

**Project Narrative**  
**Proposed University and Research Overlay District (UROD) Text Amendment**  
**October 27, 2021**

The Office of Economic Development and the Economic Development Commission in collaboration with the City of Stamford Land Use Bureau proposes a text change to establish the University and Research Overlay District (UROD). As part of this text amendment, no mapping of the District within the City is currently proposed. The mapping would be subject to a separate application to the Zoning Board.

The purpose of the University and Research Overlay District is to foster Stamford’s position as a center of higher education and research in Connecticut and the New York City metropolitan region. As the Master Plan states,

*“Stamford’s hospital and university institutions are not only prominent facilities in the City’s physical, cultural and social landscape, they are also major employers that will shape the growth of its economy by preparing and maintaining the health and intellectual well-being of its residents and workforce. [...]*

*[T]he higher-education industry has become a key driver in urban economies, attracting new population, accounting for significant employment growth and generating major investment. As a driver, higher education – and medical education – can be counted on to serve Stamford residents and stimulate the City’s economy.*

*Healthcare Services and Education account for 12 percent of employment in Stamford and are expected to increase in share to 16 percent of Stamford’s employment base by 2025, adding 3,640 new jobs.”<sup>1</sup>*

Only land in Master Plan Categories 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 16 would be eligible to be mapped as UROD. The UROD would permit certain additional uses (most of them university affiliated, such as dorms, laboratories, etc.) in addition to the uses permitted in the underlying zoning district. Within the UROD, the following uses would be eligible (“Eligible Uses”) for special development standards:

- Colleges and Universities
- Data Center (University Affiliated)
- Dormitory
- Faculty or Staff Housing
- Gymnasium or Physical Culture Establishment (University Affiliated)
- Innovation Center
- Laboratories, Research
- Library, Other
- Media Lab
- Offices, Business & Professional (University Affiliated)
- Performing Arts Center (University Affiliated)

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<sup>1</sup> Stamford Master Plan 2015-2025, p. 62

- Convention and Conference Center

The special development standards would only be permitted if at least 25% of the floor area is dedicated to an Eligible Use. If necessary, university affiliation would require appropriate documentation.

Generally, the bulk regulations of the underlying zoning district would apply. The following special development standards would apply to Eligible uses only:

- Density could be increased by up to 25% (either as floor area or units per acre);
- Building height could be increased by 1 story (if the underlying district limits building height to four stories or less) or two stories;
- Building and lot coverage could be increased by up to 25%;
- There would be no BMR requirement for dedicated deed-restricted staff or faculty housing;
- Parking requirements would be zero for all eligible uses within Parking Category 1 within 1,000 feet of a public parking garage and reduced by 50% for all other uses (75% outside of Parking Category 1)
- Bicycle Parking would have to be increased by 25% relative to the Standards in Section 12.J.
- There would be a 5% Publicly Accessible Amenity Space requirement, with a buy-out option; and
- Public internet would need to be provided.

In addition the UROD standards the proposed text change would add some university or research related uses to the regulations index of uses and Section 5 (use definitions), such as data center or faculty or staff housing.