

Members of the Planning & Development Committee,

The Town of Greenwich completed its most recent Plan of Conservation & Development in 2019. The POCD reflects the voice of the community. In the public outreach period, people stated strongly and consistently that building a better Greenwich involves maintaining “small Town character” and a “New England feel”, with a strong emphasis on community character.

While the public policy goal of eliminating discriminatory provisions in local zoning codes is an important one, the broad brush solutions included in SB1024 will negatively impact communities that don't have such legacy regulations.

In many areas of Fairfield County, the biggest obstacle to the development of affordable housing is not local regulation or community opposition, but the high cost of land and construction. Those high costs cause projects that would charge below market rate rents to be economically unfeasible for private sector developers.

The “as of right” multifamily development rights granted by Section 6 of of SB1024 to lots located within 1/2 mile of a designated transit station or within 1/4 mile of a “Main Street corridor” could have a significant negative impact in a town like Greenwich with four train stations and over six miles of a “Main Street corridor” in US Route 1. Using my personal residence as an example, my single family home on 1/2 acre in an R-20 zone which is within 1/2 mile of a train station could be replaced as-of-right by an eight or nine unit multifamily development. If i, along with all of my neighbors, chose to make that change, it would have a significant negative impact on the local streetscape and neighborhood character, never mind the impact on our local infrastructure (schools, traffic, sewers) with little to no public benefit since none of the units would be required to be affordable.

I believe that the state is better served by focusing its efforts on legislation that would prohibit the most egregious discriminatory zoning practices, like no multifamily zoning allowed, rather than taking an approach like the one proposed in SB1024 that could have significant negative consequences to so many neighborhoods across our state.

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