

Hello,

I am submitting testimony for SB 1024, "An Act Concerning Zoning Authority, Certain Design Guidelines, Qualifications of Certain Land Use Officials and Certain Sewage Disposal Systems":

As a former resident of Darien, Connecticut, and as someone whose parents still live in my childhood home in Darien, I support the proposed additions to this bill, including the proposed required trainings for planning and zoning commission members, provisions for mixed-use units and multifamily units near primary transit stations, and provisions for accessory dwelling units. I believe that Connecticut needs to recognize that a shortage of affordable housing stock is detrimental to the long-term vitality of the state and its many towns and cities, and that controlled density need not destroy the character and charm of a Connecticut town. With its great proximity to New York City and Boston, Connecticut will need to work to attract young people, including young workers, to (and back to) Connecticut, young people who are used to navigating their lives without a car, and living amid the cultural bustle of urban centers. I live in New York City at the moment. Many of my peers who also grew up in Connecticut have no plans to return any time soon. A large part of this is the lack of affordable housing options, as much as I believe many of us would appreciate having the option of moving back to the suburbs when we are ready to settle down. Connecticut has many things going for it; proximity to large metropolitan areas and robust commuter rail systems mean it is the perfect escape from urban life for those who seek it. Connecticut has the chance now with this bill to demonstrate a keen awareness of the importance of planning and zoning to the health of its communities. I believe requiring training for members of planning and zoning commissions will ensure that participants on these commissions are more fully equipped to advocate for effective land use and understand the way zoning has shaped Connecticut over the course of its history. Historical context is key; zoning decisions made today will doubtlessly affect our communities for decades to come, as they have in the past affected the state of Connecticut's towns today.

Best regards,  
Alice Wang