



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Connecticut Main Street Center Selects Three Communities for Pilot Program to Bring Housing Downtown

(Hartford, CT) – Connecticut Main Street Center (CMSC) announces the selection of Middletown, Torrington and Waterbury for its new pilot program, *Come Home to Downtown*. CMSC developed this mixed-use real estate planning pilot program to provide selected communities with new tools to strengthen economic health and restore vitality to their downtowns, facilitating the development of viable, interesting housing opportunities while improving downtown neighborhoods. The goal of the *Come Home to Downtown* program is to set the stage to attract developers and “mom and pop” building owners to redevelop vacant or underutilized buildings with a mix of uses and housing choices. CMSC will also provide local public and private champions and partners with strategic tools to allow them to create or enhance a strong downtown management program. The *Come Home to Downtown* pilot was created in partnership with the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA), through a \$250,000 investment using Community Investment Act (CIA) Program funding.

“The *Come Home to Downtown* pilot program is an ideal use of CIA funding. Increasing housing options and revitalizing downtown districts will allow people to live near where they work and play, while saving money on transportation, creating more active, vibrant town centers,” said Eric Chatman, president and CEO of CHFA. “It will also give an economic boost to the smaller “mom & pop” property owners who can better utilize the upper floors of their buildings.”

“Recent studies from the Brookings Institution also show that the millennial and baby boomer generations are increasingly interested in walkable, transit-oriented neighborhoods. The *Come Home to Downtown* program will pave the way for them,” Chatman noted.

“As the leader of downtown revitalization here in Connecticut, we know the largest impediments to mixed-use development are strict regulations, limited financing options, and the perception that density leads to blight, overcrowding and loss in value, so we applaud Governor Malloy and CHFA’s efforts to turn those obstacles around and bring housing and mixed-use development to our cities and towns,” said CMSC President & CEO



John Simone. “With their support, we’ll be able to begin addressing the specific needs of the pilot communities, using them as a model for other downtowns facing similar issues,” said Mr. Simone.

“Our *Come Home to Downtown* pilot communities were selected based on criteria we feel is vital for success, including local public and private sector leadership, a strong record of community engagement, success of previous downtown revitalization initiatives and multi-story buildings and property owners who are motivated to redevelop them,” said Mr. Simone. “After careful review and visiting Middletown, Torrington and Waterbury, we’re confident they are ready, willing and eager – and more importantly capable – to plan for and eventually create Main Streets with a vibrant mix of housing and retail.”

CMSC will kick off the program in each pilot community in early January, beginning with the collection of data, building analysis and the coordination of community engagement activities. CMSC will work in concert with Middletown, Torrington and Waterbury, exploring their downtown redevelopment issues in-depth and creating new strategies that respond to changing demographics and market dynamics. Work will continue throughout the summer on consensus building, a downtown development audit for each of the towns, model building analysis, assistance to small-property owners who demonstrate a desire to redevelop their properties to include housing, and downtown management organizational development.

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### **Connecticut Main Street Center**

Connecticut Main Street Center is a statewide nonprofit that inspires great Connecticut downtowns, Main Street by Main Street. Its mission is to be the champion and leading resource for vibrant and sustainable Main Streets as foundations for healthy communities.

Connecticut Main Street Center’s network of member communities reaches across the State. Since the Connecticut Main Street program began in 1995, Designated Main Street programs have generated over \$994 million in public and private reinvestment in their downtowns. Over the same time, 421 net new businesses have opened and 2,475 net new jobs have been created. For every \$1 spent on a local Main Street program, \$73.13 has been reinvested in CT Main Street designated downtowns, making the Main Street initiative one of the most successful economic development programs in the country.



CT Main Street Center is supported by Founding Sponsors, the State of Connecticut Department of Economic & Community Development and The Connecticut Light and Power Company, and by Growth Sponsors, The United Illuminating Company and the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office. For more information, visit [www.ctmainstreet.org](http://www.ctmainstreet.org).

**The Community Investment Act (CIA)**

In 2005, the Community Investment Act (P.A. 228) was established requiring a recording fee for all documents entered into municipal land records. The proceeds are used to increase and support affordable housing, historic preservation, agriculture and open space. CHFA is authorized to use CIA proceeds to supplement new or existing affordable housing programs.

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