

VICTORIA GU

State Senate
— District **38** —

October Newsletter, Food Drive & Rail Survey



10AM - 3PM

FOOD DRIVE

100 FRANKLIN ST
SATURDAY NOV 1

Find us in the empty parking between Aldi & Citizens

Food is a human right and donating is an immediate and tangible way to help someone. All donations will be delivered to Jonnycake. Their request is not to forget the "small" stuff. Condiments, tea, coffee, spices ... the things that make our meals whole.

Washington might shut down, Westerly doesn't!

Coordinated by
The Westerly Democratic Town Committee



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

 Happy Halloween!

As families head out for trick-or-treating tonight, I hope you have a fun and safe evening filled with sweet treats and spooky sights.

Support our community food drive on Saturday Nov 1st

This week, Rhode Island declared a state of emergency to activate emergency funds for individuals and families who are going to lose SNAP benefits because of the ongoing federal government shutdown. Rising grocery prices are making it even harder for households to keep food on the table—but together, we can help. Join us **Saturday, November 1st** for our **community food drive**, where we'll be collecting **non-perishable food donations** for Rhode Islanders in need. Whether you're in a position to give or in need of a helping hand, your participation strengthens our community and ensures no one faces hunger alone.

When: Sat Nov 1st, 10am-3pm

Where: We will have folding tables and boxes for receiving donations in the empty parking lot between Aldi's and Citizen's Bank (100 Franklin St, Westerly)

Coordinated by the Westerly Democratic Town Committee

CRMC Public Hearing on Spring Ave Extension: Nov 4th Public Hearing



State of Rhode Island
Coastal Resources Management Council
Oliver H. Stedman Government Center
4808 Tower Hill Road, Suite 3
Wakefield, RI 02879-1900

(401) 783-3370
Fax (401) 783-2069

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

CRMC ROW File No.: **2020-11-084** Hearing Date: **November 4, 2025**

In accordance with and pursuant to the provisions of the "Administrative Procedures Act", (Chapter 42-35 et. seq. of the General Laws of Rhode Island), and the Rules and Regulations of the Coastal Resources Management Council, and the rules and regulations of the Rights of Way Subcommittee of the Coastal Resources Management Council a hearing will be held to receive evidence and testimony from interested parties concerning the possible designation of a public right of way to the tidal waters of the State relative to RIGL § 46-23-6(5).

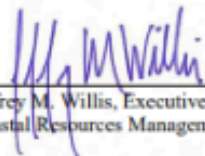
The hearing is for the proposed right of way **Spring Avenue Extension in the Town of Westerly** and will be held on **Tuesday, November 4, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.** at the Westerly Senior Center, 39 State Street, Westerly, RI.

Parties interested in/or concerned with the above-mentioned matter are invited to be present and/or represented by counsel at the above-mentioned time and place. This meeting place is accessible to individuals with disabilities. The meeting location is accessible to handicapped persons. Any individual requiring a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in this meeting should contact CRMC offices at 401-783-3370 at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.

Plans of the proposed work may be seen in the office of the Coastal Resources Management Council, Oliver H. Stedman Government Center, 4808 Tower Hill Road, Wakefield, Rhode Island, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Oral statements will be heard and recorded; and statements may be submitted to the hearing officers at the time of hearing.

Signed this 23rd day of October, 2025.



Jeffrey M. Willis, Executive Director
Coastal Resources Management Council

/s/

(*) Hybrid Meeting Link for Public Viewing Only: All Public Comment Must Be In-Person- Members Must Attend In-Person)

Join from PC, Mac, iPad, or Android:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83583030412?pwd=Gte6eXz2kavhVOkPm5kkWqa0UcHhp.1>
Webinar ID: 835 8303 0412; Passcode: 722256

* Virtual access is provided only as a convenience. Access to the meeting via the virtual platform is not guaranteed. Physical presence at the meeting is the only way to guarantee access to the meeting

Public Hearing Alert

Join the **RI Coastal Resources Management Council** for the **2nd public hearing** on the possible designation of **Spring Avenue Extension** as a Right of Way in **Westerly**.

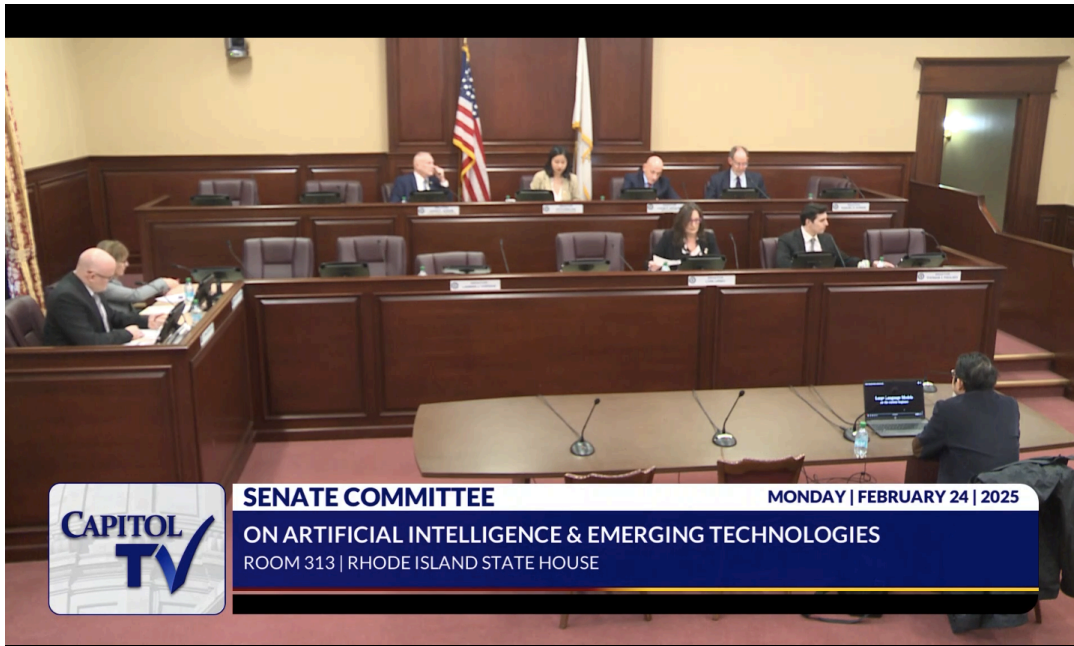
 **Nov 4, 2025** |  **6:00 PM**

 **Westerly Senior Center**, 39 State St, Westerly, RI

Last month's meeting had an opportunity for public testimony. The purpose of the November meeting is to hear evidence and testimony from interested parties. Your attendance is encouraged because public support will help keep the spotlight on this important issue.

Read more about how CRMC designates public rights-of-ways
at https://www.crmc.ri.gov/publicaccess/CitizensGuide_ROW_Process.pdf

AI 101: Why do chatbots “hallucinate”?



As the chair of the new Senate Committee on AI & Emerging Technologies, I’ve arranged presentations by leading RI scholars on AI & Cybersecurity to get our Senate members up to speed with this rapidly evolving technology. Here’s a link to our AI 101 presentation by URI Professor Drew Zhang, which starts out with a 3 minute video explaining how large language models like ChatGPT work and why these models sometimes “hallucinate” (make things up).

Watch the AI 101 presentation



Action Alert: Support Westerly Station Upgrades in the State Rail Plan Update

Respond to the Survey

The RI Department of Transportation has posted a ~5 minute online survey for its update of the State Rail Plan at this

link: <https://surveys.piopinions.com/SE/1/RIDOT/>

This is a key opportunity to show RIDOT that a lot of people care about the extension of commuter rail to Westerly and the Westerly Station high-level platform upgrade!

Please take a few minutes to fill out the survey and let RIDOT know you'd like to travel between Westerly and other points such as the Connecticut Shoreline (including Mystic), TF Green Airport, and Providence. Be sure to let them know you'd like trains to stop at Westerly more frequently throughout the day, too

Updates on Westerly Station: We've been on a roll lately-

- Charlestown Town Council passed a resolution supporting the Westerly Station high-level platform upgrade, so almost all of the adjacent communities in RI

and CT are on record supporting it!

- The Westerly Station upgrades have also been incorporated into the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) and are being finalized in the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).
- Amtrak has also completed some engineering work in the design of the platforms. All of this gives legitimacy to the project in terms of its readiness for funding (which we are pushing Amtrak and the federal government for)

Next commuter rail working group meeting scheduled for: Monday Nov 10, 9:30am at Westerly Library 2nd Floor

Meeting with Charlestown's Bikeway Committee

The Block Island Sound Bikeway Committee (which, despite the name, is a Charlestown commission) has been busy putting in an application for federal funding for rural communities that will help advance bicycle and pedestrian safety at specific points along Route 1.

The committee also unanimously endorsed high-level platforms at the Westerly Station, in part because it would allow for easier boarding and enable bike + train commuting



Ribbon-Cutting at Westerly Elementary Schools



I was excited to see the new cafeteria, renovated classrooms and other student health & wellness spaces during the open house and ribbon-cutting ceremony of Dunns Corners Elementary School.

All of this was made possible thanks to the \$50 million bond that Westerly voters passed in 2022 and the School Construction Bond that Rhode Island passed in 2018 to provide incentives and matching funds for school construction/renovation across school districts in Rhode Island.



Supporting Senior Meal Delivery Programs (Meals on Wheels)

A number of RI State Senators and I attended the **2025 Festival of Meals**, hosted by **Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island**. A few years back, as a Meals on Wheels volunteer, I delivered meals to seniors—many living with disabilities or limited mobility—and saw how a warm meal and friendly visit can brighten someone's entire day. Good nutrition isn't just about food; it helps prevent falls and health issues, allowing seniors to stay strong and independent in their homes for



longer. This Festival of Meals reminded me that delivering meals means delivering care, connection, and dignity.



WELCOME TO RISAVERS

The easy way to save for retirement

RISavers Program Launches

Find Out More

The RISavers Program is launching — a public retirement savings plan aimed at private-sector employees whose employers don't currently offer a retirement option. Why this matters:

- 170,000 Rhode Islanders do not have access to a retirement savings plan at work
- Americans are 15 times more likely to save for retirement when they can do so at work and are 20 times more likely to save if doing so is automatic.

Here's how it works and how *you* can take advantage:

- Automatic enrollment: If your employer participates, you'll be enrolled into a Roth IRA unless you choose to opt-out.
- Portable account: Your account stays with you even if you change jobs — you pick your risk level and contribution rate.
- Easy contributions: Savings go straight from your paycheck — your employer just deducts the amount and handles the paperwork.
- See the [RI AARP FAQ](#)

[View the October press conference here.](#) Congratulations to my colleague Senator Meghan Kallman on passing this bill after several years of work!

[View email in browser](#)