

## NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

**RE:** **ORDER** authorizing the Mayor to sign an agreement with the United States Department of the Army to design a flood wall and pump station along the Long Wharf Harbor to address storm surge floods and shoreline erosion at the I-95 Corridor, Rail Yard, Business District, and Public Park.  
**Submitted by:** City Engineer

**REPORT:** 1613-05

**ADVICE:** Approve.

### BACKGROUND

In 2016, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) began the Fairfield and New Haven Counties, Connecticut, Coastal Storm Risk Management Study. The goal of this study was to identify a location for a future ACOE investment to protect against coastal threats in Connecticut. In the final report (published October 2020), the ACOE identified the Long Wharf district of New Haven as the most promising location for such an investment. Not only does Long Wharf host two nationally important pieces of transportation infrastructure (I-95 and the Northeast Rail Corridor), but also hosts 5,000 jobs in a variety of critical businesses including health care and food distribution.

The ACOE study recommends three infrastructure investments in Long Wharf:

1. Flood Wall – installation of a wall (varying in height due to local topography) along the water side of the I-95 embankment from roughly across from the Canal Dock Boathouse to near the GNHWPCA pump station in City Point. The top of the wall will be at elevation 15’ and will provide protection during large storm events even with sea level rise projections through the end of the century.
2. Pump Station – installation of a pump station capable of pumping stormwater out of the Long Wharf District during significant rain events, and providing additional stormwater capacity for Downtown. The pump station has a projected capacity of 1185 cubic feet per second (over 1/2 million gallons per minute!) and would provide drainage for the downtown/long wharf area while the elevation of water in the harbor is higher than the low-lying areas in these districts.
3. Movable Gates – The project would install flood gates to prevent water from flowing through gaps in the wall and underpasses in the Long Wharf area so that flood waters would not be able to get through or around the flood wall and into Long Wharf. Three movable gates would be installed at the three underpasses into Long Wharf: Canal Dock Rd, Long Wharf Dr, and Brewery St. In addition, two gates would be installed at the exit/entrance ramps for I-95 on Long Wharf Drive as the highly dips below the elevation of the flood wall at those locations. These gates would be deployed during forecasted high-water events such as hurricanes.

Together, these investments provide a high level of protection for the Long Wharf District from not only storm surge but also stormwater-induced flooding. They couple with existing investments including our green stormwater infrastructure to provide protection for New Haven in the face of the existential threats associated with Climate Change. The final report of the study estimated the "fully funded" cost of these investments at \$151,279,000.

After the study, the ACOE divides implementation into two steps: (1) pre-construction Design and (2) Construction. The final study estimates pre-construction Design at \$9.6M. Typically, ACOE projects are cost-shared at a 65% - 35% ratio between the ACOE and the Local Sponsor, which in this case is the City of New Haven and the State of Connecticut together through the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. For the Design stage of the project, the City and the State are splitting the Local Sponsor cost share in half, at \$1.69M each.

After the completion of the study, City Departments worked diligently with partners including the federal delegation to secure funding for this important project. On January 19, 2022, Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro announced that she had secured \$160.3M in funding for the project as part of the Hurricane Ida Relief funding. This provides federal funding for both the design and construction phases of the project. Unfortunately, the 65%-35% split still applies at this stage of the project due to federal regulations despite the project being funded at over 100% federally. While there is nothing the City can do about this for the Design stage, the City has been working closely with our federal delegation who, at this time, expressed confidence in a legislative fix for the construction phase in which it is fully federally-funded with the money already allocated.

The item before you authorizes the Mayor to sign an agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers and/or the State of Connecticut as the Local Sponsor for the Design phase of the project. This requires a contribution of \$1.69M of City funds, coming from existing authorizations for Engineering and Economic Development for coastal protection and other projects. Signing the Design phase agreement does **not** obligate the City or any other party to the Construction phase of the project. Any agreements for that phase would return in front of the Board of Alders.

## PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

In accordance with Title I, Article XIII, Section 2(A) of the New Haven Code of Ordinances states, **"Every Ordinance or Resolution of the Board of Alders relating to the location and use of any street, bridge, boulevard, esplanade, square, park, playground, playfield, aviation field, parking space, public building, [grant funding], the facilities or terminals of any public utility, or the establishment or change in the boundaries of or regulations concerning zoning, shall be at once referred to the City Planning Commission and final action shall not be taken on any such Ordinance or Resolution until the commission shall have reported thereon, provided that the Board of Alders may establish by ordinance a period of not less than sixty (60) Days within which the commission shall file its report with the City Clerk and if no report is filed within such period the approval of the commission shall be presumed."** Accordingly, the Board of Alders seeks guidance regarding the proposed amendment.

*The Board of Alder seeks guidance as to:*


- Whether the proposal is aligned with the City's Comprehensive Plan.
- The City's Comprehensive Plan states, as a goal, to **"Adapt to sea level rise and other coastal/inland flooding events by identifying and seeking new sources of funding to address and improve the resiliency of properties in V and VE flood zones"**

## ADVICE

The proposal is aligned with the City's Comprehensive Plan because it:

- Implements measures to correct existing flooding issues.
- Takes preventative coastal resiliency measures to prevent loss of lives and property during major coastal flooding events.

**ADOPTED:** July 20, 2022  
Leslie Radcliffe  
Chair

**ATTEST:**   
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Laura E Brown  
Executive Director, City Plan Department