

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

RE: **RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF ALDERS** authorizing the city to apply for and accept a grant from the U.S Department of Transportation, Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program, in an amount not to exceed \$2 million to support the I-91 neighborhood reconnection initiative.

Submitted by: Laura E. Brown, Director, City Plan Department

REPORT: **1656-05**

ADVICE: **Approve**

BACKGROUND

The attached resolution requests the authorization of the application for and execution of a grant agreement between the City of New Haven and the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) under the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program (RCP). This \$2 million grant request, supplemented by \$400,000 in local and federal funds, is aimed at addressing the longstanding barriers created by transportation infrastructure, particularly Interstate 91, which has physically divided neighborhoods and restricted access to essential resources, opportunities, and services.

The proposed I-91 Neighborhood Reconnection Initiative aims to restore community connectivity by exploring strategies to reclaim land, reroute traffic, and create public spaces. Specifically, the initiative will focus on reconnecting neighborhoods from I-91 Exits 3-6 and transforming underutilized areas beneath highways into vibrant public spaces that enhance pedestrian and bicycle access. Additionally, we will explore potential housing development opportunities in the Mill River and River Street areas to promote economic growth and increase residential density.

This effort aligns with the goals of the RCP Program, which seeks to redress the harms caused by transportation infrastructure, particularly in disadvantaged communities. By breaking down the barriers imposed by I-91, this initiative will provide improved access to jobs, healthcare, education, recreation, and other vital services, fostering social and economic equity for the residents of New Haven.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The City of New Haven Comprehensive Plan **New Haven Vision 2025** states the following goals:

“Build a comprehensive and integrated bicycle and pedestrian network within the city by identifying and prioritizing the missing links and implementing solutions accordingly.”
(Sec. xxvii)

“Connect neighborhoods physically and socially by promoting neighborhood-based planning efforts.” (Sec. xxv)

Overall, pursuing grant funding opportunities for projects that remedy the negative impact of transportation infrastructure furthers the goals of the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

ADVICE

Authorization of this grant aligns with the City’s Comprehensive Plan and the State of Connecticut’s goals.

ADOPTED: September 25, 2024
Ernest Pagan
Acting Chair

ATTEST: DocuSigned by:
Laura E. Brown September 26, 2024 | 11:00 AM
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Laura Brown
Executive Director, City Plan Department