

Town of

P.O. Drawer 519

Department of Planning &
Inland Wetlands

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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: Summary Outline of CT House Bill 8002 (PA 25-1)

House Bill 8002 was passed in a **special legislative session in November 2025** and signed into law by Gov. Ned Lamont. It represents a **major housing policy reform** with a focus on spurring housing growth, encouraging middle-housing development, and providing new state-level planning frameworks and infrastructure incentives.

I. Summary Outline — CT House Bill 8002 (PA 25-1)

1. Housing Growth Planning Framework

- **Regional Housing Growth Plans (HGP)**: Councils of Governments (COGs) must prepare regional plans identifying housing growth policies, including zoning amendments, fee waivers, tax incentives, expedited approvals, and public infrastructure actions.
- **Municipal Participation**: Municipalities can *opt in* to their COG's plan or prepare their own municipal Housing Growth Plan (MHP). If a municipality does not join or submit its own plan by **June 1, 2028**, it loses eligibility for certain state appeal moratoria (under § 8-30g).

2. Priority Housing Development Zones (PHDZs)

- Municipalities may establish PHDZs where multifamily housing is permitted *as of right* (no special permit) with **minimum densities** (e.g., 4 units/acre for single-family, 6 for duplex/townhouse, 10 for multifamily).
- Regulations must be approved by the State Commissioner and consistent with the municipal/regional growth plan.

3. "Middle Housing" and Conversion Requirements

- Municipal zoning must allow **transit community middle housing** (2–9 units) and mixed-use residential use on lots zoned commercial or mixed-use via a *summary review* process (no public hearing).

4. Parking and Dimensional Standards

- The Act restricts **minimum off-street parking requirements** for residential developments with fewer than 16 units and creates a fee-in-lieu option for larger developments.

5. Procedural Reforms

- Alters rules for zone change protest petitions (reducing supermajority requirements and raising ownership thresholds).

6. Infrastructure and Grants

- Creates **state-administered infrastructure grant/loan programs** for sewer, water, roads, and transit improvements *if a municipality complies with HGP requirements*.

7. Other Statutory Changes

- Expands fair rent commission requirements.
- Includes local homelessness measures (e.g., hostile architecture ban).
- Establishes a Council on Housing Development and multiple study task forces.

II. Key Impacts on East Lyme (Relative to Current Zoning & Subdivision Regs)

1. Housing Growth Plans (HGP)

Impact: East Lyme must *prepare or opt into* a housing growth plan by mid-2028 or risk losing eligibility for § 8-30g moratorium protections and access to certain state funding.

Regulatory Implication: Your current Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) and zoning must be aligned with HGP policies; you may need to amend these documents.

Planner Note: Start early stakeholder engagement; coordinate with **Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG)** on a regional plan and local goals.

2. Priority Housing Development Zones

Impact: If East Lyme elects to establish PHDZs, corresponding zoning amendments are required to meet minimum density and as-of-right provisions.

Current Zoning: East Lyme's traditional separation of use types and density controls (e.g., R-80, R-40) may need revision to comply with PHDZ criteria.

Planner Note: Assess parcels near transit corridors (e.g., near train/bus routes) or mixed-use nodes where PHDZs could be beneficial.

3. Middle Housing & Commercial Conversion

Impact: Regulations need updates to permit duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, cottage clusters, and mixed-use residential via summary review on commercial/mixed-use lots.

Current Zoning: If current regulations require special permits or higher standards for such uses, you *must revise* those sections.

Planner Note: Review Sections of Zoning Regulation that currently restrict multifamily in commercial zones and remove barriers.

4. Parking Requirements

Impact: Current municipal minimum parking ratios will need alignment with new statutory limits (e.g., eliminating minimums for developments under 16 units and adopting fee-in-lieu options).

Current Standards: Many CT towns historically have required minimum parking based on unit type; East Lyme's regs likely need revision.

Planner Note: Amend zoning parking sections and develop fee mechanisms with legal counsel.

5. Subdivision Regulations

Impact: Subdivision standards tied to parking, density, road standards, and utilities must align with as-of-right and zoning changes.

Planner Note: Update subdivision checklists to reflect housing growth plan criteria, modify submission requirements for middle housing, and revise application review protocols.

III. What You Need to Know

A. Timeline & Phasing

- **Now–2026:** Begin internal review, early drafts of regulatory revisions, and initial coordination with SCCOG.
- **2026–2028:** Develop, adopt, or join Housing Growth Plans; complete zoning and subdivision amendments.
- **By June 1, 2028:** Mandatory deadline for housing growth plan submission.

B. Stakeholder Engagement

- Public workshops on proposed zoning changes.
- Coordination with SCT Transportation and Public Works for infrastructure plans tied to housing goals.
- Legal review to ensure compliance with state standards without conflicting with the municipal charter.

C. Strategic Opportunities

- Use state grant/loan programs for infrastructure tied to housing goals.
- Target mixed-use and transit-adjacent areas for prioritized zoning updates for maximum development incentives.

IV. Estimated Staff Time (Man-Hours) for Regulatory Updates

Task	Estimated Hours	Notes
Initial bill review & planning	40–60 hrs	Understand statutory changes & identify affected code sections
Coordination with SCCOG (regional plan)	30–50 hrs	Meetings & drafting feedback
Drafting zoning amendments	80–120 hrs	Zoning, parking, PHDZ language
Drafting subdivision amendments	40–60 hrs	Aligning procedures with housing plan mandates
Public outreach & hearings	60–100 hrs	Prep, meetings, revisions
Legal review & revisions	30–50 hrs	Coordination with town attorney
Integration into POCD & supporting documents	60–100 hrs	Comprehensive plan alignment
Final adoption & admin processes	30–50 hrs	Town Council/Commission actions

◆ **Total Estimated Effort: Approximately 340–590 man-hours over ~24 months.**

Caveats:

- Hours vary by community priorities and existing reg structure.
- Additional hours are likely for planning sessions, ongoing reporting, and annual housing growth plan updates.

Summary Outline — CT House Bill 8002 (PA 25-1)

Below is a **comparative analysis** between the **Town of East Lyme's current Subdivision Regulations and Connecticut House Bill 8002 (Public Act 25-1, "An Act Concerning Housing Growth")**, with a focus on *where they are not aligned and strategic, practical recommendations you as the Town Planner should act on to bring the local regulations into compliance with—or best position them relative to—the new state statutory requirements.*

I. Overview of East Lyme Subdivision Regulations

East Lyme's Subdivision Regulations govern the **division of land into lots** and set standards for streets, lots, utilities, open space, drainage, and related improvements. They are intended to **ensure orderly development, protect health and safety, and support environmental integrity**.

Key structural points of the current regulations:

- Definition of subdivision (three or more lots) and procedural requirements.

- Street, roadway, and public improvement standards.
- Open space dedication and environmental protection standards.
- Design standards for lots and utilities.

(Full text is available through the Town's online planning page.)

At present, the Subdivision Regulations do **not directly regulate housing types, density, parking, or other housing-specific requirements**—all of which are core to HB 8002's objectives. Instead, those housing-related issues are typically found in **Zoning Regulations**, not in subdivision provisions.

II. Summary of Key Requirements in HB 8002 Relevant to Local Regulations

House Bill 8002 (Public Act 25-1) amends Connecticut law to establish new housing-focused statutory requirements that affect local land use regulations:

A. Housing Growth Plans

The Act requires municipalities to either adopt a **local housing growth plan** or participate in a **regional one** by a statutory deadline. The plan must include:

- an inventory of developable land;
- policies to reduce or remove regulatory barriers;
- a schedule and strategy to achieve housing goals;
- infrastructure assessment.

Municipal adoption of such a plan is a key precursor for regulatory compliance and access to state infrastructure funding.

B. Parking Minimums and Assessment Requirements

HB 8002 places **new limits on local parking requirements** for residential developments:

- **Parking minimums cannot be imposed for residential developments containing fewer than 16 dwelling units.**
- For developments with 16 or more units, municipalities must allow applicants to submit a **parking needs assessment** to demonstrate the appropriate number of spaces—local minimums cannot be applied if the assessment argues otherwise.

Municipalities may establish up to **two Conservation and Traffic Mitigation Districts** covering up to 8 % of land for relaxed parking rules, but these are narrow exceptions.

C. "Middle Housing" as-of-Right and Summary Review

The Act requires municipalities to:

- Allow **middle housing (2–9 units)** via a **summary review process** on lands zoned for commercial or mixed use (and optionally elsewhere), akin to an as-of-right standard, meaning **no discretionary special permit process**.

This strongly influences zoning and subdivision planning for smaller multifamily housing types.

D. Priority Housing Development Zones (PHDZs)

Although not a direct mandate, the law creates a program for **Priority Housing Development Zones** with minimum densities and as-of-right multi-family allowances, encouraging local adoption to secure state and regional incentives.

III. Points of Non-Alignment Between East Lyme Subdivision Regulations and HB 8002

Because East Lyme's Subdivision Regulations are focused primarily on **technical land division standards**, they do **not currently address many of the housing growth-related statutory elements introduced in HB 8002**. The following areas of misalignment or absence should be the focus of regulatory updates.

1. Lack of Parking Standard Revisions

HB 8002 Requirement:

- Elimination of parking minimums for residential developments of fewer than 16 units.

Current Subdivision Regs Status:

- The subdivision regulations *do not currently contain detailed parking standards*. Parking standards are typically within zoning, but if any subdivision cross-references parking requirements (e.g., road frontage parking or lot design standards), those must be checked and amended.

Recommendation:

- **Audit any reference to parking or lot design standards** that carry minimum parking requirements in both subdivision and zoning regulations.
- Update regulations to **remove minimum parking mandates** for residential projects under 16 units and reference the *parking needs assessment* process required by statute for larger projects.
- Ensure that any cross-references to off-street parking standards are aligned with the statutory scheme noted in HB 8002 rather than default to the existing subdivision or zoning language.

2. Absence of As-of-Right Middle Housing or Summary Review Procedures

HB 8002 Requirement:

- Municipal regulations must allow middle housing via a summary process in mixed-use or commercial zones.

Current Subdivision Regs Status:

- East Lyme's subdivision regulations do not include processes for **housing type-specific approvals** or *summary review* for middle housing. That framework is primarily in zoning.

Recommendation:

- Coordinate with the **Zoning Commission** to ensure that zoning language implementing the **middle housing summary review path** is reflected in the subdivision application procedures.
- Amend subdivision application checklists to identify applications for **middle housing unit developments** that qualify for summary review and establish consistent subdivision thresholds and standards to avoid redundant or conflicting requirements.

3. No Recognition of Housing Growth Plan Requirements

HB 8002 Requirement:

- Municipalities must adopt or join a housing growth plan content that includes an inventory of developable land, strategies to reduce regulatory constraints, and an implementation schedule.

Current Subdivision Regs Status:

- Subdivision regulations do not reference or incorporate statutory housing growth plan content or any requirement to align subdivision processes with those plans.

Recommendation:

- Modify the subdivision regulations to:
 - **Incorporate language requiring consistency with the East Lyme Housing Growth Plan** (once adopted) for applicable subdivisions.
 - Establish a provision for the Planning Commission to consider a subdivision's consistency with the housing growth plan's goals, particularly where infrastructure improvements or housing density are concerned.
 - Amend the pre-application or concept review process to include discussion of how subdivisions support local housing goals.

4. Density and Land Use Issues

HB 8002 Influence:

- While the legislation is more targeted toward zoning than subdivision, its intent is to **facilitate housing opportunities and reduced regulatory barriers**, which inevitably intersects subdivision provisions tied to minimum lot sizes or design constraints that restrict housing types.

Current Subdivision Regs Status:

- Traditional subdivision provisions in East Lyme may retain large minimum lot sizes or design standards that implicitly restrict higher density housing.

Recommendation:

- **Evaluate and potentially revise minimum lot size, frontage, setbacks, and open space requirements** to support multi-family or "middle housing" developments when they are consistent with zoning requirements.

- Consider optional **cluster subdivision provisions** that encourage smaller lots in exchange for open space preservation (this would align with the housing growth framework without sacrificing environmental protection).

IV. Practical Steps to Bring East Lyme Subdivision Regulations into Alignment

A. Regulatory Revision Checklist

1. **Update references to parking standards**—ensure compliance with HB 8002 parking requirements.
2. **Coordinate with zoning amendments**—ensure subdivision and zoning work in concert on middle housing and summary review procedures.
3. **Incorporate housing growth plan consistency** language.
4. **Review density standards, lot sizes, and design requirements** that may implicitly restrict housing types part of the new statutory framework.

B. Recommended Regulatory Language Concepts

- **Cross-Reference to Housing Growth Plan:**
"All subdivision applications shall be reviewed for consistency with the Town's adopted Housing Growth Plan, including provisions for housing diversity and developable land utilization."
- **Parking Waiver/Assessment Reference:**
"Subdivision plats for residential developments of fewer than 16 dwelling units shall not be denied for failure to provide minimum parking space requirements. For developments of 16 or more units, a parking needs assessment shall be accepted and evaluated consistent with Connecticut General Statutes as amended by Public Act 25-1."
- **Summary Review Coordination:**
"Subdivision approval procedures shall incorporate and not conflict with zoning provisions allowing middle housing developments via summary review as required by state law."

(These are conceptual; final legal text should be drafted with town counsel.)

C. Sequences & Priorities

1. **Legal/Commission Workshop:** Review HB 8002 impacts with your Planning Commission and legal counsel.
2. **Subdivision Code Audit:** Identify all references to parking, housing type restrictions, and zoning cross-references.
3. **Public Engagement:** Schedule joint Planning & Zoning workshops on proposed revisions (statutory compliance obligation).

4. **Draft Revisions:** Prepare zoning and subdivision amendments concurrently to avoid conflicts.
5. **Adoption Timeline:** Aim to adopt updated regulations by mid-2026 to ensure compliance with parking and housing provision deadlines described by the statute and to align with broader housing growth plan development.