



For Immediate Release
July 24, 2019

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**WESTFIELD REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY ISSUES REQUEST FOR INTEREST
FOR ELM STREET URBAN REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

Private development partner sought for 1.6 acre downtown development

WESTFIELD- On Wednesday, July 24th, the Westfield Redevelopment Authority (WRA) advertised a Request for Interest (RFI) in the Massachusetts Central Register seeking proposals from private developers for redevelopment of a 1.6 acre downtown parcel, which has been largely vacant since a 1986 structure fire forced the demolition of a former J.J. Newberry's Department store on Elm Street.

The WRA is seeking proposals from developers with "a demonstrated expertise and track record in the development of multi-use buildings and complex real estate development projects in an urban environment."

"For the past ten years, we have worked toward this important day," said Kathy Witalisz, WRA Chairperson. "We've worked hard to consolidate ownership of the several parcels that make up the site, we've demolished blighted buildings that had outlived their useful life, and we've worked diligently with professional planning and design firms to identify concepts that we are confident will work to bring new life to this central block of Elm Street," she continued.

Previous plans to develop the property were unsuccessful due to the challenge associated with private developers' inability to gain site control. An Urban Renewal Plan, ratified in 2014 by the WRA, City Council, and Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development provided the authority for the WRA to assemble the parcels for the purposes of furthering economic opportunity in the downtown.

“In the twenty years I’ve been involved in city government, this is probably the most complex project we’ve undertaken,” Mayor Brian Sullivan said. “I am incredibly thankful to the WRA members who serve as volunteers, our city staff, and our consultants who have helped us capitalize on the full toolbox of available incentives to get us to where we are today, which is on the cusp of something very special,” he continued.

Mayor Sullivan cited over \$100 million in federal, state, and local investment in Downtown Westfield over the past ten years as “setting the table” for this project.

“I am proud of how far the City has come in repositioning our downtown,” he said. “State and federal partners helped us to rebuild Main Street, our bridges and parks, Westfield’s ratepayers funded new utility infrastructure, small business owners have invested private dollars, and volunteers have brought new life to our underutilized spaces,” he added. “Together, we’ve laid the groundwork for a brighter future,” he concluded.

The City will be accepting proposals for developers through the summer and into the fall, with a deadline for submission of October 30, 2019. For detailed proposal packets, interested parties are directed to contact the City’s Purchasing Department for access at 413-572-6254.

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