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Northern Stage Purchases Parcel for Workforce Housing at 160 Gates Street and Sets Sights on the Future

(White River Junction, VT – March 28, 2022) – Northern Stage is pleased to announce its purchase today of 160 Gates Street in White River Junction. The organization plans to create workforce housing for staff and visiting artists on the site.

Acquiring 160 Gates Street is a crucial step towards achieving Northern Stage's four strategic goals for the future:

- **To support the vibrancy and growth of White River Junction and the Upper Valley.** This housing will allow the organization to release 14 apartments it currently rents year-round for staff and artists, thereby giving back to the community affordable rentals so desperately needed in the area. The new housing will be designed to enhance neighborhood aesthetics and incorporate “green” sustainable building practices. The location of the property is just footsteps away from the theater, eliminating the need for our staff and visiting artists to commute to work.
- **To take excellent care of our staff and visiting artists.** This is one of Northern Stage's highest priorities and was the driving force in our decision to purchase 160 Gates. Our union contracts require us to provide housing and transportation for our visiting artists. By owning rather than renting, we will reduce housing costs and eliminate transportation costs. 160 Gates Street is also vital for the recruitment and retention of our staff. Recent criticism of our hourly wages overlooks several key facts: Northern Stage provides subsidized affordable housing for our full-time staff, which includes all utilities and home internet expenses. Northern Stage further enhances its compensation package with 5-weeks paid time off, career coaching, and

mentorship. Owning our own housing will allow the theater to expand these benefits while keeping our costs under our control.

- **To achieve long-term financial viability.** A new housing development offers a more sustainable financial model for the organization, allowing the company to funnel savings from dollars not spent on rent and transportation into the education and artistic programming that is the core of what we do.
- **To provide exceptional artistic and education experiences.** We hope to include a rehearsal and lab studio space in the new housing development, which will make possible additional after-school education classes and more new play development. Being even more fully invested and rooted in White River Junction ushers in a new phase of Northern Stage's own development as an anchor arts organization, able to better serve our mission.

Producing Artistic Director Carol Dunne comments, "Remarkable artists, artisans and administrators dedicate themselves to creating miraculous work at Northern Stage. Providing housing will enhance their experience, opening the doors to those who could not afford to live and work in our region. It will make White River Junction a real home for our company members and give them a strong connection to our community." Dunne, who came to Northern Stage in 2013 and has helped to guide its renewal, adds, "Creating theater for our own unique community is our mission. What a profound difference it will make when our company members are able to live and work in this remarkable village."

Northern Stage's vision for the future is to serve as a hub working with multiple local and national organizations to establish the Upper Valley as one of the foremost arts destinations in New England. Board Chair David Grant frames the company's strategy: "We see a thriving Northern Stage as integral to a thriving region. Our investment in this housing property is in the end an investment in people – not only our staff and visiting artists, but also our community. Northern Stage contributes to our local economy by attracting over 50,000 patrons a year who come to dine, shop and enjoy a play in the Upper Valley. Our new housing in the heart of White River Jct. will bring even more business and engagement in this community we value so much."

Northern Stage (northernstage.org) is a regional non-profit LORT-D professional theater company located in White River Junction, VT. Northern Stage actively engages its audiences with world-class productions and extensive educational and community outreach programs in its new home, the Barrette Center for the Arts. Founded in 1997, the company has offered more than 150 professional productions of new works, classics, and musicals. Now in its 24th Season, Northern Stage serves over 50,000 people. In 2014, the company launched a new play festival that has cultivated seven world premiere productions and three Off-Broadway transfers, including The New York Times Critic's Pick Only Yesterday. Northern Stage's breadth of programming supports the company's mission of "changing lives, one story at a time."

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