



# Village District Regulations Considerations

Initial Analysis for Town Plan and Zoning Commission

September 21, 2021



# Introduction

- Town Council referred draft Town Center Village District Regulations and Zone Map Change for TPZ recommendation by 10/19
- Refresher on Enabling Legislation
- POCD
- Proposal Overview
  - Zoning Map Amendment
  - Text Amendment
  - Procedural Considerations
- Discussion



# Enabling Law

- Village Districts are enabled by *CT General Statutes* Sect. 8-2j
- Zoning tool intended to protect the distinctive character of an area by regulating the design of new construction and substantial reconstruction
- Requires compatibility with design objectives and enables regulations that establish criteria around:
  - Design, materials, colors, and placement of buildings
  - Landscaping, lighting, and signage
  - Public views
  - Design, materials and locations of public streets
  - Other elements deemed appropriate

## Compatibility Objectives per Sect. 8-2j

- Buildings and layouts must reinforce existing development and streetscape patterns
- Streets must connect with the existing street network
- Open spaces must reinforce existing open space patterns
- Significant site features, such as buildings or views must be integrated into site design
- Landscaping must complement existing landscape patterns
- Signs, lighting and accessory structures should support a common architectural theme
- Proportionate scale, massing and detailing relative to the district



# Enabling Law

- A “Village District Consultant” reviews development and significant alteration proposals for consistency with the design standards established by the Village District regulations
  - The Village District Consultant can be a contracted architect, landscape architect or certified planner OR a committee consisting of at least one architect, landscape architect or certified planner
- Reviews must be provided to the Town Plan and Zoning Commission within 35 days of receipt of the application
- The Consultant’s report becomes part of the public hearing record and is to be considered by the TPZ in making decisions on applications



# POCD Supporting Policies

## **Town-Wide Policies**

### *11. Town Center*

d. Support high quality design through methods such as Form Based Zoning, Universal Design and Design Guidelines that promote context sensitive development and pedestrian friendly streetscapes.

## **Town Center Planning Area Policies**

### *Residential and Mixed Use*

7. Protect, maintain and enhance the streetscape trees and planting within the Town Center.

8. Encourage high quality design through methods such as Form Based Zoning and Design Guidelines that promote pedestrian friendly streetscapes and development in keeping with the size and architectural character of the surrounding neighborhood.

### *Historic Preservation*

2. Continue to promote and support rehabilitation of older commercial buildings in the Central Business District that have architectural or historic interest.

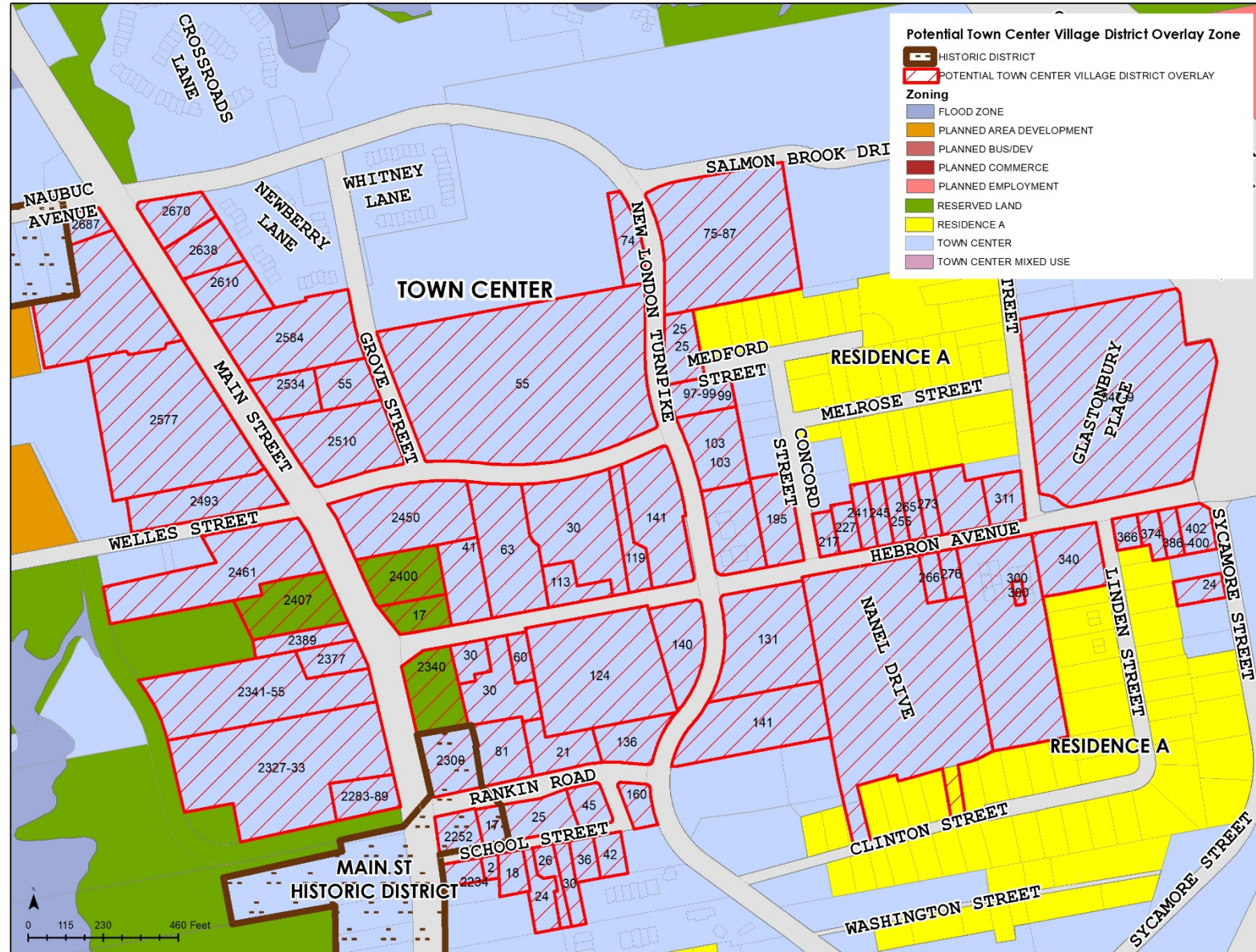
### *Economics*

4. Continue efforts to enhance the streetscapes along Main Street and Hebron Avenue through landscaping and architectural improvements...



# Draft Map Amendment

- Proposed as overlay zone – Town Center regulations still apply
- Main Street from Naubuc to School; New London Tpke from Salmon Brook to Rankin; Hebron Ave. from Main St. to Rt.2; and, Rankin, School, and Welles
- Overlaps with Main Street Historic District on three parcels
- Photo essay of most properties available





# Draft Text Amendment

## **4.19 Town Center Village District Overlay Zone**

### **4.19.1 Purpose**

Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 8-2j, the Town Center Village District Overlay Zone (TCVD) is hereby created. The TCVD is intended to promote, protect and enhance the unique and distinctive character, historic settlement pattern and architecture, and landscape of Glastonbury's Town Center and to function in support of the Town Center Zone and its purposes.

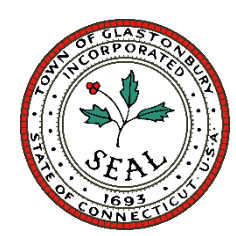
### **4.19.2 Definitions**

- a. "ADRC" – Architectural Design Review Committee
- b. "Commission" – Town Plan and Zoning Commission.
- c. "Council" – Town Council (Zoning Authority)
- d. "Town Center Village District" (TCVD) OR "District" - The Town Center Village District as delineated on the official Zoning Map for the Town of Glastonbury. The District shall be an overlay zone and its requirements and standards shall be in addition to and not in lieu of the regulations pertaining to the Town Center Zone.

Establishes district as an overlay pursuant to state enabling legislation

Statutorily required "Village district consultant" is proposed as Architectural Design Review Committee, established in a later section

Reiterates that underlying Town Center zoning still governs, this would be an additional layer of review



# Draft Text Amendment

## 4.19.3 Applicability

The TCVD is enacted to protect the distinctive character, landscape and historic structures within the District and shall apply to new construction, substantial reconstruction, and rehabilitation of property within the District and in view from public roadways, including but not limited to:

- a. The design and placement of new, expanded or altered buildings including materials and colors;
- b. The maintenance of public views;
- c. The design, paving materials and placement of public roadways;
- d. The design and placement of new and modified landscape areas, lighting, fencing and walls;
- e. The demolition of any structure or part thereof or the elimination of any landscape area; and
- f. Other elements that the Commission deems appropriate to maintain and protect the character of the TCVD.

This provision shall not apply to repairs to buildings where such repairs involve the replacement of building elements with like materials, colors etc. and such repairs do not expand or decrease the area, vertical or horizontal footprint of the building, change roof line or roof type or add or remove building elements.

Largely reiterates enabling statutes

Emphasizes maintenance of public views and cohesive design

Limits applicability to exclude repairs and in-kind replacements





# Draft Text Amendment

## 4.19.4 Objectives

All development in the TCVD shall be designed to achieve the following objectives:

- a. The building and layout of buildings and included site improvements shall reinforce existing buildings and streetscape patterns and the placement of buildings and included site improvements shall assure there is no adverse impact on the district;
- b. Proposed streets shall be connected to the existing district road network, wherever possible;
- c. Open spaces within the proposed development shall reinforce open space patterns of the district, in form and siting;
- d. Locally significant features of the site such as distinctive buildings or sight lines of vistas from within the district, shall be integrated into the site design;
- e. The landscape design shall complement the district's landscape patterns;
- f. The exterior signs, site lighting and accessory structures shall support a uniform architectural theme if such a theme exists and be compatible with its surroundings; and
- g. The scale, proportions, massing and detailing of any proposed building shall be in proportion to the scale, proportion, massing and detailing in the district.

Reiterates statutes for design objectives



# Draft Text Amendment

## **4.19.5 TCVD Design Guidelines**

The ADRC shall develop Village District Design Guidelines for review by the Commission and adoption by the Council. Such guidelines may establish sub-districts. The Guidelines shall include design criteria to achieve the compatibility objectives stated in Section 4.19.4.

Intention is to develop design guidelines that could be incorporated into the TCVD regulations, or that are advisory, or both. In any event, guidelines could provide a more detailed basis for the ADRC's review.

Should there be general design guidelines applicable elsewhere in the community? Should they focus on TCVD only?



# Draft Text Amendment

## 4.19.6 General Requirements

The following shall be considered in all development proposals requiring a zoning permit, site plan approval or special permit and in accordance with Section 4.19.3 within the TCVD:

- a. That proposed buildings or modifications to existing buildings be harmoniously related to their surroundings, and the terrain in the district and to the use, scale and architecture of existing buildings in the district that have a functional or visual relationship to a proposed building or modification;
- b. That all spaces, structures and related site improvements visible from public roadways be designed to be compatible with the elements of the area of the village district in and around the proposed building or modification;
- c. That the color, size, height, location, proportion of openings, roof treatments, building materials and landscaping of commercial or residential property and any proposed signs and lighting be evaluated for compatibility with the local architectural motif and the maintenance of views, historic buildings, monuments and landscaping; and
- d. That the removal or disruption of historic traditional or significant structures or architectural elements shall be minimized.

Links ADRC review to all types of permits in the Town Center Zone

Reiterates statutes on general design requirements

Discourages, but *cannot* prevent demolition/ removal of structures



# Draft Text Amendment

## 4.19.7 Architectural Design Review Committee (ARDC)

All applications subject to the provisions of this Section shall be referred to the Architectural Design Review Committee (ADRC) upon receipt of a complete application.

- a. The ADRC is comprised of 7 members and is established pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes section 8-2j.
- b. Appointments to the ADRC shall be made by the Town Council (Zoning Authority).
- c. The Town Manager shall assign a liaison(s) to serve as professional staff to the ADRC.
- d. Members shall include at least two architects, one landscape architects, and one professional planner/urban designer. Other members shall have background, experience and education in art, historic preservation, or similar areas specifically related to the role of the Committee and as otherwise required by CGS section 8-2j
- e. Initial terms of 3 members shall be 2 years, and 4 members, 4 years. After initial terms, all subsequent appointments shall be for a 4-year term.
- f. The ADRC may meet informally with the property owner(s) or prospective developer(s) prior to the formal submission of applications to the Town Plan & Zoning Commission.
- g. The ADRC shall provide design support to the Commission consistent with the objectives and purpose of the TCVD.

Statutes require that review committee have at least one architect, landscape architect or certified planner

Could disband Community Beautification Committee and fold some members into the Architectural Design Review Committee

Rethink Plans Review Sub-Committee process to avoid redundancy



# Draft Text Amendment

## 4.19.8 Procedure

a. Applications subject to this Section received by the Commission will be referred to the ADRC pursuant to Sections 4.19.3 and 4.19.6 and shall be reviewed by the ADRC in relation to the Design Guidelines of Section 4.19.5 and other requirements of the TCVD.

b. In addition to the information, exhibits, drawings and plans required by a specific permit under these regulations, the ADRC may also require one or more of the following items where it is reasonably required to adequately evaluate a proposal:

- 1) Cross-section drawings.
- 2) Perspective drawings.
- 3) The superimposition of the proposal on a computer created image of the existing area.
- 4) A streetscape illustrating the new proposal to scale and indicating the dimensional relationship between the project and structures on adjacent parcels.
- 5) Samples of colors and materials.
- 6) Historical pictures of the subject site and surrounding area, as available.

c. The application shall be commented upon by the ADRC prior to the opening of any public hearing on the application and such report be issued no more than thirty-five (35) days from the date of acceptance of a complete application.

d. Failure of the ADRC to report within the specified time shall be construed as approval of the design, and shall not alter or delay any other time limit imposed by these Regulations.

Per statutes, 35 days for ADRC to review and comment

Enables ADRC to request additional materials to assist in evaluating design details



# Draft Text Amendment

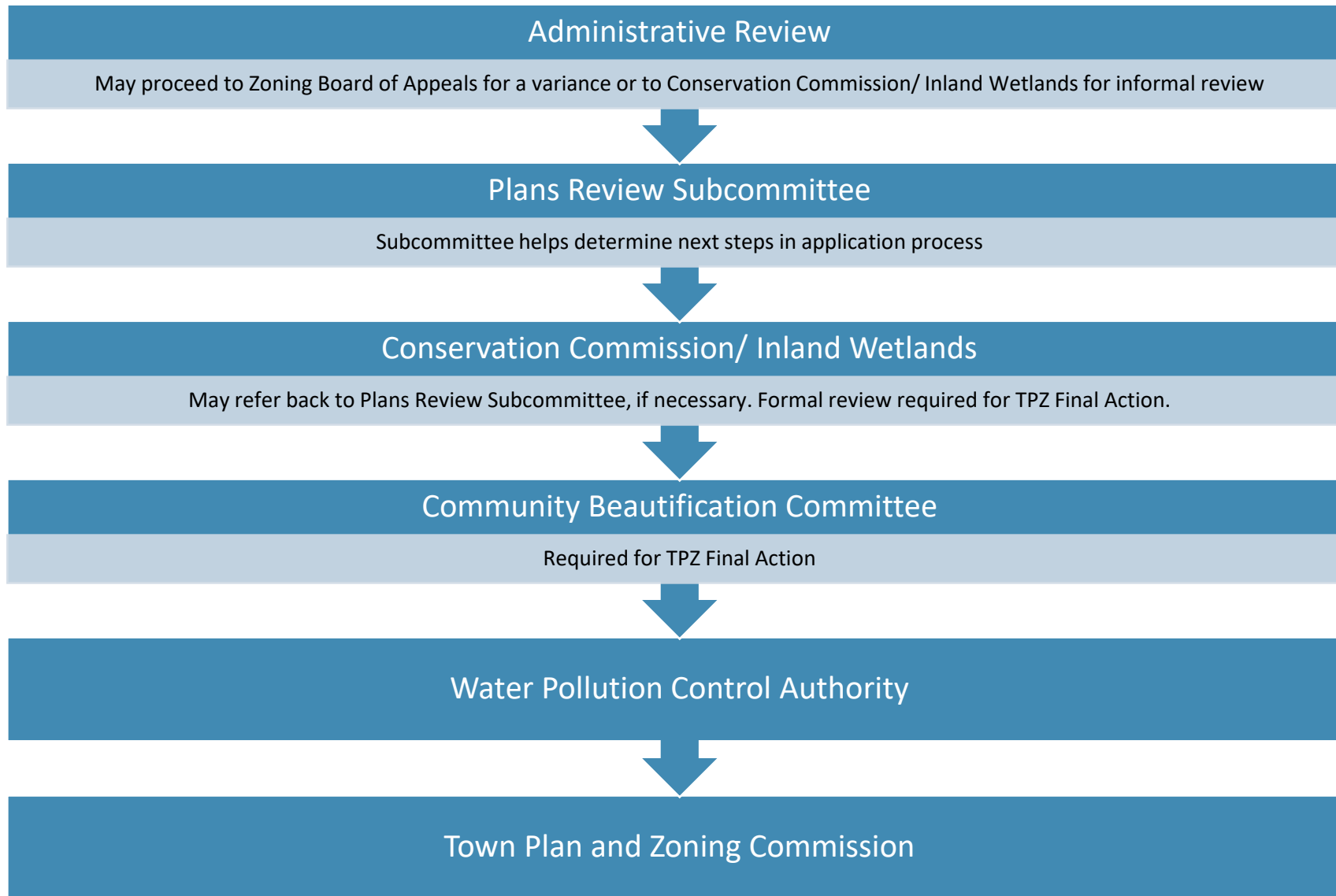
## 4.19.8 Procedure (continued)

- e. A request from the ADRC for resubmission of the application based on the ADRC recommendations shall not be considered failure to act.
  
- f. The Commission shall take action on the application upon receipt of the report from the ADRC. In addition to the report and recommendation of the ADRC, the Commission may seek the recommendations of any Town agency, regional council, or outside specialist as applicable. All reports or recommendations from such agency, council, or specialist shall be entered into the public hearing record.
  
- g. If the Commission grants or denies an application, it shall state upon the record the reasons for its decision. If the Commission denies an application, the reasons for the denial shall cite the specific Regulations under which the application was denied. Notice of the decision shall be published in the newspaper having a substantial circulation in Glastonbury.
  
- h. In accordance with §8-2j(f) and 8-3c of the Connecticut General Statutes, approval of a TCVD Application is effective upon filing in the office of the Town Clerk.

TPZ decisions on applications must state reasoning and otherwise follow typical procedures



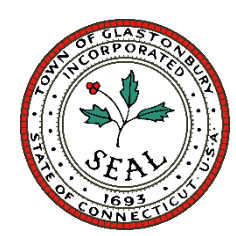
# Current Typical Review Process



Possible changes include:

1) ADRC review instead of Beautification – reviewing both site and building designs. Could be regulatory or advisory review, or both (regulatory within the TCVD, and advisory elsewhere)

2) ADRC reviews projects only within the TCVD and Beautification reviews all other projects as done currently – potential confusion



# Discussion Items

- Approach to overall TPZ recommendation – due to Council by October 19th
- Map of potential TCVD overlay area
- Design guidelines – regulatory or advisory
- Procedural implications – Plans Review Subcommittee and/ or Beautification
- Community and property owner input