

West Hartford Vision Zero Task Force #1
May 22, 2023 | 5pm

Notes

Attendees – Spellings not verified throughout notes

- Ronnie Newton – Reporter, WeHa.com
- [name unclear] Branston – Intern, WeHa.com
- Shawna Kitzman – Toole Design, Project Management Team (PMT)
- Parker Sorenson – FHI Studio, PMT
- Mike Morehouse – FHI Studio, PMT
- Adam Tecza (virtual attendee) – FHI Studio, PMT
- Jay Strange – Task Force, Transport Hartford
- Sgt. Ed Jacovino - West Hartford Police Department
- AC Larry Terra – Task Force, Asst. Police Chief, West Hartford Police Department
- Eric Dency – Task Force, Director of School Security
- Elizabeth Hanlon – Task Force, ESOL Instructor
- Ed Pawlak – Task Force, Bicycle and Pedestrian Advocate
- Shana Gibbs – Task Force, American School for the Deaf
- Adrienne Billings-Smith – Task Force, Equity Coordinator
- Roger Krahn – Capitol Region Council of Governments, Liaison
- Greg Sommer – Town Engineer, PMT
- Capt. Bill Beebe – West Hartford Fire Department
- Karen Harrington – Task Force, Health District Board
- Renee McCue – Task Force, Town Public Relations
- Rick Ledwith – Town Manager, PMT
- Mary Donegan – Task Force, UConn Professor and Planner
- Erin Conneely – Task Force, Advisory Commission for Persons with Disabilities
- Mike Walsh – West Hartford News
- Mike Komrosky – Resident
- Ethan Frankel – Resident
- Jack Dougherty – Resident

- Ed Pawlak asked:
 - Will speed limits be addressed in the VZ document? Speed should be based on safe limits.
 - The PMT responded that general policy could be included, but the actual practice of changing speed limits will likely be an action that results from the planning process, as it could be an intensive process.

- Members noted that in the next month there are several big community events, including Celebrate West Hartford and Juneteenth. Desired 1-pager to distribute and/or short questionnaire.
 - Note that the “survey” would be available at a later date and would be more intensive. Option to do a smaller “activity” (such as commitment cards) at these earlier dates
- Shana asked/commented:
 - We should be prepared for accessibility at pop-up events and have statistics on further disabled population statistics and traffic violence – for example, we know that Black and brown populations are at higher risk, but what about deaf populations?
 - The PMT responded that the Task Force is here to raise these questions and to help us collectively understand and help meet the needs of various populations, especially those most at risk of roadway death and injury.
- Sandy asked:
 - Why is the data analysis so far back on our calendar? Can we shift this earlier to get this going so data analysis isn’t the hold up?
 - PMT responded that we won't let the data run the goals, but the project is data driven. We will find the right balance of determining the goals with accurate supporting data. However, we will be doing initial data collection early in the project.
- Jay noted that there are two successful VZ communities in NJ, including Jersey City and Hoboken. He’s interested in arranging a summer field trip here.
 - Mike Morehouse noted that the PMT has connections in these cities.
- Resident Mike asked about the funding mechanism for this project:
 - Rick responded that the Action Plan is funded by American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) budget. Construction funds will likely include a mix of grant opportunities including Safe Streets 4 All (SS4A). Immediate funding for products such as marketing materials will be included from the general fund. From a traffic violence perspective, 2022 was a horrendous year and doesn’t want this repeated.
- Mary noted the SS4A grant July deadline, and asked if the Town would potentially apply for and use SS4A for planning or development.
 - Shawna responded that the timeline of this Action Plan will set the Town up nicely for Year 3 application in 2024. The planning process will reveal how the Town should apply – and could go deeper into planning by, for example, determining what messaging works best for the town’s population or doing statistically-valid polling, or could pursue pilot or demonstration project funding.
 - Greg noted that the SS4A grants are \$2.5M and up so this would be a sizable investment, should the Town apply and be awarded.
- Jay suggested that the Town’s decision not to pursue this Year 2 grant application cycle feels like a missed opportunity.
 - The Town responded that this project is adequately scoped and funded.
- Ed Pawlak indicated that the Town’s biggest Complete Streets project was North Main Road Diet yet he hasn’t seen the safety numbers for this.
 - Parker responded that HB had prepared this and Greg can find the data to share. Our data analysis will also reveal the project’s ‘after’ data.

- Karen identified the need for Task Force messaging (I.e. speaking points) to accurately communicate what this project is and does with the public.
- Shawna noted that the PMT is auditing the Task Force to determine gaps in representation, especially young people, those that are bike and/or transit dependent, and a resident or business owner along the New Britain Avenue or New Park Avenue corridors. She asked if any members of the TF are transit / bike dependent.
 - Jack Dougherty indicated he is (member of the public).
 - Jay suggested that a variety of local students or BiCiCo West (located on New Park Ave) may have good candidates.
 - Ronni indicated that there is a Mayor's Youth Council, composed of students geared towards public service and leadership.
- TF member noted that there will be a Disabilities Commission? Meeting on June 21st and Greg will be presenting as well.
- Based on majority Task Force vote, June 5th will be our next meeting, held virtually.
 - Zoom is preferable for interpreters
 - Agenda will be sent on Wednesday (May 31 before the Monday meeting)
- Task Force members would like to push for survey to be ready prior to August as this is generally a difficult time of year to get input.
 - Shawna responded that we will be iterating the draft survey at this time, not launching. The Task Force will help inform timeline for certain efforts to yield the greatest impact.
- VZ plans to review
 - Lancaster PA -> Campaign/Marketing Committee
 - Tacoma, WA -> Walk Audit Committee
 - Des Moines, IA -> Community Outreach Committee
 - Jersey City, NJ -> Data Collection committee
- Plans and notes will be posted online.

To Do

- Review meeting calendar against West Hartford holiday calendar (ex. Jan 15th meeting is on MLK day)
- Develop toolkit for Task Force for pop-ups and even small conversations (what's the elevator speech?)
- Circulate North Main Street results to TF
- Develop materials for June 21st disabilities meeting
- Send out invite for June 5th meeting - Shawna