

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

RE: **RESOLUTION** of the New Haven Board of Alders authorizing the City to apply for and accept a grant from the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development not to exceed \$32,100,000 to support the improvement and economic development of the Long Wharf District (\$25,000,000) and the Downtown District (\$7,100,000).

Submitted by: Michael Piscitelli, Economic Development Administrator

REPORT: 1629-14

ADVICE: Approve.

BACKGROUND

The State of Connecticut is making available over \$800 million to support transformative investments in communities such as New Haven through the Community Investment Fund (“CIF”). As part of CIF Round 2, the City of New Haven is proposing an Infrastructure Improvement Project in the Long Wharf and Downtown districts. The CIF funding will be used to (a) redevelop the Long Wharf district by demolishing a former state community college; developing a coastal open space; redesigning Long Wharf Drive for flood resiliency; and creating a community marina (\$25,000,000); (b) improve the Downtown district by installing streetscape improvements and public art; creating a café kiosk and public restroom on the Green and reconfiguring Temple Street; and constructing a family playground in the Downtown core (\$7,100,000).

The Project represents an essential component to the City’s overall economic recovery. Through the Together New Haven partnership, the City has created a system that covers planning, infrastructure and small business development – well beyond any individual project. For example, New Haven is widely recognized for driving economic growth of statewide significance (particularly in the life sciences) which is then supported by a value of place at the neighborhood-level and an inclusive growth strategy that serves all of our residents.

New Haven is the most diverse community in Connecticut and among the most diverse in the entire nation. According to the 2020 US Census, 36.6% of the population is Black, 31.2% Brown, 29.5% White, and 5% Asian. Long Wharf and Downtown reflect this diversity, as both districts are connected to neighboring communities, like the Hill, New Haven’s most densely populated neighborhood, consisting of residents approximately 33% Black or African American, 52% Hispanic or Latino, and 4% Asian. And even with the significant economic and population growth in recent years, income inequity is a pervasive concern with 26.5% of all residents living below the poverty line. At a per capita income of just \$26,429, the equity gap manifests in lower health outcomes and the persistence of poverty in many neighborhoods.

Thus, these commercial districts like Long Wharf and Downtown serve both the basic needs of residents (particularly those with no access to a personal vehicle), employment opportunities, and the overall quality of place – a considerable right for all residents regardless of means and mobility. In doing so, the Project promotes new economic outcomes in the form of business formation and growth; the provision of waterfront access and amenities to underserved communities; the redevelopment of the Long Wharf Gateway district, including educational programs that have a direct benefit to career pathways for

neighboring communities; the bolstering of sense of place and youth engagement through the creation of community-oriented open spaces; the increase of the local workforce and access to meaningful employment; and the promotion of growth and capacity through rebuilding said commercial centers.

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, 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.

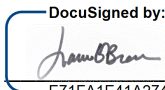
The Board of Alder seeks guidance as to whether the proposal is aligned with the City's Comprehensive Plan.

ADVICE

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

- Addresses many of the goals in the Long Wharf Responsible Growth Plan
- Addresses the Vision 2025 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"
- Proposes improvements to public open space
- Promotes equitable economic development

ADOPTED: March 15, 2023
Leslie Radcliffe
Chair

ATTEST:  March 20, 2023 | 2:15 PM EDT
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Laura E Brown
Executive Director, City Plan Department