



Town of BEACON FALLS
Connecticut

GERARD F. SMITH

First Selectman

December 21, 2021

Commissioner David Lehman
Department of Economic and Community Development
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford CT 06103

RE: CT Community Challenge Grant
NVRDC-SBF, LLC TOD Project

Dear Commissioner Lehman:

On behalf of the Town of Beacon Falls, I am writing to express my strong support for the Naugatuck Valley Regional Development Corporation's (NVRDC) application for a CT Community Challenge Grant. The grant funds will be used to support and leverage private investments to construct a mixed-use, transit-oriented development on approximately 223 acres of land on the border of the towns of Beacon Falls and Seymour. The site is located along Route 8 and lies adjacent to the Waterbury rail line. It is considered one of the largest parcels of undeveloped industrial and commercial land in the Naugatuck Valley region. The project will generate substantial economic activity in the town and expand its economic base and grand list, resulting in an increase in local property tax revenues that will help support town services.

Currently, the site is vacant but prime for development. However, it lacks access from state Route 42 in Beacon Falls and Route 67 in Seymour, and the utilities required to serve the proposed uses are limited. The CT Community Challenge Grant will be used to install and construct the infrastructure needed for the project. While the grant request is substantial, the funds would help secure private investment that will exceed \$200 million just for the first phase of the project. At full build-out, the private investment could reach \$500 million.

This project has the potential to spur other complementary outcomes. The more critical action is the consolidation of the Beacon Falls and Seymour train station and relocation to the site. The new station will provide a more convenient and attractive location for passengers to board and alight Waterbury rail line trains, and a station with modern amenities, such as high-level platform, weather protected waiting areas, real-time traveler information, and sufficient and well defined commuter parking. By consolidating the stations, travel time on the train will be reduced

by close to 10 minutes. It will also make the planned project a true TOD, with pedestrian connections between the development and the station integral to the project.

The other complementary element is construction of a roughly two-mile section of the Naugatuck River Greenway Trail. The trail is planned to run from Derby to Torrington and extend about 44 miles once completed. Several sections have already been built, including a segment through downtown Beacon Falls. Where open, the trail supports tourism, generates economic activity, and improves the health and quality of life of residents. Completing the trail between Beacon Falls and Seymour will serve to connect the towns and offer an alternate way for people to get to the respective downtowns, the planned development, and the new train station. The trail will help make the towns more attractive places to live and work, furthering the region's on-going efforts to transform it from a region with pockets of economically distressed communities to an economically stable and vital region.

The proposed project is consistent with Beacon Falls' Plan of Conservation and Development and the concept for connecting Route 42 and Route 67 to provide access to the site for economic development has been discussed as a project of regional significance in recent years and is included in the Metropolitan Transportation Plans for the Greater Bridgeport and Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Central Naugatuck Valley MPO.

The investment of a CT Community Challenge Grant in the NVRDC-SBF, LLC's project will generate economic returns well more than the initial grant funds, help revitalize the economic base of both Beacon Falls and Seymour, and support efforts to create transit-oriented developments that promote alternative modes of travel. For these reasons, I fully support the application submitted by the NVRDC and request your full consideration of this worthy proposal.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about Beacon Falls' support of this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Gerard Smith", written over a horizontal line.

Gerard Smith, First Selectman