

The 2021 APA-RI Award winners have been chosen!

Every year, we honor all the great planning work accomplished throughout Rhode Island in the past year. Thanks to everyone who nominated one or more favorite local projects, people, or spaces.

The winners are:

Award for Excellent Plan: City of Newport, [Newport North End Urban Plan](#)

Awardees: Newport Planning Board, Kim Salerno Chair; Patricia Reynolds, Director, Planning and Economic Development; Peter Friedrichs, City Planner.

Newport's North End is poised for transformation: the reconstruction of the Pell Bridge approaches will remove large amounts of obsolete expressway infrastructure, freeing up land for new development; meanwhile, there is increased interest in redevelopment of the 25-acre former jai alai facility. These two major projects create over fifty acres of new development area for innovative, blue economy uses, envisioned together with supportive uses such as workforce housing, neighborhood retail and publicly accessible open space. The North End Urban Plan (NEUP) seeks to make that connection to achieve these benefits.

Award for Excellent Transportation Plan: [Transit Forward RI 2040](#).

Awardees: Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA); Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT); Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning; and Sarah Ingle, Director of Long-Range Planning, RIPTA.

The state's first-ever transit master plan, known as Transit Forward RI 2040, is a bold and ambitious plan which recognizes the relationship between the strength of Rhode Island's transit network and its

economic health and quality of life. The transit service improvements and capital investments recommended over the next twenty years are designed to enhance mobility, help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, encourage active transportation, support economic development, and make Rhode Island a better place to live, work, and play.

Award for Excellence in Plan Implementation: [Great Streets Initiative and Urban Trail Master Plan](#), City of Providence.

Awardee: Martina Haggerty, Director of Special Projects, City of Providence.

Following a year-long, robust community engagement process, the Great Streets plan established a framework for public space improvements to ensure that every street in Providence is safe, equitable and sustainable. These improvements include streetscape and placemaking projects, safety improvements to make streets and intersections safer for people walking and riding bicycles, traffic calming to reduce speeding and cut through traffic, and the creation of a 75-mile “spine” network of urban trails that connect every Providence neighborhood. The completion of the South Water Street Urban Bike Trail Project is the latest and most visible example of implementing the City’s plan.

“Propose Your Own Category” Award: [Market to Metacom: Adaptation and Economic Development Plan](#).

Awardees: Town of Warren, Fuss & O’Neill, and Union Studio Architecture and Community Design.

Through the Market to Metacom Plan, the Town of Warren has developed a bold approach to shift threatened housing and businesses in the Market Street area to a redeveloped, revitalized Metacom Avenue neighborhood. The new neighborhood will be resilient and sustainable, with walkable and mixed-use blocks of

buildings and public spaces and has green infrastructure incorporated into the streetscape that promotes this redevelopment. This market-based repurposing of the Metacom Avenue corridor as active mixed-use areas can, through sound planning and design, enhance stormwater treatment and help mitigate local climate change impacts.

Award for Current Topic- Equity Planning: Kennedy Plaza Multi-Hub Plan Opposition Group.

Awardee: The Kennedy Plaza Resilience Coalition.

The Coalition is an informal affiliation of community organizations and individuals who have led various efforts in opposition to the proposed multi-hub bus plan that calls for the current main bus hub in Kennedy Plaza to be dismantled; in its place, a series of smaller bus hubs throughout downtown Providence would be constructed. The Coalition objected to the proposal for several reasons, including lack of public engagement among those who use the RIPTA public transit system and the identified harmful impacts that those who use the public transit system would experience if the multi-hub plan were to be implemented. The Coalition's efforts have resulted in the delay of RIDOT moving forward with the plan and the promise from RIDOT to hold a public engagement process.

Student Award: [*Reconnecting the Blackstone and The City.*](#)

Awardees: 2020 University of Rhode Senior Landscape Island Architecture class; Will Green, URI Department of Landscape Architecture Studio Director.

This project was a partnership between the City of Woonsocket's Planning Department and the University of Rhode Island's Landscape Architecture Design Studio class. The class envisioned new connections between Woonsocket's downtown and its parks along

the river, including parks and vacant lands along the Blackstone. The student's plan calls for greater access to the river, an improved bike trail, green infrastructure to address runoff and water quality issues, safer circulation for pedestrians and bicyclists, and improved opportunities for mixed use development.

Dan Varin Memorial Leadership Award: M. James Riordan, AICP, Past-President of APA-RI.

This award is given to a professional planner, elected official, citizen planner, or organization for sustained contributions to the profession through distinguished practice, teaching or writing, or whose efforts have contributed to elevating planning principles, creating greater awareness of the value of planning, and improving quality of life in one or more communities. Jim is a tremendous servant leader of APA-RI. Most notably, he is the first person to be elected to a six-year term as the Chapter's President-Elect, President, and Past President, leading the creation of a first-ever succession plan for the Chapter and serving as a link to National APA's Division's Committee, among many other duties. APA-RI is a better, stronger, and more effective organization because of his work and commitment.

President's Award: Jane Weidman, AICP, Charlestown Town Planner and Maria Mack, South Kingstown Planning Board Chair.

This award is given to one or more APA-RI members who have made a substantial contribution to the development and objectives of the Chapter and is made annually by the APA-RI Chapter President. Jane and Maria have served as the Chapter's Legislative Committee Chair and Co-Chair, respectively, for several years. They have been instrumental in activating and expanding membership of the

committee, establishing principles for when and how APA-RI responds to and advocates for specific legislation and legislative policies, elevating the profile and respect of APA-RI among local elected officials, and coordinating the tracking of and testifying on proposed legislation. In addition, they have been leaders in the creation and monitoring of the State's new Land Use Commission. Their tireless work ensures that the priorities and perspectives of the planning community in Rhode Island are heard.