

# U.S. EPA SMART GROWTH IMPLEMENTATION ASSISTANCE



## A PROJECT SELECTION TOOL FOR THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND: *LEVERAGING STATE TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING, AND INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS*

## Project Contacts

### **EPA HQ Contact:**

Ted Cochin  
Office of Sustainable Communities  
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
MC1807T  
Washington, DC 20460  
[cochin.ted@epa.gov](mailto:cochin.ted@epa.gov)

### **EPA Regional Contact:**

Rosemary K. Monahan, Ph.D.  
5 Post Office Square  
Suite 100, ORA18-1  
Boston, MA 02109-3912  
[monahan.rosemary@epa.gov](mailto:monahan.rosemary@epa.gov)

### **Rhode Island Contact:**

Jeff Davis  
Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program  
One Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02908  
[jeff.davis@doa.ri.gov](mailto:jeff.davis@doa.ri.gov)

### **DOT Contact:**

Dwayne Weeks  
Federal Transit Administration  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590  
[dwayne.weeks@dot.gov](mailto:dwayne.weeks@dot.gov)

### **ICF Contact:**

Harrison Rue  
9300 Lee Highway  
Fairfax, VA 22031  
[harrison.rue@icfi.com](mailto:harrison.rue@icfi.com)

## Introduction

This project was conducted under EPA's Smart Growth Implementation Assistance program with assistance from HUD and DOT through the Partnership for Sustainable Communities. The Partnership for Sustainable Communities is collaboration among HUD, DOT, and EPA to help improve access to affordable housing, more transportation options, and lower transportation costs while protecting the environment in communities nationwide. Representatives from the U.S. Federal Transit Association and the U.S. Department of Housing and Development played a significant role in this project as well.

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# 1 Executive Summary

Rhode Island's KeepSpace initiative is a partnership of state agencies, local governments, nonprofits, and others with a mission "to work together in diverse partnerships with a spirit of respect, collaboration, and cooperation to create a healthy, prosperous, sustainable future for Rhode Island." In 2010, KeepSpace requested assistance through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Smart Growth Implementation Assistance program to help better prioritize state, nonprofit, and federal resources. This assistance will help the state ensure that investments in housing, economic development, transportation, and infrastructure are consistent with the state's Land Use 2025 plan, KeepSpace community elements, and smart growth principles.

At the request of Rhode Island, the EPA-led team developed a project selection tool to help KeepSpace assess and prioritize projects seeking competitive state or nonprofit funding. The process included:

- An analysis of statewide funding sources.
- An analysis of existing project assessment and selection tools from across the country.
- Interviews with representatives of Rhode Island state agencies, local governments, and nonprofit organizations and a review workshop for state and local stakeholders.

The team solicited feedback throughout the process from KeepSpace partners, other state agencies and nonprofits, and KeepSpace pilot communities. That feedback guided selection of the tool's assessment categories and helped develop a project selection tool that uses yes/no checklists, distance from services, and narrative responses to award points and calculate scores. The assessment categories and sample criteria are:

- **Transportation choice and accessibility:** includes proximity to transit service, complete streets, and parking placement/supply.
- **Housing choice and affordability:** includes mix of housing types, range of housing prices, and compact development.
- **Economic development:** includes job creation, areas targeted for reinvestment, and support of existing businesses.
- **Support of existing communities and designated growth centers:** includes proximity to infrastructure, mix of uses, and proximity to services and amenities.
- **Community character and collaboration:** includes reuse of historic buildings, community involvement, and consistency with community context.
- **Environmental protection and public health:** includes protection of air, land, and water quality, as well as any disproportionate impacts on low income and disadvantaged communities.
- **The tool's criteria can be adjusted for urban, suburban, and rural projects.** The criteria focus on the evaluation of project proposals rather than the evaluation of localities or districts but could be adapted to evaluate broader state investment decisions. Five state agencies and organizations that participated in the final workshop agreed to test and refine the tool during upcoming funding application rounds.

The team offered four options to improve interagency coordination that KeepSpace Advisory Committee members can consider as they test, adjust, and implement the tool:

- Continue informal coordination by KeepSpace.
- Identify dedicated staff and a lead agency.
- Coordinate at the cabinet or sub-cabinet level.
- Expand the State Planning Council's mission and role.

Any level of government—state, regional, or local—could apply this tool to help decide which projects to fund. By implementing a single, consistent framework for funding decisions across agencies,

governments can better target limited public resources to projects that demonstrate multiple benefits. A single and consistent project selection framework also sends a strong signal to nonprofit and for-profit developers about the types of projects that the state, region, or local government seeks. Just as this framework links its criteria to Rhode Island's Land Use 2025 Plan, application of the project selection tool in other regions should also mirror the priorities and desired outcomes of a community-based plan for growth.



## 2 Background

Rhode Island is proud of the strides it has made in recent years identifying smart growth land use and infrastructure planning strategies. All major state agencies involved in these issues, plus a number of state-wide nonprofits, are working together to implement these plans and better coordinate their efforts.

In 2006 the Rhode Island State Planning Council adopted Land Use 2025 (LU 2025), the state of Rhode Island's land use policies and plan. LU 2025 responded to growing concerns that, despite major investments in land conservation, land use in the state continued to sprawl. In response to this challenge, LU 2025 established an urban services boundary that included areas of the state with the infrastructure to support additional development. The plan recommended steering development to areas within the urban services boundary or other selected growth centers. Under this plan only seven percent of the state's land area would be needed to meet growth demands through 2025.

Building on the concepts laid out in LU 2025, in 2007 a number of statewide leaders, including Rhode Island Housing, came together to form a new collaboration known as KeepSpace. KeepSpace is led by an Advisory Committee made up of state regulatory, resource and planning agencies as well as key statewide nonprofits dedicated to land conservation, smart growth, and affordable housing. Rhode Island Housing currently staffs the initiative. The mission of KeepSpace is to work together in diverse partnerships with a spirit of respect, collaboration and cooperation to create a healthy, prosperous, sustainable future for Rhode Island. Partners agree to come to the table in a spirit of collaboration, understanding the need to think beyond individual spheres of interest, pool resources and expertise, and coordinate efforts in order to create a healthy, prosperous, sustainable future. KeepSpace partners embrace the philosophy of working together to address six key elements of a sustainable community: a good home; a healthy environment; strong commerce; sensible infrastructure; positive community impact; and integrated arts, recreation, culture, and religion.

In 2008, the Advisory Committee selected four pilot KeepSpace Communities and has been working with them through a public engagement process to develop community designs and strategies for more sustainable communities that incorporate jobs, housing, infrastructure, open space and recreation opportunities in a walkable setting. Those plans are now completed and the Advisory Committee continues to discuss opportunities for assisting implementation of these plans.

There are two major obstacles to implementing the Land Use 2025 vision and the complementary strategies developed by the KeepSpace Communities; the KeepSpace Advisory Committee applied for EPA's Smart Growth Implementation Assistance program to provide options for overcoming these barriers. First, while Rhode Island has an innovative state-wide vision, and a vehicle for state agencies and statewide nonprofits to communicate with one another, there is no formal process for coordinating resources to strategically target projects that further the vision. Agencies participating in the development of pilot KeepSpace Community designs worked together to help develop strategies and identify resources, but to take that collaboration to a statewide scale, a more formal process and framework for collaboration is needed. Second, there is no consistent set of standards or priorities used by state agencies to identify and prioritize projects that embrace the KeepSpace philosophy or meet the goals of Land Use 2025. One option the Advisory Committee considered was to establish a system for prioritizing funding and streamlining regulatory processes for such projects. However, this requires shared criteria to determine what qualifies as a KeepSpace project and a system to coordinate resources between agencies when these projects are identified. The Advisory Committee recognized the need for standards relevant to each partner agency, achievable, easy to understand, and easy to replicate for applicants. A streamlined and transparent process for allocating resources and regulatory approvals is one of the most important incentives for getting cooperation and buy-in from the private sector.

As a collaborative partnership, KeepSpace depends on staff from Rhode Island Housing and leadership from Advisory Committee members. Committee members include representatives of:

- Office of the Governor.
- Rhode Island Housing.
- Rhode Island Division of Planning.
- Rhode Island Department of Transportation.
- Rhode Island Land Trust Council.
- Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation.
- Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources.
- Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission.
- Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management.
- Rhode Island Department of Health.
- Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC).
- City of Providence Department of Planning and Development.
- Grow Smart Rhode Island.

Rhode Island Housing itself is a quasi-public housing finance agency established by the state legislature to administer tax credits and tax-exempt bonds.

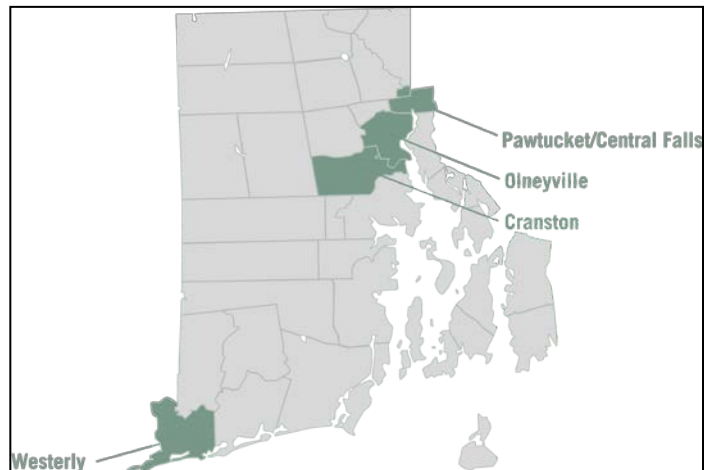
### *KeepSpace*

KeepSpace focuses its technical assistance and funding support on four pilot KeepSpace Communities: Cranston, Olneyville, Pawtucket/Central Falls, and Westerly. Each community was selected through a competitive process and has committed to development and policies that uphold the KeepSpace principles, known as Community Elements. These communities and the lessons learned serve as models for other communities throughout Rhode Island.

KeepSpace continues to engage the developer community and has convened a series of

workshops and roundtable discussions, bringing together a broad-based contingent of builders, developers and municipalities from throughout the state. Designed to illustrate the KeepSpace principles and explain the ongoing KeepSpace Request for Proposals (RFP) process, attendees were given a thorough understanding of the initiative and how they can apply for funding to engage in the initial 3-5 model communities. Rhode Island Housing also maintains a comprehensive website for builders and developers.<sup>1</sup>

KeepSpace has also placed a strong emphasis on assisting under-served communities. For example, the Environmental Justice League of Rhode Island (EJLRI) CARE Alliance organized community members around environmental justice issues that impact residents' health, such as water and air quality, household hazardous waste, and brownfields. Their Healthy Corner Store Initiative is a community campaign to add healthy options and variety to the food available at small markets in Providence and Pawtucket. They also continue to reduce residents' exposure to toxics. In addition, the West Elmwood Housing Development



*Map showing the four KeepSpace pilot communities. Image courtesy of RI Statewide Planning.*

<sup>1</sup> Rhode Island "Builders and Developers." <http://www.rhodeislandhousing.org/sp.cfm?pageid=557>. Accessed June 25, 2012.



Corporation operates its “Clear Corps” program in Olneyville that helps residents to abate lead paint hazards and address other healthy home concerns. In addition, the Rhode Island Minority Investment Development Corporation, a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), needed additional capital to make businesses loans. Community Investment assisted with strategic planning, analysis of secondary market opportunities, financial planning, and composing a successful application for \$750,000 to the CDFI Fund. Many of these approaches could easily be replicable in other communities within Rhode Island or across America.

Figure 1: The KeepSpace Elements

**The KeepSpace Elements**

These six elements are the guiding principles established by the KeepSpace partners.

**A Good Home.** Home provides the foundation upon which families can thrive, children can learn and grow, and communities can prosper. A good home is a safe, healthy, inviting place that is affordable to rent or own, especially to those who work close by. Good homes are the focal point of a thriving community.

**A Healthy Environment.** Environment is what encompasses a community. Whether a neighborhood, region, country or globe, our environment must be protected and nurtured. By using or reusing resources wisely, we encourage sustainable, healthy lifestyles today and for generations to come.

**Strong Commerce.** Commerce is the heartbeat of daily life, providing the essential needs for today and ensuring prosperity for the future. A strong economy incorporates the employment of community residents and the provision of goods and services that people need or desire.

**Sensible Infrastructure.** Infrastructure allows people to live and work in a community. It is the large-scale public systems, services, and facilities that people rely on, including power and water, public transportation, communications, roads and schools.

**Positive Community Impact.** Community impact is the influence that every home, workplace, infrastructure element, service or activity has on a neighborhood. For a community to function at its best, community members must work cooperatively to maximize productive and positive impact on others and the natural and built environment.

**Integrated Arts, Recreation, Culture and Religion.** Arts, recreation, culture and religion fulfill that part of our lives that falls beyond our basic physical necessities. They provide refreshing opportunities to interact with others in the community. By nourishing the mind, body and spirit, these elements play a vital role in the character and customs of every community.

In 2010, the KeepSpace partners solicited help through EPA’s Smart Growth Implementation Assistance (SGIA) program to develop a statewide approach to project funding (see Appendix A for more information about the SGIA program). Specifically, KeepSpace wanted a tool it could use to assess and prioritize projects that were seeking funding from statewide sources.

EPA convened a team that included consultants from ICF International, headquarters and regional staff from EPA and the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), and regional staff from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Under the HUD-DOT-EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities, the three federal agencies work together to help improve access to affordable housing, provide more transportation options, and lower transportation costs while protecting the environment in communities nationwide. The team conducted extensive research and several site visits and focus groups. On June 13-14, 2011, the team convened a workshop with KeepSpace partners and other stakeholders to present the research and discuss and refine the tool. The staff of Rhode Island

Housing provided extensive research assistance, workshop logistics, and coordination of the Rhode Island stakeholder review.

Through this project, the team developed a project selection tool that KeepSpace can consider using to assess projects that apply for funding from KeepSpace partner agencies and nonprofits. KeepSpace asked for options for a set of criteria that all state agencies and statewide nonprofits could use as a common lens to evaluate the sustainability of development projects and prioritize funding accordingly. Many state agencies already have scoring criteria that generally promote smart growth and support the goals of Land Use 2025, but they are not necessarily coordinated and consistent with one another. While the KeepSpace Elements provide broad, high-level guidance, and are conceptually consistent with Land Use 2025, the KeepSpace Advisory Committee wanted something more specific to serve as this common lens. The resulting tool could be used to help KeepSpace partners ensure that investments in housing, economic development, transportation, and infrastructure are consistent with the state's Land Use 2025 plan, the KeepSpace Elements, and smart growth principles.

### 3 Tool Development Approach and Research Summary

Although other frameworks and scorecards for evaluating projects for funding exist, there were no state-level models that covered the project attributes that KeepSpace wanted to assess. The team developed a project selection tool through:

1. Research on pertinent and available statewide funding resources.
2. Research on existing project assessment and selection tools.
3. Solicitation of direct input and feedback from representatives of Rhode Island state agencies, local governments, and nonprofit organizations through interviews and meetings, culminating in a review workshop for state and local stakeholders.

#### 3.1 Identification of Critical Funding Resources

The project started with research to identify the most relevant statewide funding resources available in Rhode Island for housing, transportation, infrastructure, environmental protection, and economic development. The goal was to compile funding resources that could support KeepSpace's goals of encouraging economically and environmentally sustainable growth and improving quality of life in communities around the state. The team cataloged state and nonprofit programs that used a competitive process to award money. Programs that provide state or nonprofit agencies with discretion over project selection or ranking criteria might be able to adopt the project selection tool developed through this project.

Selected funding programs include federal funds distributed through state agencies, tax credits, loans, and other assistance programs from the state and nonprofit agencies. More detailed information is available in the Critical Funding Resources report in Appendix C, which:

- Lists roughly 40 funding resources.
- Describes the key elements of each funding resource, such as eligible applicants, eligible uses of funds, funding cycles, and recent funding levels.
- Identifies real and perceived barriers, which KeepSpace partners and pilot communities identified during this project, to better coordination of state funding resources.
- Outlines proposed new federal funding resources that might provide financial assistance to KeepSpace projects in the future.

### 3.2 Research on Existing Project Selection Tools

The team researched and analyzed existing project assessment and selection tools from around the country to identify elements that could be useful to a KeepSpace tool.

Project assessment or selection tools vary in their approaches and can incorporate checklists, scorecards, performance measures, or other evaluation methods. They also vary in the scale at which they are applied. Some are designed to evaluate proposed individual buildings, others to assess neighborhood-scale developments, and others to evaluate how a community has incorporated smart growth principles into its policies, codes, and zoning. The team identified several examples appropriate for consideration by KeepSpace partners:

- The Massachusetts Commonwealth Capital Program, a community-level assessment tool that Massachusetts used to prioritize funding requests.
- The Smart Growth Leadership Institute Project Scorecard, which assesses proposed development projects on how well they correspond to a community's vision for smarter growth.
- The Smart and Sustainable Growth Recognition Program, which the Washington (D.C.) Sustainable Growth Alliance uses to assess whether to endorse a proposed development project.
- Austin, Texas' Smart Growth Matrix, which the city used to determine incentives for development projects that met smart growth criteria.
- New Jersey Future Smart Growth Scorecard for Proposed Developments, a voluntary scorecard used by a statewide nonprofit to rate proposed development projects.
- San Francisco Healthy Development Measurement Tool, a more complex tool used by the San Francisco Health Department to rate development projects.
- Charlotte, N.C.'s Sustainability Index, used to assess how well a proposed development would meet the city's smart growth-related goals.
- Enterprise Green Communities Criteria, which rate environmentally friendly affordable homes.
- GreenTRIP Certification system for mixed-use, infill projects in the San Francisco area to promote greater housing affordability in transit rich neighborhoods.
- Based on this research and feedback from federal and Rhode Island agencies, the team developed and presented to KeepSpace partners a proposed framework for a project selection tool, along with three alternative approaches for assessing projects.
- The checklist approach uses yes/no questions or a qualitative scale such as Poor-Fair-Good-Excellent.
- Scorecard-type tools assign a numerical score for most or all assessment criteria. These individual scores are sometimes multiplied by weighting factors before being summed to an overall project score.
- Directed response includes questions in each category that call for a written narrative to allow applicants to provide more detail on how a project would address specific goals.



*In the workshop, representatives from state agencies, nonprofits, and local governments gathered to discuss the options for a project selection tool. Photo courtesy of David DelPoio.*

### 3.3 Stakeholder Workshop

The team interviewed a range of stakeholders throughout the process through site visits, in-person and phone interviews, and the stakeholder workshop. Stakeholders represented state agencies, statewide nonprofits, representatives of four KeepSpace pilot communities, other local government representatives, and nonprofit developers of the type that could propose projects under this framework.

The workshop on June 13-14, 2011 included KeepSpace partners, other state agencies and nonprofits, and representatives from the KeepSpace pilot communities. The workshop had three goals:

- Present alternative project selection approaches and gauge their consistency with the KeepSpace Elements and livability and smart growth principles.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of specific criteria for statewide application in Rhode Island.
- Identify the approach that best meets state and local project selection needs.

The meetings included a variety of facilitated discussions about the project assessment categories and selection criteria, as well as potential processes and organizational arrangements for managing interagency coordination of funding decisions. The workshop included six sessions:

- An introductory session to present an overview of project goals, background information on project selection, and evaluation criteria and to brief participants on the project team's options for the structure and content of a project selection tool for statewide use in Rhode Island.
- A session to consider the perspectives of local grant applicants whose applications would be screened by the project selection tool.
- A working session for funding agencies to review in detail which criteria would be most appropriate for Rhode Island and how they should be structured.
- Focus sessions to examine issues and approaches for incorporating the project selection tool into transportation and economic development programs.
- A session with senior agency officials to discuss possible approaches for better interagency coordination on project selection.
- A closing session to summarize the decisions reached during previous sessions and to brief Governor Lincoln Chafee and his staff on the project.

The workshop concluded with consensus that:

- The proposed assessment categories are appropriate.
- A hybrid project selection tool should be developed based on the criteria presented (incorporating checklist, scorecard, and directed response criteria).
- Relevant criteria should include flexibility for use in urban, suburban, and rural locations.
- The tool should include short, readable instructions.
- The criteria should focus on evaluation of project-level proposals but be adaptable to evaluate broader state investments.
- State agencies in attendance would test the tool in project selection review for upcoming funding program applications.

## 4 KeepSpace Project Selection Tool

The project selection tool (see Appendix B and the separate Excel spreadsheet) is based on the research described above and participant feedback from the workshop. The tool is intended to help funding agencies review different aspects of a proposed project across six categories that contribute to its sustainability and cost-effectiveness. Many of the categories and criteria are also based on evaluation of location-efficient sites that take advantage of existing infrastructure. The following sections describe the assessment categories used to organize the tool and the criteria used in each category, and outline how to use the tool.

## 4.1 Assessment Categories

An important first step in developing a project selection tool is to select the characteristics of the projects and proposed locations that will be measured or assessed. An analysis of the assessment categories used in 12 smart growth project rating or assessment tools informed this step. Based on this analysis, the team proposed an initial set of assessment categories and, with feedback from the interagency review team and Rhode Island stakeholders, refined them to these six categories:

- Transportation choice and accessibility.
- Housing choice and affordability.
- Economic development.
- Support of existing communities and designated growth centers.
- Community character and collaboration.
- Environmental protection and public health.

Six categories were chosen largely to align the proposed assessment categories more closely with the six KeepSpace Community Elements. The workshop participants endorsed the proposed assessment categories, but added the phrase “and designated growth centers” to the fourth assessment category (Support of Existing Communities) to better reflect the state’s land use planning framework.

The following table compares the six assessment categories generally accepted by workshop participants to the Partnership for Sustainable Communities Livability Principles,<sup>2</sup> the smart growth principles, and KeepSpace Community Elements. It was used in the workshop to finalize the assessment categories.

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<sup>2</sup> EPA. “HUD-DOT-EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities.” [www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/partnership/#livabilityprinciples](http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/partnership/#livabilityprinciples). Accessed April 24, 2011.

Figure 2: Comparison of Principles and Categories

Partnership for Sustainable Communities Livability Principles	Smart Growth Principles	KeepSpace Community Elements	Project Selection Tool Categories
<p><b>1. Provide more transportation choices.</b> Develop safe, reliable, and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health.</p>	Provide a variety of transportation choices.	Sensible infrastructure	Transportation choice and accessibility
	Create walkable neighborhoods.		
<p><b>2. Promote equitable, affordable housing.</b> Expand location- and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.</p>	Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.	A good home	Housing choice and affordability
<p><b>3. Enhance economic competitiveness.</b> Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs by workers, as well as expanded business access to markets.</p>	Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective.	Strong commerce	Economic development
<p><b>4. Support existing communities.</b> Target federal funding toward existing communities—through strategies like transit oriented, mixed-use development, and land recycling—to increase community revitalization and the efficiency of public works investments and to safeguard rural landscapes.</p>	Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities.	Sensible infrastructure	Support of existing communities and designated growth centers
	Take advantage of compact building design.	A good home; sensible infrastructure	
	Mix land uses.	Strong commerce; integrated arts, recreation, culture, and religion	
<p><b>5. Value communities and neighborhoods.</b> Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods—rural, urban, or suburban.</p>	Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.	Integrated arts, recreation, culture, and religion	Community character and collaboration
	Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.	Positive community impact	
<p><b>6. Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment.</b> Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding, and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth.</p>			
<p><i>Environmental issues are embedded in Livability Principles 1, 2, 4, and 6.</i></p>	Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas.	A healthy environment	Environmental protection and public health



Each assessment category contains different types of questions. Some are simply yes/no, some provide a range of possible responses, and others request a written response. Some criteria are scored differently depending on a project's proximity to services or its location within an urban services boundary or designated growth center (as described in Land Use 2025).<sup>3</sup> The total points available in each category are roughly equal (20 to 25 points). However, the maximum number of points achievable will depend on the type of project being evaluated, because not all questions will be relevant to every project type. Specific funding programs could choose to ignore certain criteria or increase the weighting assigned to others. The maximum available score could change if the weighting and points are adjusted. Although the tool was initially designed with weighted criteria, KeepSpace partners chose to leave the weighting set at 1 for all criteria to simplify initial use. This weighting can be adjusted over time to better reflect agency funding priorities.

## 4.2 Project Selection Criteria

During the review of project assessment and selection tools, the project team compiled sets of questions or criteria grouped under the six proposed assessment categories. In compiling these criteria, the team screened for those that could be used (or adapted for use) across all of Rhode Island, not just in its cities. The team collected criteria in different formats (yes/no checklist, scorecard, narrative response) so that workshop participants could provide feedback on which format was most appropriate for a given criterion.

During the workshop, participants generally agreed that the project selection tool's criteria should use multiple formats. The consensus was that a quantitative scoring system was needed to compare funding applications, but funding applicants should also have the opportunity to provide narrative responses on how their proposed projects would align with KeepSpace goals. Participants also agreed that narrative responses could serve an important educational function for potential developers of projects seeking state funding. Rather than just checking boxes, developers would need to become familiar with the concepts and explain how their projects would meet a specific goal. Further, the tool might be useful to help shape projects in pre-development, ensuring that a project meets a basic threshold of sustainability while still in its formative or planning stages.

During interviews and at the stakeholder workshop, representatives of Rhode Island municipalities and nonprofit organizations, as well as some state officials, expressed concern about the potential complexity of the project selection tool and the time required to complete it. Based on this feedback, the project selection tool was designed so that funding applicants would not need to complete extensive or complicated data collection or analysis. Most of the criteria require only information about the project itself (e.g., land uses, road network design) and its proximity to facilities or services. For instance, proximity to transit can be easily calculated using Rhode Island Public Transit's Google Maps Trip Planner.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, proximity to services can be calculated using the online tool WalkScore.<sup>5</sup>

The following table shows sample criteria for each category:

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<sup>3</sup> Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program. *Land Use 2025: Rhode Island State Land Use Policies and Plan*. April 2006. [www.planning.ri.gov/landuse/policies.htm](http://www.planning.ri.gov/landuse/policies.htm).

<sup>4</sup> RIPTA Google Maps Trip Planner. Available at <http://www.ripta.com/trips/trips.php>.

<sup>5</sup> WalkScore Tool. Available at <http://www.walkscore.com>.

Figure 3: Project Selection Tool Categories and Criteria

Project Selection Tool Category	Sample Criteria
1. Transportation choice and accessibility	Proximity to scheduled transit service Green/Complete Streets to Streets Improve Walkability Connectivity and choice Placement of parking
2. Housing Choice and Affordability	Mix of housing types Housing for high-priority populations Range of housing prices/compact development
3. Economic Development	Job creation, workforce training Areas targeted for reinvestment Support for potentially displaced residents and businesses
4. Support of Existing Communities and Designated Growth Centers	Consistency with Land Use 2025 Proximity to amenities, water and sewer infrastructure Compact, mixed use, Transit Oriented Development
5. Community Character and Collaboration	Use of historic and other existing buildings community Gathering spaces Consistency with community context Community involvement
6. Environmental Protection and Public Health	Preservation of agricultural and recreational land Green Infrastructure techniques to protect water quality Riparian buffers for flood mitigation and habitat preservation

The categories and criteria are described in greater detail below.

### *Transportation Choice and Accessibility*

The criteria in this category gauge how a project would encourage use of transportation options. One criterion awards points based on a project's proximity to scheduled public transit service. Other criteria assess whether a project would include or be built near "complete streets," which are streets that are safe and comfortable for all users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, and drivers. Another criterion addresses parking. Poorly sited parking lots can create obstacles between pedestrians and their destinations and can become large, lifeless spaces that harm community character and street life. Excess parking can increase stormwater runoff, and use land that could instead be developed (which could make more money for developers and create more homes, services, etc.).

The design of road networks can have a big impact on community quality of life and travel behavior. Connected street networks, like those found in traditional downtowns and neighborhoods, support walking, biking, and transit access and can make all trips shorter. A connected grid of streets can also disperse traffic instead of concentrating it on a few arterial streets, meaning that residents have alternate routes if one street is congested, and streets can be narrower because they carry less traffic. Narrower streets typically have slower-moving traffic, which makes them easier to cross and more pleasant to walk or live along compared to wider roads with faster traffic.

### *Housing Choice and Affordability*

The criteria in this category assess how a residential project or a mixed-use project with a residential component would increase the diversity of housing types and the range of housing prices in a neighborhood. Because the project selection tool is likely to supplement, not replace, existing project requirements for state housing programs, the criteria in the tool do not include specific income thresholds that a project should target or a percentage of units that must be affordable.

Diversity of housing types and prices is important, because developments that provide only one type or price range of housing cannot accommodate the needs of different age groups, income levels, or family sizes and types.

Providing a variety of lot and unit sizes, building types, and prices or rents creates opportunities for families, singles, and seniors to live in the same neighborhood. Smaller lot sizes and mixed-use, compact development offer more housing choices at different levels of affordability. These neighborhoods are also more walkable because homes are near stores, workplaces, schools, parks, and other services and amenities. Compact development can help protect water quality by reducing per household stormwater runoff.<sup>6</sup> Smaller homes typically use energy more efficiently, which reduces residents' costs, and compact development uses less energy for transportation by reducing the distances that residents need to drive and making walking, biking, and transit use more feasible.<sup>7</sup>

Housing affordability should be calculated based not only the cost of rent or a mortgage payment, but also the cost of transportation to and from the home, and operating costs such as energy and utilities. Criteria in other sections about proximity to transit and other facilities and services (Transportation Choice & Accessibility, Support of Existing Communities) will encourage projects that reduce transportation costs for residents, employees, customers, and visitors.

### *Economic Development*

Questions in this category assess how a project could improve economic conditions for local residents, the community as a whole, and the state. Recognizing that applicants for state funding might not be economic development professionals, the chosen criteria do not require econometric modeling or other advanced economic analysis. One criterion assesses whether a project is likely to promote economic development by creating new permanent jobs in areas that are designated for development. Other criteria award points to projects that include a workforce training component or that retain or relocate businesses or residents that would otherwise be displaced.

Incorporating quality of life into economic development strategies can make a community more economically competitive by making it easier for workers to access employment centers, educational opportunities, services, and other basic needs, as well as expanding business' access to markets and



*The Sweetbriar Development includes 47 new affordable homes for rent in Barrington, RI. Photo courtesy of Union Studio Architecture & Community Design.*

<sup>6</sup> EPA. *Protecting Water Resources with Higher-Density Development*. 2006. [http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/water\\_density.htm](http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/water_density.htm).

<sup>7</sup> Ewing, Reid, et al. *Growing Cooler: The Evidence on Urban Development and Climate Change*. 2008. Urban Land Institute. See also: Jonathan Rose Companies for EPA. *Location Efficiency and Housing Type – Boiling it Down to BTUs*. 2011. [http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/location\\_efficiency\\_BTU.htm](http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/location_efficiency_BTU.htm).

customers. More transportation choices and well-located housing can reduce employee transportation and housing costs as well as business parking costs. Smart growth approaches can also be a catalyst for reinvesting in and revitalizing aging commercial corridors, restoring complete streets and networks, and strengthening small towns and historic districts. Reinvented corridors and revitalized Main Streets are prime targets for business reinvestment, especially when coupled with public infrastructure investments, and locally-adopted plans and codes that support compact, walkable projects.

### *Support of Existing Communities and Designated Growth Centers*

Focusing investment on existing communities in compact, connected patterns—through strategies like transit-oriented, mixed-use development and land recycling—can revitalize neighborhoods, reduce public infrastructure costs, and help safeguard rural landscapes and natural resources. Compact development in or adjacent to existing neighborhoods uses land efficiently, reduces development costs and long-term infrastructure operating and maintenance costs, conserves energy, and makes transportation options like walking, biking, or using transit more viable. Mixing land uses (e.g., housing, office, commercial/retail, services, institutional) and putting homes and services closer together also encourages walking, bicycling, transit service, and shorter driving trips.<sup>8</sup>

Rhode Island’s Land Use 2025 Plan guides future land use and development and includes the policies with which state and local land development activities must be consistent. One policy encourages municipalities to designate compact “growth centers” at appropriate locations. Some of the designated growth centers might be in rural locations that are currently undeveloped (i.e., not “existing communities”). Therefore, the criteria in this category refer to both existing communities and designated growth centers.

The criteria assess a project’s proposed location relative to existing development and sewer and water infrastructure. Two criteria assess whether a project would increase the mix or diversity of uses in the neighborhood surrounding the project. Two criteria assess the compactness of the proposed project to encourage efficient development that revitalizes existing communities.

### *Community Character and Collaboration*

Community character comes from its physical attributes, its cultural heritage, and its residents’ involvement. Historic buildings, arts and cultural resources, rural landscapes and working lands, neighborhood parks, coastlines and harbors, downtown streetscapes, and religious and civic structures all play a strong role in creating community character. This category gauges how consistent a project is with a community’s history, values, and plans for future development.

Community character is usually reflected in values and goals that are built into local plans and visions, which are most successful if developed through a collaborative process. A clear set of principles, developed with broad community input and incorporated into plans and policies, can provide a framework for determining whether proposed projects will achieve economic, environmental, and other community goals and fit with the community’s character. Projects that design and site buildings to reflect community character, while providing modern amenities, will better serve residents, especially in existing neighborhoods. For developments that will be constructed in phases over time, design guidelines that govern building siting, architecture, and landscaping can help ensure that each phase or block also meets community expectations.

Community engagement in development decision-making is very important to ensuring that projects meet the community’s needs and goals. Involving the community and gathering meaningful input lets residents near a proposed project air their concerns and goals and gives the developer a chance to respond and

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<sup>8</sup> Federal Highway Administration. *Livability Research Paper: State of the Practice Summary*. 2010. pp. 20-22. Available at [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability/state\\_of\\_the\\_practice\\_summary/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability/state_of_the_practice_summary/).

perhaps modify the project in response. Getting community input is fundamentally about being fair, but it also can reap rewards by reducing opposition to development proposals and enhancing community character by reflecting public feedback. Therefore, one of the criteria in this category assesses whether and how the project sponsor has involved the community.

### *Environmental Protection and Public Health*

The criteria in this category assess how a project would avoid, reduce, or mitigate environmental and public health impacts. Development can build over natural areas with impervious surfaces, and how communities manage their stormwater runoff affects water quality. Development patterns and practices indirectly affect environmental quality because they influence how people get around. Compact communities with convenient transportation options and a mix of uses encourage fewer and shorter vehicle trips, resulting in lower emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollution. Cleaning up and redeveloping a brownfield can remove blight and environmental contamination from a community. Green construction practices can reduce energy consumption and operating costs, conserve natural resources, and provide healthy indoor air quality.

By influencing project location and design, many criteria in other sections of the project selection tool help protect public health. For example, communities with transportation options reduce air pollution, which can decrease the incidence of respiratory illnesses. However, the role of development patterns in other public health issues warranted inclusion of additional public health criteria. Research shows that the lack of places to buy healthy food in a neighborhood is related to rates of child obesity, diabetes, and high blood pressure.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, this category includes a criterion for whether the project would provide or be near sources of healthy food such as supermarkets.

The category also includes a criterion on access to areas for physical activity. Communities designed to make walking and bicycling safe and appealing encourage people of all ages to be more active. Children can walk to school and to friends' houses; adults can walk to work or to the store. Having parks and recreation centers nearby further encourages activity. Incorporating walking or biking into a daily routine helps people get the amount of physical activity that doctors recommend, even if they cannot afford to join a gym or do not have time to exercise.

## 4.3 Ideas for Using and Adapting the Project Selection Tool

The tool was developed primarily to help Rhode Island state agency funders review and coordinate applications for competitive funding for development projects that incorporate housing, retail/commercial, industrial, employment, recreational, civic, and cultural uses. It can also be used to review funding and siting decisions for some types of transportation projects and other public investments such as schools, libraries, and health facilities. In some cases, only certain categories or criteria might apply; those excluded should be noted by the funding agency for a particular program. In addition, the metrics and rationale for individual criteria or entire categories could be incorporated directly into state agency program and grant language. Some state funding programs might require that regulations be revised to enable use of this tool. Appendix C lists Rhode Island funding programs that could use the tool to evaluate applications. Because many of these are federal resources that the state administers, they are likely to be relevant to other states.

This tool uses language specific to Rhode Island's Land Use 2025 Plan—urban services boundary, designated growth centers, and the remainder of the state—to evaluate project location. States and other entities adapting this tool for use outside of Rhode Island would probably need to substitute another way of distinguishing among urban, suburban, and rural settings; change distance ranges or density thresholds;

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<sup>9</sup> Larson N, Story M, Nelson M. Neighborhood environments: disparities in access to healthy foods in the U.S. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. 2009; 36(1):74-81.e10.



and make other adjustments to individual criteria. Because the tool is an Excel spreadsheet, it is relatively easy to customize for other uses. A state agency could also turn it into an online calculator that could link to mapping and other data.

Although the tool is fairly simple to use, training for applicants and reviewers will make it easier to incorporate into agency funding decisions. Each criterion includes short explanations or rationales, but many users could benefit from more explanation for some of the criteria, along with project examples. This information could be provided in a short handbook, with a training session for applicants and reviewers before each funding cycle (and recorded and archived on a website for continued reference). A basic training presentation could be adapted for use in agency pre-solicitation meetings for specific funding sources.

## 5 Using the Project Selection Tool

KeepSpace partners, other state agencies, and the governor's office could consider several steps to test the project selection tool by state agencies and statewide nonprofits. The four options described in this section all assume that KeepSpace will continue to provide support and guidance, but individual state agencies and nonprofits will continue to make their own funding decisions for projects and programs. This section concludes with a list of possible near-term next steps, followed by several expected outcomes from use of the tool in funding decisions.

As an initial step, the tool could be tested by program staff at individual agencies in 2012 with a few funding programs. It could pre-screen applications for formal grant reviews or could augment or replace existing review processes, such as those for Community Development Block Grants for small communities, transportation enhancements and planning grants, recreation grants, economic development site readiness funding, and housing grant programs. (See Appendix C for a full list.) Although it was designed for reviewing competitive funding applications, the tool could also help align major state capital investments with sustainable communities' goals.



*Rhode Island Housing Director Richard Godwin and RIDOT's Steve Devine are key members of KeepSpace. Having agency leadership involved can ensure that the project selection tool is tested in project funding decisions. Photo courtesy of David DelPoi.*

The stakeholder workshop included a session with senior state agency executives on how to incorporate the project selection tool into larger state goals, including assigning roles to responsible parties and developing appropriate processes. Based on that discussion, the project team developed the following options for improving interagency coordination while testing the tool:

- **Option 1: Continue informal coordination.** Rhode Island Housing continues to act informally as the lead agency on this issue and encourages KeepSpace partners and others to adopt the tool.
- **Option 2: Identify dedicated staff and a lead agency** with a more formal coordinating role to oversee implementation of the tool and support state agencies and others as they adopt the tool (whether at Rhode Island Housing, the Statewide Planning Program, or elsewhere).
- **Option 3: Coordinate at the cabinet or sub-cabinet level,** possibly with support from the agency and staff identified in option 2, further building support for state agencies to use the tool.



- **Option 4: Expand the State Planning Council's** (the statewide metropolitan planning organization) mission and role to better coordinate use of the project selection tool, embedding the coordination function in a semi-permanent, existing entity.

All four approaches could be used to test and implement the tool with varying degrees of executive and legislative action, investment, and staffing. Although these options are outlined as discrete choices, they can be phased in over time, starting with Option 1, then proceeding with Option 2 and/or Option 3, followed, if appropriate, by Option 4. Although the team identified Options 2 to 4 that included more formal state involvement, workshop participants considered Option 1 an acceptable approach, in which Rhode Island Housing continues to strengthen the current KeepSpace initiative and identify ways to incorporate the tool and principles into agency decision-making.

Several nonprofit housing developers participated in the review workshop and contributed valuable input. Regardless of which option (or combination of options) is selected, as testing the tool and training its users proceed, including nonprofit and private developers will be critical.

While these implementation approaches are specific to Rhode Island, they can be adapted for use in other states and regions. The project selection tool could be tested with a variety of competitive funding programs or public investments, augmenting existing processes.

## 5.1 Continue Informal Coordination

KeepSpace has bridged the interests of diverse state agencies and statewide nonprofits to increase understanding and use of the broad, community-based KeepSpace elements. In this option, the KeepSpace Advisory Committee, led by Rhode Island Housing, would encourage and facilitate the use of the tool by its stakeholder agencies and other entities. This option could be effective because most relevant state agencies have representatives on the committee, it is established and based on good relationships, and it has an underlying set of principles on which the project selection tool categories are built. The advisory committee could meet more frequently while beginning to test the selection tool on agency and nonprofit funding programs.

Relevant agency staff can continue working to refine the project selection tool, discuss the criteria and weighting, hammer out details and responsibilities for a coordination process, and decide on an upcoming competitive funding round that each agency can use to test the tool. Based on initial staff discussions, senior agency officials could meet to decide whether and how to formalize interagency communication. Since one key purpose of the project selection tool is to help guide state agency funding decisions, there might be advantages to bringing the project selection tool into a more formal, state-led initiative as described in Options 2 through 4.

## 5.2 Identify Dedicated Staffing and a Lead Agency

Feedback provided during the workshop highlighted the need for state agencies to communicate regularly with each other about reviews of proposed projects and funding applications. For example, if one agency is ready to make a funding decision based in part on use of the project selection tool, that agency might want to make sure other agencies will also support that project with relevant resources. The quarterly meetings of KeepSpace might not occur frequently enough to support this type of engagement. Furthermore, the effort to refine and use the tool could benefit from dedicated staff to oversee its implementation and evaluation.

Such cross-agency collaborative efforts can also create an additional burden on staff. In many cases, only a few people at each agency have the broad understanding needed to serve as liaisons with other agencies, and they already have commitments to other interagency efforts. Because KeepSpace has such a broad advisory committee, including many non-state organizations and localities, the state agencies might need

a separate meeting or working group to discuss how the project selection criteria and tool could be incorporated into state funding decisions, increasing the burden on already stretched agency staff.

Creating a formal cross-agency effort with dedicated staff and a lead agency would allow agencies to better manage the staff resources required to participate. Either a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or an executive order could outline the agencies' commitment (or governor's direction, if an executive order) to establish a working group to:

- Continue working together to test and refine the project selection tool.
- Use upcoming competitive funding cycles to evaluate real projects.
- Dedicate partial time of specific lead staff for the project (in some cases this might be a relevant internal committee, such as at Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management).
- Schedule regular meetings to discuss and evaluate the process and review any major proposed projects.
- Develop recommendations for an ongoing process and structure to incorporate the tool into state funding decisions at each relevant agency.



*Governor Lincoln Chafee and state department directors meeting to hear workshop results and discuss next steps in testing the draft project selection tool. Photo courtesy of David DelPoio.*

The MOU or executive order would need to designate a lead agency to convene and coordinate this working group (for the agenda, minutes, and action tracking). This group could initially have co-chairs or rotating chairs from different agencies, as long as a coordinating role is clearly established. The group might not require an entirely new meeting time or membership; workshop participants noted several ongoing interagency coordination meetings that could expand to serve this purpose.

The MOU could require an evaluation and reporting to the agency directors on how the tool is working, with recommendations for next steps, probably in six months or before an upcoming budget cycle. This timing would allow the administration to incorporate this coordination effort (and possibly dedicated staff) into the next budget. The initial working group could be supported by existing staff, given limited budgets and the slow development climate. However, as the tool is tested, refined, and shown to be a useful method to evaluate funding applications, and as construction and development activity increases, dedicated staffing might be required. Rhode Island could consider the model of the brownfields funding program, where environmental management and economic development staff work together to oversee the program. If the governor's office wants to initiate this work with an executive order, it could begin by instructing the relevant departments to work out the details of an interagency coordination process. This instruction would give clear direction to each department to dedicate staff resources. An executive order from the governor could also strengthen an initial MOU after the directors have evaluated results.

### 5.3 Coordinate at the Cabinet or Sub-Cabinet Level

The third option is similar to Options 1 and 2. Cabinet-level discussion, which includes the directors of most relevant agencies, tends to focus on policy, budgets, and overall coordination of the administration's initiatives. It would not be appropriate for detailed evaluation of criteria or determining exactly how the tool would be applied to individual funding programs and project decisions. However, if the governor

wants to underscore the importance of an initiative like this, the cabinet is the appropriate place to introduce it or review the results. Several states have made similar efforts to better coordinate growth and development. For example, Maryland's Smart Growth Subcabinet, chaired by the secretary of the Department of Planning, effectively focused development resources.

The state could create this coordination in several ways:

1. The governor could include discussion of the tool in an upcoming cabinet meeting and explore the pros and cons of each option. This discussion would build on testing of the project selection tool by staff in each department.
2. The governor could issue an executive order directing relevant agencies to proceed with the Option 2 working group, with recommendations in a specific time frame (e.g., three to six months). This executive order could either be the simple version outlined in Option 2 (directing agencies to meet and work out the details) or could include more specifics on the lead agency, roles and responsibilities, staffing, and budget assumptions.
3. Because the full cabinet includes agencies or departments that might not have a major role in growth and development or might not issue competitive funding grants that should be evaluated by the tool, the governor could establish a subcabinet. The subcabinet could be a committee or a working group, depending on Rhode Island practice. The group could include all agencies that make decisions that influence growth, development, and relevant competitive funding. However, the subcabinet approach could miss the opportunity to coordinate with other agencies such as RI Department of Education (on school siting and renovation policies and funding), RI Department of Health (on hospital and clinic locations), or public safety (on police and fire station locations).

Although the agencies represented in a subcabinet might be largely the same as those in the working group described in Option 2, there are two significant differences:

- The sub-cabinet approach implies more administration support and expected effort and results.
- The sub-cabinet approach would likely still require a working group of division chiefs or technical staff to work out the details described in Option 2.

## 5.4 Expand the State Planning Council's Mission and Role

Rhode Island has a central planning and coordinating group, the State Planning Council, which is the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for transportation planning; and has other roles in coordinating or reviewing housing, economic development, and energy investments. Most states have several MPOs (one is required for each urbanized area of more than 50,000 people) and a state department of transportation that develops statewide transportation plans and funding priorities. The transportation planning group is typically separate from other state agencies with responsibilities for economic development, housing, or land use plans.

The State Planning Council oversees the Statewide Planning Program and adopts planning goals and policies, most of which are contained in individual elements of the State Guide Plan, which includes Land Use 2025. The council develops the long-range transportation plan and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a multi-year program of federal transportation investments. As the Comprehensive Economic Development Committee for the state, the council adopts an annual priority list of projects for consideration by the U.S. Economic Development Administration. It also advises the governor on strategic planning matters, and ensures that major project and program proposals are consistent with the State Guide Plan. The council also has a role in siting energy facilities under 1970 legislation that established the Statewide Planning Program in the Department of Administration to promote proper

development of the state's human, economic, and physical resources.<sup>10</sup> The council has 17 members, including state agency staff, local planners, Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns representatives, a nonprofit housing representative, and an environmental advocate.

Given its coordinating and review role, the State Planning Council could be a logical "owner" of the project selection tool, providing training to other agencies and continuing to refine the tool. The council's mission could be adjusted to better coordinate transportation and land use with housing, environmental, economic development, and other investments. Such action would likely require amending membership to include more housing, public health, environmental, economic development, and other agency representatives. New state legislation and approval by the governor and U.S. DOT would also be required.

The existing process for state review and approval of municipally designated growth centers by the Statewide Planning Program could be updated and aligned with the KeepSpace tool and process. A simple scoring bonus could be applied to each agency's existing scoring system for projects located in a state-approved growth center and/or for scoring above a threshold on the KeepSpace tool. Currently, while growth centers are encouraged in each of the 39 municipalities in the state from urban to suburban to rural, only one has been formally designated. The state has a keen interest in each municipality designating growth centers to promote compact development. This priority, coupled with planning grants or technical assistance to help municipalities map designated centers, could provide the incentives needed to increase municipal designation of growth centers.

Assigning another coordinating role to the State Planning Council could be challenging because of the legislation and approvals required and because the council already has many statutory responsibilities. This function might not get the focus and attention that it requires. However, some workshop participants thought that the State Planning Council would be the most appropriate existing entity to take on the coordinating role. If this function is properly designed to coordinate and target funding across several agencies, individual departments would use the tool to inform their own project selection process and funding awards. The coordinating role could include:

- Maintaining and revising the criteria and tool.
- Providing data and analysis where needed.
- Making sure that criteria, weighting, and points are balanced across categories.
- Ensuring coordinated review of complex projects that request funding from multiple agencies.
- Overseeing training and technical assistance in using the tool, both for reviewers and applicants.

This expanded role could require some additional staffing, but part or all of the staff might be drawn from other departments, which would help with overall coordination.

One advantage of expanding the council's role to include these responsibilities is that it would make the practices more permanent, due to the state legislative action, governor's approval, and federal approval required to make it happen. The team's review of similar initiatives across the country—whether use of a project scorecard or coordinating group—found that many initiatives faded when a new mayor or governor came into office or when the composition of the legislature shifted. While establishing a new more permanent role is more likely to happen after the tool has been shown to lead to better funding decisions and better projects, it could help establish a more predictable, fair, and transparent process to allocate the state's limited resources. Because the project selection tool was designed to be easy to customize, with adjustable points and weightings, the tool could be adjusted to reflect the priorities of any administration leadership or changes in funding availability.

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<sup>10</sup> Chapter 126 of the Public Laws of 1970 amended Chapter 42-11 of the General Laws of 1956 entitled "Department of Administration." For more information on the organization and roles of the State Planning Council, see the council's Rules of Procedure, available at [www.planning.ri.gov/spc/spchome.htm](http://www.planning.ri.gov/spc/spchome.htm).

## 5.5 Next Steps

The four options outlined above are intended to support continued discussion among KeepSpace partners, state agencies, and other stakeholders. At the workshop, leaders from each participating agency committed to testing the project selection tool on at least one upcoming funding program. This could include using the tool as part of actual project proposal review or using it as a staff exercise to see how proposed projects might score, similar to how the team scored three projects for demonstration purposes during the workshop. This initial testing can help funding agency staff and applicants better understand the tool and could lead to adjustments in criteria, distances and other metrics, and weighting. Whichever group or agencies take a lead coordinating role, steps to consider could include:

- Have KeepSpace partners and other state, local, private sector, and nonprofit stakeholders meet to review this report and project selection tool, discuss the criteria and weighting, and recommend refinements to the tool and changes to the options for interagency coordination.
- Hold a second meeting to discuss details and responsibilities for an initial coordination process and funding review and upcoming competitive funding cycles that each agency might use to test the tool. This could be another KeepSpace meeting or part of another regular state agency coordinating meeting.
- At a third meeting, decide which competitive funding programs each agency will use to evaluate real project proposals. Discuss and analyze the four options outlined above, and decide on which approach to use initially.
- Dedicate at least part of a lead staff person's time to the project.
- Schedule regular meetings to discuss and evaluate the process and jointly review any major proposed projects.
- Conduct a workshop with nonprofit and private developers and other applicants to review the tool and any proposed use to evaluate project funding applications.
- Develop recommendations for an ongoing process and structure to incorporate the tool into the state's funding decisions.
- After a three- to six-month testing period, evaluate the tool and process, and report to agency directors and the governor on how the tool and process are working, with recommendations for next steps to formalize use of the tool and strengthen the funding review process.

## 5.6 Expected Outcomes

Developing and using a project selection tool is more likely to be successful if it focuses more on principles, process, relationships, and coordination and less on the tool itself. Expected outcomes include:

- Better coordination and targeting of funding decisions.
- Making better use of limited resources.
- More housing and transportation choices through public investments in development projects.
- Making it easier for customers to reach businesses and workers to reach jobs by coordinating transportation and land use decisions to connect homes with workplaces, stores, and services in the neighborhood and around the region.
- Protecting public health, the environment, and natural and cultural resources by reducing development pressures on open space.
- More targeted economic development in priority areas.

The tool is primarily a way to focus attention and funding on the principles that guide the state's growth and to help educate funding agencies and applicants on how to find development projects that meet the state's goals for environmental protection, economic strength, public health, and quality of life.



## Appendix A: EPA's Smart Growth Implementation Assistance Program (SGIA)

Communities around the country want to foster economic growth, protect environmental resources, and plan for development. In many cases they need additional tools, resources or information to achieve these goals. In response to this need the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Sustainable Communities launched the Smart Growth Implementation Assistance Program in 2005, to provide technical assistance through contractor services to selected communities. EPA assembles teams of specialized consultants, bringing together expertise that meets a particular community's needs. While working with community participants to understand their aspirations for development, the teams bring experience from working in other parts of the country to provide best practices for consideration by the assisted community. The goal of the program is to help participating communities attain their goals, while also producing a resource (such as a report or set of guidelines) that can be useful to a broad range of communities facing similar challenges.

The Smart Growth Implementation Assistance Program is designed to help communities achieve growth that supports economic, community, public health and environmental goals. Communities around the country are seeking alternatives to development that gives them no choice about driving long distances between where they live, work and shop; that requires costly expenditures to extend sewers, roads and public services to support new development; that uses up natural areas and farmland for development while land and buildings lie empty in already developed areas; and that makes it difficult for working people to rent or buy a home due to limited housing options. Smart growth strategies create new neighborhoods and maintain existing ones that are attractive, convenient, safe and healthy. They foster design that encourages social, civic and physical activity. They protect the environment while stimulating economic growth. Most of all, they create more choices for residents, workers, visitors, children, families, single people, and older adults—choices about where to live and how to get around. When communities undertake this kind of planning, they preserve the best of the past while creating a bright future for generations to come.

More information about the program, including information on how to apply and links to reports from past recipients can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/sgia.htm>.



## Appendix B: KeepSpace Project Selection Tool

The tool is an Excel spreadsheet with three tabs: an introduction, a project assessment worksheet, and a separate worksheet for written responses to questions in each category. All calculations are scored on the assessment worksheet. A PDF of the tool follows.

## Smart Growth Implementation Assistance for Rhode Island KeepSpace Project Selection Tool

### Introduction

KeepSpace is a voluntary body for Rhode Island state agencies and statewide nonprofits founded in 2007 to better coordinate efforts to promote more sustainable communities within the state. KeepSpace was awarded assistance from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to help KeepSpace partners better prioritize state and federal resources so that investments in housing, economic development, transportation, and infrastructure are consistent with the state's Land Use 2025 plan and the Livability Principles of the HUD-DOT-EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities.

This project selection tool is one of the products resulting from EPA's assistance. The tool is intended to help KeepSpace partners assess and prioritize projects seeking funding in a clear, transparent, and streamlined manner. It was developed through a process that included: (1) an analysis of existing project assessment and selection tools from across the country; (2) interviews with representatives of Rhode Island state agencies, local governments, and nonprofit organizations; and (3) a review workshop for state and local stakeholders. While a variety of more complex tools were reviewed, the general consensus among interviewees and workshop participants was that a tool that was relatively simple and easy to use would be more likely to be incorporated into state agency funding decisions.

The KeepSpace tool is intended to help funding agencies review six different aspects of a proposed project that contribute to its sustainability and cost-effectiveness:

1. Transportation Choice & Accessibility
2. Housing Choice & Affordability
3. Economic Development
4. Support of Existing Communities & Designated Growth Centers
5. Community Character & Collaboration
6. Environmental Protection & Public Health

Each of the six assessment categories contains a mix of types of questions. Some are simply "yes/no," whereas others provide a range of possible responses, and still others request a written response. The total points available in each category are roughly equal (20 to 24 points). However, the maximum number of points achievable will depend on the type of project being evaluated, because not all questions will necessarily be relevant to every project type. Specific funding programs may choose to leave out certain criteria or increase the weighting assigned to others. The maximum available score may change if any adjustments are made to the weighting and points. The values in the weighting column are all set equal to 1, but they can be adjusted over time to suit evolving needs, preferences, or annual funding agency priorities. The tool was developed primarily to review applications for competitive funding for development-type projects—including new buildings and neighborhoods, and rehab of existing buildings and complexes—incorporating housing, retail/commercial, mixed use, industrial, employment, recreational, civic and cultural uses. It can also be applied to review of funding and siting decisions for some types of transportation projects and other investments like schools, libraries, health facilities, etc. In some cases, only certain categories or criteria might apply. In addition, the metrics and rationale for individual criteria or entire categories can be incorporated directly into state agency program and grant language.

Rhode Island's *Land Use 2025: State Land Use Policies* and Plan guides land use and development in the state and presents State Guide Plan policies under which State and local land development activities will be reviewed for consistency. *Land Use 2025* identifies an urban services boundary within the state, which is based upon a detailed land capability and suitability analysis that demonstrates the capacity of this area to accommodate future growth. The Plan directs the state and communities to concentrate growth inside the urban services boundary and within locally designated centers in rural and suburban areas. This project selection tool uses this distinction among areas within the urban services boundary, designated growth centers, and the remainder of the state. Those seeking to adapt this tool for use outside of Rhode Island may need to substitute another way of distinguishing among different development settings (e.g., urban/suburban/rural), change distance ranges or density, or make other adjustments to individual criteria.

## Smart Growth Implementation Assistance for Rhode Island KeepSpace Project Selection Tool

**Instructions:** The fields highlighted in yellow contain drop-down boxes. For each question that does not request a written response, the user should click the yellow cell in Column D and select the relevant response for the project. A total number of points for that question is then automatically calculated (multiplying the selected score in column F by the assigned weight in column G to produce a total in column H).

Each of the six assessment categories also has one or more questions that request a written response. The purpose of these questions is to allow the user to explain how a particular project advances the principles underlying a given assessment category (e.g. transportation choice & accessibility) in ways that are not captured by the other questions in that category. The next worksheet (or tab) in this tool provides space for the user to type a response to each question. On that same worksheet, the reviewer will evaluate the written response and assign points by choosing a score from the dropdown box below the response area for each question. The reviewer's point awards for the written responses will be automatically reflected on this worksheet in the cells highlighted in green in Column F.

### 1. Transportation Choice & Accessibility

Providing more transportation choices such as public transit, walking, or bicycling can provide access to more destinations, decrease household transportation costs, reduce energy costs and dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, decrease greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health. The questions in this section assess the extent to which a project would enable or encourage the use of multiple modes of transportation. Traditional neighborhoods – with smaller blocks, a connected grid of streets, shaded sidewalks, safe street crossings, and moderate density – can be serviced well by transit. Locating housing and commerce closer together and adjacent to transit has been shown to increase walking and transit usage. Increasing transportation choice and multimodal mobility is especially critical for residents (typically 1/3 in most communities) who may not have full access to driving – young, old, disabled, or economically challenged.

	Possible Answers	Points	Response	Score	Weight	Total
<p><b>Proximity to Scheduled Transit Service:</b> Locating a residential project within walking distance of scheduled transit service makes it more likely that future residents will use transit for a portion of their trips. Similarly, locating a non-residential project near scheduled transit service makes it more likely that employees, customers, and other visitors will use transit to get there.</p>						
<p>1.1. How close will the project be to a stop or station for scheduled public transit (bus or rail)? Walking distance from the project's proposed location to the nearest transit stop can be calculated using RIPTA's Google Maps Trip Planner (<a href="http://www.ripta.com/trips.php">http://www.ripta.com/trips.php</a>).</p>	< ¼ mile	9	< ¼ mile	9	1	9
	¼ to ½ mile	6				
	½ to 1 mile	3				
	> 1 mile	0				
<p><b>Complete Streets:</b> Complete streets are those that adequately provide for all roadway users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, and motorists, to the extent appropriate to the function and context of the street. For example, to facilitate walking and bicycling where appropriate, a project should include sidewalks and well-marked crosswalks, bicycle lanes, and street trees. For more info on complete streets, see <a href="http://www.completestreets.org/webdocs/cs-brochure-features.pdf">www.completestreets.org/webdocs/cs-brochure-features.pdf</a>.</p>						
<p>1.2. Will the project include complete streets, or will it be located on an existing complete street?</p>	Yes	3	Yes	3	1	3
	No	0				
<p><b>Connectivity and Choice:</b> An interconnected street network—like those found in traditional downtowns and neighborhoods—supports walking, biking, and transit access, and can make all trips shorter. A connected grid of streets can also allow more streets to have fewer lanes - making them easier to cross and more pleasant to walk or live on - compared to forcing all traffic onto wider, fast-moving highways.</p>						
<p>1.3. Will the project have an interconnected road, sidewalk, and trail system or will it be located on an existing network that is interconnected?</p>	Yes	3	Yes	3	1	3
	No	0				
<p><b>Placement of Parking:</b> Parking lots can serve as obstacles between pedestrians and their destinations; excess parking can also increase stormwater runoff. Therefore, the next question asks about the placement of parking for the proposed project. The amount of parking needed for a particular project can be reduced through means such as sharing parking for land uses that have different patterns of parking demand.</p>						
<p>1.4. Will parking be situated where it does not visually dominate the project from the street and where it allows easy pedestrian access to buildings? If not, will project parking be minimized through means such as shared use?</p>	Yes	1	Yes	1	1	1
	No	0				
<p><b>Open Response:</b> This question provides an opportunity for the applicant to note any other transportation-related aspects of the project that were not addressed by the other questions in this category.</p>						
<p>1.5. In the space provided on the next worksheet labeled "Written Responses," please provide any additional information on how the project will help to ensure that all citizens have access to multiple modes of transportation for commuting and for other trips.</p>	Reviewer will assign up to 4 points based on response on next worksheet.			4	1	4

**SUBTOTAL: 20**

**2. Housing Choice & Affordability**

One of the KeepSpace Community Elements is "A Good Home," or a "safe, healthy, inviting place that is affordable to rent or own, especially to those who work close by." Similarly, one of the Livability Principles is to promote equitable, affordable housing choices. The questions in this section assess the extent to which a project would increase the diversity of housing types and housing prices in a neighborhood. This section also assesses how compact a residential development would be, which affects the cost of providing public services, as well as the transportation choices made by residents.

Developments that provide only large single family lots prevent a true mix of housing within a neighborhood—for differing ages, incomes, family size and types—and for family members to stay in or near the same neighborhood as they grow up, move out, start their own families, or grow older. Providing a variety of lot and unit sizes, building types, prices, and rents creates opportunities for younger families, singles, seniors and a greater variety of incomes to be within the same neighborhood. Smaller lot sizes and mixed use, compact development like that in traditional neighborhoods can improve housing choice, affordability, walkability, and water quality.

Creating Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) on existing lots—a converted garage or basement, or new cottage—can give homeowners extra income, provide well-managed rentals, and allow homeowners to age in place when they choose to downsize. When considering affordability, it is also important to consider the combined cost of housing and transportation. Questions in other sections regarding proximity to transit and other services will encourage projects that result in lower transportation costs for residents, employees, or other visitors.

	Possible Answers	Points	Response	Score	Weight	Total
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**Mix of Housing Types:** Providing a range of housing choices allows people of all ages and stages of life to find a niche in a community.

2.1. For a residential project, will it offer a mix of housing types, or will it increase the diversity of housing types within the specified range of the project as listed below?

- Within the urban services boundary: ¼ mile
- Within a designated growth center that is outside the urban services boundary: ½ mile
- Outside the urban services boundary and outside of a designated growth center: 2 miles

Yes	5	Yes	5	1	5
No	0				

**Range of Housing Prices:** Rhode Island's KeepSpace initiative works to ensure that communities provide homes that are affordable to rent or own, especially to those who work close by. Providing a range of housing prices provides people of all income levels the opportunity to live in or near the communities in which they work, which lowers household transportation costs. Diversity of housing prices is defined here as including both affordable and market-rate homes.

2.2. Will the project provide a range of housing prices accessible to different income levels, or will it increase the diversity of housing prices within the specified distance of the project location as listed below?

- Within the urban services boundary: ¼ mile
- Within a designated growth center that is outside the urban services boundary: ½ mile
- Outside the urban services boundary and outside of a designated growth center: 2 miles

Yes	5	Yes	5	1	5
No	0				

**Compact Residential Development:** Compact site design is necessary to support wider transportation choices, because minimum levels of density are required to make public transit networks viable. Compact development also provides cost savings for localities, because it is cheaper on a per-unit basis to provide and maintain services like water, sewer, electricity, and other utilities in more compact neighborhoods. Compact development also allows provides and protects more open, undeveloped land that would exist otherwise to absorb and filter rain water, reduce flooding and stormwater drainage needs, and lowers the amount of pollution washing into our streams, rivers, and lakes.

Compact development is critical to establishing viable transit service. Generally accepted principals are that 6 to 7 dwelling units per acre is the minimum needed to support scheduled bus service, and 12 to 13 units per acre is preferable for more frequent bus service.

Density can be calculated by dividing the total dwelling units after construction by the acreage of the entire tract, minus the dedicated acreage of public street rights of way, riparian and wetland buffers, open space that has been dedicated through a conservation program, and other non-buildable areas.

2.3. For a residential project, do the number of dwelling units per acre meet the relevant threshold below?

- Within urban services boundary: 24 dwelling units per acre.
- Outside of urban services boundary but within a designated growth center: 12 dwelling units per acre.
- Other areas: 6 dwelling units per acre.

Yes	4	Yes	4	1	4
No	0				

<p><b>Housing for High-Priority Populations:</b> In Rhode Island and elsewhere, there is a critical need for housing that serves extremely low-income households and persons with special needs.</p>						
<p>2.4. Will the project include apartments serving extremely low-income households or those with special needs (per RI agency definitions)?</p>	Yes	2	Yes	2	1	2
	No	0				
<p><b>Open Response:</b> This question provides an opportunity for the applicant to note any other housing-related aspects of the project that were not addressed by the other questions in this category.</p>						
<p>2.5. In the space provided on the next worksheet labeled "Written Responses," please provide any additional information about how the project will improve the diversity and affordability of housing choices in the host community.</p>	<p>Reviewer will assign up to 4 points based on response on next worksheet.</p>			4	1	4
<b><i>SUBTOTAL:</i></b>						<b>20</b>

**3. Economic Development**

Incorporating livability approaches into economic development strategies can enhance economic competitiveness by encouraging reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services, and other basic needs by workers, as well as giving business expanded access to markets and customers. More transportation choices and well-located housing can reduce employee transportation and housing costs and reduce business parking costs. Livability approaches can also be a catalyst for reinvesting in aging suburban corridors, restoring complete streets and networks, and revitalizing rural small towns and historic districts. Reinvented suburban corridors and revitalized main streets are prime targets for business reinvestment, especially when coupled with public infrastructure investments, an adopted plan, and new codes that support innovative project design. Preserving and supporting existing communities typically makes more efficient use of existing infrastructure and reduces long-term operating and maintenance costs. The questions in this section assess the extent to which a project will improve economic conditions for local residents, the host community, and the State of Rhode Island.

	Possible Answers	Points	Response	Score	Weight	Total
<p><b>Job Creation:</b> This question assesses whether a project is likely to promote economic development by creating new permanent jobs within the areas of Rhode Island that are designated as appropriate for development. It includes a wage threshold used by the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation.</p>						
<p>3.1. Can the project be reasonably expected to create new permanent jobs in within the urban services boundary or a designated growth center? (To be counted, jobs must pay wages at least 140% of the federal minimum wage (\$10.15 per hour or about \$25K per year.)</p>	> 50	6	> 50	6	1	6
	21 to 50	4				
	1 to 20	2				
	No	0				
<p><b>Workforce Training:</b> Projects that include a workforce training component will enhance the economic competitiveness of the community and Rhode Island by improving the skills of those working on the project or future employees at the project location.</p>						
<p>3.2. Will the project include an education or training component for likely employees, residents, or construction workers?</p>	Yes	2	Yes	2	1	2
	No	0				
<p><b>Areas Targeted for Reinvestment:</b> This question awards credit to projects that would be located within a state enterprise zone or other area targeted for reinvestment by the state or federal government. For example, Rhode Island has designated state enterprise zones to encourage increased employment at facilities located in those zones. (see <a href="http://www.riedc.com/business-services/enterprise-zones">http://www.riedc.com/business-services/enterprise-zones</a>).</p>						
<p>3.3. Will the project be located in an area designated or targeted for reinvestment (e.g., state enterprise zone)?</p>	Yes	3	Yes	3	1	3
	No	0				
<p><b>Support of Displaced Residents and Businesses:</b> State funds should spur economic development, but not at the cost of residents and existing businesses. Measures should be taken to retain or relocate businesses or residents that will be displaced by a project.</p>						
<p>3.4. Will the project provide for the retention or relocation of any displaced businesses or residents?</p>	Yes	1	Yes	1	1	1
	No	0				
<p><b>Open Response:</b> These two questions provide an opportunity for the applicant to note any other economic development and job creation aspects of the project that were not addressed by the other questions in this category.</p>						
<p>3.5. In the space provided on the next worksheet labeled "Written Responses," please provide any additional information on how the project would promote economic development and job creation in appropriate areas.</p>	<p>Reviewer will assign up to 4 points based on response on next worksheet.</p>			4	1	4
<p>3.6. In the space provided on the next worksheet labeled "Written Responses," please provide any additional information about the project's likely fiscal impacts and benefits for the host community and the State of Rhode Island.</p>	<p>Reviewer will assign up to 4 points based on response on next worksheet.</p>			4	1	4
<b>SUBTOTAL:</b>						<b>20</b>



**4. Support of Existing Communities & Designated Growth Centers**

Focusing investment on existing communities—through strategies like transit oriented, mixed-use development, and land recycling—can increase community revitalization, reduce public infrastructure costs, and help safeguard rural landscapes and natural resources. Compact development within or adjacent to existing neighborhoods and served by existing infrastructure minimizes land consumption, reduces development costs and long-term infrastructure operating and maintenance costs, conserves energy, and increases walkability and the viability of transit service. Mixing the uses (housing, retail, office, commercial/retail, services, institutional) and putting services closer together (i.e., designing commercial developments with a higher "floor area ratio" or FAR) also supports walking, bicycling, transit service, and shorter driving trips. Supporting more active transportation choices—through walking, bicycling, and access to parks and recreation—can improve health by encouraging regular exercise as part of daily living.

	Possible Answers	Points	Response	Score	Weight	Total
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**Consistency with Land Use 2025:** The purpose of *Land Use 2025: Rhode Island State Land Use Policies and Plan* is to guide future land use and development and to present State Guide Plan policies under which State and local land development activities will be reviewed for consistency. Land Use 2025 proposes growth within an urban services boundary and in selected centers in rural and suburban communities to provide growth opportunities throughout the state.

4.1. Will the project be located within the urban services boundary or in a designated growth center (i.e., consistent with <i>Land Use 2025</i> )?	Yes	6	Yes	6	1	6
	No	0				

**Proximity to Water & Sewer Infrastructure:** Locating a project in close proximity to existing utility infrastructure encourages more resource-efficient development of land, reduces development costs, and conserves energy.

4.2. If the project will be located outside the urban services boundary, will it require an extension of the water or sewer service in the area?	Yes	0	Yes	0	1	0
	No	3				

**Adjacency to Existing Development:** Locating a project adjacent to existing development encourages more resource-efficient development of land, reduces development costs, and conserves energy. It also can reduce travel distances and costs for those coming to and from the project site.

4.3. Will at least 50% of the project's perimeter border on existing development?	Yes	2	Yes	2	1	2
	No	0				

**Mix of Uses:** Mixing land uses at a project site (or adding new land uses to a neighborhood) can shorten travel distances and make it more likely that people will use alternative modes of transportation such as walking, bicycling, or transit.

4.4. Will the project contain a mix of different uses (e.g., housing, retail, office, commercial/retail, services, institutional) within the project site, or will it provide one or more new land uses within ½ mile of the project?	3+ uses	2	3+ uses	2	1	2
	2 uses	1				
	1 use	0				

**Proximity to Services & Amenities:** Having commonly used services and amenities within close proximity of a project location makes it more likely that people will make more trips using alternative modes of transportation such as walking, bicycling, or transit. One source for identifying nearby services and amenities and their distance from a project site is WalkScore (<http://www.walkscore.com>).

4.5. Indicate how many of the service and amenities listed below will be within ½ mile of the project location. Please list the individual facilities and distances in the space provided on the next worksheet labeled "Written Responses."	10+	3	10+	3	1	3
	6 to 9	2				
	3 to 6	1				
	0 to 3	0				

**Retail:** supermarket, other retail food market with produce, pharmacy, hardware.

**Services:** primary health care, bank/credit union, gym/fitness center, laundry/dry cleaner, eating establishment, licensed child care.

**Community Facilities:** police or fire station, public library, post office, educational facility (e.g., K-12 school, community college), place of worship, public recreation facility (e.g., park, ball field, swimming pool), cultural arts facility (e.g., museum, performing arts).

<p><b>Compact Non-Residential or Mixed-Use Development:</b> Compact building design is necessary to support wider transportation choices, and it can reduce the cost of providing public services such as water and sewer. Compact development also relieves development pressure on undeveloped land. For non-residential or mixed-use structures, a commonly used metric to describe density is Floor Area Ratio (FAR), which is the ratio of the floor area of a building to the area of the lot on which the building is located.</p>						
<p>4.6. For a non-residential or mixed-use project, will the density meet the relevant threshold for Floor Area Ratio?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Within urban services boundary: Floor Area Ratio of 2.5</li> <li>- Outside urban services boundary but within a designated growth center: Floor Area Ratio of 1.5</li> <li>- Outside urban services boundary or a designated growth center: Floor Area Ratio of 0.5</li> </ul>	Yes	3	Yes	3	1	3
	No	0				
<p><b>Open Response:</b> This question provides an opportunity for the applicant to note any other aspects of the project that enhance the livability of existing communities or designated growth centers.</p>						
<p>4.7. In the space provided on the next worksheet labeled "Written Responses," please provide any additional information on how the project will improve the vitality of an existing community or further the sustainability of a designated growth center.</p>	<p>Reviewer will assign up to 4 points based on response on next worksheet.</p>		4	1	4	
<b>SUBTOTAL:</b>						<b>20</b>

**5. Community Character & Collaboration**

Community character is usually reflected in values and goals that are built into local plans and visions, best developed through a collaborative process. A clear set of principles, developed in a broad community process (including development stakeholders) and incorporated into locally adopted plans and policies, can provide a framework for determining whether proposed projects are achieving sustainability goals and will fit in with desired community character. This can include treasured historic and cultural resources, rural landscapes and working lands, historic architecture and neighborhood parks, coastlines and harbors, or downtown streetscapes. Appropriate building design and siting that reflects that character while providing modern amenities can increase acceptance of growth and development, especially for more dense development in existing neighborhoods. For homes in developments that will be constructed building by building over time, a set of design guidelines can help ensure that each phase or block will also meet the community's expectations. In addition to conforming with adopted plans, a variety of collaborative community involvement methods can help make sure that development fits with community context.

Possible Answers	Points	Response	Score	Weight	Total
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**Use of Historic and Other Existing Buildings:** Preservation or adaptive reuse of historic and other existing buildings can be more resource-efficient than new construction, in part because such buildings are already tied into public infrastructure. Historic buildings also make a unique contribution to community character.

5.1. Will the project reuse or rehabilitate historic or other existing buildings in a manner that preserves their scale, materials, and character?	Yes	4	Yes	4	1	4
	No	0				

**Community Gathering Spaces:** Community spaces contribute to the vitality of a community by providing opportunities for social interaction, physical activity, and entertainment. Such gathering spaces include plazas, squares, parks, and greenways, as well as museums, theaters, and community centers.

5.2. Will the project create or enhance community gathering spaces that are open to the public?	Yes	4	Yes	4	1	4
	No	0				

**Consistency with Community Context:** Community character is expressed in part through shared architectural, siting, and landscape design elements in the buildings that make up a community or neighborhood. This character is often incorporated into adopted community plans or vision documents.

5.3. Does the project design (if a building) or design guidelines (if a development) incorporate building siting, architecture, and landscaping that fit with the community context?	Yes	2	Yes	2	1	2
	No	0				

**Consistency with Existing Plans:** Rhode Island state law requires each city or town to prepare a local comprehensive plan that indicates how the city or town intends to guide its future development. These plans are reviewed and approved by the state's Department of Administration. A proposed project should be consistent with the local comprehensive plan, as well as any other smaller-scale plans that pertain to the project location.

5.4. Is the project consistent with the approved local comprehensive plan and any other place-specific plans (e.g., corridor, neighborhood)?	Yes	4	Yes	4	1	4
	No	0				

**Community Involvement:** Communities have different needs and will therefore emphasize some livability principles over others when deciding on how they wish to develop. To discern how a project can align with the vision and preferences of a community, project sponsors should solicit the involvement of the people who live and work there. Involving the community early and often in the project development process can improve public support for projects that promote livability.

5.5. Did the developer/sponsor use any of the following community involvement methods during the project's design?  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meet with the local project review staff to discuss a concept plan prior to formal submittal.</li> <li>- Engage key stakeholders and the surrounding community in a planning charrette prior to project design.</li> <li>- Attend local neighborhood meetings to present project plans and get feedback.</li> <li>- Post information about the proposed project on an easily located and navigable website.</li> <li>- Conduct written or in-person outreach to non-English speaking populations in their native language.</li> </ul>	> 2 methods	2	> 2 methods	2	1	2
	1-2 methods	1				
	No	0				

**Open Response:** This question provides an opportunity for the applicant to note any other information about community character and collaboration that was not addressed by the other questions in this category.

5.6. In the space provided on the next worksheet labeled "Written Responses," please provide any additional information about how the project is consistent with the history and future plans of the host community. Also summarize efforts to engage the community in the project siting and design process.	Reviewer will assign up to 4 points based on response on next worksheet.	4	1	4
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**SUBTOTAL: 20**

**6. Environmental Protection & Public Health**

How communities develop affects both the natural environment and public health. Development can result in replacement of natural areas and wildlife habitat with impervious surfaces such as concrete or asphalt. Development patterns and practices also indirectly affect environmental quality because they influence how people get around. Sustainable development encourages fewer and shorter vehicle trips, resulting in lower emissions of air pollutants and greenhouse gases. How developments handle stormwater affects water quality. Cleaning up and redeveloping a brownfield can remove blight and environmental contamination from a community. Green construction practices can reduce energy consumption and operating costs, while improving indoor air quality. Development patterns affect public health in many ways. More compact, connected communities and active transportation choices can increase physical activity, as well as access to healthy food. By reducing dependence on automobiles, sustainable development reduces air emissions, thus decreasing the incidence of respiratory illnesses.

Possible Answers	Points	Response	Score	Weight	Total
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**Brownfields:** Brownfields are formerly used sites (typically industrial) that may have (or may be perceived to have) contamination issues. By cleaning up and reusing a brownfield, a project avoids the use of previously undeveloped land. Also, brownfield sites typically already have access to existing infrastructure such as roads and utilities.

6.1. Will the project result in the clean-up and reuse of a brownfield?	Yes	2	Yes	2	1	2
	No	0				

**Preservation of Agricultural & Recreational Land:** Farms contribute to a state's economic development and provide local food and farm vistas, as well as tourism opportunities and wildlife habitat. Recreational lands provide opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy the outdoors.

6.2. Will the project preserve land zoned for agricultural or recreational use by building in other locations?	Yes	1	Yes	1	1	1
	No	0				

**Preservation of Environmentally Sensitive Land:** Proper site selection avoids damage to or loss of fragile and scarce environmental resources.

6.3. Will the project avoid impacts to land physically unsuitable for development, such as slopes greater than 25%, wetlands, and aquifer recharge areas?	Yes	2	Yes	2	1	2
	No	0				

**Open Space:** Open space preservation promotes livability by preserving critical environmental areas, improving community quality of life, and guiding new growth into existing communities.

6.4. Will the project: (1) set aside at least 10% of total acreage as public open space, or (2) if within the urban services boundary, be located within ¼ mile of a dedicated public open space of at least ¼ acre?	Yes	1	Yes	1	1	1
	No	0				

**Green Building:** Green building techniques provide both environmental and health benefits. Environmental benefits derive from the use of building designs, materials, and appliances that reduce the use of energy and water, as well as from the use of materials with other environmental benefits (e.g., made with recycled content). Health benefits result from the use of building designs and materials that reduce exposure to potentially harmful substances, such as mold, lead, radon, or volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

6.5. Will the project meet any established sustainable design criteria (e.g., LEED, Enterprise Green Communities Criteria)?	Yes	1	Yes	1	1	1
	No	0				

**Energy Efficiency:** Energy-efficient homes achieve energy savings through heating, cooling, hot water, lighting, and appliance efficiencies, which improve resident comfort, reduce operating costs, and decrease emissions of air pollutants and greenhouse gases.

6.6. Will new or rehabilitated structures exceed the energy efficiency standards incorporated into the applicable state building code? (SBC-8 State Energy Conservation Code (non-residential) or Rhode Island One and Two Family Dwelling Code (residential)).	Yes	2	Yes	2	1	2
	No	0				

**Renewable Energy:** Renewable energy reduces environmental impacts that are associated with energy sourced and produced from fossil fuels. Use of on-site renewable energy can also result in energy cost savings.

6.7. Will the project provide on-site or commit to purchase a portion of its electricity (or direct heating/cooling) from renewable energy sources? (measured as a % of the project's estimated annual electricity demand)	> 20%	3	> 20%	3	1	3
	11-20%	2				
	6-10%	1				
	0-5%	0				

**Stormwater Management:** Reducing or eliminating stormwater runoff through design and management techniques increases on-site filtration, reduces the amount of pollutants from entering waterways, and decreases soil erosion. In December 2010, Rhode Island revised its stormwater requirements to incorporate low-impact development techniques as the primary method of stormwater control for developments. Use of these techniques helps to reduce net runoff and ensure adequate groundwater recharge. Points are awarded to projects that exceed the state's updated requirements or meet them even if not required to do so.

6.8. Will the project use stormwater management methods that exceed state requirements (or meet requirements if not required to)?	Yes	2	Yes	2	1	2
	No	0				

**Access to Fresh Produce:** Good nutrition is vital to good health, disease prevention, and the growth and development of children and adolescents. Low-income and underserved communities often have limited access to stores that sell healthy food, especially high-quality fruits and vegetables. In addition, rural communities often have a higher number of convenience stores where healthy foods are less available than in larger, retail food markets.

6.9. If the project will be residential or will include a residential component, will it improve the availability of fresh produce through at least one of the following means?	Yes	2	Yes	2	1	2
		0				

- Be located within ½ mile of a supermarket or a weekly farmer's market
- Provide a drop-off site for community-supported agriculture
- Provide an appropriate space for a community garden or be located within ¼ mile of an off-site community garden

**Access to Areas for Physical Activity:** Concerns about rising levels of obesity and cardiovascular disease have led to a considerable amount of attention to how the built environment can be designed to create more opportunities for physical activity. This question addresses residential proximity to playing areas, parks, open space, and trail systems.

6.10. If a project has a residential component, will the homes be located within ½ mile of parks, playing areas, trails, or other open space areas that are publicly accessible and can facilitate active recreation (e.g. walking, cycling, organized games)?	Yes	1	Yes	1	1	1
	No	0				

**Open Response:** This question provides an opportunity for the applicant to note any other environmental or public health aspects of the project that were not addressed by the other questions in this category.

6.11. In the space provided on the next worksheet labeled "Written Responses," please provide any additional information on how the project would contribute to the protection of the natural environment or the improvement of public health, such as by encouraging active living, improving access to healthy food, or increasing the supply of healthy housing (i.e., housing free of health hazards such as lead, radon, or mold).	Reviewer will assign up to 4 points based on response on next worksheet.	4		1	4
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**SUBTOTAL: 20**

**Project Score Summary:**

1. Transportation Choice and Accessibility	20
2. Housing Choice and Affordability	20
3. Economic Development	20
4. Support of Existing Communities & Designated Growth Centers	20
5. Community Character and Collaboration	20
6. Environmental Protection and Public Health	20

**TOTAL: 120**



## Smart Growth Implementation Assistance for Rhode Island KeepSpace Project Selection Tool

### Written Responses

**Instructions:** In the white boxes below, please respond to each of the following questions. Reviewers will assign a score for each response by using the dropdown menu in the green cells after each response. The assigned scores will be shown automatically in the previous worksheet.

**1.5.** Please provide any additional information on how the project will help to ensure that all citizens have access to multiple modes of transportation for commuting and for other trips.

Reviewer Score:

4

### 2. Housing Choice & Affordability

**2.5.** Please provide any additional information about how the project will improve the diversity and affordability of housing choices in the host community.

Reviewer Score:

4

**3. Economic Development**

**3.5.** Please provide any additional information on how the project would promote economic development and job creation in the host community and the State of Rhode Island.

**Reviewer Score:**

**4**

**3.6.** Please provide any additional information about the project's likely fiscal impacts and benefits for the host community and the State of Rhode Island.

**Reviewer Score:**

**4**

#### 4. Support of Existing Communities & Designated Growth Centers

4.5. Will the project meet the relevant criterion below regarding proximity to a mix of the following types of facilities or services? In the space below, please list the facilities used to meet this criterion and their respective distances from the proposed project location in the space below. Distances to most of these facilities can be determined on the WalkScore website (<http://www.walkscore.com>).

**Retail:** supermarket, other retail food market with produce, pharmacy, hardware.

**Services:** primary health care, bank/credit union, gym/fitness center, laundry/dry cleaner, eating establishment, licensed child care.

**Community Facilities:** police or fire station, public library, post office, educational facility (e.g., K-12 school, community college), place of worship, public recreation facility (e.g., park, ballfield, swimming pool), cultural arts facility (e.g., museum, performing arts).

Reviewer Score:

4

4.7. Please provide any additional information on how the project will improve the vitality of an existing community or further the sustainability of a designated growth center.

Reviewer Score:

4

**5. Community Character & Collaboration**

**5.6.** Please provide any additional information about how the project is consistent with the history and future plans of the host community. Also summarize efforts to engage the community in the project siting and design process.

**Reviewer Score:**

**4**

**6. Environmental Protection & Public Health**

**6.11.** Please provide any additional information on how the project would contribute to the protection of the natural environment or the improvement of public health, such as by encouraging active living, improving access to healthy food, or increasing the supply of healthy housing (i.e., housing free of health hazards such as lead, radon, or mold).

**Reviewer Score:**

**4**

## Appendix C: Final Critical Funding Resources Report

The EPA-led team prepared this list in cooperation with the state agencies participating in the KeepSpace initiative. It was used in preparation for the workshop and other steps in the process and is included here mainly as a reference source. This appendix describes the primary statewide funding sources available in Rhode Island to support development projects that meet KeepSpace's goals of creating housing and transportation options, protecting the environment, and enhancing quality of life. It includes state agencies and statewide nonprofit funding sources that use a competitive process to distribute resources.



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## Introduction

These funding programs, for which state agencies have discretion regarding the project selection or ranking criteria, could consider using the project selection or assessment tool that was developed through this project.

The appendix discusses some issues around the coordination of statewide funding sources, then lists the funding programs in the areas of:

- Housing.
- Environmental protection.
- Health.
- Economic development.
- Community development.
- Transportation.

The description of each funding source lists the key elements of the program, including eligible applicants, eligible uses of funds, funding cycles, and recent funding levels.

## Coordination of Statewide Funding Sources

The project team gathered input from KeepSpace state agency partners and the four KeepSpace pilot communities (Cranston, Olneyville, Pawtucket/Central Falls, and Westerly) on real and perceived barriers to better coordination of state funding sources and possible ways to overcome those barriers. This section summarizes their feedback.

### Funding Levels

Some local representatives said that the funding available from state funding sources is insufficient to meet the needs the programs are designed to address. They were concerned that state-level efforts to coordinate funding decisions, such as adopting a new project assessment or selection tool, would mean that applicants would have to work harder to obtain a share of what they considered to be an inadequate amount of funding.

At the same time, in an era of scarce public resources, it is even more important to ensure that those resources are being used effectively, and better coordination is one means of doing so. The burden of obtaining and analyzing the information needed to apply the project selection tool could be placed at least partly on the state agencies, rather than on the funding applicants. Another possible way to both improve program coordination and ease the paperwork burden would be to develop a common application for multiple grant programs, such as the “One Stop” application used for affordable housing programs in Massachusetts.

### Funding Cycles

Local representatives cited the disparity in funding cycles of state programs as sometimes being a barrier to better coordination. For example, in contrast to the annual or semi-annual funding cycles of some state programs, the Transportation Improvement Program is updated on a four-year cycle. One local representative said that community groups cannot afford to commit staff resources to projects that take five or six years to get funding.

Local representatives also observed that fixed application windows for funding programs (versus a rolling application process) prevent them from being able to use state funding sources to take advantage of opportunities that arise unexpectedly. However, state officials said that fixed application windows allow

them to compare competing project proposals to one another and allocate resources to the most worthy projects.

Some federal rules prescribe specific application or selection cycles, so state agencies can be limited in their ability to align or otherwise revise funding cycles for some programs. However, there may be opportunities to better align the funding cycles of state-designed programs.

## Project Selection Criteria

Local representatives said that the project selection criteria for some state funding programs are opaque and not specific enough to communicate the program's priorities. State officials said that, in at least some cases, they prefer to keep the priorities broad to preserve their flexibility. Such flexibility could allow for greater interagency coordination if agencies are not locked in to funding decisions by rigid project selection criteria.

## Current Coordination Among State Agencies

In addition to the interagency coordination fostered by KeepSpace, state officials noted several examples of interagency representation on selection committees for funding programs (e.g., the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant program). Also, state officials noted that because Rhode Island is small, it might have more informal coordination among state agencies than larger states.

## Housing

### Low-Income Housing Tax Credits<sup>11</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Rhode Island Housing.

**Program Description:** Low-Income Housing Tax Credits are the principal federal program for the construction and rehabilitation of affordable apartments. The tax credits are a dollar-for-dollar credit against federal tax liability. The federal government awards each state a limited amount of tax credits annually; Rhode Island receives the small state minimum. Rhode Island Housing allocates the tax credits to developers of affordable apartments. Developers then sell the credits to investors (generally for-profit corporations and investment funds) to generate the equity necessary to complete their projects. Federal law requires that state housing finance agencies annually develop a Qualified Allocation Plan outlining in detail the allocation process and the agency's priorities.<sup>12</sup> The final Qualified Allocation Plan is approved and executed by the governor.

**Eligible Applicants:** Developers of affordable rental housing.

**Eligible Uses:** A developer can receive three types of housing tax credits:

- A 9 percent annual credit for the costs of new construction or substantial rehabilitation of an existing building without any federal subsidies.
- A 4 percent (approximate) annual credit for the costs of new construction or substantial rehabilitation of an existing building with a federal subsidy.
- A 4 percent (approximate) annual credit for the cost of acquiring an existing building that involves substantial rehabilitation without federal subsidy.

**Application Window:** Applications for the 9 percent credits are typically due in October. Applications for tax-exempt financing and 4 percent credits are accepted on a rolling basis.

**Recent Funding History:** Recent funding levels are shown in the table below (in millions of dollars).

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Housing Tax Credits	\$5.061	\$4.674 (of which \$3.158 was exchanged)	\$5.218 (of which \$0.8 was exchanged)	\$3.665	\$2.72 in 2011 credits; forward reservation of 2012 credits: \$1.087

<sup>11</sup> Rhode Island Housing. "Our Products." <http://www.rhodeislandhousing.org/sp.cfm?pageid=551>. Accessed August 3, 2011.

<sup>12</sup> Rhode Island Housing. "2012 Qualified Allocation Plan." <http://www.rhodeislandhousing.org/filelibrary/2012%20QAP%20Final.pdf>. Accessed August 3, 2011.

## Development Mortgages (First Mortgages)<sup>13</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Rhode Island Housing.

**Program Description:** Rhode Island Housing provides tax-exempt and taxable first-mortgage financing for construction and permanent financing of mixed-income and affordable housing for terms of up to 40 years. Mixed-income properties must comply with requirements regarding the number and characteristics of the affordable units.

**Eligible Applicants:** Developers.

**Eligible Uses:** Permanent financing of affordable and mixed-income housing.

**Application Window:** Rolling.

**Recent Funding History:** Recent funding levels are shown in the table below (in millions of dollars).

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010
Development Mortgages	\$106.3	\$1.5	\$24.8	\$65.9

## Land Bank<sup>14</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Rhode Island Housing.

**Program Description:** The primary purpose of the Land Bank Program is to reduce barriers to the production of affordable housing by authorizing Rhode Island Housing to acquire and hold, on behalf of eligible nonprofit developers and municipalities, properties intended for development as housing affordable to low- and moderate-income residents. Land-banked properties are held up to 12 months, after which the property can be sold or transferred to another nonprofit. All costs incurred by Rhode Island Housing and a 6 percent holding fee are due upon take-out from the Land Bank. Occupied properties and those requiring demolition are generally financed with a 6 percent bridge loan to the applicant.

**Eligible Applicants:** Nonprofit developers and municipalities.

**Eligible Uses:** Acquisition of property to be developed as affordable homes for low- and moderate-income residents.

**Application Window:** Applications are accepted on a continual basis and are normally reviewed within 30 days of receipt of a completed application and all required documentation.

**Recent Funding History:** Recent funding levels are shown in the table below (in millions of dollars).

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Land Bank	\$3.0	\$2.9	\$0.7	\$1.3	\$0.2 (partial year)

<sup>13</sup> Rhode Island Housing. "Our Products." op. cit.

<sup>14</sup> Rhode Island Housing. "Our Products." op. cit.



## Pre-Development Loans<sup>15</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Rhode Island Housing.

**Program Description:** The Pre-Development Loan Program provides nonprofit developers with the resources to determine the feasibility of and obtain site control for an affordable housing development. Pre-development loans are expected to be repaid at closing of construction or permanent financing, or within 24 months, whichever occurs first. Predevelopment financing can be applied only to that percentage of a development that will be occupied by households at or below 80 percent of median income.

**Eligible Applicants:** Nonprofit developers.

**Eligible Uses:** Pre-closing costs incurred in determining development feasibility and obtaining site control. In addition to site control costs, technical assistance costs that can be covered include: architectural fees, financial packaging, legal costs, engineering, market analysis, application and bank fees, inspection, appraisal and survey fees, insurance, and title search and recording.

**Application Window:** Rolling.

**Recent Funding History:** Recent funding levels are shown in the table below (in millions of dollars).

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Pre-Development Loans	\$0.2	\$0.4	\$0.9	\$1.0	\$0.3 (partial year)

## Construction Financing<sup>16</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Rhode Island Housing.

**Program Description:** Rhode Island Housing offers construction financing for developers with fixed or floating rates for land development or the rehabilitation of existing buildings for rental or homeownership by low- and moderate-income individuals and families. For rental development transactions, Rhode Island Housing also offers a conversion option, which includes long-term, fixed-rate permanent financing. Rhode Island Housing can customize a financial structure to meet the goals of a development by using a variety of options, including taxable or tax-exempt bond financing, conduit bond financing, or lender participation.

**Eligible Applicants:** Developers of housing for low- to moderate-income households.

**Eligible Uses:** Land development or the rehabilitation of existing buildings for rental or homeownership.

**Application Window:** Rolling.

**Recent Funding History:** Recent funding levels are shown in the table below (in millions of dollars).

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Construction Financing (millions)	\$21.8	\$0.8	\$12.9	\$11.0	\$6.2*

\* 2011 funding represents construction loans through May 11, 2011.

<sup>15</sup> Rhode Island Housing. "Our Products." op. cit.

<sup>16</sup> Rhode Island Housing. "Our Products." op. cit.

## Deferred Payment Loans

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Rhode Island Housing.

**Program Description:** Deferred Payment Loan Funds can be used to write down the cost of developments as needed. These funds can be used as second mortgage financing but not as an operating subsidy and are available only to those developments using first-mortgage financing from Rhode Island Housing, although this requirement can be waived if there are significant benefits resulting from the use of other first-mortgage financing.

**Eligible Applicants:** Developments using Rhode Island Housing first-mortgage financing (unless waiver is granted).

**Eligible Uses:** Can be used as second-mortgage financing but not as an operating subsidy.

**Application Window:** Rolling.

**Recent Funding History:** Recent funding levels are shown in the table below (in millions of dollars).

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Deferred Payment Loan	\$2.7	\$1.7	\$4.9	\$1.6	TBD

## HOME Investment Partnership Program<sup>17</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Rhode Island Housing.

**Program Description:** HOME funds can be used for acquisition, rehabilitation, and new construction of affordable housing. The HOME program's priority is to provide affordable housing through the rehabilitation of existing structures and to prioritize development in neighborhood revitalization areas. It encourages the revitalization of urban neighborhoods as well as deteriorating neighborhoods throughout the state.

**Eligible Applicants:** Nonprofit, for-profit, and public organizations, including municipalities and public housing authorities.

**Eligible Uses:** Acquisition, rehabilitation, and new construction of affordable rental and ownership units. All units must be deed-restricted and restricted to low- and very low-income households. Rent and sale price limitations also apply.

**Application Window:** The timing of funding rounds varies, but they are generally held in January and June (if there are any remaining funds after the January round).

**Recent Funding History:** Each year, Rhode Island Housing receives approximately \$5 million in federal HOME funds. Recent funding levels are shown in millions of dollars.

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
HOME Investment Partnership Program	\$5.1	\$4.9	\$4.5	\$5.5	\$4.8 (estimated)

<sup>17</sup> Rhode Island Housing. "For Business Partners." <http://www.rhodeislandhousing.org/sp.cfm?pageid=570>. Accessed August 3, 2011.

## Thresholds Program<sup>18</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Rhode Island Housing on behalf of the Rhode Island Department of Mental Health, Retardation, and Hospitals (MHRH).

**Program Description:** The Thresholds Program increases the supply of housing for people with serious and persistent mental illness. The program requires participating housing sponsors to make units affordable to this population in return for funds to develop or refinance housing, and the promise of mental health and social services for these units' occupants. Projects that integrate people with a serious and persistent mental illness with the rest of the public are preferred over projects that segregate this population in single or adjacent buildings. Housing exclusively for people with a serious and persistent mental illness must either be supervised or provide access to on-site mental health services during the day. The Thresholds Program includes capital development funding and pre-development loans.

**Eligible Applicants:** Nonprofit housing sponsors.

**Eligible Uses:** Pre-development costs and capital for housing for people with serious and persistent mental illness.

**Application Window:** Rolling.

**Recent Funding History:** Recent funding levels are shown in the table below (in millions of dollars).

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Thresholds Program	\$1.1	\$0.4	\$0	\$0.5	\$0.5

## Supportive Housing Program<sup>19</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Rhode Island Housing.

**Program Description:** Each year, Rhode Island Housing applies for a HUD grant in which partner service agencies receive funding for a wide array of programs. These programs provide housing with services to the homeless population along a "Continuum of Care." This supportive housing enables special needs populations to live as independently as possible in a permanent setting. The three basic program types are:

- **Safe Havens:** Housing for hard-to-reach homeless persons with severe mental illnesses who are on the streets and have been unable or unwilling to participate in supportive services.
- **Transitional Housing:** Housing in which homeless persons live for up to 24 months and receive supportive services that enable them to live more independently.
- **Permanent Housing:** Long-term, community-based housing and supportive services for homeless persons with disabilities.

**Eligible Applicants:** Units of local government, other governmental entities such as public housing authorities, and private nonprofits.

**Eligible Uses:** Acquisition and rehabilitation of structures, new construction, leasing of structures or individual units, operating costs of supportive housing facilities, supportive services for homeless participants, and administrative costs.

<sup>18</sup> Rhode Island Housing. "Our Products." op. cit.

<sup>19</sup> Rhode Island Housing. "For Renters." <http://www.rhodeislandhousing.org/sp.cfm?pageid=654>. Accessed August 3, 2011.

**Application Window:** The timing of the application window depends on when HUD issues its annual Notice of Funding Availability.

**Recent Funding History:** Recent funding levels are shown in the table below (in millions of dollars).

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Supportive Housing Program	\$3.5	\$3.5	\$3.8	\$3.9	TBD

## Deferred Payment Special Needs Loan<sup>20</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Rhode Island Housing.

**Program Description:** The Deferred Payment Special Needs Loan program provides resources for the production of rental housing for homeless, disabled, and/or very low-income individuals and families. Through this program, Rhode Island Housing provides amortizing and deferred loans, at a maximum of \$50,000 per unit, to developers for the acquisition and development of housing with supportive services for special needs populations. All applications must include a service plan ensuring that social services will be provided to residents of these developments. Social services are not funded by the program. However, the funds are often partnered with state Neighborhood Opportunities Program funds that provide operating subsidies. The federal HOME Program is also frequently used in conjunction with this program.

**Eligible Applicants:** Developers of homes for special needs populations.

**Eligible Uses:** Acquisition and development of rental housing with supportive services for special needs populations.

**Application Window:** Rolling.

**Recent Funding History:** Recent funding levels are shown in the table below (in millions of dollars).

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Deferred Payment Special Needs Loan	\$2.0	\$2.0	\$0	\$0	\$0

## Targeted Assistance Grants<sup>21</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Rhode Island Housing.

**Program Description:** Rhode Island Housing offers grant funding to help communities enhance or increase the supply of affordable housing and achieve the state target of 10 percent long-term affordable housing. Targeted Assistance Grants have been used to help implement local affordable housing plans and study the feasibility of revitalizing blighted properties. Grants of up to \$10,000 are available on an ongoing basis to assist in the planning of neighborhoods and developments that will provide low- and moderate-income housing. A dollar-for-dollar local match is required.

Rhode Island Housing is considering revising the regulations to allow Targeted Assistance Grants to be used for a wider range of projects that are in line with the KeepSpace Community Elements. The organization is also considering coordinating the release and awarding of this grant with the Statewide Planning Program's Challenge Grants.

<sup>20</sup> Rhode Island Housing. "Our Products." op. cit.

<sup>21</sup> Rhode Island Housing. "Our Services." <http://www.rhodeislandhousing.org/sp.cfm?pageid=474>. Accessed August 3, 2011.

**Eligible Applicants:** Nonprofit organizations, cities and towns, community groups, merchants' associations, and other community stakeholders.

**Eligible Uses:** A range of activities that facilitate the development of low- and moderate-income housing, excluding actual development activity for which other funding sources, such as pre-development grants, are available.

**Application Window:** Rolling.

**Recent Funding History:** \$100,000 is allocated annually, but this amount is rarely fully used from year to year.

### LeadSafe Homes Program<sup>22</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Rhode Island Housing.

**Program Description:** The LeadSafe Homes Program provides financial assistance to property owners or developers to make their properties lead-safe. Financing is limited to a maximum of \$10,000 per unit and can be used only for lead hazard reduction work. Work must be performed by a lead-certified contractor.

**Eligible Applicants:** Owners of single-family and multifamily residences that were built before 1978. All borrowers must have clear title to the property and property taxes must be current. Household income of homeowners or renters must meet federal or state eligibility guidelines.

**Eligible Uses:** Removal of lead paint from residence.

**Application Window:** Rolling.

**Recent Funding History:** Recent funding levels are shown in the table below (in millions of dollars).

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
LeadSafe Homes Program	\$1.0	\$1.0	\$1.0	\$0	\$1.0

### Neighborhood Opportunities Program<sup>23</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Rhode Island Housing and Rhode Island Housing Resources Commission.

**Program Description:** The Neighborhood Opportunities Program (NOP) is an initiative to develop affordable housing units and revitalize neighborhoods. The program has three components:

- The Affordable Family Housing Program provides grants or low-interest capital for the rehabilitation of dilapidated housing units or for new construction, along with operating subsidies to reduce rents for a minimum of 10 years. Units are available to tenants working at or near the minimum wage.
- The Permanent Supportive Housing Program provides gap financing and operating support for the acquisition, construction, or rehabilitation of rental housing for low-income disabled individuals or families who require ongoing supportive services and are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
- The Building Better Communities Fund provides gap financing to acquire, clear, develop, or rehabilitate vacant buildings, lots, commercial or mixed-use properties, or properties used for

<sup>22</sup> Rhode Island Housing. "Our Products: LeadSafe Homes." <http://www.rhodeislandhousing.org/sp.cfm?pageid=457>. Accessed August 3, 2011.

<sup>23</sup> Rhode Island Housing Resources Commission. "Document Library." <http://www.hrc.ri.gov/library/index.php>. Accessed August 3, 2011.

social services. Funding is also available for the construction, acquisition, financing, or rehabilitation of housing for homeownership for families making up to 120 percent of median income.

**Eligible Applicants:** Eligible applicants are nonprofits, municipalities, and public housing authorities. Private for-profit entities may also apply for the Affordable Family and Permanent Supportive Housing programs.

**Eligible Uses:** Capital grants and an operating subsidy for 10 years in rental housing projects only.

**Application Window:** Twice a year (fall and spring).

**Recent Funding History:** Recent funding levels are shown in the table below (in millions of dollars).

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Neighborhood Opportunities Program	\$7.5	\$2.5	\$2.5	\$2.5	\$1.5

## KeepSpace Planning and Implementation Grants<sup>24</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Rhode Island Housing.

**Program Description:** In 2007, Rhode Island Housing issued a request for proposals to developers and announced its intention to invest up to \$10 million to support the development of the first set of KeepSpace Communities. In May 2008, four KeepSpace Communities were selected: Cranston, Providence, Pawtucket, and Westerly. The selected communities received initial funding to facilitate a community visioning process.

**Eligible Applicants:** Designated KeepSpace Communities.

**Eligible Uses:** Planning and project implementation.

**Application Window:** Future funding rounds have not yet been determined.

**Recent Funding History:** In 2009, \$345,100 was distributed to the three pilot communities as planning grants. In 2011, \$300,000 will be distributed to those same communities as implementation grants. Future funding is to be determined.

<sup>24</sup> KeepSpace. [http://www.keeppspace.org/KeepSpace\\_Default.aspx](http://www.keeppspace.org/KeepSpace_Default.aspx). Accessed August 3, 2011.



## Rhode Island Local Initiatives Support Corporation<sup>25</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Rhode Island Local Initiatives Support Corporation (RILISC).

**Program Description:** RILISC is a statewide nonprofit that organizes capital and other resources to support the development of healthy and resilient neighborhoods that are good places to live, work, raise children, and conduct business. Since 1991, RILISC has invested more than \$200 million in Rhode Island, helping build or rehabilitate more than 5,500 affordable homes, creating or improving over 5,500 child care slots, and building over 500,000 square feet of retail, community, and child care space.

Part of RILISC's assistance is through a Child Care Facilities Fund that provides capital and technical expertise to licensed child care centers and homes that are committed to providing high-quality care and serving low-income children eligible for DHS subsidies. The fund can provide a combination of training, technical assistance, and financing, whether it is for a minor renovation or for construction of a new, state-of-the-art child care facility.

**Eligible Applicants:** Local community development corporations and child care centers.

**Eligible Uses:** Affordable housing, child care facilities, and mixed-use and commercial developments in low-income neighborhoods.

**Recent Funding History:** Recent funding levels are shown in the table below.

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Child Care Grants (thousands)	\$10	\$48	\$63.5	\$10	\$0
NDF Capacity Building Program (thousands)	\$598	\$588	\$574	\$745	\$440
Recoverable Grants for Pre-development Project Expenses (thousands)	\$491	\$543	\$50	\$390	\$190

<sup>25</sup> Rhode Island Local Initiatives Support Corporation. <http://www.rilisc.org/>. Accessed August 3, 2011.

## Environmental Protection

### Clean Water State Revolving Fund<sup>26</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Department of Environmental Management (DEM) and Rhode Island Clean Water Finance Agency.

**Program Description:** The Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) Program is a subsidized loan program for local government to finance wastewater infrastructure projects. Funding for the program is available from four sources: federal capitalization grants, state match monies, agency revenue bonds, and revolved capital. The annual federal grant award to the state is based on a specific percentage of the total Congress allocates for the program. Per federal requirements, the SRF loans cannot be used to support future growth.

A separate Rhode Island Water Pollution Control Revolving Fund receives state capital contributions before the funds are transferred to the Clean Water SRF. This fund has been used on occasion to finance projects not meeting the requirements of federal programs.

**Eligible Applicants:** Local government units.

**Eligible Uses:** Wastewater infrastructure projects that are on DEM's Project Priority List and have a DEM Certificate of Approval.

**Application Window:** The Project Priority List is revised annually.

**Recent Funding History:** Recent funding levels are shown in the table below (in millions of dollars).<sup>27</sup>

	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010
Construction Loans	\$57.5	\$77.3	\$98.9	\$0	\$138.6

### Nonpoint Source Grants<sup>28</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Department of Environmental Management.

**Program Description:** The Nonpoint Source Program (also known as Clean Water Act Section 319 grants) provides funds for projects that mitigate nonpoint source pollution and/or restore water quality that is impaired by nonpoint sources of pollution. Grants require a minimum 40 percent match from non-federal sources. Grants are heavily weighted toward construction and design projects that control or abate nonpoint source pollution impairments that have been characterized by a water quality restoration plan and projects to control nonpoint source pollution in impaired water bodies that require a restoration plan.

**Eligible Applicants:** State, local, and regional governmental agencies; nonprofit agencies; and schools, colleges, and universities.

**Eligible Uses:** Implementation of best management practices to control or abate documented water quality impairments caused by nonpoint source pollution. Examples include:

<sup>26</sup> Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. "State Revolving Fund." <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/benviron/water/finance/srf/index.htm>. Accessed August 3, 2011.

<sup>27</sup> An American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grant provided a one-time increase in FY 2010 of federal capitalization of the Rhode Island SRF. Rhode Island Clean Water Finance Agency. *Annual Report 2010*. October 2010. <http://www.ricwfa.com/pdf/Annual%20Report%202010.pdf>.

<sup>28</sup> Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. "Nonpoint Source Funding." <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/benviron/water/finance/non/index.htm>. Accessed August 3, 2011.

- Design and construction of structural stormwater best management practices, such as infiltration structures, low-impact development practices, rain gardens, and streambank stabilization.
- Restoration of aquatic habitat to enhance water quality or support designated uses of surface waters.
- Repair or upgrade of publicly owned on-site wastewater treatment systems to reduce pollutant loadings.
- Certain other projects that restore habitat degraded by hydrological modifications such as stream channelization.

**Application Window:** Varies annually.

**Recent Funding History:** In November 2010, DEM awarded approximately \$750,000 in grants for six water quality improvement projects.

### Acquisition of Open Space Grants<sup>29</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Department of Environmental Management.

**Program Description:** This program provides up to 50 percent matching grants to land trusts, municipalities, and environmental organizations for the acquisition or protection of open space that possesses significant natural, ecological, agricultural, or scenic value. The program offers grants for the acquisition of fee-simple development rights or conservation easements on environmentally sensitive land. The grant applications are reviewed and scored by the Rhode Island Advisory Committee on Natural Heritage Preservation. Final awards are made by the Natural Heritage Preservation Commission.

The evaluation criteria assess whether the property is in a city or densely populated area, whether the property provides greenway linkages, and whether the acquisition would be consistent with state and local plans.

**Eligible Applicants:** Municipalities, land trusts, and nonprofit environmental organizations. Grantee must provide a 50 percent match in the form of funds or donated value.

**Eligible Uses:** Acquisition of fee simple or conservation easements.

**Application Window:** Grant applications are usually accepted in the fall of even-numbered years.

**Recent Funding History:** Recent funding levels are shown in the table below (in millions of dollars).

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Acquisition of Open Space Grants	\$3.3	\$3.2	\$1.1	\$1.6	\$1.0

<sup>29</sup> Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. "Planning and Development: Grants." <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bpoladm/plandev/grants.htm>. Accessed August 3, 2011.

## Acquisition and Physical Recreational Development<sup>30</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Department of Environmental Management.

**Program Description:** Matching grants are awarded to municipalities for the acquisition of land for recreation and/or the development of recreational projects on publicly owned land. Grantees must provide a 50 percent match in the form of in-kind labor or funds. Land acquired under this program must have a master plan for the development of the acquired property. The Rhode Island Recreation Resources Review Committee sets the maximum amount award for a single grant and reviews each application according to its eligibility criteria set forth in the Open Project Selection Process of the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. The committee submits its ranked recommendations for grant awards to the DEM director, who makes the final decision on grant awards.

**Eligible Applicants:** Municipalities.

**Eligible Uses:** Acquisition, renovation, and development of outdoor recreation facilities.

**Application Window:** Grant applications are usually accepted in the fall of even-numbered years.

**Recent Funding History:** No grant awards have been made since fiscal year 2005.

## Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund<sup>31</sup>

**State Agencies:** Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation (RIEDC) and Department of Environmental Management

**Program Description:** Through its Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund, RIEDC provides low-interest loans and grants to help clean up contaminated, abandoned, or underused properties. The program provides a sustainable financing mechanism for site cleanup and consequent return of the properties to beneficial, economically productive use. Loans at below-market rates are available to remediate eligible brownfields sites. Grants are also available for nonprofit organizations or eligible public entities.

**Eligible Applicants:** A public, private, or nonprofit entity that has control over or access to an eligible site. Participating entities cannot be considered potentially liable for cleaning up the site under the federal Superfund law or under Rhode Island laws.

**Eligible Uses:** Cleanup and consequent return of the properties to beneficial, economically productive use.

**Application Window:** Rolling.

**Recent Funding History:** As a revolving loan fund, the program uses loan repayments (principal, interest, and fees) to make new loans.

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<sup>30</sup> Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. "Planning and Development: Grants." <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bpoladm/plandev/grants.htm>. Accessed August 3, 2011.

<sup>31</sup> Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation. "Brownfield Sites." <http://www.riedc.com/business-services/site-selection/brownfield-sites>. Accessed August 3, 2011. See also: Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. "Reinvesting in Rhode Island's Brownfields: Financial Assistance." <http://www.dem.ri.gov/brownfields/financial/index.htm>. Accessed August 3, 2011.

## Targeted Brownfields Assessments Program<sup>32</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Department of Environmental Management.

**Program Description:** This program provides environmental site assessments of brownfields to determine the actual extent and severity of contamination, if any is present. The program is funded by EPA and administered through DEM's Office of Waste Management.

**Eligible Applicants:** Public or nonprofit organizations (that partner with a public entity) that are acting as voluntary parties and have redevelopment plans for a brownfield site. Responsible parties are not eligible.

**Eligible Uses:** Site investigations performed by environmental consultants under contract with the state.

**Application Window:** Applications are accepted on a rolling basis; any applications not selected for funding are held for future consideration. When Rhode Island receives an EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant, the state will put out a call for applications. Any applications that are awaiting selection are also considered at that time.

**Recent Funding History:** Recent funding levels are shown in the table below (in millions of dollars).

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Targeted Brownfields Assessments Program	--	\$0.4	\$0.3	\$0.7	\$0.4

## Farmland Preservation Program<sup>33</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Department of Environmental Management.

**Program Description:** This program, run by the Agricultural Land Preservation Commission (ALPC) and staffed by DEM, preserves agricultural lands through the purchase of farmland development rights. Purchasing development rights from farmers enables them to retain ownership of their property while protecting their lands for agricultural use. At the same time, it provides farmers with a financially competitive alternative to development. The acquisition of development rights is a purchased right or easement to the property that restricts all future uses except those related to farming, with the goal of permanently protecting the best farmland and preserving a base of agricultural land for food protection and open space.

All program applications are reviewed and scored by the ALPC according to parcel size; soil quality; agricultural operation and viability; protection of water supplies and quality; open space, cultural and scenic features; flood protection; relative development pressure; and consistency with state and local plans. Funding for this program is obtained through the Open Space Bond, the Nature Conservancy (through grants from the Champlin Foundations), the U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program, and leveraging of land trust and municipal funds.

**Eligible Applicants:** Owners of farmland.

**Eligible Uses:** Purchase of development rights from farmers.

**Application Window:** Program applications are accepted year round and are evaluated and scored at monthly meetings of the ALPC.

<sup>32</sup> Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. "Reinvesting in Rhode Island's Brownfields: Financial Assistance." <http://www.dem.ri.gov/brownfields/financial/index.htm>. Accessed August 3, 2011.

<sup>33</sup> Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. "Division of Agriculture: Farmland Ecology." <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bnatres/agricult/ecology.htm>. Accessed August 3, 2011.

**Recent Funding History:** Recent funding levels are shown in the table below (in millions of dollars).

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Farmland Preservation Program	\$0.9	\$4.5	\$1.1	\$1.3	\$1.3

## Health

### Drinking Water State Revolving Fund<sup>34</sup>

**State Agencies:** Department of Health (DOH) and Rhode Island Clean Water Finance Agency.

**Program Description:** The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) provides low-cost financial assistance to any governmental unit or public or privately organized water supplier for the financing of safe drinking water projects. The program, as mandated by the federal government, focuses on small water suppliers (serving fewer than 10,000 people) and disadvantaged systems (systems whose improvements would dramatically increase water rates paid by consumers in relation to median household income). DOH prepares a Project Priority List to rank potential projects according to several health and economic criteria.

**Eligible Applicants:** Community public water systems and nonprofit non-community public water systems, both privately organized water suppliers and local governmental units. Projects must be on the DOH Project Priority List.

**Eligible Uses:** Planning, design, construction, and rehabilitation of safe drinking water supply, treatment, storage, and transmission infrastructure.

**Application Window:** The Project Priority List is revised annually.

**Recent Funding History:** The table below shows the volume of construction loan activity (in millions of dollars), as documented in the Rhode Island Clean Water Finance Agency's 2010 Annual Report.<sup>35</sup>

	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010
Drinking Water SRF Construction Loans	\$0.4	\$12.6	\$46.8	\$0	\$43.1

<sup>34</sup> Rhode Island Clean Water Finance Agency. "Programs: Drinking Water State Revolving Fund." <http://www.ricwfa.com/DrinkingWaterStateRevolvingFund.html>. Accessed August 3, 2011. See also: Rhode Island Department of Health. "Office of Drinking Water Quality: Drinking Water State Revolving Fund." <http://www.health.ri.gov/programs/drinkingwaterstaterevolvingloanfund/index.php>. Accessed August 3, 2011.

<sup>35</sup> Rhode Island Clean Water Finance Agency. *Annual Report 2010*. October 2010. <http://www.ricwfa.com/pdf/Annual%20Report%202010.pdf>.

## Water Facilities Assistance Program<sup>36</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Rhode Island Water Resources Board.

**Program Description:** This grant program finances up to 50 percent of design and construction costs for new public water supply facilities, system improvements, and emergency interconnections. The objective is to provide ample supplies and to distribute potable water to areas of need when losses occur due to transmission or contamination problems.

Funding for this program is provided through periodic general obligation bonds passed by statewide voter referendum. At present, the Water Facilities Assistance Program is not funded other than the general obligation bonds that support the interconnections part of the program. The Water Resources Board is working with all major public water suppliers throughout the state to establish much-needed emergency interconnections between systems. Emergency water system interconnections provide redundancy of supply and the ability to address water emergencies rapidly and efficiently across water supply districts.

**Eligible Applicants:** Major public water suppliers.

**Eligible Uses:** Emergency interconnections between public water supply systems.

**Recent Funding History:** Over the past several years, the Water Resources Board has issued over \$7.5 million to water suppliers through 14 individual interconnections.<sup>37</sup> Recent funding levels are shown in the table below.

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010
Water Facilities Assistance Program (thousands)	\$536	\$42	\$101	\$97

## Healthy Places by Design<sup>38</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Department of Health.

**Program Description:** With funding provided by the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention awarded a \$675,000 grant to the Rhode Island Department of Health to develop a model for integrating active living into all local planning decisions through statewide policy change. The Healthy Places by Design program seeks to strengthen land use, transportation, and community design policies and local ordinances that guide the decision-making process for the built environment to support health, particularly as it relates to physical activity and healthy eating.

The three key focus areas of the program are:

- The Healthy Communities Plan will provide strategies for municipalities to modify their comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, and other policies; with the goal of improving walkability, safety, recreation options, transportation choices, and access to healthy foods.
- The Healthy Communities Pilot Project will be a pilot project for HEALTH to award funding to three municipalities and their community-based organization partners. The pilot project will help communities implement changes to local policies in support of physical activity and access to

<sup>36</sup> Rhode Island Water Resources Board. "Water Facilities." [http://www.wrb.ri.gov/program\\_wf.htm](http://www.wrb.ri.gov/program_wf.htm). Accessed August 3, 2011.

<sup>37</sup> Rhode Island Water Resources Board. *Annual Report 2010*. undated. [http://www.wrb.ri.gov/reports/AR\\_RIWRB\\_2010.pdf](http://www.wrb.ri.gov/reports/AR_RIWRB_2010.pdf).

<sup>38</sup> Rhode Island Department of Health. "Programs: Healthy Places by Design Project." <http://www.health.ri.gov/programs/healthyplacesbydesign>. Accessed August 3, 2011.



healthy food. HEALTH will provide training and technical assistance for municipalities and their partners to implement policy changes that improve the built environment effect's on health by revising their comprehensive plans. Also, HEALTH will build capacity for healthier communities by empowering community-based organizations to assess their environments and advocate for change.

- The Healthy Communities Toolkit will provide municipalities with resources to incorporate the goals and strategies outlined in the Healthy Communities Plan into their comprehensive plans. The toolkit will include assessment tools, model ordinances, design guidelines, and detailed information on how to implement specific strategies, such as complete streets and safe routes to school.

**Eligible Applicants:** Pawtucket, North Kingstown, and South Kingstown were chosen as the pilot communities through a competitive selection process. No further designations or awards will be made with the initial grant award.

**Eligible Uses:** N/A.

**Application Window:** N/A.

**Recent Funding History:** The program is funded through February 2012 with a \$675,000 federal ARRA grant. Future funding is to be determined.

## Economic Development

### Public Works and Development Facilities Grants, via State Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Statewide Planning Program.

**Program Description:** This program helps screen development proposals for possible funding through the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA). The program aims to benefit economically distressed areas and/or mitigate impact of major economic dislocation (e.g., loss of a major employer). Upon the recommendations of the CEDS Subcommittee and the Technical Committee, the State Planning Council approves projects for Rhode Island's CEDS Priority Project List. This list of projects is sent to EDA in support of any and all applications project proponents wish to make for EDA funding.

In the CEDS, the primary screening process for these projects, all projects must be located within the urban services boundary described in Land Use 2025 or within municipally designated centers. Projects that cite a specific policy or strategy in Land Use 2025 that they satisfy or implement get a 10-point bonus when all projects that meet the threshold requirements are scored.

**Eligible Applicants:** City and town governments, state and municipal agencies, institutions of higher learning, and nonprofit development groups.

**Eligible Uses:** Construction, design and engineering studies; pilot projects; infrastructure improvements. Workforce training/development is encouraged.

**Application Window:** For CEDS, early May (typically the first Friday). Projects are generally slated for funding in future federal fiscal years, which begin October 1st.

**Recent Funding History:** Recent funding levels are shown in the table below.

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
EDA Public Works (via CEDS) (thousands)	\$125	\$125	\$100	\$125	\$125

## Renewable Energy Fund<sup>39</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation.

**Program Description:** Created by legislative statute in 1996, the Renewable Energy Fund (REF) is dedicated to increasing the renewable energy supply in Rhode Island. The fund provides grants, loans, and other financing for renewable energy projects that produce electricity in a cleaner, more sustainable manner and stimulate job growth in Rhode Island's economy. The REF provides incentives for:

- Business, commercial, and institutional projects.
- Affordable housing developments.
- Municipal renewable energy projects.
- Technical and feasibility studies.

**Eligible Applicants:** Nonprofit affordable housing developers and agencies are eligible for funds from the affordable housing program.

**Eligible Uses:** Renewable energy infrastructure (e.g., solar photovoltaic, wind turbines) to provide electricity.

**Application Window:** For the affordable housing program, applications must be submitted by March 31<sup>st</sup> and September 30<sup>th</sup> of each year.

**Recent Funding History:** Recent funding levels are shown in the table below (in millions of dollars). RIEDC assumed management of the Renewable Energy Fund in fiscal year 2009. Of the total annual funding, \$200,000 is allocated toward housing, \$200,000 is allocated for feasibility studies, and \$1,000,000 is allocated for municipalities.

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Renewable Energy Fund	--	\$0.8	\$2.3	\$2.4	\$2.4

## Small Business Loan Fund<sup>40</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation.

**Program Description:** For smaller businesses looking for a direct, fully secured loan, the Small Business Loan Fund provides up to \$250,000 in loans for acquisition and improvements of land, buildings and equipment, new construction, and working capital. The program funds an average of 25 percent of the total project cost, and interest rates are fixed. The repayment terms are also flexible up to 10 years.

**Eligible Applicants:** Existing manufacturing, processing, and selecting services.

**Eligible Uses:** Acquisition and improvement of land, building, and equipment; new construction; working capital.

**Application Window:** Rolling.

<sup>39</sup> Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation. "Business Services: Renewable Energy Fund." <http://www.riedc.com/business-services/renewable-energy>. Accessed August 3, 2011.

<sup>40</sup> Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation. "Financing: Small Business Loan Fund." <http://www.riedc.com/business-services/financing/sblf>. Accessed August 3, 2011.

**Recent Funding History:** The Small Business Loan Fund has not received any new funding since 1996. As a revolving loan fund, it depends on repayment of existing loans to fund new loans. Total capital is approximately \$12 million.

## Community Development

### State (Small Cities) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Division of Planning, Office of Housing and Community Development.

**Program Description:** The program supports communities by providing decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expanding economic opportunity, principally for persons of low and moderate incomes. The Rhode Island program's priorities are housing, economic development, and neighborhood revitalization. Revitalization programs account for about half of the program allocations. Housing rehabilitation accounts for another 25 percent of the program awards. Grants are provided to municipalities for a variety of activities, all designed to meet a "national objective," the primary of which is predominate benefit to low- and moderate-income persons. Funds are distributed through an annual competitive process.

**Eligible Applicants:** All Rhode Island cities and towns except the CDBG Entitlement Communities (Cranston, East Providence, Pawtucket, Providence, Warwick, and Woonsocket), which receive CDBG allocations directly from HUD.

**Eligible Uses:** CDBG can be used for a broad range of activities, including (but not limited to) housing, economic development, community facility/improvements, public services, slums and blight removal, and planning.

**Application Window:** Applications are distributed in January or February and are due in late spring.

**Recent Funding History:** Recent funding levels are shown in the table below (in millions of dollars).

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Small Cities CDBG Program	\$5.3	\$5.2	\$5.2	\$5.7	\$4.8

### Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Division of Planning, Office of Housing and Community Development.

**Program Description:** Section 108 is the loan guarantee provision of the CDBG program. Under this section, HUD offers communities financing for certain community development activities, such as housing rehabilitation, economic development, and large physical development projects.

As with the CDBG program, all projects and activities must meet CDBG's primary objective (use of 70 percent of funds must benefit low- and moderate-income persons), and one of the following three national objectives:

- Principally benefit low- and moderate-income persons.
- Assist in eliminating or preventing slums or blight.
- Assist with community development needs having a particular urgency.

Loans can be for terms up to 20 years. The applicant pledges its current and future CDBG funds as the principal security for the loan guarantee. HUD can require additional security for each loan, and any additional security that may be necessary is determined case by case.

**Eligible Applicants:** Cities and urban counties that receive entitlement grants can apply directly to HUD for loan guarantee assistance. Non-entitlement communities under the state CDBG program can also apply but must have a pledge of their state's CDBG funds from the appropriate agency.

**Eligible Uses:** When determining eligibility, the CDBG rules and requirements apply. Eligible activities are:

- Real property acquisition.
- Rehabilitation of property owned by the applicant public entity or its designated public agency.
- Housing rehabilitation eligible under the CDBG program.
- Special economic development activities under the CDBG program.
- Interest payments on the guaranteed loan and issuance costs of public offering.
- Acquisition, construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, or installation of public facilities.
- Assistance for public facilities in colonias.
- Debt service reserves for repayment of the Section 108 loan.
- Other related activities, including demolition and clearance, relocation, payment of interest, and insurance costs.

**Recent Funding History:** Recipients can apply for a loan equal to an amount up to five times their annual CDBG grant for certain types of economic development activities. Loans are secured by future CDBG funds.

## Planning Challenge Grants and Corridor Studies

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Division of Planning, Statewide Planning Program.

**Program Description:** Planning Challenge Grants go to municipalities and/or nonprofit planning organizations for master planning, zoning, and feasibility and access management projects focused on particular transportation elements or areas. These grants can also be used for corridor studies. Federal transportation planning funds provide 80 percent of the projects' costs; a 20 percent municipal match is required. Studies that integrate land use and transportation planning in support of the State Guide Plan objectives must be related to transportation as federal transportation planning funds are the funding source.

**Eligible Applicants:** State agencies, cities and towns, regional planning agencies, and nonprofit organizations in partnership projects with governmental applicants.

**Eligible Uses:** Corridor studies, access management, small area plans, commuter rail, transit-oriented development, emergency preparedness, GIS.

**Application Window:** Periodic.

**Recent Funding History:** Recent funding levels are shown in the table below.

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Planning Challenge Grants and Corridor Studies (thousands)	\$350	\$0	\$1,000	\$0	\$700

## School Construction Aid<sup>41</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

**Program Description:** School Construction Aid reimburses school districts for the cost of school construction projects over the term of the bond or leases floated to support the project. Interest payments on bonds are also eligible for reimbursement. The reimbursement share ratio is based on a district's wealth compared to the aggregate state wealth, with a minimum share of 30 percent. Incentive bonuses are built into the formula for energy conservation, handicapped accessibility, asbestos abatement, and regionalization. The Board of Regents and state legislature must approve all school construction projects prior to implementation. The Board of Regents approved new school construction regulations in May 2007.

**Eligible Applicants:** School districts.

**Eligible Uses:** New construction or an addition to an existing school building.

**Application Window:** Not available.

**Recent Funding History:** Not available.

## Public Library Construction Reimbursement<sup>42</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Office of Library and Information Services, Department of Administration.

**Program Description:** This program reimburses up to 50 percent of the eligible costs of the construction or renovation of public library facilities in areas where facilities are inadequate. Eligible costs include actual construction or renovation costs, architect and consultant fees, site acquisition, and furnishings and equipment within the parameters established by the Library Board of Rhode Island. The program also reimburses the interest incurred as a result of having to borrow the state's portion of the total cost of the library project.

Total funding for the project must be secured before the state enters into an agreement to reimburse the project. Reimbursement takes place over a period of up to 20 years following the successful completion, acceptance, and audit of the project.

**Eligible Applicants:** Free public libraries. The applying library must be legally established as a public library in accordance with RIGL 29-4 and eligible for state library aid in accordance with RIGL 29-6.

**Eligible Uses:** Construction and/or capital improvements to public library facilities.

**Application Window:** Ongoing.

**Recent Funding History:** Recent funding levels are shown in the table below (in millions of dollars).

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Public Library Construction Reimbursement	\$1.4	\$0	\$3.7	\$3.9	\$0

<sup>41</sup> Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, "RIDE Funding: School Construction," <http://www.ride.ri.gov/Finance/Funding/construction/>, accessed August 3, 2011.

<sup>42</sup> Rhode Island Department of Administration. "Public Library Construction Reimbursement." <http://www.olis.ri.gov/grants/construction/index.php>. Accessed August 3, 2011.

## Transportation

### Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)<sup>43</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Statewide Planning Program (project application process); Rhode Island Department of Transportation and Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (project implementation).

**Program Description:** The TIP lists all surface transportation projects that are receiving or are slated to receive federal funds, including highway, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian projects. Major projects must first go through a study and development category. Lead time for projects is very long. Projects are evaluated by the Transportation Advisory Committee.

**Eligible Applicants:** State agencies, cities and towns, regional planning agencies, transportation providers, nonprofit organizations.

**Eligible Uses:** Interstate, bridge, and highway reconstruction and resurfacing; traffic and safety; study and development; and transit, bicycle, and pedestrian projects.

**Application Window:** Applications are distributed every four years, usually in the fall, and are usually due in February.

**Recent Funding History:** Annual funding depends on federal appropriations, but it is generally around \$170 million per year (including state match, but excluding Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CMAQ), Transportation Enhancements, Planning, and Discretionary). Much of this money is committed to debt service and multi-year projects.

### Study and Development/Highway

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Rhode Island Department of Transportation.

**Program Description:** Projects in this program go through a study and development phase that allows the project to be scoped and assessed for environmental impact, community acceptability, constructability, and cost. This study informs decisions on project feasibility prior to entering the design phase. This category is intended to bring projects to no more than 30 percent design status. Placement in the Study and Development Program does not guarantee that a proposal will be implemented as requested, but it does ensure that the transportation problems it proposes to resolve will be examined. To ensure that unfulfilled expectations are not created, the Study and Development category is limited to a number of projects that can reasonably be expected to be looked at during the biennial period. Since the Study and Development Program serves as the "entry portal" to the TIP, competition for this category is keen. Projects in Study and Development are now shown by program category. The Highway Program category includes projects continuing in Study and Development from the previous TIP and new projects that have been added through the TIP solicitation. Other projects are listed under Bridge Program, Bicycle/Pedestrian Program, and Interstate Program.

**Eligible Applicants:** N/A.

**Eligible Uses:** Study and development phase of projects, during which the project concept is scoped and assessed in terms of environmental impact, community acceptability, constructability, and cost.

**Application Window:** Projects are evaluated every four years during the TIP update cycle.

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<sup>43</sup> Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program. "Transportation Planning Home Page." <http://www.planning.state.ri.us/transportation/default.htm>. Accessed August 3, 2011.



**Recent Funding History:** Recent funding levels are shown in the table below.

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Study and Development/ Highway (thousands)	\$560	\$0	\$0	\$1,000	\$1,000

## Bicycle/Pedestrian Program<sup>44</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT).

**Program Description:** The Bicycle/Pedestrian Program includes the planning, design, and construction of independent bicycle paths (shared-use paths) and walking trails, on-road bicycle lanes, on-road bicycle routes (signing and striping), and bicycling/pedestrian promotional programs and materials production (e.g., statewide bike map, safety programs). RIDOT administers the Bicycle/Pedestrian Program, which is funded through several federal funding sources and state matching funds. Funding sources include the CMAQ Program and the Transportation Enhancements Program, which are included in this appendix.

The program is currently working on completion of four major independent bike paths (Blackstone River Bicycle Facility, Northwest Bike Trail/ Woonasquatucket River Greenway, South County Bike Path, and Washington Secondary Bicycle Facility) that will form the spine of the State Greenway System.

**Eligible Applicants:** Projects entering the Bicycle/Pedestrian Program go through a study and development phase (analogous to Study and Development for highway projects), which allows the project to be scoped and assessed for environmental impact, community acceptability, constructability, and cost, and informs decisions on project feasibility prior to entering the design phase.

**Eligible Uses:** Planning, design, and construction of independent bicycle paths (shared use paths) and walking trails, on-road bicycle lanes, and on-road bicycle routes (signing and striping); and bicycling/pedestrian promotional programs and materials production (e.g., statewide bike map, safety programs).

**Application Window:** Projects are evaluated every four years during the TIP update cycle.

**Recent Funding History:** Recent funding levels are shown in the table below (in millions of dollars).

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Bicycle/Pedestrian Program	\$4.5	\$3.5	\$1.8	\$2.0	\$4.7

## Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)<sup>45</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Rhode Island Department of Transportation.

**Program Description:** CMAQ funds transportation projects or programs that will contribute to the attainment of air quality standards. The focus of the program is the reduction of ozone precursors, known as volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrous oxides. Under certain circumstances, CMAQ can also fund projects to mitigate carbon monoxide (CO) pollution and small particulate matter (PM-10) violations. Projects are scored by the Air Quality Transportation Subcommittee and are included as part of the TIP.

**Eligible Applicants:** State agencies, cities and towns, regional planning agencies, transportation providers, and nonprofit organizations.

<sup>44</sup> Rhode Island Department of Transportation. "Intermodal Planning." <http://www.dot.ri.gov/intermod/index.asp>. Accessed August 3, 2011.

<sup>45</sup> Rhode Island Department of Transportation. "Transportation Enhancement and CMAQ Programs." [http://www.dot.ri.gov/intermod/Enhancements\\_and\\_CMAQ.asp](http://www.dot.ri.gov/intermod/Enhancements_and_CMAQ.asp). Accessed August 3, 2011.



**Eligible Uses:** Ferry operations, transportation operations, transit operations, transit capital expenses, clean fuel conversion equipment, and signal coordination.

**Application Window:** Projects are evaluated every four years during the TIP update cycle.

**Recent Funding History:** Recent funding levels are shown in the table below (in millions of dollars).

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
CMAQ	\$7.8	\$11.0	\$8.6	\$5.2	\$10.8

## Safe Routes to School<sup>46</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Statewide Planning Program and Rhode Island Department of Transportation, working with other state and community entities such as the Rhode Island Department of Health and Rhode Island Department of Education, local municipalities, and school systems.

**Program Description:** Safe Routes to School reimburses for a wide variety of infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects and activities to encourage walking and bicycling to elementary and middle schools (grades K-8). Projects are scored by the Safe Routes to School Steering Committee, and selected projects are included as part of the TIP.

**Eligible Applicants:** Only elementary and middle schools are eligible. Applications must include a school or school district and city or town. They can also include a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. If the applicant is a nonprofit, the application must be in partnership with a school and a city or town and be part of a comprehensive program for a particular school.

**Eligible Uses:** Infrastructure projects that will substantially improve the ability of students to walk and bicycle to school (e.g., installing traffic control devices and building or repairing crosswalks and sidewalks). Non-infrastructure programs and activities to encourage walking and bicycling to school (e.g., traffic enforcement, "walking school buses," walking clubs, and bike rodeos).

**Application Window:** Future awards depend on federal funding availability.

**Recent Funding History:** In the first round of awards in 2007, over \$1.9 million was distributed.<sup>47</sup> Approximately \$2 million was made available in the 2009-2010 round of funding.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program. "Rhode Island Safe Routes to School." <http://www.planning.ri.gov/transportation/srts/srts.htm>. Accessed August 3, 2011.

<sup>47</sup> Rhode Island Division of Planning and Rhode Island Department of Transportation. "Rhode Island Awards Safe Routes to School Program Funding." Press release. 2007. <http://www.planning.ri.gov/transportation/srts/srtsaward.pdf>.

<sup>48</sup> Rhode Island Division of Planning and Rhode Island Department of Transportation. "\$2 Million in Funding Awarded for Safe Routes to School Projects." Press release. October 6, 2010. <http://www.planning.ri.gov/transportation/srts/Press%20Release%202010%20Awards.pdf>.

## Transportation Enhancements<sup>49</sup>

**Administering Agency or Organization:** Rhode Island Department of Transportation.

**Program Description:** The Transportation Enhancement program was created to fund transportation-related activities that are designed to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of the nation's intermodal transportation system. It has funded a variety of projects, including establishing bike paths, restoring historic sites, installing landscaping, controlling outdoor advertising, mitigating highway runoff, and providing wildlife connectivity. Although these are not traditional transportation projects, they must show a relationship to the transportation system. Projects are evaluated by the Transportation Enhancement Advisory Committee and are included as part of the TIP.

**Eligible Applicants:** State agencies, cities and towns, and nonprofit organizations.

**Eligible Uses:**

- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- Safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites.
- Scenic or historic highway programs, including tourist and welcome center activities.
- Landscape and scenic beautification.
- Historic preservation.
- Rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures, or facilities.
- Preservation of abandoned railway corridors.
- Control and removal of outdoor advertising.
- Archaeological planning and research.
- Environmental mitigation to address water pollution due to highway runoff or to reduce vehicle wildlife mortality while maintaining habitat connectivity.
- Surface transportation museums.

**Application Window:** Projects are evaluated every four years during the TIP update cycle.

**Recent Funding History:** Recent funding levels are shown in the table below (in millions of dollars).

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Transportation Enhancements	\$4.2	\$3.7	\$4.6	\$3.4	\$4.2

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<sup>49</sup> Rhode Island Department of Transportation. "Transportation Enhancement and CMAQ Programs." [http://www.dot.ri.gov/intermod/Enhancements\\_and\\_CMAQ.asp](http://www.dot.ri.gov/intermod/Enhancements_and_CMAQ.asp). Accessed August 3, 2011.

## Appendix A: Possible Future Federal Funding Sources

The table below summarizes potential new federal funding sources that might provide financial assistance to KeepSpace projects in the future. Since they are intended to be place-based and coordinated among the three federal agencies participating in the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, these resources could be well-aligned for coordination with state-adopted project selection criteria. These proposed funding sources were included in either the Obama Administration's FY 2012 budget proposal or its reauthorization proposal for federal highway and transit programs. This list was prepared after the release of the President's FY 2012 budget request in February 2011 but prior to any subsequent appropriations actions by Congress.

### Possible Future Federal Funding Sources

Program	Description	Proposed FY 2012 Funding
<b>EPA</b>		
Healthy Communities Initiative	Multidisciplinary initiative to help states and communities promote healthier school environments by increasing technical support and outreach and co-leading federal interagency coordination and integration efforts. It also provides resources to address air toxics in at-risk communities and to support joint DOT-HUD-EPA outreach and technical assistance efforts to encourage and facilitate sustainable communities.	\$19.8 million
<b>DOT</b>		
National Infrastructure Investments Grants	A grant program similar to the Department of Transportation's Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary Grant program for states, local governments, and transit agencies to use on capital investments for surface transportation infrastructure, including roads, highways, public transportation facilities, freight, passenger rail, and port infrastructure.	\$2 billion
Livable Communities Program	One of five proposed new core highway programs with both formula and competitive grants. Three-component program to fund formula and competitive grant programs to establish place-based planning, policies, and investments to help communities increase transportation choices and access to transportation services.	\$4.1 billion
	Component One: Livable Communities Program – Formula-based grant program to enable recipients to deliver transportation projects for rural and urban areas that benefit quality of life. This program will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help states deliver transportation projects that improve quality of life in rural and urban areas.</li> <li>• Improve the safety and efficiency of the surface transportation system.</li> <li>• Reduce the impacts of transportation on the environment, including the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.</li> <li>• Reduce the need for costly future transportation infrastructure.</li> <li>• Ensure efficient access to jobs, education, and essential services.</li> <li>• Encourage private-sector development patterns and investments that support livability goals.</li> </ul>	\$3.4 billion (included in \$4.1 billion figure above)

Program	Description	Proposed FY 2012 Funding
	<p>Component Two: Investments for Livable Communities Grant Program – Discretionary grant program to promote innovative, multimodal, and multijurisdictional highway projects that promise significant environmental and economic benefits to a metropolitan area, a region, or the nation. Eligible costs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development phase activities (planning, feasibility analysis, revenue forecasting, environmental review, preliminary engineering and design work, and other preconstruction activities).</li> <li>• Construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, acquisition of real property (including land related to the project and improvements to land), environmental mitigation, construction contingencies, acquisition of equipment directly related to improving system performance, and operational improvements.</li> <li>• Certain financing costs.</li> </ul>	\$500 million (included in \$4.1 billion figure above)
	<p>Component Three: Discretionary grant program to help states, localities, and metropolitan areas engage in more robust regional transportation planning to advance the state of the practice on key technical aspects such as transportation-related data collection, modeling, livability surface transportation planning, and performance measurement. This grant would allow applicants to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve data collection through various mechanisms (surveys, inventories, travel data, etc.).</li> <li>• Provide staff training.</li> <li>• Furnish software and computer upgrades.</li> <li>• Guide institutional reorganization.</li> <li>• Assist a transportation authority to develop integrated transportation, land use, housing, and environmental planning efforts or to carry out a comprehensive plan supported by the community.</li> <li>• Develop and implement transportation modeling, simulation, and analysis capabilities.</li> </ul>	\$200 million (included in \$4.1 billion figure above)
FTA Transit Expansion and Livable Communities Program	Includes three discretionary grant programs dedicated to expanding transit services and a planning and demonstration grant program to promote places where transportation, housing, and commercial development projects have been coordinated so that people have access to adequate, affordable, and environmentally sustainable travel options.	\$3.5 billion
	Capital Investment Grant program – Discretionary grant program to provide funding to accelerate the development and financing of critically needed projects to expand transportation options in several communities. These funds would be the federal government's primary source for capital investment in new (or expansions to) transit infrastructure that is planned, constructed, and operated by state and local government entities. These projects include heavy rail, light rail, commuter rail, bus rapid transit, and streetcar systems in communities across the country. The president's FY 2012 Budget includes funding for 28 capital investment grant projects.	\$3.2 billion (included in \$3.5 billion figure above)

Program	Description	Proposed FY 2012 Funding
	Metropolitan and Statewide Planning – An existing program that proposes reforming local, regional, and state planning to make better use of performance data, improving coordination among jurisdictions, and incorporating economic and housing plans into the transportation plan.	\$140 million (included in \$3.5 billion figure above)
	Livability Demonstration Grant program – A program to fund selected projects to test different design and conceptual approaches to promoting livability in urban, rural, and tribal communities nationwide, allowing FTA to evaluate and compare their relative effectiveness.	\$50 million (included in \$3.5 billion figure above)
<b>HUD</b>		
Challenge Planning Grants	Supports local efforts to reduce regulatory barriers that allow builders and developers to meet the market demand for more sustainable communities and greater housing choice for more families. Supports development of affordable housing through the development and adoption of inclusionary zoning ordinances and other activities such as acquisition of land for affordable housing projects.	\$40 million
Regional Planning Grants	<p>Stimulates integrated regional planning to guide state, metropolitan, and local investments in economic development, housing, and transportation in a manner that empowers jurisdictions to consider the interdependent challenges of economic competitiveness and revitalization; social equity, inclusion, and access to opportunity; energy use and climate change; and public health and environmental impacts. The program places a priority on partnerships, including non-traditional partnerships that bring new voices, such as arts and culture and philanthropy, to the regional planning process. Grants would be awarded competitively to multi-jurisdictional and multi-sector partnerships as well as regional consortia consisting of state and local governments, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, and philanthropic organizations. There are two categories of funding (described below).</p> <p>Category 1 – Funds can be used to support the preparation of Regional Plans for Sustainable Development.</p> <p>Category 2 – Funds can be used to support efforts to fine-tune existing regional plans so that they address the Partnership for Sustainable Communities' Livability Principles, to prepare more detailed execution plans for an adopted Regional Plan for Sustainable Development, and limited pre-development planning activities for catalytic projects.</p>	\$100 million – of this, \$2 million to be reserved for capacity support grants distributed separately, and not less than \$25 million to be awarded to regions with populations of less than 500,000

