

# Proposed ‘One City, One Plan’ Development Patterns Document

3/3/10

## Plan Recommendation:

This Plan recommends revising zoning regulations to change the measurement of residential density from “persons per acre” and “families per acre” to “dwelling units per acre”, in order to more accurately align the density allowed under zoning regulations with the actual housing densities.

***For the R-7 zone, this would change the regulations from 5.8 people/acre to 6 units/acre. At an average 2 people per unit, this would be an increase for people of 200%.***

## Residential Density

“Density” is the term used to measure the concentration of people, dwelling units, or even jobs within a specific area, although it is usually used to refer to residential development. Many urban area residents are wary of density, as they believe it increases traffic congestion, public expenditures on infrastructure and services and crime, while causing property values to decrease. Some even suggest that density equates with poverty, although no empirical data supports this relationship.

In fact, the overwhelming evidence is that urban density results in personal and public cost savings, environmental benefits, reduced dependence on personal automobiles and an improved local and regional economy (the urban ills often associated with density are more clearly related to the failure to mix uses and provide transportation options within an urban setting, as well as poor design that discourages pedestrian activity).

Additionally, some of the most expensive neighborhoods in many U.S. metropolitan areas have densities in excess of 50 units per acre, while research on the relationship between proximity to transit stations and property values consistently shows that residential and commercial properties in close proximity to transit enjoy a property value premium. What’s more, higher density development near transit can benefit residents by providing real gains in expendable

income: increased transit options allow residents to own fewer cars, leaving more money in their budgets for other expenses and purchases.

## Effective Housing Density

An analysis of the housing density in each of the City’s neighborhoods showed that the six neighborhoods with the highest density are the City’s Downtown (134 units/acre), Asylum Hill (44 units/acre), South Green (39 units/acre), Frog Hollow (34 units/acre), Sheldon-Charter Oak (26 units/acre), and Clay-Arsenal (22 units/acre).

The City has experienced a resurgence of housing in the Downtown over the last decade. It is estimated that the number of units has tripled to nearly 2,700 over this time period. Frog Hollow, South Green, Charter Oak, and Clay Arsenal are mature neighborhoods that grew around the factories and manufacturing centers during the early to late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Typical of many cities, the less mature neighborhoods on the fringe of the city have the lowest effective housing density as shown on the map titled “Effective Housing Density by Neighborhood”. Hartford’s pattern of housing density is typical of many New England cities of similar size and age.

Under the current zoning regulations, density is measured as “person per acre” (PPA) and “families per acre” (FPA). The average household size for the City according to the 2000 Census is 2.5 persons per household. For this analy-

sis, PPA and FPA were converted to dwelling units per acre. As shown in the accompanying table the City's R-4, R-5, R-6, R-7 and R-8 zones have effective densities that are very similar to the maximum allowed by zoning. The R-1, R-2, and R-3 zones have overall effective densities that are 28% - 33% lower than the maximum density allowed. For the City's residential office districts, the RO-1, RO-2 and RO-3 districts have effective densities 52%, 72%, and 27% lower than zoning allows, respectively. Within these zones, the density for apartment and condominium use subcategories are very similar to the maximum allowed by zoning.

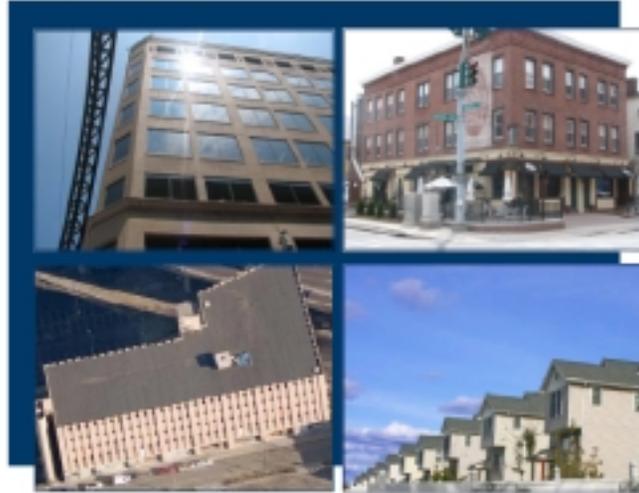
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<b>Residential Zones</b>	<b>Effective Density</b>			<b>Existing</b>	
	<u>Units</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>U/A</u>	<u>PPA</u>	<u>U/A</u>
<b><u>R-8 (One-Family)</u></b>					
Residential Condominium	88	29.2	3		
Single & Two Family	254	173.0	1		
Total:	342	202	2	3.6	
<b><u>R-5 (One- &amp; Two-Family)</u></b>					
Low Rise Apartment	323	8.2	39		
Mixed Use: Commercial / Residential	26	2.5	10		
Residential Condominium	90	2.3	39		
Senior Housing	161	5.1	32		
Single & Two Family	3,660	407.7	9		
Three & Four Family	1,255	75.3	17		
Total:	5,515	501.1	11	11.6	
<b><u>R-6 (One-Family)</u></b>					
Low Rise Apartment	2,652	107.4	25		
Mixed Use: Commercial / Residential	1	0.1	10		
Single & Two Family	1,843	255.0	7		
Three & Four Family	40	2.0	20		
Total:	4,536	364.5	12	7.3	
<b><u>R-7 (One-Family)</u></b>					
Low Rise Apartment	257	8.0	32		
Mixed Use: Commercial / Residential	2	0.7	3		
Residential Condominium	26	1.5	17		
Senior Housing	15	0.3	50		
Single & Two Family	3,267	595.6	5		
Three & Four Family	141	10.6	13		
Total:	3,708	616.7	6	5.8	



KEY TOPICS

- Land Use Inventory
- Residential Density
- Implications for the Future



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