



Press Release – For Immediate Release

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Statewide Planning Program
401-222-4411

\$1 Million in Funding Awarded for Regional and Local Planning Initiatives

Eighteen regional and local planning projects will receive approximately \$1 million under the Statewide Planning Program's Planning Challenge Grant Program, the agency announced today in a 4:00 PM public ceremony in the Atrium Gallery of the Department of Administration. Selected from 29 proposals requesting over \$1.8 million, the 18 projects slated for funding come from a variety of project sponsors and propose innovative solutions to address land use and transportation issues faced by Rhode Island communities. Grants announced today go to 13 municipalities, two regional planning organizations, one non-profit organization and one quasi-state agency and will support planning projects having an estimated value, including sponsor-match and leveraged funds, of over \$2 million.

Grant recipients announced today are: **Grow Smart Rhode Island; the Cities of East Providence, Pawtucket, Providence, and Warwick; the Towns of Bristol, East Greenwich, Exeter, North Kingstown, North Providence, Smithfield, South Kingstown, Warren and West Warwick; the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission; the Washington County Planning Council, and the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority.** Projects include updates to local comprehensive plans, growth plans for village centers, transportation corridor studies, a regional traffic incident management program, and a short sea shipping infrastructure assessment. A summary of the all grant awards including contact information is provided below.

A component of the Department of Administration's Division of Planning, the Statewide Planning Program is charged with preparing and maintaining plans for the physical, economic, and social development of the state; encouraging their implementation; and coordinating the actions of state, local and federal agencies and private individuals. Supported with planning funds provided through the Federal Highway Administration, the Planning Challenge Grant Program was initially developed by the Statewide Planning Program in 2006 as a means to further the implementation of the State's official land use plan, Land Use 2025 and the State's long range transportation plan, Transportation 2030. Together these plans urge state, local and regional agencies to work together to create a constellation of community centers connected by infrastructure corridors and framed by greenspace. Since 2006, the Planning Challenge Grant Program has provided over \$1.8 million to state agencies, municipalities, universities and non-profit agencies for a variety of inventive and diverse transportation and land use projects including the implementation of Rhode Island's first transfer of development rights program in North Kingstown, the adoption of a form based zoning code in Jamestown and the completion of a comprehensive GIS based inventory of Rhode Island ports and commercial harbors. A complete list of all previously funded projects is available on the Statewide Planning Program website, www.planning.state.ri.us.

In announcing the awards today, Kevin Flynn, Associate Director of the Division of Planning commented...

“We are particularly pleased to be able to make resources available to support these 18 locally-conceived planning efforts that will help us at the state level achieve the objectives of the State Guide Plan. We have long shared the public’s frustration that many plans, no matter how sensible and popular, do not come to fruition. As illustrated by the success of our past Planning Challenge Grant recipients, sometimes a relatively small investment can make the difference between a plan that “sits on the shelf” and one that truly changes a community, a region, or a state. We are hopeful that in supporting these pilot studies we can continue to transform the ideas of our state and community plans into actions that will make Rhode Island a better place for us all”.

For more information contact Karen Scott, Supervising Transportation Planner, Statewide Planning Program at 401-222-4411.

Proposals funded in the Statewide Planning Program’s 2009 Planning Challenge Grant Program are:

RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY: \$100,000 to complete an Alternatives Analysis for the Providence Streetcar Project, which will provide local decision makers with the information necessary to implement the most appropriate transportation solutions for the linkages between the major Providence activity centers of the Hospital area, Jewelry District, DownCity, Capitol Center and College Hill. Contact: Mark Therrien, Assistant General Manager – Development, Planning and Grants, 784-9500.

TOWN OF EXETER: \$98,500 to analyze several potential village area sites, develop zoning and design guidelines to implement the desired rural village development, and establish a transfer of development rights (TDR) program for the town. Contact: David Schweid, Town Planner, 294-2612.

GROW SMART RHODE ISLAND: \$85,415 to continue the award-winning Grow Smart RI Land Use Training Collaborative, including at least 14 workshops on topics such as mixed use development, making good land use decisions, agricultural viability, affordable housing, and the roles and responsibilities of municipal officials in the state and local planning and project review processes. Contact: Scott Wolf, Executive Director, 273-5711

CITY OF WARWICK: \$85,000 to update the City’s Comprehensive Plan. Contact: Mark Carruolo, Planning Director, 738-2000, ext. 6289.

CITY OF PAWTUCKET: \$80,000 to design public multi-modal transportation connections, streetscape enhancements and building infrastructure improvements in downtown Pawtucket. This study will also examine current downtown traffic circulation patterns and recommend alternatives. Contact: Michael Cassidy, Director of Planning and Redevelopment, 724-5200.

TOWN OF NORTH KINGSTOWN: \$70,000 to further efforts to expand the town's recently adopted TDR program by identifying additional receiving zones within existing and emergent village centers, as well as other potential areas capable of supporting higher densities. Contact: Jonathan Reiner, Planning Director, 294-3331 x 310

AQUIDNECK ISLAND PLANNING COMMISSION: \$68,000 to develop a regional traffic incident management program for Aquidneck Island to reduce traffic delays associated with incidents and events and to provide timely and accurate advance and real-time information to the public to allow them to make informed transportation decision. Contact: Tina Dolen, Executive Director, 845-9299.

CITY OF PROVIDENCE: \$61,424 to compete a short sea shipping infrastructure assessment. This study will expand on previously completed studies identifying marine transportation infrastructure statewide and conduct an in-depth parcel by parcel analysis of the improvements needed to support short sea shipping along Allens Avenue in Providence. Contact: Thomas Deller, Director of Planning and Development, 351-4300.

CITY OF EAST PROVIDENCE: \$52,800 to conduct a land use feasibility study for the "Auto Row" section of Taunton Avenue to assess its capacity to accommodate mixed commercial and moderate to high density residential land uses and develop zoning ordinance amendments to implement the findings. Contact: Jeanne Boyle, Director of Planning, 435-7531.

WASHINGTON COUNTY PLANNING COUNCIL: \$51,000 to assess the feasibility of developing and implementing an inter-municipal TDR program in Rhode Island. This project will also include a series of workshops in the Washington County region to provide a comprehensive overview of TDR programs to municipal officials. Contact: Jeff Broadhead, Executive Director, 284-1784.

TOWN OF WEST WARWICK: \$46,500 to develop tools, ordinances and associated incentives to ensure that Arctic Village becomes a thriving retail center and that other villages in town are given purposeful orientation through long range planning. Contact: Luke Peterson, Assistant to the Town Manager, 222-9216.

TOWN OF SOUTH KINGSTOWN: \$40,000 to study designation of Matunuck and West Kingston villages as growth centers, test alternate build out scenarios, draft regulatory modifications to promote and enhance these areas as compact, sustainable village settings, and develop capital improvement recommendations for infrastructure projects that will improve access to public transportation and enhance transportation options for pedestrians and bicycle users. Contact: L. Vincent Murray, Director of Planning, 789-9331.

TOWN OF NORTH PROVIDENCE: \$30,000 to update the City's Comprehensive Plan. Contact: Edward Civito, Director of Planning and Zoning, 232-0900.

TOWN OF WARREN: \$30,000 to explore access management options along Metacom Avenue with the goals of improving traffic flow, protecting residential property, and preserving natural and scenic resources. Site design guidelines, including landscaping and signage, curb cut management, land use, and zoning will all be analyzed. Contact: Caroline Wells, Director of Planning and Community Development, 245-2469.

TOWN OF BRISTOL: \$30,000 to work with local marine trades industries to study the existing marine trade businesses to learn more about their current needs and potential growth in order to develop a dedicated transportation corridor to the waterfront which can accommodate large boats, masts and other marine products. Contact: Diane Williamson, Director of Community Development, 253-7000.

TOWN OF SMITHFIELD: \$30,000 to develop an access management plan and ordinance for Douglas Pike (Route 7) and Washington Highway (Route 116) with the goals of reducing curb cuts, preserving roadway capacity and improving roadway aesthetics all while continuing to accommodate economic development. Contact: Michael Phillips, Director of Planning and Economic Development, 233-1017.

TOWN OF EAST GREENWICH: \$25,000 to update the City's Comprehensive Plan. Contact: William Sequino, Town Manager, 886-8665.

CITY OF PROVIDENCE \$10,000 to assess the feasibility of a bike share program in Providence to promote public health by reducing auto emissions and encouraging physical activity, improve the transportation system for residents and visitors and boost the city's image as a leader in sustainable transportation systems. Contact: Matthew Soursourian, Policy Associate, 421-2489, ext. 753.

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