

# COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Vol. 1 Issue 1

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## Monthly Newsletter



Please enjoy the first issue of the City of Torrington Community and Economic Development Newsletter!



## WELCOME...

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I am thrilled to be releasing our first monthly Community and Economic Newsletter! This newsletter will highlight the growth Torrington is experiencing, new initiatives the City is undertaking and welcome new businesses to the community. We hope you find it informational and enjoyable. If you are aware of an exciting story that should be highlighted please reach out and tell us about it!

As we all know, 2020 was full of challenges. While these challenges have put much into perspective, it has also reminded us of the strength within our community. Although Torrington faces many of the same problems that a large city faces, we are still small enough to know and care for each other. Our residents and businesses have been a source of inspiration and support. We have witnessed support of each other and our small businesses, business ingenuity and collaborations, schools and day cares supporting our children and families in ways they never imag-

ined and organizations banding together to provide food and shelter for those in need. This Community has truly lived up the phrase coined early in 2020 "Together we are strong, Together we are resilient, Together we are Torrington!"

The City continues to work closely with our business community, residents, non-profit organization and strategic partners to continually develop and implement our "Survive and Thrive" Recovery Plan focused on economic sustainability and creating a stronger more resilient community. The strength and beauty of our community makes Torrington an attractive place to live, work and play. I'm looking forward to sharing Torrington's successes with you throughout the year.

Sincerely,

Rista Malanca

Director of Economic Development

Find us!





## Helpful Links:

- [Torrington Area Health District](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [State of CT \(includes Executive Orders from the Governor\)](#)
- [Northwest CT Chamber of Commerce](#)



## We're Here to Help: Covid-19

**Together we are strong**

**Together we are resilient**

**Together we are Torrington!**

The City of Torrington is implementing its "Survive and Thrive" Recovery Plan. This plan focuses on both Community and Economic Recovery. As part of this Recovery Plan, you will find information and resources below that will help you and your businesses not only survive the COVID-19 Pandemic, but help you thrive long after the Pandemic has passed.

-Rista Malanca, Director of Economic Development

### *COVID-19 Testing and Vaccine Sites*

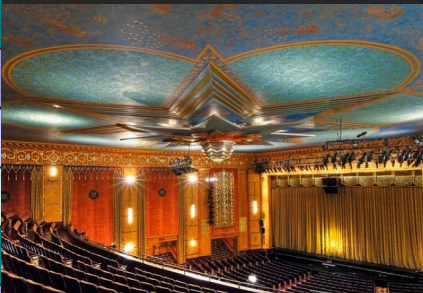
## Welcome Back the Warner Theatre

The federal government recently passed the Save Our Stages Bill. This bill is part of the \$15 billion relief package which includes financial assistance for arts and entertainment venues.

This bill is vitally important to the survival of Torrington's historical Warner Theatre. On Main Street, the Warner Theatre is the heart of economic activity and cultural vibrancy. The Warner Theatre has played an essential part in bringing community members and visitors to the downtown area, and boosting economic activity in surrounding restaurants and small businesses.

Because of the Warner Theatre, Torrington has been able to attract even more artists and performers, which then draw more businesses and consumers. The Warner Theatre is already very busy with upcoming productions and plans on how to re-open safely among COVID-19. Torrington is extremely grateful to have such a place that fuses the arts and local businesses, and we are eager to welcome them back!

Click to support the Warner and check out their upcoming shows!



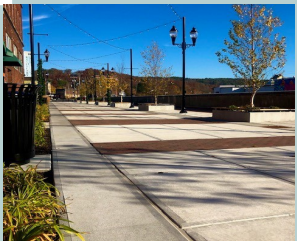
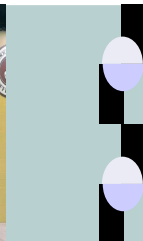
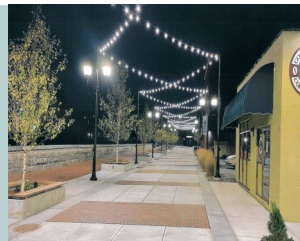
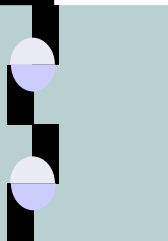
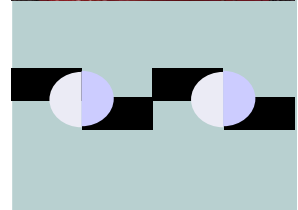
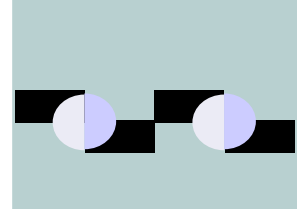
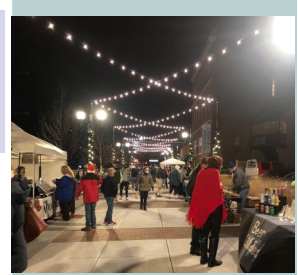
## FRANKLIN STREET PLAZA AND PATTERSON PARK ARE OPEN!

Franklin Street Plaza officially open on November 12<sup>th</sup>. The plaza sits alongside the Naugatuck River overlooking the beautiful mural, FishTales, donated to the City by Danielle Maler.

This \$2 million investment has forever changed the gravel street's physical appearance to be more modern and inviting with concrete separated by bold red brick, and lit by stunning catenary lighting. The large tree at the center of Patterson Park has been replaced by a one-mile long labyrinth decorated by the same red brick.

This long-awaited project was designed to create a civic space to draw in residents and visitors and increase economic activity in the downtown area. Hopes are that Franklin Plaza will stimulate further development and economic prosperity in the City, as it provides a more walkable connection between small businesses on Franklin Street to Main Street.

So far, the area has done just that. Franklin Plaza has already been host to several community wide events including the Festive on Franklin local holiday marketplace organized by Sanctuary Power Yoga, and the Story Walk on Franklin. We intend for the area to attract more small events in the near future. Any scheduled events would appear on the [calendar](#) provided by the Parks and Recreation Department.



## The Naugatuck River Greenway

Deliberations and plans to extend the Naugatuck River Greenway are currently underway. The greenway is a 44-mile planned, multi-use stretch adjacent to the Naugatuck River. So far, a 2-mile parcel has recently been constructed between the Sullivan Senior Center and Toro Field. We have also completed the area in Franklin Plaza with the intention of extending it to the new affordable housing complex set to begin development in 2021. Hopes are to eventually be able to connect this to the greenway in Derby.

### BENEFITS OF TRAILS

Recreation opportunity  
Economic Impact  
Transportation  
Quality of Life  
Connectivity

Find out more...



#### Construction Cost



#### Annual Direct Spending



#### Estimated Annual Visits



#### Cumulative Health Impact





# East Main Street Corridor Study

The City of Torrington has been conducting a corridor study of the section of East Main Street (Route 202), stretching from the heart of downtown to the New Hartford town line. This section of road is not only the City's western gateway, but also the economic center for the entire region. The work is being funded through a \$1.7 million Responsible Growth and Transit-Oriented Growth Grant from the Connecticut Department of Transportation.

The BSC Group and Good Earth Advisors have completed its data collection and analysis phases. A presentation on the existing conditions of the corridor was provided during a virtual public meeting held on September 29<sup>th</sup>. Since this time, the consultants have had the opportunity to conduct smaller group discussions, meet with specific property owners, and review comments submitted via the City's website and on-line survey. Ideas and concerns that were expressed by respondents have been considered as proposed recommendations were developed.

The findings and proposed recommendations were presented by the consulting team during a virtual public meeting on December 10<sup>th</sup>.

## Recommendations:

To improve **Congestion and Vehicle Operations**, it is proposed that we create a 4-lane cross section from Charles street to Route 8, and update traffic signal equipment to improve visibility and optimize signal phasing.

To increase safety on **Connections for Pedestrians and Bicycles**, we should upgrade and add suggested crossings, replace signals, and add new sidewalks and widened bike lanes.

[Review past meetings and findings here](#)

To help **Transit and Access Management**, we should upgrade bus stop locations to be more accessible, and add benches and shelters.

We should consolidate curb cuts during the re-development process, create new right-in/right-out drives and full-access side streets, restrict left turns at BJ's, and install a center median between Torrington Street and Target.



## Project Goals

- Improve traffic flow and safety
- Encourage sustainable growth patterns
- Improve connectivity between the abutting residential neighborhoods and the corridor
- Employ best practices of multi-modal transportation by striking a balance among vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists



## How will we reach these goals?

- Accurate & comprehensive data collection and survey
- Detailed assessment of traffic operations and safety
- Examine physical characteristics of the Corridor
- Identify nodes for potential future development
- Develop transportation improvement alternatives
- Develop concepts for safety improvements along the Corridor
- Identify funding sources and strategies to implement safety improvements

# COMING SOON TO TORRINGTON...

We are so excited for all of the project applications proposed to the Torrington Planning and Zoning Commission. They have been working very hard to encourage economic growth with projects that reinforce Torrington's unique character and community vitality.



We are working to re-establish a historic and beloved Torrington business that tragically closed in 2019. Proposals to re-construct [Marino's Restaurant](#) have been approved in an effort to reintroduce the family-owned restaurant back into our business community, and regain a piece of Torrington's economic and cultural heart.

We are also continuing to bring national businesses to Torrington like we have in the past couple of years, including Five Guys and Jersey Mike's Subs. Now we are happy to invite a [Chipotle](#) Mexican Grill in place of the old Santander Bank at 1313 East Main Street. Members of the Torrington and surrounding communities already eagerly await Chipotle's arrival. Construction on the brand new building has begun and we cannot wait until Chipotle is open for business!



Torrington has also realized the need for more affordable housing. Currently, there are plans underway add 92 new apartments in [Slaiby Village](#). The proposal is to construct two brand new buildings, one housing 40 units and the other housing 52 units. They will sit on a 17- acre parcel of land, where residents can take a stroll on walking trails and enjoy the scenery.

Construction projects keep rolling in and a major one is happening in [Torrington Fair Plaza by Walmart](#). There are plans to build two new buildings in the Walmart parking lot, enclose the garden center, and add a drive connecting the lot to Target. These two shopping centers are heavily utilized by Torrington consumers and this is a long-awaited addition to ease traffic flow and make shopping more convenient.

## A COUPLE UPDATES...



Torrington City Planner Martin J. Connor has also proposed a change to the Zoning Regulations to include Small Scale Manufacturing. This addition allows for new small-scale industries to settle in Torrington and further prompt economic activity. Our hopes are that this addendum initiates broader manufacturing of local goods, create more sustainable jobs, and add to Torrington's unique character, which attracts tourism and stimulates the economy.

Torrington is deeply invested in the education, health, and prosperity of its students. And so, proposals for a newly constructed high school has been approved. However, in order to facilitate the beautiful, modern two-story construction, the Planning and Zoning Commission has had to make a zone change.

## NEW BUSINESS HIGHLIGHTS



Kristy Barto opened The Nutmeg Fudge Company pop up shop over the holidays, and now intends to open up a permanent location at 20 E. Main Street



The Bad Dog Brewing Company worked extensively to renovate the old Firehouse, and continues to embrace the Torrington arts and business community. They held a grand opening January 30th!

# BUSINESS RESOURCES

## Northwest Connecticut Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber of Commerce of Northwest Connecticut serves Torrington and the surrounding Northwest communities including Litchfield, Winsted, New Hartford, Barkhamsted, Harwinton, Goshen and Canaan.

The Chamber combines efforts with other groups for continuous progress in the areas of governmental affairs, manpower, education, transportation, tourism, and regional and community development, to make the area a better place in which to live and work. Many efforts are concentrated on retaining existing businesses and industries, encouraging expansion, and attracting new enterprises to locate here.



## CT Small Business Development Center

CTSBDC provides free, confidential, professional, expert business advising to small business owners and entrepreneurs to start, grow, and thrive in Connecticut.



## Betsy Paynter

Betsy Paynter is the Small Business Outreach Consultant for Discover Litchfield Hills. Her goal is to connect with and support businesses in the Northwest Hills region. She has provided valuable resources for businesses, including:

- ◇ Business planning and pivoting
- ◇ Development of marketing plans
- ◇ Social media assistance
- ◇ Finding employees
- ◇ Financial support and access to capital, loans, and grants as available

Torrington is in the Northwest Hills region, so small business owners who would like help increasing consumer awareness, or desire assistance during these times should feel free to contact Betsy anytime!



## Discover Litchfield Hills

Discover Litchfield Hills highlights and supports 21 communities in the Northwest Hills Region, including The City of Torrington. They offer support for local businesses by advocating for you via social media and their website.

In the past they have compiled a Holiday Gift Guide to help shoppers know where to purchase local goods. They update their social media every day to showcase small businesses in the area. They are always welcoming submissions from businesses regarding specials, services, or other goods your business is offering. You can navigate to their website to help get the word out about your business!



## U.S. Small Business Administration

SBA is a large, national, free association that aims to help small businesses in any way possible. SBA has a ton of resources for small businesses. Their website alone offers guides on how to plan, launch, and manage your business. They also provide information regarding small business loans and grants which can be helpful. They even offer free courses and other programs to lift you up. If you need assistance with your small business and don't know where to start, check out the U.S SBA!

