

# Depot Square Phase I Project Milestone Summary

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## **Executive Summary**

The purpose of this summary is to outline the accomplishments of the historic Public Private Partnership between the City of Bristol, the Bristol Downtown Development Corporation, the Bristol community (Bristol Rising) and Renaissance Downtowns. This also details initiatives championed by Bristol Rising that have led to a significantly increased vibrancy in downtown. New businesses and new residential construction show that excitement exists for a reinvigorated city center.

Each aspect of the process to date has played a critical role in the foundation for future success. A focus on marketing efforts with the City of Bristol and the private sector showcase the downtown as an attractive environment for entrepreneurs and residents alike. The testimonials in this package describe just how integral the crowdsourcing and crowd funding efforts made possible by the Bristol Rising Community have shaped the downtown of today and spur the downtown of tomorrow.

While all of the successes of Bristol Rising are taking place, Renaissance Downtowns continues to make great strides in securing necessary approvals and preparing the Depot Square Site for the first phase of development. The success of the Public Private Partnership is further evident in the development of the Concept Master Plan for Downtown, the Plan for the Unified Downtown Development Project, and the approved Site Plan for the first phase of construction. Along with

these milestones, the relocations of the downtown grocer and the McDonald's restaurant were two major undertakings necessary. The Bristol Rising community showed their desire to be involved in the future of downtown, through online-based surveys that helped shape downtown plans, demonstrating the desire for a vibrant and successful downtown.

It is easy to see how this unified and holistic approach to downtown development has spurred economic growth, even before the landmark Depot Square Revitalization project gets fully underway. The significant increase in community involvement and new business growth speaks volumes about the viability of Bristol's economy. The focus on re-branding the city continues to build on the successes of the past few years making Bristol a more defined regional economic player.

Once the first Phase of the Depot Square Revitalization is underway, the impacts of Bristol Rising and the crowdsourcing process will be amplified as the city continues to turn the corner in becoming a true live, work, shop, and play destination in central Connecticut.

## TABLE OF MILESTONE DEADLINES

The following tables outline both the major milestones and Preferred Developer Agreement deadlines set by the Public/Private Partnership at the outset of the downtown revitalization efforts. The vast majority of the milestones and deadlines thus far have been met on-time or ahead of schedule due to the extraordinary collaboration that has taken place between the Public/Private Partnership and the community alike.

Tasks	Responsible Party	Approval Time Frame	Status
Submit Project Team and Consultants to BDDC (2.02)	Developer	Prior to Execution of Agreement (May 25, 2010)	Completed March 15, 2010
Commence McDonald's Negotiation (1.06(d))	Developer	Prior to Execution of Agreement (May 25, 2010)	Commenced March 25, 2010
Approval of Project Team and Consultants (2.02)	BDDC	Upon Execution of the Agreement (May 25, 2010)	Approved May 25, 2010
Commence meeting with Private Property Owners	Developer	Upon Execution of the Agreement (May 25, 2010)	Commenced Q1 2010
Review of Existing Environmental Reports (1.06(a))	Developer	Within 60 days of the Scope of Studies Approval Date (Sept 11, 2010)	Commenced Q2 2010
Submit Scope of Studies for the Concept Plan (2.03)	Developer	Within 30 days of execution of agreement (Jun 24, 2010)	Completed June 18, 2010
Approval of the Scope of Studies for the Concept Plan and Project Plan (2.03)	City Parties	Within 30 days of Submission of Scope of the Studies for the Concept Plan (Jul 18,2010)	Approved July 13, 2010
Commence collaborative Concept Planning Coordination Meetings	Parties	Within 30 days of Approval of Scope of Studies (Aug 12, 2010)	Commenced Q2 2010
Open office in Downtown Bristol (1.06(b))	Developer	Within 90 Days of Execution of Agreement (Aug 23, 2010)	Lease Executed June 28, 2010
Submit Project Schedule for Concept Plan Phase (1.06)	Developer	Within 90 Days of Scope of Studies Approval Date (Oct 11, 2010)	Completed May 25, 2010
Develop website/outreach programs (1.06(f))	Developer	Within 90 Days of Scope of Studies Approval Date (Oct 11, 2010)	rdatbristol.com launched June 2010
Commence Discussions RE: Dunkin Donuts Parcel (1.06(e))	Developer	Within 90 Days of Scope of Studies Approval Date (Oct 11, 2010)	Commenced Q3 2010
Commence discussions for zone text changes (2.06(e))	Developer	Within 30 days of Approval of Scope of Studies (Aug 12, 2010)	Commenced Q2 2010
Commence Application for zone text changes (2.06(e))	Developer	Within 90 days of Approval of Scope of Studies (Oct 11, 2010)	Deadline Amended to November 9, 2011, Completed April 28, 2011
Submit updated concept plan information for EIE (1.06(c))	Developer	within 120 days of Scope of Studies Approval Date (Nov 9, 2010)	Parties determined No Action Necessary to change the scope of the EIE
Submit Concept Plan (2.04)	Developer	Within 9 months of Effective Date (February 2011)	Deadline Amended to be within 11 months of Effective Date Completed April 25, 2011

Tasks	Responsible Party	Approval Time Frame	Status
Prepare and Submit Project Plan (1.04)	Developer	Commence within 9 Months of Scope of Studies Approval Date, if required; Completion within 18 Months of Scope of Studies Approval Date, if required (April 2011)	Parties determined a project plan was not necessary
Commence Infrastructure Improvement Analysis (2.08)	Developer	Within 9 Months of Scope of Studies Approval Date (April 2011)	Submitted as part of Concept Plan April 2011
Continued collaborative Concept Planning coordination meetings (2.06)	Parties	Within 2 years of Effective Date ( May 2012)	Continued through October 2011
Modifications to proposed Final Concept Plan	Parties	Within 2 years of Effective Date ( May 2012)	Continued through October 2011
Submit Concept Project Schedule (2.07)	Developer	Prior to Approval of Final Concept Plan	Completed May 25, 2010
Approval of Final Concept Plan (2.06)	Parties	Within 2 years of Effective Date ( May 2012)	Concept Plan Approved October 11, 2011
Analysis of any known zoning modifications or other approvals required for the Approved Final Concept Plan (2.06)	Developer	Within 60 days of Final Concept Plan Approval (December 11, 2011)	Submitted as part of Concept Plan April 2011
Commence with timely submission for any known required zoning modifications or other approvals required for the Approved Final Concept Plan (2.06)	Developer	Within 60 days of Analysis of All Approvals Required (December 11, 2011)	Deadline Amended to Be November 9, 2011 Initial Submission as part of Concept Plan April 2011
Initial Closing Date (7.02A)	Parties	Within 48 months after Effective (May 2014)	Future Due Date
Subsequent Closing(s) Date(s) (7.02C)	Parties	Each within 12 months after the Initial Closing(s) Date, or previous Subsequent Closing(s) Date, subject to delay as more fully set forth in Section 7.02B and 7.02C (May 2015)	Future Due Date
Outside Commencement of Construction Date (7.02D)	Developer	Within 5 years of Effective Date, subject to delay as more fully set forth in Section 7.02D (May 2015)	Future Due Date

**TABLE OF ADDITIONAL DEADLINES ESTABLISHED BY THE PDA**

<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Approval Time-line</b>	<b>Status</b>
Commence Preparation of the Project Plan	Developer	Feb 2011	Parties determined project plan was not necessary
Completion of Project Plan	Developer	Nov 2011	Parties determined project plan was not necessary
Notification of further Environmental Testing	Developer	July 24, 2010	No Further Testing was required at that time
Provide Notice to City on the Change of Scope for the EIE	Developer	120 days from scope of study approval date (Nov 9, 2010)	Parties determined Scope of EIE was sufficient
Contract and/or employment opportunities, as they become available	Developer	Within 90 days after the scope of study approval date (Oct 11, 2010)	Mark Walerysiak hired- May 2010 Charlie Talmadge hired - April 2011
Hold project meetings and presentations to provide information on the project at least biannually	Developer	Within 90 days after the scope of study approval date (Oct 11, 2010)	Presentations to Community Groups Began Spring/ Summer 2010. See page 64 for summary of meetings
Other outreach efforts to engage the community	Developer	Within 90 days after the scope of study approval date (Oct 11, 2010)	Presentations to Community Groups Began Spring/ Summer 2011. See page 64 for summary of meetings
At least 1 member of project team to attend Monthly BDDC Meeting	Developer	Second Monday of each month	1 or more members of the Renaissance team has and continues to attend each meeting
Complete and submit studies	Developer	Feb 2011	Deadline was amended to 11 months from effective date consistent with the extension of the Concept Plan Submission. Studies were completed in March and April of 2011 and submitted as appendices to Final Concept Plan April 2011

Pay, Bond, or otherwise cause to be discharged any mechanics lien	Developer	60 days after receiving notice of applicable filing	Not Applicable. Submitted lien waiver in supplemental submission
City to provide comments in response to Concept plan submission	City Parties	5 days after receipt at BDDC and Council meetings following submission (May 11, 2011)	Comments from BDDC Received May 23, 2011 Comments received from departments July 31, and August 1 2011
City to respond to request for approval of Proposed Final Concept Plan	City Parties	45 days after submission of Proposed Final Concept Plan (November 12, 2011)	Concept Plan Scheduled for approval October 11 and 12, 2011
Provide lien waiver and/or affidavit of payment from each member of the project team	Developer	Prior to concept plan approval (October 2011)	Submitted with Supplemental Submission September 2011
Provide written reports detailing final concept plan	Developer	Prior to concept plan approval (October 2011)	Submitted as part of Concept Plan
Provide timeline and phasing schedule	Developer	Prior to concept plan approval (October 2011)	Submitted as part of Supplemental Submission September 2011
Provide access notices	Developer	2 days prior to any due diligence actions	An access notice was provided for Phase 1 Environmental (non-invasive) conducted by CHA June 11, 2012
Selection of Appraisers	Developer	30 days following submission of concept plan (May 28, 2011)	Deadline Amended to January 9, 2012 Deadline Amended to March 9, 2012 Notification of Goodman-Marks Selection submitted October 24, 2010
Selection of Appraisers	City Parties	30 days following submission of concept plan (May 28, 2011)	Deadline Amended to January 9, 2012 Deadline Amended to March 9, 2012 Wellspeak, Dugan, and Kane selected February 14, 2012
Notification of Appraiser selection	Developer	Within 45 days of concept plan approval (November 25, 2011)	Notification of Goodman-Marks Selection submitted October 24, 2010

**TABLE OF ADDITIONAL DEADLINES ESTABLISHED BY THE PDA contd.**

Notification of Appraiser selection	City Parties	Within 45 days of concept plan approval (November 25, 2011)	Wellspeak, Dugan, and Kane selected February 14, 2012
Selection of a third Appraiser	Developer and City Parties	Within 30 of previous notification (March 15, 2012)	Submitted May 9, 2012 Final letter received May 24, 2012
Selection of a third Appraiser	Developer and City Parties	Within 30 of previous notification (March 15, 2012)	Submitted May 9, 2012 Final letter received May 24, 2012
Commencement of Appraisal Process	Developer and City Parties	Within 30 days of date of all approvals (July 12, 2012)	Process began July 11, 2012
Submission of Appraisal	Developer	120 after commencement of appraisal process	Deadline Amended to 150 days after commencement of appraisal process Appraisal Submitted December 7, 2012
Submission of Appraisal	City Parties	120 after commencement of appraisal process	Deadline Amended to 150 days after commencement of appraisal process Appraisal Submitted December 4, 2012
Third Party Appraisal Review	Developer and City Parties	60 days after submission of appraisals if necessary	No Action Necessary
Submission of Financing and Leasing Plan	Developer	Prior to closing	Future Due Date
Commencement of Construction	Developer	Within 90 days of closing	Future Due Date
Submit written notice of title exceptions	Developer	Within 90 days of scope of study approval date (October 11, 2010)	Title Exceptions submitted October 13, 2010
Correction of title exceptions	City Parties	60 days after receipt of written notice (December 12, 2010)	Correspondence from city RE: Title June 6, 2012
Remove any Encumbrances or Liens	Developer	60 days after receipt of written notice	No action necessary
Closing	Developer and City Parties	Within 90 days after the latest condition of closing is satisfied	Future Due Date
Record Contract on the land records upon request of developer	City Parties	Within 30 days of effective date	Not Requested

## SIGNIFICANT LAND USE APPROVAL MILESTONES

The process of land use approvals is also a key component in the progression of the Downtown Revitalization. The Public-Private Partnership has taken an extremely proactive approach in ensuring that all of the necessary approvals are in place, continuing progress for the Depot Square Project. The land use approval process began in 2010 when amendments to the downtown zoning regulations was originally discussed as part of the Concept Plan Submission. Those proposed amendments then became a critical piece of the puzzle and established a process for developing large parcels of land in the downtown area. With the approval of the Unified Downtown Development Project Special Permit, Renaissance was able to proceed with site plans and associated approvals for specific pieces of the overall development. The significant approvals are outlined below:



Concept Master Plan for Downtown—Approved October 11, 2011

BD-1 Zone Text Amendments—Approved February 15, 2012

Depot Square Unified Downtown Development Project Special Permit—Approved June 13, 2012

Variances for McDonald's Site Plan—Approved August 1, 2012

McDonald's Site Plan—Approved August 8, 2012

Special Permit for Hotel—Approved January 9, 2013

Special Permit for Shared Parking—Approved January 9, 2013

Site Plan Approved by the Board of Police Commissioners—January 15, 2013

Site Plan Approved by the Transportation Commission—January 22, 2013

Site Plan Approved by New Britain Transportation Company—January 22, 2013

Phase 1 Site Plan—Approved February 13, 2013

Site Plan Approved by the Board of Public Works Commissioners—March 21, 2013

Major Traffic Generator Permit Application submitted to Office of State Traffic Administration September 13, 2013, Awaiting Approval

Subdivision of Depot Square approved by Inland Wetlands Commission—January 18, 2014

Subdivision of Depot Square Approved by Planning Commission—February 26, 2014

Special Permit for Parking on a Separate parcel submitted to Zoning Commission March 31, 2014, Awaiting Approval

## Preparing the Site for Development



In preparation for the construction of the first phase of the Depot Square Revitalization there were two major relocation undertakings that were necessary to complete. The relocation of the McDonald's Fast Food restaurant from its former location at 30 North Main Street, to the current 150 North Main Street location, was essential to the future development as this condemned a large easement associated with the original location that would have prevented much of the development. In anticipation of the McDonald's move, the Discount Food Outlet needed to be closed, demolished and replaced in order for the McDonald's to be relocated. Multiple parties (City, McDonald's, Renaissance) contributed to the demolition costs for the DFO of which Renaissance contributed over \$37,000. In the best interest of the Citizens of Bristol and the future success of the downtown, the Public-Private Partnership then took an active role in establishing a new grocery store so that necessary services would be restored. Below is a summary outline of the activities involved in both search and establishment of a new downtown grocer and the relocation of the McDonald's restaurant.

### Activities in the establishment of a new grocer included:

- Meetings and conferences with Bozzutto Inc. beginning in October 2010
- Comparative grocery pricing survey
- Active recruitment of new grocery brands and operators
- Survey of potential relocation sites
- Meetings with new operator, property owner, architects, and engineers to coordinate design of the new facility
- Overseeing site plan approval, wetlands approval and building permit processes
- Coordination between new operators and City of Bristol for Economic Grant Opportunities
- Coordination with 6 banks and local lending institutions to secure project financing
- Preparation of economic benefit packages
- Coordination between property owner and BDA for façade improvement funding
- Development of signage plan and meetings with neighboring property owners regarding increased traffic concerns
- Coordinating the relocation of the Liquor Outlet to clear the building for construction
- Coordination of construction process including:
  - Securing all necessary permits
  - Working with contactors and sub-contractors to ensure compliance with plan specs
  - Coordination with Building, Health, and Fire inspectors regarding code compliance
  - Coordination of new services needed for increased demand with Northeast Utilities
  - Coordination with DEEP inspectors and environmental service engineers
  - Overseeing lien waivers forms provided to city by contractors
  - Assorted other construction activities
- Organizing grand opening event



Activities in the relocation of the McDonald's Restaurant included:

- Over 2 years of negotiations with McDonald's Corporation regarding the exchange agreement beginning in Spring of 2010
- Preparation of exchange agreement details relating to site access and signage easements
- Coordination of land use plans and application process between McDonald's and appropriate City parties
- Coordination of Zoning variances and presentation to the ZBA
- Coordination of variances through Board of Public Works
- Meetings with City Land Use and Engineering Staff
- Coordination of site plan approval process
- Liaison between City Land Use Staff and McDonald's engineers to satisfy Site Plan review comments
- Coordination of McDonald's payment of DFO demolition costs
- Coordination with McDonald's engineers, and surveyors to develop new property boundaries
- Meetings with City Land Use Staff and Surveyor to coordinate property maps
- Development of lot line revisions and property conveyance maps
- Meetings with Northeast Utilities to modify easements on newly created parcel
- Coordination with City engineers and Northeast Utilities engineers to develop easement modifications and new descriptions
- Coordination of McDonald's Title Exceptions and Closing documents
- Coordination with McDonald's Engineers and Surveyors to develop maps and descriptions for site access easements and utility easements
- Coordination of development of building plans
- Plan submission processes and coordination of permit processes from building, health, and fire departments
- Coordination of transfer of signage
- Coordination with contractors and Northeast Utilities on relocated electrical service connection
- Coordination of the mural development process
- Coordinate and finalize Mural Concept development with McDonald's
- Coordination of demolition process and schedule for old location at 30 North Main Street
- Coordination of assorted construction and demolition related activities



As Master Developer of the downtown revitalization, Renaissance plans to follow through on a transformative development that will create a vibrant fabric in downtown Bristol for generations to come, while recognizing that revitalizations can be assisted by other elements that help define the City's many existing and developing assets, contributing to a greater whole. When the City explored branding itself, investing seemed the obvious next step to Renaissance. Not only can branding a City provide the tools to portray exciting assets, but it is also a unique marketing identifier that is capable of properly telling the story of Bristol's great history, culture, and ascension as a destination place -- an opportunity that benefits everyone.

## Contributions

*Below are several contributions Renaissance Downtowns has made toward the official City of Bristol branding process:*

- \$5,000 contribution toward the \$60,000 total cost to procure the services of Nashville branding and marketing company North Star Destinations
- Opportunity to utilize the crowdsourced placemaking community Bristol Rising, allowing North Star to tap into a unique current and prospective market for Bristol
- Dedication of Renaissance employee, and current Mayor's Marketing Task Force member, Mark Walerysiak Jr. to:
  - Offer marketing expertise and experiences as the head of Bristol Rising
  - Youth perspective as a Bristol native
  - Participate on the Mayor's Marketing Task Force
  - Participate on Creative Sub-Committee
  - Coalesce creative feedback responses
  - Communicate with North Star on the group's behalf in terms of feedback and revisions

## From Bristol Rising to Bristol's Brand

While the City's rebranding efforts are well underway it is clear Bristol Rising is having a positive effect on marketing firm North Star's feel for the innovation and aspiration of the City and its residents.

Even prior to North Star landing in town, Bristol Rising, the 2,500 member crowd-sourced placemaking community and downtown promotional engine, was an integral piece of the overall marketing of the City.

The group has already successfully created a brand that has produced results in the way of new businesses, events, marketing efforts, and vibrancy in the downtown area.



The Bristol Rising community has been a key influence in the branding process

While North Star is the new kid on the block, for the past three years Bristol Rising has been a full-scale downtown economic development and marketing service for the City of Bristol's downtown area, a service courtesy of Renaissance that assigns full-time staff dedicated to developing the downtown community, a value estimated in the tens of thousands of dollars, with even greater direct and indirect beneficial impacts.



And with such a strong brand like Bristol Rising already entrenched, enter North Star, and an opportunity for Bristol to double-down as a destination with a clear and attractive message that the downtown *and* the City is the place to be. With the creation of the Mayor's Marketing Task Force to oversee the branding, the hiring of North Star presents an opportunity to compound Bristol Rising's successes to a greater degree.

And if you ask North Star, Bristol Rising was an integral source of inspiration for the Nashville Firm. So much so that one of the four concepts in their branding presentation was called "Bristol Rising." Even the settled-on conceptual language speaks directly toward the efforts of the citizen's, municipality, and Renaissance working in concert, an image that portrays acceptance and a willingness to create a wonderful place -- a brand unto itself.

Like the many new businesses and downtown living pioneers excited to become part of a downtown 2.0 community, the excitement generated through Bristol Rising has become synonymous with cutting edge successes.

North Star has seen that demonstrated through Bristol Rising, and because of that has demonstrated through its branding process that the City's arrow is pointed progressively north, a promising reflection of how everyone will soon see the City.

## Accomplishments through Community Events & Initiatives

1



### Inciting Excitement

Renaissance came to town with the revolutionary idea of including the community in the placemaking process. The community responded in kind birthing Bristol Rising, a positive downtown movement of “orange shirts” that swept through festivals, parades, and City approvals, showing their belief in downtown’s prospects & spreading the word throughout!

2



### Meetups

Bristol Rising will be celebrating its 37th meetup, which couldn’t happen without a fervent and strong support for a cause -- in this case adding vitality to downtown Bristol! At BR meetups Renaissance develops relationships with the positive fellow community, and seeks to brainstorm ideas and initiatives that can create vibrancy in the form of new businesses, events, and programs!

3



### Summer Street Cleanup

For years, Summer Street had been a neighborhood on the decline, and a place skeptical citizens thought may never be reclaimed. Enter Renaissance’s holistic approach to working with the City, landlords, tenants, and stakeholders, topped with the energetic spirit of Bristol Rising, resulting not only in caring Cleanups, but swinging the neighborhood back to

4



### Pop Up Piazza '11 & '12

Bristol Rising is all about activating the right energy downtown. So at one Bristol Rising Meetup they thought, “How can we show the rest of the City what downtown will soon be like?” “Why, let’s Pop Up the Piazza!” 15,000 and 20,000 estimated Pop Up Piazza Festival goers later, there was a resounding answer that something special is happening downtown!



## Cash Mobs '12 & '13

Bristol Rising knows that to create a local-centric downtown, the benefits of spending locally must be espoused. Hence the launch of Cash Mobs to raise awareness that spending locally supports local business, economy, & promotes a unique place. Both Tortoise & Hare Cafe and Artist Tree Tea House smashed their all-time single day records on Cash Mob Day!



## Inspiring Dawn's Deli

Market responses to ideas on bristolrising.com can inspire on-looking entrepreneurs like Barley Vine to start a business here. But in the case of Dawn McKenna, she wasn't sure people would support her idea for a deli. 120 BR likes & 400+ social media likes later, she drew 100+ people to a tasting event & is working on a business plan to open downtown!



## Special Programming

Whether it's hosting Downtown Movie Nights, creating a winter shopping experience on Main Street at the Children's Holiday Parade, activating vacant storefront with Shared Retail, Firefly Hollow Beer Tastings, or Family Nights at Bristol Billiards, Bristol Rising has helped turn downtown into a destination place with high energy programming activities!



## Crowdfunding a Fresh Start

Tortoise & Hare Cafe was down on its luck and in need of a refresh that would align the owners' passion for Southern style cooking with a representative brand. Enter Bristol Rising. The BR community helped crowdsource a new concept: 457 Mason Jar, and raised \$7900, or 122% of the goal, to allow for the rebrand! 457 Mason Jar is now a hot spot in town!

## TIMELINE OF COMPLETED DEVELOPMENTS



### **Bare Bones**

The Bare Bones Artist Space opened at 184 Main Street in September of 2011, and 165 School Street in September 2012

Renaissance's involvement included:

- Coordination between tenants, building owner and City. RD also contributed first three months of rent



### **Bristol Billiards**

Bristol Billiards opened at 184 Main Street in December of 2011

Renaissance's involvement included:

- Sponsoring Architectural work for the new space
- Coordination of fit-out processes



### **Barley Vine**

The Barley Vine Restaurant opened at 184 Main Street in September of 2012

Renaissance's involvement included:

- Assisting business owners in developing a business plan and securing financing
- Coordinating permitting and construction



### **11 Summer Street**

A blighted residential building was demolished in September of 2012 to make way for new development that is opening its doors this month

Renaissance's involvement included:

- Assisting in designing new building
- Working with owner and City to reach agreements on new development



### **People's Marketplace**

The People's Marketplace grocery store opened at 15 Memorial Boulevard in October of 2013. (RD's assistance is described earlier in this package)



### **Firefly Hollow Brewing Company**

Firefly Brewing opened at 139 Center Street in October of 2013

Renaissance's involvement included:

- Assistance in crowdfunding effort to raise necessary capital to open
- Coordination of fit-out processes



### **ArtisTree Tea House**

The ArtisTree Tea House opened at 165 School Street in November of 2013

Renaissance's involvement included:

- Assisting business owners in developing a business plan and securing location
- Coordinating permitting



### **457 Mason Jar**

The 457 Mason Jar restaurant re-opened at 457 North Main Street in January of 2014

Renaissance's involvement included:

- Assistance in crowdfunding effort to raise necessary capital to rebrand
- Coordination of renovations

# RESIDENTIAL



*signed letters of interest as of April 2014*



As of April 2014, 194 letters of interest had been collected from those interested in living in an exciting new downtown, putting Bristol well on the path to realizing a fully occupied and bustling town center.

In addition to traditional residential leasing tools such as advertising and broker assistance, Renaissance has looked to work with the community on alternate initiatives. To date, several successful residential initiatives have been run locally through Bristol Rising, Bristol establishments and media, yielding significant returns.

**Original Goal: 150 LOI's.** Renaissance's original goal was to attain 150 letters of interest for the Depot Square Development. The logic was that if it could receive 150 letters of interest that could likely translate into roughly 50-75 pre-leases, even at around 50% attrition. 50-75 pre-leases would put the project in the ballpark of 25% to 30% pre-lease range, assisting in lending institution decisions to issue construction loans. Some of the innovative paths taken to gauge interest, and surpass the goal of obtaining letters of interest as follows:

**Downtown Living 400 Survey.** Knowing that Renaissance was looking for 150 letters of interest, Bristol Rising got right to work by trying to see if they could launch a survey to identify 400 people who would be interested in downtown living.

Why 400? In order to help Renaissance achieve their goal of 150 letters of interest, it was decided to target 400 people as being interested in living downtown, of which 150 may sign actual letters.

With a solid goal in place, Bristol Rising was off to the races.

The question asked was “Would you consider living downtown if the if the price and conditions were right? If so identify which unit typology you prefer.”

The survey was launched in 2012 by Bristol Rising and put into restaurants and bars, advertised online and over social media, at colleges, places of work, festivals, expo’s, and events. There was a resounding answer to the survey, that yes, people were interested in living in this new urban environment, to the tune of over 400 people!

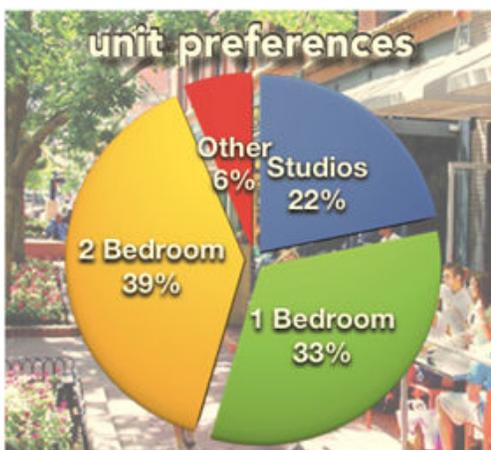
Those who completed the survey selected their choices from 8 apartment styles/pricing options that included everything from studios to three bedrooms and town houses. Not only was Renaissance able to confirm demand in downtown living, they could see exactly what the market desired.

With 400-plus survey respondees, this provided a critical market to ask whether they would like to take things one step further and secure their spot in

line by signing a letter of interest. 194 letters of interest later, a momentum for downtown living was borne and only continues to spread. Now RD recognizes that signing a letter of interest is not necessarily “moving in” but with the challenge of creating a new product, any indications of the market help secure financing that in this instance is difficult to come by.

**Target Markets & Strategy.** There are key employers in the area that fit the key demographics targeted for the Depot Square Development. First, Bristol Hospital, less than a mile away with a plethora of young professionals and empty nester boomers looking for an exciting environment to live and mingle. Second, is Jackson Labs, a state supported initiative that will increase the bioscience workforce considerably, and will only be a 15 minute drive to downtown Bristol. The last is ESPN, home to nearly 4,000 employees, many of which are transplants looking for a hip, vital, urban experience.

# #LOI Stats



As Renaissance moves forward, it will be keenly targeting the aforementioned markets, as well as the region and locality to ensure downtown Bristol is a fully occupied, thriving, and vibrant destination.

# RETAIL

Building upon the grassroots crowdsourcing efforts regarding recruitment of folks to live downtown, Renaissance in partnership with Bristol Rising has worked to stress the importance of local retailers and mom and pop shops. These establishments often become the heart and soul of any healthy downtown environments. Below please find a list of local retailers that have signed letters of interest to potentially become a part of the downtown fabric. While these recruitment methods are not the only answer, they are a kickstart to a larger and more comprehensive recruitment effort as described on the following pages.

# 15

signed letters of interest as of April 2014

	<b>Maine Seafood Restaurant &amp; Shop</b>	1750 SF
	<b>Gourmet Cupcake Shop</b>	1000 SF
	<b>Crepes &amp; Wine Restaurant</b>	1750 SF
	<b>Latin American Restaurant</b>	2000 SF
	<b>Craft Beer Specialty Store</b>	1500 SF

	<b>Mobile Phone Store</b>	1500 SF
	<b>Personalized Gift Store</b>	1200 SF
	<b>Massage Therapy</b>	1200 SF
	<b>Middle Eastern Restaurant &amp; Hookah Bar</b>	2500 SF
	<b>Dance Academy</b>	1000 SF
	<b>Tea House</b>	600 SF
	<b>Clothing, Jewelry, and Gallery Boutique</b>	1000 SF
	<b>Italian Deli Market &amp; Restaurant</b>	3000 SF
	<b>Photography Studio</b>	500 SF
	<b>Healthy Food Restaurant</b>	1500 SF

Total LOI Square Feet:

22,000

# RETAIL recruitment



Attaining 15 letters of interest for businesses interested in becoming a part of downtown is extremely exciting, and *only* the beginning.

To get to this point, Renaissance has employed several strategic recruitment layers ranging from conventional methods to out-of-the-box tactics to pitch business owners and entrepreneurs that Depot Square is the place to open up shop in Connecticut.

## **Organic Approach**

Sometimes the hard sell isn't the strategy that works best, but planting a seed from unassuming angles and watching it grow can be the best way for yielding a successful outcome. Take the Organic Approach.

Renaissance worked with the most fervent members of the 2,500 member Bristol Rising community on how to approach their favorite retailers and entrepreneurs to properly pitch Depot Square as the destination place they'd want to open their first or second businesses.

This approach was low key, and served to establish casual and buzz-worthy initial contact with business owners throughout the region by shining a light that downtown Bristol is awakening, and a very strong option for businesses, all told from the perspective of a potential future customer. All interested owners were immediately introduced to Renaissance staff.

This strategy was effective as the number of Bristol Rising members far exceeds the number of Renaissance staff, which meant Bristol Rising was able to divide and multiply across the state with great efficiency.

## **Local Brokerage Building**

In the time spent planning the Depot Square development, Renaissance has expended significant efforts to build relationships with the community, including local real estate professionals.

In the past few years, Renaissance has established a number of solid relationships with brokerages and firms that willingly show their clients the vision of downtown Bristol and how they can become a part of it.

One such relationship is with O.V. Snow Resources, who not only has a “big name client” interested in Depot Square, but they have been actively involved in recruiting appropriate clients to fill other vacancies downtown, like the currently empty Riverside Avenue side of the old Tinty’s building.

Renaissance recently launched an exciting new program for 2014 that gives the power to the Bristol Rising crowd to decide which 3 ideas they would like Renaissance staff to research and recruit, dedicating at least one of these idea categories to retail.

Renaissance staff will work hard to zero in on selected retail ideas and make a push to turn them into reality for the Bristol market.

### **Nationals**

Once financing is in place for even a portion of Phase I, Renaissance will work with large national commercial brokerages on securing “name” players for the development. Currently, this will remain separate from the more locally-based LOI’s as to maintain confidentiality standards.

### **Success Breeds Success**

With 6 new businesses inspired by Bristol Rising to open downtown already, there is an energy brewing that is continuing to gain momentum and inspire downtown Bristol to be a destination that is truly one to live, work, learn, play, and shop in.



## PROJECT FINANCING COMPARISONS



Below is research based on recent mixed-use projects in Connecticut and their comparative financing plans. Development in areas with lower area medium incomes and/or a lack of existing comparable product often require financing assistance especially in the early phases of the project.

### Storrs Center

Mansfield, CT

HOME OF UCONN\*

Population: 15,344(CDP)

AMI: \$29,030



**Size:** 20 acre mixed use development

- **Total Project Cost:** Penciled at \$225 million
- **Public Funds:**

\* \$24+ million in public funding sources already committed for planning Storrs Road, the 660 space parking garage, as well as project infrastructure

**Private: \$200 MM**

**Public: \$25 MM**

## Blue Back Square

*West Hartford, CT*

Population: 63,268

**Size:** 20.7 acre mixed use development

**Project Cost:** Penciled at \$159 million

**Public Funds:**

\* \$48.8 million non-obligation bonds (straight bonds) contributed by the City of West Hartford to underwrite key elements of project including two parking structures that the City would own and operate as well as improvements like construction of a park, streetscaping, and various building improvements.



**Private: \$110.2 MM**

**Public: \$48.8 MM**

## Steel Point

*Bridgeport, CT*

Population: 146,425

AMI: \$35,379

**Size:** 52 acre mixed use development

**1st Phase Cost:** Penciled at \$68.5 million

**Public Funds:**

\* \$31+ million in public funding committed for planning infrastructure and buildout for retailer Bass Pro Shops' 140,000 sf facility

\* \$22 million TIF

\* \$9 million in grant



**Private: \$31 MM**

**Public: \$37.5 MM**

## Greenway Commons

*Southington, CT*

Population: 63,268

AMI: \$76,256

**Size:** 14 acre mixed-use development

**Project Cost:** Unspecified

**Public Funds:**

\* \$4.5+ million of public sources to help remediate former factory soil & for demolition.

\* \$1.5 million low interest loans to service TIF district

\* \$3 million grant for remediation



**Private: N/A**

**Public: \$4.5 MM**



### **SUMMARY:**

The team at Renaissance Downtowns conducted an exhaustive search for comparable 100+ unit multi family housing projects in the central Connecticut region, developed in the past three years, in order to compare and contrast financial avenues traveled, and why those housing projects were able to obtain financing and head onto a path of success.

### **SOURCES EXPLORED:**

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)  
Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA)  
Partnership for Strong Communities (Connecticut housing advocates)  
Multi Family Housing Executive Magazine (Housing industry magazine)  
Speaking with Town Planners of regional municipalities

### **FINDINGS:**

Upon concluding its research, Renaissance discovered that there were only two multifamily housing projects of comparable size (100+ units) in the development stages in central Connecticut in the past three years. The first project is the Village at Poquanock in Windsor, CT. The project, according to Multi Family Executive Magazine, began site work last November by readying sewage infrastructure on the site of a 192 unit housing project, of which 42 units are a townhouse typology. The parcel exists outside of a downtown zone. In terms of market comparisons, area median income in Windsor is \$77,037, as compared to \$57,179 in Bristol, according to 2010 US Census data, allowing developers of Poquanock to justify higher rents and greater returns on investment.

The second project is a 120 unit apartment project being developed in Farmington, CT off of Colt Highway targeting the young professionals anticipated to be hired with the development of a new medical center. Farmington's area median income is \$80,564, as compared to \$57,179 in Bristol, representing a nearly 30 percent higher AMI than that in Bristol.

## LACK OF AREA PROJECTS:

The fact there are few projects in the central Connecticut region that have progressed to the development stage in the past 3 years, underscores the difficulty in economic and market conditions that stand in the way of streamlined development processes, and the difficulty in financing larger projects under such conditions.

## CURRENTLY FINANCED DEALS:

While Renaissance was only able to discover few recent multi-family projects in the development stages, Renaissance's new development team member, Martin Kenny of Lexington Partners LLC, is involved in a 200+ unit multi family housing project in Glastonbury, whose first phase is financed and moving forward.

As was the case in the Windsor project, the key differences in the reason why Glastonbury project was able to receive conventional financing to build, and the Bristol project remains a challenge are as follows:

1.) Area Median Income in Glastonbury, CT is \$96,884. This figure represents roughly a 41 percent increase of AMI over that of Bristol's \$57,179.

2.) Rents. Because of the higher AMI figures in Glastonbury, the development can justify higher rent rolls, and therefore more easily cover the cost of construction for new product, and produce an acceptable return on investment to investors and institutional lenders. This will also provide the necessary level of surety that the strength of existing market conditions under traditional development financing will help ensure a success.

Mr. Kenny is also involved in another project of 130+ units in Windsor's downtown, which has recently been approved. Mr. Kenny has developed many successful projects such as Trumbull on the Park, a very successful mixed-use development with 100 apartments located adjacent to Bushnell Park. In conjunction with the vast development experience of local developer D'Amato Realty, the Renaissance, D'Amato and Lexington team is in a prime position to implement the initial phase of development at Depot Square.



*HartfordBusiness.com, A rendering shows the developer's concept of the revitalized plant that would contain 33 apartments in a complex that also offers nearly 200 modern units.*

## TIMELINE OF PUBLIC OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

As part of the Preferred Developer Agreement, Renaissance was tasked with establishing a method of continued community outreach and engagement. To do this, Renaissance has utilized its Crowdsourced Placemaking approach which has led to an extremely collaborative and informative process. Not only has this community involvement process been essential to the planning and development of the Concept Plan for Downtown, but it is also a vital component to the establishment and success of several new businesses in the downtown area.

Renaissance's Crowdsourced Placemaking approach has also attracted international attention because of its cutting edge capabilities through grass roots campaigns. Renaissance has also showcased its successes through Bristol Rising when presenting at regional and national industry conferences.

Renaissance is committed to continued community outreach efforts in order to further build upon recent successes. As the community continues to grow, so will the success and vitality of the downtown area, ultimately leading to a sustainable economic environment supported by local residents and regional users.

The following section outlines a partial list of the more major outreach efforts that have taken place in the past few years. In addition to what is listed, Renaissance has had countless meetings with community stakeholders relating to site preparations and new business development. These meetings, while critical to the success of downtown, are not directed towards wide spread community involvement as those listed.

September 8, 2010  
Bristol Historical Society

September 9, 2010  
Republican Town Committee

September 21, 2011  
Planning Workshop Day 1

September 22, 2011  
Planning Workshop Day 2

November 4, 2010  
Bristol Rising Meet-up

November 18, 2011  
Public Informational Event

November 22, 2010  
Democratic Town Committee

November 23, 2010  
Rotary Club

December 1, 2010  
Bristol BNI  
(Business Networking International)

December 1, 2010  
Federal Hill Homeowners Association

December 14, 2010  
Bristol Rising Meet-up no. 2

December 22, 2010  
Veteran's Association

December 22, 2010  
Seniors Center Organization

January 3, 2011  
Bristol Library Board

January 13, 2011  
All Committees Meeting  
(Renaissance Community Committees)

January 19, 2011  
Bristol Rising Meet-up no. 3

February 2, 2011

Bristol Rising Online Meet-up	March 17, 2011	June 7, 2011
February 3, 2011	Bristol Historical Society Public Presentation	Bristol Central High School National Honor Society Presentation
Tunxis Student Presentation		Bristol Central High School AP Classes Presentation
February 9, 2011	March 19, 2011	June 16, 2011
Bristol Sports Hall of Fame	Shamrock Walk / Run	Board of Public Works Presentation
February 10, 2011	March 22, 2011	June 18, 2011
Renaissance Community Committees Working Session	Bristol Rising Meet-up no. 5	Bristol Car Show
Cultural, Entertainment and Parks, Open Space, Recreation Committees	April 6, 2011	June 21, 2011
February 10, 2011	April 19, 2011	June 29, 2011
Bristol Rising Online Meet-up no. 2	Bristol Rising Meet-up no. 6	Planning Commission Meeting
February 15, 2011	April 26, 2011	July 19, 2011
Renaissance Community Committees Working Session	Lion's Club Presentation	Veterans Presentation re Memorial Boulevard
Public Outreach Committee	April 28, 2011	July 20, 2011
February 16, 2011	Initial Concept Submission Presentation	Park Board Presentation
Bristol Rising Meet-up no. 4	May 9, 2011	Bristol Rising Meetup no. 9
February 22, 2011	Advocates for Bristol Seniors Presentation	August 6, 2011
Renaissance Community Committees Working Session	May 12, 2011	Pop Up Piazza Festival
Transportation and Economic Development Committees	"Fluid Space" (Bare Bones) Presentation to Historical Society	August 9, 2011
February 23, 2011	May 18, 2011	Bristol Rising Meet-up no. 10
Bristol Rising Youth Intro Meet-up	Bristol Rising Meetup no. 7	September 6, 2011
February 26, 2011	May 24, 2011	Bristol Rising Meet-up no. 11
Bristol Home & Business Expo	Mid State Association of Realtors Presentation	September 12, 2011
February 28, 2011	May 30, 2011	BDDC Public Presentation
Renaissance Community Committees Working Session	Bristol Rising Marches in Forestville Memorial Day Parade	September 17, 2011
Land Use and Green Initiatives Committees	June 1, 2011	Summer St. Cleanup
March 3, 2011	Department Public Works Presentation no. 1	September 20, 2011
Nuchie's Free Pasta Dinner & Renaissance Presentation	June 2, 2011	Joint Planning, Zoning & Zoning Board of Appeals Presentation
March 14, 2011	Department Public Works Presentation no. 2	September 24, 2011
Gov. Malloy Town Hall Meeting Meetup		Bristol Rising Movie Night "Back to the Future"
		September 25, 2011
		Bristol Rising Marches in Mum Festival Parade

## TIMELINE OF PUBLIC OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

October 6, 2011 BDDC Special Meeting on Concept Plan Approval	March 22, 2012 Downtown Living Pioneers Meetup	September 23, 2012 Mum Festival Parade
October 11, 2011 City Council Concept Plan Approval	March 24, 2012 Shamrock Walk & Run	September 25, 2012 Bristol Rising Meetup no. 23
October 18, 2011 Bristol Rising Meetup no. 12	April 3, 2012 Sports Hall of Fame & Leadership Awards	
October 27, 2011 Bare Bones I, Grand Opening	April 24, 2012 Bristol Rising Meetup no. 18	September 27, 2012 Bristol Rising Barley Vine Soft Opening Event
November 6, 2011 West End Cleanup	April 28, 2012 Cash Mob at Tortoise & Hare	
October 16, 2011 Bristol Rising Meetup no. 13	May 12, 2012 West End Cleanup	October 11, 2012 Barley Vine Grand Opening
December 4, 2011 Children's Holiday Parade	May 24, 2012 Bristol Rising Meetup no. 19	October 12, 2012 Bristol Rising Downtown Movie Night Featuring "Hugo"
December 8, 2011 Bristol Billiards Grand Opening	June 14, 2012 Chambers of Commerce Awards Dinner (Spirit of Bristol)	October 24, 2012 Bristol Rising Meetup no. 24
December 24, 2011 Bristol Rising Meetup no. 14	June 16, 2012 Bristol Car Show	November 1, 2012 Residential Info Session
January 14, 2012 Bare Bones Farewell 184 Main St (Hello Barley Vine)	June 26, 2012 Bristol Rising Meetup no. 20	November 2, 2012 Residential Info Session
January 18, 2012 Bristol Rising Meetup no. 15	June 29, 2012 Bare Bones Art Gallery	November 6, 2012 Residential Info Session
February 21, 2012 Bristol Rising Meetup no. 16	July 17, 2012 NYBERG, WTNH News 8 Web Interview	November 9, 2012 Residential Info Session
February 22, 2012 Downtown Living Campaign, Tunxis	July 25, 2012 Bristol Rising Meetup no. 21	November 14, 2012 Residential Info Session
February 24, 25, 26, 2012 Bristol Home & Business Expo - Downtown Living Campaign	July 29, 2012 Bristol's Marketplace Grocer Grand Opens	November 16, 2012 Residential Info Session
March 7, 2012 Kennedy Smith Presentation & Workshop	August 4, 2012 Pop Up Piazza II	November 27, 2012 Bristol Rising Meetup no. 25
March 20, 2012 Bristol Rising Meetup no. 17	August 28, 2012 Bristol Rising Meetup no. 22	November 28, 2012 Residential Info Session
	September 22, 2012 Mum Festival	November 29, 2012 Residential Info Session

December 2, 2012 Children's Holiday Parade	April 17, 2013 Bristol Young Professionals	September 24, 2013 Bristol Rising Meetup no. 32
December 12, 2012 Residential Info Session	April 24, 2013 Downtown Living Vending at Tunxis	October 11, 2013 People's Marketplace Bravo Grand Opening
December 12, 2012 Bristol Young Professionals	April 25, 2013 Downtown Living Vending at Tunxis	October 17, 2013 Bristol Boys & Girls Club Awards Dinner
December 14, 2012 Residential Info Session	May 8, 2013 Downtown Living Vending at Tunxis	
December 19, 2012 Bristol Rising Meetup no. 26	May 9, 2013 Downtown Living Vending at Tunxis	October 22, 2013 Bristol Rising Meetup no. 33
December 21, 2012 Residential Info Session	May 21, 2013 Bristol Rising Meetup no. 29	October 24, 2013 Firefly Hollow Brewing Co. Grand Opening
January 9, 2013 Rising Mobs Family Fun Night at Bristol Billiards	May 23, 2013 Downtown Living Local Employer Vending	November 1, 2013 Artist Tea Tree House Grand Opening
January 9, 2013 Zoning Commission Vote on Phase I Site Plan	May 29, 2013 Downtown Living Local Employer Vending	November 2, 2013 Cash Mob at Artist Tree Tea House
January 22, 2012 Bristol Rising Meetup no. 27	May 29, 2013 Downtown Living Local Employer Vending	November 14, 2013 Bristol Young Professionals
January 22, 2013 Zoning Commission Vote on Phase I Site Plan	June 15-16, 2013 The Shops at Downtown, Shared Retail Event	November 19, 2013 Bristol Rising Meetup no. 34
February 5, 2013 Bare Bones Flea Market Rising Mob	June 22-23, 2013 The Shops at Downtown, Shared Retail Event	December 8, 2013 Children's Holiday Parade
February 13, 2013 Zoning Commission Hearing on Phase I Site Plan	June 29-30, 2013 The Shops at Downtown, Shared Retail Event	December 18, 2013 Bristol Rising Meetup no. 35
February 23-24, 2013 Bristol Home & Business Expo	July 16, 2013 Bristol Rising Meetup no. 30	January 14, 2013 457 Mason Jar Kickstarter Contributors Party 1
March 26, 2013 Bristol Rising Meetup no. 28	August 15, 2013 Bristol Rising Meetup no. 31	January 15, 2013 457 Mason Jar Kickstarter Contributors Party 2
March 22, 2013 Downtown Living Local Employer Vending	August 17, 2013 Rockwell Park Festival	January 23, 2013 Bristol Rising Meetup no. 36
March 28, 2013 Downtown Living Local Employer Vending	August 29, 2013 McDonald's Ribbon Cutting	

## TESTEMONIAL OF NEW BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

January 27, 2014

Victor & Terry Lugo  
178-182 Main Street  
Bristol, CT 06010



My name is Victor Lugo. Myself and my wife Terry are owners of the Barley Vine Gastropub on Main Street in addition to being home owners on lower Summer Street.

We wanted to publicly express how the vision of Renaissance's plans for Depot Square, along with the Bristol Rising community, not only inspired us to become of a part of bettering downtown, but they were also the reason we choose to open our restaurant where and when we did. Without a doubt, Barley Vine would not exist today if it weren't for Renaissance's development concept for Depot Square (and downtown), or their help in the business development and financing process.

When Renaissance Downtowns first came to town in 2010 and presented their plans for downtown revitalization, we were excited to check them out. Upon review of their proposal for a live, work, shop, play destination a mere minute walking distance from our front steps, we were more than intrigued. As individuals of extensive business and military background, we have traveled all around the world, and knew the tenets of Renaissance's plans for mixed-use along with public space were sound examples of a model that works in countless vibrant communities Terry and I had the privilege of living in.

From there, we became part of the crowdsourced placemaking community sponsored by Renaissance called Bristol Rising, and quickly made friends in this uplifting community group. We were pleasantly surprised to meet positive people just like us who believed in the potential of this downtown. We became inspired by the group's optimism.

In the initial Bristol Rising surveys, Terry and I closely followed the crowd's desires for all sorts of interesting uses. Ideas populated both Bristol Rising meetups, surveys, and online, and a popularity trend became apparent. The people appeared to be asking for interesting beer and fresh food establishments. Terry & I thought, I think we can do that! Why don't we bring that to the people? And that's how it started, through Bristol Rising externalizing a market we weren't sure exists, followed by Renaissance's support for the idea.

And it was through that epiphany, planted by Renaissance's vision and watered by Bristol Rising, we began the path of creating Barley Vine. From there, the Bristol Rising community became a place to bounce ideas off of, and Renaissance Downtowns and their employees offered their hands in the process every step of the way.

In all, we can't say enough about the support from Bristol Rising, in addition to Renaissance's guidance with permitting and municipal issues. To create a list of all the items they helped provide advice on or coordinate would make this letter 15 pages.

To cap off matters, Renaissance even introduced us to local banks, and pitched side by side with us about how their development would strengthen my establishment, and help my business thrive. It was a team effort. That's when I saw, clear as day, some banks' luke warm responses become strong, risk-averse situations. We were financed soon afterward.

With money in the bank, we hit the ground running. Bristol Rising publicized our efforts with great effect over time to the point where we were a significantly known quantity in town, months before even opening. They even helped produce a video that was sent to the Food Network for us to be on the Bobby Flay show. The video was 8 minutes and included dozens of sign waving Bristol Rising members displaying a microcosm of the overwhelming community support that led to producers eventually selecting us. Unfortunately, things didn't work out because we were still weeks away from opening and couldn't align with Food Networks production schedule. But the effort was there, and we would have been on national television because of Renaissance and Bristol Rising. The Food Network even told Terry and I to keep in touch, as they had never seen synergy between a restaurant, community and developer quite like they saw in our story.

I am writing this letter because few people understand how much influence Renaissance Downtowns has had on our opening, subsequent success, and where we hope to be in the future.

They have far exceeded what a development company typically does in a community. They have helped create a name for us in town, even drawing up educational and promotional signage and initiatives that have greatly benefited us in the form of events, social media campaigns, and advertising consulting. The list keeps going.

Without Renaissance and Bristol Rising, we wouldn't be here. It is simple. When we settled on doing Barley Vine, we had our pick of towns to go to, but we choose Bristol because the Depot Square and the downtown vision is a game changer.

Our hope is that we continue on the path that Renaissance has paved, and see to it that this development occurs, as we feel it's in the best interest of the City, our business, and other organizations and businesses alike.

Sincerely yours,

Victor & Terry Lugo

## TESTEMONIAL OF NEW BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

January 27, 2014

Mike Clawson

457 North Main Street

Bristol, CT 06010

My name is Mike Clawson and I'm the owner of the recently launched 457 Mason Jar "Southern Food & Great Thymes" on North Main Street.

I am writing to let the City know how much Renaissance Downtowns and Bristol Rising have helped my business, one that existed even prior to their arrival in town. I've endured periods of struggle, and there were times I've needed to hold my breath, but with Renaissance's guidance I was able to accomplish a complete rebranding of my restaurant with a refreshing and cohesive theme that's resulted in success and promise for the future.



I first got to know the team at Renaissance in 2012 when the Bristol Rising community selected my establishment to hold the City's very first Cash Mob. There was a big deal made about it online and through the local press. Bristol Rising handled all the publicity for the event, and we were overwhelmed by the amount of people that came in to spend their dollars at my restaurant to support me. It was incredible and helped put us on the map. The day was so successful we ended up breaking our all time patronage record by 3 PM, and at the end of the day we were a staggering 42% above our all time best customer count.

While that day was a much needed shot in the arm, we eventually slipped back into hard periods when the buzz died down. Something wasn't quite hitting it off with the public.

When my family originally purchased the Tortoise & the Hare Cafe on North Main Street we choose to keep the restaurant name the same because we thought it had a good following. But we quickly noticed that the following we anticipated was not the reality, nor was the perception of the former Tortoise (prior to us) all that great. On top of that, our southern spin on food fell on deaf ears as most people didn't know ownership had changed hands, and the name "Tortoise & Hare" name didn't exactly scream "southern food" to people. We're not even sure what it said to people. Not changing the name from the start quickly became my biggest regret, but by the time we figured things out we were already committed and didn't have the means to change it.

Fast forward to this past year (2013). We were at a critical cross roads in the Summer and needed to do something or we could have been heading for trouble. We approached Bristol Rising for help. We had

talked privately about the importance of branding, and communication before, and I thought maybe it's not too late for us to make a change.

I got together with their staff and we formulated a whole game plan for soliciting new ideas from the crowd based on my passions, roots, and style of cooking. Everything from restaurant names, tag lines, decor, color schemes, menu items, signage, lighting, it would all be on the table. It's hard to open yourself up to that kind of scrutiny, but I trusted the process. Bristol Rising was able to organize a series of brainstorming sessions and surveys to collect massive amount of ideas, which were whittled down to the market's favorites.

From there, my family and I would select our favorite ideas, add our own, and put our final spin on it. That's how the concept for 457 Mason Jar was born, and we were thrilled with the result. But even with an exciting new concept in hand, I wasn't sure how to accomplish all that was needed to bring the concept to life from a financial perspective, we just didn't have the means. We kicked around a few ideas with Renaissance staff, and finally the idea of a crowd funding campaign came to light, where we would ask the community for \$6,500 to get the baseline materials we needed to get this new brand off the ground.

I wasn't exactly sure how it would turn out, although I was hopeful. But with Renaissance's help we put together a campaign that demonstrated our story to a "T". Ultimately, we were successful in raising \$7,900 through Kickstarter. 122% of our funding goal. It was an amazing feat!

In all, Renaissance staff worked tirelessly alongside me for more than 6 months on this project, from start to finish. And today, our rebranded restaurant is off to a great start, and we have them to thank for it. Since the relaunch we've had lines out the door on evenings, and are attracting visitors from our immediate region into this downtown to try our menu with a southern twist.

You would think as developers Renaissance would only care about what they're going to be constructing downtown, but that couldn't be farther from the truth. And we've always been excited for their downtown plans that we feel will strengthen all downtown business. But these guys do it all. They are a different kind of breed.

They will help anyone interested in coming downtown and even those who are here already, like myself. It's not something they have to do, or that directly benefits them, but as they say, every piece adds to the greater whole. I believe in that more than ever, and I can't thank Renaissance enough for their efforts not only with me but downtown.

I am fortunate to be able to work with an organization like theirs, and I cannot wait to be part of their larger plans for downtown, which I whole heartedly believe will benefit us all.

Sincerely,

Mike Clawson

## TESTEMONIAL OF NEW BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

January 28, 2014

Bill Collins

163 Center Street

Bristol, CT 06010



My name is Bill Collins and myself and my partners Rich Loomis and Dana Borque are the owners of Firefly Hollow Brewing Co. on 139 Center Street in Bristol. The craft beer culture is exploding, not only across the nation, but especially in Connecticut where over 10 small breweries have opened in the past few years, including several in neighboring towns. With beer tourism and the craft brew culture growing we felt the time was right to open a brewery.

When myself and the guys at Firefly were first ready to launch our brewery a critical question came into mind, “where in Connecticut do we do it?” We looked at over 15 different municipalities around the state. We then began to narrow down our focus areas. Several factors kept Bristol in our finalist list. We liked it for its central location in Connecticut. We liked the equidistance from Boston and New York, as we would eventually like our product to enter both of those markets. The town demographics were good, and it had some historic roots to grow on.

So why was Bristol our front runner?

When Rich and I scheduled a trip to visit the city hall- it was what we saw there that put Bristol as our front runner. We were introduced to Renaissance Downtowns and their project through the Bristol Development Authority (BDA). Upon hearing the Renaissance staff energetically talk about the plans for downtown Bristol, and the desire for an urban, cultural, and unique downtown experiences, we immediately started to feel at home. It sounded like the type of culture which is conducive to a craft brewery. In the midst of our research we knew Bristol had a rich manufacturing history, which we felt our business could be an extension of. More importantly we learned the town had big aspirations. Renaissance’s plans conveyed to us that Bristol was not only a town rich in history like some mid-sized New England cities, but Bristol was also looking to the future. The vision that the BDA and Renaissance outlined was a blend of history and renovation where there was a path to sustainable growth potential in the region. It was this vision of a future downtown revolution at the Depot Square which we pictured ourselves as a part of.

The glue that made us know that this plan could succeed was the Bristol Rising group. Bristol Rising is a unique community group across the whole state, a group of citizens who were committed to improving the culture and business in the town. We were invited to a Bristol Rising Meetup in May of 2012 at the Carousel Museum to meet the community in person and allow them to taste our beverages. Seeing the

passion of 75 or so community members in the room, and their desire to bootstrap this movement was amazing to us. That was all the convincing we needed. That night we decided Bristol was the place to be.

The process of readying our space was long and arduous. Our location at 139 Center Street is a centuries old factory building that cared little to conform to 21st century production and retail space. There were a significant amount of hurdles from design, to building codes, fire codes, and zoning, and the team at Renaissance was always willing to offer advice on how to navigate the challenges, and work through them together. Renaissance served as a stable continuing liaison with the City during a time of turnover in the Development Agency. Through our adventure in the build out, Renaissance and Bristol Rising kept us informed of events they were managing or participating in. They helped us spread the word into our new marketplace, and even helped with the distribution of our press releases and events to help us develop a following and success prior to opening.

We feel that Firefly Hollow is a benefit to the community. Today, craft breweries are a destination draw for many cities. We are good corporate citizens of the towns and have helped with multiple fundraisers for different community projects. We understand our corporation is part of a community in the City, and we are committed to improving that community. Coupled with solid plans for a thriving downtown, these scenarios are certainly a win win. We want the City to be able to recognize that we're here to be a part of something greater. We believe in the plans for downtown, and it's a major reason why we chose to be here - and plan to grow in Bristol. We hope that Renaissance is able to start and finish what was started, which has helped inspire places like Firefly Hollow and Barley Vine, a new beer culture in Bristol that would not have been possible had it not been for the downtown vision Renaissance presented that so excited us.

The vision and the culture of the City can continue to grow if it is allowed to. We hope to impress upon you that Firefly Hollow being in Bristol is proof that downtown Bristol is on the right path, and Renaissance helped us get there. We look forward to continuing down the path, and hope to keep our business growing with and in this city- the new Bristol!

Sincerely yours,

Bill Collins

## TESTEMONIAL OF NEW BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

David Hamelin

West End Association

64 West St.

Bristol, CT 06010



To Whom It May Concern:

My name is David Hamelin and I am the President of the West End Association. Our organization is made up of business owners, homeowners, property owners and renters who are working hard to restore integrity and pride to our neighborhood. To that end we have taken inspiration from many sources. I am writing this to explain the values and ideas that Renaissance Downtowns and Bristol Rising have given to help us grow and prosper.

One of our inspirations came from attending the Pop Up Piazza event that Renaissance Downtowns and Bristol Rising organized and promoted thru 2012. At the event on August 4, 2011 we experienced first hand the power of people getting together with a common goal and truly enjoying their roots and the promise of better things to come. The atmosphere at the Piazza was powerful and we felt that Bristol people were getting the message and were ready to support local businesses and events in the downtown and West End areas.

Inspired by the success of the Piazza and with the help of Renaissance we felt confident in producing our own event. Renaissance was extremely generous in giving their time, expertise and contacts. When the decision was made to discontinue the Pop Up Piazza due to pending construction, Renaissance Downtowns and Bristol Rising were instrumental in making our summer festival a success. The Rockwell Park Summer Festival, now an annual event, drew over 12,000 people to our historic park last year to enjoy crafts, food, competitions, artists, and of course music.

The Association is proud of our accomplishments to date. We have spotlighted attention on our neighborhood and have let our residents know that we are looking out for their well being and holding the entire neighborhood to the high standard it once had. We continue to work with the Bristol Police department and the Mayor's office to help increase awareness and to improve the safety of our residents.

We have been instrumental in removing the false fronted businesses that plagued us and are working hand in hand with Renaissance and city officials to place viable, responsible retailers in those locations. We feel that with the help of Bristol Rising, the entire town of Bristol is realizing that the city is only as strong as it's weakest neighborhood and we see the residents signing on and supporting the new businesses.



Our “Taste of Bristol” event continues our work of supporting local business. Now in our second year, we continue to offer value through discounts, and promotional value to our area residents and local restaurants.

Currently, we are working towards a plan to identify locations that could be used to enhance parking for business and create a better environment for our merchants. These plans are designed to bring our neighborhood into direct contact and walking connection with the new downtown being planned. We envision a contiguous experience that easily accommodates both a pedestrian and automotive cohesion that will allow our neighborhood to continue the flow of all traffic from downtown. Renaissance Downtowns and Bristol Rising said that they would be happy to work together with us and share their robust planning tools, resources and experience to help bring our vision to life.

A lot of good has come from our association with Renaissance Downtowns and Bristol Rising and we are certain that there will be more to come, especially after a shovel hits the ground on their downtown Depot Square project. It is important to note that many wonderful things and enthusiasm has happened as a result of their project. New ground has been broken in using the voice of the residents in determining the mix of the project and in determining the correct type and purpose of both the residential and the commercial needs of Bristol.

The West End Association is proud to voice their support for their efforts and acknowledge the impact they have had in the vision and renewed energy in Bristol. We look forward to continuing to work with them as their project moves towards completion.

Sincerely,

David Hamelin

President

West End Association

