

## NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

**RE: ABANDONMENT AND DISCONTINUANCE OF PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY.**  
 Portion of North Frontage Road/Dr. Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard between State Street and South Orange Street, (Economic Development Administrator).

**REPORT: 1484-03**

**ADVICE: Approval (see below)**

**BACKGROUND:** The Economic Development Administrator has submitted an Order to abandon and discontinue a portion of North Frontage Road, recently renamed Dr. Martin Luther King Boulevard, between State Street on the east and South Orange Street on the west. The action is submitted together with a Development and Land Disposition Agreement for the adjacent site at 275 South Orange Street in order to enable a comprehensive redevelopment of the former Coliseum site. The function of the abandoned street segment will be replaced by several travel options that will become available as the site and the Downtown Crossing project are built out.

**PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS:** The proposed reuse of the former 4.5 acre Coliseum site at South Orange and George Street as a “human –scale, mixed-use community gathering place centered on an activated public square and laneway” is an important next step in the on-going revitalization of central New Haven. The site’s adjacency to the Downtown Crossing project, which replaces the Route 34 limited access highway stub with a pair of urban boulevards, will make this site much more accessible and inviting for mixed use, including residential development. The one block segment of North Frontage Road/ Dr. Martin Luther King Boulevard has two travel lanes and was constructed to help access Union Station since it is not currently possible to cross Route 34 by taking a left at the bottom of the current exit ramp. Future travelers will have three options: 1) the Laneway running from South Orange to State Street called for in the DLDA, 2) taking a right turn onto South Orange, a right onto George Street, and a right (or left) onto State Street, and eventually a left off the ramp across Route 34 via a new signalized intersection to South Orange Street on the south side of Route 34.

The abandonment of this street segment will remove what is essentially a non-urban single purpose “vehicle only” roadway with a set of more city street options, leading to multiple destinations. The proposed Order notes that the existing street shall remain open until the “Effective Date” upon which certain schedule dates and conditions outlined in the Development Agreement are met; and provides a six year window within which this must happen.

**FINDING AND ADVICE:** The Commission finds that the abandonment and discontinuance of this portion of North Frontage Road / Martin Luther King Boulevard between State Street and South Orange Street is in the best interests of the City and the public good; will help advance the revitalization of the adjacent site, will complement the ongoing Downtown Crossing project to replace a highway with urban boulevards, and provide better options for future mobility for pedestrians and vehicles. The Commission therefor recommends that the Board of Aldermen approve the Order.

**ADOPTED:** October 30, 2013  
 Edward Mattison  
 Chair

**ATTEST:**   
 Karyn M. Gilvarg, AIA  
 Executive Director