

An aerial photograph of downtown New Haven, Connecticut, featuring a mix of historic brick buildings and modern high-rise structures. The foreground shows a parking lot with several cars and some greenery. The background is filled with a dense urban skyline under a bright, slightly hazy sky. A semi-transparent blue rectangular overlay covers the entire image, serving as a background for the text.

# Downtown For All

Zoning Ordinance Amendments to Build  
More Affordable Housing in Downtown  
New Haven

# Goals of the Downtown for All Vision

- ✓ Make New Haven more affordable
- ✓ Create new jobs
- ✓ Grow our tax base
- ✓ Make our City safer
- ✓ Cut traffic and air pollution

# City Collaboration

- City Plan Department
- Corporation Counsel
- Economic Development
- Tyche Planning & Policy Group
- Livable City Initiative
- Alder Kiana Flores, Alder Frank Douglass, Alder Angel Hubbard, Alder Carmen Rodriguez, & Alder Eli Sabin
- Board of Alders Leadership

# Community Engagement

The Downtown for All Vision builds on:

- The Board of Alders Legislative Agenda
- The City's Comprehensive Plan
- Elm City Communities *Breaking Ground* Report
- Affordable Housing Commission Report
- Discussions with Downtown stakeholders
- Work and conversations with residents
- Outreach to Town Green, the Chamber of Commerce, the Housing Authority, and more.

# **The Downtown for All Vision: 3 Key Parts**

1. Seek state and federal investments in affordable housing, transit, and quality of life that benefit the whole city.
2. Secure more affordable housing and community input for development on city-owned land in Downtown.
3. Update New Haven's zoning code to encourage dense, affordable, diverse development.



**CITY OF NEW HAVEN  
BOARD OF ALDERS**

October 6, 2023

165 Church St, New Haven, CT 06510

To Senator Richard Blumenthal, Senator Chris Murphy, and Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro;

And to Senator Martin Looney, Senator Gary Winfield, Representative Pat Dillon, Representative Toni Walker, Representative Juan Candelaria, Representative Roland Lemar, Representative Robyn Porter, and Representative Al Paolillo, Jr.

Thank you for your time and consideration of shared priorities for Downtown New Haven. As you know the Downtown strives to be a neighborhood for all residents Citywide, as well as to remain a leading hub of culture and economic activity for our entire state. Recognizing this dual role of the Downtown and our shared vision for the long-term, this letter outlines our vision for a "Downtown for All," including our shared priorities regarding key investments, changes to our zoning code, and standards for the future development of City-owned land.

We are sharing this "Downtown for All" vision with the hope that by working together with you, our community and constituents, the Mayor and City administration, and local, state, and federal stakeholders and partners, we can build a center of our community that does more for every resident of New Haven.

The goals of the "Downtown for All" vision are deeply aligned with the goals of the New Haven Board of Alders Legislative Agenda. They are:

- Affordable housing.
  - Increase affordable housing in Downtown to help address the Citywide housing crisis.
- Improve transportation and reduce traffic.
  - Improve traffic flow and transportation options for drivers, bus riders, pedestrians, residents in wheelchairs or with mobility challenges, and cyclists.
- Good jobs.

# Alders' Letter to State and Federal Delegations

The 2023 letter described the Downtown for All Vision's priorities:

- Affordable housing,
- Street safety,
- Improved transit,
- Better jobs, and
- Zoning reform to support these investments.

# **Investments to Build a Downtown for All:**

## **Major investments outlined in the letter:**

- State Street Redesign
- Affordable housing, including Beacon and State & George
- Move New Haven
- Safe Routes for All

## **Smaller investments:**

- Improvements to the Green
- Support for local and minority owned businesses in downtown

# Affordable Development on City-Owned Land



## Alders' Letter Called for 30% Affordable Housing on City Land in Downtown

### Sites that may be developed:

- 10 Wall St
- State St lots
- George St lots

### Priorities of community members for those lots:

- Mixed-income housing
- Community spaces
- Affordable grocery stores or retail
- Youth centers

## 450+ Apartments Eyed For 9th Square

by **THOMAS BREEN** | Jul 30, 2024 3:37 pm

[\(100\) Comments](#) | [Post a Comment](#) | [E-mail the Author](#)

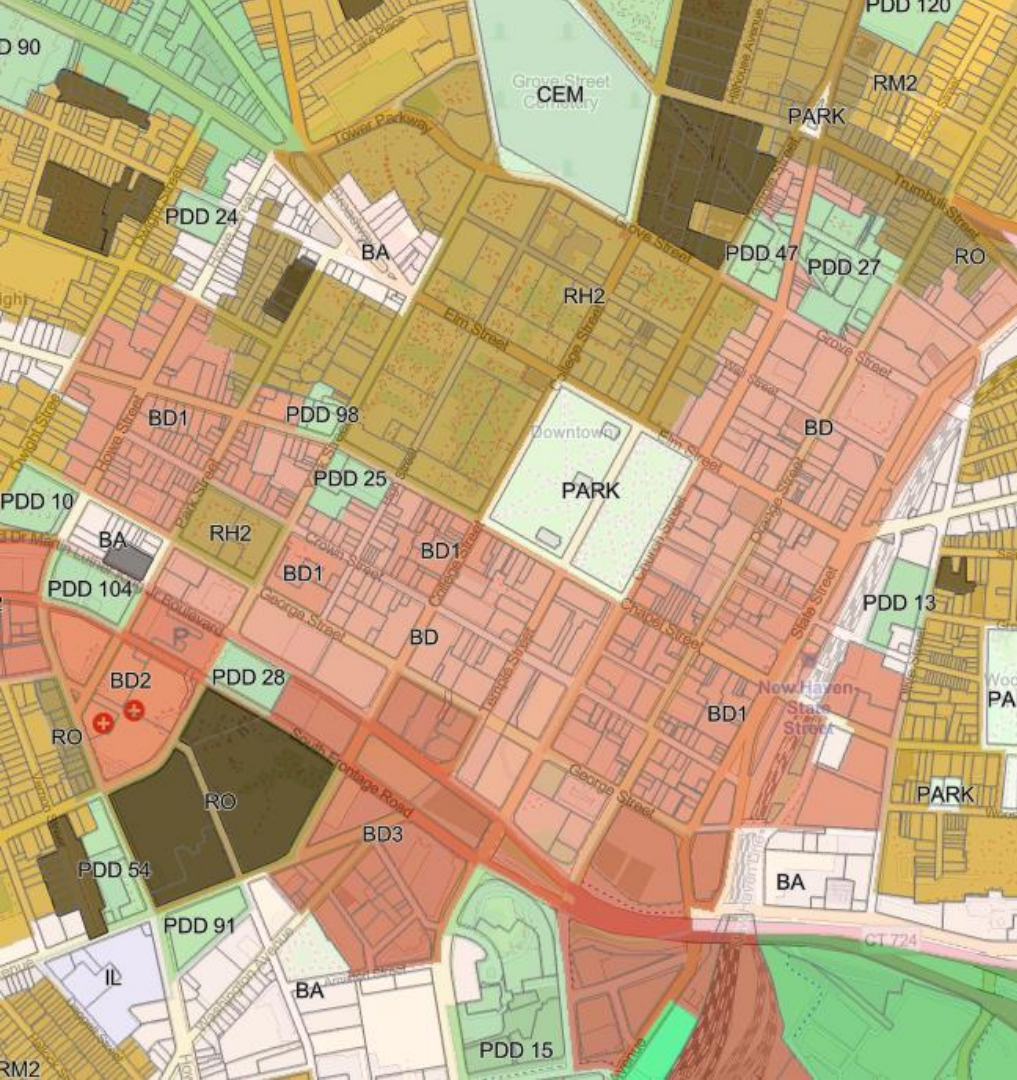
Posted to: [Downtown, Ninth Square, Housing](#)



THOMAS BREEN PHOTOS

# Results Already: 454 Units of Housing Planned, with 25% Affordable

- Development is underway for new mixed-income developments at State and George
- Beacon project under construction



# Zoning Reform Goals

Reduce limitations presented by the New Haven Zoning Ordinance in order to encourage **dense, affordable, diverse development opportunities** that increase **affordability, housing access, and vibrancy** in the Downtown.

# Why is Zoning Reform Important?

- Zoning reform is one tool to reduce barriers to housing creation.
- New Haven's Zoning Code was last revised in 1962 and does not reflect the needs of residents or market conditions that exist today.
- Zoning reform can reduce burdensome and costly requirements for new development and redevelopment. It also boosts affordability and sustainability and adapts requirements to better reflect the needs of residents.

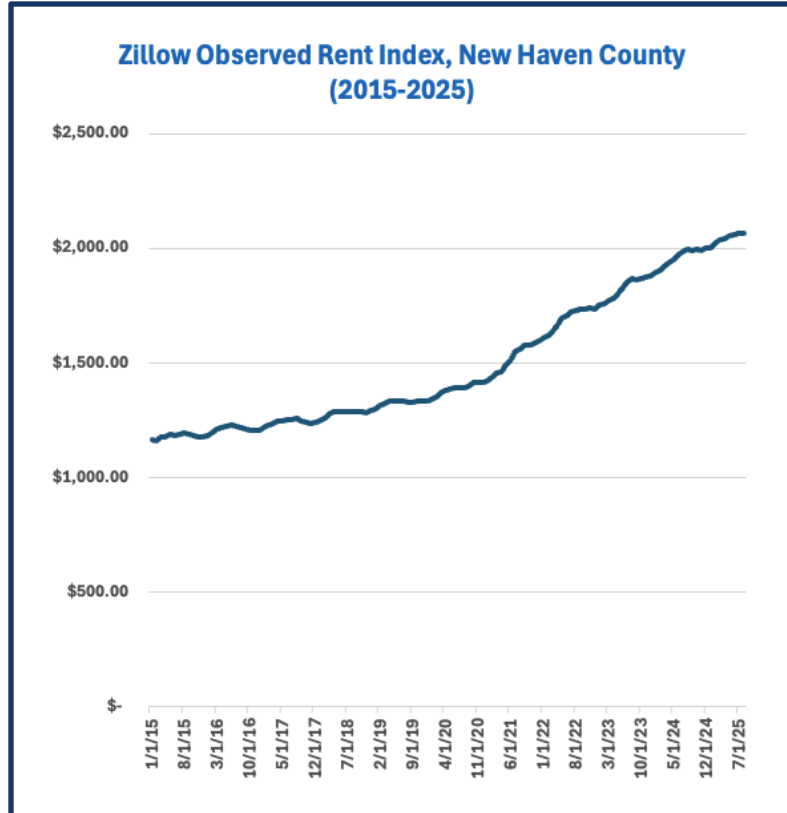


## BREAKING GROUND

SOLUTIONS TO ADVANCE HOUSING AFFORDABILITY IN NEW HAVEN

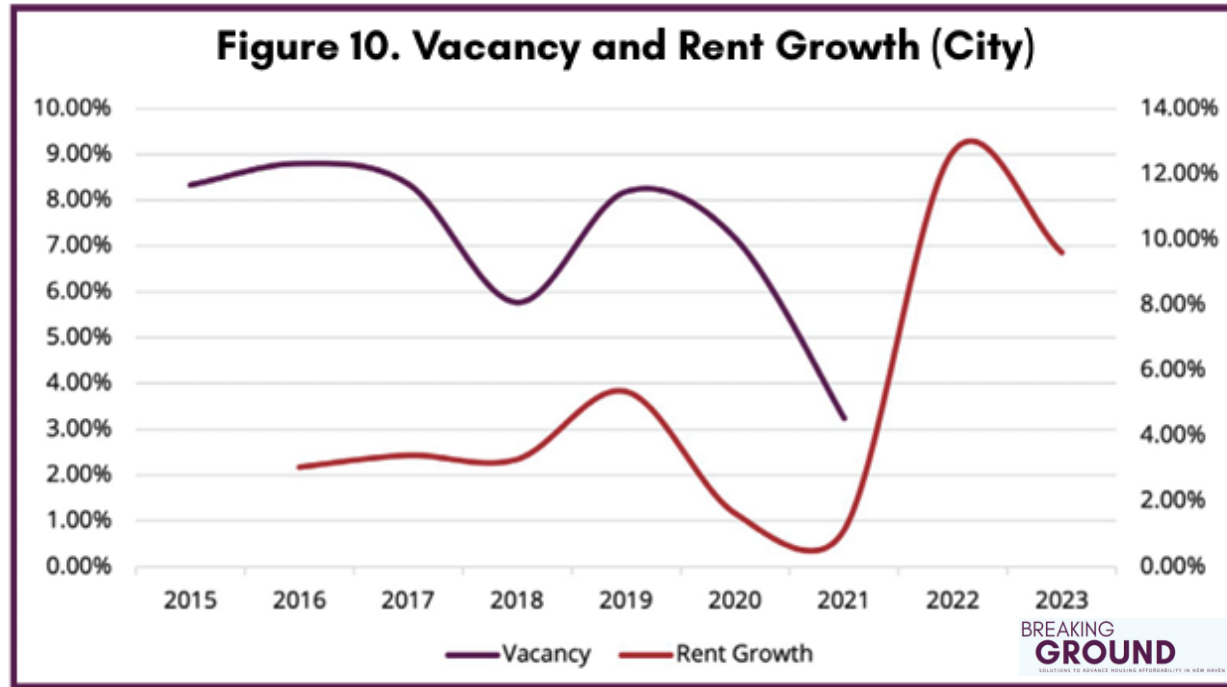
Will Viederman, Housing Policy Manager, Elm City Communities

# The Housing Shortage is Raising the Rent

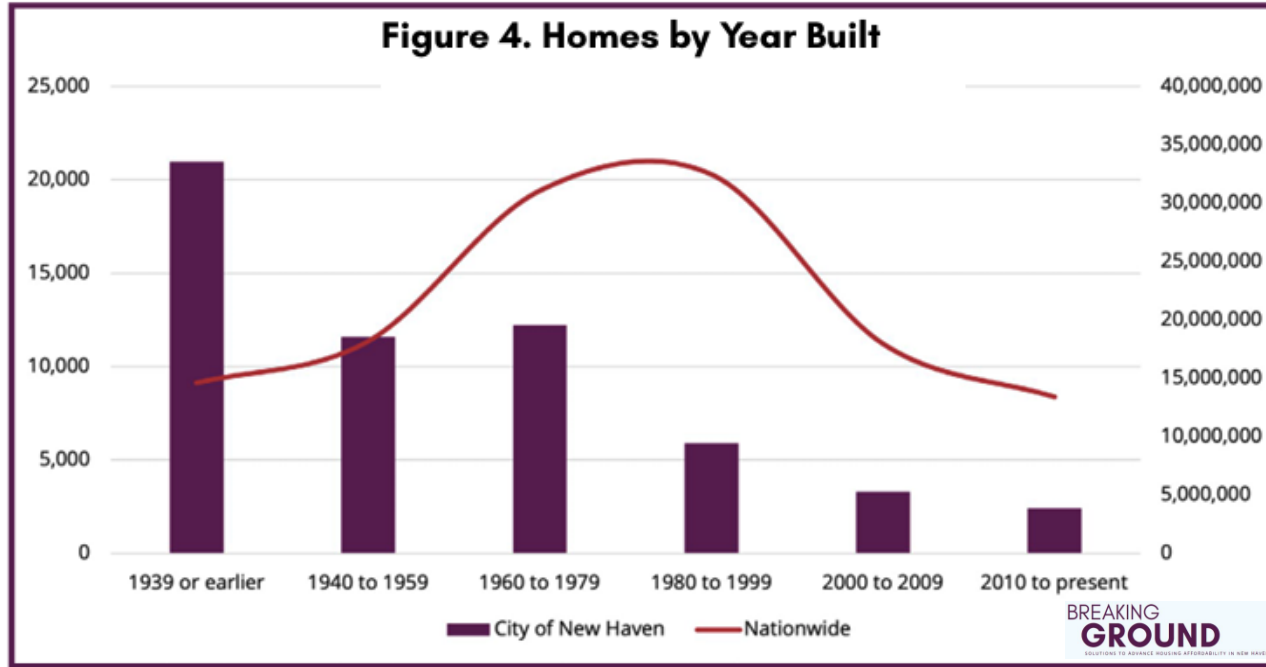


By this measure,  
rent has increased  
by **75%** over the past  
10 years.

# The Housing Shortage is Raising the Rent



# The Affordable Housing Shortage by the Numbers



# New Haven Has an Affordable Housing Shortage

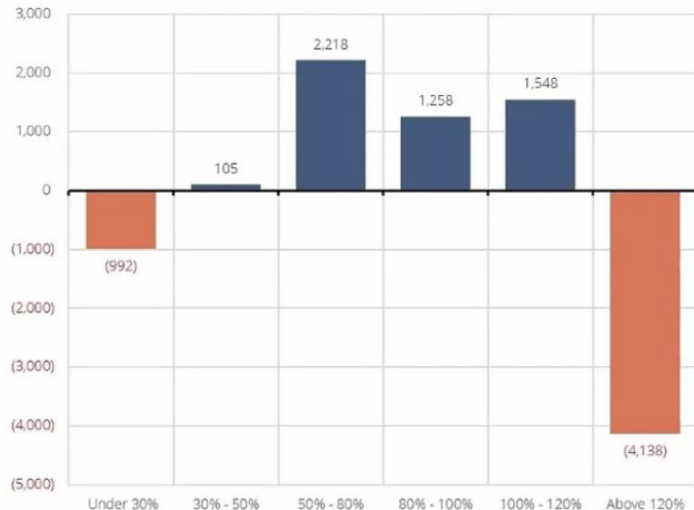
Issues and Opportunities

## Housing Affordability Gap



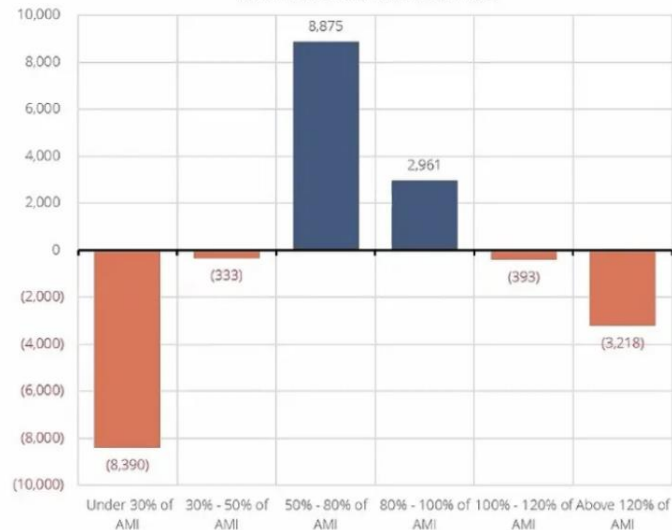
### Supply and Demand Gap for Ownership Housing Units, Conventional

Source: HUD & ACS 5-Year 2019 Estimates



### Rental Supply and Demand Gap

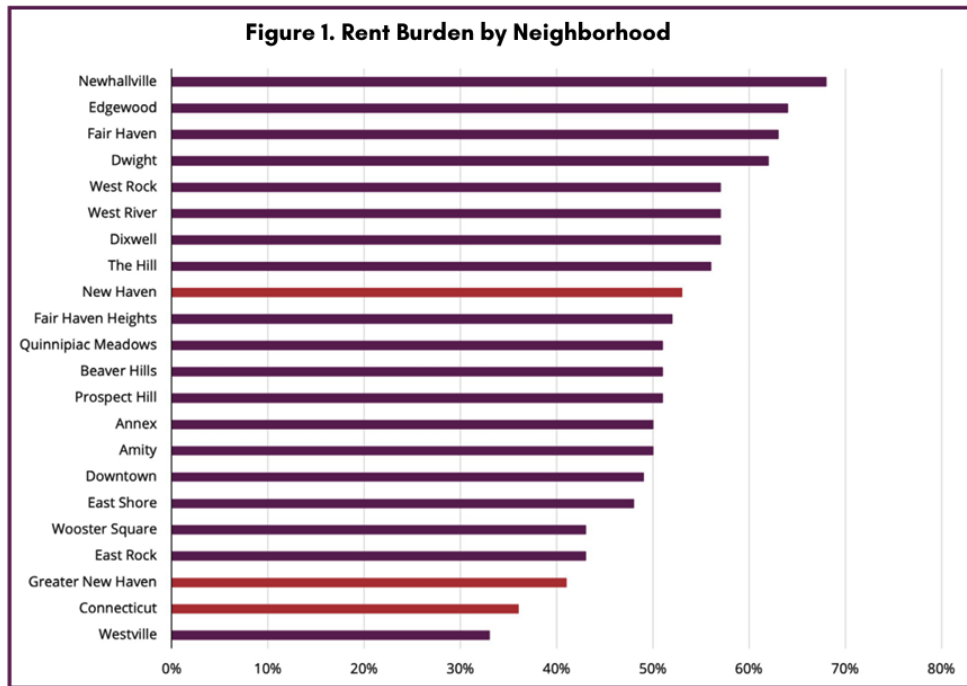
Source: HUD & ACS 5-Year 2019 Estimates



### THERE IS STILL A GREAT NEED FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN NEW HAVEN.

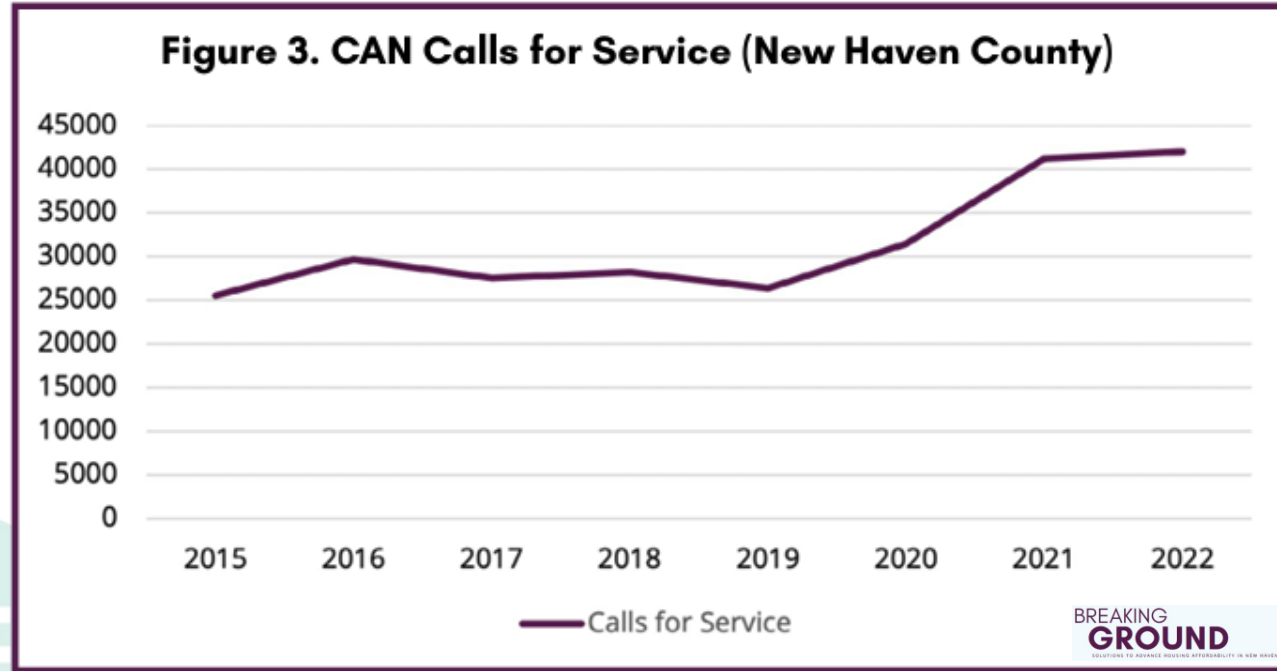
In New Haven, about **57% of the renter households** and **26.6% of the owner households** earn less than 50% of the area median income (AMI), totaling **23,859 households**. These households often experience housing instability, may rely on housing assistance, and are typically spending more on housing as a percentage of their overall income.

# The Housing Shortage is Pushing Families Out



*\*Data courtesy of DataHaven*

# The Housing Shortage is Increasing Homelessness



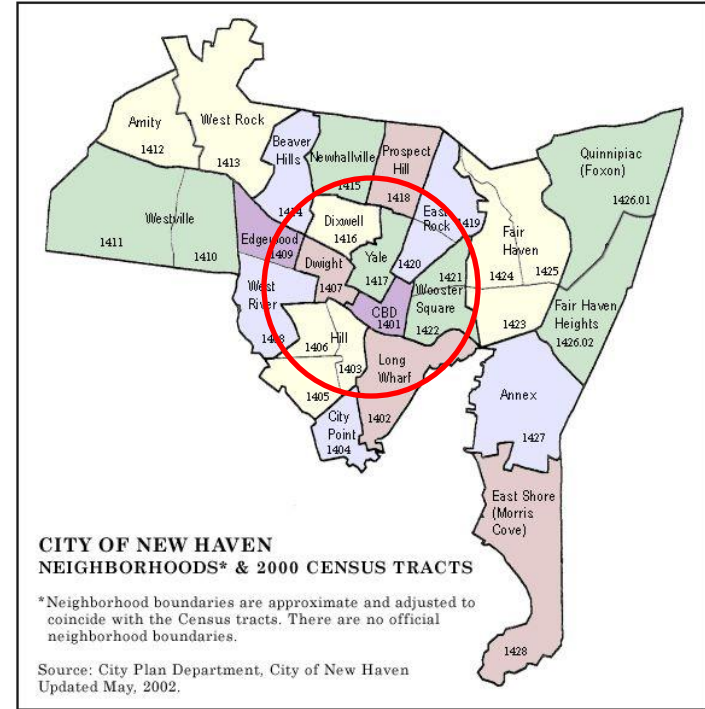
## Downtown for All Zoning Reform Will:

- ✓ **Make New Haven more affordable** by building more diverse, mixed-income housing
- ✓ **Create new jobs** through new construction and at local businesses
- ✓ **Grow our tax base** to fund city services and lower property taxes
- ✓ **Improve public safety** by making Downtown streets feel more vibrant
- ✓ **Cut traffic and air pollution** by allowing more people to live near work, school, and transit

# Proposed Downtown For All Inner and Outer Core

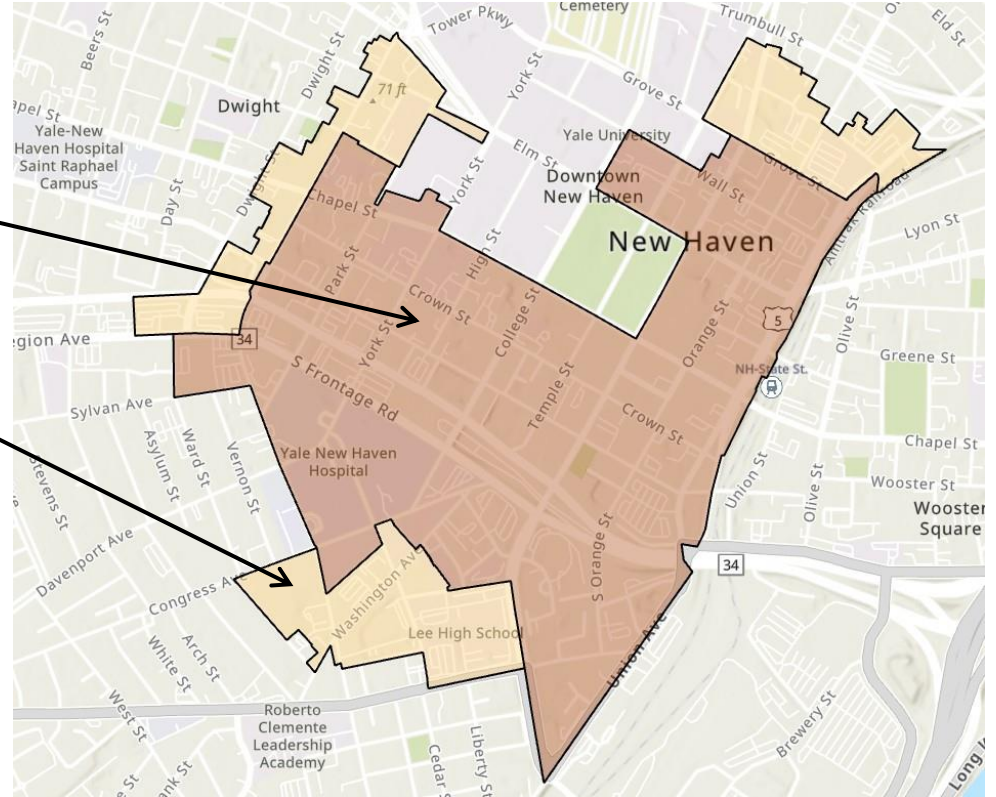
New Haven's downtown is largely surrounded by smaller-scale, residential neighborhoods including Wooster Square, the Hill, Dwight, East Rock, and Dixwell.

To create a buffer zone between the highest-density areas (FAR 12+) and these neighborhoods, two overlay districts are proposed: **Downtown Inner Core (higher density)** and **Downtown Outer Core (medium density)**.



# Downtown for All Overlay District

- Inner Core
- Outer Core



# Proposed Changes in the Downtown for All District

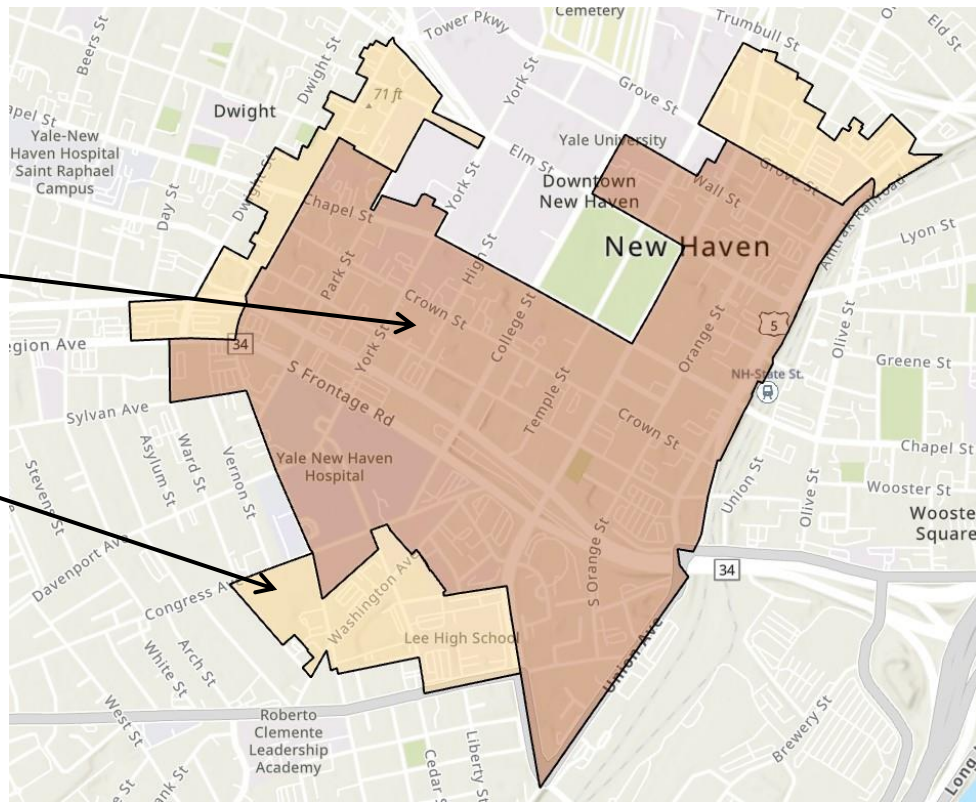
1. **Allow housing in the outdated industrial zones in Downtown**, including the portions of IL and BE districts that are within the Downtown area.
2. **Reduce costly amenity space requirements** from 50 to 25 sf.
3. **Increase the allowable density of units in multifamily dwellings** by increasing the maximum floor area ratio in the Downtown for All Overlay District.
4. **Increase allowable density for units in multifamily dwellings** by changing the maximum unit density from one unit per 1,000 sf of gross floor area to one unit per 400 sf of gross floor area in the Downtown for All Overlay District.
5. **Increase availability of shared living spaces** by allowing “Single Room Occupancy, Rooming, Boarding or Lodging Houses” by special permit.
6. **Standardize the yard, open space, and lot coverage rules in Downtown**, including in the RH-2 zone.

# Increase Allowable Density – Floor Area Ratio

## Proposed Changes:

- Allow FAR of 12.0 in the Inner Core
- Allow FAR of 6.0 in the Outer Core

This increases the allowable scale of buildings within the Downtown area, which promotes an increase in potential housing units.



# Downtown for All Overlay District & Inclusionary Zoning



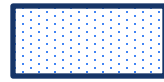
D4A Inner Core



D4A Outer Core

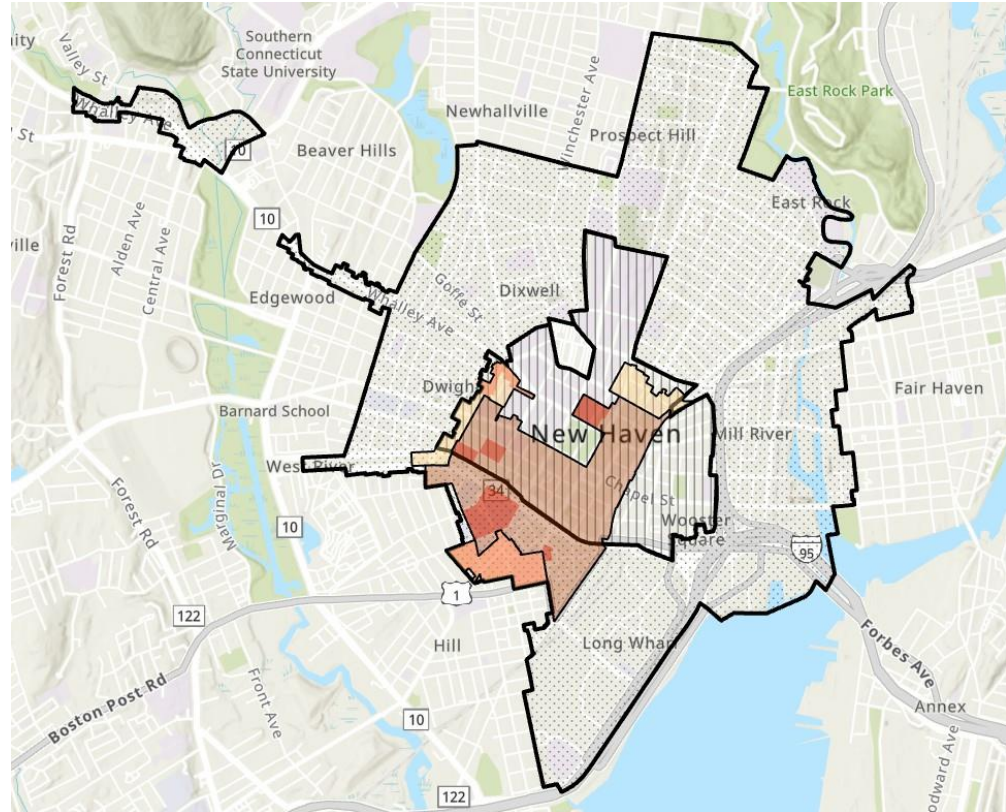


IZ Core Zone



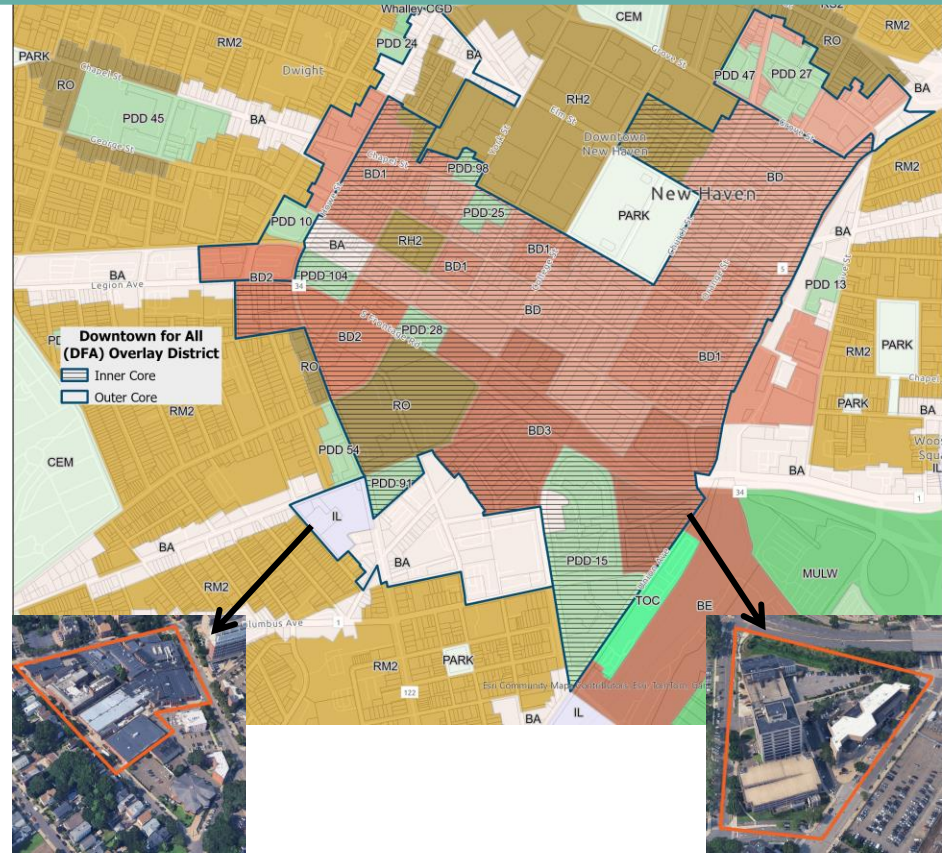
IZ Strong Zone

The Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance bonus would require affordable housing in the areas that the IZ overlay zones overlap with the Downtown for All overlay.



# Relationship of Downtown for All to Underlying Zoning

- Most of the underlying zoning where DFA will be mapped is made up of **business districts** and **commercial or mixed-use** Planned Development Districts.
- The IL and BE Districts included in the DFA boundary are suitable for multi-family dwelling uses due to their proximity to Downtown New Haven and the existing residential and mixed-use properties in the surrounding areas.



# Alignment with Vision 2034 Comprehensive Plan

## 4. Great Places to Live

### Goals

- 1 Increase the number of deeply affordable housing units.
- 2 Increase housing supply.
- 3 Expand temporary and supportive housing and programs that eliminate and prevent homelessness.
- 4 Transform empty and run-down properties into affordable housing and other community resources.
- 5 Support place-based programs, policies, and improvements that align with the unique assets and goals of each neighborhood and residents' quality of life.
- 6 Prevent displacement by ensuring residents can continue to live in their neighborhood of choice as housing costs rise.
- 7 Improve access to housing resources and support for tenants and current and prospective homeowners.
- 8 Improve the quality of existing housing.

### Goal 2: Increase housing supply.

| Strategies |                                                                                                                                                            | Priority Level | Lead    | In Progress |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------|-------------|
| 2.1        | Identify opportunities for and take measures to support infill residential development, expansions, and redevelopment.                                     | High           | EDA/HAD | ✓           |
| 2.2        | Amend ordinances and policies to better support housing development.                                                                                       | Medium         | EDA/HAD | ✓           |
| 2.3        | Increase the number of small housing units in the City such as accessory dwelling units, single-room occupancy units, and small standalone dwelling units. | High           | EDA/HAD | ✓           |
| 2.4        | Support small-scale development.                                                                                                                           | Medium         | EDA/HAD |             |
| 2.5        | Continue to convert underutilized office buildings to residential use, with a focus on key areas downtown.                                                 | Medium         | EDA/HAD | ✓           |
| 2.6        | Support collaboration and partnerships between organizations that provide housing and neighborhood resources.                                              | High           | EDA/HAD | ✓           |
| 2.7        | Increase affordable, accessible housing options for people with disabilities.                                                                              | High           | EDA/HAD |             |

# Alignment with Vision 2034 Comprehensive Plan

## *Strategies*

### **3.1 Continue to invest in and support development and redevelopment in the Downtown.**

Development and redevelopment in New Haven's Downtown should focus on density, inclusivity, and protecting neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown from gentrification. The City should continue to identify opportunities for mixed-use, mixed-income infill development on surface parking lots. Continued investment in the Downtown will drive economic growth, job creation, and long-term resilience. Strengthening these districts attracts businesses, enhances walkability, and increases tax revenue, supporting public services and infrastructure improvements. Targeted redevelopment can foster a vibrant, mixed-use environment, encouraging innovation, sustainability, and equitable economic opportunities.

### **3.3 Update the zoning ordinance to ensure that locations are available for emerging industries and business types that mitigate adverse impacts and support neighborhood development.**

Much of the City's zoning ordinance, which controls land use and new development, was adopted decades ago and needs to be updated to ensure that it allows for the type of development associated with emerging industries discussed in this plan. The City should review and amend as needed its use regulations, parking, lot size, density, setback, building coverage, building height, and floor-area-ratio standards to better support economic development.

# Downtown for All Will Help Unlock New State Funding

## Housing Growth Zones

- Cities and towns that change their zoning to allow for more housing in downtowns and near transit **can access \$90 million in state funding.**
- Support comes from the Connecticut Municipal Development Authority (CMDA) over the next two years.



## CT Municipal Development Authority opens door to new housing

*Formed in 2019, CMDA will provide financial and technical assistance to towns looking to increase density near transit*

# Alders: Goals of the Downtown for All Overlay District

- ✓ Make New Haven more affordable
- ✓ Create new jobs
- ✓ Grow the tax base
- ✓ Make our city safer
- ✓ Cut traffic and air pollution

**Thank you!**

## **Downtown for All will:**

- ✓ Make New Haven more affordable
- ✓ Create new jobs
- ✓ Grow the tax base
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- ✓ Cut traffic and air pollution