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Biggest economic development in Pawtucket's history - by Donald Grebien

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Donald Grebien

City and state elected officials joined the developer, Brett Johnson of Fortuitous Partners, at Pawtucket's Visitor Center on Dec. 2 to announce the largest economic development in the city's history. The \$400 million proposal, called Tidewater Landing, is backed by the city, state and the developer and will transform the city's underutilized riverfront and include a new United Soccer League (USL) Championship soccer team and stadium.

In addition to being home to a USL soccer team, the 7,500 seat stadium will also become available for other uses including concerts and public sports use including football, lacrosse, rugby and field hockey, and amateur soccer. The project also includes an indoor sports complex, a substantial mixed-use development with more than 200 housing units and 100,000 s/f of retail, food and beverage, and other community space and a 200-room hotel.

This \$400 million investment in Pawtucket will create jobs and will be a transformative economic development at the gateway into our state. It's a natural expansion from our beautiful Slater Mill National Park to the city's underutilized riverfront. The Blackstone Valley is prime with development opportunities.

Public investment, generated through new Pawtucket Tax Increment Financing (TIF) tool authorized by the General Assembly, will be focused on public infrastructure and non-stadium development; project will add more than \$130 million annually to the state's GDP. The project more than pays for itself with new revenue generated by the project itself that will cover the cost of the public investment – and then some.

We thank governor Raimondo, speaker Mattiello, senate president Ruggerio, the General Assembly, CommerceRI, the city council, the Pawtucket Redevelopment Agency, and everyone who assisted in this project that will be a major catalyst for years to come. The huge development project, combined with the Pawtucket/Central Falls commuter rail stop, are game changers for the city.

Donald Grebien is the mayor of Pawtucket.

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