

Policy Area - Environment and Natural Resources

Policy Statement:

The Town of Bristol is committed to protecting its greatest asset - a pristine and beautiful environment treasured by residents and visitors alike. To this end, the Town will actively work to preserve its natural resources; protect the quality of land and vistas, air, watersheds and aquifers, and flora and fauna; and promote environmental stewardship.

Objectives:

- A. Assess and preserve natural resources.
- B. Protect the quality of land and vistas, air, watersheds and aquifers, and flora and fauna.
- C. Promote environmental stewardship among residents, business owners, farmers, and landowners.

Actions:

1. Create and update an Inventory of Natural Resources, including scenic vistas, environmentally unique areas, critical habitats, existing parklands and trails, potential network of trails, and prominent features.
2. Monitor and promote inventoried natural resources on an ongoing basis.
3. Develop zoning controls to preserve natural resources.
4. Create an Open Space Plan to preserve existing open space (agricultural land, parks and other recreational sites, scenic vistas, forested land, etc.) and expand open space, when possible, through land acquisitions, conservation easements, and other innovative land use strategies.
5. Develop zoning controls to support the Open Space Plan.
6. Continue monitoring and enforcing steep slope regulations, erosion and sedimentation controls, and timber harvesting regulations.
7. Assess current groundwater and stormwater management practices, and ensure that expert recommendations are followed.
8. Assess current maintenance practices of parks and other open spaces, and ensure that expert recommendations are followed.
9. Adopt zoning code regulations that limit any activities related to natural gas exploration and extraction to those that use conventional drilling methods for non-commercial, personal use only, and classify such activities as an accessory use.
10. Adopt zoning code regulations that prohibit wastes associated with natural gas exploration, extraction, or production to be stored, disposed of, or used (e.g., as a de-icing agent).
11. Actively promote and pursue alternative energy use, including but not limited to:
 - 11-A: A feasibility study for a town-wide microgrid (see Economic Development and Infrastructure).
 - 11-B: A community charging station in an easily accessible and amenable public location.
 - 11-C: Zoning code controls that minimize restrictions on residential, business, and farm use of alternative energy generation for on-site consumption (including but not limited to solar, geothermal, and small wind systems).
 - 11-D: Zoning code controls that actively encourage community solar, in compliance with the protection of prioritized scenic vistas and the Open Space Plan.
12. Promote awareness of air pollution and adherence to DEC Open Burning regulations. Provide relevant information on the Town website as well as through leaflets available at Town Hall and the Bristol Library. If needed, increase enforcement of the regulations.
13. Consider a local noise ordinance that limits potential nuisance activities that negatively affect homeowners as well as property values.
14. Develop Dark Sky Guidelines and a Lighting Ordinance for reducing and minimizing light pollution.
15. Continue to protect and enhance Bristol's four watersheds by restricting activities that might contaminate aquifer recharge areas and groundwater resources. Identify recharge areas, and establish well-head protection and onsite waste water treatment inspection guidelines.
16. Improve monitoring and enforcement of steep slope regulations and erosion and sedimentation controls by establishing local equivalency with relevant components of the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans listed in the Sample Local Law for Stormwater Management and Erosion and Sediment Control.
17. Promote flood resiliency in affected areas by evaluating roadside ditch maintenance and cleaning practices (incl. timing and frequency), and ensuring use of hydro-seeding and rock armoring as appropriate.
18. Protect and enhance natural features such as vernal pools, backwater flood ponds, stable stream banks and natural stream buffers, and creating/managing wetlands and streams.
19. Promote improved surface water quality by ensuring best management practices for livestock grazing and agricultural plowing are followed.
20. Develop guidelines within the Open Space Plan for conservation and protection of critical habitats and locally rare plant communities, including those identified in Dr. Bruce Gilman's environmental inventory.
21. Develop guidelines within the Open Space Plan to maintain and enhance connectivity corridors, such as riparian zones along floodplain forests and hilltop forests, providing contiguous connectivity for large mammals to the Appalachian woodlands.
22. Convene a standing voluntary Stewardship Committee dedicated to stewardship of the land by providing opportunities for residents to educate themselves and the community on environmental and quality of life topics relevant to the community, such as: recycling and organics, reducing waste; conservation; use of renewable energy and electric vehicles; safe maintenance of wells, septic systems, ponds, lawns, and gardens; identifying and treating invasive species; protecting properties from erosion, flooding, and contamination; adhering to NYSDEC open burning regulations; safe disposal of toxic substances and electronic waste.
23. Promote community gardening and community composting.
24. Promote residential and business practices that manage stormwater runoff and increase rainwater infiltration.

Policy Area - Agricultural Resources

Policy Statement:

The promotion of agricultural viability and protection of agricultural land is a Town imperative. Bristol will continue to be a “Right to Farm” community that takes pride in its agricultural past and fosters continued opportunities for agricultural successes at varied scales.

Objectives:

- A. Maintain and support existing Bristol agricultural operations.
- B. Encourage and seek opportunities for new agricultural ventures at varied scales that would include, but not be limited to, agricultural support businesses, specialty uses, agri-tourism and residentially driven hobby farms.

Actions:

1. Provide guidance to current and interested land owners on agricultural assessment program requirements and benefits.
2. Provide guidance to current and interested land owners on Federal and State Programs including the Conservation Reserve Program (USDA) and Agricultural Environmental Management (NYS Soil & Water Conservation Committee) program.
3. Promote and enforce the “Right to Farm” Law.
4. Encourage agricultural planning. Explore opportunities for Purchase of Development Rights to ensure both continued agricultural production and protection of prime agricultural soils.
5. Develop a local Agricultural Committee with representatives from other groups/agencies to identify issues and opportunities on the future of agriculture in Bristol.
6. Ensure that Bristol farms and farmers are adequately marketed to local, County, State, and regional resources.
7. Identify lands within the Town that have the potential for agricultural use (e.g. prime soils, vacant, open, etc.) and work with local organizations and farmers to market opportunities for expansion of new farms.
8. Encourage farmers within Bristol and neighboring communities to establish business partnerships to develop marketing strategies, share equipment, provide customer referrals, and other collaborative efforts.
9. Evaluate the intent and extent of the agricultural zoning district in the Town and consider the development of an “Agriculture Priority” district in areas where agriculture is the most viable (i.e. County District, prime soils, existing/potential operations, etc.)
10. Consider the development of a joint Farmland Protection Plan with neighboring Towns to identify more specific measures for preserving, expanding, and supporting local agriculture.
11. Encourage new agricultural markets.
12. Encourage environmentally sound agricultural practices.
13. Encourage opportunities for the introduction of innovative crops (i.e. hops, industrial hemp).
14. Review local trends and regional needs for agriculturally-supportive businesses such as small-scale processing facilities or community supported agriculture (CSAs)
15. Work with and educate local farmers on other potential agri-tourism opportunities, such as lodging, recreation, and private and community events
16. Explore opportunities for the establishment of a seasonal farmers market within the Town as a sole or joint venture with neighboring Towns (rotating or central location) to market local goods.
17. Encourage and allow residential-scale and “hobby farms” as accessory uses within the Town with stipulations on number of animals, lot size, buffering, and other potential nuisance issues.
18. Ensure the list of permitted uses in the Town Zoning Code allows for a wide variety of agricultural uses in line with NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets as well as local trends for agriculturally related ventures.

Policy Area - Recreational Resources

Policy Statement:

Parks and recreational opportunities enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors. Demand for recreational facilities will continue to increase the demand for recreational resources. The Town will evaluate on an on-going basis and use that information to support expanded recreational facilities.

Objectives:

- A. Enhance Town parks and recreation opportunities for residents and visitors.
- B. Collaborate with adjacent communities or other stakeholders to develop additional opportunities for expanding parks and recreation resources.
- C. Establish active transportation opportunities.
- D. Encourage a variety of programs and recreational resources to promote active and healthy lifestyles.
- E. Market the Town's diverse recreational opportunities.

Actions:

1. Develop a Parks & Recreation Master Plan
2. Add signage to the existing pavilions, shelters, and other structures in the parks for identification and to convey any rules/regulations.
3. Expand equipment amenities for all age groups with the addition of a physical fitness circuit or stations throughout Levi Corser Park.
4. Add simple seating to existing shelter to expand programming and other opportunities such as dark sky compliant lighting.
5. Identify local natural features in the existing parks to expand the potential for an outdoor learning area for local schools and community organizations.
6. Continue to monitor user and resident needs, wants, and ideas for parks and recreation in the Town to identify future opportunities (e.g. suggestion box at Levi Corser, Library or Town Hall).
7. Develop a recreation committee to assist with long range planning for parks and recreation and other related projects.
8. Engage with the NYS DEC on the use of their resources for other recreation opportunities, such as formal mountain biking trails
9. Continue to actively collaborate with South Bristol regarding Bristol Mountain and explore opportunities for recreational collaboration.
10. Approach the Towns of East/West Bloomfield and Victor with regard to allowing Bristol residents the use of Boughton Park.
11. Collaborate with adjacent communities or schools on recreation programming to utilize current assets to their fullest potential.
12. Continue to pursue expansion opportunities adjacent to the existing parks to incorporate walking paths, interpretative nature trails, shade, and parking.
13. Examine alternative avenues for walking/hiking trails and paths in the Town including utility corridors, right-of-ways, and abandoned roads.
14. Establish bicycle lanes via striping, when feasible, on highly used biking roads as these roads are reconstructed or rehabilitated.
15. Formally identify bike routes within the Town for motorists and bikers.
16. Examine the potential for sidewalks and walking paths within Bristol Center between Route 64 and the Library.
17. Work with neighboring Towns to evaluate and financially support intra and inter municipal programs.
18. Engage with neighboring school districts on expanding summer and sports programs for students within their District at a reduced cost rather than having to pay an "out of town" cost to participate.
19. Ensure recreational opportunities are adequately promoted and advertised outside of the Town.
20. Continue to maintain an active listing of recreational assets through the website and any other potential marketing opportunities.
21. Ensure that local public parks and recreational resources are well maintained and signed to aid in promotion and marketing. Develop a consistent branding and signage palette.
22. Develop a community network for recreational activities, programs, and other local events.

Policy Area - Infrastructure

Policy Statement:

The Town will support a transportation system that is safe, efficient, equitable, convenient and environmentally responsible. Public water infrastructure will be maintained to ensure access to safe drinking water. Potential areas for expansion of the existing water district will be evaluated when demand arises. The Town recognizes that access to mass communication infrastructure is a priority for its residents. Residents and businesses, to the maximum extent feasible, will have access to available communications networks including; high speed internet, cellular phone coverage and fiber optics. The Town will seek to encourage the use of renewable energy technologies at a scale compatible with its character.

Objectives:

- A. Develop and maintain a transportation network for both motorized and non-motorized uses.
- B. Maintain access to existing public water infrastructure while working to expand water district access where appropriate.
- C. Foster access to, and expansion of, communications networks.
- D. Encourage renewable energy at an appropriate scale.

Actions:

- 1. Inventory current status of all town roads.
- 2. Create and utilize a 5-year highway construction and maintenance plan to include necessary highway related projects and funding needs.
- 3. Maintain communication with professional organizations and partner agencies including: Ontario County Highway Association, Ontario County Public Works and New York State Department of Transportation.
- 4. Continue utilization of shared service agreements for road construction and maintenance and to facilitate efficient and cost effective upkeep.
- 5. Reconcile potential areas of growth identified in the Town's zoning code to those that may require access to public water.
- 6. Maintain communication with appropriate state and federal representatives to advocate and apply for available grant funds.
- 7. Create an inventory of all current mass communication service/coverage areas.
- 8. Maintain communication with appropriate state and federal representatives to advocate and apply for available grant funds.
- 9. Maintain communication with service providers to facilitate expansion of services within the Town.
- 10. Revise the Town's Zoning Code to provide details relative to the desired scale of renewable energy systems.

Policy Area - Economic Development

Policy Statement:

The Town will create and sustain a vibrant local economy that supports a variety of lifestyles. The Town will promote strategic and appropriate growth through the pursuit of both public and private investments that stabilize the tax base without compromising the Community's pristine character. The Town will leverage unique sweeping view sheds and open space vistas into tourism opportunities.

The Town will actively promote economic development which:

- Minimizes environmental impact
- Makes best use of appropriate technological advances
- Promotes long term financial and tax based stability
- Complements current businesses and land uses
- Supports self-employment and home-based business
- Creates employment opportunities for residents
- Provides needed services for Bristol residents and visitors
- Leverages outside capital, as needed
- Contributes to this Plan's vision for community character

Objectives:

- A. Explore revenue-creating opportunities to generate funds for Town operations and to off-set taxes.
- B. Pursue and promote broadband connectivity to homes and businesses where feasible and affordable.
- C. Strengthen Bristol's ability to capture tourism dollars for local businesses by becoming the Finger Lakes' Go-To destination for outdoor family recreation.
- D. Encourage the development of an independent not-for-profit Bristol Valley Foundation, to help leverage available outside funding for community projects.
- E. Encourage business development in the hamlet of Bristol Center.
- F. Support new home-based ventures and current expansions, where applicable and compatible.
- G. Support existing farm-based business and encourage future agricultural ventures where appropriate throughout the Town.
- H. Coordinate economic development efforts with the County IDA and other regional business cooperatives.

Actions:

1. Commission a professional feasibility study for the development of a town-wide micro-grid project.
2. Explore best practices among rural communities of a similar character to identify other potential revenue-creating projects.
3. Develop a "Recreational Mixed-use Zoning" district along the South Bristol boarder near Bristol Mountain and Stid Hill.
4. Determine feasibility, options, costs, and potential funding sources for connection to the existing fiber optic ring.
5. Develop a hiking/biking/walking trail system that connects current trails, outdoor recreational attractions, and tourism-based businesses throughout the community.
6. Actively encourage appropriately scaled home-based and other new and existing tourism-based businesses throughout the community.
7. Commission a community-based professional plan, along with South Bristol and East Bloomfield, to address tourism and improved quality of life along the Route 64 corridor from State Routes 20 & 5, south through Bristol Valley to Bristol Springs.
8. Work with home based businesses to develop a local registry within the Town.
9. Review home based business regulations to ensure they contain adequate standards for parking, lighting, signage and overall size.
10. Examine the extent of other commercial/industrial zoning districts in the Town to determine if their boundaries and intent are consistent with business trends and the character of the community.
11. Examine and research the potential for establishing a rural business incubator to support the development of rural commercial ventures.
12. Actively market the Town of Bristol's assets to encourage new business.

Policy Area - Community Character, Facilities, and Services

Policy Statement:

The Town will ensure that our much-valued community character is preserved and enhanced. Facilities and services will continue to promote the well-being of our community and the cultural, social, and historical preservation of the town and its heritage.

Objectives:

- A. Promote and support Bristol's cultural, social, and historical organizations.
- B. Continue preservation of historically significant sites.
- C. Ensure that municipal and other public facilities continue to function safely and adequately.
- D. Promote easy access to local and County health and human services.
- E. Promote and support civic engagement and community building.
- F. Promote town government efficiency and inter-municipal & regional cooperation

Actions:

1. Continue to post information about Bristol's organizations and local events on the Town website. Ensure easy one-place access to information on Town website.
2. Identify appropriate space where members of the community can gather and where civic organizations can host meetings and special events.
3. Promote and coordinate efforts to acquire space for use by civic organizations for safe storage of historical documents and artifacts. Promote the sharing of resources among these organizations.
4. Increase the volunteer base for various civic organizations by posting requests and updates on the Town website.
5. Preserve local oral histories by coordinating a public informational meeting, posting public updates on Town website, and lending support as needed throughout the planning and implementation of an oral history project.
6. Support and assist in verification of registration status of historically significant sites on the NY State or National Register of Historic Places. Create, and update, a listing on the Town website of individual sites and their status.
7. Support and assist in preserving at-risk historic sites.
8. Encourage each municipal and community organization to perform a conditions survey to identify deficiencies and areas for potential improvements.
9. Identify and pursue grants and other funding sources, where feasible, for any critical improvements to municipal and other public facilities.
10. Continue to provide adequate funding for the Bristol Library, the Bristol Volunteer Fire Dept., and the Bristol Hills Historical Societies. Support and promote the functions of these organizations. Coordinate funding with South Bristol as needed.
11. Continue to provide links to local and County health and human services on the Town website.
12. Expand information available on Town website by including a listing of handyman services.
13. Support and promote outreach programs as needed, including local health fairs and informational presentations on specific health topics.
14. Coordinate the creation of a welcome-packet for new residents/business owners/landowners. Information should include important contacts and reference to the Town website, as well as an invite to attend Town Board meetings. Useful local and county resources should be listed as well, specifically with regard to safe maintenance of water wells, septic systems and other important aspects of rural living.
15. Encourage businesses and other contacts to update information provided on the Town website on a regular basis.
16. Provide regular e-newsbriefs about upcoming meetings, events, and volunteer opportunities in the Town. Invite residents to sign up on the Town website to receive these newsbriefs. Share information with outside social media platforms such as the We Love Bristol facebook page.
17. Provide multiple ways for the public to make suggestions and comments, including the use of suggestion boxes at the Town Hall, in the Bristol Library, and at Levi Corser Memorial Park.
18. Organize an annual Open House where residents can interact with neighbors and meet with members of the three municipal boards and with representatives of local civic organizations in an informal setting.
19. Post draft agendas for Board meetings on the Town website prior to meeting dates, along with supporting materials, when available. Draft minutes should continue to be posted in accordance with Town law.
20. Create a list of rules and regulations the Town has established with regard to Board meetings, workshops, and public hearings. Post listing on the Town website.
21. Continue to identify avenues for sharing of services, equipment and materials among Bristol, neighboring towns, and Ontario County

Policy Area - Housing

Policy Statement:

The Town will encourage and promote a variety of housing options that meet the needs of current and future residents—from first-time home owners/renters, to long-time, aging and/or disabled residents who may be in need of alternative housing or special accommodations.

Objectives:

- A. Encourage affordable-moderate housing development for both purchase and rental.
- B. Provide information to help support aging and/or disabled residents who want to remain independent in their homes.
- C. Provide information to help residents save on home ownership costs.

Actions:

- 1. Arrange for a professional independent assessment of housing needs; assist with data collection; organize public presentation by consultant on findings.
- 2. If housing assessment identifies a need for innovative housing options (for example, co-housing, so-called tiny homes, green construction), identify potential opportunities for new development, for rental and/or for purchase, and rehabilitation of existing dwellings.
- 3. Simultaneously with H-2, identify potential solutions that various innovative housing options may require, for example, with regard to basic services and zoning regulations.
- 4. To help accommodate residents' decreased mobility as they age or become disabled, create and maintain a list of local home maintenance and repair businesses/services, as well as a link to County resources. Make information available on the Town website and in print. Include a disclaimer of liability and endorsement with regard to private businesses.
- 5. Identify and list grants and loans available to residents for home maintenance and repairs, as well as for home modification to accommodate decreased mobility. Make information available on the Town website and in print.
- 6. Develop and/or expand publication of resources for home healthcare and other home-based human services. Make information available on the Town website, in print, making sure to include a disclaimer of liability and endorsement with regard to private businesses.
- 7. Develop and/or expand publication of resources regarding food security for aging and disabled residents. Make information available on the Town website and in print.
- 8. Coordinate informational meetings as needed to make residents aware of various resources and programs.
- 9. Create and maintain a list of State, County and local resources on home weatherization programs and available funding. Make information and links available on the Town website and in print.
- 10. Create and maintain a list of State, County and local resources on alternative and clean energy options and available funding. Make information and links available on the Town website and in print.
- 11. Coordinate informational meetings as needed to make residents aware of various resources and programs available.

