

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

RE: **ORDER OF THE BOARD OF ALDERS** Authorizing the adoption of the Long Wharf Responsible Growth Plan as an amendment to the 2015 Comprehensive Plan New Haven Vision 2025. (Interim Economic Development Administrator)

REPORT: 1554-05

ADVICE: Approval

BACKGROUND

The Long Wharf Responsible Growth Plan proposes a comprehensive strategy for transforming the Long Wharf Area into a series of diverse and dynamic mixed-use districts, each focused on an entirely new public realm. The Plan addresses the area's resilience against future climate-change induced weather events and sea level rise; needed infrastructure improvements to support new development; and the anticipated costs and revenues associated with the proposed development. The Plan features several key recommendations:

- Five walkable, mixed-use districts
- A "Long Wharf Greenway," a linear park that will link the four districts together
- 7.7 million square feet of new development including 4,600 units of residential development, 340,000 sf commercial office, 320,000 sf retail, and 440 hotel rooms at full build out
- A Harbor District focused on a water plan for New Haven Harbor and providing New Haven residents with the opportunity to enjoy a wider range of water-related activities.
- A multi-modal circulation system, featuring new streets, bike lanes and enhancements to the pedestrian realm that will not only link-up the five districts, but connect the Long Wharf area with both the Hill Neighborhood and the Wooster Square Neighborhood, as well as enhanced connections to Long Wharf Park and Union Station.
- A strategy for stormwater management in the core of Long Wharf Area integrated with open space and recreational improvements.

The Plan is based on several key principles:

- An emphasis on the public realm in the form of walkable streets and parks, focusing on places, not projects, with landscape and public open spaces dominating the view;
- Integrating with, and enhance the existing, building on the area's major anchors, such as ASSA Abloy, One Maritime Center, and IKEA, relying on infill development rather than "tabula rasa" redevelopment;
- Market driven, staged redevelopment, with public infrastructure linked to private investments, both organized around the key places;
- Resilient and sustainable community building, integrating public infrastructure and open space for coastal protection and storm water management;
- Promoting equitable development, increasing access and mobility to and within the district, and maximizing social equity for all ethnic and age groups.

The Responsible Growth Plan will have several important benefits for New Haven:

- Creating a new front door for the city from I-95, I-91 and the Harbor – by establishing a new vision for development focused around a new Long Wharf Greenway, the new Long Wharf will present a vibrant new image for the City.
- Transit Oriented Development – proximity to Union Station.
- Reducing the City’s vulnerability to storm surge and stormwater flooding – the Plan builds on the City’s ongoing work to enhance the resilience at Long Wharf Park, which includes a living shoreline, and a storm surge barrier.
- Creating Jobs – the construction and new commercial activity associated with the anticipated development is estimated to result in an average of 600 jobs per year, with wages and salaries totaling \$41 million*. At full build-out, on a recurring annual basis, the estimated economic impact of ongoing operations is predicted to result in nearly 3,500 additional jobs in the Long Wharf area, with wages and salaries totaling nearly \$182 million*.
- Reconnecting the City to its waterfront – the Plan creates opportunities for new maritime activity and a new place for people to engage with the Harbor.
- Providing a major setting for new development – the new Long Wharf will serve as an alternative to the smaller parcels and historic context of downtown, and other New Haven neighborhoods.

The final plan identifies the gap between available public funding sources and the costs associated with a series of “Enabling Projects” (i.e. priority public infrastructure projects), lays out a path to implement the use of Tax Increment Financing to finance this gap, and identifies critical challenges that must be overcome to make the plan a reality.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

In accordance with City of New Haven Comprehensive Plan Vision 2025,

Chapter I-F, Guiding Principles for Recommendations

“Planning recommendations for the next decade have been developed based on the following guiding principles derived from community input... Capitalize on New Haven’s natural assets: the harbor... Facilitation enhanced connections to transit, bike, and pedestrian walkways... Continue efforts to integrate the economic development of Downtown with complementary development initiatives in the Medical Center and Long Wharf areas.”

Chapter III-15, Land Use

“The Commission recommends continued development of sites in the Long Wharf area along Interstate 95 and at Canal/Belle Dock (south of Forbes Avenue) for office space, light industrial, residential, and retail and restaurant type uses. Particular attention should be paid to waterfront connections, careful site design, (minimal) signage, and flood protection. Adaptive re-use of sites is encouraged to the extent possible. Focus specific planning and redevelopment attention at Long Wharf with the intent to develop a framework for the redevelopment of the district into a more mixed-use, more dense urban, commercial, and coastal district, connected to Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park.”

Chapter VI-25 Economic Development Goals

“...large-scale, mixed-use commercial developments in Long Wharf and enhance waterfront access and connectivity through the development of a sound land use plan for this area.”

ADVICE

The Commission finds the Order in the best interest of the City and recommends approval.

ADOPTED: March 20, 2019
Edward Mattison
Chair

ATTEST: MP
Michael Piscitelli, AICP
Interim Economic Development Administrator