

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



PARKS, RECREATION, YOUTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Administration

Dr. Joshua Medeiros, Ed.D., CPRE - Superintendent
Sarah Larson, MS, CPRP - Deputy Superintendent
Amaris Estrada - Assistant to the Superintendent
Erica Benoit - Community Engagement Coordinator

Recreation

Amry Shelby, MS, CPRP - Recreation Supervisor
Madison Fostervold, CPRP - Recreation Program Assistant

Aquatics

Raelynn Andrews, LMSW, CPO, LGI, WSIT - Aquatics Supervisor
Daniel Stowe, LGI, WSI, CPO, COTA - Aquatics Coordinator
Atem Caron, CPO - Facilities Maintenance Technician

Youth and Community Services

Stephen Bynum - Youth and Community Services Supervisor
Raven Cody, LMSW - Youth and Family Coordinator
Ashante Malone, LMSW - Youth and Family Coordinator
Aubrey Minkler - Community Services Coordinator
Deedra Willingham, MPS - Drug Free Communities Project Coordinator

Arts and Culture

Arianna Therriault - Arts and Culture Supervisor

Parks, Grounds, & Facilities Maintenance

Robert Lincoln - Parks, Grounds and Facilities Supervisor
Douglas Trillo - Athletics and Ballfield Supervisor
Todd Anderson, CPO - Group Leader
Matthew Newton - Group Leader
Michael Dinice - Mechanic
Ronald Dionne, CPO - Skilled Utility Craftsman
Craig Vibert, CPO - Skilled Utility Craftsman
Carlos Rivera - Heavy Truck Driver
Steven Schriver - Landscape Gardener
Brian Beaudoin - Park Maintainer
Anthony Connors - Park Maintainer
Matthew D'Amato - Park Maintainer
Dean Dionne - Park Maintainer
Kevin Dragon - Park Maintainer
Candido Galindo - Park Maintainer
Jaden Laprise - Park Maintainer
Cody Lombardi - Park Maintainer
George Richter - Park Maintainer
Jonathan Therriault - Park Maintainer



Board of Park Commissioners

Mayor Jeffrey Caggiano - Chair
Robert Fiorito - Vice Chair
Jacqueline Olsen - City Council Liaison
Marie O'Brien - Board of Finance Liaison
Sandra Bogdanski
Cynthia Donovan
Leonard Lamothe
Robert Lawson

Youth Commissioners

Matthew Gotowala - Chair
Deborah Ahl - Vice Chair
Erick Rosengren - City Council Liaison
Ryan Broderick
Rich Kilby
Jon Lukasiewicz
Donna Osuch
Miguel Salguero
Renee Singleton
Luke Viens
Lance Washington

Arts & Culture Commissioners

Walter Lewandoski - Chair
Cheryl Thibeault - City Council Liaison
Andrea Adams
Julie Carena Crist
Juliet Norton
Maria Salice
Nigel Wynter
E. Brad Yancy

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



Investing in our future through strategic action

Over the past year the Bristol Parks, Recreation, Youth & Community Services (BPRYCS) Department delivered on our promise of providing high-quality services and facilities to enhance the community's quality of life. We offered over 175 recreational programs, taught over 1,450 kids to swim, featured 17 shows in Downtown Live at the Rockwell Theater, and completed major renovation projects at Kern Park and Seymour Park.

Most importantly, we spent the year planting seeds for the future. First, our team dedicated over 10 months to developing our 2025-2027 Strategic Plan that will guide our department over the next 3 years, advancing the community's priorities established in the 2020 Master Plan. This includes a focus on creating safe, clean and attractive parks and facilities, cultivating programs and public spaces that are fully accessible to all and representative of the community we serve, improving public health and wellness opportunities aligned with the 7-dimensions of well-being and inspiring advocacy to ensure the future of our city is sustainable and resilient. A preview of the strategic plan is available on page three and the full plan is available on our website.

After years of planning and development, we officially broke ground on Page Park Revitalization that will include construction of 4 new lighted pickleball courts, 2 basketball courts, nearly 200 additional parking spaces, an enhanced trail system, restoration of the fishing pond, a community great lawn, and a new splash park and playground. You can track the projects progress through the Park Project Portal located on our website.

Part of our planning work includes seeking out alternative funding sources to help support projects and initiatives that advance our community goals. In 2024, we wrote an application for a competitive federal grant and we are pleased to announce that the city will be receiving a \$1.9 million-dollar matching grant from the National Park Service Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program to support the revitalization of Rockwell Park. This will include renovating the Rockwell splash park, playground, pool bathhouse, disc golf course, basketball courts and ADA upgrades to the trail system and at Fraser Little League Field.

We are proud of our accomplishments in 2024, as highlighted in this Annual Report, and are excited to see how the seeds we planted this year will blossom and grow in the years to come!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joshua Medeiros".

Dr. Joshua T. Medeiros, Ed.D., CPRE, Superintendent
City of Bristol, Department of Parks, Recreation, Youth and Community Services



Department Mission

It is the mission of the Bristol Parks, Recreation, Youth and Community Services Department (BPRYCS) to deliver high-quality services and facilities that enhance the community's quality of life, meet the diverse needs of all citizens, and build a sustainable future.

Department Vision

The Bristol Parks, Recreation, Youth and Community Services Department is an essential department impacting the lives of all Bristol residents by shaping positive public perceptions, fostering cultural unity, creating responsible and healthy citizens, and inspiring advocacy.

AT- A- GLANCE: 2025 - 2027 STRATEGIC PLAN

VISION

A future where we are an essential department impacting the lives of all Bristol residents by shaping positive public perceptions, fostering cultural unity, creating responsible and healthy citizens, and inspiring advocacy

GOALS

SHAPING POSITIVE PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS

Advance best practices, resources, training and talent to drive organizational excellence, resulting in safe and attractive facilities, programs and services that build a better Bristol

FOSTERING CULTURAL UNITY

Foster inclusive and welcoming spaces that celebrate the diversity of the community to ensure everyone has equitable access to the benefits of our services

CREATING RESPONSIBLE & HEALTHY CITIZENS

Drive increased and equitable investment in parks as critical community infrastructure resulting in benefits aligned with the 7-Dimensions of Well-Being

INSPIRING ADVOCACY

Educate, develop and engage residents in the community building process to increase impact and capacity for mission delivery

OBJECTIVES

1.1. Cultivate a workplace that is second to none in employee performance and satisfaction for maximum community impact

1.2. Steward clean, safe, and attractive parks, facilities and programs that encourage public visitation & play

1.3. Develops, adopts, and implements best practices for operational efficiency and financial stewardship in alignment with industry and national standards to ensure organizational excellence

2.1. Programs, services and staff are diverse and reflective of the Bristol community

2.2. Create opportunities that are inclusive, accessible and welcoming to all members of the community through strategic investment and decision-making

2.3. Develop and employs policies, practices, and procedures that amplify and engage diverse voices within the community bringing new perspectives to shape service delivery

3.1. Identifies, implements, and prioritizes programs and initiatives that directly result in increased access to benefits from the 7 dimensions of well-being

3.2. Leader in projects, educational initiatives and policies that build an environmentally resilient community and empowers the next generation of park stewards as healthy green space champions

3.3. Essential health provider that influences community wellness benefits, is fully realized and reflected in both investment and resource allocation

4.1. Engagement, brand recognition, and communication efforts result in community members that are engaged, informed and part of the process of shaping their parks, programs & services

4.2. Foster a deep pool of committed, qualified, and engaged volunteers that support department services and creates a leadership pipeline for stewards of the future

4.3. Forge strong community partnerships that support mission delivery through funding or other resources that help reduce barriers



ACTIVITIES

Defined, tangible, and measurable activities are the work products that will allow BPRYCS to meet objectives, accomplish goals, and realize the overall vision.

CORE SERVICE PROGRAM AREAS



Arts & Culture

Comprehensive, year-round programs, events, and projects to bring creativity and entertainment to the Bristol community. A key initiative of BPRYCS is to ensure all voices of the Bristol community are heard and amplified.



Aquatics

Aquatic programs include introductory, intermediate, and advanced swim lessons that promote water safety, exercise, and therapeutic classes to help residents meet their health goals.



BEST

The BEST program, funded through a federal grant, works to unify the community and promote wellness through increasing education, strategies, and influencing policy to prevent substance misuse by youth and those who impact their development.



Case Management

Case management aims to reduce the causes of poverty, increase opportunity and economic security of individuals and families, and revitalize communities by assessing the basic needs of Bristol residents and providing equitable opportunities to enhance their lives.



Parent and Child Program

The Parent and Child program provides resources and services that assist parents in raising healthy and happy children. Programs range from learning about pregnancy and being a parent, to developing children's literacy skills, and healthy lifestyles.



Park Maintenance

Bristol is home to over 730 Acres of active and passive recreational areas. Daily park maintenance includes all necessary work to keep areas safe, clean, welcoming and operating efficiently to serve the needs of Bristol community members.



Positive Youth Development

Youth development programs enhance the network and support between family, school, peer, and community environments by creating essential opportunities for positive social and emotional development for youth.



Recreation

Recreation programs are designed to have a wide range of positive impacts on physical, behavioral, emotional, and psychological health. In addition, field, facility, and park space rentals provide community members and local organizations direct access for everyone to recreate.

CORE VALUES

Commitment to Service

Utilize a responsive, customer-centric, resident-driven professional approach to all areas of service delivery which includes transparency, strong communication and public outreach.

Commitment to Partnership

Develop strong internal and external partners and sponsors to ensure the changing recreation, leisure, and community service needs of a diverse community are being met.

Commitment to Diversity, Inclusion and Social Equity

Ensure every resident feels welcome and has access to high-quality parks and services; regardless of age, ability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and socio-economic status.

Commitment to Stewardship and Conservation

Manage city parks and open space to preserve natural resources and park assets for future generations.

Commitment to Fiscal Stewardship

Engage in strong financial leadership across every level of the organization to ensure all areas of service are administered in a fiscally responsible way.

Commitment to Innovation

Commit to being at the forefront of solution-based problem solving and creativity to address current and future challenges facing the City of Bristol.



2024 IMPACT REPORT



8,378
Total Program Registrants



1,198 New
Program Registrants



1,043 Activities Offered

67% of program participants are age 10 and under

13,207 Hours
of Pavilion and Field Rentals

200+ Community Partners
and community connections



17 Towns
Represented at Summer Camp

2,179 Miles
traveled by summer camp participants for field trips



18,916
Email Subscribers

5,743 People
Visited the Parks Project Portal



31% of Visitors
Engaged with the Parks Project Portal (Polling, Questions, Feedback)



Over 130
Targeted Program Surveys Issued

38 Commission Meetings



Downtown Live hosted **17 Unique Shows** with over 3,600 tickets sold for a **Revenue of \$121,000**



Downtown Live patrons visited from **22 States** and traveled as far as 2,525 Miles

Downtown Live has **27 Active Volunteers**



Over 1,000
Pool Memberships

28,529 Visits
to Bristol's Pools
16,717 visits to the Dennis Malone Aquatics Center (DMAC)
8,060 visits to Page Pool
3,752 visits to Rockwell Pool



Provided youth development programs and support in **10 Bristol Schools**



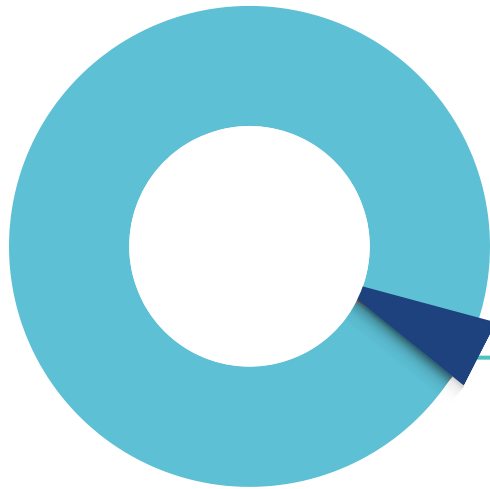
The Caring Closet served **176 Individuals** from 74 different families

\$37,614 in Scholarships
Gifted to income eligible Bristol families to assist with Summer youth programming



Over 8,450
FREE diapers provided to Income Eligible families

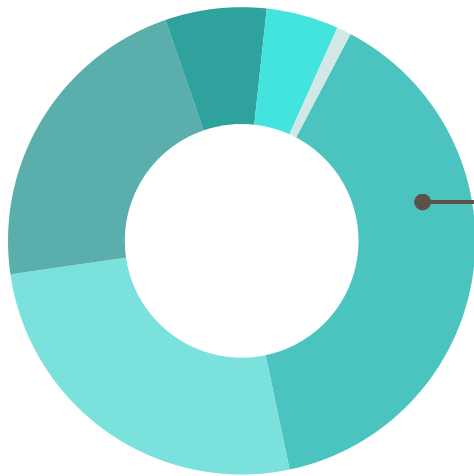
12 Youth Groups
centered around leadership, communication, conflict resolution, and social skills



CITY OPERATING BUDGET \$ 227,679,693

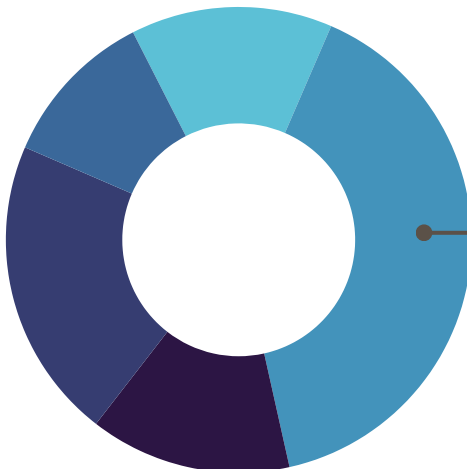
98% ALL OTHER DEPARTMENTS
\$ 222,352,432

2% PARKS, RECREATION, YOUTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES
\$ 5,327,261



FY24 Revenue Funding Sources \$ 1,311,079

39% Park Trusts	\$ 446,134
26% Recreation User Fees	\$ 297,183
22% Aquatics User Fees	\$ 246,513
07% Youth Bureau Grants	\$ 73,219
05% Parks and Facility Rentals	\$ 57,150
01% Welfare, Evictions, & Auctions	\$ 10,880



FY24 Expenditures by Division \$ 4,196,182

40% Parks	\$ 1,696,752
21% Aquatics	\$ 884,697
14% Administration	\$ 571,273
14% Recreation	\$ 597,521
11% Youth & Community Services	\$ 445,939

PARK PROJECTS

Bristol Parks, Recreation, Youth and Community Services parks and facilities are award-winning, nationally recognized and amongst the top municipal park systems in New England.

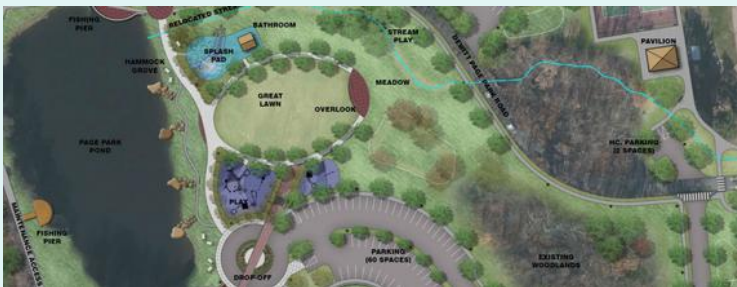


Transformational Park Revitalization at Page Park

After nearly six years of planning, a ground breaking ceremony was held in October 2024 for the long-awaited Page Park Revitalization project. The overall project is estimated at over \$18 million dollars' worth of improvements and will include the construction of 4 new lighted pickleball courts, 2 basketball courts, nearly 200 additional parking spaces, an enhanced trail system, restoration of the fishing pond, a community great lawn, and a new splash park and playground.



Phase 1 of the project began in October and is expected to be completed by January 2026. The first phase of the project will include creation of new trails, restoration of the Page Park Pond and watercourse, a formal disc golf course parking lot, and new pickleball courts with ADA pathways, parking lot, picnic pavilions, and shade structure. Full details on all phases of the revitalization are available at the Park Projects Portal at www.bristolrec.com



Kern Park Renovated

On August 21st, the grand opening ribbon cutting celebration was held at Kern Park. Kern Park was originally established in 1975, and named after Herbert Kern who served as a park commissioner between 1938 and 1971. In the 1980's the Board of Park Commissioners closed the park due to vandalism and illegal activity concerns from neighbors. Over the years a Kern Park Association was established, comprised of committed neighbors and friends of the park with the mission of helping the board preserve and protect the natural resources of the park so that Bristol residents could enjoy and experience the parks natural beauty.



In 2020, the Parks Board engaged in a master planning process that evaluated every park and engaged residents about their future recreational needs. It was clear that the desire to maintain Kern Park as a passive park was still relevant today.

The department was awarded \$300,000 of ARPA funding from the American Rescue Plan Task Force. Federal dollars utilized at a local level to provide transformative improvements post-pandemic. New improvements to the park include trail restoration, new trail system, educational signage and markers, and removal of blighted tennis courts that reclaimed valuable green space and replaced it with a beautiful pollinator garden.



PARK PROJECTS

Community members select the new playground at Seymour Park

The grand opening of Seymour Park Playground was held on June 5th. The celebration was preceded by an Upgrade your Play community engagement process which allowed the public to cast their votes for the playground design of their choice. More than 1,500 votes were cast resulting in the selection of a state-of-the-art castle and ship playscape. The playground will be enjoyed by kids for years to come!



Pine Lake Adventure Park re-opens and is available for booking!

Originally built in 1994, the Pine Lake Challenge Course temporarily closed in 2019 due to Covid-19 and remained closed to accommodate renovations and a program overhaul. In July 2024, the newly rebranded Pine Lake Adventure Park re-opened and is now available for group bookings. The course includes a new public bathroom, parking lot, grand entrance sign, picnic pavilion, and a variety of low and high ropes course elements, including a new climbing tower!



New POW-MIA Monument Installed at Veterans Memorial Boulevard

In partnership with the Bristol Veterans Council, a new POW-MIA Monument was installed on the Veterans Memorial Boulevard. The monument honors all former prisoners of War, remembers and never forgets those missing in action heroes and the families who seek their return. This new installation represents the 16th monument to be featured on the Veterans Memorial Boulevard.



Rockwell B.A.R.K. Park Enhanced

The popular dog park at Rockwell Park received some much-needed improvements this year which included updated signage, replacement of the fence, removal of dead and dangerous trees, and new elements for the dogs to enjoy!



Perry Spinelli Structural Improvements and Interior Renovations Completed

The Perry Spinelli Pavilion at Page Park underwent major renovations over the past 2 years including a wholesale modernization of the interior and essential structural repairs on the outside of the building. The pavilion will remain closed to the public for the duration of the Page Park Revitalization project but is expected to open with the new park. The pavilion will be available for party rentals, graduations, and even weddings!



STORIES AND HIGHLIGHTS



Deputy Superintendent Sarah Larson selected as 2024 R. Peter Ledger Young Professional of the Year

Deputy Superintendent Sarah Larson was selected by the Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association as the 2024 R. Peter Ledger Young Professional of the Year. The award recognizes individuals that have served 10 years or less in the field and are deserving of recognition for achievements and accomplishments in the parks and recreation profession.



Landscape Gardner Steven Schriver Continues to Beautify Park Gardens and Landscape

Landscape Gardener Steven Schriver was hired in September of 2021 and since then has worked hard to beautify existing park gardens and even created new ones. This has included landscaping at Seymour Park, at the cannon on the Veterans Memorial Boulevard and even a rain garden at Edgewood School. Additionally, Steven gained more skills and experiences through his participation in the National Recreation and Parks Association Maintenance Management School.



Superintendent Josh Medeiros elected to serve as Chair of the National Recreation and Parks Association Board of Directors

Since 2018, Superintendent Josh Medeiros has served as an Executive Board Member of the National Recreation and Parks Association, the country's leading non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of public parks, recreation and environmental conservation. Medeiros is one of a small group of professional from across the United States to serve. In 2024, Medeiros was elected by a vote of his board peers to serve as the Chair of the NRPA Board. Medeiros became the Chair Elect in October 2024 and will assume a 2-year term as Chairman of the Board starting in the fall of 2025.



Scott Heth selected as All-Heart Parks Advocate of the Year Award Winner

Environmental Learning Center of Connecticut Executive Director Scott Heth was selected by the Board of Park Commissioners to receive the All-Heart Parks Advocate of the Year Award. Scott was selected for his outstanding partnership with the management agreement at Pigeon Hill Preserve and for his work creating accessible trails at the Barnes Nature Center with connectivity to Seymour Park and the preserve.

STORIES AND HIGHLIGHTS



Lights, Camera, Action... Downtown Live at Rockwell Theater is Bringing Live Entertainment to Bristol

Downtown Live at Rockwell Theater is in full swing with monthly shows and entertainment at the heart of downtown Bristol. This year the Arts and Culture Supervisor role was restored to a full-time position and the City Council amended the ordinances to allow for sale of alcoholic concessions at the theater bringing it in line with similar theaters in the region. The annual Community Conversation on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion was also shifted from Rockwell Park and relaunched in the theater in January. The show featured 1 Degree of Separation which brought dialogue, awareness, and acceptance for those suffering from depression through laughter and vulnerability.



Bristol Parks officially have addresses!

After a long time coming, Bristol parks officially have addresses. Thanks to collaboration with the Bristol Public Works Department, the parks can now be located by specific addresses available on MyREC and Google Maps!



Newly passed legislation strengthens collaboration between Youth Services and the Bristol Board of Education

The Connecticut Youth Services Association announced a newly passed law, Section 23 of Public act #24-45, that requires all Boards of Education to enter into a Memoranda of Agreement (MOU) with their local Youth Service Bureaus (YSB) to establish procedures for the release of student information. Through the MOU, youth service staff are considered a "School Official" and in accordance with FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy) entitled to receive relevant identifiable student data. This collection of data will assist our YSB with the coordination and development of services to assist families with achieving the highest level of care. BPRYCS and the Bristol Board of Education signed their yearly agreement on October 30, 2024.



BPRYCS a National Gold Medal Finalist- 3rd years in a row!

BPRYCS was honored again as a finalist for the 2024 National Gold Medal Awards for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management by the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration (AARPA), in partnership with the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). This is the third year BPRYCS has been named a finalist, competing amongst the best park agencies from across the country. The National Gold Medal Award program honors public park and recreation agencies and state park systems throughout the United States and armed forces recreation programs worldwide that demonstrate excellence in long-range planning, resource management and innovative approaches to delivering superb park and recreation services with fiscally sound practices.



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