

# CCNA

## PROPOSED RESOLUTION

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### **RESOLUTION REGARDING VACATION OF SCHOOL AVENUE**

First CCNA Reading November 2, 2018 – Final CCNA Vote Scheduled for December 1, 2018

CCNA member neighborhoods oppose the permanent vacation of School Avenue which would transfer ownership of School Avenue to the School Board. We do however support granting a surface easement so the School Board could create a paved central campus area that would be closed to the public 180 days a year and open to the public 185 days a year.

CCNA member neighborhoods support development immediately of transportation improvements at Bahia Vista and East Avenue along with a MURT extending north from Bahia Vista, across Sarasota High School campus, connecting to Browning Street on existing School Board owned property. This would replace bicycle and pedestrian access lost as a result of the recent City/School Board 10-year Interlocal Agreement. CCNA member neighborhoods request that City require School Board to deed the land for the proposed bicycle /pedestrian bypass to the City of Sarasota and for School Board to provide the funds for development of permanent City-owned and operated MURT, to be open 365 days a year.

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**BACKGROUND:** We endorse the City of Sarasota’s support of the School Board to keep students on the Sarasota High School campus safe and the recently signed 10-year Interlocal Agreement accomplishes that purpose. The Interlocal Agreement closes City owned School Avenue right-of-way to all non-school related vehicular traffic and non-school pedestrian and bicycle traffic from 6:30 AM until 10:00 PM on all days that school is in session, which are 180 days per year.

**Current School Board Request Going Before Planning Board at 6 PM on December 12, 2018 in City Hall Chambers:** School Board has requested a complete street vacation of School Avenue that would transfer complete ownership of School Avenue right-of-way from the City to the School Board. This would create closure to all non-school vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle traffic 365 days a year. It would also transfer ownership of City School Avenue right-of-way property to School Board permanently for them to use in the future however they see fit. If such a street vacation occurred, in order for existing necessary public services and utilities to continue to function, multiple easements would need to be transferred back from the School Board to the City and to various utilities. At this time, those necessary easements have not even been written by School Board legal staff, nor reviewed by City attorneys.

If School Board wants to create a paved central gathering area on School Avenue, instead of vacating School Avenue, the City could grant the School Board a surface easement, which would satisfy campus security plans for Sarasota High School’s foreseeable future. As a result of the recently signed interlocal agreement, non-school pedestrian and bicycle north-south access was lost between Bahia Vista and Browning/North School Avenue. Improved bicycle/pedestrian access provides safer solutions for all.

**Regulatory Context:** *According to the Transportation Plan of the City’s Comprehensive Plan, “Section 2.8 Protection of Existing Rights-of-Way or Easements: The City shall not vacate any public rights-of-way or easements unless they are not in use, provide no public benefit, or are not in the best interest of the City to retain for future use.”* School Avenue is currently used by citizens, City of Sarasota Police, Fire, and Waste departments, Florida Power & Light, Comcast, Frontier, TECO Peoples Gas, school food deliveries, bicyclists and pedestrians. *Thus, it is obvious, that the right-of-way for School Avenue is clearly in use, provides public benefit, and is not eligible for vacation.*

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**THE PURPOSE OF THE ORGANIZATION IS TO PRESERVE, PROTECT AND ENHANCE CITY RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS AND TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF THE NEIGHBORHOODS AND STAND IN SUPPORT OF THOSE NEEDS**