plainville and Foxboro, Massachusetts, becomes increasingly impaired as it passes through urbanized areas north of East Providence.[34] The Ten Mile River and its tributaries have nine current TMDLs, also established in 2014.

Runnins River-Hundred Acre Cove Sub-Watershed

The Runnins River-Hundred Acre Cove sub-watershed includes the eastern portion of central and southern East Providence along with a large part of Seekonk and a portion of Rehoboth. Areas immediately adjacent to the Runnins River are low in elevation with wetlands and relatively wide

[32] Restored Waters RI: A Narragansett Bay Commission Project, available at https://restoredwatersri.com/.
[33] RIDEM, State of Rhode Island 2018-2020 Impaired Waters Report.
[34] Ten Mile River Watershed Council, Central Pond & Turner Reservoir, Accessed 12/3/2021.

floodplain areas. The Runnins River Basin (above the Mobil Dam) measures 9.7 square miles. Both Runnins River and Barrington River have active TMDLs for Fecal Coliform impairments.[35]

Floodplains

Flooding is an intermittently occurring natural phenomenon that forms and maintains flood zones and coastal zones,[36] including saltwater and freshwater marshes. In local and state regulations, they are also referred to as floodplains (Map NR.1, also see Map CC.1). While flooding occurs naturally in these areas, development in and around floodplains changes the natural flow and can increase the height of flooding waters and, in some cases, pushes water outside of the floodplain to areas that typically do not flood. It is important to maintain floodplains in their natural state. The benefits of unaltered, natural floodplains include:

- Providing flood control by temporarily "storing" floodwaters and reducing flood velocities
- Reducing wave damage immediately inland from coastal flood zones
- Surface water quality maintenance and groundwater recharge
- Providing wildlife habitat
- Providing recreational opportunities and scenic amenities
- Providing educational and scientific research opportunities

Local and state regulations and policies direct development to protect floodplains and restore or enhance natural processes that were impacted by historic development patterns. See Tools and Planning Documents.

Natural Hazards and Climate Change

This element identifies areas in the city most susceptible to future flooding due to climate change trends. Most are located within floodplains and low-lying coastal areas.

Wetlands

Coastal and freshwater wetlands provide valuable habitat, flood storage, and water filtration benefits. Over 800 acres of the city, or about one-tenth of the City's land area, is covered by wetland. Freshwater wetlands are found at the Exxon-Mobil property and within the former Forbes Street municipal landfill (also referred to as the Southeast Drainage Area).[37] These freshwater wetlands drain into Willet Pond, Bullock Cove, Narragansett Bay, Annawamscutt Brook, and Allin's Cove in West Barrington. In the northern portion of the city, wetlands are concentrated along the Ten Mile River, mostly westward of Pawtucket Avenue. A limited number of pocket freshwater wetlands are also scattered throughout the city (Map NR.1).

[35] RIDEM, State of Rhode Island 2018-2020 Impaired Waters Report.
[36] Association of State Floodplain Managers, "Natural and Beneficial Floodplain Functions: Floodplain Management-More than Flood Loss Reduction", Adopted by ASFPPM Board 2008.
[37] East Providence Zoning Ordinance

The Runnins River and the Barrington River Estuary (more commonly known as Hundred Acre Cove) in East Providence and Barrington are coastal wetlands. Areas immediately adjacent to the river near the Barrington town line consist of a rather large estuarine emergent wetland with forested wetland areas common along the river northward to Route 6 (Highland Avenue) and into the area just north of Waterman Avenue. Terrain along the Runnins River is flat with low elevations, hence the large amount of wetlands.

Both the Runnins River and Barrington River Estuary are designated as Special Resource Protection Waters (SRPW) by RIDEM in its Water Quality Regulations. SRPW are high quality surface waters with significant ecological or recreational use,[38] which may include but is not limited to:

- Wildlife refuge or management areas.
- State and federal parks or designated Estuarine Sanctuary Areas.
- Water bodies containing critical habitats.
- Wetland types or specific wetlands listed as rare, threatened, endangered, of special interest, or of special concern by the RIDEM Natural Heritage Program.

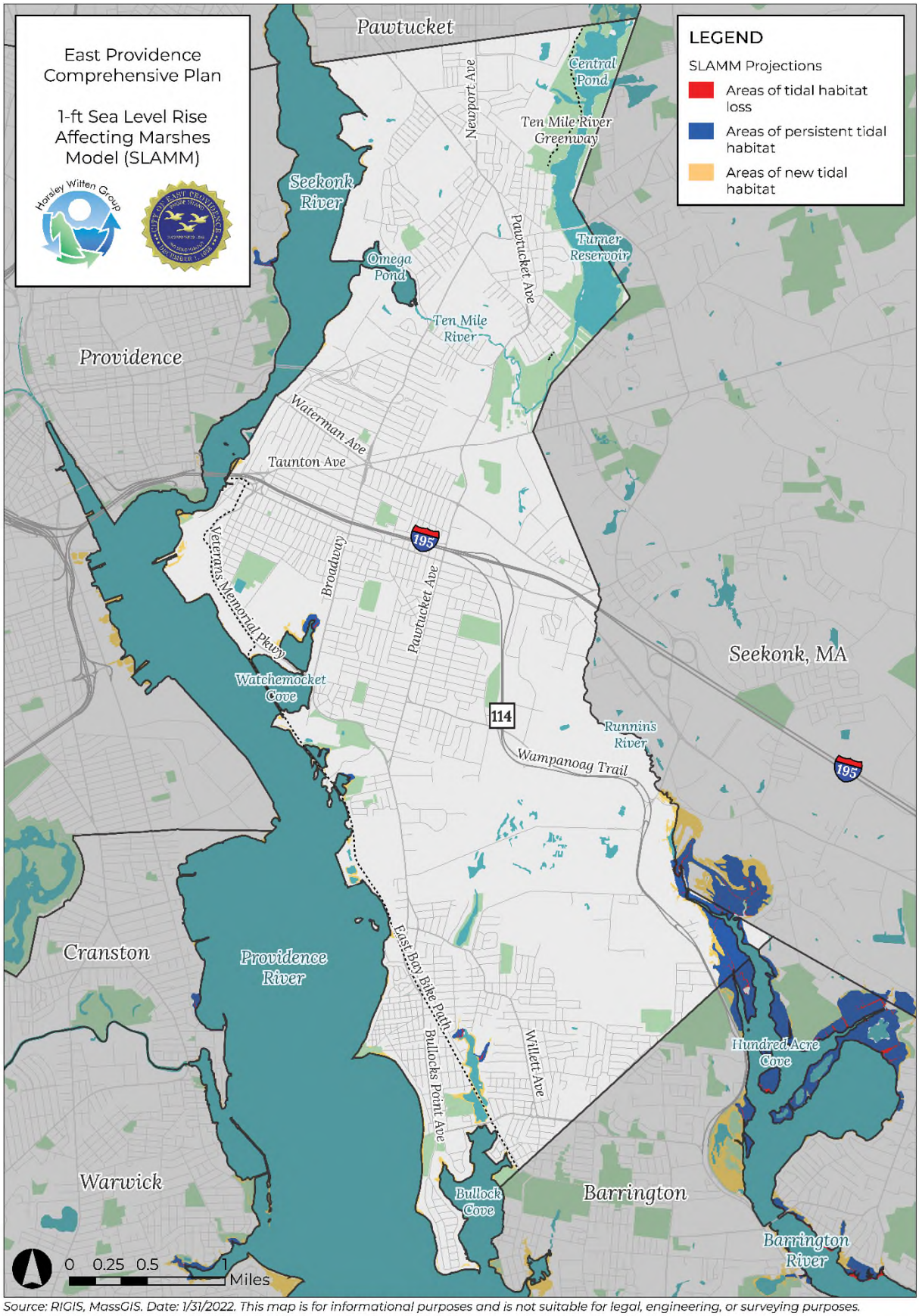
SRPW are subject to additional water quality standards; most importantly, RIDEM disallows any "measurable degradation of the existing water quality necessary to protect the characteristic(s) which cause the waterbody to be designated as a SRPW" within the resource area.[39] RIDEM designated the Runnins River as an SRPW for its critical habitat for rare and endangered species value.[40] The Barrington River Estuary is designated for its recreation, ecological habitat, critical habitat for rare and endangered species, and conservation area values.[41]

Marsh Migration

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Sea Level Affecting Marshes Model (SLAMM) identifies "higher elevations [that] will become more frequently inundated, allowing for marsh migration landward," and "lower-lying areas [that] will be so often inundated that marshes will no longer be able to thrive, becoming lost to open water."[42] The one-foot sea level rise scenario (Map NR.2) leaves East Providence's coastal wetlands largely unaffected, with small areas of new habitat added at Bold Point Park, Watchemoket Cove, and along the Runnins River. Most coastal wetlands are unaffected at the three-foot sea level rise scenario (Map NR.3), although isolated areas of habitat loss are observable at the most landward area around Metacomet Brook at Watchemoket Cove, along Vals Creek at Bullock Cove, and at Hundred Acre Cove. Larger areas of new habitat are added along Bold Point Park, the South Quay, Sabin Point, and along the Runnins River. At the five-foot sea level rise scenario (Map NR.4), areas of new tidal habitat expand to include the site of the Narragansett Bay Commission's wastewater treatment plant along the Seekonk River and into the upstream portions of the Runnins River. Much of the coastal wetland habitat where the Runnins River outlets into Hundred Acre Cove is lost as it becomes inundated by sea level rise.

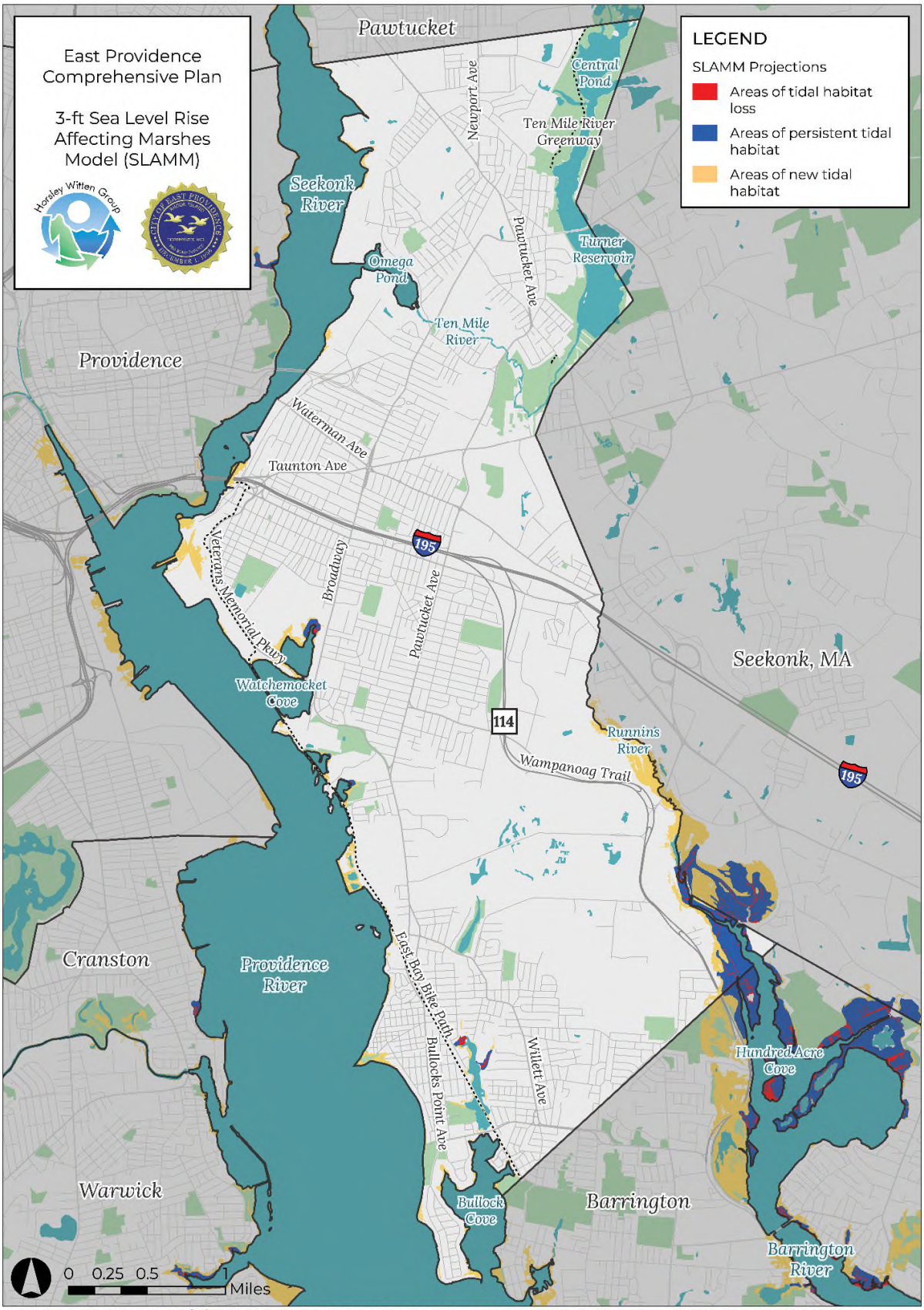
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[38] State of Rhode Island Water Quality Regulations, July 2006, amended December 2009.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.
[42] NOAA Office for Coastal Management, "Detailed Method for Mapping Sea Level Rise Marsh Migration," accessed 10/3/2022.



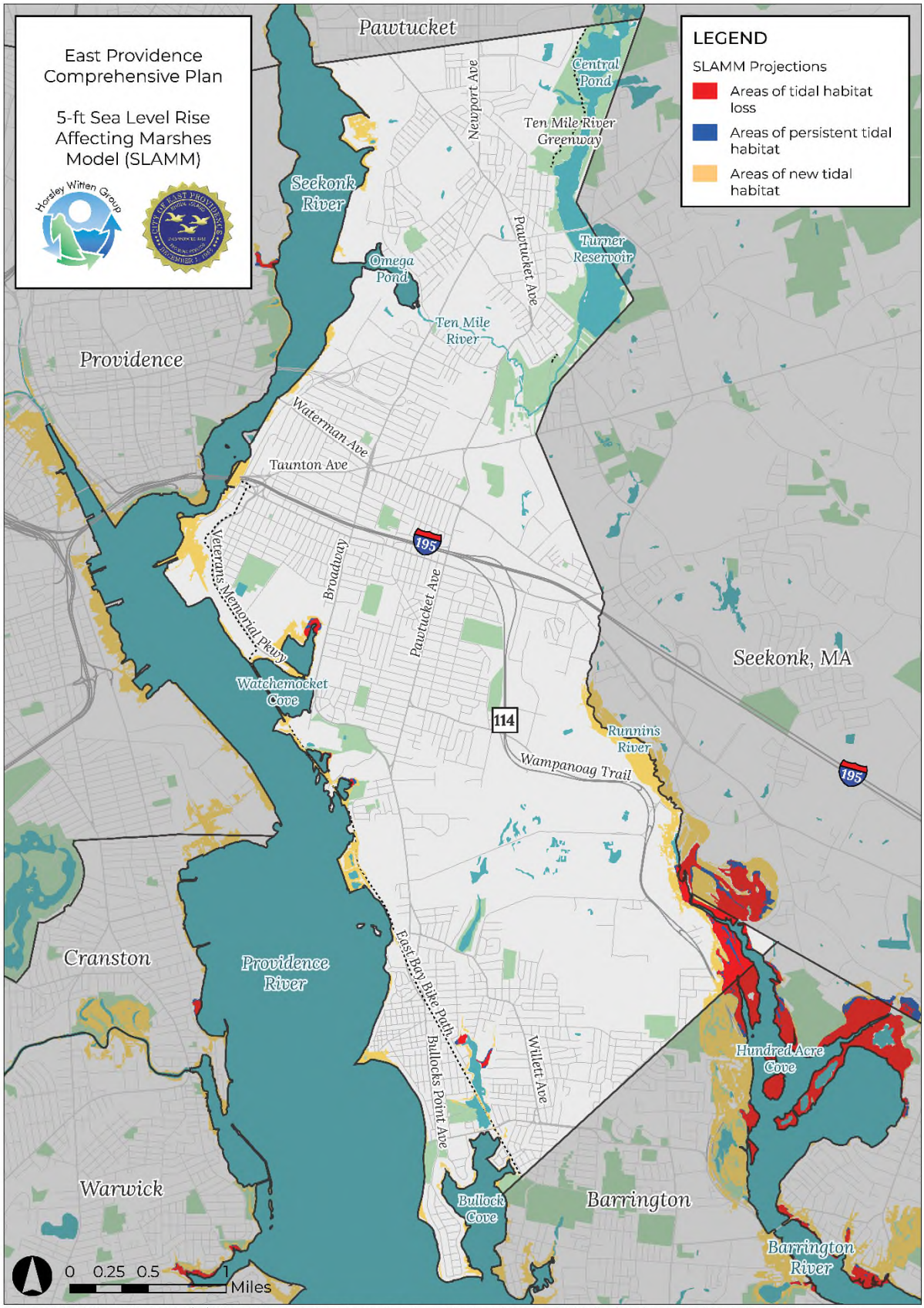
Source: RIGIS, MassGIS. Date: 1/31/2022. This map is for informational purposes and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

Map NR.2. 1-foot Sea Level Rise Affecting Marshes Model (SLAMM)



Source: RIGIS, MassGIS. Date: 1/31/2022. This map is for informational purposes and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

Map NR.3. 3-foot Sea Level Rise Affecting Marshes Model (SLAMM)



Source: RIGIS, MassGIS. Date: 1/31/2022. This map is for informational purposes and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

Map NR.4. 5-foot Sea Level Rise Affecting Marshes Model (SLAMM)

Groundwater and Soils

The Ten Mile aquifer underlies part of the Rumford neighborhood and is the City's only significant groundwater resource (Map NR.1). East Providence sources its drinking water from the Scituate Reservoir, so the Ten Mile aquifer is not used for public drinking water supply. RIDEM classifies the Ten Mile aquifer as "GB," or groundwater which "may not be suitable for public or private drinking water use without treatment due to known or presumed degradation."[43] This classification is commonly used in highly urbanized areas of Rhode Island.

Soils with a seasonal highwater table are scattered across East Providence, including at developed areas in the Riverside neighborhood, near Watchemoket Cove, and along the Runnins and Ten Mile River (Map NR.5). These are areas where the water table, or the depth below which the ground is saturated with water, is only 19 to 42 inches below ground level.

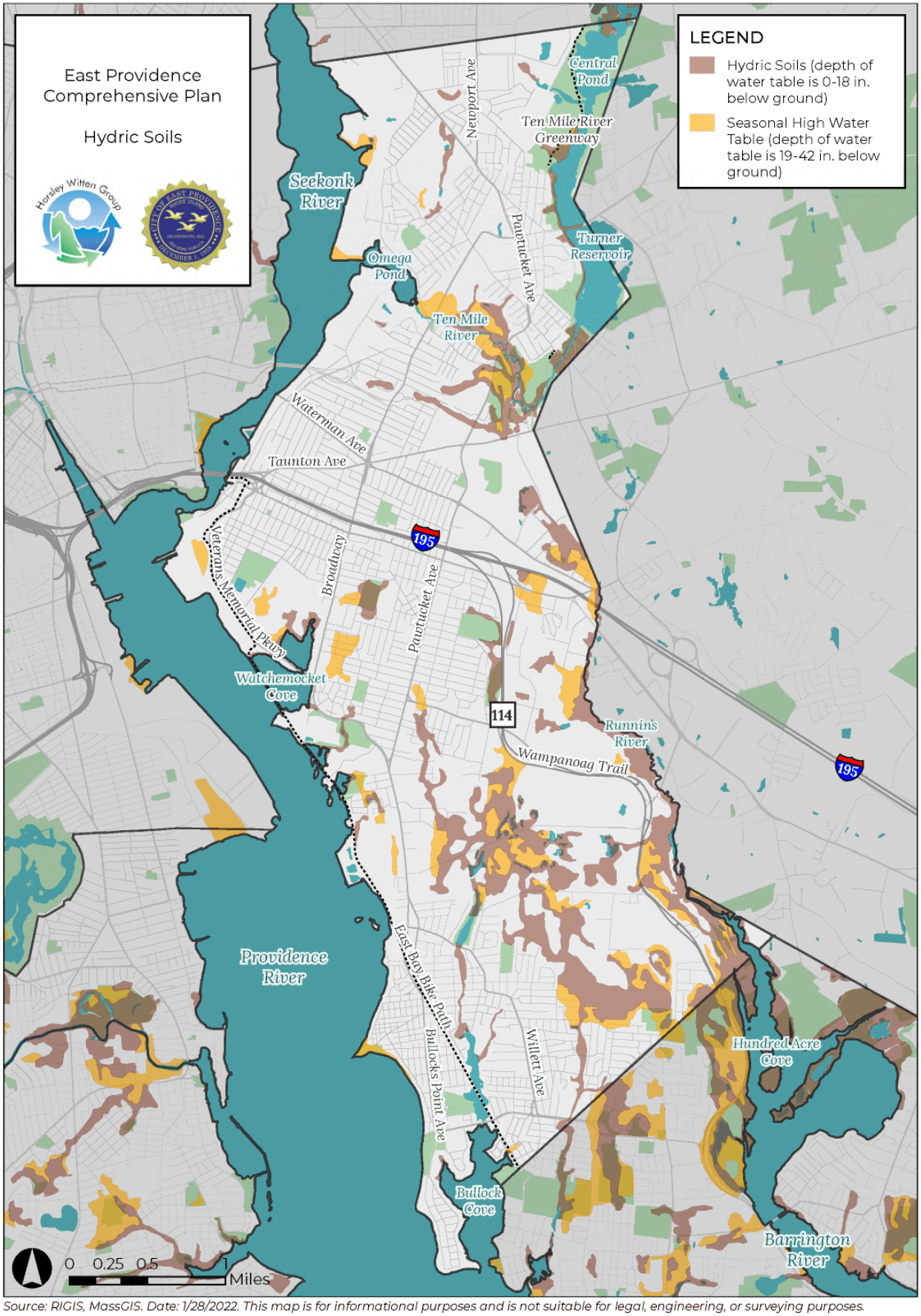
In East Providence, development in areas of the seasonal highwater table is a contributor to urban flooding (also see **Floodplains** below). Hydric soils, or those soils that are permanently or seasonally saturated with water, are unsuitable for development due largely to poor drainage, which can lead to erosion and flooding hazards. Hydric soils in East Providence are largely undeveloped and concentrated along the City's streams and rivers and at the Exxon-Mobil property (i.e., wetland areas); the distance from the ground surface to the water table can be as small as 18 inches.

Forested Areas and Urban Forestry

Urban and community forests are described by RIDEM as, "the trees, plants, and associated ecosystems located where people are."[44] Healthy urban forests improve the livability of East Providence by adding beauty and color to the urban and suburban environment. The presence of trees in urban settings has been found to provide positive psychological and social impacts, including stress relief. Additional benefits of trees in urban areas include:

- Reduction of surface water runoff and soil erosion
- Mitigation of "urban heat island" effects
- Absorption of air and water pollution and associated health benefits
- Reduction of surface wind speeds
- Urban noise abatement
- Creation of wildlife habitat
- Property value enhancement

[43] Rhode Island Groundwater Quality Rules, https://rules.sos.ri.gov/regulations/part/250-150-05-3
[44] RIDEM, Urban and Community Forestry Program, http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/forestry/urban-forestry/, accessed 12/3/2021.



Source: RIGIS, MassGIS. Date: 1/28/2022. This map is for informational purposes and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

Map NR.5. Hydric Soils

Most of the City's neighborhoods feature mature trees that are almost entirely deciduous (not "evergreen"), providing an effective canopy from May through much of October. The City Parks Division oversees and cares for City trees and the East Providence Conservation Commission provides additional stewardship in conservation areas. Significant forested areas in the City include a narrow strip along the eastern edge of northern East Providence, a large portion of the Exxon-Mobil property, and the Southeast Drainage Areas surrounding the Forbes Street Solar Farm. Most forested areas are classified as either upland or wetland deciduous forest.

Coastal Features

East Providence has 14 miles of tidal waterfront along the Seekonk and Providence Rivers and upper Narragansett Bay, including several saltwater and brackish water coves. The shoreline varies in character with narrow beaches backed by bluffs, rock outcrops, some hardened structures (retaining walls), and several small rocky islands.



Beach at Sabin Point Park. Photo credit: Kris Craig, Providence Journal

Local beaches in the City are found in Riverside along the Providence River/Narragansett Bay at Sabin Point Park, at and adjacent to Crescent Park, and at the entrance to Bullock Cove. The Rhode Island Department of Health classifies these beaches as "unlicensed" because they are not public beaches. Neither the Department or Health nor the City monitor water quality to determine if it is safe to swim. However, they do offer passive and active recreational opportunities and scenic views.

The central portion of the City's waterfront along the Seekonk and Providence Rivers has been modified over decades to accommodate water-based industries, such as oil and gas storage and distribution. As these uses have waned or moved to other locations, areas along the City's waterfront are now available for new development opportunities. This area is under the jurisdiction of the East Providence Special Waterfront District. Future development of these Waterfront District areas will be executed within State coastal regulations and with special attention paid to preserving water quality and scenic views and ensuring public access to the water.

Agricultural Land

As with most other nearby cities and towns, the area now known as East Providence was occupied by Europeans and transformed into an agricultural community. The beginnings of a community solidified when East Providence was first established in 1812, then including parts of Seekonk and Rehoboth, Massachusetts. Through a series of complicated land plattings, boundary relocations, transactions, and annexations over time, East Providence was incorporated as a Rhode Island town with today's existing geography in 1862. There were numerous working farms in East Providence well into the 20th century,

but agricultural uses quickly diminished following post-World War II suburbanization. By 1970, commercial agriculture in East Providence was essentially non-existent. Perhaps the most significant agricultural land remaining in the City, and the only one under protection as an agricultural site, is the 18+ acre Bridgham Farm Conservation Area in Rumford. This property was historically meadow and grazing land. It is managed by the East Providence Land Conservation Trust with publicly accessible walking trails (also see **Management and Protection of Natural Resources** below). Valuable agricultural soils—those classified by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service as either "Prime Agricultural" or "Soils of Statewide Significance," are present primarily at the Southeast Drainage District and along the Ten Mile River (Map NR.6).

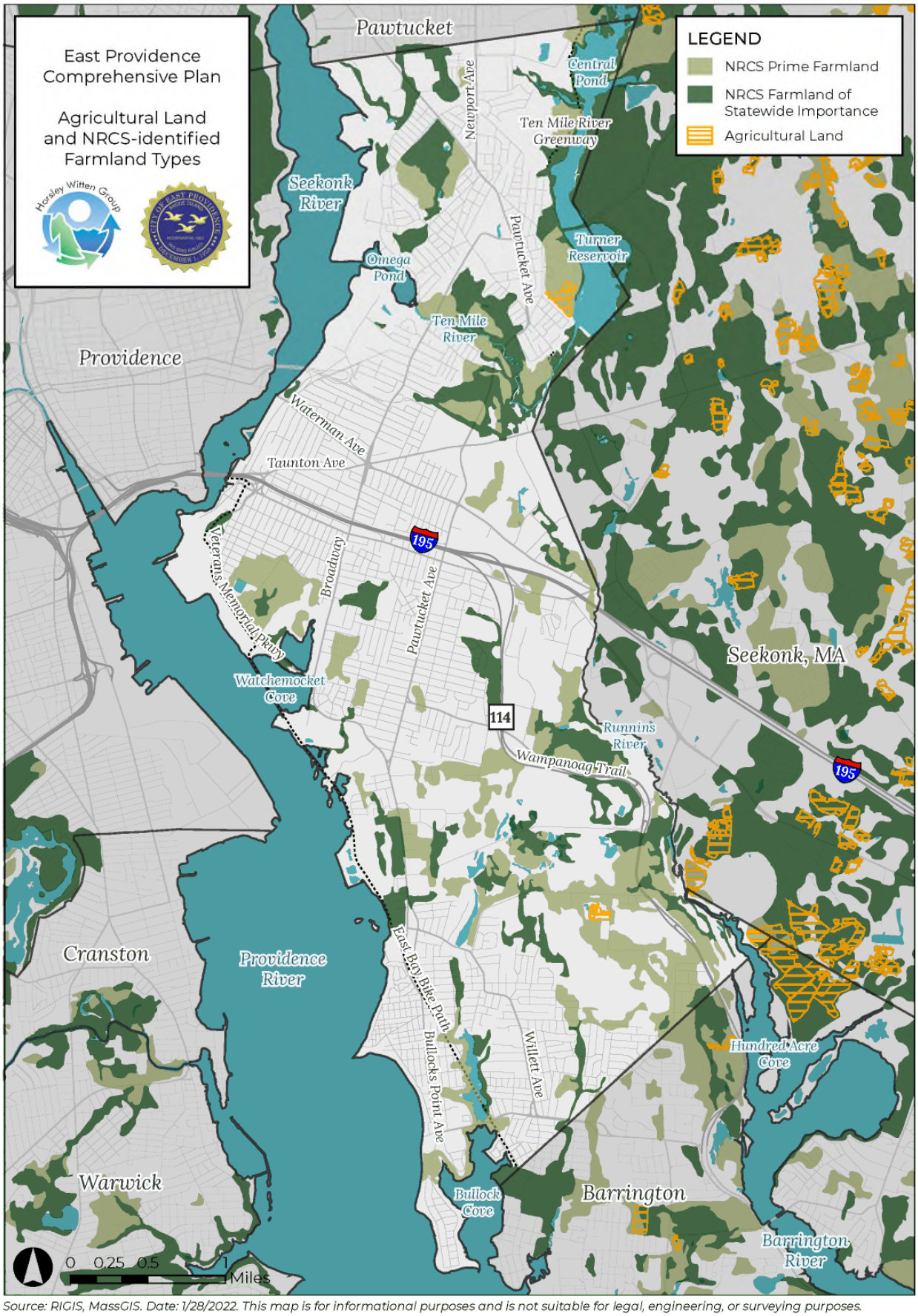
Fish and Wildlife Habitat

Despite its proximity to the urban core of Providence, East Providence is home to a diverse array of wildlife. The existence of large, relatively open areas, several park and conservation areas, and numerous locations where freshwater and saltwater mix all contribute to this diversity of species. A significant wildlife corridor between the Runnins River and uppermost Narragansett Bay runs across the Exxon-Mobil property and Southeast Drainage Area. Another important wildlife corridor stretches along the Ten Mile, Runnins, and Barrington Rivers on the city's eastern edge.[45] Even the relatively narrow East Bay Bike Path right of way serves as a wildlife corridor.

Deer, coyote, beaver, wild turkeys, owls, and bald eagles have all been spotted within the above corridors. Willet Pond serves as an important migratory stopover and year-round home for geese and other waterfowl. The City's coves support wading birds, including blue and white herons. Black crown night herons, otters, and snapping turtles have all been observed along the Ten Mile River corridor, and bald eagles have been seen at the Turner Reservoir during the winter. The lower portion of Runnins River and the nearby Hundred Acre Cove in Barrington supports a population of northern diamondback terrapin turtles, an unusual species of turtle in that they are native to the nearshore marine environment and tolerate waters of varying salinity. Diamondback terrapins, while experiencing positive population growth over the last 25 years, are an endangered species in Rhode Island.

The City, with the help of several environmental partners, executed a major ecosystem restoration project in the 2010s along the Ten Mile River with the construction of denil fishways (fish ladders) at each of three dams along the river within the City limits. The fishways provide passage for river herring and American shad, anadromous fish that live as adults in saltwater but spawn in freshwater, traveling upstream to access about 340 acres of spawning habitat.

[45] RIDEM, Rhode Island Conservation Opportunities map viewer, https://ridemgis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=63f3ef956b3e4711ab3f8dd8349f346e, accessed 12/3/2021.



Source: RIGIS, MassGIS. Date: 1/28/2022. This map is for informational purposes and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

Map NR.6 Prime Agricultural Lands

Management and Protection of Natural Resources

City-Owned Conservation Areas

The City owns and manages several conservation areas, which are permanently protected from future development to preserve natural features and important views. In some cases, these sites also have historic buildings and structures as well as recreational opportunities. These sites are show on Map NR.7 and described briefly below.



Turner Reservoir Loop Trail. Photo credit: Krista Moravec

Turner Reservoir Loop Trail

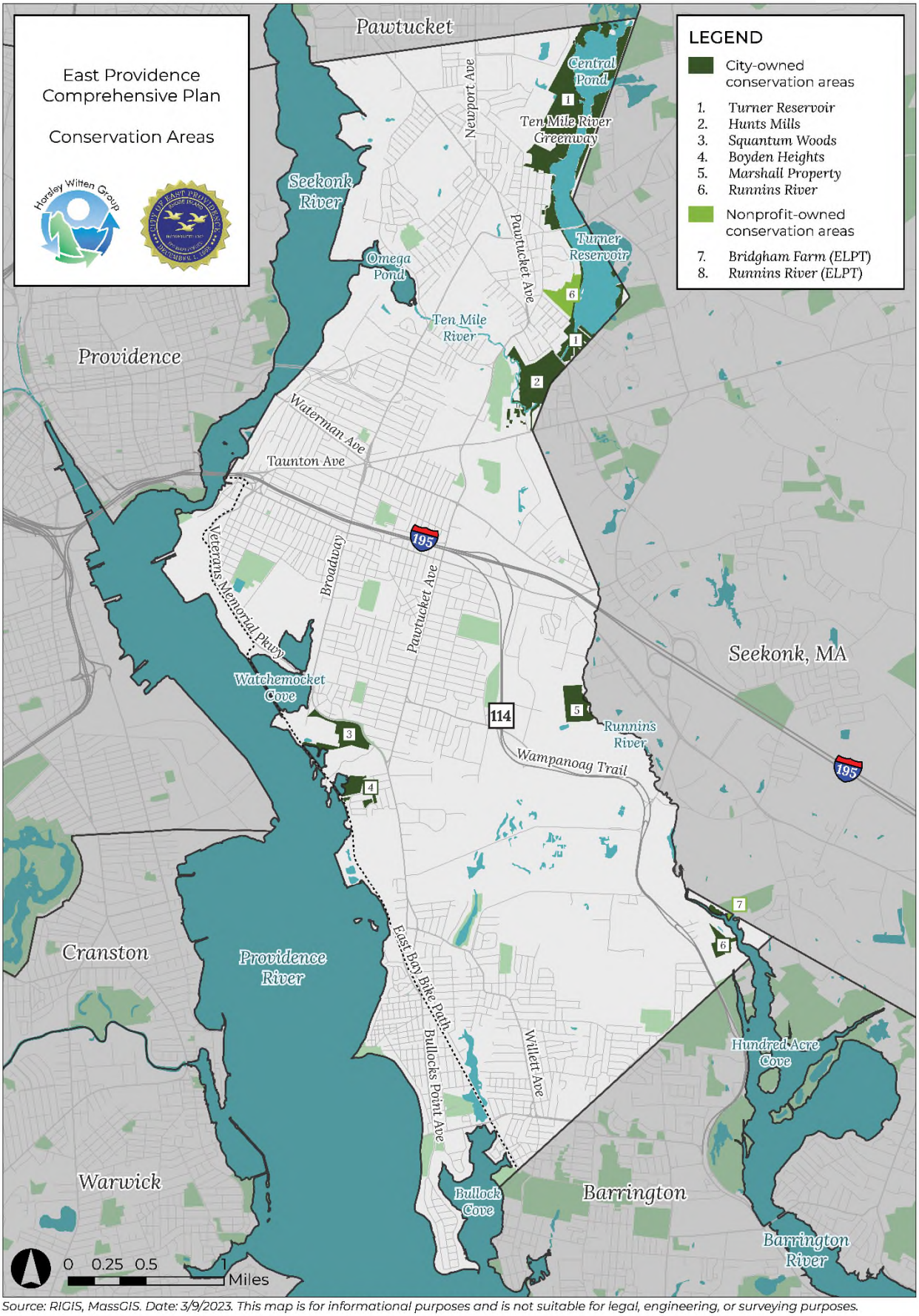
This is a fully accessible woodland and wetland trail with both gravel and boardwalk segments. It begins at the state line bus turn-around on Pleasant Street (Route 114A) and winds northward toward the Turner Reservoir Dam, where the Turner Dam fish ladder and the dam itself can be viewed. The walkway is part of a larger informal trail and sidewalk network that surrounds the Turner Reservoir and is partially in Seekonk. The complete informal loop around the reservoir totals close to three miles.

Hunt's Mills Historic Site

Located just downstream from the Raised Walkway along the Ten Mile River, this 44-acre property includes the 1750 John Hunt House along with the historic Pump House which remains from the river's days of hydropower generation. Also at this location are picnic facilities, the Hunt's Mills Dam and Fish Ladder, interpretive signage describing the property's period as an amusement park, and a well- maintained mile-long woodland trail network. Remnants of a former Fire Department training ground are also found on the site. There is approximately one mile of trail through the woodlands on the property towards the Ten Mile River. The Ten Mile River Watershed Council has an agreement with the City for use of the building at this location for storage of equipment and kayaks.

Squantum Woods

Once part of the Rhode Island State Park system, this 28-acre property includes both open and forested areas, trails, and a picnic area. It is located along Veterans Memorial Parkway across from the intersection with Interlocken Road. The Waterfront Commission oversaw a significant storm drainage project here in the early 2010s. The area, while attractive and scenic, was the site of some illicit activity in the past. Kettle Point, a major residential development adjacent to the property, includes a walking path along its edge from Veterans Parkway to the East Bay Bike Path and public fishing pier opened in 2021, and the East Providence Veterans Committee developed a memorial park within the property. Both projects have brought increased visibility to this property.



Source: RIGIS, MassGIS. Date: 3/9/2023. This map is for informational purposes and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

Map NR.7. Conservation Areas in East Providence

Boyden Heights Conservation Area

Briefly home to an amusement park in the early 1900s, this wooded 11-acre property with frontage along the Providence River and the East Bay Bike Path includes hiking trails, a tidal cove, a stream, and a wetland boardwalk. Wading birds and other wildlife are often spotted here. The park is accessed via the western end of Boyden Boulevard and offers pedestrian access to the Bike Path.



Boyden Heights Conservation Area. Photo credit: Trails and Walks in RI

Runnins River Parcels

The City owns scattered non-contiguous parcels along the Runnins River south of Route 6 (Highland Avenue). These includes several wetland parcels along the tidal portion of the river near the Barrington line. The largest contiguous City-owned area is the undeveloped 22-acre Marshall Conservation Area, about a half mile south of Route 6 off Catamore Boulevard. An access easement for this property exists on City records, but physical access via the easement is difficult due to a stream which crosses the easement. The Conservation Commission will investigate options to improve access to this area and would like to protect more land along the southern reaches of the Runnins River.

Willet Pond

Willet Pond is surrounded by a 13-acre park with seating and a walking trail around the pond. The pond is stocked each spring with trout by RIDEM. Water quality was a concern with fish die-offs and algae blooms. With funding from the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank, the City made improvements to the park to improve water quality with better stormwater infiltration. The project removed 2,700 square feet of impervious area and replaced 11,880 square feet of the existing parking area and driveway with crushed stone and pervious pavement.

City and Nonprofit Organizations

The following City and nonprofit organizations are key actors in the management and protection of natural resources.

East Providence Conservation Commission

The East Providence Conservation Commission is a citizen board of up to nine City residents responsible for the stewardship of the City's natural resources including its watersheds, rivers, wooded areas, coastal areas, wetlands, and green spaces. The Commission makes recommendations to State agencies, the East Providence City Council, and the various City Departments regarding proposed developments, donation of private land, and other environmental topics. Commission projects have included trail building and mapping, maintenance, clean-ups on City conservation properties, native species plantings, invasive species control, and reconstruction of a wetland boardwalk at the Boyden Heights Conservation Area.

East Providence Tree Commission

In 2021, the City established the East Providence Tree Commission. It has oversight of the protection, maintenance, removal, and planting of trees on public property, and makes recommendations to the City Council regarding the City's tree program. The Commission works with the City Forester.

Municipal Tree Programs

In collaboration with EP Urban Forest and resident volunteers, the City inventoried approximately 8,000 street trees in 2021. The inventory documented species, location, size, and condition of each tree. The inventory also includes trees in city parks, playgrounds, schools, and other public properties.

The East Providence Street Tree Planting Program aims to increase the number of trees along roadways. In 2022, the City planted 147 trees, with a goal of planting 200 in 2023. Residents can request a street tree to be planted in the public right-of-way through the Parks Division, which will conduct a site assessment to determine the appropriate location for the tree and species.

The City also has a Setback Tree Planting Program to encourage the planting of shade trees on private property. Through the program, trees are planted in the front or side yard, within 20 feet of the right-of-way. Trees are purchased and installed by the Parks Division, free of charge to homeowners. Installation is dependent on meeting eligibility requirements, adequate site conditions, and availability of trees and funding.

East Providence Land Conservation Trust

East Providence Land Conservation Trust (EPLCT) is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization that promotes land preservation in East Providence. EPLCT is responsible for the stewardship of the 18.8-acre Bridgham Farm Conservation Area. As noted earlier, this property was historically meadow and grazing land and is the last remaining undeveloped agricultural land that was part of the original "Ring of the Green" from the early days of European occupation. The property is open to the public and has several walking trails on-site.[46]

Ten Mile River Watershed Council

The Ten Mile River Watershed Council's (TMRWC) mission is to promote the restoration of the Ten Mile River Watershed and encourage and support recreational activities in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. It is an active 501(c)3 non-profit organization that frequently conducts riverside cleanups and trail maintenance events and provides general advocacy for the watershed.

Runnins River Watershed Alliance

The Runnins River Watershed Alliance (RRWA) is a non-profit environmental organization that hosts riverside cleanups, organizes public education events, and provides general advocacy for the Runnins River watershed.

East Providence Urban Forest

East Providence Urban Forest (EPUrbanForest), established in 2020, is a neighborhood group dedicated to improving the City's urban forest through "education, planning, and community action." The group works closely with the City, including with the Planning, Parks, and Public Works Departments, to provide

[46] East Providence Land Conservation Trust webpage, https://eplct.org/about/, accessed 12/2/2021.

tree programming to residents.[47] EPUrbanForest engages residents through public education and outreach.[48]

Tools and Planning Documents

East Providence manages and protects its natural resources using several guiding tools and planning documents. Foremost amongst these is the City's Zoning ordinance, which establishes provisions to guide orderly growth and development. State-level documents provide additional regulations and guidance on how to manage natural resources.

Native Plant Ordinance

Using native plants as part of landscape design, green infrastructure and stormwater management installations, and other applications supports local ecosystems by providing habitat and food sources for native butterflies, insects, birds, and other animals. Their use reduces the need for pesticides, and they are adaptable to local soils and weather conditions, such as seasonal rain and drought, making them low maintenance. In 2022, the City Council passed the Native Plant Ordinance, which establishes minimum standards for the use of native plants on City properties, including streetscapes and parks. All new plantings by the City on City-owned property must meet the following requirements:

1. New plantings must be designed to contain at least 50% native plant species except when the City determines that the situation demands flexibility for memorialization, aesthetic, geographic, survivability, or other substantial reasons.
2. New plantings in City parks must have a minimum of 75% native plants.
3. A minimum of 50% of street trees planted by the City each year shall be native species, with a goal of increasing this percentage in subsequent years.
4. Diversity in plant species shall be reflected in landscape designs with no one plant species making up more than 10% of the overall planting design except where the situation demands flexibility for substantial reasons.
5. The City shall make a continued effort to include native plants in areas that often contain non-native plants such as community vegetable gardens, flower beds, lawns, athletic fields, holiday displays, or seasonal decorations.

Stormwater Management Standards

Stormwater management standards are codified in East Providence's Revised Ordinances *Utilities* and *Zoning* chapters. The City's stormwater management standards comply with State requirements.

The Utilities chapter includes provisions to protect local and state waterbodies and groundwater through the regulation of discharges to the City's drainage systems. The chapter defines illicit discharges to the storm drainage system, prohibits illicit connections, and includes watercourse protection requirements for property owners to prevent erosion or degradation of a watercourse as it passes through private property.

The Zoning chapter addresses stormwater management through Article VIII, Development Plan Review. Article VII establishes drainage and erosion standards for all developments to control "the impacts of

[47] East Providence Urban Forest webpage, https://epurbanforest.org/, accessed 12/2/2021.
[48] Ibid.

erosion, inadequate drainage, and stormwater runoff." All developments must include a drainage system that prevents undue retention of surface water and drainage systems must result in no net increase in the rate of runoff from the post-development site compared to the predevelopment site conditions.

Additional Provisions in Zoning

The City's Zoning Ordinance includes additional provisions to promote orderly growth and development that protects natural resources and mitigates negative environmental impacts. Requirements and recommendations require:

- Land development projects, identified by their potential for impacts "associated with the nature of the use; scale of the project, or other unusual conditions which require additional regulations," must undergo review by the City's planning board to ensure natural resources are preserved to the maximum extent feasible and environmental quality is protected.
- East Providence allows for cluster developments, in which certain density transfers and relaxation of minimum lot requirements are allowed in return for an equivalent acreage of open space set aside within the development.
- All development within the Waterfront Special Development Districts must submit a drainage plan that accommodates for and mitigates the impacts of the 25-year storm or, if in the Special Flood Hazard Area, the 100-year storm.
- All development within the Waterfront Special Development Districts must complete an impact assessment that evaluates all direct and indirect impacts to the natural and manmade environment in the project area. The assessment must also contain mitigation and monitoring actions.
- Landscaping standards required as part of the site plan design process. The standards include provisions to preserve topsoil, protect existing plantings, and prevent soil erosion. For residential developments, additional elements may be required to mitigate climatic extremes, promote drainage control, and mitigate water and air quality impacts. The landscaping standards also dictate shade tree, vegetative buffer, and parking area landscaping requirements.

A Comprehensive Plan to Restore Water Quality at Hundred Acre Cove

Save The Bay, with funding from the Southeastern New England Program (SNEP) of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, worked with the communities of the Hundred Acre Cove watershed, including the Runnins River, to develop a long-range strategy that will restore water quality and plan for climate impacts. The comprehensive plan, completed in 2021, outlines recommendations in three broad categories:

1. Policies and programs to reduce pollution from wastewater and stormwater runoff.
2. Projects to help habitats adapt to intensifying impacts of climate change.
3. Financing and funding to support priority actions.

The City of East Providence, as a project partner, continues to collaborate with stakeholders in meeting common goals and objectives of this effort. Recommendations for East Providence focus improving stormwater management and maintenance and cleaning of its stormwater conveyance systems (catch basins and outfalls), wetland restoration, and invasive species removal and management, among other strategies.

Rhode Island Wildlife Action Plan

RIDEM's Rhode Island Wildlife Action Plan (RI WAP)[49] is a comprehensive guide to wildlife conservation efforts across the state. The RI WAP provides an overview of the state's wildlife species and their associated health, habitat, and threats. The RI WAP establishes actions steps to steward the state's wildlife and includes a wildlife conservation guide to help communities, conservation groups, and citizens implement the RI WAP's recommendations.

CRMC Metro Bay SAMP

The Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) Metro Bay Region Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) establishes rules to guide management of coastal resources in the Providence Harbor and Metro Bay region that balances human development and revitalization in the area with environmental protection. The rules establish a predictable permitting process to enable reuse of the region's urban shorelines, including that of East Providence; guidance to allow public access; and an alternative coastal vegetative buffer policy intended improve water quality through vegetative stormwater treatment and maintain and restore habitat corridors.[50]

Recreation

The City has significant facilities that make East Providence a desirable place to live. See this element for discussion on how the City will maintain and enhance its inventory of open space and recreation facilities.

Natural Hazards and Climate Change

East Providence is vulnerable to a variety of natural hazards. See this element for discussion on how the City will incorporate natural hazard and climate change considerations into its planning to build resilience.

Land Use

All communities must make decisions about the best use of their available land, and how to best balance the needs of their residents with the need for natural resource protection. See this element for discussion of the City's plan for future land use and development.

City Services

The Department of Public Works is responsible for stormwater management in the City. It oversees the implementation of its Stormwater Management Plan. This includes reviewing proposed development projects to ensure they are implementing best practices and improving the City's stormwater collection system to meeting water quality goals. See this element for more details.

Waterfront District

Development and redevelopment within the Waterfront District must meet high environmental standards. See this element for more details.

[49] Available at http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/fish-wildlife/wildlifehuntered/swap15.php.
[50] Coastal Resources Management Council, Metro Bay Region Special Area Management Plan, December 2018.

What We Heard

What the community highlighted as the City's challenges, opportunities, and needs:

- Proactive municipal action to preserve and protect open spaces and natural areas is a high priority for residents, with many wanting an increase in green and open space. Environmental protection is also a high priority. Development pressure, especially residential development in unsuitable areas, was cited as a threat to open spaces and natural areas.
- Residents see the City's natural areas and green spaces as strengths and opportunities for its future. Proximity to the Seekonk and Providence Rivers is also seen as a great opportunity. Many respondents want to protect and enhance existing natural areas.
- Many residents are concerned about the loss of natural areas, including trees, open space, wildlife habitat, and water pollution. Additional environmental challenges cited by residents include land erosion, air pollution, flooding, increases in extreme storms, sea level rise, and heat.
- Residents have mixed opinions on the effectiveness of the City's current stormwater and flood control activities. Improving stormwater management to reduce the impacts of rain runoff is a priority to residents.
- Residents also want open space and green space protected for public health reasons.
- Residents believe the City should invest in greening the City with community gardens and planting trees. The City should continue to build on the efforts of community-led EP Urban Forest and Tree Commission to expand the City's tree canopy.

Challenges, Needs, and Opportunities

Natural Resources Protection and Restoration

Protecting and restoring natural areas, including upland and coastal habitats, can have multiple benefits, including improved public health, wildlife habitat, flood management, public access for passive recreation, high water and air quality, and biodiversity. With the assistance of environmental regulations and requirements at the state and federal levels, the City manages these pressures through local policies, programs, and regulations. It also promotes environmental stewardship by residents and businesses, educating them to recognize the values of these resources and the shared responsibility in their protection.

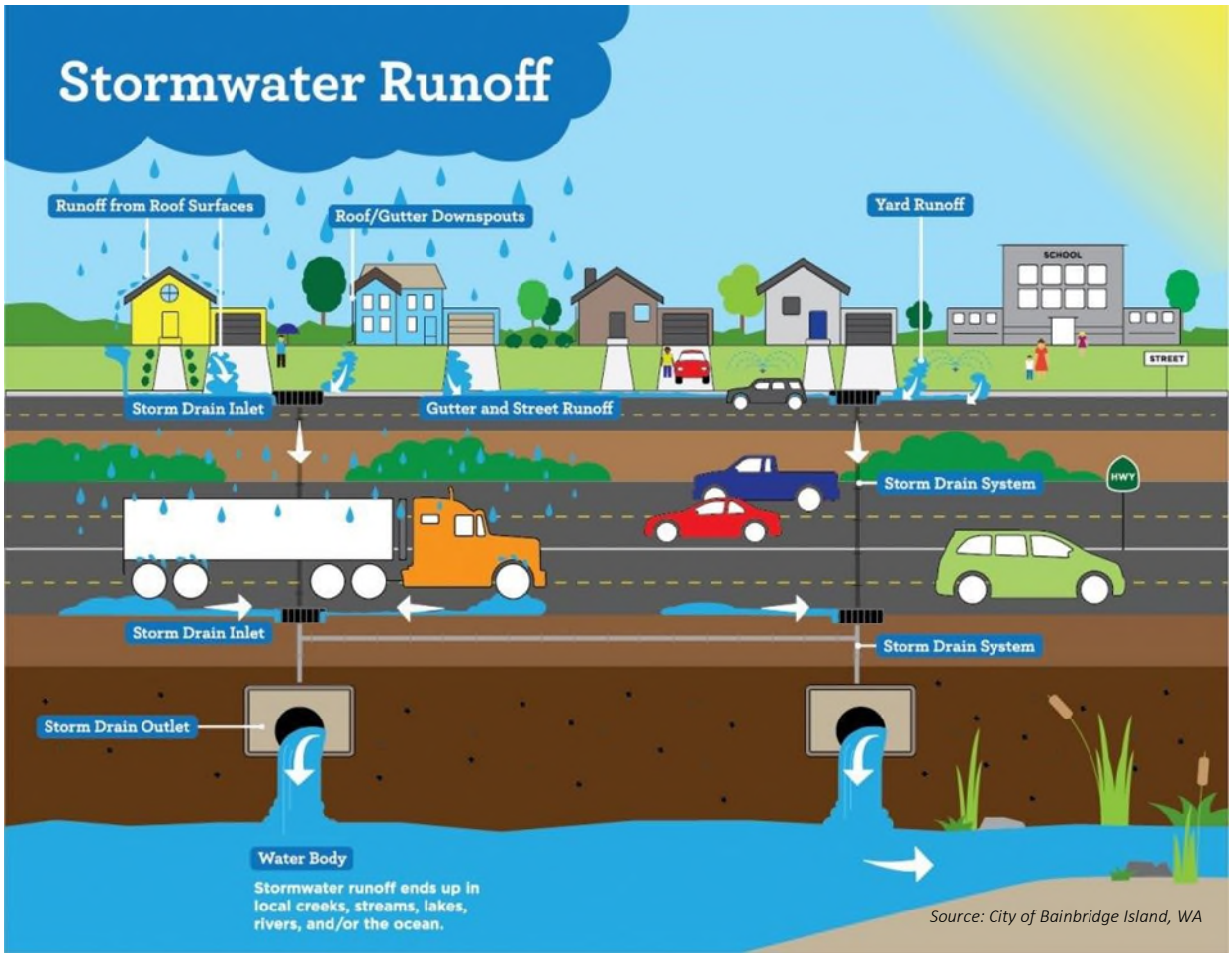
Development Regulations and Policies

In more developed urban environments, balancing development that meets the economic and housing needs of the community while protecting limited natural resources is a priority. The City uses local policies and regulations discussed earlier under **Tools and Planning Documents** to manage these pressures.

In Rhode Island, RIDEM, RIDOT, and CRMC have permitting authority over activities that take place in or near wetlands, rivers and streams, and coastal features like salt marsh, dunes, bluffs, and beaches. These regulations provide tools the City can reference and incorporate as local policy.

A New Paradigm for Stormwater Management

Improving the quality of the City's fresh waters, including rivers, streams, and ponds, and coastal waters, including coastal fisheries and their habitat, is important for environmental health but also public health. In the ongoing efforts to improve water quality across the State, stormwater management is perhaps the most important focus area, particularly in older cities with outdated infrastructure. This priority is expressed in Rhode Island State Guide Plan Element: Water Quality 2035, This document detalis the need for improved stormwater manamgenent throughout the state in order to reduce further degredation of water quality, including drinking water quality. The objective of stormwater management is two-fold. First reduce the amount of runoff running directly from pavement, rooftops, and other hard surfaces directly into wetlands and surface waters. This runoff can carry a surprising amount of pollution, even in small rain events. Second, where runoff is generated, use designed features to remove a large percentage of the pollution in the runoff before it gets back into the natural environment.



NBS installations are diverse in function and size and can be incorporated into parking lots, along streets and sidewalks, and blended into large. Image source: City of Bainbridge Island, WA

Stormwater management is achieved through a complex interplay of numerous programs, regulations, and stakeholders. The permitting and regulatory process takes place at the federal, state, and local level, and initiatives for education and advocacy are led by municipalities, watershed associations, and other

community organizations. In the most effective communities, these systems are working collaboratively. In East Providence, the Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) plan helps to identify local priorities for these efforts. The plan identifies the various sources of stormwater and makes recommendations, including policy changes and infrastructure improvements the City will take to reduce stormwater flows which may have a negative environmental impact. An important implementation piece of the plan is public education. For example, the City's Department of Public Works provides a number of easy steps that residents can take on their own properties to protect water resources.

Over the past several decades, a new approach to designing stormwater treatment practices has gradually become more mainstream. RIDEM's *Rhode Island Low Impact Development Site Planning and Design Guidance Manual* (2011) contains guidance that encourage site design and best practices that avoid and reduce the impacts of stormwater runoff our water resources through "low impact" techniques. Low impact development uses nature-based solutions (NBS) (also referred to as "green stormwater infrastructure") that incorporate features like plants and landscape design to manage, store, and filter stormwater. These types of installations can replace and complement existing "gray infrastructure" like storm drains, underground pipes, and outfalls, which do little to remove pollution from stormwater. As emphasized in the Water Quality 2035 document, NBS also enhance adjacent natural environments. These installations can be encouraged as part of new development and redevelopment projects, and would be particularly beneficial in the Waterfront District, as well as in street design and redesign. Many of the City's streets are owned and managed by RIDOT, and the agency should recognize the priority of the City to integrate NBS and best management practices (BMPs) into the City's streets.

Beyond stormwater management, NBS and green stormwater infrastructure have multiple environmental, economic, social, and public health benefits. They add green space to a neighborhood, reduce pavement, and decrease air temperatures, which can lower cooling costs in the summer. Storing floodwaters reduces flooding and damage to roads and private property. In addition to the environmental benefits of managing and filtering stormwater to improve water quality, installations can also provide missing linkages for wildlife between natural areas and opportunities to increase native plants for pollinators. Designing these features for both public and private use should consider the additional benefits they provide and the needs that could be met within a neighborhood.

Some Benefits of NBS and Green Infrastructure

Environmental Benefits

- Decreases impervious surfaces.
- Creates wildlife habitat.
- Increases infiltration of runoff into the soil.
- Adds storage capacity to reduce runoff and discharges with pollutants.
- Increases trees, bushes, and greenery that absorb air pollution and reduce air temperatures.

Economic Benefits

- Reduces heating and cooling costs.
- Reduces municipal water usage.
- Increases property values.
- Reduces costs associated with flooding.

Social & Public Health Benefits

- Reduces exposure to water pollution and flood-related hazards.
- Creates links between existing open spaces as pathways for increased opportunities for physical activity.
- Makes our city more beautiful.

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency



NBS installations are diverse in function and size and can be incorporated into parking lots, along streets and sidewalks, and blended into larger landscaped areas.

Two notable stormwater mitigation projects in Riverside are using advanced designs in an effort to improve water quality. Sabin Point Park improvements are being implemented, serving as an example for other areas of the City. Beach Road near Crescent Park is still in the planning phases.

Case Study: Beach Road

Beach Road extends from Bullocks Point Avenue directly to the Providence River alongside Crescent Park. It is a dead-end street that ends with public access to the Providence River. The road is steep and stormwater runoff contributes to poor water quality. Like Sabin Point Park, the nutrient levels in the water are too high and the City targets this area as a possible location to improve water quality and allow swimming.

Additionally, the area is vulnerable to storm surge and erosion at the base of the bluff along the river. The sea wall along a portion of the bluff collapsed in 2020 and is under reconstruction. Storm surge will continue to cause significant erosion and beach loss. Improving stormwater management on Beach Road will also capture stormwater and minimize these impacts.

In 2022 the City received funding from the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank to help fund efforts on Beach Road The project includes two catch basins connected to each other, one on each side of the road, to capture runoff before it reaches the beach. Stormwater will be directed into six rows of infiltration chambers underground that will remove pollution from the runoff before it enters the Providence River. The project also reduces impervious roadway area adjacent to the beach with native plantings, which will also allow for some water to infiltrate into the ground rather than entering the beach area.



Storm surge at Beach Road after a storm, January 22, 2021.

Case Study: Sabin Point Park

Sabin Point Park is a 4.6-acre city park located in Riverside on the Providence River. Not unlike other urban beaches, swimming is not allowed at the park because of water quality concerns. Testing results showed the water was unsafe for swimming because of elevated levels of nitrogen. The major source of this nitrogen was rain runoff from the surrounding neighborhood that collects in the storm drains and discharges into the Providence River at the park. Fertilizers and pet and animal waste were the major contributors.

As of January 2019, a Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan identified seven projects that will significantly improve the water quality of the Upper Narragansett Bay. The City completed two projects during the summer and fall of 2018 with funding from RIDEM and New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC) grants.

The remaining five projects will be completed with funds received by the State of Rhode Island Attorney General's office from the court settlement arising from Volkswagen's intentional pollution sensor manipulation causing their vehicles to exceeded legal emission standards. The settlement funds are allocated to all New England states and targeted for environmental projects. The RI Attorney General's office awarded the City $850,000 of these funds in December 2018 for the design, permit and construct the remaining five stormwater pretreatment projects.

City Services

The Department of Public Works and its divisions manage the City's stormwater infrastructure to ensure it is meeting state and federal requirements to protect and maintain water quality. See this element for more details.

Natural Hazards and Climate Change

The impacts of climate change, including increased frequency and intensity of severe storms, result in more flooding events and flooding areas that may not have had issues in the past. Implementing stormwater management strategies in these areas can help adapt and mitigate to these challenges. See this element for more detail on these locations within the City and other information.

Conservation and Management

Land designated locally as conservation areas and greenways are protected in perpetuity. The East Providence Conservation Commission is the touch point for protecting, maintaining, and enhancing the City's natural resources. It recommends properties for protection to the City Council and works with City departments, like Recreation, Public Works, and Planning and Economic Development, in the management of the City's conservation lands, among other responsibilities.

Prioritizing Efforts

Conservation in more urban and developed areas like East Providence might look a little different from conservation in more rural parts of the State, but it works toward the same goals: protecting the functions and services of natural systems to meet the needs of nature and people. These include providing clean air and water, supporting biodiversity, and managing floodwaters, among others. In more developed communities, natural areas are smaller and might be degraded to some degree because of the surrounding built environment, which compromises or limits their ability to function and provide their benefits. Also, people living in these areas have limited personal open space around their homes because lots are smaller, or they are living in multifamily buildings. As a result, public lands become important places to interact with nature and get outside.

The 2015 RI Wildlife Action Plan (RIWAP) identified and mapped **Conservation Opportunity Areas** as priority areas for conserving Rhode Island's species of greatest conservation need and key habitats.

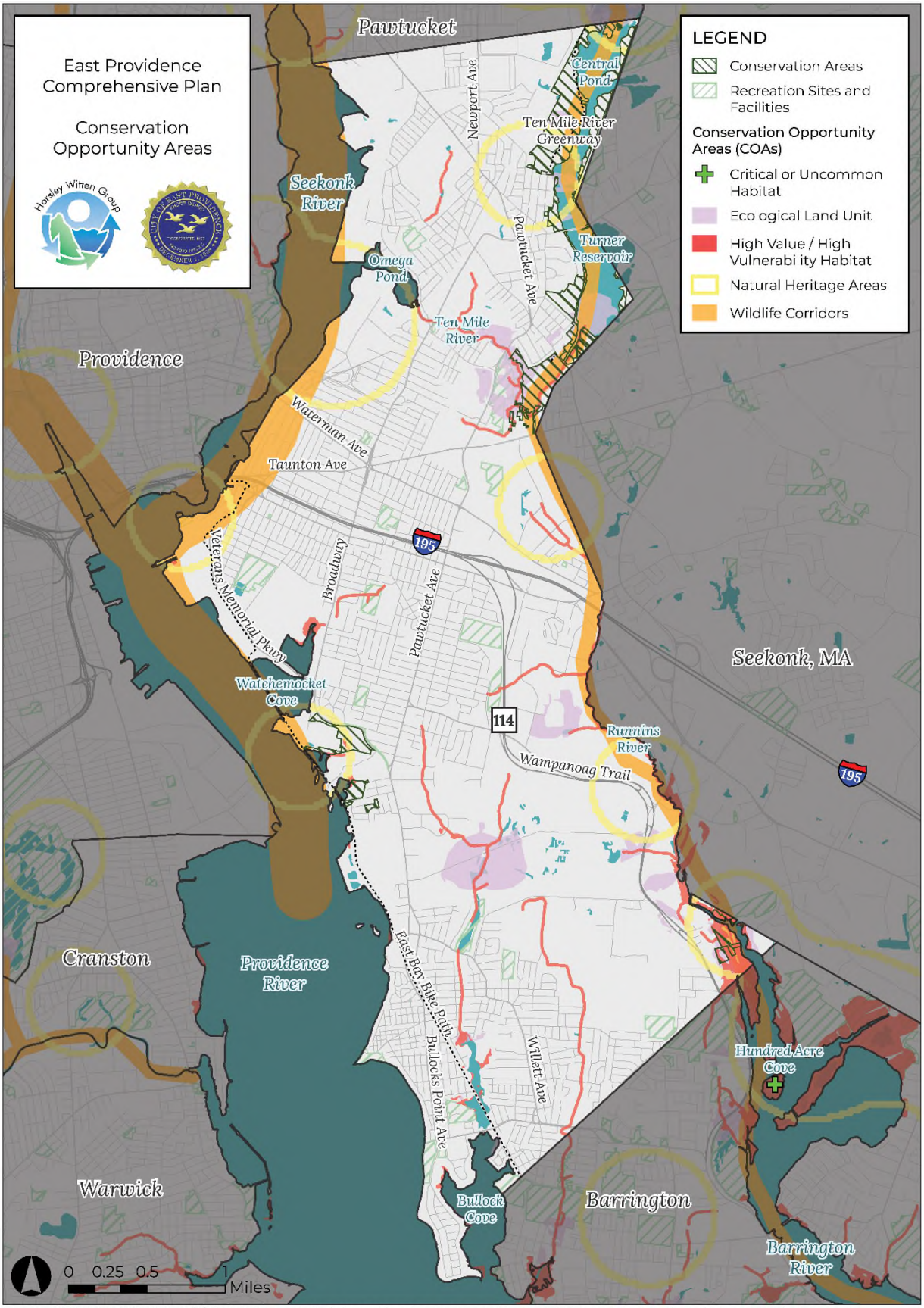
- Ecological Land Units: Places that are physically diverse in landform, drainage, and soil texture.
- High Value High Vulnerability Habitat: RIWAP Key Habitats ranked highest for their biodiversity value and vulnerability.
- Natural Heritage Areas: Approximate areas with known occurrences of rare species.
- Important Coastal Habitats: As identified by RIDEM.
- Core Forests: Unfragmented forests of 250 acres or greater).
- Natural Corridors: Largely undeveloped paths that connect the core natural areas, river corridors, and other pathways identified by The Nature Conservancy as "regionally significant."

Note not all these features are found in East Providence.

The Conservation Opportunity Areas (COAs) highlighted in the RIWAP are starting points to identify areas for protection. Together they represent core natural areas, corridors, and sites important to the state's fish and wildlife. Habitats and features that RIDEM highlight as important COAs are shown on Map NR.8 along with existing conservation areas and parks in East Providence. The details of these data can be viewed through RIDEM's online mapping platform.[51] Decision makers can use this tool to evaluate the potential impact or benefits of a project or initiative on these areas.

To build continuous wildlife corridors and connections, targeting lands adjacent to existing conservation areas and protected lands will be important. Land along critical resources, such as Runnins and Ten Mile Rivers, has always been a focus of conservation efforts. The City has also reached out to the owners of the Mobil/Exxon property, which has significant unfragmented forest and wetlands, as they prepare to subdivide in anticipation of selling parcels. The Seekonk River Greenway is another opportunity for enhance conservation.

[51] Available at https://ridemgis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=63f3ef956b3e4711ab3f8dd8349f346e.



Source: RIGIS, MassGIS. Date: 2/7/2023. This map is for informational purposes and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

Map NR.8. Conservation Opportunity Areas from the RI WAP and City Conservation Areas

In addition, the City should develop criteria it can use to help evaluate properties of interest as the opportunities arise for the implementation of different conservation strategies. These criteria should be developed with municipal leaders and community stakeholders to ensure that all city-wide goals and objectives are being met for the protection of natural resources, while also meeting the challenges of climate change, degraded systems, environmental justice, and overall quality of life. With limited funds to purchase and manage property, these criteria will give City leaders a tool for setting clear priorities and bring transparency to the decision making process.

Example criteria to evaluate properties for local conservation strategies

- Contains COAs or other important habitat.
- Addresses environmental equity. For example, located in a neighborhood that is characterized as "on par/just behind," "lagging behind," or "below typical" targeted pathway (see *Devising an Opportunity Investment Strategy for East Providence*).
- Connects existing conservation land and/or recreation areas to each other and to neighborhoods.
- Contains floodplain, wetlands, or other natural features that help reduce the impacts of natural hazards and climate change.

The *Community Wildlife Conservation Guide: Implementing Rhode Island's Wildlife Action Plan in Your Community*[52] outlines different conservation tools for local communities. Those related to property acquisition that have been used in East Providence, either by the City or partners like the East Providence Land Trust, are fee simple ownership, conservation restrictions, and transfer of development rights. These strategies maintain the natural features and/or functions of a property and prevent future or further development. Below summarizes the major features of these tools.

Examples of Conservation Strategies for Communities

Land Acquisition: Fee Simple Ownership	The outright and absolute ownership of land.
Land Acquisition: Conservation Restrictions	A legally binding agreement between a landowner and a qualified conservation organization intended to protect lands for a specific conservation purpose. Landowners retain ownership of the property, but they surrender certain rights associated with that ownership, depending on the terms of the easement (e.g., the right to develop). Conservation easements run with the land, which means that, if the landowner should sell the property, the conservation easement would remain and its restrictions would transfer to the new owner in perpetuity.
Transfer of Development Rights	Development rights can be severed from a tract of land and sold in a market transaction. The parcel from which the rights are transferred is then permanently restricted as to future development, and the purchaser of the rights may assign them to a different parcel to gain additional density—for example, more residential units or more commercial floor area than would be allowed without the transferred rights. Usually, TDR programs designate sending areas from which rights may be transferred, and receiving areas to which the rights may be sent (Taintor 2001).

[52] Available at http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bnatres/fishwild/swap/RIWAP-Companion.pdf

Resource Management

The Conservation Commission works with City departments, local nonprofits, and volunteers to help manage conservation areas (also see **Promoting Environmental Stewardship** below). The City's Parks Division helps with trail maintenance and has an arborist on staff. These areas saw an increase of usage during the COVID-19 pandemic, which in turn increased littering, vandalism, and other adverse impacts, putting additional burdens on city staff and volunteers.

An **invasive species** is any species of animal or plant that is:

- Introduced to a country or region where it is not native (it is "alien" or "exotic").
- Reproducing and spreading without the aid of cultivation (it has become "naturalized").
- Harming one or more native resources such as species, habitats and natural communities, or ecosystems.

- RI Natural History Survey

Invasive plant species management is a city-wide issue on both public and private properties and within waterways, and is a long-term maintenance need for conservation areas and other city properties. Eradicating these species improves the health of the natural environment and restores habitat. Management requires long-term solutions and a significant investment of funds and staff, which many local communities lack. The Rhode Island Natural History Survey[53] offers resources for land trusts and other land stewards to develop management plans and strategies to tackle these plant species.

Management of resources also involves maintenance of trails and other site amenities. Volunteers are huge contributors to these efforts and are overseen by the Conservation Commission. As a matter of policy, trail development on City conservation properties is designed to minimize impacts on the local landscape, and to ensure that these areas remain welcoming to the variety of wildlife and avian species that can be spotted in these areas. The Conservation Commission has implemented low-impact improvements at the Boyden Heights Conservation Area and these strategies can be applied at other locations as opportunities arise.

Linking Conservation and Historic Resources

Many of the City's conservation areas are linked to its historic and cultural resources. Building these connections for visitors enhances experiences and builds a base of attractions and interests in the City.

The Commission plans to further research and illustrate the Boyden Heights Conservation Area brief period as an amusement park in the early 1900s with a goal of providing interpretive signage on-site and developing interactive web-based information on this colorful period in the City's history. This type of historical analysis and installation of signage has been successfully implemented at Hunt's Mills. Trail improvement at both locations has resulted in increased use from local and regional interests.

Public Awareness of Opportunities

Many residents are not aware of the volunteer opportunities and educational programs available at the City's conservation areas. Increasing the awareness of these resources will create options for residents to enjoy nature in their own city. This could be accomplished through increased social media presence,

[53] https://rinhs.org/resource-library/

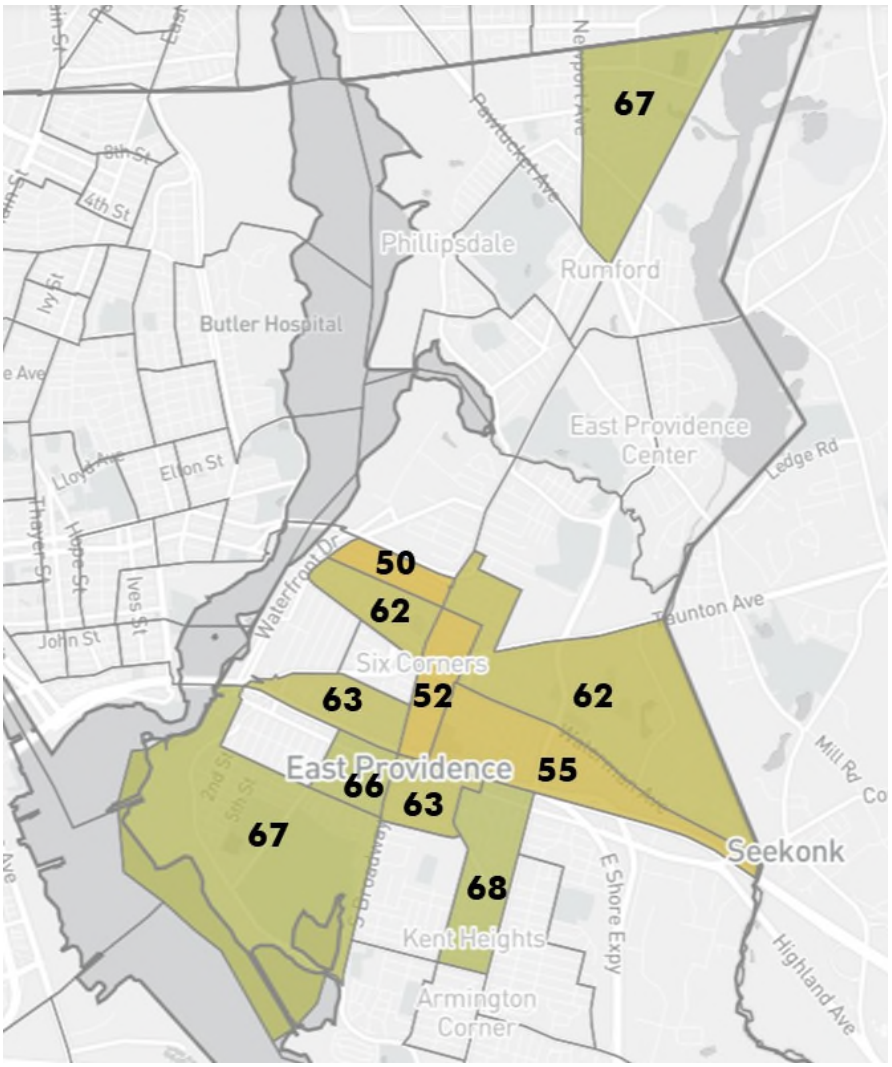
public events at these facilities, open-space mapping, and, as noted above, tie-ins with historic and cultural resources on properties. The continued stewardship of our natural areas and increasing local awareness of outdoor recreation resources also yields public health benefits and enhances the general quality of life in East Providence.

Additionally, the City is developing interpretative signage at several historic site and outdoor recreation areas and will be including the use of technology including QR-coding to produce electronic information on demand maps and informational brochures for these locations.

Urban Forest

As recognized in the State of Rhode Island's Urban and Community Forestry Plan, building and maintaining the City's urban forest and tree canopy brings multiple benefits to residents, which include improved air quality, cooler temperatures (resulting in lower energy bills), and beauty to a neighborhood. The American Forests defines Tree Equity as "having enough trees so all people experience the health, economic, and other benefits that trees provide." Tree Equity Score is a tool to help identify areas in the City that lack access to the benefits of trees. The score is derived from tree canopy cover, climate, and socioeconomic data. These metrics are combined into a single score between 0 and 100. A score of 100 means that a neighborhood has achieved Tree Equity. According to the mapper, Tree Equity Scores vary across the City.[54] The map at right shows Census Blocks with the lowest scores.

Tree Equity



Census Blocks with the lowest Tree Equity Scores in the East Providence. Source: American Forest Tree Equity Score

The State's Urban and Community Forestry Plan recommends that communities "forge partnerships with private groups supporting forest resource protection." The City completed a tree inventory during

[54] https://rhode-island.treeequityscore.org/

Summer 2021 to collect information on its 8,000 street trees and establish a baseline for better management of its public trees. This effort was completed with funding from the RIDEM and in partnership with the neighborhood organization EP Urban Forest.[55]Coupled with the Tree Equity Score mapping, the outcomes of the survey will help prioritize new street tree plantings, as well as identify other opportunities to plant public trees.

Overall, an urban forestry management plan will help the City set goals and priorities to proactively manage the city's public trees and forested areas and build a healthier environment for residents. The City should consider hiring a City Forester. The City Forester would be responsible for public and protected trees to preserve and protect the value and health of the City's urban forest. Within the Parks Division, they would oversee the City's public tree management and planting programs and enforce the City's Tree Ordinance.

Coastal Erosion

Beaches and public access points have also experienced considerable erosion. Bluff erosion in Riverside is an increasing concern with undermining of the bluff evident at several locations. Some residents have hardened the shoreline to forestall shorefront property loss. CRMC records nearly 50 applications for shoreline protection permits within a mile of Crescent Park to install new or maintain/replace existing structures.[56] These projects must be executed with great care to avoid adverse effects to other properties along the bluff. Notwithstanding these efforts, a severe storm or hurricane may result in undermining as storm surge violently erodes coastal bluffs in a relatively short period of time. Such undermining may result in collapse, which would place many homes in danger of damage or destruction.



Replacing the seawall at Crescent Park, March 2023. Photo credit: Krista Moravec

Crescent Park has experienced substantial erosion damage to its shoreline. The City had previously tried hard erosion control installations like seawalls and riprap, but these structures failed to yield positive benefits.[57] In the spring of 2020, East Providence partnered with CRMC and The Nature Conservancy to install a living shoreline at the park, another type of NBS. The City installed stones, coconut fiber logs, intertidal sills, and native salt marsh plantings and the project will be monitored as part of a larger regional effort to study the

[55] https://eastprovidenceri.gov/files-docs/21-06-08/press-release-city-east-providence-and-ep-urban-forest-inventory-thousands-trees

[56] Coastal Resources Management Council, http://www.crmc.ri.gov/news/2020_0424_habrest.html.

[57] Ibid.

efficacy of NBS for climate resilience.[58] The following year, the park's existing seawall failed and the City focused on designs and acquisition of funding to repair the wall, stabilize the shoreline along the beach, and make it safe for public access. Progress continues through 2023.

Natural Hazards and Climate Change

While coastal erosion is a natural process, the impacts of natural hazards and climate change have worsened local conditions. See this element for more discussion on how the City is working to adapt and mitigate these impacts.

Environmental Stewardship

Small individual actions contribute to the larger goal of protecting and enhancing the natural environment, and residents and businesses can contribute to the protection of the City's natural resources, particularly on their properties. There already exists many local groups that volunteer their time to the City's conservation lands and provide a platform to reach the public. Topics can focus on:



Neighborhood clean-up at Sabin Point Park. Photo credit: Krista Moravec

- Sustainable lawn maintenance to reduce fertilizers and pollutants in the waterbodies.
- Use of native, drought tolerant plant species in gardens, including those that attract pollinators like bees and butterflies, to create corridors through neighborhoods.
- Preserving and caring for mature trees.
- Removal of invasive species.

Local events are also great ways to promote environmental stewardship and community pride. Many are organized by neighbors and held in local parks.

[58] Coastal Resources Management Council, http://www.crmc.ri.gov/news/2020_0116_naturebased.html.

Recreation

Many of the City's parks and recreation areas have natural features that are maintained by the City's Parks Department and volunteers from "Friends" groups using sustainable, environment-friendly approaches. More discussion on maintenance and upkeep can be found in this element.

Sustainability

There are many ways the City is working to minimize its carbon footprint. Under this element, learn more about policies and programs for municipal facilities, operations, and services that promote energy efficiency, waste reduction, and other ways to be more a more resilient community to face the challenges of climate change.

Partnerships

Natural resources are part of larger ecosystems that span across municipal and State boundaries. This requires the City to work with its neighboring cities and towns, the State of Rhode Island, including RIDEM and CRMC, and the many community groups and nonprofits protecting the region's environment. These partners are listed earlier under City and Nonprofit Organizations. Those currently include The Nature Conservancy, Rhode Island Recourse Recovery Corporation, Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank, Narragansett Bay Commission, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, and many others.

Shared resources with neighboring communities include:

- Seekonk and Providence Rivers (Pawtucket, Providence)
- Hundred Acre Cove (Barrington, Seekonk)
- Ten Mile River (Pawtucket, Seekonk)
- Runnins River (Pawtucket, Seekonk)

Partnerships not only work to protect and improve the health of shared resources, but also work on overall common goals like promoting environmental stewardship and best practices for resource management.

Moving Forward

For each goal, the City of East Providence will implement the following policies and actions to meet the opportunities and challenges for Natural Resources. Many goals and policies in other elements support natural resource protection, such as Natural Hazards and Climate Change; Recreation; History, Culture, and the Arts; and Waterfront District.

Goal NR1. Protect and enhance the City's upland and coastal natural resources for their social, economic, and environmental benefits and functions they provide to ecosystems and the residents of East Providence.

Policy NR1.1. Use local and State regulations, standards, and policies to minimize the impact of development and redevelopment projects on the City's natural environment.

A. Work with RIDOT on future road developments to incorporate nature-based solutions (NBS) for stormwater management. (Ongoing)

B. Continue to educate citizens on the environmental hazards of illegal dumping into catch basins and storm drains. (Ongoing)

C. Enforce compliance with Subdivision and Land Development regulations regarding the planting and clearing of trees. (Ongoing)

D. Use the *Rhode Island Low Impact Development Planning and Design Guidance Manual* for guidance on low impact development, landscaping, and green infrastructure (NBS) in new development and redevelopment projects, as appropriate for our urban and suburban setting. Identify ways to incentivize these techniques to reduce pavement and add more green space, particularly in redevelopment of the City's older commercial and industrial areas. (Ongoing)

E. Enforce compliance with City drainage and erosion standards to reduce harm to the City's natural areas by human disturbance and intrusion. Ensure that best management practices are followed for development in areas with proximity to the City's wetlands and waterways. (Ongoing)

F. Actively pursue state-level funding programs that help address environmental issues and concerns and build sustainable natural systems. These include, but are not limited to, those administered by RIDEM and Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank. (Ongoing)

Policy NR1.2. Identify opportunities to protect and enhance upland and coastal natural environments to improve wildlife and fish habitat, mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change, and add to the quality of life for residents.

A. Develop an invasive species management program for City properties, including conservation areas and associated waterways. Work with state agencies and local stakeholders to identify resources and partnerships for shared resources.

B. Consider hiring a City Forester to oversee and manage the City's tree and urban forestry programs.

C. Develop a long-term forest management plan for the City's public trees. Consider:

- Scope of work to include all City properties and street trees.
- Using a diversity of native species of trees.
- Assess the tree inventory database and develop a data management system and update needs.
- Needs for staff/resources for new plantings, addressing hazardous trees, routine up-keep and maintenance schedules.
- Adaptation strategies for climate change and hazard mitigation.

D. Coordinate with RIDEM and other agencies regarding implementation of locally appropriate action items within the Rhode Island Wildlife Action Plan. (Ongoing)

E. Inventory and prioritize significant upland and coastal natural resources areas including critical wildlife and fish habitats which should be preserved and protected. Consult RIDEM's COAs and its other mapping tools.

F. Identify opportunities to build, extend, and connect natural corridors along the City's waterways, including the Runnins and Ten Mile Rivers.

G. Explore the establishment of a Seekonk River Greenway.

H. Develop a list of criteria to help evaluate and prioritize areas for conservation easements, fee simple acquisition, and other preservation strategies, in the event that such opportunities arise.

I. Protect endangered and rare plant and animal species in East Providence based on the Rhode Island Natural Heritage Survey and incorporate the list as a standard tool in the development review process. Identify and catalog unique and rare plant and animal species.

J. Seek natural resource restoration opportunities, including eel grass planting and other measures, to protect wetlands and coastal features.

K. Continue to coordinate with Save the Bay on planning and implementing stormwater best management practices along the Ten Mile and Runnins Rivers. (Ongoing)

Goal NR2. Ensure that all residents have access to and receive the benefits of the City's upland and coastal natural resources and they recognize the importance of environmental stewardship.

Policy NR2.1. Ensure equitable access to a healthy environment, targeting neighborhoods that lack natural resources and other environmental amenities.

A. Prioritize neighborhoods for green infrastructure, NBS, and other natural resource enhancement projects, with a focus on those characterized as "on par/just behind," "lagging behind," or "below typical" targeted pathway in *Devising an Opportunity Investment Strategy for East Providence*.

B. Use the City's tree inventory and the Tree Equity Score tool to identify neighborhoods that lack tree canopy and prioritize these areas for new plantings.

C. Encourage meaningful recreation and natural resource amenities in higher density residential development and redevelopment projects for the benefit of residents. Prioritize connections, preferably walking and biking opportunities, between these projects and existing recreation and conservation areas, as appropriate.

Policy NR2.2. Promote environmental stewardship among City residents and businesses through local programs and partnerships with the state, neighboring communities, conservation groups, and neighborhood associations.

A. Work with State agencies, environmental organizations, community groups, and others to encourage residents to use more environment-friendly gardening and lawn care strategies, such as the use of organic lawn treatments in place of chemical-based treatments, particularly in areas close to the City's waterways and coast. (Ongoing)

B. Continue to educate residents about the benefits of trees in an urban area, best practices for tree maintenance on their properties, and planting native tree species. Promote the City's tree planting programs to increase participation. (Ongoing)

C. Continue work with Providence, Pawtucket, Barrington, Seekonk, Attleboro, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection around water quality issues of shared resources. (Ongoing)

D. Through the City's Stormwater Management Program, increase public education about illegal dumping into storm drains and the importance of keeping them clear of debris and trash. (Ongoing)

E. Provide and update information on unique, rare, and endangered species and other natural resources in the City. Reference available RIDEM's COA mapping tools.

F. Educate residents regarding invasive species and about landscape plantings that are appropriate for our region.

G. Work with the Ten Mile River Watershed Council to identify illegal disposal sites along the River and address this issue. Utilize Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation resources to ensure and communicate the proper disposal of "hard-to-dispose-of" items that otherwise as dumped on public property.

H. Develop a youth education program, possibly through classroom "adoption" and study of a natural resource.

I. Use diverse outreach methods, including print, radio, public access television, and social media, to promote respectable use of conservation areas by residents and visitors.

- Increase informational material on specific conservation areas in hard copy and electronic format including trail maps, natural resource amenities, and historic facts where appropriate.
- Develop these materials in collaboration with efforts to promote the City's historic and cultural resources and recreational facilities and programming, including promotion through the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council.

J. Develop an outreach campaign to discourage the feeding of wildlife, including deer, geese, and swans in city parks and conservation areas along the coastline where water quality is a concern, such as Sabin Point Park and Crescent Park.

NATURAL HAZARDS & CLIMATE CHANGE

The Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning defines a natural hazard as "an event or series of events caused by forces of nature that has a negative impact,"[59] such as severe storms like hurricanes, heat waves, drought, and coastal and inland flooding. These events can have short and long-term impacts on residents, businesses, infrastructure, and the natural environment. Climate change is the long-term change in average local and regional weather patterns and environmental conditions, which has been accelerated by human activities. Natural hazards are exacerbated by climate change, making storms more frequent and more damaging, temperatures hotter or colder for longer periods of time, and increasing sea levels and storm surge. According to *Resilient Rhody*, the state's climate resilience action plan,

> *Rhode Island will experience warmer air and water temperatures, more extreme weather events such as droughts, intense precipitation, severe storms and flooding, increasing rates of sea level rise, shorter winters and longer summers, and less snowfall and ice coverage. Climate change has the potential to pose significant risks for Rhode Island's water, wastewater, surface transportation, and energy infrastructures and utilities, our natural environment, and our health, welfare, and economic well-being.*[60]

This element discusses meeting long-term goals to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of natural hazards and increase resilience against the effects of climate change through short- and long-term planning objectives. The East Providence Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan has greater detail about the City's natural hazard profile, findings of a community vulnerability assessment, how the City prepares for, responds to, and recovers from natural hazard events, and an action plan to improve this response and recovery through prioritized mitigation strategies. It is not the intention to repeat what is in this plan here, but to take it and expand for long-range resilience planning.

A companion element in the Comprehensive Plan is the Sustainability Element, which focuses on how the City can minimize its contributions to the larger global climate crisis by reducing carbon emissions from its operations and facilities, encouraging residents and businesses to do the same.

Snapshot

Priority Natural Hazards and Climate Trends

Two resources were used to identify the top natural hazards and climate trends the City is most vulnerable to: East Providence Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan and the summary of the City's Community Resilience Building Workshop through the state's Municipal Resilience Program. As noted above, the East Providence Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (NHMP) is one of many important tools used to plan for

[59] Comprehensive Planning Guidance Handbook #12 Planning for Natural Hazards and Climate Change.
[60] Impacts on Rhode Island at Climatechange.ri.gov.

natural hazard events. It evaluates the frequency and intensity of past storms, the impacts they had on the community, and outlines an action plan to prepare for future events and minimize impacts. The NHMP is updated every five years, and decision makers should always refer to the most current NHMP, and other local, state, and federal plans and studies, for the most current data on trends and the impacts on the City and region.

East Providence was designated as a "Resilient Rhody" municipality after completing its Community Resilience Building (CRB) Workshop through the state's Municipal Resilience Program (MRP) in spring 2021. During the CRB Workshop, municipalities identify their top climate hazards and adaptation actions to increase climate resilience.

As a bayside community bounded by multiple rivers, East Providence is particularly susceptible to coastal and riverine hazards like flooding and intense storms including hurricanes and Nor'easters. Factoring in climate change, increasingly wet and intense precipitation events and sea level rise will alter the geographic extent and severity of these hazards, placing many more people, properties, and assets at risk of displacement and harm.[61] Current modeling also suggests that storms will become more frequent and intense in the Atlantic Basin, raising the risks of a high impact storm event impacting the region.[62] Climate change is not limited to coastal and riverine hazards. Intense precipitation events can, for example, exacerbate existing urban flooding problems, while rising temperatures will place increasing stress on urban environments with little natural cooling capacity. The following provides an overview of the high-priority natural hazards and climate threats for the City.

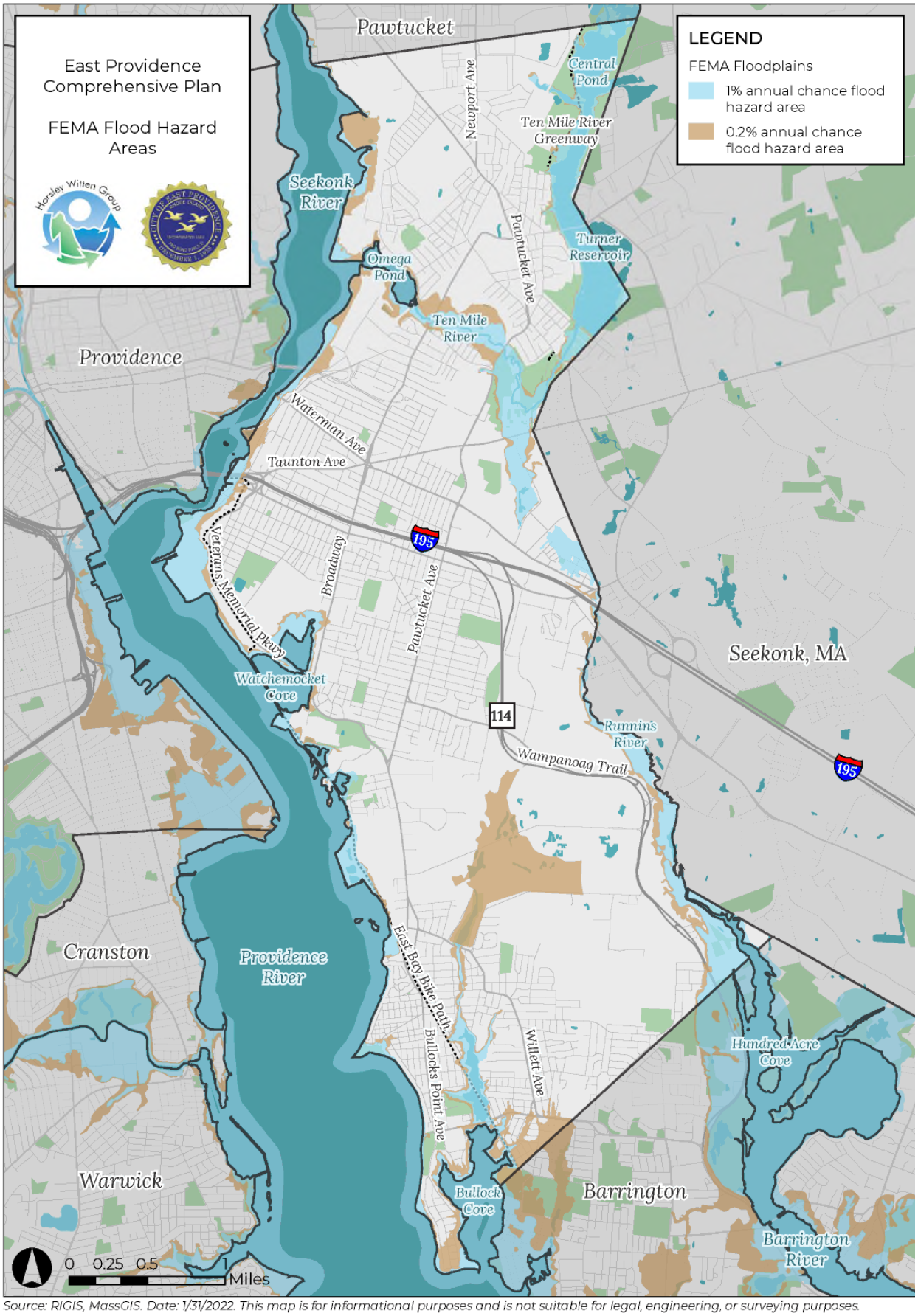
Flooding

Flooding is a localized hazard that, in East Providence, generally results from excessive rainfall but can also be caused by coastal storm surges, inadequate drainage, or rapidly melting snow. Flooding is East Providence's most commonly occurring natural hazard due to the City's geographical distribution of rivers and streams and long coastline; development is also concentrated within these areas. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) identify areas of the City that are within the 1% and 0.2% annual chance floodplain (meaning that, within any given year, the probability of flooding occurring is 1% and 0.2%, respectively) (Map CC.1).

The 1% annual chance floodplain is also commonly referred to as the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). Note that the FIRMs do not account for projected sea level rise.

Riverine flooding occurs when rivers or streams overflow their banks and partially or completely inundate the adjacent floodplain. When land next to or within the floodplain is developed, floods can become costly and dangerous events. Areas along Runnins River to the north of Interstate 195 and immediately adjacent to the Ten Mile River are most prone to riverine flooding in East Providence.

[61] Resilient Rhody, 14-15, available at http://climatechange.ri.gov/documents/resilientrhody18.pdf.
[62] Ibid.



Source: RIGIS, MassGIS. Date: 1/31/2022. This map is for informational purposes and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

Map CC.1. FEMA Flood Hazard Areas.

Urban flooding occurs in low-lying or developed areas of floodplains that have inadequate drainage to accommodate flows. In East Providence and many other cities, historical patterns of growth (especially during the post-World War II suburbanization era) modified floodplains and wetlands to accommodate development. The loss of such open land—natural storage basins for floodwaters—increases impervious surface coverage and stormwater runoff, which can overwhelm drainage infrastructure.

Coastal flooding includes storm surge flooding and tidal flooding. Tidal flooding, sometimes referred to as "sunny day flooding" or "nuisance flooding," is the temporary inundation of low-lying coastal areas caused by high and extreme tides. Areas susceptible to tidal flooding include Veterans Memorial Parkway at Watchemoket Cove, Sabin Point Park, the west shore of Bullocks Cove, and Crescent View Avenue at Bullocks Cove. The City Department of Public Works has identified areas and specific locations with a history of flooding and listed in Table CC.1. These include the obvious coastal locations and low-lying areas near rivers and streams. The list also includes street and neighborhood areas where relatively flat topography and localized low spots result in very short-term poor drainage flooding, along with larger areas prone to widespread basement flooding due to high water tables and/or sluggish passage of stormwater through the City's underground drainage system.

Table CC.1. Identified Flood Hazard Areas in East Providence

Identified Flood Hazard Areas	Type of Flooding
Residential and commercial properties in State Street neighborhood (north of Waterman Avenue, east of Rockaway Avenue, and west of Seekonk MA border).	Riverine flooding along Runnins River.
Residential, private country club, and open space areas located along the Ten Mile River east of North Broadway and north of Central Street. Includes the Agawam/Fynn Playground and part of Pawtucket Avenue. Up to ten residences are potentially affected.	Riverine flooding along Ten Mile River.
Commercial area near the intersection of Commercial Way and Taunton Avenue. Transportation and businesses can be impacted.	Urban flooding during heavy precipitation events due to low elevation and poor drainage.
Commercial area along Newport Avenue between Moore Street and Vista Drive. Structural flooding is rare, but travel can be impacted.	Urban flooding during heavy precipitation events due to poor drainage.
Corner of Ferris Avenue and Circle Street. Travel and traffic circulation can be disrupted in the Circle Street neighborhood.	Urban flooding during heavy precipitation events due to poor drainage.
Western segment of Dewey Avenue. Flooding can impact local residents and block traffic access to Dewey Avenue and Vanderland Avenue.	Urban flooding during heavy precipitation events due to poor drainage.
Portion of Pawtucket Avenue (Rtes. 103 and 114) in front of Bayview Academy. Can result in significant traffic disruptions along this major north-south thoroughfare.	Urban flooding during heavy precipitation events due to poor drainage.
Portion of Tripps Lane. Can disrupt transportation to/from a major employer and nursing home.	Urban flooding during heavy precipitation events.
Intersection of South Broadway and Lee Road. Can affect local residences and close South Broadway to traffic.	Urban flooding.
Residential and commercial area east of Willet Avenue, south of Forbes Street, and north of Barrington town line. Can cause widespread basement flooding and local disruption of traffic within the neighborhood.	Urban flooding due to flat terrain, poor drainage, and high-water tables.

Identified Flood Hazard Areas	Type of Flooding
Residential area between Grosvenor Avenue and I-195, west of North Hull Street, and east of North Rose Street. Residential flooding and traffic disruptions can occur.	Urban flooding during heavy precipitation events due to undersized drainage lines underneath I-195.
Veterans Memorial Parkway adjacent to Watchemoket Cove. Road closures result in significant traffic disruptions.	Coastal flooding during severe weather events that coincide with high tides. Sea level rise is expected to increase flooding frequency at this location.
Recreational area of Sabin Point and surrounding areas. Several low-lying homes abutting the park are vulnerable to storm surge-related flooding.	Coastal flooding during severe weather events that coincide with high tides and due to storm surge. Sea level rise is expected to increase flooding frequency and its extent at this location.
Residential area along the shoreline of Bullocks Cove and Crescent View Avenue near the cove. Low-lying homes are vulnerable to storm surge-related flooding.	Coastal flooding during severe weather events that coincide with high tides and due to storm surge. Sea level rise is expected to increase flooding frequency and its extent at this location.
Residential area within Taunton, Sutton, Irving, and Alexander Avenues.	Urban flooding during heavy precipitation events.

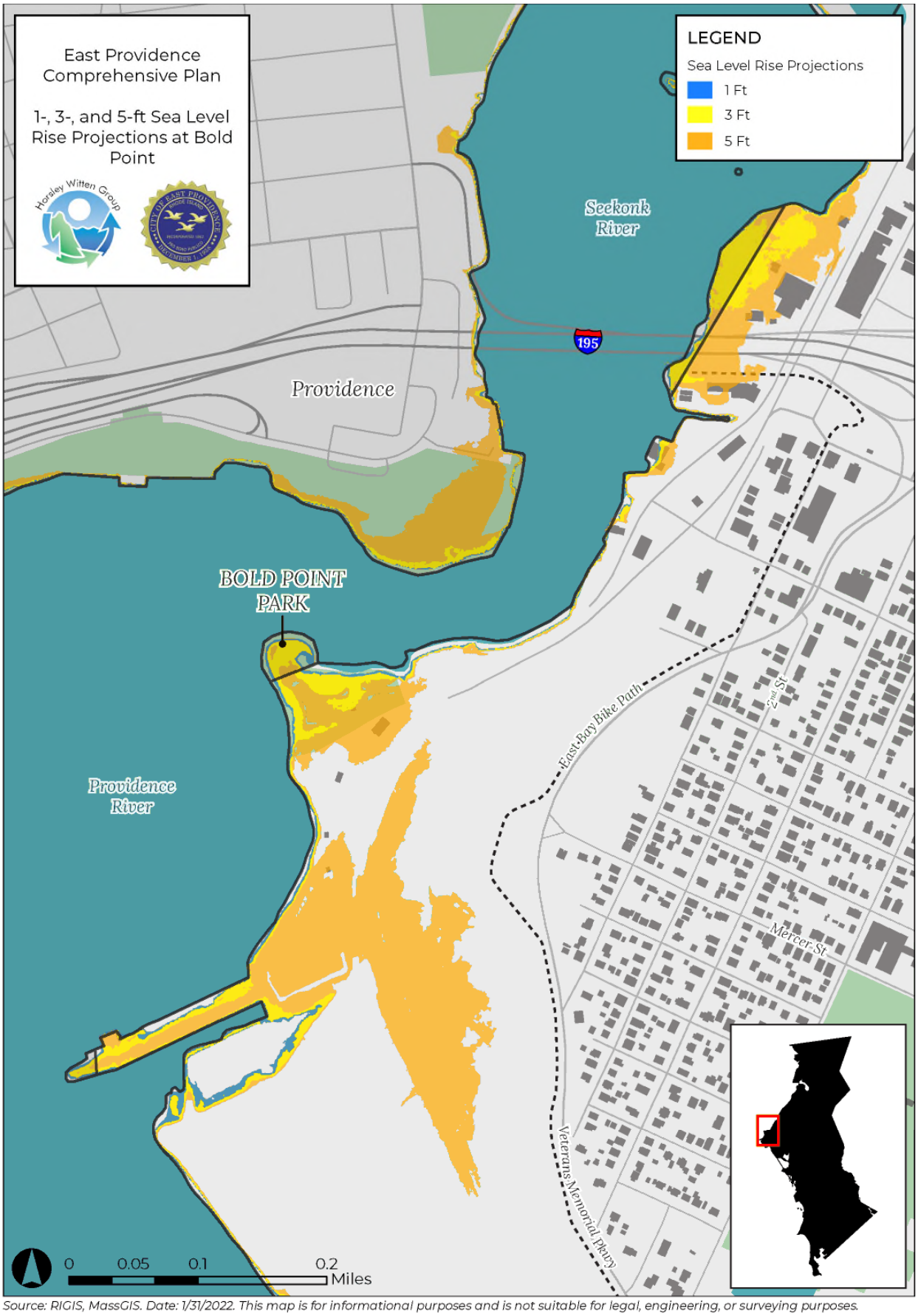
Source: East Providence Department of Public Works and Public Comment

Sea Level Rise

Current projections and planning horizons for this Comprehensive Plan are approximately one foot of sea level rise in 2035, two feet in 2050, and five feet in 2100 and can be viewed on STORMTOOLS,[63] an online viewer developed by University of Rhode Island Ocean Engineering Program for the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) using data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). These projections will predict increasing impacts of storm surge and tidal flooding due to higher "mean-tide" levels (dependent also upon the time of year and where the event falls in the tide chart). Based on these projections, inundation as a result of sea level rise is expected at:

- Areas around the I-195 abutments (Map CC.2)
- Bold Point (Map CC.2)
- Watchemoket Cove (Map CC.3)
- Sabin Point (Map CC.4)
- Runnins River/Hundred Acre Cove (Map CC.5)
- Vals Creek and Upper Bullock Cove (Map CC.6)
- Narragansett Terrance and Bullock Cove (Map CC.7)

[63] https://stormtools-mainpage-crc-uri.hub.arcgis.com/



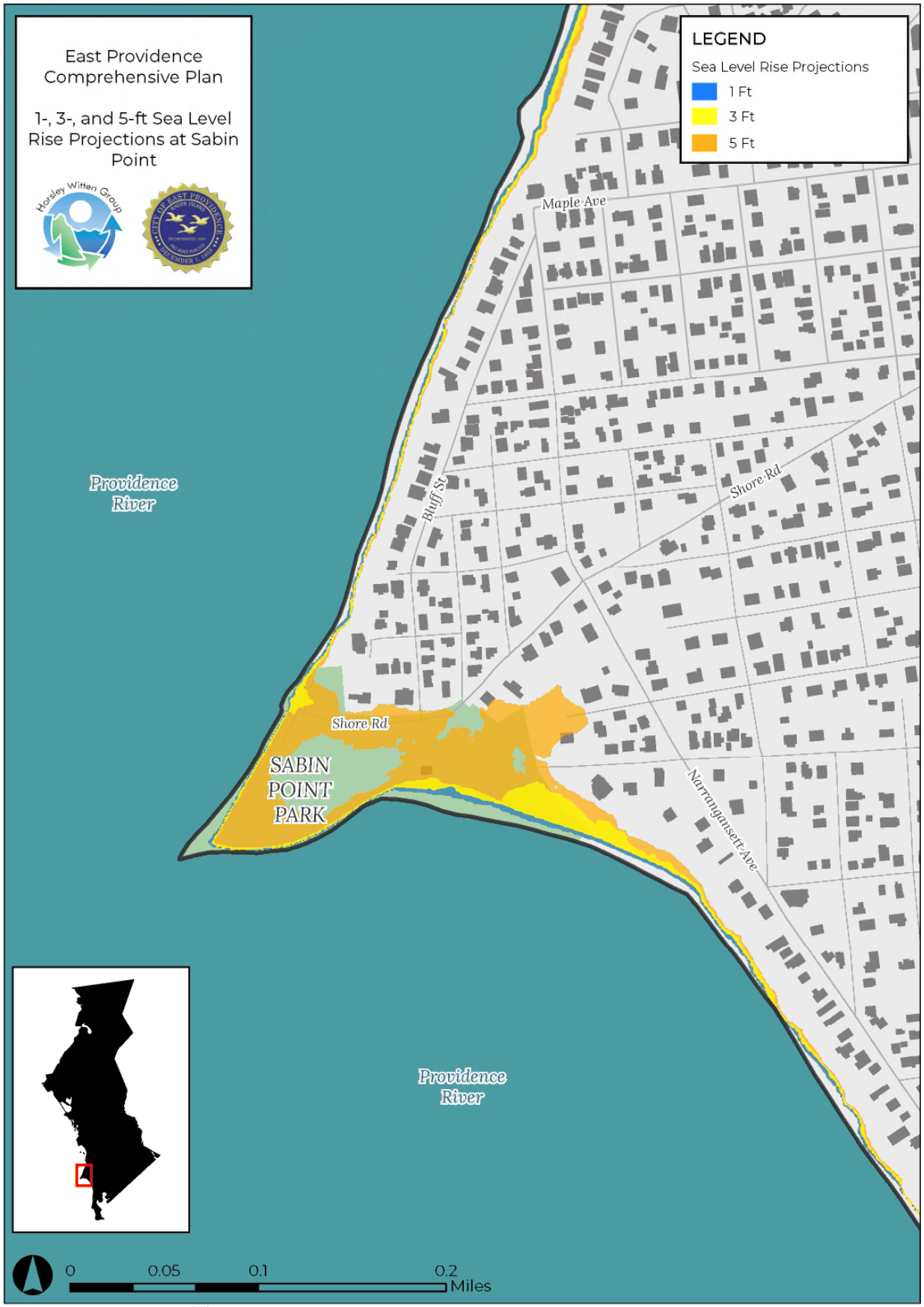
Source: RIGIS, MassGIS. Date: 1/31/2022. This map is for informational purposes and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

Map CC.2. Sea Level Rise Projections at Bold Point Park/I-195.



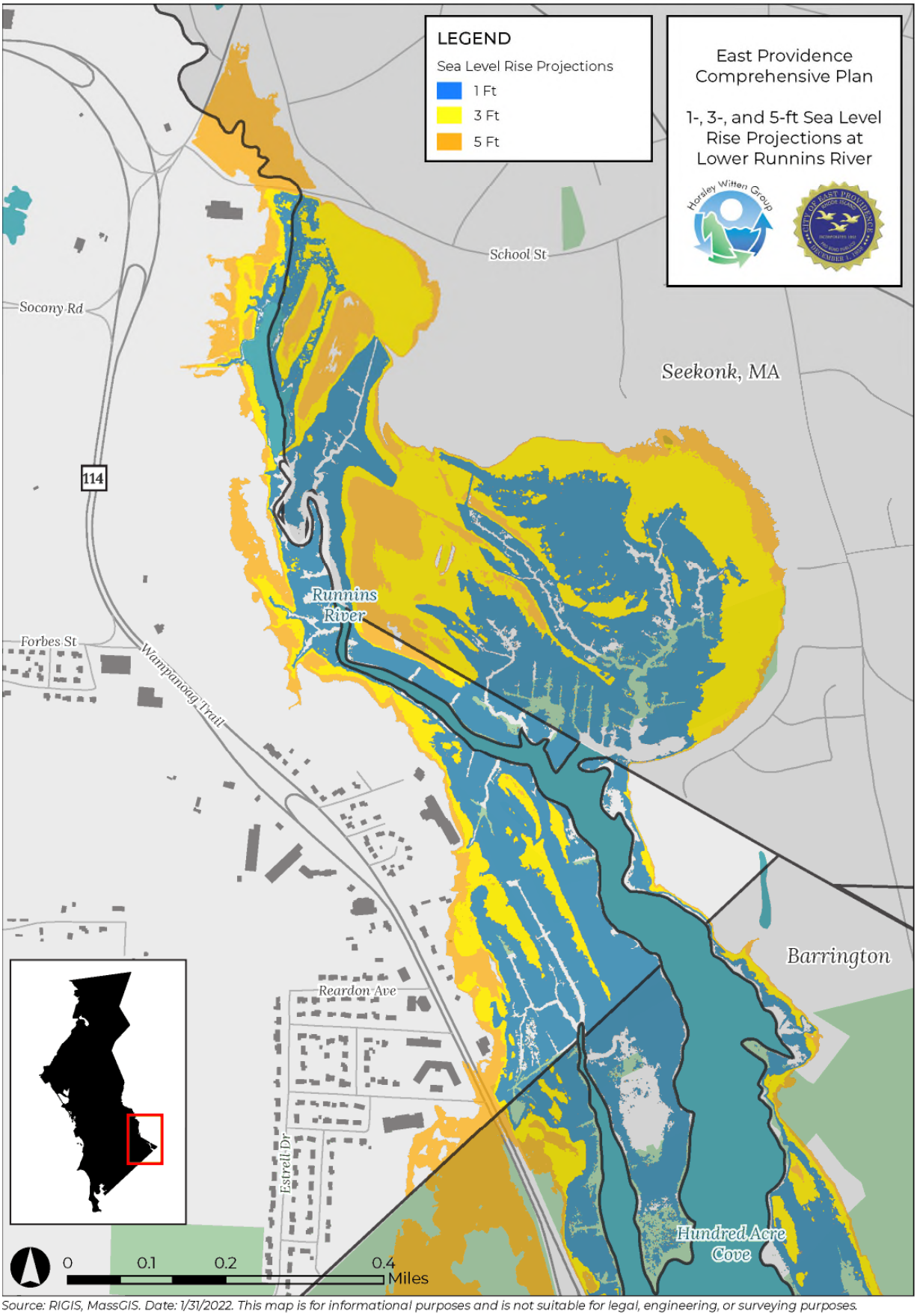
Source: RIGIS, MassGIS. Date: 3/2/2022. This map is for informational purposes and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

Map CC.3. Sea Level Rise Projections at Watchemoket Cove.



Source: RIGIS, MassGIS. Date: 1/31/2022. This map is for informational purposes and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

Map CC.4. Sea Level Rise Projections at Sabin Point.



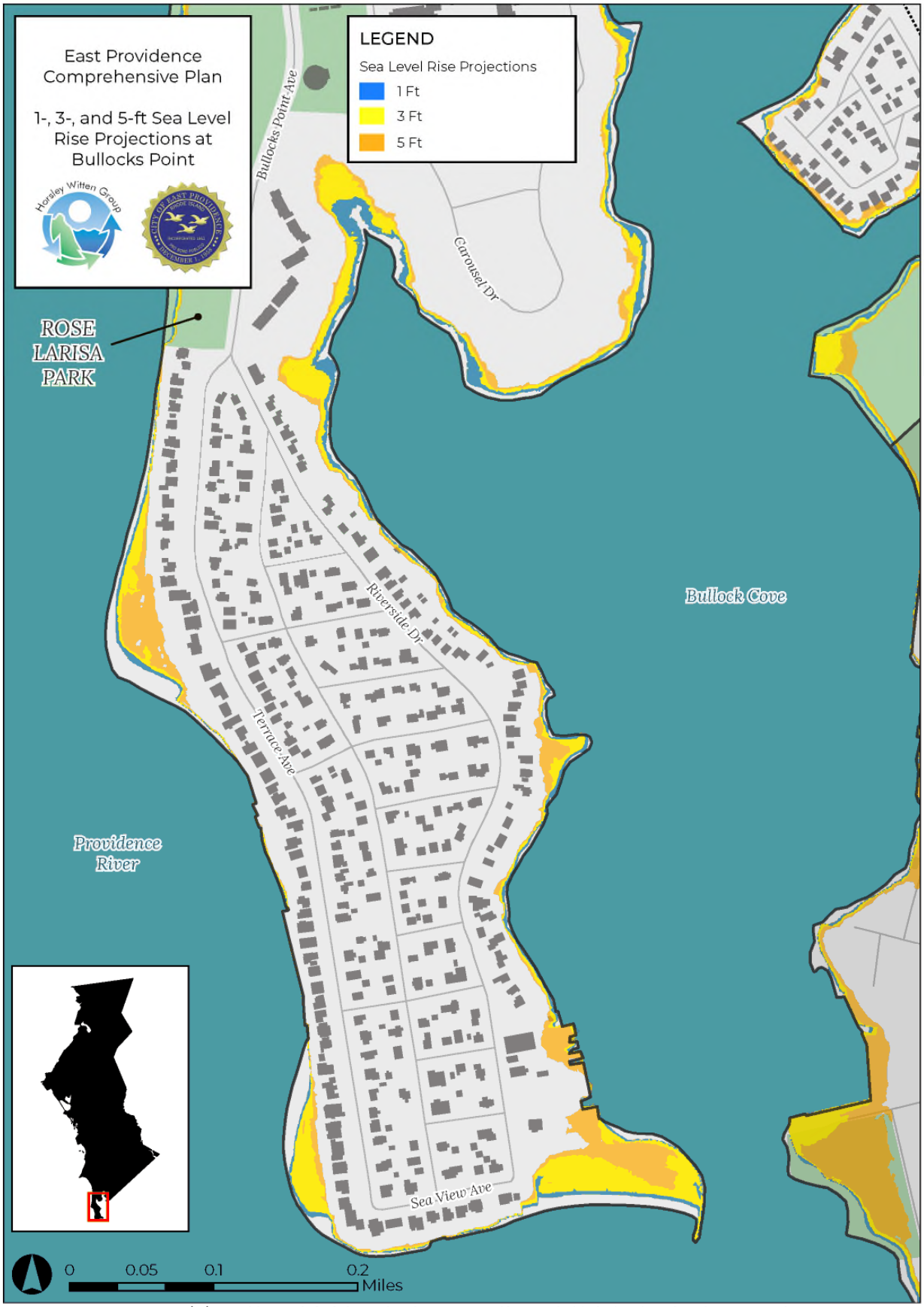
Source: RIGIS, MassGIS. Date: 1/31/2022. This map is for informational purposes and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

Map CC.5. Sea Level Rise Projections at Runnins River/Hundred Acre Cove.



Source: RIGIS, MassGIS. Date: 1/31/2022. This map is for informational purposes and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

Map CC.6. Sea Level Rise Projections at Vals Creek and Upper Bullock Cove.



Source: RIGIS, MassGIS. Date: 1/31/2022. This map is for informational purposes and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

Map CC.7. Sea Level Rise Projections at Bullock Point and Bullock Cove.

Properties with the earliest impacts, one foot by 2035, are along the upper reaches of Bullock Cove, Runnins River, and Hundred Acre Cove. For all areas listed above, structures, including buildings and infrastructure, will see impacts at three to five feet of sea level rise. Many of these areas overlap with those listed in Table CC.1, indicating that these areas could remain inundated for extended periods of time, if not permanently.

It is important to note that climate data are frequently updated, and this will in turn help CRMC refine and better predict areas that will be impacted by sea level rise. It will use the most current data from NOAA to evaluate projects for coastal hazard risk.

Coastal Erosion

Coastal erosion is a result of dynamic natural processes like wave and current patterns, hurricanes, and coastal flooding. Erosion wears away bluffs and moves beach sand and barriers. Human activities also greatly affect erosion rates; for example, erosion rates in areas adjacent to shoreline protection structures often increase due to disruptions to sediment transport patterns.[64] The area most affected by coastal erosion in East Providence is the shoreline along the Providence River south of the City's Wastewater Treatment Plant in Riverside. The shoreline there consists of a steep bluff that crests roughly 20 to 35 feet above sea level. Most of the bluff is occupied by private residential properties. The most southern extent is Crescent Park (see discussion in **Natural Resources Element**). Some residents have undertaken approved measures to slow erosion on their properties and the City is addressing the collapsing seawall and erosion within the park. But natural erosion, increasing sea level rise, and anticipated increases in storms and storm surge will almost certainly place more homes at higher risk due to bluff erosion.



Seawall under construction at Crescent Park, March 2023. Photo credit: Krista Moravec

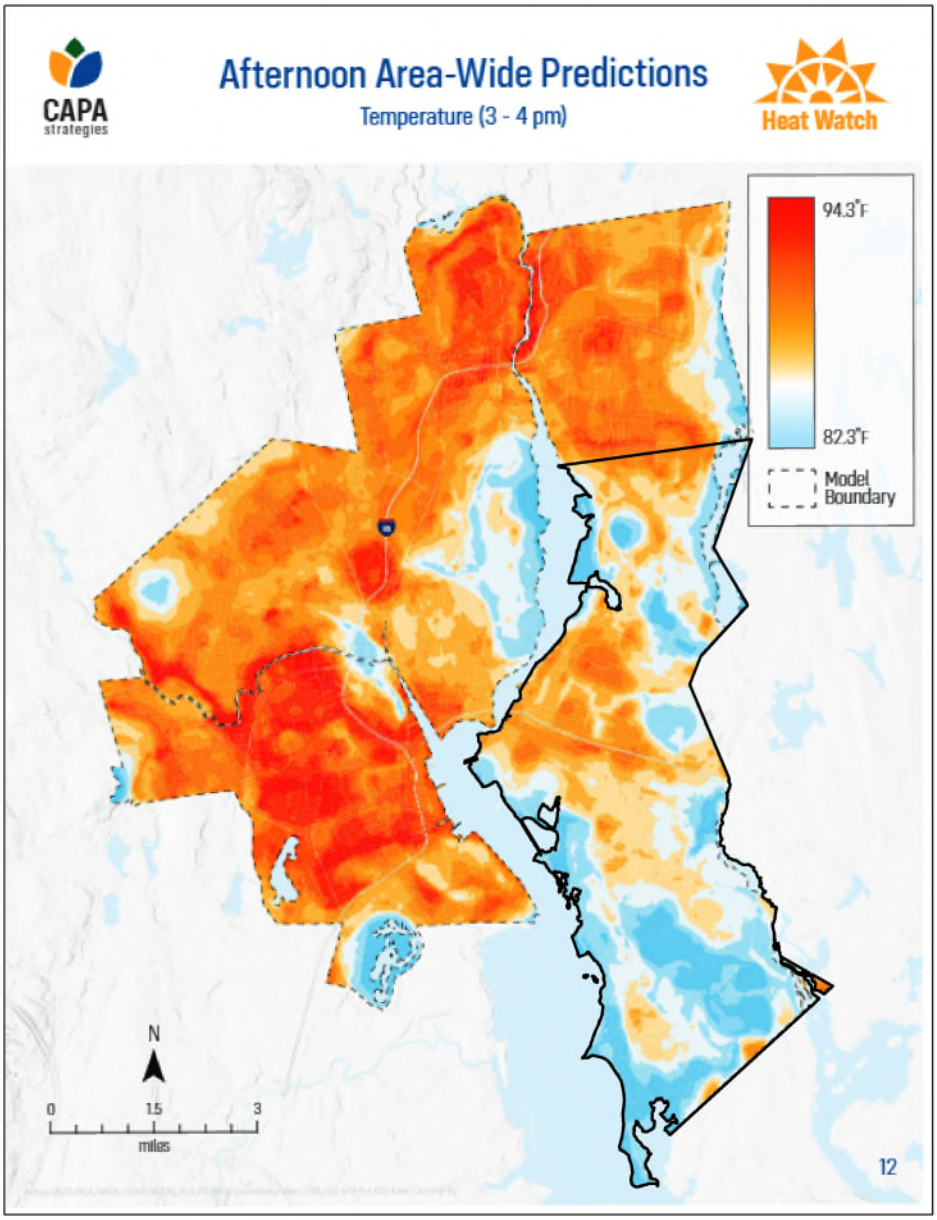
Areas along the waterfront in central and northern East Providence slated for future development are also at risk of coastal erosion. Development planning in these areas is being performed with careful consideration of these risks in cooperation with CRMC and other agencies as appropriate. As sea level rise increases the extent of coastal lands subject to normal wave and current patterns and expands the reach and intensity of storm-related hazards, more coastal lands will be subject to erosion.[65]

[64] CRMC Beach Samp, page 4-32 (138)
[65] Rhode Island Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (3-172, pg. 205).

Extreme Heat and Drought

Heat-related hazards include extreme heat and heat waves. Heat waves in New England are defined as three consecutive days where the high temperature equals or exceeds 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Climate change has led to more frequent extreme heat events and temperature increases. Since the beginnings of the 20th century, the annual average temperature in Rhode Island has increased by more than three degrees Fahrenheit.[66] When high temperatures are accompanied by high humidity, risks of heat-related illnesses increase. At-risk populations include young children and the elderly, outdoor workers, and individuals without access to adequate cooling. Additionally, periods of heat and humidity are often accompanied by lower air quality, increasing symptoms for people of all ages with respiratory issues.

Afternoon Areawide Predictions for Temperature, 3-4 pm



Source: CAPA Strategies, Providence, East Providence, Pawtucket, & Central Falls, Rhode Island Heat Watch Report, p. 12

Heat can vary widely across a community, with areas of high shade and natural vegetation recording cooler temperatures on the same day as compared to areas with lots of paved surfaces and little shade. A 2020 study by the CAPA Heat Watch program recorded consistently higher temperatures in the City Center and Rumford, concentrated along I-195 particularly at Broadway and towards Pawtucket Avenue, the neighborhood around Pierce Field, Six Corners, neighborhoods abutting the Henderson Expressway, and Newport Avenue near the Pawtucket border.[67] All these areas dominated by parking lots, buildings, and limited canopy and green space.

[66] Rhode Island Hazard Mitigation Plan 2018 update draft (3-95, pg. 128).
[67] CAPA Strategies, "Providence, East Providence, Pawtucket, & Central Falls Rhode Island Heat Watch," 7

The City has seen a lower risk of drought. Drought is characterized as a continuous period of time during which rainfall is significantly below the average for a particular area. Drought differs from other natural hazards in that it evolves over months or even years and, while causing little if any direct structural damage, can have profound economic, environmental, and social impacts. Serious drought conditions are uncommon in the Northeast. The generally-accepted "drought of record" in the southern New England area occurred in the mid-1960s. Shorter-term droughts have occurred on a rough average of every twenty years over the last century. Water quality in the City's ponds, including Central Pond, Turner Reservoir, and Willet Pond, is affected by periods of lean rainfall during the warmer times of year, causing algae blooms that are exacerbated when not adequately "flushed out" by the flow from upstream.

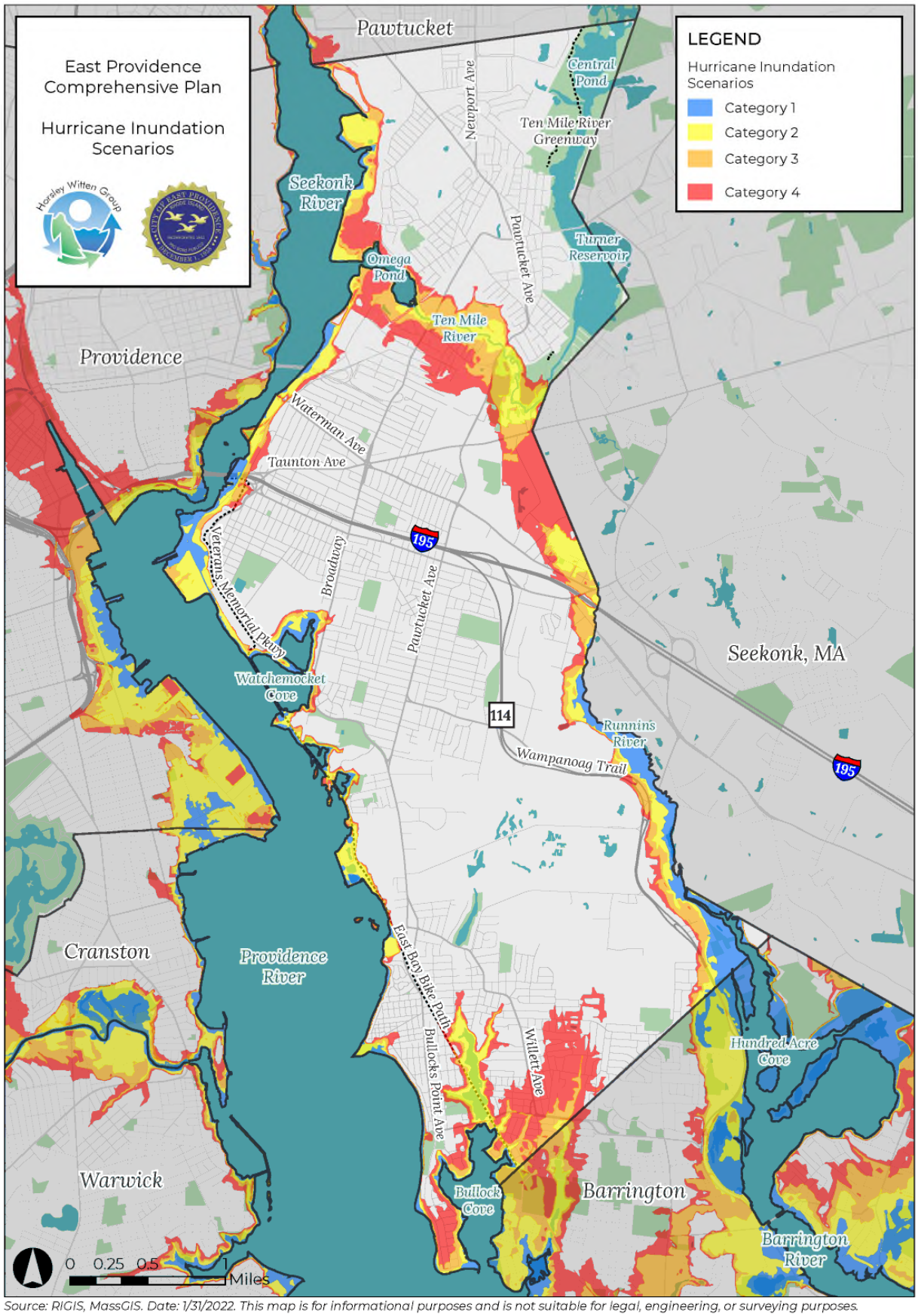
The City of East Providence is served by the Providence Water Supply Board (PWSB) and at least 95% of City residents are served by City water through the PWSB from the Scituate Reservoir, which has been a very reliable source of quality water over the years. The small percentage of residents who are not connected to City water can experience water supply issues during times of drought. It would be optimal to get these remaining households connected to the water system.

Hurricanes and Tropical Storms

Hurricanes and tropical storms, also known as tropical cyclones, are large-scale severe storms that contain very strong winds and copious moisture that present multiple hazards, including tidal flooding and storm surges, damaging winds, riverine flooding, and debris accumulation. Nor'easters are a type of extra-tropical cyclones. They commonly occur in the winter and are characterized by northeasterly winds and significant precipitation. A Nor'easter can remain offshore for extended periods of times, causing damage as it pummels communities with prolonged wind, rain and snow, and storm surge events. East Providence's steep coastal bluffs provide some protection from coastal storm surge generated by smaller storms.

A storm surge of 10 to 20 feet above the normal tide would be expected from a Category 2 or higher storm where the center passes west of Narragansett Bay on its way northward. This would flood many waterfront properties in East Providence and push seawater inland and upstream into river systems, resulting in substantial property damage (Map CC.8). Erosion of the coastal bluff along the shore south of the City's Wastewater Treatment Plant is expected during a severe storm surge event.

Farther north along the waterfront, recreational facilities including City parks and the East Bay Bike Path are highly exposed to a large storm surge and associated debris. These incidents are highly tide-dependent but can affect the City's lowest-lying areas like Watchemoket Cove, Bold Point Park, and Sabin Point Park. Upstream, storm surge can affect areas along Annawomscutt Brook, Runnins River, Barrington River, and Ten Mile River. A hurricane of any category is sufficient to cause widespread tree and power line damage resulting in debris accumulation and power outages. A direct hit from a major hurricane (Category 3 storms and above) would damage or destroy most trees and result in a near complete loss of power across the entirety of East Providence, complicating efforts to assist residents and begin recovery operations.



Source: RIGIS, MassGIS. Date: 1/31/2022. This map is for informational purposes and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

Map CC.8. Hurricane Inundation Scenarios

Nor'easters

The coastal Northeastern U.S. is very prone to regional-scale mid-latitude storm systems, which are often several hundred miles wide and can produce a very wide variety of weather at any given time in our region. As an example, a storm that is causing heavy snow with very cold temperatures in western and northern New England could be producing damaging ice accretion in central New England, and warm, wind-driven heavy rain here in the coastal plain. The term "Nor'easter" is derived from storms which pass along the coast or offshore to our east, where the counter-clockwise circulation around the storm center results in (generally cold) northeasterly winds in our area. Occasionally, one of these storms will move northward to the west of Narragansett Bay and East Providence bringing with it strong (and relatively warm) southerly winds. These storms are sometimes referred to as "inside runners" as they travel inland with respect to our location.

Given the relatively large scale of these storms, effects of any given storm are felt throughout the City and statewide. During southerly events, coastal locations of East Providence are somewhat more prone to damaging wind gusts given the open exposure to the south. This might cause southerly gales and localized damage to trees and power lines and can also produce a couple of feet of storm surge up the bay, which needs to be monitored if it comes during a time high tide.

Winter-Weather Hazards

Snowfall, while lower here than in areas farther inland, is an important component of winter weather in East Providence. Seasonal snowfall averages 34 to 38 inches. Historically, storms featuring 6 inches or more of snowfall occur on average a little less than twice per season, while storms of 10 inches or more have occurred an average of about four times in ten years. Nearly every year, storms in East Providence start as snow and then change over to rain, commonly after a few inches of snow accumulation. The impact of these "changeover" storms depends heavily on temperatures just prior and immediately following the storm, as well as how far above freezing temperatures get while rain falls. On occasion, hard freezes immediately follow these changeover storms, disrupting transportation until roads can be treated.

What We Heard

What the community highlighted as the City's challenges, opportunities, and needs:

- The City needs to make climate change its main focus for all future decisions and planning, particularly when considering areas of the City or residents that are most vulnerable to climate change impacts.
- Residents expressed support for the Waterfront District but cautioned that development must be aware of the floodplain and associated hazard risks.
- The City needs to take a leading role educating private homeowners on how natural hazards and climate change may affect their properties. Residents were mixed on how to best protect shorelines from coastal hazards, especially erosion.
- Residents were interested in increasing the City's use of "green infrastructure" or "nature-based solutions" to mitigate climate change impacts like flooding and heat. The City should develop ways to encourage private developers to use green infrastructure in their projects.

- Residents are concerned about inland flooding in neighborhoods and many expressed concern about the City's current stormwater and flood control activities.

Challenges, Needs, and Opportunities

Resilience Programs

Current resilience programs and plans allow the City to prioritize needs and take advantage of opportunities like state and federal funding. The following provides an overview of these programs.

East Providence Emergency Management

East Providence Emergency Management maintains its NHMP with the latest trends and data on natural hazards and potential mitigation actions. The NHMP is updated on a five-year cycle with its last update in 2022. A NHMP approved by FEMA is required (every five years) to maintain the City's eligibility for various FEMA funding opportunities. An approved plan also retains the City's participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and the NFIP's Community Rating System (CRS).

East Providence Emergency Management works with the City's Engineering Division and Building Inspector to implement the NHMP and coordinate floodplain management responsibilities. The City's floodplain management program responsibilities include:

- Enforcing the standards of the City's Floodplain Overlay district.
- Maintaining the City's FIRMs and providing comments on updated FIRMs as necessary.
- Implementing floodplain management activities that increase the City's participation in FEMA's CRS.
- Responding and maintain records of floodplain-related inquiries from property owners, realtors, and insurers.
- Monitoring local stream and tide gauges to inform East Providence's flood forecasting and public alerts responsibilities.

As noted above, the City participates in the NFIP, which allows East Providence property owners to purchase federally backed flood insurance for their properties. Since 2014, the City has participated in the CRS, a voluntary NFIP program that provides discounts on resident and commercial policies in communities that go above and beyond the NFIP's minimum required standards. As of 2023, the City is a Class 8 community, giving policyholders a 10% and 5% discount on policies within and outside the Special Flood Hazard Area, respectively.[68]

Municipal Resilience Program

As noted earlier, East Providence was designated as a "Resilient Rhody" municipality after completing its CRB Workshop through the state's MRP in spring 2021. During the CRB workshops, municipalities are prompted to identify their top climate hazards and adaptation actions to increase climate resilience. Vulnerable populations and environmental justice are considered. Having completed the CRB Workshop and received designation as a "Resilient Rhody" community, East Providence is now eligible for MRP grant funding to implement priority capital projects that will improve climate resilience. Other Resilient Rhody

[68] FEMA, October 2021 CRS Eligible Communities (from https://www.fema.gov/floodplain-management/community-rating-system).

municipalities with similar climate concerns to East Providence have, for example, used MRP funding to install green stormwater infrastructure, construct flood walls to protect critical infrastructure, and increase culvert capacity.[69]

Coastal Neighborhood and Waterfront Investments

The City must ensure that current and future public and private investments in the Waterfront District and coastal neighborhoods are considering future projections of sea level rise and inundation associated with storm surge. It is CRMC's policy to use the most current projections available from NOAA in its review and issuance of permits within the coastal areas under its jurisdiction. Local reviews should use the same approach as proposals come before the City. STORMTOOLS is a valuable resource for the local decision makers and those proposing development to ensure that future investments are made understanding risks with the most current data available. For properties at risk, the City might encourage increased nature-based solutions to manage stormwater or green infrastructure to reduce impervious surfaces onsite. Areas of inundation might also be considered "undevelopable" when calculating setbacks and developers can be encouraged to place buildings outside of these areas all together.

Long-term Planning for Resilience

For properties that repeatedly experience flooding and property damage or are projected to be inundated due to sea level rise, the City might want to consider whether public or private investments should continue. Equally, the City should also consider investments after disaster events and how those activities are managed. Some example policies include:

- Disaster recovery ordinance: Provides legal authority for actions that expedite recovery with emergency powers to protect public health and safety and foster beneficial long-term recovery outcomes. It also authorizes the establishment of a recovery management organization and mandates the development of a disaster recovery framework.[70] It also often includes pre-established Memorandums of Agreement/Understanding (MOA/O) with local contractors/vendors that set rates to avoid elevated pricing during emergencies.
- Disaster reconstruction ordinance: Establishes legal authority and decision-making protocols for expediting permitting for repairs and reconstruction on private property, while at the same time identifying and capturing critical opportunities for increasing community resilience to future disasters and protecting environmental resources. The ordinance is adopted before an event and establishes standard operating procedures for review and permitting for reconstruction of private property after a disaster. An added bonus is that a community can get credit for developing such an ordinance under the CRS program.[71]
- Post-disaster moratorium: A post-disaster moratorium on repairing or rebuilding structures temporarily restricts building activity following a major disaster. Communities have the authority to implement such restrictions post-event. The authorization to enact a moratorium can also be found within a comprehensive recovery ordinance that is adopted prior to a hazard event. Such ordinances typically establish the framework for a variety of post-disaster tasks, such as debris

[69] Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank, Municipal Resilience Program Action Grant Funded Project Descriptions.
[70] https://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/training/disaster-recovery-preparedness.html.
[71] Ibid.

management, stabilization of damaged buildings, identification of other life/safety risks, repair of damaged infrastructure, mitigation options, and funding to rebuild to different standards or to potentially relocate certain uses.[72]

- **Managed retreat**: Managed retreat, or the voluntary movement and transition of people and ecosystems away from vulnerable coastal areas, is increasingly becoming part of the conversation as coastal states and communities face difficult questions on how best to protect people, development, infrastructure, and coastal ecosystems from sea-level rise, flooding, and land loss. The aim of managed retreat is to proactively move people, structures, and infrastructure out of harm's way before disasters or other threats occur to avoid damage, maximize benefits, and minimize costs for communities and ecosystems.[73]

These long-term policies have direct impacts on residents and property owners, and require extensive, targeted engagement to educate the public on the pros and cons of each and to understand needs, challenges, and other concerns of the community.

Natural Resources Protection and Restoration

Natural resources are significantly important and our first line of defense against the impacts of natural hazard events and climate change. For example:

- Wooded areas, wetlands, and floodplains store and absorb rain to minimize flooding.
- Trees provide shade and cool air temperatures.
- Coastal marshes absorb and buffer against storm surge.

The exacerbation of risk is due to human activities that have removed or minimized the functions and services provided by these systems. There are opportunities to reestablish natural systems and enhance those that still exist to improve their capacity. Nature-based solutions (NBS) and green infrastructure strategies are discussed in the **Natural Resources Element** under a section with the same title used here. It discusses ways to restore and enhance these systems by:

- Using development regulations and policies to review new development and redevelopment projects and integrate NBS and other green infrastructure approaches city-wide. As noted above, using available climate data in the Waterfront District and coastal neighborhoods will be critical.
- Integrating NBS strategies into stormwater management to enhance the existing municipal piped system.
- Managing the City's existing conservation areas and prioritizing protection of conservation opportunity areas identified by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's (RIDEM) Wildlife Action Plan.
- Enhancing the City's tree canopy to reduce the urban heat island affect.
- Addressing coastal erosion through innovating approaches like living shorelines that create natural buffers against erosion and sea level rise.

[72] https://planningforhazards.colorado.gov/post-disaster-building-moratorium.
[73] https://www.georgetownclimate.org/adaptation/toolkits/managed-retreat-toolkit/introduction.html?full.

Public Infrastructure and Facilities at Risk

Through the NHMP and the CRB Workshop, the City confirmed and inventoried municipal-owned and managed infrastructure, facilities, and operations most at risk from storm events and climate change impacts. Overall, infrastructure and facilities located in areas impacted by flooding, storm surge, and projected sea level rise are priority for mitigation and adaptation strategies. These include roads, bridges, public bus routes and shelters, sidewalks and other walking amenities, and the stormwater conveyance system of pipes, catch basins, and outfalls. Many of these facilities are both municipal- and state-owned facilities, and the City will need to coordinate with the respective agencies to ensure local priorities are being met.

The Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program (SPP) identified municipal- and state-owned transportation infrastructure assets that may be affected by sea level rise and storm surge. The top 10 most volunerable road assets in East Providence are:

- Portions of I-195 East and West, including exit ramps
- Wampanoag Trail
- Veterans Memorial Parkway
- Henderson Bridge
- Crescent View Avenue
- Water Street
- Mink Road

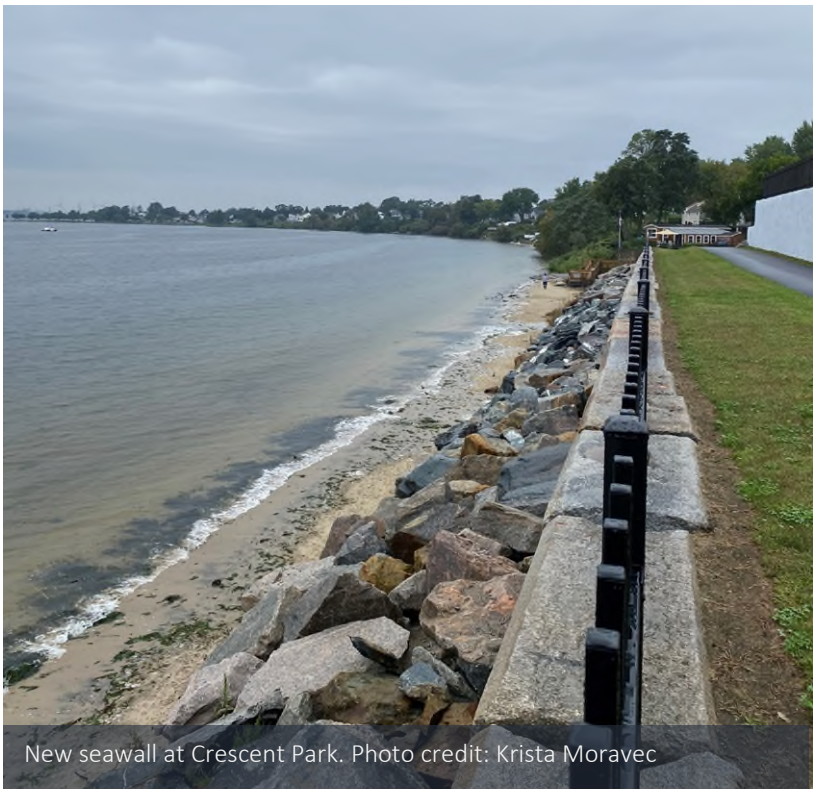
Recent improvements to I-195 on and off ramps at the former Exit 4 and current work at the Henderson Bridge will address some of these vulnerabilities. SPP's list also corresponds to Maps 2 through 7 and areas of concern listed in Table CC.1. The City must work with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) on vulnerable state roads and bridges, and associated stormwater infrastructure, owned and managed by the state, such as Pawtucket Avenue, Taunton Avenue, and Wampanoag Trail, among others.

The East Bay Bike Path will also be impacted by sea level rise in several coastal and low lying areas, particularly near Watchemoket Cove (Map CC.3) and Vals Creek and the upper reaches of Bullock Cove (Map CC.6). RIDOT and Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, who manage and maintain the path, will also be partners is protecting and adapting this important regional resources.

The City's water and wastewater treatment infrastructure should continue to be evaluated for the impacts from natural hazards and sea level rise. Improvements to the wastewater treatment plant in Riverside moved control and electrical infrastructure of the plant out of the lower parts of buildings and backup power is available. Additional assessment of all infrastructure and long-term planning should establish a schedule of upgrades and improvements to address vulnerabilities and prioritize critical facilities most at risk.

City parks, particularly Sabin Point Park and Crescent Park, are also at risk. As discussed in the Natural Resources Element, improvements to stormwater management at Sabin Point Park and the surrounding neighborhood are ongoing, but further planning needs to be done around sea level rise projections for the park. Equally, living shoreline installments at Crescent Park are being monitored to assess their ability to minimize the impacts of sea level rise and erosion of the beach and bluff. However, the collapse of the seawall in 2020 and the construction work to restore safety and public access reminds us that we are experiencing the impacts of these forces today.

As the City looks to make investments in public infrastructure and facilities, it needs to incorporate strategies that integrate green infrastructure approaches on municipal properties city-wide, like schools, Senior Center, playgrounds, parks, public safety buildings, and City Hall.



New seawall at Crescent Park. Photo credit: Krista Moravec

Public Communication and Stakeholder Coordination

All residents and businesses will be impacted by natural hazard events and climate change in one way or another. The City's NHMP details procedures for communication and coordination with state and regional response partners and the public before, during and after an event. For long-term planning, additional communication and outreach to residents and businesses on climate threats and impacts should focus on personal awareness and actions concerned citizens can take.

The Natural Resources Element highlights outreach on personal choices that can protect and maintain a healthy environment in and around their properties. This supports protecting and enhancing natural features to perform their much-needed services and functions to help mitigate the impacts of storms and climate change. There can also be specific outreach on community climate resilience and the public's role in meeting that goal, as well as the steps the City is taking to meet these challenges. Topics can include:

- Current City projects focused on making municipal infrastructure and facilities more resilient.
- Areas of the City most vulnerable to impacts today and in the future.
- Resources available to residents and businesses to address chronic flooding.
- Protecting mature trees and other native vegetation on private property.
- New climate adaption strategies for East Providence, like managed retreat, net-zero housing, or resiliency hubs that include cooling/charging stations and hazard-related support information.

An overall public engagement strategy can set up a schedule of topics and events that are on a regular rotation. These routine events keep climate change at the forefront as personal decisions are made. Engagement methods might include:

- Information materials: such as brochures, website posts, webinars, and video clips.
- Information portals: website links on home pages, may be interactive.
- Design charrettes: stakeholders collaborate to gather input for joint ownership of an issue or solution.
- Workshops: to disseminate information, tools, and techniques; and to build participant networks of support and practice.
- Scenario planning: participants create alternative views of the future using significant events and trend analysis; this can increase the breadth and depth of participants' knowledge, encourage knowledge exchange, and widen perceptions of future possibilities.
- Public opinion surveys: to involve interested participants in climate issues.
- Partnering with community-based organizations: such as schools, churches, and social service agencies.
- Volunteer engagement: for environmental monitoring and stewardship activities.

It is important to use a diverse set of approaches to ensure that information is accessible to all ages and abilities.

Finally, to help organize City efforts around mitigation and adaptation, a Climate Resilience Task Force can work across departments and commissions for a comprehensive approach to planning and implementation. While the City has a team that manages and responds to emergency events, this task force could focus on the objectives of long-term resilience. It can support a public engagement program, monitor progress towards meeting resilience goals, prioritize mitigation actions, and identify and pursue funding for project implementation. A task force can also work with neighboring communities and regional stakeholders to discuss lessons learned and share resources to meet common needs.

The Most Vulnerable People

Natural hazards and climate change will impact all residents, however, the people most vulnerable in East Providence are low-income households, the elderly, veterans, young children, non-English speakers, and the chronically ill. These individuals may not have the ability to mobilize quickly, have restricted access to resources, and are more likely to have adverse health impacts from natural hazard events, such as temperature extremes. Through its NHMP and the CRB Workshop (see Resilience Programs above), the City identified these populations within the community to build communication systems and procedures in the case of an emergency event. These residents are most likely found at affordable housing developments, senior housing, nursing homes, assisted living centers, and private daycares and schools. The report *Devising an Opportunity Investment Strategy for East Providence* (February 2020) also highlights neighborhoods in the City that are struggling with several issues that compound these impacts and their ability to be resilient against them, such as limited access to health care, transit, and economic opportunities. At-risk individuals are also dispersed throughout East Providence and need to be aware of how they should prepare for an event or how to communicate where they are and what they need during an emergency.

In addition to where vulnerable people live, there are physical and environmental factors that make certain areas of East Providence more vulnerable to natural hazards and the impacts of climate change. These are highlighted under the Snapshot and include areas that frequently flood () and areas where hot summer days create concentrated heat islands, which are built up areas that are hotter than nearby less

developed areas. People and buildings located within these areas can be at higher risk during an emergency and require additional focus for local emergency response planning.

One way to engage the City's most vulnerable residents and at-risk residential areas is through neighborhood resilience zones. New York City defines its Resilient Neighborhoods Program as "a place-based planning initiative to identify locally specific strategies, including zoning and land use changes, to support the vitality and resiliency of communities in the flood zone."[74] Through this type of initiative, the East Providence can engage residents, businesses, and other stakeholders to collectively plan how the neighborhood can adapt to and mitigate impacts with a shared vision. The City has several existing organizations and initiatives that support this effort, like the East Providence Health Equity Zone (EPHEZ).[75] The EPHEZ was established in the summer of 2019 to understand health disparities in the City, available resources, and gaps in services for the City's more vulnerable residents. It conducted a community-wide needs assessment, established a Collaborative, and developed an action plan. Through EPHEZ and other social networks, there are opportunities to reach residents to understand what residents need to address climate impacts (e.g. accommodations for people with disabilities, cooling centers, emergency shelter needs, health care needs, mental health needs, etc.) and how to meet those needs in a coordinated approach.

NYC Resilient Neighborhoods

Following Hurricane Sandy, the New York City developed a detailed action plan for recovery from the storm and the long-term resilience of New York City's coastal communities, buildings, and infrastructure. As part of this effort, the Department of City Planning (DCP) is undertaking the Resilient Neighborhoods initiative in 10 neighborhoods across all five boroughs. The studies will consider the unique character of each community and the specific issues and opportunities each faces, while guided by a set of common goals:

1. Reduce risks from natural hazards such as flooding and coastal storms
2. Foster economic and socially vibrant communities that are able to adapt to changing conditions.
3. Coordinate land use planning with rebuilding activities and infrastructure investment.

- NYC Resilient Neighborhoods

Moving Forward

For each goal, the City of East Providence will implement the following policies and actions to meet the opportunities and challenges for Natural Hazards and Climate Change. Many goals and policies in other elements support planning for these conditions, specifically Natural Resources, City Services and Facilities, Sustainability, and Waterfront District, and may not be specifically listed here. See these elements for additional actions that support the City's resilience planning.

[74] NYC Resilient Neighborhoods: https://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/plans/resilient-neighborhoods.page.
[75] https://www.ebcap.org/programs/east-providence-health-equity-zone/

Goal CC1. East Providence is proactive in preparing for and adapting to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change.

Policy CC1.1. Ensure that public and private investments are considering current and projected risks of natural hazards and climate change, including sea level rise.

A. Create a process to work with property owners that experience repetitive flooding and in areas projected to be inundated with sea level rise to develop practicable mitigation and adaptation options.
B. Continue to adapt City infrastructure and facilities to be more resilient to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change. (Ongoing)
    - Continue with improvement plans at Sabin Point Park and Crescent Park to address water quality, coastal erosion, and anticipated impacts from sea level rise.
    - Continue to improve priority City at-risk roads and bridges. Work with RIDOT to ensure that state roads are meeting projected risks. Consult the Rhode Island Statewide Planning's *Vulnerability of Transportation Assets to Sea Level Rise*.
    - Continue to implement strategies to relocate or upgrade water and wastewater infrastructure in at-risk areas. Prioritize the City's wastewater treatment plants, pump stations, and main service lines.
C. Incorporate green infrastructure into City properties to reduce pavement and increase natural features that minimize the urban heat island affect.
D. Develop project review standards that account for projected sea level rise data for both public and private investments. Consider:
    - Required use of NBS for stormwater management.
    - Required green infrastructure elements into site and building design.
    - Setbacks around projected inundation areas.
E. Establish policies that allow the City to rebuild quickly while identifying areas where continued rebuilding should be evaluated. Policies to consider are a disaster recovery ordinance, a disaster reconstruction ordinance, and a post-disaster moratorium.
F. Evaluate at-risk areas where managed retreat is a possibility. Educate the public and local policy makers on the pros and cons of this approach.
G. Investigate development of a comprehensive mitigation plan that addresses coastal erosion along the Providence River shoreline.

Policy CC1.2. Engage the public and local businesses on the impacts of natural hazards and climate change with a focus on the City's most vulnerable residents.

A. Establish a Climate Resilience Task Force comprised of City staff and local decision makers to develop a comprehensive approach across sectors. This task force would assess all plan recommendations for coastal and climate resilience, prioritize mitigation actions, and identify and pursue funding for project implementation.
B. With this Task Force, also develop a public outreach strategy to educate residents and businesses about natural hazards and the impacts of climate change.

- Work with the East Providence Area Chamber of Commerce, East Providence Economic Development Commission, and other organizations to connect with local businesses, prioritizing those in areas of the City most at risk for impacts.
- Use multiple methods of engagement (electronic, paper, in-person, virtual, etc.) to ensure that information and events are accessible for all residents.

C. With the Task Force, develop a clearinghouse of federal, state, and local resources available to residents to be more resilient in their personal choices. Use available resources through FEMA and the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency.

D. With the Task Force, establish Neighborhood Resilience Zones for specialized community-based participatory planning where residents, businesses, and neighborhood stakeholders create a shared vision of positive change and adaptation to current and future risks.

E. With the Task Force, coordinate with EPHEZ/EBCAP, East Providence Senior Center, and other social service entities to engage the City's most vulnerable residents and understand their needs and challenges associated with the impacts of natural hazards and climate change. Develop networks to meet these needs.

Policy CC1.3. Continue to support ongoing hazard mitigation and climate resilience planning to remain eligible for federal and state funding opportunities.

A. Update the NHMP every five years. (Ongoing)

B. Use the CRB Workshop findings to prioritize projects for funding through the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank. (Ongoing)

C. Maintain the City's participation in FEMA's CRS. (Ongoing)

D. Work with FEMA when the City's flood insurance rate maps are amended to ensure continued FEMA compliance of the City's floodplain ordinance. (Ongoing)

HISTORY, CULTURE & THE ARTS

The City's historic and cultural resources give context to who we are as a community. They connect us with the people and places of our past to understand how they shaped the place East Providence has become today. These assets also connect us with each other. These resources are a mix of physical places like buildings, structures, and landscapes. They also embrace formal and informal social institutions and organizations in the City that represent diverse traditions, values, and customs that open each of us to new experiences and different perspectives. These includes festivals, art galleries, museums, and other ways our community expresses its heritage and comes together to celebrate and debate. Through the planning process, policies are developed to preserve and enhance connections to these assets, so they are accessible to everyone today and in the future.

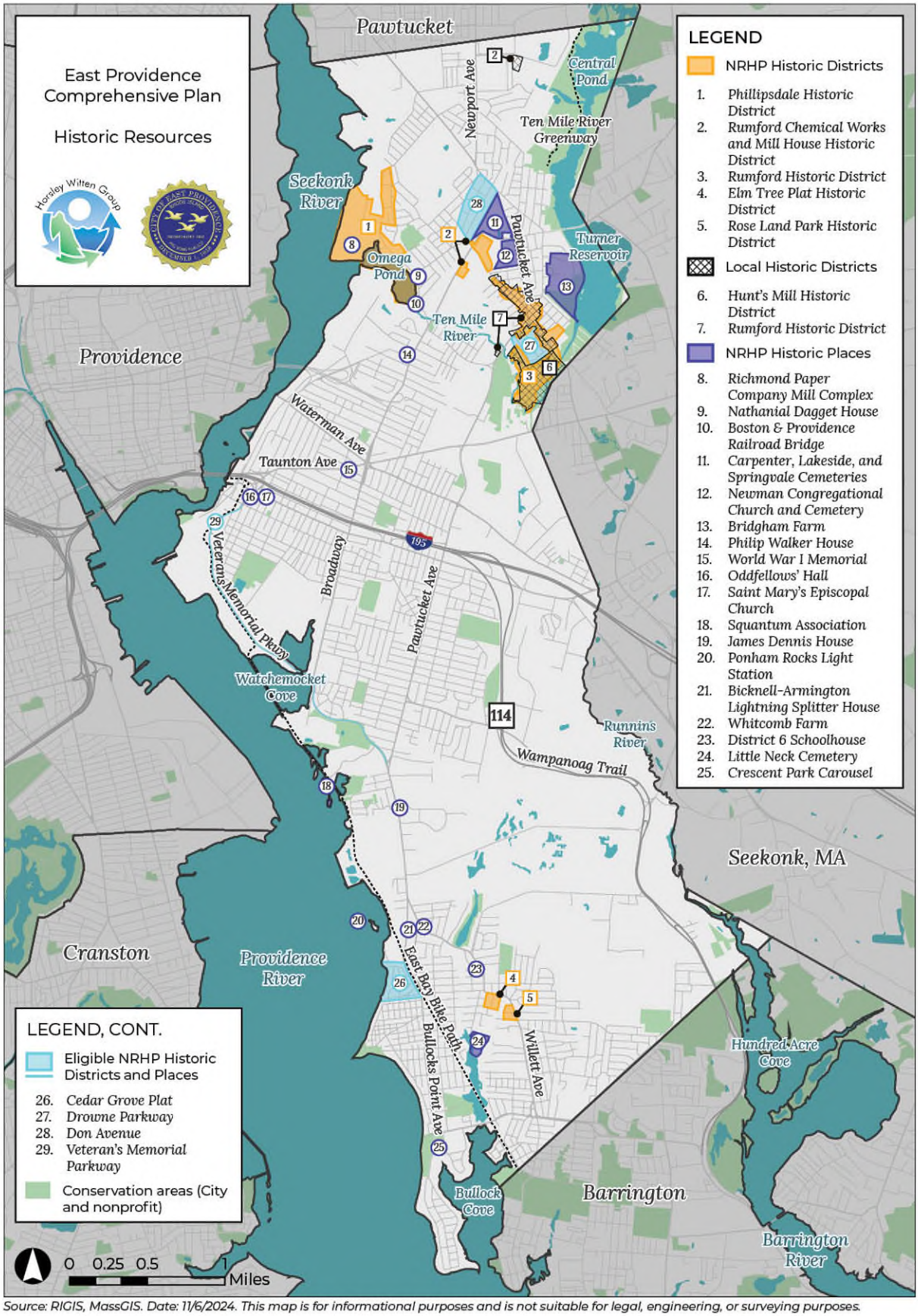
This chapter supports and embodies the goals of the following State Guide Plan elements related to historic and cultural resources:

- 211: Ocean State Accelerates: Five-Year Economic Development Strategy
- 121: Land Use 2025: Rhode Island State Land Use Policies and Plan
- 210: Historic Preservation State Guide Plan

Snapshot

Historic Resources

The City of East Providence has five historic districts (Table HCA.1.) and 19 individual structures (Table HCA.2.) listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is the federal government's official list of properties that are significant to American history and deemed worthy of preservation and is administered by the National Park Service. These resources can include individual buildings, structures, and historic districts. A contributing resource adds to the historical significance or integrity of a historic district. A National Register designation places no obligations on private property owners and no restrictions on the use, treatment, or disposition of private property. Rhode Island's State Register of Historic places, managed by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC), includes those properties listed on the National Register as well as those sites determined to be significant to Rhode Island's heritage. These historic properties are throughout the City, as shown on Map HCA.1.



Source: RIGIS, MassGIS. Date: 11/6/2024. This map is for informational purposes and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

Map HCA.1. Historic Resources in East Providence

Table HCA.1.Historic Districts and Contributing Resources

Historic District	Contributing Resources
Rumford Historic District	81
Phillipsdale Historic District	125
Rumford Chemical Works Historic District	8
Elm Tree Plat	53
Rose Land Park Plat	39
Total Contributing Resources	**306**

Source: National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service

Table HCA.2. Individual Resources on the National Register of Historic Places

Historic Building, Structure, Landmark	Location
Bicknell-Armington Lightning Splitter House	3591 Pawtucket Avenue
Boston & Providence Railroad Bridge	Ten Mile River at Roger Williams Avenue
Bridgham Farm	120 Pleasant Street
Carpenter, Lakeside, and Springvale Cemeteries	Newman Avenue
Crescent Park Carousel	Bullock's Point Avenue
Daggett, Nathaniel, House	74 Roger Williams Avenue
Dennis, James, House	3120 Pawtucket Avenue
District 6 Schoolhouse	347 Willet Avenue
Little Neck Cemetery	Read Street
Newman Cemetery	Newman Avenue
Newman Congregational Church	100 Newman Avenue
Oddfellow's Hall	63-65 Warren Avenue
Pomham Rocks Light Station	Riverside Road
Richmond Paper Company Mill Complex	310 Bourne Avenue
Squantum Association	947 Veterans Memorial Parkway
St. Mary's Episcopal Church	83 Warren Avenue
Walker, Phillip, House	432 W. Massasoit Avenue
Whitcomb Farm	36 Willet Avenue
World War I Memorial	Taunton Avenue (at Weldon Street)

Source: National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service

Rumford Historic District

The Rumford Historic District, listed on the National Register in 1980, is located in the northern portion of the City on a level plain bordered on the south and east by the Ten Mile River and two artificial ponds, Central Pond and James V. Turner Reservoir. Geography played an instrumental role in the founding of the village. The ideal location of this plain at the bend of the Ten Mile River near Seekonk Cove attracted a group of Puritan settlers who in 1643 chose the spot to be the village center of the Plymouth Colony town of Rehoboth, which included present-day Rehoboth and Seekonk, Massachusetts and East Providence, and the eastern portion of Pawtucket. A 200-acre, polygonal common called the "Ring of the Town'' or the ''Ring of the Green'' was laid out on the plain. Narrow home lots were set within the bend of the Ten Mile River that gave most of the lots frontage on both the river and the Ring. A gristmill was built above the river bend at what is now Hunt's Mills. A meeting house was constructed near the center

of the Ring. Eventually paths around the Ring and across to the meeting house evolved into roads. The original form of the community followed a "wheel-and-spoke" arrangement with the meeting house and, after 1658, a common burying ground at the "hub."

For over 150 years, the Ring remained the political, religious, and civic focus of a large, agricultural community of scattered farmsteads A subsidiary center began to grow on the Palmer River in the early 18th century, and in 1812 the township was divided. The eastern portion containing the newer settlement at Palmer River was retained by Rehoboth, the western portion to Seekonk, which is present-day Seekonk, East Providence, and Pawtucket. By 1828, the northwest corner of Pawtucket and the western portion of Seekonk were ceded to Rhode Island. Over time, with the growth of Watchmoket as a new civic hub, the Ring lost its dominance as the town center. Growth of the Rumford Chemical Works, established in 1857 on a portion of the former Ring northwest of East Providence Center, dominated development in northern East Providence through the late 19th and early 20th century, and eventually the center lost its distinct identity, and the entire area in the vicinity of what had been the Ring became known as Rumford.



Today, the physical fabric of Rumford includes structures from practically all phases of its development. The Rumford Historic District contains most of the extant structures that once fronted on the Ring of the Green, but subsequent changes have lost most of the 17th- and 18th-century character of the area. Present-day Rumford is largely the product of 19th- and 20th-century development. Most of the structures that comprised Seekonk and East Providence Center in the 19th century are still standing, interspersed with suburban dwellings of the 20th century. However, the new buildings are not too intrusive, and the remnants of the old village are still readily identifiable. The focus of the district today is the second First Baptist Church, facing southerly onto the intersection of Pawtucket and Greenwood

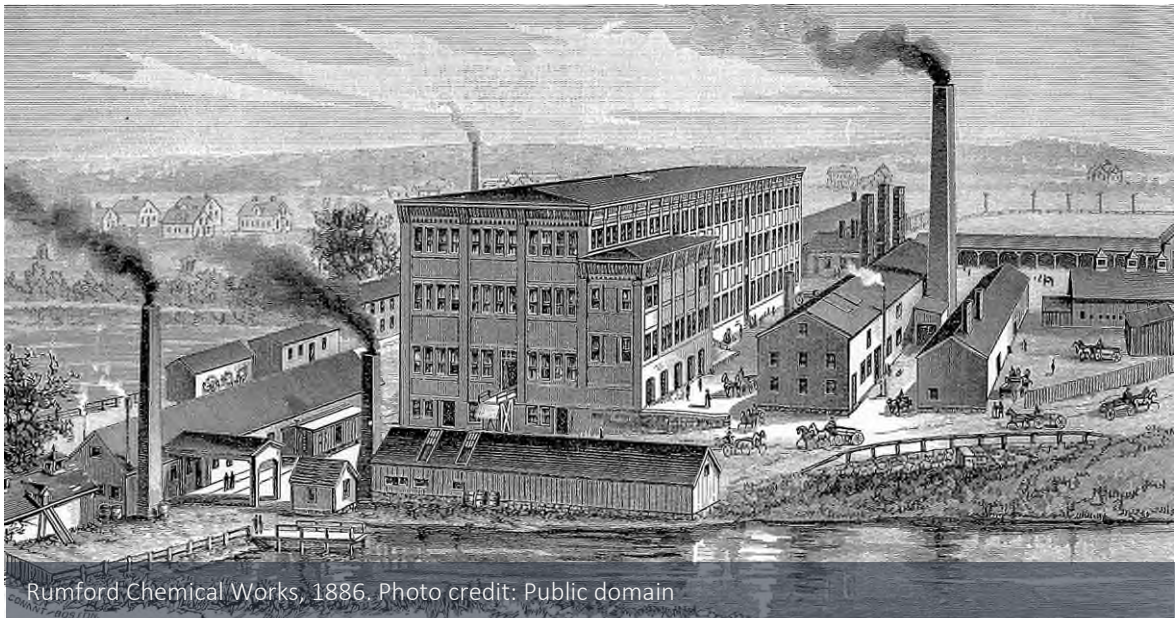
Avenues and Pleasant Street. Constructed in 1879 on the site of the Baptist meeting house of 1795, it is a magnificent example of the Queen Anne style and dominates the district visually. Along Pleasant Street and nearby Pawtucket and Greenwood Avenues, several clustered structures give a strong sense of the 19th-century village setting. [76]

Rumford Chemical Works Historic District

The Rumford Chemical Works Historic District was listed on the National Register in 1980. Rumford Chemical Works was founded by Eben Horsford, who was the Rumford Professor and Lecturer on the Application of Science to the Useful Arts at Harvard University, and entrepreneur George F. Wilson. In 1854, Wilson formed George F. Wilson & Co., a chemical merchandising firm in Providence, Rhode Island. That same year, Wilson approached Eben Horsford with the goal of expanding to develop and manufacture chemical products. Their first plant, in Pleasant Valley, Rhode Island, manufactured calcium sulfite. Horsford's first patent used calcium sulfite to neutralize chlorine in bleached fabrics.

In 1856 the plant was moved from Pleasant Valley to Seekonk, Massachusetts. The same year, Horsford received a patent for production of "pulverulent phosphoric acid" (calcium acid phosphate), an ingredient for baking powder. In 1859, the company was incorporated in Massachusetts as the Rumford Chemical Works. Its name honored Sir Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford, who had established the chair held by Horsford at Harvard.

After the boundary line between Massachusetts and Rhode Island was recalculated in 1861, the West Seekonk area became East Providence. The Rumford Chemical Works was chartered again in Rhode Island in 1862.[77] The company eventually built an extensive complex of buildings centered on the junction of Newman and Greenwood Avenues with North Broadway. The core of the complex, east of the intersection, originally extended to the shore of a pond that separated it from Newman Cemetery. The pond has been filled in and the eastern portion of the property has been set off, cleared of industrial buildings, and built up with two high-rise towers containing apartments for the elderly. An 8.38-acre tract west of these towers contains the remaining Chemical Works structures. Among them are



Rumford Chemical Works, 1886. Photo credit: Public domain

[76] National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form: Rumford Historic District (1/28/1980): https://preservation.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur406/files/pdfs_zips_downloads/national_pdfs/east_providence/eapr_historic-resources-of-east-providence.pdf

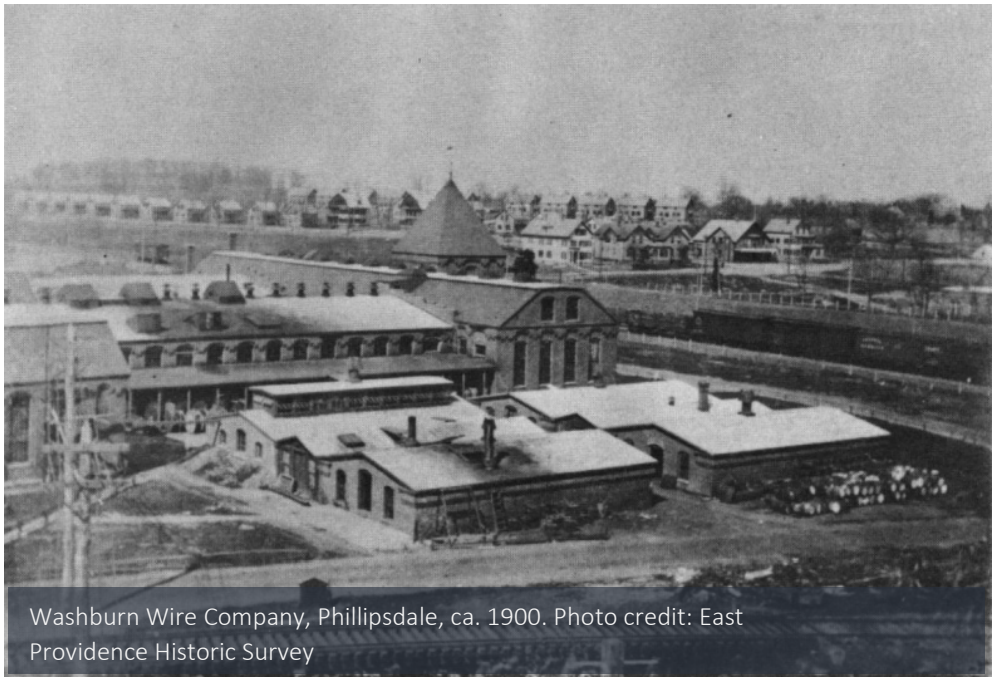
[77] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rumford_Chemical_Works_and_Mill_House_Historic_District

three one-and-one-half-story, gable-roofed, wood-frame buildings, which may date from the first decade after the establishment of the works on this site in 1857. The handsomest structure is a large, three-story, flat-roofed brick building with a fine corbelled cornice, constructed in 1895 and used for production of monocalcium phosphate. Most prominent is a five-story flat-roofed brick building erected in 1928 for use as a packaging plant and warehouse. Amid these structures stand four or five small, one- and two-story, brick or wooden buildings. Across Newman Avenue from the main complex is a two-and-one-half-story, gable-roofed, wood-frame office building. Today these industrial buildings have been repurposed for commercial and residential uses, maintaining the exterior facades of the original structures.

On North Broadway, there are eight double houses built by the company to house employees, all now privately owned. The first two, one-and-one-half-story, gable-roofed brick dwellings, were erected ca. 1910 and the others are one-and-one-half-story Queen Anne style, wood-frame dwellings of differing design, built ca. 1882.[78]

Phillipsdale Historic District

The Phillipsdale Historic District was listed on the National Register in 2011. The first settlement of Phillipsdale occurred in 1636 near the cove at the juncture of the Seekonk and Ten Mile Rivers. For much of its early history, the area was predominantly used for agricultural production, with one of the oldest surviving buildings the Edwards-Carpenter Sherman house at 111 Roger Williams Avenue (built ca. 1750). Although it has been altered and converted to a residential use, the Colonial-era design elements can still be seen today. The proximity of the Seekonk and Ten Mile Rivers attracted small water-powered grist and sawmills in the mid-17th century, cotton mills in the early 1800s, and eventually Richmond Paper Co. in 1883, American Electrical Works (AEW) in 1893, and Glenlyon Bleachery in 1899. By 1910, Phillipsdale acquired a workforce of over 2,000, as well as several stores, a restaurant, church, school, post office, train depot, and a police station.



Washburn Wire Company, Phillipsdale, ca. 1900. Photo credit: East Providence Historic Survey

The National Register nomination identified contributing buildings and structures associated with American Electrical Works (AEW) that include the AEW plant, the Phillipsdale Store, Grace Phillips Memorial Church, and 34 company-built worker houses, as well as four 19th century houses acquired by AEW and converted to multi-family use for its workers. Contributing buildings associated with Glenlyon Bleacheries include its original plant and 42 company-built worker houses. Omega Pond, including its dam

[78] National Archives at https://catalog.archives.gov/id/41374610.

and railroad bridge, and an additional 29 privately built homes complete the inventory of contributing properties.

Rose Land Park Plat and Elm Tree Plat Districts

Both the Rose Land Park Plant and Elm Tree Plat Historic Districts were listed on the National Register in 2015. Willett Avenue, named for one of the original settlers of Wannamoisett, was originally part of the postal route from Boston to Newport in the colonial era, and until the mid-19th century, most buildings in Wannamoisett including its first school were located on or near Willet Avenue. By the mid-19th century, industrialization had created a societal yearning to escape the congested, noisy, polluted, city and to live in clean, quiet, healthy, and naturalistic surroundings. The first to take up this trend were the well-to-do, who could afford second homes in the country or at the seaside. However, within a few more decades transportation improvements (electric streetcars, later automobiles) and the mass-production of building components and house designs made it more affordable for people of modest means to achieve homeownership and to live outside of cities year-round in suburban subdivisions.



Cape Cod home in Rose Land Park Historic District. Photo credit: Jim Roberts, CC BY-SA 3.0

In the 1920s and 1930s, a streetcar stop was located a few blocks from the Rose Land Park Plat and Elm Tree Plat, which likely facilitated its marketability for residential development. Similar to a streetcar suburb, house lots within the plats were laid out on a rectangular grid of streets with modest (4,800 to 5,300 square feet) lots sited with their narrow end to the street, to maximize development potential and yet allow for small front, side, and rear yards. In the late 1920s, the automobile was steadily growing more prevalent in American life, and its influence can be seen in the Rose Land Park Plat and Elm Tree Plat: each house has a driveway in a side or rear yard, and the majority also have either freestanding or attached garages, some of which appear to be original.

The Rose Land Park Plat contains 39 single-family houses, arrayed in three blocks on Dartmouth Avenue, Florence Street, Princeton Avenue, and the west side of Willett Avenue. All the housing stock is wood frame, often with brick, stone, or stucco accents, and typically one and a half to two stories tall. The most predominant architectural style is English Cottage, but the district also contains examples of Cape Cod and various Colonial Revival styles.

The Elm Tree Plat contains 53 single-family houses arrayed in a three block area on Charlotte Street, Elinora Street, and Harvey Avenue between Willett Avenue and Fenner Avenue. The subdivision was modeled on a streetcar suburb with a regular grid of streets and standard-sized house lots, but was built out as automobiles became more common, so most houses have associated garages (38 in total, 10 non-contributing). All the housing stock is wood frame with a height of one to two stories. By far the most

predominant housing type is the Bungalow, although the district also contains a few examples of Cape Cod and English Cottage styles.

Despite some alterations that have been made to individual structures, the Rose Land Park Plat and Elm Tree Plat districts have very good integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Indigenous People of East Providence

East Providence is part of the Sowams Heritage Area, which encompasses Barrington, Bristol, Providence, Rehoboth, Seekonk, Swansea, and Warren. According to the Sowams Heritage Area Project Team website,[79] when the Massasoit Ousamequin (Yellow Feather) first met the Pilgrims in what is now Plymouth in 1621, he was living 40 miles to the southwest in an area known as Sowams. Massasoit presided over a network of tribes extending from just south of present-day Boston to Bristol and from the Atlantic coast to present day Providence, but he chose to live along the Providence, Runnins, Ten Mile, Barrington, Kickemuit, Palmer, and Coles Rivers. The land came to be known as Sowams or "south country." The original Algonquian people came to be known as the Pokanoket, which refers to the "place of the cleared land" and, starting in the 18th century, by the colonists as the Wampanoag, "people of the first light."



Pokanoket Indigenous Tribe Mural in Watchemoket Square. Photo credit: Bob Rodericks, Reporter Today

Sowams was a fertile land, described as a "garden" by Miles Standish and prized by the aboriginal tribes for its rich soil, abundant wildlife, and access to the water that provided their food. When the colonists arrived, much of the land had already been cleared over the centuries to provide good hunting and easy access to fishing. Though tribes moved

[79] Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International. https://sowamsheritagearea.org/wp/sowams-heritage-area-project/

their settlements from place to place depending on the seasons, the area known as Sowams was highly prized for its natural resources.

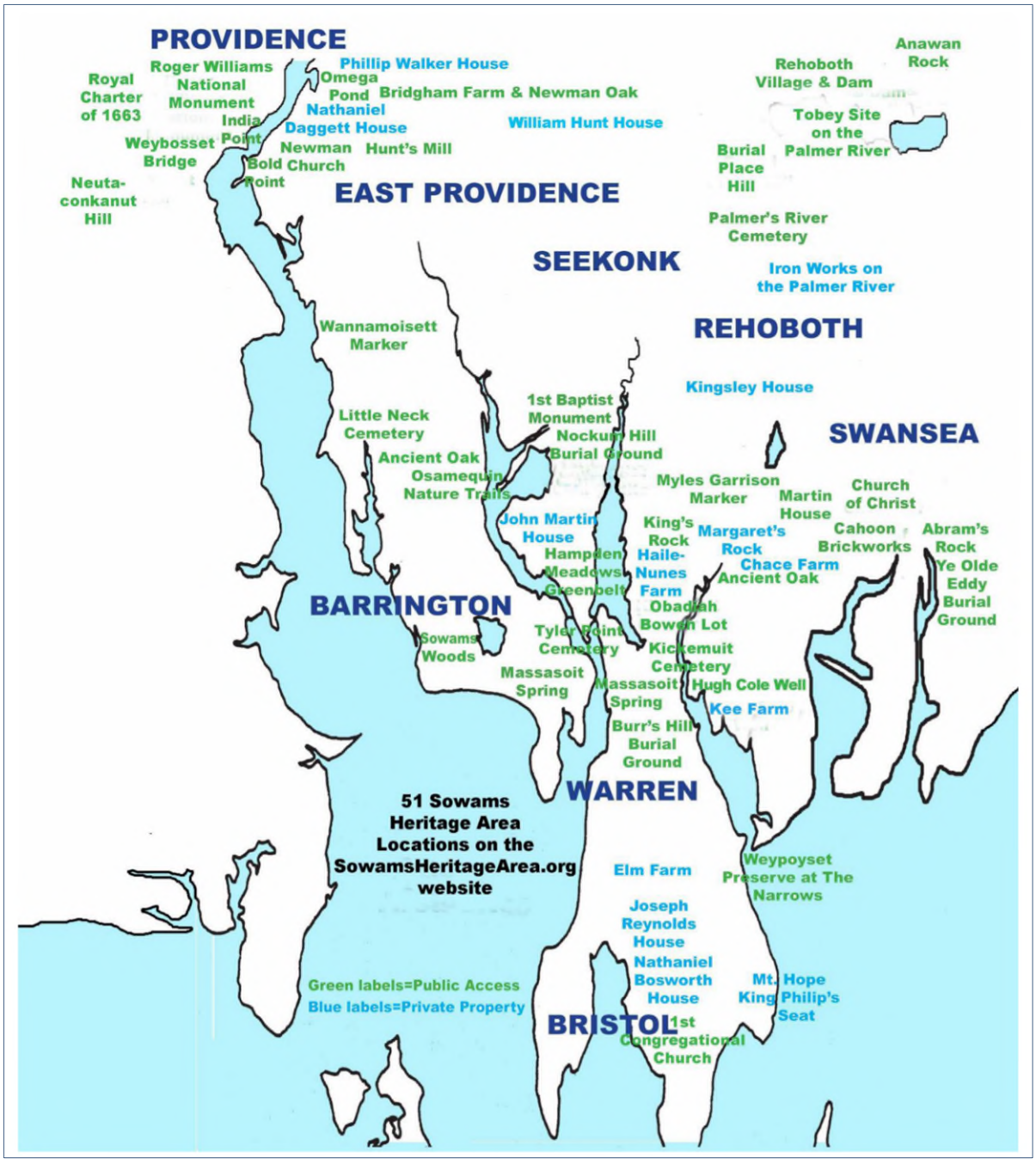
As more colonists moved into Sowams, it became clear to both Massasoit and his sons, Wamsetta (Alexander) and Metacom (named King Philip by the English), that they were losing control of the land and losing much of their population due to diseases that the colonists brought from overseas. Following the Massasoit's death in 1661 and continued encroachments and perceived injustices, war broke out in June 1675 in present-day Warren. The Pokanoket, Narragansett, and Nipmuc tribes joined forces to burn colonial villages from Dartmouth to Northampton, including all of Sowams, in an effort to force colonists to flee. In 1676, colonial armies gained the upper hand, and with help from other regional tribes, brought the war to a close in August 1676.

In the ensuing years, the unsold native land was occupied by the colonists, and nearly all the remaining aboriginal population was either enslaved or moved onto reservations. Over the next 150 years, towns were laid out in what was once Sowams, and nearly all traces of its original inhabitants were erased. What followed were years of continual development, the growth of towns, and the gradual loss of much of the original natural abundance that the colonists first encountered.

The Sowams Heritage Project presents Sowams as the pivotal place of cultural exchange between indigenous people and colonizing settlers in North America. Few people realize that there was a treaty between the Pokanoket Tribe and the Puritans established around March 21, 1621. This peace treaty stood for over 50 years before it was broken during the conflict known as King Phillip's War in 1675. The initiation and duration of the peace is unique among the colonial patterns of interaction across the New World. The human toll of the eventual conflict was the costliest to its respective populations. The Project argues that the impact of the outcome of this clash of cultures continues to this day.

Through its work to preserve and educate, the Sowams Heritage Area Project identifies locations that represent evidence of the 17th century Sowams and events that transformed the land into what we see today. These parks, monuments, first period houses, historic churches, burial grounds, aboriginal sites, farms, and natural settings are shown on the map that follows.

Sowams Heritage Area Map



Source: Sowams Heritage Area Project (www.sowamsheritagearea.org)

Management and Protection of Historic Resources

East Providence Historic District Commission and Historic Area Zoning

On January 16, 2007, the City Council passed an ordinance establishing the Historic District Commission (HDC). The purpose of the HDC is to protect the City's historic structures by designating individual properties or a concentration of properties as a local historic district. A local historic district (Historic Area Zoning) is an overlay zoning district designated by the City Council to protect a neighborhood's architecture, which largely defines its sense of place. While there are five districts on the National Register in East Providence, only the Hunt's Mills Historic District and Rumford Historic District are designated local historic districts and fall under the purview of the HDC.

Local Historic Zoning can require property owners within local historic districts to receive a certificate of appropriateness from an HDC for any construction, alteration, repair, removal, or demolition that will affect the exterior appearance of a structure. When reviewing proposed projects, an HDC considers the following design guidelines:

- The historic and architectural significance of the structure and its appurtenances.
- The historic character and historic ecological features of the surrounding landscape.
- The way in which the structure and its appurtenances contribute to the historical and architectural significance of the district.
- The appropriateness of the general design, arrangement, texture, materials, and siting proposed in the plans.

HDCs use the standards in *Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, published by Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, U.S. Department of Interior, as a guide in its evaluations.

As of 2022, the Rumford National Register District and the Hunt's Mills National Register District are the only local historic districts that have been designated by the City Council. The historic structures located in these local historic districts are not protected by any design guidelines; however, they are protected from demolition. In order for the HDC to grant permission for a historic structure located in the Rumford or Hunt's Mills local historic districts to be demolished, the HDC must make the following findings:

- Preservation of the structure is a deterrent to a major improvement program which will be of substantial benefit to the community.
- Preservation of the structure would cause undue or unreasonable financial hardship to the owner, taking into account the financial resources available to the owner, including the sale of the structure to any purchaser willing to preserve the structure.
- The preservation of the structure would not be in the interest of the majority of the community.

The intent of the HDC is to first protect historic structures using the City's existing demolition delay ordinance.

Carousel Park Commission

The Carousel Park Commission was created by ordinance in 1993 to establish programs that preserve, restore, and operate the Crescent Park Carousel at Bullocks Point Avenue. In 1885, Crescent Park's owner commissioned Charles I.D. Looff, a preeminent carousel designer, to construct and operate the structure.

The wooden carousel features intricately designed horses and figures and was continuously embellished by Looff until his departure from the park in 1910, making it unique in its variety of figures. Looff's carvings are considered representative works of American folk art. The carousel was listed on the National Register in 1976 and designated a National Historic Landmark, the highest level of historic designation reserved for resources significant to all Americans, in 1987.[80]

East Providence Historical Society

The East Providence Historic Society was established in 1966 with the mission to provide education and enrichment activities about local history to area residents. The nonprofit is headquartered at the Hunt House Museum, which it has actively worked to restore to its original state. The Society operates the Hunt House Museum and Education Center and provides educational history programming for adults and children.



John Hunt House, ca 1895. Phot credit: East Providence Historical Society

Sowams Heritage Area Project

The Sowams Heritage Area is composed of eight communities that encompass the territory once occupied by the Massasoit Ousamequin and his tribes who first met the Pilgrims after their landing in Plymouth in 1620. Within it are over fifty locations that reveal aspects of the life of those First People as well as the process by which English colonists moved into that area and displaced the native inhabitants. The Sowams Heritage Area Project is designed to increase an awareness of the importance of this unique piece of history and to argue for the continued preservation of the land and recognition of the people that the colonists first met.[81] Through its website, the Project offers a wealth of information about the area's history and self-guided tours of important locations and sites. It is currently taking steps towards meeting National Heritage Area Status from the National Park Service.

2013 Historic Resources Reconnaissance Study

In June 2013, a Historic Resources Reconnaissance Survey evaluated three study areas containing a total of 1,055 properties. The survey concluded that three early 20th century development plats along Willet Avenue merited nomination to the National Register: the Whitcomb Farm Plat of 1913, Elm Tree Plat of 1924, and Rose Land Park Plat of 1928. The Elm Tree and Rose Land Park Plats were both nominated and designated as historic districts in 2015.

2021 Survey of City's Historic Schools and Architecture

In 2021, the City commissioned a historic architectural survey of 20 current and former public school buildings. The purpose of the survey was to gather sufficient information about each building to evaluate its potential eligibility for nomination to the National Register. For each school building, exterior

[80] National Archive at https://catalog.archives.gov/id/41374536.
[81] http://www.drweed.net/SowamsHistoricalOverview.pdf

photographs and data sheets were produced according to RIHPHC standards. The survey also includes a narrative describing the historical development of public education in East Providence and how changes in school building architecture over time reflected corresponding changes in public policy for education. Buildings surveyed were:

- Union Primary and Grammar School, 1320 Pawtucket Ave. (1873-74)
- East Street Primary School, 65 East St. (1889-90)
- Williams Avenue Primary School, 115 Williams Ave. (1888-90)
- Central High School & Junior High School, 20 Whelden Ave. (1910, 1929)
- Riverside Grammar School/Junior High School, 100 Bullocks Point Ave. (1911)
- Lincoln School, 25 Metropolitan Park Dr. (1924)
- East Providence Senior High School, 2000 Pawtucket Ave. (1950-52)
- Carl T. Thompson Elementary School, 215 Ferris Ave. (1950)
- J.R.D. Oldham Elementary School, 640 Bullocks Pt. Ave, (1951)
- Alice M. Waddington Elementary School, 101 Legion Way (1955)
- Grove Ave. Elementary School, 110 Grove Ave. (1957-58)
- Emma G. Whiteknacht School, 261 Grosvenor Ave. (1957-58)
- Agnes B. Hennessey Elementary School, 75 Fort St. (1957-58)
- Meadowcrest Elementary School, 60 Bart Dr. (1964)
- Riverside Jr. High/Middle School, 179 Forbes St. (1964-66)
- Silver Spring Elementary School, 120 Silver Spring Ave. (1968)
- Orlo Avenue Elementary School, 25 Orlo Ave. (1970)
- East Providence Area Vocational-Technical School, 1998 Pawtucket Ave. (1970)
- Edward R. Martin Middle School, 111 Brown St. (1977)
- Kent Heights Elementary School, 2680 Pawtucket Ave. (1989, 2003)

The survey concluded that 10 of the buildings recommended for National Register nomination (Oldham, Waddington, Hennessey, Whiteknact, Riverside Middle, Meadowcrest, Silver Spring, Orlo, and the Vocational-Technical School) are currently owned by the City of East Providence. Of these 10, all but Oldham still function as public schools. Oldham, which has been vacant for approximately 10 years, is under study for conversion into a small business incubator. Of the remaining buildings now in private hands (Union, East, Williams, Central High, Central Jr. High, Riverside Grammar, Lincoln, Thompson, and Grove), two (Thompson and Grove) now function as private schools.

Arts and Cultural Resources

In addition to its historical resources, East Providence has many cultural assets that further contribute to its overall sense of place and community. Residents have access to diverse experiences around the arts and other enriching opportunities. Civic and community organizations offer events, membership, and programming on a wide range of topics, giving residents places to learn and connect with one another.

Groups and Organizations

East Providence is home to a variety or non- and for-profit groups and organizations that coordinate events and other types of offerings to showcase local arts and culture. These groups and organizations include, but are not limited to:

- The African American Display and Mobile Museum is a traveling exhibition and educational outreach program based in East Providence which includes over 100 artifacts in order to promote dialogue about race.
- The Cape Verdean Progressive Center is a local organization which promotes and preserves Cape Verdean culture and provides integrated social, educational, patriotic, and charitable programs.
- East Providence Public Library offers a variety of youth and adult programming and events at the Weaver Library, Riverside Branch, and Fuller Creative Learning Center. The library also has a museum pass system that offers discount admissions to museums and educational centers across the region, including the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, MA, Coggeshall Farm Museum in Bristol, and Plimoth Patuxet Museums in Plymouth, MA.
- The East Providence High School, through its Musical Theatre Group and band and chorus programs, hold performances throughout the school year.
- As noted above, the East Providence Historical Society provides education and enrichment opportunities about local history to residents. Past events have included walking tours and an "Old Fashioned Family Fun Day" featuring historical games and food.
- The East Providence Recreation Department offers so many programs and events that bring the community together, including the Independence Day Celebration, Concerts in the Park, summer and school vacation camps, and WinterFest Celebration.
- The East Providence Arts Council is a partnership between the arts community and city officials that works to promote local artists and center the arts as a key part of the City's economy. In addition to organizing the annual Looff Arts Festival and helping implement public art projects in the City, the Council also serves as a resource center for artists.
- The East Providence Community Chorus is a non-auditioned chorus group. The nonprofit organization holds two concerts annually as part of its mission to foster the public's appreciation for music.
- The Holy Ghost Beneficial Brotherhood of RI - Philip St. Hall is a nonprofit organization that functions as a restaurant and a Portuguese American cultural center supporting the culture through food, festivals, and music.
- The Holy Ghost Brotherhood Mariense - Santa Maria Cultural Center is a nonprofit organization that functions as a Portuguese American cultural center. The organization supports Portuguese culture through food, festivals, and music. They also operate a youth organization that runs special events such as theater, music concerts, dancing, and more.
- The Holy Ghost Brotherhood of Charity - Brightridge Club is an organization where members can socialize and partake in the traditions of Portugal and the Portuguese culture.
- The Portuguese Learning Center of East Providence was established in 2013 to teach both the Portuguese language and culture to children and adults.
- The Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra and Music School is based in East Providence and offers music education programs to students of all abilities and holds multiple performances throughout the year. The Rhode Island Philharmonic's Link Up music education three-year program is targeted at elementary schoolchildren.
- The Rosary Band Society is a nonprofit organization that supports the Portuguese culture through music and music education. They offer band membership to anyone interested in playing a musical instrument while also practicing for concerts and parades.
- The Sons of Italy is an organization that serves as a support system for all Italian immigrants and assists with citizenship, healthcare, education, and other matters.

- The **Teofilo Braga Club** promotes education, social affairs, sports, and charitable programs for the Portuguese American community. The organization runs several cultural events and feasts.
- The **Trindade Holy Ghost Brotherhood** is a nonprofit organization that functions as a Portuguese American cultural center supporting the culture through food, festivals, and music and hosting community events.

Community Events

Arts and cultural community events throughout the year in East Providence offer residents opportunities to celebrate the City's diverse heritage and support local individuals, businesses, and organizations. East Providence is known for its cultural festivals, including numerous Portuguese feasts run by local organizations which help carry on cultural and religious traditions. These include, but are not limited to:

- **East Providence Heritage Days Inc.** was a nonprofit organization that focused on providing cultural and education opportunities centered on the arts to East Providence residents. The organization hosted many events throughout the year, including the annual Heritage Festival, which celebrated its 40th year in 2022. In early 2023, the organization announced that it could no longer sustain the event do to rising costs and waning interest from entertainment and venders.
- The **Looff Arts Festival** is a free summer arts festival organized by the East Providence Arts Festival. The annual festival features a variety of artists, artisans, and crafters.
- The **Concerts in the Park** series is run by the City's Department of Recreation. The free concerts take place at the bandshell at Crescent Park.
- The **Rhode Island Folk Festival** is an annual free music festival held at Crescent Park and organized by the nonprofit arts organization Hear In Rhode Island, Inc.

Public Art and Placemaking

The City has been investing in public art and placemaking as a means of adding economic, cultural and community value to its neighborhoods. Murals, sculptures, and other art forms contribute to community building, identity development and place making to improve the quality of life for both residents and visitors. Over the past few years, the City has invested in public art installations in Watchemoket Square, Taunton Ave. and Riverside Square. The City's first Arts District was also established in 2021 over much of the central area of the City including Watchemoket Square. The Arts District exempts artists, writers and composers residing in the district from State personal income tax derived from their art.

What We Heard

What the community highlighted as the City's challenges, opportunities, and needs:

- East Providence's heritage and diversity make it a vibrant place to live, and residents want to showcase and support these assets. Historic preservation, the arts, and cultural activities are important to residents' quality of life.
- Residents are interested in increasing arts and cultural businesses and employment opportunities in East Providence.
- There are opportunities to raise awareness and connect East Providence's historic and cultural resources (educational signage, connections via multi-modal trails, programming, etc.).
- There are opportunities to adapt and reuse historic sites and structures

- The City should engage in planning to identify how historic sites and structures can be appropriately used (education, recreation, senior/affordable housing, etc.).

Challenges, Needs, and Opportunities

Preserve Historic Resources

Common threats to historic resources are demolition, neglect and lack of maintenance, and natural hazard events like flooding or severe storms. Equally a threat is general lack of understanding by the public of historic sites and structures in their city and the importance of these places to the community as a whole. While East Providence has taken steps to protect important local historic structures, many sites are still vulnerable to being lost. Existing tools can be strengthened or expanded to preserve these resources.

Continue to Protect Historic Sites and Places

The biggest issues threatening the City's historic resources are demolition and alterations that destroy the integrity of a resource. The City Council can address these threats by designating areas of the City that have a concentration of historic resources as local historic districts, Rumford Local Historic District and Hunt's Mills Local Historic District. State enabling legislation allows an HDC to protect historic structures by design standards that must be met by an applicant seeking permission to alter the exterior of a historic structure located in a local historic district. However, the City's HDC has no authority to regulate the exterior appearance of any historic structures such as prohibiting vinyl siding/windows or major alterations that can significantly impact the integrity of a historic resource. The City should consider implementing design guidelines for the Rumford and Hunt's Mills local historic districts and should consider creating additional local historic districts such as designating the National Register Rose Land Park and Elm Tree Plats as local historic districts. The City should consider designating additional local historic districts.

The second is the *2021 Citywide Survey of Historic Public School Buildings*, which researched 20 schools in East Providence under both City and private ownership. The survey concluded that 17 appear to meet criteria of the National Register and were recommended for nomination (Table HCA.3). Buildings that are vacant also present opportunities for reuse, as discussed below.

Table HCA.3. Public School Buildings Recommended for Nomination to the National Register

School	Ownership	Use
Union Primary and Grammar School (1873-74)	Private	Apartments
East Street Primary School (1889-90)	Private	Multifamily
Williams Avenue Primary School (1888-90)	Private	Boys & Girls Club
Central High School & Junior High School (1910, 1929)	Private	Apartments
Riverside Grammar School/Junior High School, (1911)	Private	East Bay Community Action
Lincoln Elementary School (1924)	Private	Church
Carl T. Thompson Elementary School (1950)	City	Private school
J.R.D. Oldham Elementary School (1951)	City	Under study as business incubator
Alice M. Waddington Elementary School (1955)	City	Public school
Agnes B. Hennessey Elementary School (1957)	City	Public school

School	Ownership	Use
Grove Ave. Elementary School (1957-58)	Private	Private school
Emma G. Whiteknacht School (1958)	City	Public school
Riverside Jr. High/Middle School (1964-66)	City	Public school
Meadowcrest Elementary School (1964)	City	Public school
Silver Spring Elementary School (1968)	City	Public school
Orlo Ave. Elementary School (1970)	City	Public school
East Providence/Bristol County Area Vocational-Technical School (1970)	City	Public school

Source: 2021 Citywide Survey of Historic Public School Buildings, prepared by Kathryn J. Cavanaugh

In addition to local historic districts, preservation easements are another tool to protect historic resources. Like a conservation easement, a preservation easement is a legal agreement between an owner and an entity interested in preserving the property, in this case, the RIHPHC. The agreement states that the historic and architectural character of the property will be preserved, and the property will not be altered without RIHPHC's approval. The owner retains use of the entire property and continues to be responsible for its maintenance and care. Historic buildings, archaeological sites, and land all can be protected with easements. Easements can be desirable to a property owner because they carry potentially significant tax benefits for federal income, estate, and gift taxes. Under federal law, a preservation easement is treated as a charitable contribution. Easements can be flexible to meet individual owners' needs and can protect exteriors, interiors, and/or land surrounding a building.

Overall, the City should also continue coordination with the local organizations and City commissions as they work to protect important historic and cultural assets. In addition to the HDC, this includes the Carousel Park Commission, East Providence Historical Society, and the Sowams Heritage Area Project, among others. For example, the Sowans Heritage Area Projects is currently seeking National Heritage Area Status from the National Park Service. If this designation is received, it opens opportunities for protecting additional resources and sharing indigenous perspectives of our local history.

Educate and Support Property Owners

While expansion of districts and nominations to the National Register is an important tool, the City needs to rely on property owners to maintain important structures in East Providence. The City has recently lost several prominent historic structures because of years of neglect and a perception that the structures were a liability rather than an asset to the community. Resources and information for homeowners living and working in historic properties can promote stewardship. Guidelines can educate homeowners about options for restoration or home improvement that honors the architecture and materials of historic structures. And while historic preservation efforts can conflict with environmental and energy efficiency goals, there are ways to make historic structures more energy efficient, including weather stripping, adding insulation to the attic, or using native trees to provide shade.[82] It is important to share these options as well.

The NHPHC offers financial assistance and advice to property owners who want to preserve and protect their historic properties. There are grants, loans, and tax credit programs for all types of residential and commercial projects associated with properties on the State or National Register. The HDC, along with

[82] https://savingplaces.org/stories/8-ways-to-green-your-historic-house#.XSydQuhKiUk

the East Providence Economic Development Commission for commercial properties, can help connect East Providence property owners to these resources.

Adapt and Reuse Structures and Sites

Historic buildings and structures are connections to our neighborhoods. When they are torn down, there is a sense that the past is being erased and those that were there before are forgotten. Finding ways to adapt and reuse buildings keeps the visual fabric of the street, maintains neighborhood context, and opens opportunities for new uses and added vibrancy. It can be a large effort like the Rumford Chemical Works complex or on a smaller scale like the conversion of the East Providence Library Rumford Branch as a residence.

There are many practical challenges to adaptive reuse of privately owned structures. It can be difficult to make physical improvements that respect the historic significance of a structure or site while providing modern amenities and meeting 21st century building codes. Sites with past commercial or industrial uses may present more challenges if the ground is suspected or known to be contaminated, referred to as brownfields. These projects are more complex and it is more costly to address environmental clean-up. State agencies like the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management can work with the City and property owner to identify hazards and manage steps to address these issues in the redevelopment of the building and/or site. Overall, adaptive reuse projects require developers and individuals with money, time, technical resources, and, above all, vision. Even so, where opportunities arise, the City should encourage the reuse of structures, particularly those with historic significance.

The City can also focus on the reuse and adaptation of historic sites that are municipally-owned. Through the Hunt's Mill Master Plan, the City and the HDC are identifying different opportunities to bring people to the site. The trail network through the property and community gardens are such examples. They will continue to look at opportunities to reuse the Pump House and Caleb Williams House. The survey of historic public school buildings also presents some opportunities in the near future or as uses change in the structure.

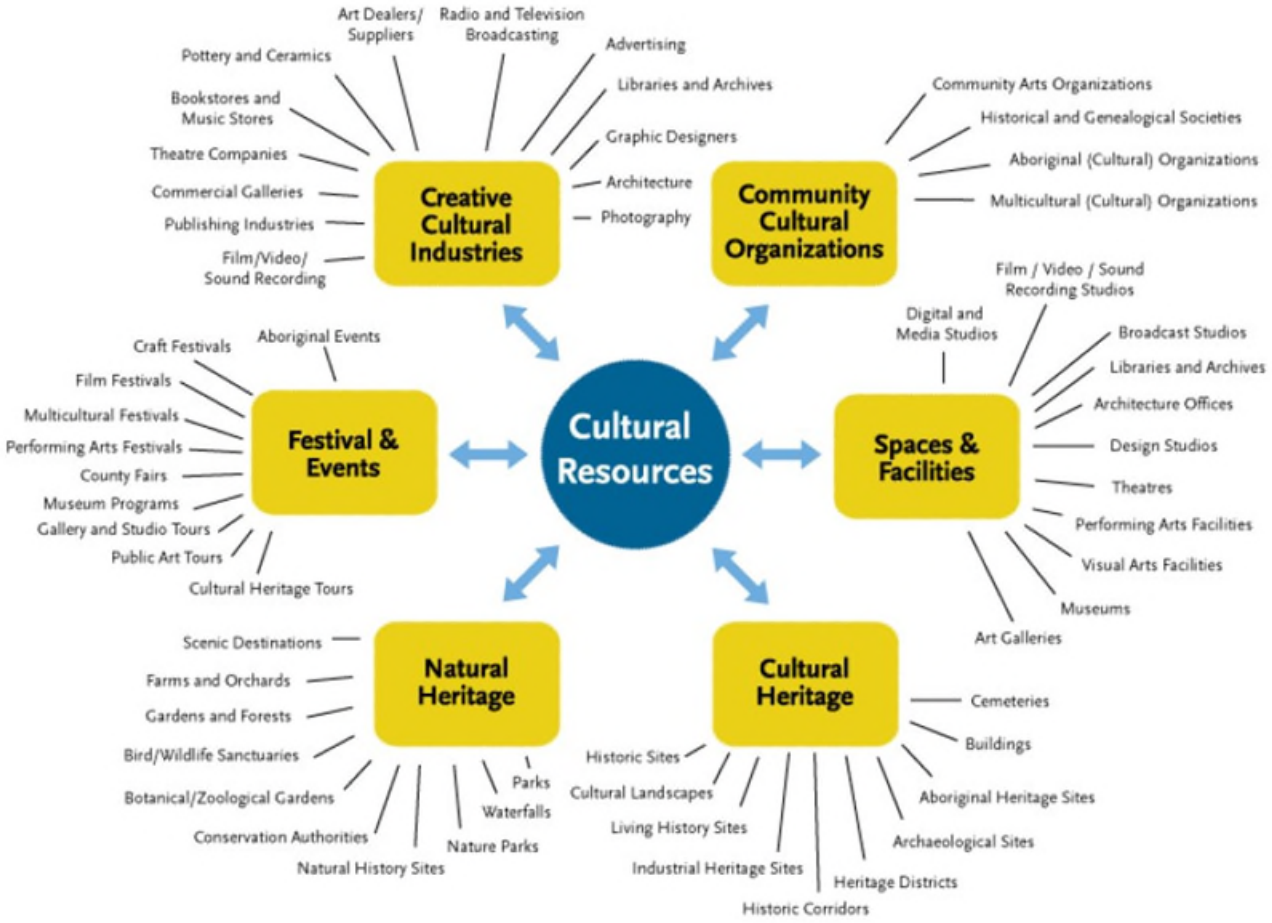
Comprehensive Approach to Heritage and Cultural Assets

The City's cultural resources are assets that give residents a sense of belonging and offer unique experiences for visitors. Bringing awareness and making these places accessible through connections and increased information not only promotes community pride but brings people into the City that will support other businesses, like restaurants and retail establishments.

Many communities undertake cultural asset mapping, "a process of collecting, recording, analyzing, and synthesizing information in order to describe the cultural resources, networks, links, and patterns of usage of a given community or group."[83] Maps can show tangible cultural resources, like buildings and places (resources maps), or intangible resources like stories and traditions (community identity maps). The information gathered helps to understand the relationships between these resources and tells the story of a place. Some examples of cultural assets are shown below.

[83] Cultural Mapping Toolkit, Creative City Network of Canada, www.creativecity.ca.

Examples of Cultural Resources in a Community



Source: Santa Barbara County, California

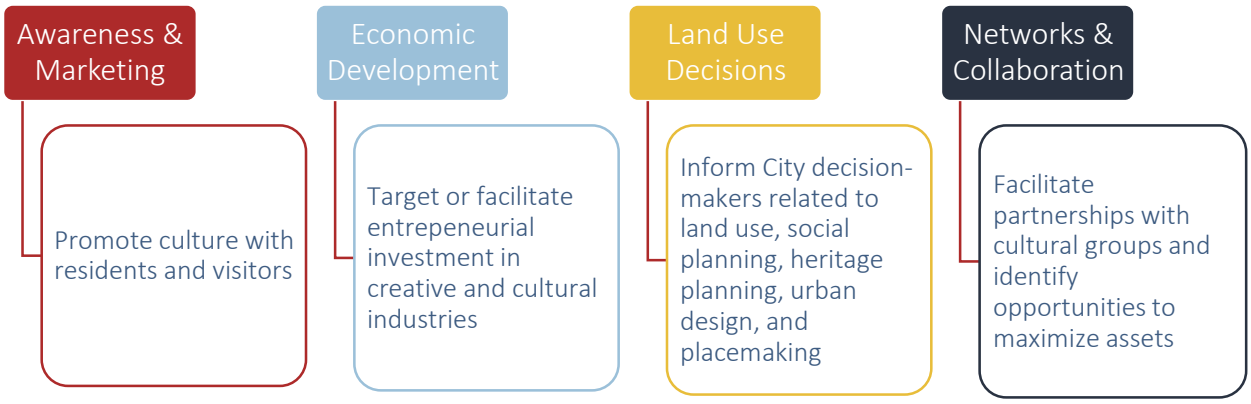
For the mapping process to be successful, it must have broad community engagement. It should be open to allow for the "exploration and creative freedom within a setting that encourages collaboration. While this may increase levels of uncertainty, new and fruitful ideas will likely emerge." [84] A more open and inclusive process can yield:

- New partnerships with the City.
- Increased capacity to influence the City's arts and culture economy.
- Better integrated activities of various organizations.
- A more comprehensive understanding of the City's assets.
- Increase the diversity and number of stakeholders engaged with the City.

The outcomes of an analysis can be integrated into many aspects of City planning, communications, growth, and investments.

[84] Robert Voigt. "Cultural Asset Planning," *Planning Commissioners Journal*, Number 81, Winter 2011.

How To Integrate Cultural Resource Mapping into City Projects



The City has done this type of assessment on a smaller scale, focusing on different places in the City or targeting specific resources. For example, it has also recently taken on initiatives that highlight its cultural assets through placemaking efforts in Watchemoket Square and the designation of an Arts District. These efforts hope to foster a thriving arts and cultural community by transforming underutilized space and supporting local artists with affordable places to live and work. The Arts District extends from Watchemoket Square north along the Seekonk River to the Henderson Bridge, east to North Broadway, and south to Warren Avenue.

The City has recently prioritized historic properties for participation in an interpretative sign program. Through input from HDC and community stakeholders, nearly 40 historic properties were chosen for informational placards that will tell the story of the place and its significance to East Providence's past.

Proposed interpretive signs for local historic sites



Source: "Interpretive Signage Plan for the City's Historic Resources," prepared by H2 Design

Also, through participation with the Sowams Heritage Area, the City can tell multiple stories about its heritage. Many historic sites and structures overlap with events and places important to the indigenous people of the region. These connections open us to discussions of different experiences. Incorporating these narratives into materials, like interpretive signage, can help build public awareness and inclusiveness of different perspectives.

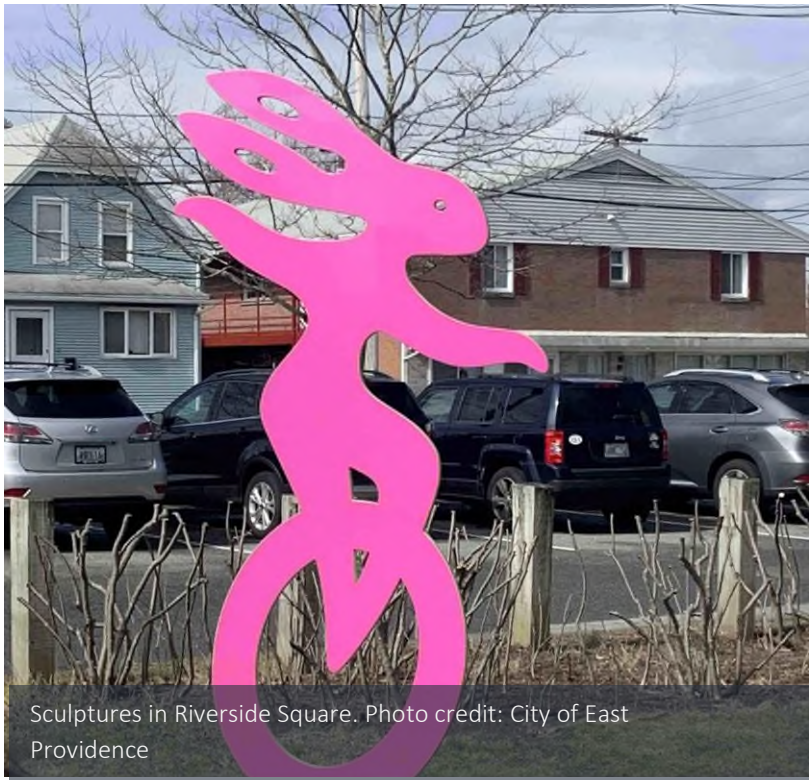
Overall, a more comprehensive look to the City's historic and cultural resources, like asset mapping, can build on these initiatives and create an organize approach to manage and protect these assets going forward. Doing so ensures consistency across all efforts and can identify new opportunities, partners, and ways to connect these places to the public through awareness campaigns.

Public Awareness

Public awareness and understanding of the City's historic and cultural assets build community support for their protection and development. Awareness should be done in multiple formats and through diverse programming to engage all residents and potential visitors at locations city-wide. The City leads many events and programs that increase knowledge of local historic and cultural figures and events in East Providence through the Library, School District, Recreation Department, HDC, and many other municipal departments and committees. It also supports initiatives organized by community groups and organizations that represent a wide variety of interests.

Historic and cultural assets are also important as the City builds tourism to East Providence. Through its membership with the BVTC, the City can take advantage of being part of a larger regional story of the Blackstone River Valley. The BVTC showcases Rhode Island's Blackstone Valley as an international destination and an attractive place to live and work. BVCT membership opens opportunities to promote East Providence to a larger audience and to acquire resources to market itself as a tourist destination.

The interpretive sign program being developed for select historic properties mentioned earlier is a great example of increasing knowledge about the people and places of East Providence's history. There could be opportunities to highlight other places and events through kiosks or placards that showcase the City's heritage. As the City prepares for installation of these signs, it should develop a plan for regular maintenance and care needed to ensure that they are kept in good condition. Doing so shows this was a worthwhile investment and it can demonstrate its potential application for other resources, such as conservation or natural areas and other cultural locations. There could also be opportunities to link these resources together through a smart phone app that recognizes your location and shows other historic and cultural resources nearby.



Sculptures in Riverside Square. Photo credit: City of East Providence

Public Art and Placemaking

The City should continue to invest in public art and placemaking, particularly in Watchemoket Square and other parts of the East Providence Arts District. For example, the ongoing construction of the Waterfront Drive exit ramp of I-195 will result in the closure of the Valley St. underpass to vehicular traffic. Public art can be one of the tools used to create an inviting pedestrian connection under the highway linking potential new residential developments north of the highway to Watchemoket Square.

Building Connections Between Destinations

Many of the City's historic and cultural resources are scattered across the City rather than concentrated in specific areas. This creates challenges for management, public awareness, and tourism activities. As the City promotes these assets, more people will be coming into the City and to these destinations. Connecting these resources through alternative modes of transportation reduces traffic congestion along local streets, but also enhances the visitor's experiences. With the call for a more walkable City by residents, the Transportation and Connectivity Element focuses on addressing walking and biking challenges city-wide and to nearby communities. Connectivity efforts should also include increasing walking, biking, and public transportation access to historic and cultural destinations. Wayfinding signage along nearby City streets and/or the East Bay Bike Path direct people to these locations, and also build awareness. Using similar themes as the interpretative signage plan for historic properties will create a cohesive look and recognition.

Transportation and Connectivity

East Providence needs to offer more opportunities to get to destinations city-wide without using a car, and these options need to be safe and accessible for everyone. As the City plans for a more walkable and bikeable and better access to transit, it should also consider visitors to local historic and cultural destinations. See this element for more policies and actions to improve mobility city-wide.

Moving Forward

For each goal, the City of East Providence will implement the following policies and actions to meet the opportunities and challenges for Historic and Cultural Resources and the Arts. Many goals and policies in other elements support planning for these conditions, specifically Economic Development, Natural Resources, and Transportation and Connectivity, and may not be specifically listed here.

Goal HCA1. Protect and ensure proper management of the City's historic and cultural resources.

Policy HCA1.1. Support efforts to protect and enhance important historic buildings, sites, and landscapes.

A. Assist the East Providence Historic District Commission and East Providence Historical Society with nominations of properties or individual structures to the National and/or State Register of Historic Places.
    - Undertake the process to nominate the Whitcomb Farm Plat to the National Register.
    - Use the *Citywide Survey of Historic Public School Buildings* to prioritize buildings for nomination on the National Register.

B. Consider designating additional local historic districts to increase protection of significant historic structures.

C. Evaluate other tools, such as acquisition, preservation easements, and transfer of development rights, among others, to protect historically significant properties and structures.

D. Educate and support private property owners of historic buildings as they maintain their properties, including ways to be more energy efficient.

E. Encourage the adaptation and reuse of historical structures that can bring new opportunities for residential uses and/or economic opportunities.

- Connect property owners with state and federal information about potential resources to clean up contaminated sites, address building renovations, and other financing or technical assistance.

F. Continue to implement the Hunt's Mill Master Plan to protect and enhance the property. (Ongoing)

- Continue to maintain and promote public access to the trail network and community gardens at Hunt's Mills.
- Continue to study the feasibility of various adaptive reuse options for the Pump House and Caleb Williams House.

Policy HCA1.2. Support local community efforts to protect and enhance important cultural assets and the arts in East Providence through equitable and inclusive engagement.

A. Conduct a city-wide asset mapping exercise or inventory of historic and cultural assets, including buildings, sites, events, organizations, and traditions that contribute to the City's heritage.

- Engage a broad group of stakeholders, residents, businesses, and others to identify placemaking efforts, targeted investments, and promotional tourism activities that are inclusive of all cultures represented by City residents and the unique experiences of living and working in East Providence.
- Build on existing inventories and placemaking efforts to identify new partnerships with cultural groups and fill gaps in inventories.

B. Continue to promote investments in the City's artist community and Arts District (see Economic Development). (Ongoing)

C. Support the Sowams Heritage Area as it protects sites significant to the culture of the region's indigenous people and promote awareness of their history and experiences, including the efforts to achieve National Heritage Area Status. (Ongoing)

Policy HCA1.3. Protect the historic resources in the City's local historic districts by the use of design guidelines.

A. Designate the Rose Land Park and Elm Tree Plat National Register Districts as local historic districts and protect the exterior of the historic resources by the use of design guidelines.

Goal HCA2. Increase awareness of and access to historic and cultural resources and the arts in East Providence.

Policy HCA2.1. Build awareness of the City's historic and cultural assets.

A. Use diverse media and programming to increase awareness of the City's historic and cultural assets, including lectures, visual and performing arts, and social media.

B. Use the Interpretative Signage Plan to install placards and informational signs at historic significant structures and sites identified in the plan.
    - Find opportunities to use this plan as a template for other cultural assets in the City.
    - Identify ways to link resources together through digital or other means as a way of promoting places to visitors.

C. Incorporate local historic and cultural assets and arts community in tourism activities that promote the City to visitors.

Policy HCA2.2. Promote the City's heritage through organizations, networks, and partnerships in East Providence and throughout the region.

A. Partner with the East Providence School District to find opportunities to weave local history into the curriculum, including history, arts, and civics.

B. Support the Historic District Commission, East Providence Historical Society, and East Providence Library, among others, to build public knowledge of local historic and cultural figures, events, and sites.

Policy HCA2.3. Increase access to the City's historic and cultural assets.

A. Build in wayfinding signage along streets and the East Bay Bike Path, as appropriate, to promote historic and cultural destinations in the City.

B. Incorporate the City's historic and cultural assets as destinations in the city-wide effort to improve walking and biking safety and accessibility.

C. Increase public transportation options to the City's historic and cultural destinations by promoting the use of RIPTA, as appropriate, and adding wayfinding signage at bus stops.

D. To the greatest extent practical, increase accessibility at city-owned historic and cultural resources for people with disabilities. This includes physical access, but also outreach materials and interpretive signage. Examples include the use of large print, braille, and tactile systems.

Goal HCA3. Invest in public art, beautification, and placemaking.

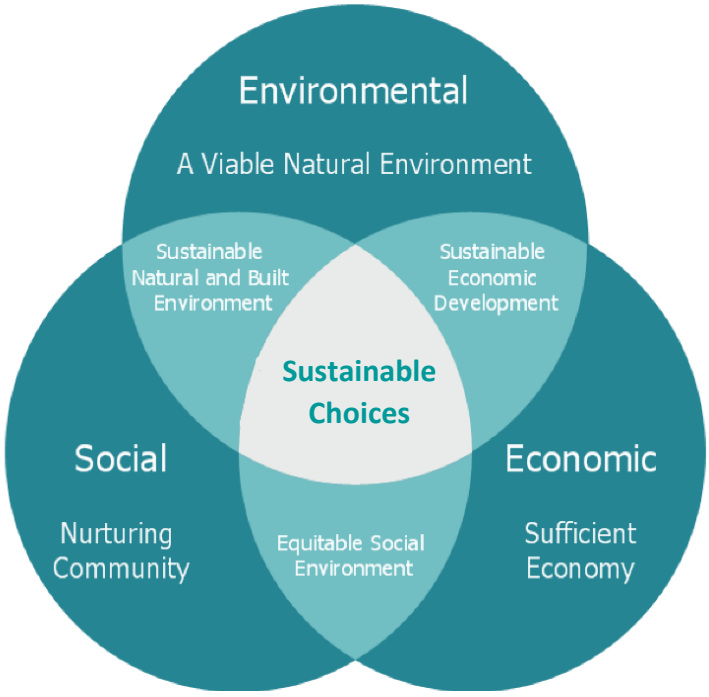
Policy HCA3.1. Invest in public art, beautification, and placemaking particularly in Watchemoket Square and other parts of the East Providence Arts District.

A. Utilize public art as a means to create an inviting pedestrian connection under the Valley Street underpass which will be closed to vehicular traffic. (Ongoing)

Policy HCA3.2. Continue to work with the East Providence Arts Council to promote the Arts in East Providence.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is defined different ways in different sectors and under different circumstances, but it generally has a common objective: to balance the use of resources so that they can be enjoyed by all equally and by future generations. Municipalities can focus on making sustainable choices that balance economic, social, and environmental needs of the community without sacrificing the needs of one group over another, one generation over another, or one group receiving greater benefits over another. This helps to create a thriving community where all residents have a voice and shared quality of life.



The City recognizes that local government can play an important role in fostering community sustainability through carefully planned and maintained City services and infrastructure improvements. City decisions around land use, resource management, energy use, conservation, and waste management must satisfy present and future needs while providing tangible environmental and economic benefits for residents.

There are many goals and policies throughout the Comprehensive Plan that guide sustainable choices to reduce the impact on the natural environment, improve social conditions, and foster economic prosperity. The City will further minimize its "footprint" on the natural environment and reduce municipal costs by taking more steps to be energy efficient, consume less, and produce less waste. This Sustainability Element focuses on these pillars.

This chapter supports and embodies the goals of the following State Guide Plan elements related to municipal infrastructure, facilities, and services:

- 120: Energy 2035: Rhode Island Energy Plan

Snapshot

Energy Efficiency of Municipal Facilities and Operations

The following section provides an overview of energy consumption related to municipal buildings and facilities, and measures taken by the City to address efficiencies.

City Buildings and Facilities

In 2022, the City partnered with Rhode Island Energy to conduct a comprehensive energy audit for municipal buildings. This audit will present the City with energy usage data and recommendations for energy savings across municipal facilities. The City also conducted an electric vehicle fleet study which provides analysis of the City's existing vehicle usage and potential cost savings increased by switching to electric vehicles. The last comprehensive energy audit for municipal buildings was conducted in 2010 and presented a complete accounting of energy usage and recommendations for energy savings. A number of the recommendations provided in the audit have been implemented, including new heating and air conditioning systems at City Hall, replacement of City-owned traffic signals with LED lights, and new boilers at several facilities. The City continues to implement recommendations as grant funding and available capital budgeting allow. The following highlights specific and ongoing efforts to address energy efficiency and consumption at City facilities.

- Upgrades to the East Providence Water Pollution Control Facility in 2010-12 included high efficiency aeration equipment and an energy efficient HVAC system within the newly constructed headworks building. Construction was supported by a grant from the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources.
- Comprehensive heating and electrical upgrades began in 2017 to make City buildings more efficient with modern equipment and fixtures. With funding from the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank, the City was able to leverage financing to address needs at the Weaver Library, Senior Center, Sweetland House on the Senior Center grounds, and the Public Works Department Headquarters on Commercial Way.
- In 2021, the City started working with National Grid under the Municipal Streetlight Investment Act to convert 5,200 streetlights to LED lights. It is estimated that the conversion will save just over $500,000 in energy costs. Smart streetlight controls will also be installed, which will enable remote management, scheduling, and dimming of the new lights, which could add additional savings.

The conversion to LED streetlights provides many benefits including:

- Increased public safety
- Lower energy costs
- Lower maintenance costs (LEDs last three to four times longer than that of incumbent technology)
- Better illumination of roads
- Increased visibility
- Decrease in overall light pollution

School Energy Usage and Efficiency Upgrades

The East Providence School District entered into a 15-year Energy Savings Performance Contract (ESPC) with Johnson Controls in 2010. The degree of performance is based on energy savings achieved through the implementation of 45 "facility improvement measures." These include replacement of lights and HVAC equipment, using computer and HVAC management software, replacement of water infrastructure to lower water use, new windows and doors, and more. Sufficient facility improvement measures have now been accomplished to enable a year-to-year comparison of energy usage and costs across School Department buildings, and to project potential energy savings out 15 years.

Measures that have already been completed for most or all the operating school buildings include updated light fixtures, water conservation measures, and computer and temperature setback management. New windows and doors and upgraded HVAC systems have been installed on more limited

basis; this work will proceed with time in the coming years. School department infrastructure spending needs to prioritize satisfying applicable health, building, mechanical and fire safety codes with additional energy-specific expenditures as funding allows.

More recently, through an Efficient Building Fund loan from the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank, the City integrated energy conservation measures into the design of the new East Providence High School that opened in the 2021-2022 school year. These measures are projected to save the City over 18.5 million kWh of electricity, and the below-market interest rates available through the Infrastructure Bank also saved the City $1 million on debt service payments.

Renewable Energy

While the City does not produce its own renewable energy, it supports renewable energy uses within East Providence. A common thread of these facilities is the clean-up and reuse of former industrial sites with legacy contamination, also referred to as brownfields, which can be costly, legally complex, and time intensive.

Forbes Street Solar Facility

Completed in 2014, the Forbes Street Solar Facility was constructed on the City's former landfill. The 6.7 MW-DC solar plant was developed and constructed by CME Energy in conjunction with Hecate Energy, which lease the 70-acre site from the City. In 2010, the project received a grant from the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation (now Rhode Island Commerce Corporation) for its development. The facility delivers approximately 5,000 MWhs of clean electricity to thousands of Rhode Island residents through energy sales to National Grid under a 20-year power purchase agreement.



Forbes Street Solar Facility. Photo credit: CME Energy

Kearsarge Solar Array Field on Dexter Road

In December 2020, Kearsarge Energy finished construction of a 6,000-plus panel solar installation on a nine-acre former tank farm on Dexter Road. Kearsarge used a Brownfield Solar Grant from the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation to help cover the cost of mitigating any contamination remaining on the property from prior uses. According to Kearsarge, the clean energy produced from the Dexter Road site will save about 62,000 tons in carbon emissions over 25 years, the equivalent of preserving approximately 73,000 acres of forested land.

In early 2021, the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) signed a remote net energy agreement with Kearsarge to purchase energy credits from power generated at its solar facility. RIPTA estimates it will save at least $250,000 in energy costs annually.

South Quay

As of summer 2022, the City, State and Rhode Island Waterfront Enterprises are working collaboratively to redevelop the South Quay Marine Terminal. The site is proposed to be redeveloped as a staging area and innovative hub for the Northeast's growing off-shore wind industry. South Quay has easy access to deep-water channels and is accessible to several offshore wind lease areas, including the Vineyard Wind, New England Wind, South Fork Wind Farm, and Revolution Wind projects.

Waste Reduction

As discussed in the **City Services and Facilities Element**, the City provides curbside trash and recycling collection for residents.

Beginning July 1, 2012, every Rhode Island city or town that enters into a contract with the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation (RIRRC) to dispose of solid waste is required to recycle a minimum of 35% of its solid waste and divert a minimum of 50% of its solid waste. Rhode Island municipalities commonly measure these against their Mandatory Recycling Rate (MRR) and rate of Overall Material Diversion (OMD), respectively. The MRR includes mixed recyclables (what is collected in residential bins) sent to the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF), composted materials, scrap metal, and clothing. In 2021, East Providence reached a MRR rate of 54% and OMD rate of 54%, exceeding both benchmarks. Per the City's agreement with the RIRRC, for recycling over 25% of total solid waste, the City pays less per ton and receives a rebate for disposal costs.

What We Heard

What the community highlighted as the City's challenges, opportunities, and needs:

- Residents want the City to increase the energy efficiency of its buildings, facilities, and municipal operations.
- The City could create incentives to encourage alternative energy and infrastructure (e.g., solar panels) in private development and retrofits.
- Promoting energy efficiency of private homes and businesses is a priority. Providing renewable energy incentives, initiatives, education, and outreach would help homeowners and businesses find opportunities to increase their sustainability.
- Supporting electric vehicle charging was seen as a way to promote sustainability.
- Trash collection and recycling services were seen as a strength for the City. The City should let the public know how it continues to improve its trash collection and recycling services.
- Residents want waste reduction (including food composting) and recycling to be a focus of education efforts.
- Residents want accessible and affordable food composting options for household and business food waste.
- There are opportunities for the City to develop restrictions on the use of single-use plastics (e.g., plastic bags and straws).
- The City could create a Sustainability Officer position to lead education and enforcement of sustainability topics and regulations for residents and businesses and serve as a liaison to technical experts.

- There are opportunities to incorporate sustainability and resilience topics in public schools (e.g., a "green curriculum") and for students to take leading roles in public education and outreach initiatives.

Challenges, Needs, and Opportunities

Being a sustainable community requires the collective action of municipal government, residents, and local businesses. The City can provide the space and opportunities that allow the community make choices that reduce the use of fossil fuel-based energy and increase the production of energy from renewable sources. These opportunities are expressed throughout the Comprehensive Plan.

Element	Policies Supporting Energy Efficiency and Reduced Consumption
Housing	Upgrading existing homes to be more energy efficient Building new housing that is energy efficient
Transportation and Connectivity	Increase opportunities to drive less with increased transit access and increased walking and biking amenities Electric vehicle charging stations
Waterfront District	Locating renewable/clean energy businesses Promoting energy efficient development (green buildings)
Land Use	Promoting energy efficient development (green buildings) Supporting development along transit corridors Increasing residential density along transit corridors Locating renewable/clean energy businesses
Historic and Cultural Resources and the Arts	Finding ways to make historic homes more energy efficient while maintaining features that are historically significant
Economic Development	Supporting renewable/clean energy businesses Training residents and students in skills to work at clean energy businesses

Energy Efficiency and Reduced Energy Consumption

Sustainable City Operations and Facilities

Energy efficient City facilities, buildings, and operations not only save money, but reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Upgrading insulation and improving HVAC systems in municipal buildings, acquiring more efficient fleet vehicles, installing more efficient indoor lighting, and upgrading streetlights are examples of how communities are reducing energy costs.

The City should update the assessment of its energy usage for each municipal building and facility to create a baseline of its energy usage. This would include City Hall, schools, libraries, wastewater treatment plants, water and wastewater pumping stations, public safety facilities, recreational facilities, and other buildings and facilities. Energy consumption of City vehicles and equipment, streetlights and fixtures, and other operations should also be collected and updated.

With this data, the City should develop an Energy Usage Reduction Plan. The plan will allow the City to establish energy reduction goals and develop metrics to evaluate progress towards those goals. Investments have been made in buildings to replace lighting, windows, and HVAC systems, which should be documented as part of the plan. From this, additional actions needed to improve energy efficiency of

facilities and operations can be developed, prioritizing facilities and operations with the highest energy consumption rates. Having a plan that prioritizes what needs to be done will help the City demonstrate need to acquire funding through its Capital Improvement Program as well as competitive state and federal funding sources. Energy consumption and efficiency data should also be publicly available to promote transparency and build community support for projects that require significant public investment. Reporting progress to the community will also show cost savings and reduced pollution generated by City operations. It can also showcase to other businesses how they can benefit from having more energy efficient buildings and consuming less.

Transportation Emissions

According to RIDEM, emissions from transportation is the largest contributor of greenhouse gases in the state, with most originating from gasoline-powered cars and trucks.[85] As noted above, the Transportation and Connectivity Element outlines several policies to reduce dependency of City residents on their cars, such as increasing walking and biking safety to key destinations, improving amenities at public transit stops, and working with the City's larger employers to develop incentives for employees to reduce the number of cars on city streets. This element also speaks to increasing infrastructure for electric vehicles, including city-wide charging stations. Rhode Island Office and Energy Resources can also help identify opportunities to expand use of electric vehicles (EV) in City fleets and for City-run shuttle services and provide EV charging stations at municipal buildings.

Supporting Residents and Businesses

The City promotes programs available to East Providence residents and businesses to help them be more energy efficient and reduce their energy costs. Currently, information is available for residents to receive an energy assessment of their homes from Rhode Island Energy/PPL and become eligible for rebates for insulation and energy-efficient appliances. Rebates are also available for small businesses for costs associated with energy efficienct electrical upgrades.

Weatherization programs are also available through the East Bay Community Action Program for low-income residents, including rental units with landlord approval. The Weatherization Assistance Program will cover 100% of the cost of improving heating, air conditioning, and appliances of income-eligible housing units.

Greener Building and Site Design

As the City works to make its facilities and operations more sustainable, new investors in East Providence should be doing the same. The City should consider policies and incentives that encourage greener buildings and site design in new development and redevelopment projects. The US Green Building Council established design and construction standards through Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design™ (LEED), a green building rating system, that promotes energy efficient and environmentally sustainable buildings and development.[86] Many communities have adopted local policies based on this rating system or referenced it in their development standards. Some examples of programs and policies across the country that offer incentives for greener development include the following:

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[85] *2020 Rhode Island Greenhouse Gass Emissions Inventory*. RIDEM. Available at https://dem.ri.gov/environmental-protection-bureau/air-resources/greenhouse-gas-emissions-inventory.

[86] LEED Rating System: https://www.usgbc.org/leed

- Arlington County, Virginia: The County's Green Building Incentive Policy offers density bonuses to developers that meet LEED Gold Certification and other environmental standards.[87]
- Chandler, Arizona: The City Council adopted a Green Building Program that requires all new city facilities to meet LEED Silver Certification or better and provides incentives to encourage green building in the private sector. If projects meet criteria associated with the LEED rating system, they become eligible for expedited plan review to obtain building permits and begin construction sooner.[88]
- Catawba County, North Carolina: The County offers reduced application and permit fees for new structures that meet energy and environmental standards of LEED, US Environmental Protection Agency, National Association of Home Builders, and state policies, among others.[89]

The City should consider different approaches to making new construction more environmentally friendly and sustainable, including policies that encourage certain standards be met. It should also consider where minimum energy efficiency standards should be required. By working with local developers and the construction community, the City can learn from their experiences and develop policies that meet sustainability goals.

Waste Reduction

Reduce, reuse, recycle. This is the mantra to reduce the amount of waste the City sends to the landfill. Doing so saves residents, businesses, and the City money. Through the Comprehensive Plan, the City can help support the community in waste reduction through municipal services and access to information and opportunities in the state and region.

In recent years, improper recycling by residents has increased and resulted in loads rejected by Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation (RIRRC). Rejected recycling includes contaminated mixed recycling loads that do not meet the minimum quality standards and are not processed in the MRF and subsequently landfilled. If a load is deemed contaminated, RIRRC will charge the City fees to process the materials and transport them to the landfill. As show in Table SUS.1, this costs the City thousands of dollars each year. In 2020, RIRRC rejected 342 tons of recycling from the City, or 41 pounds per household.

To support the City's larger goal to be more sustainable, it can encourage residents to make more sustainable, everyday choices. These should be easy ways that show residents they are part of a larger, community effort:

- Buy products with minimal packaging materials.
- Use a refillable water bottle.
- Use reusable shopping bags.
- Donate unwanted clothing.
- Park once and walk when shopping.
- Turn off the lights.
- Lower the thermostat.

Developing fact sheets or using materials from existing organizations are simple, effective ways to reach the community.

[87] Arlington County, VA, Green Building New Construction Program: https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Sustainability-and-Environment/Energy/Green-Building/Green-Building-New-Construction-Program

[88] City of Chandler, AZ, Green Building Program: https://www.chandleraz.gov/sites/default/files/DEV-green-bldg-program-doc.pdf

[89] Catawba County, NC, Green Construction Permitting Incentive Plan: https://www.catawbacountync.gov/building/_pdfs/gcpip.pdf

Table SUS.1. Rejected Loads and Costs by Year

Year	Number of Loads X Equipment Fee	Cost	Rejected Tons X Tipping Fee	Landfill Cost	Total
2020	55 X $250	$13,750	342 x $47	$16,074	$29,824
2019	32 X $250	$8,000	194 X $47	$9,118	$17,118
2018	7 X $250	$1,750	40 X $47	$1,880	$3,630
2017	3 X $250	$750	21 X $47	$987	$1,737

Source: East Providence Refuse and Recycling Division

To promote recycling done right, the City uses its website, utility bill stuffers, local events, and other activities to educate residents about what can be put in their recycling bins and how to recycle materials that cannot. The City's Department of Public Works facility on Commercial Way is a self-service drop off area to recycle and reuse many different materials, including car batteries, scrap metal, antifreeze, books, cooking oil, and e-waste (anything with a plug), among others. The City also offers curbside pick-up with a fee for larger items like refrigerators, mattresses, and furniture. Continued education will be key, particularly as technology and industries change what can and cannot be recycled.

With the carrot also comes the stick. In 2021, the City amended its health and sanitation ordinances to address the placement of non-recyclable materials in recycling bins, among other public health issues. Residents will be charged $50 for plastic bags and other non-recyclable items found in bins. This fine is hoped to deter improper recycling and address added costs associated with contaminated loads.

But "reuse" and "recycle" are only part of the mantra. *Reducing* the amount of waste we produce overall is also part of our sustainability objectives. Along with educating residents about proper recycling, the City can inform residents how to make better choices that reduce the amount of trash they thrown away. Providing information to residents and businesses that link them to private services or companies that recycle or reuse materials is one way. The City might also want to think about municipal services that can support these types of choices, such as a "swap shack" to exchange gently used items or food waste composting. For example, the City of Providence through its website provides resources on food waste composting for households, including a list of food scrap pick up services and drop off locations. Providence restaurants that compost their food waste are also listed on the Compost webpage as a way to highlight their efforts.

Net Zero Action Plan

To tie all these efforts and ideas together, developing a "net zero" vision and action plan can help the City reduce greenhouse gas emissions and its carbon footprint as a collective community. The Rhode Island 2021 Act on Climate[90] establishes the following *state* greenhouse emission reduction goals:

- 10% below 1990 levels by 2020
- 45% below 1990 levels by 2030
- 80% below 1990 levels by 2040
- Net-zero by 2050

[90] http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE42/42-6.2/INDEX.htm

Developing a municipal net zero action plan with residents, businesses, and community groups as well as state agencies like RIDEM and RIPTA is important to success. The action plan should set measurable goals like those in the state's Act on Climate with indicators to track progress.

Through the visioning process, local champions can be identified to help advocate for local policies that support sustainable municipal practices and services that reduce the City's greenhouse gas emissions. They can also help residents and businesses with resources to reduce their own carbon footprint. The establishment of an energy or sustainability committee can also assist with implementation and could act in an advisory role for municipal decision makers.

What is net zero?

Put simply, net zero means cutting greenhouse gas emissions to as close to zero as possible, with any remaining emissions re-absorbed from the atmosphere, by oceans and forests for instance.

How can net zero be achieved?

Transitioning to a net-zero world is one of the greatest challenges humankind has faced. It calls for nothing less than a complete transformation of how we produce, consume, and move about. The energy sector is the source of around three-quarters of greenhouse gas emissions today and holds the key to averting the worst effects of climate change. Replacing polluting coal, gas and oil-fired power with energy from renewable sources, such as wind or solar, would dramatically reduce carbon emissions.

- United Nations

Moving Forward

For each goal, the City of East Providence will implement the following policies and actions to meet the opportunities and challenges for being a more energy efficient and sustainable community. Also see policies and actions in **Housing**, **Transportation and Connectivity**, **Waterfront District**, **Land Use**, **Historic and Cultural Resources and the Arts**, and **Economic Development** elements.

Goal SUS1. Reduce the City's carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions by minimizing its reliance on fossil fuels.

Policy SUS1.1. Build municipal capacity to improve energy efficiency and reduce energy consumption of City buildings, facilities, and operations.

A. Complete the ongoing comprehensive assessment of energy usage by each municipal department to develop baseline data for all buildings, facilities, equipment, and vehicles.
B. Based on the comprehensive energy usage assessment, develop an Energy Usage Reduction Plan that outlines energy reduction goals, strategies to reduce energy consumption and improve energy efficiency, and define how progress towards goals will be tracked.
C. Establish an energy or sustainability committee within city government, or a collaborative city/resident/business energy commission to implement an Energy Reduction Plan and act in an advisory role for local decision makers.
D. Establish a "green building" policy for municipal facilities, requiring minimum standards to ensure facilities are meeting sustainability objectives.
E. Develop a transition plan to replace or upgrade the City's vehicle fleet with more energy efficient and electric vehicles.

F. Develop a long-range net zero plan for the City that establishes measurable goals to reduce the community's overall greenhouse gas emissions beyond municipal energy consumption. Consider including stakeholders from the business community, residents, community groups, local institutions, and state agency representatives in the development of the plan.

Policy SUS1.2. Support residents and businesses to be more energy efficient and encourage more sustainable development.

A. Support solar and other alternative energy opportunities for interested residents and businesses through the RI Office of Energy Resources and other sources. (Ongoing)
B. Develop incentives that encourage Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design™ (LEED) "green building" techniques in new construction and rehabilitation.
C. Continue the upkeep of resources for residents to improve and maintain the energy efficiency of their homes and rental properties. (Ongoing)

Goal SUS2. Reduce waste produced by municipal operations, residents, and businesses.

Policy SUS2.1. Increase recycling across the City to achieve the state's goal and reduce rejected recycling fees.

A. Continue to educate residents about what can and cannot be recycled through the City's curbside pickup program. (Ongoing)
B. Assess the success of penalty fees for improper recycling. Continue to evaluate incentives and/or penalties that encourage proper recycling by residents.
C. Ensure that all municipal departments are recycling properly and identify any gaps or informational needs.
D. Require the use of recycled materials across municipal departments, as appropriate.
E. Work with the Chamber of Commerce and other business organizations to encourage businesses and other establishments not included in the City's curbside program to recycle.

Policy SUS2.2. Increase knowledge and opportunities across the City to make more sustainable choices for waste reduction.

A. Continue to promote the City's materials recycling center on Commercial Way. (Ongoing)
B. Develop systems and policies across municipal departments that reduce the need for printed materials.
C. Identify existing educational materials of other agencies and organizations, or develop city-specific resources, to promote more sustainable choices of residents and businesses to reduce their environmental footprint.
D. Investigate ways to provide city services that can help residents and businesses divert waste including food waste, waste oil recycling, and other approaches. If private or regional options are more affordable and efficient, develop ways to connect the community with these opportunities.

WATERFRONT DISTRICT

East Providence's Seekonk and Providence River shorelines are transitioning from their long history as an industrial waterfront to a new mixed-use destination. Encompassing approximately three hundred acres, East Providence has long recognized that the Waterfront District's inherent recreational and scenic values hold tremendous economic development potential. Its proximity to surrounding neighborhoods, downtown amenities, regional labor markets, and transportation support the business community, nearby residents, and the regional tourism industry. Redevelopment of East Providence's waterfront is a unique opportunity for urban revitalization that can yield short- and long-term economic and social benefits for the residents of East Providence. As such, the objective of the Waterfront District is to attract new businesses and jobs; create a range of housing opportunities across income levels; provide recreational, civic, and cultural opportunities; and provide and ensure public access to valuable environmental resources.

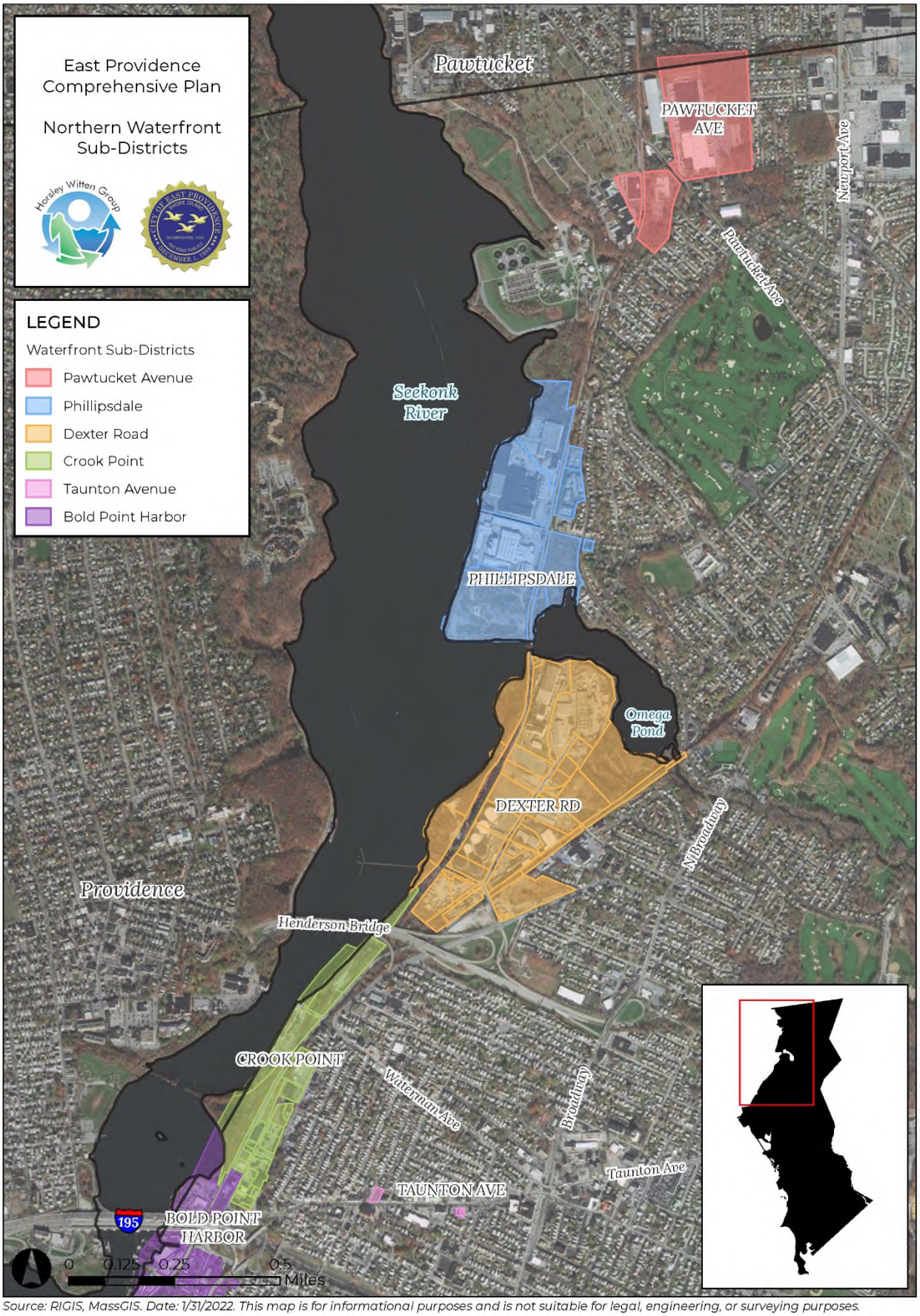
Snapshot

East Providence Waterfront District Plan

History of the Waterfront District and Waterfront District Plan

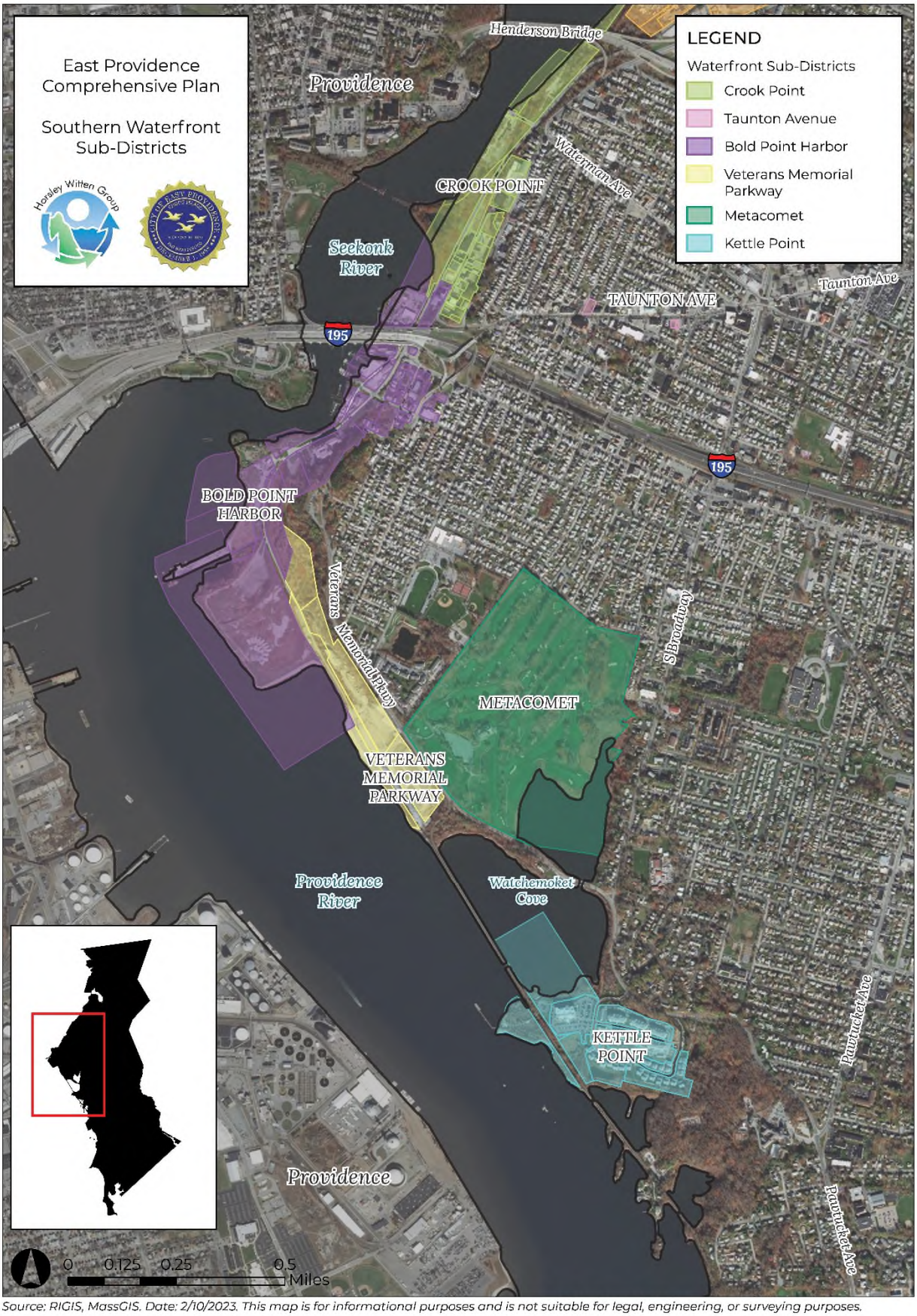
Historically, the East Providence waterfront was used for industrial and heavy commercial purposes and was the home to a variety of functions and operations, including petroleum and chemical storage, distribution facilities, and a steel mill site. While these uses were active, they generated revenue and employment opportunities across the City and region. However, dramatic changes in the U.S. economy since the 1950s, and a complementary shift to a service economy and information technologies made many of the waterfront's uses obsolete. The legacy of industrial and heavy commercial use left the City's waterfront characterized by vacant structures and buildings, unused and untended land parcels, and environmental contamination.

East Providence's waterfront planning began in earnest in the early 1990s, and the City consolidated its efforts into its *2003 East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Plan* (2003 Plan). The plan defines the City's vision for the area and articulates strategies to transform over 300-acres of underutilized land along the Providence and Seekonk Rivers into new centers of economic and social activity. In particular, new zoning identified in the 2003 Plan establishes the Waterfront District's permitting process for mixed-use development and facilitates public access to the area. The District's design guidelines and desired land use are discussed in more detail below. In recognition of the need for cooperative partnerships between East Providence, the State of Rhode Island, and private sector actors, the State Legislature created the East Providence Waterfront Development District Commission—now known as the Waterfront Commission—as a quasi-governmental organization to implement the directives of the Plan.



Source: RIGIS, MassGIS. Date: 1/31/2022. This map is for informational purposes and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

Map WF.1. Waterfront Special Development District – Northern Sub-Districts



Source: RIGIS, MassGIS. Date: 2/10/2023. This map is for informational purposes and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

Map WF.2. Waterfront Special Development District – Southern Sub-Districts

The Waterfront District has a seven-part Vision for its future:

- **Environmental Improvements:** Waterfront developments should improve current site conditions while protecting and enhancing the natural environment.
- **Public Access:** Waterfront development should provide the public with improved access to the East Providence coastline.
- **Economic Development:** Waterfront development should stimulate both short- and long-term economic development opportunities in East Providence and Rhode Island.
- **Fiscal Impact:** Waterfront development should have a positive fiscal impact on local and state government.
- **Mixed-Use:** Waterfront development, in the aggregate, should provide a self-sustaining mix of commercial, residential, institutional, light industrial, civic, and recreational uses.
- **Quality Product:** Waterfront development projects should be of high quality—in terms of purpose, planning, architecture, and materials.
- **Community Sensitivity:** Waterfront projects should be sensitive to historical and community concerns.

Waterfront Commission

The Waterfront Commission is the permitting authority for the District. The Commission's goal is to create a streamlined regulatory process that facilitates positive redevelopment of the District. The Waterfront Commission is made up of 17 members with relevant design and development related expertise. Of the 17 members, five are appointed by the East Providence City Council and five are appointed by the Governor (with the advice and consent of the State Senate). The East Providence Mayor and Governor appoint the Chairperson. Six members of the Waterfront Commission comprise the Design Review Committee, which is responsible for ensuring that proposed developments adhere to the District's design guidelines. Four members also serve on the Hearing Panel, which adjudicates on all requested waivers. The full Waterfront Commission is responsible for approving development projects following approvals from the Design Review Committee and Hearing Panel, if applicable. Throughout the entire development application process, the Waterfront Commission also takes public input to inform their decisions.

Design Guidelines and Land Use

The City's goal is to transform the Waterfront District into a self-sustaining mix of commercial, office, housing, institutional, civic, and recreational uses. To this end, the Waterfront Commission has design guidelines for nine sub-districts to establish localized standards that prioritize public access, recreation, and water-related activities at the water's edge, as listed below and shown on Map WF.1 and Map WF.2:

- Pawtucket Avenue Subdistrict
- Phillipsdale Subdistrict
- Dexter Road Subdistrict
- Crook Point Subdistrict
- Taunton Avenue Subdistrict
- Bold Point Harbor Subdistrict
- Veteran's Memorial Parkway Subdistrict
- Metacomet Subdistrict
- Kettle Point Subdistrict

Detailed descriptions of the sub-districts' design guidelines are available in the *2003 East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Plan*. To ensure that proposed development and substantial redevelopment projects in the District meet the guidelines, they undergo a design review process with

the District's Design Review Committee. The process includes a public input component and allows the Design Review Committee to make suggestions and require corrective design changes.

In general, the design guidelines emphasize appropriate transitions and buffers between different land uses within the larger district, and to uses outside the sub-districts. They emphasize creating walkable streetscapes in residential and consumer-facing commercial areas that encourage street-level activity. Prominent street frontages on commercial and residential development are encouraged, and street trees are generally required on all streets to enhance view corridors and provide shade and heat mitigation benefits.

The East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Plan identifies a range of general land uses within each of the waterfront sub-districts, as described in the following subsections:

(1) Kettle Point: Medium density residential, with ancillary commercial uses including restaurants, clubhouses, marinas and limited retail geared toward residents.

(2) Veterans Memorial Parkway: Medium density multi-family residential along the Veterans Memorial Parkway frontage, with commercial and retail uses at the lower levels of the site, and marina uses at the waterfront.

(3) Bold Point: A mixed-use high density area of commercial, office, retail and high density multi-family residential uses. Hospitality uses, including hotels and lodging, cafes, restaurants, bars and entertainment venues are also encouraged. Marinas, with limited support services, and water-transit related services are also permitted. Uses supporting off-shore wind and renewable energy are also encouraged.

(4) Crook Point: Retail and hospitality uses are encouraged closer to the Washington Bridge, with commercial office, retail and high density residential uses transitioning north toward the Henderson Bridge.

(5) Taunton Avenue: Retail and hospitality uses are encouraged closer to the Washington Bridge, with commercial office, retail and high density residential uses transitioning north toward the Henderson Bridge.

(5) Dexter Road: Technology-oriented light manufacturing, including offices, research and development, commercial education institutions and supportive commercial retail uses. Heavy commercial, mini-storage or industrial land uses are not permitted.

(6) Phillipsdale: A mix of commercial office, retail, mixed-density residential (single-family, townhouses and multifamily condominiums), light manufacturing (in selected areas) and artisan live/work studio space.

(7) Pawtucket Avenue: Commercial office, light manufacturing and research and development, with medium density multifamily residential in selected areas

(8) Metacomet: A mix of commercial office, retail, mixed-density residential (single-family, townhouses and multifamily condominiums), continuing care, fast food, conference centers, pharmacies, recreation and outdoor uses.

MetroBay SAMP Urban Coastal Greenway

The Waterfront District is located within the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council's (CRMC) Metro Bay Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) boundary, which covers the coastlines of Providence, East Providence, Cranston, and Pawtucket. Prospective developers within the Metro Bay SAMP boundary have the option to follow CRMC's standard coastal regulations or use the Urban Coastal Greenway (UCG) regulations—these regulations "[establish] standards regarding overall vegetation of the site, management of stormwater runoff using Low Impact Development (LID) techniques, and public access."[91]

The UCG regulations are intended to provide flexibility for prospective developers by tailoring coastal buffer design and maintenance standards to urban areas and consider the need to reduce flood damage potential and increase usable green space. These coastal economic development concerns are balanced with the need to protect the natural environment and achieve habitat and water quality benefits. If using the UCG regulations, a site must meet a 15% vegetative cover requirement and "treat the first one-inch of runoff from the project site to remove 80% of total suspended solids"[92] using LID techniques to the extent possible. In contrast to the buffers required under CRMC's less urban standards, UCG buffers are often more compact and "not entirely vegetated, as a portion of the greenway is designed to accommodate a public access path."[93]

Economic Development and Housing

Central to the Waterfront District's vision is the desire to foster a self-sustaining mix of uses that stimulate short- and long-term economic development opportunities in East Providence and across the region. Full buildout of the Waterfront District will generate millions of dollars in new tax revenue and thousands of temporary and permanent jobs; together, these will provide a strong infusion of new revenue to create a more stable and diverse local economy in East Providence.

Offering a variety of housing opportunities available to individuals across all income levels is critical to the vitality of the Waterfront District. The Waterfront District requires mixed-use developments that contain five or more residential units provide a minimum 10% of the total units for purchase or rent to those individuals with low to moderate incomes. In 2014, the State Legislature revised the State's inclusionary zoning law to require that municipalities with such a regulation must offer bonuses for providing affordable housing. The Waterfront Commission now has the flexibility to offer developers a mix of on-site and off-site affordable housing construction and contributions to an in-lieu/rehabilitation fund.

Job Opportunities

The Waterfront District Commission is committed to "creating an environment of market-driven redevelopment opportunities that will create new opportunities for higher-wage employment, and for

[91] Urban Coastal Greenway Design Manual for the Metro Bay Region, 2, available at http://www.crmc.ri.gov/samp_mb/UCG-Design-Manual.pd.
[92] Common Questions Concerning the CRMC Urban Coastal Greenways Policy, 2, available at http://www.crmc.ri.gov/samp_mb/UCG_Common_Questions.pdf.
[93] Ibid, 1.

housing, recreational, cultural and waterfront public access opportunities for all persons, especially to those with low to moderate incomes and to minority populations."[94]

The Waterfront District is home to approximately 50 industrial, retail, services, and other types of employers large and small. Since its inception, the District has added almost 700 jobs to East Providence, with the ultimate goal of creating approximately 2,300 new jobs.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

The 2008 *East Providence Waterfront District Tax Increment Financing Plan* proposes the use of tax increment financing (TIF) to facilitate the implementation of public improvements in the Waterfront District. TIF is the use of long-term increased local tax revenues from an anticipated development to fund near-term site and area improvements. TIF can be used as an incentive for developers who need an additional financing tool for projects within the Waterfront District; TIF can also be used to help fund updates and expansions to public infrastructure and associated facilities such as water, sewer, and storm drainage systems. For example, in the case of Kettle Point, the TIF agreement helped transform an environmentally contaminated brownfield site into a new neighborhood featuring a mix of housing options and a medical complex. In 2009, the site generated roughly $67,400 in property taxes; in 2021, it generated roughly $1,533,300 in property taxes. The property tax revenue is split between allocations to the City's General Fund and the TIF Fund.

Commercial Development Projects

The Waterfront Commission intends for commercial development projects to strengthen existing commercial areas and revitalize non-performing sites. The types of commercial activities permitted throughout the Waterfront District varies by sub-district to account for local conditions (see the 2003 Plan for more detail on permitted activities). Since 2003, the Waterfront District has welcomed a diversity of commercial uses in redevelopment and new development sites. New and planned commercial activity in the District includes larger operations such as renewable energy and nanotechnology manufacturing to smaller-scale activities like a CrossFit gym, indoor trampoline park, and restaurant.

Residential Development Projects

Residential development in the Waterfront District will create new options for East Providence residents to live in the same neighborhoods where they work and play. The types of housing—single-family, townhouses, and multi-family—and their permitted locations vary by sub-district and account for other designated land uses that may require buffers between residential development(see the 2003 Plan for more specific information on permitted housing types). New and planned residential development projects in the District range in size and typology, and several include on-site affordable housing.

Mixed-Use Development Projects

Mixed-use development is central to the Waterfront District's vision of having a diverse array of complementary uses that is self-sustaining over time. Horizontal mixed-use, where multiple, individual buildings within a development have a single use, and vertical mixed-use, where buildings contain multiple types of uses, are both encouraged in the district. The Kettle Point development, for example,

[94] *2003 East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Plan*, page 4.

integrates residential and medical offices horizontally across its site (see the 2003 Plan for more specific information).

Historic and Cultural Resources

The Waterfront Commission is committed to facilitating redevelopment that is sensitive to local context and provides appropriate transitions and buffer spaces to the area's existing historic and cultural resources. Several resources are located and feature prominently within the Waterfront District, as described below:

- The Phillipsdale sub-district includes much of the **Phillipsdale National Register District**, a historic mill village that developed due to the area's proximity to the Seekonk and Ten Mile Rivers. The Phillipsdale National Register District was accepted to the National Register of Historic Places in 2011. Buildings and structures associated with the American Electrical Works and Glenlyon Bleacheries businesses are within the historic district and include company-built worker houses, Grace Phillips Memorial Church, the Phillipsdale Store, and the original Glenlyon Bleacheries plant.
- An 1895 map shows **Watchemoket Square** encompassing the area just north of Taunton Avenue from the Seekonk River east to Potter Street, south to Mauran Avenue along 4th Street, and west to the Providence and Seekonk Rivers. The construction of I-195 through East Providence (completed in 1959) displaced much of the neighborhood and split what remained in two. Some maps indicate that the district's eastern boundary extends to 8th Street south of I-195 and Ivy Street north of the Interstate. The Crook Point and Bold Point Harbor sub-districts include portions of Watchemoket Square. The Waterfront Commission works with Watchemoket Square merchants and residents to raise awareness about the area's history and future potential as an arts and entertainment district. The East Providence Area Chamber of Commerce also helps bring awareness to the area by hosting Watchemoket Square Day, an annual celebration of the Square's past, present and future. As part of the celebration, the East Providence Historical Society hosts walking tours about the early families who settled in the Square and their homes and buildings.
- The **Oddfellows' Hall** is a focal point of Watchemoket Square, and the rehabilitation of this endangered historic building was critical to the ongoing redevelopment of the neighborhood and the Bold Point Harbor sub-district. In 2014, the Waterfront District Commission received a $7,500 grant from Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission to prepare a historic structures report for the long-vacant Shingle-style Oddfellows' Hall. The building, built in 1889, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and was purchased in late 2019 from the City by a developer. The building was developed as mixed-use with retail on the first floor and offices on the upper floors.
- **Veterans Memorial Parkway** was designated a scenic highway by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation in 1991. The Parkway was completed between 1910 and 1920 and is characteristic of the early 20th century Parkway movement, which emphasized scenic linkages between parks that were increasingly being located away from burgeoning urban centers. Veterans Memorial Parkway was designed by the pre-eminent Olmsted landscape architecture firm and is also associated with the Greater Metropolitan Park Plan for Providence. The Parkway is not currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places but is seen as eligible for

recommendation.[95] The Parkway forms the eastern boundary of the Bold Point Harbor and Veterans Memorial Parkway sub-districts, both of which emphasize maintaining scenic view corridors and development that is consistent with the area's historic character. As noted in Ocean State Outdoors – State Guide Plan Element 152, green space along the City's major public roads needs to be recognized for the importance of aesthetic and functional roles. Waterfront Development District projects along the Parkway must be executed with full regard to preserving this roadway's unique attributes.

Open Space and Recreation

Improving public access to the coastline is one of the seven core goals of the Waterfront District. Several notable open space and recreation assets already exist in the Waterfront District, as described briefly below:

- **Squantum Woods Park** was created in the early 1990s as part of the development of Veterans Memorial Parkway. It was improved in the 1930s as a picnic area with Works Progress Administration funds as part of the Rhode Island Metropolitan Parks Commission's initiative to create a state park system around the City of Providence. The park is currently owned by the City.
- **Bold Point Park** is a small, two-acre park located on the Providence River adjacent to the Bold Point Harbor sub-district. The park has several benches and scenic views of the Providence skyline. Its public boat ramp is heavily used during warmer months. Bold Point Park has been used as a seasonal concert venue since 2018, and its success as an artistic venue plays an important role in the economic revitalization of the Waterfront District and Watchemoket Square. Future plans include the development of a permanent music venue and improvements to the site to support the State's green energy initiatives.
- **Crook Point** is a seven-acre property owned by the State. The property fronts on Seekonk River and is bounded by Waterfront Drive to the east. The property was historically the site of an elevated rail river crossing that connected East Providence to Providence.
- Opened in 2021, **Kettle Point Park & Pier** is a three-acre public park located along the Providence River. The park features a 60-foot fishing pier and is adjacent to the East Bay Bike Path; visitors can access either amenity via the park's public parking lot.
- The **John L. Lewis Waterfront Park** is located along the Seekonk River and is adjacent to the Bold Point Harbor sub-district. The half-acre park has views of Narragansett Bay, Washington Bridge, Bold Point Park, and the East Providence and Providence shorelines. The park also has a small picnic area.
- Two marinas are located in the Southern Waterfront District. The **Oyster House Marina** on Water Street has a restaurant and 60 guest slips. The **East Providence Yacht Club** on Pier Road is known primarily as a bar and club, but it also has a full-service marine shop with four guest slips.

Environmental Quality, Sustainability, and Resilience

Development in the Waterfront District is guided by a commitment to improve existing site conditions and minimize the impact of development on natural resources. Accounting for the projected impacts of

[95] Rhode Island Department of Transportation, "Rhode Island's Scenic Roadways" (from http://www.dot.ri.gov/community/scenicroadways.php#VetsParkway).

climate change—including increasingly extreme temperatures, storms, and sea level rise—through thoughtful planning and development is essential to ensuring the long-term success and viability of the Waterfront District.

Water Quality and Protection

Stormwater runoff is a well-documented issue in the Waterfront District, with the Seekonk and Providence Rivers especially affected during heavy precipitation events. Stormwater management practices are required under the previously discussed UCG regulations (and in CRMC's standard regulations), and the City has already started to take action. The City acquired funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to conduct an extensive stormwater management study in 2008. The study found that the Waterfront District is constrained by poorly drained soils, contamination, and severe topography. As a result, many sites within the District "have limited capacity to manage stormwater within their own boundaries." The study recommended creating shared best management practices (BMPs) such as constructed wetlands, vegetated swales, and permeable pavement to capture and treat stormwater before it runs into waterbodies. The study also recommended that the Waterfront Commission create a stormwater utility district that would impose additional fees on property owners within the District. There are no current plans to implement the stormwater utility.

Natural Hazards and Climate Change

As expected, given its waterfront location, the City and District Commission recognizing that fostering resilience to natural hazards and climate change is key to the long-term success of the Waterfront District. See this element to understand the natural hazards most relevant to the Waterfront District—including flooding and sea level rise—and the City's overall approach to mitigation and adaptation.

Brownfields

The East Providence waterfront is mostly comprised of land formerly used for industrial or heavy commercial purposes, such as petroleum and chemical storage, distribution facilities, and a steel mill site. When these uses were actively operating, they generated revenue and employment opportunities for the City and region. However, dramatic changes in the U.S. economy over the last 50 years and a shift from an industrial to service economy and information technologies left a legacy of underutilized—and in some cases, unsightly, derelict, and environmentally contaminated—parcels of land along the waterfront. These sites are referred to as "brownfields."

Planning for brownfield redevelopment in the Waterfront District has included inventorying vacant and/or underutilized sites and ranking them for cleanup prioritization based on known environmental conditions and cooperation from the existing property owners. These initial investigations, sometimes as a formal "Phase I Site Assessment," review the site history and include some limited investigations on-site. Following completion of Phase I Site Assessments, several sites will likely move on to more detailed Phase II Site Assessments. Phase II Site Assessments will include a complete history of the sites and any potential impacts from surrounding properties; a description of the site evaluation findings, including the presence and extent of hazardous substances; the implications of the findings; and recommendations for remediation as necessary.

Climate Change and Sea Level Rise

Development in the Waterfront District will be exposed to the effects of climate change, notably those hazards related to flooding: intense precipitation, severe storms and flooding, and increasing rates of sea level rise.[96] Heat-related hazards, such as extreme heat and heat waves, are also projected to become more common.

The sub-districts along the Providence River—Bold Point Harbor, Veterans Memorial Parkway, and Kettle Point—are especially exposed to the 100-year flood, though the City's steep topography does help limit the inland extent of flooding. Additionally, the area around Veterans Memorial Parkway at Watchemoket Cove and Sabin Point Park are susceptible to tidal flooding. The City Department of Public Works has identified areas with a history of flooding in and around the Waterfront District, which is described further in the Natural Hazards and Climate Change Element. Severe storms are also a planning consideration within the Waterfront District. A storm surge of 10 to 20 feet above the normal tide would be expected from a Category 2 or higher storm (i.e., a hurricane or tropical storm) that passes closely by Narragansett Bay on its way northward. The resulting flooding would affect many waterfront properties in East Providence; storm surges would also travel inland and upstream into river streams.

Current sea level rise projections and planning horizons for this Comprehensive Plan are approximately one foot of sea level rise in 2035, two feet in 2050, and five feet in 2100. Sea level rise will naturally increase the impacts of storm surge and tidal flooding due to higher "mean-tide" levels (dependent upon the time of year and where the event falls in the tide chart). Buildings and infrastructure in the Waterfront District are generally not projected to see impacts until three to five feet of sea level rise has occurred.

What We Heard

What the community highlighted as the City's challenges, opportunities, and needs for the Waterfront District:

- The Waterfront District is an asset to the City. Parts of the District should be transformed as "Gateways to the City."
- Redevelopment should be aware of development constraints and natural hazards, like flooding and sea level rise.
- Redevelopment should improve existing environmental conditions and protect natural resources.
- Uses within the Waterfront District should be balanced and provide appropriate linkages or buffers between uses. There are opportunities to provide linkages between existing neighborhoods and new development in the District.
- The Waterfront District needs to be accessible to all modes of transportation and expand linkages to existing and planned amenities. There are opportunities to add creative transit options, like trolley cars or water taxis, to areas unable to accommodate parking.
- People want active and passive recreational opportunities in the District. Protecting and expanding public access to the water is important.

[96] Impacts on Rhode Island at Climatechange.ri.gov.

Challenges, Needs, and Opportunities

Revisit the 2003 Plan

The Waterfront District is an important asset of the City and will continue to play a critical role toward reaching many of its goals around economic development, housing, social equity, and resilience. Since its adoption, the 2003 Plan has helped guide efforts to create new opportunities for residents to live, work, and recreate. After 20 years, the 2003 Plan should be revisited to reflect on progress made in meeting its goals and objectives and to incorporate local and regional planning initiatives since 2003 that have an impact on future work in the District.

The following discussion presents a high-level overview of areas where the 2003 Plan should be reviewed to ensure consistency with the goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan. It is not an all-inclusive list and is meant to provide initial guidance as the City begins the process.

Land Use Designations

Land use designations within the Waterfront District should be reviewed and updated. This includes an update to the Bold Point sub-district's South Quay site to ensure that is consistent with CRMC's water type classification of "Industrial Waterfronts and Commercial Navigations Channels" at this section of the Providence River. It is anticipated that this site will be used to support offshore wind development. See the **Land Use Element**.

Diverse and Affordable Housing

Continued emphasis on creating diverse and affordable housing within the district should be made, stressing the desire not to grant waivers for meeting the affordable housing requirement. More affordable and diverse housing is needed in East Providence and the region, and the Waterfront District presents a great opportunity to create more inclusive neighborhoods by mixing housing types and household incomes. See the **Housing Element**.

Transportation Options

The **Transportation and Connectivity Element** describes current and planned transportation initiatives that have or will have an impact on circulation within or access to the Waterfront District and are not reflective in the current plan. These include the Henderson Bridge and Expressway redesign and on/off ramps from I-195.

References to Waterfront Drive north of Dexter Road should be removed. The City no longer plans to continue the roadway north.

Continue to emphasize walking and biking connections to and through the district for both recreational users and commuters. The George Redman Linear Park across the Washington Bridge did not exist in 2003 and presents a great opportunity to connect to areas north of I-195, including the Crook Point Sub-District and potentially the Dexter Road Sub-District along Waterfront Drive.

The City continues to think about ways to address safety concerns from the George Redman Linear Park to the East Bay Bike Path in Watchemoket Square. Development in the Bold Point Harbor and Veterans

Memorial Parkway sub-districts should integrate safer connections to the bike path to help minimize conflicts between bikers and vehicles.

Finally, efforts to integrate public transportation in the District should continue. The current plan references RIPTA bus routes, but they have since changed and are not providing the access that was once envisioned in 2003. Supporting mixed-use development and more affordable and diverse housing requires access to multiple transportation options, like biking infrastructure discussed above and public transportation to support density and minimize the impact of traffic congestion.

Watchemoket Square and the Arts District

Watchemoket Square will serve as a gateway to the Waterfront District and the City's Arts District. The updated plan should reference the *Watchemoket/Waterfront Gateway Placemaking and Multi-modal Access Improvements Study* to ensure that projects in Crook Point and Bold Point Harbor sub-districts are consistent with the study's objectives. Watchemoket Square and the Arts District are also discussed in the Economic Development Element and Historic and Cultural Resources and the Arts Element.

Public Spaces and Access to the Shoreline

Creating public spaces in the Waterfront District has always been an objective of the 2003 plan. The updated plan should reference new spaces, such as the Kettle Point Pier, and highlight any new opportunities that present themselves during the update process. The Recreation Element summarizes the recreation and public spaces within the District as they fit into the larger city-wide network.

Nature-Based Solutions for Stormwater Management

The 2003 Plan stresses the importance of protecting natural features. The update should discuss different ways to enhance and improve the functions of the existing resources. The Natural Resources Element stresses the importance of using nature-based solution (NBS) in new developments and redevelopment projects to manage stormwater. NBS use natural features to capture, filter, and absorb runoff. The 2003 Plan focused on using pipes and drains to collect stormwater and connect to the City's stormwater conveyance system. The update should encourage the use of NBS to help the City meet larger environmental and resilience goals of reducing pavement and increasing green space.

Climate Change

The 2003 Plan touches on hazard mitigation planning to address erosion and flooding, and references requirements for developing in the floodplain. It does not mention climate change or its impacts like sea level rise, increased and more intense storm events, or rising temperatures. Sea level rise and storm surge inundation data and other available climate change projections should be incorporated into the updated plan or reference data sources to ensure current data are used to evaluate the potential impact on future development projects in the district. Accounting for the effects climate change as part of compliance with federal floodplain regulations ensures safety of future development along the waterfront. See the Natural Hazards and Climate Change Element.

Update Process

The update process for the 2003 Plan will bring residents, businesses, and decision makers together to identify progress made since 2003 and discuss best practices and lessons learned from the last 20 years. Like the update of the Comprehensive Plan, this process presents an opportunity to have a broader

discussion about the vision stated in the plan for the Waterfront District and if it is still relevant for the next 20 years. The following are some suggested steps for the City to consider as it plans for the update process.

- Develop a robust public participation process that engages residents, businesses, community groups, state agencies, and other stakeholders. Consider the use of a stakeholder committee.
- Compile data around business development (sectors), job creation (types and numbers of jobs, needed skill levels), housing development (housing types, renter/owner, affordability), acreage of dedicated public open space, acreage of environmental cleanup, and other metrics.
- Update the inventory of properties within the District with development potential.

Future District Plan

Because of the unique governance structure associated with the Waterfront District and the past reliance on a detailed plan specific to the area, the Comprehensive Plan defers specific discussion of future uses, performance standards, and other features to the revision of that 2003 Plan. This is an effective approach for areas with unique opportunities and has been successfully applied to other areas in Rhode Island like the Quonset Business Park and Providence's I-195 Corridor. After the 2003 Plan is updated, a schedule should be established to review and monitor its progress. It would make sense to do this when the City is reviewing the Comprehensive Plan, at the five-year and 10-year marks. The metrics developing during the 2003 Plan update can help with this review.

Moving Forward

Many goals and policies in the Economic Development, Housing, Natural Hazards and Climate Change, Recreation, Natural Resources, and Transportation and Connectivity elements support the Waterfront District.

Goal WF1. Ensure the *East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Plan* reflects the vision of the community and is consistent with state and local goals unique to this area.

Policy WF1.1. Develop and follow a schedule and process to review and update the District Plan.

A. Identify available data and develop metrics to measure success of the 2003 Plan and subsequent updates.
B. Update the 2003 Plan.
    - Develop a robust public engagement process for the 2003 Plan update.
        - Engage a broad representation of the City, including residents, businesses, and community groups.
        - Ensure that appropriate state agencies are part of the process.
        - Start engagement early and keep the process accessible, open, and transparent.
    - Consider establishing a steering committee to play a central role in the 2003 Plan update process with diverse membership that represents city issues around housing, economic development, conservation, and transportation, among other needs.

- Develop a scope of work for the update that includes, but not limited to, the following tasks:
    - Evaluating activities within the district and progress towards meeting stated goals.
    - Vetting the current vision and goals with the community and stakeholders.
    - Identifying future needs for public services and utilities, including park and public space maintenance, water, wastewater, and public safety.

C. Develop a schedule to periodically review the District Plan to ensure it meets stated goals and objectives and the community's vision.

Policy WF1.2. Continue the development of Bold Point Harbor to support off-shore wind projects.

A. Continue to work with private property owners and state agencies to support the development of the South Quay into a port that supports off-shore wind projects. (Ongoing)

LAND USE

The Comprehensive Plan is a policy statement that guides decision makers to ensure that development and investments in East Providence are consistent with the vision of its residents. Each element tackles specific issues, like transportation, conservation, housing, and historic preservation, among others. The Land Use Element acts as an umbrella for many of the desired outcomes for each element. Importantly, this element provides the basis for zoning and subdivision regulations that direct how the City's land is developed.

Growth and Development Trends in East Providence

East Providence is the fifth largest municipality in Rhode Island by total population, behind the capital city of Providence, and the cities of Warwick, Cranston, and Pawtucket. It is mostly a densely developed suburban community located on the eastern side of the Seekonk and Providence Rivers. It is among the communities on the east side of Narragansett Bay that make up the geographic area known as the "East Bay." East Providence consists of 13.3 square miles of land area and has approximately 14 miles of coastline. The City is approximately two to three miles in width (east to west) depending on where one measures. East Providence is bordered by the City of Pawtucket to the north, the Town of Barrington to the south, and predominantly the Town of Seekonk, Massachusetts to the east.

East Providence is part of the Sowams Heritage Area, which encompasses Barrington, Bristol, Providence, Rehoboth, Seekonk, Swansea, and Warren. According to the Sowams Heritage Area Project Team website,[97] when the Massasoit Ousamequin (Yellow Feather) first met the Pilgrims in what is now Plymouth in 1621, he was living 40 miles to the southwest in an area known as Sowams. More discussion of Massasoit and encounters with colonists in Sowams is found in the **Historic and Cultural Resources and the Arts Element**.

The beginnings of a community solidified when East Providence was first established in 1812, then including parts of Seekonk and Rehoboth, Massachusetts. Through a series of complicated land plattings, boundary relocations, transactions, and annexations over time, East Providence was incorporated as a Rhode Island town with today's existing geography in 1862. East Providence was incorporated as a city in 1958.

The three distinct geographic areas of East Providence today are rooted in four recognized villages in the early history of the city: Rumford, Phillipsdale, Watchemoket, and Riverside. As discussed below, the growth of these villages and the city as whole was very much influenced by the region's transportation system. More detail on the villages is found in the **Historic and Cultural Resources and the Arts Element**.

[97] Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International. https://sowamsheritagearea.org/wp/sowams-heritage-area-project/

Village of Rumford

Early centers of development in Rumford included the area known as the "Ring of the Green." Rumford was the site of the Town Hall until 1889 and consisted, for the most part, of farms and some mills located along the Ten Mile River. Despite the shift of commerce and government operations to Watchemoket, Rumford continued to prosper around the growth of the Rumford Chemical Works.

Village of Phillipsdale

In 1870, Phillipsdale was a small village with varied mills with no particular identity. However, that changed in 1893 when the Phillip Copper Wire Company (from which the village would take its name) moved from Providence and established a mill. By 1895, 700 workers were employed at the mill and resided in surrounding mill housing. The village expanded with the inclusion of a steel mill in 1900 and was the fastest growing manufacturing village in New England. With 2,000 residents, the village of Phillipsdale became what was considered a model for mill housing development.

Village of Riverside

Riverside, despite some early 19th century colony activity, remained remote and focused on the farming or fishing trades. Beginning in the year 1860, a chain of events occurred that would lead to Riverside's development as an amusement park and entertainment resort area. At the time, During this era, General Flagg developed the "Maze" as the area's first residential development, followed by many business establishments between 1800 to 1890. Transportation changes including first rail lines and later electric street cars helped spur the amusement and recreational uses.

Village of Watchemoket

Watchemoket, because of its location on the waterfront and convenient river crossings, as well as its proximity to Providence, developed as a hub of commerce and associated residential development. Two bridges built in this location spurred the growth of Watchemoket. In 1885 a new Washington Bridge opened, and in 1896 the famous Red Bridge was completed. Railroad trestles were also built across the Seekonk River which facilitated industrial development. Transportation of cargo from the Seekonk River to Narragansett Bay was made easy with the presence of the rail lines. Highways came together in Watchemoket Square including the Boston Post Road connection to the Washington Bridge, Route 44 to Taunton, and Route 6 to other East Bay communities (Barrington, Warren, and Bristol) and Fall River. Between 1865 and 1895 Watchemoket's population rose from about 600 to over 6,000. It was the core "downtown" area, but also included land along Taunton and Warren Avenue.

From a land use perspective, these areas have retained some of their village center feel but have still been influenced by the advancement of the automobile and the subsequent suburban development between them.

From 1920 to 1940, the City's commerce and residential development comprised more expansive as the population grew by 47% to 32,175. It became more accessible in 1931 when the first modern George Washington Bridge was constructed between Providence and East Providence, which replaced an older

bascule (swing) bridge built in 1886. Automobiles and trucks became the majority of bridge traffic rather than horses and carts. Commercial land use in the 19th century was scattered. Some in smaller concentrated areas with single structures. Others in a "Main Street" configuration with connected structures on the City's major streets and routes of commerce, such as Taunton Avenue among other locations.



Swimming at Crescent Park. Photo credit: Reporter Today

Larger scale uses such as amusement parks and recreational waterfront activities prominent in Riverside were also made accessible to tourists, first with railroad lines, and later with electric streetcar lines. This increased access also spurred residential development in the waterfront community. As the popularity of the automobile grew, roadway design and improvements became more urbanized.

The construction of Interstate 195 (I-195) and its ramping system and bridge abutments (at Taunton Avenue) in the 1950s and 1960s geographically divided East Providence and led to the demolition of much of what had first developed as the center of East Providence's commerce, government, and institutional uses in Watchemoket.

The construction of I-195 through East Providence impacted neighborhoods, local traffic patterns, and connections between areas north and south of the highway that are still felt today. Bridges were built at Potter Street, Purchase Street, Lyon Avenue, and Pawtucket Avenue over I-195 to reconnect the City. However, these connections focused on the automobile with little thought to the needs and experiences of pedestrians or the residents that remained along the highway's right-of-way. Residents that live in these homes are impacted by noise, heat, and poor air quality from the traffic and pavement of the highway.

Current Land Uses

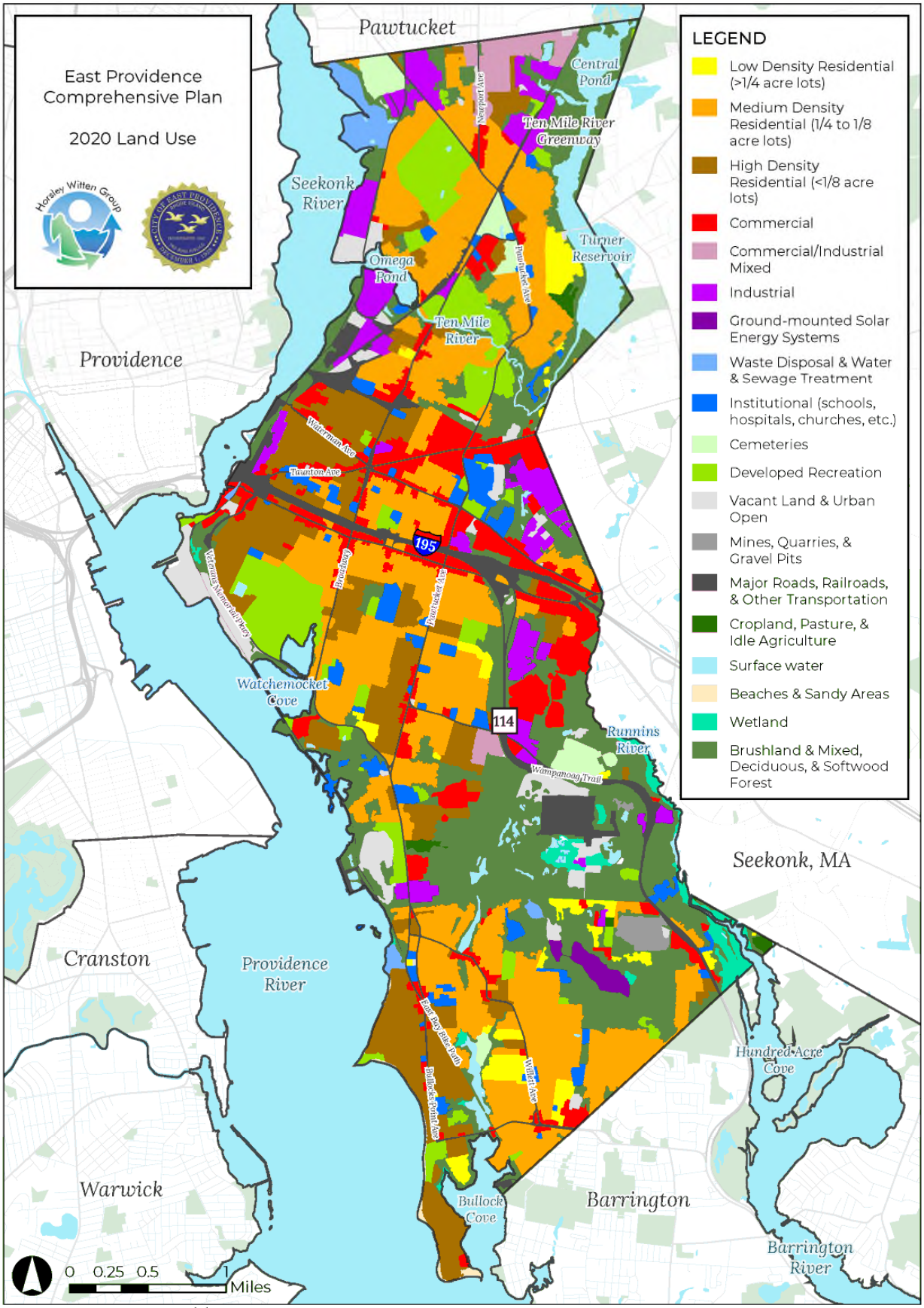
Land uses describe the type of development (or preservation) happening on the ground. Based on the Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning Land Use and Land Cover data for 2020 (Map LU.1), approximately 40.3% of the City's land is used for residences. Medium density residences make up most

of this category (25.2%), followed by high density residences (12.9%). Approximately 21.7% of the City's land is covered by brushland and forestland, with large contiguous tracts at the Ten Mile Greenway, Squantum Woods, Hunt's Mills Museum and along the Runnins River. Additional brushland and forestland is found at the Mobil Oil Corporation property and former landfill property on Forbes Street.

Table LU.1. Current Land Use

Land Use	Percent Total of Land Area (not including water)
Low Density Residential (> 1/4 acre lots)	2.2%
Medium Density Residential (1/4 to 1/8 acre lots)	25.2%
High Density Residential (<1/8 acre lots)	12.9%
Commercial	9.0%
Commercial/Industrial Mixed	1.4%
Industrial	4.8%
Institutional (schools, hospitals, churches, etc.)	3.2%
Cemeteries	1.5%
Developed Recreation	6.7%
Roads, Railroads, and Other Transportation	4.6%
Ground-mounted Solar Energy Systems	0.5%
Mines, Quarries, and Gravel Pits	0.5%
Waste Disposal and Water and Sewage Treatment	1.0%
Vacant Land and Urban Open	3.1%
Beaches and Sandy Areas	0.2%
Wetland	1.2%
Brushland and Mixed, Deciduous, and Softwood Forest	21.7%
Cropland, Pasture, and Idle Agriculture	0.4%

Source: Land Use and Land Cover (2020), Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning



Source: RIGIS, MassGIS. Date: 8/4/2022. This map is for informational purposes and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

Map LU.1. Land Use and Land Cover of East Providence

Zoning

Different from existing land uses, zoning is a legal mechanism for cities and towns to *regulate* the development of land. Typical standards include the allowable uses, building area and height, parking, and site design. Municipalities are given the authority to regulate local land use decisions through several state enabling laws that address select topics including comprehensive planning, subdivision and land development projects, various review processes, and special tools related to uses like affordable housing, communications towers, etc. The City's Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 19 of the Revised City Ordinances, has been in place for over 50 years. It is typical of conventional zoning ordinances in that it has several different zoning districts for each major land use type from a lower intensity to a higher intensity use, for example residential, commercial, and industrial uses. The ordinance includes definitions, dimensional requirements (lot size and width and depth, setbacks, height/number of stories, building coverage, etc.), and a schedule of uses for each district. Uses are either permitted, permitted by Special Use Permit, or prohibited. For uses requiring a Special Use Permit, the applications are reviewed for conformance with standards that would minimize any potential negative impacts of the proposed use on the surrounding area and for conformance with the City's land use goals as described in the Comprehensive Plan.

Recent amendments to the Zoning Ordinance provide opportunities for a mix of land uses on a parcel or within a building in some districts and for some compatible uses. The intention is to maintain historic development patterns in older parts of the City, like Riverside Square. Standards support a "Main Street" type setting with buildings connected along the street and abutting the sidewalk. Typically, in these neighborhoods, retail, restaurant, or office uses are on the first floor and residential uses are in the upper stories.

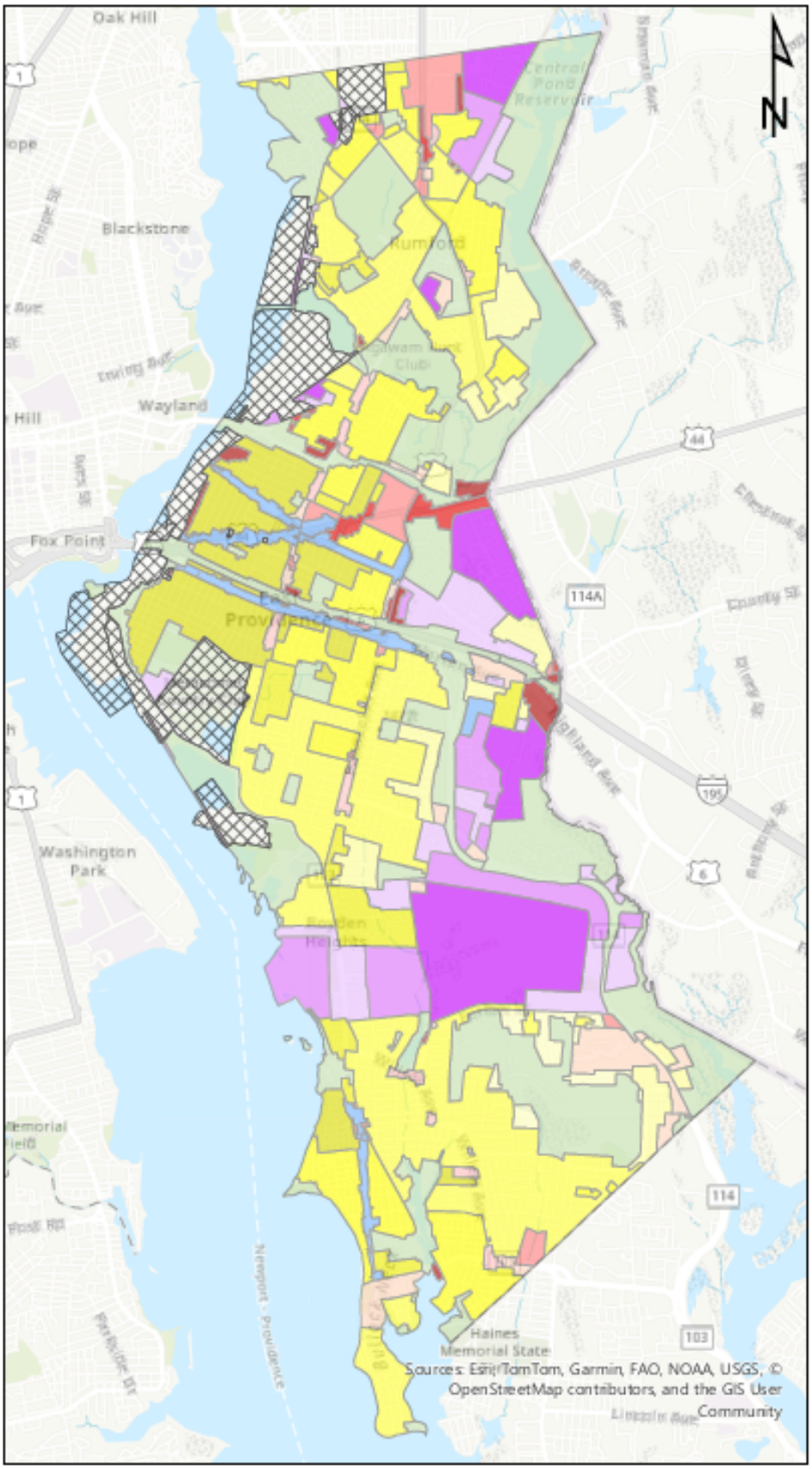
Other features of the Zoning Ordinance include procedures and standards for plan review, including Development Plan Review and provisions to amend the ordinance by the City Council (generally by district or by parcel). Procedures to allow variances from the ordinance where findings can be met (through the Zoning Board of Review) are also contained in the Zoning Ordinance.

Zoning districts are also depicted on Map LU.2.

Residential Zoning Districts

East Providence has six residential zoning districts:

- Residential Districts 1 through 3 (R-1, R-2, and R-3) permit single-family uses on minimum lots of 18,750 square feet for R-1, 10,000 square feet for R-2, and 7,500 square feet for R-3.
- Residential 4 (R-4) allows one-family on a minimum lot of 5,000 square feet and a two-family on not less than 8,750 square feet.
- Residential 5 (R-5) allows for multi-family developments.
- Residential 6 (R-6) permits one, two, and three-family residential provided that a minimum lot size and other criteria set out by the Ordinance are met, e.g. setbacks proportional to height, and useable lot area.



East Providence Comprehensive Plan Current Zoning Map

Legend

- C-1
- C-2
- C-3
- C-4
- C-5
- I-1
- I-2
- I-3
- Mixed-Use Overlay Districts
- O-1
- R-1
- R-2
- R-3
- R-4
- R-5
- R-6
- Waterfront Sub-Districts

FOR MORE DETAILS REGARDING WATERFRONT SUB-DISTRICTS, PLEASE SEE MAPS WF.1 AND WF.2.

Open Space-1

Open Space-1 Zoning District allows for some farming, conservation, watershed protection and supply, and municipal facilities, i.e. parks, government buildings, schools; churches, cultural activities, cemeteries, golf courses or country clubs, and institutional uses. For the purposes of this district, open space means lands primarily undeveloped, including public and semi-public open lands and private development of similar low building intensity.

Commercial Zoning Districts

East Providence has five commercial zoning districts:

- Commercial 1 (C-1) is Office Business and does not include uses such as retail, restaurants, fast food establishments and the like, which are permitted in the C-2 district. C-1 also allows for commercial large-scale multi- family development where certain standards are met, such as increased setbacks proportional to height and useable lot area based upon the number of units and bedrooms.
- Commercial 2 (C-2) is Neighborhood Business District and permits smaller scale retail oriented to neighborhoods with smaller building footprints than would be found in the C-3 district.
- Commercial 3 (C-3) is a General Retail district and includes the larger-scale single lot commercial developments and the strip commercial developments, as well as some of the limited scale permitted C-2 land uses.
- Commercial 4 (C-4) is Highway Business and includes retail and service land uses while it prohibits heavier type land uses such as auto body, soldering or welding shops for example.
- Commercial 5 (C-5) is Heavy Business and permits auto body, soldering and welding shops, wholesale distribution or warehouse, and limited manufacturing subject to certain standards, and parcel distribution centers, among other uses.

Industrial Zoning Districts

East Providence has three districts for industrial use. Industrial 1 (I-1) allows for limited and "light" manufacturing. Industrial 2 (I-2) allows for General Manufacturing, and Industrial 3 (I-3) District allows for Heavy Manufacturing. The Zoning Ordinance contains an "Industrial Processes" section which allows the City to address any potential negative and/or safety issues by standards set for noise, dust and particulate matters, gases/fumes, odor, and vibration. Many former I-3 land uses have ceased operations, structures have been removed, and property owners are remediating these sites of pollutants. Many of these former "brownfield" uses were related to chemical and petroleum uses, or "smokestack" type operations.

Overlay and Floating Districts

The City also has overlay and floating districts, the latter of which is not mapped. In general, these districts offer incentives to create the desired vision of an area that cannot be achieved with the underlying zoning. The overlay and floating districts can offer relief from some requirements in the underlying zoning in exchange for a specific development feature, like mixed use. Property owners have the option to implement the standards of the underlying zoning or take advantage of the overlay or floating districts but are strongly encouraged to do the latter. The exception (not optional) is the Floodplain Overlay District, which requires property owners to meet standards set forth by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

- Mixed Use Hub Overlay Districts
    - Applicable to areas of Taunton Avenue, Waterman Avenue, Warren Avenue, Riverside Square, and Bullocks Point Avenue from the Square to Crescent View Avenue. Intent is to allow for a mix of uses by right, including multifamily, and promote Main Street character by offering relief from setback requirements and parking standards
- Business/Technology Floating District
    - In the C-1, C-4, I-1, I-2, and I-3 zoning districts, allows for a planned development of an integral facility of number of separate buildings and supporting ancillary uses. Allows for accessory employee services located within the district, such as dry cleaning, convenience store, ATM, coffee shop, and childcare.
- Cluster Floating District
    - Any residential district may be amended to permit the clustering of residential units with the goal of preserving open space. Density bonuses of up to 10% are available under certain circumstances, including a percentage of affordable housing units.
- Floodplain Overlay District
    - Applicable to special flood hazard areas identified in the FEMA Federal Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs). All construction, including development projects that will fill, grade, excavate, etc., within these areas requires a permit.
- Commercial Mixed Use District
    - Encourages more active use and redevelopment of oversized multi-tenant commercial properties by promoting more flexibility of uses and design that is well suited for active economic activity along Newport Avenue.

Land Development Review and Land Development Projects

Design criteria are utilized for developments that meet the thresholds for Development Project Review (DPR) and Land Development Projects (LDP) (number of off-street parking spaces and square footage of building, or any multi-family use of 20 units or greater). Among the requirements are landscaped islands in parking areas, a minimum percentage of shading of the parking area, stormwater management BMP's, and general landscaping and buffering, in addition to other typical zoning provisions such as minimum off-street parking, off-street loading, trash storage and recycling areas. Development that is not subject to the DPR or LDP process, or areas developed prior to the establishment of DPR and LDP, are typically the large and small developments along commercial corridors, of which many are of poor quality of design and appearance, have excessive curb cuts, excessive signage, and large areas of uninterrupted asphalt, with little to no landscaping or stormwater management.

What We Heard

Through the public engagement process, the community highlighted the City's challenges, opportunities, and needs around land use decisions, which overlap with all other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

- The City should take a holistic look at neighborhoods as it plans for housing, walkable streets, parks and recreation opportunities, access to services and goods, access to public transportation, and increased green space.
- Zoning needs to offer flexibility to accommodate a mix of uses and activities that support a neighborhood or commercial center.
- Land use decisions need to consider current and future climate impacts, like sea level rise, increased frequency and intensity of severe storms, increased flooding, and increased heat.

- The Waterfront District holds a lot of potential for new development, which should be balanced with a mix of uses and public amenities.
- Residents value the city's green spaces, parks, and conservation areas. With development pressure, land use decisions need to balance housing needs, economic development, and natural resource protection. The change in ownership of Metacomet Golf Course and the new owners application for a zone change, and subsequent approval by City Council, to develop the property as a mixed use project was a controversial issue.
- Decision makers need to ensure that benefits of land use decisions are equitably distributed throughout the community.

Needs, Challenges, and Opportunities

East Providence has very few opportunities to develop on previously undeveloped land. Therefore, most opportunities for economic development, housing, recreation, or other investments will predominately entail the redevelopment of existing properties and facilities, including the City's Waterfront District. This heightens the need to balance choices and investments that support the city's tax base to sustain high quality municipal services, build resilience to climate change, create safe and affordable homes, support a clean environment, and maintain natural resources and public open spaces. Pulling from all the elements of the Comprehensive Plan, these investments must balance environmental, economic, and social needs of the community and are equitable in that all residents benefit from positive impacts. This will lead to hard decisions by the community, but this Land Use Element provides some overarching themes for known opportunities and hurdles to overcome.

Zone Changes and Land Use

As the City plans for the next 20 years, it will undoubtedly experience difficult decisions regarding changes in land use. A prime example is the rezoning of the Metacomet Golf Club in 2021 from open space to a sub-district of the Waterfront District. The developer, which purchased the nearly 140-acre golf club in 2019, requested the zone change to build a mixed-use development in 2020. Neighbors and residents organized in protest, citing concerns about loss of green space, traffic, and other potential quality of life impacts. Requests to evaluate the feasibility of the City purchasing the property were raised, but the cost of acquiring the property was considered too high at over $8 million. Ultimately the City Council voted 3-2 in favor of the rezoning with conditions, including no hotels, among other use restrictions, and the designation of the property as a sub-district of the Waterfront District. As a sub-district, the project will be under the purview of the Waterfront Commission, which will establish design and performance standards specific for this property that the City hopes will yield a high quality development. Provisions of the City Council vote also include dedication of open space and developing a nine-hole golf course for community use. The final outcomes of the development project will be seen in the next five to 10 years.

The Metacomet zone change raises important land use and preservation issues for the City to consider as it plans to implement the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). First, the limited open space in the city needs to be proactively protected, including private lands. While the cost of buying property outright can be high, other alternatives, such as conservation easements or purchasing of development rights by third parties (e.g., a nonprofit), could be pursued. Documenting this process is important for public transparency. Using the FLUM and the available data can help the City target important areas for not only open space,

but also to address flooding, sea level rise, and other climate concerns. See Natural Resources and Natural Hazards and Climate Change Elements.

Second, the City's Zoning Ordnance needs an overall update to definitions, terms, and overall intent to meet modern needs and desires of city businesses and residents. For example, the Open Space District allows hospitals and educational institutions. These uses reflect the zoning of the 1960s, where public open spaces were meant for public uses, regardless of what they were. Open space today is generally interpreted as green, natural areas without structures, which could be undeveloped, parklike landscapes, or treed. Additionally, traditional zoning enforced a separation of commercial, office, and residential uses, and encouraged development on larger lots that were accessed by cars. This eroded traditional, walkable neighborhood centers that had a mix of these uses on smaller lots. Adopting this zoning made many areas of the city non-conforming. Today preferences have changed, with communities valuing more traditional neighborhood designs. However, the City's Zoning Ordinance has made investment in these areas difficult, as discussed in Economic Development and Housing Elements. The City has made several recent updates to overcome these barriers with overlay districts that reduce parking requirements, allow for a mix of appropriate uses, and encourage amenities that support walking over driving.

Transparent and Coordinated Decision-Making

In order to meet the land use goals of the Comprehensive Plan, transparent and coordinated decision making by municipal staff and the City boards and committees is required. As noted in the City Services and Facilities Element, decision making at the government level must be well-documented, participatory, accessible, and transparent. While that element provides overarching policies and actions that are applicable to broader government decisions, the Land Use Element is an opportunity to focus on the City's Planning Board, as well as advisory boards and commissions, and enhance their ability to make sound land use decisions in an open and transparent process. To do this, the City will continue to provide the Planning Board other appropriate city boards and commissions with resources and training on emerging planning trends and topics, such as resilience and climate change, equity, and public health.

The City Services and Facilities Element also discusses communication with the public about how governmental decisions are made, and this includes land use decisions. One of the larger hurdles is the general public's understanding of how local decisions are made. The City has many boards and committees with different levels of authority--from advisory to granting permits to changing local laws. Educating residents and business owners about how projects are reviewed and who is making decisions at what point in the process is an ongoing effort. Developing ways to inform residents about ongoing projects, where the project is in the review process, and how residents can participate is an important objective of the City.

Equity and Land Use Decisions

The Comprehensive Plan focuses on how to make East Providence a great place to live, work, and visit. It identifies areas of the city residents want to preserve, areas that need support, and places that could be transformed. As decisions are made for public and private investments, it is important to ask who is benefiting from these initiatives, and who is not. Historically, federal, state, and local policies and programs that guided community investments systematically excluded neighborhoods with predominantly lower income populations and people of color from receiving the benefits of a clean

environment, safe and affordable housing, and job and education opportunities, among others. As the City targets areas that have been neglected or left behind for reinvestment, it should be mindful of the impacts of new projects on existing residents and businesses and take steps to avoid displacement of residents and local businesses. Communities use different negotiating tools with developers, particularly if incentives are offered. The City has experience negotiating with developers. As it encourages investments in East Providence, it should consider the needs of the neighborhood and build in outcomes that benefit current residents and businesses as well as new that come as a result of a project.

Regulatory Review and Updates

In the early 20th century, zoning was used to separate uses like housing, manufacturing plants, and commercial areas. Each site was typically viewed in isolation, with specific requirements for setbacks, site design, and parking that ignored how the surrounding neighborhood functioned as a whole. This approach led to development trends like commercial strip malls with vast parking lots and sprawling suburbs that segregated communities. Over the past several decades, these practices have been well-documented as discriminatory, expensive, and environmentally damaging. Unfortunately, many older communities with downtowns and village centers that pre-dated these types of regulatory requirements adopted this type of zoning. As a result, many properties within these older areas subsequently became "non-conforming" because their building or lot size did not meet newer minimum standards, or the use of the property was subsequently designated as prohibited. This provided incentive to demolish what once was, and neighborhoods began to lose their sense of place and character, and often their residents.

Non-Conforming Use or Structure

A use or structure that was valid when brought into existence, but by subsequent regulation becomes no longer conforming. Typically, non-conforming uses are permitted to continue for a designated period of time, subject to certain restrictions.

Understanding the Basics of Land Use Planning: Glossary of Land Use and Planning Terms. Institute for Local Government.

While the East Providence Zoning Ordinance has a traditional structure, the City has made efforts to minimize these types of outcomes. For example, new overlay districts in the City's neighborhood and commercial corridors (Mixed Use Hub overlays) allow a mix of uses in a single building or on a single lot and design requirements hope to maintain the character of Taunton, Waterman, and Warren Avenues and Riverside Square. The Commercial Mixed Use Overlay encourages redevelopment of larger commercial properties with older shopping centers on Newport Avenue with a mix of uses as well. The City continues to identify similar, larger parcels in the city where this type of overlay could lead to reinvestments.

Even as communities like East Providence make incremental changes to its ordinances, after years of amendments, they can become difficult to enforce consistently and may even have conflicting language. It is important to take stock of zoning ordinances every five to ten years to make sure regulatory provisions are still accomplishing what they were meant to and not causing unintended negative consequences.

A thorough audit and potential rewrite of the City's Zoning Ordinance is needed. Given the on-going work of the Economic Development and Planning Department, it is unrealistic to expect it to conduct the audit

or rewrite. Hiring outside consultants with legal and land use expertise to work with staff would be a more efficient approach.

Focus Areas

Throughout the Comprehensive Plan, there are many references and cross-references to the City's neighborhood centers. These areas require support to maintain quality of life for residents and the vitality of local businesses. Equally, other references discuss areas of the City that would benefit from transformation and require more detailed study. The following provides an overview of these neighborhood centers and areas of transformation as they related to regulatory needs and the Future Land Use Map.

Neighborhood Centers and Corridors

Neighborhood centers and compact commercial corridors can support local economic vitality, build community strength, and provide a space for more diverse housing options, including rental opportunities. While the City lacks a single, defined downtown, there are smaller retail corridors and neighborhood centers that serve nearby residential areas with a concentration of retail and services. Many of these areas are a mix of the former historic village and redevelopment through the decades. For many years, these areas saw little investment and storefronts were empty, but more recently there has been growing interest and investment. The most notable are the following:

- City Center along Taunton Avenue from Walnut Avenue to Irving Avenue.
- City Center along Waterman Avenue from Massasoit Avenue/North Brow Street to Pawtucket Avenue.
- Watchemoket Square along Warren Avenue from Valley Street to Pawtucket Avenue.
- Riverside Square and along Bullocks Point Avenue to Crescent View Avenue.

As noted in the Economic Development Element, one of the barriers to creating more vibrant, mixed use neighborhood centers was the zoning regulations. In 2016, the City adopted the Main Street and Neighborhood Overlay District for the Taunton Avenue Main Street corridor and the Riverside Square Mixed Use/Downtown Overlay District with the intent of opening opportunities for mixed land uses in these areas. The overlay districts allow for flexible development with higher density (e.g. multifamily and mixed-use buildings) by expanding allowable uses, reducing onsite parking requirements, and offering more lenient dimensional requirements to accommodate more residential units. In 2021, the overlay districts were updated and expanded to include the Warren Avenue and Waterman Avenue corridors, and in 2022 to includes the Bullocks Point Avenue corridor from Riverside Square to Crescent View Avenue.

Newport Avenue

Newport Avenue is a major commercial corridor of the City with many challenges. Traveling to and maneuvering through the area is difficult for all modes of transportation. It is an auto-dominated roadway with four lanes and many curb cuts accessing individual businesses and strip malls. There are no shoulders on either side for bicycles and while there are sidewalks, the experience of walking along Newport Avenue is not pleasant. There is no buffer from traffic and pedestrians constantly encounter cars at the numerous curb cuts. Many design features in the area are not ADA compliant. Most sidewalks

do not continue along residential streets that intersect with Newport Avenue and there are few, if any, shade trees.

Along with these challenges, there are opportunities. Businesses along the roadway are a mix of banks, retail, restaurants, and services, serving adjacent neighborhoods just behind these commercial areas. Redevelopment of individual commercial structures and new businesses opening along the corridor show that there is interest in the area. A mixed-use development is planned at the city line, replacing aging retail plazas with chronically vacant storefronts. The new complex will include one- and two-bedroom apartments and commercial space.

The City is investigating whether mixed use development is a viable economic opportunity along the entire roadway towards Pawtucket Avenue to help address housing needs and create higher quality development in the corridor. One of the challenges to implementing mixed use that is the large number of small lots do not offer space for increased density, parking, and other amenities. A preliminary buildout analysis of this portion of Newport Avenue does not show a high yield of residential uses from a mixed use overlay district similar to those applied in other areas of the City. More public engagement on the future of this roadway needs to occur to better understand the concerns and needs of the adjacent residential areas. Better management of traffic will be important to make the area more desirable.

Henderson Bridge and Parkway

The reconstruction of the Henderson Bridge has opened new opportunities where it lands in East Providence on Massasoit Avenue. The smaller bridge footprint creates opportunities for future development in the area and connection to the Waterfront District. Up to 25 acres of land, mostly owned by the State, will be made available through the reduction, potentially aiding in economic development. Through an extensive public engagement process and coordination with the State, the City will need to develop a master plan that lays out the future vision of this area and develop zoning to implement that vision.

Another opportunity in this area is the completion of a Henderson Parkway from Massasoit Avenue, across Broadway, and along the Henderson Trunk Line Service that would end at Pawtucket Avenue. This corridor may eventually include shared use paths for walking and biking along a RIPTA service line with a transit hub at Pawtucket Avenue. These types of connections can help manage traffic and increase accessibility to this new area of opportunity.

The Henderson Bridge reconstruction and Henderson Parkway projects are discussed in detail in the Transportation and Connectivity Element.

Special Waterfront Development District

The Waterfront District has its own vision and development guidance articulated in the 2003 *East Providence Special Waterfront District Master Plan*. Since its adoption, the 2003 Plan has helped guide efforts to create new opportunities for residents to live, work, and recreate. As noted in the Waterfront District Element, after 20 years, the 2003 Plan should be revisited to reflect on progress made in meeting its goals and objectives and to incorporate local and regional planning initiatives since 2003 that have an impact on future work in the District. While not an inclusive list, the element presents a high-level overview of areas that should be reviewed for consistency with the goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan.

Former Exxon Mobil Property

The former Exxon Mobil property, now owned by Global East Providence Terminals LLC, between Pawtucket Avenue and Wampanoag Trail is over 700 acres. This industrially zoned property is home to a fuel tank farm, in addition to a large area consisting of woodlands and wetlands. Some degree of contamination is expected. There are no development plans for the property at this time, however, over the past several decades, the City has experienced the closure of several fuel storage facilities on the property. Should the property owner ever seek to abandon this use, the City will have to consider what its goals are for this site. While the land is privately owned, a conceptual study of this property could help the City form its vision regarding any potential development proposals, zoning changes or conservation efforts.

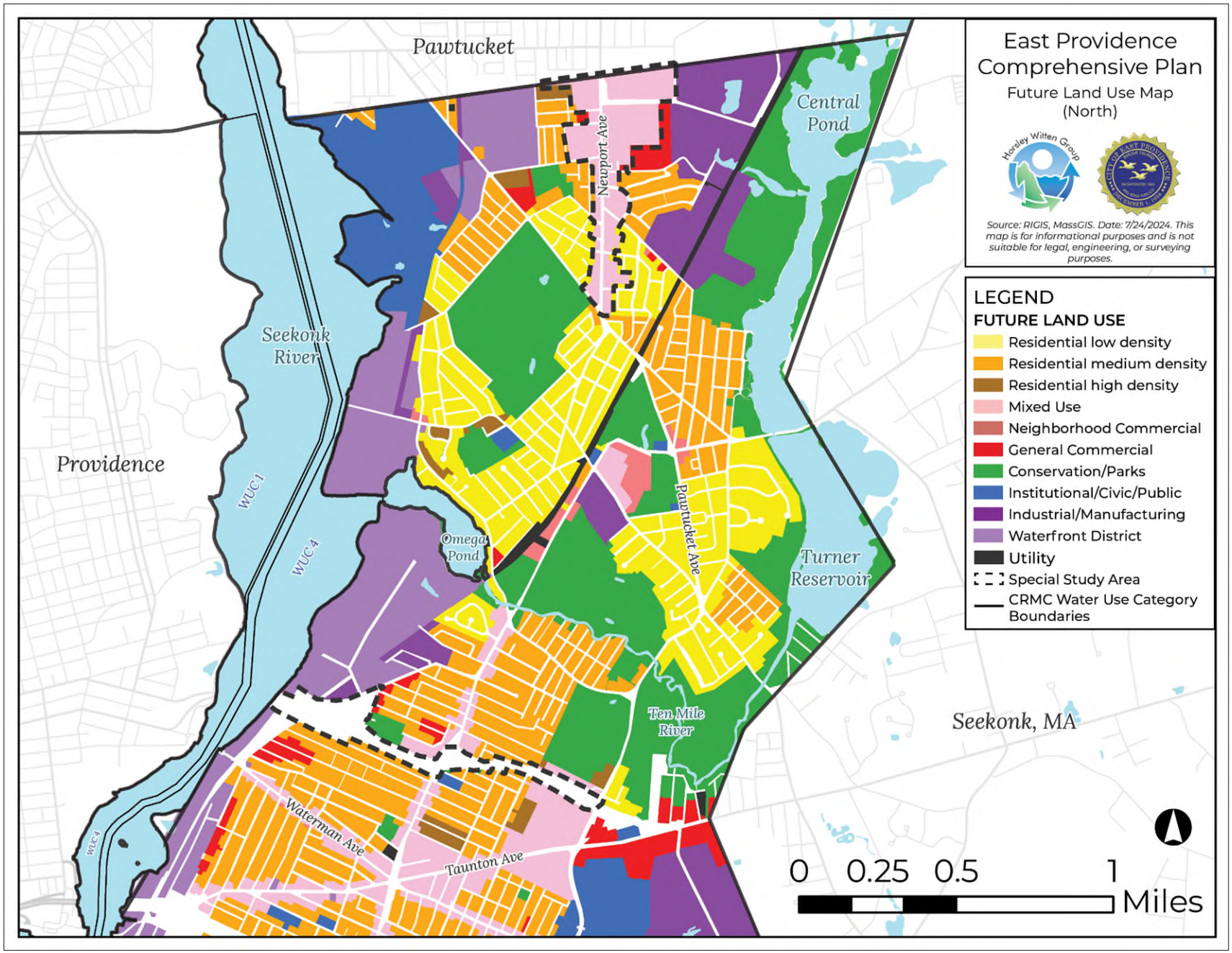
The City recognizes a potential inconsistency related to the goal of "conservation / parks" at the northern edge of this property, in and adjacent to Silver Spring Golf Course. CRMC's "Red Book," states that "The Council's goals for Type 6 waters and adjacent lands under Council jurisdiction are to encourage and support modernization and increased commercial activity related to shipping and commercial fisheries." As shown in this plan's Future Land Use Map, the City's goal is to preserve the golf course as open space, provide public access from Pawtucket Avenue to the East Bay Bike Path, and buffer the residential area to the north from industrial land uses. The City will work with CRMC on any future zoning ordinance and/or map amendments in this area within CRMC's jurisdiction to Type 6 waters. The City will also work with CRMC to address the possibility of changing the water type classification in the area of this parcel in the future, so that any water type change does not affect the Type 6 waters classification.

Future Land Uses

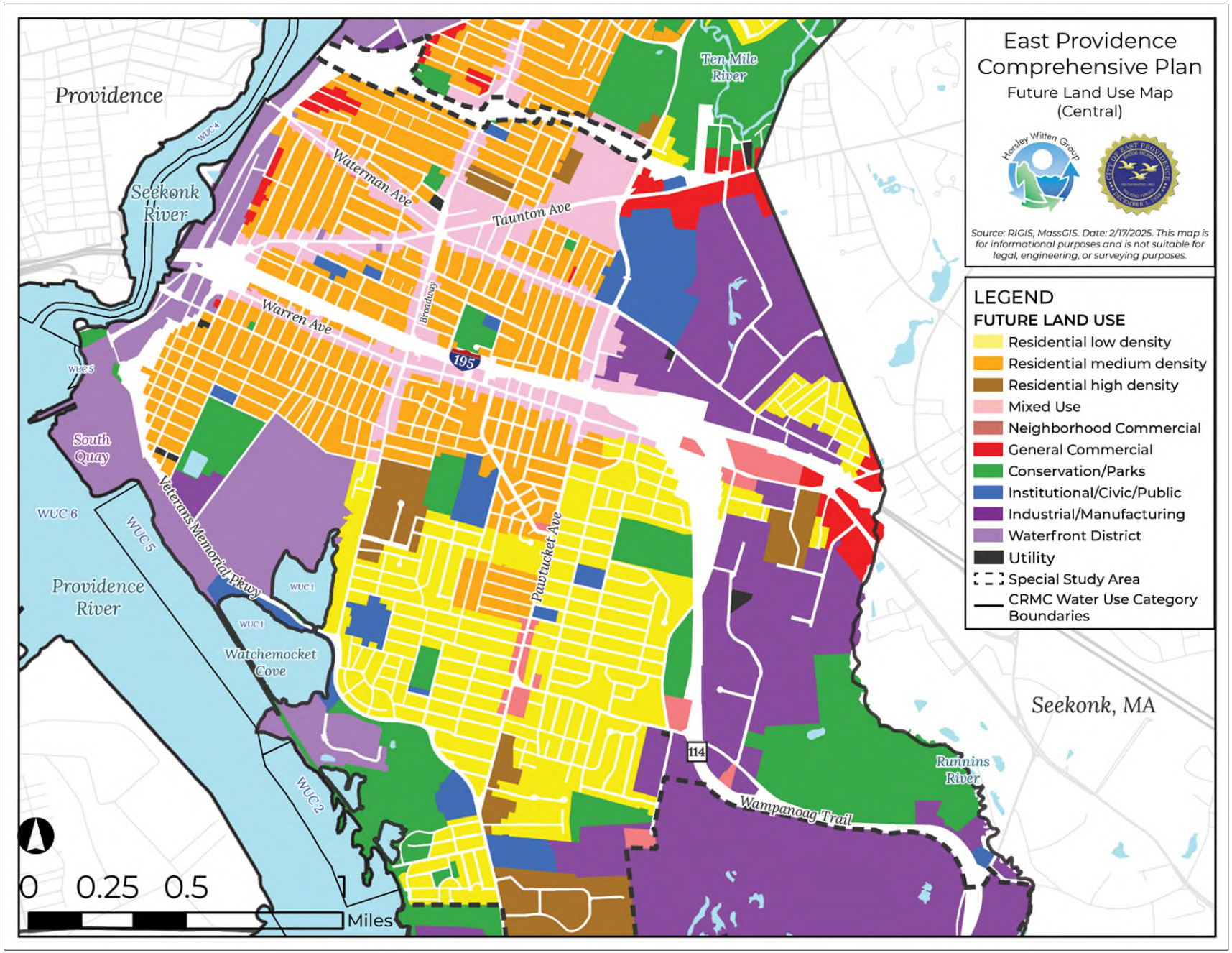
All land use decisions, directly or indirectly, are made in accordance with the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). The FLUM illustrates desired land use patterns over the next 20 years. It shows general land use categories, indicating the type and intensity of the use. The FLUM is accompanied by land use descriptions that provide the intent of the land use categories as they relate to the policies throughout the Comprehensive Plan. The FLUM is not to be interpreted as a zoning map; however, state law requires that a municipality's zoning map must be consistent with the FLUM. In areas where it is not, a municipality must set a schedule to revise its zoning map for consistency between the two maps.

Future Land Use Map

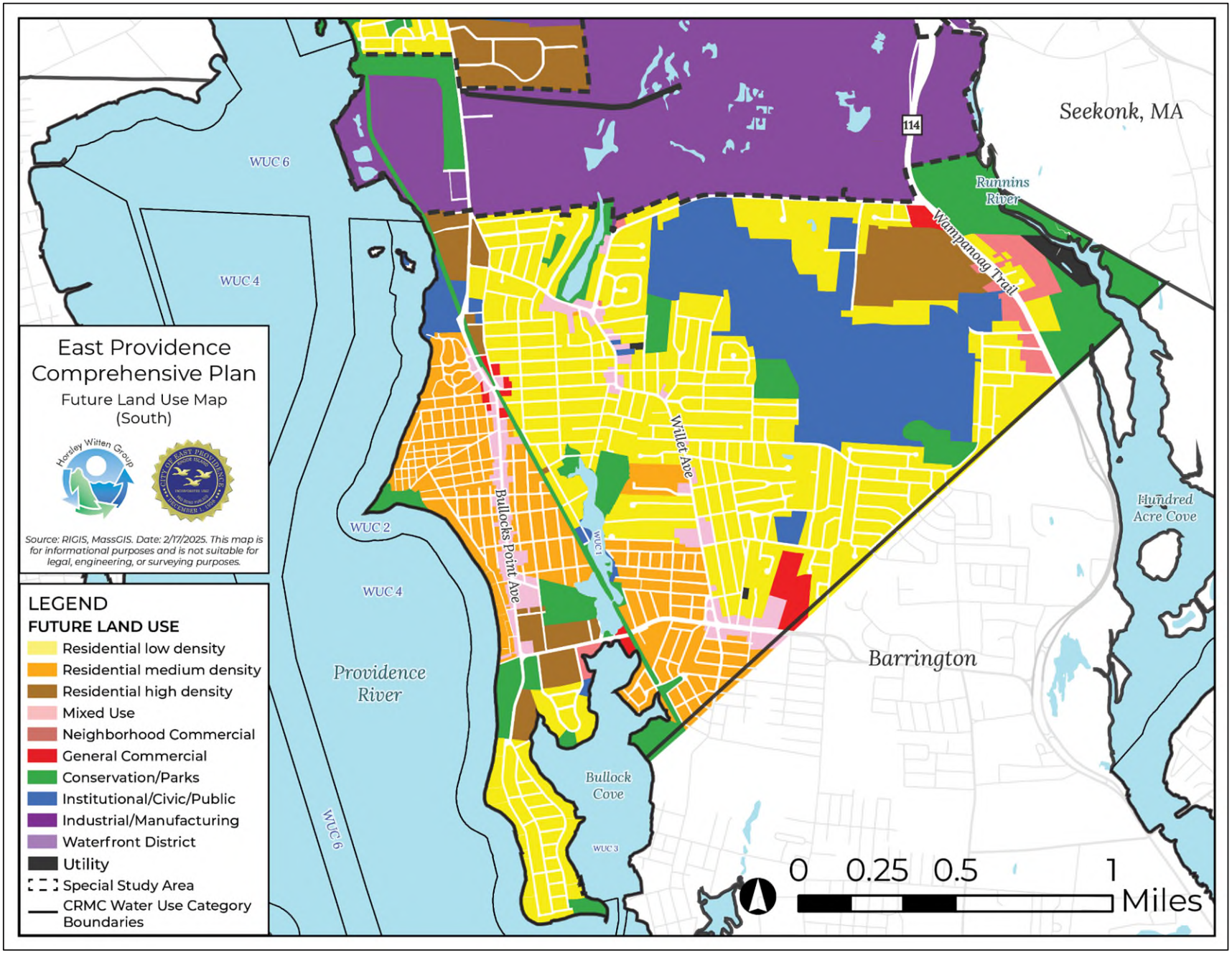
The FLUM (Map LU.3 through Map LU.5) illustrates East Providence's land use strategies and policies. The City has determined the best locations for general land uses based on existing built and natural environments, residential and business needs, and public input through the planning process.



Map LU.3. Future Land Use Map - North



Map LU.4. Future Land Use Map - Central



Map LU.5. Future Land Use Map - South

Future Land Use Descriptions

Residential – Low Density

Residential Low Density areas are predominately single-family homes at densities generally less than six dwelling units per acre. Minimum lots range from 7,500 to 18,750 square feet. Non-conforming multifamily structures (two or three family) and neighborhood-scale commercial uses may exist, particularly in areas that transition to a higher density or commercial area.

Neighborhood design in this land use category should foster a high quality of life for city residents. Public and private investments should support equitable access to resources such as parks, green spaces, recreational facilities, and other public spaces. This can be done through the creation of new resources or improved access to existing amenities. Public and private investments that improve walking and biking safety and connections, reduce climate impacts, and address access inequities will be a priority.

Residential – Medium Density

Residential Medium Density areas are a mix of single- and two-family homes. Lots are intended to be a minimum of 5,000 square feet. Densities up to 15 residential units per acre are allowed if a lot meets the zoning requirements. Higher densities and non-conforming commercial uses are typically found in areas that transition to higher-density residential and commercial areas.

Neighborhood design in this land use category should foster a high quality of life for city residents. Public and private investments should support equitable access to resources such as parks, green spaces, recreational facilities, and other public spaces. This can be done through the creation of new resources or improved access to existing amenities. Public and private investments that improve walking and biking safety and connections, reduce climate impacts, and address access inequities will be a priority.

Residential – High Density

Residential High Density areas are predominately condominium or townhouse style development. Permitted densities can be up to 25 dwelling units per acre if regulatory standards are met. Non-conforming neighborhood commercial development can also be found in some areas, particularly along areas that border commercial corridors.

Neighborhood design in this land use category should foster a high quality of life for city residents. Public and private investments should support equitable access to resources such as parks, green spaces, recreational facilities, and other public spaces. This can be done through the creation of new resources or improved access to existing amenities. Public and private investments that improve walking and biking safety and connections, reduce climate change impacts, and address access inequities will be a priority.

Neighborhood Commercial and Office Space

Neighborhood Commercial and Office Space areas are characterized by small-scale businesses that provide goods and services to nearby neighborhoods. Lots are small, about 5,000 square feet, and in character with the surrounding area. Establishments might include a local retailer, bank, or café. Smaller-scale office uses for medical or other professional services are also found in this area, with employees supporting the small-scale businesses.

The design of public and private investments in these areas should create and support multiple transportation options, including pedestrian activity and increasing biking amenities and access to public transportation.

General Commercial

General Commercial areas include retail, restaurant, and office uses that provide goods and services to the city as whole or are places of employment serving the region. Establishments are larger in size than those found at the neighborhood scale (lots greater than 5,000 square feet) and typically accommodate more than one business or office in a structure or on a site. Multifamily structures can also be found in General Commercial areas.

Design and investments should prioritize better access to public transportation for residents, employees, and customers, greener alternatives to stormwater management, and minimization of climate change impacts.

Industrial and Manufacturing

Industrial and Manufacturing areas accommodate businesses that produce, assemble, process, or store products at a large scale and require more land to accommodate large buildings. Roads must be able to accommodate trucks for deliveries and shipping. Smaller manufacturers may also be located in these areas because processes require buffering from residential areas to minimize the impact of noise and odor. This includes the South Quay property located in the Veterans Memorial Parkway Sub-district of the Waterfront District.

Mixed Use

Mixed Use areas have businesses, diverse housing types, public spaces, and civic institutions situated together, either in the same building or next to each other. The character may vary from location to location, but overall, these areas resemble "traditional neighborhood design" where development is compact and pedestrian-oriented, offers amenities for biking safely, and supports access to public transportation.

Conservation and Recreation

Conservation and Recreation include passive and active recreational areas, cemeteries, and land dedicated to protect natural resources (conservation). These areas are owned and/or managed by either the City of East Providence, a state agency, private entity, or non-profit organization.

Institutional and Civic

Institutional and Civic areas include public services and facilities managed and operated by municipal, state, and federal government entities. They include buildings, such as City Hall, public schools (including associated playgrounds and recreational amenities), public libraries, and other land owned by the City, as well as the Bucklin Point Wastewater Treatment Facilities owned by the Narragansett Bay Commission. Other institutional uses such as private schools and churches are also included.

Utility

Utility areas include public and private utility infrastructure, including those associated with oil cargo distribution, railroads, and electricity.

Waterfront District

Waterfront District identifies the eight sub-districts established by the current *East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Master Plan*. Refer to this plan for the intended vision of each sub-district and guidance for development within these areas. The exception is the South Quay in the Bold Point Harbor Sub-district, which is designated for industrial/manufacturing uses. They are summarized as follows:

(1) Kettle Point: Medium density residential, with ancillary commercial uses including restaurants, clubhouses, marinas, and limited retail geared toward residents.

(2) Veterans Memorial Parkway: Medium density multi-family residential along the Veterans Memorial Parkway frontage, with commercial and retail uses at the lower levels of the site, and marina uses at the waterfront.

(3) Bold Point Harbor: A mixed-use high density area of commercial, office, retail and high density multi-family residential uses. Hospitality uses, including hotels and lodging, cafes, restaurants, bars and entertainment venues are also encouraged. Marinas, with limited support services, and water-transit related services are also permitted. The exception is the South Quay which is designated for industrial/manufacturing uses with the FLUM. Uses supporting offshore wind and renewable energy are encouraged, consistent with CRMC Water Use Category 6.

(4) Crook Point: Retail and hospitality uses are encouraged closer to the Washington Bridge, with commercial office, retail and high density residential uses transitioning north toward the Henderson Bridge.

(5) Taunton Avenue: Retail and hospitality uses are encouraged closer to the Washington Bridge, with commercial office, retail and high density residential uses transitioning north toward the Henderson Bridge.

(5) Dexter Road: Technology-oriented light manufacturing, including offices, research and development, commercial education institutions and supportive commercial retail uses. Heavy commercial, mini-storage or industrial land uses are not permitted.

(6) Phillipsdale: A mix of commercial office, retail, mixed-density residential (single-family, townhouses and multifamily condominiums), light manufacturing (in selected areas) and artisan live/work studio space.

(7) Pawtucket Avenue: Commercial office, light manufacturing and research and development, with medium density multifamily residential in selected areas.

(8) Metacomet: A mix of commercial office, retail, mixed-density residential (single-family, townhouses and multifamily condominiums), continuing care, fast food, conference centers, pharmacies, recreation and outdoor uses.

Special Study Areas

The Special Study Areas noted on the FLUM highlight areas that will be open to redevelopment opportunities in the future. They include the following areas:

- Henderson Bridge Right-of-Way and Parkway and opportunities that open with the realignment of the bridge and opening of the corridor to Pawtucket Avenue.
- Newport Avenue Corridor to determine feasibility of mixed use development.
- Exxon Mobil property between Pawtucket Avenue and Wampanoag Trail.

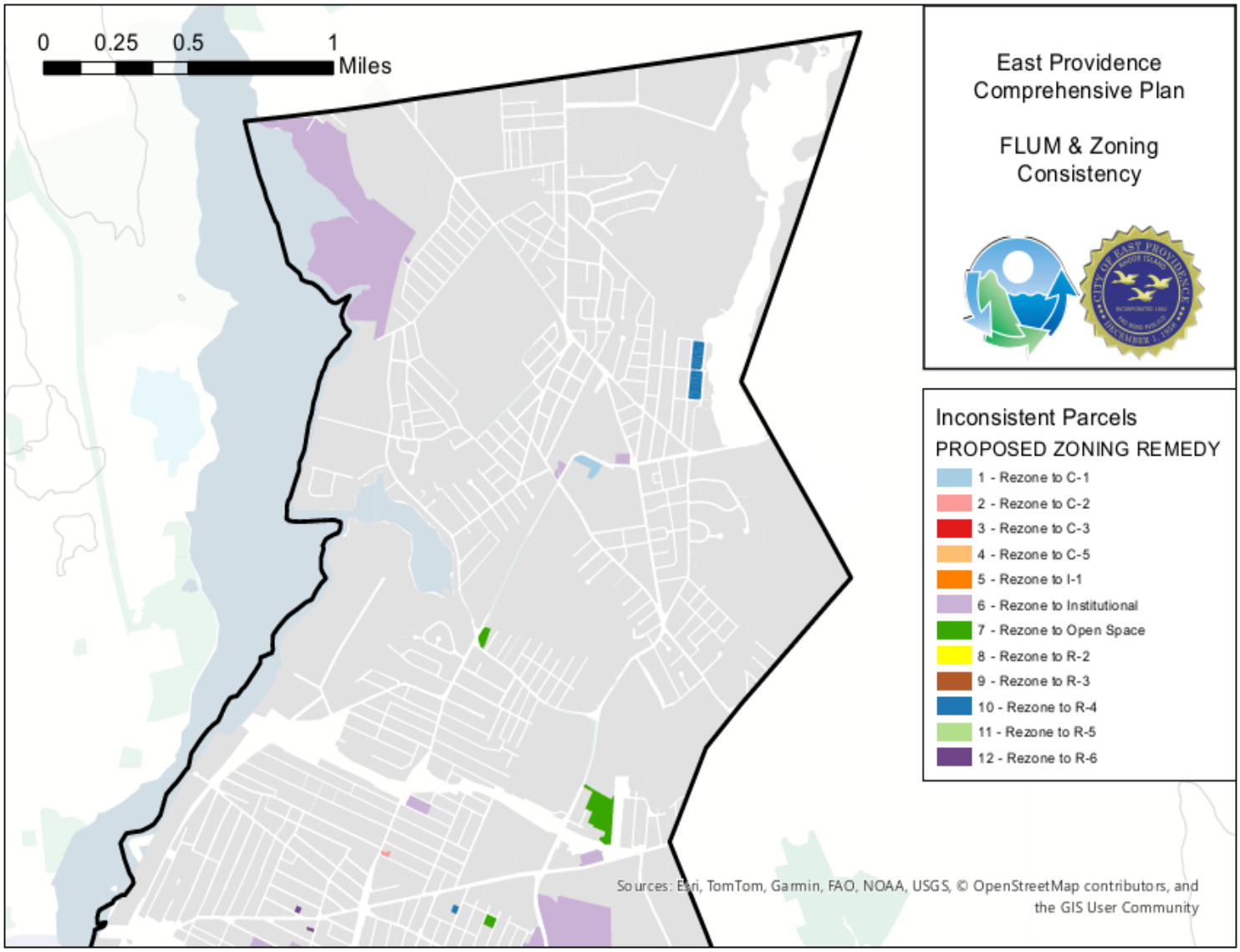
By highlighting these areas, the City anticipates intense public involvement to develop a shared vision and specific strategies, including regulatory changes, to address the unique circumstances that impact these areas.

Consistency with Zoning

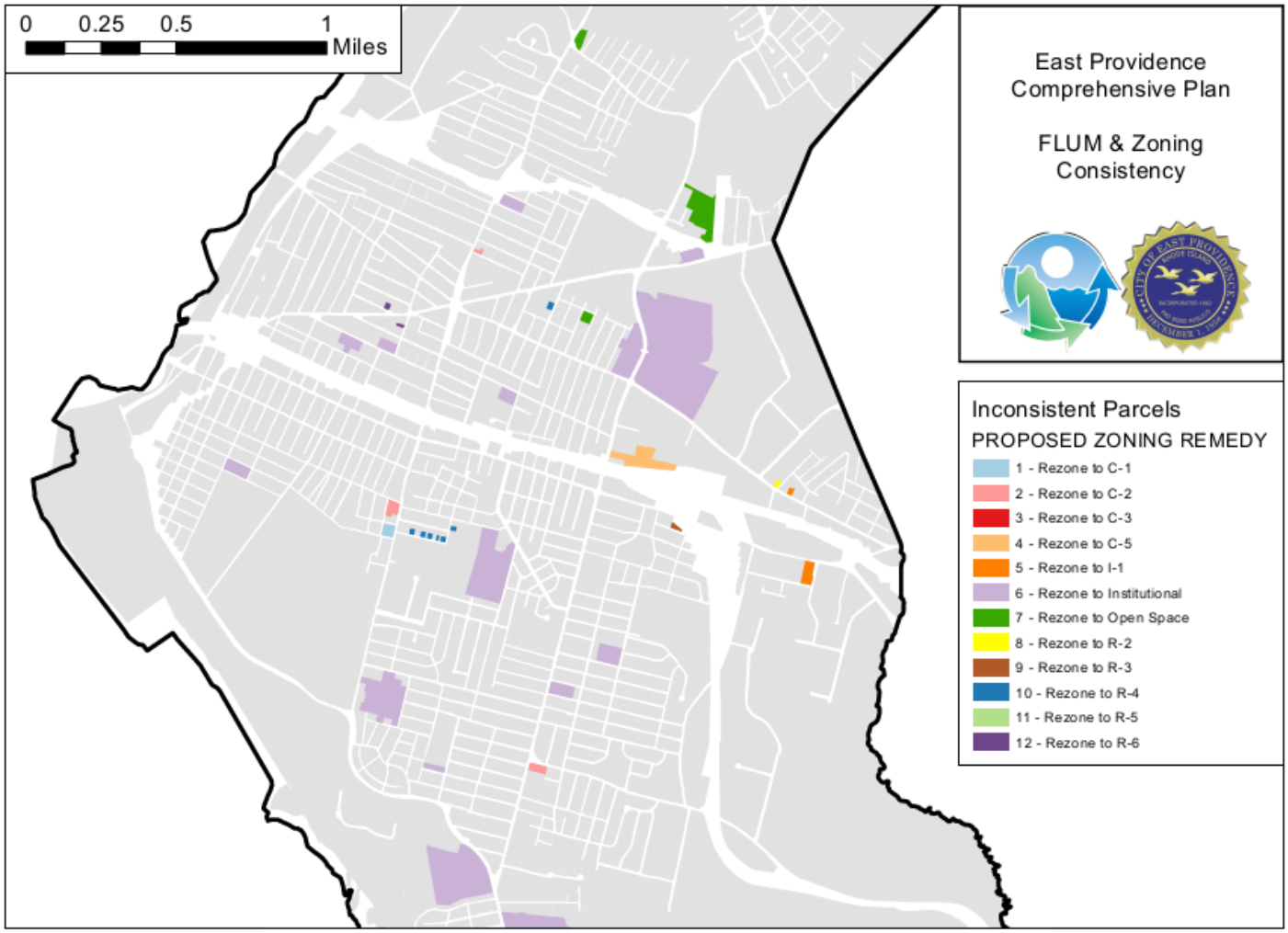
The Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act, RIGL section 45-22.2-9(d), requires that the local zoning ordinance and map must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and FLUM. In the development of the FLUM, the City conducted an analysis of the inconsistencies that existing between it and the current Zoning Map, which are shown on Map LU.6. Inconsistencies are because of the following possible conditions:

- Zoning district is not consistent with FLUM.
- Residential density is not consistent with FLUM.
- Commercial intensity is not consistent with FLUM.
- Mixed use is not permitted in current zoning district.
- Property is in multiple zoning districts, and partially inconsistent with FLUM.

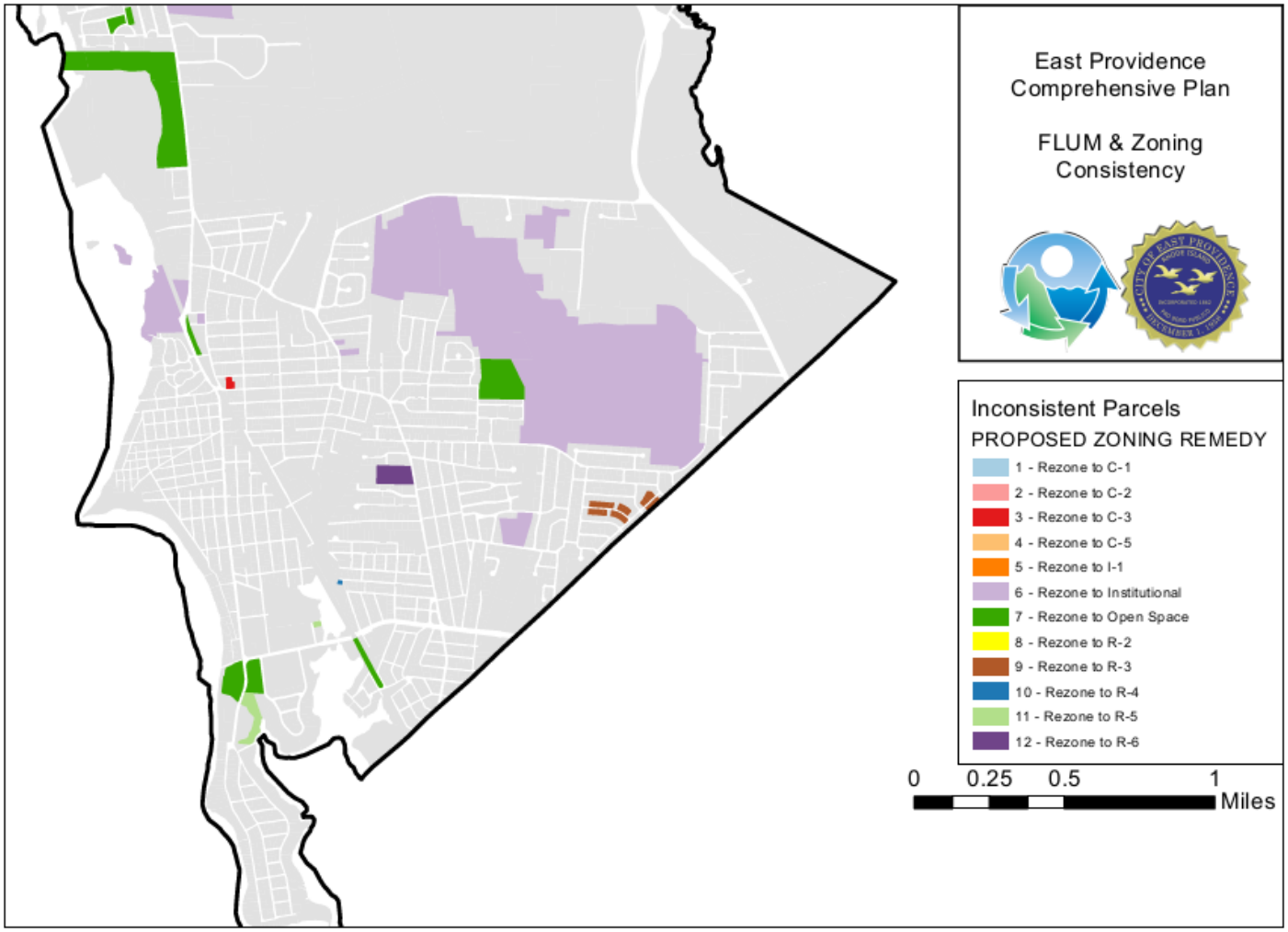
To address these inconsistencies, the City will develop amendments to the Zoning Ordinance. Depending on the timing of the regulatory review suggested earlier, these updates could take place at that time. Please see Appendix C for the list of specific properties.



Map LU.6 North. Inconsistencies between the FLUM and Zoning



Map LU.7 Central. Inconsistencies between the FLUM and Zoning



Map LU.8 South. Inconsistencies between the FLUM and Zoning

Moving Forward

The City of East Providence will implement the following policies and actions to meet the opportunities and challenges for Land Use. It is important to recognize that all elements of the Comprehensive Plan impact land use decisions and the following are intended to provide regulatory and administrative support to the goals, policies, and actions of the other elements of this plan.

Goal LU1. Make land use decisions in an open and transparent environment, based on equitable principles, public engagement, and the most accurate and available data.

Policy LU1.1. Ensure an efficient, transparent, and forward-thinking regulatory and policy framework that guides land use decisions.

A. Update zoning and subdivision regulations to be consistent with the Future Land Use Map and the intent of the Comprehensive Plan.

B. Conduct an audit of the City's Zoning Ordinance to identify outdated language and internal inconsistencies. Develop a schedule and budget for revisions.

Policy LU1.2. Support decision makers, including staff, City Council, and local boards and commissions, in their ability to make land use decisions consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

A. Continue to offer training opportunities to the Planning Board on land use decision making and current topics in the planning field. Examples include resilience and climate change, equity, and public health, among other emerging topics. (Ongoing)
B. Continue to educate other boards and committees on the goals of the Comprehensive Plan and how their work can support its goals and policies. (Ongoing)

Policy LU1.3. Build public transparency and trust of the land use decision making process.

A. Increase the use of the City's website to provide resources and information for developers as they navigate the land development review and permitting processes. Enhance the City's GIS and prioritize the availability of the current Zoning Map online.
B. Continue to use multiple avenues to increase public awareness of and participation in the review of land development projects. Provide information on the development review process overall and where projects are in the review process. (Ongoing)
C. Continue to showcase completed development projects and highlight how they support the policies of Comprehensive Plan. (Ongoing)

Goal LU2. Promote sustainable development and investments in East Providence that balance environmental and economic goals to create a high quality of life for all city residents and a thriving local business community.

Policy LU2.1. Ensure that development and redevelopment is within the capacity of the City's existing and planned infrastructure and services.

A. Evaluate proposed developments with assistance from Public Safety, Public Works, and other city departments to ensure existing resources and infrastructure capacity will meet current and projected future demands of the development. (Ongoing)
B. Where possible, encourage developers to support upgrades to infrastructure and services to meet the anticipated demands of their projects. (Ongoing)

Policy LU2.2. Support development and redevelopment that promote walking, biking, and transit use, among other transportation alternatives, and expand alternative transportation networks throughout the city.

A. Continue to support public and private investments in alternative transportation options in East Providence in areas of development opportunity. (Ongoing)
B. Create incentives for development and redevelopment along existing or planned transit corridors.

C. Conduct a visioning session for the proposed Henderson Bridge and Parkway that will enhance bus service and create connections between Pawtucket Avenue and the area opened for redevelopment by the Henderson Bridge improvements project.

Policy LU2.3. Ensure the use of best management practices that protect environmental quality, enhance natural resources, and increase resilience to climate change.

A. Continue to monitor data that can be used in land use decisions today and in the future, including climate science data. Direct public and private development in the city to use these data to inform project design, particularly in coastal and low-lying areas. (Ongoing)
B. Review local regulations and standards to find opportunities to require or strongly encourage investors to create more environment-friendly projects. This can include requirements for energy efficient buildings, nature-based solutions or green infrastructure for stormwater management, and enhancing walking and biking amenities in the area to reduce the need for single-occupancy vehicles.

Policy LU2.4. Support development and redevelopment that increases equitable access to environmental, economic, and social benefits for residents who live and work in the City's more disadvantaged and distressed areas.

A. Based on available data, develop indicators to help monitor the environmental, economic, and social impacts, both positive and negative, of land use decisions on City residents and businesses.
B. Review local regulations and standards to identify barriers that prevent investments in the City's more disadvantaged and distressed areas.
C. As investments are made in these areas, use incentives or other mechanisms to prevent displacement of residents and local businesses.

Policy LU2.5. Encourage mixed use development that supports traditional "Main Streets" with diverse housing options, space for local businesses and services, and opportunities for public parks and green space, among other features.

A. Hold visionary charettes for targeted Focus Areas to develop recommendations based on public needs and preferences.
B. Identify areas of the city that would be good candidates for redevelopment as mixed use, particularly larger commercial parcels. Consider the applicability of the City's existing mixed use overlay districts to encompass these areas.
C. Review regulations and standards to identify where changes need to be made to allow for more compact development and walkable corridors in the City's commercial areas. Review permitted uses as well as setbacks, building height, parking requirements, and other standards that impact the relationship between building(s) and the sidewalk and/or street and other site design features.
D. Investigate amending minimum parking requirements to help reduce excessive impervious areas and to prevent regulations from being an obstacle to the development of multifamily and/or affordable housing.

IMPLEMENTATION

Once the Comprehensive Plan is adopted by the Planning Board and City Council, implementation begins. The Implementation Schedule that follows identifies a lead for each action or project, which is usually City staff or a board, committee, or commission. The lead will ensure that decision makers recognize the action's importance to the larger vision of the Plan and champion its progress. The lead will be supported by other municipal entities in the action item's progress towards completion, and are suggested in the schedule, though the role of those identified may change over time and others may also participate.

It is important to understand no City department has the staffing capacity to take on **all** the action items assigned to them at once. Further, in the case of boards, committees, and commissions, these bodies often have regular responsibilities (e.g., permit application review) that consume much of their meeting time and taking on special projects might be a challenge. These limitations highlight the importance of prioritization. Placing a higher priority on an action is based on many factors such as urgent public need, regulatory mandates, or available financial resources. Easy wins are those that may not require a lot of technical or financial resources, or are already in the works and can be implemented right away. Medium or lower priorities are influenced also by the availability of funding, but also access to technical resources and municipal staff capacity. They could also be reliant on the completion of other actions in the schedule or contributions from entities outside of the City and that timeframe may be unknown. With a 20-year horizon, completion timeframes assigned to prioritization categories are as follows:

- High priority: within 5 years
- Medium priority: within 5-10 years
- Low priority: more than 10 years

There are also actions listed in Moving Forward that are categorized as "ongoing." They are part of city staff's everyday tasks to meet overall goals and objectives. They are not prioritized because they drive decisions or are done on a regular basis or cycle. Examples include continued participation in regional planning efforts, meeting regulatory mandates, identifying funding sources and grant writing, or finding opportunities to include better design in development proposals.

It is important to note the role the Department of Planning and Economic Development plays in the implementation process. It is the "keeper" of the Comprehensive Plan and monitors its progress. The majority of action items in the schedule have this department identified as the lead. At the time this plan was adopted, the department had a director and staff of five, which typically manage all types of assignments that come through the office, from subdivision review to long-range planning like the Comprehensive Plan to grant writing. Three of the five staff planners are focused primarily on economic development such as business attraction and retention. Two of these planners were recent hires during the development of the plan to meet the growing interest from private investors in the City for economic and housing development. Department staff also support the Planning Board, Historical Commission, Conservation Commission, and Economic Development Commission. As with many communities, the department also takes the lead on public health initiatives, transportation projects, and resilience planning. Looking ahead, additional planning staff may be needed to meet growing day-to-day demands

on the City, as well as emerging trends to address more comprehensive transportation, housing, and resilience planning, among other needs.

Implementation Schedule

Action Leads

AA	Affirmative Action Officer	EPSD	East Providence School District
ASSESSOR	Assessment Division	FIRE	Fire Department
BLG	Building Inspector	HC	Historical Commission
CC	City Council	IT	Information Technology Department
CD	Community Development Division	LIB	East Providence Public Library
CON	Conservation Commission	PARKS	Parks Division
DPED	Department of Planning and Economic Development	PBLG	Public Buildings Division
DPW	Department of Public Works	POLICE	Police Department
EDC	Economic Development Commission	REC	Recreation Department
EMA	Emergency Management Agency	SS	Senior Services Department
ENG	Engineering Division	ZONE	Zoning Officer

Prioritization

High Priority	Completed or started within 5 years
Medium Priority	Completed or started in 5-10 years
Low Priority	Completed or started in 10 years or more

Housing

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
Goal H1: Preserve the quality of the existing residential neighborhoods while encouraging growth.			
Policy H1.1: Establish mixed-use overlay zoning in carefully selected areas of the City's commercial corridors to allow higher densities, mixed-use districts, and non-traditional forms of housing such as live/work spaces and mixed-use developments.			
H1.1.A. Evaluate the performance of existing mixed-use overlay districts to ensure they are producing the types of housing and development desired. Consult with local property owners and developers who have developed or renovated under the overlay standards and seek their advice on any needed regulatory adjustments.	DPED	High Priority	
H1.1.B. Identify additional areas of the City, including parts of Pawtucket Avenue, Willet Avenue, Broadway, and Newport Avenue, that might be able to accommodate mixed-use overlay zoning.	DPED	Medium Priority	
Policy H1.2: Continue and expand the City's efforts to reinvest in East Providence's existing housing stock.			
H1.2.A. Evaluate and expand existing grants or revolving loan programs, including the Community Development Department's housing rehabilitation programs, to help homeowners and rental property owners reinvest in their properties. Consider targeting a portion of funds for specific hard-to-finance needs like group residences for seniors and adults with disabilities. Seek other sources of grants and financing to couple with any local and CDBG assistance.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress
H1.2.B. Consolidate and regularly update and publicize a list of federal, state, and local services and resources available to help East Providence property owners maintain and improve their homes, including information related to homes located in flood plains and coastal areas, and actively promote these resources to residents and business owners.	CD	Ongoing	
H1.2.C. Continue to invest federal, state, and local funds into grants or loans for energy efficiency and climate resiliency improvements, and actively market these resources to private property owners.	DPED	Ongoing	
H1.2.D. Support and promote the use of state, national, and local utility programs that would provide significantly more financing and design assistance for retrofitting existing homes, such as the Weatherization Assistance Program and National Grid energy efficiency services, and consider actively advocating for future state or federal legislation or programs that would increase such assistance.	DPED	Ongoing	
Policy H1.3: Strive to ensure all homes and neighborhoods in East Providence are safe, healthy, and sustainable and that everyone has equitable access to opportunity.			
H1.3.A. Continue to support the work of the East Providence HEZ and help to implement its action plan.	CD	Ongoing	

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
H1.3.B. Continue the East Providence Lead Safe Program and financing programs to property owns and residents make their homes lead safe, energy efficient, and overall environmentally safe to live.	CD	Ongoing	
Policy H1.4: Strive to ensure the foreclosure rate in the City remains low and that foreclosed properties are quickly put back to productive use.			
H1.4.A. Continue to monitor and conduct periodic site visits of foreclosed properties.	CD	Ongoing	
Policy H1.5: Ensure smooth and compatible transitions from mixed-use and commercial corridors to neighboring residential areas.			
H1.5.A. Evaluate current standards for landscaping and other techniques to ensure they can adequately buffer these areas from adjacent residential neighborhoods.	DPED	High Priority	
H1.5.B. Explore zoning options for allowing “missing middle” housing types (2-6 units per building) adjacent to mixed-use overlay areas, in order to increase housing opportunities while providing a transition from higher density mixed-use to lower density residential areas.	DPED	High Priority	In progress
Goal H2: Increase housing options in proximity to parks, bike paths, public transit, and commercial corridors.			
Policy H2.1: Coordinate zoning for housing alternatives with public amenities			
H2.1.A. Prioritize establishing new mixed-use overlay zoning and zoning for "missing middle" housing in proximity to parks, bike paths, and public transportation corridors.	DPED	High Priority	
H2.1.B. Where housing alternatives are desired away from these amenities, prioritize investments in sidewalks, parks, bike paths, and transit options before or in conjunction with new housing development.	DPED	Ongoing	
Policy H2.2: Encourage adaptive reuse of existing structures for residential purposes, as appropriate, in order to preserve the City’s existing fabric.			
H2.2.A. Continue to actively market the development opportunities within mixed-use overlay zones to property owners and developers.	DPED	Ongoing	
H2.2.B. Identify buildings in the mixed-use overlay zones the City deems to be most appropriate for residential or mixed-use conversion and include this in marketing materials.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress
H2.2.C. Develop an institutional reuse policy that would permit the adaptive reuse of existing institutional buildings such as schools, churches, etc. for multi-family residential where the underlying zoning would not otherwise allow this.	DPED	Medium Priority	Complete
Goal H3: Decrease the number of cost burdened households.			
Policy H3.1: Continue to coordinate with federal, state, local, for-profit, and non-profit housing organizations to maintain and expand LMI housing opportunities.			
H3.1.A. Seek assistance from non-profit housing developers to identify appropriate sites for new LMI housing opportunities, utilizing federal technical assistance and other grants. Prioritize projects that meet the needs of families and people with special needs.	DPED	High Priority	In progress
H3.1.B. Continue to explore City-owned property appropriate for the development of LMI or mixed-income housing.	DPED	Ongoing	

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
H3.1.C. Continue to partner with local non-profit developers to purchase and renovate existing multi-family properties, and deed restrict them as LMI housing.	DPED	Ongoing	
H3.1.D. Conduct an annual inventory of East Providence homes that qualify as LMI per state law. At least five years prior to the expiration of any deed restriction, develop a plan for renewing the deed restriction.	CD	Medium Priority	
Policy H3.2: Continue to coordinate with the East Providence Housing Authority to ensure its fiscal health and local control over public housing management.			
H3.2.A. Seek ways to expand the inventory of Housing Authority homes, through construction of new properties, redevelopment of existing properties, or the purchase and deed restriction of existing private market apartment buildings.	CD	Ongoing	
H3.2.B. Develop a capital improvement plan to ensure that all Housing Authority homes are retained and invested in to support future generations of East Providence residents. Fully utilize federal, state, and institutional grants and financing.	CD	Low Priority	
Policy H3.3: Seek to eliminate homelessness in East Providence.			
H3.3.A. Develop protocols with City departments, including Public Safety, East Bay Coalition for the Homeless, and other local homeless service providers for connecting unhoused people in our community with services.	CD	High Priority	Complete
H3.3.B. Monitor data on individuals and households most at risk of homelessness, including those with very low-incomes, mental illness, and drug addiction. Continue to invest in City services and connect to non-City services to help prevent these populations from slipping into homelessness, particularly rental and mortgage assistance, legal assistance, counseling and advocacy, and anti-eviction programs and policies.	CD	Ongoing	
H3.3.C. Identify partners to expand the current stock of transitional and permanent supportive housing in East Providence. Collaborate on seeking funding and financing to move projects forward.	CD	Medium Priority	In progress
Policy H3.4: Increase awareness of and access to housing support resources available to East Providence residents.			
H3.4.A. Coordinate efforts with Rhode Island Housing to advertise and increase local participation in the agency's programs for first-time homebuyers, rental assistance, etc.	CD	High Priority	In progress
H3.4.B. Maintain a link to the Rhode Island Housing website on the City's website, and at least once a year seek to reach out to renter households in East Providence with information on home ownership programs.	CD	High Priority	In progress
Policy H3.5: Encourage housing options for the City's elderly population, including opportunities to age in place, that are compatible with the limits of their resources and their ability to live independently.			
H3.5.A. Partner with local non-profit developers to take advantage of financing for affordable senior housing through the HUD 202 program.	CD	Medium Priority	

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
H3.5.B. Conduct a market study for the need for additional assisted living facilities in East Providence, and actively share this information with assisted living providers in the region.	CD	Low Priority	
H3.5.C. Continue property tax exemptions for the elderly and research opportunities for other special needs households.	CC	Ongoing	
Policy H3.6: Research options for zoning and other regulatory reform that will expand housing alternatives.			
H3.6.A. Expand where two-family homes are allowed and consider reducing or eliminating the required increase in lot size so long as other dimensional and parking standards are met. Allow this for new homes as well as conversion of existing homes.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress
H3.6.B. Create a new use category for 3-to-6-unit multi-family dwellings and increase where these are allowed compared with multi-family dwellings today.	DPED	Medium Priority	
H3.6.C. Allow larger scale (7+ unit) multi-family or mixed-use housing by right in more commercial zoning districts and by special use permit in more residential zoning districts.	DPED	Medium Priority	
H3.6.D. Establish an Inclusionary Zoning policy outside of the Waterfront District, whereby developments of a certain size are required to provide a certain percentage of LMI units. Consider enforcing this everywhere in the City, or at least in targeted mixed-use areas.	DPED	High Priority	In progress
H3.6.E. Adopt an accessory dwelling unit ordinance that is consistent with State enabling legislation.	DPED	High Priority	In progress
H3.7.F. Investigate amending zoning regulations to reduce minimum off-street parking requirements for larger multifamily residential developments.	DPED	Medium Priority	

Economic Development

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
Goal ED1. Foster a positive and supportive business environment and promote the City as a "good place to do business."			
Policy ED1.1. Ensure capacity of City staff and the East Providence Economic Development Commission to implement policies and actions of the City's Comprehensive Plan; encourage the Economic Development Commission's interaction with local businesses, the East Providence Area Chamber of Commerce and RI Commerce.			
ED1.1.A. Assess the capacity of City staff to meet future economic development needs and determine if additional staff is warranted or contracted services should support staff on as as-needed basis. Regularly revisit this capacity assessment to identify the need for any changes.	DPED	High Priority	In progress

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
Policy ED1.2. Communicate with the business community to understand economic development issues, business needs, marketing of the City, and approaches to improve the overall business environment.			
ED1.2.A. Attend regular meetings and events of the East Providence Area Chamber of Commerce and local trade and merchant associations.	DPED	Ongoing	
ED1.2.B. Survey businesses annually to understand current needs and trends.	DPED	Medium Priority	
ED1.2.C. Review City financial and incentive programs to ensure they are meeting business needs, accessible, and achieving desired results.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress
Policy ED1.3. Increase the participation and inclusion of local businesses that meet the definition of minority and/or woman owned business, which also assist other disadvantaged business owners like people with disabilities and veterans.			
ED1.3.A. Connect with local businesses owned by women, people of color, people with disabilities, and veterans, among others, to understand unique challenges and opportunities that can help their businesses grow (see 1.2.B above).	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress
ED1.3.B. Encourage and support local businesses to become state-certified as women- and minority-owned businesses (WBE and MBE).	AA	Ongoing	
ED1.3.C. Establish a policy that promotes the use of local MBE and WBE on city-funded and sponsored projects and programs.	DPED	High Priority	
Policy ED1.4. Continue to invest in public improvements within the City's industrial and office parks to ensure that the businesses operating within these facilities can remain competitive.			
ED1.4.A. Coordinate directly with property owners and tenants to identify needed infrastructure upgrades and improvements at the City's industrial and office parks. Prioritize needs and establish a schedule for implementation, including funding options.	DPED	Medium Priority	
ED1.4.B. Identify opportunities for improved signage and wayfinding.	ENG	Medium Priority	In progress
ED1.4.C. Incorporate commercial areas and recreational opportunities into marketing strategies that promote industrial and office parks to new tenants.	DPED	High Priority	
Policy ED1.5. Support businesses that want to be greener and more sustainable in their operations.			
ED1.5.A. Provide targeted financial assistance through the use of CDBG funds, City Commercial Loan Program, the Waterfront District Green Business Initiative, and other City programs.	DPED	Ongoing	
ED1.5.B. Connect business with state and federal resources that can help fund greener approaches to doing business.	DPED	Ongoing	
Goal ED2. Target vacant or underutilized parcels, aging commercial corridors, and neighborhood centers to promote development and redevelopment investments.			
Policy ED2.1. Use diverse financing mechanisms to support economic revitalization of significant development parcels. These may include federal Economic Development Administration (EDA), Housing and Urban Development Section 108 funding, and RIDEM brownfield cleanup grants.			

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
ED2.1.A. Identify key undeveloped or underutilized properties that can have a significant impact on the City's tax base. Prioritize and connect with owners to discuss barriers to development. Research and identify potential funding options appropriate for each site.	DPED	High Priority	In progress
ED2.1.B. Maintain list of target parcels and update as needed.	DPED	Ongoing	
ED2.1.C. Keep apprised of new funding opportunities from state and federal sources.	DPED	Ongoing	
Policy ED2.2. Continue to administer the tax incentive programs for new development and research possible new tax relief and other types of incentives that provide benefits to the community from economic development projects.			
ED2.2.A. Review existing programs to ensure they are achieving desired outcomes and truly benefiting the community.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress
ED2.2.B. Consider incentives that prioritize city residents for job openings, training, or other employment opportunities.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress
ED2.2.C. Evaluate new programs to ensure they result in equitable development that benefits all community members. In addition to local employment and training opportunities, benefits may also include the creation of affordable housing to avoid displacement and parks and other community facilities that increase public access.	DPED	High Priority	
Policy ED2.3. Work with local businesses, property owners, and neighborhood residents in aging retail corridors and struggling neighborhood centers to develop more focused strategies for investments.			
ED2.3.A. Conduct studies that articulate a clear vision of what the community would like to see in distressed areas of the City. Use the findings of HousingWorks RI's *Devising an Opportunity Investment Strategy for East Providence* to target areas that need more support with investments.	DPED	Medium Priority	
ED2.3.B. Prioritize areas and develop a schedule for study development.	DPED	Medium Priority	
ED2.3.C. Determine support for Business Improvement Districts to help areas businesses pool resources for area improvements, marketing, and other efforts.	DPED	Medium Priority	
ED2.3.D. Undertake revitalization study of Newport Avenue.	DPED	Medium Priority	
Goal ED3. Support diverse economic opportunities while protecting important commercial and industrial assets.			
Policy ED3.1. Maintain existing industrial zoned districts. Outside of the Waterfront Special Development District, discourage the rezoning of prime industrial properties to include residential uses.			
Policy ED3.2. Work closely with Rhode Island Commerce to identify emerging and target industries that match the assets of East Providence.			
ED3.2.A. Identify opportunities within the City for locating emerging industries.	DPED	High Priority	In progress
ED3.2.B. Develop and refine marketing strategies to attract these industry types.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress
Policy ED3.3. Promote the arts as an economic driver for the City.			
ED3.3.A. Implement the strategies of the *Watchemoket/Waterfront Gateway Placemaking and Multi-modal Access Improvements* study.	DPED	High Priority	In progress

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
ED3.3.B. Develop materials to promote the Arts District to local and area artists. Work closely with EPAC and others to connect with local artists and makers.	DPED	High Priority	In progress
ED3.3.C. Identify opportunities to support training and business development for local artists.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress
ED3.3.D. Promote local events of the arts communities, including festivals, music, theater, galleries, and other venues.	DPED	Ongoing	
Policy ED3.4. Promote the City as a tourist destination by showcasing its arts, cultural, and historic assets.			
ED3.4.A. Begin participation in programming and events sponsored through the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council to attract visitors to the City.	DPED	High Priority	In progress
ED3.4.B. Develop marketing materials, both print and electronic, to highlight the City's attractions and destinations. Collaborate with local businesses, resource managers, and others in their development.	DPED	High Priority	In progress
ED3.4.C. Develop city-wide wayfinding and signage around a common theme that links resources and destinations. Link with signage program developed for historic properties.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress
Policy ED3.5. Attract and support clean energy industries.			
ED3.5.A. Identify key properties that can accommodate renewable energy opportunities. Review regulations to determine barriers, performance standards, and other requirements, as needed.	DPED	High Priority	
ED3.5.B. Work with local business and trade organizations to market these spaces and opportunities to develop this sector in East Providence.	DPED	Medium Priority	
Policy ED3.6. Create opportunities for co-workspaces, maker spaces, and other flexible environments that accommodate changing office space and workspace preferences and needs.			
ED3.6.A. Work with business and industry groups, higher education institutions, East Providence School District, and East Providence Arts Council, among others, to understand space needs and desirable amenities for co-workspaces, maker spaces, or other flexible environments.	DPED	High Priority	In progress
ED3.6.B. Based on this understanding, identify areas and buildings within the City that could support co-workspaces, maker spaces, or other flexible environments. • Find opportunities to build on existing spaces. • Consider what new public investments might be needed to develop interest in these locations, such as utility upgrades and streetscape improvements. • Review local regulations to understand any barriers that might exist in establishing these types of spaces and consider adopting performance standards. • Develop financial incentives to attract developers. • Help activate spaces by coordinating collaborations between educational institutions and property owners. These can be temporary or permanent spaces.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
Goal ED4. Support a skilled East Providence workforce to help address disparities and build economic security among residents.			
Policy ED4.1. Connect East Providence residents with training opportunities that lead to higher paying, more secure jobs.			
ED4.1.A. Work with RIDLT and local and regional technical training, such as New England Institute of Technology, MotoRing Technical Training, and East Providence Career and Technical Center, to provide training opportunities for East Providence residents in emerging industries. Prioritize people of color, lower income, unemployed, and underemployed residents.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress
ED4.1.B. Develop relationships with the state's higher education institutions to incentivize participation by East Providence residents in training and educational programs. Prioritize people of color, lower income, unemployed, and underemployed residents.	DPED	High Priority	In progress
ED4.1.C. Support relationships between the East Providence School District and higher education institutions to encourage student enrollment. Prioritize students of color and those from lower income households.	DPED	High Priority	
ED4.1.D. Invest in the East Providence Career and Technical Center to establish strengthen existing programs, particularly STEM/STEAM programs, that train East Providence youth in emerging careers.	DPED	High Priority	
ED4.1.E. Use relationships with business and trade organizations to connect East Providence residents with employment, apprenticeship, and/or mentorship opportunities.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress
ED4.1.F. Understand the barriers for full employment over and above skill development and make connections between these needs and residents' success. Examples may include lack of affordable housing, needed childcare, special training, occupational therapy, or access to transportation. Collaborate with local, regional, and state partners to identify existing support programs that can meet needs and/or gaps. Partners may include East Providence Health Equity Zone, East Bay Community Action Program, Rhode Island Housing, RIDLT, RIPTA, and others.	DPED	Ongoing	

City Services and Facilities

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
Goal CSF1. Maintain high quality and cost-effective municipal services and infrastructure in East Providence.			
Policy CSF1.1. Maintain and improve public infrastructure through cost-effective repairs and upgrades.			
CSF1.1.A. Use the East Providence School District Strategic Plan to continue needed maintenance, capacity, and safety improvements at City schools to create a modern teaching environment for students, teachers, and administrative staff. Seek municipal and outside funding sources necessary to make these improvements.	EPSD	Ongoing	

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
CSF1.1.B. Ensure that City facilities are accessible for all users, including buildings, recreational sites, and other public spaces. Use the principles of Universal Design to develop inclusive places.	PBLG	High Priority	In progress
CSF1.1.C. Seek funding to complete sewer line connections where they are discontinuous along Taunton Avenue and Pawtucket Avenue near their intersection.	ENG	Low Priority	
CSF1.1.D. Maintain and/or seek funding for continued improvements to the City's water system, including additional water main cleaning and lining.	ENG	Medium Priority	In progress
CSF1.1.E. Replace aging water system infrastructure, including outdated residential water meters to reduce the amount of water usage that is unaccounted for.	ENG	Ongoing	
Policy CSF1.2. Ensure a continued strong public safety system to maintain a safe city for all residents			
CSF1.2.A. Investigate, then support, security enhancements at City facilities, particularly at City Hall, to enhance safety for the visiting public and for City staff.	PBLG	High Priority	Complete
CSF1.2.B. Maintain staffing levels and training for the Police and Fire Departments that meet national standards. • Ensure that departments have adequate staffing to meet demands of new development within the Waterfront District. • Continue to move forward with the Community Police Station at Pierce Memorial Field.	POLICE, FIRE	High Priority	In progress
CSF1.2.C. Evaluate and plan for upgrades and/or replacement of the City's fire stations to meet national standards. • Evaluate two potential locations for new fire stations: one to respond to calls on the eastern side of Wampanoag Trail and/or replace Station 2, and another to cover new development in the Waterfront District.	FIRE	High Priority	
CSF1.2.D. Support a program of vehicle and equipment replacement for police and fire services to avoid the need for on-the-spot emergency procurements at high costs.	POLICE, FIRE	Medium Priority	In progress
CSF1.2.E. Support community policing and other community-based public safety initiatives.	POLICE	Ongoing	
Policy CSF1.3. Invest in smart technology and information infrastructure that supports equitable and efficient city services to residents and the business community.			
CSF1.3.A. Evaluate online services currently offered by the City to ensure they are accessible and meeting efficiency objectives. Identify areas of improvement and new opportunities.	IT	Medium Priority	In progress
CSF1.3.B. Develop a strategic plan to create and maintain a comprehensive list of data points currently managed by each municipal department. The strategic plan should define the parameters for data points, how data points will be used to measure progress in reaching local goals and objectives, and different ways in which departments can share and support the collection of data. State and federal requirements, restrictions, and obligations regarding data sharing must be followed.	IT	Medium Priority	

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
CSF1.3.C. Identify which data from every municipal department can be digitized into the municipal GIS database. Determine if data, based on privacy and other sensitive information, can also be incorporated into the City's GIS online portal.	IT	Low Priority	In progress
CSF1.3.D. Develop an approach to provide free Wifi access at City facilities where it is currently not available and where residents frequently gather, including City Hall, schools, and recreational areas. • Prioritize facilities in the City's lower-income and more vulnerable neighborhoods. • Look for opportunities to partner with local internet and broadband providers.	IT	Medium Priority	In progress
Policy CSF1.4. Develop procedures and protocol for the acquisition and dispensation of City property.			
CSF1.4.A. Maintain an inventory of properties that may be of interest to expand or provide new City Services & Facilities, for example a new or expanded fire station.	ASSESSOR	Medium Priority	
CSF1.4.B. Maintain a database of City-owned properties where there is dispensation interest and keep the status of those properties updated.	ASSESSOR	Medium Priority	
CSF1.4.C. Develop and document a step-by-step process of City property dispensation.	ASSESSOR	Low Priority	
Goal CSF2. Support the services, agencies and programs that create the City's social network.			
Policy CSF2.1. Maintain and improve municipal services that offer social and community enrichment.			
CSF2.1.A. Continue to evaluate the needs for seniors today and in the future to determine if existing programming and services in the community, including through the City and region, are meeting or will continue to meet those needs. Consider needs around housing, lifelong learning, recreation, social interaction and stimulation, and health and wellness, among other issues.	SS	Ongoing	
CSF2.1.B. Identify opportunities for a community and/or recreation center that serves multiple generations, including the proposed police wellness center. Ensure a new community center addresses the health monitoring needs of the community, enables workforce development programming, and provides recreational and educational opportunities to East Providence residents.	SS, REC	Ongoing	
CSF2.1.C. Maintain library services geared toward the entire community including youth and adult programming, equal access to technology, and summer outdoor community events including farmers markets and music events.	LIB	Ongoing	
Policy CSF2.2. Support local and regional agencies and organizations that provide the City's most vulnerable residents with needed services and assistance.			
CSF2.2.A. Continue to remain eligible for the City's CDBG Program funding allotment and support agencies that address high priority community needs through these funds.	CD	Ongoing	
CSF2.2.B. Work with the East Providence HEZ, and local non-profit service providers, to integrate public health issues into the local decision-making process that directs public and private investments in the City.	CD	High Priority	

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
CSF2.2.C. Continue to partner with local and regional agencies and organizations to connect residents with needed services.	CD	Ongoing	
Goal CSF3. Ensure transparent communication with the public and support active participation in government.			
Policy CSF3.1. Use appropriate strategies to effectively communicate with residents and business owners.			
CSF3.1.A. Evaluate the ways in which the City communicates with and receives input from the public. Ensure that strategies maximize citizen engagement across multiple platforms. • Determine the strategies that could be strengthened and new technology available that improves access. • Ensure that information coming out of City Hall is accessible for people with disabilities and is available in multiple languages.	MAYOR	High Priority	In progress
CSF3.1.B. Ensure that information coming out of City Hall is accessible for people with disabilities and is available in multiple languages.	MAYOR	Ongoing	
Policy CSF3.2. Assure that residents have the information, tools, and opportunities needed to actively participate in government.			
CSF3.2.A. Develop an online clearinghouse of ongoing proposals and projects under review by the City, including the anticipated review process, status of review, and ways the public can provide input (e.g., board or committee meeting dates).	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress
CSF3.2.B. Support training of existing and new City staff in meeting facilitation and public engagement techniques (high and low tech) to ensure effective communication before, during, and after public meetings, workshops, and other City-sponsored events.	MAYOR	High Priority	
CSF3.2.C. Develop an outreach strategy to increase the diversity of City boards and committees.	MAYOR, CC	High Priority	In progress

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
CSF3.2.D. Understand reasons for low to moderate participation in public meetings, workshops, and other City-sponsored events. Develop protocols for meeting design that encourages attendance and a more diverse representation of the City. • Consider offering food, childcare, and other reasonable incentives to encourage attendance. • Hold meetings in places that are neighborhood-based (school, social club, faith-based space, park) to promote a welcoming and safe environment for attendees. • Consider the day of the week and timing of meetings, and if evenings and weekends may be options. • Consider how accessible to a meeting site: is it accessible for people with disabilities? Is it accessible by public transportation? • Evaluate the process by which meetings and workshops are advertised or promoted and identify ways to reach residents that typically do not participate in City-sponsored events. • Demonstrate an inclusive meeting by making sure the process for the event is clear, describing when and how the public can participate and voice their ideas during the meeting. • Consider sign and/or language interpreters. • Use multiple strategies to engage the public, using in-person events and online options. Think about different technology and how user-friendly they are.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress

Transportation & Connectivity

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
Goal T1. Continue to promote the development of a well maintained and attractive roadway network that efficiently serves the community.			
Policy T1.1. Ensure that existing roadways are adequately maintained and improved to provide safe and reliable transportation circulation for all residents, using all modes of travel.			
T1.1.A Continue to develop a roadway rehabilitation program that inventories the roadway network, level of improvements required, and potential funding sources.	ENG	Ongoing	
T1.1.B. Strive to be consistent with the State's Freight and Goods Movement Plan.	DPED	Ongoing	
T1.1.C. At the local level, identify corridors not identified within the Rhode Island Freight and Goods Movement Plan where truck traffic should be restricted and identify corridors that should be designated as truck routes to reduce the wear on local roadways and minimize negative impacts to residents.	DPED	Medium Priority	

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
Policy T1.2. Support projects that seek to improve circulation patters in the City to reduce congestion, foster economic growth, and improve quality of life.			
T1.2.A. Complete a review of the City's local roadways that may be susceptible to cut through traffic and assess measures such as raised crosswalks/intersections, traffic circles, roadway narrowing or traffic diverters to reduce or eliminate the volume of cut-through drivers.	ENG	Medium Priority	In progress
T1.2.B. Study the City's arterial roadway network and identify specific measures to improve safety and traffic flow (e.g., controlling access points, synchronizing traffic signals, reducing speed limits, development of roundabouts at appropriate intersections, etc.).	ENG	Low Priority	In progress
T1.2.C. Work with RIDOT to study the feasibility and potential benefits of restoring a two-way traffic pattern at the Six Corners intersection of Taunton Avenue and Waterman Avenue as a means of improving traffic flow, creating a more inviting environment for pedestrians, and supporting efficient economic development opportunities in the immediate vicinity of this intersection.	ENG	High Priority	In progress
T1.2.D. Investigate access management techniques, including the potential to reduce and consolidate curb-cuts along major thoroughfares, as a means of reducing roadway hazards and improving overall traffic circulation. Priority corridors for employing access management include Newport Avenue, Pawtucket Avenue, and Taunton Avenue. Work with RIDOT on the planning and implementation of any such measures on state roads.	ENG	Medium Priority	In progress
Policy T1.3. Establish gateway corridors to reflect that East Providence is a vibrant, welcoming city with community pride.			
T1.3.A. Develop a gateway corridor prioritization plan for physical improvements.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress
T1.3.B. Develop comprehensive street landscaping and signage control provisions for the City's major transportation corridors. Use the Watchemoket/Waterfront Gateway Placemaking and Multi-modal Access Improvements study as an example for other parts of the City.	ENG	Low Priority	
T1.3.C. Allocate funding for regular maintenance of gateway sites.	CC	Low Priority	
Goal T2. Promote the development of projects and initiatives in the City that enhance multimodal transportation patterns.			
Policy T2.1. Redesign existing thoroughfares to incorporate multimodal elements.			
T2.1.A. Identify viable locations for effective traffic calming techniques and road diets to reallocate the right-of-way from vehicles to all modes more equally.	ENG	High Priority	In progress
T2.1.B. Coordination with RIDOT will be required for road-diets on roadways under RIDOT jurisdiction. Seek funding to perform preliminary engineering design to elevate projects on the state's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP).	ENG	Medium Priority	In progress
Policy T2.2. Support a Complete and Green Streets approach to redesign and improvement of major corridors.			
T2.2.A. Draft a Complete and Green Streets Policy for approval by the City Council to demonstrate the City's commitment to providing safe access for all users.	DPED	High Priority	

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
T2.2.B. Complete a City-wide evaluation and prioritization of streets to identify priorities for Complete Streets projects.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress
T2.2.C. Assess corridors that have been previously identified as priorities for multimodal improvements for consistency with an established Complete Streets Policy and prioritization plan. These roadways include: Taunton Avenue, Pawtucket Avenue, Newport Avenue, Broadway, Waterman Avenue, and Warren Avenue.	DPED	Low Priority	In progress
Policy T2.3. Support public and private development projects that are likely to reduce reliance on the automobile as the primary form of transportation.			
T2.3.A. Ensure that the development of City-led plans and other planning initiatives support diverse modes of transportation including pedestrian, bicycle, and transit.	DPED	Ongoing	
T2.3.B. Investigate incentives to developers/employers to adopt transportation demand management (TDM) strategies to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips. This could include strategies such as preferential parking for carpools, enhanced/secure bicycle parking, priced-parking instead of free parking, and/or subsidized transit passes.	DPED	Medium Priority	
T2.3.C. Work with RIPTA to expand the guaranteed ride home program, which can be used by employers to encourage employees to take alternative modes of transportation to work.	DPED	Medium Priority	
Policy T2.4. Foster a positive walking and biking culture through programs and policies that educate all road users on roadway etiquette and law and the benefits of walking and biking.			
T2.4.A. Work with City departments such as the School Department, Recreation Department, and Police Department to create educational materials that promote a positive walking and biking culture (roadway etiquette, benefits of walking and biking, etc.) that can be posted online or in City buildings and host community events.	DPED	High Priority	In progress
T2.4.B. Organize or include City participation in walking and biking events. Community events may include walk and bike to work or school days, bike workshops where community members can learn how to size and fix a bike, or a walking tour of different neighborhoods of East Providence.	REC	Medium Priority	
T2.4.C. Install bike racks at City facilities including City Hall and other buildings, parks, and schools to both make it easier to bike and create an awareness of biking. Find ways that will encourage businesses to do the same to create a network city-wide.	ENG	High Priority	In progress
Goal T3. Improve the City's streets, roadways, bicycle paths and greenways to create a safer and more enjoyable environment for pedestrians and bicyclists.			
Policy T3.1. Pursue strategies that improve pedestrian related facilities and pedestrian-scale roadway design.			
T3.1.A. Identify the needs and prioritize roadways for the installation of new curbing, sidewalks, and safety enhancements throughout the city.	ENG	Medium Priority	In progress

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
T3.1.B. Promote the continued repair and replacement of sidewalks, pedestrian connections, and safety enhancements through capital improvement programming, during roadway reconstruction projects, and through the approval process for newly proposed developments/ redevelopment. Potential safety enhancement may include high visibility crosswalks and pedestrian crossing signage, raised crosswalks, pedestrian refuge islands, curb extensions, and pedestrian hybrid beacons.	DPED	Ongoing	
T3.1.C. Complete an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) audit of pedestrian crossings within the City to improve accessibility to public and private facilities for those with mobility impairments.	ENG	High Priority	
T3.1.D. Work with the School Department to pursue opportunities to promote student safety , as funding becomes available.	ENG	Medium Priority	In progress
T3.1.E. Implement the recommendations of the completed Safe Streets For All (SS4A) Action Plan.	ENG	Ongoing	
Policy T3.2. Pursue strategies that improve bicycle connectivity and safety throughout the city.			
T3.2.A. Develop a comprehensive city-wide bicycle master plan to put forward a strategy for system-wide improvements that will enhance the bicycling safety and connectivity in East Providence for people of all ages and abilities. Consult with the City's larger employers and businesses in employment centers to identify ways to accommodate and encourage employees to bike to work. This plan could be combined with the update to the Pedestrian Plan (see above).	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress
T3.2.B. Work with RIDOT to expand existing and new bike path and greenway facilities in East Providence. These include expanding the Ten Mile River Greenway from Kimberly Ann Rock Complex south to the Hunt's Mill Historic Site, connecting the East Bay Bike Path with the Ten Mile River, studying the feasibility of a bike path in the State's "Seekonk River Crossing" right-of-way, and evaluating opportunities for bike paths in other underutilized open land.	DPED	Low Priority	In progress
T3.2.C. Coordinate with neighboring communities including Providence, Pawtucket, Barrington, and Seekonk, Massachusetts to examine opportunities for inter-municipal bicycle and regional bike network connections.	DPED	Low Priority	In progress
Policy T3.3. Expand funding for bicycle and pedestrian facilities to both enhance safety and improve connectivity for people of all ages and abilities.			
T3.3.A. Incorporate pedestrian and bicycle facility enhancement funding into the City's capital improvement budget.	ENG	High Priority	
T3.3.B. Seek additional state and federal funding opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian facilities and safety enhancements. Potential funding opportunities include the Municipal Road and Bridge Revolving Fund and Community Development Block Grants.	DPED	Ongoing	

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
Goal T4. Continue to promote a high-quality public transit system that meets the needs of our residents, workers, and visitors.			
Policy T4.1. Pursue the creation of a centralized transit hub(s) in East Providence to make transit more attractive and easier to use.			
T4.1.A. Work with RIPTA to advocate for the full design and construction of the east-west transit emphasis corridor on the Henderson Bridge trunk line service to connect the Henderson Bridge and Pawtucket Avenue. This will require minimal land acquisition and the construction of boulevards and roundabouts.	DPED	High Priority	In progress
T4.1.B. Work with RIPTA to locate a high-quality transit hub in Each Providence to support the use of transit and create a centralized location within the City to access transit services. Pawtucket Avenue between Office Parkway and the Stop & Shop driveway has been identified as a priority location to improve transit service to this commercial area.	DPED	High Priority	In progress
Policy T4.2. Work with RIPTA to enhance and/or expand transit service within the City of East Providence and to improve connectivity of transit services.			
T4.2.A. Work with RIPTA to identify transit service options that best meet the needs of East Providence residents, workers, and visitors. This includes evaluating the potential for several previously identified strategies: • Extending bus service to the Seekonk, Route 6 retail corridor Providing a local bus service, or looped transit corridor, to make transit a more viable option for local trips. High priority locations for local transit access include retail shopping corridors, larger employers, and employment centers. • Reviewing all RIPTA proposals for changes to service, and where appropriate, submit written comments during the public notice period expressing concerns and interests of the City and its residents. • Advocating for more frequent and mid-day bus service as well as more direct bus service to destinations in East Providence.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress
T4.2.B. Work with the City's larger employers and employment centers to increase worker connections to transit as well as walking and biking amenities to reduce car trips into the City.	DPED	Medium Priority	
T4.2.C. Develop incentives for developers to improve transit infrastructure through implementing elements such as bus turnouts, transit shelters, and accessible bus stop improvements in new and revitalized private developments, and within the public right-of-way, where appropriate.	DPED	Medium Priority	
T4.2.D. Work with RIPTA to improve or study the feasibility of relocating its Park & Ride facility on Taunton Avenue to better serve riders through the installation of passenger amenities and improved signage, such as real time arrival information.	DPED	Low Priority	
Policy T4.3. Promote aging in place through reviewing options for increasing transit and mobility options for the growing senior citizen population in East Providence.			

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
T4.3.A. Work with RIPTA to inventory existing bus shelters, bus stop signage and amenities, and upgrade facilities as needed to meet ADA-accessibility requirements. Implement best practices of the Rhode Island Bus Stop Design Guide. Identify where upgrades can be made as part of roadway construction projects/streetscape improvements or by developer commitments when parcels are redeveloped.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress
T4.3.B. Evaluate the feasibility of establishing a City funded para-transit service in a manner that best serves the mobility needs of elderly and disabled residents.	DPED	Medium Priority	
T4.3.C. Explore options for partnering with ride share companies, such as Uber and Lyft, to provide new options for seniors and other transit dependent populations to secure affordable transportation services for trips such as shopping, doctors' appointments, and other essential needs.	DPED	Medium Priority	
Policy T4.4. Stay aware of new technologies for electric, connected, and automated vehicles that can be used to strengthen the public transit system.			
T4.4.A. Continue to stay up-to-date on autonomous vehicle technology and anticipate potential ways to implement the technology, such as through shuttles that can serve both transit dependent populations and those who choose not to drive a car.	DPED	Ongoing	
T4.4.B. Work with the Rhode Island Office and Energy Resources to identify opportunities to expand use of electric vehicles (EV) in City fleets and for City-run shuttle services and provide EV charging stations at municipal buildings.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress
Goal T5. Develop parking standards that are in harmony with the needs of the community.			
Policy T5.1. Analyze the City's existing parking inventory and parking needs in the City's neighborhood centers to provide the right balance between parking and other land uses.			
T5.1.A. Develop and maintain an inventory of the municipal parking supply, including all City-owned or operated facilities.	DPED	Low Priority	In progress
T5.1.B. Complete parking utilization studies in neighborhood centers to understand how on-street and off-street parking is used. This will inform the type of parking to provide to meet user needs (long-term, short-term, resident, etc.), where parking can be reallocated to other uses, and how parking can be best managed in area of high demand to encourage turnover and support businesses. Two priority areas identified for parking utilization studies are Watchemoket Square and Riverside Square.	DPED	Low Priority	
Policy T5.2. Develop parking management strategies that support the land use, economic development, and streetscape goals of the City.			
T5.2.A. Review the effectiveness of the existing Zoning Overlay Ordinance to determine if and where incentives and flexibility should be expanded to continue to support right-sized parking requirements that best fit demand.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
T5.2.B. Review the effectiveness of shared parking in the City's Zoning Ordinance and revise, if necessary, to expand use of shared parking agreements among facilities that operate during different times of day.	DPED	Medium Priority	
Goal T6. Explore the development of waterborne transportation options in cooperation with other metropolitan Providence communities.			
Policy T6.1. Encourage improvements to the waterborne transportation system, including dredging and removal of impediments to waterborne transportation.			
T6.1.A. Work with the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council to explore the development of waterborne transportation options, such as marine taxi services, in cooperation with other metropolitan Providence communities.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress
T6.1.B. Continue to promote the completion of an updated Harbor Management Plan that addresses key waterborne transportation issues.	POLICE	Ongoing	
T6.1.C. Work with appropriate state and federal agencies to remove impediments to navigation in the coastal waterways of East Providence including the removal of abandoned pier footings, sunken hulks, and other hazards that may affect safe navigation.	POLICE	Ongoing	
T6.1.D. Work with appropriate state and federal entities to assure that dredging of the navigable waters within East Providence is completed on an on-going basis.	POLICE	Ongoing	

Recreation

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
Goal R1. Support the design, operation, and maintenance of high-quality parks, recreation facilities, and programming.			
Policy R1.1. Perform long-range planning for the operation and management of City parks and facilities.			
R1.1.A. Develop a Park and Recreation Master Plan to understand level of service, physical condition, maintenance and operation needs, and opportunities for new programming and amenities at the City's parks and recreation areas. Develop this plan with targeted community outreach to ensure an inclusive process that reaches diverse user groups, including people with physical and cognitive disabilities, lower income residents, and people of color, among others.	REC	Medium Priority	
R1.1.B. Create a master plan for Pierce Memorial Complex to address long-term maintenance and upgrade needs to maintain its status as the City's premier recreation and community destination.	REC	Medium Priority	
Policy R1.2. Ensure the sustainable maintenance and operations of City parks and recreation areas.			
R1.2.A. Evaluate current maintenance practices and equipment. Identify where more sustainable practices can be used. Educate the community about the importance of using more sustainable maintenance and operation practices to develop support for new investments in equipment and training.	REC	High Priority	

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
R1.2.B. Maintain a priority list of improvement and rehabilitation needs at City parks and recreation areas until a Parks and Recreation Master Plan is developed.	REC	High Priority	In progress
R1.2.C. Promote capital projects with reasonable impact on operations and on maintenance costs.	REC	Ongoing	
Policy R1.3. Use local partners to support recreational opportunities			
R1.3.A. Reach out to businesses with employees that regularly use local recreational areas or have spaces near these sites. Look for sponsorships to support maintenance activities or programming.	REC	Medium Priority	
R1.3.B. Identify private benefactors or interest groups that might be interested in sponsorships of recreational events.	REC	Low Priority	
R1.3.C. Continue to work with and support residents and community groups in the upkeep and maintenance of neighborhood parks.	REC	Ongoing	
Policy R1.4. Create new recreational opportunities and enhance those at existing parks and recreation areas.			
R1.4.A. Continue support for City-sponsored recreational and cultural events organized by the Recreation Department, such as the Dolly Searle Golf Tournament, Fourth of July celebration, outdoor concerts, annual tree lighting, Winterfest, Turkey Trot Road Race, and others.	REC	Ongoing	
R1.4.B. Develop a biannual (every two years) survey to understand resident needs for recreational facilities, activities, and programming.	REC	Medium Priority	
R1.4.C. Identify opportunities in parks to incorporate elements that create interest and encourage gatherings, either formally or informally. Include public art, pavilions, benches, and other features. Use a biannual survey to understand community preferences.	REC	Low Priority	In progress
Policy R1.5. Ensure that existing and future parks are designed to be resilient to natural hazards and climate change.			
R1.5.A. Upgrade existing parks and recreation areas to be resilient to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change, including, but not limited to, erosion, sea level rise, increased flooding, storm surge, and increased heat, among others.	REC	High Priority	In progress
R1.5.B. Develop standards to design new parks city wide to be resilient to impacts of climate change and add to the resiliency of the neighborhoods in which they are located.	REC	High Priority	
Goal R2. Create a network of accessible, safe, and inclusive parks and recreation areas and associated programming.			
Policy R2.1. Provide accessible and inclusive parks, playgrounds, and other recreation areas, including programming, for all users of all ages.			
R2.1.A. Upgrade equipment and amenities at parks and recreational areas not meeting ADA standards.	REC	High Priority	In progress
R2.1.B. Incorporate the principles of universal design in new park and facility development and identify opportunities to add elements to existing parks and recreation areas.	REC	Medium Priority	In progress
R2.1.C. In addition to meeting the needs of users with physical disabilities, find opportunities to add amenities that meet the needs of users with cognitive and sensory disabilities.	REC	Medium Priority	In progress

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
Policy R2.2. Ensure the equitable distribution and connections to parks, recreation areas, and programming in all parts of the City.			
R2.2.A. Assess the geographic distribution of parks and recreational areas and identify neighborhoods that are more than a quarter mile from a resource. Overlay existing trails, sidewalks, and bicycle amenities to determine if resources can be reached by walking and biking and the accessibility and safety of these routes.	DPED	High Priority	
R2.2.B. Engage residents in at-risk neighborhoods to understand their park and recreation needs, how welcoming and safe residents perceive existing public spaces, and what could make these spaces safer and more usable.	CD	Medium Priority	
R2.2.C. Improve connectivity of City recreation areas with other destinations in East Providence, such as high employment areas, historic and cultural sites, and commercial areas, through enhanced pedestrian and bicycle route planning and implementation. See Transportation and Connectivity Element.	DPED	Low Priority	
Policy R2.3. Maintain public access to coastal waters and inland water bodies that provide potential scenic vistas, observation points, and opportunities for water-based recreation.			
R2.3.A. Utilize the City's Waterfront District Development Plan to guide responsible development in the Waterfront District and improve public access to the shore.	DPED	Ongoing	
R2.3.B. Engage local water sport and recreation enthusiasts to improve direct water access. Provide facilities to support specific water-related activities including kayaking, sailing, and fishing.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress
R2.3.C. Enforce all ordinances that prohibit the blocking, impeding or private annexing of CRMC rights-of-way, City rights-of-way, and platted roadways that provide access to the City's coastline.	ZONE	Ongoing	
R2.3.D. Improve Bold Point Park to bring it up to the standard of Sabin Point Park with regards to park condition, amenities, and open views.	REC	Low Priority	In progress

Natural Resources

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
Goal NR1. Protect and enhance the City's upland and coastal natural resources for their social, economic, and environmental benefits and functions they provide to ecosystems and the residents of East Providence			
Policy NR1.1. Use local and State regulations, standards, and policies to minimize the impact of development and redevelopment projects on the City's natural environment.			
NR1.1.A. Work with RIDOT on future road developments to incorporate nature-based solutions (NBS) for stormwater management.	ENG	Ongoing	

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
NR1.1.B. Continue to educate citizens on the environmental hazards of illegal dumping into catch basins and storm drains.	ENG	Ongoing	
NR1.1.C. Enforce compliance with Subdivision and Land Development regulations regarding the planting and clearing of trees.	ENG	Ongoing	
NR1.1.D. Use the Rhode Island Low Impact Development Planning and Design Guidance Manual for guidance on low impact development, landscaping, and green infrastructure (NBS) in new development and redevelopment projects, as appropriate for our urban and suburban setting. Identify ways to incentivize these techniques to reduce pavement and add more green space, particularly in redevelopment of the City's older commercial and industrial areas.	DPED	Ongoing	
NR1.1.E. Enforce compliance with City drainage and erosion standards to reduce harm to the City's natural areas by human disturbance and intrusion. Ensure that best management practices are followed for development in areas with proximity to the City's wetlands and waterways.	ENG	Ongoing	
NR1.1.F. Actively pursue state-level funding programs that help address environmental issues and concerns and build sustainable natural systems. These include, but are not limited to, those administered by RIDEM and Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank.	ENG	Ongoing	
Policy NR1.2. Identify opportunities to protect and enhance upland and coastal natural environments to improve wildlife and fish habitat, mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change, and add to the quality of life for residents.			
NR1.2.A. Develop an invasive species management program for City properties, including conservation areas and associated waterways. Work with state agencies and local stakeholders to identify resources and partnerships for shared resources.	CON	Medium Priority	
NR1.2.B. Consider hiring a City Forester to oversee and manage the City's tree and urban forestry programs.	CC	High Priority	
NR1.2.C. Develop a long-term forest management plan for the City's public trees. Consider: • Scope of work to include all City properties and street trees. • Using a diversity of native species of trees. • Assess the tree inventory database and develop a data management system and update needs. • Needs for staff/resources for new plantings, addressing hazardous trees, routine up-keep and maintenance schedules. • Adaptation strategies for climate change and hazard mitigation.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress
NR1.2.D. Coordinate with RIDEM and other agencies regarding implementation of locally appropriate action items within the Rhode Island Wildlife Action Plan.	CON	Ongoing	
NR1.2.E. Inventory and prioritize significant natural resources areas including critical wildlife habitats which should be preserved and protected. Consult RIDEM's COAs and its other mapping tools.	CON	Medium Priority	

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
NR1.2.F. Identify opportunities to build, extend, and connect natural corridors along the City's waterways, including the Runnins and Ten Mile Rivers.	CON	Medium Priority	In progress
NR1.2.G. Explore the establishment of a Seekonk River Greenway.	CON	Medium Priority	
NR1.2.H. Develop a list of criteria to help evaluate and prioritize areas for conservation easements, fee simple acquisition, and other preservation strategies, in the event that such opportunities arise.	CON	High Priority	
NR1.2.I. Protect endangered and rare plant and animal species in East Providence based on the Rhode Island Natural Heritage Survey and incorporate the list as a standard tool in the development review process. Identify and catalog unique and rare plant and animal species.	CON	High Priority	
NR1.2.J. Seek natural resource restoration opportunities, including eel grass planting and other measures, to protect wetlands and coastal features.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress
NR1.2.K. Continue to coordinate with Save the Bay on planning and implementing stormwater best management practices along the Ten Mile and Runnins Rivers.	DPED	Ongoing	
Goal NR2. Ensure that all residents have access to and receive the benefits of the City's upland and coastal natural resources and they recognize the importance of environmental stewardship.			
NR2.1. Ensure equitable access to a healthy environment, targeting neighborhoods that lack natural resources and other environmental amenities.			
NR2.1.A. Prioritize neighborhoods for green infrastructure, NBS, and other natural resource enhancement projects, with a focus on those characterized as "on par/just behind," "lagging behind," or "below typical" targeted pathway in *Devising an Opportunity Investment Strategy for East Providence*.	DPED	High Priority	
NR2.1.B. Use the City's tree inventory and the Tree Equity Score tool to identify neighborhoods that lack tree canopy and prioritize these areas for new plantings.	TC	Medium Priority	In progress
NR2.1.C. Encourage meaningful recreation and natural resource amenities in higher density residential development and redevelopment projects for the benefit of residents. Prioritize connections, preferably walking and biking opportunities, between these projects and existing recreation and conservation areas, as appropriate.	DPED	High Priority	In progress
NR2.2. Promote environmental stewardship among City residents and businesses through local programs and partnerships with the state, neighboring communities, conservation groups, and neighborhood associations.			
NR2.2.A. Work with State agencies, environmental organizations, community groups, and others to encourage residents to use more environment-friendly gardening and lawn care strategies, such as the use of organic lawn treatments in place of chemical-based treatments, particularly in areas close to the City's waterways and coast.	CON	Ongoing	

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
NR2.2.B. Continue to educate residents about the benefits of trees in an urban area, best practices for tree maintenance on their properties, and planting native tree species. Promote the City's tree planting programs to increase participation.	TC	Ongoing	
NR2.2.C. Continue to work with Providence, Pawtucket, Barrington, Seekonk, Attleboro, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection around water quality issues of shared resources.	DPED	Ongoing	
NR2.2.D. Through the City's Stormwater Management Program, increase public education about illegal dumping into storm drains and the importance of keeping them clear of debris and trash.	ENG	Ongoing	
NR2.2.E. Provide and update information on unique, rare, and endangered species and other natural resources in the City. Reference available RIDEM's COA mapping tools.	CON	Medium Priority	
NR2.2.F. Educate residents regarding invasive species and about landscape plantings that are appropriate for our region.	CON	Medium Priority	In progress
NR2.2.G. Work with the Ten Mile River Watershed Council to identify illegal disposal sites along the River and address this issue. Utilize Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation resources to ensure and communicate the proper disposal of "hard-to-dispose-of" items that otherwise as dumped on public property.	CON	Medium Priority	In progress
NR2.2.H. Develop a youth education program, possibly through classroom "adoption" and study of a natural resource.	CON	High Priority	In progress
NR2.2.I. Use diverse outreach methods, including print, radio, public access television, and social media, to promote respectable use of conservation areas by residents and visitors. • Increase informational material on specific conservation areas in hard copy and electronic format including trail maps, natural resource amenities, and historic facts where appropriate. • Develop these materials in collaboration with efforts to promote the City's historic and cultural resources and recreational facilities and programming, including promotion through the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council.	CON	Ongoing	
NR2.2.J. Develop an outreach campaign to discourage the feeding of wildlife, including deer, geese, and swans. Target city parks and conservation areas along the coastline where water quality is a concern, such as Sabin Point Park and Crescent Park.	CON	High Priority	

Natural Hazards and Climate Change

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
Goal CC1. East Providence is proactive in preparing for and adapting to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change.			
Policy CC1.1. Ensure that public and private investments are considering current and projected risks of natural hazards and climate change, including sea level rise.			
CC1.1.A. Create a process to work with property owners that experience repetitive flooding and in areas projected to be inundated with sea level rise to develop practicable mitigation and adaptation options.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress
CC1.1.B. Continue to adapt City infrastructure and facilities to be more resilient to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change. • Continue with improvement plans at Sabin Point Park and Crescent Park to address water quality, coastal erosion, and anticipated impacts from sea level rise. • Continue to improve priority City at-risk roads and bridges. Work with RIDOT to ensure that state roads are meeting projected risks. Consult the Rhode Island Statewide Planning's Vulnerability of Transportation Assets to Sea Level Rise. • Continue to implement strategies to relocate or upgrade water and wastewater infrastructure in at-risk areas. Prioritize the City's wastewater treatment plants, pump stations, and main service lines.	ENG	Ongoing	
CC1.1.C. Incorporate green infrastructure into City properties to reduce pavement and increase natural features that minimize the urban heat island effect.	DPW	Medium Priority	In progress
CC1.1.D. Develop project review standards that account for projected sea level rise data for both public and private investments. Consider: • Required use of NBS for stormwater management. • Required green infrastructure elements into site and building design. • Setbacks around projected inundation areas.	DPED	High Priority	
CC1.1.E. Establish policies that allow the City to rebuild quickly while identifying areas where continued rebuilding should be evaluated. Policies to consider are a disaster recovery ordinance, a disaster reconstruction ordinance, and a post-disaster moratorium.	DPED	High Priority	
CC1.1.F. Evaluate at-risk areas where managed retreat is a possibility. Educate the public and local policy makers on the pros and cons of this approach.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress
CC1.1.G. Investigate development of a comprehensive mitigation plan that addresses coastal erosion along the Providence River shoreline.	DPED	Medium Priority	

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
Policy CC1.2. Engage the public and local businesses on the impacts of natural hazards and climate change with a focus on the City's most vulnerable residents.			
CC1.2.A. Establish a Climate Resilience Task Force comprised of City staff and local decision makers to develop a comprehensive approach across sectors. This task force would assess all plan recommendations for coastal and climate resilience, prioritize mitigation actions, and identify and pursue funding for project implementation.	DPED	High Priority	
CC1.2.B. With this Task Force, also develop a public outreach strategy to educate residents and businesses about natural hazards and the impacts of climate change. • Work with the East Providence Area Chamber of Commerce and other organizations to connect with local businesses, prioritizing those in areas of the City most at risk for impacts. • Use multiple methods of engagement (electronic, paper, in-person, virtual, etc.) to ensure that information and events are accessible for all residents.	DPED	Medium Priority	
CC1.2.C. With the Task Force, develop a clearinghouse of federal, state, and local resources available to residents to be more resilient in their personal choices. Use available resources through FEMA and the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency.	EMA	Medium Priority	
CC1.2.D. With the Task Force, establish Neighborhood Resilience Zones for specialized community-based participatory planning where residents, businesses, and neighborhood stakeholders create a shared vision of positive change and adaptation to current and future risks.	DPED	Low Priority	
CC1.2.E. With the Task Force, coordinate with EPHEZ/EBCAP, East Providence Senior Center, and other social service entities to engage the City's most vulnerable residents and understand their needs and challenges associated with the impacts of natural hazards and climate change. Develop networks to meet these needs.	CD	Medium Priority	
Policy CC1.3. Continue to support ongoing hazard mitigation and climate resilience planning to remain eligible for federal and state funding opportunities.			
CC1.3.A. Update the NHMP every five years.	EMA	Ongoing	
CC1.3.B. Use the CRB Workshop findings to prioritize projects for funding through the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank.	ENG	Ongoing	
CC1.3.C. Maintain the City's participation in FEMA's CRS.	EMA	Ongoing	
CC1.3.D. Work with FEMA when the City's flood insurance rate maps are amended to ensure continued FEMA compliance of the City's floodplain ordinance.	EMA	Ongoing	

History, Culture, and the Arts

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
Goal HCA1. Protect and ensure proper management of the City's historic and cultural resources.			
Policy HCA1. Support efforts to protect and enhance important historic buildings, sites, and landscapes.			
HCA1.1.A. Assist the East Providence Historic District Commission and East Providence Historical Society in nominations of properties or individual structures to the National and/or State Register of Historic Places. • Undertake the process to nominate the Whitcomb Farm Plat to the National Register. • Use the Citywide Survey of Historic Public School Buildings to prioritize buildings for nomination on the National Register.	DPED	High Priority	
HCA1.1.B. Consider designating additional local historic districts to increase protection of significant historic structures.	HC	Medium Priority	
HCA1.1.C. Evaluate other tools, such as acquisition, preservation easements, and transfer of development rights, among others, to protect historically significant properties and structures.	HC	Medium Priority	
HCA1.1.D. Educate and support private property owners of historic buildings as they maintain their properties, including ways to be more energy efficient.	HC	High Priority	
HCA1.1.E. Encourage the adaptation and reuse of historical structures that can bring new opportunities for residential uses and/or economic opportunities. Connect property owners with state and federal information about potential resources to clean up contaminated sites, address building renovations, and other financing or technical assistance.	DPED	High Priority	In progress
HCA1.1.F. Continue to implement the Hunt's Mill Master Plan to protect and enhance the property. • Continue to maintain and promote public access to the trail network and community gardens at Hunt's Mills. • Continue to study the feasibility of various adaptive reuse options for the Pump House and Caleb Williams House.	DPED	Ongoing	
Policy HCA1.2. Support local community efforts to protect and enhance important cultural assets and the arts in East Providence through equitable and inclusive engagement.			

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
HCA1.2.A. Conduct a city-wide asset mapping exercise or inventory of historic and cultural assets, including buildings, sites, events, organizations, and traditions that contribute to the City's heritage. • Engage a broad group of stakeholders, residents, businesses, and others to identify placemaking efforts, targeted investments, and promotional tourism activities that are inclusive of all cultures represented by City residents and the unique experiences of living and working in East Providence. • Build on existing inventories and placemaking efforts to identify new partnerships with cultural groups and fill gaps in inventories.	DPED	Medium Priority	
HCA1.2.B. Continue to promote investments in the City's artist community and Arts District (see Economic Development).	DPED	Ongoing	
HCA1.2.C. Support the Sowams Heritage Area as it protects sites significant to the culture of the region's indigenous people and promote awareness of their history and experiences, including the efforts to achieve National Heritage Area Status.	DPED	Ongoing	
Policy HCA1.3. Protect the historic resources in the City's local historic districts by the use of design guidelines.			
HCA1.3.A. Designate the Rose Land Park and Elm Tree Plat National Register Districts as local historic districts and protect the exterior of the historic resources by the use of design guidelines.	DPED	Medium Priority	
Goal HCA2. Increase awareness of and access to historic and cultural resources and the arts in East Providence.			
Policy HCA2.1. Build awareness of the City's historic and cultural assets.			
HCA2.1.A. Use diverse media and programming to increase awareness of the City's historic and cultural assets, including lectures, visual and performing arts, and social media.	DPED	High Priority	In progress
HCA2.1.B. Use the Interpretative Signage Plan to install placards and informational signs at historic significant structures and sites identified in the plan. • Find opportunities to use this plan as a template for other cultural assets in the City. • Identify ways to link resources together through digital or other means as a way of promoting places to visitors.	DPED	High Priority	In progress
HCA2.1.C. Incorporate local historic and cultural assets and arts community in tourism activities that promote the City to visitors.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress
Policy HCA2.2. Promote the City's heritage through organizations, networks, and partnerships in East Providence and throughout the region.			
HCA2.2.A. Partner with the East Providence School District to find opportunities to weave local history into the curriculum, including history, arts, and civics.	HC	Medium Priority	
HCA2.2.B. Support the Historic District Commission, East Providence Historical Society, and East Providence Library, among others, to build public knowledge of local historic and cultural figures, events, and sites.	HC	Medium Priority	In progress

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
Policy HCA2.3. Increase access to the City's historic and cultural assets.			
HCA2.3.A. Build in wayfinding signage along streets and the East Bay Bike Path, as appropriate, to promote historic and cultural destinations in the City.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress
HCA2.3.B. Incorporate the City's historic and cultural assets as destinations in the city-wide effort to improve walking and biking safety and accessibility.	DPED	Low Priority	
HCA2.3.C. Increase access to public transportation options to the City's historic and cultural destinations by promoting the use of RIPTA, as appropriate, and adding wayfinding signage at bus stops.	DPED	Low Priority	
HCA2.3.D. To the greatest extent practical, increase accessibility at city-owned historic and cultural resources for people with disabilities. This includes physical access, but also outreach materials and interpretive signage. Examples include the use of large print, braille, and tactile systems.	DPED	Medium Priority	
Goal HCA3. Invest in public art, beautification, and placemaking.			
Policy HCA3.1. Invest in public art, beautification, and placemaking particularly in Watchemoket Square and other parts of the East Providence Arts District.			
HCA3.1.A. Utilize public art as a means to create an inviting pedestrian connection under the Valley Street underpass which will be closed to vehicular traffic.	DPED	Ongoing	

Sustainability

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
Goal SUS1. Reduce the City's carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions by minimizing its reliance on fossil fuels.			
Policy SUS1.1. Build municipal capacity to improve energy efficiency and reduce energy consumption of City buildings, facilities, and operations.			
SUS1.1.A. Complete the ongoing comprehensive assessment of energy usage by each municipal department to develop baseline data for all buildings, facilities, equipment, and vehicles.	Multiple	High Priority	
SUS1.1.B. Based on the comprehensive energy usage assessment, develop an Energy Usage Reduction Plan that outlines energy reduction goals, strategies to reduce energy consumption and improve energy efficiency, and define how progress towards goals will be tracked.	Multiple	Medium Priority	
SUS1.1.C. Establish an energy or sustainability committee within city government, or a collaborative city/resident/business energy commission to implement an Energy Reduction Plan and act in an advisory role for local decision makers.	CC	Medium Priority	
SUS1.1.D. Establish a "green building" policy for municipal facilities, requiring minimum standards to ensure facilities are meeting sustainability objectives.	PBLG	Medium Priority	
SUS1.1.E. Develop a transition plan to replace or upgrade the City's vehicle fleet with more energy efficient and electric vehicles.	Multiple	Medium Priority	

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
SUS1.1.F. Develop a long-range net zero plan for the City that establishes measurable goals to reduce the community's overall greenhouse gas emissions beyond municipal energy consumption. Consider including stakeholders from the business community, residents, community groups, local institutions, and state agency representatives in the development of the plan.	Multiple	Medium Priority	
Policy SUS1.2. Support residents and businesses to be more energy efficient and encourage more sustainable development.			
SUS1.2.A. Support solar and other alternative energy opportunities for interested residents and businesses through the RI Office of Energy Resources and other sources.	DPED	Ongoing	
SUS1.2.B. Develop incentives that encourage Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design™ (LEED) "green building" techniques in new construction and rehabilitation.	DPED	Medium Priority	
SUS1.2.C. Continue the upkeep of resources for residents to improve and maintain the energy efficiency of their homes and rental properties.	DPED	Ongoing	
Goal SUS2. Reduce waste produced by municipal operations, residents, and businesses.			
Policy SUS2.1. Increase recycling across the City to achieve the state's goal and reduce rejected recycling fees.			
SUS2.1.A. Continue to educate residents about what can and cannot be recycled through the City's curbside pickup program.	RR	Ongoing	
SUS2.1.B. Assess the success of penalty fees for improper recycling. Continue to evaluate incentives and/or penalties that encourage proper recycling by residents.	RR	High Priority	In progress
SUS2.1.C. Ensure that all municipal departments are recycling properly and identify any gaps or informational needs.	RR	High Priority	In progress
SUS2.1.D. Require the use of recycled materials across municipal departments, as appropriate.	RR	High Priority	
SUS2.1.E. Work with the Chamber of Commerce and other business organizations to encourage businesses and other establishments not included in the City's curbside program to recycle.	RR	Medium Priority	
Policy SUS2.2. Increase knowledge and opportunities across the City to make more sustainable choices for waste reduction.			
SUS2.2.A. Continue to promote the City's materials recycling center on Commercial Way.	RR	Ongoing	
SUS2.2.B. Develop systems and policies across municipal departments that reduce the need for printed materials.	RR	Medium Priority	In progress
SUS2.2.C. Identify existing educational materials of other agencies and organizations, or develop city-specific resources, to promote more sustainable choices of residents and businesses to reduce their environmental footprint.	RR	High Priority	In progress
SUS2.2.D. Investigate ways to provide City Services & Facilities that can help residents and businesses divert waste including food waste, waste oil recycling, and other approaches. If private or regional options are more affordable and efficient, develop ways to connect the community with these opportunities.	RR	Medium Priority	

Waterfront District

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
Goal WF1. Ensure the *East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Plan* reflects the vision of the community and is consistent with state and local goals unique to this area.			
Policy WF1.1. Develop and follow a schedule and process to review and update the District Plan.			
WF1.1.A. Identify available data and develop metrics to measure success of the 2003 Plan and subsequent updates.	WFC	High Priority	
WF1.1.B. Update the 2003 Plan. • Develop a robust public engagement process for the 2003 Plan update. o Engage a broad representation of the City, including residents, businesses, and community groups. o Ensure that appropriate state agencies are part of the process. o Start engagement early and keep the process accessible, open, and transparent. • Consider establishing a steering committee to play a central role in the 2003 Plan update process with diverse membership that represents city issues around housing, economic development, conservation, and transportation, among other needs. • Develop a scope of work for the update that includes, but not limited to, the following tasks: o Evaluating activities within the district and progress towards meeting stated goals. o Vetting the current vision and goals with the community and stakeholders. o Identifying future needs for public services and utilities, including park and public space maintenance, water, wastewater, and public safety.	WFC	High Priority	
WF1.1.C. Develop a schedule to periodically review the District Plan to ensure it is meeting stated goals and objectives and the community's vision.	WFC	Medium Priority	
Policy WF1.2. Continue the development of Bold Point Harbor to support off-shore wind projects.			
WF1.2.A. Continue to work with private property owners and state agencies to support the development of the South Quay into a port that supports off-shore wind projects.	WFC	Ongoing	

Land Use

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
Goal LU1. Make land use decisions in an open and transparent environment, based on equitable principles, public engagement, and the most accurate and available data.			
Policy LU1.1. Ensure an efficient, transparent, and forward-thinking regulatory and policy framework that guides land use decisions.			
LU1.1.A. Update zoning and subdivision regulations to be consistent with the Future Land Use Map and the intent of the Comprehensive Plan.	DPED	High Priority	
LU1.1.B. Conduct an audit of the City's Zoning Ordinance to identify outdated language and internal inconsistencies. Develop a schedule and budget for revisions.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress
Policy LU1.2. Support decision makers, including staff, City Council, and local boards and commissions, in their ability to make land use decisions consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.			
LU1.2.A. Continue to offer training opportunities to the Planning Board on land use decision making and current topics in the planning field. Examples include resilience and climate change, equity, and public health, among other emerging topics.	DPED	Ongoing	
LU1.2.B. Continue to educate other boards and committees on the goals of the Comprehensive Plan and how their work can support its goals and policies.	DPED	Ongoing	
Policy LU1.3. Build public transparency and trust of the land use decision making process.			
LU1.3.A. Increase the use of the City's website to provide resources and information for developers as they navigate the land development review and permitting processes. Enhance the City's GIS and prioritize the availability of the current Zoning Map online.	IT	High Priority	In progress
LU1.3.B. Continue to use multiple avenues to increase public awareness of and participation in the review of land development projects. Provide information on the development review process overall and where projects are in the review process.	DPED	Ongoing	
LU1.3.C. Continue to showcase completed development projects and highlight how they support the policies of Comprehensive Plan.	DPED	Ongoing	
Goal LU2. Promote sustainable development and investments in East Providence that balance environmental and economic goals to create a high quality of life for all city residents and a thriving local business community.			
Policy LU2.1. Ensure that development and redevelopment is within the capacity of the City's existing and planned infrastructure and services.			
LU2.1.A. Evaluate proposed developments with assistance from Public Safety, Public Works, and other city departments to ensure existing resources and infrastructure capacity will meet current and projected future demands of the development.	DPED	Ongoing	
LU2.1.B. Where possible, encourage developers to support upgrades to infrastructure and services to meet the anticipated demands of their projects.	DPED	Ongoing	

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
Policy LU2.2. Support development and redevelopment that promote walking, biking, and transit use, among other transportation alternatives, and expand alternative transportation networks throughout the city.			
LU2.2.A. Continue to support public and private investments in alternative transportation options in East Providence in areas of development opportunity.	DPED	Ongoing	
LU2.2.B. Create incentives for development and redevelopment along existing or planned transit corridors.	DPED	High Priority	In progress
LU2.2.C. Conduct a visioning session for the proposed Henderson Bridge and Parkway that will enhance bus service and create connections between Pawtucket Avenue and the area opened for redevelopment by the Henderson Bridge improvements project.	DPED	Medium Priority	
Policy LU2.3. Ensure the use of best management practices that protect environmental quality, enhance natural resources, and increase resilience to climate change.			
LU2.3.A. Continue to monitor data that can be used in land use decisions today and in the future, including climate science data. Direct public and private development in the city to use these data to inform project design, particularly in coastal and low-lying areas.	DPED	Ongoing	
LU2.3.B. Review local regulations and standards to find opportunities to require or strongly encourage investors to create more environment-friendly projects. This can include requirements for energy efficient buildings, nature-based solutions or green infrastructure for stormwater management, and enhancing walking and biking amenities in the area to reduce the need for single-occupancy vehicles.	DPED	Medium Priority	
Policy LU2.4. Support development and redevelopment that increases equitable access to environmental, economic, and social benefits for residents who live and work in the City's more disadvantaged and distressed areas.			
LU2.4.A. Based on available data, develop indicators to help monitor the environmental, economic, and social impacts, both positive and negative, of land use decisions on City residents and businesses.	DPED	Medium Priority	
LU2.4.B. Review local regulations and standards to identify barriers that prevent investments in the City's more disadvantaged and distressed areas.	DPED	High Priority	In progress
LU2.4.C. As investments are made in these areas, use incentives or other mechanisms to prevent displacement of residents and local businesses.	DPED	Medium Priority	
Policy LU2.5. Encourage mixed use development that supports traditional "Main Streets" with diverse housing options, space for local businesses and services, and opportunities for public parks and green space, among other features.			
LU2.5.A. Hold visionary charettes for targeted Focus Areas to develop recommendations based on public needs and preferences.	DPED	Medium Priority	
LU2.5.B. Identify areas of the city that would be good candidates for redevelopment as mixed use, particularly larger commercial parcels. Consider the applicability of the City's existing mixed use overlay districts to encompass these areas.	DPED	High Priority	In progress

	Lead	Prioritization	Current Status February 2025
LU2.5.C. Review regulations and standards to identify where changes need to be made to allow for more compact development and walkable corridors in the City's commercial areas. Review permitted uses as well as setbacks, building height, parking requirements, and other standards that impact the relationship between building(s) and the sidewalk and/or street and other site design features.	DPED	High Priority	In progress
LU2.5.D. Investigate amending minimum parking requirements to help reduce excessive impervious areas and to prevent regulations from being an obstacle to the development of multifamily and/or affordable housing.	DPED	Medium Priority	In progress