

June 2020

Planner's Coffee Hour Every Weds.

There will be a virtual coffee “hour” for RI planners every Wednesday in June from 9AM-9:45AM. Please join us for planning discussion, support, problem-solving and community. Hang out with a morning beverage and see your fellow planners! No need to register: just drop in. Hosted by the RI Division of Statewide Planning. Contact [Roberta Groch](#) to submit a discussion topic. To join the event- <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86130756490>



RI Supreme Court Affirms Providence Ordinance

On May 27, the RI Supreme Court ruled in favor of the City of Providence, affirming a prior judgment that an amendment to the Providence Zoning Ordinance that restricts the number of unrelated persons who may live together in single-family homes in certain residential areas did not violate the Plaintiffs' right to equal protection or due process under the RI Constitution. The Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of a zoning ordinance that limits to three the number of college or graduate students who can live in a single-family home in certain zoning districts. The ordinance was the result of complaints from residents near RI College and Providence College that student noise, public drunkenness, traffic, parking problems and an increase in crime were threatening neighborhood real estate values.

In *Federal Hill Capital, LLC vs. City of Providence*, the owner of a single-family home in an R-1 district, and the four plaintiff-college students who were renting the property filed a declaratory judgment action against the City to invalidate the 2015 zoning amendment (which impacts a three-square-mile area intended for lower density residential development). They asserted that the City had violated the Due Process and Equal Protection clauses of the RI Constitution and that the ordinance violated the right of people to choose where and with whom they live; they also argued that it was not rationally related to a legitimate government interest.

In its decision, the RI Supreme Court cited the landmark 1974 case *Village of Belle Terre v. Boraas* which upheld the police power of government through zoning as a valid basis for establishing residential zones that can limit the number of unrelated individuals inhabiting a dwelling. The Supreme Court affirmed that the Providence zoning

amendment was rationally related to the legitimate state purpose of preserving the residential character of certain neighborhoods and that there was no constitutional violation.

For more information or discussion about the court case and its impact on local land use regulations, please contact Joshua.Oneill@doa.ri.gov.

No Tolling for Municipalities



The Governor's Office has definitively decided that RI municipal planners and their boards will not receive any time extensions for reviewing planning and zoning applications (known as "tolling"). All time frames currently in place will continue unchanged.

There is no word on whether development projects will receive extensions of municipal approvals that have already been granted, as has happened in the past, most notably during the Great Recession.

RI Freight Origins/Destinations Webinar

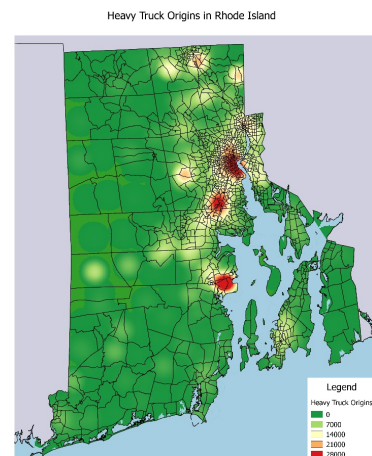
Supervising Planner Josh O'Neill, AICP and Principal Research Technician Benjamin Jacobs recently gave a [webinar](#) on an analysis on freight truck trip origins and destinations within Rhode Island as part of a meeting of the [Eastern Transportation Coalition](#) (formerly the I-95 Corridor Coalition), an alliance of state transportation agencies, and regional MPOs that provides a forum for key decision and policy makers. Using purchased vehicle probe data and "big data" analytics software platform allowed analysis of truck trip origin and destination data that RI Planning previously had no access to.

Staff had some initial questions: Where and how were freight origins and destinations concentrated? Where and how were they concentrated and distributed? What communities and what facilities hosted the highest truck origin volume? And lastly, which communities should be targeted for further study to better manage truck freight traffic?

Using Trip Analytics Tools and features to begin answering these questions, staff quickly decided that "heat maps" of the truck origin and destination clusters would improve data visualization.

Mason Perrone, Principal Planner, assisted with creating statewide heat maps, as well as community-specific heat maps. The top communities for truck freight traffic are Providence, North Kingstown, Johnston, Warwick, Cranston, Newport, Woonsocket, and Cumberland.

For more information on this project, view [the webinar](#), [the PowerPoint presentation](#), or [the Q-and-A session](#): or contact Joshua.ONEill@doa.ri.gov.



I looked at the blank column in front of me this morning and thought: "Where do I start?" It's like that moment when you start a new job, or make the choice to make a change that impacts your career or personal life in a significant way. There are so many things I'd like to discuss, and so many upcoming events, as well as a million other thoughts running through my head on this Monday morning, the very first day of June 2020.

There are things that have become easier with social distancing measures in place and while teleworking: most notably the commute, which for me has gone from 45 minutes to an hour to a hop, skip, and a jump over the dog, with an occasional detour to avoid the cat. However, one side-effect of moving to a digital platform is that it suddenly seems easier to gather larger groups of people without the need to be physically present in a room somewhere. We've had nearly perfect attendance at several large-scale meetings, and we're finding people joining us by phone, tablet, and laptop from all over Rhode Island. The virtual meeting is no longer geographically dependent. With my undergraduate degree in geography and an undying interest in maps, I wonder how it is that we can map the virtual world? Is there a geography of zoom meetings and chat rooms?

Speaking of virtual events, we're still working to achieve a complete count in Rhode Island as part of the 2020 Census. We are hosting a weekly Census Coffee Hour every Tuesday at 10AM (not to be confused with the Planner's Coffee Hour on Wednesday!), and we continue to collect, report on, and map response rates throughout Rhode Island's 39 municipalities (and in certain hard-to-count (HTC) tracts). As you are probably aware, Check out our [Census 2020 page](#) on the Division's website for links and more information. Who's got the highest response rate in Rhode Island so far? Click the link and see! You can also join us TOMORROW (June 2) at 10AM ([ZOOM Link](#)) to talk about seasonal housing - if nobody lived there on April 1, 2020, what then?

Which brings me to current events. I'd really like to have a meaningful conversation about our systems, social justice, equity issues, and being a change agent: the topic is so broad and important that I've got that big, blank page feeling all over again. Where do we start?

I went in search of some inspiration, and came across Paul Davidoff's "[Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning](#)" from the Journal of the American Institute of Planners in 1965. I'm sure I read this article before, probably sometime between Fall 1992 and Spring 1994 while I was at CPAD. However, never before have the words really hit home.

"The present can become an epoch in which the dreams of the past for an enlightened and just democracy are turned into a reality. The massing of voices protesting racial discrimination have roused this nation to the need to rectify racial and other social injustices."

How far we've come, as we watched the SpaceX Dragon reach orbit and dock with the International Space Station. Our technology has made remarkable leaps from 1965 to the present. Still, how far we have to go. Read the Davidoff article for yourself - take a few minutes today.

Due to the on-going health emergency, please check the links to see if meetings have been canceled.

[State Planning Council](#)
June 11- 9AM via Zoom

[Technical Committee](#)
June 12- 9AM via Zoom

[Transportation Advisory Committee](#)
June 25- 5:30PM via Zoom

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

PHOTO TRIVIA

Do you know where in RI this building is located? See the answer at the bottom of the newsletter.



Virtual Events

June 3, 10, 17 & 24 [Planner's Coffee Hour](#) See the blurb above for details.

June 3 [Revitalizing Main Street](#) Hear about efforts across the state and from neighbors in Conn. and New Bedford to maintain the vitality of Main Streets and historic downtowns in this Grow Smart RI webinar. Time: 10AM. Registration: \$10.

June 3 [Saving Land, Water, and Money With Smart Local Land Use Regulations.](#) Adopting nature-based and LID solutions can help effectively manage stormwater while conserving land and protecting water quality. Learn how Mass Audubon's Bylaw Review Tool can give land use regulations a tune-up. Time: 1PM-2PM. Free.

June 4 [Regional Strategies for Recovery.](#) Economic developers, chambers and businesses of all sizes are wondering: "What's next?" This Northeast Economic Development Association discussion will address how to get through new business hurdles and opportunities presented by the crisis. Time: 10AM. Free.

June 5 [Building Resilience: Covid-19 and Climate Change.](#) The Climate Adaptation Forum hosts a conversation on resilience and the connections between Covid-19 and climate change; how our responses can make us more resilient to future threats; what climate resilience looks like in this new reality; and to highlight success stories. Time: 9AM-12PM. There is a fee for this event.

June 5 [Tactical Urbanism: Project Delivery for a Post-Pandemic World.](#) Tactical Urbanism provides an opportunity for cities and advocates to advance existing or develop new projects in a time of constrained resources and social uncertainty: Time: 1PM-2:30PM. 1.5 CM credits for live viewing only.

June 6 [Virtual RI Statewide Planning Institute](#) This one-day training for members of RI planning boards, zoning boards, historic district commissions, conservation commissions, municipal staff, and city/town councils is open to appropriate boards/commissions, as well as municipal staff. Free, but registration is required. Time: 8AM-5PM.

June 9 [Engaging Youth in Planning.](#) Learn about how to engage youth in the planning process and how to teach young people about urban planning. Time: 1PM-2PM. Free. 1

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June 10 [Mitigating the Economic Impacts of COVID-19 in Rural Areas](#). Rural areas have higher poverty rates, are still struggling to recover from the Great Recession, and have a higher share of the most immediately vulnerable industries. The role local organizations in connecting small businesses to resources will be discussed. Time: 2PM-3PM.

June 10-13 [Congress for New Urbanism: Virtual National Conference](#). The CNU Conference will include 55-70 sessions and pre-Congress webinars. There will be sessions, live Q-and-A with speakers, social gatherings, and plenaries. [Registration options](#) vary from \$90-\$450; prices increase after June 5.

June 11 [Remote Recovery: Shifting Your Budget During a Crisis](#). The United States is facing a historic economic downturn: how will state and local governments balance their budgets amid this new reality? What assistance do they need? Time: 3PM-4PM. Free.

June 16 [Equitable Inclusion in Virtual Community Engagement](#). How can community leaders continue to engage stakeholders and the public in local decisions when staying safe means staying home? Tools and examples for staying in touch, sharing ideas, and getting interactive feedback will be discussed. Time: 2PM-3PM. Free.

June 19 [Driving Innovation to Create Aging-friendly Communities](#). Explore a variety of housing types that energize neighborhoods and make them more vibrant; discuss how building codes impact the public realm, and provide examples of how zoning codes and building codes might conflict. Time: 1PM-2:30PM. 1.5 CM credits for live viewing only.

June 24 [Empowerment through Design to Create a Choice Neighborhood](#). Examples from seven HUD Choice Neighborhoods Plans will be shared to show how to revitalize distressed public and assisted housing developments. Time: 1PM-2:30PM. 1.5 CM credits for live viewing only.

Anytime The [Eno Center for Transportation website](#) lists free on-demand [transportation planning webinars](#). **Also** check out Zoom's [free live daily trainings](#) and recorded webinars.

Grant Opportunities

June 5 [EPA Healthy Communities Grant Program](#) deadline. This program will work directly with communities to reduce environmental risks, protect and improve human health and improve the quality of life and fund projects that target resources to benefit communities at risk.

June 5 [RIDEM Supplemental Local Open Space Grant](#) deadline. This program provides up to 50% matching funds to municipalities, land trusts and non-profit land organizations to preserve open space throughout the state. DEM anticipates awarding approximately \$1 million for projects for this supplemental 2020 rounds up to \$400,000 each.

June 10 [Digital Projects for the Public](#) deadline. This National Endowment for the Humanities' program supports projects that interpret and analyze humanities in primarily digital platforms and formats, such as websites, mobile applications and tours, interactive touch screens and kiosks, games, and virtual environments.

June 10 [Publishing Historical Records Grant application](#) deadline. Projects should focus on broad historical movements in U.S. history, such as politics, law (including the social

and cultural history of the law), social reform, business, military, the arts, and projects to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

June 11 [Preservation and Access Education and Training grant](#) deadline. National Endowment for the Arts awards will be made to offer education and training programs across all stages of development. Awards help the staff of cultural institutions obtain the knowledge and skills needed to serve as effective stewards of humanities collections.

July 6 [Urban Agriculture and Innovation Production Grant Program](#) deadline. UAIP supports the development of urban agriculture and innovative production activities by funding Planning Projects and Implementation Projects led by nonprofit organizations, local or Tribal governments, and schools in areas of the United States.

July 10 [North American Wetlands Conservation Act](#) deadline. NAWCA grants increase bird populations and wetland habitat while supporting local economies, hunting, fishing, bird watching, family farming, and ranching through flood control, reducing coastal erosion, and recharging ground water. Standard and Small Grants are available.

Planning Articles of Interest

[Judge sides with Exeter over solar developer in suit](#)

[Town won't force restaurants to trade off indoor capacity](#)

[Fighting beach erosion in East Providence, the natural way](#)

[An 'avalanche of evictions' could be bearing down on renters](#)

[Prestigious grant awarded to lift up voices of Newport's North End](#)

[Working from home? Why detachment is crucial for mental health](#)

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PHOTO TRIVIA ANSWER:
Clemence-Irons House (1691)
Johnston
Photo: Historic New England