

Town of Haddam

Office of the First Selectman



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March 9th, 2020

Re: Continuing Legislative Committee on State Planning and Development

Testimony Regarding - Draft 2018-2023 State Plan of Conservation and Development

Dear Members;

Thank you for your dedication and all your hard work on behalf of the State of Connecticut.

My name is Robert McGarry, I am the First Selectman for the Town of Haddam, CT. I am submitting this testimony to request the expansion of the Higganum Village Priority Funding Area (VPFA) on the draft 2018-2023 State Plan of Conservation and Development.

Higganum is our historic Town Center which has a long industrial past tied to the Connecticut River. It is plagued with brownfield issues and large areas of soils made up of industrial fill. Compounding this problem is the lack of a centralized sewer system. This has prevented any meaningful development in the village for over 30 years. Numerous studies have been conducted and concluded that the two options that were considered 1.) a 4.5mile sewer extension to Middletown and 2.) the development of a sewage treatment plant in the center, made no economic or environmental sense.

The Town purchased the former Haddam Elementary School in Higganum Center in the Fall of 2019. The entire site was 155 acres. I am happy to report that the rear 146 acres was deeded to the Haddam Land Trust. This beautiful open space parcel is now completely consistent with the "Protected Land" designation on the State Plan of C&D. The town retained ownership of the remaining fully developed 9-acre school parcel.

The town is looking to develop a community septic system on approximately 3 acres of the school parcel and on the town green which is across the street from the school. When finished, the community septic system will be completely underground. We have been working closely with Bob Scully at the State Department of Health (DPH) and Mike Hart at the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) regarding the permitting and design of the community septic system. They understand our dilemma and have been very supportive. We firmly believe a community septic system will release pent up economic growth and smart growth in a compact, mixed use and walkable town center. This growth will benefit the Town of Haddam and the State of Connecticut.

Today, I am simply asking for a change in the designation on fully developed and municipally owned parcels of land. In order to receive state funding for the project the parcels need to be in a VPFA on the State Plan of Conservation and Development. The 9-acre fully developed school parcel and the town green abut the VPFA but are not in the VPFA. They are in the "Protected Lands" designation. The attached map displays the current situation.

I have been in communication with the Office of Policy and Management (OPM). OPM recommended that the Town submit public hearing testimony to the General Assembly requesting the expansion of the Higganum VPFA in the Draft 2018-2023 State Plan of Conservation and Development. The General Assembly would then have the option of directing OPM to make such change upon adoption of the plan. This is the most simple and efficient option and would avoid the need for undertaking the formal interim change process.

I thank you for this opportunity to comment and look forward to a positive resolution to this situation.

Thank you.



Robert McGarry
First Selectman
Haddam, CT

Proposed State Plan of C&D



Existing Conditions



Request – Designate School Parcel and Green
Village Priority Funding area

March 9th, 2020 Testimony to Planning and Development Committee – Robert McGarry, First Selectman, Haddam, CT