



PROVIDENCE TOMORROW

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WASHINGTON PARK AND SOUTH ELMWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

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August 2009

Introduction

On May 31, 2006, Mayor David N. Cicilline and the City Council announced the creation of Providence Tomorrow – an innovative planning process designed to provide a framework for the growth and preservation of Providence neighborhoods. Since then, the City Council has adopted a new Comprehensive Plan and the Department of Planning and Development has undertaken detailed planning studies for each of the city's neighborhoods. In March 2007, the first neighborhood "charrette", or detailed planning process, was held in the Washington Park and South Elmwood neighborhoods. This plan is a summary of the information that was collected from residents, business owners and neighborhood youth over the course of an intensive week of public meetings.

This plan summarizes neighborhood history and demographics, illustrates existing neighborhood character through building typologies, and identifies key issues and neighborhood priorities. The most important part of this report is the Action Plan, which identifies short-, mid- and long-term goals for the neighborhoods and the parties that will lead each effort. The Action Plan identifies not only City-led actions, but those projects that can be initiated by groups of residents working together. This report will be used to guide the review of development projects in the Washington Park and South Elmwood neighborhoods by City boards and commissions, and will help prioritize funding for projects and infrastructure improvements, as well as provide a guide for redevelopment efforts.





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Providence Tomorrow Neighborhood Charrettes



Providence has 25 distinct neighborhoods, each with unique character and identity. While neighborhoods share many features, each has its own set of planning issues and concerns. An important part of Providence Tomorrow is the in-depth, detailed planning studies that are conducted at the neighborhood level. The neighborhoods have been grouped together so that there will be ten neighborhood charrettes, or planning studies, conducted from 2007 to 2009.

Washington Park and South Elmwood Charrette



The Washington Park and South Elmwood Neighborhood Charrette was held March 22-28, 2007. Most sessions were held at the Washington Park Community Center. An additional session was conducted with the fifth grade class at the Feinstein Elementary School at Broad Street. Approximately 100 people participated in the charrette, voicing their opinions on how to activate public spaces in the neighborhoods, where they would like to see commercial and industrial growth in the future, and how to protect the existing character of their neighborhood, among other issues. The planning team collected all of the information from the week and drafted an action plan that was presented at a follow-up meeting in May, 2007. After further comment and review, this neighborhood plan was developed.

What is a Charrette?

The term “charrette” originated at Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, the world’s top architectural school in the 19th century, and is derived from a French word meaning “little cart.” Carts were circulated to collect final plans. Students would jump on the cart, polishing their drawings up to the last minute.



Today the word “charrette” describes a process of dynamic, interactive community planning. Its goal is to bring all the stakeholders - and all the issues - into one room. This process can be applied to different projects, but always uses the same basic strategy. A team consisting of citizens, elected officials, planners, architects, developers, business owners, city officials, and other stakeholders works to root out potential problems, identify and debate solutions, and create a plan in a set amount of time. Meeting both day and night for several days, participants work together in both large and small groups through a series of brainstorming sessions, sketching workshops and other exercises.

The Benefits of Charrettes in Planning

Charrettes provide a framework for creating a shared vision shaped by community involvement, directed by consultants representing all key disciplines.

Charrettes provide an opportunity to improve and expand the relationships between residents and their government through meaningful public involvement and education.

Charrettes help a community to develop a shared vision of its future by allowing for increased opportunities for residents to make positive contributions to the planning process.

Charrettes help to create better plans by gaining more diverse input and involvement and help increase the likelihood that plans will be realized.





Charrette Schedule		
Thursday March 22, 2007		
Kickoff/Open House		6:00PM to 8:00PM
Saturday March 24, 2007		
Visioning		8:30AM to 12:00 PM
Visioning		1:00PM to 4:30PM
Monday March 26, 2007		
Elected Officials Forum		6:00PM to 7:30PM
Neighborhood Plan Progress		7:30PM to 9:00PM
Tuesday March 27, 2007		
Public Work Session		6:30PM to 9:00PM
Wednesday March 28, 2007		
Wrap up party and plan presentation!		6:00 to 8:00PM



Neighborhood Overview

The History - Neighborhood Backgrounds

Washington Park

Washington Park is located in the southeastern quadrant of Providence, bounded by the waterfront on the east, the city of Cranston on the south, and Interstate 95 on the west and north. The major transportation arteries run north-south and include Broad and Eddy streets. These thoroughfares are commercial corridors, intersecting in the center of Washington Park near the Feinstein Elementary School at Broad Street and the entrance to Roger Williams Park. Allens Avenue, which becomes Narragansett Boulevard, is also a major neighborhood artery. Most of the side streets between Broad Street and Narragansett Boulevard are residential.

The heart of the residential neighborhood is located between the Port of Providence on the east and Roger Williams Park, the largest urban park in the State of Rhode Island, on the west. Most of the houses are single- or two-family dwellings built between 1890 and 1930 and are architecturally consistent. During World Wars I and II, the increase in war-related industries at nearby Fields Point contributed to the demand for housing. A smaller percentage of houses was built after 1940 on infill lots in the neighborhood in response to rising housing demands. Additionally, many single-family houses were divided into multiple unit buildings as a result of the changing economic climate in the neighborhood. In the 1960s, Washington Park became home to many families of Irish heritage who abandoned South Providence after Interstate 95 was built. A significant Portuguese population has remained strong over the years in the area of Narragansett Boulevard.

It is interesting to note that many streets in Washington Park were named for states: New York, Alabama, Vermont, Ohio, Michigan, California, Washington, and Massachusetts avenues run through Washington Park.

The Fields Point area, once distinguished by coves, rolling hills and shady groves, was the city's premier park destination and remained attractive for recreation and outings for years. When Roger Williams Park was laid out in the 1870s it became the major park destination for the City. However, the popularity of Fields Point endured due to a famed shore dinner hall, Colonel Atwell's Clam House, the Washington Park Yacht Club and Kerwin's Beach. During World War II, the beach was overtaken by the Walsh-Kaiser Shipyard, which employed 21,264 people at its peak, constructing huge Liberty Ships to aid the war effort. After the war, Fields Point became home to a garbage landfill.

The current site of Save the Bay's headquarters, at the tip of Fields Point, was once Sunshine Island, originally known as Starve Goat Island. A children's hospital was located there until it was destroyed in the 1938 Hurricane. The island was later physically connected to the mainland by the growing landfill. Some recreation uses existed until the late 1960s, at various times including a bar, marina, swim club, amusement park, bowling alley, drive-in, and skating rink. In 1973 Johnson & Wales acquired some vacant industrial buildings in the area for its culinary program; this was the beginning of the current Harborside Campus. In 2001 Save the Bay leased land from Johnson & Wales which, after remediation, became the site of its current headquarters.





Washington Park and South Elmwood History Timeline

1754 - The City of Cranston is sectioned off and established, and includes South Elmwood and parts of Elmwood, South Providence and Washington Park.

1773 - Nathaniel Williams, Roger Williams' great grandson, builds a small cottage for his son, James, on the family land just east of present day Elmwood Avenue.

1812 - Edward Babcock buys a large farm running east from Broad Street to the waterfront area neighboring the Williams family land.

1848 - Washington Park is annexed back to the City of Providence. The area is still mostly undeveloped.

1850s - A cluster of slaughterhouses is built in South Elmwood.

1870s - Providence experiences an economic boom along with the rest of the nation. Real estate speculation increases the price of suburban land to record levels.

1871 - The Williams' farms are given to the city to be used as a park.

1873 - The Panic of 1873 puts to a halt further speculation, and real estate prices drop.

South Elmwood

South Elmwood is a small, middle-class residential neighborhood composed primarily of owner-occupied, single-family, two-story houses. Located at the southernmost tip of Providence and consisting of only a few blocks surrounding Roger Williams Park, it is bounded by the Cranston city line on the west and south, and Interstate 95 on the north. Roger Williams Park is the centerpiece of South Elmwood and consumes the majority of the neighborhood's land area. The park, which consists of 432 acres, including 140 acres of water, was bequeathed to the city by Betsey Williams in 1871, after the area was annexed to Providence. The neighborhood's major transportation artery is Elmwood Avenue, which also serves as the sole commercial corridor for the neighborhood.

South Elmwood's transformation from a rural village to an urban neighborhood was a gradual one. The area did not see much development until the twentieth century and, even then, aside from a school house situated in the middle of the neighborhood, development during the early stages consisted largely of scattered residential dwellings.

Both Washington Park and South Elmwood have experienced minimal residential infill development in recent years, due in part to the uniformity and small size of lots, as well as dense development patterns. The most significant growth in the area has occurred within the Johnson & Wales University Harborside Campus, which expanded considerably with the opening of the Harborside Village housing complex in 2006.



1875 - Horsecar lines run along Eddy Street, Thurburn Avenue and Broad Street.

1879 - Horsecar lines are extended to the village of Pawtucket on the Warwick and Cranston border.

1890 - Only a few dozen houses are scattered throughout the neighborhoods.

1895 - The horsecar line is extended along both New York Avenue and Narragansett Boulevard.

1918 - Most of Washington Park south of New York Avenue is built.

1928 - The tracts north of New York Avenue are developed, as well as the small area east of Narragansett Boulevard on Carolina and Georgia avenues.

1940s - World War II spurs war-related industry at nearby Fields Point, further contributing to the demand for housing.

1960's - There is a large influx of Irish families from South Providence after Route 95 is built.

1973 - Johnson & Wales acquires property at Fields Point for its culinary program, marking the beginning of what is now the Harborside Campus

2001 - Save the Bay leases property from J&W for its headquarters at Fields Point.

The People - Neighborhood Demographics

Washington Park

According to the 2000 Census, 7,802 people lived in Washington Park, a six percent decrease from 1990. Washington Park, like South Elmwood, is one of the city's most diverse neighborhoods. About 20 percent of residents are Black or African American, 30 percent are Hispanic, and almost five percent are Asian. About a third of all residents are foreign born and about half speak a language other than English at home. In 2000, 56 percent of Washington Park adults age 25 or older were high school graduates and almost a fifth (17.3 percent) had a college degree. The unemployment rate in 2000 among Washington Park residents was 12 percent, about three percentage points higher than the citywide rate of 9.3 percent.

The median family income in Washington Park in 1999 was \$35,550, 9.8 percent higher than the citywide median of \$32,058. The percentage of people (19 percent) and families (17 percent) living below the poverty level in 2000 was slightly higher than the poverty rate reported in 1990, as was the percentage of children living in poverty (25.4 percent), while the elderly poverty rate (17 percent) declined slightly.

Housing in Washington Park has been stable over the past three decades, with about half of all homes being owner-occupied (53.1 percent) and half occupied by renters (46.9 percent) in 2000. Forty percent of homes are single-family, half are two- to four-family homes, and less than five percent of the homes are located in buildings with five or more units. Eighty percent of the homes in Washington Park are over 40 years old.

The median residential sales price in Washington Park in 2004 was \$193,500, 12 percent below the citywide median value. The median rent in Washington Park was six percent higher than the citywide median. According to the 2000 census, about a third (32 percent) of Washington Park residents had moved into their home within the previous five years and approximately 40 percent of residents had lived in their home for more than 10 years.

South Elmwood

According to the 2000 census, 2,184 people lived in South Elmwood, an increase of 8.3 percent from 1990. Between 1990 and 2000, the nonwhite population in South Elmwood increased to represent 61 percent of all residents. In 2000, 32.9 percent of South Elmwood residents were Hispanic (more than tripling from 1990); 7.6 percent were Asian; 18.2 percent were Black or African American; and 1.6 percent were Native American. In 2000, 75 percent of residents age 25 or older were high school graduates. The unemployment rate in South Elmwood in 2000 was five percent, almost half the citywide rate of 9.2 percent and a 57 percent decrease from 1990.

The median family income in South Elmwood in 1999 was \$42,896, 25 percent higher than the citywide median family income. The incidence of poverty in South Elmwood doubled between 1990 and 2000. In 1990, 7.2 percent of people lived below the poverty line, versus 16 percent in 2000. In 2000, 15 percent of families were living below the poverty line, 22 percent of children were poor, and 12 percent of elderly residents were living in poverty, whereas in 1990 there were no elderly with incomes below the poverty level.

The number of homes in South Elmwood increased 15 percent between 1990 and 2000. The percentage of homes that were owner-occupied decreased from 57 to 46.5 percent during this same period. Almost half of all homes in South Elmwood were single-family homes (46 percent) and 42 percent were two- to four- family homes. Seventy-five percent of the homes in South Elmwood were more than 40 years old. The median residential sales price in South Elmwood in 2000 was \$189,250, 14 percent lower than the citywide median. The median rent in South Elmwood was 1.6 percent higher than the citywide median rent.

Neighborhood Statistics	Washington Park	South Elmwood	Citywide
Size (Square Miles)	1.73	0.95	18.2
Population			
Households	2,174	828	62,389
Individuals	7,802	2,184	173,618
Percent Under 18	29.40%	27.40%	26.10%
Diversity			
Percent White	41.80%	48.10%	54.50%
Percent Black or African American	22.10%	18.20%	14.50%
Percent Non-Hispanic White	34.70%	38.90%	45.80%
Percent Hispanic	30%	32.90%	30.00%
Percent Asian or Pacific Islander	4.70%	7.60%	6.20%
Percent Native American	1.20%	1.60%	1.10%
Percent Other	18.40%	18.70%	17.60%
Percent Claimed 2 or more races	11.90%	5.80%	6.10%
Percent of Public school children primarily speak a Language Other than English	55%	52%	54%
Income			
Median Family Income	\$35,550	\$42,896	\$32,058
Median Household Income	\$32,086	\$36,868	\$26,867
Families Below Poverty	17.40%	15.40%	23.90%
Households on Public Assistance	12%	8.80%	10.20%
Housing			
Total number of housing units:	2,282	906	67,915
Percent Owner-occupied housing units	53.10%	46.50%	34.60%
Percent Single-family units	47.10%	44%	26.40%
Percent Duplex units	25.30%	23.50%	22.20%
Percent Multi-family units	28.40%	30.70%	50.10%
Percent of Housing built before 1960	79.30%	75.90%	70.10%
Percent Vacant units	6.50%	4.20%	8.10%
Percent Overcrowded housing units	8.40%	6.60%	8.40%
Median Sales Value and Number of Sales by Year			
for Single-family residence	\$110,000	\$120,000	\$130,000
for 2 to 5-family residence	\$129,500	\$119,000	\$129,000
Council Districts	9.1	8, 9	

Development Patterns

Neighborhood Typologies

The Planning Department is reviewing ways to preserve the existing character of the residential neighborhoods throughout the city, those areas that were identified in the City's Comprehensive Plan, Providence Tomorrow, as "Areas of Stability." The goal for these areas is to reinforce their stability, character and diversity by respecting valued development patterns and attributes. The strategies to achieve this goal include ensuring that new development maintains existing density levels and complements existing neighborhood scale, massing and design, and preserving the existing building stock in each of the city's neighborhoods.

One step toward that goal is to conduct an in-depth analysis of the existing development patterns in each neighborhood. The character of an area is defined by a number of elements that combine to create a cohesive identity. Building placement and form, lot coverage as well as lot size, shape, and orientation are some of these elements. As part of the neighborhood planning process, streets, blocks and structures were evaluated and grouped into areas that have common features. These areas are referred to as "typologies." By understanding the elements that combine to create the character of an area, it is possible to then identify those characteristics that current and future development may need to reflect or respect in order for this character to be maintained and preserved over time.

Key characteristics of the typologies identified for each neighborhood will be used to fine-tune zoning to make it a more effective tool to protect neighborhood character.

Washington Park

Washington Park's development is defined by six typological regions:

- A: The waterfront, which has both industrial and institutional uses.
- B: The industrial park (ManuCenter), home to several small-scale manufacturing businesses and some services.
- C: The commercial corridors, including Allens Avenue, Eddy Street and Broad Street.
- D: The triangle between Broad and Eddy streets.
- E: The square between New York and Montgomery avenues, and Eddy Street and Allens Avenue.
- F: The area between Broad Street and Roger Williams Park.

In many ways, Washington Park's development is similar to Providence's other residential neighborhoods. The street grid is largely rectilinear, with continuous sidewalks on both sides of the street in most cases. Street trees are present throughout the neighborhood, but are more common in certain sections than in others. On-street parking is also common. However, the unique development patterns of Washington Park's residential areas reflect the narrow timeframe in which it was settled. Because the majority of the area's development was concentrated between 1890 and 1930, it is fairly consistent architecturally. Most of the houses are single- or two-family dwellings with some triple-deckers throughout. This homogeneity is periodically interrupted by post-war infill housing, which often does not reflect the existing architectural context so much as the economic drivers of the housing market at the time of construction.

South Elmwood

The residential development patterns and housing types in the South Elmwood neighborhood can be broken down into three distinct areas:

A: The area bordered roughly by Carlisle Street (up to Elmwood Avenue) and Route 10 to the north, Elmwood Avenue and Typology area B to the east, Hathaway Street to the south, and the Providence City line to the west.

B: The area bounded approximately by Route 10 to the north and east, Providence City line to the south, and Typology area A to the west.

C: The isolated small area bounded by Parkside Drive to the north, east and west.

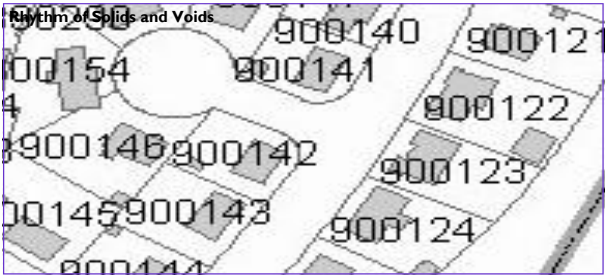
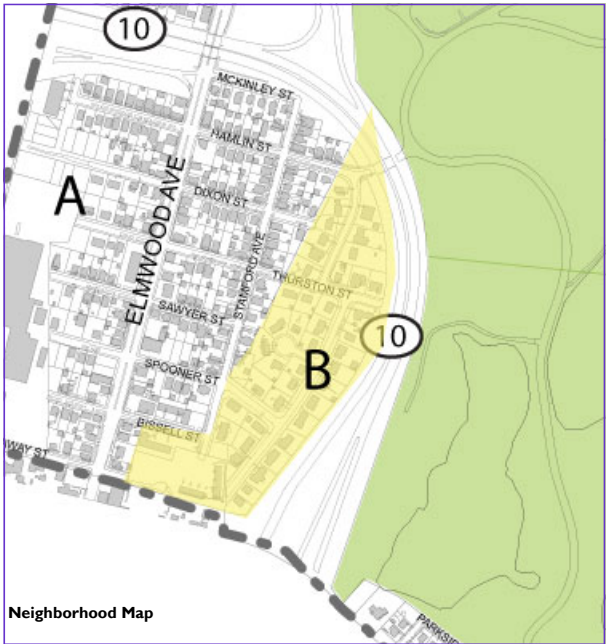
The majority of land in South Elmwood is in Roger Williams Park. All residential development is concentrated in the southwest corner of the neighborhood and constitutes three different typology areas. All commercial development is concentrated along Elmwood Avenue, with residential pockets to the east and west of the street. The largest concentration of residential development (Typology Area A) occurred in the same 40-year period as in Washington Park - between 1890 and 1930 with bungalows and Victorian-era styled buildings. Single family dwellings are predominant, while two- and three- family units are concentrated along the major thoroughfare (Elmwood Avenue).

Typology Area B encompasses Netop and Potter drives, and was developed in the post-World War II era after Route 10 was constructed excess land was made available for development as house lots, resulting in a significantly less dense development than the average Providence neighborhood. It is composed mainly of ranch-style single-family homes, lacks continuous sidewalks and has a curvilinear street pattern more common in suburban developments than urban areas. Dwellings are oriented so that the longest facade sits parallel with the street. Additionally, the lots in this particular area are larger, and the lot coverage is low relative to the citywide average.

Typology Area C is a small, isolated area located at the southern tip of Roger Williams Park, bordering the city of Cranston. Like Area B, it was developed in the post-World War II era, with single family houses in smaller lots. Architecturally, houses are built in the Revival Styles, here Tudor- and Colonial-, popular at the time.

Sample Washington Park & South Elmwood Neighborhood Typologies

South Elmwood—Typology B

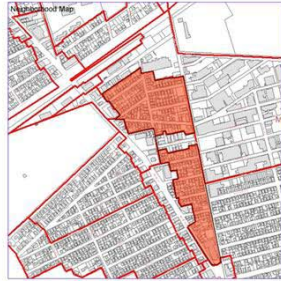


Defining Characteristics

Streetscape		Lots		Buildings			
Pavement Width	40, 55, 65 ft	Lot Size	6800—10000 sq ft	Type	Single, Apartment	Roof Type/Pitch	Gable
On-Street Parking	Double-sided	Lot Width	80—100 ft	Lot Coverage	20—30 %	Materials	Wood, Brick
Sidewalks	No	Density	1 unit per lot; Multi units	Height	1—2 stories	Garages	Attached, Side
Street Trees	Regular	Side Yards	15—25 ft	Porch/Stoop	No	Outbuildings	Rear
Front Yard	10—20 ft	Rear Yard	40—50 ft	First Floor Elevation	0—1 ft		
Fences	No	Parking	Side	Street Facing Transparency	10—15 %		

Above is a sample neighborhood typology, consisting of a typology area map, fieldwork photos and observational data, an aerial photo of the area, and an illustration of the area's lot layout.

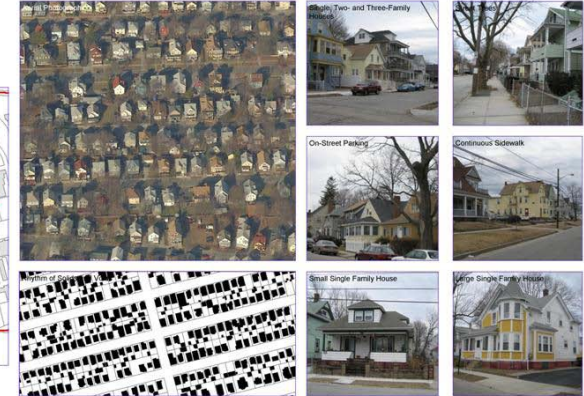
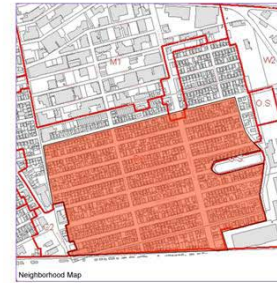
Washington Park Wedge — Typology A



Defining Characteristics

Streetscape	Lots	Buildings
Pavement Width	30 Ft	Type
On-Street Parking	Double, single-sided	Lot Coverage
Sidewalks	Continuous concrete	Density
Street Trees	Yes, irregular pattern	Side Yards
Front Yard	10 Ft, on average	Rear Yard
Fences	Iron and masonry	Parking
		Side, rear
		First Floor Elevation
		Street Facing Transparency
		25-50% Transparency

Washington Park—Typology B



Defining Characteristics

Streetscape	Lots	Buildings
Pavement Width	30 Ft	Type
On-Street Parking	Double, single	Lot Coverage
Sidewalks	Continuous Concrete	Density
Street Trees	Yes, irregular pattern	Side Yards
Front Yard	25 foot setback	Rear Yard
Fences	Iron and masonry	Parking
		Side, rear
		First Floor Elevation
		Street Facing Transparency
		25-50%

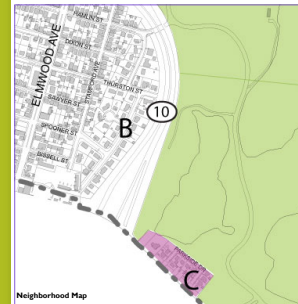
Washington Park—Typology C



Defining Characteristics

Streetscape	Lots	Buildings
Pavement Width	30 Ft	Type
On-Street Parking	Yes, double-, single-sided	Lot Coverage
Sidewalks	Continuous concrete	Density
Street Trees	Yes, irregular pattern	Side Yards
Front Yard	10-20 Ft setback	Rear Yard
Fences	Iron and masonry	Parking
		Side, rear
		First Floor Elevation
		Street Facing Transparency
		25-50%

South Elmwood—Typology C



Defining Characteristics

Streetscape	Lots	Buildings
Pavement Width	35, 40 ft	Type
On-Street Parking	Double-sided	Lot Coverage
Sidewalks	Continuous	Density
Street Trees	Irregular	Side Yards
Front Yard	20 ft	Rear Yard
Fences	No	Parking
		Side
		First Floor Elevation
		Street Facing Transparency
		20—25 %

Historic Districts

Providence derives much of its character from its large stock of historic buildings. The City has long recognized the value of preservation and has established eight Local Historic Districts and 40 National Register Districts that cover over 9,000 properties citywide. In addition, there are 150 individual properties listed on the National Register. National Register Districts identify an area or group of buildings that are significant on a local, state or national level; however, they do not provide regulatory protection through local zoning. Property owners in National Register Districts may be eligible for state and federal tax credits for maintenance and renovation. Properties listed in a Local Historic District (LHD) are in a zoning overlay which requires that building alterations be approved by the Providence Historic District Commission. This is to ensure that the historic attributes and qualities of the properties within the district are maintained and preserved over time. Property owners in LHDs are eligible for the same tax credits as the National Register Districts.

The Industrial and Commercial Buildings District (ICBD) is one of the eight LHDs in the city. Many of the buildings that made up the industrial and manufacturing centers in Providence's history are included in this district. In Washington Park and South Elmwood, there are 15 properties listed on the ICBD. In addition, Roger Williams Park is listed on the National Register as a National Historic Landscape.

Neighborhood Issues

At the beginning of the neighborhood charrette, residents were asked what issues concerned them most about their neighborhoods. During that exercise and throughout the entire charrette process they identified numerous issues, which could be grouped into several categories: Business and Job Opportunities (which is further broken down by: Commercial Areas, Job Growth and Small Business Support, Manufacturing, The Port of Providence, and Fields Point), Amenities and Services, Housing, Johnson & Wales University, Aesthetics & Character, Circulation, and Safety.

Business and Job Opportunities

Commercial Areas

The commercial activity in Washington Park and South Elmwood centers around the key commercial corridors: Broad Street, Eddy Street, Elmwood Avenue, and Allens Avenue. Of these, Broad Street is the liveliest, with the highest concentration

of small-scale neighborhood-serving uses. The cluster of businesses located at the intersection of Broad and Eddy streets, near the Cranston line, forms the neighborhood center, along with the elementary school, banks and professional offices. The activity on Eddy Street is more varied, with a mix of auto-oriented businesses, institutional uses, offices, small-scale businesses, and churches. Allens Avenue consists mostly of service-oriented businesses, such as small restaurants and liquor stores. The portion of Elmwood Avenue that runs from Roger Williams Park to the Cranston line in South Elmwood is a mix of residential uses and small-scale businesses, usually occupying the ground floor of residential buildings.

Job Growth & Small Business Support

As mentioned above, Washington Park and South Elmwood are home to many small businesses; thus, most of the residents' concerns revolve around small business opportunities. Overall, residents wanted to see more new small businesses and more variety among the small businesses. People commented that regulations governing small businesses should be simpler, to make the start-up process easier. In addition, residents felt that there was a lack of support for existing small businesses. Finally, increased job opportunities for residents was a major concern.

Manufacturing

The area between Ernest Street and Carolina Avenue is the heart of the industrial district of Washington Park. The district is composed of mostly single-story brick manufacturing buildings that were built in the 1920s and 1930s for jewelry manufacturing, gold and silver plating, tool companies, and electrical supply businesses. Though many of the businesses have relocated or closed over the last several decades, several of the buildings are still in operation today as manufacturing uses. Several other buildings have been converted to professional office use. One of the largest companies in the area, Mahr Federal, is a global company that employs over 300 people and has been a leader in producing precision measurement devices for various industries such as defence, aerospace, computers, and medical devices. Several representatives of the ManuCenter attended the charrette and expressed their concern about the pressure they feel from developers looking to convert manufacturing buildings to offices and other commercial uses.

Neighborhood Issues (Cont.)

The Port of Providence and Fields Point

Technically a part of Washington Park, the Port of Providence and Fields Point are isolated from the neighborhood by topography. The Port of Providence encompasses over 100 acres of land and off-loads over 2,000 ships annually, handling one million tons of cargo such as cement, chemicals, machinery, petroleum, and scrap metal. The Port also provides bulk storage in warehouses and has 20 acres for open storage. Residents did not have many concerns about the Port, due in part to the physical separation caused by the significant grade change.

Amenities and Services

The most notable amenity in Washington Park and South Elmwood is Roger Williams Park - the showcase park for the City - which both neighborhoods abut. Residents had very specific ideas about how Roger Williams Park could be improved, including fixing the fountains in the park so that they are functioning, expanding the athletic fields and courts, banning all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) in the park, and giving more authority to park police. On a more general level, residents would like to see more recreation spaces and more community services geared towards children and the elderly in the neighborhood. In particular, residents feel that the area is underserved with respect to library facilities and schools. Many residents expressed a need for improvement in the existing schools. People also felt the community could benefit from more community garden-type spaces and perhaps auxiliary programs such as a community composting program.



Housing

The housing stock in both neighborhoods is varied. Residents' issues were mainly focused on housing affordability, ownership and having a say in where community housing is located and how it is developed. As in other city neighborhoods, Washington Park, and to a lesser extent, South Elmwood have been impacted by the foreclosure crisis. Many streets have vacant, vandalized and boarded houses. This has a negative impact on the character and feeling of the neighborhoods and is a concern for the neighborhood residents and the city as a whole.



Johnson and Wales University

The Johnson & Wales University (JWU) Harborside campus is located in Washington Park east of Narragansett Boulevard and west of the Port of Providence. Due to a significant grade difference, the majority of the campus is hidden from Narragansett Boulevard. The Harborside Campus has grown significantly over the past ten years with the addition of new academic halls and a large new residential life complex. Plans for the next five to ten years include new buildings for the College of Culinary Arts, a new campus academic center, a dining hall, and recreational and athletic fields. JWU also plans to construct a large vegetated buffer along its boundary with the Port of Providence to buffer the school from adjacent port uses. Additionally, the school plans to construct a greenway along Narragansett Bay in coordination with CRMC.

Neighborhood issues focus mainly on the behavior of students living in the neighborhood. Neighborhood residents expressed concern about expansion of the campus leading to more students living off campus within the neighborhood. Residents were also concerned about the maintenance and upkeep of off-campus housing that is not owned by the school. Truck traffic in and out of the campus was also a concern.

Safety

Safety was one of the basic concerns for the neighborhood. Residents wanted improved community safety by having increased police presence in the neighborhoods. Improved street lighting to deter crime was another suggestion. In addition to general issues of safety, mention was made of the problem of public drinking, particularly in front of liquor stores.



Circulation

The major circulation issue in residents' eyes was parking. They did not want to see parking on sidewalks or lawns, or double-parking - particularly on Broad Street. However, they did express a need for parking in general. Additionally, residents wanted to see more bike parking accommodations.



Neighborhood Issues (Cont.)

Aesthetics/Character

Many of the aesthetic concerns of the neighborhood focused on cleanliness. Trash and litter were of particular concern – residents complained that trash cans are left out in violation of codes, that there aren't enough public trash cans, and that litter laws need to be enforced. Tied to this is the phenomenon of "street spam," whereby flyers and other posters accumulate on trees and poles along the street, contributing to litter as they become detached. Residents wished to see a decrease in street spam, and an overall improvement in streetscapes along the major commercial corridors, including Eddy Street, Broad Street, Elmwood Avenue and Allens Avenue. Residents pinpointed a need for improved landscaping, clean-up and reuse of empty and vacant lots, and a reduction in graffiti. Furthermore, residents felt the character of the neighborhood could be improved via public displays and performances by local artists, cleaning up particular locations and businesses, getting rid of aesthetically displeasing attributes (such as chain link fencing) and the addition of more street trees.

Land Use Conflicts

Charrette participants identified areas where the current land use regulations are out of sync with the existing or desired uses. After an extensive review of existing uses and current land use regulations, several areas were identified that may require zoning or comprehensive plan amendments to protect the existing character of the area, reflect the existing uses, or in some cases encourage the desired uses to be developed in the future. A list of these specific areas is included in the action plan. The Planning Department will review these areas and forward recommendations for any amendments to the regulations to the City Plan Commission and City Council for their consideration.

Neighborhood Action Plan

The key outcome of the Washington Park & South Elmwood charrette was the development of a multi-phased action plan for the neighborhoods and its associated map. The action plan below details the short-, mid- and long-term goals (spanning <5 years, 5-10 years and 10+ years respectively) of the neighborhoods and identifies specific actions needed to achieve the vision.

Key to Acronyms for City and State Departments, Agencies and Institutions:

DPD- Department of Planning and Development (City of Providence)

DPW- Department of Public Works (City of Providence)

DIS- Department of Inspection and Standards (City of Providence)

RIPTA- Rhode Island Public Transit Authority

ACT-Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism (City of Providence)

Parks- Department of Parks and Recreation (City of Providence)

PPD- Providence Police Department

PEDP- Providence Economic Development Partnership

HDC- Historic District Commission (City of Providence)

RIDOT- Rhode Island Department of Transportation

CRMC- Coastal Resources Management Council

ZBR- Zoning Board of Review (City of Providence)

TED- Traffic Engineering Division (City of Providence)

Schools- Providence Department of Public Schools

JWU- Johnson & Wales University

Washington Park and South Elmwood Initiatives

Initiatives/Projects	Actions	Project Lead	Target Date
Actively involve the Washington Park and South Elmwood Neighborhoods in community decision-making.			
Promote collaboration between City government, neighborhood residents and businesses to achieve the vision for Washington Park and South Elmwood.	Identify strategies to broaden community participation in implementing the plan, such as creation of neighborhood and merchant associations, outreach plans, etc.	DPD	Short-term
	Identify potential partners, such as businesses and non-profit organizations, that can assist in completing specific projects.	DPD	Ongoing
Ensure that all projects and initiatives contribute to achievement of the long-term vision.	Evaluate projects for consistency with the City's Comprehensive Plan and the adopted neighborhood plan.	DPD	Ongoing
	Include neighborhood outreach and communication as part of the planning and development of significant public and private projects.	DPD	Ongoing
	Develop education and awareness programs to assist residents in understanding how different projects such as street tree plantings, recycling programs, etc. can improve their neighborhood.	DPD	As Needed

Initiatives/Projects	Actions	Project Lead	Target Date
Revitalize Broad Street as the neighborhood main street.			
Create a streetscape that is clean and litter free.	Schedule neighborhood cleanups of Broad Street.	Community Groups	As Needed
	Improve enforcement of environmental (trash, recycling) regulations.	DPW	Ongoing
Improve pedestrian experience.	Complete Broad Street pedestrian improvement project. The sidewalk conditions on Broad Street are in significant need of repair.	DPW	Short-term
	Conduct studies of intersections of Broad/Eddy Street and Alabama/Montgomery avenues to determine traffic counts and movements and identify physical improvements to intersections.	DPW/Traffic	Short-term
	Work with the Feinstein Elementary School at Broad Street to determine eligibility for Safe Routes to School funding.	Schools	Short-term
	Apply for transportation enhancement funds to improve sidewalks and streetscape (trees, lighting, trash containers, etc.).	DPD/ Community Groups	Mid-term
Improve transit stops.	Enhance bus stops with shelters, improved lighting, signs, seating, and trash cans, particularly at areas identified as nodes on the neighborhood plan map.	RIPTA	Short-term
	Identify bus stops with stamped asphalt to emphasize no parking in those areas.	DPW/RIPTA	Short-term
Continue to promote mix of commercial and residential uses.	Enforce the existing design regulations contained in the Commercial Corridor Overlay District.	DPD/ZPR	Short-term
	Work with the CPC to create a commercial node at the intersection of Broad Street and Baker and Broom Streets.	DPD	Short-term
	Work with the CPC to create a Commercial Node at the intersection of Broad Street, Eddy Street and Montgomery Avenue.	DPD	Short-term
	Amend the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance to designate Elmwood Avenue as Neighborhood Commercial from Route 10 South to the City line.	DPD	Short-term
	Conduct citywide entertainment study to determine appropriate locations for nightclubs to minimize impacts on surrounding neighborhoods.	DPD/ACT	Mid-term
	Identify the best locations and proper regulations for street vendors on Broad Street.	DPD/ Merchants	Mid-term

Initiatives/Projects	Actions	Project Lead	Target Date
Preserve and enhance Washington Park and South Elmwood as urban neighborhoods with a high quality of life.			
Increase opportunities for home ownership and access to safe and affordable housing.	Publicize existing housing programs such as down payment assistance, emergency repairs and lead abatement through distribution of brochures at neighborhood centers, meetings and events.	DPD	Ongoing
Improve community pride by enhancing and maintaining the character of residential areas.	Improve enforcement of City ordinances such as paving limits, property maintenance and the residential occupancy limit.	DIS	Ongoing
	Work with Johnson & Wales to address student housing issues and problems in the neighborhood.	Community Groups	Ongoing
	Amend residential zoning regulations to promote the best examples of existing neighborhood character as identified in neighborhood typologies to ensure that new development will blend with the existing character of the neighborhood.	DPD	Short-term
	Sponsor neighborhood clean-up days and similar events for neighborhood improvement and to increase community pride.	Community Groups	Ongoing
	Identify need for landscape buffers for commercial/industrial uses along major streets (Eddy, Broad, Allens, Elmwood).	DPD	Short-term
	Identify landscaping and lighting improvements along Carolina Avenue to buffer residential properties from the industrial park.	DPD	Short-term
	Amend the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance to designate the lots on the south side of Carolina Avenue as RM to provide a buffer between the industrial park and medium-density residential areas.	DPD	Short-term
Complete network of street trees throughout the neighborhoods.	Using the Parks Department Street Tree Inventory, prioritize streets for planting projects.	Community Groups, City Forester	Ongoing
	Work with property owners and residents to submit applications to the Providence Neighborhood Planting Program.	Community Groups	Ongoing
Improve community safety.	Identify areas with insufficient lighting.	Community Groups	Ongoing
	Consider creating neighborhood watch groups in coordination with the District 13 community police officers.	Community Groups	Ongoing

Initiatives/Projects	Actions	Project Lead	Target Date
Preserve and enhance Washington Park and South Elmwood as urban neighborhoods with a high quality of life. (Cont.)			
Maintain and improve community amenities.	Create community engagement process to discuss future of Broad Street Elementary School.	Schools	Short-term
	Repair roof of Washington Park Branch Library to preserve building.	City	Complete
	Work with Providence Public Library to reopen a neighborhood branch library.	City	Complete
	Identify improvements for plaza in front of library and community center to activate the space and reduce conflicts between cars and children.	City/ Community Center	Mid-term
	Develop new transfer station/ recycling center at the Port of Providence.	DPW	Long-term
Work with Johnson & Wales to improve neighborhood coordination and involvement.	Improve communication and coordination between neighborhood residents and Johnson and Wales University (JWU) community liaison.	JWU/ Community Groups	Short-term
	Identify improvements to physical connection between the neighborhood and the waterfront - upgrade fencing along perimeter, plantings, gateways, signs, etc.	DPD/ JWU	Short -to Mid-term
	Explore opportunity for community partnership in development of culinary garden-plots for neighborhood residents, joint education programs to share expertise.	JWU/Community Groups	Mid-term
	Explore potential for farmers market.	JWU/Community Groups	Mid-term
	Identify alternate truck and service routes that minimize impacts on the adjacent residential neighborhood.	DPW/JWU	Short-term
After an extensive review of existing uses and current land use regulations for the neighborhoods, zoning amendments and comprehensive plan amendments should be considered for the following areas to reflect existing uses, encourage new uses, or in some cases, to protect the existing character of the area.			
Washington Park	The Heavy Commercial District between Roger Williams Park and I-95 to Heavy Industrial Use.	DPD	Short-term
	Overlay the "Jobs Only" district on the ManuCenter located between Allens Avenue, Eddy Street, Ernest Street and Carolina Avenue.	DPD	Short-term
	The waterfront mixed-use district south of Ernest Street and north of New York Avenue to Heavy Port Industry.	DPD	Short-term
	The Heavy Commercial along Chapman Street to Heavy Industrial use.	DPD	Short-term
	The City owned parcel at Fields Point from Open Space to Heavy Port Industry.	DPD	Short-term
	Overlay the Jobs Only District on the Heavy Port Industry areas at ProvPort.	DPD	Short-term

Initiatives/Projects	Actions	Project Lead	Target Date
Increase opportunities for business and job growth.			
Promote existing job and training opportunities citywide.	Promote First Source program by distributing brochures and applications at neighborhood centers, meetings and events. Continue to promote job training opportunities sponsored through First Source to everyone on the First Source list.	DPD	Ongoing
	Work with Providence Cranston Workforce Development and the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation (RIEDC) to develop a catalogue of existing job and training opportunities.	DPD	Ongoing
Promote business growth in the neighborhood.	Publicize incentives available for job creation such as the revolving loan fund and enterprise zone tax credits.	PEDP	Ongoing
	Promote business assistance programs such as technical assistance, storefront improvement grants and micro-loans.	PEDP	Ongoing
	Expand the "Neighborhood Markets" program to include all of Broad Street.	DPD	Short-term
Maintain and improve Washington Park "ManuCenter" as a neighborhood job center.	Meet with business owners to understand needs, concerns and issues.	DPD/ PEDP	Short-term
	Identify ways to improve natural environment (street trees, landscaping, buffering, green roofs, etc.) that do not impede business efforts.	DPD	Short-term
	Amend the Zoning Ordinance to designate the industrial park as a "Jobs Only" district.	DPD	Short-term
	Prioritize industrial and manufacturing uses in the Washington Park ManuCenter over commercial, office and other uses.	DPD	Ongoing
	Identify changes to truck traffic that will minimize impact on adjacent residential neighborhood.	DPD/ManuCenter Business Owners	Mid-term

Initiatives/Projects	Actions	Project Lead	Target Date
Improve access to recreation and open space.			
Roger Williams Park - Improve neighborhood access and recreational opportunities.	Enhance pedestrian experience on the Hamlin Street Bridge while maintaining emergency vehicle access.	Parks	Short-term
	Improve pedestrian safety by adding new crosswalks as part of the Elmwood Avenue resurfacing project.	RIDOT	Completed
	Enhance underpass along Elmwood Avenue as a gateway to the park with a zoo-themed mural.	Parks	Short-term
	Develop a recreational trail network in the park such as an off-road bike path and signed recreational trails.	Parks	Mid-term
	Work with RIPTA to extend the Gold Line Trolley to the zoo entrance and explore the possibility of having the trolley complete a loop through the park, stopping at major destinations such as the carousel and botanical center.	Parks/RIPTA	Mid-term
	Activate space near the Broad Street entrance to the park with community uses such as a tot lot and community garden.	Parks/Community Groups	Mid-term
Columbia Park-Improve access, safety, maintenance and programming.	Create a "Friends of" group to watch over and care for the park.	Community Groups	Short-term
	Investigate the possibility of recruiting neighborhood seniors to work in the park.	Parks/Community Groups	Short-term
	Work with the local district commander and JWU to increase police and JWU security patrols of the park.	Parks/PPD/JWU	Short-term
	Develop vision for future programming and access to the park.	Parks/Community Groups	Short- to Mid-term
Drummond Field - Improve access and programming.	Work with Johnson & Wales University to identify potential access and shared parking improvements to the park.	Parks/JWU	Short-term
	Establish pedestrian access from New York Avenue.	DPD/DPW	Short-term
	Improve pedestrian and bicycle access from the neighborhood.	DPD/DPW	Short-term
	Develop vision for future programming.	City/ Residents	Short-term
Improve pedestrian and bicycle connections through the neighborhoods and between parks.	Improve sidewalks and streetscaping along Montgomery Avenue, Washington Avenue and Thurbers Avenue.	DPD/DPW	Short- to Mid Term
	Work with State to re-stripe bike lanes along Allens Avenue/Narragansett Boulevard.	DPD/RIDOT	Short-term
	Complete Elmwood Avenue Resurfacing Project.	RIDOT	Complete
	Improve existing crosswalks across Allens Avenue and identify locations for new crosswalks.	RIDOT/DPD/DPW	Mid-term

Next Steps

This plan is not meant to sit on a shelf - it is a guide to neighborhood action. City departments, neighborhood leaders and residents should use this plan to guide decisions in the neighborhood and to prioritize funding and neighborhood improvement projects. The action plan sets out short-, mid- and long-term goals so that we can periodically check in to see how we are doing. The plan is also not a static document – it can and will be changed over time. New concerns, issues or conditions in the neighborhood will be reflected in updates to the plan. Finally, the plan will set the course for amending zoning regulations that have impacts in the neighborhood.

Thank you to the charrette team and to the residents of Washington Park and South Elmwood for participating in this effort, to the students and faculty at the Alan Shawn Feinstein Elementary at Broad Street and to the Washington Park Community Center for generously donating space for the charrette!

The Charrette Team

Mayor David N. Cicilline

Councilman Luis Aponte

Councilman Miguel Luna

Councilman Leon Tejada

Express Ideas and HNTB

Thomas E. Deller, AICP, Director

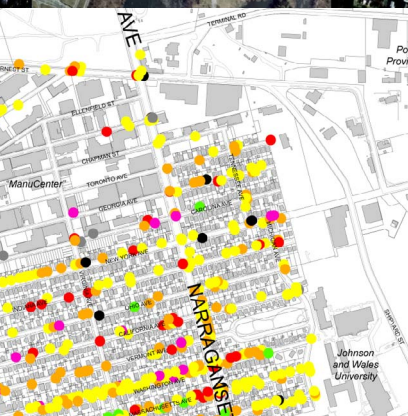
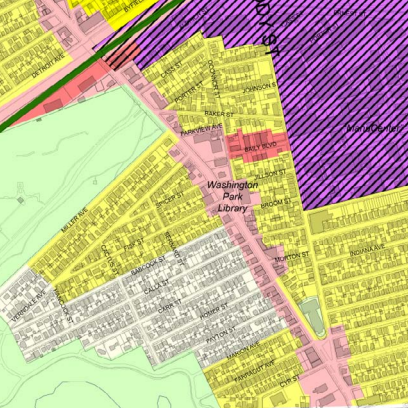
Linda M. Painter, AICP, Deputy Director

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Keelia Wright, AICP

David Everett



APPENDIX - NEIGHBORHOOD DATA

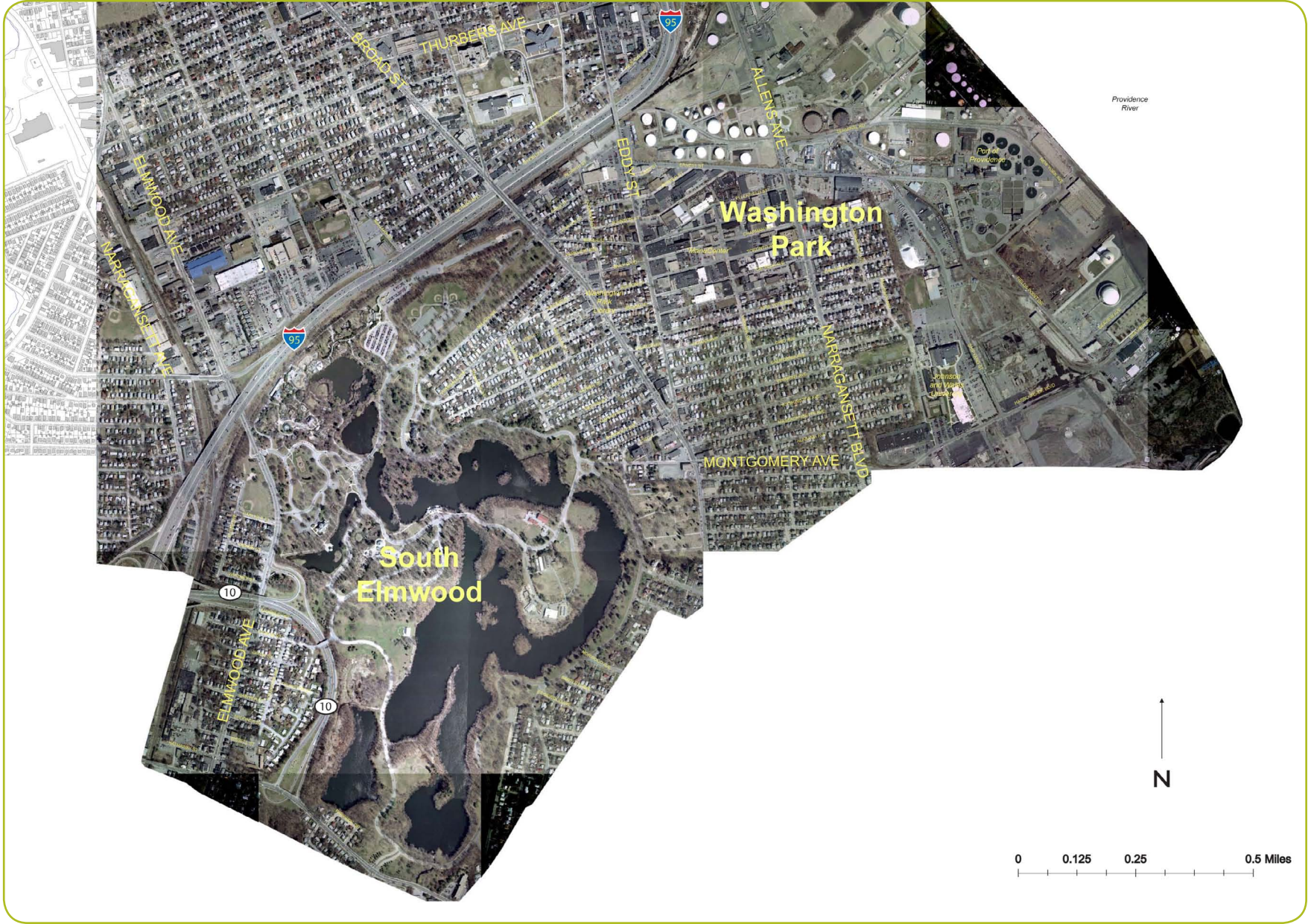
Neighborhood Boundaries



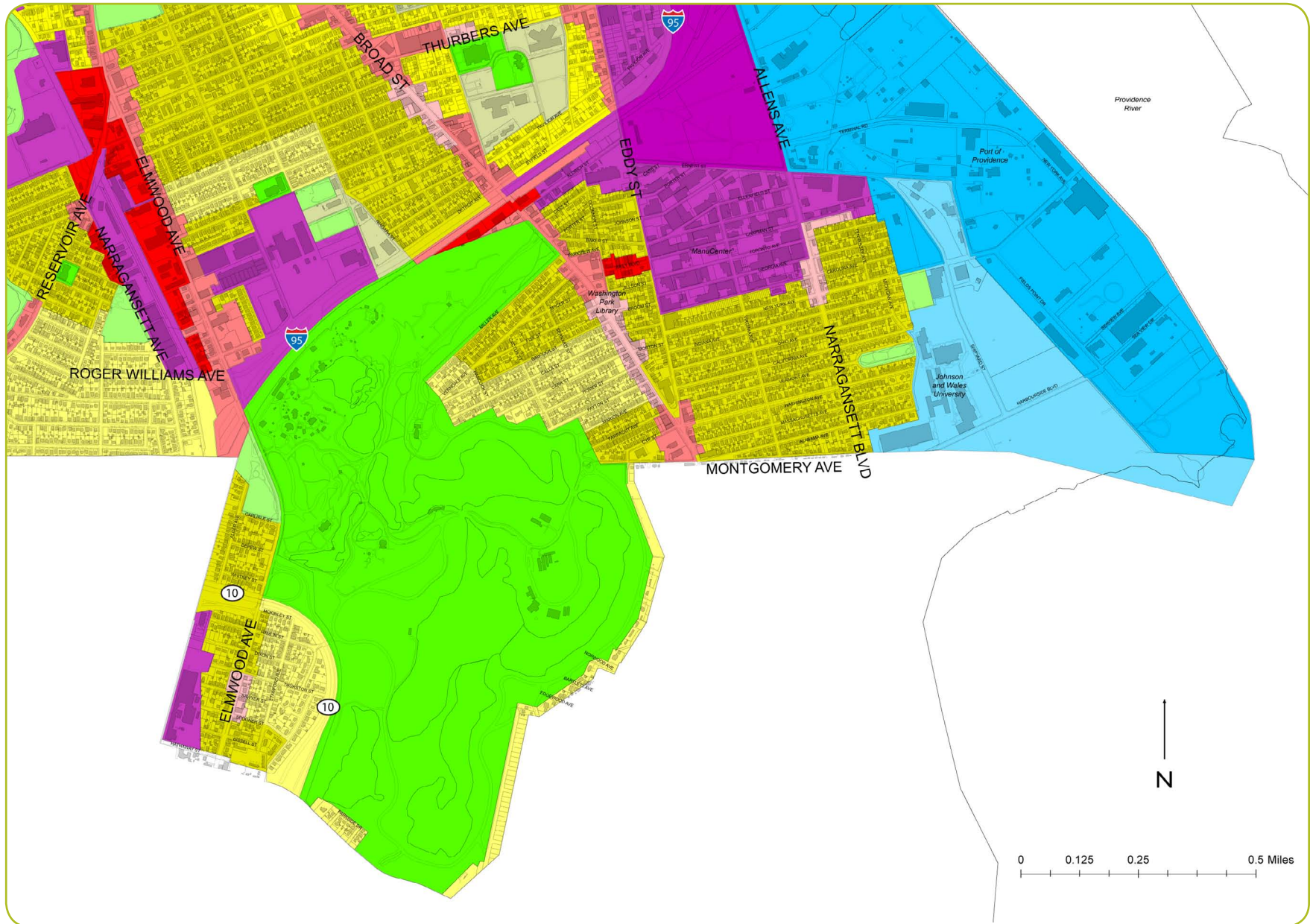
Legend

--- Neighborhood Boundary

Aerial Photograph



























Current Zoning

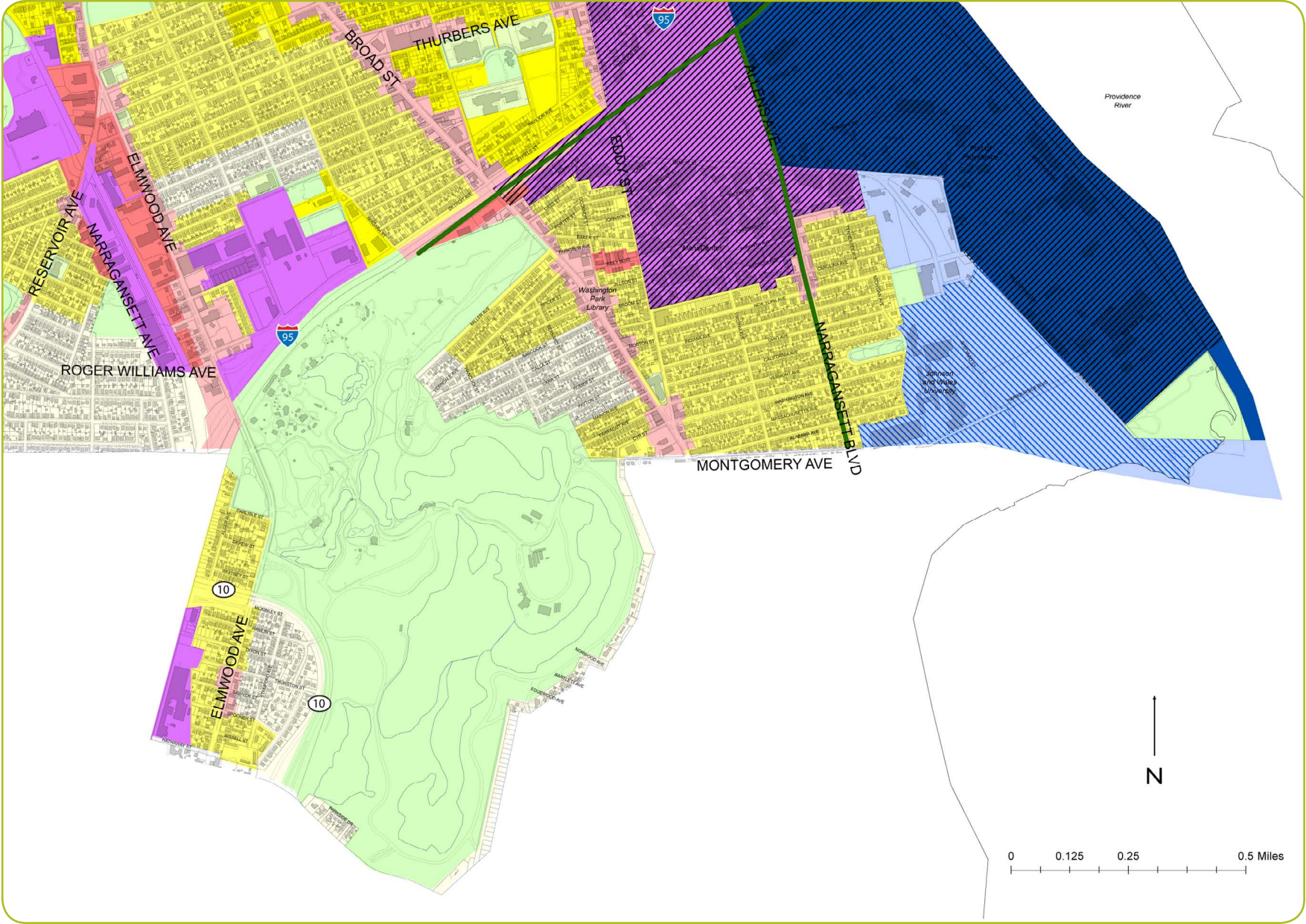


June 2009

Legend

	R1		RG		C1		O.S.		D1-45		D1-150		D2		W1
	R2		RM		C2		P.S.		D1-75		D1-200		M1		W2
	R3		RP		C4		CD		D1-100		D1-300		M2		W3

Future Land Use



Legend

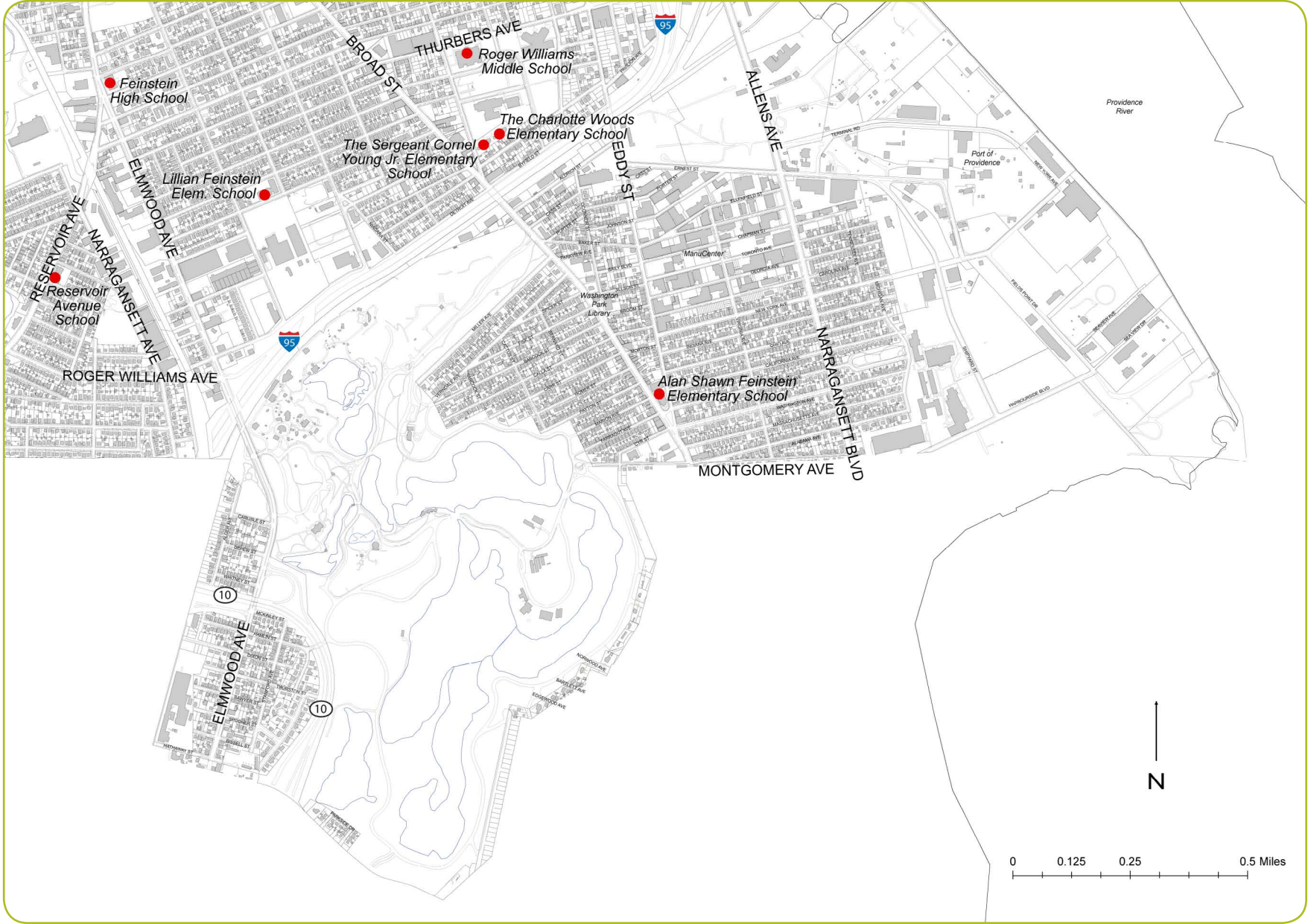
- Institutional
- Low Density Res.
- Neigh. Comm./Mixed Use
- Business/Mixed Use Waterfront
- Waterfront/Port
- Single Family Res.
- Medium Density Res.
- Gen. Comm./Mixed Use
- Mixed Use/Neigh.
- Public Space/Open Space
- High Density Res.
- Downtown/Mixed-Use
- Waterfront Mixed Use/Gen.
- Conservation

December 2007 (Comprehensive Plan)

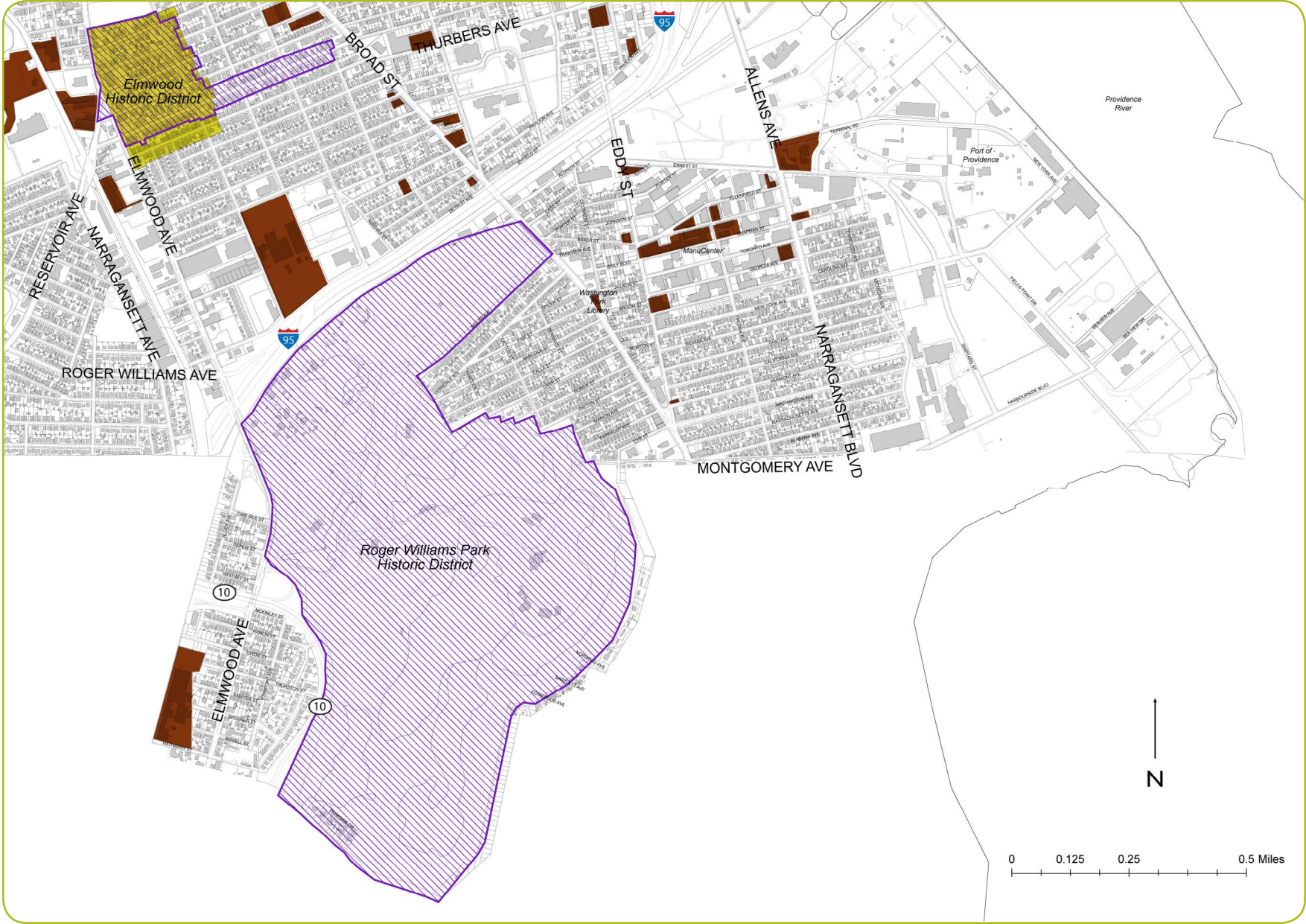
Parks and Open Space



Schools



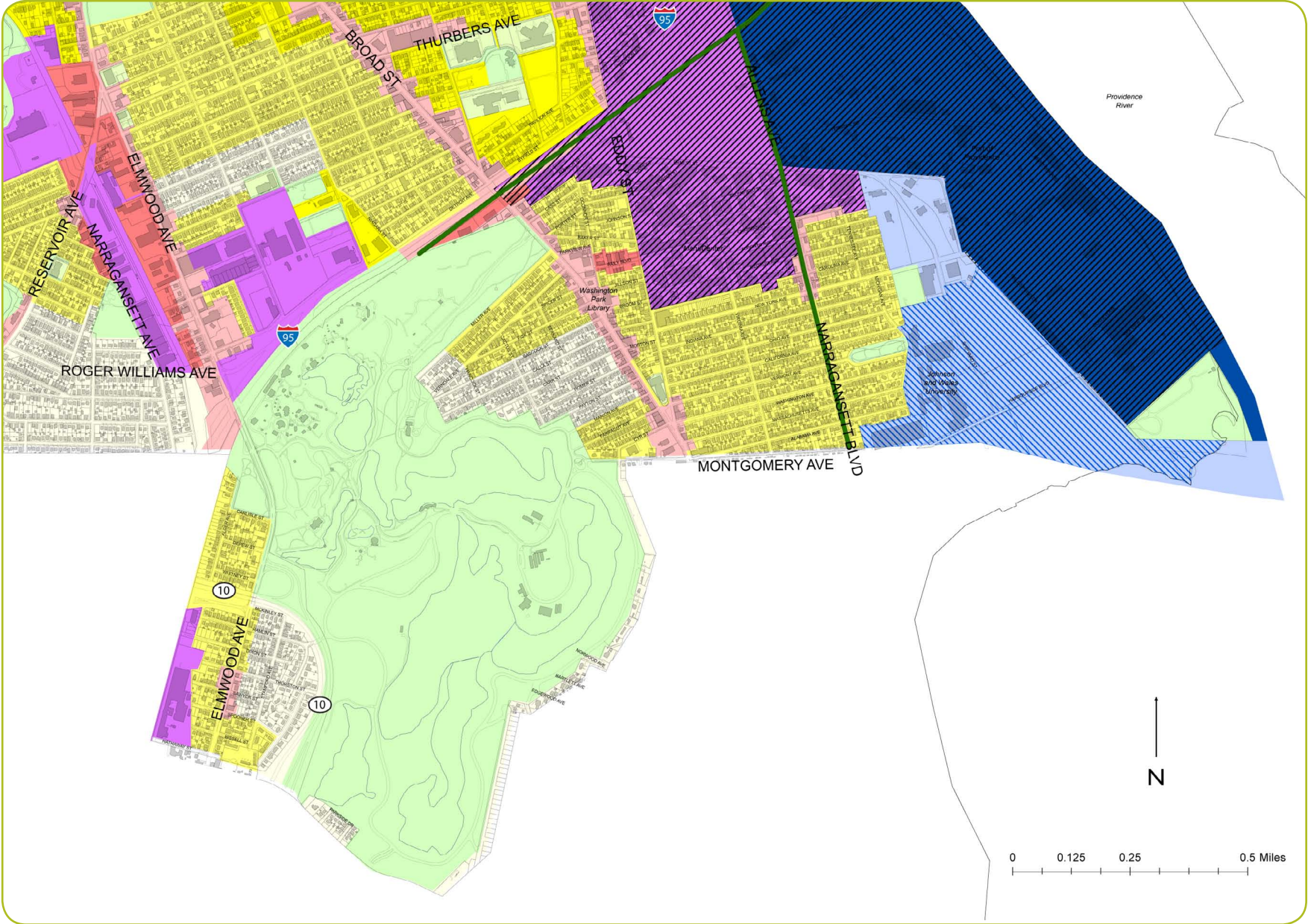
Historic Districts



Legend

- Local Historic District
- ICBD
- National Register Historic District

Institutional Zones

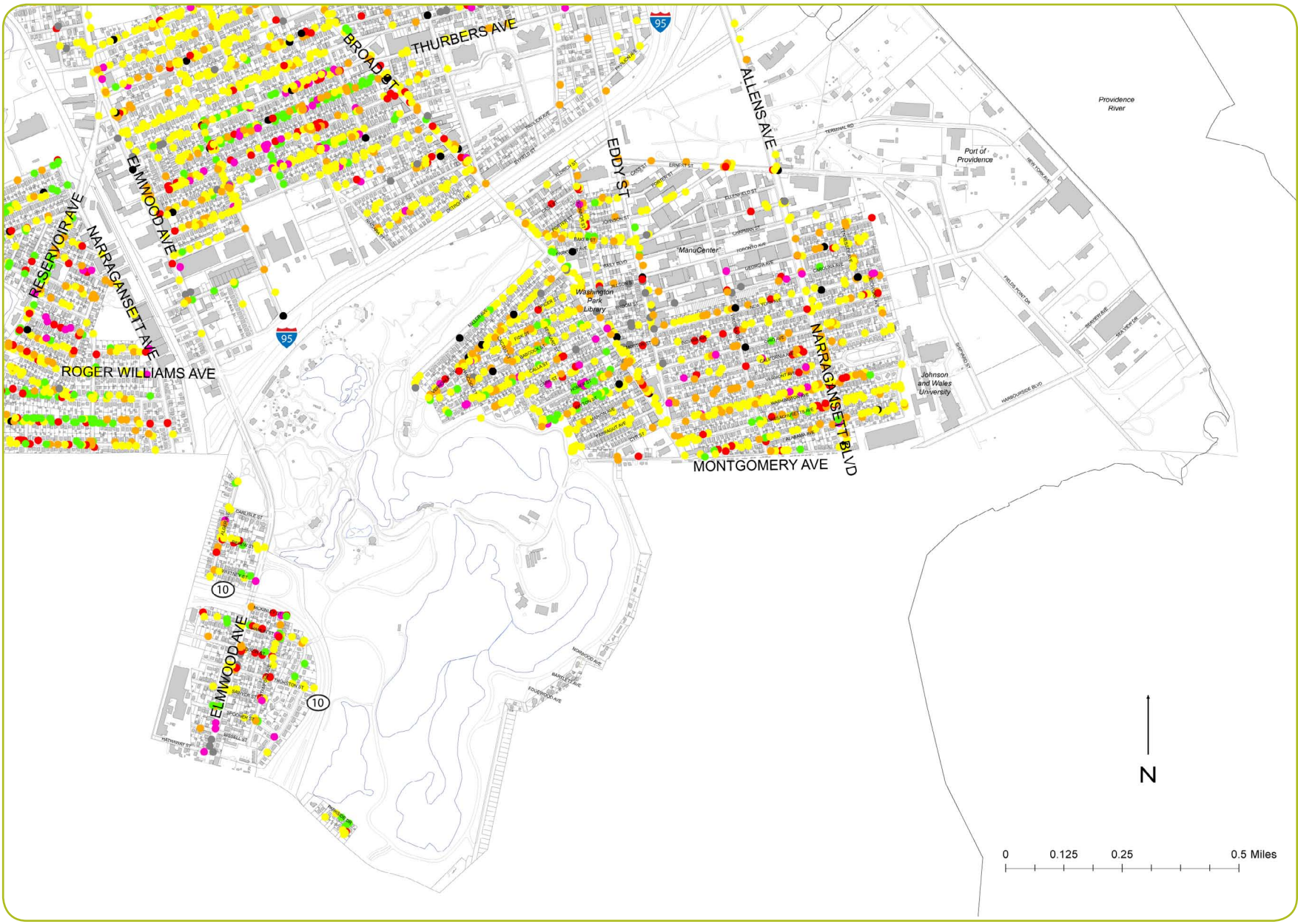


Legend

- I-1 Health Care Zone I-2 Educational Zone I-3 Educational Downtown Zone

June 2009

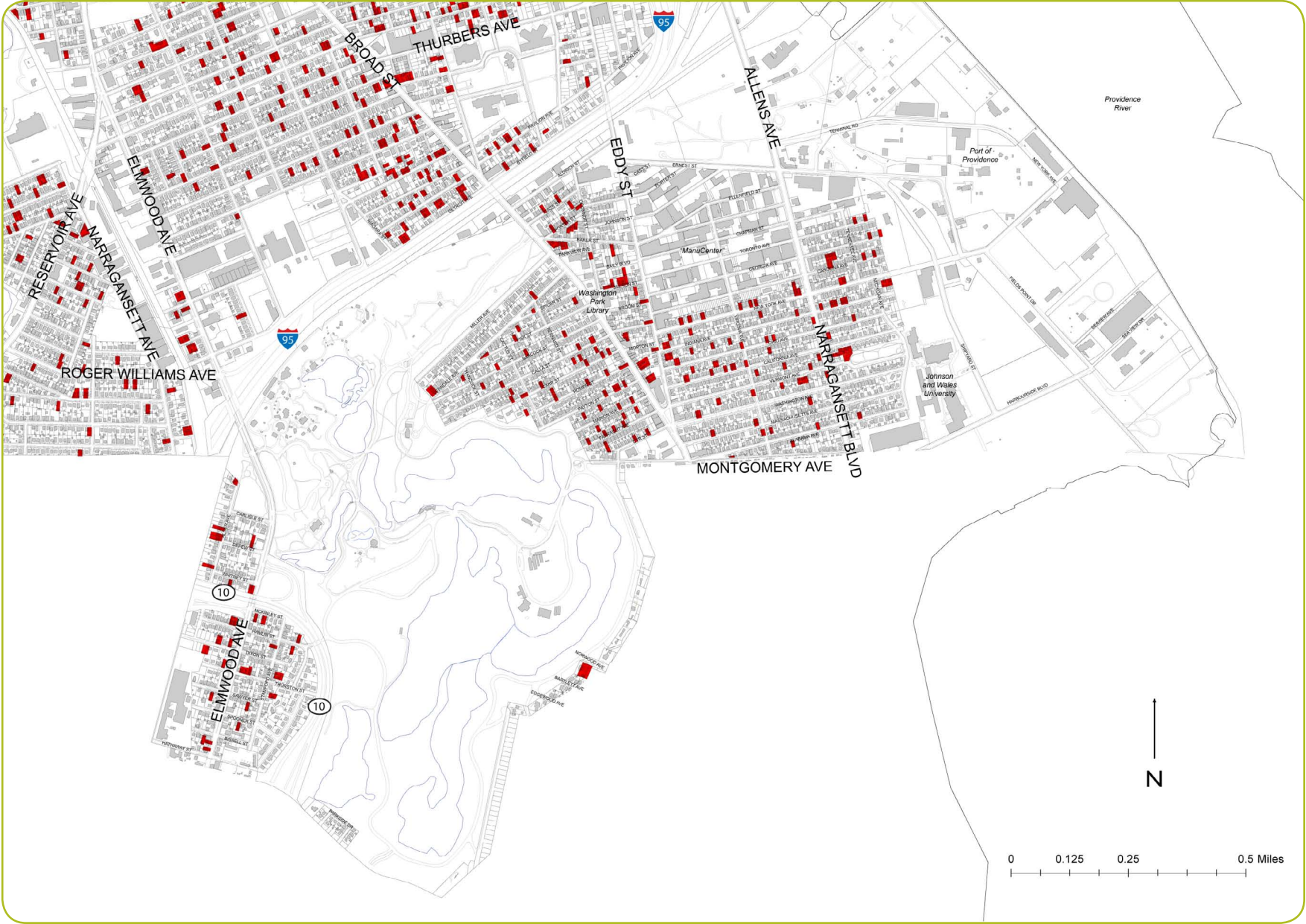
Street Tree Conditions



- Legend
- | | | | |
|-----------|------|-------|-----------|
| Excellent | Fair | Dead | Empty Pit |
| Good | Poor | Stump | |

March 2007

Foreclosures

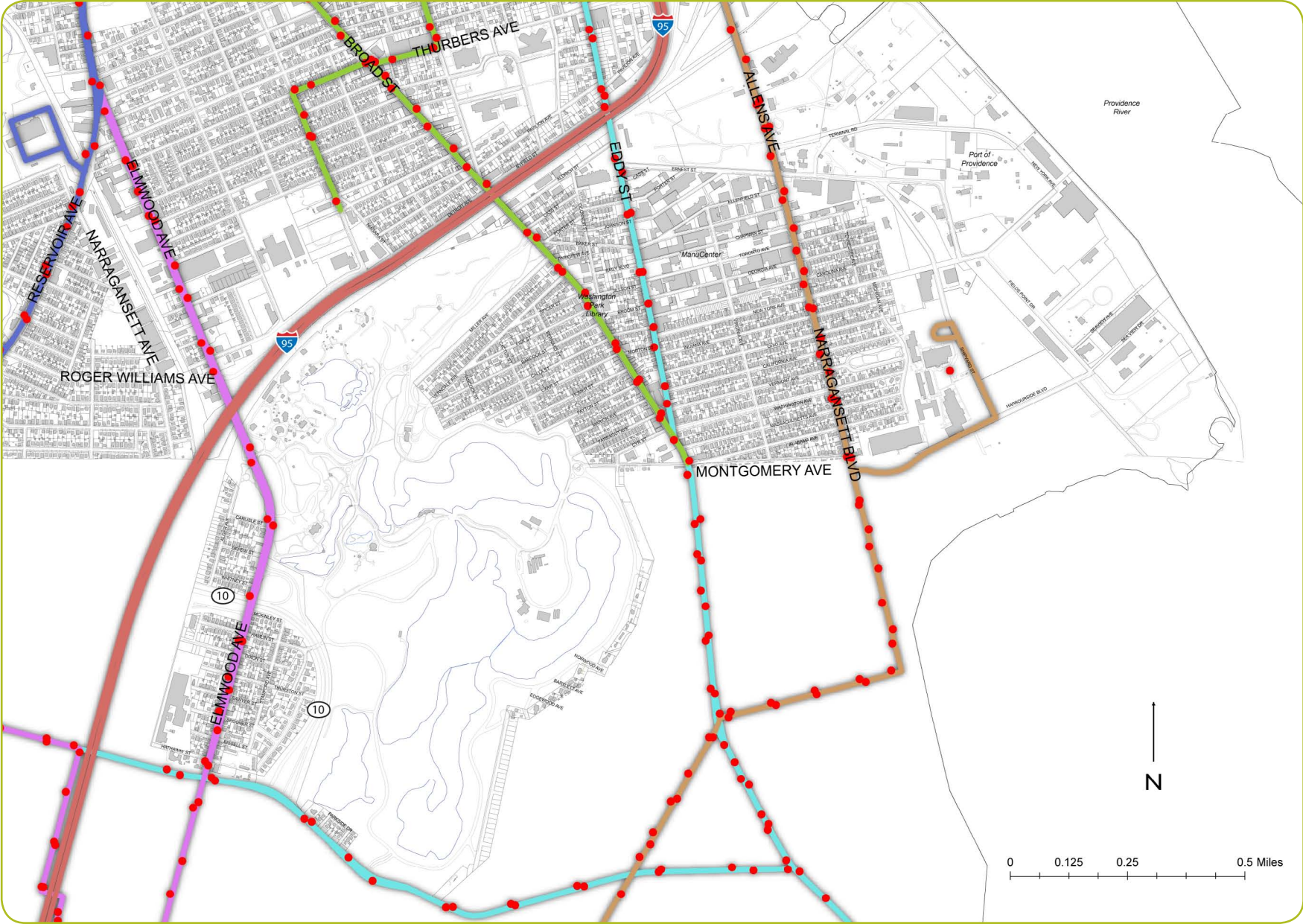


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Foreclosure

January 1, 2006 - May 31, 2009

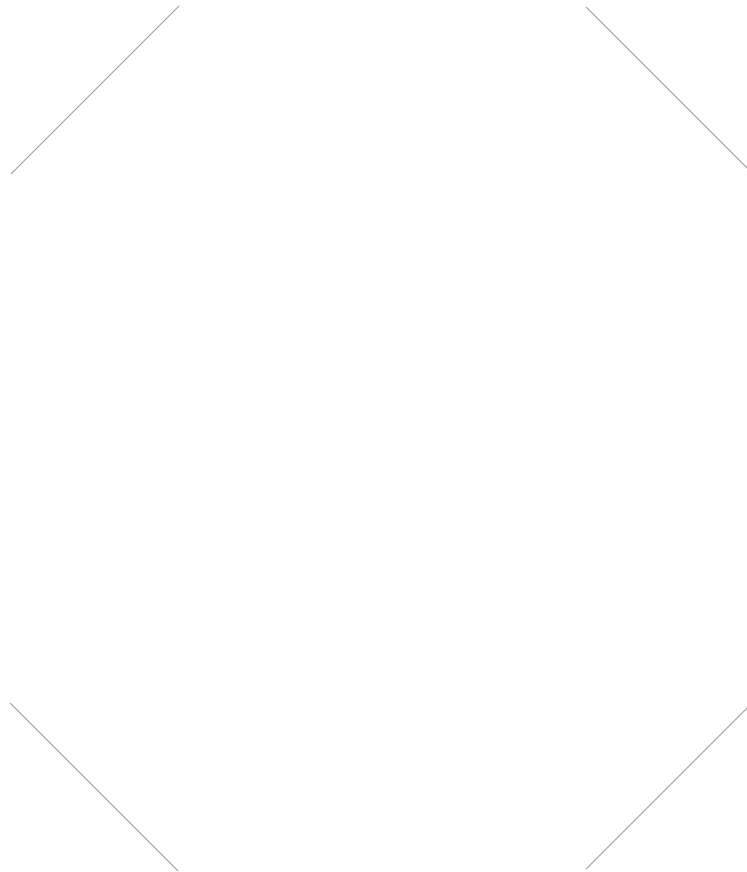
RIPTA Routes



Legend

- RIPTA stop
- RIPTA route

APPENDIX - NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN MAP



PROVIDENCE TOMORROW

our city ■ our neighborhoods ■ our future

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