

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

RE: [ORDER OF THE BOARD OF ALDERS](#) authorizing the New Haven Board of Education to enter into an agreement with Trifecta Ecosystems, under the Connecticut Department of Agriculture – CT Grown for CT Kids program, for shipping containers for High School in the Community through June 30, 2026

Submitted by: Science Supervisor

REPORT: 1680-08

ADVICE: Approval

BACKGROUND:

This request for approval by the Board of Alders would authorize an agreement with Trifecta Ecosystems – Connecticut Department of Agriculture, CT Grown for CT Kids Program for High School in the Community.

The service would support the installation of a climate-controlled shipping-container mushroom farm at a district high school located within **High School in the Community**. This innovative project is designed to provide students with authentic, hands-on learning experiences centered on agriculture, sustainability, nutrition, and entrepreneurship, while also strengthening career and technical pathways within the district.

The initiative is designed to align with the mission of High School in the Community. It aims to transform an underutilized space into a productive, revenue-generating learning environment where students engage directly in food production, environmental stewardship, and small-business operations.

The mushroom container farm will serve as a living laboratory, exposing students to modern agricultural practices—including controlled-environment agriculture, hydroponic and aquaponic systems, and traditional growing methods—while reinforcing science, technology, engineering, and math skills. Students will gain real-world experience in cultivation, data collection, quality control, logistics, and sustainability planning.

Central to this initiative is the integration of the **Weekly Harvest Micro-Business Experience**, which enables students to participate in the full farm-to-market cycle. Through this model, students will learn budgeting, marketing, workforce collaboration, and customer engagement, developing essential skills that prepare them for postsecondary education and careers in agriculture, bioscience, food systems, and entrepreneurship.

The shipping container farm would be implemented in partnership with Trifecta Ecosystems Inc., the vendor as presented. Trifecta Ecosystems, Inc. specializes in modular, controlled-environmental agriculture systems designed for educational and community-based settings.

Note: Upon investigation of this item staff learned that this project has already been implemented but ARPA funds have not yet been fully expected for related project charges. This approval is required to complete the administration of the project.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

[Vision 2034](#), **New Haven's Comprehensive Plan**, includes the following goals and strategies:

Economic Opportunities for All

Goal 1: Connect New Haven’s workers to good jobs and economic opportunities in the City.

- Strategy 1.1: Support and expand workforce development and job placement programs and continue to coordinate with those programs to develop new training pathways.
- Strategy 1.4: Promote vocational training opportunities for local youth in New Haven's most competitive and emerging industry sectors.

Goal 2: Strengthen New Haven’s position as a regional employment center by building on economic strengths across multiple sectors.

- Strategy 2.7: Enrich and contribute to innovation by supporting food-based business, craft products and cultural equity.

Climate & Ecological Connections

Goal 5: Expand farming and gardening opportunities for all.

- Strategy 5.5: Increase access to information, resources, and opportunities related to food and agriculture.

Civic Services & Experiences

Goal 10: Improve quality and use of school buildings to better meet the needs of students and the community.

- Strategy 10.3: Improve schools to better support community engagement and provide multi-use spaces.

Per the applicant, this project represents a strategic investment in workforce development, sustainability, and student engagement. By aligning innovative agricultural education with economic and community impact, the shipping-container mushroom farm advances the City’s goals of expanding green workforce opportunities while creating meaningful, career-connected learning experiences for New Haven students. Authorization of the agreement with Trifecta Ecosystems would enable High School in the Community to achieve these goals.

The City Plan Commission recommends the following:

- That the applicant submit a site plan to City Plan staff for review
- That the applicant reaches out to the building department for review of building code requirements
- Clarification of whether this shipping container and associated programming is temporary or will be a permanent fixture at High School in the Community

ADVICE

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

ADOPTED: March 18, 2026
Ernest Pagan
Chair

ATTEST: _____

 Laura Brown
 Executive Director, City Plan Department