

Esteemed Chairs Cassano and McCarthy Vahey,
Members of the Planning and Development Committee:

I understand that this bill is intended to increase the supply of a/ordable housing. This is a goal that I, and the region I live in shares, and it is a goal that the region's members are delivering on: from 2002 through 2019, the region created 48% of new a/ordable housing units in Connecticut, despite accounting for 16% of the state's population. The region's adoption of innovative and elective strategies such as transit-oriented development and inclusionary zoning, which requires multifamily housing to include affordable units as a condition of approval, have played a key role in this success.

I, and my neighbors share the goals of SB 1024 but disagree with the assumptions in them that municipalities will not build affordable housing on their own, that state intervention is needed, and that public involvement and equity are in dichotomy.

The region's experience, where local governments voluntarily adopted regulations to promote a/ordable housing production, through a process that included hearings on regulations and proposals, without external intervention, demonstrates these assumptions to be false.

Given false premises, SB 1024 is likely to prove counterproductive, setting back equity rather than advancing it. These bills would compel municipalities to allow denser housing around transit stations and commercial corridors – places where a car is not necessary and that are ideal for households that struggle with the cost of owning one – by right, at market rate, without any affordability requirements. This would pull the rug out from under the region's successful inclusionary zoning programs. (Given lower profits on a/ordable units, it is dubious whether any developers would opt into inclusionary zoning if they can build without it.)

Lastly, most people, including us, move out of cities to be away from multi-family dwellings and the crowdedness, noise, etc that come with them. It's hard to imagine that you can choose a town based on its limited density, only to be told that multi-family housing can be built next to you (we are within a mile of a train station). I am in favor of more access to public transportation for all residents, but this can be achieved in many other ways and if you engaged the communities rather than legislate in isolation, I believe better things would be accomplished.

Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,
-Adam Hirsch