

SUMMARY of the 2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION



Legislation Enacted that Affects Local, Regional and Statewide Planning

During the 2023 Rhode Island General Assembly session, numerous bills were enacted that will impact local, regional, and statewide planning. A total of 2,588 bills were filed in 2023. This year, 140 planning related bills were tracked and, of these tracked bills, more than 40 were enacted as laws. The Land Use Staff of the Division scans for a variety of topics related to centralized planning responsibilities for the Division, the State Guide Plan, and other requirements as the State's single Metropolitan Planning Organization. To supply a speedy summary this year, due to the volume of changes enacted, summaries are not provided to get the entire list of law amendments circulated as soon as possible. Below is a list of the enacted bills, accompanied by links to the actual legislation on the web. The bills that were signed into law and that affect the Division are shown first, then bills related to transportation, energy, housing, land use/zoning, other state government, solid waste, and water supply planning follow. The Summary concludes with a few selected "hot" topics that did not pass the session. A reminder: the effective dates vary for some of the enacted laws, municipal planners should consult with their municipal solicitors about amendments needed to bring zoning ordinances, subdivision and land development, and or other regulations into compliance with the newly enacted laws.

DIVISION OF STATEWIDE PLANNING

- Senate Resolution No. [1004](#) - ENTITLED, SENATE RESOLUTION CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PAWTUCKET CORRIDOR (Creates a new 13 member commission to study and provide recommendations for improving the Pawtucket Corridor, and reports back to the President of the Senate on or before May 7, 2024, and expires on June 7, 2024.) - Appoints the Associate Director of Statewide Planning and Chair of the Transportation Advisory Committee or designees to the Commission– Takes effect upon passage.
 - 06/14/2023 Senate read and passed - Resolution 420
- Senate Bill No. [1033 SUB A](#) /House Bill No. [6085 SUB A](#) ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- RHODE ISLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING AND LAND USE ACT (Amends the required contents of a comprehensive plan providing that the "implementation program" component of the requirements include a 5-year strategic plan to ensure that the comprehensive plan goals and policies are implemented in a timely fashion.) - Takes effect on March 1, 2024.
 - 06/24/2023 Signed by Governor – Chapters 314 & 315
- Senate Bill No. [1038 SUB A](#) / House Bill No. [6086 SUB A](#) ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- RHODE ISLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING AND LAND USE ACT (Amends certain notification procedures relating to comprehensive planning and land use, subdivision of land and zoning ordinances) – Takes effect upon passage.
 - 06/24/2023 Signed by Governor – Chapters 316 & 317
- House Resolution No. [6089](#) - ENTITLED, HOUSE RESOLUTION EXTENDING THE REPORTING AND EXPIRATION DATES, AND REQUIRING REAPPOINTMENT OF THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY THE ENTIRE AREA OF LAND USE, PRESERVATION, DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING, ENVIRONMENT, AND REGULATION (Extends the reporting and expiration dates and requires a letter of continued interest to the speaker for reappointment of membership, to the commission to study the entire area of land use from 6/8/23 to 6/8/25 and would expire on 6/30/25.) – Takes effect upon passage.
 - Allows for reappointment of the Associate Director of Statewide Planning to the Commission
 - 04/06/2023 House read and passed - Resolution 230

TRANSPORTATION

- Senate Bill No. [988 as amended](#) ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- PARKING FACILITIES AND PRIVILEGES (Requires electric vehicle parking spaces in new and expanded parking lots.) - Takes effect on July 1, 2023.
 - 06/22/2023 Signed by Governor – Chapter 268
- Senate Bill No. [991 SUB A as amended](#) / House Bill No. [6495](#) ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS -- RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY (This act would amend the composition of the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority.) - Takes effect on July 1, 2023.
 - 06/22/2023 Signed by Governor – Chapter 247

ENERGY

- Senate Bill No. [684 SUB A](#) / House Bill No. [5853 SUB A](#) ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS -- NET METERING (Defines core forest and preferred sites and provides that any net metering resource owned or operated by a renewable energy developer be treated as an eligible net metering system provided it is not in a core forest.) – Takes effect upon passage.
 - 06/24/2023 Signed by Governor – Chapters 300 & 301
- House Resolution No. [6370](#) ENTITLED, HOUSE RESOLUTION EXTENDING THE REPORTING AND EXPIRATION DATES FOR THE SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PLACEMENT OF SOLAR PANELS ON INTER-STATE HIGHWAYS (Extends the reporting and expiration dates of the commission to study and make recommendations on placement of solar panels on inter-state highways from April 11, 2023, to April 11, 2024, and would expire on June 11, 2024.) – Takes effect upon passage.
 - 05/25/2023 House read and passed - Resolution 354

HOUSING

- Senate Bill No. [1037 SUB A](#) / House Bill No. [6081 SUB A](#) ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- LOW AND MODERATE INCOME HOUSING (Provides amendments relative to low-and moderate-income housing and modifies and clarifies the procedure for review of applications to build such housing.) - Takes effect on January 1, 2024.
 - 06/24/2023 Signed by Governor – Chapters 310 & 311
- Senate Bill No. [1050 SUB A](#) / House Bill No. [6083 SUB A](#) ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- LOW AND MODERATE INCOME HOUSING (Amends several sections of law relating to low-and moderate-income housing and the application, appeal, and judicial review process.) – Takes effect upon passage.
 - 06/24/2023 Signed by Governor – Chapters 312 & 313
- House Resolution No. [6088](#) ENTITLED, HOUSE RESOLUTION EXTENDING THE REPORTING AND EXPIRATION DATES AND AMENDING THE PURPOSE, NAME, AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY THE LOW AND MODERATE INCOME HOUSING ACT (This resolution would expand the purpose, amend the name and membership, and extend the reporting and expiration dates of the Commission from April 12, to June 7, 2025, and would expire on June 28, 2025.) – Takes effect upon passage.
 - 04/06/2023 House read and passed - Resolution 229

LAND USE/ZONING

- Senate Bill No. [114](#) / House Bill No. [5262](#) ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- HISTORICAL AREA ZONING (Allows the town of Bristol to appoint a second auxiliary member to its historical district commission.) – Takes effect upon passage.
 - 05/15/2023 Signed by Governor - Chapters 015 & 016
- Senate Bill No. [1032 SUB A](#) / House Bill No. [6059 SUB A](#) ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- ZONING ORDINANCES (Amends certain general laws relative to zoning ordinance variances, special use permits, modifications thereto and also amends provisions relative to substandard lots of record and the merger of such lots.) - Takes effect on January 1, 2024.
 - 06/24/2023 Signed by Governor – Chapters 304 & 305
- Senate Bill No. [1034 SUB A](#) / House Bill No. [6061 SUB A as amended](#) ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- SUBDIVISION OF LAND (Amends the provisions relative to the subdivision of land and the application process requesting

relief from zoning ordinances and the review process thereof.) - Takes effect on January 1, 2024.

- 06/24/2023 Signed by Governor – Chapters 308 & 309
- Senate Bill No. [1035 SUB A](#) / House Bill No. [6090 SUB A](#) ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- ZONING ORDINANCES (Provides that adaptive reuse for the conversion of commercial property into residential or mixed-use developments shall be a permitted use and allowable by specific and objective provisions of a zoning ordinance, subject to certain restrictions.) - Takes effect on January 1, 2024.
 - 06/24/2023 Signed by Governor – Chapters 321 & 322
- Senate Bill No. [1051 SUB A](#) / House Bill No. [6058 SUB A](#) ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- ZONING ORDINANCES (Increases the amount of allowable units per acre for all projects subject to inclusionary zoning as well as other incentives and subsidies to offset differential costs of below-market units.) – Takes effect on January 1, 2024
 - 06/24/2023 Signed by Governor – Chapters 302 & 303
- Senate Bill No. [1052 SUB A](#) / House Bill No. [6084 SUB B](#) ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- ZONING ORDINANCES (Creates the transit oriented development pilot program to encourage residential housing near convenient public transportation.) – Takes effect on January 1, 2024.
 - 06/24/2023 Signed by Governor – Chapters 323 & 324
- Senate Bill No. [1061 SUB A](#) ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- ZONING ORDINANCES (Amends what can be considered an individual household for purposes of zoning ordinances.) - Takes effect upon passage.
 - 06/15/2023 House passed Sub A in concurrence*
 - * It still is uncertain if it has been transmitted to the Governor as of 07/05/23 the GA site has no updated actions on this bill.
- House Bill No. [5264 SUB A](#) / Senate Bill No. [683](#) ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- ZONING ORDINANCES (Extends the moratorium on penalties related to COVID-19 modifications to food business or food service establishments to February 15, 2024.) – Takes effect upon passage.
 - 03/30/2023 Signed by Governor - Chapters 005 & 006

OTHER/ STATE GOVERNMENT

- Senate Bill No. [203](#) ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO WATERS AND NAVIGATION -- COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL (Creates appointment of executive director of coastal resources management as an employee and respected staff of coastal resource management to coordinate with DEM and division leaders to plan management of coastal resources.) – Takes effect upon passage.
 - 06/22/2023 Signed by Governor – Chapter 270
- Senate Bill No. [731](#) ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO HIGHWAYS -- ABANDONMENT BY TOWNS (Provides that road abandonments by municipalities be properly recorded in land evidence records.) - Takes effect upon passage.
 - Signed by Governor 06/14/2023 - Chapter 074
- Senate Bill No. [1053 SUB A](#) / House Bill No. [6060 SUB A](#) ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO COURTS AND CIVIL PROCEDURE-- COURTS -- SUPERIOR COURT (Establishes a land use court within the superior court, effective January 1, 2024.) – Takes effect on January 1, 2024.
 - 06/24/2023 Signed by Governor – Chapters 306 & 307
- House Bill No. [5200 SUB A as amended](#) – APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2024 - - Takes effect upon passage.
 - 06/16/2023 Signed by Governor – Chapter 079
- House Bill No. [5174 SUB A](#) ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO WATERS AND NAVIGATION -- COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL (Provides a definition of the recognizable high tide line for the public's rights and privileges of the shore.) - Takes effect upon passage.
 - 06/26/2023 Transmitted to Governor – Chapter 340
- House Resolution No. [6449](#) ENTITLED, HOUSE RESOLUTION CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICIES THAT DEAL WITH NUMEROUS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SHORT-TERM RENTALS ISSUES CONCURRENTLY (Creates a new 15 member commission to review and provide recommendations for

concurrent policies dealing with numerous economic and social short-term rentals issues, and report back by March 15, 2024, would expire on April 15, 2026.) - Takes effect upon passage.

- 06/14/2023 House read and passed – Resolution 422

SOLID WASTE

- Senate Bill No. [14 SUB B](#) / House Bill No. [5090 SUB A](#) ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO FOOD AND DRUGS -- DISPOSABLE FOOD SERVICE CONTAINERS (Prohibits a covered establishment from preparing, selling, processing or providing food or beverages in or on a disposable food service container that is composed in whole or in part of polystyrene foam.) - Takes effect on January 1, 2025.
 - 06/22/2023 Signed by Governor - Chapters 273 & 274
- House Resolution No. [5502 SUB A](#) ENTITLED, JOINT RESOLUTION CREATING A SPECIAL JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS TO PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES FROM PLASTIC BOTTLE WASTE (Creates an 18 member special joint legislative commission whose purpose it would be to study and provide recommendations to protect our environment from plastic bottle waste, and who would report back to the General Assembly no later than June 10, 2024, and whose life would expire on June 30, 2024.) - Takes effect upon passage.
 - 06/23/2023 Signed by Governor – Resolution 433
- House Bill No. [5550 SUB A](#) ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- MERCURY REDUCTION AND EDUCATION ACT (Prohibits the sale: eff. 1/1/24 of screw/bayonet base compact fluorescent lamps; eff. 1/1/25 of pin-base type compact and linear fluorescent lamps with civil penalties for violations.) - Takes effect upon passage.
 - 06/22/2023 Signed by Governor – Chapter 290

WATER SUPPLY

- House Bill No. [6255](#) ENTITLED, AN ACT AMENDING AN ACT TO INCORPORATE THE STONE BRIDGE FIRE DISTRICT AND TO FURNISH A SUPPLY OF WATER FOR THE TOWN OF TIVERTON (Amends AN ACT TO INCORPORATE THE STONE BRIDGE FIRE DISTRICT AND TO FURNISH A SUPPLY OF WATER FOR THE NEW TOWN OF TIVERTON, in order to clarify the eligibility of district residents to vote at district meetings.) – Takes effect upon passage.
 - 06/27/2023 Effective without the Governor's signature – Chapter 386

OTHER TRACKED BILLS OF INTEREST WHICH DID NOT PASS:

- Senate Bill No. [317](#) – LOW AND MODERATE INCOME HOUSING (definition to include federal subsidy)
 - Senate passed & 06/14/2023 & Referred to House Municipal Government & Housing
- House Bill No. [5220](#) ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- REGULATION OF ELECTRIC BICYCLES (Regulates electric bicycles in the same manner as human-powered bicycles, classify electric bicycles into three (3) classes, require all electric bicycles to have a label affixed to the bicycle and be equipped with a speedometer.)
 - 05/11/2023 House read and passed & 05/15/2023 Referred to Senate Judiciary
- House Bill No. [6082 SUB A as amended](#) -- ZONING ORDINANCES (ADUs)
 - 05/16/2023 House passed Sub A as amended (floor amendment) & 06/06/2023 Referred to Senate Housing and Municipal Government
- House Bill No. [6483](#) – OUTDOOR DINING ACT
 - House passed & 06/13/2023 Referred to Senate Housing and Municipal Government

If you have any questions regarding this summary, please contact either:

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