

Testimony from Jordan Day, Associate Director
Land Use Commission – January 5, 2023

Thank you, Chairman Deller and members of the Commission for the opportunity to share the League's thoughts on potential ideas presented by working groups. As both the Land Use and Low- and Moderate-Housing Commissions continue to examine the current barriers to affordable housing creation, we have worked with the American Planning Association of Rhode Island (APA RI) to provide relevant feedback on the subject matter being discussed.

The League supported the establishment of both study commissions to identify ways to help cities and towns meet their obligations under the Low- and Moderate-Income Housing Act to ensure that at least 10% of their housing stock qualifies as affordable. It is clear that housing continues to be a priority at all levels of government in Rhode Island.

Local leaders agree zoning and land use should remain a local decision. The state must work with cities and towns to encourage housing construction and rehabilitation, and remove barriers to housing, such as infrastructure improvements. Municipal leaders stand together in welcoming the development of responsible housing in our communities and are interested in working with stakeholders across the state to improve housing opportunities for Rhode Islanders.

To accomplish this, municipalities need:

- A clear menu of innovative solutions and funding opportunities from the state that can be implemented this winter season.
- Increased funding for infrastructure improvements and remediation, outside of federal aid opportunities.
- To preserve and promote quality of life, based on the different communities' needs and respect the local voice in land use decisions.
- Funding the implementation of programs and systems to support process improvements.
- Increased technical support and adequate funding to departments and agencies that facilitate housing growth, including the Division of Statewide Planning and Department of Housing.
- Workforce development to expand the pool of municipal planners and building and zoning officials.
- Adequate state and education aid to support the needs of residents
- A commitment to expand reliable transportation opportunities for residents, extending the urban service boundary.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.