

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

RE: FROM ALDERS SABIN, FLORES, DOUGLASS, HUBBARD AND C. RODRIGUEZ
SUBMITTING A TEXT AND MAP AMENDMENT TO THE NEW HAVEN CODE OF
ORDINANCES TO ESTABLISH THE DOWNTOWN FOR ALL OVERLAY DISTRICT

Submitted by: Alder Kiana Flores, Ward 1, Alder Frank Douglass Jr, Ward 2, Alder Angel Hubbard, Ward 3, Alder Carmen Rodriguez, Ward 6, and Alder Eli Sabin, Ward 7.

REPORT: 1672-04

ADVICE: Approve.

BACKGROUND

As stated in the support letter provided in the application materials, this text and map amendment will establish a Downtown for All Overlay District within the New Haven Zoning Ordinance with the goal of improving the potential for affordable housing development and increase density in Downtown New Haven.

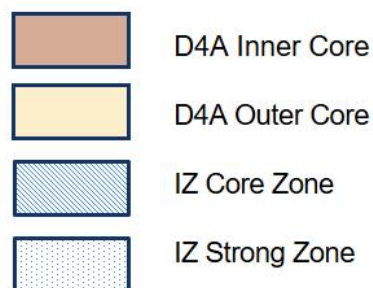
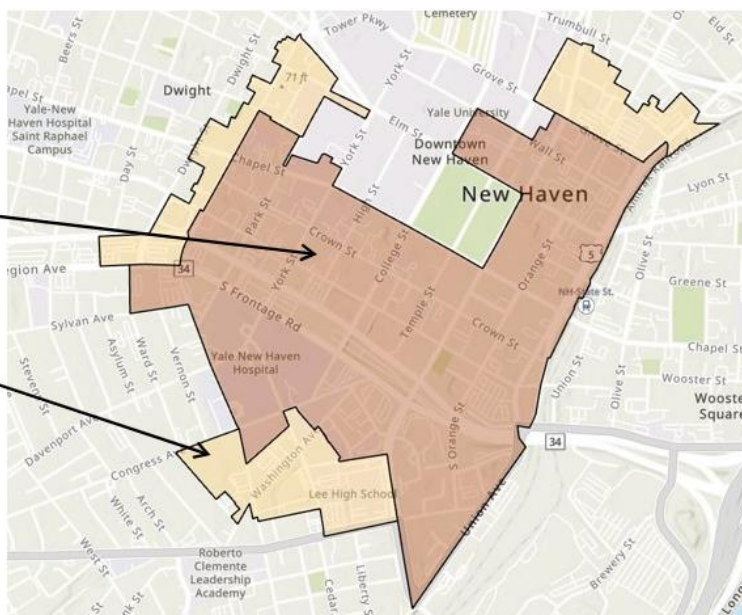
The Downtown for All Overlay District aims to:

- Expand access to affordable housing;
- Grow the City's tax base to support City services and a lower mill rate;
- Create good jobs through new construction and at local businesses;
- Improve public safety by increasing foot traffic; and
- Reduce local emissions by helping more residents live closer to jobs, school, shops, and public transit.

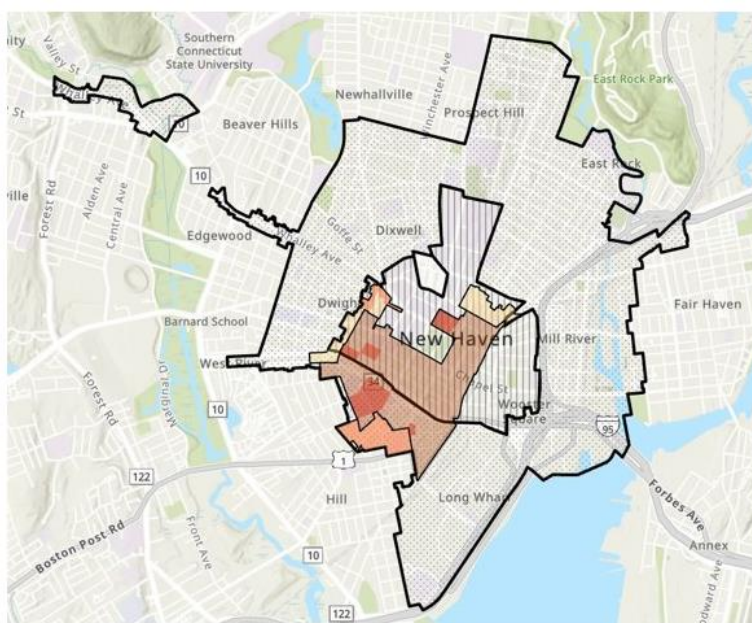
The Overlay District includes two overlay zones: the Downtown for All Inner Core and the Downtown for All Outer Core as depicted by the boundaries in the image below. Changes in the Inner Core will allow buildings with an increased maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 12.0 (currently 6.0), reduce the minimum Gross Floor Area per unit ratio (GFA) from the current one unit per 1,000 sq ft pf gross floor area to one unit per 400 sq. ft of gross floor area, reduce the required common amenity space requirement from 50 sqft to 25 sqft per dwelling unit, and allow rooming and boarding houses by special permit. These changes also apply in the Outer Core, except that the maximum FAR in the Outer Core will be FAR of 6.0. Developments that include hotel uses will continue to have a maximum FAR of 6.0 throughout the Downtown for All Overlay District. The City's Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance will apply in addition to the Downtown for All Overlay District, require 15% affordable housing in new housing developments in most of the Inner Core and Outer Core zones. Where Inclusionary Zoning is applicable the allowable FAR in the Inner Core will be 15.0. the additional image below demonstrates the overlap between Inclusionary Zoning and Downtown for All Overlay Areas.

Proposed Changes:

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



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



This legislation has been developed in partnership with the City of New Haven City Plan Department and Corporation Counsel. The proposed Downtown for All Overlay District is aligned with both the City of New Haven's Vision 2025 and Vision 2034 Comprehensive Plans.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

This ordinance amendment aligns with the goals of the Vision 2034 Comprehensive Plan from the standpoint of directly enabling the following strategies from the Plan.

Great Places to Live

Goal 2: Increase Housing Supply

Strategy 2.2: Amend ordinances and policies to better support housing development.

The New Haven Zoning Ordinance shapes and controls development across the city and has not been amended since 1962, when car-centric, low-density development was the focus. A comprehensive zoning overhaul is needed, with an emphasis on lowering barriers to the creation of diverse housing options. The City should review and amend the New Haven Zoning Ordinance and other relevant policies to better support the development of workforce, mixed-income, multi-family, and high-density housing types. More specifically, the City should review and amend as needed its parking, lot size, density, setback, building coverage, building height, and floor-area-ratio standards to better support housing development. Many of these changes are recommended in the 2023 Elm City Communities Breaking Ground report and other advisory documents. Some policy changes may apply city-wide, while others will need to be developed through small area planning for specific neighborhoods. Rezoning efforts should be designed to avoid catalyzing gentrification in neighborhoods with high displacement risk.

Great Places to Live

Goal 6: Prevent displacement by ensuring residents can continue to live in their neighborhood of choice as housing costs rise.

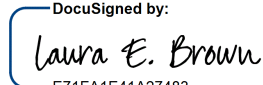
Strategy 6.5: Allow single-room occupancy housing in areas where there is access to transit and support services.

Allow single-room occupancy housing in areas where there is access to transit and support services. Single-room occupancy (SRO) living arrangements, whether as a rented room in a house or in a boarding house environment are one of the most affordable models of housing. Location of this type of housing in proximity of transit and other services provides higher benefit to residents. The City should improve and strengthen its licensing program for SROs.

ADVICE

Approval. This ordinance amendment aligns and enables the City of New Haven's Comprehensive Plan goals.

ADOPTED: November 5, 2025
Ernest Pagan
Chair

ATTEST: 
Laura E Brown
Executive Director, City Plan Department