

## **NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT**

**RE: ORDER OF THE BOARD OF ALDERS** Authorizing the adoption of the Affordable Housing Taskforce Report and Recommendations. (Alder Aaron Greenberg)

**REPORT: 1554-10**

**ADVICE:** Endorse

### **BACKGROUND**

The New Haven Affordable Housing Task Force (AHTF), established by the Board of Alders in March 2018, was tasked with recommending “actions that the City can take which would increase the number of safe and sanitary SRO units and other low-income housing options.” Members of the AHTF held a series of public meetings throughout 2018 and in the beginning of 2019 where they heard testimony from a variety of stakeholders, including residents, state and federal policy experts, developers, advocates, activists and elected officials, regarding the need to preserve, diversify, and increase the affordable housing stock in New Haven.

The AHTF developed six major recommendations with potential actions that can be taken to increase safe and sanitary affordable housing options that include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Ensure continued action on the creation and preservation of affordable housing
  - Board of Alders should create a permanent Affordable Housing Commission.
2. Ensure that the City has a wide spectrum of housing options for people at all income levels
  - Board of Alders and City Plan Commission should make zoning changes to permit a wider range of affordable housing options.
  - Board of Alders should create a process mandating that developers of market rate projects consult with a recognized affordable housing developer to explore good-faith efforts to include affordable units.
3. Increase land use efficiency
  - The City should fund an inclusionary zoning feasibility study.
  - The City Plan Commission (CPC) and its staff should review and investigate the zoning changes proposed by the AHTF.
4. Work regionally to create affordable housing, deconcentrate poverty, and promote integration
  - The City should take a leadership role in engaging the Southcentral Region Council of Governments to study and address the disproportionate siting of affordable housing and initiate a COG compact for the fair disproportionate of affordable housing in the region.
  - The City and partner organizations should advocate to remove references to considering community character in the Zoning Enabling Statue (C.G.S. 8-2); strengthen language that local regulations must include zoning for housing to meet the needs identified in the State consolidated plan; and establish deadlines by which municipalities must demonstrate compliance with sanctions imposed.

5. Increase the ability of people to stay in current housing by improving the quality and stability of existing affordable housing
  - LCI should increase fines, where applicable, to encourage repairs, renovations and lead abatement
  - The City should advocate to the state for the services of the Fair Rent Commission to be expanded to cover the Greater New Haven region.
6. Improve access to affordable housing
  - The City and partner organizations should implement a system that consolidates waitlists for affordable housing.
  - The City and partner organizations should invest in a local, user-friendly system of accurate and timely documentation of the existence and availability of its affordable housing resources.

## PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The Commission recognizes the importance of and urgency surrounding the recommendations set forth by the Affordable Housing Task Force for the City of New Haven, the region, and the state of Connecticut to address the significant lack of affordable housing options in our communities.

The recommended actions help to address several goals identified in New Haven Vision 2025, including promoting the development of affordable housing through necessary Zoning Ordinance amendments; achieving a balanced approach of market-rate and affordable units; partnering with regional planning agencies to promote housing policies aimed at fair, equitable, and de-centralized distribution of government-assisted affordable housing within the region; and exploring the feasibility of incentivizing developers who provide affordable housing in the city.

In addition to the AHTH's recommendations, the City Plan Commission encourages the task force and/or the potential Affordable Housing Commission to consider advocating for affordable housing that is better integrated into the rest of the city through enhanced physical connectivity and access to jobs, grocery stores, recreation opportunities, public transit and community services.

The Commission commends the Affordable Housing Task Force for the considerable amount of time that was dedicated to developing recommendations for increasing the number of safe and sanitary low-income housing options in New Haven. Acknowledging that the recommendations function, more or less, as a road map that requires coordination between various City departments and additional actions to be taken in the City, the Commission kindly urges that the Board of Alders consider and establish next steps for implementation.

## ADVICE

The Commission finds the Order in the best interest of the City and endorses the Affordable Housing Task Force recommendations.

**ADOPTED:** February 20, 2019  
Edward Mattison  
Chair

**ATTEST:** MPL  
Michael Piscitelli, AICP  
Interim Economic Development Administrator