

Transportation Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6570

AN ACT CONCERNING TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT AND

Title: MUNICIPAL ZONING.

Vote Date: 3/26/2021

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/8/2021

File No.:

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

Transportation Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This legislation would give municipalities the opportunity to develop underused state-owned property surrounding transit centers. This would help solve issues of housing affordability and provide a benefit to the municipalities that participate by allowing them to capitalize upon these underused and potentially valuable zones.

Substitute language makes this legislation permissive with expanded opportunities for municipalities that elect to participate.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Section 1 of the bill requires the Department, in consultation with the Department of Housing, to identify five transit stations with state-owned parking lots and issue an RFI (request for information) for the construction of a transit oriented development (TOD) on such lots with an affordable housing component. Given the uncertainty surrounding what transit ridership will look like after the COVID pandemic, the Department recommends the legislation be amended to first identify potential development locations and postpone the requirement to issue an RFI until transit ridership projections stabilize. Issuing an RFI before transit ridership stabilizes may result in less than favorable responses. In addition, given the level of effort needed to properly screen and identify lots prime for TOD and potentially appropriate for a joint development, the Department recommends that the identification and reporting deadline be consistent with one another, February 1, 2022.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Sara C. Bronin, Lead Organizer, Desegregate CT: Supports this legislation's goal of increasing the amount of affordable housing surrounding transit centers.

Sean Ghio, Policy Director, Partnership for Strong Communities: Supportive of increasing the amount of affordable housing surrounding transit centers, and advocates for "mixed-income" in these areas.

John Guskowski, and Emily Harrigan, Government Relations Committee Co-Chairs, Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association: Supports language in the legislation that would require the Commissioner of Transportation to identify 5 transit-adjacent zones around the state that they believe would benefit from redevelopment, as well as the provision that would allow for multi-family and accessory apartment units within a half mile of the transit center.

Susan Miller, Resident, Windsor: Supports this legislation on the basis of affordable housing and its positive environmental impact.

Jim Perras, CEO, Home Builders and Remodelers Association of CT: Supports how this legislation would make it easier to build new housing in areas with existing infrastructure and high demand for housing.

Erin Sheehan, Legislation and Data Analyst, CT Voices for Children: Supports how this legislation would increase housing affordability and diversity in areas near transit centers.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Dana Benson, Resident: Doesn't support that legislation erodes local control over zoning.

Janet Cling, Resident, Darien: Does not believe this legislation will lead to more affordable housing, rather that it would remove local voices from the discussion.

Joseph Colaprico, Resident, Weston: Disagrees with the approach of the legislation and does not support any removal of local control.

Randy Collins, Advocacy Manager, CT Conference of Municipalities: Disagrees with a "one size fits all" approach to zoning regulations, hopes that the state and towns can work more together.

Donna Dubanowski, Realtor, Enfield: Not supportive of language that would remove local control from zoning regulations.

Christopher D. Edge, Economic Development Director, Berlin: Disagrees with the specific language regarding the percentage of area that would be required to be developed and wants the municipalities to have more discretion in that regard.

Damion Fragoso, Resident, Stamford: Concerned that this development would over inundate the area with development and remove needed parking.

Betsy Gara, Executive Director, CT Council on Small Towns: Disagrees with development mandates in the legislation that would remove local control.

Nizajet Gjuraj, Resident, Norwalk: Supports municipal control over zoning, believes that the state should prioritize development of cities rather than suburbs.

Doug Krupa, Resident, Wilton: Believes that any project should be controlled and approved by municipalities, would like any projects to require some amount of affordable housing.

Linda Lavelle, Resident, Ridgefield: Disagrees with the state creating zoning regulations, believes that such action would violate individual property rights.

William Malone, Resident, New Canaan: Does not support the state having control over municipalities in zoning matters.

Barry Michelson, Builder Developer, Stamford: Supports local control over zoning.

Francis Pickering, Executive Director, Western Connecticut Council of Governments: Believes that municipalities are better suited to make zoning decisions and does not believe state mandates can solve zoning issues.

Andy Powell, Chairman, Tolland Planning and Zoning Commission: Has interest in working with state and other local governments but believes that municipalities should have final say.

Deborah Schultz, Resident, Woobury: Supports local control over zoning.

Jayne Stevenson, First Selectman, Town of Darien: Believes this proposal would have a negative impact on their town due to the mandates that would be imposed.

Mary Ann Turner, Resident, Enfield: Supports local control over zoning.

Maria Weingarten, Resident, New Canaan: Believes that the state's priority should be attracting industry and that this proposal would not accomplish that, at least not as well as municipalities could.

The primary controversy in this legislation surrounded the state setting guidelines for municipalities to follow, thus removing some amount of local control. This was addressed in JFS language which removed the mandate for municipalities.

Reported by: Justin Kaiser

Date: 4/1/2021