



keep space

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## KeepSpace Philosophy Inspires Changes in DEM Process

### *Department of Environmental Management Streamlines Permitting Process for Landmark Community Initiative*

PROVIDENCE, RI (Sep. 4, 2008) – The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) is embracing the KeepSpace philosophy of compromise and cooperation. A partner in the KeepSpace initiative, DEM is streamlining its permitting process to help create the first four **KeepSpace Communities: *where neighbors meet, people work, children play.***

The first KeepSpace Communities were announced in May and include neighborhoods in Cranston, Pawtucket/Central Falls, Providence and Westerly. To streamline the permitting process, each of these communities will be assigned a DEM Project Review Team, rather than each developer having to seek out every permit separately, as is the current standard practice. This means that – for the first time ever in Rhode Island – all DEM-related permits will be handled cooperatively and cohesively. As the community developments progress, all permit requests will be handled by the assigned team of DEM experts.

“The comprehensive team approach creates a new way for DEM to conduct business that is more efficient for the applicant and the agency,” said DEM Director W. Michael Sullivan, PhD. “The KeepSpace emphasis on environmental stewardship presented the perfect opportunity to implement this approach. The KeepSpace partners have embraced the streamlined approach and are excited about creating a new model for future projects.”

The underlying goal of KeepSpace is to create viable and sustainable communities by bringing together all concerned – the community, developers, cities and towns, and state and local regulatory departments – in a collaborative process. Through these unique partnerships, particularly among those who focus on homes, jobs, environment, transportation and local government, KeepSpace *combines* expertise, rather than focusing 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.

“KeepSpace is about working *together* to build a better Rhode Island,” says Richard Godfrey, Executive Director of Rhode Island Housing, Founding Partner of KeepSpace. “It is a philosophy that embraces compromise, recognizing that every situation is unique and we can

where neighbors meet, people work, children play.



[Rhode Island Housing]

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no longer work in silos with the hope of comprehensive results. DEM's significant effort to streamline their permitting process is a perfect example of how we need to rethink the way we do things in Rhode Island. We need to combine our skills, resources and expertise, and come to the table thinking about the big picture. This is the only way we can efficiently maintain our state's beauty while creating thriving communities."

The communities selected as the first four KeepSpace Communities are located in Cranston, Providence, Pawtucket/Central Falls and Westerly. Each of the sites has a centralizing element and embraces all of the KeepSpace core elements: a good home; strong commerce; a healthy environment; sensible infrastructure; positive community impact; and integrated arts, recreation, culture and religion.

- 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 opportunities for homes.
- Olneyville Housing Corporation (OHC) in Providence uses the Woonasquatucket Greenway as a centralizing element and connector, recreating healthy open spaces and cleans brownfields in the community.
- Pawtucket Citizens Development Corporation (PCDC) uses a new potential commuter rail stop and a historic station building 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.

For more information on KeepSpace, visit [www.keepspace.org](http://www.keepspace.org) or contact Rhode Island Housing at 401 457-1234.

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