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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **SUMMerview SQUARE – SMART GROWTH IN NORWALK**

Norwalk rental community revitalizes a blighted neighborhood on the city's north side

and provides more affordable housing using 90% Made In America building products.

Developer honored with Smart Growth and Community Service Awards

Norwalk, CT – A major precept of growing smarter is investing in transit rich existing neighborhoods by developing more sustainable and affordable housing. Compact, walkable housing development in neighborhoods located near transit can increase a community's economic competitiveness, and reduce housing cost for its residents. So says the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's [Smart Growth Guidelines](#) for Sustainable Design & Development.

Three years ago, Westchester asset management company, [Seavest Inc.](#) formed Summerview Square LLC and purchased four land parcels in a blighted area of Norwalk. Fairfield County builders Andrew LaSala and Steven Berko of Summerview Development Group were hired to develop and manage the project. Their first step was to chase squatters and drug users from the abandoned houses, and then managing partner, Andrew LaSala enlisted the help of the West Main Street Neighborhood Association in a neighborhood cleanup.

Today, [Summerview Development Group](#) has built thirty-one of the one, two and three bedroom townhouse apartments in a 63 unit townhouse style rental community known as Summerview Square. Construction is underway on the last phase of 32 units, and this once blighted neighborhood has been rejuvenated.

“This has been a huge step towards development on the city's north side, an area that has been a question mark for years,” said Mayor Richard Moccia

**How Summerview Square Has Revitalized this North Side Neighborhood**

“I have owned a home on Jefferson Street for 47 years now,” says West Main Street Association President, Christine Abraham. “Summerview finally brought a dream into reality. Everyone thinks the apartments are condos, they look so great, and several of us, including my husband and me, have improved our own homes.”

In April, 2011, Greg Duffey and Joe Brenneis took a 10 year lease on a 3,200 sf building at 167 Main Street, around the corner from Summerview. They gutted the building and opened Minute Man Press. “We like the area. The street’s very active, and our business is growing,” Brenneis said.

Roger Wechter lives in a two family home on West Main Street and also owns a neighborhood business, Cross River Lock. He’s pleased that Summerview “architecturally fits in with the neighborhood”, and his business has also benefitted.

Michael Church of William Pitt Sothebys handles the rentals at Summerview. He purchased his first home in the neighborhood, a two family located just behind the development.

The colonial and Victorian–style buildings mimic the neighborhood’s older two family homes, right down to the front porches, which enliven the street and are an important part of the local culture.

Michael Wrinn, Norwalk’s Assistant Director of Planning characterizes Summerview’s design as an improvement over other developers’ unattractive “sidewinders” which he describes as condominium buildings with a blank side wall facing the street. Since Summerview began construction, the city has changed its regulations to prevent future sidewinders.

“Norwalk has become increasingly attractive to young adults priced out of the rental market in Stamford and Greenwich,” said Rick Segal, President of Summerview Square LLC and chief executive officer of [Seavest Inc.](#), the private investment management firm in White Plains that owns the development.

### **Made in America**

According to a recent study by economist turned builder, Anders Lewendal, and publicized on [ABC News](#), if every builder bought just 5 percent more American made materials, it would create 220,000 U.S. jobs.

Summerview Square has been committed to Buying American from the start of construction.

“At least 90% of the building materials and products we use . . . from concrete, siding and roofing, to nails and web joists . . . are [Made in](#)

[America](#),” says Summerview Development Group construction manager, Steven Berko. “When we discovered that the hardwood floors were from China, we did some research and found a small South Carolina factory to produce them for us.”

According to Andrew LaSala of Summerview Development Group, a number of the building products are fabricated locally in Connecticut. Beyond building materials, the Summerview Square development team employs hundreds of local subcontractors and service providers.

“We are proud that this project has been transformative for the neighborhood and the city of Norwalk,” says Rick Segal. “[Seavest](#) would like to continue to invest in the rejuvenation of Norwalk’s north side.”

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#### **ABOUT ANDREW LASALA**

[Summerview Developemnt Group](#) managing partner, Andrew LaSala was recently recognized as **2011 Fairfield County Builder of the Year** by the Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Fairfield County. Mr. LaSala is a Past President of the Fairfield County HBRA was the driving force in the creation of The Vision Fund, currently known as the [Building Hope Foundation](#), a not-for-profit organization set up by HBRA to provide housing assistance for those in need in the Fairfield County community.