

**From:** [G.C](#)  
**To:** [BOR AllReps](#)  
**Subject:** Connecticut Municipal Development Authority - LU 32.001  
**Date:** Monday, January 5, 2026 5:00:27 PM

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To The Honorable Members of the Stamford Board of Representatives:

My name is Gina Calabrese, and I am a resident of District 8, in the Cove. At your January 5th meeting, you will vote on whether Stamford will join the Connecticut Municipal Development Authority. My concern with the upcoming vote is that, according to the CDMA, collaboration with the Authority is a transparent process with public comment at every stage, including the initial step of membership. However, The BOR has not designated a period or opportunity for public comment, and the process is not beginning in a transparent way. I don't think this is the best way to start and believe that there would be more public support for the CDMA venture if there was a more robust opportunity for public comment.

The CDMA's FAQs are part of the legislative record. Here is Question 2:

**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

The answer to Question 6 also assures the public that they will have some input into the membership decision.

**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....26 towns have already opted in, and even more have begun the public process.**

The CDMA Resolution came before the Land Use Committee on December 17, 2025, with a brand new Board and during a season when many people are focused elsewhere: the holidays, school semesters ending, travel, end-of-year closings for businesses, etc..

As you are aware, development in Stamford over the past decade has had real impacts on its residents who are of varied opinions on it. Our population has increased and is projected to continue to increase. In its own materials and in its media communications, the CDMA's stresses the importance of transparency and stakeholder involvement. Without a more public process, residents will feel disrespected by the representatives they put in office. That will not help to get buy-in from the public.

The BOR's procedures and practices manual provides the option of holding a public hearing on resolutions in Section C: "Depending upon the subject matter, the Committee may recommend the resolution to the full Board for approval of a public hearing (e.g. fee changes,

street discontinuances, etc.) or for final adoption. If the full Board approves the recommendation for a public hearing, the Committee will then hold a public hearing the following month."

Prior to October 2025, the CDMA statute required that municipal legislative bodies hold a public hearing on any resolution to join the CDMA. Effective October 1, 2025, that requirement was relaxed to require the municipal legislature to hold a public hearing "or otherwise provide for public comment prior to any vote on such certified resolution." Although the law does not require all the formalities of a public hearing (though it remains an option), the implication is that there should be a meaningful, fair, and reasonable opportunity for public comment. The 30-minute general public comment portion of the BOR monthly meeting is not a substitute for a designated period for public comment. The statute appears at the end of this email.

I would suggest deferring the vote on the Resolution to join the CDMA until next month's meeting and soliciting public comment in writing before that meeting and by extending the public comment period for the February meeting by 20 minutes.

Because it's uncertain whether there will be opportunity to comment on the resolution, I am sharing a few thoughts now. First, as Mr. Kooris acknowledged during the 12/17/25 LU Committee meeting, Stamford has been building transit-oriented housing. Its zoning regulations, for the most part, allow such housing within half a mile of its train stations. While I see the value in the consulting services of the CDMA, it seems that Stamford may not need that. That leaves funding for infrastructure as one benefit of joining the CDMA. I think our greatest need is infrastructure improvement, including improved bus service and improved roads for access to train stations, etc. I have reservations about the low interest GAP loans to private developers. Given the volume of housing Stamford has added in the past 5 years with more large-scale projects announced monthly or more, it's clear that developers have no obstacles to obtaining financing. However, if low-interest loans were used to incentivize the affordable and deeply affordable housing Stamford desperately needs, then that could be a benefit.

Before voting on the CDMA resolution without a meaningful opportunity for public comment, I ask you to reflect on the Washington Post's slogan: "**Democracy dies in darkness.**" Will that be the legacy of the 32nd Board of Representatives?

Sincerely,

Gina Calabrese

<< CT ST § 8-169ll >>

(a) (1) Any municipality, except the city of Hartford or any municipality that is considered part of the capital region, as defined in section 32-600the town of East Hartford, may, by certified resolution of the legislative body of the municipality, or by the board of selectmen in a municipality where the legislative body is the town meeting, opt to join the Connecticut Municipal Redevelopment Development Authority as a member municipality, provided such municipality holds a public

hearing or otherwise provides for public comment prior to any vote on such certified resolution.can't help but draw a comparison to a point made in the Mayor's Veto Memo for the Tree Ordinance. There, it says that one reason for the veto is Public outreach on this ordinance was not extensive or proportionate to the sizable impacts it would have on Stamford residents."

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