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Promoting more transportation options at Quonset Business Park

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As Quonset Business Park continues to establish itself as one of the Ocean State's most successful centers of job creation, we need to consider how to get 9,100 people to work every day in the most efficient way possible. And while we continue to invest in programs to preserve open space, to enhance our bicycle path, and to make miles of shoreline more accessible to the public, we also realize that public transportation initiatives will play an increasingly important role in moving people in and out of the park as employment continues to grow here.

For us, increased transportation alternatives are an important benefit to our existing businesses prospective tenants, and are environmentally sound. We recognize that the majority of the 9,100 full-time and part-time employees who work at Quonset Business Park commute each day in their own vehicles. And as time goes on, we recognize that improved public transportation will be an asset in recruiting new businesses here and to assist existing businesses to expand.

We have consistently worked to build and maintain a modern infrastructure, including: a multi-modal transportation system that features an airport, as well as highway, seaport, and railway access. We also offer full service utilities, including high-speed broadband, a water supply and wastewater treatment facility, and two on-site substations that provide electrical power. The amenities within the park include a hotel, the TownePlace Suites by Marriott, onsite retail, including Dave's Marketplace, high-speed ferry access to Martha's Vineyard, a daycare facility, a public golf course and banquet facility, a 2.3 mile-long bike path along the waterfront, beaches, marinas, and the nationally acclaimed Seabee Museum.

It only makes sense that we make it as convenient as possible for people to get here. And so we support efforts to take what we consider to be one of our existing strengths - public transportation - and make it even stronger. For example, the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) continues to fine tune its routes. Bus #14, for example, stops at the Gateway - the retail section of the park, adjacent to Post Road - 33 times each day. The roundabout we constructed in the park provides a convenient turnaround for buses. Gate Rd. was constructed with a bus pull-off area, which also includes a bus shelter.

On top of the RIPTA routes, TownePlace Suites by Marriott has a shuttle service, and Electric Boat has vanpools - two initiatives that take additional cars off the road. The Quonset Bike Path is primarily a recreational facility but was also designed to be an option for our neighbors commuting from Quidnesett or Potowomut. Lastly, QDC has proposed that the State Rail Plan place a commuter rail station at West Davisville, and perhaps even within the Business Park itself.

In addition to a commuter rail station on the Amtrak line in West Davisville, we also support construction of Rte. 95 South ramps from Rte. 4, which will alleviate congestion on Division Rd./Rte. 2 in East Greenwich. We also believe the establishment of the Marine Highway system, which puts

containers and other cargo on barges arriving or departing at the Port of Davisville, will reduce truck traffic on our highways.

We are committed to improving and enhancing public transportation options at Quonset Business Park. We support these initiatives because we know it is good for those who work here, for our state, and for the environment.

Steven King, PE, is the managing director of the Quonset Development Corp., North Kingstown.

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