

City Of Torrington

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Economic Development Quarterly Report August 2020

CITY-WIDE PROJECTS

- **Franklin Street Plaza** – The Plaza is near completion. Lighting fixtures were delayed due to COVID-19. Planning a ribbon cutting after fixtures are installed. Parking Lot sign is scheduled installation this week. Pedestrian Kiosk sign has been awarded to Write Way sign and is being fabricated. Estimated installation 6 weeks.
- **Pennrose Affordable Housing Development** – 100 Franklin Street
Pennrose is beginning their permitting process. Construction is expected to begin fall of 2020
- **Nickerson** – New Building Construction – expansion of existing business. – Under construction
- **Bad Dog Brewery** – renovation of existing building – Anticipated opening Sept//Oct. 2020
- **Torrington Savings Bank** – New Construction – under construction
- **Stone Container property (105 Summer St)** – Has been purchased by a manufacturing company. I have been working with the new property owner, to bring his company to Torrington. He is estimating he will be hiring locally for 70-100 clean manufacturing jobs within the next 18 months. In the next 24+ months he may have as many as 200 new positions created at this property.

GRANTS

- **\$1,000,000 DECD Brownfield Remediation Grant** – 100 Franklin Street
Bids for remediation were received. Brownfield remediation expected to start in 2-4 week and will take approximately 30 days to complete.
- **\$300,000 DECD Brownfield Remediation and Assessment Grant**– 200 Litchfield St. & 105 Summer St. Working with new property owner to develop scope of work for additional assessment that needs to be completed on 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.
 - RFQ for permitting software have been reviewed and interviews conducted. Fee proposals were requested from 5 out of the 9 proposals we received. Deadline for fee proposals 8/17.

- Developed a Real Estate Agent Tool Kit, including a residential “pitch piece”
<https://www.torringtonct.org/economic-development/pages/real-estate-agent-tool-kit>
- Leveraging these funds, as matching funds, to submit a **grant application for CARES Funds Through EDA**. Applying for additional \$747,000 for the implementation of the City’s Survive and Thrive Economic Recovery Plan.
- **\$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. BSC is working on developing these plans. Design for improvements at the Library Parking lot are a priority and are expected to be complete by the end of August. Additional survey work is required for portions of the greenway, due to impacts on wetlands.
- **\$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
The bulk of this grant is for improvements to the municipal parking on next to the Library, which is anticipated to be bid this fall. Weather pending work to begin fall of 2020 or spring 2021. The other projects included in this grant is wayfinding signage to parking lots and at the parking lots for pedestrian, improved pedestrian lighting at all downtown municipal parking lots and crosswalks re-painted. Wayfinding signage is estimate to be installed this fall.
- **\$250,000 (administered through NWHCOG) E. Main Street Corridor Study**
Data collection is complete. Routine meetings with the Technical Advisory Committee continue monthly. Key Economic Development nodes have been identified and will be studied in more detail. Public outreach will be done virtually on this project. The first public outreach meeting is planned for early October (exact date TBD). An on-line GIS portal to receive public comment will be launched to aid in gathering public input. In-person meetings with individual property owners, will be taking place prior to the October public meeting.
- **Grant APPLICATION Opportunity** Working closely with the Northwest CT Workforce Investment Bureau to access funds that will provide on the job training and hiring incentives for lead and asbestos remediation contractors. These funds can also be used for employee recruitment and initial screening of candidates. Application deadline 9/22/20.

COVID-19 Recovery Plans

- **Torrington’s “Survive and Thrive” Community Recovery Steering Committee**
This Committee is to identify the needs within the community and relay those needs up the chain of command. This Committee meets every Thursday at 2:00. The major unmet needs in the community are food insecurities, sufficient childcare “spots” to meet demand, anticipated increase in housing instability once non-eviction orders are lifted and supporting local businesses.

United Way 211 calls have been one indicator we are using to identify where there is increased demand within the community. Healthcare calls have seen the highest increase (in percentage) of all the categories. The Committee is working with local healthcare agencies to identify where the need in healthcare is.

The following small work groups have formed to address the following concerns

- Food Insecurity
- Downtown Revitalization
- Torrington Social Service Providers

A press release and social media message was released to the Community, encouraging businesses and residents to contact us with any unmet needs they may be facing. TorringtonThrives@torringtonct.org has been created for this outreach. Several emails have come in to this address, mainly regarding housing assistance and job/unemployment questions.

In addition, any information that has been requested from Committee members has been posted on the City's website as resources to the community:

<https://www.torringtonct.org/home/urgent-alerts/coronavirus-information-and-resources>

- **“Survive & Thrive Plan” Economic Recovery Plan**

The intention of this plan is not only to help our businesses survive this pandemic, but help them to thrive now and in the future. The efforts made during this pandemic are designed strengthen our business community and build collaboration that can be applicable after this pandemic. Many of the efforts connected to our Building Healthier Communities Grant, such as Economic Gardening. The following steps have already begun, and will continue to be developed and adjusted as needed.

- Continued Tele-Town Hall meetings
- CT SBDC offers free
- Acquire itshappeinghere.com to give businesses a platform to advertise on (estimated completion 2 weeks)
- Marketing efforts to promote Torrington Businesses
- Apply for CARES Act funds through EDA for implementation of this plan
- Meeting with Downtown Arts organizations weekly
- Meeting with Main Street Torrington (tentatively scheduled for 8/18/)

Sincerely,

Rista Malanca, AICP
Director of Economic Development
City of Torrington