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Scott Avedisian mayor's message: Moving forward with redevelopment

February 09, 2012 - Rhode Island

With the City Council's recent approval of my administration's amendments to local zoning ordinances and the Warwick Station Development District Master Plan, we are moving forward with advancing redevelopment of up to 1.5 million s/f within the 95 acres surrounding T.F. Green Airport and the InterLink intermodal train station.

These amendments formally establish two distinct zoning districts, the Intermodal District and the Gateway District, and relax prior parking, height, density and setback requirements in the area. The new regulations also streamline the permitting process, condensing the review period and making it more convenient and efficient for developers, investors and businesses interested in building within the district. Design, construction and landscaping standards have been developed to insure that high-quality development will occur within both districts.

The overall goal of the Master Plan is to: transform the Development District into a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly, transit oriented hub that is a gateway to Rhode Island and builds upon existing investments in the area to develop a sustainable, attractive, 24-hour live/work environment for the traveling public, attract new economic activity and enhance commuter rider ship; promote parking, walkability and connectivity within the district; and create a strong, vibrant sense of place to appeal to businesses, residents, developers and tourists. There is also a potential for an additional 1 to 2 million s/f of office/hotel development along Jefferson Blvd. and adjacent to the station that the Master Plan recommends for inclusion in the Intermodal District.

A combination of residential uses, (such as multi-family units), general office uses, service-based industries such as health clubs, hotels, tailoring, beauty salons, restaurants, child care facilities, museums and transportation-based industries would be permitted in both districts. Plans also provide for the development of a public or civic center and/or public recreation facilities.

An \$847,860 federal transportation grant, awarded to the state Department of Transportation (RIDOT), is funding critical pedestrian and safety infrastructure improvements in the district, which is also helping us to move forward more quickly with marketing and developing the District than originally anticipated.

The city's Department of Tourism, Culture and Development and our Planning Department are also working cooperatively with the Governor's office, state Economic Development Corp., RIDOT, and the Central Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce to secure a federal grant for placemaking, comprehensive marketing and outreach plan for the district to complement ongoing marketing efforts.

With its multi-faceted development plan, convenient access to the airport, train station, buses and I-95 and 295, and proximity to Boston and New York, the Warwick Station Development District offers unique opportunities for businesses looking to locate or expand in Warwick.

For more information call our Planning Department at (401) 738-2000, ext. 6289 or our Department of Tourism, Culture and Development at (401) 738-2000, ext. 6402.

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