

Ensuring a place for the past
in Rhode Island's future

2017-2021
STRATEGIC PLAN





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MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-CHAIRS

Preserve Rhode Island's strategic plan outlines goals and strategies to make preserving Rhode Island's historic buildings and special places for the future an abiding principle for the people of our state.

Our historic buildings and unique places shape the distinct character of every city and town. They act as connectors and centers for our heritage—places of shared experience. From coastline to main streets, from neighborhoods to fields and forests, Rhode Islanders enjoy a quality of place that is unique and far more than a pretty picture—it is a key economic driver for the state.

Together, we can build an army of people who care. Let's demonstrate how vacant buildings can be transformed into valuable community assets. Let's capitalize on the way our heritage attracts visitors to our state. Let's get more people excited about protecting historic places and fostering community.

This strategic plan was developed by lively working groups of Preserve Rhode Island staff and trustees—harnessing our collective professional experience and our statewide reach. The plan lays out an ambitious vision for a Rhode Island in which historic places are seen as economic and community assets, and Preserve Rhode Island's hands-on experience in the care of historic properties is recognized and valued.


The strategic priorities we lay out are varied; some have long time horizons, many are challenging, almost all will require collaboration to leverage resources and deepen our statewide reach. We recognize the need to find new resources to realize these goals.

We campaign for historic places not because we want to live in the past but because we care about the generations ahead. Please join us in our efforts to take care of the places that tell our unique story in history, and thereby strengthen our communities for the future. Rhode Island's distinct quality of place and community-minded citizenry are essential ingredients for prosperity.

Preserve Rhode Island Co-Chairs


Lewis Dana


Doris Licht


Wendy Nicholas

WORDS TO LIVE BY

“It is greatly in the public interest that beautiful and historic buildings, places, and things in Rhode Island be preserved for public enjoyment and to attract visitors to our state, and that continued activity be inspired in the extraordinary development of architecture, arts and crafts which has been the rich heritage of Rhode Island from its earliest colonial days.”

*Articles of Incorporation
Preserve Rhode Island, 1956*

“The historical and cultural foundations of the Nation should be preserved as a living part of our community life and development in order to give a sense of orientation to the American people . . . the preservation of this irreplaceable heritage is in the public interest so that its vital legacy of cultural, educational, aesthetic, inspirational, economic, and energy benefits will be maintained and enriched for future generations of Americans.”

National Historic Preservation Act, 1966



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Co-Chairs

Lewis Dana, Providence

Doris Licht, Providence & Charlestown

Wendy Nicholas, Boston & Westport, MA

Sheryl Amaral, Cumberland

Sheila Brush, North Kingstown

Elizabeth Capozzi, Cranston

Kristin DeKuiper, Cranston

Johanna Harris, Providence

William Kenyon, Warwick

Lawrence Lavers, Bristol

Catherine Lund, Providence & Tiverton

Georgina Macdonald, Bristol

Cristen Raucci, Providence

Carole Saracco, Cranston

Mike Sherry, South Kingstown

Sara Strachan II, Providence

Richard Ventrone, Scituate

Meera Viswanathan, South Kingstown

MISSION & VISION

MISSION

To protect and celebrate Rhode Island's historic places for the generations to come.

VISION FOR SUCCESS

- Rhode Islanders take pride in their state's historic places and actively work to safeguard them
- Communities evolve in ways that honor our heritage, old buildings are given new uses and new buildings respect the sense of place
- Farms, open space, forests and historic downtowns form integral parts of community life and the economy
- Restored and re-purposed historic buildings are major contributors to economic vitality and environmental sustainability
- Preservation means business—jobs, a robust tax base, and stable property values
- Visitors come to our state because it offers “only-in-Rhode Island” experiences—our unique history, architecture and landscapes
- Our properties set the standard for best stewardship practices in the care of historic buildings
- We are recognized for leading advocacy initiatives that generate resources to protect historic places



GOAL #1 STEWARD

Set an example for stewardship excellence and provide best-practice preservation services to owners of historic buildings.

CHALLENGE

How do we sustain excellent property care standards while keeping up with the ongoing maintenance needs of our own properties and those we steward?

STRATEGIES

- Maintain our properties to a high standard of excellence
- Augment stewardship funds and building reserves to ensure the properties we own are financially sustainable
- Provide excellent stewardship services to non-profit organizations and governmental entities
- Develop a Stewardship Services Business Plan that sets a pathway for program growth and expansion
- Conduct annual monitoring of easements and leases, and enforce provisions to protect historic properties

GOAL #2 | PROTECT

Accomplish projects that focus on preserving the quality of place in Rhode Island.

CHALLENGE

What can we do to expand Preserve Rhode Island's work statewide?

STRATEGIES

- Identify and take on Revolving Fund projects, focused on partnering with cities and towns and non-profit organizations
- Build the Revolving Fund to \$500,000
- Focus on protecting historic places adjacent to open space in partnership with land trusts
- Collaborate on special projects that protect the historic character of communities
- Accept donations of historic preservation easements when they align with our priorities



Documenting historic buildings on open space on Aquidneck Island

GOAL #3 | ADVOCATE

Speak up to protect historic places and support policy initiatives that encourage preservation.

CHALLENGE

How do we prove that saving old places delivers major economic benefits to the public?

STRATEGIES

- Conduct research and promote findings on the economic and societal impacts of preservation
- Develop measures and track progress in preserving Rhode Island's quality of place
- Advocate for the expansion of state and federal preservation programs
- Organize community action around threatened historic places to influence decision-makers
- Work with allies in land conservation, housing, arts and culture, and economic development to have a stronger voice



The final pole comes down at Sachuest Point, Middletown where Preserve Rhode Island and partners campaigned to restore this historic, treasured landscape



GOAL #4 ENGAGE

Increase public engagement with historic places to build an army of people who care and take action to preserve Rhode Island.

CHALLENGE

How can we better engage Rhode Islanders to actively work to preserve our special places?

STRATEGIES

- Celebrate outstanding preservation projects and people at the annual Rhody Awards
- Offer innovative programs to engage diverse audiences at Lippitt House Museum
- Lead the Historic Sites Coalition and the Rhody Ramble Initiative to connect family visitors to Rhode Island's historic places
- Generate news coverage of noteworthy preservation activities and local success stories that contribute to the character of Rhode Island communities
- Complete the strategic plan for Lippitt House Museum to increase its impact as a leading cultural institution

GOAL #5 | STRENGTHEN FINANCES

Increase Preserve Rhode Island's financial capacity to expand our reach and become a more resilient organization.

CHALLENGE

How do we increase Preserve Rhode Island's financial resources to advance our agenda and sustain the organization?

STRATEGIES

- Implement a development strategy that makes smart investments to increase resources
- Cultivate and expand the circle of individuals who support and sustain our organization
- Promote a planned gift program to expand stewardship funds and to sustain operations
- Host exciting, innovative and financially successful events to engage new people and sustain the organization
- Secure grants for capital projects and innovative preservation programs
- Monitor investment performance and ensure sustainability of our endowment

GOAL #6 | STRENGTHEN THE TEAM

Develop Preserve Rhode Island's board of trustees and staff to ensure Rhode Island has a strong voice for preservation.

CHALLENGE

How can we strengthen our leadership role and increase our capacity?

STRATEGIES

- Continue the rotating tri-chair board leadership model
- Institute a succession plan to capitalize on the skills and expertise of all PRI trustees and maintain Preserve Rhode Island's vitality
- Foster trustee engagement through committees, working groups and ad hoc teams
- Recruit new trustees who are committed to our mission and whose skills can advance our organization's mission
- Align staff salaries with the market
- Expand staffing to support growth in development and programs called for in this plan



Preserve Rhode Island Trustee Committee
discusses preservation options with owner
of historic property, Cranston

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