

## MEETING NOTES

### HARTFORD ZONING ADVISORY GROUP

Meeting on November 13, 2013 at City Offices

#### Attendees:

Sara Bronin  
David Blatt  
Frank Hagaman  
Donna Thompson-Daniel  
Lynn Ferrari  
Denise Best  
David Jorgensen

#### Staff:

Thomas Deller  
Khara Dodds  
Jonathan Mullen  
Laura McMenamin  
Caitlin Fitzpatrick  
Stephen Cole

#### Consultants:

Leslie Oberholtzer  
Christina Bader

The following outlines the agenda and the key discussion points for the Zoning Advisory Group meeting held on November 13, 2013. The topics are organized around the existing Plan of Conservation and Development “One City One Plan”. The POCD is a general comprehensive vision document.

#### I. POCD Goal: Revise Zoning Map and Zoning Regulations

The objectives outlined in the POCD under Goals 1 and 2 for revising the zoning map and the zoning regulations include:

- streamlining the number of permitted uses;
- organizing the regulations around the concepts of form, scale, design, and performance standards;
- redefining density as “units per acre” rather than “people per acre” and “families per acre”;
- provide incentives for green and sustainable practices;
- create design districts in critical areas; stimulate adaptive reuse of buildings and land;
- address parking issues in the CBD; increase residential density in the CBD;
- and provide incentives for TOD around the BRT stations and other transportation hubs.
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#### Question: Is there a need for density regulations?

Generally, the group confirmed that the city needs to maintain its neighborhoods with single family housing and lots of green [yard] space, but agrees that density is needed in some areas. The design of that density, however, needs to reflect the urban character of Hartford and the design of the existing variety of housing stock, i.e. suburban style housing in proximity to downtown is inappropriate.

Two and single family houses being turned into three family in neighborhoods (West

End, especially) creates issues with overpopulation, parking, maintaining the integrity of the house, paving the backyards. Two family is okay, especially when it is designed for it. Three family tend to NOT be owner-occupied and for-profit rentals. In most areas it is more an issue of number of dwellers per unit and not really the number of people in an area.

Some discussion of the potential for adding density in new development (Bowles Park and Westbrook Village).

Higher density is expected along corridors and in downtown, but keep it out of the neighborhoods.

**Jon Mullen explained the people per acre v. family per acre in the existing code and Caitlin Fitzpatrick mentioned that in the existing code multiple and single family are generally allowed in the same zone.**

Frank Hagaman brought up the need for **adaptive re-use** for historic properties and the need to stimulate reuse while being sensitive to the properties and the context.

The other issue is the **need for better enforcement**, no matter what the code says.

Sidebar on ticketing: street system for trash pickup is broken. No parking on side of the street designated for trash pickup but the signs are incorrect, police are ticketing, and there is not enough parking already.

## **II. POCD Goal: Promote Livable and Sustainable Neighborhoods**

Topics in the POCD under this heading related to housing quality, maintenance, and affordability, and included a discussion about revising housing-related regulations. Additionally, this goal includes other zoning related topics such as complete streets and improving parks and public safety.

Questions were posed related to zoning rewrite potential project goals such as:

preserve and enhance the “completeness of neighborhoods”

preserve housing form?

Provide a variety of housing choices?

Maintain/enhance mix of neighborhood commercial uses within walking distance?

Manage large scale redevelopments?

Understand infill potential?

The answer to the above questions as goals for the zoning rewrite was a resounding “yes”, with the caveat that there is not much space for many large scale redevelopments.

## **III. POCD Goal: Mobility**

Topics were presented from the POCD goal of “Enhance Mobility through Improvements to Transit, Pedestrian, and Bike Systems City-Wide”, including improving pedestrian and bicycle systems and elevating them as modes of choice; implementing BRT, improving existing buses, and improving rail; emphasizing “complete streets”, reducing dependence on SOVs, promoting TOD.

The following were posed as potential goals for our project:

- Make ALL Corridors Walkable? Or some Level of Walkable? (especially Building Forms)
- Create Street Types? How much will they change?
- Will TOD levels of Parking work?
- Require Bicycle Parking? Storage in Residential?
- Block Sizes on Larger Redevelopments?

Yes was the answer to those questions posed. Group and community members want all corridors to be walkable and bike-able. It was noted that FHI will do street types to inform the building requirements, potentially adding to the space between the curb and property line for sidewalk and streetscape.

Concerns about TOD parking or less requirement. Will they park in the neighborhood? People in the TODs will still have cars and they need to be accommodated.

Changes to I84 and the implementation of the BRT will not become effective for another 10 to 15 years, at least.

Additional discussion on parking. Parking should be addressed in neighborhoods, along corridors, and in the downtown. Credits for parking requirements and shared parking in back of the shops are needed, but maintain a requirement for off street parking. Willing to not have parking requirements, but on what corridors?

#### **IV. POCD Goal: Downtown**

The goal of advancing downtown's role as the region's center for commerce, culture and city living was presented.

Questions were posed related to the zoning rewrite's project goals:

- Follow Focus Retail Streets in POCD to REQUIRE retail/service space? Beyond 15%?
- Require Residential in the Mix?
- Require or Incentivize Affordable Housing?
- Address issues with Entertainment Uses & Residential?
- How to Install Streetscape?

The discussion was too short for this section and probably requires additional meeting. The downtown core currently has only one zoning district and the new code will likely include a variety of zones. Access is an issue.

Question of whether the zoning code is hurting the downtown. Response was no, it works, but needs design review.

#### **V. POCD Goal: Sustainability**

This goal will be discussed at another date.

#### **VI. Existing Zoning**

Existing zoning code and map in the city were presented. Discussed the different existing

districts, existing use table, existing bulk or form requirements, and some special/unique elements of the existing code.

#### **VII. Introduction to Form-Based Codes**

A brief introduction to what a form-based code is and how it can benefit Hartford was discussed.

#### **VIII. Community Workshops**

Discussed the potential format for the community workshops, organized around 9 geographic areas.