2008 WORK PLAN FOR GROW SMART RHODE ISLAND

SUMMARY

We recommend prioritizing five objectives for Grow Smart Rhode Island in 2008, each of which will require a series of discrete activities, most involving collaboration with one or more of our numerous coalition partners. The five objectives are outlined below briefly in this summary section, which is followed by detailed elaboration about how we propose to achieve each of the objectives. The final component of the 2008 Work Plan is a listing and brief description of the more than 20 committees and working groups to which we are either already committed or for which we anticipate that our participation will be requested in 2008.

Five Priority Objectives For Grow Smart Rhode Island in 2008

1. As advocated in Land Use 2025, promote implementation of more high quality, mixed-use, mixed-income development in our centers by safeguarding key incentives such as the State Historic Tax Credit and by sponsoring a new set of capacity building and public education initiatives.

2. Promote expansion of public transit and integration of such expansion with sound land use/community development.

3. Develop a comprehensive farm preservation strategy and work toward implementation of several key planks, including state inheritance tax relief for active family farms.

4. Place the smart growth agenda at the center of the state’s public policy dialogue about achieving a better future for Rhode Island through coalition work on behalf of a number of policy reforms and through a targeted program of publications, community and media outreach capitalizing on Grow Smart’s 10th Anniversary.

5. Continue to grow and diversify our funding base to ensure sustainability, staff retention and gradual expansion of staff so that we can capitalize on our rising influence, and the related increase in requests for our input/involvement.
WORK PLAN DETAILS

1. As advocated in Land Use 2025, promote implementation of more high quality, mixed-use, mixed-income development in our centers by safeguarding key incentives such as the State Historic Tax Credit and by sponsoring a new set of capacity building and public education initiatives. Specific actions to achieve this objective include:

- Coalition for Neighborhood and Economic Renewal. (Lead Role) (Scott/John)

- Advocating for an amendment to the state’s Tax Increment Financing (TIF) law to exempt TIF revenue from the property tax levy cap. We believe that until this action is taken, TIF arrangements for redevelopment will not be considered seriously by any Rhode Island municipality. (Lead Role in conjunction with the Rhode Island League of Cities & Towns) (Scott/Sheila)

- Attending regular meetings of two committees established to implement key Land-Use 2025 objectives, including well designed mixed income, mixed use centers – the State Planning Council’s Land-Use 2025 Advisory Subcommittee, and the KeepSpace Advisory Committee.

- Assisting, as needed other related initiatives such as the EPC led Borderlands project to establish thriving, model village centers in Exeter Rhode Island and nearby Killingly, Connecticut.

- Developing four new land-use planning workshops. (Lead Role) (Sheila/Katrina)

- Delivering a total of at least 12 land-use planning workshops (approximately 44 hours of training) and serve 325-400 attendees. (Lead Role) (Sheila/Katrina)

- Producing up to 4 additional smart growth case studies and printing and “packaging” all case studies (approximately 10) for distribution to a variety of key constituencies. (Lead Role) (Sheila with support from other staff and interns)

- Sponsoring our first Smart Growth Awards Program for the fall of 2007 to honor specific developers, developments, public officials and communities showing leadership in advancing key smart growth principles. (Lead Role)

- Working with the RI Chapter of the American Planning Association to post on line materials from land use workshops and innovative municipal ordinances such as those allowing for denser, mixed use development of village and town centers.

- Expanding public use of the electronic calendar www.communityconnectionri.org as a resource for information about workshops, conferences and other programs focused on land-use issues and strategies.
2. **Promote expansion of public transit and integration of such expansion with sound land use/community development.** Specific actions to achieve this objective include:

- Continuing to participate actively in the New Public Transit Alliance (NUPTA) and the second phase of the Transit 2020 initiative conceived by Mayor Cicilline in order to develop specific proposals and funding mechanisms for improved public transit. (John/Scott)

- Helping to shape and promote the NUPTA legislative agenda. (John)

- **Promoting restoration of train service in Pawtucket and Woonsocket** by working respectively (as needed) with the Pawtucket Foundation and the Woonsocket Planning Department.

- **Watchdogging implementation of the Wickford to Providence commuter rail project** through contact with DOT, the State Division of Planning and planning/economic development officials from North Kingstown, Warwick and Providence.

3. **Develop a comprehensive farm preservation strategy and work toward implementation** of several key planks, including state inheritance tax relief for active family farms. Specific actions to achieve this objective include:

- **Staffing a Board subcommittee** to lead and guide Grow Smart’s farm preservation efforts. (Sheila)

- Continuing to support the Farm Bureau’s state inheritance tax relief legislation for active family farms.

- Monitoring and attending when possible meetings of the State’s Farm Viability Committee. (Sheila)

- Possibly leading advocacy efforts for other farm preservation related legislation.

- Ensure that if an Open Space Bond is proposed for 2008 it includes a significant farm preservation component.

- Serving on any Committee established to promote a 2008 Open Space Bond.
4. Place the smart growth agenda at the center of the state’s public policy dialogue about achieving a better future for Rhode Island through coalition work on behalf of a number of policy reforms and through a targeted program of publications, community and media outreach capitalizing on Grow Smart’s 10th Anniversary. Specific actions to achieve this objective include:

- **Maintaining our involvement in coalitions** working to promote the State Historic Tax Credit, affordable housing, water management reform, Land Use 2025 Implementation, farm preservation, featurism and expansion of public transit.

**In the area of Affordable Housing:**

- **Promote maintenance of the current State level of financial support** for affordable housing primarily by safeguarding continued distribution of the state affordable housing bond funds, the Neighborhood opportunities Program and the Supportive Housing program designed to facilitate a path to independence for the homeless. (Scott and Sheila)

- **Participate in the Housing Works RI government relations subcommittee** if asked to continue serving on this subcommittee. (Scott)

- **Attend regular meetings of Housing Works RI Board of Directors now that Scott has been asked to serve on this new body** (Scott)

- **Shape the Housing Works RI legislative agenda** to reflect smart growth principles and priorities. (Scott and Sheila)

**In the area of Water Supply Management reform:**

- **Continue as an active member of the Coalition for Water Security.** (Scott)

- **Provide a land use and economic development perspective** for the Coalition’s reform proposals in order to ensure that Rhode Island’s ample water supply becomes a competitive advantage for the state. (Scott)

- **Assist the Coalition in the development and implementation of an effective communications and legislative strategy** (Scott)

- **Continue to be a statewide force for increasing substantially public awareness of the negative land use consequences of our current property tax system.**

- **Producing the 2nd Power of Place Summit** on May 2, 2008 and work to surpass the attendance of nearly 500 recorded at the inaugural Summit held in 2006. (John with support from rest of staff and interns)
• In partnership with the Providence Business News, producing and disseminating to an audience of roughly 12,000 opinion leaders a publication in April highlighting Grow Smart’s 10th anniversary and providing a detailed promotional brochure for the Power of Place Summit. (John with support from other staff and interns)

• Producing an updated, graphically enhanced Smart Growth Candidates’ Briefing Book for distribution to all candidates for General Assembly and local offices. (John with support from other staff and interns)

• Continuing to publish and circulate Grow Smart’s highly valued monthly E-Newsletter and seek to expand its audience from approximately 3,400 individuals to at least 4,000 (John with support from rest of staff)

• Maintaining and expanding Grow Smart’s web site. (John with support from other staff and interns)

• By using our access to national Smart Growth America research and to counterpart state based organizations around the country developing economic development and the movements for energy conservation, alternatives to global warming, and improved public health.

• Securing speaking engagements and conference presentation opportunities before a variety of influential audiences gathered by our coalition partners and other prominent civic groups.

• Continuing a program of aggressive Media Outreach, including op-eds, press releases/events, and appearances on public affairs shows. We will integrate these outreach efforts as much as possible with our electronic newsletter and web site.

• Working to expand the base of the smart growth movement, with particular emphasis on outreach to young people, the elderly, and the numerous grass root citizen groups in our state focused on development issues.

• Using project commentary (on a very selective basis) to speak publicly about smart growth policies and objectives and to influence decisions on major development proposals.

5. Continue to expand our funding base to ensure sustainability, staff retention and gradual expansion of staff so that we can capitalize on our growing influence, and the related increase in requests for our input/involvement.

• Complete Data Base upgrade and use database to systematize and manage fundraising efforts. (Leslie)

• Get approximately 60% of 2008 revenues from sources other than large foundations. (Scott with support from Betsy, rest of Staff and Board)
● Emerge from end of ’08 with at least a $30,000 surplus. (Scott with support from Betsy, rest of Staff and Board.)