



People Friendly Stamford

www.peolestamford.org

November 17, 2022

Re: Haig Avenue Redevelopment

Dear Mayor Simmons:

People Friendly Stamford is a local community advocacy group working to transform Stamford, Connecticut's neighborhoods to make them more walkable and bikeable, economically vibrant, affordable, and less reliant on cars. We are writing to urge that the Haig Avenue Civil Defense Building be redeveloped into multi-family housing.

Stamford is seeing unprecedented rental and housing price increases that are driving current residents from the city and curbing its ability to attract new workers. Fifty-one percent of renters in Stamford are cost burdened according to the [Partnership for Strong Communities 2022 CT Housing Data Profile](#). According to that same report, the City only issued 55 new building permits last year, a 10-year low. The calcified zoning maps — which were drawn up in the years following World War II and are now long outdated — are preventing Stamford from adequately meeting the needs of a growing and diverse workforce.

The Haig Avenue site is less than a mile from the Springdale train station and the 333 bus route. The site is in a walkable neighborhood and only a short bike ride from downtown. Multi-family housing is more efficient in land, water and energy usage compared to the sprawling, car-centric, single-family development that has consumed much of the developable land in the city. To increase our housing supply, the city must embrace construction of ["missing middle" housing](#). The approximately 1.6-acre site occupied by the civil defense building is a prime location for such development. It would be disastrous to take one of the few remaining unused parcels of public land and convert that into single-family housing with little public benefit.

People Friendly Stamford rejects the zero-sum, anti-human thinking that views increased population and multi-family density as a blight. We reject population control and the idea that Stamford is somehow "full" as solutions to traffic and increased need for education or social services. The failure to provide adequate housing supply or, more accurately, the decision to deliberately create barriers to housing construction, has led to Stamford becoming a city hostile to lower income residents. We believe Stamford should not be a city reserved for the wealthy and those with the good fortune to have purchased a home 30 years ago. The only way to commit Stamford toward an inclusive future is to diversify and increase our housing stock. The Haig Avenue property represents an excellent opportunity to do just that.

Thank you for your consideration.

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