



Town of Hamden

Planning and Zoning Department

Hamden Government Center
2750 Dixwell Avenue
Hamden, CT 06518
Tel: (203) 287-7033
Fax: (203) 287-7075

Memorandum

To: Hamden Planning and Zoning Commission

From: Erik C. Johnson, Acting Director Planning and Economic Development

Re: Updated – Proposed New Amendment to Town of Hamden Zoning Regulations –
Section 34 -Planned Development Districts

Date: May 19, 2022

The Town of Hamden's 2019 Plan of Conservation and Development identified strategies, polices and action steps that should be undertaken in Hamden with the goal of meeting community needs, preserving community character, and enhancing the overall quality of life in Town.

As part of the implementation recommendations the POCD proposes the establishment of a Planned Development District (PDD) to submit a request to the Planning and Zoning Commission for a zone change for a specific site plan and such approval would create a new zone for that property(s). This new zone would allow for the modification of certain standards established under the Town's existing zone code, thus eliminating the need for variances from the Zoning Board of Appeals. All plans would have to be submitted and reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Commission in advance of granting the change and zoning, and per the approved POCD the Planned Development District mechanism is only eligible in Business Zones or in College or University District areas.

The Planning Staff has developed this summary memo and draft regulations for the Commission's review and consideration. The planned development districts (PDD) technique is a useful zoning tool that gives municipalities, property owners and developers greater flexibility in permitting land use development. PDD's are **intended to encourage creative, innovative, and/or mixed use development**, and to insure and promote land use compatibility and harmony for land that is to be planned and developed as a whole in a single development operation or a programmed series of development phases

The proposed PDD regulations have been modeled against similar regulations in other parts of the state of CT. Jurisdictions that have adopted PDD regulations include: New Haven, Shelton, Orange, Cheshire, Wallingford, Meriden, Southbury, Branford, Madison, Derby, Middlebury, East Haven and West Haven. The tool has also been used in the following municipalities that are similar in certain ways to Hamden: Manchester, New Britain, Wethersfield, Old Saybrook, West Hartford, East Hartford, and Bloomfield.

The adoption of a Planned Development District is a 2-Step Process:

Step 1: Interested property owners, developers or other municipal stakeholders apply to the Commission for the establishment of a District. The application for the establishment of a PDD is considered by the commission as is considers any zone change application. In the case of a PDD, the zone change application also contains the proposed standards that would apply within the new zone/PDD. Those generally include permitted uses, density allowances, yard restrictions and setbacks, height requirements, parking ratios, open space requirements, building and lot area bulk standards and other items typically included in zoning district regulations.

Step 2: If the commission approves the PDD the applicant would then return in step two to the commission with its master development plan. The PDD regulation would contain specific requirements for the development plan submission requirements. At a public hearing noticed and held in accordance with the relevant state statutes and town regulations, the development plan is carefully considered by the commission. The commission would receive comment from the public as it currently does on all special permit applications. The approval criteria would also be the same as is the current special permit criteria.

Key Consideration to PDD Proposed Regulation:

Once the development plan is approved at the public hearing, the property owner would then submit more detailed development site plans, again in accordance with the submission requirements in the enabling regulation, to demonstrate each building or phases of the implementation of the master development plan is in compliance with the PDD standards adopted for the district. This is done by either site plan or administrative review approval. Applicant is not required to go through public hearing process unless they are making significant changes or alterations to the approved master development plans.

Minimum Requirements:

In order for a project to be eligible for consideration to be a Planned Development District, Planning Staff is proposing that is must meet the following conditions:

1. Parcel(s) must be a minimum **4 acres** for consideration to be a PDD
2. Parcel(s) must be in Business Zone (T Zone) or be part of College /University District
3. The proposed Master Plan must be compatible with the Town of Hamden Plan of Conservation and Development.
4. If the development includes residential units, units must comply with Town's Affordable Housing Requirements
5. Final adoption requires approval from the Inland Wetland Commission
6. All applicants required to pay \$1500 application fee. (All fees are subject to final review and approval by the Town Legislative Council.

Administrative Responsibilities:

The Application process is outlined in greater detail in the Proposed Regulations. However, it should be noted that all applications are required to complete a PDD Review Meeting with Planning Department Staff in advance of submission to the Planning and Zoning Commission. There will also have to be an application fee established for the Planned Development District's that must be approved by the Town's Legislative Council.

Town Preferences and Other Requirements:

The Planning Staff is proposing the adoption of process through which an applicant can work in concert with the Planning and Zoning Commission to propose and development a project that due to its scale, site conditions, phasing plan or other factors is impacted by the Town's current zoning ordinances. In order to maintain the integrity of the proposed process, I do not believe that Town should introduce any additional regulatory requirements as part of this process. However, I do believe that the Town, the Commission and the Applicant should make sure that where appropriate there are community benefits applied to these effort. Furthermore, in instances where the PDD is being requested for Town Owned Properties or formerly owned Town Property or where the Applicant is requesting other "incentives" from the Town, I believe consideration should be made for provision of community benefits that are commensurate with the amount and type of incentives that are being offered. However, to re-state, these considerations, should be made and outside of process that is being proposed, and addressed for each submitted application.

Proposed Next Steps

Thank you in advance for your review and consideration of this request to established a new section of the Town's Zoning Regulations for Planned Development Districts. The Planning Staff would like to submit the proposed amendment for the 35 day public notice period, after which the proposal would be open to a public hearing, where the matter can be discussed with the general public and any interested parties in advance of any action taken by Planning Commission in support or opposition to the proposed Amendment to the Town's Zoning Regulations.