



ZONE CHANGES

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A zone change is a modification to a municipality's zoning districts ("zones") as shown on a map (e.g., creating a new zone or moving parcels from one district to another). When a person requests a zone change, they are asking the municipality to change the land uses it allows in an area. Zone changes can affect one parcel or several.

For example, expanding a commercial zone to encompass part of an agricultural zone gives property owners in the expanded area the right to engage in the land uses permitted in the commercial zone.

ISSUE

Does state law require an applicant for a zone change to submit, as part of the zone change application, a site plan and traffic impact study? You indicated you are interested in Stamford.

SUMMARY

The general statutes authorize municipalities to adopt their own zoning regulations, including requirements for approving zone change applications (CGS § [8-2](#)). Whether a municipality requires zone change applications to include a site plan and traffic impact study depends on its regulations, with possible exceptions. Some municipalities derive their zoning authority from a special act charter; these special acts could establish zone change application requirements

that differ from those in the general statutes. Since Stamford is one such municipality, we reviewed its special acts and determined that they do not require zone change applicants to submit a site plan or traffic impact study.

It appears that municipalities that choose to require site plans and traffic impact studies generally do so as part of the approval process for a proposed development, rather than as part of a zone change application. This is because zone change approval is not necessarily equivalent to permission to commence a particular project; often other municipal approval (e.g., a building permit) is required before a property can be developed.

JSB:cmg

