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The Conant Thread is 150 acres of new transit-oriented development - by Jan Brodie

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Pawtucket & Central Falls are known as the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution and the home of a thriving textile industry including the renowned Conant Thread mill complex. A center for invention, Conant Thread set the national standard for the quality of its six strand multi-colored thread and its pioneering manufacturing techniques. Today 4 million s/f of mill space is vacant or underutilized – including the historic Conant Thread factory. But what still remain is a creative spirit of original thinking, risk taking and entrepreneurship.

With plans moving forward on a new transit center, set for completion in 2020, the two cities are working together to maximize development opportunity in the surrounding area. The Conant Thread district is 150 acres of new transit-oriented development described in a recent editorial as “A truly transformative project.”

Transit Oriented Development (TOD) spurs economic growth. Neighborhoods are revitalized and businesses grow around transportation hubs. At Conant Thread, intentional planning and an ideal location provide great opportunities to enhance the TOD factor. With the new train station, bus hub and its central location in the Northeast Corridor, Conant Thread is uniquely positioned to attract students, young professionals, families and empty nesters, who will enjoy the ease of access to Providence, Boston and New York City, while appreciating the restaurants and nightlife, affordability and connectivity of a smaller city. Conant Thread builds off an existing dense urban environment, integrated with sustainable parks, bike paths and riverfront access

There are 2 million s/f of vacant or underutilized historic mill space and another 2 million s/f of development opportunity for new construction in the Conant Thread district in downtown Pawtucket, home of the PawSox and historic Slater Mill. Once developed, the district will truly transform the area. For residents, Conant Thread offers an authentic urban vibe and a lower stress, lower cost of life without complete dependence on a car for connection to work and home life. For businesses, it provides proximity to the region’s major transportation hubs and talent pools. The district’s concentrated, diverse and accessible labor pool supports a variety of existing and future businesses and entrepreneurs.

The cities of Pawtucket and Central Falls are in the midst of infrastructure planning for Conant Thread, including parking, bike lanes, open spaces, access plans, utilities and storm water, street and intersection improvements. Pawtucket mayor Donald Grebien and Central Falls mayor James Diosa have joined forces with a joint planning commission for consistent zoning, tax-stabilization agreements and flexible, swift permitting. Zoning in the district is very flexible, meant to encourage all types of use opportunities in an area that will be a hub for alternative forms of transportation and sustainable infrastructure

Conant Thread is a once-in-a-lifetime, 21st century development opportunity that will transform the area on the Pawtucket and Central Falls border into a second urban center for the State of Rhode Island. To learn more, visit www.conantthread.com.

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