

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

RE: **RESOLUTION OF THE NEW HAVEN BOARD OF ALDERS** Ordinance amendment to Title IV of the City of New Haven’s Code of Ordinances (the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance) to bring the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance into compliance with the Uniform Building Code for the State of Connecticut.

Submitted by: New Haven City Plan Department

REPORT: 1632-19

ADVICE: Approval

BACKGROUND

On March 4, 1991, the Board of Alders of the City of New Haven adopted an ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances concerning flood damage prevention. The ordinance was last amended on July 8, 2013, to comply with the State of Connecticut Building Code. Since then, the State of Connecticut has updated the building code twice (in 2018 and 2022) and the current city flood ordinance is out of compliance.

The 2018 Building Code updates require that the City of New Haven add several definitions (see attachment for technical summary), update several existing definitions, and expand the area of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood zones subject to more stringent development regulations to match Connecticut Building Code standards.

In addition to updating the ordinance to ensure compliance, the City Plan Department sees an opportunity to address several other gaps that staff have identified and for the City to join cities like New London (which requires the highest elevation for new buildings in the state) as leaders in the region. The City Plan Department (in conjunction with Engineering, Building and Emergency Services) proposes that the Ordinance require all buildings within the Special Flood Hazard Area to be built at least two feet above Base Flood Elevation, more clearly define how applicants should measure a property’s “market value” for consistent regulation across projects; and prevent further intensification of hazardous materials like oil storage tanks in flood-prone areas.

Connecticut expects to see 20 inches of sea level rise by 2050 in the Long Island Sound, and requiring buildings to be built two feet above Base Flood Elevation (24 inches) are common sense for buildings whose lifetimes will likely exceed 30 years. Further, across the country and in New Haven, there are growing movements to prepare industrial waterfronts, many of which are in low-income communities of color, for flooding impacts of climate change. In coordination with other city and community-driven strategies, this ordinance can play an important role in ensuring safe and resilient waterfronts for future residents of New Haven.

This amendment will ensure the appropriate incorporation of the 2022 State Building Code into the City’s Code of Ordinances. Further, this amendment will further the goal of the ordinance to promote public health, safety, and general welfare and to minimize public and private losses due to flood conditions.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

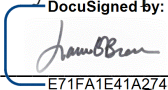
This grant proposal is aligned with the City Comprehensive Plan because it will further Comprehensive Plan goals to:

- Adapt to inland and coastal flooding;
- Protect floodplains from inappropriate development and prevent the loss of life or property due to flooding;
- Review, assess, and revise the floodplain ordinances of the City periodically to protect the health, safety, and welfare of residents.

ADVICE

Approval--Authorization of this ordinance amendment aligns with the City's Comprehensive Plan goals.

ADOPTED: June 21, 2023
Leslie Radcliffe
Chair

ATTEST:  June 23, 2023 | 12:23 PM E
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Laura E Brown
Executive Director, City Plan Department