

RI 2030 Public Input Form

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe3cgRe67IN2PM2WhbjUbqV01Ax-HZ8DyNYPjD3\\_U3be5FH7A/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe3cgRe67IN2PM2WhbjUbqV01Ax-HZ8DyNYPjD3_U3be5FH7A/viewform)

**Name:** Valerie Talmage, Executive Director

**Email:** [vtalmage@preserveri.org](mailto:vtalmage@preserveri.org)

**Organization:** Preserve Rhode Island

**What issues are most important to you as we plan for Rhode Island's future?**

- Rhode Island's historic building stock and how it can help with housing shortage and green energy goals.
- Developing strong coastal resiliency plans that can help Rhode Island's most at-risk communities adapt to the threat of rising sea levels.
- Promoting the health of historic village main streets and downtowns which are drivers of economic growth in our state.

**What are the top things Rhode Island should do to become a more prosperous, equitable, and resilient state?**

1. Rhode Island should see its current housing stock as a resource and not as a liability. The greenest building is one that is already built! Older homes have already demonstrated a longer useful life expectancy due to higher quality materials and craftsmanship than new construction, which is better for the environment. We must elevate the conversation about the sustainability and economic feasibility of reusing our existing historic building stock. Historic buildings are not a threat to our communities, but an asset that can promote important green energy goals. By providing financial assistance to homeowners and landlords to help improve energy efficiency by repairing existing building elements (example – window sash restoration, adding storm windows) and mitigating health hazards, it will help Rhode Islanders stay in their homes and open existing housing stock to more people. Additionally, with the large shift in office work that has resulted from the pandemic, we are faced with the question of how to adaptively reuse large office buildings, and this should be considered as a major opportunity to develop additional housing options.
2. Rhode Island should prioritize efforts to adapt to and prepare for imminent climate change. Rising sea levels are endangering Rhode Island's historic buildings and other historic resources located in cities and towns across our state. This is already having a direct impact on Rhode Island's cultural heritage. This damage is increasing and will be irreversible if systematic and coordinated action is not taken.
3. Rhode Island's historic downtowns are an important part of the state's economy and more should be done to support local businesses and create an environment that enables them to thrive. Preserving downtown historic commercial and industrial buildings through adaptive reuse is an economic development tool that should be encouraged with economic incentives. Historic preservation is good for business and good for Rhode Island.

**Are there any other issues, policies, or initiatives our state should consider for the next decade?**

Non-profits should be seen as organizations that contribute to the state's economy as small business employers as well as partners who can work with both governments and private businesses to advance initiatives. For example, to advance workforce development goals, the state might provide

financial incentives to encourage partnerships with nonprofits in addition to educational institutions. Nonprofits, especially ones like ours, Preserve Rhode Island, who are directly working with buildings throughout the state, have a lot to offer to advance many of the workforce development goals outlined in the 2030 Plan. Developing a stronger workforce of skilled preservation trades workers is a nationwide goal in the historic preservation field. We want to participate in some of the ideas the state is putting forward as it is directly related to our goals as well.