

*To:* CT General Assembly Planning & Development Committee

*From:* Karl Reinhardt of New Canaan, CT

*Re:* SB 1024, An Act Concerning Zoning Authority, Certain Design Guidelines, Qualifications Of Certain Land Use Officials And Certain Sewage Disposal Systems

*Date:* March 15, 2021

Chairman Cassano, Chairwoman McCarthy Vahey, Vice Chairman Needleman, Vice Chairwoman Goupil, Ranking Member Senator Hwang, Ranking Member Zullo, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to you in complete support of SB 1024. This bill will positively impact the community of New Canaan I grew up in and the entire state of Connecticut. While the bill will help to “desegregate” Connecticut (i.e. help to reconcile the huge gaps in racial/ethnic and income inequality that exist between municipalities in the state), it will also generate other benefits in areas of sustainability and economic development. For example, the bill will not just help protect our existing wildlife and farmlands by curbing development sprawl, but will also make more walkable and transit friendly communities that are associated with lower greenhouse gas emissions. The bill will also lead to a more diverse housing stock that is more desirable to younger generations.

This is especially important to me as a young person living in Connecticut. The lack of diverse housing options makes it difficult for many like me to live in the state. SB 1024 proposes changes that would increase housing supply and diversity, which could encourage more young people to stay (or even move) to the state and subsequently increase economic development.

Furthermore, as someone who grew up in the state, the inequality across different municipalities due to land use regulation is staggering. The burden of housing supply and diversity is placed on certain cities and towns, while other municipalities contain only expensive single-family homes that are unaffordable to many due to zoning laws. I can honestly say that growing up in one of these more privileged and segregated communities was not productive for my growth and social awareness. Of

course, there are many aspects of growing up in this community that I do love and appreciate. I just wish these aspects could have been accessible to more than a privileged few. And SB 1024 would allow for more dense development near the train station and downtown center of New Canaan, which would expand affordable housing options and make the community more walkable, diverse, and sustainable.

Finally, as a transportation planner, I want to highlight one technical aspect of the bill in particular. Other states leading transportation and housing policy in the U.S., like California, have already passed laws requiring states to use vehicle miles traveled (VMT) for local development impacts instead of level of service (LOS). While in California, municipalities are required to use VMT, SB 1024 would simply allow municipalities in Connecticut to use VMT instead of LOS if they wish, which is extremely necessary for Connecticut to do at this point at the very least. I have studied and researched the impacts of using LOS vs VMT to measure the transportation impacts of development. Research in California has found that LOS metrics have “led communities to build expensive, capacity-increasing mitigation measures to ease vehicle delay” and “that the vehicle capacity constructed to mitigate LOS may contravene the goals and aspirations of many communities in California, as well as the state's goals for GHG reductions, and is unlikely to solve the congestion problem caused by misplaced land use development” ([Lee and Handy, 2018](#)). The transportation planning community is very much in agreement that VMT is the preferred metric for environmental, economic, public health, and social equity reasons.

Again, I am in full support of SB 1024. This legislation would amend archaic land use laws that hinder Connecticut’s economic growth and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. And, of course, in amending these laws, SB 1024 would also address decades of inequality across racial and ethnic groups that is a result of zoning laws across the state.

Sincerely,

Karl Reinhardt (New Canaan, CT native and current resident)