

South End NRZ Meeting Minutes
March 11th, 2025

Draft

Attendees: Bonnie Tores-FHI Studio; Stephanie Brooks-FHI Studio; Sandra Gottlin-Neighborhood Ambassador; Dan Shea-BLT; Andres Hogg-Hogg Holdings; Lori Goings-South End Resident; Elizabeth McCauley- South End Property Owner; Sue Halpern-Property Owner; Frances Gerety-Property Owner; Ralph Blessing-City of Stamford; Leah Kagan-City of Stamford, Jennifer Orlikoff-UConn Stamford; Liz Abbasi-South End Property Owner; John DaRosa-Elmcorft Road; Terry Adams-South End NRZ Member; Jon Wooten-South End NRZ Member; Sheila Barney-South End NRZ Member

The meeting was held at the **Hazel community** room and began at 6:30 pm

Ralph Blessing, Leah Kagan & Jennifer Orlikoff gave an overview of the **University and Research Overlay District (UROD)** emphasizing:

[Proposed University & Research Overlay.pdf](#)

1. The goals of the UROD
2. How the UROD support the goals
3. The eligible uses of an UROD
4. How the proposed changes protect the lower density areas in the South End
5. How to make sure student housing doesn't displace residents
6. Who is the applicant for this application
7. How does the proposal impact local taxes
8. How does Transfer of Development Rights work
9. Does UROD mean more Development in the South End
10. How are Historic Buildings protected
11. Why are universities and Cultural Institutions important in Stamford

Liz Abbasi questioned the yellow area on the map that designated the Historic District, as she thought the Historic District was no longer on the table?

Ralph Blessing answered that the area highlighted in yellow are the houses that are on the National Historic Register which doesn't provide strong protections, it's not a Local Historic District which was withdrawn.

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Andres Hoggs reiterated that it was mentioned that 80% of the students are commuters from other cities.

Jennifer Orlikoff affirmed there are Stamford students, but a large number choose to remain home or commute up and down the transit line.

Sue Halpern raised concern about density since there are transfer rights that would allow 1 story for every 5 that is zoned.

Ralph Blessing confirmed the transfers are only for university uses and targeted for the eleven uses specified for the University & Research Overlay District.

John Wooten mentioned that the developers will be changing their focus to dorms placing competition against affordable housing. The building located on 1201 Washington Blvd was mentioned as an example of the owner not renewing leases so the building could be used as a dormitory.

Leah Kagan advised the tenants whose leases will not be renewed will be relocated. The new building slated for Burlington Coat Factory will be offering the tenants a new unit. In the meantime, the tenants will be able to relocate with any difference in cost being paid by the Boulevard ownership.

Elizabeth McCauley asked Do UConn have any ideas or plans of what they are going to build for the specified UROD areas or is this going to be a free for all?

Jennifer Orlikoff answered **No** they do not have plans now as UConn is currently suffering from a large budget deficit.

Andres Hoggs asked area the houses highlighted in yellow eligible to transfer air rights if they have them?

Ralph Blessing answered **YES**, they are eligible to transfer the Historic air rights, and the building have to be historic and be on the cultural resources of Historic.

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Elizabeth McCauley asked is there another map that shows where the office space is located since there is not a lot of empty land left and it doesn't seem you're going into empty land but existing buildings?

Ralph Blessing answered to some degree they are going for both empty land and existing buildings but around the train station there is some vacant land.

Sue Halpern asked can BLT for their high risers get development of TDR's.

Ralph Blessing answered they can receive them, but they cannot generate them, nor can they get the bonus or sell the left-over rights.

Stamford 2035 Comprehensive Plan- Ralph Blessing & Sandra Gottlin

Ralph advised the city of Stamford is working on the 2035 Comprehensive Plan that is required every 10 years. There is a state statute that if the city doesn't do it the State can cut certain funding to the city. The city of Stamford's Planning Board in partnership with the Land Use Bureau is working with Sasaki, James Lima Planning & Development over the next 10 months to articulate the future of Stamford.

[Stamford's New Comprehensive Plan](#)

Two important things to keep in mind:

1. The Comprehensive plan is not legally binding when the plan says should not be developed with high density apartment building is not legally binding. What is legally binding is the zoning and the zoning must follow the comprehensive plan.
2. The Comprehensive plan is not a fine set of recommendations it's something that says we need to do more research to figure things out.

Sandra Gottlin introduced herself and advised she is the South End Neighborhood Ambassador who is trying to connect BLT & the Old South End. Sandra welcomed open conversation from anyone who have concerns.

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I-95 Stamford Plan: Stephanie Brooks & Bonnie Torres. [I-95 Stamford](#)

Stephanie Brooks updated the group on what's happening on the I-95 Stamford Plan. Stephanie invited the group to speak on smaller projects and wanted to get feedback. Stephanie mentioned the project doesn't make anything happen, but it can recommend projects to move forward.

Liz Abbasi suggested parking during certain hours which would be kinder for retail.

Elizabeth McCauley mentioned the yellow lines and the merging lanes can be very confusing.

Any concerns can be sent to Stephanie Brooks:

Stephanie.s.brooks@imegcorp.com

917.933.7443

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm