



# BE THE CHANGE

## A PLAYBOOK FOR LAND USE COMMISSIONERS



**DESEGREGATE  
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## INTRODUCTION

So, you're on your town's planning and zoning commission, planning commission, or zoning board of appeals? And you support "pro-homes" policies that make your town – and Connecticut – more welcoming? Great! This "Be the Change" Playbook is for you.

The Playbook assumes you're familiar with the basics! But if you want to brush up on zoning terms, visit [www.desegregatect.org/definitions](http://www.desegregatect.org/definitions). If you want to brush up on Connecticut's statewide zoning enabling laws, which give local commissions their powers, visit [www.desegregatect.org/laws](http://www.desegregatect.org/laws). You might also check out our [summary of the 2021 zoning reforms](#). In addition, our team has compiled a bank of [studies and reports](#) that can get you up to speed on the latest research.

We wrote this Playbook because we realized that many commissioners want to learn more and do the right thing - but they don't know where to start. In this Playbook, we'll focus on 4 critical skills you need to be a pro-homes commissioner:

- Understanding that zoning can be both a problem and a solution
- Identifying the pieces of information you need to know to be effective
- Putting together your agenda as a commissioner
- Having a plan to engage the public

We want you to change your town for good, and we're here for you! Your success locally is our success statewide. If you have questions or want to be put in touch with our network of like-minded commissioners, please be in touch at [info@desegregatect.org](mailto:info@desegregatect.org)!



## ZONING: A PROBLEM & SOLUTION

Whether you've been a commissioner for many years or are new to public service, you probably already sense that there is something about our current zoning system that doesn't quite work for everyone. In this section, we articulate the problems zoning creates and explain the solutions offered by "pro-homes" zoning.

We recognize you probably weren't around when most of the laws in your town were created. But you're here now! And you've got the power to change outdated laws in your town. Your reading this Playbook is an excellent first step.

### A. What Problems Can Zoning Create?

Since we were founded in June 2020, we have heard from hundreds of people about the problems that our current zoning system has created. Here's how we summarize what they have told us: Connecticut's status quo zoning hurts our economy, damages our environment, and creates inequities. By "status quo zoning," we mean very restrictive laws that only allow large-lot single-family housing, and that make it very difficult to build any other type of housing.

We've done more thinking about all three of these problems, and here's how we summarize them:

- THE ECONOMY PROBLEM: Restrictive zoning and costly land use review processes have stopped housing production and driven up prices. The high price of housing means essential workers can't afford housing, small businesses and manufacturers can't fill jobs, and young families and minority homeowners are priced out of homeownership.
  - More Details: [Restrictive zoning, costly review processes, and arbitrary impediments](#) have ensured our housing supply falls short of necessary

levels. They drive up prices, which in turn makes it harder for people to find attainable housing.

- THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEM: One-size-fits-all zoning laws require us to build single-family housing on large lots, which creates serious sprawl. This gobbles up our farmland and forest and pollutes our waterways. Our housing is built too far away from shops and jobs, making us a car-dependent state and contributing to an international climate emergency.
  - More Details: The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has provided irrefutable evidence that the warming of our planet is caused by man. Land use laws contribute. Connecticut's zoning laws require a minimum of one acre per house on 81% of residential land in our state. Sprawl makes us use more land for housing, which requires us to drive and build roads, and thus pollutes our waterways. Researchers have found that between 1985 and 2010, Connecticut lost 6.5% of our forests and 15% of agricultural land – primarily to sprawling residential development.
- THE EQUITY PROBLEM: Connecticut's zoning laws overwhelmingly create the most expensive kind of housing: freestanding, single-family housing (which according to our Zoning Atlas is allowed on 91% of the land in state). This kind of zoning excludes people with diverse backgrounds and needs, including the elderly and disabled, from Connecticut.
  - More Details: In Connecticut, one in six families in our state pay more than 50% of their income on housing. Our land use laws prevent us from attracting and retaining racially and economically diverse populations.

Check out further stats and links at [www.desegregatect.org/background](http://www.desegregatect.org/background).

## **B. How Can Zoning Be Part of the Solution?**

Some types of zoning laws are definitely problematic. But modern zoning laws based on data and common sense can be a solution. Later in this Playbook, we'll talk about

specific zoning solutions that are right for a broad range of Connecticut towns. For now, just note that in general, changing zoning laws to make it easier to build diverse types of housing in cities and towns across the state is a good thing.

Here's how "pro-homes" solutions address each of the 3 problems noted above:

- THE ECONOMY SOLUTION: Zoning reform that makes it easier to create diverse housing can stimulate the economy by creating construction jobs and by indirectly supporting jobs in nearby shops and offices. New housing adds to the property tax base – and multi-family housing contributes more taxes on a per-unit basis than single-family housing.
  - More Details: By creating more attainable housing options, zoning reform will make our economy work for everybody. If we build 1,500 multi-family units, we will generate \$271 million dollars in income and almost \$40 million dollars in revenue for state and local governments, not to mention over 3,000 jobs.
- THE ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTION: Zoning reform that gives property owners the choice to build walkable communities can reduce the time we all spend in cars and give people housing they want. We have to build more housing, and it's smarter if we build it in places that don't require us to destroy our farms and forests.
  - More Details: Zoning reform can nestle additional housing into existing neighborhoods, using the streets, sidewalks, sewers, water lines, and stormwater systems that are already in place. Zoning reform can also help create more centralized neighborhoods where residents are able to walk from their homes to their workplaces, local businesses, and transit stations. These walkable communities reduce reliance on cars and thus reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Your platform can also include a push to reduce or eliminate costly parking mandates, because research shows more minimum parking requirements leads to more driving. Check out a video of a longer presentation that makes the environmental case for zoning reform.

- THE EQUITY SOLUTION: Zoning reform that enables diverse housing will make our communities more diverse, too. More diverse neighborhoods can reduce racial disparities in access to grocery stores, child care, and vital services.
  - More Details: Studies show that children of low-income families who live in income-diverse neighborhoods make more money, go to college at higher rates, have measurably better life outcomes and benefit from lower income gaps. If you live in a city where gentrification is a concern, note for your constituents that more housing (especially larger apartment buildings) can help reduce rents for everyone.

In summary, being “pro-homes” means embracing zoning that produces more diverse types of homes, in more accessible and sustainable places. To understand what your town needs to do better, you’re going to have to dig a little deeper. Turn next to Part III, where we talk about what you need to know to make progress.



## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

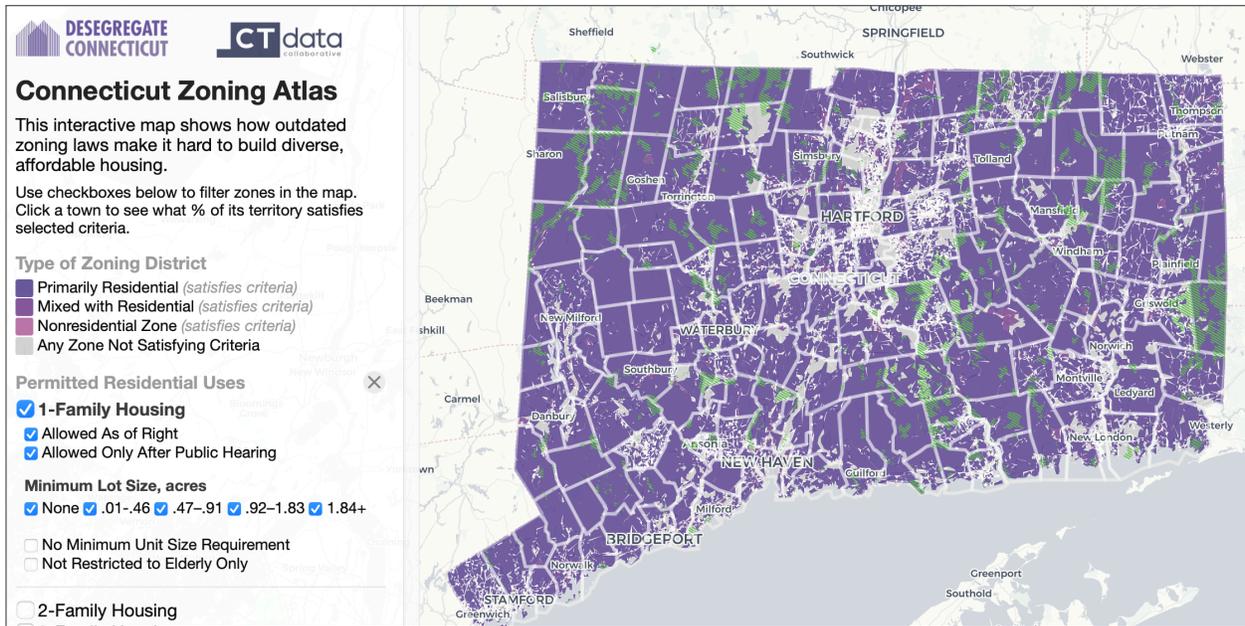
Now that you've gotten the "big picture," it's important to get down to the town level. What do you need to know about your town to make the best decisions for your town's future? We think it comes down to three basic things: you need to know your town's zoning, your town's demographics, and some useful stats that might help you convince other commissioners about the need for change.

### **A. Know Your Town's Zoning**

As a commissioner, you're probably one of the very few people to be familiar with your town's zoning code. Most zoning codes are dozens, if not hundreds, of pages long. Unless your town has done a comprehensive rezoning in recent years, the zoning code is probably the result of piecemeal edits, with hodgepodge amendments scattered throughout — and it almost certainly reflects an outdated vision for your town.

No matter how many times you have read your code, we encourage you to look at it with fresh eyes. Read it cover to cover. Try to figure out whether an ordinary person can understand what it says and can understand how they can build something they want to build. In particular, look at the sections on housing. Is multi-family housing allowed? Where and under what conditions? Are the conditions placed on two, three, or four-or-more family housing onerous? Are they the same conditions placed on single-family housing?

Reading the text of the code doesn't give you the full picture. As you know, the text is tied to a zoning map. You could keep your zoning map handy and cross-reference each time you run across a zone-specific requirement, so you can see the amount of land to which the requirement applies. But we have a shortcut for you - at least when it comes to housing. And that shortcut is the Connecticut Zoning Atlas, an interactive map we produced, which is online at [www.desegregatect.org/atlas](http://www.desegregatect.org/atlas).



The Zoning Atlas shows much of your town allows certain types of housing, and what types of permits are required. It also shows minimum lot sizes that are required for different types of housing, and shows where a zoning district limits housing to elderly people only. It also shows where accessory apartments are allowed, and whether certain conditions apply to them.

A step-by-step tutorial appears when you first visit the site, but we are always available to provide additional resources or information if needed.

As you review the code and the Atlas, consider a few additional issues:

- Does your town zone primarily for large-lot, single-family housing?
  - Clicking on the tooltip in the Atlas will tell you the percentage of town requiring 1-acre or 2-acre minimum lot sizes, which are considered very exclusionary by national standards.
- Does your town zone to allow two, three, or four-family housing near commercial areas? Near train or CTfastrak stations?
  - Zoning for housing around shops and jobs is better for business, people, and the environment.
- Does your town align its zoning with existing sewer lines?
  - Areas served by sewer are great places to put more diverse housing options.

The last thing we will suggest is that you should compare your town to neighboring towns, or towns with similar aspirations and characteristics. One easy way to do this is to use the “tooltip” feature of the Zoning Atlas: that’s the little box that appears if you click within the boundaries of your town. You can select the characteristics you’re interested in on the left-hand menu, then click within the boundaries of the town, and then a number will appear showing the percentage of the town zoned for the characteristics you have selected. If another town is permitting more diverse types of housing than yours, does it suggest that your town could do more? If none of your neighboring towns permits a diverse array of housing, could your town lead the way?

## **B. Know Your Town’s Demographics**

The other thing that you might want to understand is your town’s demographic makeup. The Zoning Atlas does show two demographic measures in the tooltip. First, it shows the percentage of people who identified in the last Census as non-Hispanic, non-White, which includes Black, Hispanic, Asian, and indigenous people. Second, it shows the percentage of people who are cost-burdened, meaning in the Census definition, they spend more than 30% of their income on housing. The cost-burden number may surprise you: even people in wealthy towns are overspending on housing as a portion of their income. The reason for this is that we aren’t producing enough housing, and when supply goes down relative to demand, prices go up.

After you’ve checked out those measures on the Zoning Atlas, we strongly suggest that you visit the Partnership for Strong Communities’ [Housing Data Profiles](#). This excellent resource shows the amount, affordability, and quality of housing that each town and county provides. It identifies the number of “assisted housing” units (those whose occupants or owners receive public subsidies) the median rent, cost burdened households, home values, population changes, household income, and many other demographic characteristics.

There is a lot of additional information available from [Data Haven](#) about community well-being and from other sources on [our website](#). Overall, these resources paint a

picture that housing is unattainable and overpriced for too many Connecticut residents. It's even true in the town you serve as a commissioner.

## C. Know Some Useful Stats

Sifting through all of this information can be time-consuming. So we've done some the work for you. We have identified useful statistics and data that are relevant different groups of people you represent. We thought organizing it this way would help you figure out how the status quo affects different people. Click on the hyperlinks to learn more.

In addition, feel free to check out our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page. Topics addressed there include:

- "Home rule" and local control
- Whether Connecticut is really segregated
- Why conservatives nationally support zoning reform
- The impact of zoning reform on:
  - o Home values
  - o Schools and enrollment
  - o Traffic
  - o Gentrification
  - o Open space

### 1. Homeowners

Useful Stats:

- Single-family housing is allowed as of right on 91.1% of the land in Connecticut, making it the most dominant type of housing.
- Accessory apartments can increase the resale value of a home by up to 50%.
- Single-family homes near multi-family housing appreciate in value faster than homes in single-family neighborhoods.

Summary: Zoning reforms enabling accessory apartments and allowing smaller lots give homeowners the freedom to invest in, and build wealth from, their homes. In

addition, zoning that allows new, diverse housing options (including multi-family housing) can actually increase property values in single-family neighborhoods.

## 2. Homerenters

Useful Stats:

- The median rent in Connecticut is \$1,180.
- In the United States at large, more and more high-income people are renting their homes instead of buying them. Their demand for housing has made it harder for lower- and moderate-income people to afford housing.
- In addition, more older Americans and larger households (primarily families with kids) are renting than in prior years.
- Only 2.1% of the land in Connecticut allows four-or-more family housing as of right, meaning that more affordable rental options are few and far between.
- About 64% of Connecticut's homerenters with extremely low incomes in the state are severely cost burdened and risk becoming homeless
- Studies have shown that a 10 percent increase in housing construction can lead to a 4 to 7 percent reduction in rents, which makes housing more affordable for all people.
- Harvard University reported that between 2012 and 2017, the number of housing units renting nationally for less than \$600 a month fell by 3.1 million.

Summary: Diverse housing options – including accessory apartments and multi-family housing – tends to be a better housing option for young, mobile professionals, and working class families. More housing means that rents become lower and more affordable.

## 3. Employers

Useful Stats:

- See the stats on rental housing above.
- The Connecticut Business and Industry Association reported in 2020 that the manufacturing industry was losing jobs due to Connecticut's high cost of living, and that only 25% of manufacturing employers reported "no trouble" in retaining and recruiting young workers.

- A study of 34,000 workers found that those who commute fewer than 30 minutes per day gain seven days' worth of productive time annually
- 64% of workers who earn less than \$50,000 said they would consider a lateral employment move if it would shorten their commute, while 60% of workers earning more than \$50,000 said the same.

Summary: When Connecticut residents spend less on housing costs, they can spend more at local businesses. We should locate housing near main streets and near publicly accessible transportation to make businesses in your community more successful and to boost Connecticut's economy.

#### 4. Young People/Families

Useful Stats:

- Connecticut's population only grew by 1% over the past 10 years, trailing our competitor states.
- Most towns in Connecticut (likely including yours!) are facing declining school enrollments.
- For the sixth consecutive year, Connecticut's K-12 public school enrollment has decreased.
- Connecticut's child population dropped by 10% over the past decade.

Summary: Attracting new residents will expand our tax base and help pay for essential services for our aging population. Improved zoning can help Connecticut maintain its vitality while building and educating the workforce of the future.

#### 5. Baby Boomers and the Elderly

Useful Stats:

- Connecticut has the 7th oldest population in the country.
- Baby boomers make up a third of our population, and the 65+ population projected to grow by 57% between 2010 and 2040.
- By 2030, one fifth of America's population will have reached the age of retirement.
- Connecticut's population grew by barely 1% over the past decade.

Summary: Changes to zoning laws can help seniors “age in place,” by providing them with affordable and accessible housing options, like accessory apartments. With more diverse housing options, our town can make it possible for residents to upsize/ downsize without having to look elsewhere and can make it possible for multi-generational families to live together. In addition, zoning laws that foster walkable communities can provide for older residents who, because of preference or ability, do not drive cars anymore.

## 6. People with Disabilities

Useful Stats:

- 50,000 Connecticut residents are intellectually disabled, and many rely on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments.
- Disabled Connecticut residents only receive \$932 per month in Supplemental Security Income benefits.
- Rent for an average one-bedroom apartment ranges from the cost of a one-bedroom rental unit ranged from a low of 88% of SSI payments in the Windham County housing market area to a high of 183% in the Stamford-Norwalk housing market area.

Summary: If we want to be a state where everyone belongs, we need to change restrictive zoning laws and make housing more accessible. Ensuring accessory apartments are accessible to people with a wide range of physical abilities can ensure integration of members of the I/DD community into existing neighborhoods. Members of the I/DD community who cannot drive will also benefit if we build more housing near transit centers and commercial areas. In such housing, members of the I/DD community can live near family members, support networks, and health services while maintaining an independent lifestyle.

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## **IV** MAKING CHANGE AS A COMMISSIONER

So far in this Playbook, you've been exposed to key ideas, research, and statistics. Now you can put all the pieces together to develop a "pro-homes" vision for your town, which you can make sure is enacted as a commissioner. First, though, you have to figure out what you can and can't do in your official role. This section deals first with your responsibilities as a commissioner and then provides suggestions as to the types of reforms you can advance.

### **A. Issues Specific to Commissioners**

As a commissioner, you have a unique opportunity to shape the future of your community. You have more power than the average resident in making change, because (absent any local rules to the contrary!) you can propose general amendments to zoning laws without paying stiff application fees or doing individual mailings to each person in town. As long as a majority of commissioners agree that your amendment can proceed, it should be given a public hearing.

How you develop a proposal for amendments is the subject of the next section. And certainly before doing anything radical, you'll want to talk with fellow commissioners and constituents. But we encourage you to explore using the route of a commission-proposed amendment, to make necessary updates in your town.

As you develop your proposals, you can communicate with your constituents about zoning policy and consider their feedback, as long as you remember one critical rule: don't talk with them about any "live" applications on individual projects or policies. Once an application has been submitted, you can only hear from your constituents about the application "on the record," that is, during a public hearing.

With that note of caution behind us, we thought we would provide you with a few additional thoughts about communicating with your constituents.

**Treat concerns seriously.** If you remember nothing else from this Playbook, remember to treat all questions as if they are good-faith questions, expressing good-faith concerns, unless you know, or it is obvious, that they are not.

**Set a tone of civility.** Government and public input do not work when we do not operate on a common baseline of respect. In any public setting, ask speakers to focus on facts and policy and to treat other speakers with respect. Occasionally, speakers will make incorrect claims about new housing options. (We have debunked most of those claims on our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page.)

**Put politics aside.** We have always believed that zoning reform is a bipartisan concern. Zoning reform has been achieved on a bipartisan (and sometimes even unanimous!) basis in Massachusetts, Vermont, and Oregon. If zoning reform is politicized on party lines in your town, we suggest focusing on areas of common ground. Highlighting the economic benefits of zoning reform, whether for small businesses or for homeowners, is one example of messaging that nationally receives strong bipartisan support.

**Inform the public.** Often, local government can feel inaccessible to community members. You can use your office to involve community members in your decision making! Set up social media accounts if you haven't already - Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are good places to start. Though these platforms can be a little noisy, they are also incredibly effective at reaching people and expanding your pro-homes vision. You can make it a point to explain all of the votes you take through social media or publicize local government events for the general public.

**Participate in community coffees.** While social media is great, nothing beats face to face interactions! Public health permitting, consider setting up a time for your constituents to meet with you and share their vision for the community - perhaps once every two weeks, at a local business. It's essential to hear from the people who you serve and ensure that your community is playing a part in determining its future.

## **B. Top 4 Zoning Reforms to Push**

With those issues in mind, we have 4 specific ideas for you about zoning reforms you can push forward as a commissioner. In addition to the 4 issues we present here, we encourage you to check out our arguments for reducing or eliminate minimum parking requirements, online at [www.desegregatect.org/parking](http://www.desegregatect.org/parking), and to consider adopting a form-based code.

Several of these ideas are made with consideration given to the 2021 zoning reforms (also known as Public Act 21-29 or HB 6107) adopted by the State legislature. We believe that those reforms were common-sense and long-overdue; they make modest, “pro-homes” changes to the State Zoning Enabling Act. As a commissioner, you can encourage your commission to update your zoning code to match the state legislation. For example, your town may need to eliminate minimum unit sizes for housing or eliminate any numerical caps for the number of multifamily housing units that can be built in a particular zone. We’re happy to go over the details with you if it’s useful.

With that context, here are our top 4 ideas for you to advance as a commissioner:

### **1. Improve Permitting for Small-Scale (2-4 Family) Housing**

If your town imposes onerous public hearing requirements on 2-4-family housing, you could propose that the town write zoning regulations to permit this type of housing “as of right.” More information is at [www.desegregatect.org/walkable](http://www.desegregatect.org/walkable).

Why:

- Small multi-family homes increase housing supply without significantly changing the look and feel of existing neighborhoods
- They encourage walkable communities that enable residents to walk to school, entertainment, and shops
- They bring more foot-traffic and consumers, thus stimulating local businesses

Who Benefits:

- Homeowners seeking to live in walkable neighborhoods

- Homerenters or first-time home buyers who cannot afford to rent or own a single-family home
- Elderly or disabled individuals seeking an independent lifestyle where they also can live close to family members
- Local businesses who benefit from having more consumers closer to their business
- Property owners seeking to increase the value of their homes

Ideas for Change:

- Advocate for 2-family housing to be allowed as-of-right in your town, or at least within a 10-minute walk of downtown/commercial areas
- Reduce parking requirements that prevent multi-family housing
- Document architectural standards that already work for the community so review is streamlined and not arbitrary
- Upzone certain areas of town to allow for more forms of multi-family housing

## 2. Promote Accessory Apartments



If your town has outdated restrictions on accessory apartments, you could propose updating them to ensure that these are permitted as of right everywhere single-family housing is allowed.

More information - including the one-page summary at left - is at [www.desegregatect.org/ada](http://www.desegregatect.org/ada). We can also produce one-page summaries of how your town zones.

Why:

- Accessory apartments are naturally affordable, meaning that they are budget-friendly because of their size
- Accessory apartments reduce sprawl because they are built where housing already exists
- Accessory apartments are environmentally efficient – their small size means they use less electricity and water
- Accessory apartments increase housing supply without changing the look and feel of the neighborhood

## Who Benefits:

- Homeowners looking for naturally affordable housing
- Property owners seeking to increase property value and generate rental income
- People with disabilities seeking independent living situations close to home
- Seniors looking to downsize or live close to family
- Young people seeking to live where they work or grew up

## Ideas for Change:

- Educate people about the benefits of accessory apartments
- Campaign to “opt in” to the 2021 reforms
- Lift any bans and onerous permitting requirements on accessory apartments
- Establish programs/discussions which educate property owners on the benefits of accessory apartments and their creation in your town

### 3. Allow Equitable Transit-Oriented Communities

**Get on Board with Equitable Transit-Oriented Communities**

Equitable transit-oriented communities are mixed-use neighborhoods with an array of housing options (including affordable homes), near train stations or CTTransit stations.

Intervently Affordable • Environmentally Sustainable • Capitalize on Existing Assets

**Zoning reform can enable equitable transit-oriented communities!**

- **Who benefits from equitable transit-oriented communities?**
  - People with diverse income and housing needs
  - Business who depend on public transit, & employers who need workers
  - Local businesses who will get more foot traffic
  - Transit who get more passengers and increase on-board revenue
  - Property owners seeing new opportunities for their land
  - Our environment - because less car use means cleaner air and less polluted groundwater!
- **What should advocates for?**
  - A mix of housing types allowed "across" near your transit station(s)
  - DAs for mixed-use housing near transit (as deemed "naturally affordable")
  - More parking alternatives for new housing
- **Don't "build a station" include bus stops!**
  - Add a "bus stop" to your station and CTTransit station.

**5 WAYS TO SHARE YOUR SUPPORT!**

- 1 Contact your legislators in the legislature
- 2 Promote EQUITYboards in your media, neighborhood, or workplace
- 3 Write the editor about housing and how it can address your community's needs
- 4 Contact your local business owners and ask them to support your efforts
- 5 Contact your local elected officials and ask them to support your efforts

Find out more at: [www.desegregatect.org/toc](http://www.desegregatect.org/toc)

If your town has a transit station (or areas with clustered bus stops), you could propose allowing diverse types of housing to be created around those stations.

More information - including the one-page summary at left - is at [www.desegregatect.org/toc](http://www.desegregatect.org/toc). We can also produce one-page summaries of how the areas around specific transit stations are zoned for housing, should they be useful to you.

## Why:

- Equitable transit-oriented communities (ETOCs) reduce reliance on cars, leading to less pollution and cleaner air
- ETOCs increase affordable housing supply by allowing naturally affordable housing as well as income-based housing
- ETOCs create jobs and promote denser communities, stimulating local business

- ETOCs generate new town tax revenue by increasing the supply of taxable property

#### Who Benefits:

- Communities of color and working-class individuals most reliant on public transit
- Homeowners desiring more affordable housing options
- Local property owners who can increase the value of their property by building more densely on it
- Employers near transit who benefit from increased foot traffic
- Employers on transit lines who have access to a growing workforce
- Town officials seeking to increase tax revenues and the grand list (listing all taxable property in town)

#### Ideas for Change:

- Advocate for a diversity of housing to be allowed as-of-right near your transit station(s)
- Eliminate all minimum parking requirements within a half-mile of transit
- Advocate that a percentage (such as 10%) of the housing near transit be deed-restricted affordable

## **4. Reduce Minimum Lot Sizes**

If your town has large minimum lot sizes (as 81% of Connecticut does), you could propose allowing homeowners to subdivide their land or put more than one unit on their lot. More information is at [www.desegregatect.org/lots](http://www.desegregatect.org/lots).

#### Why:

- Reduces sprawl and cuts back vehicle emissions
- Reduces surging housing costs by allowing more housing creation in existing neighborhoods.
- Enables denser neighborhoods with greater walkability
- Grows a town's tax revenue by increasing housing on land that was previously not generating the higher tax rates that housing does

### Who Benefits:

- People who care about climate change and want to make our air and water cleaner
- Home renters and first-time homeowners seeking more affordable housing options
- Property owners seeking to subdivide lots and increase wealth
- Towns that can disperse taxes among more taxpayers, thus decreasing taxes for everyone but increasing tax revenues to fund schools, essential services, and infrastructure improvements

### Ideas for Change:

- Reduce minimum lot sizes in large-lot areas of an acre or more
- Allow homeowners to add a dwelling unit to larger lots
- Develop smaller minimum lot sizes in areas served by sewer and water, which is done in Vermont (on a statewide basis)



## CONCLUSION

As a local commissioner, you play a critical role in advancing municipal-level reforms, making your town a model for good zoning, and securing more wins for the pro-homes movement. In turn, your voice as a commissioner will help spur statewide change. As we saw in the last legislative session, local commissioners and planning staff play a key role in crafting legislation, implementing policy provisions, and championing reform.

Along the way, we invite you to work in partnership with our organization. DesegregateCT was started in June 2020 in response to the murder of George Floyd, when public awareness of racial inequities in American society was rapidly growing. Today, we have a deeper understanding that one of the most powerful manifestations of racial inequity in America is housing segregation, which was established in part through restrictive zoning.

Our support for your time as a commissioner is informed by the recognition that statewide legislation isn't enough to make Connecticut more equitable, more economically strong, or more environmentally sustainable. Local land use commissioners have the authority and power to make our towns and cities places everyone can call home.



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[www.desegregatect.org](http://www.desegregatect.org)