

Ivy Vann
Ivy Vann Town Planning
LD 1940

My name is Ivy Vann and I am a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners. I work both in New England and nationally as a town planner helping villages, towns and cities improve their regulatory environment to produce better places.

I am speaking in favor of LD 1940 and I would like to call out several specific instances where I see the proposed changes being a marked improvement over the existing statute.

The focus in the bill language on public investment in growth areas is praiseworthy. By putting our water and sewer and road construction dollars in places where we want to see development means that we can both encourage the kinds of places where people want to live and invest, as well as guarantee that those infrastructure dollars will be translated into tax revenue in the future.

The placetype language not only clearly defines places in a way that is comprehensible to the layperson, and illuminates the kind of development intended to happen there but is infinitely flexible so that each jurisdiction can calibrate the placetypes to local conditions. The placetypes can be renamed and redescribed in the comprehensive plan for each individual place. Additionally those locally defined placetypes are mapped locally: each place determines where the village center belongs, what the boundaries of the rural district are. This provision for the people who know a place best to both define its parts and make distinctions about future growth is hugely powerful.

In the same vein the emphasis on community engagement in the bill's language is also to be lauded. We all know that public engagement is both crucial for the success of planning and hard to do well. I am pleased to see that the bill promises the creation of tools for better community engagement. As a person who spends a great deal of her working life on community engagement in advance of proposed zoning regulation changes I can assure you that the quality and quantity of community engagement determines whether or not necessary changes will be accepted locally.

I understand that while the requirement for an implementation strategy in the comprehensive plan is not a new requirement, it is the thing that is most likely to be left undone under the current statute. Strengthening this language and especially the fact that it includes requirements for specific ordinances to be adopted and a timetable for those changes to be made are important.

Thank you for your time and attention.