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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

A N A C T

RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- PROHIBITION OF SINGLE-FAMILY ZONING IN
URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARIES ACT OF 2023

Introduced By: Senators Mack, Kallman, and Bell

Date Introduced: February 16, 2023

Referred To: Senate Housing & Municipal Government

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 45 of the General Laws entitled "TOWNS AND CITIES" is hereby
2 amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 24.7

4 PROHIBITION OF SINGLE-FAMILY ZONING IN URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARIES ACT

5 OF 2023

6 **45-24.7-1. Short title.**

7 This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Prohibition of Single-Family Zoning
8 in Urban Growth Boundaries Act of 2023".

9 **45-24.7-2. Legislative purpose.**

10 The legislature encourages the development of higher-density, mixed use, and walkable
11 urban communities by repealing and prohibiting single-family zoning in urban areas. The
12 prohibition of single-family zoning in urban areas would reduce the use of automobiles and create
13 development of middle housing within areas formerly zoned as single-family areas.

14 **45-24.7-3. Definitions.**

15 As used in this chapter, the following words and phrases shall have the following meanings:

16 (1) "Cottage clusters" means groupings of no fewer than four (4) detached housing units
17 per acre with a footprint of less than nine hundred (900) square feet each and that include a common
18 courtyard.

1 (2) "Middle housing" means duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, cottage clusters and
2 townhouses.

3 (3) "Townhouse" means a dwelling unit constructed in a row of two (2) or more attached
4 units, where each dwelling unit is located on an individual lot or parcel and shares at least one
5 common wall with an adjacent unit.

6 (4) "Urban growth boundary" means and refers to rules that designate what areas can and
7 cannot be developed around a city center.

8 **45-24.7-4. Middle housing allowed.**

9 (a) Except as provided in subsection (d) of this section, each municipality with a population
10 of twenty-thousand (20,000) or more, shall allow the development of:

11 (1) All middle housing types in areas zoned for residential use that allow for the
12 development of detached single-family dwelling; and

13 (2) A duplex on each lot or parcel zoned for residential use that allows for development of
14 detached single-family dwellings.

15 (b) A duplex on each lot parcel zoned for residential use that allows for the development
16 of detached single-family dwellings.

17 (c) Nothing in this subsection prohibits a local governing body from allowing other types
18 of middle housing in addition to duplexes.

19 (d) This section does not apply to municipalities with a population of less than twenty-
20 thousand (20,000); lands not within an urban growth boundary; lands not zoned for residential use,
21 including lands primarily zoned as commercial, industrial, agricultural; those used for public uses
22 or, lands zoned under an interim zoning designation that maintains the land's potential for planned
23 urban development.

24 (e) Local governing bodies may regulate siting and design of middle housing required to
25 be permitted under this section, provided that regulations do not, individually or cumulatively,
26 discourage the development of all middle housing types permitted in the area through unreasonable
27 costs or delay. Local governing bodies may regulate middle housing to comply with protective
28 measures adopted pursuant to statewide land use planning goals and the municipalities'
29 comprehensive plan.

30 (f) This section does not prohibit local governing bodies from permitting:

31 (1) Single-family dwellings in areas zoned to allow for single-family dwellings; or

32 (2) Middle housing in areas not required under this section.

33 **45-24.7-5. Compliance.**

34 (a) Notwithstanding any other provisions contained in this chapter, a local governing body

1 shall adopt land use regulations or amend its comprehensive plan to implement § 45-24.7-6 no later
2 than June 30, 2024 for each of those municipalities with a population of more than twenty thousand
3 (20,000).

4 (b) The state building code standards committee shall develop a model middle housing
5 ordinance no later than December 31, 2023.

6 (c) Any local governing body that has not adopted land use regulations or amended its
7 comprehensive plan by the dates contained in this section shall directly apply the model ordinance
8 developed by the state building code standards committee until it adopts the regulations or amends
9 its comprehensive plan as required by this section.

10 (d) In adopting regulations or amending a comprehensive plan under this section, a local
11 governing body shall consider ways to increase the affordability of middle housing by considering
12 ordinances and policies that include, but are not limited to:

13 (1) Waiving or deferring system development charges;

14 (2) Adopting or amending criteria for property tax exemptions under § 44-5-12 and §§ 44-
15 5-13.2 through 44-5-13.39;

16 (3) Assessing a construction tax.

17 (e) When a local governing body makes a legislative decision to amend its comprehensive
18 plan or land use regulations to allow middle housing areas zoned for residential use that allow for
19 detached single-family dwellings, the local governing body is not required to consider whether the
20 amendments significantly affect an existing or planned transportation facility.

21 **45-24.7-6. Relief from compliance.**

22 (a) Notwithstanding the provisions of § 45-24.7-5, the state building code standards
23 committee may grant an extension of the time allowed to adopt land use regulations or amendments
24 to comprehensive plans.

25 (b) A municipality may apply for an extension only to specific areas where the local
26 governing body has identified water, sewer, storm drainage, or transportation services that are
27 either significantly deficient or are expected to be significantly deficient before December 31, 2025,
28 and for which the local governing body has established a plan of action that will remedy the
29 deficiency in those services that is approved by the state building code standards committee. Any
30 extension granted shall not extend beyond the date that the local governing body intends to correct
31 the deficiency under the plan.

32 (c) In areas where the extension under this section does not apply, the local governing body
33 shall apply its own land use regulations as adopted pursuant to this section or apply the model
34 ordinance adopted by the state building code standards committee.

1 (d) Any local governing body requesting an extension shall apply for the extension at least
2 six (6) months prior to the expiration of the dates of compliance set out in § 45-24.7-5.

3 (e) The state building code standards committee shall provide a decision on the request for
4 extension within ninety (90) days of receipt of the request.

5 (f) The state building code standards committee shall adopt rules regarding the form and
6 substance of any application for an extension. The rules shall include, but not be limited to:

7 (1) Defining affected areas;

8 (2) Calculating deficiencies of water, sewer, storm drainage or transportation facilities;

9 (3) Service deficiency levels required to qualify for the extension;

10 (4) The components and timing of a remediation plan necessary to qualify for an extension;

11 (5) Standards for evaluating applications; and

12 (6) Establishing deadlines and components for the approval of a plan of action.

13 SECTION 2. Sections 45-22.2-6 and 45-22.2-12 of the General Laws in Chapter 45-22.2
14 entitled "Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act" are hereby amended to read as
15 follows:

16 **45-22.2-6. Required content of a comprehensive plan.**

17 (a) The comprehensive plan must utilize a minimum twenty (20) year planning timeframe
18 in considering forecasts, goals, and policies.

19 (b) The comprehensive plan must be internally consistent in its policies, forecasts, and
20 standards, and shall include the content described within this section. The content described in
21 subdivisions (1) through (10) may be organized and presented as deemed suitable and appropriate
22 by the municipality. The content described in subdivisions (11) and (12) must be included as
23 individual sections of the plan.

24 (1) Goals and policies. The plan must identify the goals and policies of the municipality
25 for its future growth and development and for the conservation of its natural and cultural resources.
26 The goals and policies of the plan shall be consistent with the goals and intent of this chapter and
27 embody the goals and policies of the state guide plan.

28 (2) Maps. The plan must contain maps illustrating the following as appropriate to the
29 municipality:

30 (i) Existing conditions:

31 (A) Land use, including the range of residential housing densities;

32 (B) Zoning;

33 (C) Key infrastructure such as, but not limited to, roads, public water, and sewer;

34 (D) Service areas for public water and sewer;

- 1 (E) Historical and cultural resource areas and sites;
- 2 (F) Open space and conservation areas (public and private); and
- 3 (G) Natural resources such as, but not limited to, surface water, wetlands, floodplains, soils,
- 4 and agricultural land;
- 5 (ii) Future land use illustrating the desired patterns of development, density, and
- 6 conservation as defined by the comprehensive plan; and
- 7 (iii) Identification of discrepancies between future land uses and existing zoning use
- 8 categories.
- 9 (3) Natural resource identification and conservation. The plan must be based on an
- 10 inventory of significant natural resource areas such as, but not limited to, water, soils, prime
- 11 agricultural lands, forests, wildlife, wetlands, aquifers, coastal features, and floodplains. The plan
- 12 must include goals, policies, and implementation techniques for the protection and management of
- 13 these areas.
- 14 (4) Open space and outdoor recreation identification and protection. The plan must be
- 15 based on an inventory of outdoor recreational resources, open space areas, and recorded access to
- 16 these resources and areas. The plan must contain an analysis of forecasted needs, policies for the
- 17 management and protection of these resources and areas, and identification of areas for potential
- 18 expansion. The plan must include goals, policies, and implementation techniques for the protection
- 19 and management of existing resources and acquisition of additional resources if appropriate.
- 20 (5) Historical and cultural resources identification and protection. The plan must be based
- 21 on an inventory of significant historical and cultural resources such as historical buildings, sites,
- 22 landmarks, and scenic views. The plan must include goals, policies, and implementation techniques
- 23 for the protection of these resources.
- 24 (6) Housing. The plan must include the identification of existing housing patterns, an
- 25 analysis of existing and forecasted housing needs [by type and density range](#), and identification of
- 26 areas suitable for future housing development or rehabilitation [in accordance with all factors](#)
- 27 [contained in this section](#). The plan shall include an affordable housing program that meets the
- 28 requirements of § 42-128-8.1, the “Comprehensive Housing Production and Rehabilitation Act of
- 29 2004” and chapter 53 of this title, the “Rhode Island Low and Moderate Income Housing Act.” The
- 30 plan must include goals and policies that further the goal of § 45-22.2-3(c)(3) and implementation
- 31 techniques that identify specific programs to promote the preservation, production, and
- 32 rehabilitation of housing.
- 33 (7) Economic development. The plan must include the identification of existing types and
- 34 patterns of economic activities including, but not limited to, business, commercial, industrial,

1 agricultural, and tourism. The plan must also identify areas suitable for future economic expansion
2 or revitalization. The plan must include goals, policies, and implementation techniques reflecting
3 local, regional, and statewide concerns for the expansion and stabilization of the economic base
4 and the promotion of quality employment opportunities and job growth. [The plan shall consider](#)
5 [market factors that may substantially impact future urban residential development.](#)

6 (8) Services and facilities. The plan must be based on an inventory of existing physical
7 infrastructure such as, but not limited to, educational facilities, public safety facilities, libraries,
8 indoor recreation facilities, and community centers. The plan must describe services provided to
9 the community such as, but not limited to, water supply and the management of wastewater, storm
10 water, and solid waste. The plan must consider energy production and consumption. The plan must
11 analyze the needs for future types and levels of services and facilities, including, in accordance
12 with § 46-15.3-5.1, water supply system management planning, which includes demand
13 management goals as well as plans for water conservation and efficient use of water concerning
14 any water supplier providing service in the municipality, and contain goals, policies, and
15 implementation techniques for meeting future demands.

16 (9) Circulation/Transportation. The plan must be based on an inventory and analysis of
17 existing and proposed major circulation systems, including transit and bikeways; street patterns;
18 and any other modes of transportation, including pedestrian, in coordination with the land use
19 element. Goals, policies, and implementation techniques for the provision of fast, safe, efficient,
20 and convenient transportation that promotes conservation and environmental stewardship must be
21 identified.

22 (10) Natural hazards. The plan must include an identification of areas that could be
23 vulnerable to the effects of sea-level rise, flooding, storm damage, drought, or other natural hazards.
24 Goals, policies, and implementation techniques must be identified that would help to avoid or
25 minimize the effects that natural hazards pose to lives, infrastructure, and property.

26 (11) Land use. In conjunction with the future land use map as required in subsection
27 (b)(2)(ii) of this section, the plan must contain a land use component that designates the proposed
28 general distribution and general location and interrelationships of land uses including, but not
29 limited to, residential, commercial, industrial, open space, agriculture, recreation facilities, and
30 other categories of public and private uses of land. The land use component shall be based upon
31 the required plan content as stated in this section. It shall relate the proposed standards of population
32 density and building intensity to the capacity of the land and available or planned facilities and
33 services. The land use component must contain an analysis of the inconsistency of existing zoning
34 districts, if any, with planned future land use. The land use component shall specify the process and

1 schedule by which the zoning ordinance and zoning map shall be amended to conform to the
2 comprehensive plan and shall be included as part of the implementation program.

3 (12) Implementation program.

4 (i) A statement which defines and schedules the specific public actions to be undertaken in
5 order to achieve the goals and objectives of each component of the comprehensive plan. Scheduled
6 expansion or replacement of public facilities, and the anticipated costs and revenue sources
7 proposed to meet those costs reflected in a municipality's capital improvement program, must be
8 included in the implementation program.

9 (ii) The implementation program identifies the public actions necessary to implement the
10 objectives and standards of each component of the comprehensive plan that require the adoption or
11 amendment of codes and ordinances by the governing body of the municipality.

12 (iii) The implementation program identifies other public authorities or agencies owning
13 water supply facilities or providing water supply services to the municipality, and coordinates the
14 goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan with the actions of public authorities or agencies
15 with regard to the protection of watersheds as provided in § 46-15.3-1 et seq.

16 (iv) The implementation program must detail the timing and schedule of municipal actions
17 required to amend the zoning ordinance and map to conform to the comprehensive plan.

18 **45-22.2-12. Maintaining and re-adopting the plan.**

19 (a) A municipality must maintain a single version of the comprehensive plan including all
20 amendments, appendices, and supplements. One or more complete copies of the comprehensive
21 plan including, all amendments, shall be made available for review by the public. Availability shall
22 include print, digital formats, and placement on the internet.

23 (b) A municipality shall periodically review and amend its plan in a timely manner to
24 account for changing conditions. At a minimum, a municipality shall fully update and re-adopt its
25 entire comprehensive plan, including supplemental plans, such as, but not limited to, special area
26 plans, that may be incorporated by reference, at least once every ten (10) years from the date of
27 municipal adoption. A minimum twenty (20) year planning timeframe in considering forecasts,
28 goals, and policies must be utilized for an update. [In assessing changing conditions, a municipality shall adopt findings regarding the density expectations assumed to result from measures adopted under this section. The density expectations may not project an increase in residential capacity above achieved density by more than three percent \(3%\) without quantifiable validation for such departures. For municipalities outside the urban growth boundaries, a quantifiable validation must demonstrate that the assumed housing capacity has been achieved in areas that are zoned to allow no greater than the same authorized density level within that municipality. For urban growth areas,](#)

1 [a quantifiable validation shall demonstrate that the assumed housing capacity has been achieved in](#)
2 [areas that are zoned to allow no greater than the same authorized density with the municipality.](#)

3 (c) A newly adopted plan shall supersede all previous versions.

4 (d) A municipality shall file an informational report on the status of the comprehensive
5 plan implementation program with the chief not more than five (5) years from the date of municipal
6 approval.

7 SECTION 3. Section 45-53-4 of the General Laws in Chapter 45-53 entitled "Low and
8 Moderate Income Housing" is hereby amended to read as follows:

9 **45-53-4. Procedure for approval of construction of low- or moderate-income housing.**

10 (a) Any applicant proposing to build low- or moderate-income housing may submit to the
11 local review board a single application for a comprehensive permit to build that housing in lieu of
12 separate applications to the applicable local boards. This procedure is only available for proposals
13 in which at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the housing is low- or moderate-income housing.
14 The application and review process for a comprehensive permit shall be as follows:

15 (1) Submission requirements. Applications for a comprehensive permit shall include:

16 (i) A letter of eligibility issued by the Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance
17 corporation, or in the case of projects primarily funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and
18 Urban Development or other state or federal agencies, an award letter indicating the subsidy, or
19 application in such form as may be prescribed for a municipal government subsidy; and

20 (ii) A written request to the local review board to submit a single application to build or
21 rehabilitate low- or moderate-income housing in lieu of separate applications to the applicable local
22 boards. The written request shall identify the specific sections and provisions of applicable local
23 ordinances and regulations from which the applicant is seeking relief; and

24 (iii) A proposed timetable for the commencement of construction and completion of the
25 project; and

26 (iv) A sample land lease or deed restriction with affordability liens that will restrict use as
27 low- and moderate-income housing in conformance with the guidelines of the agency providing
28 the subsidy for the low- and moderate-income housing, but for a period of not less than thirty (30)
29 years; and

30 (v) Identification of an approved entity that will monitor the long-term affordability of the
31 low- and moderate-income units; provided, that, on and after July 1, 2022, this entity shall include
32 the Rhode Island housing resources commission established pursuant to chapter 128 of title 42 and
33 acting through its monitoring agents, and these agents shall monitor the long-term affordability of
34 the low- and moderate-income units pursuant to § 45-53-3.2; and

1 (vi) A financial pro-forma for the proposed development; and

2 (vii) For comprehensive permit applications: (A) Not involving major land developments
3 or major subdivisions including, but not limited to, applications seeking relief from specific
4 provisions of a local zoning ordinance, or involving administrative subdivisions, minor land
5 developments or minor subdivisions, or other local ordinances and regulations: those items required
6 by local regulations promulgated pursuant to applicable state law, with the exception of evidence
7 of state or federal permits; and for comprehensive permit applications; and (B) Involving major
8 land developments and major subdivisions, unless otherwise agreed to by the applicant and the
9 town; those items included in the checklist for the master plan in the local regulations promulgated
10 pursuant to § 45-23-40. Subsequent to master plan approval, the applicant must submit those items
11 included in the checklist for a preliminary plan for a major land development or major subdivision
12 project in the local regulations promulgated pursuant to § 45-23-41, with the exception of evidence
13 of state or federal permits. All required state and federal permits must be obtained prior to the final
14 plan approval or the issuance of a building permit; and

15 (viii) Municipalities may impose fees on comprehensive permit applications that are
16 consistent with but do not exceed fees that would otherwise be assessed for a project of the same
17 scope and type but not proceeding under this chapter, provided, however, that the imposition of
18 such fees shall not preclude a showing by a nonprofit applicant that the fees make the project
19 financially infeasible; and

20 (xi) Notwithstanding the submission requirements set forth above, the local review board
21 may request additional, reasonable documentation throughout the public hearing, including, but not
22 limited to, opinions of experts, credible evidence of application for necessary federal and/or state
23 permits, statements and advice from other local boards and officials.

24 (2) Certification of completeness. The application must be certified complete or
25 incomplete by the administrative officer according to the provisions of § 45-23-36; provided,
26 however, that for a major land development or major subdivision, the certificate for a master plan
27 shall be granted within twenty-five (25) days and for a preliminary plan shall be granted within
28 twenty-five (25) days. The running of the time period set forth herein will be deemed stopped upon
29 the issuance of a certificate of incompleteness of the application by the administrative officer and
30 will recommence upon the resubmission of a corrected application by the applicant. However, in
31 no event will the administrative officer be required to certify a corrected submission as complete
32 or incomplete less than ten (10) days after its resubmission. If the administrative officer certifies
33 the application as incomplete, the officer shall set forth in writing with specificity the missing or
34 incomplete items.

1 (3) Pre-application conference. Where the comprehensive permit application proposal is a
2 major land development project or a major subdivision pursuant to chapter 23 of this title a
3 municipality may require an applicant proposing a project under this chapter to first schedule a pre-
4 application conference with the local review board, the technical review committee established
5 pursuant to § 45-23-56, or with the administrative officer for the local review board and other local
6 officials, as appropriate. To request a pre-application conference, the applicant shall submit a short
7 description of the project in writing including the number of units, type of housing, as well as a
8 location map. The purpose of the pre-application conference shall be to review a concept plan of
9 the proposed development. Upon receipt of a request by an applicant for a pre-application
10 conference, the municipality has thirty (30) days to schedule and hold the pre-application
11 conference. If thirty (30) days has elapsed from the filing of the pre-application submission and no
12 pre-application conference has taken place, nothing shall be deemed to preclude an applicant from
13 thereafter filing and proceeding with an application for a comprehensive permit.

14 (4) Review of applications. An application filed in accordance with this chapter shall be
15 reviewed by the local review board at a public hearing in accordance with the following provisions:

16 (i) Notification. Upon issuance of a certificate of completeness for a comprehensive
17 permit, the local review board shall immediately notify each local board, as applicable, of the filing
18 of the application, by sending a copy to the local boards and to other parties entitled to notice of
19 hearings on applications under the zoning ordinance and/or land development and subdivision
20 regulations as applicable.

21 (ii) Public notice. Public notice for all public hearings will be the same notice required
22 under local regulations for a public hearing for a preliminary plan promulgated in accordance with
23 § 45-23-42. The cost of notice shall be paid by the applicant.

24 (iii) Review of minor projects. The review of a comprehensive permit application
25 involving only minor land developments or minor subdivisions or requesting zoning ordinance
26 relief or relief from other local regulations or ordinances not otherwise addressed in this subsection,
27 shall be conducted following the procedures in the applicable local regulations, with the exception
28 that all minor land developments or minor subdivisions under this section are required to hold a
29 public hearing on the application, and within ninety-five (95) days of issuance of the certificate of
30 completeness, or within such further time as is agreed to by the applicant and the local review
31 board, render a decision.

32 (iv) Review of major projects. In the review of a comprehensive permit application
33 involving a major land development and/or major subdivision, the local review board shall hold a
34 public hearing on the master plan and shall, within ninety (90) days of issuance of the certification

1 of completeness, or within such further amount of time as may be agreed to by the local review
2 board and the applicant, render a decision. Preliminary and final plan review shall be conducted
3 according to local regulations promulgated pursuant to chapter 23 of this title except as otherwise
4 specified in this section.

5 (v) Required findings. In approving an application, the local review board shall make
6 positive findings, supported by legally competent evidence on the record that discloses the nature
7 and character of the observations upon which the fact finders acted, on each of the following
8 standard provisions, where applicable:

9 (A) The proposed development is consistent with local needs as identified in the local
10 comprehensive community plan with particular emphasis on the community's affordable housing
11 plan and/or has satisfactorily addressed the issues where there may be inconsistencies.

12 (B) The proposed development is in compliance with the standards and provisions of the
13 municipality's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations, and/or where expressly varied or
14 waived local concerns that have been affected by the relief granted do not outweigh the state and
15 local need for low- and moderate-income housing.

16 (C) All low- and moderate-income housing units proposed are integrated throughout the
17 development; are compatible in scale and architectural style to the market rate units within the
18 project; and will be built and occupied prior to, or simultaneous with the construction and
19 occupancy of any market rate units.

20 (D) There will be no significant negative environmental impacts from the proposed
21 development as shown on the final plan, with all required conditions for approval.

22 (E) There will be no significant negative impacts on the health and safety of current or
23 future residents of the community, in areas including, but not limited to, safe circulation of
24 pedestrian and vehicular traffic, provision of emergency services, sewerage disposal, availability
25 of potable water, adequate surface water run-off, and the preservation of natural, historical, or
26 cultural features that contribute to the attractiveness of the community.

27 (F) All proposed land developments and all subdivisions lots will have adequate and
28 permanent physical access to a public street in accordance with the requirements of § 45-23-60(5).

29 (G) The proposed development will not result in the creation of individual lots with any
30 physical constraints to development that building on those lots according to pertinent regulations
31 and building standards would be impracticable, unless created only as permanent open space or
32 permanently reserved for a public purpose on the approved, recorded plans.

33 (H) For purposes of estimating housing needs, each municipality shall use population
34 projections generated by the United States Census Bureau and shall consider and adopt findings

1 related to changes in each of the following factors since their last comprehensive plan as
2 promulgated pursuant to chapter 22.2 of title 45:

3 (I) Household sizes;

4 (II) Household demographics including age, gender, race, or other established
5 demographic category;

6 (III) Household income;

7 (IV) Vacancy rates;

8 (V) Housing costs.

9 (vi) The local review board has the same power to issue permits or approvals that any local
10 board or official who would otherwise act with respect to the application, including, but not limited
11 to, the power to attach to the permit or approval, conditions, and requirements with respect to
12 height, site plan, size or shape, or building materials, as are consistent with the terms of this section.

13 (vii) In reviewing the comprehensive permit request, the local review board may deny the
14 request for any of the following reasons: (A) If the city or town has an approved affordable housing
15 plan and is meeting housing needs, and the proposal is inconsistent with the affordable housing
16 plan; provided that, the local review board also finds that the municipality has made significant
17 progress in implementing that housing plan; (B) The proposal is not consistent with local needs,
18 including, but not limited to, the needs identified in an approved comprehensive plan, and/or local
19 zoning ordinances and procedures promulgated in conformance with the comprehensive plan; (C)
20 The proposal is not in conformance with the comprehensive plan; (D) The community has met or
21 has plans to meet the goal of ten percent (10%) of the year-round units or, in the case of an urban
22 town or city, fifteen percent (15%) of the occupied rental housing units as defined in § 45-53-3(4)(i)
23 being low- and moderate-income housing; provided that, the local review board also finds that the
24 community has achieved or has made significant progress towards meeting the goals required by
25 this section; or (E) Concerns for the environment and the health and safety of current residents have
26 not been adequately addressed.

27 (viii) All local review board decisions on comprehensive permits shall be by majority vote
28 of the members present at the proceeding; provided that, there is at least a quorum of the local
29 review board present and voting at the proceeding, and may be appealed by the applicant to the
30 state housing appeals board.

31 (ix) If the public hearing is not convened or a decision is not rendered within the time
32 allowed in subsections (a)(4)(iii) and (iv), the application is deemed to have been allowed and the
33 relevant approval shall issue immediately; provided, however, that this provision shall not apply to
34 any application remanded for hearing in any town where more than one application has been

1 remanded for hearing provided for in § 45-53-6(f)(2).

2 (x) Any person aggrieved by the issuance of an approval may appeal to the superior court
3 within twenty (20) days of the issuance of approval.

4 (xi) A comprehensive permit shall expire unless construction is started within twelve (12)
5 months and completed within sixty (60) months of final plan approval unless a longer and/or phased
6 period for development is agreed to by the local review board and the applicant. Low- and
7 moderate-income housing units shall be built and occupied prior to, or simultaneous with the
8 construction and occupancy of market rate units.

9 (xii) A town with an approved affordable housing plan and that is meeting local housing
10 needs may by council action limit the annual total number of dwelling units in comprehensive
11 permit applications from for-profit developers to an aggregate of one percent (1%) of the total
12 number of year-round housing units in the town, as recognized in the affordable housing plan and
13 notwithstanding the timetables set forth elsewhere in this section, the local review board shall have
14 the authority to consider comprehensive permit applications from for-profit developers, which are
15 made pursuant to this paragraph, sequentially in the order in which they are submitted.

16 (xiii) The local review board of a town with an approved affordable housing plan shall
17 report the status of implementation to the housing resources commission, including the disposition
18 of any applications made under the plan, as of June 30, 2006, by September 1, 2006, and for each
19 June 30 thereafter by September 1 through 2010. The housing resources commission shall prepare
20 by October 15 and adopt by December 31, a report on the status of implementation, which shall be
21 submitted to the governor, the speaker, the president of the senate, and the chairperson of the state
22 housing appeals board, and shall find which towns are not in compliance with implementation
23 requirements.

24 (xiv) Notwithstanding the provisions of § 45-53-4 in effect on February 13, 2004, to
25 commence hearings within thirty (30) days of receiving an application remanded by the state
26 housing appeals board pursuant to § 45-53-6(f)(2) shall be heard as herein provided; in any town
27 with more than one remanded application, applications may be scheduled for hearing in the order
28 in which they were received, and may be taken up sequentially, with the thirty-day (30) requirement
29 for the initiation of hearings, commencing upon the decision of the earlier filed application.

30 (b)(1) The general assembly finds and declares that in January 2004 towns throughout
31 Rhode Island have been confronted by an unprecedented volume and complexity of development
32 applications as a result of private for-profit developers using the provisions of this chapter and that
33 in order to protect the public health and welfare in communities and to provide sufficient time to
34 establish a reasonable and orderly process for the consideration of applications made under the

1 provisions of this chapter, and to have communities prepare plans to meet low- and moderate-
2 income housing goals, that it is necessary to impose a moratorium on the use of comprehensive
3 permit applications as herein provided by private for-profit developers; a moratorium is hereby
4 imposed on the use of the provisions of this chapter by private for-profit developers, which
5 moratorium shall be effective on passage and shall expire on January 31, 2005, and may be revisited
6 prior to expiration and extended to such other date as may be established by law. Notwithstanding
7 the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, private for-profit developers may not utilize the
8 procedure of this chapter until the expiration of the moratorium.

9 (2) No for-profit developer shall submit a new application for comprehensive permits until
10 July 1, 2005, except by mutual agreement with the local review board.

11 (3) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (b)(2) of this section, a local review
12 board in a town which has submitted a plan in accordance with subsection (c) of this section, shall
13 not be required to accept an application for a new comprehensive permit from a for-profit developer
14 until October 1, 2005.

15 (c) Towns and cities that are not in conformity with the provisions of § 45-53-3(4)(i) shall
16 prepare by December 31, 2004, a comprehensive plan housing element for low- and moderate-
17 income housing as specified by § 45-53-3(4)(ii), consistent with applicable law and regulation.
18 That the secretary of the planning board or commission of each city or town subject to the
19 requirements of this paragraph shall report in writing the status of the preparation of the housing
20 element for low- and moderate-income housing on or before June 30, 2004, and on or before
21 December 31, 2004, to the secretary of the state planning council, to the chair of the house
22 committee on corporations and to the chair of the senate committee on commerce, housing and
23 municipal government. The state housing appeals board shall use said plan elements in making
24 determinations provided for in § 45-53-6(c)(2).

25 (d) If any provision of this section or the application thereof shall for any reason be judged
26 invalid, the judgment shall not affect, impair, or invalidate the remainder of this section or of any
27 other provision of this chapter, but shall be confined in its effect to the provision or application
28 directly involved in the controversy giving rise to the judgment, and a moratorium on the
29 applications of for-profit developers pursuant to this chapter shall remain and continue to be in
30 effect for the period commencing on the day this section becomes law [February 13, 2004] and
31 continue until it shall expire on January 31, 2005, or until amended further.

32 (e) In planning for, awarding, and otherwise administering programs and funds for housing
33 and for community development, state departments, agencies, boards and commissions, and public
34 corporations, as defined in chapter 18 of title 35, shall among the towns subject to the provision of

1 § 45-53-3(ii), give priority to the maximum extent allowable by law to towns with an approved
2 affordable housing plan. The director of administration shall adopt not later than January 31, 2005,
3 regulations to implement the provisions of this section.

4 (f) Multi-family rental units built under a comprehensive permit may be calculated towards
5 meeting the requirements of a municipality's low- or moderate-income housing inventory, as long
6 as the units meet and are in compliance with the provisions of § 45-53-3.1.

7 SECTION 4. Section 23-27.3-105.3 of the General Laws in Chapter 23-27.3 entitled "State
8 Building Code" is hereby amended to read as follows:

9 **23-27.3-105.3. Part change in use.**

10 (a) If a portion of a building is changed in occupancy or to a new use group, and that portion
11 is separated from the remainder of the building with the required vertical and horizontal fire
12 division complying with the fire grading as provided by this code, then the construction involved
13 in the change shall be made to conform to the requirements of this code, or the requirements of the
14 rehabilitation building and fire code for existing buildings and structures as applicable for the new
15 use and occupancy, and the existing portion shall be made to comply with the exitway requirements
16 of this code.

17 (b) The state building code standards committee shall establish uniform standards for a
18 municipality to allow alternate approval of construction related to conversions of single-family
19 dwelling into no more than four (4) residential dwelling units that are no more than two (2) stories
20 in height and that received certificates of occupancy prior to January 1, 2023.

21 (1) Any application submitted for alternate approval of construction related to conversions
22 shall be granted or denied by the local building official within fifteen (15) business days and if
23 denied, the local building official shall inform the applicant in writing of the reason or reasons for
24 the denial.

25 (2) Appeals from any denial shall be filed with the local zoning board of appeals within
26 twenty (20) calendar days.

27 SECTION 5. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- PROHIBITION OF SINGLE-FAMILY ZONING IN
URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARIES ACT OF 2023

1 This act would require single-family residential zoning in municipalities with populations
2 of over twenty-thousand (20,000) to allow middle housing and mandates that those municipalities
3 adopt zoning regulations for middle housing.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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