



City of Bristol
Zoning Commission

SPECIAL MEETING — THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 2026
VIRTUAL — ONLINE VIA ZOOM
5:00 P.M.

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC TO ACCESS THIS MEETING:

Zoom Meeting link:

<https://bristolct-gov.zoom.us/j/83668399292?pwd=w3daQmu7aTvJg8ay9lXhYhRujfRO0k.1>

Meeting ID:

836 6839 9292

Meeting Passcode:

123456

Join by phone

1-929-205-6099

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Public Participation
3. New Business
 - a. Commission Discussion on Vape/Smoke Shops
 - b. Commission Discussion on Data Centers
4. Staff Reports
5. Adjournment

REMINDER: The next Regular Meeting of the Zoning Commission is Monday, September 21, 2026

Application AZR-26-03

Moratoria Zoning Amendments

Initiated By:
Bristol
Zoning
Commission

Recommended Zoning Amendments



City of Bristol Recommended Zoning Amendments

Date: 8/19/25

Recommended Amendment to establish a Moratorium on the Establishment or Expansion of Smoke and Vape Shops

Purpose: The purpose of this amendment is to prohibit the establishment or expansion of new smoke or vape shops while the Zoning Commission and other boards and commissions consider permanent amendments to the zoning regulations and other City ordinances and policies to adequately regulate this use for the protection of public health and safety.

Description: This recommended amendment does the following:

- Establishes a new Section 17.3 Moratoria in the Zoning Regulations to accommodate this recommended moratorium and future moratoria.
- Establishes an 18-month moratorium on the establishment of a new smoke or vape shop or the expansion of any existing shop.
- Provides a definition of smoke or vape shops.

Geographic Extents: Citywide, all zoning districts.

Context:

- Since 2018, the number of vape shops in the country has increased by an average of almost 20% each year.
- In 2024, e-cigarettes were the most commonly used tobacco product among middle and high school students in the United States with 7.8% of high school students using them.
- The CDC recommends that local governments "Reduce the number of retailers that are allowed to sell tobacco products" as one means of addressing this issue.
- According to the Connecticut Department of Revenue Services, there are 44 licensed Cigarette Dealers in Bristol.
- According to the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection, there are 32 active and 51 inactive registered Dealers of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems or Vapor Products in Bristol.

Consistency with the Plan of Conservation and Development: The 2015 Bristol Plan of Conservation and Development does not directly address the issue of smoke or vape shops however the plan does recommend that the City:

"Maintain and improve the economic base of Bristol in order to enhance its reputation as a desirable place in which to live, work, shop and raise a family."

Ensuring that its retail spaces provide a variety of goods and services to residents and that those goods and services contribute to the health and wellbeing of the community is consistent with this recommendation.



Recommended Zoning Amendments

1. Add new Section 17.3 Moratoria as follows:

17.3 Moratoria

17.3.1 Authority and Procedures

- A. The Zoning Commission may, consistent with CGS § 8-2 and applicable case law, adopt a temporary moratorium on the acceptance, consideration, or approval of applications for specified uses or development when the Commission determines that such moratorium is reasonably necessary to evaluate existing or anticipated land use conditions, study the potential impacts of such uses or development, and consider appropriate amendments to these Regulations.
- B. Any moratorium shall be adopted in accordance with the applicable procedures of CGS § 8-3, shall be reasonably limited in duration and scope, and shall identify the uses, development activities, applications, approvals, or geographic areas to which it applies and the date upon which the moratorium shall expire.
- C. Any moratorium adopted pursuant to this Section 17.3 shall be recorded in this section and may be repealed, replaced, or amended by the Zoning Commission in accordance with the applicable procedures of CGS § 8-3. A moratorium shall automatically expire on the expiration date specified therein unless earlier repealed, replaced, or amended by the Zoning Commission.
- D. Upon expiration of a moratorium, the text of the expired moratorium may be removed from Section 17.3 by administrative action without further action by the Zoning Commission, provided such removal does not alter any other provision of these Regulations.

17.3.2 Moratorium on the Establishment or Expansion of Smoke and Vape Shops

- A. The purpose of this moratorium is to provide the City with sufficient time to evaluate the public health, safety, and economic impacts associated with smoke and vape shops and to consider the adoption of amendments to these Regulations governing such uses.
- B. Effective [insert effective date], no application for the establishment of a new smoke or vape shop shall be accepted, considered, or approved, and no new smoke or vape shop shall be established, in any zoning district within the City of Bristol. No application for an expansion of the gross floor area of an existing smoke or vape shop shall be accepted, considered, or approved during the moratorium. A smoke or vape shop lawfully existing as of the effective date of this Section may continue to operate in accordance with these Regulations but shall not be expanded in gross floor area during the moratorium. The moratorium shall expire on [insert expiration date], unless earlier repealed or superseded by an amendment to these Regulations.
- C. For the purposes of this Section 17.3.2 a smoke or vape shop is defined as a retail establishment principally engaged in the sale of cigarettes, cigars, tobacco products, electronic nicotine delivery systems, vapor products, electronic cigarette liquids, or related products or accessories. This does not include a general retail establishment, convenience store, grocery store, gas station, or similar establishment in which the sale of such products is accessory to the principal retail use.

City Council Referral



City of Bristol
Office of Town and City Clerk
111 North Main Street
Bristol, Connecticut 06010
(860) 584-6200

July 15, 2026

Zoning Commission
c/o Land Use Office
City Hall
111 North Main Street
Bristol, Connecticut 06010

Dear Members:

At a meeting of the City Council on July 14, 2026 it was voted to refer two matters to the Zoning Commission for action:

1. Request for consideration of a moratorium on new Vape/Smoke shops within Bristol for a 12-month period while the City Council, and its Ordinance Committee and legal staff, review state laws and regulations that may impact and enhance the City's ability to regulate the proliferation of Vape Shops to ensure they are not operating to the detriment of the community's public health;
2. Referral concerning the elimination of the 5,001-250,000 gross square footage for data centers. The City Council would also like the Zoning Commission to have all data center applications be the subject of a special permit, and to be appropriately distanced from other data centers.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Erica Cabiya".

Erica Cabiya, CCTC
Town and City Clerk

EC/mb

cc: City Council Members
Wyland Dale Clift, Corporation Counsel
Justin Malley, ECD Director

EDC Letter



August 7, 2026

Zoning Commission
City of Bristol
111 North Main Street
Bristol, CT 06010

Dear Commissioners:

At its meeting held August 6, 2026, the Economic and Community Development (ECD) Board authorized submission of a letter to the Zoning Commission strongly supporting a moratorium on the approval of “vape shops” (retailers in which vapes and vape products comprise a majority of goods). The ECD Board is charged with establishing policies that encourage economic growth. Although vape shops *may* be legal businesses, the proliferation of these retailers is, ironically, detrimental to the economy.

Vape shops’ negative impact on community health is well documented. Evidence suggests that a percentage of vape shops engage in nefarious activities including selling illegal, unlicensed nicotine and THC products that may be dangerous. Evidence also indicates that vape shops, as a whole, have a habit of selling to minors. Vape products are abused in Bristol schools, in public parks, on sidewalks and streets, and in other public places. Obviously, this scenario negatively impacts the local economy.

In addition, vape shops introduce more nuanced problems for the local economy. From a business perspective, vape shops selling mystery THC products hurt licensed cannabis retailers that follow the law. Simply put: vape shops sell dangerous material at a reduced price, undercutting legal cannabis businesses that offer safe products taxed by the State of Connecticut. Additionally, the mere presence of a vape shop degrades the neighborhood and businesses nearby. Vape shops employ garish lighting and graphics designed to attract minors. Nearby businesses suffer: no quality business is interested in a vape shop opening next door or even down the street. In fact, the presence of a vape shop also limits the potential of attracting *new* businesses to the area.

The good news is that recently passed legislation may provide communities authority to hold bad vape shops – and, critically, their landlords – accountable. Some of this legislation is unclear, so time is needed to sort out a plan. This is where a moratorium will be particularly helpful: It would be frustrating to craft a plan for regulating unsafe vape shops as new vape shops are opening!

While there is promise for future State oversight, at present local government must step in to manage this situation. The City Zoning Enforcement Officer and code enforcement team have addressed some local violations, but the Zoning Commission remains the City’s best line of defense. We thank you for your work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Justin Malley', is written over a blue horizontal line.

Justin Malley
Director
Economic and Community Development

City Council Referral

Data Centers



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