

My wife and I chose to move to Darien after living in a large city for over 20 years. Our decision was not based on the socio-economic demographics of the town but to escape the congested city living for more space, exposure to the outdoors and the often-celebrated charm of a small New England town. We like to enjoy the slower paced atmosphere while still having proximity to engage in city culture. Finding a suburb that was within a commutable distance of major city areas (Stamford, Norwalk, Manhattan) is what made this location so appealing to us. Turning small town Connecticut into more concentrated development living areas will greatly reduce the appeal of attracting new residents to the state.

We explored numerous towns in New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut. Like most home buyers, convenience, quality of schools, property taxes and small-town aesthetics were major factors in our decision. For this reason, we were delighted to have chosen Darien as our residence.

Local planning and zoning are vital to maintain a small town's characteristics. A town which has well defined shopping and business districts, transport hubs, parks and residential areas is as logical as a home which has a kitchen and a garage. If we wanted a more urban appeal, we would have moved to Stamford or Norwalk.

Removing local Planning and Zoning oversight and adding multiple family units to single family zones introduces many negative side effects: increased vehicles on roads already at full capacity and dangerous pedestrian conditions. In addition, green spaces would be greatly reduced. Small town infrastructure and resources are not built to support high density living.

We strongly oppose SB 1024 – A “one size fits all” solution at the state level would only open the door to exploitation by commercial developers and destroy one of Connecticut's biggest appeal – small town charm. Adding more housing units does not ensure more diversity in a community as people tend to gravitate towards shared cultures, socio-economic commonality, and similar beliefs.

The state may provide guidance but let communities chart their own path with thoughtful local considerations.

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