

## 11.0 TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

### 11.1 Introduction

The Transportation and Circulation Chapter of the Cranston Comprehensive Plan outlines the City's transportation infrastructure, examining its current state, historical context, and future needs. This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of Cranston's transportation network, highlighting key elements such as roadways, public transit, pedestrian pathways, and freight movement, while addressing the challenges and opportunities associated with each mode of transport.

### 11.2 Existing Conditions

#### 11.2.1 Historical Context and Evolution

Cranston, Rhode Island, has a rich history that dates to its founding in 1754. Over the centuries, the City's transportation network has significantly transformed to adapt to the changing needs of its residents and the broader economic landscape.

In the early days, Cranston's transportation was dominated by horse-drawn carriages and foot traffic, with primary routes linking agricultural areas to nearby markets. The arrival of the railroad in the 19th century marked a turning point, fostering industrial growth and facilitating the movement of goods and people. The Providence and Worcester Railroad, still in operation today, played a pivotal role in shaping Cranston's industrial base.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the electric trolley emerged, and suburban neighborhoods developed in Cranston. During the 20th century the emergence of the automobile profoundly influenced Cranston's urban development. Interstate 95 (I-95) and Interstate 295 (I-295) were constructed, providing critical north-south and circumferential routes, respectively. These highways, along with principal arterials like Route 10 (Huntington Expressway) and Route 37, cemented Cranston's position as a key node in Rhode Island's transportation network. The auto-centric development that followed led to sprawling suburban growth, especially in the western parts of the City, while the eastern part retained a denser, more urban character.

#### 11.2.2 Current Transportation Infrastructure

##### **Auto-Centricity and Its Implications**

Cranston's transportation network, being heavily reliant on automobiles, has shaped both its built environment and the quality of life for its residents. While the extensive road infrastructure supports economic activity by facilitating the movement of goods and services, it also presents challenges.

##### **Economic Prospects and Quality of Life**

Residents' reliance on the automobile contributes to congestion and longer commute times, at certain locations, which can deter potential businesses and residents. More transportation options could assist in economic competitiveness, and address congestion. Improved public transit and alternative transportation options will benefit Cranston's future growth.

Heavy reliance on automobiles impacts the environment and public health, contributing to air pollution and sedentary lifestyles. Expanding public transit, bike paths, and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure can mitigate these effects and promote a healthier, more sustainable community.

### Urban Density and Demographic Diversity

Cranston exhibits distinct differences between its eastern and western parts, reflecting varying urban densities and demographic profiles.

#### *Eastern Cranston:*

- **Population Density and Urbanization:** The eastern part of Cranston is characterized by higher population density and a more urbanized environment. This area benefits from its proximity to Providence, providing residents with better access to employment opportunities, public transit, and a higher concentration of services and amenities.
- **Land Use and Zoning:** Eastern Cranston has a diverse mix of land uses, including high-density residential areas, commercial zones, and industrial sites. The significant commercial presence along major corridors such as Reservoir Avenue and Park Avenue, coupled with industrial zones near I-95 supports a vibrant urban economy.
- **Demographic Diversity:** This part of the City features a mix of incomes and diverse demographic backgrounds, contributing to a rich cultural fabric. The higher density residential areas include a range of housing types, from single-family homes to multi-family apartments, accommodating a wide demographic spectrum.

#### *Western Cranston:*

- **Suburban and Low-Density Character:** Western Cranston is predominantly suburban, with larger residential lots and lower population density. This area is marked by its expansive open spaces, including significant forested lands and agricultural areas, which contribute to its suburban charm and lower density.
- **Land Use and Zoning:** The land use in western Cranston is primarily residential, with a substantial portion dedicated to low-density housing. Agricultural lands, forested areas, and undeveloped open spaces dominate the landscape, making it a more tranquil and less congested part of the City. It also includes some multi-family dwellings, commercial zones, and an industrial zone near I-295.
- **Homogenous Demographic Profile:** Western Cranston has a more homogenous demographic profile, with less diversity compared to the eastern part. This homogeneity can be traced back to historical patterns of suburban development and zoning regulations. In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, post-World War II suburbanization led to the creation of residential zones with larger lot sizes, appealing to predominantly middle- and upper-income families seeking a quieter, suburban lifestyle.
- **The reliance on automobiles is more pronounced here due to the lower density and fewer public transit options.** The suburban development model historically prioritized road infrastructure over public transit, creating a barrier for those without access to private vehicles.

### Implications for Transportation Planning

The distinct urban and suburban densities and demographic profiles of eastern and western Cranston have significant implications for transportation planning and the overall transportation chapter. Understanding these differences is crucial for developing targeted strategies that address the unique needs of each area, ensuring an efficient, sustainable, and equitable transportation network across the City.

*Eastern Cranston:*

- **Public Transit Expansion:** The higher density and urban characteristics of eastern Cranston support the expansion and enhancement of public transit services. Investment in frequent and reliable bus services, improved transit facilities, and better integration with regional rail networks can reduce car dependency and traffic congestion.
- **Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure:** Developing comprehensive pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in this area can further promote alternative modes of transportation, reducing environmental impacts and improving public health. This includes expanding bike lanes, enhancing sidewalk networks, and ensuring safe crosswalks and pedestrian pathways.

*Western Cranston:*

- **Maintaining Suburban Character While Reducing Economic Barriers:** Improving transportation options, such as increasing the availability of public transit routes and ensuring safe, accessible pedestrian and bicycle paths, can enhance mobility and reduce dependence on personal vehicles.
- **Mixed-Use Developments:** Encouraging small-scale, mixed-use developments can integrate residential, retail, and office spaces, reducing the need for long commutes and fostering local economic growth. These developments should be designed to blend seamlessly with the existing suburban landscape.
- **Enhanced Connectivity:** Improving connectivity within Western Cranston through the development of safe pedestrian and bicycle paths can reduce reliance on automobiles. Creating greenways and multi-use trails that link residential areas to parks, schools, and local amenities will enhance accessibility and promote active transportation.
- **Public Transit Accessibility:** Developing park-and-ride facilities at strategic locations can connect residents to regional transit services, reducing the need for daily car use. Ensuring that these facilities are well-integrated with public transportation networks will make commuting more convenient and sustainable.
- **Traffic Management:** Implementing traffic calming measures and optimizing traffic signal timings can improve road safety and reduce congestion. Measures such as roundabouts, speed humps, and better signage can enhance the suburban experience while addressing traffic issues.

**Commute to work by Mode of Transportation**

Cranston has a total of 40,734 commuters, reflecting a diverse array of transportation habits and needs. The City's transportation network is designed to accommodate a wide range of commuting preferences, from private vehicles to public transit and active transportation. Table 11.1 illustrates the number of commuters utilizing various transportation modes to commute to work.

<b>Transportation Mode</b>	<b>Number of Commuters</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Car, truck, or van:	35,222	86%
Drove alone	31,067	76%
Carpooled:	4,155	10%
In 2-person carpool	2,655	7%
In 3-person carpool	878	2%

<b>Transportation Mode</b>	<b>Number of Commuters</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
In 4-person carpool	27	0%
In 5- or 6-person carpool	572	1%
In 7-or-more-person carpool	23	0%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab):	835	2%
Bus	650	2%
Subway or elevated rail	0	0%
Long-distance train or commuter rail	185	0%
Light rail, streetcar or trolley	0	0%
Ferryboat	0	0%
Taxicab	0	0%
Motorcycle	20	0%
Bicycle	74	0%
Walked	658	2%
Other means	590	1%
Worked from home	3,335	8%

Source: Census Bureau. (2022). Means of transportation to work (American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B08301).

#### *Car, Truck, or Van:*

- The vast majority of Cranston's commuters (86%) rely on cars, trucks, or vans for their daily travel. Notably, 76% of these individuals drive alone, underscoring the City's auto-centric culture. This reliance on single-occupancy vehicles contributes to traffic congestion, especially during peak hours, and highlights the need for more robust public transit options to alleviate road congestion and reduce environmental impact.
- Carpooling: Although less common, carpooling still plays a significant role, with 4,155 commuters participating in shared rides. The data reveals a breakdown within carpooling habits:
  - 2,655 in 2-person carpools
  - 878 in 3-person carpools
  - 27 in 4-person carpools
  - 572 in 5- or 6-person carpools
  - 23 in carpools with 7 or more people

#### *Public Transportation:*

- A smaller yet crucial segment of the population (835 commuters) relies on public transportation. The majority of these commuters (650) use the bus system, which indicates that buses are a vital component of Cranston's public transportation infrastructure. Additionally, 185 commuters use long-distance trains or commuter rail, emphasizing the importance of regional connections that link Cranston to major employment hubs in the region. This highlights the need for efficient bus services that provide access to these rail stations in neighboring communities.

*Other Modes of Transportation:*

- Diverse transportation options are essential for a resilient urban mobility system. In Cranston:
  - 20 commuters use motorcycles
  - 74 use bicycles
  - 658 walk to work
  - 590 use other means

The variety in commuting methods underscores the importance of investing in comprehensive transportation infrastructure that supports all modes of travel. Enhancing bicycle lanes, pedestrian pathways, and safety measures can make these alternatives more viable and attractive, contributing to reduced traffic congestion and improved public health.

**Work from Home**

A significant number of residents (3,335) work from home, reflecting a growing trend that has been accelerated by recent global events. This shift not only reduces the overall demand on transportation infrastructure but also highlights the need for robust digital infrastructure to support remote work. The significant number of residents working from home suggests that the City should also consider supporting remote work infrastructure, such as high-speed internet access and coworking spaces. Facilitating remote work can reduce peak-hour traffic, lower emissions, and support a more flexible workforce.

**Commuting Time to Work**

The ACS data on travel time to work found in Table 11.2 provides insights into the commuting experiences of Cranston residents:

Table 11.2. Travel Time to Work		
Commuting Times	Total number of Commuters by Commute Time	Percentage
Less than 5 minutes	340	0.89
5 to 9 minutes	4,650	12.19
10 to 14 minutes	3,630	9.51
15 to 19 minutes	9,019	53.64
20 to 24 minutes	7,542	19.77
25 to 29 minutes	1,432	3.75
30 to 34 minutes	4,607	12.07
35 to 39 minutes	1,764	4.62
40 to 44 minutes	910	2.38
45 to 59 minutes	1,934	5.07
60 to 89 minutes	2,019	5.29
90 minutes or more	309	0.81
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>38,156</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). Travel time to work (American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B08303).

The data in Table 11.2 indicate that a significant portion of the population (approximately 54%) commute for 15 to 19 minutes, suggesting that many residents work relatively close to their homes.

However, there is also a notable number of longer commutes, with over 4,000 residents traveling 45 minutes or more. This highlights the importance of reliable and efficient public transportation options that can serve these longer-distance commuters and the opportunity to reduce overall vehicle miles traveled by way of offering a wider range of multi-modal transportation options throughout the City. By offering such options many of Cranston's residents, who's daily commute is 15 minutes or less, the City would greatly increase the likelihood that those residents would walk, ride bicycles, or utilize other forms of transportation to get to and from work. This change could have many compounding effects on the overall quality of life for the City's residents, by reducing congestion, decreasing travel time for all other commuters, improving air quality, and more.

### 11.2.3 Roadways

Cranston's transportation infrastructure is a vital component of its urban and suburban fabric, facilitating the movement of people and goods within the City and to neighboring regions. The City's roadways, categorized by their function and capacity, serve diverse transportation needs, from local commutes to regional travel. The City itself, the state, and federal entities are all responsible for maintaining various roadways throughout the City. Major highways such as I-95 and I-295 fall under state maintenance, while local roads and collectors are primarily maintained by the City. This division of responsibilities ensures that road maintenance and improvements are managed effectively across different levels of governance.

#### Major Roadways

Several major roadways service Cranston, providing essential links to other parts of Rhode Island and beyond:

- Interstate 95 (I-95): A primary north-south corridor that runs along Cranston's eastern edge, offering direct access to Providence and other major cities along the East Coast.
- Interstate 295 (I-295): This highway loops around Cranston's western side, functioning as a bypass for I-95 and connecting to suburban and rural areas.
- Route 10 (Huntington Expressway): A crucial route connecting Cranston to downtown Providence and facilitating intra-city travel.
- Route 37: An east-west connector that links I-95 to I-295, serving as a major artery for commuters and commercial traffic.

#### Other Arterials and Collector Roads<sup>1</sup>

Cranston's transportation network includes several other arterial and collector roads that play vital roles in connecting neighborhoods and facilitating local traffic flow. The following is an exhaustive list including a description of each of these roads:

#### Other Principal Arterials

- Reservoir Avenue (Route 2): This major arterial road runs north-south through Cranston, serving as a key commercial corridor. It connects residential areas with numerous retail establishments, services, and schools, making it an essential route for daily commutes and local traffic.

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<sup>1</sup> Rhode Island Department of Transportation. (2016). RIDOT Roads (2016) [vector digital data]. Rhode Island Geographic Information System (RIGIS) Data Distribution System. Environmental Data Center, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, Rhode Island.

- Scituate Avenue (Route 12): Connecting the western parts of Cranston, this road serves both residential and commercial areas, facilitating access to the more suburban and rural regions.
- Pontiac Avenue: Running parallel to I-95, this arterial provides an alternative route for local traffic and access to residential and commercial areas. It connects to several important intersections and serves as a feeder to larger highways.
- Park Avenue (Route 12): Another significant east-west arterial, Park Avenue connects multiple neighborhoods and provides access to key City landmarks, including Cranston High School East and several parks. Its strategic location helps distribute traffic efficiently across the City.
- Dyer Avenue: Serving the central part of Cranston, Dyer Avenue links residential neighborhoods with commercial zones and local institutions.
- Cranston Street: As one of the primary east-west connectors, Cranston Street links various neighborhoods and provides access to local businesses, schools, and recreational facilities. Its role as a collector road is crucial for distributing traffic from major highways to local streets.
- Narragansett Boulevard (Route 1A): A major north-south route along the eastern edge of Cranston, providing access to the waterfront and neighboring communities.

#### Minor Arterials

- Atwood Avenue (Route 5): Serving the western part of Cranston, Atwood Avenue is a vital north-south route that connects residential areas with commercial zones and industrial sites. It also provides access to nearby Johnston and serves as a critical link for local traffic.
- Plainfield Pike (Route 14): An east-west route that connects the central part of Cranston to the neighboring towns of Johnston and Providence, facilitating both local and regional traffic.
- Phenix Avenue: This minor arterial connects residential areas with local parks and commercial establishments, playing a crucial role in local traffic distribution.
- Scituate Avenue: Scituate Avenue serves local traffic in western Cranston, connecting residential areas with suburban and rural parts of the City.

#### Major Collectors

- Garfield Avenue: A key collector road that facilitates local traffic within Cranston, connecting residential neighborhoods with schools, parks, and commercial areas.
- Meshanticut Valley Parkway: This scenic route serves as a collector for the surrounding residential areas, providing access to local parks and amenities.
- Oaklawn Avenue (Route 5): Connecting residential neighborhoods with commercial zones, this road plays a crucial role in local traffic management.
- Fletcher Avenue: Serving the northern part of Cranston, this road links residential areas with local businesses and amenities.



## Minor Collectors

- **Homestead Avenue:** A typical local roadway that runs through residential neighborhoods, providing access to homes, local parks, and schools. It is representative of many similar streets in Cranston that form the backbone of the City's local transportation network.
- **Puritan Avenue:** This local road serves residential areas, connecting them to nearby arterials and collector roads. It plays a crucial role in the local circulation of traffic and provides access to neighborhood amenities.
- **Carlsbad Street:** Another example of a local roadway, Carlsbad Street supports residential access and local traffic flow. It connects with other local streets and helps distribute traffic within neighborhoods.
- **Garrison Street:** Serving a similar purpose, Garrison Street is part of the local network that provides essential connectivity for residents. It ensures easy access to local facilities and other parts of the City.

## Local Roadways

Cranston's extensive network of local roadways ensures that all neighborhoods are accessible and well-connected. These roads are essential for facilitating daily commutes, local travel, and access to services. The local roads form the backbone of the City's transportation network, ensuring that all residential areas are well-connected to the broader transportation infrastructure. These roads are typically maintained by the City and play a crucial role in the daily lives of Cranston residents, providing essential connectivity and access to local amenities.

## Roadway Classification and Mileage

Cranston's roadways are classified based on their function and capacity, as outlined in the following table:

FHWA Classification	Description	Total Length (miles)
1	Principal Arterial	22.09
2	Minor Arterial	13.18
3	Major Collector	27.02
4	Minor Collector	23.16
5	Local Road	32.40
7	Other Roads	281.74

Source: Rhode Island Department of Transportation. (2016). *RIDOT Roads (2016)* [vector digital data]. Rhode Island Geographic Information System (RIGIS) Data Distribution System. Environmental Data Center, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, Rhode Island.

## Traffic Patterns and Street Network Capacities

Traffic patterns in Cranston vary significantly between the eastern and western parts of the city. The eastern region, being more densely populated and urbanized, may experience higher traffic volumes, especially during peak hours. This area benefits from a more access to public transit and a greater concentration of services and amenities, which can help to mitigate traffic congestion.

In contrast, the western part of Cranston, with its suburban character, may see less traffic congestion on most roadways but relies heavily on automobiles for daily commuting. This can influence particular roadways which a majority of commuters rely upon for access to highways and other parts of the City. The street network capacities in this area are generally sufficient to handle current traffic



volumes, but ongoing monitoring and improvements are necessary to address future growth and development.

### **Problem Spots and Projected Traffic Volumes**

Key problem spots in Cranston's transportation network include intersections with high congestion rates and areas with frequent traffic accidents. Efforts are underway to address these issues through traffic calming measures, signal improvements, and road maintenance projects. For example, the Route 37 improvement project, which includes the rehabilitation of bridges and congestion improvements, is a significant ongoing effort to address these issues ([RIDOT](#)).

Projected traffic volumes indicate a need for continued investment in the transportation infrastructure to accommodate future growth. Enhancements in public transit, bicycle paths, and pedestrian facilities are essential to provide alternative transportation options and reduce reliance on automobiles.

### **Accessibility to Major City Centers**

Cranston is conveniently situated between both Providence and Warwick with direct access to multiple highways and roads which offer relatively short travel times to several major City centers in Rhode Island and beyond:

- Providence, RI: Approximately 15-20 minutes via I-95.
- Warwick, RI: About 10-15 minutes via Route 37 or I-295.
- Newport, RI: Roughly 40-45 minutes via I-95 and Route 138.
- Boston, MA: Between 1 hour and 15 minutes via I-95 North.

Cranston's roadways form a critical component of its transportation network, supporting both local and regional travel. By addressing current challenges and planning for future growth, Cranston can enhance its transportation infrastructure to better serve its residents and support economic development.

#### *11.2.4 Major Traffic Generators*

Cranston's transportation network supports various key destinations that generate significant traffic volumes. Identifying these major traffic generators is crucial for understanding traffic patterns, planning infrastructure improvements, and managing congestion effectively.

### **Key Commercial Areas**

- Garden City Center: This premier shopping destination features numerous retail stores, restaurants, and entertainment options, attracting both local residents and visitors from neighboring communities. The influx of shoppers, particularly during weekends and holidays, significantly contributes to traffic congestion in the area.
- Chapel View: Adjacent to Garden City Center, Chapel View is a mixed-use development with retail, office spaces, and residential units. The combination of these uses creates a high volume of traffic throughout the day.
- Reservoir Avenue Commercial Corridor: This major arterial road is lined with various businesses, including supermarkets, service centers, and small shops, generating constant traffic. Its central location within the City makes it a vital commercial hub.

### Educational Institutions

- Cranston High School East: Located on Park Avenue, this high school generates substantial traffic, especially during morning arrival and afternoon dismissal times. The surrounding streets experience increased congestion from student drop-offs and pick-ups.
- Cranston High School West: This high school also contributes to peak traffic volumes. The proximity to major roadways like Route 37 and I-295 exacerbates traffic during school hours.

### Industrial and Business Parks

- Cranston Industrial Park (Amflex & Comstock, Comstock Parkway south of Route 14) This industrial area generates significant freight and employee traffic, affecting nearby roadways. The movement of goods and services to and from this area is crucial for local businesses but adds to congestion.

### Recreational Areas

- John L. Curran State Park: Popular for outdoor activities such as hiking, fishing, and picnicking, this state park draws numerous visitors, especially on weekends and holidays. The increased traffic impacts nearby residential streets and major access routes.
- The John H. Chafee Athletic and Recreation Complex: Serves as a major hub for sports and community events, significantly increasing traffic volume during peak usage times during the weekends and potentially causing congestion in the surrounding residential and commercial areas.
- Dorsey Field: Dorsey Field is a well-known outdoor recreational facility in Cranston, offering spacious grounds and various sports amenities. Its use, especially during sports events and community activities, can lead to increased traffic and potential congestion on Hope Road and nearby residential streets.
- Cooney Playground: Located on Gansett Avenue, Cooney Playground provides a variety of amenities including playground equipment, sports fields, and picnic areas. The high volume of visitors, particularly families and youth sports teams, may result in increased traffic and parking challenges in the surrounding neighborhood during peak hours.
- Meshanticut State Park: This park, with its scenic lake and walking paths, attracts numerous visitors for recreational activities such as walking, jogging, and picnicking. The influx of park-goers, especially on weekends and holidays, may cause traffic buildup along Reservoir Avenue and Dean Parkway, impacting the flow of traffic and parking availability in adjacent areas.
- Roger Williams Park: Despite being located in Providence, there are several entrances to Roger Williams Park from Cranston, most notably from Park Ave. This expansive park offers a wide array of recreational activities, including boating, walking trails, and zoo visits. The park's popularity can lead to increased traffic on Park Avenue and surrounding roads, particularly during weekends and events, affecting both Providence and Cranston neighborhoods with congestion and parking demands.

#### 11.2.5 Bridges<sup>2</sup>

Cranston's bridges are integral to the City's transportation network, facilitating the movement of people and goods while connecting various parts of the City. The City features a mix of state and

<sup>2</sup> National Bridge Inventory. (2018). Bts.gov. <https://geodata.bts.gov/datasets/national-bridge-inventory/about>

municipally owned bridges, many of which are in good condition, but some are in need of attention due to structural concerns.

### Key Bridges and Infrastructure Improvements:

The Route 37 corridor is a critical area for Cranston, encompassing multiple bridges that support significant traffic volumes and connect key commercial and residential zones. Projects are underway to rehabilitate or replace 22 bridges along this route, addressing both safety and congestion issues. These improvements are vital for maintaining efficient east-west travel and ensuring the longevity of the infrastructure. Among these, approximately half of the Route 37 bridges are classified as being in poor condition, highlighting the urgency of these projects (RIDOT).

### Bridges in Poor Condition:

Several bridges in Cranston have been identified as being in poor condition and require urgent attention. For instance, the Dean Parkway bridge over the Washington Secondary Bike Path and the Phenix Avenue bridge over Furnace Hill Brook have been flagged for structural deficiencies. The City has initiated inspections of these bridges to assess their current state and determine necessary repair and rehabilitation plans. Notably, six of the bridges along the Route 37 corridor are considered structurally deficient and are part of the current rehabilitation efforts (Rhode Island news) (RIDOT). Based on the information from Rhode Island Bridges<sup>3</sup> there are a total of 69 bridges in Cranston. Out of which, 15 are in poor condition (shown below in Table 11.4), 39 are in fair condition, and the rest of the 15 bridges are in good condition.

Bridge Name	Bridge Location	AADT (as of 2023)	Year Built	Structure	Bridge Condi- tion	Inspection Date
WELLINGTON AV & AMTRAK	I-95 RAMP CB	15200	1965	Steel	Poor	8/2/2021
I-95 NB & SB	AMTRAK RI 10 HUNTINGTON EXP	34,764	1965	Steel	Poor	9/2/2021
WELLINGTON AV	I-95 NB & SB	134,500	1964	Steel	Poor	5/2/2021
PAWTUXET RIVER	RI 37 EB	36,090	1963	Steel	Poor	2/2/2022
RI 10 HUNTINGTON EXPRESS	PONTIAC AV	9,191	1966	Steel	Poor	10/2/2022
RI 2 NEW LONDON AV	RI 37 EB & WB	47,871	1965	Steel	Poor	6/2/2021

<sup>3</sup> Experience. (2024). Arcgis.com.

[https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/9e4e6fb1f2d848b68808c1ece9e2db0b#data\\_s=id%3A045e9cc84c1c414097a19af1f029a56e-18cb559a44c-layer-2%3A938](https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/9e4e6fb1f2d848b68808c1ece9e2db0b#data_s=id%3A045e9cc84c1c414097a19af1f029a56e-18cb559a44c-layer-2%3A938)

Bridge Name	Bridge Location	AADT (as of 2023)	Year Built	Structure	Bridge Condition	Inspection Date
Wash Sec Bike Path	RI 37 EB & WB	30,529	1968	Steel	Poor	9/2/2021
CRANSTON ST	RI 37 EB & WB	30,528	1968	Steel	Poor	6/2/2021
CRANSTON ST	RI 37 RAMP	14,390	1968	Steel	Poor	9/2/2022
WASH SEC BIKE PATH	DEAN PKWY	2,102	1984	Prestressed Concrete	Poor	7/2/2021
I-295 NB	RI 37 EB & WB	27,900	1968	Steel	Poor	6/2/2021
WASH SEC BIKE PATH	RI 5 OAKLAWN AV	16,551	1940	Steel	Poor	8/2/2021
I-295 SB	RI 37 EB & WB	27,900	1969	Steel	Poor	7/2/2021
I-295 NB	RI 51 PHENIX AV	11,658	1968	Steel	Poor	9/2/2022
FURNACE HILL BROOK	KIMBERLY LANE	2,502	1980	Concrete	Poor	9/2/2022
I-295 NB & SB	RI 12 SCITUATE AV	9,841	1969	Steel Continuous	Poor	9/2/2022

### Ongoing Bridge Inspections:

In March 2024, Cranston began comprehensive inspections of seven bridges and seven culverts within the City, conducted by the Pare Corporation<sup>4</sup>. This initiative aims to review the structural conditions and develop a list of suggested repairs or rehabilitation needs. Bridges under inspection include Gansett Avenue over the Washington Secondary Bike Path and Garden City Drive over the Pocasset River. These inspections are a proactive measure to ensure public safety and extend the lifespan of these critical structures.

#### 11.2.6 Public Transportation Services

An effective public transportation network is a cornerstone of any thriving City. For Cranston, a robust public transit system not only provides essential mobility options for residents but also promotes sustainable urban development, reduces traffic congestion, and enhances the overall quality of life. As Cranston continues to grow and evolve, enhancing public transportation services will be critical in meeting the needs of its diverse population. This vision aligns closely with the goals outlined in the Transit Forward RI 2040 plan, which emphasizes the development of high-capacity transit services and the expansion of transit access to underserved areas.

<sup>4</sup> RI News Today. (n.d.). Cranston begins its own inspection of 7 bridges and 7 culverts. Retrieved June 18, 2024, from <https://rinewstoday.com/cranston-begins-its-own-inspection-of-7-bridges-and-7-culverts/>

### Public Transportation Routes and Services

The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) operates several bus routes in Cranston, providing essential service for those who rely on public transportation. Key routes include:

- Route 1 (Eddy/Hope/Benefit):
  - Weekday service from 5:08 AM to 11:44 PM
  - Frequency: 12 to 23 minutes
  - Saturday service from 6:38 AM to 10:38 PM
  - Sunday service from 6:44 AM to 9:19 PM
- Route 3 (Warwick Ave):
  - Weekday service from 5:13 AM to 8:48 PM
  - Frequency: 20 to 45 minutes
  - Saturday service from 5:59 AM to 9:38 PM
  - Sunday service from 6:50 AM to 8:34 PM
- Route 21 (Reservoir Ave):
  - Weekday service from 5:10 AM to 11:01 PM
  - Frequency: 30 to 37 minutes
  - Saturday service from 6:47 AM to 11:34 PM
  - Sunday service from 7:00 AM to 9:56 PM
- Express Routes:
  - Route 8 (Jefferson Blvd Express) and Route 65 (Wakefield Express) provide limited peak and off-peak services for commuters traveling to key business districts. These routes are crucial for connecting residents to employment centers efficiently, reducing the need for personal vehicle use and easing traffic congestion.

### Transvan Services

In addition to regular bus services, Cranston offers the Transvan program<sup>5</sup>, a shared-ride, door-to-door transportation service for residents 60 years of age or older and/or disabled. This service is designed to enhance mobility for seniors and disabled residents, ensuring they can access essential services and activities within the City. Key features of the Transvan service include:

- Transportation to personal appointments such as banking, hairdresser, and shopping within Cranston.
- Access to medical appointments, including labs and physical therapy, within Cranston.
- Rides to exercise and fitness facilities, as well as health, educational, and nutritional programs at the Cranston Senior Center.
- Monthly passes are available for a fee of \$25.

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<sup>5</sup> Cranston Senior Center. (n.d.). Transvan. Retrieved June 18, 2024, from <https://cranstonseniorcenter.com/transvan/>

- The Transvan service operates five vehicles daily, offering a cost-effective and reliable transportation option that fosters independence and social engagement among senior residents.

With 650 commuters relying on bus services, ensuring that routes are efficient, reliable, and well-connected to key areas of the City and neighboring regions is crucial. Enhancing bus frequency, especially during peak hours, and ensuring timely connections to other transit modes can improve the overall public transportation experience. Addressing concerns about limited availability and reliability will be essential to increasing ridership.

#### **Access to Rail Services:**

Although Cranston does not have its own rail infrastructure, 185 commuters travel to nearby communities to access long-distance trains and commuter rail services. This underscores the need for reliable and frequent bus services that can efficiently connect residents to these regional rail stations. Improving these connections can help alleviate road traffic and support a more sustainable urban environment.

#### **Active Transportation:**

Encouraging the use of bicycles, walking, and other means of transportation can help reduce traffic congestion and promote a healthier lifestyle. Investing in bike lanes, pedestrian pathways, and safety measures can make these options more attractive and accessible. Developing infrastructure that supports these active transportation modes can significantly enhance urban mobility and quality of life.

#### **Transit-Oriented Development**

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is a crucial strategy for integrating land use and transportation planning, promoting higher density development near public transit hubs. Reservoir Avenue may be a possibility for TOD due to its strategic location and existing infrastructure. This corridor connects Cranston to both Providence and Warwick and features robust commercial areas near Park Avenue and prominent shopping plazas such as Garden City and Chapel View.

Reservoir Avenue's accessibility and existing commercial vitality make it an ideal candidate for TOD initiatives. The area already supports a mix of multifamily and single-family residential zones, making it well-suited for higher density residential developments. By focusing TOD efforts on Reservoir Avenue, Cranston can enhance public transit usage, reduce reliance on personal vehicles, and foster sustainable urban growth.

#### *Key Benefits of TOD along Reservoir Avenue:*

- *Increased Public Transit Use:* Higher density residential and commercial developments near transit stops can boost ridership, making public transportation more viable and sustainable. By concentrating development along Reservoir Avenue, Cranston can create a more transit-friendly environment that encourages residents to opt for public transit over personal vehicles.
- *Economic Growth:* TOD can attract new businesses and residents, contributing to local economic development. The commercial vitality of Reservoir Avenue, with its proximity to key shopping plazas like Garden City and Chapel View, presents an opportunity for mixed-use developments that combine retail, office space, and housing. This integration can stimulate economic activity and create vibrant, walkable communities.

- *Sustainable Urban Growth:* TOD promotes sustainable development practices by reducing urban sprawl and preserving open spaces. By focusing growth around transit hubs, Cranston can minimize the environmental impact of new developments, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote energy-efficient living.
- *Enhanced Quality of Life:* TOD can improve the quality of life for residents by providing easy access to amenities and services. Developments along Reservoir Avenue can offer a variety of housing options, retail establishments, and recreational facilities within walking distance, reducing the need for long commutes and enhancing community connectivity.
- *Improved Infrastructure Efficiency:* Concentrating development in designated TOD areas can lead to more efficient use of infrastructure and public services. This can result in cost savings for the City and better service delivery to residents.

### 11.2.7 Sidewalks and Bicycle Infrastructure

#### Sidewalks

Sidewalks play a crucial role in ensuring the safety, accessibility, and mobility for all residents of Cranston. While the City currently lacks a formal sidewalk inventory, several sources of public input and existing policies provide insight into the existing conditions and highlight areas for improvement.

#### Public Opinion on Sidewalks in Cranston

Public feedback regarding sidewalks in Cranston reveals several key concerns and opportunities for improvement. Residents have expressed a range of concerns and opportunities, primarily focused on maintenance, safety, and accessibility.

- **Maintenance and Condition:** A significant portion of the public feedback reviewed for this chapter highlights the poor condition of many sidewalks throughout the City. Residents have reported that numerous sidewalks are in need of repair, with some areas requiring complete replacement. The deterioration of sidewalks poses a safety risk and hinders the overall pedestrian experience.
- **Safety:** Safety concerns are a prevalent theme in the feedback. Inadequate lighting on sidewalks has been identified as a critical issue, particularly in making evening travel unsafe for pedestrians. Additionally, residents have called for more traffic calming measures to enhance pedestrian safety on sidewalks and at crosswalks.
- **Accessibility:** There are considerable challenges related to accessibility for pedestrians. Inadequate pedestrian facilities make it difficult for residents to travel safely to various locations within the City. The need for more and safer crosswalks has also been emphasized to ensure better accessibility for all pedestrians, including those with disabilities.
- **Improvements:** Residents see substantial opportunities for improving the City's pedestrian infrastructure. Expanding and maintaining sidewalks to ensure they are safe and accessible is a priority. Suggestions include implementing better pedestrian pathways and connections to promote walkability across the City with a focus on connecting residential areas to parks, local businesses, and schools.
- **Community Involvement:** Encouraging community involvement in maintaining and improving pedestrian facilities is another opportunity identified by residents. Engaging the community can foster a sense of ownership and responsibility towards the upkeep of sidewalks and pedestrian pathways.



### *Overview of Sidewalk, Curb, and Driveway Construction Regulations in Cranston*

Chapter 12.08: Sidewalk, Curb, and Driveway Construction<sup>6</sup> of Cranston's code of ordinances requires property owners to apply for permits and bear the costs for changes to curbing for driveway access. Sidewalk repairs are mandated for property owners when notified by the City, with a cost-sharing program available for residential properties near schools. The program provides reimbursement for repairs, with higher rates for low-income residents.

### *Evaluation Against Best Planning Practices*

Distributing maintenance costs to property owners can align well with best practices by reducing the financial burden on the City, allowing municipal resources to be allocated to other critical areas. This approach promotes accountability, as property owners who directly benefit from well-maintained sidewalks are responsible for their upkeep. Such a system ensures that those who use and benefit from the infrastructure contribute to its maintenance, fostering a sense of responsibility and community involvement.

From a safety and accessibility perspective, regulations that mandate timely repairs and high standards for sidewalk installations are crucial. These regulations ensure that sidewalks are safe and accessible for all residents, aligning with best practices in urban planning. The cost-sharing program further promotes equity and accessibility by providing reimbursement for repairs, especially with higher rates for low-income residents. This approach ensures that financial constraints do not prevent necessary repairs, thus maintaining safe and accessible pedestrian pathways across the City.

However, there are notable challenges and criticisms associated with this approach. One significant concern is equity. The requirement for property owners to cover repair costs can disproportionately affect low-income residents, potentially leading to inequities in sidewalk conditions across different neighborhoods. This misalignment with best practices can result in inconsistent quality and maintenance, as property owners with varying financial capabilities may not be able to afford the same level of repairs. Consequently, sidewalks in wealthier areas may be better maintained than those in less affluent neighborhoods, exacerbating social and economic disparities.

Another challenge is the inconsistency in the quality of repairs. When different contractors perform repairs, the standards can vary significantly, potentially compromising overall safety and uniformity of the sidewalk network. This variability can pose safety risks and undermine the effectiveness of the sidewalk maintenance program.

Enforcing these regulations requires substantial administrative resources. Ensuring compliance involves inspecting sidewalks, issuing notices, and following up on repairs, which can strain City departments. The administrative burden can divert resources from other essential services and complicate the management of the sidewalk maintenance program. While distributing maintenance costs to property owners can reduce the financial burden on the City and promote accountability, it also presents significant challenges. Ensuring equity, consistent quality, and efficient enforcement are critical issues that need to be addressed to align with best planning practices fully.

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<sup>6</sup> City of Cranston. (n.d.). Sidewalks, curbs, and driveway cuts (Code of Ordinances, Title 12, Chapter 12.08). Retrieved June 18, 2024, from [https://library.municode.com/ri/cranston/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=CO\\_TIT12STSIPUPL\\_CH12.08\\_SICUDRCO](https://library.municode.com/ri/cranston/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=CO_TIT12STSIPUPL_CH12.08_SICUDRCO)

### Aligning with Transit Forward RI 2040

The feedback provided by Cranston residents on sidewalk conditions throughout the City aligns with the goals of the Transit Forward RI 2040 plan, which emphasizes the importance of creating safe and accessible pedestrian pathways to support public transit usage. Addressing the concerns of Cranston residents by enhancing sidewalks will facilitate better access to bus stops and other transit services, contributing to a more integrated and efficient transportation network across the City.

### Bicycle Infrastructure

#### *Overview*

Bicycle infrastructure is an essential component of Cranston's transportation network, contributing to overall mobility, public health, and environmental sustainability. Currently, Cranston's bicycle infrastructure is minimal, primarily consisting of a segment of the Washington Secondary Bike Path and a limited number of on-road bicycle facilities. This section examines the existing conditions of bicycle infrastructure in Cranston, public feedback, and alignment with state-level plans, particularly the Rhode Island Bicycle Mobility Plan<sup>7</sup> (BMP).

#### *Existing Bicycle Infrastructure*

##### *Washington Secondary Bike Path:*

The Washington Secondary Bike Path is the most significant bicycle facility in Cranston, running from Cranston Street in Cranston to Log Bridge Road in Coventry. This path follows a former rail corridor and is mostly flat, making it accessible for cyclists of all skill levels. The path spans 19 miles and features scenic views, including sections parallel to the Pawtuxet River, offering a pleasant and safe route for both recreational and commuting cyclists.

##### *On-Road Bicycle Facilities:*

Cranston hosts a few on-road bicycle facilities, though they are not extensive. The City has some signed bike routes intended to guide cyclists along safer, lower-traffic streets. However, these routes are not well-documented or widely promoted, leading to limited usage and awareness among residents.

#### *Public Feedback on Bicycle Infrastructure*

##### *Maintenance and Safety:*

Residents have expressed concerns about the maintenance of existing bike lanes and paths. Common issues include poor pavement quality, debris, and inadequate lighting, all of which can detract from the safety and usability of these facilities. There is a strong call for more protected bike lanes, better lighting, and traffic calming measures to improve safety for cyclists (Rhode Island news).

##### *Connectivity and Accessibility:*

Public input highlights the need for better connectivity between existing bike paths and major destinations such as schools, parks, and commercial centers. Improving these connections can encourage more residents to use bicycles for their daily commutes and errands. Additionally,

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<sup>7</sup> Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning. (n.d.). Bicycle mobility plan. Retrieved June 18, 2024, from <https://planning.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur826/files/documents/LRTP/Bicycle-Mobility-Plan.pdf>

infrastructure improvements should consider the needs of young cyclists, seniors, and individuals with disabilities to create an inclusive network.

#### *Alignment with Statewide Plans*

The Rhode Island Bicycle Mobility Plan (BMP) outlines a comprehensive vision for expanding and improving the state's bicycle infrastructure. Cranston's current efforts, though limited, align with several key goals of the BMP:

#### *Connectivity:*

The BMP emphasizes the importance of connecting existing bike paths to create a seamless network. Enhancing connectivity within Cranston, particularly linking the Washington Secondary Bike Path with other local routes, is crucial for achieving this goal.

#### *Safety:*

The BMP prioritizes enhancing safety through infrastructure improvements such as protected bike lanes and better signage. Addressing public concerns about maintenance and safety in Cranston's bicycle infrastructure will support this objective and help reduce bicycle-related accidents.

#### *Equity:*

Ensuring equitable access to bicycle infrastructure across all communities is a key focus of the BMP. Expanding and maintaining bike facilities in underserved areas of Cranston will help ensure that all residents have access to safe and convenient cycling options.

#### *11.2.8 Specific Unsafe Areas for Pedestrians and Cyclists*

Ensuring the safety of pedestrians and cyclists is a critical component of Cranston's transportation planning. Identifying specific areas that pose risks can help prioritize improvements and reduce accidents.

#### **High-Risk Intersections**

- Reservoir Avenue and Park Avenue: This busy intersection sees a high volume of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The lack of adequate pedestrian crossings and the high speed of vehicles make it a dangerous area for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Cranston Street and Dyer Avenue: Frequent accidents and close calls have been reported at this intersection, highlighting the need for better signage, traffic calming measures, and dedicated bike lanes.
- Atwood Avenue and Phenix Avenue: The intersection's complex layout and heavy traffic create challenges for safe pedestrian and cyclist crossings. Improved crosswalks and signal timing adjustments are necessary to enhance safety.

#### **School Zones**

- Cranston High School East: The area around the school, particularly on Park Avenue, poses significant risks during school hours. High traffic volumes combined with inadequate pedestrian infrastructure necessitate the implementation of traffic calming measures and safer crosswalks.
- Garden City Elementary School: Located near busy shopping areas, the streets surrounding this school require enhanced safety measures to protect children walking or biking to school.

### Bicycle Path and Roadway Conflicts

- Washington Secondary Bike Path Crossings: Where the bike path intersects with major roads like Cranston Street, there are significant safety concerns. Improved signage, better lighting, and more visible crosswalks can mitigate risks at these crossings.
- Dyer Avenue: The lack of dedicated bike lanes and the high speed of traffic make this road particularly unsafe for cyclists. Introducing protected bike lanes and reducing speed limits can improve safety.

### Commercial Corridors

- Reservoir Avenue: This major commercial corridor is heavily trafficked, and the lack of sufficient pedestrian infrastructure makes it hazardous for non-motorized users. Enhanced sidewalks, pedestrian signals, and bike lanes are essential improvements needed in this area.

#### 11.2.9 Complete Streets

“Complete Streets” is an urban planning concept that emphasizes designing and operating streets to provide safe and accessible transportation options for all users, regardless of their mode of transportation. In Cranston, the City Council passed a resolution in 2023 supporting the incorporation of Complete Streets principles into the Comprehensive Plan and City Code of Ordinances. This section examines the existing conditions of Cranston's public transit, sidewalks, and bicycle infrastructure, and outlines how these can be integrated into a Complete Streets framework.

### Public Transit

Cranston's public transportation system, managed by the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA), includes several bus routes that connect residents to key destinations within the City and neighboring areas. However, public feedback indicates a need for more frequent and reliable services, better communication of schedules, and improved access to transit stops. Enhancing public transit services is essential for providing equitable transportation options, particularly for the 7.7% of households without an automobile and the 35% of households with only one vehicle available.

### Sidewalks

Sidewalks in Cranston are vital for ensuring pedestrian safety, accessibility, and mobility. Public input has highlighted several concerns, including the poor condition of many sidewalks, inadequate lighting, and the need for more and safer crosswalks. Maintenance and safety improvements are necessary to make sidewalks more accessible for all residents, including children, seniors, and individuals with disabilities. Current regulations require property owners to maintain sidewalks, but this approach can lead to inconsistencies in sidewalk quality and safety.

### Bicycle Infrastructure

Cranston's bicycle infrastructure is limited, with the Washington Secondary Bike Path being the most significant facility. There are a few on-road bicycle lanes and signed routes, but these are insufficient for creating a connected and safe network for cyclists. Public feedback has called for better maintenance, improved connectivity, and enhanced safety measures such as protected bike lanes.

### Complete Streets Principles

The Complete Streets resolution passed by the Cranston City Council underscores the importance of designing streets that provide safe and convenient access for all users. Key elements of Complete Streets include:

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- **Sidewalks and Shared-Use Paths:** Ensuring sidewalks are well-maintained, well-lit, and accessible. Developing more shared-use paths that accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists.
- **Bicycle Lanes and Routes:** Expanding the network of protected bike lanes and clearly marked routes to improve safety and connectivity for cyclists.
- **Public Transit Infrastructure:** Enhancing bus stops with shelters, benches, and lighting to improve the transit user experience. Increasing the frequency and reliability of public transit services.
- **Pedestrian Safety Features:** Implementing traffic calming measures such as bump-outs, center islands, pedestrian signals, and crosswalks to make streets safer for all users.
- **Green Infrastructure and Aesthetics:** Incorporating street trees, landscaping, and other green infrastructure to enhance the urban environment and promote environmental sustainability.

### 11.2.10 Freight Movement

Freight transportation is a critical component of Cranston's transportation infrastructure, supporting the local economy and connecting the City to regional, national, and global markets. Effective freight movement is essential for the City's businesses, particularly those in manufacturing, retail, and logistics sectors. This section provides an overview of the current state of freight transportation in Cranston, including key modes of transport, recent trends, and future needs.

#### Modes of Freight Transport

Cranston's freight transportation system comprises multiple modes, including road, rail, water, and air. Each mode plays a specific role in the overall freight network, contributing to the efficient movement of goods<sup>8</sup>.

##### *Truck Freight:*

Trucks are the dominant mode of freight transportation in Cranston, handling the majority of goods transported to and from the City. The main freight corridors for trucks in Rhode Island include Interstate 95, Interstate 295, Route 4, and Route 146. These routes facilitate significant freight movement and (Interstates 95 and 295 in particular) connect Cranston to the rest of the state and regional distribution centers.

##### *Rail Freight:*

Rail freight plays a significant role, particularly for bulk goods and long-distance transportation. Cranston benefits from connections to the Amtrak Northeast Corridor, which links the City to the broader national rail network. Rail freight provides an efficient means of transporting heavy and bulk commodities such as raw materials and manufactured goods.

##### *Water Freight:*

Although less dominant than truck and rail, water freight is crucial for transporting large volumes of goods. Cranston's proximity to the Port of Davisville within the Quonset Business Park and the Port of Providence allows for the efficient movement of goods via Narragansett Bay.

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<sup>8</sup> Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning. (2023). Rhode Island statewide freight and goods movement plan 2022. Retrieved June 18, 2024, from <https://planning.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur826/files/2023-06/Rhode%20Island%20Statewide%20Freight%20and%20Goods%20Movement%20Plan%202022.pdf>

*Air Freight:*

Air freight is essential for high-value and time-sensitive goods. Cranston is served by nearby airports that handle air cargo operations. Air freight volume has seen significant growth, with Rhode Island experiencing an increase in air cargo volume, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic when passenger air traffic declined sharply.

### 11.3 Community Engagement

#### 11.3.1 Public Input and Community Concerns

Public input gathered from surveys and workshops highlights several key concerns and opportunities for Cranston's transportation network:

- Roads and Traffic:
  - Residents expressed concerns about the maintenance and condition of roads, issues with traffic control, and poor street lighting. They emphasized the need for more traffic calming measures and better infrastructure improvements.
- Public Transit:
  - There is a desire for more frequent and reliable public transit services. Improved communication about transit schedules and expanded transit network coverage were common themes.
  - There is a need for better communication of public transportation schedules.
  - Residents desire more frequent and reliable public transit services.
  - Expanding and improving the transit network to better serve the community.
  - Promoting public transportation as a viable option for daily commutes.
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities:
  - Maintenance and safety of existing bike paths were significant concerns, with calls for better lighting and security. Opportunities exist for expanding and connecting bike paths to encourage their use.
  - Sidewalks need repair and better maintenance, with specific requests for improved lighting, more crosswalks, and traffic calming measures to ensure pedestrian safety.
- Environmental Sustainability:
  - Concerns about stormwater management, forest land degradation, and invasive species were prevalent. Residents see opportunities in promoting renewable energy, green infrastructure projects, and conservation efforts.

### 11.4 Challenges and Opportunities

#### 11.4.1 Challenges

##### **High Car Ownership and Reliance on Car Infrastructure:**

Cranston's transportation system is heavily dependent on automobiles, leading, at certain locations at certain times, to congestion, longer commute times, traffic accidents, air pollution, and safety concerns for pedestrians and bicyclists. This auto-centric approach also contributes to the fragmentation of urban spaces and reduces the viability of alternative modes of transportation.



**Sidewalks in Need of Repair and Maintenance:**

Many sidewalks in Cranston are in poor condition, with issues such as cracks, disrepair, and inadequate lighting. These conditions pose safety risks and hinder accessibility, particularly for individuals with disabilities. There is a significant need for more traffic calming measures to enhance pedestrian safety.

**Inadequate Bicycle Infrastructure:**

The existing bicycle infrastructure in Cranston is minimal and insufficient to connect major destinations such as schools, parks, and commercial centers. Existing bike lanes require repairs and better lighting to ensure the safety and usability for cyclists.

**Public Transit Limitations:**

Public transit services need improvement in terms of frequency, reliability, and coverage. Better communication about transit schedules and expanded transit network coverage are essential to make public transportation a viable option for more residents.

**Environmental Sustainability:**

Concerns about stormwater management, forest land degradation, and invasive species are prevalent. The transportation infrastructure must incorporate environmentally sustainable practices to mitigate these issues and promote green infrastructure projects and conservation efforts.

*11.4.2 Opportunities***Promotion of Multimodal Transportation System**

Cranston has the opportunity to shift a significant portion of commuters, particularly the 54% who have commuting times between 15 and 19 minutes, away from car dependence. Investments in expanded bike networks, pedestrian connectivity, and bus services can encourage the use of alternative transportation modes, leading to a more interconnected and healthier community.

**Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)**

Areas such as Reservoir Avenue are ideal candidates for TOD initiatives. By concentrating development around transit hubs, Cranston can enhance public transit usage, reduce reliance on personal vehicles, and foster sustainable urban growth. This approach can attract new businesses and residents, stimulate economic activity, and create vibrant, walkable communities.

**Improvement of Sidewalk and Pedestrian Infrastructure**

Enhancing sidewalks and pedestrian pathways is crucial. Implementing a City-managed maintenance program and encouraging community involvement in maintaining pedestrian facilities can ensure consistent quality and safety. Expanding and maintaining sidewalks, particularly near parks, schools, and local businesses, can significantly improve walkability.

**Enhanced Bicycle Infrastructure**

Developing a connected network of bicycle lanes and routes, prioritizing protected bike lanes on high-traffic streets, and improving signage and pavement markings can make cycling a safer and more attractive option for residents. Addressing public concerns about maintenance and safety in bicycle infrastructure aligns with state goals for expanding and improving the bicycle network.

**Green Infrastructure and Environmental Initiatives**

Integrating green infrastructure elements, such as street trees, bioswales, and other sustainable practices, into street designs can enhance the urban environment and promote environmental



sustainability. These initiatives can help manage stormwater, reduce urban heat islands, and improve air quality.

### **Public Transit Enhancements**

Working with RIPTA to enhance the frequency and reliability of bus services and upgrading bus stops with shelters, seating, and lighting can improve the public transit experience. Efficient connections to regional rail stations and ensuring that new and existing bus routes serve residents without vehicles can support a more sustainable transportation system.

### **Support for Remote Work**

The significant number of residents working from home highlights the need for robust digital infrastructure to support remote work. Facilitating remote work can reduce peak-hour traffic, lower emissions, and support a more flexible workforce. The City should consider investments in high-speed internet access and coworking spaces to support this trend.

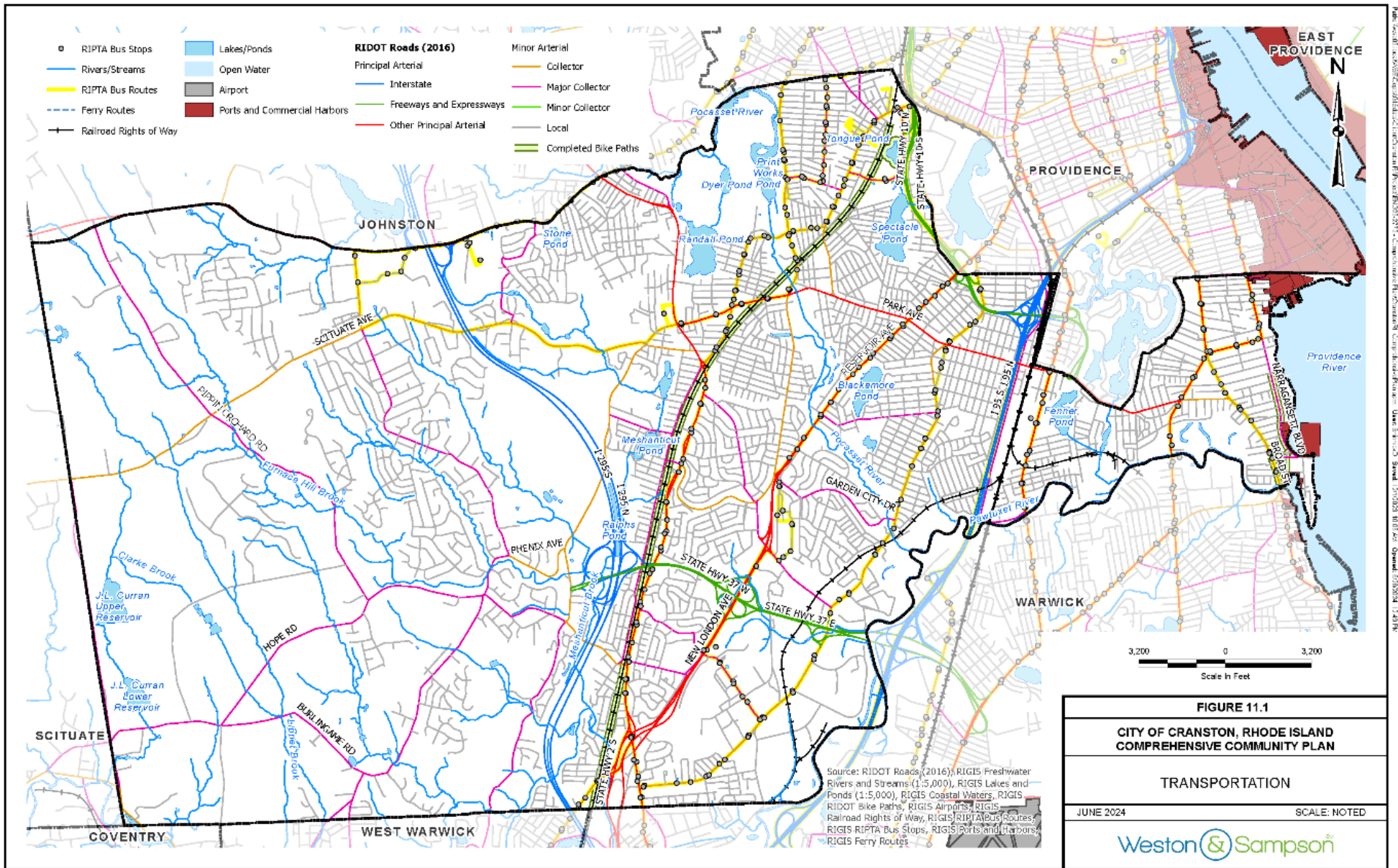


Figure 11-1. Transportation Network - Cranston, RI