

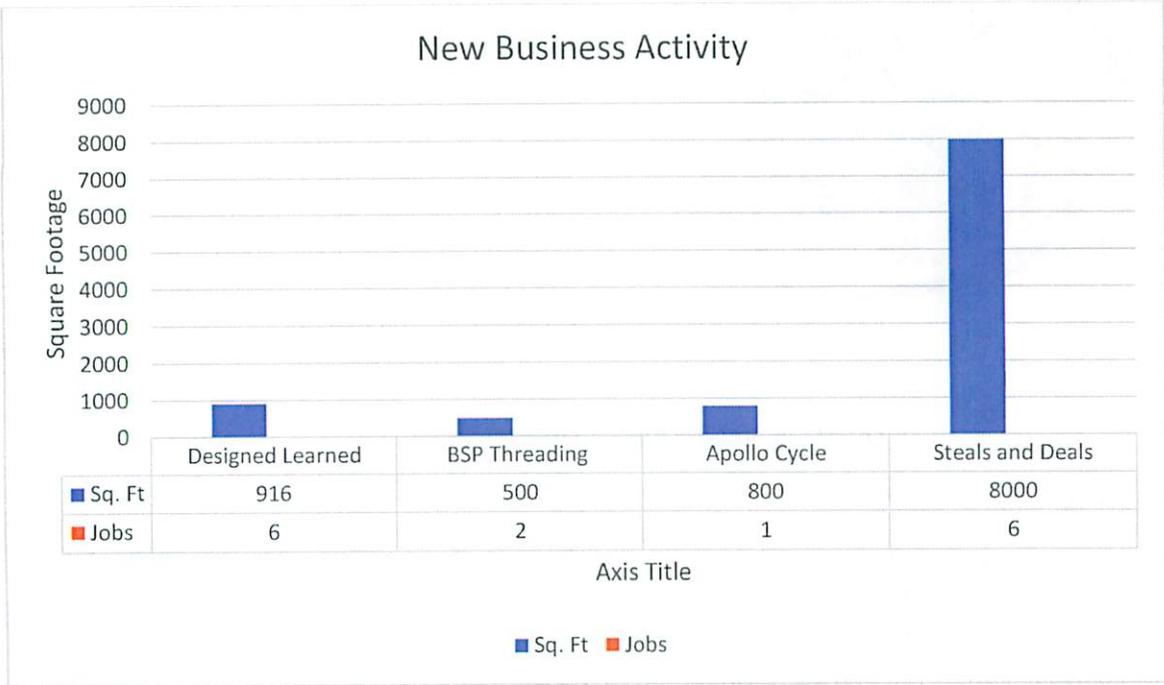


## Quarterly Report April 2019-June 2019

### Economic Development Activity:

This quarter has been particularly busy with business openings. April saw the opening of a small retail threading and sewing shop in the downtown called BSP Threading located at 224 Main Street. The former Human Resources building located at 80 Broadway was renovated and is now home of Café Otis, a Mediterranean café with “grab and go” food options along with table dining. The café features a full bar and metropolitan décor new to the downtown. Designed Learned completed their first-floor expansion renovations on Main Street. The expansion triggered a relocation of the Greater Norwich Chamber of Commerce to fill office space in the Shannon Building. The Chamber celebrated this quarter with reaching their 500 business member milestone. Next Street Driving School opened a branch in the 77-95 Main Street block filling a vacant space. The former People’s Bank located at 4 Broadway underwent a 150K renovation on the first floor to be readapted into a community mission based urban center church and community center. The former Elks building on Main Street that had been dark for about a decade was purchased and is under going renovations to become a small boutique hotel with 30 rooms, a restaurant and spa. The former Panda Market located at 16 Franklin Street has reopened under new owners. The new tenants will expand the marketplace to include bubble tea and steamed dumplings in the upcoming months. Apollo Cycle, a former Danielson shop owner has relocated his bike shop to the downtown. Apollo Cycle is a full-service bike shop. Epicure Brewery celebrated their second year of business with the introduction of a line of canned beer. Foundry 66 has expanded into the Sunlight Building on Franklin Street. The expansion recaptures 3500 square feet of vacant first-floor inventory in the downtown. The space will be used as an incubator for retail startups.





## Education and Workshops:

The last week in April, Norwich Community Development Corporation together with the Greater Norwich Chamber of Commerce hosted 11 small business week workshops at Foundry 66, over 80 people attended the sessions. Staff attended a half-day workshop in Pawtucket RI. on April 10<sup>th</sup> ***“Change Your Downtown Thinking”***. The event included placemaking concepts on how to create a walkable and vibrant city. Events and outdoor gathering spaces were the primary focus. To create a destination community, a community needs to host at least 200 events a year. An event could be as simple as an outdoor ice rink or splash pad. The connection between dining and retail was discussed. Most retail activity occurs after 6pm at night yet many downtowns close shop earlier than 6pm. In fact, 71% of all retail activity occurs after 6pm. Dining and shopping are the primary activity of tourism. Historical and recreational activity is an ancillary activity that occurs while the tourists visit but is not their primary activity.

NCDC Staff and community leaders attended two planning workshops called ***“Revising the Harbor”*** James Coleman facilitated the conversation. He was the same consultant that worked with NCDC during the 2010 downtown bond initiation. Suggestions included moving the public boat launch for public safety reasons along with extending green space on the waterfront. Long term goals included the feasibility of moving the Chelsea Harbor Drive road to better connect the downtown with the harbor and slow traffic through the city with a two-way road option of Rt 2.

## Events:

The Global City Norwich program was awarded its second year of funding from the generous grant donation from the Chelsea Groton Foundation. The grant initiative was designed to address the chicken and egg scenario. ***How do you get businesses to open downtown if there isn't enough foot traffic? How do you create foot traffic if there aren't any businesses?*** The Global City initiative was created to first create downtown vibrancy with cultural street festivals. Secondly, the Global City initiative identifies and cultivates potential business owners through free small business education programs and removing barriers to entrepreneurship. The third step is aimed at working with downtown property owners to find ways to vanilla box ready storefronts that potential businesses can move into.

The Global City Norwich hosted the Cape Verdean Festival on May 26<sup>th</sup>. Denis Gracia was the musical headliner. Visitors came from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Florida, and Texas.

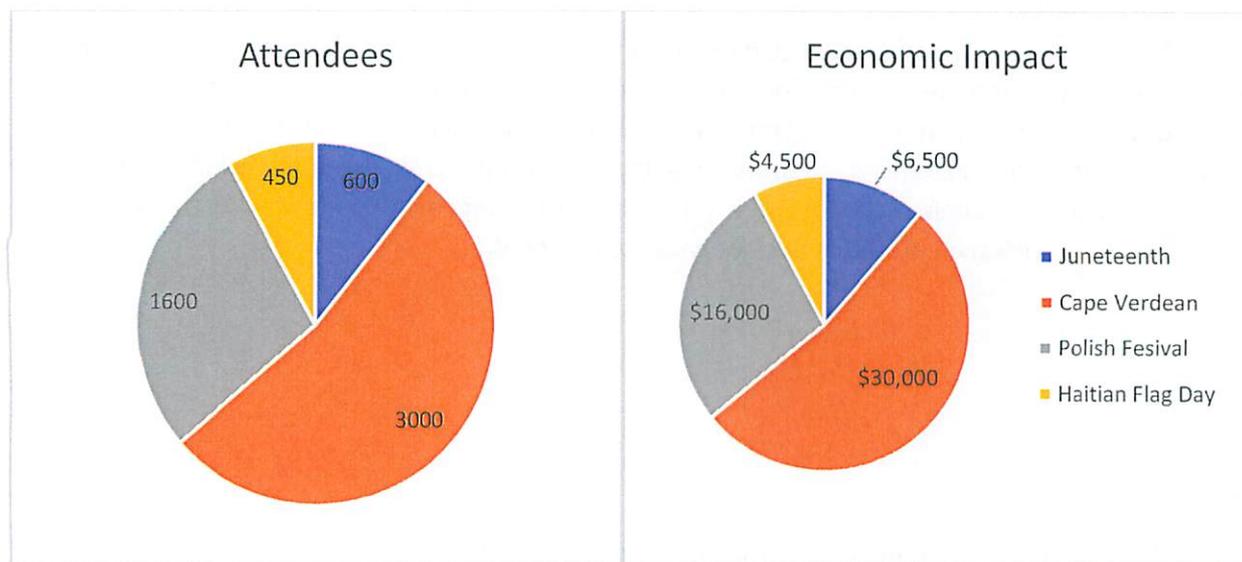


The Juneteenth Festival occurred on June 15<sup>th</sup> in celebration of the emancipation laws in the United States. The Ebony Riders from Hartford were in attendance. The festival traditionally was held down at the harbor but moved to Franklin Street to encourage attendees to explore the downtown.

Haitian Flag Day was held in early May. The event was a very meaningful event to the people of Haitian descent. Their flag was raised next to the American flag at City Hall.

The Polish Festival occurred on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. This was a second-year festival. Visitors enjoyed traditional Polish food, music, and dance. The Dennis Polisky and the Maestro’s Men performed as well as the Polanie Dancers of Bridgeport. A giant waterslide kept the children happy and cool during the event.

NCDC together with the Global City Norwich program initiated 25K in electrical infrastructure improvements for the City of Norwich. The improvements will create more opportunities for outdoor activities in the downtown. The four festivals created well over 56K in economic impact in the downtown.



**Notable Meeting and Conferences:**

NCDC facilitated three Mayor’s Economic Development Workshops in April, May, and June held on Saturday mornings for three hours each session. Issues that were addressed were tax abatement guidelines and creating a matrix approval process that is uniform and standard. Addressing blight and vacancy issues were discussed. Ideas for creating universal outdoor dining in the downtown area discussed as well. The next meeting will be held July 20<sup>th</sup> at Foundry 66.

NCDC together with The Last Green Valley hosted two community downtown cleanups. The first was held on May 11<sup>th</sup> and the second on June 22<sup>nd</sup>. Forty-eight volunteers participated in the clean-ups



which included the NFA football team. Over 1,635 pounds of garbage was collected. The next clean up is scheduled for September 28<sup>th</sup>.

On May 20<sup>th</sup> the NCDC staff, board members and NPU representatives met with Commissioner Lehman from the Department of Economic Community Development to discuss projects and issues regarding state funding and policies. The group toured Ponemah Mills, the Business Park, Hale's Mill and the harbor.

In May, NCDC together with the City of Norwich attended and sponsored the **Leading the Way Conference** in Groton. The conference was focused on how to enter the supply chain with General Dynamics. It was a match making event for vendors with decision-makers in the pipeline. Several hard leads came from the 350 plus attendees looking for commercial space within proximity of the Electric Boat facility. NCDC has begun growing those relationships.

June 19<sup>th</sup> NCDC together with CT Main Street hosted a workshop at the Wauregan Ballroom. Over 110 people attended the conference to learn more about opportunities in the downtown. Historic tax credits, opportunity zone, and the downtown revitalization bond program were discussed. Guest panelist included the Global City Coordinator and the CEO of the Chelsea Bank to opportunities and challenges in the revitalization of small urban cities in Connecticut. After the workshop, most of the attendees participated in a downtown walking tour to see new successes and more challenging properties. Several follow up meetings are in progress, as a result, of the event.

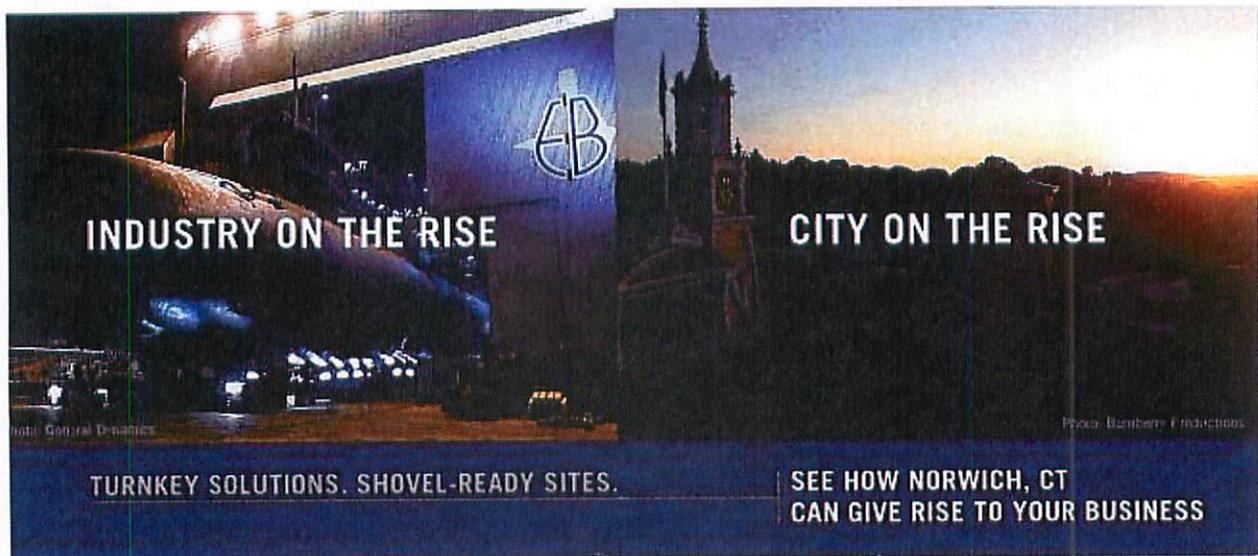
Staff members are participating and contributing to the Sustainable Ct certification. NCDC is working in collaboration with Norwich Public Utilities and city departments to obtain the recognition.

NCDC has partnered with The Eastern Regional Tourism District (ERTD) to serve as a fiduciary for the District. The ERTD have obtained two offices at Foundry 66. This relationship will help to facilitate a more equitable representation of tourism promotion within the region.

### Marketing:

New marketing materials were recreated to use for the Leading the Way Conference. The messaging is **City on the Rise**- See how Norwich can give rise to your business. Rack cards and banners were used at both the Leading the Way Conference and the CT Main Street Workshops. In addition, a video called **Restaurants on the Rise** <https://vimeo.com/341954525> was created to encourage other restauranteurs to look at Norwich as a "foodie city". The video featured three of our newest restaurants. Other marketing efforts include the promotion of homeownership in Norwich. The campaign included a rotation of housing stock in Norwich featuring value and architectural elements in our housing market.





**Business Park News:**

Two primary facilities are open and on the market for new owners/users 40 Wisconsin, a 230,000' facility in poor condition, which is owned by Phillips Lighting. Additionally, 243 Vergason, a 54,000' building, owned by the of David Greenburg Trust. Both have seen much activity by their listing brokers, Jones Lang Lasalle, and OR&L Commercial, respectively. The larger facility is being targeted to distribution and warehouse users and the smaller one to manufacturers and biotech users.

NCDC has completed the design of the wayfinding signs in the park and is prepared to replace them in the next quarter of 2019.

**Taftville:**

OneKey LLC, the owner of the Ponemah Mill project completed the first phase of 121 units in 2018 and is approximately 90% complete with phase 2 with 116 units, which is planned to be completed in September 2019. Phase 3 is in the funding stage. The Connecticut Commissioner of Housing, Seila Mosquera-Bruno, visited with the owner's representative and Mayor Nystrom at the Ponemah in June.



Notable upcoming events:

July 28<sup>th</sup> Peruvian Festival

August 2<sup>nd</sup> First Friday Car Show

August 11<sup>th</sup> Dominican festival

August 18<sup>th</sup> Ellis! Arts & History

September 15<sup>th</sup> Cup of Nations Soccer

October 6<sup>th</sup> International Food Festival

December 8<sup>th</sup> Winter Holiday Festival

