

IDEAS SORTED BY TOPIC AND SUBTOPIC

The following ideas were collected in the Opportunities segment of the October 1, 2015 Community Voices workshop.

The ideas are reported verbatim. When necessary, compound ideas have been separated into individual components. Each idea is numbered. The first number indicates the table where the idea was collected. The second number identifies the idea.

The ideas have been sorted into topics and sub-topics and organized according to five categories:

- The Public Realm
- Transportation and Parking
- Retail, Restaurants and Other businesses, Arts and Events, and Marketing
- Transportation and Parking
- Government.

The topics are listed below with an indication of the number of ideas gathered for each.

The Public Realm: 110 ideas

Walk Bike: 35 Ideas

Open Space: 24 Ideas

Character: 17 Ideas

Housing: 14 Ideas

Development: 13 Ideas

Landscapes: 7 Ideas

Downtown Businesses, Art and Events, Marketing: 43 ideas

Retail, Restaurants, and Other Businesses: 24 Ideas

Arts And Events: 12 Ideas

Marketing: 7 Ideas

Transportation and Parking: 40 ideas

Transportation: 20 Ideas

Parking: 20 Ideas

Government: 15 ideas

Government: 13 Ideas

Environment: 2 Ideas

PRELIMINARY BROAD GOALS

The topic and subtopics provide insights in areas that are critical to the plan. They suggest a number of broad goals such as:

- Enhance the pedestrian friendly qualities of Bethel by improving sidewalks throughout, adding bike lanes and paths, using the wetlands for exercise trails and recreation, and connecting different parts of downtown.
- Create a major “community gathering” place as well as distinctive smaller open spaces.
- Maintain and enhance Bethel’s character, streetscapes, and visual appearance.
- Add downtown housing.
- Attract and strengthen retail, restaurants, and other businesses by leveraging Bethel’s arts and events and marketing the town’s unique assets.
- Improve the flow of traffic and parking.
- Address infrastructure and regulatory issues.

Please feel free to refine these broad goals. During the Community Choices workshop we will ask participants to prioritize them. Also feel free to comment on the sorting of ideas.

CATEGORY – THE PUBLIC REALM

TOPIC – WALK BIKE: 35 IDEAS

Ideas	Topic	Sub-topic
2.04. Bike lanes for commuting from home to downtown especially train station.	Walk Bike	Bike
2.05. Change ordinance for bike racks, allow racks in parking lots by eliminating parking.	Walk Bike	Bike
10.10. Bike Lanes.	Walk Bike	Bike
5.01. Put clear emphasis on creating pedestrian friendly areas, one linked to the next, all through the downtown and Durant area and west side of tracks.	Walk Bike	Connect
8.07. Connect the Danbury/Bethel Inn on Grassy Plan St to the center of town by walking paths and boulevard type streets.	Walk Bike	Connect
9.16. Bridge “walking” over M-N RRR @ Diamond (or North), connecting west downtown to east downtown.	Walk Bike	Connect
10.11. Better pedestrian crossings.	Walk Bike	Connect
3.07 Connected sidewalks throughout town.	Walk Bike	Connect
5.13. Greater access for foot traffic to and from the train station.	Walk Bike	Connect
13.10. Improved accessibility.	Walk Bike	Connect
3.01. Walkways, paths, pedestrian bridge from east side at train tracks to the west side near the new apartments that are being built.	Walk Bike	Connect
5.17 Re-designate School St to pedestrian only/re-pave with brick/cobblestone etc.	Walk Bike	Pedestrian
3.07. More accessibility. Making a pedestrian friendly environment. A train that is actually efficient.	Walk Bike	Pedestrian
9.20. People on the street + parking.	Walk Bike	Pedestrian
13.06 B. Develop the Greenway north of the train station as public outdoor recreational areas.	Walk Bike	Recreation
1.16. Raised walking paths and bike paths (separate) built over wetlands so people can stroll through these areas.	Walk Bike	Recreation
2.08. Accessibility to wetlands for walkways/bike paths or exercise trails.	Walk Bike	Recreation
7.01. Bike path (multi-use path) circling the TOD attracting people to downtown center. Bike Friendly Town.	Walk Bike	Recreation
7.15. Create more walkway and green space along wetlands.	Walk Bike	Recreation
9.01. Nice access, wide bike/ walking paths, with recreation to downtown business district from all in town residential areas.	Walk Bike	Recreation

9.04. Make walkway throughout wetland.	Walk Bike	Recreation
9.12. Create walk ways.	Walk Bike	Recreation
9.18. Bike path - Greenway over wetlands.	Walk Bike	Recreation
3.07 Bike land/developing a trail, community oriented place to exercise off road.	Walk Bike	Recreation
9.09. Create a walkable downtown with bike paths, walkways thru the wetlands/greenways-a vibrant cohesive downtown community.	Walk Bike	Recreation
2.01. More and improved sidewalks.	Walk Bike	Sidewalks
3.16. Connect all sidewalks in the area.	Walk Bike	Sidewalks
4.13. Better sidewalks.	Walk Bike	Sidewalks
5.10. Uniform sidewalks throughout TOD area.	Walk Bike	Sidewalks
10.09. Sidewalks on School Street.	Walk Bike	Sidewalks
13.08. New sidewalks on the Grassy Plain side of town.	Walk Bike	Sidewalks
13.10 Pay attention to small details in sidewalk quality and curb cuts that can make downtown hard to walk around if you have mobility issues.	Walk Bike	Sidewalks
13.10 Look into permeable concrete for sidewalk so curb less streets would work.	Walk Bike	Sidewalks
7.08 Better sidewalks	Walk Bike	Sidewalks
8.02. Walkable area, larger/longer of a downtown that is inviting with great curb appeal.	Walk Bike	Sidewalks

TOPIC – OPEN SPACE: 24 IDEAS

Ideas	Topic	Sub-topic
1.14. Central gathering space (outdoors) for community events, that is similar to the Danbury Green. Reasonable size stage with covering and electric/lights and lawn for people to gather.	Open Space	Central
6.08. Some sort of centralized location that is the place from which all activity, events, art, gatherings occur...and a way to know what is happening.	Open Space	Central
8.03. Create a public area including gardens, sculpture to us as a centralized gathering place. Surrounded with businesses, restaurants, etc that is connected to existing downtown.	Open Space	Central
8.09. Green space and a community center. A space for all generations to gather for positives activities.	Open Space	Central
13.06. Creation of a central larger public park. Outdoor space to rival the great lawn in the educational park.	Open Space	Central
13.11. Destination park/splash pad similar to Dickinson Newtown or Rogues Park Danbury.	Open Space	Central
9.09 New large central recreational area for concerts and community events.	Open Space	Central
8.09 A community center with a pool, gym, walking paths, playground. Promotes town pride.	Open Space	Community center
8.14. Community Center	Open Space	Community center
13.07. I would like to see a recreation center in the proposed area of development to benefit residents of all ages. The center could include an outdoor bike path, an indoor track (great for the senior population) and a swimming pool. The town could charge for swimming lessons, gym membership, etc. Additionally there could be businesses located in the rec center such as a cafe.	Open Space	Community center
1.06. Close off all or part of PT Barnum Sq. to traffic.	Open Space	PT Barnum
5.09. Turn PT Barnum into large green, eliminate roads.	Open Space	PT Barnum
5.04. Small gazebo with seats in PT Barnum Square.	Open Space	Small
10.02. Have some pocket parks where people can sit, talk, relax and meet one another.	Open Space	Small
10.15. Small park like area to sit, meet, eat lunch, read, etc. Community garden.	Open Space	Small

5.08. Move building to Greenwood or use parking as park/green, seating in front of yellow brick building, Rector & Greenwood. Upgrade facade of building.	Open Space	Small
6.13. More nice parks, attractive areas. For example by the stream along the RR tracks by the railroad station and/or the stream between the post office and CVS.	Open Space	Small
6.02. Expand Town Hall lawn to other side of School Street. Ask owner to allow this. Close School Street. Make Town Hall lawn our "Town Square".	Open Space	Town hall area
6.14. Make a town square, perhaps where Municipal Center and School St area or by PT Barnum Sq.	Open Space	Town hall area
10.08. Enhance Municipal Center, renovate and make more accessible.	Open Space	Town hall area
13.05. Development of the municipal center area as a true town center. Bridging the downtown to the train.	Open Space	Town hall area
13.06 A. Expand municipal center open space.	Open Space	Town hall area
3.17. Make Mousey's Corner into downtown dog and people park.	Open Space	
9.07. Elizabeth Street parking/transit/play area.	Open Space	

TOPIC – CHARACTER: 17 IDEAS

Ideas	Topic	Sub-topic
1.08. Keep character of buildings.	Character	Buildings
1.09. No buildings more than 3 stories.	Character	Buildings
3.14 Don't want old Bethel houses to turn into Danbury.	Character	Buildings
12.02. One story round houses across from Post Office on School Street.	Character	Buildings
12.12 Consistent aesthetics with building design	Character	Buildings
7.17. Move all utilities to the back of the buildings on Greenwood Ave.	Character	Appearance
5.11. Uniform style for designated areas, not colors, not lettering.	Character	Appearance
8.05. Center zone (i.e. a more homogenous look).	Character	Appearance
8.13. The "look"/visual appearance of the buildings, keeping a historic feel.	Character	Appearance
12.10. Consistent look all along 302.	Character	Appearance
3.05. Bury downtown power lines. Visual pollution near Boylans & Greenwoods is very prevalent.	Character	Maintenance
3.14. Protect residential areas from noise, dirt, etc; when owners reside in historic homes they take better care of yards.	Character	Maintenance
7.05. Encourage owners to improve the exterior appearance of their buildings. Perhaps enlist boy/girl scout clubs to paint buildings or plant shrubs and flowers around these structures.	Character	Maintenance
7.08 Proper building maintenance	Character	Maintenance
7.07. Restrict new construction to maintain existing style of construction on each street.	Character	Regulations
7.09. Have architectural zoning requirements (build structures that are made to last and look good). Not that crummy, temporary big box look.	Character	Regulations
9.13. Removing "unattractive" buildings, factories, unused land.	Character	Regulations

TOPIC – HOUSING: 14 IDEAS

Ideas	Topic	Sub-topic
8.06. Bring more people to downtown. If more people live here, the business will follow.	Housing	
12.13. Encourage young professionals not families.	Housing	

4.03. Affordable housing for 55+ and older. Rentals or Condos.	Housing
5.12. More residential development to help support and grow the downtown commerce vitality.	Housing
5.16. Developing more opportunities to live downtown	Housing
6.01. More housing downtown.	Housing
6.10. More affordable housing. Mixed housing choices.	Housing
7.13. Affordable rental housing. Fix sidewalks all over TOD area.	Housing
9.02. Flood the downtown area with new residential homes to supply the business district with customers to highly utilize the millennial tendencies to use the train.	Housing
9.03. Durant Ave. convert to housing not commercial.	Housing
9.06. Housing. No new commercial, but need to do a study on how much is needed.	Housing
9.14. Housing for younger families. So there is more activity and people.	Housing
13.03. Increased commuter housing and parking.	Housing
13.07 I do not want to see more residential development as I am concerned about traffic and parking.	Housing

TOPIC – DEVELOPMENT: 13 IDEAS

Ideas	Topic	Sub-topic
3.09. Integrate strong points such as Greenwoods to the Green into more of the continuous corridor. It needs flow from one building to another, where the architecture and feel are similar.	Develop	
3.11. Move the police station to Durant Ave. and get rid of the school bus storage.	Develop	
6.03. No industrial development downtown.	Develop	
7.16. Buy stores - Leave as is but restore building.	Develop	
8.04. Redevelopment of rundown buildings and vacant properties following guidelines for the village.	Develop	
8.10. Tear down 11 Durant Ave and build apartments.	Develop	
1.20. Create incentives for businesses to want to move into town. In turn create competition among business owners. Tax breaks to property owners to pass on to new and/or struggling businesses.	Develop	
3.10. Developing Verdi's Woodworking into a restaurant or civic center or performing arts.	Develop	
5.19. Expand existing village district into part of the TOD area possibly.	Develop	
8.11. Develop eastern edge of Greenwood Ave.	Develop	
10.12. Revamp old factory near old train station. Make it an antique co-op, an art co-op or small boutique stores/shops.	Develop	
6.04. Allow more flexibility in land use.	Develop	
12.12. Commercial development only. Conserve open space. Walkability. .	Develop	

TOPIC – LANDSCAPES: 7 IDEAS

Ideas	Topic	Sub-topic
7.06. Create streetscape.	Landscapes	
7.08. More trees	Landscapes	
7.10. Extend streetscaping to Dolan Plaza and opposite strip mall to camouflage parking lots and create pleasant link to Victorian row.	Landscapes	
7.11. Trees on Durant Ave and sidewalk improvement. Also down to Caraluzzi's.	Landscapes	
10.01. Re-tree the downtown with smaller tougher trees that can withstand climate change.	Landscapes	
1.19. Extend street scaping / sidewalk past Dolan Plaza on both sides and landscape the hill across from Opera House/Putnam House on the side of the Bethel Cycle parking lot.	Landscapes	
9.19. Street scape extended.	Landscapes	

CATEGORY – DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES, ART AND EVENTS, AND MARKETING

TOPIC – RETAIL, RESTAURANTS, AND OTHER BUSINESSES: 24 IDEAS

Ideas	Topic	Sub-topic
1.17. Brand Stores! LL Bean, Home Goods, Starbucks, GAP, Shoe Store, adult & child new clothing store.	Retail	Anchor
7.02. Trader Joe's or Fresh Market, a destination store to bring people from out of town.	Retail	Anchor
10.03. Get in a big magnet store like Old Navy where people can shop for clothes.	Retail	Anchor
12.08. Large retail stores for clothing store.	Retail	Anchor
13.01. Anchor store to attract people to downtown.	Retail	Anchor
4.06. More diverse establishments with shopping and performing arts.	Retail	Diversify
10.05. We have too many pizza places in town but there is not a Mexican restaurant. Would love to have art supplies available.	Retail	Diversify
10.14. More diversity. More restaurants and shops.	Retail	Diversify
7.04 Tax incentives should be offered, personal property tax waivers.	Retail	Incentives
10.04. Incentives perhaps to attract small business to the many available spaces on Greenwood Ave. Our primary street looks deserted.	Retail	Incentives
1.20 Create incentives for businesses to expand hours.	Retail	
8.01 Create and encourage more retail opportunities.	Retail	
13.12. Clothing store, picnic table, garbage cans. Option for a place to leash dog to enter a store?	Retail	
1.24. Bed & Breakfast and places for visitors to stay that are in keeping with local character.	Retail	
5.02. Offer counseling to potential business owners to help determine if their business plan can succeed. Too many new business open, have no customer base, and close quickly.	Retail	
5.15. Enhance what draws people to downtown and providing economic opportunity.	Retail	
5.18. Somehow attract more businesses to stay longer. We have a constant turnover in the downtown area.	Retail	
7.04. Fill in the empty store fronts with businesses, preferably selling goods that will attract buyers. Parking will need to be improved to facilitate this.	Retail	
9.05. Understand that services maybe realistic to downtown. Income of Bethel, different clientele than retail.	Retail	
8.08. The downtown needs more sustainable retail that keeps with the charming New England feel we currently have.	Retail	
1.03. More stores for men's and women's shoes.	Retail	
2.07. Beer Garden near downtown.	Retail	
4.07. Apparel shops for men, women (Talbots), children. Speciality shops - e.g. sports, gold	Retail	

4.09. Health food store for downtown.	Retail
4.11. Encourage restaurants as a destination for fine eating or family eating.	Retail
6.06. Keep stores open later at night.	Retail
6.11. Industry out, fill up stores.	Retail
7.03. More Dr. Mike's out to the front of a building in downtown center.	Retail
7.14. Attract businesses that will bring Bethelites and others into Bethel.	Retail
13.04. Increased Retail.	Retail

TOPIC – ARTS AND EVENTS: 12 IDEAS

Ideas	Topic	Sub-topic
1.15 Outdoor sculptures in the park areas all along walking paths.	Art & Events	Arts
1.15. More art/music/theater in Bethel.	Art & Events	Arts
4.08. Live theatre performances.	Art & Events	Arts
1.15 "Music Nights" where people bring instruments and play together.	Art & Events	Arts
1.23. Highlight the strong ARTS - music, visual, etc. There is live music almost every night in Bethel but so few people know.	Art & Events	Arts
2.06. A weekly program on the green in front of town hall.	Art & Events	Arts
3.04. Need a real banner to announce events. Have great events and no way to advertise them. Banner in downtown, centralized marketing/recreation plan. People can't come if they don't know about events.	Art & Events	Events
10.13. Farmers market on Sundays. Food truck night, add to summer events.	Art & Events	Events
1.02. Major Unnamed Bethel Festival. Close the center of Bethel to traffic and use all the space to host a major festival/event.	Art & Events	Events
12.07. An arts venue.	Art & Events	Facilities
12.14. Cultural Center/Arts/Music/Performing Arts Center.	Art & Events	Facilities
12.05. Venue in downtown to attract people.	Art & Events	Facilities

TOPIC – MARKETING: 7 IDEAS

Ideas	Topic	Sub-topic
1.18. Make Bethel a destination for weekenders. Need downtown accommodations (we have the restaurants) "Come to Bethel for the Weekend"	Marketing	
1.01. Create a focus for Bethel. Bethel needs a theme, something that it is known for that will attract people to downtown -e.g. Hay-on-Wye = Used books	Marketing	
1.05. Give people a reason to come to downtown Bethel so they will shop and go to restaurants.	Marketing	
1.10. We need a creative, comprehensive P.R. campaign to encourage people to come and spend money downtown, otherwise, no businesses will thrive.	Marketing	
1.22. A PR campaign to celebrate Bethel's local entrepreneurship - different from Greenwich, Westport, New Canaan and Kent	Marketing	
8.01. Beautiful town. Feature our town in local newspapers and Shelter magazine.	Marketing	
12.11. Something unique to draw people to Bethel.	Marketing	

CATEGORY – TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING

TOPIC – TRANSPORTATION: 20 IDEAS

Ideas	Topic	Sub-topic
4.05. Better traffic flow with parking.	Transport	Flow
4.14. Make better traffic flow.	Transport	Flow
9.09 Make Greenwood drive only, no street parking.	Transport	Flow
1.21. Bus station - list of businesses and direction to access (a directory at station). Trolley around town to access businesses. Collaboration between elected officials, business owners, and property owners.	Transport	Public
3.02. Bethel needs better public transportation. More buses. Taxis that are safe and can transport a disabled veteran and his wheel chair.	Transport	Public
1.12. Trolley car to go around town.	Transport	Public
1.13. Bus shelters.	Transport	Public
6.12. Have a downtown trolley and get as much parking off streets and into lots as possible. Charge for the parking as needed but make the trolley hop on, hop off and free.	Transport	Public
8.12. Capitalize on our beautiful train station, using it as a means for accessibility and a destination point.	Transport	Train
9.10. Electrify RR for a quicker/easier ride. Expand the schedule to NYC.	Transport	Train
9.17. Electrification of Metro North.	Transport	Train
3.13. Creative ideas for rush hour traffic congestion.	Transport	
4.02. Open up town hall parking lot to drive thru.	Transport	
4.10. Fix the roads.	Transport	
4.12. Fix roads.	Transport	
9.08. Grand/Durant connection.	Transport	
10.07. Improve access in/out of Dolan Plaza.	Transport	
13.02. Traffic relief for Greenwood Ave.	Transport	
1.04. Signage for direction.	Transport	
5.07. Greenwood Ave. car free from Caraluzzi's to Library and Depot Place including Barnum Square (add fountain). East bound traffic via south street. West bound traffic via main street & school street. Parking south side of school street.	Transport	

TOPIC – PARKING: 20 IDEAS

Ideas	Topic	Sub-topic
5.05. Parking on School Street.	Parking	School Street
5.17. Reconfigure existing parking areas in downtown. Prime example is on School St facing Municipal Center. Opposite side of street could be green space to connect to muni center lawn.	Parking	School Street
12.06. Unified and level parking on School Street.	Parking	School Street
12.04. Limit street parking. Get off street parking. We sell Bethel cheap.	Parking	
1.07. Need more downtown parking.	Parking	
5.14. More parking.	Parking	
6.05. Improve parking/reduce traffic (trucks) down Greenwood Ave.	Parking	
6.07. Better parking.	Parking	
9.11. More parking.	Parking	
9.15. Downtown parking.	Parking	
10.06. Remove parking on Greenwood.	Parking	
12.01. Eliminate dangerous parking from St. Thomas Church to Barnum Square.	Parking	
12.03. Parking and new sidewalk.	Parking	
12.15. Parking and addressing traffic issues.	Parking	

3.15. Connect the parking lots and put up signs showing where they are.	Parking
4.01. Put up parking lot signs.	Parking
13.09. Better signage and sight lines to make downtown easier and safer to navigate. Better signage for off street parking. Removal of selected parallel spots that hide cross walks.	Parking
2.02. Expand train station parking.	Parking
3.18. Tie parking lots together. Town could do easement and accepting liability.	Parking
6.09. Development of the upper end of Maine Street, primarily parking, to improve access to museum, historic sites and church.	Parking

CATEGORY – GOVERNMENT

TOPIC – GOVERNMENT: 13 IDEAS

Ideas	Topic	Sub-topic
7.12. Sell water to Danbury in return for more sewer capacity.	Govern	Infrastruct
12.09. New update infrastructure.	Govern	Infrastruct
3.08. Maintenance. Maintenance of sidewalks in winter. renovating/up dating blighted properties.	Govern	Maintenance
3.08. Cleaning up trash, more trash cans/recycling bins.	Govern	Maintenance
5.03. Recycling receptacles next to garbage receptacles in downtown area. Slot for paper and slot of plastics/glass.	Govern	Maintenance
3.03. Enforce ordinances. The sidewalk maintenance in Bethel in winter is abysmal, ice & snow everywhere. Very dangerous.	Govern	Maintenance
3.06. Enforce blight ordinance. Burned house on Blackman is an eyesore. Understand it is historic but it has been too long and sets a precedence.	Govern	Regulations
3.08. Enforcing existing ordinances.	Govern	Regulations
3.12. Condemn and teardown abandoned buildings.	Govern	Regulations
7.18. Create enforceable sign regulations.	Govern	Regulations
4.04. Lower taxes for seniors. Including those already offered.	Govern	Taxes
5.06. Lower taxes on commercial property so landlords can charge lower rents.	Govern	Taxes
1.11. Town leaders to use our tax dollars to better maintain, clean, trim, etc the downtown area.	Govern	Taxes

TOPIC – ENVIRONMENT: 2 IDEAS

Ideas	Topic	Sub-topic
3.19. Check wetlands. 100 year flood plain.	Environ	
2.03. Solar-powered charging stations.	Environ	