

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

RE: 756, 762 CONGRESS AVENUE
 MBLU: 303 0094 03700, 303 0094 03600

Disposition of a vacant lot at 756-762 Congress Avenue to Congress Development, LLC to develop a new mixed-use building with affordable rental units at 80% AMI

Submitted by: Evan Trachten, LCI

REPORT: 1642-06

ADVICE: Approve with recommendations

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Applicant(s): Congress Development, LLC
Price: \$43,025
Site: 7,840 SF
Zone: BA
Use: 80% AMI Affordable Units
Financing:
City Lead: Evan Trachten
Agency: Livable City Initiative
Phone: 203-946-8373

ORDINANCE

This request comes from the City's Livable City Initiative Bureau (LCI) regarding the disposition of a vacant lot. This is in accordance with Section D(8) of the City's Land Disposition Agreement Guidelines, "**The proposal shall be forwarded in the following sequence for further consideration: 1. PAD (approval required); 2. City Plan Commission (advisory review); and 3. LCI Board of Directors (approval required).**" Accordingly, the Planning Commission may provide an advisory report.

BACKGROUND

The City of New Haven proposes to dispose the 7,840 square foot vacant lot at 756-762 Congress Avenue to Congress Development, LLC. Congress Development, LLC will pay approximately \$5.50 per square foot. The total purchase price is \$43,025. The purpose is for Congress Development LLC to create affordable housing. This property must be maintained as an affordable rental property at eighty percent (80%) Area Median Income (AMI) for a minimum period of twenty (20) years inclusive of successive ownership, unless a more extensive period is required by federal law, the Property Acquisition and Disposition Committee (PAD), the Board of Directors of Livable City Initiative (LCI) and/or the Board of Alders of the City of New Haven. Zoning approval is required prior to closing. Approximately 20 residential units are tentatively proposed. Congress Development, LLC owns the adjacent parcel at 744 Congress Avenue. As part of the sale, they would make improvements to this property which is a mixed-use structure.

Planning Commission considerations include whether:

- The property is or should be used for municipal purposes.
- The site is not adjacent to a park to create additional park land.

- The property is an interior lot.¹
- The site could be used as a pocket park or community garden.²
- The comprehensive plan identifies or will identify resources within this area for which this parcel could be used.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS:

The proposal will achieve the following Comprehensive Plan Goals:

- Develop land uses that are compatible with the character of the surrounding area.
- **“Use redevelopment and other tools to address nuisance and deterioration issues, including uses that are deleterious to neighborhoods in general.”** (The City’s Comprehensive Plan) – This is a redevelopment tool to keep property from becoming deleterious to the neighborhood.
- **“Continue to use the city’s Land Disposition Agreement (LDA) to advance housing and neighborhood objectives, including appropriate densities, home ownership and contextual design.”** (The City’s Comprehensive Plan) – The City will use this tool to sell the property for home ownership.
- **“Create diverse housing stock suitable for all abilities, ages and incomes.”**
- **“Encourage neighborhood stability.”**
- **“Improve housing affordability.”** (The City’s Comprehensive Plan)
- **“Encourage sustainable housing developments.”** (The City’s Comprehensive Plan)
- **“Encourage that adequate rental and homeownership opportunities exist for people of all incomes, especially in transition areas affected by business/infrastructure investments, institutional expansion, and/or changing market trends.”** (The City’s Comprehensive Plan)

RECOMMENDATIONS


The Commission makes the following recommendations for the proposed disposition:

- Ensure the applicant is not seeking to create a PDU since the site is not eligible
- The Board of Alders continues the conversation with the developer about their commitment to senior housing and potentially opting into the Inclusionary Zoning ordinance to provide a development with more affordable units at deeper levels of affordability

ADVICE:

To approve with recommendations based on this proposal’s alignment with the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

ADOPTED: December 20, 2023
Leslie Radcliffe
Chair

ATTEST:  January 10, 2024 | 11:05 AM EST
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Laura E Brown
Executive Director, City Plan Department

¹ Interior Lot - "a lot other than a corner lot with only one frontage on a street " (<http://parcelsales.scgov.net/Definitions.aspx>)

² Pocket Park - "A small area accessible to the general public that is often of primarily environmental, rather than recreational, importance. They can be urban, suburban or rural and often feature as part of [urban regeneration](http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Pocket_park) schemes in inner-city areas to provide areas where wild-life can establish a foothold." (http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Pocket_park)