

OPPORTUNITIES FOR A BETTER DOWNTOWN

TABLE 1

- 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
- 1.02. Major Unnamed Bethel Festival. Close the center of Bethel to traffic and use all the space to host a major festival/event.
- 1.03. More stores for men's and women's shoes.
- 1.04. Signage for direction.
- 1.05. Give people a reason to come to downtown Bethel so they will shop and go to restaurants.
- 1.06. Close off all or part of PT Barnum Sq. to traffic.
- 1.07. Need more downtown parking.
- 1.08. Keep character of buildings.
- 1.09. No buildings more than 3 stories.
- 1.10. We need a creative, comprehensive P.R. campaign to encourage people to come and spend money downtown, otherwise, no businesses will thrive.
- 1.11. Town leaders to use our tax dollars to better maintain, clean, trim, etc the downtown area.
- 1.12. Trolley car to go around town.
- 1.13. Bus shelters.
- 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.
- 1.15. More art/music/theater in Bethel. Outdoor sculptures in the park areas all along walking paths. "Music Nights" where people bring instruments and play together.
- 1.16. Raised walking paths and bike paths (separate) built over wetlands so people can stroll through these areas.
- 1.17. Brand Stores! LL Bean, Home Goods, Starbucks, GAP, Shoe Store, adult & child new clothing store.
- 1.18. Make Bethel a destination for weekenders. Need downtown accommodations (we have the restaurants) "Come to Bethel for the Weekend"
- 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.

- 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. Create incentives for businesses to expand hours.
- 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.
- 1.22. A PR campaign to celebrate Bethel's local entrepreneurship - different from Greenwich, Westport, New Canaan and Kent
- 1.23. Highlight the strong ARTS - music, visual, etc. There is live music almost every night in Bethel but so few people know.
- 1.24. Bed & Breakfast and places for visitors to stay that are in keeping with local character.

TABLE 2

- 2.01. More and improved sidewalks.
- 2.02. Expand train station parking.
- 2.03. Solar-powered charging stations.
- 2.04. Bike lanes for commuting from home to downtown especially train station.
- 2.05. Change ordinance for bike racks, allow racks in parking lots by eliminating a parking.
- 2.06. A weekly program on the green in front of town hall.
- 2.07. Beer Garden near downtown.
- 2.08. Accessibility to wetlands for walkways/bike paths or exercise trails.

TABLE 3

- 3.01. Walkways, paths, pedestrian bridge from east side at train tracks to the west side near the new apartments that are being built.
- 3.02. Bethel needs better public transportation. More buses. Taxis that are safe and can transport a disabled veteran and his wheel chair.
- 3.03. Enforce ordinances. The sidewalk maintenance in Bethel in winter is abysmal, ice & snow everywhere. Very dangerous.
- 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.

- 3.05. Bury downtown power lines. Visual pollution near Boylans & Greenwoods is very prevalent.
- 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.
- 3.07. More accessibility. Making a pedestrian friendly environment. Connected sidewalks throughout town. Bike land/developing a trail, community oriented place to exercise off road. A train that is actually efficient.
- 3.08. Maintenance. Maintenance of sidewalks in winter. Cleaning up trash, more trash cans/recycling bins. renovating/up dating blighted properties. Enforcing existing ordinances.
- 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 are feel are similar.
- 3.10. Developing Verdi's Woodworking into a restaurant or civic center or performing arts.
- 3.11. Move the police station to Durant Ave. and get rid of the school bus storage.
- 3.12. Condemn and teardown abandoned buildings.
- 3.13. Creative ideas for rush hour traffic congestion.
- 3.14. Protect residential areas from noise, dirt, etc; when owners reside in historic homes they take better care of yards. Don't want old Bethel houses to turn into Danbury.
- 3.15. Connect the parking lots and put up signs showing where they are.
- 3.16. Connect all sidewalks in the area.
- 3.17. Make Mousey's Corner into downtown dog and people park.
- 3.18. Tie parking lots together. Town could do easement and accepting liability.
- 3.19. Check wetlands. 100 year flood plain.

TABLE 4

- 4.01. Put up parking lot signs.
- 4.02. Open up town hall parking lot to drive thru.
- 4.03. Affordable housing for 55+ and older. Rentals or Condos.
- 4.04. Lower taxes for seniors. Including those already offered.
- 4.05. Better traffic flow with parking.
- 4.06. More diverse establishments with shopping and performing arts.
- 4.07. Apparel shops for men, women (Talbots), children. Speciality shops- e.g. sports, gold

- 4.08. Live theatre performances.
- 4.09. Health food store for downtown.
- 4.10. Fix the roads.
- 4.11. Encourage restaurants as a destination for fine eating or family eating.
- 4.12. Fix roads.
- 4.13. Better sidewalks.
- 4.14. Make better traffic flow.

TABLE 5

- 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.
- 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.
- 5.03. Recycling receptacles next to garbage receptacles in downtown area. Slot for paper and slot of plastics/glass.
- 5.04. Small gazebo with seats in PT Barnum Square.
- 5.05. Parking on School Street.
- 5.06. Lower taxes on commercial property so landlords can charge lower rents.
- 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.
- 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.
- 5.09. Turn PT Barnum into large green, eliminate roads.
- 5.10. Uniform sidewalks throughout TOD area.
- 5.11. Uniform style for designated areas, not colors, not lettering.
- 5.12. More residential development to help support and grow the downtown commerce vitality.
- 5.13. Greater access for foot traffic to and from the train station.
- 5.14. More parking.
- 5.15. Enhance what draws people to downtown and providing economic opportunity.

5.16. Developing more opportunities to live downtown

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. Re-designate School St to pedestrian only/re-pave with brick/cobblestone etc.

5.18. Somehow attract more businesses to stay longer. We have a constant turnover in the downtown area.

5.19. Expand existing village district into part of the TOD area possibly.

TABLE 6

6.01. More housing downtown.

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".

6.03. No industrial development downtown.

6.04. Allow more flexibility in land use.

6.05. Improve parking/reduce traffic (trucks) down Greenwood Ave.

6.06. Keep stores open later at night.

6.07. Better parking.

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.

6.09. Development of the upper end of Maine Street, primarily parking, to improve access to museum, historic sites and church.

6.10. More affordable housing. Mixed housing choices.

6.11. Industry out, fill up stores.

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.

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.

6.14. Make a town square, perhaps where Municipal Center and School St area or by PT Barnum Sq.

TABLE 7

- 7.01. Bike path (multi-use path) circling the TOD attracting people to downtown center. Bike Friendly Town.
- 7.02. Trader Joe's or Fresh Market, a destination store to bring people from out of town.
- 7.03. More Dr. Mike's out to the front of a building in downtown center.
- 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. Tax incentives should be offered, personal property tax waivers.
- 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.
- 7.06. Create streetscape.
- 7.07. Restrict new construction to maintain existing style of construction on each street.
- 7.08. More trees, better sidewalks, proper building maintenance.
- 7.09. Have architectural zoning requirements (build structures that are made to last and look good). Not that crummy, temporary big box look.
- 7.10. Extend streetscaping to Dolan Plaza and opposite strip mall to camouflage parking lots and create pleasant link to Victorian row.
- 7.11. Trees on Durant Ave and sidewalk improvement. Also down to Caraluzzi's.
- 7.12. Sell water to Danbury in return for more sewer capacity.
- 7.13. Affordable rental housing. Fix sidewalks all over TOD area.
- 7.14. Attract businesses that will bring Bethelites and others into Bethel.
- 7.15. Create more walkway and green space along wetlands.
- 7.16. Buy stores - Leave as is but restore building.
- 7.17. Move all utilities to the back of the buildings on Greenwood Ave.
- 7.18. Create enforceable sign regulations.

TABLE 8

- 8.01. Beautiful town. Create and encourage more retail opportunities. Feature our town in local newspapers and Shelter magazine.
- 8.02. Walkable area, larger/longer of a downtown that is inviting with great curb appeal.

- 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.
- 8.04. Redevelopment of rundown buildings and vacant properties following guidelines for the village.
- 8.05. Center zone (i.e. a more homogenous look).
- 8.06. Bring more people to downtown. If more people live here, the business will follow.
- 8.07. Connect the Danbury/Bethel Inn on Grassy Plan St to the center of town by walking paths and boulevard type streets.
- 8.08. The downtown needs more sustainable retail that keeps with the charming New England feel we currently have.
- 8.09. Green space and a community center. A space for all generations to gather for positives activities. A community center with a pool, gym, walking paths, playground. Promotes town pride.
- 8.10. Tear down 11 Durant Ave and build apartments.
- 8.11. Develop eastern edge of Greenwood Ave.
- 8.12. Capitalize on our beautiful train station, using it as a means for accessibility and a destination point.
- 8.13. The "look"/visual appearance of the buildings, keeping a historic feel.
- 8.14. Community Center

TABLE 9

- 9.01. Nice access, wide bike/ walking paths, with recreation to downtown business district from all in town residential areas.
- 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.
- 9.03. Durant Ave, convert to housing not commercial.
- 9.04. Make walkway throughout wetland.
- 9.05. Understand that services maybe realistic to downtown. Income of Bethel, different clientele than retail.
- 9.06. Housing. No new commercial, but need to do a study on how much is needed.
- 9.07. Elizabeth Street parking/transit/play area.
- 9.08. Grand/Durant connection.

- 9.09. Create a walkable downtown with bike paths, walkways thru the wetlands/greenways-a vibrant cohesive downtown community. Make Greenwood drive only, no street parking. New large central recreational area for concerts and community events.
- 9.10. Electrify RR for a quicker/easier ride. Expand the schedule to NYC.
- 9.11. More parking.
- 9.12. Create walk ways.
- 9.13. Removing "unattractive" buildings, factories, unused land.
- 9.14. Housing for younger families. So there is more activity and people.
- 9.15. Downtown parking.
- 9.16. Bridge "walking" over M-N RR @ Diamond (or North), connecting west downtown to east downtown.
- 9.17. Electrification of Metro North.
- 9.18. Bike path - Greenway over wetlands.
- 9.19. Street scape extended.
- 9.20. People on the street + parking.

TABLE 10

- 10.01. Re-tree the downtown with smaller tougher trees that can withstand climate change.
- 10.02. Have some pocket parks where people can sit, talk, relax and meet one another.
- 10.03. Get in a big magnet store like Old Navy where people can shop for clothes.
- 10.04. Incentives perhaps to attract small business to the many available spaces on Greenwood Ave. Our primary street looks deserted.
- 10.05. We have too many pizza places in town but there is not a Mexican restaurant. Would love to have art supplies available.
- 10.06. Remove parking on Greenwood.
- 10.07. Improve access in/out of Dolan Plaza.
- 10.08. Enhance Municipal Center, renovate and make more accessible.
- 10.09. Sidewalks on School Street.
- 10.10. Bike Lanes.
- 10.11. Better pedestrian crossings.

- 10.12. Revamp old factory near old train station. Make it an antique co-op, an art co-op or small boutique stores/shops.
- 10.13. Farmers market on Sundays. Food truck night, add to summer events.
- 10.14. More diversity. More restaurants and shops.
- 10.15. Small park like area to sit, meet, eat lunch, read, etc. Community garden.

TABLE 12

- 12.01. Eliminate dangerous parking from St. Thomas Church to Barnum Square.
- 12.02. One story round houses across from Post Office on School Street.
- 12.03. Parking and new sidewalk.
- 12.04. Limit street parking. Get off street parking. We sell Bethel cheap.
- 12.05. Venue in downtown to attract people.
- 12.06. Unified and level parking on School Street.
- 12.07. An arts venue.
- 12.08. Large retail stores for clothing store.
- 12.09. New update infrastructure.
- 12.10. Consistent look all along 302.
- 12.11. Something unique to draw people to Bethel.
- 12.12. Commercial development only. Conserve open space. Walkability. Consistent aesthetics with building design.
- 12.13. Encourage young professionals not families.
- 12.14. Cultural Center/Arts/Music/Performing Arts Center.
- 12.15. Parking and addressing traffic issues.

TABLE 13

- 13.01. Anchor store to attract people to downtown.
- 13.02. Traffic relief for Greenwood Ave.
- 13.03. Increased commuter housing and parking.

13.04. Increased Retail.

13.05. Development of the municipal center area as a true town center. Bridging the downtown to the train.

13.06. Creation of a central larger public park. Outdoor space to rival the great lawn in the educational park. A. Expand municipal center open space. B. Develop the Greenway north of the train station as public outdoor recreational areas.

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. I do not want to see more residential development as I am concerned about traffic and parking.

13.08. New sidewalks on the Grassy Plain side of town.

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.

13.10. Improved accessibility - pay attention to small details in sidewalk quality and curb cuts that can make downtown hard to walk around if you have mobility issues. Look into permeable concrete for sidewalk so curb less streets would work.

13.11. Destination park/splash pad similar to Dickinson Newtown or Rogues Park Danbury.

13.12. Clothing store, picnic table, garbage cans. Option for a place to leash dog to enter a store?