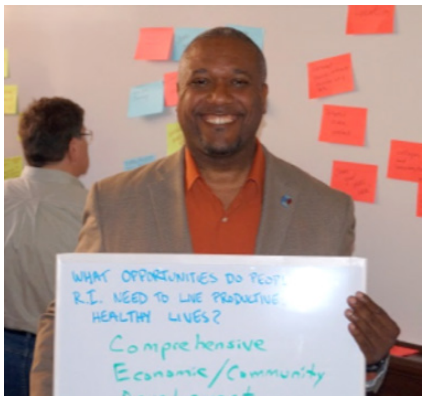
State of Rhode Island MPO



Public Participation Plan

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
DIVISION OF STATEWIDE PLANNING

Date: June 13, 2019

TITLE VI – NOTICE TO BENEFICIARIES

The Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning (RIDSP) operates its programs, services, and activities in compliance with federal nondiscrimination laws including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and related statutes and regulations. Title VI prohibits discrimination in federally assisted programs and requires that no person in the United States of America shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin (including limited English proficiency), be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal assistance. Related federal nondiscrimination laws administrated by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), or both that prohibit discrimination on the basis of age, sex, and disability. These protected categories are contemplated within RIDSP's Title VI Program consistent with federal interpretation and administration. Additionally, the RIDSP provides meaningful access to its programs, services, and activities to individuals with limited English proficiency, in compliance with US Department of Transportation (USDOT) policy and guidance on federal Executive Order 13166.

DISCLAIMER

The preparation and publication of this document were financed in part by funds provided by the USDOT, FHWA, and FTA. The provision of Federal financial assistance should not be construed as denoting U.S. Government approval of plans, policies, programs or projects contained herein.

PROGRAM OF PROJECTS – RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY

The public participation process described herein is used to satisfy the public participation process for the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority's program of projects.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction 4
Preface 4

II. Public Participation 5
What is Public Participation 5
Our Philosophy 5

III. Background 6
Organization of the MPO 6
Federal Requirements 9
State Regulations 11

IV. Participation Goals and Objectives 13

V. Participation Policy and Work Plan Principles 14

VI. Participation Engagement Strategies 15
Information Dissemination 15
Targeted Consultation 20
General Participation 23

VII. Addressing Continuing Challenges, Environmental Justice Populations and Other Traditionally Underserved Peoples 28
Major Transportation Documents 32

VIII. Evaluation 36
Annual Review 37
Performance Measures 38

IX. Conclusion 40

X. Adoption Process 41

Appendix A - Federal Requirements 42
Appendix B – Performance Measures Exit Survey 46
Appendix C – Figure A. Outreach and Notification Table 47
Appendix D – 2018 Limited English Proficiency Plan 48

INTRODUCTION

PREFACE

The Rhode Island State Planning Council (SPC), the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the State of Rhode Island, and its staff at the Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning are dedicated to involving public officials, planning professionals, transportation stakeholders, and the public with a transparent communication and engagement process to support the statewide transportation planning process. Public involvement is a process of connecting people and communities, regardless of race, color, national origin, age, income, or ability, with the opportunity to comment and provide feedback regarding future transportation programs or projects and other land use needs. Public involvement is about fostering a dialogue aimed at incorporating the views, concerns, and issues of the public into the transportation decision making process.

The SPC and its staff, the Division of Statewide Planning, as the MPO, is the lead agency responsible for meeting the federal public participation requirements for transportation projects funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation. This Public Participation Plan reinforces the SPC and Statewide Planning's commitment to transparent communications and engagement with the public and with public and private agencies to support the statewide transportation planning process. This Plan outlines the Division of Statewide Planning and SPC's responsibilities, goals, and strategies for engaging the public in its planning work. It may be used for the SPC's planning process for transportation planning including the development of the State's Long-Range Transportation Plan and State Transportation Improvement Program. The Plan may also be used for the development of the SPC's non-transportation planning areas including land use planning documents.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

WHAT IS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION?

Public participation is the process by which interested and affected individuals, organizations, agencies, and government entities are consulted and included in the decision-making process. The public includes anyone who resides, works, has an interest in, or does business in the State of Rhode Island and is potentially affected by transportation decisions. The public provides a rich source of ideas that can contribute to improving the transportation system. Community members intimately know their area's transportation issues and challenges and are invested in seeing short- and long-term solutions come to fruition.

Public participation consists of three related, and often overlapping, processes: information dissemination, targeted consultation, and general participation. Information dissemination refers to the availability and distribution of timely and relevant information about the Division of Statewide Planning's programs and projects. Targeted consultation pertains to information exchanges among Division of Statewide Planning, implementing agencies, and stakeholders. General participation is the State Planning Council's and its subcommittees engagement, through its staff, of the individuals, groups, or institutions that have an interest in the outcome of a program or project.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

The Division of Statewide Planning and the State Planning Council (SPC) believe that effective public involvement and participation is an active and ongoing process that is essential to meeting the future transportation and land use needs of all Rhode Islanders. To engage in a fair and open dialogue, there needs to be cooperative and coordinated actions with the public, private and non-profit sectors, as well as transportation stakeholders.

Effective planning cannot be achieved without the consideration and cooperation of residents throughout the state. The Division of Statewide Planning and the SPC are committed to promoting and sustaining a responsive public participation program that supports and actively seeks citizen input and timely response at all levels of planning.

BACKGROUND

ORGANIZATION OF THE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)

DEFINITION OF AREA

The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is uniquely structured in Rhode Island in that the MPO boundaries cover the entire state, which has a land area of approximately 1,045 square miles and a population of approximately 1,052,567, according to the 2010 U.S. Census. The MPO geographic boundaries include the Rhode Island portion of the Providence, RI-MA urbanized area and the Rhode Island portion of the Norwich-New London, CT-RI Urbanized Area. The MPO geographic area is fully incorporated and is comprised of 39 individual municipalities. There is no formal county government structure in Rhode Island.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

In 1974, Rhode Island Governor Philip W. Noel designated the State Planning Council (SPC) as the MPO. In 1992, Governor Bruce Sundlun reaffirmed that designation. In 2013, Rhode Island General Law (R.I. Gen. Law) § 42-11-10[1], titled Statewide Planning Program, was amended to designate the SPC as the State's single, statewide MPO. Division of Statewide Planning, described in detail below, serves as staff to the SPC.

The membership of the SPC is also articulated in R.I. Gen. Law § 42-11-10[2] and includes:

- The Director of the Department of Administration as Chairperson
- The Director, Policy Office, in the Office of the Governor, as Vice-Chairperson
- The Governor, or his or her designee
- The Budget Officer
- The Chairperson of the Housing Resources Commission
- The highest-ranking administrative officer of the Division of Planning, as Secretary
- The President of the League of Cities and Towns or his or her designee and one official of local government, who shall be appointed by the governor from a list of not less than three (3) submitted by the Rhode Island League Cities and Towns
- The Executive Director of the League of Cities and Towns
- One representative of a nonprofit community development or housing organization appointed by the Governor
- Six (6) public members, appointed by the Governor, one of whom shall be an employer with fewer than fifty (50) employees, and one of whom shall be an employer with greater than fifty (50) employees
- Two (2) representatives of a private, nonprofit environmental advocacy organization, both to be appointed by the Governor
- The Director of Planning and Development for the City of Providence

[1] http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE42/42-11/42-11-10.HTM
[2] Ibid.

- The Director of the Department of Transportation
- The Director of the Department of Environmental Management
- The Director of the Department of Health
- The Executive Director of the Economic Development Corporation
- The Commissioner of the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources
- The Chief Executive Officer of the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority
- The Executive Director of Rhode Island Housing
- The Executive Director of the Coastal Resources Management Council

It should be noted that membership changes to include additional municipal representation on the SPC is currently under review by the Rhode Island State Legislature. The legislature is expected to review these proposed changes during their 2019 legislative session.

The SPC also has three permanent advisory committees, which include:

1. The **Technical Committee** advises the Division of Statewide Planning staff, provides feedback on major plans and provides other advice as requested by the SPC. Membership of the Technical Committee parallels that of the SPC, with representatives of state agencies, local governments, citizens from different areas of the state, and federal advisory members. The Associate Director of the Division of Statewide Planning appoints staff to serves as Secretary. The Committee is intended to ensure representation of diverse interests and views in Statewide Planning's activities.

2. The **Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)** advises the SPC on transportation planning and encourages public involvement in the process. The TAC reviews and provides input into the transportation planning documents that are the responsibility of the SPC, notably the State Long Range Transportation Plan and State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The membership includes local officials, state agencies, organizations representing a variety of transportation interests, citizens from different areas of the state, and the Narragansett Indian Tribe.

3. The **Rhode Island Geographic Information System (RIGIS) Executive Committee** provides policy guidance, oversight, and coordination of the collective efforts of organizations in Rhode Island using GIS technology. It seeks to coordinate data development, adopt technical standards, set distribution policy for GIS products, promote the use of GIS, and provide information and assistance to users. The membership includes a cross-section of individuals and organizations with GIS expertise including those in federal, state, and local government, education, consulting services, and utility operation.

The Division of Statewide Planning serves as the principal staff for the SPC. The Division of Statewide Planning staff prepares and maintains the State Guide Plan which consists of a series of long-range plans for the physical, economic, and social development of the state; encourages their implementation; and coordinates the actions of state, local and federal agencies and private individuals within the framework of the state's development goals and policies. The basic charge is established by R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-11-

10[3] and § 42-11-12[4]. The Division of Statewide Planning currently consists of 19 full time staff that specialize in transportation, including freight, congestion, rail planning, as well as, land use, natural resources, comprehensive planning, geographic information systems (GIS), data analysis, local planning assistance and other related topics.

The Division of Statewide Planning also closely collaborates with several other agencies in fulfilling its duties, particularly those related to transportation planning. These agencies include:

1. Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) – the Division of Statewide Planning works cooperatively with RIDOT in carrying out all its transportation planning and air quality activities. RIDOT serves on the SPC, as well as the Technical Committee and the TAC. RIDOT has the lead responsibility in many areas of transportation including safety, intermodal planning, and system operations. The Division of Statewide Planning is an active partner and collaborator in all these areas. RIDOT also partners with the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) for the provision of commuter rail service and identifies rail transit projects for inclusion in the STIP. RIDOT is a key partner in the implementation of the State's Congestion Management Process. In addition, as the administrator of the metropolitan planning funds the state receives from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), RIDOT serves as the primary intermediary between the Division Statewide Planning and those agencies.

2. Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) – the Division of Statewide Planning works cooperatively with RIPTA, the only provider of public bus transit service in Rhode Island. RIPTA is responsible for the capital and bus transit service needs for the State. RIPTA identifies bus transit projects for inclusion in the STIP. RIPTA serves on the SPC and the TAC.

3. Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) – RIDEM has overall responsibility for compliance with the Clean Air Act, including the development and adoption of the State's air quality plan known as the State Implementation Plan (SIP). The Division of Statewide Planning closely collaborates with RIDEM in implementing the Transportation Conformity Air Pollution Control Regulation. This rule outlines the process and criteria for State agencies to determine air quality conformity, when necessary, for transportation plans and projects. RIDEM serves on the SPC and the TAC.

The Division of Statewide Planning also works with closely with Rhode Island municipalities. The MPO area is comprised of 39 cities and towns, who are key partners in the statewide transportation planning process. These municipalities serve on the SPC, its subcommittees and other committees as needed. The municipalities also help to identify and prioritize projects and provide the local knowledge and perspective needed to integrate transportation with sustainable land use, economic development, and housing.

[3] Ibid.

[4] http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE42/42-11/42-11-12.HTM

FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

Developing an effective public involvement/participation plan involves the identification of public outreach techniques and public engagement tools designed to meet the needs of a given situation relating to the development of a transportation plan, program, project or the need for public input. Current Federal statutes and regulations provide general guidelines for public involvement processes and procedures. These Federal guidelines provide great flexibility to agencies in developing specific public involvement/participation plans. However, while the set of techniques for any given situation may differ depending upon such factors as demographics and identified potential impacts, the general approach to developing a public involvement/participation plan contains elements that are relevant and responsive to all communities. This information is provided to help identify legal requirements related to engaging the public that were created to protect their right to participate and promote good practices to allow such involvement. The full text of the primary USDOT regulations for Metropolitan and Statewide Planning public participation requirements may be found in Appendix A of this Plan.

This Public Participation Plan is intended to satisfy the public participation requirements outlined in Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act of 2015 (P.L. 114-94)[5] and Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) (P.L. 112-141)[6], from July 2012. MAP-21 reaffirmed the public participation requirements outlined in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) (P.L. 112-102)[7] and further detailed in the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Regulations which were published in the Federal Register on February 14, 2007 (see Appendix A for Federal Regulations). Specifically, the public participation plan must:

- Be developed by the MPO in consultation with all interested parties
- Provide adequate and timely public notice of public participation activities
- Provide visualization techniques for plans
- Use electronically accessible formats and means
- Hold public meetings at convenient and accessible venues
- Consider and respond to public input
- Engage and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved
- Provide additional opportunity for public comment if plans change in the development process
- Coordinate with the statewide transportation planning process
- Review the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan

AIR QUALITY: TRANSPORTATION CONFORMITY

The air quality provisions of the Clean Air Act (CAA) and the metropolitan transportation planning provisions of 23 U.S.C. § 134[8] and 49 U.S.C. § 53[9] require a planning process that integrates air quality and metropolitan transportation planning such that transportation investments support clean air goals.

[5] https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-114publ94/pdf/PLAW-114publ94.pdf
[6] https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-112publ141/pdf/PLAW-112publ141.pdf
[7] https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-112publ102/pdf/PLAW-112publ102.pdf
[8] https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2012-title23/html/USCODE-2012-title23-chap1-sec134.htm
[9] https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2011-title49/html/USCODE-2011-title49-subtitleIII-chap53.htm

This process is known as transportation conformity and is carried out in accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 51[10] and 40 C.F.R. § 93[11]. Affected agencies making conformity determinations on transportation plans, programs, and projects shall establish a proactive public involvement process which provides opportunity for public review and comment by, at a minimum, providing reasonable public access to technical and policy information considered by the agency at the beginning of the public comment period and prior to taking formal action on a conformity determination for all transportation plans and TIPs. Responsibilities associated with the conformity process include;

- conduct analysis on metropolitan transportation plan/TIP,
- incorporate latest emissions factors, planning assumptions, and emissions models,
- circulate draft metropolitan transportation plan/TIP for interagency and public comment based on public involvement procedures adopted by the MPO.

TITLE 49 FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION

In accordance with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regulatory guidance, the public participation process described herein is used to satisfy the public participation process for the Program of Projects for the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA). FTA has determined that when a recipient follows the procedures of the public involvement process outlined in the FHWA/FTA planning regulations, the recipient satisfies the public participation requirements associated with development of the Program of Projects (POP) that recipients of Section 5307, Section 5337 and Section 5339 funds must meet. This Public Participation Plan is being used by the following recipient(s)* to satisfy their public participation process for the POP. This Public Participation Plan follows the procedures for public involvement associated with TIP development and therefore satisfies public participation requirements for the POP.

NONDISCRIMINATION - TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

Title VI (42 U.S.C. § 2000d et. seq.)[12] was enacted as part of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964. It prohibits exclusion from participation in, denial of benefits of, and discrimination under federally assisted programs on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs receiving federal financial assistance

AMERICAN WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990 AND OTHER RELATED LAWS

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq.)[13], prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability, as well as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 701)[14]. Together they are federal anti-discrimination laws that protect persons with disabilities. The ADA and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 provides comprehensive civil rights protections to any qualified person with a disability and it forbids discrimination not only in government programs, benefits

[10] https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2018-title40-vol2/xml/CFR-2018-title40-vol2-part51.xml
[11] https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2018-title40-vol22/xml/CFR-2018-title40-vol22-part93.xml
[12] https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2010-title42/pdf/USCODE-2010-title42-chap21-subchapV.pdf
[13] https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2009-title42/html/USCODE-2009-title42-chap126.htm
[14] https://www.dol.gov/oasam/regs/statutes/sec504.htm

and services, but also in employment practices, access to public accommodations, and telecommunications.

EXECUTIVE ORDER 12898, FEDERAL ACTIONS TO ADDRESS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IN MINORITY POPULATIONS AND LOW-INCOME POPULATIONS

Executive Order 12898[15] was signed in 1994. Its purpose is to focus federal attention on the environmental and human health effects of federal funded actions on minority and low-income populations with the goal of achieving environmental protection for all communities. This Executive Order directs federal agencies to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of actions on minority and low-income populations. The act directed all agencies to create environmental justice strategies that enhanced all programs, policies, planning and public participation processes to encourage and ensure greater public participation by minority and low-income populations.

EXECUTIVE ORDER 13166, IMPROVING ACCESS TO SERVICE PERSONS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

Executive Order 13166[16] was signed in 2000 and requires federal agencies to examine the services they provide, identify any need for services to those with limited English proficiency (LEP), and develop and implement a system to provide those services so LEP persons can have meaningful access to those services. Compliance standards for recipients of federal funds were developed by the Department of Justice and are articulated in the policy guidance document "Enforcement of the Civil Rights Act of 1964-National Origin Discrimination Against Persons with Limited English Proficiency" (2002). This Order and ensuing guidance were designed to improve access to federally conducted and federally assisted programs and activities for persons who, because of national origin, are limited in their English proficiency (LEP).

STATE REGULATIONS

RHODE ISLAND RULES AND STANDARDS OF THE STATE PLANNING COUNCIL

The Rules and Standards of the State Planning Council[17] are promulgated pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-35-2(a)(1)[18], titled "Administrative Procedures", and § 42-11-10[19], titled "Statewide Planning Program". In general, the rules outline procedures for the SPC in guiding the Division of Statewide Planning staff; approving all elements of the State Guide Plan; determining consistency of certain development activities of state agencies, local government, and the private sector with the State Guide Plan; and, incorporates all Federal regulations required for acting as the single statewide MPO and providing for public participation.

[15] https://www.archives.gov/files/federal-register/executive-orders/pdf/12898.pdf
[16] https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2000-08-16/pdf/00-20938.pdf
[17] http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/council/SPC%20Rules%20TIP%20Amend.pdf
[18] http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/title42/42-35/42-35-2.HTM
[19] http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE42/42-11/42-11-10.HTM

RHODE ISLAND OPEN MEETINGS ACT

The R.I. Gen Law § 42-46[20], titled "Open Meetings", and Rhode Island Open Meeting Rules[21] require most state and municipal departments, agencies, committees, and councils to file notices and agendas of upcoming meetings with the Rhode Island Secretary of State's Office. Most meeting notices must be filed at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting. In addition, most departments, agencies and commissions within the Executive branch of state government must file meeting minutes within 35 days of a meeting.

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES ACT

Rhode Island's Administrative Procedure Act requirements are defined under R.I. Gen. Law § 42-35[22]. This law requires that all state agencies state the general course and method of its operation, so that the public may obtain information. The agency should make available its rules, written statements of policy, and final decisions and opinions for public inspection and copying. In addition, the Act provides that each agency should maintain an official rule-making file for each of its proposed or adopted rules. At the time an agency files an adopted rule with the Rhode Island Secretary of State, the agency should submit to the Secretary of State a concise explanatory statement about the rule stating the reason for adopting the rule. Also, it requires an agency to give at least thirty days' notice regarding adoption, amendment or repeal of any rule.

RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

Rhode Island's Public Records Act requirements are defined under R.I. Gen. Law§ 38-2[23] and guarantees access to public records of government bodies at all levels in Rhode Island, while protecting from disclosure information about particular individuals maintained in the files at public bodies when disclosure would constitute invasion of personal privacy.

[20] http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE42/42-46/INDEX.HTM
[21] https://rules.sos.ri.gov/regulations/part/100-40-15-2
[22] http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/title42/42-35/index.htm
[23] http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/title38/38-2/INDEX.HTM

PARTICIPATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Laying at the root of public participation are three often overlapping goals/processes: information dissemination, targeted consultation, and general participation. To ensure that the State Planning Council (SPC) and Division of Statewide Planning has a proactive and meaningful public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public input to key decision-making processes, and supports early and continuing involvement in developing transportation plans and programs, the Council pursues the following goals and objectives:

Goal 1: Information Dissemination – To enhance and increase the public's awareness of opportunities and activities to actively participate in Statewide Planning's plans and programs.

> ***Objective:*** As a means of strengthening state transportation policy making, the dissemination of information will be comprehensive to promote the broadest understanding of the state's transportation plans and programs.

Goal 2: Targeted Consultation – To present specific and targeted opportunities for interested parties to identify and provide valuable input on state transportation concerns and priorities during the development process to ensure participation results in improved transportation system planning and project advancement.

> ***Objective:*** The public and stakeholder groups will be offered ample opportunity to participate and supply input in the decision-making process for the development of state transportation projects and plans including, but not limited to, the State Transportation Improvement Program and the Long-Range Transportation Plan.

Goal 3: General Participation – To initiate a coordinated public participation strategy with the SPC's Transportation Advisory Committee, stakeholder groups, and the public, that improves participation at the decision-making level.

> ***Objective:*** While adopting transportation plans and programs, meaningful public input will be obtained to advise the SPC's planning and decision-making processes and to encourage involvement among the public and stakeholders.

September 2016 Planners Roundtable Meeting.

PARTICIPATION POLICYAND WORK PLAN PRINCIPLES

It is the policy of the Rhode Island State Planning Council (SPC), acting as the Metropolitan Planning Organization and Division of Statewide Planning, to provide all Rhode Islanders with access to and encourage their involvement in an open and collaborative transportation planning process in which the interests of all stakeholders, both public and private, are reflected and considered. The SPC, through the Division of Statewide Planning, is guided in that effort by federal and state regulations outlined previously and principles that will help shape planning development. The Public Participation Plan principles require planning teams to:

- Provide opportunity for early and continuing public involvement;
- Seek and sustain widespread involvement of residents, business owners, employees, local groups and public officials throughout the process; educate, engage, and empower these groups, particularly traditionally underserved.
- Implement a process that maximizes inclusiveness where stakeholders have an ample opportunity to express their views.
- Build consensus through an open, transparent, and collaborative process where public input is sought at every appropriate opportunity.
- Use social media to help broaden outreach and technology to gather and organize community feedback data.
- Provide clear, concise communication to the public through a series of informational meetings.

PARTICIPATION ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

It is the intent of Division of Statewide Planning to carry out the following public participation activities listed below, related to transportation planning while adhering to the above Policy and Principles. This is done not only to comply with Federal and State regulations but to ensure that there is a rich and diverse public participation process, and that interested parties are informed and educated about state transportation issues, programs, and projects. Statewide Planning utilizes the following strategies to ensure all audiences receive timely information in a variety of formats, and that various opportunities are available for public engagement.

In addition, to meet the objective of enhanced and increased public involvement and knowledge, especially involving the traditionally underserved populations, the Division of Statewide Planning is always looking to introduce new and state-of-the-practice techniques, tools, and technologies to provide more opportunities for public outreach and engagement. Some of these participation methods and tools were utilized by the Division during the preparation of the State's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), and Bicycle Mobility Plan, while still others were suggested by the Public Participation Plan Advisory Committee. These participation opportunities and methods are also outlined below and will be incorporated as appropriate for specific projects.

INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

The goal of information dissemination is to provide access to relevant information at the earliest opportunities and to enhance and increase the public's awareness of opportunities and activities for active participation in the Division of Statewide Planning's plans and programs. Primary participation activities are utilized for the widest possible involvement in the transportation planning process. Opportunities will be evaluated on a project specific basis to employ these strategies, utilize social media, reach the out and maximize inclusion.

PRIMARY PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES

PUBLIC INFORMATION MATERIALS

The Division of Statewide Planning utilizes a variety of public information materials to raise awareness about its transportation programs, plans, and projects. Public information materials are an essential form of communication in any public involvement process and come in a variety of formats, from printed to online web postings. Materials can be factual, present a point of view, or in some instances are legally required.

Public information materials provide basic information about a process, project, or document in a *fast, concise, and clear way*. They often summarize or capsulize the overall point of a process. They provide information on what to do to respond, comment, get more involved, or how to get on Statewide Planning's mailing list or a mailing list for a specific project or study.

Public information materials are an easy way for the Division of Statewide Planning to periodically provide updated information to people who are not actively involved in an issue but who are curious or interested about its status.

The following public information dissemination methods and materials are utilized by Statewide Planning:

PHYSICAL POSTING

Public notification of public meetings of the State Planning Council (SPC), Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), and Technical Advisory Committee is provided by the physical posting of a meeting agenda at least 48-hours in advance of a scheduled meeting excluding weekends and holidays. A meeting's agenda is posted on the Rhode Island Department of Administration Building's (1 Capitol Hill, Providence, Rhode Island) third floor hallway bulletin board and on the Division of Statewide Planning's bulletin board. In addition, just prior to the start of a scheduled meeting an agenda is posted directly outside of the meeting room location.

DIRECT MAIL OR EMAIL

Early and widespread notification using the Division's extensive lists of contacts can be used to maximize the inclusiveness of participation. Notification of public meetings is provided by the Division of Statewide Planning via direct mailings through the U.S. Postal Service or by email for the following:

- SPC Meetings
  - Agenda and associated meeting materials; or
- TAC meetings
  - Agenda and associated meeting materials; or
- Technical Advisory Committee meetings
  - Agenda and associated meeting materials; or
- Major transportation plans and programs public hearing notification is provided to Division of Statewide Planning's Transportation Public Notification List (via direct mail and/or email). The list currently includes:
  - Applicable state agencies
  - Public and private transportation service or facility operators/providers
  - Applicable federal and state agencies, agencies and organizations in other states, and multi-state groups involved in transportation
  - Local officials, such as chief executives, mayors/town managers, planning directors, town/city council members, planning board members, public works directors, town engineers, and public safety officials
  - Regional planning commissions and organizations
  - Organizations interested in transportation, the environment, social equity (Environmental Justice Contact List), and the economy
  - Interested members of the public who have specifically requested inclusion

Members of the public and any agency or organization, may request to receive notifications, by mail or email, for any or all the distribution lists cited above by contacting the Division of Statewide Planning at 401-222-7901.

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS AND NETWORKING WEBSITES

Social media and networking websites (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc….) allow for registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, and send messages. Besides being used to keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues they can be utilized as powerful advertising tools for quickly spreading the word to promote certain types of programs and projects by MPOs and other planning agencies around the country. It is technology that can broaden outreach to diverse populations. the Division of Statewide Planning is initiating the process to create its own Facebook page. This social media was used successfully by Division consultants with the development of the Long-Range Transportation Plan, Bicycle Mobility, and Freight and Goods Movement Plan.

DIVISION OF STATEWIDE PLANNING WEBSITE

The Division of Statewide Planning maintains and continuously updates a website at www.planning.state.ri.gov. Visitors to the Division of Statewide Planning website will find a wide range of transportation planning resources and data and information about the various transportation related functions and activities. Some examples of information available includes:

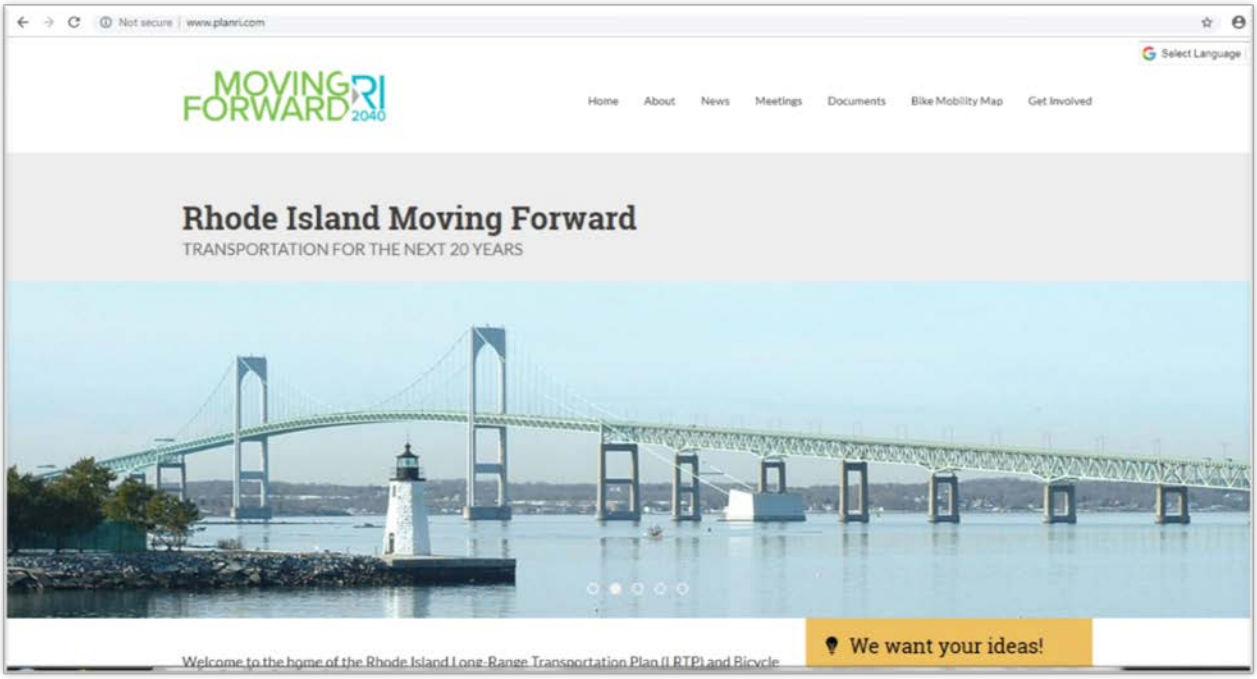
- State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)
- Freight planning activities
- Highway functional classification
- Rhode Island's travel demand model
- Vulnerability of transportation assets to sea level rise

The Division of Statewide Planning website provides downloadable copies of past and present monthly e-newsletters, the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), the STIP, and the LRTP, as well as most studies and reports produced by the Division of Statewide Planning. In addition, there is the contact us link that will take visitors to a listing of the Division of Statewide Planning staff member's direct email and telephone contact information for additional information. The Website Home page provides a link for visitors to sign up to receive notification of public hearings.

The Division of Statewide Planning's website Home Page also provides a link to the Rhode Island Secretary of State's Open Meetings calendar by clicking on Meeting Notices & Public Hearings that provides meeting agendas and minutes for the SPC, TAC, and Technical Advisory Committee.

PROJECT SPECIFIC WEBSITE

For large scale projects, Division of Statewide Planning often establishes project specific websites from which members of the public can access detailed information for that project. A project specific website is valuable for establishing a common place for individuals to receive information and submit feedback relative to that project. Project specific websites are also useful for posting key upcoming events, recent news, archived data, and sharing information. These websites are usually limited in duration to the lifetime of the planning project. Once the project is completed, these project specific websites are ended, and the final deliverables are placed on the Division of Planning's website.



E-NEWSLETTER

The Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning compiles an e-newsletter which is emailed monthly and reaches several hundred diverse recipients. The list is composed of individuals, agencies, institutions and business, both for profit and non-profit. They are from both the private and public sector. The e-

newsletter contain information on recent activities, programs and projects; and provides monthly meeting schedules and announcements regarding publications and training workshops. Complimentary information from partner agencies is also provided in the e-newsletter. Archived editions of the e-newsletter are also provided on the website. To sign up to receive the Division of Statewide Planning's monthly e-newsletter please visit www.planning.ri.gov/newsletter/index.php.

ADVERTISEMENTS / PRESS RELEASE

The Division of Statewide Planning sometimes uses advertisement or press releases to disseminate information. Depending on the content, this information may appear in statewide newspapers, local newspapers, or in alternative language newspapers. The Division of Statewide Planning also utilizes radio advertisements in different languages to appeal to limited English proficient populations.

BASIC VISUALIZATION

When appropriate, visualization techniques are employed throughout the Division of Statewide Planning's public participation activities to aid the public in increased awareness, understanding of proposed plans and projects, and level of dialogue exchanged. Examples of visualization techniques include PowerPoint presentations, photos, maps, tables and graphs, and GIS based scenario planning tools.

ROGER WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY TOD MAPGALLERY EVENT, MAY 2018.

PROJECT / PLAN LOGO

The Division of Statewide Planning has created a unique for logo for the Division to boost its documents and projects. The Division of Statewide Planning logo appears on all its major documents released to the public to help create branding and generate public recognition of its projects.

FACT SHEETS / PAMPHLETS / POSTERS AND FLYERS

The Division of Statewide Planning develops project fact sheets, pamphlets, posters and flyers in a concise and attractive manner to summarize and convey information to the public. This attractive and consolidated packaging of information is done to help the public better understand the specific project or program.

PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES

VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE

A virtual open house is a useful web-based tool that posts project and plan specific meeting materials, as well as surveys, all in one place, at one time. It can be a means to inform the public who might not have the time or availability to attend a physical open house or meeting. Statewide Planning utilized this online tool to post all its meeting materials and surveys developed for its LRTP and Bicycle Mobility Plan. Examples of websites that could host a virtual open house include Basecamp.com, which is an online platform that offers a centralized location to post and store web-based documents for stakeholders and the public to view.

PROJECT SPECIFIC UPDATES

The Division of Statewide Planning often develops email contact lists for special/specific projects to offer announcements of upcoming events and meetings, status updates, project newsletters, and any other information about the project's activities. It also offers the ability for the public to sign-up to receive the project specific updates on the Division of Statewide Planning website and project specific website, if one has been developed, and on sign-in sheets at the project's meetings or events, or to those who have otherwise expressed interest in the project.

TARGETED CONSULTATION

The goals for targeted consultation provide specific, early opportunities for interested parties to identify and provide valuable input on state transportation concerns and priorities during the planning process to ensure public participation results in improved transportation system planning and project development. Primary participation activities are directly utilized for maximum inclusiveness of stakeholders in order to help build consensus in the transportation planning process, while other strategies and opportunities will be evaluated on a project specific basis.

PRIMARY PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES

PROJECT COMMITTEES

Temporary plan and project specific advisory committees are often formed when undertaking large transportation planning projects. These committees are formed with representation from stakeholders with a diversity of backgrounds, opinions, and ideas to engage and obtain feedback on a specific topic relevant to their interest, expertise, or agency. These groups generally meet on a regular basis for the duration of a specific project. Examples of project specific committees include the following:

- Public Participation Plan Advisory Committee
- Freight Advisory Committee (the Freight Advisory Committee is now a permanent committee of the MPO).
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee
- Vulnerability of Transportation Assets to Sea Level Rise Working Group
- Congestion Management Task Force

SURVEYS

Public opinion surveys assess public and stakeholder opinions and are useful to guide Statewide Planning's efforts to develop and assist to build consensus in effective transportation programs and projects. The Division of Statewide Planning has administered surveys through the online survey provider SurveyMonkey.com. These targeted surveys generated responses from a specific group of stakeholders who are more interested in specific transportation issues than the population at large. Survey results showed the selected group's positions and opinions, as well as gathered information for use in the development of programs. For example, the Program utilized an online survey for the Physical Alteration Permit and Access Management Report in which specific stakeholders from the municipal planning, consulting engineering, and local building community were targeted for responses and input.

TRAINING

The Division of Statewide Planning is an active participant in Grow Smart RI's Land Use Training Collaborative[24], which is an alliance of agencies and organizations that share a commitment to the principles of smart growth and sustainable community development. The Collaborative has proven to be both an effective outreach and public relations program to a targeted professional constituency. Grow Smart RI and Statewide Planning believe that the work done today by municipal councils, boards, commissions and staff and by Rhode Island's professional planners, designers, and developers will largely determine Rhode Island's future quality of life and economic progress. The Land Use Training Collaborative supports community planning by developing and delivering cost-effective training that enable participants to build planning and decision-making capacity and to learn about innovative planning, design, and financing strategies. By partnering together, collaborative partners maximize their

[24] http://www.growsmartri.org/training/land-use-training-collaborative/

collective resources and bring a range of outlooks and expertise to workshop development, thereby ensuring that the programs present a balanced and comprehensive approach to land use issues.

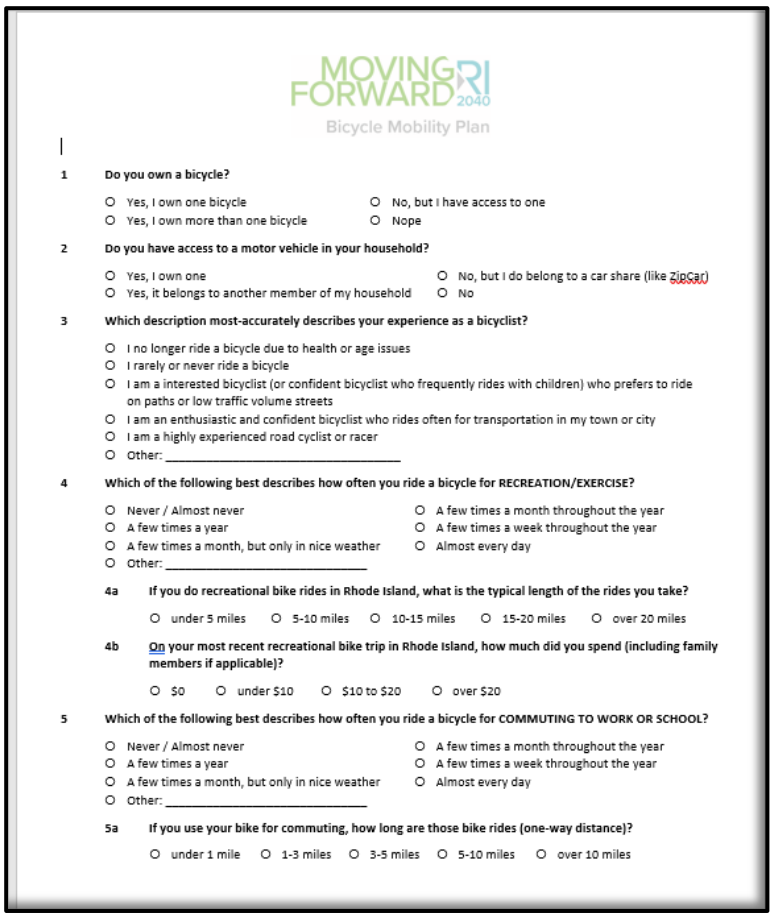
The workshops are small groups, usually around 30 attendees, which focus on one or more topics, working intensively over a short period of time. The training workshops are taught by Rhode Island's professional planners (including Statewide Planning staff), architects, attorneys, and developers. Workshop topics have included making good land use decisions, smart growth and community planning, introduction to access management, complete streets, port development in Rhode Island: clarifying the issues and exploring the opportunities and making communities more walkable and bikable.

PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES

FOCUS GROUPS

A focus group is a small group discussion led by a facilitator or by someone with expertise in the focus topic. They are used to gauge the public's opinions, needs, wants, and expectations on a specific program or topic.

Participants can be selected in two ways: random selection, to assure all segments of the community are represented, or non-random selection to elicit a position or point of view. A combination of selection techniques will attract people well-versed in transportation issues along with those who are solely consumers of transportation services.



MOVING FORWARD RI 2040

Bicycle Mobility Plan

1 **Do you own a bicycle?**

- O Yes, I own one bicycle
- O Yes, I own more than one bicycle
- O No, but I have access to one
- O Nope

2 **Do you have access to a motor vehicle in your household?**

- O Yes, I own one
- O Yes, it belongs to another member of my household
- O No, but I do belong to a car share (like ZipCar)
- O No

3 **Which description most-accurately describes your experience as a bicyclist?**

- O I no longer ride a bicycle due to health or age issues
- O I rarely or never ride a bicycle
- O I am a interested bicyclist (or confident bicyclist who frequently rides with children) who prefers to ride on paths or low traffic volume streets
- O I am an enthusiastic and confident bicyclist who rides often for transportation in my town or city
- O I am a highly experienced road cyclist or racer
- O Other: _____

4 **Which of the following best describes how often you ride a bicycle for RECREATION/EXERCISE?**

- O Never / Almost never
- O A few times a year
- O A few times a month, but only in nice weather
- O Other: _____
- O A few times a month throughout the year
- O A few times a week throughout the year
- O Almost every day

4a **If you do recreational bike rides in Rhode Island, what is the typical length of the rides you take?**

O under 5 miles O 5-10 miles O 10-15 miles O 15-20 miles O over 20 miles

4b **On your most recent recreational bike trip in Rhode Island, how much did you spend (including family members if applicable)?**

O $0 O under $10 O $10 to $20 O over $20

5 **Which of the following best describes how often you ride a bicycle for COMMUTING TO WORK OR SCHOOL?**

- O Never / Almost never
- O A few times a year
- O A few times a month, but only in nice weather
- O Other: _____
- O A few times a month throughout the year
- O A few times a week throughout the year
- O Almost every day

5a **If you use your bike for commuting, how long are those bike rides (one-way distance)?**

O under 1 mile O 1-3 miles O 3-5 miles O 5-10 miles O over 10 miles

A focus group has the following basic features:

- Eight to twelve participants.
- A carefully-crafted agenda with five or six major questions.
- Minimal presentation of context and subject.
- Identification of major points of agreement and divergence of opinion.
- Emphasis on gathering perspectives, insights, and opinions of participants through conversation and interaction.

Focus groups offer the opportunity to understand the public's expressed attitudes and assess policy directions and program objectives. They are a chance to review allocation of resources and they help confirm or deny established goals or set new directions. The informal atmosphere and small size of a focus group encourage participation.

Focus groups cannot replace other formal public involvement techniques, but they can provide input and assist in building consensus in the future. They are used to identify concerns and issues prior to implementing a strategy. They can be used to refine requirements for transportation alternatives and can be repeated at intervals to gauge changes in public opinion. They also provide a qualitative supplement to quantitative community surveys.

GENERAL PARTICIPATION

The Division of Statewide Planning utilizes several ways to both provide concise communication and obtain meaningful public input to advise the SPC on the decision-making process for transportation plans and programs. The primary method to obtain public input for the SPC is through public meetings and the public hearing process. However, there are opportunities to utilize other potential approaches and techniques to obtain meaningful participation. The strategies may include the following:

PRIMARY PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES

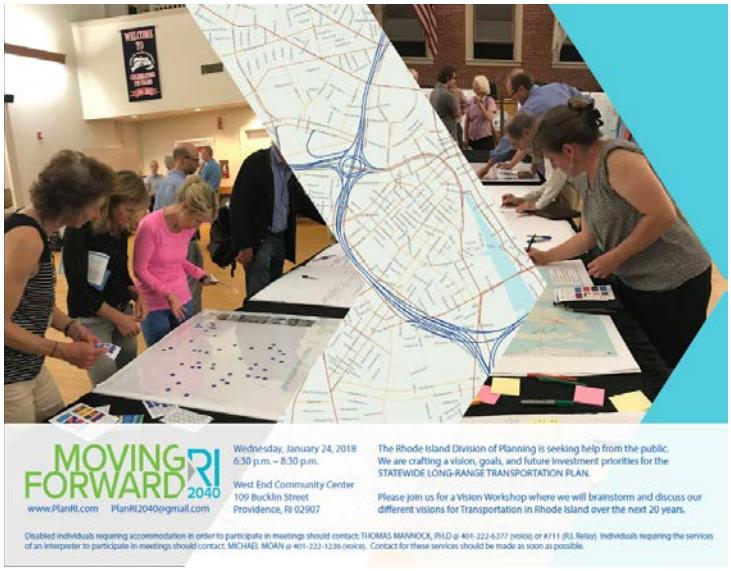
PUBLIC HEARINGS

A public hearing is a formal meeting held to receive input from the public on an issue, plan, or project near the end of the data-gathering activities. Public hearings are required prior to the adoption of major transportation planning efforts like the LRTP and STIP. A 20-day notice of a 30-day comment period is provided for by regulations. The SPC authorizes public hearings. A typical hearing begins with an overview of the issue, plan, or project, followed by an opportunity for the public to make comments. All notification time periods exclude weekends and holidays.

A public hearing report is prepared after a hearing, summarizing and addressing *all* the comments (both written and oral comments, letters and emails) received. This document is prepared for the SPC and is made available prior to their final decision. This report with our response to comments and questions is posted to our public website.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Public meetings, including open houses, workshops, and information sessions, are scheduled as appropriate, to allow the greatest opportunity for attendance by the public and interested groups. The SPC and its subcommittee's offer regular and frequent opportunity for public comments through regularly scheduled meetings. Members of the public are invited to comment on the agenda or any other topic of interest at each meeting.



*Flyer Developed for Second Round of Workshops on LRTP Update

In addition, the SPC often conducts public meetings throughout the state during the development of large scale plans or projects such as the STIP or the LRTP. All meetings of the SPC and its subcommittees are posted in advance of a meeting, are open to the public, and posted pursuant to the State of Rhode Island's Open Meetings Act.

PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES

NON-TRADITIONAL MEETING PLACES, EVENTS, AND RESOURCES

Non-traditional meeting places and event locations are sites that are not the usual public buildings or meeting venues where many participation efforts are held. Non-traditional meeting location options may include shopping centers, centers for the elder community, community centers, farmers markets, neighborhood fairs and block parties, cultural events and sporting events. To reach people who don't typically participate, Statewide Planning will evaluate instances where it will go to locations where communities congregate and feel comfortable—in other words, to their own turf. When these meeting site options are used, community access is easier, and the public's interest can be heightened. In addition to the above, Statewide Planning will piggy-back off previously scheduled events of other groups as permitted.

Non-traditional locations could help Division of Statewide Planning maximize inclusiveness, seek wider involvement and increase attendance. Sites may be private locations or public locations, but events relating to the work of the Division of Statewide Planning should always be open to the public. An example may include the Southside Cultural Center of R.I. Weekend events may be necessary for attendance along with nontraditional venues and events. The following non-traditional locations and events will be considered by Division of Statewide Planning to attract new and different participants to the transportation planning process:

- **Shopping malls** attract large numbers of people. Activities can include mini-focus groups, children's activities, and presentations.
- **Neighborhood fairs and Farmers markets** are effective venues to distribute information. Displays or mini-meetings may be held in conjunction with block parties, house meetings, or local community festivities.
- **Sporting events** are good places to meet and talk with people.
- Centrally-located, convenient **community centers** may be used to distribute agency information. Local libraries are a good place for viewing displays and can be used, along with websites, to make project documents available.
- **Cultural Events** are a venue for participation in which staff of the Division of Statewide Planning could interact with limited English proficiency populations and get increased interaction with groups that don't normally participate in the planning process. Annual events such as the Day of Portugal community events or the Dominican Parade and Dominican Festival in Providence are cultural events where tabling or surveys for ongoing Plans would net responses from residents who don't normally participate in our traditional outreach processes described above.

A variety of methods are available, both technologies based and non-technology, to use in unconventional sites, including the following:

- **Booths or tables** to give and get information. Conversations with staff at booths can clarify goals and elicit community comments.
- **Kiosks** also offer a method of giving and getting information. Interactive displays can provide information people may find useful. Displays can also be set up to record comments or survey customer attitudes.

RI Division of Planning Pop Up Information Booth.

- **Props** help stimulate dialogue in non-traditional meeting places. Props such as renderings, photos, and engineering designs could help participants visualize scenarios of managed growth, maximized density, and minimized infrastructure development.
- **Videos** may be shown at special sites, with web addresses of their locations online for wider distribution.
- **Mobile Public Pop-Up Events** can be mounted inside a vehicle used to travel around the State. Pop-Up Events can take the place of staff and still inform the public by bringing project information to places where people are gathering for other reasons. These Pop-Up Events can include tables and presentation boards showcasing photographs, renderings, kiosks, interactive displays with survey handouts, videos, or maps. With permission they can be stationed at nearly any location, including malls, universities, transit hubs, farmers markets, street festivals, or other local public buildings
- **Meeting in a Box**, www.team**meetinginabox**.com with its highly structured packet of information that enables the public to host their own meetings and record discussions in a way that make it easy to incorporate ideas. This tool provides an innovative way to overcome challenging aspects of community barriers to engagement and take discussions into the community to hear perspectives that might otherwise go unnoticed.

There are also a variety of unconventional online resources to engage and obtain feedback from the public, especially from those who might not typically attend a public meeting. These resources include:

- **Mysidewalk.com** is an online platform that strings together all conversations related to a selected area (like a city, county, or state) together into one continuous feed. This enables the public to easily share and explore ideas and issues shaping their communities regarding proposed projects or programs.
- **Wikimapping.net** is survey tool for gathering public input through online visualization and mapping. This tool enables planners and the public the ability to engage in creating an online mapping survey with one or more questions which can be attached to a point or a line (a project route, road or bridge) that the public can offer comments on or identify locations for themselves.

OPEN HOUSE FORUM

An open house forum is a public hearing with elements of an open house. The informal open house setting in which people can get information in a clear and concise manner about a plan or project, however there is no formal discussions or presentations. Instead, the information is received through a variety of formats, including written products, exhibits, and open dialogue with attendees. This may aide in building consensus in the future. Attendees are encouraged to give opinions, comments, and preferences to staff. After reviewing exhibits and talking with staff, participants can provide comments in several ways that will appear in the formal transcript of the public hearing. The public hearing represents the formal stage of public involvement and is intended to identify the issues, goals, objectives and concerns related to the project.

Open house forums have the following characteristics:

- Information is presented buffet style
- Space is provided for tables or booths, and project information is displayed
- Comment sheets are provided to the public and participants turn in comment sheets
- Staff answers questions and provides details
- Since there is no formal agenda, these events are usually scheduled for substantial portions of the day or evening, so that people can drop in at their convenience and fully participate
- Brochures or videos introduce the open forum process
- Require formal notice of the time and date of the event, even though the hearing itself is informal
- Comments are summarized and made available after the event

2018 Open house style Workshop for LRTP Update.

Open house forums strive to provide an informal, casual, and friendly atmosphere to encourage participants who are intimidated by formal meeting and public hearings.

ADDRESSING CONTINUING CHALLENGES, ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE POPULATIONS AND OTHER TRADITIONALLY UNDERSERVED PEOPLES

Challenges continue to confront the transportation planning process in the State of Rhode Island as the Division of Statewide Planning strives to engage a diverse population, especially those that have been traditionally underserved. Individuals from minority and low-income groups, tribal and the disabled; historically have experienced barriers to participation in the public decision-making process. Many in the minority, low-income and limited English-speaking communities have been unaware of, unable to, or reluctant to participate in the transportation planning process. This may be because they do not own a car, cannot afford child care, or they work late shifts or multiple jobs. Barriers may also arise from cultural, linguistic, and economic differences. Therefore, efforts to include varied groups in transportation planning is important to encompass the full range of public interests. Strategies and methods to address these specific challenges are detailed below. Recent strides have been made in diversifying the Transportation Advisory Committee membership which will provide input from several different interests. The Public Participation Plan Advisory Committee had a diverse membership representing a mix of the interests this plan aims to reach.

This Public Participation Plan recognizes that the Division of Statewide Planning must be strategic in designing a program focused on activities, those that will encourage engagement beyond the general public. To this end, the Public Participation Plan outlines possible strategies and methods to better reach the limited English-speaking, disabled, minority, and low-income populations.

The Division of Statewide Planning will employ an over-arching strategy of crafting a general location and profile of the underserved populations using its geographic information systems (GIS). A statewide Transportation Equity Benefit Analysis (TEBA) was conducted for the most recent State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). This study includes demographic and geographic (GIS) profiles of Environmental Justice and other select population groups which may face transportation challenges or discrimination. Statewide Planning will maintain an Environmental Justice and Title VI (see definition on page 10) contact list.

For information on obtaining documents on the Division of Statewide Planning website in plain text or languages other than English contact the Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning, One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908 (401.222.7901 voice) (401.222.2627 tdd).

The Division will then seek out and contact organizations and community leaders with which it has or can build a working relationship to further engage the wider population of these underserved populations. These leaders may or may not be with government organizations and may or may not be elected officials. Statewide Planning could option to enter into partnerships with organizations like the Rhode Island Council on the Arts, the Providence Cultural Equity Commission with the Providence Office of Sustainability or the Dorcas International Institute of R.I. It is then the intention of the Division of Statewide Planning to go to the populations where they are most comfortable and where the Division is welcome. These places may be where the people live, work, recreate, or worship.

POTENTIAL METHODS OF ENGAGEMENT

THE LIMITED ENGLISH-SPEAKING POPULATION

- The Division of Statewide Planning recently updated its Limited English Proficiency Plan in 2018. This plan details how Statewide Planning responds to requests for information in languages other than English. It also directs that all notices for public hearings and workshops be translated into Spanish and Portuguese. The plan also provides a listing of resources available, both internal and external along with methods that may be used to engage limited English-speaking populations.
- Providing foreign language translations and interpreters, if requested in advance and when the need is anticipated. Posting the meeting agenda on the building entryway door and on the meeting room doorway in appropriate languages.
- The Division of Statewide Planning website can be read in ninety-one (91) languages utilizing the 'Google Translate' plug-in.
- Use various illustration and visualization techniques
- Welcome and treat attendees in a courteous and respectful manner.

RHODE ISLAND'S POPULATIONS LIVING WITH DISABILITIES

In the spirit of and in conformance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 12101 et. seq.)[25] and Sections 504 (29 U.S.C. § 701)[26] and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 794d)[27], all items posted to the Division of Statewide Planning website can be made available in plain text documents for the visually impaired.

The very act of participation in public meetings requires the ability to access, attend, and or interact with the decision-making processes. There can be many barriers to participate. Statewide Planning addresses these potential barriers by:

- Conducting meetings in locations that are ADA accessible
- Selecting locations convenient to public transit
- Selecting facilities that are centrally located within the State or region
- Selecting facilities that provide ample public and free parking, and parking for persons with disabilities
- Providing Communication Assisted Real Time Translation (CART) for the blind, and assisted listening devices for the deaf and hard of hearing if requested in advance
- Providing sign language interpreters for the hearing impaired, if requested in advance
- Welcome and treat attendees in a courteous and respectful manner.

[25] https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2009-title42/html/USCODE-2009-title42-chap126.htm
[26] https://www.dol.gov/oasam/regs/statutes/sec504.htm
[27] https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2011-title29/html/USCODE-2011-title29-chap16-subchapV-sec794d.htm

RHODE ISLAND'S MINORITY COMMUNITIES

- Scheduling meetings at times convenient for different constituencies (hold two meetings daytime and/or evening)
- Selecting locations convenient to public transit
- Hold meetings at neighborhood community centers
- Develop a relationship with "faith based" institutions to build trust. Use their networking infrastructure to reach the people and meet at places of worship
- Consider cultural differences when planning meetings (venue, attendance, and dynamic of interaction)
- Attend cultural events as permitted. Statewide will maintain a list of cultural events held around the state.
- Work with appropriate organizations to gain cultural competence when needed
- Work in small groups and informal ways
- Welcome and treat attendees in a courteous and respectful manner.

Providence Open House Event for "RhodeMap RI", May 2014

THE LOW-INCOME POPULATION

- Partner with the Department of Health, Department of Transportation, Rhode Island Public Transit Authority, Rhode Island Housing and other state agencies to improve low income population participation and access to the state transportation planning process through coordination of outreach efforts
- Providing childcare services at meetings will be considered on a case by case basis if feasible
- Selecting meeting locations convenient to public transit
- Conduct meetings at schools and work with school administration and teachers of elementary, middle and high schools
- Welcome and treat attendees in a courteous and respectful manner.

HEALTH EQUITY ZONES

Another engagement opportunity exists through the Rhode Island Health Equity Zones. The Health Equity Zone initiative is an innovative, place-based approach that brings communities together to build the infrastructure needed to achieve healthy, systemic changes at the local level. Health Equity Zones are geographic areas where existing opportunities emerge and investments are made to address differences in health outcomes. Through a collaborative, community-led process, each Health Equity Zone conducts a needs assessment and implements a data-driven plan of action to address the unique social, economic, and environmental factors that are preventing people from living healthy active lives.

Many of these Health Equity Zones work on place-based planning issues such as greater access to transit opportunities, promoting pedestrian and bike enhancements, and other investments to create more walkable communities. The Division of Statewide Planning will leverage the existence of the Health Equity Zones as an additional forum for engagement and community outreach on cross-cutting issues. The Rhode Island Health Equity Zones are the following:

- Bristol Health Equity Zone
- Newport Health Equity Zone
- Olneyville Health Equity Zone
- Pawtucket and Central Falls Health Equity Zone
- Providence Health Equity Zone
- Southside, Elmwood, West End Health Equity Zone
- Washington County Health Equity Zone
- West Warwick Health Equity Zone
- Woonsocket Health Equity Zone

MAJOR TRANSPORTATION DOCUMENTS

Transportation plans and projects can greatly impact the physical, economic, and social structure of a society, which is why public participation is extremely important. Rhode Island's two key transportation planning documents, the LRTP and the STIP, are developed with extensive efforts of public engagement and outreach. Statewide Planning works to ensure that the public is offered the opportunity to participate in the selection of the state's transportation goals, objectives, policies, and strategies, and projects and programs. The State's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) - *Transportation 2037*[28], FFY 2018-2027 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)[29], and FY 2019 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)[30] were developed under the 2017 Public Participation Guide and the Rules and Standards of the State Planning Council[31]. Transportation documents adopted after this 2019 Public Participation Plan will be developed according to standards outlined in this Plan and according to the Rules and Standards of the State Planning Council[32]. Also, in the effort to encourage more effective public participation in the transportation planning process, some of the participation opportunity methods listed in this plan will be considered for use in future updates to these major transportation documents.

LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LRTP)

The State's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) – *Transportation 2037*[33] is a multi-modal statewide transportation plan with a 20-year planning horizon. The Plan outlines goals, objectives, policies and strategies to guide transportation decisions toward improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of the state. The plan is updated every 5 years as the State of Rhode Island is currently an air quality attainment area. The plan will be updated every 4 years should the MPO become an air quality non-attainment area. In addition, the LRTP is also adopted as an element of the State Guide Plan. As such, it becomes the basis for determining consistency of local comprehensive plans and other plans, programs and projects with the transportation policies of the State. The current LRTP, Transportation 2037[34], was adopted by the State Planning Council (SPC) in December 2017. A new LRTP 2040 is currently under development an expected to be completed in late 2019.

[28] http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/trans/2017/LRTP-37.pdf
[29] http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/tip/2018/STIP_Full%2012-18-18.pdf
[30] http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/about/FY-19-UPWP-APPROVED.pdf
[31] http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/council/SPC%20Rules%20TIP%20Amend.pdf
[32] Ibid.
[33] http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/trans/2017/LRTP-37.pdf
[34] Ibid.

Coordination and Outreach

The coordination and outreach effort for the LRTP is formulated through a public process by the Division of Statewide Planning, the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and the State Planning Council (SPC). Outreach efforts for the development of the LRTP may include visioning workshops, other public events, focus group meetings, stakeholder outreach, newsletters, and surveys. In addition to the Rhode Island Department of Transportation

2016 Transportation Forum for LRTP Kickoff

(RIDOT), Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM), Rhode Public Transit Authority (RIPTA), and the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation (RICC), who are represented on the TAC, and SPC, outreach shall include:

- Municipal officials, public and private transportation/transit providers, public port facilities, public and private facility operators, freight shippers, state agencies, federal agencies, neighboring MPOs, media outlets, persons with disabilities limiting transportation access or use, bicycle and pedestrian users or organizations interested in transportation, the environment, and the economy, and any others on the Statewide Planning transportation mailing list for comment.

Adoption

Adoption of the LRTP involves a significant public participation component which shall include the following minimum efforts:

- A public comment period of at least thirty (30) days
- Demonstrated response to public input
- Adoption by the SPC
- Publication of the final Plan

STATE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (STIP)

The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)[35] is a list of transportation projects the State of Rhode Island intends to implement using State, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding, and other various funding sources. The STIP reflects investment priorities established in the LRTP and covers a minimum period of four (4) years. The STIP is developed in close cooperation with RIDOT and RIPTA as they are the primary agencies responsible for the implementation of the projects listed in the STIP. Municipalities are solicited during the STIP development process and must each hold individual public hearings on their STIP project requests to the State. The STIP must be fiscally constrained; meaning the list of projects in the STIP may not exceed the anticipated funding that is reasonably expected to be available over the first four-year timeframe. Unless otherwise provided for by federal requirements, projects utilizing federal funds must be included in a federally approved STIP. The SPC is responsible for adopting the STIP and adopted the most recent STIP on December 14, 2017 which covers the implementation of projects during fiscal years 2018 to 2027.

Solicitation of Project Proposals

The extensive public involvement process for the STIP is conducted by the Division of Statewide Planning and done primarily though the TAC. Project proposals may be drawn from the LRTP, the Congestion Management Process Plan, Freight and Goods Movement Plan, the management systems plan of RIDOT and RIPTA, and other State or Local plans or studies as appropriate. The STIP solicitation process shall include the following minimum efforts:

- Offer a *minimum* thirty (30) day public notice on the website, of the opportunity to submit project proposals for inclusion in the STIP.
- Direct letters to each city and town chief executive, with copies to local planning and public works directors, requesting project proposals. The letter shall include:
  - Information on the state transportation plan
  - Information on the STIP
  - The status of past proposals and current projects
  - Federal –aid program eligibility
  - The process for including any project in the STIP
- Letters may also be directed to
  - Planning boards and commissions
  - Joint municipal planning commissions established under R.I. Gen. Law § 45-22.1[36]
  - Regional councils of local governments established under R.I. Gen. Law § 45-43[37]
  - Municipal and regional committees

Public Participation Submission Requirements

Rhode Island's STIP process is also unique in that the SPC Rules require that a municipal public hearing be held on STIP proposals submitted by cities and towns. This affords residents an opportunity to

[35] http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/tip/2018/STIP_Full%2012-18-18.pdf
[36] http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE45/45-22.1/INDEX.HTM
[37] http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE45/45-43/INDEX.HTM

participate at the local level in determining priorities for the STIP. It also allows municipal officials to hear directly from their own constituents. In addition, to increase and ensure public participation at the municipal level as part of the STIP application and submission procedures, cities and towns are required to do the following as part of their STIP application submission requirements:

- Public notice in accordance with local procedures
- Hold a minimum of one (1) public hearing on projects that the municipality intends to submit for the STIP.
- Copy of sign-in sheet(s) from the municipal public hearing
- Certification that the municipal public hearing venue was ADA accessible
- Certification that the chief elected official of the municipality in which the project is located was notified and that the proposal conforms to the local comprehensive plan.

Project suggestions may also be submitted by the public.

Public Review of the STIP

The Division of Statewide Planning and the TAC upon completion of a draft STIP project list and accompanying text initiates a public review period consisting of the following:

- Provide at least a thirty (30) day notice and public comment period, in advance of a public hearing, of a draft STIP
  - Send notice and/or draft STIP to municipal officials, public and private transit providers, public and private facility operators, state agencies, federal agencies, neighboring MPOs, media outlets, organizations interested in transportation, the environment, the economy, and any others on the Statewide Planning transportation mailing list for comment
- Hold a public hearing on the draft STIP to introduce the proposed STIP and offer the public with an opportunity to review and comment on the proposed projects listed.
- Provide a thirty (30) day public comment period after the public hearing

Approval of the STIP

Statewide Planning and the TAC shall prepare and present to the SPC a revised draft STIP along with a summary analysis report on the proposed disposition of comments received, and a recommendation on how to proceed. The SPC is then responsible for adopting the STIP. Following approval by the SPC, the STIP is forwarded to the Governor for submission to the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration.

UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP)

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)[38] is a statement of the transportation planning priorities and planning projects to be carried out within a metropolitan planning area in a given fiscal year. In Rhode Island, the UPWP is collaborative effort between the MPO, RIDOT, and RIPTA. It includes a discussion of the planning priorities facing the State and USDOT, identifies work proposed for the next

[38] http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/about/FY-19-UPWP-APPROVED.pdf

one-year period by major activity and task; and indicate who will perform the work, the schedule for completing the work, the resulting products, the proposed funding by activity/task, and a summary of the total amounts and sources of federal and matching funds. The SPC adopts a UPWP annually in June for the upcoming fiscal year. The public review process for adopting the UPWP includes:

- One (1) or more public meeting(s) at which public participation is encouraged.
- Information will be presented on the following topics, but not limited to:
  - A review of planning assumptions and the plan development process
  - Transportation issues and processes
  - Public access to technical and policy information used in transportation planning
  - Methods for identifying and responding to the needs of those underserved by existing transportation systems
  - Review of public involvement process and results

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND HIGHWAY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

The Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning, working in cooperation with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT), conducts a comprehensive review and update to the State's Highway Functional Classification System[39] as required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). This task is undertaken about every ten (10) years. In between these comprehensive updates there are occasional requests from RIDOT or local governments to change a roadway's classification. Statewide Planning and RIDOT shall prepare and present to the TAC a draft Functional Classification Plan along with a summary analysis report on the proposed disposition of comments received from both FHWA and local governments, and a recommendation on how to proceed. The TAC is then responsible for adopting the State of Rhode Island Functional Classification. Following approval by the TAC, it is forwarded to the FHWA.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Beyond these three mandated activities, The Division of Statewide Planning undertakes a variety of other statewide planning activities which are outlined in greater detail on the Program's website at www.planning.ri.gov. Many of these other program areas and projects also provide opportunities for public participation and input.

EVALUATION

This Public Participation Plan represents an ongoing strategy of public outreach for the State Planning Council's (SPC) plans and programs. There is no singular approach to public engagement and outreach, and participation for specific projects and plans may be different. The residents of Rhode Island are diverse; therefore, methods of outreach may also be different depending on the intended audience. At the same time, to maintain a successful participation program, the Division of Statewide Planning and the SPC must evaluate what works and what does not work in the public participation process. To

[39] http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/trans/2015/TP_165.pdf

assess the effectiveness of the public participation activities, Statewide Planning will utilize the three evaluation methods outlined below to measure the level of success of the public outreach component of various projects and ensure compliance with state and federal agency regulations.

ANNUAL REVIEW

To maintain an up-to-date and effective public involvement program Statewide Planning must evaluate the effectiveness of its public involvement strategies and techniques. Each year, the Division of Statewide Planning will conduct an evaluation of the public participation activities of the previous year and identify new activities for the year ahead. This evaluation is prepared as part of the Division's Title VI Report. It will be shared with the SPC and all its subcommittees and posted on the Division of Statewide Planning website for the public to review.

The evaluation will address the objectives identified on page 15 and 16 following the topic areas below:

- **Assessment of activities**. Did public involvement and public information activities over the past year achieve their intended purposes on involving the public? How could they have been improved?
- **Future activities**. What public participation activities should be planned for the year ahead and are in line with Statewide Planning's planned work program activities? What new public outreach initiatives should be undertaken?
- **Recurring activities**. How can Statewide Planning enhance public activities that are conducted on a recurring cycle, such as meetings of the Transportation Advisory Committee? Would it make sense to discontinue or alter recurring activities? Are the information needs of the different public constituencies being met through Statewide Planning's publications?
- **Reaching previously uninvolved and underserved residents and groups**. What public involvement activities has Statewide Planning staff conducted and should conduct to reach constituencies that may not typically be part of the State's transportation planning process?

This annual evaluation report will include a summary of the Division of Statewide Planning's publications, reports, meeting attendance and newsletters. It will also include a summary of the performance measures outlined on the following page.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance measures for this Public Participation Plan were identified and chosen because they are indicative of the effectiveness of the MPO's public involvement activity. These measures or metrics are based on the objectives to measure performance of the MPO's public participation plan process. The use of an exit survey at some meetings along with internal office records will assist in gathering data.

Measure Information Dissemination* Indicator/Metric	Data Source(s)
Number of Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) publications produced.	Website (Number of publications available on www.planning.ri.gov)
Media inventory of newspaper articles, television and minority radio coverage including social services media.	Project files
Were the participants at the events satisfied with the availability of information? Negative/Positive	Survey instruments/Event Attendee Feedback
Was the information provided in a timely manner? Negative/Positive	Survey instruments/Event Attendee Feedback
Was "noticed" to actively participate effective? Number in attendance. Response rate from mailings	Survey instruments/Attendance record
Number of subscribers to Division's Newsletter	File records/Constant Contact
Consultation*	
Number of MPO public forums, workshops and community meetings at which displays, presentations, discussions and feedback occurred.	UPWP/Project Scope of Work
Number of people/organizations invited to attend public meetings. Response rate (see above)	Public Involvement Mailing List
Number of persons on the MPO mailing list receiving regular agendas.	Division of Statewide Planning Mailing Lists
Was there meaningful information and dialogue exchanged and did the outreach achieve desired outcomes; such as was the event beneficial and did it provide information that was helpful to the participant?	Survey instruments/Event Attendee Feedback
Did the participants believe the event was at a time and location that was convenient? Negative/positive	Survey instruments/Event Attendee Feedback
Is public participation more demographically balanced, such as more participation of the underserved and minority populations? Demographic data	Survey instruments/Event Attendee Feedback
Is there a measurable trend of increased attendance/participation? (collected separately)	Attendance sheet/manual count

Measure	Data Source
Stakeholder Participation*	Data source
Number and origin of participants at such public forums, workshops and community meetings.	Attendance sheet/ Survey instruments/Event Attendee Feedback
Number of spoken comments, electronic and paper comment forms received from members of the public after public meetings. Rate of response	Meeting records/Project files
Were the participants satisfied with the opportunity to offer input? Negative/positive	Survey instruments/Event Attendee Feedback
Did they believe their opinions were heard and mattered? Negative/positive	Survey instruments/Event Attendee Feedback
Number of participants at public forums, workshops and community meetings held in historically underserved areas or with such populations;	Attendance sheet/manual count
Number of visitors to Planning.ri.gov. and Newsletter	Website Counter

*Demographic profile of participants as data permits. A sample questionnaire is in Appendix B. Some questions repeat under different measures to provide data to assist in conclusions unique to the measure.

CONCLUSION

Public involvement incorporates the public and stakeholders into the decision-making process for transportation programs and projects that can potentially affect their neighborhood, community, or the state. This Public Participation Plan will help to ensure that the Division of Statewide Planning and the State Planning Council (SPC) provide an equal opportunity for all individuals to participate and to comply with federal and state regulations. The public's feedback is highly valued by the SPC, and public opinion is an integral part of the Council's decision-making process.

The Division of Statewide Planning is in a favorable position to disseminate information, offer opportunities to consult with the public and stakeholders during the decision-making process, and to obtain meaningful public input to advise the SPC's planning and decision-making process. This Public Participation Plan was created with the citizens of the State of Rhode Island in mind to accomplish such an outcome.

ADOPTION PROCESS

The draft Public Participation Plan was developed in cooperation with the Public Participation Plan Advisory Committee which held a meeting on September 7, 2018. It was presented to the Technical Committee at their January 4, 2019 meeting and the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) at their February 28, 2019 meeting. At the close of this meeting, the TAC voted to recommend that the State Planning Council (SPC) schedule a public hearing on the draft plan. The SPC subsequently reviewed the draft at their March 14, 2019 meeting and approved it for conducting a public hearing. The requirement of a minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days was provided prior to plan adoption by the SPC as required by federal regulations, during which no public comments were received. Notice of the public hearing and 45-day opportunity to comment on the draft plan was provided through advertisement on the Division of Statewide Planning website and a direct mailing to over 1,315 contacts.

The draft Public Participation Plan was then revised by staff based on direction received from the TAC through the public hearing process and presented back to the TAC for approval. On May 23, 2019 the TAC officially voted to recommend approval of the revised Plan by the SPC. The SPC approved and adopted the final Plan on June 13, 2019. Copies of the approved Public Participation Plan were provided to FHWA and FTA for informational purposes and it is posted on the Division of Statewide Planning website.

APPENDIX A: FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

The Division of Statewide Planning will fulfill all the requirements and criteria provided for public involvement under 23 U.S.C. 134(i)(5), 134 (j)(1)(B), 23 CFR §450.316, §450.324 of Subpart C-Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming Federal Highway Administration and Section 5303(i)(5) and 5303(j)(1)(B) of Title 49 Federal Transit Administration.

§ 450.316 INTERESTED PARTIES, PARTICIPATION, AND CONSULTATION.

(a) The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

(1) The participation plan shall be developed by the MPO in consultation with all interested parties and shall, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for:

(i) Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including but not limited to a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;
(ii) Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;
(iii) Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs;
(iv) Making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web;
(v) Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;
(vi) Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;
(vii) Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services;
(viii) Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final metropolitan transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts;
(ix) Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes under subpart B of this part; and
(x) Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.

(2) When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft metropolitan transportation plan and TIP (including the financial plans) as a result of the participation process

in this section or the interagency consultation process required under the EPA transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93), a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final metropolitan transportation plan and TIP.

(3) A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised participation plan is adopted by the MPO. Copies of the approved participation plan shall be provided to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes and shall be posted on the World Wide Web, to the maximum extent practicable.

(b) In developing metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, the MPO should consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA that are affected by transportation (including State and local planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements) or coordinate its planning process (to the maximum extent practicable) with such planning activities. In addition, metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs shall be developed with due consideration of other related planning activities within the statewide and metropolitan area, and the process shall provide for the design and delivery of transportation services within the area that are provided by:

(1) Recipients of assistance under title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53;
(2) Governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations (including representatives of the agencies and organizations) that receive Federal assistance from a source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide non-emergency transportation services; and
(3) Recipients of assistance under 23 U.S.C. 204.
(4) 23 U.S.C. 128 and 139 and CEQ regulation

(c) When the MPA includes Indian Tribal lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Indian Tribal government(s) in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.

(d) When the MPA includes Federal public lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Federal land management agencies in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.

(e) MPOs shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process (es) that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies, as defined in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section, which may be included in the agreement(s) developed under § 450.314.

§ 450.210 INTERESTED PARTIES, PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AND CONSULTATION

(a) In carrying out the statewide transportation planning process, including development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP, the State shall develop and use a documented public involvement process that provides opportunities for public review and comment at key decision points.

(1) The State's public involvement process at a minimum shall:

(i) Establish early and continuous public involvement opportunities that provide timely information about transportation issues and decision making processes to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, providers of freight transportation services, and other interested parties;

(ii) Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP;

(iii) Provide adequate public notice of public involvement activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including but not limited to a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed long-range statewide transportation plan and STIP;

(iv) To the maximum extent practicable, ensure that public meetings are held at convenient and accessible locations and times;

(v) To the maximum extent practicable, use visualization techniques to describe the proposed long-range statewide transportation plan and supporting studies;

(vi) To the maximum extent practicable, make public information available in electronically accessible format and means, such as the World Wide Web, as appropriate to afford reasonable opportunity for consideration of public information;

(vii) Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input during the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and STIP;

(viii) Include a process for seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services; and

(ix) Provide for the periodic review of the effectiveness of the public involvement process to ensure that the process provides full and open access to all interested parties and revise the process, as appropriate.

(2) The State shall provide for public comment on existing and proposed processes for public involvement in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP. At a minimum, the State shall allow 45 calendar days for public review and written comment before the procedures and any major revisions to existing procedures are adopted. The State shall provide copies of the approved public involvement process document(s) to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes.

(b) The State shall provide for non-metropolitan local official participation in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP. The State shall have a documented process(es) for consulting with non-metropolitan local officials representing units of general-purpose local government and/or local officials with responsibility for transportation that is separate and discrete from the public involvement process and provides an opportunity for their participation in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP. Although the FHWA and the FTA shall not review or approve this consultation process (es), copies of the process document(s) shall be provided to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes.

(1) At least once every five years (as of February 24, 2006), the State shall review and solicit comments from non-metropolitan local officials and other interested parties for a period of not

less than 60 calendar days regarding the effectiveness of the consultation process and any proposed changes. A specific request for comments shall be directed to the State association of counties, State municipal league, regional planning agencies, or directly to non-metropolitan local officials.

(2) The State, at its discretion, shall be responsible for determining whether to adopt any proposed changes. If a proposed change is not adopted, the State shall make publicly available its reasons for not accepting the proposed change, including notification to non-metropolitan local officials or their associations.

(c) For each area of the State under the jurisdiction of an Indian Tribal government, the State shall develop the long-range statewide transportation plan and STIP in consultation with the Tribal government and the Secretary of Interior. States shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process(es) that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with Indian Tribal governments and Federal land management agencies in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP.

Note: Protocol listed under § 450.316(a) (3) was followed during the adoption of the Division of Statewide Planning Participation Plan. The 45-day comment period began on January 2019 and ended on February 2019. Copies of the approved Participation Plan were provided to FHWA and FTA following the adoption of the Plan by the RI State Planning Council on February 2019, and the Plan was posted on the website on February 2019.

APPENDIX B: PERFORMANCE MEASURES EXIT SURVEY

Attendee Feedback

Meeting Date: Time:

Meeting Description:

Meeting Location:

Providing information that will assist Statewide Planning in improving our programs and services to all people of this state. The information you provide will be used to better understand who we serve. This information is strictly voluntary and will remain anonymous. Thank you for participating at today's meeting.

Was this meeting held at a good time for you?	YES NO
Was this meeting held at a convenient location? If No, why?	YES NO
How did you find out about this meeting? Other comments:	□ Email message □ Web □ TV □ Radio □ Poster □ Other
Did you get a chance to participate during this meeting?	YES NO
Do you feel that your ideas were considered?	YES NO
Was today's event beneficial and information helpful?	YES NO
Recommendations to improve future events?	
If you requested special accommodation, were your needs met?	YES NO Not Applicable
Were ADA accessible features satisfactory? If No, why?	YES NO Not Applicable

Race: □ White □ Black/African American □ American Indian/Alaskan Native □ Asian □ Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander

Ethnicity: Hispanic / Latino: □ Yes □ No

Age: □ Under 18 □ 18-24 □ 25-34 □ 35-44 □ 45-54 □ 55-65 □ 65+

Family Income: □ Less than $15,000 □ $15,001-25,000 □ $25,001-35,000 □ Over $35,001

Sex: □ Male □ Female

Is English your native language? □ Yes □ No, Please **tell us your native language**:

How well do you speak English? □ Very Well □ Well □ Not Well □ Not Very Well

Disabled: * □ Yes □ No

*Note: Individuals with disabilities are persons with a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities including caring for one's self, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, performing manual tasks, and learning. (Codified as 29 U.S.C. 794.)

Your response to the questions above is optional and confidential. It will help Statewide Planning to better meet your needs.

APPENDIX C: FIGURE A. OUTREACH AND NOTIFICATION TABLE

Project	Activity	PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD	NOTICE (MINIMUM DAYS)	PHYSICAL POSTING	DOP WEBSITE	SOS WEBSITE	E-NEWSLETTER (MONTHLY)	**EMAIL AND/OR HARD COPY**	Transportation Adv. Comm.	State Planning Council	Governor's Office	FHWA / FTA	Chief Executive Officer	Town Planners	Town PW Directors	Council Presidents	State Agencies	Transportation Providers	General Assembly Leadership	Congressional Delegation	Social Advocacy Groups	Transportation List	Public Hearing List
SPC / TAC	Regular Meeting Agenda (1)		2	X		X			X	X													
TIP	Project Solicitation	30	30	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	Draft TIP Hearings	30	20	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	x	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Final TIP Approval		2	X		X	X		X	XA	XA	XA											
	Administrative Adjustment (2)								X	X	XA	XA											
	Minor Amendment (2)(3)	10	10	X	X	X			XA	X	XA	XA									X	X	X
	Major Amendment (2)(4)	30	20	X	X	X	X		X	XA	XA	XA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
PLAN	Draft Plan Hearings	30	20	X	X	X	X		X	XA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Final Plan Approval		2	X		X	X		X	XA	X	X											
	Amendment	30	20	X	X	X	X		X	XA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
UPWP	Draft UPWP		2	X		X			X	X	X	X											
	Final UPWP		2	X		X	X		X	XA	X	XA											
PPP	Public Participation Plan	45	20	X	X	X	X		X	XA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Func Class	Highway Functional Classification				X		X		X			X	X	X	X			X				X	
AQ	Air Quality Copnformity	30	20	X	X	X	X		X	XA	X	XA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

DISCLAIMER: This chart is not intended to fully document the procedures for preparation of these documents. It is intended only as a summary of public outreach.

Notes (#)

1 Annual Schedule adopted and posted at the beginning of the year
2 Consistent with MOU on Procedures to Modify the TIP
3 10-day public comment period. No public hearing.
4 30-day public comment period with public hearing.

X	Reviews Notifications	SOS	Secretary of State
XA	Approval Authority	SPC	State Planning Council
WF	When feasible	FHWA	Fed. Highway Administration
DOP	Department of Planning / Secretary of State	FTA	Fed. Transit Administration
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program		
UPWP	Unified Planning Work Program		
PPP	Public Participation Plan		

2018 Limited English Proficiency Plan

Rhode Island
Division of Statewide Planning

July 2018

Division of Statewide Planning

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Meredith Brady, Associate Director

Title VI Notice to Beneficiaries

The Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning (Statewide Planning) operates its programs, services, and activities in compliance with federal nondiscrimination laws including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and related statutes and regulations. Title VI prohibits discrimination in federally assisted programs and requires that no person in the United States of America shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal assistance. Related federal nondiscrimination laws administrated by the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, or both prohibit discrimination on the basis of age, sex, and disability. These protected categories are contemplated within Statewide Planning's Title VI Program consistent with federal interpretation and administration. Additionally, Statewide Planning provides meaningful access to its programs, services, and activities to individuals with limited English proficiency, in compliance with US Department of Transportation policy and guidance on federal Executive Order 13166.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
1. The Division of Statewide Planning	5
2. Background	5
3. Four Factor Analysis: Determining the Need	6
4. Meeting the Requirements: The Statewide Planning Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan	11
▪ Identifying LEP Individuals Needing Language Assistance	11
▪ Outreach to Community Organizations that Serve LEP Persons	11
▪ Language Assistance Measures	11
▪ Translation of Written Materials	12
▪ Oral Language Services	13
▪ Staff Training	14
▪ Providing Notice of Available Language Service to LEP Persons	14
5. Monitoring, Updating, and Performance Measures for the Statewide Planning LEP Plan	14
6. Title VI Notice and Provisions for Complaint Access by LEP Populations	15
▪ Notice to Beneficiaries	15
▪ Title VI and LEP Complaint Procedure	16
▪ Review and Response	16
▪ Submission of Complaint to the U.S. Department of Transportation	16
Appendix I: RI LEP Table and Mapping by City and Town 2014	17

THE DIVISION OF STATEWIDE PLANNING

The Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning is established under Rhode Island Laws Chapter 42-11-10 as the central planning agency for state government. The work of Statewide Planning is guided by the State Planning Council, comprised of state, local, and public representatives, as well as federal advisors. The Council also serves as the single statewide Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Rhode Island. As an MPO, the State Planning Council is directly responsible for making sure that any funds spent on existing and future transportation projects and programs is based on a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (otherwise known as the 3-C) planning process. All transportation projects and programs that receive federal funds go through this 3-C planning process. The State Planning Council also provides overall program management of an annual work program - the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). In addition, the Council provides policy direction and oversight in the development of a federally mandated Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and the transportation element of the State Air Quality Implementation Plan.

The Division of Statewide Planning is divided into 3 sections; Transportation Operations, Strategic Planning, and Planning Assistance/Information. The objectives of Statewide Planning are to plan for the physical, economic, and social development of the state; to coordinate the activities of government agencies and private individuals and groups within this framework of plans and programs; and to provide planning assistance to the Governor, the General Assembly, and other state agencies. Statewide Planning prepares and maintains the State Guide Plan as the principal means of accomplishing these objectives. The State Guide Plan is comprised of a series of functional elements that deal with physical development, environmental concerns, the economy, and human services. Statewide Planning activities are supported by state appropriations and federal grants.

Funding for production of this document was provided principally by grants from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA). State of Rhode Island general appropriations to Statewide Planning provided additional support. The contents of the Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEP) were compiled by Statewide Planning, which is responsible for the accuracy of the facts and data presented herein. This publication is based upon publicly supported research and may not be copyrighted.

BACKGROUND

As a sub-recipient of federal funds, Statewide Planning is obligated to comply with *Presidential Executive Order 13166: Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency*, the purpose of which is to ensure accessibility to programs and services to eligible persons who are not proficient in the English language.

Who is a LEP Individual? Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language AND who have a limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English.

Federal law: *Presidential Executive Order 13166: Improving Access to Service for Persons with Limited English Proficiency*, clarifies Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 with regards to national origin discrimination against persons with limited English proficiency.

Its purpose was to ensure accessibility to programs and services to eligible persons who are not proficient in the English language. This Executive Order states that individuals who do not speak English well and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English are entitled to language assistance under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 with respect to a particular type of service, benefit, or encounter. It reads in part,

> ***Each Federal agency shall prepare a plan to improve access to its federally conducted programs and activities by eligible LEP persons. Each plan shall be consistent with the standards set forth in the LEP Guidance, and shall include the steps the agency will take to ensure that eligible LEP persons can meaningfully access the agency's programs and activities.***

Presidential Executive Order 13166 also required Federal departments and agencies to develop and make available guidance on how recipients of Federal funds should assess and address the needs of LEP individuals seeking assistance. The US Department of Transportation (USDOT) developed guidance titled *Policy Guidance Concerning Recipients' Responsibilities to Limited English Proficient Persons*.[1] This guidance was issued to ensure that persons in the United States are not excluded from participation in DOT-assisted programs and activities simply because they face challenges communicating in English.

The intent of this plan is to ensure that where substantial numbers of residents of the State of Rhode Island exist who do not speak or read English proficiently; there will be access to Statewide Planning's transportation planning process, plans and published information, and that public notification is provided in other languages. The production of multilingual publications and documents and/or interpretation at meetings/events will be provided to the degree requested and needed, and as funding permits based on current laws and regulations.

FOUR FACTOR ANALYSES: DETERMINING THE NEED

As a sub-recipient of federal funding, Statewide Planning must take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to the information and services it provides. In determining "reasonable steps" there are four factors to be considered:

1. The number and proportion of LEP persons in the eligible service area;

2. The frequency with which LEP persons encounter Statewide Planning;

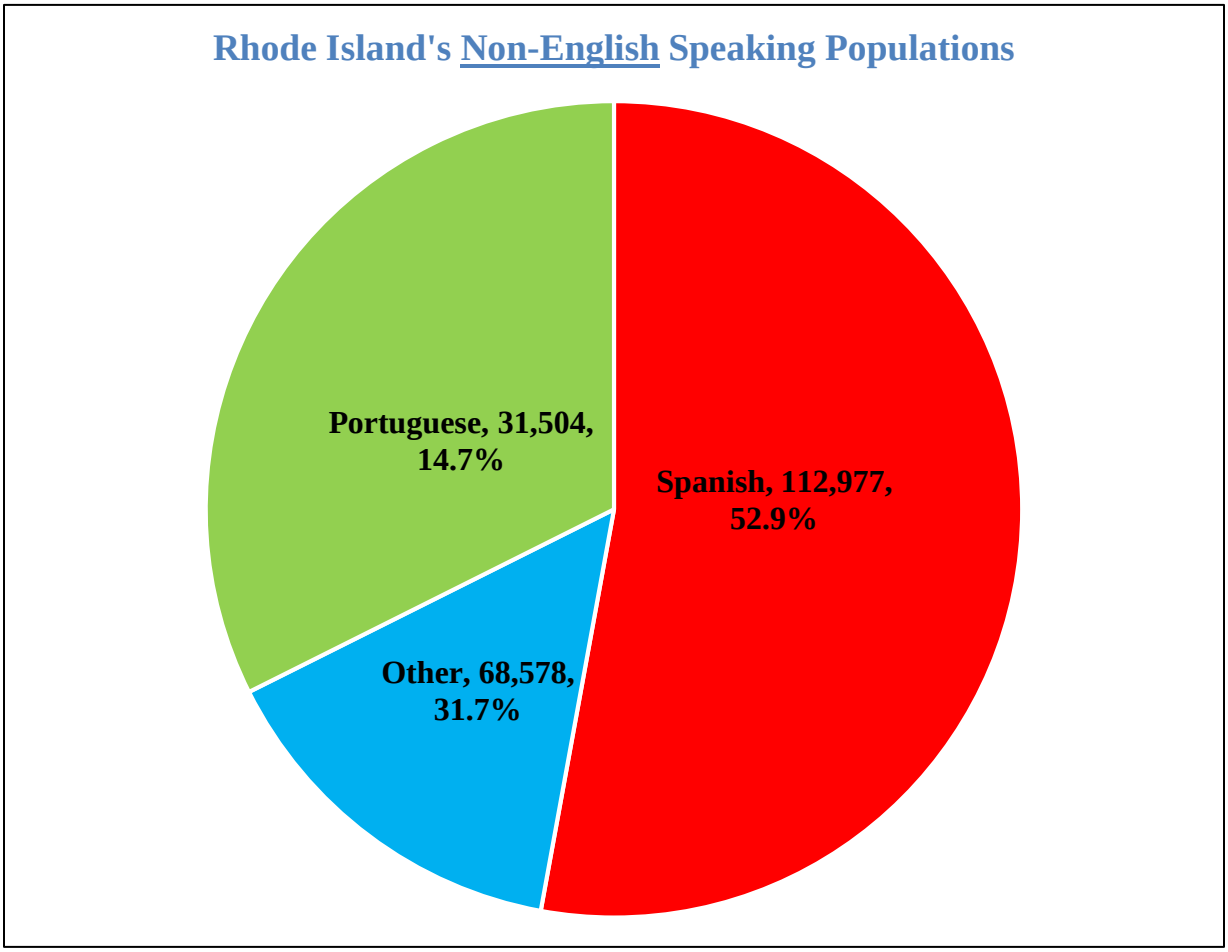
3. The importance of the service provided by Statewide Planning; and

[1] **This document utilized technical assistance provided by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Policy Guidance Concerning Recipients' Responsibilities to Limited English Proficient (LEP) Persons; A Handbook for Public Transportation Providers, FTA, April 13, 2007, (DOT LEP Guidance, Federal Register, vol. 70, no. 239, pp. 74087–74100, December 14, 2005), and Circular FTA C 4702. 1B 10/01/2012.**

4. The resources available to the recipient.

The USDOT Policy Guidance gives recipients substantial flexibility in determining what language assistance is appropriate based on a local assessment of the four factors listed above. The following is an assessment of need in the State of Rhode Island in relation to the transportation planning process.

1. The number and proportion of LEP persons in the eligible service area.
Statewide Planning conducts its programs and activities for the State of Rhode Island. The first step towards understanding the state's profile of LEP individuals that could participate in the statewide transportation planning process is a review of the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates. According to the 2015 ACS data, Rhode Island's total population of *non-English* speaking households consisting of individuals 5 years and over is 213,675 and comprises 21.4% of that total population of 998,431. Of the 213,675 non-English speaking households, the top two languages are Spanish at 112,977 (52.9%) and Portuguese at 31,504 (14.7%).



Source: ACS 2011-2015 Table B16001: LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME BY ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH FOR THE POPULATION 5 YEARS AND OVER

Table 1
Most Prominent Non-English Languages Spoken by Rhode Island's LEP Population

Non-English-Speaking languages	Estimated ***LEP*** Population	% Total LEP	Percentage of Total State Population*
Spanish or Spanish Creole	48,002	57.7	4.81
Portuguese or Portuguese Creole	11,854	14.2	1.19
Chinese	3,775	4.5	.38
French (Creole)	2,746	3.3	.28
Mon-Khmer, Cambodian	2,298	2.8	.23
French (incl. Patois, Cajun)	2,056	2.5	.21
Italian	1,814	2.2	.18
Arabic	1,213	1.5	.12
Laotian	1,078	1.3	.11
All other Non-English Languages	8,392	10.1**	.84
Total LEP	83,228		8.3

***Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2011-2015 5-Year Estimates *Rhode Island's total population 5 years and over is estimated at 998,431 LEP Population U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2011-2015 5-Year Estimates: Table B16001: Language spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English "Less than Very well" for the Population 5 Years and over.**
**** None of the languages that make up this category exceed 5% or 1000 people of the total non-English speaking population.**

The most predominant non-English languages spoken in Rhode Island were then cross-referenced with languages spoken by Rhode Island's LEP population and are displayed as a subset in Table 1. The total LEP population was estimated at 83,228 or 8.3% of the total population 5 years and over who speak a language other than English at home and with the *Ability to Speak English "Less than Very well*". Spanish and Portuguese make up the two largest single languages within this category at 57.7% and 14.2% respectively.

The languages identified in Table 1 are all the Safe Harbor Provision languages determined by United States Department of Justice (USDOJ) and adopted by USDOT civil rights program practices. The Safe Harbor Provision addresses the provision of written translation of vital documents for each eligible LEP language group that constitutes five percent (5%) or 1,000 persons, whichever is less, of the total population of persons eligible to be served or likely to be affected or encountered. Maps of the highest concentrations of LEP populations, including all those meeting "Safe Harbor" Provision parameters are in Appendix I.

Safe Harbor Provision: USDOT has adopted the USDOJ's Safe Harbor Provision, which outlines circumstances that can provide a "safe harbor" for recipients regarding translation of written materials for LEP populations. The Safe Harbor Provision stipulates that, if a recipient provides written translation of vital documents for each eligible LEP language group that constitutes five percent (5%) or 1,000 persons, whichever is less, of the total population of persons eligible to be served or likely to be affected or encountered, then such action will be considered strong evidence of compliance with the recipient's written translation obligations. Translation of non-vital documents, if needed, can be provided orally. If there are fewer than 50 persons in a language group that reaches the five percent (5%) trigger, the recipient is not required to translate vital written materials but should provide written notice in the primary language of the LEP language group of the right to receive competent oral interpretation of those written materials, free of cost. These safe harbor provisions apply to the translation of written documents only. They do not affect the requirement to provide meaningful access to LEP individuals through competent oral interpreters where oral language services are needed and are reasonable.

2. The frequency with which LEP persons come in contact with Statewide Planning

The growing number of the foreign language populations and thus the potential LEP population in Rhode Island increases the probability of the contact with Statewide Planning activities. Due to the size of the current LEP population and the nature of services provided by Statewide Planning, LEP involvement is presently infrequent and unpredictable. The 19-person staff of Statewide Planning was surveyed in January of 2018 with the following questions via email.

a. How *often* (estimate 1/day, week, month) do you interact (receive requests for information or conduct other Statewide Planning business) with persons who speak English with limited proficiency (understand English "not well" or "not at all") at work?
b. What non-English language(s) are you encountering while delivering Statewide Planning programs, services and activities?
c. Have you received requests for Statewide Planning documents in languages other than English? If yes, how many and what languages?
d. What languages other than English do you speak, read or write?

Results: Survey results from this office consisted of a 100% return rate from a total staff of nineteen (19), and there were no Staff encounters with LEP populations. Such encounters in past years have been on a very infrequent basis. In addition, no requests have been made in the past year for information by either LEP individuals or groups. Statewide Planning staff did not receive requests for any additional translations from other Statewide Planning activities.

3. The importance of the service provided by the program

Statewide Planning uses USDOT funds to plan for future transportation projects, and therefore does not include any service or program that requires vital, *immediate*, or emergency assistance such as medical treatment or services for basic needs (food, housing, education, etc.) or transportation services. Statewide Planning does not conduct compulsory activities (applications, interviews, or other activities prior to participation in our programs and/or events). Public involvement with the Statewide Planning or its committees is done entirely on a voluntary basis.

Statewide Planning does provide regular and frequent opportunities for the public to comment through its Transportation Advisory Committee which meets monthly. Input is also sought on the use of Federal funds in three major statewide transportation planning areas: an annual Unified Planning

Work Program (UPWP), a 10-year State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and a 20-year Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The STIP is updated every four years at a minimum and the Transportation Plan every four to five years depending on Rhode Island's air quality conformity status. The potential impacts of transportation improvements resulting from these actions may have an impact on all residents and efforts are made to provide an understanding of the process and opportunities to comment.

Public participation and hearing efforts follow Rule V in the Planning Council's Rules and Standards at http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/council/SPC_Rule_%202014.pdf as well as in the procedures, guidance, and resources outlined in the updated *Statewide Planning Public Participation Plan 2017*. The planning process is also described in the documents generated by Statewide Planning and at public hearings conducted by the organization. These efforts demonstrate that Statewide Planning is committed to engaging and reviewing input from all stakeholders and every effort is made to make the planning process as inclusive as possible.

As a result of this statewide transportation planning process, selected projects receive approval for Federal funding and progress toward advanced project planning, design, and construction. Advanced planning, design, and construction usually come under the responsibility of Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) and Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA). These organizations carry-out the coordination with local jurisdictions and project area populations. Both RIPTA and RIDOT have their own policies in place to ensure opportunities for LEP individuals to participate in the process that shapes how and when a specific project is implemented or constructed.

4. The resources available to the recipient

While the cost of translating transportation plans is high, Statewide Planning will continue to monitor and adjust its resources as necessary to respond to LEP population needs. Furthermore, Statewide Planning will make efforts to partner with state, local agencies, cities and towns with large LEP populations, to provide language translation and interpretation services when needed for agency lead hearings or public workshops.

In addition, Statewide Planning will continue to make the free online translation service, *Google Translate*, available on its website. This site contains considerable information on the state's transportation planning process and the *Google Translate* program will allow visitors to translate any page of text into additional languages.

Statewide Planning obtained a quote for the cost of translating its' four key documents: State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP); Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP); Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP); and, Public Participation Plan (PPP). Funds will be utilized for translation of materials and interpretation services as needed. Translation and interpretation services can be obtained by Statewide Planning using the Rhode Island Division of Purchases Master Price Agreements (MPA). The MPA consists of a list of certified vendors that have pricing agreements with state government and it is available to all departments and divisions. The language services MPA consists of vendors providing interpreting and translations services for fixed prices. Translation or interpreters can be provided upon request and within a time frame which can vary depending on the scope of service requested and availability of the language expertise. This may be from 2 days for a simple translation of a 1-page public hearing notice to several days for a translation of a larger document. Interpreter services during public meetings usually require booking 5 or more business days from when they are needed.

MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS: THE STATEWIDE PLANNING LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP) PLAN

Based on the current number of residents with limited English proficiency (LEP) in Rhode Island and the limited interaction with Statewide Planning, an appropriately scaled LEP plan is necessary. Providing needed services to the diverse population within the state is important and Statewide Planning has completed the following assessment and plan for providing them to the LEP population in Rhode Island. All language access activities detailed below will be coordinated by the Statewide Planning staff with assistance from the RI Department of Administration, Office of Diversity, Equity and Opportunity, RIPTA and RIDOT or other organizations when necessary.

Identifying LEP Individuals Who Need Language Assistance

US Census American Community Survey indicates that the probability of encounters with Spanish LEP residents is the most likely scenario. Data will continue to be collected from the U.S. Census to monitor the changing language demographics within the state. A record will be kept of staff contacts and other interactions with LEP persons and or groups. This office will maintain a list of the points of contact where a LEP person interacts with the organization. At this time, it is anticipated that the key points of contact for LEP individuals are during public workshops and hearings. As interaction with LEP individuals increases, additional points of contact will be identified. Experience has indicated sporadic and very small numbers of encounters with Spanish speaking residents. Data and language needs will continue to be identified through our public outreach and participation efforts.

Outreach to Community Organizations that Serve LEP Persons

Statewide Planning may seek to partner with organizations in Rhode Island that work with low-income adults and youth to improve their integration and participation in the community through literacy, collaboration, advocacy and community involvement. The Division may work with organizations who assist all those who are working to overcome cultural, educational, economic, and language barriers; and, empower them to achieve self-sufficiency and to participate actively in the community. Such non-government organizations (NGOs) provide client-centered services, advocacy and opportunities based on their expertise in family literacy and adult education, employment services, refugee resettlement, translation, interpretation, U.S. citizenship and immigration services. These organizations can provide Statewide Planning with valuable insight into the activities and needs of the LEP populations of RI.

Language Assistance Measures

Statewide Planning utilizes several measures to provide assistance to the LEP populations when needed. Translation services will be offered upon request. When Statewide Planning posts a notice for a public hearing or workshop, a *minimum* 5-day notice for oral language interpretation service is requested for those who require such services. Regular meetings of the State Planning Council and all its standing committees contain a note on their meeting notices that interpreters can be provided on request and such request should be made to our office as soon as possible.

To effect a completer and more versatile LEP plan, Statewide Planning includes information about the ways in which additional language assistance will be provided for the following:

a. *How recipient staff can obtain language assistance services.*
Services are available both in-house and by the State of RI Master Price Agreement (MPA) with outside vendors.

b. *How to respond to LEP callers.*
Staff will transfer telephone calls to an in-house staff interpreter if available or to a language line if available. Help may be available from the RI Department of Administration, Office of Diversity, Equity, and Opportunity.

c. *How to respond to written communications from LEP persons.*
Staff will utilize Microsoft Word Translate function if appropriate to the type of media received, transfer it to in-house staff for translation if available, or to the RI Department of Administration, Office of Diversity, Equity and Opportunity, or contract with an outside service listed on the MPA.

d. *How to respond to LEP individuals who have in-person, in office contact with staff.*
To determine the language of communication to use, language identification cards (or ``I speak cards'') may be utilized by staff to invite LEP persons to identify their language needs. Such cards, for instance, might say, ``I speak Spanish'' in both Spanish and English, or ``I speak Vietnamese'' in both English and Vietnamese. A set of these cards is available and at www.usdoj.gov/crt/cor/13166.htm Staff will then transfer the individual to in-house staff with the appropriate language skills if available or, to the RI Department of Administration, Office of Diversity, Equity and Opportunity.

e. *How to ensure competency of interpreters and translation services.*
This verification is done by the Division of Purchases and is required by state regulations.

f. *How to provide the public information on public participation and Civil Rights.*
The Division of Statewide Planning's wesite is equipped with Google Translate to translate text into various other languages. Below is a list of the Public Participation and Civil Rights webpages and the detailed information provided on each.
   - Title VI & Civil Rights – Provides Statewide Planning's Notice to Beneficiaries; Statutory Requirements Related to Executive Orders; information on Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access; and, Title VI rights, processes, and complaint procedures.
   - Public Participation and Civil Rights – Provides various ways Statewide Planning conducts its public outreach and participation program particularly related to the following: Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), 2018 Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEP), and Public Participation Plan (PPP).
   - Translation Services – Provides information on available translation services available through Statewide Planning.
   - Supporting Legislation – Provides key pieces of federal and state legislation that address specific requirements for conducting transportation planning in an open process.
   - PTD for the Visually Impaired – Provides key documents in PTD format for the visually impaired.

Translation of Written Materials

Translation of all plans and materials is not possible due to cost restrictions and the current LEP population levels of request for such materials do not warrant such translations. However, Statewide Planning will provide the following.

1. *Website* - The free service, powered by Google Translate program, allows users to choose from a variety of language translations. The translation service is available by clicking the Google Translate link at the bottom right of the website.

2. *Key Documents* - An Executive Summary for the following key documents will be made available in Spanish or other language upon request:

(a) Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
(b) State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)
(c) Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
(d) Public Participation Plan (PPP)

Preparation time may vary depending on the document and language. Please visit our Translation Services webpage. For more information contact Benny Bergantino by email Benny.Bergantino@DOA.RI.GOV, or call 401-222-1755.

3. *Outreach Materials* - Spanish-language outreach materials from organizations such as FHWA, USDOJ, and FTA, state, and local transportation agencies will be utilized when appropriate and possible. The Title VI Manager will keep a list of such materials. Requests will be considered to provide key outreach materials in Spanish or other languages as new materials are developed. Please see the *Monitoring, Updating and Performance Measures for the RI Statewide Planning LEP Plan* section for future actions in this category.

4. Public hearing notices will continue to be translated into Spanish and posted on our webpage.

5. Request as needed, language and cultural diversity assistance such as radio and newspaper contacts from the Human Resources Outreach & Diversity Office at the Rhode Department of Administration if available.

6. Utilize the extensive list of agencies, institutions, private business, and individuals from our Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) contact list at Statewide Planning. Many of these contacts are LEP in nature.

Oral Language Services

To provide these oral language services Statewide Planning will do the following:

- Staff will transfer telephone calls to an in-house staff interpreter or to a language line if available, as designated by the RI Department of Administration, Office of Diversity, Equity, and Opportunity.
- Identify, by language spoken, employees who fluently speak and/or write a language other than English. Detail which of these employees are also able to act as interpreters – An inventory of staff language capabilities will be maintained.
- Maintain a list of outside sources from the Department of Administration's Master Price Agreement (MPA) for services that can provide both translation of key documents and oral language services. If it is required, Statewide Planning will provide oral language services to LEP individuals upon advance request. It is anticipated that such services would be necessary for public hearing or workshops scheduled and advertised well in advance of the event.
- Request as needed, language and cultural diversity assistance such as bilingual staff, radio, and newspaper contacts from the Human Resources Outreach & Diversity Office at the Rhode Department of Administration.

Staff Training

To establish meaningful access to information and services for LEP individuals, employees in public contact positions and those who will serve as translators or interpreters should be properly trained. Such training, when available, will ensure that staff is fully aware of LEP policies and procedures

and are effectively able to work in person and/or by telephone with LEP individuals. Although Statewide Planning staff have had very limited instances of contact with LEP individuals, staff and management have attended Title VI and Environmental Justice Training including National Highway Institute courses on Environmental Justice. FHWA's RI Division Civil Rights Specialist has briefed management on data collection requirements of Title VI and environmental justice and is available for future consultations. Statewide Planning will take advantage of any future LEP training offered by FHWA, FTA or RIDOT.

Providing Notice of Available Language Service to LEP Persons
Statewide Planning has adopted the following methods to inform Spanish-speaking and other LEP individuals, supporting organizations, as well as the general public, of available no-fee LEP services.

Key Statewide Planning efforts include a notice that language translation assistance services are available with advance notice. Information on translation service is listed on Statewide Planning's Translation Services webpage. Additional efforts may include:

1. The Statewide Planning webpage: notices in Spanish and English that key documents can be made available upon request in Spanish or other languages.

2. Notice of public hearings and workshops in Spanish-language is placed on our webpage. This notice also includes information on language translation services that are available in Spanish and other languages when given advance notice.

3. Notice of public hearings or workshops to a local Spanish radio station for major actions such as the STIP and Long-Range Transportation Plan updates. Materials can be provided upon advance request.

4. Notice of language interpreter availability by advance request on all meeting notices of the MPO and all its standing committees.

Monitoring, Updating, and Performance Measures for the RI Statewide Planning LEP Plan

Statewide Planning will periodically determine whether new documents, programs, services, and activities need to be made accessible for LEP individuals and will conduct further assessment and work to meet the following goals, objectives, and actions from this plan to gauge progress:

- Stay knowledgeable of the current LEP population in RI; Statewide Planning will monitor changing population levels and the language needs of LEP individuals in the state (U.S. Census data).
- Monitor the frequency of contact with LEP groups and keep records of any LEP services provided both in-office and in public venues.
- Determine the nature and importance of activities to LEP persons and ensure that Statewide Planning is meeting their needs by developing and fielding an exit survey for public hearings and workshops to provide public feed-back on services and collect demographic data including primary languages. A copy of an exit survey is in Appendix II of this document.

- Require cities and towns that are proposing projects for the FY 2018-2027 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) to adopt a new standard of participation and public hearing process. As part of this requirement, municipalities would be responsible for providing a statement to public hearing notices that municipal public hearings are being held in compliance with local laws and ordinances.
- Conduct an annual survey of staff for language capabilities.
- Review utilization of the MPA translation services as necessary. Outline the cost of these services. Identify budget and personnel for limitations.
- Update, E.J. and Title VI contact lists annually.
- Public participation brochure in Spanish and English.
- Assess availability of resources, including technological advances and sources of additional resources, and the costs imposed.
- Inform staff about the LEP plan and how to implement it.
- Evaluate identified resources for LEP assistance that are still available and viable.

Title VI Notice and Provisions for Complaint Access by LEP Populations

Notice to Beneficiaries

Statewide Planning operates its programs, services, and activities in compliance with federal nondiscrimination laws including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and related statutes and regulations. Title VI prohibits discrimination in federally assisted programs and requires that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin (including limited English proficiency), be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal assistance. Related federal nondiscrimination laws administrated by the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, or both prohibit discrimination on the basis of age, sex, and disability. These protected categories are contemplated within the SPP's Title VI Program consistent with federal interpretation and administration. Additionally, the SPP provides meaningful access to its programs, services, and activities to individuals with limited English proficiency, in compliance with US Department of Transportation policy and guidance on federal Executive Order 13166.

Title VI and LEP Complaint Procedure

As a sub-recipient of USDOT financial assistance, the Statewide Planning Program has in place the following Title VI complaint procedure and will follow this complaint procedure and process that meets Title VI requirements.

> **Submit complaint:** Any person who believes that he or she, or any specific class of persons, has been subjected to discrimination or retaliation, from the Division of Statewide Planning during the administration of federally funded programs, as prohibited by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and related statutes, may file a written complaint form. Complaints may be submitted in writing to the Title VI Coordinator using the Title VI/Civil Rights Complaint Form or Title VI/Civil Rights Complaint Form for other Languages. The complaint must be filed within 180 calendar days after the date the person believes the discrimination occurred.

Submit written complaints to:
Benny Bergantino, Title VI Manager
Division of Statewide Planning
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908-5872
Benny.Bergantino@DOA.RI.GOV

Complaints must be in writing and signed by the complainant and/or the complainant's representative. Complaints should set forth as complete as possible, the facts and circumstances surrounding the claimed discrimination and include the following information:

- Name, address, and telephone number of the complainant.
- A written statement of the complaint, including the following details:

  (a) Basis of complaint (i.e., race, color, national origin or sex, disability, and age).
  (b) The nature of the incident that led the complainant to feel discrimination was a factor.
  (c) A detailed explanation of the alleged discriminatory act(s).
  (d) The date or dates on which the alleged discriminatory event or events occurred and any witnesses.
  (e) If applicable, name(s) of alleged discriminating official(s).

- Other agencies (state, local or Federal) where the complaint is also being filed (optional).
- Complainant's signature and date.

Review and Response: Upon receipt of the complaint, the Associate Director of the Division of Statewide Planning shall review and forward the complaint to the Rhode Island Department of Transportation Title VI Office.

These procedures do not deny the right of the complainant to file formal complaints with other State or Federal agencies or to seek private counsel for complaints alleging discrimination. These procedures are part of an administrative process that does not provide for remedies that include punitive damages or compensatory remuneration for the complainant.

Submission of Complaint to the U.S. Department of Transportation: In accordance with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular 4702.1B, Chapter IX, a complaint must be submitted within 180 calendar days after the date of the alleged discrimination. Chapter IX of the FTA Circular 4702.1B, which outlines the complaint process to the Department of Transportation, may be obtained online at www.fta.dot.gov. Paper copies of the circular may be obtained by calling FTA's Administrative Services Help Desk, at 202-366-4865.

APPENDIX I: LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY POPULATIONS

2016 Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Populations, By City/Town

Table: Top Three Languages Spoken by LEP Individuals

Code	City/Town	LEP (%)*	1st Language	Percent**	2nd Language	Percent	3rd Language	Percent
CF	Central Falls	38.4	Spanish	32.8	Portuguese	2.9	French Creole	2.1
PR	Providence	21.1	Spanish	16.3	Mon Khmer	0.9	Chinese	0.7
PA	Pawtucket	17.6	Spanish	8.0	Portuguese	5.1	French Creole	1.8
EP	East Providence	9.5	Portuguese	6.1	Spanish	1.5	Chinese	0.5
WO	Woonsocket	8.4	Spanish	3.9	French	0.9	Laotian	0.9
CR	Cranston	7.8	Spanish	3.4	Chinese	0.8	Portuguese	0.6
NP	North Providence	6.5	Spanish	2.6	French	0.7	Italian	0.6
BR	Bristol	6.2	Portuguese	4.5	Spanish	0.7	Chinese	0.4
NE	Newport	4.6	Spanish	3.8	Portuguese	0.3	Other Indo European Language	0.1
CU	Cumberland	4.3	Portuguese	1.7	Spanish	1.1	Chinese	0.6
JO	Johnston	4.0	Spanish	1.2	Italian	1.1	Portuguese	0.7
WY	Westerly	3.9	Chinese	1.6	Italian	1.2	Spanish	0.6
WW	West Warwick	3.8	Portuguese	1.0	Spanish	0.9	Hmong	0.3
WN	Warren	3.7	Portuguese	2.1	Hungarian	0.5	Other Indo European Language	0.5
MI	Middletown	3.2	Tagalog	1.1	Spanish	0.7	Portuguese	0.5
WK	Warwick	3.1	Spanish	1.1	Portuguese	0.7	Chinese	0.2
LI	Lincoln	2.8	Spanish	1.5	Portuguese	0.6	Arabic	0.2
NK	North Kingstown	2.4	Spanish	0.7	Chinese	0.4	Japanese	0.2
JA	Jamestown	2.2	Hindi	1.0	French	0.6	Portuguese	0.5
EG	East Greenwich	2.2	Chinese	1.1	Polish	0.4	Spanish	0.2
BA	Barrington	1.9	Chinese	0.6	Portuguese	0.5	French	0.3
SC	Scituate	1.7	Italian	0.7	Spanish	0.5	Portuguese	0.4
SM	Smithfield	1.5	Spanish	0.7	Mon Khmer	0.2	French	0.2
NS	North Smithfield	1.4	French	0.6	Spanish	0.2	Portuguese	0.1
PO	Portsmouth	1.3	Portuguese	0.4	Japanese	0.2	Spanish	0.2
TI	Tiverton	1.3	Portuguese	0.7	French	0.2	Hebrew	0.2
SK	South Kingstown	1.1	Chinese	0.3	Spanish	0.2	Urdu	0.1
BU	Burrillville	1.1	French	0.5	Other Indo European Language	0.2	German	0.1
CO	Coventry	1.1	Russian	0.2	German	0.1	Portuguese	0.1
FO	Foster	0.8	Spanish	0.6	French	0.2		
GL	Glocester	0.7	Portuguese	0.4	Italian	0.2	German	0.1
LC	Little Compton	0.5	French	0.3	Italian	0.2		
HO	Hopkinton	0.4	Other Asian Language	0.2	French	0.2	Spanish	0.1
EX	Exeter	0.4	Tagalog	0.2	French	0.2		
CH	Charlestown	0.4	Chinese	0.2	German	0.1	French	0.1
NA	Narragansett	0.3	Spanish	0.3				
RM	Richmond	0.0						
BI	New Shoreham	0.0						

*** Percentage of people within this community who reported speaking English less than "Very Well"**

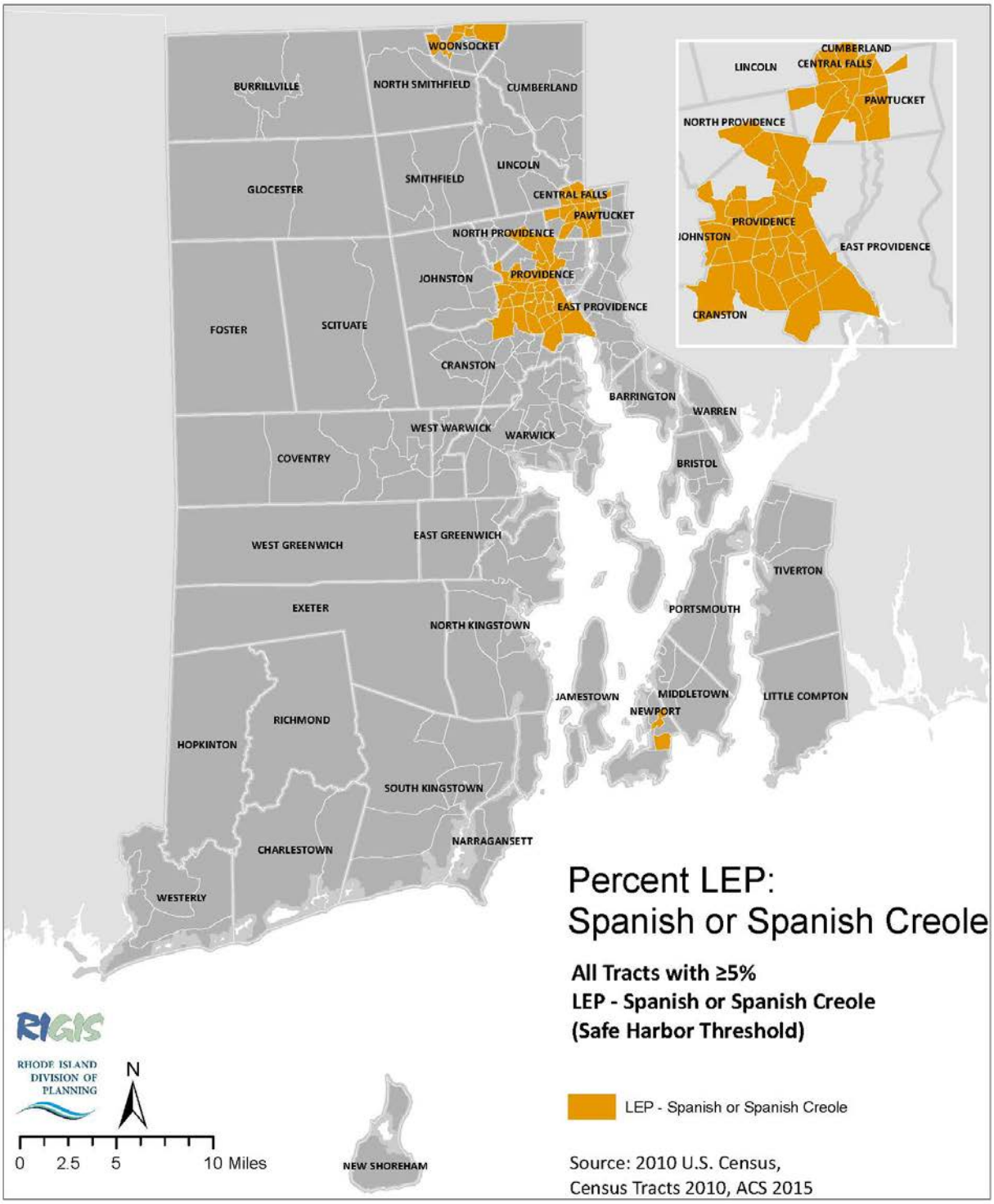
**** Percentage of people within this community who reported speaking English less than "Very Well" AND speak this language as their primary language.**

Source: US Census Bureau, 2011-2015 5-Year American Community Survey, Table B16001

Transportation Equity Benefit Analysis

September 2017

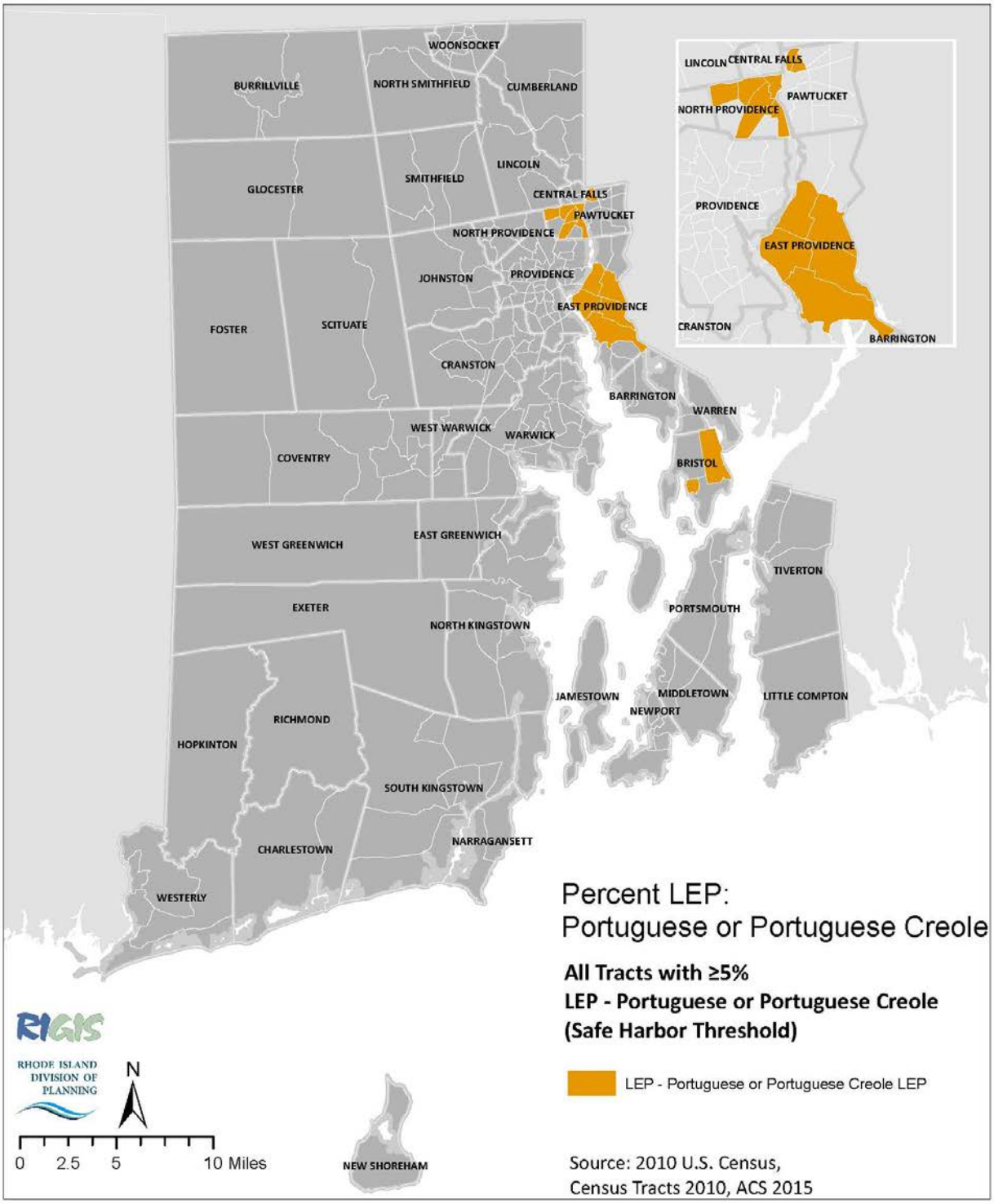
Percentage of LEP Individuals in RI by U.S. Census Tract - Spanish or Spanish Creole



Transportation Equity Benefit Analysis

September 2017

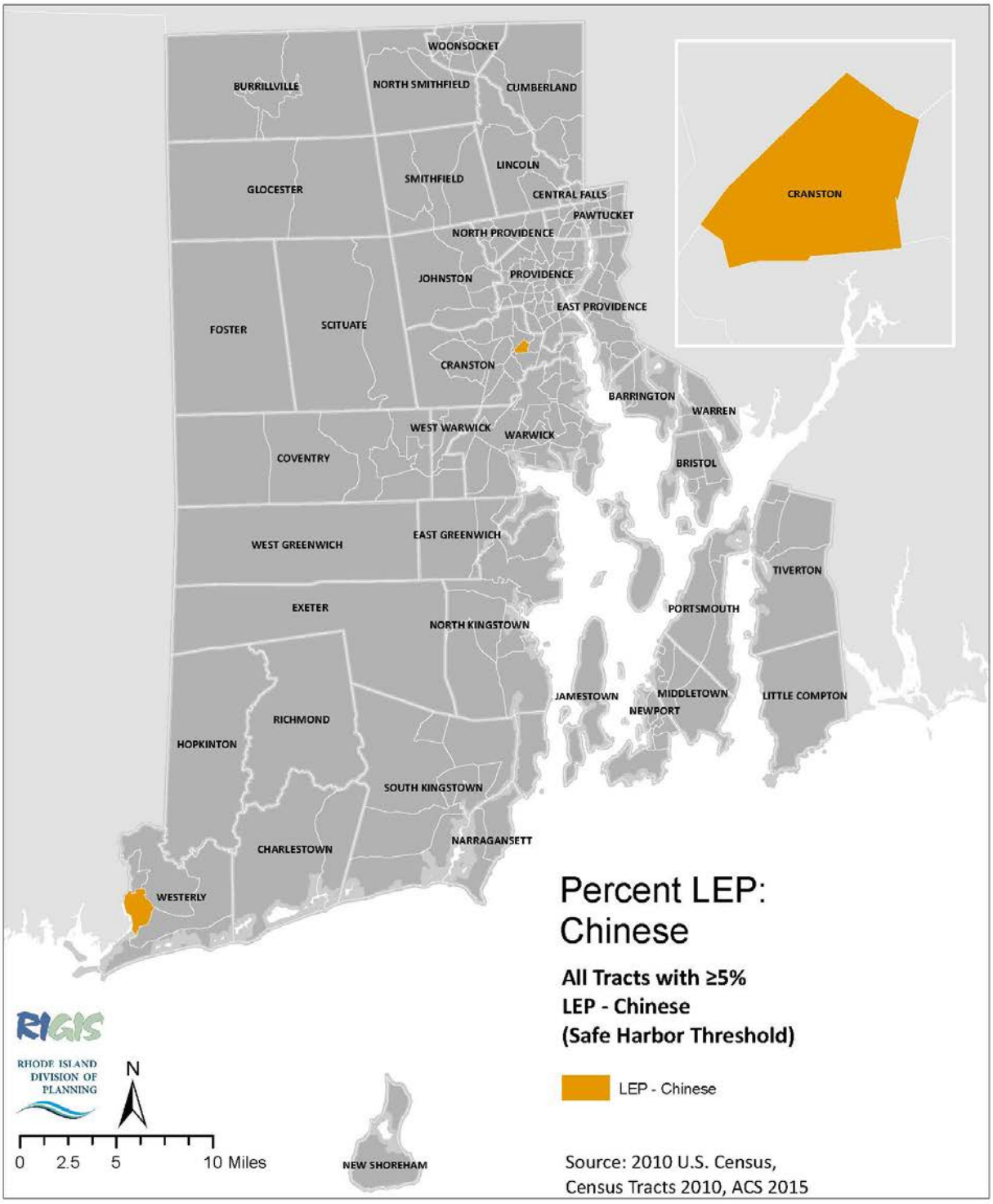
Percentage of LEP Individuals in RI by U.S. Census Tract - Portuguese or Portuguese Creole



Transportation Equity Benefit Analysis

September 2017

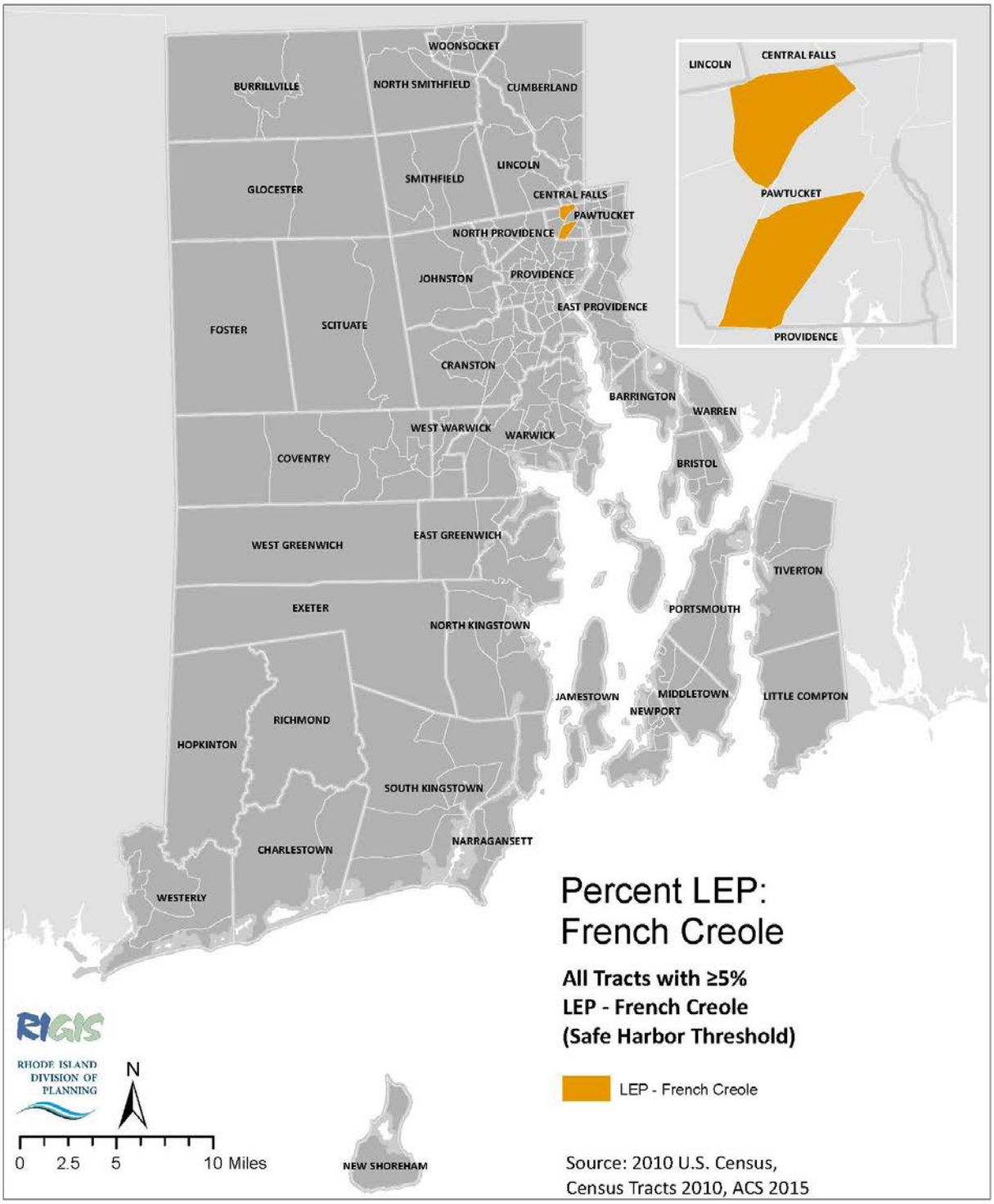
Percentage of LEP Individuals in RI by U.S. Census Tract - Chinese



Transportation Equity Benefit Analysis

September 2017

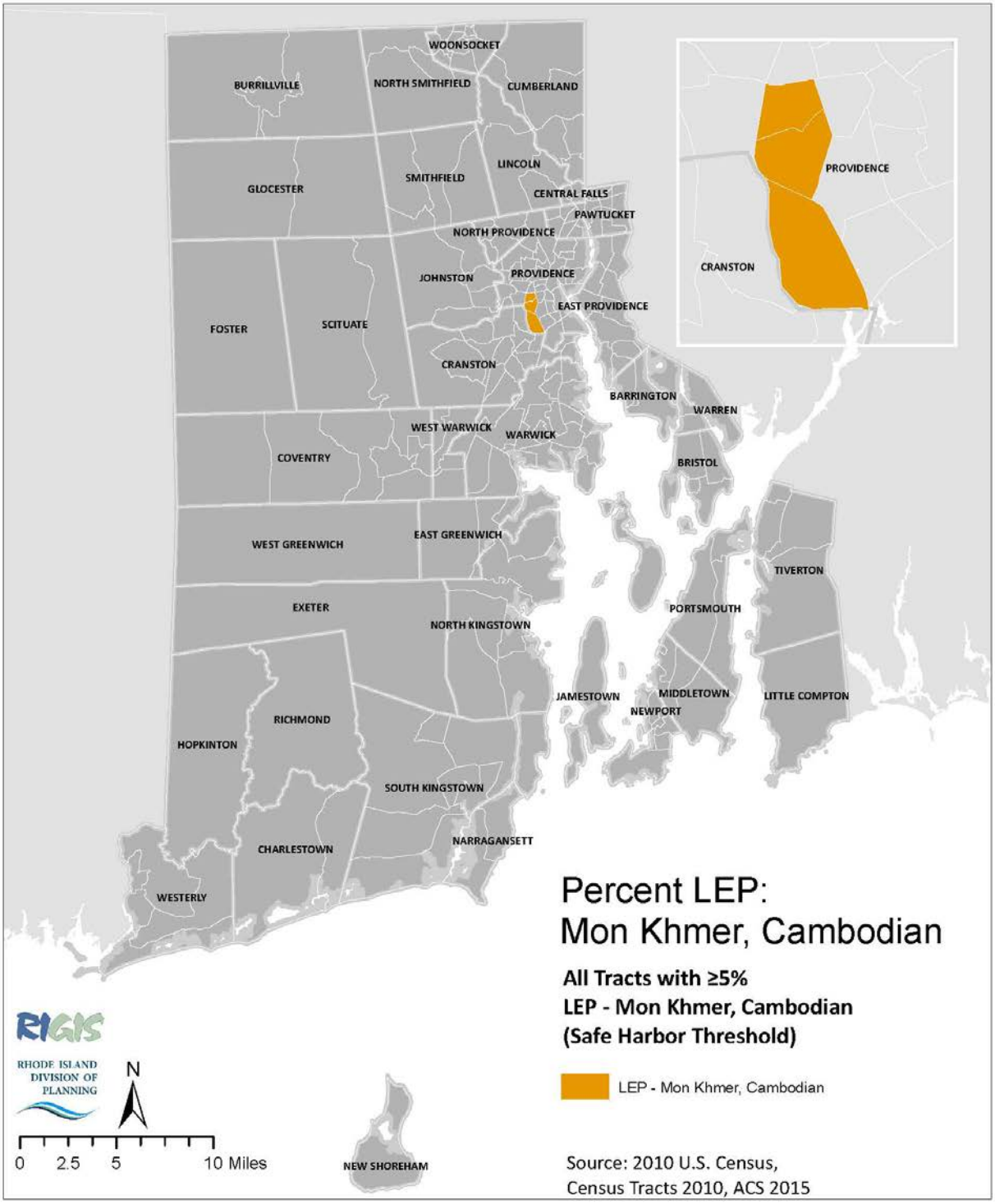
Percentage of LEP Individuals in RI by U.S. Census Tract - French Creole



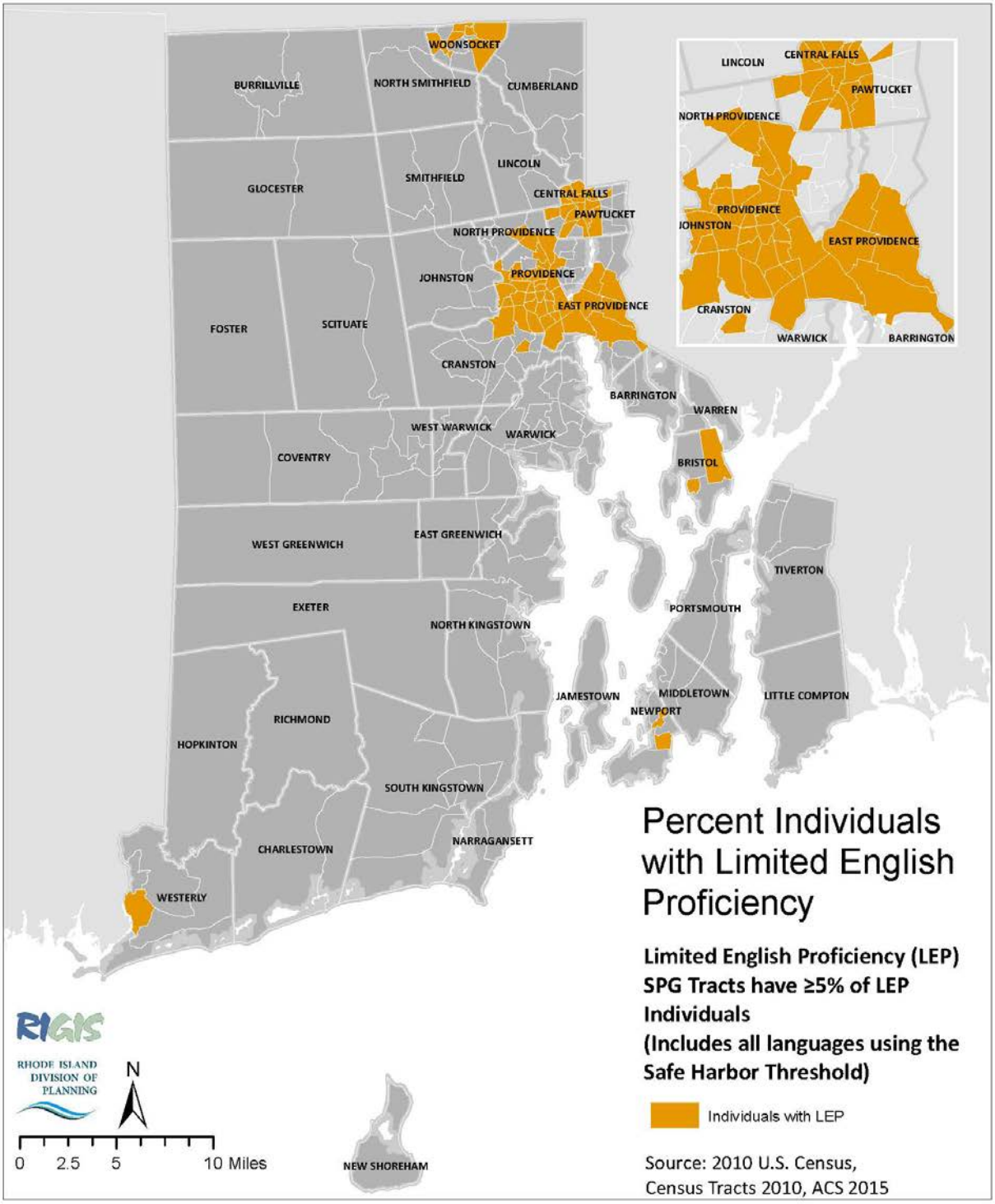
Transportation Equity Benefit Analysis

September 2017

Percentage of LEP Individuals in RI by U.S. Census Tract - Mon Khmer, Cambodian



Transportation Equity Benefit Analysis

September 2017

Percentage of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Individuals in RI by U.S. Census Tract