



**Rhode Island Flood Mitigation Association  
Strategic Plan**

**2019-2021**

Prepared with assistance of

**CAUSE & EFFECT**<sup>®</sup>  
INC.

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## Mission

The Rhode Island Flood Mitigation Association (RIFMA) advances the practice of environmentally sound floodplain management in Rhode Island.

## Vision

Rhode Island's floodplains are valued and protected for their ecological and economic benefits, now and into the future. As a result of adopting strong floodplain management practices and preparedness, Rhode Island's cities and towns significantly reduce the potential of human suffering (economic and personal) from damaging flooding both inland and along the coast.

RIFMA is a vital community of practice for Rhode Island professionals who have any role in floodplain management, whether in the public or private sector. Through RIFMA, individuals may exchange knowledge and ideas, find a supportive peer network, and access educational opportunities to advance their technical knowledge in multiple aspects of floodplain management and related issues.

## About RIFMA

Since 2006, RIFMA has served as the professional network of floodplain managers in Rhode Island. It is the state affiliate of the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) and membership is open to anyone with a role or interest in floodplain management. Current members come from Rhode Island and surrounding cities and towns; state government agencies including the RI Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC), the RI Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA), the RI Department of Environmental Management (DEM), and the RI Department of Transportation (DOT); and federal agencies such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the US Geological Survey (USGS), the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Also included are private sector members from the building, engineering, surveying, and insurance industries; environmental and conservation organizations; and research institutions.

## About the Strategic Planning Process

The RIFMA Board of Directors conducted a strategic planning process from July to December of 2018. During this time, the Board identified strategic questions facing RIFMA, codified its logic model/theory of change, conducted interviews with twenty-five (25) stakeholders and RIFMA members, held two planning retreats, revised its mission and vision, identified goals, objectives and capacity investments and completed a financial forecast for the three years of the plan. The plan was approved by the Board on February 14, 2019. Throughout the process, the Board was

guided by Gayle L. Gifford, co-President of the organization development firm Cause & Effect Inc.

## Findings

The following summarizes the key feedback we received in our stakeholder interviews and in consultation with the Board. Our goals and objectives were developed in response to this feedback. The items below are organized to represent a larger, statewide perspective, the narrower practitioner level, and the organizational (RIFMA) level.

### *Community concerns:*

- Due to increased severe weather events and sea level rise from a changing climate, Rhode Island communities are facing increased occurrence and severity of damaging flooding.
- Rhode Island salt marshes are currently being lost to rising sea levels.
- Rhode Island planners, emergency management officials, floodplain managers, and other related professionals are concerned that Rhode Island residents are not prepared for or doing enough to mitigate the impacts of damaging flooding.

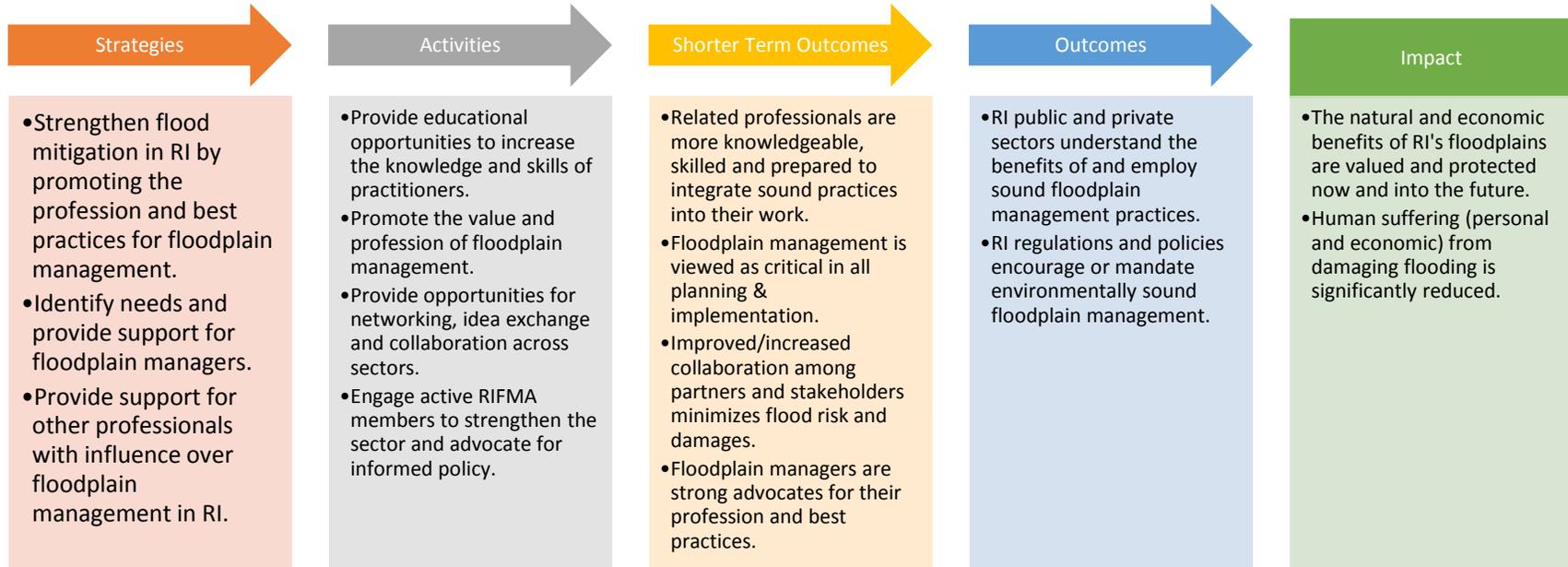
### *Information and education:*

- The annual RIFMA conference is highly valued by professionals working in the field.
- Constituents identified technical needs and access to information that could be facilitated by RIFMA.
- RIEMA and FEMA are important sources of information on floodplain management.
- Members and other stakeholders would like RIFMA to be a clearinghouse for information and a conduit to other resources.

### *Operational:*

- Potential members are interested in participating in and presenting at education and outreach events.
- RIFMA's capacity is limited by the small circle of dedicated volunteer board members who undertake most of the organization's work.
- Volunteer time and capacity to take on projects is limited; RIFMA currently has no paid staff.
- Many professionals who work on flooding issues do not consider themselves floodplain managers; however, they are potential RIFMA members or affiliate members.
- Constituents suggested many partnership opportunities.

## How we work: Our logic model



The model above shows how identified strategies and activities relate to larger desired outcomes and impacts.

## Our Goal

To ensure a robust and valued professional association for floodplain managers in Rhode Island.

## Three-year Objectives\*:

- 1. Increase the influence, knowledge and technical skills of our members and other constituents.**
  - Continue to organize the annual conference.
  - Host at least three other educational events per year.
  - Regularly distribute floodplain management news and other items of interest to members via social media, email, or e-newsletters.
  - Provide best practice guidance and constituent voice on policy issues of importance to sound floodplain management.
  - Convene cross-sector collaboration opportunities to improve floodplain management in Rhode Island.
  
- 2. Increase active participation in RIFMA and its value to professionals with responsibilities for floodplain management or flood mitigation.**
  - Grow participation in RIFMA committees by actively soliciting volunteers for specific tasks. Committees include Conference, Education and Outreach, Membership, and Technical.
  - Grow membership from 100 to 175 members over three years and explore an affiliate membership category.
  - Increase the number of value-added activities for members such as networking events, a private Facebook group, discounts on workshops, and convening affinity groups.
  
- 3. Invest in building the capacity of RIFMA to serve its members, advance its educational agenda and grow participation in Rhode Island.**
  - Engage new voices in the leadership of RIFMA (e.g., Board of Directors, committees) and its membership.
  - Hire a part-time coordinator to manage our member/constituent database, coordinate social media, renew and expand membership, explore affiliate membership and coordinate and support volunteer activities.
  - Increase revenue generating activities and income.
  - Strengthen connections with ASFPM to benefit RIFMA members.

\* The RIFMA Board will review and prioritize the objectives and actions on an annual basis.

## Affiliations of Stakeholders Interviewed for the Plan

- *Aquidneck Island Planning Council (AIPC)*
- *Association of State Flood Plain Managers*
- *City of Providence*
- *Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC)*
- *URI Coastal Resources Center/RI Sea Grant*
- *Engineering firms*
- *FM Global*
- *RI Builders Association*
- *RI Building Commission*
- *RI Department of Environmental Management (DEM)*
- *RI Department of Transportation (DOT)*
- *RI Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA)/Silver Jackets*
- *RI Infrastructure Bank*
- *RI Statewide Planning*
- *Save the Bay*
- *Town of Lincoln*
- *Town of Narragansett*
- *Town of North Kingstown*
- *Town of South Kingstown*
- *U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) Rhode Island*