



December 2022 / January 2023

## Statewide Planning's Year in Review

It's been a great year for the RI Division of Statewide Planning! In 2022, we:

- Received unqualified MPO certification from FHWA and the Federal Transit Agency (FTA) after a review of our core planning efforts since 2018 (no deficiencies, five commendations);
- Received FHWA approval of the 2022 RI Interim Update of Freight Forward RI: The Freight and Goods Movement Plan - work continues on a new statewide Truck Parking Study Report and a full update of the RI Freight Commodity Flow and Freight Forecast;
- Completed the Newport Transportation Master Plan, Keep Newport Moving, as partners with the City of Newport;
- Continued participation in the Port of Providence Community Working Group;
- Completed the 2022 Congestion Management Annual Report and updated the data incorporated in the Congestion Management Plan/Process Story Map;
- Continued work on the E-STIP, including a project intake tool with performance-based scoring criteria, a STIP manager to assist in completing STIP amendments and tracking projects, and a public view version of the software;
- Processed six amendments for the 2022-2031 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and completed the annual reporting of projects using federal funding from the STIP to FHWA;
- Substantially completed project mapping for the pool of projects associated with the Long-Range Transportation Plan, Bicycle Mobility Plan, and Transit Master Plan to assist with E-STIP project intake and provide a framework to help track progress moving forward;
- Started the process of contracting for a statewide Complete Streets Plan;
- Partnered with RIDOT to conduct thorough research of bike count data resources that are available to use in upcoming years;
- Started working on a new social equity platform to better target improvement areas in Rhode Island, created a working group, and researched work other RI agencies have done in the past;
- Began work with three East Bay communities on a resiliency plan for a major roadway/evacuation route;
- Created an advisory committee to provide training to municipal planning and



zoning boards and local historic district commissions per RI General Law §45-22-7 to receive training on land use and land use responsibilities, planning, and conducting public meetings;

- Served on multiple Transportation Research Board (TRB) project panels, the American Planning Association's (APA) National Advisory Committee, the Eastern Transportation Coalition Freight Data & Planning Working Group, the National States Geographic Council Parcel & Land Records Working Group, the Board of the RI Chapter of the APA, and the 2022 SNEAPA Conference Committee;
- Continued background research and work on *RI Land Use 2050*;
- Served as a committee member of the of the RI Land Use Commission, tasked with reviewing Rhode Island's land development statutes;
- Monitored proposed 2022 legislation that would impact local, regional, and Statewide planning, scanning a total of 2,511 bills and tracking 208 planning-related bills; of these tracked bills, more than thirty were enacted as laws;
- Continued to serve on many State committees, such as the EC4, the Agricultural Land Preservation Commission, the Historic Preservation & Heritage Commission, the Conservation and Development Council, the Recreation Resources Review Committee, the Rivers Council, the Inter-Agency Food & Nutrition Policy Advisory Council, and the State Conservation Commission;
- Continued work on the Cranston Street Armory re-use effort;
- Continued the existing municipal educational program and conducted seven educational workshops via Zoom for municipal planning, zoning, and other board members, and trained seventy-seven community board members on topics such as conducting public meetings, making land use decisions, transportation and comprehensive planning, and the State Guide Plan;
- Met with thirty RI municipal planning directors to discuss what they were working on and the top issues in their community;
  - (Fun fact: twelve of the thirty-nine municipalities in RI have a different planning director this year than during last year's visits);
- Conducted State Guide Plan consistency reviews for the RIEMA *Disaster Recovery Plan*, the RIDOT *Rhode Island Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Deployment State Plan*, local Comprehensive Plan draft updates and amendments, clean water infrastructure replacement plans, water supply system managements plans and clean water and drinking water SRF applications;
- Developed 2020 Census data visualizations and custom tables for download using the 2020 Decennial Census Redistricting data and continued to develop state and municipal monographs that will also include the forthcoming (May '23) Demographic and Housing Characteristics file;
- Continued our longstanding partnership with the University of Rhode Island's Environmental Data Center to maintain and update the Rhode Island Geographic Information System (RIGIS) consortium data distribution clearinghouse;
- Developed a State agency parcel needs survey to determine agency uses, needs, and common attribute fields needed to support local, regional and Statewide planning with a Statewide digital parcel dataset;
- Provided GIS mapping and data support to other DOA offices and State agency projects, including the Pandemic Recovery Office, RISCA, DCAMM, and Commerce RI;
- Created an Environmental Justice and Select Population Groups online map identified in RI's Transportation Equity Benefit Analysis;
- Completed a Statewide, seamless, vector-formatted geospatial dataset depicting 2020 land use and land cover ground conditions by comparing high resolution 2020 and 2011 leaf-off aerial orthoimagery and employing both automated and manual oversight processes to detect, delineate and photo interpreted changes since 2011;

- Transitioned the RIDSP static website [www.planning.ri.gov](http://www.planning.ri.gov) to the enterprise Content Management System, allowing higher quality digital services and content;
- Continued to work with the Office of Energy Resources to provide technical planning assistance to municipalities on adopting regulations for renewable energy, and authored [a fact sheet on Electric Grid Battery Storage](#) ;
- The Water Resources Board (WRB):
  - Launched a two-year effort to develop a comprehensive property management plan for the 8,400-acre Big River Management Area;
  - Secured a new water source for the Block Island Water Company by purchasing a 6.8-acre parcel for \$1.3 million through the South County Groundwater Protection and Acquisition Program bond funds;
  - Built [a new water database](#) in partnership with the University of Rhode Island and the U.S. Geological Survey;
  - Approved seven Water Supply System Management Plan five-year updates, which are required for the State's largest water suppliers;
  - Produced [an interactive map](#) in partnership with the RI Infrastructure Bank and RIDEM to help identify parcels that might be acquired to help protect the state's drinking water sources;
  - The Rivers Council (an associated function of the Water Resources Board) renewed designations of three-member watershed councils and designated one new council and finalized grants to watershed councils for the completion of educational watershed videos;
- Continued to serve on and advise the Energy Facility Siting Board with five cases continuing or assigned docket numbers.
- Provided RI planners and other stakeholders with planning news, information, grant opportunities, events, and articles via our awesome [Plan RI newsletter](#);
- And much more!

All of us at Statewide Planning wish you a happy, healthy, and safe holiday season!

## APA-RI Awards' Nominations are due today!



It's that time of year again: time to honor all the great planning work accomplished throughout Rhode Island in the past year. But we can't honor what we don't know about! That's why we need YOU to put on your thinking cap and nominate one or more of your favorite local projects, people, or spaces.

This year's award topics are:

- Current Topic Award: Planning For Sustainability & Resilience
- Equity in Planning
- Award for Excellent Plan
- Award for Excellence in Plan Implementation
- Paul Davidoff Award for Social Change
- Dan Varin Memorial Leadership Award
- Student Award

The nominations will be evaluated based on innovation, comprehensiveness, transferability, quality, collaboration/inclusiveness, and implementation.

Awards will be announced at the **APA-RI Awards & Post-Holiday Party on Friday, January 20, 2023** at the Park Theatre in Cranston. Ticket sale information will be posted soon on the APA-RI website: [www.rhodeislandapa.org](http://www.rhodeislandapa.org)

[Click here](#) for criteria and submission forms. Submit nominations to [Bob Ruilli](#) today! [Email Bob](#) if you have any questions regarding the requirements or eligibility.

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## Meredith's Message

I could simply copy and paste much of my message from last month in this space again. Maybe I should switch it up and simply plead - I need help! (Well, we all knew that already, but...) We are, indeed, (still) hiring.

We will be reposting a principal planner soon, along with a Data Analyst I for Water Resources Board. Currently, we have an opening for an [Assistant Chief of Planning](#) - this position will focus on Transportation. I'm going through resumes from the positions advertised last month. The candidate pool is, sadly, shallow.

Despite the job openings and the incredible workload, I almost feel as though we are turning a corner. The Division's role and work is finding some recognition. Although the literal darkest days of the year are ahead, there's something that feels a little bit like hope waiting out there.

Take the vacation days (don't lose them!), take the pictures, have the dinner, take the trip, be present with friends and family, find time to connect and reconnect. We have all been very disconnected the past few years.

We will be holding an off-site staff get together at Buttonwoods Brewery on December 21, from 3:30 to 6:30 (and later, if we have enough interest in fielding a trivia team): please feel free to drop in and say hello, if you have time. Happy Holidays!

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## Upcoming Statewide Planning Meetings

### [State Planning Council](#)

**December 8 - 9AM**

Room 2A, 1 Capitol Hill, Providence

### [RIGIS Executive Committee](#)

**December 15 - 2PM**

William Hall Library Auditorium  
1825 Broad St., Cranston

### [Drought Steering Committee \(WRB\)](#)

**December 13 - 10AM**

Room 2A, 1 Capitol Hill, Providence

### [Water Resources Board](#)

**December 16 - 9 AM**

Rm 300, 235 Promenade, Providence

### PHOTO TRIVIA

Do you know where in Rhode Island  
you can find this building?

See the answer at the bottom of the  
newsletter!

## State Planning Council

**January 12 - 9AM**

Location TBD

## Transportation Advisory Committee

**January 26 - 5:30PM**

Location TBD

## Technical Committee

**February 3 - 9AM**

Room 2A, 1 Capitol Hill, Providence



## Events

*Events may be held in person, virtually, or in a hybrid format.*

**Today! December 1 Planners' Book Club.** *Happy City: Transforming Our Lives Through Urban Design* by Charles Montgomery will be discussed. All are welcome, even if you have not read the book! Time: 5:30PM-7PM at Long Live Beerworks, 40R Sprague Street, Providence.

**December 2 The Next Wave of Abolishing Parking Mandates.** Learn why parking reform is important and lessons from cities who have already deleted this regulation from their zoning code. Time: 2:30PM-3:30PM. Free. 1 CM.

**December 6 Engaging Underserved Populations in Community Tree Management Activities** will help planners and tree wardens communicate the values of trees to diverse communities and improve benefits of their urban forest. Time: 1PM-2PM. Free.

**December 6 Uprooting Racism and Seeding Sovereignty in the Food System.** Leah Penniman is a Black Kreyol farmer, food justice activist, and co-director/farm manager of Soul Fire Farm in NY. This event is online only. Time: 7PM. Free

**December 7 A Better Understanding of Shopping Travel in the US.** Shopping generates multiple essential trips per week, most of which are part of trip chains. Learn about new research to make assessing total shopping travel easier. Time: 12PM. Free.

**December 7 Climate Conversations: Insurance.** Learn how worsening hazards will drive communities, policymakers, and the insurance industry itself to reduce community vulnerability over coming decades. Time: 3PM-4:30PM. Free.

**December 8 2022 Planning Law Update.** Attorneys who specialize in local government law will give updates on recent developments in planning and zoning law across the country. Time: 1PM-2:30PM. Free. 1.5CM, 1 L.

**December 9 Examining Modal Shifts Between Automobiles, Transit, and Uber Trips and Quantifying Their Impacts** This webinar addresses effects of transit and Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) operations on transportation network performance. Time: 12PM. Free.

**December 12 Expanding Microtransit Services and Improving the Rider Experience.** Explore how to improve the microtransit rider experience, learn ways to

transform mobility, and all about public-private partnerships. Time: 1PM-2:30PM. Free. 1.5 CM.

**December 13 [The 21st Century Food System We Deserve](#).** Richard Salvador of the Union of Concerned Scientists will discuss moving the food system into sustainable and equitable practices. Time: 7PM. Location: URI's Edwards Auditorium, 64 Upper College Rd, Kingston, and online. Free.

**December 13 [Trends in Transit Ridership: Analysis, Causes, and Responses. Presenters](#)** will discuss past trends, identify contributing factors, and provide actionable steps to combat ridership decline in post-pandemic travel. Time: 1PM-2:30PM. Free. 1.5 CM.

**December 14 [Carbon Offset Opportunities to Plant and Protect Urban Forests](#).** With climate change, urban forests face more threats from insects, diseases, and weather; learn how urban forestry is adapting to climate change. Time: 1PM-2:15PM. Free.

**December 14 [The Key to Building Great Communities: Listening for Understanding](#)** The author of Roadways for People discusses how to make pave the way towards a more inclusive transportation scene. Time: 2PM-3PM. Free.

**December 15 [RI EC4 Meeting](#)** Meeting of the RI Executive Climate Change Coordinating Committee (EC4). Time: 1PM-2:30PM. Location: RIDEM Room 300, 235 Promenade Street, Providence.

**December 15 [Scenario Planning: Forecasting the Impact of CAV's and other Uncertainties](#).** Hear about changing travel patterns, increases in teleworking, micromobility, and shared mobility, which bring new challenges and options to passenger and freight travel alike. Time: 2PM-3:30PM. Fee: \$79. 1.5 CM.

**December 15 [U.S. Bicycle Route System: Success Stories from Across the Network](#)** Time: 1PM-2PM. Free.

**December 15 [Wayfinding by Individuals with Functional Disability](#),** Update on developing standards in mobile wayfinding as it relates to wayfinding and routing of visually-impaired, blind, and deaf/blind pedestrians. Time: 1PM-2:30PM. Free. 1.5 CM

**December 16 [A Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Primer for Planners](#).** This session will use the recently-published APA Climate Mitigation and Adaptation PAS Report to provide the basics of climate science and adaptation. Time: 1PM-2:30PM. Free. 1.5 CM.

**January 7 [TransportationCamp](#)** is an annual unconference where the participants create the program and lead sessions. Connect with advocates and experts to find ways to make transportation work better for all. Time: 9:30AM-4PM. Fee: \$10-\$50.

**January 18 [2023 Rhode Island Food System Summit](#).** URI hosts the annual virtual Summit, with discussions on critical food systems issues and working together to build a more resilient, sustainable, and equitable food system. Time: 9AM-12PM.

**January 19 [Effective Communication with Elected Officials: Making the Case for Trails](#).** Hear about successful strategies to engage lawmakers in securing public funding and policy that support the development of trail networks. Time: 1PM-2:30PM. Free.

**January 19 [Leveraging Value Capture with Federal Innovative Finance Programs](#).** Learn about a toolbox of strategies used by public agencies to recover a portion of the value generated by public infrastructure investments. Time: 1PM-3PM. Free.

**January 20 [APA-RI Awards and Post-Holiday Party](#)** Location: The Park Theatre, 848 Park Ave., Cranston. Time: 6PM-9PM. Fee: \$35 for members, \$45 for non-members. Come celebrate our award winners (and the new year) with the RI planner community!

**January 26 [Introduction to Marketing for Non-Marketers and Small Agencies.](#)** Webinar on how to best leverage your limited time to focus on promotional tactics that help you reach your goals for marketing parks and trails. Time: 1PM-2PM. Free.

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## Grants & Deadlines

**December 1 [APA-RI Awards' nominations due.](#)** See article, above, for details.

**December 1 [Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements \(CRISI\)](#)** Program helps improve railroad safety, congestion at passenger and freight rail chokepoints, and new or existing intercity passenger rail transportation corridors.

**December 2 [RI Emissions Reduction Plan](#)** public comments due on strategies to reduce Rhode Island's traffic and emissions. Comments are accepted through the [RI EC4 portal](#).

**December 15 [Tree City, Tree Campus, and Tree Line USA](#)** deadline for community urban forest resources.

**December 16 [Deadline for RI Natural Resources Conservation Service programs:](#)** Conservation Easements, Agricultural Management, Conservation Stewardship, Environmental Quality Incentives, and Conservation Incentive Contracts.

**December 31 [Walmart Local Community Grants](#)** range from a minimum of \$250 to a maximum of \$5,000 and can be used for eight categories of funding.

**January 6 [USDA Farm to School Grant program](#)** implements programs that improve access to local foods in the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and Summer Food Service Program.

**January 9 [Affordable Connectivity Outreach Grant Program](#)** provides funding from the FCC for resources needed to increase awareness of and participation in the ACP among households most in need of affordable connectivity.

**January 11 [Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant Program](#)** leverages public and private dollars to support locally-driven strategies that address struggling neighborhoods with severely distressed public housing and/or HUD-assisted housing.

**January 11 [National Endowment for the Humanities' Public Humanities Projects](#)** program supports projects that reach diverse public audiences, are accessible to the general public, and employ appealing interpretive formats.

**January 12 [National Endowment for the Humanities' Cultural and Community Resilience](#)** program supports community-based efforts to mitigate climate change and COVID-19 pandemic impacts, and prioritizes projects from disadvantaged communities.

**January 17 [National Endowment for the Humanities' Climate Smart Program](#)** offers federal matching funds for activities such as energy audits and risk assessments, to create a climate smart plan.

**January 17 [van Beuren Charitable Foundation](#)** funds proposals to achieve measurable

results in four priority areas, prioritizing Aquidneck Island and Newport County; proposals from outside the region that benefit target communities are welcome.

**January 20 [RIHPHC Certified Local Government \(CLG\) Grant](#)** will support projects in the following categories: Identification and Evaluation of Historic Resources; Planning, Resource-Specific, and Public Education Activities; and Statewide Projects.

**January 23 [FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities \(BRIC\)](#)** program will support states, local communities, tribes and territories as they undertake hazard mitigation projects, reducing the risks they face from disasters and natural hazards.

**January 23 [FEMA Flood Mitigation Assistance](#)** program will help to reduce or eliminate the risk of repetitive flood damage to buildings and structures insured under the National Flood Insurance Program.

**January 31 [HOPE VI Main Street Program](#)** provides grants to communities smaller than 50,000 people to help renovate historic, central business district, or “Main Street” areas by replacing unused commercial space with affordable housing units.

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## Articles of Interest

[RI Middle school buyer envisions luxury project](#)

[New England's forests are an underused tool for climate change](#)

[New research shows how zoning discourages racial integration](#)

[Providence River dredging will benefit two communities](#)

[RI Wiccan church zoning decision reversed](#)

[Regulator could suspend wind project cable route application](#)

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## RI Statewide Planning Staff

Click [here](#) for staff contact information.

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## Photo Trivia Answer

**BRISTOL**

Seven Oaks/Augustus O. Bourn House (1873)

Photo: [buildingsofnewengland.com](http://buildingsofnewengland.com)



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