

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

RE: DEVELOPMENT AND LAND DISPOSITION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF NEW HAVEN AND CONTINUUM CENTERPLAN DEVELOPMENT, LLC to redevelop the property located at 243 Legion Avenue to create an administrative office headquarters for Continuum of Care and New Retail, Medical/Commercial uses on the parcel. (Economic Development Administrator)

REPORT: 1488-10

ADVICE: Approval

BACKGROUND

Continuum Centerplan LLC is a development entity created to develop a new home headquarters for Continuum of Care as well as new community retail space on the undeveloped block of Route 34 west, between Dwight and Orchard Streets, bounded by Martin Luther King Boulevard and Legion Avenue. The Economic Development Administrator has submitted this Land Disposition and Development Agreement to the Board of Alders for their approval; the DLDA covers the transfer of the land from the City to the development entity and sets out the Developer's and the City's obligations for a phased development for the entire block.

Continuum of Care is a non-profit agency which provides housing and residential support services to individuals with psychiatric and development disabilities. They established Continuum Home Health which is a Medicaid certified home health provider. The organization employs 650 people, of which 227 are New Haven residents. Continuum completed 150,000 home care visits in New Haven in 2013; they are a regional organization and provided many more visits in total. The State of Connecticut recently awarded Continuum \$7.5 million in state bonds for construction of the new 30,000 sf (approx.) building which is to occupy the eastern portion of the site. The western portion of the block along Orchard Street will house neighborhood oriented retail; this retail space and the Continuum building will form the first phase of development... The center of the block is planned for additional retail and office space, potentially adding up to a total development of 120,000 sf.

The undeveloped land in the Route 34 west corridor was transferred to the City in the mid-2000s, and has been the subject of various reuse planning activities in the intervening years. While there is no formal plan adopted for the corridor, a parallel re-zoning effort and the approval of design guidelines recently submitted to the Board of Alders are steps toward the realization of the most recent plans.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

243 Legion Avenue is a 5.39 acre parcel bounded by Dwight Street, MLK Boulevard, Orchard Street and Legion Avenue. The parcel is currently improved with a surface parking lot. This parcel, along with the land to the east and west is part of the Route 34 corridor. Route 34 was cleared in the 1960's and 70's as part of a plan to extend the highway as a limited access depressed roadway from the Intersection of Interstates 95 & 91 through New Haven to the Naugatuck Valley. This plan has been deconstructed over decades, resulting in the current configuration through New Haven as a pair of one-way roadways from Ella Grasso Boulevard (Rte. 10) east to Park Street. From Park Street east to the interstate intersection, as part of the City's Downtown Crossing project, the roadway is being converted back to urban boulevards, and the limited access ramps are being removed in phases. Phase 1 of Downtown Crossing is currently under construction with Phase 2 in design in conjunction with the Live Work Learn

Plan mixed use development on the former Coliseum site. This DLDA is for the un-developed parcel just west of the site (Howe to Park Street) where Yale New Haven Hospital recently constructed office space, 24 residences and a large parking structure.

As outlined in the Development and Land Disposition Agreement, the project will be completed in two phases. The first phase of the development includes the environmental remediation of the parcel and the construction of the Continuum headquarters along with a new neighborhood retail center, whose proposed uses could include a medical office, a pharmacy, a banking facility, sit down dining option for residents as well as employees working in the area. The second phase of the development, will create a 50,000-70,000 square feet commercial building intended to be a mix of retail, medical-office uses, hospitality and parking (likely in a structured facility).

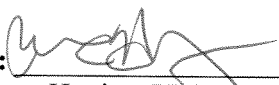
The Developer has met with the Management Teams in Dwight and Hill South, and most recently Hill North and has met with local neighborhood groups, and elected officials. As the land is currently City owned, the Agreement includes a number of benefits to the community including, workforce requirements for both construction and permanent jobs, a job fair and working with New Haven Works and Commission on Equal Opportunity (12½) are included; as well as the Small Business Initiative (12¼) and construction business and vendor opportunities. There is also a section, 5.2 “Commitment to Sustainability” and 5.6: provision of Public Open Space. The DLDA will be reviewed at the Board of Alders at a sub-committee public hearing.

The Commission’s advice to the Board is general concerning planning and land use, and not the specific terms of the agreement. The Commission will see the development in more detail at Site Plan reviews.

ADVICE

The Commission believes that the uses proposed for the site are appropriate and will address City retail and community service and city-wide employment goals and neighborhood input. The Commission recommends approval of the Development and Land Disposition Agreement between Centerplan Continuum LLC and the City for 243 Legion Avenue.

ADOPTED: February 19, 2014
Edward Mattison
Chair

ATTEST: 

Anne Hartjen, PLA, ASLA
Senior Project Manager