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City of EP seeing forward momentum on several projects

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A recent Providence Journal editorial identified the historic downturn in our economy that has caused a significant slowdown of new development affecting nearly every community in Rhode Island, but that despite these challenges, the city of East Providence is seeing forward momentum on several important redevelopment projects within the city. More good news on the green technology funding front will further support and bolster new project development in the city in the coming year. The city's Waterfront Special Development District has received \$334,746 in state and federal aid funds to support environmental protection and sustainable development initiatives for projects within the city's Waterfront District. The district commission credited U.S. Sen. Jack Reed - along with U.S. Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, and U.S. Rep. Patrick Kennedy - with securing the funding.

\$234,746 of the funding will be utilized to provide assistance to small businesses to incorporate green design and other sustainable approaches into construction and renovation projects within the district. "These projects are part of a strategy to diversify our economy, create new jobs and be a city that helps businesses lower their energy costs," said city manager Richard Brown.

Also, \$100,000 of the appropriated funding will be used for habitat restoration and runoff prevention, including efforts to eliminate phragmites (invasive plants) and replace them with native vegetation and for the design and construction of vegetated stormwater systems. "These funds will enable the city to use innovative technology to improve the water quality of upper Narragansett Bay," mayor Joseph Larisa Jr. said.

"Although it may appear that little is happening in the Waterfront District, 2009 is actually shaping up to be a very prosperous and active year for East Providence," said Jeanne Boyle, executive director of the Waterfront Special Development District Commission. Among the waterfront projects moving forward this year are the Tockwotten Home, a \$41 million nursing and assisted living center at Bold Point that will replace its existing 140-year old building in the Fox Point neighborhood on the East Side of Providence, Baer Supply Company, a distributor of laminate material, with plans to develop a 100,000 s/f distribution warehouse on seven acres of land in Rumford. Also, Village on the Waterfront, LLC has also entered into a cooperative agreement with Chevron to transform its former 25-acre site on Veteran's Memorial Parkway into a mixed-use community. The proposal calls for 600 residential units with supporting commercial uses. Public amenities may include a fishing pier, a spur of the East Bay Bike Path and a kayak beach.

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