

# Community Outreach Plan

## Town of South Kingstown Solarize Rhode Island Application

This Community Outreach Plan provides a description of the designated project team, a community profile, and a marketing and outreach plan to encourage participation in the program. The purpose of this plan is to outline South Kingstown's proposed role in the project and demonstrate the community's capacity for successfully engaging the community in the Solarize Rhode Island Program.

## Community Profile

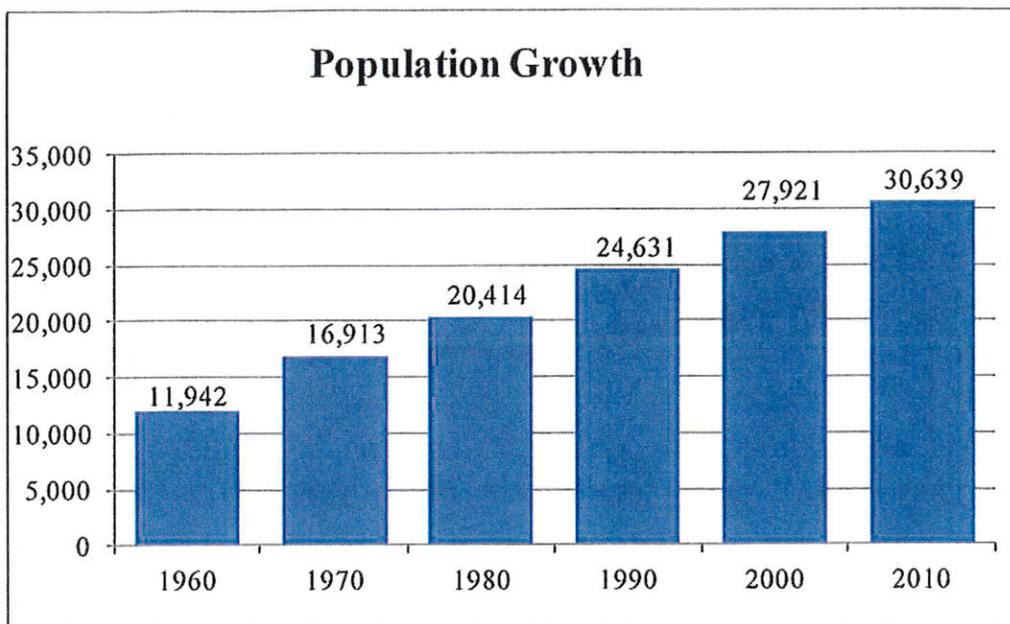
### Geography:

Land Area Land and Water 62.3 sq. miles Land Only 56.8 sq. miles (36,352 acres) The Town of South Kingstown owns 108 parcels of land (does not include tax sale properties) including properties that host Town facilities, rights of way, schools, pump stations, easements, parks, fields, and designated open space. The total acreage for these properties is 1265.4 – approximately 3% of total Town acreage (exclusive of Town roads) - of which over 400 acres (33%) are comprised of outdoor parkland and play fields. The Town owns approximately 150 miles of roads for which it is responsible for capital improvements, storm water management, and routine maintenance including snow plowing.

### Population:

According to the 2010 Census, the population of South Kingstown in 2010 was 30,639 representing a 10 percent increase over the population in 2000 (U.S. Census). This increase is less than the 13.4 percent increase in the previous decade (1990 to 2000). The population growth was 20.7 percent in the previous decade, when the population grew from 20,414 people in 1980 to 24,631 people in 1990. From 2000 to 2010, the Town added 2,718 year-round residents, representing an average annual increase of 272 people. The current South Kingstown population represents 2.9 percent of the State's population and 24 percent of the population of Washington County. As the "South County" section of the State continues to grow, the Town's share of the State population increased from 2.2 percent in 1980, 2.5 percent in 1990, and 2.7 percent in 2000 to 2.9 percent in 2010 (U.S. Census and RI Statewide Planning Program).

### Population Growth



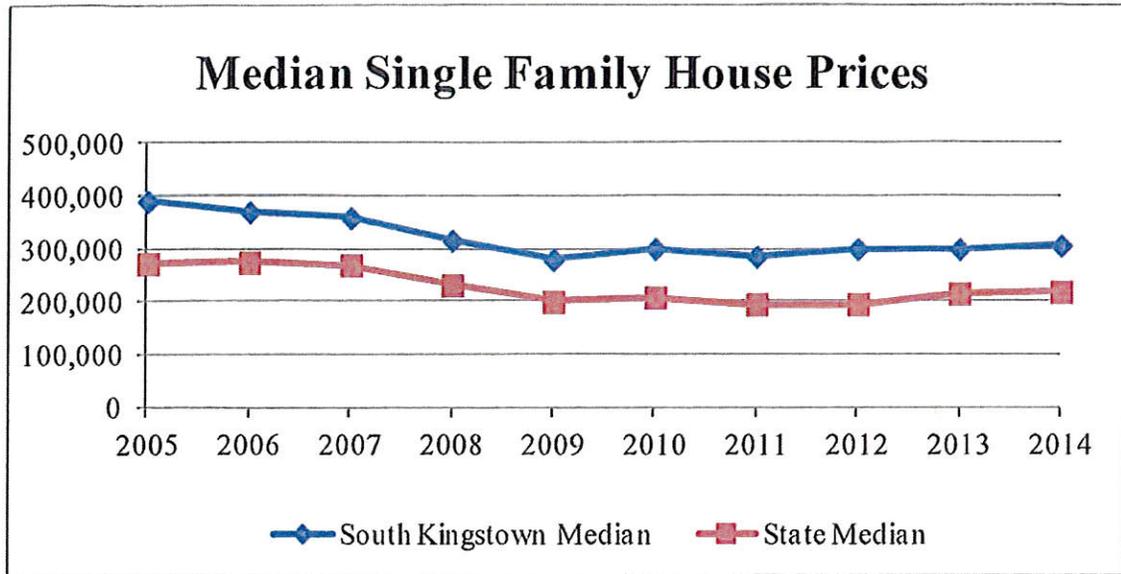
As the population has increased, the density of development in Town has also increased. In 2000 there were 489.0 residents per square mile. In 2010, the Town had 537.5 residents per square mile, a 10 percent increase. Growth at the University of Rhode Island (persons in group quarters) is a significant contributing factor to the overall increase in the community's population increase. According to 2010 Census figures, growth at URI accounts for nearly half the increase of the Town's overall increase.

#### Housing:

The 2010 U.S. Census reports a total of 13,218 housing units in the Town of South Kingstown, of which 78.0 percent (10,316) were occupied, 17.5 percent were seasonal, recreational, or occasional use, and the remainder were vacant. Of the 10,316 occupied housing units, 72.6 percent were owner occupied and 27.4 percent were renter occupied. The average household size of an owner occupied unit was 2.60 persons, while the average household size of a rented unit was 1.99 persons. The 10,316 occupied households include 6,639 family households, 41.0 percent of which included their own children under age 18. Also reported is that 28.2 percent of households included individuals under 18 and 28.4 percent had individuals 65 years and over.

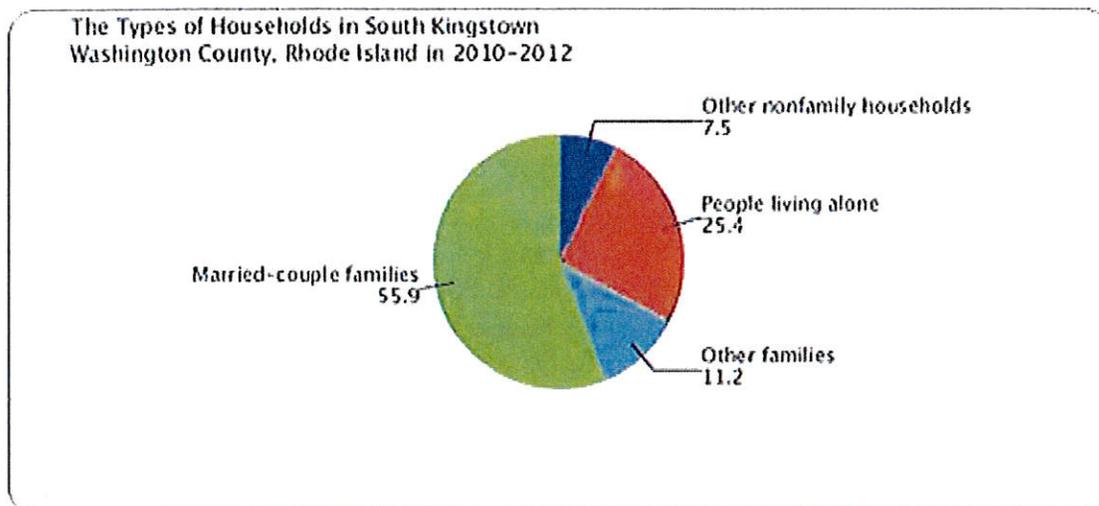
#### Median Home Prices and Family Income:

The median sale price of a single-family home in South Kingstown increased to \$306,000 between January and August 2014, compared to the same period in 2013 during which the median sales price of \$300,000 was recorded. The sale price of the average home in South Kingstown in 2005 was \$380,000. The following graph demonstrates the gap between local housing prices and the statewide average selling price of a median priced home. The Statewide average sale price in August 2014 was \$218,000 or \$88,000 less than the average sale price in South Kingstown.



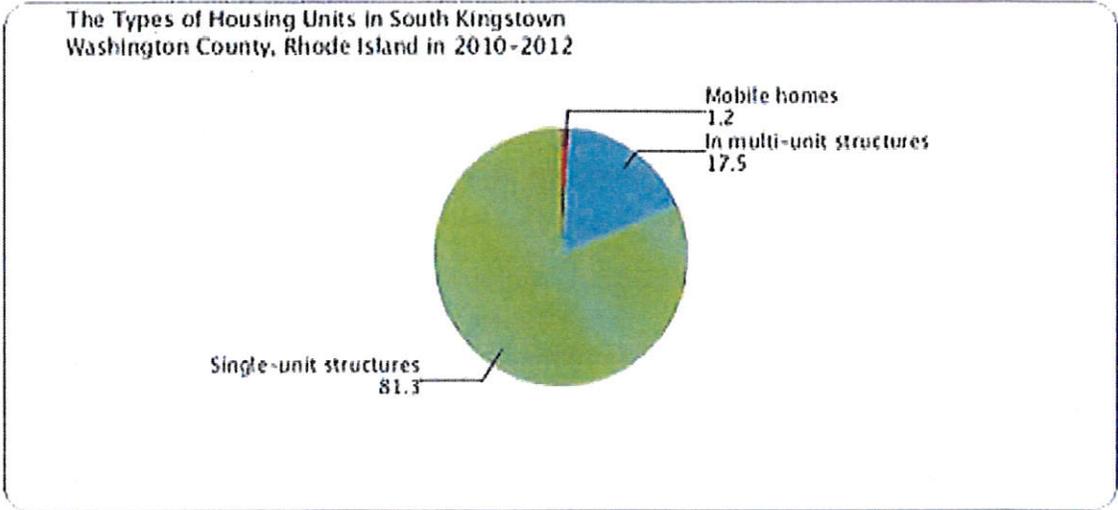
Households and Families:

In 2010-2012 there were 10,000 households in South Kingstown. The average household size was 2.4 people. Families made up 67 percent of the households in South Kingstown. This figure includes both married-couple families (56 percent) and other families (11 percent). Of other families, 5 percent are female householder families with no husband present and own children under 18 years. Nonfamily households made up 33 percent of all households in South Kingstown. Most of the nonfamily households were people living alone, but some were composed of people living in households in which no one was related to the householder. In South Kingstown, 25 percent of all households have one or more people under the age of eighteen; 29 percent of all households have one or more people 65 years and over.



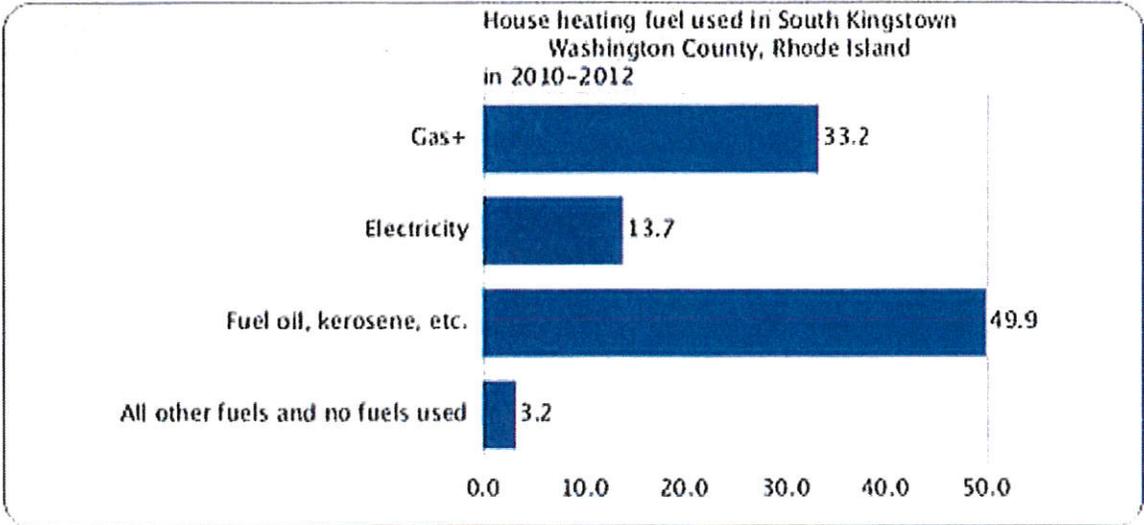
Housing Characteristics:

In 2010-2012, South Kingstown had a total of 13,000 housing units, 20 percent of which were vacant. Of the total housing units, 81 percent were in single-unit structures, 18 percent were in multi-unit structures, and one percent were mobile homes. Twenty-eight percent of the housing units were built since 1990.



Occupied Housing Unit Characteristics

In 2010-2012, South Kingstown had 10,000 occupied housing units - 7,900 (76 percent) owner occupied and 2,500 (24 percent) renter occupied. Fifty-two percent of householders of these units had moved in since 2000. Seventy-four percent of the owner occupied units had a mortgage. Two percent of the households did not have telephone service. Six percent had no vehicles available and another 24 percent had three or more. Homes in South Kingstown were heated in the following ways:



## Marketing and Outreach Plan

The South Kingstown Planning Department will serve as the lead with regard to community outreach and education regarding the benefits of solar power and cost savings associated with this program. The Planning Department oversees the review of subdivision and land development projects, management of the Comprehensive Community Plan, review and recommendations on regulatory amendments, coordination with State and Federal agencies, as well as policy development and support services for the Town Council, Town Manager, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Historic District Commission, Economic Development Committee, and Affordable Housing Collaborative. The Department also oversees the Town's Geographic Information System (GIS), providing accurate geographic information to various government departments and its citizens.

### Planning Framework:

South Kingstown has a well-established commitment to energy conservation and sustainability policies, including its renewable energy initiatives and a targeted program to review and retrofit all Town-owned facilities to reduce energy use. The Planning Department realizes that the fiscal, environmental, and social impacts of energy consumption must be considered within a policy framework that supports innovative energy solutions. The Planning Department will continue to assist in the coordination and implementation of the Town's Energy Services Program. The Town will continue to utilize grant opportunities and programs through utility providers to fund improvements and also include targeted improvements to facilities and equipment through the Capital Improvement Program. The Town is supportive a regulations that allow for solar technologies in economically and environmentally sound locations.



The Town has a history of successfully implementing State programs that involves coordination between multiple agencies and includes a public engagement component. Examples of significant planning initiatives in South Kingstown which included sustainable design elements and a significant community engagement component are as follows:

### *1. University of Rhode Island's Master Plan*

The Planning Department continues to participate as a Town representative on the University of Rhode Island's Master Plan Review Team. Through the Master Plan Review Team process the Planning Department remains involved with the pending capital projects at the University. The Town has continued to be involved with URI on a variety of issues especially concerning infrastructure and transportation management including: sustainability initiatives on URI property, the reconstruction project for Route 138 between Route 2 and Route 108; and advocating for URI projects on the State Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Specifically, the Planning Department has worked with URI Campus Sustainability Officer, Marsh Garcia, to conduct public education regarding residential sustainable practices through the Lexicon of Sustainability Program.

### *2. Healthy Places By Design Grant Program*



Healthy Places by Design (HPBD) was a grant funded pilot project administrated by the Town in 2011-2012 with an ongoing community engagement component that continues to this today. This program was funded through a grant from the RI Department of Health which sought to assist communities in implementing changes to local policies in support of physical activity and access to health food.

The project was structured to address 4 core issues: walking and biking, access to recreation, access to healthy food, and neighborhood design. The main focus of the HPBD grant was to engagement the community in order to understand local needs and perspectives on these 4 core issues and to make policy changes to support healthy lifestyles. Although the formal grant funding period ended in June 2012, the implementation effort has continued through a variety of means including program initiatives and ongoing meetings of "grass roots" working groups.

### *3. Village Planning Model*

The Department has completed Village Plans for the areas of Wakefield and Peace Dale and is now completing work on the Village Plans for the areas of West Kingstown and Matunuck. These planning efforts were made possible through a Planning Challenge Grant award from RI Statewide Planning to engage local residents and stakeholders to identify critical issues facing the villages. The Village Plans are intended to be celebratory, "micro-plans" that are centered on the issues and opportunities noted by

residents and businesses during the public outreach efforts conducted over the course of the study. The Plans are part of a broader Town planning model to incorporate village-centric plans into the Town's Comprehensive Community Plan.

### Political Climate and Anticipated Support

The local political climate is amenable to progressive polities relative to renewable energy infrastructure. This is viewed as a building block for a formalized "Solarize South Kingstown" program. Through the Town's public outreach capacities and its strong relationship with agencies that are equally open and enthusiastic about the opportunities with regard to renewable energy infrastructure, we are confident that this program will be well received and implemented successfully. Demonstrating the support of the Planning Board and Town Council, the



Town anticipates formal consideration of a resolution to participate in the program in the coming months. This approach to energy technology is also consistent with the Planning Department's philosophy concerning public infrastructure and facilities. One example of the Town's implementation of this philosophy through the recent award of a contract to assess the feasibility of two closed and remediated Town landfill sites (Rose Hill Landfill and West Kingstown Town Landfill) for re-use with solar generation systems.

The Town of South Kingstown is uniquely suited to receive consideration under the Solarize Rhode Island Program due not only to its expertise and experience related to this program's intent and goals, but also because of our solid understanding of its benefits to residents and business owners. Building on its current partnerships and developing new networks throughout the community, and with significant resident and key-stakeholder involvement, through assessment, analysis, and best practices, the Town of South Kingstown is deeply invested in the promotion of solar technology.

### Marketing and Outreach Goals

The Town Planning Department will activate its existing community networks of local civic leaders, community organizations, and volunteers to help increase the discussion of solar technologies and the benefits of the Solarize Rhode Island Program specifically. The primary goals of South Kingstown outreach and marketing efforts for this program are as follows:

1. Raise awareness of the benefits of solar power to generate community interest in order to decrease up-front marketing and customer acquisition costs for installers;
2. Engage the local media through newspaper coverage; press releases, program advertisements, the Town website content, and social media;
3. Distribute program information through municipal mechanisms such as email notices to local Board and Commission members, distribution of information through public schools and public tax bill inserts (as appropriate);
4. Market and host a Project Kick-off Workshop to provide a face-to-face forum for community members to more about program benefits and meet Project Team Members and solar installers.
5. Serve as the primary contact for questions of program mechanics and basic solar information;
6. Organize and mobilize community organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, various neighborhood associations, and local community organization focused on sustainability and energy to assist with spreading the word of the program;
7. Coordinate with the selected solar installer to develop applicable technical materials on solar technology during the course of the Program; and
8. Assist in providing marketing content for State-wide Solarize Rhode Island website as necessary.

The Planning Department's philosophy is that that effective community engagement should not happen to the people, but instead with the people of South Kingstown. The focus of the Town's outreach plan is the facilitate a process in which the community is asked to both learn about the benefits of the Solarize Rhode Island Program and to help educate others that may be interested. This is best accomplished with a hands-on approach. The Planning Department will initiate the public engagement process and will leverage its community networks to act as program advocates to create additional voices of support.

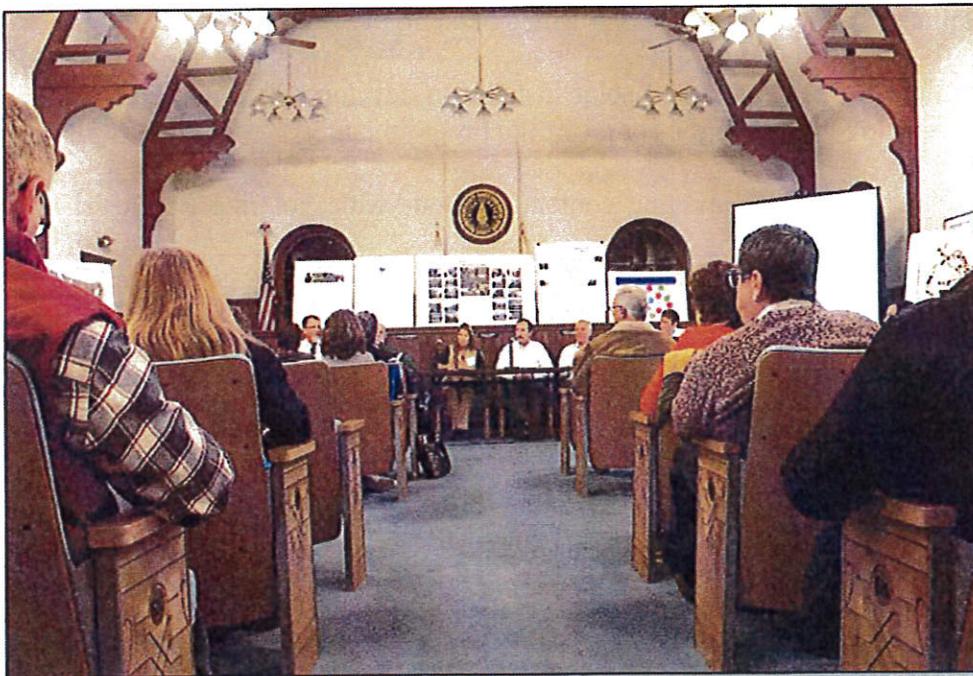
Specific details of our outreach plan will include a diverse strategy that will use both on-line resources as the Town website, e-blasts, and social media, as well as use "grass roots" efforts such as maintaining a presence at community events, tabling, and flyers. The Town has developed sizable email distribution lists through previous public outreach efforts that would be utilized as a significant public engagement resource for this to program.

The Town will utilize its membership of boards and commissions as ambassadors of the program through discussion at scheduled Town meetings and other community/neighborhood events that they attend. Such Town boards and commissions will include, but are not limited to: Town

Council, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Historic District Commission, Economic Development Committee, and Affordable Housing Collaborative.

Additionally, the Town will work with its contacts at local media outlets to provide press coverage of the program in general and specific events and workshops targeted for community involvement. A combination newspapers ads, press releases, and content for editorial stories will provide ongoing press coverage during the program kick-off and initial

There will be focused media attention on providing a major Project Kick-off Workshop at the onset of the project. This workshop will allow interested residents and business owners an opportunity to meet directly with the project team and generate additional interested in the program. The Town offers a variety of facilities that can host large-scale public workshops that meet program interest. The primary location for proposed program workshops will be the Town Hall Council Chambers with an occupancy capacity of 173 people. The Town has other public meeting space at its disposal included meeting rooms at the Public Safety Complex and the Neighborhood Guild Recreation Building. The Town is prepared with all necessary audio/visual equipment (i.e. microphone, projector, screen, etc.) to accommodate presentations for large audiences.



*South Kingstown Town Hall Council Chambers*

The Town is dedicated to providing a broad community engagement campaign that reaches all sectors of its population. To accommodate residents' schedules, public meetings will be held both in the evening and during the day. It is hoped this outline of marketing and outreach methods provides sufficient information on the Town's capacity in this regard and specifics of its proposed community engagement efforts.