

Economic Development/Marketing/Grants/CDBG Report

February 2024

Downtown/West End Updates

- Centre Square:
 - PKL Ventures is working on a site plan and associated parking options concerning its building plan for “Parcel 10” on Centre Square.
 - Wheeler Health anticipates the completion of construction in June 2024.
 - The City has solicited for construction bids on the Centre Square Parking Structure. The structure is designed for 194 spaces.
 - The relocation of large Eversource equipment to serve the site will happen in parallel with garage construction.
 - Streetscape design work for North Main Street (in front of Centre Square Village) and eventually Main Street (in front of Parcel 10 project) is ongoing.
 - The final available parcel – “Parcel 3” – will be used for parking when the parking structure is built. However, the ECD may consider soliciting bids for development of this parcel in 2024.
- Staff will discuss several brownfields located in/near downtown and the West End at the upcoming ECD meeting. All sites require policy work in 2024.
- New Cambridge Brewing is nearing completion on taproom improvements at the former Firefly Hollow location with a goal to open very soon
- Staff continues to work with the owners of 234 Riverside Ave. to support the demolition and future fuel cell/data center planned for the site.
- Staff is working on a second façade improvement project in the “West End” at Positano Plumbing.
- Yellow King Brews is open and very busy.
- Staff are working with St. Vincent De Paul Mission on evaluating ways to address the increased need for homeless services.
- Design for the Route 72 Streetscape is ongoing. Staff are working with CT DECD on grant paperwork for the \$6+ million in Community Investment Fund grant for the project. CT DOT is also involved, as Riverside Ave. will receive roadway upgrades at the same time as the streetscape construction.

Development Outside Downtown

- The Forgivable Revolving Loan Fund will launch Jan. 31. A brief update will be provided at the February ECD Board meeting.
- Industrial Update
 - Staff continues to work on options for development in the Southeast Bristol Business Park. One established Bristol business is investigating the potential of building a new facility as a way to consolidate operations.
 - Staff is working with a potential buyer of the “Lot 2” development started by BHF Logistics. This project will need to be discussed with the Industrial Committee.

- Lot #3 in the Southeast Bristol Business Park is proving to be a challenge due to elevation issues. Staff may want to talk with the Industrial Committee about offering an “allowance” to help a future buyer level the lot.
- In the 229 Technology Park, the HOME2 Suites is expected to be complete in late spring 2024.
- Route 6:
 - City staff, along with State officials, continue to work on a traffic signal at the intersection of Sheila Court and Route 6 as both a safety measure and to support a new development on a large parcel east of Bristol Farms Plaza.
 - The new Citgo gas station at the intersection of King St./Route 6 is 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.
 - Cannabis retail: Fine Fettle, a well-regarded cannabis company, received City Council approval to open the City’s second hybrid retail location. The location is the former Goodwill space on Farmington Ave.
 - Cannabis manufacturing: In addition to New England Edibles on East Main Street, the ECD is working with a cannabis packaging company hoping to open on Cross St., and a potential large cultivation operation as well.

Small Business/Manufacturing Technical Assistance Grants Completed or In Process

- Urban Collab Studios: Assisting with upgrades to a new podcasting space including new flooring and other eligible renovations.
- Pine Street Package Store: assisting with signage infrastructure and fencing
- Stacey Lynn Photography LLC: Assisting with upgrades to a new photography studio including new flooring, paint and other eligible renovations.
- Dunphy’s Ice Cream: Assisting with upgrades to a new store including new flooring and plumbing.
- Curtis Products – Round 2: Assist with a second round of manufacturing technical assistance to utilize remaining funds for marketing and sales consulting.
- Working with two great new businesses on Prospect St.: Rosie’s Detailing and Rust to Riches

Marketing

Marketing and Public Relations Initiatives:

- 1) ECD had partnered with Downtown LIVE/City Arts & Culture Commission to develop a campaign to promote the 2024 shows at the Rockwell Theater. Anyone who signs up to receive the quarterly Bristol All Heart e-newsletter through the new Bristol All Heart website by February 3rd will be entered into a drawing to win a \$100 voucher to be used toward any show in 2024. Over 60 people have signed up to date.
- 2) A video has been produced to show the demolition of 234 Riverside Avenue, the former Dodge Village property to make way for new development. It has been posted to Bristol All Heart and Mayor’s Office social media pages for viewing.

- 3) Dawn Nielsen has joined the local Bristol America 250 Committee to assist with the planning and marketing of Bristol to commemorate America's 250 birthday in 2026.
- 4) A new video project is being developed to promote Bristol using the theme: **Bristol IS Something for Everyone – What IS Your Something?** to generate pride for what Bristol has to offer existing residents and businesses and to promote Bristol to potential residents and businesses. Using this theme, the video will include interviews from those who work here, live here, and have visited Bristol.

New Businesses and Anniversary Recognitions:

- 1) ECD along with the Mayor and the Chamber of Commerce celebrated the grand opening of Yellow King Brews at a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on Friday, January 26th.
- 2) ECD along with the Mayor and the Chamber of Commerce celebrated the 70th anniversary of Rowley Spring & Stamping with a presentation to John Dellalana and his team on January 25th.

Grants Administration

Grants Activity:

FEMA SAFER Grant:

The Grants Administrator is working with Fire Chief Richard Hart to prepare application materials for a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant. This FEMA grant program is designed to assist local fire departments with the hiring of new staff to comply with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1710 structural response standards. SAFER grants provide 100% of new personnel salaries for 3-years, after which time the Fire Department must retain and support those positions using local funds.

FEMA AFG Grant:

The City will apply for another AFG grant to support training in the Bristol Fire Department. Because there are so many new hires, the BFD seeks to repeat some of the officer training classes that were provided several years ago through the program, to bring new personnel into the queue for potential officer positions when they open up.

AFG 2021: Fire Officer III, Pump Operator, and Aerial operator classes are complete and this grant should be closed out in the coming months.

AFG 2022: Classes will be scheduled soon for BFD personnel who are interested in Ropes Rescue, Ropes Technician, and Confined Space Technician training.

CDBG Program Highlights

- CDBG Year 49
The second quarter of Year 49 is done and quarterly reports received from grant recipients.
- CDBG Year 50
Application materials for Year 50 Public Service and Facilities grants were due on Jan. 31.
- 5-Year Consolidated Plan
The survey is now closed. Results from the survey will be shared with the ECD Board at the February meeting.