

Economic Development/Marketing/Grants/CDBG Report

April 2023

Downtown/West End Updates

- We are proud to report that the City’s Community Investment Fund (CIF) grant application to construct a new streetscape on Route 72 – Riverside Ave. and Park St. – has been approved at approximately \$6.8 million.
- City attorneys, in coordination with Carrier’s representation, are preparing the Purchase and Sale Agreement of Centre Square parcels 5, 6, 7, 8 for execution.
- BristolWORKS! celebrated its grand opening, featuring federal guests Sen. Blumenthal and Rep. Larson along with State/local dignitaries. This event begins a process to begin to secure additional federal/state/foundation funding to ensure the program is sustainable for years to come.
- Under “Downtown Update” at the April meeting we will discuss work on the Hope St. Parking Structure, including determining correct sizing, cost issues, future operation/maintenance, etc.
- Wheeler Health continues construction on Centre Square, with framing set to begin soon.
- Work on the “Sessions” building remediation and redevelopment continues. New Colony Development Corp. expects to begin cleanup in April/May following competitive bid.
- The State DOT has begun demolition of certain properties associated with the Route 72/Route 69 intersection realignment. It is anticipated that the “West End” parking area will soon be closed for construction.
- ECD staff, Mayor’s Office, and D’Amato Real Estate welcomed First Impression Salon to the 10 Main Street building, joining a growing number of tenants. Arizona Construction (AZ Construction) is expected to open soon at the “Barrett” building in the Valley Street area. Other new downtown business openings including Two Sisters’ Deli, Elaborate Wedding and Event Planner, and Avalon Smoke Shop.
- The State funded “City Hall Structure”: D’Amato Construction has begun construction, which should go quickly once the pre-formed casts arrive for the structure’s parking levels.
- Other Significant Downtown Infrastructure:
 - Public Works staff, ECD staff, Benesch Engineering, and Carrier Construction are coordinating streetscape design work for North Main Street in front of the “Centre Square Village” project.
 - Public Works is coordinating with Eversource on the relocation of electrical “switchgears” and associated concrete structure from the corner of Hope St./North Main St. to an interior location between the Hope St. Parking Structure and Bristol Health’s property.
 - Carrier will begin work on the retaining wall required along the railroad bank shortly after breaking ground on Centre Square.

Development Outside Downtown

- ECD staff and UHY continue to coordinate the Building Bristol grant program using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.
- ECD staff, Mayor's Office, and Public Works continue to work closely with ConnDOT on various initiatives. This includes ConnDOT financial assistance for the Route 72 streetscape (to complement CIF Grant), continued discussions on bus service on Route 229 to Southington, future bike path and other improvement in the West End, and more.
- ECD staff and special guests will continue to discuss the possibility of enacting a revolving loan program that would effectively replace up to 3 existing grant programs to make it easier for businesses to gain access to debt as they grow in Bristol.
- Baumer has begun operations at its temporary relocation with longer-term plans to construct a new building on Business Park Drive.
- 894 Middle Street groundwater monitoring continues. ECD staff and the Licensed Environmental Practitioner (LEP) for the site are in discussions on next steps to address groundwater monitoring results to enable the property's sale for private development.
- The HOME2 and Conference Center project is proceeding but for various reasons expect a delay to open until October 2023.
- Route 6:
 - After years of supporting development at the large development site just east of the Bristol Farms Plaza we are happy to report that development of a large medical office construction project is just beginning, with design materials submitted to our land use and public works staff.
 - Bristol Plaza continues to attract new tenants, including Cost Cutters, a future Robek's Juice franchise, and Carter's children's clothing store.
 - The new gas station and associated 7-11 retail store are under construction on Farmington Ave. heading toward Plymouth/Terryville.
 - A potential second hybrid cannabis location may open in the former "Blockbuster" location if/when the appropriate materials are submitted for City Council approval.

Small Business/Manufacturing Technical Assistance Grants Completed or In Process

- Cuts by Chelle: Assist with new air conditioning and fence enclosure.
- 10 Main Café: Assist with upgrades to plumbing and electrical.
- Rosie's Detail House: Assisting with removal of graffiti on exterior.
- Rust to Riches: Assisting with removal of graffiti and new gate.
- Palma's Diner: Assisting with permanent improvements as a result of the accident.
- Advanced Machine Lubricants: Assist with new space renovation including electrical, and permanent fixtures.
- Advanced Fuel & Oil: Assisting with new heating and electrical.

- Casa Blend: Assist with new space renovation with items to be identified for a juice bar concept.
- Alloy Welding: Assist with grading and leveling of driveway area.
- Harry the Barber: Assist with new space renovation including electrical, plumbing, HVAC, flooring, painting, and more.

Marketing

Marketing and Public Relations Initiatives:

- 1) Bristol All Heart Website Update: All content has been handed over to the vendor who is creating all the pages for the new site.
- 2) A video is being planned with the Mayor to walk the West End neighborhood to discuss the road construction and where to park to patronize West End businesses, will be distributed through social media channels and on the All Heart website. Mayor's column for April also discusses this topic. Social media posts will be developed throughout the construction process to promote the West End businesses.
- 3) Upcoming 2023 new business ribbon cutting ceremonies and anniversaries:
 - Ultimate Wireforms – 35th Anniversary Presentation to be rescheduled from March TBD
 - The Sisters' Deli – Ribbon Cutting Ceremony TBD
 - Advanced Machine Lubricants – Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on April 19th
 - Scarritt Spas & Pools – 40th Anniversary Presentation on April 26th
 - Arizona Roofing – Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on May 3rd
 - Chippanee Golf Club – 100th Anniversary Presentation on May 12th

Grants Administration

- The Grants Administrator and Executive Director are members of a multi-departmental team working on the "Complete Streets Academy" pilot program. A two-day workshop was held in Bristol on March 21-22.

Grant Award:

- The City was awarded \$6,850,000 in the second round from the Community Investment Funds (CIF) for the proposed enhancements to the Route 72 corridor on Riverside Avenue and Park Street. The City will make improvements to sidewalks and crosswalks as well as upgrades to the streetscape such as new lighting, trees, benches, and signage. This is the first of what is hoped to be several grants for non-profits on the corridor to assist with expansion and improvements to their facilities.

Grant Submissions:

- The City submitted an application on behalf of the Bristol Police Department for funding from the Main Street Community Foundation to be used for Active Shooter rescue supplies (mass trauma kits) and the purchase of Automated External Defibrillators (AED) for patrol officers who are often the first responders to cardiac emergencies.
- The Bristol Senior Center has submitted a proposal to the Main Street Community Foundation to create an Emergency Assistance Fund and SNAP Qualified Toiletry

Program to offer aid to its members experiencing financial challenges due to inflation and increased costs.

Upcoming Grant Opportunities:

- Several applications for grants will be submitted to the Thomaston Savings Bank Foundation (deadline April 30). They include:
 - The Bristol Police Department will request a grant to provide financial support for its Police Cadet program, and a second application to fund the Roberto Clemente Summer Youth Athletic Program at Cambridge Park.
 - The Bristol Senior Center will request funding to provide Eversource Utility Assistance for its members unable to meet the rising costs of electricity.
 - The Bristol Fire Department will seek a grant to support the annual upkeep for Okee (the BFD service dog), and to purchase smoke detectors for distribution to residents in need.
- The CT Dept. of Transportation will accept applications again this year for Community Connectivity Grants that focus on improvements to pedestrian amenities such as crosswalks and accessibility. The City of Bristol was previously awarded two of these grants and will prepare an application for this round, which will be due on July 21.

CDBG Program Highlights

- **CDBG Year 49**
The City's CDBG allocation from HUD was announced, and it is substantially reduced from prior years. For Year 49, the City will receive \$588,120. The Policy Committee has published its recommendations and the "Public Comment Period" is open until April 15. The ECD Board will be asked to vote on these recommendations at its May meeting.