

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

RE: **ORDER OF THE BOARD OF ALDERS** approving the painting of several creative crosswalks along Chapel Street in the public right of way along the Chapel Street Railroad Overpass and the intersections on both sides (Chapel and State & Chapel and Union St). Submitted by: Town Green District)

REPORT: **1574-01**

ADVICE: **Approve**

BACKGROUND

The Town Green District aims to transform the railroad overpass at Chapel and State Street and the adjacent intersection at Chapel and Union Street into a neighborhood connection point between all five neighborhoods whose paths meet at this thoroughfare in New Haven. Thus, The Town Green District proposes painting several creative crosswalks along Chapel Street and enhancing the railroad overpass walls with a bright new color scheme using paint and vinyl decals, corner screens, and lighting.

Since April 2019, Town Green District staff and design firm Atelier Cue based out of Fair Haven, have worked with City Engineering, Traffic and Parking, City Plan, and Cultural Affairs on this project. The ideas have been sourced from the community through outreach efforts to the surrounding residents, businesses, pedestrians, transit riders, and other frequent users of Chapel Street. The community process engaged hundreds of people and resulted in the drafting of five physical improvements ranging from adding sidewalk planters, creative crosswalks, wayfinding signage, public art installed on the overpass walls, and increased overpass lighting.

The crosswalk design incorporates the names of neighborhoods with the destination points embedded in the design, reading "Downtown, Wooster Square, The Hill, Long Wharf, and East Rock." The crosswalk and vinyl decal design also showcases cherry blossoms and elm leaves to celebrate some of our city's cherished natural features.

If approved, the crosswalk work could then begin right away, while the public art enhancements on the state-owned overpass would progress to the mayoral office for recommendation to the State Department of Transportation after more refined technical consultation with City Engineering. Town Green District will work closely with TT&P to minimize the traffic impacts and assure a safe working environment for volunteers. If approved the Board and then the State, the painting of the railroad overpass walls and installation of the vinyl decorative decals, corner screens, and lighting is planned for summer/fall 2021.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The Town Green District's proposal embodies an opportunity to enhance the appearance of several major intersections in the city. Also, given its proximity to the State Street train station, the proposal will render the station surrounding area more welcoming and pedestrian-friendly. Thus the proposal for creative crosswalks and enhancement of the railroad overpass walls complies with the City's Comprehensive Plan that calls to:

New Haven Vision, 2025, Sec. I-10:

"Consider placemaking as a strategy beyond traffic for transportation improvements "

ADVICE

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

ADOPTED: October 21, 2020
Ed Mattison
Chair

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