



**February 2022**

## Update on COVID Traffic Impacts

Since March of 2020, transportation officials have observed unprecedented changes to traffic patterns across the United States including here in Rhode Island. The Division of Statewide Planning (RIDSP), utilizing INRIX data, examined these travel and traffic trends via the University of Maryland's CATT Lab's COVID-19 Impact Analysis Platform. This platform provides relevant data pertinent to the function of nationwide transportation impact statistics from the beginning of 2020 until April of 2021.



Pre-COVID, Rhode Island witnessed approximately eighteen percent of residents remaining at home (i.e. no trips with a non-home trip end more than one mile away from home). While this number peaked at around thirty-five percent in 2020, it has normalized to about twenty-two percent in 2021. This shift has been due largely to residents either working from home when possible or losing their jobs due to the pandemic. On a related note: work trips per person have decreased from 0.75 trips/day to 0.54 trips/day.

In spite of the observed drop in vehicle trips, miles traveled per person has steadily...

[Read more](#)

## MPO Recertification

On February 8th through 10th, the Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning (RIDSP) will participate (virtually) in the required four-year Transportation Management Area (TMA) re-certification review process. The RIDSP is the legally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the entire state and is responsible for transportation



planning and programming of federal transportation funding for Rhode Island. Officials from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) review the MPO program for compliance with Federal law in areas such as civil rights and public participation, regional coordination, freight planning, long-range transportation planning, and performance-based planning and programming.

This review provides feedback to staff (who also serve as MPO staff) and to the State Planning Council, the governing body of the MPO. Associate Director Meredith Brady says, "The review outcome will be a recertification report that will spell out actions to be addressed within a specific time frame, as well as recommendations for the planning process in Rhode Island for the next four years." The staff of the RIDSP will use this report to implement plans, policies, and legislation to meet all the requirements of federal law and to improve the overall planning process going forward.

If you would like to learn more about the recertification, you can attend the February 10 State Planning Council meeting, the February 17 Transportation Advisory Committee meeting, (see "Statewide Planning Meetings," below) or contact Assistant Chief Linsey Callaghan at [Linsey.Callaghan@doa.ri.gov](mailto:Linsey.Callaghan@doa.ri.gov).

## Most Popular Newsletter Articles of 2021

In case you missed them the first time, here were the top ten articles of 2021 (based on your clicks):

1. [Craft brewery, apartments planned at mill](#)
2. [Park named in memory of planner David Westcott](#)
3. [Some Rhode Island Flood Insurance rates about to skyrocket](#)
4. [State remands proposal to Planning Board](#)
5. [Amendments target affordable housing in mills, existing homes](#)
6. [Planning Board votes to prohibit wind turbines](#)
7. [This RI neighborhood will soon be underwater forever. Can it be saved?](#)
8. [Six-acre parcel purchased for train station parking](#)
9. [Residents in one nearby town reject plan for mixed rent project](#)
10. [Board plans interim step to limit overdevelopment](#)

## Meredith's Musings

As usual, there's a lot on my mind. Almost literally: a lot, as in a parcel, caused a great scramble for information. I've been helping to engage in a mapping exercise, looking at state-owned property and whether we can build a better (figurative) mousetrap with the data we have on hand. Sometimes, it's all about whether the lines are, or aren't, drawn.

What else is on my mind, you ask? In no particular order: snow and the forecast for heavy rain (structural strength and drainage), the price of home heating oil (clean energy development), safety and security (food insecurity, need for (more) affordable housing, COVID precautions), needing to be two places at once (the rise of telecommuting and the need for virtual public meetings), and the impending recertification.

Frankly, my head is full of all of the great things we've accomplished in the last four

years, and all of the issues we need to tackle moving forward. This recertification will look not only at the ways in which we check the federally-mandated boxes, but also the ways we innovate and address emerging issues. It will allow us to introduce our MPO to staff from FHWA and FTA at a regional level and from other parts of the country.

If you have interacted with staff at the Division in any capacity over the last few years, particularly when it comes to the topics of transportation, resilience, data (including Census), or public participation, I would ask you a favor: please come to one of the opportunities for [virtual public comment](#) regarding our transportation planning process and help us to provide a balanced and complete picture of our complex and varied planning work.

## Upcoming Statewide Planning Meetings

Meetings may be held in person, virtually or in a hybrid format, and are open to the public.

### [Technical Committee](#)

**February 4 - 9AM**

Room 2A, 1 Capitol Hill, Providence

### [State Planning Council](#)

**February 10 - 9AM**

Room 2A, 1 Capitol Hill, Providence

### [Transportation Advisory Committee](#)

**February 17 - 5:30PM**

Room 2A, 1 Capitol Hill, Providence

Please check the links for cancellations.

### PHOTO TRIVIA

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



See the answer at the bottom of the newsletter!

## Events

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

**February 2** [Climate Change Planning for Vulnerable Neighborhoods](#). Attendees will learn about opportunities for and challenges to implementing climate adaptation and climate mitigation measures for local and regional governments. Time: 12PM-1PM. Free. 1 CM.

**February 2** [Identity-Conscious Leading](#). Examine learned biases and explore how biases show up in our work and how to begin dismantling problematic biases. Time: 10AM-11AM. Fee: \$75-\$250 for three-part series.

**February 3** [From Complete Streets to Complete Networks: A Data-Driven, Performance-Based, Multimodal Planning Tool](#). Planners will share a GIS tool for network analysis and for analyzing the multimodal performance of individual streets to evolve the practice of complete streets planning and design. Time: 1PM-2:30PM. Free. 1.5 CM.

**February 3 [Improving Diversity and Inclusion Programs in Public Transportation.](#)** Overview of current DEI efforts by U.S. public transportation agencies and discussion of a diversity toolkit that can be adapted to fit any transit agency. Time: 1PM-2:30PM. Free. 1.5 CM.

**February 4 [Reckoning with Induced Vehicle Travel.](#)** Research shows that expanding road capacity leads to more driving, or "induced travel." This presentation will introduce an induced travel calculator and discuss how transportation impact analysis is changing. Time: 2:30PM-3:30PM. Free. 1 CM.

**February 4 [Responding to Climate Change.](#)** Presentation of a planning framework for using green infrastructure to build community resilience to climate change and highlight changing conditions and design considerations for better preparing our communities. Time: 1PM-2:30PM. Free. 1.5 CM.

**February 8 [Stormwater Tree Trench Design Options Guide Training.](#)** This training uses real-world examples, site conditions and scenarios to explain best practices for using the *Stormwater Tree Trench Guide* when planning a green infrastructure project. Time: 9AM-10AM. Free.

**February 9 [Methods and Public Health Impacts of Community-Based Urban Forestry Efforts.](#)** Webinar about the community-engaged urban greening efforts and the extensive outreach efforts that informed Philadelphia's ten-year strategic plan for equitable growth of the urban forest. Time: 1PM-2:15PM. Free.

**February 9 [RI Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council \(EC4\) Meeting](#)** The Council incorporates consideration of climate change impacts into the powers and duties of all state agencies. Open to the public remotely. Time: 10:30AM-12PM.

**February 10 [Embracing the Unknown: Strategic Transportation Planning in the Pandemic Age.](#)** Presenters will identify how agencies can plan strategically while facing challenges from the pandemic and how to create a culture of strategic planning within an agency. Time: 2PM-3:30PM. Fee: \$0-\$100. 1.5 CM.

**February 11 [Building Multi-Racial Movements for Equity & Justice in the New England Food System and Beyond.](#)** Hear how to advance racial equity and wellbeing in challenging times, opportunities to advance equitable belonging, and making changes across food, farming, and fishing sectors. Time: 10AM-2:30PM. Free.

**February 11 [Ninth Annual Offshore Wind Conference: Commercial-Scale Offshore Wind Farm to Cable is Here.](#)** Learn why New England is in the position to reap social, economic, and environmental benefits from commercial-scale offshore wind energy. Time: 9AM-12:30PM. Fee: \$25-\$120.

**February 15 [Is Transit-Oriented Development Affordable for Low and Moderate Income Households?](#)** Reid Ewing, Professor at the University of Utah, will discuss whether TOD- style development capitalizes on increased accessibility by demanding higher rents than comparable developments. Time: 1PM-2PM. Free. 1 CM.

**February 16 [Is Your Community Climate Resilient? Bylaws and Best Practices.](#)** Learn about a Bylaw Review Tool that can help you give your community's land use regulations a tune-up to ensure they support cost-effective best practices and how to identify priorities for local action. Time: 12PM-1:30PM. Free.

**February 16 [Transportation Data Webinar: Video-Image Processing Technology for](#)**

**Bikes and Pedestrians.** Learn about the results of a county's efforts to determine the accuracy of detection systems on distinguishing bicyclists from other roadway users. Time: 5PM-6PM. Free. 1 CM.

**February 17 [Future-focused Economic Development in Rural America.](#)** This Center on Rural Innovation webinar will discuss how technology is changing rural economies and how local leaders are responding. Time: 2PM-3:30PM. Free.

**February 18 [Climate Science & Planning - The Basics.](#)** What do planners need to know about climate science? Learn about changing climate conditions and their impact on current planning practice. Time: 1PM-2:30PM. Free. 1.5 CM.

**February 18 [Visionary Policy: Universal Human Rights Legislation in Support of Food & Forest Systems.](#)** Join Food Solutions New England to learn how a collective, just, and networked policy approach can help our region achieve a shared food vision. Time: 10AM-2:30PM. Free.

**February 22-24 [The Blue Innovation Symposium](#)** is New England's largest technology conference for connecting the marine technology industry, featuring representatives from the U.S. and beyond. Location: Wyndham Newport Hotel, Middletown, RI. Fee: \$45-\$85.

**February 23 [Transportation in an Aging Society: The Future is Now.](#)** This webinar will identify past, present, and future initiatives to ensure easier mobility for an aging society, the current mobility landscape, and solutions about how to improve it. Time: 1PM-2:30PM. Fee: \$0-\$100. 1.5 CM.

**February 25 [Climate Science & Planning – Intermediate Roundtable.](#)** What are planners doing in the U.S. to incorporate climate considerations into planning? Learn planning tools and techniques for changing climate conditions. Time: 1PM-2:30PM. Free. 1.5 CM.

**March 1, 8, 15 & 22 [How to Create Successful Markets](#)** This Project for Public Spaces training is for planners, policymakers, and advocates to learn the essentials for a public market that is economically sustainable and creates inclusive public places. Time: 10AM-12PM. Fee: \$375-\$500.

**Anytime [Equitable TOD Webinar Series](#)** has free webinars about equitable transit-oriented development (eTOD) topics like parking requirements, community ownership of affordable housing, new transportation technology, and more.

## Grants

**February 3 [AmeriCorps Seniors' American Rescue Senior Demonstration Program](#)** focuses on communities reopening after the pandemic and engaging adults age 55+ to address one or more focus areas: Disaster Services, Economic Opportunity, Education, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures, and Veteran & Military Families.

**February 8 [Historic Preservation Fund - Underrepresented Community Grants](#)** deadline. Funds surveys and inventories of historic properties associated with communities underrepresented in the National Register, as well as the development of nominations to the National Register for specific sites.

**February 10 [Grants for Arts Projects](#)** deadline. This National Endowment for the Arts program supports public engagement with, and access to, various forms of art across the

nation, the creation of art, and the integration of the arts into community life.

**February 10 [Newport County Fund](#)** deadline. Grants range from \$1,000 to \$10,000 and are awarded where for strategic assistance to eligible organizations to serve one or more of the communities in Newport County.

**February 15 [Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant Program](#)** deadline. Program supports strategies to address struggling neighborhoods with distressed public or HUD-assisted housing through a comprehensive neighborhood transformation.

**February 22 [Landmarks of American History and Culture](#)** program supports residential, virtual, and combined format projects that situate the study of topics and themes in K-12 humanities within sites, areas, or regions of historic and cultural significance.

**February 22 [Rural eConnectivity Program \(ReConnect\)](#)**. Program provides loans, grants, and loan/grant combinations to facilitate broadband deployment in rural areas; the program will fuel long-term economic development and opportunities in rural America.

**February 25 [The NAWCA U.S. Standard Grants Program](#)** supports projects that involve long-term protection, restoration, and/or enhancement of wetlands and associated uplands habitats for the benefit of all wetlands-associated migratory birds.

**February 28 [Rural Business Development Grant](#)** will provide technical assistance and training for small rural businesses (less than 50 new workers and less than \$1 million in gross revenue) that benefit rural areas or towns outside the urbanized periphery of any city with a population of 50,000 or more.

## Articles of Interest

[The pandemic supercharged sprawl](#)

[Historic Providence building to be redeveloped into apartments](#)

[How can government help Black and Brown people overcome challenges of starting and growing a business?](#)

[Survey: 52% of state, local public workers considering leaving jobs](#)

[Rare cannabis products are now being produced, distributed out of new R.I. facility](#)

[Planning Board approves plan for another mystery warehouse](#)

## RI Statewide Planning Staff

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

## Photo Trivia Answer

# **WARWICK**

## Hopelands

(1686, 1793, & 1885)

Rocky Hill School campus

Photo: Wikipedia