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Mayor Announces $100,000 Community Challenge Grant Award

Mayor Leo T. Fontaine announced that the City of Woonsocket has been awarded a $100,000 grant from Rhode Island Statewide Planning. The funds, provided by the US Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, will be used to create a Main Street Livability Plan. The Plan will assist in the rejuvenation and revitalization of Main Street through the development of streetscape design, innovative zoning recommendations, and a transportation and parking study. RiverzEdge Arts Project and YWCA Northern Rhode Island will serve as partners to the planning process.

New streetscape design will include trees, landscaping, pedestrian and bike amenities, public art as well as receptacles for recycling. The streetscape will encourage people to walk, bike, shop, meet and relax on Main Street. The Plan’s innovative zoning techniques will include form-based code, which will be the first of its kind in an urban community in Rhode Island. Form-based code regulates mass and form of buildings. It will ensure that any development or redevelopment will be in the same character as the existing historic buildings on Main Street. It will also maintain and increase the area’s pedestrian friendliness. The Plan will also examine parking alternatives for Main Street shops and residents. The transportation systems in the Main Street area will additionally be studied including automobile, bus, pedestrian and bike modes.

“Woonsocket has a history of strong public-private partnerships. The City’s application offered a strong vision of Main Street and a creative approach. The plan’s potential and partnership strength made for a winning application. We’re very pleased that the funds will help move our vision forward,” said Mayor Fontaine.

Staff from the City’s Planning Department wrote the successful competitive grant application. Thirty-three Rhode Island communities submitted applications, and 15 were awarded. The Plan’s development will be an 18-month process starting on April 2, 2012. The City’s Planning Department will manage the development process.

The Plan will include workshops and committee meetings, which will offer ample opportunity for community input. A calendar covering Plan-related events soon will be posted on the City website: www.ci.woonsocket.ri.us. For additional information about the Plan, interested parties may call Jennifer Siciliano, Woonsocket City Planner at 401-767-1418 or jsiciliano@woonsocketri.org.