

Planning and Development Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6812

Title: AN ACT REDEFINING "INCLUSIONARY ZONING".

Vote Date: 3/28/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/19/2025

File No.: 719

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Planning and Development Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

To amend the definition of 'inclusionary zoning' to expressly include the acquisition of real property for the purpose of developing affordable housing.

The Substitute Language modifies the legal requirements for how municipalities must publish legal notices, particularly transitioning toward online publication and clarifying what constitutes sufficient circulation.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[James Foster, Chair- Westport AH Trust Fund Committee](#)

James Foster, Chair of the Westport Affordable Housing Trust Fund Committee, writes in support of the bill. He believes it would benefit the expansion of affordable housing options in Westport. He shares that the committee, of which he is chair, unanimously voted in favor of supporting changes to the legislation.

[John Guszowski, CCAPA Government Relations Committee Co-Chair](#)

John Guszowski, Government Relations Officer for the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association, writes in support. He notes the organization supports the bill because it would expand the definition of "inclusionary zoning" in Section 8-2i to include the acquisition of property for affordable housing development. They believe this is a critical tool for

municipalities to address the housing crisis and consider this an appropriate amendment to the statute. He also provides more background on the organization.

[Paul Lebowitz, Chairman-Westport P&Z Commission](#)

Paul Lebowitz, Chairman of the Westport Planning and Zoning Commission, writes in support. He shares that in February 2024, Westport established an Affordable Housing Trust Fund to support the purchase, renovation, and management of affordable housing on town-owned land. This was funded through an inclusionary housing fee on non-municipal construction, which has already raised nearly \$1 million. However, the town attorney advised that the current statute 8-2i does not explicitly authorize land acquisition. They were informed that only donations or grants could be used for this purpose. After consultation with legal counsel and state officials, they were advised to request a statutory modification. He concludes by stating that the Town of Westport, with support from the First Selectwoman, the Affordable Housing Committee, the RTM ordinance sponsors, and both state representatives, respectfully requests that 8-2i be amended.

[Zachary McKeown, Advocacy Manager for the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities \(CCM\)](#)

He states that H.B. 6812 would redefine “inclusionary zoning” to include the acquisition of property for affordable housing development. Inclusionary zoning under 8-2i is intended to help municipalities actively plan for affordable housing, yet it currently does not include land acquisition. The bill would likely allow affordable housing funds to be applied to acquiring suitable property, thus expanding development options.

[Francis Pickering, Executive Director, Western Connecticut Council of Governments](#)

Francis Pickering, Executive Director of the Western Connecticut Council of Governments, writes in support. He explains that this bill would explicitly allow housing funds to cover not just the construction and renovation of affordable housing, but also the land beneath it. He emphasizes that the lack of authority to apply housing trust funds toward land purchases is a primary barrier to developing affordable housing under inclusionary zoning. This bill would correct that by making it clear that such funds can be used to acquire land.

[Jonathan Steinberg, State Representative, CGA](#)

Jonathan Steinberg, State Representative, writes in support. He references Westport’s recent ordinance to collect a 0.5% fee on non-municipal construction to fund affordable housing, which is expected to generate nearly \$1 million annually. However, the town attorney determined that statute 8-2i does not explicitly permit land acquisition, unlike statute 8-37pp. Steinberg urges amending 8-2i to clarify that housing trust funds may be used for acquisition and other related activities. This would give towns greater flexibility to address their affordable housing needs.

[Seth Braunstein](#)

Seth Braunstein writes in support of H.B. No. 6812. In his testimony, he shared that he co-sponsored the legislation that established the Town of Westport’s Affordable Housing Fund. He strongly supports efforts at the state level to allow inclusionary zoning fees to be used to purchase land. He highlights how crucial this is to Westport’s efforts and broader initiatives across Connecticut to promote and develop affordable housing options.

[Danielle Dobin](#)

Danielle Dobin writes in support of H.B. No. 6812. She requests that this change be adopted

to permit affordable housing trust fund dollars, raised through zoning permit fees, to be used for land acquisition. She argues that limiting land purchases to funds raised only through donations severely restricts a town's ability to address the affordable housing crisis. Dobin notes that Westport's fund has already raised nearly \$1 million and asks for the law to be updated so her committee can convert these dollars into deed-restricted units. She emphasizes that she is writing as a citizen and not on behalf of the town or board.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Shay Richards

Date: 4/23/2025