



**RESULTS FROM SURVEY OF ATTENDEES AT  
FORUM ON “REVITALIZING AND RENEWING RHODE ISLAND”, MAY 21, 2003**

(A majority of attendees filled out the survey, but please note that not all did so. Also, please note that some of those who did fill out the survey didn't always answer each question. Tabulated results for each question are based on the total number answering that question. For some questions the “Not Sure” percentage has been rounded up or down by a single percentage point so that totals add to 100%.)

Please take this opportunity to give us your opinions about a variety of suggested strategies to promote urban and town center revitalization in Rhode Island. **Please complete all four pages.**

**1. Have you done redevelopment work in Rhode Island or nearby Massachusetts/Connecticut?**

- Yes      **56%**
- No        **44%**

**Total responses = 125**

**a. If yes, what percentage of your company's billings or organization's expenditures (for govt., non-profits) would you say focus on redevelopment work?**

- Less than 10%    **17%**
- 10-25%            **18%**
- 26-50%            **17%**
- 51- 75%            **18%**
- More than 75%    **29%**

**Total responses = 70**

**2. Below is a list of advantages that some people cite for doing redevelopment work over greenfield development. Please indicate for each item on the list if you think it is a major advantage in doing redevelopment work over greenfield development, a minor advantage, or no advantage at all.**

**(Results presented in descending order of percentage citing an item as a “major advantage”.)**

	<b>Major Advant.</b>	<b>Minor Advant.</b>	<b>No Advant.</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>
Redevelopment sites are more likely than Greenfield sites to be served by existing infrastructure <b>Total responses = 125</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>6%</b>
Redevelopment locations tend to be in densely populated areas with access to a good labor force and consumer market. <b>Total responses = 122</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>2%</b>
Redevelopment creates more goodwill and good publicity <b>Total responses = 125</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>4%</b>
There are now more sites available in Rhode Island for Redevelopment projects than for Greenfield projects <b>Total responses = 121</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>25%</b>
Redevelopment is more professionally fulfilling and challenging than Greenfield development. <b>Total responses = 125</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>10%</b>
Redevelopment employs more people than new construction. <b>Total responses = 117</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>13%</b>

**3. How much do you think high property taxes discourage investors from pursuing redevelopment opportunities in our urban centers—a great deal, somewhat, just a little, or not at all?**

- A great deal **44%**
- Somewhat **42%**
- Just a little **5%**
- Not at all **2%**
- Not sure **7%**

**Total responses = 126**

**4. How much do you think the perception of being subjected to greater regulatory burdens in urban centers than elsewhere discourages investors from pursuing urban redevelopment opportunities—a great deal, somewhat, just a little, or not at all?**

- A great deal **53%**
- Somewhat **38%**
- Just a little **4%**
- Not at all **2%**
- Not sure **3%**

**Total responses = 125**

**5. Which ONE of the following do you think is the single best way to stimulate additional redevelopment of Brownfields in Rhode Island?**

**(Results presented in descending order of % selecting an item as the single best way to stimulate additional Brownfield redevelopment in RI.)**

- Establish a 30% Brownfield State Income Tax Credit for the assessment and clean up costs of companies or individuals involved in Brownfield redevelopment.  
**35%**
- Increase funding for the State Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund  
**17%**
- Provide better assistance for developers seeking brownfields sites available for redevelopment  
**15%**
- Expand Environmental Insurance Options  
**5%**
- Establish a Licensed Site Professional program to oversee assessment and clean-up projects.  
**5%**
- Increase the staff in DEM's Brownfields unit  
**4%**
- Other (Write in) \_\_\_\_\_  
**5%**
- Not Sure  
**14%**

**Total responses = 124**

**Other:**

- Better Coordination of "One Stop Shopping".
- State should clean up the sites & then sell them to developers.
- Make greenfield devel. More difficult. Make brownfield devel. Easier.
- P.R. campaign to educate the masses.
- Establish grant funding for small businesses that want to work with others for incubator.
- Clarity and knowledge of regs for clean-up and economic responsibility for work.
- Tax stabilization to encourage redevelopment over new construction.

6. Which ONE of the following do you think is the least effective way to stimulate additional redevelopment of Brownfields in Rhode Island?  
(Results presented in descending order of % selecting an item as the least effective way to stimulate additional Brownfield redevelopment in RI.)

- Establish a Licensed Site Professional program to oversee assessment and clean-up projects.  
**21%**
- Increase the staff in DEM's Brownfields unit  
**17%**
- Provide better assistance for developers seeking brownfields sites available for redevelopment  
**13%**
- Expand Environmental Insurance Options  
**4%**
- Establish a 30% Brownfield State Income Tax Credit for the assessment and clean up costs of companies or individuals involved in Brownfield redevelopment.  
**3%**
- Increase funding for the State Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund  
**2%**
- Other (Write in) \_\_\_\_\_  
**1%**
- Not Sure  
**39%**

**Total responses = 120**

Other:

- Task EDC with the job of selling these sites

7. Do you think that Rhode Island's Economic Development Corporation is being aggressive enough in promoting urban and town center redevelopment?

- Yes **10%**
- No **64%**
- Not sure **26%**

**Total responses = 126**

8. Do you think the state should target some of its infrastructure spending and investments to designated growth centers – compact, mixed-use centers designated by municipalities as areas for growth?

- Yes 84%
- No 5%
- Not sure 11%

**Total responses = 126**

9. The “Cities Count” initiative has proposed creating, subject to voter approval in a statewide referendum, a \$ 75 to \$100 million “Urban Renaissance Investment Trust Fund” to provide municipalities and redevelopment agencies with access to capital to improve urban infrastructure and leverage private investment in our urban communities. Would you strongly favor establishing such a fund, somewhat favor it, somewhat oppose it, or strongly oppose it?

- Strongly Favor 67%
- Somewhat favor 22%
- Somewhat oppose 2%
- Strongly oppose 0%
- Not sure 9%

**Total responses = 122**

10. What do you think are the most important actions to take within the next year to encourage more urban and town center redevelopment in Rhode Island? (Please write your answers below. You should not feel limited to the suggestions raised earlier in this questionnaire (use back side of paper if necessary).

- Market the rehab code.
- Better coordination between the myriad of public agencies effecting redevelopment.
- More public outreach and education. People are not aware of the programs already adopted.
- Better schools, mass transit, public safety, beautify.
- Increased regulatory relief, insurance options and funding.
- Make Greenfield development more difficult.
- Financial incentives, real dollars for development.

- Tax stabilization.
- Continued education on the use of tax credits and the rehab code.
- Improvement of services in urban areas.
- Touting of benefits to individuals who would be consumers.
- Institutionalize smartgrowth at state level (office of smartgrowth) and fund properly.
- Also, institutionalize developer education initiative with best development practices.
- More investment \$ for ring communities.
- More fire and Bldg. officials, better trained with unified code. State should push development to cities and town centers.
- More P.R. on subject so there is enhanced understanding of projects and availability of tax incentives. Put additional emphasis on mixed-use/ afford. rent units.
- Make Greenfield development more difficult. Have a growth plan emphasizing growth in targeted areas.
- Urban programs should include rural conservation and farm viability programs. Also, should be looking to ecological design to reduce urban pollution.
- Disincentives for new development and new infrastructure. More efficient regulatory process. Financial incentives for re-use, transportation improvements.
- Clarification of historic tax credits. Fund building & inspection.
- Establish a Main Streets program.
- P.R. about the need to do this work.
- Need strong statewide policy that encourages urban development. Eliminate inventory tax. State leases in rehab buildings. Improved public transit & walkability would help.
- Make it easier and less expensive to deal with brownfield issues. Too many bureaucratic hoops to jump through and delays. Delays by DEM staffers seem whimsical and subjective and often require developers to engage high-priced lawyers or try to apply political pressure by using contacts.
- Funds for feasibility and pre-development costs.
- Keep the community involved in the process.
- “One-Stop” regulatory agency.
- Economic incentives. Ease administrative burden.
- Implement “Growth Centers”.
- Education.
- Upgrade infrastructure – especially sewers in existing town centers.
- Public (voter/taxpayer) education. Eliminate red tape. State needs to be more business friendly. Develop new codes to promote streamlined permitting.
- Build political support at all levels. Establish an ombudsman to help work through implementation of smartgrowth policies.
- More Incentives for sustainable design (i.e) use of renewable energy and “green technologies” in these redevelopments.
- Restore the RI Division of Statewide Planning to its previous stature and importance – need stronger role (similar to Maryland).
- Rural communities must have access to professional planner, architectural, and landscape architecture services, to better negotiate with developers.
- Improvement of attractiveness of RI as a business center.
- Encourage local officials to accept using the rehab code.
- Show, re-show, celebrate why current and recent projects achieve the specific benefits. Recognize the reality that significant segments of larger public love their malls and strip centers. Emphasize how problems of sprawl cannot entirely be solved by free markets.

- Coordination of agencies like statewide planning, EDC, the Housing Resources Commission, RI Housing and manage efforts to develop a community economic development vision and strategy to support, foster, encourage and fund local initiatives.
- To grow with a comprehensive plan , not just react to development. Political support for density. Funding for infrastructure, Favorable regulatory environment, Tax incentives, Directing state investment to older communities.
- Increase state investments in local urban and town center improvements and programs. More education of RI developers (RIBA, etc.) to show that redevelopment projects can be as, or more profitable than new development.
- More public awareness and highlight success stories.
- Funded parking solutions. Quicker plan reviews. Political support for density.
- Promote regionalism.
- Force the state DOT to initiate or rebuild rail transportation infrastructure – eliminate highway widening, expansion projects and shift funds to user-friendly mass transit.
- Support detailed study of the Ship Street canal project in Providence.
- Re-focus the RIEDC to emphasize downtown and town center projects and support the “creative economy” initiatives advocated by the RIEPC and others.
- Clarity of codes, policy and mission of state, regional, city and neighborhood goals.
- Make the linkage of funds available for development known to developers. Develop a comprehensive list of all funding sources created and distributed to all agencies involved in funding.
- More good staff for inspections and standards. Commercial building code & enforcement. Create process to reclaim vacant lots and buildings. Incorporate affordability.
- Aggressively market available sites.
- Make it very expensive to develop greenspace. More inspectors in cities. Help RIPTA create a working transit system to get people in/out of city.
- Increase staff and training of building officials so process is more dependable and efficient.
- Publicize the wealth and variety of buildings, space and infrastructure that exists in RI.
- Establish land trusts in rural areas, taking greenspace off the market. Improve the school systems and existing resources within the cities. Incorporate anti-gentrification provisions with development incentives to maintain diversity and long-term sustainability.
- Consolidation and Promotion of incentives. Streamlining of approval process. Staffing for building/zoning departments for more inspectors.
- Increase state PILOT. Promote creative economy. Propose tax reform. Brownfields credit & program.
- Develop grass roots interest.
- Establishment of “Growth Centers”. Provision of more affordable housing. Increased economic incentives to encourage new businesses and growth.
- Work to optimize rehab code and clear questions on tax credit applicability. Development opportunity is primarily dependent on identification of market. Since that is happening, we need to clear as many hurdles as possible and let the market work.

**11. Please mark the category below that best describes your current occupation.**

- Builder (3)
- Developer (for-profit or non-profit) (26)
- Architect (11)
- Property Owner / Property Manager (4)
- Realtor (2)
- Banker (5)
- Insurer
- Attorney (2)
- Other Business
- Local Government Official (15)
- State Government Official (6)
- Federal Government Official (5)
- Economic Development Professional (4)
- Labor Union Official (1)
- Historic Preservation Professional (5)
- Environmental Professional (5)
- Housing Professional / Advocate (3)
- Other Non-Profit (10)
- Student (3)
- Professor / Teacher (1)
- Retired (1)
- Community Volunteer (2)
- Other (please write in)(7) \_\_\_\_\_

**Other:**

- Regional Planner
- Technical Consultant
- Engineer
- Planner
- Commercial Real Estate Appraiser
- Organization & Community Consultant
- Policy Analyst