

Berlin POCD Draft Recommended Goals, Strategies, and Actions

Topic Area	Goal
Environmental Resources	Continue to protect the Town's environmental resources and better connect open space resources through the strategic acquisition and protection of open space.
Housing	Ensure that Berlin has a wide selection of housing choice that enables residents to live in Town through various stages of life and provides housing opportunities to new residents to the community.
Economic Development	Foster a stable economy that leverages Berlin's location and commercial zones to provide residents with access to goods, services, and employment opportunities while maintaining a diversified property tax base.
Transportation	Improve and expand transportation options to ensure greater connectivity for all modes of transportation and maintain and improve infrastructure in a sustainable manner.
Facilities and Services	Provide high quality services and facilities to residents, property owners, business owners, and visitors in a sustainable manner.
Cultural Resources	Protect, promote, fund, and continue to act as a steward for Berlin's cultural resources with a special focus on the Towns historic properties and farms.

Environmental Resources Strategies	Actions	Yes, No, or ?
Ensure that the Town’s zoning regulations direct development towards areas that can support development without adversely impacting the Town’s environmental resources.	Maintain the Town’s low density residential zoning districts as a means of limiting development in environmentally sensitive areas.	
	Consider adopting ridgeline protection regulations.	
Prioritize the protection and acquisition of open space and improve linkages between existing open space properties.	Consider funding opportunities, through grants, donations of open space, and capital budgeting for the strategic acquisition of open space for the purposes of conservation.	
	Partner with outside organizations such as land trusts to expand the supply of protected open space in Berlin.	
	Identify potential open space linkages that could be provided through the acquisition of land and/or development of greenway networks on public and private properties.	
	Consider funding strategies for improving and maintaining Town-owned conservation properties including the hiring of more public grounds staff.	
	Maintain a Town fund or bonding authorization to strategically acquire open space as it becomes available	
	Prioritize the acquisition of properties that would link existing protected open space properties and foster improved intertown connections such as at Lamentation Mountain (Middletown, Meriden), Ragged Mountain (NB, Southington,) and Short Mountain (Southington)	
	Review open space areas that do not have conservation easements and recommend additional protection for all or parts of these properties, as required.	
	Pursue State grants for the acquisition of open space.	
Adopt and implement low impact policies and practices.	Review and amend the Town’s zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure that the regulations encourage or require Low Impact Development (LID) practices in new developments.	
	Work towards the adoption of sustainable practices at Town parks and facilities such as capturing rainwater for irrigation use, encouraging use of pervious pavement, reducing water usage, reducing the use of chemicals on athletic fields, improving recycling, and reducing solid waste.	
Continue the oversight and protection of environmentally sensitive areas.	Continue to adequately staff departments and commissions with land use functions and provide sufficient resources to carry out their duties. Assign a Town staff member as point person for open space and environmental issues and ensure that staff member has the resources necessary to carry out their duties.	

Environmental Resources Strategies	Actions	Yes, No, or ?
	Review the Town's land use regulations including zoning regulations, floodplain regulations, subdivisions regulations, and inland wetland regulations, to ensure that the regulations adequately protect environmental resources and encourage sustainable development. Amend the regulations as necessary, and expand protections as needed, in favor of environmental protection that is fully supportive of the goals of this plan.	
	Continue to attempt to manage invasive species problems in Town owned waterbodies.	
	Work with property owners to permanently protect more sensitive portions of their properties such as riparian buffers and forest areas with conservation easements.	
Actively work towards protecting and improving water quality of the Mattabasset River and other waterways in the Town.	Conduct a public campaign to reduce litter and pollution into the Town's brooks and rivers.	
	Review the Town's zoning regulations for opportunities to include riparian zone requirements and restrictions for developments in proximity of the Town's rivers and brooks.	
	Require inspections and reporting on the condition of on-site stormwater management systems in existing and new developments.	
Improve stewardship of forests and tree canopy on Town-owned open space and right-of-ways.	Seek the assistance of a university forestry program to develop a forest management and invasive species control plan for all Town-owned open space and forests.	
	Continue to allocate financial resources towards forestry so as to adequately respond to the need for forest and roadside tree maintenance and removal.	
	Review zoning regulations to ensure that they require adequate tree planting and replacements on projects as appropriate. Allow flexibility in requirements to allow tree planting in locations where they would be most beneficial and most likely to thrive.	
Continue to promote sustainable stormwater management and floodplain management to be resilient and adaptable to a changing climate.	Continue to invest in stormwater infrastructure improvements throughout the Town as recommended by the Town's Stormwater Management Plan. Sustainable, green infrastructure improvements should be prioritized.	
	Review and evaluate the Town's Floodplain zoning regulations to ensure consistency with FEMA recommended model ordinances.	

Environmental Resources Strategies	Actions	Yes, No, or ?
Expand and improve the Town's trail system to better connect open space properties and connect Berlin to trail networks in surrounding Towns and improve access to and promotion of trail system.	Work with CFPA and Land Trusts to protect the path of the Mattabeset and Metacomet Trails and NET in Berlin and to relocate trails to protected property when necessary.	
	Make trail connection from Timberlin to Reservoir Road on newly acquired Reservoir Road parcel.	
	Work with New Britain Water Department to relocate a portion of the former Wigwam Road ROW to connect Reservoir Road to Ragged Mountain Preserve. Develop a trail after the ROW is relocated.	
	Work with CFPA and other partners to reduce the distance of road walks of through trails on Spruce Brook Road, Orchard Road and Edgewood Road. Improve safety of the trail crossing at the Berlin Turnpike.	
	Improve the connection between Pistol Creek and the through Trails at Lamentation Mountain.	
	Relocate the Metacomet Trail off private property and into the Blue Hills Conservation area in the vicinity of Summit Wood Drive.	
	Work with New Britain and Meriden Water Departments to provide more public access to lands they own in Berlin, as feasible.	
	Keep trails information up to date on the Town website and make trails information available through apps.	
Provide site improvements to open space properties to ensure proper stewardship of those properties and to improve access by the public.	Advance planning for the shared open space, water department use for the Woodlawn parcel.	
	Improve parking for Ragged Mountain Preserve at West Lane.	
	Improve parking at Park Drive that is an access point to Meriden's Hubbard Park and to trails.	
	Work with Middletown to improve the Pistol Creek properties as a two Town open space and recreational area.	
	Re-establish public access to Webster Park.	
	Make town open space lands more accessible to public by: creating new trails, marking existing trails and boundaries, building bridges and boardwalks, placing signage, improving accessibility, keeping trails information up to date on the Town website and make trails information available through apps., and creating parking areas.	
	Identify critical improvements and maintenance needed at Town-owned open space properties and produce a summary and list of needs.	

Housing Strategies	Actions	Yes, No, or ?
Implement recommendations of the 2022 Affordable Housing Plan as a means of increasing the supply and range of affordable housing in Berlin and maintain an affordable housing inventory in excess of existing supply.	See 2022 AHP	
Maintain and increase the supply of housing designed for or occupied by seniors.	Explore opportunities to revise the zoning regulations to allow the adaptive reuse of buildings for the development of age-restricted and other forms of housing for Berlin’s aging population.	
	Revise zoning regulations to allow for the development of, or conversion to, multi-generational housing that provides shared living areas for multiple generations of a family in appropriate residential districts.	
	Promote and support participation in the Senior Citizen Property Tax Deferral Program.	
	Revise zoning regulations to allow assisted living facilities in appropriate districts	
	Expand support services to assist seniors to age in place.	
Administer, educate, and support affordable housing initiatives.	Pursue State and Federal funds for affordable housing initiatives with a focus on programs that provide support to targeted income levels.	
Promote affordable home ownership opportunities.	Provide residents, real estate professionals, and other stakeholders with information on CHFA mortgages and other financing options for lower income and first-time homeowners.	
Revise zoning as recommended by the Affordable Housing Plan to support development of affordable housing	Consider modifying PS-A district at individual locations to allow for mixed-use residential at a density appropriate to the location, with a required affordable housing component.	
	Consider adjustments to the BTD zone to further incentivize development of affordable housing.	
	Revise Kensington Village Core 2 regulations to allow increased density, consider redistricting area across the train station to Farmington Avenue Core Area 1.	
	Revise the zoning regulations to allow private development of Housing for the Elderly on Town-owned property.	
Support the diversification of the Town's housing stock without adversely impacting single-family neighborhoods by providing adequate zoning controls.	Ensure that the zoning regulations direct higher density housing towards areas that have the infrastructure to support such development.	
	Provide additional design standards and/or guidelines for multifamily development to ensure that development is not adversely impactful to adjacent single-family residential properties or districts.	

Housing Strategies	Actions	Yes, No, or ?
	Amend zoning regulations to better control orientation and placement of residential uses, as it is an important component of the quality of residential neighborhoods	
	Amend the zoning regulations to ensure that sensitive environmental features are protected to the degree practical and area adequate to handle subsurface disposal needs	

Economic Strategies	Actions	Yes, No, or ?
Foster an environment that is supportive of economic development and provides opportunities for the growth and development of small and large businesses in the Town.	Continue to streamline the Town’s business permitting and licensing processes to be efficient, effective, and expeditious.	
	Work with local banks, SBA lenders, and Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) to promote existing small business lending and micro-lending programs.	
	Continue to provide tax incentives to for new economic development projects consistent with the Town's tax abatement policy. Consider dynamic changes to the tax abatement policy as economic and market conditions change.	
	Encourage the expansion of high-speed broadband coverage and gigabit internet access across the Town.	
Develop a campaign and communications that promotes Berlin as a place that is friendly to business.	Develop a strategic communications and engagement plan for the Town.	
	Continue to provide and evolve regular communications and promotion of economic development activity in the Town through multiple media platforms.	
	Develop a marketing campaign that includes branding, an overview of Berlin's strengths and assets, and print and digital materials.	
	Partner with the Chamber of Commerce to actively promote Berlin and distribute campaign materials and information.	
Support the development of industrial parks that will serve small and emerging businesses.	Identify sites that would be suitable for the development of small lot industrial parks.	
	Revise zoning regulations to allow for the development of small lot industrial parks at suitable sites. Allow 1 acre lots in PI-2 if part of a unified site plan for a lot 5 acres or larger. Allow 100' frontage in PI-2 and P-1 if development of a unified site plan for 1 acre lots.	
Review and update, as appropriate, the Town’s mixed-use, commercial, and industrial zone regulations to ensure that the regulations provide sufficient flexibility to allow development that responds to current and future market conditions.	Review zoning regulations to ensure that they are supportive of the development of health care facilities in appropriate districts.	
	Review special permit uses and reduce requirement as feasible to a zoning permit and site plan for specific uses in specific districts.	
	Review zoning regulations to ensure that they allow for the development of shared working spaces and business incubators in a range of districts.	
	Analyze the Town’s existing industrial zoning districts to determine if allowable uses, building heights, parking and loading requirements, and constraints on building size or footprints are in line with today’s industrial/manufacturing/distribution standards.	
	Modify site plan and zoning regulations to allow the Planning and Zoning Commission to strengthen requirements for environmental assessments for properties with potential for environmental contamination based on historic uses	

Economic Strategies	Actions	Yes, No, or ?
	Study mixed-use options that include residential in the PS-A zoned areas (see housing section).	
	Revise BTZ Zoning regulations to require at least 20% commercial development and that commercial and residential development be done on a pro rata basis if a project is phased.	
	Revise regulations in several ways in the SPDD zone to increase the flexibility for mixed use developments and reduce setbacks and minimum lot sizes in accordance with POCD	
	Eliminate the SPDD Overlay and SPDD-2 zones.	
	Update Town zoning regulations to consider providing more flexibility in the definition of business uses and to address contemporary business trends and definitions.	
Focus economic development efforts on Farmington Avenue and the Berlin Turnpike.	Review parking requirements for potential reductions to requirements that may allow for infill development in existing parking lots.	
	Consider conducting corridor studies or area plans for the Berlin Turnpike and Farmington Avenue to help align economic development priorities with needed infrastructure improvements to adequately support future growth.	
	Identify infrastructure enhancements needed in those areas.	
	Review zoning regulations to ensure that the regulations support desirable land uses and site design and provide opportunities for housing development without displacing commercial uses.	
Facilitate the clean-up, improvement, and reuse of vacant, aging, or contaminated commercial and industrial properties.	Continue to facilitate clean up and reuse of brownfields sites including by seeking grants and loans to facilitate investigation and clean up. Consider RFPs for sale of tax liens to address tax delinquent brownfields sites.	
	Maintain a focus on reducing commercial building vacancies by working with property owners to identify needs and challenges in filling vacancies.	
	Step up the enforcement of the Town's blighted property ordinance.	
	Work with and provide incentives to commercial property owners on Farmington Avenue and the Berlin Turnpike to improve the appearance of properties.	
Continue to invest in Kensington Village and facilitate the redevelopment of properties and development of mixed-use commercial and residential projects.	The Town should assist private property owners to market properties consistent with the uses proposed in the Plan	
	Increase the allowed residential density in Kensington Village Core Area 2 (see Housing section).	
	Communicate with property owners in the core of the TOD area and develop and coordinate plans for the next phases of TOD area mixed use redevelopment as properties are available for sale.	
	Make transit, pedestrian and bicycle improvements to link residents and employees to the TOD hub at the Berlin Train Station	

Economic Strategies	Actions	Yes, No, or ?
	Expand open space walking connection to Old Brickyard Lane and beyond.	
	Consider joining the Main Street Program or using its approach to create a public/private organizational structure to foster town center revitalization in Kensington Center.	
	Continue to implement Farmington Avenue Design standards and update standards as needed.	
	Continue to extend sidewalks and fill missing links to connect the Kensington Village TOD area to nearby neighborhoods.	
	Consider rezoning the Berlin Steel complex and industrial properties on Harding street for Transit Oriented Development uses if these properties become available for sale or reuse.	
	Continue to make public investments to reinforce the Kensington Village TOD area.	
	Continue streetscape improvements as grant funds become available. Concentrate on streetscape improvements on Farmington Avenue between to New Britain Road and Steele Boulevard.	
	Study creation of wireless zone downtown.	
	Connect Steele Boulevard to the Train Station parking and Depot Road when appropriate rights can be secured from CTDOT and AMTRAK.	
Continue to promote Berlin's TED sites by developing informational and promotional materials specific to each site.	Seek added funding to continue the façade program to upgrade landscaping and facades on Farmington Avenue, New Britain Road and vicinity.	
	Work with the TED site property owners. Support their marketing efforts if the properties are for sale. Prepare conceptual development plans in concert with the owners.	
	Continue to encourage property owners in TEDs areas to work together on issues regarding sale and future development of the properties	
	Consider infrastructure extensions and other incentives to stimulate the development of TEDs properties consistent with the uses proposed in the Plan	

Transportation Strategies	Actions	Yes, No, or ?
Improve traffic operations across the Town.	Improve the Town's traffic operations by updating traffic signal infrastructure and technology at intersections that experience a low level of service.	
Strategically improve transportation infrastructure across the Town.	Continue to pursue State and Federal funding for local bridge maintenance and repairs.	
	Integrate Low Impact Design (LID) measures in transportation infrastructure projects as feasible.	
	Implement recommendations of pavement conditions survey and management plan to address outstanding needs in pavement conditions of the Town's roads.	
	Seek grants for and continue to invest in streetscape projects in commercial areas where warranted with priority being Farmington Avenue between New Britain Road and Steele Boulevard.	
Improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity across the Town.	Adopt a Complete Streets policy that prioritizes the provision of pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and traffic calming improvements in transportation infrastructure and maintenance projects and review ordinances, regulations, and policies to align with complete street principles.	
	Provide bicycle racks at locations across Town such as the Train Station, schools, and parks. Consider providing bike lockers at Train Station.	
	Develop a bicycle plan that identifies preferred bicycling routes and corridors that may be appropriate for the development of bike lanes or pathways.	
	Expand and improve the Town's sidewalk network with an aim of connecting neighborhoods to schools, Town facilities, and Kensington Village. Prioritize corridors such as Farmington Avenue, Worthington Ridge, Berlin Turnpike, Deming Road, Four Rod Road (south of Norton), Percival Avenue (Carbo Lane to Percival Field), Robbins Rd (Towne Drive to Timberwood), and Kensington Road (Carriage Drive to Norton Road).	
	Identify priority intersections across Town for improving pedestrian crossings and provide improvements to pedestrian crossings as needed including crosswalk markings, signage, signal enhancements, and lighting enhancements.	
	Expand trail and greenway connections across the Town and identify preferred routes for connecting to nearby regional trails such as the Farmington Canal Trail.	
	Accommodate emerging transportation modes and technologies.	Seek funding to provide electric vehicle charging infrastructure at Town facilities and where may be required to support electric vehicle fleets.
Review zoning regulations and amend as necessary to require the provision of bicycle parking and electric vehicle charging as appropriate.		
Transition to an electric and/or alternative fuel fleet of Town vehicles.		

Transportation Strategies	Actions	Yes, No, or ?
Continue to address safety issues across Berlin's transportation system.	Pursue grant funding, as available, to provide safety enhancements at high-crash areas.	
	Continue to work with CTDOT to ensure that safety enhancements are made to high-crash locations on State highways in Berlin.	
	Develop a traffic calming toolbox as part of a Complete Streets plan and implement traffic calming measures on local roadways where crash rates could be reduced through traffic calming.	
Improve access to CT Transit bus routes	Provide additional bus shelters and waiting/drop-off areas	
	Work with CT Transit to provide more local stops on routes that currently serve Berlin	

Town Facilities and Services Strategies	Actions	Yes, No, or ?
Continue to preserve, enhance, and maintain parks and recreational facilities.	Develop a Parks and Recreation Masterplan	
	Conduct playscape, athletic field, and athletic court replacement and refurbishment to ensure better conditions.	
	Expand and enhance trails and paths within and connecting parks with the aim of connecting the Town's parks and open spaces with a connected network.	
	Make accessibility improvements at parks including pathway upgrades and accessible playgrounds to ensure full access.	
Continue the process to design and construct improvements to address identified Police Department space needs and continue to evaluate facilities to ensure that Berlin's Public Safety services have the resources to meet the needs of the community	Plan for and maintain public safety facilities in accordance with evolving space and technology needs.	
Support sustainability including energy efficiency and renewable energy sources across all Town facilities.	Develop a municipal energy plan that includes energy tracking and management, energy reduction goals and actions, and clean energy goals and actions.	
	Commit funding to address the needs identified by the energy assessment and pursue grant funding as available to assist in the financing of improvements.	
	Benchmark and track energy use across Town and school buildings and facilities.	
	Include energy efficiency and renewable energy projects in the Town's capital improvement plan.	
	Implement energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements at Town and school buildings and facilities.	
Continue to protect and maintain the Town's drinking water supply and distribution infrastructure.	Limit water service extensions to designated services areas.	
	Make investments in water supply system as needed to ensure a safe yield	
	Implement water saving measures across Town properties and facilities as a means of reducing Town drinking water usage.	
	Revisit the potential consolidation of the Berlin's three water districts as a means of improving infrastructure and reducing costs. If the districts are not consolidated, update the working agreements between the districts to more efficiently coordinate services and streamline permitting for projects requiring inter -- jurisdictional cooperation.	
	Promote the adoption of best management practices and the use of green infrastructure as a means of reducing the use of drinking water supply for irrigation. Implement measures at Town properties and include regulations and guidelines within the Town's zoning regulations.	

Town Facilities and Services Strategies	Actions	Yes, No, or ?
Continue to make needed investments in the Town's wastewater collection infrastructure.	Limit sewer service extensions to designated services areas while promoting economic growth through cooperation with potential developers and the State of Connecticut.	
	Address inflow and infiltration issues across the wastewater collection system.	
	Upgrade obsolete or dysfunctional components of the wastewater collection system.	
	Revisit the potential consolidation of the Berlin's three water districts as a means of improving sewer infrastructure and reducing costs. If the districts are not consolidated, each district needs to plan and complete inflow and infiltration reduction projects if requested by the Mattabassett District, to reduce sewer system flows in storm events. Update the working agreements between the districts to more efficiently coordinate services and streamline permitting for projects requiring inter-jurisdictional cooperation.	
Proactively work towards obtaining and securing funding through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) as a means of financing needed improvements to Town facilities and infrastructure.	Work across Town departments to identify projects eligible for funding under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.	
	Work across Town departments and with State agencies to prepare grant applications and request for funding through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.	
Continue to pursue options for accommodating Senior Center and Community Center space needs.		
Provide improvements to the Town's stormwater infrastructure to reduce risk of flooding and protect water quality.	Conduct a study of the Mattabesset / Sebeth River Basin to determine the most appropriate ways to improve drainage and minimize the flood plain.	
	Continue to conduct improvements to stormwater infrastructure as specified in the Town's stormwater management plan.	
Encourage the underground installation of electric and communications infrastructure in new developments as a means of protecting infrastructure from storm events and improving the appearance of new developments.	Modify subdivision requirements as necessary to encourage underground utilities for new residential and business projects	

Cultural Resource Strategies	Actions	Yes, No, or ?
Provide continued support for the promotion and protection of historic resources in Berlin.	Promote public awareness and appreciation of local historic resources through the development of print materials, online content, and on-site signage.	
	Develop an inventory and assessment of all historic properties and cultural resources in the Town including cemeteries, greens, residential and commercial structures, and other cultural sites.	
	Inventory and protect Berlin's scenic roads and byways. Define the features that would distinguish these, such as agricultural vistas, open meadows, historic properties, stonewalls, mature trees, notable geologic formations. Study the benefits of a Scenic Road ordinance per the Connecticut General Statutes and adopt an ordinance if found to be beneficial.	
	Develop regulations to preserve the physical and architectural characteristic of historic houses and their sites.	
	Install historic plaques in the Worthington Ridge Historic District that convey the significance of the properties and Berlin's role as part of the Underground Railroad.	
	Pursue financial incentives for preservation, including State and Federal grants, tax incentive programs, preservation or facade easements, assessment deferrals and transfer of development rights.	
Allow for the reuse of historic properties and ensure the preservation of historic properties when re-used or when redeveloped.	Encourage maintenance of the architectural integrity of historic and architecturally-significant sites, buildings and structures when adapted for reuse for commercial, industrial or residential purposes.	
	Amend the zoning and subdivision regulations to encourage the preservation and reuse of historically significant structures within proposed developments	
	Revise zoning ordinances to allow adaptive reuse of buildings in the Worthington Ridge Historic District including for additional residential units.	
Develop a marketing campaign for Berlin that features and promotes its cultural resources.	Develop branding and print materials that promote Berlin's cultural resources.	
	Establish a unified presence on social media to promote Berlin's cultural resources.	
Provide continued support for the Town's farms to help ensure their continued operation.	Develop and maintain an inventory of active farms in Berlin including acres farmed, number of people employed by these farms and agricultural businesses, and other information pertinent to the economic value of Berlin's agricultural and related products.	
	Allow a house on farms of at least 10 acres in the POD zone to encourage small farmers.	

Cultural Resource Strategies	Actions	Yes, No, or ?
	Engage in a dialogue with local farmers to identify additional zoning amendments to encourage the preservation of local farms, including by expanding definitions of farming related uses.	
	Evaluate the opportunity for farming on Town properties, including continuation of haying in open space areas.	
	Use Town open space acquisition funds and identify funding partners to purchase development rights of farms to ensure their continued operation.	
	Review and revise the zoning regulations as appropriate to allow farms to engage in accessory uses that are complementary to the principal use of a farm.	
Support the development of micro-farming in Berlin.	Revise zoning regulations to allow farming on lots less than ten acres. Consider a two tier definition with expanded farming uses permitted only on sites that are 10 ten acres or more.	
	Provide adequate regulations to restrict composting and farm animals based upon lot size and district.	
Improve and reuse Town-owned historic properties.	Complete restoration of the Worthington Meeting House and place it into productive use as a Historic Society museum.	
	Review the zoning regulations and revise as necessary to support the restoration and adaptive reuse of historic properties.	
Work with owners of historic properties to add properties to the National Register of Historic Places, whether individually listed or as part of a new district.	Prioritize the historic designation of the Nelson Augustus Moore property.	