

Comprehensive Housing Market Analysis

Workforce Housing in Bristol, CT

Center for Real Estate, University of Connecticut

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Comprehensive Housing Market Analysis: Workforce Housing in Bristol, CT

Analysis Conducted by the Center for Real Estate

University of Connecticut, November 24, 2010

Executive Summary

The Center for Real Estate at the University of Connecticut was commissioned to study Bristol's existing housing stock relative to the City's current and potential future housing needs. The primary focus of this study is a description of the Bristol housing market and a response to the question: "does the Bristol housing market meet the needs of the Bristol workforce?" The following questions clarify:

1. How can the urban fabric of Bristol be enhanced with workforce housing?
2. How much demand is there for workforce housing in the City?
3. How can the City best meet this demand with an Incentive Housing Zone (IHZ)? I.e., what form should IHZ-based housing take in order to have the greatest market effect?

The study team walked and drove Bristol neighborhoods and surrounding towns, worked with City officials, conducted interviews in the City and gathered primary and secondary data on the local housing market and employment. The study team collected demographic and socioeconomic information by neighborhood.

Major conclusions include:

- Bristol's single family housing stock is older, somewhat more affordable and more likely to be subsidized than housing in Hartford County and in surrounding towns.
- Bristol's single family house prices have been less volatile and less affected by recent market declines than surrounding towns.
- Bristol's multi-family market is dominated by very old construction. The old construction does not appear to meet the needs of the market.
- The local labor force is slightly younger than the balance of Hartford County and most surrounding towns, with higher percentages of people in the 30 to 39 and 40 to 49 age cohorts. Bristol's age demographic is an ingredient for attracting young individuals who are more likely to identify with a populace of similar age.
- The two major private sector employers in Bristol (ESPN and Bristol Hospital) are likely to seek an educated labor force. It is essential that any IHZ development be coupled with amenities that satisfy the needs and wants of well educated young professionals.

- Newly arriving employees - especially renters – are unlikely to find an available housing stock that meets their tastes and preferences and thus will tend to live in other towns such as Southington, West Hartford, and Farmington. The development of Blue Back Square in West Hartford has made it an attractive location for younger professional workers.
 - A new urban development with relatively high-density IHZ housing will likely enhance the local environment when placed appropriately in neighborhoods with existing land uses that support the targeted demographic segment. A new urban development may increase the overall feeling of safety and security in adjacent neighborhoods.
 - The apparent success of SuperNatural and other shops on Bristol’s North Main St indicates that there may be unmet demand for sophisticated food and other products in Bristol.
 - Development of workforce housing in higher densities accompanied by urban activities may further strengthen the City’s ties to ESPN and other employers of young professional and trades-people and could result in a higher percentage of this demographic living, shopping and staying in Bristol.
- **Overall summary:** Bristol could enhance its urban fabric with an affordable urban development containing amenities and design elements of the type found in Blue Back Square in West Hartford. This would add vitality to Bristol by attracting the young professional workers and trades-people hired by ESPN, the Bristol Hospital and other employers.

A link to the full study can be obtained by emailing recenter@business.uconn.edu or by clicking :

http://www.business.uconn.edu/Realestate/RESociety/Bristol/Bristol_Housing/BristolFinalOct2010.docx

Introduction

In 2010, the City of Bristol (“City”) considered the creation of an Incentive Housing Zone (IHZ) overlay to its existing zoning plan. The IHZ has the potential to encourage the development of workforce housing: briefly, this is housing for those earning somewhere between 60% and 120% of the area median income (AMI) as defined below. The Connecticut Office of Policy and Management has made a grant to the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Commission to conduct a study of the City’s existing housing stock relative to City’s current and potential future housing needs. In support of that effort, the Center for Real Estate and Urban Economic Studies at the School of Business of the University of Connecticut (hereafter, “the Center”) conducted a housing market analysis for the City.¹

The Center was charged with producing specific deliverable products, outlined in Attachment 2. The primary focus of this study is a description of the Bristol housing market and a response to the question: “does the Bristol housing market meet the needs of the Bristol workforce?” The following questions clarify:

1. How can the urban fabric of Bristol be enhanced with workforce housing?
2. How much demand is there for workforce housing in the City?
3. How can the city best meet this demand with an IHZ? I.e., what form should IHZ-based housing take in order to have the greatest market effect?

Methodology

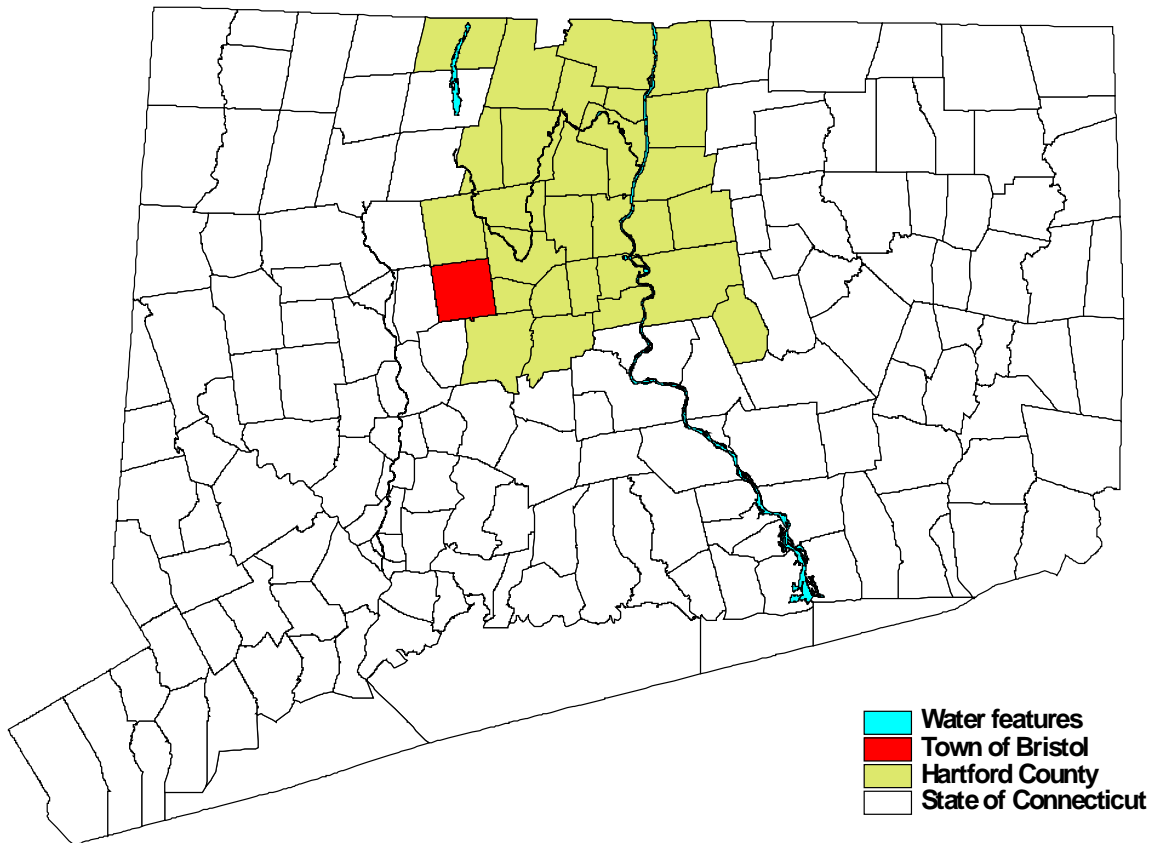
Map 1 shows the town of Bristol in the context of surrounding towns. The study team walked and drove Bristol neighborhoods and surrounding towns, worked with City officials, conducted interviews in the City and gathered information on the local housing market and employment. The study team collected demographic and socioeconomic information by neighborhood.² The team evaluated the following:

- Housing supply – an inventory of existing housing stock that gave us insight into the quantity of housing units both single and multi-family, the condition of the stock, its style and its affordability.

¹ [Members of the study team can be found in Exhibit 1, Bristol Housing Market Study Team.](#) If you are reading this off-line, email recenter@business.uconn.edu for links to all exhibits.

² Data are the latest available at the time the study was conducted in the spring of 2010.

- Housing demand – interviews with local officials and employers as well as analysis of demographic and socioeconomic data to determine the character of local housing demand and its compatibility with the local housing stock.
- Housing market – analysis of past sales activity and the current offerings as well as current rental offerings were used to understand the absolute and relative affordability of Bristol’s housing for the local workforce.



Map 1:
Hartford County and Town of Bristol CT.

Defining “Workforce Housing” with special reference to Connecticut’s IHZ housing

There is often some confusion regarding the term “Workforce Housing”. Some interpret it to refer to housing for low cost labor. Others conflate it with government-subsidized affordable housing programs. In fact, it is neither of those. Workforce housing is housing for

people who work. The Urban Land Institute has focused on the issue of workforce housing in a series of metropolitan area studies.³ They define workforce housing to be housing that is affordable by families or singles whose household income is between 60% and 120% of the Area Median Income in the case of the San Francisco Bay Area and between 60% and 100% of the Area Median Income in the case of the Washington D.C. metropolitan area where the median household income is \$102,700. Thus workforce households are the mainstream of Americans, earning about average incomes but faced with housing costs that have moved away from their traditional relationship with income.

[Exhibit 2](#)⁴ summarizes Connecticut's Incentive Housing Zone (IHZ) provisions. The IHZ is relevant to workforce housing in Bristol because it is designed to encourage the development of affordable housing at higher density than the typical single family home. IHZ housing is intended to have good access (preferably on foot) to transportation, shopping and urban amenities such as schools, and places of worship, restaurants and grocery stores.

The IHZ statute requires that 20% of the housing units be affordable for households earning no more than 80% area median income (AMI). These affordable units are deed-restricted to be used for lower income (<80% AMI) for 30 years. Precise determination of AMI is up to Connecticut's Office of Policy and Management. The study team estimates this amount at \$69,225⁵ in 2009, which implies that 20% of the housing units would need to be at prices or rents affordable to a household making no more than \$55,380. If this household is spending no more than 30% of income, then rents are limited to a maximum of \$1,385/ month. Many households qualifying will earn less and therefore pay lower rent.

Housing Supply in Bristol

Bristol's housing stock includes a range of age, condition and size that will be shown to correlate to its economy and is comparable to that of surrounding towns. Smaller (700-1500 sq. ft.), well maintained one and two story single family residences with good access to

³ One example of these studies is "Priced Out: Persistence of the Workforce Housing Gap in the San Francisco Bay Area"; Urban Land Institute, 2009.

⁴ If you are reading this off-line, email recenter@business.uconn.edu for links to all exhibits.

⁵ We estimate this number from the Census/FFIEC site which says that HUD estimated median family income in the Hartford MSA in 2009 is \$85,100, and that it has grown by 32.6% since the 2000 estimate. Census website gives the 2000 estimate for median household income as \$52,188; multiply by 32.6% to get \$69,225. We judge that household income is a more general concept than family income, and more relevant to the new employees hired in Bristol (see discussion below). Our estimate is supported by a website stating that the US Census Bureau, American Factfinder, reports that the Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford metropolitan area had a median household income of \$67,171 in 2008. <http://www.city-data.com/forum/city-vs-city/770838-metro-areas-median-household-income-2008-a.html#ixzz0slnCKBDS>

schools, places of worshippingarks and local shopping are common. Multifamily units are similar in variety, ranging from two, three and four family units to apartments and condominiums.^{6 7}



Figure 1:

Example of a typical Bristol Single Family home: 700-1500 sf. Well maintained lot and structure. Typically no garage or 1 car garage.

⁶ [See Exhibit 3 for tract by tract details](#). If you are reading this off-line, email recenter@business.uconn.edu for links to all exhibits.

⁷ [See Exhibit 4 for housing stock details](#)



Figure 2:
Example of a typical Bristol multifamily neighborhood. Well maintained lot and structure.

[Table 1](#)⁸ shows that Bristol housing is older (nearly 31% of units built before 1950), more affordable (median price of \$213,000) and more likely to be subsidized (at 13% of units) than the housing in the largest surrounding towns. Moreover, Bristol housing is more likely to be in multifamily units (at 43% of units) and less likely to be owner occupied (at 59%) than surrounding towns.

⁸ If you are reading this off-line, email recenter@business.uconn.edu for links to all exhibits.

Table 1

	Bristol	Southington	Plainville	Farmington	Hartford CY
Existing Units	26,918	16,704	7,898	10,589	367,988
% Single Unit	57.50%	77.70%	64.90%	73.60%	61.30%
Median Price	\$212,750	\$278,000	\$205,000	\$377,500	245,000
Built Pre 1950 share	30.90%	18.40%	29.30%	14.90%	30.20%
Owner Occupied Dwellings	15,420	12,259	5,137	7,150	215,253
As % Total Dwellings	59%	79%	67%	73%	61%
Subsidized Housing	3,532	992	594	738	48,156
As % Total Dwellings	13%	6%	8%	7%	13%

Source: CERC compilation of Census 2008 data

To further explore the affordability issue, we widened our comparison to include seven towns. In 2009 median single family sales were priced at:

- \$183,000 in Plymouth
- \$188,250 in Bristol
- \$192,000 in Plainville
- \$209,000 in Wolcott
- \$266,000 in Southington
- \$285,000 in West Hartford, and
- \$310,000 in Farmington

Bristol also has relatively affordable condominiums. The median sale price of condominiums in 2009 was:

- \$131,000 in Bristol
- \$133,700 in Plymouth
- \$159,500 in Plainville
- \$165,500 in Wolcott
- \$199,900 in Southington
- \$205,000 in Farmington, and
- \$230,000 in West Hartford

[Figure 3](#) shows that Bristol's single family market has been consistently in line with costs in Plainville and Plymouth and more affordable than Wolcott, Southington, Farmington and West Hartford. During the decade starting in 2000, Bristol single family houses prices were

less volatile than surrounding towns: prices went up by a smaller percentage but did not decline by as much. This suggests stable, well maintained neighborhoods – a conclusion confirmed by our analysis of the “urban fabric,” below.

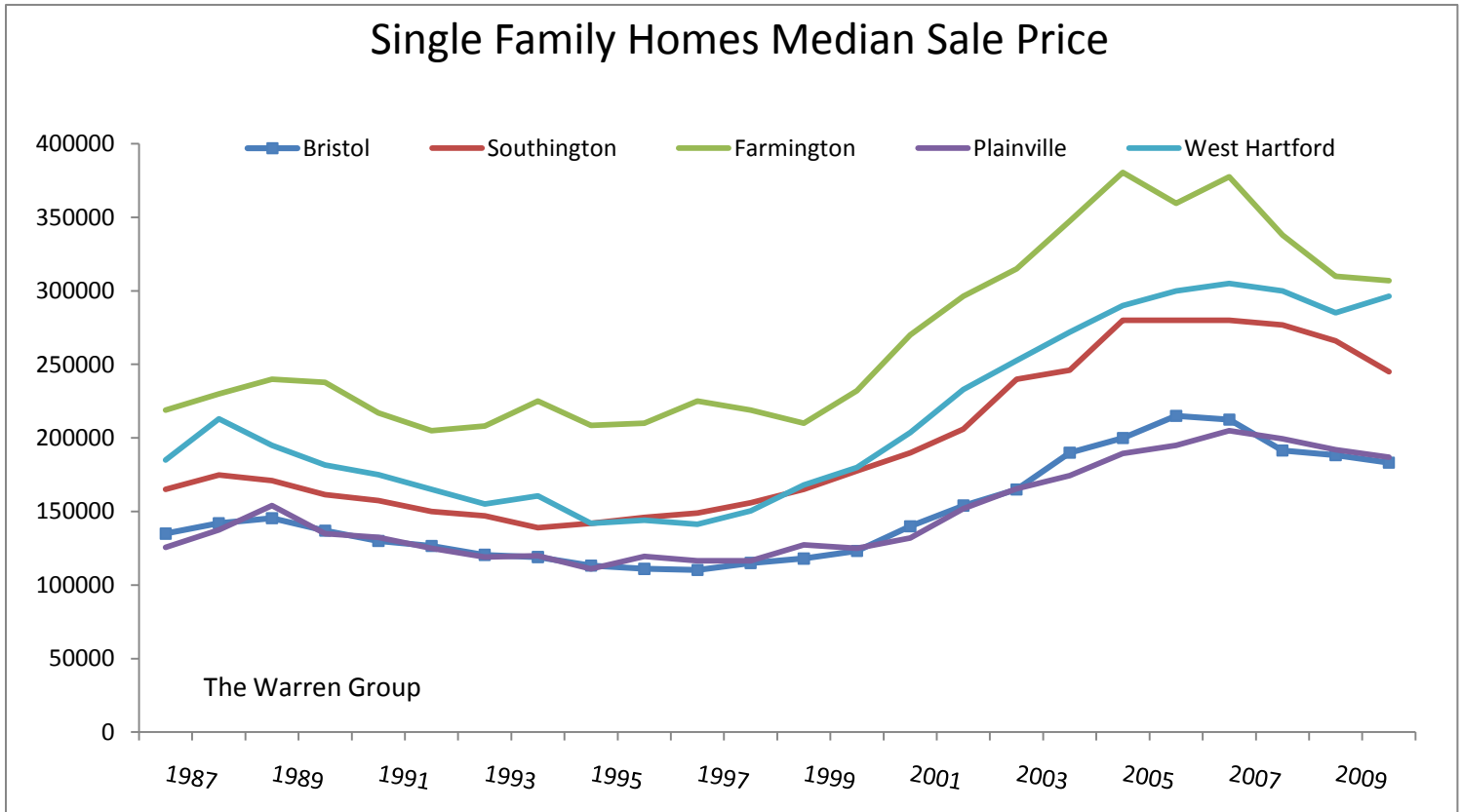


Figure 3.

[Figure 4](#) displays the condominium median sales price history for the same communities. The conclusions derived from the single family market are supported by the condominium market: prices in Bristol are more affordable and less volatile than prices in most surrounding towns. The active condominium market provides one indication that affordable high density housing has an established place in Bristol's urban fabric.

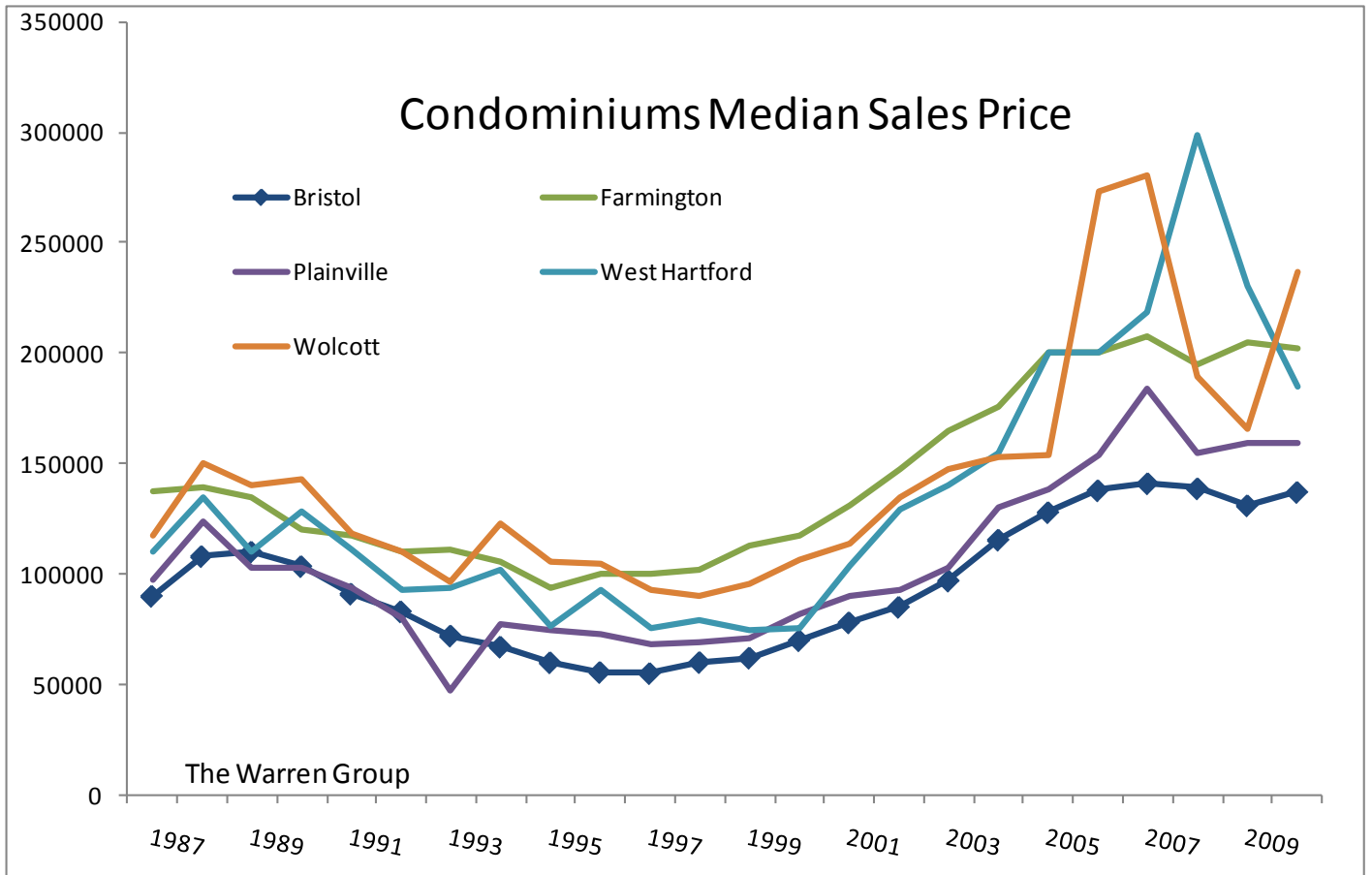
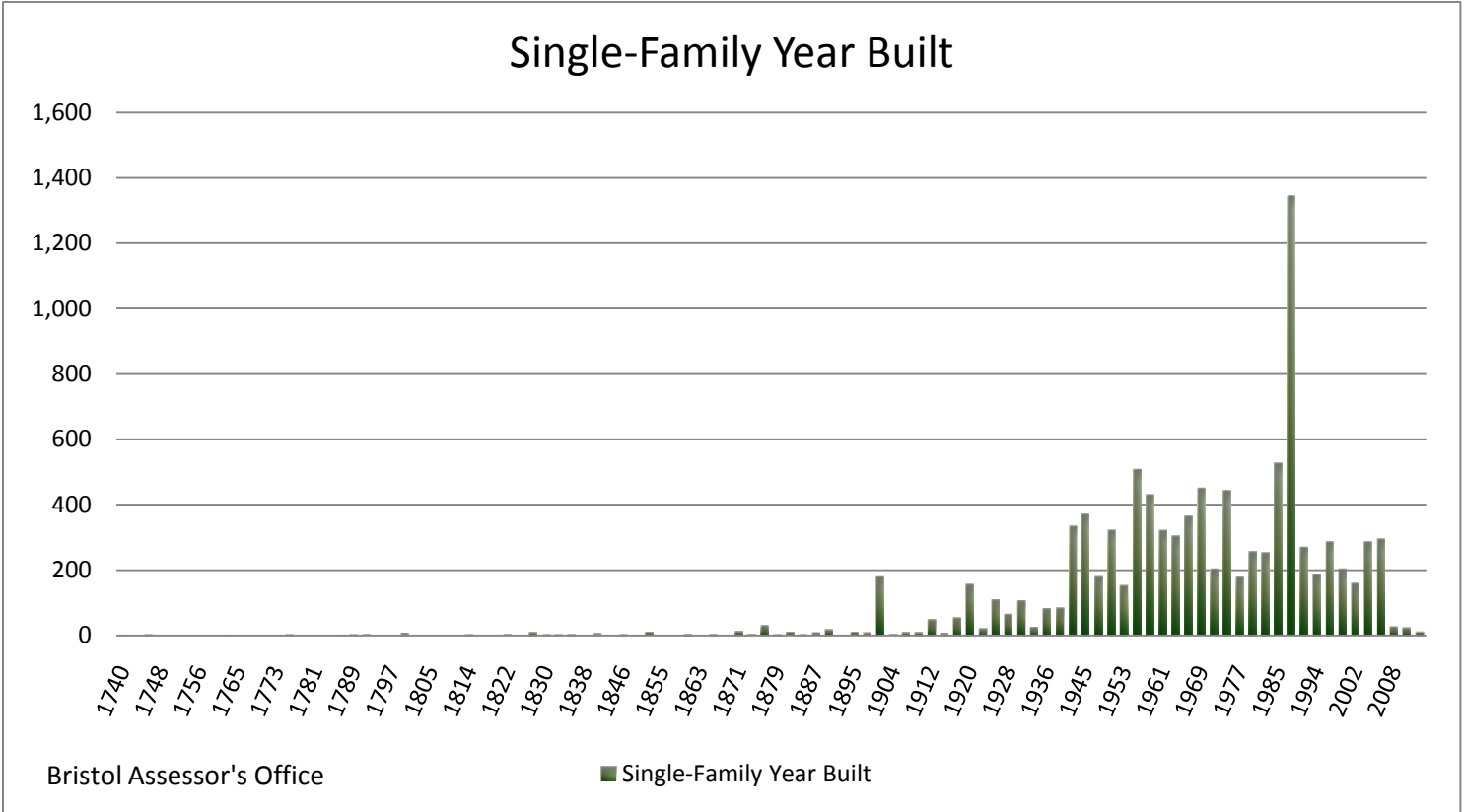


Figure 4

Bristol has relatively affordable rental housing as well. In April and May 2010 we compared rental listing on Craigslist in Bristol and surrounding communities as a representative sample of what a potential renter might discover. There were 31 rental listings ranging from \$400 to \$1,600 per month with an average asking rent of \$878 per month. A similar sample in Farmington averaged \$1,300 per month and ranged from \$925 to \$2,100. Southington rentals ranged from \$750 to \$1,650 and averaged \$1,066. West Hartford, Plymouth, Plainville and Wolcott offered comparable rents as well, ranging from \$750 to \$2,500 and averaging slightly over \$1,000 per month.



While the cost of renting in Bristol is not a deterrent to workforce housing, we will address issues about its age and condition.

Figure 5

We conclude that Bristol has relatively affordable and stable single family, condominium and multifamily neighborhoods. Our field work confirms clean, well maintained neighborhoods with good access to schools, places of worship, parks and local shopping. We observed normal levels of activity on the streets and in yards. Despite the depressed economy, we did not see extensive signs of foreclosure or housing abandonment, a conclusion confirmed by discussions with real estate agents, Chamber of Commerce and town officials. Therefore, we explore the age of the housing stock in order to determine if new, high-density, affordable IHZ housing is needed.

Figure 6

Homes

Housing Age, Size and Condition

Figures 5 and 6 reveal that Bristol's single family housing stock is young compared to its multi-family stock.⁹ The average single family residence is 42 years old, while the average multi-family unit is 85 years old. The three largest production years for single family in Bristol were 1955, 1985 and 1988. The three largest production years for multi-family in Bristol were 1904, 1925 and 1932. Figures 5 and 6 show this pattern by year built for single and multi-family units. We conclude that there is a need to renew the multifamily stock with new IHZ housing.

⁹ Figures 5 and 6 are derived from the study team's analysis of the Bristol Assessor's database.

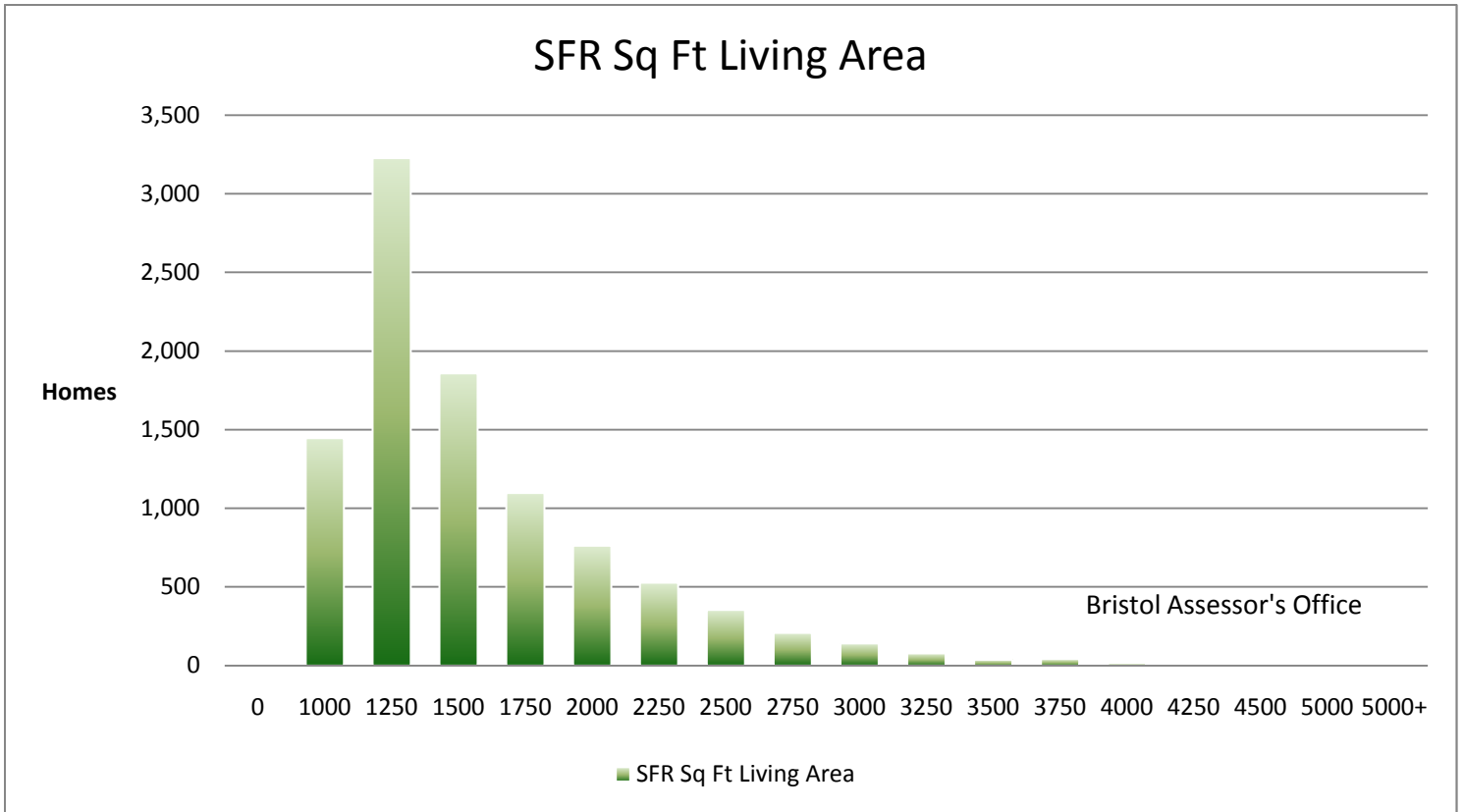


Figure 7

Our field work indicates that Bristol’s single family stock contains a wide range of size and quality. Homes in Bristol tend to be modest as indicated by Figure 7.¹⁰ Approximately half of the single family stock is measured as 1,500 square feet or less in the Assessor’s database, while only 2% are measured as having more than 3,000 square feet of living area. Figure 7 shows how the city’s houses are skewed to smaller footprints.

¹⁰ A typical house in Connecticut is over 1,900 square feet. Source: statistics compiled by the Center for Real Estate, University of Connecticut.

Demographics and Socioeconomics

Bristol’s population skews slightly younger than Hartford County and the surrounding towns: median age is 40 in both Bristol and in Hartford County. Similarly, Bristol has a relatively high proportion of the population in the 20 to 29 and 30 to 39 age cohorts. This a prime age range for new employees at ESPN¹¹ and these data may reflect the presence of locally housed employees.

Bristol residents in the labor force have a lower rate of educational attainment (see percent of population with more than high school education) than the balance of Hartford County and than most surrounding towns. This may be a reflection of the larger youth cohort but is more likely the result of more higher education in more affluent communities in the county. Median income and poverty rates indicate less affluence in Bristol.

	Bristol	Southington	Plainville	Farmington	Hartford CY
<i>Population</i>	60,048	42,031	17,436	25,238	876,378
<i>% age 20-29</i>	13.1%	10.0%	12.6%	9.1%	12.5%
<i>% age 30-39</i>	13.2%	12.5%	12.6%	12.0%	12.2%
<i>Pop./Sq. Mi.</i>	2,265	1,168	1,790	900	1,192
<i>Median Age</i>	40	42	42	43	40
<i>Households</i>	24,419	15,656	7,305	9,976	336,745
<i>Med HH Inc.</i>	\$59,391	76,613	\$59,961	\$85,119	\$64,189
<i>Poverty Rate</i>	6.6%	3.3%	5.1%	4.5%	9.3%
<i>Education %> High School</i>	47%	58%	52%	72%	59%

¹¹ ESPN, a major employer in Bristol, is discussed in more detail below.

Table 2

Major Employers define where the young professional cohort is located

The most striking feature of Bristol's employment base is the presence of ESPN headquarters located in the southeast quadrant of Bristol. ESPN employs approximately 5,000 people world-wide of whom 3,400 are located in the Bristol complex and nearby buildings. Given the unique nature of their physical plant and the massive investment they have made in their campus it is likely that ESPN will remain a stable presence in the local labor market. The recent addition of a large new building is evidence of that likelihood.¹² ESPN's 2010 announcement that its magazine staff would relocate from New York to Bristol further supports that impression.

Typically, ESPN hires approximately 100 to 150 net new employees per year. In addition to its employees, ESPN contracts with numerous independent content and service providers. Interviews with ESPN management reveal that approximately 25% of ESPN's local employees live in Bristol.¹³ Another 6% live in Southington and the balance are spread throughout Hartford and New Haven counties and beyond. Therefore, there is ample scope for attracting a greater percentage of ESPN employees to Bristol.

ESPN management indicated that many of their newer employees have begun to look at West Hartford as an ideal location due to the presence of shops, restaurants and bars and the attractive housing stock which includes the "new urban" development at Blue Back Square. In addition to their staff, ESPN contracts with a number of independent contractors involved in creating content for broadcast. Several of the independent contractors have indicated a need for live/work space in the area, another emerging feature of recent urban development.

Another major employer is Bristol Hospital with 1,655 employees. Bristol Hospital management reports that 43% of the local employees live in Bristol. Approximately 6% live in the village of Terryville in Plymouth, 4% reside in Burlington and 3% each in Southington, Wolcott and Plainville.¹⁴ These towns together with Bristol account for 63% of

¹² This is the 17th building (named "Building #13") at ESPN's Bristol campus; more construction is planned.. "The building will house the network's graphics department, its transmission center and a 3-D research-and-development unit. ESPN plans to add 100 employees to its Connecticut payroll by 2011, bringing its statewide total above 3,700. Worldwide, it employs about 6,000." Source: Eric Gershon, The Hartford Courant, April 10, 2010.

¹³ Interview with Mike Soltys, ESPN vice president on Friday, April 2, 2010.

¹⁴ Source: data provided by the department of human resources at Bristol Hospital.

hospital employees so it appears that hospital employees prefer to live relatively close to their work. The balance of hospital staff live in 96 towns in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

According to Dun and Bradstreet, four other employers have in excess of 250 employees on-site of which two are public agencies.

In summary, the growing segment of demand for housing in Bristol is defined by the young professionals being hired by ESPN and the hospital. Next, we explore the type of housing they want.

What types of housing do young professionals want?

Research shows that young professionals want attractive, modern housing in areas with recreational and urban amenities. They want a vibrant, healthy community with activities after work hours. And, they want all this at affordable prices!¹⁵

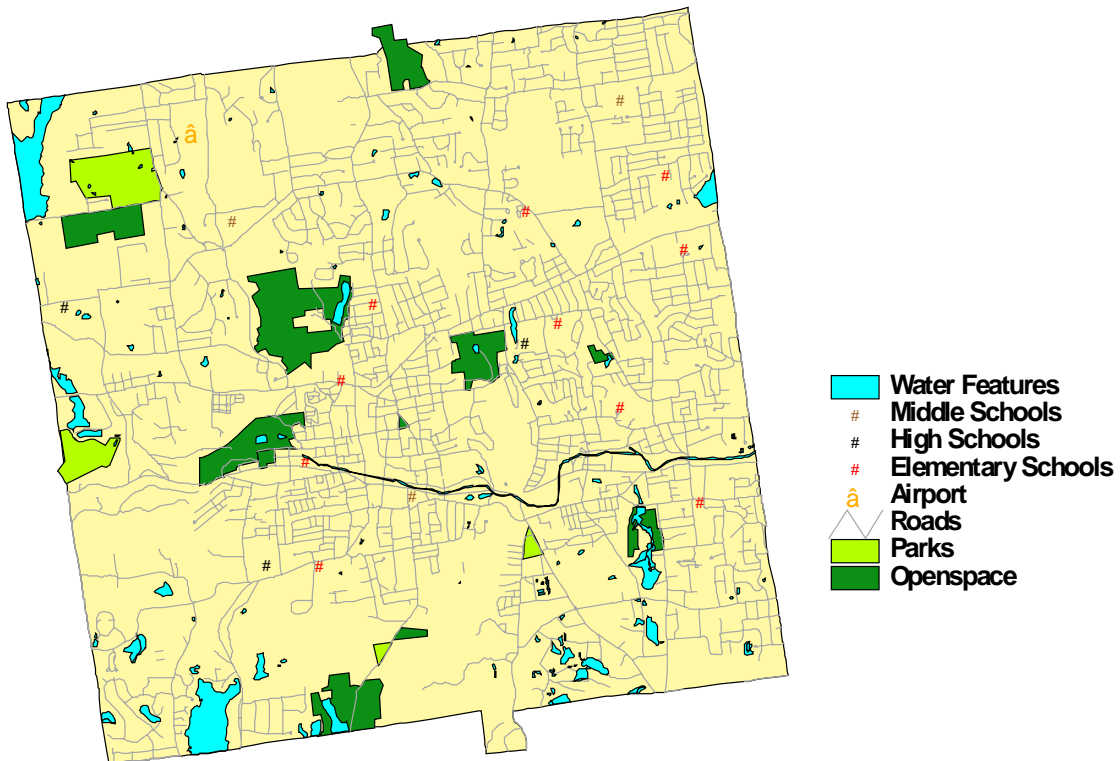
ESPN's human resources department reports that a significant percentage of new employees are moving to areas close to Blue Back Square in West Hartford. Interviews conducted by the Study Team suggested that these "wants" explain the success of Blue Back. But, Blue Back is relatively expensive: to be competitive, a housing development in Bristol will need to be much more affordable than Blue Back.

Given the findings with respect to supply and demand for housing in Bristol, the study team evaluated the possible role of an Incentive Housing Zone (IHZ) in meeting the needs of the young professional demographic. Would Bristol's urban fabric be receptive to and enhanced by IHZ housing?

¹⁵ [See Exhibit 5 for details](#). If you are reading this off-line, email recenter@business.uconn.edu for links to all exhibits.

Bristol's urban fabric

Map 2 shows the parks, open space and schools (i.e., public assets) available in Bristol.



Map 2.

The study team estimates that median household income is \$69,225 in the Hartford metropolitan area in 2009.¹⁶ The team determined that the introduction of workforce housing would not alter the urban fabric of most neighborhoods. In particular, eleven of Bristol’s 12 census tracts have incomes within the workforce housing definition used by the Urban Land Institute in the San Francisco Bay Area – between 60% and 120% of the MSA median income¹⁷. Using the narrower range of 60% to 100% of AMI that the ULI applied in the Washington, D.C. area, Bristol has 8 of 11 tracts that fit the definition. Tract 4061, covering the downtown core and the West End is estimated to have an income level of 50%

¹⁶ For more information, go to www.census.gov and click on American Factfinder.

¹⁷ In “Priced Out: Persistence of the Workforce Housing Gap in the San Francisco Bay Area”; Urban Land Institute; 2009

of the Area Median Income as seen in Figure 8, Bristol Family Income Estimate by Census Tract.¹⁸

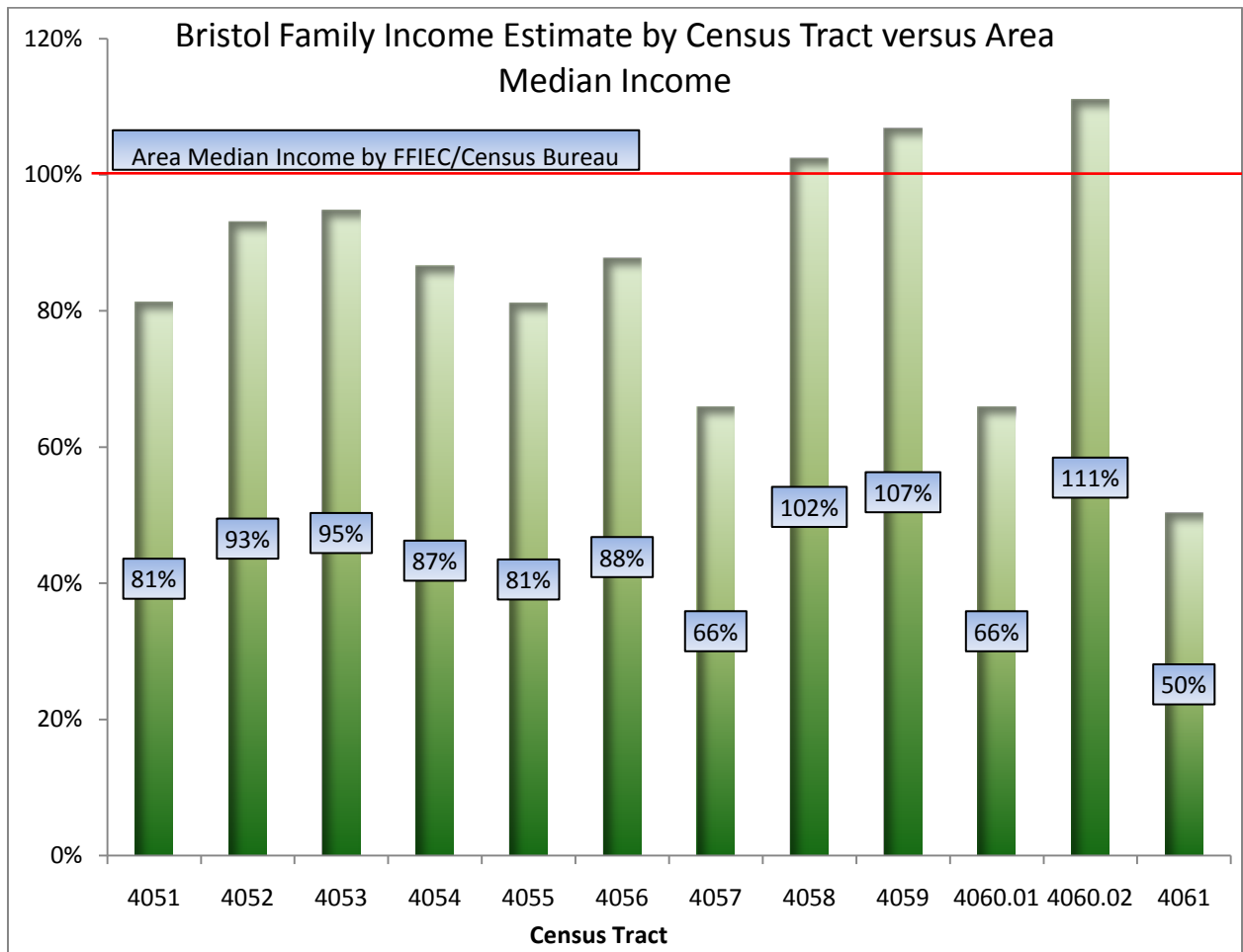


Figure 8.

The study team drove and walked each of the twelve neighborhoods (defined by census tract boundaries)¹⁹ to study the feeling of each neighborhood and their individual contribution to Bristol’s overall urban fabric. Within each census tract, neighborhoods were assessed on types of housing, age and condition of housing and yards, types of businesses observed,

¹⁸ We assume that family income percentages, presented in Figure 6, will be about the same as household income percentages.

¹⁹ See [Exhibit 3](#). Notes include housing stock, positive amenities, negative amenities, and generalizations about the “feeling” that a visitor may experience while traversing neighborhoods. The study team concluded that tract boundaries are well-drawn in Bristol: i.e., they do a good job of defining neighborhood boundaries.

street conditions observed, and positive and negative amenities observed. Positive amenities include community stabilizers such as schools, public buildings or parks, and places of worship. Negative amenities include signs of criminal activity. See [Exhibit 3](#)²⁰ for details on our findings.

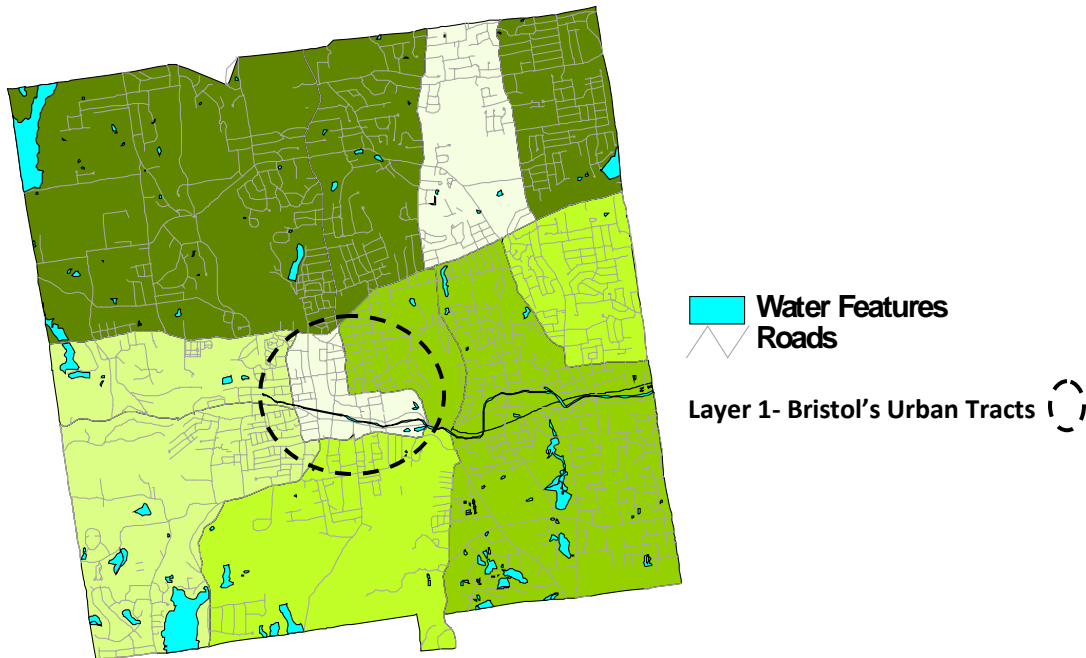
Generally, Bristol's urban fabric positively correlates to the per capita income of each tract that is shown below by [Map 3](#). Throughout the town are areas of well maintained single and multifamily neighborhoods. Most regions feature quiet streets and available parks and green space. These areas evoke the strongest feeling of community that is representative of most parts of Bristol.

The centermost tracts of the city provide some exceptions to the well maintained neighborhoods mentioned above: see Layer 1 on Map 3.²¹ In this area, poorly maintained multifamily units minimize the feeling of community and safety. Nighttime venues that provide entertainment are extremely limited. On the other hand, close proximity of groceries, offices and parks gives residents the freedom to walk to nearby destinations. SuperNatural, a health food store that provides deli sandwiches, fine chocolates, vitamins and beauty aids – is an example of the type of activity that attracts young professionals. This is the type of area that might be enhanced with IHZ housing.

Aside from the Federal Green, affluent neighborhoods are an exception to the norm and are notably isolated from the rest of Bristol. Average neighborhoods are working class with modest homes, and although sidewalks provide limited inter-neighborhood connectivity, they are not always available or properly lit at night. Pockets of unappealing, depressed commercial and residential lots are certainly visible, but they do not dominate Bristol's urban fabric. The center of town provides some urban amenities. However there is a notable lack of good transportation and nighttime entertainment that appeals to the younger professional workers.

²⁰ If you are reading this off-line, email recenter@business.uconn.edu for links to all exhibits.

²¹ Tracts 4057 and 4061 are the most central. And they are the lowest income neighborhoods as indicated by Figure 8. [See Exhibit 3](#)



Map 3.
Per Capita Income by Census Tract. Darker colors denote larger per capital income.

We conclude that any IHZ housing development needs sufficient scale to establish a vibrant urban community. We judge this to be in the range of 200 to 750 housing units.²² Moreover, the IHZ development should include (or be proximate to) a mix of uses that support a range of daily activities and needs in addition to affordable housing. Accessibility remains a problem: the nearest railroad station with attractive service (in Waterbury) is a 30-40 minute drive. Bus service to Hartford can take up to 90 minutes after allowing for transfers. Other mass transit is unavailable. The recent extension of Route 72 will help somewhat. Bristol is a key part of current efforts to renew commuter rail service to the region and will benefit from any success in that effort. However, in the years before substantial improvements to mass transit in Bristol, it will be difficult for new high-density housing to compete with the

²² Our field work suggested several redevelopment sites that would provide sufficient acreage to develop the scale required for a vibrant urban community. The City recently entered into an agreement with a developer, Renaissance Downtowns, for a large project in 17 acres in the downtown: near the middle of Layer 1 on Map 3. Source: "Downtown Developer: City is 'No. 1' on Radar," The Hartford Courant, September 14, 2010.

better transportation infrastructure available to housing in and near Blue Back Square and other competing locations.

Additional research would be desirable to plan for improved transportation and schools within the City. We propose a large development to provide housing, restaurants, entertainment and night life attractive to young professionals. But, once a vibrant urban community is established, it would be highly desirable to retain that demographic segment as it progresses through its life cycle. Good transportation and schools would contribute to the long term success of our proposal. However, full development of these ideas is beyond the scope of our assignment.

Conclusions

- Bristol's single family housing stock is older, somewhat more affordable and more likely to be subsidized than housing in Hartford County and in surrounding towns.
- Bristol's single family house prices have been less volatile than the market in surrounding towns.
- Bristol's multi-family market is dominated by very old construction. The old construction does not appear to meet the needs of the market.
- The local labor force is slightly younger than the balance of Hartford County and most surrounding towns, with higher percentages of people in the 30 to 39 and 40 to 49 age cohorts. Bristol's age demographic is an ingredient for attracting young individuals who are more likely to identify with a populace of similar age.
- The local labor force is less well-educated than the balance of Hartford County with only 13% of those 25 or older having completed college compared to 19% in Hartford County. Those who have earned graduate degrees comprise 9% compared to 15% in the county.
- The two major private sector employers in Bristol (ESPN and Bristol Hospital) are likely to seek an educated labor force, thus making it likely that they will hire people from other towns or states. It is essential that any IHZ development be coupled with amenities that satisfy the needs and wants of well educated young professionals.
- Newly arriving employees - especially renters - are unlikely to find an available housing stock that meets their tastes and preferences and thus will tend to live in other towns such as Southington, West Hartford, and Farmington. The development of Blue Back Square in West Hartford has made it an attractive location for younger professional people.
- The apparent success of SuperNatural and other shops on Bristol's North Main St indicates that there may be unmet demand for sophisticated food and other products in Bristol. Bristol may be relatively flexible in terms of its freedom to explore a variety of amenities available for a new housing development that strengthens its urban fabric.
- A new urban development with relatively high-density IHZ housing will likely enhance the local environment when placed appropriately in neighborhoods with existing land uses that support the targeted demographic segment. A new urban

development may increase the overall feeling of safety and security in adjacent neighborhoods.

- Development of workforce housing in higher densities accompanied by urban activities may further strengthen the City's ties to ESPN and other employers of young professional and trades-people and could result in a higher percentage of this demographic living, shopping and staying in Bristol.
- Poor transportation linkages to Hartford's downtown pose a major problem with Bristol's urban fabric, a problem partially ameliorated by the Rte 72 extension. A strong urban fabric promotes easy access between the homes and workplaces. Young professionals want to avoid traffic and automobiles by using more efficient forms of public transportation both for work and recreation.

Overall summary: Bristol could enhance its urban fabric with an affordable urban development containing amenities and design elements of the type found in Blue Back Square. This would add vitality to Bristol by attracting the young professional workers and trades-people hired by ESPN, the Bristol Hospital and other employers.