**MISSION**

Grow Smart Rhode Island’s mission is to bring together diverse interests to protect and improve Rhode Island’s quality of life, economic vitality, and environmental health and the unique physical character created by the state’s historic cities, towns, and villages and by its farms, forests and open spaces. This will be achieved by promoting business and residential growth in urban and town centers and advancing open-land conservation and the preservation of rural character.

**VALUES**

- Building Strong, Livable Communities
- Promoting Economic Growth
- Renewing Rhode Island's Traditional Pattern of Urban, Town and Village Centers
- Preserving Natural Resources
- Promoting Effective Transportation System
- Calling for Responsible Government
Education & Outreach

Training

Grow Smart RI is committed to 'actively solicit the opinions and ideas of all Rhode Islanders and promote public debate about the future direction of our state.' Our mission statement specifically calls for Grow Smart RI to 'coordinate, and encourage broad community participation' in examining RI's current development patterns, considering alternatives and advocating for policies to achieve the common vision for the future.

Key Goals: Education & Outreach
Raise awareness among officials and citizens of the alternatives to current sprawl development patterns, their consequences and the tools to achieve smart growth
Build a stronger grass roots movement for smart growth policy reform at state and local level.
Connect smart growth more closely and viscerally to Rhode Islanders’ daily concerns in such areas as public health, economic development, taxation, and energy conservation.

Key Goals: Training
Raise awareness among officials and citizens of the alternatives to current sprawl development patterns.
Provide training in specific skills/knowledge needed to implement tools to achieve smart growth.
Maintain training at current level in 2005 with focus on smart growth topics while aggressively seeking funding for an expanded training program beginning in 2006.

Key Activities 2005: Education & Outreach

Refine Communications Plan
Continue monthly e-briefs
Maintain and expand website
Continue yellow pages
Expand database
Create & make widely available smart growth criteria checklist

Key Activities 2005: Training

Complete funded commitments in areas of housing and land use decision making.
Continue Making Good Land Use Decisions (possible handoff 06)
Identify funding for 06 and beyond.
Advocate for inclusion of training registration funds in city and state planning budgets.

Key Activities 2006: Education & Outreach

Develop 'People’s Guide to the State Land Use Plan'
Develop and produce Annual Newsletter (print and electronic format)
Update and Reissue Candidate Briefing Book
Smart Growth Annual Awards Program
Develop and implement Seminars for Journalists (only if earmarked funds obtained)

Key Activities 2006: Training

Further specialize focus of Grow Smart training
Expand audience to include citizens
Use environmental professionals and other resources to develop and deliver programs
Consider Annual Conference to deliver multiple workshops simultaneously (by 2008)
**Priority Investment Areas/Growth Centers**

Grow Smart RI is committed to reviewing and taking public positions on selected policies, procedures and projects for their impact on the quality of growth in RI. Policies, procedures and projects are selected which have regional and statewide implications - Grow Smart believes that development projects should be evaluated for their potential impacts on industrial/commercial vitality, job creation, environment, and on the quality of life of the community.

**Key Goals: Priority Investment Areas**

Promote state implementation of growth centers policy, including significant state investment in a dozen growth centers by 2008.
Convince 10 municipalities to include 'priority investment areas' in their Comp Plans by the end of 2006 and another 10 by the end of 2007.
Promote private sector participation in growth center development by FY 08.

**Key Activities 2005: Priority Investment Areas**

Assess whether the Growth Planning Council and or the EDC’s proposed "Jump Start Program"/RI Growth Centers Commission can be an effective vehicle to promote adoption of a comprehensive Growth Centers policy - if so, play key role in shaping growth centers policy through one or both these vehicles (especially to accomplish activities 2-11 listed below). If not, convene interested partners as a Growth Centers Task Force (GCTF) to promote growth centers initiative.
Modify current growth centers definition (ie, definition established by Growth Planning Council) & develop effective terminology and communications plan to communicate growth centers concept.
Define what constitutes urban, suburban and rural growth centers
Help to define criteria for prioritizing growth centers warranting special state attention

**Key Activities 2006: Priority Investment Areas**

Finalize list of specific public investments that can/should be targeted for growth centers.
Develop and disseminate model Comp Plan and ordinance language for growth centers.
Help to identify and overturn regulatory hurdles that discourage investment in growth centers
Provide information and technical assistance to cities and towns, including a 2006 Growth Centers Conference and infrastructure guidance.
Monitor, with the assistance of the Advisory Council and an intern, the siting decisions of the State Properties Committee to ensure that State facilities are sited in growth centers, and not moved from one growth center to another, unless there is a compelling reason for doing so.
Develop plan to work with banks to influence their views on loans to mixed use compact projects
Brownfields
Defending and Promoting Key Tools for Urban and Town Center Revitalization

Grow Smart RI is committed to accelerating the remediation and reuse of hundreds of Brownfield sites in RI,
Grow Smart RI is committed to generating new commercial and residential activity in urban and town centers through reuse of existing buildings.
Grow Smart RI is committed to make urban and town center redevelopment financially attractive and logistically feasible.

Key Goals: Brownfields

1. Increase RI State Government's promotion/facilitation of Brownfield redevelopment
2. Encourage local governments to initiate Brownfield redevelopment projects themselves or to facilitate private investment
3. Establish a pooled environmental insurance program for smaller Brownfield sites.

Key Activities 2005: Brownfields

Watchdog and facilitate implementation of permit streamlining.
Link Brownfields re-development w/ growth centers initiative if possible
Continue public education on value of Brownfield redevelopment

Key Activities 2006: Brownfields

Advocate for additional staffing at EDC for Brownfield marketing and oversight of Revolving Loan Fund.
If R.I. state fiscal situation improves and the development community shows great interest in a Brownfield redevelopment tax credit, initiate new advocacy efforts on behalf of such a tax credit.
In the 2006 Governor's race, revisit the issue of the State establishing an Ombudsman's Office for Properties Recycling and Brownfields.
Collaborate with the EBC and EPA on a workshop for communities interested in redeveloping more of their Brownfields.
Work with the EBC and the CDC community to identify small sites for a pooled insurance fund.

Key Goals: 'Key Tools'

1. To maintain the Historic Preservation Investment Tax Credit and increase developer use and citizens' support for it.
2. To re-establish the viability of the State Building Rehab Code.
3. To work with our allies to establish a Unified Fire and Building Code

Key Activities 2005: 'Key Tools'

Mobilize coalition members & research to defend HPITC.
Complete HPITC Study and use its results strategically.

If a decision is made to move forward on the Rehab Code, we should organize research and input for the State's Joint Rehab Board, Fire Board and Building Commission. (July, 2005)
Provide assistance to leadership of Unified Fire and Building Code effort in areas of coalition building, legislative advocacy and grass roots mobilization/lobbying.
Affordable and Workforce Housing

Grow Smart RI is committed to patterns of residential development that reflect Smart Growth principles around the environment, social equity, and economic development.

Key Goals: Affordable and Workforce Housing

1. By 2006, help to either pass a dedicated bond issue for affordable housing/land conservation, or establish a dedicated funding stream for affordable housing, ideally, a stream that would also assist with land conservation.

2. Help ensure that by 2007 29 RI communities have aggressive, realistic affordable housing plans that direct affordable housing to geographically appropriate, mixed use, mixed income, transit oriented sites.

3. Promote widespread understanding and application of design principles that will enable RI communities to have compact residential development complimenting existing community character.

4. Promote zoning changes to allow for more affordable housing laws within the understanding described in # 2 above.

Key Activities 2005: Affordable and Workforce Housing

Continue to lead Housing and Conservation Trust Fund Study Commission
Serve on the Joint Legislative Housing Act Oversight Commission
Provide input/best practice information to Statewide Planning and Housing Resources Commission re: 2006 State Housing Plan
Emphasize positive role of Historic Preservation Investment Tax Credit in producing additional units of affordable housing.
Encourage high proportion of RI's new housing units be built from existing stock (50% or more if deemed realistic).
In education efforts, make link between drive for more affordable housing and local designation of growth centers.
Take leadership role in promoting Trust Fund Study Commission's legislative recommendations.
Raise financial support to create education, outreach & training around local affordable housing efforts. (overlaps w/ outreach/education & training)
Highlight on our web site and in civic presentations the positive design and quality of life aspects of many affordable housing initiatives (note overlaps with activities in Priority # 1)

Key Activities 2006 Affordable and Workforce Housing

Design curriculum for additional affordable housing training.
Deliver curriculum for additional affordable housing training.
Transportation

Grow Smart RI believes that federal, state and local funds should be focused on maintaining existing roads and highways, promoting efficient automobile use, and developing mass transit and other alternatives to automobile transportation. Also, transportation planning and implementation for new development should include pedestrian, bicycle, public transit and water transportation. No Rhode Islander should be denied services, recreational or job opportunities because of their limited means or inability to drive/purchase a car.

Key Goals: Transportation

1. Promote expansion of commuter rail and intermodalism in Rhode Island.

2. Help establish a more solid financial future for RIPTA.

3. Encourage transit oriented development-perhaps as a critical component of any locally designated growth center.

Key Activities 2005: Transportation

1. Develop a job description and recruit for a graduate planning intern to coordinate Grow Smart's activities regarding transportation.

2. Support strongly efforts to develop commuter rail service from Providence to Wickford.

3. Watchdog as necessary with our allies DOT's study of the potential for reactivating the Pawtucket train station.

4. Participate in the dialogue and research as necessary about how to develop a long range, sustainable funding mechanism for RIPTA.

5. Strongly support efforts to establish at TF Green Airport one of the nation's first intermodal train stations adjacent to a commercial airport.

6. Ensure that the state prioritizes investments in locally designated "growth centers" featuring either existing public transit access or proposals for new transit oriented development (crosses over with Priority II).

Key Activities 2006: Transportation

Include transportation projects in the proposed Awards program.
Property Tax
Land Conservation

Grow Smart RI is committed to identifying and implementing alternatives to RI’s current heavy reliance on the local property tax to fund public education and other municipal services because this reliance adversely impacts decisions as to where development is located. Grow Smart RI is committed to preserving the state’s farmlands, forests, Bay, and inland waters and coastal lands.

Key Goals: Property Tax

1. Ensure that the negative land use consequences of the current property tax system become a significant part of the state's property tax reform dialogue.

2. Ensure that key participants in the property tax reform debate are exposed to potential smart growth oriented solutions to the current over reliance on the property tax.

Key Activities 2005: Property Tax

1. Make the land use case for property tax reform at every opportunity - civic forums, media appearances and outreach, meetings with key elected and appointed officials, etc.

2. Inject ideas about split rate taxation systems and regional property tax sharing so that a full spectrum of reform alternatives is considered.

3. Monitor the Joint Legislative Committee on Education Funding's deliberations and seek opportunities to comment on their deliberations and react to their preliminary recommendations.

Key Activities 2006: Property Tax

4. Work to make property tax reform a central plank of the major gubernatorial candidates in 2006.

Key Goals: Land Conservation

1. Preserve the rural character of as many of RI's currently rural communities as possible.

2. Provide local officials and citizens with more tools and funding to preserve priority open space lands and other key natural resources.

Key Activities 2005: Land Conservation

1. Continue to promote innovative tools for land conservation through training programs, web site, toolbox, and e-briefs. (Crosses over with Education, Outreach and training goals)

Key Activities 2006 & 2007: Land Conservation

2. Help to develop and promote future Open Space Bond issues as necessary. (crosses over with Affordable Housing Goals) 2007

3. Assess whether either RI's farm community or the cause of farm preservation needs special attention from us to thrive.

4. If we determine that either warrants special attention, become involved in DEM's farm promotion committee and watchdog the distribution of state farm preservation funds to ensure that they are allocated in an efficient and timely way.
Project Commentary

Grow Smart RI is committed to reviewing and taking public positions on selected policies, procedures and projects for their impact on the quality of growth in RI. Policies, procedures and projects are selected which have regional and statewide implications - Grow Smart believes that development projects should be evaluated for their potential impacts on industrial/commercial vitality, job creation, environment, and on the quality of life of the community.

Key Goals: Project Commentary

1. To use controversy about projects as smart growth teachable moments.

2. To connect the smart growth agenda more directly to people's daily lives, hopes and fears.

3. To stop bad projects and promote good ones.

Key Activities 2005: Project Commentary

Seek Board agreement on a new set of threshold criteria for project commentary and a range of ways we can participate in such commentary.

Include in annual work plans enough staff time and financial resources to comment in support of at least one project and in opposition to at least one other project.

Key Activities 2006: Project Commentary

Include projects in the proposed Awards program.