

2. A review of the policy

What works well:

The policy establishes clear guardrails for a cherished community space. The "one-for-one replacement" rule (you can't add new permanent structures unless removing something of equal or greater size) is elegant—it prevents creep while allowing thoughtful evolution. The requirement for public input through warned Selectboard meetings respects Bristol's democratic traditions.

Potential concerns:

The 14% coverage threshold seems arbitrary without stated rationale. Why is 14% the magic number versus 12% or 18%? The policy would benefit from explaining the thinking.

The blanket prohibition on new structures (except in the Peace Garden) is quite restrictive. What if the community wanted to add benches, a small shelter, or accessibility features? The policy doesn't distinguish between a memorial bench and a permanent building.

Missing elements:

- No guidance on temporary structures for events (tents, stages, vendor booths)
- No mention of maintenance standards or condition assessments
- Nothing about underground utilities or infrastructure
- No process for emergency removals (storm damage, safety hazards)
- The Peace Garden exception isn't fully explained

Questions that come to mind:

Does this policy adequately serve Bristol's accessibility goals mentioned elsewhere in your community profile? What happens if ADA compliance requires adding features the policy might restrict?