

Portland Train Platform and Station Public Meeting



April 25, 2024





Introduction

About NNEPRA

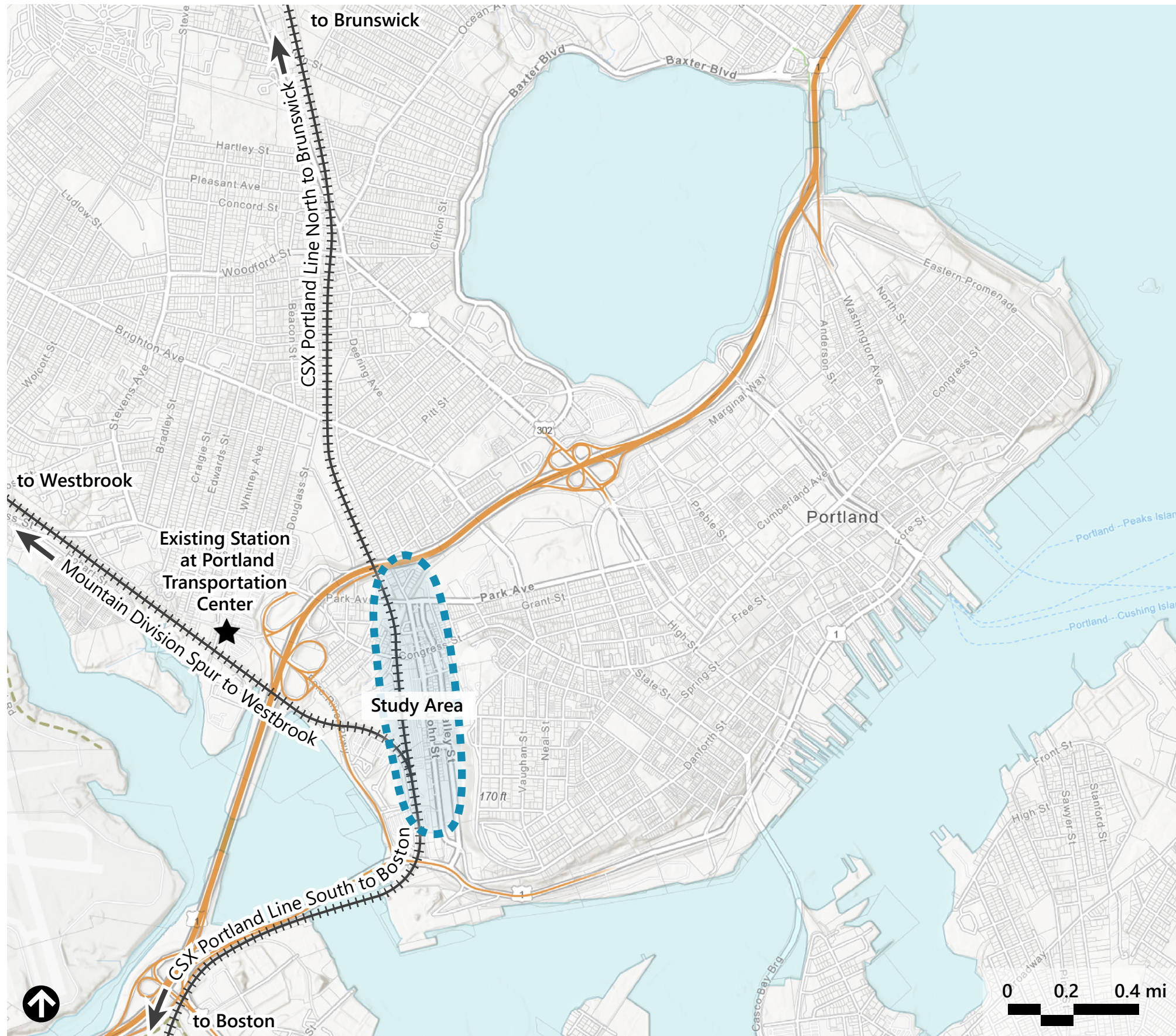
- Quasi-government agency established by the Maine State Legislature to oversee the operation of passenger rail service to and within Maine
- Holds Service Agreement with Amtrak for operation of Downeaster
- Establishes schedules, marketing programs, fares
- Manages strategic planning and capital projects
- Holds agreements with station community partners to maintain platforms, provide parking and passenger amenities

Downeaster Operations

- 5 round-trips daily between Brunswick, ME and Boston, MA (North Station)
- Serves 12 station communities in 3 states
- 600,000+/- passengers annually

Strategic Initiatives

- Add 6th daily round trip to support southern Maine commuter service into Portland
- Relocate Downeaster station in Portland to a mainline location
- Add passenger platform in West Falmouth near exit 53 off I-95
- Expand service to Bath, Wiscasset, and Rockland, ME



Project Overview

Problem Statement

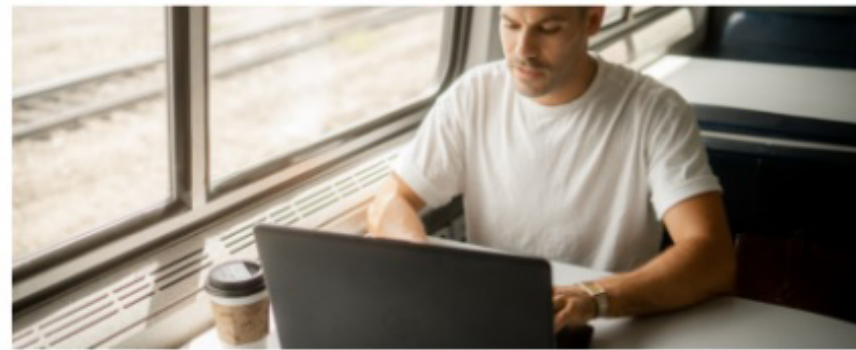
The current Downeaster Portland station is located at the Portland Transportation Center (PTC) which is on a branch line approximately 1 mile from CSX mainline. Accessing the current station requires time consuming reverse moves, creating conflicts between freight and passenger trains. This constrains growth and causes passengers additional travel time.

Project Purpose

Explore alternative locations for a new Downeaster train station on the CSX mainline east of I-295 and closer to Portland peninsula to support Downeaster Operations and Strategic Initiatives.

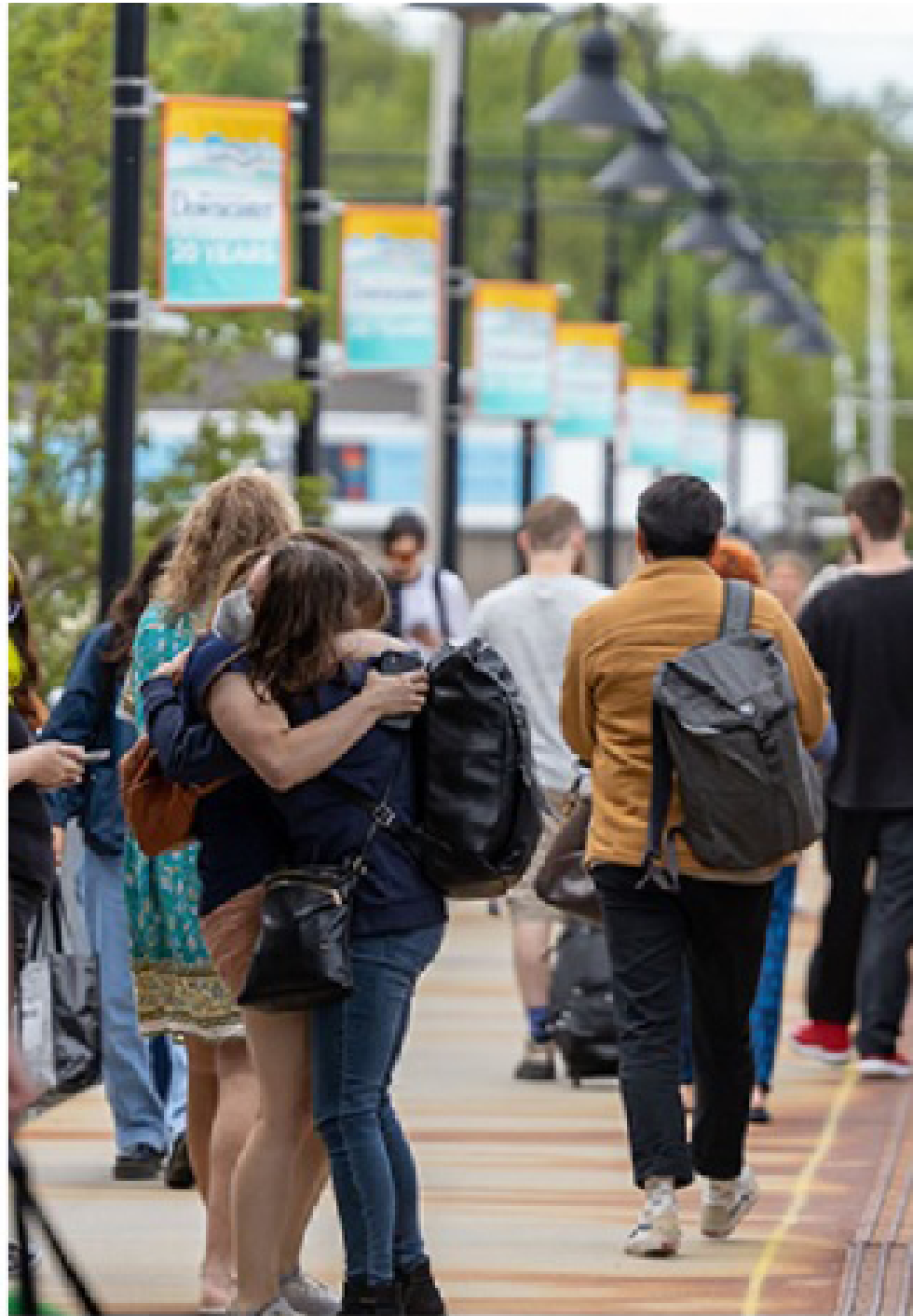
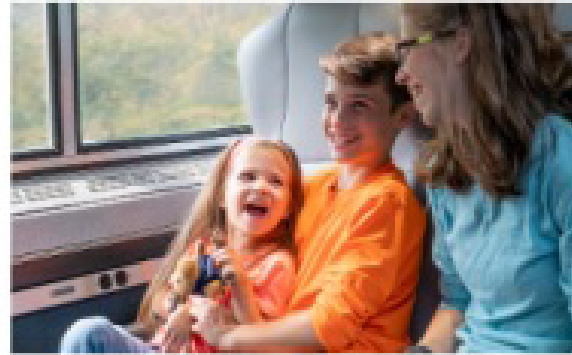
Previous Studies

- In 2019-2020 MaineDOT studied needs of intercity bus, rail, and related modes at PTC from a customer and regional system perspective. A detailed evaluation of a new rail facility on the mainline with appropriate shuttle connections to the PTC was recommended.
- In 2023 VHB analyzed Downeaster parking demand and anticipated a parking requirement of 105 spaces in Portland



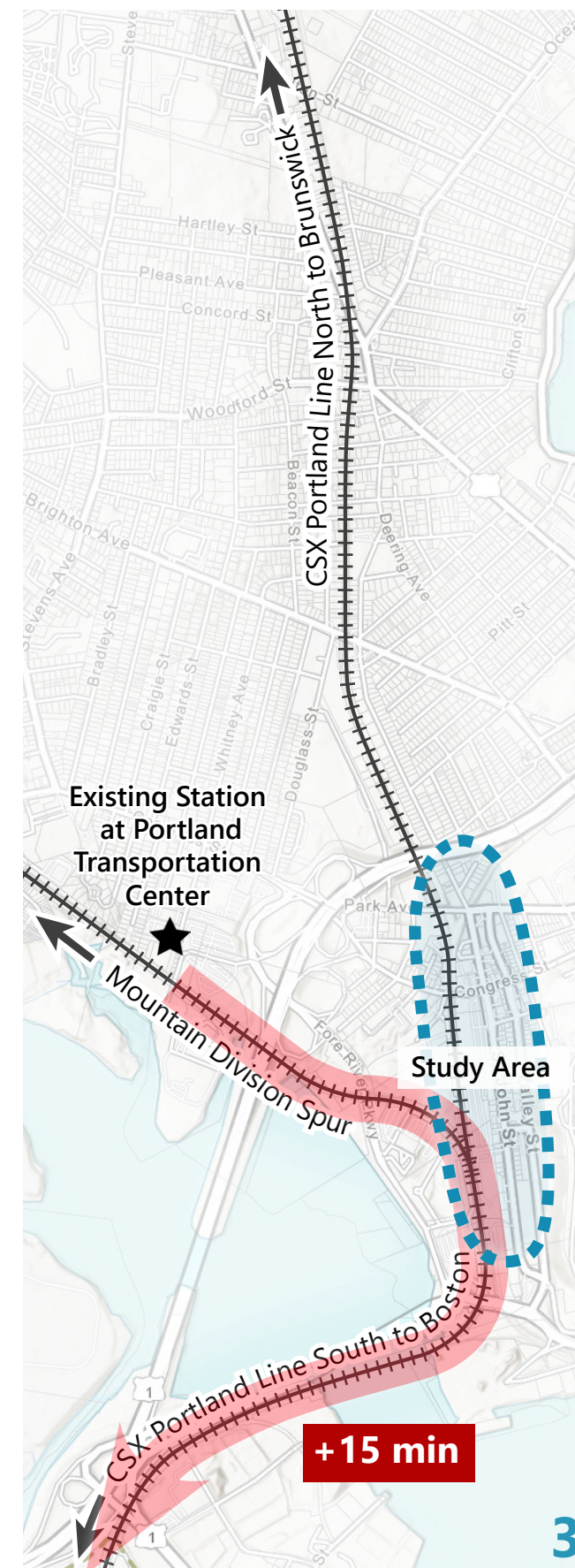
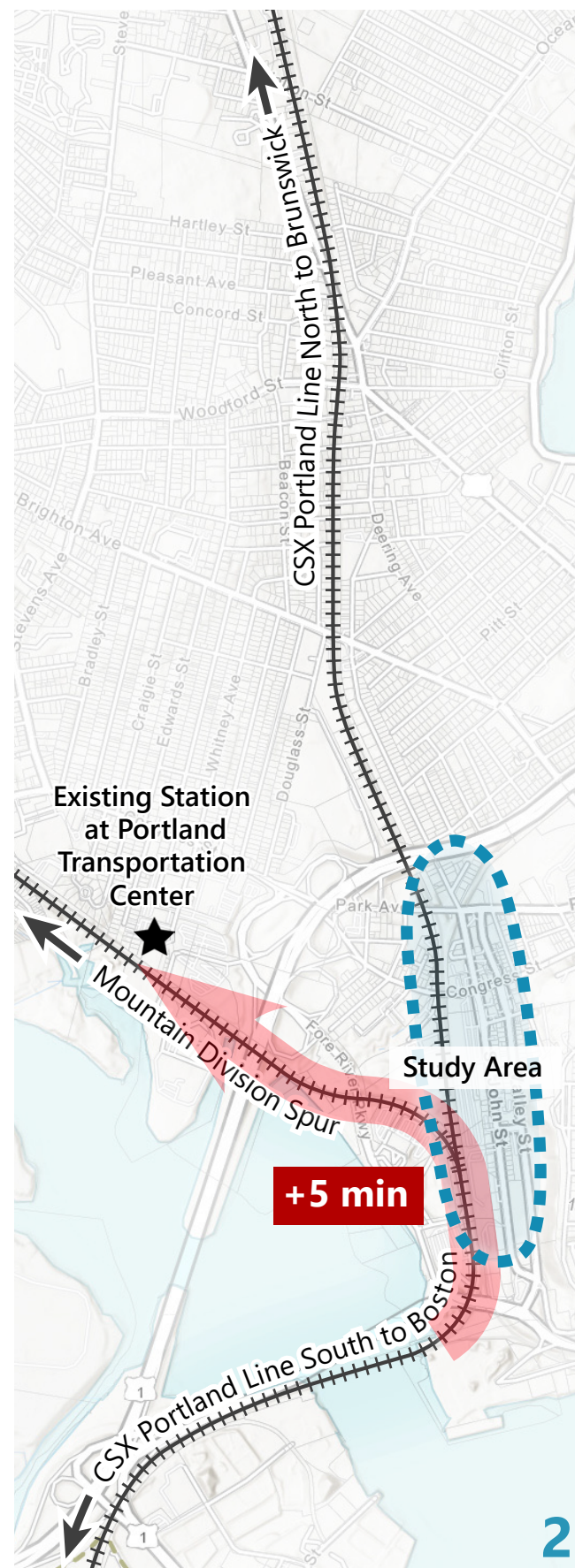
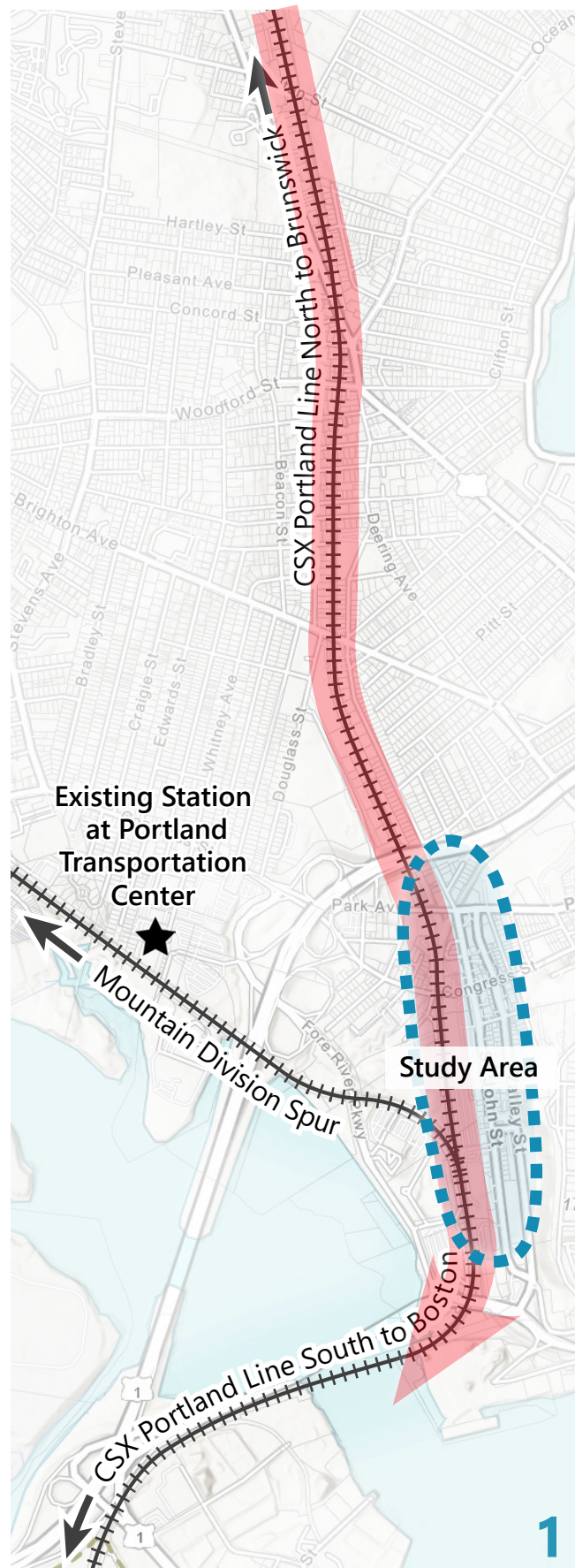
Project Goals

- Support regional transportation goals, to make transit easier, create frequent connections, and create transit-friendly places
- Enhance rider experience by reducing passenger travel time
- Increase regional ridership by providing time competitive service and proximity to demand generators
- Improve reliability of the Downeaster service
- Mitigate/minimize conflicts between passenger and freight trains
- Reduce train movement and noise
- Minimize at-grade crossing traffic interference
- Preserve existing transit connections to Portland Transportation Center (PTC)



Project Goals

- Maximize ridership on new inbound commuter service from southern Maine into Portland (estimated 2026)
- Support additional frequencies and potential connecting service north/south and east/west of Portland in the future
- Improve access to pedestrian, transit and bike connections
- Support Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), as well as economic development and land use opportunities

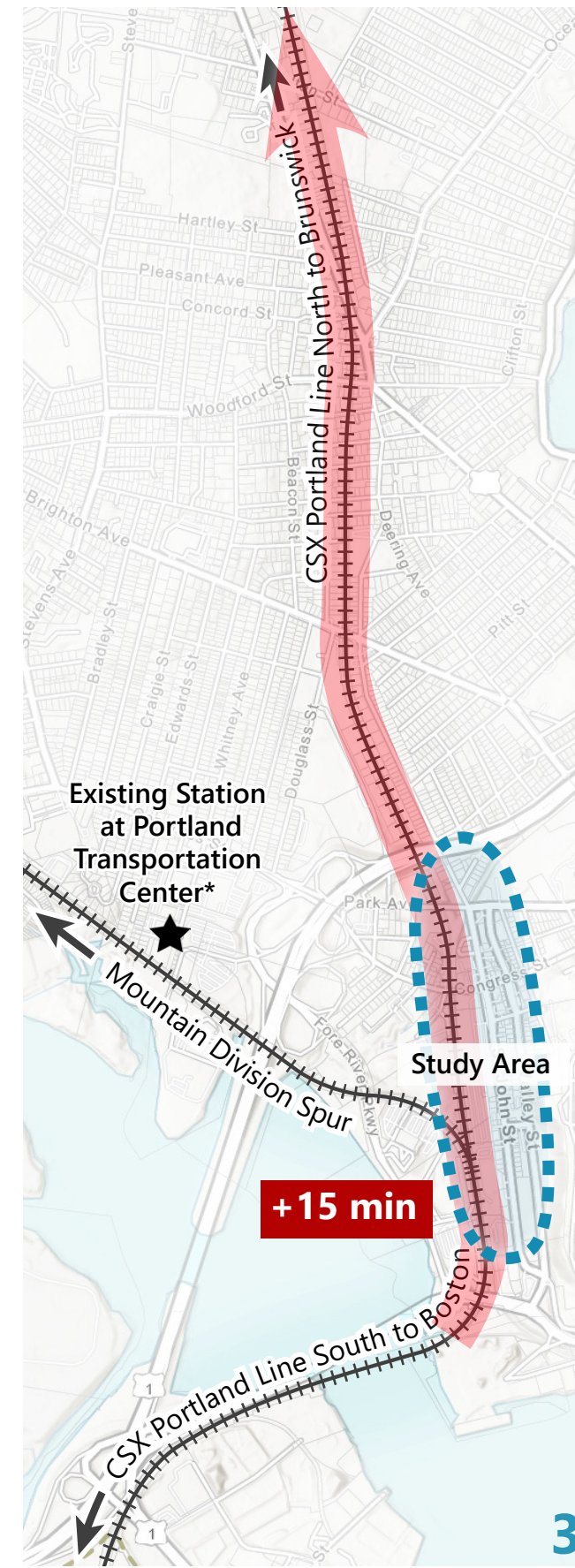
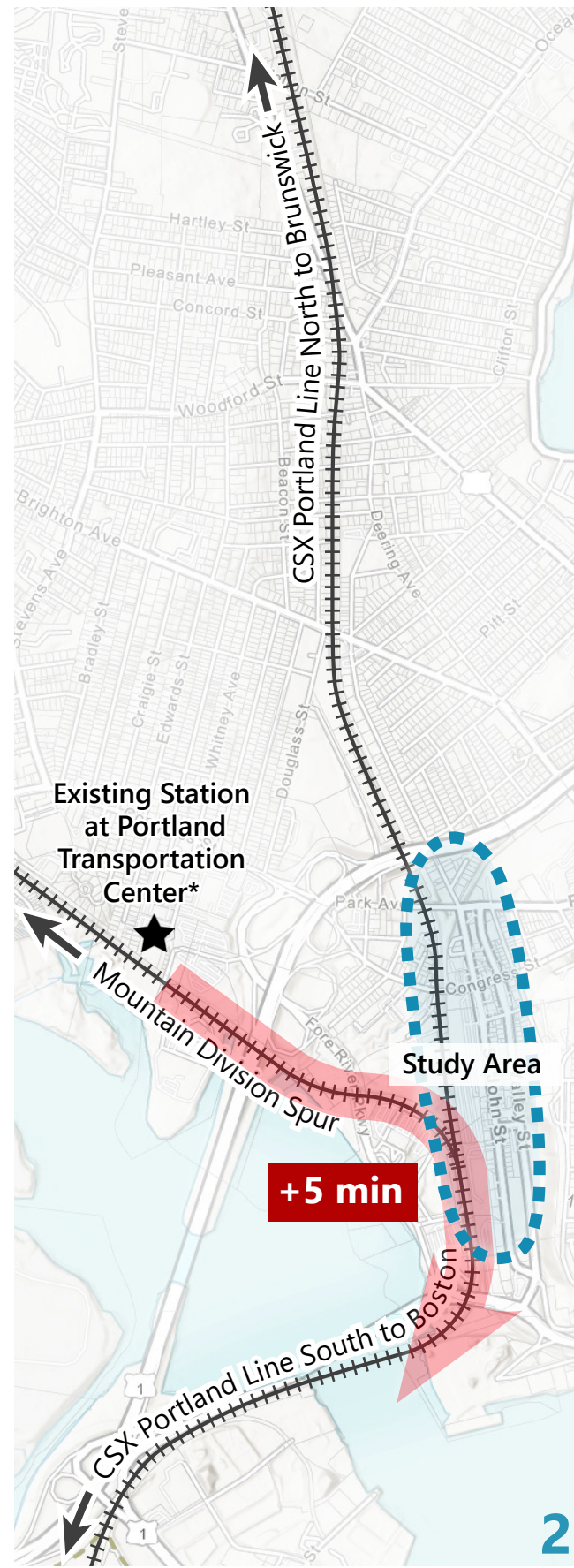
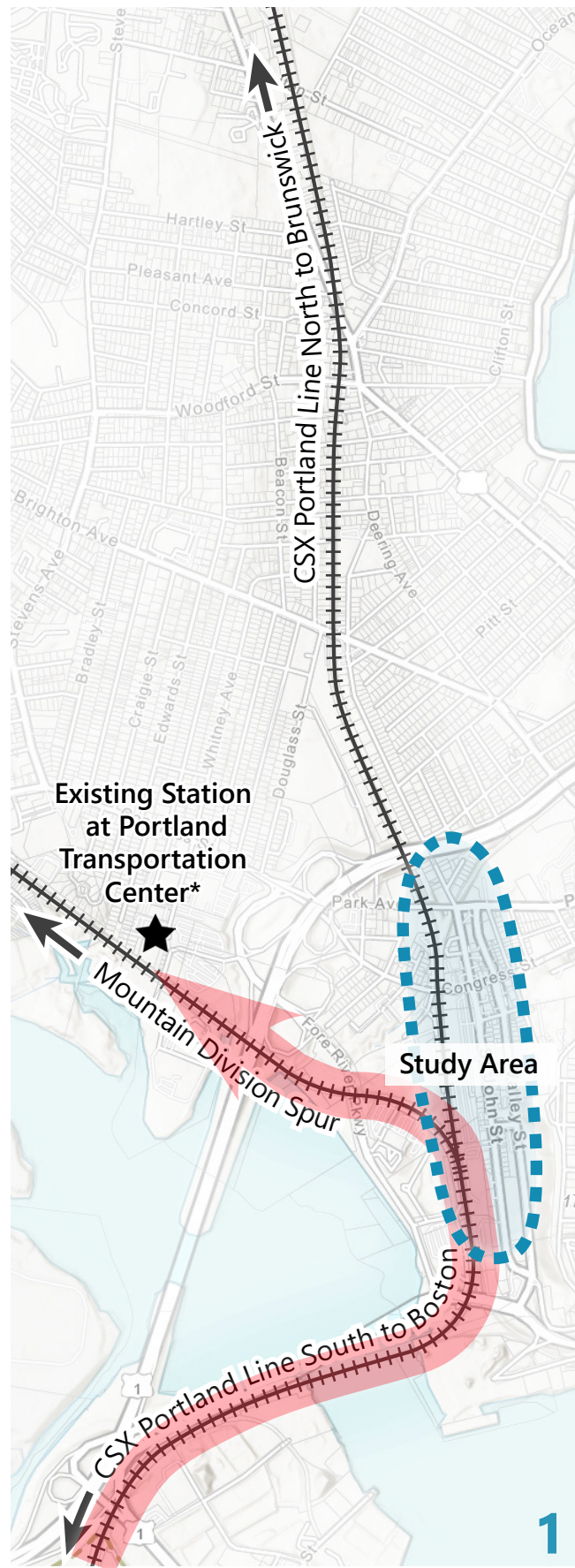


Current **Southbound Downeaster** Operation

Every Downeaster train must make 3 movements to access the PTC:

- 1** Clear the split on the mainline, stop, then back onto the branchline into the PTC (5 minutes)
- 2** Stop at PTC. Those continuing to points south of Portland wait in the station to align crews and change direction (5 minutes)
- 3** Travel back to the mainline to continue their trip south (5 minutes)

In total, this causes 15 additional minutes of travel time for passengers on each train. 75 minutes of impact daily.



Current **Northbound** Downeaster Operation

Downeaster passengers travelling north from stations located south of Portland:

- 1** Travel 5 minutes from the mainline to the PTC platform, located on the branch line (5 minutes)
- 2** Stop at PTC. Those continuing to points north of Portland wait in the station to align crews and change direction (5 minutes)
- 3** Reverse back onto the mainline from the branch line and clear the split to continue the trip north to Freeport/Brunswick (5 minutes)

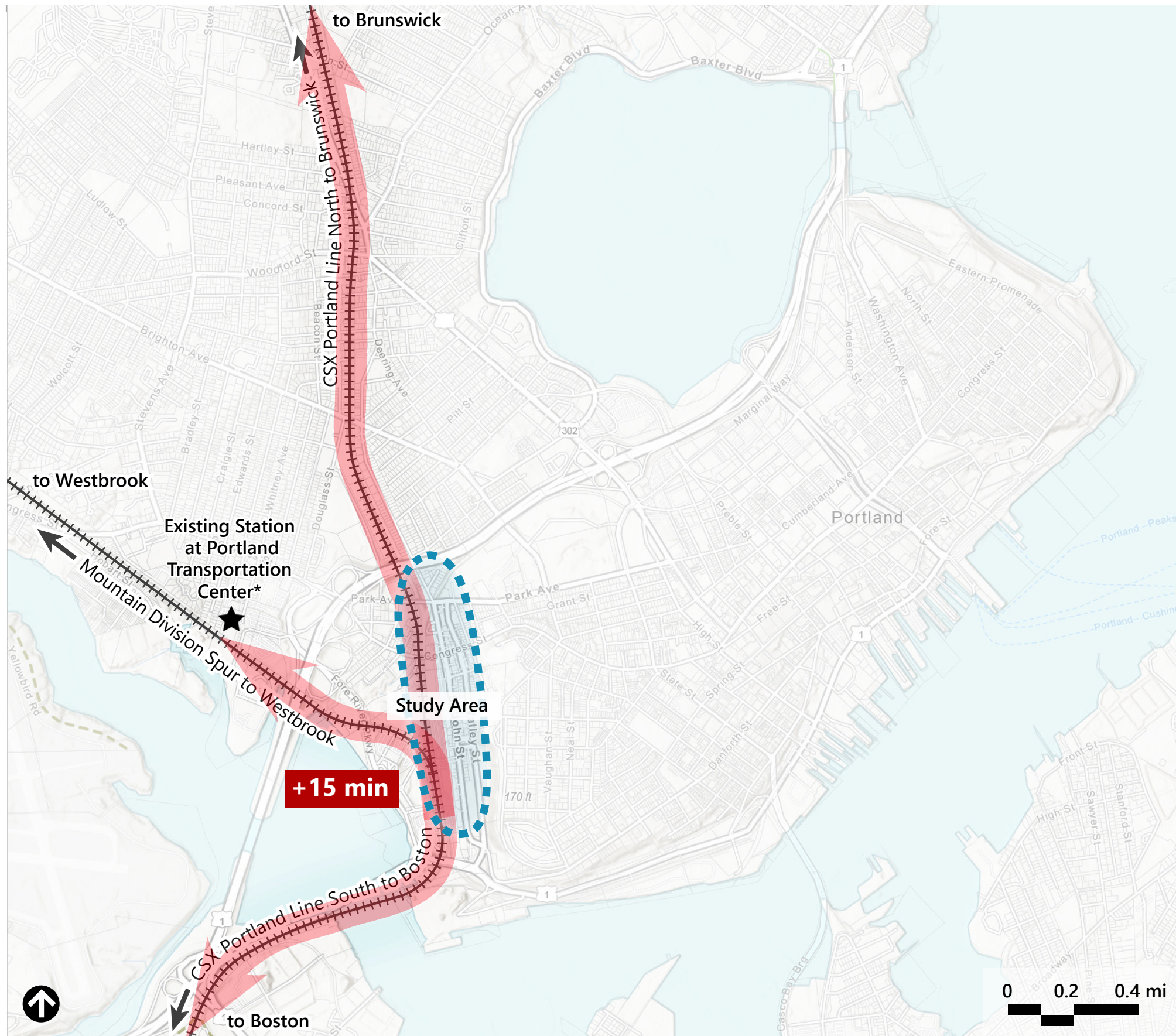
In total, this causes 15 additional minutes of travel time for passengers on each train. 75 minutes of impact daily.

* Original northern terminus of the Downeaster before service was expanded to Brunswick in 2012

Summary of Operational Impacts

- 20 additional daily train movements are needed to access the PTC daily
- The additional moves take 150 minutes each day
- The resulting additional scheduled travel time makes the Downeaster travel time less competitive with roadway modes and increases labor and fuel costs
- The additional moves constrain and delay freight and passenger trains on the mainline
- The constraints of the branch line station location (at the PTC) limit schedule flexibility and prohibits additional frequencies or future connecting services
- In CY2023:
 - 125,000 riders collectively spent more than 31,000 hours on Downeaster trains backing in and out of the PTC
 - This maneuver resulted in 3,650 hours of crew overtime and consumed 8,600 gallons of fuel
 - This resulted in approximately \$973K in costs

A mainline station with double platforms would only require a 2-minute station stop.



* Original northern terminus of the Downeaster before service was expanded to Brunswick in 2012



Project Needs

- A Downeaster platform and station facility on the freight mainline double track at a site with minimal adverse impact on traffic / at-grade crossings
- Two boarding platforms (one on each side of tracks) to maximize schedule flexibility and reliability; passenger trains travelling in opposing directions can board and alight riders simultaneously
- Parking for approximately 105 vehicles to support Downeaster riders
- Convenient vehicular access with pedestrian, transit and bike connectivity/access from various directions
- Proximity to demand generators
- Efficient access to train servicing and storage facilities (Portland Layover Facility - PLF) located on branch line to minimize freight and passenger train conflicts
- Ability to support potential connecting services to/from locations north and west of Portland
- Minimize passenger and freight train interference

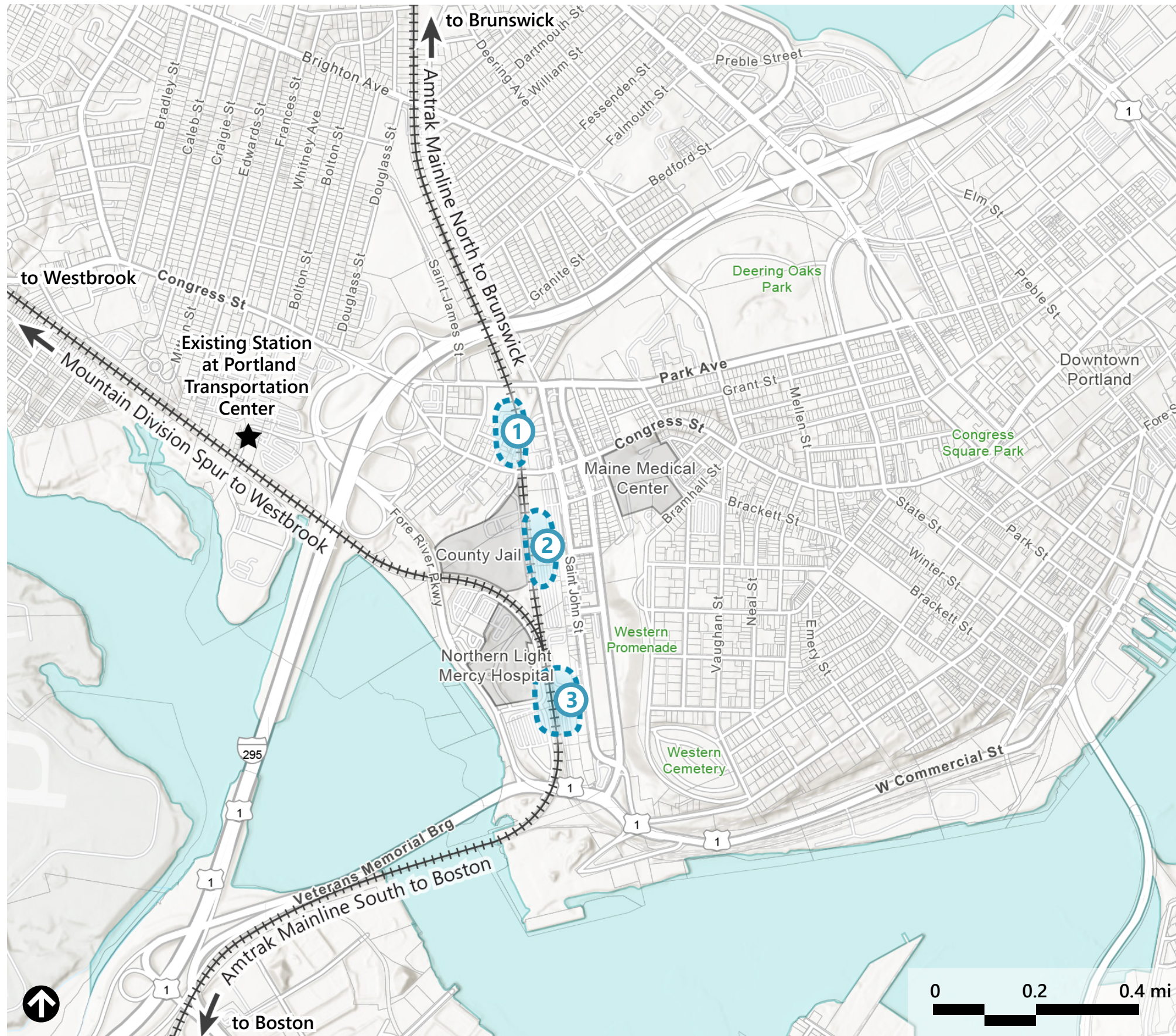
Possible station configuration similar to Meriden Transit Center, CT.

Proposed Platform and Station Configuration

- Two boarding platforms (one on each side of tracks) within the railroad right-of-way
- ADA pedestrian bridge over tracks for multi-directional access
- Climate-controlled passenger waiting area with ticketing and restrooms (approx. 750 s/f) located within the platform structure
- Adjacent parking with circulation area for drop off/pick up



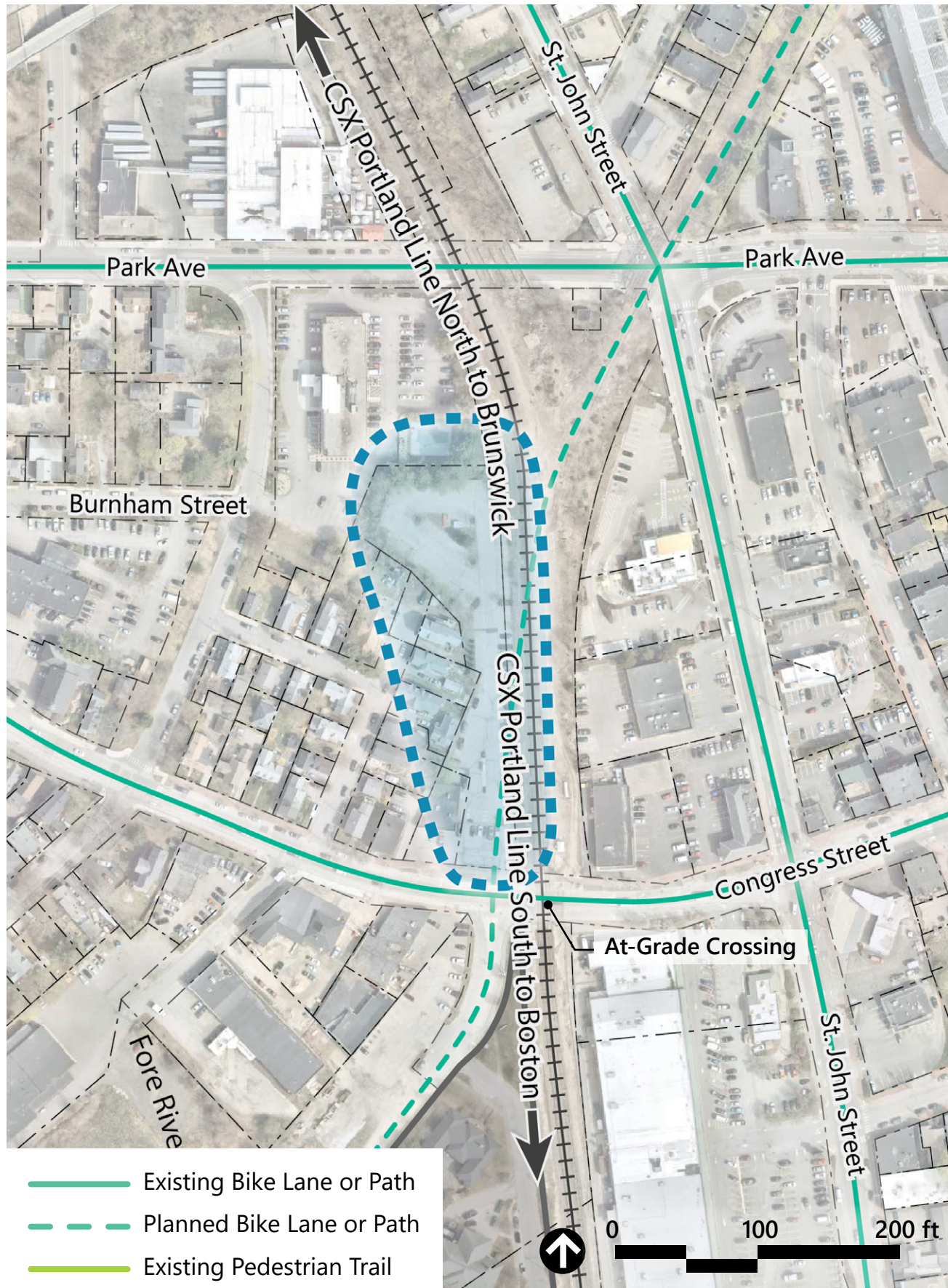
Possible station configuration similar to Meriden Transit Center, CT.



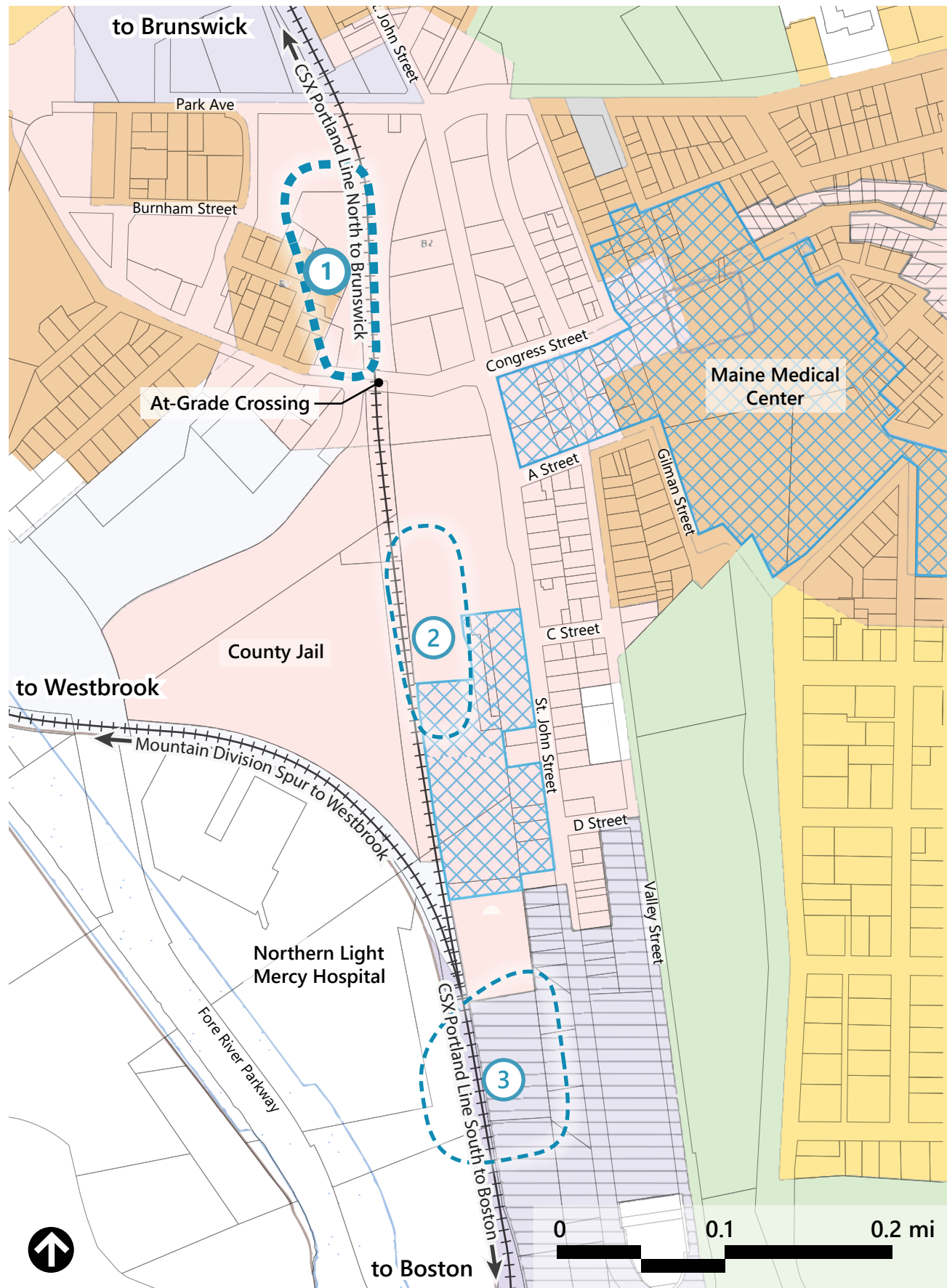
Portland Train Station - Sites Considered:

- ① Between Congress Street and Park Ave, behind Amato's/McDonald's on St. John St (access via Congress Street)
- ② South of Congress Street near Union Station Plaza, between Cumberland County Jail and St. John Street
- ③ Southern end of St. John Street, between Northern Light Mercy Hospital and St. John Street

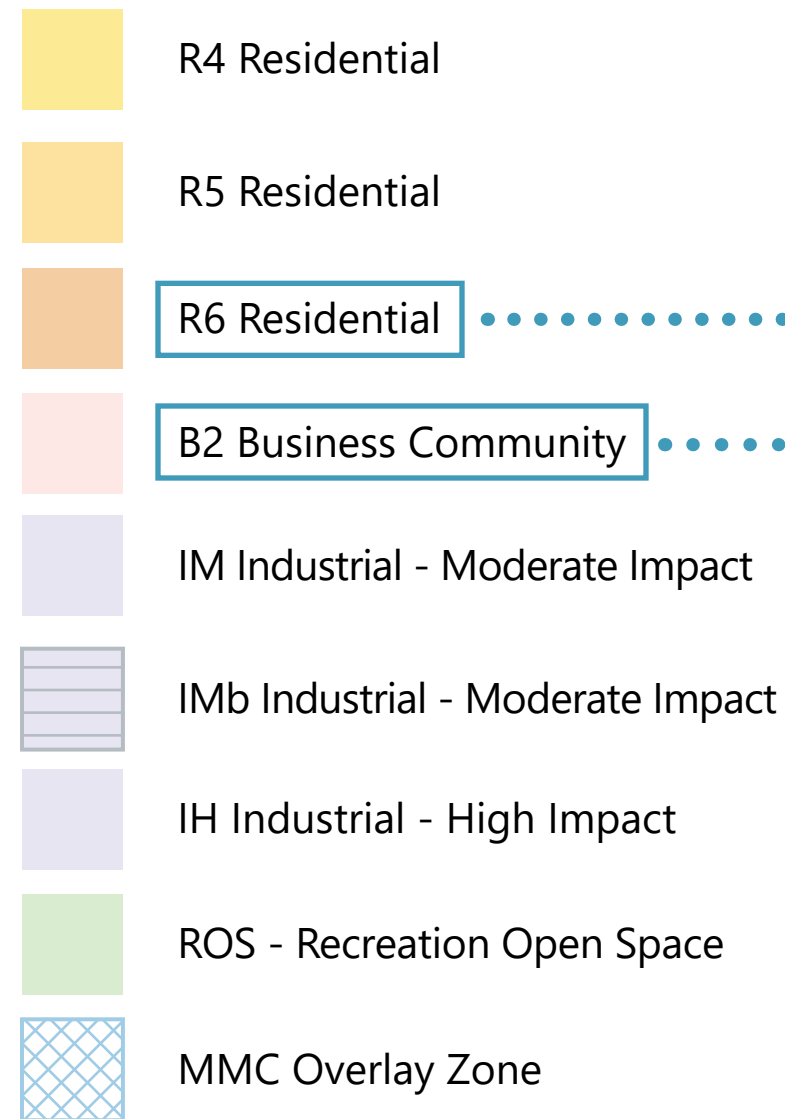
Station Site Comparison: Site 1



PROJECT NEEDS/GOALS	SITE CHARACTERISTICS
Mainline double track location with minimal traffic/grade crossing impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proximity to Congress St. grade crossing impedes traffic flow while train is at station, causing congestion at the intersection Railroad converges to single track at this location
Parking for 105 cars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awkward parcel layout; possible to accommodate with site modifications
Connectivity: Vehicular Pedestrian Bike/Transit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicular access via Congress St. only Pedestrian access to neighborhood, Congress St. and St. John St. METRO bus and bike lanes on Congress St.
Access to servicing facility (PLF) with minimal train conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Back-up move required on mainline for PLF access Potential for conflicts between passenger and freight trains
Supports additional rail service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Station track needed for connecting service from north Does not support east/west connections
Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zoned for residential and mixed commercial development
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location adds complexity to train movements



Zoning: Site 1



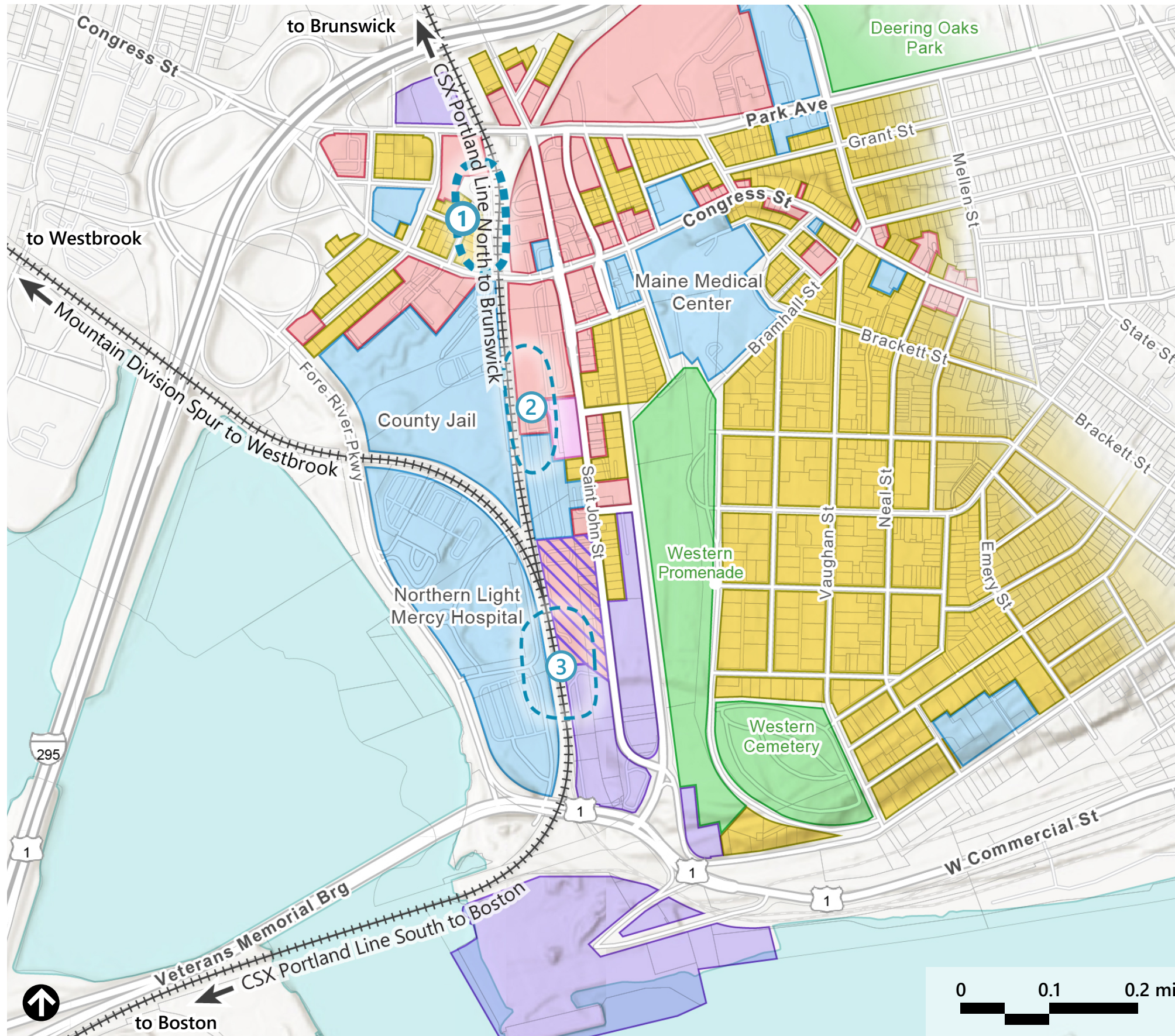
- Located in the B2 zone, adjacent to the R6 zone.
- B2 zone does not expressly include transportation-related uses or regional transportation infrastructure as an allowed use.
- Site is highly constrained by geometry of existing street and rail network, limiting Transit Oriented Development (TOD) potential at this location.

Intent & allowable uses:

"To set aside areas on the peninsula for housing characterized primarily by **multi-family dwellings at a high density** providing a wide range of housing for differing types of households."

Intent & allowable uses:

"To provide appropriate locations for the development and operation of community centers offering a **mixture of commercial uses, housing, and services** serving the adjoining neighborhoods and the larger community... The zone should provide locations for moderate to high-density housing in urban neighborhoods along arterials."

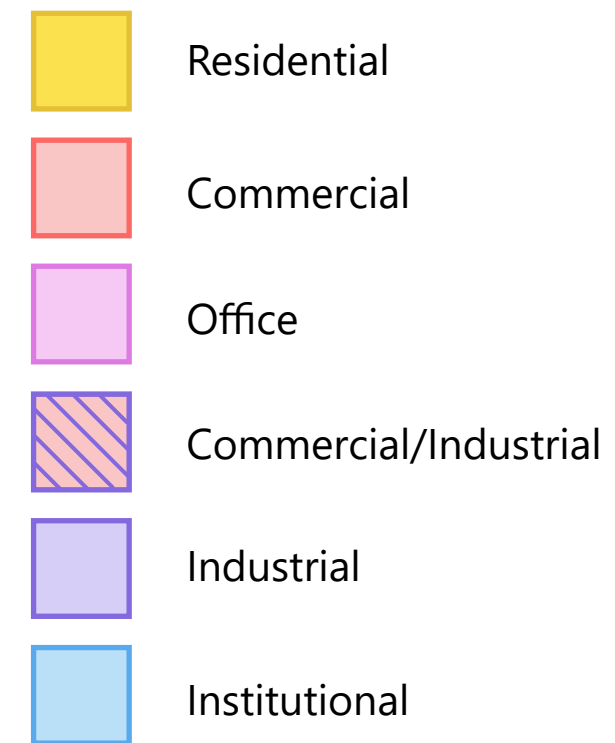


Local Land Use: Site 1

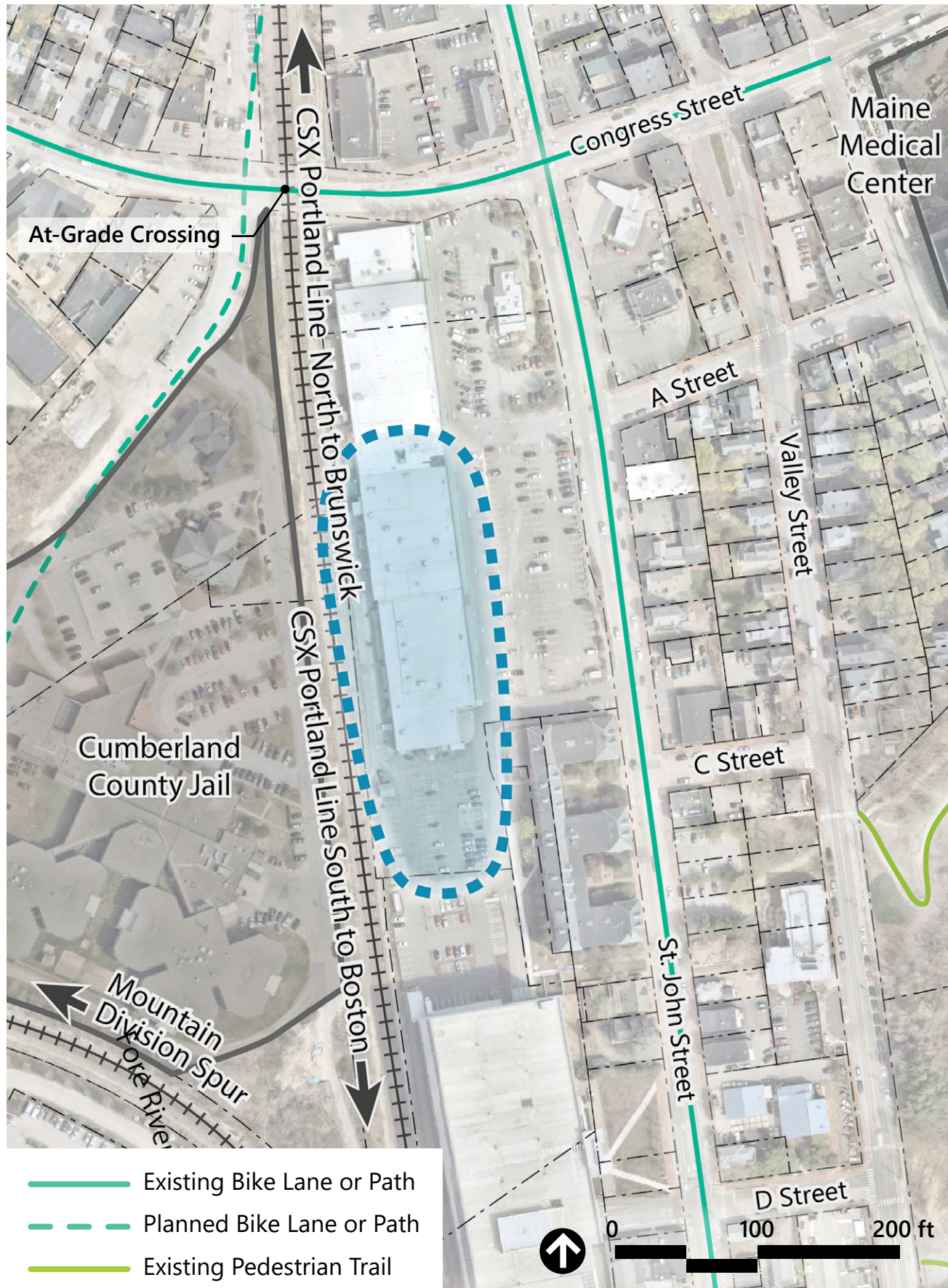
Site 1: Commercial & Residential

Site 2: Commercial, Office & Institutional

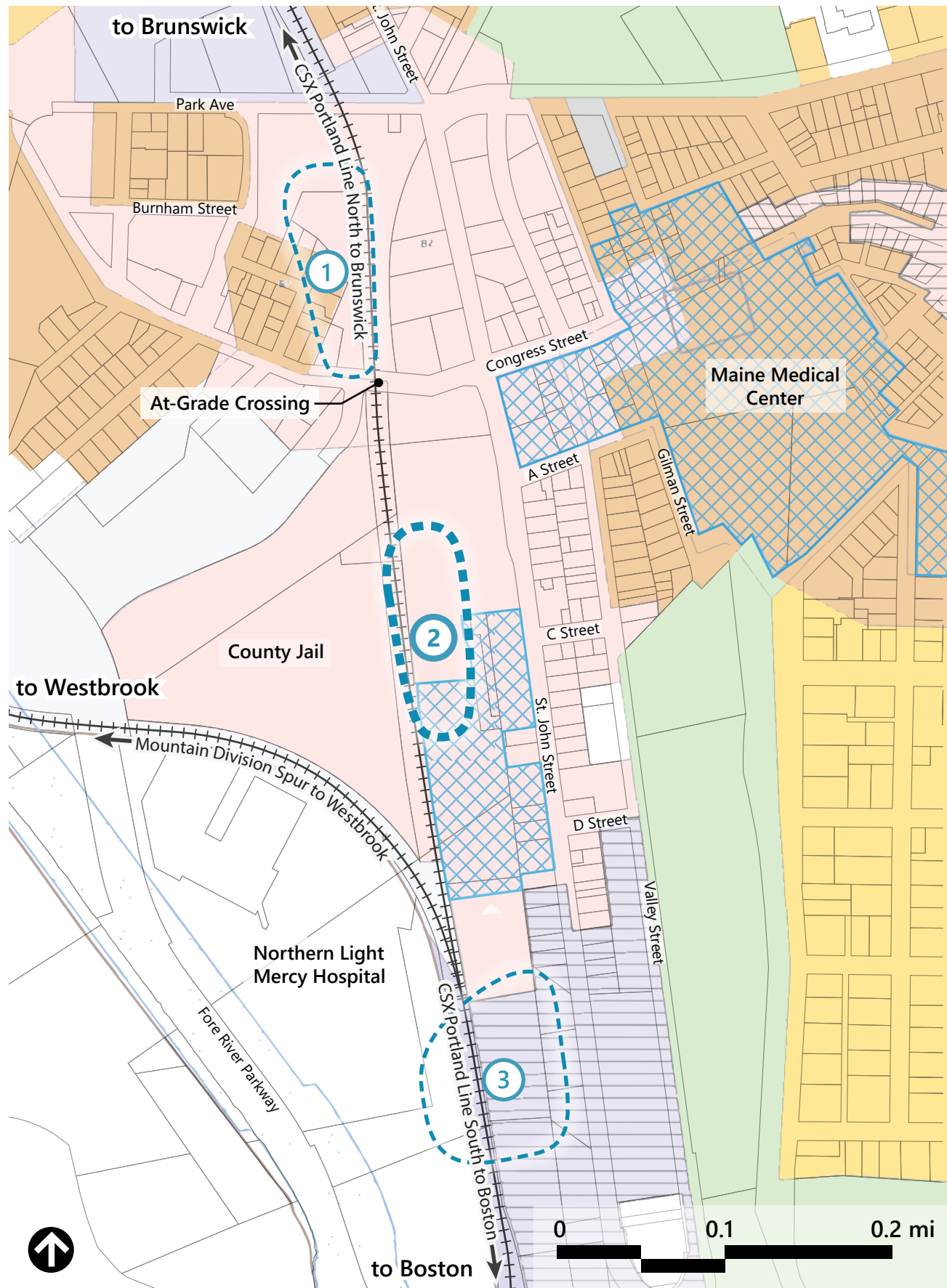
Site 3: Commercial/Industrial



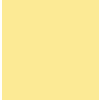








Station Site Comparison: Site 2



PROJECT NEEDS/GOALS	SITE CHARACTERISTICS
Mainline double track location with minimal traffic/grade crossing impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proximity to Congress St. grade crossing impedes traffic flow while train is at station, causing congestion at the intersection
Parking for 105 cars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible to accommodate needed spaces onsite. Property owned by Maine Health with alternate development plans
Connectivity: Vehicular Pedestrian Bike/Transit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicular access from Congress St. and St. John St. Pedestrian access from Congress St. and St. John St. side only. Abuts County Jail METRO and BSOOB bus routes, Maine Med shuttle and bike lanes
Access to servicing facility (PLF) with minimal train conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Back-up move required on mainline for PLF access Potential for conflicts between passenger and freight trains
Supports additional rail service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Station track needed to support connecting service from north Does not support east/west connections
Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zoned for mixed commercial development
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location adds complexity to train movements and does not support dual-sided pedestrian access



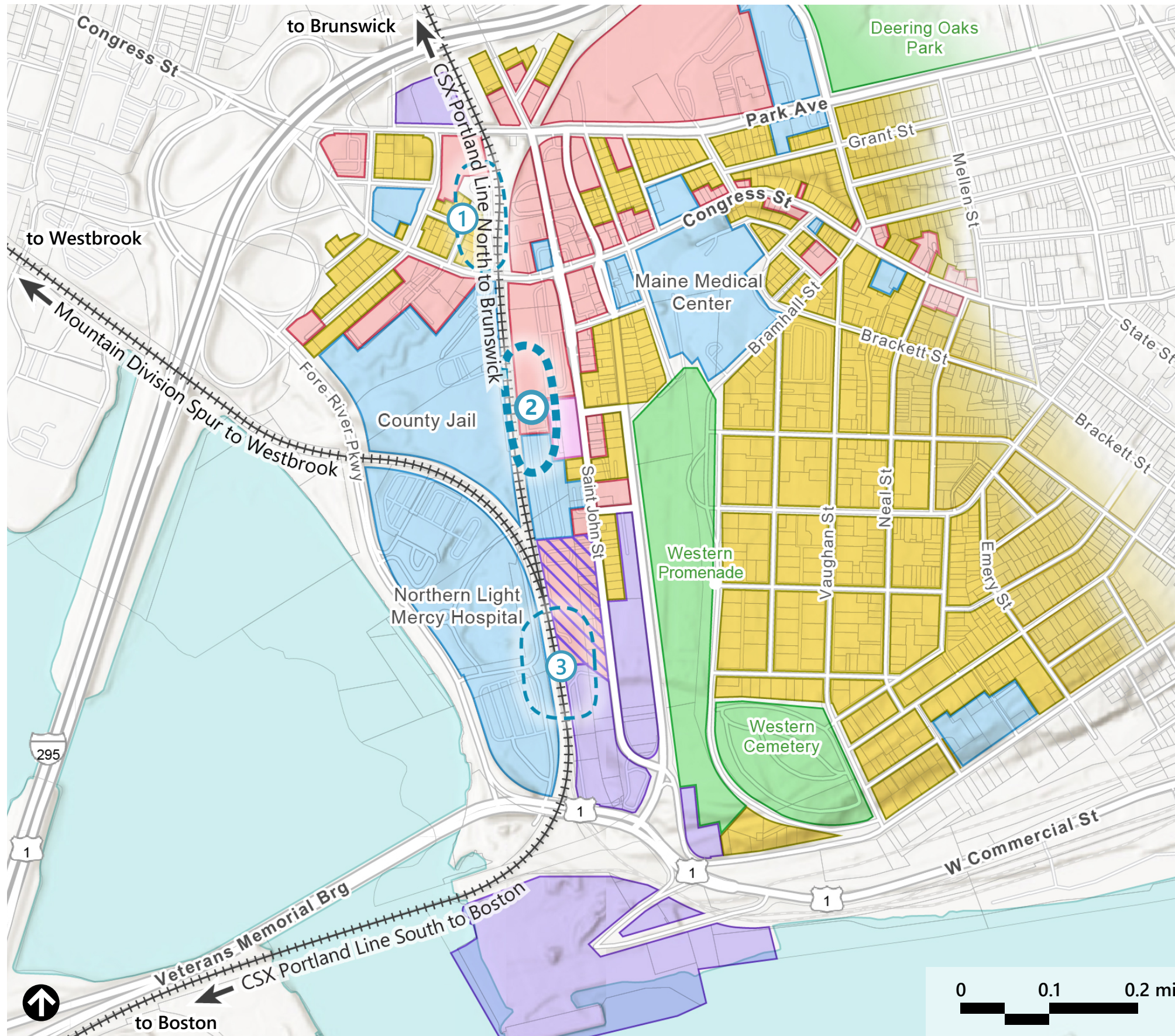
Zoning: Site 2

-  R4 Residential
-  R5 Residential
-  R6 Residential
-  B2 Business Community
-  IM Industrial - Moderate Impact
-  IMb Industrial - Moderate Impact
-  IH Industrial - High Impact
-  ROS - Recreation Open Space
-  MMC Overlay Zone

- Located in B2 zone, adjacent to the MMC Overlay Zone.
- B2 zone does not expressly include transportation-related uses or regional transportation infrastructure as an allowed use.
- Site is located in an area that allows for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) growth opportunities in the B2 zone.

Intent & allowable uses:
 "To provide appropriate locations for the development and operation of community centers offering a **mixture of commercial uses, housing, and services** serving the adjoining neighborhoods and the larger community... The zone should provide locations for moderate to high-density housing in urban neighborhoods along arterials."

Intent & allowable uses:
 "All development proposed by Maine Medical Center (MMC) within the boundary of the MMC Institutional Overlay Zone (IOZ) shall be consistent with the approved Institutional Development Plan (IDP)"

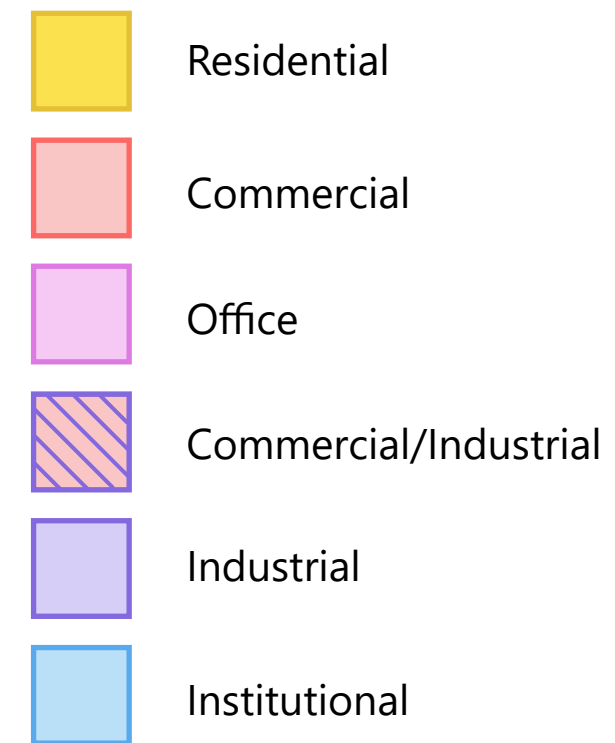


Local Land Use: Site 2

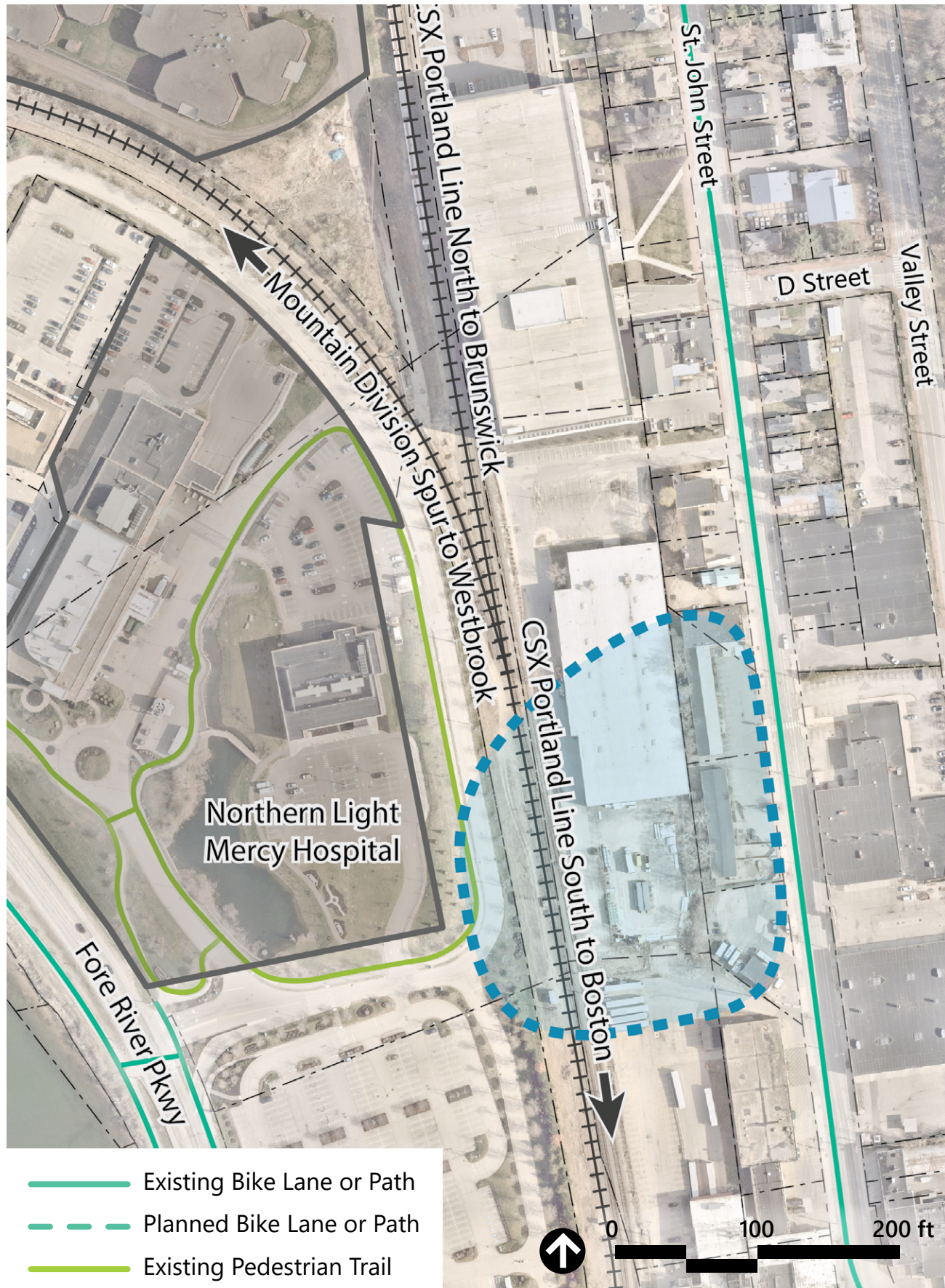
Site 1: Commercial & Residential

Site 2: Commercial, Office & Institutional

Site 3: Commercial/Industrial



Station Site Comparison: Site 3



PROJECT NEEDS/GOALS

Mainline double track location with minimal traffic/grade crossing impacts

Parking for 105 cars

Connectivity: Vehicular

Pedestrian

Bike/Transit

Access to servicing facility (PLF) with minimal train conflicts

Supports additional rail service

Land Use

Other

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

- No traffic or grade crossing impacts

- Possible to accommodate needed spaces onsite
- Property owned by private businesses

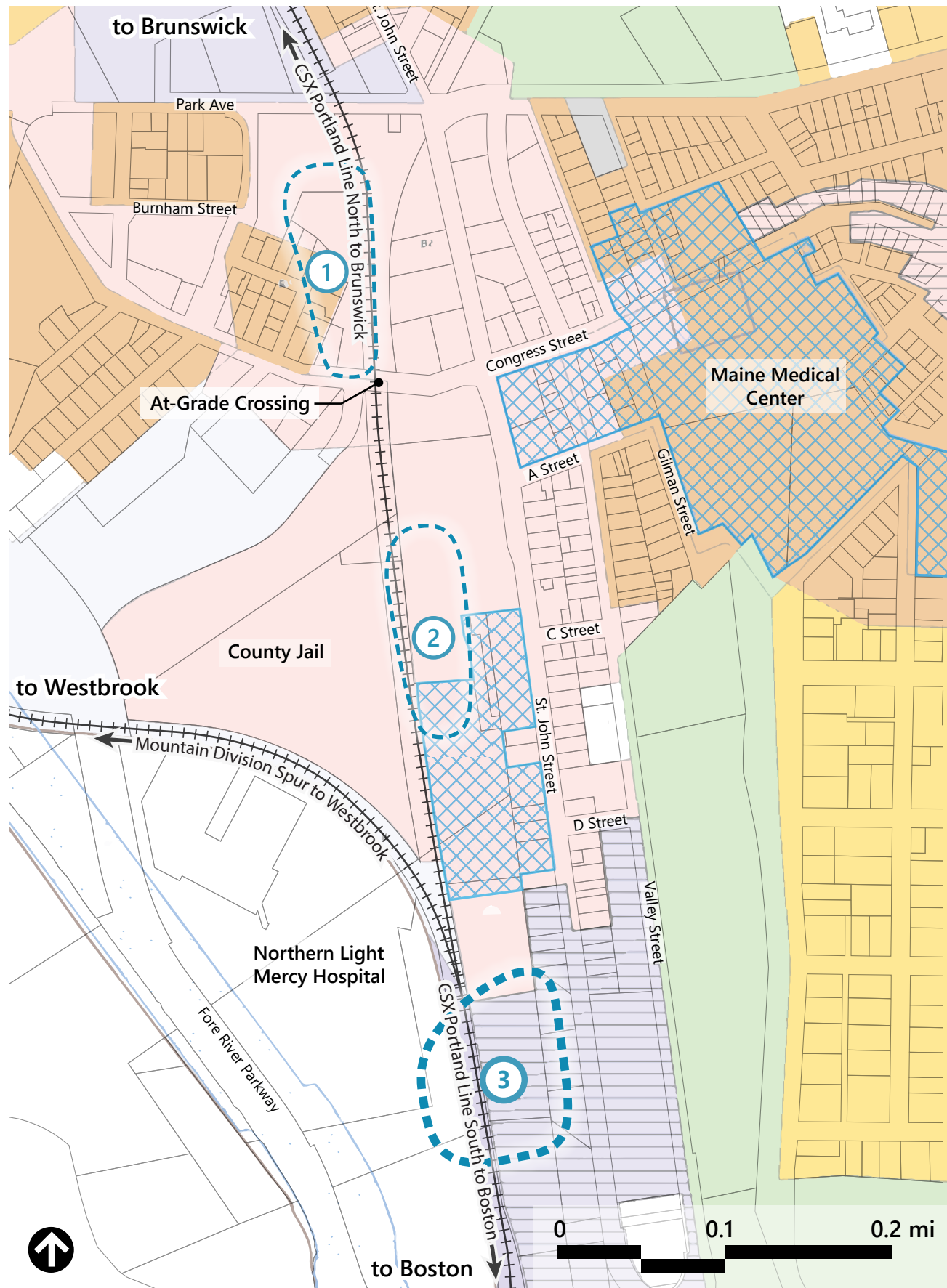
- Vehicular access from both sides of station structure (via Congress St., St. John St., Fore River Parkway) as well as Veterans Memorial Bridge (I-295 exit 4 / South Portland) and Commercial St.
- Direct pedestrian access to Northern Light Mercy Hospital campus and Fore River Pkwy to the west and St. John St. to the east
- METRO and BSOOB bus routes at St. John and Fore River Parkway; Maine Med shuttle and bike lanes

- Direct access to PLF without mainline back-up
- Minimal potential for train conflicts

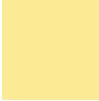








- Can support connecting service from north
- Supports east/west connections

- Zoned for co-existing transportation uses and regional transportation infrastructure
- Adjacent to high density commercial/residential development areas

- Location provides multi-directional and multi-modal access with minimal traffic impacts or train interference
- Closest proximity/best access to PTC



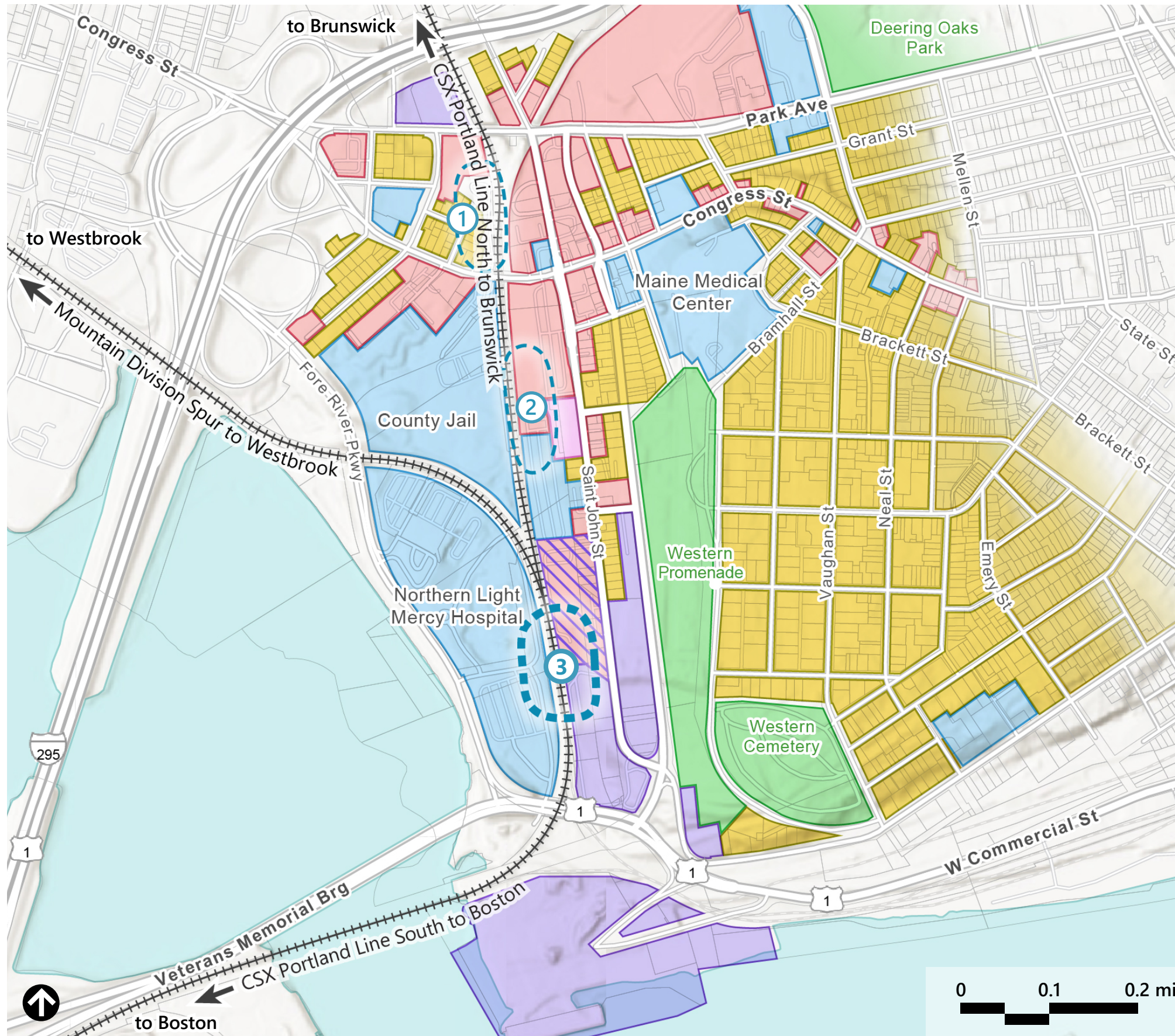
Zoning: Site 3

-  R4 Residential
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-  R6 Residential
-  B2 Business Community
-  IM Industrial - Moderate Impact
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-  IH Industrial - High Impact
-  ROS - Recreation Open Space
-  MMC Overlay Zone

- Located in the IMb zone, adjacent to the B2 Zone.
- IMb zone expressly allows for transportation related uses/ infrastructure.
- Site directly abuts B2 zone, allowing for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) growth opportunities.

Intent & allowable uses:
 "To provide appropriate locations for the development and operation of community centers offering a **mixture of commercial uses, housing, and services** serving the adjoining neighborhoods and the larger community... The zone should provide locations for moderate to high-density housing in urban neighborhoods along arterials."

Intent & allowable uses:
 "To provide zones in areas of the city in which low- and moderate-impact industries and **transportation-related uses** will coexist...Often uses may be highway-oriented and **transportation-related**, thus relying on citywide and **regional transportation infrastructure**"

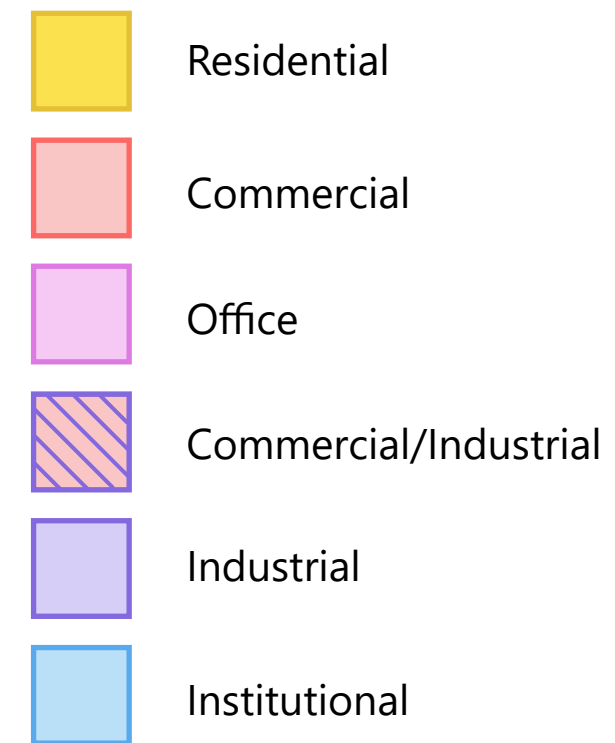


Local Land Use: Site 3

Site 1: Commercial & Residential

Site 2: Commercial, Office & Institutional

Site 3: Commercial/Industrial





Next Steps

- Additional Stakeholder Engagement
- Identify Preferred Alternative
- Future Public Meeting to Present Site Selection
- Seek Federal Funding for design and construction



Public Input

- Public input limited to two minutes per person
- Meeting recording and presentation slides will be on NNEPRA's website at nnepra.com within 2 business days
- A form will be posted on NNEPRA.com for submitting written public input through May 10, 2024

Patricia Quinn - NNEPRA Executive Director
Gordon Edington, PE - VHB Project Manager
Dave Senus, PE - VHB Civil Engineer