



Town of Wallingford, Connecticut

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The Honorable Art Feltman, Co-Chair, Planning and Development Committee
The Honorable Eric Coleman, Co-Chair, Planning and Development Committee
House and Senate Member, Planning and Development Committee

RE: RB-5641: an act Concerning Conservation Development

On behalf of the Town of Wallingford and, along with my colleagues in the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association, I would like to express my concern about the recent changes that appear to have been made regarding the use of the "Locational Guide Map" from the State Plan of Conservation and Development as a de facto zoning map.

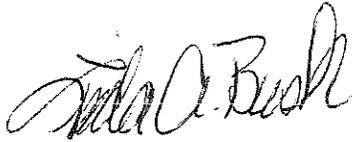
About a year ago, the Town of Wallingford submitted plans to the DEP showing the upgrade of a sewer line in Grieb Road from 8 inches to 12 inches. Grieb Road is located in a growth area on the State Locational Guide Map, part of the State Plan of Conservation and Development. Grieb Road is scheduled for reconstruction soon and good planning requires that if a utility upgrade might be needed in the not too distant future, that work should be done before a road is rebuilt. The Town received a letter back from DEP indicating they would not approve the upgrade. A portion of the sewage that flows down Grieb Road is generated in an area on the Locational Guide Map that is shown as conservation area. This "conservation area" includes Medway Business Park, a large industrial park which is home to numerous businesses including Bristol-Myers Squibb Pharmaceutical Research Center, a major Wallingford employer and taxpayer with 1,250 employees and sufficient acreage for major expansion. It also serves the Interchange zone, home to several hotels and office buildings, including the vacant 350,000 sq.ft. Campus at Greenhill, the planned future corporate headquarters for the now bankrupt Mortgage Lenders Network. I-91 also bisects the area. It is unclear at this time if the Grieb Road sewer main would have to be upgraded even without any additional flow from the conservation areas; it also serves a large growth area.

The problem appears to be a new interpretation by several state agencies, notably the DEP, of what constitutes a "state project" under the State Plan of Conservation and Development. For thirty years a state project was just that, a state project, not a local project that conforms to both the local Plan of Conservation and Development and local zoning regulations. Wallingford has been told that because the Grieb Road sewer line serves a conservation area, and the Town of Wallingford has received state funds for both our sewage treatment plan and other local projects, upgrading this sewer main will not be permitted.

Medway Business Park has been zoned for industrial development since 1963 when United Illuminating and Connecticut Light and Power formed a development corporation to create an industrial park adjacent to, and with easy access to, I-91. I-91 had not yet opened when the industrial park was conceived. The Interchange Zone was created in 1984 to implement a recommendation in Wallingford's 1984 Plan of Development. The area at the intersection of I-91 and Route 68 was the last undeveloped, four-way interchange on I-91 and the Town felt it would be in their best long-term economic health to rezone this area from residential to office park. In 2003 the State Department of Transportation completed a major reconstruction of this interchange, replacing the Rte. 68 bridge over I-91, increasing the lanes on the bridge from 3 to 6 and rebuilding 4,400 ft. of Rte. 68 at a cost of millions. The reconstruction was necessary to handle the increase in traffic expected from development of the immediate area, namely Medway Business Park and the Interchange zone.

My office took an active role in reviewing the draft State Plan. I attended several public meetings and submitted written testimony explaining that areas shown as conservation on the draft map should be changed because they were zoned commercial or industrial and were partially developed; these areas were not changed. Now future development in these areas, and other areas in Wallingford, is jeopardized because our zoning regulations are based on our Town Plan of Conservation and Development, a plan that is regularly reviewed and updated and incorporates many things, including development policies that were made years ago; development policies that we felt then, and still do, are sound planning policies for our community.

I concur that Section 7 of RB-5641: An Act Concerning Conservation Development, be revised by adding a new section specifying that state agency permits and financial support be based on the Locational Guide Map as supplemented by detailed, parcel-specific, local plans adopted pursuant to Section 8-23.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Linda A. Bush". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Testimony submitted by,
Linda A. Bush, AICP
Town Planner
Town of Wallingford

Cc: William W. Dickinson, Mayor, Town of Wallingford
George Adair, Director, Wallingford Department of Public Utilities
Roger Dann, General Manager, Wallingford Water & Sewer Divisions