



June 26, 2026

To the Members of the Board of Alders:

I write in enthusiastic support of the proposed zoning text amendment that would allow cultural activities as-of-right in New Haven's Light Industrial districts.

For over three decades, the International Festival of Arts and Ideas has demonstrated what New Haven already knows: that arts and culture are not mere amenities — they are essential, civic infrastructure. They attract residents and businesses, generate economic growth, and define a city's national identity and reputation. The proposed amendment reflects that understanding, extending to IL zones the same cultural use recognition that every residential and business zone in the city already enjoys.

As a New Havener, I'm proud to add my voice to this important conversation, alongside that of Dr. Roslyn Milstein Meyer, our founding director who also serves as board president of Lost in New Haven. Dr. Meyer's courageous leadership has long guided sustainable arts and culture in this city — from building the Festival into a nationally recognized institution to championing Lost in New Haven as a model for what cultural investment in our neighborhoods can look like. Her support for this amendment is not a gesture — it is the latest expression of a life's work built on the conviction that culture doesn't stop at the edge of a business district, and that New Haven is only as vibrant as its least-served neighborhood.

The proposed is a modest and well-grounded change. The evidence is clear that cultural institutions are compatible neighbors in light industrial areas and are quieter, with less traffic and emissions, than many uses already permitted. Meanwhile, the buildings in question are often vacant and deteriorating — to enable their adaptive reuse for museums, galleries, and libraries is to turn a liability into a valuable, community asset.

The amendment also advances goals the City has already publicly endorsed. *Vision 2034* and the *Cultural Equity Plan* both call for expanding the footprint of arts and culture beyond downtown and into Greater New Haven's neighborhoods. This is a direct path to doing exactly that. I urge the Board to approve this amendment and send a clear signal that New Haven's commitment to culture extends to each resident, and to every corner of this city.

In Community,

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