

City of Torrington

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Economic Development Report July 2020

New Business or Property Development

- **Torrington Riverfront:** 100 Franklin Street
The contamination has been removed from the Site and Torrington Riverfront is now under construction.
- **Nutmeg Fudge Company:** Has opened a permanent shop on E. Main Street
- **Chipotle:** Has opened on E. Main Street
- **Salt 2.0:** Has opened on Main Street
- **New World Mortgage:** Opened just prior to the pandemic, but has recently had their grand opening
- **199 & 229 Church Street, Hotchkiss Mill:** Assisting Developer on a Mixed Use Development, including market rate housing, commercial space, parking and portions of the Naugatuck River Greenway.
- **861 Migeon Ave- Gas Station and Sonic Express:** Under Construction
- **Torrington Savings Bank:** CO issued, fully operational.
- **360 Technology Drive – New Opportunities Greenhouses:** Under Construction
- **6 Tucker Drive, Slaiby Village (Torrington Housing Authority):** Environmental Review for HUD near completion.
- **90 Main Street, Yankee Pedlar:** Court case pending. Pending outcome of the court case, the City was awarded a \$20,000 grant from the State of CT Historic Preservation Office to assist with existing conditions assessment of the property
- **70 North St – IRG (Former Torrington Co. Standard Plant):** On behalf of IRG, the City submitted a \$2M brownfield remediation grant from CT DECD. This application has been approved, pending some additional financial information from IRG. We continue to work with IRG to supply necessary information to DECD so the grant funds can be released

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- **100 Franklin Drive, Nidec:** CT DECD awarded a \$200,000 grant to the City of Torrington to help solicit an end user for this site. These funds will help with soft costs and the preparation of a Remedial Action Plan that incorporates the final site design.
- **E. Pearl Road, Verogy – Solar:** This project has been approved by the Siting Council and is constructed. Been in contact with Verogy regarding their landscaping.
- **Highland Ave, Silicon Ranch – Solar:** Currently seeking Siting Council approval. Approximately 70% of this project is proposed for Litchfield.

City Projects and Grants

- **\$1,000,000 DECD Brownfield Remediation Grant** – Remediation work at 100 Franklin Street nearly complete. All funds from this grant have gone toward the removal of contaminated material. Caps, monitoring and legal documents still need to be completed, in conjunction with the construction of Torrington Riverfront.
- **\$300,000 DECD Brownfield Remediation and Assessment Grant**– 200 Litchfield St. & 105 Summer St. New access agreements are in the process of being executed, to reference new property owner. This grant has been put on hold until the property owner hires proper professional services, that will guide the redevelopment of these properties.
- **\$750,000 Building Healthier Communities Grant** – Economic Development Strategies. This grant is designed to develop and implement an Economic Gardening Strategy that will help support growth of our existing businesses. This grant will also focus on positioning the City to attract new development. See attached budget breakdown.
 - **Façade and Building Improvement Program:** Develop the program description and application forms. Seeking Council approval prior to launching program.
 - **Promotional Videos:** Westfield Production was contracted to produce a series of promotional videos. Two days of filming have occurred, and videos are in production now. First 3 to launch will be Arts and Culture, Family Friendly and Get outdoors – all videos will include a variety of business and promote our It's Happening Here website.
 - **Business “pitch piece”:** A 4 page document highlighting why Torrington is a good place to do business is created. Electronic as well as hard copies will be distributed to all of the Commercial Real Estate Agents in the area. This is also linked to the Real Estate Agent Tool Kit on our website <https://www.torringtonct.org/economic-development/pages/real-estate-agent-tool-kit>
 - **Business Facilities AD:** Torrington placed an Ad in the July/August edition of Business Facilities to try and recruit new business to Torrington. This issue of BF highlighted both the State of CT and Opportunity zones.
 - **Banner Art Program:** Working closely with ACT Commission to develop a banner program that includes art created by to community. The goal is to have a uniformed banner that includes different art work created by community members of all ages and skills.
 - **New Resident Survey:** From January 2020 Through May 2021 there has been over 900 residential property sales. A Google survey was created to get a sense of what

drew them to Torrington. A postcard was sent to these addresses to inform and encourage residents to take the survey. Results have started to come in, a full presentation of the results will be shared toward the end of August.

- **Development of the “Live” page on City Website:** This page has been updated to provide links to information residents may want to know, such as where to find out what’s happening, how trash removal is handled, who the cable providers are, elderly services, where bus stops are etc So that all residents have a “one-stop” resource to find information what’s going on in the community, family and household resources.

<https://www.torringtonct.org/resources-residents>

- **Community Development (Permitting) & Asset Management software:** Implementation of Central Square Software now underway. Implementation of the each software component is approximately 9 month process. Expected launch date for the Community Development software is between December 2021 and January 2022 and Asset Management is April –May 2022.
- **Blue Haus Group:** Phase 1 report is complete and can be found here. The City is working on developing strategies and programs to implement recommendations from this reports such as façade improvements, banner program and activation of “Railroad Square” – further detailed throughout report.
- **Communications Intern:** Our second Communications intern has been hired. He has been working throughout the summer and will remain as an intern through the Fall Semester. His efforts have been focused at increase our Social Media presence and creating our monthly newsletters. In June, or newsletter was also published in Spanish.
- **Social Media pages:** In addition to our Facebook page, which now has 308 followers, we have an Instagram account which has 421 followers. You can follow both pages here:

<https://www.facebook.com/TorringtonCED>

<https://www.instagram.com/cityoftorrington/>

- **It’s happening here.com:** The City has contracted with Northwest Arts Council to update and improve the content on the website. The “find the arts”, “take a hike”, “eat local” and “grab a drink” pages have been updated.

An intern has been developing content for this site such as Selfie Spots, Hidden Gems and Torrington Happenings, which will be added to the website in the near future.

A link (QR Code) to the “places” map will be on City Wayfinding signage

- **Parking Lot Wayfinding Signage:** Working closely with Signlite for the development and installation of 6 parking lot signs and parking wayfinding signage.

- **\$275,000 OPM Smart Growth Grant** – Sue Grossman 5-Mile Extension routing study and design the routing study, to extend the Sue Grossman Still River Greenway from Harris drive, where it currently ends, to Franklin Street is complete. The consultants have recently completed 30% design of all 5 miles. We have terminated our contract with BSC and have identified priority areas, to finalize design plans. New RFP or RFQs will be issued in the near future
- **\$1.9M OPM Smart Growth Grant** – Sidewalks on E. Main Street. The Engineering Department continues to work with DOT on final approval of these plans.
- **\$385,000 Community Connectivity Grant** – Improvements at Municipal Library Parking Lot, wayfinding signage, & improved pedestrian lighting in parking areas. Portions of the parking wayfinding signs will be paid by this grant. NRG improvements are scheduled for Spring of 2022.
- **\$250,000 (administered through NWHCOG) E. Main Street Corridor Study**
This study is completed and available for review <https://www.torringtonct.org/economic-development/pages/e-main-street-corridor-study>
- **Economic Development Commission, new members:** Throughout the pandemic the EDC had virtually met a few times, but due to personal schedules it was difficult to get a quorum. In addition, throughout the pandemic a few members have moved out of Torrington, leaving only 3 active members on the Commission. Now that in-person meetings are being held more regularly, we have been searching for new members to fill the vacant seats. a few candidates have been recommended for these vacancies but a few seats remain open.
- **Cultural District:** Working closely with the City's major cultural institutions, we are in the process of creating a cultural district per CT General Statutes. A proposed boundary of the cultural district has been created. Next steps are to hold a public informational meeting. A presentation to City Council is expected within the next month.
- **Park Mobile:** Assisted the Police Department with implementation of Park Mobile. Park Mobile went live Monday 8/26, launch, promotion and marketing material to be distributed through Economic Development and Mayor's Offices, in conjunction with Park Mobile, over the next 2 weeks.

Statutory and/or Policy Discussion / Changes

- **Food Truck Policy:** Currently Food Trucks are regulated by the City's Pedaling ordinance. Working closely with the Police Department and Land Use Department to identify how this ordinance should be applied to food trucks in the public right of way and determine if changes to this ordinance are necessary. Have reviewed food truck policies and ordinances from other municipalities.
- **Adult Use Marijuana Laws:** State of CT has recently passed new laws that allow Adult Use, recreation Marijuana, including the growing, retail and delivery of marijuana. Conversations with Torrington's Medical Marijuana distributor to see how these changes impact their business. Planning and Zoning will be considering possible regulations changes in the next few months to address the new laws passed.

COVID-19 Recovery Plans/ Recovery Funds

- **ARPA Funding:** Identifying ways to meet the needs of our local business community and aid in the economic recovery for hardships caused by COVID- 19.

Sincerely,

Rista Malanca, AICP
Director of Economic Development
City of Torrington

