



keep space

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Senator Reed and Community Leaders Gather for Historic Groundbreaking

Pawtucket, RI (April 9, 2010) – Pawtucket Citizens Development Corporation (PCDC), the City of Pawtucket, Rhode Island Housing, LISC and KeepSpace were joined by U.S. Senator Jack Reed and community partners today, to celebrate the very first groundbreaking of a **KeepSpace Community: *where neighbors meet, people work, children play.***

When complete, **Blackstone Valley Gateways** will include 33 homes for rent and 4,000 square feet of community office and program space. Spearheaded by PCDC, the Blackstone Valley Gateways initiative is part of the greater KeepSpace plans for Pawtucket/Central Falls.

“This is an exciting day for Pawtucket,” said Nancy Whit, PCDC Executive Director. “Through our efforts and the efforts of our partners, Pawtucket is a very different place than it was just a few years ago. Every time we reach a milestone like today, we are one step closer to realizing our vision for a community where people can safely and comfortably live, work and play.”

“The work that PCDC has done in our neighborhoods is remarkable,” said Pawtucket Mayor James E. Doyle. “They have done an amazing job cleaning up the area. I am very proud to say Pawtucket has been, and continues to be, a city on the rebound. In the glory days of Pawtucket’s proud boom as a manufacturing center, our old mills were the lifeblood of commerce and enterprise. KeepSpace is providing Pawtucket with the opportunity and resources to bring this Renaissance to the next level, connecting our initiatives and plans of the recent past with the needs of the greater community for a vibrant future.”

“This new mixed-use development is great news for Pawtucket and Central Falls. I applaud PCDC, KeepSpace, and their partners for leading this collaborative effort, and I am proud to have helped secure over \$900,000 in federal assistance for this initiative. Together with private investments, this project is estimated to create about 170 jobs,” said Senator Reed. “KeepSpace is about strengthening neighborhoods so folks have access to jobs, housing, schools, stores and businesses, and public transportation. This development will help more families plant roots in the community and offers a blueprint for smart, sustainable growth.”

“KeepSpace is about doing things differently,” said Richard Godfrey, Executive Director of Rhode Island Housing and KeepSpace Advisory Committee Member. “Not only does it manage to bring together all of the agencies needed to create a connected, vibrant community, but the key to the success of KeepSpace involves listening to and incorporating the ideas of members of the community at large. Through the hard work and commitment of the KeepSpace Working Group, which is made up of neighbors, businesses and community groups, we continue to ensure that the long-term needs of our community are being met, as together we are bringing each of the six KeepSpace elements to fruition.”

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Launched in 2007, KeepSpace is about changing the way Rhode Island thinks about, builds and approaches “community.” It is a broad-based partnership initiative to build a prosperous, healthy, sustainable Rhode Island, now and into the future. KeepSpace Communities are traditional, walkable, vibrant communities which incorporate all of the KeepSpace core elements: good homes; a healthy environment; strong commerce; sensible infrastructure; positive community impact; and integrated arts, culture, recreation and religion.

In July 2009 a Pawtucket/Central Falls KeepSpace Working Group was formed to create a Community Design Plan, which will incorporate a new potential commuter rail stop and other connectors including Broad Street running from Pawtucket through Central Falls to Cumberland; Cross Street connecting several Pine Street mill complexes to new developments along the Blackstone River; the Blackstone River Greenway and Barton Street. A key ingredient of this KeepSpace Community is adaptability to changing markets and evolving opportunities for transportation, as well as homes to suit various preferences and income levels.

“Being brought into KeepSpace with all the other partners, like the DEM [Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management] and EDC [Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation], so early on in the development process is a new and refreshing way of doing things,” said Stephen Devine, Rhode Island Department of Transportation Chief of Intermodal Planning and KeepSpace Advisory Committee Member. “Whether we are talking about the proposed train rail opportunities or bike paths, we know there will be no surprises down the road because we are working together.”

“Like much of the rest of the economy, this is a very challenging time for affordable housing,” said Barbara Fields, Executive Director of Rhode Island LISC. “But high-quality, affordable homes shouldn’t be an unattainable luxury. At LISC and National Equity Fund, Inc. (NEF) our goal is to support high-impact developments like this that anchor strong communities and give families a safe and healthy place to raise their children. We are proud to partner with PCDC on this tremendous development and grateful for the commitment of Senator Reed, the City of Pawtucket and Rhode Island Housing to this community and to making this project happen.”

Pawtucket/Central Falls is one of four KeepSpace Communities underway in Rhode Island. Others include Cranston, Providence and Westerly.

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The Pawtucket/Central Falls KeepSpace Community Design Plan will work to:

- Increase inter- and intra-community connections, including a potential new rail station, linking independent residential and commercial development activities and traditional retail districts.
- Build on historic and cultural resources to advance economic tourism.
- Revitalize major streets such as Broad, Cross, Pine, Barton, Dexter and Roosevelt for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders, as well as cars.
- Continue the transformation of once abandoned mills into beautiful, mixed-use facilities with homes, commerce and cultural activities.
- Integrate and build upon past and current planning and community development efforts.
- Create homes to suit various preferences and income levels, some with ground-floor business opportunities.
- Provide better access to and improved recreational activities along the Blackstone River, including picnicking, kayaking and bicycling.
- Support the preservation and growth of local businesses.
- Preserve and enhance existing jobs and seek ways to create new employment and local wealth opportunities.
- Integrate and respect the value of the diverse cultures within the community.
- Address the negative influence of foreclosures on the neighborhood.
- Address negative environmental factors.
- Consider and explore solutions to some of the community's social challenges.
- Expand the community's tax base.

To learn more about KeepSpace, visit www.keepspace.org or contact Amy Rainone at arainone@keepspace.org.

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