



The State Guide Plan: Rhode Island's Big-Picture Policy Guide for Agencies and Municipalities

Presented to the Special Legislative Commission
to Study the Entire Area of Land Use, Housing,
Environment, and Regulation

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I'll Tell You About

- 1) The Division of Statewide Planning
- 2) The State Guide Plan
- 3) Local Comprehensive Planning (and the State's Role)
- 4) Land Use 2025
 - a) Where We Were
 - b) What We Knew
 - c) What's Changing

Objective: inform future discussion about land use and subdivision statutes and local regulation, tools to help implement local goals and objectives.

Division of Statewide Planning

The Statewide Planning Program consists of the State Planning Council, and the Division of Statewide Planning, a division within the Department of Administration.

- *The State Planning Council (27 members) is comprised of federal, state, local, public representatives, and other advisors, and guides the work of the Program.*
- *The Division of Statewide Planning is the staff agency of the State Planning Council.*





The Division of Statewide Planning

Planning for Rhode Island's
physical, economic, and social development since 1964

Central state
planning
agency
established by
R.I. General
Law 42-11

Coordinate the
activities of
government
agencies ,
communities, and
organizations
through the State
Guide Plan

Provide planning
assistance to the
Governor, the
General Assembly,
municipalities, and
other state
agencies

Review local
comprehensive
plans, proposed
projects, and
activities for
consistency with
the State Guide
Plan

Metropolitan
Planning
Organization (MPO)
for federal
transportation
planning and
funding



Division of Statewide Planning

Transportation

- Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
- Manage federal transportation planning process for State

Long Range Planning

- Land Use
- Outdoor Recreation
- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Natural Resources
- Solid Waste
- Energy
- Water Supply/Quality

Municipal Collaboration

- Training
- Technical Assistance
- Comprehensive Plans/ Reviews

Data Center

- RIGIS
- US Census
- Aerial Photography

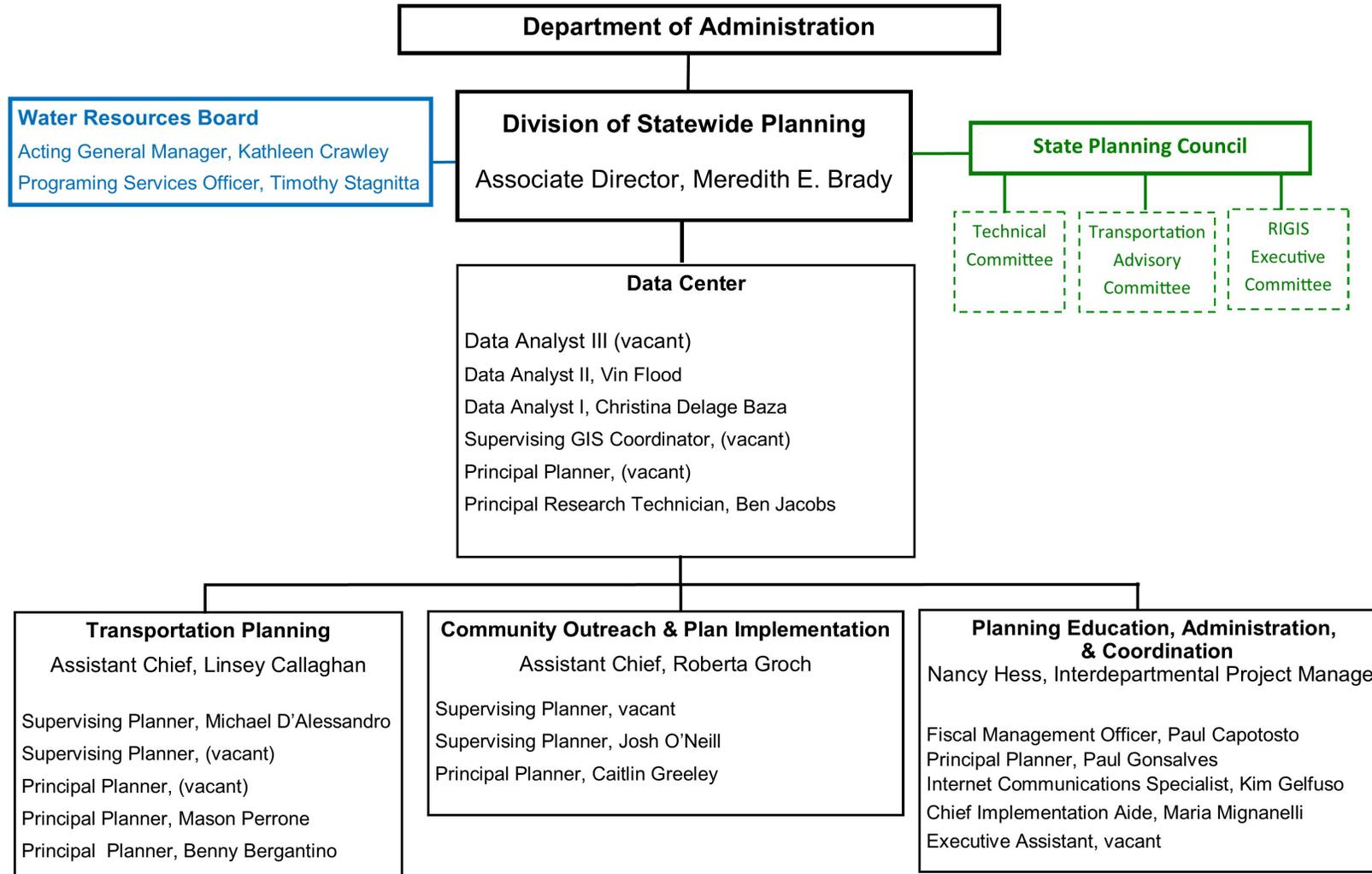
Drinking Water Management

- Staff to Water Resources Board
- Drought Mitigation
- Drinking water protection

Special Projects

- Climate Change
- Resiliency
- EC4

Organization Chart



Division of Statewide Planning Mission Statement

The Division of Statewide Planning promotes and encourages best practices for the balanced growth and development of the State of Rhode Island. We do so by:

- Connecting agencies, communities, and organizations;
- Guiding land use, water, and transportation choices; and
- Promoting continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive application of planning principles, along with data-driven analysis, to create and implement State, regional, and local plans.

Our goal is to ensure equitable, sustainable, and resilient development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future



“Steak Guy Plan”

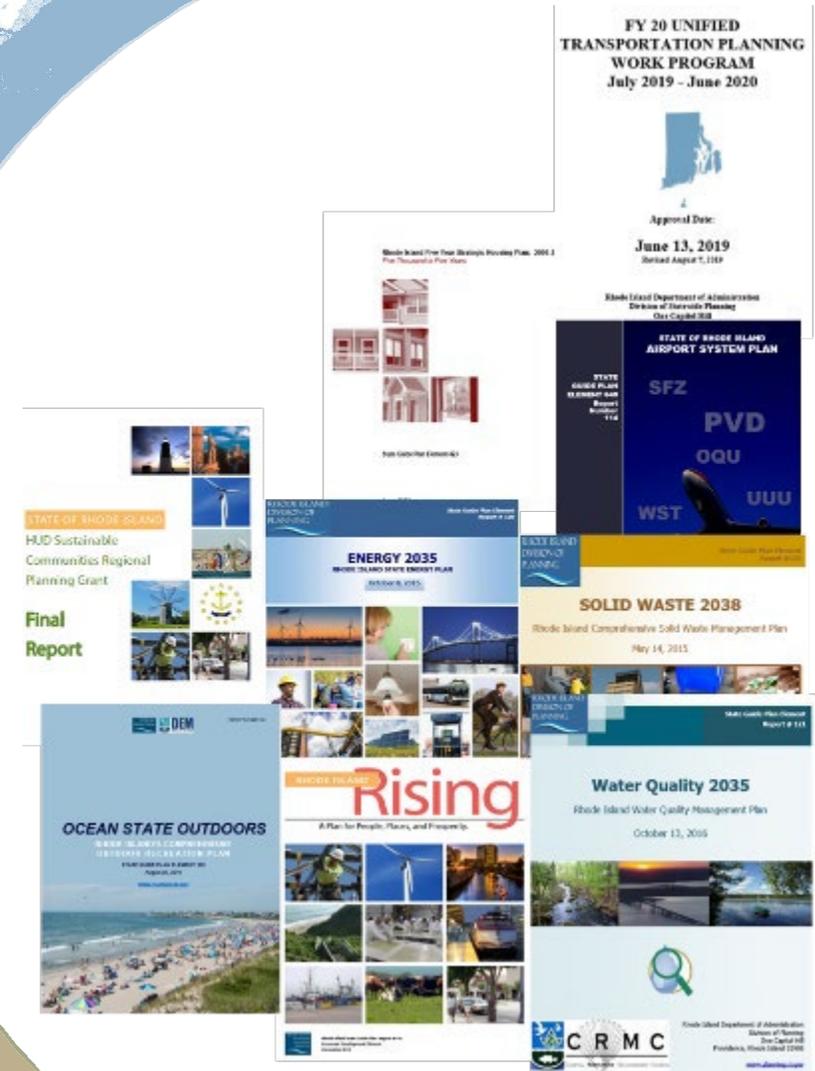
State Guide Plan

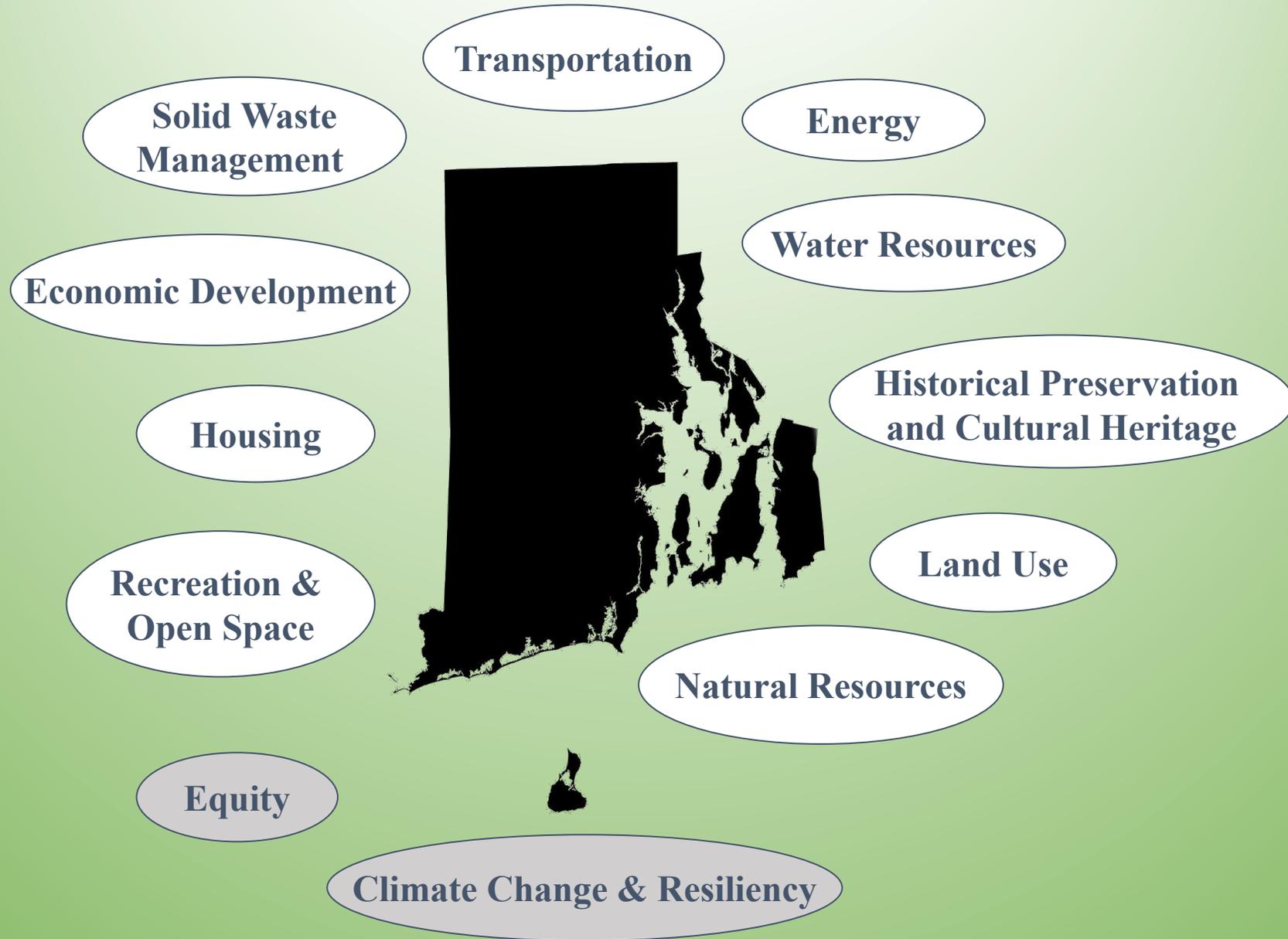
42-11-10 – State Guide Plan Law

Series of topical plans used to centralize long-range goals, policies, plans, and implementation activities. for the State

The [State Planning Council](#) is responsible for approval of elements of the State Guide Plan.

Currently there are 18 Elements of State Guide Plan





What is the State Guide Plan?

The SGP provides a degree of continuity and permanent policy direction for the State's future development.

The SPC is responsible for approval of all elements of the SGP, which has four primary functions:

- It sets long-range goals and policy positions (generally twenty years);
- It provides a means to evaluate and coordinate projects or proposals of State importance;
- It sets standards for comprehensive community plans; and
- It serves as a source of information on various topics of statewide importance.

Fitting the Pieces Together

Long-Range
Plans



Implementation
Plans/Programs



Short Term
Goals/Objectives

State Guide
Plan Elements



Local
Comprehensive
Plans



Goals and
Objectives

10,000 Foot
View



A Closer
Look



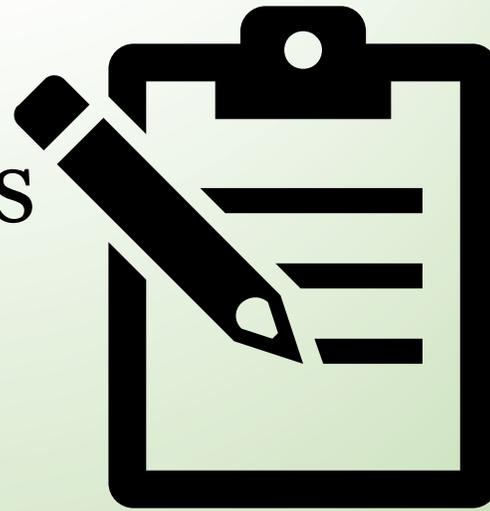
Measurable
Steps

How Do We Review Local Community Comprehensive Plans?

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Local Comprehensive Plans



- ✓ 25 fully-approved
- 12 expired
- ✗ 2 denied



- In 2011 revisions were made to the Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulations Act. A major change was that State approvals were extended from 5 years to 10 years. Also added was a new requirement for an implementation report.

- Municipalities are now required to submit an; “Informational report on the status of the comprehensive plan implementation program with the Division of Planning not more than five (5) years from the date of municipal approval” (§ 45-22.2-12).

- Ensures municipalities are assessing progress toward achieving actions identified in their implementation program

Why a Status Report?



Are Communities Penalized If They Don't Have An Approved Comp Plan or Exceed the 5 Year Reporting Deadline ?

- Although the required by law, **there is no specific penalty** for failure to comply.
- Per RIGL 45-22.2-13 “(h) Upon approval by the chief or superior court, the municipality is eligible for all benefits and incentives conditioned on an approved comprehensive plan pursuant to this chapter, and the municipality is allowed to submit the approved comprehensive plan or relevant section thereof to any state agency which requires the submission of a plan as part of its requirements, and the plan or relevant section thereof shall satisfy that requirement.”



**Where
does the
power to
protect
the public
interest
come
from?**

Federal Government

Delegates power via constitution and laws



State of Rhode Island Enabling Legislation

- Comprehensive Planning Act
 - Zoning Enabling Act
- Land Development & Subdivision Review Act
 - Others



Municipality

City/town council or mayor appoints board and commission members
Legal Authority given to public bodies provided via State law,
municipal charters and or local ordinances



Public Body

Protects the public interest through land use planning and
administration of land use regulations and ordinances.

An aerial photograph of a coastal region. The image shows a large body of water on the left and top, with a town and an airport on the right. The town is densely packed with buildings and roads. The airport has a long runway and taxiway. The land is a mix of urban, agricultural, and natural areas. The water is a deep blue color. The overall scene is a typical coastal town and airport area.

Land Use 2025

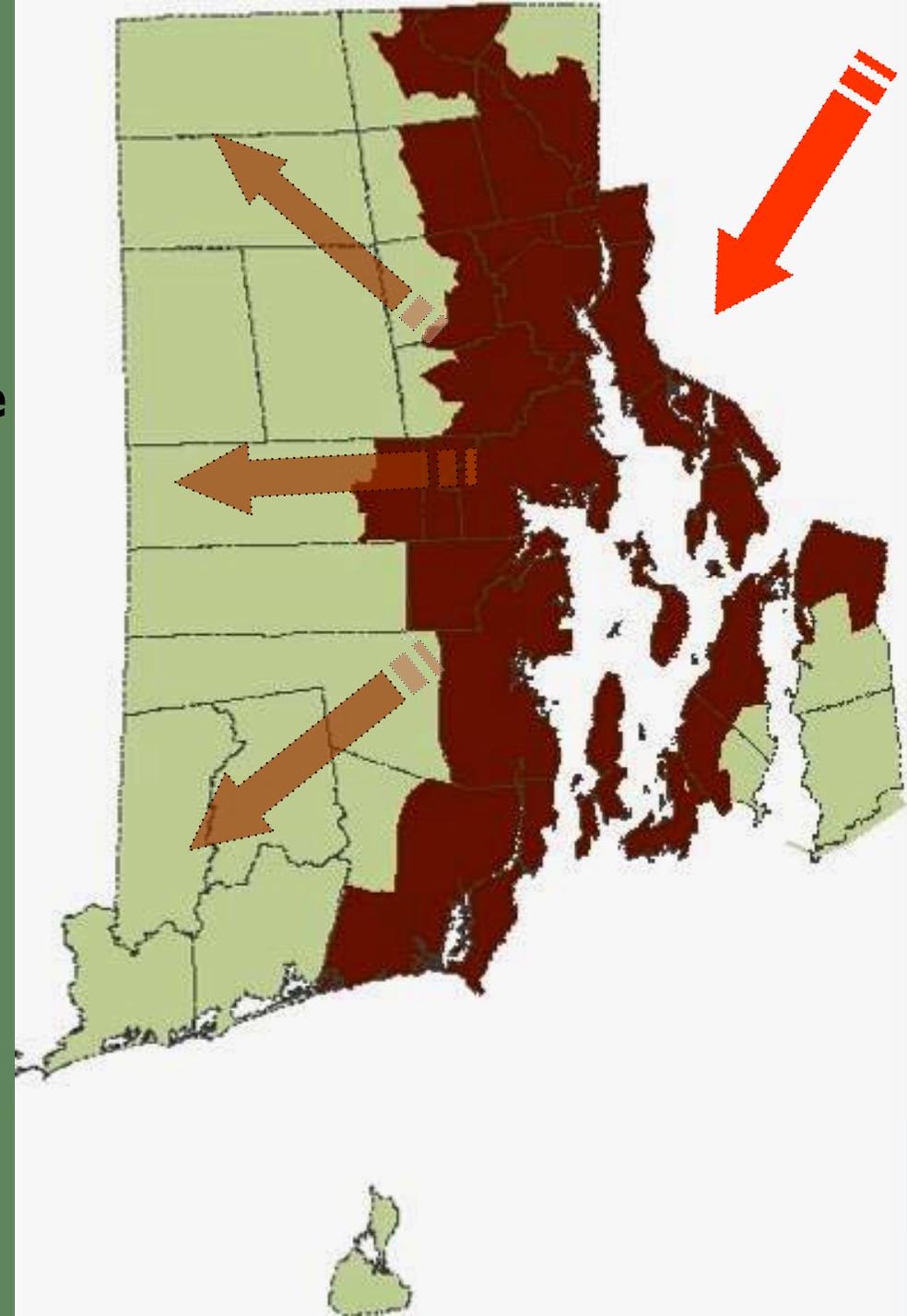
Land Use 2025

- ◆ **Where are we, and where are we going?**
- ◆ **Where do we want to be in 2025?**
- ◆ **Issues to be concerned while getting there?**
- ◆ **How do we get there?**
- ◆ **What must be done to achieve vision?**



Where are we?

- ◆ **80%+ Rhode Islanders still live in urbanized areas along the Bay & major rivers**
- ◆ **In recent decades, growth has been both outward from this core; and coming into the state from neighboring states**
- ◆ **More significant is the way we are growing and impacting on the RI landscape**



Changes in Land Use

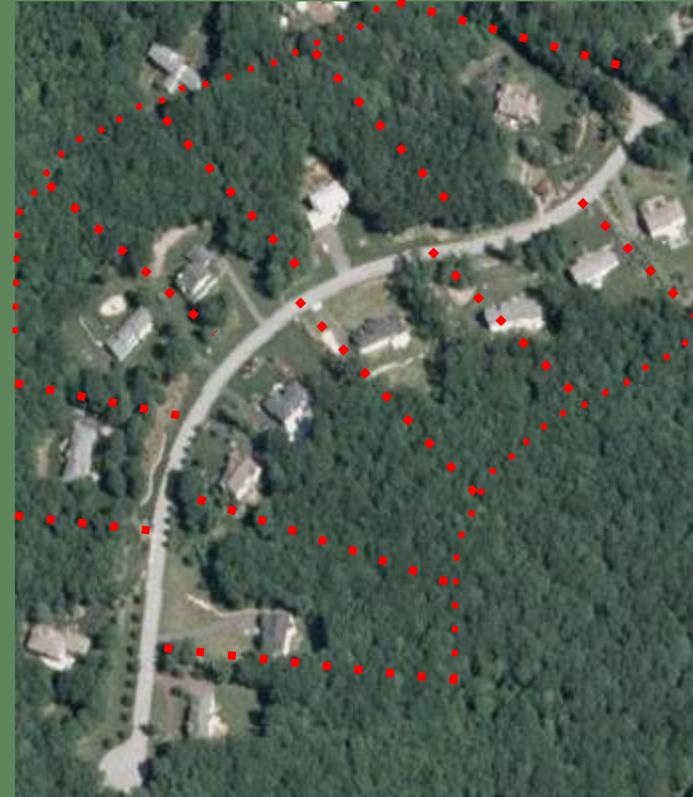


We Used to Live and Work in Compact Communities....

- ◆ **Small house lots**
- ◆ **Mix of housing types**
- ◆ **Interconnected street network to disperse traffic**
- ◆ **Mixed uses; Housing, shopping and civic functions**

What is Different Now?

- ◆ **Lots have larger footprints than traditional development**
- ◆ **One dominant housing type (single family)**
- ◆ **Single-use areas – separation of industrial, business & civic uses**
- ◆ **Roads have few interconnections**
- ◆ **Traffic concentrated on collectors and arterials**



Results

- ◆ **Developed land increasing 9 times faster than population**
- ◆ **Population and jobs moving away From Urban Core**
- ◆ **Unsustainable sprawl**
- ◆ **~ 30% of state's land currently developed**



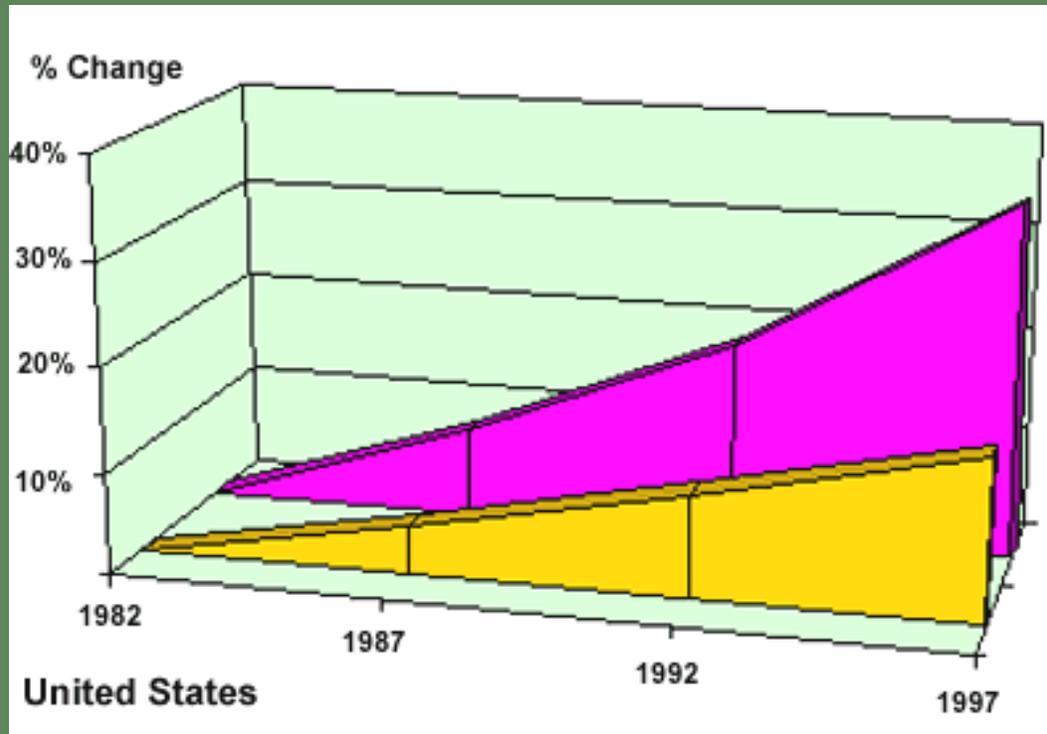
It took 330 years to develop the first 20% of our land, but just over 25 years to develop the next 10%.

Total New Developed Land by 2025

**109,000 acres or 16% of
state area**



Population & Land Development Rates in the United States

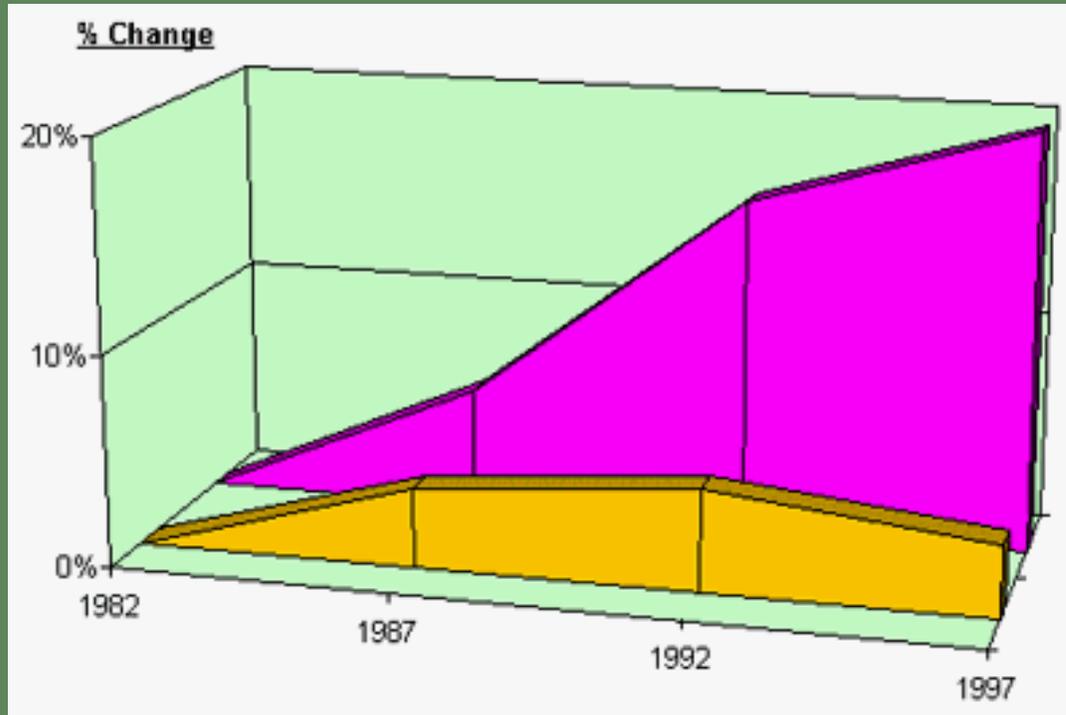


■ Population Change
■ Development



**Changes in Population & Newly
Developed Land from 1982-1997**

Rhode Island Population & Land Development Rates

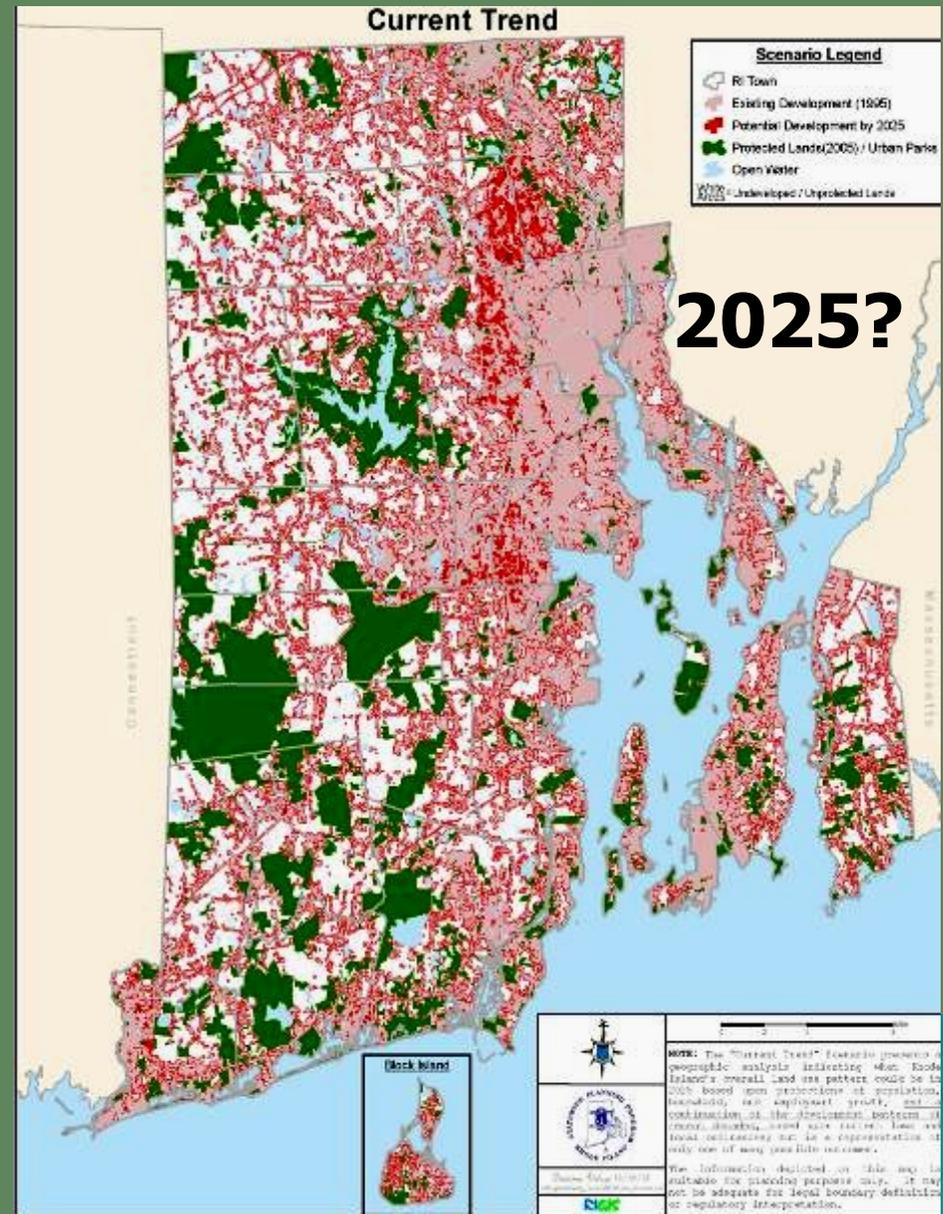
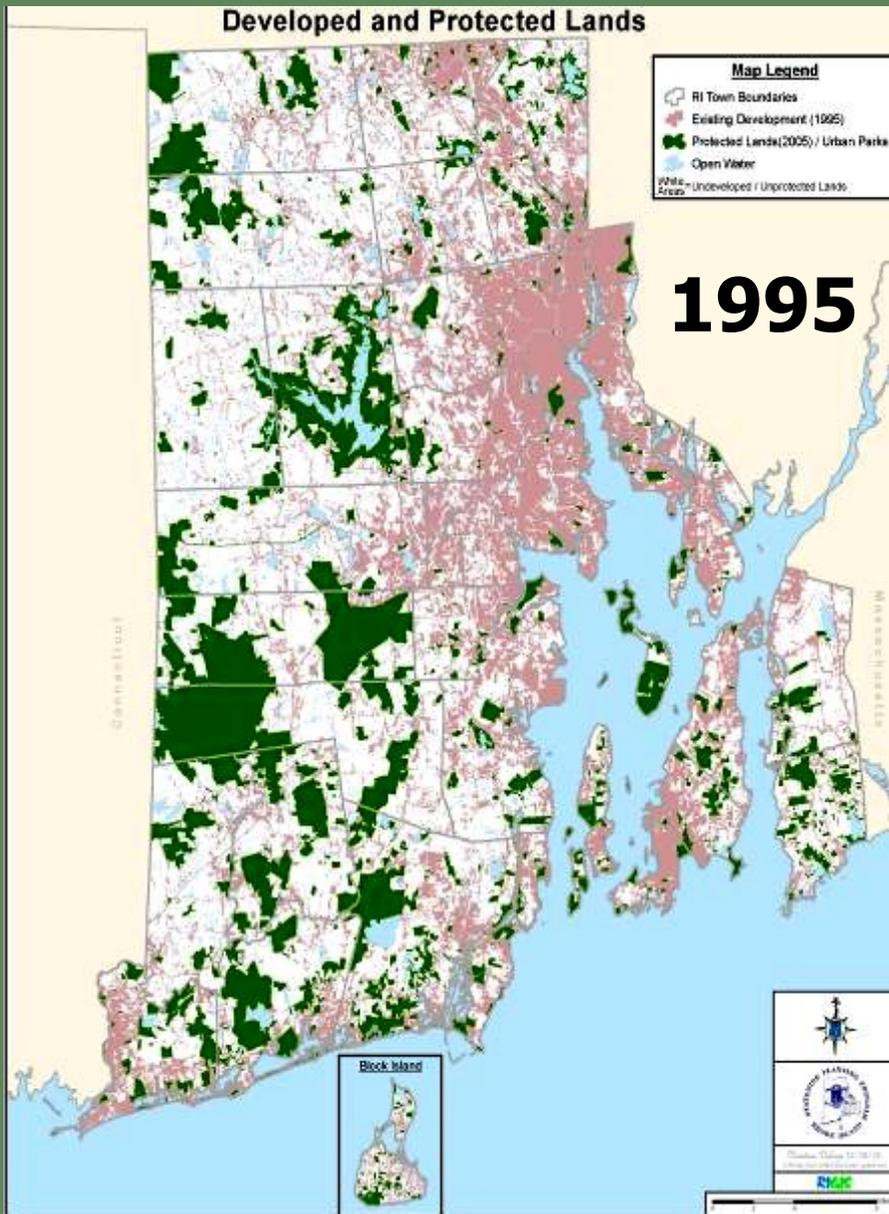


- Population Change
- Development



Changes from 1982-1997

Where are we going?



Primary Goals

A Sustainable Rhode Island



Greenspace & Greenways



Excellence in Community Design

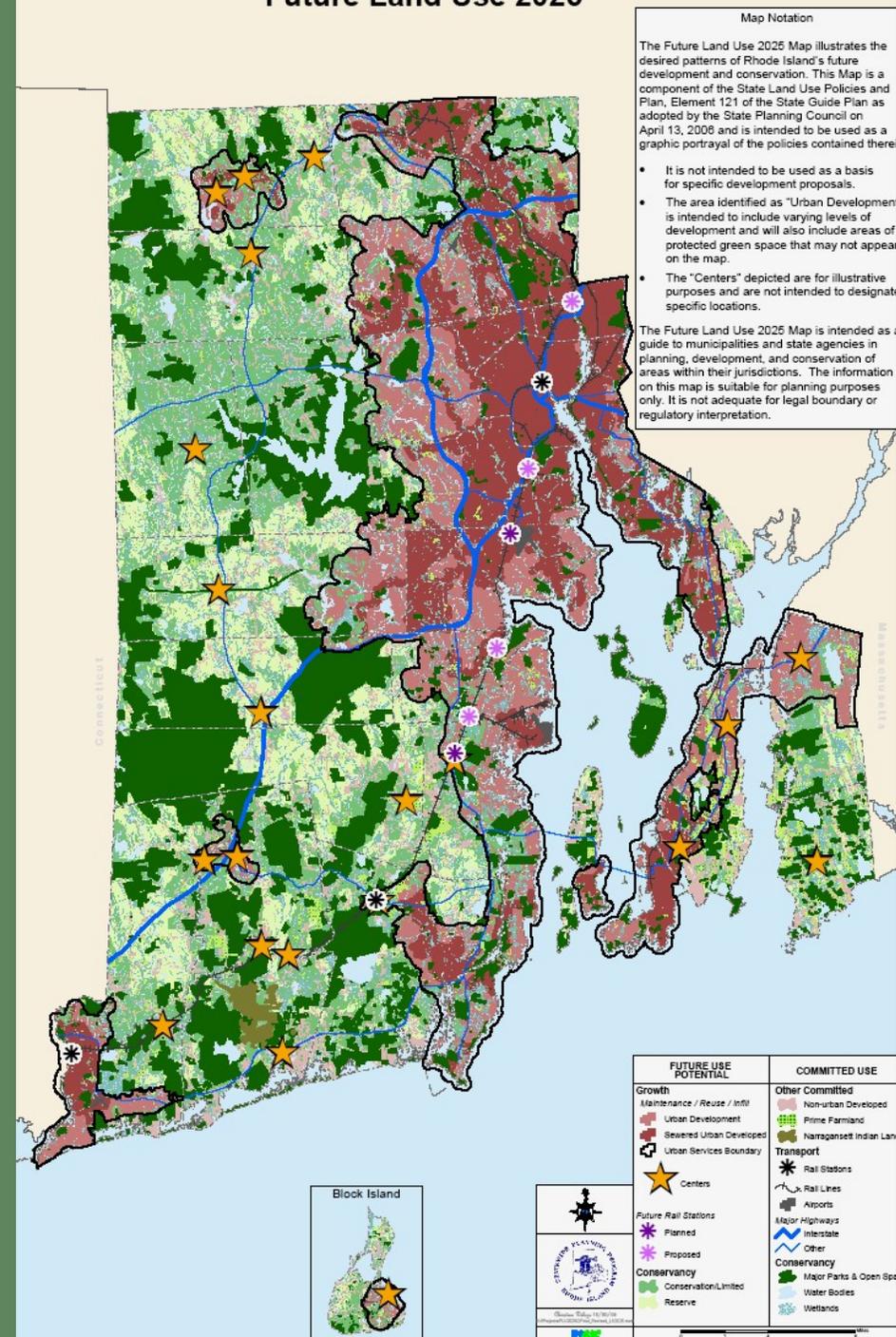


First Class Infrastructure



What Does This Look Like?

- ◆ **Concentrates growth in:**
 - **Urban Service Boundary**
 - **Growth Centers**
- ◆ **Maximizes investment in existing infrastructure**
- ◆ **Promotes more efficient development:**
 - **Infill**
 - **Rehabilitation**
 - **Higher Densities**
- ◆ **Maintains Green and Open Space**



Not all new ideas

Relate state land use policies to anticipated population growth to enhance the distinction between urban and rural places.

Use open space to control and shape urban growth.

Promote the use of higher residential densities and smaller lot frontages in urban and suburban areas, and town centers, where public water and sewer service is present or planned.

Promote low overall density where public service are not planned. Promote the clustering of development in these areas.

I'M SORRY,
GOOD INTENTIONS
AREN'T ENOUGH

HEAVENLY GATES



HEDMAN
©76

What Needs To Be Done?

State Investment Strategy that focuses support for growth- inducing development investment within the Urban Services Boundary and in Growth Centers



State Investments

Discretionary public infrastructure investments which can help shape Smart growth:

- 🕒 **Community Development – CDBG**
- 🕒 **Housing – Neighborhood Opportunities Program**
- 🕒 **Economic Development – CEDS**
- 🕒 **Land Preservation – Open Space grants, Bikeways**
- 🕒 **Drinking Water – Clean Water SRF**
- 🕒 **Wastewater – RI Clean Water Finance SRF**
- 🕒 **Transportation – Transportation Enhancement Program, CMAQ**
- 🕒 **Education – School Housing Aid**

What Are Some Of The Other Issues?

- ◆ **Affordable Housing**
- ◆ **Economic Development**
- ◆ **Resource Constraints**
 - **Water**
 - **Sewer**
- ◆ **Open Space Protection**
- ◆ **Transportation**



Property Tax Reform



A plan without data is a guess;

*A plan isn't just a list of hopes
and wishes, it develops
measurable, achievable criteria.*

The Challenge Ahead

**How do we measure
success?**

Or lack of ?



Land Use Performance Measures

To be measured within the Urban Services Boundary:

- ◆ \$\$ Investments
- ◆ # of Housing Units permitted
- ◆ Amount of Commercial/industrial square footage constructed
- ◆ Density of housing units
- ◆ # of current Comprehensive Plans
- ◆ # of Towns with full-time planning staff

To be measured outside of Urban Services Boundary

- ◆ # of lost acres of farmland
- ◆ # of Growth Centers
- ◆ # of current Comprehensive Plans
- ◆ # of Towns with full-time planning staff

Tools to Promote Compact Development

Community Comprehensive Plans

Form based Codes

Transit Oriented Development

Projects of Regional Significance

Transfer of Development Rights

Permit Allocation Systems

Historic Tax Credits





Tools to Promote Preservation

Comprehensive Plans

Land Acquisition

Farmland Zoning

Historic Overlay Zoning

Buying Development Rights

Cluster Development

Conservation Development



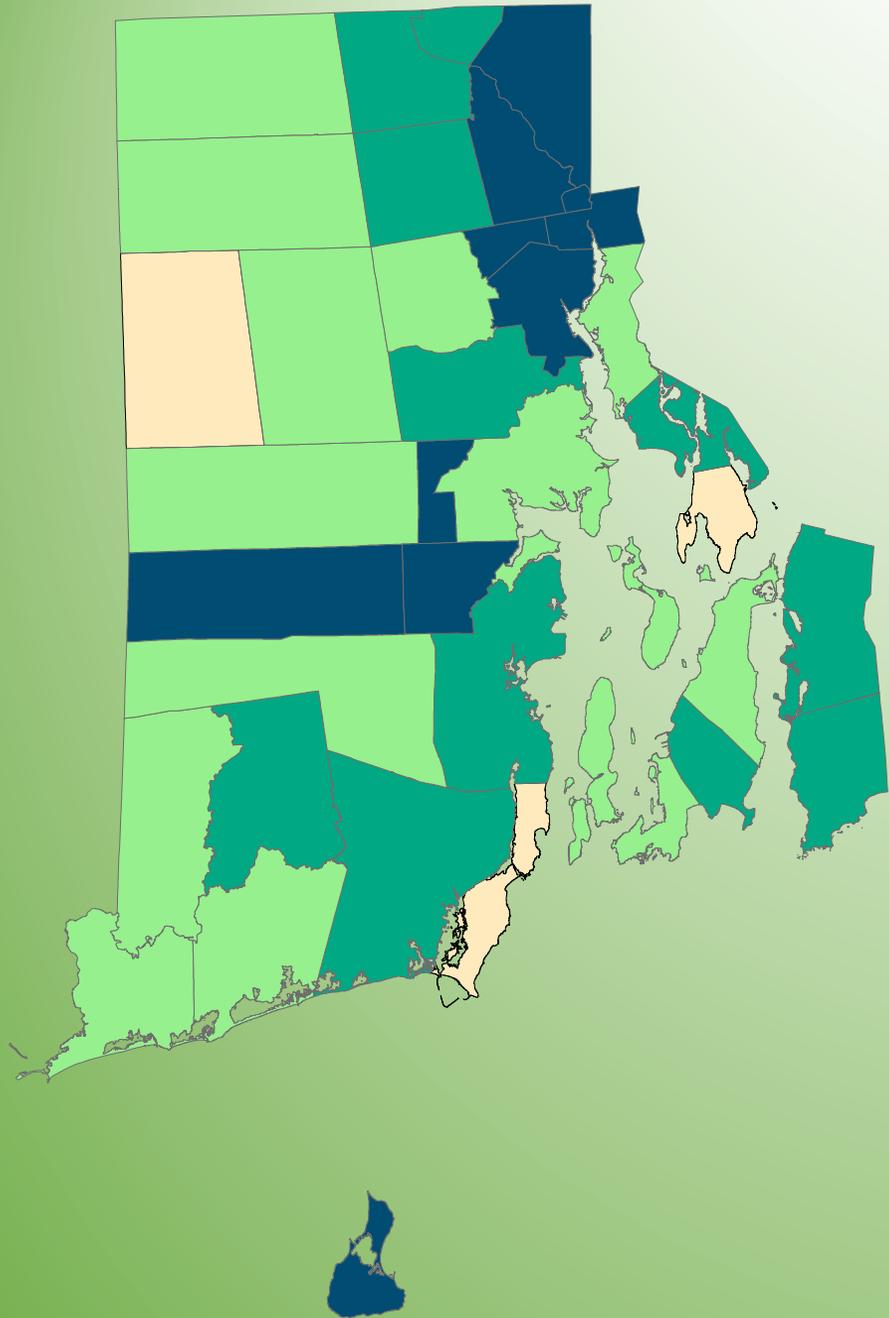
Planning Board Survey Response

Q7 What is most important land use related issue facing Rhode Island today?



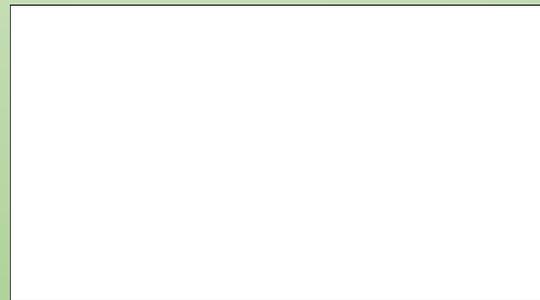
A word cloud of responses to the survey question. The words are arranged in a roughly circular pattern. The most prominent words are 'development', 'climate change', 'infrastructure', 'solar', 'planning', 'housing', 'sea level rise', 'communities', 'land use', 'green', 'need', 'energy', 'encourage', 'State', 'Keep', 'areas', 'issues', 'land use plans', 'make', 'residential', and 'sustainable'. The words are in various shades of blue and green, with 'development' and 'climate change' being the largest.

issues land use plans make residential infrastructure sustainable
planning rural housing sea level rise solar
communities development land use
climate change energy need encourage State Keep areas
green



This map shows the percent change in total population from the 2010 Census to the 2020 Census at the municipality level.

- Top 5 in terms of population growth were New Shoreham, Central Falls, East Greenwich, Cumberland and Providence
- Strong growth in northeast urban core cities
- Narragansett, Foster and Bristol lost population.



Rhode Island's Population Grew 4.3% Last Decade

Rhode Island

Click a value to the right to change the map and table.

Total Population (2020):

1,097,379

Numeric Change in Population (2010–2020):

44,812

Percent Change in Population (2010–2020):

4.3%

Housing Units (2020):

483,474

Housing Unit Vacancy Rate (2020):

8.7%

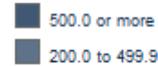
Percent Change in Housing Units (2010–2020):

4.3%

Population Density in Rhode Island Counties: 2020



People per square mile



Rhode Island Counties

(Ranked by 2020 total population)

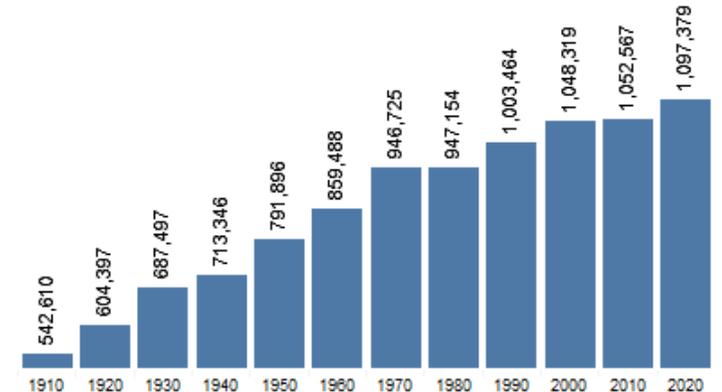
1.	Providence County	660,741
2.	Kent County	170,363
3.	Washington County	129,839
4.	Newport County	85,643
5.	Bristol County	50,793

Rhode Island Counties

(Ranked by percent change in population, 2010–2020)

1.	Providence County	5.4
2.	Newport County	3.3
3.	Kent County	2.5
4.	Washington County	2.3
5.	Bristol County	1.8

Population (1910–2020)



OTHER DATA RESOURCES



Rhode Island Maps and Data

Geospatial Data Hub

search RIGIS open data

RIGIS Online Database

The Rhode Island Geographic Information System (RIGIS) distributes open geographically-referenced datasets that represent a wide range of topics, including transportation, infrastructure, and the environment.

Rhode Island Geographic Information System

Data Collections
Metadata Resources
What's New

Data Collections



RIGIS DATA



IMAGERY



ELEVATION & BATHYMETRY



BASEMAPS



MUNICIPAL GIS



RI DEPARTMENT RESOURCES

- **Free access and downloads**
- **Several Hundred Spatial Datasets, Categories**
- **Many Contributors**
- **Managed by URI Geospatial Extension Specialists**
- **Aerial Photography – RIDSP, RIDOT, RIDEM...**

Thank You!



Questions?

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