



Representative Marvin L. Abney, Chairman
House Committee on Finance
Rhode Island State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

**RE: Bills H8316 (on 4/14/26) & S2676 (on 4/30/26)
Please fund a 2nd year of the statewide Main Street Coordinating Program**

April 13, 2026

Dear Representative Abney and Members of the Finance Committee,

I write to ask for your support for a second year of the statewide Main Street Coordinating Program. This will enable Grow Smart RI to continue working with Main Street America to provide technical assistance and training to Rhode Island cities and towns. As a municipal planning consultant who works in cities and towns throughout the state, I can attest to the value provided by the Main Street America program.

Poor planning practices and on-line retail threaten RI community cohesion and Main Street vitality. Our cities and towns need technical support in best practices to invigorate local economies. Indeed, Main Streets are an economic development priority for all Rhode Island cities and towns. The Main Street America program gives municipalities the tools to enhance the built environment while improving outcomes in a variety of planning areas including economic development, historic preservation, beautification *and* affordable housing. The 21st century economy increasingly divides and isolates people who lack great civic spaces for gathering and commerce. Investment in our downtowns is one step in improving this condition.

Please vote to fund Bills H8316 & S2676.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kim Salerno". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Kim Salerno