



nerej

By Angel Taveras -New legislation creates I-195 Redevelopment District Commission

September 08, 2011 - Rhode Island

On August 1, I was pleased to join with governor Lincoln Chafee, leaders from the General Assembly, officials from our state's colleges and universities and representatives from the business community for the signing of legislation that established the I-195 Redevelopment District Commission.

The product of months of collaboration between my administration, the governor's office and the General Assembly, this 7-member commission will oversee the development of 20 acres made available by the relocation of I-195 in Providence.

The relocation of I-195, which has opened up 35 acres in and around Providence's science, technology and healthcare Knowledge District, is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to accelerate the expansion of businesses, support research efforts at our universities and hospitals, create jobs and stimulate economic development for Providence and the region.

I look forward to the I-195 Commission's process to develop this valuable land, which will require that tax-exempt institutions purchasing property on the newly opened land pay full taxes unless they reach agreement with the city for payments in lieu of taxes, and preserve the integrity of Providence's planning and zoning system.

My administration is currently working with more than 30 civic, government and business leaders who have volunteered to work with a world renowned consultant on the creation of new, streamlined planning and zoning regulations for the city, with a special emphasis on the new properties made available as part of the relocation of I-195. At the conclusion of the process, Providence will have a single, streamlined zoning and permitting system that makes it easier and faster to begin development projects and do business in the city.

At the same time, Providence is one of 24 cities across the globe that has been selected for IBM's Smarter Cities Challenge program - a global initiative to move cities into the 21st Century by using technology to make cities more efficient, more responsive and more collaborative.

Through the month of August, we worked with IBM to develop a roadmap for a new computerized land management system for the city. Eventually, this type of integrated data system could provide a framework for the development of other regions and to accelerate solutions and collaborations statewide.

We are thinking boldly about our future here in Providence. I invite you to learn more about our burgeoning Knowledge District and to explore the opportunities that development of the former I-195 land presents to those in the real estate sector.

Angel Taveras is the mayor of Providence.