



PROVIDENCE
HR&A + INNOVATION & DESIGN
DISTRICT

I-195 Redevelopment District Strategy Update

Preliminary Recommendations

July 2023

HR&A Advisors is a leading economic development consultancy. We help create more equitable, resilient, and dynamic communities. Our work turns vision into action through rigorous analysis, strategy development, and implementation planning.

HR&A has served a diverse range of clients – including real estate owners and investors, hospitals and universities, cultural institutions, community development organizations, and governments – since 1976.



HR&A supported Cortex Innovation Community with their 2022-2026 Strategic Plan

Successful Innovation Districts

Innovation districts bring leading-edge institutions, public agencies, and companies together to support a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood with economic development, community building, and civic activities.

What makes an innovation district successful?

1. **A vibrant, dense environment** to attract talent and support idea creation.
2. **Density and mixing of uses** – from residential and retail, to commercial – to create a highly desirable urban environment.
3. **Programmed open space** and public realm improvements to foster creativity and collaboration.
4. **Cohesive branding and marketing** to promote district identity.
5. **Robust partnerships** between public, private, academic and nonprofit actors anchored around a catalytic vision.
6. **A designated managing entity** to guide the district's ongoing planning, development and programming, and to ensure buy-in from key stakeholders.

Best practices from other cities

Mission Bay, San Francisco



Seaport Square, Boston

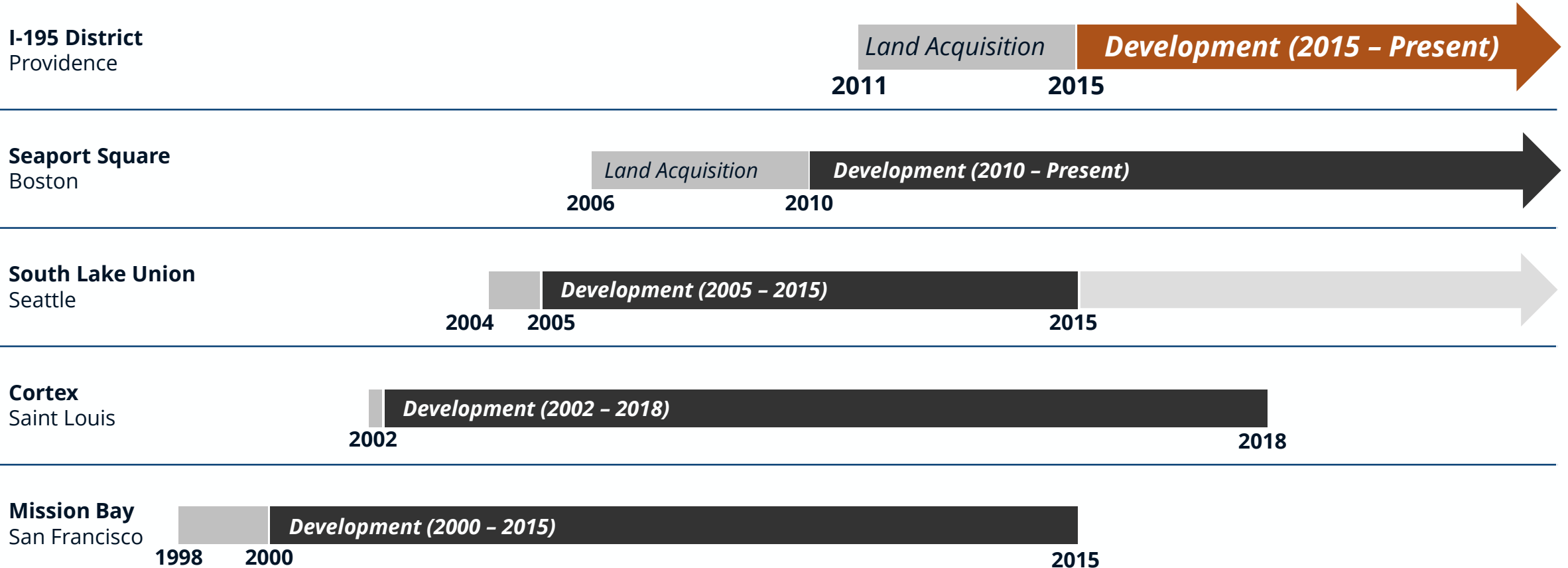


South Lake Union, Seattle



Innovation District Timelines

Building a successful innovation district takes time. Comparable districts in other cities took about 10-20 years to reach full development, depending on the pre-development timeline.



Context

Based on recommendations from the 2016 study led by HR&A, the I-195 Redevelopment Commission has been implementing strategies to create a successful innovation district.

Providence's 9-Step Action Plan

- Support **infrastructure development, place-making strategies, and private sector job creation** with a true Master Plan
- Collaborate with **Wexford Science & Technology and CV Properties**
- Leverage the strength of Providence's **anchor institutions**
- Create an **innovation center** and prototyping lab for collaboration between institutions and firms
- Form an organization** charged with the creation of the district
- Broaden the innovation district's **geography**
- Attract a robust **research and commercialization center**
- Access a world-class culture of **design thinking** at a new Product Prototyping and Evaluation Lab
- Staff a **managing entity** mandated to efficiently and responsibly deliver funding, tools, and resources



Context

The I-195 Commission has completed or is in progress to deliver many of the assets and amenities recommended in the 2016 study, including the initial development program and infrastructure improvements.

Recommendations (2016)	Progress to Date
20,000-50,000 SF Innovation Center	Completed. 217K SF Point225 opened in 2019 anchored by the Cambridge Innovation Center (CIC), Brown University School of Professional Studies, and Johnson & Johnson.
Signature Pedestrian Bridge	Completed. The Michael S. Van Leesten Memorial Bridge opened in 2019.
Parking Garage	Completed. The Clifford St. Garage opened in 2020 with 1,250 parking spaces.
Transportation Connectivity	Completed. The Downtown Transit Connector (DTC), a bus rapid transit service lane, is installed through the District.
Up to 500 Residential Units	Completed. More than 400 residential units delivered to-date from Chestnut Commons, Emblem 125, and Parcel 6. More residential units are planned in Parcels 2, 8, 9, and 14/15.
Up to 500,000 SF Academic Space	In Progress. Johnson & Wales built the Bowen Center for Science & Innovation on parcels 31 & 36 and Brown University occupies space in Point225.

Infrastructure and Public Amenities

The I-195 Commission has delivered key infrastructure improvements and continues to successfully manage dynamic programming in the I-195 District Park, which has helped increase activity and attract new investments to the neighborhood.



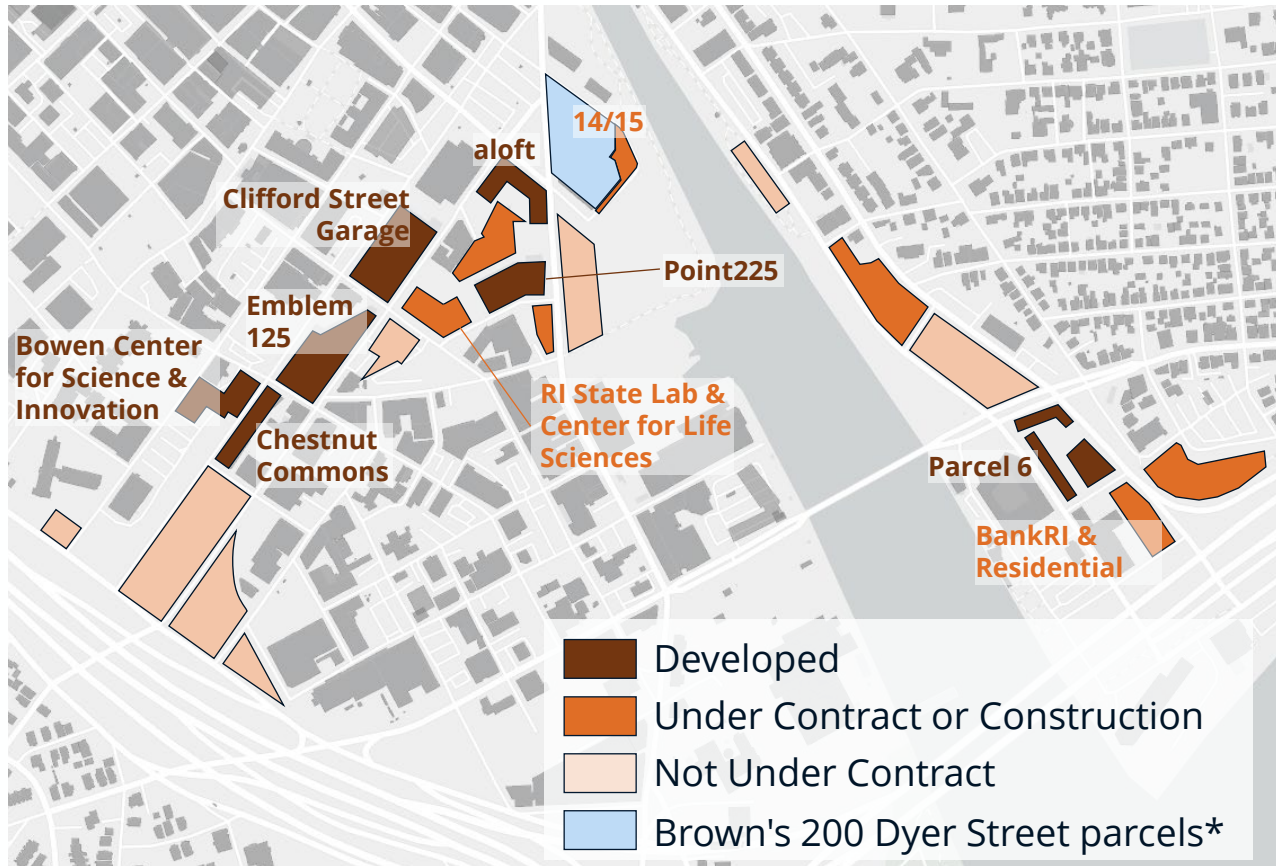
Source: I-195 Redevelopment Commission

- The I-195 District Park **hosted 90 events in 2022 and 130 more are planned for 2023** – from film festivals, art displays, music, and private events.
- Set to open in 2025, the Park Pavilion will provide **year-round food and beverage concessions, public bathrooms, and other amenities.**
- The State **invested in infrastructure improvements**, such as the Clifford Street Garage and Downtown Transit Corridor.

Development Summary

To date, the I-195 Commission has delivered 900K SF of development with another 1M SF of development in the pipeline. Nearly seven acres remain available for development.

Summary of Development on I-195 Parcels



Developed to Date

+400 units
Residential Units

+260K SF
Office or Academic Space

In the Pipeline*

+540 units
Residential Units

+660K SF
Office or Academic Space

Note: Estimates are rounded.

*Numbers for "In the Pipeline" include planned development combining parcels 14/15 with Brown's adjacent land at 200 Dyer St.

Market Conditions

Office development in the pipeline should satisfy existing demand for wet-lab and research space. Multifamily residential projects continue drive increased land value and support other uses in the District, such as retail and amenities.

Residential

- **Residential development on I-195 parcels drove most of the multifamily growth in Providence.** The District's role in the city's growth is expected to continue given its pipeline and absorption.

Office

- **The conventional office market is stagnant in Providence** – Point225 is the only major office development in recent years. Traditional office buildings in downtown are undergoing conversions or demolitions.

Wet-Labs & Research

- **At least four wet-lab and research developments are proposed.** To fill the wet-lab and research space in the pipeline, Providence must double the current number of private-sector life sciences jobs.

Source: CoStar, HR&A analysis

Note: City-wide estimates exclude Downtown Providence and the I-195 District.

New Multifamily Units (2016 – 2023)

16%

of recently developed residential units in Providence are on I-195 parcels

75%

of proposed or under-construction residential units in Providence are on I-195 parcels

Change in Office SF (2016 – 2023)

+13.1%

I-195 District & Jewelry District

-1.8%

Downtown Providence

+0.7%

Rest of Providence City

Wet-Lab & Research SF in the pipeline

+600K SF

Coming online by 2026

+220K SF

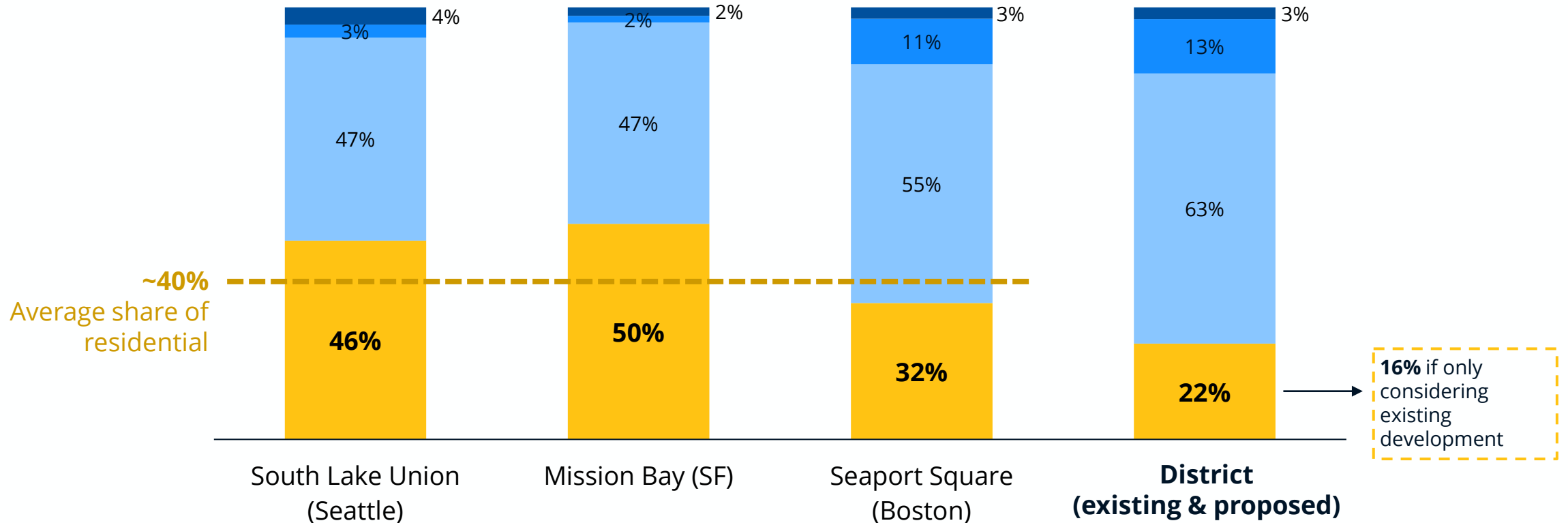
Proposed after 2026

Market Conditions

Even with the Commission's success, the share of residential development in the District (I-195 parcels and the Jewelry District) remains low compared to other innovation districts.

Programs for Selected Innovation Districts

Residential Office/Research Retail/Other Hotel



Life Sciences

The I-195 District poses a significant commercial opportunity for Providence's life sciences industry, given its proximity to major institutions and recent investment from the State and local actors.

The life sciences industry has strong growth potential in Providence, if coupled with the right investment and coordination of multiple actors.

- **Governor McKee announced \$45 million investment for the life sciences sector** in the FY2024 budget. Funds may be used for the development of wet-lab incubator space and resources to grow the life sciences ecosystem.
- **Growing Demand:** There is a growing concentration of biotechnology companies in the city, and many have expressed interest in wet-labs.
 - At least 200K SF of wet-lab space are coming online in the short term.
 - Currently, local companies are traveling to other cities to access wet-lab space. Providence-based biotechnology companies have expressed a need for wet-labs.
- **Major Institutions:** The proximity of major hospitals, Brown Medical School and a university focus on life science makes the district a prime location for focused life sciences investment.

Overview of Life Sciences Industry*

950

Current life sciences jobs in Providence

27.5%

Job growth of life sciences from 2014 to 2023

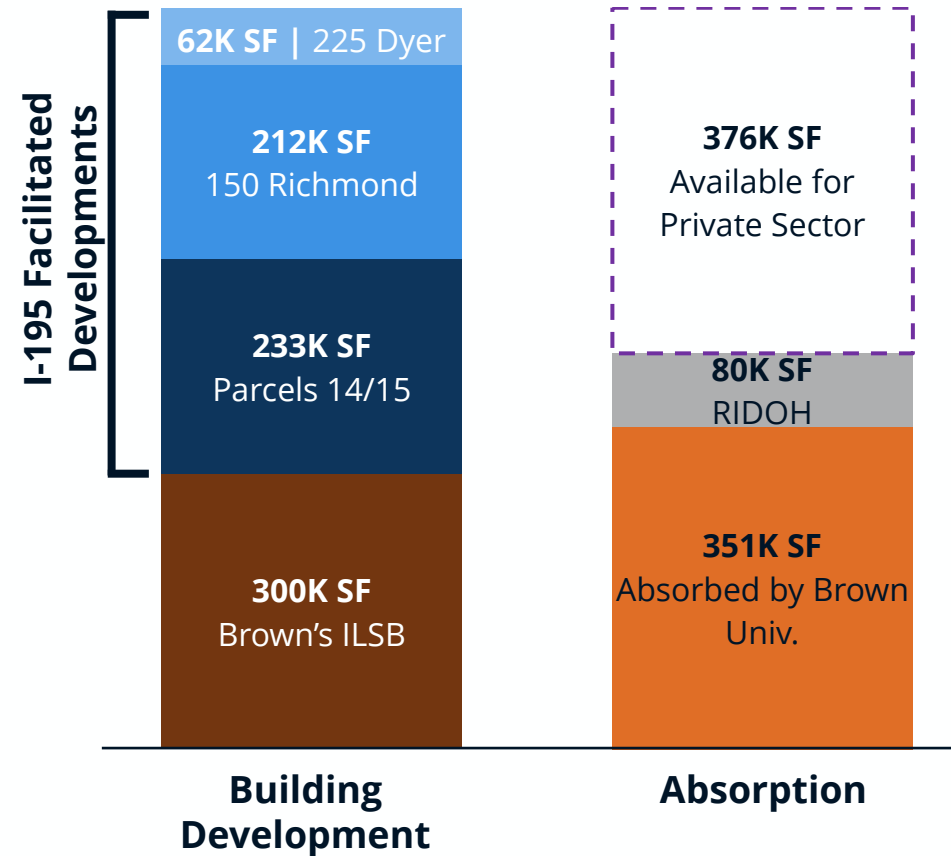
Source: Lightcast, BioPlan CBRE Research (2022).

*Note: data reflects commercial life science ecosystem, excluding nonprofit/institutional life science.

Development Summary

There are four major wet-lab and research developments proposed on or adjacent to I-195 land. Private-sector life sciences jobs are needed to absorb 376K SF of space in the pipeline.

Wet-Lab Developments in the Pipeline



Source: Lightcast

*Note: Development by Brown University on its own parcels (non-I-195 parcels).



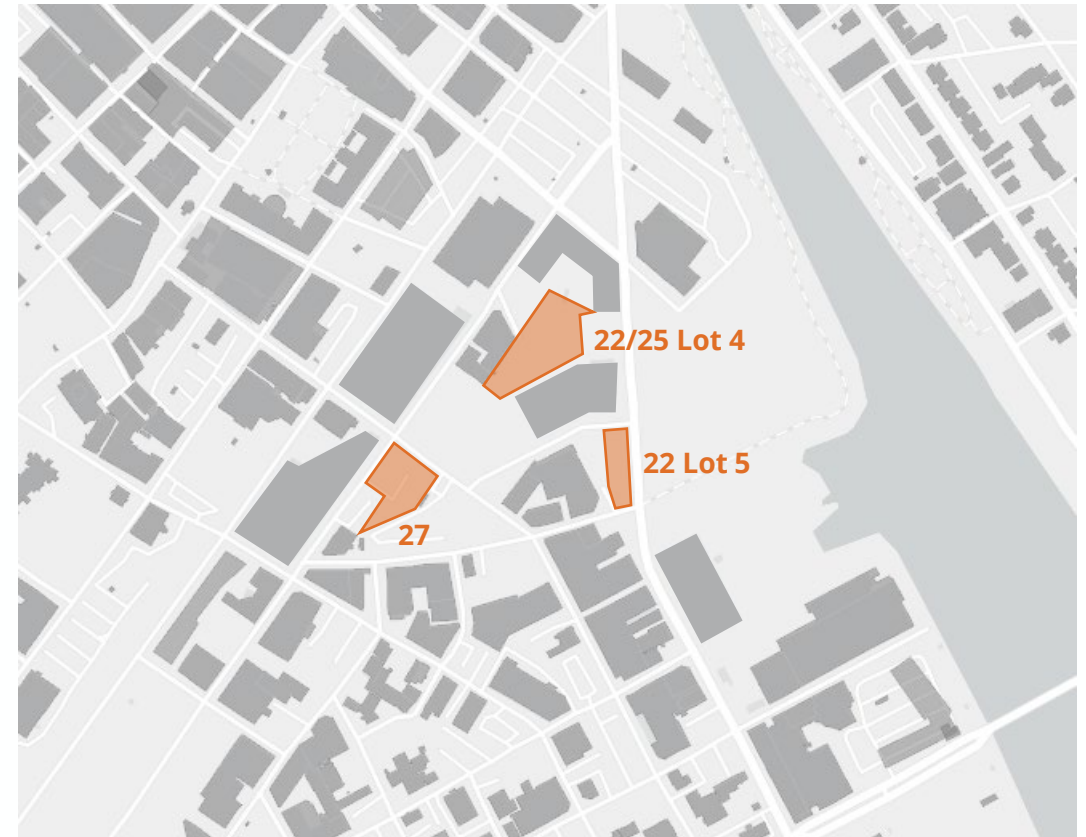
Recommendations

Recommendation – Promote Development of Research Space

Strategically hold one or two I-195 parcels for future wet-lab or office development once the other proposed wet-lab and research developments in the District come online and are absorbed.

- The I-195 Commission should **save a few parcels to leverage momentum towards life sciences** once the wet-lab and research developments in the pipeline are absorbed.
- Commercial development should be **concentrated in the core of the District**, close to 225 Dyer and the developments in the pipeline.
- The current proposed developments will come online between 2025 and 2027, at which point the Commission can leverage its commercial parcels to **encourage institutional investment and drive further private investment.**

Parcels appropriate for research and wet-lab space



Note: Lots 4 and 5 are anticipated to be combined with adjacent properties owned by Wexford

Recommendation – Continue to Collaborate with Commerce

Continue to work with Commerce and other economic development agencies to attract companies and support the creation of an additional 1,000 to 1,100 private-sector life sciences jobs.

- The governor’s \$45 million commitment to life sciences should be **directed into the District** to support the creation of an additional 1,000 to 1,100 private-sector life sciences jobs.
- Successful delivery and absorption of the current pipeline is a marketing strategy and will lead to the development of the remaining parcels.
- To fill wet-lab and research developments in the pipeline, Providence needs to **create about 1,000 to 1,100 private sector life sciences jobs**, doubling the current number of jobs.*

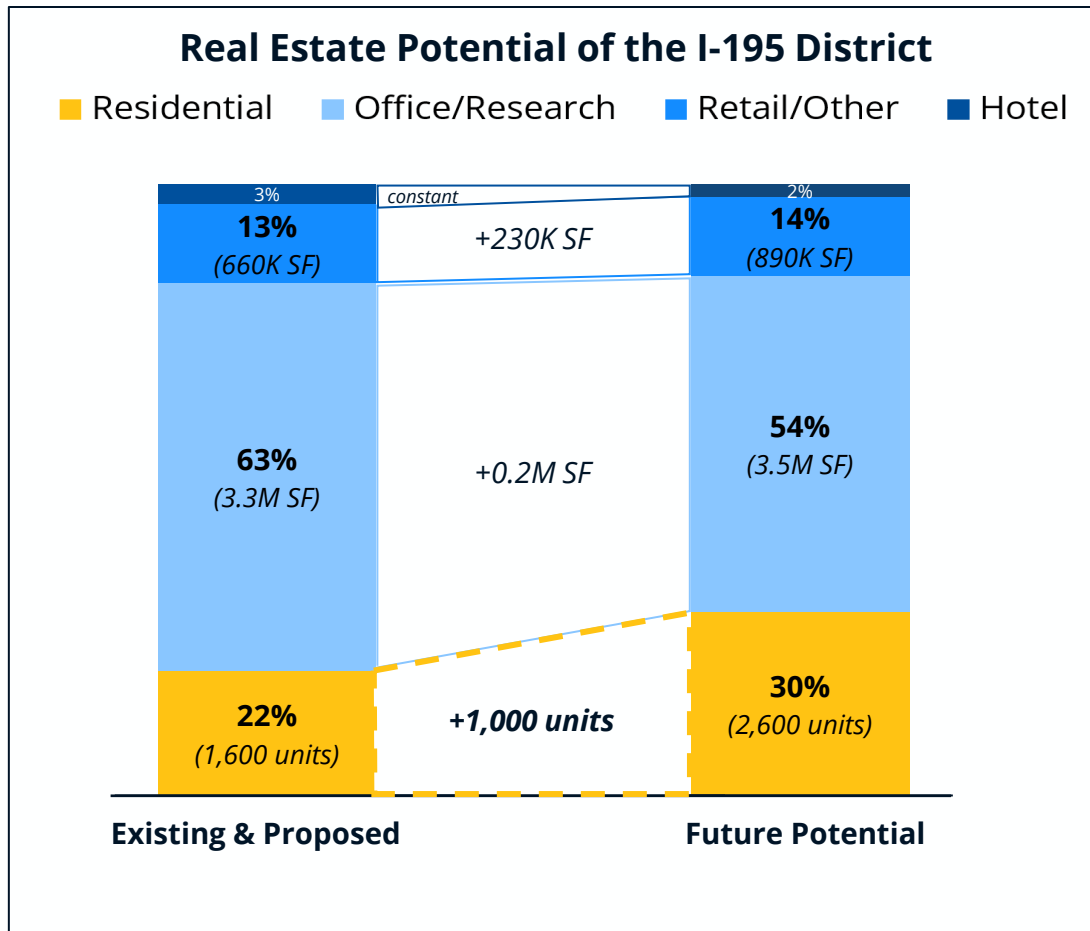


Source: Lightcast

* Note: Number of jobs calculated by summing available private-sector (non-academic, non-public) lab spaces in the pipeline divided the average SF of lab space per job (350 SF/job).

Recommendation – Support Residential Development in the District

The I-195 Commission should encourage more residential development to ensure the District reaches the critical density required to attract other neighborhood amenities and businesses.



- Adding a total of **1,000 units** can bring the **share of residential development to 30% in the larger district.**
- The remaining I-195 parcels can accommodate approximately **700 more residential units.**
- Adjacent parcels **should absorb the additional residential demand** to reach the creation of 1,000 additional residential units.

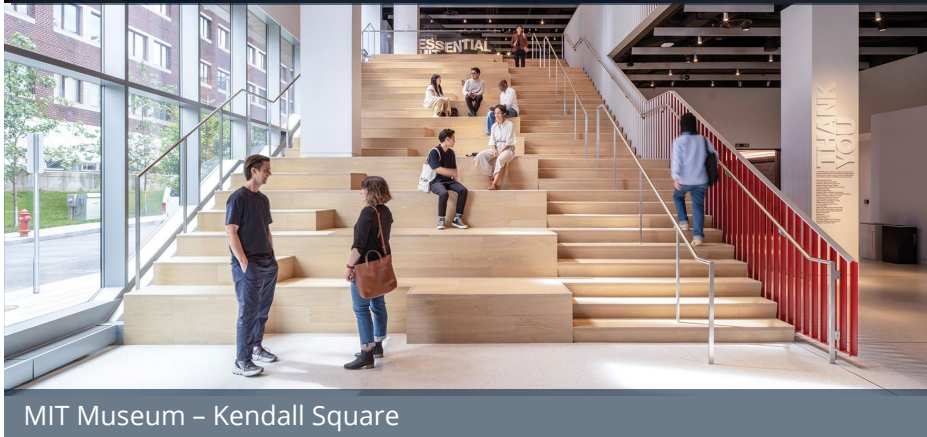
Sources: CoStar, HR&A analysis

Recommendation – District Activation

Support a true Work-Live-Play environment in the neighborhood by expanding I-195 Commission’s strong programming and investments into public space.



Durham Performing Arts Center – American Tobacco



MIT Museum – Kendall Square

- The I-195 Commission has already made significant improvements to the public realm. The Commission should **continue to expand district activation and placemaking strategies**, especially in the core of the District.
- The forthcoming **park pavilion** will bring additional public amenities and infrastructure upgrades to the I-195 District Park.
- **Coordination with stakeholders**, including the City and the Downtown Providence Parks Network will help create a cohesive public space along the waterfront.
- The Commission should **consider cultural or entertainment uses** (potentially as part of parcel 42) to further create a vibrant district and support value creation in the area.
- Consider shifting the proposed transit center from the District entrance to District parcel(s) adjacent to Interstate 95, catalyzing Transit Oriented Development while supporting the development delivered to-date and future placemaking strategies in the District’s core.

Recommendation - Create a Cohesive District

Connecting historically divided neighborhoods and fostering innovation beyond I-195 parcels will require a coordinated branding and marketing strategy for the western side.

Connecting Downtown and the Jewelry District to cultivate a **strong ecosystem west of the river** will require a coordinated branding and marketing strategy. This work should be led by an established managing entity representing institutions and stakeholders beyond the Commission

Once parcels on the east side of the river are developed, they will **blend into Fox Point's established residential ecosystem** and no longer require active oversight.



Note: the boundary on the map is illustrative.

Summary of Recommendations

On the remaining seven acres of vacant land, the Commission should implement the following strategies to continue to drive Providence's economic growth.

Real Estate & District Activation

1. **Strategically hold one or two I-195 parcels for future wet-lab or office space** until the current pipeline of development is absorbed.
2. **Continue to work with Commerce and other economic development agencies** to attract companies and support the creation of an additional 1,000 to 1,100 private-sector life sciences jobs.
3. **Encourage more housing** to support commercial development in the pipeline, create the density needed to attract neighborhood amenities and businesses, and generate land value in the long-term.
4. **Continue to support the creation of a Work-Live-Play neighborhood** by investing in the I-195 District Park and holding parcels for district activation uses, such as cultural space.
5. **Establish a cohesive district** through coordinated marketing and branding focused west of the river.

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