



Justin Elicker  
Mayor

## New Haven Development Commission

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Michael Piscitelli  
Economic  
Development  
Administrator

Minutes  
Regular Meeting  
Wednesday, February 12, 2025  
In-Person/Online Meeting

### COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Manmita Dutta  
Dan McLeggon  
Casey Pickett  
Caroline Tanbee Smith, Aldermanic Representative  
Charles Negaro

### Guests:

Barbara Malmberg, EDC REX  
Doug Hausladen, Executive Director -New Haven Parking Authority

### City Staff Present:

Mike Piscitelli, Economic Development Administrator  
Carlos Eyzaguirre, Deputy Economic Development Administrator  
Mark Wilson, Manager, Neighborhood Commercial Development  
Malachi Bridges, Economic Development Officer  
Dean Mack, Economic Development Officer  
Anna Mariotti, Economic Development Officer

**Call to Order:** Mr. Eyzaguirre opened the meeting at 8:34 am

### 1. Review of Previous Minutes:

Mr. Pickett noted that during the previous meeting we discussed re-routing the buses during any work to improve the Green. Mr. Eyzaguirre responded that the re-routing was still a partially open question more generally (e.g. will they all return to the Chapel Street hub?). A motion to amend the previous minutes to include the discussion to re-route bus routes was made, seconded and approved



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unanimously (a second motion to amend the minutes included the corrected spelling of Commissioner Bergemann's name). Mr. Eyzaguirre will make sure the City's Engineering team attends a Commission meeting soon to provide an update.

## **2. Introductions:**

With new Commissioners recently coming on board, a round of introductions was held.

## **3. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update:**

Mr. Eyzaguirre opened the presentation with background on the CED noting it was a required by the US Economic Development Administration to maintain eligibility for specific federal funding while also an important exercise that helps update and track our industry sectors along with other important metrics like housing and job growth.

REX Development's Barbara Malmberg led the presentation and explained in more detail what the CEDS is and why it is important. **She explained that** REX Development covers fifteen towns (15) in New Haven County and addresses economic development issues like housing, employment and transportation that affect all cities and towns and are often better addressed in a regional way. The CEDS is part of REX's role as the region's federally recognized Economic Development District and is charged with helping all member municipalities. The process for creating the CEDS includes a strategic planning committee as well as five (5) sub-committees including business retention expansion and recruitment, workforce, housing, infrastructure and real estate land use and sustainability. The goal is to try and get as much input from all of REX partners. In addition to being a requirement for eligibility for federal funding, it is also used to measure regional economic development goals and objectives and is used as a reference/guide by the region's partners.

## **Demographics**

The 2023 demographics (most recent census data) showed no significant change in population and while household incomes have gone up it is not sufficient to cover the attendant increases in housing prices. Poverty in New Haven exceeds much of the rest of the region which is not surprising given some of the very wealthy suburbs however the entire region is burdened by housing prices and municipalities need to work together to increase the supply of housing.

## **Workforce**

Ms. Malmberg noted the state and region's workforce shortage with about 80,000 unfilled jobs in Connecticut. The largest demand is in healthcare, but there is also a shortage in STEM fields that is informing the City's career pathway strategy. In terms of the labor force, there was a lot of concern during the pandemic about impending retirements but current numbers exceed those from before the pandemic. New Haven's labor force is up 3.3% which is a bit of a surprise considering the lower numbers of 2020/2021. Regional unemployment continues to be very low (actually lower than the natural rate of unemployment that takes into consideration virtual unemployment, people who are changing jobs and seasonal workers).

## **Housing crisis**

Ms. Malmberg addressed the housing crisis. Median home sales prices are up significantly. The state needs ~100,000 additional units with affordability being key but more housing of all types is needed to address the issue. Some of the suburban towns are beginning to grow their housing inventory but nothing to the the scale that you see in New Haven. They simply do not have the land, do not have the zoning. The current Regional Housing Strategy is focused on municipalities building an

inventory of homes that do not cost more than thirty (30) % of various household incomes as the current shortage has led to many families purchasing homes they can not afford if they are able to purchase a home at all.

## **Key Sectors**

### **Healthcare**

As the Commission is well aware, there are several large projects underway in the region. One is the ~\$1b neuroscience tower at YNHH- St. Raphael's campus, this was originally budgeted at \$838 scheduled to open in 2027 and the CT Proton Therapy Center in Wallingford, a joint project with Hartford Health Care and YNHH and the first cancer treatment center of its kind in the state. It is slated to open in December 2026.

### **Higher Education**

The numbers have not changed much since last year. Overall there is an increase in enrollment since 2018 that's primarily due to the new colleges opening at Yale. Since 2018 enrollment at SCSU, Gateway and Albertus Magnus are much lower which can be problematic in terms of developing our workforce because these students tend to be more local. A good indicator shows state school enrollment improving year over year (both degree and certificate programs) but still a ways off from 2018 numbers. They definitely have a ways to go before we can get to where we were in 2018.

**Alder Tanbee Smith** asked whether the majority of the unfilled jobs in healthcare continue to be registered nurses and what other jobs might also be going unfilled.

Ms. Malmberg responded that it tends to be nursing and CNA positions that are difficult to fill due to demand.

### **Manufacturing**

There was some concern about the Skill Up for Manufacturing Program because it is ARPA funded. Workforce Alliance is looking to get the program funded again. What the industry is seeing now are barriers to capital investment simply because during Covid manufacturers had to bulk up their inventory to adjust for supply chain disruptions and that has tied up a lot of their capital.

### **Bioscience**

Given the last week of activity in the federal government, this is an area that is very concerning to the region with \$661M coming into the local economy from Yale alone. In addition there is another \$400M from non-Yale affiliated sources. This also translates to jobs and purchasing and a slow down would mean a significant hit to the local economy. In terms of the biotech companies in the REX region some of the ring towns are starting to build up in terms of their presence in the sector which is a positive development for a broader management structure and indicates the New Haven bioscience sector's growth and influence on towns outside of New Haven.

A question was asked on what could prompt towns like Guilford, Branford, Woodbridge and Madison to build more housing?

Ms Malmberg responded that Guilford specifically has been very active in trying to build new housing. Woodbridge has two developments underway. Branford has a couple they recently knocked down and rebuilt one of the projects with affordable housing in partnership with the Housing Authority of New Haven. She noted that though some towns are moving faster than

others, most understand that there has to be a regional housing solution. There is hope that the newly formed Municipal Redevelopment Agency, which provides statewide funding for development around transit oriented development, might be incentive for towns to actively participate in growth.

### **Arts, Culture & Tourism**

The region's hotels are doing better year to date but still not back to where they were pre-pandemic due to the decline in business travel but we are seeing a lot of increased web traffic at Visit New Haven. Visit New Haven web traffic has gone up 86% in the last year and its Visitor's Guide request are up over 37% mainly due to the media attention that region has gotten from the Peabody Museum re-opening, new Avelo destinations and pizza. This combination of organic attention has been really positive for us. The earned media has garnered a lot of attention including New York Times articles and the Today Show segment at the Peabody which provides a different level of visibility.

### **Entrepreneurship**

We are at the increased level we have been since the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic we were seeing about 4,500 new businesses in the region and we are currently at about 6,600. This number has remained steady over the last couple years.

### **Regional Progress**

The CEDS Housing Committee has been meeting and compiling a list of all the housing projects (planning, underway and recently completed) in the region to really get a fuller picture of what's going on not just in New Haven but in the ring towns as well. Tweed Airport continues to grow dramatically. Previous CEDS goals prior to Avelo and Breeze envisioned 100,000 enplanements a year. Tweed's recent growth has far outpaced those numbers and construction of the new terminal will make a huge difference both for the community and airport operations. Despite some recent highly publicized weather-related incidents, Avelo has the best on-time ranking of any airline in the country.

Mr. Piscitelli stated that there is an impact to neighbors due to the airport and reiterates that the City has strived to make sure there is a responsible growth and ensure that people who do feel impacted are supported. Upcoming community initiatives include an air purifier distribution program, noise mitigation measures like new windows on homes as well as traffic calming infrastructure.

Ms Malmberg continued by noting that Tweed expects to serve 1.4 million passengers over the next year and that the airport has been selected to work with NASA in terms of airport energy node development which could potentially electrify the entire airport ecosystem.

In terms of capital investments made by local colleges and universities, in addition to Yale, the University of New Haven and Quinnipiac are really working to develop sustainability on their campuses and have taken a lead role regionally.

### **SCRCOG Legislative Agenda**

Finally, in terms of the SCRCOG Legislative Agenda, the regional issues that municipalities are most concerned with include municipal solid waste, housing and the education cost sharing formula particularly as these critical services pertain to budget projections.

The floor was then opened to questions where Commissioners asked how REX is funded. Ms. Malmberg responded that the 15 member municipalities pay dues and REX also secures some private funding as well as undertaking contract work for the municipalities.

Commissioners also asked about REX's board governance. Ms. Malmberg explained it a combination of public and private board members including chief elected officials and leaders of the public utilities among others.

Ms. Malmberg encouraged Commissioners to send any feedback to her as the CEDS update is finalized over the next few months. There will also be a formal 30 day comment period before it is finalized in late May

Mr. Piscitelli noted that the City would provide some big picture thoughts on driver for future economic growth like Quantum, Climate and Cultural Equity and where it sees potential growth in each of those spaces. The City is also interested in getting a comprehensive view at its infrastructure profile and how the longer term planning of the various public utilities all fit together,

### **Economic Development Updates -**

Mr. Mack discussed the City's Innovation Cluster RFI submission to the State of CT and its work with local biotech and university partners to put forth a proposal that focuses on the bioscience cluster around MLK Blvd and stretches from the hospital down to the new development soon underway at Union Station. The City's initial proposal would support and expand the new development that is in the pipeline including the Ancora building as well as another possible Winstanley development with a particular focus on infrastructure investment.

New Haven was recently selected to submit a full proposal (along with Stamford and Hartford) that will focus on not only bioscience but also Quantum computing (led by UConn and Yale) and includes an expanded team of higher ed institutions as well as Cure Rare Disease. This larger application now proposes programming along with infrastructure improvements and the expanded team is now meeting regularly to put together a strong application by the April 15 deadline.

### **USDOT Reconnecting Communities**

Mr. Bridges informed the Commission of the City's successful application for a planning grant through the USDOT which aims to reconnect the New Haven communities divided by the I-91 construction during Urban Renewal. Similar to the Downtown Crossing project at Rt 34, this grant will provide strategies to mitigate the highway's impact on residents by identifying ways to bring people across the highway safely while identifying underutilized parcels for either new housing development opportunities or for activated public spaces.

Mr. Eyzaguirre asked Alder Tanbee Smith if she had anything to add as she was instrumental in leading this project. She responded that it was a real team effort. Alder Smith also noted that real thought had been put into identifying for study locations of major motor vehicle accidents which often occur at the intersections in and around the highway. She was very excited about the idea of being able to invest in intersections all along I-91 and also saw an important story telling opportunity for New Haven.

Commissioner Pickett asked about City confidence in the funding actually coming through with so many federal grants being put on hold.

Mr. Piscitelli responded that the City would soon meet with CT DOT to go over a strategy on awarded grant and also other funds DOT may have to support. One thing that is beneficial in this case is Reconnecting Communities is more than a grant, it is also a City initiative so there are other capital funds to potentially tap into to keep the project moving. However as a general point there is acknowledgement that we are facing a storm and we are putting together thoughts about how best get through it and make sure that projects like this remain fully funded.

### **Shop & Dine Local for V-Day**

A press event emceed by Alexander Clark (Technolutions, Zinc, Union League) and headlined by Mayor Elicker was held at Olives and Oil to promote Valentine's Day spending citywide.

### **National Pizza Day**

Governor Lamont and Mayor Elicker celebrated National Pizza Day at BAR on Crown Street and announced several pizza themed initiatives including a statewide Pizza Trail , new art installations at Tweed and discounted fares to New Haven from Avelo.

### **State & George Redevelopment RFQ**

Mr. Eyzaguirre starts by stating this will come before you for a vote (both projects). Mark Wilson starts talking and states they are moving very intentional it does seem like it is moving slow what I think they want to do is cross all their t's and dot all their I's. They are very methodical and they are moving forward both side A and side B will probably produce upwards of 700 rental units and probably roughly 45 to 40 % will be affordable. They are trying to acquire the Hertz Lot there which would make their project much more viable so that is in the process. We think that having both of these projects going at the same time is going to produce a good number of jobs. They are exciting projects that are going to produce as I said alot of units and I think they are still looking towards the end of this year, first quarter of next year to break ground in Site A maybe Spring of next year for Site B.

### **River Street RFQ (Request for Qualifications)**

Mr. Eyzaguirre noted that the closed Request for Qualifications for a mixed use development on two vacant former industrial sites at 100 and 142 River Street will be reviewed and scored over the next month or so. The City is hopeful it will yield a viable proposal. The Commission will be kept abreast of developments as it will be formally brought before the Commission should it move forward.

### **Adjournment:**

Mr. Eyzaguirre adjourned the meeting at 9:40 am via a unanimous motion to close.