

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

RE: [ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT](#) OF THE NEW HAVEN BOARD OF ALDERS AMENDING ARTICLE 1 DEFINITIONS AND ARTICLE V. SECTION 42, TABLE 3, USE TABLE OF THE NEW HAVEN ZONING ORDINANCE TO DEFINE “JUICE BARS AND SIMILAR FACILITIES” AND TO PROHIBIT “JUICE BARS AND SIMILAR FACILITIES” WITHIN ESTABLISHMENTS THAT OPERATE UNDER A CAFE PERMIT AND THAT SELL OR SERVE ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES.

Submitted by: City Plan Department

REPORT: 1682-03

ADVICE: Approve

SUBMISSION:

This zoning ordinance text amendment was dated for and received at the April 6, 2026 Board of Alders meeting. Legistar File ID: OR-2026-0013. The submission included:

- 0 - Checklist for Aldermanic Submissions
- Cover Letter, dated March 26, 2026
- CLEAN Ordinance Amendment
- 2 REDLINED ordinance Amendment
- Public Notification Form
- Fiscal Impact Statement

BACKGROUND

This amendment involves a change to the text of Section 42 of the New Haven Zoning Ordinance to add the definition for juice bars as an accessory use in Article 1 Definitions and to modify Section 42 of the Use Table Use regulations for business and industrial districts to prohibit the establishment of juice bars in these zones as shown below.

Section 1. Definitions.

The following definitions shall apply to all parts of the zoning ordinance. Words not defined in this ordinance shall be as defined in the most current edition of Webster's New World Dictionary, College Edition. Words in ***boldface italic*** in this ordinance are defined in [this Article I](#) or in an applicable section if their use is limited.

[JUICE BAR OR SIMILAR FACILITY means a separate and limited area within a premises that is operated under \(a\) a cafe permit or \(B\) a cafe permit for wine, beer and cider wherein nonalcoholic beverages are served to minors and wherein there is no sale, consumption, dispensing or presence of alcoholic liquor, as further defined under Section 30-22c\(1\) of the Connecticut General Statutes \(CGS § 30-22c\(1\)\). This is only an accessory use to an establishment selling or serving alcoholic beverages, not a standalone principal use.](#)

ARTICLE V. BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS

Section 42. Use regulations for business and industrial districts.

| TABLE 3. USE TABLE | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----|------|-----|------|----|----|------|------|------|----|------|-----|----|----|----|---------|---------|
| Key: <u>R</u> - Permitted As-of-Right <u>SP</u> - Special Permit <u>SE</u> - Special Exception <u>X</u> - Not Permitted <u>NA</u> - Not Applicable | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| In case of conflict between this Table 3 and the text of the Zoning Ordinance, the text shall prevail. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Use | BA | BA-1 | CGD | BA-2 | BC | BD | BD-1 | BD-2 | BD-3 | BE | MULW | TOC | IL | IM | IH | Parking | Loading |
| <i>E. Eating, Drinking Places & Entertainment</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ESTABLISHMENTS SELLING FOOD OR BEVERAGES FOR IMMEDIATE CONSUMPTION ON OR OFF PREMISES, INCLUDING ESTABLISHMENT WHERE LIVE ENTERTAINMENT IS A PRINCIPAL OR ACCESSORY USE | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| FOR PURPOSES OF THIS ZONING ORDINANCE A CHANGE FROM ONE CLASSIFICATION OF EATING, DRINKING OR ENTERTAINMENT ESTABLISHMENT TO ANOTHER SHALL BE CONSIDERED A NEW USE | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| EATING AND DRINKING PLACES | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Other establishment selling or serving alcoholic beverages for immediate consumption on or off premises, including accessory entertainment, or permitting immediate consumption of alcoholic beverages on or off premises, including accessory entertainment | SE | SE | SE | SE | SE | R | SE | SE | R | SE | R | R | R | SP | R | p | x |
| <u>Without juice bar or similar facility as an accessory use</u> | SE | SE | SE | SE | SE | R | SE | SE | R | SE | R | R | R | SP | R | p | x |
| <u>With juice bar or similar facility as an accessory use</u> | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | NA | x |

Figure 1. Excerpt from petition showing zoning table change

A **juice bar or similar facility** is a separate and limited area within a premises that is operated under (a) a cafe permit or (B) a cafe permit for wine, beer and cider wherein nonalcoholic beverages are served to minors and wherein there is no sale, consumption, dispensing or presence of alcoholic liquor, as further defined under Section 30-22c(1) of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS § 30-22c(1)).

State-level regulation of juice bars is meant to reduce the likelihood of alcohol being served to minors within establishments like bars, nightclubs, and concert venues. The creation of a separate area allows businesses to hold “all-ages” events with reduced concern or liability of minors receiving or consuming alcoholic beverages on their premises. State regulations include several provisions that require establishments with juice bars to inform local police of large events, further encouraging public safety for this particular land use activity.

PUBLIC HEARING

A Public Hearing was held by the City Plan Commission on May 20, 2026. A transcript of the hearing, meeting #1682, is available from the City Plan Department.

The hearing included discussion of the following topics:

- Concern about having young people in the same establishments where alcohol is being consumed because it increases access to those beverages.
- Given the number of young people that come to downtown New Haven the consumption of alcohol increases the risk for unsafe behavior.
- Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

In the Spring of 2026 the City of New Haven convened a working group of Departmental Staff to address the increasing large crowds and recent incidents of violence impacting public safety. Over 50 incidents were addressed by the New Haven Police Department in a recent six-month period at establishments concentrated in the Downtown neighborhood. The presence and marketing of juice bars was noted by public safety staff as a significant contributing factor to establishing and controlling order. Such establishments increase the need for police presence and take resources from other public safety duties both in the Downtown and citywide.

It should be noted that the Zoning ordinance amendments proposed will apply only to newly proposed establishments and not to existing establishments. Therefore alongside proposed zoning ordinance amendments, the City has worked with state legislators on recently passed state legislation (Public Act 26-100), awaiting signature by the Governor. This state legislation adds additional requirements for juice bars to meet in order to operate, as well as allows municipalities, by local ordinance, to limit the hours of operation, prohibit the sale of alcohol, and/or prohibit the operation of juice bars, including already existing establishments. The City, Alders, and neighborhood representatives may consider future ordinance amendments to regulate juice bars in this manner as enabled by state legislation. In addition to restrictions proposed, the City should continue to pursue options that support health, safe activities for young people Downtown and around the city.

NEW HAVEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: SUBMISSION MEETS REQUIREMENTS

The proposed text amendment aligns with the goals of the City of New Haven's Plan of Conservation and Development, Vision 2034 Comprehensive Plan (adopted October 2025) by supporting the development of the Downtown as a multi-use neighborhood and promoting public safety.

Economic Opportunity for All

Goal 3: Promote inclusive commercial development & economic activity in strategic locations that align with neighborhood goals.

New Haven should build upon the success of its existing commercial areas such as Downtown and direct economic activity towards emerging areas such as Long Wharf, the

Port, Mill River, Science Park, Innovation Clusters/Hill to Downtown, and Union Station/Union Square. The City should also continue its investment in former brownfield sites as areas of potential redevelopment.

Strategy 3.1 Continue to invest in and support development and redevelopment in the Downtown.

Development and redevelopment in New Haven's Downtown should focus on density, inclusivity, and protecting neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown from gentrification. The City should continue to identify opportunities for mixed-use, mixed-income infill development on surface parking lots. Continued investment in the Downtown will drive economic growth, job creation, and long-term resilience. Strengthening these districts attracts businesses, enhances walkability, and increases tax revenue, supporting public services and infrastructure improvements. Targeted redevelopment can foster a vibrant, mixed-use environment, encouraging innovation, sustainability, and equitable economic opportunities.

CITY CHARTER AND ZONING ORDINANCE CRITERIA

Sections 181 and 182 of the Charter of The City of New Haven

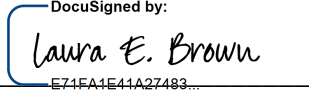
The City Plan Commission finds that, based on submitted information, the proposed zoning ordinance amendment complies with Sections 181 and 182 of the Charter of the City of New Haven in that it is:

- (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.

FINDINGS AND ADVICE

Following the public hearing held on May 20, 2026 the City Plan Commission recommended that the proposed zoning text amendment be **Approved**.

ADOPTED: May 20, 2026
Ernest Pagan
Chair

ATTEST: 
Laura E Brown
Executive Director, City Plan Department