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Gateway wins R.I. approval creates climate for growth

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The Quonset Business Park took a major step forward in realizing its full economic development and job growth potential last month with the unanimous approval of the Gateway project on September 20 by the Rhode Island Statewide Planning Commission.

The approval clears the way for the mixed-use development of the 72.5 acre entryway to the Quonset Business Park. The entryway to the park will integrate office and R&D space, pedestrian walkways and outdoor space, with amenities including a hotel, restaurants, and retail space. We believe this project will enhance our ability to serve as an engine for job creation and economic growth in Rhode Island.

After taking into account suggestions and input from local, state and community stakeholders, we worked with our development partners, New Boston Development to revise the original proposal to represent a mixed use project that serves park residents and the community while also creating space for new office uses and corporate headquarters.

Among the new additions is a sports fitness complex with indoor playing fields, a full gym, physical therapists and trainers. In addition to the indoor fields for soccer and lacrosse, the complex will have several outdoor fields as well. This complex will enhance the mix of uses on the site and provide much-needed recreation space for the community.

The Rhode Island Economic Development Corp. executive director Saul Kaplan anticipates the Gateway will pay great dividends for Rhode Island, accelerating the state's job creation efforts at Quonset by providing needed park amenities while also creating new office space.

New Boston Development Partners, the developers of the Gateway, will invest \$144 million of private funds in the project. During the construction phase the Gateway will create 1,060 construction jobs. At full build-out the development is projected to create 2,165 jobs, over 1,200 of which will be office jobs.

The Gateway will also create additional revenue for the state and the town of North Kingstown. Rhode Island will realize \$9 million in sales tax and \$3 million in payroll tax from the project. The town is projected to receive \$1.4 million in combined property taxes and PILOT payments.

The Gateway will lead to greater job growth at Quonset, while using solely private sector dollars to build a mixed-use site that will boost the local economy and respect the surrounding neighborhoods both now and in the future.

The 961,660 s/f Gateway will include 391,900 s/f of office space, 333,960 s/f of retail space, and an 81,700 s/f, and a 160-room hotel. There will also be 154,100 s/f of non-retail space. The Gateway will also house community meeting space above the retail space.

The revisions to the plan represented suggestions and input from the state, the local community, and park tenants. The cooperation required between all stakeholders served as a good example of what we can accomplish by working together for the benefit of all Rhode Islanders.

The revised Gateway proposal presented by New Boston Development Partners was endorsed by governor Donald Carcieri, the Quonset Development board of directors, and the Rhode Island Economic Development Corp. as well as the local chamber of commerce.

Steven King P.E. is the chief operating officer of the Quonset Development Corp., North Kingstown.

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