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## **Commercial construction in the town of Newtown continues to be active**

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Commercial construction in Newtown continues to be active while housing construction continues to be slow. Commercial projects under development on South Main St. (Rte. 25) include two shopping centers and a few smaller commercial projects. The two shopping centers will add a total of 126,000 s/f of new retail space to the corridor. Plaza South will contain 70,000 s/f of space and Highland Plaza involves the conversion of the former Fireside Inn and the addition of two new buildings. A reuse project involving renovations to a former home and out buildings on the site are nearly complete while construction of a new office building for a publishing company has not broken ground. The village overlay zone along the Rte. 25 corridor permits the conversion of existing residential homes into office use which has ignited interest in this highly traveled corridor.

TNT Partners has made progress on the construction of their new headquarters building in Curtis Corporate Park. This telecom expense management company is expanding its Newtown operations into the new headquarters building from a site nearby. The Curtis Corporate Park has been helpful to economic expansion in Newtown as seven new businesses have moved into the corporate park over the past few years. A commercial/industrial condo that E&R Commercial LLC built last year still has openings for a couple more businesses. Details can be found on the EDC home page.

Progress on the redevelopment of the Fairfield Hills Campus continues to be made. The Newtown Youth Academy, a privately funded 80,000 s/f sports complex is on schedule for a fall opening and the Hawley Construction Company has an executed lease for Newtown Hall which will be renovated into 16,000 s/f of medical offices. Bids for the conversion of Bridgeport Hall into a municipal office building should be out in July and demolition of Greenwich Hall for parking should begin this month. Additional buildings and redevelopment pads are still available for private occupancy. The Fairfield Hills Authority is actively working on promoting the campus for commercial redevelopment opportunities. More information is available on our home page.

The Borough of Newtown is in the process of a commercial building boom and facelift. The village district zoning requires new and redeveloped properties to include the provision of sidewalks, streetlamps and landscaping which has successfully tied the district together as a central business district. The village has benefited from the recent development of new shops, offices, banks and restaurants along with streetscape elements that allow shoppers to walk between properties and from one business to another. Toro opened a new restaurant on Church Hill Rd. (Rte. 6) and a newly constructed office building is available for occupancy. Saint Rose is constructing additions to their school facilities and Caraluzzi's Market of Bethel announced that they will anchor a renovated Eton Center along with Wachovia Bank who currently occupies the center. Brause Realty who owns the site, has plans to renovate the existing 45,000 s/f building, and construct a new building on

Church Hill Rd. for Wachovia. A new convenience store and gas station are also approved for the Borough.

Further down Church Hill Rd. directly off exit 10 of I-84 and across from the infamous Blue Colony Diner, a 6,600 s/f commercial building is approved for construction. Two new commercial projects are planned for Sandy Hook Center along with an affordable housing development. Land use approvals have also been given for a new 7,500 s/f commercial building in Hawleyville immediately off exit 9 of I-84.

A plan to expand bus transit between Waterbury and Danbury and between Bridgeport and Danbury with stops in Newtown has been proposed by Housatonic Area Regional Transit (HART). The new transit routes will open new transportation opportunities for employees and employers in the region. The plan for service between Waterbury and Danbury may begin as soon as this fall. Newtown's location along the I-84 corridor offers ease of access for workers and the shipment of goods to and from their markets.

Newtown's Economic Development Commission is ready to assist its businesses to grow locally and provides assistance to new companies to help get their business up and running in their Newtown location. A listing of available properties is accessible from the Commission's web site at [www.newtown.org](http://www.newtown.org).

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