

**Rell backs Naugatuck rehab job  
Bond could give borough \$75,000 for impact study**

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REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN  
12/8/07

NAUGATUCK — The governor wants to help. In her first signal of support for a downtown revitalization project known as Renaissance Place, M. Jodi Rell announced this week the state will likely kick in \$75,000 from the state Bond Commission to help finance an environmental impact evaluation for the proposed project.

The commission is expected to vote on the plan when it meets at the Capitol in Hartford Wednesday.

“We want to help Naugatuck move forward with downtown development,” Rell said in a prepared statement. “In every city and town in Connecticut, we are asking what we can do to help create jobs. We have set a record high for jobs in recent months, but (the) state government must continue to work with municipalities to grow the local economy and improve the tax base.”

State Rep. Kevin DelGobbo R-Naugatuck, who helped get the proposal on the Bond Commission’s agenda, said the state Department of Economic and Community Development, or DECD, will conduct the evaluation to see what type of environmental remediation is needed in areas where Renaissance Place developer Alexius C. Conroy hopes to build.

Much of the project would be built on former industrial parcels considered brownfields because they may be contaminated.

“It makes far more economic and environmental sense to clean up and reuse an old factory site, or old store, than to lose scores of virgin farmland or open space to development,” Rell said.

Renaissance Place is a \$707 million mixed use — commercial and retail — development project planned for 60 acres downtown that would be built in four phases over 15 years. The first phase, approved by voters in May, is expected to bring 387 condominiums, 170,000 square feet of office space, 223,800 square feet of retail and commercial space and a 44,300 square foot movie theater to downtown.

Conroy and his unnamed private development backers would spend \$152.6 million on private developments. The first phase requires \$29.2 million in public funding, much of which the borough hopes to receive through state and federal grant funding.

The first phase is projected to bring about 950 construction jobs, 2,500 on-site job opportunities and \$4.4 million in annual tax revenue, according to a fiscal impact and feasibility study conducted last year by the planning and development consulting firm Harrall-Micholowski based in Hamden.

An environmental impact evaluation is required by the state before any development can begin.

DelGobbo said that study could cost anywhere from \$75,000 to a “couple hundred thousand.” He said the borough has involved state officials in the planning process, and has had discussions with DECD and the Office of Policy and Management.

“We’ve done a lot more due diligence from the state’s perspective than many other proposed projects at this point,” he said. “It is our hope that we can significantly reduce the kind of costs you would have if you were starting this process from scratch.

“This (money) will let us get the ball rolling. This is a huge step forward, and I think it is a signal of support from the governor for this project. Since this is a necessary first step in to ultimately getting further funding, it’s obviously very critical. So, I’m extremely pleased with the governor for her support.”