

## CITY OF BRISTOL

### Building Use Study

#### Recommendations for Building Uses.

April 12, 2012

Four potential scenarios have been identified in this study to solve the City's space needs and disposition of its buildings. Of the options presented we recommend Option D.

Option D has the highest cost but the properties that will be available for sale are the most desirable and may result in a higher demand and quicker sale. The economy is currently depressed and property is not moving so any sale may take considerable time to realize.

Our recommendations below are listed in "Work Groups" however, the work groups need not be performed in the order listed but can be re-arranged in order of preference and availability of funds.

Following the survey of buildings the two uses that were in the greatest need for expansion were the Police and Fire Departments.

The Police Department in particular is locked into a space that cannot provide expansion unless the Superior Court moved out, which appears to be unlikely. The Police Department's location is improved because of the parking garage that is used for cruisers and any relocation should take this into consideration.

The Fire Department is located on a tight site but one that can accommodate an expansion/renovation that would meet their needs. However, during construction a temporary location will be required as the work is extensive.

#### **Work Group One**

Demolish Bingham School.

Initially, only a metal building will be constructed that would be used as a temporary location for the Fire Department (FD) Headquarters while renovations to the FD building are undertaken. Upon completion the FD will move back to the renovated building.

A new PD facility will then be constructed with the metal building used to house police cruisers.

The current PD space will be available for lease or sale.

Memorial Boulevard School (MBS) is much beloved in the city but there does not appear to be a good opportunity to repurpose the building apart from using it for the City Hall. The sale of this building may also be difficult due to its large size, and inefficient use of space. The loss of the theater will be a negative for the city.

The City Hall function will be able to use the Auditorium and possibly support the establishment of a theater group. The current City Hall would be available for sale and has the potential of accommodating many potential uses including, for example, office space and hotel space.

MBS's size will permit the inclusion of the majority of city departments in the building including Youth Services and Parks Department.

**Work Group Two**

Renovate Memorial Boulevard School to accommodate City Hall Functions.

Move City Hall to renovated MBS and sell the current City Hall building.

Move Youth Services to the renovated MBS and sell the Youth Services Building.\* Alternatively, relocate Youth Services to the Beal’s Community Center.

Keep Parks Department with City Hall

The Beal’s Community is well used as the City’s Senior Center and should remain as such. There is a large amount of space that is not being fully utilized. Probate should be moved into the building where it can have its own separate entrance and a waiting area that is lacking in its current location. As mentioned in work group two above, Youth Services can also be accommodated in the community center.

**Work Group Three**

Move Probate into Beal’s Community Center.

As an option in work group three Youth Services could also be moved to the Beal’s Community Center. The space would be better than at MBS but would separate it from City Hall.

The space occupied by the Superior Court is adequate for their needs, albeit, in need of new finishes.

**Work Group Four**

Leave the Superior Court in its current location

The last building is O’Connell School where potential building uses are limited due to the configuration of the building, its location, but especially the propensity for flooding

**Work Group Five**

Demolish the main school building and re-grade area to create a public park.

Retain gymnasium building for community use.

CITY OF BRISTOL, CONNECTICUT

OPTIONS MATRIX  
March 16, 2012

Building	Description	OPTION A			OPTION B			OPTION C			OPTION D			Cost to Mothball		
		Extent of Scope (Building Area)	Cost/ SF	Cost	Extent of Scope (Building Area)	Cost/ SF	Cost	Extent of Scope (Building Area)	Cost/ SF	Cost	Extent of Scope (Building Area)	Cost/ SF	Cost	Extent of Scope (Building Area)	Cost/ SF	Cost
City Hall	City Hall function to remain. Redefine spaces and locations within building	60,141		\$ 17,018,000.00				60,141		\$ 17,018,000.00						
City Hall	Relocate City Hall to Memorial Boulevard School. Renovate school for new function															
	Auditorium Renovation				105,970		\$ 2,010,000.00				105,970		\$ 2,010,000.00			
Police Dept.	Renovate and expand police into court space	35,500		\$ 10,636,000.00	35,500		\$ 10,636,000.00									
Police Dept.	Construct new Police facility at Bingham School Site							35,500		\$ 16,079,000.00	35,500		\$ 16,079,000.00			
	Metal Building Garage at Bingham School Site							20,000		\$ 2,825,000.00	20,000		\$ 2,825,000.00			
Building Dept.	Relocate to court space.			\$ 757,000.00												
Building Dept.	Include in City Hall Renovations above.															
Building Dept.	Include in Mem. Blvd Renovations above.															
Probate	Relocate to Senior Center building	2310		\$ 815,000.00	2310		\$ 815,000.00	2310		\$ 815,000.00	2310		\$ 815,000.00			
Youth Services	Relocate to Senior Center building							5525		\$ 1,406,000.00						
	Included in City Hall Renovations above.			\$ -												
	Included in City Hall relocation to Mem. Blvd. Sch.															
Parks Dept	Include in City Hall relocation to Mem. Blvd. Sch.															
	Relocate to City park			\$ 277,000.00						\$ 277,000.00						
Superior Court	Renovate in current location	24,290		\$ 5,292,000.00				24,290		\$ 5,292,000.00			\$ 5,292,000.00			
Superior Court	Relocate to Bingham School				16,538		\$ 6,210,000.00									
Fire Dept.	Renovate & expand current building headquarters*				15,080		\$ 4,384,000.00	15,080		\$ 4,384,000.00	15,080		\$ 4,384,000.00			
Fire Dept.	Construct new Fire Dept HQ. Demolish Bingham School.	15,080		\$ 5,353,000.00												
Senior Center	No changes required.			\$ -			\$ -			\$ -			\$ -			

CITY OF BRISTOL, CONNECTICUT

OPTIONS MATRIX  
March 16, 2012

Building	Description	OPTION A			OPTION B			OPTION C			OPTION D			Cost to Mothball		
		Extent of Scope (Building Area)	Cost/ SF	Cost	Extent of Scope (Building Area)	Cost/ SF	Cost	Extent of Scope (Building Area)	Cost/ SF	Cost	Extent of Scope (Building Area)	Cost/ SF	Cost	Extent of Scope (Building Area)	Cost/ SF	Cost
O'Connell School	Demolish building and create neighborhood park.						\$ 1,458,000.00			\$ 1,458,000.00						
O'Connell School	Demolish classroom wing, renovate gymnasium and create neighborhood park			\$ 2,374,000.00									\$ 2,374,000.00			
O'Connell School	Mothball Building			\$ -											50,500	\$166,650
Memorial Blvd Sch.	Mothball Building			\$ 317,910.00						\$ 317,910.00					105,970	\$ 349,701.00
Bingham School	Mothball Building														50,505	\$166,667
Bingham School	Demolish			\$ 808,360.00						\$ 808,360.00			\$ 808,360.00			
				\$ 43,648,270.00			\$ 47,807,416.00			\$ 50,680,270.00			\$ 56,881,776.00			\$683,018
Excess property for sale																
		Youth Services Fire Department Memorial Boulevard			City Hall Youth Services Bingham Partial					Memorial Boulevard Youth Services Police Department				City Hall Police Department Youth Services		

\* Fire department to be distributed to all other fire departments during construction except for options C & D where metal building at Bingham will provide temporary HQ's.

CITY OF BRISTOL  
BUILDING USE OPTIONS

DEPARTMENT/USE	NEW LOCATION OR DISPOSITION														
	CITY HALL	POLICE	SUPERIOR COURT	FIRE DEPARTMENT HQ	YOUTH SERVICES	SENIOR CENTER	BINGHAM SCHOOL	O'CONNEL SCHOOL	MEMORIAL BLVD SCHO	OTHER LOCATION	DEMOLISH	PORTIONS VACANT	PARTIAL DEMOLITION	NEW PARK	MOTH BALLING
CITY HALL	Option A	Option C							Option B	Option D					
POLICE		Option B	Option A												
BUILDING DEPARTMENT	Option C		Option A						Option B	Option D					
PROBATE						Option A	Option B	Option D							
YOUTH SERVICES	Option A					Option C			Option B	Option D					
PARKS DEPARTMENT									Option B	Option D	Option A	Option C			
SUPERIOR COURT			Option A	Option C	Option D		Option B								
FIRE DEPARTMENT HQ				Option B	Option C	Option D	Option A								
SENIOR CENTER					Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D							
BINGHAM SCHOOL											Option A	Option C	Option D	Option B	
O'CONNEL SCHOOL											Option B	Option C	Option A	Option D	Option C
MEMORIAL BLVD SCHOOL											Option B	Option D			Option A

## SPACE NEEDS ANALYSIS, BRISTOL, CONNECTICUT

### Potential Building Uses

#### GENERAL

There are a series of basic options that are available in consideration of the disposition of each of the surveyed building:

- Demolish the facility and determine a new use for the land. This would be last resort as the resource will be lost, unless there is a valuable reuse of the land.
- Mothball the building for future use. Being in a weak market, and having no potential users, the idea of mothballing a facility would allow for future development of a valuable resource.
- Reuse the building for a City Use. This is ideally suited for buildings that would not be desirable for private use.
- Reuse the building for private use through a sale or lease arrangement. Desirability of building and location together with the ratio of useable floor area to building area must be strong considerations for this approach.
- Provide swing space for renovations to other buildings and then one of the above.

The following is a status of potential uses for the buildings.

#### MEMORIAL BOULEVARD SCHOOL

This is a large beloved building within the community with attractive facades. If a suitable use cannot be found it is highly unlikely that it would be demolished, but rather it would be moth-balled for an appropriate future use.

Possible Uses:

##### 1. City Hall

- a. The building is capable of accommodating all city departments housed within the existing City Hall plus Youth Services and still have space for future expansion. Probate could also be located in this building.
- b. The theater space would be able to function in support of City Hall but also independently for theater and similar performance groups.
- c. The gymnasium area would support and expand the youth center functions

##### 2. Residential

- a. Much housing has been proposed by the Renaissance group including the construction of new units around the perimeter of the Memorial Boulevard School playing field. Rather than construct the new housing the school could be re-purposed for housing units. The theater area would remain independent for theater and similar performance groups.

##### 3. Educational

- a. A performing arts magnet school was explored by the Renaissance group and would not be supported at the State level due to two existing facilities located in Waterbury and Hartford.

- b. There has not been an expression of interest but the theatre gymnasium and a portion of the classroom areas would be a great foundation for the development of a performing arts program for a Community College.

**4. Sale for Commercial Use**

- a. The building although attractive would have a low desirability for a commercial use due to the net to gross ratio.

**O'CONNELL SCHOOL**

AMS has provided a market analysis for the building (See Appendices) that has resulted in suggestions for the following uses:

Reuse Options	Market Strength	Locational Strength	Community Impact	Overall Assessment
Senior Rental Housing - Affordable	High	High	Positive	For senior Housing, O'Connell has some advantages over Bingham including stronger residential location, less traffic and better tie-in into the neighborhood. One thought is to break off auditorium from the main building and use as Recreation Center
Housing - Affordable	High	Moderate High	Depends on Target Market	While its unclear if there would be support for another affordable housing project in the city unless it was for seniors, there are a number of special needs groups in need of housing ranging from Veterans to Disabled persons. Obviously given this is city property, the city and the neighborhood would have to approve the target market.
Market Rate Rental Housing	Very Low	Low	Positive	Data is pretty conclusive that this location/market area would not support the level of rents needed to offset rehab costs without public assistance. Market rate housing is not an option – though mixed income housing might be.
Community Center	Moderate-High	Moderate	Very Positive	While conversion to a community center would likely represent the highest and best use for West End residents, it is hard to envision a scenario that does not involve the city underwriting on-going maintenance. This of course is separate from the capital funding needed to upgrade the facility to meet building code requirements. For this to happen, an organization or sponsor on the level of a Boys and Girls Club would be required.
Recreation Center	Moderate-High	High	Very Positive	One of the more intriguing scenarios for O'Connell and one that is doable due to building configuration is the creation of a community recreation center centering only on the auditorium. The city would need to maintain ownership but the costs of repair and ongoing maintenance are potentially manageable. The community in turn is able to preserve a recreation component for neighborhood use. The space can also be rented out or used by community for a range of uses including meetings, dinners, reunions, performances, ect.

**Residential**

A sample layout for a rental unit in a typical classroom was developed and is included in the appendix. There is space to create a “moat” around portions of the building to lower the window sills into the basement level.

Land area is such that in addition to parking it would be possible to create gardens for growing vegetables for the residents.

The gymnasium would need to function independently of the housing, possibly being run by Youth Services. Before the water damage to the gymnasium floors there has been a high demand for renting the gymnasium space in the evenings and at weekends.

There did not appear to be a high demand new construction use for the site if the classroom portion of the building was demolished. The gymnasium portion could function independently if the classroom wing was demolished.

The largest drawback to any potential use on the site is the uncertainty of continued flooding of the site.

<b>BINGHAM SCHOOL</b>
-----------------------

The school’s location on busy Route 6 provides a high level of visibility for the potential users. Separated from the retail district to the east, the building will need a strong identity to draws users. AMS performed the following assessment:

Reuse Options	Market Strength	Locational Strength	Community Impact	Overall Assessment
Senior Rental Housing - Affordable	High	High	Positive	Strong Option but will need public financial support
Market Rate Rental Housing	Low	Moderate	Positive	Existence of new market rate housing near downtown would be positive but more work is needed in downtown to bring this about – not a likely option at this time
Artists Housing	Moderate-High	High– though arts tenant base will need to be drawn wide area.	Positive	Artists housing is often looked as an option in areas in need of jump-start to downtown revitalization efforts. It’s best undertaken by groups familiar with such housing and the type of marketing needed meet lease-up. Offers benefit of a commercial element. Needs subsidy to work. Considered a moderate re-use opt.
Medical Office Building	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Positive	As a submarket of the office market, Medical Office Buildings is the strong sector. However, the positives linked with location and possible connection with Bristol Hospital might be enough to tip this towards MOB use. Opportunity viewed as low to moderate.
Vocational –Technical School	Low-Moderate	High	Positive	This might represent a multi-tenant opportunity in which a technical school is the prime tenant. The presence of classrooms in the school makes consideration of this use an obvious candidate. The in-roads into this sector by on-line education is a red flag. On the whole, however, this is viewed as a moderate opportunity.
Art-Antiques Center	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Positive	A concept for an art-antique center that can also offer classes is more about vision than market. Typically this kind of use functions best surrounded by similar uses which can be accomplished in a single building. Other advantages include its downtown peripheral location and frontage on Route 6 (easy access). Parking should be easy as well. The one caveat is that this market has been hard hit by the recession and online trading. Thus tenant costs will need to be very reasonable in order to attract and maintain a core tenant base. However, this may make it difficult to underwrite building cost and improvements.

In addition to the above the following options were also discussed:

**1. Court and Legal Offices**

- a. With the demands for space in both the Police Department and City Hall one option would be to relocate the Superior Court to Bingham School. The court currently leases space from the City and would be happy not to change anything.
- b. There is ample space in the school to accommodate the court but there would need to be a number of improvements made to separate detainees from the public (separate elevators, holding cell etc.).
- c. Unused floor area could be leased for legal offices or bail bondsmen.

## 2. Retail

- a. The existing wide hallways offer good circulation for patrons of the stores and would provide a mini-mall feel. For retail we suggest a themed group of stores to create a destination for the public.
- b. Deliveries to the stores would need to be handled through storage spaces on the lower level. This would also increase the actual display area on the first and second levels.
- c. Addition(s) would include an attractive entrance with elevator and an open stair serving the upper levels.

## 3. Arts and Cultural Center

- a. This approach combines both public and private users, and would be an opportunity to support and develop community groups supporting the arts.
- b. Teaching spaces for various art forms such as pottery, painting and photography would be provided.
- c. Exhibit areas would be included in the large hallways.
- d. Retail areas within the building may include framing shop, knitting supply store, jewelry maker, photography studio, arts and crafts supply etc..
- e. Rentals would probably be below market and would not generate sufficient funds to fully support the public and community uses.
- f.

## 4. Community Center

- a. Central to the City the building could be developed into a Community Center for the City.

## 5. Demolition

Demolition of the building provides an opportunity for new construction to resolve the town's space needs. New construction could be considered as an option for the following buildings:

**New Fire Department Headquarters (15,000 SF)** The current Fire Department HQ site is very tight for the needs of the department. Construction a new building on the Bingham site will provide plenty of on-site parking and maneuvering space for fire trucks. There is also an opportunity to construct a free standing building to allow for maintenance of fire trucks.

- a. The site will provide adequate parking and vehicular turning space. The traffic signals on Route 6 would need relocation to avoid conflict with the apron to the street. Route 6 slopes upward to the west and this slope will need to be addressed in the slope of the apron; the building will need to be moved further back from the street for appropriate drainage and slope.
- b.

**New Police Department (35,500 SF not including undercover parking)** The Police Department has no opportunity for expansion at its current location unless the Courts are relocated. One solution would be to construct a new police department building to replace the Bingham School. Police vehicles are currently garaged so it may be desirable to create undercover parking in the new location. Having plenty of land area would allow for a drive-thru sally port.

**Public Safety Complex. (50,000 SF)** Another option would include combining Police and Fire Departments into a single Public Safety Complex resolving the space needs for both Departments.

## CITY HALL

### 1. City Hall

- a. If Youth Services are returned to the Building, even with Probate and Parks moving out an expansion of approximately 5,000 SF will be required.
- b. Building expansion could occur in a number of ways. If the courts were relocated an expansion could occur in that space (see Courts). If an addition connected the Police building and City Hall a third floor expansion would be possible (see Police).
- c. This is a good central location.

### 2. Commercial

- a. The building lends itself to commercial use as office space but the market is so depressed at this time this option has not been explored.

### 3. Residential

- a. This is a solid structure and could lend itself to many uses. Residential is one of them. Its proximity the proposed Depot Square redevelopment, however, would be in competition with the proposed housing to be constructed.

## FIRE DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS

### 1. Fire Department HQ

- a. The current site is small and limits the expansion of the facility to accommodate future growth. If the maintenance portion of the building could be relocated off-site it would provide an additional bay for vehicles permitting an expansion similar to that indicated in the 2004 study but with a revised site layout to increase parking.
- b. A scheme has been developed that modifies the recommended design in the 2004 study. It provides additional floor area, an additional bay and much needed additional area in spaces such as equipment storage which is currently overcrowded.

### 2. Sell Building

- a. A local developer has expressed some interest in purchasing the current facility. If this was done then a entirely new facility would need to be constructed. (See Bingham School)
- b. Lease the building for retail (first floor) and office space (second floor). Upgrades including an elevator will be required.

## BEALS SENIOR COMMUNITY CENTER

### 1. Probate Court

- a. Probate can easily be accommodated in the excess space within this facility.

### 2. Senior Center

- a. This is an excellent facility for the senior particularly with everything located on a single level. The building is currently being upgraded with the current use in mind. A survey of seniors was performed and resulted in a confirmation that the current location was highly preferred.

### 3. Youth Services

- a. There is adequate spec in the center to relocate Youth Services into the north wing.

### 4. Over 55 housing

- a. The recently vacated wing could be adapted for small independent housing units. The desirability would be enhanced by being contiguous with the Senior Center.

## POLICE DEPARTMENT

### 1. Police Department

- a. The facility is ideally suited to continue use as a Police Department. Expansion space is however, required with no obvious solution to this.
- b. If the Courts were moved out of the building (see Bingham) this would provide a substantial area for expansion. In fact considerably more space than required for the police. It would be necessary to develop a combination of compatible uses for the space (see Courts)
- c. For security reasons, parking areas in the building should be controlled access for designated individuals in the City.
- d. It would also be possible to create a second and third floor link between the police department building and City Hall. The court area would need to be reconfigured to move the police areas to the front of the building to achieve contiguous space for the second floor police areas. City hall would then be able to expand on the third floor. The first floor could be open to the elements or enclosed to provide a dignified entrance to City Hall. This open area could have multiple uses; kiosk; display space; manned help desk etc.

### 2. Office Space – Possibly legal office space.

If the Police Department was relocated to a new building (see Bingham School) this floor could be used for office space. Elevator modifications will need to occur and police would need a secure area in the basement garage to transfer inmates to the elevator and up to the Superior Court. A separate public elevator will need to be added for the new occupants of the current police space.

## SUPERIOR COURT

### 1. Police Department Expansion

- a. The facility is ideally suited to accommodate much needed additional space for the Police Department. The police department already occupies the rear of this floor. The court would need to be relocated (see Bingham School) to accommodate this change

### 2. Building Department

- a. Additional space is needed in City Hall. One solution would be to relocate the Building Department to the area of the Court and thereby eliminate the need for a City Hall expansion. Being a code enforcement department it shares some similarities with the police department. It would also be slightly closer to the Fire Marshal's office in the Fire Department.
- b. Even with the Police Department and Building Department moving to this floor there will be still be considerable unused floor area.

### 3. Superior Court

- a. The floor of the building would remain as is; leased to the State.

## YOUTH SERVICES

Youth services are located in a recently renovated structure. One task we were given was to explore if the use could be returned to City Hall.

**1. Youth Services in City Hall**

- a. If youth services are relocated to the current City an expansion of the building will be required.
- b. If City Hall is relocated to Memorial Boulevard School Youth Services can be easily accommodated.
- c. Current Senior Center would be sold.

**2. Youth Services in Beals Senior Center.**

- a. There is adequate space in the senior center to accommodate the space needs.
- b. Current Senior Center would be sold.

**3. No Change in location**

\* \* \*