

Background about HousingWorks RI's zoning research

[HousingWorks RI](#)'s foray into understanding Rhode Island municipal residential zoning, most recently enhanced by GIS mapping, began in 2018. In its efforts to better understand municipal potential for residential development, HousingWorks RI has examined municipal comprehensive plans and zoning codes to align what is proposed in plans to what has been passed by ordinance. Taking it a step further, in 2021, HWRI engaged in GIS mapping of zoning for single family, two-family, multifamily, and mixed-use development, as well as the state's low- and moderate-income housing, public infrastructure, and transit routes, among other important land use elements. This work to-date has been informed by HWRI's analysis of the methodologies used by [Desegregate CT](#) and [Massachusetts Housing Partnership's Transit Oriented Development Explorer \(TODEX\)](#) and [Residency](#).

Following the launch of the [National Zoning Atlas](#) collaborative project, which is an outgrowth of Desegregate CT's Zoning Atlas, HWRI became the Rhode Island lead, responsible for collecting, analyzing, and visualizing the zoning districts of all 39 Rhode Island municipalities. In addition to the National Zoning Atlas, HWRI also intends to build a secondary interactive online map that will serve as a hub for a coalition of land use/affordable housing researchers, educators, and advocates. This secondary atlas will include additional featured layers such as residential density, transportation, environmental data points, community amenities, and more.


Through the creation of these interactive maps, HWRI anticipates that municipalities, residents, developers, and legislators alike will be able to utilize the data presented therein to make more informed, contextual, and nuanced decisions about zoning and land use.

HWRI is seeking funding and partners to build out the project.

RHODE ISLAND ZONING ATLAS

HousingWorks RI, a community partner of Roger Williams University, has launched the [Rhode Island Zoning Atlas](#). HWRI is seeking funding and partners to build out the project. Current advisors include faculty and staff from Roger Williams University, and several state partners.

[LEARN MORE](#)


HousingWorksRI
at Roger Williams University

Building a Tool for Stakeholders

Municipalities:

- Help to identify those areas that development and denser housing types should be directed towards

- Highlight areas that are opportunities for zoning updates that encourage residential and other development that may provide compatible amenities to existing residential areas
- Integrate transportation, amenities, walkability, and infrastructure into discussions of residential development
- Understand and leverage zoning and land use practices of neighboring and nearby municipalities to create more cohesive policies that recognize and respect historic development patterns and “human-forged paths”

Developers:

- Help “decode” zoning so that development opportunities are expanded past a handful of municipalities that a developer is familiar with
- More easily identify and act upon opportunities with minimal costs and resistance

Legislators:

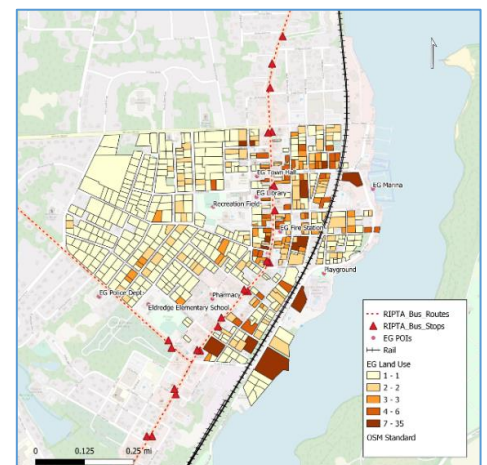
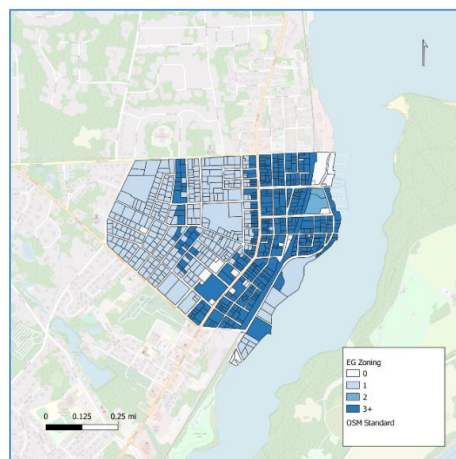
- Provide a visual representation of zoning and land use across the state to create a more cohesive understanding of the state as a whole and its municipalities
- Layer other imperative elements (transportation, schools, emergency services, sidewalks, bike paths, grocery stores, census data, housing data, etc.) with land use and zoning in order to more strategically target investments to certain areas that will benefit most
- Inform regional and statewide policies and efforts to address the housing shortage and unaffordability

Residents:

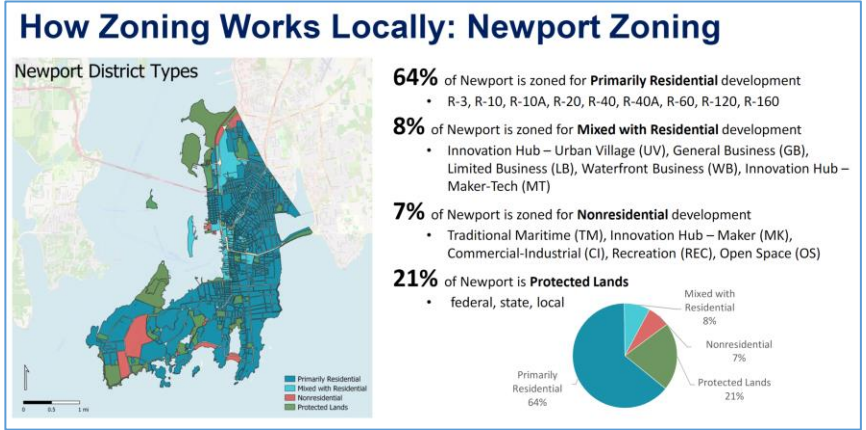
- Provide an easily navigable interface to learn about and explore the zoning and land use of one’s own community as well as others
- Illustrate the disconnect between the development patterns that predate zoning and those patterns that evolved following zoning (the fallacy of community character).

Mapping Work To Date

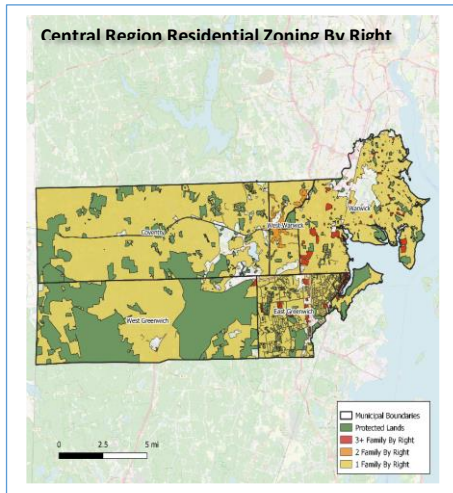
A look at proposed Transit Oriented Development at Grow Smart RI’s Power of Place Summit, 2022.



Training modules to local Health Equity Zone residents about planning and zoning.



Analysis for use in 2022 Housing Fact Book.



Working draft for National Zoning Atlas.

