

Year-End Wrap Up

Although 2020 was not the year any of us expected (who knew?), it was a good year for the RI Division of Statewide Planning. Here are some highlights:

- Adopted (pending) the *Long Range Transportation Plan*, the *Bicycle Mobility Plan*, and the *Transit Master Plan*;
- Completed the first data driven Congestion Management Process Plan;
- Processed seven STIP Revisions (two Minor Amendments and five Administrative Adjustments);
- Continued to hold meetings of the RI State Planning Council, Transportation Advisory Committee, Technical Committee, RIGIS Executive Committee, Freight Advisory Committee, and other groups, with a rapid switch to new technology through Zoom, Teams, and other platforms;
- Staffed the RI Complete Count Committee for the 2020 RI Census;
- Developed an online Census mapping tool and provided daily data updates;
- Assisted in staffing the Governor's Mobility Innovation Working Group and participated in the consultant selection for the group as well as the meetings of the group itself;
- Continued work towards an electronic State Transportation Improvement Program ("e-STIP"), in cooperation with RIDOT and RIPTA and through contracts with PMG and ESRI;
- In conjunction with the work on the e-STIP, continued to partner with RIDOT to develop a project intake tool;
- Began work on *RI Land Use 2050*, including surveys and aerial photography;
- Completed the *Bike/Walk PWT/CF* bicycle and pedestrian plan for the Cities of Pawtucket and Central Falls and started work on a Transportation Master Plan for the City of Newport as part of our Municipal Technical Assistance Program;
- Kicked off the Five-Year Update for the *State of Rhode Island Freight and Goods Movement Plan*, including a statewide Truck Parking Study;
- Ran a successful "Freight and Land Use Training" series with assistance from the FHWA Resource Center;
- Continued to support the ongoing Port of Providence community engagement process, grant applications and planning projects;
- Worked with the City of Providence and EPA Region 1 to complete a *Port of Providence Truck Count and Assessment Study*;

2020 needs to just
pull over and let me
out ... I'll walk

- Continued supporting and attending meetings of the Broad Street Regeneration Initiative in Central Falls, Cumberland and Pawtucket;
- Performed a statewide Truck Travel Origin-Destination analysis using recently-purchased RITIS PDA User Suite and associated INRIX data;
- Presented a "Transportation Planning and Natural-Hazard Resilience" seminar with the FHWA Resource Center (see "Events," below);
- Continued working on the the Cranston Street Armory re-use effort with the RI Department of Capitol Assets Management and Maintenance (DCAMM);
- Drafted a "Parking and Commuting Plan for the Capitol Hill Campus" and associated parking policies with DCAMM;
- Helped pilot a program that offered free RIPTA bus passes to State workers at the Capitol Hill Campus to reduce the number of single-occupancy vehicle commutes;
- Reviewed and commented on municipal Harbor Management Plans, community Comprehensive Plans, and draft State Guide Plans;
- Continued to digitize aerial photographs and other records;
- Water Resources Board (WRB) moved from space in Warwick to shared space with the Division, including moving records from DOA to the Foundry;
- Hired a new staff person, Tim Stagnitta, Programming Services Officer (WRB);
- Hired a new Chief Implementation Aide, Maria Mignanelli, who shares time between WRB and Division responsibilities (see below);
- Approved three Water System and Supply Management Plans and began the review of several others (WRB);
- Continued to manage the Big River Management Area (BRMA), 8,400 acres in West Greenwich and Coventry, in partnership with DCAMM and DEM, including developing plans for the demolition of vacant residential properties and framing a land use planning effort for BRMA (WRB);
- Partnered with staff from neighboring metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) in Mass. and Conn. on data sharing, project reviews, and training information;
- Hosted a socially-distanced municipal freight field trip to the Port of Galilee;
- Presented at (and attended) virtual conferences and trainings;
- Increased outreach to municipal planners at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic through a workshop on the legal implications of virtual meetings (with APA-RI) and Planner Coffee Hours;
- In the pre-pandemic months, worked to try and develop legislation establishing a legislative task force to review Rhode Island's land development statutes, in partnership with a range of stakeholders;
- Continued our annual RI Planning Speaker Series, including an upcoming presentation on December 18 at 11AM (see "Events," below);
- Helped to lead the first-ever virtual Planners' Institute to train local board members in the basics of good land use decision-making;
- Provided planners and other stakeholders with current planning news, grant opportunities, and events via our awesome *Plan RI* newsletter;
- And much more!

We look forward to continuing our work with you in 2021. Happy holidays!

National Freight Plan Webinar

The Division of Statewide Planning will continue our Transportation Speaker Series with a presentation and questions-and-answers from the U.S. DOT's Volpe Center on their recently completed *National Freight Strategic*

Plan on Friday, December 18 from 11:00AM-12PM.

The *National Freight Strategic Plan* defines the U.S. DOT's vision and goals for the nation's multimodal freight system and defines strategies to achieve those goals. The Plan was developed through a multi-agency effort involving extensive consultation with freight stakeholders in both the public and private sectors. The U.S. DOT will use this Plan to guide national freight policy, programs, initiatives, and investments. Learn how the Plan will be used to inform State freight plans and identify freight data and research needs.



For webinar login information, please contact Roberta.Groch@doa.ri.gov. For more information on freight in RI, contact Joshua.ONeill@doa.ri.gov.

Employee Spotlight



Maria Mignanelli began working as the Chief Implementation Aide for the Division of Planning and the Water Resources Board in March 2020. She provides support to the Division and the Board for teleworking functions, the U.S. Census effort, remote filings, minutes and the overall organization of files and records.

Maria came from Ocean State Jobbers, Inc. as their Leasing Administrator, managing tenant relations for over three hundred tenants and the legal administration of documentation related to property management. Prior to this, she had twenty-five years of legal administrative experience, working at several local law firms and as a corporate paralegal on trial preparation and legal filings, legal research, and client relations.

In her spare time, Maria is completing a degree in Business Administration at CCRI. She loves the beach, skiing, horseback riding, Zumba dancing and enjoying life with her daughter Arianna, her husband John, and their adopted Chihuahua, Charlie. She also creates beautiful candy/dessert tables! Contact Maria at Maria.Mignanelli@doa.ri.gov.

Brady's Brief Bulletin

I promise, I will keep things short. (I'm sure you're all heaving a sigh of relief!) Although my column was inadvertently left out last month, I want to make sure we stay in touch. Better yet, this column offers me the perfect opportunity to thank my amazing staff.

With very little notice and minimal intermittent practice, all twenty staff of the Division of Statewide Planning transitioned to a mostly virtual workplace beginning in the middle of March. They went from being able to utilize office supplies and check with their supervisor in person to e-mails, texts, phone calls, Zoom, Teams, and other virtual tools in the blink of an eye. We have retained a limited in-office presence, although we have never had more than six in the office on any given day since March, and now we're back to 2-3 staff, max.

Although there are still occasionally delays, difficulty in hearing the "tone" of someone's e-mail or text, technical difficulties, and other hiccups along the way, the staff of the

Division has been a shining example of adaptability, willingness to pitch in and help out, creativity, dedication, and perseverance. I want to thank them ALL from the bottom of my heart. I could not have asked for a better team of competent, compassionate, curious, community-oriented individuals willing to take on challenges and follow my lead as we feel our way through these, yes, unprecedented times.

There have been joys (Benny Bergantino and his wife welcomed a son in October) and losses in our small family of planners. There has been added stress, some shortened commutes, changing practices and policies, and a sense of isolation. Who would have thought that we'd miss the long walk to the facilities or the longer walk to the parking lot? Despite all this, as I set out to arrange a distanced thank-you luncheon (deliveries to home offices) for staff in December, they have asked me to instead donate what I would have spent to help a family or families in need.

The world needs good people. I am grateful for the good people who work for the Division. I couldn't do this without you, and I wouldn't want to lose my amazing team. Happy Holidays to all of you: take care of yourselves and those you love.

PHOTO TRIVIA

Do you know where in RI this building is located?

See the answer at the bottom of the newsletter!



Upcoming Meetings

Please check the links to see if a meeting has been canceled or changed.

[Technical Committee](#)

December 4 - 9AM via Zoom

[State Planning Council](#)

December 10 - 9AM via Zoom

[Transportation Advisory Committee](#)

January 21 - 5:00PM via Zoom

All meetings are open to the public.
Please click on the links to find out how to attend virtually.

Virtual Events

December 1 [The Planners' Tool Kit](#). Planners must know about zoning ordinances, subdivision/land development ordinances, and other regulatory/non-regulatory approaches, but enabling authority may arbitrarily limit their use. Learn how to address

unique issues while shielding local government from liability. Time: 1PM-2:30PM. Free.

December 2 [Advancing Safe Routes to Parks in the Time of Coronavirus.](#) The coronavirus pandemic has shown the benefits of greenspace while exposing disparities in access to those places. Learn how communities have advanced shared goals for parks and helped build capacity, skills, and structures. Time: 2PM-3PM. Free. 1 CM.

December 3 [Legal Issues with Green Energy.](#) State governments incentivize development of green energy, often without consideration for local impacts; companies seek to site infrastructure, but the authority of local governments is often unclear. Attorneys will discuss the legal issues impacting land use planners. Time: 1PM-2:30PM. Free. 1.5 CM.

December 4 ["Flag Wars" Virtual Film Screening.](#) Join Rhode Island colleagues to watch this gentrification-focused documentary that follows the conflicts that arise when gay white professionals move into a Black working-class neighborhood. Stick around for a facilitated discussion. BYO popcorn and beverages! Time: 4PM-6PM. Free. Sponsored by the APA-RI Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Committee.

December 8 [Broadband and Planning.](#) With COVID-19, the rural divide became bigger. This session discusses how to impact broadband distribution through ordinances, comprehensive plans and other local ordinances, including the uncertainties surrounding small cells and 5G technology. Time: 1PM-2:30PM. Free. 1.5 CM.

December 10 [Environmental \(In\)Justice During Covid-19](#) Legal experts will unpack National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Title VI regulations related to environmental justice, describe the EJ issues brought about by COVID-19, and what we can do as transportation professionals. Time: 2PM-2:45PM. Free.

December 11 [Incorporating Sea Level Rise into Your Capital Plan](#) Explore how to incorporate sea level rise into the capital infrastructure planning process. Where local planners are part of the capital infrastructure planning process, they can play a role in including sea level rise into the CIP process. Time: 1PM-2:30PM. Free. 1.5 CM.

December 11 [RI Planners' Book Club: "Rising" by Elizabeth Rush.](#) Discuss the observations and insights in "[Rising: Dispatches from the New American Shore](#)" as they relate to planning work in Rhode Island. Please read the book to support a lively discussion! Time: 12PM-1PM. Free [registration](#) is required. 1 CM.

December 15 [Equity by Design.](#) This presentation will explore best practices for equitable development and engagement, including: strategies to lift up community voices; tools to effectively engage under-represented communities; and identifying community priorities to deepen planning and outcomes. Time: 1PM-2:30PM. Free. 1.5 CM.

December 16 [Historic Urban Landscape Framework and Historic Preservation](#) This session will feature pre-recorded presentations from international experts describing the development, use, and implementation of the Historic Urban Landscapes protocol in world cities and how it could be successful in the U.S. Time: 1PM-2:30PM. Free. 1.5 CM.

December 17 [Equity Planning.](#) Recent events lay bare the systemic racism in American society. The planning profession is guilty of contributing to this legacy, through unfair housing policies, exclusionary zoning, among others. Learn how communities are including equity in the planning process. Time: 1PM-2:30PM. Free. 1.5 CM.

December 18 [The 2020 National Freight Strategic Plan: Implications at the State and](#)

Local Level. Join the USDOT's Volpe Center staff for a presentation and discussion about the *National Freight Strategic Plan* (drafted by the Volpe Center) and how it relates to Rhode Island. Part of the annual RI Planning Speaker Series. Time: 11AM-12PM. Free. 1.0 CM. For registration and login info, please contact Roberta.Groch@doa.ri.gov.

January 12 [The Land to Sea Speaker Series: Brian Moore, RIDOT Office of Stormwater Management.](#) This Clean Ocean Access series aims to inspire and empower the community to take actionable steps to improve the environment. This online lecture is free and open to the public. Time: 6:30PM-7:30PM.

January 20 [Taking the Lead: Improving Food Access in a Global Pandemic.](#) The URI Food Systems Summit 2021 will be a virtual discussion on how the pandemic has impacted our state and nation's food security and what is being done to address these issues. It will feature speakers from across the regional food and health ecosystems. Time: 9AM-12PM.

January 21 [Complete Streets: Performance Measures.](#) Learn how to develop a performance evaluation plan to identify potential positive and negative effects of Complete Street Projects and how this can be used to improve the comfort and wellbeing of the traveling public. Time: 11AM-1PM.

January 28 [Navigating Turbulent Times: The RI League of Cities and Towns Virtual Convention.](#) Choose from workshops throughout the day to help you better handle a wide range of pressing public policy issues and find solutions to problems facing your community. Time: 8:30AM-4:30PM. Free for League member communities.

Anytime [The Project for Public Spaces](#) offers pre-recorded webinars on topics that relate to public space, such as Covid-19, homelessness, revitalization, equity, engagement, and more. Free.

Grant Opportunities

December 16 [Choice Neighborhood Implementation Grants](#) deadline. This HUD program supports locally driven strategies that address struggling neighborhoods with distressed public or HUD-assisted housing through a comprehensive approach to neighborhood transformation.

December 31 [Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants](#) deadline. The National Park Service makes available funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to help States and local communities acquire and preserve threatened Revolutionary War, War of 1812, and Civil War Battlefields.

December 31 [Walmart Foundation Local Community Grant](#) deadline. Grants range from \$250 to \$5,000. Organizations must have a current tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) or (19) organizations; a recognized government entity: state, county, or city agencies, including law enforcement or fire departments.

January 8 [USDA Farm to School](#) grant deadline. This program supports planning, developing, and implementing farm to school programs to help state, regional, and local organizations initiate, expand, and institutionalize farm to school efforts.

January 14 [Sustaining Cultural Heritage Collections](#) grant deadline. This program helps local and state cultural institutions meet the challenge of preserving large and diverse holdings of humanities materials through sustainable conservation measures.

January 15 [van Beuren Charitable Foundation grant](#) deadline. Grants fund proposals that achieve measurable results in four areas: strong starts, healthy lifestyles, community prosperity, and excellence in the commons. Aquidneck Island and Newport County are the center of their work but proposals from outside the region are welcomed.

January 16 [Access to Historical Records: Major Initiatives Grant](#) (preliminary deadline). The National Historical Publications and Records Commission seeks projects that will significantly improve public discovery and use of major historical records collections, especially in collections of America's early legal records.

January 19 [HOPE VI Main Street Grant](#) deadline. HOPE VI provides grants to small communities for the renovation of historic/traditional central business districts, or "Main Street" areas, by replacing unused, obsolete, commercial space in buildings with affordable housing units and redeveloping central business districts in Main Street areas.

January 28 [RIDEM/RIDOT Recreational Trails Grant](#) deadline. Grants fund the construction of new trails, maintenance of existing trails, development of ancillary trail facilities, purchase/lease of trail construction or maintenance equipment, educational programs promoting safety, and environmental protection along recreational trails.

January 31 [Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities \(BRIC\)](#) deadline. The BRIC program makes federal funds available to states, tribal governments, and local communities for pre-disaster mitigation activities, capability/capacity-building to identify mitigation actions, and implementation that reduce risks posed by natural hazards.

Planning Articles of Interest

[Portsmouth residents want new solar ordinance revised](#)

[How should Aquidneck Island stay warm?](#)

[Officials urge caution on Ann & Hope mill transformation](#)

[What's driving the renewed interest in golf?](#)

[RI town says 'no' to clothing collection bins](#)

[New development proposed at former Ocean State Steel site](#)

Statewide Planning Staff

Click on staff person's name for their email address:

[Meredith Brady](#), Associate Director
401/222-6496

[Roberta Groch](#), AICP- Assistant Chief
401/222-4720

[Benny Bergantino](#), Principal Planner
401/222-1755

[Nancy Hess](#), Supervising Planner
401/222-6480

[Linsey Callaghan](#), Assistant Chief
401/222-6479

[Benjamin Jacobs](#), Principal Research
Technician

Paul Capotosto, Fiscal Management Officer
401/222-6170

Michael D'Alessandro, AICP- Supervising
Planner
401/222-2177

Christina Delage Baza, Data Analyst I
401/222-6481

Vincent Flood, Data Analyst II
401/222-1243

Kim Gelfuso, Internet Communications
Specialist
401/222-5764

Caitlin Greeley, Principal Planner
401/222-2848

Paul Gonsalves, Principal Planner
401/222-1756

401/222-3949

Maria Mignanelli, Chief Implementation
Aide

Kevin Nelson, Supervising Planner
401/222-2093

Joshua O'Neill, AICP- Supervising Planner
401/222-4849

Mason Perrone, Principal Planner
401/222-7966

Catherine Pitassi, Executive Assistant
401/222-7901

Water Resources Board staff:

Kathleen Crawley, Acting General Manager

Timothy Stagnitta, Programming Services
Officer

PHOTO TRIVIA ANSWER:

SMITHFIELD

Georgiaville Baptist Church (1907)

Photo: Wikimedia Commons