

# **Resilient Connecticut 2.0 Synthesis Report Appendix I**

## **CIRCA Legal Team Products**

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### Appendix I

As climate change threatens people and the environment, municipalities can implement strategic land use planning and zoning regulations to enhance local resilience to climate change impacts like increased precipitation, flooding, excessive heat and sea level rise and direct development away from vulnerable areas. Targeting regulation to protect natural buffering features and incentivize green infrastructure is a cost-effective way to use existing legal authority under Connecticut General Statute §§ 8-2 to 13a tailored to the needs of local communities for climate risk reduction and to protect the health and safety of the community.

The CIRCA [Climate Resilient Zoning Library](#) was created to provide a resource for municipalities seeking to buffer their communities from the increasing threats to property and wellbeing from climate change. The library contains factsheets about specific zoning tools and policies which can help municipalities become more resilient to climate change. Resources are available in both English and [Spanish versions](#). For example, [Transferable Development Rights](#) (TDR) is a legal device used to shift development from designated areas to more desirable locations while preserving property value. In the context of climate resilience, TDR's can be used to define vulnerable areas and provide a mechanism to incentivize development in areas with lower risk. Another zoning tool, [Overlay Zones](#), can add protections in areas impacted by particular threats like flooding that may cross other established land use zones. [Minimum lot size](#) and [maximum lot coverage](#) are regulatory standards that can be adjusted to address specific vulnerabilities in certain zones, or used in conjunction with overlay zones to provide flexibility to standards in vulnerable areas. Using zoning codes to set standards on building and landscape design can increase climate resilience by requiring heat mitigating materials and incorporation of green areas on sites or allowing limits on impervious cover or increasing housing density in appropriate areas. While zoning alone cannot solve threats posed by flooding or excessive heat, it can be a tool to mitigate these problems or help municipalities adapt to changing conditions going forward.

In order for municipal land use officials to better understand their authority to use zoning codes as a tool for climate resilience, and in accordance with Public Act 21-29 which mandated biannual training for land use officials, we created three [training modules](#) as companion resources to the Resilient Zoning Library. These training modules are available online for the use of anyone who would like to learn more about the impact of climate change on land use and infrastructure, and specific topics with examples from Connecticut towns that have adopted resilient zoning regulations.

Additionally, we have participated in live workshops with towns in the NVCOG, the City of Bridgeport, and as part CIRCA Summit. We have worked with non-governmental organizations like Sustainable CT, the Connecticut Parks Association and the Connecticut Association of Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commissions on informative presentations and have

consulted with town zoning officials in Mansfield, Pomfret, Brandford, Bridgeport, and Madison Connecticut on municipal policy issues. We have also produced fact sheets in support of other town boards and commissions who have authority over areas that may be impacted by climate change, like [Conservation Commissions](#), [Stormwater Authorities](#), [Flood Prevention, Climate Resilience and Erosion Control Boards](#). We have also produced factsheets and white papers that support other CIRCA projects including a fact sheet about [beavers and climate resilience](#) and are developing a factsheet about culvert standards in Connecticut. Earlier in 2025, in association with Vermont Law School, CIRCA published a [Municipal Energy Resilience Guide](#) for towns seeking to use incentives in the Inflation Reduction Act to help with the adoption of renewable energy resources.