

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*September 13, 2011*

**THE TOWN OF NORTH KINGSTOWN AND THE WEST BAY FAMILY  
YMCA BEGIN THE HEALTHY PLACES BY DESIGN PROJECT**

The Town of North Kingstown is partnering with the West Bay Family YMCA to deliver its Healthy Places by Design project. The project, funded by the Rhode Island Department of Health, is designed to incorporate community health policies in the update of the town's comprehensive plan. "This is a historic moment" says Town Manager, Michael Embury as the project is a process that builds shared community vision and harnesses the talents and energies of community members to make positive changes to their town.

Public outreach and participation in this project is vital. Residents will be asked to identify aspects of the community that could be altered in order to promote healthier living. Armed with this information, residents, business owners and other community stakeholders will work side-by-side to craft innovative solutions and advise town leadership on possible changes to areas in the town's comprehensive plan, with the goal of improving areas such as walkability, bikeability, safety, recreation options, transportation choices, and access to healthy foods. Planning Director, Jon Reiner "welcomes the opportunity to build on the positive efforts over the years of community collaboration on projects such as the Post Road Corridor and the Wickford Junction Train Station".

The project kicks off with a community meeting to explain the project on Wednesday, September 21, 7:00 pm, at the Cold Spring Community Center. "This is a great opportunity for the town to come out to learn how to get involved and to engage in meaningful conversation about what matters to support healthy lifestyles" comments Martha Machnik, District Executive Director, West Bay Family YMCA. The Town and YMCA will also be conducting a community health assessment that looks at local opportunities for physical activities and access to healthy foods. During the month of October there will be a number of interactive workshops on community health held throughout Town. The keynote event of this process is a Charrette on Thursday, November 3 through Thursday, November 10, to include members of the community, town officials, business owners and the YMCA.

During the Charrette, the town and the public participate in hands-on activities to express their vision and create policies and plans in support of physical activity and access to healthy food. Information and feedback from the Charrette will be used to update the town comprehensive plan. Other potential outcomes could include policies, procedures, work groups and design plans. The project has just begun and is expected to run through early February.

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*The mission of the Healthy Places by Design Project is to strengthen land use, transportation and urban design policies and ordinances that guide the decision making process for the built environment to be more supportive of health, particularly as it relates to physical activity and healthy eating. Please see the Town's website on this project at:  
<http://www.northkingstown.org/healthy-places-design>*

All media inquires should be directed to:

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For more information about workshop dates, forums, or other ways you can become involved in the project, please contact Denise Kaplin, Healthy Places by Design YMCA Consultant, at [dkaplin@gpymca.org](mailto:dkaplin@gpymca.org) or 401-295-6501.