



# Portland Train Station Relocation Planning Report

Portland, Maine

**PREPARED FOR**



75 W. Commercial Street  
Suite 104  
Portland, ME 04101  
207.780.1000

**PREPARED BY**



500 Southborough Drive  
Suite 105B  
South Portland, ME 04106  
207.889.3150

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# 1

## Introduction

### About NNEPRA

The Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA) is a quasi-government agency established by the Maine State Legislature to oversee the operation of passenger rail service to and within Maine. NNEPRA holds the service agreement with Amtrak for operation of the Downeaster passenger rail service.

As part of its charge, NNEPRA establishes schedules, fares, and marketing programs; manages strategic planning, maintenance and capital projects; and holds the agreements with station community partners to maintain platforms, provide parking, and passenger amenities.

### Downeaster Operations

The Amtrak Downeaster currently offers five roundtrips daily between Brunswick, ME and Boston, MA (North Station). The Downeaster serves 12 station communities in 3 states – Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts, and serves approximately 600,000 passengers annually.

### Strategic Initiatives

One of NNEPRA's primary purposes is to develop strategic initiatives to improve the passenger experience, reduce travel times, and increase ridership. NNEPRA currently has four strategic initiatives:

- › Relocate the Downeaster station in Portland, ME to a mainline location.
- › Add a passenger platform in West Falmouth, ME near Exit 53 off I-95.
- › Add a sixth daily round trip to support southern Maine commuter service into Portland, ME.
- › Pilot passenger rail service to Bath, Wiscasset, and Rockland, ME.

This report summarizes the site alternatives analysis for the initiative to relocate the Downeaster station in Portland, ME to a mainline location.



# 2

## Project Overview

This report summarizes NNEPRA’s evaluation of site alternatives for relocating the Downeaster train station in Portland to the CSX mainline.

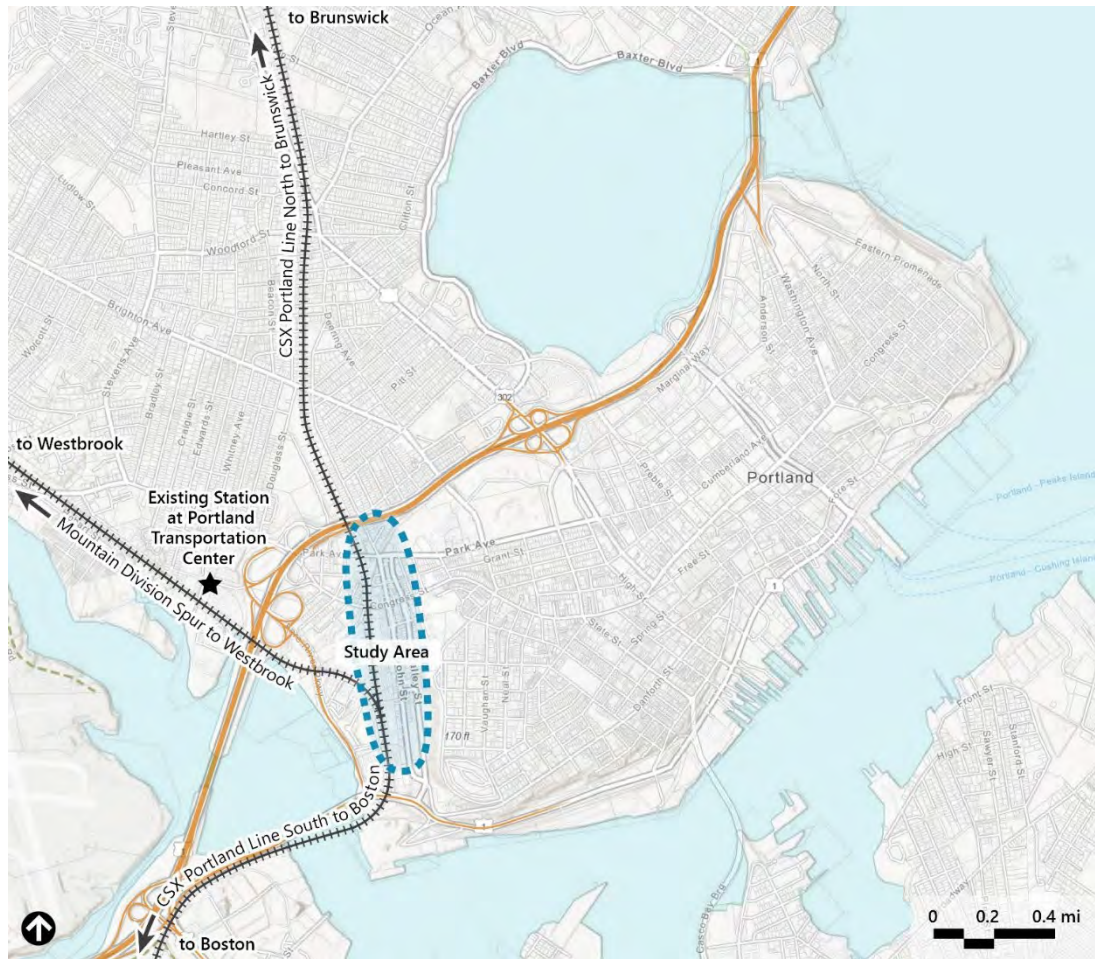
### Problem Statement

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

### Project Purpose

The purpose of this site alternatives analysis is to explore, evaluate, and identify a location in Portland for a new Downeaster train station on the CSX mainline, east of I-295, which would best support Downeaster operations and reduce passenger travel time while improving proximity to major employers and residential areas, as well as access to transit and road connections and active transportation corridors. These enhancements will increase ridership and reduce vehicle trips to and through the greater Portland region. The overall project study area is shown in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 Project Study Area



## Constraints of the Current Station Location on Downeaster Operations

The current station, located about 1 mile from the CSX mainline on the Mountain Division branch line, requires 20 additional train movements daily that would not be necessary with a mainline station. These extra movements add up to 150 minutes of train operations each day. The added travel time makes the Downeaster less competitive than other modes of travel and hinders ridership growth while increasing labor and fuel costs. These movements also delay freight and passenger trains on the mainline, limit schedule flexibility, and prevent additional frequencies or future connecting services.

NNEPRA analyzed the cumulative impacts of these required train moves through calendar year 2023:

- › Of the nearly 550,000 passengers that rode the Downeaster in 2023, approximately 125,000 riders collectively spent more than 31,000 hours on trains backing in and out of the PTC.
- › This maneuver resulted in an additional 3,650 hours of crew time and consumed 8,600 more gallons of fuel than would be required with a mainline station.
- › These impacts resulted in approximately \$973,000 in additional costs to passengers and the Downeaster service.

A mainline station with double platforms would only require a 2-minute station stop, similar to other Downeaster station stops between Maine and Massachusetts.

See Appendices A and B for additional information related to the current operational constraints.

## Public Meetings

NNEPRA, in partnership with the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT), hosted three virtual meetings during the site alternatives evaluation process with opportunities for public input:

- › April 24, 2024 – An initial public meeting to gather public input on the project.
- › June 24, 2024 – A presentation on the site analysis and a summary of public input at the NNEPRA Board of Directors meeting, which was open to the public and included public comment.
- › August 13, 2024 – A public meeting to present the summary of this phase of the project.

See Section 5 of this report for additional discussion of these meetings and the public input that was received.

In addition, NNEPRA presented meeting materials at various public meetings in 2024. Presentations were provided at two public meetings held by the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS), which serves as the region's federal metropolitan planning organization that coordinates transportation planning and investment decisions with the state, municipalities, and public transportation partners. NNEPRA also presented the project at a Public Transportation Advisory Council (PTAC) meeting. PTAC advises the Departments of Transportation, Labor, and Health and Human Services on public transportation policies and priorities. The Council is charged with evaluating needs, recommending levels of service, identifying funding requirements and seeking maximum coordination of resources. In addition, NNEPRA provided regular monthly project updates at NNEPRA Board Meetings, which are often attended by members of the public and media.

## Previous Related Studies

In 2019 and 2020, MaineDOT studied the intercity bus, rail, and related modes at the 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 as a result of that study. The summary of that study is available on MaineDOT's website at <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/planning/ptldtransportationstudy/>.

In 2019, VHB studied a rail transit connection from Westbrook to Portland along the Mountain Division branch line, evaluating two station alternatives on Main Street in downtown Westbrook, intermediate stations at Rock Row and PTC, and two options for stations on West Commercial Street. The conceptual level study assessed the feasibility, potential service types, high-level ridership estimates, and planning-level cost estimates.

In 2023, VHB analyzed Downeaster parking demand for a relocated Portland Station. NNEPRA and Amtrak provided data of existing ridership and use at the PTC, including boardings and alightings per train, and zip code data for tickets purchased. VHB also completed passenger surveys at the PTC to understand train usage, access methods, and trip durations. Based on the

information analyzed, VHB determined a current parking demand of 90 parking spaces at the PTC and a future parking demand of 105 parking spaces.

Also in 2023, MaineDOT released the Maine State Rail Plan which included the relocation of the train station in Portland in its short-term (2023-2026) passenger rail program. This systemwide planning process included market forecasting for several passenger rail initiatives. The increase in ridership attributable to travel time reductions through Portland and the relocation of the station to a more walkable location was projected to be 66,000 annually.





# 3

## Project Goals & Needs

The project seeks to reduce passenger train travel time, improve connectivity and proximity to employment centers/demand generators and increase ridership. The project aims to align with regional transportation goals, while prioritizing safety, passenger needs, efficiency of freight and passenger rail operations, and stakeholder and community interests. These factors are considered in examining the operational, accessibility, land use, and design impacts of potential station locations.

### Project Goals

NNEPRA identified project goals to align with the project purpose and address the problem statement presented in Section 2. The site alternatives analysis determines which of three potential locations best meets these project goals. They include:

- › Identify a Portland station location which does not require time-consuming, inefficient, and costly back up moves.
- › Improve Downeaster ridership by reducing travel time and improving reliability.
- › Maximize benefits of sixth Downeaster round trip (2027) targeted to provide commuter-friendly service into Portland from Maine stations.
- › Reduce conflicts between passenger and freight trains.
- › Improve vehicle, pedestrian/bike, and transit access to the station.
- › Support regional transportation goals to make transit easier, create frequent connections, and create transit-friendly places.
- › Reduce train movement and noise.

- › Support Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) as well as economic development and land use opportunities in and around the station areas.

## Project Needs

To achieve the project goals, NNEPRA developed a list of project needs:

- › Location on the freight mainline to eliminate reverse movements and promote safe and efficient train operations.
- › A double-track location with a boarding platform on each side of the tracks so that passenger trains travelling in opposing directions can board and alight riders simultaneously at the station and minimize freight train conflicts. The location should also:
  - Provide efficient access to train servicing and storage facilities at the Portland Layover Facility (PLF), located on the Mountain Division branch line, with minimal freight and passenger train conflicts.
  - Be far enough away from at-grade crossings so that train movements to/from station do not have a negative impact on traffic flow or public safety.
- › Parking for approximately 105 vehicles to support Downeaster riders.
- › Convenient vehicular access along with pedestrian, transit, and bike connectivity/access from various directions.
- › Proximity to demand generators to help drive additional ridership growth.
- › Compatibility with land use and development initiatives.
- › Ability to support potential future connecting rail services to/from locations north and west of Portland.

## Potential Platform and Station Configuration

NNEPRA identified specific needs for the potential platform and station configuration of a relocated station in Portland. The proposed configuration will include two boarding platforms, (one on each side of the tracks) within the existing railroad right-of-way to minimize property impacts. The two boarding platforms will be connected by stairs and elevators to an ADA accessible pedestrian bridge over tracks for multi-directional access. The lobby areas for the stairs and elevators will include climate-controlled passenger waiting areas with ticketing, restrooms, and other amenities located within the platform structure. This layout will further reduce impacts to private property while providing passengers with a safe and comfortable area to wait for trains. Finally, the station will require adjacent parking areas with a circulation area for passenger drop off/pick up.

Figure 3.1 shows a rendering of a potential station configuration. This rendering is of the ongoing Wells Area Improvement Project. The proposed Portland station will incorporate similar elements, including platforms on each side of the tracks, an accessible overhead bridge, and an interior waiting area. Future planning and design will be required to incorporate these program elements into the Portland site and determine the final architectural design. It is anticipated that, like the Wells Area Improvement Project, this project would qualify for a Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Categorical Exclusion for environmental clearance purposes.

Figure 3.1 Potentail Station Rendering Example from Wells Station Expansion Project





# 4

## Site Alternatives Analysis

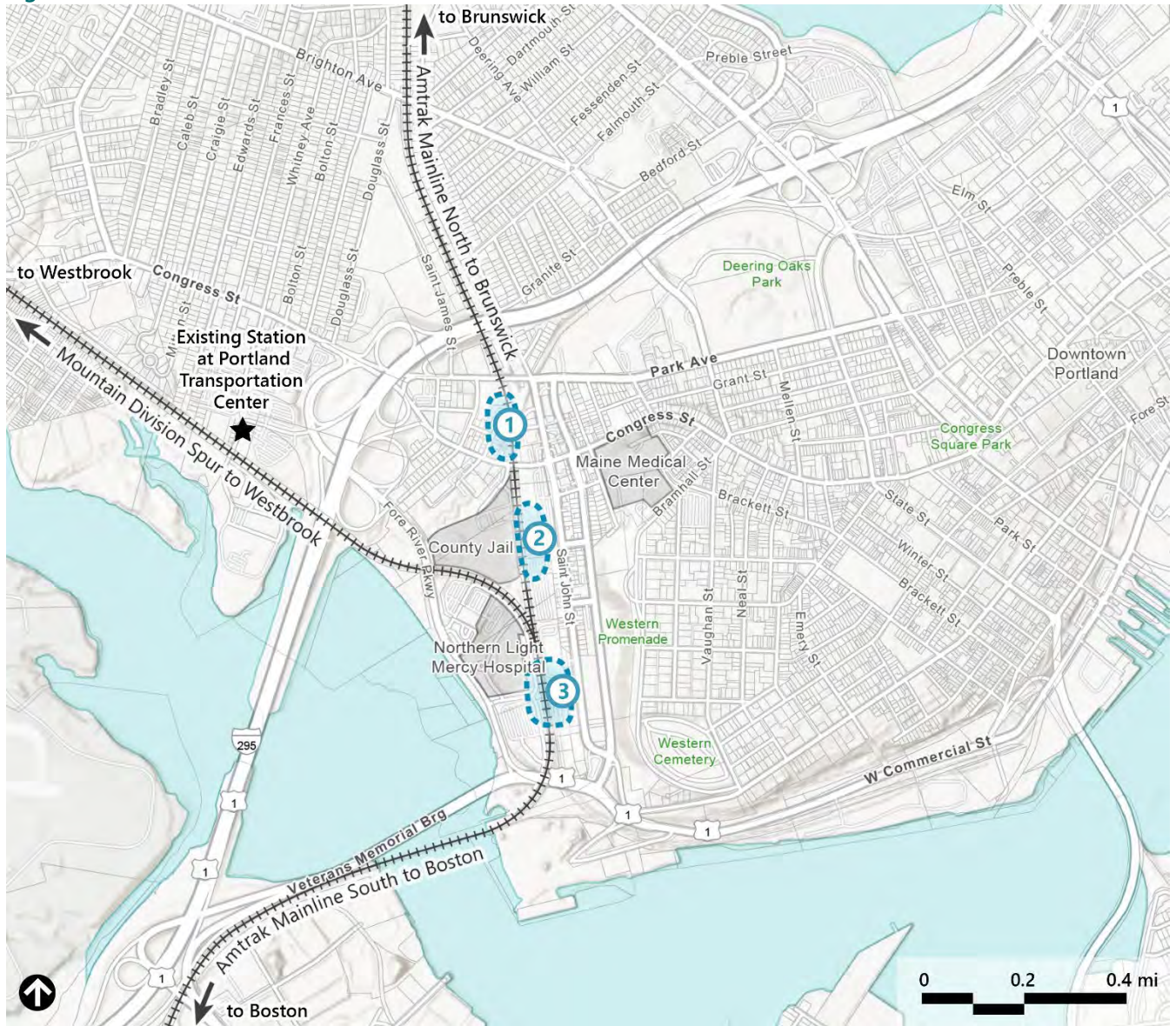
NNEPRA, in partnership with MaineDOT, conducted a site alternatives analysis as part of the due-diligence process in selecting a station location that best aligns with the project's goals and needs. This site alternatives analysis focused on a section of the CSX mainline closest to established transportation networks, such as I-295 and city arterial streets, businesses, and the densest residential areas of Portland and the state of Maine. The study area is an approximately one-half mile corridor of the CSX mainline on Portland's peninsula.

### Sites Considered

The station location must be on the CSX mainline with reasonable access to the existing street network. Three sites, shown in Figure 4.1 below, were identified within the study area for further evaluation:

1. Site 1 is located between Congress Street and Park Avenue, behind the existing Amato's and McDonald's on St. John Street. This site would be accessed directly from Congress Street immediately adjacent to the existing Congress Street grade crossing.
2. Site 2 is located south of Congress Street between the Cumberland County Jail and the Maine Medical Center employee parking garage on St. John Street. It would be accessed from St. John Street.
3. Site 3 is located at the southern end of St. John Street, between Northern Light Mercy Hospital and St. John Street. This site would be accessed from St. John Street from the east and could potentially also be accessed from the Northern Light Mercy Hospital campus and Fore River Parkway from the west.

Figure 4.1 Sites Considered



## Site Considerations

Each of the sites were analyzed for the following site considerations.

### Train Operations



The site analysis considered various aspects of train operability associated with Downeaster passenger trains as well as CSX freight trains. Based on discussions with Amtrak and CSX, it was determined that the station must be located at a mainline location with double track to allow trains in opposing directions to pass without interference and also to allow faster-moving passenger trains to pass slower-moving freight trains without delays. A location south of the Mountain Branch would be necessary to efficiently access Downeaster mechanical facilities at the PLF on Thompson’s Point without disruptive reverse moves on the mainline.

The proximity of the station to the grade crossing at Congress Street must also be considered to maintain pedestrian safety and minimize impacts on vehicular, pedestrian, and train traffic. Stations at or near grade crossings pose safety risks, especially in double-track territory where passengers and pedestrians may not anticipate a train approaching from a different direction if a train is already stopped at the station. Station platforms must be located far enough away from grade crossings so that locomotives and passenger cars do not physically block the roadways or activate signals and gate closures while trains are approaching the station, or while passengers are boarding and alighting.

Beyond that, the closer a station is to a grade crossing, the longer it takes to clear the grade crossing due to slower speeds while accelerating or decelerating. This situation is exacerbated when trains are scheduled to pass at the station, as is often expected to be the case in Portland.

## Bicycle and Pedestrian Connections

The site analysis considered connectivity with locally established or designated bicycle and pedestrian corridors in addition to vehicular access. The bike and pedestrian connections figure provides a graphical summary of these connections.

-  Bike Routes
-  Pedestrian Routes



## Zoning and Land Use

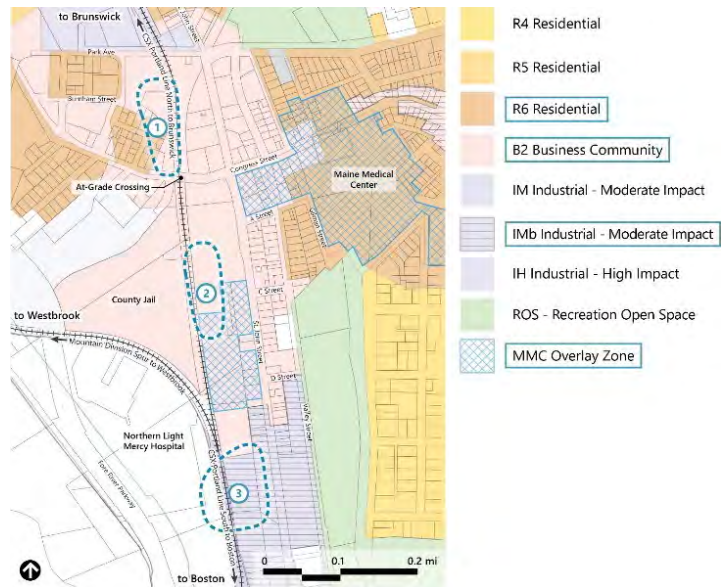
During the planning process, the three site location alternatives for the future Portland Station resided in the following zones:

**Site 1:** *B2 (Business Community) & R6 (Residential)*

**Site 2:** *B2 (Business Community) & MMC Overlay*

**Site 3:** *I-Mb (Industrial – Moderate Impact)*

The City of Portland has recently approved a new zoning code with map changes that take effect in December 2024. Information regarding the City’s ReCode process, including the new zoning designations, can be found in Appendix C.



## Station Site Comparisons

This section provides a brief overview of the three site alternative locations all located along a one-half mile section of CSX mainline track in Portland, ME. The tables below each alternative detail site-specific considerations related to project needs. Each site alternative was reviewed to assess how its characteristics align with the project goals and needs outlined in Section 3.

### Station Site Alternative 1

Site 1 is located north of Congress Street, accessed by a paved driveway just west of the CSX grade crossing. The site is currently a paved parking lot and abuts a mix of densely sited single and multi-family residential houses to the west, a La Quinta Inn & Suites to the north, and St. John Street commercial food businesses (McDonald’s and Amato’s) across the CSX mainline to the east. Access to Site 1 exists by way of an existing driveway that connects to Congress Street.

Project Needs/Goals	Site-Specific Characteristic
Safe and efficient train operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Railroad converges to single track and would not allow for dual platforms.</li> <li>› Located north of Mountain Division. Back-up moves would be required to access PLF, conflicting with freight and passenger train movements.</li> <li>› Located in close proximity to Congress Street and within the signal activation circuit for the Congress Street grade crossing. These factors will extend gate closure times while train(s) approach, service, and depart the station, impeding traffic and creating safety concerns.</li> </ul>
Parking for 105 cars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Awkward parcel layout with significant modifications necessary to accommodate parking.</li> </ul>
Connectivity: Vehicular, pedestrian/bike, transit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Vehicular access from Congress Street. Access to Veterans Memorial Bridge. Closest site to I-295.</li> <li>› Pedestrian access to neighborhood, Congress Street, and St. John Street.</li> <li>› Bike access to Congress Street and St. John Street bike network. Potential future access to Union Branch trail.</li> <li>› Over-track bridge does not enhance pedestrian connectivity.</li> <li>› Adjacent to four existing METRO bus routes.</li> <li>› Winding route for potential shuttle to PTC.</li> </ul>
Proximity to demand generators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Within ¼ mile of Maine Medical Center complex, plus retail and commercial.</li> </ul>
Compatible with land use and development initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Zoned B2 (Business Community) &amp; R6 (Residential)</li> <li>› The Intermodal transportation facility use is proposed to be added as an allowable use to B2.</li> </ul>
Supports future rail service expansions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Can only support future connecting service from north with station track added.</li> <li>› Does not support potential future east/west connections.</li> </ul>

## Station Site Alternative 2

Based on the grade crossing factors outlined above, the platforms for Site 2 must be located at least 1,300 feet south of Congress Street to avoid additional impacts on road closures. Site 2 is then located south of Union Station Plaza and partially behind the Maine Medical Center employee parking garage on the east side of the tracks, with Cumberland County Jail to the west. The site abuts and partially includes areas of surface parking associated with businesses in the area, including the commercial shopping plaza and a large historic office building on St. John Street. Access to Site 2 is via driveway connecting to St. John Street.



Project Needs/Goals	Site-Specific Characteristic
Safe and efficient train operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Doubletrack mainline location.</li> <li>› Located north of Mountain Division. Back-up moves would be required to access PLF, conflicting with freight and passenger train movements.</li> <li>› A station track would be needed to mitigate train conflicts.</li> <li>› Site abuts Congress Street. Platform would be located behind MMC parking garage to clear the signal activation circuit and limit additional gate/road closure time at Congress Street grade crossing. Location would increase gate closure times over existing conditions while train(s) approach, service, and depart the station.</li> </ul>
Parking for 105 cars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Parking over-subscribed; structured parking likely needed.</li> </ul>
Connectivity: Vehicular, pedestrian/bike, Transit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Vehicular access from St. John Street and Congress Street via Union Station Shopping Plaza parking lot. Access to Veterans Memorial Bridge and I-295.</li> <li>› Pedestrian access to St. John Street and Congress Street via Union Station Shopping Plaza parking lot.</li> <li>› Bike access to St. John and Congress Street bike network.</li> <li>› County Jail and Mountain Division tracks obstruct vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle connectivity to Fore River Parkway, Fore River Parkway Trail, and Northern Light Mercy Hospital and.</li> <li>› Adjacent to four existing METRO bus routes, and BSOOB and Maine Medical Center shuttle bus routes on St. John Street.</li> <li>› Winding route for potential shuttle to PTC.</li> <li>› Would interfere with MMC employee garage and shuttle.</li> </ul>
Proximity to demand generators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Within ¼ mile of Maine Medical Center complex with direct access via shuttle, plus retail and commercial.</li> </ul>
Compatible with land use and development initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Zoned B2 (Business Community) &amp; MMC Overlay</li> <li>› Intermodal transportation facility use is proposed to be added as an allowable use to the B2 and TOD zones.</li> <li>› Property owned and operated by MaineHealth and is in full use. Property is the location of potential alternate development plans.</li> </ul>
Supports additional rail service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Can only support future connecting service from north with station track added.</li> <li>› Does not support potential future east/west connections.</li> </ul>

### Station Site Alternative 3

Site 3 is located at the southern end of St. John Street across from the METRO offices and garage, and immediately east of the Northern Light Mercy Hospital campus. Current site uses adjacent to Site 3 along St. John Street include commercial and industrial businesses consisting of a plumbing supply warehouse and showroom, a food preparation business, and a series of smaller commercial businesses.

Project Needs/Goals	Site-Specific Characteristic
Safe and efficient train operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Doubletrack mainline location.</li> <li>› Location south of Mountain Division minimizes back-up moves to access PLF, mitigating conflicts with freight and passenger train movements and eliminating need for a station track.</li> <li>› No grade crossing or traffic impacts over existing conditions.</li> </ul>
Parking for 105 cars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Possible to accommodate needed spaces adjacent to site location.</li> <li>› Property currently owned by private businesses.</li> </ul>
Connectivity: Vehicular, pedestrian/bike, transit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Vehicular access from St. John Street, Fore River Parkway, and I-295 via Fore River Parkway. Closest potential access to Veterans Memorial Bridge and Commercial Street.</li> <li>› Pedestrian access to St. John Street, Northern Light Mercy Hospital campus, and Fore River Parkway Trail.</li> <li>› Bike access to St. John Street bike network and Fore River Parkway Trail.</li> <li>› Over-track bridge provides new pedestrian connectivity between St. John Street, Northern Light Mercy Hospital campus, and Fore River Parkway.</li> <li>› Adjacent to one existing METRO bus route, and BSOOB and Maine Medical Center shuttle bus routes on St. John Street and Fore River Parkway. METRO willing to explore adding additional service to the site.</li> <li>› Direct route for potential shuttle to PTC via Fore River Parkway.</li> </ul>
Proximity to demand generators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Within ½ mile of Maine Medical Center complex with direct access via shuttle, plus retail and commercial.</li> <li>› Adjacent to Northern Light Mercy Hospital campus.</li> </ul>
Compatible with land use and development initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Zoned I-Mb (Industrial – Moderate Impact and transportation-related uses)</li> <li>› Current mix of commercial and light industrial uses adjacent to commercial/residential mixed-use area.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Intermodal transportation facility use is proposed to continue to be an allowable use in the I-Mb and is proposed to be added as an allowable use to the B2 and TOD zones.</li><li>› Mix of commercial uses with supporting surface parking and institutional parking (surface and structured).</li></ul>
Supports additional rail service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Can support future connecting service from north.</li><li>› Supports potential future east/west connections.</li></ul>



# 5

## Stakeholder and Public Input

NNEPRA conducted extensive outreach to key stakeholders and the public as part of the site alternatives analysis. Stakeholders include railroad partners, property owners in the analysis area, and the City of Portland. NNEPRA hosted two dedicated public meetings to gather feedback, as well as presented the project at two meetings of the area’s federal metropolitan planning organization, Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS).

### Summary of Stakeholder Input

Stakeholder input is a key factor in determining the location that best meets the project goals. As discussed in previous sections, the primary concern at the current station is the operational impacts and delays caused by its location. In addition to input from railroad operations stakeholders, NNEPRA completed outreach to nearby property owners, including Portland’s major medical care facilities, MaineHealth and Northern Light Mercy Hospital. NNEPRA has also coordinated with the City of Portland throughout the site analysis phase.

#### Amtrak

Amtrak operates the Downeaster service and identified Site 3 as the preferred alternative from a railroad operations standpoint. Amtrak expressed concerns about Sites 1 and 2, citing operational challenges due to their proximity to Congress Street grade crossing and signal circuits. A station at these locations would require additional gate down time at the Congress Street grade crossing, impacting vehicular traffic. Additionally, Amtrak noted Site 1 and Site 2 would limit connections to the PLF, where Downeaster trainsets are serviced. While all

alternatives may require some track and signal improvements to accommodate the new station location, Site 3 is expected to need less extensive modifications than Site 1 or Site 2.

## CSX

CSX owns the tracks used by the Downeaster in Maine and New Hampshire and must approve any station relocation. NNEPRA and CSX coordinate weekly on existing operations and proposed future improvements. Through that coordination, CSX has indicated that Site 3 is their preferred location from an operational standpoint because it is the furthest away from the Congress Street grade crossing and preserves access to the Mountain Branch.

## MaineHealth

MaineHealth owns Maine Medical Center, the largest hospital in the state of Maine. While the primary campus is on Congress Street, MaineHealth also owns and/or operates Site 2 and much of the property adjacent to Site 2, including an employee parking garage immediately south of Site 2. MaineHealth has indicated concerns with potentially locating a station at Site 2, including that:

- › The proximity of Site 2 to Congress Street and the potential for increased railroad gate closure time on this primary ambulance / emergency vehicle route is concerning.
- › Site 2 parking is already fully subscribed.
- › Use of Site 2 for other long-term purposes would limit Maine Medical Center's ability to expand in the future to accommodate the community's increasing healthcare needs and would jeopardize the potential to rehabilitate the adjacent historic office structure.
- › Site 2 includes a travel corridor for MaineHealth shuttles; increased bike and pedestrian traffic through this area raises safety concerns.

## Northern Light Mercy

The Northern Light Mercy Hospital (Mercy) campus is immediately west of the railroad tracks at Site 3. During discussions with NNEPRA, Mercy expressed that while they do not have a preference on the site selection, they would be willing to work collaboratively to explore options that are mutually beneficial if Site 3 is selected, as long as the integrity of their campus and the safety of their employees and patients is preserved.

## Greater Portland Metro

NNEPRA has engaged with Greater Portland Metro (Metro), which operates fixed-route bus service in Brunswick, Freeport, Yarmouth, Falmouth, Portland, South Portland, Westbrook, and Gorham, with connections to local and regional transit systems. Metro's primary garage facility is located across from Site 3, between St. John Street and Valley Street. Metro is planning improvements and expansion of their garage and administration facilities at this location and supports a future Portland train station at any of the three alternative site locations. Metro has indicated that they would work with NNEPRA and MaineDOT in the planning process to accommodate a Metro bus service stop at any future station location. Discussions with Metro's leadership suggest that Site 3 could offer added benefits of inter-agency coordination for

administrative space, parking facilities, and on-site security, and could help to develop a transit hub at a location in Portland that is immediately adjacent to Metro’s facilities.

## City of Portland Planning Staff

NNEPRA and MaineDOT met with city planning staff on several occasions throughout the site analysis process with the important goal of ensuring the future station location aligns with and potentially enhances current and future land uses in the area and other city goals and initiatives, like ReCode. City planning staff have identified Site 2 as their preferred location based on their vision of land use at this location and their view of connectivity to current and future bicycle and pedestrian networks, as well as access to 4 existing bus routes that provide high frequency connections to the peninsula core and points west. City planning staff expressed a desire to be closely involved in advancing the Portland station relocation project at any location.

## Other Property Owners

In addition to the stakeholder input discussed above, NNEPRA reached out to many of the private landowners in the vicinity of the site locations. This outreach focused on project status updates and allowed NNEPRA to gather feedback and address concerns from landowners. No discussions were held regarding the value of potential property acquisition.

## Summary of Public Input

NNEPRA, MaineDOT, and VHB hosted two formal public meetings for the project. The first meeting in April 2024 presented an analysis of the alternatives under consideration and gathered public input. The second meeting in August 2024 presented input gathered from key stakeholders and the public, and the site that best meets the project’s goals. Both meetings were held virtually to maximize attendance, included presentations from NNEPRA and VHB, and were followed by a public comment period where all attendees who wished to speak were given the opportunity. After each of the public meetings, NNEPRA posted a recording and a PDF of the slide deck on their website, along with a form for written feedback available for two weeks following each meeting. In addition to the two formal public meetings, VHB presented the project to the NNEPRA Board of Directors at their June board meeting, which was open to the public and included public comment.

## April Public Meeting

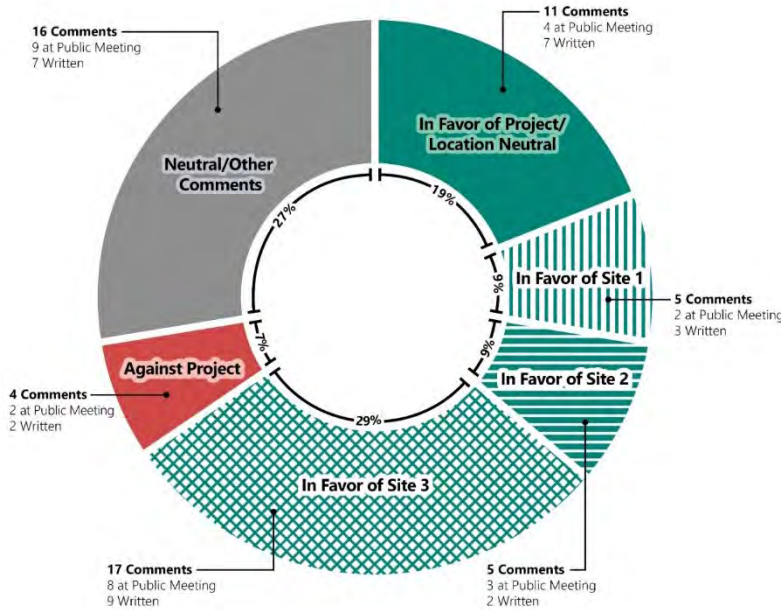
The purpose of the April public meeting was to present the framework of the project, the three sites under consideration, and some of the initial pros and cons identified at each location. No recommendation was made regarding a preferred site and the primary goal of the meeting was to receive public feedback on the site alternatives.

VHB and NNEPRA reviewed all public comment received during the April public meeting, including written comments that were submitted through NNEPRA’s website in the two weeks following the meeting. In total, nearly 60 people provided input, with some people providing input multiple times.

**Figure 5.1** below provides a graphical summary of the comments received. In general, there was significant support for the project with only 4 comments (approximately 7%) noting opposition

to the project and 38 comments (approximately 66%) expressing support for the project. Of those who expressed support for the project, the site that received the most support was Site 3 (approximately 29% of all comments). The remaining 16 comments provided did not express any support for or opposition to the project, but rather provided miscellaneous input or asked questions.

**Figure 5.1 Summary of Public Input – April Public Meeting**



In addition to categorizing the input by support or opposition, common themes were identified among the comments received. The public priorities that were most noted included:

- › Maintaining connections to other forms of public transportation.
- › Supporting bicycle and pedestrian connections.
- › Encouraging transit-oriented development/mixed-use development.
- › Allowing for connections to future east/west rail service.
- › Promoting safety at a new station location.

## June NNEPRA Board of Directors Meeting

VHB presented a project summary to the NNEPRA Board of Directors at their June meeting. This presentation included a summary of the public input from the April public meeting and a refined analysis of the characteristics of each site. After the presentation, the board discussed the project and voted in favor of Site 3 as the location that best meets the project goals. This meeting was open to the public, and two attendees provided supportive comments.

## August Public Meeting

The final public meeting of this phase of the project was held in August 2024. NNEPRA and VHB presented the final summary of the site alternatives analysis, public input from the April meeting, and direction from the Board of Directors in June. Site 3 was identified as the location that best meets the project goals. Following that meeting, NNEPRA and VHB reviewed all public input received during the meeting and via written comment in the two weeks following the meeting. In total, 51 people provided comment. Similar to the April meeting, there was minimal opposition to the project by way of 4 comments (approximately 8%). Of those that noted support for a specific site, the comments received were:

- › 4 comments in support of Site 1 (approximately 8%).

- › 3 comments in support of Site 2 (approximately 6%).
- › 13 comments in support of Site 3 (approximately 25%).
- › 4 comments in support of the project but not specifying one site over another (approximately 8%).

Since the August meeting focused on presenting the preferred site, fewer comments were made about specific locations. Instead, many provided input on the next phase of the project, desired station amenities, and other miscellaneous comments. 21 comments (approximately 41%) were in this category. Most comments were very similar to the recurring themes noted in the comments from the April public meeting.





# 6

## Recommendation and Next Steps

Using the information analyzed and discussed in the sections above, the project team and the NNEPRA Board of Directors determined that Site 3 is the site that best meets the project's needs and goals.

### Summary of Recommendation

The characteristics of each site alternative were considered as related to the identified project goals. Additionally, stakeholder and public input were taken into consideration.

All three sites considered could improve pedestrian/bike/transit connectivity and support surrounding TOD economic development. Site 3 has been identified as the site which best meets the project goals and needs based on the following:

- Site 3 is the only site which provides direct access to the Mountain Branch for access to the PLF and mitigates train conflicts most effectively.
- Site 3 would require the least amount of costly railroad infrastructure improvements (e.g., signal modifications, station and/or new mainline track) to support the station.
- Site 3 is the only site which would have no impacts to the Congress Street grade crossing beyond existing conditions.
- Site 3 is the only site which enhances bike and pedestrian connectivity between St. John Street and the Fore River Parkway via the over-track pedestrian bridge.
- Site 3 is the only site which provides direct pedestrian access to the Northern Light Mercy Hospital campus as well as Maine Medical Center via the shuttle.
- Site 3 provides the most opportunity for connectivity to the PTC via the Fore Street Parkway.
- Site 3 is the preferred site for the general public, Amtrak, and CSX.

## Next Steps

The next steps for the project will be to advance to the preliminary design and pre-environmental compliance phase, focusing on Site 3. The preliminary engineering phase will analyze the opportunities and constraints at Site 3 in greater detail and develop preliminary plans and project cost estimates to inform the final design and eventual construction of a relocated Portland Station. In conjunction with MaineDOT, NNEPRA intends to seek federal funding and non-federal match for the construction of the station and required associated site improvements.

Figure 6.2 Conceptual Rendering of Station at Site Alternative 3 Location



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## Appendix A – April Public Meeting Slide Deck

# 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

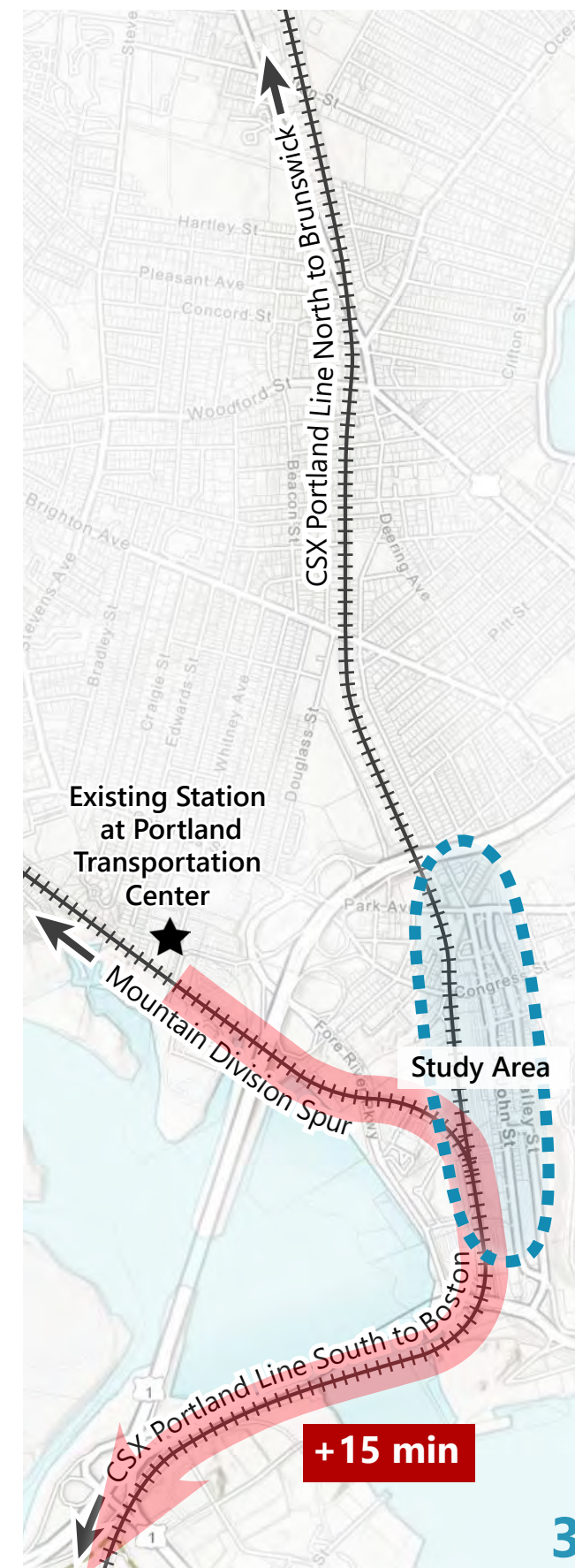
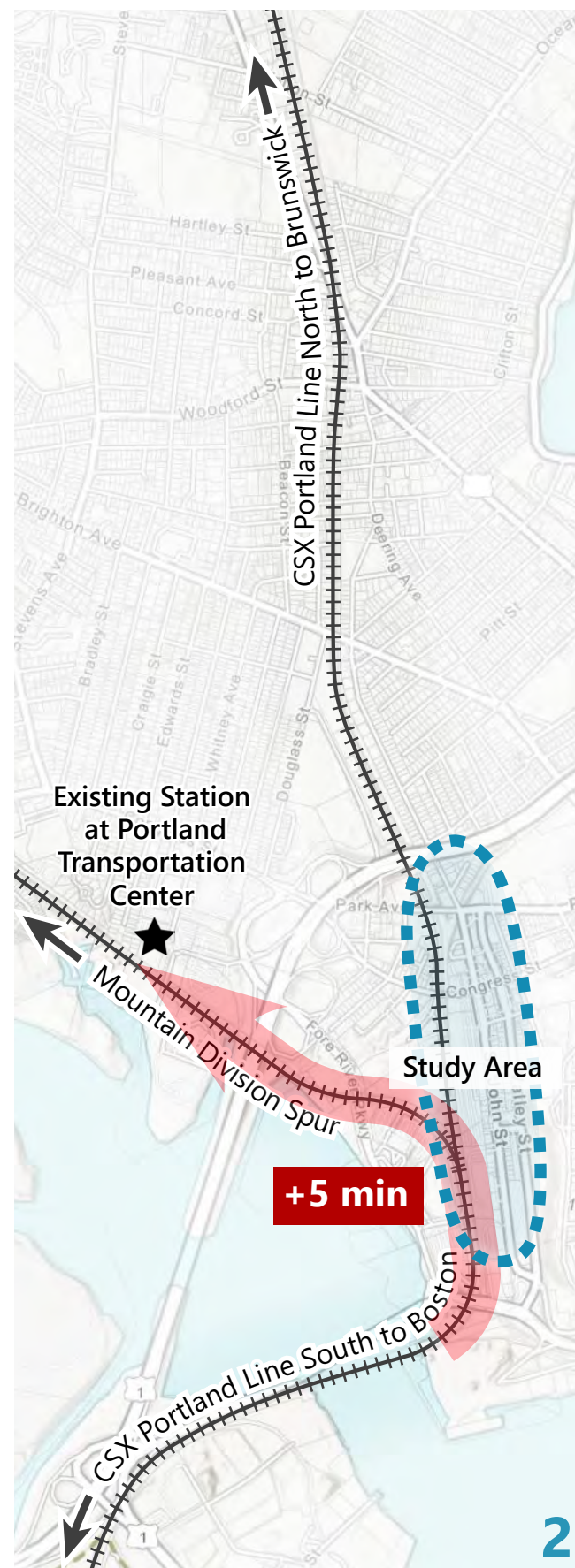
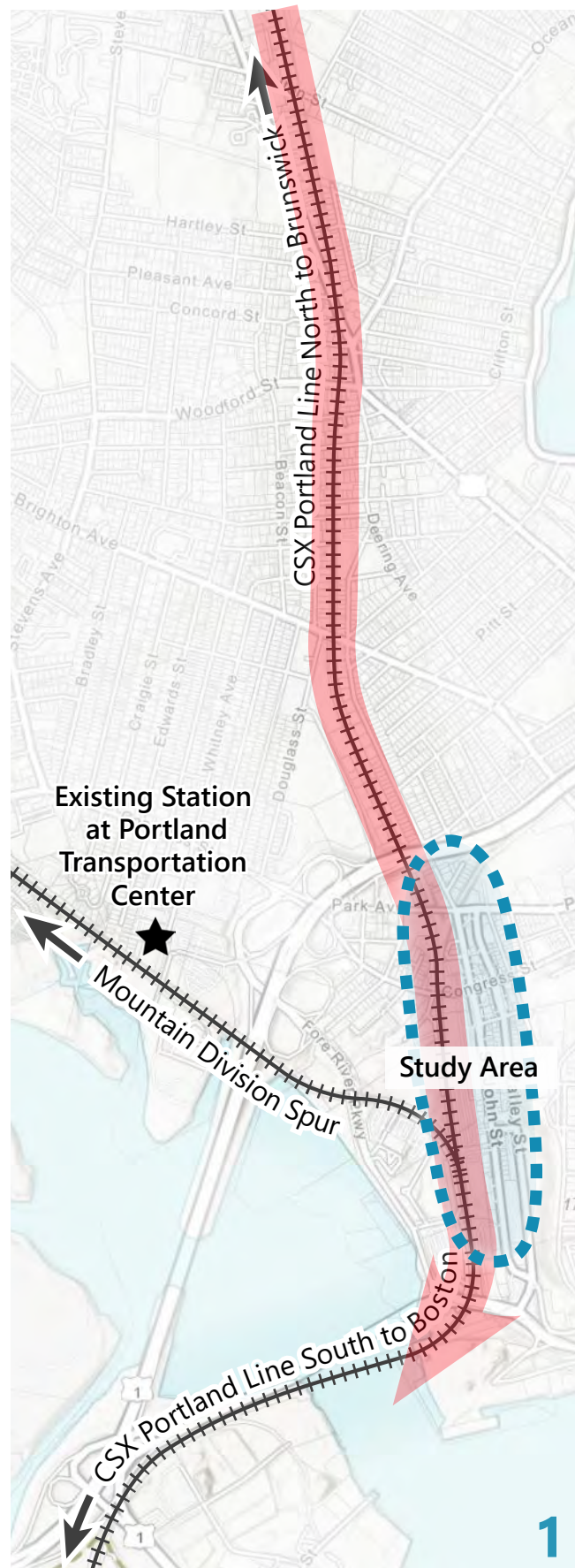
- Support regional transportation goals, to make transit easier, create frequent connections, and create transit-friendly places
- Enhance rider experience by reducing passenger travel time
- Increase regional ridership by providing time competitive service and proximity to demand generators
- Improve 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



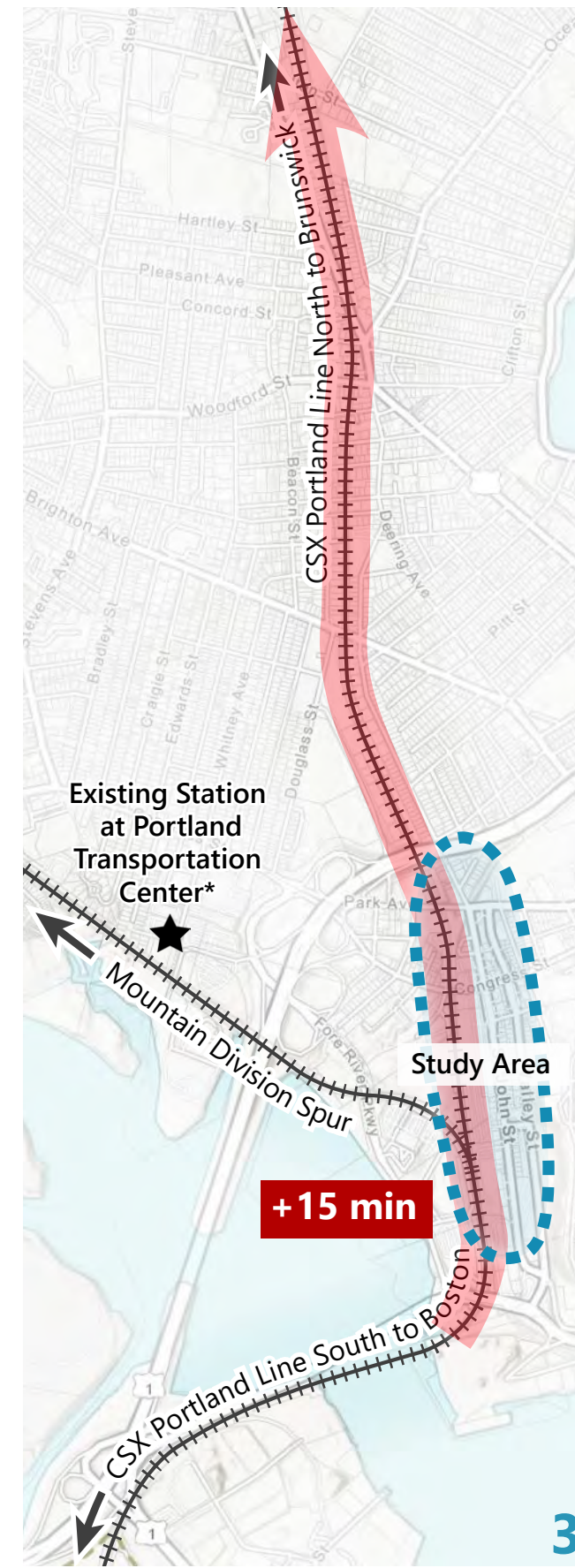
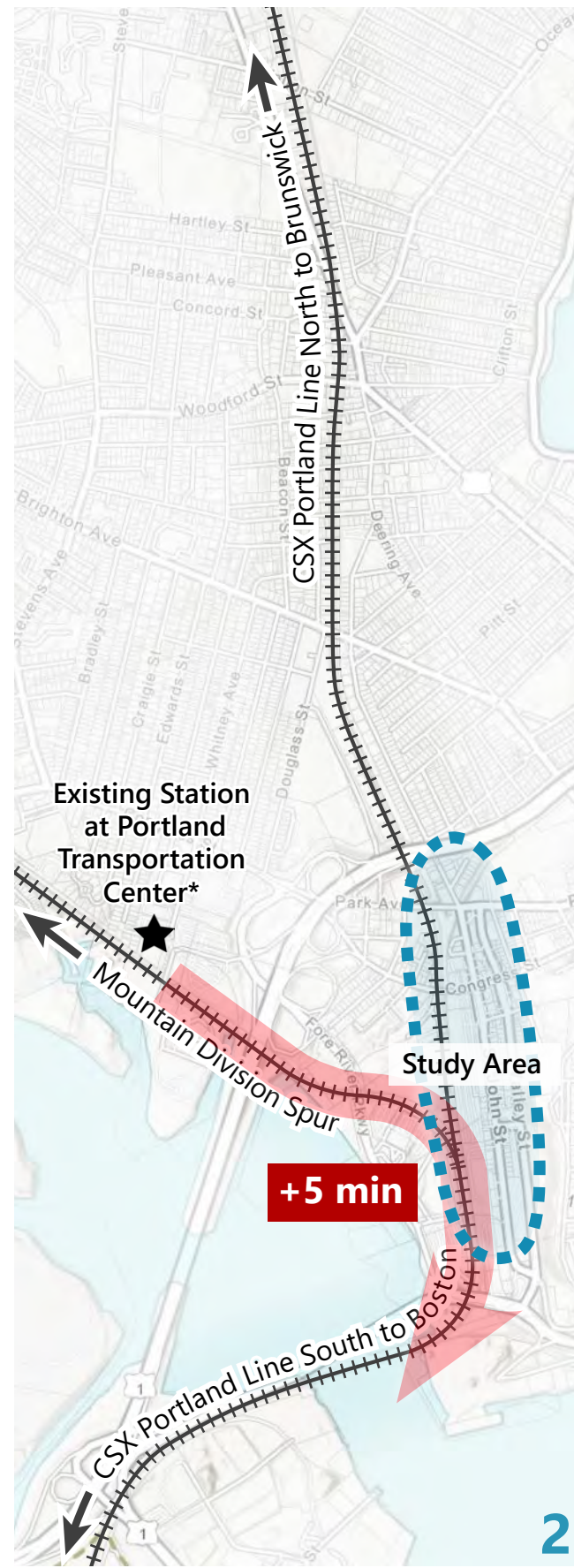
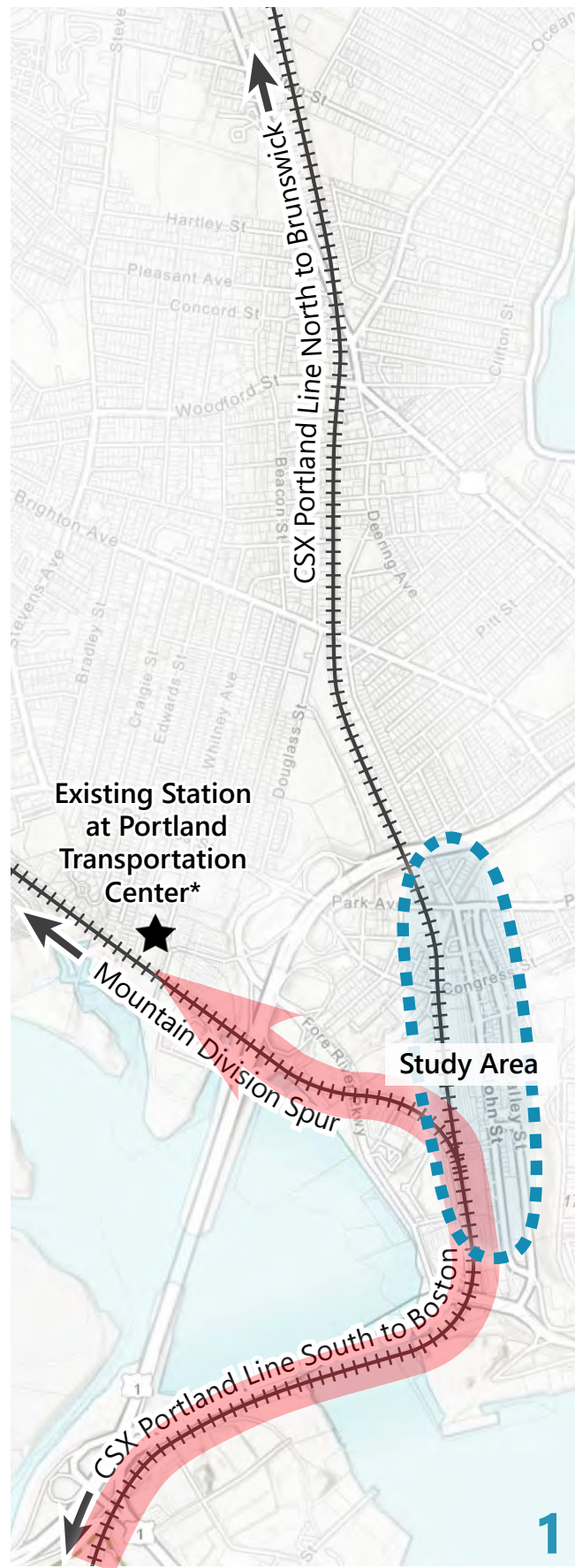


## Current **Southbound** Downeaster Operation

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

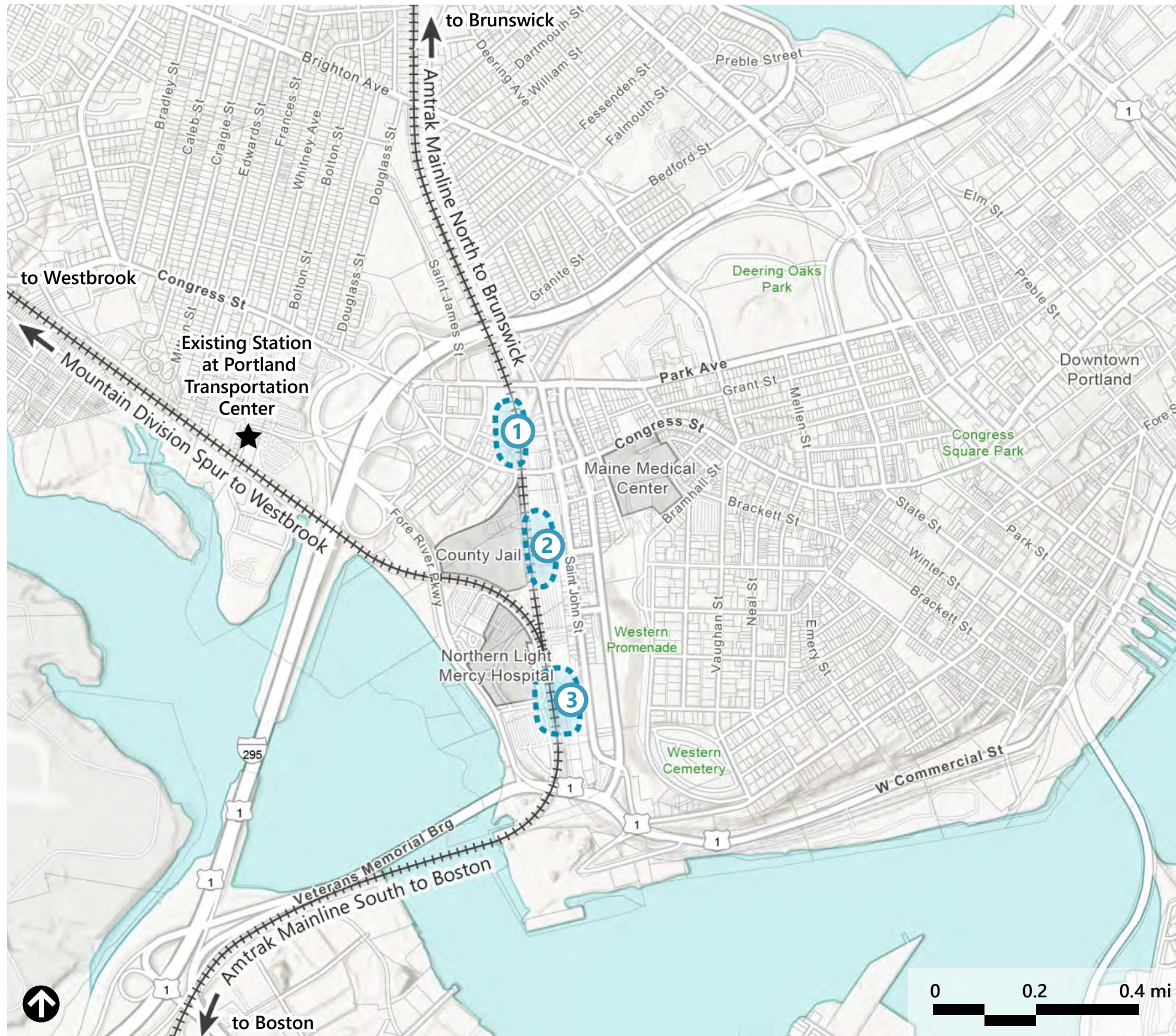
Possible station configuration similar to Meriden Transit Center, CT.

## 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



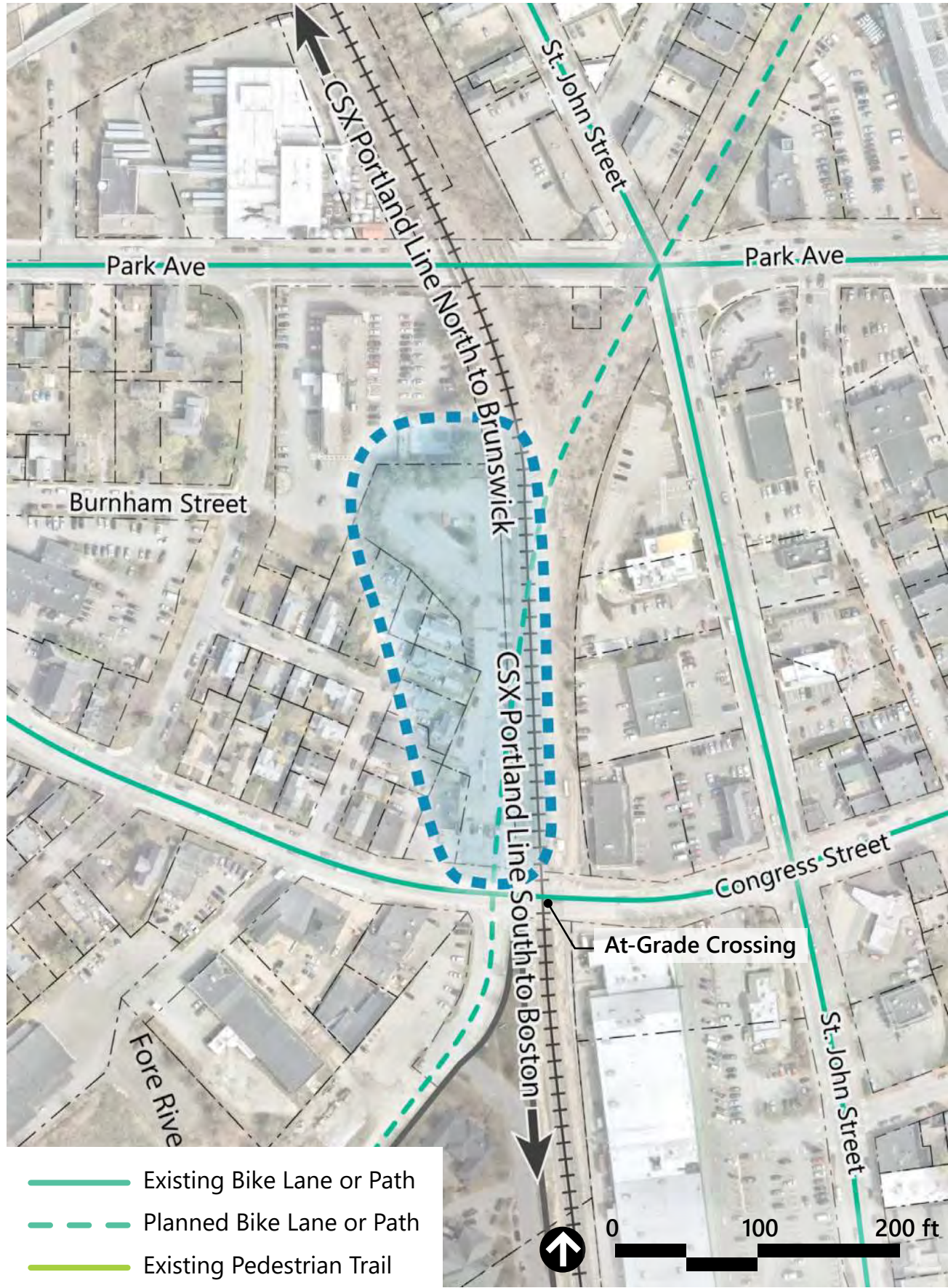
Possible station configuration similar to Meriden Transit Center, CT.



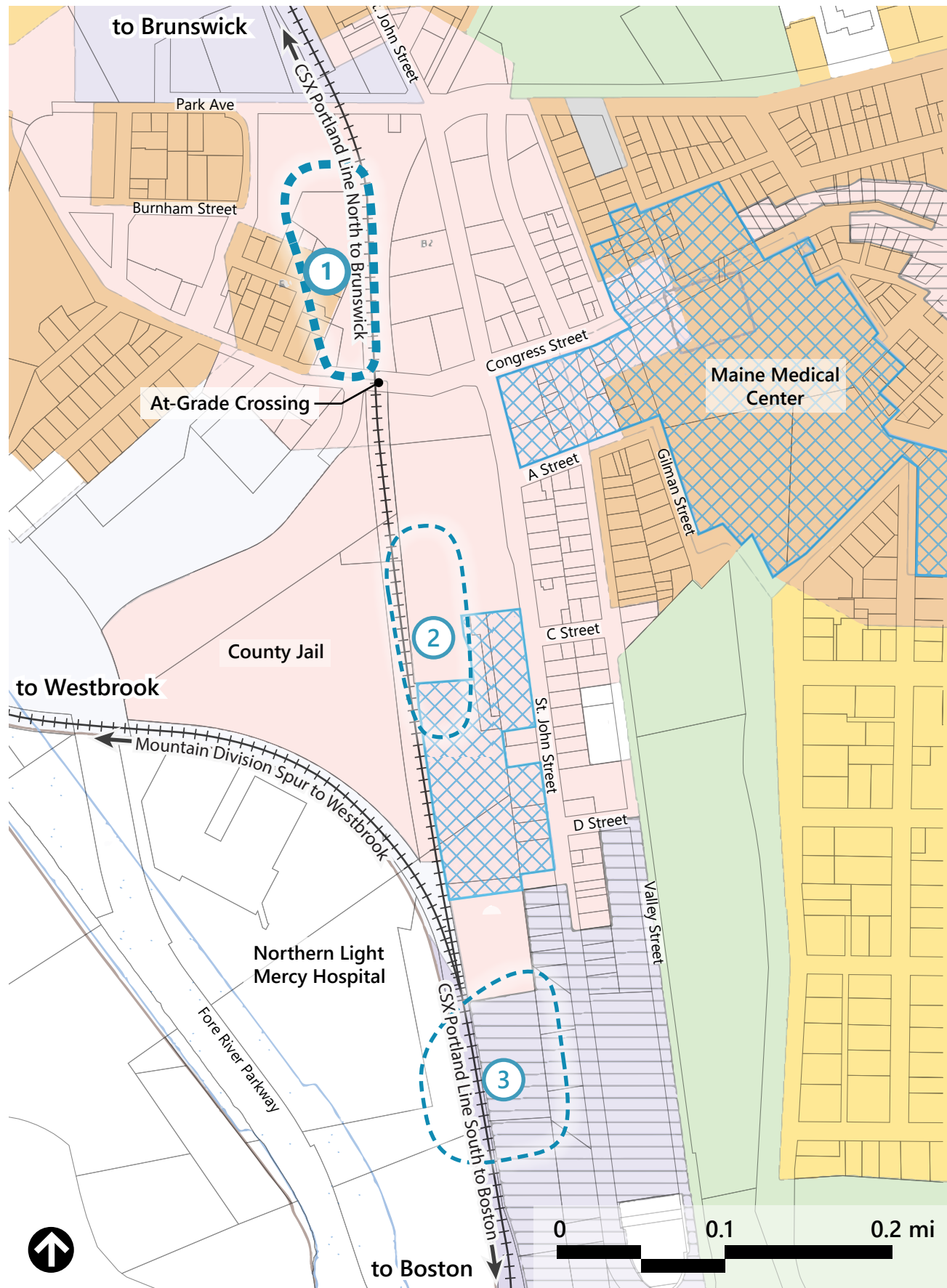
## Portland Train Station - Sites Considered:

- 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

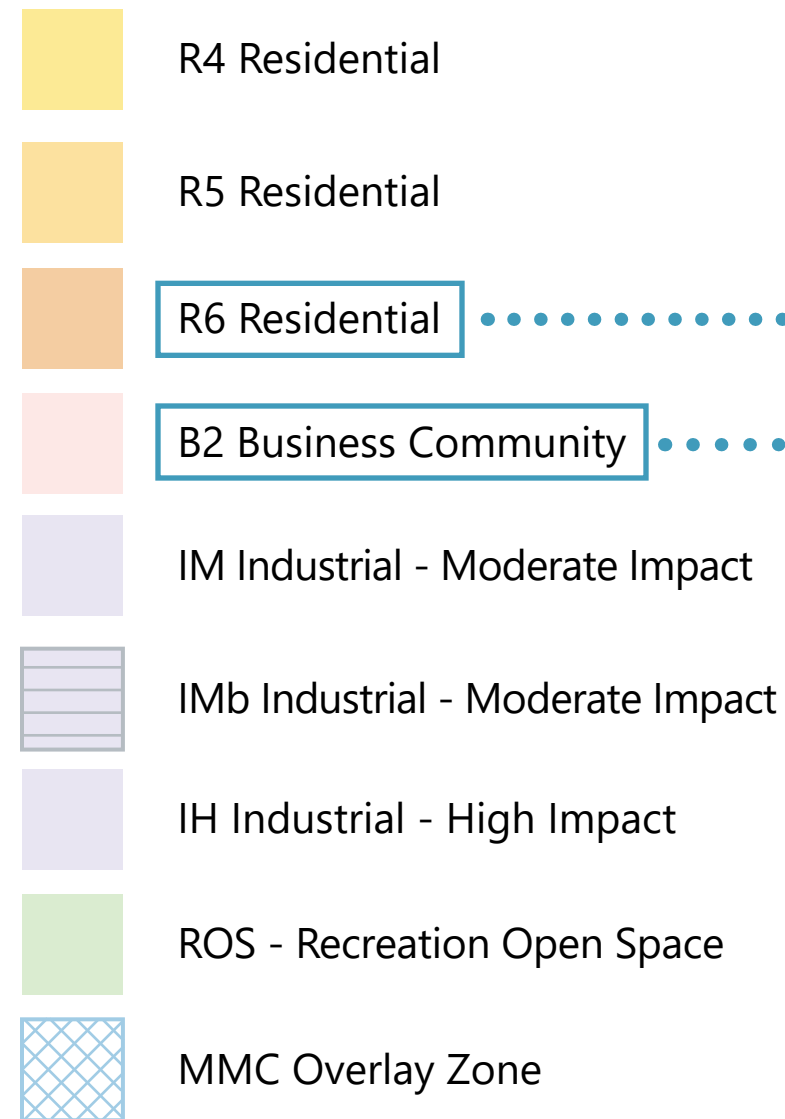
# Station Site Comparison: Site 1



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



## 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.

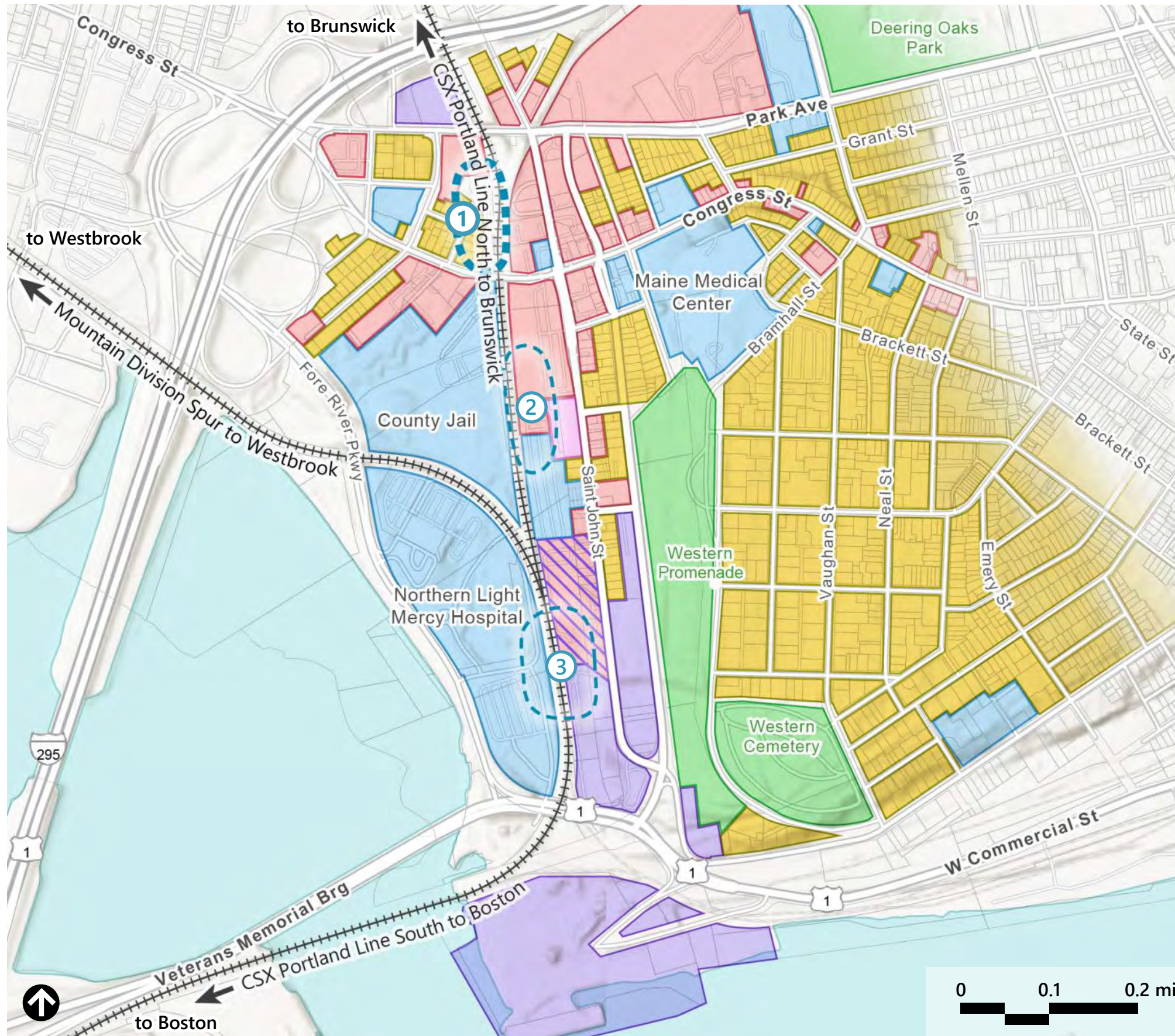
Intent & allowable uses:

"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."



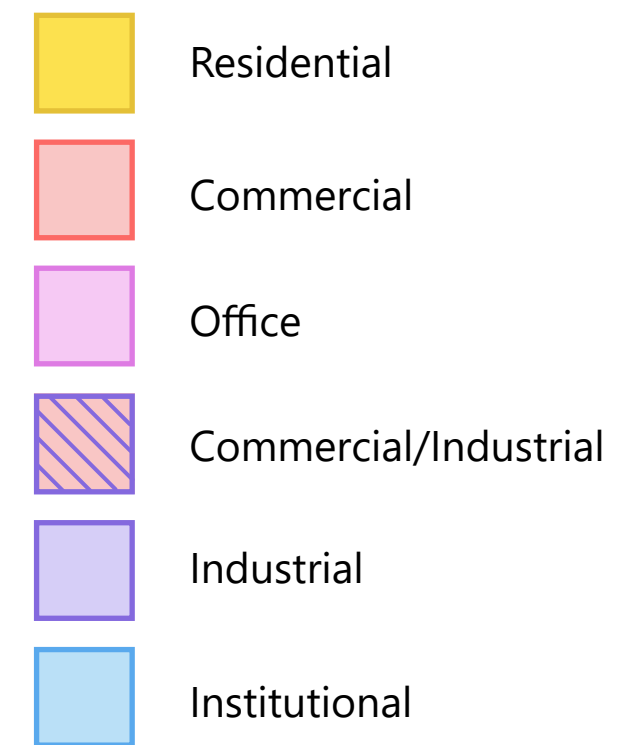


## Local Land Use: Site 1

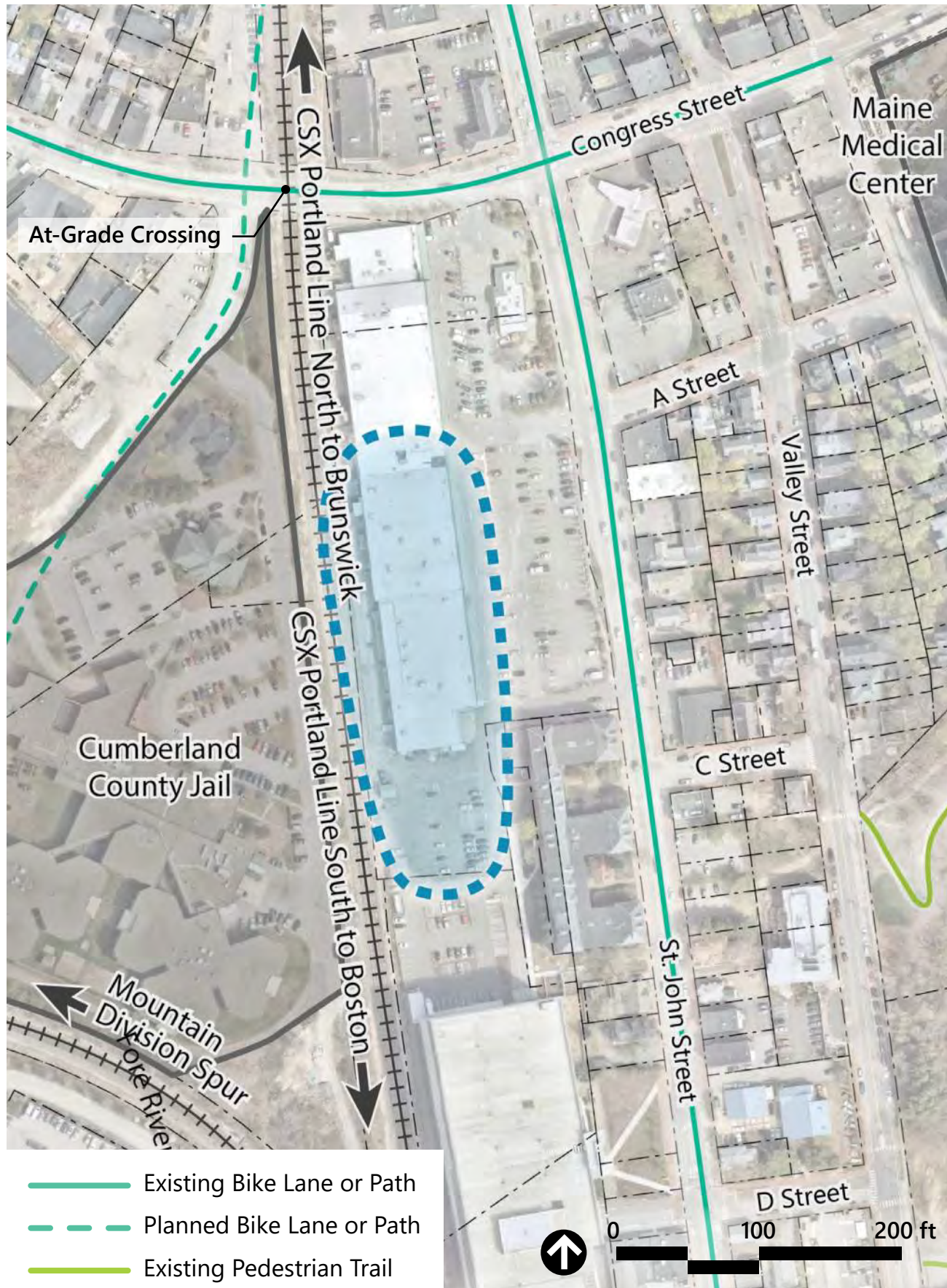
Site 1: Commercial & Residential

Site 2: Commercial, Office & Institutional

Site 3: Commercial/Industrial



## Station Site Comparison: Site 2



### PROJECT NEEDS/GOALS

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

- Proximity to Congress St. grade crossing impedes traffic flow while train is at station, causing congestion at the intersection

- Possible to accommodate needed spaces onsite.
- Property owned by Maine Health with alternate development plans

- 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

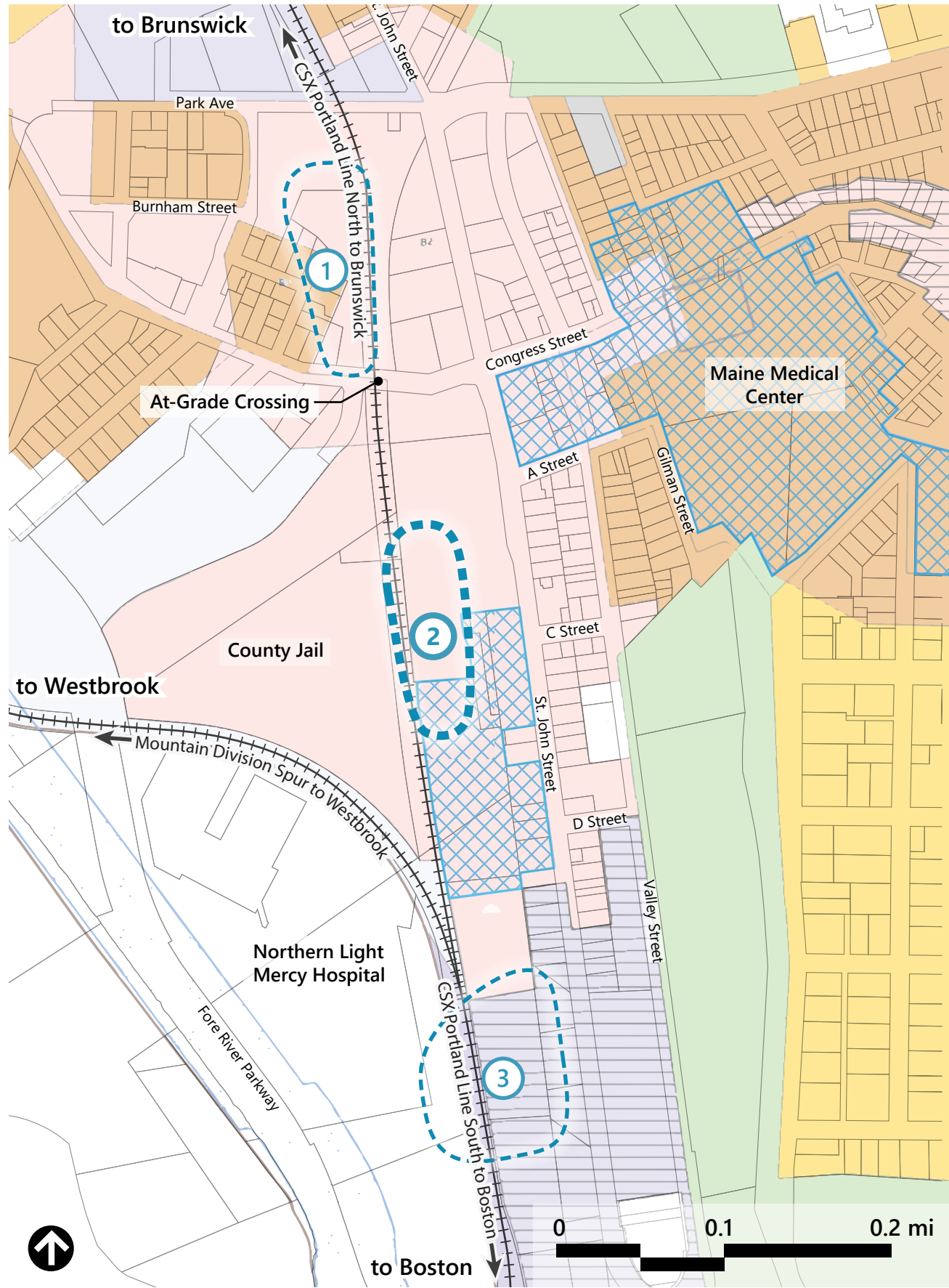
- Back-up move required on mainline for PLF access
- Potential for conflicts between passenger and freight trains

- Station track needed to support connecting service from north
- Does not support east/west connections

- Zoned for mixed commercial development

- Location adds complexity to train movements and does not support dual-sided pedestrian access

## Zoning: Site 2

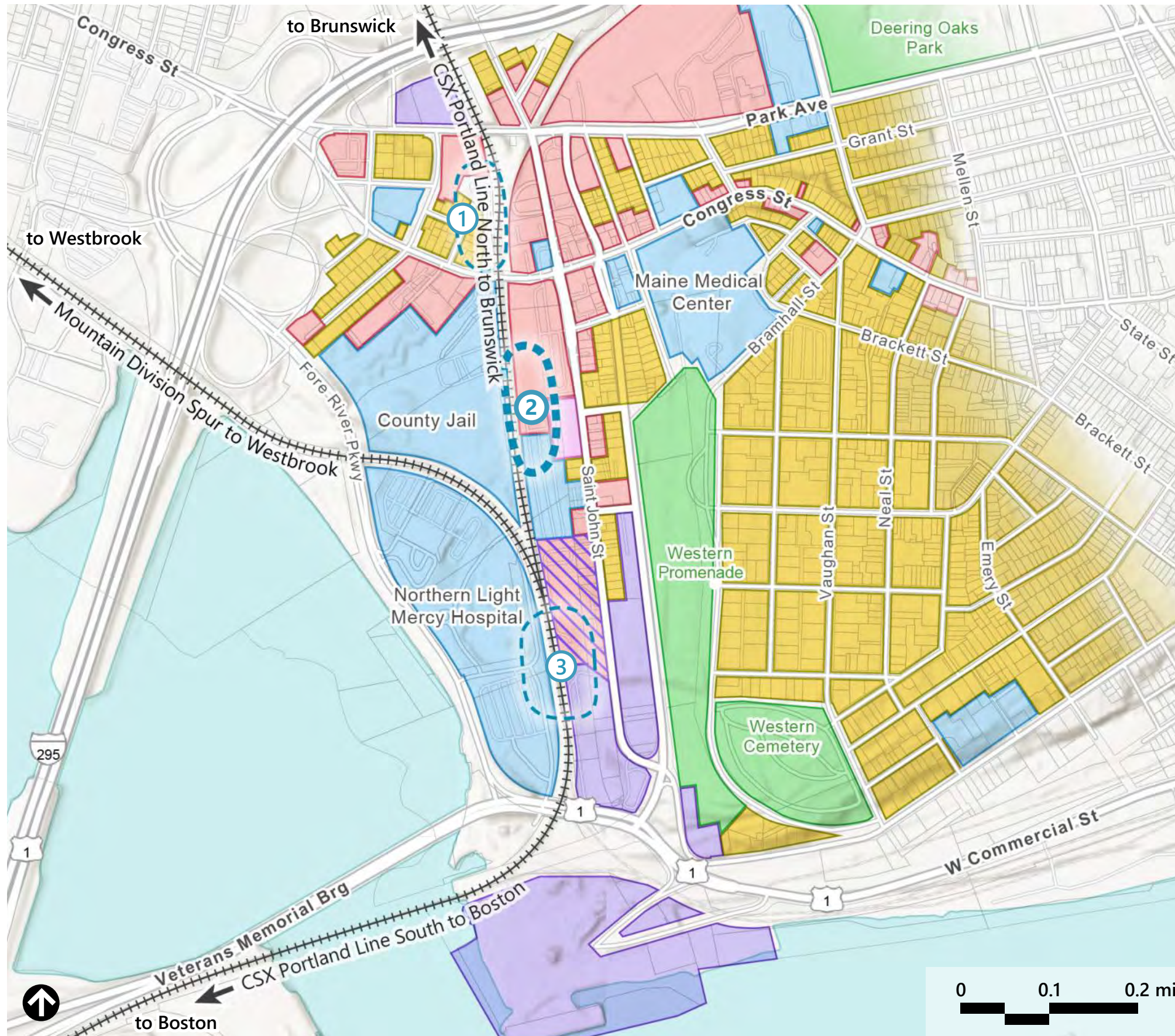


- R4 Residential
- R5 Residential
- R6 Residential
- B2 Business Community
- IM Industrial - Moderate Impact
- IMb Industrial - Moderate Impact
- IH Industrial - High Impact
- ROS - Recreation Open Space
- MMC Overlay Zone

- 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)"

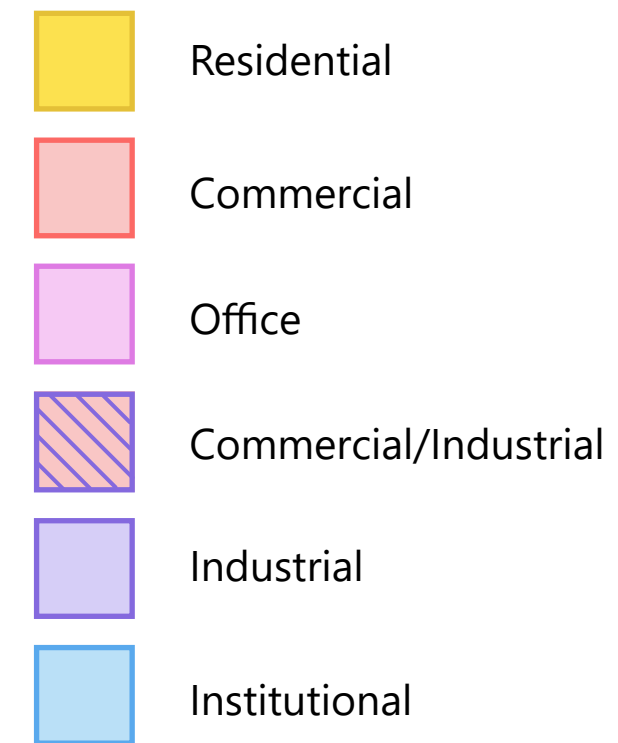


## Local Land Use: Site 2

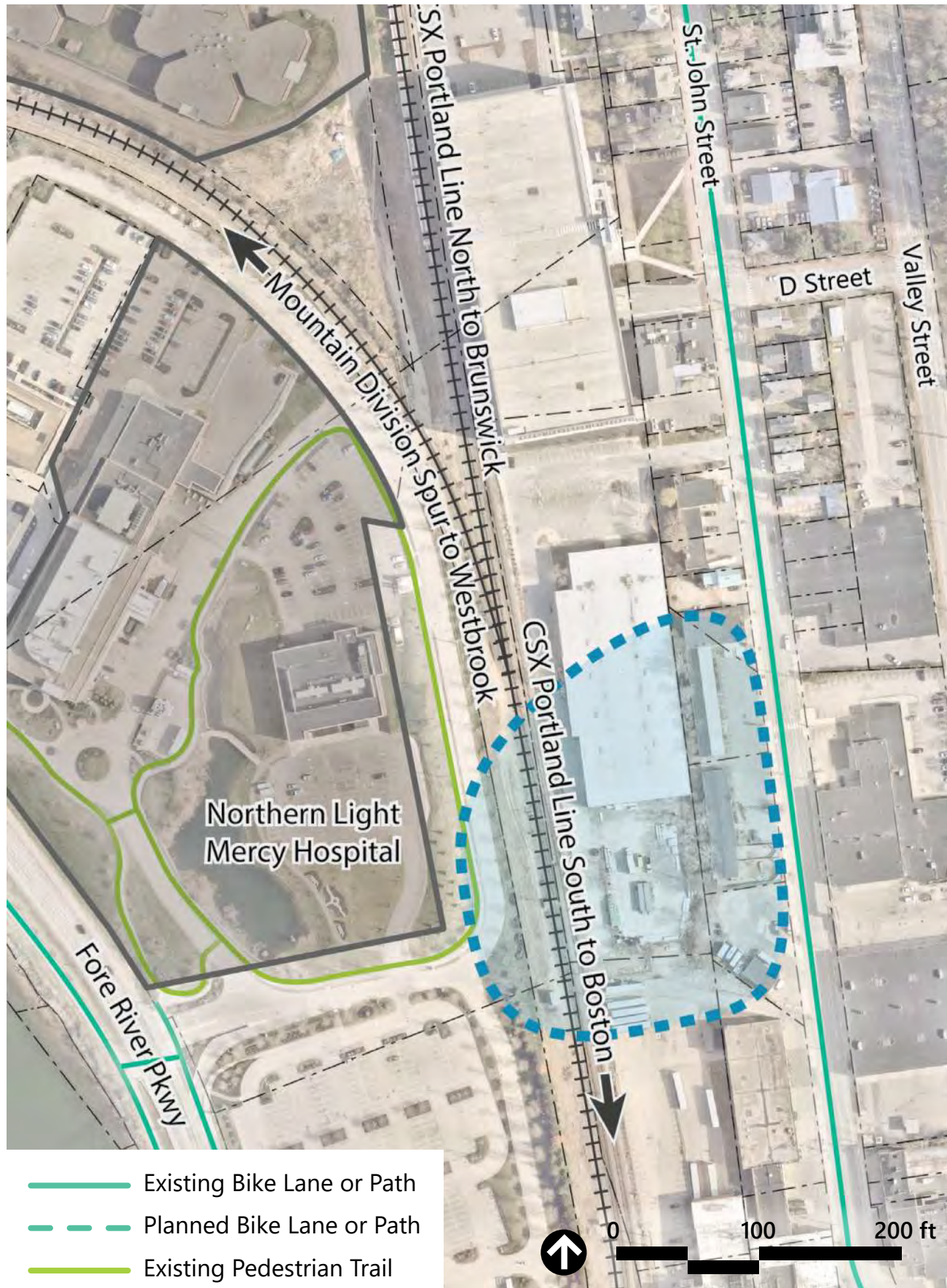
Site 1: Commercial & Residential

Site 2: Commercial, Office & Institutional

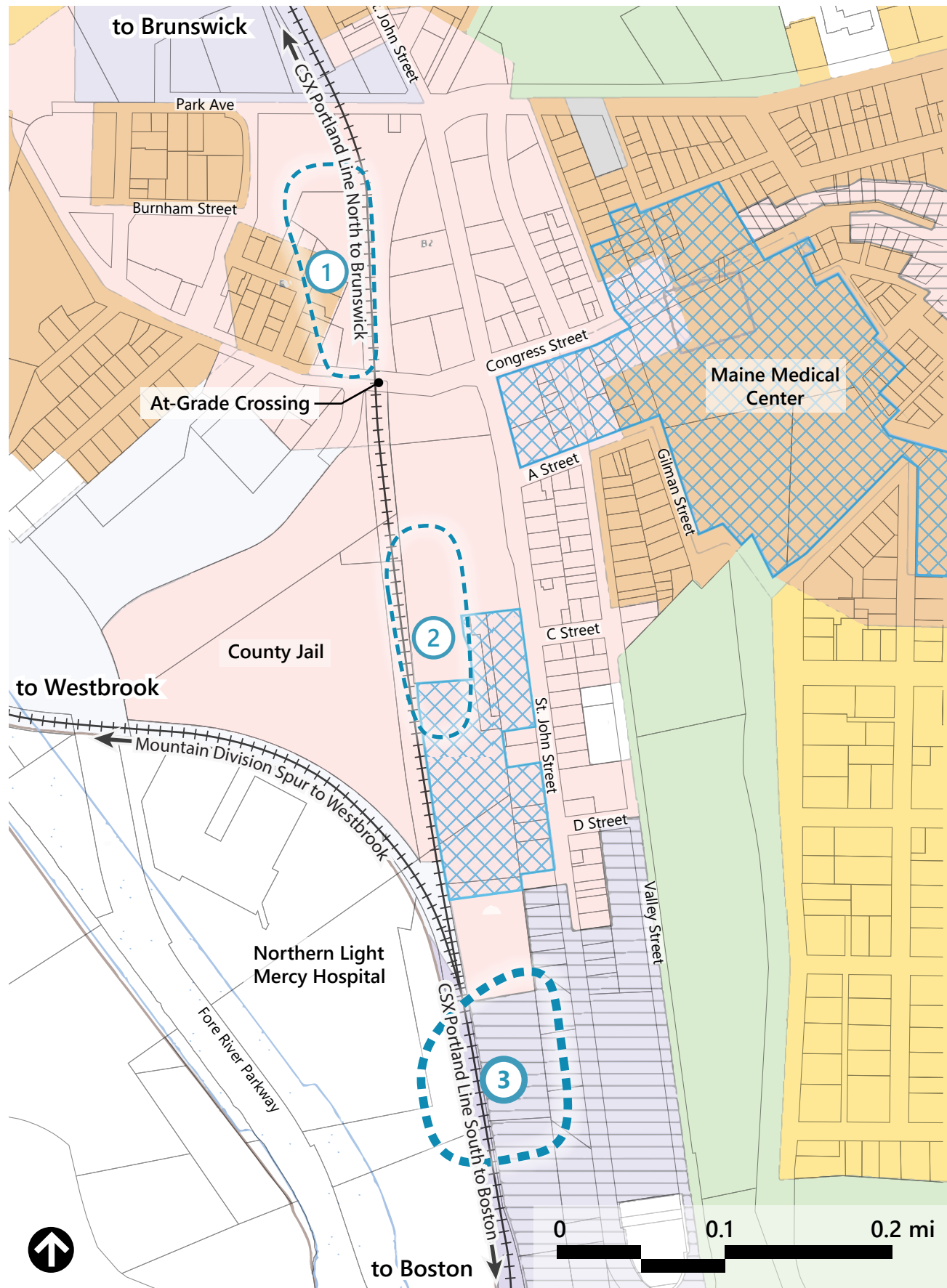
Site 3: Commercial/Industrial



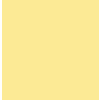








## Station Site Comparison: Site 3



PROJECT NEEDS/GOALS	SITE CHARACTERISTICS
Mainline double track location with minimal traffic/grade crossing impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No traffic or grade crossing impacts</li> </ul>
Parking for 105 cars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possible to accommodate needed spaces onsite</li> <li>Property owned by private businesses</li> </ul>
Connectivity: Vehicular  Pedestrian  Bike/Transit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Direct pedestrian access to Northern Light Mercy Hospital campus and Fore River Pkwy to the west and St. John St. to the east</li> <li>METRO and BSOOB bus routes at St. John and Fore River Parkway; Maine Med shuttle and bike lanes</li> </ul>
Access to servicing facility (PLF) with minimal train conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct access to PLF without mainline back-up</li> <li>Minimal potential for train conflicts</li> </ul>
Supports additional rail service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can support connecting service from north</li> <li>Supports east/west connections</li> </ul>
Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zoned for co-existing transportation uses and regional transportation infrastructure</li> <li>Adjacent to high density commercial/residential development areas</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Location provides multi-directional and multi-modal access with minimal traffic impacts or train interference</li> <li>Closest proximity/best access to PTC</li> </ul>



## Zoning: Site 3

-  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

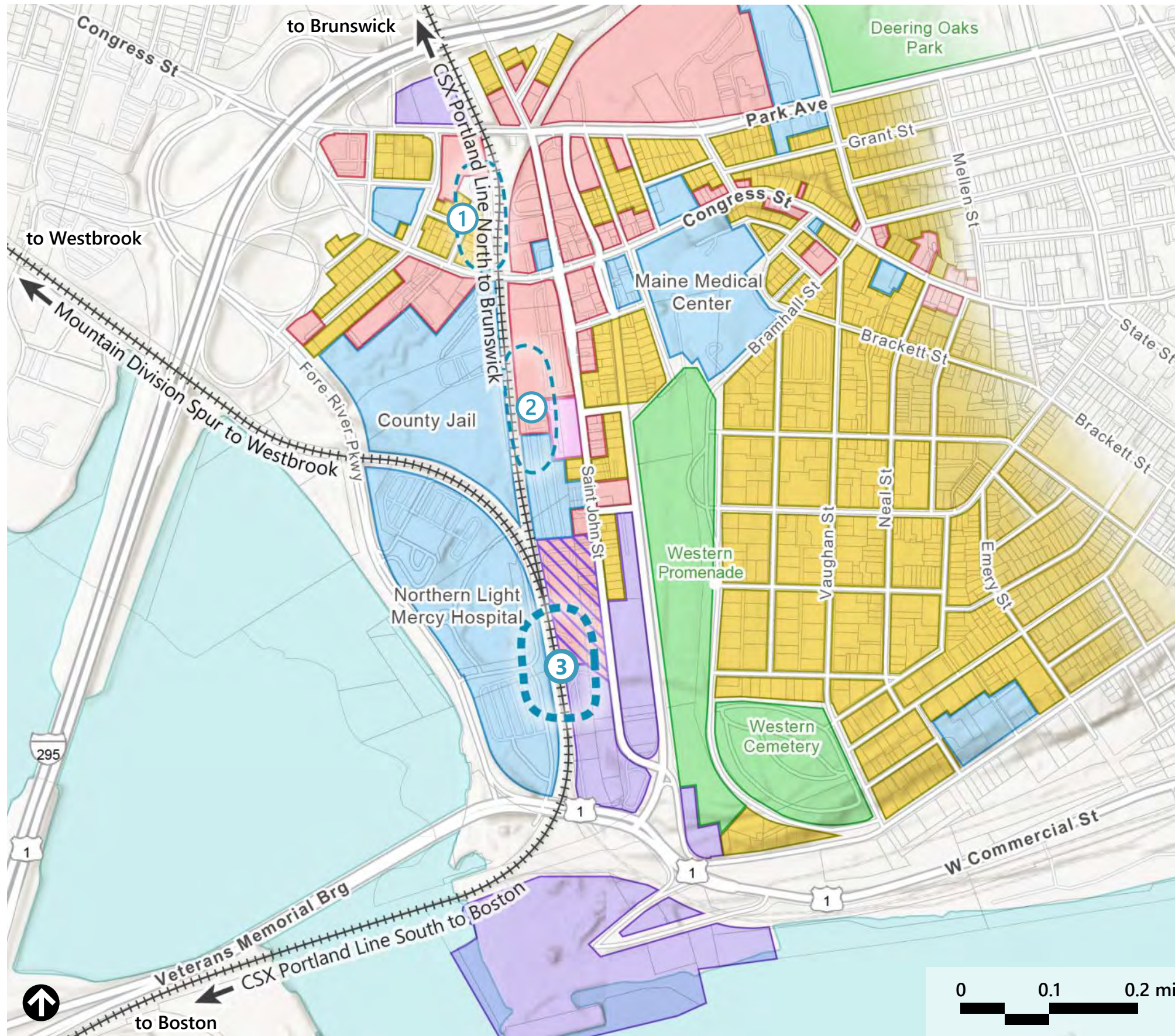
- Located in the IMb zone, adjacent to the B2 Zone.
- IMb zone expressly allows for transportation related uses/ infrastructure.
- Site directly abuts B2 zone, allowing for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) growth opportunities.

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**"

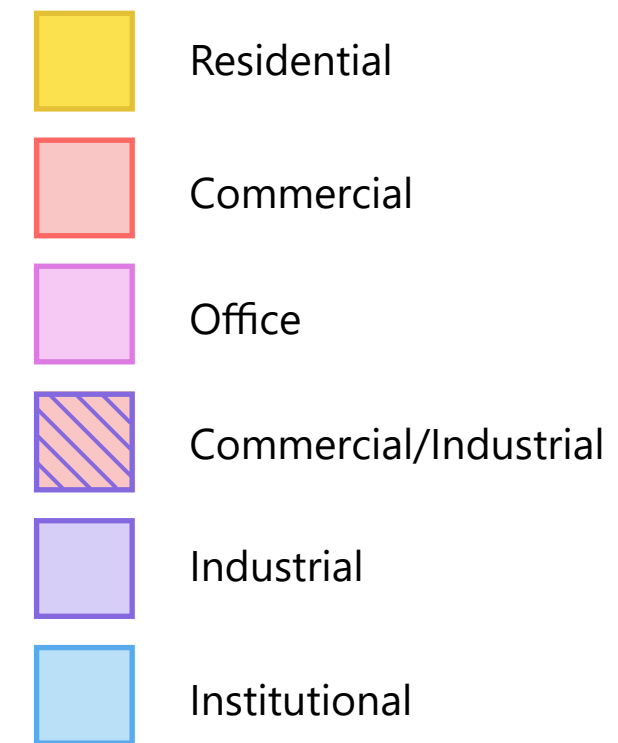


## Local Land Use: Site 3

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](http://nnepra.com) within 2 business days
- A form will be posted on [NNEPRA.com](http://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

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## **Appendix B – August Public Meeting Slide Deck**

# Portland Train Platform and Station Site Alternatives Evaluation - Public Meeting



August 13, 2024





## Introduction

### About NNEPRA

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- 5 round-trips daily between Brunswick, ME and Boston, MA (North Station)
- Serves 12 station communities in 3 states
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### Strategic Initiatives

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

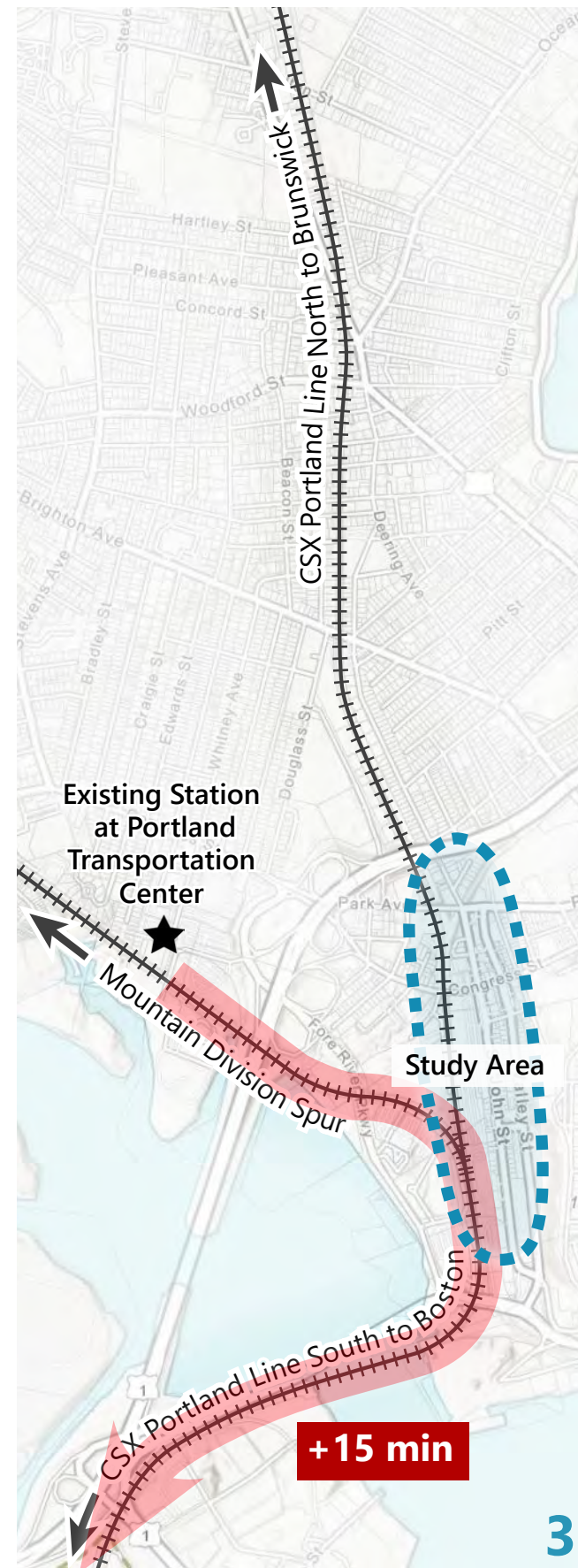
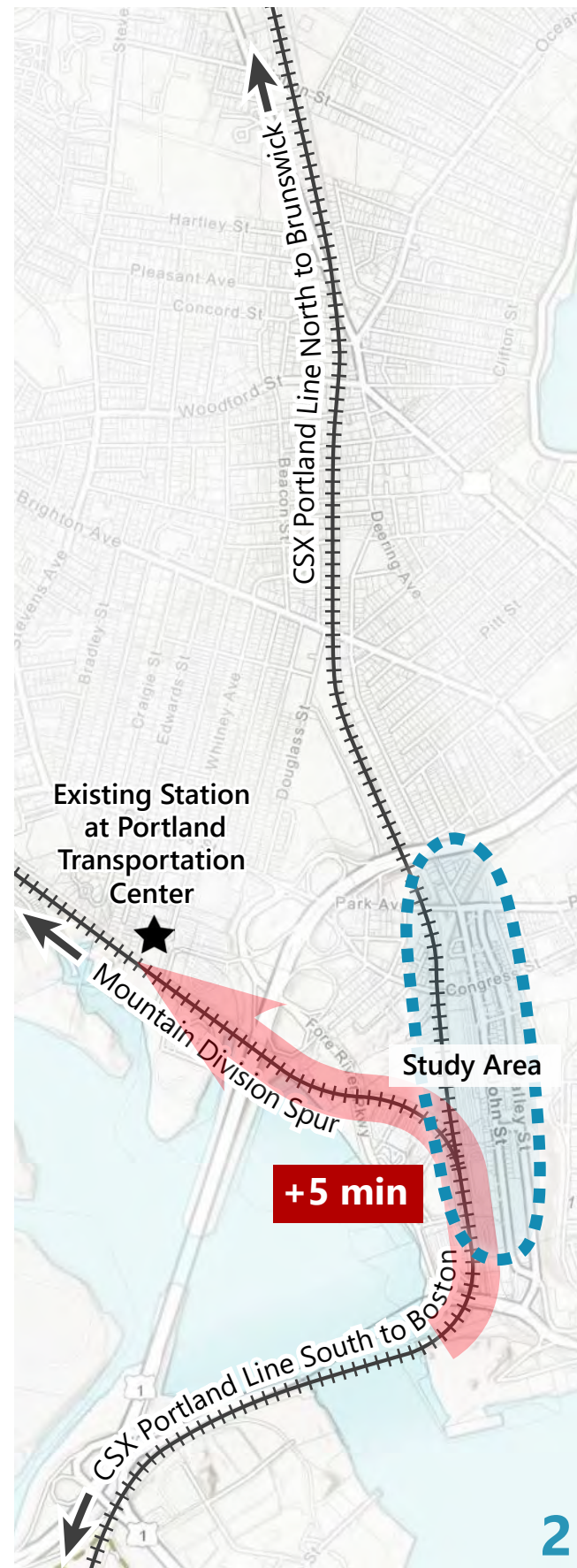
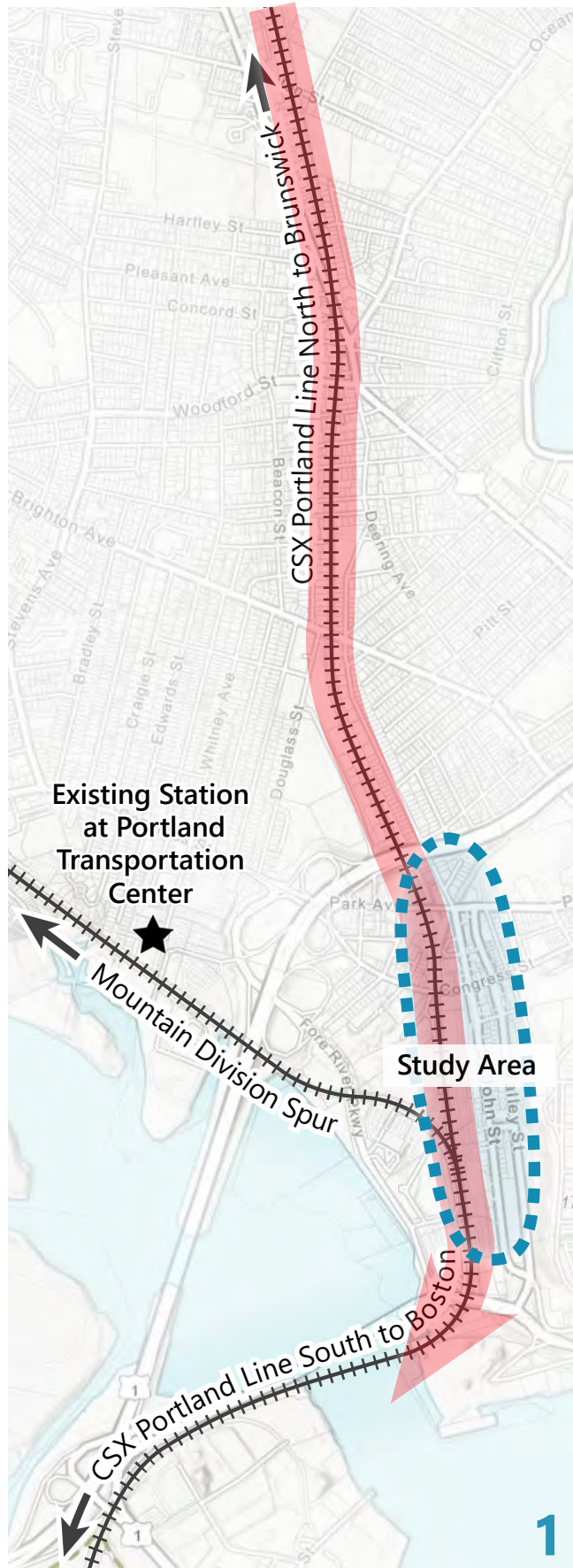
Explore alternative locations for a new Downeaster train station on the CSX mainline east of I-295 and closer to Portland peninsula to support Downeaster Operations and Strategic Initiatives.

### 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

### Previous Public Meetings During this Phase

- April 24, 2024 NNEPRA and VHB held an initial public meeting to gather public input and comments on the project.
- June 24, 2024 NNEPRA and VHB presented the site analysis and summary of public input at the public NNEPRA Board of Directors meeting.

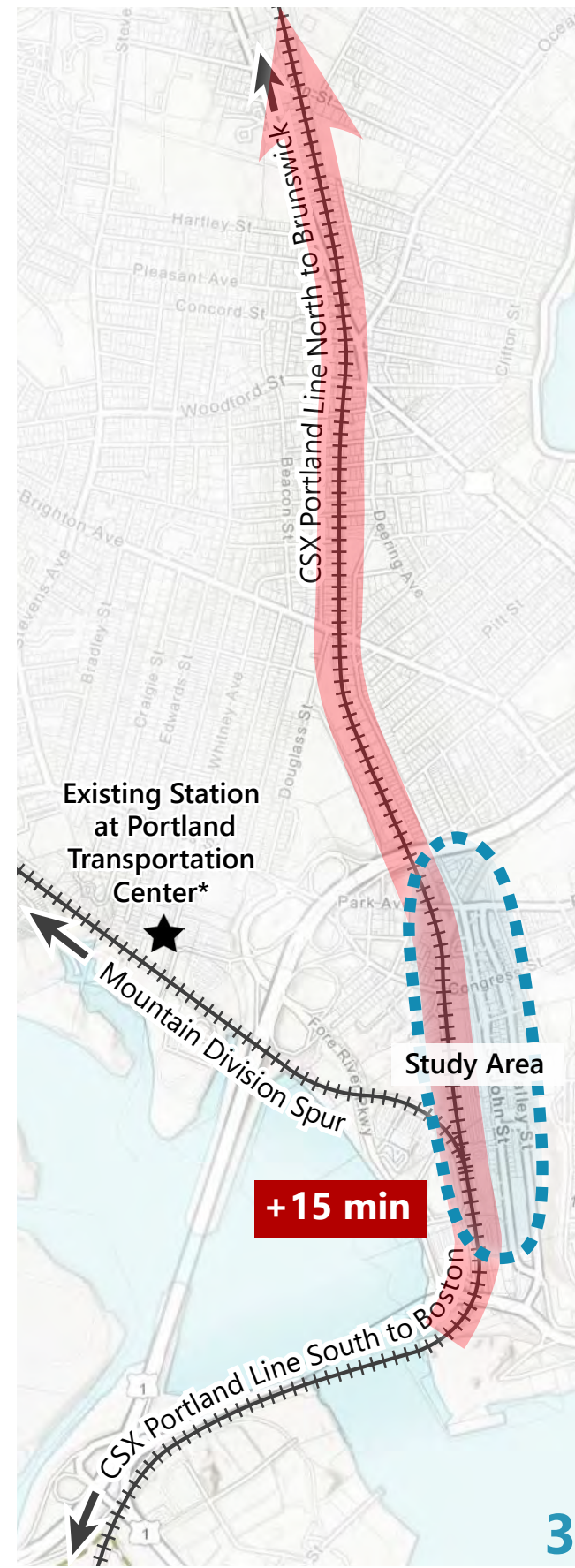
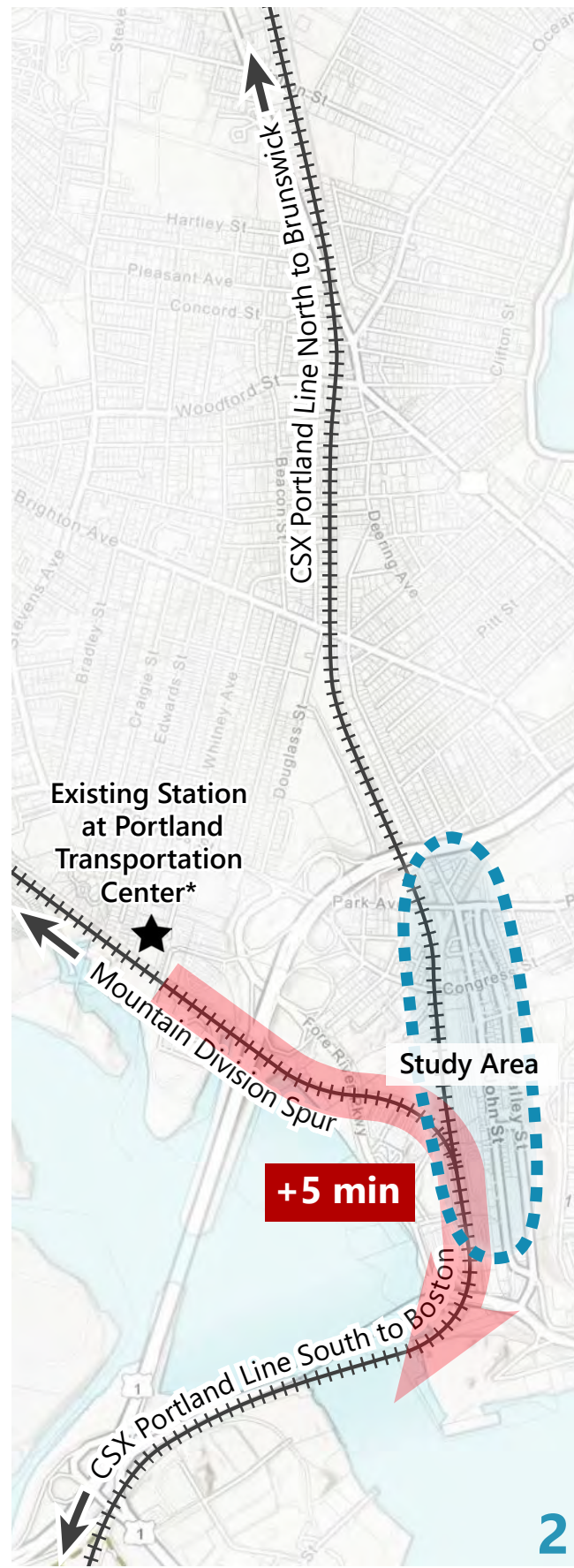
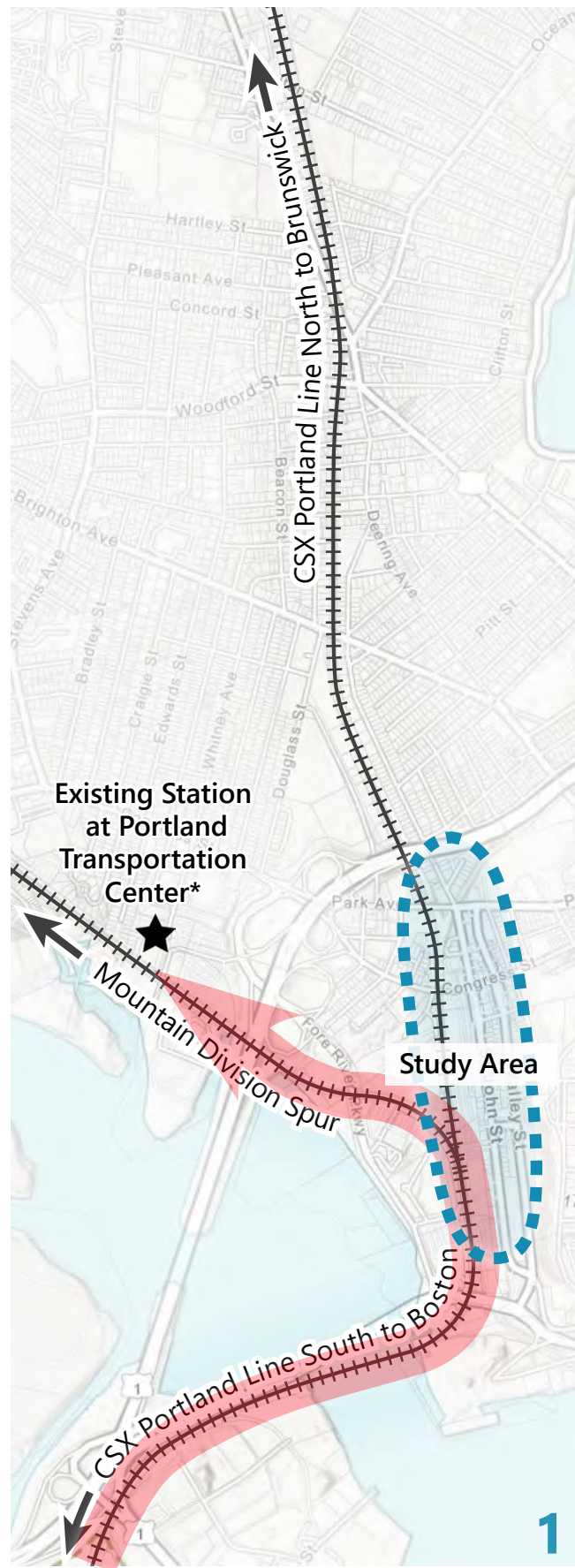


## Current **Southbound** Downeaster Operation

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.***



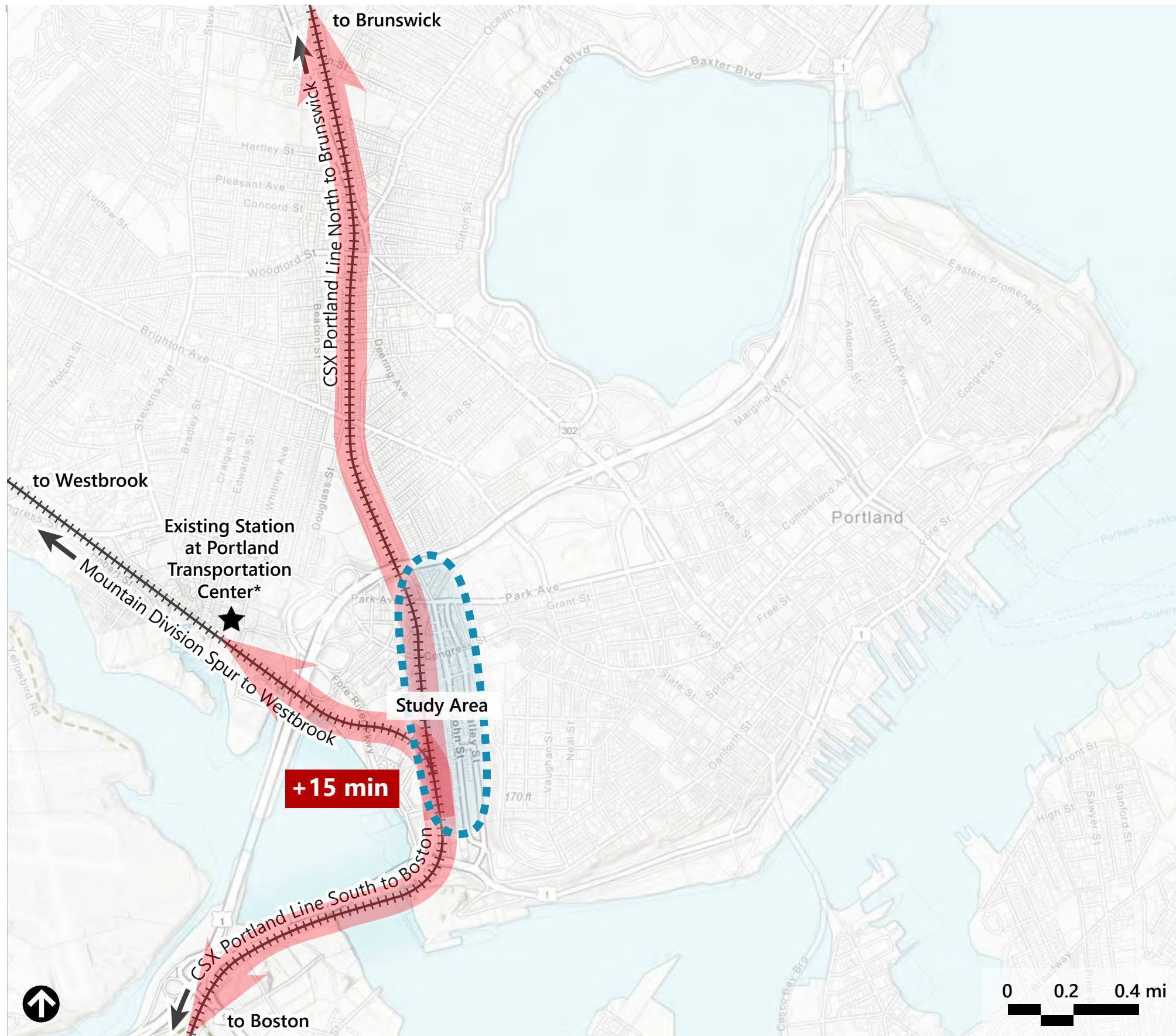
## Current Northbound Downeaster Operation

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



## Constraints of Current Station Location

- 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 less competitive with roadway modes impeding ridership growth and increasing 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 Goals

1. Relocate station to main line location with double tracked section
2. Minimize grade crossing impacts and conflicts between passenger and freight trains
3. Enhance rider experience by reducing passenger travel time
4. Improve reliability of the Downeaster service
5. Provide access to vehicular, pedestrian/bike, and transit connections.
6. Support regional transportation goals, to make transit easier, create frequent connections, and create transit-friendly places
7. Increase regional ridership by providing time competitive service and proximity to demand generators
8. Reduce train movement and noise
9. Support Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) as well as economic development and land use opportunities
10. Maximize ridership on new inbound commuter service from southern Maine into Portland (estimated 2026)
11. Preserve existing connections to Portland Layover Facility (PLF), Portland Transportation Center (PTC) and potential future east/west rail services.



## Project Needs

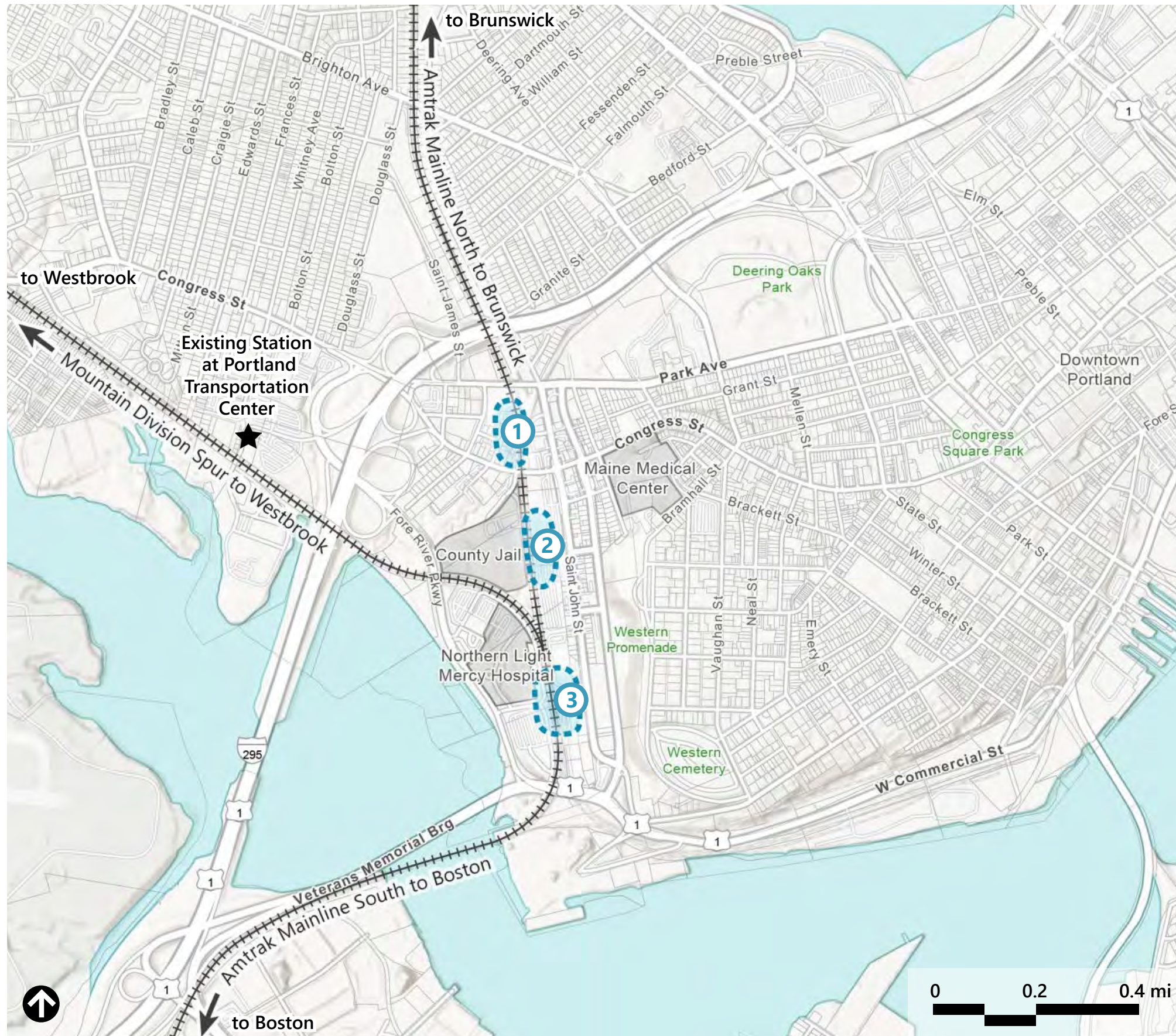
- A Downeaster platform and station facility on the freight mainline double track
- A site with no adverse impact on at-grade crossings
- Two boarding platforms (one on each side of tracks) to maximize schedule flexibility and reliability; passenger trains travelling in opposing directions can board 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
- 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
- Proximity to demand generators

## 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



Rendering of a proposed station in Wells, ME.

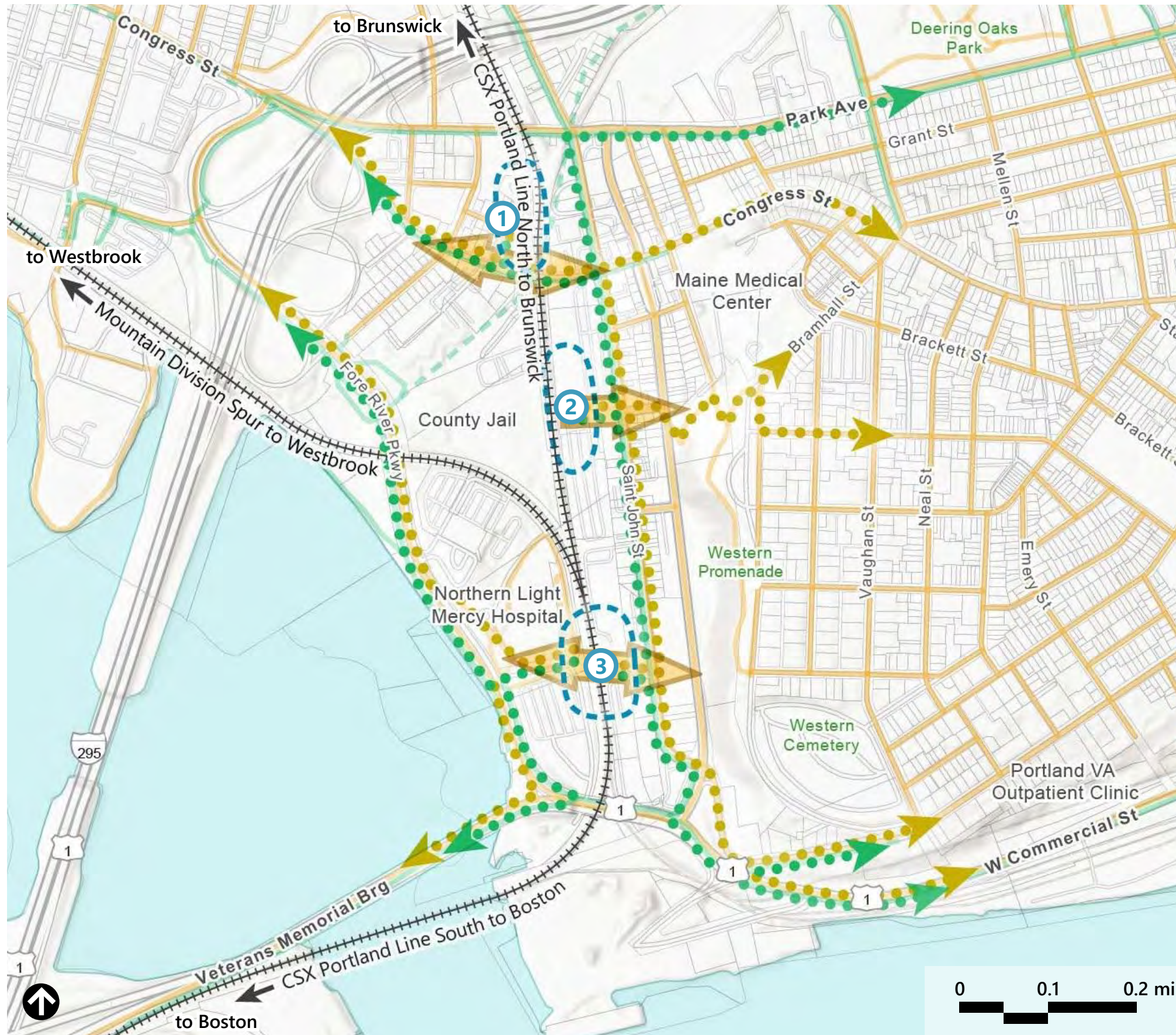


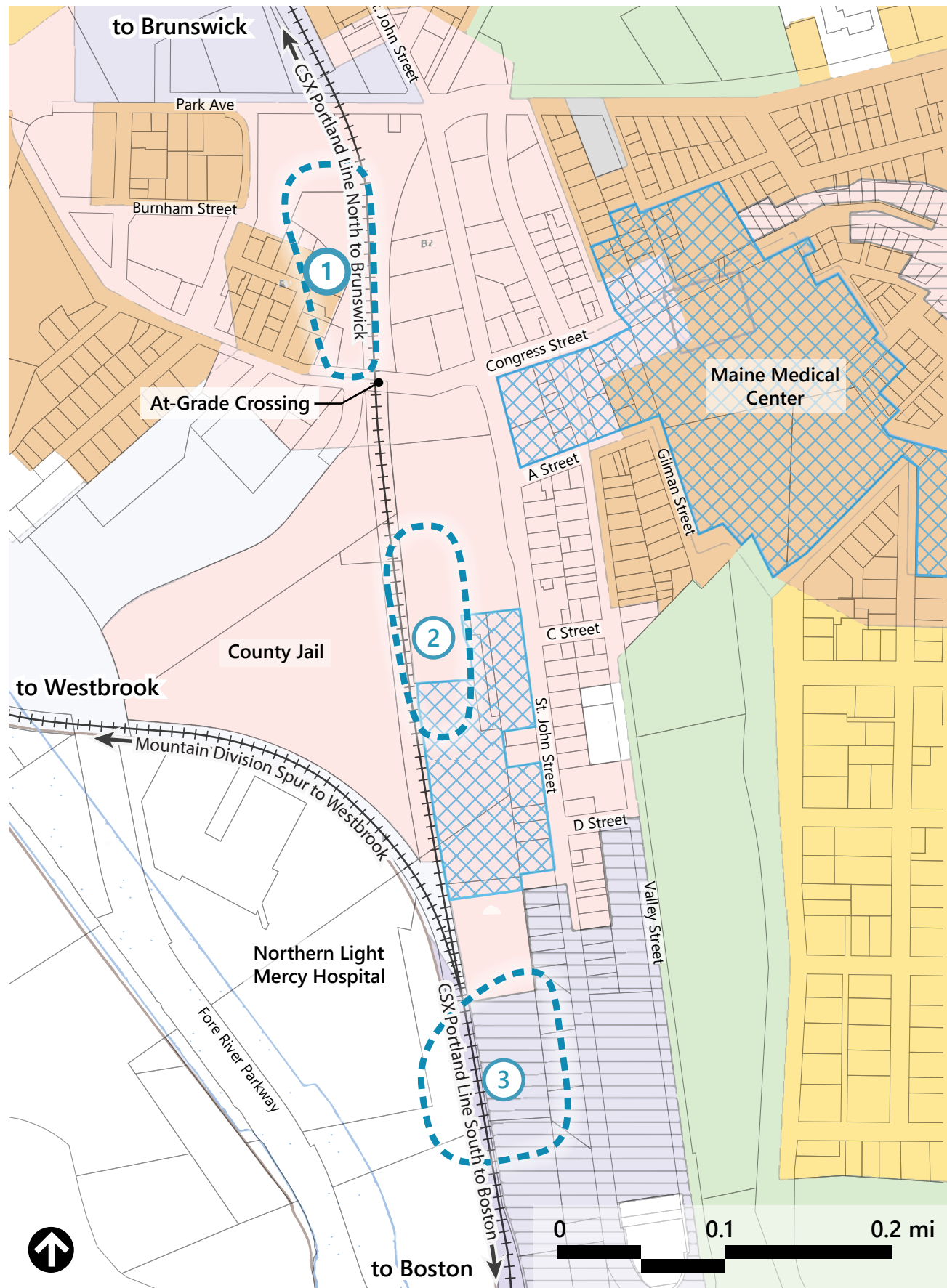
## Portland Train Station - Sites Considered:

- 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

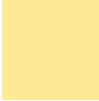





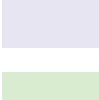


# Bike/Pedestrian Routes East & West

-  Bike Routes
-  Pedestrian Routes





## Zoning

-  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

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:

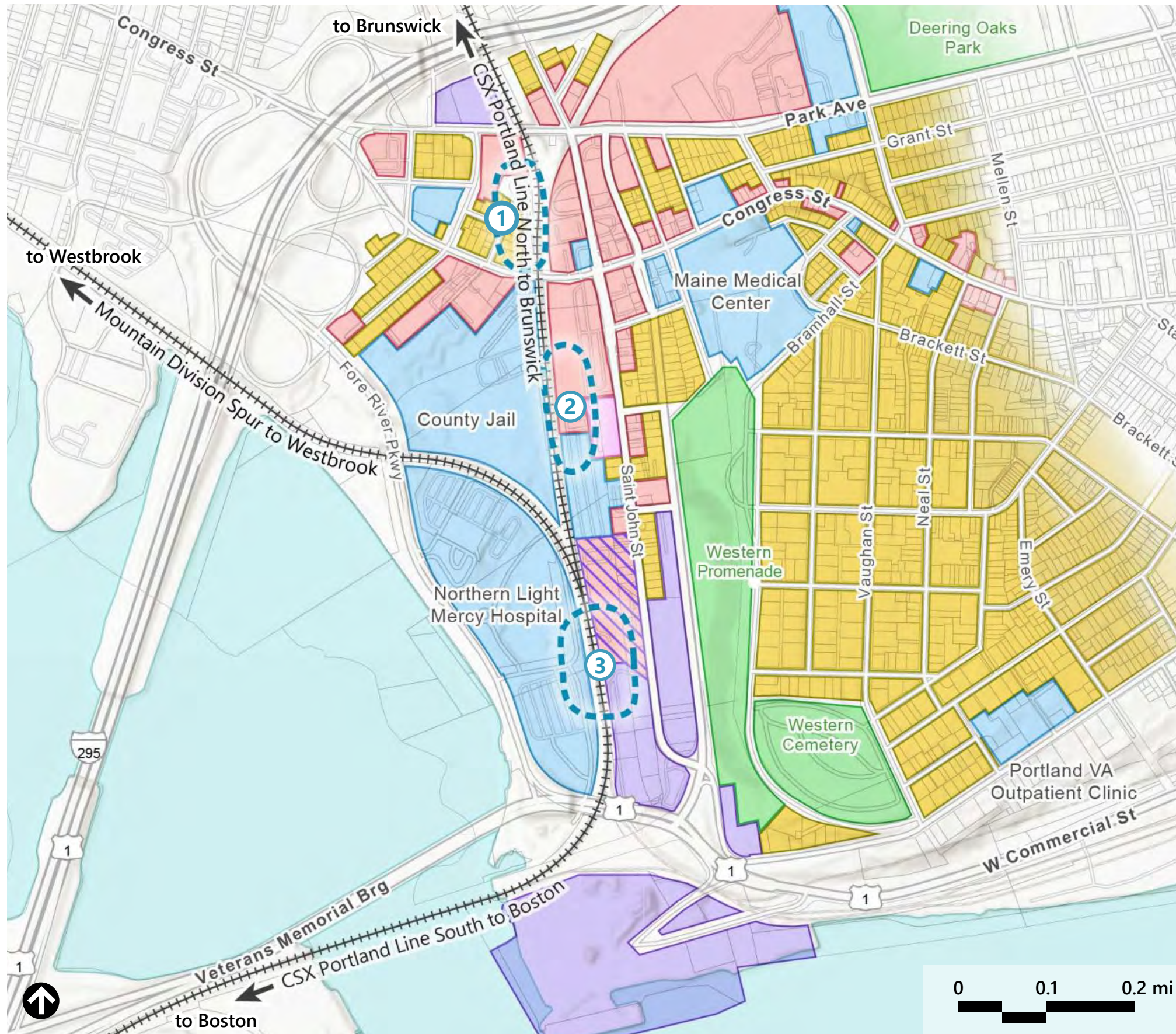
"To provide appropriate locations for the development and operation of community centers offering a **mixture of commercial uses, housing, and services** serving the adjoining neighborhoods and the larger community... The zone should provide locations for moderate to high-density housing in urban neighborhoods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

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**"

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)"

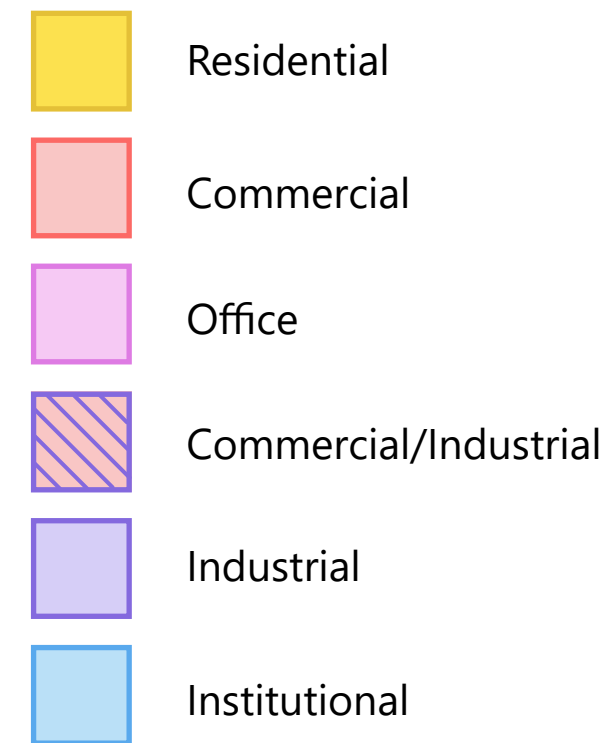


## Local Land Use

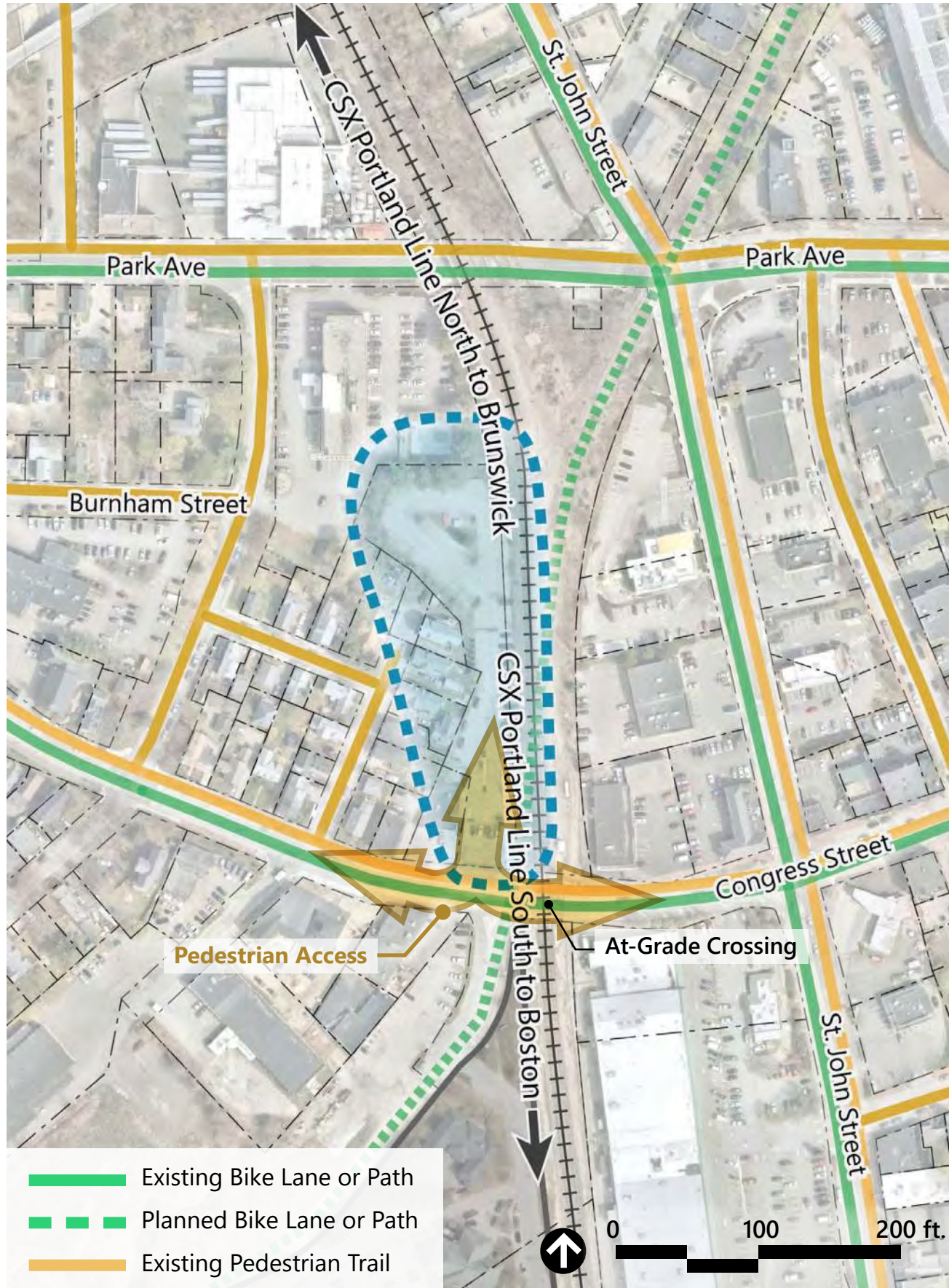
Site 1: Commercial & Residential

Site 2: Commercial, Office & Institutional

Site 3: Commercial/Industrial



# Station Site Comparison: Site 1



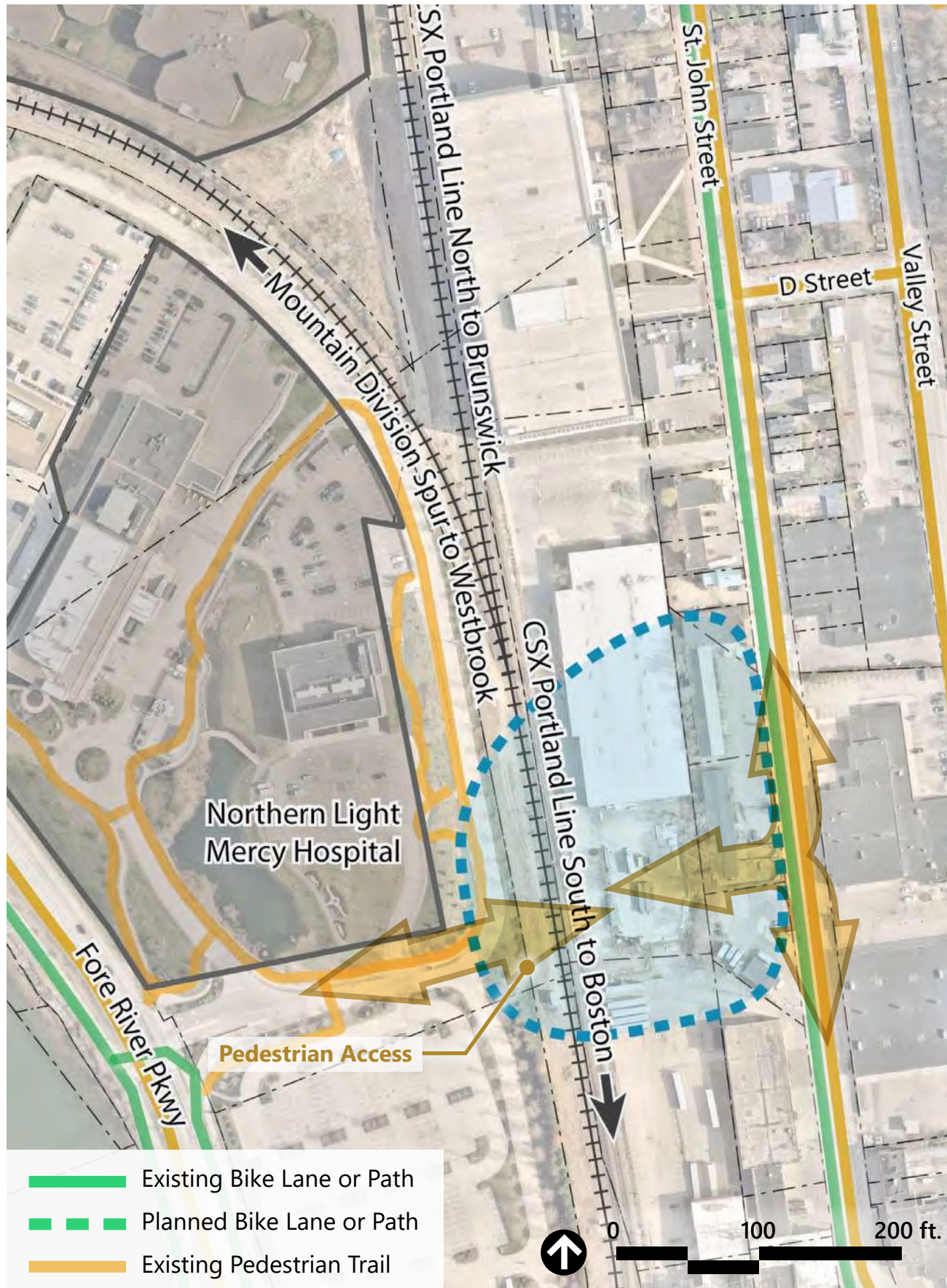
PROJECT NEEDS/GOALS	SITE CHARACTERISTICS
Railroad operations considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proximity to Congress St. grade crossing impedes traffic flow while train is at station, causing congestion at the intersection</li> <li>• Railroad converges to single track at this location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





## Station Site Comparison: Site 2

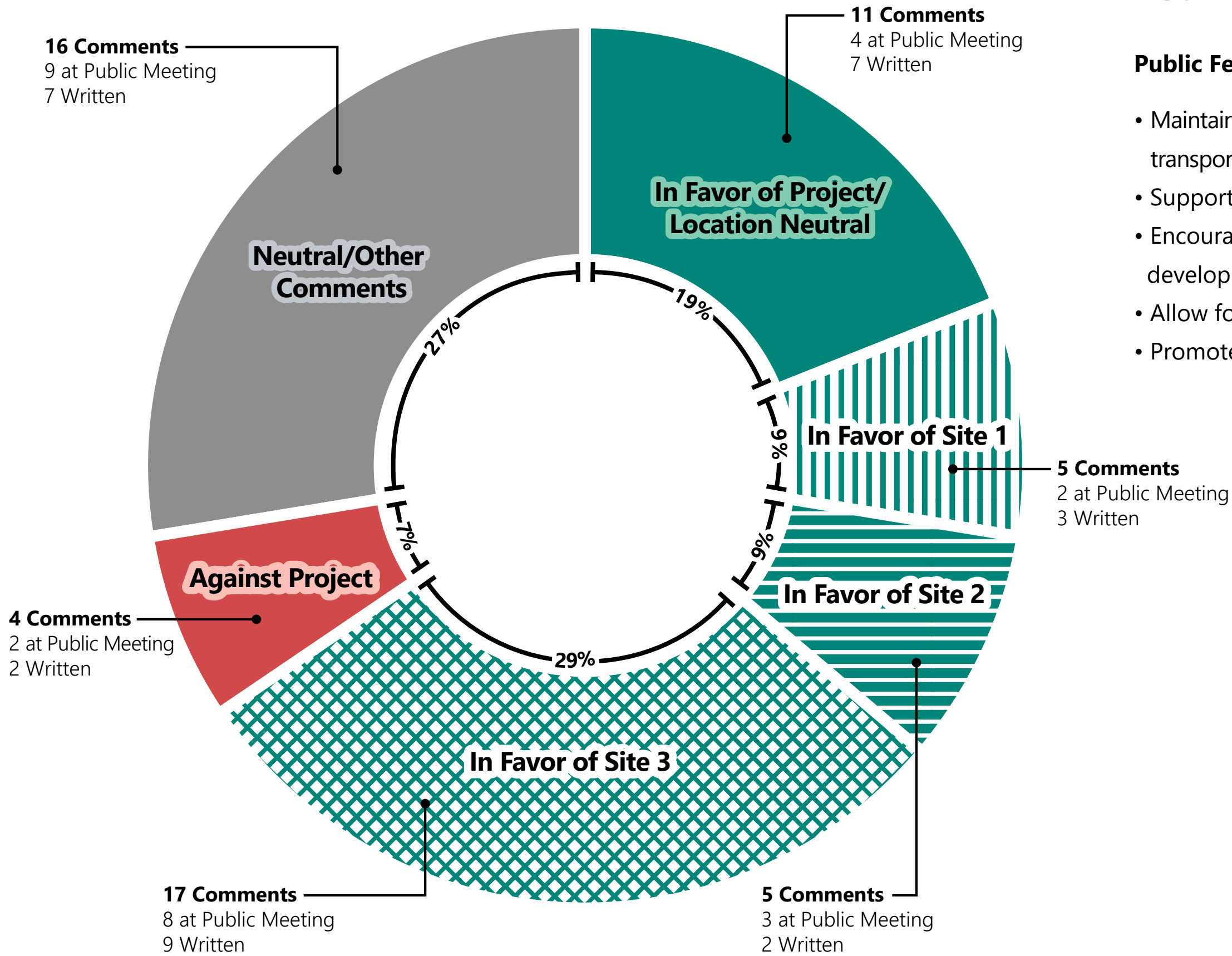
PROJECT NEEDS/GOALS	SITE CHARACTERISTICS
<p>Railroad operations considerations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proximity to Congress St. grade crossing impedes traffic flow while train is at station, causing congestion at the intersection</li> <li>• Less desirable for passenger operations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



## Station Site Comparison: Site 3

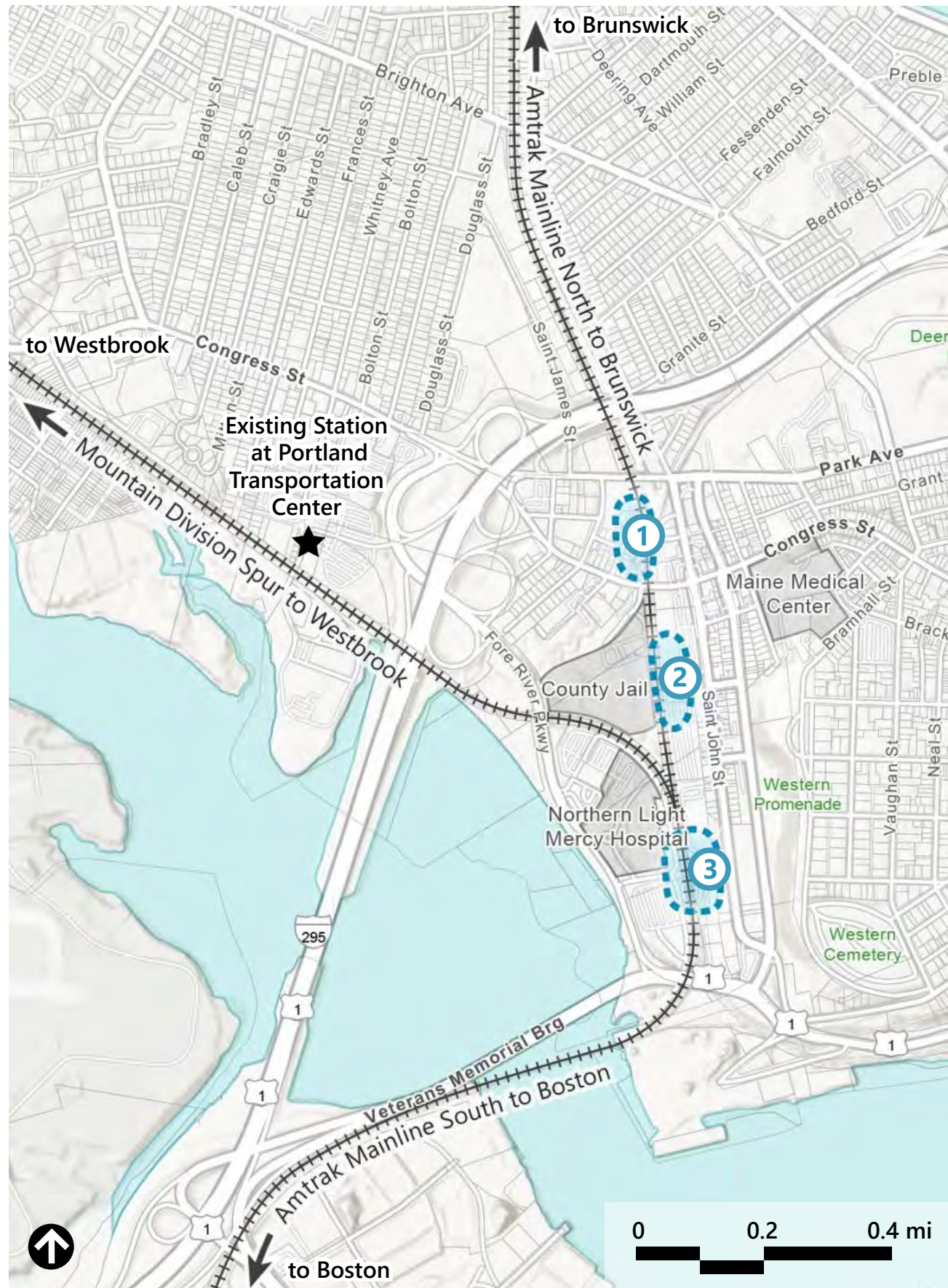
PROJECT NEEDS/GOALS	SITE CHARACTERISTICS
Railroad operations considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No traffic or grade crossing impacts</li> <li>Strongly preferred for passenger operations</li> </ul>
Parking for 105 cars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possible to accommodate needed spaces onsite</li> <li>Property owned by private businesses</li> </ul>
Connectivity: Vehicular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>
Pedestrian/Bike	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct pedestrian access to Northern Light Mercy Hospital campus and Fore River Pkwy. to the west and St. John St. to the east</li> <li>Bike lanes on St. John St.</li> </ul>
Transit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>METRO and BSOOB bus routes at St. John and Fore River Parkway; Maine Med shuttle</li> </ul>
Access to servicing facility (PLF) with minimal train conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct access to PLF without mainline back-up</li> <li>Minimal potential for train conflicts</li> </ul>
Supports additional rail service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can support connecting service from north</li> <li>Supports east/west connections</li> </ul>
Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mix of commercial and light industrial uses</li> <li>Adjacent to commercial/residential mixed use area</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Location provides multi-directional and multi-modal access with minimal traffic impacts or train interference</li> <li>Closest proximity/best access to PTC</li> </ul>

# Summary of Public Input



## Public Feedback/Public Priorities:

- Maintain connections to other forms of public transportation
- Support bicycle and pedestrian connections
- Encourage transit-oriented development/mixed use development
- Allow for connections to future east/west rail service
- Promote safety of new station location



## Summary of Stakeholder Input

### Amtrak Input

- Site 3 is the preferred alternative from a railroad operations standpoint.
- Sites 1 and Site 2 present operational challenges due to their proximity to Congress Street.
- Site 1 and Site 2 limit connections to the Portland Layover Facility.
- Site 3 is likely to require less extensive modifications to existing track and infrastructure than Site 1 or Site 2.

### CSX Input

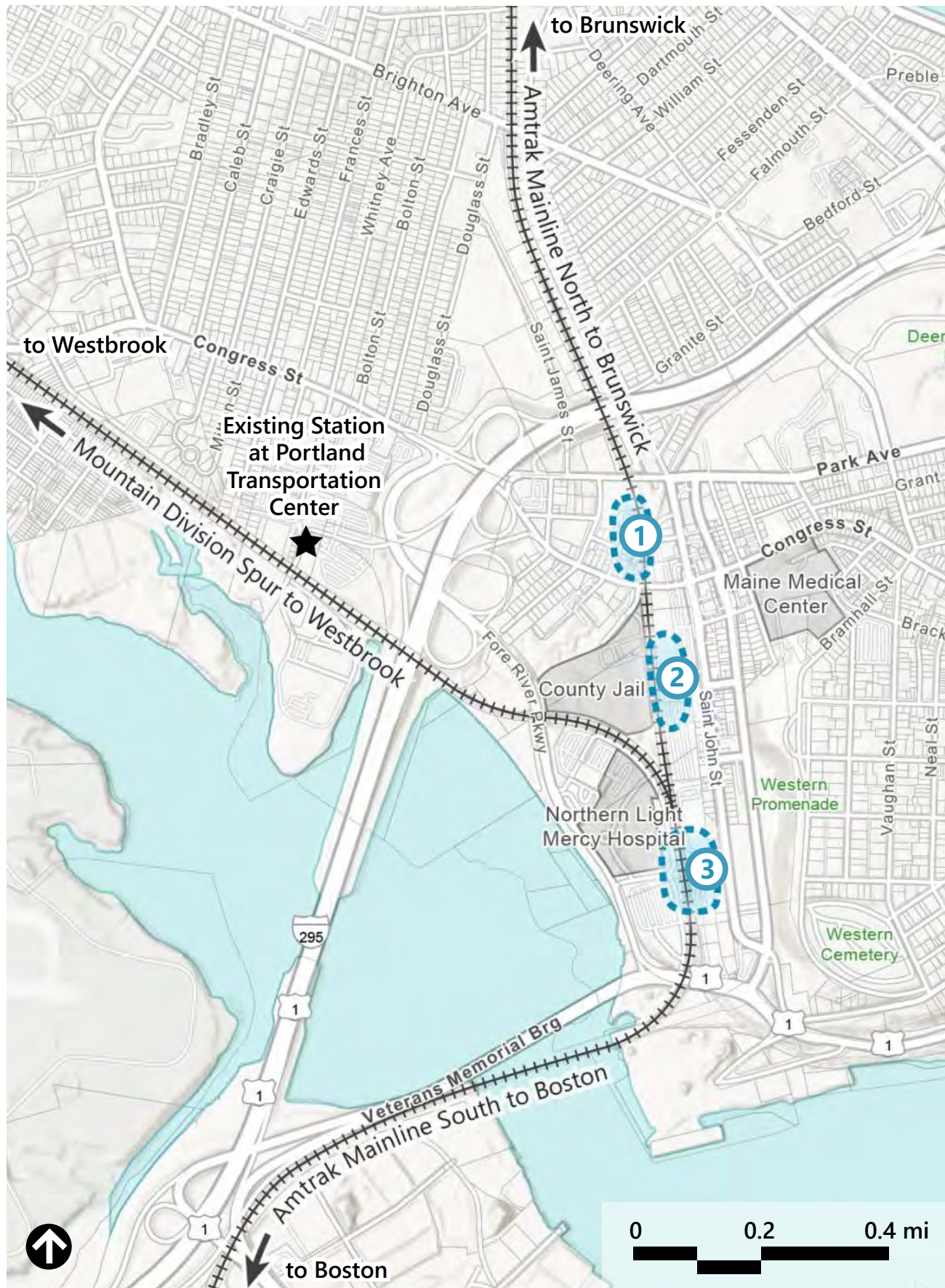
- Site 3 is the preferred location from an operational standpoint.

### MaineHealth

- The proximity of Site 2 to Congress Street and potential for increased railroad gate closure time on this primary ambulance route is concerning.
- Site 2 parking is fully subscribed.
- Use of Site 2 for other long-term purposes would limit Maine Medical Center's ability to expand in the future to accommodate the community's increasing health-care needs and would jeopardize plans to rehabilitate a large, historic structure.
- Site 2 includes travel corridor for MaineHealth shuttles; increased pedestrian traffic through this area raises safety concerns.

### Northern Light Mercy Input

- NL Mercy does not have a preference on the site selection.
- In the event Site 3 is selected, Mercy is willing to work collaboratively to explore options that can be mutually beneficial as long as the integrity of our campus and the safety of our employees and patients are preserved.



## Station Site Comparison

Project Consideration	SITE 1	SITE 2	SITE 3
Railroad Operation Considerations	Does not Meet Project Goals	Does not Meet Project Goals	Meets Project Goals
Parking for 105 Cars	Does not Meet Project Goals	Partially Meets Project Goals	Partially Meets Project Goals
Vehicular Connectivity	Meets Project Goals	Meets Project Goals	Meets Project Goals
Pedestrian/Bike Connectivity	Partially Meets Project Goals	Partially Meets Project Goals	Meets Project Goals
Transit Connectivity	Partially Meets Project Goals	Meets Project Goals	Meets Project Goals
Access to Servicing Facility w/ minimal train conflicts	Does not Meet Project Goals	Does not Meet Project Goals	Meets Project Goals
Supports Additional Rail Service	Does not Meet Project Goals	Does not Meet Project Goals	Meets Project Goals
Land Use	Partially Meets Project Goals	Partially Meets Project Goals	Partially Meets Project Goals

Legend:

Meets Project Goals	Partially Meets Project Goals	Does not Meet Project Goals
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# Conceptual Site 3 Rendering

Site 3 best meets the project goals.

This past June, NNEPRA's Board of Directors passed a resolution directing NNEPRA to pursue Site 3. The board agreed that the site best fulfilled the goals of the project.



## Next Steps

- Begin Preliminary Engineering Design and Estimate for Site 3
- Begin Pre-Environmental Compliance Phase for Site 3
- Seek Federal Funding and Non-Federal Match for Final Design and Construction



## Public Input

- Public input limited to two minutes per person
- Meeting recording and presentation slides will be available on NNEPRA's website (NNEPRA.com) within 2 business days
- A form will be posted on NNEPRA.com for submitting written public input through August 27, 2024

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



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## Appendix C – Zoning Information

## City of Portland Rezoning

During the Portland station relocation planning process, the zones in the project area had summarized purpose statements as follows:

*B2 – "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."*

*R6 – "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."*

*MMC Overlay – "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)."*

*I-Mb – "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."*

In addition to the summarized purpose statements for these zones, there are zone-specific and city-specific "use" allowances and restrictions, and dimensional standards identified within the city's land use code that require careful evaluation during a future design phase. An "Intermodal transportation facility" is an allowed use in the I-Mb zone but restricted in the others. Because this term was not defined in the city's land use code, an interpretation would be required from the city's zoning administrator as to whether this term describes a passenger train station under the code. In other communities, this term often refers to the transfer or exchange of goods and freight between varying modes of transportation. The assumption is that a train station would be an allowable use in any of the above-listed zones under the land use code; however, certain components of the station that are accessory to the principal use, such as parking and access, would require interpretations and site-specific engineering to ensure compliance at each site.

Of the above listed zones, the I-Mb zone is most aligned with accommodating a train station and any associated accessory uses because it includes specific consideration of "transportation related uses" in its purpose statement and has the least restrictive dimensional requirements.

The City of Portland has been in a rezoning process over the past 7 years that both restructures the format of their land use code and evaluates map changes and code language changes in consideration of their comprehensive plan, "Portland's Plan2030". That effort is formally referred to as "ReCode". As of the writing of this report, city staff have presented the final draft "Phase II" ReCode text and map changes to the city's Planning Board and City Council. The Planning Board and City Council have accepted a final draft of ReCode, and that final draft formally takes effect on December 4, 2024.

The new City zoning code and map under ReCode can be found here:

<https://www.recodeportland.me/final-draft-planning-board>.

Under the adopted ReCode, changes to the map areas for the three site alternatives being considered by NNEPRA include the addition of a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) district over Sites 1 and 2, and minor changes and cleanup to the limits of the I-Mb zone at Site 3 to

better align with existing uses and parcel boundaries. The city has also introduced a definition for “Intermodal transportation facility” under Section 3 – Definition as follows:

**Intermodal transportation facility.** A facility where two or more modes of transportation intersect, passengers can transfer between modes, and basic passenger amenities are provided.

The Intermodal transportation facility use continues to be an allowable use in the I-Mb, and is added as an allowable use to the B-2 and TOD zones.