



**Testimony
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Before the Transportation Committee
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The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) appreciates the opportunity to comment in **opposition** to **SB-HB-6570, AN ACT CONCERNING TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT AND MUNICIPAL ZONING.**

Many municipalities are embracing efforts to pursue Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) to create more vibrant areas near transit stations that include walkable, bikeable areas, mixed-use commercial and residential buildings, job-accessible housing, and retail shops. In fact, Connecticut has initiated several successful programs to support Transit-Oriented Development, including competitive grant programs that provide funding for municipalities and regional Councils of Government.

Although COST supports efforts to facilitate TOD development, we **oppose** **HB-6570 which would mandate that municipalities allow “as-of-right” multifamily dwellings, accessory apartments and mixed use dwellings in 50% of the area by a rail station or rapid transit bus station.**

Connecticut has made significant progress in promoting and facilitating TOD, including undertaking comprehensive studies to identify strategies that will activate TOD, such as the [Hartford Line TOD Action Plan](#) and the [CTFastTrak TOD Capacity Study](#).

These plans include detailed assessments regarding the TOD potential of certain sites along transit corridors, including the 1) physical suitability of certain areas, 2) public sector readiness, 3) developer interest; and 4) leadership support. The plans also identify hurdles that TOD faces in certain areas, such as land use conditions, environmental contamination and groundwater issues. In addition, the plans recognize the importance of balancing development with the need to protect water resources and ecological habitats and address climate resiliency issues.

These efforts have positioned Connecticut to successfully build on local, regional, and statewide planning efforts and develop targeted strategies and incentives for municipal TOD projects that address the unique characteristics and challenges of each area, including North Haven, Old Saybrook, Wallingford, Berlin, Newington, West Hartford, Windsor, Windsor Locks, East Windsor, and Enfield. The state Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) highlights a number of these success stories on its [website](#).



COST is very concerned that HB-6570 would undermine these successful TOD efforts by prescribing rigid, one-size-fits-all requirements that fail to consider an area's unique land use conditions and characteristics.

COST urges lawmakers to **reject HB-6570** and, instead, build on the significant progress that the state has made in advancing TOD development. For example, Connecticut launched a \$15 million TOD Fund to promote development around station stops along the existing and proposed transit corridors. This fund has provided pre-development and acquisition financing to eligible projects and developers and was a key component of a coordinated strategy to leverage transportation-related development, including 1) affordable housing funds; 2) infrastructure and TOD capital funds; and 3) brownfield remediation funds.

COST urges lawmakers to continue to support this successful TOD strategy by:

- Continuing to adequately fund programs, such as the Transit-Oriented Development Grant Fund, that enhance local efforts to support housing and economic development projects around transit centers; and
- Providing technical assistance to municipalities to facilitate the use of Tax Increment Financing and other mechanisms to support Transit-Oriented Development.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.