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Continuing ribbon cuttings and redevelopment using Commercial Mixed-Use Zoning Overlay - by Diane Feather

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Ribbon cuttings continue in East Providence with the most recent being for the MidiCi Italian Kitchen at 75 Highland Ave., the final tenant in “Highland Commons,” completed in 2016. MidiCi offers Neapolitan pizza, appetizers, salads and desserts. The East Providence location is a configuration of an open kitchen and wood-fired pizza ovens, indoor seating in various accommodating arrangements, a bar with signature cocktails and craft beer, and an outdoor dining area. BankRI, Moe’s Southwest Kitchen, I-Hop, Simply Greek, Your Blue Store, and Pet Valu are also located in Highland Commons.

The proposed redevelopment of the 22-acre Narragansett Park Plaza by Carpionato Corp., on Newport Ave. at the East Providence/Pawtucket border for 119,000 s/f of office space, 240,770 s/f of retail and restaurant space, a drive-thru restaurant and 72 residential units in a “live-work-play center” has master plan approval and commercial mixed-use (CMU) rezoning created for this parcel. This proposed redevelopment has been referred to as a smaller version of Carpionato’s Chapel View development in Cranston which has 470,000 s/f of mixed-use and created roughly 1,000 jobs on site. The Narragansett Park Plaza redevelopment is ideal for mixed-use retail, office and residential as it is of considerable acreage (22 acres), has frontage on a major commercial corridor with transit service, easy highway access, and limited impact to adjoining land uses.

Areas of East Providence are being reviewed by the city for capacity to expand the places for use of the CMU zoning overlay. There are notable large-scale vacant buildings and underperforming sites that could be redeveloped by applying innovative concepts and then become contributing assets to the city and vibrant opportunities for persons to work, shop and live.

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