



**NEWS RELEASE
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Cheshire Honored with Sustainable CT Certification

(Cheshire, CT-June 1, 2021) Cheshire is among four Connecticut municipalities to be recognized this spring for achieving Sustainable CT certification. Cheshire met high standards in a broad range of sustainability accomplishments to qualify for the prestigious bronze-level certification. The highest level of certification currently offered is silver.

Sustainable CT, a statewide initiative that inspires and supports communities in becoming more efficient, resilient, and inclusive, announced its 2021 spring certified communities this week.

According to Sustainable CT, Cheshire demonstrated significant achievements in actions in eleven sustainable impact areas ranging from inclusive community building, thriving local economies, and vibrant arts and culture to clean transportation and diverse housing. Cheshire successfully completed actions including brownfield remediation at the Ball & Socket project site, bike-to-school events with Bike Cheshire, and the creation of Pollinator Pathway gardens along the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail. In addition, the Coalition for a Sustainable Cheshire worked with a group of local volunteers of all ages and levels of expertise to organize the Seeding Backyard Composting campaign, which gained state-wide attention and was recognized as a model project by Sustainable CT.

Jim Jinks -Cheshire Town Councilor, Council liaison to the Cheshire Sustainability Team, executive director of Bike Cheshire and founding member of the Coalition for a Sustainable Cheshire- expressed his excitement for Cheshire achieving bronze-certification, his gratitude to everyone involved in Cheshire's successful application and why this effort is important for our town, 'I'm really excited that we quickly qualified for bronze. It's a recognition of investments in sustainability that the town and Council have made over several years, as well as the important contributions made recently by several Cheshire non-profits – like Ball & Socket Arts, the

Pollinator Pathway, Bike Cheshire and the Coalition for a Sustainable Cheshire.’ Councilor Jinks added, ‘I’m sure some people will wonder why the recognition from Sustainable CT and sustainability in general is such a big deal. My answer is sustainability allows the town to save taxpayer dollars, improve public health, protect our natural resources and build a community that is more equitable and inclusive. In short, sustainability makes Cheshire better today and for years to come.’”

Fiona Pearson, the Sustainability Team leader for the group and Coalition for a Sustainable Cheshire co-chair and executive director, commended team members Linda Blackburn, Jen Dillon, Doug Noble, Karen Schnitzer, and Bill Stanley for their work over the past eight months. “At the outset, once we learned exactly what was required for certification, I think we all felt a bit overwhelmed. But with persistence and commitment, we were able to bring together these many different pieces and develop sustainability projects and an application that reflects what an amazing community we have collectively created,” said Pearson.

Sustainable CT has seen strong momentum and growth as a valuable, high-impact program. One-hundred twelve municipalities have registered for the program, representing 84 percent of the state’s population. Collectively, sixty-four municipalities, more than 37 percent of the state’s communities, have earned Sustainable CT certification. Certification lasts for three years, with submissions rigorously evaluated by independent experts and other Sustainable CT partners.

“Congratulations to our newest Sustainable CT certified communities,” said Lynn Stoddard, Executive Director of the program. “They join a growing number of certified towns and cities that are demonstrating municipal practices that make our communities more inclusive, healthy, connected, and strong.”

The program is managed by the Institute for Sustainable Energy at [Eastern Connecticut State University](https://www.ecsu.edu/) and includes actions that help towns and cities build community connection, social equity, and long-term resilience. The program’s action roadmap and support tools are especially relevant as towns seek practices and resources to promote racial justice and respond to the COVID-19 crisis

Sustainable CT is independently funded, with strong support from its three founding funders: the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation, the Common Sense Fund, and the Smart Seed Fund. Additional support is provided by the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, Connecticut Community Foundation, Fairfield County Community Foundation, Main Street Community Foundation, and other sponsors.

Cheshire and all 2021 certified communities will be recognized later this year at the Annual Convention of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities in December. For more information, visit www.sustainablect.org.

The Coalition for a Sustainable Cheshire facilitates collaboration between local organizations, government, and citizens for implementing environmentally sustainable and socially equitable projects that improve the quality of life in Cheshire.