



DEPARTMENT OF PARKS
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Justin Elicker
Mayor

September 26, 2024
Honorable Tyisha Walker-Myers
Board of Alders of the City of New Haven
165 Church Street
New Haven, CT 06510

Dear President Walker-Myers:

Enclosed please find for your consideration the attached resolution authorizing the application for technical assistance for the Trust for Public Land's "Park Equity Accelerator" Program. The Trust for Public Land is a national non-profit organization who helps municipalities to increase access to nature and the outdoors while also providing resources to help improve park systems and services to the community. In recent years the Trust for Public Land worked with locally based organizations such as Urban Resources Initiative on research and data collection of the City's Park system as part of their "Park Score" program.

On September 18, 2024, the Parks Commission unanimously approved moving forward with an application for the Park Equity Accelerator Program. The need to formulate a comprehensive strategy to increase resources as well as coordination with the community on improving the park system was emphasized. To achieve these goals the Park Equity Accelerator aims to:

- Identify public finance policies, conservation finance measures, and/or long-term funding mechanisms that can be leveraged to support system-wide change for New Haven parks.
- Cultivate a network of City and community stakeholders to support park advocacy and stewardship.
- Partner with developers to better integrate land use planning, housing, and public space goals.
- Develop a strategy for maximizing use of transit infrastructure and "interstitial" lands as public realm.
- Analyze the existing City network of parks and public spaces to determine potential gaps or shortfalls in access, program, or amenities for residents.

We appreciate the advice, guidance and support provided by the Board of Alders, and feel the Park Equity Accelerator will further efforts to reinvigorate the current organizational structure and positively impact the park system through benchmarking and best practice recommendations, co-creation of customized solutions including planning support (such as park conditions assessments, surveying, and GIS/mapping to support implementation. The City's commitment to celebrate, enhance and maintain high-quality parks for all its residents and visitors is paramount.

The program, if approved, would be slated to start in 2025 and take approximately (9) nine months to complete. The program would be provided at no cost to the City, but would require both City staff time as well as involve public engagement efforts with community stakeholders.

Respectfully,

Stephen T. Hladun,
Deputy Director, Parks Department