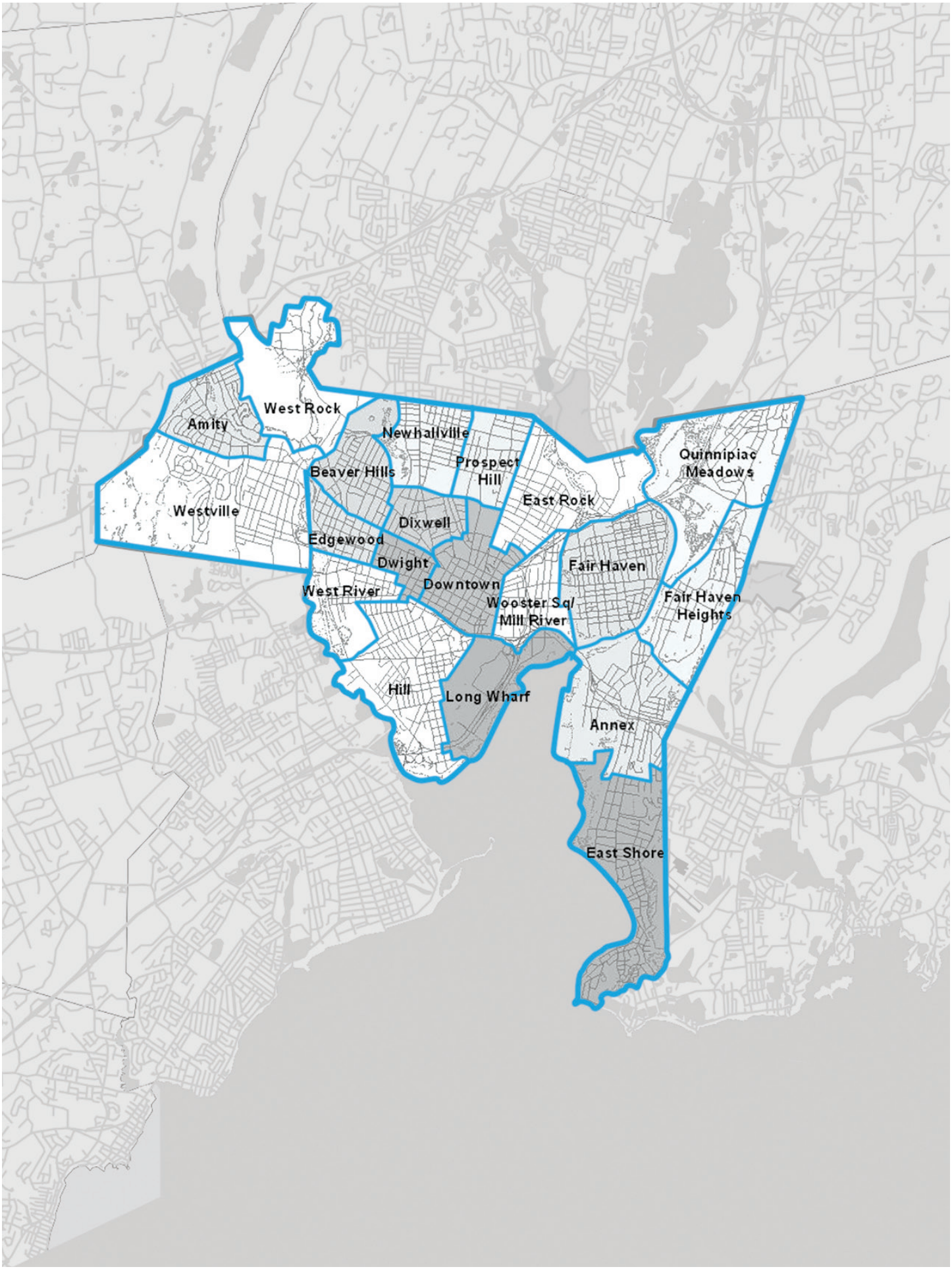
RECOMMENDED GOALS FOR THE ELICKER ADMINISTRATION

City of New Haven
January 2020

JUSTIN ELICKER
TRANSITION TEAM


West Rock
Amity
Newhallville
Prospect Hill
Quinnipiac Meadows
Beaver Hills
East Rock
Westville
Dixwell
Edgewood
Dwight
Fair Haven
Downtown
West River
Wooster Sq/ Mill River
Fair Haven Heights
Hill
Long Wharf
Annex
East Shore

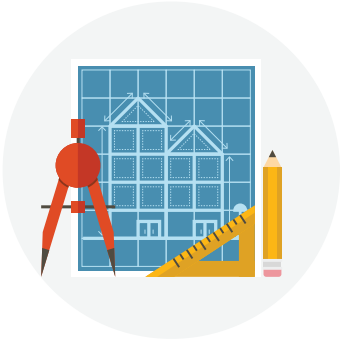
Transition Team Areas of Concentration

Arts, Culture, and Library

Budget and Finance

City Operations and Public Works

Community Leadership, Responsive Government, and Transparency



Economic Development, Workforce, and Transportation

Education

Environment and Climate Change

Health and Housing

Human Services and Immigration

Public Safety

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Letter from Co-Chairs

Beloved Community:

It is with great joy that we present the recommendations of the Elicker Transition Team for the City of New Haven.

The Team concentrated on ten areas: Arts, Culture, and Libraries; Budget and Finance; City Operations and Public Works; Community Leadership, Responsive Government, and Transparency; Economic Development, Workforce, and Transportation; Education; Environment and Climate Change; Health and Housing; Human Services and Immigration; and Public Safety.

On each topic, we offer a set of recommendations designed to provide the Elicker administration with immediate, short-term, and long-term goals. Immediate goals are those that we believe can be accomplished in the first 100 days. Short-term goals are meant to be implemented over the two-year mayoral term. Because of New Haven's short mayoral term, many recommendations are identified as long term; for each of these, we identify steps that can be taken to initiate progress. While we provide recommendations that we believe are achievable, we also recognize that unexpected barriers may arise and it may not be possible to implement every recommendation.

Principles of transparency and inclusion guided the development of these goals. We sought community-wide input in a number of ways, including community meetings, a transition website set up to welcome suggestions, and a community survey. Transition Team members also engaged in individual outreach efforts, hosted meetings, and attended community forums. Our recommendations reflect the main messages received on these topics from the community.

A few additional notes:

1. We received many more recommendations than can be included in this document. Please know that each suggestion was read, and each is valued. Even if it does not appear here, it has been shared with the administration and is part of an appendix, downloadable at justinelicker.com.

2. The recommendations are numbered for convenience, but the numbers do not imply order of priority.

3. In the future there will be additional opportunities for community input. The Elicker administration will continue the work of the Transition Team by creating ongoing forums for engagement, feedback, and ideas.

We hope that you are as excited as we are about the vision and path that the team, working with the community and reflecting community ideas, created for the City that we are proud to call home.

In solidarity,

Representative Robyn Porter | Sarah Miller | Kica Matos

Our Process

The recommendations in this report were co-created with the New Haven community during November and December 2019.

The Transition Team was tasked primarily with listening. Our goal was to identify and relay the shared wisdom of the community. We gathered community input in many ways:

2 public meetings with 497 participants

112 emailed suggestions

353 survey responses

68 meetings with City staff, elected officials, community leaders, educators, and neighbors

Thank you for sharing your practical suggestions, wisdom, and dreams for our community.

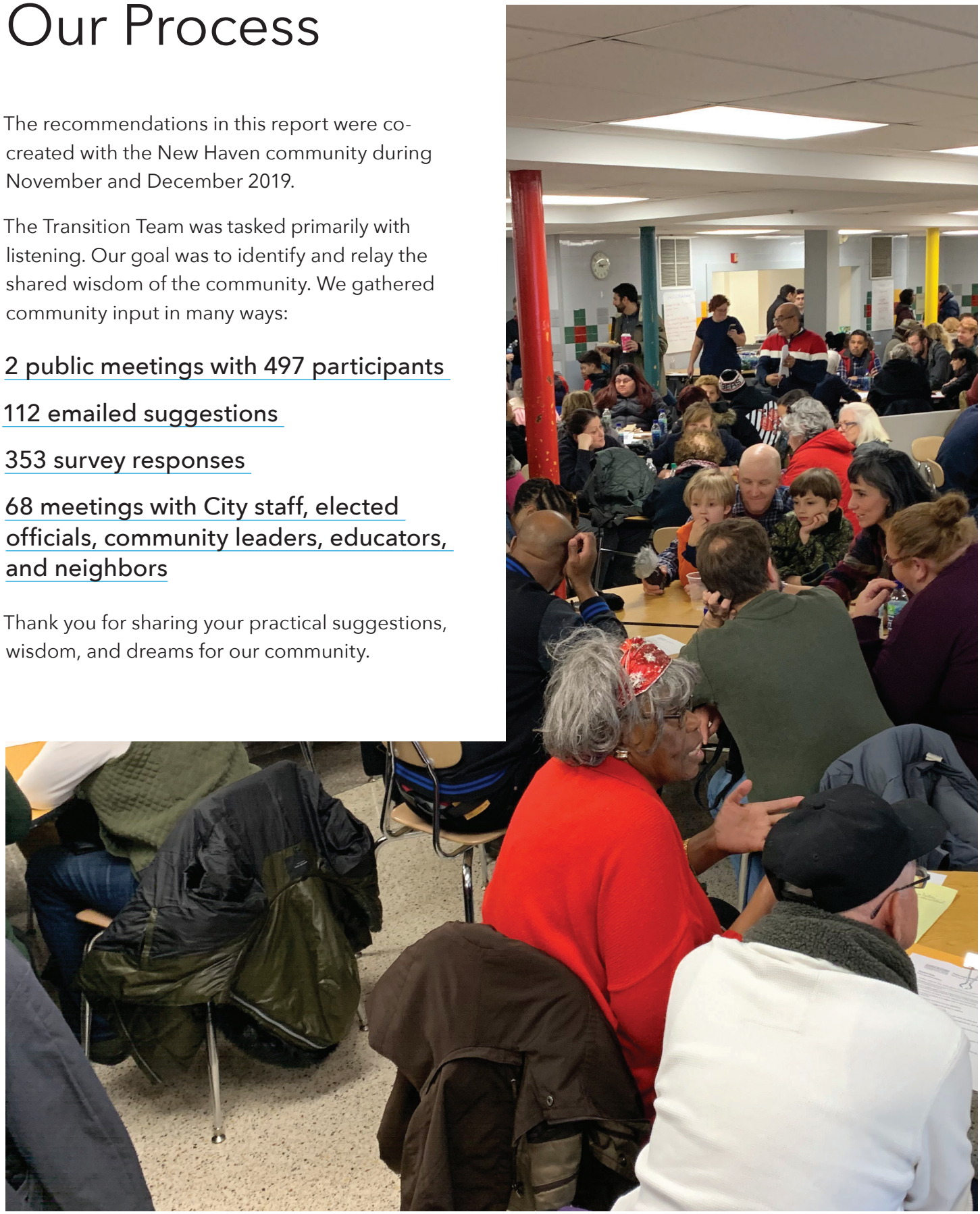


Photo: Sarah Miller

Cross-Cutting Recommendations

A number of recommendations emerged repeatedly, in various forms, across the Transition Team's ten areas of concentration. They apply overall as the administration moves forward with plans and ideas.

1. Facilitate ongoing input.

Establish avenues for authentic, accessible community input in planning, policy recommendations, and assessments of needs. This begins by ensuring diverse community representation on all City boards, commissions, task forces, working groups, and other bodies.

2. Enable two-way communication.

Create a culture of transparency and collaboration within City Hall, as well as between City Hall and the community, a culture in which all ideas, suggestions, and concerns are welcome and valued and information generated by City Hall is made broadly available.

3. Assess and restructure.

Think creatively about the structure and staffing of City Hall, with strategic restructuring over time. To begin, audit each department, covering such areas as mission, programs, structure and staffing, budgets, financial controls, climate concerns, staff development, hiring, infrastructure and equipment, partnerships, data collection, state and federal rules and regulations, internal policies, and planning practices.

4. Maximize shared spaces.

Assess City buildings—occupied and unoccupied—for efficiency and community benefit. Develop a plan for achieving the highest and best community use for each City-owned property.

5. Increase access.

Minimize red tape and improve the accessibility of City services and spaces. Digitize City services and forms, and better utilize social media to share information, while ensuring access to physical forms and information channels for those without digital access. Improve language accessibility by using not just English but the other most spoken languages in the City.

6. Work in partnership.

Expand and deepen collaboration among residents, community organizations, neighborhood groups, Community Management Teams, the New Haven Public Schools, and New Haven's colleges and universities.

7. Recognize that everything is connected.

Fundamental needs such as healthcare, affordable housing, economic security, and environmental sustainability are closely intertwined, yet they are often tackled separately. In the spirit of the national Green New Deal, seek holistic solutions that address multiple challenges concurrently.

8. Secure new revenue.

The City is underfunded. Increased public and private dollars are needed to provide sufficient baseline services, as well as to improve and expand programs.

9. Learn from other cities.

There is much to learn from the successes and failures of cities of similar size and demographics while recognizing New Haven's distinctiveness.

10. Plan first.

Many of the recommendations in this report will not be accomplished in two years—or ten. The City should operate based on a comprehensive long-term plan that is under continuous review. It should consider not only these recommendations but also those to come.

Arts, Culture, and Library

Context

New Haven teems with cultural vibrancy. The arts can play a crucial role in creating economic health, building community, and fostering equity and inclusion. However, the City lacks a coherent vision for its arts and culture policy. Although the City includes a number of very strong arts organizations, the better-resourced institutions are predominantly white-led and cater to largely white audiences; those led by people of color often struggle on the margins. An equity framework, combined with a comprehensive and inclusive cultural-planning process, is needed to address this disparity.

Among the pillars of the City's cultural life is the New Haven Free Public Library. Through the historic Ives Main Library and branches in Dixwell, Fair Haven, the Hill and Westville, the library reaches deep into our City's neighborhoods, touching lives, meeting needs, and fostering a sense of community. In 2018, with extensive community input, the library created a five-year strategic framework that guides its efforts; and in 2019, it was awarded a National Medal for Museum and Library Service. Despite this recognition, the library's success is more fragile than it looks and should not be taken for granted. We recommend that the City double down on the excellent work of our library system to ensure its stability and enable it to flourish.

First 100 Days

Recommendation 1: Prioritize expanded cultural inclusivity in the arts.

Initiate the process to draft and adopt an equity, diversity, and inclusion framework to guide

decision-making. Draw on the Connecticut Office of the Arts' READI (Relevance, Equity, Access, Diversity, Inclusion) principles in creating the framework.

Recommendation 2: Announce a comprehensive cultural-planning process.

Begin drafting a proposed plan for the City to implement and advance that is reflective of New Haven's diverse perspectives. A guiding principle of this plan should be the prioritization and elevation of local talent. The Americans for the Arts group offers a basic approach and rationale: "The cultural planning process assesses the current community culture and creates an implementation plan to achieve a community's vision. Cultural plans act as mirrors for a community—they are, ideally, a reflection of the community's culture that they serve." We could learn from regional models like Boston Creates and Creative Providence.

Recommendation 3: Abolish library late fees and launch a policy review of late fees.

Many libraries across the country have abolished late fees in recognition of the inequities that these fees engender. People with unpaid fines often fail to pay them because they do not have the disposable income to do so. Unpaid fines mean they cannot check out additional books. In October, Chicago became the largest system to abolish late fees. Earlier this year, the American Library Association passed a resolution calling for all libraries to abolish fines. The New Haven Free Public Library has experimented with both amnesty days and suspending late fees for the summer. A policy review would not only take into account lessons from these experiments, staff perspectives, and revenue implications but consider alternative methods of keeping books and videos available for all library users.

Two Years

Recommendation 1: Undertake a comprehensive review of the Department of Arts, Culture, and Tourism.

Consider the structure of the department and its role; its proper place in the organizational chart of the City; the optimal place where it should be housed (physically); and the value of giving it a formal relationship with other City agencies, including those overseeing libraries and parks.

Recommendation 2: Increase the role of art, artists, and the creative process in the work of City departments that create and manage our built environment.

In various City departments—City Plan; Economic Development; Parks, Recreation, and Trees; Transportation, Traffic, and Parking; Public Works; and the Livable City Initiative—prioritize the following objectives:

- Advocate for and/or help to implement "tactical urbanism," defined, courtesy of Wikipedia, as "low-cost, temporary changes to the built environment, usually in cities, intended to improve local neighborhoods and City gathering places";
- Install public art;
- Encourage for-profit developments to include a voluntary percentage of their budgets for publicly visible art projects; and
- Create avenues for collaboration among City departments, artists, arts organizations, and the Proprietors of the New Haven Green to promote and encourage arts and culture in the Lower Green.

Recommendation 3: Create free and affordable community spaces for artists and cultural groups to rehearse and perform.

Lack of access to spaces to rehearse and hold community workshops or concerts is a systemic challenge for individual artists and smaller, less-resourced organizations. The City can identify spaces such as schools, libraries, and community centers that can be made available at low or no cost and create a streamlined mechanism for allowing artists easy access.

Recommendation 4: Assess library staffing needs and competitiveness.

At every level, library salaries are not competitive with those in surrounding towns and related industries, with many salaries unchanged for more than ten years. Entry-level professional staff often leave for higher-paid positions in surrounding communities. An IT manager is also needed to support all the branches. The Elicker administration can launch a review of existing staff needs and salaries in the

library system, phase in essential new positions, and increase salary ranges over time to ensure that the City hires and retains talented and committed staff.

Recommendation 5: Share information about arts and cultural events.

Create more effective communication channels about arts and cultural happenings throughout the City.

Long Term

Recommendation 1: Expand direct investment in equitable arts programming.

Strengthen the Mayor's Neighborhood Cultural Vitality Grant Program to provide direct support for large-scale, grass-roots events poised to grow. Given the City's budget constraints, identify external resources to double the overall funding allocated to support artists and events. Create different levels of funding and different kinds of funding to enable local events like the Pride New Haven celebration, the Dia de los Muertos Parade, the Freddy Fixer Parade, the Westville Village ArtWalk, and the Quinnipiac Riverfest to grow through deeper involvement by and investment from the City. The annual Holiday Tree Lighting and Market could be expanded to include seasonal ice skating on the Green, as with Winterfest Hartford. To deepen the bench of local leaders in the arts, the City could add a category for funding fellowships for artists.

Recommendation 2: Support public cultural events by addressing the high cost of City services, and streamline the permission structure for events large and small.

A consistent message from institutions of all sizes is the prohibitively expensive cost of securing extra duty officers; permits for street closures, vendors, the Health Department, and the Building Department; set up and cleanup; stage rentals; insurance, and more. For large events, police and permit fees can amount to more than half the operational cost. The process is also unnecessarily time-consuming. There is concern regarding high police and fire overtime costs for community events; yet we believe these investments are worthwhile. The City can consider mitigating these prohibitive costs via external funding sources that enable waived fees, sliding scales, and insurance coverage, or an arts and culture funding pool to cover expenses. In addition, it can develop a less burdensome permit application process.

Recommendation 3: Phase in a 1% allocation for libraries.

Raise the library's allocation from approximately 0.77% to 1% of the General Fund, an increase of roughly $1.5 million dollars, to be implemented in phases as the City's fiscal status improves. Current per capita funding for the library ($32.43) is well below that of other cities in Connecticut ($45.73), as well as below the statewide average ($47.35). Chronic underfunding of the library and its infrastructure needs, as well as the central importance of libraries, make this a critical investment for our community.

Recommendation 4: Extend library hours.

The number one request of library patrons is additional hours. Branch libraries are closed on Fridays, and all libraries have very limited evening hours. When funding reaches 1%, additional staff can provide expanded library hours.

Recommendation 5: Expand young people's engagement with the arts.

Facilitate partnerships among district and school leadership, art and music teachers, youth programs, artists, and arts institutions to increase learning opportunities during and outside school across the visual and performing arts.

Recommendation 6: Enhance outside funding for cultural projects.

The Department of Arts, Culture, and Tourism can strategically pursue increased direct investment through grants, sponsorships, and collaborations. While cultural planning will facilitate the success of these efforts, the pursuit of funding can begin right away.

Recommendation 7: Invest in library infrastructure.

Although the libraries are essential parts of the municipal infrastructure and well placed throughout the City (with the notable exception of the East Shore), the buildings need maintenance and periodic renovation to ensure that they meet community needs. A review of the existing structures of all libraries besides Stetson (a new structure is already planned) could help set priorities. As a first step, a renovation of Ives, the main library, is needed to more effectively organize the space.

Recommendation 8: Explore including a Board of Education representative on the Library Board.

Many library programs serve the same population as the public schools. A shared representative could strengthen collaboration.

Recommendation 9: Facilitate residents' engagement with Yale's rich artistic and cultural offerings.

Yale University has incredible resources, which are often not accessible to New Haven residents. The City can work with Yale to identify, promote, encourage, and facilitate opportunities to connect Yale's cultural institutions, thought leaders, and artists with New Haven residents, especially students and artists.

Photo: Tom Breen

Budget and Finance

Context

New Haven continues to grow by attracting people who want a vibrant small-city experience, but significant financial pressures limit the services that the City can offer its residents. Its difficult financial situation has been decades in the making and is not attributable to any single person or decision. Neither tax increases nor spending cuts will be enough to address the City's financial needs. Instead, new revenues are needed. The administration should pursue a dual-track approach: (1) engage stakeholders quickly, in order to recommend a budget to the Board of Alders by March 1, and (2) begin long-term financial planning with broad buy-in to position the City for inclusive growth and leverage new revenue sources.

First 100 Days

Recommendation 1: Engage stakeholders in remediating the budget deficit for FY 2020-2021.

The deficit could be as high as $50 million. The immediate cause of this deficit is a $35 million increase in debt-service costs between this year and the next, along with $15 million in inflationary cost increases and estimated deficits at the Board of Education. Some reduction will be possible through refunding opportunities that maintain current maturities and result in net present-value savings. But the City will need to identify significant new revenue sources to close the gap. It will need to adopt clear, top-line financial goals and targets so that all stakeholders are clear on the outcomes. And it will need to prioritize resolving the budget deficit by engaging everyone impacted to help find possible solutions.

Recommendation 2: Initiate a revenue review.

Assess the full amount of lost revenue from all anchor institutions, other subsidized developments, and other nonprofits, and assess the community impact of the lost revenue. In collaboration with the community, the Board of Alders, and the state delegation begin building a coalition to close the revenue gap. Responsibly partner with Yale and Yale New Haven Hospital in the context of inclusive growth and a new vision for New Haven.

Recommendation 3: Continue current financial controls.

New practices around purchasing, overtime, contract approval, approval of requests for proposals, and hiring, which were implemented in November, should be maintained and adopted as standard practice in future years.

Two Years

Recommendation 1: Close the revenue gap with anchor institutions.

As part of an Inclusive Growth Initiative (see Economic Development recommendations), collaborate with Yale University and Yale New Haven Hospital to ensure the City's financial stability and overall development. In particular, given Yale University's untaxed New Haven property assessed at $6.6 billion, work to secure increased ongoing annual payments to the City that take into account the extent of lost revenue. As the City's largest employers, Yale and Yale New Haven Hospital are integral to New Haven's success—and when New Haven thrives, Yale thrives.

Recommendation 2: Create a holistic, long-term financial stability plan.

Convene a broad coalition of executive and legislative state leaders, leaders from Yale University, Yale New Haven Hospital, and other colleges and nonprofits, labor leaders and leaders from the business sector, and neighborhood leaders in order to present New Haven's financial difficulties as not just an issue of municipal finance but a challenge to the whole community. Show how revenues will be used responsibly and the City positioned for inclusive growth within a long-term plan that requires greater contributions from the state, businesses, and nonprofits. In developing this plan, taxpayers should be the last ones asked to sacrifice.

Recommendation 3: Request that the state develop a plan to support fiscal stability in New Haven and the other large cities.

The Mayor can take a leadership role in an emerging coalition of big-city mayors that can present a strong legislative agenda and seek legislative changes with regard to state funding formulas and ways to enable towns to diversify revenue sources.

Recommendation 4: Undertake a department-by-department review to align spending with needs.

Most of the City's costs go toward personnel, meaning that cuts would require the City to do less with fewer people. However, the administration can examine staffing levels in the Police and Fire Departments, the requirements of union contracts, and the need to ensure public safety. Under the supervision of the Superintendent of the New Haven Public Schools, it can also conduct a review of Board of Education funding needs. As in any large organization, there are probably divisions that have become overstaffed and others that are stretched. Rationalizing staffing across departments is a way to improve service delivery without increasing costs.

Recommendation 5: Implement transparent budgeting and spending.

Publish the City budget in an easily shared and sorted electronic format. In the monthly report and annual budget, break out costs in consolidated cost centers like healthcare by department. Establish an online "check register" that shows all spending. Review and publish the City's policy for travel costs and severance pay. Provide regular reports on pensions and other post-employment benefits, such as fund performance, and make presentations to investors and credit-rating agencies, to the Finance Committee of the Board of Alders, and to the Financial Review and Audit Commission. Review the governance process for bond refundings. At the Board of Education, ensure tighter controls and closer scrutiny of spending to ensure that frontline services are prioritized. Address technical issues in the implementation of Oxygen, a cloud-based system that is supposed to find savings by streamlining billing and payments.

Long Term

Recommendation 1: Establish new City-generated revenue and secure other revenue streams.

The City already imposes a number of fees and has broad public health powers that can be used to enforce new fees. The new fees could include a stormwater fee and public health fees, as well as building-permit and other user fees, which would more directly impact large institutions than households. Other possibilities are a hospital bed tax, a local sales tax, and a commuter tax. However, fees are unlikely to close the budget deficit, and the impact of new revenues on business sentiment, investment, and growth must be assessed. For any fee, exceptions should be made for low-income households and nonprofit organizations wherever possible.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen grant-seeking capacity.

The City has successfully competed for grants from the state and federal governments and from nonprofits and philanthropy. Now the City should assess and grow its current capacity to identify, apply for, manage, and comply with grants. In addition, it should explore other revenue opportunities, such as social impact funding, which are investments designed to generate beneficial social or environmental impacts alongside financial return. It should also ensure full utilization of all existing private and government grant funding, such as the Community Development Block Grants.

Recommendation 3: Formalize good budgeting practices.

There are a number of practices to be considered. The administration should announce a public goal of achieving a 15% budget reserve fund, which would result in lower interest rates from investors and prevent tax increases in the next recession. In addition, the City should remove the "property tax initiative" line in the budget, which reflects the revenues that should be sequestered in case of revenue shortfalls. It is also critical to update facilities and maintenance plans and publish the estimated cost to maintain equipment, vehicles, and facilities.

Recommendation 4: Host a challenge competition.

The City can sponsor a competition for students, urban planners, advocates, and others to try to solve discrete but difficult issues facing the City. Questions that would be appropriate for a challenge competition are how to lower utility costs and how to rationalize the City's fleet. These are just examples. Large, unstructured challenges, such as how to balance the budget, are unlikely to be successful.

Recommendation 5: Experiment with participatory budgeting.

New Haven's strong community must be engaged early and often in the budgeting process. This begins with proactive outreach to discuss the budget—not just inviting community proposals but also asking questions about where we are, how we got here, how budgeting works in New Haven, etc. As a longer-term goal, the administration could consider a participatory budgeting pilot program to increase citizen engagement with City government.

Recommendation 6: Systematize regular review of all contracts.

Beginning with large contracts and those up for renewal, review all processes for contracting and purchasing, as well as processes laid out in the City Charter, ordinances, and administrative policy. Use contracts negotiated by the state, the Capitol Region Council of Governments, the South Central Regional Council of Governments, and other regional and national bodies when

possible, since prices are likely to be lower when contracts are negotiated by a larger body. Allow contracts, particularly software contracts, to be multiyear in order to achieve savings. Move toward performance-based contracting.

Recommendation 7: Set a policy of transparency and honesty in bonding.

When we bond, we should avoid bond premiums.

Recommendation 8: Examine making a move to low-cost, mostly passive pension investments.

Undertake a review of historical returns on different types of investments, with attention to low-cost investments. New York City undertook a similar review and found that, after fees, low-cost investments generated higher returns over time. Reduce the assumed rate of fund returns to a more realistic level. Stretch out payments into the pensions over 30 years, with each of those payments equalized rather than backloaded toward large payments in future years, as is currently the case. Review the Connecticut Treasurer's Short Term Investment Fund as an alternative to depositing the City's money in bank accounts.

Recommendation 9: Consider a land value tax.

The State of Connecticut is piloting a land value tax in place of or in addition to a property tax. Review opportunities for New Haven to use the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) on State Property program to adopt a tax system that is more equitable than the one currently in use.

Photo: Sarah Miller

City Operations and Public Works

Context

The category of City Operations includes a range of essential core functions that affect all departments, particularly Information Technology and Human Resources. The Public Works Department, in taking care of everything from trash and recycling pickup to street repairs, interfaces with more residents on a daily basis than perhaps any other City department. Residents have shared concerns about customer service and ease of access to public information held by City Hall. Sidewalk and road maintenance is also a perennial issue, particularly the timeline for obtaining repairs and the lack of transparency about the sequence in which repairs are made. The administration can improve residents' satisfaction by emphasizing customer service, establishing systems to make public information readily accessible, and facilitating improved public communication around public works repairs and maintenance.

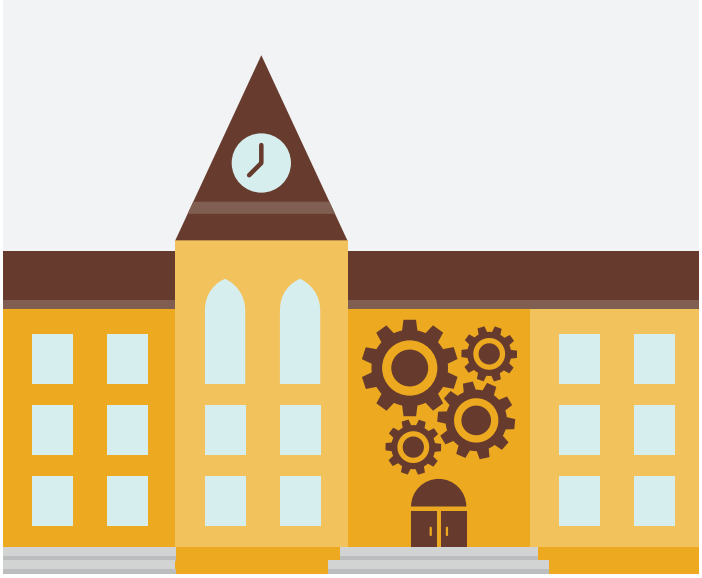
First 100 Days

Recommendation 1: Provide equitable access to City jobs.

Create the expectation that all jobs, internal and external, will be posted on the City's online jobs posting system.

Recommendation 2: Establish the expectation that departments dealing directly with residents prioritize customer service.

Distrust in government is often built on not just government's inability to address a problem but government's inability to communicate effectively about why it can or cannot address a problem. City



employees should respond in a timely manner to resident requests, even if the answer is simply further information, reasons for delay, or an accurate timeline.

Recommendation 3: Plan for labor contract negotiations.

Contracts with two of the City's largest unions will expire in 2020. The negotiation of these contracts allows for a review of policy options like updating job specs and adopting the state Municipal Employees' Retirement System pension program. The administration should work collaboratively with the unions to ensure that the personnel structure meets the City's needs.

Two Years

Recommendation 1: Establish a communications protocol for City employees.

Begin planning for a uniform ticket-tracking system for all requests by residents. Deploy a callback

system for departments with call queues, and impose a uniform voicemail policy so that City voicemail identifies the recipients and uses out-of-office notifications. Update the City website and implement a process for resolving technical issues that impede reaching that goal. Continue digitization of City operations, including requests for bulk trash pickup. Explore new ways to inform residents of impactful City activities in their neighborhoods.

Recommendation 2: Create a transparent tracking system for repairs to City property, including street and sidewalk maintenance.

There is currently no system for finding out where one's request is in the queue or for estimating a timeframe for completion. This information should be accessible to those who request a service, as well as to the public, so that overall progress can be tracked by anyone interested.

Recommendation 3: Evaluate the current system of single-stream recycling and expand recycling.

Improve public awareness about recyclable materials. Assess and seek to resolve underlying causes of the high cost of recycling in our current single-stream system, which combines plastics, paper, metal, glass and other materials in a single curbside bin. Extend recycling to all City departments, all parks, and the New Haven Public Schools.

Recommendation 4: Ensure strong ethics and conflict-of-interest rules.

Review existing rules and processes as they apply to City staff and members of boards and commissions, and refine them as needed.

Recommendation 5: Audit capital equipment and the vehicle fleet.

Assess usage needs for equipment and vehicles. Examine the option of paying for vehicles out of general operating funds instead of in the capital budget, since the equipment and vehicles last for a shorter time than the ten-year bond repayment period. Explore the cost-effectiveness of electrifying City vehicles.

Recommendation 6: Convene regional mayors for shared planning.

Explore how to save costs through shared services, such as animal shelters, public works, and public health.

Recommendation 7: Review the security posture of City Hall and the Hall of Records.

Review security protocols to ensure the safety of staff, elected officials, and the public at City Hall. Evaluate the safety of City staff and the Board of Alders during sessions.

Recommendation 8: Formalize an appeals process for blight violations issued by the Department of Public Works.

The process is already mostly designed and simply needs to be reviewed and finalized.

Longer Term

Recommendation 1: Assess data access and capacity for internal technological support.

Explore unifying Police, Board of Education, and Information Technology staff for increased efficiency and effectiveness. Create a cross-trained on-call rotation for the IT Department, which is already prepared to support different technologies across departments, in case of an emergency. Review the City's cybersecurity posture to ensure that City departments are protected from ransomware and other network threats. Improve data sharing and real-time access to data across departments.

Recommendation 2: Research road maintenance funding needs.

Evaluate whether funding is sufficient to keep City roads in a reasonable state of repair. Work with the Board of Alders to allocate increased funds if needed.

Recommendation 3: Simplify the online system for tax payments.

Most residents avoid the cost and hassle of using the current online platform. An improved electronic process would save dollars, since online payments are cheaper to handle than in-person payments and will lead to more individuals paying their taxes. If possible, the City should set up a single portal for all outstanding taxes and citations.

Recommendation 4: Use automated license plate readers to find out-of-state vehicles.

Collaborate with the state to make sure that vehicles are properly registered at their local addresses. Following Waterbury's example, identify residents who should pay the car tax, and enforce payment of unpaid taxes.

Recommendation 5: Create a municipal utility to buy power in bulk from area utilities and provide an affordable municipal broadband service.

This would have the added advantage of allowing City residents and businesses to buy more low-cost renewable energy than they do now and would serve as an alternative and/or interim step toward Community Choice Aggregation (see Economic Development recommendations), which requires state legislation to implement. Once the relevant state lawsuit is resolved, explore options to allow high-quality, low-cost internet access across the City.

Recommendation 6: Explore establishing a stormwater authority.

Such an entity would ensure the City's ability to effectively manage stormwater and related fees. Evaluate the feasibility of such a service, including a review of any required exemptions or rebates for small nonprofits.

Photo: Sarah Miller

Community Leadership, Responsive Government, and Transparency

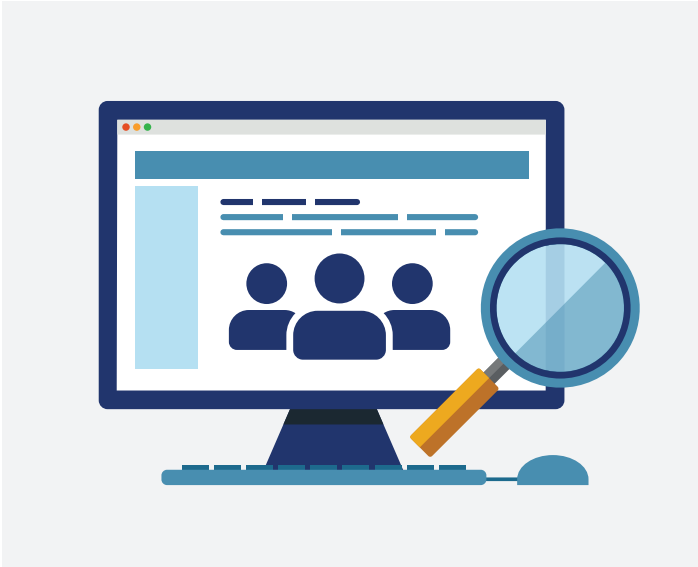
Context

The City needs to move beyond community engagement to community leadership. Right now, many structures disproportionately negatively affect black and brown residents. Current leadership structures, including boards and commissions, do not yet adequately represent our community, and investment in outreach and education is needed to broaden representation. City meetings, resources, and information must also become more accessible by enacting diversity, equity, and inclusion frameworks in City processes and operations. In acknowledging and accounting for the ways past and current structures created and continue to sustain racial inequities, the City can create deliberate systems and supports that strive to achieve racial equity through proactive and preventative measures. Racial justice and equity means having policies, practices, attitudes, and actions that promote equal opportunity, treatment, and outcomes for people of all races. In order to move toward a more just and equitable New Haven, residents need to both lead in the building of these policies and deeply benefit from the policies that the City and the community create together.

First 100 Days

Recommendation 1: Lay the groundwork for an intentional, robust communication strategy.

Via the City website and other tools, educate residents on City processes and the way to get involved. As a starting point, create an



organizational chart for the City and each department, a legislative decision flowchart, and a flowchart for development projects. Utilize the City's online events calendar to include, at a minimum, all public meetings. Create a plan to make all public communications available in Spanish and Arabic, the second and third most spoken languages in New Haven after English.

Recommendation 2: Increase transparency around community participation.

Create a clear and open process for joining boards and commissions, with an announcement of when applications open, a description of the application and appointment process, a timeline for appointments, and a list of clear criteria for serving. Prioritize representation through intentional outreach to neighborhoods, youth, and other underrepresented groups to ensure that boards

and commissions are representative of the City's residents. Improve residents' ability to participate meaningfully with board and commission activities by listing on the City website all available information on boards, commissions, and ad hoc committees, creating standard procedures for public comment, and updating the website with cancellations and meeting minutes. Broaden notice requirements for development projects to include posting notices for all hearings and zoning changes on the City website, announcing them in press releases, and, where possible, giving notice in schools, libraries, and elsewhere.

Recommendation 3: Consult with community and faith leaders.

Regularly consult with both faith-based leaders who represent the range of New Haven's religious communities and community leaders who represent a broad section of City residents. These leaders can all be called upon to share information, build partnerships to improve community welfare, build on common goals and interests, and advise on critical issues that directly involve specific community groups, faith-based organizations, and/or community-based organizations.

Two Years

Recommendation 1: Make public meetings accessible, and ensure they are respectful of everyone.

Explore partnerships to provide childcare for public meetings and on-site childcare that City employees could pay into. Establish lactation rooms for breastfeeding employees and visitors, and provide toys and children's books in waiting and meeting areas. Provide Spanish and Arabic interpretation whenever possible. Begin meetings with an acknowledgment that identifies the original indigenous inhabitants. Collaborate with the Board of Education and Board of Alders to explore livestreaming their meetings on Facebook. Plan for an upgrade of the Board of Alders sound system. Unlock the doors of City Hall for all public meetings, even when they begin before 9 a.m..

Recommendation 2: Deploy personalized electronic communications.

Develop a citywide email list that can be segmented by interests and location—e.g., local events, citywide events, citywide policies, zoning changes, and new developments. Provide text alerts for residents who prefer texting or who do not use email that links to email content; do this alongside a parallel social media strategy.

Recommendation 3: Continue ongoing community canvasses by the Mayor and senior staff.

This could include an hour of door-knocking per person per month that involves open conversations or topic-based questions from staff.

Recommendation 4: Collaborate with youth to design avenues for youth leadership in City government.

Work with youth-led community groups, high schools, and the Citywide Student Council, among others. Programs could include Mayor for A Day, continued leadership on the Board of Education, and youth service on boards and commissions.

Recommendation 5: Support strong census outreach.

Continue to support ongoing efforts to have a strong census year. Focus on ensuring that all residents feel comfortable participating, regardless of immigration status, since increased participation increases the availability of state and federal funds and programs.

Recommendation 6: Facilitate improved public engagement with the budget.

To help residents more easily follow progress on the budget, collaborate with the Board of Alders to arrange staggered budget workshop times so they no longer occur only late in the evenings, as well as provide the City budget in an easily shared and sorted electronic format (see Budget and Finance recommendations). Provide financial information to residents upon request rather than requiring formal Freedom of Information Act requests. The Police and Fire Departments should publicly share a cost itemization of overtime budgets.

Recommendation 7: Improve community connections with the Registrar of Voters.

Recruit more poll workers, and publicize information about voting-related changes. Work with schools to identify suitable volunteers and paid staff to help on election days. Ramp up voter registration efforts going into the 2020 election.

Longer Term

Recommendation 1: Partner with Community Management Teams.

Help residents and City officials understand how CMTs are currently perceived and how their functions can be improved to fit the needs of each district. Provide staff time for outreach, and seek funding for childcare and interpretation to ensure accessibility and inclusion. Consider building in time at each CMT meeting for residents to meet and discuss issues both with and without the presence of City officials.

Recommendation 2: Enhance the transparency of Livable Cities Initiative and Economic Development transactions.

Create a clear, accessible list of all City properties and developments. Regularly update SeeClickFix about inspections, inspection results, and residential licenses. Via the City website, outline how to apply to lease, buy, or use City property; supply application materials; and enumerate criteria for consideration and approval. Prioritize applications from New Haven residents for community-oriented purposes. All applications should be reviewed and receive a response within a specified time frame. Negotiations around developer incentives (e.g., tax abatements) and affordability should be made public, and the Affordable Housing Commission should be given a stronger voice in decision-making.

Recommend 3: Implement a City open data policy.

Many public debates about City matters are not fully informed by available public data. As data are digitized and processed, they should be made anonymous and published in the most accessible format available. Examples include publishing the City's motor vehicle crash data and lead abatement statistics.

Recommendation 4: Develop a citywide equity initiative.

Establish a permanent office or program to examine and address structural racism and promote racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity.

Recommendation 5: Invest in New Haven as a city friendly and safe for LGBTQ+ residents.

Run an audit on LGBTQ+ funding to determine what percentage of the budget is currently allocated specifically to the LGBTQ+ community and LGBTW+ issues. Develop a permanent LGBTQ+ Commission with the goal of supporting the LGBTQ+ community in New Haven and making sure the City is friendly and safe for members. Create an LGBTQ+ resources section on the City website. Ensure that LGBTQ+/queerness is a diversity factor considered in hiring City staff. Support programming for queer youth, especially queer youth of color.

Recommendation 6: Plan for revision of the City Charter and potential redistricting.

In advance of the 2023 Charter revision, design an inclusive process for identifying community needs and priorities.

Photo: Lucy Gellman

Economic Development, Workforce, and Transportation

Context

In recent years, New Haven has undergone a dramatic private development boom, experienced job growth, and pioneered transportation investments. Although the City has made great strides, wealth inequality, underemployment, and traffic safety issues continue to hold New Haven back from being the "community where all can thrive" envisioned by Mayor Elicker. New Haven also faces the challenge of $6.6 billion in untaxed property owned by Yale and Yale New Haven Hospital. Going forward, New Haven's residents, institutions, businesses, and other stakeholders need to strive to grow together for the benefit of all. To help accomplish this, the administration can implement a new economic development strategy that builds on all its assets, including the entrepreneurial potential of its residents, the enduring strength and proud spirit of its neighborhoods, and the world-class strength of its educational, biomedical research, and healthcare institutions. Through a united strategy for truly inclusive economic resilience and growth, New Haven can foster the kind of development capable of creating good jobs that translate into meaningful future opportunities for local residents and encourage the Grand List growth necessary for the longer-term fiscal stability of the municipal government. The administration's guiding principle in this area should be inclusive growth. It should prioritize community planning and development that is resident-led and invests in the City's most vulnerable populations through skills training, educational opportunities, and access to municipal resources.

First 100 Days

Recommendation 1: Announce an Inclusive Growth Initiative.

As soon as possible, initiate a community-led plan for shared economic growth. Foundational to this effort is a plan to close the revenue gap with Yale and Yale New Haven Hospital (see Budget and Finance recommendations). The process should include residents, institutions, businesses, and community organizations—everyone invested in the economic success of the City and its residents. The single most important thing the City can do for economic development is create a common, unifying narrative that residents and institutions can come together to plan and work together to achieve. The plan should specify what sectors the growth efforts should focus on, and it should define goals, including what a "good job" entails, how institutions can help provide good jobs for City

residents, how to facilitate tangible opportunities for certain vulnerable (e.g., formerly incarcerated) and underrepresented (e.g., persons with disabilities) groups, how to grow green jobs, and how to ensure that New Haven contractors are preferred for construction work. Further, the initiative should create a dialogue on how the educational resources in the region can support access to new growth sectors, and it should acknowledge structural barriers that prevent residents from taking advantage of opportunities. Central to this initiative is appointing a permanent Economic Development Administrator to reimagine the Economic Development Administration around principles of "Community Planning and Development"—principles that encourage human flourishing as opposed to wealth extraction by elite groups. The long-term goal should be to produce and provide "Housing For All" with "All Hands On Deck" coordination among private, nonprofit, government, and amateur groups and individuals.

Recommendation 2: Set the goal to create a robust multimodal transportation network.

Declare the intent to transform the City transportation infrastructure through collaborative planning and new investment. The plan will incorporate efforts to:

- Make all City streets Complete Streets—that is, safe for pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, and mobility-assistive devices;
- Encourage transit-oriented development along transit corridors and at major stops;
- Pursue coordination between all bus and shuttle transit systems in the region to create an efficient and attractive transportation alternative to driving;
- Seek green and sustainable transport options;
- Facilitate safe, convenient access to and from Union Station and Long Wharf via multiple transportation modes;
- Support faster service to and from New York along Metro-North;
- Expand service at Tweed Airport, with the goal of attending to neighborhood concerns and reducing airport reliance on municipal subsidies; and
- Encourage direct bus, shuttle, or rail service between New Haven and Bradley Airport.

Two Years

Recommendation 1: Orient the City toward inclusive growth and fiscal stability.

Engage stakeholders in a shared long-term plan to encourage inclusive growth. Besides closing the revenue gap with Yale and Yale New Haven Hospital, the administration should plan to:

- Support land use regulations, development policy, and housing programs to maximize participation in a "Housing For All" initiative;
- Promote the City's existing zoning provisions, Citywide Tax Assessment Deferral Program, Home Repair Fund, and Tax Abatement Program to local residents and homeowners;
- Reevaluate the Tax Deferral Program based on leasing data from recent development projects;
- Prioritize the use of funds generated from the Tax Deferral Program for City residents' projects;
- Work with Dwight, Edgewood, and West River residents and homeowners in preparation for the planned Neuroscience Center;
- Support a New Haven Community Land Bank and Trust;
- Adopt a Local Preservation Ordinance to prevent the unnecessary demolition of historic and potentially historic structures; and
- Task a Zoning Enforcement Officer with addressing issues involving non-owner-occupied residential property owners who use dwelling

units for short-term rentals, such as Airbnb, and support zoning amendments to allow homeowners to rent out vacant bedrooms as a way to benefit from the market for places for short-term stays.

Recommendation 2: Reestablish municipal government as a leader in exemplifying and promoting local hiring and living wages.

Announce a relaunch of the City as an anchor employer committed to New Haven hiring. Embrace the principle that "One Job Should Be Enough," and expect all employers to provide living wages, benefits, and a fair process for workers who want to unionize. Establish a shared measure of what constitutes a good job. Evaluate the supply and capacity of the area's current construction training and pipeline programs by trade, facilitate collaboration among programs to maximize utilization and benefit to residents, and explore mechanisms to infuse private development deals with local hiring clauses. Promote the City's pipelines to every employer, and share resources for identifying qualified candidates for open positions. Ensure that those tasked with serving vulnerable and underrepresented communities are engaged in this effort. Facilitate collaboration between employers and pipeline organizations that identify and support job candidates. Engage pipeline and training organizations in the early stages of project development and land disposition agreements.

Recommendation 3: Begin work on a comprehensive multimodal transportation network plan.

Engage representatives from the Engineering, Transportation, City Plan, Police, and Public Works Departments, the community, and the Board of Alders in plan development. Coordinate routine street maintenance with planning efforts. As an initial focus, the administration can:

- Deploy and test temporary traffic-calming devices like curb extensions, intersection bump-outs, and neckdowns with paint, delineator tubes, and planters;
- Prioritize transportation planning on Whalley Avenue, Whitney Avenue, State Street, and Route 34;
- Engage the Connecticut Department of Transportation to make Complete Streets investments on state roads like Route 80 and Route 10;
- Promote Yale University's free shuttle service to non-Yale affiliates;
- Encourage coordination of bus and shuttle transit services among CTtransit, Yale University, the Greater New Haven Transit District, and major employers that operate private shuttles;
- Envision state-owned land adjacent to major transit facilities as opportunities for transit-oriented development and reduction of local congestion and pollution;
- Seek a more favorable Bike Share program agreement to better attract users; and
- Explore creating a Tweed Airport Impact Zone to make investments in Complete Streets, house soundproofing, noise barriers, and other community benefits.

Longer Term

Recommendation 1: Become a city where development is driven by residents.

Restructure the Economic Development Administration to focus on community planning and development. Seek to address the underlying causes of property abandonment, vacancy, neglect, absenteeism, and demolition of structures. Prioritize opportunities to develop vibrant neighborhood commercial corridors, with attention to vacancies. Diversify the local economy beyond education, health services, and biomedical

research, fields that may change in the future. Provide incentives for City employees to live in New Haven by developing a home ownership program accessible to employees at all pay levels.

Recommendation 2: Invest in an inclusive entrepreneurship strategy with a focus on local entrepreneurs.

As a first step, streamline how entrepreneurs interact with City programs, policies, and requirements by revising the City website and processes for entrepreneurs to create a seamless user experience for navigating City requirements. Provide regular office hours when entrepreneurs can schedule one-on-one time for tailored support by phone or in person. To understand what existing businesses need, hold a business census to include a public survey and "door-to-door" outreach. In later steps:

- Partner with Yale and other universities and colleges to leverage funding, mentorship, space, and other supports for entrepreneurs;
- Establish a structured, cohort-based entrepreneurship program that deeply supports new entrepreneurs with the skills, resources, and confidence to build their businesses;
- Support existing businesses with critical marketing and storefront support, especially immigrant-, Latinx-, and black-owned businesses;
- Establish a local business agreement between Yale and New Haven that includes an annual commitment to source local products, a commitment from Yale University Properties to offer affordable storefront space, and an impact loan fund for small businesses and entrepreneurs rooted in the community;
- Invest in new ownership models by creating cooperative support and education programs;
- Reduce the cost of electricity for small businesses by exploring a partnership with United Illuminating and advocating for state legislation to allow Community Choice Aggregation—that is, shared electricity-buying power through an aggregator to increase options and reduce costs; and
- Support an accessible biotech industry through investment in K-12 and college-level science education and workforce development programs to ensure that New Haven residents can participate in and be the primary beneficiaries of economic benefits associated with the biotech industry.

Recommendation 3: Strive to become a multimodal City.

A multimodal New Haven will have Complete Streets that are safe and convenient for all transportation modes and users of all abilities; downtown streets designed for local trips at off-peak times, not just rush-hour commuting; coordinated planning for street maintenance and multimodal transportation investments; access to a robust bus transit system consolidated from many previously uncoordinated services; development that encourages transit use and supports improvements to transit service; and connectedness within the City, between the City and its regional neighbors, and beyond the region to the wider world.

Photo: Tom Breen

Education

Context

The New Haven Public Schools face a moment of transition, challenge, and possibility. Presently there is system-wide instability because of two short-lived Superintendents, a severe and recurring deficit, inadequate numbers of personnel, and dramatic inequity among schools. State Department of Education School Performance Indicators privilege external standardized assessments over high-quality teacher-created performance assessments, presenting a challenge to authentic learning. Yet the opportunity for new leadership and the current initiative to create a "Whole Child Framework" point in a positive direction. The Elicker administration can build confidence in the New Haven Public Schools and renew faith in public education; draw from existing knowledge, resources, and relationships, inside and outside the district, to advise and inform; and secure the resources and partnerships needed to serve our children's complex needs. Efforts should begin with what is most achievable and directly impactful for the greatest number of families while laying a stable foundation for continual progress toward the full promise of public education.

First 100 Days

Recommendation 1: Declare 2020 the Year of the Whole Child in New Haven.

The education of children begins with recognition of the inherent assets and strengths that students and families bring to our school communities. In turn, it is the community's responsibility to ensure that childrens' holistic needs—physical, cognitive, cultural, social, and psychological—are understood

and met through instructional practices grounded in research-based child development theory. Given the challenges created by long-term systemic inequity, we must marshall new resources in order to eliminate barriers to learning, and we must reject practices that reproduce educational inequities. This process begins with a declaration of intent.

Recommendation 2: Establish guiding principles for appointments to the Board of Education and the New Haven Early Childhood Council.

The Mayor has significant influence over the direction of these key bodies via appointments. To ensure that appointments are made with integrity and transparency, it is necessary to create guidelines that are aligned with recommendations of the National Association of School Boards and the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education.

Recommendation 3: Nurture a collaborative working relationship between the Mayor and the Interim Superintendent, and between the New Haven Public Schools and City Hall.

A well-functioning school system relies on key decision-makers developing positive relationships that are grounded in understanding of and respect for one another's distinct statutory roles and responsibilities. Although the City Charter provides for the Mayor to be a member of the Board of Education, this dynamic is an outlier in school boards around the country and for good reason: because it leads to hyperpoliticization. Our new Mayor can avoid this trap by maintaining an overall focus on children and by recognizing that district educators are charged with educating and that the role of the City is to bring resources to support education.

Two Years

Recommendation 1: Ensure a transition to a stable, community-supported Superintendent.

The district requires a formal transition to stable, permanent leadership, selected via an inclusive process driven by authentic community input. The new leadership should be committed to a community-supported purpose, set of values, and vision for public education.

Recommendation 2: Develop a shared analysis and long-term plan to educate the whole child and address barriers to learning.

Under the direction of the Superintendent, establish an understanding of how current curriculum and teaching practices align with child development and prioritize strategies for improvement that increase learning time, decrease chronic absenteeism, and improve graduation rates. As an initial priority, identify resources to enhance and expand the district's inquiry-based early learning initiative. In addition, identify short-term and long-term strategies to develop and improve:

- Teaching in alignment with children's developmental needs;
- Understanding of racism and implicit bias among students and educators;
- Culturally affirming and historically truthful curriculum and teaching;
- Access to foreign-language, arts, health, and physical education;
- Social and emotional learning and restorative practices for students and educators;
- Support for students navigating trauma and mental health challenges;
- Understanding and use of authentic performance assessment while de-centering the use of corporate-created standardized tests; and
- Ethical practices, from LGBTQ+ and cultural sensitivity to treatment of food waste.

Recommendation 3: Improve problem-solving, transparency, and inclusive decision-making.

School district operations are notoriously opaque. Educators, parents, and students report that concerns are routinely left unresolved and that they are shut out of decision-making. To facilitate the most basic need—obtaining answers to questions and resolving problems—the district can establish a "No Wrong Door" policy that invites the community to approach any school or district office for assistance related to the school system. A chart detailing the process for resolving questions and concerns can be posted prominently at every school and on the district website. In addition, an expanded Board of Education Teaching and

Learning Committee could facilitate educator, staff, and community participation in policy development, as well as advance analysis and planning around educating the whole child.

Recommendation 4: Establish fiscal stability and direct resources to staffing.

Services to children cannot be enhanced without new revenue sources and ethical fiscal governance. Conduct a "forensic" audit of the Board of Education to establish a baseline understanding of how dollars have been spent to date. Implement a district Procurement Policy to support responsible stewardship of dollars going forward. Develop a plan to secure increased public and private dollars. As new resources are identified, direct them to ensure adequate staffing—including substitutes, teachers, teaching assistants, counselors, social workers, tutors, library media specialists, nurses, food service workers, and building maintenance workers—as well as improved staff wellness and working conditions, including living wage compensation and support for teaching assistants' pathways to certification.

Recommendation 5: Cultivate a citywide learning community.

Expand the citywide "Big Read" to include a common read on a tough subject such as race, with books tiered to different age levels, and invite the community to weigh in on the book selections.

Longer Term

Recommendation 1: Align vocational and technical education with local growth sectors and a sustainable future.

Our schools have an essential role to play in facilitating diverse career options for students. In addition to college preparation, students must have access to and preparation for technical careers in areas of growth within the local economy and in green technologies. The City can partner with local community colleges to make their vocational courses more accessible to high school students through the dual college credit program and to encourage courses tied directly to local career opportunities and green jobs. Partnerships with businesses, nonprofits, government, and local professionals can facilitate internship placements, which can be promoted to students and families via enhanced school career days. Using these initiatives to create a comprehensive long-term plan geared toward more intentional, integrated local workforce development would ideally provide every high school student with the opportunity to establish, before graduation, industry-recognized credentials and a supported pathway to a sustainable, fulfilling career.

Recommendation 2: Deliver reliable educational programming outside the traditional school day, after school and over the summer.

Learning does not stop when school is dismissed, and our City can support a more integrated network of programs to support children and working families outside of school hours. The City should identify resources to expand high-quality after-school programs implemented by the district and community partners at district schools with no consistent after-school programs. Via coordination with Elderly Services, there could be collaboration with seniors who can offer services and programs.

Recommendation 3: Invest in early education, from birth through preschool.

All children deserve equitable access to high-quality early-learning experiences. This begins with support for the expansion of high-quality home-based childcare businesses and advocacy for an increase in the subsidies available to families for these and other early childcare programs. In collaboration with the Early Childhood Council, the City administration can streamline access to current public preschool

offerings with a universal application and develop long-term strategies to provide all children with access to high-quality preschool programs.

Recommendation 4: Increase the number of African-American, Latinx, Spanish-speaking, and New Haven-resident educators.

Student learning is enhanced by educators who understand students' lived experiences, and significant efforts must be made to recruit and retain them. As an initial step, the City can develop partnerships with university teacher preparation programs, such as a pipeline with effective mentoring for talented high school juniors and seniors to study education, and a university-based local alternative route to certification, to transition professionals from other fields into teaching. In addition, the City should research potential incentives, including a homebuyers' program, tax incentives for teachers residing in New Haven, and a hiring preference for New Haven residents and Spanish speakers, as the foundation for a long-term plan to diversify the faculty.

Recommendation 5: Broaden and enhance bilingual and dual-language programs and supports for immigrant students.

A majority of New Haven Public Schools students are Latinx, but current bilingual and dual-language offerings are inadequate to meet student needs. Establishing a comprehensive K-8 bilingual program at a neighborhood school in the Hill would support its high number of immigrant families, as well as provide additional bilingual staff and enhanced support services for immigrant students. At the same time, dual-language learning provides an opportunity for all children. The City should host a community forum on how to support and improve bilingual education and bilingualism across the City and use this input as the basis for longer-term planning.

Recommendation 6: Develop student, parent, and guardian advocacy skills and knowledge of child development.

Progress in our schools and school district should be driven by those most directly affected. In recent years, the district and the City implemented with mixed results a range of initiatives to empower student leaders and educate parents and guardians on a range of topics. To understand this history and establish constructive structures and programs going forward, we need to study current and former programs and models, including how schools seek to engage families and empower student leaders. Another useful step would be to conduct a survey of students and families to establish the types of programming that will best elicit families' engagement, nurture authentic student leadership, deepen understanding of child development, and equip parents and guardians for constructive advocacy.

Recommendation 7: Expand student, family, and educator services and supports through community and City partnerships.

While New Haven is rich in human and organizational resources to support the education of young people and their families, many of these resources go untapped. The City should create a collaborative plan for expanding community partnerships, volunteers, and mentoring, as well as for enhancing collaboration between the New Haven Public Schools, City programs, and community agencies that serve children. It should survey school leadership to find out what volunteers and supplies are needed and share these needs centrally on the City website. It should support the development and promotion of Get Connected New Haven, an online database of available services, as well as identify and seek to fill service gaps. It should also consider creating a partnership for volunteer and mentorship matching

that could include connecting seniors with youth; the goal would be to identify a supportive mentor for every student in our community.

Recommendation 8: Establish new revenue sources toward full, stable funding.

Public education is chronically underfunded, presenting a perennial challenge to the delivery of high-quality education for every child. Actions to take: Improve the City's grant-seeking capacity for programs that serve children by reviewing available private and government grant programs and aggressively seeking new funding. Initiate planning on a statewide campaign for full funding for public education in Connecticut based on an updated, independent cost study. Ensure that education is at the top of our state lobbying agenda and build a coalition of cities and towns with similar needs.

Recommendation 9: Achieve equity in resources and overall quality among schools.

Inequitable and inadequate resources among district schools constitute a long-standing challenge, as is the perception that the school district has higher- and lower-quality schools. All district schools should be sufficiently resourced, and every school should be the kind of place that all parents and guardians would be happy to send their own children. Actions to take: Study equity models that provide sufficient educational resources in other districts. Host a community forum to gather input on pathways to greater equity: both can inform a long-term strategy of sufficient resources for all. Prioritize new services and supports for the least-resourced schools, including reducing elementary and middle-school class sizes in select schools with the highest needs.

Recommendation 10: Realize a racially integrated school district.

Despite pockets of integration, our district remains racially segregated, which is a disservice to all children and the City writ large. The process of integrating our schools begins with research and community input. Actions to take: Collaborate with the current District Equity Team to implement its District Racial Equity Policy and implementation plan. To inform the next steps, study redistricting models and possibilities implemented across the country, and host a community forum to gather initial input on approaches and options.

Photo: Sarah Miller

Environment and Climate Change

Context

The climate crisis is a national and global emergency that threatens critical ecosystems and communities. A 2018 United Nations report warns that we have *less than ten years* to stabilize global temperatures and mitigate catastrophic natural disasters. In 2012, New Haven responded to the destruction of Superstorm Sandy. In the aftermath of Hurricane Maria in 2017, New Haven became a climate refuge city for families displaced from Puerto Rico.

Last year, the Board of Alders declared a climate emergency and passed a Climate Emergency Resolution, which establishes a Climate Emergency Mobilization Task Force and "calls on the Mayor to direct all city departments to report to the Task Force." It also calls for widespread climate emergency education and partnerships with local organizations to include "job creation, environmental justice, and public health in project development and to prioritize equitable outcomes, particularly for poor and marginalized communities." The Task Force will address reductions in greenhouse emissions by the end of 2021, placing the highest priority on "equitable and just transition in all sectors." The administration is enjoined to operate via a Just Transition framework, which aims to shift the base of economic and political power from an extractive economy to a regenerative economy, and commit to social equity. By emphasizing the intersectionality of climate change, we can collaborate to achieve a significant reduction in local greenhouse emissions.

First 100 Days

Recommendation 1: Publicly declare a climate emergency and action plan.

Establish that New Haven will respond with urgency to the climate emergency by charting a path to a 55% reduction of 1999 greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2050. As our environment deteriorates, frontline low-income and marginalized communities of color will continue to bear a disproportionate burden and become the most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. The City should advance a commitment to equity by planning with these frontline communities most impacted by environmental injustice and energy insecurity. Other actions to take: Affirm commitment to a federal Green New Deal Resolution to set priorities for a statewide policy agenda centered on investments in green jobs, infrastructure, building retrofits, and transit reforms, among others. Endorse the US Mayors' Climate

Protection Agreement (2005) and strengthen New Haven's advocacy for climate change action within the United States Conference of Mayors.

Recommendation 2: Establish the Climate Emergency Mobilization Task Force.

Involve all stakeholder groups, from department heads to those most at risk during the climate crisis, including elderly residents, female-headed low-income households, and communities of color.

Two Years

Recommendation 1: Convene department heads to address the intersectional impacts of climate change and plan for potential disaster.

Establish, coordinate, and address departmental goals in accordance with New Haven's 2018 Climate and Sustainability Framework. Strengthen climate emergency and environment communications on the City's website, which should include information on issues and actions related to the environment and climate change, disaster and emergency preparedness, and related content from environmental groups, task forces, management teams, and City initiatives. Ensure strong and supported partnerships with nongovernmental organizations that serve marginalized communities of color. Develop a New Haven Disaster Readiness Plan that prepares the City for future climate-induced migration, immigration, and other impacts.

Recommendation 2: Conduct public outreach and education to promote climate awareness and readiness strategies.

Establish Climate Emergency Town Halls to promote awareness and engage the public in co-creating climate readiness strategies. Ensure that the New Haven Public Schools science curriculum includes grade-appropriate climate modules, and consider an annual citywide Climate Justice Symposium to showcase student work. Prioritize after-school programs centered on environmental sustainability and transportation alternatives, such as training in how to fix and maintain bicycles. Center outreach on communities of color, low-income neighborhoods, and youth, perhaps offering student internships to support outreach.

Recommendation 3: Support and expand policy initiatives and collaborations in food systems.

New Haven's Food Systems and Policy Division works at the intersection of health, socioeconomic justice, and environment. Actions to take: Encourage the Community Food Systems Hub, a proposed "multipurpose facility for food systems-related organizations in New Haven" to strengthen food entrepreneurship opportunities, with particular attention to low-income and underemployed residents and entrepreneurs of color. Support the Green Ordinances Working Group, a collaboration between the Departments of City Plan, Engineering, and Food System and Policy to guide zoning reform toward more equitable land-use policies for food- and farming-related work. Implement the Good Food Purchasing Program, a national framework to improve transparency and accountability in public food procurement, and school meals in particular, focused on the values of support for local economies, environmental sustainability, valued workforce, nutritional health, and animal welfare.

Recommendation 4: Improve citywide environmental practices.

Establish policies that eliminate unnecessary idling of City vehicles to reduce pollution and fuel consumption. Ban all carcinogenic pesticides and

herbicides, particularly near water sources and recreational areas. Prioritize wildlife habitats. Create a coordinated plan for tree maintenance, including swift and efficient removal when needed and collaboration with United Illuminating to eliminate injurious tree trimming by their crews.

Longer Term

Recommendation 1: Promote energy independence and equity.

New Haven's housing stock is generally old and lacks adequate air sealing and insulation. Seventy percent of New Haven residents are renters, with lower-income renters residing in older housing units and having to pay higher electricity bills than those in newer housing. Approximately 2,000 individuals in New Haven routinely experience utility disconnection. Many others are forced to scale back on basic needs and go into debt to avoid disconnection; many also experience housing instability, including eviction. Actions to take: Explore Community Choice Aggregation (see Economic Development recommendations) to allow for collective purchasing power and potentially reduce electricity prices by 15% to 20%, with a 100% renewable energy option. Work closely with United Illuminating to ensure that low-income households have energy audits, and explore the Livable City Initiative's capacity to address residential energy efficiency, including holding absentee landlords accountable for inadequate energy efficiency. Convene stakeholders around energy justice in order to prioritize the voices of residents experiencing energy insecurity, research low-income utility assistance programs, and address inequalities.

Recommendation 2: Invest in energy efficiency and green transportation.

Consider a citywide Green New Deal like that of Ithaca, New York, to convert all government operations to renewable energy. Invest in electric-powered City vehicles and become a member of an electric vehicle car-sharing program. Reduce the number of private cars allowed to park on public streets to allow for safer and more equitable transportation. Via goNewHavengo and Complete Streets, establish safe routes for youth to walk to school, and enforce a citywide speed limit of twenty miles per hour.

Recommendation 3: Divest from fossil fuels.

In addition to divesting City pension funds from fossil fuels, collaborate with Fossil Free Yale and Endowment Coalition programs to urge Yale University, other institutions, and neighboring towns to divest from corporations that are destroying the environment and driving the climate crisis. Switch to greener, more sustainable energy. Reinvest funds in green initiatives in New Haven.

Photo: Sarah Miller

Health and Housing

Context

New Haven is experiencing a building boom, with many new housing developments recently built and more planned. At the same time, healthy and affordable housing is in short supply. Unmanaged, the City's growth threatens to further segregate our community by race and income. Without adequate access to not only housing but also healthy food, adequate mental health services, and freedom from addiction, the disparities in our communities will continue to increase relative to health, jobs, and economic stability. The administration should lead in addressing the social determinants of health—the conditions in which people live, learn, work, and play—that affect a wide range of health risks and outcomes. These include, most notably, safe and affordable good-quality housing. Housing development should create options across the full range of affordability and at market rates; it should be informed by community needs and desires and represent inclusive and equitable investment in all neighborhoods and downtown. Addressing health inequities will provide for healthier families who, in turn, are able to work, pay taxes, and reinvest in New Haven.

First 100 Days

Recommendation 1: Issue a call to action to create more affordable housing in the City and the region.

Announce a long-term goal of expanding affordable units in New Haven through a combination of naturally occurring, privately subsidized, and publicly subsidized approaches, including new units in the twelve surrounding towns that, with New Haven, make up the South Central Regional Council of

Governments. Appoint senior staff to coordinate with the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness and the New Haven Coordinated Access Network, among others, to advocate for regional investment in affordable housing to alleviate the strain on City resources and create equity for families needing affordable housing. Staff the Affordable Housing Commission to begin implementation of the Affordable Housing Task Force's recommendations.

Recommendation 2: Establish the infrastructure for a lead-safe City.

Appoint members to the Lead Advisory Commission and fill vacant positions on the Board of Public Health Commissioners. Work closely with the board to hire a Health Director with strong management skills, a health background, and a bold policy vision.

Recommendation 3: Manage the development of market-rate housing.

In neighborhoods that include limited affordable housing, complete a strategic study of housing

and consider imposing a fee for larger market-rate developments that fail to include affordable housing. Eliminate tax abatement for market-rate housing developments. Support zoning policies that ensure affordable units are available whenever market-rate housing is built.

Two Years

Recommendation 1: Set health priorities that are innovative, transparent, and collaborative among City departments and community organizations.

Healthy priorities should be systems-focused, with emphasis on: reproductive health; maternal, infant and child health; chronic disease prevention and control; infectious disease prevention; access and equity; mental and behavioral health; substance use; injury and violence prevention; and toxic stress and trauma. Specific priorities: Include robust services to enroll residents in health insurance programs. Develop clear and concise public health messaging and campaigns. Align health priorities across the City and ensure collaboration across departments, particularly the Community Services Administration, and with community organizations.

Recommendation 2: Establish lead-safety protections.

Ensure full staffing of the Environmental Health Division, including a director and a full lead inspection staff. Initiate a thorough review of the data on current Health Department performance regarding lead, and study best practices in other municipalities concerning lead enforcement. In collaboration with the Lead Advisory Commission, look to develop clear policies and procedures for ensuring lead-safe homes, as well as implement increased resident and landlord education around lead safety and the dangers of lead, strengthen landlord commitment to renting lead-safe homes, and seek new sources of funding for lead abatement.

Recommendation 3: Reduce harm from the substance use crisis.

Continue the Mayor's Overdose Response Task Force and develop an ongoing collaborative relationship between the Police Department, drug treatment providers, and community groups. Implement stronger and more informed messaging regarding the availability of substance treatment. Rethink or dismantle the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion program while continuing or expanding programs that provide medication-assisted treatment, Narcan, and needle exchange. Direct police to deemphasize investigations of sales of unadulterated heroin and non-counterfeit pharmaceutical drugs. Start a conversation around safe injection facilities and decriminalization to make sure police are not arresting people for possession of methadone or Suboxone. Distribute fentanyl test strips for users to protect themselves.

Recommendation 4: Prevent gun violence and injury.

Collaborate with existing programs to prevent gun violence, particularly among youth. Consolidate related efforts at City Hall with one point of access for services, and work to identify and engage youth. Ensure that decisions are informed by data about needs and services.

Longer Term

Recommendation 1: Realign investment in housing development to meet the call to action.

Reconfigure the use of federal, state and local funds to prioritize development of affordable housing.

Among the steps to take:

- Complete a study of housing development and develop appropriate guidelines for the development of market-rate, mixed-rate, and other community development programs;
- Engage local housing development partners and property owners;
- Consider zoning ordinance changes to diversify housing options and incentivize affordable housing and mixed-income communities;
- Study zoning changes and consider allowing accessory dwelling units (including Tiny Houses and bungalow courts); reducing parking requirements; promoting inclusionary zoning, set-asides, and land trusts; and reassessing building height and density requirements;
- Realign building codes to incentivize affordable construction opportunities;
- Concretize a strategy to move housing development projects forward in ways that foster vibrant mixed-income communities downtown and in each neighborhood; and
- Invite anchor institutions to revamp homeownership programs to help meet the need for affordable housing via a focus on multifamily owner-occupied units in targeted neighborhoods.

Recommendation 2: Improve transparency and inclusive decision-making.

Reinvigorate community processes for obtaining resident input into proposed neighborhood changes and development proposals. Draft an ordinance requiring all LLC owners to be listed with contact information, as Hartford has done. Create a searchable online database of landlord registries and oversight programs, including property code violators; an online system to file housing code complaints; and a database for record-keeping for all inspections and enforcement.

Recommendation 3: Restructure the Livable City Initiative and improve code enforcement.

Reorganize the Livable City Initiative to focus on support to property owners and code enforcement, and reduce emphasis on housing development. Invest in LCI staffing and resources to better meet the mandate for safe and vibrant housing and neighborhoods. Support a housing code enforcement unit that is staffed and resourced to support property owners and to inspect housing units and enforce codes in the City. Improve the coordination of inspections across departments and consider consolidation of code enforcement. Develop clarity in addressing complaints about housing conditions. Establish a written relocation plan, consistent with the state Uniform Relocation Act, to provide policy and procedure for administering relocation assistance for tenants displaced by code enforcement activity.

Recommendation 4: Create a Healthy Homes Coalition.

Bring together City and state departments, community organizations, and Yale New Haven Hospital to focus on creating safe and healthy homes and address poor housing conditions such as mold, asbestos, vermin, lead, and other hazards. Waterbury's One Touch system is an example of such a community approach to healthy homes.

Photo: Sarah Miller

Recommendation 5: Develop resident-focused initiatives to access and maintain affordable housing and build resident power.

Support small local landlords and homeowners with incentives for owner occupancy and with tax deferrals and abatements to improve homes. Strengthen and extend Yale University and Yale New Haven Hospital's Homebuyers Program to include support for City employees, particularly teachers, firefighters, and police officers. Create online platforms to aid in the search for affordable housing options. Support eviction prevention and rapid rehousing initiatives, including security deposits, to encourage housing stability.

Recommendation 6: Create a "Health in All Policies" agenda.

To address health equity, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that cities articulate and integrate health considerations into policymaking across sectors.

Recommendation 7: Increase state and federal dollars for affordable housing production and preservation.

Effectively engage state and federal partners to ensure the preservation of historic properties while also addressing the issue of blighted properties. In conversation with the community and the Board of Alders, gradually shift the allocation of Community Development Block Grants and other federal dollars to incentivize affordable housing development and preserve affordable housing.

Recommendation 8: Facilitate state legislation to allow further management of absentee landlords.

Legislation can increase fines that property owners are assessed for failing to be a part of the City's rental registration program.

Recommendation 9: Ensure tenants' rights to counsel in eviction proceedings.

Support a feasibility study on tenants' right to counsel in eviction proceedings to increase housing stability. There are a number of successful models in other cities, including Philadelphia, New York, and San Francisco.

Recommendation 10: Explore the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative.

As part of a long-term strategy, work with the state and other municipalities to justify higher expenditures on energy-efficient and healthy affordable housing by documenting cost savings in other areas of the budget and cost reductions to the local economy.

Recommendation 11: Make school buildings accessible for improved community health.

Explore the "community school" model of the Federation of Community Schools to provide community access to school buildings after hours for after-school programming, health services, physical exercise, adult education, and other services that improve health, public safety, and community cohesion. Train community members to run these programs and keep the schools open. As a first step, consider opening the Hillhouse track to the public in the evening and on weekends.

Recommendation 12: Expand the use of school-based health centers to provide primary care to families year-round.

Ensure at least one nurse and one counselor in every New Haven public school. The leading causes of school absenteeism are health-related. Nursing and health services in every school would ensure that our children are healthier, miss fewer days of school, and have better immunization rates. The City can also administer many health services for families in these facilities at low to no cost. Review the feasibility of expanding nursing services and counselors in every school.

Human Services and Immigration

Context

Despite its many positive attributes, New Haven is challenged by deep economic and social disparities. One quarter of the City's residents live below the poverty line, a percentage that far exceeds the national average. Immigrants, including the undocumented, continue to face systemic exploitation, and the quality of life for City residents varies significantly depending on neighborhood. According to DataHaven's most recent Community Index, New Haven has low rankings in the areas of Youth Opportunity, High School Graduation, Unemployment, Young Child Poverty, Severe Housing Cost Burden, and Life Expectancy.

The Trump administration's extreme anti-immigrant policies and executive orders have been acutely felt in New Haven. Immigrants are forced to contend with arrests in courthouses; an increase in arrests, detention, and deportation; and the threat of raids leading to family separation. Progressive and inclusive cities across the country have responded to the current anti-immigrant agenda by advancing policies that protect immigrant populations and principles of immigrant inclusion and integration.

New Haven should maintain its reputation as one of the nation's most progressive cities on issues of immigration by adopting new policies and protective measures. In addition, to create a City of opportunity for all, the administration must create a safety net that supports its most fragile and vulnerable residents while creating opportunities for all residents to advance and prosper.

First 100 Days

Recommendation 1: Commit to eradicating homelessness.

Begin the process of reviewing and revising the City's ten-year plan to end homelessness; the plan expired in 2017. Advocate for passage of a Homeless Bill of Rights by the Board of Alders. Support the Affordable Housing Commission in its efforts to study and issue policy recommendations.

Recommendation 2: Publicly affirm New Haven as an immigrant-friendly City.

Declare New Haven an inclusive City that welcomes all immigrants, irrespective of status. Uphold and revise the Executive Order signed in August 2019. Support a Sanctuary City Ordinance that delineates our obligations and affirms New Haven's designation as a Sanctuary City. Work with the Police Department and immigrant rights organizations to create a mechanism to facilitate the processing and granting of U visas to eligible immigrants.

Recommendation 3: Realign the Youth Services Department.

Restore the Youth Services Department under the direction of the Community Services Administrator. Reestablish the connection between the Youth Commission and the Youth Services Department, and ensure that the commission is empowered to recommend policy. Establish a collaborative working relationship among Youth Services, the New Haven Public Schools, the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Trees, the New Haven Free Public Library, and other youth-engaged City agencies, a relationship grounded in an understanding of each entity's distinct roles, responsibilities, and program offerings.

Two Years

Recommendation 1: Coordinate the work of human services across departments to maximize impact, efficiency, and effectiveness.

Many programs serve similar populations of residents as well as residents who can be activated for service to the community. We need to think broadly about how to address needs concurrently and creatively across existing program and departmental lines and how to expand and enhance programming in support of youth, including, in particular, queer youth of color, the elderly, the disabled, and those reentering the community after imprisonment. We also need to develop pathways for those who receive services to later engage as leaders in support of others in need in our community.

Recommendation 2: Assess senior services and expand senior-youth programing.

Evaluate accessibility and programming at the three senior centers operated by the Elderly Services Department. Consider additional accessible locations for expanded senior services by using shared resources. Promote Property Tax Relief for Seniors to help seniors stay in their homes and reduce appeals to the Board of Alders Tax Abatement Committee. Explore possibilities for expanded youth-elderly programming within senior centers, schools, and other community spaces.

Recommendation 3: Expand summer job opportunities for youth.

The limited scope of the current Youth@Work program leaves many teens unemployed during the summer. Actions to take: Seek partnerships to support expanded job opportunities in local nonprofits and businesses. Work toward the goal of ensuring that any child age sixteen and up can obtain a summer job.

Recommendation 4: Enhance support for the immigrant community.

Identify resources to coordinate the provision of services to protect immigrants, encourage integration, and work to fully realize the potential of immigrant families to enrich our community. Priority areas include improved language access, youth, integration, family self-sufficiency, and Know Your Rights education. Review current application forms for licensing permits and either remove a request for a Social Security Number or allow for the use of an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number. Conduct annual training for educators and others who work with youth and immigrant families on best practices in the support of undocumented and immigrant students and their families. Explore an immigrant legal defense fund to help provide legal representation for New Haven residents facing deportation. Develop raids preparedness plans for City Hall and the New Haven Public Schools and ensure the relevant staff are informed.

Recommendation 5: Integrate food insecurity into human services priorities.

Develop formal partnerships to promote healthy living and food and establish educational workshops around health and nutrition. Develop strategies to eliminate food waste. Encourage the creation of farmers markets in all neighborhoods, especially those in food deserts, including the Dixwell, Newhallville, West Rock, Dwight/West River, and Hill neighborhoods.

Recommendation 6: Support keeping U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement out of the courthouse.

ICE has aggressively pursued a practice of hunting undocumented immigrants in New Haven courthouses, denying access to justice and due process for immigrants and leading to family separation. The City should work with the New Haven municipal court system to ban courthouse access to ICE, and it should support efforts to ensure that the Connecticut Judiciary follows other states (Oregon, New York, New Jersey) in banning ICE from courthouses.

Recommendation 7: Implement wage theft protections and establish labor standards.

Wage theft and the rampant exploitation and abuse of immigrants, especially the undocumented, are among the most persistent problems facing our immigrant working population. Initial steps: Revoke or suspend licenses of businesses found to have committed wage theft and/or retaliation against workers complaining of wage theft; allow for stop-work orders for businesses in violation; and do the same with findings of sexual harassment. Train police and prosecutors investigating wage theft cases and prosecuting employers who threaten or engage in retaliation. Engage federal, state, and City officials and community members in establishing local labor standards. Via a small increase in business licensing fees, explore grants for community organizations that inform workers of their rights, identify instances of wage theft and sexual harassment, and refer victims to state enforcement programs.

Longer Term

Recommendation 1: Invest in "Housing First" policies to address homelessness.

Develop solutions for ongoing challenges and strategies to prevent homelessness. Tackle chronic problems related to homelessness, including homeless encampments and the need for emergency housing for elderly people and women. Craft an agenda that makes the connection between homeless services and job opportunities explicit, facilitating the transition for families and individuals from homelessness to permanent housing, stable employment, and economic stability. Partner with the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities Homelessness Prevention Task Force for resources and technical assistance. Lower or remove barriers—such as sobriety and credit history—to place those experiencing homelessness directly into living situations with wraparound support services, rather than moving them through different levels of transitional housing. An example of a successful model is the Housing First policy in Madison, Wisconsin.

Recommendation 2: Streamline and coordinate reentry services.

Create a one-stop hub to facilitate collaboration among City departments and community organizations that support the reentry community, including those dealing with mental health services, health care, behavioral health, workforce development, job development, family reunification, support groups, education, court-ordered services, legal services, benefits assistance, transportation,

pardons, and housing assistance. Establish a collective impact framework to coordinate the work across different service providers and allow service providers to create joint benchmarks and measure progress toward goals.

Recommendation 3: Revamp and revive the Elm City Resident Card program.

The New Haven municipal ID card, in addition to serving as a form of ID, provides access to the City's libraries, beach, golf course, and various services. This initiative, a first in the nation that emerged from New Haven, is now largely dormant: few City residents are aware of the existence of this program, and there have been no efforts to innovate it. Actions to take: Upgrade and revive the program; increase outreach and marketing efforts; re-create the mobile unit to ensure access to all residents; and create additional uses, such as prepaid debit card availability and help with other municipal, cultural, educational, and financial services.

Recommendation 4: Explore "Adopt a Park" partnerships with businesses and residents.

For a minimum annual donation, businesses and residents could receive recognition. The program would cultivate community pride and ownership and ensure ongoing added resources for park maintenance and enhancements.

Photo: Sarah Miller

Public Safety

Context

Public safety services are at a transition point. New Haven maintains top-notch staff and leadership across Fire, Police, and Public Safety Communications Departments. Yet distrust between public safety departments and the community remains a challenge, with high-profile incidents of excessive force on record and a new Civilian Review Board just installed. Once a model for community policing, in recent years New Haven focused less on community policing as an operating philosophy. This led to a weakening of the foundations of partnerships and collaborative problem-solving. Budgets are also squeezed, necessary capital projects are deferred, and morale is low. Overtime costs across the public safety departments remain unacceptably high. Recent efforts have begun to turn these trends around and must be strengthened via renewed focus on building community trust, delivering necessary services while reining in costs, supporting officers' wellness, and establishing a sustainable long-term capital plan.

First 100 Days

Recommendation 1: Commit to reimagine community policing.

Announce public support for a revamped community policing strategy that emphasizes partnership, collaboration, and problem-solving as the basis for positive relationships between the police and the community.

Recommendation 2: Support the Civilian Review Board.

In order to enhance trust between public safety departments and the community, as well as provide independent and prompt resolution of resident

complaints, provide all necessary support to the board from City, Police, and Fire Departments. This will facilitate proper oversight of officer misconduct.

Recommendation 3: Establish a plan to reduce overtime costs.

While some overtime is unavoidable, current costs are excessive. Actions to take: Enforce existing policies on overtime disbursement and budget overtime by division within each department. Audit the distribution of overtime work, and improve the management of overtime that is governed by public safety contracts.

Two Years

Recommendation 1: Align community policing with community needs and expectations.

As initial steps, work with every member of the Police Department to create strong, effective partnerships with community residents, businesses, and stakeholders. Ensure that efforts are in place

to eliminate bias in policing and that officers treat all residents with respect, no matter their race, neighborhood, or economic bracket. Encourage upper command to be frequently visible in the community. Challenge officers to build, embrace, and strengthen relationships that are fundamental to their service as community guardians.

Recommendation 2: Develop mechanisms for ongoing police officer and firefighter input.

The concerns of line officers and firefighters often do not reach department heads, leaving the heads without a full sense of the impact of City decisions. Actions to take: Establish advisory processes within the Police and Fire Departments so frontline insights are regularly shared with departmental leadership and the Mayor's Office.

Recommendation 3: Craft an officer morale, health, and wellness program.

The overall wellness of public safety officers affects all community stakeholders. The phrase "I got your six" is among the most meaningful promises that members of the law enforcement community make to one another: the unconditional promise to have each other's back. That promise can be fulfilled with a holistic wellness program. Investigate where stressors exist, recognize and commend high-quality work, and develop recognition initiatives. New health and safety tools, as well as officer fitness initiatives, can help manage risks and increase officers' quality of life and overall safety.

Recommendation 4: Prevent excessive force.

Assess Police and Fire policies, procedures, and practices for ways to better prevent misconduct. Implement measures to identify rogue officers before harm occurs. Recognize and reward officers for nonaggressive behavior under trying circumstances.

Recommendation 5: Ensure the effectiveness of the Civilian Review Board.

Research best practices in other jurisdictions, such as investigation processes and discipline frameworks. Host listening sessions for police officers, Civilian Review Board members, City officials, and residents.

Longer Term

Recommendation 1: Design an adequate and transparent capital budgeting process.

The process for capital improvements is shrouded in mystery. One department official mentioned being unable to secure capital funding for equipment necessary to meet legal requirements. Others mentioned severe delays in maintenance and replacement of capital assets. The obvious step is to establish a clear and open capital budget process that takes into account large and small planned expenses and the replacement of equipment at the end of its life.

Recommendation 2: Cultivate future leadership by improving officer recruitment, training, and succession planning.

Create pathways to employment as public safety officers, starting in high school, with efforts to increase the diversity of candidates and the number of candidates who are New Haven residents. Advocate for public safety staff development via high-quality, progressive training that follows best practices. Because routine and dangerous situations are more likely to be resolved positively if first responders and support personnel have received appropriate and consistent training, commit to strategic succession planning, to ensure continued effectiveness during personnel transitions. This includes supporting leadership practices that teach, promote, and reinforce critical core values and a positive organizational culture.

Recommendation 3: Better utilize technology, equipment, and social media.

Through strategic use of technology, increase efficiency and define clearer channels of internal and external communication. Require the use of body-worn cameras by all officers. Implement anonymous text and voice tip lines, a mobile device application to disseminate information and receive tips, and an online reporting system for minor events. Exploit the analytic capabilities of predictive and data-mining software. Ensure up-to-date equipment distribution to improve policing and the safety of officers and residents.

Recommendation 4: Strengthen public safety support services at City Hall.

Ensure that citywide services can consistently meet the needs of public safety departments. Provide adequate information technology backup and coverage during nights and weekends, with staff who understand public safety technology. Accelerate hiring timelines, especially when positions are funded and exams completed. Facilitate arbitration when appropriate. In addition, tailor some citywide policies to public safety department needs—e.g., by exempting grants for public safety programs from citywide spending freezes. Flexibility should be established to tweak policies as needed.

Recommendation 5: Enhance facilities to better accommodate the community and employees and to reduce costs.

Consider changes to staffing and operating hours at the Planning/Records Division and the police garage, among other sites, to improve efficiency and services.

Photo: Tom Breen

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New Haven Environmental Advisory Council
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"I was excited when our Transition Team felt up to the task of holding so many public meetings, and we were all thrilled when hundreds of City residents attended our first and second public transition meetings. Talk is cheap, but showing up to two public meetings to engage with neighbors and set a tone and course for our City—that's an investment. I thank all of you who have contributed to the transition process."

– Mayor Elicker

Photo: Lucy Gellman

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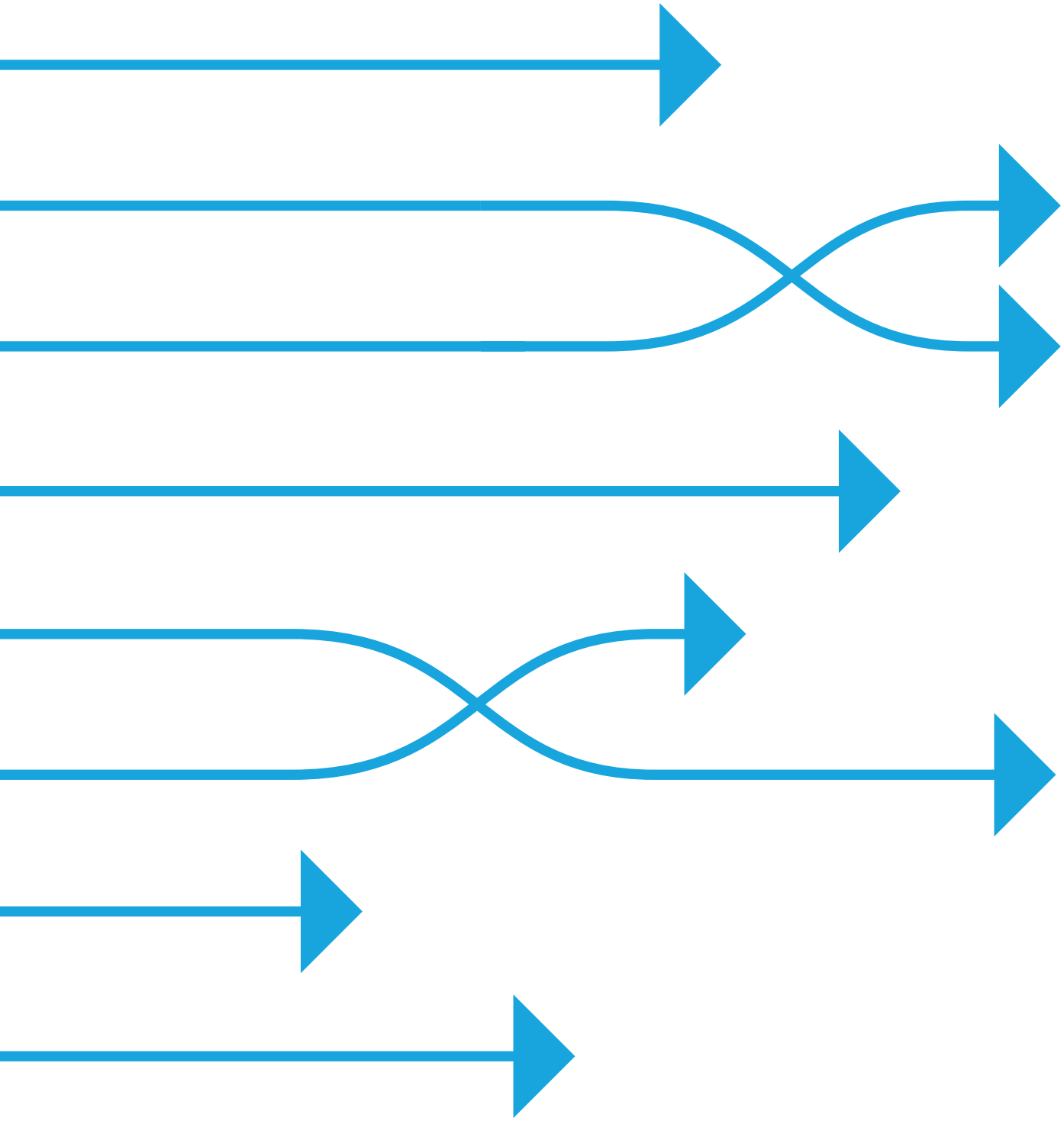

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