

## Pawtucket Redevelopment Agency Major Accomplishments

The Pawtucket Redevelopment Agency was established to undertake “Urban Renewal” in the City of Pawtucket in 1961.

In the 1960s, the Agency acquired property in the City’s Downtown, tore down derelict buildings, realigned the streets, provide new development parcels for the construction of new privately owned buildings in the downtown. This redevelopment activity resulted in the construction of a number of commercial buildings, office and residential buildings including the current Hampton Inn, the Apex buildings, the former Peerless Department store, the apartments at Park Place, and a number of the elderly housing developments in the downtown.

During the 1970’s, the Agency moved its activities into the older residential areas around the downtown. Removing numerous blighted structures, making way for new low rise elderly public housing projects in Pleasant View and on Mineral Spring Avenue; installing new sidewalks and repaving streets; creating development parcels for new multifamily housing market rate projects, new neighborhood commercial project; and providing low-interest loans for the rehabilitation of homes in these neighborhoods.

In the 1980’s, the Agency continued working in the residential neighborhoods, but also acquired land to create two small industrial parks, providing the necessary infrastructure development and creating buildable parcels for industrial users. All of the parcels were sold and developed by industrial or commercial users.

In the 1990’s, the Agency acted as the City’s real estate developer for the redevelopment and reuse of the former Narragansett Race Track. This 500 acre property was developed under a mixed use plan, providing residential, commercial and industrial sites for redevelopment. The Agency managed the necessary infrastructure installation and the disposition of all of the parcels. This project involved numerous construction projects for the infrastructure, and then overseeing each developer’s project to insure compliance with the development rules and goals of the project. This project took almost ten years to complete, and involved not only development in Pawtucket, but also parcels in East Providence.

Since 2000, the Agency has continued to work on neighborhood redevelopment, by providing low interest loans for the rehabilitation of the housing stock. Currently the Agency has a loan portfolio of over \$.5 Million. They began working with the City and the Pawtucket Foundation on the Commuter Rail Planning and the Riverfront Development planning. The funding for the construction of the new commuter rail station was obtained in 2016 and the station is schedule to open in 2020. The Agency had acquired and assemble a number of parcels along the City’s Riverfront and began to work on the reuse of these parcels with the City. The Agency transferred land to the City for the development of the Town Landing boat launch and fishing pier project and the land off School Street that became Festival Pier.

The Agency focused on acquiring foreclosed properties that were having a detrimental impact on nearby properties and the surrounding neighborhoods. Many were demolished and made available

for new affordable residential development in cooperation with the City's two non-profit housing development agencies.

In the case of the former Peerless building, a vacant 50,000 square foot commercial structure in foreclosure located in the heart of the City's downtown across from the Old Slater Mill, was acquired by the PRA and retrofitted to provide a multi-tenanted commercial/ office facility. The building became the location of the Blackstone Valley Visitor Center and a number of office tenants. After owning the building for over ten years the Agency partnered with the City to provide the location for the location of the corporate office of Pet Food Inc. By selling the building to the business who completely retrofitted 25,000 square feet of the office space for their new headquarters, over 80 jobs were brought into the City.

Since the City was not eligible for these grants, the Agency has been active in acquiring abandoned brownfield properties in the City, getting grants from EPA to clean up the properties and putting them back into use.

Most recently the Agency partnered with the City's Business Development Corporation in providing gap financing to facilitate the Isle Brewers Guild's development of their brand new brewery in the City's downtown. This \$7.5 million project is located one block from the site of the new Commuter Rail Station, which, along with the private redevelopment and reuse of the surrounding mill buildings for residential reuse, is expected to bring new people into the City's Downtown.