



Mayor Anita Dugatto
City of Derby, Connecticut

PRESS RELEASE

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Derby Receives \$445,000 Grant for Downtown Revitalization Efforts

DERBY – The State of Connecticut Bond Commission has awarded the City of Derby a \$445,000 non-matching grant to be used for downtown revitalization efforts.

Mayor Anita Dugatto requested the funds as part of her plan to attract private investment to an area that has seen its share of missed opportunities.

The Redevelopment Zone, as the City calls it, is a 15-acre area of land on the south side of Main Street adjacent to Route 8 and within walking distance to Derby's train station. It has been largely void of economic activity after most of the existing buildings were removed. Since then, there has not been a clearly defined plan in place for development.

The City has been waiting for developers to come calling and, over the years, some have. However, each opportunity ended in frustration.

Dugatto believes Derby has been going about the process in reverse. "Developers want three things: clarity, simplicity, and swiftness. None of these things characterized this opportunity in the past."

"The profile of the property is complicated and we don't have a handle on what types of projects are truly feasible. For example, it has an active, privately owned rail spur running through it," Dugatto said. "This has to be considered during the planning process."

Dugatto continued, "Current regulations need to be evaluated to be certain they give developers a clear picture of what Derby is looking for. Most importantly, we need a collective vision that reflects the desires of our community. We all need to be on the same page." Dugatto said.

The grant funds will be used to find out where Derby has fallen short in the past in order to make administrative and legislative improvements and to determine what development opportunities truly exist given the complicated profile of the land and current market conditions. The funds will also be used to vet desirable development scenarios to further reduce uncertainty for developers.

Since the City of Derby does not support a full-time planning staff, the tasks will be put out to bid using a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to insure the City is getting the best work at the best possible price.

"All of these issues, among others, need to be studied before we can roll out the welcome mat", said Dugatto.

"We want to iron out as many wrinkles as possible while paving the way for realistic development prospects," Dugatto said. "Derby is in competition for investors with every city and town from New York to Boston and beyond."