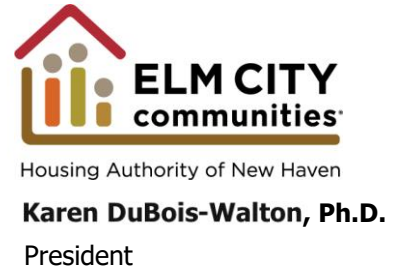


April 2, 2024

Members of the Legislation Committee
Honorable Board of Alders
City of New Haven
165 Church St
New Haven, CT 06510



Re: Accessory Dwelling Units Amendment

Dear Chair Cupo, Vice Chair Furlow and Members of the Committee:

I write to express my support for the petition submitted by New Haven’s City Plan Department, which amends the city’s existing ordinance regarding Accessory Dwelling Units. This updated policy stands to substantially increase the amount of decent and affordable housing throughout our city. In this way it promises to make New Haven a more vibrant and equitable place to live, an outcome that benefits us all.

In 2023, Elm City Communities published the Breaking Ground Report, a collection of eight policy recommendations intended to address New Haven’s affordable housing crisis. In our report, we show that New Haven needs 12,000 units of new housing to align New Haven’s median rent (\$1,219) with the national median rent (\$956). We also argue that the city’s affordable housing strategy must create options for families of all incomes, and especially the city’s lowest-income residents.

One of the core recommendations from our report involves the elimination of owner-occupancy requirements for ADUs. Several major US cities, including Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Portland, and San Francisco, have experienced dramatic increases in ADU development following the elimination of owner-occupancy requirements. In these same cities, the vast majority of ADU developers and owners remain local even though owner-occupancy requirements are no longer in place.

For these reasons, I fully support the amendments to New Haven’s ADU ordinance proposed by the City Plan Department. The proposed updates build on our initial recommendation by eliminating multiple barriers facing ADU owners. The city’s analysis shows these changes will enable ADUs on over 4,000 new parcels across the city.

This policy is not a silver bullet. Even if 4,000 accessory dwelling units were built in the city tomorrow, it would not singlehandedly solve New Haven’s affordable housing crisis. However, this strategy will be deeply impactful if combined with additional policies that enable the development of new housing at all price points, the strategic management of corporate landlords, and the proper investments into our city’s code enforcement programs. We celebrate this step by the City of New

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Haven, and hope the city will adopt more recommendations from the Breaking Ground Report moving forward.

Sincerely,



Karen DuBois-Walton, Ph.D.
President
Elm City Communities/Housing Authority of the City of New Haven



Housing Authority of New Haven

Karen DuBois-Walton, Ph.D.

President



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