

Project Narrative

C-D (Designed Commercial District) and General Development Plan Text Change

08-30-2021

The City of Stamford Zoning Board proposes to amend Section 9.G. (C-D Designed Commercial Districts) and add a new Section 19.H General Development Plans. The changes to Section 9.G would streamline the C-D District Regulations. Currently, General Development Plans have varying definitions in different zoning districts. New Section 19.H. would create a uniform regulation for General Development Plans. As a consequence, several district regulations would need to be updated to refer to the newly created standards for General Development Plans.

1. Proposed Changes to Section 9.G. Designed Commercial Districts

The C-D District Regulations are intended to control uses and development on large tracts of land that are primarily used for office parks. As the demand for office parks has dwindled, other uses, such as senior housing, have been added to the permitted uses, provided that they support the campus-like and low intensity setting intended for this zoning district.

The following changes are proposed:

- a. Residential Uses would be added as a permitted as-of-right use in all C-D districts. Currently, residential uses are permitted in C-D districts by Special Permit only if they are contiguous to residentially zoned land, do not front on a State highway and are exclusively used for residential uses. Residential development would be subject to the same limitations as currently established for the Special Permit use, i.e., development would be limited to the density and bulk standards of the RM-1 district (low density multifamily) and must provide at least 50% pervious surface.
- b. Public Schools would be added as an as-of right use (both City and State are exempt from zoning requirements – this addition serves as a clarification)
- c. Other currently permitted Special Permit uses – Assisted Living, Senior Housing and Nursing Home Facility Complex and School, non-public would remain subject to Special Permit Approval. Colleges and Universities would be added as a new Special Permit use.
- d. Bulk regulations (building height, coverage, density, etc.) for commercial, residential and Special Permit uses would largely be retained from what is currently allowed. A clarification would be added on how mixed use commercial and residential buildings would be treated.

- e. Regulations for Structured Parking would slightly increase the height of such structures from 20 feet to 30 feet, but would also require structures to be setback 100' from property lines (currently only 50')
- f. Pole Signs would no longer be permitted. The position of Wall Signs on buildings would be specified more closely. Ground signs would be allowed for all curb cuts, regardless of the number of buildings on the parcel, and Wall Signs would be allowed to substitute Ground signs. The height of ground signs would be reduced to 8 feet from currently 12 feet.
- g. All development within the C-D District would be subject to approval of a General Development Plan.

As a clarification, the definition for Building Height in Section 3.B – Defined Terms would be updated to clarify how the building height for individual buildings connected by walkways or attached buildings is determined. As a clean-up, it was clarified that the building height for buildings in flood prone and coastal areas would be determine starting from the Base Flood Elevation.

2. Proposed Addition of Section 19.H. – General Development Plans.

The current definition for General Development Plans is provided in the DW-D Designed Waterfront District regulations. While GDPs were originally applied only in the DW-D Districts, GDPs have proven to be useful planning tools for other districts as well. As a consequence, GDP regulations have been added to other districts and uses more or less consistent with the standards in the DW-D. The intention of Section 19.H. is to create uniform regulations for GDPs in all districts and for all uses.

All new or re-development in C-D, DW-D, HCD-D, IP-D, MRD-D, MX-D, SRD-S, SRD-N and TCD-D Districts, all multi-building or phased development with individual buildings exceeding a certain size or certain uses would require submission of a GDP. However, some actions such as stand-alone Zoning Map changes in certain zoning districts would no longer need GDP approval and the pre-application requirement would be eliminated, as well as the application procedure simplified.

The proposed regulations would also establish a standard validity term for GDPs (10 years, with the ability to extend validity up to two times for no more than five years for each.

As GDPs are referenced in different sections and for different uses, these sections and use definitions would be updated to be consistent with the new Section 19.H. The following Use definitions in Section 5.E. would be affected

- Beach Club
- Corporate Retreat
- Country Clubs or Golf Clubs
- Hospital Complex
- Museum Complex
- Senior Housing and Nursing Home Facility Complex
- Swim or Tennis Clubs
- Yacht Clubs

References for the following Zoning Districts would be updated:

- 9.C. – MX-D
- 9.D. – DW-D
- 9.F. – TCD-D
- 9.I. – IP-D
- 9.P. – MRD-D
- 9.Q. – SRD-S
- 9.R. – SRD-N
- 9.S. – HCD-D

3. Amend Appendix A, Table 1 to simplify approval process for Group Day Care Homes

Change use 24.1 “Group Day Care Home” to a Permitted Use in all listed districts except M-L and M-G and replace ‘A’ and ‘B’ with ‘X’ and update the District Regulations accordingly. Group Day Care Home will not be a permitted in the M-L or M-G district. A Group Day Care Home serves seven (7) to twelve (12) children and is licensed by the State. Simplifying the approval process will assist small facilities in locating in Stamford.

4. Amend Section 3.B to add a definition for Murals

There is currently no standard or process in place to allow for Murals. The new definition will create the parameters for where Murals are permitted and the guidelines for their location, relationship to the sign requirement, lighting ordinance and content.