



Economic Development Strategy

May 17

2017

This Strategic Plan for Economic Development sets forth the goals and initiatives for continued economic growth in Bethel, CT.

Adopted by the Economic Development Commission on May 17, 2017.

**Bethel,
Connecticut**

The Economic Development Strategic Plan was developed through EDC planning sessions and information from:

The Plan of Conservation and Development – 2007

Downtown and Clarke Business Park Advisory Committee Needs Assessments – 2014

Downtown Property and Business Owner Survey - 2014

Economic Development Strategy Survey - 2016

Clarke Business Park Survey - 2016

Bethel Forward Master Plan – July 2016

Goals

The ten major goals the commission will pursue over the next five years.

1. Assist in the retention and growth of Bethel's existing businesses
2. Expand the commercial/ industrial/retail sector of Bethel's Grand List
3. Provide programs and incentives that attract new businesses and investment to Bethel
4. Increase occupancy of available commercial/industrial/retail properties
5. Advance the economic development of town-owned property
6. Promote a "business friendly" climate that allows businesses to continue to grow and develop in Bethel
7. Enhance the character and quality of life of Bethel
8. Support entrepreneurial activities
9. Build a brand for Bethel that drives economic growth
10. Help build a workforce that meets the needs of Bethel employers
11. Work with Planning and Zoning on commercial development opportunities
12. Partner with Stony Hill Four Corners, the Bethel Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Danbury Chamber of Commerce to achieve these goals

In order to achieve these goals the commission will focus on 4 key areas.

1. Business Development and Support

2. Community Partnerships
3. Marketing and Public Relations
4. Community Improvements

Business Development & Support

Business Assistance

- Business Liaison
- Guide to Starting a New Business
- Welcome Email
- Improved Permit Process

Retain and Attract Businesses

- Business Visits
- Business Incentives
- Entrepreneurship and Innovation
- Unmet Demand Businesses

Communication

- Newsletter
- Social Media
- Email
- Websites – Town and Community

Educational Workshops

Development and Investment Opportunities

- Transit Oriented Development
- Clarke Park Expansion
- New Development & Business Expansion
 - Grants
 - Incentives

Community Partnerships

Property and Business Owners

- Personal Introductions
- Meet and Greets
- Downtown Advisory Committee
- Clarke Park Advisory Committee

Bethel Chamber of Commerce

Stony Hill Four Corners Association

Real Estate Professionals

- Commercial Brokers Alliance
- Site Selectors
- Women’s Council of Realtors of Greater Danbury

Culture & Arts

- Local Arts Organization - Bethel Arts
- Cultural Alliance of Western CT

Educational Institutions

- Bethel Public Schools
- WCSU, Naugatuck Valley CC, Abbott Tech

Local Government, Commissions & Boards

Business Support Organizations

- HIDC
- SCORE
- SBDC
- CBIA

State Agencies and Offices

- DECD

ED Professionals/Organizations

- Regional ED Offices
- CERC
- CEDAS
- WCEDA
- Danbury Regional Mfg. Group



Marketing & Public Relations

Marketing Materials

- Brochure
 - Town
 - Clarke Business Park
- Town Video
- Community Guide
- Real Estate Developers

Community Brand

Website

- Available Properties
- Business Directory

Publicity & Advertising

- Press Releases

Social Media

- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Ambassador Program

Community Improvements

Business Districts

- Downtown
- Clarke Business Park
- Stony Hill
- Berkshire
- TOD

Completer Streets

Way finding Signage

Appeal

- Maintenance
- Gateways
- Public Art
- Recreation

Downtown Parking

- Public Parking Signage
- Shared Parking

Commercial Property Improvements

- Property Owner Outreach
- Empty Storefront Initiative
- Façade Improvements
- Incentives

Business Development & Support

Business Assistance		
Action	Metrics	Status
<p>Business Liaison - Establish the Office of Economic Development as a resource for businesses through communication and outreach.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of businesses assisted 	On-going
<p>Guide to Starting a New Business - Includes an overview of what a new and potential business would need to know in order to start a business in the State of CT and Bethel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of the guide Guide is available on town and community website, and in town departments. Maintain content 	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>On-going</p>
<p>Welcome Email - Informational email welcoming new businesses to Bethel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a template email Number of emails sent to new businesses 	<p>Complete</p> <p>On-going</p>
<p>Improved Permit Process - Establish the Office of Economic Development as a point of contact for permit assistance.</p> <p>Facilitate pre-application and department meetings.</p> <p>Maximize the use of the town's website to improve the permit process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of businesses assisted Number of facilitated pre-application/department meetings Develop permit tools on the website Track the use of website tools 	<p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p>

Retain and Attract Businesses		
Action	Metrics	Status
<p>Business Visits - Schedule visits with Bethel businesses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of visits 	On-going
<p>Business Incentives - Recommend a plan that attracts new businesses and incentivizes commercial development and expansion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Researched municipal business incentives Completed business incentive analysis 	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p>

<p>Research and assist in obtaining business incentives (i.e. state, federal) for businesses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a local business incentive plan • Number of businesses located, expanded and invested • Number of jobs created • Amount of new tax revenue • Number of businesses located, expanded and invested • Number of jobs created • Amount of new tax revenue 	<p>In Process</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p>
<p>Entrepreneurship and Innovation - Develop a program that attracts entrepreneurs to build and expand their business in Bethel (i.e. business incubator program, home based businesses, Made in Bethel).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete needs assessment • Develop program • Number of businesses in the program • Business success rate 	
<p>Unmet Demand Businesses - Define a plan to attract businesses where unmet demand exists (i.e. high-quality restaurants, arts and entertainment, apparel)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop plan • Number of businesses 	

Communication

Action	Metrics	Status
<p>Newsletter - Distribution of a yearly newsletter from the Office of Economic Development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a template • yearly distribution 	<p>Complete</p> <p>On-going</p>
<p>Social Media - Use social media to promote Bethel.</p> <p>Engage members of the community that show an evident enthusiasm towards Bethel and its happenings to take an active role to promote Bethel's attributes, successes, and town events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of an ED Facebook and LinkedIn page • Number of posts • Create an Ambassador Program 	<p>Complete</p> <p>On-going</p>

thus allowing us to promote to a larger audience.		
Email - Distribution of information through email.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created a distribution list • Developed website functionality allowing people to join the distribution • Number of emails 	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>On-going</p>
<p>Websites - Town - Develop an economic development section on the town's website that contains business specific information and resources.</p> <p>Community - Develop a community website, which contains quality of life and business specific information and resources, to improve commerce and attract businesses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched ED section on town website • Usage • Maintain content • Obtained funding for website • Launched community website • Usage • Maintain content 	<p>Complete</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p>

Educational Workshops

Action	Metrics	Status
Educational Workshops - Provide information and opportunities, through workshops, to help businesses be more successful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of workshops 	On-going

Development Opportunities

Action	Metrics	Status
Transit Oriented Development - Identify funding opportunities for TOD.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research, apply and manage funding 	On-going
Participate with consultants and advisory group on Master Plan and implementation efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in town's TOD work 	On-going
Market the plan to attract new investment into the area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a marketing plan 	In process
Clarke Park Expansion - Identify funding opportunities for the expansion of Clarke Business Park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify, apply and manage funding 	In process

<p>Lead project by working with the engineering and design consultants.</p> <p>Work with state departments to provide the needed information to obtain project approval and manage the projects implementation.</p> <p>Market available properties</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write RFPs and project manage engineering and environmental work • Obtain state approval for the project • Successful implementation of the project • Properties sold 	<p>In process</p> <p>In process</p>
<p>New Development & Business Expansion - Identify and assist in new opportunities for development and business expansion in Bethel.</p> <p>Research grants that may be available to Bethel and take appropriate actions to apply.</p> <p>Research and pursue incentives (i.e. state, federal) that may be available for new development and business expansion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify new opportunities • Number of new projects • Number of grants written • Amount of requested and received grant money • Number and amount of incentives received 	<p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p>

Community Partnerships

Property and Business Owners		
Action	Metrics	Status
Personal Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of business visits 	On-going
Meet and Greets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of Meet and Greets 	On-going
Downtown Advisory Committee – Develop a committee of downtown property and business owners that meet regularly to identify their needs and implement solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Created a downtown advisory committee Number of meetings Number of needs that are addressed 	Complete On-going On-going
Clarke Business Park Advisory Committee – Develop a committee of Clarke Business Park property and business owners that meet regularly to identify their needs and implement solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Created a Clarke Park advisory committee Number of meetings Number of needs that are addressed 	Complete On-going On-going

Bethel Chamber of Commerce		
Action	Metrics	Status
Partner with the Chamber to develop programs that improve economic development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of programs 	On-going
Support and promote the events and activities of the Chamber of Commerce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of events 	On-going

Stony Hill Four Corners Association		
Action	Metrics	Status
Support and promote the events and activities of Stony Hill Four Corners Association.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of events 	On-going

Real Estate Professionals		
Action	Metrics	Status
Subscribe and attend meetings of real estate professionals to identify ED opportunities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial Brokers Alliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of meetings 	On-going

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Sectors Guild • Women’s Council of Realtors of Greater Danbury 		
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Culture & Arts

Action	Metrics	
Bethel Arts - Develop an arts organization that provides programs to catalyze economic development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase arts businesses • Increase tourism and business patronization through arts events and activities 	On-going On-going
Cultural Alliance of Western CT - Participate with the Cultural Alliance to identify and promote art programs that improve economic development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of programs 	On-going

Educational Institutions

Action	Metrics	
Bethel Public Schools - Participate with the BPS to identify and promote programs that improve economic development and help develop a future workforce. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Advisory Council • Mentor Program • Internships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of programs 	On-going
Western CT State University, Naugatuck Valley CC, Abbott Tech. - Participate with educational institutions to identify and promote programs that improve economic development and help develop a future workforce (i.e. internships).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of programs 	On-going

Local Government, Commissions & Boards

Action	Metrics	
Participate in the activities of local government, commissions and boards that impact our local economy and update them on our ED activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of activities • Number of communications 	On-going On-going

Business Support Organizations

Action	Metrics	
Partner with business support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of businesses referred 	On-going

organizations to promote and refer businesses to their programs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIDC • SCORE • SBDC • CBIA 		
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State Agencies and Offices

Action	Metrics	
Work with the state to identify ED opportunities for Bethel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DECD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of opportunities 	On-going

ED Professionals/Organizations

Action	Metrics	
Work with ED professionals and organizations to identify ED opportunities for Bethel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional ED Offices and Chambers • CERC • CEDAS • WCEDA/WestCOG • Danbury Regional Manufacturing Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of opportunities 	On-going

Marketing & Public Relations

Marketing Materials		
Action	Metrics	
<p>Brochure - Town - The brochure will provide Bethel specific information and resources in order to attract new business. It will be available online.</p> <p>Clarke Park - The brochure will provide specific information about Clarke Business Park in order to attract new business. It will be available online.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed a town brochure Developed a Clarke Park brochure Brochure/s is available on the town and community website Maintain content 	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>On-going</p>
<p>Town Video - The video will provide Bethel specific information in order to attract new business. It will be available online.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed a town video Video is available on the town and community website Maintain content 	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>On-going</p>
<p>Community Guide - The community guide will provide information on the quality of life opportunities in Bethel in order to attract business. It will be available online.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a community guide Guide is available on the town and community website. Maintain content 	
<p>Real Estate Developer Marketing - Develop a marketing piece tailored to the developers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a marketing piece Available on the town and community website. Maintain content 	

Community Brand		
Action	Metrics	
<p>Develop a community-wide branding campaign that represents and supports economic development and the Town of Bethel. The brand identity will further the economic and social goals of the community and better position itself in a highly competitive environment. It will help the town attract, retain and compete for business, tourism and community development with</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed brand Incorporated brand in the community website Promote brand 	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>On-going</p>

<p>surrounding communities. The community brand will help consumers (residents, businesses and tourists) distinguish our town from other towns/cities in the marketplace and help the community present itself both internally and externally, in one unified voice.</p>		
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Website

Action	Metrics	
<p>Available properties - Promote the commercial properties that are available in Bethel on both the town and community websites.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Properties are available on the websites • Maintain content 	<p style="text-align: center;">Complete</p> <p style="text-align: center;">On-going</p>
<p>Business Directory - Promote Bethel businesses on both the town and community websites.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a business directory • Directory is available on the websites. • Maintain content 	<p style="text-align: center;">Complete</p>

Publicity and Advertising

Action	Metrics	
<p>Press Releases - Promote Bethel news through the development of press releases</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed press contact list • Number of press releases 	<p style="text-align: center;">Complete</p> <p style="text-align: center;">On-going</p>

Social Media

Action	Metrics	
<p>Facebook -</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed an ED facebook page • Number of posts 	<p style="text-align: center;">Complete</p> <p style="text-align: center;">On-going</p>
<p>LinkedIn -</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed of an ED LinkedIn page • Number of posts 	<p style="text-align: center;">Complete</p> <p style="text-align: center;">On-going</p>
<p>Ambassador Program - Develop a program where individuals, who are active in social media, engage in the community and show an evident enthusiasm towards Bethel and its</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the program • Number of shared posts 	

happenings take an active role to promote Bethel's attributes, successes, and town events and happenings through social media.		
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Community Improvements

Business Districts		
Action	Metrics	
<p>Downtown Improvements - Identify needs and opportunities for the improvement of downtown business district.</p> <p>Development of an improvement plan.</p> <p>Implementation of the improvement plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveyed property and business owners • Identified the needs and created an improvement plan • Identify, apply and manage funding • Number of initiatives implemented 	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p>
<p>Clarke Park Improvements - Identify needs and opportunities for the improvement of Clarke Business Park.</p> <p>Development of an improvement plan.</p> <p>Implementation of the improvement plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveyed property and business owners • Identified the needs and created an improvement plan • Identify, apply and manage funding • Number of initiatives implemented 	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p>
<p>Stony Hill Improvements - Identify needs and opportunities for the improvement of Stony Hill business district.</p> <p>Development of an improvement plan.</p> <p>Implementation of the improvement plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey property and business owners • Identify needs and create an improvement plan • Identify, apply and manage funding • Number of initiatives implemented 	
<p>Berkshire Corporate Park - Identify needs and opportunities for the Berkshire Corporate Park.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey property and business owners 	

Development of an improvement plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify needs and create an improvement plan 	
Implementation of the improvement plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify, apply and manage funding Number of initiatives implemented 	
TOD - Identify needs and opportunities for the TOD District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey property and business owners 	
Development of an improvement plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify needs and create an improvement plan 	
Implementation of the improvement plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify, apply and manage funding Number of initiatives implemented 	

Wayfinding Signage

Action	Metrics	
Clarke Business Park - Addition of signage to improve commerce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installation of street directory sign in the park Install of Clarke Park signage on Route 53 	Complete
Stony Hill - Addition of signage to improve commerce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installation of Stony Hill Shopping District signs 	Complete
Downtown - Addition of signage to improve commerce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installation of Downtown Shopping District signs 	Complete

Completer Streets

Action	Metrics	
Identify opportunities to improve accessibility, walkability and safety in the commercial areas (i.e. sidewalks, transit shelters, signage, pedestrian, car and bicycle access and safety, streetscape, street furniture).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify needs Identify, apply and manage funding Number of opportunities 	

	implemented	
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Appeal		
Action	Metrics	
Improve Maintenance – Identify areas for improved maintenance in our commercial districts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify needs Number of opportunities implemented 	On-going
Improve Gateways – Identify opportunities to aesthetically improve the areas that are considered gateways into our business districts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify opportunities Identify, apply and manage funding Number of opportunities implemented 	
Public Art – Identify opportunities to provide public art in order to improve commerce and tourism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify opportunities Identify, apply and manage funding Number of opportunities implemented 	On-going On-going
Recreational Opportunities – Identify recreational opportunities in order to improve quality of life, commerce and tourism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify opportunities Identify, apply and manage funding Number of opportunities implemented 	On-going

Downtown Parking		
Action	Metrics	
Shared Parking – Identify opportunities for shared parking and facilitate implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify opportunities Identify, apply and manage funding Number of opportunities implemented 	
Downtown Public Parking Signage- Addition of signage to improve commerce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installation of downtown public parking signs 	Complete

Commercial Property Improvements		
Action	Metrics	
<p>Property Owner Outreach – Identify properties that are vacant and work directly with the property owners to fill them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify properties • Improve vacancy rate 	
<p>Empty Storefront Initiative – Fill vacant storefronts with short term tenants that provide the space with visibility and improves the vitality of the commercial area (i.e. art studios, popup shops).</p> <p>Animate vacant storefront windows.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of properties • Improve vacancy rate 	
<p>Façade Improvements – Identify opportunities for commercial property façade improvements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify opportunities • Identify, apply and manage funding • Number of opportunities implemented 	
<p>Incentives – Identify and assist property owners with incentives and programs that are available to them (i.e. historic tax credits)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of property owners assisted 	