

East Hartford Burnside Church Brownfield Area-Wide Revitalization Plan Public Workshop #1

January 15, 2026 @ 6:30PM-7:30PM | Wickham Memorial Library, East Hartford

FACILITATORS

- Kimberly Baptiste – Colliers Engineering and Design (consultant)
- Jacob Robison - Colliers Engineering and Design (consultant)
- Bridget Snover – Colliers Engineering and Design (consultant)
- Carlene Shaw – Town Planner / Project Manager
- Gary Guimond – Richter & Cegan Landscape Architecture
- Jeff Peracchio – Richter & Cegan Landscape Architecture

FORMAT

This was the first public workshop of the planning process. The project team facilitated a formal presentation introducing the project team, providing a project overview, reviewing proposed public engagement strategies, visioning results to date, existing conditions inventory, market conditions, timeline, and next steps in the planning process. There were opportunities for attendees to ask questions throughout the presentation. The meeting concluded with an interactive visioning exercise.



PRESENTATION

Kimberly Baptiste facilitated a round of introductions of the project team.

01 Introducing the BAR Project

Project Manager Kimberly Baptiste (CED) began the formal presentation by presenting the project team structure:

- Town of East Hartford: Project management and oversight
- Colliers Engineering & Design (CED): Lead consultant
- Camoin Associates: Market/economic analysis
- HRP Associates: Environmental review and ESAs

- Richter & Cegan: Public outreach assistance/ public space design
- Advisory Committee: Project guidance and feedback

Other items included in the introduction include:

- Study Area overview
- Defining a brownfield
- Outcomes of the planning process

02 Elements of the Burnside Church BAR Project

Kimberly Baptiste reviewed the Brownfield Area-Wide Revitalization (BAR) planning process:

- Key steps and milestones
- Comprehensive understanding of existing conditions, opportunities and challenges
- Community participation to gather feedback and help build sense of ownership in plan implementation
- Identification of key visioning themes
- Effective implementation strategies (based on market studies and feasibility analyses)
- Prioritization of specific brownfield sites for cleanup and reuse
- Prioritization for both public and private investment
- Identification of strategic redevelopment sites

Kimberly reviewed the community engagement strategy, which includes multiple opportunities to solicit feedback from a diversity of stakeholders. These range from focused meetings with the advisory committee, stakeholder sessions, student and youth outreach, public workshops, and pop-up events. The project website, www.BurnsideChurchRevitalization.com, is a 24/7 community resource where the public can learn more about the project, find upcoming or past events, and submit comments directly to the project team.

Kimberly outlined the project's 12-month timeline, emphasizing that we're currently in the master planning phase.

03 Next Steps

Engagement

- Advisory Committee Meeting #3
- Stakeholder Engagement (ongoing)

Technical

- Visioning and Goals
- Begin Land Use Master Planning
- Strategies and Implementation

04 Discussion

Reasons for attending the meeting:

- Starting a business in the study area (Moxi on the Rocks)
- To know what is going on in the community
- To provide feedback
- Child might be transferring to East Hartford Middle School

Q: How do improvements to the study area impact E Hartford as a whole?

A: Strategies and recommendations that come from this BAR plan may be applicable to other areas in the Town including the Burnside Avenue corridor.

C: Condos and senior housing need to be prioritized to increase homeownership in the Town. Condos offer more rent control than apartments cannot (ex. Windsor, CT nursing home was adapted into senior housing).

R: The vacant parcel on Church Street has potential for townhome development, but other housing will need to be implemented elsewhere due to lack of available space in the study area.

C: The Bicentennial Square Park concepts need to rethink the location of the playgrounds. Roundabouts are slated to be implemented on the corner of Scotland and Forbes.

A: Carlene will confirm whether the roundabout project will be moving forward.

05 Interactive Stations

The meeting concluded with an interactive session where attendees visited four stations to provide feedback to the project team.

Station #1: Connectivity

What is your primary destination in the study area, if any?

- Burnside Avenue (x2)
- Wickham Memorial Library (x2)
- East Hartford Middle School (x1)
- Bicentennial Square Park (x1)

If facilities were available (bike lanes, sidewalks, etc.), what would be your primary mode of transportation?

- Car (x2)
- Walk (x2)
- Bus (x1)
- Bike (x1)

Share your thoughts on the existing trails and connectivity in the study area.

- Bike lanes down Scotland / Forbes
- Possible trail north of Hockanum River?
- Suspension bridge over the river to connect the lower mill and open space
- Need sidewalks at the Forbes Street bridge
- Establish trail to Wickham Park

Station #2: Burnside Avenue Improvements

What maximum building height do you feel is most appropriate for Burnside Avenue?

- 1 story (x1)
- 2 stories (x1)
- 3 Stories (x4)
- 4 stories (x1)

What types of uses would you like to see on Burnside Avenue in the future?

- Mixed-use (x6)

- Restaurants (x5)
- Public space (x3)
- Indoor recreation (x2)
- Retail (x1)
- Arcade (x1)
- Service providers (Hair, medical, etc.) (x0)

What types of amenities would you like to see on Burnside Avenue in the future?

- Pedestrian-level lighting (x4)
- Outdoor seating (x3)
- Street trees (x3)
- Benches (x2)
- Waste / recycling receptacles (x2)
- Sculptures (x1)
- Art as amenity (x1)
- Widened sidewalks (x0)
- Murals (x0)

Station #3: Bicentennial Square Park

Concept A

What do you like about Concept A?

- Open space, open lawn
- The separated monument areas is a great idea

What do you not like about Concept A?

- Too much parking

Concept B

What do you like about Concept B?

- Parking on the edge to maximize interior space
- Multiple areas

What do you not like about Concept B?

- Playground upfront

Concept C

What do you like about Concept C?

- Round space
- Potential for music, amphitheater, etc.
- The large wildflower and meadow areas

What do you not like about Concept C?

- No comments

General Comments about the park as it is today.

- Too open/barren
- No sense of place or amenities

Station #4: General Comments

- Overall overlay district(s) / creative zoning mechanisms conducive to redevelopment, especially for housing
- Need hiking trails to be redone