



March 27, 2024

The Honorable Robert E. Craven  
Chairman House Judiciary Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith St  
Providence RI, 02903

RE: Bill Number: 7949 RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES --SUBDIVISION OF LAND

Dear Chairman Craven and Honorable Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

I am writing to express our support for House Bill 7949, which proposes amendments and clarifications to various provisions concerning the subdivision of land review process in Rhode Island. We believe this legislation is a significant step forward in ensuring efficient and equitable development practices across our state.

House Bill 7949, informed in part by feedback from the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Planning Association (RI APA-planners), addresses critical aspects of land subdivision review, review stages, special provisions related to development, and procedures for approvals from permitting authorities. These amendments are essential for streamlining the development process, enhancing transparency, and promoting responsible growth.

The League is heartened by the collaborative approach taken in drafting this bill, incorporating input from planning professionals who understand the nuanced challenges and opportunities associated with land use planning in Rhode Island. Their expertise ensures that House Bill 7949 reflects best practices and aligns with the overarching goals of sustainable development and community well-being.

There was a request that came to our attention that we respectfully wish to bring to the sponsor's attention regarding Section 45-23-32, Definitions, (9) Development Plan Review, specifically to maintain the language regarding development in a historic district under vi). We feel this suggestion merits careful consideration. Preserving the cultural heritage and architectural character of our historic districts is paramount for cities and towns, and any modification to uphold this principle is appreciated.

In conclusion, House Bill 7949 represents a critical opportunity to modernize and improve the land subdivision review process in Rhode Island. By incorporating feedback from planning experts and stakeholders, this legislation has the potential to enhance the efficiency, fairness, and sustainability of development practices statewide.

I urge you to support House Bill 7949 and to carefully consider the suggested amendment regarding development in historic districts. Together, we can advance policies that promote responsible growth, protect our cultural heritage, and create vibrant, resilient communities for generations to come.

On behalf of the League of Cities and Towns thank you for allowing me the opportunity to express our views.

Sincerely,

David M. Bodah  
Associate Director

Cc: House Judiciary Committee  
Ernie Almonte, Executive Director, RILCT