



NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN DEPARTMENT

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December 10, 2019

Honorable Rosa Ferraro Santana, Chair
Honorable Adam Marchand, Vice Chair
Legislation Committee
Board of Alders of the City of New Haven
165 Church Street
New Haven, CT 06510

RE: PETITION/APPLICATION FOR ZONING ORDINANCE MAP AMENDMENT AND TEXT
AMENDMENT TO CREATE NEW COMMERCIAL GATEWAY DISTRICT

Dear Chair Santana, Vice Chair Marchand and members of the Legislative Committee:

The City Plan Department of the City of New Haven is pleased to be heard by the members of your committee of the Board of Alders with this Petition/Application to create a new zoning district: the Commercial Gateway District. As you know, the City Plan Commission moved this item favorably, in the version appended to the report and with the additional recommendation that references to the Dixwell Avenue Corridor be struck. The appended version is very different from the version with which we applied to the Board of Alders. It was the result of collaboration with community members, stakeholders, and interested professional experts throughout 3 months of public testimony, and it is a better draft as a result.

Since the City Plan Commission voted to move this item on November 20, 2019, the community continues to be actively involved. As a result of continued public comments and staff's continued commitment to improving the draft ordinance, we submit this memorandum with additional modifications that we would like your Committee to please consider in addition to moving the item favorably:

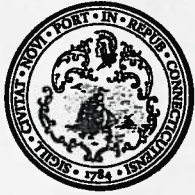
- Add the parcels between Olive Street and the railroad tracks to the map amendment. These parcels are 953 Grand Avenue (MBLU 224 0578 02400), 943 Grand Avenue (MBLU 224 0578 02300), 170 Olive Street (MBLU 224 0578 02200), and 960 Grand Avenue (MBLU 224 0559 00600). If these parcels are not added, there will remain an island of BA between the downtown and the new Commercial Gateway District.
- Remove the direct height limit on the Grand Avenue Corridor for parcels on State Street, between Olive Street and State Street, and abutting the I-91 overpass, between Jefferson Street and Hamilton Street. The community feedback suggests that the building height can be greater there because of the impact of the rail lines and the elevated overpass. Height in these sections would remain limited by FAR.
- Remove the definition of 'Affordable Housing' from Section 1 and remove the baseline affordability requirement in proposed Section 43(c)(2) and mark this as "Reserved." It is staff's recommendation that any inclusionary zoning provisions should be the direct result of the forthcoming citywide inclusionary zoning feasibility study, market analysis, and zoning update.

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One member of the Grand Avenue community stated that she "worr[ies] about imposing inclusionary requirements on two difficult-to-develop corridors when the rest of the city has no requirement whatsoever." A stakeholder in the Whalley Avenue corridor concurred, stating that community members "would support an inclusionary zoning initiative that was city-wide but do not feel comfortable having this included in the CGD initiative; as it seems to disadvantage the corridors that have historically experienced disinvestment."

- Revise and replace the Anti-Displacement provision in the proposed Section 43(m)(13) as follows: "Anti-Displacement. All proposed changes in uses or construction of greater than 50,000 square feet, whether located in new or existing structures, shall require a Special Permit in order to ensure that such relatively large proposals are compatible with and meet the general criteria and standards of the CGD District as described and defined in Section 43. The Commission may take into consideration whether the project is anticipated to cause displacement and additional impacts on the neighborhood or the City including transportation, environmental protection (e.g. wind, shadow, noise, air quality, solar glare), sustainability, urban design, historic resources and infrastructure systems."
- In proposed Section 43(b)(2)5.b., revise and replace that Sustainability Strategy to state: "Construct primary structures out of Mass Timber or other engineered timber systems." Increase the Points assigned to 5, and add a definition to Section 1 as follows: " 'Mass Timber.' Mass Timber is a category of primary structural building framing characterized by the use of large solid wood panels for wall, floor and roof construction; typical mass timber products as of 2019 are CLT, NLT, DLT, MPP (mass plywood panels) and glulam columns and beams." After speaking with mass timber experts, staff believe this will create a considerable incentive to build more sustainable midrise structures than the current trend of stick over podium construction. Mass timber construction has already been implemented in the City of New Haven to build sustainable and structurally-sound additions to existing structures where no other development potential previously existed. This is a trend that we fully support from a planning perspective.

Should you have any questions, representatives from the Department will be present at the hearing of the Legislative Committee this evening at 6pm in the Aldermanic Chambers.

Very truly yours,

Aicha Woods, Executive Director

CC: Michael Smart, City Clerk

Misty Maza, Legislative Aide II & Staff to Legislative Committee

Albert Lucas, Director of Legislative Services

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