



## POLICY WHITE PAPER Branding and Marketing Pawtucket's Assets

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Page 1 of 3

### Overview

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As the economic globe flattens and government budgets shrink, communities increasingly compete to retain and grow their tax base. To thrive, cities, regions and states, like the private sector, must market economic opportunities to residents, businesses and visitors.

Pawtucket currently does not have a cohesively defined brand or marketing strategy. There are numerous local individuals, businesses, attractions and property owners already attempting to reach out to consumers, however there is no comprehensive marketing structure to capture each of these individual opportunities into a cohesive **Pawtucket brand**.

An overarching community brand could complement existing resources and opportunities to make the sum of all entities and experiences greater than their individual parts. Pawtucket can benefit from increased tax revenue by strengthening its identity and leveraging locally-generated commerce.

Pawtucket is well poised for resurgence and must make strategic investments to ensure it maximizes its assets. Pawtucket is already preparing for an infusion of over \$200 million in infrastructure improvements. An iconic Interstate-95 Pawtucket Bridge is scheduled to open in 2013. At the same time, the City has hired a local firm to redesign traffic patterns, streetscapes and make zoning recommendations in the downtown. Progress continues towards restoring MBTA commuter rail service to Pawtucket with a \$2M federal planning grant. Funds are in place to construct bus access to the South Attleboro MBTA station and rapid bus downtown Pawtucket. Design plans for Pawtucket Segment 3b of the Blackstone Valley bicycle path are in progress.

Transportation improvements will aid residential, commercial and tourist investment that is already occurring. In the last ten years, 700 housing units have been created in and around the downtown, creating demand for retail and service commerce. Five new businesses have opened in the downtown, in the last year, and more are expected in the future. The entertainment and tourist industry continues to be strong. The Pawtucket Red Sox, Slater Mill Historic Site, Pawtucket Arts Festival and active theater companies draw three quarters of a million visitors a year. A strong arts community, historic architecture, diverse cultures, community pride and a scenic riverfront also benefit Pawtucket.

Developing a Pawtucket brand and marketing plan to promote these assets would help draw residents, businesses and visitors to the City of Pawtucket.

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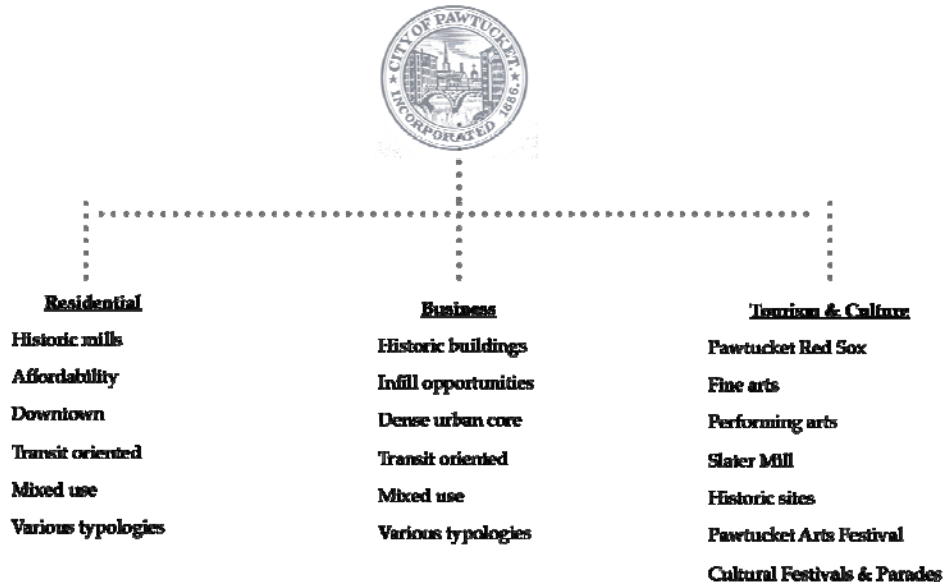
08.20.2010  
Page 2 of 3

**Discussion:**

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Developing a brand and marketing a community takes careful consideration. The campaign must be authentic and connect the inside truth about Pawtucket to the outside world. As the branding process continues, participants must focus on promoting an existing reality rather than an idealized future. Consumers must be able to validate the experiences sold during the campaign.

Specific goals and audiences must be outlined to help guide the process. Three primary focus areas should drive the process and help target audiences.



**DOWNTOWN RESIDENTIAL DENSITY.** Increasing residential density will increase the tax-base, create a demand for development and support local business development. Identifying the populations most likely to live in the desired mix of housing typologies will narrow the focus.

**BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT.** In the central core, Pawtucket hopes to attract a broad base of service, retail, office and arts related businesses to infill land or redevelop existing buildings. Business development will increase tax revenue, quality of life, character of downtown, walkability and sustainability.

Aside from the isolated mill sites, there are significant industrial opportunities at the former thread factory on Conant Street and the industrial park on Narragansett Park Drive. Manufacturing continues to be the primary employment sector in Pawtucket and will likely remain for some time. Identifying growth in this and the other top job sectors is paramount.

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08.20.2010  
Page 3 of 3

**TOURISM & CULTURE.** With a number of existing successful assets, Pawtucket must understand the attendance and revenue impact of each segment. Opportunities to maximize tax revenues from these attractions lie not just in helping to increase visitors, but from linking attractions and retaining visitors in Pawtucket to increase commerce.

A number of potential partners, including The Pawtucket Foundation, are available to help guide and support the branding work, but the City of Pawtucket must take a leadership role in prioritizing, implementing and managing the project. Local artists, residents and businesses should participate in the development and review of a successful campaign.

## **Recommendations:**

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1. Find an entity within the City of Pawtucket to lead and house the branding campaign
2. Identify partners in the community to help fund, advise and integrate the campaign.
3. Identify the type of marketing collateral that would be generated and make decisions about how it will be used and/or distributed
4. Identify opportunities for local artists and marketing/branding experts to participate in the process.
5. Outline a scope of work with projected cost scenarios
6. Allocate funding for creation and implementation of the brand
7. Prepare a request for proposal (RFP) and implement.