



Rhode Island Division of Planning

Statewide Planning Program • Office of Housing and Community Development • Water Resources Board

ANNUAL REPORT 2012



RHODE ISLAND DIVISION OF PLANNING | ONE CAPITOL HILL PROVIDENCE RI 02908
401-222-7901 | www.planning.ri.gov

INTRODUCTION

The Division of Planning is a unique resource within state government with expertise across a broad spectrum of topics. The Division has core responsibilities that are legislatively mandated including:

- Preparing, maintaining, and implementing plans for the physical, economic and social development of the state;
- Regulating the proper development, protection, conservation and use of the water resources of the state; and
- Ensuring that all Rhode Islanders have access to safe and affordable housing.

The Division is led by Associate Director Kevin Flynn and has an additional 37 full time staff members in three (3) offices: the Statewide Planning Program (23 FTEs), the Office of Housing and Community Development (11 FTEs), and staff of the Water Resources Board (3 FTEs). The total budget for the Division is approximately \$19.3 million. Every \$1 of state investment in the Division is leveraged by an additional \$5 of federal funding; therefore, just 20%, or \$3.8 million, of the Division's total budget is funded through direct state contribution.

In addition to the core functions outlined above, the Division has become a leader in developing collaborative processes among different levels



Rhode Island State Capitol

of government, the non-profit sector and educational institutions sharing information, maximizing the impact of financial resources, and driving state policy.

The purpose of this annual report is to highlight the recent efforts the Division has led along several major themes:

- Driving the sound investment of financial resources;
- Developing new tools and products to assist our partner agencies; and
- Forming strategic partnerships to inform state policy

Division of Planning Leadership

Kevin Flynn, Associate Director

Statewide Planning Program

Jared Rhodes, Chief

Karen Scott, Assistant Chief

Office of Housing and Community Development

Michael Tondra, Chief

Water Resources Board

Ken Burke, General Manager

Visit <http://www.planning.ri.gov/> to learn more about the Division of Planning or any of the projects listed in this annual report.

SOUND INVESTMENT OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Of the Division's \$19.3 million budget, \$13.4 million is redistributed to municipalities, non-profits, other state agencies and educational institutions through competitive grant programs. Although the majority of these funds are federal, the Division plays a key role in their management, investment and distribution.

The main tenets of a successful grant program include a well crafted call for proposals, an engaged and diverse grant award selection committee, a top notch system for accounting and tracking grant funds, and an informed staff ready to provide technical assistance to ensure each grant's successful implementation. These are the elements that the Division of Planning staff provide to a series of grant programs, outlined below, to ensure not only the wise use of financial resources but the confidence of our federal partners to continue to invest in Rhode Island.

Transportation Improvement Program

In 2012, the Division, through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) process, scheduled over \$1.2 billion worth of transportation projects that the State intends to implement over the next four years. The 2012 cycle is particularly noteworthy since it represents the first time since 2004 that the submission of potential projects was open to all state agencies, municipalities and the general public for all categories of the TIP. In conducting the review, staff and members of the State's Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC):

- Reviewed over 300 local project proposals totaling several hundred million dollars;
- Utilized an open review process that included 24 public hearings and opportunities for public input; and
- Concluded with the production of a TIP that raised the bar in terms of information provision and that has been hailed as the most transparent for the State to date.



Providence Viaduct



Washington Secondary Bike Path

SOUND INVESTMENT OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Planning Challenge Grants \$1,000,000 Awarded in 2012

This unique grant program is fully supported with planning funds provided through the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration. It was initially developed by the Statewide Planning Program in 2006 as a means to further the implementation of the State's official land use plan, Land Use 2025, and the State's long range transportation plan, Transportation 2030. Together these plans urge state, local, and regional agencies to work together to create a constellation of community centers connected by infrastructure corridors and framed by greenspace.

Since 2006, the Division of Planning has provided over \$2.8 million through the Planning Challenge Grant Program to state agencies, municipalities, universities and non-profit agencies for a variety of inventive and diverse transportation and land use implementation projects. In the 2012 grant round, 14 proposals were funded. A sample of these projects include:

The City of Warwick (\$100,000)

To develop a comprehensive design manual establishing standards and guidelines for development within the Warwick Station District.

The manual will direct both public and private investment in creating a livable and sustainable community by employing smart growth principles that result in a walkable, mixed-use city center characterized by a variety of transportation, work and leisure options as well as mixed-income housing choices.

Cities of Pawtucket and Central Falls (\$100,000)

For the production of a real estate development strategy for properties along portions of the Blackstone River. The strategy will address historic preservation, affordable housing, and intermodal transportation. Most importantly, this project will position the two cities to accelerate the revitalization of significant yet underutilized economic assets which exist within the corridor.

University of Rhode Island and the Town of North Kingstown (\$100,000)

For the development of a prioritized strategy for addressing the very real threats that the Town faces from climate change and sea level rise in particular. For example and as revealed from a previous award, there is approximately \$32.4 million of total property value expected to be threatened by sea level rise within Town.



Slater Mill in Pawtucket



North Kingstown Seal Level Rise Map

SOUND INVESTMENT OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES



Kaiser Mill in Bristol



Storefront Improvements in Bristol

Community Development Block Grants \$4,584,584 Distributed in Program Year 2012

The primary objective of this grant program is to provide decent housing, expanded economic opportunity and suitable living environments for low and moderate income persons. In the 2012 grant round, 30 municipalities submitted 300 proposals requesting over \$8.5 million in funding. A sampling of the types of projects that this funding supports is listed below.

Housing Rehabilitation

Grants, deferred loans, and low interest loans are provided to home owners to eliminate housing code violations and lead paint hazards. In calendar year 2012, which is the most recent data available, \$1.3 million was invested to assist 145 properties statewide. This work allows low and moderate income families and the elderly to remain safely in their homes.

Economic Development

The CDBG program supports a number of local efforts regarding job preparedness and providing fundamental skills to successfully enter the workforce. For example, the Westerly WARM Shelter Employment Readiness program

provided job training services to 94 shelter residents during 2012. This same program saw 64 individuals become employed in 2011.

Neighborhood Revitalization

CDBG also funds comprehensive, multi-year neighborhood revitalization activities in low and moderate income neighborhoods. For example, the MOSAICO Community Development Corporation has partnered with the Town of Bristol in implementing improvements that benefit the local economy and neighborhood residents which include the creation of elderly housing, new pedestrian amenities, storefront improvements in 39 businesses, and residential housing rehabilitation. In tandem with physical improvements, a variety of homeownership and job training programs have been provided to neighborhood residents. This work continues with \$200,000 awarded in 2012 for improvements at the historic Kaiser Mill to attract new businesses and create more jobs within the community.

SOUND INVESTMENT OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Disaster Recovery Grants March 2010 Flooding \$9 million (multi-year initiative)

Rhode Island has received a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Disaster Recovery supplemental allocation of \$9 million to support long term recovery efforts related to the floods experienced in March 2010. These funds were allocated through a competitive application process by the Division of Planning. Funds are being used to support a variety of activities including but not limited to:

- Full reconstruction of the residence of a very low income family, cleaning of seven (7) detention ponds to improve stormwater storage capacity and minimize flooding risk, and improvements to fire station property in Richmond.
- Rehabilitation of 10 flood damaged rental properties, restoration of the Public Works access road, and 9,650 linear feet of drainage and pavement reconstruction in Westerly.
- Stormwater and culvert improvements along Bristol's Tanyard Brook and Silver Creek.
- Floodplain capacity improvements through direct acquisition of property in Cumberland and Cranston.



2010 Flooding at Shannock Mill

An additional \$3.24 million in CDBG- Disaster Recovery funding was recently received to support long term recovery efforts related to Hurricane Sandy. The Division of Planning is working with municipalities to assure these limited resources are used most effectively.

Neighborhood Stabilization Program \$24.6 million (multi-year initiative)

The Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) was designed to assist in the revitalization of communities hardest hit by the foreclosure crisis. Funds are primarily used to assist in the redevelopment of abandoned and foreclosed properties, stabilizing communities and eliminating blight. Activities have been funded in 11 communities with the majority of funding focused on urban neighborhoods such as West Elmwood, Smith Hill and South Providence. These funds will assist in the redevelopment of nearly 400 units across the state.

This program is improving the lives of Rhode Islanders. Families have moved into affordable and modernized housing units, formerly homeless United States military veterans now have new apartments to call home, and once vacant lots have been redeveloped into new housing units that contribute to the health of the entire State.

SOUND INVESTMENT OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES



Drilling Test Wells on Block Island

South County Well Development Program \$7 million (multi-year initiative)

The South County Well Development Program administered by the Water Resources Board (WRB) identifies, procures, develops and protects new and existing sources of groundwater in Washington County. The program is currently funded through \$7 million in general obligation bonds that were approved by the voters of Rhode Island in 2004.

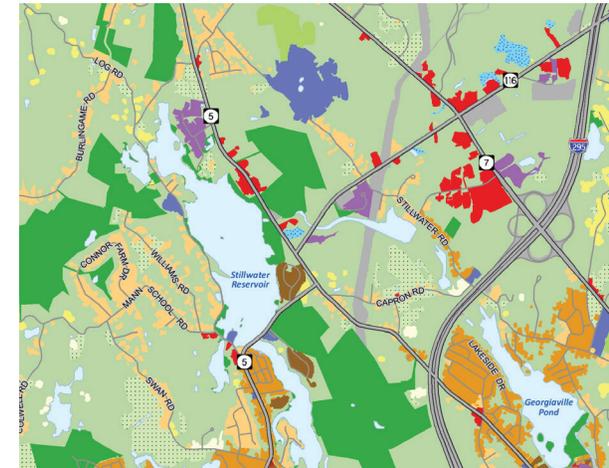
As part of the Well Development Program, WRB staff collaborated with the Block Island Water Company, The Nature Conservancy, the Block Island Land Trust, and private property owners to preserve a 4.5 acre site, strategically located close to the Town's water treatment facility. The Town will now develop this site as a new sustainable source of water for the residents of Block Island, ensuring continued availability of potable, affordable drinking water for the Island. This acquisition also helped advance the Town's goal of conserving 50% of the island's land area.

Enterprise Geographic Information System

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) provide a common holding area for mapped information and specialized tools to analyze that information and assist with problem-solving. Currently each State agency that undertakes mapping and geographic data analysis has to use their own "container", or database, from which they pull data to produce maps. With funds secured by the Division of Planning through the Emergency Management Agency, a central shared database, will now be available for all State agencies to work from simultaneously. This will provide an incredible time savings to GIS departmental staff across several state agencies as they will have

immediate access to the most up-to-date data, resulting in quick, accurate responses to meet internal needs and those of the general public.

GIS staff in the Department of Administration, Department of Transportation, E9-1-1, Emergency Management Agency, Department of Environmental Management, Department of Health, Historic Preservation and Heritage Commission, University of Rhode Island Environmental Data Center, Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Department of Information Technology will share in this new arrangement.



Enterprise GIS brings together data from multiple sources

NEW TOOLS AND PRODUCTS

There are many types of products and tools that state agencies, municipalities and others involved in public policy are in need of to inform their decision making but as individual agencies, they often do not have the resources to purchase or create. The Division of Planning, with its expertise over many topic areas and relationships with outside agencies, is a logical place to develop these types of tools and products that are of statewide significance.

In order to gauge the needs of our municipal partners, the Division conducted a technical assistance survey. Topics that were repeatedly cited in the survey include assistance with renewable energy planning, technical assistance in GIS and data analysis, and economic development planning. The Division will continue to use the results of this survey to guide the development of future tools of statewide interest.



Wind Turbine at Field's Point in Providence

Renewable Energy Siting Guidelines, Part I Interim Siting Factors for Terrestrial Wind Energy Systems

As directed by the RI Comprehensive Energy Conservation, Efficiency and Affordability Act, the Division produced Rhode Island's first ever renewable energy facility siting guidelines for utility-scale wind turbines. To accomplish this, the Division created a stakeholder forum for addressing wind turbine issues by forging partnerships across opposed factions in the form of an advisory committee.

Over the course of a year, the Division worked to expand the overall level of knowledge of the Committee about wind turbines and provided technical information on siting issues. Many debates were facilitated by Division staff on issues associated with wind energy. By fostering understanding between stakeholders, the Division was able to produce Renewable Energy Siting Guidelines, Part 1 - Interim Siting factors for Terrestrial Wind Energy Systems, a guidance document that will help municipalities address their wind energy system needs.

NEW TOOLS AND PRODUCTS

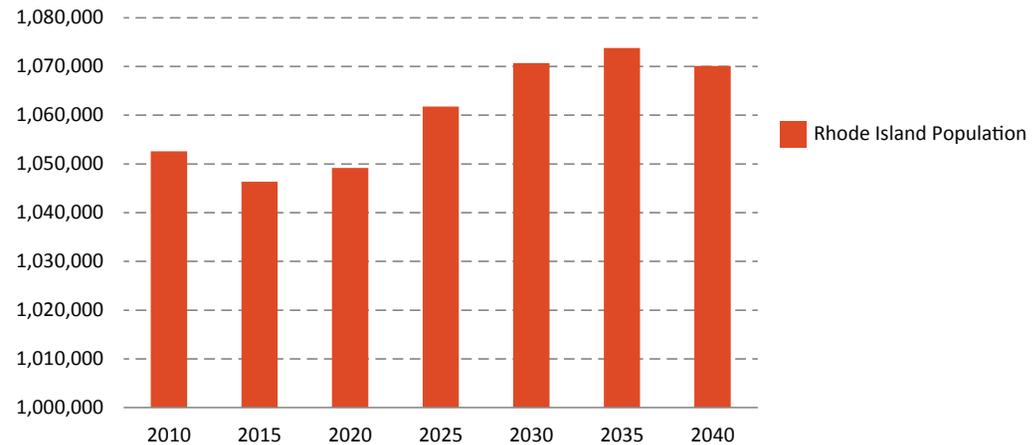
Population Projections

In an effort to provide valuable and coordinated statistical and planning information to municipalities, state agencies, and other service providers; the Division of Planning developed new population projections through the year 2040. The projections forecast the state's total population, as well as the populations of all municipalities, at 5 year intervals through 2040. These projections will help state and local officials understand and prepare for expected demographic change.

The Division developed an original model for the projections to make the best use of available data including population counts and estimates, births, deaths, and net migration by year, age, and race. The draft projections were distributed to municipalities for comment so that major local events affecting population counts could be considered. This feedback was incorporated into the final analysis.

A population projection report, which discusses the findings and suggests some key points of significance for state and local planning is available on the Division of Planning website.

Rhode Island Population Projections: 2010 to 2040



Light Detecting and Ranging Data (LIDAR)

As part of a federal initiative, the New England states banded together to develop a single, consistent, regional LIDAR program, which is serving as a pilot for a national program. LIDAR is a type of digital elevation data that provides a level of precision and accuracy in topography that far exceeds what is currently available to most of the nation. As part of this project, Rhode Island would receive very accurate data for coastal communities and less accurate data for the rest of the state. The Division secured funds from several sources to purchase the more accurate data for the entire state, vastly expanding the usefulness of the data to many different types of analyses.

The data will be free and available to municipalities, businesses and the general public. This data may be used in:

- Assessing and improving transportation infrastructure,
- Identifying suitable sites for alternative energy development,
- More effective and efficient communication and utility equipment deployment,
- Determining risks from climate change and sea level rise,
- Preparedness, response and recovery from natural disasters, and
- Better watershed protection and wastewater management.

STATE POLICY

A key role of the Division of Planning is to engage groups of diverse stakeholders around major issues facing the State to develop state policy that speaks as one voice, comprised of many interests. The Division strives to put forth specific implementation plans on a variety of topic areas that will inspire continued collaboration towards a common vision, elevating the effectiveness of all involved.

Rhode Island Water 2030

The Division completed a new State Guide Plan element, Rhode Island Water 2030. Prior to the completion of Water 2030, the State's goals and policies for drinking water were spread across five separate State Guide Plan elements, making it very difficult for water suppliers, municipalities and members of the general public to review and collectively understand. Utilizing an advisory committee of stakeholders representing public and private drinking water suppliers, environmental organizations and state agencies, one cohesive State Guide Plan element, Water 2030, was created to set state policy for all

drinking water used in the State of Rhode Island, ensuring that fresh and healthy drinking water is available to all state residents.

Water 2030 also meets the planning requirements set forth in the Water Use and Efficiency Act, passed in 2009. This act requires more coordination of water supply information with land use planning. As an Element of the State Guide Plan, RI Water 2030 helps to provide that coordination as the goals and policies set out in Water 2030 must be incorporated into municipal comprehensive plans.

For the first time, state policy as documented in Water 2030, calls for the regionalization of the state's water supply. Of the 490 community water suppliers in RI, 464 are small systems (i.e., serving fewer than 1,000 customer connections). About 1/2 of these small systems are privately owned, serving fewer than 100 connections and operated by part-time employees. In an effort to ensure that a safe and adequate drinking water supply is maintained, Water 2030 calls for integrated planning and regionalization where appropriate to better balance future water demands against water availability.



Carr River, Big River Management Area



Scituate Reservoir

STATE POLICY



RhodeMap RI: Building a Better Rhode Island

RhodeMap RI is a state-led effort to develop a vision and a set of comprehensive policy steps to strengthen our communities. The Division of Planning, in collaboration with state agencies, municipalities, non-profit organizations, and residents will craft an integrated plan with economic development, housing, environmental and transportation strategies to create communities in which Rhode Islanders can live, work, and thrive. Together we will seek answers to basic questions about what we want for Rhode Island.

- Where should we direct future investments in housing, infrastructure, and businesses to have the greatest positive impact on the state?
- How do we build strong, resilient communities with jobs and housing for all Rhode Islanders?
- How do we create lasting partnerships to inform state policy and drive implementation?

The Division of Planning will seek answers for these questions through a three year, \$2.4 million Sustainable Communities Regional Planning grant it received from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. Rhode Island's grant began in February 2012, and in the first year, the Division of Planning has focused on preparation and outreach; the planning process is now underway.

Already RhodeMap RI has produced two reports that provide timely data and analysis on the state's economy, focusing on business climate and social equity respectively. Both reports were developed collaboratively, and the information they contain benefits not only the work of RhodeMap RI but also other state partners including, the Department of Health, the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation, and the Department of Labor and Training.



Downtown Westerly



Housing Construction in Providence

STATE POLICY



I-195 Land in Providence



Growth Centers Conceptualization

Continuing to build strong partnerships and creating efficiencies among state agencies and municipalities will be critical to the success of RhodeMap RI. A Consortium composed of representatives of state agencies, municipalities, universities and non-profit organizations, will lead the project. The group will work with community members, government officials, business owners, and non-profit leaders to integrate the strategies and recommendations that emerge through RhodeMap RI with the state's existing land use, transportation, and water plans.

The Division of Planning will focus on three key areas through RhodeMap RI.

Economic Development

Develop a new economic development vision that builds on the state's existing assets to position it for future growth and build strong communities. It will identify the industries in which the state should make investments as well as the regulatory, marketing, and financial strategies it should implement in order to achieve the vision. It will provide a framework for decisions on future investments so that they align with existing infrastructure and the state's land use, transportation, and environmental priorities.

Housing

Create a new state housing plan that ensures that housing is accessible to households at all income levels and located in proximity to jobs and other opportunities. The plan will direct housing development and investment at the state and local levels through strategies that promote compact, sustainable growth, expands energy efficient housing choices, and strengthens Rhode Island's communities.

Growth Centers

Collaborate with partners from around the state to determine how and where Rhode Island should develop growth centers. Growth Centers are areas of the state that already have a core of residential and commercial development or are well suited to planned, future development. Through RhodeMap RI, the state's municipalities will receive maps and tools to aid them in identifying and locating their own growth centers.

STATE POLICY



Social Equity and Public Engagement

Underlying the entire project is a commitment to social equity and meaningful public involvement. A Social Equity Advisory Committee composed of residents and representatives from community organizations will be involved in all elements of the project to help ensure that the needs of all Rhode Islanders are incorporated into the planning process and its outcomes.

Through this effort we will also develop new tools and products to aid our partner agencies, local governments, and others to provide the

capacity necessary to implement RhodeMap RI. In order to be successful, municipal officials and staff must be fluent and comfortable with the principles and practices of sound land use planning, economic development and other related subjects, and community members need to know how to participate meaningfully in planning and decision-making processes.

RhodeMap RI will produce a unified vision for the state, one that integrates the economic development, housing, and growth centers elements of the project with Rhode Island's

existing policies and plans on land use, transportation, and water. Its implementation will require a similarly coordinated effort by a diverse group of state, local, and non-profit partners, and the RhodeMap RI implementation strategy will detail how we can work with our partners to realize its vision. It will include indicators through which the state can measure its progress towards the goals and strategies of the project. They will help ensure that implementation occurs in a coordinated, financially sound manner.

LOOKING AHEAD



Downtown Providence



Aerial View of Warwick

As outlined in this annual report, the Division of Planning serves an important role in State government. By uniting competing interests to set sound state policy and ensure responsible investment of the state's resources, the Division is at the forefront across a range of topics including water supply, economic development, transportation, renewable energy, housing, land use and GIS. Moving into the coming year, the Division will focus on several issues of statewide significance:

- Continued implementation of RhodeMap RI, including the development of State Economic Development and Housing Plans.
- Continued cooperation with the Office of Energy Resources to develop the State's Energy Plan.
- Continued cooperation with the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation to develop the State's Solid Waste Management Plan.
- Solicitation of projects for Community Development Block Grants and Disaster Recovery Grants.
- Development of a process to distribute the voter approved affordable housing bond of \$25 million.



RI Resource Recover Facility in Johnston

Thank you for your interest in the Division of Planning. We'd love to hear from you.

Please contact Kevin Flynn, Associate Director of the Division of Planning at (401) 222-7901 for more information about any of the projects highlighted in this report or the Division of Planning in general.

Visit <http://www.planning.ri.gov/> to learn more about the Division of Planning or any of the projects listed in this annual report.

DIVISION OF PLANNING STAFF

Kevin M. Flynn
Associate Director for Planning

Statewide Planning Program

Jared Rhodes, Chief
Karen Scott, Assistant Chief

Transportation

Linsey Callaghan, Supervising Planner
Michael Moan, Principal Planner
Ronnie Sirota, Principal Planner
Benjamin Jacobs, Principal Research Technician

Land Use

Nancy Hess, Supervising Planner
Jeff Davis, Principal Planner
Paul Gonsalves, Senior Planner

Sustainable Communities

Melanie Jewett Army, Supervising Planner
Chris Witt, Principal Planner

Comprehensive Planning and Consistency Review

Kevin Nelson, Supervising Planner
Chelsea Siefert, Principal Planner
Benny Bergantino, Senior Planner

Planning Information Center

Vincent Flood, Supervising Planner
Shane White, Supervising GIS Specialist/
RIGIS Coordinator
Christina Delage Baza, GIS Specialist II
Amanda Martin, Principal Planner
Kim A. Gelfuso, Information Services
Technician II

Support Staff

Paul Capotosto, Principal Accountant
Dawn Vittorioso, Executive Assistant

Office of Housing and Community Development

Michael Tondra, Chief

Community Development

Charles Kimes, Sr., Planning & Program
Development Specialist
Karen C. Marshall, Housing Commission
Coordinator

Housing Resources Commission

Simon Kue, Housing Commission Coordinator
Raymond Neirinckx, Housing Commission
Coordinator
Darlene Price, Housing Commission
Coordinator
Laura Sullivan, Program Services Officer
Michelle Brophy, Interagency Commission on
Homelessness Coordinator

Local Government Assistance

June B. House, Supervisor

Water Resources Board

Ken Burke, General Manager
Kathleen Crawley, Staff Director
Romeo Mendes, Supervising Civil Engineer



Image Credits

Cover:

Housing: SWAP, Inc.

MBTA Train: Rhode Island Department of Transportation

Narragansett: Timothy Valentine (Flickr)

Sail Boats: Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation

Steel Yard: Jess Zimbabwe (Flickr)

Waterplace Park: Matt Ducke (Flickr)

Page 1

State Capitol: J. Stephen Conn (Flickr)

Page 3

Providence Viaduct: Rhode Island Department of Transportation

Page 5

Shannock Flooding: peppergrass (Flickr)

Page 8

Wind Turbine: Michael Spring/Narragansett Bay Commission

Page 10

Westerly: Doug Kerr (Flickr)

Housing: SWAP, Inc.

Page 11

Growth Center: Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

Page 13

Landfill: Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation

Page 15

Providence Skyline: Jef Nickerson



RHODE ISLAND DIVISION OF PLANNING | ONE CAPITOL HILL PROVIDENCE RI 02908
401-222-7901 | www.planning.ri.gov