

Concord Square Planning & Development, Inc.

Memorandum

To: Hiram Peck, Director of Community Planning & Development

From: Karen Cullen, Senior Planner

Date: April 17, 2009

Re: Initial Site Suitability Analysis for Incentive Housing Zone Study

This memo describes Concord Square's analysis of the thirteen potential IHZ sites in Simsbury.

To select the sites that are the most appropriate for Simsbury to pursue IHZ for at this time, Concord Square looked at the Plan of Conservation and Development for the town as well as the state statute (Ch. 124b) and the state Conservation and Development Policies Plan. We developed the list of criteria you will find in the initial scoring sheet (attached) from these sources. We believe this resulted in the most objective analysis possible, and since it depends heavily on the local POCD, has a high level of relevance to Simsbury.

Criteria 1, 2, and 3 are a determination of the level of compliance with the eligible location requirements for an IHZ in Ch 124b. When preparing the analysis, we decided to set scores for each item rather than using these as a yes/no "switch", so we could see which sites met more than one criteria as well as how well they met each criteria. In the end however, we felt it was more equitable to use these as a yes/no "switch" – i.e. if a site scored higher than zero in any one of the three criteria, then it was passed through to the next step. Site M – the Tower Ridge Golf Course – did not score above zero in any of these three, thus it is considered to be ineligible for an IHZ.

Criterion 4 is a determination of the level of conformance to the state policies plan. Sites were scored 1, 2, 4, or 5 based on whether it was located in an area considered suitable for future development or the land should not be developed based on conservation goals in the state policies plan. If the site is located within a Neighborhood Conservation Area, it was given a 5 (Simsbury has no Regional Centers, otherwise that area would score a 5), in a Growth Area it scored 4. On the conservation side, sites falling within a Conservation Area were scored 2, in a Preservation Area it would score 1 (none did).

Criteria 5 and 6 are a determination of the level of suitability in relation to the state statute definition of "developable land". Criteria 7 through 16 deal with issues raised in the Simsbury POCD which are depicted in the series of maps in that document.

The assumption was made for this analysis that each criteria is of equal importance, thus no weighting was done. Obviously, weighting the various criteria would potentially affect the

final outcome, and such manipulations could be done in a variety of ways that would result in different rankings and tier assignments. If the Town feels strongly about one or more of these criteria, the scoring can be re-run, but for the purpose of winnowing the thirteen sites, we feel that no weighting is the appropriate method.

The results section of the initial scoring sheet shows how each site scored, their rank with 1 being the best scoring and 13 being the worst, and their tier assignment. Sites scoring above 50 were assigned tier 1, those scoring between 40 and 50 are tier 2, and those below 40 are tier 3 (this includes the ineligible site, M). The accompanying map depicts the thirteen sites with their tier assignments. In the end, there are six sites in tier 1, four sites in tier 2, and three sites in tier 3.

A brief explanation of the tier 3 sites may help: Site B, the Keystone site, scored poorly in regards to traffic improvements, proximity to non-vehicular transportation facilities, compatibility with the economic development plan, and walking distance to community facilities. Site B scored moderately in developable area, size and access for IHZ development, aquifer, floodplain, and compatibility with the future land use plan. Site E, the Antonio site on Tariffville Road, scored poorly on aquifer protection, proximity to Special Areas, floodplain, and compatibility with the future land use plan or the economic development plan. Site E scored moderately in water and sewer (water is at or adjacent to the site, sewer is not, although it is not far away), traffic improvements, and proximity to non-vehicular facilities. Finally, site M is ineligible since it scored zero in the first three criteria, and furthermore it scored poorly in many of the other criteria.

The four sites in tier 2 each have issues which may be overcome either through careful planning during zoning or development phases or through public improvements – which could be funded by the developer of the site. However, as you know, there is a limit to what can be done with the funds available for this IHZ study, and not all sites can be included. What we have left are the six sites in tier 1, which scored well in most criteria, leaving little doubt they should be in tier 1 and studied further for potential IHZ zoning.

That said, there are two other points to consider. First, there may be good reason to include a larger area in the town center than just the site behind the funeral home (site H). In our earlier work on these sites, Concord Square found that four to six sites hold good potential for creating residential units, thus increasing the vitality of the Town Center. It is possible that a single IHZ district that encompasses a majority of the Town Center and that is developed in conjunction with the Town Center Charette would be in the best interest of the Town. Given the limited resources for the IHZ study now in progress, Concord Square recommends either moving forward with several IHZ's on tier 1 sites or creating a single IHZ (which could include subdistricts) in the Town Center, perhaps delaying significant work on that until the Charette project is further along or completed.

Second, this analysis was done to narrow down the sites based on one set of objective criteria – site selection can and often does get made based on subjective or some other practical consideration (e.g. owner willingness to proceed). In the end, the decision lies with the Town as to which sites should move into the next phase of analysis for the IHZ study.

Concord Square respectfully awaits the Town's decision on which sites to move forward with. Should you have any questions on this analysis or other related issues, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Simsbury Site Selection - Initial Scoring Sheet

4/16/2009

Ratings: 5 = best for IHZ, 3 = moderate, 1 = poor, 0 = horrible

Criteria		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	L	M	N	O
1	close to transit station (bus stop) (w/in 500' = 5, w/in 1000' = 4, w/in 2500' = 2)	0	5	4	5	4	0	5	5	5	0	0	2	0
2	in an area of concentrated development (in = 5, edge = 3, out = 0)	3	0	0	5	3	5	3	5	5	3	0	5	3
3	in an area suitable for IHD due to infrastructure, transportation access, or underutilized building or land	5	3	3	5	1	5	5	5	3	5	0	5	3
If scored above zero on at least one of above criteria, passes to next level:														
4	In conformance with the state POCD (NCA = 5, GA = 4, CA = 2, PA = 1)	5	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	2	4	4
5	developable – not steep slopes, not wetlands, not rock outcrop (none = 5, <half = 3)	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	3
6	of sufficient size and with sufficient access to reasonably develop with housing at the densities required by Ch 124b	5	3	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
7	with existing access to municipal water and sewer at site (both = 5, one = 3, none = 0)	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	0	5	3
8	outside of an aquifer protection district or wellhead zone (outside = 5, <half = 3, most w/in = 0)	5	3	0	0	0	5	5	5	5	5	0	5	5
9	in a Special Area (in = 5, edge = 3, out = 0)	5	5	5	5	0	0	5	5	3	5	0	5	3
10	in an area where no traffic improvements are necessitated by the proposed IHD (none = 5, modest = 3, major = 0)	5	0	0	3	3	5	5	5	0	5	5	5	5
11	close to bikepath, trails, sidewalks, or other non-vehicular transportation facility (good = 5, limited = 3, none = 0)	3	0	3	5	3	3	5	5	5	5	0	5	3
12	out of floodplain and other natural resources areas, including habitat areas (out = 5, <half = 3, most in = 0) ¹	0	3	5	5	0	5	0	5	0	5	3	0	0
13	compatible with the future land use plan (yes = 5, maybe = 3, no = 0)	5	3	5	0	0	5	5	5	0	5	0	5	3
14	compatible with the economic development plan (outside econ dev area = 5, in = 0; most are currently Industrial)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	5	0	0
15	located such that there will not be an adverse impact on the Simsbury Character Places (treasures) (no = 5, may = 3)	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	3	5	3	5
16	in walking distance to one or more community facilities (good = 5, mod = 3, none = 0)	5	0	3	3	5	5	5	5	5	0	0	5	3

Results:	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	L	M ²	N	O
Total Score of criteria 4 through 16	51	34	45	45	33	51	55	65	41	53	28	52	42
Rank	5	11	8	7	12	6	2	1	10	3	13	4	9
Tier ³	1	3	2	2	3	1	1	1	2	1	3	1	2

Notes:

1. Used DEP_water, FEMA_2006, primary & secondary habitat, and wetland_agency_approved layers to determine.
2. Site M is not eligible, based on ch 124b locational criteria.
3. Tier Breakdown: If score was above 50 = tier 1; 40-50 = tier 2, below 39 = tier 3.

