



**November 2022**

## **Planning Tool: EJScreen**

**EJScreen** is the EPA's environmental justice (EJ) mapping and screening tool that provides environmental and demographic socioeconomic indicators as a user-friendly way. The tool presents information that can help address concerns about a project or give planners a snapshot of the population of a specific location, city, area, or census tract. Users choose a geographic area: the tool then provides demographic socioeconomic and environmental information based on publicly-available data.

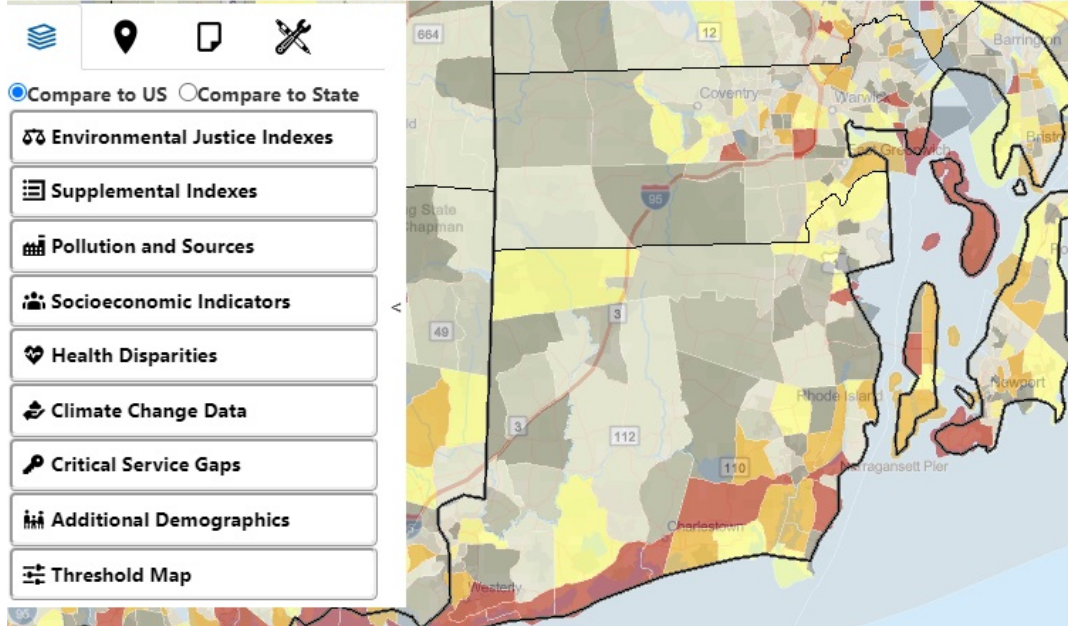
EJScreen includes:

- Twelve environmental justice indicators, including ozone, traffic proximity, lead paint, and hazardous waste proximity;
- Seven socioeconomic indicators, including limited English proficiency, unemployment rate, and low income;
- Three health disparity indicators: asthma rates, low life expectancy, and heart disease rates;
- Six climate change indicators, such as drought, flood risk, and sea level rise; and
- Critical service gaps, like food deserts, broadband gaps, and the medically underserved.

Be aware that the tool is not intended to provide a risk assessment and does not provide data on every environmental impact and demographic indicator that may be relevant to a particular location. Also note that data may be several years old.

For an introduction on EJScreen, the EPA has a [short video](#) available on the website, as well as more [in-depth videos](#) about how to use the tool.

Please note: Territory data (except Puerto Rico) is not available as comparable to the US. It is only comparable to the territory itself by using the



## Feedback Needed on Municipal Education Program



Due to new provisions adopted by the General Assembly in 2022 to [Chapter 45-70](#), "Continuing Education for Local Planning and Zoning Boards and Historic District Commissions," the Division of Statewide Planning is now required to provide an education program for municipal planning, zoning, and historic district boards or commissions on land use, law, and planning.

Education program topics to be considered "may include, but not be limited to, the following:"

- History and purposes of planning and zoning;
- State laws and local ordinances, rules and regulations applicable to the work of planning and zoning members, including a full review of the Rhode Island Low and Moderate Income Housing Act;
- Overview of the functions of the boards, statutory requirements, and the main tools of planning, zoning, and subdivision review;
- The role of others in the planning and zoning process (citizens, applicants, planning and zoning staff, and elected officials);
- Understanding and interpreting local comprehensive plans to help to make land use decisions;
- Understanding basic property rights;
- Legal context for the decision-making process and making legal, defensible decisions;
- Basics of "findings of fact", making the record, and the legal context for planning;
- Public hearings, voting requirements and other key procedural requirements;
- How to review site plans and subdivisions;
- Types of conditions boards may impose when approving special permit(s) or variance application(s);
- Open meetings/ethics requirements/avoiding ethical dilemmas; and
- Proper ways to manage public meetings including quorums, recusals, and rules of order.

If you have any ideas on what the Division could include in this program, possible ways to conduct it, or resources you would like to share for it, please complete a brief survey by clicking the button below, and help us craft this important program.

[Take the Survey](#)

## SNEAPA Conference Wrap-up

SNEAPA 2022 is over and what an amazing event it was! Over 450 planners and associated professionals gathered at the RI Convention Center for two days of professional development, mobile workshops, networking, reconnecting with friends, and fun. Many thanks to all who attended!



A huge "thank you" goes to the 2022 [Conference Committee members](#), especially Chairman Jay Parker.

It takes a village to put on an event of this magnitude, especially since the last Rhode Island SNEAPA was in 2017; the Committee volunteers worked overtime to make the Conference a huge success. BTW, if you are interested in volunteering for the next conference in Connecticut, please send an email to [news@sneapa.org](mailto:news@sneapa.org).

See you at SNEAPA in New Haven on October 5 & 6, 2023!



## Land Use Commission Update

The Land Use Commission that was convened by the General Assembly in 2021 has formed four working groups from within [Commission membership](#): comprehensive planning, zoning, subdivision/land development, and housing. The working groups have been asked to bring forward their recommendations to the full Commission in order to expedite legislation relating to land use in the 2023 Legislative session.

The [Land Use Commission](#)'s most recent meeting was on September 20, 2022, and was a joint meeting with the Low Moderate Income Housing Commission. The entirety of the live broadcast was not possible due to technical issues, but the recording can be viewed [here](#). The next full meeting of the land use commission is scheduled for Thursday, November 10 at 2PM, and will be broadcast live on [Capitol TV](#).

## Meredith's Message

We are hiring! This seems not only to be an organizational statement, but also a universal truth these days.

Who isn't hiring? It seems that, pre-pandemic, we had a job market where occasional opportunities arose, but those opportunities were comparable to other jobs in specific sectors. Now it seems as though there is a significant gap between private and public sector jobs, and measurable gaps between federal, state, and municipal employment.

I can tell you with certainty that we could have foreseen the planning job market in Rhode Island years ago, based on the elimination of the Masters in Planning at URI. Today? There's a certificate program, but it doesn't give us the planners we need.

We'll be posting six positions in the next couple of months. Three are posted today: Supervising Planner; Principal Planner; and Supervising GIS Specialist.

I know that the State hiring planners from municipalities will only deepen the crisis. So if you know someone bright in an allied profession who wants to start a career in public service, please share.

## Upcoming Statewide Planning Meetings

All meetings are open to the public.  
Click on the links for virtual attendance information.

### [Technical Committee](#)

**November 4 - 9AM**

Exec. Conference Room, 4th floor  
One Capitol Hill, Providence

### [State Planning Council](#)

**November 10 - 9AM**

Room 2A, 1 Capitol Hill, Providence

### [Transportation Advisory Committee](#)

**November 17 - 5:30PM**

Room 2A, 1 Capitol Hill, Providence

### [Water Resources Board](#)

**November 18 - 9 AM**

Room 300, 235 Promenade St.  
Providence

### PHOTO TRIVIA

Do you know where in Rhode Island you can find this monument?  
See the answer at the bottom of the newsletter!



## Events



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

**November 1 [Rail~Volution 2022](#).** The Rail~Volution virtual conference focuses on the interplay of transit, mobility options, and land use/development in building great places to live. Learn real-world solutions and innovative approaches to the challenges that face cities and regions of every size. Time: 10AM-5PM. Fee: \$99. 5.5 CM.

**November 1 [Second Amendment and Zoning](#).** This webinar provides an overview of considerations in regulating firearms in zoning, ways in which states have preempted certain local land use regulations, and recent case law. Time: 12PM-1PM. Free. 1 CM Law.

**November 2 [Master Planning On A Budget](#).** Learn how to ID your downtown planning needs, plan elements, applicable costs, budgets, preparing Request for Proposal documents, and soliciting proposals. Time: 10AM-11AM. Free. 1CM.

**November 3 [EC4 Council meeting](#).** This will be a hybrid meeting with Council members attending in person and the opportunity for the public to join via Zoom. Time: 2:30PM-4PM. Location: RIPTA Boardroom, 269 Melrose Street, Providence.

**November 3 [Staging](#).** Chris Reed, Director of STOSS Landscape Urbanism, Boston, will speak as part of the URI Landscape Architecture Lecture Series. Location: Online and Avedesian Auditorium (Room 170), 7 Greenhouse Road, Kingston. Time: 7PM. Free.

**November 4 [The Rise of Urban Placemaking: Shaping Public Spaces Through Collaboration](#).** Discover how cities are applying urban placemaking to create accessible, welcoming, mixed-use spaces that celebrate and support thriving communities. Time: 1PM-2:30PM. Free. 1.5 CM.

**November 8 [Using Public Art for a More Vibrant and Welcoming Community](#).** When public art is supported and implemented thoughtfully, it adds tremendous cultural, aesthetic, and economic value to a community and facilitates a sense of place and community pride. Time: 10AM-11AM. Free.

**November 9 [Accessory Dwelling Units](#).** Join the Director of AARP Rhode Island for a discussion about the new accessory dwelling unit (ADU) legislation that was passed by the RI General Assembly. Time: 10AM. Free.

**November 9 [RI Statewide Road Inventory](#).** Join the Rhode Island LTAP and the RIDOT Office of Asset Information Systems to learn about the Statewide Linear Referencing and Road Inventory system that the Rhode Island Department of Transportation is implementing. Time: 12PM-1PM. Free.

**November 10 [The ABCs of Form-Based Codes](#).** This course consists of four, two-hour sessions: learn how form-based codes solve the problems created by conventional zoning and how to create a form-based code. Time: 12PM-2PM. Fee: \$285-\$315.

**November 15 [Farm Bill 101](#).** Join the RI Food Policy Council for a virtual discussion about issues that affect food policy in RI and how to get involved in creating a more just and resilient food system for everyone. Time: 12:30PM. Free.

**November 15 [Next-Generation Innovations in Housing Affordability](#).** Find solutions for affordability that combine construction and design, finance, policy and regulatory reform, and new approaches to drive the housing sector forward. Time: 1PM-5:30PM. Free.

**November 16** [Centering Equity in Transportation Planning and Design](#). Learn the value of identifying and incorporating missing expertise into decision making processes improves decision making. Time: 3PM-4PM. Free. 1 CM.

**November 16** [Improving Business' Financial Literacy and Management to Support Post-Disaster Economic Recovery](#). This virtual course will help planners, economic development committee members, and small business owners better prepare for catastrophic events that could close businesses for days, or even weeks. Time: 9AM-3PM. Free.

**November 16** [Transportation and Disadvantaged Populations: Travel Characteristics and Emerging Mobility Solutions](#). Learn about this Southeastern Transportation Research, Innovation, Development and Education Center (STRIDE) project. Time:12PM-1PM. Free.

**November 17** [Exploring the GSEs' Equitable Housing Finance Plans](#). This webinar will discuss Government-Sponsored Enterprises (GSE) Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac plans to reduce racial home ownership gaps, will break each plan into fundamental themes, and explore the details of each. Time: 1PM. Free.

**November 17** [The National Digital Trails Project: Increasing Access and Opportunities](#). This webinar discusses the National Digital Trails project accomplishments, future steps, and provides a demonstration of the web-based Trail Routing, Analysis, and Information Linkage System (TRAILS) tool. Time: 1PM-2PM. Free.

**November 17** [Urban Heat Island Mapping Results](#). Learn about four heat mapping campaigns, the overall experience, how volunteers and local organizations were engaged, how the communities plan to use their mapping results, and learn how interested communities can apply for the 2023 cohort. Time: 1PM-2:30PM. Free.

**November 17** [Why Climate Change Engagement Matters: Real Solutions Require Hearing Real Stories](#). This EBC Climate Change and Air webinar will explore how to use storytelling in project engagement around climate change, esp. for engaging historically underrepresented communities. Time: 9AM-11AM. Fee: \$25-\$80.

**November 18** [3rd Annual RI Offshore Wind Conference: Partnering for the Future of Offshore Wind in RI](#) will explore what comes next for offshore wind in Rhode Island and will feature Senator Whitehouse discussing the latest legislative developments that will help move our green economy forward. Time: 9AM-12PM. Fee: \$25-\$120.

**November 29** [Managing Severe Storms and Environmental Impacts](#). This TRB webinar will explore highway maintenance/operations and long-term planning to reduce environmental impact in winter operations, and new practices to improve operational response in extreme weather events. Time: 1PM-2:30PM. Fee: \$100.

**November 29** [Perilous Bounty: Emerging Crises in Industrial Agriculture](#). Tom Philpott is the author of *Perilous Bounty: The Looming Collapse of American Farming and How We Can Prevent It*. Time: 7PM. Location: URI's Edwards Auditorium and online. Free.

**November 30** [Making Land Use Decisions](#). Virtual workshop for RI volunteer board and commission members on conducting land use reviews, standards, and crafting decisions. Contact [Nancy.Hess@doa.ri.gov](mailto:Nancy.Hess@doa.ri.gov) for more information and registration. Free.

**November 30** [RI Stormwater Innovation Expo](#) Learn about green stormwater

infrastructure across RI. Includes presentations about funding, workshops, and tours.  
Location: Roger Williams Park Casino, 1000 Elmwood Ave., Providence. Time: 8:30AM-3:30PM. Fee: \$0-\$35.

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## Grants & Deadlines

**November 4** [RI Office of Energy Resources Agricultural Energy Grant Program](#) provides grants of up to \$20,000 for eligible energy efficiency and renewable energy projects located on farms throughout Rhode Island.

**November 4** [Municipal Resilience Program](#) provides support to RI cities and towns to complete a workshop process that brings together climate change information and local knowledge to identify top hazards, current challenges, and community strengths.

**November 8** [Historic Preservation Fund: African American Civil Rights History Grants and Preservation Grants](#). History grants will support interpretive/research-based projects, while preservation grants will fund planning and "bricks and mortar" preservation/conservation work.

**November 10** [Landscape Scale Restoration Grant Program- Northeast and Midwest](#) is for landscape restoration projects on rural nonindustrial private forestland and/or rural Tribal, State, or local government forest land.

**November 11** [Understanding the Effects of Climate Change on Environmental Hazards in Overburdened Communities](#) seeks to advance the understanding of climate hazard effects on communities that are overburdened by environmental hazards (e.g., heat-related stress, and air and water contaminants).

**November 14** [AmeriCorps State and National American Rescue Plan Planning Grants](#) provide up to \$240,000 for a twelve-month planning period to develop an AmeriCorps program that will engage members in evidence-based interventions to solve community problems.

**November 15** [Inspire! Grants for Small Museums](#) support project-based efforts to serve the public in three project categories: Lifelong Learning, Institutional Capacity, and Collections Stewardship/Access.

**November 15** [State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program](#). The goal of this Department of Homeland Security- FEMA program is to help states, local governments, rural areas, and territories address cybersecurity risks and cybersecurity threats to information systems.

**November 22** [EPA Brownfield Multipurpose Grants](#) are for communities that have identified (through community engagement efforts) a neighborhood, district, corridor, or census tract with one or more brownfield sites.

**November 30** [Local Agriculture and Seafood Act \(LASA\) grant](#) deadline. The goal of the RIDEM LASA program is to support the growth, development, and marketing of local food and seafood in Rhode Island.

**December 1** [Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements \(CRISI\) Program](#) helps improve railroad safety, efficiency, and reliability; mitigate congestion at passenger and freight rail chokepoints; enhance multi-modal connections; and lead to new/substantially improved intercity passenger rail transportation corridors.

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## Articles of Interest

[Why the traditional mall's days are numbered](#)

[City park to be sold for use as warehouse parking lot](#)

[Telecommuting may have a negative environmental impact](#)

[Town looks to close retail loophole for compassion centers](#)

[Town residents challenging Mass. transit overlay, other zoning changes](#)

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## RI Statewide Planning Staff

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

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## Photo Trivia Answer

**LITTLE COMPTON**

**Rhode Island Red monument** (1925)

Photo: Wikipedia

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