



# **TOWN OF BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND**

## PLANNING BOARD MEETING

### Planning Board Meeting Agenda

Thursday, April 11, 2024 at 7:00 PM

Community Development Office, (Former Reynolds School), 235  
High Street, 1st Floor, Bristol, RI 02809

- A. Pledge of Allegiance
- B. Approval of Minutes - March 14, 2024
- C. New Business
  - C1. Update to Housing Chapter of Bristol's Comprehensive Plan - Presentation, Review, and Discussion to start the update with Jeff Davis from Horsley Witten Group consulting firm. Update will include strategies to achieve the goal of 10% Low-Moderate Income Housing.
- D. Adjourn

Date: April 5, 2024

Posted by: mbw



## Town of Bristol, Rhode Island

*Department of Community Development*

10 Court Street  
Bristol, RI 02809  
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401-253-7000

April 4, 2024

TO: Planning Board  
FROM: Diane M. Williamson, Director  
RE: **Update to Housing Element of Comprehensive Plan**

For the April 11 Planning Board meeting, Jeff Davis, a planner from the consulting firm of Horsley Witten Group will make a presentation to the Board for review and discussion as we begin the project of updating the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Town received a Technical Assistance Grant from RI Housing to undertake this work and the grant is funding the project in its entirety. The grant will also fund a consultant to help the Town create a program with the Affordable Housing Fee in Lieu funds anticipated from the Bristol Yarn Mill project. That consultant will present to the Board in May to begin that phase of the project.

For this project there will also be a public meeting in May to discuss this update with the broader public and continued review with the Planning Board again in June and July.

Enclosed is the current Housing Chapter from the Comprehensive Plan to review prior the meeting next week. Also enclosed are Interview Questions to consider. We will review and discuss the Board member's thoughts in response to these as well.

Thank you!



## Bristol Housing Chapter April 2024 Interview Questions

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed to assist us in the development of the Housing Chapter of the Town of Bristol's Comprehensive Plan. Below are questions that may come up during the discussion.

1. What attracts people to live in Bristol?
2. Who is moving to Bristol? Where do they move from?
3. Why do people leave Bristol?
4. Who is moving out of Bristol? Where do they move to?
5. Have these trends changed at all in recent years? Are certain household types or populations more likely to be affected by these trends?
6. Have you noticed any changes in housing trends or needs recently?
7. Are there any types of housing (rental, ownership, single-family houses, apartments, ADUs, townhouses, duplexes, certain price points, etc.) that the community wants or needs more of?
8. Are there any changes that you would like to see in the current Town regulations and zoning as they relate to housing?
9. How would proposals for allowing different types of housing in Bristol be received by the community? Do people tend to see housing as something the Town needs to address?
10. What is the capacity for addressing housing related issues in Town? Who is thinking about housing issues and what tools do they have to address them?
11. What characteristics of the community's housing market are barriers for different populations (e.g., lack of supply, housing quality, lack of accessible units, price, etc.?) Which populations are most affected?
12. What other related factors make attaining or retaining housing challenging for these populations? (e.g., transportation, childcare, other household costs, medical issues, lack of services?)
13. If you had a magic wand, what are the top things you would do to address housing concerns in Bristol?
14. Is there anything else we should know about housing in Bristol based on your experiences and knowledge?

# 4. Housing

## Introduction and Background

The Town of Bristol is home to a cultural 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. Bristol's sense of pride is strong and people take pride in their homes and neighborhoods. In 2010, the Town was named one of the ten best places to raise a family by Family Circle Magazine.

Between 2009 and 2013, there were 77 new single family residential units and two multi-family units (a three-family and a two-family) built. This rate of housing growth represents a decrease of 1/3 from the 2009 Comprehensive Plan which reported 115 new single family units. There were no condominiums built in this time frame which is indicative of the economy during this period. In 2012, the Building Department began tracking the estimated cost of construction and in that year it was reported at \$2,323,500 and \$3,798,825 in 2013. This is an increase of almost 40% in the value of construction.

The Town's population is also growing older. Having affordable housing is important in order to keep the younger generations in Town, to help provide the Town services such as Town's volunteer Fire Department; and, to have a strong workforce. The Town also has to provide services and amenities so that Bristol's older population can age in place. What is good for the growing elderly population is actually good for all of the residents, such as making streets more pedestrian friendly and the ability to safely walk. Bristol's walkability score is 65 on walkscore.com, which means that it is somewhat walkable and some errands can be accomplished on foot. The AARP Public Policy Institute conducted a study as to what older adults want to have close to home. The top things are: a bus stop, grocery store,

park, and drug store/pharmacy. Bristol prides itself on having a pedestrian friendly, walkable downtown. However, more needs to be done to connect neighborhoods to the downtown, especially those on the east side of Metacom Avenue and along Metacom Avenue. Using funds for a voter-approved bond in 2004, the Town has been upgrading and replacing existing sidewalks in many neighborhoods. Development projects along Metacom Avenue have also been installing new sidewalks as part of the Town's requirements.



*Residential neighborhood in Bristol*

In May 2013, the Town was entered into the Community Rating System of the National Flood Insurance Program. The Community Rating System provides a discount to all property owners who maintain flood insurance as required by the National Flood Insurance Program. The discount is based on a scoring for eligible activities to educate residents and mitigate damage from flooding including brochures, posting information on the Town's web site, and preservation of open space that is in the floodplain. The Town's discount is currently 10%. The Building Official and the Director of the Department of Community Development became Certified Floodplain Managers in 2013. A Certified Floodplain Manager is trained on the requirements for construction in the flood plain which is important in the review of permits for construction in the flood zone. FEMA has also developed new floodplain mapping for the

Town which was finalized in July 2014. Along with this new flood plain mapping, the Town of Bristol has also adopted a companion Flood Zone Ordinance Update. The adoption of the Flood Zone Mapping and Ordinance allows the Town to continue to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program which means that all property owners in the Town continue to be eligible to purchase flood insurance for their property.

## Assessment of Housing Needs

Current Housing Inventory (Range of housing unit sizes and types) – Housing in the Town is predominately single-family detached dwellings however there are many neighborhoods in the downtown and surrounding area that have multi-family units.



*Housing in Bristol*

**Table 4.1: Types of Housing Units in Bristol, RI, 2000 and 2012 ACS 5-Year Estimates**

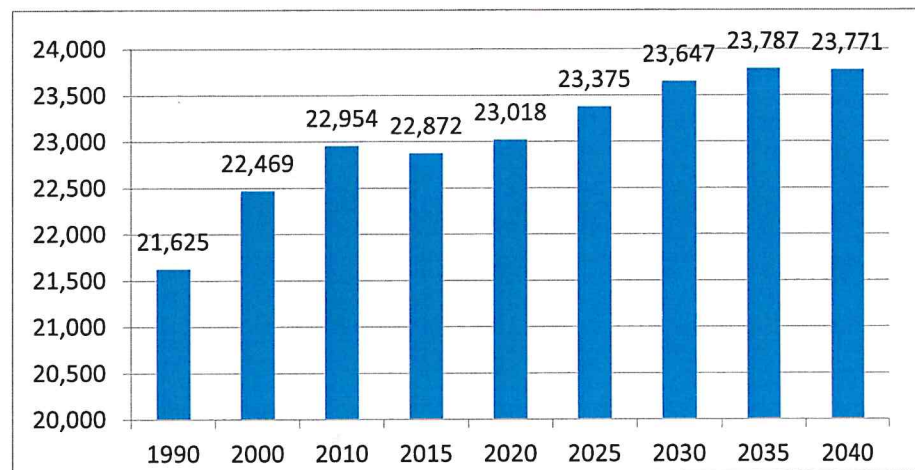
Type of Structure	2000 Units	2008-2012 Est		% Change 2000-2012
		Number	Percent	
Single-family (detached)	5,293	5,980	62.1%	13.0%
Single-family (attached)	361	257	2.7%	-28.8%
Two-family Units	1,175	1,074	11.2%	-8.6%
Three or four units	987	1,138	11.8%	15.3%
Five to nine units	476	597	6.2%	25.4%
Ten of more units	408	579	6.0%	41.9%
Mobile Home	5	0	0.0%	-100.0%
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>8,705</b>	<b>9,625</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>10.6%</b>

Source: American Community Survey 2008-2012 5-Year Estimates

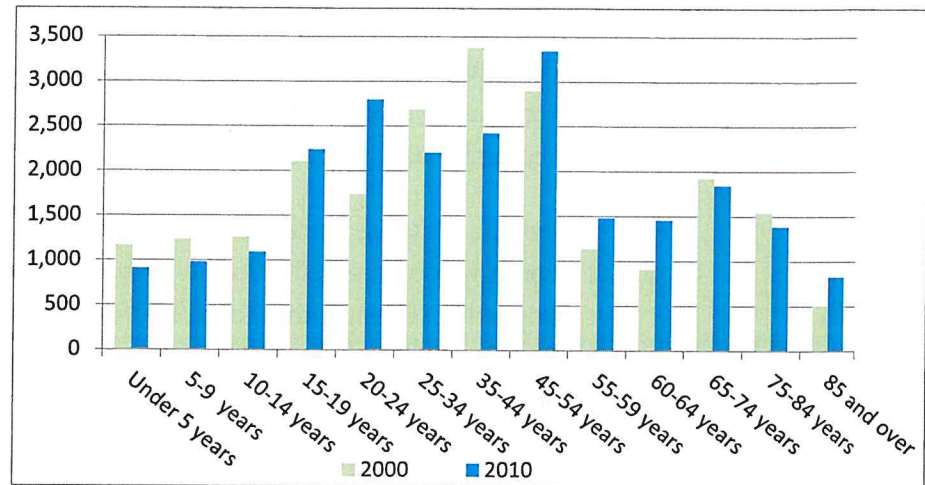
### Population Projections

According to the Rhode Island Population Projections from 2010 – 2040, Technical Paper 162, dated April 2013, the population in the Town was forecasted at 22,866 for 2015 and will increase slightly in 2020 to 23,009. Given the census data, the population is expected to rise for those in the 54 and older category as the baby boomers age.

**Figure 4.1: Historic and Projected Population Growth in Bristol, RI**



Source: US Census, Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program Population Projection

**Figure 4.2: Distribution of Age, Bristol, RI**

Source: US Census 2000 and 2010

### *Housing Needs*

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) database provides information on the housing needs. According to the CHAS data tabulations from 2006-2010, of the 8895 total households, 3310 (37%) pay more than 30% of their income to housing. The CHAS data also indicates that 3120 households are low income with approximately half rental (1735) and half home ownership (1385).

Based on the population projections and the current housing inventory, there will a need for additional housing for seniors and/or provisions for more residents to age in place.

## **Affordable Housing**

### *Housing Affordability*

The Town of Bristol has 9,015 total year round housing units<sup>1</sup> with 535 qualifying as long-term affordable. Of the 535 units, 359 are reserved for elderly, 100 are long term affordable units reserved for family and 76 are reserved for special needs.

<sup>1</sup> The year round housing units data from the 2010 US Census represents the latest decennial census of the Town of Bristol for the purpose of affordable housing discussion.



RI Housing's report on meeting the 10% affordable housing target indicates that the Town has made good progress toward reaching that goal with 5.96%. The Town would need an additional 367 units to meet the 10% threshold established by Rhode Island's Low-Moderate Income Housing Act of 2004.

Bristol's housing market has been hit with the downturn in the economy. Between 2010 to the present, there were 42 bank-owned properties. Though the Town's affordable dwellings increased by 0.7% from the 2008 count, the Town lost two affordable units due to foreclosure in 2012. While attempts were made to have the Town's local affordable housing organization, East Bay Community Development Corporation, purchase the dwellings, an agreement could not be reached and ultimately the bank took over the mortgages and the affordable housing deed restriction was lost. Another unit of affordable housing will also be lost in the near future with the expiration of the affordable restriction.

Households are considered cost burdened if they pay more than 30 percent of their gross income for housing costs, which include rent, utilities and fuel costs for renters. They include mortgage or purchase contract payments, property taxes, and hazard and mortgage insurance for homeowners. As may be expected, renter households are more likely to be cost burdened than owner occupied households.

In the 2013 Housing Works RI publication "Housing Fact Book", the Town of Bristol's median home price was \$280,000 in 2013 which is approximately a 20% increase over the last ten years. The income needed to afford this was \$80,416; however, the median household income in Bristol was \$60,934 in 2012. A 2-bedroom rental average rent is \$1,132 with an income needed of \$45,280 to afford this rent. The average private sector wage in Bristol is \$39,104 and the Median Renter Household Income for the area is \$31,740. Thus, there are significant gaps between the income required to own or rent in Bristol when compared to the median household income. The report indicates some examples of median wages from different jobs as follows:

- Registered Nurses - \$68,367
- Customer Service Reps - \$31,707

- General Office Clerks - \$29,270
- Home Health Aids - \$24,317
- Retail Salespersons - \$20,924
- Wait Staff - \$17,277

This speaks to the affordability gap in Bristol which is approximately \$13,540 for renters and \$19,492 for homeowners.

The first Habitat for Humanity house in Bristol is currently being constructed which will be deed restricted as an affordable unit.

### *Affordable Housing Organizations*

#### *Non-Profit*

The Town recognizes the East Bay Community Development Corporation (East Bay CDC) as the nonprofit organization to address the Town's affordable housing needs and the only monitoring agent in the East Bay. This CDC is based in Bristol and had its roots there but has grown to a regional affordable housing provider. The East Bay CDC owns and manages Franklin Court Independent Living with 96 units of low income senior housing and Franklin Court Assisted Living, with 68 affordable apartments. Both of these are located in the former Kaiser Mill Complex. Franklin Court Assisted Living is one of only two assisted living facilities in Rhode Island that can offer Medicaid waivers to low income elderly needing financial assistance. There is currently a 4-year wait list for senior units in the Franklin Court Independent Living.

In addition, the East Bay CDC owns and manages 170 apartment units in multiple scattered sites throughout Bristol, Warren, and Barrington. In addition to providing this affordable housing, the East Bay CDC has also helped the Town and bettered the neighborhood by removing blighted buildings in the Wood Street neighborhood. The East Bay CDC recently completed a 19-unit building at Metacom Avenue, known as "Kane's Way", which is 100% affordable for families; all but one of these units has sold.

#### *Public*

The Bristol Housing Authority oversees Benjamin Church Manor which is rented to persons who are 62 years of age or older whose

income does not exceed \$40,450 for one person and \$46,200 for two persons as of 2014 data. Persons who apply and are eligible have their name placed on the waiting list with preference given to residents of Bristol. According to the Executive Director, there are 85 people currently on the waiting list. The Bristol Housing Authority is currently moving forward with plans to build additional housing at the Benjamin Church property which will be for seniors 62 years of age and older. There are a total of 194 units that were developed over time. Phase 1 with 150 units was constructed in 1969, Phase 2 with 30 units was constructed in 1979 and Phase 3 with 40 units was constructed in 1982. The Housing Authority constantly maintains and upgrades the property. In 2011 and 2012, vinyl siding, new doors and new windows were added to eight buildings housing 150 units. In 2013, most of the sidewalks were replaced. In 2013, state-of-the-art wireless security cameras that meet Police Department recommendations were added to all buildings. In 2014, major electrical upgrades were made to buildings S-AA. In 2015, the Housing Authority intends to upgrade the fire panel and the fire alarm system with a state-of-the-art wireless system. The Bristol Housing Authority has been recognized by HUD as a “High Performer”. The Authority is scored on a physical inspection of the property, financial management, along with other items and in 2014, the score was 100%.

The Bristol Housing Authority also administers the Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) program, which provides federal assistance for people to live in private apartments. The program currently has 156 vouchers being used in Bristol and there are approximately 750 people on the waiting list. This program is for the very low-income residents – federal guidelines for income and rents are:

Income	Rents
\$15,200 for one person	\$822 for one bedroom with utilities
\$17,350 for two people	\$1,004 for two bedrooms with utilities
\$19,790 for three people	\$1250 for three bedrooms with utilities

The Housing Choice Voucher Program was scored at 100% on performance and management. This scoring system is called the Section Eight Management Assessment Program (SEMAP). The BHA has consistently scored 100% for 15 years in a row.

The Bristol Housing Authority also leases the historic Benjamin Church building to the Town of Bristol for the Senior Center. This building, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1971 has always served senior citizens (except for a brief period between 1968 and 1972). The Senior Center has operated for more than 40 years. It offers many social, wellness and educational opportunities for adult members 55 and over. The Bristol Housing Authority's partnership with the Bristol Senior Center has enabled both organizations to better service the seniors of Bristol.

### *Affordable 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 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 the 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.

In June 2005, the Town completed the Affordable Housing Production Plan. Following this, the Town appointed an Affordable Housing Committee to oversee implementation of the plan and further the Town's affordable housing goals. The Town's Affordable Housing Committee prepared a report with recommendations to the Town Council but has not been active in recent years.

The Town adopted Inclusionary Zoning in 2010 and there are two applications currently pending under this provision. The threshold for requiring the affordable housing unit is five market rate units; however, when discussed with developers, they will drop their market rate density to below five which will then not trigger the ordinance. The Town has required six affordable housing units as a condition for the granting variances for legalizing additional dwelling units. The Town is currently reviewing two proposals that include an affordable housing component. If they are approved as proposed there will be seven additional affordable housing units and they would be the first ones to be built under the Inclusionary Zoning provisions.

The Town also revised the zoning ordinance to allow multi-family dwellings in otherwise single family zones and to allow accessory dwelling units for nonfamily members when they are restricted to affordable housing. No one has taken the opportunity create a multi-family dwelling in a single family zone; however, there were two affordable units created when accessory family dwelling units originally approved were modified through the zoning process to allow for non-family occupants. It is believed that the 30-year deed covenant requirement is the main reason why people do not create the affordable units. The rental for affordable units is often more than

landlords are charging so they are encouraged to participate until they find out that they need to have a 30-year deed restriction.

In addition, there are three locations depicted in green in Map 6 Homes and Neighborhoods identified as "Open Space Conservation with Affordable Housing and Agriculture". These are existing residential properties that are currently used for agriculture and/or have undeveloped woodlands and open space. The Town intends to keep these properties residentially zones to be consistent with the FLUM. However if these properties were to be developed in the future, considerations should be given to preserving existing open space areas and utilizing existing residential structures and developed residential portions of the properties for affordable housing options.

There is little land available for large scale development which could include a percentage of affordable housing; therefore, infill development will continue to be the preferred way to achieve the affordable housing goals. There needs to be smaller sized, well-designed housing units to fit into existing neighborhoods. A public advertising campaign and strong leadership on the importance and need for affordable housing is also necessary. In order to meet the affordable housing goals, the Town will need to find creative solutions.

It is also worth noting that the Town has been well managed and maintains the lowest taxes in the region which is a plus to affordable living.

## Affordable Housing Progress

The table below is an assessment of the Town's affordable housing strategies from the 2009 Comprehensive Plan, including resulting progress of affordable housing development in Town.

### Assessment of 2009 Affordable Housing Strategies

Strategy	Number of Units Proposed	Number of Actual Units
<i>Allow Multi-Family Housing By Special Use Permit in R-10 zone for 3-4 units</i>	49	0
<p>Factors affecting Success Rate and Ways to Improve the Success:</p> <p>The Town has not yet amended the zoning ordinance to allow this strategy. In doing so, we would explore a partnership with RI Housing Works and the Roger Williams University Community Partnerships Center to assist with outreach. A brochure could be developed to generate interest and help educate on the options. A guidebook of housing types and styles could also be created illustrate how to keep the housing within the character of the neighborhood while also generating interest.</p>		
<i>Mandate Inclusionary Units</i>	75-120	5
<p>Factors affecting Success Rate and Ways to Improve the Success:</p> <p>The Town adopted the mandatory inclusionary zoning in 2010 with a trigger threshold of 5 or more units. The Town did not see many applications during the subsequent years for subdivisions with this many units or the Developer revised the application to provide fewer than 5 thereby eliminating the requirement. The Planning Board recently approved a subdivision (July 2015) with 2 affordable housing units as a result of the mandatory inclusionary zoning requirement. In 2012, the Planning Board granted Master Plan approval on a mixed use development with 3 affordable units in accordance with the inclusionary zoning requirement; however, these units have not yet been built. While this has had some limited success, we expect that we will continue to see units produced through this requirement. The Town's Technical Review Committee continues to facilitate a greater understanding of the process with the developers and coordinate with the Town's affordable housing agency so that the monitoring, marketing, and eventual sale or rental of the LMI unit does not seem so daunting to the developer.</p>		
<i>Allow Duplexes by Right in R 15 and R 20 Zones</i>	18	0
<p>Factors affecting Success Rate and Ways to Improve the Success:</p> <p>The Town changed the zoning to allow duplexes by Special Use Permit in the R15 and R20 zones rather than by-right. The reason for the lack of units being created by this strategy has been lack of will by property owners to build duplex units with the mandatory 30-year deed restriction needed on the affordable unit. Again, in partnership with RI Housing Works and Roger Williams University Community Partnerships Center, a brochure could be developed to generate interest and help educate</p>		

<p>on the options. A guidebook of housing types and styles could also be created to generate interest and illustrate how to keep the housing within the character of the neighborhood. Based on the past performance of this strategy, we have adjusted the expectations going forward.</p>		
<i>Review Accessory Family Dwelling to Allow non-family affordable Units</i>	25-50	2
<p>Factors affecting Success Rate and Ways to Improve the Success:</p> <p>The zoning ordinance was amended to allow for this; however, we haven't seen any applications because most people want this unit for family and don't have a need to create a non-family unit. While we have had 2 or 3 Accessory Family Dwelling Units transition to non-family Affordable Dwelling Units, we haven't seen as many as expected. Those that have applied to transition are unique situations where either the family member has left the property and the owner wants to keep the additional unit or the property has been sold and the new owner wants to keep the unit but doesn't have a family member to occupy it. While it is a great way to keep both the homeowner and the renter with affordable housing, most people are reluctant to go down this path because of the required 30-year deed restriction. Most people want more flexibility and some people think it will make it difficult to sell the property. However, more can be done to educate people on this option as part of our enforcement follow-up with the existing stock of Accessory Family Dwelling Units.</p>		
<i>In-Fill Development Vacant Lots R10</i>	12	0
<p>Factors affecting Success Rate and Ways to Improve the Success:</p> <p>The reason for the lack of units being created by this strategy is assumed as lack of will by owners / developers. Similar to the strategies listed above, more could be done to education property owners about this option in partnership with RI Housing Works and the Roger Williams University Community Partnerships Center. To educate and create interest, a "Small - Lot Pattern Book" could be created which would illustrate how to create in-fill development that keeps within the character of the neighborhood and sparks ideas on small home designs. We will also explore opportunities for additional infill lots in the R6 and R8 zones</p>		
<i>Rehabilitation in Low - Mod Area</i>	212	0
<p>Factors affecting Success Rate and Ways to Improve the Success:</p> <p>The reason for lack of units being created by this strategy is lack of will by owners/developers and required deed restriction for 30 years on property. Because of the lack of performance on this strategy, we have adjusted our expectations going forward. However, there is a relative high supply of older housing stock in the low-moderate area census tract so we will also review the current CDBG home repair program policies to determine if we can create any deed restricted units through this program. A future housing trust fund could also help pay for monitoring costs as an additional incentive for the housing units and be used for low interest loans or other home purchase assistance.</p>		



<i>Adaptive Re-Use Robin Rug Mill</i>	10	0
While these units have not yet been built, they were a condition of the zone change for the re-use of the mill.		
<i>Comprehensive Permits</i>	66	18
<p>Factors affecting Success Rate</p> <p>*We had one Comprehensive Permit application which was before the Planning Board in July and denied. The proposal had 5 units of affordable housing. The reason for lack of units under this strategy has been the poor housing market overall and the lack of applications.</p>		
<i>Conversion of Student Housing at Almeida Apartments</i>	30	0
<p>Factors affecting Success Rate:</p> <p>This strategy is in partnership with Roger Williams University; however, the University has not been ready to move forward on this action and is still using the Almeida Apartments for student housing.</p>		

The Affordable Housing Strategies Table that follows summarizes the number of affordable units to be produced by development strategies of the Comprehensive Plan and the timeline to achieve the 10% affordable housing target of 1,012 by 2035 (20-year horizon).

The housing target is calculated as follows:

20-year population projection = 23,787 (from RI SPP 20-year population projections)

Average Household Size = 2.35 (from Factfinder. Census.gov 2010)

20-year housing unit projection 10,122 (calculated by dividing the 20 year population projection by the average household size)

Forecasted 10% threshold = 1012 (calculated by multiplying the 20 year housing projection by 10%)

Existing affordable units = 535;

Forecasted to need by 2035 = additional 477

### Affordable Housing Strategies Table

Strategies (Items in parenthesis refer to Action Items from the Implementation Table)	1-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-15 Years	16-20 Years	Projected Total
1. Comprehensive permits at identified sites (H-21)	15	35	34	42	126
2. Inclusionary zoning	20	20	20	20	80
3. Accessory Dwelling Unit – (H-20)	5	5	5	5	20
4. Condition of variances and zone changes (H-22)	4	4	4	4	16
5. Infill ( H-21 and H-24)	9	10	11	12	42
6. Housing rehab/existing housing stock conversion with housing trust fund (H-3, H-11, H-21)	10	20	20	20	70
7. Tax sale properties	2	2	2	2	8
8. Multi – Family by Special Use Permit – (H-1, H-2, H-10)	3	5	7	10	25
9. Mixed Use Commercial/Res	20	20	25	25	90
<b>TOTAL Affordable Housing Units</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>477</b>

#### NOTES from the Affordable Housing Strategies Table:

1. Comprehensive Permits at Identified Sites – refer to the Affordable Housing Location Summary Chart for locations. This is a 2009 Strategy that has been carried forward with an adjustment to the number of expected units since one of the previous identified properties is no longer available. This strategy also includes the units from Robin Rug and student housing at Almeida.
2. Inclusionary Zoning – This is a 2009 strategy that has been carried forward.
3. Accessory Dwelling Unit for affordable Housing – This is a 2009 strategy that has been carried forward and revised as to the number of expected units.
4. Condition of Variances – has been an effective tool when applicants come to legalize units and/or need other relief on density. This is a new strategy.
5. Infill– This is a 2009 strategy that has been carried forward and revised as to the number of expected units.
6. Housing Rehab and Existing Housing Stock Conversion using established housing trust fund to assist with low interest loans and home purchase assistance and CDBG funds. This is a 2009 strategy that has been carried forward and revised as to the number of expected units.
7. Tax Sale Properties - In conjunction with RI Housing, Town to monitor tax sale properties annually and move to acquire for affordable housing establishment. This is a new strategy.
8. Multi-family Units – This is a combination of two (2) 2009 strategies that have been carried forward and revised – Multi-family by Special Use Permit and Duplexes by Right.
9. Mixed Use Commercial/Residential Units including Metacom Mixed Use Zone – This is a new strategy

## Homelessness

According to the Bristol Director of Human Services, the Town does not have data on the number of homeless people, although it is believed to be small. The Town does not have a homeless shelter within its borders – the nearest ones are in Middletown, Warwick and Providence. The East Bay Coalition for the Homeless works to help families get back on their feet by providing access to safe, affordable housing combined with case management, financial counseling and connection to mainstream resources. There are also short-term shelter services provided by the Rhode Island Veterans Home on Metacom Avenue and the East Bay Coalition for the Homeless’ 18 apartments that are scattered within East Providence, Bristol and Warren. The Town will work with these local homeless agencies and others such as the RIVERWOOD MHS and/or East Bay Community Action Program to track homeless individuals or families who may have resided within the Town.

## Statement of Goals and Policies

Housing policies must support a broad range of housing opportunities so that Bristol can continue to provide affordable housing to its traditionally diverse population and to ensure that all neighborhoods are livable places.

Based on the critical issues described in the Introduction and the overarching goal stated above, this section presents the goals and policies developed by the Town of Bristol to guide its homes and neighborhoods. These goals encompass goals expressed in the other elements of this plan.

**Goal 1. Work for a continued range of housing opportunities so that Bristol can continue to be home to our traditionally diverse population.**

Policies to achieve Goal 1:

- A.** Direct Town efforts toward addressing housing needs that the private market does not, or cannot, meet.

- B. 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.
- C. Make sure that housing programs first meet the needs of Bristol residents.
- D. Encourage a broad range of housing costs, with special emphasis on creating and maintaining houses and apartments that are affordable to lower income residents.
- E. Work toward a range of housing types to match residents' differing preferences and resources for their physical environments.
- F. Encourage a range of housing ownership and rental options to match residents' differing preferences and resources, to include: home ownership, rental, accessory apartments, condominium, cooperative, and congregate.
- G. Continue programs to help elderly and others on fixed incomes stay in their homes.
- H. Encourage coordination among the public agencies and the community organizations to leverage their resources and generate new programs.

**Goal 2. Ensure that neighborhoods are livable places.**

Policies to achieve Goal 2:

- A. Historical and architecturally significant properties should be surveyed and designated for preservation.
- B. The Town is encouraged to investigate new urbanism techniques such as form based vs. use based zoning regulations to maintain characteristics of existing neighborhoods.
- C. Sidewalks are encouraged for safety and sustainability purposes in new developments.
- D. Connectivity must be maintained between neighborhoods as essential to quality of life, as well as for safety and convenience.

- E. 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.
- F. Provide adequate water supply and pressure.
- G. Buffer neighborhoods from incompatible land uses.
- H. The Town should continue to call for adequate buffer zones between incompatible uses (i.e. between adjoining industrial and residential areas).
- I. Take into account existing land use patterns when designing new zoning regulations.
- J. Promote good design in all future developments.
- K. Require that new developments stay within a scale that is appropriate to Bristol and to surrounding homes.
- L. Strengthen the services and amenities that make Bristol a good place to live.

**Goal 3. To protect the safety and welfare of all residents, new residential development along the waterfront, especially on undeveloped land, should be carefully reviewed and considered for its appropriateness.**

Policies to achieve Goal 3:

- A. Continue participation in the National Flood Insurance Program in order to allow property owners the ability to purchase flood insurance. Any waterfront development should be required to provide public lateral access to the waterfront.
- B. The Town will pursue federal and / or state funds to purchase flood prone properties.
- C. The Town must stress the need to maintain large tracts of open land as still exist.

**Goal 4. Create affordable housing opportunities and diversify the housing stock.**

Policies to achieve Goal 4:

The Town's Affordable Housing Production Plan of 2005 recommends the following affordable housing policies and they are re-affirmed and incorporated in this Plan. The Town of Bristol's affordable housing goals are as follows:

- A. 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.
- B. Meet 10% Goal for affordable housing.
- C. 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, with the following targets: Family Housing 394 Units, Elderly Housing 96 Units, Special Needs Housing 73 units. 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.
- D. Revise the zoning ordinance to promote affordable housing and housing that meets the needs of all Bristol citizens.
- E. Identify potential locations for affordable housing development.
- F. Strengthen partnerships and build community support for affordable housing development.
- G. Identify existing and new resources for affordable housing development.
- H. Encourage public /private partnerships for the creation of affordable housing which will provide additional funding opportunities such as grants.
- I. Ensure the long term affordability of housing.

### Affordable Housing Locations Summary Chart

Location	Total Units *	Affordable Units
Robin Rug	98	10
Nunes Property on Chestnut Street	12	4
Bristol Housing Authority Senior Housing	22	22
Francis Gravel Bank at Bayview (P48/L8)	24	6
Goulart at Metacom (P87/Lots 1-8)	35	7
KenDan LLC at Gooding (P11/Lot 1)	20	5
Anthony Nunes at Metacom (P108B/L4&9)	10	2
Coehlo at Gooding (P111/Lots , 2, 42, 43)	16	4
Stephenson off Annawan (Plat 127/Lot 6)	14	3
Stephenson in Mason Farm (P128/Lots 3,4,9,10)	25	6
Rego/Ramos at Metacom (P128, L 15 &16)	6	2
Francis Bros off of Harrison (P133, L3&4)	14	3
Raposa at Metacom (P150/L17)	5	2
Perry Nursery at Metacom (P159/L1034)	8	4
RWU at Almeida Apts	30	30
Balazano's Mt. Hope Avenue (mixed use)(P41/L 126)	8	4
St. Elizabeth School – (Reuse)	12	12
<b>Total Identified</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>126</b>

\*Potential proposed unit numbers are conservative; build out of each site will be specific to each development proposal.

Note that the projected 126 affordable units indicate significant progress toward closing the 367 unit shortfall in the Town's effort to meet the 10% threshold. The Town will continue to look to creative approaches in addressing the affordable housing requirements despite the fact that expectations for achieving the goal described in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan have been diminished with the realities of the fluctuating housing market, which is out of the Town's control.



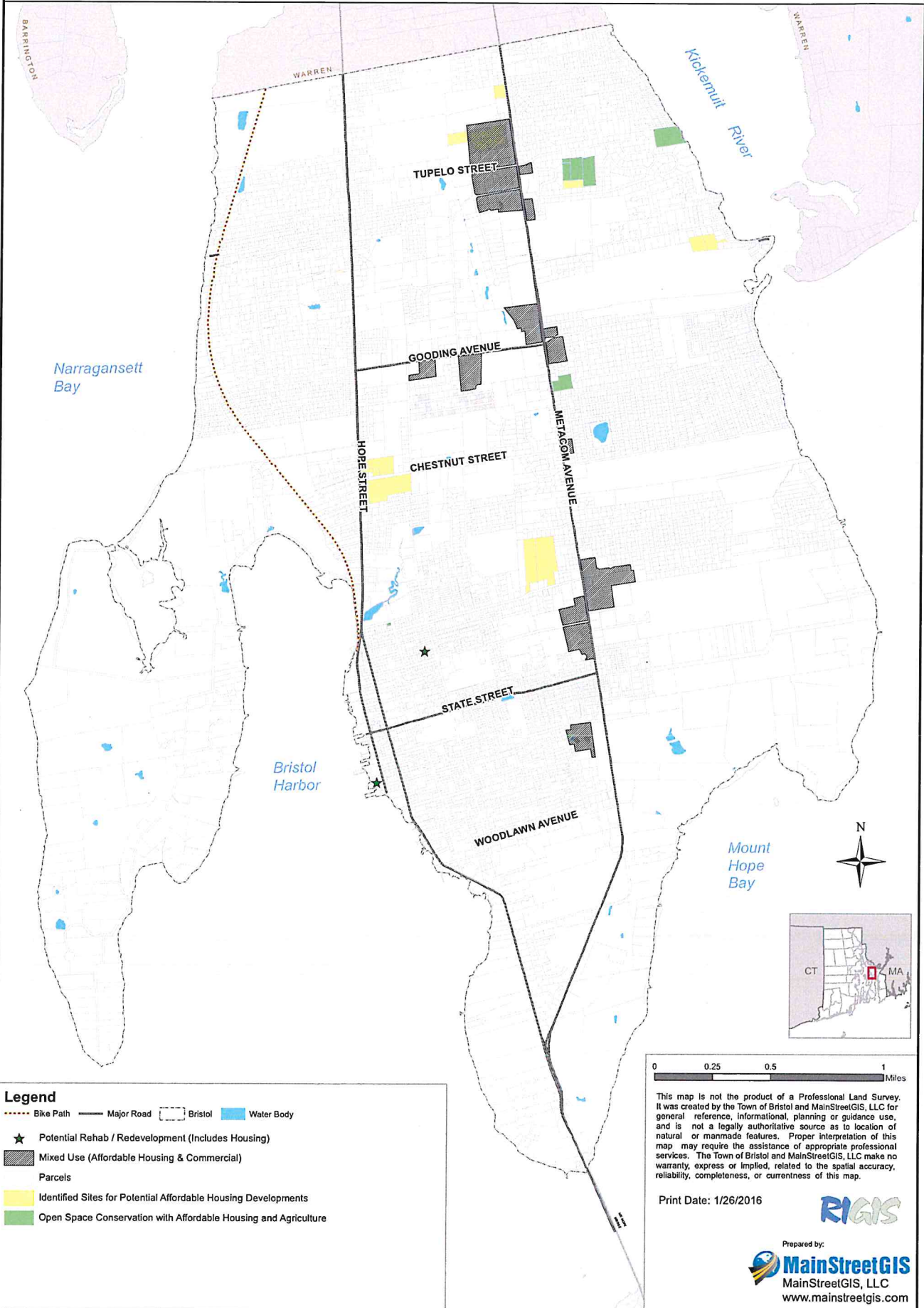
# Town of Bristol

Rhode Island  
Comprehensive Plan, 2016

# MAP 6

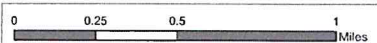
Item C1.

## Homes and Neighborhoods



**Legend**

- Bike Path
- Major Road
- Bristol
- Water Body
- Potential Rehab / Redevelopment (Includes Housing)
- Mixed Use (Affordable Housing & Commercial) Parcels
- Identified Sites for Potential Affordable Housing Developments
- Open Space Conservation with Affordable Housing and Agriculture



This map is not the product of a Professional Land Survey. It was created by the Town of Bristol and MainStreetGIS, LLC for general reference, informational, planning or guidance use, and is not a legally authoritative source as to location of natural or manmade features. Proper interpretation of this map may require the assistance of appropriate professional services. The Town of Bristol and MainStreetGIS, LLC make no warranty, express or implied, related to the spatial accuracy, reliability, completeness, or currentness of this map.

Print Date: 1/26/2016

**RIGIS**

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## Housing

#	ACTION	TIME FRAME <sup>2</sup>				RESPONSIBLE AGENT
		S	M	L	O	
H-1	Create standards for multi-family housing units that are created for affordable housing through the special use permit process.	√				Community Development Department and Planning Board
H-2	Adopt a public advertising campaign to educate residents on the need for the creation of affordable housing units.	√				Community Development Department
H-3	Build an affordable housing trust fund so that foreclosed units or units for sale may be purchased to create affordable housing rather than building new or to help with down payment assistance for first time homebuyers. This fund could also receive revenue from the inclusionary zoning ordinance "fee in lieu of" provision.	√	√			Finance Director, Town Administrator, Town Council, Department of Community Development
H-4	Work with RWU to encourage more on-campus student housing. As off-campus housing becomes surplus, the Town should consider creating opportunities for affordable housing. The Town and RWU should create an agreement offering the Town the right of first refusal for these units (Almeida Apartments)	√	√			Town Council, Planning Board, Department of Community Development
H-5	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. Include representative from the local housing organizations on the Committee.	√				Town Council
H-6	Develop a Section 8 Home ownership program in conjunction with a Family Self Sufficiency Program with the Bristol Housing Authority.	√				Department of Community Development

<sup>2</sup> S: short-term 1-3 years; M: medium-term 4-7 years; L: long-term 8-10 years; O: ongoing

#	ACTION	TIME FRAME <sup>2</sup>				RESPONSIBLE AGENT
		S	M	L	O	
H-7	Develop a program with the Bristol Housing Authority to recruit more landlords to participate in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program. There are currently more recipients than apartments available.	√				Department of Community Development
H-8	Develop program and promote the East Bay Community Development Corporation, as the only East Bay Agency recognized as a monitoring agent for the privately owned affordable housing units, to ensure that housing units with long term deed restrictions are not lost over time.	√				Department of Community Development
H-9	Partner with the East Bay Chamber of Commerce in promoting and raising awareness to the economic benefits of affordable housing. The lack of workforce housing is a critical issue in the business community.	√				Economic Development Commission, Department of Community Development
H-10	Utilize the services of the Roger Williams University Community Partnerships Center to develop creative ways to provide affordable housing such as: a) exploring new design and material advances in housing construction, b) research innovate funding mechanisms and land use techniques for providing affordable housing and c) study the amount of substandard housing and prioritizing areas of the low/moderate census tracts for rehabilitation efforts.	√				Department of Community Development, Planning Board
H-11	Continue and expand the Towns CDBG home repair and home maintenance grant and loan programs.	√			√	Department of Community Development
H-12	Consider the best use or reuse of town-owned property to include housing and/or a portion from the sale to be applied to a housing trust or first time homebuyer program. The exception to this would be the former school buildings on the Town Common which cannot be used for housing and cannot be sold.	√				Department of Community Development, Town Administrator, Town Council

#	ACTION	TIME FRAME <sup>2</sup>				RESPONSIBLE AGENT
		S	M	L	O	
H-13	Work with State Representatives and State Senators to broaden the definition of “affordable housing” beyond government subsidized housing and include modestly priced and locally affordable units within the community.	√			√	Town Council
H-14	Survey and identify individual properties and neighborhoods, like the Highlands, that should have value for historic preservation. The survey is to be town wide and focused on architectural or historic significance. Work with those interested property owners to have the properties nominated for National Register of Historic Places designation.	√	√			Historic District Commission, Department of Community Development
H-15	Explore and Consider adopting form based vs. use based zoning regulations to maintain characteristics of existing neighborhoods.	√				Department of Community Development, Planning Board, Town Council
H-16	Continue to update existing streets that lack sidewalks and determine feasibility of providing such and requiring new sidewalks with specific reference to Ferry Road and Metacom Avenue.	√			√	Department of Public Works, Department of Community Development
H-17	Cul-de-sacs should be discouraged where practicable and local transportation connections to commercial uses along Metacom and Hope Street are encouraged.	√			√	Department of Community Development and Planning Board
H-18	Adopt a night sky ordinance to address the impacts of exterior lighting on neighborhood residential properties.	√				Department of Community Development, Town Council

#	ACTION	TIME FRAME <sup>2</sup>				RESPONSIBLE AGENT
		S	M	L	O	
H-19	<p>Continue to participate in the Community Rating System of the National Flood Insurance Program and amend as applicable to raise the Town's credit for increased discounts on Flood Insurance Policies.</p> <p>Work with the State of Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) and the State Building Official's Office to change the State Building Code to allow more credits to the Town under the CRS Program.</p>	✓				Department of Community Development, Town Council
H-20	To provide incentive for property owners to create a deed restricted affordable rental unit, the Town will continue to limit the property taxes on the deed restricted unit to 8% of the gross income received from the unit.	✓				Tax Assessor, Finance Director
H-21	Continue to identify locations for Affordable Housing Development. Bristol does not want to create large affordable housing developments for specific income groups. The Town prefers smaller in-fill developments scattered throughout the Town, so that affordable housing is not clustered in one neighborhood. Affordable housing should be integrated with market rate housing. Affordable housing should be designed so as to blend with surrounding market-rate housing in terms of architectural style. In addition to in-fill development and potential rehabilitations of units in the low-mod census tract, the Town has identified the sites listed on the Affordable Housing Location Summary Chart as appropriate locations for affordable housing development as adaptive reuse, rehabilitation, or new construction.	✓				Department of Community Development, Planning Board, Town Council
H-22	Continue to require affordable units as a condition for zoning relief, and changes of zone that include residential uses	✓				Planning Board, Town Council

#	ACTION	TIME FRAME <sup>2</sup>				RESPONSIBLE AGENT
		S	M	L	O	
H-23	Create an information packet to provide for-profit developers to help promote the creation of affordable housing.	√				East Bay CDC, Department of Community Development, Planning Board
H-24	Create design standards for in-fill development to help them blend into the character of the existing neighborhood.	√				Department of Community Development, Planning Board
H-25	Help seniors age in place and provide programs that engage them in socialization outside of the home as well.	√				Senior Center, Recreation Department, Town Administrator
H-26	Work with service providers to create affordable child care, based on income, to help people return to the workforce.	√				Human Services Department
H-27	The Town will work with local homeless agencies such as the Rhode Island Veterans Home, East Bay Coalition for the Homeless, Riverwood MHS and/or East Bay Community Action Program to track homeless individuals or families who may have resided within the Town	√				Human Services Department
H-28	The Town should work with the State of Rhode Island to redefine and/or amend the current State Law on affordable housing. For example, the Bristol Housing Authority manages the Section 8 Voucher program; however, the Town cannot count these vouchers toward our 10% goal.	√				Town Council.



**2024 -- H 7948 SUBSTITUTE A**

LC005508/SUB A

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

A N A C T

RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- ZONING ORDINANCES

Introduced By: Representatives Solomon, Fellela, Voas, Casimiro, Baginski, Shanley,  
and Casey

Date Introduced: March 05, 2024

Referred To: House Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1           SECTION 1. Section 45-24-46.1 of the General Laws in Chapter 45-24 entitled "Zoning  
2   Ordinances" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3           **45-24-46.1. Inclusionary zoning. [Effective January 1, 2024.]**

4           (a) A zoning ordinance requiring the inclusion of affordable housing as part of a  
5   development shall provide that the housing will be affordable housing, as defined in § 42-128-  
6   8.1(d)(1); that the affordable housing will constitute not less than ~~twenty-five percent (25%)~~ fifteen  
7   percent (15%) of the total units ~~in~~ proposed for the development; and that the units will remain  
8   affordable for a period of not less than thirty (30) years from initial occupancy enforced through a  
9   land lease and/or deed restriction enforceable by the municipality and the state of Rhode Island. A  
10   zoning ordinance that requires the inclusion of affordable housing as part of a development shall  
11   specify the threshold in which the inclusion of affordable housing is required, but in no event shall  
12   a minimum threshold triggering the inclusion of affordable housing be higher than ten (10) dwelling  
13   units. The total number of units for the development may include less than fifteen percent (15%)  
14   affordable units after the density bonus described in subsection (c) of this section is determined.

15           (b) A zoning ordinance that includes inclusionary zoning may provide that the affordable  
16   housing must be built on-site or ~~utilize~~ it may allow for one or more alternative methods of  
17   production, including, but not limited to: off-site construction or rehabilitation; donation of land  
18   suitable for development of the required affordable units; and/or the payment of a fee in lieu of the  
19   construction or provision of affordable housing units.



1           (c) **Density bonus, zoning incentives, and municipal subsidies.** For all projects subject  
 2 to inclusionary zoning, subject to applicable setback, lot width, or frontage requirements or the  
 3 granting of relief from the same, a municipality shall allow the addition of ~~two (2)~~ one market rate  
 4 units for each affordable unit ~~provided~~ required and the minimum lot area per dwelling unit  
 5 normally required in the applicable zoning district shall be reduced by that amount necessary to  
 6 accommodate the development. Larger density bonuses for the provision of an increased percentage  
 7 of affordable housing in a development may be provided by a municipality in the zoning ordinance.  
 8 The total number of units for the development shall equal the number originally proposed, including  
 9 the required affordable units, plus the additional units that constitute the density bonus. Local  
 10 regulations shall provide for reasonable relief from dimensional requirements to accommodate the  
 11 bonus density under this section. ~~Nothing herein shall prohibit a~~ A municipality ~~from providing, or~~  
 12 ~~an applicant from requesting,~~ shall provide, and an applicant may request additional zoning  
 13 incentives and/or municipal government subsidies as defined in § 45-53-3 to offset differential  
 14 costs of affordable units. Available zoning incentives and municipal government subsidies ~~shall~~  
 15 may be listed in the zoning ordinance, but shall not be an exclusive list.

16           (d) **Fee-in-lieu.** To the extent a municipality provides an option for the payment of a fee-  
 17 in-lieu of the construction or provision of affordable housing, and an application seeks to utilize  
 18 fee-in-lieu, the use of such fee shall be the choice of the developer or builder applied on a per-unit  
 19 basis and may be used for new developments, purchasing property and/or homes, rehabilitating  
 20 properties, or any other manner that creates additional low- or moderate-income housing as defined  
 21 in § 45-53-3(9).

22           (1) Eligibility for density bonus. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this chapter, an  
 23 application that utilizes a fee-in-lieu ~~of the construction or provision of affordable housing,~~ off-site  
 24 construction or rehabilitation, or donation of land suitable for development of the required  
 25 affordable units shall not be eligible for the density bonus outlined in this section.

26           (2) An application that seeks to utilize a fee-in-lieu of the construction or provision of  
 27 affordable housing must be ~~permitted~~ reviewed by the planning board or commission and is not  
 28 eligible for administrative review under the Rhode Island Land Development and Subdivision  
 29 Review Enabling Act of 1992, codified at §§ 45-23-25 — 45-23-74.

30           (3) Amount of fee-in-lieu. For affordable single-family homes and condominium units, the  
 31 per-unit fee shall be the difference between the maximum affordable sales price for a family of four  
 32 (4) earning eighty percent (80%) of the area median income as determined annually by the U.S.  
 33 Department of Housing and Urban Development and the average cost of developing a single unit  
 34 of affordable housing. The average cost of developing a single unit of affordable housing shall be

1 determined annually based on the average, per-unit development cost of affordable homes financed  
2 by Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation (RIHMFC) over the previous three (3)  
3 years, excluding existing units that received preservation financing.

4 (i) Notwithstanding subsection (d)(3) of this section, in no case shall the per-unit fee for  
5 affordable single family homes and condominium units be less than forty thousand dollars  
6 (\$40,000).

7 (4) Use of fee-in-lieu. The municipality shall deposit all in-lieu payments into restricted  
8 accounts that shall be allocated and spent only for the creation and development of affordable  
9 housing within the municipality serving individuals or families at or below eighty percent (80%)  
10 of the area median income. The municipality shall maintain a local affordable housing board to  
11 oversee the funds in the restricted accounts and shall allocate the funds within three (3) years of  
12 collection. The municipality shall include in the housing element of their local comprehensive plan  
13 and shall pass by ordinance, the process it will use to allocate the funds.

14 (e) As an alternative to the provisions of subsection (d), the municipality may elect to  
15 transfer in-lieu payments promptly upon receipt or within the three-year (3) period after receipt. A  
16 municipality shall transfer all fee-in-lieu payments that are not allocated within three (3) years of  
17 collection, including funds held as of July 1, 2024, to RIHMFC for the purpose of developing  
18 affordable housing within that community.

19 (f) Both the municipalities and RIHMFC shall report annually with the first report due  
20 December 31, 2024, to the general assembly, the secretary of housing, and the housing resources  
21 commission the amount of fees in lieu collected by community, the projects that were provided  
22 funding with the fees, the dollar amounts allocated to the projects, and the number of units created.

23 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect on January 1, 2025.

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LC005508/SUB A  
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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- ZONING ORDINANCES

\*\*\*

- 1           This act would provide amendments to the requirements of the inclusionary zoning law for  
2 affordable housing development.  
3           This act would take effect on January 1, 2025.

=====  
LC005508/SUB A  
=====