

Existing or Previous Providence Vision Statements and Objectives

**Providence
Foundation's
Joint Economic
Development
Plan** **Objectives:**

To grow the downtown economy, particularly the office economy.

Assure that companies and government agencies remain and/or expand in downtown.

Communicate the advantages of a downtown Providence location to prospective businesses and differentiate downtown from suburbs and other cities. Research cost differences.

To compile and distribute information about locating or expanding a business in downtown; to become the resources for downtown information; to supplement the information provided by the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce, the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation, and the City of Providence.

To increase spaces and venues that can help entrepreneurs and artists thrive downtown.

To make it easier to start or expand a business downtown.

Work with the City to develop a permit process, particularly for building and fire permits, that mirrors national best practices; develop a review system that is an asset for economic development.

To work with the City on creating a new downtown plan and a new zoning ordinance that promotes and encourages offices/businesses downtown, including institutional operations; and supports transit oriented development.

To create a superlative physical environment.

To increase transit service to accommodate a greater number of downtown employees and visitors; develop a service that results in more employees choosing transit as opposed to auto for commuting purposes.

Develop a parking "system" that is customer-oriented; reducing the negative image/effect of parking on downtown locational decisions.

Achieve fair, market-driven real estate re-assessment values; work towards a City commercial tax rate structure that is more competitive with other New England cities and RI suburbs.

To create a more competitive business climate in the state of Rhode Island.

**Providence
Tomorrow: The
Comprehensive
Plan**

A Vision for Providence

We envision a Providence that is:

Green-with a healthy natural environment and sustainable design.

Rich in character-honoring our historic character, producing excellence in design and showcasing our spectacular waterfront location.

Dynamic- thriving with abundant business and employment opportunities.

Livable- with healthy, vibrant, walkable neighborhoods connected to an active downtown, with many transit options.

Diverse-culturally rich, home to many diverse communities.

Active-with many places for people to recreate and gather.

Equitable-with an array of housing and job choices.

Efficient- a fiscally sound city, providing high-quality, cost-effective services.

Engaging-with strong schools, libraries, and civic groups.

Creative-where the arts play a key role in city life.

"A city where all can enjoy a great quality of life!"

**Providence 2020
(May 2006)**

Vision

In the future, Providence will be a waterfront city, where the water, continuous parks, and transit link the Valley to the Bay. Along this spine, downtown will be a premier environment for a great variety of economic activities, with innovative industry commerce, higher education and medical services, research, retail, culture, and housing for a diverse population. In this century, water may reclaim a role as local transportation, but its primary force will be recreation, amenity, and natural environment.

Providence is a city of great variety, with an historical pattern where residential neighborhoods on the hills overlooked waterfront industry and commerce. As rails and highways pierced the city, each district developed its own personality, one complementing the other. Looking to the future, the character of each district should be celebrated by acknowledging the different strengths so that they continue to complement one another. This approach will build a city with a variety of choices for living, many different destinations for visiting, and investment decisions based on physical and economic competitive advantages.

The continuous waterfront greenway will weave through the different districts that make up downtown Providence: Promenade, Capital Center, Downcity, Jewelry District, and Narragansett Bay. Part of the city's distinct charm is the variety of places in the river valleys and the bay and up on the surrounding hills. Different architecture, uses, and tradition make each area stand on its own merits. The future will depend on the strength of the linear connections along the waterfront and the links to the neighborhoods so that every resident feels ownership of downtown. Over time, the downtown areas will become neighborhoods in their own right, each with its own mix of uses.

Downtown will offer distinct competitive advantages to other locations in the region by offering urban amenities that cannot be found elsewhere. People who choose to live downtown in historic lofts or new apartments and rowhouses will be able to walk to work, shops, or the theater. Events like Waterfire and outdoor concerts on the waterfront parks will draw people downtown to experience the ambiance of the city in the evening. Every downtown district will have a waterfront park that ties the local area into the regional open space network, making it easy to jog or stroll at lunchtime or before or after work. Activities on the water will range from sailing on the bay to fishing in the upper reaches of the rivers. The rivers and the bay can become gateways for environmental education programs in the schools.

Downtown's unique advantage is the ability to foster face to face interaction. Walkable streets, for which Providence is already well known, will extend into the former industrial districts. With the relocation of Interstate 195 to the south, one will be able to walk easily from a center point around Friendship Street to the Providence Place Mall to the north or to the Point Street corridor to the south, a ten-minute walk in either direction. To reach the neighborhoods, beautiful tree-lined corridors will lead up the hills, making the ten-to twenty-minute walk seem shorter.

A continuous transit spine will connect Eagle Square to Thurburs Avenue, along the length of the waterfront. In the short term, this may be a rubber-wheel trolley, and over time will become bus rapid transit and if driven by demand, light rail transit. A series of stations spaced about one-half mile apart will serve each district with express service. At a few key locations, intermodal centers could interface with regional RIPTA bus service and provide structured parking. The existing trolley system serves as a feeder system that complements the transit spine. Over time, new routes may be needed to serve downtown neighborhoods.