

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

RE: **PETITION TO AMEND THE NEW HAVEN ZONING ORDINANCE MAP** to change the zoning designation of 18 Tower Lane and 1B Tower Lane from Planned Development District #15 to BD-3 Central Business/Mixed-Use District.
Owner/Applicant: Gustave Keach-Longo, New Haven Jewish Community Council Housing Corporation)

REPORT: 1677-02
ADVICE: Approval

PROJECT ADDRESSES:

- 18 Tower Lane (Map/Block/Parcel 238/0110/00400)
- 1B Tower Lane (Map/Block/Parcel 239/0110/00402)

APPLICANT/OWNER:

Gustave Keach-Longo
New Haven Jewish Community Council Housing Corporation

SUBMISSION:

This petition for this ordinance amendment was dated for and received at the January 5, 2026 Board of Alders meeting. Legistar File ID: LM-2025-0675. The submission included:

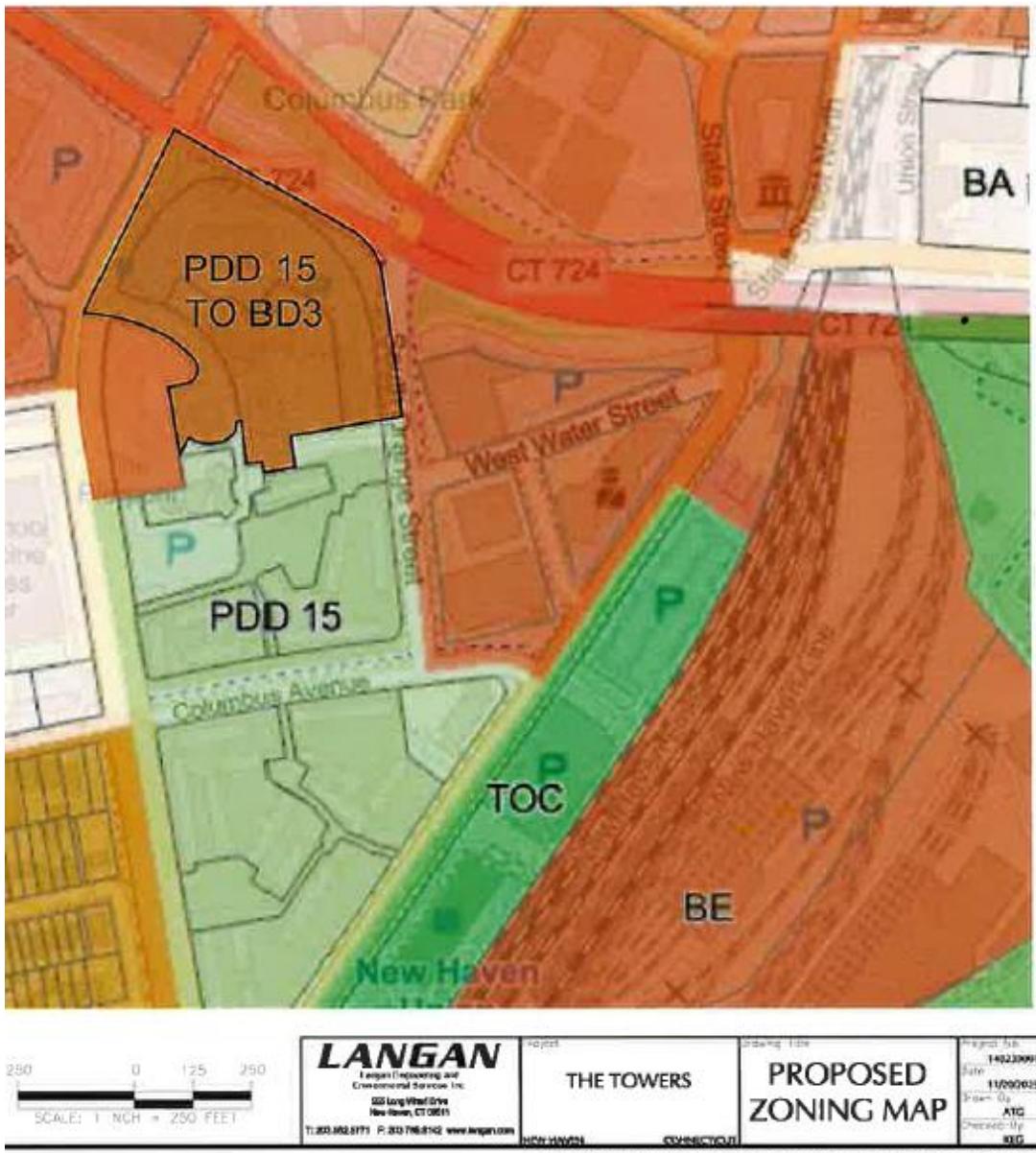
- Submission checklist form
- Fiscal impact statement
- Prior notification form
- Cover Letter
- Signed Petition including:
 - Attachment A: Petition for Zoning Map Amendment
 - Attachment B Proposed Ordinance for Zoning Map Amendment
 - Attachment C: Existing and Proposed Zoning Maps
 - Attachment D: Legal Description of Parcels to be Re-Zoned
- Filing fee

BACKGROUND AND PDD HISTORY

18 Tower Lane consists of two parcels and encompasses an area of approximately 4.4 acres. The parcels are Map/Block/Parcel 239/0110/00402 situated on the south side of South Frontage Road (Route 34) and bounded to the west by Church Street South, Tower Lane and South Orange Street and Map/Block/Parcel 238/0110/00400 on the east side of Tower Lane and bounded by Map/Block/Parcel 239/0110/00402 parcel to the north owned by the New Haven Jewish Community Council Housing Corporation.

The parcels described are occupied by two residential Senior Living Apartment high-rise buildings called “The Towers at Tower Lane.” One building is a 21-story tower (“Tower One”) and the second is a 13-story tower (“Tower East.”) The site also includes a yard and a paved parking area. The facility is a 54-year-old independent and assisted living community which serves low income, very low income and moderate-income elderly residents and provides care services.

These parcels are part of existing Planned Development District 15 (PDD 15). The existing PDD is in the Hill neighborhood and is bounded by South Frontage Road (Route 34) to the north, Church Street South to the west, Union Avenue to the south and South Orange Street to the east. The PDD is bisected by Columbus Avenue. The parcels are part of the northern third of the existing PDD.



Planned Development District 15 - Church Street South

The Church Street South Planned Development District (PDD) #15 is an approximately 15-acre mixed-use area in the Hill neighborhood bounded by Union Avenue, South Orange Street, South Frontage Road (Route 34), and Church Street South. The area currently contains vacant land where Church Street South was situated, and high-rise residential towers, including Tower One and Tower East, which primarily serve elderly and moderate-income residents. Residential development includes courtyards, landscaped open spaces, pedestrian walkways, and internal

streets part of the Robert T. Wolfe apartments operated by Elm City Communities fronting on Union Ave. Institutional facilities in the district include the Greek Orthodox Church (St. Basil's). The parcel known as 9 Tower Lane was removed from the PDD in 1989.

Prior to Redevelopment, the area around including the parcels in PDD 15 played an important role in New Haven's early economic history providing blocks of row houses for primarily immigrant families and an array of local shops, bakeries, and family-owned businesses that served the neighborhood. As factories closed and the manufacturing economy shifted through the late 20th century, buildings fell into decline and neighborhoods in this area became less cohesive.

PDD #15 was adopted by the Board of Alders in 1967 with the purpose of establishing low-income multifamily housing as part of the Church Street Redevelopment and Renewal Project. The original project area was bounded by Church Street Extension, the Oak Street Connector (South Frontage Road), South Orange Street, and Union Avenue "known as Church Street South." The project consisting of 30 buildings of low-income housing was constructed in 1969 ultimately housing approximately 260 families. In 2008 Northland Investment Corporation purchased the property from the existing owner, The Community Builders. After years of ongoing structural issues, the project was demolished in 2018 to make way for a newly visioned mixed-use development. In 2023 Elm City Communities (ECC, the Housing Authority of New Haven), with the Glendower Group, (the development arm of ECC) purchased most the parcels on the Church Street South, PDD #15. Elm City Communities, in partnership with the City of New Haven, received a grant to initiate the Union Square Choice Neighborhood Planning process through HUD from 2023 to 2025 <https://unionsquarechoice.com/>

There have been numerous amendments to the PDD as detailed below primarily to accommodate ongoing developments of the Towers buildings by the New Haven Jewish Community Council and the Greek Community Church (Saint Basil's) ongoing developments of the Towers buildings by the New Haven Jewish Community Council and the Greek Community Church (St. Basil's).

Date	CPC Meeting / Report No.	Action Taken
August 1, 1967	621-01A	Amendment to change the BE zone to the RH-2 zone for Parcels J, K, and L
August 1, 1967	621-01B	Initial approval of Planned Development District #15 (Church Street South).
March 5, 1968	654-01	Amendment approving inclusion of Tower One within PDD #15.
September 30, 1968	644-06	Amendment to PDD #15 reducing overall project size.
November 30, 1971	687-01	Revision to PDD permitting commercial space, daycare, and 12 residential units.
December 16, 1983	952-01	Action related to Church Street South Housing Finance Corporation (Tower One).
June 20, 1984	968-11	Detailed Plan Review (primarily landscape-related comments).
August 17, 1988	1072-04 / 1072-02	Approval of Land Disposition Agreement (LDA) to the New Haven Greek Community and PDD amendment to permit church and related uses.

April 5, 1989	1088-01 / 1088-02	Amendment to PDD deleting parcel K-1 and approving mixed-use commercial/residential plans.
July 19, 1989	1094-24	City Site Plan Review (CSPR) and Detailed Plan Review (DPR) for Greek Community development (K-1-B and K-2).
July 31, 1991	1135-21	Revised DPR and CSPR approval with NHRA advisory input for Greek Community facilities.
February 19, 1992	1143-08	Detailed Plan Review approval for church construction.
May 20, 1992	1148-06	Minor modification approval for Tower One (accessory commercial use).
September 16, 1992	1151-12	Administrative approval for change in utility vault location.
May 12, 1994	1176-10	DPR approval for Tower One parking lot and related minor modifications.
June 15, 1994	1177-05	Amendment to Land Disposition Agreement for K-1-B parcel.
September 22, 1999	1278-19	Approval of Section 108 Loan (\$10.5 million) with HUD guarantee supporting PDD development.
May 31, 2002	<i>Administrative</i>	Modification for accessibility improvements (no CPC meeting number noted).
December 16, 2009	<i>Administrative</i>	Approval for addition to the Greek Orthodox Church within the PDD.
December 15, 2015	<i>Administrative</i>	Lot split approved to facilitate a 4,300 sq. ft. addition to St. Basil's Church.

PROPOSED ZONING – Business D-3 Districts—Central Business/Mixed-Use (BD-3)

The applicant proposes to rezone two parcels 18 Tower Lane (Map/Block/Parcel 238/0110/00400) and 18 Tower Lane (Map/Block/Parcel 239/0110/00402) as shown in the map below, from Planned Development District #15 to the BD-3 Zone to support the construction of a new building to be known as Tower Three to include 140-220 residential units. The applicant states "Tower Three will provide additional assisted living and support services for elderly and other low- and moderate-income residents."

The applicant states that the rezoning is needed to accommodate the new Tower Three Building and, in particular, to amend the required open space. Section 65 of the Zoning Ordinance requires 250 square feet per dwelling unit and 125 square feet for each elderly dwelling unit. Amendments made to the PDD allowed the open space requirement to be met on parcels that are not part of this proposal. The applicant states "*Prior to the demolition of the Church Street South Project, a substantial amount of the open space required for Tower One and Tower East was located on the Church Street South Project site that was also part of PDD #15. Now that the Church Street South Project has been demolished, the open space available and attributed to The Towers no longer exists {such land will be used for the Union Square Project}*". If the Planned Development for The Towers properties remained in place there would be additional open space required for the new 140-200 units that will be constructed in Tower Three that is not available on The Towers' properties or elsewhere in PDD#15.

The applicant further states that “*The BD-3 District permits residential and assisted living units as a matter of right, allows for dense development, provides for appropriate open space, and permits a mixed-use development, which Tower Three will be.*”

The current owner of the remaining parcels in PDD #15, Elm City Communities and the City of New Haven, have concurrently applied in a separate application for a rezone of those parcels out of the PDD to the newly established Transit Orientated Community Zone. Should both of these zone changes be enacted this would effectively terminate the PDD.

Per the New Haven zoning ordinance, the BD-3 zone (*Central Business/Mixed-Use Zone*) is characterized as “*districts in the urban core reserved for intensive development, including multi-story and mid- and high-rise buildings. They provide for mixed uses, including hospital outpatient clinics, other medical clinics, biotechnology research centers, high and medium density residences, offices, and commercial uses, including retail shops and restaurants. These districts also connect the city's central business and medical and educational districts with each other and with the city's transportation center at Union Station. The Central Business/Mixed-Use Districts are pedestrian, bicycle and transit friendly. Uses on the ground floors of nonresidential and mixed-use buildings that face public rights-of-way in these districts should include retail and active uses that are in part or in whole transparent from sidewalks and streets.*”

Zoning Table – Comparison of Bulk, Yard, Density, and Parking Regulations

The table below demonstrates the differences in zoning regulations between the original underlying zone that the existing PDD varies from (the RH-2 zone), the existing enacted PDD, and the proposed BD-3 zone.

Standard	RH-2 in Aug 1967 Underlying Zoning	PDD 15 Approved Variation of Underlying Zoning	BD-3 Proposed Zoning
Maximum Density of Units per Lot Area	One unit per 2,000 sq ft	One unit per 1,010 sq ft	N/A
Maximum Density of Units per Gross Area of the Building	N/A	N/A	One unit per 1,000 sq ft ¹
Maximum Building Coverage	30%	40.4%	No direct limit
Maximum Gross Floor Area (Floor Area Ratio – FAR)	0.5 to 1.7 (depending on building coverage)	1.03 to 1.89	6.0
Front Yard Setback	17-25 ft	3-5 ft	No front yard required with exceptions ²
Side Yard Setback	One side at least 8 ft; other side at least 10 ft	0 ft; 5 ft for the side containing the “Dining Area”	No side yard required with exceptions ²
Rear Yard Setback	25 ft	No variation from RH-2	No rear yard required with exceptions ²

Accessory Buildings in Required Yards		Permitted with a minimum of 5 ft from the lot line	No minimum	Same yard regulations as principal buildings apply
Covered Front Yard Parking		Permitted by Special Exception	“Requested” (as stated in PDD materials)	N/A
Distance Between Facing Walls of Two Garden Apartments	Both walls contain windows	50 ft	28 ft	N/A
	One wall contains windows	20 ft	9 ft	
Distance Between Facing Walls of Other Residential Principal Buildings	Both walls contain windows	41 ft	27 ft	N/A
	One wall contains windows	27 ft	14 ft	
Projection into Corner Visibility Area		Not Permitted	Permitted up to 4 ft	Not Permitted
Maximum Building Height – Tower		110 feet	224 ft	No limit on building height
Maximum Building Height – Dining / Low-Rise Areas		40 feet	Up to 72 feet	N/A
Minimum Parking		108 parking spaces (a ratio standard is not provided)	45 parking spaces	0.5 spaces per dwelling unit; 0.33 per Assisted Living and Elderly Housing dwelling unit
Minimum Open Space per Dwelling Unit		250 sq ft / 125 ft for elderly units	Approx. 351 sq ft	50 sq ft with exceptions ³

Notes

1. Specified in Use Regulations – Section 42, Table 3, Use Table, A (Residential Uses).
2. In the BD-3 zone, there must be a minimum of 15 ft of unobstructed land from the ground up on which no structures shall be located between the outer face of a building foundation wall at grade of a principal building that fronts on a street and the curb of such street – Section 43(g)(4) (Yard Regulations). Additionally, in the BD-3 District, when a mixed use or a residential principal building which is four stories or less, contains one or more windows that face a nonresidential building on the same lot, there shall be a minimum of ten feet of unobstructed land from the ground up between the nonresidential building and the residential principal building or mixed-use building. If such residential principal building or such mixed-use building faces a nonresidential building on

an adjacent lot or faces an adjacent vacant lot, then there shall be a minimum ten-foot side or rear yard (as the case may be) on the lot on which such residential principal building or mixed-use building is located facing the adjacent lot.

3. If any point on the lot upon which the mixed-use building or the residential principal building is situated is located within a 1,000-foot radius of publicly accessible usable open space, then a minimum of 25 square feet of usable open space per dwelling unit shall be required.

Zoning Table – Comparison of Relevant Use Regulations

Use	RH-2 in Aug 1967 <i>Underlying Zoning</i>	PDD 15	BD-3 <i>Proposed Zoning</i>
Dwelling Units	Permitted As-of-Right	Permitted As-of-Right	Permitted As-of-Right (<i>above ground floor</i>) Permitted by Special Permit (<i>ground floor in combination with upper story dwelling units</i>)
Assisted Living, Elderly and Disabled Housing	Permitted As-of-Right	Permitted As-of-Right	Permitted As-of-Right
Retail	Permitted As-of-Right (<i>limited to accessory use</i>)	Permitted As-of-Right (<i>PDD materials only specify ground floor use</i>)	Permitted As-of-Right (<i>majority of retail uses</i>)
Community Center	Permitted by Special Exception	Permitted As-of-Right	Permitted by Special Exception

PUBLIC HEARING

A Public Hearing was held by the City Plan Commission on January 27, 2026. A transcript of the hearing, meeting #1677, will be available from the City Plan Department.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Given the long history of PDD #15, it is not surprising the City's approach to land uses in this area have changed significantly since its inception. In spite of the many changes to the PDD over the years, it still codifies the autocentric redevelopment era approach to housing and mixed-use development on these parcels. Previous zoning approaches failed to capitalize on the unique location of this land adjacent to one of the busiest public transit hubs in New England, nearby many of the City's amenities and at the junction of several established neighborhoods.

This application aligns with the City's Plan of Conservation and Development, New Haven Vision 2034 (2025), the recently adopted Union Square Choice Neighborhood Transformation Plan (2025) goals in the Hill to Downtown Community Plan (2014).

NEW HAVEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: SUBMISSION MEETS REQUIREMENTS

The City of New Haven's Vision 2034 Comprehensive plan emphasizes the need for greater housing development city-wide. The proposed zoning amendment aligns with several goals found in the Great Places to Live focus area, which are noted below. As referenced in the applicant's narrative,

the proposal would further Goal 7 of this focus area by greatly increasing the number of affordable housing units with long term care services. The added capacity for seniors assisted living allows more New Haven residents to age in place, embodying strategy 6.1. These efforts also support related goals in this focus area, such as promoting mixed use development. Overall, staff find the proposed amendment to be consistent with the goals of the comprehensive plan.

New Haven Vision 2034, Goals addressed by this project include:

Great Places to Live

Goal 1: Increase the number of deeply affordable housing units.

Goal 2: Increase housing supply.

- Strategy 2.2: Amend ordinances and policies to better support housing development.
- Strategy 2.6: Support collaboration and partnerships between organizations that provide housing and neighborhood resources.

Goal 5: Support place-based programs, policies, and improvements that align with the unique assets and goals of each neighborhood and residents' quality of life.

- Support mixed-use development and ensure that such development is sensitive to the neighborhood.

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

- Strategy 6.1: Pursue necessary zoning amendments to promote aging in place.

Goal 7: Improve access to housing resources and support for tenants and current and prospective homeowners.

- Strategy 7.6: Encourage or prioritize projects that combine affordable housing with long-term care services, such as a Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) or state-assisted living programs to enable older residents to age in place while receiving coordinated care and services.

Choice Neighborhood Transformation Plan

The Union Square Choice Neighborhood Transformation Plan sets several goals for the revitalization of the Union Square Neighborhood. These goals were developed based on extensive community outreach and were drafted to ensure Union Square becomes a thriving, equitable, and resilient community. The goals are grouped into three categories: People, Neighborhood, and Housing. Staff have identified areas where the proposed zoning amendment aligns with the goals of the Choice Neighborhood Plan. Overall, the proposal furthers several of the housing goals in the plan by allowing greater development of the subject parcels for assisted living housing. It strengthens the neighborhood through greater density and place making, and through the development of quality affordable units. Lastly, it will generate jobs through the construction phases of the forthcoming tower, and the long term uses that will establish themselves in the mixed-use portions of the development.

People

- Goal 5: Foster job creation and economic development.

Neighborhood

- Goal 2: Make sure the neighborhood's public places support wellness, safety, and economic mobility.
- Goal 4: Increase the supply of affordable and high-quality homes for homeowners and renters who want to stay here.

Housing

- Goal 2: Provide affordable, safe, and high-quality housing choices.
 - Strategy 2.1 Provide diverse housing options: townhouse-style homes and tall apartment buildings
- Goal 4: Offer amenities for community gatherings, social support, and recreation.
 - Strategy 4.2 Promote new housing development for all ages and family types, especially on underutilized land and at neighborhood hubs
- Goal 5: Design spaces for retail and commercial development.
- Goal 6: Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization.

Hill-to-Downtown Community Plan (Adopted November 2014)

The Hill-to-Downtown Community Plan emphasizes the need for an organic connection between the Hill Neighborhood and Downtown. This connection must be growth based, including the development of high-quality housing that accommodates a wide range of incomes, places that serve the social needs of residents, and businesses that serve economic needs of the community. All these initiatives work towards a community vision of a vibrant, walkable, mixed-use district. The intent of this application is to facilitate development of mixed use “Tower Three” designed to accommodate 150-200 assisted living dwelling units. This project would greatly increase the density of the rezoned parcels and support the assisted living community in both existing towers. In short, the proposed text and map amendments aligns with the following goals explicitly referenced in the Community Plan:

- Encourage Development of Commercial, Residential, and Retail Space in the Areas Around Union Station and within the Medical District Areas.
- Strengthen the Existing Neighborhood.
- Improve Connectivity within the District and to Downtown
- Expand the City’s Tax Base

CITY CHARTER AND ZONING ORDINANCE CRITERIA

Sections(s) 181 and 182 of the Charter of The City of New Haven

The City Plan Commission finds that, based on submitted information, the proposed zoning ordinance amendment complies with Sections 181 and 182 of the Charter of the City of New Haven in that it is:

- (i.) uniform for each class of buildings or structures,
- (ii.) made in accordance with the comprehensive plan,
- (iii.) designed to lessen congestion in the streets, secure safety from fire, panic and other dangers, promote health and the general welfare, provide adequate light and air, prevent the overcrowding of land, avoid undue concentration of population, facilitate

the adequate provisions for transportation, water, sewerage, parks and other public requirements, and

(iv.) made with reasonable consideration, as to the character of the proposed district and its peculiar suitability for particular uses, and with a view to conserving the value of buildings and encouraging the most appropriate use of land throughout the City.

Section 64(d)(2)c of the New Haven Zoning Ordinance

Section 64(d)(2) requires that the City Plan Commission take the following into consideration in evaluating any amendment to the text of the Zoning Ordinance and the Zoning Map:

a. Errors in the existing ordinance, changes that have taken place in the city and in patterns of construction and land use, the supply of land and its peculiar suitability for various purposes, the effect of a map change on the surrounding area, the purposes of zoning and the comprehensive plan of the City of New Haven:

Since the approval of the subject PDD, there has been increased need for housing throughout New Haven, especially for elderly residents seeking independent and supportive living options. The surrounding area has also been rezoned to the BD-3 zone to the northwest of these parcels as part of work to support mixed-use development between Downtown New Haven and Union Station. The mapping of the Transit-Oriented Community (TOC) zone and the adoption and mapping of the Downtown for All Overlay District in this surrounding area has further indicated a plan for increased residential and mixed-use development in support of greater housing and economic opportunity.

These parcels were once part of the BE zone (Wholesale and Distribution) and were rezoned to the RH-2 zone in the same City Plan Commission meeting (August 1967) at which these parcels were then added into PDD 15. The intent of that rezoning was to support more viable and necessary residential development in a formerly industrial part of the city. The proposed map change continues that intent and further applies different open space regulations that help maximize the development of elderly housing on this site in ways that the current PDD and underlying RH-2 zone prohibit.

b. Whether some other method or procedure under the zoning ordinance is more appropriate:

The proposed ordinance map amendment is the most appropriate method to support the development of a residential tower within this area. It reflects a continuation of abutting zoning districts that are in keeping with the City's comprehensive plan and desired development patterns.

Additionally, because this PDD includes parcels meant for two future proposed projects (Tower Three by this proponent, and Union Square by the Housing Authority of New Haven as described in report 1677-01), an amendment to the existing PDD would be insufficient as it would make it difficult for two different residential and mixed-use development projects to proceed without conflicting regulatory pathways.

c . In the case of a map change, the size of the area involved. As a general policy, the City Plan Commission shall not consider favorably any petition which would result in a total contiguous area (separated only by streets, and excluding the area of streets) of less than two acres in the

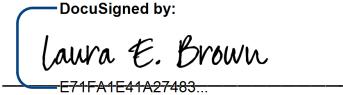
case of a residence district, less than one acre in the case of a Business District, or less than four acres in the case of an Industrial District:

The contiguous area of the proposed ordinance map amendment exceeds the required minimum at a total size of 4.5 acres.

FINDINGS AND ADVICE

Based on the above it is the recommendation of the Commission that the proposed map amendment is in full compliance with the standards and requirements of Section(s) 181 and 182 of the Charter of the City of New Haven and Section 64(d)(2) of the New Haven Zoning Ordinance and should be **approved**.

ADOPTED: January 27, 2026
Ernest Pagan
Chair

ATTEST: 
Laura E. Brown
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Laura E Brown
Executive Director, City Plan Department