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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**GOVERNOR PATRICK ANNOUNCES NORTHAMPTON PRIORITY
DEVELOPMENT SITE AND 43D GRANT**

Northampton's Village Hill to be developed as mixed-use site, create/retain 400 jobs

NORTHAMPTON – Thursday, May 15, 2008 – Governor Deval Patrick announced today that Northampton's Village Hill site has been designated a priority development site and that the City of Northampton has been awarded a \$100,000 43D grant.

"Village Hill is another example of the state and municipalities working together to create a more business-friendly culture in Massachusetts," said Governor Patrick. "Streamlined permitting tools such as 43D are vital to sustainable economic development in the Commonwealth."

Village Hill is a planned development which will include commercial, industrial, retail, mixed-use, assisted living, and residential facilities. Located at the site of the former Northampton State Hospital, which closed in 1993, the project will create business and employment opportunities within walking distance to downtown and to market rate housing, affordable housing, and open space.

At full build out, the site will allow for:

- 200,000 sq ft of commercial/industrial
- 50,000 sq ft of mixed-use
- 80,000 sq ft of assisted living
- 181 new housing units (51% affordable)
- Creation/retention of 400 jobs

- MORE -

The \$100,000 43D technical assistance grant will improve and upgrade the City's permit tracking systems, integrate all permit-related databases, and establish an online permitting system for easy application to the City. The City's investment in technology will provide for more timely and efficient permitting at the Priority Development Site and throughout the City.

Adopting 43D on this location assures all future local permits will be issued in 180-days or less. A master plan and special permit for this project have already been approved by local officials.

The first industrial tenant, Volz Clarke Associates, Inc (VCA), is a high-end custom woodworking firm relocating from Easthampton. VCA is currently constructing a 20,000 square foot building with an additional 12,000 square feet available for future expansion. VCA invested \$1.6M in the new construction and employs 15 full time employees and one part-time employee. The expansion will result in at least 2 new full time jobs.

The Chapter 43D Expedited Permitting Program was passed by the legislature in 2006, and is managed by the State Permit Ombudsman, first appointed by Governor Patrick in 2007. An Interagency Permitting Board administers the grant program and provides a format for cross-agency staff collaboration on specific projects and municipal planning efforts. To date, 44 communities have voluntarily "opted in" to the Chapter 43D program.

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