

SPRAWL IS THE ENEMY OF CONSERVATION AND AFFORDABILITY

Connecticut faces an affordable housing crisis that is deeply tied to the climate crisis. The origins of both lie in land use planning that fuels sprawl: car-oriented, low-density, single-use zoning. Sprawl is enforced by zoning regulations like only allowing single-family housing and banning multi-family homes, requiring large residential lots, incorporating too much parking in residential and commercial zones, and overly limiting building sizes and heights. Collectively, these policies severely limit the number of available homes, make the few available ones more expensive, and block the production of more diverse homes that our population needs.

On top of that, sprawl degrades the environment by enforcing car dependency. Every trip in the sprawl requires driving, which requires more roads and more parking. All of this leads to habitat loss, increased runoff, light pollution, noise pollution, increased emissions, and heat islands due to more and more land being turned over to car infrastructure. We can not protect our environment and address our affordable housing crisis by maintaining land use policies that enforce sprawl. We must embrace anti-sprawl solutions. Luckily, there are many available to us that we must work together to implement locally and at the state-level.

TRANSIT ORIENTED COMMUNITIES ARE ANTI-SPRAWL

The alternative to sprawl is transit oriented, higher density, mixed-use land use:

Transit oriented: Building around and for bus and rail ridership (which CT already has a lot of!) not only promotes taking public transportation, but it also promotes more walkable and bikeable communities. Living car-free is not the goal for everyone in CT, but centering transit will make that option feasible for some people and will remove some car trips for others. The total impact of this focus will be a dramatic decrease in emissions, pollution, and land lost to car infrastructure.

In-fill” Density: Perhaps counterintuitively for some, density is good for environmental protection. Developing “in” rather than “out” concentrates human activity and development in smaller land areas, particularly ones that already have infrastructure. That means less land, less material, and less energy is consumed on a per person basis and more open space is protected from development. It also means more affordability. Multi-family homes and smaller homes on smaller lots - commonly known as “missing middle homes” - are cheaper to build, heat/cool, and service.

Mixed-use: Allowing homes to exist near or even in the same building as businesses or other services is critical to creating transit oriented communities. This is the fastest way to remove a significant amount of car trips for any type of person, in any type of community.



An old idea: If TOCs sound familiar, there’s a good reason: CT developed in the 19th and early 20th century as a transit oriented state. Many of our most beloved and successful communities are TOCs. If you love our New England character, you should embrace reviving transit oriented communities.

Keys to Promoting Transit Oriented Communities

- ❖ **Get Involved Locally:** Start attending Planning & Zoning meetings and advocate for changing outdated local zoning regulations. Local support for these changes is the fastest way to see them happen.
- ❖ **Advocate at the state-level:** Many local governments don't have the technical expertise or infrastructure funding to expand transit oriented communities even when they want to. The legislature must direct more resources to help. Luckily, groups like DesegregateCT are promoting bills to do this work during the legislative session. Testify and contact your state reps to support these efforts.
- ❖ **Tell the governor to act:** Governor Lamont supports transit oriented communities but so far he has not moved to reorganize state agency policies and funding around them as much as we need. Tell the Governor to reject sprawl once and for all and go all in on reimaging state leadership across all agencies.
- ❖ **Educate your neighbors:** Many people still do not see the link between the climate crisis and housing crisis. Many half misconceptions about in-fill density, transit, or affordable housing. Its up to you to make the case on your street with your neighbors to see the universal benefits to rejecting sprawl and embracing transit oriented communities.



DESEGREGATE CONNECTICUT

MORE INFORMATION

Pete Harrison

Director: Desegregate CT
 pete@desegregatect.org
 917-365-4034
 Desegregatect.org



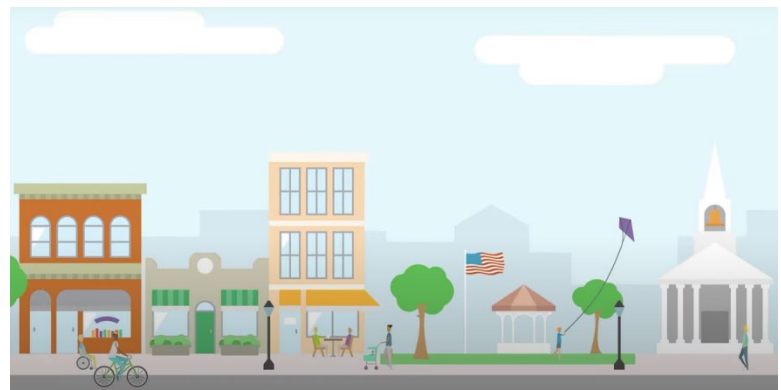
DESEGREGATE CONNECTICUT

Tucker Salls

Legislative Director:
 Desegregate CT
 tucker@desegregatect.org
 860-944-5113
 Desegregatect.org



DESEGREGATE CONNECTICUT



Missing Middle Housing: Range of multi-unit housing types that are compatible in scale with single-family or transitional neighborhoods, made for a walkable community.

