

Town of

P.O. Drawer 519

**Department of Planning &
Inland Wetlands**

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East Lyme

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MEMORANDUM

To: East Lyme Planning Commission

From: Gary A. Goeschel II, Director of Planning/ Inland Wetlands Agent

Date: February 10, 2026

Re: CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS OF H.B. 8002 & THE EAST LYME 2020 POCD

Here's a **consistency analysis** between the **Town of East Lyme's 2020 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD)** and the **requirements and themes of Connecticut's House Bill 8002 ("An Act Concerning Housing Growth," Public Act 25-1)** — focusing on where the POCD currently aligns with or diverges from the statutory priorities that will be central under the new law. (§ references in the POCD below come from the Plan's recommendations and overall structure, and the HB 8002 summary is based on the final Public Act and analyses.)

I. Core Themes of CT HB 8002 Relevant to the POCD

Under HB 8002, the state is prioritizing several key planning and policy concepts for towns, which will become more central as **municipal Housing Growth Plans (HGP**s) and related zoning/subdivision changes are developed:

1. **Housing Growth Planning** – Municipalities must prepare or adopt a housing growth plan that inventories developable land, sets housing strategies, and aligns with regional/state housing needs goals.
2. **Housing Choice and Diversity** – Encouraging a range of housing types, including middle housing, multifamily, and affordable units.
3. **Consistency with State Plans** – HGP and priority housing development zones must be consistent with the State Plan of Conservation and Development and regional plans.
4. **Reduced Regulatory Barriers** – Allowing as-of-right housing types, reduced minimum parking requirements, and more predictable land use approvals.
5. **Infrastructure and Sewage Capacity** – Addressing sewer, water, and other infrastructure constraints linked to housing growth.

II. East Lyme 2020 POCD Vision & Objectives (Selected Elements)

The East Lyme POCD 2020 is a **comprehensive planning document** that sets goals and recommendations for largely physical development patterns, conservation, transportation, and community character. Key relevant elements include:

- **Affordable Housing Support:** The Plan *recommends establishing an Affordable Housing Subcommittee*, pursuing solutions to increase the town's affordable housing stock, and identifying areas convenient to transportation and amenities for such housing (recommended to be mixed-use in commercial areas).
- **Conservation Design & Cluster Development:** Encourages conservation residential design and revisiting cluster design regulations to preserve open space.
- **Balance of Development and Conservation:** Strong emphasis on environmental protection, coastal resources, water/wastewater management, and limiting impacts of growth.
- **Mixed Use & Economic Development:** Recommends rezoning commercial districts for village concepts and supporting redevelopment that enhances community character.

POCD overall states that future zoning and growth decisions should be **consistent with the goals and objectives of the POCD** for the quality of life and balanced growth.

III. Comparison: Consistencies with HB 8002 Goals

1. Housing Diversity and Affordable Housing

✓ **POCD Alignment:** The Plan identifies the need for affordable housing and suggests the development of an Affordable Housing Plan and subcommittee to actively pursue affordable housing recommendations.

HB 8002 Consistency: HB 8002 places housing choice and diversity at the forefront of municipal planning through mandatory growth planning and expanded allowable housing types. Municipal plans that embrace diversified housing pathways will be advantageous when crafting HGPs.

Conclusion: The POCD's inclusion of affordable housing goals and mixed-use recommendations provides a supportive policy framework for HB 8002's housing diversity objectives.

2. Mixed-Use & Transportation-Accessible Development

✓ **POCD Alignment:** The Plan supports consideration of mixed-use redevelopment in commercial nodes like Flanders and encourages locating affordable housing near amenities and services.

HB 8002 Consistency: HB 8002's encouragement of housing near transit nodes and in mixed-use settings (especially in transit priority or middle housing contexts) aligns with the POCD's vision.

Conclusion: There is strong alignment on the concept of mixed-use development and focused growth around community centers.

IV. Areas of Significant Inconsistency or Lack of Alignment

1. Formal Housing Growth Planning

✗ POCD Gap: The 2020 POCD does **not include a statutory Housing Growth Plan**, nor does it contain a structured inventory of developable land tied to specific housing growth targets or strategies as defined by HB 8002.

- POCD goals for affordable and mixed housing are **recommendatory**, not part of a structured housing growth implementation framework required by the new state law.
- There is no structured framework in POCD that anticipates the **state timelines for regional and municipal housing growth plan adoption** or the specific content mandates (e.g., land inventory, development targets, infrastructure needs).

Implication: East Lyme's POCD will need *explicit integration* of a housing growth strategy, with measurable goals consistent with regional and state housing needs assessments under HB 8002.

2. Density and As-of-Right Housing Requirements

✗ POCD Emphasis: The Plan strongly encourages preservation and conservation design, which may emphasize larger minimum lot sizes and environmental constraints. It *notes* discouraging residential use of some commercially zoned land outside of mixed-use settings.

HB 8002 Conflict: State law increasingly prioritizes **as-of-right housing types** (e.g., middle housing), density targets (e.g., minimum housing densities in priority housing development zones), and reduced regulatory barriers to allow diversification of housing types.

- POCD's more cautious language on where residential can be located (e.g., discouraging residential in existing commercial zones except mixed-use) may work against HB 8002 outreach objectives and will need clear updating in future updates.

Implication: POCD language and the zoning recommendations associated with it may need to be revised to support **middle housing, density targets, and flexible housing provisions** at the regulatory level.

3. Infrastructure & Sewage Capacity Planning

✗ POCD Context: The Plan focuses on water quality, wastewater management, and sewer avoidance strategies.

HB 8002 Requirement: The Housing Growth Plan structure places emphasis on understanding **infrastructure constraints and capacities** as part of housing growth planning.

- East Lyme's POCD **does not currently integrate sewer and other public infrastructure planning directly with housing growth goals**, and in fact encourages avoidance of sewer expansion in sensitive areas.
- There may be a *policy tension* between resisting sewer development (to protect environmental resources) and meeting infrastructure readiness needed for housing growth targets.

Implication: As part of compliance with HB 8002, the next POCD update (by 2030) will need to **integrate infrastructure planning more explicitly with housing growth expectations and land use recommendations** to support compliance.

4. Quantifiable Growth Targets & Monitoring

✗ POCD Approach: The POCD does not set *quantitative housing growth targets* or metrics for tracking progress toward increasing housing stock or affordability.

HB 8002 Requirement: Housing Growth Plans must contain measurable strategies and benchmarks tied to regional and state needs.

- POCD recommendations are largely qualitative and aspirational (e.g., encourage cluster development, support affordable housing committees) without tying them to *target levels of units or timelines*.

Implication: Subsequent POCD updates or supplemental planning documents (such as a municipal housing growth plan) must **add quantifiable targets**, e.g., number of units by type, affordability levels, and timeline benchmarks.

V. Action Items to Reconcile POCD with HB 8002

To improve consistency with HB 8002, the following revisions should be considered for the next POCD update or interim planning work:

1. **Incorporate a Dedicated Housing Growth Chapter:** Include a section that explicitly responds to HB 8002's requirements — integrating a developable land inventory, infrastructure analysis, housing types strategy, and measurable goals.
2. **Update Vision/Goals to Emphasize Diversity & Middle Housing:** Align the broad vision with statutory priorities like middle housing, multifamily housing access, and locations near infrastructure/transit.
3. **Revise POCD Language on Density & Zoning Flexibility:** Modify any language that discourages residential uses in certain zones if such discouragement would impede as-of-right housing types under HB 8002.
4. **Integrate Infrastructure Capacity with Housing Goals:** Add data and strategy for sewer, water, roads, and public facilities planning that directly link to housing growth needs.
5. **Quantified Performance Metrics:** Establish clear, measurable targets for housing growth — including units by affordability level, types of housing, and timelines — that can be used as benchmarks for the municipal housing growth plan required by the new law.

VI. Summary of Key Inconsistencies

Topic Area	2020 POCD Position	HB 8002 Expectation	Consistency Status
Housing Growth Planning	Advisory recommendations without mandatory structure	Must prepare housing growth plans with inventory & strategies	Inconsistent
Housing Diversity & Types	Encourages affordable housing but lacks policy for as-of-right middle housing	Encourages middle housing, diverse housing types	Partially consistent
Infrastructure Planning	Focuses on conservation and avoidance of sewer expansions	Infrastructure analysis essential for growth planning	Conflict / Inconsistent
Density & Zoning Flexibility	Mixed-use encouraged but some discouragement of residential conversions	Encourages density and as-of-right residential types	Inconsistent
Measurable Targets	Largely qualitative goals	Quantifiable growth benchmarks required	Inconsistent

VII. What You Should Know

- The next POCD update (due by 2030) will be a critical opportunity to integrate HB 8002 requirements and avoid conflicts between long-term planning and statutory housing growth expectations.
- Consider preparing **interim strategic planning documents** or a draft Municipal Housing Growth Plan before the next POCD to align with the housing growth timelines set out in the new law.
- Engage **Southeastern CT Council of Governments (SCCOG)** early, as regional housing needs assessments will influence municipal planning expectations under HB 8002.