

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

RE: ZONING ORDINANCE MAP AMENDMENT, Order to Amend Zoning Ordinance Map (Grid #12) to change the designation of approximately 11.3 acres of land bounded by South Orange Street, South Frontage Road, State Street North and George Street (including the former Coliseum site and the Knights of Columbus Museum) from Business District (BD) to Business District-3 (BD-3, Central Business/Mixed-Use) (Executive Director, City Plan Department).

REPORT: 1484-01

ADVICE: The Commission recommends approval of the Order to Amend the Zoning Map to rezone approximately 11.3 acres bounded by South Orange Street, George Street, State Street North and North Frontage Road /Martin Luther King Boulevard from BD to BD-3. (see below Findings and Advice)

BACKGROUND: The City Plan Department has submitted a Petition for a Map Amendment to the Board of Aldermen. The Former New Haven Coliseum Site at 275 South Orange Street is currently zoned as a BD District, The petition requests that the zoning for this site and the adjacent area east of State Street, totaling approximately 11.3 acres be re-zoned BD-3 Central Business/Mixed –Use. The City specifically designed the BD-3 District for mixed use development with retail and housing uses in the same building; and also to permit a broad range of uses including office, retail, and high technology and certain medical and research uses . BD-3 was created and approved by the Board of Aldermen last year as part of the Downtown Crossing Project and was mapped along the entirety of the current Route 34 highway from the Air Rights Garage to the center line of South Orange Street. This proposed map amendment would extend that zoning to these sites and increase the proportion of BD-3 zoned land in central New Haven. The parcel to the east across State Street which contains the Knights of Columbus Museum is also included in order that it not become orphaned as a less than 1 acre business zone; the rezoning will not affect the current use of that building.

PUBLIC HEARING:

[The Public Hearing was recorded by Post Reporting Services]

Economic Development Administrator Kelly Murphy, A.I.C.P., spoke in favor of the zone change, saying it would “set the table” for future development on the site; enabling the kind of uses that are growing jobs in New Haven. Ten persons signed up to speak and all spoke favorably, additional persons asked some factual questions and Max Rheim, representative of the proposed developer (Live Work Learn Play) for the former Coliseum site, also spoke in favor. The sign-up sheet, recording of the hearing and transcript of the hearing are available upon request to the City Plan Department.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS: The current BD zone encourages single use business and commercial buildings. Residential uses in the BD district require large setbacks from the street and are limited in their F.A.R. (Floor area ratio) to between 0.5 and 1.7, requiring proportionally

large yards. The proposed BD-3 zones relieves residential buildings of the large front and side yard requirements of the BD, and reduces the required ratios of off-street parking spaces, while allowing a maximum F.A.R. of 6.0. The BD-3 has a focus on active street frontages and pedestrian friendly environment. The City is contemplating a redevelopment project for the area which consists of a broad mix of uses, including residential, office, retail and a hotel that will maximize the site's potential as an engine for job and tax base growth and revitalization in New Haven. The BD-3 allows buildings to rise from the back of the sidewalk, while requiring a minimum 15 foot wide sidewalk. This pattern for the relationship of street to sidewalk to building is currently preferred to the modernist corporate park setting for both office and residential structures that dominated mid-20th century city building. It is also more compatible with the adjacent BD-1 zone in the Ninth Square which seeks to preserve an earlier pattern of buildings that front the street in a continuous line.

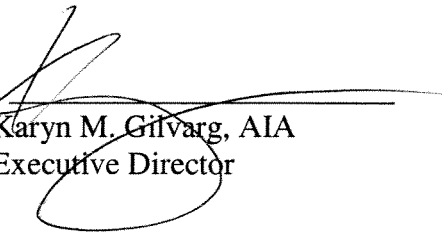
Given the Coliseum Site's adjacency to the existing BD-3 zoning across Martin Luther King Boulevard, and because of the changes in our economy and preferences for unbroken street frontages in the central business area the proposed rezoning of 275 South Orange Street and One State Street to BD-3 makes sound land use and zoning sense.

In addition to this proposed zoning map amendment, the Office of Economic Development has submitted a Development and Land Disposition Agreement to the Board of Aldermen for the redevelopment of the former Coliseum site, at 275 South Orange Street, by developer Live Work Learn Play; and an Order for the abandonment and discontinuance of a portion of North Frontage Road/ Dr. Martin Luther King Boulevard between State and South Orange Streets

The redevelopment of the former New Haven Coliseum Site is an important step in advancing New Haven's economy and revitalization. This zoning map amendment is an important precursor to enabling our central city to grow in a vibrant and sustainable direction.

FINDINGS AND ADVICE: The Commission recommends approval of the Order to Amend the Zoning Map to rezone approximately 11.3 acres bounded by South Orange Street, George Street, State Street North and North Frontage Road /Martin Luther King Boulevard from BD to BD-3. The Commission finds that the rezoning is necessary because of changes in the pattern of construction and land use; because the area is particularly suited to the purposes and uses permitted in the BD-3 zone, because the map change will have a positive effect on the surrounding area by encouraging compatible building patterns and uses; and because it meets the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan of the City and the Gateway Municipal Development Plan.

ADOPTED: October 30, 2013
Edward Mattison
Chair

ATTEST: 
Karyn M. Gilvarg, AIA
Executive Director