



TESTIMONY ON H.B. 6570
AN ACT CONCERNING TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT AND MUNICIPAL ZONING

via email to tratestimony@cga.ct.gov

By: Sara C. Bronin, Lead Organizer

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Dear Chairman Lemar, Vice Chairman Cassano, Vice Chairman Simms, Ranking Member Carney, Ranking Member Somers, and Distinguished Members of the Connecticut General Assembly Transportation Committee:

On behalf of the Desegregate Connecticut coalition, I am testifying in **support** of H.B. 6570 and specifically Section 2, subsection (b)(8), on the development of multifamily housing as of right near transit stations.

Desegregate Connecticut is a coalition of individuals and 64 organizations who believe in creating abundant, diverse housing in service of equity, inclusive prosperity, and a cleaner environment. We have hosted dozens of educational events attended by thousands of people. Our team assembled a first-in-the-nation interactive Zoning Atlas map detailing all 2,622 zoning districts in our state and highlighting Connecticut's lack of affordable, diverse, and multifamily housing. Most importantly, we have conducted extensive outreach and solicited feedback, working with municipal leaders, planners, charitable organizations, social workers, community activists, and others to refine our ideas. With that in mind, we have offered several legislative proposals to achieve three main goals: expand housing diversity, increase housing supply, and improve the development process.

Among these is a proposal that aligns with the language of Section (2), subsection (b)(8) of H.B. 6570. That section would allow for as-of-right accessory apartments and multifamily housing developments with at least four units on 50% of the land within a half-mile radius of bus rapid transit stations and railroad stations. It also eliminates minimum parking requirements on such developments. This provision takes advantage of underdeveloped, yet highly desirable, land to increase our housing diversity and affordability. It also is smart environmental planning.

Our Zoning Atlas shows that there is a huge opportunity to unlock the potential of public investment in transit stations. Areas around these stations are often not zoned to satisfy local demand for housing in convenient locations. The provisions in H.B. 6570 will unlock new

housing near transit and help generate tax revenue, create jobs, attract workers and stimulate businesses. It will also reduce the reliance on cars, cutting down on draining commutes, promoting walking, and cleaning our air. Furthermore, it will reduce sprawl by building denser communities instead of developing more into our farmlands and forests.

Although, according to our research, this proposal would impact just half of 1% of land in the State, it will have positive ripples on our communities due to the desirability of the land and the ability for more housing to naturally drive the overall costs of housing down. Dense, mixed-use development adjacent to transit, is also financially much more beneficial for towns than single-family only development.

The elimination of parking requirements, as is proposed in this bill, is essential to housing creation near transit. Our research in Connecticut shows that high parking requirements persist even in areas serviced by mass transportation. In 63 districts that span almost 20,000 acres of land in transit towns, the parking requirements for new two-bedroom apartments exceed two spaces per unit. These requirements hinder the creation of multi-family housing, not only because jurisdictions require more parking for multi-family housing than for single-family housing, but also because parking constrains the types of lots on which housing can be built. Moreover, excessive minimum parking requirements are an equity issue and drive up the price of housing—a cost that is often passed on to renters or that prevents the housing from being built at all. Lifting parking minimum requirements statewide around transit stations is needed for the sustainability and economic growth of our communities.

If I may, I would like to mention a few additional comments that you might consider adding to your bill. Specifically:

- **Requiring multifamily housing with ten or more dwelling units have 10% of the units set aside as affordable housing.** We believe this is a necessary step to ensure affordability in these high-value locations.
- **Allowing up to 50% of the land area required to allow multifamily housing to be located within a mile radius of transit stop if such development is located on a public right of way that connects to the transit station with walking facilities.** There may be some towns that are unable, due to geographic conditions or otherwise, to identify lots for multifamily housing within 50% of the land area in the half-mile radius. For those towns, we have proposed greater flexibility in the satisfaction of the requirements, as long as there are adequate sidewalks, crosswalks and other similar facilities.

In summary, we support the provisions in H.B. 6570 to increase the number of transit-oriented developments and allow for greater housing density near our transit stations. We acknowledge that zoning reform near transit is only one piece of the puzzle, but it is a critical first step to building inclusive and affordable communities. We encourage the members of this committee and any participants in this public hearing to visit our website, www.desegregatect.org, and review the policy proposals, Zoning Atlas, and prior educational events about many of the

ideas and research I discussed today. We remain available to members of this Committee to discuss the impacts of zoning reform near transportation stations.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.