

Element 423: Rhode Island Five Year Strategic Housing Plan: 2006-2010 Five Thousand in Five Years

Introduction

State Guide Plan Element 423, Rhode Island Five Year Strategic Housing Plan: 2006-2010, was approved by the State Planning Council on June 8, 2006. The plan was a statutory mandate of The Comprehensive Housing Production and Rehabilitation Act of 2004 (R.I.G.L. 42-11-10 (d) and 42-128-8.1 (c)). The law required the Housing Resources Commission, in conjunction with the statewide planning program, to develop a five year strategic plan for housing, that would be adopted as an element of the state guide plan, and which would include quantified goals, measurable steps toward the accomplishment of goals, implementation activities, and standards for the production and/or rehabilitation of housing to meet the needs of Rhode Islanders.

The element defines the housing need and establishes strategies and action steps for implementation. The Plan has five Guiding Principles.

- **Preserve Assets:** Preserve the character of Rhode Island's communities, open space and natural resources by promoting compact development in growth centers, towns and villages.
- **Minimize Costs:** Address the escalating cost of housing by reducing regulatory barriers and increasing density, where appropriate, and maximizing the use of existing infrastructure.
- **Promote Economic Development:** Support the workforce by providing housing at all price points for workers. This includes developing new housing as well as preserving existing housing resources.
- **Encourage Diversity:** Encourage the development of economically and racially diverse and accessible communities to provide geographic opportunity to households at all income levels.
- **Target Populations:** Focus the strategic plan and the state's resources for the next five years on safe, healthy, and affordable housing for families, small households, the homeless, and the disabled based on population projections.

A broad range of specific strategies to address the housing needs of Rhode Island's population, including low and moderate income residents, homeowners, renters, homeless persons, persons with disabilities, and students are incorporated. These include:

- Implementation of legislative mandate that the 29 towns that do not have 10% affordable housing are required to have an Affordable Housing Plan and steps toward implementation;

- Provision of state funding for affordable housing, specifically through a bond issue and continuation of funding for the Neighborhood Opportunities Program;
- A permanent source of funding for housing production;
- State historic tax credits targeted for affordable housing;
- Increased density as recommended in Land Use-2025;
- Mixed use development, accessory apartments, workforce housing, inclusionary zoning;
- Reduction of barriers to affordable housing;
- Preservation of existing affordable units;
- Addressing the needs of special populations including those who are homeless; have disabilities; and the frail elderly
- Implementation of the lead hazard mitigation goal of total elimination;
- On campus housing for students to reduce displacement of families and low income households from rental housing;
- Reduce housing cost burdens through energy efficiency.

The key strategies for Rhode Island's Five Year Housing Plan can be summarized as: increased funding, support for local planning efforts, removal of regulatory barriers at the state and local level, and building at higher densities where there is infrastructure to support growth. Additionally, the Rhode Island Five Year Strategic Housing Plan must be coordinated with other closely related statewide initiatives including:

- Rhode Island's State Land Use Policies and Plan through Rhode Island Statewide Planning;
- Statewide Affordable Housing Financing through the Housing Resources Commission and Rhode Island Housing;
- Statewide Smart Growth Initiatives and the Rhode Island Housing and Conservation Trust Fund through Grow Smart Rhode Island; and
- Rhode Island Community Housing Land Trust through the Housing Network of Rhode Island.

The states five year goal is the development of 5,000 new affordable housing units and preservation of existing affordable units.