

Planning and Development Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6831

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING TRANSIT-ORIENTED COMMUNITIES.

Vote Date: 3/12/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/3/2025

File No.: 346

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SPONSOR OF BILL:

Planning and Development Committee.

REASONS FOR BILL:

The bill's focus is on development in areas that are already served by transportation infrastructure, such as rapid transit or regular bus service. The core idea behind the bill is to link a municipality's access to discretionary state infrastructure funding. Such as, grants and loans for public works projects, to the adoption of transit-oriented development (TOD) zoning. By doing so, the state hopes to align local zoning with broader goals like increasing housing availability, especially affordable units, improving transit ridership, reducing reliance on cars, and encouraging walkable communities. Overall, the bill aims to address the state's housing shortage, reduce sprawl, and support sustainable growth by concentrating development in areas that can accommodate it.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE: Tightens the scope of eligible funding sources by removing conservation-related programs. It grants more authority to the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management and to designated officials, rather than allowing external consultants. Additionally, the substitute language calls for required percentages of affordable housing units in developments, adds more specifics on eligible public landowners, and explicitly permits mixed-use developments by right in transit-oriented districts. It also emphasizes environmental justice, mobility alternatives, and regional planning through interagency collaboration for developing zoning guidelines. The implementation deadline is moved up to October 1, 2025. Additional refinements include prioritizing funding in designated "activity zones" instead of broader "priority funding areas," and placing conditions on accessory dwelling units (ADUs), such as a 3-year ownership minimum.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Martin L. Heft, Undersecretary, The Office of Policy and Management \(OPM\)](#): They support Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) but argues that the proposed bill creates duplicative processes that would be inefficient to administer. The bill introduces two parallel programs for qualifying transit-oriented and transit-adjacent communities, which overlap with existing efforts by the Connecticut Municipal Redevelopment Authority (MRDA) to encourage TOD and revitalization in municipalities. MRDA has already begun working with multiple towns to establish development districts, and OPM believes consolidating the processes would be more efficient. Additionally, OPM suggests that decision-making authority should rest with the Secretary of OPM, not a consultant or staff. The bill also proposes creating a non-lapsing "public water and sewer rehabilitation or expansion account," which OPM opposes due to concerns over transparency and compliance with the state's spending cap, as it bypasses the annual appropriations process.

[Gina Calabro, Executive Director/CEO, American Institute of Architects \(AIA\)](#): The speaker supports the Work Live Ride (WLR) bill, which aims to establish mixed-use housing near public transit. They believe it will foster community interaction, reduce car dependency, and promote pedestrian-friendly areas, while revitalizing downtowns and town centers. The bill is seen to increase housing diversity, improve access to jobs and services for non-drivers, and support both urban and smaller communities. It also offers residents more housing options, such as downsizing or generating extra income, while promoting sustainability by reducing emissions and encouraging investment in transit-oriented areas. Overall, the WLR bill is viewed as a step toward a more inclusive, equitable, and environmentally friendly Connecticut.

[Anne Manusky, National Director, Connecticut Republican Assembly](#): "Have the CT General Assembly attorneys' reviewed this bill for its Constitutional standing? It goes against self-government of the People. Doesn't this violate the Constitution in that outside organizations, such as Regional Plan Association and Desegregate CT are usurping the Connecticut Peoples' towns and properties, rather than inquire local municipalities whether they are interested in making the noted local "improvements"? "Financial incentives" are additional taxes on the People. The People already have great concerns with being unknowingly taxed via the electric bill "Public Benefits". This is an act against the will of the People."

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Gara Betsy, Executive Director, CT Council on Small Towns \(COST\)](#): The speaker expresses concerns about HB 6831, arguing that it could undermine Connecticut's existing successful Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) efforts, such as those supported by Public Act 23-204. They worry that the new bill creates confusing requirements for TOD funding that could limit funding for other critical projects, especially in towns without transit stations. While they support the creation of an interagency council to address housing development issues and the establishment of a fund for expanding water and wastewater capacity, they believe the bill's funding for infrastructure projects is inadequate. They also oppose Section 8 of the bill, which would override municipalities' decisions on accessory apartments, considering it

overreaching. The speaker advocates for building on existing TOD efforts rather than introducing new, potentially disruptive frameworks.

[Gara Betsy, Executive Director, Connecticut Water Works Association \(CWWA\)](#): They argue this could divert resources from urgent public health and environmental needs, such as wastewater treatment, water contamination issues (e.g., PFAS, uranium), and clean water infrastructure. They worry the bill may disrupt existing timelines and coordination with programs like the Clean Water Fund. CWWA also opposes limiting new funding (via Section 5) only to TOD areas, while many communities struggle to address broader water supply and sewer issues. They urge lawmakers to expand Section 5 to include funding for the state's broader public water supply needs through the Public Water Supply Improvement grant program.

[Jessica Doll, Executive Director, CT Apartment Association](#): They support HB 6381, which gives municipalities the option, not a mandate, to become transit-oriented or transit-adjacent communities, striking a balance between local control and increasing housing supply. They stress the need for more mixed-use development, middle housing, and the conversion of vacant commercial properties into multifamily zones. However, they express concerns about certain aspects of the bill, including parking requirements, development impact fees, and deed restrictions. They also advocate for reducing the required percentage of deed-restricted units from 15% to 10% in high-opportunity markets. Additionally, they highlight concerns about unscrupulous landlords harming residents' sense of home.

[Sarah Fox, Chief Executive Officer, Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness](#): They call this bill a transformative solution to Connecticut's homelessness crisis and housing shortage. They argue that the lack of affordable housing is the root cause of homelessness and that providing stable, affordable homes is crucial for improving health, education, and economic outcomes. The bill aims to promote Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), which integrates affordable housing with public transit to create walkable, diverse neighborhoods with accessible jobs and safer streets. The speaker highlights the growing housing gap, the rising cost of rent, and the increase in homelessness, emphasizing that TOD can address these issues by providing more housing options, stimulating economic growth, and reducing environmental impacts. They urge lawmakers to pass the bill to create a sustainable, affordable, and connected future for Connecticut.

[Kathleen Callahan, Director of Policy and Civic Engagement, CT Cradle to Career Coalition](#): The speaker advocates for legislative solutions that address systemic inequities and promote comprehensive policies to improve education, workforce development, and healthcare access, particularly focusing on youth disconnection. They highlight the negative impact of exclusionary zoning, which has contributed to racial and economic segregation in Connecticut. The speaker supports the bill for its opt-in approach to promoting equitable, affordable, and sustainable land use policies, emphasizing that zoning plays a crucial role in community health, education, and economic outcomes. They stress that housing and transportation are key social determinants of health, and transit-oriented development (TOD) can drive economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social equity. TOD is seen as essential for creating connected, vibrant neighborhoods that foster well-being and resilience in communities.

Melanie Lee, Co-Chair and Debra Tangarone, Co-Chair, Congregations Organized for a New Connecticut (CONECT): After hearing personal stories about housing struggles, they believe the bill will help address issues like eviction, homelessness, and the need for more affordable housing, especially in transit corridors. They urge lawmakers to pass the bill, emphasizing its potential to create diverse, walkable homes, increase job access, and support safer streets. They highlight the urgency of the state's housing crisis and the bill's role in providing more affordable housing options for families, seniors, and others in need.

Melvette Hill, Executive Director of the Connecticut Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity (CWCSEO): They emphasize that the bill encourages affordable housing near public transit, stimulates economic growth, and reduces the state's carbon footprint. TOD offers equitable access to housing, employment, and services, benefiting working families and communities of color. Hill highlights the importance of zoning reform and TOD policies, which would help small businesses, boost local economies, and reduce car dependency, leading to cleaner air and improved environmental sustainability. The bill also provides financial incentives for municipalities to adopt TOD policies, establishes an Interagency Council on Housing Development, and ensures at least 10% of housing near transit hubs is affordable. Hill stresses that the bill focuses on transit stations (train and CTfastrak), maximizing impact. They urge the legislature to act on this critical issue to address housing and climate challenges, with CWCSEO committed to promoting policies that benefit underserved communities.

Lori Brown, Executive Director, CT League of Conservation Voters: CTLCV supports HB 6831 for promoting smart growth and transit-oriented development (TOD), but has concerns about Section 1(a)(1), which references the Open Space & Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program. They agree with other environmental groups that this provision should be removed. While the bill provides a zoning tool to reduce sprawl and car dependence, CTLCV emphasizes the need to include environmental standards, particularly for inland wetlands and watercourses. Wetlands play a vital role in climate change mitigation, flood storage, and water quality improvement. CTLCV insists that local wetlands agencies be consulted during the planning of transit-oriented communities and can hold public hearings to ensure better stormwater management and safer development patterns.

Jon Zagrodzky, First Selectman, Town of Darien: They acknowledge the need for affordable housing but emphasizes that a one-size-fits-all approach doesn't work. Each town should tailor solutions to fit its needs. In Darien, developers must allocate 14% of new apartments as affordable, resulting in 29 new units in the past three years and 46 more underway, despite the town being 98% developed. Darien has also built a \$1 million Affordable Housing Trust. While many of these units are near transit, the speaker opposes mandates on development size, density, or location, and rejects subsidizing outside developers, arguing it could lead to profit-driven projects that ignore local impacts. Darien supports affordable and transit-oriented development on its own terms—and the current strategy is producing results.

Caitlin Rose, Chief Executive Officer, Friendship Service Center: They're a Hamden resident and expert in homelessness who leads a homeless services organization in New Britain, expresses strong support for H.B. 6831, known as Work Live Ride. They emphasize the bill's potential to address Connecticut's housing shortage by promoting walkable, transit-

accessible communities that link housing and employment opportunities. Rose notes the bill is not a mandate but a voluntary roadmap for municipalities. They highlight the challenges faced by workers due to the lack of affordable housing near jobs and limited transportation options, which can impact quality of life and financial stability.

[Natalie Shurtleff, Associate State Director, AARP](#): AARP highlights that TOD promotes independence, social connection, and better health outcomes by reducing isolation and encouraging active lifestyles. It also provides economic benefits by lowering transportation costs and stimulating local economies through new businesses and increased housing options. AARP especially supports the bill's provision for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), which offer affordable, flexible housing alternatives for older adults wishing to downsize while remaining in their communities. They argue that lifting restrictive regulations on ADUs will help address housing shortages. Overall, AARP sees TOD as a comprehensive solution that enhances mobility, affordability, and inclusion for older adults, allowing them to live independently and thrive in their communities.

[Carol Scully, Director of Advocacy, The Arc of Connecticut](#): While endorsing the bill's goals, The Arc emphasizes the need to specifically address the unique housing and transportation challenges faced by people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), autism, and other disabilities. These individuals often struggle with inaccessible and unaffordable housing, limited transportation—especially in rural areas—and outdated policies that contribute to segregation and inequality. The Arc highlights that housing and transportation are deeply interconnected, and without inclusive, accessible transit options, people with disabilities remain excluded from job and housing opportunities. They stress the importance of planning inclusive communities by incorporating affordability, accessibility, and assistive technology needs into development. The Arc urges that H.B. 6831 be amended to explicitly include language that ensures accessibility and affordability for people with disabilities, making transit-oriented communities truly inclusive.

[Cassandra Archer, President, the Connecticut chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architects \(NOMAct\)](#). They emphasize the bill's focus on smart, transit-oriented development that balances housing needs with environmental and historic preservation. NOMAct supports the bill's inclusion of affordable housing requirements and its voluntary, incentive-based approach. They view HB 6831 as a meaningful opportunity to promote equity, reduce sprawl, and create more inclusive, sustainable communities across Connecticut.

[Mendi Blue Paca, President & CEO, Fairfield County's Community Foundation](#): The bill seeks to enhance data collection and disaggregation by race, ethnicity, and other demographic factors, with the goal of addressing disparities and promoting equity. Blue Paca emphasizes that detailed and accurate data is essential for understanding systemic inequities and making informed policy decisions. They explain that the Foundation already uses disaggregated data to guide its equity-focused work, identify gaps, and measure the impact of its initiatives. In their testimony, they urge legislators to pass the bill, framing it as a vital step toward inclusive, equitable, and effective governance.

[Alan Cavagnaro, Deputy Director, DesegregateCT](#): They criticize outdated zoning policies that require large lots and restrict development, ultimately stalling growth and limiting tax revenue. Citing research, they highlight that restrictive zoning has significantly hindered U.S.

economic growth by limiting access to opportunity. Sharing their personal experience as a UConn commuter student, they point out how car dependency and limited housing access pose financial and academic challenges. They advocate for Transit-Oriented Communities to reduce these barriers, noting that nearly 48% of college students face housing insecurity. Expanding housing near transit would improve access to education, jobs, and essential services while decreasing car reliance.

[Michael Glidden, Legislative Liaison Connecticut Association of Zoning Enforcement Officials \(CAZEO\)](#): CAZEO, representing zoning enforcement officers across Connecticut, raises concerns about HB 6831. They argue the bill may not effectively address the state's housing issues, particularly in smaller or rural communities lacking transit infrastructure and sewer systems. These towns could struggle to compete for funding and face challenges supporting dense development. CAZEO also objects to requiring communities to commit to plans before state guidelines are finalized, calling it premature and potentially misleading. They urge legislators to consider these issues before moving forward with the bill.

[Samuel Gold, Executive Director, RiverCOG](#): They say true TOD requires reliable, frequent service, which many towns lack. The bill also gives zoning responsibilities to municipal bodies that don't have that authority, bypasses planning commissions, and ignores existing state and local plans. They criticize the lack of municipal and regional representation on the bill's proposed housing council and warn that vague TOD definitions will dilute funding and hinder real progress. RiverCOG supports TOD in town centers with proper planning, but believes this bill falls short and recommends the Municipal Redevelopment Authority lead TOD efforts instead.

[John Guskowski, Government Relations Committee, The Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association \(CCAPA\)](#): The author supports Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) and encourages Connecticut communities with transit stations to see it as an opportunity for economic development. They believe TOD can improve housing diversity and quality of life, especially for people who rely on public transportation. They acknowledge the progress some communities have made and expresses a desire to collaborate with the Office of Responsible Growth to assist towns that need help implementing TOD.

[Grace Brangwynne, Public Policy Associate, CBIA](#): CBIA supports transit-oriented development but is concerned about prioritizing funding for qualifying transit-oriented communities over other municipalities. They argue that lowering funding priority for non-qualifying towns could hinder business growth in those areas.

[Dorothy Adams](#): They highlight benefits for people with mobility challenges, those downsizing, and those seeking eco-friendly transportation. The bill offers incentives, not mandates, and supports local visions for resilient development. They emphasize the urgency due to the long timeline for physical development and the need for diverse housing solutions, including community land trusts. Passing the bill would show that state leaders are committed to a smart, sustainable future amid national political uncertainty.

[Anonymous Anonymous, Conect](#): "Abandoned real estate near transit at former Mauro Motors car dealership on Dixwell Avenue in Hamden. Also, former LA Fitness on Skiff Street and former YMCA on Shepherd Avenue. USE EMINENT DOMAIN and CREATE HOUSING."

[People Friendly Stamford](#): People Friendly Stamford (PFS), a local volunteer group, strongly supports HB 6831. They advocate for safer, more affordable, and environmentally sustainable communities by encouraging housing near public transit. PFS argues that suburban sprawl has led to high housing costs, environmental damage, and car dependency. In contrast, smart development around transit can reduce traffic, lower emissions, support local businesses, and improve quality of life. Infill development, especially in expensive cities like Stamford, offers affordable housing, boosts tax revenue, and helps preserve natural areas.

[Chris D'Antonio, A member of Enfield's Planning and Zoning Commission](#): (speaking personally) They express strong support for HB 6831, especially as Enfield prepares for the return of its rail station in Thompsonville—a neighborhood ideal for transit-oriented development (TOD). The area already has walkability, diverse housing, and a dense core. The speaker emphasizes that not all towns have allowed such smart, people-focused development, which is essential to solving Connecticut's housing and affordability crisis. They argue the state's strong but underutilized transit system should be paired with strategic housing growth. HB 6831 enables this by offering an opt-in framework that respects local control while encouraging municipalities to plan sustainably. It supports communities ready to embrace TOD, without mandating participation, and allows local commissions to shape their own transit districts using proven best practices.

[Jocelyn Ault](#): They share a personal story about their 36-year-old daughter who only recently moved out of Stamford due to the lack of affordable housing. They emphasize the need for more housing at various price points to prevent people from being trapped in high-rent cycles. They appreciate that the bill is voluntary, allowing towns to opt in for funding and benefits. The resident sees the bill to revitalize downtown areas, encouraging walkability, local business support, and community engagement, especially among younger residents who currently seek entertainment elsewhere.

[Bryan Baker](#): Drawing from experience with Planning and Zoning Commission meetings, they note that opposition to new housing is often based on unfounded concerns like traffic or school overcrowding—despite evidence, such as declining school enrollment in places like Norwalk. The bill offers a voluntary, incentive-based approach: towns that opt in can access infrastructure funding to support growth, while those that choose not to participate face no penalties. This “carrot” approach promotes sustainable development while respecting local control.

[Clara Biesel](#): Having lived in cities with excellent transit, they envision a future where public transit makes life more affordable and reduces the state's climate impact. They highlight personal experiences, such as being able to visit family via train and enjoying interactions with students on the bus. They hope for a future where Connecticut residents can move around without relying heavily on cars.

[Owen Biesel](#): They advocate for increasing downtown population density to boost demand for public transit, which would make it easier for everyone to get around. They highlight the benefits of replacing cars with walking, biking, and public transit, including fewer traffic accidents, cleaner air, and a stronger local economy with more foot traffic for small businesses. They envision a future where train stations are gateways to vibrant local communities across the state.

[Marie Bravo](#): The speaker, a Hamden resident, supports the bill, citing the rising housing costs that have priced many people out of the town. They believe the bill will help increase housing supply near transit and legalize efficient housing options like "missing middle" homes. They emphasize the need to address the financial burden of high rents and mortgages and see this as an opportunity for the state to lead in housing development.

[Tamar O'Brien](#): "It is critical for more affordable housing within .5 miles of transit stations/bus rapid transit. It also emphasizes missing "middle housing" which is housing units between 2-9 per structure. This will make CT a more equitable, livable place."

[Thomas Broderick](#): The speaker argues that Connecticut's current land use policies, particularly in Fairfield County near Metro-North stations, are hindering the economy, damaging the climate, and underutilizing investments in transit infrastructure. The speaker believes that this bill will help towns grow, reduce CO2 emissions by encouraging transit use over cars, and unlock the potential of investments in transit. They emphasize that building such communities will ease housing costs, attract more workers, and boost the state's economy, making it a crucial move for the General Assembly.

[Chapin Bryce](#): They highlight the importance of mobility options that don't rely on personal vehicles, particularly for working families, seniors, and those unable to drive. They share a personal experience from growing up on a dairy farm in rural Vermont, where a bus stop connecting their town to Burlington provided access to jobs and upward mobility. They suggest that a bill promoting transit-oriented development could have helped their community by supporting infrastructure around their main street and improving housing availability.

[Carolyn Cary](#): They support HB 6831, stating it would help create special housing zones near transportation routes, making it easier for residents to access their municipalities and strengthen community development. Citing a vacant Walgreens in Hamden as an example, they see potential for affordable mixed-residency housing that could revitalize the area. They believe the bill would reduce traffic, boost small business growth, increase property values, and enhance community-building efforts.

[Joshua Caskey](#): They highlight that homelessness is rising due to a severe shortage of affordable housing. As working people spend more of their income on housing, they are forced to cut back on essentials like food and transportation. They also address environmental concerns, noting that transportation is a major source of CO2 emissions and air pollution in Connecticut, contributing to environmental disasters and health issues like asthma. They argue that the state's current zoning, which heavily favors single-family homes, limits the use of alternative transportation.

[Ryan Casella](#): "If you support practical and healthy urban growth, this bill is a great step in that direction. Attracting (and keeping) talent CT is dependent on creating a housing stock that matches the needs of a diverse and growing population. Let's meet the moment with responsible and forward-thinking legislation!"

[Tom Catricala](#): A Southington resident and pro-housing advocate urges lawmakers to pass the Work Live Ride bill, emphasizing its strong support in the previous legislative session, including 90 House votes, and backing from the Governor. They stress the bill has been

thoroughly vetted, widely supported across Connecticut, and is essential for improving communities.

[Sarah Churchill](#): They emphasize that the bill will help create diverse, walkable communities near public transit, leading to more affordable housing, better job access, and safer streets. With Connecticut facing a housing shortage, climate challenges, and uncertain federal support, they argue that now is the time to strengthen the state's ability to support local housing reforms and ensure a more accessible and appealing future for residents.

[Christina Corey](#): They support the Work Live Ride bill, urging its passage to address Connecticut's housing shortage. They believe the bill will help create diverse, walkable communities near public transit, leading to more affordable housing, better job access, and safer streets. With growing climate risks and uncertain federal support, they stress the importance of building state-level capacity to support local housing reforms now.

[Carlos Diaz](#): The speaker urges lawmakers to pass the "Work, Live, Ride" bill as soon as possible, emphasizing that it has been thoroughly vetted and has broad support across the state. They argue that the bill will create diverse, walkable homes, provide more affordable housing, and improve job accessibility and safety. With Connecticut facing a housing shortage, climate risks, and uncertain federal support, they stress the importance of passing the bill to help towns evolve in ways that are both accessible and affordable for current and future residents.

Seventy-three other individuals have submitted written testimony in support of this bill, stating it would help create special housing zones near transportation routes, making it easier for residents to access their municipalities and strengthen community development. [Here's the link for this testimony.](#)

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

[Tina Courpas, Connecticut General Assembly, State Representative](#): She represents Connecticut's 149th District, opposes HB 6831 despite supporting affordable housing. She argues the bill undermines local control by shifting zoning authority to the state, which lacks the local knowledge to manage details like parking and setbacks effectively. She also criticizes the bill's "opt-in" structure, calling it a coercive financial penalty for towns that choose not to participate. She raises concerns about environmental protections, stating the bill's language on wetlands and coastal areas is vague and insufficient. Additionally, she believes the bill is not a comprehensive solution, as it overlooks broader economic issues like high taxes and energy costs that affect housing affordability. Finally, she warns of severe unintended consequences, such as increased school overcrowding and a loophole allowing profit-driven development of non-affordable, even luxury, housing without local oversight. While committed to addressing the housing crisis, she maintains this bill is not the right approach.

[Micheal Criss, First Selectman, Town of Harington](#): He stresses that programs like STEAP, the Clean Water Fund, Urban Act, and Open Space & Watershed Land Acquisition are essential for towns like Harwinton to fund infrastructure and community projects without raising property taxes. Harwinton has used STEAP funds to upgrade its sewer system

(2023), rehabilitate a veteran's memorial (2021–2022), and plan a tennis and pickleball facility (2025). Representing regional organizations like the Northwest Council of Governments and COST, Criss warns the bill would remove key funding sources from rural areas, making them less affordable and harder to serve. He urges the Planning & Development Committee to reject H.B. 6831, which he says unfairly disadvantages rural towns with significant funding needs.

Francis Pickering, Executive Director, Western Connecticut Council of Governments: He argues that the bill would negatively impact the structure and operation of councils of governments (COGs) across the state. Pickering expresses concern that the bill could undermine local control by changing the governance of COGs, impose unfunded mandates, and complicate their day-to-day operations. He also suggests that the bill could reduce the overall efficiency and responsiveness of COGs, which he states are currently functioning well under existing laws. He recommends that any proposed changes to COG structure be developed collaboratively with the councils themselves and based on a careful and comprehensive review.

Ulla Tiik-Barclay, Killingly Town Councilor: They state that most local residents value the town's rural character and do not want increased housing density. They argue the bill undermines local control and imposes a one-size-fits-all approach driven by outside interests like Desegregate CT and large developers. They criticize the use of state funding as leverage to force towns into compliance and believes municipalities shouldn't be responsible for fixing a housing shortage, they say was caused by state policies, including Connecticut's status as a sanctuary state.

Jonathan Blake, Town Planner/Zoning Enforcement Officer, Killingly: The bill encourages municipalities to opt-in for priority funding, but in doing so, would grant the state control over local zoning, including aspects like parking, density, and setbacks. This undermines local decision-making and may bypass environmental protections. The bill also creates new levels of bureaucracy and introduces a program of grants for transit and infrastructure development. The writer suggests that the state should focus on empowering local governments and consider other measures like tax exemptions for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to promote affordable housing, without overreaching with legislation. They believe TOD can be supported through traditional grants, without forcing municipalities to surrender control.

Fred Camillo, First Selectman, Town of Greenwich: The speaker, a former member of the Connecticut General Assembly and First Selectman, criticizes the bill for being misleading and overreaching. While labeled as "opt-in," the bill is seen as punitive, threatening municipalities with reduced state funding if they don't comply. They argue it undermines local autonomy, as it could allow a state-appointed "zoning czar" to override local zoning decisions. They also express concern that the bill offers no protections for the environment or historic preservation, particularly in towns like Greenwich, where these values are important. Additionally, the bill would bypass public hearings for most developments, preventing expert input on preservation and land use. They call the proposal undemocratic and troubling for Connecticut.

Zachary McKeown, The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM): CCM opposes the bill due to its prioritization of funding for municipalities that adopt TOD districts, which could

penalize towns without transit hubs. They recommend removing TOD-related funding from certain grants like STEAP and Urban Act funds and creating a separate appropriation for sewer infrastructure for TOD-adopting towns. CCM suggests that MRDA, which already serves as the state's TOD policy, should control additional water and sewer bond funds rather than including them in the Clean Water Fund. This would preserve existing funds for their intended purposes. They also support the MRDA's incentive-based approach, which encourages towns to adopt housing growth zones around transit hubs, making them eligible for dedicated resources. CCM expresses strong support for the Office of Responsible Growth within the Office of Policy and Management, highlighting its role in coordinating planning efforts across the state to strengthen communities, protect the environment, and promote economic growth.

[Dan Carter, First Selectman, Town of Bethel](#): They express frustration that access to essential funding, like STEAP grants, could be jeopardized unless the town cedes control of local zoning to an outside entity appointed by OPM. They emphasize the town's unique and vibrant downtown, which attracts visitors and has even been featured in films. They argue that HB 6831 forces a difficult choice between staying competitive for grants or risking state-imposed regulations—like a 4-story height limit—that could harm local planning and development efforts.

[Aziz Dehkan, Executive Director, Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs \(CRCJ\)](#): They raise concerns about the vagueness of HB 6831, particularly around terms like "reasonable size" and the role of consultants in determining it. They question the lack of clear guidelines on issues like the size of transit-oriented districts, whether areas near watercourses or historical districts are affected, and how towns with existing transit plans but not meeting all guidelines will be treated. They also ask how the bill's implementation in 2025 will impact cities and towns that have already begun working on transit-oriented districts and whether they will need to reapply for funding.

[Michael Goldstein, Member of Greenwich RTM](#): They, talking as an individual and not a member, express concern that new legislation will give the state control over parts of Greenwich's downtown and residential areas. They argue that some of the Metro North stations in Greenwich (Riverside and Cos Cob) are in residential zones without infrastructure for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), while downtown Greenwich and Old Greenwich are already heavily developed. They compare this situation to the historical grievance of taxation without representation, claiming that the state is imposing tax burdens on Greenwich without proper local representation. They also point to policies in Hartford that have led to wealth flight from the town, which has historically contributed a significant portion of Connecticut's income tax revenue.

[Anonymous Anonymous](#): They believe the bill is not truly voluntary and would shift zoning power to the state, limiting public input and local oversight. They express concerns about overdevelopment, strain on infrastructure, and environmental impacts. The bill would allow large developments without public hearings or zoning board review, reducing transparency and accountability. Instead, they advocate for focusing development in underdeveloped, more affordable areas like Bridgeport or Norwalk, rather than already congested, affluent towns.

Sean Ghio, Policy Director, Partnership for Strong Communities: This statement supports HB 6831 (Work Live Ride) for promoting walkable, transit-oriented communities with more affordable housing. It highlights the bill's role in reducing transportation costs, improving access to jobs, and addressing racial and economic segregation—especially in places like Fairfield County. The writer urges removal of the option allowing developers to pay a fee instead of building affordable units, arguing that mixed-income housing should be integrated on-site. They also warn that affordable housing trust funds can be misused to reduce affordable housing in developments, undermining the bill's goals.

Joe Anonymous: "We are not interested in these outside groups trying to exert their will on us the people. We don't want high-rises in our towns. We don't want projects being built near our houses and schools bringing crime and drugs and all the other unnecessary crap that comes along with it. We moved to the suburbs for a reason to get OUT of the city. We don't want the city being brought to our backyard. KEEP THIS OUT OF OUR TOWNS!!!! You guys and your proposals are pushing the people to be more combative, and we will push back harder and harder the more you bother us, so I suggest you pack your stuff up and get off our backs!! GO FIND ANOTHER HOBBY!! GO LIVE YOUR LIVES IN PEACE STOP BOTHERING EVERYONE ELSE WHO MIND THEIR OWN BUSINESS AND WANT TO ENJOY LIFE!!"

Peter Arakelian: "I am not in favor of HB06831. I do not believe the State should be imposing housing and development initiatives on municipalities. Each municipality should develop its own plan consistent with its potential housing needs consistent with its infrastructure and property values."

John Aurello: "I am not in favor of continued construction in our Connecticut cities and towns that I believe will hurt our present citizens."

Karen Banks: They argue that this bill undermines local control by shifting authority to the state, which they believe is generally unwise. They also criticize the bill for not sufficiently addressing environmental concerns like water supply and wetlands. Additionally, they feel it unfairly favors towns that opt in by giving them priority for grants and funding, effectively penalizing those that opt out.

Mary Beeman: They argue that it represents an overreach by legislators who don't live in the community and would withhold tax revenues if towns don't comply. They criticize the bill's opt-in requirement, which would shift local zoning control to a state-appointed coordinator, overriding local zoning boards. They believe that local control is essential for addressing residents' concerns and that state interference could lead to negative consequences like increased traffic and community tension, as developments may not align with the town's character.

Lisa Bernier: They're from the Brooklyn-Pomfret area, opposes housing developments near her rural community, particularly one behind the Brooklyn school. They argue that transit-oriented housing is unrealistic in rural areas where residents rely on cars for transportation. They emphasize that they moved to the area for its quiet, rural nature and do not want increased traffic and housing. They urge the preservation of the region's rural character, including farms and gardens that contribute to the community.

[Aubrey Blatchley](#): "Connecticut consists of unique and beautiful towns One size fits all zoning will destroy the character of these towns. Please leave planning, development and zoning to local control."

[Patricia Bollettieri](#): The testimony criticizes affordable housing laws in Connecticut, arguing that they give too much power to wealthy developers and consulting firms, often at the expense of regular citizens. It suggests that the housing market should operate naturally without heavy regulation. The testimony highlights several Connecticut towns like Torrington, New London, and Norwich, which already offer affordable housing, and claims that job growth and community development will follow once people move there. It opposes the creation of large apartment complexes in overcrowded areas like Fairfield County, asserting that artificial housing mandates destabilize communities. The testimony also points out the negative effects of Eminent Domain, which has been used to tear down affordable housing in areas like Fort Trumbull and West Haven, undermining efforts to increase affordable housing availability.

[Aaron Bowman](#): The bill raises promotes high-density projects without accountability, forcing municipalities to cover infrastructure costs while benefiting out-of-state developers. The bill allows projects of up to 9 units to bypass local review and affordability requirements. It expands the 8-30g loophole, forcing towns to accept large developments without considering community impact. The bill also grants the Secretary of OPM authority over zoning, removes local decision-making, and presents environmental and financial risks, including unfunded infrastructure costs and reduced environmental protections. Towns are pressured to comply with Transit-Oriented Development mandates or lose funding.

[Roberta Brill](#): The bill is criticized for removing local control, as the state office lacks local knowledge and accountability. It is expected that the Office of Responsible Growth would override local planning boards, eliminating public hearings and appeals, and preventing residents and preservation groups from protecting the environment and historic areas.

[Ned Brokaw](#): "This bill undermines the fundamental rights of representative democracy where local land issues should be determined by local representatives, not legislative agendas of state bureaucrats. This bill attacks the fundamentals of our democracy."

[Ora Burstein](#): "My name is Ora Burstein and I strongly object to this bill I favor local zoning."

[Thomas Cardello](#): It advocates for a policy requiring municipalities to establish zoning laws that support affordable housing development, along with incentives like tax credits. The "As of Right" development provision is criticized as mainly benefiting real estate developers and potentially fostering corruption. Additionally, the bill is seen as an unfunded mandate, burdening municipalities with administrative costs, and it is viewed as inconsistent with existing state statutes CGS 8-12 and CGS 8-23.

[Dionna Carlson](#): The statement criticizes a bill that removes local control over land use decisions in transit districts, transferring authority to the State's Office of Policy and Management or its designee. This office, lacking local accountability or knowledge, could override zoning decisions on issues like building height, parking, and setbacks. The bill is also criticized for neglecting protections for natural resources, historic sites, and open spaces, leaving towns vulnerable to unchecked development. Additionally, the bill eliminates

public hearings for most development projects, limiting residents' ability to engage in decisions impacting their communities and hindering environmental and historical preservation efforts.

[Michele Chamberlain](#): They criticize this bill as a recurring effort by the developer lobbying group Desegregate CT. They argue the bill would give the state too much control over local zoning decisions, especially concerning large apartment buildings, and would undermine the authority of local boards and residents. They also express concern that the bill aligns with global agendas, like those of the World Economic Forum, which they believe prioritize external interests over local communities.

[Marguerite Christie](#): They argue this bill benefits a New York developer rather than Connecticut residents. They believe it strips local zoning boards of their authority, threatening the unique character of individual towns. They criticize the centralization of zoning power in Hartford and sees the partnership between state government and private developers as a move away from local control and community-based planning.

[Jerry Cincotta](#): They believe residents, who understand the area's density and traffic issues, should guide development. A riverside resident criticizes the bill's one-size-fits-all approach from Hartford, stating that the town is already working on appropriate housing solutions. They express frustration that the bill is being reintroduced after a similar version was previously rejected and question whether the legislature is truly listening to its constituents.

[Collin Colburn](#): They argue that housing decisions for towns like Fairfield should not be made by officials in Hartford who don't live there. They criticize the bill's opt-in provisions, which would allow a state-appointed zoning coordinator to override local boards, removing input from residents. They believe local control is essential to avoid negative impacts like traffic, community tension, and developments that don't align with the town's character. They argue that solving the housing crisis should begin by addressing corruption and economic inequality in cities like Bridgeport, Waterbury, and Hartford.

[Jenny Colucci](#): "I worked for the Town of Greenwich, Land Use Dept for nearly 20 years and saw firsthand a town that has accomplished so much in regard to affordable housing. I grew up in an area of Greenwich (Riverside) in which the homes were built for WW2 veterans. Greenwich has long been taking care of its low-income community residents. It's time the state paid attention to what's happening there. Learn from Greenwich so other towns can gain insight and vote against this punitive bill."

[Richard Croll](#): They argue that it unfairly allows state legislators, who don't live in their community, to make housing decisions. They believe the bill would override local zoning authority, replacing it with a centralized coordinator, which would undermine community input and thoughtful local planning. The speaker warns this could lead to negative consequences like increased traffic, frustration, and neighborhood discord due to developments that don't align with the town's character.

[Chris Dahm](#): They criticize "Desegregate CT" and similar groups for pushing zoning policies that prioritize profit over affordable housing or desegregation. They argue that recent apartment developments in towns like Norwalk, New Canaan, and Stamford are expensive and unattractive, contributing to traffic congestion and overdevelopment. They express

concern about the negative impact on the state's beauty and livability, emphasizing the need to improve existing cities with mass transit instead of further expanding developments.

[Mark Davis](#): They critique the "Work, Live, Ride" bill for limiting local control over planning and zoning by requiring towns to "opt-in" and comply with state mandates. They suggest the bill needs more flexibility, transparency, and incentives for towns. Specifically, they recommend adding examples of reasonable-sized Transit-Oriented Developments (TODs), allowing towns to set their own height restrictions and TOD radius, and letting them establish their own zoning rules. They also propose offering exemptions from state housing mandates (like 8-30g) within TOD areas as an incentive for towns to participate.

[Doug Davison](#): "I am a resident of Wilton and am opposed to turning over zoning decisions to the state and am not in favor of bills by sponsors and special interest groups which include New York based real estate interests. The idea that this bill is voluntary for towns is a fiction. It is coercive and punitive."

[Linda DeGray](#): They raise concerns about the vagueness of HB 6831, particularly around terms like "reasonable size" and the role of consultants in determining it. They question the lack of clear guidelines on issues like the size of transit-oriented districts, whether areas near watercourses or historical districts are affected, and how towns with existing transit plans but not meeting all guidelines will be treated. They also ask how the bill's implementation in 2025 will impact cities and towns that have already begun working on transit-oriented districts and whether they will need to reapply for funding.

[Amarilys del Pino](#): "I wholeheartedly oppose the states' proposed Bill and the strong-arm tactics they plan to employ to those who oppose."

[Arthur Delmhorst](#): "Let local communities maintain full control over their zoning regulations. Let's build up bad neighborhoods, not tear down good ones!"

One-hundred and four people have submitted written testimony in opposition of this bill, stating that they argue that it unfairly allows state legislators, who don't live in their community, to make housing decisions. They believe the bill would override local zoning authority, replacing it with a centralized coordinator, which would undermine community input and thoughtful local planning. [Here's the link to the testimonies.](#)

[Kirk Carr](#)

[Maria Weingarten](#)

GENERAL COMMENTS:

[Dr. Michael Autuori](#): They support affordable housing but believes it should be integrated more thoughtfully—through accessory apartments, repurposed large homes, or unused buildings—rather than large multifamily complexes that disrupt community character. They criticize housing proposals for neglecting the importance of open space and environmental preservation. Emphasizing the proven benefits of access to nature, they argue that legislation should require open space set-asides in any affordable housing development to maintain a balance between growth and conservation.

[Janet Brooks, Attorney](#): They criticize the process outlined in lines 108-115 of the bill, which requires zoning commissions to "collaborate" with wetlands agencies to determine whether transit-oriented districts allow for as-of-right development of middle housing and mixed-use developments. They argue that this collaboration is unnecessary and legally incorrect, as wetlands agencies, not zoning commissions, have sole authority to determine their jurisdiction over regulated activities. They also point out that middle housing and mixed-use developments are not exempt under wetlands law. They suggest revising the language to clarify that the zoning commission should simply determine whether proposed activities require a permit, rather than involving wetlands agencies in the process.

[Lisa Thomas Chairwoman, Coventry Town Council](#): The Town of Coventry urges the removal of language in H.B. 6831 that would restrict small towns from accessing vital grants like STEAP. These grants are essential for funding key infrastructure and community projects, especially since small towns lack a strong commercial tax base and often don't qualify for other funding sources. Coventry highlights its efforts to support affordable housing and public safety, much of which has been made possible through grant funding. Without continued access to these resources, small towns risk falling short of meeting basic needs and state policy goals.

[Susan W. Beckman, Regional Planner, RiverCOG](#): The Connecticut River Gateway Commission (CRGC) expresses concerns about HB 6831 potentially conflicting with existing state statutes, particularly those governing the Gateway Conservation Zone in the Lower Connecticut River Valley. The CRGC, which ensures the protection of this environmentally significant area, fears that the bill's zoning guidelines could clash with their established standards for preserving the region's character. They emphasize the need for the bill to respect local diversity and allow for exemptions in areas with unique zoning needs, such as the Gateway Conservation Zone, to avoid conflicts between state and local regulations. They recommend amending the bill to include provisions that ensure compatibility with existing zoning obligations.

Reported by: Austin Adil

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