January 15, 2020

Honorable members of Rhode Island General Assembly,

As President of the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA-RI), I would like to offer an introduction to our organization. We are devoted to serving our respective communities and the State with good planning in the public interest, and aspire to a common goal of creating open, vibrant communities of lasting value.

APA-RI members are community planners and allied professionals, elected and appointed local planning officials, educators, students, and engaged citizens who are committed to supporting strong, vital, and sustainable communities. Our diverse membership serves the 39 cities and towns in Rhode Island and represents a broad range of issues around comprehensive planning & land use, zoning & subdivision regulations, economic development, housing, energy & the environment, and transportation. Meaningful and effective planning creates stronger and more just communities through access to opportunities, strategic investments in innovation, and broadly shared prosperity.

Our organization is supportive of enforceable policies, including legislation, that follow these core principles:

- Respect and understanding of self-governance (i.e., home rule) while acknowledging that some issues require State standards, enabling authority, guidance, and assistance.
- Local regulatory environments that are consistent with the State Guide Plan (SGP), supporting a long-term vision, in particular with the land use element of the SGP, Land Use 2025.
- Provide financial and technical support when policies require municipal action.
- Support for a holistic approach to legislation and policy, with deliberate consideration of context, consequences, and collateral issues. This approach acknowledges the need for an appropriate balance among competing land uses.
- An efficient, equitable planning process that is responsive to the needs of the public.
- Policy or legislation that is consistent with existing law and demonstrates technical accuracy supported by proper research, public participation, and a balancing of local and State interests.

I welcome the opportunity to meet with you along with my fellow APA-RI members to discuss legislation and policy goals for this legislative session and the longer term.

Sincerely,

Jeff C. Davis, AICP
President
jeffreycdavis@yahoo.com
401-272-1717