

## NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

**RE:** DOWNTOWN CROSSING and ROUTE 34, Authorization to Apply for and Accept TIGER II Grant Funding (\$21.3 million) for Infrastructure and Route 34 Improvements (Economic Development Administrator).

**REPORT:** 1444-03

**ADVICE:** Approval

### BACKGROUND

The City is applying for TIGER II discretionary grant funds from the federal government in order to design and build the first phase of converting Route 34 from Union Avenue to the Air Rights Garage from an expressway to urban boulevards. The total project cost is \$31.7 million, with \$21.3 million requested from the TIGER II grant program. Matching funds are provided from Connecticut DOT (\$4.9 million), Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (\$3.0 million), City of New Haven capital funds (\$2.0 million) and Winstanley Investments (\$.5 million).

In this first phase, project elements include (1) conversion of North and South Frontage Roads to urban boulevards with road, streetscape, bicycle and pedestrian enhancements; (2) reconfiguration of local street connections; and (3) reconstruction of College Street to grade level. All elements are designed to citywide Complete Streets standards and support the economic development of Connecticut's growing health sciences industry, and will create much improved walking and biking connections between the Hill neighborhood, Union station area and downtown.

The College Street Bridge over CT 34 will be removed. In its place, the City will reconstruct College Street at grade. A new tunnel beneath College Street will be constructed to allow for vehicular access to Yale-New Haven Hospital parking and the new 55 Park Street medical sciences building driveways to the Air Rights Garage. The next development parcel within the CT 34 right-of-way is located just west of College Street, at 100 College Street. Immediately following completion of these improvements, this site will be ready for new development.

### PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Downtown Crossing is the City's plan to convert CT Route 34 from a limited access highway to urban boulevards from Union Avenue to the existing Exit 3 at College Street. The depressed limited access highway has long separated the medical district and the Hill neighborhood from downtown, and has made walking from Union Station to downtown uninviting and confusing. Conversion to urban boulevards will leave the surplus right-of way for development. Design of new streets will follow the City's recently completed Complete Streets Policy and Manual, encouraging residents to take transit, walk or bike to work, and facilitating pedestrian access to and from the medical district, Union Station, Hill neighborhood and downtown.

### ADVICE:

In a City with limited land for new development, removal of a limited access highway stub, and creation of development sites in the City center, between the major employment areas of downtown and the medical district is critical to growing new jobs and increasing our tax base. Proximity of the sites to an area served by transit and rail, and near several residential areas will grow New Haven in a sustainable way. The Commission recommends approval.

**ADOPTED:** September 22, 2010  
Edward Mattison  
Chair

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