

March 2021

RI Women in Planning



The Rhode Island planning community has seen many changes over the past few decades, but perhaps none is more striking than the increase in the number of women planners.

Currently in Rhode Island, thirty-five percent of Planning Directors or Town Planners are women and forty-four percent of all municipal planning positions are filled by women. State planning offices are also women-led, including the DEM, the Quonset Development Corporation, and the DOA's Division of Statewide Planning, which has a woman in all three of its leadership positions. Many more women planners are employed by consulting firms in the state.

A [2018 survey](#) of its members by the American Planning Association found that women planners in the U.S. have less experience than their male counterparts and have a lower median salary (perhaps because of the former). They are also less likely to be supervising more than three people in their office and less likely to be the director of their office. More women planners were under the age of forty-four, while more male planners were older.

Planner Diane Williamson has worked at the Bristol Planning Department since 1995 and has served as its Director since 2005. She says, "When I started, I was inspired by women planners like Marilyn Cohen, Anna Prager, Derry Riding, Jeanne Boyle, and others: that generation opened the door for my generation of planners. We have had many women in leadership positions in Town departments over the years, so I've grown my career surrounded by other women leaders who have mentored me." Another woman planner also notes the importance of mentors for women, saying that "it is so important to push the 'women empower women' mantra amongst female leaders."

An informal survey of a group of women planners in the state found that they are looking for more flexibility; generally, the rise to management positions occurs at the same time in women's lives as when they have children. Susan Mara, Pawtucket's Planning Director, says, "I am seeing that some of the COVID-related changes have the potential to help women balance work and home a little better. It's much easier to jump on a Zoom meeting at 7PM than to be away from home all night."

What do women planners wish they could change? "Men who comment about my

appearance, clothing, or age." "Men talking over me when I am speaking and interrupting!" "Women generally need to work harder than men to gain attention and respect." "Many who see their own power as something that another woman can take away and, because of that, they don't help to lift anyone else up."

Megan DiPrete, the Director of RIDEM's Office of Planning & Development sums it up best: "What makes good leaders? It's not gender or age or race or clothes – but those and other traits often influence how we are viewed, and heard, particularly in public environments. So maybe 'what would I like to change' is answered by suggesting a focus on leadership concepts: listening, conflict resolution, critical thinking, and engagement. Wouldn't that benefit us ALL?"

Send us Your News!

Are you working on an interesting project? Has your community completed an initiative that you think other planners could learn from? Send it to us! We want to showcase more projects and plans from around Rhode Island in our newsletter. Contact [Roberta Groch](#) with your ideas.

RI Statewide Planning Meetings

All meetings are open to the public.
Please check the links to see if a meeting has been canceled or changed.

[Technical Committee](#)

March 5 - 9AM via Zoom

[State Planning Council](#)

March 11 - 9AM via Zoom

[RIGIS Executive Committee](#)

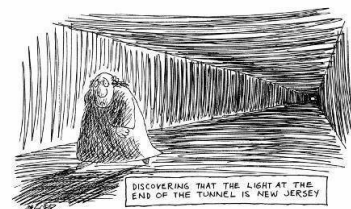
March 19 - 2PM via Zoom

[Transportation Advisory Committee](#)

March 25 - 5:30PM via Zoom

Brady's Brief(ish) Bulletin

We are coming up on a year since many of us changed the way that we work and live, a year of distant or non-existent celebrations and milestones, births and deaths, challenges and successes and even some failures. Coming up on my tenth wedding anniversary, I was hoping for a night out, but I'll have to settle for a virtual St. Patrick's Day beer with friends online. Three hundred and forty-nine days since I was last in my office for a full week. As we are starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel, we know that an immediate return to "normal" is not possible.



Some of the changes we have seen or implemented are long-anticipated, leveraging modern technology to improve the way we work and live. Within Statewide Planning, we have found that our Council and Committee meetings are better attended on a virtual platform, and that remote offices allow us to accommodate a wide range of family situations and working styles. It is easier to schedule several meetings in a single day, with the elimination of travel times between buildings or communities. Yet it is also harder to read emotions, intent, and meaning in electronic communications, and our lack of contact can be a detriment, personally and professionally. Work days become lengthened without a clear boundary between our work and home life.

Much of this year has felt as though we were waiting for something: first wave, second wave, elections, new year, change in administration at the state level, vaccines, I'm starting to sound like a modern update to a certain Billy Joel song. At this point, it is important to start considering ways to operationalize changes we wish to keep and think about ways that we might improve on processes: while we hope that the disruption caused by the pandemic is a once-in-a-lifetime event, forced change offers a unique opportunity to innovate. We have a unique opportunity to be proactive instead of reactive, to pivot and provide planning support to our communities and constituencies in ways that make sense, break barriers, and bring attention to systemic inequities.

My opinion, of course, but I wonder: what can we do to help you and your communities in a changing world? Let me know at meredith.brady@doa.ri.gov or call/text (401) 368-7601.

PHOTO TRIVIA

Do you know where in RI this building is located?

See the answer at the bottom of the newsletter!



Virtual Events

March 1-3 [National Bike Summit](#). The Bike Summit is open to everyone who believes in the power of bicycling to make life better. The theme of this year's virtual Summit is "Bikes: Our Vehicle for Change" in recognition of the power of bicycling to move us forward, even in the most challenging of times. Time: 1PM-6PM. Fee: \$60-\$180.

March 2 [Assessing Future Changes in Fire Risk in the Northeast](#). Little is known about how the direct effects of climate change will impact fire risk in the Northeastern US: this webinar will highlight regional changes in future fire risk and its causes using the Coupled Model Intercomparison Project Phase 5 and the Keetch-Byram Drought Index. Time: 1PM-2PM. Free.

March 5 [Climate Adaptation Forum: Municipalities Adapt to the Climate Crisis](#). The climate crisis is a global problem, but its impacts are felt closer to home. Experts from New England and beyond will discuss innovative adaptation strategies being implemented in local communities. Time: 10AM-1PM. Fee: \$5-\$15.

March 5 [Forging Equity in Cities: Using Equitable Transit-Oriented Development \(eTOD\) as a Blueprint for Policy and Practice.](#) Learn about organizing and empowerment work to create eTOD in Chicago that incorporated diversity, equity, and inclusion into planning and infrastructure investments and how this effort focused creating more vibrant, prosperous, and resilient neighborhoods and housing. Time: 2:30PM-3:30PM. Free.

March 9 [The Future of Coastal Megaprojects.](#) This URI/Sea Grant Coastal State Discussion will look at the technical, environmental, economic, and political factors of why some coastal flood protection megastructures are built while others are not, using Boston Harbor and the Fox Point Hurricane Barrier in Providence as case studies. Time: 3PM-5PM. Free.

March 10 [Climate Risk and Market Value: Data Innovations for Real Estate.](#) In this Urban Land Institute webinar, hear from experts leading efforts to improve climate data and models for real estate development and land use policy. Time: 1-2PM. Fee: \$25-\$40.

March 10 [Our Sense of Place: Post-Pandemic Facility Considerations.](#) The pandemic has provided a unique opportunity to re-think how we move through public space. This webinar is deep dive into the ways parks and public space design might evolve due to what Covid-19 has taught us. Time: 10AM-12PM. Fee: \$35.

March 11 [New Urbanism in the Renaissance City: Bite-Sized Preservation Series.](#) Did you know that much of downtown Providence's revitalization has been driven by New Urbanist principles? The Providence Preservation Society will explore how this particular approach to urban planning has shaped Providence. Time: 12PM-1PM. Free.

March 12 [Conflict Resolution – Step Toward the Solution.](#) Explore common causes of conflict; learn tools to use to navigate those situations more effectively; and use the tools in conflict situations to understand how they work in practice. Time: 11:45AM-1:15PM. Fee: \$10.

March 16 [The Land to Sea Speaker Series](#) Speakers: Jed Thorp, Advocacy Coordinator for Save the Bay and Ann Battersby, Senior Environmental Scientist at RIDEM. From best management practices for individual homeowners to policy solutions for local governments, explore the growing challenge of stormwater. Time: 6:30PM. Free.

March 17-19 ["Urbanism Next" Virtual Forum- 2021.](#) Join planners, urban designers, transportation professionals, architects, developers, and anyone who is interested in how new mobility, e-commerce and urban delivery, and autonomous vehicles are shaping cities in the face of unprecedented change. Time: 12PM. Fee: \$149-\$199.

March 19-20 [RI & MA 2021 Two-State Land Conservation Conference](#) "Building a Stronger Land Movement through Diversity, Equity and Inclusion." Rhode Island and Massachusetts are hosting a two-state Land Conservation Conference this year that will offer new opportunities to learn from our neighbors. Time: 9AM-4:15PM. Fee: \$15-\$75.

March 19 [The Road to AICP.](#) Do you have doubts about becoming AICP certified? Are you planning to take the upcoming AICP exam? This webinar is for you! While there are advantages to obtaining American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) certification (like increased earning potential), there are also barriers, like annual dues and continuing education. A panel will discuss these issues and test taking tips. Time: 1PM-2:30PM. Free.

March 23 [Transit Impacts on Jobs, People and Real Estate.](#) Learn about how transit should affect the location of jobs and people, and how real estate should respond; and

how transit station proximity influences mode choice and household transportation budgets;. Time: 1PM. Free. 1 CM.

March 25 [Understanding Mobility Changes in Response to COVID-19: A Los Angeles Case Study](#). This webinar examines compliance with COVID-19 related policies in Los Angeles County across income and race by using mobile device data to compare mobility patterns before and during the various pandemic phases: the results show how race and socioeconomic disparities are revealed in mobility patterns. Time: 3PM. Free.

March 30 [Virtual Building Tour: URI Engineering Research Center- RI New Construction Energy Code Event](#). This interactive virtual building tour of the Fascitelli Center for Advanced Engineering will showcase energy efficiency features, such its high-performance building enclosure. Attendees can ask questions throughout the tour. Time: 9:30AM-11AM. Free.

March 31 [EBC RI Leadership: Rhode Island Environmental, Energy and Climate Leadership](#) webinar. The leadership of the RI Department of Environmental Management, the RI Office of Energy Resources, and the RI Climate Program at the Infrastructure Bank will provide an update on environmental, energy, and climate programs and priorities for Rhode Island. Time: 8:45AM-12PM. Fee: \$25-\$100.

Anytime [APA Chapters & Divisions Webcast Series](#) This series features dozens of previously-recorded planning webinars that explore topics like public engagement, resiliency, equity, transportation, historic preservation, housing, ethics, and law. Free.

Grant Opportunities

March 5 [Agriculture Land Easement](#) application deadline. The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides funding for purchasing Agricultural Land Easements to protect the agricultural use/conservation values of eligible land. Eligible partners include Indian tribes, state and local governments, and non-governmental organizations that have farmland or grassland protection programs.

March 5 [Wetland Reserve Easement](#) application deadline. Funding is available through the NRCS to help landowners protect and restore wetlands in Rhode Island. The funding can be used to protect critical water resources and wildlife habitat, and to encourage private owners to maintain land for wildlife.

March 12 [Rural Design Workshop](#) application deadline. Rural communities with a population of less than 50,000 can apply for Citizens' Institute on Rural Design workshop opportunities to address specific community challenges. Applications are encouraged from municipal or tribal governments and other community partners. Online Design Learning Cohort programs will also be funded.

March 17 [Site Readiness Program](#) applications due. RI Commerce Corporation partners with municipalities and/or developers to fund: 1) municipal technical assistance and 2) site-specific planning and improvements. Funding priorities are urban projects that are a minimum of two acres or 100,000 square feet of existing or planned building space; and suburban or rural projects that are ten acres or more.

March 21 [RI Foundation Community Grant](#) deadline. This program provides grants up to \$10,000 for community-making efforts. For 2021, projects should: build social networks and connection among neighbors; develop and sustain strong relationships; enhance the role of shared public spaces as community anchors; help people collaborate to identify

goals, solve problems, or make group decisions; and/or share traditions.

March 31 [Underrepresented Communities Grant](#) deadline. This National Park Service program works to diversify the nominations submitted to the National Register of Historic Places. Projects include surveys/inventories of historic properties associated with underrepresented communities and the development of nominations to the National Register for specific sites.

April 1 [Archives Collaboratives Grant](#) deadline. The National Historical Publications and Records Commission funds projects that make collections from small and under-represented archives more available for public discovery and use. Funding can be used to: share best practices, tools, and techniques; assess institutional strengths; and promote management structures for long-term sustainability and growth.

Rolling deadline [Community Heart & Soul Seed Grant Program](#) This program provides \$10,000 in startup funding for small cities and towns (population 2,500-30,000) to engage a community in shaping its future. Grant funding requires a \$10,000 cash match from the participating municipality or a partnering organization.

Planning Articles of Interest

[High-speed Northeast rail corridor could be on its way](#)

[What would a city designed by women look like?](#)

[Board rejects variance for home on tiny lot, but it might still go up](#)

[Forest value, protection focus of recent talk; new group formed](#)

[Planning board hears residents' concerns as Johnston considers massive development](#)

[Lincoln making gains toward ten percent affordable housing](#)

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PHOTO TRIVIA ANSWER:

WOONSOCKET

City Hall (1856)

Photo: [Wikipedia](#)