# TOWN OF BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

PLANNING BOARD COMPREHENSIVE
PLAN UPDATE MEETING

**Agenda**
**Thursday, October 22, 2026 at 5:30 PM**
**Conference Room at Department of Community Development**
**35 Washington Street (Former Guiteras School)**
**Bristol, RI 02809**

**A. Pledge of Allegiance**

**B. Agenda Items**

**B1.** Take action on finding of consistency with Comprehensive Plan and General Purposes of Zoning for Proposed Zoning Amendment to regulate AI Data Centers as recommended at October 8, 2026 Planning Board meeting.

**B2.** Review Revised Land Use Chapter and Draft Future Land Use Map (*Continued from September, 2026*)

**B3.** Review revised Draft Housing Chapter

**B4.** Review Draft Economic Development Survey for Businesses

**B5.** Discuss/Review Proposed schedule for Comprehensive Plan adoption

**C. Adjournment**

Date Posted: October 15, 2026

Posted By: mbw

# Town of Bristol, Rhode Island

***Department of Community Development***

10 Court Street
Bristol, RI 02809
bristolri.gov
401-253-7000

October 16, 2026

TO: Planning Board

FROM: Diane M. Williamson, Director

**RE: Proposed Zoning Amendment for Artificial Intelligence (AI) Data Centers**

As you recall, at the October regular Planning Board meeting, the Board passed a motion to send a recommended ordinance amendment to the Town Council that would prohibit AI Data Centers in all zoning districts.

As part of that recommendation, the Board also needs to make a finding that the recommended ordinance is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the General Purposes of Zoning.

I recommend that the Planning Board make these findings and cite the following:

Consistent with the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Goal #1 – Promote land use patterns that are sensitive to the Town's character and assets, recognize the Town's resource constraints" and Police E to this Goal – "maintain the character of Bristol and make sure that new development does not adversely impact the integrity of the Town".

Consistent with the General Purposes of Zoning #1 – Protect the public health, safety and welfare and #2 – Provides for the control, protection and/or abatement of air, water, groundwater and noise pollution and soil erosion and sedimentation.

# LAND USE

## Introduction

Bristol's land use pattern reflects more than three centuries of development shaped by its waterfront setting, maritime history, historic neighborhoods, transportation corridors, institutions, and natural resources. The Town includes a compact and walkable historic downtown, established residential neighborhoods, a working waterfront, commercial and industrial areas, Roger Williams University, agricultural and open lands, and an extensive network of public and protected open space.

Bristol is a largely built-out community, with limited opportunities for large-scale development on previously undeveloped land. Future growth and change will occur primarily through redevelopment, adaptive reuse, and infill development. The Town's remaining undeveloped lands contain important natural, agricultural, scenic, historic, and cultural resources that contribute significantly to the Town's character and environmental quality.

The Town's land use strategy therefore focuses on directing development and redevelopment to appropriate locations, making efficient use of existing infrastructure, protecting established neighborhoods and employment areas, and conserving important natural and cultural resources. Land use decisions must also respond to changing housing needs, evolving State land use requirements, climate change and coastal hazards, and the need to maintain a strong and diverse local economy.

Land use planning is closely related to each of the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Housing, transportation, economic development, natural resource protection, historic preservation, public infrastructure, recreation, and climate resilience all influence Bristol's land use patterns and how they evolve over time. The goals, policies, and Future Land Use Map contained in this element provide the overall framework for guiding future land use and development in Bristol.

## Progress Since the 2016 Comprehensive Plan

Since adoption of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan, Bristol has advanced a number of land use and zoning initiatives. Key accomplishments include:

- Established the Metacom Mixed Use Zoning District and the Route 136 Overlay Design Standards to guide development and redevelopment along Metacom Avenue and address mixed-use development, site and building design, neighborhood compatibility, transportation, and access.
- Support continued investment, reinvestment, and business growth within established employment areas, including the Bristol Industrial Park, Tupelo

Street area, Franklin Street area, and Unity Park, with an emphasis on manufacturing, marine trades, technology, research, and other Blue Economy businesses.
- Created the Public Institutional (PI) zoning district in 2019 to recognize and protect institutional uses of Town-owned property.
- Repurposed former municipal and school properties to meet changing community needs, including conversion of the former Guiteras School into Town Hall, reuse of the former Walley School for senior services, and sale of the former Oliver School for residential redevelopment.
- Completed the Bristol Maritime Center, expanded marina facilities, and improved public docks and other waterfront infrastructure to support public access, recreational boating, commercial marine activity, and use of Bristol Harbor.
- Continued use of Educational Institutional zoning and institutional master plan review to coordinate development at Roger Williams University with Town land use, transportation, infrastructure, neighborhood, and environmental considerations.
- Protected natural resources, agricultural land, open space, and significant landscapes through conservation planning, easements, acquisition, and other land protection efforts.
- Continued investment in municipal recreation and open-space properties, including Town Beach, the Sports Complex, Quinta-Gamelin Community Center, and Town Common.
- Completed or advanced drainage, flood mitigation, and water-quality improvements in the Silver Creek, Mt. Hope Bay, and Tanyard Brook watersheds identified through prior planning efforts.
- More fully integrated flooding, sea level rise, stormwater management, coastal hazards, and climate resilience into development review, infrastructure planning, and other municipal decisions.

**Public Input**

Public input at workshops reflected strong support for managing future growth in a way that preserves Bristol's historic character, established neighborhoods, open spaces, waterfront, and natural resources. Residents generally supported reinvestment in already-developed areas while expressing concern about continued development pressure on remaining open land, environmentally sensitive areas, and locations where existing infrastructure may limit additional development. These themes were echoed throughout discussions of housing, economic development, natural resources, transportation, and historic preservation.

A recurring theme was the need to make better use of land that is already developed. Participants identified vacant and underutilized buildings and properties as opportunities for redevelopment and adaptive reuse and supported directing investment toward these areas rather than expanding development into remaining

open land. Suggestions included revitalizing commercial properties, reusing vacant buildings, encouraging smaller-scale and mixed-use development in appropriate locations, and creating walkable mixed-use centers. Metacom Avenue was frequently identified as an area where redevelopment could improve the appearance and function of the corridor. Survey comments similarly linked redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties with opportunities for housing, economic development, and preservation of open land.

Protection of remaining open land and environmentally sensitive areas was another strong theme. Residents expressed concern about development affecting wetlands, flood-prone areas, watersheds, and other sensitive lands and called for stronger protection of these resources. More than 80 percent of survey respondents rated open space preservation as very important, while climate resilience was also a significant priority, including stormwater and flood management, shoreline protection, and preservation of natural buffers. Workshop participants similarly identified wetland protection, continued open space preservation, development of already-developed or underutilized land, and stronger regulatory protection of environmentally sensitive areas as priorities.

Residents also emphasized maintaining Bristol's small-town and historic character as change occurs. Public comments supported a walkable and active Downtown, rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of existing buildings, protection of established neighborhoods and historic resources, and continued opportunities for local businesses and employment. At the same time, participants raised concerns about infrastructure limitations, development intensity, and the effects of new development on neighborhood character and sensitive lands. These priorities reinforce the importance of coordinating future land use decisions with transportation, infrastructure capacity, environmental conditions, and the character of surrounding areas.

**Existing Development Pattern**

**Map LU1: Existing Land Use** illustrates how land is currently developed and used throughout Bristol based on the most recent available Rhode Island Geographic Information System (RIGIS) land use data. Unlike the Zoning Map, which identifies how property may be developed under the Zoning Ordinance, the Existing Land Use Map depicts the uses currently present on the ground. The map identifies residential, commercial, industrial, mixed-use, institutional, agricultural, recreation, open space, and other land uses, as well as wetlands, conservation lands, transportation and utility corridors, and undeveloped lands.

Residential uses comprise the largest share of Bristol's developed land. Development ranges from the compact neighborhoods surrounding Downtown to lower-density

residential areas in the eastern and southern portions of Town. Most residential neighborhoods are well established, and future residential development is expected to occur primarily through infill, redevelopment, adaptive reuse, accessory dwelling units, and other housing opportunities within existing developed areas rather than through large-scale subdivision of undeveloped land.

Downtown Bristol remains the Town's civic, commercial, cultural, and tourism center. Its traditional street pattern, historic buildings, mix of residential and nonresidential uses, public institutions, waterfront, and pedestrian-oriented development distinguish it from other commercial areas of Town. Maintaining this mixed-use character while accommodating appropriate reinvestment and adaptive reuse is an important land use priority.

Metacom Avenue is Bristol's principal highway-oriented commercial corridor and includes commercial, residential, and municipal properties. The corridor provides important goods, services, employment, and transportation connections, but its auto-oriented development pattern, frequent curb cuts, and gaps in the sidewalk network can make travel difficult and less safe for pedestrians and bicyclists. The Town should work with the State to close gaps in the sidewalk network and improve pedestrian and bicycle connections along the corridor, independent of individual redevelopment projects. As properties are developed or redeveloped, additional opportunities should also be pursued to improve site design, access management, pedestrian connections, and transitions between commercial development and adjoining residential neighborhoods.

Industrial and employment uses are concentrated primarily north of Gooding Avenue, in and around the Bristol Industrial Park and Tupelo Street area, Franklin Stret, and at Unity Park. These areas provide an important land base for manufacturing, marine industries, technology businesses, services, and other employment uses. Maintaining sufficient land for these activities is important to Bristol's economy and tax base, particularly as State housing and adaptive reuse requirements create new opportunities for residential and mixed-use development.

Roger Williams University is one of the Town's largest institutional land uses and a significant employer and economic resource. Continued coordination between the Town and University is important as the campus evolves, particularly with respect to Ferry Road, transportation and infrastructure capacity, shoreline and natural resources, and impacts to surrounding residential areas.

Despite Bristol's developed character, significant open space, agricultural lands, wetlands, coastal resources, and other undeveloped lands remain. These lands contribute to water quality, wildlife habitat, flood protection, recreation, scenic character, and the Town's historic landscape. Some large privately and institutionally

owned properties may face future development, making early coordination and consideration of conservation and appropriate development strategies important.

**Existing Zoning**

The Town of Bristol Zoning Ordinance regulates the location, type, intensity, and character of development. As illustrated on **Map LU2: Zoning**, residential districts comprise the majority of Bristol's land area and accommodate a range of development patterns, from compact neighborhoods surrounding the historic downtown to lower-density residential neighborhoods throughout other areas of Town. Commercial and mixed-use districts are concentrated within Downtown and along the Metacom Avenue (RI Route 136) corridor, while manufacturing districts are located primarily north of Gooding Avenue and east of Hope Street. Overlay districts supplement the underlying zoning by addressing the unique characteristics and planning objectives of designated areas.

**Table LU-1: Zoning Districts**

| Zoning Category | Existing Zoning Districts | General Land Use Pattern/Purpose |
|---|---|---|
| Residential | R-6, R-8, R-10, R-10SW, R-15, R-20, R-20SP, R-40, R-40W, R-80 | Range of residential districts accommodating compact to low-density development patterns |
| Commercial/Mixed Use | LB, GB, D, MMU | Neighborhood, general commercial, Downtown, and mixed-use development |
| Manufacturing | M | Manufacturing, marine-related, technology, and other employment uses |
| Institutional | EI, PI | Educational and public institutional uses |
| Agricultural/Open Space | AG, OS | Agricultural and protected/open-space uses |
| Waterfront | W, WLDP | Waterfront and water-related uses and redevelopment |

Table LU-1: Zoning Districts

| Zoning Category | Existing Zoning Districts | General Land Use Pattern/Purpose |
|---|---|---|
| Planned Development | LDP | Flexible development and redevelopment |
| Historic Preservation/Conservation | HPC | Protection and compatible use of historic and conservation properties |

Several zoning districts are particularly relevant to the land use strategies addressed in this Plan. The Metacom Mixed Use (MMU) District provides for mixed-use development and redevelopment along Metacom Avenue, while the Downtown (D) District supports the traditional mix of commercial, residential, civic, and cultural uses within the historic downtown. Educational Institutional (EI) zoning and the institutional master plan process provide a framework for development at Roger Williams University, while the Public Institutional (PI) District recognizes Town-owned institutional properties. Agricultural (AG), Open Space (OS), and Historic Preservation and Conservation (HPC) zoning provide additional tools for protecting agricultural, open space, historic, and conservation lands.

**Overlay Districts**

The **Historic District Overlay** protects areas of architectural and historical significance and establishes additional review requirements intended to preserve Bristol's historic character. Established in 1987, the district includes approximately 619 properties representing more than 300 years of architectural development and historic significance.

The **Route 136 Overlay** applies to properties with frontage along Metacom Avenue and establishes additional development and design standards addressing the appearance and function of the corridor, compatibility with adjoining neighborhoods, scenic resources, transportation access, and public safety.

The **Resource Conservation and Creative Development (RC&CD) Overlay** provides for conservation-oriented development that clusters residential development to preserve open space, agricultural land, natural resources, and historic and cultural features.

**Redevelopment, Infill, and Adaptive Reuse**

Because Bristol is largely developed, redevelopment and reuse of existing properties will play an increasingly important role in accommodating future housing, economic activity, and community needs.

Redevelopment provides opportunities to reinvest in vacant or underutilized properties without extending development into remaining open lands, consistent with community support for directing new investment toward already-developed areas. It can also support new housing opportunities, strengthen commercial and employment areas, improve site design and infrastructure, and address properties developed under standards that no longer reflect current Town objectives.

Not every site is equally appropriate for increased development intensity. Redevelopment should consider surrounding neighborhood character, transportation and infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints, historic resources, climate vulnerability, and the continued need for commercial and industrial land.

Recent changes to Rhode Island land use and housing laws have expanded opportunities for adaptive reuse and residential development in circumstances where local regulations previously provided greater discretion over changes in use. Bristol's approach should recognize these requirements while using the authority available to the Town to address site design, neighborhood compatibility, infrastructure, environmental resources, historic character, and other local planning considerations.

**Downtown Bristol**

Downtown Bristol's compact development pattern, historic buildings, waterfront setting, civic institutions, businesses, restaurants, and residences create a mixed-use environment that is central to the Town's identity and economy. The combination of uses within a walkable setting is one of Downtown's defining characteristics and should remain the basis for future land use decisions.

Context-sensitive infill provide opportunities for continued investment and additional housing while maintaining building scale, historic development patterns, pedestrian orientation, and neighborhood character.

Land use decisions should also reinforce connections between Downtown and the waterfront and support the public spaces, streetscapes, pedestrian environment, and civic uses that contribute to Downtown's vitality.

**Metacom Avenue**

Metacom Avenue serves as Bristol's principal north-south commercial and transportation corridor. It accommodates a substantial share of the Town's commercial

activity as well as residential, institutional, industrial, and mixed-use properties. Portions of the corridor are characterized by automobile-oriented development, large paved areas, multiple curb cuts, and properties with redevelopment potential.

The Town has undertaken extensive planning for Metacom Avenue and established the Metacom Mixed Use Zoning District and Route 136 Overlay to guide development and redevelopment. These tools provide a foundation for improving the corridor over time while recognizing its continued importance for commercial activity and regional transportation.

Future land use planning should support appropriate redevelopment of underutilized properties, improve site and building design, provide appropriate transitions to adjoining residential neighborhoods, and strengthen pedestrian and bicycle connections. Land use changes should be coordinated with access management and transportation improvements so that redevelopment contributes to the long-term function and safety of the corridor.

**Employment Areas**

Bristol's industrial and employment areas support manufacturing, marine trades, technology, services, and an expanding Blue Economy. Unity Park, the Bristol Industrial Park, the Franklin Street corridor, the Tupelo Street area, and other established employment locations provide space for businesses that cannot readily be accommodated in Downtown or residential areas.

These lands are an important component of Bristol's economy and tax base. The Town should maintain an adequate supply of viable industrial and commercial land.

Within the Bristol Industrial Park and surrounding employment lands, future planning should address transitions to nearby residential areas and environmental conditions associated with the Silver Creek watershed. Opportunities for ecological restoration, green infrastructure, conservation, and multimodal connections should be considered where environmentally constrained or undeveloped land is not needed for employment development.

**Waterfront and Marine Uses**

Bristol's waterfront is one of the Town's defining natural and economic resources. It supports commercial fishing, recreational boating, marine businesses and the Blue Economy, tourism, and public recreation. The Maritime Center, Harbor Walk, docks, rights-of-way, and other public facilities support recreational use and public access to Bristol Harbor.

Land use decisions along the waterfront should support water-dependent and marine-related activities while maintaining public access and protecting water

quality, historic resources, scenic character, and surrounding neighborhoods. The increasing exposure of waterfront properties and infrastructure to coastal flooding and sea level rise will also require land use and redevelopment decisions to consider long-term resilience.

**Roger Williams University and Major Institutional Properties**

Roger Williams University is a major institutional landowner and employer and plays an important role in Bristol's economy and community. The Educational Institutional zoning and institutional master plan process provides a framework for coordinating University development with broader Town objectives.

Future campus planning should address housing, transportation and infrastructure capacity, Ferry Road, surrounding residential areas, shoreline and environmental resources, and connections between the campus and the broader community.

Other large institutional and privately owned properties also warrant long-term attention. Some contain significant open space, scenic landscapes, historic resources, agricultural land, or environmentally sensitive areas and could experience substantial change if sold or redeveloped. Early communication with property owners can help the Town identify potential changes and evaluate conservation easements, acquisition of land or development rights, conservation development, or other strategies appropriate to individual properties.

**Natural Resources and Open Space**

Land use decisions play an important role in protecting Bristol's wetlands, watersheds, agricultural lands, floodplains, coastal resources, wildlife habitat, and remaining open lands. These resources provide environmental benefits while also contributing to the Town's scenic and historic character.

Particular attention should be given to the Silver Creek and Tanyard Brook watersheds and to development in areas where wetlands, drainage conditions, groundwater, or other environmental constraints limit development capacity. Development intensity should reflect the ability of land and infrastructure to accommodate development without adversely affecting natural resources or increasing flooding and drainage problems.

The Town should evaluate the land use tools available to protect wetlands and other sensitive resources beyond minimum State requirements where local authority allows. Where State law limits local regulatory authority, Bristol should advocate for State policies that provide appropriate protection of resources important to the Town.

Permanent conservation should remain a priority for lands with significant natural, agricultural, scenic, historic, or recreational value. Depending on the property,

appropriate tools may include acquisition, conservation easements, purchase or transfer of development rights, conservation development, partnerships with landowners and conservation organizations, and outside funding.

**Climate Resilience and Land Use**

Flooding, sea level rise, coastal hazards, and extreme precipitation are important considerations in Bristol's long-term land use planning. The Town incorporates available federal, state, and local hazard information into land use planning, development review, infrastructure planning, and hazard-mitigation efforts.

Hazard and climate data continue to evolve as monitoring records expand and federal and state agencies update precipitation estimates, flood mapping, sea-level-rise projections, and related methodologies. Where currently available datasets do not fully reflect recent conditions or provide sufficient local detail, the Town should support efforts to improve the underlying data and incorporate updated information as it becomes available. Land use decisions should continue to be coordinated with the more detailed vulnerability assessments and adaptation strategies contained in the Natural Hazards and Climate Change Element.

**Commercial Area Redevelopment**

Bristol has previously identified selected commercial areas where mixed-use redevelopment can support reinvestment and make more efficient use of already-developed land. This approach is reflected along Metacom Avenue, where the Metacom Mixed Use (MMU) Zoning District identifies specific areas for focused mixed-use development and redevelopment, including commercial uses with residential uses above. The zoning district was informed by earlier corridor planning efforts that identified specific nodes and parcels with redevelopment potential, rather than applying higher-intensity mixed-use zoning uniformly along the corridor.

Building on this approach, other established commercial areas may provide opportunities for similar, context-sensitive reinvestment. Some existing commercial sites are characterized by relatively low-intensity development, large areas of surface parking, limited pedestrian connections, and inefficient circulation. As these properties are improved or redeveloped, the Town should consider opportunities to maintain and strengthen commercial activity while allowing housing above or otherwise integrated with commercial uses, where appropriate. Redevelopment can also provide opportunities to reduce the amount or prominence of surface parking, improve site design and internal circulation, and strengthen pedestrian connections within the site and to adjoining streets and neighborhoods.

The Gooding Avenue/Hope Street commercial area is one location where this approach may be appropriate. Future redevelopment could maintain the area's commercial

function while providing opportunities for upper-story or appropriately integrated residential uses, more efficient use of existing parking areas, and improved pedestrian access and circulation within and around the site. Similar opportunities may be appropriate in other established commercial areas where existing development patterns, infrastructure, transportation access, and compatibility with surrounding uses support mixed-use redevelopment.

**Brownfields and Environmentally Impacted Properties**

Bristol's industrial and commercial history has resulted in a number of properties with known or potential environmental contamination. The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management maintains inventories of properties investigated or regulated through its Site Remediation and Brownfields programs. These inventories change over time, and inclusion does not necessarily indicate that an ongoing environmental problem exists at a property. Brownfield assessment, remediation, and redevelopment can reduce environmental risks, return underutilized land to productive use, and provide opportunities to accommodate future development within already developed areas.

Environmental conditions should be considered together with surrounding land uses, infrastructure, natural resources, and other planning considerations in determining the appropriate long-term use of these properties. The Future Land Use Map identifies the Town's preferred long-term land-use pattern, including changes in designation where continuation of historic industrial or manufacturing use is no longer appropriate.

**Emerging Land Uses and Technologies**

Changes in technology, business practices, energy systems, and other industries can create land uses that were not anticipated when existing zoning regulations were adopted. Some emerging uses may have different infrastructure, environmental, operational, or neighborhood impacts than more traditional uses within the same zoning category. The Town should periodically review its land use regulations to ensure that new and evolving uses are clearly defined and appropriately regulated based on their characteristics and potential impacts.

**Future Land Use**

~~A significant component of the Comprehensive Plan is the **Future Land Use Map (Map LU3)**, which identifies the Town's long-range vision for the future distribution and intensity of land uses throughout Bristol. The map is based on existing development patterns, natural resources, transportation networks, public facilities and services, and the community's vision for future growth, redevelopment, conservation, and preservation over the 20-year planning horizon.~~

~~The Future Land Use Map supports the goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan by establishing a framework for future land use decisions. The map identifies generalized land use categories that describe the desired character and primary uses within each area of town rather than specific zoning districts or development proposals.~~

~~**Zoning and Future Land Use Consistency**~~

~~As part of the Comprehensive Plan update, the Town evaluated the consistency of existing zoning with the land use designations shown on the Future Land Use Map. The evaluation identified areas where existing zoning does not align with the intended future land use or residential density established by the Plan. These areas are shown on **Map LU3: Zoning and Future Land Use Inconsistencies (not drafted yet)** and summarized below, along with the zoning changes or other measures needed to achieve consistency.~~

~~The consistency analysis reflects changes incorporated into the Future Land Use Map through this Plan update, including the designation of permanently protected open space and conservation lands and areas identified to support future housing opportunities.~~

## Future Land Use

A significant component of the Comprehensive Plan is the **Future Land Use Map (Map LU3)**, which identifies the Town's long-range vision for the future distribution and intensity of land uses throughout Bristol. The map is based on existing development patterns, natural resources, transportation networks, public facilities and services, and the community's vision for future growth, redevelopment, conservation, and preservation over the 20-year planning horizon.

Bristol is a largely built-out community, with limited opportunities for substantial new development on undeveloped land. Accordingly, the Town's future land use pattern is expected to remain generally consistent with existing conditions. Future changes will primarily occur through redevelopment and adaptive reuse of existing properties, appropriate infill development, reinvestment in established commercial and industrial areas, and the continued preservation of important natural, historic, and open space resources.

The Future Land Use Map supports the goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan by establishing a framework for future land use decisions. The map identifies generalized land use categories that describe the desired character and primary uses within each area of Town, rather than specific zoning districts or development proposals.

## Future Land Use Designations

The Future Land Use Map identifies the following land use designations. These categories describe the Town's intended future land use pattern and provide guidance for evaluating development proposals, zoning amendments, and other land use decisions.

### Low Density Residential

Areas intended primarily for lower-density residential development, generally characterized by larger residential lots and a relatively low intensity of development. These areas include portions of southern Bristol and other established neighborhoods where maintaining existing residential character, open space, and environmental features is a priority.

### Medium Density Residential

Areas intended primarily for moderate-density residential development, including established single-family neighborhoods on moderately sized lots and other residential uses permitted under applicable zoning. Future development should be compatible with the scale and character of surrounding neighborhoods.

### High Density Residential

Areas characterized by smaller residential lots and higher concentrations of residential development, including locations that may accommodate multifamily housing, redevelopment, or adaptive reuse where appropriate. This designation includes established higher-density neighborhoods as well as selected properties identified for future residential development or redevelopment. The designation does not establish an entitlement to any particular density or development type, which remains subject to applicable zoning and other regulations.

### Agricultural / Open Space

Areas characterized by agricultural activity, undeveloped land, or open space where continued agriculture, conservation, and protection of the existing landscape are priorities. This designation recognizes the importance of preserving agricultural resources and maintaining open landscapes. Depending on existing conditions, ownership, conservation status, and intended future use, these properties may be appropriately zoned Agricultural or Open Space.

### Open Space / Conservation

Areas intended for the long-term preservation of natural resources, conservation, recreation, and other open space purposes. These include publicly owned parks and conservation lands, permanently protected properties, and designated open space

within existing residential developments. In some locations, the Future Land Use Map identifies protected open space within larger developed properties, even where the entire property remains within a single zoning district. These designations recognize existing conservation and open space areas and do not necessarily indicate a need for changes to the underlying zoning.

**Civic / Institutional**

Areas occupied by or intended for public, educational, governmental, community, or other institutional uses. These include schools, municipal facilities, major institutional campuses, and similar properties that serve public or community needs. The designation recognizes the established or anticipated long-term institutional use of these properties, which may not always correspond directly with existing zoning.

**Limited / Neighborhood Commercial with Medium to High Density Residential**

Areas intended to accommodate smaller-scale commercial and service uses, together with compatible residential uses. These locations generally serve surrounding neighborhoods and may include a mix of commercial and residential activity. The designation recognizes the potential for residential uses alongside neighborhood-scale businesses while maintaining compatibility with surrounding residential neighborhoods.

**Commercial**

Areas intended primarily for retail, service, office, and other commercial activities. These include established commercial properties and corridors where continued commercial use, reinvestment, and appropriate redevelopment are anticipated. Commercial activities in these areas contribute to the Town's economic base and provide goods, services, and employment opportunities.

**Downtown Mixed Use**

Bristol's historic downtown commercial center, characterized by a traditional mix of commercial, residential, civic, cultural, and related uses. This designation supports the continued vitality of downtown through preservation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings, continued commercial activity, upper-floor residential uses, and improvements that reinforce downtown's walkable character.

**Mixed Use**

Areas where a combination of commercial, residential, office, and other compatible uses is appropriate. This designation includes selected commercial properties and redevelopment opportunity areas, particularly along Metacom Avenue and Gooding Avenue, where redevelopment or adaptive reuse may provide opportunities for

housing, commercial activity, and more efficient use of existing land and infrastructure.

Mixed-use development may occur within a single building or across a coordinated development site. The designation does not require every property to contain both residential and commercial uses but establishes a framework for allowing an appropriate combination of uses.

**Industrial**

Areas intended primarily for manufacturing, fabrication, warehousing, industrial services, and related employment uses. This designation supports the retention of land suitable for industrial and employment activities while encouraging continued investment, appropriate buffering, and measures to minimize impacts on adjacent neighborhoods and natural resources.

**Industrial / Mixed Use Commercial**

Areas characterized by a mix of industrial, commercial, maritime, cultural, and recreational uses. These include former industrial and mill properties that have been adapted to accommodate new manufacturing businesses, restaurants, breweries, and other commercial activities, as well as waterfront properties supporting boatbuilding, marine-related businesses, museums, events, and other compatible uses.

This designation is intended to provide flexibility to accommodate a range of compatible uses, support the continued operation and growth of existing businesses, encourage new manufacturing and other employment-generating activities, and facilitate the adaptive reuse of former industrial properties. Future uses should be compatible with surrounding neighborhoods and environmental resources.

**Historic Preservation and Conservation**

Areas encompassing significant historic estates and landscapes, including Mount Hope Farm and Blithewold, where preservation of historic, cultural, architectural, scenic, and natural resources is a primary objective. This designation recognizes the importance of maintaining the historic character, landscapes, gardens, and open space associated with these properties while accommodating compatible uses that support their continued preservation and stewardship.

**Waterfront Mixed Use**

Areas along Bristol's waterfront where a combination of water-dependent, maritime, commercial, recreational, and other compatible uses is appropriate. This designation recognizes the waterfront's economic, cultural, and recreational significance and supports continued maritime activity, access to the waterfront, and appropriate

reinvestment while considering historic character, coastal hazards, and environmental constraints.

## Relationship Between Future Land Use and Existing Zoning

The Future Land Use designations generally correspond to the Town's existing zoning districts, as summarized in Table LU-2. However, the Future Land Use Map is intended to guide long-term land use decisions and does not necessarily reflect current zoning on every property.

Certain areas have been assigned future land use designations that differ from existing zoning to reflect intended redevelopment, housing opportunities, conservation priorities, or established land uses. These differences are addressed in the following section on zoning and future land use consistency.

### Table LU-2. General Relationship Between Future Land Use Designations and Existing Zoning

| Future Land Use Designation | Generally Corresponding Existing Zoning Districts |
|---|---|
| Low Density Residential | R-40, R-40W, R-80 |
| Medium Density Residential | R-15, R-20, R20SP |
| High Density Residential | R-6, R-8, R-10, R10SW |
| Agricultural / Open Space | AG, OS |
| Open Space / Conservation | OS |
| Civic / Institutional | EI, PI |
| Limited / Neighborhood Commercial with Medium to High Density Residential | LB; other districts depending on location |
| Commercial | GB |
| Downtown Mixed Use | D |
| Mixed Use | MMU; selected areas currently zoned GB, LB, or M where changes may be proposed |
| Industrial | M |

| | |
|---|---|
| Industrial / Mixed Use Commercial | M; other commercial or mixed-use districts as appropriate |
| Historic Preservation and Conservation | HPC |
| Waterfront Mixed Use | W, WPUD, as applicable |

*Note: This table identifies general relationships and does not establish permitted uses, residential densities, or zoning changes. The appropriate zoning for individual properties may vary depending on their existing and intended future use.*

**Existing Planned Unit Developments**

Existing Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) and Residential Planned Unit Developments (RPUDs) are shown on the Future Land Use Map according to their established residential and open space uses. These developments are already built out, and no changes to their existing zoning are proposed. Their future land use designations reflect existing development patterns and are not intended to encourage additional development or redevelopment.

**Future Land Use Overlays**

In addition to the underlying land use designations, Map LU3 identifies overlays that provide further guidance for the preservation, use, or redevelopment of particular areas. These overlays supplement the underlying future land use designations rather than replacing them.

**Historic District**

The Future Land Use Map identifies the Town's Historic District boundary to recognize the importance of preserving Bristol's historic buildings, streetscapes, and community character. The boundary is shown as an overlay, allowing the underlying future land use designation to remain visible.

**Resource Conservation and Creative Development (RC&CD)**

The RC&CD overlay identifies areas subject to the Town's Resource Conservation and Creative Development zoning framework. The overlay recognizes properties where development should be coordinated with the protection of significant natural, scenic, historic, and cultural resources. It is shown in conjunction with the underlying future land use designation.

**Attainable Housing Preservation and Redevelopment Opportunity Areas**

The Future Land Use Map identifies selected properties with potential opportunities to preserve, adaptively reuse, or develop housing that helps address Bristol's housing

needs. These areas include vacant or underutilized commercial properties, former institutional buildings, and other locations identified through the Housing Element and Planning Board review.

The overlay is intended to identify potential housing opportunities for future consideration and does not establish development approvals, guarantee the suitability of a particular site, or supersede applicable zoning and environmental regulations.

Some of these properties already have residential zoning generally consistent with their intended future use, while others may require zoning amendments to accommodate residential or mixed-use redevelopment.

*Note: Draft list of properties intended to be included in the attainable housing overlay for review and finalization*

| **Property / location** | **Plat / Lot** |
|---|---|
| Ferreira Property – Bay View Avenue | 47/3 |
| Almeida Apartments – 201 Bay View Avenue | 48/7 |
| Francis Gravel Bank – Bay View Avenue | 48/8 |
| Gooding Plaza / Ace Plaza – 20 Gooding Avenue | 118/2 |
| 6 Gooding Avenue | 118/1 |
| Former Bristol Toyota – 706 Metacom Avenue | 128/11 and 128/13 |
| Perry Properties – 500–502 Metacom Avenue | 159/984, 985, 990, 991, 1034 |
| King Philip Property – 400 Metacom Avenue | 155/71 and associated sublots |
| Former Benny's Plaza – 655 Metacom Avenue | 94/7 |
| Bristol Total Fitness – 685 Metacom Avenue | 94/1 |
| Former Reynolds School – 235 High Street | 14/27 |
| Former St. Elizabeth's School | 23/54 and 23/55 |
| Columban Fathers – 65 Ferry Road | 166/2 and 166/19 |
| St. Dorothy Property – Monkey Wrench Lane | 167/8 |

## Zoning and Future Land Use Consistency

As part of the Comprehensive Plan update, the Town evaluated the consistency of existing zoning with the land use designations shown on the Future Land Use Map. Because Bristol is largely developed, the evaluation focused on whether current zoning accurately reflects established land uses, the Town's long-term preservation objectives, and opportunities for redevelopment and adaptive reuse.

The Town has also identified properties where zoning amendments may be desirable to accommodate compatible redevelopment or more accurately reflect established uses, even where an amendment may not be strictly necessary for consistency.

These areas are identified for further review in **Map LU4: Zoning and Future Land Use Inconsistencies** [not yet drafted] and summarized in Table LU-3 below.

## Priority Properties for Zoning Review

Table LU-3 identifies properties where existing zoning differs from the proposed Future Land Use designation or where other zoning amendments are under consideration. The table reflects preliminary recommendations developed through the Comprehensive Plan update and is intended to guide further Planning Board review and zoning implementation.

**Table LU-3. Preliminary Zoning Amendments and Future Land Use Implementation**

| Property / Location | Existing Zoning | Proposed Future Land Use | Potential Zoning Action |
|---|---|---|---|
| Almeida Apartments / RWU Property, Bay View Ave (P48/L7) | LB | High Density Residential | Consider R-6 or other appropriate high-density residential district |
| Francis Gravel Bank, Bay View Ave (P48/L8) | LB | High Density Residential | Consider R-6 or other appropriate high-density residential district |
| Gooding Plaza, 20 Gooding Ave (P118/L2) and 6 Gooding Ave (P118/L1) | GB | Mixed Use | Consider mixed-use zoning allowing commercial and residential development |
| Former Bristol Toyota, 706 Metacom Ave (P128/L11 and 13) | M, GB | Mixed Use | Consider mixed-use zoning |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Perry Properties, 500–502 Metacom Ave (P159/L984, 985, 990, 991, 1034) | LB | Mixed Use | Consider mixed-use zoning |
| King Philip Property, 400 Metacom Ave (P155/L71 and associated sublots) | GB | Mixed Use | Consider mixed-use zoning |
| Former Benny's Plaza, 655 Metacom Ave (P94/L7) | GB | Mixed Use | Consider mixed-use zoning |
| Bristol Total Fitness, 685 Metacom Ave (P94/L1) | M | Mixed Use | Consider mixed-use zoning |
| Gas Station, 756 Hope St (P12/L19) | GB | Mixed Use | Consider mixed-use zoning |
| 814 Hope St (P7/L12) | GB | Medium Density Residential | Consider R-15 or R-20 |
| 607 Metacom Ave (P98/L18) (in front of Stop & Shop) | M | Commercial | Consider GB |
| Jack's Salvage, 625 Metacom Ave (P94/L8) | M | Industrial / Mixed Use Commercial | Evaluate appropriate commercial-oriented zoning while considering existing conditions and environmental constraints |
| Harbor Condos, 3 Poppasquash Rd (P187/L39) | WPUD | High Density Residential | Review potential change to appropriate residential zoning |
| Tower Street Properties (Plats 135 and 144) | R-40 | Agricultural / Open Space | Rezone to OS and remove RC&CD designation |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Williams Agricultural Property (P160/L5) | R-40 | Agricultural / Open Space | Evaluate AG or OS |
| State Veterans Home (P156/L37 and adjacent State-owned property) | HPC | Civic / Institutional | Consider rezone to institutional |

*Note: The properties and potential zoning actions listed above are preliminary. Final recommendations will be based on Planning Board review.*

**Additional Properties and Zoning Considerations**

In addition to the properties identified above, the Town has identified several areas where further review of existing land use, zoning, or overlay boundaries may be appropriate.

**Table LU-4. Additional Future Land Use and Zoning Considerations**

| Property / Location | Future Land Use Consideration | Proposed Direction |
|---|---|---|
| Columban Fathers, Ferry Road (P166/L2 and 19) | Low Density Residential with RC&CD and Attainable Housing Opportunity overlays | Maintain underlying R-40; recognize conservation resources and potential adaptive reuse |
| St. Dorothy Property (P167/L8) | Residential with RC&CD overlay | Confirm intended residential designation and any associated zoning changes |
| Deer Run Road Development | Medium and High Density Residential | Remove RC&CD overlay; retain existing underlying residential designations |
| Stop & Shop (P98/L3) | Commercial with rear open space area | Verify extent and protection status of open space before determining zoning implications |
| Larger Cemeteries | Civic / Institutional | Identify appropriate properties and evaluate whether existing residential zoning should be amended to institutional |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Usher Farm (P138/L1) | Residential with RC&CD overlay | Remove from Historic District; no underlying zoning amendment proposed |
| Maritime Center, 127 Thames St (P10/L70) | Institutional (correct on map) | Confirm intended land use designation and if rezoning to institutional is consistent with waterfront uses |
| Burnside Street / Herreshoff Industrial Properties (Plat 16) | Industrial / Mixed Use Commercial | Review whether existing zoning adequately supports intended uses |
| Unity Park and Adjoining Properties (Plat 29) | Industrial / Mixed Use Commercial | Reflects existing uses and adopted zoning; no additional rezoning currently proposed |

*Note: These properties are identified for further review and should not automatically be classified as requiring amendments for zoning–FLUM consistency. Overlay boundary adjustments should be distinguished from changes to underlying zoning.*

In some locations, the Future Land Use Map identifies distinct land uses within a single parcel, such as designated open space within an established residential development. These differences do not necessarily represent zoning inconsistencies requiring amendments. Where existing development approvals, conservation restrictions, or other protections establish and preserve these uses, the Town does not intend to divide the property into separate zoning districts solely to match the Future Land Use Map.

## Implementation of the Future Land Use Map

As part of this Comprehensive Plan update, the Town has evaluated existing zoning in relation to the proposed Future Land Use Map and identified areas where zoning amendments will be necessary to achieve consistency. These areas are illustrated on Map LU4, *Zoning and Future Land Use Inconsistencies*, and summarized in the preceding tables.

In accordance with the Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act, the Town is required to bring its Zoning Map into conformance with the adopted Future Land Use Map within 18 months. The identified zoning amendments will be incorporated into the Plan's Implementation Program, which will establish the schedule and responsibilities for completing these changes.

The proposed amendments include changes to accommodate residential and mixed-use redevelopment opportunities, align zoning with intended commercial and institutional uses, and provide appropriate zoning for certain conservation and open space properties. In addition to these identified inconsistencies, the Town may consider other zoning amendments to provide greater flexibility for compatible redevelopment and adaptive reuse, particularly along Metacom Avenue and Gooding Avenue.

The Future Land Use Map establishes the Town's long-term planning direction but does not itself amend the Zoning Ordinance or Zoning Map. The necessary zoning amendments will be undertaken following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan through the applicable public review and adoption process.

## Goals and Policies

### Goal LU-1

Promote a sustainable, resilient, and fiscally responsible land use pattern that accommodates Bristol's housing, economic, institutional, and community needs while protecting the Town's distinctive character and environmental resources.

### Policies

**LU-1.1** Direct growth and redevelopment toward locations with appropriate infrastructure, transportation access, and capacity to accommodate development while minimizing impacts to environmentally sensitive and historically significant areas.

**LU-1.2** Encourage compact development, appropriate infill, redevelopment, and adaptive reuse as alternatives to unnecessary expansion of the developed footprint.

**LU-1.3** Coordinate land use decisions with transportation, infrastructure, public services, environmental protection, housing, economic development, and climate resilience planning.

**LU-1.4** Maintain an appropriate balance of residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, recreational, agricultural, and open-space land to support a complete and fiscally sustainable community.

**LU-1.5** Encourage conservation development, low-impact development, green infrastructure, and other sustainable development practices where appropriate to preserve natural features and reduce environmental impacts.

**LU-1.6** Promote the assessment, remediation, and beneficial reuse of brownfields and other environmentally impacted or potentially contaminated properties, with future uses consistent with the Future Land Use Map and based on environmental conditions, surrounding land uses, infrastructure capacity, natural-resource constraints, and neighborhood character.

**Goal LU-2**

Preserve and strengthen the distinctive development patterns, neighborhoods, landscapes, corridors, and activity centers that collectively define Bristol's community character.

**Policies**

**LU-2.1** Maintain Downtown Bristol as a walkable, mixed-use center characterized by its traditional development pattern, historic buildings, pedestrian-oriented streets, compatible infill, and mix of residential, civic, institutional, and commercial uses.

**LU-2.2** Protect the character of established residential neighborhoods by ensuring that infill, redevelopment, and changes in land use are appropriately scaled and designed for their surroundings.

~~**LU-2.3** Protect the low-density, scenic, historic, agricultural, and coastal character of areas and ensure that development intensity is compatible with environmental conditions and available infrastructure.~~

~~**LU-2.4** Protect significant natural, scenic, historic, cultural, and open-space resources in less-developed portions of Bristol while allowing compatible development consistent with environmental and infrastructure capacity.~~

**LU-2.3** Protect the low-density character and significant natural, scenic, historic, cultural, agricultural, coastal, and open-space resources of Bristol's less-developed areas while ensuring that new development is compatible with these resources, environmental conditions, and available infrastructure.

**LU-2.~~5~~ 4** Encourage development and redevelopment along Metacom Avenue that improves the corridor's appearance and function, supports appropriate commercial and mixed-use activity, strengthens connections to adjoining neighborhoods, and is coordinated with transportation improvements.

**LU-2.~~6~~ 5** Encourage reinvestment and mixed-use redevelopment in appropriate existing commercial areas, including opportunities for housing integrated with commercial uses, more efficient parking and site design, and improved pedestrian access and circulation.

**LU-2.~~7~~ 6** Encourage major institutional landowners to plan future development in a manner compatible with surrounding neighborhoods, natural and cultural resources, transportation capacity, and Town land use objectives.

**Goal LU-3**

Maintain a diverse land base that supports housing, employment, commerce, marine activity, institutional uses, and a strong municipal tax base while ensuring compatibility among uses and with surrounding neighborhoods.

**Policies**

**LU-3.1** Preserve an adequate supply of appropriately located commercial and industrial land to support employment, services, entrepreneurship, marine-related activity, and economic development.

**LU-3.2** Discourage unnecessary conversion of viable commercial and industrial land while recognizing opportunities for mixed-use development, adaptive reuse, housing, and other land use transitions consistent with State law and the Comprehensive Plan.

**LU-3.3** Support investment and redevelopment in the Bristol Industrial Park and other employment areas in a manner compatible with surrounding neighborhoods, transportation systems, and environmental resources.

**LU-3.4** Encourage redevelopment and productive reuse of vacant and underutilized properties where appropriate before expansion of development into important open-space and environmentally sensitive lands.

**LU-3.5** Support waterfront and marine-dependent uses in appropriate locations while maintaining public access, coastal resilience, water quality, and compatibility with surrounding uses.

**Goal LU-4**

Protect Bristol's natural resources, open spaces, watersheds, coastal areas, scenic landscapes, and environmentally sensitive lands through land use planning and development practices that increase resilience to climate change.

**Policies**

**LU-4.1** Protect wetlands, watercourses, groundwater, floodplains, coastal resources, wildlife habitat, and other environmentally sensitive lands through appropriate land use and development standards.

**LU-4.2** Protect the Silver Creek and Tanyard Brook watersheds and consider watershed conditions and potential downstream impacts when evaluating development, redevelopment, infrastructure, and land use changes.

**LU-4.3** Preserve significant open lands, agricultural landscapes, scenic resources, and important connections between protected lands.

**LU-4.4** Encourage permanent conservation of priority lands through acquisition, conservation easements, purchase or transfer of development rights, conservation development, and partnerships with private landowners and conservation organizations.

**LU-4.5** Incorporate sea level rise, flooding, storm surge, erosion, extreme precipitation, and other climate hazards into long-range land use planning and development review.

**LU-4.6** Avoid increasing development intensity in locations where environmental constraints, infrastructure limitations, or climate hazards make such development inappropriate or unsustainable.

**Goal LU-5**

Maintain a clear land use regulatory framework that implements the Comprehensive Plan, responds to changing community needs and State requirements, and provides for effective long-term land use management.

**Policies**

**LU-5.1** Maintain consistency among the Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Map, Zoning Ordinance, Zoning Map, and Subdivision and Development Review Regulations.

**LU-5.2** Periodically review zoning and development regulations to respond to changes in State law while preserving Bristol's ability to address community character, environmental protection, infrastructure capacity, and sound planning principles.

**LU-5.3** Use the Future Land Use Map as the principal guide for future zoning decisions and evaluate proposed zoning changes for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

**LU-5.4** Use development review and design standards to ensure that infill, redevelopment, adaptive reuse, and new construction are compatible with their physical and neighborhood context.

**LU-5.5** Maintain current GIS, development, environmental, infrastructure, and land use information to support informed decision-making and monitor implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

**Planning Areas**

To supplement the Town-wide land use goals and policies, this Plan retains the planning area framework established in the previous Comprehensive Plan. The planning areas recognize differences in development pattern, neighborhood character, environmental and historic resources, institutional and employment uses, transportation conditions, infrastructure, and opportunities for preservation and redevelopment.

The policies for each planning area provide place-specific direction and should be considered together with the Future Land Use Map and the Town-wide goals, policies, and actions contained throughout this Comprehensive Plan. Planning area boundaries provide a framework for long-range planning and are not intended to function as zoning district boundaries.

Town-wide policies concerning compatible development, natural-resource protection, stormwater management and green infrastructure, tree canopy, climate resilience, historic-resource protection, Complete Streets, and pedestrian and bicycle connectivity apply throughout Bristol as appropriate. Several major corridors, including Metacom Avenue and Hope Street/Ferry Road, extend through multiple planning areas; applicable Town-wide corridor, transportation, historic-resource, and land-use policies should therefore be considered together with the place-specific policies below.

**Northeast**

- Maintain and protect the established residential and commercial character of the area.
- Ensure that development and redevelopment along Metacom Avenue are compatible with adjoining residential neighborhoods.
- Maintain appropriate neighborhood connections that improve local circulation and access without encouraging undesirable cut-through traffic.

**Kickemuit**

- Preserve the area's remaining farmland, open fields, wetlands, and significant open space through conservation easements, conservation development, protection of development rights, and other appropriate land-preservation tools, with particular attention to agricultural lands and scenic views along Metacom Avenue.
- ~~Make preservation of the area's remaining farmland, open fields, wetlands, and open space a primary land use objective.~~
- ~~Protect significant agricultural lands and open space through conservation development, conservation easements, development-right protection, and other appropriate land-preservation tools.~~
- ~~Protect the open fields and agricultural lands visible from Metacom Avenue as important components of the area's rural character.~~

- Support continued agricultural use and compatible activities that contribute to the long-term viability of farming in Bristol.
- Direct appropriately scaled mixed-use development and redevelopment to suitable properties along Metacom Avenue while maintaining appropriate transitions to agricultural and residential lands to the east.
- Protect the Kickemuit River, Mount Hope Bay, associated wetlands, watershed resources, and water quality by minimizing stormwater runoff and other potential impacts of development and redevelopment.
- ~~Protect the Kickemuit River, wetlands, watershed resources, and water quality as development and redevelopment occur.~~

**The Narrows**

- Protect the established residential character and scale of the Narrows.
- Improve north-south neighborhood circulation where connections would benefit local residents, emergency access, service delivery, pedestrians, or bicyclists without encouraging regional cut-through traffic.
- Coordinate future changes associated with the Rhode Island Veterans Home with surrounding neighborhoods and environmental resources.
- Address drainage and stormwater conditions that affect the neighborhood.
- Improve appropriate connections between the Narrows and Hopeworth, including pedestrian and bicycle connections where environmental constraints make vehicular connections inappropriate.
- Protect Waypoyset Preserve as an important archaeological, cultural, natural, and passive-recreation resource.
- Manage public access, trails, and interpretation at Waypoyset in a manner that protects sensitive archaeological and culturally significant resources.

**Hopeworth**

- Protect the established residential character and development pattern of Hopeworth.
- Maintain the former Hopeworth landfill property at the end of Roosevelt Drive consistent with its open-space designation.
- Maintain appropriate connections between Hopeworth and the Narrows.
- Protect wetlands, drainage systems, shoreline resources, and Mount Hope Bay through appropriate stormwater management and measures to minimize the impacts of development and redevelopment.

- ~~.~~

- Incorporate coastal flooding and long-term shoreline conditions into land-use and infrastructure decisions in vulnerable portions of the area.
- ~~Develop a long-term land-use strategy for the former landfill/Minturn Farm property that recognizes its renewable-energy use, environmental constraints, and opportunities for compatible conservation, recreation, public access, and~~

~~long-term management.~~ Ensure that future uses and management of the former Bristol Landfill on Minturn Farm Road are compatible with its existing renewable-energy and municipal uses, environmental constraints, and open-space designation.

**Mt. Hope**

- Protect the Mt. Hope area as one of Bristol's most significant open-space, natural, archaeological, historic, and cultural landscapes.
- Protect forests, fields, wetlands, shoreline resources, habitat, and other significant natural features.
- Protect culturally and archaeologically significant sites associated with Indigenous history and incorporate appropriate consultation into stewardship and land-use decisions.
- Maintain and strengthen long-term conservation of the Mount Hope Community Forest and surrounding protected lands.
- Coordinate stewardship of the broader Mt. Hope landscape with the Pokanoket Tribe, conservation organizations, Mount Hope Farm, institutions, public agencies, and other landowners.
- Use conservation easements, acquisition, development-right protection, conservation development, and other tools to preserve significant lands that remain unprotected.
- Provide appropriate public access, trails, interpretation, and environmental education while protecting sensitive cultural and natural resources.
- Reflect permanently conserved properties as Open Space on the Future Land Use Map and Zoning Map, where appropriate.

**University**

- Coordinate future campus development through applicable Educational Institutional zoning and University master-planning processes.
- Ensure that campus development protects surrounding cultural, historic, environmental, shoreline, and neighborhood resources.
- Coordinate campus planning with transportation and infrastructure capacity, including Ferry Road and Metacom Avenue.
- Encourage additional on-campus student housing to reduce competition between students and other households for Bristol's year-round rental housing.
- Maintain public shoreline access, including the RWU Shell Path, and consider opportunities to improve pedestrian connections where appropriate.
- ~~Maintain appropriate shoreline access and trail connections associated with the campus.~~
- Protect the scenic and historic character of Ferry Road/Route 114 as campus and transportation improvements occur.

- Incorporate coastal flooding, shoreline conditions, and infrastructure resilience into long-term University campus planning and improvements.
- ~~Incorporate shoreline and infrastructure resilience into long-term University and corridor planning.~~
-

**North Central**

- Maintain the predominantly residential and open-space character of the area and allow only compatible infill development.
- Protect wetlands, wooded open space, water resources and natural drainage systems ~~the Silver Creek watershed~~ from degradation.
- Use conservation development and other preservation tools to protect significant natural resources where development occurs.
- Maintain the residential character of the east side of Hope Street.
- Maintain and expand appropriate walking, bicycle, greenway, and open-space connections through the area.
- ~~Protect environmentally sensitive land and ecological connections associated with the Silver Creek watershed.~~

**Industrial Area**

- Preserve strategically important industrial land for manufacturing and employment uses and avoid unnecessary conversion of viable industrial properties to incompatible uses.
- Support continued economic development and reinvestment within the Bristol Industrial Park and surrounding employment areas.
- Encourage marine trades, advanced manufacturing, ocean technology, and related industries that build on Bristol's existing economic strengths.
- Allow compatible commercial activity and appropriate transition areas while protecting the core industrial land base.
- Coordinate development and redevelopment along Metacom Avenue, Gooding Avenue, Tupelo Street, and Broadcommon Road with access, circulation, and corridor-management objectives.
- Continue to support shared access and internal circulation between Gooding Avenue and Tupelo Street where feasible.
- Protect the Silver Creek watershed and ~~use~~ prioritize environmentally ~~constrained~~ sensitive land for ~~appropriate~~ conservation, restoration, stormwater-management, and green-infrastructure ~~purposes~~, where appropriate.
- Improve compatibility and transitions between industrial and commercial properties and adjoining residential or environmentally sensitive areas.

**High School**

- Maintain the High School area as a major educational and recreational use while protecting surrounding residential neighborhoods.
- Protect and restore Silver Creek and coordinate site improvements with drainage, stormwater-management, and water-quality objectives.
- Integrate the replacement of Mt. Hope High School and associated athletic, parking, circulation, and site improvements into the long-term land-use pattern of the area.
- Minimize traffic, parking, lighting, and other school-related impacts on adjoining residential neighborhoods.
- Improve pedestrian safety and accessibility on Sherry Avenue, Perry Street, Naomi Street, and other streets used by students traveling to and from the High School.
- Support appropriate redevelopment of commercial properties in the Metacom Avenue/Gooding Avenue area consistent with the broader Metacom Avenue corridor strategy.

**Downtown Neighborhood**

- Maintain the area's traditional mixed residential and neighborhood-commercial character.
- Encourage adaptive reuse of older residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional buildings where compatible with surrounding development.
- Support context-sensitive infill and mixed-use redevelopment that maintains neighborhood scale, pedestrian orientation, and historic development patterns.
- Encourage appropriate redevelopment and reinvestment along Metacom Avenue in the Bayview Avenue, Franklin Street, ~~Minturn Farm Road,~~ Mt. Hope Avenue, and Woodlawn Avenue portions of the planning area.
- Provide appropriate transitions between Metacom Avenue commercial or mixed-use development and adjoining residential neighborhoods.
- Recognize and protect significant historic resources identified through the Historic Resources Re-Survey, including resources within Northern Hope Street and Wood Street/New Goree neighborhood.
- Coordinate long-term planning for the Police Department property and adjoining Bayview Avenue property with surrounding land uses and neighborhood conditions.

**The Estates**

- Preserve the area's distinctive estate landscapes, ~~large lots,~~ historic properties, gardens, ~~open space,~~ mature vegetation, open space ~~shoreline resources,~~ and scenic character ~~of the area~~.
- Work proactively with owners of large estate and institutional properties to plan for ~~future~~ potential changes in ownership or use, including opportunities for conservation, preservation, and compatible adaptive reuse or reuse, or housing that are compatible with the area's historic, environmental, and neighborhood character.

- ~~Use~~ Encourage the use of conservation easements, purchases of development-right~~s protection~~, acquisition, conservation development, and other preservation tools to protect significant landscapes and open space.
- Preserve significant scenic vistas of historic landscapes and the shoreline from public roads and other publicly accessible locations, and protect existing public shoreline rights-of-way.
- ~~Protect views and existing public shoreline rights-of-way.~~
- ~~Consider appropriate adaptive reuse or housing opportunities within existing institutional properties if institutional uses change, where compatible with historic, environmental, infrastructure, and neighborhood objectives.~~
- Protect the scenic and historic character of ~~Hope Street and~~ Ferry Road/Route 114.
- Incorporate coastal flooding, shoreline conditions, and infrastructure resilience into long-term land use planning for the area.~~Incorporate long-term resilience of the Ferry Road shoreline and associated infrastructure into land-use planning for the area.~~

**Downtown Core**

- Preserve and enhance the Downtown Core as Bristol's historic, compact, walkable, mixed-use center.
- Protect historic buildings, streetscapes, development scale, and the character of Hope Street and the Bristol Waterfront Historic District while accommodating compatible reinvestment and adaptive reuse.
- Preserve the historic and scenic character of Bristol Harbor and the Downtown waterfront while accommodating compatible waterfront uses and improvements.
- ~~Maintain the physical scale and historic character of the waterfront.~~
- Support active ground-floor commercial uses and housing on upper stories to reinforce year-round Downtown activity.
- Maintain and expand continuous public access to the ~~waterfront~~ Bristol Harbor and improve connections among waterfront parks, the public boardwalk, docks, Downtown destinations, and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Maintain working-waterfront, boating, ferry, and other appropriate marine and water-dependent uses.
- Maintain the Town Common as an important historic, civic, and open-space resource.
- Manage parking and curb space in a manner that supports Downtown residents, businesses, visitors, and accessibility while maintaining walkability and historic character.
- Incorporate preservation-compatible flood resilience into public and private improvements within the Waterfront Historic District.
- Support appropriate adaptive reuse or redevelopment of surplus municipal and institutional properties as Town functions relocate.

- Support Unity Park as an established adaptive-reuse and employment destination and improve compatible access between Unity Park, Franklin Street, Downtown, and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Continue to improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation within Downtown, including implementation of the Thames Street and Wood Street concepts identified through the Bicycle Network planning process.

**Northwest**

- Maintain and protect the established residential character of the area.
- Maintain the existing overall development pattern; substantial land-use change is not anticipated.
- Conserve remaining open land and significant natural resources.
- Ensure that infill development is compatible with established neighborhood character.
- Maintain appropriate neighborhood connections.
- Protect the scenic and historic character of Hope Street/Route 114.

**Highlands**

- Protect the established residential and historic character of the Bristol Highlands.
- Ensure that infill and redevelopment are compatible with established lot patterns, building scale, streetscape, and landscape character.
- Limit incompatible expansion of commercial uses into established residential portions of the area.
- Maintain appropriate neighborhood connections without encouraging undesirable cut-through traffic.
- Protect historic resources and the distinctive settlement pattern of the Highlands.
- Protect the scenic and historic character of Hope Street/Route 114 and its role within the Revolutionary Heritage Byway.

**State Park**

- Protect Colt State Park, Town recreation lands, and associated open space as the predominant land uses within the planning area.
- Maintain and improve Bristol Town Beach, the Sports Complex, Quinta-Gamelin Community Center, and associated recreation facilities.
- Maintain and strengthen the path and trail system connecting recreation and open-space resources.
- Protect shoreline, coastal habitat, and open space while maintaining appropriate public recreation and shoreline access.
- Incorporate accessibility and long-term coastal resilience into future improvements to parks, beaches, recreation facilities, trails, and shoreline infrastructure.

- Continue coordination between the Town and State regarding Colt State Park, the East Bay Bike Path, and adjoining Town recreation facilities.

**Poppasquash**

- Maintain the low-density, agricultural, open-space, historic, and scenic character of Poppasquash in recognition of its infrastructure limitations and environmental constraints.
- Discourage development intensity that would adversely affect private wells, groundwater resources, on-site wastewater systems, or the area's rural character.
- Protect agricultural lands, wooded areas, wetlands, shoreline habitat, scenic views, and significant open space.
- Protect the historic character of the Poppasquash Farms area and its distinctive pattern of farms, estates, stone walls, and shoreline views.
- Use conservation development, easements, acquisition, and other preservation tools to retain significant open space and natural resources as development occurs.
- Maintain appropriate pedestrian and bicycle connections between Poppasquash Road, Hope Street, Colt State Park, and the East Bay Bike Path.
- Incorporate recurrent flooding, sea-level rise, emergency access, and long-term transportation resilience into planning for Poppasquash Road and future land-use decisions.

| Land Use Implementation Actions (DRAFT 10/16/2026) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **ID** | **Implementation Action** | **Responsible Party** | **Timeframe** |
| **LU-A1** | Review and amend the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map as necessary to achieve consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map within 18-months of Plan adoption, consistent with state law. | Town Council; Planning Board; Department of Community Development | Short Term |
| **LU-A2** | Review and update the Subdivision and Development Review Regulations to implement the Comprehensive Plan, maintain consistency with state law, and incorporate land use objectives | Planning Board; Department of Community Development | Short Term |
| **LU-A3** | Review and amend the zoning of permanently protected conservation and open space properties, as appropriate, to achieve consistency with the Future Land Use Map. Recognize that protected open space within existing developed properties may be appropriately identified on the Future Land Use Map without requiring changes to the underlying zoning. | Town Council; Planning Board; Department of Community Development | Short-Term |
| **LU-A4** | Review the zoning of Town-owned and other major public or institutional properties and pursue amendments, as appropriate, to reflect existing and planned uses and achieve consistency with the Future Land Use Map. | Town Council; Planning Board; Department of Community Development | Short-Term |
| **LU-A5** | Develop a long-term land-use strategy for the former landfill/Minturn Farm property that considers existing renewable-energy use, environmental constraints, compatible recreational and conservation uses, public access, long-term management needs, funding opportunities, and potential partnerships. | Town Administrator; Community Development; DPW; Planning Board | Medium Term |
| **LU-A6** | Review and update zoning and development standards along Metacom Avenue to support appropriate redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties, mixed-use development, continued commercial activity, and opportunities for housing. Improve site and building design, transitions to adjoining residential areas, and coordination with transportation and infrastructure improvements. | Planning Board; Town Council; Community Development | Short Term/Ongoing |
| **LU-A7** | Review and update zoning and development standards for appropriate commercial areas, including Gooding Avenue, to support mixed-use redevelopment, upper-story and other appropriately integrated housing, continued commercial activity, more efficient parking and site design, and improved pedestrian access and circulation. | Planning Board; Town Council; Community Development | Short–Medium Term |

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|---|---|---|---|
| **LU-A8** | Review zoning and development standards for the Bristol Industrial Park and surrounding lands to support continued economic development, retain viable industrial land, improve transitions to adjacent uses, and address environmental constraints associated with the Silver Creek watershed. | Planning Board; Community Development; Economic Development Commission | Medium Term |
| **LU-A9** | Evaluate opportunities for conservation, ecological restoration, green infrastructure, and appropriate multimodal connections on environmentally constrained or undeveloped land within and adjoining industrial and commercial areas, particularly where such measures would protect the Silver Creek watershed. | Community Development; Planning Board; Conservation Commission; DPW | Medium–Long Term |
| **LU-A10** | Review Downtown zoning and development standards to support mixed-use activity, context-sensitive infill, and adaptive reuse while maintaining historic development patterns, pedestrian orientation, appropriate building scale, and neighborhood character. Evaluate local standards that can supplement state adaptive-reuse requirements where legally permissible. | Planning Board; Historic District Commission; Town Council; Community Development | Short–Medium Term |
| **LU-A11** | Coordinate with Roger Williams University through applicable zoning and master-plan review processes to ensure that future campus development addresses surrounding neighborhoods, housing, transportation and infrastructure capacity, shoreline and natural-resource constraints, and Town land use objectives. | Community Development; Planning Board; RWU | Ongoing |
| **LU-A12** | Identify large undeveloped or underdeveloped privately and institutionally owned properties that may be susceptible to future development or disposition and establish strategies for early coordination with property owners and evaluation of conservation easements, development rights, acquisition, conservation development, or other appropriate land-use tools. | Community Development; Planning Board; Conservation Commission; Bristol Land Conservation Trust | Ongoing |
| **LU-A13** | Evaluate local land-use and regulatory tools to protect significant wetlands, wetland buffers, watersheds, floodplains, and other environmentally sensitive lands beyond minimum state requirements where legally authorized, and advocate for stronger state protections where local authority is limited. | Planning Board; Conservation Commission; Community Development | Medium Term/Ongoing |
| **LU-A14** | Continue to incorporate the best available federal and state information on sea-level rise, coastal and inland flooding, extreme precipitation, stormwater, erosion, and other relevant natural hazards into zoning, subdivision review, redevelopment planning, and land use decisions. Evaluate appropriate adaptation strategies for vulnerable areas and update local information and standards as new data and methodologies become available. | Planning Board; Community Development; DPW | Ongoing |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **LU-A15** | Maintain and enhance the Town's GIS-based land use information and mapping to support planning, development review, resource protection, and municipal decision-making. | Community Development | Ongoing |
| **LU-A16** | Periodically review available RIDEM Site Remediation and Brownfields information to identify properties where environmental assessment, remediation, or coordinated redevelopment may be warranted. Work with RIDEM, property owners, and other partners to pursue available assessment and remediation assistance and funding and support redevelopment consistent with the Future Land Use Map. | Department of Community Development; Town Administrator | Ongoing |
| **LU-A17** | Coordinate with federal, state, regional, and academic partners to support improvements to precipitation, flood-risk, drainage, and other hazard data relevant to Bristol. Pursue available funding for supplemental local data collection, monitoring, modeling, mapping, and technical studies where existing datasets do not provide sufficient current or site-specific information for local resilience planning. | Department of Community Development; Department of Public Works; Town Administrator | Ongoing |
| **LU-A18** | Review zoning and development standards for areas designated Industrial / Mixed Use Commercial on the Future Land Use Map to provide flexibility for existing and new manufacturing, maritime, commercial, cultural, and recreational uses, including adaptive reuse of former industrial properties. Ensure that permitted uses and development standards support compatible activities and continued employment opportunities. | Department of Community Development; Planning Board; Town Council | Medium-term |
| **LU-A19** | Evaluate land uses, zoning, and development standards along Gooding Avenue and Metacom Avenue between Gooding Avenue and Tupelo Street to identify opportunities for improved commercial and industrial frontage, compatible mixed-use development, and enhanced streetscape character. Consider strategies to accommodate commercial and residential uses along appropriate corridor frontages while preserving viable industrial land and operations, maintaining adequate buffers and transitions, and avoiding conflicts between residential and industrial activities. | Department of Community Development; Planning Board; Town Council | Medium-term |
| **LU-A20** | Review zoning and development standards for low-density, scenic, historic, agricultural, coastal, and environmentally sensitive areas to ensure that development intensity and design are compatible with established character, environmental constraints, infrastructure capacity, and climate vulnerability. | Department of Community Development; Planning Board; Town Council | Medium-term |

# MAP LU2
# Zoning

## TOWN OF BRISTOL RHODE ISLAND

Comprehensive Plan
2026

DRAFT

WARREN
Kickemuit River
WARREN
TUPELO STREET
HOPE STREET
METACOM AVE
GOODING AVE
CHESTNUT STREET
Narragansett Bay
STATE STREET
Bristol Harbor
WOODLAWN AVE
MT HOPE BAY
MT HOPE BRIDGE

N

Location Inset




## Legend

### Residential Zoning Districts

- R-6 (Residential 6,000 sq ft lot size)
- R-8 (Residential 8,000 sq ft lot size)
- R-10 (Residential 10,000 sq ft lot size)
- R10SW (R-10 w/ sewer, water)
- R-15 (Residential with 15,000 sq ft lot size)
- R-20 (Residential 20,000 sq ft lot size)
- R20SP (R-20 w/ Conditions)
- R-40 (Residential 40,000 sq ft lot size)
- R-40-W (R-40 with Water)
- R-80 (Residential 80,000 sq ft lot size)

### Zoning Districts

- Agricultural (AG)
- Downtown (D)
- Education Institutional (EI)
- General Business (GB)
- Historic Preservation and Conservation (HPC)
- Limited Business (LB)
- Manufacturing (M)
- Metacom Mixed Use (MMU)
- Open Space (OS)
- Planned Unit Development (PUD)
- Public Institutional (PI)
- Rehab PUD (RPUD)
- Waterfront (W)
- Waterfront PUD (WPUD)

### Overlay Districts

- Route 136 Overlay
- Historic District
- Resource Conservation and Creative Development (RC&CD) Overlay
- Bike Path
- Roads

0 0.25 0.5 1

Miles

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RIGIS

Prepared by Eliana C. Hornbuckle 09/20/26

AB PLANNING + MAPPING

# MAP LU3
# Future Land Use

## TOWN OF BRISTOL RHODE ISLAND

Comprehensive Plan 2026

DRAFT

WARREN

Kickemuit River

WARREN

Narragansett Bay

Bristol Harbor

MT HOPE BAY

OS

AG

METACOM AVE

SHERMAN AVE

TUPELO STREET

GIBSON RD

HOPE STREET

GOODING AVE

NARROWS RD

ASYLUM RD

CHESTNUT STREET

ANNAWAMSCUTT DRIVE

HOPEWORTH AVE

BAYVIEW AVE

TOWER STREET

STATE STREET

WOODLAWN AVE

FERRY RD

N

Location Inset

CT

MA

RI

## Legend

- Bike Path
- Roads
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Agricultural / Open Space
- Civic / Institutional
- Commercial
- Downtown Mixed Use
- Historic Preservation and Conservation (HPC)
- Industrial
- Industrial / Mixed Use Commercial
- Limited / Neighborhood Commercial w/ High to Medium Density Residential
- Mixed Use
- Open Space / Conservation
- Waterfront Mixed Use

### Overlay Districts

- Attainable Housing Preservation and Redevelopment Opportunity Areas
- Historic District
- Resource Conservation and Creative Development (RC&CD) Overlay

0 0.25 0.5 1

Miles

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TOWN OF BRISTOL Settled 1680 Virtute et Industria RHODE ISLAND

AB PLANNING +MAPPING

RIGIS

Prepared by ECH; 10/16/26

# Housing

## Introduction

The Town of Bristol is home to a culturally and economically diverse population. The quality of life in Bristol attracts homebuyers from across the region. The Town's community spirit encourages pride and long-term commitment to the community, including people's homes and neighborhoods.

The Town of Bristol recognizes that adequately maintaining and constructing a diverse array of homes is vital for the quality of life in our community and the health of our local economy. It is also critically important for making sure the children and grandchildren of our families with deep roots in the community are able to make their homes here into the future and continue the Town's tradition of pride. The whole town benefits when people have access to a variety of housing types and prices that meet their needs at various stages of life.

Bristol also recognizes that it has limited land and environmental issues, including low-lying lands subject to flooding, that will continue to constrain how many new homes are built and where in town they can best be accommodated. Fortunately, Bristol already has one of the most diverse housing stocks in Rhode Island outside the urban core, with single-family homes of various sizes, two-families, three-families, and both small and larger-scale apartments and condominiums. Unfortunately, the cost of housing is increasingly out of reach for the average household in town, even for more modest housing in traditionally working-class neighborhoods.

Having housing that is safe and affordable is important in order to keep the younger generations in Town, help provide Town services such as the volunteer Fire Department and have a strong workforce. The Town is also aging, and in great need of more independent and assisted living opportunities for seniors as well as support services to help people better age in place. What is good for the growing elderly population is actually good for all residents, such as making streets more pedestrian friendly.

In this challenging situation, the overarching goal is to develop housing policies that meet the needs of our residents and employers, support our neighborhoods, make efficient use of our existing infrastructure, and protect our remaining natural resources today and into the future. There are no easy solutions left, and every decision the Town will make regarding housing will have tradeoffs. This Housing Chapter lays out local policies and implementation actions to provide a range of housing choices, recognizing the local, regional, and statewide housing needs of people at a range of income levels and all stages of life.

One of the major objectives of the Housing Chapter is to reassess the Town's existing strategies to facilitate the development and maintenance of at least 10 percent of the Town's housing stock as subsidized affordable housing as defined by the Rhode Island Low and Moderate Housing Income Act. However, this Housing Chapter also recognizes that market rate housing development and renovation of the existing housing stock are just as important for meeting the long-term housing needs of the community.

**Low or Moderate Income Housing**

The State's definition of "low or moderate income housing" includes:

'any housing whether built or operated by any public agency or any nonprofit organization or by any limited equity housing cooperative or any private developer, that is subsidized by a federal, state, or municipal government subsidy under any program to assist the construction or rehabilitation of housing affordable to low- or moderate-income households, as defined in the applicable federal or state statute, or local ordinance and that will remain affordable through a land lease and/or deed restriction for ninety-nine (99) years or such other period that is either agreed to by the applicant and town or prescribed by the federal, state, or municipal government subsidy program but that is not less than thirty (30) years from initial occupancy' (www.rilin.state.ri.us).

Low to moderate income (LMI) households in Bristol are defined as those reporting incomes below 80 percent of the median household income for the Providence-Warwick Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).

Throughout this chapter, the term "***LMI Housing***" or "***Low-Moderate Income Housing***" will refer to subsidized housing units that count toward the Town's low or moderate income housing goals. The term ***"affordable housing"*** will refer to any home that is generally affordable to the occupant, whether market rate, subsidized, owner-occupied, or renter-occupied.

**Community Engagement**

This chapter was updated with input from many stakeholders, as summarized below. First, several key stakeholders were interviewed to get a sense of how the Town's housing needs have changed since the last comprehensive plan was adopted. Interviewees included the Bristol Housing Authority, the East Bay CDC, local developers, and the Town Administrator. Next, Town staff discussed the latest housing data and trends with the Planning Board and reviewed the existing Goals, Policies, and Actions for housing, considering what has been accomplished, what is in progress, what has not been accomplished, and what might be missing. The Town hosted a public meeting on May 22, 2024, where residents were asked to provide their

thoughts on the Town's current housing actions and how they might be updated. Participants were also asked three big-picture questions:

**Question #1**: What is working well with the housing supply and market in Bristol?
**Question #2**: What needs are not being met? Discuss issues that you, your family, your friends, or your neighbors have had in trying to find the types of housing you need at a price you can afford.
**Question #3**: What are your big ideas? Be creative! What do you think the community can do to tackle these issues together?

After this discussion, the meeting became an open house. Participants were invited to walk around and look at informational display boards, including:

- Goal and Policy Boards – Modified existing Goals and Policies
- Existing Action Boards – Participants were asked to place dots on the board indicating whether they support, support with changes, or do not support an action.
- Potential Action Boards – The same dot exercise was used to evaluate potential new actions.
- Big Ideas Board
- Zoning Map of Bristol – Where should LMI housing be encouraged?

The first part of the meeting was live-streamed online. In addition, the Town prepared an online survey that replicated many of the same questions discussed in person. In total, approximately 120 people participated in the public meeting and/or the online survey. The Goals, Policies, and Actions presented below were all informed by this feedback.







## Comprehensive Plan Public Workshops and Survey

Housing was also a prominent topic during the broader Comprehensive Plan workshops and community survey conducted as part of the overall plan update. This additional outreach reinforced many of the concerns identified through the housing-specific engagement while providing further perspective on how residents view housing in relation to growth, neighborhood character, infrastructure, and other community priorities.

Housing affordability was a recurring concern, particularly the ability of younger households and families to remain in or return to Bristol and the limited options available to seniors who wish to downsize. Participants also expressed concern about the availability of year-round housing and the effects of seasonal homes, short-term rentals, and student rentals on the existing housing stock. Comments identified a need for starter homes, affordable rentals, smaller and accessible housing options, and better coordination with Roger Williams University regarding student housing and properties such as the Almeida Apartments.

Participants also frequently supported making greater use of existing developed properties rather than relying primarily on development of remaining open land. Suggestions included rehabilitating existing housing, adaptively reusing vacant or underutilized buildings, considering appropriate reuse of former school buildings, and encouraging mixed-use development in suitable locations. At the same time, residents emphasized balancing additional housing opportunities with infrastructure capacity, environmental protection, and preservation of Bristol's historic and small-town character.

Bristol Housing Data and Trends

## Snapshot

~~Below is a quick snapshot of some of the key housing statistics for Bristol. The data come from the 2022 American Community Survey.~~ The following provides a snapshot of key housing characteristics in Bristol, based on the 2020–2024 American Community Survey (ACS) five-year estimates. Bristol's housing stock has increased steadily, although relatively slowly, since 2000. This growth has been modest compared with the increases experienced from the 1950s through the 1980s. Of the Town's estimated 9,510 housing units, 8,731 (91.8%) are occupied and 779 (8.2%) are vacant. However, only 74 units, representing 0.78% of the total housing stock, were identified as available for sale or rent. The overall vacancy rate includes properties used seasonally, recreationally, or occasionally and therefore overstates the amount of housing actually available to households seeking a home.

**HOUSING UNITS**

9,~~432~~510

Existing housing units in Bristol. This number is up 8.4% since 2000

**HOUSING OCCUPANCY**

~~86%~~91.8

Occupied housing units

~~14~~8.2

Vacant housing units

~~**YEAR-ROUND vs. SEASONAL**~~**HOUSING AVAILABILITY - 74 (Vacant units identified as available for sale or rent (0.78% of housing stock)**

~~Year-round~~

~~Seasonal~~

**HOUSING TENURE**

~~70.2~~66.1

Owner-occupied

~~29.8~~33.9

Renter-occupied

**HOUSING TYPES**

70.2%

Single-Family

11.9%

Two-Family

17.9%

Multi-Family (3+ units)

~~In brief, the housing stock in Bristol has been rising steadily, if slowly, since 2000. These increases are minimal compared with the growth experienced from the 1950s through the 1980s. The calculated vacancy rate is quite high, but it is likely that much of this reflects the increasing number of seasonal homes and properties used as short-term rentals. While only 337 seasonal vacancies were calculated, this is probably an undercount. The owner occupancy rate is just above 70%, much higher than neighboring Warren (54.9%) and Rhode Island overall (59.4%) and much lower than neighboring Barrington (87.0%). About 70% of the Town's homes are single-family units, whether attached or detached, which is much higher than Warren (58.1%) and Rhode Island overall (60.8%) and much lower than Barrington (93.6%).~~

## Housing Costs

Housing costs in Bristol have increased substantially over the past decade, presenting growing affordability challenges for both homeowners and renters. Rising home prices, rental costs, and the incomes required to secure housing have made it increasingly difficult for many households to find affordable housing in the community.

### Home Sales Prices

As shown in Table 1, the median sales price of a single-family home in Bristol increased from $320,000 in 2014 to $575,000 in 2024, an increase of approximately 80%. Much of this growth occurred after 2020, reflecting the significant increases in home prices experienced throughout Rhode Island and the broader region. These increases have created additional barriers to homeownership, particularly for first-time homebuyers and households with moderate incomes.

Table 1. Bristol Median Single-Family Home Sales Prices, 2014–2024

| Year | Median Sales Price |
|---|---|
| 2014 | $320,000 |
| 2015 | $294,000 |
| 2016 | $300,000 |
| 2017 | $320,000 |
| 2018 | $322,500 |
| 2019 | $335,000 |

| | |
|---|---|
| 2020 | $380,000 |
| 2021 | $479,500 |
| 2022 | $500,000 |
| 2023 | $627,394 |
| 2024 | $575,000 |

Source: HousingWorks RI, Housing Fact Books, 2015–2025. Data represent median single-family home sales prices for the calendar year preceding publication.

According to the 2025 HousingWorks RI Housing Fact Book, a household would need an estimated annual income of $191,440 to afford a median-priced single-family home in Bristol, based on a median sales price of $575,000. The estimated monthly cost of homeownership was $4,786, illustrating the substantial income needed to enter the local housing market.

**Rental Housing Costs**

Rental housing costs have also increased considerably. According to HousingWorks RI, the average monthly rent for a two-bedroom unit in Bristol increased from approximately $1,657 in 2019 to $2,002 in 2024, an increase of 21%. A household would need an estimated annual income of $80,080 to afford the average two-bedroom rental without spending more than 30% of its gross income on housing.

Table 2. Bristol Average Two-Bedroom Monthly Rent, 2019 and 2024

| Year | Average Monthly Rent |
|---|---|
| 2019 | $1,657 |
| 2024 | $2,002 |
| Change | +21% |

Source: HousingWorks RI, 2025 Housing Fact Book.

U.S. Census data provide additional perspective on housing costs across the existing housing stock. Between the 2016–2020 and 2020–2024 American Community Survey (ACS) five-year periods, Bristol's median gross rent increased from $1,141 to $1,579, an increase of 38.4%. Over the same period, the median value of owner-occupied housing increased from $347,300 to $485,000, an increase of 39.6%.

These Census measures reflect rents paid by existing tenants and estimated values of owner-occupied homes, rather than current asking rents or actual home sales prices. Together, these indicators demonstrate the substantial increase in housing costs experienced in Bristol in recent years.

**Housing Affordability Implications**

The combined effects of rising home prices and rents have increased the financial burden on many Bristol households. According to HousingWorks RI, approximately 27% of owner households and 39% of renter households are cost burdened, meaning they spend at least 30% of their household income on housing costs. These affordability challenges affect households at different income levels and may limit opportunities for younger residents, first-time homebuyers, older residents seeking to downsize, and workers employed in the community to obtain suitable housing.

Source: HousingWorks RI, 2025 Housing Fact Book, Bristol municipal profile, page 40.

~~**Table 1. Bristol Median Home Price Trends, 2014–2024.**~~

| ~~Year~~ | ~~Median Sales Price~~ |
|---|---|
| ~~2014~~ | ~~$280,000~~ |
| ~~2015~~ | ~~$320,000~~ |
| ~~2016~~ | ~~$294,000~~ |
| ~~2017~~ | ~~$300,000~~ |
| ~~2018~~ | ~~$320,000~~ |
| ~~2019~~ | ~~$322,500~~ |
| ~~2020~~ | ~~$335,000~~ |
| ~~2021~~ | ~~$380,000~~ |
| ~~2022~~ | ~~$479,500~~ |
| ~~2023~~ | ~~$500,000~~ |
| ~~2024~~ | ~~$627,394~~ |

~~Source: HousingWorks RI Fact Books, https://www.housingworksri.org/research-policy/publications-reports/previous-housing-factbooks~~

~~**Table 2. Bristol Median Rental Prices, 2023–2024.**~~

| ~~Year~~ | ~~1-Bedroom Unit~~ | ~~2-Bedroom Unit~~ | ~~3-Bedroom Unit~~ |
|---|---|---|---|
| ~~January 2023~~ | ~~$2,200~~ | ~~$2,400~~ | ~~$2,100~~ |
| ~~January 2024~~ | ~~$1,650~~ | ~~$1,950~~ | ~~$2,400~~ |
| ~~October~~ | ~~$1,900~~ | ~~$2,200~~ | ~~$2,550~~ |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2024 | | | |

Source: "Bristol, RI Rental Market," Zillow, updated: October 26th, 2024, https://www.zillow.com/rental-manager/market-trends/bristol-ri/.

According to US Census data, for the 2018 to 2022 period, Bristol's median household income was $91,382 and the median value of owner-occupied housing units was $426,000. For comparison, for that same period, the figures for Rhode Island as a whole were $81,370 and $343,100, respectively. Broadly speaking, of course, those figures indicate that Bristol residents generally have both higher housing costs and more financial means to meet those costs (although certainly not always – a point later subsections will revisit).

Beyond US Census data, a look at real estate prices online shows a starker picture. For example, the median price for a house in Bristol on Redfin as of August 2024 was $600,000 (https://www.redfin.com/city/35723/RI/Bristol/housing-market).

In 2023, according to an article from East Bay RI[1], Bristol had the highest price increase (28%) in real estate sales of any community in Rhode Island's East Bay region. Bristol also joined the top ten towns and cities with the highest single-family home values in Rhode Island.

In 2021, the average construction value per permit for a single-family house was $264,000, compared to $120,400 in 2000. However, the average cost has varied substantially, going as high as $662,000 in 2008.[2]

## Housing Trends

*Age and Condition of Housing Units*

According to the 2022 2020-2024 American Community Survey, Bristol has a relatively old housing stock, with 32.528% of housing units built before 1949 1939 and just 2.73.6% between 2010 and 2019. A substantial portion of Bristol's housing stock was also constructed during the 1950s through the 1980s, reflecting both the Town's historic development patterns and its periods of suburban residential growth.

The decades from the 1950s through the 1980s are each responsible for over 10% of Bristol's housing stock, with the median home in Bristol constructed in 1966. In other

[1] East Bay RI, "Bristol and Warren lead the region in '23 price increases." Posted January 10, 2024. https://eastbayri.com/east-providence/stories/bristol-and-warren-lead-the-region-in-23-price-increases,118967

[2] "Bristol, Rhode Island," City-Data, last accessed: October 28th, 2024, https://www.city-data.com/city/Bristol-Rhode-Island.html.

~~words, many of Bristol's homes have long histories, and the benefits and challenges that come with age.~~

Older homes contribute to Bristol's historic character and architectural heritage but may also present maintenance, rehabilitation, and energy-efficiency challenges. Some older properties may contain materials such as lead-based paint that require special consideration during renovations.

~~Older homes can be a wonderful part of a community's heritage and a financial boon for a community if those properties attract tourists or enthusiastic homebuyers. They may also bring maintenance and upkeep costs, not associated with their newer counterparts (for example, if old, unsafe materials, such as lead, need to be removed).~~

The majority of owner-occupied houses have five to seven rooms. By contrast, most renter-occupied apartments have four to five rooms. Most owner-occupied homes have three bedrooms, whereas most renter-occupied homes have one to two bedrooms.

Table 3 shows the distribution of occupied housing units by structure type in Bristol. While single-family detached homes account for the majority of occupied housing units, approximately 37% are located in other housing types, including attached single-family homes, two-family homes, and multifamily buildings. This mix of housing types contributes to the diversity of Bristol's housing stock.

~~The chart below shows the proportions of different types of homes in Bristol. As can be seen, Bristol currently has a fairly wide array of housing types, with nearly 40% of homes being alternatives to single- family detached homes.~~

**Table 3. ~~Number of~~Occupied Housing Units by Structure Type, 2014-2023**

| Year | Single - Family Detached | Single - Family Attached | 2-~~Family~~Unit Structures | ~~Multifamily~~ 3-4 Units | ~~Multifamily~~ 5+ Units |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2014 | 5,486 - 64.2% | 222 - 2.6% | 1,077 - 12.6% | 914 – 10.7% | 855 - 10% |
| 2019 | 5,202 – 62.6% | 387 – 4.7% | 1,068 – 12.9% | 599 – 7.2% | 1048 – 12.6% |
| 2023 | 5,316 – 62.7% | 397 – 4.7% | 1,043 – 12.3% | 756 – 8.9% | 968 – 11.4% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey five-year estimates, Table S2504, Physical Housing Characteristics for Occupied Housing Units.~~American Community Survey, Table S2504~~

### Housing Construction

As the previous subsection discussed, a very large proportion of Bristol's housing units were constructed before the 1990s. Proportionally, according to the Rhode

Island Department of Housing, the years following 1990 saw less housing construction[3]. Only 13% of owner-occupied housing units were constructed in 2000 or later, compared to 25% between 1980 and 1999. For renter-occupied housing units, only 6% were constructed in 2000 or later.

~~The years from 2000 to 2022, were responsible for just 12% of owner-occupied housing units, compared to 29% between 1980 and 1999. For renter-occupied housing units, only 7% were built between 2000 and 2022[4].~~

Construction data from the last 10 years reveals a tendency toward building single-family over multifamily homes and indicates that housing production has remained relatively modest in recent years. ~~and reiterates that housing production overall is much slower than it was in the 1990s and decades prior~~. This is not surprising given the Town is approaching build out. Table 4 below shows an average of about 20 new housing units per year since 2015. According to the Rhode Island Department of Housing's 2024 Integrated Housing Report, the 27 units finished in Bristol in 2024 represent 2.9% of all housing units finished in the state that year. This compares favorably to Bristol's population which represents about 2% of the State's population.

[3] Rhode Island Department of Housing. *2022 Integrated Housing Report.* January 2023. 2022_Integrated_Housing_Report_FINAL921271.pdf. (Page 18)

~~[4] Rhode Island Department of Housing. *Rhode Island 2023 Integrated Housing Report.* December 2023. 2023 Rhode Island Annual Integrated Housing Report (2).pdf. (Pages 61-62)~~

**Table 4.**

New Housing Units Issued Certificates of Occupancy, 2015–2024

~~Housing Trends in Bristol, 2015–2023~~

| Year of Certificate of Occupancy | Single Family | Multi Family | ADU | Total Units |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2015 | | | | **16** |
| 2016 | | | | **17** |
| 2017 | | | | **25** |
| 2018 | 15 | 2 | 0 | **17** |
| 2019 | 8 | 0 | 3 | **11** |
| 2020 | 21 | 0 | 0 | **21** |
| 2021 | 23 | 0 | 0 | **23** |
| 2022 | 16 | 8 | 0 | **24** |
| 2023 | 17 | 0 | 2 | **19** |
| 2024 | 11 | 16 | 0 | **27** |
| TOTAL since 2015 | **NA** | **NA** | **NA** | **200** |

*Source: Town of Bristol, 2025. Data on the distribution of units by housing type were not available for 2015–2017.*

~~Source: 2025, Town of Bristol (Note: data for single-family vs. multi-family not available prior to 2018)~~

The number of housing units permitted increased substantially in 2025. Bristol issued permits for 139 housing units, including 12 units in one-unit buildings and 127 units in one multifamily development. However, only three new residential units received certificates of occupancy during 2025. Because permitted housing units may take several years to be completed, the distinction between permits issued and certificates of occupancy provides important context for evaluating both the development pipeline and actual housing production.

## Occupancy

According to the 2020–2024 American Community Survey, there were approximately 8,731 occupied housing units in Bristol, 66.1% of which were owner-occupied and

33.9% renter-occupied. Of the Town's estimated 9,510 total housing units, approximately 8.2% were vacant. However, this includes seasonal, recreational, and other housing units not necessarily available for year-round occupancy.

~~As of 2022 there were 8,065 occupied housing units in Bristol, 5,700 (or 70.2%) of which were occupied by the homeowners. Renters occupied 2,414 (or 29.8%) of the units. There were no vacancies among owners, but the rental vacancy rate was 8.2%. As a point of comparison, the nationwide vacancy rate for homeowners and renters was 0.8% and 5.8%, respectively.~~

There are many factors that can affect occupancy rates. One factor is age of homes. Many of the homes that renters live in are older. ~~Sixty-one percent of renter-occupied housing units were built before 1960 (compared to 33% of owner-occupied housing units).~~

Another factor is short-term rentals. According to a 2023 report from the Rhode Island Foundation, Bristol had 106 units listed on short-term rental websites, outpaced by municipalities like Narragansett (784) and Providence (313), but well above municipalities like Warren (42), Cranston (41), and East Greenwich (8).[5] In 2026, the Town adopted regulations governing short-term rentals. At the time of adoption, 107 short-term rentals were registered with the Town and permitted to continue under provisions applicable to existing registered units. New short-term rentals are subject to additional zoning standards, including owner-occupancy and parking requirements and, in certain circumstances, special use permit review. Continued tracking of short-term rental activity will help the Town evaluate whether changes in their number or location are affecting the availability of year-round housing.

Academic institutions like Roger Williams University can be another factor. Some housing units may be unoccupied during transition periods in the academic calendar, and students compete for in-town rental housing with local families and working age adults.

[5] Rhode Island Foundation. *Housing Supply and Homelessness in Rhode Island.* April 2023. http://assets.rifoundation.org/documents/RI-Foundation-Coalition-x-BCG-Final-Report-June-2023-vF-1.pdf.

## Framework for Housing

Housing 2030

In 2025, the State Planning Council adopted *Housing 2030: Building Rhode Island's Future* as the housing element of the State Guide Plan. Housing 2030 establishes statewide and municipal housing production goals intended to increase housing supply, diversity, affordability, and accessibility. Bristol is identified as a "Modest Growth" community, with a five-year housing production goal of 289 units, including 43 affordable units. These goals provide additional context for the Town's housing policies and implementation strategies and should be considered together with Bristol's infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints, existing development pattern, and limited remaining developable land.

## Zoning for Residential Uses

The Town of Bristol is divided into 18 base zoning districts, of which 12 districts allow for one or more types of standard residential use. Compared with many of its neighbors, Bristol's zoning allows for a wide range of housing types. Notably, Bristol has five zoning districts in which multi-household dwellings are allowed by right.

**Table 4. Types of Residential and Mixed-Use Zoning Districts and the Types of Housing They Allow, 2024.**

| Name of District | Types of Housing Allowed | Minimum Lot Size (in Square Feet) | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|
| R-80 Zone | Single Household Dwelling | 80,000 | |
| R-40 Zone | Single Household Dwelling | 40,000 | |
| R-20 Zone | Single Household Dwelling; Two-Household Dwelling | 20,000 | Two-Household Structures allowed if at least one unit is deed restricted LMI housing. |
| R-15 Zone | Single Household Dwelling; Two-Household Dwelling | 15,000 | Two-Household Structures allowed if at least one unit is deed restricted LMI housing. |
| R-10 Zone | Single Household Dwelling; Two-Household Dwelling | 10,000 | |
| R-10SW Zone | Single Household Dwelling; | 10,000 | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Two-Household Dwelling | | |
| R-8 Zone | Single Household Dwelling; Two-Household Dwelling | 8,000 | |
| R-6 Zone | Single Household Dwelling; Two-Household Dwelling; Multi-Household Dwelling | 6,000 | 6,000 square feet for the first dwelling unit and 4,000 square feet per additional dwelling unit where public water and sewer required. |
| LB Zone | Single Household Dwelling; Two-Household Dwelling; Multi-Household Dwelling | | |
| MMU Zone | Multi-Household Dwelling | | Residential on upper floors of buildings only. |
| D Zone | Single Household Dwelling; Two-Household Dwelling; Multi-Household Dwelling | | |
| W Zone | Single Household Dwelling; Two-Household Dwelling; Multi-Household Dwelling | | Ground floor commercial uses are required for larger-scale multi-household dwellings. |

## Housing in Bristol's Neighborhoods

Bristol is a community of many distinct neighborhoods with different housing types and conditions. The types and density of housing that exist in these neighborhoods today largely correspond with what is allowed in their underlying zoning districts. The Land Use Chapter of this Plan divides the Town into 16 Planning Areas, which functionally represent 16 different neighborhoods. Please refer to that chapter for more detailed information, including a map of the various Planning Areas. Below is a summary of the housing types, ages, and density generally found in each of the neighborhoods.

### Northeast

Located in the far northeastern corner of Bristol, this neighborhood is largely built out into subdivisions. The area along the Kickemuit River consists of smaller homes and cottages, many built before World War II. Inland, most homes were built after the war up through the 1980s and tend to be larger. Density ranges significantly, with lots as small as 3,000 square feet along the coast to nearly ½ acre inland and on the southern end of the neighborhood. While 2-family homes are allowed throughout the neighborhood, most homes are single-family.

### Kickemuit

Located just south of the Northeast neighborhood, Kickemuit is more rural in character with some of the Town's last remaining farms. Protection of open space and agricultural lands remains a priority here, however, there remain opportunities for mixed use development along Metacom Avenue on its western border. The zoning in this area requires 15,000 square foot minimum lot sizes, however, many homes sit on much larger lots of ½ acre or more. Development here is more recent, with most homes built in the late 1980s or later.

### The Narrows & Hopeworth

Located just south of the Kickemuit neighborhood, The Narrows and Hopeworth neighborhoods have similar characters, with some older, smaller homes on smaller lots along the waterfront, and larger, newer homes on larger lots inland. Like other neighborhoods bordering Metacom Avenue, there are opportunities for mixed use development along that corridor. The zoning in this area generally requires 10,000 - 15,000 square foot minimum lot sizes, however, there is a wide range of density in the neighborhood, with some homes on lots of 5,000 square feet or less and others of 1/3 acre or more. While 2-family homes are allowed in this neighborhood, the vast majority of existing homes are single-family. Development here has occurred in phases, with some coastal and farm cottages having been built prior to World War II, but with most homes built anywhere from the 1950s to the 1990s. The Narrows is home to the Rhode Island Veterans Home while Hopeworth is home to a former landfill.

### Mount Hope

Located just south of the Hopeworth neighborhood, Mount Hope is a largely undeveloped are of farmland and forests. There is a subdivisions just off Metacom Avenue at Tower Street similar in character to the inland parts of Hopeworth and the Narrows. Just south of Mount Hope Farm is the Bristol Landing development, a denser condominium community with a variety of attached and detached housing types.

### The College

Located on the southeastern tip of Bristol, this area is home to Roger Williams University. Many students live in dormitories on campus, and the Town is in regular communication with the university to expand housing options on campus so that fewer students are competing with other renters for off-campus rental housing.

### The Estates

Located on the southwestern tip of Bristol, this area, as its name suggests, is made up of large homes on large lots, often of one acre or more. Many of the homes are newer, sometimes having replaced older structures on site. This neighborhood is also home to the Columban Fathers Monastery and the Blithewold Museum. The Columban property could provide housing potential should the monastery ever close.

### Downtown Neighborhood

This neighborhood wraps around the Downtown "core" to the south and east. The southern part of the neighborhood is relatively low density with many single-family homes on lots of 1/3 acre or greater. Much of the area is forested, including the area around the Town's Water Treatment Facility. The part of the neighborhood east of the Downtown "core" has a significant variety of housing types, ages, and densities, with zoning requiring minimum lot sizes of only 6,000 – 8,000 square feet. Some of the homes in this area are old farmhouses predating World War I while others have been built only within the past few years, and everything in between. While two-family and multi-family housing is the exception and not the rule in terms of existing housing stock, there is certainly a presence of this housing diversity which is allowed by zoning. There are also opportunities for mixed use in this neighborhood.

### Downtown Core

The Downtown Core is the historic heart of Bristol, with the highest concentration of historic buildings and a wide variety of housing types. This area has the oldest and densest housing stock in Bristol with a range of single-family homes, two-family homes, three-family homes, multi-family homes, and mixed use along the Town's major commercial corridors. Traditionally, this neighborhood has been home to a wide swath of Bristol's socioeconomic layers, from the working class to the very wealthy. In spite of the sharp increases in housing values over the last ten years, the

shear variety of housing in this neighborhood helps maintain that traditional socioeconomic diversity.

### High School

As the name suggests, the High School neighborhood surrounds Mount Hope High School, the regional public high school for students from Bristol and Warren. Considering the high school and its grounds, several cemeteries, parks, forested areas, and marshy areas, much of this neighborhood remains undeveloped. However, much of the developable land in this area has been filled in with housing subdivisions since World War II – primarily single-family homes on lots of 15,000 square feet or more. However, the southern portion of the neighborhood adjacent to Downtown has some older homes on smaller lots, including several two- and three-family homes, particularly along Bayview Avenue. The Gooding Avenue corridor on the north end of the neighborhood is primarily zoned for commercial uses and has notable potential for future mixed use development. This neighborhood is also home to the Bristol Housing Authority's Benjamin Church Manor, a multi-family development for seniors.

### Industrial Area and North Central

These two neighborhoods, located due north of the High School neighborhood, have limited residential areas around their peripheries. As the name suggests, the Industrial Area is made up primarily of industrial or commercially zoned land, as well as the Town Forest and the Bristol Golf Park. The North Central neighborhood is largely forested in the center, with some subdivisions around its edges. Residential development in both areas has occurred in pockets mostly since World War II and extending to the 21st century. Earlier subdivisions tend to have smaller homes on smaller lots (some of less than 10,000 square feet) while newer subdivisions tend to have larger homes on lots of ¼ acre or more.

### Northwest and Highlands

These two neighborhoods are located in the far northwest of the Town adjacent to Narragansett Bay. The core of the Highlands neighborhood was built in the 1920s and the neighborhood retains many of the homes from this era on lots of ¼ acre or more with many mature trees. The far southern end of the neighborhood was largely built out in the 1950s and 1960s, with smaller homes on 10,000 square foot lots. Areas to the north were built out in the 1960s to 1990s with larger lots and homes. Most of the Northwest area was developed as a Planned Unit Development in the 1970s and 1980s, as the North Farm condominium complex. This community largely consists of townhouse style development.

State Park and Poppasquash

These two neighborhoods are the least densely populated in the Town. State Park consists of Colt State Park, Bristol Town Beach, the Town's Community Center, the North Burial Ground, and other areas set aside for recreation. It is not populated. Poppasquash is located on the Poppasquash Neck peninsula and consists of single-family homes on large lots (at least an acre and often much larger) or forested land.

Bristol's Housing Agencies and Programs

The Bristol Housing Authority (BHA) works to make affordable housing opportunities available to Bristolians. The BHA oversees Benjamin Church Manor, an affordable housing complex of 130+ units for the elderly. As of 2024, there are over 300 people on the waitlist. The BHA also manages the Town's participation in the RI Centralized Waiting List Portal for the Housing Choice Voucher Rental Assistance Program. These vouchers help subsidize rents in private rental homes.

The East Bay Community Development Corporation (EBCDC) is a nonprofit organization that has been working for over 30 years to build and preserve affordable housing for low to moderate income residents in Bristol, Barrington, and Warren. The EBCDC is currently responsible for over 300 apartment units in those three towns and Franklin Court Independent Living and Franklin Court Assisted Living (both in Bristol). Originally called the Bristol Foundation, the East Bay CDC was born in 1989, the result of a study the Town of Bristol had commissioned. Its inception was initially focused on revitalizing the neighborhood around the Kaiser Mill Complex. The Kaiser Mill Complex is now home to Franklin Court Assisted Living.

The Housing Network of Rhode Island (HNRI) is an association of the state's Community Development Corporations (CDC). To help make housing more affordable for Rhode Islanders, HNRI advocates for state policies, connects first-time homebuyers and landlords with classes on home buying, and provides housing-specific informational resources to homebuyers, homeowners, tenants, and member organizations. HNRI is also affiliated with the Community Housing Land Trust of Rhode Island (CHLT), a nonprofit which works with developers and municipalities across Rhode Island to develop affordable housing. After construction, they also work with different stakeholders to ensure the property is compliant with deed restrictions requiring it to be affordable. HNRI plays this role for many properties in Bristol.

Bristol offers property tax exemptions for qualifying senior homeowners, reducing the taxable assessed value of their homes. Table 5 identifies the exemption amounts by age, as established in the Bristol Town Code.

~~Bristol has tax exemptions for seniors, which can ease the financial burden of living in Bristol. The table below details the annual exemptions, per the Bristol Town Code.~~

**Table 5. Bristol's Tax Exemptions for Seniors By Age~~, 2024.~~**

| Ages 65-69 | Ages 70-74 | Ages 75 and Older |
|---|---|---|
| $15,000 | $ 17,500 | $ 20,000 |

Source: Bristol, RI Town Code., § 27-9. - Entitlements and amounts (~~2024~~2026).

Bristol has a Home Repair Program funded by Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and managed by Church Community Housing. The Town started the program in order to help residents, notably those with limited financial means, improve their homes. To receive support through this program, applicants must meet certain income requirements determined each year by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).[6]

In addition to the Town's existing Home Repair Program, the State launched a Statewide Home Repair Program funded through the 2024 housing bond. The program provides assistance to lower-income homeowners for urgent repairs intended to maintain safe living conditions and preserve existing housing. The Town should continue to make residents aware of State and local resources available to maintain and rehabilitate Bristol's aging housing stock.

## Issues and Opportunities

### Cost Burden

One of the best sources of data on local housing needs and problems, including cost burden, is the Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) developed by U.S. HUD. Cost Burden refers to any household paying more than 30% of its income on housing. Severe Cost Burden refers to any household paying more than 50% of its income on housing. Table 6 below summarizes cost burdened households of various kinds within Bristol.

According to the 2017–2021 CHAS data, nearly one-third of Bristol households were cost burdened.~~The fact that nearly 1/3 of all households in Bristol are cost burdened should be a concern for the Town.~~ Whether people choose to or are forced by circumstances to spend more than 30% of their incomes on housing, this means they have less disposable income to spend both on other necessities such as food and

[6] For more information about the Town's program, visit: https://bristolri.gov/330/Bristol-Home-Repair-Program.

health care, and at local shops, restaurants, and service providers. In other words, the entire economy is impacted.

Low- and moderate-income (LMI) households, defined as those earning less than 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI), experience substantially higher rates of housing cost burden than households overall. Approximately two-thirds of LMI households are cost burdened, and more than one-third are severely cost burdened, leaving less income available for other necessary expenses. While approximately 30% of Bristol households were renter-occupied during the CHAS reporting period, renters accounted for more than half (52%) of cost-burdened LMI households. However, a substantial proportion (48%) of cost-burdened LMI households were homeowners, potentially including older residents living on fixed incomes.

~~It should come as no surprise that LMI households (making less than 80% of the Area Median Income) have much higher rates of cost burden than the average household. About 2/3 are cost burdened, and over 1/3 are severely cost burdened, significantly limiting the amount of income they have available for other expenses. It is also no surprise that while just under 30% of Bristol residents live in rental households, over half of cost burdened LMI households do. That said, a significant number of cost burdened LMI households are homeowners, perhaps reflecting retirees on a fixed budget or people who choose to live where they do in spite of the burden on their incomes.~~

**Table 6. Bristol CHAS Data, 2017-2021: Cost Burden**

| | Number of Households | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Number of Cost Burdened Households | 2,514 | 31.2% of total households |
| Number of Severely Cost Burdened Households | 1,125 | 14.0% of total households |
| Number of LMI Cost Burdened Households | 1,770 | 66.7% of LMI households |
| Number of LMI Severely Cost Burdened Households | 905 | 34.1% of LMI households |
| Number of LMI Cost Burdened Households that are renting | 920 | 52.0% |
| Number of LMI Cost Burdened Households that own their home | 850 | 48.0% |

Source: Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), 2017-2021

More recent data from the 2020–2024 American Community Survey indicate that housing cost burdens remain significant in Bristol. Approximately 37.9% of renter households (1,087 households) and 29.4% of owner households (1,697 households) were cost burdened, spending 30% or more of their household income on housing costs. The CHAS data presented in Table 6 provide additional detail regarding the income and tenure characteristics of cost-burdened households.

Local Needs

CHAS data tracks four different housing problems: incomplete kitchen facilities, incomplete plumbing facilities, more than 1 person per room, and cost burden greater than 30%. Table 7 captures households with at least one such problem, organized by renters vs. owners and by household income. The acronym "HAMFI" - HUD Area Median Family Income - is calculated by HUD for each jurisdiction and will not necessarily be the same as other calculations of median incomes (such as a simple Census number), due to a series of adjustments that are made by the agency. The numbers in the "Percent" column represent the percent of households in each category with at least one housing problem. For example, in the first row of statistics in Table 7, "485" represents 89% of all renter households earning less than 30% HAMFI.

**Table 7. Bristol CHAS Data, 2017-2021.**

| Household Income | Households with at least 1 Housing Problem | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| **RENTERS** | | |
| ≤ 30% HAMFI | 485 | 89% |
| > 30% - ≤ 50% HAMFI | 285 | 95% |
| > 50% - ≤ 80% HAMFI | 150 | 28% |
| > 80% - ≤ 100% HAMFI | 40 | 14% |
| > 100% HAMFI | 10 | 1% |
| **Total** | **970** | **38%** |
| **OWNERS** | | |
| ≤ 30% HAMFI | 245 | 89% |
| > 30% - ≤ 50% HAMFI | 235 | 72% |
| > 50% - ≤ 80% HAMFI | 370 | 55% |
| > 80% - ≤ 100% HAMFI | 175 | 46% |
| > 100% HAMFI | 340 | 9% |
| **Total** | **1,365** | **25%** |

Source: "Consolidated Planning/CHAS Data," Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Policy Development and Research, last accessed: October 30th, 2024, https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/cp.html#year2006-2020.

It is no surprise that income generally correlates with housing problems. The lower a household's income, the more likely it is to have at least one housing problem. The one notable exception is that renter households making less than 30 percent of the HAMFI are a little less likely to experience housing problems than households making between 30 percent and less than 50 percent HAMFI. One possible explanation is that a greater portion of very low-income renters are receiving some sort of housing subsidy, giving them access to higher-quality homes. Also of interest is that LMI homeowners (those making less than 80% HAMFI) are far more likely to experience housing problems than LMI renters. For renters, households making over 100 percent HAMFI have very little exposure to housing problems. However, nearly 10% of owner households making that income do.

## Homelessness

Homelessness remains a significant housing challenge in Rhode Island, although reliable data at the municipal level are limited. The January 2026 Point-in-Time count identified 2,236 people experiencing homelessness statewide, including 1,820 people staying in shelters and 416 people who were unsheltered. This represented a decline from 2,373 people counted in 2025.[1] The Point-in-Time count provides a one-night estimate of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness and does not capture everyone who experiences homelessness over the course of a year.

Comparable municipal-level counts are not readily available for Bristol. Small numbers may be suppressed to protect confidentiality, and people experiencing homelessness may receive shelter or services outside the community in which they previously lived. One locally available measure is therefore the number of school-age children identified as experiencing homelessness through the public school system.

Under the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, children and youth are considered homeless when they lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This definition is broader than children living in shelters or unsheltered locations. It also includes children temporarily sharing housing with other households because of housing loss or economic hardship ("doubled up"), as well as children living in hotels or motels. Students may be identified through school enrollment and residency information or through referrals by school staff during the school year, with eligibility determined through the school district's McKinney-Vento process.[2]

The Bristol Warren Regional School District serves students from both Bristol and Warren. Therefore, the figures in Table 8 represent the combined regional school district and cannot be attributed to Bristol alone. During the 2024–2025 school year, 21 children in the district were identified as experiencing homelessness. This was similar to the 19 children identified in 2023–2024 and lower than several earlier years, although the relatively small numbers can fluctuate from year to year.[3]

Table 8. Students Identified as Experiencing Homelessness, Bristol Warren Regional School District

| School Year | Students Identified as Experiencing Homelessness |
|---|---|
| 2024–2025 | 21 |
| 2023–2024 | 19 |
| 2022–2023 | 27 |
| 2021–2022 | 17 |
| 2020–2021 | 22 |
| 2019–2020 | 37 |
| 2018–2019 | 35 |
| 2017–2018 | 24 |
| 2016–2017 | 11 |
| 2015–2016 | 17 |
| 2014–2015 | 18 |
| 2013–2014 | 17 |
| 2012–2013 | 15 |
| 2011–2012 | 13 |
| 2010–2011 | 9 |
| 2009–2010 | 3 |
| 2008–2009 | 3 |

*Note: Figures are district-wide and include students from both Bristol and Warren.*

**Sources:**
[1] Rhode Island Continuum of Care, 2026 Point-in-Time Count.
[2] Rhode Island Department of Education, McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Program.
[3] Rhode Island Department of Education data reported by Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, *Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbooks*, 2010–2026.

~~Homelessness~~

~~Before providing an overview of homelessness in Bristol, it is worth briefly discussing two factors related to homelessness: evictions and foreclosures. According to the Eviction Lab, over the last year, Bristol County had relatively few eviction filings (123) compared to other Rhode Island counties, most notably Providence County (6,169) and Kent County (960).[7] As of mid-September of 2024, Bristol County's number of filings has also decreased by 27% from the average year (for the 2016-2019 period).[8] This year, Bristol County also had relatively fewer foreclosure rates. It had the second lowest number of foreclosures per housing unit (Newport County had the lowest), per Social Finance, LLC in 2024[9].~~

~~Another metric that can help assess homelessness levels is the number of homeless children in school. The table below indicates how many children identified as homeless were enrolled in the Bristol Warren Regional School District in different school years.~~

**~~Table 8. Number of Children Identified as Homeless in the Bristol Warren Regional School District, 2008-2023.~~**

| ~~Years~~ | ~~Number of Children Identified as Homeless~~ |
|---|---|
| ~~2022-2023~~ | ~~27~~ |
| ~~2021-2022~~ | ~~17~~ |
| ~~2020-2021~~ | ~~22~~ |
| ~~2019-2020~~ | ~~37~~ |
| ~~2018-2019~~ | ~~35~~ |
| ~~2017-2018~~ | ~~24~~ |
| ~~2016-2017~~ | ~~11~~ |
| ~~2015-2016~~ | ~~17~~ |
| ~~2014-2015~~ | ~~18~~ |
| ~~2013-2014~~ | ~~17~~ |

~~[7] Numbers are found by hovering the cursor over each county.~~
~~[8] Percentage is found by selecting "Relative to Average" among the options next to the map and then hovering the cursor over each county.~~
~~[9] Social Finance, LLC, "Foreclosure Rates for All 50 States in March 2024." Posted April 15, 2024. https://www.sofi.com/learn/content/foreclosure-rates-for-50-states/~~

| | |
|---|---|
| ~~2012–2013~~ | ~~15~~ |
| ~~2011–2012~~ | ~~13~~ |
| ~~2010–2011~~ | ~~9~~ |
| ~~2009–2010~~ | ~~3~~ |
| ~~2008–2009~~ | ~~3~~ |

~~Source: Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbooks 2010 – 2024 "Publications," Rhode Island KIDS COUNT (2024), https://rikidscount.org/archives/.~~

**Low and Moderate Income Housing**

Low and Moderate Income Housing Data and Trends

The Low and Moderate Income Housing Act (R.I.G.L. 45-53), mandates that Towns that do not conform to the Act find ways to encourage low-moderate income (LMI) housing development, with a goal of maintaining at least 10 percent of the total housing stock for low-moderate income households.

The Town adopted its Low and Moderate Income Housing Plan in 2005. The plan contained strategies for achieving the 10% LMI threshold as required under the Low and Moderate Income Housing Act (Act). These strategies were later incorporated into this housing chapter of the Town's Comprehensive Community Plan.

Why should the Town care to reach the 10 percent goal? If reached, Bristol would no longer be subject to housing development through Comprehensive Permits. Such developments currently may be allowed to override local zoning if they provide a certain percentage of LMI housing. By achieving 10%, Bristol would have more control over local land use decisions in the future. To reiterate, "LMI" refers to "Low-Moderate Income" households, or those making 80% of the Area Median Income or less. Of course, maintaining the 10 percent goal requires additional work – as new market rate units are built new LMI units are needed to keep up. Tools such as Inclusionary Zoning (discussed below) are a good way to maintain the 10 percent goal over time.

Current LMI Count

~~As of 2023, Bristol has 529 LMI units, or 5.69% of Bristol's total year-round units identified in the 2020 US Census. Below is a summary of all the LMI homes in Bristol that count towards the 10% LMI threshold as of 2023 (Table 9). After several years of steady progress, the number of LMI units in Bristol has been fluctuating since 2019 but has remained largely steady overall. The Rhode Island Veterans Home eliminated 15 units in approximately 2021, and a few others have been added. As shown in the table below, over 2/3 of the Town's LMI units are reserved for seniors and over 80% are available as rentals.~~ According to Rhode Island Housing's final 2025 Low- and Moderate-Income Housing Chart, Bristol has 626 LMI housing units, representing 6.74% of the 9,292 year-round housing units used to calculate the statutory 10%

threshold. Of Bristol's LMI units, 357 are classified as elderly housing, 226 as family housing, and 43 as special needs housing. The Town's official LMI count is updated annually and may fluctuate as qualifying units and federal rental assistance vouchers are added or removed.

Currently, there are only a handful of potential new LMI units in the development pipeline. The Bristol Yarn Mill will provide or pay a fee in lieu of 26 LMI units (20% of 127 total units), ten built on site, three in residential units across the street from the mill, and through a fee in lieu that the Town intends to leverage to create at least 13 LMI units elsewhere. The redevelopment of the Oliver School is likely to produce two new LMI units. In addition, as of 2024, housing vouchers are allowed to count toward a community's LMI housing target so long as the vouchers are actively being used to rent a home in that community and the unit does not otherwise count as LMI. Rhode Island Housing will be responsible for calculating this number each year for the official LMI count. While the number of voucher holders actively renting in Bristol may fluctuate from year to year or even month to month, the overall number of vouchers available in the state is likely to remain more or less steady for the foreseeable future. Prior to Rhode Island Housing releasing official numbers, the Bristol Housing Authority estimates approximately 165 vouchers are currently in use in Bristol. For purposes of calculating the Town's LMI housing achievements, it is assumed that 165 vouchers are available now and into the future. This can be revisited should the number of vouchers available in Rhode Island ever significantly increase or decrease. Taking the expected 15 LMI units at the Bristol Yarn Mill and the Oliver school and adding ~~the estimated 165 vouchers, in the near future the Town should have a total of 709 LMI units~~ adding them to the official 2025 LMI count of 626 units which includes housing vouchers in the near future the Town should have a total of 641 LMI units (and potentially many more in the later future depending on how the fee in lieu is leveraged – see the Spotlight on the Bristol Yarn Mill below). ~~This would represent approximately 7.5% of the Town's housing stock.~~ The calculations throughout the remainder of this chapter assume a baseline of ~~709~~ 641 LMI units.~~.~~

### Spotlight on the Bristol Yarn Mill (Update?)

The Bristol Yarn Mill is a unique case for Bristol. The fee in lieu was based on a negotiation with the Town Council in exchange for a zoning change. The Town worked with a consultant team to explore ways to use the fee in lieu to finance the development of at least 13 LMI units. The most likely solution would be to use the $520,000 generated by this fee as a matching grant for a non-profit developer to help finance the purchase and renovation of the Almeida Apartments, currently owned by Roger Williams University, (or another such property) into affordable and LMI housing. This has the potential to produce far more than 13 LMI units. See more under the LMI Housing Strategies below.

**Table 9. Low-Moderate Income Homes, ~~2023~~2025.**

| Housing Type | # of Units |
|---|---|
| Elderly | 357 (~~67.5~~57%) |
| Family | ~~104~~ 226 (~~19.7~~36.1%) |
| Special Needs | ~~68~~ 43 (~~12~~6.9%) |
| ~~Ownership~~ | ~~50 (9.5%)~~ |
| ~~Rental~~ | ~~437 (82.6%)~~ |
| Total | 626 (100%) |

Source: RIHousing, Final 2025 Low- and Moderate-Income Housing Chart.~~"Welcome," State of Rhode Island Department of Housing, 2024, https://housing.ri.gov/.~~

**Low and Moderate Income Housing Policy**

In an effort to clarify Bristol's position on affordable housing, the following policy statement was developed for the 2009 Comprehensive Plan and re-affirmed with the last plan update as well as this plan update. Bristol supports the development of housing that helps to meet the needs of all Bristol's "local residents". Bristol is also willing to do its share to assist in meeting the housing needs of the regional population, but within the context of a broad, cooperative, fair share policy that involves all of Bristol's neighboring Towns. Bristol has great concerns over pursuing housing strategies based on past theories of public housing provisions, specifically the development of large projects for specific socioeconomic groups.

Bristol is a town that has always had a rich mixture of housing types blended together within the downtown. The outlying single-family neighborhoods have developed in a variety of lot sizes and development patterns. Bristol has never created large multifamily developments that then deteriorated causing yet more problems for residents and non-residents alike. Bristol shall not pursue that strategy in the future. In order to guide affordable housing development in Bristol, the following development standards were adopted.

Affordable housing in Bristol shall:

**1.** Be integrated with market price units.

**2.** Be dispersed throughout town rather than being congregated in specific areas or projects. It shall be developed in areas that are suitable for any type of housing development.

**3.** Be designed so as to physically blend with surrounding market price units in terms of height, massing, site design, and architectural treatment.

**4.** Be designed to give residents and neighbors pride in their homes.

**5.** Be developed to give residents the opportunity to share in the ownership of at least some of the units where feasible given the particular needs.

## Low and Moderate Income Housing Projected Target

*NOTE FOR PLANNING BOARD/STAFF – Revised LMI Housing Projections*

*This section has been substantially revised to reflect the corrected 2025 LMI inventory (626 rather than 709 units), updated State population projections, and Housing 2030 goals. The previous draft assumed 18.6 new housing units annually and projected reaching 10% LMI housing by 2065; however, with the corrected LMI inventory, its strategies would only achieve approximately 9.4%.*

*The revised draft assumes 30 new housing units annually, a more ambitious but potentially realistic rate compared with Bristol's historical average of 20 and the State's goal of approximately 58 annually. It also increases the 40-year comprehensive permit target from 200 to 240 LMI units and the deed-restriction target from 80 to 90 units. These changes result in projected LMI shares of 8.5% by 2045 and 10.2% by 2065.*

Under the Rhode Island Low and Moderate Income Housing Act, municipalities are expected to work toward having at least 10% of their year-round housing units qualify as low- and moderate-income (LMI) housing. According to RIHousing's final 2025 LMI Housing Chart, Bristol had 626 qualifying LMI units, representing 6.74% of its year-round housing stock. Based on the 2020 Census count of 9,292 year-round housing units, the Town would need approximately 930 qualifying LMI units to reach the 10% threshold, or 304 additional units beyond the current certified inventory.

The Town anticipates an additional 13 LMI units associated with the Bristol Yarn Mill redevelopment and two LMI units at the former Oliver School. While the Yarn Mill units are committed as part of the approved redevelopment, the Oliver School units are included as a planning assumption pending confirmation of the project's final status and affordability requirements. These 15 units are not included in the official 2025 inventory and will contribute toward the Town's LMI percentage once completed and determined eligible for inclusion in the State's inventory.

**Projected Housing Growth**

There are several ways to estimate Bristol's future housing needs and corresponding LMI housing targets. Previous Comprehensive Plan projections relied primarily on anticipated population growth. However, updated population projections from the Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning estimate Bristol's population at 22,643 in 2025 and approximately 22,343 in 2045, suggesting relatively stable population levels over the next 20 years. Housing demand is influenced by more than population growth alone, including changes in household size, household formation, aging residents, housing availability, and affordability.

Bristol is also largely developed, with relatively limited vacant land available for new residential construction. Between 2015 and 2024, an average of approximately 20 new housing units received certificates of occupancy annually. However, redevelopment and adaptive reuse opportunities, including larger multifamily projects, may contribute to increased housing production in the coming years.

In 2025, the State adopted *Housing 2030: Building Rhode Island's Future*, which identifies Bristol as a "Modest Growth" community and establishes a five-year housing production goal of 289 units, including 43 affordable units. This equates to approximately 58 new housing units annually, substantially higher than Bristol's historical construction rate.

For purposes of projecting future housing needs and the 10% LMI target, this Comprehensive Plan assumes an average of 30 new housing units annually. This represents a 50% increase over recent production levels while recognizing the Town's limited remaining developable land and the opportunities presented by redevelopment, adaptive reuse, accessory dwelling units, and infill development.

This planning assumption is lower than the State's Housing 2030 goal but represents a reasonable intermediate scenario for long-range analysis. It does not diminish the Town's commitment to pursuing the State's housing production goals as opportunities and resources allow.

**Table 10. Illustrative Housing Growth and LMI Targets, 2025–2065**

| Measure | 2025 Baseline | 2045 Projection | 2065 Projection |
|---|---|---|---|
| Year-round housing units | 9,292 | 9,892 | 10,492 |
| Average annual new housing units | — | 30 | 30 |
| Cumulative projected new units | — | 600 | 1,200 |
| Units needed to meet 10% threshold | 930 | 990 | 1,050 |
| Official 2025 qualifying LMI units | 626 | 626 | 626 |
| Anticipated Yarn Mill and Oliver School LMI units | — | 15 | 15 |
| Additional LMI units needed beyond existing and anticipated pipeline units | — | 349 | 409 |

*Sources: RIHousing, Final 2025 LMI Housing Chart; U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census; Town of Bristol certificate-of-occupancy data, 2015–2024; Rhode Island State Guide Plan, Housing 2030.*

*Note: Projections represent illustrative planning scenarios using the 2020 Census year-round housing inventory and 2025 certified LMI count as reference baselines. They assume an average of 30 net additional year-round housing units annually over the planning period. The estimates are not official future LMI determinations and should be periodically adjusted to reflect actual changes in the housing inventory and certified LMI units.*

The projections indicate that Bristol will need to increase both overall housing production and the proportion of new or existing units qualifying as LMI housing to achieve the statutory 10% threshold. While new construction will play an important role, affordable housing preservation, rehabilitation, and deed restrictions on existing housing can contribute to the LMI inventory without necessarily increasing the overall number of housing units.

**Low and Moderate Income Housing Projected Target**

There are several ways to calculate the LMI housing target for the Town. Below is an update using the methodology from the Town's 2016 comprehensive plan as well as an alternate and perhaps more accurate methodology based on recent housing starts. Both methodologies surmise what can be achieved by 2045 (20-year horizon).

Update Using 2016 Methodology

The housing target is calculated as follows:

**Current population** = 22,493 per the 2020 Census.

**2045 population projection** = 23,771 by 2040 per Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program population projections. This is an increase of 1,278 people between 2020 and 2040, or 319.5 people every five years. Assuming the same rate of growth from 2040 to 2045, there is a total projection of 24,091 rounded up.

**Average Household Size** = 2.57 owner occupied (70.2% of occupied housing units), 1.71 renter occupied (29.8% of occupied housing units) per American Community Survey 2022.

**Current housing units** = 9,629 per the 2020 Census.

**2045 housing unit projection** = 6,580 owner-occupied and 4,057 rentals (10,637 units total). Calculated by dividing the 2045 population projection between 70.2% owner occupants and 28.8% renters and then dividing those portions respectively by the average household size for owners and renters.

**Forecasted 10% threshold** = 1,064 (calculated by multiplying the 2045 housing projection by 10%)

Existing affordable units = 709 (as of 2023 + expected 15 units + 165 vouchers est.)

**Forecasted to need by 2045** = additional 355 units (1,064 10% threshold – 709 current LMI units)

Per the assumptions above, just over 1,000 additional units of housing will be needed to accommodate Bristol's population growth in the next 20 years. This assumption is also in line with the trend in smaller household sizes, which means that more units are needed to accommodate the same number of people. For example, a single-family house might have housed seven people 20 years ago (two parents, four children, and a grandparent, for example) but today those seven people are more likely to be split into multiple households (say, two parents and one child, a childless couple, and two adults living on their own). "New" units may come from the subdivision/redevelopment of existing buildings as well as brand new construction.

~~Revised Methodology~~

~~That said, population projections are a loose art, at best. Basing future development on population projections is potentially less realistic than basing it on development trends. As Bristol is largely built out, new housing unit starts are very low. The average number of new housing units built between 2018 and 2022 was 18.6 per year. At that rate, it would take over 54 years to develop 1,000 new units. This also means that in the next 20 years, only about 372 new units of housing can be expected, barring some large developments. In addition, there are 127 permitted units at the Bristol Yarn Mill and 11 at the former Oliver School, for an additional 138 units.~~

~~**Revised housing unit projection** = 372 units (projected) + 138 units (permitted) + existing 9,629 units = 10,139 units~~

~~**Re-Forecasted 10% threshold** = 1,014 units (calculated by multiplying the revised projection by 10%)~~

~~**Forecasted to need by 2045** = additional 305 units (1,014 10% threshold – 709 current LMI units)~~

## Low and Moderate Income Housing Strategies

As required by the Rhode Island Low and Moderate Income Housing Act, the Town has identified specific strategies to increase its supply of qualifying LMI housing and make progress toward the 10% threshold. These strategies build upon existing local regulations, redevelopment opportunities, partnerships with affordable housing developers, and opportunities to preserve affordability within the existing housing stock.

~~make progress toward the ten percent goal for low and moderate income (LMI) housing. This section presents a detailed explanation of the strategies along with quantitative estimates of the number of LMI housing units expected to be generated by each strategy over the next 20 years and beyond.~~ The estimates presented below represent long-range planning targets rather than commitments associated with specific approved projects. Achieving these targets will require ongoing municipal coordination, available funding, willing property owners, and participation by public and private development partners.

Inclusionary Zoning (IZ)

nclusionary zoning is an important tool for encouraging LMI housing as part of new residential development. However, because Bristol is largely developed and much of its future housing growth is likely to occur through smaller infill projects and redevelopment, opportunities for inclusionary housing may be more limited than in communities with substantial vacant land.

Bristol's inclusionary zoning provisions establish affordability requirements for qualifying developments of five or more units. For purposes of the projections, the Town assumes a 15% affordability requirement for qualifying development, consistent with state law.

Under the assumed production rate of 30 housing units annually, Bristol could accommodate approximately 600 new housing units over 20 years. Not all new units would be subject to inclusionary requirements. Assuming approximately one-third of new development occurs in qualifying projects, inclusionary zoning could generate approximately 30 LMI units over 20 years.

Allowing for fluctuations in the mix and size of development projects, a conservative planning estimate of **28 LMI units by 2045 and 56 units by 2065** is retained.

~~IZ is the most significant tool in the municipal toolbox for LMI housing. However, in a situation where the Town is largely built out and many new units will come from renovations or redevelopment, this will produce fewer units than in less built out communities. It is also reliant on new market rate development, which the Town can~~

~~encourage and enable, but not control. Nevertheless, it is a vital tool toward making progress.~~

~~If 372 new units can be expected over the next 20 years, how many of those can realistically be LMI under inclusionary zoning? Given that the Town is largely built out, and that opportunities for single-family subdivisions are limited, it is probably fair to assume that most new development will be individual infill single-family homes or small-scale multi-family housing (new or redevelopment) moving forward. If the Town reinstates IZ with a trigger of five units, it might be reasonable to assume that half of all proposed units will be subject to IZ, or about 186 units. The calculation below assumes an IZ policy that requires 15% of all housing development of five or more units to be LMI housing. (*Note: This does not include the 13 LMI units at the Bristol Yarn Mill and two at the former Oliver School, but only developments approved after the IZ ordinance is reinstated.*)~~

~~IZ at 15% = 28 LMI units (186 x 0.15)~~

**Comprehensive Permits**

Comprehensive permits represent another significant opportunity to expand Bristol's LMI housing inventory. While municipalities may proactively identify suitable sites, coordinate with nonprofit housing organizations, and encourage affordable housing development, the timing and scale of individual projects depend on property owners, developers, funding availability, and regulatory approvals.

Comprehensive permit projects generally fall into two categories:

- **Town-supported or "friendly" comprehensive permits:** Projects involving sites identified by the Town and encouraged through partnerships with nonprofit or private developers.
- **Developer-initiated comprehensive permits:** Projects proposed independently by property owners or developers.

This Comprehensive Plan identifies potential redevelopment opportunities where affordable housing could be encouraged over the long term. Some locations may not be immediately suitable or available for development, but could become viable as ownership, market conditions, and funding opportunities change.

Potential sites include:

~~"Comp" Permits are the other major tool for LMI housing. Again, while municipalities can proactively partner with non-profit developers and property owners to encourage comp permits in certain areas, they do not have direct control over development proposals. Comp permits generally fall under one of two categories:~~

- ~~"Friendly" Comp Permits – Sites identified and encouraged by the Town. Partnerships with local CDCs or "friendly" private developers.~~
- ~~Other Comp Permits – Developer driven – can be proposed anywhere.~~

~~This Comprehensive Plan continues to make assumptions about potential LMI units based on specific properties where Comp Permits could be encouraged or expected. While some of the properties on this list may not be ripe for housing development today, it is important to plant the seeds. A project that is untenable today may unfold in the future with persistent work and negotiation with property owners.~~

~~To calculate the potential under this tool, the Town has included 1) properties where future development will be encouraged, and 2) Assumptions about the outcomes of partnering with East Bay CDC and/or other local developers to proactively look for other opportunities, large and small, to invest in LMI housing (including through the reuse or sale of town-owned property). Such proactive partnerships could be part of the role of an Affordable Housing Committee.~~

~~The following is a list of properties with long term potential for future comp permit development/redevelopment:~~

1. Ferreira on Bayview Avenue ~~(Concept Review / Pre Application in process)~~
2. Almeida Apartments on Bayview Avenue (currently owned by Roger Williams University)
3. Francis property on Bayview Avenue
4. Gooding Plaza shopping center (2nd floor addition and/or additional mixed-use development)
5. Former Bristol Toyota building on Metacom Avenue, including potential upper-floor residential reuse

~~5. Second floor addition on vacant Bristol Toyota building at Metacom Avenue~~

6. Perry Property at Metacom Avenue across from Chestnut Street
7. King Phillip Hotel, potential adaptive rehab/reuse
8. Columban Fathers Monastery at Ferry Road - ~~Future~~ potential reuse of dormitory building

~~9. Unity Park former industrial buildings~~

9. St. Elizabeth's Church school - Reuse of vacant school building.

10. others?

The Town should also continue identifying suitable publicly owned, underutilized, and privately owned properties that may present opportunities for affordable housing development.

Through proactive partnerships with organizations such as East Bay Community Development Corporation, other nonprofit housing developers, and private development partners, Bristol should seek to facilitate an estimated **110 LMI units through comprehensive permits by 2045**.

Over the longer term, the Town will seek to increase production through this strategy, with a planning target of **240 LMI units by 2065**. Achieving this target would require an average of six qualifying units annually over the 40-year period, although actual production would likely occur through occasional larger developments rather than consistent annual additions.

The larger long-term target reflects an expectation that redevelopment and adaptive reuse will become increasingly important sources of housing production as Bristol continues to evolve. Specific opportunities will require evaluation for infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints, neighborhood compatibility, financing, and other development considerations.

~~If the Town remains aggressive with this strategy, it may be possible to reasonably assume 100 new LMI units in the next 20 or so years, or an average of about five per year. However, such developments will likely occur sporadically, so there will be some years when this strategy produces no units at all and others where it may produce far more than five.~~

**Condition of Variances or Zoning Changes**

This has been a successful strategy on a small scale. The Town can pursue this more aggressively, particularly with properties that take advantage of the Metacom Mixed Use zoning district (MMU). Several properties along Metacom Avenue are called out in this comprehensive plan as being appropriate for rezoning for higher density mixed-use, but the zoning is not actually changed until requested by the property owner and agreed to by the Town. Of course, any such development will be subject to Inclusionary Zoning, but the Town can negotiate with property owners to secure even more LMI units in the case of a variance or zoning change. ~~Realistically, on average, this is unlikely to produce more than 1 unit per year, or about 20 units over 20 years.~~

This strategy is expected to produce a relatively modest number of additional qualifying units, estimated at **20 units by 2045 and 40 units by 2065**.

Units attributed to this strategy must represent additional affordable housing beyond units counted under inclusionary zoning or comprehensive permits to avoid double-counting.

**Deed Restricting Existing Housing Stock**

This is a strategy that many municipalities would like to see work on a larger scale. This could involve outright purchasing of existing properties by the Town or a non-profit developer (for example, East Bay CDC is always on the lookout for such opportunities); providing tax incentives or cash payments for property owners willing to deed restrict their properties; or obtaining existing buildings through tax sales. If the Town more aggressively partners with East Bay CDC, Habitat for Humanity, and other non-profit developers, it might be reasonable to expect ~~perhaps that~~ approximately 2 existing units could be deed restricted each year, for a ~~total of 40 units over 20 years.~~target 45 additional LMI units by 2045. Over the longer term, the Town will seek to expand these efforts through stronger partnerships and additional funding opportunities, with a target of **90 LMI units by 2065**.

Because these units would generally be drawn from the existing housing stock, this strategy can increase Bristol's qualifying LMI inventory without proportionately increasing the total number of year-round housing units.

**Potential LMI Housing Progress**

20-Year Outlook:2045

Based on the strategies outlined above, Bristol could reasonably target approximately 203 additional qualifying LMI units by 2045, beyond the existing certified inventory and the anticipated Yarn Mill and Oliver School units.

**Table XX. Projected LMI Housing Progress by 2045**

| Source or Strategy | LMI Units |
|---|---|
| Official 2025 LMI inventory | 626 |
| Bristol Yarn Mill | 13 |
| Former Oliver School (assumed) | 2 |
| Inclusionary Zoning | 28 |
| Comprehensive Permits | 110 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Conditions of Variances or Zoning Changes | 20 |
| Deed Restricting Existing Housing Stock | 45 |
| **Projected Total LMI Units** | **844** |
| Projected Year-Round Housing Units | 9,892 |
| **Projected LMI Percentage** | **8.5%** |
| LMI Units Required for 10% | 990 |
| **Additional LMI Units Needed** | **146** |

Under this scenario, Bristol would increase its qualifying LMI inventory from 626 units to approximately 844 units by 2045, representing 8.5% of the projected year-round housing stock.

Although the Town would not yet reach the 10% threshold, this would represent substantial progress and would establish a stronger foundation for achieving the statutory goal over the longer term.

The Town will continue to evaluate opportunities to accelerate affordable housing production where feasible, particularly through larger redevelopment projects and partnerships that could generate more units than assumed in these projections.

**40-Year Outlook: 2065**

Looking further ahead, Bristol could potentially achieve the 10% LMI threshold by approximately 2065 through sustained implementation of its housing strategies.

The long-term projection assumes continued housing production averaging approximately 30 units annually and increased affordable housing activity through comprehensive permits and preservation of existing housing.

**Table XX. Projected LMI Housing Progress by 2065**

| **Source or Strategy** | **LMI Units** |
|---|---|
| Official 2025 LMI inventory | 626 |
| Bristol Yarn Mill | 13 |
| Former Oliver School (assumed) | 2 |
| Inclusionary Zoning | 56 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Comprehensive Permits | 240 |
| Conditions of Variances or Zoning Changes | 40 |
| Deed Restricting Existing Housing Stock | 90 |
| **Projected Total LMI Units** | **1,067** |
| Projected Year-Round Housing Units | 10,492 |
| **Projected LMI Percentage** | **10.2%** |
| LMI Units Required for 10% | 1,050 |
| **Projected Units Above 10% Threshold** | **17** |

Under these assumptions, Bristol could reach approximately 1,067 qualifying LMI units by 2065, representing 10.2% of its projected year-round housing stock.

Achieving this outcome will require a sustained commitment to affordable housing production and preservation, with particular emphasis on redevelopment, comprehensive permits, partnerships with nonprofit and private developers, and opportunities to deed restrict existing housing.

The Town recognizes that these projections are sensitive to the pace of overall housing development and the availability of funding and development opportunities. Individual projects may contribute substantially more or fewer units than assumed, and some potential development sites may not advance within the planning period.

Accordingly, the Town will periodically evaluate its progress toward the 10% goal using updated RIHousing LMI inventory data, actual housing production, and the status of anticipated affordable housing developments. Strategies and numerical targets should be adjusted as necessary to reflect changing conditions and to maintain a credible pathway toward achieving the statutory threshold.

While the 2065 projection provides a long-term planning horizon, the Town will seek opportunities to reach the 10% threshold sooner as feasible and will continue to pursue the housing production and affordability objectives established in Housing 2030.

~~Based on the assumptions above, the following may be a realistic expectation of Bristol's progress towards 10% LMI housing by 2045.~~

~~Inclusionary Zoning: 28 units~~

~~Comprehensive Permits: 100 units~~

~~Condition of Variances or Zoning Changes: 20 units~~

~~Deed Restricting Existing Housing Stock: 40 units~~

~~Maximum Total: 188 units~~

~~Total LMI Housing by 2045: 897 (188 + 709)~~

~~**Percent LMI Housing by 2045**: 8.8% (897 / 10,139 Revised housing unit projection for 2045)~~

~~At current rates of development and given the current resources available to renovate and deed restrict existing buildings, Bristol can make good progress toward reaching 10% in the next 20 years, but it is likely to take longer before the target is reached.~~

~~40-Year Outlook~~

~~Looking further into the future, if the Town continues to steadily apply these strategies, the 10% target is more likely to be achieved in the next 40 years. Assuming a 40-year target of 2065, the following is possible:~~

~~**Revised housing unit projection** = 744 new housing units (18.6 units per year x 40 years) + existing 10,046 units = 10,790 units~~

~~**Re-Forecasted 10% threshold** = 1,079 units (calculated by multiplying the revised projection by 10%)~~

~~Forecasted to need by 2065 = additional 370 units (1,079 – 709)~~

~~Inclusionary Zoning: 56 units~~

~~Comprehensive Permits: 200 units~~

~~Condition of Variances or Zoning Changes: 40 units~~

~~Deed Restricting Existing Housing Stock: 80 units~~

~~Total: 376 units~~

~~Total LMI Housing by 2065: 1,085 (376 + 709)~~

~~**Percent LMI Housing by 2065**: 10.1% (1,085 / 10,790 – Revised housing unit projection for 2065)~~

## Housing Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Housing policies must support a broad range of housing opportunities so that Bristol can continue to provide housing that is affordable to its traditionally diverse population and to ensure that all neighborhoods are livable places. Based on the critical issues described in this chapter and the overarching housing policies stated above, this section presents the goals, policies, and strategies developed by the Town of Bristol to guide its homes and neighborhoods.

The goals and policies are listed first, followed by the strategies. The strategies are inclusive of the LMI strategies discussed above.

## Housing Goals and Policies

**Goal H1: Work for a continued range of housing opportunities so that Bristol can continue to be home to our traditionally diverse population.**

Policy H1.1: Prioritize Town efforts to address local housing needs that the private market is not meeting on its own, whether market rate or LMI, owner or rental, etc. This could include things such as senior housing, assisted living, smaller scale apartment buildings, or housing affordable to individuals or families making less than the Town's median income.

Policy H1.2: Address the needs of Bristol's special demographic groups, to include: working families, single parent families, parents whose children are grown, persons living alone, and the elderly.

Policy H1.3: Make sure that housing programs first meet the needs of Bristol residents.

Policy H1.4: Encourage a broad range of housing costs, with special emphasis on creating and maintaining houses and apartments that are affordable to working individuals and families making less than the Town's median income.

Policy H1.5: Continue programs to help elderly and others on fixed incomes stay in their homes.

Policy H1.6: Encourage coordination among public agencies and community organizations to leverage their resources and generate new programs that can better meet local housing needs.

**Goal H2: Ensure that neighborhoods are livable places.**

Policy H2.1: Continue to pursue the expansion of the historic district per the findings of the historic district survey, prioritizing properties with the greatest historical and architectural value.

Policy H2.2: The Town is encouraged to investigate new urbanism techniques such as form-based zoning regulations to guide the design of significant mixed-use redevelopment and design guidelines for infill development to maintain characteristics of existing residential neighborhoods and Bristol's historic downtown.

Policy H2.3: Sidewalks are encouraged for safety and sustainability purposes in new residential and mixed-use developments.

Policy H2.4: Connectivity must be maintained between neighborhoods as essential to quality of life, as well as for safety and convenience.

Policy H2.5: Address the issue of exterior lighting for public and private development, balancing the need for adequate lighting with the need to avoid excessive lighting on nearby residences.

Policy H2.6: Provide adequate water supply and pressure.

Policy H2.7: Buffer neighborhoods from incompatible land uses.

Policy H2.8: The Town should continue to call for adequate buffer zones between incompatible uses (i.e. between adjoining industrial and residential areas).

Policy H2.9: Take into account existing land use patterns when designing new zoning regulations.

Policy H2.10: Promote good design in all future developments that is appropriate to Bristol and to surrounding homes.

Policy H2.11: Require that new developments stay within a scale that is appropriate to Bristol and to surrounding homes.

Policy H2.12: Strengthen the services and amenities that make Bristol a good place to live.

**Goal H3: Create affordable housing opportunities and diversify the housing stock.**

Policy H3.1: Create a diversity of housing types that meets the current and future needs of low-moderate income residents, employees, and special needs populations. While Bristol does currently have housing for the elderly, families, single persons, and special needs populations, the majority of housing being built in Bristol is out of the reach of the low-mod populations. The housing gap this causes will continue to grow unless Bristol continues to actively and aggressively pursue the development of affordable housing within the town.

Policy H3.2: Meet 10% Goal for Low and Moderate Income (LMI) housing.

Policy H3.3: Provide housing opportunities for the Town's special needs populations. Achieve or maintain, whenever possible, at least a few housing units that will provide opportunities to households of one or more of the groups that have been identified as being of particular need in Bristol. Include careful and creative decisions about how the public purpose of expanded housing opportunity can be combined with other public purposes on any given site.

Policy H3.4: Revise the zoning ordinance to promote affordable housing and housing that meets the needs of all Bristol citizens.

Policy H3.5: Identify potential locations for LMI housing development.

Policy H3.6: Strengthen partnerships and build community support for affordable housing development.

Policy H3.7: Identify existing and new resources for affordable housing development.

Policy H3.8: Encourage public/private partnerships for the creation of LMI housing which will provide additional funding opportunities such as grants.

## Housing Strategies

Below is a review of the 28 Housing strategies included in the 2016 Bristol Comprehensive Plan, followed by the 25 Housing strategies in this updated plan.

### Review of 2016 Housing Strategies

Below is a list of the housing strategies included in the 2016 Bristol Comprehensive Plan along with a brief status update on each.

**H-1 – Create standards for Multi-family housing created for affordable housing**

This was not completed. Moving forward, it may make more sense to consider standards for infill multi-family housing regardless of whether it is LMI or market rate. This is addressed in the updated strategies.

**H-2- Adopt public advertising campaign**

This was not completed. However, Bristol sees the value of a public campaign around housing issues and may wish to partner with other municipalities, organizations or the state on this. This is addressed in the updated strategies.

**H-3 Build an Affordable Housing Trust Fund**

This was not completed. The Town never received fees-in-lieu from any inclusionary zoning projects. The Town then rescinded its Inclusionary Zoning ordinance (though

this plan recommends reinstating it). The updated strategies include options for using a negotiated fee from the Bristol Yarn Mill and other ways to potentially invest in an Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

**H-4 Work with RWU to encourage more on-campus housing and a right of first refusal for Almeida**

RWU does have a plan to build more on-campus housing, and they are aware of the Town's interest in Almeida Apartments when they go off-line. This is an ongoing strategy.

**H-5 Re-institute the Affordable Housing Committee**

The original appointed Committee provided recommendations to the Town Council and then disbanded. The updated strategies explore new potential roles for a reestablished Affordable Housing Committee.

**H-6 Develop a Section 8 Home ownership program**

This was not completed. This is more of a role for local non-profits. Though at the moment, the cost of home ownership is out of reach for most Section 8 voucher holders without a significant subsidy.

**H-7 Develop a program with Bristol Housing Authority to recruit more landlords for Section 8 since there are more recipients than apartments.**

This was not completed but is included in the updated strategies.

**H-8 Develop a program and promote East Bay CDC as the only East Bay Agency recognized as a monitoring agent**

This has been done informally. Whenever the Town has an applicant for LMI housing we meet with the East Bay CDC as the monitoring agent. The RI Housing Network is the monitoring agent for the LMI homeownership units that had been monitored by Rhode Island Housing. The updated strategies seek to formalize these roles.

**H-9 Partner with East Bay Chamber of Commerce to raise awareness of need for workforce housing.**

This was not completed. Again, the Town sees value in raising public awareness and this is addressed in the updated strategies.

**H-10 Utilize the service of RWU Community Partnerships Center to develop creative ways to provide affordable housing**

This is ongoing as opportunities present themselves with the CPC. This will be included with the updated strategies.

**H-11 Continue and expand the CDBG home repair program**

This is ongoing with a very active CDBG Home Repair Program, and is included in the updated strategies.

**H-12 – Consider best use or re-use of Town owned property to include housing or apply a portion of the sale to a housing trust or first-time homebuyer. Exceptions are the former schools on the Town Common which cannot be sold or used for housing per the Grand Deed and the former Guiteras Elementary School.**

The former Oliver School was recently sold and is proposed for 11 residential units with ~~3~~ 2 to be affordable (other parts of the chapter read 2 LMI). Also proposed to have one accessible unit. Remaining town-owned property is limited and there are few opportunities appropriate for housing development. However, the Town acknowledges the value of this approach. It has been included with the updated strategies, even though few results are expected in the near future.

**H-13 Work with State Legislature to broaden definition of affordable housing**

Ongoing with Statewide initiatives. Bristol has some landlords that have had long term rentals with rents less than what they could charge as documented "LMI" units. However, these landlords don't want to commit to the 30-year deed restriction and so those units are not counted towards the 10%. The Town is still interested in getting credit for such units.

**H-14 Identify individual properties and neighborhoods for architectural or historic significance and work with owners for National Register of Historic Places designation.**

Some preliminary work has been done but need to do more.

**H15 – Explore and consider form based versus use based zoning to maintain characteristics of existing neighborhoods.**

This was not completed. The Town is unlikely to pursue form based code in the near future.

**H16 – Continue to update streets with sidewalks**

This is ongoing with developments and with the Town and RIDOT. RIDOT is currently working on sidewalks on the west side of Hope Street and Ferry Road as well.

**H17 – Cul-de sacs should be discouraged where possible.**

This is ongoing with the Planning Board as part of subdivision reviews.

**H18 – Adopt a night sky ordinance to address the impacts of exterior lighting on neighborhood.**

The Town prohibits lights from impacting neighbors with shielding, location, and intensity, but not as a comprehensive "night sky ordinance."

**H-19 Continue to participate in Community Rating System**

This is ongoing and the Town is now a Class 7.

**H-20 To provide incentive for property owners to create deed restricted affordable rental, continue to limit the property tax on the deed restricted unit to 8% of the gross income received.**

This is ongoing.

**H-21 Continue to list sites for affordable housing and consider scattered units.**

The Town needs to update this list as a lot of the sites are no longer available. A new list is included with the updated strategies.

**H-22 Continue to require affordable units as a condition for zoning relief and zone changes that include residential.**

This is ongoing specifically with the Zoning Board; however, the Board doesn't always agree with staff's recommendations to require affordable units.

**H-23 Create an info packet for non-profit developers to help promote creating affordable housing**

This was not completed. Local non-profit developers are very aware of the opportunities in Bristol – the bigger problem is finding funding/financing.

**H-24 Create design standards for in-fill development**

This was not completed. Moving forward, it may make more sense to consider standards specifically for infill multi-family housing. This is addressed in the updated strategies.

**H-25 Help seniors age in place**

This is ongoing, though more specific strategies around this issue are needed.

**H-26 Work with service providers to create affordable child care**

This was not completed and is not addressed in the updated housing strategies. However, there is still a strong need for these services which the Town may explore elsewhere in this plan.

**H-27 Work with homeless agencies to track homeless individuals or families**

This is ongoing and is included in the updated strategies.

**H-28 Work with the State to amend current state law on affordable housing including allowing Section 8 vouchers to count toward 10% goal.**

State Laws were updated in 2024 to allow active vouchers to count toward the 10% goal. These units have been included in Bristol's LMI housing calculations above.

### Current Housing Strategies

H1. Adopt a **public advertising campaign** to educate residents on the need for the creation of LMI housing units.

Misinformation and a lack of information can be major barriers to LMI housing. Throughout the public outreach process, participants noted it would be beneficial to educate people about what LMI units are, who needs them, and what is involved in creating them. An advertising campaign could be one approach to significantly educate the public.

The Town should consider utilizing the Rhode Island Executive Office of Housing's Housing Forward educational resources, case studies, and training opportunities to support public understanding of local housing needs and potential solutions.

H2. Build an **Affordable Housing Trust Fund** to help give the Town a tool to invest in creating and maintaining the types of LMI housing most needed by the community in the places where it makes most sense to have it.

This program would provide financial assistance to initiatives that are directly aimed at creating more affordable or LMI housing units. On top of the fee in lieu from the Bristol Yarn Mill development, the Town may choose to seed such a fund through future negotiated fees in lieu, grant funds, or general Town revenues.

H3. Work with **RWU** to encourage **more on-campus student housing** and agree on a right of first refusal to partner with a non-profit housing developer to turn the **Almeida Apartments** into general rental or senior housing (with some or all the units as LMI housing) over time. Funds from an Affordable Housing Trust Fund could be used to help provide a downpayment for this and other large properties, or to help provide gap financing.

Encouraging more on-campus student housing could reduce the number of students who compete with non-students for housing not provided by the university.

H4. Re-institute the **Affordable Housing Committee** to help identify affordable housing opportunities, advocate for / educate about affordable housing needs, and explore more creative ways to achieve affordable housing goals.

The Town had an Affordable Housing Committee (AHC) that helped draft the initial housing strategies back in 2005. Once this was completed, the AHC disbanded. A revived AHC could help create content for a public education campaign on affordable housing, manage the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (in an advisory capacity, should the Town establish a longer term financing source for the Fund), and otherwise support Town staff in implementing the strategies of this chapter.

H5. Develop a program with the Bristol Housing Authority to **educate landlords** and encourage them to participate in the **Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher** program.

Through the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides funding to public housing agencies (PHAs), in this case the Bristol Housing Authority (BHA). The PHA then passes on the funds as rental assistance to eligible people (very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled) who can find rental units owned by participating landlords. There are currently more recipients than apartments available. Expanding the number of landlords willing to accept vouchers will make more of the existing housing stock affordable to more people.

H6. Formalize agreements with East Bay Community Development Corporation and the Housing Network of Rhode Island to serve as the **monitoring agents** for privately owned LMI housing units and enforce the policy that any new LMI housing units in Bristol are deed restricted for 99 years.

The Town currently has had this arrangement informally with the East Bay Community Development Corporation, a nonprofit focused on affordable housing, and the Housing Network of Rhode Island. Formalizing these arrangements could involve the Town signing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with these organizations and, as part of those agreements, requiring a tracking system for when deed restrictions are set to expire as well as a deed restriction time period of 99 years. That tracking system would alert Town staff and the AHC (if reestablished) when they need to start working with property owners well in advance to find financing or other mechanisms to extend deed restrictions.

H7. Utilize the services of the **RWU's Community Partnerships Center** to develop creative ways to provide affordable and LMI housing.

RWU's Community Partnerships Center's mission is to undertake and complete projects that will benefit local communities within Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts, while providing RWU students with knowledge in real-world projects

that deepen their academic experiences." The Town of Bristol is already a community partner with the center, as is Benjamin Church Manor, which provides affordable housing to Bristol seniors. Town staff and the AHC should approach the Center to assist with any research needed to implement the strategies of this chapter.

H8. Continue and expand the Town's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) **home repair and home maintenance grant and loan programs**.

With CDBG funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Bristol runs a Home Repair Program aimed at helping residents who may have limited financial means to make improvements to their homes. This program has helped many individuals and families, and could be expanded from other sources, including the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

H9.

**H9. Maintain and annually update an inventory of municipally owned or controlled property and evaluate appropriate properties for housing or LMI housing.**

Consistent with the State Housing Land Bank Program, the Town should review real estate owned by or under the control of the municipality and identify properties that are not in current or planned municipal use. Appropriate properties should be evaluated for potential residential or affordable housing reuse. Where property is sold rather than directly reused for housing, the Town should consider dedicating a portion of sale proceeds to an Affordable Housing Trust Fund or first-time homebuyer program. The former schools on the Town Common must remain in general public use pursuant to the grand deed and may not be converted to housing.

~~Consider the best use or reuse of **town-owned property** to include LMI housing and/or a portion from the sale to be applied to a housing trust or first-time homebuyer program.~~

~~The Town should maintain a running list of properties it owns and annually evaluate which uses would best serve the community. While there may be limited opportunities with this strategy in the foreseeable future, it is a valuable process to evaluate this annually. Note that the former schools on the Town Common must remain in general public use per the grand deed, and may not be converted to housing. (See LMI Housing Strategies for greater detail.)~~

H 10. Work with the General Assembly to **broaden the definition of LMI housing** to include modestly priced and locally affordable units within the community.

The Town will continue to advocate for this strategy. Certain landlords charge tenants less than the upper limit that officially defines a unit as LMI. In other words, those units could be defined as LMI because they are affordable (would represent 30% or less of a household's income) for people making 80% or less of the area median income (LMI). Many landlords are reluctant to voluntarily take on a 30+-year deed restriction, which is what guarantees long term affordability and is a requirement for most homes to count as LMI. Further, landlords would need to be willing to verify annually the rents they are charging and the incomes of their tenants.

H 11. Continue to participate in the **Community Rating System (CRS) of the National Flood Insurance Program**. Advocate for and explore options to raise the Town's credit for increased discounts on Flood Insurance Policies.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) oversees the CRS, a voluntary incentive program that rewards National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Communities for doing floodplain management activities that go beyond the minimum NFIP requirements. In exchange for performing those activities, the community receives discounts on flood insurance premiums. This approach saves money, which can benefit the community, and reduces the flood risks the community faces.

The Town is now at a Class 7 CRS rating, meaning that Bristol residents who purchase or renew their flood insurance policies for properties in a Special Flood Hazard Area in Bristol will have their flood insurance premium discounted by 15%. The Town can continue to implement actions that will help improve its ratings under the CRS Program even further.

H12. To provide incentive for creating and maintaining LMI housing, the Town will proactively **reach out to property owners of deed restricted units** to inform them they are eligible to limit the property taxes on the LMI unit to 8% of the gross income received from the unit.

Many Bristol property owners who are eligible for this tax incentive do not take advantage of it. One barrier could be that many property owners are simply not aware that the tax incentive exists. Others are wary of the paperwork it would take to verify their eligibility. To address that barrier, the Town can work to inform property owners about this, including through the public advertising campaign described for strategy 1. In addition, the Town can work with the Housing Network of Rhode Island to provide support to property owners to maintain and submit their paperwork.

H13. Continue to identify locations where the Town would like to proactively encourage the development of LMI housing through **"friendly" comp permits**.

Under Rhode Island law, an applicant proposing to build housing that qualifies as at least 25% low- or moderate-income may apply for a comprehensive (comp) permit, instead of submitting separate applications to different local boards. In other words, the permit allows the developer to move through the approval process more quickly and have a higher density of units in the proposed property. Bristol has identified several properties that may have the potential for friendly comp permits either now or in the future. (See LMI Housing Strategies for more details and a list of the potential properties.)

The Town should consider utilizing the State's Housing Visualizations and Mapping Tool, together with local GIS data, to evaluate potential opportunities for infill development, redevelopment, and affordable housing on suitable properties.

H14. Require or continue to negotiate LMI units as a **condition for zoning relief**, and changes of zone that include residential uses.

The Town currently often negotiates with developers to provide more LMI units in exchange for zoning relief. The Town could set a policy requiring developers to produce a certain number of LMI units in exchange for zoning relief. Alternatively, the Town could continue to negotiate with developers, adjusting the number of LMI units they request on a case-by-case basis. (See LMI Housing Strategies for greater detail.)

H15. Create an **information packet for for-profit developers** to help promote the creation of LMI housing.

The Town could create the packet by adapting resources from Rhode Island and Massachusetts municipalities and from Rhode Island state agencies, such as Rhode Island Housing and the Rhode Island Department of Housing. The packet could include information about income limits and prices for LMI units/rentals, contact information for the monitoring agency, a draft deed covenant, preferred areas for LMI housing development, and references to Bristol's zoning ordinance and historic preservation standards.

H16. Create **design standards for infill development** of multi-family housing to help them blend into the character of existing residential neighborhoods.

Infill development means building on underutilized or unutilized lands within an existing developed area. For example, if someone were to build a triple-decker house on an abandoned lot between several triple-decker houses on a street, they would be

practicing infill development. Design standards or form-based code can help ensure that a building looks compatible with its surroundings regardless of what is happening inside. For example, design standards can ensure a building envelope, basic roof shapes, building width and depth, garage placement, etc. look compatible whether the inside hosts one unit or four. So long as the required parking can be accommodated on site, small-scale multi-family can fit into many neighborhoods with the right design.

H 17. The Town will work with local homeless agencies to **track homeless individuals** or families who may have resided within the Town and try to connect them with support services.

Organizations the Town could work with include: East Bay Coalition for the Homeless, Riverwood Mental Health Services, and East Bay Community Action Program.

**H18. Monitor short-term rentals and evaluate their effects on the year-round housing supply.**

Implement and enforce the Town's short-term rental regulations and maintain an up-to-date inventory of registered short-term rentals. Periodically evaluate the number, location, and characteristics of short-term rentals, including grandfathered units, to determine whether changes in short-term rental activity are affecting the availability of year-round rental and ownership housing. Consider amendments to the short-term rental regulations, as warranted, based on observed housing and neighborhood impacts.

~~H18. Mitigate the effects of **Short-Term Rentals** on housing market competitiveness.~~

~~The Town will explore bolstering its registration process for short-term rentals in order to better track their locations and understand their impacts (being sure short-term rental permits are tracked separately from year-round, longer-term rentals). Where short-term rentals prove to have a negative impact on year-round rental housing, particularly for working class and middle class residents, the Town may consider requiring longer-term leases (12 months or more) – at least for properties where an owner occupant is not present.~~

H19. Explore allowing more diverse housing types in more zones. For example . . .

- Allow up to four-family dwellings in the R-8 and R-10 districts.
- Allow two-family dwellings in the R-15 within a ½ mile walking radius of any commercial or mixed-use zoning.

- Explore zoning options for allowing clusters of small-scale cottages or "tiny homes" on single parcels.

Paired with the design standards discussed in H16, allowing a greater diversity of housing in certain zones may be an effective way to introduce housing diversity and more naturally occurring affordable housing in a way that is compatible with existing development.

H20. Explore more options for **Senior and Accessible Housing** that would allow seniors to downsize from their single-family homes. Explore requirements for universal design and accessibility in new construction or major renovations. The Almeida Apartments may present a good opportunity for additional senior and accessible housing.

H21. Explore cooperating with the Housing Network of RI's (HNRI) **Community Housing Land Trust (CHLT)** where HNRI owns the land while the homeowner owns the home. This would reduce the price of a home by removing the land value. HNRI's existing CHLT can accept donations of land, including with existing housing, and manages the long-term affordability of such properties by setting an affordable resale price. Partnering with this existing entity would provide the Town with all the advantages of a CHLT without the administrative hassles of running one itself.

H22. Proactively foster **Local and Regional Partnerships** and regularly meet with partners to learn from each other. Communities all over the state and New England are dealing with the same issues.

H23. Amend and reinstate the Town's former **Inclusionary Zoning** policy that certain developments must provide a percentage of new residential homes as LMI. Inclusionary zoning should apply to any development of five or more units and at least 15% of units should be LMI. (See LMI Housing Strategies for greater detail.)

H24. Encourage the Development of **Accessory Dwelling Units** (ADUs).

ADUs refer to smaller independent residential units that are on the same lot as a single-family home. At a minimum, the Town will comply with all state laws related to ADUs.

H25. The Town will continue to track **tax sale properties** as they become available and will consider acquiring appropriate properties and then working with local non-profit developers to renovate them as needed and then deed restrict them for LMI housing. (See LMI Housing Strategies for greater detail.)

**H26. Pursue and maintain designation as a Rhode Island Housing Champion.**

The Town should pursue the State's voluntary Housing Champion designation by continuing to implement housing-supportive land use regulations, training planning and zoning board members, investing in infrastructure and transportation improvements that support housing, utilizing appropriate financial tools, and maintaining a Comprehensive Plan that supports housing and community development. Housing Champion communities receive preferential consideration for certain discretionary State funding programs, providing an additional incentive for Bristol to continue implementing its housing goals.

| Housing Implementation Actions | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **ID** | **Action** | **Responsible Parties** | **Timeframe** |
| H-A1 | Adopt a public advertising campaign to educate residents on the need for the creation of LMI housing units. | Department of Community Development; Affordable Housing Committee | Short |
| H-A2 | ~~Build an Affordable Housing Trust Fund to help give the Town a tool to invest in creating and maintaining the types of LMI housing most needed by the community in the places where it makes most sense to have it.~~Build an Affordable Housing Trust Fund to help the Town invest in creating and preserving LMI housing, including the acquisition, rehabilitation, and deed restriction of existing housing units. | Town Council; Town Administrator; Department of Community Development | Short–Medium |
| H-A3 | ~~Work with RWU to encourage more on-campus student housing and agree on a right of first refusal to partner with a non-profit housing developer to turn the Almeida Apartments into general rental or senior housing (with some or all the units as LMI housing) over time. Funds from an Affordable Housing Trust Fund could be used to help provide a downpayment for this and other large properties, or to help provide gap financing.~~Work with RWU to encourage additional on-campus student housing and explore opportunities to partner with nonprofit housing developers on the future reuse of the Almeida Apartments for general rental, senior, and/or LMI housing, including a potential right of first refusal. | Town Administrator; Department of Community Development | Ongoing |
| H-A4 | Re-institute the Affordable Housing Committee to help identify affordable housing opportunities, advocate for / educate about affordable housing needs, and explore more creative ways to achieve affordable housing goals. | Town Council; Department of Community Development | Short |
| H-A5 | Develop a program with the Bristol Housing Authority to educate landlords and encourage them to participate in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program. | Department of Community Development; Bristol Housing Authority | Short–Medium |
| H-A6 | Formalize agreements with East Bay Community Development Corporation and the Housing Network of Rhode Island to serve as the monitoring agents for privately owned LMI housing units and enforce the policy that any new LMI housing units in Bristol are deed restricted for 99 years. | Department of Community Development; Town Administrator | Short |
| H-A7 | Utilize the services of the RWU's Community Partnerships Center to develop creative ways to provide affordable and LMI housing. | Department of Community Development; Affordable Housing Committee | Ongoing |
| H-A8 | Continue and expand the Town's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) home repair and home maintenance grant and loan programs. | Department of Community Development | Ongoing |
| H-A9 | Maintain and annually update an inventory of municipally owned or controlled property and evaluate appropriate sites for housing or LMI housing.<u>, including potential redevelopment and adaptive reuse opportunities.</u> | Town Administrator; Department of Community Development | Ongoing |
| H-A10 | Work with the General Assembly to broaden the definition of LMI housing to include modestly priced and locally affordable units within the community. | Town Council; Town Administrator; Department of Community Development | Ongoing |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| H-A11 | Continue to participate in the Community Rating System (CRS) of the National Flood Insurance Program. Advocate for and explore options to raise the Town's credit for increased discounts on Flood Insurance Policies. | Department of Community Development; Department of Public Works | Ongoing |
| H-A12 | To provide incentive for creating and maintaining LMI housing, the Town will proactively reach out to property owners of deed restricted units to inform them they are eligible to limit the property taxes on the LMI unit to 8% of the gross income received from the unit. | Department of Community Development; Tax Assessor | Ongoing |
| H-A13 | ~~Continue to identify locations where the Town would like to proactively encourage the development of LMI housing through "friendly" comp permits.~~Proactively identify appropriate sites for LMI housing development through comprehensive permits, including redevelopment and adaptive reuse opportunities, and work with nonprofit and private developers to advance feasible projects. | Department of Community Development; Planning Board | Ongoing |
| H-A14 | ~~Require or continue to negotiate LMI units as a condition for zoning relief, and changes of zone that include residential uses.~~Encourage additional LMI housing through appropriate zoning amendments, development incentives, and voluntary agreements with property owners, consistent with applicable State law and local regulations. | Department of Community Development; Planning Board; Zoning Board of Review; Town Council | Ongoing |
| H-A15 | Create an information packet for for-profit developers to help promote the creation of LMI housing. | Department of Community Development | Short |
| H-A16 | Create design standards for infill development of multi-family housing to help them blend into the character of existing residential neighborhoods. | Department of Community Development; Planning Board; Town Council | Short–Medium |
| H-A17 | The Town will work with local homeless agencies to track homeless individuals or families who may have resided within the Town and try to connect them with support services. | Department of Community Development; Police Department | Ongoing |
| H-A18 | ~~Mitigate the effects of Short-Term Rentals on housing market competitiveness.~~Monitor and regulate short-term rentals and evaluate their effects on the year-round housing supply. | Department of Community Development; Town Council | Ongoing |
| H-A19 | Explore allowing more diverse housing types in more zones. For example . . .<br>• Allow up to four-family dwellings in the R-8 and R-10 districts.<br>• Allow two-family dwellings in the R-15 within a ½ mile walking radius of any commercial or mixed-use zoning.<br>• Explore zoning options for allowing clusters of small-scale cottages or "tiny homes" on single parcels. | Department of Community Development; Planning Board; Town Council | Short–Medium |
| H-A20 | Explore more options for Senior and Accessible Housing that would allow seniors to downsize from their single-family homes. Explore requirements for universal design and accessibility in new construction or major renovations. The Almeida Apartments may present a good opportunity for additional senior and accessible housing. | Department of Community Development; Affordable Housing Committee | Medium |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| H-A21 | Explore cooperating with the Housing Network of RI's (HNRI) Community Housing Land Trust (CHLT) where HNRI owns the land while the homeowner owns the home. This would reduce the price of a home by removing the land value. HNRI's existing CHLT can accept donations of land, including with existing housing, and manages the long-term affordability of such properties by setting an affordable resale price. Partnering with this existing entity would provide the Town with all the advantages of a CHLT without the administrative hassles of running one itself. | Department of Community Development; Town Administrator; Affordable Housing Committee | Short–Medium |
| H-A22 | Proactively foster Local and Regional Partnerships and regularly meet with partners to learn from each other. Communities all over the state and New England are dealing with the same issues. | Department of Community Development; Town Administrator; Affordable Housing Committee | Ongoing |
| H-A23 | Amend and reinstate the Town's former Inclusionary Zoning policy that certain developments must provide a percentage of new residential homes as LMI. Inclusionary zoning should apply to any development of five or more units and at least 15% of units should be LMI. (See LMI Housing Strategies for greater detail.) | Department of Community Development; Planning Board; Town Council | Short |
| H-A24 | Encourage the Development of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). | Department of Community Development | Ongoing |
| H-A25 | The Town will continue to track tax sale properties as they become available and will consider acquiring appropriate properties and then working with local non-profit developers to renovate them as needed and then deed restrict them for LMI housing. (See LMI Housing Strategies for greater detail.) | Town Administrator; Department of Community Development; Tax Collector; Town Council | Ongoing |
| H-A26 | Pursue and maintain designation as a Rhode Island Housing Champion. | Department of Community Development; Town Administrator | Ongoing |
| H-A27 | Annually track housing production, qualifying LMI units, and progress toward the Town's interim and long-term LMI housing targets. Periodically review and update the assumptions and strategies used to project achievement of the 10% threshold. | Department of Community Development; Planning Board | Ongoing |

**Bristol Comprehensive Plan Update**

**State Review Comments – Economic Development and Business Outreach**

Statewide Planning has completed its preliminary review of four draft Comprehensive Plan elements: Historic and Cultural Resources, Economic Development, Public Services and Facilities, and Transportation. No required revisions were identified for Historic and Cultural Resources or Transportation.

Three required revisions were identified in the other two elements:

- **Economic Development – Employment Trends:** The existing employment data included a snapshot of local employment. A ten-year comparison by industry has now been added to show changes over time.
- **Public Services and Facilities – Mapping:** The Public Facilities map has been updated to show all Town-owned properties on the base map.
- **Economic Development – Business Infrastructure Needs:** The State requested additional input from the business community about infrastructure and service needs, particularly broadband, water, sewer, stormwater, and other factors affecting business operations and growth.

The first two items have been addressed. To respond to the remaining comment, a draft invitation letter and brief survey have been prepared to solicit input from a selection of local businesses, potentially through the Chamber of Commerce and direct outreach to business representatives. Responses would inform any necessary additions to the Economic Development Element.

**Please review the draft letter, survey questions, and proposed outreach approach and let us know if you have any comments or suggestions before we move forward.**

**Town of Bristol**
**Comprehensive Plan Update**
**Business Needs Survey – Invitation to Participate**

Dear Bristol Business Owner,

The Town of Bristol is updating its Comprehensive Plan, which will guide decisions about land use, economic development, infrastructure, and community services over the next 20 years.

As part of this process, the Town is seeking input from local businesses about infrastructure needs and other challenges that may affect their ability to operate and grow in Bristol. We are particularly interested in identifying issues and improvements that the Town or other public agencies may be able to help address.

We invite you to complete a brief survey to share your perspective on current conditions and future needs. Your input will help the Town identify priorities for supporting local businesses and strengthening Bristol's economy.

**Business Needs Survey: [Insert Survey Link]**

Survey responses and comments will help inform the Economic Development element of Bristol's Comprehensive Plan and may be incorporated into the draft, as appropriate, to better reflect the needs and priorities of Bristol's business community. Businesses are welcome to review the Draft Economic Development Element and provide additional comments or suggestions. Reviewing the draft is entirely optional and is not necessary to complete the survey.

Please submit your response by **[Insert Deadline]**.

Thank you for taking the time to share your perspective and help shape Bristol's future.

Sincerely,

**Town of Bristol**
Department of Community Development

**Town of Bristol Comprehensive Plan Update**
**Business Needs Survey – Draft for Review**

**Introduction**

The Town of Bristol is updating its Comprehensive Plan and is seeking input from local businesses about infrastructure, services, and other issues that may affect their ability to operate and grow in Bristol.

Your responses will help inform revisions to the draft Economic Development Element and identify improvements that the Town or other public agencies may be able to address.

The survey should take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

**1. What type of business do you operate?**

*Select one.*

1. Retail
2. Restaurant/Food Service
3. Professional or Business Services
4. Manufacturing/Industrial
5. Marine-Related Business
6. Construction/Trades
7. Tourism/Hospitality
8. Healthcare
9. Other (please specify): _____

**2. Which of the following issues currently affect your business's operations or ability to grow in Bristol?**

*Select all that apply.*

**Infrastructure and Utilities**

1. Internet/broadband service (speed, reliability, or availability)
2. Public water service (capacity, reliability, or cost)
3. Sewer service (capacity, availability, or cost)
4. Stormwater management, drainage, or flooding

**Transportation and Access**

1. Customer parking
2. Employee parking
3. Traffic
4. Road conditions
5. Sidewalks or pedestrian access

6. Public transportation

**Workforce**

1. Recruiting or retaining qualified employees
2. Availability or cost of housing for employees

**Other**

1. Other issue (please specify): _____
2. None of the above

**3. Please briefly describe any issues identified above and how they affect your business operations or potential expansion.**

*Optional written response.*

**4. What improvements to public infrastructure, municipal services, or other community conditions would most benefit your business or Bristol's business community?**

*Open-ended response.*

**5. Do you have any comments or suggestions regarding the Draft Economic Development Element of Bristol's Comprehensive Plan?** *Reviewing the draft is optional and is not necessary to complete this survey.*

*Optional written response.*

[Link to Draft Economic Development Element]

**6. Business and Contact Information (Optional)**

1. Business Name: _____
2. Contact Name: _____
3. Email Address: _____

Thank you for helping the Town of Bristol plan for its economic future.