



Connecticut Municipal Development Authority

FAQs

Who We Are

The Connecticut Municipal Development Authority (CMDA) is a quasi-public state organization that works with willing towns and cities to increase housing production. Led by Executive Director David Kooris, our mission is to help build vibrant communities in Connecticut with more housing in walkable downtowns and near transit hubs, contributing to a healthier economy across the state.

We created this resource because we believe transparent information leads to better community decisions. CMDA only succeeds when towns achieve their own goals—that's why every aspect of our process prioritizes local control and community input.

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Question #1: "Can CMDA force zoning changes and override our development decisions?"

ANSWER: Towns retain complete zoning authority. The process is as follows:

- CMDA reviews local zoning and provides recommendations if necessary to achieve housing growth.
- Local zoning commission reviews CMDA recommendations and decides whether they want to approve changes.
- If towns don't want to change zoning, they simply don't participate.

Question #2: "Does CMDA eliminate community voice and public comment?"

ANSWER: Community members can ask questions and raise concerns. Public participation is built into every phase:

- Phase 1: Mandatory public comment before any membership vote.
- Phase 2: Local zoning commission holds standard public processes on any zoning changes.
- Phase 3: Normal municipal approval processes for all projects.
- Community members can ask questions and raise concerns throughout.

Question #3: "Once you join CMDA, are you stuck with whatever they want to build?"

ANSWER: Towns control all development decisions.

- Towns identify specific focus areas where they want support.
- Towns decide what types of development fit their community.
- Towns and developers apply for funding—CMDA doesn't impose projects.
- Local officials maintain final approval authority over development districts.

Question #4: "If you join CMDA, are you locked into a program you can't control or leave?"

ANSWER: Towns can exit at multiple decision points. They can:

- Vote "no" on initial membership after the public comment.
- Decline to make zoning changes if current rules don't qualify.
- Choose not to create development districts.
- Decide not to apply for funding for specific projects.
- Participation is voluntary at every single step.

Question #5: "Will CMDA rush development and ignore local planning processes?"

ANSWER: CMDA works within existing local processes:

- Municipal officials actively participate in creating development districts.
- Local zoning commissions retain their standard review authority.
- There is a 90-day review period for project applications ensures thorough evaluation.
- The State Bond Commission provides additional oversight for final approval.

Question #6: "Is state government forcing development on unwilling communities?"

ANSWER: CMDA only works with willing partners:

- Towns approach CMDA or invite them to present.
- Local legislative bodies vote on whether to join after public input.
- 161 of 169 Connecticut towns qualify—but participation is entirely voluntary.
- 26 towns have already opted in, and even more have begun the public process.

The Bottom Line

CMDA is a collaborative resource that helps towns achieve their own goals. No outside mandates, no loss of local control—just partnership, technical expertise, and funding opportunities for willing communities.

Questions? The process starts with a simple conversation. Contact CMDA at info@wearecmda.org.