

Smith Street Revitalization Plan



Community Meeting 3

Wednesday, May 13

camiros



PROVIDENCE
CITY COUNCIL

P
MAYOR JORGE O. ELORZA
CITY OF PROVIDENCE

this is not just a
plan

It is a guide for
community action

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the community members, leaders, consultants, and City staff who contributed to this Plan.

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planning area

THE SMITH STREET CORRIDOR REVITALIZATION AREA



Tyndall Ave

I-95

project goals

- *fully inclusive process*
- *redevelopment as a catalyst for neighborhood improvement*
- *improve the quality of life for local residents*



- *streetscape and mobility improvements*
- *cultural and arts planning that uplift the identity of the neighborhood*
- *education, safety, health, supportive social services*

the process



September
2019

Fall
2019

Winter
2020

Spring
2020

community engagement



smith street today

Urban Livable History
Chill Young People Well Worn Character Old People
Beautiful People Passing Through
Rundown Under appreciated Forgotten
Diverse
Location Underrepresented Sound Community
Friendly **Community** People Moving
Convenient Litter Family-Oriented
Vacant
Potential Can Change **Dirty** Rogers
Awesome People Bad Reputation
Multi-Family Welcoming Neglected Central Wealth Busy
Mixed Love

smith street tomorrow

Colorful Friendly Dining Lively
Business Powerful Inclusive
Local Control Welcoming
Clean
Engaged
Nourishing Diverse Sustainable
Community Nimble
Energy Beauty Green Thriving
Quality of Life Main Up and Coming Services
Revitalized Equitable Walkable Learning Rogers
Mixed

community context

ECONOMICS



Median Income in
Smith Hill
\$41,161

Median Income in the
City of Providence
\$42,150



Unemployment Rate
in Smith Hill
8%

Unemployment Rate
in the City of Providence
4%



Cost Burdened Households
(Spending >30% of income on
Housing) in Smith Hill
27%

Cost Burdened Households
(Spending >30% of income on
Housing) in the City of Providence
43%

HOUSING

Total Housing Units in
Smith Hill
3,150



Percent of all Housing
Units in the City of
Providence
4.27%
(Out of 73,820 Total
Housing Units)

Owner-Occupied
Housing Units

Smith Hill	City of Providence
20%	35%

Renter-Occupied
Housing Units

Smith Hill	City of Providence
80%	65%



Median Home Value
in Smith Hill



Median Home Value in
the City of Providence



themes for revitalization

City of Providence Department of Planning and Development
Smith Street Revitalization Plan

A HOME FOR ALL

This map features a purple overlay on the Smith Hill area. It contains 18 circular icons, each with a small image and a text label. The labels include: 'AFFORDABLE HOUSING', 'IMPROVED HOUSING', 'KEEP IT LOCAL', 'REPAIR AND MAINTAIN', 'RENOVATE', 'REDEVELOP', 'REUSE', 'REPAIR AND MAINTAIN', 'RENOVATE', 'REDEVELOP', 'REUSE', 'REPAIR AND MAINTAIN', 'RENOVATE', 'REDEVELOP', 'REUSE', 'REPAIR AND MAINTAIN', 'RENOVATE', 'REDEVELOP', 'REUSE'. A large white house icon with a dollar sign is positioned at the bottom left.

City of Providence Department of Planning and Development
Smith Street Revitalization Plan

A NEIGHBORHOOD OF LEARNING

This map features an orange overlay on the Smith Hill area. It contains 18 circular icons, each with a small image and a text label. The labels include: 'PROVIDENCE COLLEGE', 'EDUCATION', 'SKILLS TRAINING', 'JOB TRAINING', 'EMPLOYMENT', 'BUSINESS INCUBATION', 'START-UPS', 'SMALL BUSINESS', 'WELCOME to Historic SMITH HILL', 'FOOD TRUCK', 'CITY OF PROVIDENCE', 'STATE HOUSE BUILDING'. A 'WELCOME to Historic SMITH HILL' sign is visible on the right side.

City of Providence Department of Planning and Development
Smith Street Revitalization Plan

A CLEAN, GREEN AND SAFE COMMUNITY

This map features a green overlay on the Smith Hill area. It contains 18 circular icons, each with a small image and a text label. The labels include: 'GREEN SPACE', 'WALKABILITY', 'BIKEABILITY', 'PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION', 'SAFETY', 'CLEAN AIR', 'WATER QUALITY', 'WASTE MANAGEMENT', 'RECYCLING', 'REPAIR AND MAINTAIN', 'RENOVATE', 'REDEVELOP', 'REUSE', 'REPAIR AND MAINTAIN', 'RENOVATE', 'REDEVELOP', 'REUSE'. A 'COME visit Historic SMITH HILL' sign is visible on the right side.

City of Providence Department of Planning and Development
Smith Street Revitalization Plan

AN INTERNATIONAL FOOD HUB

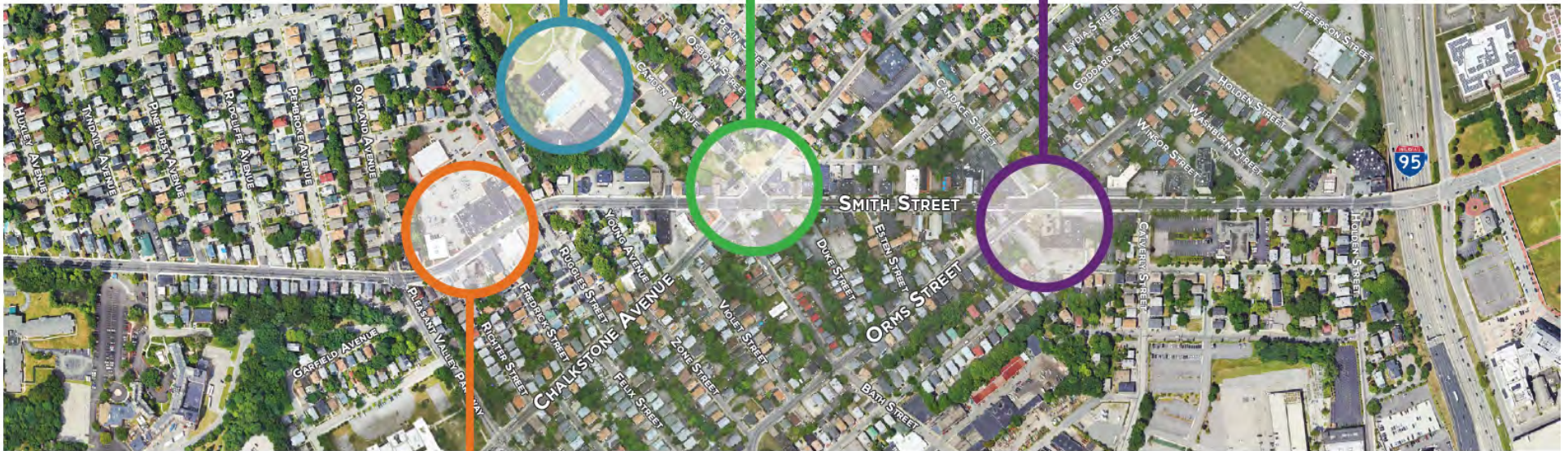
This map features a blue overlay on the Smith Hill area. It contains 18 circular icons, each with a small image and a text label. The labels include: 'PROVIDENCE COLLEGE', 'EDUCATION', 'SKILLS TRAINING', 'JOB TRAINING', 'EMPLOYMENT', 'BUSINESS INCUBATION', 'START-UPS', 'SMALL BUSINESS', 'WELCOME to Historic SMITH HILL', 'FOOD TRUCK', 'CITY OF PROVIDENCE', 'STATE HOUSE BUILDING'. A 'WELCOME to Historic SMITH HILL' sign is visible on the right side.

focus areas

Focus Area 2
Harry Kizirian
Elementary Area

Focus Area 3
Smith &
Chalkstone
Avenue Area

Focus Area 4
Smith & Orms
Street Area

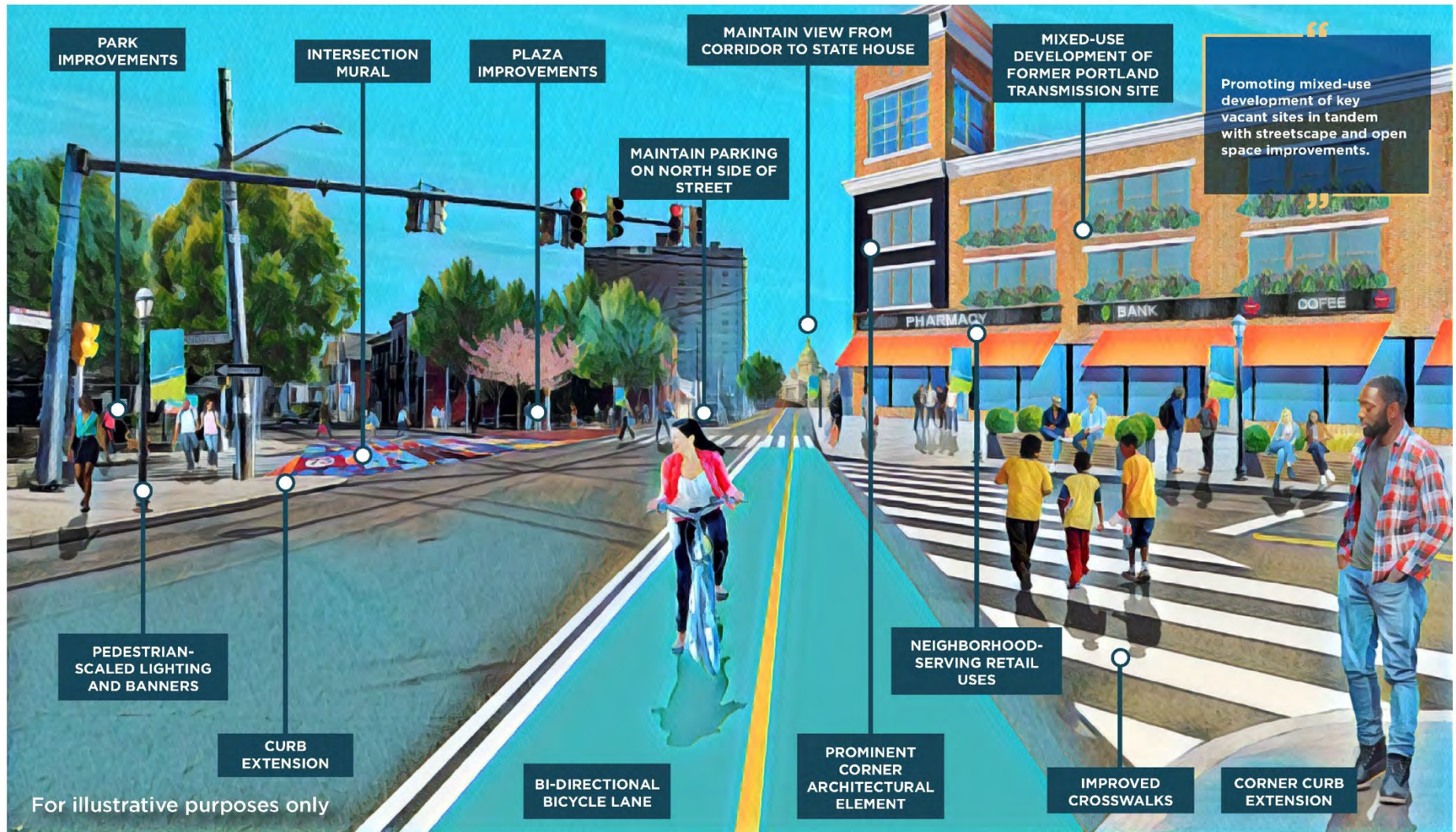


Focus Area 1
Aldi Area

smith and orms focus area



smith and orms focus area

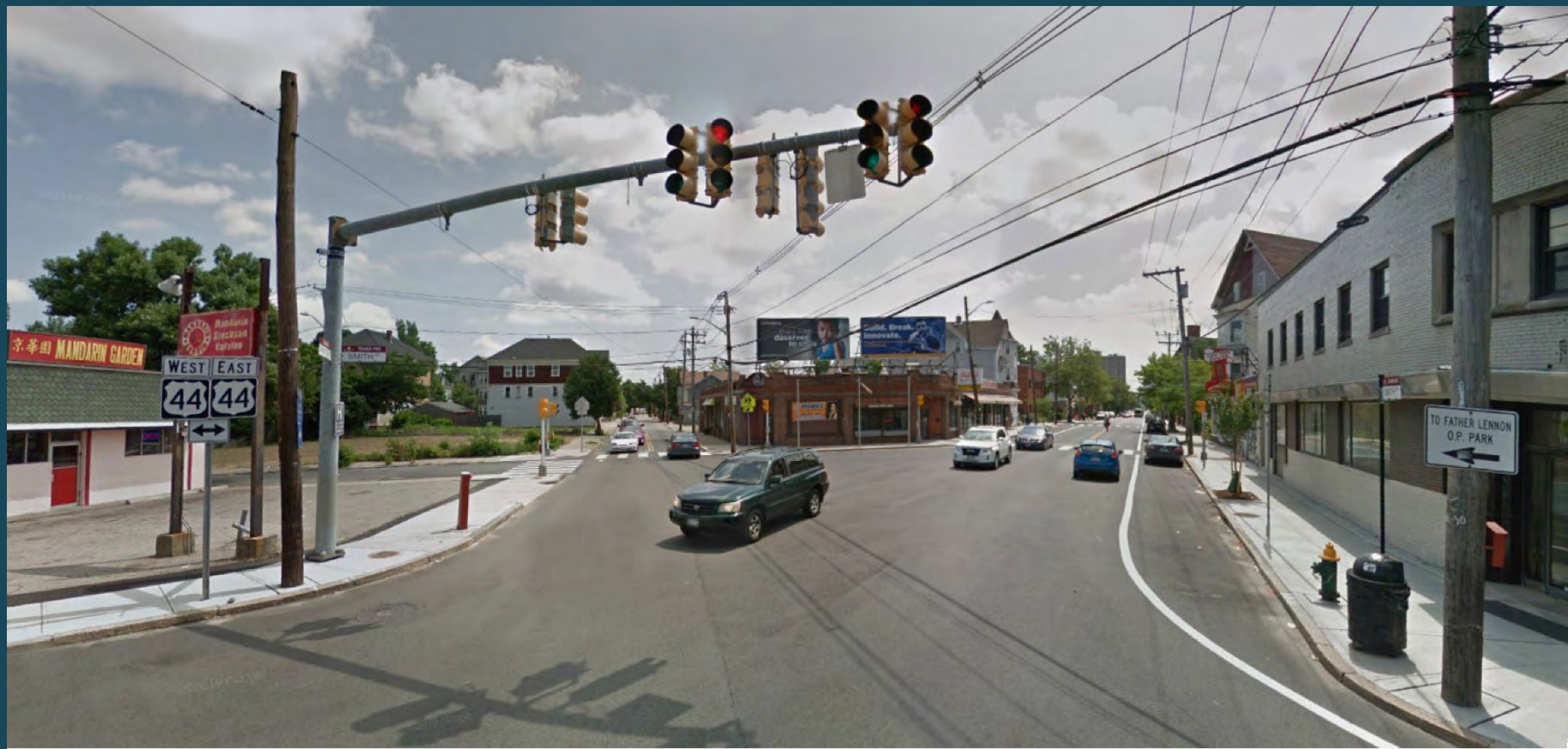


smith and orms focus area

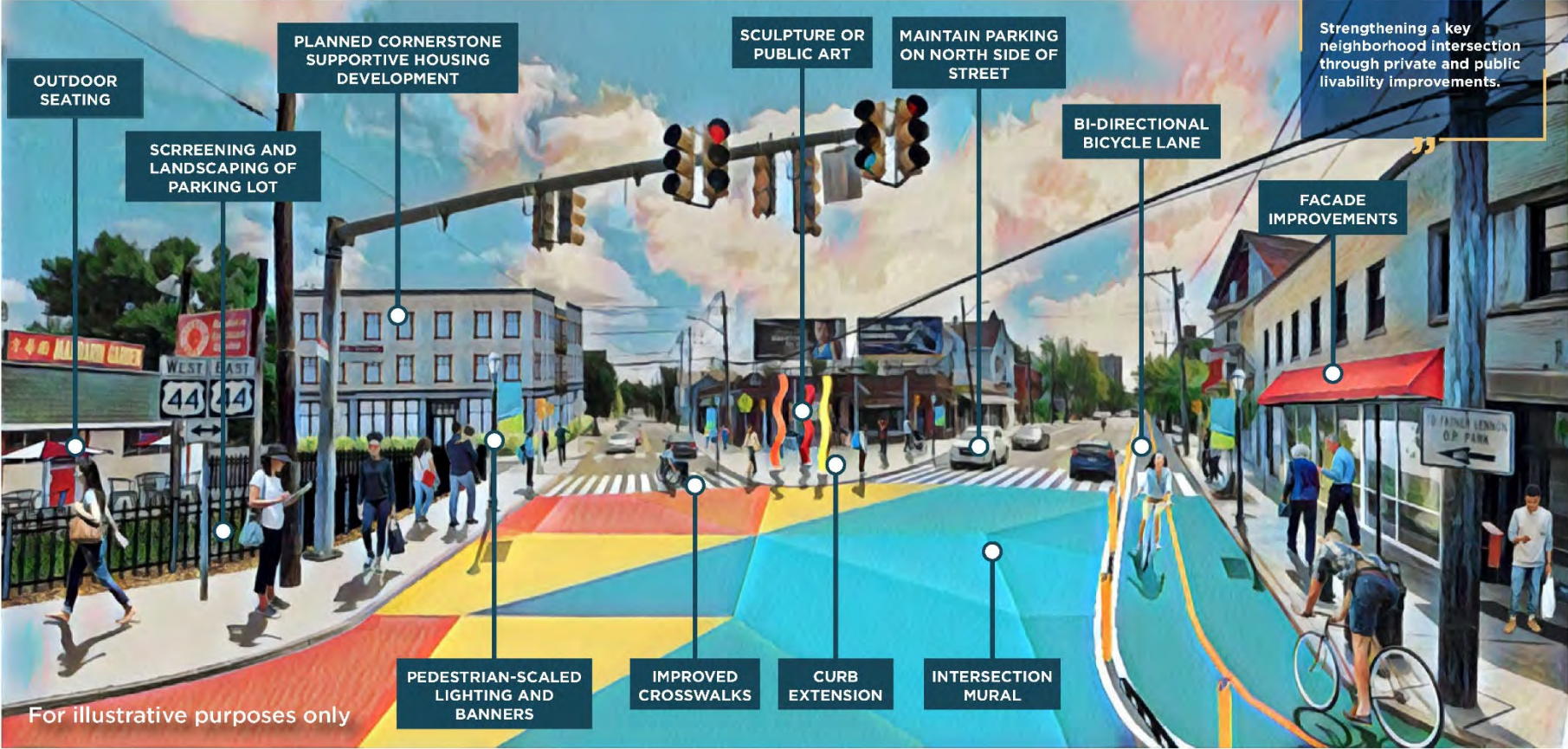


Option B

smith and chalkstone focus area



smith and chalkstone focus area



smith and chalkstone focus area



Option B

harry kizirian elementary focus area



harry kizirian elementary focus area



aldi focus area



aldi focus area



Option A

aldi focus area



Option B

priority projects



High Priority Projects

- 1 Hold a Taste of Smith Hill Festival (**Early Action Project**)
- 2 Improve Vacant Properties with Pocket Parks, Plazas, and Community Gardens
- 3 Implement Public Art and Signage Improvements
- 4 Implement Changes to Improve Safety for all Road Users as Identified in the City's Great Streets Master Plan
- 5 Encourage Mixed-Income Housing Development on Key Sites
- 6 Create a Business Façade Improvement Program
- 7 Install Little Free Libraries Throughout the Neighborhood to Encourage Reading
- 8 Establish a Smith Hill Merchants Association
- 9 Improve Smith Hill Library as a Community Learning Anchor and Include Additional Educational Programming for Youth and Adults
- 10 Improve the Schoolyard at Harry Kizirian Elementary

Medium Priority Projects

- 11 Conduct a Neighborhood Lighting Study and Consider a Neighborhood Porch Lighting Program
- 12 Redesign and Connect Russell J Boyle Plaza and Joseph P Hassett Sr Memorial Park for Higher Utilization
- 13 Work with Property Owners to make the Aldi's Commercial Area More Attractive
- 14 Encourage Greater Utilization of Rogers Recreation Center, including a Police Basketball League for Youth
- 15 Encourage Local College Students to Volunteer as Local Tutors
- 16 Establish a Neighborhood STEAM and Robotics Club

Lower Priority Projects

- 17 Create a Smith Hill Restaurant Guide and Food Tour
- 18 Widen Sidewalks to Encourage Outdoor Dining
- 19 Encourage Hotels, Inns, and other Lodging
- 20 Establish an International Restaurant Incubator including Food Industry Training and Food Production Program for Nearby Anchor Institutions
- 21 Establish and Sustain an Online Neighborhood Social Media Presence and Neighborhood Newsletter

HIGH PRIORITY PROJECTS





1. Hold a Taste of Smith Hill Festival (Early Action Project)

Description

As a key step in building momentum for the Plan, the Smith Street Steering Committee has brainstormed ideas for Early Action Projects that can be initiated as the Plan takes shape. The top Early Action Project idea identified by the Committee is a Taste of Smith Hill Festival. Recognizing that Smith Hill is a colorful, vibrant, and diverse community, the Committee recommended that the 2020 Smith Hill Block Party be expanded to become a larger and more inclusive Taste of Smith Hill Festival, to promote the community and bring people together. This Festival should celebrate the neighborhood while highlighting a variety of cultural and ethnic groups, showcasing unique cuisine along with art, music, and dance.

Action Steps

1. The Steering Committee, led by Half-Full, is currently working on organizing the Taste of Smith Hill Festival as an

expanded and rebranded Smith Hill Block Party for the Summer of 2020. It is recommended that a small sub-committee be formed to help guide this effort

2. Identify a location for the Festival that is convenient for both neighborhood residents and visitors.
3. Identify a date for the Festival that will not conflict with other local or major city events.
4. Begin to structure the various elements of the Festival with a focus on local art, culture and cuisine.
5. Reach out to partners for support and participation in the Festival.
6. Utilize the Festival to promote the projects and strategies outlined in the Revitalization Plan, and to celebrate successes that have been achieved by neighborhood stakeholders.
7. During the Festival, be sure to collect data relating to the number of visitors, and what activities and elements are most popular.
8. Following the Festival, assess the data and feedback provided by attendees in order to develop recommendations for larger neighborhood strategies, as well as the next year's Festival.

Lead Partner:

Half-Full: Coordination and planning of event with local stakeholders.

Potential Partners:

- City of Providence Department of Art, Culture, and Tourism
- SHPI
- SHARP
- Smith Hill CDC

Potential Resources

- **\$1,000 in Early Action Funding**
- **Providence Tourism Grant**
- **Rhode Island Foundation Community Grant**



2. Improve Vacant Properties with Pocket Parks, Plazas, and Community Gardens

Description

Public spaces provide opportunities for recreation and gathering. Connections between public spaces should be improved and new public spaces should be established to fill in gaps and create a cohesive, well-integrated network. Community gardens bring neighbors and stakeholders together to beautify the neighborhood, while providing fresh, healthy and low-cost food for residents. By creating a network of pocket parks and gardens, the Smith Hill neighborhood can become greener, healthier and more sustainable.

Action Steps

The Plan recommends the following steps to create and improve a network of pocket parks:

1. **Smith Hill Park Improvements:** Through representatives of SHARP and SHPI, the City should engage community members to help identify potential park locations, identify needs for existing open spaces, and relay neighborhood concerns to City Parks Department staff.
2. **Open Space Evaluation:** Each potential pocket park, plaza or community garden should be evaluated for physical improvement needs including the installation of decorative fencing, landscaping and signage.
3. **Placemaking:** Placemaking techniques should be used to improve Smith Hill's existing parks and plazas.

The Plan recommends the following steps to establish a Smith Hill Community Gardens Initiative:

1. **Identify Vacant Lots:** Where community support is available, vacant lots should be identified as future community garden sites. These properties offer an opportunity to initiate community garden programs as an interim or long-term use of underutilized property.
2. **Garden Program:** Begin a community garden program on the most prominent vacant lots within the neighborhood.
3. **Fresh Food Initiative:** Develop partnerships to provide fresh food to local residents. This can be done through relationships with local businesses and organizations, or through the establishment of a farm stand on Smith Street.

Lead Partner:

Southside Community Land Trust (SCLT):

SCLT serves people in economically challenged urban neighborhoods where fresh produce is scarce and who, as a result, are at risk for life-threatening, diet-related, chronic diseases.

Potential Partners

- Faith-based Organizations
- Office of Sustainability
- Healthy Communities Office
- Department of Parks

Potential Resources

- **City of Providence Neighborhood Improvement Funds (NIF)**
- **National Endowment for the Arts - Our Town Grant**
- **National Association of Realtors (NAR) - Placemaking Micro-Grant**
- **Rhode Island Foundation Community Grant**
- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**
- **Capital Improvement Program (CIP)**



3. Implement Public Art and Signage Improvements

Description

Integrate the neighborhood's international community and history into the citywide Urban Trail Network signage program to celebrate the legacy of Smith Hill and highlight the geography, industry, and cultural diversity that gives the community its unique character and sense of place. The citywide Urban Trail signage program will provide a unifying template for banners, directional signs, and interpretive signs that can be tailored to tell the story of each neighborhood's history and culture. The City should also create opportunities for local artists to create public art at key gateway sites including the intersections of Smith Street with I-95, Holden Street, Orms Street, Chalkstone Avenue, and Oakland Avenue.

Action Steps

Before the installation of new signage and gateways can occur, a neighborhood branding process should be conducted utilizing the following steps, as recommended by the Center for Community Progress:

- 1. Define the Goal:** The project leaders must define what the community wants the branding campaign to accomplish and identify the desired outcomes that would prove the marketing strategy to be successful.
- 2. Identify Target Markets:** It is critical to decide on exactly who the campaign needs to speak to in order to accomplish the marketing goals.
- 3. Select Core Brand Components:** The project leaders should define the first three ideas or emotions they want target markets to think or feel when they hear "Smith Street"
- 4. Develop a Logo:** Work with a graphic designer to create a logo for Smith Street that conveys in images or words the three core components discussed previously.
- 5. Align Local Activities:** Consistency is important in the neighborhood branding strategy.

- 6. Promote Positive Stories:** Promote the positive stories, activities and progress taking place in Smith Hill in order to reinforce the desired brand image.
- 7. Public Art Installations:** The Plan recommends that the City's ACT Public Art program be expanded into the Smith Street Corridor to celebrate the legacy of Smith Hill, highlighting the geography, history, and cultural diversity that gives the community its unique character and sense of place.

Lead Partner:

City of Providence Department of Planning and Development: Initiate a branding effort with local stakeholders that can translate directly into public art and signage improvements for the corridor.

Potential Partners

- City of Providence Department of Art, Culture + Tourism
- Smith Hill CDC
- Our Streets Providence
- RI Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission
- SHARP
- SHPI
- Providence Preservation Society

Potential Resources

- **City of Providence Neighborhood Improvement Funds (NIF)**
- **The Main Street Rhode Island Streetscape Improvement Fund**



4. Implement Changes to Improve Safety for all Road Users as Identified in the City's Great Streets Master Plan

Description

Work with RIDOT to implement an Urban Trail along Smith Street to connect to the citywide Urban Trail Network and enhance east-west connectivity through Downtown, Smith Hill, and Elmhurst. Work with RIDOT to implement safety improvements at the intersections of Smith Street with Holden Street, Orms Street, Chalkstone Avenue, and Oakland Avenue. Implement an Urban Trail along the Oakland/Pleasant Valley/Dean Street corridor to connect to the Woonasquatucket River Greenway and enhance north-south connectivity. Investigate concerns regarding speeding and cut-through traffic on Oakland Avenue, Richter Street, Frederick Street, Ruggles

Street, Young Avenue, Camden Street, Candace Street, Goddard Street, Wayne Street, Nolan Street, Ruggles Street, Osborn Street, Pekin Street, and Jefferson Street.

Action Steps

The Plan recommends following the implementation guidance of the Great Streets Master Plan to invest in and preserve great streets, prioritize safety and comfort for people who walk, ride bicycles, and use public transit, advocate for friendlier state laws and policies related to mobility and expand opportunities for engagement, education, and encouragement.

Lead Partner:

City of Providence Department of Planning and Development: Design and oversee implementation of the recommendations in the Providence Great Streets Plan related to Smith Hill.

Potential Partners

- City of Providence Department of Public Works
- City of Providence Department of Art, Culture + Tourism
- RIDOT
- RIPTA
- Our Streets Providence
- SHARP
- SHPI

Potential Resources

- City of Providence Neighborhood Improvement Funds (NIF)
- City of Providence Sidewalk Repair Program
- City of Providence Traffic Calming Program
- Capital Improvement Program (CIP)
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- Private, Community, and Non-Profit Developments



5. Encourage Mixed-Income Housing Development on Key Sites

Description

Based on the Market Study conducted as part of this planning process (see Appendix for more detail), it is clear that demand for both rental and for sale residential properties outstrips supply, resulting in steep increases in sales prices and rents over the past several years. Potential development sites such as the 3.2-acre site near Holden and Orms streets and the former Portland Transmission site at Smith and Orms streets should be prioritized for residential development or purpose-built student housing which could help ease the shortage of housing units for working families in the neighborhood. Just north of the planning area, the Chad Brown public housing site, owned and managed by the Providence Housing Authority, could provide an opportunity for a larger mixed-income redevelopment that could have a significant impact on Smith Hill.

Action Steps

1. Work with partners such as the Smith Hill CDC to facilitate redevelopment of the former Portland Transmission Site in a way that aligns with the community needs and vision for the site as a pedestrian-oriented, multi-story mixed-use building, including mixed-income housing, that could catalyze additional neighborhood reinvestment.
2. Continue to work with Saints Sahag And Mesrob Armenian Church to define and envision a potential mixed-income development on the vacant portion of their current property.
3. Encourage smaller infill developments, including mixed-income housing, within the Smith Street Corridor. The development of single-use sites into mixed-use can provide additional mixed-income housing units that are desired by local residents. Adding housing to the Smith Street corridor can also help to support small local businesses.
4. Work with the Providence Housing Authority to explore alternatives for mixed-income redevelopment or rehabilitation of the Chad Brown property. It is recommended that the Providence Housing Authority consider applying for a HUD Choice Neighborhoods Planning / Action

Grant in order to develop a vision and strategies for this property in context with surrounding neighborhood improvements.

Lead Partner

Smith Hill Community Development Corporation (CDC): Smith Hill CDC is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to providing safe, affordable housing.

Potential Partners

- Providence Housing Authority
- Rhode Island Housing
- City of Providence Department of Planning and Development

Potential Resources

- **Equitable Neighborhood Development Planning Grant**
- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**
- **HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME)**
- **Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)**
- **Choice Neighborhoods Planning or Implementation Grant**



6. Create a Business Façade Improvement Program

Description

A facade improvement program should be created to encourage and assist commercial property owners and tenants in making exterior building facade improvements and installing new signage. Facade improvements for commercial properties on Smith Street could be tied directly to the City's Great Streets program to enhance the interface between the public realm and commercial activities. The improved appearance of commercial buildings will generate a positive aesthetic impact on the neighborhood. The City and/or local partners should explore funding opportunities to offer grants and workshops to assist with exterior renovations of existing commercial properties.

Action Steps

1. Identify all potential storefronts within the Smith Street Corridor.

2. Develop a "kit of parts" for improvement projects. Examples include identifying specific materials, architectural elements, and awning types for facades to utilize.
3. Hold "Pop-up" events in vacant storefronts to create momentum for the improvement and activation of underutilized spaces.
4. Where possible, use historic photos and resources to show potential of storefronts that could be restored to their original architectural quality.
5. Establish a small grant program to assist business owners in improvements. The Plan recommends that the program be based on the following general structure:

SUGGESTED FUNDING STRUCTURE

Approved projects would be eligible for reimbursement of up to 50 percent of project costs for eligible project elements (i.e. upgrades or alterations to building exteriors), up to \$10,000. Funding would be provided on a competitive basis.

SUGGESTED REQUIREMENTS

Property must be located within the Smith Street Revitalization Plan boundary. Property must contain an active commercial business or be undergoing renovations for the opening of a business within six months. Applicants must be current on City of Providence taxes and must not owe other City fees prior to filing an application.

Program would include the installation of a new façade or major enhancements to an existing façade. Business owners leasing space can apply with written permission from the property owner; Property should not be targeted for redevelopment. General maintenance and upkeep of existing exterior are NOT included in this program.

Lead Partner

Smith Hill CDC: To work directly with the Department of Planning and Development to begin to structure a program based on initial recommendations outlined in the Plan.

Potential Partners

- City of Providence Department of Planning and Development
- City of Providence Office of Economic Opportunity

Potential Resources

- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**



7. Install Little Free Libraries Throughout the Neighborhood to Encourage Reading

Description

One of the most successful ways to improve children's reading achievement is to increase their access to books, especially at home. Two out of three children living in poverty have no books to call their own (**Source: LittleFreeLibrary.org**). In order to bring additional opportunities for reading to residents, it is recommended that a free library program be integrated at key locations within the neighborhood.

Action Steps

- 1. Build Interest and Find Partners:** Find community members who want to strengthen the neighborhood and improve access to books by creating and maintaining their own small libraries in front of houses or in neighborhood parks. Find partners willing to help donate building supplies or books, and/or help with a group build day.
- 2. Organize a Group Build Day:** There are several library kits available in The Insider's Guide to Starting a Little Free Library's online store that come with step-by-step instructions and can be assembled in as little as two hours.
- 3. Announce Your Library through Local and Social Media:** Promote the finished libraries on social media and in neighborhood newsletters to encourage community members to use them.

Lead Partner

Smith Hill CDC: To identify potential locations within the Smith Hill neighborhood, and organize potential partners for implementation.

Potential Partners

- Providence Community Library
- City of Providence Department of Art, Culture + Tourism
- Providence Public School Department

Potential Resources

- Rhode Island Foundation Library Challenge Grant
- Rhode Island Foundation Community Grant



8. Establish a Smith Hill Merchants Association

Description

Connecting and organizing the local business community will help existing businesses grow locally, improve marketing strategies, expand into new markets, and remain competitive in an increasingly complex and evolving marketplace. The merchants association might also work with entrepreneurs and start-ups to assist them in creating and running a successful business in the neighborhood. A Merchants Association could help business owners overcome challenges they are unable to address on their own. Working in partnership with local business owners, the association could help achieve a business climate that fosters entrepreneurship, produces opportunities for living-wage jobs, advocates for flexible regulations, and supports restaurants, shops and services that enhance the lives of residents.

Action Steps

The steps to creating a strategic plan for the establishment of a business or merchants association, as recommended by the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), include:

- 1. Research existing merchants associations:** Several successful merchants associations currently operate within the City of Providence. These include the Wayland Square Merchants Association, the Hope Street Merchants Association, the Thayer Street District Management Authority, and the Wickenden Area Merchants Association.
- 2. Hold a business owners roundtable:** The Plan recommends holding a business owner roundtable to offer local business owners an opportunity to discuss the challenges they face and discover new ways to grow.
- 3. Define the target audience:** It is important to determine whether the merchants association should represent every type, size and form of business in Smith Hill, or represent a specific segment of the local business community. Defining this audience will help focus recruitment efforts and establish a clear purpose within the business community.
- 4. Identify membership needs:** Business owners will join the association if they recognize a tangible benefit to their businesses.
- 5. Determine costs and revenue sources:** Once a program of services is developed, it is important to understand what it will take to deliver those services in a professional and reliable manner. Through this process, sources of revenue can also be identified.
- 6. Identify Opportunities:** The Plan recommends the utilization of multiple sources of data to identify gaps in the business community, including feedback from the business owners roundtable, market feasibility studies and neighborhood surveys.
- 7. Business Improvement District:** Consider establishing the merchants association as a business improvement district for greater management and maintenance of Smith Street.

Lead Partners

- **Smith Hill CDC:** to convene existing businesses for discussions relating to organizing and forming a merchants association.

Potential Partners

- RI Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Rhode Island Black Business Association
- City of Providence Office of Economic Opportunity
- Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce
- U.S. Small Business Administration

Potential Resources

- **Rhode Island Foundation Organizational Development Grant**
- **Rhode Island Foundation Community Grant**
- **Rhode Island Foundation Responsive Grant**
- **Rhode Island Foundation Juanita Sánchez Community Fund Grant:**



9. Improve Smith Hill Library as a Community Learning Anchor and Include Additional Educational Programming for Youth and Adults

Description

The Smith Hill Library is an important neighborhood center, offering meeting space and classes relating to language development and school readiness. It is recommended that the Library continue to be leveraged as a more robust learning hub, through agreements with local colleges and other partners. In particular, residents have identified the need for additional programming focused on adult learning.

Action Steps

1. Assess existing programs and how they meet the needs of the community.

2. Evaluate the gaps in programming and begin to identify partners that would be willing to provide additional services.
3. Work with the Providence Community Library to potentially extend open hours for the Smith Hill Library. If Library hours are unable to be extended, develop a method for the lower portion of the Library to be accessible and available to community groups and organizations on an appointment basis.
4. Continue to recruit local volunteers to help provide additional programming, fundraising and library assistance efforts.
5. In order to provide long-term space for additional programs, the Plan recommends that the Smith Hill Library evaluate their spatial needs and examine their potential for physical expansion. Potential expansion areas could include the grassy lawns on the northeast corner of the site.

Lead Partners

- **Providence Community Library:** to evaluate their overall needs and capacity and to continue to advocate for additional resources for programs and physical improvements.

Potential Partners

- Providence Public Schools
- University and College Partners

Potential Resources

- **State Grant-in-Aid**
- **City of Providence Neighborhood Improvement Funds (NIF)**
- **Rhode Island Foundation Library Challenge Grant**
- **Rhode Island Foundation Providence Journal Charitable Legacy Fund Grant**
- **Starbucks Foundation Grants**



10. Improve the Schoolyard at Harry Kizirian Elementary

Description

The mission of Harry Kizirian Elementary is to strive to educate students and to assist them in realizing their full potential as responsible, productive, contributing members of society by providing an educational environment in which students are challenged, excellence is expected and differences are valued. In support of this mission, the Plan recommends improving the hardscape schoolyard to support a variety of new activities through the establishment of an outdoor classroom along with redesigned spaces to accommodate basketball and other games. Improved landscaping and a redesign of the fence between the swimming pool and the schoolyard will help to create a more pleasing environment as well as a stronger connection between the school, Rogers Recreation Center, and Father Lennon Park.

Action Steps

1. Secure funding for a design team.
2. Hire a design team to create a plan for the schoolyard area. Utilize the Green Schoolyards Design Guide, developed through the City's Parks and Healthy Communities Departments, as a tool for improvement. The Design Guide includes prototypical site plans for small, medium and large-scale schoolyards, as well as design details and cost estimates for materials, landscape, play equipment, shade structures, educational elements, and garden features.
3. Secure funding for construction of the schoolyard improvements.

Lead Partners

- **Providence Public Schools:** to initiate a conceptual design for the schoolyard and to organize parents who may be interested in leading fundraising efforts.

Potential Partners

- Harry Kizirian Elementary Staff
- Harry Kizirian Elementary PTO
- Rhode Island Department of Education
- Providence Parks Department
- Youth in Action
- Groundwork Rhode Island
- Providence Healthy Communities Department.

Potential Resources

- **City of Providence Neighborhood Improvement Funds (NIF)**
- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**
- **Rhode Island Foundation Arts in Academics Grant**
- **Rhode Island Foundation Community Grant**
- **Rhode Island Foundation Providence Journal Charitable Legacy Fund Grant**

MEDIUM PRIORITY PROJECTS





11. Conduct a Neighborhood Lighting Study and Consider a Neighborhood Porch Lighting Program

Description

Residents have identified inadequate lighting as a primary concern. The City and its partners should conduct a lighting study to identify areas with inadequate or broken street lights and areas where overgrown trees or landscaping block lights. This inventory could be done with high school and college students working in teams to record data.

A porch lighting program is also recommended to improve neighborhood lighting. This Program would assist residents in installing and maintaining low-energy, high-output lights that come on automatically at dusk and turn off at dawn. This project would also allow neighborhood partners to engage in community-building by meeting residents and providing

opportunities for neighbors to engage with one another at social events designed to promote the program.

Action Steps

Recommended steps for implementation of a neighborhood lighting program include:

1. Identify the Overall Project Goal:
2. Identify Project Funding:
3. Conduct a Night Time Survey and Identify Locations for New or Improved Lights
4. Install new or improved lights within the planning area.
5. Ensure maintenance of new or improved lights within the neighborhood.

Recommended steps for implementation of a porch lighting program include:

1. Create a committee to help lead effort.
2. Identify local sponsors or donations for LED light bulbs.
3. Promote the program through local media, schools and neighborhood flyers.
4. Develop a neighborhood pledge to keep porch lights lit that can be signed by local residents.
5. Organize a series of social events and canvassing days where each Smith Hill home would receive a free LED light bulb to install on the front porch as long as the resident agrees to leave the light on throughout the night.

6. Track the success of the program through quarterly porch lighting surveys.

Lead Partner:

City of Providence Department of Planning and Development: Organize local students to help conduct neighborhood lighting assessment.

Potential Partners:

- City of Providence Department of Public Property
- RIDOT
- City of Providence Office of Sustainability
- City of Providence Forestry Division
- SHARP
- SHPI

Potential Resources

- **Street Light Incentives**
- **Rhode Island Foundation Responsive Grant**



12. Redesign and Connect Russell J Boyle Plaza and Joseph P Hassett Sr Memorial Park for Higher Utilization

Description

Boyle Plaza and Hassett Memorial Park are adjacent to one another, separated by Orms Street and six-foot high fencing. Redesigning these two public spaces, along with the Orms Street sidewalk and roadway, would create a stronger connection between these existing community assets, improving neighborhood access, activity, and safety. This public investment would also encourage mixed-use development on vacant or underutilized sites nearby. Elements of this redesign could include traffic calming on Orms Street, new ornamental fencing, public seating, improved play equipment or a splash pad, landscaping and trees, signage, lighting, art installations, and areas for performances, temporary markets and food trucks.

Action Steps

1. Work with a landscape architect to develop a concept plan for both the Park and Plaza that align with the community's vision for the Smith / Orms focus area.
2. Evaluate various traffic calming features on Orms Street, including curb extensions, painted crosswalks and other elements designed to slow vehicles and create a safer pedestrian connection between the two spaces.
3. Work with the community to gather feedback on conceptual plans for the Park and Plaza, and to ensure broad public support and buy-in.
4. Once funding is available, consider utilizing volunteers when possible to help improve both public spaces.
5. Activate spaces with programmed events, activities and installations.

Lead Partner:

City of Providence Department of Planning and Development: Identify or procure a landscape architect for initial design concept drawings.

Potential Partners

- City of Providence Parks Department
- City of Providence Department of Art, Culture, and Tourism
- Our Streets Providence
- RIDOT
- City of Providence DPW

Potential Resources

- **City of Providence Neighborhood Improvement Funds (NIF)**
- **Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) Outdoor Recreation Grants**
- **Rhode Island Foundation Community Grant**
- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**



13. Work with Property Owners to Make the ALDI's Commercial Area More Attractive

Description

The Aldi's commercial area at Smith and Ruggles Streets is currently unwelcoming, with low visibility. This Focus Area should be improved by working with local property owners to implement the following changes:

- Planting street trees and new landscaping,
- Creating public art and landscaped "green walls" along blank facades on Smith Street,
- Expanding neighborhood retail offerings by creating new infill buildings with a pharmacy or bank, and
- Installing more visible and attractive signage along the Smith Street side of the building.

Action Steps

- Meet with the shopping center property owner and surrounding commercial property owners on Smith Street to discuss beautification and revitalization efforts.
- Coordinate private beautification efforts with public streetscape investments in the area.
- Once established, utilize the Smith Street Merchants Association to identify and fundraise additional resources for local beautification and revitalization efforts.

Lead Partner:

City of Providence Department of Planning and Development: Connect with local property owners to share the Revitalization Plan and initiate dialogue relating to potential local improvements.

Potential Partners

- Property Owners
- City of Providence Department of Art, Culture + Tourism

Potential Resources

- **City of Providence Neighborhood Improvement Funds (NIF)**
- **The Main Street Rhode Island Streetscape Improvement Fund**
- **Rhode Island Foundation Community Grant**

- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**
- **United Plant Savers Community Planting Grant**



14. Encourage Greater Utilization of the Selim Madelin Rogers Recreation Center, including a Police Basketball League for Youth

Description

Rogers Recreation Center provides residents with easy access to recreational activities and educational programs, and acts as a social gathering place. Current programs include athletics and fitness, a homework and reading club, an art club, mentoring programs, a bowling league, and a movie club. In order to increase community health, nutrition and fitness, it is recommended that an expanded athletic program is created, centered on the Rogers Recreation Center. This program could include increased athletic coordinator staff hours to enable

the center to incorporate new sports and activities as well as potentially creating a Police Basketball League for local youth. In the long-term, the community has expressed a desire to expand Rogers Recreation Center to host additional programs.

Action Steps

1. Meet with the City Recreation Department to assess current programs and needs related to the Rogers Recreation Center.
2. Evaluate the gaps in programming and begin to identify partners that would be willing to provide additional services.
3. Work with the Recreation Department to potentially extend open hours for the Rogers Recreation Center.
4. Continue to recruit local volunteers to help provide additional programming, fundraising and Recreation Center assistance efforts.
5. In order to provide long-term space for additional programs, the Plan recommends that the Rogers Recreation Center evaluate their spatial needs and examine potential for physical expansion. Potential expansion areas could include the grassy lawns west or north of the existing building.

Lead Partner:

- **City of Providence Recreation Department:** Organize Rogers Recreation Center staff and local residents to begin brainstorming potential improvements.

Potential Partners

- City of Providence Community Relations Office
- City of Providence Police Department
- Providence Public Schools

Potential Resources

- **City of Providence Neighborhood Improvement Funds (NIF)**
- **Rhode Island Foundation Responsive Grant**
- **Rhode Island Foundation Juanita Sánchez Community Fund Grant**



15. Encourage Local College Students to Volunteer as Local Tutors

Description

In conjunction with local colleges, universities, and public schools, the neighborhood should establish a more robust youth mentorship program that connects college students with youth in the community. This program could provide mentees with a positive role model and demonstrate the benefits of academic success and staying involved in the community. The program can build off of programs currently available on Saturdays at the Selim Madelin Rogers Recreation Center relating to athletic and educational experiences and positive guidance related to sports and recreation.

Action Steps

Recommended steps to initiate a program in Smith Hill, as outlined by youth.gov, include:

- 1. Assessing Needs and Resources:** By identifying what needs and resources are available in Smith Hill, it will help to determine if there are existing programs with a similar mission or potential partners for collaboration. Key stakeholders should be identified to help generate buy-in.
- 2. Designing the Parameters:** Define the youth population that will be served with consideration of age, gender, mentoring need, and common characteristics. Identify who to recruit as mentors, and determine the type and focus of mentoring relationships which are needed. Create a schedule and location for mentoring sessions and determine their length and desired outcomes to be evaluated.
- 3. Management:** Identify a management team, establish management policies and procedures, develop and implement ongoing training, and develop a financial plan. The mentoring program should be continuously evaluated and adjusted as needed.

+ Adapted from “Starting a Program,” youth.gov (youth.gov/youth-topics/mentoring/considerations-starting-mentoring-program)

Lead Partner

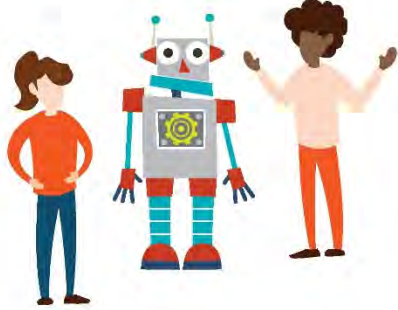
Providence Public Schools: Assess local needs and resources, and to connect with potential University and College partners.

Potential Partners

- University and College Partners

Potential Resources

- Rhode Island Foundation Community Grant
- Rhode Island Foundation Responsive Grant
- Rhode Island Foundation Providence Journal Charitable Legacy Fund Grant
- Rhode Island Foundation Juanita Sánchez Community Fund Grant



16. Establish a Neighborhood STEAM and Robotics Club

Description

STEAM Education is an approach to learning that uses Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics as access points for guiding student inquiry, dialogue, and critical thinking. Local partners should establish a STEAM and Robotics after-school program hosted at Rogers Recreation Center, Smith Hill Library, or Kizirian Elementary School. Participating students could rotate through educational modules designed to teach them how to solve problems, design systems, and live a more sustainable lifestyle.

Action Steps

1. **Outline Topics:** Define an outline for elements to cover in the club. Topics could include robotics, engineering, electricity, architecture, problem-solving, and sustainable energy.

2. **Sign Ups:** Work on getting local students signed up for the club. Coordinate with local schools to spread the word and pass out sign-up forms.
3. **Time and Location:** Identify a time and location for club meetings.

+ Adapted from “Starting a STEAM Club,” Mr. Mault’s Marketplace (www.edtech101.org/starting-a-steam-club/)

Lead Partner

Steambox RI: STEAM Box is a youth-led nonprofit designed to allow students to explore their passions through science, technology, engineering, art and math projects.

Potential Partners

- AS220
- Providence Public Libraries
- Steel Yard

Potential Resources

- **American Honda Foundation STEM Grant**
- **21st Century Community Learning Centers**
- **Education Technology State Grant**
- **GEAR Up**
- **Rhode Island Foundation Responsive Grant**

- **Rhode Island Foundation Providence Journal Charitable Legacy Fund Grant**
- **Rhode Island Foundation Juanita Sánchez Community Fund Grant**

A photograph of a city street with a dark blue semi-transparent overlay in the upper right quadrant. The overlay contains the text 'LOWER PRIORITY PROJECTS' in white, bold, sans-serif font. The background shows a street with buildings, trees, and a cloudy sky. The street has a white center line and double yellow lines on the left side. There are several cars on the road, and utility poles with wires are visible. The buildings are a mix of brick and siding. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds.

LOWER PRIORITY PROJECTS



17. Create a Smith Hill Restaurant Guide and Food Tour

Description

Promoting local restaurants to the broader public is a goal of the community. This project would establish a map, directory, and guide to the neighborhood's unique offerings. The guide could be distributed to State workers, local students, and Downtown hotels to encourage residents outside of Smith Hill and visitors to Providence to visit the neighborhood.

Action Steps

1. Utilizing the Smith Hill CDC's guide to Smith Hill, create a map of all existing restaurants and food-related businesses in the neighborhood. Note whether the restaurant offers delivery, take-out, and/or online ordering.
2. As new restaurants open, modify the guide to keep it up to date.
3. Encourage local restaurants to have booths at the Taste of Smith Hill Festival.
4. Roll out the guide at the Taste of Smith Hill Festival, and distribute to festival attendees.
5. Organize a walking tour to stop at participating restaurants for a small sample of their cuisine.

Lead Partner:

SHARP: The goal of SHARP is to focus on solving problems that impact the Smith Hill community and implement solutions by aligning resources as a committed and powerful workforce.

Potential Partners:

- SHPI
- Rhode Tour

Potential Resources

- Rhode Island Foundation Media Project Grant
- Rhode Island Foundation Community Grant



18. Widen Sidewalks to Encourage Outdoor Dining

Description

Outdoor dining areas could help existing local businesses and increase the vitality of Smith Street. Where possible, outdoor seating should be located to the front of restaurants; however, in places that are heavily constrained, outdoor dining could be encouraged along side streets, within a portion of adjacent parking lots, or through the strategic transition of on-street parking spaces into seating areas through widened sidewalks or temporary parklets.

Action Steps

1. Examine the areas around each existing restaurant on Smith Street, evaluate potential opportunities for outdoor dining within the property, or on the public right of way.
2. Encourage restaurant owners to consider adding outdoor dining to their establishments, as long as it meets City regulations.
3. Where no space is available, consider converting one or more on-street parking spaces into seating areas, as long as it will not negatively impact local businesses.

Lead Partner:

City of Providence Department of Planning and Development: Organize local restaurant owners to evaluate the benefits of increased outdoor seating capacity.

Potential Partners

- Restaurant Owners
- Office of Economic Opportunity

Potential Resources

- **The Main Street Rhode Island Streetscape Improvement Fund**
- **City of Providence Neighborhood Improvement Funds (NIF)**
- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**



19. Encourage Hotels, Inns, and other Lodging

Description

At present, there is one bed and breakfast in the Smith Hill neighborhood, the historic Christopher Dodge House on West Park Street just south of Smith Street. This property is within walking distance of the State House and caters to business visitors here and elsewhere in the City with rooms ranging from \$120 to \$150 a night. Additionally, there are currently 52 short-term rentals listed on Airbnb, ranging in price from around \$30 to \$104 per night. Because of its proximity to Downtown and the State House, as well as the City's colleges and universities, there is potentially unmet demand for additional lodging and short-term accommodations within Smith Hill. Hotel, inn, and lodging development could help strengthen the customer base for Smith Hill businesses. Currently, the majority of properties along Smith Street are designated

as C-1 or C-2 Commercial Districts, which permit hotel use. Larger scale hospitality development in blocks off of Smith Street would likely require zoning changes. The Plan recommends evaluating areas on the eastern side of the neighborhood, in close proximity to Interstate 95, for potential amendments. These areas are currently designated R-4 and R-3, which do not currently permit hotel use. Rezoning portions of these areas to C-1 or C-2, could stimulate hotel development on vacant or underutilized properties within close proximity to Downtown Providence and the State House.

Action Steps

1. Begin by focusing on expanding bed and breakfast and Airbnb offerings within the neighborhood as long as they conform with existing regulation.
2. Evaluate permitted uses under existing zoning designations and modify if necessary to encourage new lodging uses on Smith Street.

Lead Partner:

City of Providence Department of Planning and Development: Evaluate existing regulations in order to potentially promote additional hospitality uses in the community.

Potential Partners

- Providence / Warwick Convention and Visitors Bureau
- RI Commerce Corporation

Potential Resources

- **Small Business Administration (SBA) Loans**
- **SBA Microloan**



20. Establish an International Restaurant Incubator including Food Industry Training and Food Production Program for Nearby Anchor Institutions

Description

In order to grow the local food industry while connecting residents to new opportunities, an international restaurant incubator should be pursued as part of a new development or as a use for an existing building in Smith Hill. The incubator can celebrate culinary-cultural exchange, spur cultural economic development, and support immigrant communities. The incubator could include a restaurant space, culinary entrepreneurship programs, cooking and food-handling classes, and space for local food festivals.

Action Steps

- 1. Establish a Leadership Structure:** This effort would effectively be the initial undertaking to get the idea of the ground. It focuses on creating a champion and advocate for the Restaurant Incubator and all of the tasks needed to implement the project.
- 2. Feasibility Study:** Advance the overall effort with an in-depth phase one feasibility study. This work could be supported by efforts such as the Local Food, Local Places Technical Assistance Program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agricultural in partnership with the U.S. EPA, the Centers for Disease Control and other partnering agencies.
- 3. Pursue funding sources for Phase I capital project:** This step may consist of establishing base occupancy in a vacant building in Smith Hill with street visibility. It would likely require, at minimum, a community-shared commercial kitchen, flex processing, production, packaging, shipping, and a trade area.

Lead Partner:

Social Enterprise Greenhouse: Social Enterprise Greenhouse creates positive social and economic impact by providing social entrepreneurs and enterprises with the tools and networks they need to thrive. We also foster an ecosystem of diverse stakeholders who work to enable a more just, equitable and resilient economy.

Potential Partners

- Global Shapers Providence
- Johnson and Wales University
- Farm Fresh RI

Potential Resources

- **U.S. HHS Administration for Children and Families (OCS) Community Economic Development Grant**
- **USDA Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) and Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP)**
- **USDA Community Food Program.**
- **Local Food, Local Places**
- **Rhode Island Foundation Community Grant**
- **Rhode Island Foundation Providence Journal Charitable Legacy Fund Grant**



21. Establish and Sustain an Online Neighborhood Social Media Presence and Neighborhood Newsletter

Improving neighborhood communications is a core goal of residents. As Smith Hill continues to host community gatherings and events to cultivate a more connected neighborhood feel, a community newsletter can help ensure all residents are aware of the exciting things going on and promote goods and services available in the community. A quarterly community newsletter, developed by SHARP, in conjunction with Providence College, could provide times and dates of upcoming events, while providing community members with an easy way to keep track of all the things they could participate in. This Plan also recommends creating a community website and greater social media presence to reach a broader

neighborhood audience. An active social media presence and utilization of web platforms such as www.nextdoor.com can include relevant content posted regularly, help keep residents engaged, assist with crime prevention and police assistance, communicate emergency alerts, promote community activities and volunteerism, and promote neighborhood meetings to educate citizens on governmental matters.

Action Steps

Recommended steps for developing a newsletter, as adapted from the **Yes We Can! Neighborhood Newsletter How-to Guide**

1. Determine the Roles
2. Define the Purpose
3. Identify the Audience
4. Develop a Publishing Schedule
5. Select Content
6. Writing and Editing
7. Design
8. Printing
9. Distribution
10. Gather feedback:
11. Regularly update the "Know Your Neighborhood" booklet as part of the newsletter initiative

+ Adapted from "How to Create a Neighborhood Newsletter," Yes we can! (www.grassrootsgrantmakers.org/wp-content/uploads/Create_a_Nhood_Newsletter.pdf)

Lead Partner

SHARP: Work with Providence College students to organize a sustainable newsletter program for Smith Hill.

Potential Partners

- SHPI
- Providence College
- Smith Hill CDC

Potential Resources

- Rhode Island Foundation Media Project Grant
- Rhode Island Foundation Community Grant

priority projects



High Priority Projects

- 1 Hold a Taste of Smith Hill Festival (**Early Action Project**)
- 2 Improve Vacant Properties with Pocket Parks, Plazas, and Community Gardens
- 3 Implement Public Art and Signage Improvements
- 4 Implement Changes to Improve Safety for all Road Users as Identified in the City's Great Streets Master Plan
- 5 Encourage Mixed-Income Housing Development on Key Sites
- 6 Create a Business Façade Improvement Program
- 7 Install Little Free Libraries Throughout the Neighborhood to Encourage Reading
- 8 Establish a Smith Hill Merchants Association
- 9 Improve Smith Hill Library as a Community Learning Anchor and Include Additional Educational Programming for Youth and Adults
- 10 Improve the Schoolyard at Harry Kizirian Elementary

Medium Priority Projects

- 11 Conduct a Neighborhood Lighting Study and Consider a Neighborhood Porch Lighting Program
- 12 Redesign and Connect Russell J Boyle Plaza and Joseph P Hassett Sr Memorial Park for Higher Utilization
- 13 Work with Property Owners to make the Aldi's Commercial Area More Attractive
- 14 Encourage Greater Utilization of Rogers Recreation Center, including a Police Basketball League for Youth
- 15 Encourage Local College Students to Volunteer as Local Tutors
- 16 Establish a Neighborhood STEAM and Robotics Club

Lower Priority Projects

- 17 Create a Smith Hill Restaurant Guide and Food Tour
- 18 Widen Sidewalks to Encourage Outdoor Dining
- 19 Encourage Hotels, Inns, and other Lodging
- 20 Establish an International Restaurant Incubator including Food Industry Training and Food Production Program for Nearby Anchor Institutions
- 21 Establish and Sustain an Online Neighborhood Social Media Presence and Neighborhood Newsletter

next steps

- *Draft Plan available – comments due by Monday, May, 18th*
- *Final Plan – complete by Monday, June 1st*
- *Continuing collaboration and implementation*

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Smith Street Revitalization Plan



Community Meeting 3

Wednesday, May 13

camiros



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