

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

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SECTION ONE: WHY PRESERVE HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND AREAS?

Over the last forty years Rhode Islanders have made a significant investment of time, effort, and money in the preservation of historic buildings, areas, and archeological sites. Individual property owners have purchased and restored historic houses. Investors in commercial properties have renovated and updated older buildings in our downtowns and industrial properties located throughout the state. State and federal agencies have rehabilitated historic buildings, both large and small, so that they continue to serve the people of Rhode Island. Local communities have developed their own preservation programs and spent scarce dollars on the restoration of important community-owned historic buildings. Colleges and universities have restored some of their important historic buildings; several have developed programs for teaching about archeology and the preservation of historic resources. Religious congregations have supported important restorations of their historic houses of worship. Thousands of Rhode Islanders have toured historic buildings and areas in their own communities, have joined organizations that promote historic preservation, and have voted for bond issues which support historic preservation.

Why?

Rhode Islanders' interest in historic preservation and their commitment to its support stems from the belief that the quality of our environment has a direct impact on the quality of each individual's life—and our environment includes the buildings we live and work in, the roads and bridges we travel, the farms, villages, cities and suburbs which form the texture of our daily lives. Just as we work to insure that our natural environment is conserved, that the quality of our air and water is protected, we also work to insure that the best elements of our man-made environment are protected.

Well preserved physical elements from our past—our historic buildings and areas—have important value for the future of Rhode Island, value which we can realize by planning to keep those important resources.

What kinds of value are there in historic buildings and areas? Part of their value will put dollars in the pockets of Rhode Islanders and part of their value will be gained in improving the quality of life for all of us. If we plan for their future with care and an appreciation of their value, historic buildings and areas will produce an important dividend for the investment Rhode Islanders make in their preservation.

1. The value of historic buildings and areas

Use Value

Most historic buildings can be used for the same purpose they were built. Historic houses have value as dwellings, historic factories can be used for manufacturing, older commercial buildings can still market goods and services. Most of the state's historic buildings are used for their original purpose, and they serve those purposes well. Where historic buildings have outlived their original use, they can be converted to new uses.

Tourism

Thousands of tourists come to Rhode Island every year—tourism is an important economic generator for the state. Many of those who visit Rhode Island choose our state as a destination because of its special historic and visual character. Travelers seeking cultural and historic attractions drive half of the state's \$1.2 billion annual tourist industry. They come to visit our historic cities, small towns, and countryside, our museums, parks, and golf courses, and to participate in special events that take place in historic areas. They spend money at hotels, restaurants, and retail shops; they create jobs and generate tax revenues.

Community Character

Everyone who lives in Rhode Island lives in an old town or city—even as political jurisdictions, our newest communities are still almost a century old; many have a history of settlement which reaches back three centuries and more. The towns and cities we live in are the product of numerous decisions made by those who lived here in the past—where to live, how to build, how to work, educate children, worship, and travel. When we answer similar questions for our families and ourselves, our decisions are made in the context of the past.

Historic buildings and areas give shape and substance to the communities we live in. The patterns of development that characterize the historic areas of our towns and cities are the patterns with which we still live. And, for the most part, these patterns have made communities which are human-scale, humane, pleasant, and various. While this value may be difficult to quantify, it is very real.

Even by quantifiable standards, the preservation of historic buildings and areas to save community character is important. Much of Rhode Island's beauty and desirability as a place to live and work depends on its historic buildings and areas.

Growth Management

The preservation of historic buildings and areas can assist Rhode Islanders in managing the future growth of their communities. Historic patterns of development in each community and throughout the state can provide a model for the future.

The concentrations of development that characterize the state's towns and cities, the ebb and flow of built-up areas and open space, have value as a guide for the future of each community. When existing building patterns are treated as the base from which further development takes place, there is much to be gained. The preservation of older neighborhoods is a smaller strain on the community's resources than new development, since the infrastructure of community services is already in place and need not be created anew. And using our old buildings instead of creating new ones saves our diminishing open space.

Educational Value

Some historic buildings are used directly in the educational process. The state's historical societies, preservation societies, colleges and universities, towns and cities, and patriotic organizations own many of Rhode Island's most significant historic buildings. Many are open to the public and are regularly used as an important part of school curricula. Students visit these historic buildings and study the buildings themselves, their collections, and the lives of the people who used the buildings in the past. As archeological sites are excavated, experts learn more about the past and improve our understanding of the generations which preceded us.

Apart from such direct educational value, there is a broader and even more common value in living and working among historic buildings and areas. The well preserved evidence of the past which surrounds all Rhode Islanders gives each resident and the state as a whole a sense of location in time and space. We are surrounded by the places made by people who lived here before us—their homes, churches, factories, stores—and this helps to give each of us a sense of existing along a continuous line of human occupation. We live in the midst of an important legacy to which we can add before it is handed on to the next generation.

2. Preservation principles

Like all plans, this one draws on basic principles about the best ways to achieve the goals outlined in the plan. Among these principles are:

1—The preservation of historic buildings and areas is a fundamental public interest, a proper and desirable exercise of the state's authority and leadership and the legitimate concern of its communities and its citizens.

2—The preservation of historic buildings and areas is not antithetical to progress or growth or good economic development but has been proven to add significantly to Rhode Island's economy.

3—Historic buildings and areas are best preserved by using them, either for their original purpose or by adapting them for a new use.

4—The preservation of historic buildings and areas is best achieved when it is integrated into public planning processes rather than when it takes place in opposition to those processes.

SECTION TWO: THE CONTEXT FOR PRESERVATION

1. Rhode Island's land and waterways

Rhode Island is the nation's smallest state, only 1214 square miles, and is located in the southernmost tier of New England. The land areas of Rhode Island surround Narragansett Bay, a long narrow estuary oriented north-south and reaching into the land mass of Rhode Island some 30 miles. Narragansett Bay is the dominant geographic feature of both the eastern half of the state and the low-lying coastal strip of the western half. West of Narragansett Bay, the state's land rises gradually into the low gentle hills of the west and northwest. The state's highest point at Jerimoth Hill is only 800 feet. The coastline of Rhode Island (including the bay, its islands, and the southern shore) is over 400 miles long—it has been an overridingly important feature of the state's historical development and will continue to be an important part of its future development.

At the head of Narragansett Bay is the city of Providence, its harbor set at the confluence of the three rivers which drain the northern section of the state. Providence is the state's capital and its industrial, educational, and cultural center. North of Providence to the state's border with Massachusetts are the cities and towns of the Blackstone Valley. Once characterized by hardscrabble farms and later by the development of industry in village centers along the river, the valley's older cities and agricultural matrix are now overlain by suburban development.

On the west side of Narragansett Bay a series of coastal settlements centered on small ports stretches from Providence to Narragansett, again overlain by suburban development. The state's second major river, the Pawtuxet, was (like the Blackstone) the scene of industrial settlements strung along the valley's length.

The western areas of Rhode Island along the border with Connecticut are still the state's most rural regions. Gentle hills, woods, small streams, lakes and ponds characterize this most sparsely settled region of the state. The largest water body here is the Scituate Reservoir which provides water to large sections of the state.

The southern shore of Rhode Island fronts on the Atlantic Ocean and is separated from it by barrier beaches. The southernmost reach of the state's lands is a flat moraine; just north of the moraine are the broad outwash plains of South County. The state's best soils are located here, and this has always been an important agricultural area. The land of this region is interlaced with wetlands and is drained by the Wood-Pawcatuck River.

Narragansett Bay is framed on the east by a series of long peninsulas whose indented coasts contain small ports at Bristol and Warren. The bay itself is dominated by a series of islands both large and small. The most important is Aquidneck Island, home to the city of Newport, once a major port, later a large military installation, now a major tourist attraction. Conanicut Island is a long narrow stretch of land, oriented north-south in the middle of the bay. Most of the other islands are not inhabited, though many have been

fortified in the past to protect the bay. Block Island, located south of Narragansett Bay in Long Island Sound, is an important resort area.

2. The people of Rhode Island

Rhode Island's population is growing slowly. In 2001, 1,058,920 people lived in this state, an increase from 1990 of about 4.5%. The increase was small by national standards and represents a slowing of the rate of growth in the previous decade.

Rhode Island is a very densely populated state, over 900 people per square mile. This average masks the very uneven distribution of the state's population. The greatest concentrations of Rhode Islanders are in the older core cities of Providence, Pawtucket, and Woonsocket and in the early suburban areas, especially Warwick and Cranston. Rhode Island's population is growing most quickly in its smallest towns, such as Charlestown, New Shoreham, and Richmond. This pattern is likely to continue as South County and the western hill towns continue to exhibit an expanding population.

About 85% of Rhode Islanders are Caucasian; about 4.5% are African-Americans; about .5% are Native Americans. Rhode Islanders are diverse in their national ancestries, a legacy of the successive waves of immigrants who have historically made the state their home and new immigrant groups who continue to settle here; the state has large groups of people whose ancestral origins are in Ireland, Italy, France and French Canada, England, Portugal, Germany, Poland, and southeast Asian nations, such as Viet Nam and Cambodia. And an increasing number of Rhode Islanders can claim Hispanic origins, as immigration from South American and Caribbean locations becomes an important pattern. A further legacy of immigration to Rhode Island is the historic importance of the Catholic churches--half of all Rhode Islanders claim an affiliation with the church.

Rhode Islanders are on average somewhat older than Americans in general. In 2000, 14.5% of the population was 65 and older; this group of Rhode Islanders is likely to increase in size in the next ten years. On average, Rhode Islanders are neither poorer nor richer than Americans as a whole; their per capita income is roughly equal to the national figure, though there are disparities among communities.

A little more than half of all Rhode Islanders own their own homes, though there are differences among communities. In Barrington, 9 out of 10 residents live in houses they own; in Providence about 4 out of 10; in Central Falls about 2 out of 10.

Historically, large numbers of Rhode Islanders have made their living in manufacturing. The state was one of the earliest and most intensively industrialized. Since the early twentieth century, manufacturing has been a stagnating rather than expanding component of the economy. Many Rhode Islanders still work in the manufacture of goods (especially metals, machinery, jewelry, textiles, and chemicals), but three to four times as many Rhode Islanders make their living in non-manufacturing sectors such as service industries, trade, construction, financial industries (as the state has

become a regional banking center), transportation, and public service. Once located almost exclusively in urban or riverfront sites, Rhode Island's industry has become in the last four decades far more suburbanized as many towns have developed industrial parks to attract manufacturers.

Few Rhode Islanders farm for a living, but these farmers have a disproportionate impact on the state's landscape. Nursery stock, fuelwood, and turf are the state's principal agricultural products; there are some dairy farms, orchards, apiaries, and truck farms. The principal field crop is potatoes. A small commercial fishing fleet still operates; most boats put in at Point Judith.

Commercial centers in Rhode Island have traditionally been located in the downtowns of older core cities, such as Providence, Pawtucket, and Woonsocket. In the last few decades, commerce has become more suburbanized as major shopping malls have been constructed in suburban areas and in Massachusetts near the border with Rhode Island, as well near downtown Providence.

Rhode Islanders employ an elaborate transportation system which has an important impact on planning for the future. Major highways and bridges connect all areas of the state. Interstate highway 95 is the major north-south route for automobiles, passing from the southwest section of the state through Providence and into Massachusetts. It is roughly paralleled in its southern reach by US-1. Interstate highway 195 is a major east-west route, moving traffic from eastern Massachusetts into Providence; its extension through western Rhode Island into Connecticut is US-6. Route 138 carries east-west traffic across southern Rhode Island from Newport, across the bay, and across South County. Interstate highway 295 serves as a ring road around Providence. This system of roads assures that daily commuting between any two points in the state is possible and that transportation constraints on the outer limits of residential development have been virtually removed.

Railroad passenger and freight service connects Rhode Islanders and their goods to out-of-state destinations via AMTRAK, the MBTA, and the Providence and Worcester Railroad. The major passenger stops are in Providence and Kingston. The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority provides commuter bus service; a private carrier provides interstate bus service from a terminal in Providence. Air service is located at the state's Green Airport in Warwick and at several smaller state airports.

Rhode Island's ports, once a key to the state's industrial development, no longer dominate the transport network. The great port of Providence is moribund; it now ships only a small fraction of the goods that once passed through, mainly petroleum, automobiles and scrap metal. The state's smaller ports--Newport, East Greenwich, Pawtuxet, Bristol, Wickford--have become yacht harbors.

Rhode Island has a variety of educational institutions that have an important impact on its future. The state's university is located in rural South County and is a major employer and development determinant in that region. Rhode Island College is located in

Providence. The two branches of the state's community college are located on suburban campuses in Lincoln and Warwick. The state also operates a system of vocational-technical schools. Elementary and secondary education are carried out by local school districts; a parallel system of religious schools educates about 10% of the state's pupils. Major private colleges and universities are located in Providence, Bristol, Smithfield, and Newport. These institutions have important roles in preservation, especially as property owners.

3. Making public policy decisions about preservation in Rhode Island

Rhode Island's lawmaking body is the bi-cameral General Assembly. State senators and representatives are elected from districts created for this purpose. Rhode Islanders elect five general officers, chief among them the governor who is the state government's executive officer.

State government is divided by function and area of concern into departments managed by directors who are appointed by the governor. Many of these state departments have important roles in preservation planning, both directly as property owners and as funding or licensing agencies for others' actions.

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission is the state's agency for historic preservation. The RIHP&HC operates both federal and state programs related to historic preservation and reviews actions by federal and state agencies which may have an impact on historic resources. The RIHP&HC operates Eisenhower House in Newport and also has responsibilities for heritage programming not directly related to historical preservation.

Every state agency has the potential to play an important role in preservation decision-making, but four agencies are consistently involved in preservation decisions: 1) the Division of Planning in the Department of Administration (which serves as the staff for the State Planning Council; administers the Intergovernmental Review Process; and assists communities in meeting their obligations for comprehensive planning); 2) the Department of Environmental Management (which is the steward for many of Rhode Island's most important historic sites, buildings, and landscapes; is the funding source for the state's programs for public parks and open space; and is the principal planning agency in the state for all issues associated with outdoor recreation); 3) the Department of Transportation (which administers the federal transportation enhancements program and whose responsibilities for road work and transportation planning have impacts on historic resources); 4) Rhode Island Housing (which operates programs to promote the creation of housing and to support home-ownership among Rhode Islanders); and 5) the Coastal Resources Management Council (which regulates development in the coastal zone.)

The land area of the state is divided into 39 cities and towns. A single Native American tribe is federally recognized—the Narragansett Indian Tribe. Other tribal groups also live here. Rhode Island is divided into 5 counties, but this is an administrative

device only; only the court system is organized by county; there is no unincorporated land in Rhode Island.

The forms of local government vary among Rhode Island communities. In general, cities have a mayor as the executive and a council which serves as the legislative body. In eight smaller towns, the executive and legislative functions are combined in a council. About two-thirds of the towns have a manger/administrator.

Among their several functions Rhode Island communities are required to plan for their future development. State statute mandates that each community prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan which outlines the intent of its citizens and government; among the prescribed elements of the comprehensive plan is a requirement that each community must address its program for the protection of historic resources. Many Rhode Island communities have professional planning staffs.

Actions of city and town government which may have an impact on historic resources may be reviewed by the RIHP&HC. State statute allows Rhode Island communities to zone for historic resources and to require the review of a local historic district commission before alterations or demolitions take place on historic resources. About one-third of Rhode Island's communities use this mechanism.

Historically, governmental functions have not usually been regionalized in Rhode Island. This is changing; several significant initiatives, including the creation of the Washington County Planning Council, the South County Greenspace Project, the Aquidneck Island Planning Council, the Aquidneck Island Partnership, and the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, suggest that regional planning efforts may be more important in the future than they have been.

4. Preservation partners

There are more than 100 historical and preservation organizations in Rhode Island with an estimated total membership of 25,000. Many of these organizations are effective local advocates for historic preservation; they make use of information and technical assistance from the RIHP&HC and in turn distribute that information through their programs.

Among historical and preservation organizations are a handful characterized by professional staffs, substantial property ownership, and sophisticated programming, such as the Rhode Island Historical Society, the Newport Historical Society, the Providence Preservation Society, the Preservation Society of Newport County, and Preserve Rhode Island. The greater number of historical and preservation organizations are small associations, administered by volunteers, often devoted to the history and artifacts associated with a single community, and sometimes serving as stewards and interpreters of an important property in their town. Some of the state's larger communities have specialized preservation organizations as well, such as the PPS Revolving Fund which

provides loans and technical assistance to development projects. Several community development corporations are located in the state's urban centers; they support and carry out affordable housing development projects in target neighborhoods.

Historical preservation as an academic discipline is taught at Roger Williams University and at Salve Regina University.

SECTION THREE: PRESERVATION IN RHODE ISLAND--THE PAST

Rhode Islanders have a long history of working for the protection and enhancement of their historic buildings and sites. Beginning with sporadic efforts in the nineteenth century to keep buildings associated with the generations which settled Rhode Island and achieved its independence, into the twentieth century when Rhode Islanders developed a systematic approach to the identification and support of their historic resources, the state has a long tradition of affection and support for its special treasures.

The Rhode Island Historical Society, founded in 1822, was an early leader in preservation efforts, encouraging the repair and restoration of Whitehall in Middletown, for example, and commissioning drawings of buildings that could not be saved. Some important archeological sites were identified and studied by Rhode Islanders, including the Native American soapstone quarry in Johnston and the home site and burial site of Roger Williams.

In the years following the nation's centennial celebration in 1876, preservation activities quickened. Late nineteenth-century architects used early buildings as inspiration for their new designs. Publication of historical documents and treatises on early buildings increased in number and level of scholarship. Historical and patriotic societies acquired historic buildings to use as their headquarters, beginning the state's long tradition of saving buildings by purchase. Usually these were buildings associated with an important person or event, often related to the War for Independence.

In the early twentieth century these traditions continued. The State of Rhode Island acquired the Providence home of Stephen Hopkins, one the state's signers of the Declaration of Independence. Many historical societies similarly acquired houses associated with early families and worked to restore them as educational and social centers. The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities acquired and restored the Eleazer Arnold House in Lincoln, for example, and an association was created to acquire and preserve the Coventry home of General Nathanael Greene. In addition, groups were created to preserve other aspects of the state's history, such as the Wickford Main Street Association and the Old Slater Mill Association.

In the first half of the twentieth century, the architectural profession developed increasing sophistication and expertise in restoration; in a series of restorations of significant buildings architects such as Norman Isham developed the ideals which still guide preservation architects today: scrupulous documentation through drawing and photography, careful analysis of change, the retention of architectural elements from more than a single period.

Until the middle of the twentieth century, historic preservation remained largely the province of private individuals and groups. Their achievements had been substantial, and the results of their efforts are still with us today—restored buildings saved by these preservationists grace many communities. Buildings such as the Vernon House in Newport, the Gilbert Stuart House and Mill in North Kingstown, the Varnum House in

East Greenwich, Shakespeare's Head in Providence, and the John Brown House in Providence testify to the presence in Rhode Island of their original owners and proprietors, but also document the important efforts of the state's preservationists in the developing decades of Rhode Island's preservation movement.

In the mid-twentieth century, the federal government took some tentative steps toward involvement in the preservation of historic buildings and areas. In 1935 the Historic Sites Act established preservation of historic sites and buildings as a national policy. The act allowed for the designation of National Historic Landmarks, a highly selective listing of places which have value for the nation. The first Rhode Island National Historic Landmark was not designated until the mid-1940s; twenty years later, eleven had been named. Landmark designation has great prestige because the program is so selective, but the designation did not include any protective mechanism or financial assistance.

For the most part, however, historic preservation during the post-World War II decades remained a private enterprise. The Preservation Society of Newport County, formed in 1946, began to develop its nationally important program of house museum ownership—the society owns and interprets architecturally significant properties from several periods of the city's history. Other Newport organizations formed in the 1950s and 1960s (such as The Point Association, Operation Clapboard, Oldport Association, and the Historic Hill Association) promote the preservation of smaller houses and whole streets and neighborhoods. The Newport Restoration Foundation instituted a program in the 1960s to acquire, renovate, and lease dozens of Newport's early houses.

In Providence, the Providence Preservation Society was created in 1956 as a response to the growth of Brown University and the demolition of several blocks of early houses on College Hill. The society was a leader in the City Plan Commission's study of College Hill in the mid-1950s, and the report which they produced was the turning point for historic preservation in Rhode Island.

The report recommended a full-scale preservation program for College Hill: restoration programs, a new national park, educational programming, an historic trail, and protective municipal legislation—a program which in the decades since its proposal has largely been achieved. The Providence Preservation Society has expanded its interests over time to include the protection of all of the city's historic neighborhoods.

In other areas of Rhode Island, the 1950s, 60s, and 70s saw the creation and development of private societies to work toward the preservation of historic buildings and areas in most of Rhode Island's cities and towns. Many of these societies own and have restored buildings that are important in their community's history.

The major commitment of the federal and state governments dates from the 1950s, when the state Department of Economic Development created an initial inventory of some of Rhode Island's historic sites and buildings. In 1956, the state chartered the private Heritage Foundation of Rhode Island. Now called Preserve Rhode Island, the

organization owns several important properties and works to promote historic preservation throughout the state.

In 1959 the General Assembly passed the first truly effective preservation legislation for the state—historic district zoning. Rhode Island cities and towns were allowed to pass special ordinances to protect their historic buildings and areas and to create municipal commissions which would review some of the changes proposed for historic buildings. About a third of Rhode Island's communities now have such historic district zoning.

In 1966, Congress passed the National Historic Preservation Act and began the creation of a broad federal program for preservation. The act established the National Register of Historic Places (a list of buildings, sites, districts, and objects worthy of preservation), set up a process of review of all federally funded projects which might have an impact on registered properties, and provided funding to assist states in establishing preservation programs based on comprehensive surveys of historic resources.

Rhode Island began participation in the federal program two years later—the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission was established in 1968. The commission began almost immediately to survey the state's historic and archeological resources, to nominate properties to the National Register of Historic Places, to administer federal grants-in-aid, and to plan for the preservation of worthy resources.

In the years since its creation, the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission has surveyed every community in the state and has published over 50 reports on their historic buildings and neighborhoods. Fifteen thousand properties have been added to the National Register. Federal funds are no longer available for grants, but the Commission administers a variety of federal and state assistance programs, offering technical assistance and financial help in the form of loans and tax credits to owners of historic buildings.

Projects proposed by federal and state agencies are reviewed by the Commission for their effect on historic buildings, areas, and archeological sites; in the years since its creation, commission staff has reviewed thousands of projects and have provided assistance to their proponents in avoiding damaging effects on Rhode Island's historic resources.

In the past four decades, historic preservation has become an important part of Rhode Island's civic life. For many residents of the state, it has also become an important part of their decisions about where and how to live. This growing awareness of the importance of our physical surroundings is evidenced in nationally significant planning legislation created by the General Assembly in 1988. With the passage of the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act, Rhode Island became one of the first states to require each of its communities to plan for the future by creating a

comprehensive community plan. Each plan includes the community's goals and planned actions to preserve its cultural resources.

SECTION FOUR: PRESERVATION IN RHODE ISLAND--TODAY

1. Identifying Rhode Island's historic places

Preservation of historic buildings, areas, and sites begins with awareness and understanding of the state's historic places. The statewide survey of Rhode Island's historic properties, started in 1968 by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, has now compiled information about historic and archeological properties in every city and town.

The survey is organized by community and neighborhood. The professional staff of the RIHP&HC, working closely with local officials and organizations, researched community development through maps and records and examined all of the visible buildings in each community. Properties that have historical interest (about 50,000) were photographed and described.

The RIHP&HC has published its survey findings in a series of published reports that include a concise history of the community, an inventory of places of historical interest, and recommendations for the future of these resources.

Every community in the state has now been surveyed, but the identification and location of historic buildings, areas, and sites is always an ongoing process. As recent resources change with time, as perceptions change about what has been significant in our past, Rhode Island will continue to supplement its survey with additional information. Properties from the recent past will always need to be surveyed and evaluated. As communities improve their own preservation programs, they sometimes have a need for additional survey information (in the management of historic district zoning, for example), and the survey process will need to accommodate those needs.

2. Listing properties in the National and State Registers

More than 12,500 properties have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places, most of them included in 145 historic districts. Several thousand more properties are probably eligible for registration. The large number of Rhode Island properties in the National Register documents our state's rich and widespread architectural, historical, and archaeological heritage. The RIHP&HC intends to eventually nominate all eligible properties to the National Register.

National Register properties are located in every Rhode Island community. Every town and city in the state has at least one registered historic district; some communities have many more. All of the state's National Register properties are also listed in the State Register; some properties are included in the State Register only.

National Register listing protects these important resources from damage by government-funded projects and makes these places eligible for federal and state assistance programs. Listing in the National or State registers may also trigger other important financial assistance programs at the community level, such as property tax benefits. Towns and cities may have their own priorities for registration.

3. Reviewing the impact of government projects

The RIHP&HC reviews all federal and federally-funded or federally-licensed projects to determine whether they will harm a resource which is on or eligible for the National Register. The RIHP&HC also reviews state projects for their impact. Commission staff members work with federal and state agencies to help insure that the damage resulting from government projects is avoided or lessened.

Since its creation the RIHP&HC has reviewed thousands of projects, large and small, to insure that impacts on historic places are minimized. The RIHP&HC has established close working relationships with government officials, state agencies, and federal agencies to insure that consideration for the protection of historic resources is incorporated into the early planning process for government projects.

Communities that have adopted historic district zoning may also review the impact of federal, state, and local government projects; at the RIHP&HC the coordination of such local reviews with the state review is a high priority, to insure that the least possible damage is done to historic resources and to insure that the regulatory process is effective and no more burdensome than is necessary.

4. Archaeological resources

Over 2,000 significant archaeological sites, spanning 10,000 years of history, are located throughout Rhode Island; many historic shipwrecks lie beneath Narragansett Bay. The identification, study, evaluation, and protection of these sites are important parts of the Rhode Island historical preservation program.

Archaeological studies have been conducted throughout the state. Many sites have been located along the coastline where sources of food and other resources have been readily available for 5,000 years. Having located so many sites, archaeologists can predict the likelihood that a given area contains archaeological sites. If government-funded or licensed construction is planned in an area that probably contains sites, then excavations can be performed to confirm the location and significance of the sites.

The RIHP&HC issues permits for and monitors archaeological exploration of state-owned land and water. Artifacts recovered during excavation are stored and cared for under the supervision of the RIHP&HC.

Some Rhode Island communities that have important archeological resources within their borders may also include review for impact in their own review processes. Where this review includes consultation with the RIHP&HC, it can be especially effective.

5. Providing financial assistance to preservation projects

Grants:

In the 1970s and early 1980s, the federal government provided some grant funding to historic properties through the RIHP&HC. Today, the federal government's efforts to support historic properties with direct grants are managed through a program called Save America's Treasures. Stewards of historic properties apply directly to SAT for funding, which is reserved for a limited number of properties that have significance to the nation as a whole. A handful of Rhode Island properties have been funded through the program, but most of the state's historic properties are not eligible.

When federal funding for preservation projects was curtailed after 1983, Rhode Island responded on a state level. Since 1987 legislative grants have provided some grants for the state's community landmarks. In 1988, Rhode Island voters approved a bond issue that provided \$2.5 million to restore state-owned historic places and to purchase and restore Linden Place in Bristol, one of the state's most important houses.

The need for grants for preservation work is always greater than the funds available. Some private foundations are interested in assisting the preservation of historic buildings and areas, but several million dollars is needed for restoration work on publicly-accessible historic buildings.

Tax credits:

The federal government provides income tax credits for substantial certified rehabilitations of historic buildings which are income-producing. Assisted by these tax credits private investors have undertaken hundreds of rehabilitation projects in Rhode Island. In addition to preserving important buildings, these projects create jobs, provide needed housing, revitalize our main streets and older neighborhoods, and develop properties for office and commercial use.

In 1989, Rhode Island instituted a state income tax credit to help homeowners with the costs of maintaining their historic houses. Hundreds of owner-occupants have claimed this credit, which is administered by the RIHP&HC; many more are eligible for the credit.

Local communities are authorized to provide some property tax benefits to owners of historic buildings, and a few do so. Some communities have made this local tax benefit a cornerstone of their preservation program.

Loans:

Rhode Island's Historic Preservation Loan Fund provides low-interest loans to save and restore historic buildings. This is a revolving fund; as loans are repaid, additional projects are funded. Loans have been made in many Rhode Island communities, both to property owners and to communities and preservation organizations which, in turn, lend to property owners.

6. Educational programming

Many Rhode Islanders are interested in the historic places they own and live near and in ways to restore and protect them. Each year, Rhode Islanders visit historic buildings and areas throughout the state, sometimes for pleasure and recreation, more often as they carry out their normal daily routines. Some are interested in lectures and presentations, tours, and workshops about their historic areas and buildings.

The RIHP&HC publishes surveys and other materials which assist in decision-making about preservation issues. The RIHP&HC maintains a website which provides these surveys, as well as descriptions of state programs for historic preservation, applications for financial assistance, and the opportunity to query experts and seek advice about a wide range of preservation problems.

Once a year the RIHP&HC sponsors, with a local community, the state's annual preservation conference. Each April several hundred preservation leaders gather for a full day of workshops, panel discussions, networking, and tours.

The Preservation Library is a collection of printed materials about many preservation issues, designed to assist homeowners who want help in planning and carrying out the maintenance and repair of their houses, now located in 22 libraries and planning offices around the state. While some materials are out-of-date and should be supplemented by new additions, the library is still a useful mechanism for making information about historic preservation widely accessible to the public.

The state's most direct and effective educational effort about preservation issues is the RIHP&HC's longstanding commitment to answering individual preservation questions, one by one. Commission staff meet and talk daily with developers, property owners, and public officials, to provide expert advice and to assist in planning preservation projects.

7. Supporting local government preservation efforts

Community preservation programs:

Each community in Rhode Island plans for its future by developing, writing, and adopting a comprehensive plan. These plans express a community's civic goals and outline the strategies a community has identified to reach those goals. Included in each of these plans is the community's plan for the future of its historic resources. Most of these plans use a published survey report as a starting point for planning, and many of these plans were developed with the participation and advice of RIHP&HC staff members.

The plans are as various as Rhode Island communities, but each addresses at least minimally a number of preservation issues. Some communities have gone far beyond the minimum requirements and have designed community preservation programs which represent a very high level of achievement and which will be effective agents for preservation in their future. Others have designed programs which, while not so ambitious, are suitable for the community's level of interest, awareness, and abilities to participate in preservation programs. Each community's preservation plan is included in its comprehensive plan.

Certified local governments:

One of the most effective steps a community can take to protect its historic character is to establish local historic district zoning. About one-third of Rhode Island's communities have adopted this protective mechanism.

Under the certified local governments program, the RIHPHC supports this local commitment to preservation with grants and technical assistance. Communities are certified when they have adopted historic district zoning and created a local commission with authority to review exterior changes to buildings within an identified zone.

Each year, the RIHPHC awards small grants to certified communities through a competitive application process. In the past, certified local governments have used these grants to create public education materials, such as brochures and walking tours; to underwrite the cost of National Register nominations; to prepare plans; and to address specific local preservation needs. Each local government identifies its own priorities; the RIHP&HC gives high priority to survey and registration activities, educational and planning programs, and to the community's own priorities as described in its comprehensive plan.

In addition to grants, the RIHP&HC provides technical assistance and training to local historic district commissions and to local planning staffs. This assistance is often provided ad hoc and as needed, but the RIHP&HC also operates a formal training program for local historic district commissioners.

8. Organizing information about historic resources

The RIHP&HC organizes information about historic resources and about preservation activities into 57 separate units, called contexts. These contexts are established to guide our understanding of the significance of historic properties and to assist in planning for their preservation. Rhode Island's historic resources span twelve thousand years of our history and range from small archeological sites to large historic districts. In addition, a wide variety of individuals, government agencies, and private groups are involved in their preservation. The explicit organization of what we know about these resources improves the likelihood of their preservation.

The 57 contexts reflect our understanding of the broad patterns of Rhode Island history. Each context has both a geographic and a temporal component—each one deals with a specific time span and place.

The contexts dealing with the period after 1636 include 49 which represent Rhode Island's cities and towns and some neighborhoods in Providence, Newport, Cranston, and Warwick. City, town, and neighborhood contexts are useful mechanisms for understanding the historic significance of particular resources—the RIHP&HC survey is organized through these contexts and our evaluation of the significance of properties uses them as well.

Additional contexts address below-ground resources--one is for underwater shipwrecks; another deals with the period before 3000BC; five others address general patterns of land use by Native Americans in the long period between 3000BC and the mid-17th century.

For each of these contexts, we intend to gather information about resources, to write a history of its development, to identify properties included in the context, and to sort them by type so that they can be compared with one another, and to nominate properties to the National Register.

In addition, contexts organize information about preservation issues. For each of the contexts, the RIHP&HC regularly gathers information about planning progress. From several program areas, we add information about resources, about current plans, about activities within the context community, and about specific projects. For each context, the RIHP&HC formulates goals. These are sometimes elaborate; at other times, they are limited to a list of properties which are recommended for National Register listing. For each context, the RIHP&HC is able to annually assess its goals and priorities.

SECTION FIVE: PRESERVATION IN RHODE ISLAND—TOMORROW

1. What we protect

Many kinds of historic resources have particular value for Rhode Islanders—their old houses and neighborhoods, industrial buildings, commercial buildings and downtown centers, public buildings and churches, archeological sites, and landscapes.

Old houses, neighborhoods, and development patterns

The historic houses of Rhode Island are a unique resource. Constructed over several hundred years, they represent a variety of styles, materials, living arrangements, and settings. Their presence means that Rhode Islanders can choose from a wide range of living situations which suit their interests, tastes, and means—as various as owning a fine eighteenth-century house to renting an apartment in a handsome three-decker from the early twentieth century.

Most of Rhode Island's historic houses are located in historic neighborhoods—old villages, urban neighborhoods, suburban plats. If we can keep this variety of age, style, and construction, we will preserve an important part of Rhode Island's unique character.

Living in an historic house can have particular advantages. With appropriate rehabilitation, an historic house can have many of the amenities associated with a new house. Older houses often have larger and more interesting spaces than new houses. Most old houses are located in historic neighborhoods where residents are close to conveniences and transportation routes. Rehabilitating older houses can preserve and enhance the identity of these neighborhoods and sustain the loyalty residents feel toward their localities.

Preserving Rhode Island's old houses and neighborhoods will pay important dividends—it strengthens the pride of residents in their communities, their concern for and attachment to their neighborhoods, and their willingness to work for improvements.

Apart from all the practical reasons for preserving historic houses and neighborhoods, the very best reason for their preservation is that they enrich the life of our state and give Rhode Island its special character and beauty.

Industrial buildings

Rhode Island's long history as a center of industry has left the state with a wealth of historic industrial buildings—they are an important resource for our future. Located throughout the state, but especially in the urban centers of Providence, Pawtucket, and Woonsocket and in the villages strung along the state's river valleys, these old factories

are central to the story of Rhode Island's development. They can also have a role in the state's future economic development.

Only a few of these old factories are used for their original purposes, but many are used by manufacturers of various products, for a variety of commercial enterprises, and for warehousing and storage. While old mills are often considered obsolete and large-scale manufacturers are often reluctant to work in a multi-story factory, locating in a historic mill can be a profitable choice for some. The costs of land and construction for new buildings are high—space in older buildings is still relatively inexpensive. Renovation of an existing building can have advantages—it often takes less time than new construction and can be staged so that production is not interrupted while work proceeds. When an old mill is clearly not useful as a manufacturing site, its open undifferentiated space may be useful for developers of housing, office space, or commercial space.

Rhode Island's old industrial buildings are frequently the site of ground contamination, making them more difficult to use. Efforts to remediate such "brownfields" are an important component of successful re-use of these sites.

Commercial buildings and downtowns

Rhode Island's historic commercial centers are many in number and exceptional in quality. Providence's downtown, the state's principal commercial center, is a remarkable area, rare among cities of similar size—a cohesive fabric of substantial and beautiful buildings that tell the story of the economic center of an industrializing region. The state's smaller cities and older towns have important downtown areas as well, often a single main street, lined with the handsome commercial buildings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many of the commercial centers give evidence of the pride their builders took in their towns and in their businesses.

Some city and town centers in Rhode Island display a pattern of disinvestment, dilapidation, and vacancy. As with old factories, old commercial buildings may seem to have outlived their usefulness—large-scale, highway-oriented retailing has become the norm—but there is still substantial value to be realized from the preservation of historic commercial centers. Important components of the retail sector make use of smaller pedestrian-scale commercial buildings. Neighborhood retailing centers make good use of older buildings. And specialty retailers sometimes find a particular advantage in the use of an older building which serves as a signature and becomes part of a marketing program. Several of the state's most interesting village centers have seen this kind of development.

The growth and change exhibited by the most successful of Rhode Island's older downtowns depends to a great extent on the willingness of the community to take a planning approach which deals with a commercial area as a whole, rather than a piece-

meal ad hoc approach. Good development plans for historic commercial areas can help insure their economic vitality and visual quality.

Public buildings and ecclesiastical buildings

The state's public buildings and houses of worship have a special place in the appearance of Rhode Island's cities and towns. These buildings are important centers of activity; they serve a larger and more diverse community than the single private building; and they are landmarks, often elaborate and impressive, usually highly visible, many times the chief architectural ornament of their area.

As a builder, Rhode Island's state government has produced a remarkable collection of buildings. The most important is the State House, the visual and functional center of the state's executive and legislative branches. But the state has also built important courthouses, arsenals and armories, police barracks, hospitals, prisons, parks, airports, a university and several colleges.

The state's communities have constructed town and city halls, schools, libraries, police stations, fire stations, and public parks, many of them handsome examples of their kind and all of illustrative of the important role of the community in daily life.

The state's long history and the diversity of its population has bequeathed to Rhode Islanders an unparalleled assortment of ecclesiastical buildings—meetinghouses, churches, and synagogues. Beyond their self-evident value to those who use them as houses of worship, these buildings are landmarks for their communities, usually prominently sited. And, in their variety of age, size, and style, they document the state's history as a haven for all faiths and as a home to immigrant communities from around the world.

As governmental functions change, old public buildings sometimes seem to be a drain on a community's resources. Changes in ownership or use may provide a key to the preservation of such resources. Similarly, demographic shifts may suggest that older religious buildings have outlived their usefulness and no longer justify their costs. But, as with public buildings, ecclesiastical buildings are storehouses of community life. Changes in ownership and use should be thoroughly investigated before demolition is contemplated.

Archeological sites

The first Rhode Islanders lived over 10,000 years ago—field surveys and research have located over 2,000 archeological sites across the state. The state's archeology program is managed by professional archeologists on the staff of the RIHP&HC; the Commission regulates archeological investigations on state lands and under waters within the state's jurisdiction and also cares for a large collection of artifacts.

The archeological sites of Rhode Island are a great library of information about our past—investigation of these sites may give us our only glimpse into the lives of people who lived thousands of years ago and who left no written records. It also adds to our understanding of more recent history, helping to insure that we hear the voices of people who have been left out of the written record and helping to re-create the facts of daily life which no one thought to record.

The Commission gives special emphasis to the study and interpretation of sites related to Rhode Island's colonial and early national period (c.1600-1800). Sites from this period can provide two kinds of information. They contain a record of the daily lives of the ordinary and not-so-ordinary people who made and unmade a colony, made a state, and helped to make the nation. Second, some of these sites contain structural remains that add to what we know about house forms, floor plans, and the pattern of settlements. When these kinds of information are interpreted and presented as part of a reconstructed landscape, Rhode Islanders can learn about the state's history in a new ways—through archeology trails on land and under water, with exhibits, and with brochures and booklets.

Protection of the archeological sites on state lands has achieved a measure of success in Rhode Island, but the preservation of sites on private land is more problematic. Some Rhode Island communities now review development proposals for their effects on archeological resources, but many more should.

Historic landscapes

Rhode Island's landscape legacy is extraordinary. The state's campuses, cemeteries, farms, gardens, golf courses, parks, parkways, and public open spaces document long-standing and ongoing efforts to shape and adapt the natural landscape to a variety of human needs.

What is particularly noteworthy about Rhode Island landscapes is the way changing needs, tastes, and abilities over the state's long history have created distinctive places across the state. Nowhere else in this country in so contained an area and over a sustained period of almost 400 years can one find such variety and consistently high quality of landscapes, with remaining examples for first-hand examination.

Often naturalistic settings are taken for granted, and their design or historic significance is not readily apparent. Landscapes may be confused with open space, at best, or, at worst, perceived as undeveloped or vacant—land often considered a development opportunity, not a preservation opportunity.

2. Setting our goals

The fundamental aim of Rhode Island's historic preservation program is to locate, identify, and evaluate all of the state's historic properties and to preserve them in place through affirmative treatments (such as rehabilitation) or passive treatment (such as avoidance). To achieve this objective, Rhode Island establishes goals, sets policies to achieve these goals, and identifies actions that will advance the state toward preservation of all historic resources.

GOAL ONE: LOCATE, IDENTIFY, AND EVALUATE ALL OF RHODE ISLAND'S HISTORIC RESOURCES.

WHAT WE HAVE: For buildings and historic areas, Rhode Island has a solid, comprehensive survey. Every community in the state has been examined in at least a preliminary fashion. The survey was conducted by professional historians in accordance with National Park Service and RIHP&HC standards. Properties were studied to the extent necessary to assess their eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places; some properties were studied to a greater extent. Archeological sites are the subject of a separate survey; over 2000 have been identified. The information contained in the survey is organized by geographic and temporal context.

Many of the properties included in the survey have been nominated to and listed in the National Register; about 15,000 properties are included. The National Register nominations for Rhode Island properties are an important source of evaluative information. These documents explain why the registered properties are significant and describe their appearance. Further, the process of National Register listing (which includes an important component of public participation) often serves as an occasion for increased public awareness about the resource. Some archeological sites are also included in the National Register, but the listing of such sites has not been as high a priority as the evaluation and recording of sites.

WHAT WE NEED: Both changes in historical interpretation and changes in technology mandate that Rhode Island continue to improve and expand its identification and evaluation of historic resources. It is now possible to refine our understanding of historical significance to include a wider variety of properties, if we continue to gather and evaluate information about Rhode Island's resources.

Previous surveys sometimes collected only a limited amount of information about individual properties; these gaps should be filled in. Some early surveys concentrated on the architectural quality of a particular area, with the result that more modest buildings are not well documented; some areas of Newport, for example, filled with small vernacular houses should be re-examined. Many of the buildings of the first and second thirds of the twentieth century can now be appropriately evaluated for their historic significance; these resources from the recent past should be surveyed and evaluated. Especially important are resources related to the development of Rhode Island as a

metropolitan area, to include classes of resources whose significance may transcend local community boundaries, such as the development of suburban neighborhoods, such as Oak Hill (in Pawtucket) and Edgewood (in Cranston). Much of the survey information is now several decades old; where there is a particular and specific need for more current information, older surveys should be updated

A variety of changes in the planning context and in technology suggest that there is an opportunity and a necessity for wider availability of the locational and evaluative information of the RIHP&HC. Several state agencies and local and regional planning agencies need the information contained in paper files at the RIHP&HC; we need to insure that the survey is not only comprehensive and reliable but also accessible, in formats (such as computerized geographic information systems) which make it useful to those who need it.

Policy: Survey (and re-survey) the state's historic buildings, areas, and archeological sites to insure that resources from all periods and areas of significance are included, to fill in existing data gaps, and to update as needed.

Policy: Evaluate known historic resources to determine if they are eligible for the National Register.

Policy: Write and process nominations to the National Register.

Policy: Insure that survey and National Register information is available in easily accessible formats to those who need it.

GOAL TWO: INSURE THAT THOSE WHO OWN, CARE FOR, AND INVEST IN HISTORIC BUILDINGS, AREAS, AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES HAVE THE TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE THEY NEED.

WHAT WE HAVE: Rhode Island has developed a strong program of both financial and technical assistance for owners and stewards of historic resources.

Technical advice on a wide range of preservation issues is available to Rhode Islanders who need it. The staff of the RIHP&HC includes historians, architectural historians, archeologists, and historical architects. Every year they answer thousands of direct questions from residents of the state who need to know more about historic preservation. The advantages of such a one-on-one approach are clear: questioners receive information as they need it, directed at their particular situation, and at a level of elaboration which is immediately suitable.

Rhode Island has a remarkable program of financial assistance for some historic properties. Income tax credits have been the cornerstone of this program for several years. Federal tax credits for certified rehabilitations of income-producing buildings have made the re-use of hundreds of buildings possible, even profitable. A similar state tax

credit which is now available, and which may be combined with the federal credit where appropriate, promises to increase the financial viability of rehabilitating and re-using income-producing buildings throughout the state. Owner-occupants of historic residences (a substantial part of National Register property owners) may claim a state income tax credit for appropriate exterior maintenance and rehabilitation to their houses. The credit underwrites the (sometimes) higher cost of working on an historic house. Hundreds of Rhode Islanders have been awarded this credit, maintaining their property values and keeping historic neighborhoods well preserved. The Historic Preservation Revolving Loan Fund also provides low-interest loans for some development projects. In addition, some communities have granted property tax relief to owners of historic properties.

WHAT WE NEED: Rhode Island needs to find ways to encourage more property owners to seek the financial benefits available and find ways to provide financial assistance to properties not now aided.

Too few Rhode Islanders seek the homeowner's tax credit. The credit provides a return of 20% of the funds invested annually by an owner-occupant of a National Register property in appropriate exterior maintenance and repair. At a minimum, every house needs maintenance and repair every 5 to 10 years, such as repairing or replacing the roof, carpentry, and exterior paint. We need to find mechanisms to inform property owners about the credit and to encourage them to seek this benefit.

Despite the state's excellent program of financial assistance for historic buildings, an important group of properties is now unaided—historic buildings owned by non-profit organizations. This group of properties includes both places operated as restored historic sites (such as the small museums located in many communities centered on old houses, school, mills) and historic properties used by non-preservation non-profit groups to carry out their missions (such as community art centers and the like). While such properties are small in number compared to the total list of National Register properties, they are disproportionately important—they are an important focus of a community's preservation effort and often occupy unusually significant buildings. In many cases, tax credits are not a suitable form of assistance; even low-interest loans may be of little use to an organization which does not generate substantial income; for such properties direct grants are needed. The 2002 Historic Preservation, Recreation, and Heritage Bond Issue will provide \$3 million to address these needs. Consideration should be given to additional funding in the future.

Policy: Provide federal and state tax credits to eligible rehabilitation projects which are income-producing.

Policy: Provide state tax credits to homeowner/occupants who perform appropriate maintenance and rehabilitation.

Policy: Seek mechanisms to inform owner-occupants about the homeowner's tax credit and to encourage them to preserve their historic houses.

Policy: Provide loan funding to appropriate rehabilitation and restoration projects.

Policy: Support efforts to provide direct grants to stewards of properties for which loans and tax credits are not suitable forms of assistance.

Policy: Provide technical assistance to owners and stewards of historic resources, including the expertise of historic architects and preservation specialists.

GOAL THREE: STRENGTHEN THE PROTECTION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS, AREAS, AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES FROM INAPPROPRIATE ALTERATION, NEGLECT, AND DEMOLITION.

WHAT WE HAVE: Rhode Island's program of protection of historic resources from incompatible alterations, deterioration, and demolition has a strong record of success in some arenas and is less successful in others.

Federal and state statutes and regulations provide an important framework for the review of projects proposed by federal and state agencies; the RIHP&HC's survey is sufficiently advanced to insure that review of above-ground projects can be carried out in an efficient and effective manner. Further, the RIHP&HC has developed good working relationships with the agencies whose work is most likely to produce activities which will have an impact on historic resources and helps to guard against adverse impacts with reviews which take place early in an agency's planning process.

An important component of the state's regulatory system for the re-use of historic buildings no longer acts a disincentive for protecting their special character. The Rhode Island Rehab Code (adopted in 2002) helps to insure that those who work on historic buildings need to meet common-sense standards in their work, providing flexibility while promoting high safety standards.

WHAT WE NEED: Building projects carried out by private developers in Rhode Island do not usually undergo the same review as projects which are funded or licensed by federal or state agencies. While some communities protect some of their historic buildings with historic district zoning, many do not. All Rhode Island communities should consider whether and how to protect their resources.

The lack of local protection can be significant for above-ground resources; for archeological sites it can be disastrous. By their nature, buildings are visible—the RIHP&HC and local preservationists can carry out a dialog with local permitting officials concerning their preservation. In contrast, archeological sites are often not discovered until a building project destroys them. Early consultation about proposed building projects between local officials and the state's archeological experts would help to preserve the state's underground resources. For all archeological sites, Rhode Island's preferred treatment is avoidance; data recovery is sometimes necessary, but usually its

cost and the irreversible damage which is done to an excavated site suggest that avoidance is appropriate. Rhode Island's archeological survey is sufficiently advanced to provide predictive models for the presence of sites, and an appropriate consultative process need not be burdensome.

Through their state government, Rhode Islanders are the owners of some their state's most significant historic buildings. Many of these historic buildings continue to serve their original purposes; others have been adapted for new uses, by the state or by new owners. Where the state is unable to provide adequate levels of funding for the maintenance and restoration of its historic resources, private groups of citizens who care about a particular resource may help to fill the gap; the State House Historical Society and the Fort Adams Trust are good examples. The state should offer support and assistance to such groups.

Policy: Review all proposed actions of the federal and state governments that may have an impact on historic resources and insure that the adverse impacts of such actions are minimized.

Policy: Encourage Rhode Island communities to use the protective mechanisms available to protect their historic resources, both above-ground and below-ground.

Policy: Preserve all historic state-owned properties through appropriate use and adequate funding.

Policy: Encourage private groups who are willing to support the maintenance and restoration of state-owned properties.

GOAL FOUR: BUILD BETTER COMMUNITIES THROUGH HISTORIC PRESERVATION.

WHAT WE HAVE: Rhode Island's historic resources can be central to the state's efforts to create better communities. Our heritage of historic resources is both broad and deep; we have resources from every period of our history, and we have them in great numbers. They can help us insure that the future of Rhode Island's cities and towns is economically vibrant and is filled with a wide range of choices for all of us.

Rhode Islanders are increasingly disappointed in the results of decades of inadequately restrained land development, results which are visible both in our urban centers and in our countryside. The state's population has grown modestly, but our consumption of land in the last few decades has increased dramatically. The beautiful farms, forests, and open space of Rhode Island's historic rural towns are being filled with strip commercial developments and low-density residential developments. And our historic urban centers are paying the price—too many neighborhoods are suffering from lack of investment, from deterioration, and from demolitions; older commercial areas are underused; and historic industrial buildings are abandoned.

The evidence is growing that Rhode Islanders want to change this pattern. Historic preservation can be an important part of our planning for the future. Preservation speaks to much of what Rhode Islanders love best about their state—its beauty, its character, and its unique quality of life. Preservation also helps to address what Rhode Islanders don't love—disappearing farmlands, acres of new housing, and deteriorating neighborhoods in core cities.

WHAT WE NEED: As Rhode Islanders move toward a better understanding of the relationship of development to their historic buildings and areas, what is needed most is a sense that our existing building stock and historic development patterns are a base from which further development takes place—that their productive use and preservation is primary. The character and vitality of the state's historic cities, villages, and rural areas should not be relegated to a secondary role in planning for the future.

Historic preservation is sometimes thought of as antithetical to progress and growth—it is not. Growth that does not acknowledge the buildings and development patterns of the past will destroy the rich heritage of Rhode Islanders. Treating our historic buildings, areas, and development patterns as a primary consideration will keep Rhode Island a desirable place to live and work.

Economic development

Rhode Island development policies should rely on the re-use of buildings in historic areas. We have the principal asset needed for successful development—truly authentic places: city neighborhoods, downtowns, town centers, villages. Our historic districts have all the advantages of their era—they are compact, walkable, bikeable, human-scaled, humane, filled with visual interest. Their infrastructure is in place, and they are often convenient places to live, work, study, and play, with their mix of uses, their access to public transport, and their compact character. Above all, their greatest asset is that they are real. In contrast with a landscape of strip malls and housing developments, Rhode Island's old centers have a sense of place, a quality which makes them valuable assets in planning for the future of the state.

Keeping and promoting this sense of place should be a central tenet of economic development. The identification of city neighborhood centers and town and village centers which can absorb additional development is an important first step in preserving these places. Existing incentives can aid developers in the re-use of buildings in older areas; the development of partnerships among state, local, and neighborhood agencies to support development projects will enhance the viability of historic areas.

Heritage tourism

Tourism is an important feature of the state's economy. It should also help to preserve the historic places of Rhode Island. Most visitors tend to see the same small number of historic sites, those which are well marketed and well prepared for large

numbers of tourists. Increasing the number of sites which attract tourism and which can address the needs of visitors should be an important part of planning for Rhode Island's future. An increase in the number of available and attractive sites will sustain longer visits to the state, increase the number of activities available to visitors, and help to create a small income stream for some of the dozens of small sites which could benefit from increased visitation.

Unfortunately, many of the historic sites which could most benefit from increased visitation are, at present, least able to provide the facilities needed by visitors. To sustain these sites and to increase the number and length of visits to Rhode Island, the state should move toward the principle of product development rather than simply marketing existing resources. Public investment in the creation of visitor amenities (restoration, interpretation, and visitor services) at additional historic sites would pay important dividends in the promotion of tourism and would help to support a number of historic buildings.

Housing

Rhode Island has a shortage of housing, both market rate and affordable houses. Yet the state also has many large historic neighborhoods which need assistance. The historic burst of housing construction which occurred in the state in the half-century between 1870 and 1920, to accommodate a growing population drawn by the industrializing economy, together with some earlier and later housing booms, has given Rhode Island many large areas of livable pleasant neighborhoods. These areas--city neighborhoods, old villages, suburban plats—are an important resource in Rhode Island's commitment to insuring an adequate housing supply. Old neighborhoods and existing houses should have primacy in the housing policies of the state and its communities.

Renovation of older houses and preservation of old neighborhoods can be less of a strain on a community's resources than new construction, since the infrastructure of utilities and services is already in place and need not be created anew. Good renovation of old buildings can raise property values as much as new construction. In urban areas, the development of housing in targeted old neighborhoods has demonstrated that the goal of preservation can help achieve the goal of affordable housing.

The re-use of non-residential buildings for housing now has a long history of success in Rhode Island. Many communities have renovated outdated school, old mills, even vacant churches, into new housing. They increase their housing stock and preserve buildings which are important to the community but have outlived their original use.

Brownfields

Rhode Island has important stock of vacant or under-used historic mills. Many of the great mills of the Blackstone and Pawtuxet Valleys have outlived their original manufacturing use, but they remain a substantial resource for the state and their towns and cities. Visually, they dominate their communities. Historically, their significance

cannot be overstated. They represent an enormous investment of resources which is wasted when they are demolished or unused.

These old mills can have a future; they can be used for manufacturing, for housing, for office parks. Their large undifferentiated spaces can house any number of uses, depending on the needs of their communities and the requirements of their developers. But many old mills sit on sites which have been contaminated by pollutants over the decades of their use. These brownfield sites are a deterrent to redevelopment and reuse of this important property type. The provision of state incentives to clean up such properties would help to preserve them.

Historic district zoning

Rhode Island towns and cities need support, both financial and technical, to grow better. The planning "toolbox" of legal and financial mechanisms to support the continued use of historic buildings and areas should have a wide variety of choices. It is especially important that communities be able to adapt their historic district zoning to their particular needs; there is already considerable variation in ordinances and enforcement policies—such variety should be supported.

Policy: Planning for economic development, tourism, housing, and brownfield remediation should support the preservation of existing buildings, areas, and development patterns.

Policy: Provide technical and financial assistance to communities that protect historic resources by establishing local preservation programs and encourage other communities to develop and adopt such protections.

Policy: Assist local communities by developing new financial, legal, and planning tools to encourage preservation.

GOAL FIVE: INCREASE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE VALUES OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS, AREAS, AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES.

WHAT WE HAVE: Communication with all Rhode Islanders about their historic resources has always been an important component of the state's historic preservation program. Through publications, tours, conferences, and workshops, members of the public and smaller groups with special needs for knowledge are kept informed.

Survey publications, fact sheets, a website, and the Preservation Library serve a broad public, as does the annual statewide conference. Members of local historic district commissions and their staffs receive specialized training and presentations about the National Register and zoning. Specialized audiences may attend workshops on particular subjects of interest, such as accessibility issues or tax credit questions.

Several communities have made educational efforts an important part of their local preservation program, using walking tours, plaques and markers, and lecture programs as ways of conveying the importance of historic resources.

WHAT WE NEED: Rhode Island should insure that each person who needs information about some aspect of historic preservation receives the information in a form which is usable and suitable, whether his need is for specialized advice on a technical or financial matter or for a more general understanding of the role of historic buildings and areas in our communities' lives. To insure that information is available in a suitable format, we will need to continually assess the impact of information technology on the information we provide.

Rhode Islanders need to know that historical preservation can have an impact on the quality of our environment; that preservation can increase the choices available to all Rhode Islanders; that living in an historic community is not a luxury for the affluent but an entitlement for all Rhode Islanders; and that preservation principles can be a practical and economical basis for making decisions about the future of buildings. In short, Rhode Islanders need information about the "why" of historic preservation as well as the "how."

Some Rhode Islanders also need specific information targeted to their special interests and requirements, especially government officials, architects, lawyers, planners, and realtors. These professionals are a specialized audience with special needs for information, since they often make or share in preservation decisions. They need information in formats which are matched to their needs.

Publications have been at the core of the Rhode Island's public information strategy—books, booklets, fact sheets and brochures on many topics have been produced over the last few decades. The high cost of paper publications and the difficulty with updating them suggest that we should concentrate publication efforts on the internet. Survey reports are now being formatted for inclusion on the RIHP&HC website; this will be the preferred medium of publication in the future.

Policy: Strengthen all aspects of preservation education, to insure that information is available in a timely, accessible, and expert fashion.

Policy: Increase public education about preservation in mechanisms designed to meet the needs of specific audiences.

Policy: Provide technical assistance and training for local preservation officials.

Policy: Focus general public education efforts on mechanisms which explain the values of historic preservation.

SECTION SIX: USING, ALTERING, AND REPLACING THIS PLAN

1. Using the plan

This plan is designed for the people of Rhode Island, their state government officials, local planning agencies, and the National Park Service (which provides major funding for the state historic preservation program). The plan is an amendment of earlier plans, the latest from June 1996. This plan will serve until 2009. The plan has been reviewed by the National Park Service, the Division of Planning, Rhode Island Department of Administration, and others.

When adopted, the plan's goals and policies guide the work of the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission each year. As the RIHP&HC prepares its annual work program for each year and evaluates its end-of-the-year report, the Commission staff consults the plan to insure that each task set out in the work program advances one of the goals and adheres to the policies laid out here.

Various strategies are available to the RIHP&HC, to other state officials, to local officials, and to all of Rhode Island's preservationists to achieve the goals outlined in this plan. The goals established for the state preservation program are necessarily very general.

Despite the state's small size the preservation movement in Rhode Island is an intensely particularized and localized effort. One of the strengths of the state's preservation program in the past has been its ability to match the development of the professionally staffed central office with the development of myriad efforts by Rhode Islanders in every community to save particular buildings and sites and to create protective mechanisms for historic resources in their community government. This partnership between the RIHP&HC and its staff, guided by sound preservation principles, and Rhode Islanders in their communities, guided by their appreciation of the particular character and quality of the places in which they live, is a substantial asset which should be protected. The operation of this partnership is made manifest in the application of our general policies to the particular needs and concerns of community preservationists.

Specific recommendations are made as part of each survey and, while the overall programmatic principles are vital, these specific recommendations are also important. They are continually supplemented by additional information from other surveys, from National Register work, from project-specific sources (such information from grants, loans, and tax credit materials), and by additional planning information (plans developed by state and federal agencies and, especially, by local comprehensive plans). Information from each of these sources is regularly integrated into the RIHP&HC's understanding of each community, and such information should be considered part of this plan.

New information about each community is incorporated each year into our understanding of the history, resources, needs, and goals of the community. Information is received from many sources, and each year the need to revise our understanding of a

community is evaluated in light of new information. Priorities for identification, evaluation, registration, and protection for resources within each area are continually updated to reflect progress toward achieving previously defined goals and to reflect changes in needs and opportunities.

Annually, as the RIHP&HC prepares each year's work program and task list, these goals are re-evaluated and updated. Each year's annual work program is part of this plan. The annual work program is a public document, submitted each year to the Statewide Planning Program's clearinghouse for public review and comment. The work program is summarized and distributed for comment and proposed alteration.

In addition to the process of continuous updating and annual re-evaluation, our understanding of each community (or context) is reviewed by RIHP&HC staff at least once every five years. The review may include revision of the developmental history and the planning goals or may be limited to the identifying explicitly the need for such revisions. On occasion there is the opportunity for an even broader re-evaluation of the goals and planning recommendations derived from each of the contexts. If the developmental or planning context shifts for a community, a region, or the state as a whole, the RIHP&HC may undertake a reassessment of its goals.

Once revised and adopted, other state agencies and local officials will consult this plan as they prepare their own plans and programs to insure that no conflict occurs among the goals and policies of the state's several agencies and to insure that local comprehensive plans do not conflict with state plans.

2. Altering and replacing the plan

This plan is evaluated on an annual basis by the RIHP&HC to determine if the conditions to which it responds have changed sufficiently to require alteration of the plan. The evaluation is carried out by RIHP&HC staff and commissioners and by other Rhode Islanders who participate in the process when they comment on the annual work program. When soliciting suggestions for the annual work program each year, RIHP&HC examines suggestions to determine whether they indicate that a change to the plan may be necessary. If conditions have changed to such a degree, alterations and amendment of the plan will be undertaken. The annual evaluation of this plan includes suggested or planned changes to its overall structure and components when replacement is due in 2008.

APPENDICES [not included here]

1. An Overview of Rhode Island History
2. How This Plan Was Prepared
3. Sources of Information About Historic Resources and Preservation in Rhode Island
4. Financial Needs—Community Buildings
5. List of Contexts and Property Types
6. Preparing a Community Historic Preservation Plan
7. Bibliography