



October 2021

## October is National Community Planning Month!

"The goal of planning is to maximize the health, safety, and economic well-being of all people living in our communities. This involves thinking about how we can move around our community, how we can attract and retain thriving businesses, where we want to live, and opportunities for recreation. *Planning helps create communities of lasting value.*" – [American Planning Association](#).

## Planning Tools: Streetmix

What would you do if you could redesign a street in your community? Would you add a multi-use path? A bus rapid transit lane? More trees? Widen the sidewalks? Or use the space to create a designated rideshare drop-off/pick-up lane? Without clear diagrams or special software, it's difficult to clearly convey your vision so people can see what's possible.



Streetmix is a free, open-source, interactive tool that can be used to design streets and street networks. It creates cross sections of a street that is completely customizable by the user, allowing anyone to build up a street with various lanes and elements, including lighting, trees, bike lanes, transit lanes, utility poles, and signage (see graphic, below). It gives planners a better way to show others what an existing right of way could be used for and what it may look like. The tool can serve as a starting point for conversations about reconfiguring an existing roadway as a complete street or for showing the community impacts of road diets and/or street reconstruction. Users can also share the street networks they create with others on social media.

The city of Bogotá, Columbia, used Streetmix as the basis for a comprehensive participatory street design process to reconfigure one of its busiest streets, Avenida Séptima, which is fourteen miles long. Because of the pandemic, it was not possible to hold in-person community meetings or outreach; the City asked its residents for Streetmix proposals to redesign the avenue without reallocating existing street space, while giving priority to more sustainable modes of transportation. (In Bogota, transportation accounts for nearly half of all greenhouse gas emissions in the City). Over two weeks in October 2020, nearly seven thousand design proposals from six thousand users were submitted from all strata of residents, with ninety-one percent of the proposals deemed valid. Results showed that participants overwhelmingly preferred increasing capacity through prioritizing active modes of transportation and public transit over adding more capacity for vehicles. Work on the redesign plans is set to begin in 2022.

## Help Lower Flood Insurance Costs in Your Community

Many Rhode Island small businesses are in areas vulnerable to the effects of extreme weather and are also subject to unexpected temporary shutdowns associated with wind damage, power outages, infrastructure/transportation damage, and winter storms.

The National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System (CRS) recognizes community efforts by reducing flood insurance premiums for the community's property owners. To participate in the CRS, a community can choose to undertake some or all of the eighteen public information and floodplain management activities described in the CRS Coordinator's Manual. The CRS assigns credit points for each activity.

Based on the total number of points a community earns, the CRS assigns one of ten classes to it: the discount on flood insurance premiums is based on the class. CRS discounts on flood insurance premiums range from 5% to 45% for property owners and provide an incentive for new flood protection activities that can help save lives and property in the event of a flood. Participation in the CRS is voluntary.

The Division of Statewide Planning has produced free guides that identify risk reduction actions tailored to the needs of Rhode Island's small business community, by industry, that can add points under the CRS. The guides include recommendations for ways that small businesses can minimize losses, maintain continuity of operations, and shorten the length of closures. We also have small business magnets printed with tips for preparing for an extreme weather event that provide a reminder for business owners to prepare for (and take control) in the event of a disaster. Both the guides and the magnets can be placed in a public location for people to pick up, such as a kiosk in a town hall lobby or in a permitting office.

If your municipality (enrolled in the CRS program or not) wants to receive free guides and/or magnets, please contact [Roberta.Groch@doa.ri.gov](mailto:Roberta.Groch@doa.ri.gov).



## Congratulations to South Kingstown



The Town of South Kingstown recently received State approval of its Comprehensive Plan update. The overriding goal of the plan is to protect and harness the Town's rich historic heritage, "which includes vibrant villages, natural landscapes, magnificent coastlines and topographical diversity, while addressing the challenges brought on by growth, climate change, and technological advances."

South Kingstown "will continue its legacy as a welcoming, diverse, vibrant, and sustainable community, in which the tradition of high-quality village development balances seamlessly with the enduring value of the community's rich historic, cultural, and natural resources." Statewide Planning staff looks forward to helping the Town achieve their vision!

View the South Kingstown *Comprehensive Plan* on our website at [www.planning.ri.gov](http://www.planning.ri.gov).

## Brady's Bits

October has arrived, bringing with it cooler nights and shorter days. The experts are saying that last year's drought combined with prolonged heat this year will lead to less spectacular, but prolonged, fall foliage. Where we're not worried about water levels this year, we are worried about Atlantic storms. Apparently, we are about to run out of names. Honestly, if it's not one thing, it's another.

There are many pressures and concerns on all of our minds: work, home, community. Family, friends, society. Balance. Sure, people can tell you to find it, you can see examples of what it might look like, but it's never that easy. We are all juggling madly these days, in person and remote meetings, risk versus reward for social engagements. What's the common thread, between climate and work/life balance, risk assessment, adaptation? It's resilience.

During National Community Planning Month, it's worth some time to consider the concept of resilience. Resilience certainly has a range of definitions. My favorite, so far, is from the Stockholm Resilience Center: "Resilience is the capacity of a system, be it an individual, a forest, a city or an economy, to deal with change and continue to develop. It is about how humans and nature can use shocks and disturbances like a financial crisis or climate change to spur renewal and innovative thinking."

Resilience is also a personal trait: something we learn and develop, although some people seem more naturally resilient than others. So I'm sharing [an article from that other APA](#) - the American Psychological Association - about building resilience. I don't know about you, but these days, I need all the tools I can get! Key tips: build your networks (connect), take care of yourself (prioritize your health and wellness), and help others.

What's your definition of resilience? What are you doing to build resilience, in your community and in yourself? I'll be collecting answers and will share some additional thoughts in next month's note.

## Upcoming Statewide Planning Meetings

These meetings will be held in person. Please check the links for cancellations.

### [State Planning Council](#)

**October 14 - 9AM**

Room 2A, 1 Capitol Hill, Providence

### [Transportation Advisory Committee](#)

**October 28- 5:30PM**

Room 2A, 1 Capitol Hill, Providence

### [Technical Committee](#)

**November 5 - 9AM**

Room 2A, 1 Capitol Hill, Providence

All meetings are open to the public and are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Do you know where in Rhode Island this building is located?

See the answer at the bottom of the newsletter!



## Events

*Events may be held in person or virtually.*

**October 1 [Market to Metacom- Adaptation and Economic Development in Warren, RI.](#)** Planners' Roundtable presentation about climate resiliency and TOD. Time: 3PM-4:15PM. Location: East Providence's Weaver Public Library, 41 Grove Avenue, EP. Free. 1.25 CM.

**October 1 [Turning Streets Into Housing.](#)** Subdivision ordinances typically set standards for street width in excess of what is economically optimal: these standards are one contributor to high housing costs, which exacerbate the housing affordability crisis. Learn how this width could be used to create new units. Time: 2:30PM. Free. 1 CM.

**October 4 [Race, Power & Preservation.](#)** In preservation and planning, subjective ideas have been used as tools to reinforce power structures and racial bias in our built environment. Join the Providence Preservation Society and national leaders for a discussion of the terms historic preservation must reconsider to affect positive, systemic change. Time: 4PM. Free.

**October 5 [Coasts in Crisis: Risk and Resilience in New England.](#)** Panel includes the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council, the Mystic River Watershed Association, the URI Coastal Resources Center, and The Public's Radio. Part of the URI "Sustaining Our Shores" series. Time: 7PM. Free. Location: online and in person at Edwards Hall, 64 Upper College Rd., Kingston.

**October 5 [Introduction to Environmental Justice: Theory, Practice, and Real-World Consequences.](#)** This webinar is an introduction to environmental justice concepts and a panel discussing the role of environmental justice in business operations, development opportunities, land use, and permitting. Time: 9AM-12PM. Fee: \$0-\$50.

**October 5 [Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative \(RGGI\) Listening Session](#)** The RGGI is a cooperative effort among Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states to cap and reduce power sector CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. This virtual session will solicit public input on the objectives, topics, and analyses for the updated Third Program Review. Time: 10AM-12PM. Free.

**October 6 [The Future of Work: What Today's Trends Tell Us About Tomorrow's Commute](#)**. Explore current commute patterns and consider what could happen as more workplaces reopen. A panel will discuss what these pandemic-related changes could mean for transit investments, land use and housing trends, and worker flexibility. Time: 3:30PM-4:30PM. Free.

**October 7 [Evaluating the Accuracy of Smartphone Based Travel Behavior Data](#)** Research that used passively-collected multimodal travel behavior data was evaluated in real-world travel settings. The Texas A&M Transportation Institute and Univ. of S. Florida will present preliminary research. Time: 12PM-1PM. Free.

**October 7, 14, & 21 [Health, Housing, Energy, Equity: Exploring the Intersections](#)** Clean energy can reduce the burden of high energy costs and improve health outcomes for low-income residents. Learn about available programs, their strengths and flaws, and how to make them work. Time: 8:30AM-10AM. Free.

**October 7 & 28 [URI Landscape Architecture Lecture Series](#)** The 29th Annual Landscape Architecture Lecture Series returns to an in-person format on Thursdays at 7PM in the Ernest Mario Auditorium, Room 170 in Avedesian Hall, 7 Greenhouse Road, Kingston. Free and open to the public; face coverings are required.

- **10/7** Emily Humphrey: "Uncovering the Multifaceted History of the Toronto Port Lands," and Ramón Ibarlucea: "Historical Fiction: Gathering Inspiration from Context and Site History"
- **10/28** Thäisa Way: "Race and Gender in the Emergence of Landscape Architecture"

**October 8 [Transportation Implications from COVID-19: Food Delivery & Public Transport](#)**. Virtual webinar from the U.S.DOT's University Transportation Center (UTC), which fuels the innovative work of top transportation researchers. Time: 12PM. Free.

**October 12 [Changing Landscaping Practices: Implications for Landowners and Local Officials](#)**. Learn about the benefits and challenges of lawn conversion and native landscaping; local regulatory items for consideration; and experiences and lessons learned from regulators and experts. Time: 10AM-12PM. Free.

**October 12 [CRMC Freshwater Wetland Rules Public Hearing](#)** The CRMC proposes to adopt new rules to strengthen the protection of freshwater wetlands and to provide clarity, predictability and streamlining of the regulatory framework. Time: 6PM. Location: Room 2A, Department of Administration, 1 Capitol Hill, Providence.

**October 13 [Creating Equitable Infrastructure](#)**. Transportation systems are vital to connect communities to each other and to economic opportunities, but they can also cut off people and communities. Learn how a data platform for the built environment is working with cities to create more equitable infrastructure. Time: 2PM-3PM. Free.

**October 13-15 [NNECAPA 2021: Virtual/Reality- Envisioning a New Normal](#)**. This year's annual conference of the Northern New England Chapter of the American Planning Association will take place in person at the Burlington Hilton in Vermont. Fee: \$205-\$290. Student and retiree rates are available.

**October 14 [Solar Energy Development: A Status Report for the New England Region](#)**



Webinar will include siting and permitting, policy incentives to direct development, working with utilities, the evolution of state solar policy over time, and lessons learned. Time: 9AM-12PM. Fee: \$25-\$100.

**October 17-20 [Northeast Arc Users Group Fall Conference](#)** In addition to the in-person NEARC Conference in New Haven, there are also remote-only registration options this year. Fee: \$225-\$525 (student and educator rates are available).

**October 18 [The Impact of Form-Based Codes](#)**. Join the authors and experts from the Form-Based Codes Institute and Smart Growth America for a deep dive and Q&A into the findings of the first-of-its-kind report, *Zoned In: Economic Benefits & Shared Prosperity with Form-Based Codes*. Time: 2PM-3:15PM. Free.

**October 19 [Infinity Fish: Economics and the Future of Fish and Fisheries](#)** Speaker: Rashid Sumaila, University of British Columbia Professor, Interdisciplinary Ocean and Fisheries Economics. Part of the URI "Saving Our Shores" series. Location: online and in person at Edwards Hall, 64 Upper College Rd., Kingston, RI. Time: 7PM. Free.

**October 19 [Reimagining Resiliency: Housing in Downtowns](#)**. Communities are struggling to provide affordable housing to their residents, even with downtown buildings that have vacant upper floors. Find a win-win solution to help transform underutilized spaces into housing for this (and future) generations. Time: 1PM-2PM. Free.

**October 20 [Racism and the Economy: Focus on the Wealth Divide](#)**. This virtual event focuses on how racialized barriers to wealth accumulation deny families and communities long-term economic mobility and financial resiliency; bold strategies to reverse this will be discussed. Time: 12PM-2:30PM. Free.

**October 25 [Using Food as Economic Development](#)**. This webinar provides an in-depth look at how local food and food systems can help drive economic development; learn how planners and policymakers can promote economic development by supporting local food initiatives. Time: 12PM-1PM. Free. 1 CM.

**October 26 & 27 [Stormwater Innovation Expo 2021](#)** Join the RI Green Infrastructure Coalition and APA-RI for a two-day opportunity to discover new and innovative products being used in green stormwater infrastructure across Rhode Island and the industry. This event has both in-person and virtual events. Time: 1PM-5PM. Fee: \$25.

**October 27 & 28 [Rolling With It: Empowering Shared Micromobility Conference](#)** The virtual conference features a variety of topics and speakers, keynote presentations, breakout sessions on topics ranging from transit integration to climate impact, a virtual exhibitor booth, and networking opportunities. Fee: \$125-\$195.

**October 28 [Designing and Implementing Smart Cities](#)** This TRB webinar will describe the steps taken and lessons learned from various Smart City deployments, identifying obstacles to Smart Cities and highlighting how to collect and analyze urban data. Time: 1PM-2:30. Fee: \$0-\$95. 1.5 CM.

**October 28 & 29 [SNEAPA 2021 @A Distance](#)** Attend SNEAPA from the comfort of your home, office, town hall, or anywhere! View high-quality sessions, attend network events, and interact with vendors and sponsors. Fee: \$65-\$95 (student, retiree and unemployed rates are available).

**Anytime [AARP's Livable Communities Initiative](#)** offers on-demand courses on urban planning topics like accessory dwelling units, transportation and older adults, rural livability, home sharing, universal access, and more. Free.

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## Grant Opportunities

**October 1** [RISCA Arts Access Grant](#) deadline. Provides program support (up to \$3,000) to new ventures or occasional arts programs executed by non-profit organizations, or groups fiscally sponsored by a non-profit organization.

**October 7** [National Archives](#) deadline for the following grant programs: [Public Engagement with Historical Records](#), [Access to Historical Records: Archival Projects](#), and [Publishing Historical Records in Documentary Editions](#).

**October 12** [STEM Talent Challenge Program](#) The U.S. EDA seeks to develop or expand regional workforce capacity and support high-growth, high-wage entrepreneurial ventures and industries that have a high likelihood of accelerating economic competitiveness and job creation. A 1:1 funding match is required.

**October 19** [U.S. EDA's Build Back Better Regional Challenge](#) (Phase 1). This program is designed to assist communities nationwide with up to \$500,000 in technical assistance funds to develop and support projects as a way to grow a regional growth cluster and accelerate economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

**October 29** [RIDEM Open Space Grant](#) deadline. This grant program provides up to fifty percent matching funds to municipalities, land trusts, and non-profit conservation land organizations to preserve open space. Awardees are also eligible for reimbursement of up to fifty percent of appraisal, title, and survey costs.

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## Articles of Interest

[Council wants action on measures to slow growth](#)

[Demand for facilities for this sport on Aquidneck Island is soaring](#)

[Proposed ordinance takes aim at short-term rental problems](#)

[Town council tables rule mandating recorded meetings](#)

[Council adopts new zoning for 'seaside village'](#)

[Six-acre parcel purchased for train station parking](#)

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## RI Statewide Planning Staff

*Most staff members are working remotely and can best be reached via email.  
Click on staff names for email address.*

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*Water Resources Board staff:*

Kathleen Crawley Acting General Manager

Timothy Stagnitta Programming Services  
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**PHOTO TRIVIA ANSWER:**

**WESTERLY**

Train Station (1872)

Photo: Wikipedia