

New Haven Commercial Gateway Districts (CGD Zoning) | Legislation Committee
December 10, 2019 | 6-7 PM

Testimony:

Honorable Chair Santana and members of the Legislation Committee:

I am Fred Taylor, vice-president of St. Luke's Development Corporation, and I am here tonight to express our continued support for the proposed CGD zoning regulations. We have supported the CGD zone throughout the public process and we ask that you put this zoning into place quickly. In particular, we ask for the prompt replacement of the outdated and restrictive BB zone along Whalley Avenue with the proposed CGD zone.

Our parish is located at the entrance to the proposed Whalley commercial corridor and the surrounding area is our neighborhood and our home. For the last few decades, St. Luke's has made investments in the Whalley corridor to spur development in our neighborhood. We believe it is our duty to take concrete steps to continue the community's positive growth and believe that the proposed CGD regulations will support that effort.

Some of our existing projects, including a large mixed-use development planned along our properties on Whalley and Sperry Avenue, have faced development barriers due to the BB zoning currently in place. The outdated zoning has forced us, a small nonprofit with limited funds, to accrue fees for architects and consultants to secure multiple variances and special exceptions. This in turn has made it difficult to secure tax-credit and other state and federal funding that would allow our project to move forwards.

The updated CGD zoning will allow projects like ours to become reality. The CGD zoning will create new opportunities for dense development, appropriate to a core urban corridor which will spur investment in the neighborhood, creating new opportunities for the residents and increasing the vibrancy of the area.

The development of the CGD zoning has been very collaborative and City Plan staff have made concrete effort to maintain open lines of communication and solicit community input. At various points, St. Luke's has raised questions and comments, all of which were respectfully discussed and addressed. In the most recent draft of the regulations, published on the Commercial Corridors website on November 15th, St. Luke's submitted a letter. We sought technical changes to a few provisions and these same requests have been submitted in written testimony provided to this honorable body as well. We look forward to continuing to work with City Plan staff to resolve these remaining issues but want to highlight one important concern.

St. Luke's fully supports the creation of a city-wide inclusionary zoning requirement but would like to note the inclusion of such a requirement in the CGD zones would unfairly disadvantage the CGD zones, singling them out from the rest of the City that are not subject to inclusionary zoning. This would be unfortunate and be contrary to the goal of

the CGD zoning, which we believe is to ensure the communities that have long borne the brunt of antiquated zoning and subsequent disinvestment, would no longer be disadvantaged.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak this evening.