



Connecticut General Assembly Joint Planning and Development Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 2100
Hartford, CT 06106

March 12, 2021

Re: SB1024, AN ACT CONCERNING ZONING AUTHORITY< CERTAIN DESIGN GUIDELINES, QUALIFICATIONS OF CERTAIN LAND USE OFFICIALS AND CERTAIN SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEMS

Dear Chairman Cassano, Chairwoman McCarthy Vahey, Vice Chairman Needleman, Vice Chairwoman Goupil, Ranking Member Senator Hwang, Ranking Member Zullo, and Distinguished Members of the Connecticut General Assembly Joint Planning and Development Committee:

We are the Safe Streets Coalition of New Haven, a diverse, citywide group of pedestrians, cyclists, public transit riders, and drivers who advocate for just, safe, accessible, and sustainable transportation in New Haven, prioritizing underserved communities. We envision a New Haven and a Connecticut where all residents from all neighborhoods, towns, and cities can easily and safely travel anywhere they want to go without a car.

We are writing to share our strong support for **SB1024** because we know that zoning reform can bring us closer to creating the city we want: one that is more equitable, less car-dependent, and environmentally sustainable.

Reducing Parking Minimums

Mandatory parking minimums harm our towns and cities in many ways. By forcing a minimum number of parking spots to be built, we incentivize and subsidize private car ownership while discouraging the use of car alternatives (public transport, walking, and biking). Onerous parking minimums reduce the available land for development, which drives up the costs of land, future development, and housing. Parking lots pave over our valuable green spaces and increase greenhouse gas emissions through encouraging driving.

In our city of New Haven, 30% of residents do not own cars. Yet our zoning laws require property owners to build parking. They pass on the costs of building expensive parking spots to renters or later homeowners. Parking requirements therefore contribute to the cost burdens on our residents and the lack of affordable housing in New Haven.

We were thrilled when Hartford eliminated all parking minimums and established parking maximums. This is a clear indication from city leadership that public transit riders, pedestrians,

and cyclists are valued in their city. We hope that New Haven will follow suit and move towards ending all parking minimums across all neighborhoods. We know that **SB1024** could help push New Haven towards this reform more quickly and improve the status of excessive parking in towns and cities across Connecticut.

Racial and Economic Justice

The Safe Streets Coalition of New Haven believes that transportation is a matter of racial and economic justice as transportation is a key factor in access to quality jobs. It is no surprise that lower income adults experience greater transportation insecurity: in our city, 46% of adults who earn less than \$15,000 per year report not having access to a car when needed. Black and Latinx residents of New Haven are also more likely to lack car access. Rather than continue to subsidize car ownership, we need to invest in alternative local transportation options to ensure all residents can get to jobs, appointments, and services.

The Safe Streets Coalition of New Haven also understands that transportation is not separable from housing and land use regulations. That's why we support transit-oriented development and accessory dwelling units (ADUs) that will increase affordable and diverse housing — the kind that actually responds to the needs and desires of New Haven residents. Transit-oriented development can ensure that New Haven residents do not have to weigh the tradeoffs of lower cost housing against increased commute time and transportation costs. Instead, it guarantees that our train and bus stations are conveniently located so that low-wage workers do not spend a disproportionate amount of time and money commuting.

Similarly, relaxing ADU laws can increase affordable, space-efficient housing. In New Haven, it has been estimated that reformed ADU regulations could provide 200 new units of housing per year. Not only would we create more affordable housing, we might begin to integrate neighborhoods as smaller, less expensive units become available in communities that have traditionally been out of reach for low-income workers and families.

As part of the Desegregate Connecticut coalition, we urge you to support urgent land use reforms put forth in **SB1024** to move us closer to making Connecticut an equitable, sustainable, and economically vibrant place to live.

Sincerely,
Safe Streets Coalition of New Haven
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