

Economic Development/Marketing/Grants/CDBG Report

July 2023

Downtown/West End Updates

- Carrier Construction will hold a ground breaking ceremony on July 13. More information to come at the July 6 ECD meeting.
- Bristol Bazaar is officially open! A ribbon cutting is tentatively scheduled for July 15. More information to come at July 6 ECD meeting.
- ECD staff expects a popular “fast casual” restaurant with several locations in central CT to close on 209 Riverside Ave. The building will require a full renovation and conversion to restaurant.
- BristolWORKS! continues to impress, having graduated its first early childhood, IT, and healthcare groups, with the manufacturing group beginning classes at the end of June.
- An art studio offering fun activities for the public is planning to open on Riverside Avenue once its lease is finalized. ECD staff expects to announce more information at the August ECD meeting.
- *Golden Years*, an established adult daycare/home healthcare provider, is relocating to 118-126 Main St. The project will bring approximately 20 full-time employees to a prominent vacant building.
- ECD and Public Works continue to work with design firm GM2 on the streetscape design for Route 72. The project is fully funded by the Community Investment Fund (CIF) grant as well as portion of funding from CT DOT.
- City staff met with CTtransit officials in late June to finalize the slight relocation of bus stops around Centre Square. Specifically, the stops located on the northern end of Centre Square near McDonalds will be relocated to the area on North Main Street in front of the Wheeler Health project.
- New Colony Development Corp. has approved nearly all remediation bids for the J.H. Sessions building. New Colony expects to begin cleanup end of July.
- D’Amato Construction continues City Hall Parking Garage construction, which should go quickly once the pre-formed casts arrive for the structure’s parking levels. However, the project is experiencing supply chain issues with electrical equipment.
- Other Significant Downtown Infrastructure:
 - Wheeler and Carrier are coordinating with Eversource on installation of service meters
 - Grant-funded work will begin shortly on design for a bike/walking path in the West End to connect Rockwell Park with Downtown/Memorial Blvd/Middle St.
 - Streetscape design continues for both Route 72 and North Main Street.
 - Carrier will begin work on the retaining wall required along the railroad bank shortly after breaking ground on Centre Square.

Development Outside Downtown

- City staff received one response to the RFP for revolving loan services from well-respected lender Community Investment Corp. (CIC): <https://ciclending.com/> Staff are reviewing the proposal week of July 3 in hopes of moving as quick as possible on the

revolving loan program. Staff will keep the ECD board updated frequently on this project.

- ECD staff is meeting with Ecosmart on its stalled construction project in the Southeast Bristol Business Park. The pandemic and development costs have delayed this project. More info to come.
- Baumer has begun operations at its temporary relocation with longer-term plans to construct a new building on Business Park Drive.
- Staff will provide an update on 894 Middle Street at the July 6 meeting. This includes updates on the draft RFP and budget to potentially hire a consultant to assist with the RFP process.
- Route 6:
 - Eblens and Boston Market have each closed operations, unfortunately.
 - All Star Weddings wedding planner is opening in the plaza with Rodd's Restaurant. A ribbon cutting is planned the week of July 17.
 - The new Citgo gas station at the intersection of King St./Route 6 is finally under construction.
 - The other new gas station on Farmington Ave. heading toward Plymouth/Terryville should resume construction shortly, as the owner is dealing with steel supply/labor issues.
 - The city still has one "hybrid" cannabis retail license available. Currently there are several potential companies interested in this final license.

Small Business/Manufacturing Technical Assistance Grants Completed or In Process

- Rx Crystals: Assisting with new signage framing.
- West End Pizza: Assisting with new fixed assets.
- Plaza Oaxaca: Assisting with new flooring, drywall, painting, and ceiling tile replacement.
- Ryse & Grind: Assisting a new startup business with new flooring, plumbing, sheetrock, and lighting.
- Curtis Products: Assist with a second round of manufacturing technical assistance to utilize remaining funds for marketing and sales consulting.
- Fourslide Spring & Stamping: Assist with purchase and installation of a new instant measurement system.
- Cuts by Chelle: Assist with new air conditioning and fence enclosure.
- Rosie's Detail House: Assisting with removal of graffiti on exterior.
- Rust to Riches: Assisting with removal of graffiti and new gate.

Marketing

Marketing and Public Relations Initiatives:

- 1) A West End Business Marketing Campaign is being developed to help support the businesses within the West End neighborhood while construction continues along Rt.72/69. More details will be provided to the Commissioners at the meeting.

- 2) A Groundbreaking Ceremony has been scheduled for Thursday, July 13th for the Centre Square Village development, all ECD Commissioners will receive an invitation.
- 3) The 2023 season of the Bristol Farmers is underway, we hope that ECD Commissioners will support the market by stopping by any Saturday from 10 am to 1 pm to support all the local vendors.
- 4) Upcoming July Events – Please Mark Your Calendars:
 - By Carrier Centre Square Village Groundbreaking Ceremony: Thursday, July 13th
 - Robeks Juice Ribbon Cutting Ceremony: Friday, July 14th
 - City of Bristol Sponsored Bristol Blues Game with Fireworks: Friday, July 21st
 - C.V. Mason 140th Anniversary Business Presentation: Wednesday, July 26th

Grants Administration

Grant Awards:

- The Main Street Community Foundation awarded a grant to the Bristol Police Department for the acquisition of emergency AED and Mass Casualty Kits.
- A \$250,000 Climate & Flood Resilience Planning Grant from the CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection was awarded to the Dept. of Public Works.

Grant Submissions:

- The Grants Administrator is working with DPW to submit an application for the DOT's Community Connectivity Grant, to focus on replacing noncompliant ramps. Due on July 21.
- Still pending: Assistance to Firefighters Grants – for continued training of fire personnel.

CDBG Program Highlights

- **CDBG Year 48**
Program Year 48 has been closed. The New England Carousel Museum project was granted an extension and remains open pending completion of the work.
- **CDBG Year 49**
The Annual Action Plan for Year 49 was approved by the City Council and submitted to HUD for review.
- **CDBG-CV**
All the CARES Act funding has been expended by grant recipients. Bristol is one of very few communities that has expended *all* of its CDBG-CV funds. The total amount funded was \$776,730.