

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

RE: 164 GRAND AVENUE, Resolution authorizing the application to and acceptance of Connecticut Department of Transportation grant under the “**Safe Routes to School Program**” for infrastructure improvements and other vital safety measures in the vicinity of the Fair Haven K-8 School (Alderwoman Sturgis-Pascale).

REPORT: 1432-09

ADVICE: Approval

BACKGROUND

This resolution will enable the City to apply for a grant through the Connecticut Department of Transportation’s “Safe Routes to School” Program and thus fund the necessary infrastructure improvements and other important safety measures needed near Fair Haven K-8 School.

The “Safe Routes to School” Master Plan for the Fair Haven K-8 School represents the results of a very productive and comprehensive collaboration between Fair Haven School administrators, teachers and parents, the Fair Haven community, and a broad spectrum of city agencies and law enforcement officials. The goal of this application to the State’s “Safe Routes to School” program is to secure funding needed to transform the eastern end of Grand Avenue into a neighborhood environment where children can feel safe and secure in walking to their local school. School staff, community residents and city officials are committed to implementing a far-ranging plan of engineering infrastructure improvements, as well as educational and outreach activities that can build on the city’s Street Smarts Kids campaign, Complete Streets initiative and traffic calming measures. Though 75 percent of students at the Fair Haven School live less than one mile from the school, a recent survey shows that 80 percent of students arrive to school in a car or bus. Importantly, not a single student rode a bicycle to school even though over 60% of the survey respondents own a bicycle.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

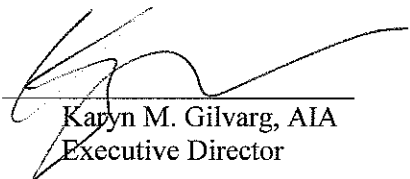
The New Haven Public School District Wellness Policy explicitly supports the Safe Routes to school program by supporting the improvements “needed...to make it safer and easier for students to walk and bike to school.” The vision of this program is to improve safety and security of residents, enhance their health, reduce traffic congestion, and improve the overall quality of life of the Fair Haven community.

The school is located on a neighborhood “main street” in a dense urban neighborhood which has seen many vehicle accidents. The rate of pediatric pedestrian injury in New Haven is more than twice the national average. High traffic speeds and lack of adequate pedestrian or bicycle facilities create significant obstacles for children seeking to access the school by means other than motor vehicle. The proposed infrastructure improvements include two protected pedestrian landscaped islands with improved crosswalks on Grand Avenue at two closest intersections: Atwater Street and Bright Street; installation of two speed humps/speed tables on Exchange Street with bump outs and sharrows to indicate shared travel lanes; purchase of “U” Shaped bike racks for the front of the building and/or the new bike room; sidewalk widening and/or sidewalk gap closures along East Pearl Street, Exchange Street, and Grand Avenue to better connect the neighborhood to the school; and intersection improvements at Grand/Ferry and Grand/Front Streets. This engineering work, coupled with comprehensive education and outreach efforts should make for a much safer walking and cycling environment for students on their way to the school.

ADVICE

Approval

ADOPTED: September 16, 2009
Edward Mattison
Chair

ATTEST: 
Karyn M. Gilvarg, AIA
Executive Director