



## Colchester Planning Commission Adopted Policy (02/01/2022) on Public Requests for Amendments to the Colchester Development Regulations

Under State Statute, the Planning Commission is responsible for initiating amendments to the Town's Development Regulations. Amendments involve multiple steps, including research and evaluation by staff and the Commission, the holding of warned public hearings by the Planning Commission and Selectboard, and ultimately action by the Selectboard.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and equitable process for the consideration of requests from the public, that can be catalogued, and that best respects the resources of the Town and Planning Commission.

General procedure for review of requests for amendments:

1. Any person or body wishing to submit a request is strongly encouraged to first call or meet with the Planning & Zoning Director.
2. Requests may be made by members of the public, appointed boards and commissions, or staff members.
3. All requests for amendments to the Colchester Development Regulations (CDRs) must be provided in writing, via the Department of Planning and Zoning, for it to be considered by the Planning Commission. Requests may include amendment language or may be a concept for consideration. Requests are encouraged to cite or reference existing regulations where applicable.
4. Upon receipt of a request, staff will assign a tracking number and schedule the request for one of **two (2)** annual public meetings. These meetings should occur at the first meetings in **April** and **October**. **Staff will share requests with members of the Commission as they are received and as informational only.**
5. Requests for amendments must be received at least 30 days prior to the meeting to be considered for that meeting.
6. The Commission chair and staff will perform an initial screening of the request and will develop a recommendation for the Commission's consideration.
7. At the public meeting, the Planning Commission should consider each request and take one of the following actions:
  - a. Review the proposed amendment for possible inclusion of it in the warning for the next Supplement to the CDRs;
  - b. Table the request for a later time, including until related issues are undertaken by the Commission via studies or other amendments;

- c. Decide not to pursue the requested amendment.
8. In determining its course of action, the following will be used as guidelines:
  - a. Requests substantively related to an active or planned review of the Development Regulations should generally be heard commensurate with that process;
  - b. Requests unrelated to an ongoing CDR amendment should be considered for their timeliness and in relation to existing work plans of the Commission;
  - c. Relationship to the adopted Town Plan. The Commission should consider the extent to which the request advances stated goals and objectives of the Plan. To the greatest extent possible, staff and the Commission should identify the related goals or identify for consideration any goals which would be obstructed or contradicted in the use of a proposed amendment.
  - d. Relationship to the Planning Commission Work Plan for the applicable fiscal year. In utilizing this, the Commission should consider and discuss the anticipated time commitment for the amendment, determine whether such time exists in the work plan, and whether consideration of the amendment results in a delay of a project already included within the annual work plan.
9. Upon determination by the Planning Commission that an item will be considered for a more thorough review, staff will prepare a brief report on the request for the amendment. The report will include a short analysis of the requested amendment's consistency with the Town Plan, its relationship to the Commission's work plan, various options and depths of solutions for consideration where applicable, and the anticipated Commission and staff time involved in undertaking any potential research on the topic.