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Winchester targets economic development, fiscal health at smart growth strategy workshop

CONTACT: Thomas Madrecki, 202-215-2258, tmadrecki@smartgrowthamerica.org
Dale Martin, Town Manager, townmanager@townofwinchester.org

WINCHESTER, CT — Winchester officials and local residents will meet February 20-21 with representatives from Smart Growth America as part of a free, grant-funded technical assistance program aimed at helping the town figure out the best course of action for revitalizing its downtown and attracting economic growth.

“The redevelopment of Winsted has been a historic struggle,” says Winchester Town Manager Dale Martin. “Although several efforts have been taken to envision a revitalized downtown, those well-intentioned attempts failed to revitalize the commercial center as hoped. With the economic upheaval of the past several years, many of the foundations upon which those earlier studies were based have been undermined. The interest and experience of Smart Growth America presents an exciting opportunity to re-shape the future of Winsted, using principles and techniques that have been proven successful elsewhere.”

In November 2012, Winchester was one of 22 communities nationwide selected by Smart Growth America to participate in the free technical assistance program. Stretching from Maine to Washington State, these communities represent major cities, suburban centers, and rural towns alike.

Members of the general public are invited to join the workshop’s first day, which will be held at Whiting Mills (210 Holabird Ave, Winsted, CT) from 6-8 PM on February 20, 2013.

“Smart Growth America is committed to providing the tools and training to help community leaders keep their cities and towns livable, sustainable and vital places,” said Roger Millar, Director of Smart Growth America’s Leadership Institute. “Winchester is poised to overcome its economic development and fiscal challenges. They’ve already done a lot of the work, studying and analyzing what could make a difference. The next step is to act, putting smart growth and better development strategies to work for residents. Everyone who lives, works and plays in Winchester stands to benefit if the community can develop a concise strategy for moving forward.”

The program, made possible through a five-year Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency’s Office of Sustainable Communities, seeks to develop local planning solutions that help communities grow in ways that benefit families and businesses, while protecting the environment and preserving a sense of place. Three other nonprofit organizations—Forterra, Global Green USA and Project for Public Spaces—also received competitively awarded grants under this program to help communities get the kinds of development they want.

As a national leader in the field, Smart Growth America has accumulated extensive experience working with communities to help them use land strategically, make the most of existing resources

and invest strategically to catalyze private development.

Smart Growth America is the only national organization dedicated to researching, advocating for and leading coalitions to bring smart growth practices to more communities nationwide. From providing more sidewalks to ensuring more homes are built near public transportation or that productive farms remain a part of our communities, smart growth helps make sure people across the nation can live in great neighborhoods. For additional information visit www.smartgrowthamerica.org.

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