



Transit-oriented district approved by zoning

By [Elizabeth G. Howard](#) on April 2, 2015 in [Latest News](#), [Lead News](#), [News](#) · [1 Comments](#)

About author



Elizabeth G. Howard

Elizabeth Howard is a Stratford-based journalist, blogger and poet. She writes on the arts, education, music, the environment, green lifestyle, American culture, travel and food. You can find her online at elizabethoward.net



Vincent Chase, owner of Colonial Square Shopping Center at 2420 Main Street, spoke in opposition to the zoning commission's Transit-Oriented Development Overlay District. The amendment to the zoning regulations, creating the new overlay district, passed through zoning Tuesday night. — Elizabeth Howard photo

A productive Tuesday night at Town Hall ended a busy month for the zoning commission, including the establishment of a new Transit-Oriented Development Overlay Zone District.

The commission voted unanimously Tuesday to amend zoning regulations to establish the TOD overlay zone to replace the former Transit-Centered Development zone.

The TOD zone covers roughly a one-half mile radius from the train station. Its boundaries are generally from Longbrook Avenue to Stratford Avenue along the Main Street corridor and from Ferry Boulevard to Knowlton Street. A map of the TOD overlay zone is on file at Town Hall.

The creation of the overlay zoning district has been three years in the making and is the result of the combined efforts of the commission along with the town's Planning Commission, Economic Development Office, and local businesses, under the guidance of the Greater Bridgeport Regional Council (GBRC).

At the public hearing, GBRC Executive Director Brian Bidolli said the new zoning district provides both local and regional benefits.

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	1	2	3	4	5

TUE 02 Senior calendar: May 29-June 4
June 1 @ 8:30 am - June 4 @ 4:00 pm

TUE 02 Catholic Daughters meeting
June 2 @ 6:30 pm

"Locally, it encourages compact, mixed-used and walkable development within a quarter of a mile of the train station," Bidolli said. "Regionally, this kind of zoning is a step toward supporting the state of Connecticut in terms of economic development, housing and transportation.

"You are increasing rail ridership, and that supports the businesses in that area. By creating this zone, you remove a barrier to economic development. ... It keeps Stratford competitive."

Several members of the public, including Colonial Square owner Vincent Chase and Beth DaPonte, spoke in opposition to the new district. Zoning Commissioner Linda Pepin addressed concerns raised by the public about traffic, parking, building height, landscaping, eminent domain, and more.

"I was part of the steering committee, the whole process," Pepin said. "It has been a long time coming. There has been a lot of discussion involved. Every issue has been discussed, by the people who know what they are doing. This is the road to go on."

The new zoning district is an "overlay" district, which means that developers have the option to choose whether to design sites based on the transit-oriented zoning rules or use current zoning regulations of the area they wish to develop.

Approving the TOD zone is part of the town's 2013 Plan of Conservation and Development, said Commission Chairman Dave Fuller.

Package store application denied

The commission responded to the voice of local residents Tuesday night and voted unanimously to deny a permit for a class A liquor store at 17 Woodend Road.

Third District Town Councilwoman Stephanie Philips voiced a protest at the public hearing, saying having another liquor store in the South End neighborhood contradicts the work the town has been doing to reduce alcohol and drug-related offenses.

"Our neighborhood community has four liquor stores within walking distance of each other and of three schools," Philips said. "We don't want to see our work diminished by adding more alcohol to the area we are working in."

In October 2014, the Youth and Family Advisory Board received a "Drug Free Communities" grant for \$125,000 over five years from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Many neighbors shared their concerns. The owner of adjacent property, Stratford Food Center, submitted a petition with 60 signatures opposing it. The Stratford Food Center currently holds a permit to sell beer.

Gary Lorentson, zoning administrator, read out letters from those in opposition, including Pat Patusky, superintendent of the Stratford Recreation Department. Patusky expressed concern for students and youth using the recreation and school facilities at the Birdseye Complex, two blocks from the proposed store.

The Stratford Police Department had recommended against approving the permit, Lorentson said.

The commission cited concerns with high foot traffic past the store, the store's high visibility for students, and the location in proximity to the schools and the popular food market next door as reasons for its vote.

Ferry Boulevard building use changed

Despite impassioned protest from neighbors at the Feb. 24 public hearing, the commission voted unanimously to approve the conversion of 608 Ferry Blvd. from commercial use to residential apartments.

The building, which sits at the corner of Riverview Place and Ferry Boulevard just beyond I-95's exit 33 ramp, has been empty for several years. It was

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originally planned to be developed for commercial use.

Architect Wayne Garrick said at the February meeting that the building would have greater appeal as a residential space than as commercial property.

“There was very little interest in commercial there. It has to do with circulation of traffic in the area,” Garrick said. “The apartments are designed to attract younger people who share space. They are fairly large — the concept is that there will be bedrooms at either end with common space in between.”

The approval of the special case is contingent on the commission’s approval of final site plans.

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George · 2 months ago

I believe: some people become involved in politics for direct and / or indirect compensation. Increasingly Stratford has evolved into mirror images of Bridgeport and Nottingham of Robin Hood days.

There are direct relationships between the Sewer Plant sale and Pension shortfalls as

well as forcing property values down and taxes up to increase redevelopment by the allies and patrons of political proxies and surrogates.

The political acts aren't incompetence, but malicious and I believe dangerously illegal.

-

At one time Manual Noriega, Bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, and Adnan Kashoggi were allies of U S Intelligence.

Roger Wilson (D) / Missouri --- 2012 (pleaded guilty) ---two years of probation for misusing money to make political donations

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