

**NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT**

**RE:** Resolution of the New Haven Board of Alders authorizing the City to apply for, act as pass through for, and accept a grant from the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development not to exceed \$10,000,000 to support the improvement and economic development of the Whalley Commercial Gateway District.

**Submitted by:** Michael Piscitelli, Economic Development Administrator

**REPORT:** 1633-12

**ADVICE:** Approve.

**BACKGROUND**

The State is making available over \$800 million to support transformative investments in communities such as New Haven through the CIF. As part of CIF Round 3, the City along with its partners, Glendower, Inc. (“Glendower”) and St. Luke’s Development Corporation (“St. Luke’s”), is seeking funding for the redevelopment of the Whalley Avenue Commercial Gateway District (the “WACGD”). The redevelopment consists of (a) “Main Streets” Streetscape and Infrastructure Revitalization and (b) the construction of the St. Luke’s Affordable Housing Development (\$6,000,000) (collectively, the “Project”).

The CIF funding will be used to (a) revitalize a major portion of Whalley Avenue from Tower Parkway to Ella Grasso Boulevard by restriping the roadway and intersections, replacing some concrete sidewalks, and simultaneously installing new lights, signage, and traffic calming measures, such as dedicated bike lanes, restricted bus lanes, raised crosswalks, intersections, speed tables, etc. The City will also install additional streetscape improvements, including street trees, furniture, parklets, planters, plants, etc. (~\$4,000,000). The remainder of the CIF funding will be passed through to Glendower enabling them to (b) complete construction on their long-awaited St. Luke’s Affordable Housing Development, which includes the demolition of buildings at 117-129 Whalley Avenue and 10-12 Dickerman Street, and the construction of a new mixed-use, 55-unit building (90% affordable) with 3,843 sf of retail space at the first-floor level (~\$6,000,000). The City Plan Commission approved the site plan for this project on March 15, 2023 (CPC #1629-03).

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% Latino 29.5% White, and 5% Asian. And Whalley Avenue reflects this diversity, as the district runs along three neighborhoods: Dwight, which is approximately 39% Black, 23% Latino, and 9% Asian; Edgewood, which is approximately 50% Black, 20% Latino, and 4% Asian; and Beaver Hills, which consist of residents approximately 56% Black 15% Latino, and 3% Asian. Even with the significant economic and population growth in recent years, income inequity is a pervasive concern with 26.5% of all New Haven 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 including those served by the WACGD.

Commercial districts like the WACGD, serve the basic needs of residents (particularly those with no access to a personal vehicle) while also providing employment and recreation opportunities for residents and visitors alike.

Thus, the overall quality of place is a considerable right for all residents regardless of means and mobility. Implementation of the Project will promote new economic outcomes in the form of quality affordable housing; new business formation; the provision of new amenities to underserved communities; the bolstering of sense of place as well as youth engagement through the creation of community-oriented open spaces. The rebuilt Whalley Avenue commercial corridor will promote growth and increased capacity that builds up the local workforce and provides better access to meaningful employment.

## 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.

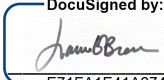
*The Board of Alder seeks guidance as to whether the proposal is aligned with the City's Comprehensive Plan.*

## ADVICE

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

- Proposes improvements to public open space
- Promotes equitable economic development
- Increase open space opportunities within new/infill developments and enhance Whalley Avenue streetscape through wayfinding signage, traffic calming, and landscaping. Pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use environments with a combination of retail and support services on ground floor are encouraged on Whalley Avenue.

**ADOPTED:** July 19, 2023  
Adam Marchand  
Acting Chair

**ATTEST:**  July 25, 2023 | 10:57 AM EDT  
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Laura E Brown  
Executive Director, City Plan Department