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POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES FOR BRISTOL

Overview

This booklet is intended to promote discussion of possible “development strategies” for Bristol as part of preparing the 2015 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) for the City. Development strategies include looking at how the City might want to guide growth and change in the future in order to enhance the overall community and promote the public health, safety, and welfare. This booklet summarizes “development strategies” from the 2000 POCD and suggests some additional topics for discussion.

“Sustainable development is the pathway to the future we want for all.”

Ban Ki-Noon
Secretary-General
United Nations

Other themes which are being considered as part of the POCD include:

- **Conservation Strategies** - what the City might consider preserving, protecting, or enhancing in order to promote the public health, safety, and welfare (see Booklet #5 on the City’s website).
- **Infrastructure Strategies** – the services and facilities the City might want to have to promote its overall conservation and development goals and promote the public health, safety, and welfare (anticipated to for discussion in October 2014).

Residential Development



Business Development



Institutional Development



Downtown



Forestville



West End



Executive Summary

Possible Housing/ Residential Development Strategies

1. Continue to preserve and enhance the integrity and stability of residential neighborhoods.
2. Promote owner occupancy of housing.
3. Encourage the provision of attractive, decent, safe and sanitary housing to meet the social and economic needs of the city's current and future population.

Possible Business / Economic Development Strategies

4. Maintain and improve the economic base of the city in order to enhance its reputation as a desirable place in which to live, work and raise a family.
5. Promote and manage industrial development.
6. Strive to make efficient use of available areas.
7. Encourage appropriate building and site design.

Possible Institutional Development Strategies

8. Manage institutional development.

Residential



Business Park



Possible Downtown Strategies

- 9. Recognize and promote downtown Bristol as the center of governmental, institutional, commercial and office activity in the city.
- 10. Reinforce the appropriate mix of uses in downtown Bristol.
- 11. Increase cultural, entertainment, and recreational opportunities in downtown Bristol.
- 12. Address parking such that it meets the needs of downtown but does not dominate the overall environment or disrupt the sense of place.
- 13. Promote the establishment of public spaces to enhance downtown.
- 14. Ensure appropriate design of improvements in the downtown area.

Possible Forestville Strategies

- 15. Support and enhance Forestville.

Possible West End Strategies

- 16. Support and enhance the West End.

Possible Route 6 Strategies

- 17. Manage development along Route 6.

Possible Route 72 Strategies

- 18. Manage development along Route 72.

Downtown



Forestville



Possible Housing/ Residential Development Strategies

2000 POCD

Overview (adapted from 2000 POCD)

Housing is an important element of a Plan of Conservation and Development. Most of the land in Bristol is zoned and used for residential development of one type or another. More importantly perhaps, housing provides shelter and meets other needs and desires of residents.

How the community manages residential uses and guides residential development will have a significant impact on the form and function of the community and the quality of life of its current and future residents.

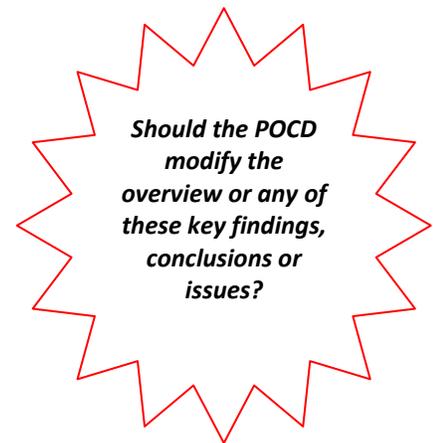
In Bristol's 2000 POCD, housing strategies were included in Chapter 4 – Housing.

There were some housing recommendations included in Chapter 11 – Future Land Use Plan.

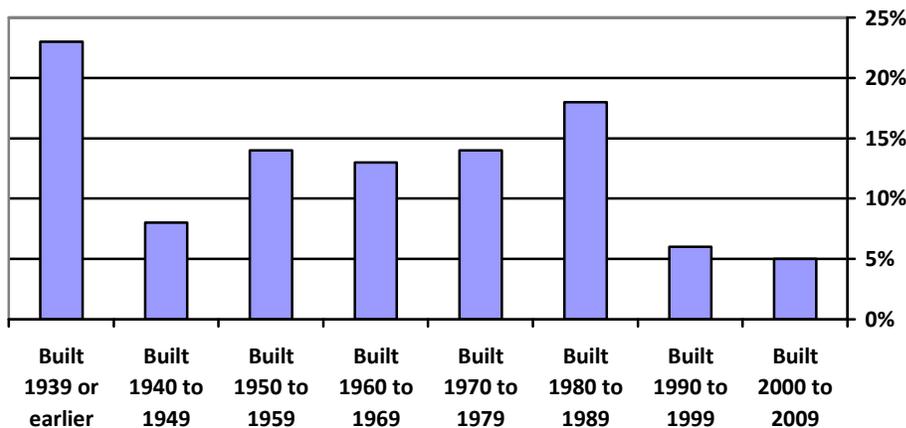
Key Findings, Conclusions and Issues (from 2000 POCD)

Age, Type and Condition of Housing

- The majority of Bristol's housing stock was built before 1970 and almost one-quarter of the housing stock was built before World War II (1939 or earlier).
- Housing production in Bristol has slowed recently compared to prior decades.



Age of Housing Stock, City of Bristol, CT



- As of 2010, about one-third of the occupied housing units in Bristol were renter occupied.
- In some areas with a high percentage of rental units, a lack of maintenance and upkeep, combined with the age of the housing stock, has contributed to deterioration of properties and increased the potential for neighborhood blight and neighborhood destabilization.

Housing And Demographics

- Bristol has historically attracted younger adults (ages 25 to 34) who may be seeking their first apartment or house.
- As the “baby boomers” (people born between about 1945 and about 1965) enter the older age groups, there is an opportunity to attract them to Bristol (or to stay in Bristol) if the right mix of housing and amenities within walking distance can be established to enhance their quality of life.
- As the number of elderly persons continues to grow, provisions for their specific housing needs must be addressed, including housing options for people whose lifespan may outlive their savings.

Housing Cost And Affordability

- According to the Connecticut Economic Resource Center, the median price of a single-family residence in Bristol in 2010 was \$192,500 while the median price in Connecticut was \$246,000.
- As of 2014, approximately 13.5% of Bristol's housing stock was considered affordable (governmentally assisted or available to moderate income households), based upon the definition of "affordable housing" established under Section 8-39a of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Historic Single-Family



Traditional Single-Family



Newer Single-Family



Multi-Family House



Apartment Building



Multi-Family Condominium



GOAL

Continue to preserve and enhance the integrity and stability of residential neighborhoods.

Is this goal appropriate?

Should it be modified?

Policies:

1. Continue to encourage the maintenance and rehabilitation of the existing housing stock, especially in a manner that maintains the architectural integrity of existing structures.
2. Continue to support the use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to support housing rehabilitation for eligible properties.
3. Continue to implement the property maintenance code through the Code Enforcement Committee.
4. Discourage multi-family development (2+ units) within established, stable single-family neighborhoods.
5. Where appropriate in order to encourage neighborhood stabilization or preserve historic buildings, continue to allow conversion of existing buildings to professional office and/or multi-family development in appropriate locations (such as transition areas adjacent to the downtown).
6. Except as indicated above, continue to protect residential neighborhoods from commercial encroachment.
7. Except as indicated above, continue to discourage zoning actions that would allow mixed uses in established residential areas except at the borders and fringes where major streets are located.
8. Consider allowing established residential neighborhoods to maintain the same pattern of development as in the past, even though this might result in lesser setbacks, small lots or multi-family units.

GOAL

Promote owner occupancy of housing.

Is this goal appropriate?

Should it be modified?

Policies:

9. Encourage owner-occupancy of multi-family dwellings, particularly the double- and triple-decker homes prevalent in the city's older neighborhoods.
10. Encourage conversion of existing 2-3 unit buildings to single-family homes if feasible.

GOAL

Encourage the provision of **attractive**, decent, safe and sanitary housing to meet the social and economic needs of the city's **current and future** population.

Is this goal appropriate?

Should it be modified?

Policies:

11. Encourage the diversification of the local housing stock in appropriate locations (such as near services and/or transit) to meet the changing housing needs of current and future residents.
 - Young adults (ages 25 to 35) since Bristol's continued growth and vitality depend in part on the ability of the city to attract and retain younger residents,
 - Families with children (ages 35 to 55),
 - Mature adults (ages 55 to 70 or so) seeking housing with lower maintenance needs and lifestyle amenities nearby, and
 - Senior citizens (ages 70+) who may seek accessory apartments, congregate housing, life-care facilities.
12. To help address current and future housing needs, consider permitting multi-family development of appropriate density and design to be located:
 - in the downtown in mixed use buildings,
 - along major commercial highway corridors, and
 - in other business districts or other suitable locations.
13. Strive to encourage the provision of:
 - affordable housing for the elderly who need it,
 - affordable housing for families and individuals who need it,
 - group homes,
 - emergency shelters,
 - transitional housing, and
 - single-room-occupancy hotels for those individuals with special housing needs.
14. Support the efforts of the Bristol Housing Authority to meet local housing needs and to maintain and upgrade their housing developments.
15. Require that new government-funded or subsidized housing developments be held to the same design standards as privately developed housing.

Recommendations:

16. Consider establishing programs to help young families purchase "starter" housing within the city.
17. Explore available programs of state and federal governments that offer assistance to create or support housing to meet Bristol's housing needs.

The following policies were included in the 2000 POCD, the Planning Commission may wish to revisit these recommendations:

Housing Design

18. Require that parcels for multi-family residential development be of suitable size and configuration to accommodate good site layout and design. Encourage such developments to include garages or covered parking, hidden parking, and recreational facilities. [from FLUP chapter]

Specific Location References

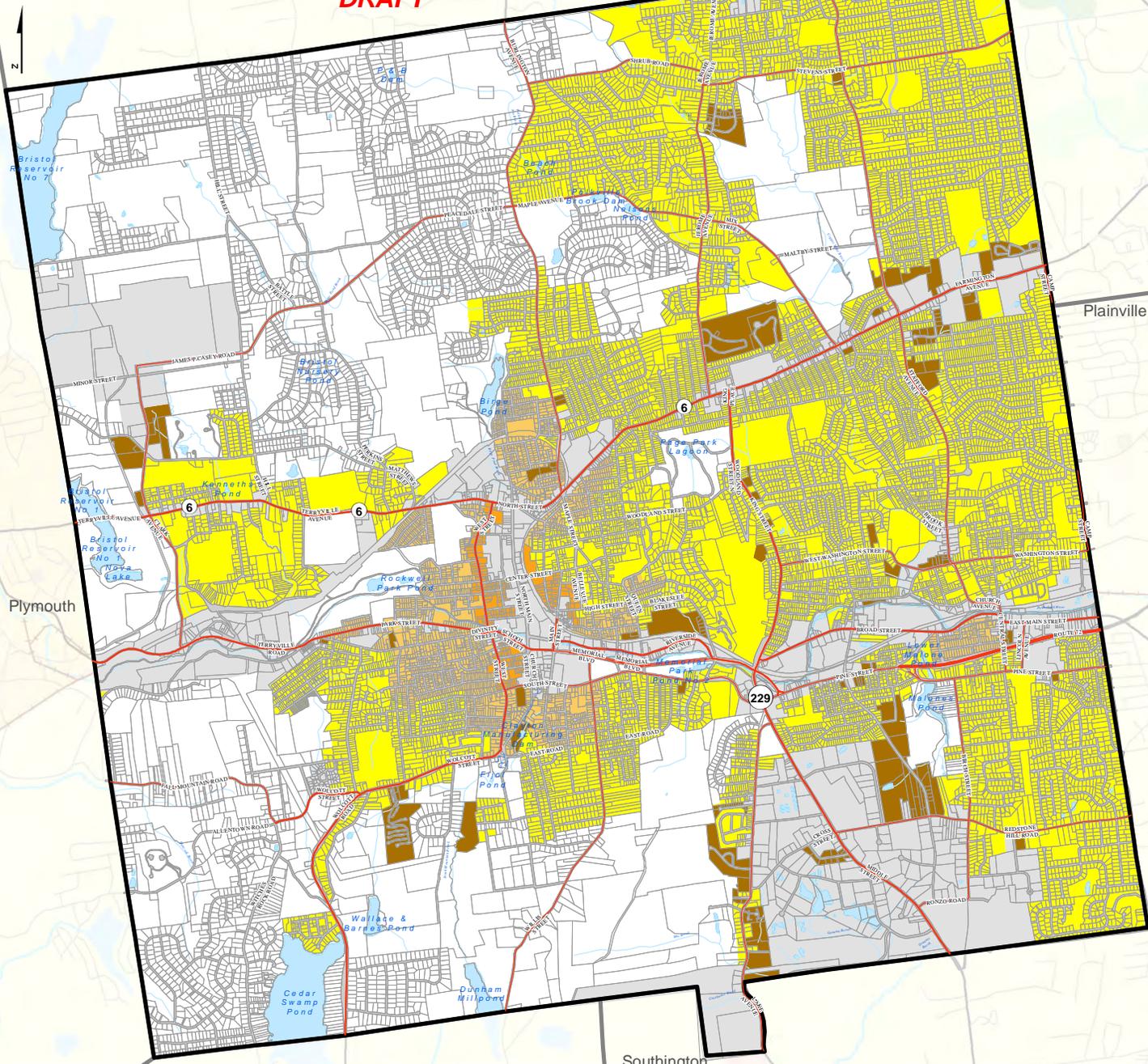
19. Maintain the predominantly single-family residential character along the east side of Route 229 between Lake Avenue and the parcel of land north of Superior Electric. [from FLUP chapter]
20. Maintain the predominantly single-family residential character along Route 6 between Britton Road and Stafford Avenue and between Lewis Street/Oakland Street and Mercier Avenue. [from FLUP chapter]
21. Maintain the predominantly residential character of Route 229 between Broad Street and Route 6. [from FLUP chapter]
22. Rezone the Masonic Temple parcel on the west side of Lake Avenue to allow low-density multi-family residential development. [from FLUP chapter]
23. Rezone the primarily vacant area along the east side of Lake Avenue between Cross Street and the existing multi-family residential development to the south to allow low-density multi-family residential development. Such development would serve as a buffer/transition between the adjacent industrial development to the east and the single-family residential development to the west. [from FLUP chapter]
24. Maintain the existing single-family residential zoning on the west side of Lake Avenue between Glenn Street and Lake Compounce Park, reflective of the insufficient parcel depth – due to the proximity of the base of South Mountain – needed to accommodate multi-family residential development. [from FLUP chapter]

Residential Densities Map

Bristol, CT

DRAFT

Burlington



Plymouth

Plainville

Wolcott

Southington

Legend

- Single Family - Densities up to 1.6 Units per Acre or Less
- Single Family - Densities up to 4.0 Units per Acre
- RM - 2+ Family Residential - Densities of 7.3 to 18.7 Units per Acre
- BT - 2+ Family Residential - Densities of 8.0 to 42.0 Units per Acre
- A - Multi_Family Residential - Densities of 8.0 to 12.0 Units per Acre
- Non-Residential

3,000

Feet

Possible Business / Economic Development Strategies

2000 POCD

Overview (adapted from 2000 POCD)

The economic health of Bristol depends to some extent upon our ability to attract, “grow” and retain business and industry. Commercial, industrial and office developments generate considerable revenues from taxes and fees, provide jobs for residents of the community and the region, and often require fewer public services than residential development. Among the factors that typically influence the location of business and industry are housing and transportation costs, the availability of a suitable labor force, land prices, taxes and even local quality of life (e.g., the quality of a community’s schools and the availability of cultural and recreational resources).

This chapter summarizes the key features of Bristol’s economic base and labor force, their relationship to the region, and the nature and direction of future economic development efforts in the city.

In Bristol’s 2000 POCD, Chapter 7 was devoted to economic development.

There were also some economic development recommendations included in Chapter 11 – Future Land Use Plan.

Key Findings, Conclusions and Issues (from 2000 POCD)

Economic Diversification

- As the regional, national, and world economies evolve, it will be in Bristol’s long-term interests to diversify its local economy in order to be resilient at weathering economic cycles.
- The city’s advantages lie with its strong work ethic, growing educational and occupational attainment, quality of life as a place to live, and ability to attract and retain skilled white-collar workers.
- Bristol is very fortunate to host ESPN since it comprises in excess of eight percent of the total tax base in the community.

Should the POCD modify the overview or any of these key findings, conclusions or issues?

Office / Technology



Industry



Retail / Service



Market Dynamics -- Office / Technology

- Bristol can be an attractive location for office uses due to its labor pool, rental rates, and business “clusters” already located here (such as ESPN).
- At the same time, Bristol will compete for major office development with communities that have direct access to an interstate highway and/or are located closer to Hartford and other major cities.
- Office demand is also generated locally by law firms, accountants and other professionals.

Market Dynamics - Industry

- Bristol contains a number of smaller manufacturing enterprises and has ample land zoned for industrial growth with utility services to meet the needs of current and future industrial users.
- Some of the industrial properties in the city have been affected by historical operations and some sites (often referred to as “brownfields”) may require environmental cleanup and remediation.
- The Bristol Development Authority advises property owners on environmental cleanup and remediation efforts and has established the Bristol Property Renewal Corporation to assist, when appropriate.

Market Dynamics -- Retail / Service

- There is a significant retail shift going on where some goods are being purchased “on line” rather than in “bricks and mortar” locations.
- The key difference may be that “bricks and mortar” locations offer immediacy, contact with the goods” and the overall “shopping experience” while on-line sales can offer price comparison and convenience.
- Since local spending supports local businesses, where and how Bristol residents spend their disposable income will have significant influence on the configuration of the retail environment in Bristol in the future.
- Since there is a fixed amount of disposable income to be spent by residents, new retail businesses run the risk of replacing established businesses unless new “spending power” (more people or more disposable income) is created.
- Since it is unclear exactly how this will resolve itself, Bristol should consider seeking ways to be resilient as the retail market evolves.

GOAL

Maintain and improve the economic base of the city in order to enhance its reputation as a desirable place in which to live, work and raise a family.

Is this goal appropriate?

Should it be modified?

Policies:

1. Encourage a stable, diversified economic environment which provides:
 - Employment for residents and workers,
 - Goods and services for residents and visitors, and
 - A strong tax base.
2. Seek to maintain Bristol as a regional center of employment and commercial activity.
3. Encourage the retention and expansion of existing business and industry in the city.
4. Encourage the attraction of new business and industry to suitable locations in the city in order to expand the city's tax base and employment opportunities.
5. Encourage the growth of the technology sectors of the local economy and seek to make this an "economic cluster" unique to Bristol.
6. Continue to work with ESPN to encourage and promote their operations in Bristol.
7. Encourage the inclusion of small businesses, arts and crafts, and cottage industry trades as part of the local economy.
8. Encourage the installation of a city-wide "information infrastructure" to stimulate economic and community development.
9. Coordinate efforts of the Bristol Development Authority, the Downtown Development Corporation, the Chamber of Commerce and others to promote appropriate development.
10. Continue to use economic development incentives (such as the Enterprise Zone program) to attract and support eligible businesses.

Industrial Park (Southeast)



Industrial Park (Northwest)



GOAL

Promote and manage industrial development.

Policies:

11. Continue to support industrial operations in the City.
12. Recognize the southeast section of the city along the Route 229 corridor as Bristol's major industrial area.
13. Undertake a review of the rationale and standards for the three Industrial Park districts to ensure that the zone locations and dimensional standards are appropriate and reasonable.

Is this goal appropriate?

Should it be modified?

GOAL

Strive to make efficient use of available areas.

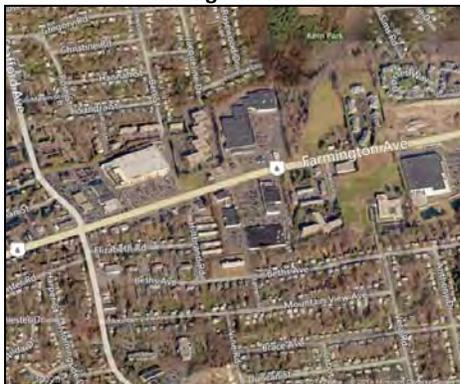
Policies:

14. Continue to support environmental cleanup, remediation, and redevelopment of "brownfield" sites.
15. Prohibit business expansion onto residential side streets.
16. Protect industrial land from residential and commercial encroachment.
17. Where appropriate, encourage the adaptive re-use of older industrial buildings.
18. Undertake a review of parking standards to ensure that the requirements do not place Bristol at a disadvantage for development and do not require more site area for parking than is needed.

Is this goal appropriate?

Should it be modified?

Farmington Avenue



Pine Street and Broad Street



GOAL

Encourage appropriate building and site design.

Is this goal appropriate?

Should it be modified?

Recommendations:

19. Consider establishing a design review process to ensure that business development enhances the overall character of the community.
20. Improve the overall appearance and safety of the city's business areas through the use of graphic symbols, the planting of trees, the installation of sidewalks and street furniture, the regulation of signage and the provision of other functional and aesthetic improvements that make these areas more desirable for pedestrians and shoppers.
21. Improve the gateway entrances into the city.
22. Continue to regulate the size and number of new signs.
23. Consider allowing expansion or modification non-conforming uses and/or buildings through a special permit process provided that there is a significant and identifiable community benefit (such as improvements to the site's landscaping, signage, access, parking, lighting and/or design).

Farmington Avenue



Riverside Avenue



The following policies were included in the 2000 POCD, the Planning Commission may wish to revisit these recommendations:

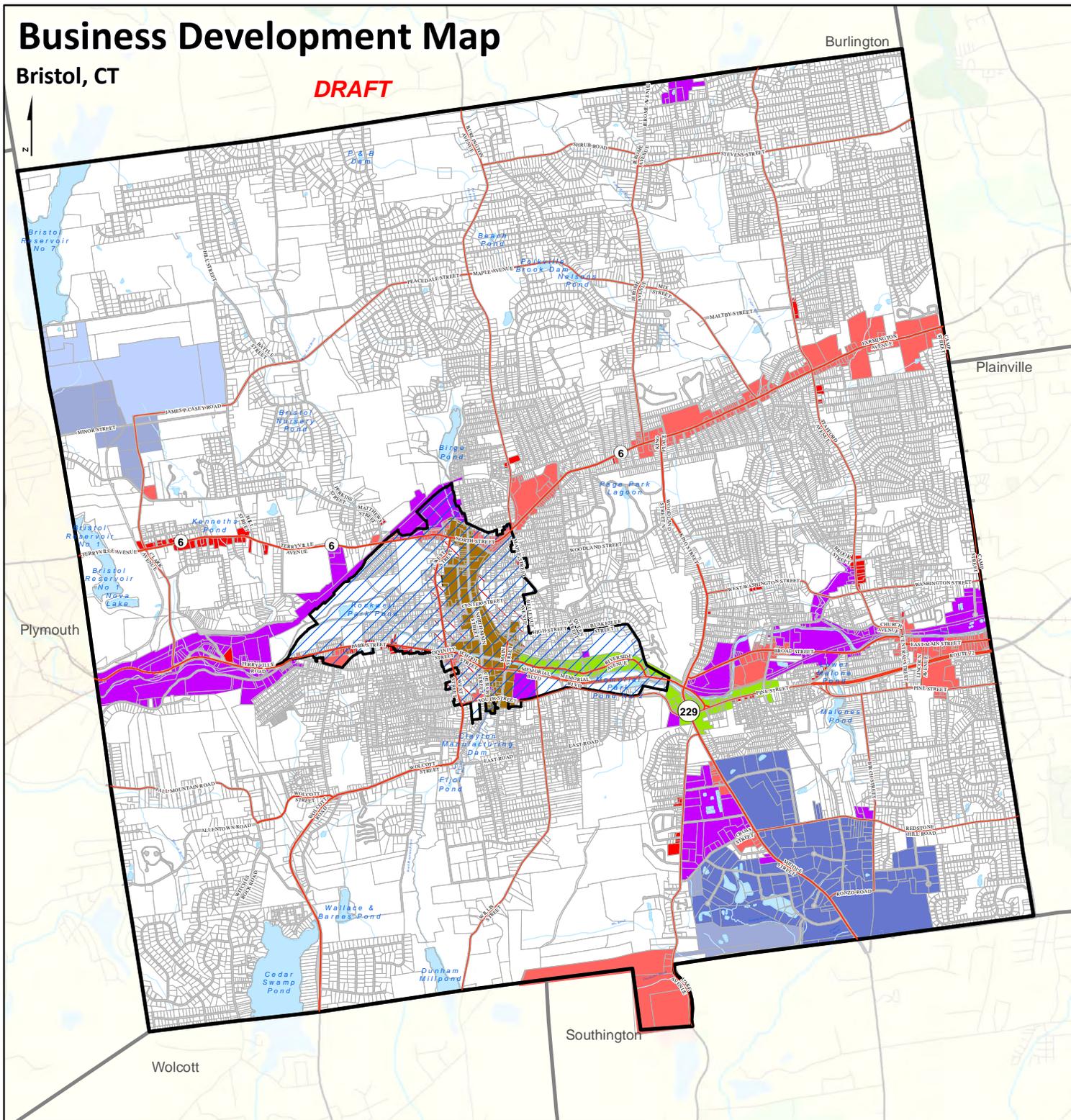
Specific Locations

24. Establish a small, neighborhood-oriented shopping area in the northwest and southwest sections of the city to serve the daily shopping and service needs of these growing residential areas.
25. Limit development along each side of Route 229 between Battisto Road and the Bristol-Southington line to high-quality, low-traffic-generating uses, primarily of an industrial/office nature rather than a retail/commercial nature. Limit future retail/commercial development along this portion of the corridor to those properties that are currently zoned for business. [from FLUP chapter]
26. Limit future retail/commercial development along the Route 6 corridor to those properties that are currently zoned for business and that front on Route 6. [from FLUP chapter]
27. Limit future retail/commercial development along the Route 6 corridor between West Street and the Bristol-Plymouth line to neighborhood-oriented facilities on properties that are currently zoned for business. [from FLUP chapter]
28. Evaluate proposed developments along the Route 6 corridor in terms of their potential impacts (positive or negative) on revitalization efforts in downtown Bristol. [from FLUP chapter]
29. Maintain the mixed-use character of Route 229 between Broad Street and Pine Street. [from FLUP chapter]

Business Development Map

Bristol, CT

DRAFT



Legend

Business

- General Business
- Neighborhood Business
- Downtown Business
- Downtown/Neighborhood Transition
- Route 72 Corridor

Industrial

- General Industrial
- Industrial Park 1
- Industrial Park 3
- Industrial Park 25
- Enterprise Zone

3,000

Feet

Possible Institutional Development Strategies

2000 POCD

Overview

Institutional uses (such as churches, private schools, hospitals, private clubs, and similar uses) are often community assets and can help enhance the overall quality of life in a community. However, in certain situations, such uses or the way they are operated can also detract from a community.

One of the challenges of a POCD is to find appropriate locations for such uses and to maintain an appropriate balance with surrounding uses,

Bristol's 2000 POCD did not really address any issue related to Institutional Development.

The Planning Commission should discuss whether a POCD section on institutional development would be of benefit

Key Findings, Conclusions and Issues

- Lake Compounce – Lake Compounce is America's oldest continuously operating amusement park and has been part of Bristol since 1846. Although a private business enterprise, it has been an "institution" in the community and the region for generations.
- Bristol Hospital - Bristol Hospital, part of the community since 1921, is a significant community asset. The hospital serves people who live and work in the Bristol area and provides a substantial locational advantage that many other places do not have. Since the Hospital is in a residential neighborhood, finding the appropriate balance between the 24-hour per day operations of the hospital, its ability to adapt to the changing medical environment, and the impacts on the neighborhood is important. Managing the impacts of the hospital while supporting its overall mission could be a consideration in the POCD.
- Religious Facilities – Bristol has religious facilities to serve many faiths. Most of these are located in residential neighborhoods where they have been an important part of the community for many years. However, churches can have negative impacts when principal or accessory activities regularly spill over into adjacent areas, parking or traffic overwhelm normally quiet neighborhoods, or even when churches occupy business facilities. Even though religious land uses have some special provisions under federal law, ensuring that such facilities and any accessory activities are appropriate for the proposed location is important to maintaining an appropriate balance. Managing the impacts of religious facilities could be a consideration in the POCD.
- Social Service Facilities – Some social service facilities can affect adjacent uses or detract from an area. While the jurisdiction of such facilities may be outside of local control, managing the impacts of such uses could be a consideration in the POCD.



- Educational Institutions – Public, private, and parochial schools can enhance the overall quality of life in a community. Magnet school can also be included in this category as can the Vo-Ag and Vo-Tech schools. Attracting and supporting such uses could enhance the overall community. Managing the impacts of such uses could be a consideration in the POCD.
- Private Clubs – Private clubs (such as the Boys and Girls Club) can also enhance the community. Attracting and supporting such uses could enhance the overall community. Managing the impacts of such uses could be a consideration in the POCD.
- Court Facilities – Court facilities can enhance the stature of a community but they can also result in external impacts on adjacent areas. While the jurisdiction of such facilities may be outside of local control, managing the impacts of such uses could be a consideration in the POCD.
- State / Federal Facilities – State and/or federal facilities can enhance the stature of a community but they can also result in external impacts on adjacent areas. While the jurisdiction of such facilities may be outside of local control, managing the impacts of such uses could be a consideration in the POCD.

GOAL

Manage institutional development.

Is this goal appropriate?

Should it be modified?

Policies:

1. Consider ways to encourage and support Lake Compounce.
2. Consider ways to support the overall mission of Bristol Hospital and evolution of their campus while balancing its impacts on adjacent areas (traffic, parking, building expansion, buffers, etc.).
3. Consider ways to support the overall mission of other institutional uses while balancing their impacts on adjacent areas.
4. Seek to attract educational, cultural, arts, entertainment and other institutions to Bristol while considering their potential impacts on adjacent areas.

Possible Downtown Strategies

2000 POCD

Overview (adapted from 2000 POCD)

In Bristol's 2000 POCD, the downtown area was addressed in Chapter 10 – Downtown.

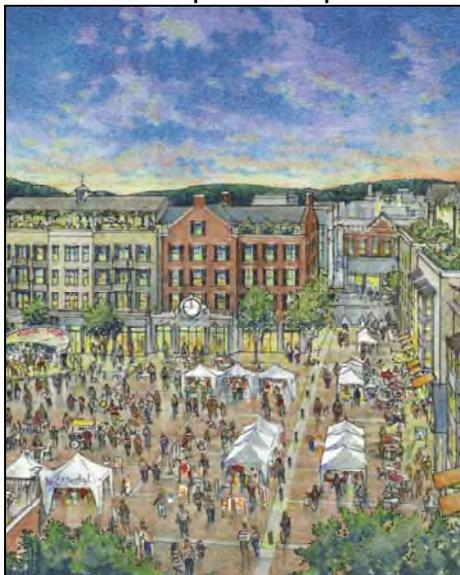
For many years, what we now know as downtown Bristol was a self-sufficient place where local industry employed people who walked from surrounding neighborhoods. Even with the arrival of the railroad, and later the trolley, Bristol was still an enclave which largely supported itself. The automobile changed that. With the mobility of the automobile and changing consumer preferences, Bristol residents increasingly travelled to other places to live and shop and play.

Since the 1950s, downtown Bristol has undergone a series of sweeping changes that have dramatically altered its physical form. Following the 1955 floods, the City embarked on a program of "urban renewal" where large parts of downtown were razed and a suburban-style indoor shopping mall and a supermarket were constructed. When the mall ceased operations, the City and the State began discussing ways to promote the resurgence of downtown Bristol. In anticipation of a partnership with the State, the City went ahead and acquired the 17-acre parcel. When the State changed course, the City still owned the property.

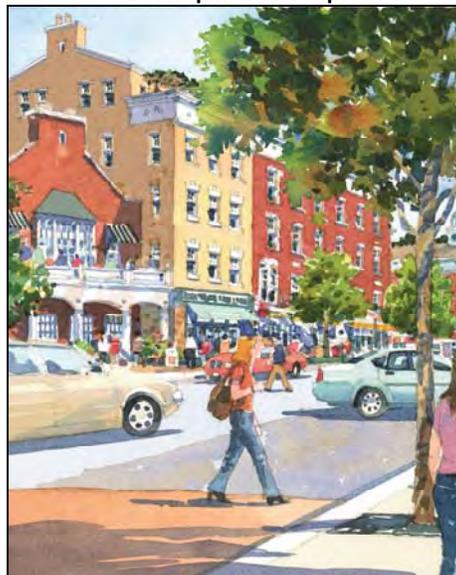
The City established the Bristol Downtown Development Corporation and a process began to solicit a preferred developer for the property. The selected developer negotiated a development framework with the City and began a design and community engagement process. That process resulted in a preliminary development plan which was embraced by City officials and residents.

Should the POCD modify the overview or any of these key findings, conclusions or issues?

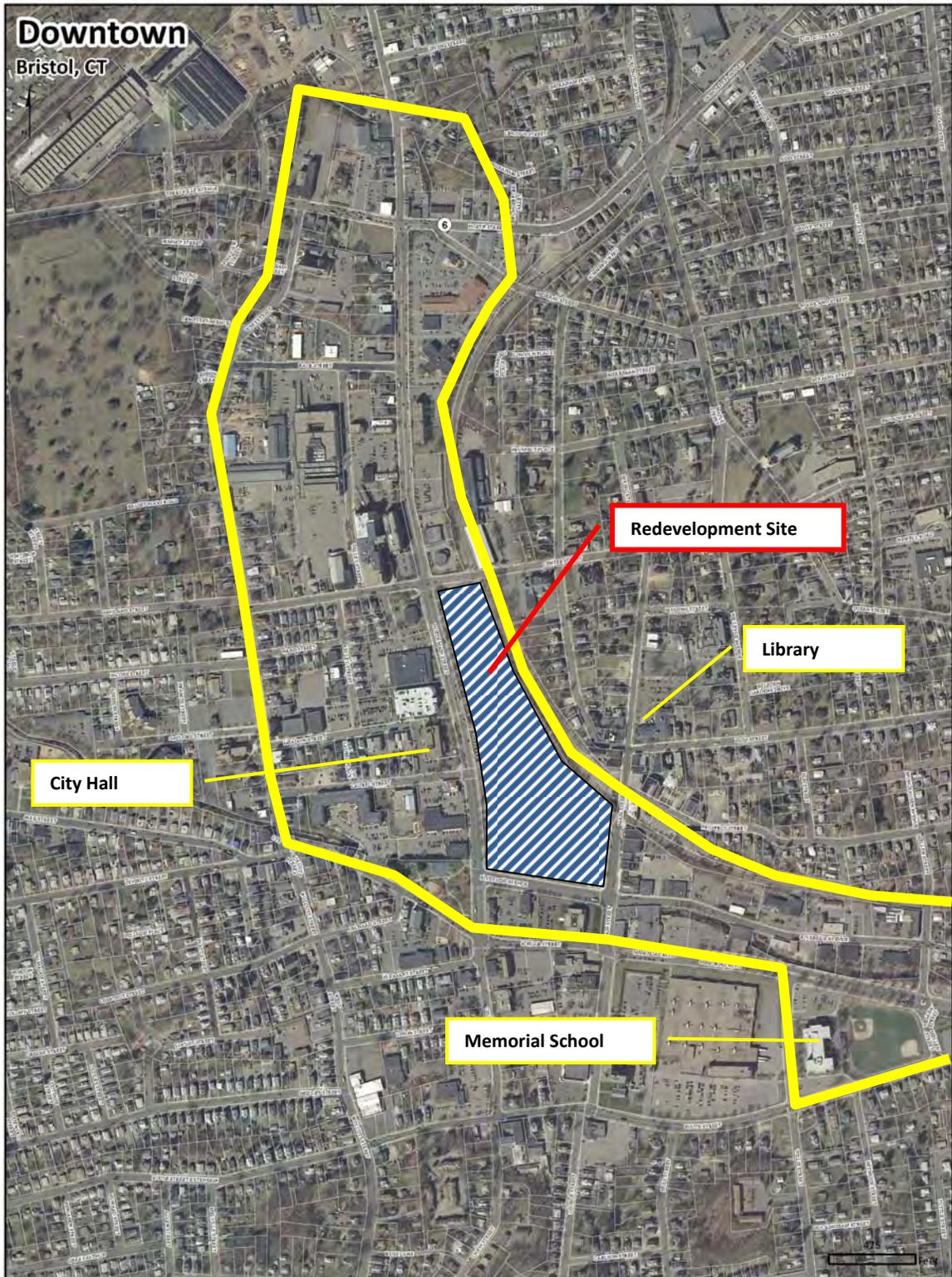
Development Concept



Development Concept



Downtown Bristol



Then, in 2014, the preferred developer indicated that market financing was difficult to obtain given the overall economic situation at the time, the scale and innovative nature of the proposed development, and the fact that market comparables were not available to evaluate the overall risk. The developer requested the City consider assisting with the financing of the proposed development otherwise the developer might not be able to conform to the original schedule. Discussions about how to proceed were continuing at the time this POCD was being prepared.

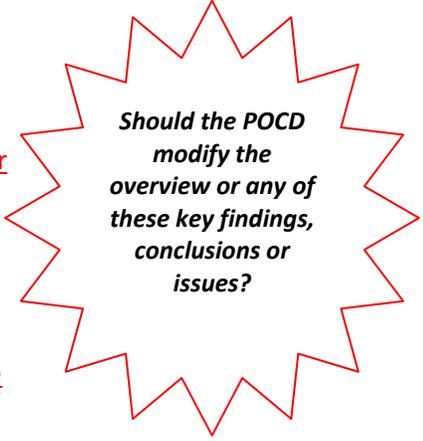
A key issue for this Plan of Conservation and Development is to guide the future uses and activities in the downtown area in order to enhance its relevance and function within the city.

As with the prior POCD, the aim of this chapter is not to select a specific scheme or concept for the downtown. Rather it is intended to set forth a broad range of planning, economic, transportation and design objectives and recommendations that can serve as the foundation for the future.



Key Findings, Conclusions and Issues (adapted from 2000 POCD)

- **Foundations for the Future** - Downtown Bristol possesses a number of strengths that provide a foundation for future revitalization:
 - A mix of land uses which complement each other and provide a basic framework to build upon,
 - Government and civic facilities (such as City Hall, the Post Office, and the Bristol Public Library) which provide an established draw for residents, workers, and businesses,
 - Historically and architecturally significant buildings and areas which set the scale, character, and tone for development within the downtown area, and
 - Adjacent residential neighborhoods (such as Federal Hill, the South End, and the West End) provide opportunities for residents of these areas to walk to the downtown area and enjoy the mix of activities which occur there.
- **Critical Mass** - If downtown is to realize its potential, it will need to establish a critical mass of activity and overcome the existing low intensity of development (low, freestanding buildings set within large surface parking lots.
- **Mix of Uses** - If downtown is to realize its potential, it will need to establish a diverse but complementary mix of uses including shops, services, restaurants, offices, residences, entertainment facilities, cultural attractions, recreational facilities, and other uses.
- **Unique Attractions** - If downtown is to realize its potential, it will need to establish a critical mass of special attractions such as cultural attractions, restaurants, entertainment, and/ or recreation uses that will help make downtown a unique and inviting place.
- **Pedestrian Orientation** - If downtown is to realize its potential, it will need to have a pedestrian orientation rather than the automobile orientation epitomized by the wide configuration of North Main Street, proliferation of driveways, and expanses of parking which discourage pedestrian activity. Downtown will need to have a continuous, attractive pedestrian network a “city block” configuration which provides frontage and visibility for a variety of uses and encourages pedestrian exploration.
- **Gathering Space** - If downtown is to realize its potential, it will need to have an identifiable focal point – a major public space - or special place that will be used for special events, festivals or open-air displays and performances and establish the downtown as a gathering place and focal point for the entire community.



*Should the POCD
modify the
overview or any of
these key findings,
conclusions or
issues?*

- **Sense of Place** - If downtown is to realize its potential, all activities and uses will need to contribute to creating an experience and a “*sense of place*” that will attract people to live here, work here, shop here, and/or frequent this area on a regular basis.
- **Streetscape Improvements** – The design of public improvements (such as sidewalks, light poles, light fixtures, street trees, benches, banners, planters, trash receptacles, bicycle racks, crosswalks and other elements) are important to creating and maintaining the sense of place. Public amenities must have a human-scale quality and be coordinated with one another in order to foster a harmonious physical environment. One of the most effective short-term approaches to making the downtown attractive is to invest in the physical environment, such as landscaping and other pedestrian amenities.
- **Appropriate Scale** - If downtown is to realize its potential, it will need to develop at an appropriate scale which recognizes and is supportive of the context in which it occurs, i.e., within an urban center and not in a suburban mall or along a highway corridor. To create a downtown identity, individual parcels must be developed (or re-developed) with sensitivity to the larger, urban context. Design guidelines and implementation techniques can ensure that individual buildings and sites are appropriately integrated into the larger urban environment.
- **Appropriate Building Character** - If downtown is to realize its potential, it will need to ensure that every new building exhibits the architectural character which is important to setting the tone for a pedestrian friendly place and that site designs favor the pedestrian rather than the automobile.
- **Appropriate Programming** - If downtown is to realize its potential, there will need to be a person or organization responsible for programming of events which complement and support physical improvements in the downtown and the public and private uses. These activities will help to revive and support the public’s interest in participating in downtown activities.
- **Investment Philosophy** – It will take some time to realize the potential of downtown Bristol and the public and private expenditures necessary for downtown revitalization should be viewed as investments in the future of the entire City of Bristol.

GOAL

Recognize and promote downtown Bristol as the center of governmental, institutional, commercial and office activity in the city.

Policies:

1. Promote a concentration and diversity of uses in and around downtown Bristol. The pattern and scale of development should contribute to and reinforce the relative compactness of the area.
2. Give careful attention to the future development of the downtown and enhance and emphasize its value as a unique and efficient place for shopping, entertainment, cultural activities and the conduct of business.
3. Encourage the adaptive reuse of existing vacant buildings and the redevelopment of underutilized sites.
4. Encourage mixed-use development in the downtown.
5. Provide for enhanced pedestrian accessibility throughout the downtown.
6. Promote quality of design in new downtown development and redevelopment projects.
7. Support downtown development with the establishment of consumer amenities. A program of improvements to make the area more desirable for pedestrians and shoppers should include convenient parking, attractive landscaping and pedestrian "furniture."
8. Reduce the dependence upon off-street surface parking in the downtown; encourage the provision of parking structures, both private and municipal, to satisfy future off-street parking needs.
9. Encourage intensive downtown development suitable for a city of Bristol's size; discourage low-intensity development that could be accommodated in other business zones outside the downtown.
10. Recognize the need to attract tourists, visitors and shoppers to downtown Bristol from outside the region.
11. Encourage the establishment of a multi-modal transportation center in downtown Bristol.
12. Reconstruct sidewalks and provide better lighting in the residential neighborhoods adjacent to downtown Bristol in order to encourage greater pedestrian movement between these areas and the downtown.

Is this goal appropriate?

Should it be modified?

Are these policies and recommendations appropriate?

Should they be further modified?

GOAL

Reinforce the appropriate mix of uses in downtown Bristol.

Policies:

13. Maintain mixed-use zoning and reinforce the relationship between the downtown and the surrounding residential neighborhoods.
14. Limit the types of new retail uses in other areas of Bristol in order to encourage destination retail uses in the downtown.
15. Encourage so-called “back office” uses within the downtown, especially in older industrial buildings.
16. Investigate non-industrial alternatives for the re-use of older industrial buildings in the downtown (e.g., artists’ lofts; retail stores and restaurants; museums; offices of non-profit, civic and community organizations).
17. Encourage the provision of new housing units at appropriate locations in downtown Bristol.
18. Encourage additional residential development in surrounding residential neighborhoods.
19. Encourage more food establishments, especially higher and mid-range quality restaurants.

Is this goal appropriate?

Should it be modified?

GOAL

Increase cultural, entertainment, and recreational opportunities in downtown Bristol.

Policies:

20. Encourage organizations and community groups to provide cultural, entertainment, and recreational events.
21. Encourage the development of facilities that can also serve as a performance space or public plaza.
22. Support more events that focus on the downtown, such as a “Main Street Festival” organized around turn-of-the century Bristol or an “Industrial Heritage Day” focusing on Bristol’s legacy as one of the nation’s manufacturing centers.
23. Encourage city-sponsored special market days, such as farmers’ markets, flower markets, and antique markets.

Is this goal appropriate?

Should it be modified?

GOAL

Address parking such that it meets the needs of downtown but does not dominate the overall environment or disrupt the sense of place.

Is this goal appropriate?

Should it be modified?

Policies:

24. Place parking lots behind buildings to establish/maintain “street walls” along major downtown streets.
25. Consider ways to allow on-street parking to be provided by developers and to count towards their parking requirements.
26. Encourage shared parking arrangements among owners of adjoining properties.
27. Where parking areas are visible from the street or sidewalk, soften the visual impact of parking lots through the use of street trees, landscape islands within parking areas, and low-level planting along their edges.
28. Use structured parking in order to reduce the amount of parcel area devoted to surface parking lots. Structured parking can also shorten walking distances to building entries.
29. Use the “fee in lieu of parking requirements” provision of the Connecticut General Statutes (Section 8-2c).

GOAL

Promote the establishment of public spaces to enhance downtown.

Is this goal appropriate?

Should it be modified?

Policies:

30. Seek to establish a central public space within the downtown anchored with a significant design element such as a plaza, fountain, or sculpture.
31. Seek to include an adjacent or integrated outdoor amphitheater for outdoor performances, markets, festivals and other special events.
32. Seek to establish additional public spaces designed to meet a variety of recreational, entertainment and visual needs and provide areas for shoppers, office workers and visitors to relax, gather and socialize that are easily accessible, safe and attractive.

GOAL

Ensure appropriate design of improvements in the downtown area.

Is this goal appropriate?

Should it be modified?

Policies:

33. Seek to establish “gateway elements” at strategic entries to the downtown to help define and reinforce the downtown’s identity.
34. Consider creating a design review process and/or design guidelines to help ensure the long term integration of new development with the desired character of the downtown.
35. Establish and implement landscaping guidelines for:
 - street tree plantings (to create a uniform and harmonious approach to downtown streets),
 - hedges to screen surface parking lots,
 - landscaping at the entryways of buildings and developments, and
 - special plantings, where appropriate.
36. Establish and implement signage guidelines to heighten the visual interest and appeal of the downtown and contribute to the creation of a livelier, more enjoyable urban environment.

Time and Money

For a number of years, local residents, business owners and governmental and civic leaders have expressed interest in the future of downtown Bristol. During this period, it has become apparent that, in order to achieve lasting success, transforming the goal of downtown revitalization into bricks-and-mortar reality will be a long-term, incremental process that involves an equally long-term commitment by both the public and private sectors of the community.

Like urban renewal in the 1960s, reshaping the face of downtown Bristol will likely require an infusion and expenditure of public funds. It may also require the municipal exercise of appropriate development and design controls, as well as the provision by city government of an array of public services, both traditional (e.g., police and fire protection) and non-traditional (e.g., streetscape improvements).

In other words, efforts at downtown revitalization will inevitably necessitate the formation of partnerships – financial and otherwise – between the public sector (i.e., government) and the private sector (i.e. - developers, property owners, and the downtown business community).

Long Term Management

Ensuring the long-term success of downtown will involve an on-going relationship between the public sector and the private sector. The mission of such a relationship would be to improve, maintain and promote the downtown. This situation is not unique to Bristol and, in fact, the State of Connecticut has established a process whereby a community can establish a “special services district” (SSD) to facilitate this. The enabling legislation is codified in Section § 7-339m et seq. of the Connecticut General Statutes.

At least 13 Connecticut communities have established SSDs and use them for downtowns and other special areas to provide services such as business promotion, common area maintenance or parking. A special services district (also known as a “business improvement district”) cannot be established without the approval of a majority of the property owners.

Typically comprised of downtown property owners and merchants, local officials and other civic leaders, these organizations involve themselves in such activities as business attraction and retention efforts, promotion and marketing, crime prevention and security, sponsorship of special events and activities, and beautification and streetscape improvement programs. In addition, they often act as the official liaison between downtown businesses and the local government.

Possible Initial Phase(s) Of Development



Possible Forestville Strategies

2000 POCD

Overview

Forestville is a secondary center in Bristol located east of the downtown area along the Pequabuck River. Forestville grew into a village as a result of the industry located here and the establishment of a train station in the late 1800s.

Bristol's 2000 POCD contained a few recommendations relative to Forestville (in the Future Land Use chapter).

Key Findings, Conclusions and Issues

- The Forestville area was heavily impacted by the 1955 flood and one of the "improvements" after the flood was to eliminate the on-street parking which had supported many of the local businesses.
- When the Interstate Highway System was built, the Route 72 extension ended just east of Bristol and all of the traffic was let off onto East Main Street and into the center of Forestville where the heavy traffic volumes detracted from the character of this area.
- With the extension of Route 72, the traffic in the Forestville area has eased and now there are opportunities to enhance the overall form and function of this area.
- The Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency in collaboration with the University of Connecticut conducted a study of Forestville in order to investigate the new opportunities resulting from recent traffic changes.

Forestville – Past



Forestville - Present



GOAL

Support and enhance Forestville.

Is this goal appropriate?

Should it be modified?

Policies:

1. Support rethinking of the street arrangement from an “east-west” orientation to a “north-south” orientation.
2. Encourage the establishment of “infill buildings” to reinforce the streetscape by creating and supporting “terminal vistas” and “street walls”.
3. Seek to “square up” the intersections to better guide the more modest traffic flows in this area and to reinforce a pedestrian focus.
4. Consolidate parking areas to the extent possible and share parking among different uses.
5. Seek to narrow lane widths where possible along the roadway to provide for wider sidewalks, on-street parking, bicycle lanes and other amenities.
6. Seek funding to enhance the sidewalks and pedestrian areas.
7. Seek to make grants and loans available to enhance building facades.
8. Promote outdoor dining and other pedestrian activities in Forestville Center.

Forestville – Future



Possible West End Strategies

2000 POCD

Overview

The West End is one of Bristol’s oldest neighborhoods. From the mid-1800s to the mid- 1900s, the West End was a working-class neighborhood, comprised of immigrants and first-generation Americans living in a compact, walkable, mixed-use urban neighborhood.

However, after World War II, development preferences changes in ways which did not favor the West End. By the year 2000, the neighborhood was beginning to show signs of age and disinvestment and the public perception changed.

In 2008, the City commissioned a plan for the West End neighborhood. That study and its recommendations are hereby incorporated into this Plan of Conservation and Development.

While Bristol’s 2000 POCD did not really address the West End, an amendment to the POCD in 2012 incorporated a special study conducted by The Capstan Group of New Haven, Connecticut and the Yale Urban Design Workshop of New Haven, Connecticut.

Key Findings, Conclusions and Issues

- The West End is a key neighborhood within the City.
- The West End contains a diverse population, a variety of housing types and local businesses, distinctive architecture, and three of Bristol’s finest recreation locations – Rockwell Park, Muzzy Field, and Brackett Park.
- The West End Plan envisions that the West End will be a safe, friendly, and family-oriented neighborhood through the positive efforts put forth by many individuals and organizations.
- The West End Plan also envisions that people in the neighborhood will demonstrate their pride by taking responsibility for the ongoing care of their homes and properties, their businesses, the parks and river, and one another.

West End Street



West End Planning Process



GOAL

Support and enhance the West End.

Is this goal appropriate?

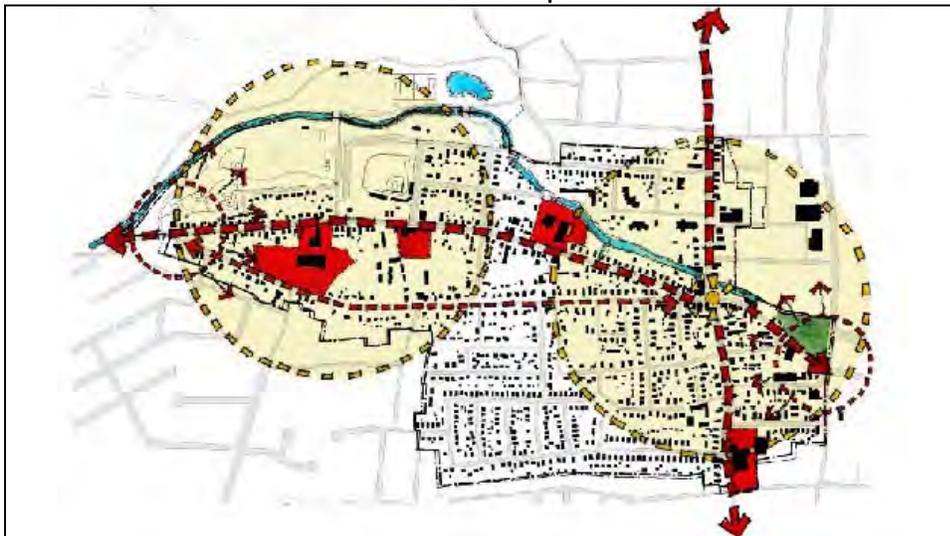
Should it be modified?

Policies:

1. Improve public safety – and the public’s perception of safety - in the neighborhood.
2. Establish and implement housing assistance programs that maintain and increase owner-occupancy in the neighborhood.
3. Maintain and enhance the appearance of the neighborhood:
 - Organize and implement neighborhood cleanup and beautification programs.
 - Use CDBG grants and other funds to assist with rehabilitation of commercial properties.
 - Target blighted properties for comprehensive code enforcement efforts.
 - Support the timely acquisition and re-occupancy of foreclosed properties.
 - Implement streetscape improvements (such as sidewalks, lighting, signage, landscaping, etc.).
4. Promote and support neighborhood activities that foster community-building and celebrate the neighborhood’s diversity (e.g., festivals, block parties, etc.).
5. Extend bus service into the neighborhood.
6. Better integrate the Pequabuck River into the neighborhood and provide greater public access to it.

See the West End Study (2011) for additional recommendations and details.

West End Concepts



Possible Route 6 Strategies

2000 POCD

Overview

Route 6 is the main east-west arterial road in Bristol. It has evolved from a cart path connecting to Farmington to a major access point into the community. As Bristol grew in the post-World War II era, the eastern portion of Route 6 became the center of retail development for the new automobile-oriented society.

In actuality, there are several components of Route 6 and guiding and managing land use activities and future development in these different sections is the focus of this portion of the Plan.

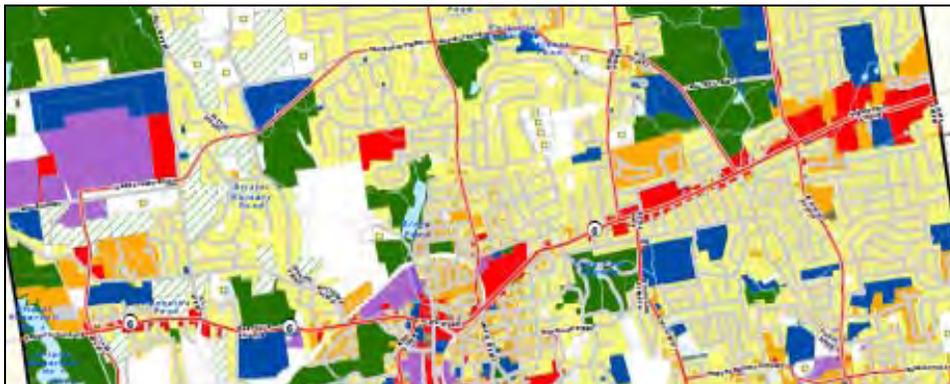
While the 1989 POCD contained a special discussion of Route 6, the 2000 POCD did not.

The Commission may wish to include a special section on Route 6 or integrate it into the Business Development section.

Key Findings, Conclusions and Issues

- The section of Route 6 east of Stafford Avenue contains larger lots and supports larger developments. Some multi-family developments are located in this section.
- Properties west of Stafford Avenue tend to be smaller and shallower in depth and this creates challenges for encouraging redevelopment while managing impacts (access, buffers, etc.). Some areas are used for single-family residences.
- Due to increasing traffic volumes and associated issues, the Department of Transportation is planning on widening Route 6 east of Carol Drive (i.e. – east of Mix Street).

Route 6 Land Uses



GOAL

Manage development along Route 6.

*Is this goal
appropriate?*

*Should it be
modified?*

Policies:

1. Recognize the eastern portion of Route 6 (from the Bristol-Farmington line to Burlington Avenue) as the primary highway business corridor in the city and:
 - contain future commercial development along this section of the Route 6 corridor to existing business zones,
 - encourage improvement to existing buildings and sites to improve their appearance and function,
 - require effective screening and/or buffers between business uses and adjacent residential uses,
 - encourage or require sharing of driveways and other access management strategies to reduce congestion and maintain the capacity of the roadway, and
 - consider the potential conversion of properties within the corridor to mixed use or multi-family residential use to meet housing needs. (Note to Planning Commission - these areas could be identified on a map if desired.)
2. Recognize the portion of Route 6 from Burlington Avenue to Federal Street as a “transition area” between downtown Bristol and the highway business corridor to the east.
3. Recognize the portion of Route 6 from Federal Street to West Street as part of downtown Bristol.
4. Limit future commercial development along the western portion of Route 6 (from West Street to the Bristol-Plymouth line) to neighborhood-oriented shopping in existing business zones.
5. During the planning period, undertake a special study of the Route 6 corridor, especially east of North Main Street, to evaluate any current land use issues and consider ways to promote compatible redevelopment within the corridor.

Possible Route 72 Strategies

Overview

Route 72 is a major east-west arterial road in Bristol. For many years, Bristol's primary access to the interstate highway system was to access the divided highway section of Route 72 in Plainville at the Bristol line.

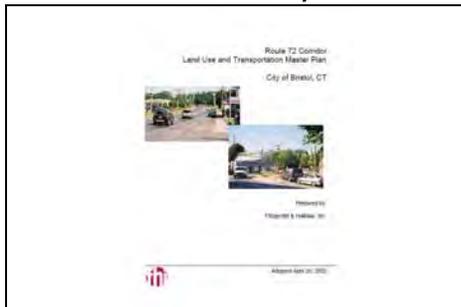
After many years of effort, the City was able to get the Connecticut Department of Transportation to improve a portion of Route 72 and extend a limited access portion further west to Todd Street and then make additional improvements all the way to Blakeslee Street and Riverside Avenue.

To better anticipate the land use and transportation implications of this project, the City undertook a special study of the Route 72 corridor in 2005. That study, which was conducted by Fitzgerald and Halliday of Hartford, CT, is **hereby incorporated into this Plan of Conservation and Development.**

Key Findings, Conclusions and Issues

- Route 72 is a gateway to Bristol and the downtown so it is important to preserve and enhance the character of Memorial Boulevard and Riverside Avenue.
- There are many businesses along Broad Street and it will be important to encourage a diverse range of uses while improving the aesthetics of both the public streetscape and abutting properties.
- On the western end of Pine Street, it will be important to protect the character of residential areas on the south side of the street while accommodating business development on the north side of the street.
- On the eastern end of Pine Street, it will be important to protect the character of residential areas.

Route 72 Study



New Route 72 Location



GOAL

Manage development along Route 72.

Is this goal appropriate?

Should it be modified?

Policies:

1. Promote the adaptive re-use/redevelopment of vacant and/or underutilized properties, particularly brownfield sites, especially along East Main Street, Broad Street, and Riverside Avenue.
2. Improve the aesthetics throughout the corridor through both public and private enhancement projects.
3. On the south side of Pine Street, limit commercial development between the vicinity of Benham Street and the vicinity of Bishop Street to low-intensity, small-scale uses that serve as a transition/buffer between more intensive commercial uses in the area and the residential neighborhood to the south.
4. Extend the “village center” concept outward from Forestville Center, especially to the east along East Main Street and to the west along Broad Street to Todd Street.
5. Utilize access management techniques to limit the number, design, and location of driveways along Riverside Avenue and Pine Street.

See the Route 72 Corridor Master Plan (2005) for additional recommendations and details.

Route 72 Master Plan

