

West Hartford poised to adopt transit-oriented zoning near busway stops



West Hartford officials hope to capitalize on the new Elmwood and Flatbush CTfastrak stations, marrying rapid transit with denser and more pedestrian-friendly development in the areas immediately around the stops.

West Hartford's Town Council will hold a public hearing on the proposed changes Tuesday and could vote that same evening for adoption.

The zoning change would impact properties within a quarter mile of the busway stations, with frontage on, or accessed by, Darcy Street, Flatbush Avenue, Jefferson Avenue, New Britain Avenue, New Park Avenue, Prospect Avenue and South Street.

Those properties currently have a mix of commercial and industrial zoning.

The new "Transit-Oriented Development District" zoning would allow greater mix of uses, which would be allowed by right, rather than require review from land-use boards, Dumais said.

The change would allow for increased building heights, floor area ratios, reduced parking and shared parking with other uses. The proposed zoning also encourages development up to sidewalks, making for a more walkable district, Dumais said.

Density restrictions would drop from 1,000 square feet per unit to 750 square feet, Dumais said.

Dumais said the plan is the culmination of about seven years of planning and discussion between West Hartford, the Capital Region Council of Governments and state officials. The town is also pursuing roadway improvements intended to calm traffic and improve pedestrian experience, he said.

“The change to a TOD zone is very narrowly focused to an area in a five-minute walk from the stops,” Dumais said.