



**MAYOR JUSTIN M. ELICKER**  
**CITY OF NEW HAVEN**

February 27, 2026

My fellow residents,

In accordance with our City Charter, I'm pleased to submit my proposed city budget for the Fiscal Year 2026-27. This proposed **\$733 million budget** represents a 4.4 percent increase, or \$31 million, from last year's General Fund budget and responsibly builds upon our previous six consecutive years of balanced budgets.

It's a budget that continues to provide our residents with critical city services and programs they need and deserve. It's a budget that covers our rising fixed costs and avoids budget gimmicks that pass hidden financial burdens onto the next generation. It's a budget that protects the city's long-term financial health and continues to chip away at paying down past I.O.U.'s when our city lived beyond its means. Finally, it's a budget that's anchored in our values and seeks to promote a high quality of life for our residents.

Thankfully, our city's continued growth – including new housing and development that grew our taxable Grand List by 2.5 percent – has helped add new vitality to our city and generated new revenue to maintain a lower tax burden than would otherwise be the case. However, we also face several financial pressures, including the winding down of federal grant funds and other federal cuts that require us to transition several previously federally funded initiatives to the city's budget. In addition, the state's education formula still has not increased the per student foundation level contribution since 2013, as educational needs and associated costs continue to rise.

Similar to last year, these pressures require us to make much more limited, strategic investments towards important city priorities, which include:

- **Education:** Investing an additional \$5 million to New Haven Public Schools to fund essential educational services as well as an additional \$1 million to support the continuation of the New Haven Tutoring Initiative to support struggling students who need a helping hand in reading and math.
- **Parks and Climate:** Supporting the hiring of three new parks positions, including two to staff the new Long Wharf Park and Waterfront (similar to how we staff Lighthouse Point Park) and one field technician to help us better care for and maintain our athletic facilities for our youth. In addition, we are prioritizing work on climate change by transitioning our Office of Climate and Sustainability from federal funds to city funds.
- **Seniors:** Supporting the hiring of a new Elderly Services specialist for the Hill neighborhood, where we will be opening the new Trowbridge Youth and Community Center this year that will also house a senior center.
- **Vulnerable residents:** Supporting the continuation of Elm City C.O.M.P.A.S.S. program and the Foxon Boulevard Emergency Shelter that care for individuals experiencing homelessness, substance use disorders and chronic mental health challenges.

To meet all our existing financial obligations and these priorities, I am proposing a 1.58 mill rate (4.01 percent) increase, bringing our mill rate from 39.4 to 40.98. We work hard to balance the services residents demand with our ability to pay for them – and aim to keep any tax increase at the rate of inflation. To this end, our tax rate remains lower than many other Connecticut cities, including those of similar size (like Bridgeport, Waterbury, and Hartford) and those in the area (like Hamden). In addition, the city is also in ongoing negotiations with Yale University regarding their voluntary

contribution and I hope to have more to report soon on an increased commitment that allows us to reduce the proposed mill rate and potential tax burden on individual residents further and help pay for essential city services.

I look forward to engaging with you and the Board of Alders as we work together to finalize our city's budget and chart a path forward of that supports our continued growth, funds our priorities, reflects our values and helps uplift more of our residents and communities to create a city where all New Haveners can thrive.

Always serving you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Justin Elicker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Justin Elicker  
Mayor, City of New Haven