

February 18, 2026

City of New Haven Board of Alders

**Re: 510 Grand Avenue – English Station**

Dear Alder Rodriguez (Chair), Alder Douglass (Vice Chair), and members of the Community Development Committee,

My name is Daniel Reyes, a resident of Ward 11, and I am in support of the acquisition of the properties of 510 & 510A Grand Avenue for park purposes. I am a life-long resident of New Haven – I graduated from Amistad High School back in 2021 and, more recently, I graduated from Yale University with a degree in Ethnicity, Race, & Migration in 2025.

I'm in support of the acquisition of this property and the eventual conversion of it into a park for a number of reasons. Firstly, English Station, which sits on this property, is an eyesore. While I didn't grow up in Fair Haven, I regularly played soccer as a kid at the park next to John Martinez School and also at Criscuolo Park. The sight of English Station was unavoidable – I would wonder what the building was for if it looked so abandoned and unusable. How and why was this building still up? Now, knowing the history behind the building and how it has polluted the neighborhood and the east side of the City, why would we keep it up? Acquiring this property would allow the City to explore the possibility of demolishing it and ridding the City of something that has brought harm to the entire city.

This brings me to my second reason for supporting this proposal – the creation of a park. A park would expand recreational opportunities for the entire city, not just Fair Haven. A park would make a vastly more meaningful impact than keeping a building up that has sat abandoned. And even from a purely economic standpoint, a park is cheaper than maintaining and fixing the building.

Finally, the Mayor's current proposal explores the possibility of an outdoor pool. While I share concerns about ongoing maintenance, I am resoundingly in support of such a proposal because of the rationale: providing more swimming opportunities to our community, especially from Black and Latino communities who are statistically less likely to know how to swim. I speak from experience as the son of Colombian and Peruvian immigrants who has seen the value of adequate swimming knowledge provided by City of New Haven facilities. Growing up, I used to take swimming lessons at John Martinez where I learned key swimming skills that I still use to this day.

Knowing how to swim isn't just a safety thing, it's an enjoyment thing. Providing more kids the opportunity to have fun and learn to swim, as I was provided, is exactly what the City needs. Why would we not encourage that?

I urge the Board of Alders to pass this proposal. Thank you for the work you all do.

Best,

Daniel Reyes

188 Eastern Street

New Haven, Connecticut



February 18, 2026

City of New Haven Board of Alders – Community Development Committee

**RE: English Station Property Purchase**

Dear Honorable Alders:

The Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce supports the City’s proposal to purchase the English Station property. This is an important parcel of land that could be well utilized in the future. The Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce and our members strongly encourage economic development in New Haven. Our mission is to be an advocate for business, a valuable resource for our members, a venue for connections, and a promoter of economic growth that is shared and inclusive.

The City is an important partner in the process to remediate the site. Simplifying the ownership structure of the property should assist with the ongoing process. We look forward to a day when there is renewed vitality at the English Station site, and it is considered an asset to the City. To make this happen, it is critical for the City to be an engaged and invested partner in restoring this property.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Garrett Sheehan".

Garrett Sheehan  
President & CEO  
Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce

BETHANY | BRANFORD | CHESHIRE | EAST HAVEN | GUILFORD | HAMDEN | MADISON | MILFORD  
NEW HAVEN | NO. BRANFORD | NO. HAVEN | ORANGE | WALLINGFORD | WEST HAVEN | WOODBRIDGE

195 CHURCH STREET, 4TH FLOOR | NEW HAVEN, CT 06510 | TEL: (203) 787-6735 | FAX: (203) 782-4329 | GNHCC.COM

Sally J. Esposito, J.D.  
50 Downing Street  
New Haven, CT 06513  
February 16, 2026

Hon. Carmen Rodriguez, Chair  
Community Development Committee  
Board of Alders  
City of New Haven  
165 Church Street  
New Haven, CT 06510  
Via email: publictestimony@newhavenct.gov

Letter in opposition to: ORDER OF THE NEW HAVEN BOARD OF ALDERS APPROVING THE ACQUISITION BY THE CITY OF NEW HAVEN OF THOSE PROPERTIES KNOWN AS 510 GRAND AVENUE, NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT AND 510A GRAND AVENUE, NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT FOR PARK PURPOSES, SUCH ACQUISITION TO BE BY WAY OF A NEGOTIATED SALE AND PURCHASE OR, IF NECESSARY, BY SUCH OTHER MEANS AS MAY BE AVAILABLE TO THE CITY OF NEW HAVEN WHICH MAY INCLUDE THE USE OF EMINENT DOMAIN

Dear Honorable Chair Rodriguez,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony for the above referenced issue. I oppose taking Ball Island/English Station by eminent domain in order to create a park with an outdoor pool.

I honestly believe an outdoor pool would be a fantastic addition to our city but I firmly believe it should be located at Lighthouse as Lighthouse only has a saltwater swimming option and a splashpad. I believe the outdoor pool could become a reality much sooner if it were included in the current Lighthouse renovation project. If the outdoor pool were planned for Lighthouse, any remediation of Ball Island/English Station would not be an immediate issue.

If the City were to acquire Ball Island/English Station in the future, the City should remediate the property in the most cost-effective way to allow the island to be used as a solar farm like the one developed at Public Works.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

S/Sally J. Esposito

18 February 2026

**RE: LM-2026-0007 510 and 510A GRAND AVENUE, Examples of the reuse of power plants**

Dear Members of the Community Development Committee of the Board of Alders:

The League has been working with Fair Haven residents, elected officials, the City of New Haven, community groups, and people in the broader New Haven community to develop plans for English Station and the Mill River delta. Our collective work is guided by these basic principles:

- A. That the interests and preferences of the Fair Haven community are primary to any consideration for the future of the site. This is because 1) Fair Haven is an Environmental Justice Community; and 2) environmental health studies have shown that Fair Haven is the neighborhood most impacted by the operations of the power plant, and by the legacy of pollution on the site;
- B. That developing a plan for the site must be a collective, collaborative process, one that brings all stakeholders together with planning professionals to weigh choices and options. A basic principle of environmental justice work is that the voice and preferences of the community are central to the process, and that proscriptive planning is not imposed;
- C. That we bring the best possible team of professional expertise to work with the community, which we have done by engaging Grimshaw Architects and Sherwood Design Engineers and others;
- D. That facts about site history, pollution, regulatory requirements, legal status, remediation procedures and costs, are all known and shared with the community to help inform their decisions;
- E. That all reliable facts, community preferences, and expert analysis are used to *create a portfolio of alternatives* for the neighborhood and city to consider.

A site of this complexity and value — especially in an Environmental Justice community demands — this deliberative, community-based approach. The plan presented by the City is proscriptive, limited in its assessment of the values of the site, and created without meaningful community engagement.

In the past year, the League has conducted many public walking tours of the English Station/ Mill River. Through these tours, we brought together the many stakeholders and planning and environmental experts to create a dialog about the challenges and potentials of the site. Ideas offered by people joining the tours have been incorporated into our work. Every tour was fully booked. We will resume the tours this Spring.

The League is also in continuously discussions with the Fair Haven Community Management Team, Junta, and other organizations about planning for the site, and these plans relate to broader community goals for housing, job training, employment opportunities, connection to the maritime economy, trails, recreation, and access to the water.

In all this work, we have had the good fortune to bring the expertise of Grimshaw Architects, a world leader in architectural design, sustainable development and work with complex sites to New Haven. Grimshaw introduced us to Sherwood Design Engineers, who are bringing their expertise in the remediation of highly polluted urban deltas to the project. Sherwood has also researched grant opportunities available to the neighborhood and city. An initial workshop with this team created an outline of community goals and images to be used to start-off a community charrette. Included in this testimony is an example of this “ideation” work – images for a community charrette, created to open-up thinking and dialog.

We ask that you table or deny the the City’s request to use eminent domain to acquire English Station. Your Committee does not have all the information it needs to assess the costs and potential legal consequences of using eminent domain now – the City has not done a thorough job of looking at the cost/benefit analysis to substantiate eminent domain. The consequences of dedicating a huge site like this for a pool, without any consideration of alternatives are serious. Giving adequate consideration to the wide array of community benefits this rare waterfront can offer is needed before choosing a plan for the site, determining its value, creating an fiscal plan for acquisition and development, and eventually rezoning the parcel and bringing its redevelopment to fruition.

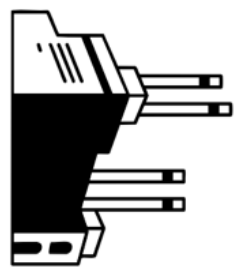
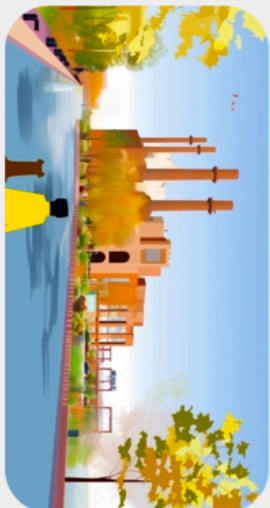
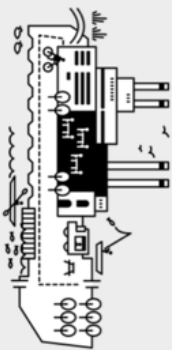
It is premature to approve the use of eminent domain until:

1. Facts are available about the contamination of the site and reasonable remediation methods and costs are determined (this is in dispute – there is ongoing litigation between UI and CT DEEP);
2. Alternative uses for the site have been developed through a community process.

Sincerely,



Anstress Farwell  
President

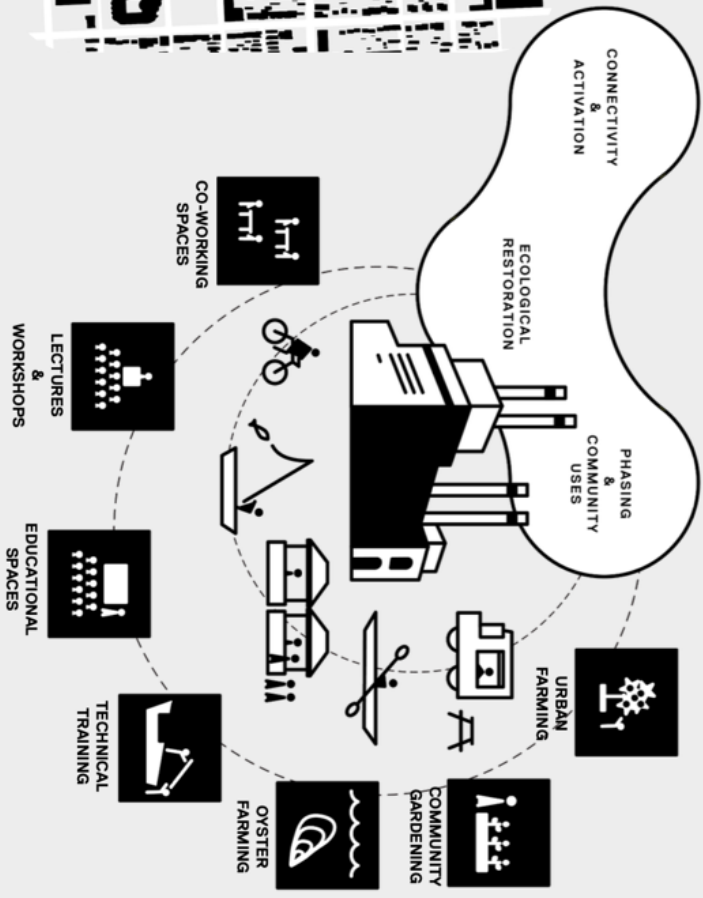
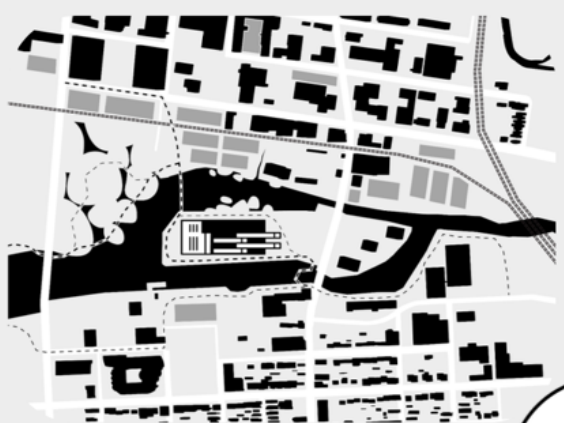


**ENGLISH STATION**

NEW HAVEN  
URBAN  
DESIGN  
LEAGUE

**GRIMSHAW**

**SHERWOOD**  
DESIGN ENGINEERS



## OFFICIAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Alder Carmen Rodriguez, Chair, Community Development Committee; President Walker-Myers

FROM: Alder Mandy Martinelli, Ward 8

DATE: February 16, 2026

RE: Formal Technical and Fiscal Due Diligence Requirements for Ball Island (LM-2026-0007)

Dear Chair Rodriguez,

As the Alder of Ward 8, where Ball Island is located, I am formally submitting my technical and fiscal concerns through you as Chair of the Community Development Committee. While I share the goal of remediating this long-standing environmental burden, I cannot support moving this item out of committee based on the current unknown financials and significant gaps in information.

I am requesting written clarification on the following items from the City Engineer, City Attorney, and Budget Director:

1. The \$25 million figure currently being discussed by the administration is has been presented as a park construction *estimate*. However, redeveloping coal plants like the Potomac River station involves total budgets exceeding \$100 million once environmental liabilities are included. I am requesting a formal breakdown of who is responsible for the approximately \$50 million difference between the "park budget" and the total projected remediation cost. Specifically, who pays for the 15 to 25 million dollars required to upgrade the cleanup from an "Industrial" factory standard to a "Residential" playground standard?
2. Tearing down a 1929 power plant filled with pcbs, asbestos, lead and the multitude of other unknown contaminates is a high-risk operation typically estimated between 10 and 15 million dollars. United Illuminating (UI) has noted in 2025/2026 legal proceedings that their current obligations do not include full demolition. Does the \$25 million budget include the cost of the wrecking ball and hazardous waste disposal? If it does not, the City is asking this Board to acquire a property it cannot afford to remove.
3. The current owners, Haven River Properties and Paramount View Millennium, have neglected this site for years. I am requesting the exact dollar amount they currently owe the City in back taxes and anti-blight fines. Under the current 2025 ordinances, these fines total \$1,000/day. I am requesting a legal explanation for why we are using eminent domain—which requires the City to pay the owners—instead of a foreclosure action that allows us to take the land for the debt they already owe our taxpayers.
4. The May 2021 Supplemental Remedial Investigation admits that soil testing directly under the main boilers and foundation mat was never completed due to "*unsafe conditions*." Without knowing the current levels of contamination, the City cannot reliably project remediation costs. If the City acquires the property before this "hidden" soil is tested, our City—not UI—may become responsible for any newly discovered toxins found during demolition. I request a plan for how this "discovery risk" will be mitigated.

5. In 11 days, the state transitions to the new Release-Based Cleanup Regulations (RBCR) under Chapter 445b. These new laws provide the City with significantly more power to force polluters to pay for newly discovered releases on a strict timeline. I am requesting a formal legal explanation for how this state law might aid us in this process.

My constituents deserve a park that is safe and a budget that is honest. I formally request that this item remain with the Community Development Committee until these technical and fiscal risks are resolved in writing.

Best regards,

Alder Martinelli, Ward 8

Sally J. Esposito, J.D.  
50 Downing Street  
New Haven, CT 06513  
February 16, 2026

Hon. Carmen Rodriguez, Chair  
Community Development Committee  
Board of Alders  
City of New Haven  
165 Church Street  
New Haven, CT 06510  
Via email: publictestimony@newhavenct.gov

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I honestly believe an outdoor pool would be a fantastic addition to our city but I firmly believe it should be located at Lighthouse as Lighthouse only has a saltwater swimming option and a splashpad. I believe the outdoor pool could become a reality much sooner if it were included in the current Lighthouse renovation project. If the outdoor pool were planned for Lighthouse, any remediation of Ball Island/English Station would not be an immediate issue.

If the City were to acquire Ball Island/English Station in the future, the City should remediate the property in the most cost-effective way to allow the island to be used as a solar farm like the one developed at Public Works.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

S/Sally J. Esposito

Dustin Nord  
110 Nash Street  
New Haven, CT 06511

February 18, 2026

Community Development Committee  
New Haven Board of Alders  
165 Church Street  
New Haven, CT 06510

**Re: Proposed Acquisition of English Station Property**

Chair Rodriguez and Committee Members,

My name is Dustin Nord, and I am a resident of 110 Nash Street in East Rock. I am writing to provide testimony regarding the proposed acquisition of the English Station property by eminent domain, to be discussed on February 18, 2026.

I respectfully oppose the proposal. I do not believe the proposed acquisition and use case represent the highest and best use of a critical parcel of land in our city. I recognize the site's complicated history and understand the desire to transform it into a public amenity. However, converting a centrally located and economically significant property into a park anchored by a seasonal aquatics facility — particularly without a comprehensive evaluation of alternative redevelopment scenarios or a transparent accounting of total public cost — presents meaningful fiscal risk with uncertain long-term benefit.

Public statements have referenced a potential cost of approximately \$25 million, but there has not yet been a detailed breakdown of projected acquisition, remediation, demolition, construction, and ongoing operating expenses, nor a clear explanation of how those costs will ultimately be financed. While philanthropic contributions and potential state funding have been discussed, the extent of committed versus anticipated funding remains unclear. Any remaining financial exposure could ultimately fall to the City and its taxpayers, and warrants fuller public review before proceeding with acquisition.

Additionally, if the Committee determines that acquisition is in the City's interest, I would urge caution in codifying specific end uses within the authorizing legislation prior to further feasibility analysis. English Station is a uniquely significant property. Prescribing a narrow set of recreational uses at this stage may unnecessarily constrain future flexibility before costs, environmental liabilities, and alternative redevelopment options have been fully assessed.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully,

Dustin Nord

**From:** Moira Cassell <mcmoira@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 16, 2026 9:25 AM  
**To:** Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>  
**Subject:** Public Comment for English Station Proposal

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To the Honorable Board of Aldermen in the City of New Haven,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the proposed installation of a swimming pool as part of the English Station park project.

It is my hope that the Board will vote against this initiative.

I am a resident of the East Shore neighborhood, where several municipal parks are testament to the city's egregious neglect of park maintenance. There are abysmal conditions at Lighthouse Park (including an inoperable and blighted snack stand, inoperable bathrooms, parking lot in disrepair, and significant rot on the historical carousel house), deferred maintenance of the tracks, courts, 40+ year-old exercise stations, and playground at East Shore Park, a lack of sidewalks connecting said park to the surrounding neighborhood, excessive litter and drug use at the Fort Nathan Pier and adjacent parks and beach, abundant litter and dog feces at Morris Beach, and broken benches, gates, and lights along the seawall. What's more, the lack of a lifeguard at Morris Beach and the inconsistent staffing levels at Lighthouse Park suggest that the city has a shortage of lifeguards.

This long list of parks concerns is limited only to Wards 17 and 18. There are many more parks in the city that bear similar, if not more appalling, marks of neglect.

In addition, as an educator who served in New Haven for nine years, including posts at Career and Wilbur Cross High Schools, I can say with confidence that the city has a long history of deferred maintenance of its school's pools.

I implore the Board to hold the city accountable to its existing parks and public swimming infrastructure before spreading its paltry parks staff and budget even thinner with an unnecessary pool at English Station.

City residents deserve a seat at the table of all parks development projects, including the reimagining of the English Station site. It is my hope that the Board will represent its constituents as such.

I sincerely thank you for your time and consideration,

Moira Cassell  
51 Pope Street  
New Haven, CT

**From:** Denisse L <nenipr318@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Monday, February 16, 2026 1:12 PM

**To:** fairhavencmt@gmail.com

**Cc:** Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>; Alder Magda Natal <WARD16@newhavenct.gov>; Angel Hubbard <WARD3@newhavenct.gov>; Carmen Rodriguez <WARD6@newhavenct.gov>; Frank Douglass Jr <WARD2@newhavenct.gov>; Alder Mandy Martinelli <WARD8@newhavenct.gov>; Alder Frank R. Redente, Jr. <WARD15@newhavenct.gov>

**Subject:** Public Testimony Regarding Mill River and the Outdoor pool project.

You don't often get email from [nenipr318@gmail.com](mailto:nenipr318@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

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Public Testimony Regarding Mill River and the Outdoor pool project.

Greetings,

As a long time New Haven Resident, and the last 15+ year as part of the Fair Haven Community. I believe there is no need to acquire the property located at 510 Grand Ave. for the use of the land for an outdoor pool and another park.

What the city of New Haven needs is for those funds to be used to improve the current parks in our community. To ensure they are maintained and safe. The current pools across the New Haven public schools can use repairs and once the repairs are completed, they can become available for the public to use year-round instead of an outdoor pool that will probably be used less than 3 months of the year.

Use city funds to repair the school pools to be used for recreational purposes. Train staff and/or create new jobs for young people as lifeguards in these schools. My son learned to swim in the pool at Conte West Hills School, and I believe the future generation will benefit from improved conditions on our already existing pools.

Our city has so many other needs like affordable housing for those of us that work and are finding hard to afford a living in New Haven due to all the rents being increased. We are paying higher prices, and our living conditions continue to decrease.

Let's improve the maintenance of our current parks and pools before adding another bill that can't be funded. So many New Haven parks need repairs and mean time our mayor wants to spend money on moving a contaminated soil to create another problem with no clear plan on how to fund it. Who is going to end up paying for it?

I stand with my Fair Haven Community on No for the Outdoor Pool!

- No to blank checks
- Nothing about us, without us
- Fix the pools **we already have and staff them properly for year-round use**
- Revitalize English Station for uses aligned with community priorities

Thanks for your time and consideration to this matter,  
Denisse Lecodet  
New Haven Resident

**From:** Gary Doyens <gary.doyens@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 16, 2026 1:44 PM  
**To:** Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>  
**Subject:** English Station acquisition

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Board of Alders:

It will come as no surprise that I oppose the acquisition of Ball Island and English Station by agreement and most certainly not by force. New London and West Haven have both seized private property for dubious projects, neither of which were built. Now the properties are a wasteland and eyesore. That said, this is a seriously flawed plan. There is no real cost estimate on the acquisition and remediation. We've watched the Clock Factor, another environmental remediation project of grand design, fall apart and provide a safe haven for squatters for years. It is always more complicated and significantly more expensive than the best minds, let alone lay people with no direct or relevant experience in such a project.

Moreover, while teaching swimming lessons is a great goal, the city doesn't teach lessons at any of the pools it currently owns. That's because there's not the will and the pools are in continuing disrepair. The schools and the Parks departments do not maintain the assets we have. Why in the world would we even consider adding more to their plate? What we need are jobs for our people. They need economic security. Their kids need to go to schools that are clean, have no lingering maintenance issues and be able to use all the facilities at those schools from the bathrooms to the pools. We need a vo-tech school to teach car repair, construction, welding, plumbing and electrical for the kids who don't want to go to college. In any of those trades, they could be earning as much as \$100K a year or more.

Please ignore what's being shoved down your throats. Focus on the practical and the accomplishable - the issues and challenges that directly impact the most people not for a summer or two but for a lifetime.

Thank you. g.  
-- Gary Doyens  
203.676.6610  
30 Birch Drive  
New Haven, CT 06515

**From:** S Richmond <srichmond3198@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 16, 2026 3:09 PM  
**To:** Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>  
**Subject:** BOA Meeting 2/18/26 - English Station

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First, I want to say that Fair Haven is New Haven's most beautiful and vibrant neighborhood, which I have been a grateful and happy resident for 18 years. And the English Station site is extremely valuable because of its location adjacent to waterways, relatively easy access to the interstate highways, and its location on the boundary of Fair Haven and downtown and greater New Haven.

I am not in support of a plan to develop this site into solely a park and outdoor swimming pool, with very limited and inadequate funding, and also little support from the Fair Haven community.

First, financially, the site is a superfund site. Who will pay for cleanup to the extent where the site can be used for a park and outdoor swimming pool (which would require extensive remediation)? It might be more financially smart to clean up and repurpose the current building. And frankly, I would not trust remediation of the entire land. The current plan will only cost New Haven (and the state), and bring in no revenue. Also, our Parks Department is already stretched thin (Yale, you could help). Certainly, it would not look like the pictures presented.

Why not develop a plan that will create recreation and job opportunities to the youth and residents of Fair Haven, forge bonds between Fair Haven and greater New Haven, and also generate tax income and, importantly, job and recreational opportunities for Fair Haven youth, as well as establishing bonds with greater New Haven?

Why not park features, paired with local businesses, restaurants, and perhaps some downtown businesses such as Walker Loden? Partner with the Sound School for educational opportunities, the kayaking offerings of our Parks Department, sunset sails of SoundWaters? Just to name a few.

Maybe provide shuttle buses between Ikea (which seems to have visitors from near and afar, and maybe they would like to make a day of it) and the site, or downtown and Yale, to the restaurants and shops at English Station. Many cities have converted power stations to far better use than this, with likely more benefit to their communities and the local citizens.

---

From: Stephanie FitzGerald <sfitzgerald1@comcast.net>  
Sent: Monday, February 16, 2026 3:49 PM  
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>  
Subject: Ball Island

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Hello Alders,

I hope I am addressing this letter properly.

I support cleaning up Ball Island so that our community will have access and can make use of it.

If possible, it would be good to somehow reuse part of the structure.

What do Fair Haven's neighbors want?

An outdoor swimming pool can't be a high priority. We have a nearby pool at John Daniels School that is rarely available. Make it available 7 days a week to the community outside

school hours. We have Lighthouse Point Park for outdoor swimming. We most likely don't need an outdoor pool when our Hillhouse, Conte and John Daniels indoor pools are not readily available to the public.

Stephanie FitzGerald

433 Edgewood Ave.

Ward 24

Sent from my iPhone

February 16, 2026

To the Board of Alders,

This is to provide written testimony for the public hearing about the mayor's proposal to build a park at English Station. I live in Fair Haven, a neighborhood that will be directly impacted what happens at that site. And I was one of the environmental justice activists who worked hard to prevent English Station from reopening as a power plant more than twenty years ago.

I would love to see the site repurposed for something like a park. But I implore you not to rush into this before we have more information. Attempting to acquire one of the city's most contaminated properties without a transparent, fully-funded remediation plan is financially reckless. The public estimate for site acquisition and remediation sits at \$25 million. Yet without a real cost analysis, that number is little more than a guess.

Our city struggles with chronic budget issues, with taxes increasing every year. Putting funds towards this project means funding will be reduced for something else. For example, the proposal references \$5 million in funds already earmarked for the Mill River Trail and green infrastructure. Worse yet, our existing pools are chronically closed for repairs and our parks struggle with deferred maintenance and safety concerns. Before we break ground on new, expensive infrastructure, we should see some evidence of the city's financial capacity to improve upon this record.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Christel Manning

333 Front St., New Haven, CT

christeljmanning@ gmail.com

**From:** Moira Cassell <mcmoira@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 16, 2026 9:25 AM  
**To:** Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>  
**Subject:** Public Comment for English Station Proposal

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51 Pope Street  
New Haven, CT

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**Sent:** Monday, February 16, 2026 1:12 PM

**To:** fairhavencmt@gmail.com

**Cc:** Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>; Alder Magda Natal <WARD16@newhavenct.gov>; Angel Hubbard <WARD3@newhavenct.gov>; Carmen Rodriguez <WARD6@newhavenct.gov>; Frank Douglass Jr <WARD2@newhavenct.gov>; Alder Mandy Martinelli <WARD8@newhavenct.gov>; Alder Frank R. Redente, Jr. <WARD15@newhavenct.gov>

**Subject:** Public Testimony Regarding Mill River and the Outdoor pool project.

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Public Testimony Regarding Mill River and the Outdoor pool project.

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I stand with my Fair Haven Community on No for the Outdoor Pool!

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- Nothing about us, without us
- Fix the pools **we already have and staff them properly for year-round use**
- Revitalize English Station for uses aligned with community priorities

Thanks for your time and consideration to this matter,  
Denisse Lecodet  
New Haven Resident

**From:** Gary Doyens <gary.doyens@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 16, 2026 1:44 PM  
**To:** Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>  
**Subject:** English Station acquisition

You don't often get email from [gary.doyens@gmail.com](mailto:gary.doyens@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

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Board of Alders:

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Moreover, while teaching swimming lessons is a great goal, the city doesn't teach lessons at any of the pools it currently owns. That's because there's not the will and the pools are in continuing disrepair. The schools and the Parks departments do not maintain the assets we have. Why in the world would we even consider adding more to their plate? What we need are jobs for our people. They need economic security. Their kids need to go to schools that are clean, have no lingering maintenance issues and be able to use all the facilities at those schools from the bathrooms to the pools. We need a vo-tech school to teach car repair, construction, welding, plumbing and electrical for the kids who don't want to go to college. In any of those trades, they could be earning as much as \$100K a year or more.

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Thank you. g.  
-- Gary Doyens  
203.676.6610  
30 Birch Drive  
New Haven, CT 06515

**From:** S Richmond <srichmond3198@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 16, 2026 3:09 PM  
**To:** Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>  
**Subject:** BOA Meeting 2/18/26 - English Station

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First, I want to say that Fair Haven is New Haven's most beautiful and vibrant neighborhood, which I have been a grateful and happy resident for 18 years. And the English Station site is extremely valuable because of its location adjacent to waterways, relatively easy access to the interstate highways, and its location on the boundary of Fair Haven and downtown and greater New Haven.

I am not in support of a plan to develop this site into solely a park and outdoor swimming pool, with very limited and inadequate funding, and also little support from the Fair Haven community.

First, financially, the site is a superfund site. Who will pay for cleanup to the extent where the site can be used for a park and outdoor swimming pool (which would require extensive remediation)? It might be more financially smart to clean up and repurpose the current building. And frankly, I would not trust remediation of the entire land. The current plan will only cost New Haven (and the state), and bring in no revenue. Also, our Parks Department is already stretched thin (Yale, you could help). Certainly, it would not look like the pictures presented.

Why not develop a plan that will create recreation and job opportunities to the youth and residents of Fair Haven, forge bonds between Fair Haven and greater New Haven, and also generate tax income and, importantly, job and recreational opportunities for Fair Haven youth, as well as establishing bonds with greater New Haven?

Why not park features, paired with local businesses, restaurants, and perhaps some downtown businesses such as Walker Loden? Partner with the Sound School for educational opportunities, the kayaking offerings of our Parks Department, sunset sails of SoundWaters? Just to name a few.

Maybe provide shuttle buses between Ikea (which seems to have visitors from near and afar, and maybe they would like to make a day of it) and the site, or downtown and Yale, to the restaurants and shops at English Station. Many cities have converted power stations to far better use than this, with likely more benefit to their communities and the local citizens.

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From: Stephanie FitzGerald <sfitzgerald1@comcast.net>  
Sent: Monday, February 16, 2026 3:49 PM  
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>  
Subject: Ball Island

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Hello Alders,

I hope I am addressing this letter properly.

I support cleaning up Ball Island so that our community will have access and can make use of it.

If possible, it would be good to somehow reuse part of the structure.

What do Fair Haven's neighbors want?

An outdoor swimming pool can't be a high priority. We have a nearby pool at John Daniels School that is rarely available. Make it available 7 days a week to the community outside

school hours. We have Lighthouse Point Park for outdoor swimming. We most likely don't need an outdoor pool when our Hillhouse, Conte and John Daniels indoor pools are not readily available to the public.

Stephanie FitzGerald  
433 Edgewood Ave.  
Ward 24  
Sent from my iPhone

## **Community Member Written Testimony (English Station Acquisition)**

Community Development Committee – Board of Alders

Public Hearing: February 18, 2026, 6:00 PM

Board of Alders Chamber, 165 Church Street, New Haven

Written testimony submission: [publictestimony@newhavenct.gov](mailto:publictestimony@newhavenct.gov)

Chair Rodriguez and members of the Community Development Committee:

My name is Alyssa Krinsky, and I am a former resident of Westville and have worked in and around the Fair Haven neighborhood in New Haven for more than a decade. I am writing in opposition of the proposed acquisition of the English Station properties at 510 and 510A Grand Avenue for redevelopment as a public, outdoor pool.

The English Station power plant was decommissioned in 1992 and has remained vacant and contaminated for more than three decades. For many residents, this site has long been a barrier to accessing the waterfront and a reminder of disinvestment in surrounding neighborhoods.

Access to safe parks and recreational spaces is important for families, children, and seniors. Parks provide places for physical activity, reduce stress, and create opportunities for neighbors to gather and build stronger communities. Expanding safe and accessible recreational space helps improve quality of life and supports healthier neighborhoods.

Many neighborhoods in New Haven have less park space and fewer recreational resources than others. Creating a new public park and recreational area at this site would help address these disparities and provide opportunities for families and youth who may not otherwise have access to safe outdoor spaces. However, that is not best carried out through pushing through a plan to develop a space and add an outdoor pool when that is not what the people who live in the neighborhood want.

Access to aquatic recreation is important. Swimming is not only a recreational activity but also a life-saving skill, and safe public facilities provide opportunities for children and families to learn and stay active. That said, there are several spaces, including one directly adjacent to the site in question at John Martinez School, which could adequately provide those spaces if they were properly maintained. Given that there are multiple swimming spaces around the city in disrepair it leaves little confidence in the city's ability to additionally maintain an outdoor space.

While it is fantastic that there has been pledged philanthropic funding for a project in a neighborhood that has often been deprived of resources and opportunities, there has not been the community support to back this endeavor. The community at no point in this process was given true autonomy to contribute to the planning process. From the onset, meetings were held under the guise of being collaborative when the reality was they set up to provide limited community reactions, inputs, and feedback to a plan the city has already

firmly asserted as being their intended outcome. This lack of community input was further highlighted with the city's "planning meeting series" around the project which did not consider family needs, transportation gaps, or language barriers (the community input survey is only available in English through the available storymap).

Transforming a long-blighted industrial property into a safe, welcoming public space will improve the neighborhood, restore access to the waterfront, and benefit residents for generations to come but is best done when the community has a true input into how the spaces around them are engaged.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Alyssa Krinsky

Formerly Westville & Fair Haven, New Haven

Dustin Nord  
110 Nash Street  
New Haven, CT 06511

February 18, 2026

Community Development Committee  
New Haven Board of Alders  
165 Church Street  
New Haven, CT 06510

**Re: Proposed Acquisition of English Station Property**

Chair Rodriguez and Committee Members,

My name is Dustin Nord, and I am a resident of 110 Nash Street in East Rock. I am writing to provide testimony regarding the proposed acquisition of the English Station property by eminent domain, to be discussed on February 18, 2026.

I respectfully oppose the proposal. I do not believe the proposed acquisition and use case represent the highest and best use of a critical parcel of land in our city. I recognize the site's complicated history and understand the desire to transform it into a public amenity. However, converting a centrally located and economically significant property into a park anchored by a seasonal aquatics facility — particularly without a comprehensive evaluation of alternative redevelopment scenarios or a transparent accounting of total public cost — presents meaningful fiscal risk with uncertain long-term benefit.

Public statements have referenced a potential cost of approximately \$25 million, but there has not yet been a detailed breakdown of projected acquisition, remediation, demolition, construction, and ongoing operating expenses, nor a clear explanation of how those costs will ultimately be financed. While philanthropic contributions and potential state funding have been discussed, the extent of committed versus anticipated funding remains unclear. Any remaining financial exposure could ultimately fall to the City and its taxpayers, and warrants fuller public review before proceeding with acquisition.

Additionally, if the Committee determines that acquisition is in the City's interest, I would urge caution in codifying specific end uses within the authorizing legislation prior to further feasibility analysis. English Station is a uniquely significant property. Prescribing a narrow set of recreational uses at this stage may unnecessarily constrain future flexibility before costs, environmental liabilities, and alternative redevelopment options have been fully assessed.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully,

Dustin Nord

**From:** Moira Cassell <mcmoira@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 16, 2026 9:25 AM  
**To:** Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>  
**Subject:** Public Comment for English Station Proposal

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To the Honorable Board of Aldermen in the City of New Haven,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the proposed installation of a swimming pool as part of the English Station park project.

It is my hope that the Board will vote against this initiative.

I am a resident of the East Shore neighborhood, where several municipal parks are testament to the city's egregious neglect of park maintenance. There are abysmal conditions at Lighthouse Park (including an inoperable and blighted snack stand, inoperable bathrooms, parking lot in disrepair, and significant rot on the historical carousel house), deferred maintenance of the tracks, courts, 40+ year-old exercise stations, and playground at East Shore Park, a lack of sidewalks connecting said park to the surrounding neighborhood, excessive litter and drug use at the Fort Nathan Pier and adjacent parks and beach, abundant litter and dog feces at Morris Beach, and broken benches, gates, and lights along the seawall. What's more, the lack of a lifeguard at Morris Beach and the inconsistent staffing levels at Lighthouse Park suggest that the city has a shortage of lifeguards.

This long list of parks concerns is limited only to Wards 17 and 18. There are many more parks in the city that bear similar, if not more appalling, marks of neglect.

In addition, as an educator who served in New Haven for nine years, including posts at Career and Wilbur Cross High Schools, I can say with confidence that the city has a long history of deferred maintenance of its school's pools.

I implore the Board to hold the city accountable to its existing parks and public swimming infrastructure before spreading its paltry parks staff and budget even thinner with an unnecessary pool at English Station.

City residents deserve a seat at the table of all parks development projects, including the reimagining of the English Station site. It is my hope that the Board will represent its constituents as such.

I sincerely thank you for your time and consideration,

Moira Cassell  
51 Pope Street  
New Haven, CT

**From:** Denisse L <nenipr318@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Monday, February 16, 2026 1:12 PM

**To:** fairhavencmt@gmail.com

**Cc:** Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>; Alder Magda Natal <WARD16@newhavenct.gov>; Angel Hubbard <WARD3@newhavenct.gov>; Carmen Rodriguez <WARD6@newhavenct.gov>; Frank Douglass Jr <WARD2@newhavenct.gov>; Alder Mandy Martinelli <WARD8@newhavenct.gov>; Alder Frank R. Redente, Jr. <WARD15@newhavenct.gov>

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**Subject:** English Station acquisition

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203.676.6610  
30 Birch Drive  
New Haven, CT 06515

**From:** S Richmond <srichmond3198@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 16, 2026 3:09 PM  
**To:** Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>  
**Subject:** BOA Meeting 2/18/26 - English Station

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Stephanie FitzGerald

433 Edgewood Ave.

Ward 24

Sent from my iPhone

February 16, 2026

To the Board of Alders,

This is to provide written testimony for the public hearing about the mayor's proposal to build a park at English Station. I live in Fair Haven, a neighborhood that will be directly impacted what happens at that site. And I was one of the environmental justice activists who worked hard to prevent English Station from reopening as a power plant more than twenty years ago.

I would love to see the site repurposed for something like a park. But I implore you not to rush into this before we have more information. Attempting to acquire one of the city's most contaminated properties without a transparent, fully-funded remediation plan is financially reckless. The public estimate for site acquisition and remediation sits at \$25 million. Yet without a real cost analysis, that number is little more than a guess.

Our city struggles with chronic budget issues, with taxes increasing every year. Putting funds towards this project means funding will be reduced for something else. For example, the proposal references \$5 million in funds already earmarked for the Mill River Trail and green infrastructure. Worse yet, our existing pools are chronically closed for repairs and our parks struggle with deferred maintenance and safety concerns. Before we break ground on new, expensive infrastructure, we should see some evidence of the city's financial capacity to improve upon this record.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Christel Manning

333 Front St., New Haven, CT

christeljmanning@gmail.com

February 16, 2026

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Christel Manning

333 Front St., New Haven, CT

christeljmanning@ gmail.com

Board of Alders  
Community Development Committee  
City of New Haven  
165 Church Street  
New Haven, CT 06510

February 18, 2026

Dear Members of the Board,

My name is Ana P Juarez and I am a lifelong New Haven resident, with over 20 years living in Fair Haven. I am actively involved in my community and throughout the city. I serve in several roles including for the Executive Board for the Fair Haven Community Management Team, the Community Advisory Board for COMPASS, and as a DTC Cochair for Ward 14. The role that I view most important is that of an advocate for my neighborhood and community. Too long does Fair Haven get overlooked and forgotten, and many times do we have people voicing their opinions of what is best for us, rather than to ask us what our needs and wants are. Do not erase Fair Haven's identity and replace it with something as unremarkable as a pool. I do not have anything personal against parks or pools. In fact, I love my city parks and have been an avid swimmer, but this is not about that. The city has an opportunity to collaborate with the community on a historical building and site. There are plenty of other projects and developments that can replace this current pool idea with actual culture and without further risk of contamination to the public and environment. And without the risk of another city project to become abandoned due to lack of funds -in the near or far future. Last Fall, when the city held a last-minute meeting in my neighborhood, I posed the following questions to the city's planning staff and architects:

1. What is the estimated **total** cost? The cost to decontaminate the area, destroy the current historical power plant, excavate, and build this new landscape. And then the additional costs to maintain an outdoor pool, keep it fully staffed, and winterproof it in a state that experiences cold weather 80% of the year?

2. Will you let your kids and family be the first to swim in this area? -My direct question to one of the city's architects, which left him unable to answer. s
3. What is the rush to build, without further resident input, from the Elicker administration?

Due to the lack of responses, and what I view as oversight, from the city, there was not much that had been discussed further. My questions have remained unanswered since this meeting. My key points remain the same; the environmental and financial risks outweigh the recreational benefit of an outdoor pool. There are better alternatives to this project, and the city is aware of it. I want to thank you for your time and consideration in this matter and look forward to the Board of Alders voting in favor of the community.

Sincerely,

Ana P Juarez

## Written Testimony Supporting Acquisition and Redevelopment of the English Station Site

*Chair Rodriguez and members of the Community Development Committee, I respectfully submit testimony in support of the proposed acquisition of the English Station properties at 510 and 510A Grand Avenue for redevelopment as a public park and community recreation space.*

As Director of Health for the City of New Haven, I offer this testimony from the perspective of population health, prevention, and environmental justice. I also speak as someone who was raised in this community and who has spent more than two decades working in public health, with a focus on prevention, environmental conditions, and health equity. This perspective informs my support for the proposed acquisition. I also serve on the Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council.<sup>1</sup>

### **Professional Perspective and Public Health Mission**

The New Haven Health Department is responsible for protecting and improving the health of more than 130,000 residents through environmental health enforcement, school health, emergency preparedness, and community health initiatives. Our mission is to ensure that every resident has the opportunity to live in a safe, healthy, and equitable environment. **The conditions in which people live, work, and play remain among the strongest predictors of long-term health outcomes**, and this principle guides my testimony today.<sup>2</sup>

### **Historical Context of the Site**

To understand the public health significance of this proposal, it is important to consider the history of the English Station site. The English Station power plant was decommissioned in 1992 and has remained vacant and contaminated for more than three decades. During this period, surrounding neighborhoods, particularly Fair Haven and adjacent areas, have experienced limited access to the waterfront, continued environmental burden, and lost opportunities for safe recreational space. The prolonged vacancy of this industrial site represents not only a land use concern but also a longstanding environmental and community health issue.<sup>3,4</sup>

English Station is widely recognized as a defining element of New Haven's industrial heritage. Responsible redevelopment should include structural evaluation, environmental safety assessment, and feasibility analysis to determine whether any elements can be preserved or interpreted in a way that is consistent with public health protections and long-term sustainability.<sup>5</sup>

424 Chapel Street, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor • New Haven, Connecticut 06511 • 203-946-6999

---

Justin Elicker, Mayor • Maritza Bond, MPH, Director of Health

The action before the Committee concerns acquisition of the property. Acquisition establishes public control and enables coordinated environmental remediation and structured planning to proceed under state oversight. Environmental remediation requirements remain governed by the Connecticut *Department of Energy and Environmental Protection* (DEEP) and applicable regulatory standards, regardless of ownership.<sup>6</sup> **Acquisition does not predetermine final design, specific amenities, or long-term operating decisions. Those matters are evaluated in subsequent phases through public process and funding review.**

### **Public Health Evidence and Prevention**

Public health research consistently demonstrates that access to green space is associated with improved mental health, increased physical activity, reduced stress, and lower risk of cardiovascular disease and premature mortality. Accordingly, investments in remediation and accessible recreational environments function as evidence-based prevention strategies that support population health and long-term community well-being.<sup>2</sup>

### **Local Health Indicators and Environmental Conditions**

Local indicators further reinforce the importance of these investments in New Haven. Childhood asthma prevalence has historically exceeded statewide averages in several school populations, and respiratory illness remains a persistent concern in neighborhoods impacted by older housing stock, traffic corridors, and historic industrial activity.<sup>7</sup> Environmental conditions, housing quality, and neighborhood infrastructure all contribute to these outcomes. For these reasons, remediation of contaminated land combined with the expansion of safe public space represents a meaningful upstream intervention that can improve long term health trajectories.

### **Equity and Access to Recreational Space**

In addition to these health indicators, equity in recreational access remains an important consideration. Although many New Haven residents live within walking distance of a park, disparities remain in the amount of park acreage and the quality of recreational space available in lower-income neighborhoods and communities of color. **Expanding high-quality, safe, and accessible recreational space directly addresses these inequities and supports healthier communities.**<sup>8,9</sup> As future uses of this site are evaluated, decisions should be guided by feasibility analysis, environmental standards, sustainability, and meaningful community engagement.

### **Philanthropic Investment and Community Confidence**

This project is further strengthened by the prospect of significant private and philanthropic partnership. Public reporting indicates that philanthropic funding of up to ten million dollars has been pledged toward potential recreational components associated with broader redevelopment

# CITY OF NEW HAVEN

## Health Department



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Justin Elicker, Mayor • Maritza Bond, MPH, Director of Health

concepts.<sup>10</sup> Any capital scope, long term operating sustainability, and maintenance planning should continue to be evaluated transparently through established municipal budgeting processes and phased implementation review.

### **Long Term Community Impact**

For decades, residents, advocates, preservationists, and elected leaders have invested a sustained effort in envisioning a better future for this site. Beyond the immediate benefits, research and practice consistently show that the redevelopment of long blighted industrial properties can catalyze neighborhood stabilization, economic activity, and improved environmental conditions. Transforming English Station into a public asset will restore waterfront access, improve environmental conditions, and provide lasting health and quality of life benefits for residents.

### **Conclusion**

In closing, the question before us is not simply whether to acquire a property. The question is whether we are willing to turn a thirty-year symbol of disinvestment into a generational investment in health, safety, and opportunity for New Haven residents. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to support this acquisition.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued service to the residents of New Haven.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Bond", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

**Maritza Bond, MPH, M.Div.**  
Director of Health  
City of New Haven

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## Endnotes and Sources

<sup>1</sup> Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council (CEEJAC) Members page (lists Maritza Bond, City of New Haven).

<sup>2</sup> Twohig-Bennett, C., & Jones, A. (2018). The health benefits of the great outdoors: A systematic review and meta-analysis of greenspace exposure and health outcomes. *Environmental Research*. Also WHO Regional Office for Europe (2016). *Urban green spaces and health*.

<sup>3</sup> New Haven Building Archive (Yale University). English Station overview (notes deactivation in 1992). See also CT Mirror reporting on plant powered down in 1992.

<sup>4</sup> CT Mirror. “Judge sends English Station cleanup dispute back to DEEP” (Aug. 1, 2025) and Connecticut Public reporting on PCB contamination (Aug. 5, 2025).

<sup>5</sup> Connecticut Mills: Making Places. United Illuminating Co., English Station (describes historical development and significance).

<sup>6</sup> City of New Haven. “Mayor Elicker Announces Proposal to Transform the Former English Station Power Plant Property into Mill River Park.” Press release (posted July 30, 2025).

<sup>7</sup> DataHaven. Asthma Rates (Greater New Haven public school districts; New Haven above 12%). See also Yale Law School GHJP issue brief, “Asthma: a health justice issue in New Haven” (2018).

<sup>8</sup> Trust for Public Land. New Haven ParkScore analysis (reports 96% of residents within a 10-minute walk to a park and discusses equity dimensions).

<sup>9</sup> CDC. Health Disparities in Drowning (updated Jan. 27, 2026) and CDC Vital Signs: Drowning Increases in the U.S. (June 18, 2024) documenting disparities and barriers to swim lessons.

<sup>10</sup> New Haven Independent. “English Station Park Pool Donor Emerges” (Jan. 12, 2026) describing philanthropic pledge toward aquatic and recreational components.

## **Written Testimony Supporting Acquisition and Redevelopment of the English Station Site**

*Chair Rodriguez and members of the Community Development Committee, I respectfully submit testimony in support of the proposed acquisition of the English Station properties at 510 and 510A Grand Avenue for redevelopment as a public park and community recreation space.*

As Director of Health for the City of New Haven, I offer this testimony from the perspective of population health, prevention, and environmental justice. I also speak as someone who was raised in this community and who has spent more than two decades working in public health, with a focus on prevention, environmental conditions, and health equity. This perspective expresses my strong support for this proposal.<sup>16</sup>

### **Professional Perspective and Public Health Mission**

The New Haven Health Department is responsible for protecting and improving the health of more than 130,000 residents through environmental health enforcement, school health, emergency preparedness, and community health initiatives. Our mission is to ensure that every resident has the opportunity to live in a safe, healthy, and equitable environment. The conditions in which people live, work, and play remain among the strongest predictors of long-term health outcomes, and this principle guides my testimony today.<sup>4</sup>

### **Historical Context of the Site**

To understand the public health significance of this proposal, it is important to consider the history of the English Station site. The English Station power plant was decommissioned in 1992 and has remained vacant and contaminated for more than three decades. During this period, surrounding neighborhoods, particularly Fair Haven and adjacent areas, have experienced limited access to the waterfront, continued environmental burden, and lost opportunities for safe recreational space. The prolonged vacancy of this industrial site represents not only a land use concern but also a longstanding environmental and community health issue.<sup>123</sup>

### **Public Health Evidence and Prevention**

Public health research consistently demonstrates that access to green space is associated with improved mental health, increased physical activity, reduced stress, and lower risk of cardiovascular disease and premature mortality. Accordingly, investments in remediation and accessible recreational environments function as evidence-based prevention strategies that support population health and long-term community well-being.<sup>34</sup>

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**Local Health Indicators and Environmental Conditions**

Local indicators further reinforce the importance of these investments in New Haven. Childhood asthma prevalence has historically exceeded statewide averages in several school populations, and respiratory illness remains a persistent concern in neighborhoods impacted by older housing stock, traffic corridors, and historic industrial activity. Environmental conditions, housing quality, and neighborhood infrastructure all contribute to these outcomes. For these reasons, remediation of contaminated land combined with the expansion of safe public space represents a meaningful upstream intervention that can improve long term health trajectories.<sup>35</sup>

### **Equity and Access to Recreational Space**

In addition to these health indicators, equity in recreational access remains an important consideration. Although many New Haven residents live within walking distance of a park, disparities remain in the amount of park acreage and the quality of recreational space available in lower-income neighborhoods and communities of color. Expanding high-quality, safe, and accessible recreational space directly addresses these inequities and supports healthier communities.<sup>6</sup>

### **Philanthropic Investment and Community Confidence<sup>8</sup>**

This project is further strengthened by significant external investment. Public reporting indicates that philanthropic funding of up to ten million dollars has been pledged toward the aquatic and recreational components of the park, demonstrating regional and philanthropic confidence in the long-term value of this redevelopment effort.<sup>78</sup>

### **Long Term Community Impact**

Beyond the immediate benefits, research and practice consistently show that the redevelopment of long blighted industrial properties can catalyze neighborhood stabilization, economic activity, and improved environmental conditions. Transforming English Station into a public asset will restore waterfront access, improve environmental conditions, and provide lasting health and quality of life benefits for residents.

### **Conclusion**

In closing, the question before us is not simply whether to acquire a property. The question is whether we are willing to turn a thirty-year symbol of disinvestment into a generational investment in health, safety, and opportunity for New Haven residents. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to support this acquisition.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued service to the residents of New Haven.

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Bond", is positioned above the typed name.

**Maritza Bond, MPH, M.Div.**  
Director of Health  
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<sup>8</sup> New Haven Independent. “English Station Park Pool Donor Emerges” (Jan. 12, 2026) describing philanthropic pledge toward aquatic and recreational components.

February 18, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Rodriguez, Co-Chair Douglass, and members of the Community Development Committee:

The coastline of New Haven sits along the Atlantic Flyway, one of the most significant migratory bird corridors in North America. Each year, migrating shorebirds, waterfowl, raptors, and songbirds rely on the waters and tidal habitats of the New Haven Harbor and the Mill River as critical stopover and feeding grounds. Nearby areas such as Lighthouse Point Park, City Point, and Sandy Point just over the border in West Haven, are well known for their importance to migrating species.

We should not grow numb to the presence of a polluted island in the middle of this ecosystem simply because it has been that way for decades. The former English Station site remains contaminated with PCBs and heavy metals, which are substances known to persist in sediments, accumulate in aquatic life, and pose risks to wildlife, water quality, and public health.

Supporting this legislation does not lock in a final outcome, it strengthens our ability to confront a long-standing environmental problem. Advancing it to the full Board creates additional avenues to examine, challenge, and ultimately address the contamination that has lingered for decades.

A yes vote expands the tools available to pursue accountability and remediation. It keeps open every possible pathway to finally tackle the standing pollution, rather than allowing it to remain untouched and unresolved.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to vote yes on LM-2026-0007 and allow this matter to move forward for further consideration.

Sincerely,  
Julian Hough  
80 Sea Street, New Haven

Dear Members of the Board of Alders Community Development Committee,

My name is Kimberly Acosta, and I am a lifelong resident of New Haven, spending my early years in the Hill neighborhood and the majority of my life in Fair Haven. I am testifying *against* item LM-2026-0007, for many reasons, but particularly because it has been clear from the very beginning that it was yet another decision in New Haven that is not by and for the community most impacted by it. To be frank, I believe that like the idea of a pool, this decision is already made, but I am hopeful that as elected officials, you will honor public sentiment over this administration's preferences.

From the very beginning, it was clear that the City was committed to creating a public park and pool regardless of residents' visions for the space. In fact, City staff mentioned at these meetings that the idea came from one person alone, and that the Mayor liked it, and that is why they were moving forward with it. In addition, they emphasized it as an opportunity to draw in people from outside of New Haven. While I am not opposed to that, I fervently believe that we should prioritize community development and economic opportunities for the people who already live here, and especially for the communities that have experienced the most disinvestment. Like other urban areas, we have a history of developing for everyone except these communities - and this could be our opportunity to do better.

The City has never allowed for any other vision to exist for this space. I've attended every meeting since the first one was made public. At every meeting, the City has tried to squash public feedback after their presentation, by forcing everyone to ask questions 1:1 or visit pre-established "stations" that limited feedback to commentary on their ideas - there was never an opportunity for residents to share any alternatives. In addition, they have added insult to injury through their survey, by limiting the feedback people could provide based on the questions they asked and never including in their presentations any critical feedback. Last but not least - the vast majority of people who attended all of these meetings were not Fair Haven residents, or residents of the wards closest to the site, and that says a lot.

The City has made every attempt to garner support for this idea to make it work, including but not limited to the following:

- Initially, they framed it as an opportunity to save the lives of Black and Brown children, who are more likely to drown...I won't go into that potential wormhole, but I will say, as a woman of color who grew up in the Hill and Fair Haven, and attended our public schools - the best way to do that would be to maintain, update, and re-open the pools that exist in nearly every community within our public schools, and to re-introduce swimming as part of our curriculum. If this is

about saving lives, that would be the most equitable and accessible approach to doing so. In addition, I would say it is concerning to want to develop a pool and greenspace for Black and Brown kids on severely contaminated land when those very same children are already at a disproportionate risk of health-related consequences of environmental contamination and injustice. Our children deserve better.

- Then, it was framed at the most recent meeting as a matter of park equity. Again, the best way to address park equity would be to maintain and improve the public green spaces that exist for the benefit of ALL residents. There have been perpetual issues with access to East Rock by people with limited mobility and disabilities. In addition, there have been issues with our domino players being able to use Criscuolo Park, albeit for different reasons. In summary, if this is about park equity - strengthen our parks. Do not spend an exorbitant amount of money trying to build a new one, again, on contaminated land.
- Last but not least, it was interesting to see the meeting held in another neighborhood to garner support. The reason the City said they did this is because it is a “City” or “Community Asset”, and proceeded to name other assets, such as the Q House and Lighthouse Park. Interestingly enough, I don’t believe I have ever seen another public meeting held for these “community assets” in a different neighborhood. To be clear, I think that is a process the City should move forward with, but I don’t believe it was done with the best intentions in this case.

Finally, the truth came out at the last meeting about what is truly driving this idea - the City wants to build a park and pool so they can create a new neighborhood around it. So, all along, that is what this has really been about - creating an opportunity for more development that will further displace our residents in the area. To be clear, we can have community development that benefits the residents who have stayed in New Haven despite the inequities and injustices they’ve experienced - because we are resilient. However, for that to happen, that has to be the goal, and it is very clear with this park that it has never been about how our community benefits. Please use your power as Alders to honor community wishes, and encourage this administration to do better.

Sincerely,

*Kimberly Acosta*

February 17, 2026

**Written Testimony Supporting Acquisition and Redevelopment of the English  
Station Site**

Dear Chairwoman Rodriguez and Members of the City of New Haven Board of Alders  
Community Development Committee,

My name is Brian Wnek, and I serve as the Environmental Health Program Director for  
the City of New Haven Health Department. I respectfully submit this letter in support of  
the proposal to acquire the English Station properties located at 510 and 510A Grand  
Avenue for purposes of public redevelopment.

The English Station site is a long-vacant industrial property. Properties of this nature  
commonly present recognized environmental health and safety considerations,  
including structural hazards, potential exposure pathways associated with legacy  
building materials, and conditions that may contribute to nuisance, illegal dumping, and  
vector harborage. Systematic evaluation and control of such conditions are consistent  
with established environmental health practice and the preventive public health  
responsibilities of municipal government.

Acquisition of the properties would enable the City to conduct environmental due  
diligence consistent with prevailing federal and Connecticut redevelopment standards,  
including Phase I Environmental Site Assessment procedures and, where warranted,  
additional investigation. These practices align with the risk identification and liability  
management framework reflected in the Connecticut Property Transfer Act (CGS §22a-  
134 et seq.) and related state-level environmental review mechanisms governing  
historically industrial establishments and sites.

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Public control of the site further supports coordination with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) regarding any necessary characterization, remediation, or risk-based corrective actions. Such an approach is consistent with Connecticut's established policies encouraging the responsible reuse of potentially impacted properties through assessment, remediation, and long-term risk management.

From a municipal public health perspective, site acquisition and redevelopment are also consistent with the City's authority and obligations under the Connecticut General Statutes, including statutory provisions governing local health departments (CGS §19a-207) and municipal abatement of hazardous and nuisance conditions. Proactive site management reduces the likelihood of unmanaged environmental hazards and supports compatible future land use that protects community health and safety.

The productive reuse of distressed or underutilized industrial parcels for public purposes is supported by well-recognized public health, environmental, and neighborhood stabilization considerations. Redevelopment of this site offers an opportunity to reduce blight, improve environmental quality, and advance community development objectives aligned with sound environmental stewardship principles.

From a public health, environmental risk management, and statutory compliance perspective, site acquisition and responsible redevelopment represent a prudent, evidence-based, and policy-consistent course of action.

For these reasons, I respectfully support advancing this proposal.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued service to the residents of New Haven.

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Justin Elicker, Mayor • Maritza Bond, MPH, Director of Health

Sincerely,

*Brian Wnek*

Brian Wnek, MPH, REHS/RS  
Program Director of Environmental Health  
New Haven Health Department

**Public Testimony | A Better Plan for Ball Island | *We do not yet have data or demand to dig out heavily polluted dirt to create a seasonal swimming space.***

**2.18.26**

My name is David Weinreb, I reside at 51 Perkins Street in Fair Haven, a former Fair Haven School bilingual educator, an aspiring school leader currently working as the Magnet Resource Teacher at Elm City Montessori School, and the Ward 14 Co-Chair. I submit this testimony in opposition to the plan to replace the power plant with the pool.

I do feel open to the city acquiring Ball Island. The Fair Haven Community Management Team has invited UI and other relevant stakeholders to come present; they never did. I have never seen any showcase of care or interest from the current owners in the wellbeing of the neighborhood or its neighbors. So if the city thinks it's got a way to remediate, it wants to and feels like it can take on this mega project and do so responsibly, to make this place clean and useful to the city and specifically Fair Haven, then we should talk about it! But that's not yet how it's felt. And I think how it feels, matters. There are ways to engage in methodical community-led process. I remember a summertime Parks & Rec party at Clinton Ave school where I was being asked questions about a plan that felt already-baked. I see big printed promo flyers, albeit with question marks, posted up around our cities. But we can do better. If you lean on the Fair Haven community, we can help steward this process.

But I'd like to center my testimony on pools. I love our city pools, or at least I love what they could be. I have harangued parks and recreation staff for not updating their website with open swim hours, I have encouraged the city communications team to more publicly promote these incredible resources, lifeguard Brian and his team over at Martinez are incredibly kind and welcoming. The thing is, unfortunately, no one is there. I'd ask alders and folks present in these chambers, have you swam in our pools? Our pools, which I think are in beautiful places, are open year-round, are currently empty. Last summer, I would personally bring half the Hillhouse pool swimmers on Wednesday nights. Two weeks ago, I hosted my one year old's birthday party at Martinez on a Saturday - we were the only guests there. And of course, there are 3 other public pools that are currently out-of-order. I am pro-swimming, I am pro-pools, but I strongly urge the city, and all of us, to promote the use of our current pools. If you get out of here early enough you could even go take a dip yourself, open swim hours are every Wednesday at Hillhouse and Martinez 5-8PM. We do not yet have data or demand to dig out heavily polluted dirt to create a seasonal swimming space.

Thank you for your time, attention, and consideration. I am available for any questions.

David Weinreb | Pronouns: he/him/his ([what is this?](#)) | [davidjweinreb@gmail.com](mailto:davidjweinreb@gmail.com) | 914-393-7671

**Jordan Sorensen**  
**45 Horsley Avenue**  
**New Haven, CT**

**Opposition to the acquisition of Ball Island/English Station**

**TO: The Board of Alders Community Development Committee**

Dear Committee Members,

I'm writing to oppose the city's acquisition of Ball Island/English Station as the first step to eventual demolition of this historic resource. First and foremost, the proper planning of such an endeavor has not been thought out and detailed to the public. The option for reusing this property has been ignored, even when other cities have reused similar buildings in remarkable ways. It's irresponsible not to properly explore all options when planning such a large project, especially when it's likely to be less expensive to rehabilitate the building rather than remediate it, demolish it, and install a pool. **The waste that will result from demolition of this building would be a shameful stain on the city.** There must be a compromise.

Furthermore, my son attends Conte West Hills School in Wooster Square and it's **absolutely disgraceful that the pool in that school has not been fixed in at least the three years he has been there.** What a missed opportunity not to fix what we already have and rather be looking into constructing more with taxpayer dollars. The city needs to pause and assess how **existing infrastructure can be fixed for the people who are already needing it** before acting on expensive and outlandish ideas.

Sincerely,

Jordan Sorensen

My name is Manmita Dutta. I am a resident and taxpayer in New Haven, and I'm here today in strong support of the proposal to acquire Ball Island and transform the former English Station power plant site into Mill River Park.

I'm supporting this proposal for four reasons.

First, environmental justice. For nearly 100 years, this site has blocked New Haven residents from their own waterfront. Families in nearby neighborhoods have had to live next to a blighted, contaminated industrial site. Environmental justice means we stop asking working-class communities to live with toxic leftovers. It means we clean this land up, restore it, and return it to the public as something safe, healthy, and beautiful.

Second, equity and water safety. Swimming is a life-saving skill, and a public pool is not a luxury. Drowning is one of the leading causes of death for children. When families don't have safe, affordable places to swim, they also lose access to swim lessons - and that can have tragic consequences. Cities deserve public pools just like suburbs do. For decades, suburban communities invested in pools and private swim clubs while many urban public pools declined. That created a two-tier system, and New Haven should not be asked to live with less.

Third, this park will help kids get offline. In the summer, families need safe places where children can be active, healthy, and connected - without a screen. A waterfront park and pool mean joy, movement, and community -- a shared civic space for families who can't afford private clubs or summer travel.

Finally, this is about economic revival. A premier riverfront park can help spark responsible development - new housing, new businesses, and more foot traffic for nearby corridors like Grand Avenue. It improves quality of life, strengthens the Mill River district, and supports the city's long-term tax base - helping fund the priorities we all care about.

Simply put, this is not an either/or. We can meet essential needs and also invest in public spaces that uplift working families. This is how we turn a symbol of industrial neglect into a symbol of shared prosperity. I urge you to support the City's acquisition of Ball Island to allow for its redevelopment into Mill River Park and invite residents to help shape a waterfront that finally belongs to everyone.

## **Testimony in support of the City of New Haven acquiring 510 and 510A Grand Avenue**

Chair Rodriguez and members of the Community Development Committee,

As a resident of Fair Haven, I write in strong support of the City of New Haven's efforts to acquire the site of English Station and convert it into a community asset. English station closed operations in 1992, two years prior to my birth. Since then it has languished in a state of disrepair while private companies continually pass the buck on any meaningful action. Before you today is the opportunity to put right over three decades of neglect.

I support the city's efforts both as a resident who drove past that monument of decay every single day for years on my way to and from work, and as someone who works in government and knows how projects like this get solved. Should you choose not to pass this ordinance today I know the years it may add to any meaningful action taking place, and how Ball Island will remain both an eyesore and a contaminant instead of what it should be which is a tremendous community asset.

I am confused by suggestions that salvaging the building is either possible or desirable. It's not only horrifically contaminated, it isn't some architectural or historical marvel to begin with. It was a fairly unattractive building when it was opened in 1929 and no amount of money is going to turn it into some great wonder. It's also so vastly more expensive to even attempt to undertake that I'd rather our dollars go to maintaining and improving things that are actual community assets.

I respect that there are some in my neighborhood that would like to see this preserved, and their voices are certainly valuable in considering this. But from a practical perspective English Station is never going to be brought to a state of good repair. We can either let the city actually do something about it or wait another 30+ years and have this debate all over again. I ask that you take action.

Thank you very much for your consideration and the work you do for our city.

Respectfully,

Kevin Alvarez  
98 Clinton Ave