



WEB

December 10, 2019

Rosa Ferraro Santana
Chair, Legislation Committee
Board of Alders
City of New Haven
165 Church Street
New Haven, CT 06510

I am Bill Spruill, the Executive Director of SUDC. We have been discussing this zoning with other community groups. Nadine was not able to be present but asked I read this into the record.

Chair Santana and the honorable members of the legislation committee:

Once again I write on behalf of the WEB (Whalley/Edgewood/Beaver Hills) Community Management Team to express our continued strong, enthusiastic support for the proposed creation of a commercial corridor zone for Whalley Avenue and the subsequent revised and updated zoning ordinances that will make this vital thoroughfare more viable, livable, safe and vibrant!

The WEB (Whalley/Edgewood/Beaver Hills) Community Management Team consists of active, dedicated, passionate residents organized to serve as a forum for neighborhood problem solving and information exchange. A looming, constant complaint of the management team over the years has been the lack of diversity in the types of businesses that we've been able to attract to Whalley Avenue, and the zoning ordinances as they stand now have been a huge barrier in the process. For the past 30 years Whalley Avenue has been a BB zone, and for many years it was known as "automobile row" for the number of automobile dealers located up and down the Avenue. The car dealerships have long since disappeared, but the zoning has remained the same, and as a result Whalley Avenue has been flooded with "sidewalk" car dealerships, automobile repair shops, convenience stores, beauty salons and barber shops, as well as fast food establishments.

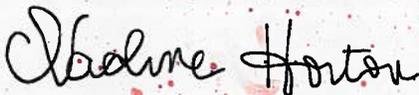
While we like to think of ourselves as the "utility corridor" because of all the things you can do on Whalley Avenue, we've been at a disadvantage because we have been unable to attract any businesses outside of what I mentioned exist on the Avenue now. We would like to experience the growth that other parts of the city enjoy but as the zoning ordinance stands now, that would be difficult to do without requiring several variances and special exceptions that are not required in other parts of the city.

Finally, we have St. Luke's Episcopal Church, which is the second-oldest African-American congregation in the city, that fronts onto Whalley Avenue. St. Luke's Development Corporation has spoken to our management team several times over the years about doing an affordable housing project on the Avenue which would help ease one of the city's most pressing social issues. However, again because of the obsolete zoning ordinances on Whalley Avenue, it would be extremely difficult for them to bring this project to fruition. Once the commercial corridor zoning is put in place, this project will be able to push through at a much smoother and faster pace, bring more density and life to the Avenue and show what a great neighborhood those of us who live here know it to be!

With the addition of desperately needed traffic calming in the form of bike lanes, bus bump-outs, painted crosswalks and better traffic signal timing, Whalley Avenue will become a more safe, walkable, livable, and vibrant neighborhood. City Plan staff, particularly Director Woods, LCI staff, particularly Arlevia Samuel, and economic development staff, particularly deputy director Steve Fontana, continue to be very collaborative in working with the Whalley Avenue Main Street Committee, formed four years ago, as well as the management team in making sure this is the will of the neighborhood, and it is.

Commercial corridor zoning is much needed on Whalley Avenue to help it reach its full potential and we hope that the Board of Alders legislation committee will approve this measure wholeheartedly.

Sincerely,



Nadine Horton

Chair

Whalley Edgewood Beaver Hills Community Management Team

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Cc: Emilee Gaebler, Yale Law School Clinic

Aicha Woods, City Plan

Arlevia Samuel, LCI

Steve Fontana, Economic Development

