

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

RE: RESOLUTION OF THE NEW HAVEN BOARD OF ALDERS authorizing the City of New Haven to apply for and accept a grant from the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development pursuant to the Urban Action Grant Program in the amount of \$5,000,000 for planning and redevelopment and public infrastructure purposes with respect to the Mill River District.

Submitted by: Michael Piscitelli, Economic Development Administrator

REPORT: 1652-12

ADVICE: Approve.

BACKGROUND

The City of New Haven is looking to advance the revitalization of the Mill River District in part through planning and redevelopment activities and in part through investments in public infrastructure. The Mill River District comprises over 200 acres of land along both banks of the Mill River. About 3,000 jobs in sectors such as food processing and distribution, design and construction support, precision manufacturing, and other diverse commercial ventures are encompassed within the Mill River District.

In January 2014, the City Plan Commission recommended that the Board of Alders adopt the Mill River Planning Study as part of the Comprehensive Plan, stating, in report #1488-08, that “The [comprehensive] Plan identifies Mill River area as an industrial area intended to promote manufacturing/production activities, and more intense employment generation in a manner consistent with light industrial zoning uses. The proposed amendment to this Plan describes a strategy for the development of the Mill River industrial area conforming to modern modes of production and manufacturing. The Mill River Plan also begins to lay out the various options available to deal with waterfront issues which have become significant in recent years.” The Mill River district faces challenges with coastal resilience, contamination, and a history of heavy-industrial uses. The district also offers unique opportunities with proximity to the water, economic opportunities described earlier in this report, and the Mill River Trail. Over the last several years, there has been important, community-driven planning related to the Mill River Trail and the Resilient Fair Haven study with CIRCA. Funding remains a barrier for implementation of the Mill River Planning Study, MDP, trail, and resiliency improvements.

Recognizing the passage of time since the adoption of the Mill River Planning Study in 2014, the City hosted a community meeting in April which served as a launch point for future investments not only in economic development but also affordable housing, retail/amenity and coastal resilience. With Urban Act support, the City would have the ability to move forward as opportunities arise either through further investments in the Mill River Trail, acquisition of dormant or underutilized property or providing support for affordable housing and mixed-income developments which would add vibrancy to the area. As with many other Urban Act awards, the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development will administer the grant.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

In accordance with Title I, Article XIII, Section 2(A) of the New Haven Code of Ordinances states, **"Every Ordinance or Resolution of the Board of Alders relating to the location and use of any street, bridge, boulevard, esplanade, square, park, playground, playfield, aviation field, parking space, public building, [grant funding], the facilities or terminals of any public utility, or the establishment or change in the boundaries of or regulations concerning zoning, shall be at once referred to the City Planning Commission and final action shall not be taken on any such**

Ordinance or Resolution until the commission shall have reported thereon, provided that the Board of Alders may establish by ordinance a period of not less than sixty (60) Days within which the commission shall file its report with the City Clerk and if no report is filed within such period the approval of the commission shall be presumed.” Accordingly, the Board of Alders seeks guidance regarding the proposed amendment.

The Board of Alder seeks guidance as to:

- Whether the proposal is aligned with the City’s Comprehensive Plan.
- The City’s Comprehensive Plan states, as a goal, to **“implement the recommendations of the Mill River District Plan and the Municipal Development Plan”** in order to **“revitalize and the Mill River Industrial Area”**

ADVICE

The proposal is aligned with the City’s Comprehensive Plan and should be approved.

ADOPTED: July 31, 2024
Leslie Radcliffe
Chair

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