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## **Pawtucket's Tidewater Landing project coming to fruition - by Donald Grebien**

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Donald Grebien

For decades, the city of Pawtucket has been working diligently to revitalize our downtown and to open up access to our beautiful waterfront along the Blackstone and Seekonk rivers. Bit by bit we have been making real progress towards these goals, with two major projects coming to fruition over the last year.

The first was the opening of the Pawtucket-Central Falls Transit Center in 2023. The station district has already attracted millions of dollars in private investment for mixed-use housing and commercial development projects. And the station's parking lot is nearly full most days with commuters on their work via rail and bus connections. That's why last month we opened a new parking lot at the transit center, with 270 additional parking spaces for train and bus commuters.

The other game changer for Pawtucket is the Tidewater Landing development. A project that will create a premier gateway destination for the state of Rhode Island and surrounding areas, and also create multiple affordable housing units which will be vital to addressing the current housing crisis.

Earlier this month, the first phase of this development closed on all aspects of funding for the Stadium at Tidewater Landing — including the bonds, private debt, and private capital.

This continues to be one of the most vetted, transparent processes in the state's history. All parties performed their due diligence on all aspects of this vital project. Throughout this effort, the city has remained true to our number one priority, ensuring that the taxpayers are protected.

Ultimately, approximately 63% of the project's cost is the responsibility of the private developer (over \$80 million in private investments). Funds will come mostly from private investments and the Tax Incremental Financing legislation created by the Rhode Island General Assembly when Pawtucket sadly lost the Pawtucket Red Sox.

This is a great example of private investors and federal, state, and local governments working together to reinvest in a community and an underutilized brownfield site.

With phase one of the stadium financing completed, we are excited to start phase two of this gateway project. Once complete, the Stadium at Tidewater Landing is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Pawtucket and the state to create a spectacular public space. It will be home to Rhode Island FC and will also host concerts, community activities, festivals, and collegiate and professional sports (including soccer, football, lacrosse, rugby, and other sports).

Area residents from across the state and region can also look forward to the surrounding development. In the coming years, the stadium will be accompanied by restaurants, shops, hotels, housing, improved waterfront access, a pedestrian bridge, and more. Tidewater Landing will truly provide fun and family-friendly entertainment options for generations to come.

Pawtucket is excited by the progress and momentum we are seeing with commercial and housing

development across our city. And we're just getting started!

Donald Grebien is the mayor of the city of Pawtucket, R.I.

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