

## NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

**RE:**            **RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF ALDERS** Authorizing the Mayor to apply for, execute, acknowledge, implement and deliver any and all documents as may be considered necessary or appropriate for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Grant: Global Ideas for U.S. Solutions: Cities Taking Action to Address Health, Equity, and Climate. (Submitted by: Aicha Woods, Executive Director of City Plan)

**REPORT:**    **1569-08**

**ADVICE:**    **Approve**

### BACKGROUND

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Grant: Global Ideas for U.S. Solutions: Cities Taking Action to Address Health, Equity, and Climate invites cities to identify global solutions for local climate and health equity objectives.

The proposed project will apply three interrelated public engagement programs developed and applied by Open Streets Cape Town (Cape Town, South Africa): Open Streets, Talking Streets, and StreetLab.. While these concepts were used to inform transportation actions only, we propose to expand them to inform neighborhood design and the built environment more broadly. In doing so, we will follow best practice in building community resilience to climate change that calls for “hyper local” and community-driven adaptation action.

These programs build upon both longstanding and more recent community, city and partner driven initiatives such as the Fair Haven Urban Walking Trails, Walk New Haven, open streets festival like events such as Freddy Fixer parade and Rock to Rock bike event. It also builds on current policy initiatives within the City with regards to Green Ordinances, Urban Heat Island and the Climate and Sustainability Framework.

We will put these three innovative concepts into action in the Edgewood, Dwight, Mill River, and Fair Haven neighborhoods, which run along the spine of Whalley Avenue to Grand Avenue corridor. These four neighborhoods reflect New Haven’s ethnic and racial diversity, as well as its deep economic, social, and health disparities. They are predominantly low-income, with disproportionate incidence of poor health outcomes (including asthma, diabetes, obesity, COVID rates) and high reliance on public transportation.

The project’s four primary objectives are:

1.       Facilitate a process to collect and record residents’ knowledge about their neighborhood, their perceptions on how the local environment affects their health, and their visions for the future of their neighborhoods
  2.       Combine the collected community knowledge with spatial data on health outcomes, environmental factors, and climate projections to develop an online mapping tool that educates the public and informs City policy
  3.       Convene community residents, civic leaders, and City staff to iteratively generate ideas on green ordinance principles and active transportation investment priorities, informed by the mapping tool and additional community engagement
  4.       Achieve action within the grant period by securing approval by the Board of Aldermen of three new or updated green ordinances, active transportation infrastructure improvements, and updates to City Plan’s public engagement procedures
- Make active transportation safer and easier, thereby reducing transportation related greenhouse gas emissions, particulate matter, and other air pollutants

Project team:

- City of New Haven: City Plan Department, Transportation Department, Engineering Department, and the Food System Policy Division
- Yale Center on Climate Change and Health
- University of Connecticut, Plant Sciences and Landscape Architecture

Project collaborators:

- New Haven Active Coalition for Active Transportation
- Open Streets Cape Town

**PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

The project addresses the following focus areas: buildings; transportation, land use and urban planning; and climate adaptation/resilience. It engages the urban planning and transportation sectors, with additional connections to the engineering and food policy sectors.

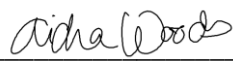
We expect that the project will address the intertwined threats of health, equity, and climate change by changing city planning, policies, and programs in three ways:

- Institutionalize inclusive community engagement techniques into city government practices
- Codify built environment and urban design changes in four green ordinances that address climate threats including the urban heat island effect, urban flooding, and local food security

**ADVICE**

The Commission finds the Order in the best interest of the City and recommends approval.

**ADOPTED:** May 20, 2020  
Edward Mattison  
Chair

**ATTEST:**   
Aicha Woods  
Executive Director, City Plan Department