

*City of Taunton
Office of the Mayor*



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**MAYOR O'CONNELL ANNOUNCES LAUNCH OF TRANSFORMATIVE
DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE IN WHITTENTON AREA**

Taunton, MA...Today Mayor Shaunna O'Connell announced the local partners of the Transformative Development Initiative (TDI) have begun the work of sharing ideas and information regarding this new initiative to reenergize the Whittenton area. On March 1, 2022, the TDI kick-off began with an introductory meeting of community members from the public, private and nonprofit sectors of Taunton. On Tuesday, March 22, 2022, several Whittenton business owners and members of the Mayor's Office of Economic & Community Development (OECD) met with representatives from MassDevelopment for a walking tour to begin discussing the specific needs of the Whittenton community.

Last month, the City of Taunton was awarded the highly competitive MassDevelopment Transformative Development Initiative (TDI) Fellowship Grant. At that time, Mayor O'Connell was joined by Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Michael Kenneally and MassDevelopment President Dan Rivera for a brief tour of the Whittenton neighborhood, the new TDI district in Taunton.

"It is exciting to have our City be included in the Governor's expansion of the TDI program. As we continue to focus our efforts on different areas throughout the City, this TDI grant will give us invaluable access to resources to help us stimulate economic growth in Whittenton. I look forward to seeing our much-loved Whittenton neighborhood further thrive and I am grateful to the Baker-Polito Administration for their ongoing support of our City," O'Connell stated.

MassDevelopment's TDI program is designed to accelerate growth within specific districts of Gateway Cities. The program focuses on developing partnerships, engaging community members in actionable planning, implementing local economic development initiatives, and stimulating public and private investment. Since the inception of the program in 2015, MassDevelopment has invested \$20 million in TDI districts and spurred improvements in advancing small businesses, expanding use of public spaces and utilizing vacant properties.

The City of Taunton will be awarded a TDI Fellow, a MassDevelopment employee who will provide economic development expertise and collaborative leadership and work with a core team of local financial professionals, business and property owners and residents with the long-term goal of rejuvenating the Whittenton business corridor and neighborhood overall. The TDI Fellow will provide access to resources to help accelerate development, including technical assistance, grants to support local market development and arts and cultural initiatives, and much more.

Bill Roth, Executive Director of OECD, is looking forward to seeing what this initiative will accomplish for Whittenton. “I have personally worked with the TDI program and have seen firsthand how a TDI Fellow can help a neighborhood such as Whittenton transform and prosper.”

Over the next year, various meetings will be planned and held specifically with the intent of gathering feedback from residents and business owners in the Whittenton area on what they see as the needs, goals, and future of Whittenton.

For further information about the TDI program, please contact the Mayor’s Office of Economic and Community Development at 508-821-1030. ###