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CT MAIN STREET CENTER RECOGNIZES TOWN OF MANCHESTER FOR INNOVATIVE PLANNING PROGRAM

Manchester, CT — The Town of Manchester is pleased to announce that it is one of eight statewide recipients of the prestigious CT Main Street Center’s Annual Award of Excellence in the category of Planning for its Downtown 2020 Initiative. This year’s winners represent the most transformative, catalytic, and inclusive efforts in bringing Connecticut’s Main Streets back to life over the past year.

“We know that times are tough right now, but we’ll get through this, and it’s the people and communities like our award winners that will help our downtowns and Main Streets come back stronger than ever.” said Patrick McMahon, CMSC CEO.

The Town of Manchester knew that it was forging new ground when it developed and implemented the Downtown 2020 Initiative in partnership with the Downtown Manchester Special Services District. This innovative two year Downtown planning initiative, begun in 2019, was intended to accelerate Downtown economic growth, increase vibrancy, grow tax revenue and expand accessibility. The program components include:

- The Downtown Code Improvement Loan/Grant Program - A zero interest loan program intended to bolster transformative private investment in Downtown buildings. The first successful applicant to the Downtown Code Improvement Loan/Program spearheaded the transformation of a 29,000 sq. ft. historic commercial building into a mixed use property boasting a first floor DIY arts center and café, with upper level maker space and apartments to follow.

- Public Capital Investments – Public investments that offer community-wide value by reinforcing Downtown’s brand and sense of “place”. Two examples of Capital Improvement Projects that have been completed include installation of market lighting along Purnell Place and a public art project resulting in a dynamic mural along a pedestrian walkway connecting Main St. with the extensive Purnell Place Parking Lot.

- Downtown Management Reorganization – A reorganization of roles and responsibilities undertaken by the Town and the Downtown Special Services District in order to provide real property tax relief for Downtown property owners, while maintaining services to
Downtown property owners and businesses, and enhancing marketing and real estate assistance.

As Manchester faces the new economic challenges presented by COVID-19, innovative programs like the Downtown 2020 Initiative will help communities rebuild their economies.

Gary Anderson, Director of Planning and Economic Development for the Town of Manchester notes, “The Town of Manchester is extremely proud to receive this award. We know that when we get through the current health crisis together, Downtown will once again be in good position to thrive and grow. We thank the Downtown Special Services District and all Downtown Manchester businesses and property owners for their continued partnership in this important work and we look forward to seeing everyone Downtown in the near future. “

The 2020 Initiative is scheduled to continue through the end of December 2020.

For more information on the Downtown Manchester 2020 Initiative go to www.Downtown2020.com

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