

Guest Letter to the Editor

Great things expected of transit-oriented proposal

Dear residents:

I am happy to report the proposed Pawtucket Commuter Rail Stop has received both praise and won the support of a regional group comprised of business, civic and community leaders from throughout the Blackstone Valley, as the single greatest economic development initiative in over 50 years. Furthermore, the regional group unanimously approved a resolution urging federal and state officials to support a Woonsocket to T.F. Greene Airport transit-oriented proposal with a Pawtucket Commuter Rail Stop, as a top priority.

On Monday, Oct. 26, 2009, I attended an 8 a.m. Congressional Breakfast meeting sponsored by two of the city's greatest community partners, the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce and the Pawtucket Foundation. During the meeting, our elected congressional officials met with key business, civic and community leaders from around the Blackstone Valley with the purpose of promoting a regional transportation strategy that promotes economic growth through investing in our existing rail infrastructure to accommodate a regional transit-oriented investment.

This transit-oriented investment would include commuter rail service from Woonsocket to T.F. Greene Airport with the initial priority focusing on the development of a new Pawtucket Commuter Rail Stop. The group decided to support this initiative because they are aware the project is

about to enter its design and permitting phase, and they are also aware of the regional economic development benefits of the project. The Pawtucket Commuter Rail Stop will not only generate over \$100 million in further mill transformations into hundreds of mixed-use live work space, but it will attract residential and commercial investments in our neighboring communities.

Thanks to the efforts of U.S. Senator Jack Reed, the initial design and permitting phase will be mostly paid for with \$1.9 million in federal funding, with the City of Pawtucket using the proceeds from the sale of the ice rink, as its 20 percent match to access the federal funds. While the design phase is underway, the city, in conjunction with the Regional Blackstone Valley Group of business, civic and community leaders, will seek further federal funding for the construction phase of the project. Without a doubt, the Pawtucket Commuter Rail Stop will be the single greatest economic development initiative to grace Pawtucket in over 50 years.

I thank the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce and the Pawtucket Foundation for sponsoring the breakfast meeting, and I also thank the many business, community and civic leaders who attended and committed to supporting both the Pawtucket Commuter Rail Stop and the proposed transit-oriented development.

With across-the-board support like this, I know great things will happen.

James E. Doyle
Mayor of Pawtucket

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