

# Providence City Plan Commission

June 29, 2021



## AGENDA ITEM 1 ▪ DISCUSSION ON CHANGES TO THE SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT, AND LAND USE CHAPTERS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

### OVERVIEW

<b>PROPOSERS:</b>	Office of Sustainability, Department of Planning and Development	<b>PROJECT DESCRIPTION:</b>	Discussion on proposed changes to the Sustainability and the Environment, and Land Use chapters of the Comprehensive Plan
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### Discussion

The proponents, the Office of Sustainability and Department of Planning and Development (DPD), are proposing a comprehensive set of changes to the Sustainability and the Environment, and Land Use chapters of the Comprehensive Plan. Leah Bamberger, Director of the Office of Sustainability, and Robert Azar, Deputy Director of the DPD will present changes to each chapter. The proposed revisions are based on policy changes and plans that have been enacted since the last revision of the comprehensive plan. The chapter on land use has been updated in response to changes in development, land use patterns and policy. The presentation will focus on the proposed changes to each chapter and how they differ from the current language.

# Climate and Sustainability

## Intro

Goal 1: Protect and preserve the natural environment and strive to make Providence a sustainable, equitable, low-carbon, and climate resilient city.

Providence's landscape and environment have been dramatically altered by the industrial revolution and urbanization. Providence's economic success came at a human and environmental cost. It depended on cheap cotton from the south, which was grown and harvested by slave-labor; indigenous communities lost their access and rights to the land; and rivers were polluted with toxic chemicals as mills and other industries dumped untreated waste into them. More than 200 years later, our post-industrial landscape remains contaminated with lead that poisons 10 to 30% of our kindergarten age children, and several neighborhoods have among the highest rates of childhood asthma in the state.

Providence has come a long way in acknowledging and addressing these harms but there is still a long way to go to becoming an equitable, sustainable city. Past comprehensive plans have prioritized sustainability. The City's Greenprint (2008) report set forth strategies to address climate change. Sustainable Providence (2014) created a holistic plan for meeting a broad set of sustainability goals. The 2019 Climate Justice Plan centered Providence's frontline communities in the fight for a healthier, more equitable, climate resilient city.

Through these plans and processes, we have learned and evolved. We now know that burning fossil fuels is causing our planet to warm to dangerous levels and emits co-pollutants that have disproportionate impacts on the health of low-income communities of color in Providence. We understand that changing light bulbs is not going to solve the climate or environmental crisis. If we are to avoid catastrophic climate change, we must stop burning fossil fuels by 2050. This means we need to fundamentally transform the energy system that fuels our economy and we must reconnect with the natural systems that sustain us. Perhaps most importantly, we have learned that we need an inclusive and equitable approach to addressing our climate and environmental crises. When we do this, we get solutions that are rooted in community and result in the systemic and transformative change that we need.

The Climate Justice Plan, released in 2019, puts forth a vision for a sustainable city where one's race or zip code no longer determines health or economic outcomes. Where decisions are made collectively to allow those who are most impacted to have the greatest say. Where land stewardship is valued over ownership. Where access to clean water and land is not just a luxury for the wealthy, but a fundamental human right. This plan will set a path for Providence, but it is up to the residents and businesses in the City to make sure that we take it.

# Changes, Challenges and Opportunities

## Changes

**Commitment to Climate Action.** In 2015, Mayor Jorge O. Elorza joined the Global Covenant of Mayors, committing to climate action. In 2016, Mayor Elorza signed the Executive Order on Climate Action which commits Providence to becoming a carbon-neutral city by 2050 and sets goals to prepare Providence for the impacts of climate change. It outlines strategies and near-term actions such as setting an interim greenhouse gas reduction goal; assessing the social, infrastructural, and economic impacts of climate change; and taking carbon emissions and the impacts of climate change into account in all planning and decision making processes. These climate goals were incorporated into a 2016 update to the 2014 Sustainable Providence Plan.

**Climate Resilience.** The Office of Sustainability has hosted several workshops and trainings to help identify and prioritize climate risks and solutions. The City was recently selected to participate in the state's Municipal Vulnerability Program, and has made Climate Resilience a key evaluation criteria for investments made through the City's Capital Improvement Plan.

**Environmental and Racial Justice as a Priority.** The Office of Sustainability has been recognized as a national leader in addressing racial equity in its work. The Providence Racial and Environmental Justice Committee (REJC) was created in 2016 to lead this effort. This focus on equity required Providence's community to reclaim and receive acknowledgement as subject matter experts on the consequences of the City's past actions. Government employees and community members attended Undoing Racism trainings facilitated by The Peoples' Institute for Survival and Beyond.

**Just Providence Framework.** Adopted in 2017 by the Office of Sustainability, this Framework encourages taking actions that allow and encourage frontline communities to enjoy their fundamental right to quality of life and liberty and to live free from discrimination and oppression, acknowledges that people are sacred and respects their cultures, and co-creates and co-leads governance. This effort was led by community organizers and frontline community members of the Racial and Environmental Justice Committee.

**Climate Justice Plan.** Released in 2019 in collaboration with the Racial and Environmental Justice Committee, the Climate Justice Plan includes seven key objectives, 20+ targets, and 50+ strategies aiming to create an equitable, low-carbon, climate resilient city. The Plan addresses the systematic changes necessary in our governance structures, economic system, and community health to ensure a just and equitable transition away from fossil fuels.

**Transparency and Accountability.** Transparency is essential for the City to be held accountable to its climate, equity, and sustainability goals. The Sustainability Dashboard, launched in 2016, is an online resource that publicizes data monitoring the City's progress in

implementation of the Sustainable Providence Plan. The Dashboard is being updated to include metrics from the Climate Justice Plan. The Environmental Sustainability Task Force, composed of nine community members, is responsible for reviewing the data and progress towards citywide goals reported by the Office of Sustainability. This helps provide accountability for the City's environmental agenda and communication to increase transparency. ESTF meetings are open to the public and as of 2020 are also live-streamed.

**Green Justice Zones.** Green Justice Zones (GJZs) use a collaborative governance model with frontline communities to make investments in sustainability and equity in neighborhoods that have been disinvested in and are overburdened with pollution. A key strategy of the Climate Justice Plan, GJZs aim to address the priorities and concerns of the neighborhood. This concept was developed based on a successful model from the [City of Minneapolis](#). Here in Providence we are starting with two Green Justice Zones—one in the near-port community of South Providence and Washington Park, and the other in Olneyville. These two neighborhoods have the highest concentration of Environmental Justice communities according to the EPA's EJ Index tool.

**Reducing Toxic Chemical Use.** Providence aims to reduce neurotoxic chemical exposures in its parks and green spaces throughout the city. In 2020, the City highlighted the efforts of the Parks Department to limit exposure to chemical-heavy pesticide and fertilizer treatments as well as the use of unsafe building materials. With the parks as a best management practice, Providence will launch a Pesticide Free PVD campaign targeted at reducing the use of pesticides in residential lawns and gardens, as well as other toxins in the home.

**Sustainable Procurement Practices.** The City is working with partners to develop a procurement policy that reduces the purchase of products containing neurotoxic chemicals and creates incentives for healthy, sustainable, low-impact products.

**Plastic Bag Ordinance.** The Retail Plastic Bag Reduction ordinance was unanimously approved by Providence City Council on Earth Day, April 22, 2019 and subsequently signed into law by Mayor Elorza. The ban went into effect October 22, 2020, prohibiting retailers from offering single-use plastic bags at the checkout counter. Any checkout bag provided to customers by retail establishments must be a reusable bag or a recyclable paper bag. The ban seeks to reduce the number of plastic checkout bags in the City, curb litter in the streets, protect our waterways and marine environment, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

**Dredging of the Providence River.** Sections of the Providence and Woonasquatucket Rivers in downtown Providence and Waterplace Park were dredged in 2019. The project was funded and supported by Rhode Island voters as a part of the Clean Water and Green Economy Bond and has improved local ecology and commercial, and recreational activities. A second phase of dredging is in the planning stages.

**Providence Stormwater Innovation Center.** The Providence Stormwater Innovation Center (PSIC) launched at Roger Williams Park in the summer of 2020 as a partnership between the

Providence Parks Department, Audubon Society of Rhode Island, The Nature Conservancy, and other partners. The goal of the PSIC is to demonstrate to communities throughout Rhode Island and Southeast New England strategies for improving urban water quality and associated wildlife habitat through the use of innovative green stormwater practices. A wide range of green infrastructure structures and practices will provide hands-on training for municipalities, engineers, construction companies, and scientists who will learn from the successes and failures of their design, implementation, and maintenance.

**Investments in alternative transportation.** In 2020, the City released the Great Streets Plan, which establishes a framework for public space improvements to ensure that every street in Providence is safe, equitable and sustainable. Over the next five years, the City's FY2020-FY2024 Capital Improvement Plan identifies nearly a twenty-million dollar investment in Great Street initiatives, including streetscape and placemaking projects, safety improvements, traffic calming, and the creation of Urban Trails. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) serves as the advisory body to the City on issues pertaining to bicycling and walking. In August 2019, the Pedestrian Bridge spanning the Providence River opened to the public, connecting Fox Point and the Jewelry District. In January 2020, the 1.4-mile Downtown Transit Corridor opened, providing peak bus service connecting Rhode Island's largest employment hubs and institutions to downtown and adjacent neighborhoods on an average of every five minutes.

**Electric Vehicle Procurement.** In 2020 the City took advantage of state incentives to install electric vehicle charging stations at the Public Safety Garage. There is also funding set aside in the master lease program to procure electric vehicles to replace some of the older City fleet vehicles.

**Renewable Energy.** The City launched a solarize program in 2016, which boosted residential solar installments. Since the end of 2016, solar installments have grown by over 100%, contributing 3.75 megawatts (MW) to the grid. As of December 2019, 7.41 MW of solar PV capacity had been installed throughout Providence. In 2019, the City virtually connected to a 23 MW solar farm that is generating credits that cover almost 70% of municipal electricity consumption.

**Energy Benchmarking and Disclosure.** The City has been tracking its energy use using EPA's Portfolio Manager since 2010. In 2016, the City released its first annual Municipal Energy Report, reporting and disclosing its energy use to the public. The Office of Sustainability is working closely with the City Council to develop a citywide energy reporting and disclosure ordinance.

**LED Streetlights.** Completed in 2016, the Street Light Conversion Initiative upgraded street lamps around the city to LED, decreasing energy use and potentially saving \$3 million annually.

**Community Choice Aggregation.** In 2019, the City Council authorized the Office of Sustainability to develop a Community Choice Aggregation plan with the goals of increasing

renewable energy supply in our electricity mix, and stabilizing affordable energy rates. Such plan was approved by the Council and submitted to the Public Utilities Commission in the summer of 2020. The City hopes to launch the program in early 2021.

## Challenges

**Sustainable and Affordable Housing.** 57% of renters outside of the East Side are housing cost-burdened, meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs. Furthermore, buildings account for 70% of the city's carbon footprint. The Climate Justice Plan calls for the City to ensure access to dignified housing and affordable, efficient and clean energy for all Providence residents, eliminate fossil fuel use in all buildings, and ensure that residents who benefit from energy efficiency improvements are not displaced.

**Recycling Contamination.** In 2018, 10,391 tons of contaminated recycling was rejected from RIRRC, costing the City of Providence approximately \$715,697. According to a 2015 study by the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation (RIRRC), about half of plastics that end up in Rhode Island's landfill are recyclable. Addressing recycling contamination is essential to preventing recyclable materials from ending up in Rhode Island's landfill and avoiding the associated tipping fees.

**Solid Waste.** Rhode Island's Central Landfill is expected to reach its capacity by 2024. When this happens, waste disposal costs will increase substantially as the state seeks alternative places and processes to manage its trash. In 2018, the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation estimated that 32% of the state's municipal landfill waste was food and other organic materials that could be composted. Addressing waste reduction and diversion through initiatives such as composting will require innovation and collaboration between the City and community groups. Ongoing and emerging home and business composting operations should be encouraged and supported by the City.

**Transitioning to a Clean Industrial Waterfront.** Providence's industrial waterfront is a significant contributor to local air pollution, including smog and soot. The proximity to Route 95 adds to this burden. As a major transport hub for fossil fuels, the Port of Providence's significant local health impacts disproportionately affect low-income communities of color who live near the industrial waterfront. The Climate Justice Plans calls for more efficient shipping practices and creating a fee on port emissions as we move towards a clean and decarbonized port.

**Structural Racism and White Supremacy Culture.** The exploitation of natural resources during the Industrial Revolution is inextricably linked to the exploitation of people of color through the slave trade in Rhode Island. In this way, climate change and structural racism are historically rooted in the same exploitation. In Providence, structural racism continues to be enacted through many instances of environmental injustice. For example, health outcomes for people of color in Providence are lower compared to that of white people. The City must combat white supremacy culture by incorporating collaborative governance, which shifts from

community engagement to ownership and ensures that communities impacted by environmental racism have political power and influence.

## Opportunities

**Offshore Wind.** The exponential growth of offshore wind along the East Coast presents an opportunity for Providence's industrial waterfront. The City should prioritize development in the port by continuing efforts to ensure that the offshore wind industry can site their supply chains at Providence's industrial waterfront while being held to local workforce, environmental, and economic development targets.

**Community-scale Composting.** Providence's Office of Sustainability, in partnership with Zero Waste Providence, continues to explore neighborhood-scale composting solutions. The City should pilot a city-wide community composting program that incorporates various models including curbside pickup, drop-off locations, and at-home composting. This composting program must not economically or otherwise burden communities of color.

**Carbon Sequestration.** Prioritizing deep root, native plantings in parks and other public green spaces, and adding compost to managed soils will maximize carbon sequestration. This is an important opportunity for the City in its pursuit to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

**Green School Yards.** Through the Healthy Communities Office and Parks Department, the Providence Green Schoolyard Initiative helps schools improve their grounds by adding school gardens, nature education space, stormwater reclamation sites, tree canopy, and other green improvements.

**Community Solar.** Community solar allows residents with barriers to physically installing rooftop solar (such as due to financing, renting, condo associations, or historic district restrictions) to connect to virtual solar development and reap the financial and ecological benefits of renewable energy.

## Objective SE1: Environmental and Climate Justice

Implement a just and equitable approach to transitioning away from fossil fuels and ensure low-income, communities of color no longer suffer disproportionately from environmental impacts. To do this, Providence must ensure that those who are most impacted by the climate crisis in Providence are centered in the decision-making process for crafting and implementing solutions.

## Strategies

- A. Include at least two members from the Racial and Environmental Justice Committee or other Frontline community members on the Environmental Sustainability Task Force.
- B. Partner with frontline community organizations on every major initiative using the collaborative governance model outlined in the Climate Justice Plan.
- C. Train City staff on racial equity, anti-racism, environmental racism, environmental justice, and implicit bias.
- D. Establish a diversity hiring target to shift municipal workforce to be more reflective of the community.
- E. Adopt the Just Providence Framework citywide.
- F. Create a dedicated funding stream to support implementation of the Climate Justice Plan
- G. Report on key metrics and implementation actions that advance Providence towards targets set forth in the Sustainable Providence Plan and Climate Justice Plan. This reporting should happen annually, and should be easily accessible to the public. It must also include measuring and monitoring the level of environmental burden and investments being made in each neighborhood.
- H. Advocate for and support a state-level Climate Justice Working Group.
- I. Establish Green Justice Zones in Frontline Communities. Green Justice Zones use a collaborative governance model with frontline communities to make investments in sustainability and equity in neighborhoods that have been disinvested in and are overburdened with pollution. The City would provide resources to support community members in developing action plans alongside City officials to address the priorities and concerns of the neighborhood. Green Justice Zones seek to achieve health equity, improve quality of life, and climate resilience in frontline communities. They should consider the following:
  - a. Microgrids in critical community spaces (i.e. schools, elder care facilities, community centers, etc.) to enable local energy generation, storage and consumption, add capacity and stability to the larger grid, and operate independently at times.
  - b. Resiliency Hubs.
  - c. Participatory budgeting processes.
  - d. Weatherization, energy efficiency, electrification, and on site renewables, especially for low income community members.
  - e. Training and job opportunities in the above for local community members.
  - f. Policy tools such as zoning to prevent the burden of additional pollution in frontline communities.

## Objective SE2: Climate Resilience

Achieve citywide carbon neutrality by 2050, and assess and prepare for the impacts of climate change using a racial justice lens.



## Strategies

- A. Measure and report community-wide greenhouse gas emissions at least every three years.
- B. Advocate for the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) funding to support environmental justice priorities.
- C. Develop a long-term climate resilience and adaptation plan: Partner with the REJC and other frontline communities to ensure those most impacted by the impacts of climate change are centered in the process of designing and implementing a plan to prepare the city for the impacts of climate change. This plan should examine the impacts of heat, riverine flooding, coastal storms, sea-level rise and other related effects of climate change. It should focus on areas along the Woonasquatucket River, the port, and the Hurricane Barrier.
- D. Consider climate impacts and greenhouse gas emissions in all planning and decision-making processes, including but not limited to capital planning, neighborhood and comprehensive planning, and city boards and commissions.
- E. Address underlying community stresses including housing access, food security, environmental justice, and economic stability to increase climate resilience.
- F. Partner with surrounding municipalities, regional partners, and the State to achieve broader impact.
- G. Expand community facilities for cooling such as cooling centers and water park hours and access. Ensure consistency in operations and communication to the public.
- H. Establish resilience hubs in frontline communities. Resilience hubs are community-run mutual aid centers that can address community needs during disasters and times of normalcy.
- I. Ensure critical facilities have back-up battery storage and microgrids. Replace diesel-burning generators with on-site solar plus battery storage.
- J. Assess and address climate vulnerability and resilience at the port-area.
- K. Eliminate gas leaks in Providence through statewide legislation that requires the utilities to promptly address leaks.
- L. Deploy green infrastructure and other nature-based solutions in public spaces and require similar practices citywide to address stormwater management and reduce flooding.

## Objective SE3: Community and Environmental Health

Create the conditions for healthy air and community spaces free from pollution for all Providence residents, with a focus on Port-area neighborhoods and other communities facing the highest rates of pollution.

## Strategies

- A. Expand and improve green spaces. Partner with community organizations to expand green spaces and parks in frontline communities including the following priorities:

- a. Incorporate community priorities and maximize opportunities for new open space and climate resiliency investments.
  - b. Employ community members in the stewardship of green spaces.
  - c. Prioritize deep root, native plantings in parks and other public green spaces to maximize carbon sequestration, eliminate the need for fossil fuel-based fertilizer and pesticides, and educate the community on the climate and biological benefits of such planting and land use practices. Work with the state to do the same, with an eye towards managed soils to increase carbon sequestration.
- B. Advocate for legally binding climate pollution reduction and clean energy targets at the state-level. Ensure targets incorporate cumulative impact analysis that considers effects of past and current pollution.
- C. Working with the Green Justice Zones, reduce pollution and improve community health through zoning and land use policy changes that limit, or in certain over-burden areas, prohibit new polluting facilities or infrastructure.
- D. Monitor major air pollutants and ensure residents in areas of high air pollution are aware of existing air quality conditions and improvement plans and actions. Residents must also be informed of methods to reduce their exposure to pollution and have a clear process to report violations.
- E. Increase Providence's tree canopy. Prioritize tree plantings in low-canopy areas where heat island index is high, and residents can experience the cooling (electricity savings), air pollution, and water filtration benefits.
- F. Strive for all water bodies to be fishable, swimmable, and accessible, and to provide high quality, affordable drinking water to all residents. Ensure access to such clean water is equitable.
- G. Increase lead safety, promote lead-safe housing, and protect the City's children and families from lead exposure. Meet regularly with partners (including the lead programs administered by the City, Providence Water and and the RI Department of Health) to share progress and accomplishments, discuss cases and questions, and coordinate services and activities.
- H. Support urban agriculture by increasing access to community gardens and providing resources to urban growers.
- I. School garden initiative / Green schoolyards
- J. Reduce neurotoxic chemical exposures in parks, yards and other green spaces, inside homes and workplaces, as well as by private landowners, businesses, and landlords throughout the city, including the State.
- K. Work towards the elimination of brownfields in Providence.

## Objective SE4: Clean Energy

Transition to 100% clean energy supply in Providence, with a focus on local generation, equitable access, and energy democracy.

## Strategies

- A. Transition to 100% carbon-free electricity by 2050, with an interim goal of 50% carbon-free electricity by 2035. Municipal operations should lead by example by transitioning to 100% renewable electricity by 2030. Local generation should account for at least 30% of this supply.
- B. Prioritize energy efficiency in the transition to renewable energy. Specifically, achieve a minimum of 30% energy use reduction by 2030 in all City-owned property.
- C. Increase the ownership of clean energy assets in Providence by frontline community organizations and individuals.
- D. Maximize the economic benefits and job creation, specifically for frontline communities, as Providence transitions to clean, renewable energy.
- E. Advocate and support a statewide shift to energy democracy. The state and utilities should partner with frontline community organizations to create mechanisms for collaborative governance around energy decisions. Specifically, ensure that residents understand how rates are decided and structured to ensure that they do not disproportionately burden low income households.
- F. Implement a Community Choice Aggregation program that prioritizes clean, local renewable energy while increasing affordability and energy democracy.
- G. Increase access to renewable energy, specifically for frontline communities, via community solar and other programs.
- H. Continue efforts to ensure the growing offshore wind industry can use Providence's industrial waterfront to site their supply chains. The companies using this infrastructure should be held to robust local workforce, environmental, and economic development targets.
- I. Address local impacts of regional power operations. Specifically, work with partners to ensure that the operation of Manchester Power--as part of the regional grid--measures, reports and reduces impacts on local air quality on a routine basis.

## Objective SE5: Mobility / Transportation

Ensure that all Providence residents have access to clean and efficient public transportation and infrastructure that supports walking and riding bicycles, while reducing carbon and co-pollutants in the city, with a focus on areas with cumulative health impacts.

## Strategies

- A. Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMTs) 11% by 2035 and 20% by 2050.
- B. Electrify transportation citywide. By 2035, 43% of VMTs in Providence are electric and by 2050, 80% of VMTs are electric.
- C. By 2035, increase the number of employers in Providence offering RIPTA's EcoPass to their employees from 50 to 200.

- D. Maximize efficiency of the City's current vehicle fleet and invest in electric vehicles and charging stations in order to achieve 100% of the City's fleet powered by renewable energy by 2040.
- E. Reduce emissions from school buses.
- F. Increase the number or percentage of City employees using alternative transportation to get to work.
- G. Evaluate and modify traffic patterns to reduce emissions in frontline communities.
- H. Identify resources and programs to improve efficiency and EV infrastructure for buses, garbage trucks, construction and other commercial trucks working in Providence's frontline communities.
- I. Advocate for investing in cleaner and more accessible public transportation.
- J. Ensure all road users have access to balanced, safe, and affordable transportation options.
- K. Invest in infrastructure to make walking and riding bicycles safer and more accessible, especially in low-income areas.
- L. Implement the Great Streets Plan.
- M. Expand bike share, scooter share, and other micro mobility options in low-income communities. Ensure options are carbon free and accessible.
- N. Advocate for the expansion of incentives for electric vehicles.

## Objective SE6: Housing and Buildings

End displacement and ensure dignified housing and access to affordable, efficient and clean energy for Providence residents, while eliminating fossil fuel use in all buildings.

### Strategies

- A. Upgrade municipal buildings to transition to zero energy buildings:
  - a. Conduct a municipal building electrification study to determine a plan for transitioning all City buildings off natural gas and oil and towards zero energy. This study should include community collaboration and prioritize buildings most used by and/or located in frontline communities, such as recreation centers, schools, and community libraries.
  - b. Continue efforts to improve building energy efficiency through lighting, HVAC, and building envelope/ weatherization upgrades.
  - c. Install on-site solar and high efficiency heat pumps or other clean alternatives to natural gas and fossil fuels to meet the goal of 100% renewable heating for municipal buildings by 2040.
- B. Design new municipal buildings to be zero energy. New buildings and major renovations should be built to be zero energy ready, meaning they are highly efficient buildings that do not burn fossil fuels on site.
- C. Work towards heating electrification citywide to meet the following targets:

- a. By 2035: 48% of residential heating and 45% of commercial converted to heat pumps.
  - b. By 2050: 90% of residential heating and 85 percent of commercial converted to heat pumps.
- D. By 2040, reduce low-income energy burden to <5%. Low income energy burden is the percent of income that low-income households are spending on energy.
- E. Ensure all residents can benefit from energy efficiency improvements without concern for being displaced. Renters should not have their rent raised, be evicted, harassed, or otherwise pushed out when basic health, safety or energy efficiency improvements are made. Utility efficiency programs should implement safeguards for ensuring benefits of lower energy costs flow to renters, and are not all held by the landlord. Landlords should adhere to the Rhode Island Landlord/Tenant handbook and mitigate disruptions to renters of energy efficiency and electrification upgrades through actions such as informing tenants when improvements are to begin, and providing adequate accommodations during major energy improvements.
- F. Ensure community members have access to information about how to navigate services related to housing affordability and anti-displacement including:
  - a. Greater dissemination of Landlord Tenant Handbook to ensure tenants know their rights on and off-line. Consider requirements for landlords to provide a handbook upon lease of property.
  - b. Support for low-barrier community legal aid programs.
  - c. Assisting people to navigate services and apply for affordable housing.
  - d. Improve access to information about land trust housing opportunities in Providence.
- G. Develop a local model and assessment plan with frontline communities for “Community Benefit Agreements” (CBA) and investigate requiring them for large new developments and redevelopments, particularly those that receive public dollars/subsidies. Under a CBA, the developer would assess the impact to the surrounding neighborhood including impacts related to housing affordability/displacement, transportation/traffic, local jobs, carbon and air pollution emissions, and health. The developer would then work with community members to minimize negative impacts through the agreement.
- H. Explore mechanisms to prioritize affordable housing for displaced populations. Work with the Providence Housing Authority to develop a process that prioritizes housing for those that have historically been displaced from their communities in Providence. This could be modeled off the Community Preference ordinance in Seattle, which enabled affordable housing providers to prioritize those with historic connections to the communities that have been most harmed by the legacy of discrimination and segregation.
- I. Pass a Building Energy Reporting Ordinance (BERO) that requires building owners to report their energy use and carbon emissions to the City and mandates action to improve energy performance for buildings over 10,000 square feet. The City would then ensure that building energy and emissions information is made readily available to the public, especially to renters, tenants, and prospective renters and buyers.
- J. Explore mandatory emissions reductions for large buildings.

- K. Require homes and small buildings to disclose their energy performance at the time of rental or sale. Apply to buildings under 10,000 square feet or those not covered by BERO. Such a policy helps prospective owners and renters understand how expensive their energy bills will be. Create a clearinghouse of information where energy performance of homes for rent or sale is made available and accessible.
- L. Advocate for the state of Rhode Island to adopt more advanced energy code standards.
- M. Expand knowledge of and access to existing energy efficiency programs. This effort should explore the following:
  - a. Identify specific barriers to participation among LMI populations, including through existing and/or future participation studies
  - b. Make programs more accessible and consumer-friendly.
  - c. Ensure that on-bill financing includes inclusive financing that can help frontline communities access energy efficiency upgrades.
  - d. Employ community members to engage with their communities about existing programs like discount and disability programs, etc.
  - e. Expand cross-referrals between existing programs (e.g. CAPP and Home Repair) and encourage greater use of OneTouch referral system by all home-visiting housing service providers.
- N. Expand energy efficiency, energy access, clean energy and electrification programs to better serve low-income communities, renters, and other underserved populations: This work should seek to:
  - a. Create protections for Providence low income residents through programs like Percentage Income Payment Plan (PIPP) which allows low-income households to pay a fixed percentage of their income for utility bills.
  - b. Prioritize efficiency programs for small businesses and nonprofits, with a focus on locally owned businesses and grassroots organizations for energy improvements, to support retrofits, and green economy transition.
  - c. Expand the cold-climate heat pump program for income eligible customers introduced in 2019.
- O. Identify additional funding for energy efficiency investments in frontline communities and ensure that energy efficiency programs meet the need in low and moderate income households regardless of a household's credit score, or utility bill payment history or ability to pay. Consider the following sources of funding:
  - a. As guidelines permit, increase funding for the Community Development Block Grant-funded City Home Repair Program to serve a greater number of households, and expand marketing of the program and emphasize focus on energy efficiency.
  - b. Support the Providence Housing Authority to leverage funding to conduct energy audits of properties and make energy improvements and eliminate the use of natural gas in their buildings.
  - c. Leverage funding by coupling efficiency upgrades with healthy homes improvements, such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM)<sup>17</sup> and environmental hazard mitigation/ remediation (including mold, lead, asbestos and radon). In

addition, energy efficiency investments should be coupled with routine maintenance and capital investments in buildings.

- P. Work with the state to prevent utility shut-offs and integrate fair rate structures that do not penalize lower consumption users disproportionately. Ensure the PUC is able to consider the impact of health, climate pollution and other social effects of energy infrastructure in their decisions.
- Q. Continue to increase participation in the RePowerPVD Energy Challenge.

## Objective SE7: Local and Regenerative Economy

Build a sustainable, zero-waste economy in Providence, one in which we produce and consume to live well without living better at the expense of others, with a focus on supporting local businesses and creating meaningful work for local frontline community members.

### Strategies

- A. Meet annual targets of 10% of City spending in municipal purchases of goods and services from state-certified women-owned enterprises and 10% of City spending in municipal purchases of goods and services from state-certified minority-owned enterprises as outlined in City ordinance.
- B. Create workforce development programs to support a just transition away from fossil fuels. Create programs that will help prepare frontline communities to have meaningful work in the carbon-free economy. This should include training and education in industries such as construction, energy efficiency, clean energy, electrical trades and engineering, including job training for frontline community members to provide education and implementation of energy efficiency and electrification services. It should also:
  - a. Support self-employment and cooperatives for frontline community members, especially in industries that foster a regenerative economy.
  - b. Create partnerships with frontline community businesses and community organizations to deliver training, efficiency, and renewable energy services and products.
  - c. Train local employers, especially in the clean energy industry, in racial equity and sustainability practices, and provide guidelines that support the training, hiring and retention of local, frontline community members. Create a clear definition for just transition, circular, local and regenerative economy businesses and operations for Providence.
- C. Strengthen City policies supporting local frontline community workers and businesses. Continue efforts to ensure compliance with the First Source Ordinance, which supports local hiring. Implement additional policies to improve local labor conditions, especially for frontline communities. This includes supporting unionized labor and providing a dignified wage, paid time off and other benefits. In addition, work with the state to improve accessibility of becoming W/MBE certified for small businesses.

- D. Create employment pipelines for local residents to work at the port: Review local hiring needs processes within the port area and identify ways to make these jobs more accessible to port-area residents.
- E. By 2040, eliminate food waste in Providence starting with the following programs:
  - a. Create a recognition program for local businesses that are composting and engaging in responsible waste management.
  - b. City-wide community composting program: work with local community groups to pilot community composting throughout the City. Use various models of neighborhood composting that incorporate curbside pickup, multiple drop-off locations, incentivize at-home composting, etc. Ensure that the resulting composting program will not economically or otherwise burden communities of color.
  - c. Explore opportunities to reduce waste through programs such as “gleaning,” where crops that would otherwise be wasted are harvested and donated to those in need.
- F. Increase carbon sequestration in soils through composting. Explore the benefits of adding compost to soils to increase carbon sequestration and stormwater runoff treatment capacity. Continue to promote local use of finished compost.



## 11. Land use

**GOAL 9: Manage change and growth to sustain Providence's high quality of life and preserve its unique attributes.**

"Where should Providence grow?" "How should Providence grow?" These questions are at the heart of the Land Use plan for the city. We know that growth and change is going to happen. The question is where

should it happen and how? This section addresses both of these questions, based on input from Providence's citywide charrette, held in the fall of 2006. During that week, residents created their own vision of where expected growth should occur by placing building blocks representing specific types and amounts of development on a citywide map. While each group had a unique perspective, two key themes emerged; protect residential neighborhoods and direct expected development, residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional, to the downtown, major commercial corridors, and industrial areas. [With the adoption of a new zoning ordinance in 2014, growth has largely followed these broad policies. Residential development in particular has been strong, with thousands of new dwelling units created in downtown and along major corridors.](#)

This section has two important maps. The first is the "Areas of Stability and Change" map, which reflects the themes that were developed at the charrette. This map is a snapshot of where we anticipate growth is likely to happen in the future, and where growth is most appropriate. It also shows the areas of the city where we do not anticipate significant growth and change in the coming years. A quick glance at the map shows that most of the city's residential neighborhoods are considered 'areas of stability'. The 'areas of change' identified on this map also indicate areas for further study through the neighborhood plans. This section identifies objectives and strategies that focus on the preservation of the existing neighborhood character and protecting what is most special about our neighborhoods. The blue and red areas on the map are those areas where we anticipate the most change. This plan aims to direct growth in a controlled way that complements the assets of our city and builds on them. It sets the parameters for growth that will help expand the City's tax base, while preserving and enhancing the livability of our city.

The second map in this section is the "Future Land Use" map. This map is the official Land Use Map of the city and provides the basis for the Zoning Ordinance. The map reflects the existing land use patterns in the city, with a few amendments. These maps are not fixed in time; it is expected that they will be refined and fine-tuned during the neighborhood planning process and periodically in the future.

**This section is organized in three parts.**

- ['Where do we grow?'](#) - Identifies areas of stability and areas of change in the city on Map 11.1 'Areas of Stability and Change', and lists the goals and objectives for both areas.
- ['How do we grow?'](#) - Identifies specific details on how the city should be developed using Map 11.2 'Future Land Use' to establish the future amount and distribution of land uses and allocate scarce resources among competing activities.
- ['Achieving the vision'](#) - Links the Land Use Section to the other sections of the plan by identifying goals and strategies that are specific to land use for each of the other topics. For example, for sustainability and the environment, the built environment and housing, specific objects are identified that relate to land use.

## 11.1 Where do we grow?

**GOAL 10:** Ensure the continued strength and stability of Providence's neighborhoods by directing growth to appropriate areas.

Map 11.1 'Areas of Stability and Change' is the graphic representation of the themes expressed during the charrette. The map identifies four distinct areas which are described in detail below: Areas of Stability,

Growth Districts, Growth Corridors, and Transitional Areas. This map is illustrative only, describing a general policy approach that ~~will be~~has been refined through neighborhood and specific area plans, and amendments to Map 11.2 'Future Land Use' and the Zoning Map.

Map 11.1 Areas of Stability and Change



### Areas of Stability

Areas of Stability include the vast majority of the city, primarily the residential neighborhoods and their associated commercial areas, where limited change is expected over the coming years. There are 25 ethnically and culturally diverse neighborhoods that are known for their quality of life, including their rich architecture. Each neighborhood has its own identity and character. The goal for these areas is to identify and maintain the existing character of the area while accommodating limited new development and redevelopment. Of the city's 25 neighborhoods, all but Downtown are designated as areas of stability in whole or part.

Regarding the existing character of the Areas of Stability, all of these areas contain some development that is nonconforming in that the residential density of the development is higher than what is allowed by the Zoning Ordinance. There are also existing large buildings in some Areas of Stability that may be appropriate for adaptive reuse for housing. Many of these buildings are sturdy historic structures, such as churches and school buildings that are often ideal candidates for conversion to residential uses. In some cases, these types of development may be desirable in the Areas of Stability, such as when the development provides or preserves much-needed housing, both market-rate and affordable, or preserves a historic structure. There are also many legacy uses and buildings allowed by use variances, where the use is restricted to what was granted by the Zoning Board of Review. There should be means to convert those uses to more modern, productive uses without having to meet the onerous standards for a use variance. In addition, there may be select lots or small areas that would be conducive to higher residential density due to their locations near to transit. Therefore, there should be instances where zoning tools can allow for higher residential density, to legalize nonconformities, eliminate use variances, and to allow new development at higher density. These tools should be used very carefully to minimize disruption of stable neighborhoods and preserve their quality of life. Certain high-density uses, such as student housing, should be regulated to prevent negative impacts.

Areas of Stability also contain nonconforming commercial uses. The 2014 Zoning Ordinance recognizes that some of these uses are desirable and created mechanisms to legalize certain types of "neighborhood commercial establishments" while still discouraging the continuance of uses less compatible with residential life such as auto shops.

#### OBJECTIVE LU1: PROTECT AND ENHANCE STABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

Reinforce the stability, character and diversity of the City's neighborhoods by respecting valued development patterns and attributes.

#### Strategies:

- A. Continue to use the neighborhood and specific area planning processes to review the following:
  1. Development patterns and attributes that contribute to the character of Providence's stable neighborhoods.
  2. Significant buildings and view corridors to be preserved.
  3. Environmentally important features to be preserved or enhanced such as views, river and

harbor-front areas and potential pedestrian access points.<sup>1</sup>

4. Needed services and facilities such as schools, parks, recreation, public safety and shopping areas
5. Potential redevelopment opportunities such as vacant or blighted properties.

B. Update regulations to:

1. Ensure that new development maintains existing density levels.<sup>2</sup>
2. Ensure that new development complements existing neighborhood character in scale, massing and design.<sup>3</sup>
3. Encourage the preservation of the existing building stock.<sup>4</sup>
4. Mitigate impacts of non-residential uses on neighboring residential uses.
5. Limit the locations of inappropriate uses such as adult entertainment.
6. Use zoning to strategically allow for limited higher residential density on residential lots and in residential neighborhoods that exhibit a pattern of nonconforming development, or where it can be demonstrated that this density is desirable.
- 5-7. Expand regulation of uses incompatible with stable neighborhoods, including undesirable commercial uses and high-density student housing.

### Areas of Change

This section is intended to direct growth to areas where most people agree that development or redevelopment would be beneficial and is most likely to occur in the coming years. Carefully directing and planning for growth will benefit the city as a whole. Future residents and workers will have access to efficient forms of transportation that will include biking, buses, and, in the future, other forms of public transit. New developments in these areas can improve the economic base, provide jobs, and enhance the visual quality of buildings, streets and neighborhoods.

There are three distinct areas designated on Map 11.1 'Areas of Stability and Change':

- **Growth Districts-** These areas are centered around the downtown core, and along the waterfront and in manufacturing areas in the city. They have many different characteristics, but common traits include: close proximity to a commercial arterial street, locations in older industrial areas or large vacant areas. Opportunities for pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use development and transit hubs can be found in most of these areas. Successfully developing these areas should not come at the expense of displacing existing residents. Instead, these areas are intended to become diverse mixed-use areas, with the addition of new residents to the areas, rather than displacement.
- **Growth Corridors-** These areas are located along key commercial and transit corridors in the city. These corridors present an excellent opportunity for pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use development at higher densities than the surrounding neighborhoods to support an improved transit system. Development on these corridors would likely have nodes of higher intensity and activity at key intersections. The areas considered growth corridors will also address the transition from the commercial uses to the adjacent residential uses.

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<sup>1</sup> See Strategy BE1(B)3

<sup>2</sup> See Strategy BE7(B)

<sup>3</sup> See Strategy BE3(A)

<sup>4</sup> See Strategy BE6(B)

- **Transitional Areas-** These areas are located on the fringes of growth districts and abut residential neighborhoods. These areas are intended to provide a transition in height, density and scale between the larger scale development anticipated in the growth districts and the lower scale and density of surrounding neighborhoods.

The primary role of land use regulation in these areas is to encourage the redevelopment of these areas with economically beneficial development that enhances the city's character and livability. Although regulations cannot dictate the market demand for an area or a specific type of building or industry, they can impose conditions that make redevelopment infeasible without subsidy. Therefore, the strategy for encouraging development is to allow sufficient development intensity and appropriate mixes of uses so that planned land uses will be economically feasible. Design standards will ensure that quality of design is an asset to the surrounding neighborhood and contributes to the city's character. New development must take into consideration natural and man-made environmental constraints and focus on preserving those aspects of our environment that we hold dear, including views, vistas and corridors, and Providence's historic character.

#### **OBJECTIVE LU2: DIRECT GROWTH**

Encourage growth in areas best suited to provide access to jobs, housing and transit.

##### **Strategies:**

- A. Use ~~the~~ neighborhood [and specific area](#) plans to review the following:
  1. Design vision for Growth Districts, Growth Corridors and Transitional Areas identified on Map 11.1 'Areas of Stability and Change' that identifies the preferred pattern and character of development including mass, scale, building height, design, use, and density, and considers topography, streets, sidewalks and open spaces.<sup>5</sup>
  2. Nodes of increased density to support transit options.<sup>6</sup>
  3. Significant buildings and view corridors to be protected.
  4. Environmentally important features to be persevered or enhanced such a views, river and harborfront areas and potential pedestrian access points.
  5. Locations and boundaries for Jobs Districts, land use designations, proposed greenways and proposed open space/public space.
- B. Update regulations to implement the points above and:
  1. Maintain and enhance waterfront views to and from the city.
  2. Reflect design vision adopted as part of the neighborhood plans.
  3. Encourage adaptive reuse of historic structures where economically feasible.
  4. Create incentives for development.

<sup>5</sup> See Strategy BE3(A)

<sup>6</sup> See Strategy BE3(C)



## 11.2 How do we grow?

**GOAL 11:** Promote a balance of uses to support sustainable patterns of development providing healthy, walkable neighborhoods, thriving business districts, and a high quality of life.

The previous section addressed *where* future growth should be directed; this section focuses on more specific details as to *how* the city should be developed. Map 11.2 'Future Land Use' depicts specific land

use designations for each area of the city and is the Official Land Use Map. The purpose of the land use plan is to establish the amount and distribution of land uses and allocate scarce resources among competing activities. The historic mixed-use character of the city poses a challenge with conventional land use designations and regulations. Unlike many newer cities and towns that have uses separated from each other, the mixed-use character of the city Providence is one of its most prized assets. Providence is a living testament to the fact that, with good design, diverse uses can coexist to create special places that are universally valued. The city's mixed-use pattern encourages walking, a goal that this Plan also promotes. Though most land use areas contain multiple uses, the descriptions of each designation depicted on the map refer to the dominant use. The objectives and strategies for the city's waterfront are identified in Chapter 12.

### Future Land Use and Existing Zoning Discrepancies

Currently, there are inconsistencies between the City's existing zoning ordinance and the proposed future land use. These inconsistencies, identified in the lists below and on Map 11.3 Future Zoning Change Areas, are due to the consolidation of various categories, the addition of "Greenways," and various changes in use.

#### Residential Changes

The future land use plan consolidates zoning categories R1A and R1 into "Single Family Residential."

#### Commercial Changes

Commercial changes include the consolidation of C1, C2 and RP into "Neighborhood Commercial/Mixed Use" and the renaming of C3 to "General Commercial/Mixed Use." Additionally, two parcels, located between Traverse Street and I-195, have been converted from C2 to "Public Space/Open Space," and "Medium Residential Density."

#### Mixed Use Changes

The future land use plan creates various new mixed use categories. D1 from the existing zoning code is renamed to "Downtown/Mixed Use" and M1, M2 and MMU are combined to form "Business/Mixed Use."

#### Waterfront Changes

The two waterfront categories, W2 and W3, are also renamed in the future land use plan. W2 is renamed "Waterfront/Mixed Use Neighborhood" and W3 is renamed "Waterfront/Port."

#### Open Space Changes

In the future land use plan, O.S. and P.S. are combined to form "Open Space/Public Space," and "Greenways" have been identified. It should also be noted that Burnside Park and Roger Williams National Memorial, originally categorized as "Open Space," are now designated as "Downtown/Mixed Use" on the future land use

~~plan because “Downtown/Mixed Use” is the dominant use in the area. “Open Space/Public Space” will remain a permissible use within the “Downtown/Mixed Use” area.~~

#### *~~Industrial Changes~~*

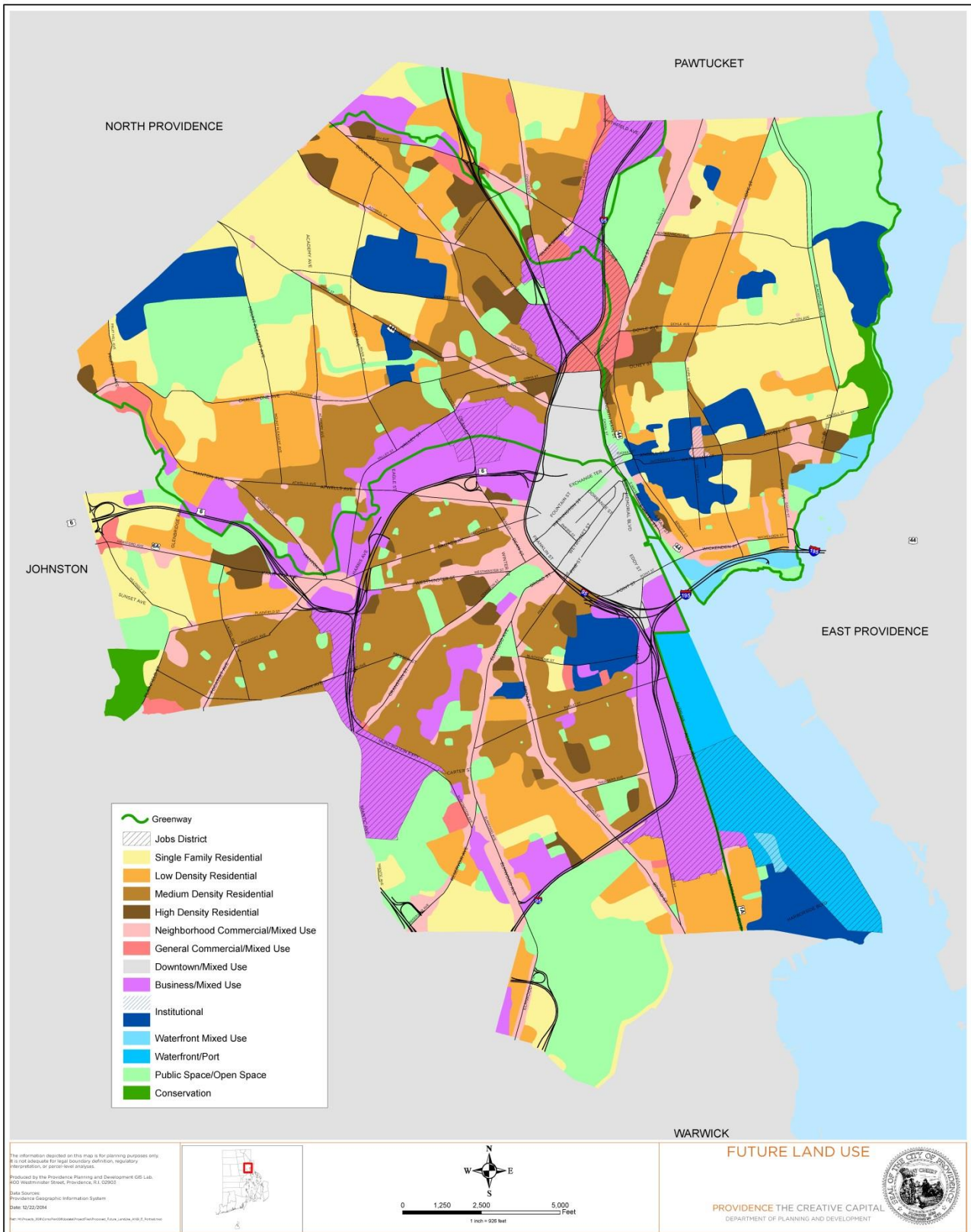
~~While relatively little change is made to industrial areas in the future land use plan, M1, M2, and MMU have been consolidated into “Business/Mixed Use.”~~

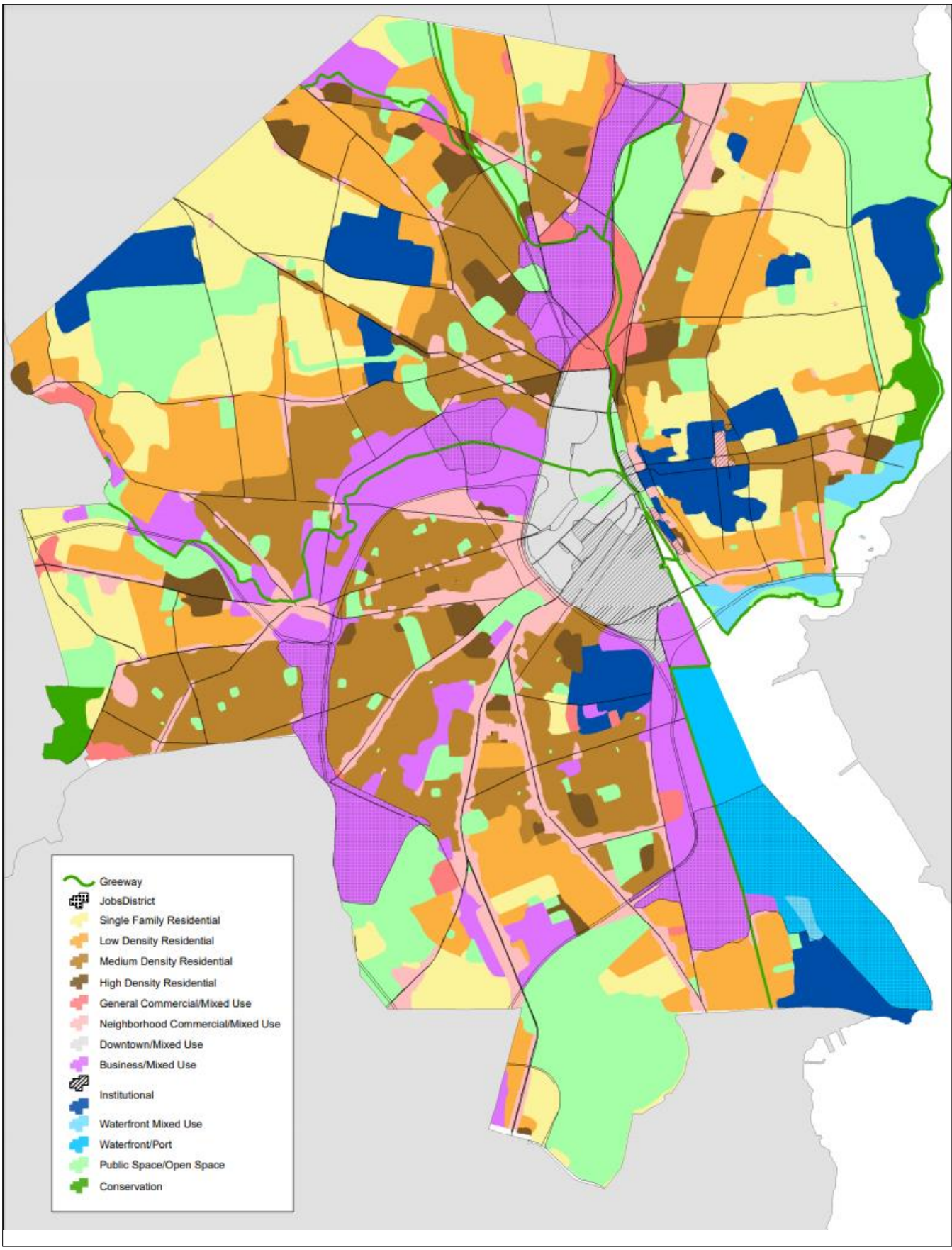
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When this plan was adopted in 2014, it called for dozens of zoning map changes that were later incorporated into a new zoning ordinance. Going forward, the intent of this plan is that all new zoning changes are to be consistent with the Future Land Use Map. The map is intended to be general enough to support a wide range of zoning changes, including when a land use designation allows for more than one zoning district, or when a property is in the vicinity of a the border of more than one land use designation. There are currently no zoning changes required to resolve inconsistencies between the Future Land Use Map and the zoning map.



Map 11.2 Future Land Use







Map 11.3 Future Zoning Change Areas Map [\(Reserved\)](#)

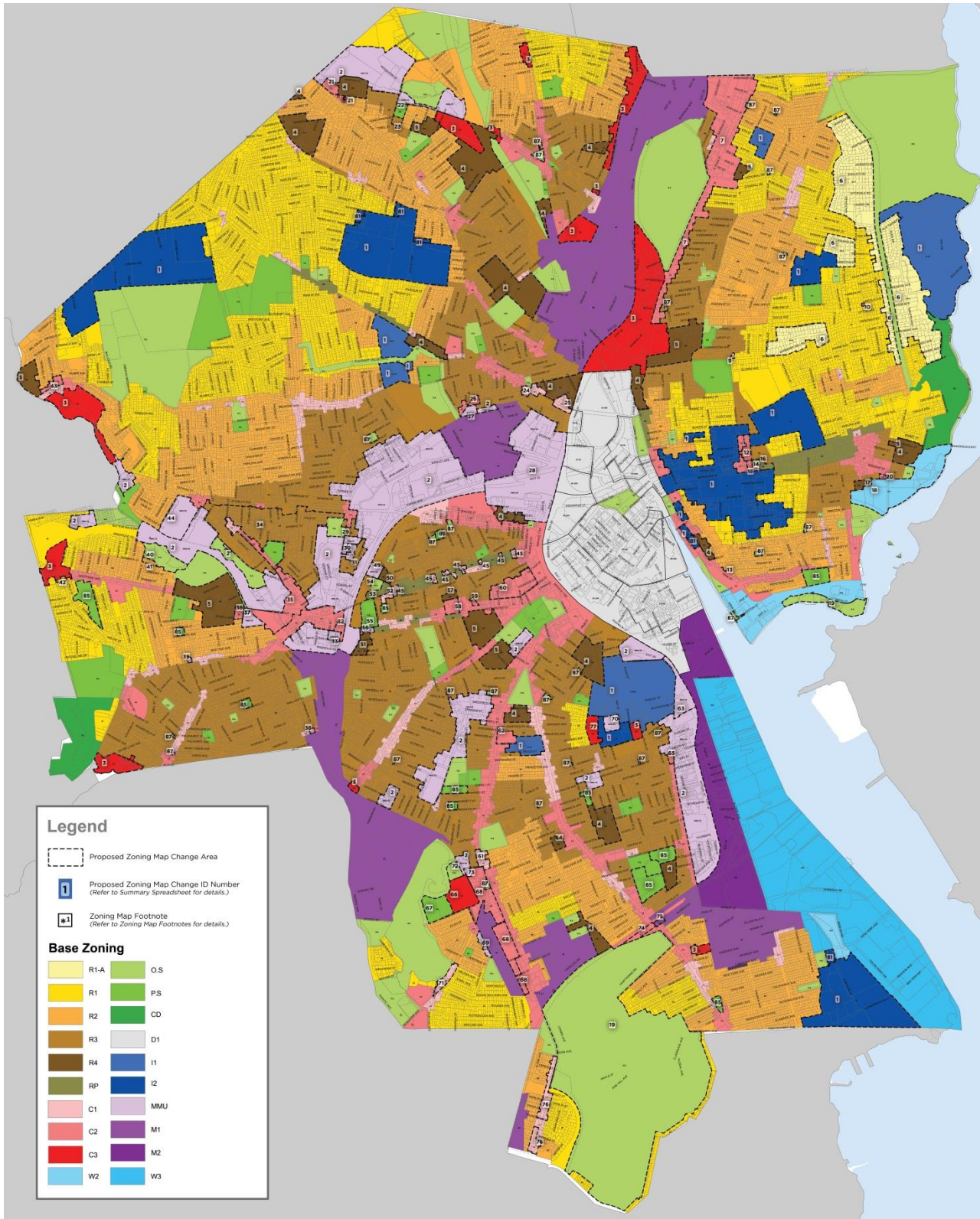


Table 11.1 Future Zoning Change Areas (Reserved)

Change ID #	Current Zoning	Proposed Zoning	Ward	Neighborhood	Explanation
1	varies	I1/I2	Multiple	Multiple	Existing I1 and I2 Institutional Overlay Zones to be converted to Base Zones to simplify and clarify zoning map.
2	M1	MMU-75	Multiple	Multiple	Existing Light Industrial (M1) zones split into two new zones: M1 (jobs only, no residential) and MMU-75 (allows for residential development); implements "Jobs Only" districts designated in Comprehensive Plan.
3	C4	C3	Multiple	Multiple	Existing C4 district to be renamed C3.
4	RG	R4	Multiple	Multiple	Existing RG and RM districts to be combined into new R4 (multi-family residential) zone.
5	RM	R4	Multiple	Multiple	Existing RG and RM districts to be combined into new R4 (multi-family residential) zone.
6	R1	R1-A	2, 3	Blackstone	New R1-A district created to preserve the character of large lot single family areas (7,500 sf and above).
7	C4	C2	3	Hope, Mount Hope	Existing Heavy Commercial area along North Main Street to be rezoned as General Commercial to encourage neighborhood-scale commercial development.
9	R1	C1	3	Blackstone	Tortilla Flats property at corner of Olney and Hope streets to be rezoned from Single-Family Residential to Local Commercial to reflect existing use.
10	R1	C1	2	Blackstone	Lot at southeast corner of Lincoln and Cole avenues to be rezoned from residential to Local Commercial to reflect existing use.
12	R3, RM High	C2	2	College Hill	Lots along west of Brook St between Cushing and Waterman to be rezoned from residential to commercial to accommodate more diverse land uses. Implements Thayer Street Planning Study recommendation.
13	C2	R2	1	Fox Point	Easement off of Transit Street to be changed from C2 to R2 to reflect use as easement to residential property.
14	R3	C1	1	College Hill	Citizen's Bank lot at the northeast corner of Brook and Waterman to be rezoned from residential to commercial to reflect existing use.
15	C1	C2	1	College Hill	Lots west of Brook St, between Angell and Waterman to be rezoned from C1 to C2 to accommodate more diverse land uses. Implements Thayer Street Planning Study recommendation.
16	R3	RP	1	College Hill	Lots along Angell and Waterman, between Brook and Hope streets, to be rezoned from residential to residential-professional to reflect existing uses and character. Implements Thayer Street Planning Study recommendation.
17	W1	R4	1	Fox Point	W1 district is being eliminated. Lots between Pitman and George streets, on either side of Wayland Avenue, to be rezoned as multi-family residential to reflect existing character.
18	W1	W2	1	Fox Point, Wayland	W1 district is being eliminated. Eastside Marketplace, Riverview Place, Richmond Square and other lots along waterfront to be rezoned as W2.
19	PS	OS	1	Fox Point, South Elmwood	India Point Park and Roger Williams Park to be rezoned from Public Space to Open Space to reflect existing uses.
20	W1	C2	1	Wayland	W1 district is being eliminated. Lots at northwest corner of Pitman Street and Wayland Avenue to be rezoned as commercial to reflect existing character.
21	C1	C2	4	Wanskuck	1010 Branch Avenue as well as lots at northern corner of Douglas and Branch avenues to be rezoned from C1 to C2.
22	M1	PS	14	Wanskuck	Area south of Branch Ave, east of Veazie, to be rezoned from M1 to Public Space to reflect existing school (E-Cubed Academy).
23	M1	R3	14	Wanskuck	Area north of Shiloh, east of Veazie to be rezoned from industrial to residential to reflect surrounding character.
24	C2	C1	12	Smith Hill	Commercial lots south and east of Smith/Orms intersection to be rezoned from General Commercial to Local Commercial to encourage smaller-scale commercial development compatible with the neighboring residential zones.
25	C2	C1	12	Smith Hill	Commercial lots on Smith Street, west of I-95 to be rezoned from General Commercial to Local Commercial to encourage smaller-scale commercial development compatible with the neighboring residential zones.
26	C4	C2	12	Smith Hill	Commercial lots at northern corner of Valley and Jewett to be rezoned from Heavy Commercial to General Commercial to encourage neighborhood-scale commercial development.
27	C4	MMU-75	12	Smith Hill	Lots south of Valley/Jewett intersection to be rezoned from heavy commercial to industrial mixed-use to reflect existing uses.
28	D2	MMU-90	12, 13, 15	Smith Hill, Federal Hill	Existing D2 district is being eliminated. Lots along Promenade Street and Providence Pl and D2 area along Cedar and Bradford streets to be rezoned to industrial mixed-use to reflect existing character.
29	C2	R3	15	Olneyville	Lots along Tuxedo and Amherst to be rezoned from commercial to residential to reflect existing character.
30	C2	MMU-75	15	Olneyville	Lots north of Helm Street, east of Valley Street, to be rezoned from commercial to industrial mixed-use to reflect existing character.
31	M1	R3	15	Olneyville	Lots along Desoto Street to be rezoned from manufacturing to residential to reflect existing character.
32	C4	C2	15	Olneyville	Lots south of Westminster Street, east of Troy Street to be rezoned from Heavy Commercial to General Commercial to reflect existing character and encourage neighborhood-scale commercial development.
33	C4	MMU-75	15	Olneyville	Lots east of Troy, between Oak and Dike streets to be rezoned from Heavy Commercial to industrial mixed-use to reflect existing character.
34	RM	R3	6, 15	Olneyville	Residential lots between Atwells and Manton avenues to be rezoned from RM to R3 to reflect existing character.
35	C4	C2	15	Olneyville	Former Price Rite Plaza on Manton Avenue to be rezoned from Heavy Commercial to General Commercial to encourage neighborhood-scale commercial development.
36	R3	C1	15	Silver Lake	Two lots along Union Ave, on either side of Cumerford St, to be rezoned from residential to Local Commercial.
37	C4	MMU-75	7	Hartford	Lot at southeast corner of Hartford Avenue and Heath Street to be rezoned from Heavy Commercial to mixed-use industrial to reflect existing character.
38	C4	C2	7	Hartford	Lot south of Hartford Avenue between Heath and Etna streets to be rezoned from Heavy Commercial to General Commercial to encourage neighborhood-scale commercial development.
39	C4	C1	7	Silver Lake	Lots at the northeast corner of Laurel Hill Avenue and Plainfield Street to be rezoned from Heavy Commercial to Local Commercial to reflect surrounding character and encourage smaller-scale commercial development compatible with the neighboring residential zones.
40	M1	OS	7	Hartford	Former Lincoln Lane and Braid site to be rezoned from industrial to Open Space to reflect existing use.
41	M1	R2	7	Hartford	Residential lots along Barbara Street, east of Melissa Street, to be rezoned from industrial to residential to reflect existing use.
42	C4	R1	7	Hartford	Three wooded lots between Milo and Killingly streets, behind Citizens Bank on Hartford Avenue, to be rezoned from commercial to residential.









Change ID #	Current Zoning	Proposed Zoning	Ward	Neighborhood	Explanation
43	C4	C2	5	Manton	Lots on north side of Manton Avenue, west of Fruit Hill Avenue to be rezoned from Heavy Commercial to General Commercial to encourage neighborhood-scale commercial development.
44	RG	MMU-75	15	Olneyville	Manton Heights property to be rezoned from Residential General to Mixed-Use Light Industrial to accommodate planned future redevelopment of the site.
45	RP	C1	13	Federal Hill	Lots at key nodes along Broadway to be rezoned from Residential-Professional to Local Commercial to reflect existing uses: Ringgold St (Allstate Insurance), Pallas St (Broadway Bistro), Vinton St (Julian's, DePasquale Pharmacy), Knight St (Seven Stars, floral shop), Courtland St (Cluck, Broadway Gas), Tobey St (Nick's).
49	R3	MMU-75	13	Federal Hill	Lots north of Bell Street Park, between Ridge Street and Route 6, to be rezoned from Three-Family Residential to light industrial mixed-use to reflect existing use.
50	R3	R4	13	Federal Hill	Parenti Villa property to be rezoned from Three-Family Residential to Multi-Family Residential to reflect existing use.
51	R3	R4	13	West End	Marvin Gardens property to be rezoned from Three-Family Residential to Multi-Family Residential to reflect existing use.
52	R3	C1	13	Federal Hill	Lots south of Broadway between Tobey and one lot west of Bainbridge to be rezoned from residential to commercial to reflect existing character.
53	R3	RP	13	Federal Hill	Lots north of Broadway west of Tobey, to be rezoned from residential to residential-professional.
54	R3	OS	13	Federal Hill	Bell Street Park to be rezoned from residential to Open Space to reflect existing use.
55	R3	PS	13	Federal Hill	Asa Messer Elementary School to be rezoned from residential to Public Space to reflect existing use.
56	R3	MMU-75	13	West End	Lots along the south side of Westminster Street, east of Route 6/10 to be rezoned from residential to mixed-use industrial to reflect existing uses.
57	D2	R4	13	Federal Hill	Existing D2 district is being eliminated. Area to be between Carpenter and Grant streets (Grant Mill Apartments) to be rezoned to multi-family residential to reflect existing use.
58	D2	C2	13	Federal Hill	D2 District being eliminated. D2 zone along Westminster, west of Bridgman Street, to be rezoned as General Commercial.
59	R3	C2	13	Federal Hill	Lots at the intersection of Washington and Knight streets to be rezoned from residential to General Commercial to reflect existing uses.
60	C4	C2	13	Federal Hill	Heavy Commercial area north of Washington Street (along Battey, Winter and Cargill streets) to be rezoned to General Commercial to better reflect surrounding character and encourage neighborhood-scale commercial development.
61	C2, R2	C1	9	Elmwood	Lots on either side of Elmwood Avenue from Ontario Street north to Locust Grove Cemetery to be rezoned to Local Commercial to encourage commercial uses compatible with surrounding residential districts.
62	C4	C2	11	Elmwood	Lot east of Elmwood Avenue between Dartmouth Avenue and Plenty Street to be rezoned from Heavy Commercial to General Commercial to reflect surrounding character.
63	C2, C4	MMU-75	11	Upper South Providence	Lots east of Eddy Street from Dudley Street to Willard Ave to be rezoned from Commercial to mixed-use industrial to reflect surrounding character.
64	R3	R4	9	Elmwood	Lots east of Niagara Street on either side of Ontario Street to be rezoned from R3 to multi-family residential to reflect existing multi-family use.
65	M1	C2	10	Lower South Providence	Lots west of Eddy Street, from Potters Avenue to O'Connell Street (site of Love For All Learning Center and parking lot), to be rezoned from light industrial to General Commercial to match surrounding character.
66	M1	C3	8	Reservoir	Former Stop and Shop Plaza to be rezoned from industrial to Heavy Commercial.
67	M1	PS	8	Reservoir	Alvarez High School to be rezoned from industrial to Public Space to reflect existing use.
68	C4	C2	8	Elmwood	Heavy Commercial area west of Elmwood Avenue near Reservoir Avenue intersection to be rezoned to General Commercial to encourage neighborhood-scale commercial development.
69	C4	MMU-75	8	Reservoir	Lots currently zoned as Heavy Commercial along Narragansett Ave, between Reservoir Ave and Woodmont St, to be rezoned as mixed-use industrial to reflect existing uses.
70	PS	MMU-75	11	Upper South Providence	Former Flynn School property to be rezoned as Mixed-Use Industrial to allow for a greater range of uses.
71	C2	C1	8	Reservoir	Lots along west side Reservoir Ave, between Wildwood and Stadden streets, to be rezoned from General Commercial to Local Commercial to encourage the development of smaller-scale commercial uses compatible with the neighboring residential zones.
72	M1	OS	8	Reservoir	Lot on Mashapaug Pond to be rezoned from industrial to Open Space.
73	C4	MMU-75	8	West End	Vacant lot at the end of Earl Street, west of Elmwood Avenue, to be rezoned from Heavy Commercial to mixed-use light industrial.
74	C4	C2	9	South Elmwood	Heavy Commercial lot along west side of Broad Street, between Roger Williams Park and I-95, to be rezoned to General Commercial to encourage neighborhood-scale commercial development.
75	C4	M1	10	Washington Park	Heavy Commercial lot along east side of Broad Street, between Aldrich Street and I-95, to be rezoned to Light Industrial.
76	R2	C1	8	South Elmwood	Lots on either side of lower Elmwood Avenue from Route 10 south to the City line to be rezoned from residential to Local Commercial to reflect existing uses and to encourage the development of smaller-scale commercial uses compatible with the neighboring residential zones.
77	R3	C3	11	Upper South Providence	Urban League property to be rezoned from residential to Heavy Commercial (C3) to allow for a greater mix of uses.
78	--	TOD Overlay	11	Upper South Providence, West End	New Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Overlay District to be introduced along Broad St from Trinity Square north to the Service Road.
79	--	TOD Overlay	3	Hope	New Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Overlay District to be introduced for upper North Main Street between North Burial Ground and the Pawtucket city line.
80	--	I-3E Overlay	Multiple	Multiple	Institutional campuses to be expanded through I-3E (Educational Overlay) District.
81	--	I2	Multiple	Multiple	Expansion of Institutional Zone as I2 Institutional District.
85	varies	PS	Multiple	Multiple	The following City-owned properties to be rezoned to Public Space to reflect existing use as public schools: a. West Broadway Middle School, 29 Bainbridge Avenue (Plat 35, Lot 543) b. Vartan Gregorian Elementary School, 455 Wickenden Street (Plat 17, Lot 2) c. DelSesto Middle School, 152 Springfield Street (Plat 15, Lot 585) d. Frank D. Spaziano Elementary School, 85 Laurel Hill Avenue (Plat 107, Lot 84) e. Webster Avenue Elementary School, 191 Webster Avenue (Plat 104, Lot 50) f. Alfred Lima, Sr. Elementary School, 222 Daboll Street (Plat 43, Lot 570) g. Leviton Dual Language School, 65 Greenwich Street (Plat 43, Lot 979) h. Robert L. Bailey, IV Elementary School, 65 Gordon Avenue (Plat 48, Lots 772, 773, 775, 958, 1084) i. Providence Academy of International Studies, 182 Thurburn Ave (Plat 54, Lot 923) j. Young and Woods Elementary School, 674 Prairie Avenue (Plat 54, Lots 325, 916, 817) k. Alan Shawn Feinstein Elementary School at Broad Street, 1450 Broad Street (Plat 58, Lot 456)


86	R3	PS	13	Federal Hill	Zuccolo Recreation Center (Plat 28, Lot 676) to be rezoned from three-family residential to public space to reflect existing use as city recreation center.
87	varies	OS	Multiple	Multiple	<p>The following City-owned properties to be rezoned to Open Space to reflect existing use as public parks:</p> <p>a. Alphonso Street Totlot, 10 Alphonso Street (Plat 46, Lot 267)  b. Brassil Memorial Park, 41 Arnold Street (Plat 16, Lot 312)  c. Cerbo Square, 136 Murray Street (Plat 109, Lot 146)  d. Columbus Square, 24 Reservoir Avenue (Plat 52, Lot 20)  e. Corliss Landing, 579 South Water Street (Plat 18, Lot 16)  f. Diamond Street Playground, 136 Diamond Street (Plat 31, Lot 188)  g. Fenner Square, 80 Governor Street (Plat 17, Lot 234)  h. Hopkins Square, 480 Branch Avenue (Plat 71, Lot 139)  i. Jacqueline Clements Park, 333 Dudley Street (Plat 23, Lot 979)  j. Jennifer Rivera Memorial Park, 40 Niagara Street (Plat 49, Lot 260)  <del>k. Knight Street Park, 63 Knight Street (Plat 39, Lot 436)</del>  l. Mable Smith Totlot, 103 Taylor Street (Plat 45, Lot 698)  m. Morris Avenue Totlot, 397 Morris Avenue (Plat 7, Lot 120)  n. Ninth Street Park, 21 Ninth Street (Plat 91, Lot 649)  o. Pearl Street Park, 161 Pearl Street (Plat 23, Lot 237)  p. Pleasant Street Park, 34 Pleasant Street (Plat 68, Lot 10)  q. Regent Avenue Playground, 140 Regent Avenue (Plat 65, Lot 187)  r. Rochambeau Square, 8 Brewster Street (Plat 73, Lot 319)  s. Salisbury Street Totlot, 13 Salisbury Street (Plat 46, Lot 313)  t. Silver Lake Memorial Park, 308 Pocasset Avenue (Plat 109, Lot 423)  u. St. Ann's Plaza, 579 Chapel Street (Plat 71, Lot 600)  v. St. John's Park, 47 Sulton Street (Plat 28, Lot 165)  w. Summit Avenue Park, 84 Ninth Street (Plat 91, Lot 131)  x. Waldo Street Totlot, 136 Waldo Street (Plat 43, Lot 729)  y. Warren Avenue Playground, 35 Warren Street (Plat 30, Lot 309)</p>

The following table contains descriptions of each land use designation as well as a photograph of a typical area.  
(Table 11.2 Land Use Designations)



**Table 11.2 Land Use Designations**

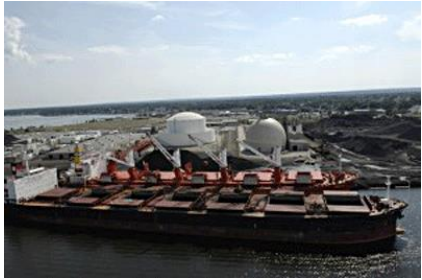



Use Designation	Description	Photo
<b>Single Family Residential</b>	These areas are characterized <a href="#">primarily</a> by one-family dwellings in detached structures on separate lots. Lot sizes vary by neighborhood with most ranging from 3,200 to 6,000 square feet. Some areas have lot sizes upwards of 7,500 square feet. <a href="#">These areas may contain other compatible uses and some residential development at higher, but appropriate densities.</a>	
<b>Low Density Residential</b>	These areas are characterized <a href="#">primarily</a> by one-family and two-family dwellings in detached structures on separate lots. Buildings typically range in height from one to three stories. Lot sizes vary by neighborhood, with most ranging from 3,200 to 5,000 square feet. In some areas, small-scale commercial uses, such as neighborhood corner stores, may be appropriate. <a href="#">These areas may contain other compatible uses and some residential development at higher, but appropriate densities.</a>	

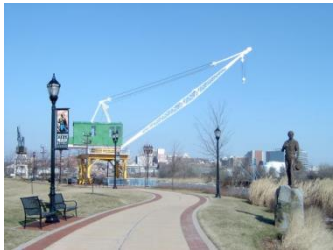


Use Designation	Description	Photo
<b>Medium Density Residential</b>	These areas are characterized by one- to three-family dwellings and multi-family dwellings on separate lots. Buildings typically range in height from one to three stories. Lot sizes vary by neighborhood, with most ranging from 3,200 to 5,000 square feet. In some areas, small-scale commercial uses, such as neighborhood corner stores, may be appropriate. <a href="#">These areas may contain other compatible uses and some residential development at higher, but appropriate densities.</a>	
<b>High Density Residential</b>	These areas are characterized by multi-family dwellings, with some one-, two- and three-family dwellings interspersed. Multi-family buildings typically range from three to four stories in height. In some areas, small scale commercial uses, such as neighborhood corner stores, may be appropriate. <a href="#">These areas may contain other compatible uses.</a>	
<b>Neighborhood Commercial/Mixed-Use</b>	These areas are characterized by traditional, pedestrian and transit-oriented uses that serve local neighborhood needs for convenience retail, services, professional offices, and housing. Buildings are set close to the street, with entrances and facades oriented toward the street. Residential uses are encouraged.	
<b>General Commercial/Mixed-Use</b>	These areas are characterized by commercial uses such as large shopping complexes and plazas that serve citywide needs for retail, services and office establishments. Residential uses are encouraged in these areas. These areas may be located along commercial corridors that accommodate large commercial uses or <a href="#">are</a> clustered <del>uses</del> at a higher density to support transit.	

Use Designation	Description	Photo
Downtown/Mixed-Use	<p><u>Designation of T</u>his area is intended to revitalize and restore the historic core business area and to accommodate appropriate expansion of the downtown area. It is characterized by a variety of business, financial, institutional, public, quasi-public, cultural, residential, appropriate light manufacturing, and other related uses. -To preserve and foster the economic vitality of downtown, a mix of compatible uses is encouraged to promote commercial and other business activity at the street level and residential, office, and commercial uses on the upper floors. In order to promote economic development while maintaining compatibility between uses, sub-districts may be established to address building height, entertainment and light industrial uses.</p> <p><del>It should be noted that in addition to the contiguous parcels in the historic core business area, there are several Downtown/Mixed-Use parcels located between Westminster, Grant, and Bridgham Streets. These parcels have been designated as Downtown/Mixed-Use in the past and no change will be made.</del></p>	



Use Designation	Description	Photo
<b>Business/Mixed-Use</b>	These areas are intended to foster the expansion of business, industrial, commercial, office, and medium-to-high density residential uses into former manufacturing areas and historic mill buildings. A variety of business, financial, institutional, public, quasi-public, cultural, light industrial, manufacturing and other related uses are encouraged to provide a mix of activities in these areas. Certain areas of this land use designation allow for residential uses, <u>however, and</u> certain areas do not, <u>as indicated by the presence of the Jobs District designation.</u>	
<b>Waterfront Mixed-Use/Neighborhood</b>	These areas are intended for a mixture of residential and neighborhood serving commercial, recreational and open space/public space uses.	

Use Designation	Description	Photo
<b>Waterfront/Port</b>	<p>These areas are intended for waterfront port and maritime uses to promote the Port of Providence and related maritime industrial and commercial uses within the waterfront area. The purpose of this designation is to protect the waterfront as a resource for water dependent industrial uses, and to facilitate the renewed use of a vital waterfront for economic growth and expansion.</p>	
<b>Public/Open Space</b>	<p>These areas are intended to ensure that open space and areas for public buildings and facilities are preserved in the city. These areas are characterized by parks, baseball fields, soccer fields, and supporting uses, as well as areas for passive recreation. Other typical uses include government-owned park and recreation areas and public buildings such as fire stations and schools. These areas are typically publicly owned, but may include privately owned land.</p>	 
<b>Conservation</b>	<p>These areas are intended to ensure woodlands, rivers, streams, ponds, wetlands, floodplains, and other sensitive natural areas are preserved in their natural scenic and ecological condition. These areas may be publicly or privately owned.</p>	

Use Designation	Description	Photo
<b>Greenway</b>	These areas are intended to provide active and passive recreation and open space along the waterfront, and to provide continuous connections between open spaces. They may vary in width depending on the potential for adjacent public/open space or other amenities. They may be publicly or privately owned.	
<b>Institutional</b>	These areas-, which include both zones and overlays, are institutional campuses, designed to permit institutional growth and development while controlling and limiting negative impacts on neighborhoods.	
<b><u>Jobs District</u></b>	<u>These areas are intended to promote business and job growth and are intended to exclude housing, which may interfere with such growth.</u>	

### 11.2.1 Residential Areas

The majority of land in the city is developed as residential neighborhoods. These areas contribute significantly to the livability of the city; their special character is what attracts many people to Providence. Residents have voiced strong support for protecting residential neighborhoods from intrusions that negatively impact quality of life, such as the expansion of commercial and institutional uses. Since 2000, there has been an increase in residential infill projects in virtually every neighborhood in the city. While some projects fit seamlessly into the surrounding neighborhood, [designs of](#) many of the new homes do not respect the character of the surrounding area. While the City supports the expansion of housing opportunities, it is essential that new construction respects the valued attributes and character of the surrounding neighborhood.

While residential dwellings are the predominant use in these areas, one of the things that makes Providence special is the variety of neighborhood stores and service establishments that are scattered throughout residential areas, within walking distance of residents. These types of uses are appropriate in certain locations, with limits on size and design to ensure compatibility with adjacent residential properties. In many neighborhoods there are also historic buildings, such as former mills, [churches](#) and schools that are part of the urban fabric but are no longer suitable for their original uses. To promote the preservation of these buildings, land use regulations must be flexible in terms of their use and density. [In addition, housing types aren't uniform within neighborhoods. For example, it is quite common to see two-, three-, and even multi-family buildings in single-family zones. This is not always a negative, especially since it allows for a range of affordability. As affordability becomes an increasing concern, the zoning ordinance should include mechanisms to recognize nonconformities, and in some cases allow for increases in housing stock in residential areas while maintaining neighborhood character. Some tools to achieve this goal include allowing rowhouses, cluster development, and accessory dwelling units, and removing the provision in the ordinance that calls for merging small lots.](#)

The City recognizes the importance of providing a variety of residential types and densities to ensure balanced housing choices for City residents. At the same time, the City aims to ensure that the residential integrity of the neighborhoods [are-is](#) preserved and protected from the encroachment of commercial, industrial and other uses.

#### OBJECTIVE LU3: MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Promote the development of a wide range of residential land uses to ensure a diversity of housing choices (type and density) for City residents, while limiting the amount and type of other land uses within residential areas designated on Map 11.2 'Future Land Use'.

#### Strategies:

- A. Encourage development that is consistent with residential character by updating regulations to:
  1. Allow for residential development at the same density levels as currently exist.
  2. Allow for a range of housing types to accommodate increased population that is consistent with the character of the neighborhood in scale, density and overall design.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See Strategy H5(E)

- 3. Allow for limited non-residential uses such as neighborhood corner stores, offices and home-based businesses while maintaining the residential character of the area.
- B. Encourage adaptive reuse of historic non-residential buildings in residential areas by allowing for increased residential density or limited non-residential uses to make reuse economically feasible.<sup>8</sup>
- C. Encourage neighborhood revitalization by targeting vacant lots for housing, green space, playgrounds, or community gardens, based on the needs and density of the neighborhood.
- D. Use zoning to strategically allow for limited higher residential density on residential lots and in residential neighborhoods that exhibit a pattern of nonconforming development, or where it can be demonstrated that this density is desirable.
- E. To increase housing stock while maintaining neighborhood character, adopt regulations to allow for rowhouses, cluster development, and accessory dwelling units; and revise the zoning provision regarding merger of small lots.
- F. Expand regulation of uses incompatible with stable neighborhoods, including high-density student housing.
- ~~D.~~

### 11.2.2 Mixed-Use Areas

While most areas in the city have more than one single use, the truly mixed-use areas are the city's downtown, commercial corridors, former manufacturing areas and parts of the City's waterfront. Urban life and vitality are the heart of these areas, with residential, retail, office, industrial, civic, institutional, and entertainment uses jumbled together. Mixed-use takes many forms, such as small commercial blocks, commercial areas along main corridors, shopping areas and plazas, office buildings with retail uses on the ground floor, stores with apartments on upper floors, or former mill buildings with a mix of industrial, office and residential uses.

Mixing uses creates desirable places to live by improving the balance of jobs to housing and creating healthy neighborhoods where residents can walk to shops and services. It is in these mixed-use areas that nodes of concentrated development could be established to link future development to transit hubs. In these nodes, greater residential density and buildings heights could be accommodated to create a more efficient pattern of development and protect the character of the residential neighborhoods.

Building form is important in mixed-use areas. The urban fabric of our city, with buildings set to the street edge, pedestrian amenities and human-scaled building massing and design must be preserved and must guide the character of future developments. When many uses co-exist, it is the built environment of those areas that establish the character. Establishing a cohesive form allows for uses to change over time without significantly changing the character of the area.

While a variety of uses is encouraged in these areas, it is important that no one use dominates. For example, in some of the city's former manufacturing areas, residential uses are permitted; however it is not intended that those areas should become primarily residential. A healthy mix of uses is essential to the future vitality of downtown, the commercial areas, the former manufacturing areas, and parts of the City's waterfront.

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<sup>8</sup> See Strategy H2(D)

**OBJECTIVE LU4: PROMOTE VIBRANT MIXED-USE AREAS**

Promote the development of mixed-use areas with different levels of intensity and use to improve the jobs/housing balance and encourage alternative modes of transportation.

**Strategies:**

- A. Promote the development of a mixture of residential and neighborhood-serving commercial uses in areas designated as Neighborhood Commercial/Mixed-Use on Map 11.2 'Future Land Use' as a transition to adjacent residential neighborhoods by:
  1. Encouraging the development of retail, office and service uses that are compatible with surrounding areas.
  2. Encouraging and, in areas where appropriate, requiring buildings to be a minimum of two stories to support potential residential development on upper floors.
  3. Updating regulations to include design criteria focused on pedestrian orientation and maintaining neighborhood character.
- B. Promote the development of a mixture of commercial uses that serve citywide needs and higher density residential uses in areas designated as General Commercial/Mixed-Use on Map 11.2 'Future Land Use' along major arterials and select areas to create nodes of activity by:
  1. Identifying areas that should be developed with a concentration of commercial and higher density uses to support transit.<sup>9</sup>
  2. Identifying areas where residential uses are not appropriate.
  3. Updating regulations to include design criteria focused on maintaining and improving neighborhood character, pedestrian orientation and accessibility to transit.
- C. Encourage continued investment in the area designated as Downtown/Mixed-Use on Map 11.2 'Future Land Use' with a high concentration of business, commercial, institutional, cultural, and residential uses by:
  1. Identifying changes to regulations and other strategies to minimize the conflict between residential, business and entertainment uses, such as development a measurement process for nightlife's impact and creating a strategy for its use by the Board of Licenses in managing the renewal of licenses and projecting the effect of a new license issue.
  2. Refining the unified design vision for the area through the neighborhood planning process, using previous plans such as the DOWNCITY Plan, the Jewelry District Plan and Providence 2020 as a starting point.
  3. Refining existing regulations to better implement the goals of protecting the historic character and environmental assets of the area while promoting new investment.
  4. Identifying strategies to increase parking downtown without negatively impacting the character of the built environment.<sup>10</sup>
  5. Developing zoning regulations for the Jewelry District and the surplus I-195 land that encourage a mix of uses, and promote urban design excellence.
  6. Promote development of the knowledge economy in Downtown.

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<sup>9</sup> See Strategies BE3(B) and M7(B)

<sup>10</sup> See Strategy M6(G)

- D. Encourage the development of former manufacturing areas designated as Business/Mixed-Use on Map 11.2 'Future Land Use' with a balanced mixture of commercial, light industrial, office and residential uses by:
1. Promoting these areas for business retention and expansion for a variety of businesses.
  2. Encouraging the adaptive reuse of former manufacturing buildings with a mixture of uses that contributes to the character of the area if economically feasible.
  3. Updating regulations to limit residential uses to upper floors and ensure that residential uses do not impede business development efforts.

### 11.2.3 Business Areas

It is vital for Providence to provide opportunities for industries and industrial expansion which will employ residents of Providence, while ensuring minimal impact on adjacent residential areas. These areas are designated as Jobs Districts on Map 11.2 'Future Land Use'. Manufacturing land uses consists of land that is occupied by industries such as jewelry and assembly companies. Manufacturing uses are located throughout the City, with a number of industrial parks such as Huntington Industrial Park, Silver Spring Industrial Park, West River Industrial Park, and the industrial area of Washington Park. There has been a significant reduction in the amount of land occupied by industries in the last few decades. As manufacturing companies of all kinds generally employ large numbers of people and contribute to a diverse economic base, efforts will be made through this plan to encourage manufacturing firms to grow and expand in these areas. Businesses need areas where they can predictably grow and expand in the future without the concern of conflicts that often arise between manufacturing/industrial uses and residential uses. Therefore, no residential uses of any kind are permitted in the Jobs Districts.

#### OBJECTIVE LU5: PROTECT AREAS FOR JOBS

Promote business retention and expansion in areas best suited for industrial and commercial development.

#### Strategies:

- A. Encourage the growth of industrial activities by preserving industrial land primarily for manufacturing purposes in areas designated as Jobs Districts on Map 11.2 'Future Land Use'.
- B. Promote the preservation of industrial parks to encourage the expansion and, if possible, the return of manufacturing companies to the city to expand the economic base.
- C. Prohibit all residential uses in the Jobs District, including artist live-work space.

### 11.2.4 Natural and Civic Areas

Natural and civic spaces are an extension of the community. When these spaces work well, they serve as a stage for the public lives of city residents. If they function in their true civic role, they can be the settings where celebrations are held, where friends run into each other, and where cultures mix. When cities and neighborhoods have thriving open and civic spaces, residents have a strong sense of community; conversely, when such spaces are lacking, people may feel less connected to each other.

Natural and open spaces contribute to community health – socially, economically, culturally and environmentally. They enhance the civic realm – not only visually, but also in providing a sense of character and



a forum for public activities. All of these assets, as well as the opportunities these places offer residents to relax and enjoy themselves, and to exercise and recreate add up to greater city livability.

Public places offer free, open forums for people to encounter art, to enjoy performances, and to participate in other cultural activities. From concerts at the Temple to Music in Roger Williams Park to outdoor art displays downtown, open spaces foster and enhance a city's cultural life. WaterFire, the award-winning fire and music installation, has had an impressive cultural and economic impact, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors downtown on summer and fall evenings. These events bring a great variety of people together and set the stage for positive social interaction.

Open space and public buildings land uses consist of areas committed to planned open space such as parks, playgrounds and cemeteries; and public buildings such as City Hall, public schools, and police and fire stations. Open space areas have been designated to allow for the active and recreational needs of city residents. As the population of the city continues to change, the recreational needs of city residents are also changing. Through the open space objectives and strategies presented in this plan the city will meet these changing needs and efforts will be made to ensure that these needs are addressed on an ongoing basis.

#### **OBJECTIVE LU6: MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE OPEN SPACES AND CIVIC AREAS**

Preserve and protect Providence's open and public spaces to enhance the overall quality of life for city residents.

##### **Strategies:**

- A. Provide opportunities for recreation and visual relief by preserving Providence's parks, playgrounds, golf courses, cemeteries and undeveloped city-owned open space.
- B. Preserve open space along the city's waterbodies by creating open space corridors along rivers and ponds.<sup>11</sup>
- C. Promote a diversity of recreational activities through the use of active open space in the City's parks, playgrounds and other recreational areas.
- D. Protect and preserve environmentally sensitive and significant areas.<sup>12</sup>
- E. Provide and encourage the provision of a variety of active and passive recreation facilities geographically distributed to serve the present and future needs of city residents.
- F. Expand the amount of public open space in Providence.
- G. Identify city and/or state-owned open spaces best suited for urban agriculture.<sup>13</sup>
- H. Develop a plan for the reuse of public buildings that are no longer being used for public purposes.
- I. Develop a system of greenways, as identified on Map 11.2 'Future Land Use'.<sup>14</sup>

### **11.2.5 Institutional Areas**

The city's seven universities and seven hospitals are important centers of employment, education and culture for Providence and the region. The health care facilities provide vital services to residents. Both hospitals and colleges also have unique characteristics that add value above and beyond creating jobs. These institutions conduct research and impart technical expertise to their students and workers. In the increasingly knowledge-

<sup>11</sup> See Strategy SE2(C)2

<sup>12</sup> See Strategy SE2(A)

<sup>13</sup> See Strategies BJ5(B)3, SE2(E) and SE2(F)

<sup>14</sup> See Strategy SE2(C)2



based economy, these institutions contribute to a more experienced and educated workforce, a highly desirable resource in all cities. Furthermore, their economic activities foster an entrepreneurial spirit and attract additional economic growth through small spin-off businesses and supporting uses. Institutions contribute to the city in other ways as well, such as through education partnerships, mentoring teachers and students and "adopting" schools, and through payments in lieu of taxes, which helps to offset the loss of taxes due to the institutions' tax-exempt status.

Balanced with all of the benefits that institutions bring to our city are the impacts of institutions: traffic, noise, pollution, housing shortages, congestion, and a loss of tax revenue. As many of the hospitals and colleges are located in residential areas, these impacts are not insignificant. Institutional buildings are often of a height; scale and massing that do not blend well with the character of residential neighborhoods. The city recognizes the importance of mitigating conflicts with residential areas, identifying the best locations for institutional growth and expansion in the future, and encouraging growth in those areas.

Providence is a compact city with limited land area available for new development. Unlike many U.S. cities that are able to annex land to increase their area, Providence has a fixed land area of 18 square miles. Approximately a third of the land area is stable residential neighborhoods where significant change and growth is unlikely and unwanted. In addition, a large percentage of the city's land area (over 46%) is taken up with land uses that do not generate property taxes, such as schools, churches, hospitals, state offices and public rights of way. What remains is a small area of available land for new growth and development, generating new revenue for the city. It is imperative that this resource be utilized efficiently and effectively. Growth is essential to the city's economic health and sustainability, as the city is dependent on property taxes for income. As land use policy and tax policy are intricately linked, both must be considered in this plan.

The objectives and strategies in this section aim to strike a balance between institutional growth, taxpayer affordability and neighborhood preservation.

**OBJECTIVE LU7: ALLOW FOR INSTITUTIONAL GROWTH WHILE PRESERVING NEIGHBORHOODS**

Permit institutional growth and expansion in Institutional areas designated on Map 11.2 'Future Land Use' while limiting their encroachment and negative impacts on the neighborhoods in which they are located.

**Strategies:**

- A. Ensure that institutional development is consistent with neighborhood character by updating institutional regulations to:
  1. Address setbacks and buffering from adjacent residential uses.
  2. Encourage the development of parking garages to minimize surface parking lots, where appropriate, or off-site parking facilities.
  3. Address the design of buildings, through height, scale and massing regulations.
  4. Require institutions to use their land more efficiently and expand on their existing campus footprint, while ensuring compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood.
- B. Encourage institutions, where possible, to collaborate by co-locating uses and services to maximize the use of available land within their current land holdings.
- C. Identify and evaluate the best areas in the city for institutional expansion in commercial areas, mixed use areas and downtown, with consideration for the impact of institutional uses on the city's tax base.
- D. Consider the individual settings of institutions in crafting regulations. Use the neighborhood planning process to identify unique neighborhood conditions and potential regulations to address them.
- E. Collaborate with institutions to address city needs such as development of housing, jobs, the redevelopment of underused land, and development of venture capital relationships with the business community.
- F. Continue to require health care and educational institutions to prepare long-range master plans that will allow the city to evaluate and mitigate impacts of proposed expansions on City neighborhoods. Such Master Plans shall:
  1. Address short (1-2 years), mid (5 years) and long-range (10 years) growth and expansion plans, including current property holdings.
  2. Be updated a minimum of every five years in accordance with the schedule adopted by the City Plan Commission.
  3. Identify the process through which the institution coordinated with the surrounding neighborhoods.
  4. Identify specific measures to mitigate impacts of expansion on surrounding neighborhoods.
  5. Identify specific measures to encourage and offer incentives for students and employees to use public transportation.

### 11.3 Achieving the Vision

This section links the other chapters of *Providence Tomorrow* to Land Use by addressing how each element of the plan (Housing, Sustainability and the Environment, for example) impacts land use. In each section, specific land use strategies are identified to implement the goals of the other chapters of this plan.

#### OBJECTIVE LU8: SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Promote sustainability and environmental quality through appropriate land use controls.

##### Strategies:

- A. Amend land use controls to:
  - 1. Protect solar access.
  - 2. Allow for greenways citywide.
  - 3. Promote home-based businesses and telecommuting.
- B. Identify land areas that are best suited to wind power generation.
- C. Evaluate existing set back requirements from waterbodies to ensure water quality protection.
- D. Identify construction techniques to minimize flood damage to buildings in the flood zone.
- E. Identify appropriate land areas for transfer stations. Identify other amendments that need to be made to facilitate trash to energy conversion.
- F. Identify environmentally sensitive land areas, and amend regulations as necessary to ensure their protection.<sup>15</sup>
- G. Develop incentives for the development of solar and wind energy, and green buildings and other developments with low environmental impacts.
- H. Support urban agriculture by:<sup>16</sup>
  - 1. Identifying the best land areas for urban agriculture. Land best suited for development should not be considered for agriculture.
  - 2. Amending regulations as necessary to facilitate urban agriculture.
  - 3. Amending regulations as necessary to promote a system of farmers' markets throughout the city.

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<sup>15</sup> See Strategy SE2(A)

<sup>16</sup> See Strategies BJ5(B)4, SE2(E), SE2(F), and LU6(G)

**OBJECTIVE LU9: BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

Promote design excellence and historic preservation through appropriate land controls.

Strategies:

- A. Identify possible “character” districts that could be used in the future as categories for land use regulations that are based more on building form than use.
- B. Identify the best locations for nodes of concentrated development and increased density. Link nodes to existing and future transit stops.
- C. Identify areas that could support taller buildings and amend land use regulations to allow for greater height in those areas.
- D. Amend regulations as needed to establish incentives for greater height and density in exchange for affordable units, public space investment, support for neighborhood amenities, sustainable design, etc.
- E. Amend regulations to permit small-scale businesses in residential neighborhoods, with the appropriate controls to mitigate the impact of these establishments.

**OBJECTIVE LU10: BUSINESS AND JOBS**

Promote job growth and retention through appropriate land use controls.

Strategies:

- A. Regulate land use downtown to ensure its future as Rhode Island’s preeminent center for business, tourism and entertainment.
- B. Ensure that land available after the I-195 relocation will support a significant number of jobs and generate taxes.
- C. Revise regulations to reinforce existing jobs districts and establish new districts that allow for business growth and the development of the city’s tax base without conflicts with residential uses. Key jobs districts are designated on Map 11.2 ‘Future Land Use’ and include:
  - 1. Promenade
  - 2. Industrial Parks: Huntington, West River, Silver Spring, Washington Park
- D. Identify land areas for the continued growth of existing industries and businesses and evaluate the land use needs for future business uses.
- E. Amend regulations as necessary to encourage mixed-use buildings in neighborhood commercial areas.
- F. Reduce regulatory barriers for some home occupations and telecommuting.
- G. Identify the best locations for small professional office uses in residential areas.
- H. Ensure residential uses do not discourage business growth and expansion in the business/mixed-use areas designated on Map 11.2 ‘Future Land Use’.
- I. Consider incentives to promote small business incubator space in industrial and commercial buildings.

#### **OBJECTIVE LU11: HOUSING**

Promote varying levels of housing density through appropriate land use controls.

Strategies:

- A. Amend regulations for the areas identified as Areas of Stability on Map 11.1 'Areas of Stability and Change' to permit existing levels of density.
- B. Amend regulations for the areas identified as Areas of Change on Map 11.1 'Areas of Stability and Change' to establish nodes of concentrations of density.

#### **OBJECTIVE LU12: MOBILITY**

Promote the efficient use of land to promote transit, walking and biking through appropriate land use controls.

Strategies:

- A. Identify the best land use areas for:
  - 1. Nodes of development to support existing and future public transit.<sup>17</sup>
  - 2. Commercial corridors best suited for transit.
  - 3. Possible bike connections and corridors along greenways.
  - 4. Ferry ports and cruise ships.
  - 5. Marinas and moorings, through a Harbor Management Plan and, if necessary, amend land use regulations to support these uses.
- B. Amend land use regulations to :
  - 1. Allow for greater density and higher concentrations of development in those areas identified as nodes.
  - 2. Permit on-street parking.

#### **OBJECTIVE LU13: ARTS AND CULTURE**

Promote the development of arts, cultural and entertainment facilities through appropriate land use controls.

Strategies:

- A. Reduce regulatory barriers for artist work space.
- B. Identify appropriate land areas for large outdoor venues for events and festivals.<sup>18</sup>
- C. Evaluate entertainment citywide to identify the best locations for different sized venues for entertainment, and mitigate the impacts of these uses in residential areas.
- D. Update the Adult Entertainment Plan.
- E. Promote and enforce the policies of the Responsible Hospitality Partnership Initiative.

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<sup>17</sup> See Strategy M2(B)

<sup>18</sup> See Strategies AC4(D) and PS1(D)

**OBJECTIVE LU14: PEOPLE AND PUBLIC SPACES**

Promote the preservation and development of parks and open spaces through appropriate land use controls.

Strategies:

- A. Promote open spaces and public access along the waterfront.<sup>19</sup>
- B. Develop incentives for the provision of publicly accessible open spaces as a part of private developments, which shall be maintained by the private developer and be developed in accordance with established standards.
- C. Develop ways to activate park spaces in conjunction with neighboring uses.
- D. Identify possible locations for additional parks and open spaces in neighborhoods that are currently underserved by parks and open spaces.<sup>20</sup>
- E. Promote the development of greenways as identified on Map 11.2 'Future Land Use'.

**OBJECTIVE LU15: LAND USE AND THE REGION**

Work with the State of Rhode Island and neighboring communities to promote the smart, efficient and equitable use of land.

Strategies:

- A. Work with surrounding communities to ensure compatibility of land uses on the city's edges.
- B. Coordinate federal and state plans with *Providence Tomorrow* to ensure a regional planning framework.
- C. Work with the State of Rhode Island to amend legislation to permit form-based regulations instead of regulations primarily based on use.
- D. Work with the State of Rhode Island to amend legislation to promote an equitable distribution of undesirable land uses.
- E. Work with the State and surrounding communities to effectively implement Land Use 2025, the state land use plan.
- F. Encourage the state to retain state offices in Providence and develop a plan for their use, maintenance and expansion and to densify on their existing campus.
- G. Work with the Federal government to retain and expand federal department offices in Providence.
- H. Consider the implementation of a regional planning commission to address issues such as waterfront development and other issues of regional importance.
- I. Work with the state to develop new tools to assist the city in addressing the disproportionate impacts that the city bears as a result of the location of the institutions.
- J. Encourage the state to fully fund the PILOT program to offset the impacts of institutions.

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<sup>19</sup> See Strategy PS5(A)

<sup>20</sup> See Strategies PS4(A) and PS5(B)