



# keep space

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kris Allard  
(w) 401 654-6663  
(c) 508 942-3147

Jo-Ann Ryan, Rhode Island Housing  
(w) 401 457-1258

founding partner:  
Rhode Island Housing

### **KeepSpace Communities Announced for Cranston, Providence, Pawtucket and Westerly**

*Landmark Collaborative Initiative to Bring Vibrant, Healthy Communities,  
Homes and Jobs to Cities and Towns Across Rhode Island*

PROVIDENCE, RI (May 15, 2008) – **KeepSpace: where neighbors meet, people work, children play** announced plans today for the first four KeepSpace Communities in Rhode Island. The core elements of a KeepSpace Community are: a good home; strong commerce; a healthy environment; sensible infrastructure; positive community impact; and integrated arts, recreation, culture and religion.

Together with the KeepSpace Advisory Committee, state officials and other KeepSpace partners, Rhode Island Housing – the founding partner of this unique collaborative initiative – announced the recipients of the first round of funding, as well as details surrounding these exciting new communities.

KeepSpace is a groundbreaking effort to find innovative, long-term solutions to issues that affect every community in Rhode Island. KeepSpace reaches out to partners with varied interests for a comprehensive and cooperative effort to create thriving communities. KeepSpace Communities are living, breathing, growing places where neighbors meet, people work, children play.

The underlying goal and philosophy of KeepSpace is to create viable and sustainable communities by bringing together all concerned – the community, developers, and state and local regulatory departments – in a collaborative process. Through these unique partnerships, particularly among those who focus on jobs, environment, real estate, and local government, KeepSpace combines expertise, rather than working on isolated parts of land development and preservation. The result: strong, healthy, prosperous communities that use integrated solutions to many of the development and environmental challenges facing Rhode Islanders and the state.

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The communities selected as the first four KeepSpace Communities are located in Cranston, Providence, Pawtucket and Westerly. Each of the sites has a centralizing element and embraces all of the KeepSpace core elements. Highlights of the proposals and the applicants are:

- **Cranston** Print Works is an historic, river-oriented mill site in a traditional working-class suburban neighborhood that offers tremendous opportunities for preserving and creating new jobs, environmental remediation, recreational development and a range of housing opportunities.
- **Olneyville** Housing Corporation (OHC) in **Providence** uses the Woonasquatucket Greenway as a centralizing element and connector and recreates healthy open spaces and cleans brownfields.
- **Pawtucket** Citizens Development Corporation (PCDC) uses an historic station building and a new potential commuter rail stop as the centerpiece of this proposal. However, other connectors may be of more immediate impact including: Broad Street (Route 122) running from Pawtucket through Central Falls to Cumberland; Cross Street connecting Pine Street mill complexes to new developments along the Blackstone River; the Blackstone River Greenway and Barton Street.
- **Westerly** Land Trust and WH Properties use two parcels in downtown Westerly, one along the river and the second by the train station. The community will reduce reliance on automobiles, remediate under-used and contaminated lands and improve visual and actual access to the Pawcatuck River.

*(See KeepSpace Communities Highlights handout for more detail.)*

The selected communities will receive initial funding to facilitate the community “visioning” process. In each KeepSpace Community, organizers will be reaching out to residents, businesses and community leaders in their respective cities and towns, to seek their involvement in the planning process. Providing funding for this key part of the process is vital to creating communities that residents, businesses and stakeholders will embrace.

“One of our goals is to ensure that each KeepSpace Community reflects the local character of the neighborhoods in which they are located,” said Richard Godfrey, Executive Director of Rhode Island Housing and Founding Partner of KeepSpace. “No two KeepSpace Communities will be alike. By engaging local residents, businesses and community leaders and listening to their ideas of what they would like to see in their community, we will work to create a vision for the custom-design of each community that residents can embrace and be proud to include in their neighborhoods.”

The KeepSpace Advisory Committee, a diverse group of private and non-profit housing professionals, community agencies and state officials, reviewed the 16 proposals submitted since last August when KeepSpace was launched. The committee will work closely with each community to ensure its successful progress toward becoming a viable and sustainable community.

“Many of these individuals and agencies worked around each other for years and some have even worked on the same projects before,” said Godfrey. “However, the KeepSpace Advisory Committee meeting was the first time many of them had been in the same room together.

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It was the first time we had a chance to discuss issues that affect all of us and to apply our collective experience and expertise to a specific initiative. This kind of collaboration, streamlining of processes, exchange of ideas, and creativity is what makes KeepSpace unique.”

The unprecedented collaboration that occurs through the KeepSpace Advisory Committee, and today’s landmark announcement itself, provide tangible examples of the difference KeepSpace is already making in the way Rhode Island approaches the use of resources and the creation of communities.

Joining Godfrey in the announcement of the first KeepSpace Communities were David R. Gifford, MD, MPH, Director, Rhode Island Department of Health; William Parsons, Deputy Director, Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation; and W. Michael Sullivan, Ph.D., Director, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. Their participation underscores the importance of KeepSpace as a long-term solution to key challenges impacting the health and economic well-being of every Rhode Islander and the future of this state and its environment.

“By helping to develop KeepSpace Communities, Rhode Island Housing is fulfilling its mission of ensuring that all people who live and work in Rhode Island can afford a safe, healthy home,” said Godfrey. “For our state’s economy to be strong and healthy, we must come up with innovative solutions to meet our housing, environmental and workforce needs. KeepSpace offers an integrated long-term solution to these problems. By developing viable and sustainable communities, we are investing in our neighbors, in our communities, in our environment, and in our state. Together, we *can* build a better future for Rhode Island.”

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