

# North of Boston projects praised by Gov. Romney

## Four local initiatives recognized for redeveloping mills, waterfronts

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BOSTON — Efforts to find new uses for old mills and to redevelop waterfronts are among the projects in four North of Boston communities honored yesterday by Gov. Mitt Romney.

Romney singled out initiatives in Lawrence, Newbury, Newburyport and Salem that exemplified "smart growth," balancing environmental and economic development concerns.

Lawrence's Reviviendo Gateway Initiative is designed to create mixed-used projects where people would live on the upper floors and businesses would operate on the ground floors.

"It will bring people back to urban places and revitalize open spaces there," said Mayor Michael J. Sullivan after receiving the award.

Reviviendo, a partnership of Groundwork Lawrence and Lawrence CommunityWorks, came up with a plan to change what they saw as the city's outdated zoning laws. They convinced city agencies to change the rules so that the area can have a mix of shops, businesses and studio lofts in mill spaces.

The Gateway area abuts Marston, Canal, General and Union streets, and sits across from Lawrence General Hospital.

At a noontime ceremony on the Esplanade near the Charles River, Romney said these projects encourage growth without the "random sprawl" that is all too common in many places.

"We've maintained local character and charm," he said.

There is no money given out with the awards. However, several local officials said the honor would

help them bolster their case when applying for grants.

Newbury and Newburyport were honored for their joint plan for developing 1,500 acres on the southern edge of Newburyport at the Newbury town line. The two communities hope to preserve most of the land as open space and to transfer development rights from that area to the traffic circle shared by the communities.

Newburyport was praised for its project to redevelop the waterfront by constructing buildings for housing and commercial use.

Jeffrey Gowan, the city's economic development director, said the plan addresses the city's short- and long-term goals.

"We've underutilized our waterfront but also wanted to see green spaces expanded. We want to connect the downtown to the waterfront so it is a seamless transition," he said.

Salem was honored for its plan to rezone the area around the North River Canal to encourage a mix of residential and small retail businesses. It calls for redevelopment of the FlynnTan factory on Boston Street into retail stores and housing, the creation of an "urban village" with a "gateway" building on vacant former Sylvania land at the corner of Bridge and Boston streets, and a pathway along the North River canal connecting neighborhoods to the MBTA station and downtown.

Martin H. Imm, a member of the committee that developed the plan, said they hoped to show prospective businesses that the city and its residents are united around the project.

"We want to show that we will wrap our arms around them, rather than try to challenge them at every turn," he said.