



American Planning Association
Rhode Island Chapter



APA-RI 2020

Five-Year Strategic Plan of Development

APA-RI 2020 presents an approach to advance APA Rhode Island over the next five years. The intent is to vet and establish initiatives and leading priorities for the Rhode Island Chapter. This plan also serves as a tool to ensure that our operations and activities directly relate to and support our mission and goals.

FINAL PLAN FOR ADOPTION: January 2016

*APA-RI
771 Plainfield Pike
North Scituate, Rhode Island 02857*

<http://www.rhodeislandapa.org/>

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Acknowledgements:

This plan was developed by the Executive Board of the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Planning Association. The principal author of the plan was M. James Riordan, AICP, LEED AP, Chapter Vice President. Jim was generously assisted by Albert Ranaldi, AICP, Chapter Professional Development Officer.



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Executive Summary

The National American Planning Association (APA) has established 10 performance criteria (see Appendix A) for its 47 chapter subsidiaries. The second of these criteria is preparation and maintenance of a **long-range development plan** (i.e., strategic plan) for submission to APA once every five years. *American Planning Association Rhode Island Chapter Five-Year Strategic Plan of Development* (APA-RI 2020) is the Rhode Island Chapter's long-range development plan and will take the place of the Chapter Work Plan 2014 - 2017.

APA-RI 2020 describes our Chapter (see "About APA-RI") and the context in which it functions (see "Planning Context"). Our Chapter's mission and long-range work program are then discussed in the section entitled "Mission, Vision, Goals, and Objectives." This section intends to clarify the nexus between our aspirations and actions. This section also lays out the framework on which we will establish annual work plans over the next five years.

APA-RI 2020 was developed through a facilitated planning process, which included outreach to our membership through broadcast email and four strategic planning workshops. One of these workshops was held during our annual Chapter breakfast at the 2015 Southern New England American Planning Association Conference (SNEAPA) and was attended by over 30 members of our Chapter. Attendees of the workshop series collaborated to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of our Chapter as well as upcoming opportunities and concerns. Seven areas of focus were established for the next five-year period:

- **Street Cred**—Create a "seat at the table" for APA-RI in working with the Rhode Island General Assembly, Rhode Island Builders Association and others.
- **Spread the Word**—Build on the current use of social media and other forms of communication to promote planning principles and planning-related events.
- **Enlightenment**—Engage and build on our diversity of membership to expand the knowledge of planning boards and the general public about sound planning.
- **Fun Stuff**—Continue to bring intellectually stimulating and engaging networking opportunities through conferences like SNEAPA and social events such as the annual holiday party and summer get-together.
- **Get a Clue**—Continue to spearhead lifetime learning opportunities through certificate maintenance opportunities, cutting-edge technical training, AICP training, and support the reintroduction of a planning school in Rhode Island.
- **Get it Done**—Make projects happen through APA-RI's knowledge base and through grants and grant making.
- **Reach Out**—Stay well connected with APA National and build our connections outside of Southern New England, especially with the Northern New England chapters.

APA-RI 2020 is meant to be flexible. Each year, it is to be reviewed and adjusted as needed as part of the work planning process. At the completion of its five-year term, APA-RI 2020 should be fully reevaluated and updated for the next five year cycle.



Purpose and Background

This section of the *American Planning Association Rhode Island Chapter Five-Year Strategic Plan of Development (APA-RI 2020)* describes the need for a strategic plan and gives general background on APA-RI.

Purpose of APA-RI 2020

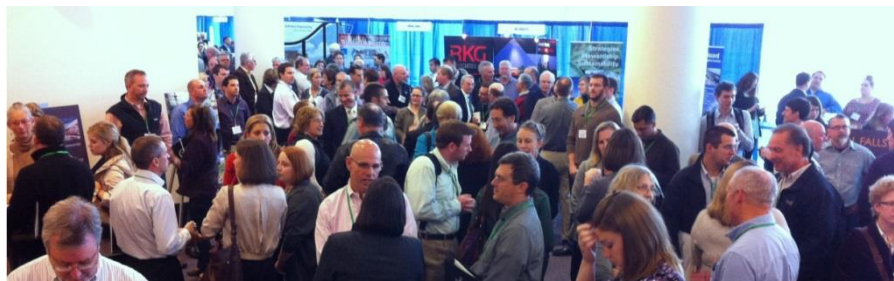
APA National requires each of its chapters to develop a strategic plan and update it on a five-year or more frequent basis. It's for a good reason. The strategic planning process helps to ensure that our operations and activities directly relate to and support our mission and goals; and the completed strategic plan then serves our chapter as a guide for action.

Therefore, the purpose of APA-RI 2020 could be described as follows:

- Assess the Chapter's current condition.
- Confirm and articulate the Chapter's mission.
- Reaffirm the membership's support of those areas in which the Chapter is performing well.
- Identity specific areas in need of improvement.
- Provide a realistic long-range work program to guide implementation of activities which will support strong and strengthen weak Chapter program areas and services.
- Establish accord with APA National requirements.

About APA-RI

APA-RI is one of 47 chapters of the American Planning Association and is a nonprofit public interest and research organization dedicated to urban, suburban, regional and rural planning. A key role for APA-RI is to support professional development of its members through professional education and networking events (e.g., conferences). APA-RI also advocates for well-considered community planning and development through involvement in state and national policy forums, coordination with allied professionals, and development of technical resources to support its membership.



Professional development...

Events like the Southern New England American Planning Association Conference, present APA-RI members with excellent opportunities to exchange ideas. In 2014, APA-RI offered its members the opportunity to earn over 150 certificate maintenance credits.



An Executive Board governs the chapter. Four of the chapter board positions are elected every two years by the chapter membership (President, President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer). The remaining chapter board members are appointed positions and include the Professional Development Officer and committee chairs. The Executive Board meets monthly to manage chapter business, such as requests for certification maintenance credits, event planning, legislative priorities, etc.

The APA-RI has established and maintains a chapter website, which, along with general chapter communications, publishes the following:

- Annual work plan, bylaws, financial reporting (<http://www.rhodeislandapa.org/chapter-info/chapter-by-laws-and-workplan/>).
- Newsletters and planning news (<http://www.rhodeislandapa.org/news/newsletter/>)
- List of chapter officers and board members (<http://www.rhodeislandapa.org/chapter-info/chapter-board/>).

APA-RI regularly distributes broadcast emails to its membership regarding conferences, educational opportunities and monthly chapter meetings.

Our chapter membership...

is made up of over 150 planners at all government levels as well as private consultants, local planning board members, landscape architects, environmental scientists, lawyers, engineers, professors, students and other professionals dedicated to sound planning principles. Expanding our membership is a priority to strengthen our chapter.

Planning Context

A key feature of any plan is the context in which it is intended to function, that is to say, the people we work with and support and those issues, which are of common priority to them and our chapter. This section of APA-RI 2020 discusses APA-RI’s relationship to:

- APA National
- New England and other Region 1 chapters—especially Connecticut and Massachusetts
- Rhode Island state agencies
- Rhode Island city and town governments
- Affiliated groups -professional organizations and nonprofits with related missions

This section also discusses who our chapter represents, i.e., our existing membership.

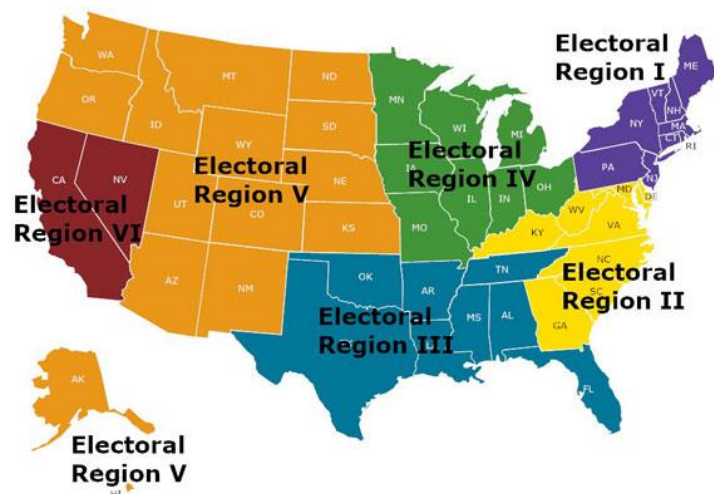
Relationship of the Rhode Island Chapter to APA National

APA National is an independent, not-for-profit educational organization that provides leadership in the development of vital communities. The American Planning Association was created in 1978 by the consolidation of two separate planning organizations, but its roots grow all the way back to 1909 and the first National Conference on City Planning in Washington, D.C. As described in its 2015 Plan of Development, APA National has established the following mission:

The American Planning Association provides leadership in the development of vital communities by advocating excellence in planning, promoting education and citizen empowerment, and providing the tools and support necessary to meet the challenges of growth and change.

Region 1 Chapters

APA - Region 1 consist of nine states. Region 1 represents Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Region 1 also extends into Canada and represents planners from Ontario, Quebec, and Maritime Provinces.



In 2015, Region 1 held a conference in Saratoga Springs, New York with the theme of getting ahead of the future.

Southern New England Chapters
(<http://www.sneapa.org/>)

The Southern New England Chapters include Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. **APA-RI enjoys a particularly close relationship with the Connecticut and Massachusetts chapters of APA.** Each year, we participate in the Southern New England American Planning Association (SNEAPA) Conference. SNEAPA is an annual 2-day planning conference, hosted by the Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts chapters of APA. The conference draws over 500 planners, landscape architects, architects, engineers, academics, students and others. Hosting of the conference revolves from state to state and is therefore held in Rhode Island on a triennial basis. SNEAPA represents APA-RI's primary source of revenue for chapter activities.



SNEAPA 2015...

Was held in Hartford, CT. SNEAPA will be in Rhode Island again in 2017.

Northern New England Chapters
(<http://nnecapa.org/>)

The Northern New England chapters include Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. This regional group of APA chapters is an important opportunity for Rhode Island to form a closer relationship with and collaborate on issues and conference events.

Rhode Island Affiliated Organizations

Planners come from many walks-of-life and APA-RI partners itself with a wide range of professional, governmental, academic, and advocacy organizations. Three key examples are discussed below. APA-RI is constantly working to strengthen our existing affiliations as well as establishing new relationships with allied organizations.

Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program

(<http://www.planning.ri.gov/about/>)



The Rhode Island Division of Planning consists of two main components: the Statewide Planning Program, and the Water Resources Board. The Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program prepares and maintains 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 Statewide Planning Program consists of the State Planning Council and staff who specialize in land use, comprehensive planning, GIS, transportation and other related topics.

The State Planning Council oversees the Statewide Planning Program's work. The Council adopts goals and policies related to planning, most of which are contained within individual plans, which are elements of the State Guide Plan.

There are 26 members of the State Planning Council representing a range of interests. Currently, the APA-RI vice president serves as a public member of the State Planning Council on a five-year term that is set to expire in 2020.

Grow Smart RI

(<http://www.growsmartri.org/>)

Grow Smart RI provides statewide leadership for diverse public and private interests seeking sustainable and equitable economic growth by advocating for compact development in revitalized urban, town, and village centers balanced with responsible stewardship of our region's natural assets – farmland, forests, the coastline, and the Bay. They inform leaders, decision makers, and concerned citizens about the many benefits of compact development and asset stewardship and provide research and training on proven smart growth strategies. Grow Smart RI convenes broad coalitions that advocate policy reforms and specific projects designed to build communities where all people and businesses can thrive. APA-RI regularly attends and supports Grow Smart RI events.



Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns

(<http://www.rileague.org/>)

Associations like the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns exist in 49 states and were originally formed for the purpose of representing municipal government interests before the state legislature. This role has expanded to include representation before the executive and state administrative agencies as well as the provision of technical assistance, information sharing, and training to assist municipal officials in fulfilling their responsibilities. An important and highly visible function of the RILC&T is its annual conference. APA-RI has been an exhibitor at the annual RILC&T conference in 2013 and 2014.





Mission, Vision, Goals and Objectives

The heart of a strategic plan is the mission statement, vision, goals, and its implementation objectives. This section is written to clearly establish a direction forward for our chapter and the means by which we will pursue that direction.

Chapter Mission Statement

APA-RI has established the following mission:

Positively shape the planning profession by providing a forum for the understanding and application of sound planning principles within the State of Rhode Island and to provide leadership in the development of vital communities by advocating and recognizing excellence in community planning.

Our intent in this strategic plan is to describe how we will achieve our mission through advocacy, networking, outreach and professional development.

Chapter Vision

As part of a visioning exercise, members of APA-RI identified seven areas of focus. We also developed SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analyses for each area. The seven areas of focus are:

- **Street Cred**—Create a “seat at the table” for APA-RI in working with the Rhode Island General Assembly, Rhode Island Builders Association and others.
- **Spread the Word**—Build on the current use of social media and other forms of communication to promote planning principles and planning-related events.
- **Enlightenment**—Engage and build on our diversity of membership to expand the knowledge of planning boards and the general public about sound planning.
- **Fun Stuff**—Continue to bring intellectually stimulating and engaging networking opportunities through conferences like SNEAPA and social events such as the annual holiday party and summer get-together.
- **Get a Clue**—Continue to spearhead lifetime learning opportunities through certificate maintenance opportunities, cutting-edge technical training, AICP training, and support the reintroduction of a planning school in Rhode Island.
- **Get it Done**—Make projects happen through APA-RI’s knowledge base and through grants and grant making.
- **Reach Out**—Stay well connected with APA National and build our connections outside of Southern New England, especially with the Northern New England chapters.

Five-Year Goals

As a starting point we have established the following five-year goals for APA-RI:

- A. Reestablish 501(c)(3) status with the Internal Revenue Service.
- B. Work closely with Roger Williams University, University of Rhode Island, and Rhode Island College to reintroduce a Rhode Island school of planning for graduate studies.



- C. Continue our strategic planning process to keep our strategic plan a living and forward-moving document.
- D. Continue to provide excellent learning and networking events such as SNEAPA, brownbag trainings as well as the holiday party, summer get-together, and awards events. Explore opportunities for a New England planning conference and planning-related conferences with our affiliates like Grow Smart RI.
- E. Continue to participate in our affiliates events like the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns annual conference.
- F. Establish liaisons to improve outreach to planning boards through one-on-one meetings.
- G. Reach out to the Rhode Island General Assembly by hosting a relationship-building event such as a legislative breakfast.
- H. Use our website as a springboard for enhancing our social media presence. For example, consider establishing a blog.
- I. Create a Rhode Island Planning Think Tank that works as a clearinghouse of information for members of APA-RI.

Objectives—Meeting Five-Year Goals

Table 1
Summary of Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

Objectives	Responsibility	Schedule	Anticipated Outcomes	Measures of Success	Priority Level	Resource Requirements
501(c)(3) Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President 	End of Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application for nonprofit status with IRS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful application to IRS 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$3,500 for consultant
Graduate Planning School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President • Vice President or President-Elect • Professional Development Officer (PDO) • Program Coordinator 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credential program or graduate program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD with host school • Influx of young planners in RI 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing meetings with EB and local schools
Strategic Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vice President • PDO • Executive Board • Chapter members 	End of Year (Annual evaluation thereafter)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter approval of RI APA 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full EB engagement in implementation • Enhanced Chapter membership involvement 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing meetings • EB time drafting plan
Continuation of SNEAPA, CM training, holiday party, etc. Expand training and social events to include allied organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SNEAPA Chair (TBD) • PDO • EB 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation of regular events and training • Expand events schedule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued training of membership • Expanded chapter engagement • Enhanced cooperation with allied organizations • Enhanced revenue for the Chapter 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EB and volunteer time • Budget TBD
Continue to participate in affiliate events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President • EB 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinated events with affiliates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced training opportunities for Chapter members 	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EB time • Budget TBD
Planning board liaisons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDO • Membership Chair 	Year 1 – 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaison meetings with each local planning board in RI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased Chapter membership • More complete support of planning boards 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time and budget TBD
Outreach to General Assembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and Legislative Coordinator (Ashley Hahn) 	Year 1 - 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better relationship with the General Assembly, especially the leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct communication on key issues with the GA leadership 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time and budget TBD
Social media presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Relations Coordinator (Chris Witt) • Public Relations Committee 	Year 2 - 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better engagement of membership, especially young planners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased hits to Chapter website. 	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time and budget TBD
APA-RI Think Tank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Coordinator • Program and Events Committee 	Year 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter planners and affiliate organizations have APA-RI as an informational resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established committee with policies and procedures 	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time and budget TBD



American Planning Association
Rhode Island Chapter

Appendix 1

Compendium of Key Documents and Chapter Performance Criteria



American Planning Association
Rhode Island Chapter

Appendix 2

Strategic Planning Process