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CONDITIONS & TRENDS

Overview

This booklet provides a general overview of conditions and trends affecting Bristol. It has been prepared as part of the process of preparing the 2015 Plan of Conservation and Development.

“If we could first know where we are and whither we are tending, we could then better judge what to do and how to do it.”

Abraham Lincoln,
American President

History



People



Housing



Economy



History of Bristol

The landform of Bristol was created over millions of years by massive geologic forces. Native Americans are believed to have lived in this area for the last 10,000 years or so although there is no written record of their culture.

Europeans “discovered” this part of New England in 1614 when Dutch explorer Adriaen Block sailed up what we now call the Connecticut River. Dutch and British trade with Native Americans eventually led to settlement of Wethersfield after 1634. Colonial settlement reached Farmington around 1640 although the area we now know as Bristol grew slowly due to the remoteness of the area and restrictions on land ownership.

As population grew, settlers gradually moved westwards from Farmington into what we now call Bristol. The first homestead was established about 1728. A separate parish, called New Cambridge, was formed around 1746 so that residents of this area did not have to travel to Farmington every week for religious services. The center of this parish was situated in the area now known as Federal Hill. In 1785, residents of this area received permission from the General Assembly to establish a separate municipality, called Bristol, which also included a separate parish called West Britain. After Burlington was carved off as a separate municipality in 1806, Bristol’s boundaries were set.

Settlers were primarily involved in subsistence agriculture and the challenging land resulted in a dispersed development pattern. Some important businesses for a growing community (sawmills, gristmills, blacksmith, fulling mill, etc.) were established to meet local needs. Over time, other small manufacturing establishments were established.

Local innovators and entrepreneurs began to specialize in the construction of clocks. This focus was the result of the knowledge and skills created here and the availability of raw materials and water power to support manufacturing. Over time, Bristol also became a focal point for other types of precision manufacturing and metal fabrication.

Eras In Transportation

Up until the mid-1800s, Bristol residents travelled primarily by foot and horse. People lived on the land they farmed or close to where they worked.

Travel to other locations could be treacherous since nobody was in charge of road maintenance. As a result, “turnpikes” were established at this time where tolls were charged to users of the road to fund maintenance. Present day Route 4 and Route 6 began as turnpikes.

With the invention of the steam engine, rail service began in the mid-1800s. Eventually, rail service connected Bristol to New Britain, Hartford, Waterbury, and Fishkill, New York.

In the late 1800’s, trolley service was established within Bristol and to connect Bristol to Plainville and New Britain.

By the 1920s, cars and buses became more prevalent and the establishment of the State Highway Department accelerated the use of the automobile.

Map of Bristol (circa 1867)



Then, with the “industrial revolution” in the latter part of the 1800s and the advent of steam power and other advancements in manufacturing, Bristol began a transformation from an agricultural community to an industrial powerhouse.

The arrival of the railroad and the siting of the train stations in downtown and Forestville reinforced the development pattern of the community at that time. The railroad provided opportunities for local products to be shipped far and wide and provided an opportunity for workers and their families to come here from distant places. The sweeping pattern of the railroad through the center of Bristol owes as much to the power of local industry as it does to the prevailing topography.

With growth came the need for new housing for workers. New streets and utilities were needed to support the housing. New businesses were established to meet the needs of the residents. Local industrialists saw some of the needs of the community and made contributions of parks and other amenities. However, much of this growth was not organized around an overall concept, simply placed where it was most expedient at the time.

Between 1900 and the end of the First World War, the population of the City doubled. By, 1920 there was a realization that the community would benefit from an overall plan. A City Planning Commission was created, and the first comprehensive plan was written in 1920. This Plan organized a number of civic improvements and set the stage for enactment of zoning regulations a short time later.

Following World War II, the entire country experienced a new wave of growth where growth expanded out from traditional areas. People were free to live further from their place of employment since they could commute by automobile. The outlying areas of Bristol, like many other places, grew significantly.

Implementation of 1920 Plan

As stated in the 2000 POCD:

Bristol implemented the 1920 Plan’s recommendations for parks and playgrounds, improved land subdivision regulations, and gained the knowledge that privately inspired growth could be shaped.

The new subdivision regulations controlled the spate of new housing in the 1920’s and 1930’s to the north and on the open, flat land between Forestville and the city’s center.

Zoning, which was adopted in 1930, created separate residential, commercial, and industrial areas.

While the 1920 Plan’s central recommendations for the downtown were not heeded, strong private sponsorship led to the creation of Memorial Boulevard, and a new high school and parkland were created in the 1920’s.

Other civic improvements at this time included brick schools, a hospital, the Bristol Boys and Girls Club, and a new state armory.

Downtown (circa 1955)



Route 6 (circa 1960)



Single family homes sprouted in former farm fields. Route 6 was transformed from a rural highway to a retail strip as a result of the advent of the “shopping center” which people would drive to. Bristol’s population grew from about 30,000 people in 1940 to about 55,000 people in 1970. Growth slowed but continued to a peak of 60,640 residents in 1990.

Other changes occurring during this period affected Bristol as well:

- For some reason, the establishment of the interstate highway system in the 1950s and 1960s essentially bypassed Bristol.
- The 1955 floods devastated parts of the community.
- The overall Connecticut economy began a transition from manufacturing (Bristol’s historic focus) towards a more service-based economy.
- The national trend towards “redevelopment” and the availability of federal monies resulted in the demolition of several blocks in the downtown for the establishment of a suburban-style shopping mall.
- Changing retail preferences resulted in abandonment of the “Bristol Center Mall” and acquisition of the property by the City.
- In the late 1970s, several local entrepreneurs established a fledgling sports broadcasting business (ESPN) which has grown to become the worldwide leader in sports programming and which has its world headquarters in Bristol.
- The country went into a prolonged recession in 2007.
- The State of Connecticut extended Route 72 further west to intersect with Route 229 in Bristol and enhance access into the City.

Past City Plans

- **Local Survey and City Planning Proposals** (1920) - John Nolen of Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- **Report on a General Plan for Bristol, Connecticut** (1958) - John T. Blackwell of Boston, Massachusetts.
- **Comprehensive Plan** (1964) - Planning Services Group of Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- **Bristol, Connecticut, Plan of Development** (1979) - Brown, Donald and Donald of Farmington, Connecticut.
- **Plan of Development** (1989) - Harrall-Michalowski Associates of Hamden, Connecticut.
- **Plan of Conservation and Development** (2000) – Buckhurst, Fish and Jacquemart of New York, New York.

Bristol Center Mall



ESPN World Headquarters

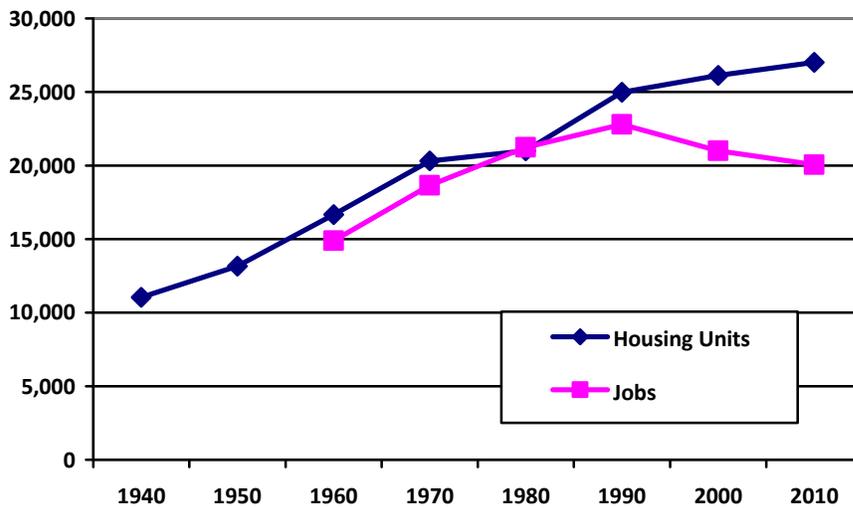


Regional Roles and Implications

Bristol serves two regional roles.

Bristol is a residential community. According to the 2010 Census, the community had over 60,000 residents and over 25,000 housing units. Most of the land area in Bristol is zoned, used and planned for residential use.

Bristol is also a regional employment center. As shown in the following chart, Bristol had over 20,000 jobs in 2010. While this is a slight decline from the peak of almost 23,000 jobs in 1990, Bristol is still a significant location for jobs.



As can be seen from the following data, Bristol is an integral part of a larger region. On a daily basis, Bristol sends thousands of workers to jobs in other communities and accepts thousands of workers who live in other places.

Commuters (2010)

Workers In Bristol Commute From		Residents of Bristol Commute To	
Bristol	7,171	Bristol	7,171
Southington	998	Farmington	2,522
Plymouth	850	Hartford	2,434
New Britain	813	New Britain	1,519
Waterbury	704	Southington	1,498
Plainville	662	Plainville	1,294
Farmington	598	Waterbury	916
West Hartford	579	West Hartford	804
Burlington	470	East Hartford	628
Other Origins	7,216	Other Destinations	11,980

CERC 2014

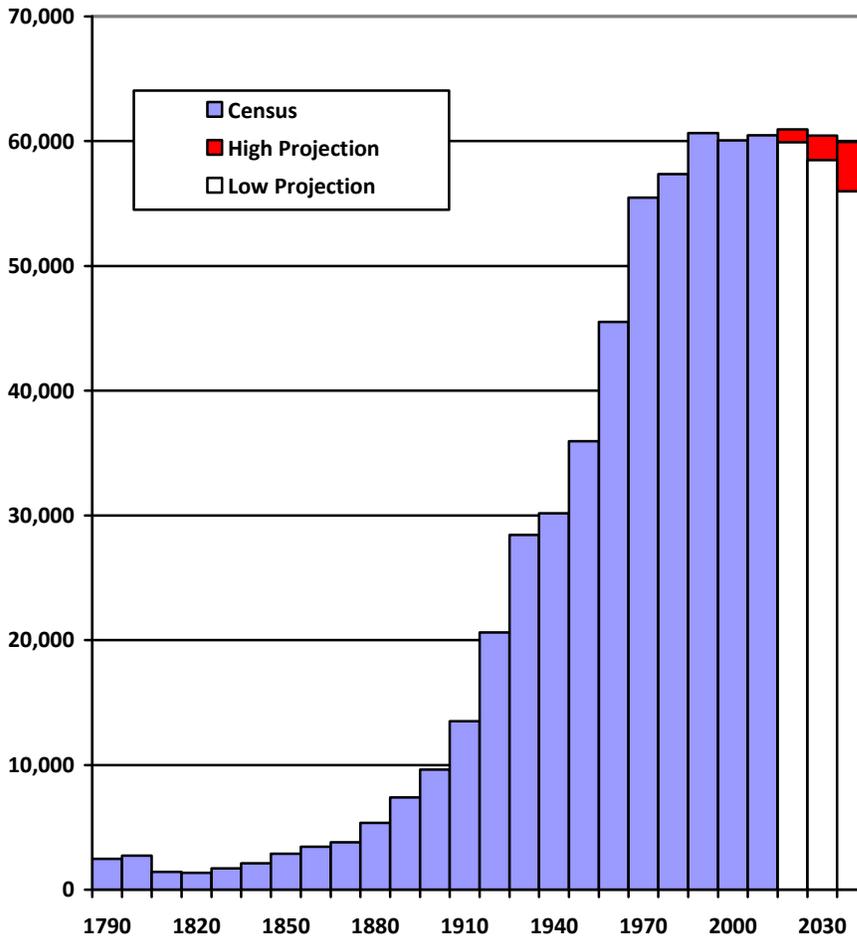
People Of Bristol

According to the Census, Bristol had a year 2010 population of 60,477 persons. This represents an increase of 415 persons from the 60,062 persons reported in the 2000 Census. The chart shows Bristol population growth since the 1790 Census with a range of population projections to the year 2040. If recent trends continue (births, deaths, migration, etc.), Bristol's population may decrease over the next several decades although the exact timing cannot be determined.

Bristol's Population

1790	2,462
1800	2,722
1810	1,428
1820	1,362
1830	1,707
1840	2,109
1850	2,884
1860	3,436
1870	3,788
1880	5,347
1890	7,382
1900	9,643
1910	13,502
1920	20,620
1930	28,451
1940	30,167
1950	35,961
1960	45,499
1970	55,487
1980	57,370
1990	60,640
2000	60,062
2010	60,477
2020	<i>59,908</i> <i>60,958</i>
2030	<i>58,487</i> <i>60,452</i>
2030	<i>55,988</i> <i>59,946</i>

Bristol's Population (1850 – 2040)



US Census data for 1790 to 2010. Projections are in italics. Low projections are based on Planimetrics cohort survival model. High projections based on Connecticut State Data Center projections to 2025 extrapolated to 2040.

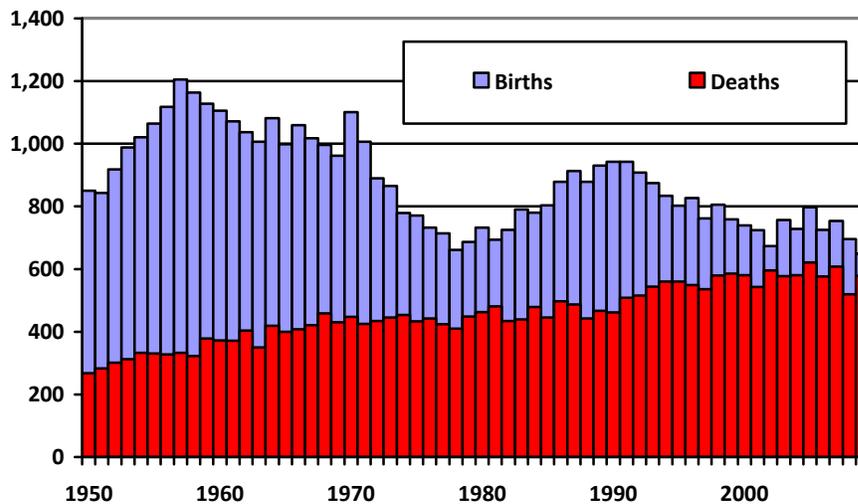
Dynamics of Population Change

A community's population can increase or decrease through:

- Natural change (births compared to deaths), and/or
- Net migration (people moving in compared to people moving out).

Since 1950, Bristol has experienced positive natural change as there have been more births to residents than deaths.

Bristol's Natural Change (1950 – 2010)



However, when the natural change is taken out of the total population change, it can be seen that, since 1970, there has been net out-migration from Bristol which has offset the natural change.

Components of Population Change

	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
Total Change	+9,538	+9,988	+1,883	+3,270	-578	+415
Change Due To Natural Increase	7,109	6,299	3,845	3,491	3,058	1,466
Births	10,299	10,333	8,206	8,125	8,456	7,244
Deaths	3,190	4,034	4,361	4,634	5,398	5,778
Change Due To Net Migration	2,429	3,689	-1,962	-221	-3,636	-1,051

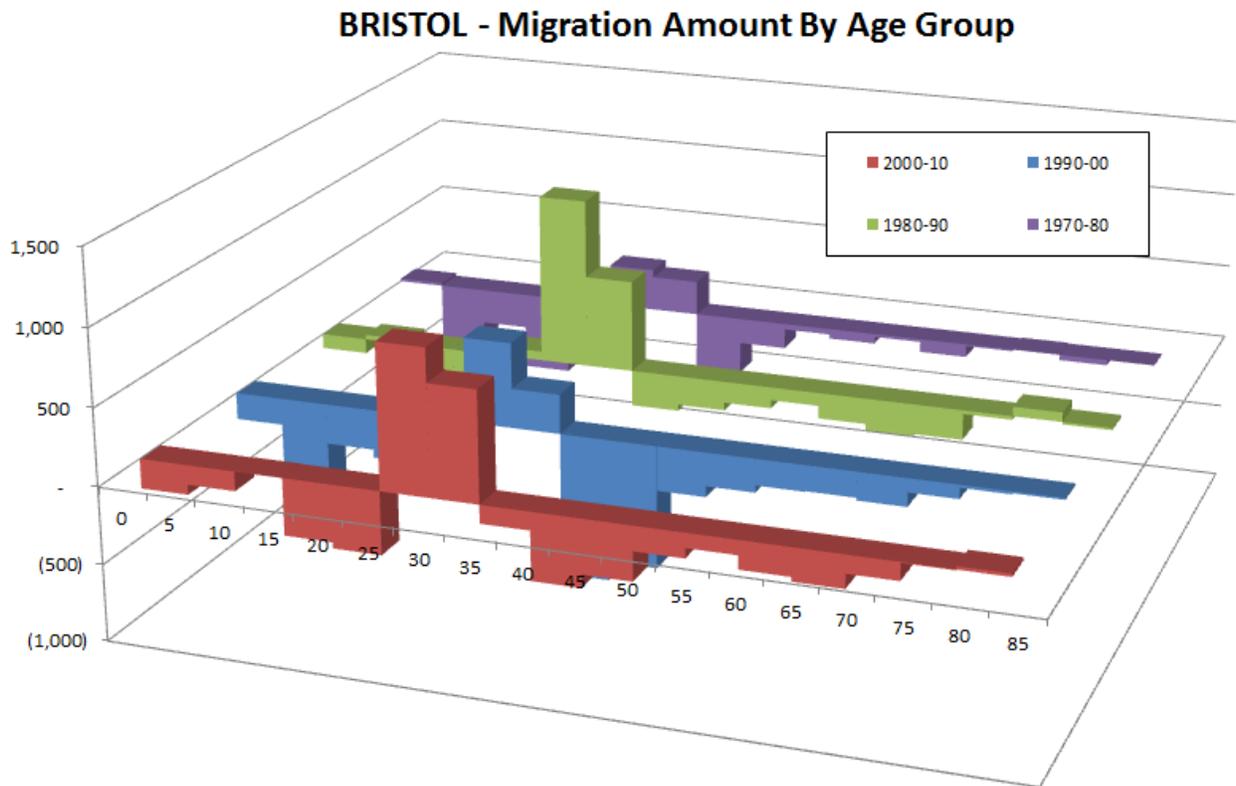
US Census, Connecticut Health Department reports.

By comparing the number of people in one age group in the Census to the number of people 10 years younger in the prior Census (10 years earlier), the dynamics of migration in Bristol can be evaluated.

Since at least 1970, as can be seen from the following chart, Bristol has exhibited a consistent pattern of attracting young adults (ages 25 to 35). This age group typically consists of young single people and couples seeking their first home.

The data also shows net out-migration in the following age groups:

- Adults aged 35 to 55 (and their children aged 0 to 20)
- Young adults aged 20 to 25
- Older adults aged 55+



Age Composition

The following chart looks at Bristol’s historic and projected population composition for the period from 1970 to 2040.

The most significant ***past*** trends (1970 to 2010) are:

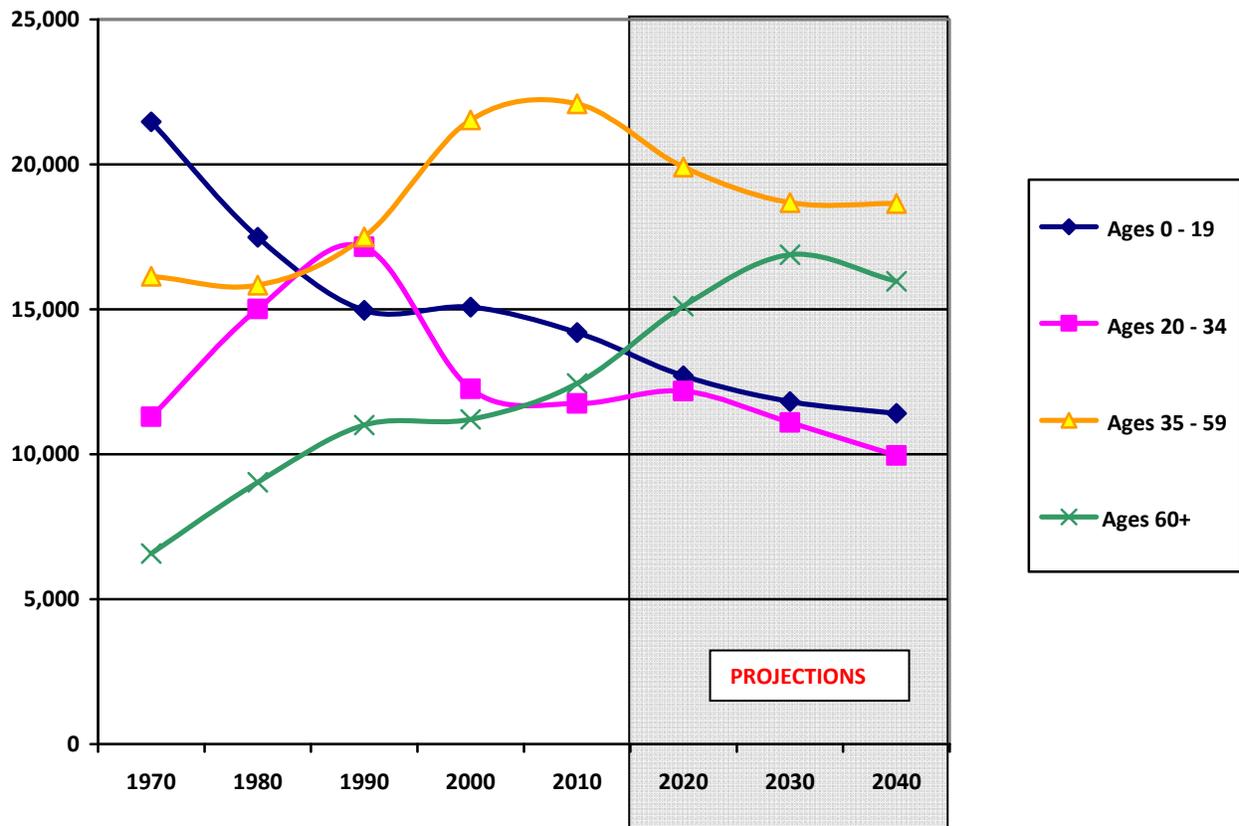
- the increase in persons aged 35 to 59. This primarily reflects the aging of the “baby boomers” (people born between about 1945 and 1965). The population in these age groups increased almost 40 percent from 1970 through to 2010.
- The decrease in the number of children ages 0 to 19.
- The increase to 1990 in the number of people aged 20 to 34 and the subsequent decrease. Interestingly, this also reflects the aging of the “baby boomers” (people born between about 1945 and 1965).

The most significant ***future*** trend is the projected increase in persons aged 60 and over. Again, this is a reflection of the aging of the “baby boomers”. The population in these age groups is expected to increase by about 30 percent in the next 30 years or so.

Median Age

Farmington	44
Southington	44
Wolcott	43
Plainville	43
Burlington	42
State	40
Bristol	40
Plymouth	40

CERC 2014 (data for 2011)



A changing age composition can also result in a changing demand for municipal and housing types. Of course, it must be remembered that these are projections and variations can occur, especially further into the future.

For planning purposes, a community’s age composition might be broken down into age groups which reflect differing needs. If population projections bear out (birth, death, and migration patterns continue), the need for different community programs can be evaluated.

The major demographic element in Bristol’s future is expected to be the growth in the number of older residents. This is occurring nation-wide and is a reflection of the aging of the “baby boom” and the longer life expectancies.

Description	Age Range	Needs	Projection To 2040
Infant	0 to 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child care Recreation programs 	Overall decrease to 2040
School-Age	5 to 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School facilities Recreation programs 	Overall decrease to 2040
Young Adults	20 to 34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rental housing Starter homes Social opportunities 	Increase to 2020 then decrease to 2040
Middle Age	35 to 54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family programs Trade-up homes 	Overall decrease to 2040
Mature Adults	55 to 64	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smaller homes Second homes 	Increase to 2020 then decrease to 2040
Retirement Age	65 and over	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing options Elderly programs 	Increase to 2030 then stable to 2040

Bristol Population History & Projections by Age Groups

Ages	Actual					Projections		
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030	2040
0-4	4,996	3,553	4,280	3,761	3,416	3,101	3,003	2,889
5-19	16,474	13,936	10,691	11,313	10,779	9,608	8,817	8,520
20-34	11,295	15,014	17,157	12,257	11,752	12,181	11,097	9,961
35-54	13,407	12,611	14,810	18,549	18,104	15,427	15,287	15,108
55-64	4,838	6,001	5,456	5,257	7,400	8,866	7,113	6,471
65+	4,477	6,255	8,246	8,925	9,026	10,726	13,168	13,040
Total	55,487	57,370	60,640	60,062	60,477	59,908	58,487	55,988

1970-10 Census, Projections by Planimetrics.

The greatest demographic opportunities for Bristol may be:

- Continue to capture young adults (ages 25 to 34)***
- Keep them through middle age (ages 35 to 54)***
- Attract older persons seeking a vibrant lifestyle (ages 55+)***

Other Demographic Information

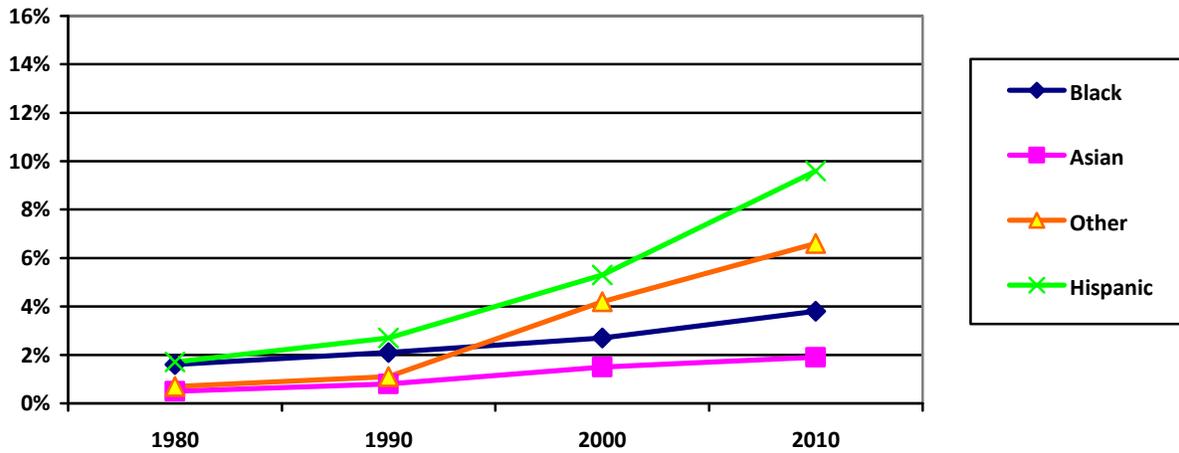
In terms of educational attainment, the percentage of the population with a Bachelor's degree or higher is lower than for the state as a whole.

Over the years, both Bristol and Connecticut have become more ethnically diverse. Note that in the following charts, Hispanic Origin is a separate designation from Race but is presented in the same chart for comparison purposes.

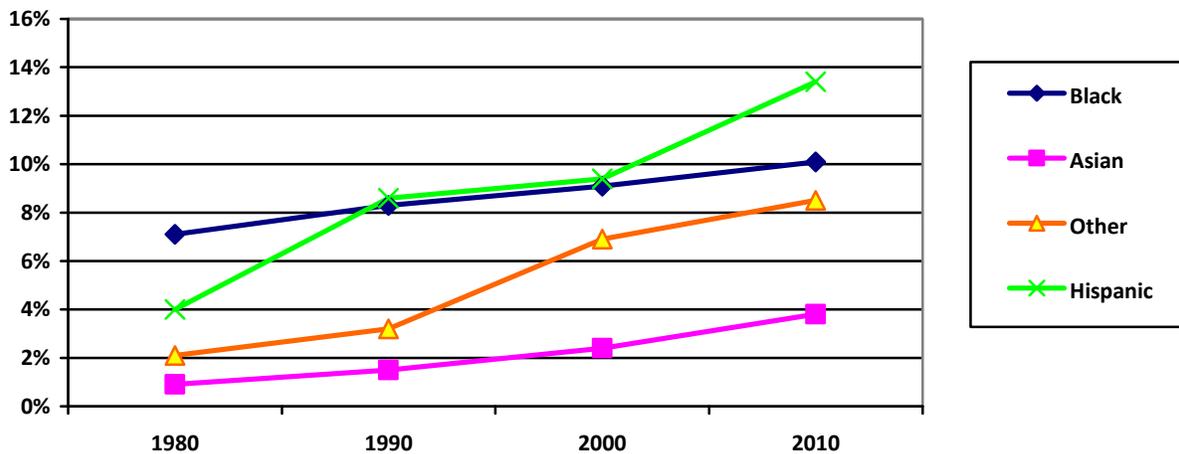
Educational Attainment

Farmington	56%
Burlington	47%
State	36%
Southington	33%
Wolcott	24%
Bristol	22%
Plymouth	21%
Plainville	19%
<small>Percent with Bachelors Degree or higher CERC 2014</small>	

Bristol - Ethnicity 1980 to 2010



Connecticut - Ethnicity 1980 to 2010



Housing In Bristol

Bristol had about 27,000 housing units in 2010. While Bristol added an average of about 400 housing units per year between 1980 and 1990, growth has been much slower (about 100 units per year) in the last 20 years as:

- societal changes spurred demand in more rural areas,
- family dynamics and age composition changes resulted in fewer people in the age groups typically attracted to Bristol,
- the amount of developable land shrunk, and
- land became more difficult to develop.

Housing Type

In terms of the composition of its housing stock, Bristol is one of the most diverse communities in the region and the State. In 2010, the percentage of multi-family units (apartments and condominiums) was higher in Bristol (39 percent) than the State average (35 percent) and surrounding towns (7 percent to 25 percent). In addition, the percentage of renter occupied units was higher in Bristol (33 percent) than the State average (32 percent).

In addition, about 13 percent of the housing units in Bristol are considered “affordable housing” (assisted housing, financed by CHFA mortgages, or sale price restricted by deed). As a result, Bristol is not subject to the State’s affordable housing appeals procedure whereby a developer can force an affordable housing development on a community.

Single-Family House



Multi-Family Building



Housing Units

1980	21,004
1990	24,989
2000	26,125
2010	27,011

US Census.

Percent Multi-Family

Bristol	39%
State	35%
Plainville	25%
Farmington	24%
Southington	16%
Plymouth	14%
Wolcott	12%
Burlington	7%

2010 Census

Percent Renter Occupied

Bristol	33%
Plainville	32%
State	32%
Farmington	23%
Southington	19%
Plymouth	18%
Wolcott	10%
Burlington	4%

2010 Census

Percent Affordable

Bristol	13.45%
State	11.26%
Farmington	7.73%
Plainville	7.44%
Plymouth	7.11%
Wolcott	7.11%
Southington	5.71%
Burlington	2.04%

CT Department of Housing (2014)

Housing Occupancy

It is interesting to note that about two of every three housing units in Bristol are occupied by one or two people. While this can reflect “empty nesters” (adults whose children have moved out), it is also a product of the in-migration of young single and married persons ages 25 to 35.

Housing Values

According to data compiled by the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC), median sale prices in Bristol are lower than the state median sales price and lower than some of the surrounding towns.

Housing Occupancy

	Bristol	State
1 person	30%	27%
2 people	34%	32%
3 people	16%	17%
4 people	13%	14%
5 people	5%	6%
6+ people	2%	3%
Median	2.35	2.52

Total may not add due to rounding
2010 Census

Single-Family House



Multi-Family Building



Median Sales Price (2010)

Burlington	\$355,000
Farmington	\$307,000
Wolcott	\$257,000
Southington	\$254,950
State	\$246,000
Plainville	\$195,000
Bristol	\$192,500
Plymouth	\$189,900

CERC 2014

Single-Family House



Multi-Family Building



Economic Conditions in Bristol

As previously indicated, Bristol is a regional economic and employment center.

Number of Jobs

The number of jobs in Bristol increased from about 15,000 jobs in 1960 to about 23,000 jobs in 1990. While employment declined from 1990 to 2010, recent information from the Connecticut Department of Labor suggests that employment in Bristol increased to 21,079 jobs in recent years.

Type of Jobs

As indicated in the following chart, there have been considerable changes in the types of jobs in Bristol over the past 50 years or so. Note again that employment has increased from 2010 levels.

Jobs In Bristol

1960	14,890
1970	18,647
1980	21,240
1990	22,810
2000	21,010
2010	20,061

CT Labor Dept.

Types of Jobs In Bristol – 1960 - 2010

	Manufacturing	Constructions	Trade	Services
1960	10,280	500	2,430	3,410
1970	11,320	950	3,330	5,240
980	9,290	800	4,490	6,660
1990	5,520	1,040	5,460	10,790
2000	4,830	990	4,560	10,630
2010	2,790	480	3,120	13,670

CT Department of Labor

ESPN



Retail Plaza



Median Incomes

According to data compiled by the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC), median household incomes in Bristol in 2011 were lower than the state median and lower than surrounding towns.

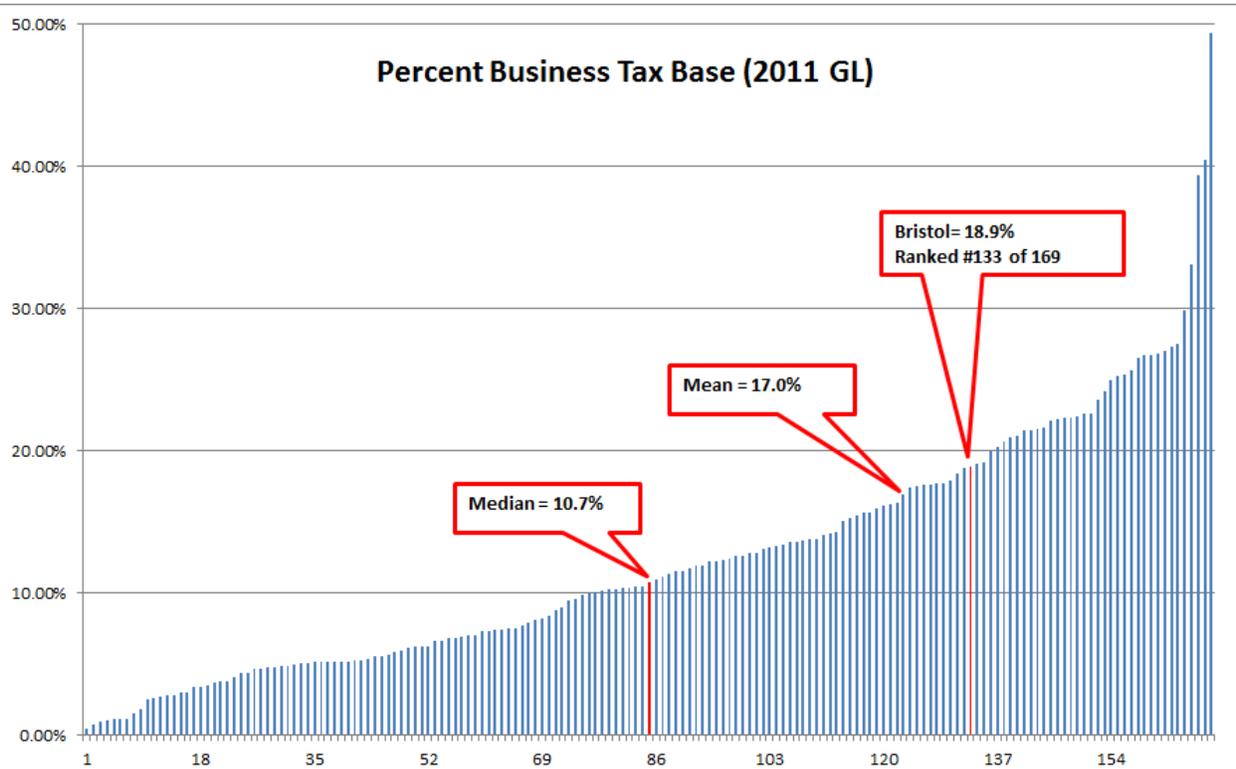
Median Household Income

Burlington	\$114,792
Farmington	\$86,675
Wolcott	\$80,529
Southington	\$77,112
Plymouth	\$74,317
State	\$69,243
Plainville	\$61,489
Bristol	\$60,032

CERC 2014 (date for 2011)

Tax Base

Bristol is very fortunate to have a very strong tax base where local services are supported by tax revenue from local businesses.



Riverside Avenue



Farmington Avenue



Land Use In Bristol

Bristol contains approximately 17,168 acres within the City limits.

A land use evaluation using the Assessor’s database found that about 88 percent of the community (15,164 acres) is occupied for residential, business, industrial or institutional use or was dedicated to a specific purpose such as public land or protected open space. Conversely, about 12 percent of the land in town (2,004 acres) is vacant or uncommitted to a specific use at this time.

Land Use	Area	Acres	Percent
Residential		7,554	44%
Single-Family Residential	6,613		
2-4 Family Residential	553		
Multi-Family / Other	387		
Business		809	5%
Business	763		
Mixed Use	46		
Industrial		1,006	6%
Industrial	999		
Earth Excavation	8		
Community Facilities / Institutions		1,985	12%
Public Institutions	621		
Private Institutions	1,364		
Open Space		2,653	15%
Park / Active Recreation	969		
Passive Open Space / Water Supply	1,101		
Private Open Spaces	583		
Other		1,157	7%
Farm	421		
Miscellaneous Public Land	135		
Transportation / Roads / Utility / Parking	601		
Vacant / Potentially Developable		2,004	12%
CITY OF BRISTOL		17,168	100%

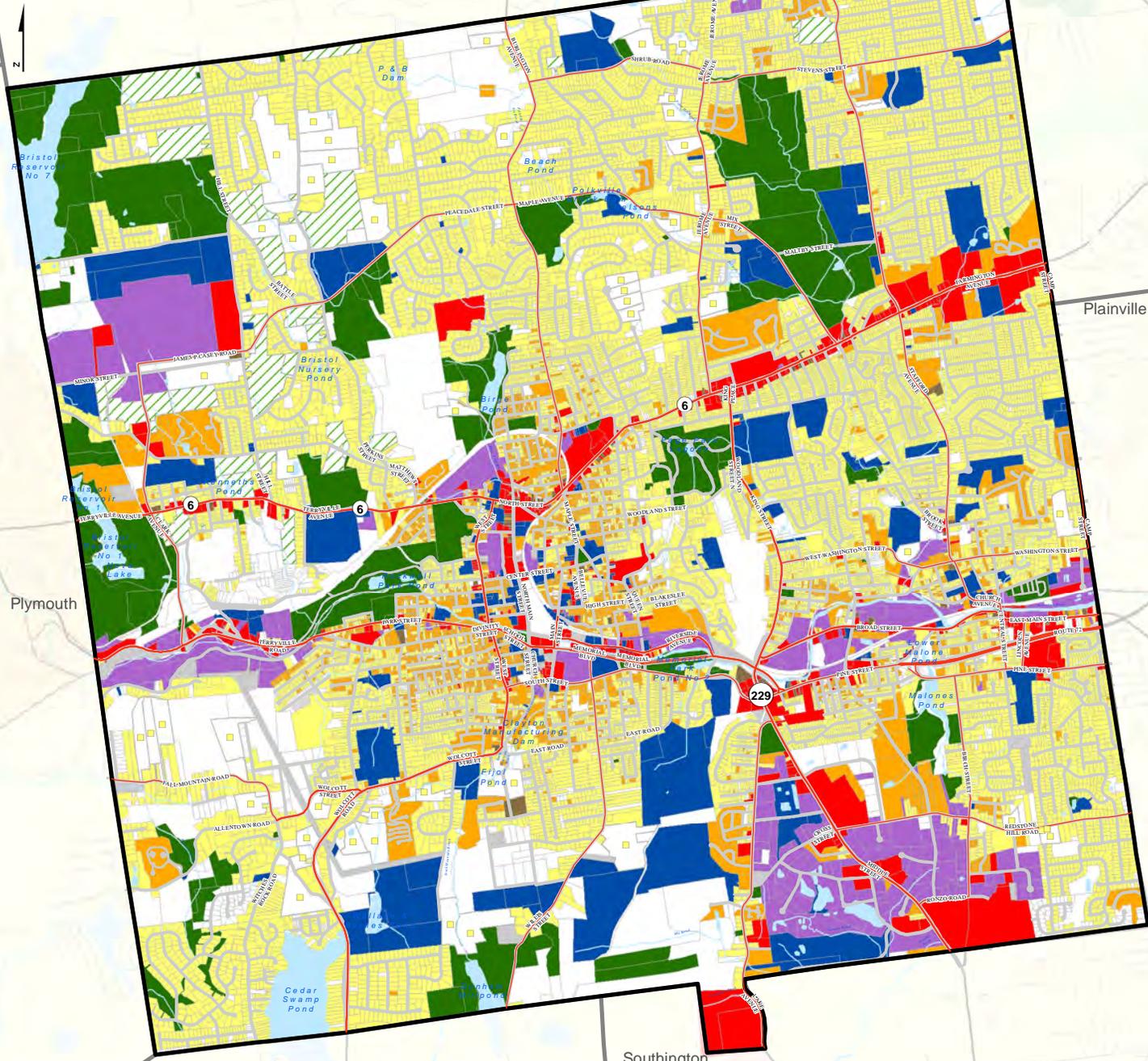
Totals may not add due to rounding.

Preliminary Land Use Map

DRAFT

Bristol, CT

Burlington



Plymouth

Plainville

Wolcott

Southington

Legend

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Single-Family Residential |  Institutional |
|  Other Residential |  Infrastructure |
|  Mixed Use |  Open Space |
|  Business |  Farm |
|  Industrial |  Vacant |

3,000 Feet

Zoning In Bristol

According to the City's geographic information system, about 86 percent of the community is zoned for residential use, about 5 percent is zoned for business use, and the remaining 10 percent was zoned for industrial use. Note that some of these zoned areas include road rights-of way.

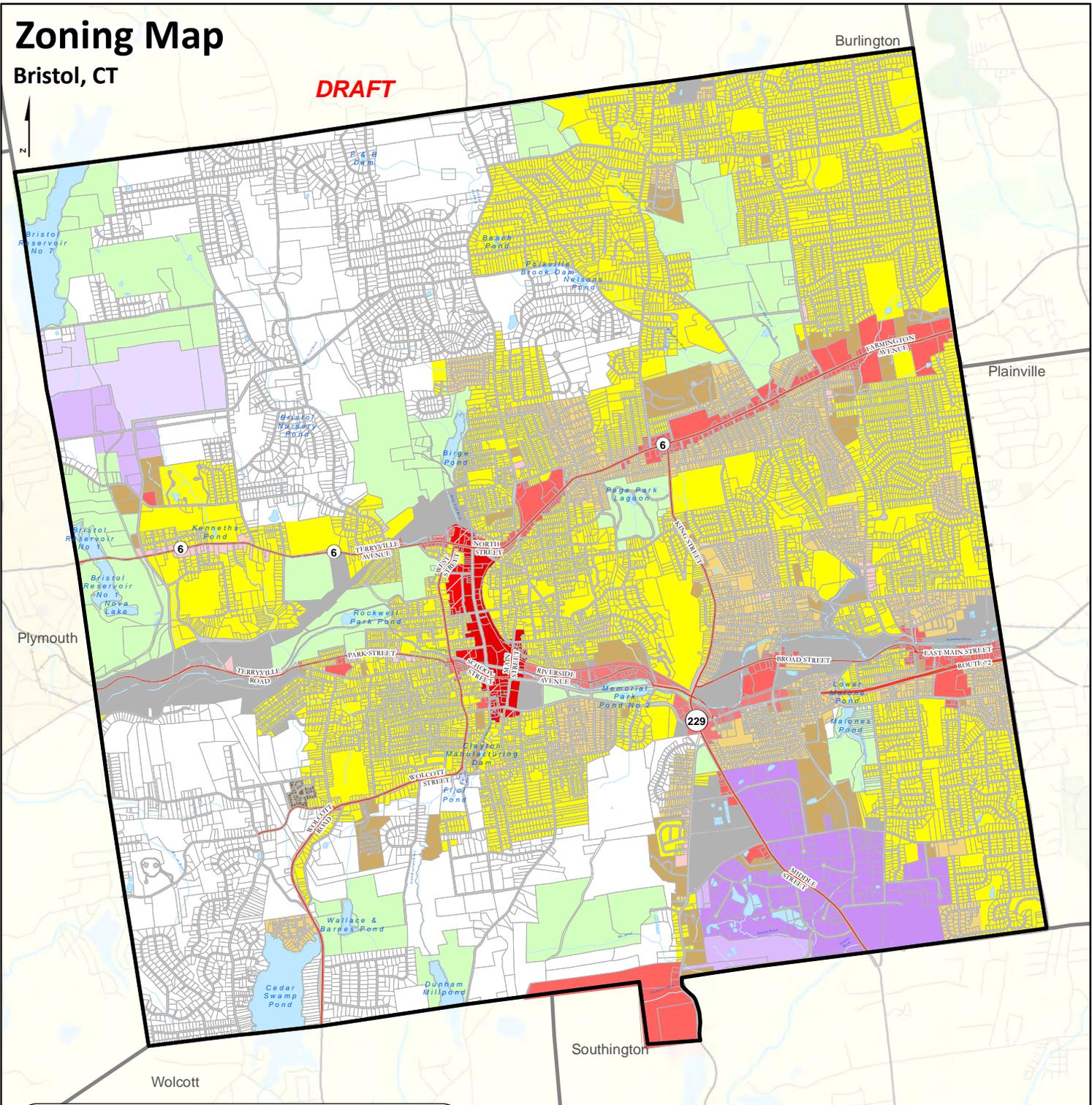
Zone	Area	Acres	Percent
Residential - Single-Family		13,546	79%
R-10 – Single Family	1,204		
R-15 – Single Family	5,237		
R-25 – Single Family	4,662		
R-40 – Single Family	2,051		
R-15/OSD– Single Family – Open Space	41		
R-25/OSD – Single Family – Open Space	182		
R-40/OSD – Single Family – Open Space	169		
Residential - Other		1,131	7%
R-15/BT – Downtown Transition	97		
R-10/RM – Mixed Residential	10		
R-15/RM – Mixed Residential	545		
A – Multi-Family	465		
SDD – Special Development	14		
Business		844	5%
BD-1 – Downtown Business	105		
BD-2 – Downtown Business	43		
BG – General Business	524		
BHC – Highway Commercial (Route 72)	106		
BN – Neighborhood Business	66		
Industrial		1,647	10%
I – Industrial	634		
IP-1 – Industrial Park	584		
IP-3 – Industrial Park	195		
IP-25 – Industrial Park	234		
CITY OF BRISTOL		17,168	100%

Totals may not add due to rounding.

Zoning Map

Bristol, CT

DRAFT



Legend

Residential

- R-40
- R-25
- R-15
- R-10
- A
- SDD

Business

- BN
- BHC
- BG
- BD-1
- BD-2

Industrial

- IP-25
- IP-3
- IP-1
- I

Overlay Zones not shown on this map.
Please see the Official City Zoning Map for the location of the Overlay Zones.

3,000 Feet

