



## Application for CPC Project Assistance

**Introduction:** The Roger Williams University (RWU) Community Partnership Center (CPC) delivers project-based services to organizations and municipalities in the local and regional communities. Services are based on the University's academic programs and the availability/applicability/suitability of the projects. Previous projects have included architectural design, market survey and research, business planning, community planning, historic preservation, neighborhood crime prevention planning, legal research and associated specialties. Since the project services are performed by students in support of their educational experience please understand that any deliverables generated through an accepted project are intended to provide conceptual information only to assist design and planning and such are not intended, nor should they be used for, construction or other project implementation. Professional and/or other services may be needed to ultimately implement a sponsor's desired goals

**Instructions:** We encourage non-profit organizations and municipal agencies to contact the CPC with ideas for projects that can benefit the community while providing meaningful service-learning for RWU students. Please fill out this Application for Project Assistance, answering all applicable questions. In order for any project to be considered for assistance, completed applications must be submitted to CPC Director Arnold Robinson via e-mail: [arobinson@rwu.edu](mailto:arobinson@rwu.edu) or faxed to (401) 254-3565. Any questions can be directed to CPC staff at (401) 254-3307.

### SECTION 1: Organization Information

Name of Organization: **Town of Johnston**

Type of Organization (*please circle one*): public (**town**, city, special district), private (citizen, non-profit), other (please explain: )

Name of Contact Person: **Pamela Sherrill, AICP, Town Planner**

Address of Organization/Contact Person: **100 Irons Avenue, Johnston RI 02919**

Phone: **231-4000 x4021** Fax: **231-4186**

E-mail: [planner@johnston-ri.us](mailto:planner@johnston-ri.us)

Description of Organization and Mission:

**Office of Planning and Economic Development is charged with implementation of the comprehensive plan (approved by the state in November 2009) and review of various land use municipal issues and development plan review.**

How did you hear about the CPC? **Arnold Robison at Grow Smart RI Power of Place Summit in May.**

## SECTION 2: Project Description

Title of the Project: **Manton Gateway**

Project Location (Address, City, State, and Zip): **Greenville/Killingly Streets, Johnston, RI 02919**

General Project Description (*you may attach a longer narrative if necessary*):

The Manton section of Johnston is an older mill village located west of the Woonasquatucket River. Greenville Avenue continues east over the Manton Avenue bridge to Providence. Small format retail, restaurant/bars, ravioli/sausage shops, tanning/nail salons, and auto repair are the predominant commercial uses. Residential uses include older mil-style housing, single and multifamily housing, and units above storefronts. Assets include the Woonasquatucket River Bike Path, located along the Johnston side of the river. The following observations were made in a June 4, 2010 memo from the planner to (former) Councilman Joseph Wells:

- Current zoning is B-2 General Business along Greenville Avenue and Killingly Street. “This district is composed of certain land and structures to provide for the retailing of commodities and the furnishing of services which depend upon a great volume of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.” Residential use is not permitted in this zone per Table III D-1 Use Regulations. Residential use in older neighborhoods such as Manton is “grandfathered” as a pre-existing use. Of the 84 parcels viewed (a handful of additional parcels were not recognizable as separate lots), 32 parcels are in commercial/retail use, 43 are strictly residential, and 9 have commercial use on the first floor with residential use above.
- Exclusive residential use (not mixed use with residential above a first floor commercial use) was well distributed on all four assessors’ plats. Residential use is the predominant single use and includes single-family, 2- or 3-family stand-alone structures. Structures range from older mill housing along the south side of Greenville Avenue near the Manton Street bridge to WWII-era units constructed on side streets. This does not include the residential use in the nine mixed use parcels. This is indicative that the B-2 category does not accurately reflect current (or past) land use.
- Commercial use includes automotive and retail plazas including Greenville Plaza and Killingly Center and the plaza on the corner of Killingly and Greenville. These uses all have off-street parking. Additional retail and non-retail commercial uses are located throughout the area.
- Vacant storefronts and vacant lots were observed along Greenville throughout the area. A cluster of vacancies was identified west of Greenville Avenue from Jackson south to Yale. Vacancies in this area range from lots for sale to apparently vacant businesses (Waterman), to storefront vacancies in mixed use parcels on Yale. Other vacancies were observed east of the Killingly Street intersection (both sides) in the vicinity of Cecil Street.
- On-street parking is prohibited. Successful businesses have off-street parking. Many of the vacant storefronts do not appear to have sufficient off-street parking.
- Although Greenville Avenue is well served with sidewalks, the signalized Killingly Street intersection is not pedestrian-friendly. Neither a crosswalk nor pedestrian phase on the signal

is provided. The triangle in the center does not provide adequate pedestrian refuge for safety. Although crosswalks are generally provided at RIPTA bus stops, vehicular traffic did not typically yield to a pedestrian in the crosswalk.

The Manton area was identified by the Office of Housing and Community Development as having Census Tract Block Groups with a high percentage of low and moderate income residents (2000 US Census).

#### Potential Scope of Work/Tasks for RWU CPC:

The objective of Manton revitalization would be to involve business people, property owners and residents as well as staff and appointed officials to address the following:

- Review current zoning and determine how best to allow mixed use by right or by special use permit.
- Design streetscape improvements that create a sense of place and define the identify as a gateway from Providence (and nearby North Providence)
- Recommend multimodal transportation improvements for vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users

A first step could be to research the history of the area (work with the Johnston Historical Society) to help understand how land use patterns have changed over time. This could be used to help create a sense of identity that is different from the Graniteville section along Putnam Pike, the Thornton area along Plainfield Street, the Atwood/Harford Avenue corridors, and other neighborhoods in Johnston.

#### Proposed Project Schedule (when the tasks/project needs to be completed):

The Town of Johnston would like to use the outcomes of this project to demonstrate local commitment and support for various grant applications. As such, we are not currently tied to a project schedule. Other outcomes include zoning amendments that are not tied to a specific schedule.

Other information to help us to better understand the project (we encourage feel free to include pictures, site documentation, maps etc.):

See attached photos and google earth imagery (apologies for not having the capacity to provide captions)

### **SECTION 3: Project Outcomes**

Please describe how this project will benefit your organization:

Revitalization of the Manton area would strengthen the business district, encourage investment in multi-use and residential structures, create a sense of pride in one of the oldest sections in town, and improve property values. This will benefit the entire town of Johnston.

Please describe how this project might benefit the overall community, including who could benefit from this project (i.e. target groups, neighborhoods, the region/city/town as a whole, etc.).

- Manton serves as a gateway to Johnston from Providence. It also serves as the cut-through gateway from Route 6 to Rhode Island College and other North Providence destinations. Improvement of this high-traffic volume corridor will improve the image of the town on a regional basis as well.
- The Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council has put considerable effort into stewardship of the bike path through this area. The proposed project will complement their efforts in providing a recreational asset, linking communities, and protecting natural resources.
- This village center includes two of three census tract block groups in Johnston with over 50 percent low/moderate income population (2000 US Census).
- A project which improves the quality of life for local residents and business people will benefit the entire community.

#### SECTION 4: Financial Information

What is your organization's annual operating budget?

The Johnston Planning Office has no discretionary funds for planning purposes.

What are your major sources of funding?

Federal and state grants for various projects including a GIS Challenge Grant, NRCS funding for acquisition and demolition of residences in the Pocasset River flood plain, DEM/RIDOT funding for upgrade of Cricket Park (with the stewardship of the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council).

How much funding from your annual operating budget is set aside for this project (if any)?

None.

#### SECTION 5: Private Sector Involvement

Have you or your organization discussed the project with practicing professionals (e.g. architect, engineer, planner, etc.)? Yes / No

If no, please explain why:

**Although this had been considered for a Challenge Grant application, GIS mapping was determined to be a higher priority for the town. Other than the town planner, no practicing professionals have provided input.**

If yes, please explain why you have chosen to seek assistance from the RWU CPC with your project request, instead of undertaking the project using fee-for-services from a paid professional: