

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

RE: **ORDER OF THE NEW HAVEN BOARD OF ALDERS** authorizing the Mayor to apply for and accept the us environmental protection Agency community change grant to reduce pollution and build Community strength, and to enter into associated agreements In order to accept grant funding and carry out the associated Grant program activities

Submitted by: Steven Winter, Director, Office of Climate & Sustainability

REPORT: 1652-13

ADVICE: Approval

BACKGROUND:

The Office of Climate and Sustainability, in partnership with Greater Dwight Development Corporation, is requesting authorization to apply for and accept \$20 million in funding over three years from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under the Environmental and Climate Justice Community Change Grant program.

The grant would fund community-driven projects to address climate change and pollution while building community strength and resilience capacity. The City of New Haven, Greater Dwight Development Corporation, and partnering neighborhood development nonprofits (St. Luke's Development Corporation, the Newhallville Community Services Development Corporation, Community Action Agency of New Haven, Neighborhood Housing Services, Beulah Land Development Corporation, ConnCAT/ConnCORP, and Junta for Progressive Action) have engaged residents, nonprofit organizations, and businesses focused on addressing environmental issues while meeting immediate community needs such as alleviating hunger, providing safe and affordable housing, and moving safely though the city on foot, on bike, or in a vehicle.

This collaborative process has identified a set of climate mitigation and adaptation strategies that build on the many current environmental efforts in New Haven: Energy retrofits of existing homes and energy upgrades for new construction will reduce utility bills for residents while improving indoor and ambient air quality. An integrated system of composting infrastructure, school-based composting, materials management and nutrition education, and curbside recycling education citywide will reduce food waste and boost recycling. Investments in green infrastructure, such as improved tree canopy, stormwater diversion, and community gardens/greenspaces, will mitigate heat waves, reduce pollution of Long Island Sound, and increase access to local food. Improvements to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure will provide safer routes for zero-emission travel for residents who walk, use the re-started bike share and those who qualify to purchase bicycles or electric bicycles with vouchers. Together, these improvements will strengthen our neighborhoods and build capacity of neighborhood organizations, improve the lives of our residents and provide them with job opportunities, and result in a healthier, cleaner, and greener city.

Special focus will be placed on reaching residents in census tracts and block groups that the EPA's Inflation Reduction Act Disadvantaged Communities Map designates as "disadvantaged" according to climate, energy, health, demographic, and other criteria. These tracts include all of the West Rock/West Hills, Newhallville, Dixwell, the Hill, Edgewood, West River, Long Wharf, Fair Haven, Annex, Fair Haven Heights, and Quinnipiac Meadows neighborhoods, as well as parts of Mill River, Downtown, Dwight, and Beaver Hills.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The City of New Haven Comprehensive Plan **New Haven Vision 2025** states the following goals:

“Build the missing infrastructure for enhancing the existing bicycle/pedestrian network within the city and facilitate enhanced use of transit through the implementation of sustainable land use, housing, transportation, and economic development strategies to improve air quality.” (Sec. xxxiii)

“Preserve the quality of the natural environment by encouraging local businesses and industries to make energy-efficient structural, as well as, process-based improvements.” (Sec. xxix)

“Encourage energy conservation and green building designs in new/infill developments, including appropriate green buildings standards, use of green technologies, and careful site planning. Encourage low-impact development to that end by implementing a far-reaching energy program focused on the use of renewable power sources within new and existing housing in the city. Encourage more programs that help reduce energy costs in existing old housing stock.” (Sec. IV-15)

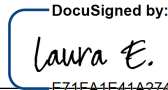
“The City will require a continued commitment to sustainable environmental policy and a systematic approach to energy efficiency and development of renewable energy resources to further improve air quality and ensure a high-quality environment.” (Sec. VII-17).

Overall, in pursuing grant funding opportunities for developing New Haven’s grass-roots sustainability efforts, the Office of Climate & Sustainability furthers the goals of the City’s Comprehensive plan.

ADVICE

Authorization of this grant aligns with the City’s Comprehensive Plan and the State of Connecticut’s goals.

ADOPTED: July 31, 2024
Leslie Radcliffe
Chair

ATTEST:  August 1, 2024 | 10:57 AM EDT
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Laura Brown
Executive Director, City Plan Department