

**Sec. 8-2j. Village districts. Compatibility objectives with other uses in immediate neighborhood. Applications. Village district consultant.** (a) The zoning commission of each municipality may establish village districts as part of the zoning regulations adopted under section 8-2 or under any special act. Such districts shall be located in areas of distinctive character, landscape or historic value that are specifically identified in the plan of conservation and development of the municipality.

(b) The regulations establishing village districts shall protect the distinctive character, landscape and historic structures within such districts and may regulate, on and after the effective date of such regulations, new construction, substantial reconstruction and rehabilitation of properties within such districts and in view from public roadways, including, but not limited to, (1) the design and placement of buildings, (2) the maintenance of public views, (3) the design, paving materials and placement of public roadways, and (4) other elements that the commission deems appropriate to maintain and protect the character of the village district. In adopting the regulations, the commission shall consider the design, relationship and compatibility of structures, plantings, signs, roadways, street hardware and other objects in public view. The regulations shall establish criteria from which a property owner and the commission may make a reasonable determination of what is permitted within such district. The regulations shall encourage the conversion, conservation and preservation of existing buildings and sites in a manner that maintains the historic or distinctive character of the district. The regulations concerning the exterior of structures or sites shall be consistent with: (A) The "Connecticut Historical Commission - The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings", revised through 1990, as amended; or (B) the distinctive characteristics of the district identified in the municipal plan of conservation and development. The regulations shall provide (i) 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, (ii) 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, (iii) 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 (iv) that the removal or disruption of historic traditional or significant structures or architectural elements shall be minimized.

(c) All development in the village district shall be designed to achieve the following compatibility objectives: (1) 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; (2) proposed streets shall be connected to the existing district road network, wherever possible; (3) open spaces within the proposed development shall reinforce open space patterns of the district, in form and siting; (4) 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; (5) the landscape design shall complement the district's landscape patterns; (6) the exterior signs, site lighting and accessory structures shall support a uniform architectural theme if such a theme exists and be compatible with their surroundings; and (7) the scale, proportions, massing and detailing of any proposed building shall be in proportion to the scale, proportion, massing and detailing in the district.

(d) All applications for new construction and substantial reconstruction within the district and in view from public roadways shall be subject to review and recommendation by an architect or architectural firm, landscape architect, or planner who is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners selected and contracted by the commission and designated as the village district consultant for such application. Alternatively, the commission may designate as the village district consultant for such application an architectural review board whose members shall include at least one architect, landscape architect or planner who is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners. The village district consultant shall review an application and report to the commission within thirty-five days of receipt of the application. Such report and recommendation shall be entered into the public hearing record and considered by the commission in making its decision. Failure of the village district consultant to report within the specified time shall not alter or delay any other time limit imposed by the regulations.

(e) The commission may seek the recommendations of any town agency or regional council or outside specialist with which it consults, including, but not limited to, the regional council of governments, the municipality's historical society, the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation and The University of Connecticut College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Any reports or recommendations from such councils or organizations shall be entered into the public hearing record.

(f) If a commission grants or denies an application, it shall state upon the record the reasons for its decision. If a commission denies an application, the reason for the denial shall cite the specific regulations under which the application was denied. Notice of the decision shall be published in a newspaper having a substantial circulation in the municipality. An approval shall become effective in accordance with subsection (b) of section 8-3c.

(g) No approval of a commission under this section shall be effective until a copy thereof, certified by the commission, containing the name of the owner of record, a description of the premises to which it relates and specifying the reasons for its decision, is recorded in the land records of the town in which such premises are located. The town clerk shall index the same in the grantor's index under the name of the then record owner and the record owner shall pay for such recording.

(P.A. 98-116; P.A. 00-145, S. 1; P.A. 01-195, S. 110, 111, 181; P.A. 13-247, S. 275.)

History: P.A. 00-145 divided existing Subsec. (a) into Subsecs. (a) and (b) and existing Subsec. (c) into Subsecs. (d) and (e), amended Subsec. (a) to require districts to be located in areas identified on the plan of conservation and development, amended Subsec. (d) to include landscape architects and planners in review and authorize an architectural review board to act as the village district consultant, deleted former Subsec. (e) which had defined "neighborhood", inserted new provisions as Subsec. (f) re approval or disapproval, relettered former Subsec. (d) as (g) and made numerous technical changes throughout; P.A. 01-195 made technical changes in Subsecs. (d) and (f), effective July 11, 2001; P.A. 13-247 amended Subsec. (e) by substituting "town agency" for "town", "council" for "agency", "council of governments" for "planning agency" and "councils" for "agencies", effective January 1, 2015.