

## 8.0 SERVICES AND FACILITIES

### 8.1 Introduction

The Services and Facilities Chapter of the Cranston Comprehensive Plan provides an in-depth examination of the City's essential services and facilities, focusing on their current state, historical context, and future needs. This chapter aims to give a comprehensive understanding of Cranston's public infrastructure and services, covering key aspects such as town administration, health and human services, library and community services, schools, public safety and emergency services, public works, solid waste and recycling, wastewater, and water supply. It also addresses the challenges and opportunities associated with maintaining and improving these services to support the community's growth and quality of life. This chapter outlines Cranston's public infrastructure, facilities, and services (shown in Figure 8.1) under the following categories:

- Town administration
- Health and Human Services
- Library and community services
- Schools
- Public safety and emergency services
- Public works
- Solid waste and recycling
- Wastewater
- Water supply

### 8.2 Existing Conditions

Cranston runs its major public services out of the City Hall, located at 869 Park Avenue. The City has 28 departments that ensure it runs effectively and that residents receive adequate services:

- Auditing
- Building Inspection
- Canvassing
- City Clerk
- Community Development
- Economic Development
- Engineering
- Finance
- Fire Department
- Fleet Management
- Harbormaster

- Highway Department
- Information Technology (IT)
- Law Department
- Libraries
- Mayor's Office
- Municipal Court
- Parks & Recreation
- Personnel
- Planning
- Police Department
- Public Works
- Purchasing
- School System
- Senior Services
- Tax Assessor
- Workforce Development
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

In addition to these aforementioned departments, the City has a variety of Boards and Commissions that meet regularly which can be found on the City's website<sup>1</sup>:

- Arts Commission
- Audit Committee
- Board of Canvassers
- Building Appeal Board
- Charter Review Commission
- City Council
- Community Development Block Grant Citizen's Advisory Committee
- Conservation Commission
- Contract and Purchase
- Cranston Housing Commission
- Diversity Commission

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<sup>1</sup> City of Cranston. (n.d.). Boards and commissions. Retrieved June 18, 2024, from <https://www.cranstonri.gov/government/boards-and-commissions/>

- Harbor Master
- Historic District Commission
- Historical Cemeteries Commission
- Housing Authority
- Investment Commission
- Juvenile Hearing Board
- Parks and Recreation Advisory
- Personnel Appeal Board
- Planning Commission
- Probate Judge Advisory
- Public Library Board of Trustees
- School Buildings Committee
- Small Business Advisory Committee
- Tax Assessment Board of Review
- Traffic Safety Board
- Zoning Board of Review

Many of the City's departments are housed in the City Hall. Boards and Commissions also meet at the City Hall.

The Cranston Fire Department, Public Library, School Department, Department of Senior Services are housed at other locations, as noted in their respective sections within this Chapter.

#### 8.2.1 *Human Services*

The City of Cranston offers some health and human services to its residents and relies on its neighboring communities to provide services not located within the City's limits. Senior services, recreational activities, and youth programs are currently funded by the City administration through various departmental budgets.

#### **Health and Hospital Services**

Due to Cranston's large area, access to hospitals can vary greatly. Though there are no hospitals located in Cranston, residents have access to hospitals in neighboring communities. Kent Hospital is closest for those living in the southern or western portion of the City while Rhode Island Hospital is closest for those to the north and east; however, these are at least a couple of miles from the Cranston border. The closest Trauma 1 Center, Rhode Island Hospital, is located in Providence, a couple of miles east of the Cranston border. Cranston does not have a health department housed within its local government. Therefore, the Town relies on the State of Rhode Island's Department of

Health for guidance and funding. The State Department of Health website provides detailed information on important health updates specific to Cranston<sup>2</sup>.

### Senior Services

The Cranston Department of Senior Services provides a variety of services for the City's ageing population. Programs are intended to assist, inform, entertain, and enrich the lives of individuals at least fifty-five years of age. The Cranston Senior Enrichment Center is located at 1070 Cranston Street and houses the Department of Senior Services.

Programs and offerings provided through the department of Senior Services are comprised of the following:

#### Adult Day Services

The Cranston Senior Enrichment Center runs daily adult services that are geared toward meeting the medical, social, and psychological needs of the health challenges that seniors and disabled populations face. A team of skilled staff, which include nurses, case managers, activities coordinators, and physical therapists provide participants with opportunities for physical therapy, art, music, book clubs, nutritional services, and physical exercise. Participants must attend at least twice per week and a minimum of five hours per day.

#### Nutrition

The Nutrition Division ensures that Cranston seniors receive consistent nutritious meals. Hot lunches are served Monday through Friday in addition to breakfast specials, food court items, and catering for non-profit organizations. Meals are run out of the Senior Enrichment Center's dining room.

#### Health and Wellness

Health and wellness are core to the Cranston Department of Senior Services mission. Health programs and screenings are conducted on a consistent basis. Health checkups and various support groups are available for Cranston residents in coordination with students and faculty from local colleges.

#### Social Services

The Social Services Division offers support to help seniors and their families navigate through challenging and often uncertain situations. Case managers are available Monday through Friday to discuss problems, provide support, assist with paperwork, and refer seniors to the agency or service that can best help with particular inquiries or requests. Other programs include support groups, counseling, case management, and advocacy services.

#### Transvan

The Center offers daily transportation as part of the Transvan program, which brings Cranston residents to various locations around Cranston. Reservations are necessary for all trips. Single round-trip rides cost \$5 while monthly passes are available for \$25. Rides are scheduled Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 2:00pm.

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<sup>2</sup> Rhode Island Department of Health. (n.d.). Community health data: Cranston. Retrieved June 18, 2024, from <https://health.ri.gov/communities/results.php?place=Cranston>

Table 8.1. Updates in Cranston Senior Services Budget							
Program	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
Administration	\$423,189	\$405,953	\$400,270	\$490,801	\$472,312	\$437,578	\$437,578
Programs	\$154,878	\$106,737	\$112,165	\$156,013	\$163,189	\$132,625	\$132,625
Adult Day Care	\$520,847	\$475,913	\$446,714	\$508,276	\$503,455	\$507,608	\$507,608
Social Services	\$229,156	\$237,864	\$252,709	\$242,624	\$281,272	\$288,764	\$288,764
Transvan	\$504,492	\$566,843	\$496,253	\$548,067	\$544,096	\$423,857	\$423,857
Nutrition	\$1,286,792	\$1,101,267	\$1,113,892	\$1,340,999	\$1,081,319	\$569,293	\$569,293
RSVP	\$93,834	\$94,890	\$93,620	\$206,465	\$118,111	\$123,563	\$123,563
TOTAL	\$3,213,188	\$2,989,467	\$2,915,623	\$3,493,245	\$3,163,754	\$2,483,288	\$2,483,288

Source: City of Cranston

### 8.2.2 Department of Parks and Recreation

Cranston’s Department of Parks and Recreation plays a crucial role in maintaining and enhancing recreational facilities throughout the City, catering to school sports, youth athletics, and the public. The Department oversees 47 facilities across Cranston, which include:

Table 8.2. Count of Parks and Recreation Facilities	
Baseball Fields	25
Softball Fields	11
Basketball Courts	6
Bike Path	4.5 miles
Tennis Courts	24
Pickleball Courts	6
Playgrounds	33
Soccer Fields	7
Public Swimming Pools	1
Baseball Fields	25

Source: City of Cranston

### Budlong Swimming Pool

Budlong Swimming Pool, once celebrated as one of the largest outdoor swimming pools in the nation, has become a focal point of community debate in recent years. The pool, a historical and recreational landmark, is now at the center of discussions regarding its future. Officials have proposed a redesign to reduce the pool’s size, aiming to better align with contemporary usage patterns and financial sustainability. However, the exact dimensions and features of the new pool are still being actively debated, reflecting the community’s diverse opinions.

Recent public meetings have highlighted the community’s strong emotional and historical connection to Budlong Pool. Many residents recall the pool as a significant part of their childhood and community life, which has sparked a robust dialogue on how best to balance its historical significance with practical considerations. Some community members are concerned that

downsizing the pool could diminish its legacy, while others argue that a smaller, more modern facility would be easier to maintain and more cost-effective.

In response to these discussions, officials have emphasized the need to incorporate community feedback into the final design. Plans have been proposed to ensure the new pool honors its historical roots while meeting current safety and accessibility standards. The redesign aims to create a sustainable and enjoyable recreational space that will continue to serve the community for years to come.

To recognize the pool's storied history, suggestions have included incorporating historical markers or exhibits within the new facility. This approach seeks to preserve the pool's legacy while adapting to modern needs, ensuring that future generations can appreciate its historical importance.

The ongoing debate over Budlong Swimming Pool underscores a broader challenge faced by many communities: how to preserve cherished historical sites while adapting to present-day realities. The outcome of this process will ultimately reflect the community's values and vision for the future.

### The Peter Pastore Youth Center

The Peter Pastore Youth Center, located at 155 Gansett Avenue, is a versatile venue that can be rented to groups or organizations for various activities. This facility supports a range of community events and initiatives, fostering engagement and social cohesion.

The Department offers a variety of programs to residents, including:

- Women's Fitness Program: Encouraging physical health and wellness among women in the community
- Pickleball Leagues: Catering to the growing popularity of this sport among all age groups.
- Saturday Morning Basketball: Designed for children in kindergarten through second grade, promoting early engagement in sports.
- Playground Program Summer Camp: Available for ages 6 to 12, held at four locations across Cranston, this program provides structured activities during the summer months.

Additionally, the Department creates summer employment opportunities for students, helping them gain work experience and get involved in the City's recreational initiatives. These programs and facilities collectively enhance the quality of life in Cranston by promoting active lifestyles, community engagement, and social interaction.

### 8.2.3 Library

The Cranston Public Library system is a cornerstone of the community, with six locations serving the City's diverse needs. The Central Library, located at 140 Sockanosset Cross Road, is the hub of the system. Established by the Cranston City Council in 1966, the library system began with the Oaklawn Library in 1968 and has since expanded its reach and services.

### Impact and Services:

The library's Impact Report 2023<sup>3</sup> highlights significant achievements, notably the restoration of core services to pre-pandemic levels. This reflects the library's resilience and commitment to providing high-quality services to the community.

The library boasts a collection of 139,231 items, including:

- Books: 119,414
- Videos: 10,663
- Audios: 7,135
- Periodicals and Specialty Items: 1,451 (including museum passes, Kindles, and hotspots)

This extensive collection ensures that the Cranston Public Library can meet the diverse informational and recreational needs of its patrons.

### Budget and Funding

The library's budget supports a variety of services and operations, ensuring that it can continue to provide high-quality resources and maintain its facilities. Funding allocations for services and operations include salaries, utilities, books, magazines, film, supplies, Ocean State Library Service Facilities, computer replacement, subscription fees, pensions, social security, health insurance, professional memberships, programs, and building maintenance. Below is a comprehensive list of all services offered by the Cranston Public Library:

- General Services:
  - Borrowing and Lending:
    - Books, DVDs, audiobooks, and other materials
    - eBooks and audiobooks through the Ocean State Libraries eZone, Hoopla, and Flipster
    - Access to TV shows and movies
  - Technology Services:
    - Public access computers and free Wi-Fi
    - Printing, copying, scanning, and faxing services
    - Mobile printing
    - C-Lab with 3D printing and media preservation
    - Video conferencing facilities

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<sup>3</sup> Cranston Public Library. (2023). 2023 impact report. Retrieved June 18, 2024, from [https://www.cranstonlibrary.org/\\_files/public/2023\\_ImpactReport\\_Print.pdf](https://www.cranstonlibrary.org/_files/public/2023_ImpactReport_Print.pdf)

- Technology education, including computer classes, open tech time, and one-on-one tech appointments
- Meeting Room Reservations:
  - Available for public use, with spaces for meetings and events
- Educational and Research Services:
  - Book Groups:
    - Various book clubs for adults, teens, and children, both in-person and virtual
  - Local History and Genealogy:
    - Access to local historical documents and genealogy resources
    - Research assistance and educational programs
  - Storytime Programs:
    - Sessions for babies, toddlers, and preschoolers, including virtual options
  - Educator Services:
    - Resources and support for teachers, including classroom collections and teacher library cards
    - Special programs and workshops for educators
  - Online Tutoring:
    - Free tutoring and homework help through Tutor.com for students in grades K-12
  - Museum Passes:
    - Borrow passes for discounted or free admission to local museums and attractions
- Community and Outreach Services:
  - Homebound Services:
    - Delivery of library materials to homebound individuals
  - ESL and Citizenship Programs:
    - English as a Second Language (ESL) and citizenship classes in partnership with the Rhode Island Family Literacy Initiative (RIFLI)
  - Healthy Families Program:
    - Programs and resources to support family health and wellness
  - Notary Services:
    - Free notary public services available at the Central Library



- Specialized Services:
  - Small Business Services:
    - Resources and support for small business owners and entrepreneurs, including business databases and workshops
  - Bilingual Services:
    - Materials and programs for Spanish-speaking patrons through "La Biblioteca"
  - Teen Services:
    - Programs, resources, and volunteer opportunities specifically for teenagers
  - Cool Tools:
    - Borrow non-traditional items like musical instruments, tools, and technology
- Accessibility and Inclusion:
  - ADA Accommodations:
    - Services and facilities designed to be accessible to individuals with disabilities

Overall, the Cranston Public Library remains a vital resource, fostering a love for reading, learning, and community engagement. Its ongoing efforts to adapt and expand services underscore its importance in the fabric of Cranston's community life.

#### 8.2.4 Police Services

The Cranston Police Department provides comprehensive law enforcement services to the community, ensuring public safety and crime prevention. The department is headquartered at 5 Garfield Avenue and operates from several substations strategically located throughout the City to enhance response times and community engagement. These include substations at Cranston Street, Atwood Avenue, and Park Avenue.

#### Community Services and Activities

The Cranston Police Department is actively involved in various community services and activities aimed at building strong relationships with residents. These initiatives include youth outreach programs, neighborhood watch meetings, and participation in community events. The department also offers educational programs such as D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) and Citizens Police Academy to foster trust and cooperation between the police and the community.

#### Vehicle Inventory

The department maintains a robust vehicle inventory, including patrol cars, Sport Utility Vehicles (SUVs), motorcycles, and specialized units such as K-9 units and Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) vehicles. Recent investments have been made to upgrade the fleet with newer, more efficient vehicles to ensure the safety and reliability of the department's operations.

#### Recent Improvements

- Physical Improvements:

- Renovation and modernization of the main police headquarters.
- Upgrades to the communication and dispatch centers to improve emergency response efficiency
- Departmental Improvements:
  - Implementation of body-worn cameras for all patrol officers to enhance transparency and accountability
  - Adoption of advanced crime analysis software to better predict and prevent criminal activities

### Costs and Operations

Over the past five years, the budget allocations for the police department have seen steady increases, reflecting the City's commitment to maintaining public safety. The spending covers salaries, equipment upgrades, training programs, and community outreach initiatives. The following table provides a detailed breakdown of spending for the police department over the last five years:

Table 8.2. Cranston Police Department Budget					
Fiscal Year	Personnel Services	Equipment & Maintenance	Training & Development	Community Programs	Total Spending
2019	\$18,318,566	\$631,775	\$126,659	\$4,775,000	\$24,381,636
2020	\$19,504,534	\$474,719	\$118,758	\$5,164,670	\$25,262,681
2021	\$19,839,237	\$667,853	\$101,640	\$5,400,920	\$26,009,650
2022	\$20,796,315	\$596,648	\$104,413	\$5,624,662	\$27,122,038
2023	\$21,377,193	\$728,618	\$81,404	\$9,171,798	\$31,359,013
2024	\$21,994,388	\$790,000	\$82,000	\$6,159,373	\$29,025,761
2025	\$22,334,537	\$865,000	\$102,000	\$6,046,096	\$29,247,633

Source: City of Cranston. (2024). FY25 adopted budget. Retrieved from <https://www.cranstonri.gov/budgets-by-fiscal-year/>

#### 8.2.5 Fire Services

The Cranston Fire Department is dedicated to protecting the lives and property of the City's residents through fire prevention, education, and emergency response services. The department operates from multiple fire stations, ensuring comprehensive coverage across Cranston. The main fire station is located at 301 Pontiac Avenue, with additional stations situated at key points including Oaklawn Avenue, Scituate Avenue, and Cranston Street.

### Community Services and Activities

The fire department engages in various community service activities, including fire safety education programs in schools, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training sessions for residents, and participation in community health fairs. These initiatives aim to promote safety awareness and preparedness among the public.

### Vehicle Inventory

The fire department's vehicle inventory includes fire engines, ladder trucks, rescue units, and specialized apparatus such as hazmat units and water tankers. The department has recently upgraded several vehicles to enhance their emergency response capabilities.

### Recent Improvements

The City of Cranston has recently made several significant improvements to its Fire Services, focusing on both physical and departmental advancements to enhance overall safety and efficiency.

#### Physical Improvements:

- Construction of a new fire station in Western Cranston to improve response times in the area
- Major renovations and updates to existing fire stations to ensure they meet modern standards

#### Departmental Improvements:

- Introduction of advanced firefighting equipment and protective gear to enhance firefighter safety
- Implementation of a new fire incident reporting system to streamline operations and improve data accuracy
- In 2023, Cranston experienced severe flooding, prompting the City to declare a state of emergency and highlight the critical role of the fire department in disaster response and management

### Costs and Operations

The fire department's budget reflects the City's prioritization of public safety, with significant investments in personnel, equipment, and infrastructure. The following table provides a detailed breakdown of spending for the fire department over the last five years:

Fiscal Year	Personnel Services	Equipment & Maintenance	Training & Development	Facility Upgrades	Total Spending
2019	\$24,030,706	\$2,004,695	\$140,340	\$7,030,878	\$33,206,619
2020	\$24,718,166	\$2,517,662	\$150,727	\$7,213,461	\$34,600,016
2021	\$24,055,128	\$2,556,834	\$200,059	\$8,738,601	\$35,550,622
2022	\$26,136,688	\$2,676,020	\$196,245	\$7,666,722	\$36,675,675
2023	\$27,317,395	\$3,348,197	\$188,855	\$8,854,742	\$39,709,189
2024	\$26,848,891	\$2,992,993	\$205,800	\$7,268,026	\$37,316,710
2025	\$26,649,342	\$2,938,500	\$224,000	\$6,031,580	\$35,843,422

Source: City of Cranston

### 8.2.6 School Facilities

Cranston boasts a diverse array of educational institutions that serve the needs of its residents. The City is home to a mix of public and private schools, each contributing to the community's educational landscape. This section provides an overview of these facilities, including their locations, enrollment numbers, and recent updates.

#### Public Schools

Cranston Public Schools operates several primary, middle, and high schools across the City. These schools are strategically located to serve different neighborhoods, ensuring that students have access to education close to their homes. Table 8.4 shows the total number of students enrolled at each public school throughout the City during the 2023 - 2024 school year.

Table 8.4. 2023-2024 Enrollment by School		
School	Grades Served	Enrollment
Arlington School	K-5	219
Eden Park School	K-5	244
Edgewood Highland School	K-5	285
Edward S. Rhodes School	K-5	303
Garden City School	K-5	510
George J. Peters School	K-5	260
Gladstone Street School	K-5	399
Glen Hills School	K-5	284
Oak Lawn School	K-5	252
Orchard Farms Elementary School	K-5	465
Stadium School	K-5	241
Stone Hill School	K-5	234
William R. Dutemple School	K-5	276
Woodridge School	K-5	257
Hope Highlands Middle School	6-8	345
Hugh B. Bain Middle School	6-8	536
Park View Middle School	6-8	693
Western Hills Middle School	6-8	700
Cranston High School East	9-12	1,513
Cranston High School West	9-12	1,698
Cranston Early Learning Center	Pre-K	48
Apprenticeship Exploration School	Vocational/Technical	180
Cranston Public Schools	Vocational/Technical	184
<b>Total</b>		<b>10,126</b>

Source: RIDE, 2024

#### Distribution of Students by Grade Level

The data reveals an uneven distribution of students across various grade levels, from pre-kindergarten to high school and vocational/technical education. Notably, the highest enrollment is

observed in the high schools, with Cranston High School West and Cranston High School East enrolling 1,698 and 1,513 students respectively.

### Specialized and Vocational Education

The presence of specialized and vocational/technical schools, such as the Apprenticeship Exploration School and the Cranston Public Schools Vocational/Technical programs, indicates a commitment to providing diverse educational pathways. These institutions cater to students who are interested in pursuing technical skills and vocational training, preparing them for immediate entry into the workforce or further specialized education.

### Enrollment Trends and Demographics

Over the past five school years, the enrollment in Cranston's schools has shown a slight but consistent decline, decreasing from 10,475 in the 2019 - 2020 school year to 10,126 in the 2023 - 2024 school year. This trend suggests a gradual decline in the student population, which could be attributed to demographic shifts or other factors such as families moving out of the district.

Year	Native American	Asian Pacific	Black	White	Hispanic	Multi-Race	IEP	FRL	LEP	Total
2019-20	78	950	509	5217	3113	608	1619	4563	769	10475
2020-21	78	974	493	4986	3230	640	1636	4337	830	10403
2021-22	81	922	491	4782	3345	631	1523	3429	932	10258
2022-23	81	900	493	4630	3500	612	1562	4338	1051	10225
2023-24	81	869	512	4456	3594	606	1628	4464	1148	10126

Source: RIDE, 2024

The racial composition of the student body has seen some changes over the last five school years:

- Native American Students: The number of Native American students has remained consistent at around 78 – 81 students each year.
- Asian Pacific Students: The Population of Asian Pacific students has slightly decreased from 950 in 2019 – 2020 to 869 in 2023 – 2024
- Black Students: The number of Black students has remained relatively stable, around 490 – 510 students each year.
- White Students: There has been a noticeable decline in the number of White students, from 5,217 in 2019 – 2020 to 4,456 in 2023 - 2024
- Hispanic Students: The Hispanic student population has increased from 3,113 in 2019 – 2020 to 3,594 in 2023 – 2024
- Multi-Race Students: The number of multi-race students has remained stable, around 600 – 640 students each year.

The increase in Hispanic students and the decrease in White students highlight the evolving demographics of Cranston, which could have implications for cultural and language support services within the schools.

### Special Programs:

Special programs such as Individualized Education Programs (IEP), Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL), and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) have also shown varying trends:

- IEP: The number of students with IEPs has been stable, with slight fluctuations, reflecting a consistent need for special education services
- FRL: There has been a slight increase in the number of students eligible for FRL, from 4,563 in 2019 – 2020 to 4,464 in 2023 – 2024, which may indicate persistent economic challenges within some areas of the community.
- LEP: The number of LEP students has significantly increased from 769 in 2019 – 2020 to 1,148 in 2023 – 2024, indicating a growing need for language support services as the student body becomes more diverse.

### Grade-Level Enrollment

The distribution of students across different grades has remained relatively consistent, although there are minor variations each year. Kindergarten (KF) and primary grades (1-5) have seen stable enrollments, while middle school (6-8) and high school (9-12) enrollments reflect normal progression and graduation rates.

Year	PK	KF	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
2019-20	67	673	762	727	754	735	780	818	856	810	862	890	847	873	10475
2020-21	108	703	675	746	736	757	727	781	827	858	808	885	880	892	10403
2021-22	77	659	714	695	742	732	742	739	795	804	859	798	864	981	10258
2022-23	97	649	699	710	701	749	720	774	753	817	847	868	800	993	10225
2023-24	104	585	672	705	723	706	766	755	796	757	850	875	874	900	10126

Source: RIDE

Cranston's schools are experiencing gradual demographic shifts and changes in student needs that necessitate adaptive strategies in services and facilities. By focusing on language support, special education, economic assistance, and community engagement, Cranston can continue to provide a high-quality educational experience for all its students. These efforts will ensure that the district remains responsive to the evolving needs of its diverse student body.

### Transportation Services

Cranston provides a comprehensive bus service for students attending both public and private schools. The school bus network ensures that students can safely and reliably commute to and from school. The transportation system is managed by the Cranston Public School Transportation Department which operates all buses across the City, covering all major school routes.

### Costs and Operations

The operational costs of Cranston's school facilities are a significant component of the municipal budget. The City's investment in education includes expenditures on salaries, benefits, transportation, and facility maintenance. For the 2023 - 2024 fiscal year, the Cranston Public Schools budget reflects a comprehensive allocation aimed at maintaining and enhancing the quality of education.

## Budget Overview

The total budget for Cranston Public Schools for the 2023 - 2024 fiscal year is \$179,167,952, representing an increase of 3.31% over the previous year. This increase addresses several critical areas:

- Salaries and Compensation
  - Total salary expenses amount to \$111,453,175, an increase of \$4,229,100 from the previous year. This includes teacher salaries, administrative staff, support staff, and substitutes. Specific increases were noted in teacher salaries and district-wide compensation adjustments.
- Employee Benefits
  - Employee benefits account for \$42,701,223, reflecting a rise of \$1,621,534. Key benefits include health and dental insurance, pension contributions, and other fringe benefits. Notably, there is a projected increase in health insurance costs by 3% annually.
- Purchased Services
  - Expenditures on purchased services total \$20,361,581, with a notable increase of \$1,334,180. This category covers special education services, charter school tuitions, and property insurance.
- Supplies and Materials
  - The budget allocates \$4,605,760 for supplies and materials, marking a \$449,722 increase. This includes expenditures on educational materials, utilities, and maintenance supplies
- Capital Outlay
  - Capital outlay expenditures are projected at \$1,752,687, a slight decrease from the previous year. This budget covers the acquisition of new equipment and infrastructure improvements.
- Miscellaneous and Other Costs
  - Miscellaneous costs include dues, fees, and other operational expenses, with a notable reduction due to projected savings from teacher retirements and staff reductions, totaling \$1,815,919.

### Budget Changes Over Fiscal Years

Over the past several fiscal years, Cranston Public Schools' budget has seen various adjustments in response to evolving educational needs and financial conditions. Here's an overview of the budget changes from fiscal years 2019 - 2020 to 2023 - 2024<sup>4</sup>:

- 2019 - 2020 Fiscal Year
  - Total Budget: \$160,480,093
  - Major expenditures included salaries (\$99,197,224) and employee benefits (\$37,784,417).
- 2020 - 2021 Fiscal Year
  - Total Budget: \$166,692,482
  - The budget saw a moderate increase, with notable rises in salaries and purchased services.
- 2021 - 2022 Fiscal Year
  - Total Budget: \$171,165,486
  - Continued growth in salary expenses and increased investment in purchased services and supplies.
- 2022 - 2023 Fiscal Year
  - Total Budget: \$173,423,550
  - Additional increases in employee benefits and a slight rise in miscellaneous costs.
- 2023 - 2024 Fiscal Year
  - Total Budget: \$179,167,952
  - This year marks a significant rise in total budget, driven by increased state aid, Medicaid reimbursements, and City appropriations.
- 2024 - 2025 Fiscal Year
  - Total Budget: \$181,712,717
  - The budget reflects further increases in salaries, employee benefits, and purchased services, continuing the trend of incremental growth to meet educational needs. Major revenue sources include an increase in state aid by \$2,521,293, a \$250,000 increase in Medicaid reimbursement for services, and a \$1,890,005 increase in City appropriation.

<sup>4</sup> Cranston Public Schools. (2024). FY25 adopted budget. Retrieved June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024 from [[https://www.cpsed.net/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC\\_ID=1649283&type=d&pREC\\_ID=2205365](https://www.cpsed.net/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=1649283&type=d&pREC_ID=2205365)].



### Transportation Services

Cranston provides a comprehensive bus service for students, managed under the district's transportation budget. The total transportation budget is \$3,614,104, which includes salaries for bus drivers, maintenance of the fleet, and fuel costs. Notably, there was a decrease of \$235,813 in transportation expenditures due to efficiency improvements and route optimization.

### Recent Financial Adjustments

The 2023 - 2024 budget reflects several strategic financial adjustments:

- **State Aid** increased by approximately \$2,521,293.
- **Medicaid Reimbursement** for services saw an increase of \$250,000.
- **City Appropriation** increased by \$1,890,005, ensuring continued support from local government.
- **Reclassification of positions** previously funded by ESSER II & III grants, resulting in a \$503,788 increase in salaries.

These adjustments are part of a broader strategy to enhance the educational environment and ensure financial sustainability.

### Recent Updates

Cranston's educational landscape has seen significant changes over the past decade. Several schools have undergone closures, renovations, or new constructions to adapt to the growing and changing needs of the community.

- **Rebuilt and Redeveloped Schools:**
  - Cranston High School East underwent major renovations, including the addition of a new science wing and updated laboratory facilities to support advanced STEM education.
  - Gladstone Elementary School was rebuilt to modern standards, with state-of-the-art classrooms and improved accessibility features.
- **Closed Schools:**
  - Horton Elementary School was closed in 2013 due to declining enrollment and shifting population demographics. The building has since been repurposed for community use.
- **New Constructions:**
  - Garden City Elementary School saw the construction of a new wing to accommodate an increasing student population and to provide more specialized educational spaces.

Cranston's school facilities play a crucial role in the community, providing essential educational services to the City's youth. The combination of public and private institutions, supported by a robust transportation network and significant municipal investment, ensures that Cranston continues to offer high-quality education. As the City grows and evolves, continued attention to the needs of its

schools will be vital in maintaining the high standards of education that residents have come to expect.

### 8.2.7 Public Works

The Department of Public Works (DPW) offices are at City Hall, located at 869 Park Ave., and the Public Works Garage is located at 929 Phenix Ave. Solid waste management, recycling, and sewer are the primary concerns of the DPW, but it is also in charge of the following divisions: Bureau of Traffic Safety, Highway Maintenance Division, Engineering, and Tree Maintenance. The department has 9 employees.

The DPW manages the City's snow removal, landscaping, street light repairs, traffic signs, City streets, sidewalk improvements, and stormwater permits. The City spends close to \$2,000,000 per year paving and repairing over 320 miles of City streets, and almost \$4,000,000 more per year for the remaining public works, maintenance, and engineering activities.<sup>5</sup>

### 8.2.8 Solid and Hazardous Waste Management

#### Waste Processing

The City of Cranston processes its waste through a comprehensive curbside refuse and recycling collection program managed by the Department of Public Works (DPW). This program is designed for residents in single-family homes and multi-family dwellings up to four units. The collection occurs once per week, with residents required to place their refuse, recyclables, and yard waste at the curb by 6:15 AM on collection day. The City uses an automated collection system with specially marked roll-out carts for rubbish and recyclables.

#### Cost and Operations

The budget for the Refuse Removal and Disposal Group for 2025 includes various expenditures that ensure efficient waste management. These costs cover salary schedules, payroll taxes, pension contributions, and refuse removal hauling and tipping fees. The total budget for refuse removal and disposal is approximately \$7.65 million. The Clean City Program Coordinator oversees the administrative tasks, while Waste Management of Rhode Island handles the collection and maintenance of waste carts.

#### Recycling Programs

Cranston supports several recycling programs to promote sustainability and reduce landfill waste. The City participates in the Recycle Together RI initiative, which simplifies recycling by allowing residents to recycle a broader range of items. Residents can drop off household hazardous waste, such as propane tanks, oil-based paint, and rechargeable batteries, at designated locations. Additionally, items like books, waste oil, televisions, electronics, and scrap metal can be recycled at the Public Works Garage without any charge or appointment.

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<sup>5</sup> City of Cranston. (2024). Public Works Department: Streets and Sidewalks. Retrieved June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024, from <https://www.cranstonri.gov/departments/building-and-public-works/public-works/streets-and-sidewalks/default.aspx>; City of Cranston. (2024). Adopted 2024-2024 Municipal Budget.

Table 8.7. Municipal Waste Management Data (2023)

Tons of Trash Landfilled per HH	MRF Recycling Rate	Mandatory Recycling Rate	Overall Diversion Rate	Pounds of Rejected Recycling per HH
0.89	6,382	31.7%	32%	131

Source: RIRRC

In 2023, Cranston managed 25,937 households, generating a total of 38,145 tons of waste<sup>6</sup>. Of this, 6,382 tons were solid waste, 5,550 tons were MRF (Materials Recycling Facility) recycling, and 49 tons were composted materials. The City also recycled 61 tons of scrap metal and 166 tons of other materials. The overall diversion rate for Cranston was 32.0%, with a mandatory recycling rate of 31.7% and an MRF recycling rate of 19.7%.

### 8.2.9 Water and Wastewater Resources and Facilities

Cranston's water supply and wastewater management are integral to the City's infrastructure, ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of its residents. This section outlines the current state and future projections of these essential services.

#### Water Supply

Most of Cranston receives its water from the Providence Water Supply Board (PWSB), which provides treated drinking water to approximately 60% of Rhode Island residents, including Cranston.<sup>7</sup> The water is sourced from the Scituate Reservoir, which is part of a larger system that includes several smaller reservoirs. The treatment process at the Scituate Reservoir involves aeration, coagulation-flocculation, sedimentation, rapid sand filtration, disinfection, and fluoridation, ensuring the water meets or exceeds all federal and state drinking water standards. A small portion of the City is serviced by the Kent County Water Authority, which supplies water from its own groundwater wells and treated water purchased from the Providence Water Supply Board (PWSB).<sup>8</sup>

To promote efficient use of the resource, the City maintains and updates the infrastructure connected to the PWSB system. Recent improvements include the implementation of a Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system to monitor and control water distribution in real-time, and the replacement of old water meters with Automated Meter Reading (AMR) systems to enhance accuracy and operational efficiency. Figures 8.2, 8.3, and 8.4 show Cranston's water supply, quality and service area.

#### Wastewater Management

Cranston's wastewater is managed by a municipal system operated by Veolia Water. The City's wastewater treatment facility (WWTF) treats an average of 10 million gallons of wastewater per day, servicing approximately 73,200 customers. The WWTF, which includes an incinerator capable of

<sup>6</sup> Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation. (2024). 2023 municipal summary detailed with charts. Retrieved June 18, 2024, from <https://rirrc.org/sites/default/files/2023%20Municipal%20Summary%20Detailed%20with%20Charts%2020240401.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Providence Water Supply Board. (2020). Water Supply System Management Plan Executive Summary. Retrieved from Providence Water Executive Summary.

<sup>8</sup> Kent County Water Authority. (2024). About KCWA. Retrieved from <https://kentcountywater.org/about-kcwa.aspx>.

processing 66 dry tons of sludge per day, has received recognition for its exceptional operations and maintenance practices. In 2019, the facility was awarded the Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant Excellence Award by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.<sup>9</sup>

The wastewater system primarily serves the eastern section of Cranston, while developed parcels not connected to the sewer system rely on Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS). The City's comprehensive plan indicates that future development in western Cranston will generally rely on OWTS unless they can connect to a pressurized sewer line. Figure 8.5 shows the Sewer Service Area's within the City of Cranston.

The City is proactive in managing its sewer system, conducting regular inspections, pressure testing, and maintenance of sewer lines and manholes. Manhole pressure tests are conducted to check for leaks and ensure proper installation.

### Stormwater Management

The Environmental Program Manager, housed within the DPW, manages the City's stormwater program and permit requirements. The City is required to submit an MS4 annual report to the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Office of Water Resources. The City conducts extensive public education and outreach to promote awareness and compliance with stormwater management practices. This includes the distribution of educational materials, public meetings, and partnerships with local organizations such as Save the Bay and the Stormwater Innovation Center.

In 2022, the City completed a significant project at the Speck Field recreation facility, which included the installation of an underground infiltration basin and a vegetated infiltration basin to reduce phosphorus levels in the Spectacle Pond watershed area. This project was partially funded through an EPA Southeast New England Program (SNEP) grant and is used as a showcase for the benefits of phosphorus reduction.<sup>10</sup>

The City proceeded with the design and engineering for an additional stormwater infiltration project at Pomham Street. This project, also partially funded through a SNEP grant, is scheduled for construction in Spring 2024, with associated outreach activities to educate the public on its potential benefits.<sup>11</sup>

The City has established best management practices (BMPs) for stormwater management to reduce runoff and improve water quality. These include retention basins, bioretention basins, Vortechinics<sup>12</sup> units, and underground infiltration basins. The retention basins and Vortechinics units are subject to annual inspections and maintenance to ensure their effectiveness.<sup>13</sup>

Cranston has also focused on retrofitting existing infrastructure to include BMPs. For instance, the Barrett Street project completed in 2022 involved installing an underground infiltration basin to reduce phosphorus runoff into Spectacle Pond. The City continues to identify and implement

<sup>9</sup> City of Cranston. (2024). Public Works - Sewer Maintenance. Retrieved from Cranston RI Public Works.

<sup>10</sup> City of Cranston. (2024). Public Works - Sewer Maintenance. Retrieved from Cranston RI Public Works.

<sup>11</sup> City of Cranston. (2024). Public Works - Sewer Maintenance. Retrieved from Cranston RI Public Works.

<sup>12</sup> Vortechinics is a manufacture and provider of stormwater treatment systems.

<sup>13</sup> City of Cranston. (2024). Public Works - Sewer Maintenance. Retrieved from Cranston RI Public Works.

potential BMP locations to improve stormwater management and reduce pollutant loads, with plans outlined in the Spectacle Pond Phosphorus Reduction Plan.<sup>14</sup>

### Public Education and Outreach

The City conducts a variety of outreach activities to educate the community about stormwater management. In October 2022, a public meeting was held at the Speck Field parking lot to discuss recent stormwater projects. The City also partners with local organizations for outreach activities, such as the Stormwater Innovation Center and Save the Bay.<sup>15</sup>

In addition to public meetings, the City uses its website and distributed flyers to inform residents about stormwater management practices and the importance of reducing pollutants like phosphorus. These materials are available on the City's stormwater webpage and through direct mailings.<sup>16</sup>

The City also participates in educational initiatives, such as painting sidewalk storm drain murals around catch basins with students from Eden Park Elementary School to raise awareness about the impacts of stormwater runoff on local waterbodies.

## 8.3 Challenges and Opportunities

### 8.3.1 Challenges

#### Budlong Pool Renovation

The ongoing debate about the size and scope of the new Budlong Pool remains a significant challenge. Community expectations vary, with some advocating for a pool that matches the size of the original, while others support a smaller, more cost-effective option. The closure of the pool has been a contentious issue, emphasizing the need for a resolution that balances community desires with financial feasibility.

#### Western Cranston Sewer and Water Policy

As development continues in Western Cranston, the existing infrastructure is increasingly burdened. The proposed establishment of a Septic System Management District, as mentioned in the 2010 Plan, remains unimplemented. This district would bring individual septic systems under City management, contracting private companies for monitoring and maintenance, thereby addressing the growing infrastructure demands.

#### Pawtuxet River Water Flow

Maintaining adequate water flow in the Pawtuxet River, as mandated by the EPA, continues to be a challenge. The river receives treated effluent from the City's wastewater treatment plant and stormwater runoff. Continuous monitoring by the City and the Providence Water Supply Board is necessary to ensure compliance with environmental standards.

#### Increasing Solid Waste Disposal Costs

The rising costs of municipal solid waste disposal necessitate exploring alternatives to decrease reliance on the Johnston landfill. Diversification into recycling and composting programs is essential

<sup>14</sup> City of Cranston. (2024). Public Works - Sewer Maintenance. Retrieved from Cranston RI Public Works.

<sup>15</sup> City of Cranston. (2024). Public Works - Sewer Maintenance. Retrieved from Cranston RI Public Works.

<sup>16</sup> City of Cranston. (2024). Public Works - Sewer Maintenance. Retrieved from Cranston RI Public Works.

to manage these costs effectively. The recent budget indicates a significant allocation towards refuse removal and disposal, highlighting the City's efforts to manage waste efficiently.

### Municipal Building Maintenance

The 2010 Plan highlighted concerns about municipal building maintenance, including non-compliance with the latest fire codes and the lack of long-term maintenance plans. An update on these issues is required to ensure that City-owned buildings are safe and well-maintained, with structured criteria around capital improvement planning.

### Stormwater Management and Flooding

Stormwater management remains a critical challenge, with the need to retrofit existing infrastructure to include best management practices (BMPs). Recent projects have focused on installing permeable pavements (see figure 8.6 to see total impervious cover within the City) and other BMPs to manage stormwater effectively. However, ongoing maintenance and additional projects are necessary to mitigate flooding risks and improve water quality.

### Traffic and Road Maintenance

The maintenance of roads and traffic signs remains inadequate, as noted in the 2010 Plan. Many roads require resurfacing, and traffic signs need updating to meet current standards. With the City spending approximately \$2,000,000 annually on paving and repairing streets, a more structured approach is needed to address these deficiencies comprehensively.

### School System Challenges:

- High Enrollment Schools: Schools with higher student enrollment require substantial resources for staffing, facility maintenance, and extracurricular programs.
- Cultural and Language Support: Increasing Hispanic and LEP student populations necessitate enhanced language support services and multicultural resources.
- Special Education: Consistent need for specialized staff and facilities for IEP students.
- Economic Assistance: Persistent economic challenges require ongoing support for low-income students.

#### 8.3.2 Opportunities

### Expansion of Library Services

Building on the success of the Arlington Branch, the Library Department can explore the development of a western Cranston branch. This initiative, first listed in the 1992 and 2010 Plans, should be revisited, particularly in conjunction with establishing a Western Cranston Village Center. Expanding library services would enhance community engagement and provide additional educational resources.

### Capital Sewer Fund Implementation

The proposal for a Capital Sewer Fund from the 2010 Plan should be revisited to better fund capital sewer projects. Implementing this fund would provide a dedicated revenue stream for necessary infrastructure improvements, ensuring sustainable management of the City's sewer system.

### Leveraging Partnerships for Water Quality Improvements

Partnerships with local stakeholders, such as the Stormwater Innovation Center and Save the Bay, offer opportunities to improve water quality through both structural and non-structural BMPs. These collaborations can enhance the City's efforts in stormwater management, leveraging expertise and resources to implement effective water quality projects.

### Green Infrastructure and Resilience Projects

The City's recent projects, such as the Barrett Street and Pomham Street stormwater infiltration basins, demonstrate the potential for green infrastructure to manage stormwater and reduce phosphorus levels. Expanding these projects citywide can improve resilience against extreme weather events and enhance overall infrastructure sustainability.

### Public Engagement and Education

Increasing public awareness and engagement in stormwater management can lead to more effective community participation in environmental initiatives. Educational programs and public meetings, such as those conducted for the Spectacle Pond Phosphorus Reduction project, can foster a better understanding of the importance of stormwater management and encourage community involvement.

### Utilizing State and Federal Funding

The City can take advantage of state and federal funding opportunities, such as the State Revolving Fund (SRF) Loan Program, to finance water quality and stormwater management projects. These funds can support watershed management, stormwater infrastructure, and green infrastructure initiatives, providing low-cost financing options for essential projects.