

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ZONING REGULATIONS OF THE CITY OF NORWICH,  
CONTAINED IN THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN BY ADDING REGULATIONS FOR A  
VILLAGE DISTRICT OVERLAY AS SECTION 3.10 OF THE ZONING REGULATIONS**

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORWICH** that the Zoning Regulations of the City of Norwich be and hereby are amended by the addition of a Village District Overlay as Section 3.10 of the Zoning Regulations as hereinafter set forth.

**3.10 Village District Overlay (VDO)**

**3.10.1 Purpose.**

- .1 The Village District Overlay (VDO) is adopted pursuant to the authority of CGS Sec. 8-2j with the purpose to establish Village Districts in areas of distinctive character, landscape or historic value that have been specifically identified in the Norwich Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD).
- .2 Village Districts are identified in the 2013 Plan of Conservation and Development as a strategy for enhancing Norwich's physical character (p.38). The POCD recognizes several community nodes as focal points where compatible development may reinforce a sense of place for residents and enhance community character. These include, but are not limited, to Norwichtown, Occum, Thamesville, Greeneville, Bean Hill, Downtown and Taftville.
- .3 Establishment of village districts will encourage the conversion, conservation and preservation of existing buildings and sites in a manner that maintains the historic or distinctive character of the specific district.

**3.10.2 Objectives**

To protect the distinctive character, landscape and historic structures, the Commission on the City Plan shall regulate, on and after the effective date of these regulations, new construction, substantial reconstruction and rehabilitation of properties within an established village district and in view from public roadways, including, but not limited to, (1) the design and placement of buildings, (2) the maintenance of public views, (3) the design, paving materials and placement of public roadways, and (4) other elements that the commission deems appropriate to maintain and protect the character of the village district. These regulations shall not apply to existing structures used solely for residential purposes. To accomplish these objectives:

- .1 Buildings, the layout of buildings, and included site improvements shall reinforce existing buildings and streetscape patterns and the placement of buildings and included site improvements shall assure there is no adverse visual effect on the district;

- .2 The maintenance of historic buildings, monuments, and landscaping shall be encouraged;
- .3 Proposed streets and walkways shall be connected to the existing district road network, wherever possible;
- .4 Open spaces within the proposed development shall reinforce open space patterns of the district, in form and siting;
- .5 Locally significant features of the site such as distinctive buildings, sight lines or vistas from within the district, shall be integrated into the site design;
- .6 Landscape design shall complement the district's landscape patterns;
- .7 Exterior signs, site lighting and accessory structures shall support a uniform architectural theme if such a theme exists and be compatible with their surroundings; and
- .8 The scale, proportions, massing and detailing of any proposed building shall be in proportion to the scale, proportion, massing and detailing in the district.

### 3.10.3 Village District Design Guidelines.

The Council of the City of Norwich shall adopt Village District Design Guidelines following review by the Commission on the City Plan, which may be updated from time to time, by the Council of the City of Norwich to include specific criteria to encourage compatibility for each particular village district. The guidelines shall include design criteria to achieve the compatibility objectives stated in Section 3.10.2. The regulation concerning the exterior structures or sites shall be consistent with the (A) "Connecticut Historical Commission - The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings", revised through 1990, as amended; or (B) the distinctive characteristics of the district identified in the municipal Plan of Conservation and Development. The regulations shall establish criteria from which a property owner and the commission may make a reasonable determination of what is permitted or encouraged within such district.

### 3.10.4 General Requirements:

Utilizing the Village District Design Guidelines, the following shall be considered in all development proposals:

- .1 Proposed buildings or modifications to existing buildings shall be harmoniously related to their surroundings, and the terrain in the district and to the use, scale and architectural style of existing buildings in the district that have a functional or visual relationship to a proposed building or modification,
- .2 All spaces, structures and related site improvements visible from public roadways shall be designed to be compatible with the elements of the area of the village district in and around the proposed building or modification,

- .3 The color, size, height, location, proportion of openings, roof treatments, building materials and landscaping of commercial or residential property and any proposed signs and lighting shall be evaluated for compatibility with the local architectural motifs and the maintenance of views, historic buildings, monuments and landscaping, and
- .4 The removal or disruption of historic traditional or significant structures or architectural elements shall be minimized.

### 3.10.5 Village District Uses:

#### Norwichtown:

Bed and breakfasts, as well as current uses within the underlying zones, are allowed in the Norwichtown Village District. The following uses are not permitted in the Norwichtown Village District:

- .1 Excavation and Earth Removal Operations
- .2 Large public utility facilities
- .3 Solar equipment, 1 megawatt (mW) and greater
- .4 Commercial kennels
- .5 Boat sales (i.e., display and repair, including sale of marine equipment or products) or Docks, slips, piers, Marina / yacht clubs
- .6 Motor vehicle fueling stations (NOTE: Repair is a storage occupancy)
- .7 Motor vehicle retail (e.g., passenger cars, recreation vehicles and mobile homes)
- .8 Motor Vehicle Repair Garages
- .9 Car Wash Facility
- .10 Storage Rental Facility
- .11 Any exterior storage not shielded from public view

### 3.10.6. Regulated Activities

All applications for new construction and substantial reconstruction within the district and in view from public roadways shall be subject to review and recommendation by an architect or architectural firm, landscape architect, or planner who is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners contracted by the City of Norwich and selected by the Commission on the City Plan and designated as the village district consultant for such application. Alternatively, the Council of the City of Norwich may adopt an ordinance to designate an architectural review board as the village district consultant whose members shall include at least one architect, landscape architect or planner who is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners. Should the commission hire an outside consultant for review of village district proposals, such services shall be paid by the applicant.

### 3.10.7 Application Process

The City has established a tiered approach to review development proposals based on their complexity. It is at the discretion of the Zoning Enforcement Officer to determine the appropriate tier:

#### Tier 1 Activities:

- .1 Sign, awning, lighting, public art/historical markers, solid waste, and recycling storage, fire exits, and handicapped access or fence.

#### Tier 2 Activities:

- .1 Replacement of stairs, accessory buildings, landscaping, minor additions of 200 square feet or less, sidewalks, siding and facades, or window and door replacement.

#### Tier 3 Activities:

- .1 New structures, major additions of over 200 square feet, new paved parking lots, scale roof-mounted solar systems, and any application or site plan that requires approval from the Commission on the City Plan.
- .2 All proposals that don't adhere to Tier 1 or 2
- .3 All municipal improvements are automatically Tier 3.

### 3.10.8 Submission Materials

To demonstrate that proposals meet the requirements of the Village District, the following items must be submitted:

- .1 Tier 1 and 2: submit material specs, spec sheet, simple assessor's map plot plan, and any other information required to ensure the proposal meets the requirements of the Village District as listed in these regulation Guidelines.
- .2 Tier 3: submit stamped architectural/ engineering site plans, survey, drawings, models, renderings, and/or perspectives that illustrate the 3-dimensional massing and architectural character of proposed new buildings and/or substantial renovation of existing buildings, including adjacent buildings that are adequate to properly assess the application.
- .3 The village district consultant or the Zoning Enforcement Officer may request additional materials for permitting.

### 3.10.9 Review Process

- .1 The village district consultant shall review all applications and report its suitability findings at the next regular meeting of the Commission of the City Plan or within thirty-five (35) days of receipt of the application. Such report and recommendation shall be considered to render a decision on the village district compatibility. Failure of the village district consultant to report within the specified time shall not alter or delay any other time limit imposed by the regulations.
- .2 In reviewing village district proposals, recommendations may be sought from any City agency or regional council or outside specialist with which it consults, including, but not limited to, the regional council of governments, the municipality's historical society, Historic District Commission, the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation and the University of Connecticut College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Any reports or recommendations from such councils or organizations shall be entered into the public hearing record.

- .3 In determining an application for its compatibility, the Commission on the City Plan shall state upon the record the reasons for its decision. If a commission denies an application, the reason for the denial shall cite the specific regulations under which the application was denied. Notice of the decision for Village District applications shall be published in a newspaper having a substantial circulation in the municipality. An approval shall become effective in accordance with subsection (b) of section 8-3c of the Connecticut General statutes. The fee for the legal notice shall be paid by the applicant.
- .4 No approval under this section shall be effective until a copy thereof, certified by the commission after rendering a decision regarding compatibility, containing the name of the owner of record, a description of the premises to which it relates and specifying the reasons for its decision, is recorded in the Norwich Land Records.
- .5 The city clerk shall index the same in the grantor's index under the name of the then record owner and the record owner shall pay for such recording.

President Pro Tem Bill Nash