

# Rhode Island Foundation

May 6, 2025

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney  
Chair, House Committee on Finance  
Rhode Island State House  
Providence, RI 02903

*RE: SUPPORT – House Resolution No. 5477, MAKING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$500,000 TO ESTABLISH A STATEWIDE MAIN STREET COORDINATING PROGRAM*

Dear Chairman Abney:

I am writing today in support of the proposed House Resolution 5477, an important initiative to invest \$500,000 to establish a statewide Main Street Coordinating program.

This bill would provide the necessary resources to launch a three-year pilot program, which would be managed by Grow Smart RI and coordinated with Main Street America. A statewide program would enhance collaboration, support the coordination of training and communication, and promote the sharing of best practices to help communities across Rhode Island to effectively grow, activate, beautify, and promote their downtown and neighborhood centers as vibrant and attractive destinations for visitors, residents, and businesses.

Similar initiatives have brought successful economic development to traditional commercial districts for over 45 years, and 46 programs are currently active in 42 states around the country and in the District of Columbia. In other places, there has been an average 30:1 return on similar investments.

Main Streets serve as important gathering places that connect residents with the larger community. As Rhode Island's only community foundation, we are

committed to expanding civic and cultural opportunities that bring together people of diverse backgrounds to sustain equitable, thriving communities. Investing in our Main Streets creates space for such community connections. Rhode Island municipalities would significantly benefit from the expertise and resources that would become available through a state-level program.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jenny Pereira". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jenny Pereira  
*VP of Grants and Community Investments*

cc: Representative Scott Slater, First Vice Chair; Representative Alex Marszalkowski, Second Vice Chair; Representative Karen Alzate; Representative Jacquelyn M. Baginski; Representative Nathan W. Biah; Representative Terri Cortvriend; Representative Grace Diaz; Representative John G. Edwards; Representative Alex S. Finkelman; Representative Raymond A. Hull; Representative George A. Nardone; Representative William W. O'Brien; Representative Sherry Roberts; Representative Teresa Ann Tanzi