

December 29, 2017



Chairman-Elect Michael Rossi  
Clinton Planning & Zoning Commission  
54 East Main Street  
Clinton, CT 06413

**RE: Planning Comment on Zoning Amendment Application #AR 17-078,  
New Section 23: Transit Oriented Development Overlay, Section 27.3  
Schedule of Uses – Floating & Overlay Zones, and Appendix B- Visual  
Guidance**

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Chairman-Elect Rossi and PZC Members,

I have been asked to review Application #AR 17-078, proposing to add a new Section 23 (and associated tables/appendices) of the Clinton Zoning Regulations concerning a Transit Oriented Development Overlay (TODO), as presented by the Commission itself. As you know, the proposal is the result of an Ad-Hoc Committee which I assisted in the development of these draft Regulations. I have reviewed the proposed amendments and their applicability to the Plan of Conservation & Development (PoCD), as well as the comments from Commission Attorney Richard Roberts (dated 12/21/2017). Please consider the following notes:

- The overall effort of the Ad-Hoc Committee was to deliver on several related priorities and recommendations of the PoCD as relates to the Unilever property and Clinton Center in general. From the Clinton Center Planning Focus Area chapter (p. 56), these recommendations include:
  - o *Redevelopment of the Unilever site should be consistent with transit-oriented development principles;*
  - o *Change Zoning to increase density on the undeveloped area of the Unilever site and in downtown buildings, allowing for mixed-use opportunities; and*
  - o *Develop and implement design standards for the area, maintaining the small, compact historic downtown, while improving streetscape and connectivity.*
- Despite some relatively recent tweaks to maximum building size for indoor recreation facilities, the current regulations for the Unilever site anticipate and allow mostly industrial uses. While the PoCD encourages mixed-use and transit-friendly developments, an October public information session revealed community support for the restoration or continuation of industrial or manufacturing uses at this property (in addition to housing, commercial, recreational, etc.);

- As a result of this input and per the guidance of the Ad-Hoc group, the proposed Regulation is an overlay, which keeps in place the underlying Industrial District but creates the option of significantly expanded uses via the enabling of an Overlay;
- The General Intent of Section 23.2 provides a strong philosophical basis for the Commission and applicants to guide site design decisions;
- While not explicitly targeted at the Unilever property, the requirement of a 10-acre minimum for applicability to the Overlay makes the Unilever property far-and-away the most likely property to be subject to the Regulations. Should a collection of adjacent properties aggregate to comprise over 10 acres within the ¼ mile radius, that would also create an interesting redevelopment opportunity for which these Regulations would be useful as well;
- The Overlay process laid out in proposed Section 23 provides the Commission with authorities to withhold application of the Overlay unless it is satisfied that the approach and design of the applicant is appropriate to the intent of the Regulations and the PoCD. In this way, the Commission should not be forced into a blind approval without understanding the future development concept. The two-step process (which may be accomplished in concurrent hearings) gives the Commission this leverage;
- The visual guidance provided in the proposed additions to Appendix B should be useful to both the potential developers and the Commission in more objectively judging appropriateness of design;
- Attorney Roberts' comments are well presented. In response, I would recommend the following amendments to the proposal:
  - o 23.3.1 should read "...located within a ¼ mile radius of the Clinton Train Station (**Map/Block/Lot 44/29/5A**)"
  - o 23.5 should read "...site development plan and within individual buildings. **Please see Section 27.3 for specific permitted uses.**"
  - o Section 25.5.3 could be eliminated as presenting something otherwise self-evident that Industrial uses (not subject to the Overlay) would just be handled under current District Regulations;
  - o The reference in 23.6 should be to **27.3** and not 27.2.

It is my recommendation that the Commission approve this application with minor amendments. It is the hope of these Regulations that potential developers for the Unilever property and other areas near the Train Station will find more options and greater density enabled by this Overlay, while still safeguarding the character of Clinton Center. While there are still significant challenges to redevelopment in this area, not least of which is the current lack of appropriate wastewater disposal systems, these Regulation amendments represent an implementation of several PoCD priorities and

one of the few levers of control that the Planning & Zoning Commission is able to manipulate to see this area appropriately redeveloped. Please contact me if you have any questions about these comments. Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John P. Guskowski".

John P. Guskowski, AICP  
Consulting Town Planner