

MEETING SUMMARY

July 31, 2023

To: West Hartford Vision Zero Task Force

From: FHI Studio Team

Project: West Hartford Vision Zero Action Plan

Re: July 24, 2023 Meeting Summary

Attendees

- **Task Force:** Sandy Castellon, Tom Condon, Erin Conneely, Eric Dency, Mary Donegan, Aryan Grover, Rick Ledwith, Duane Martin, Renée McCue, Ed Pawlak, Greg Sommer, Amalia Seedman, Jay Stange, AC Larry Terra
 - Absent: Adrienne Billings-Smith, Shana Gibbs, Maxine Nugent, John Phillips
- **Consultant Team:** Laura Nagle (virtual), Parker Sorenson, Adam Tecza (virtual), Susan VanBenschoten (FHI Studio); Shawna Kitzman and Ben Silverstein (Toole Design)
- **Note:** Mark Bassett has retired from the Town and is no longer on the Task Force.

Welcome and Project Schedule

- Town Manager Rick Ledwith kicked off the meeting.
- Susan VanBenschoten, CEO of FHI Studio, introduced herself and noted her role in developing plans and designs for safer streets throughout the state. She is integral to the project team. Susan thanked the Task Force for the work they are doing to develop the actions, strategies, and goals.
- The team welcomed the Task Force, members of the public, and new faces from Capital Region Council of Governments (CRCOG).

Mission Statement Adoption

- Select Task Force members developed the Mission Statement throughout early 2023. The PMT shared the latest version via email for Task Force review the week of July 17.
- Voting with the green (yes), yellow (neutral), and red (no) cards, there were two votes no, and one vote neutral. There were 12 votes yes, therefore the majority (70% or more

as defined the Task Force Charter) adopted the Mission Statement. This will be incorporated into the Action Plan.

Safety Assessment

- In response to the safety assessment overview slide, Greg Sommer asked for clarification of roadway data. The team responded that the data and roadway segments represent centerline miles and do not include the interstate and ramps.
- Ed Pawlak asked to clarify roadways where clusters of crashes happen but otherwise do not show up on the High Injury Network (HIN) because there were no serious injuries. Adam Tecza responded that the data driven approach to focus on crashes involving deaths and serious injuries in the HIN is a best practice from the reviewed examples in other cities. Shawna Kitzman added that community input collected from the webmap would likely indicate if there are roadways that require a closer evaluation for the focus areas.
- Ed Pawlak asked if roads outside the HIN will still be included in the Action Plan. Parker Sorenson responded the Action Plan addresses more than the HIN; the HIN is one part of the decision-making process for priority setting.
- Sandy Castellon asked if there are gaps in the crash data. Project team analyst Ben Silverstein responded that the data is gathered from the CT UConn Crash Repository and is all public data. The team also met with the WHPD to discuss data and address any anomalies.
- Mary Donegan asked why South Quaker Lane is included in the predictive analysis, but it is not on the HIN. Ben Silverstein responded that not all roads in the predictive analysis can be included on the HIN for priority setting. The HIN is not final, and analysis is ongoing.
- Jay Stange asked if the predictive analysis considered potential for mode shift and noted impacts from the North Main Street Road Diet may not be reflected in current data. The team responded that the model analyzes streets where there are currently high crashes, and risk is applied to streets with similar conditions to those. Therefore, streets with dangerous conditions, but no previous crashes, may still be considered a risk. The model does not consider future facility changes and land use developments.
- Mary Donegan questioned why Trout Brook Drive does not appear on the HIN, when it is a known roadway of concern as a partly-four lane road that allows high speeds. She noted the only person she knows who has been hit on a bike was on Trout Brook Drive, within the past five years. Both Tom and Ed agreed.
- Jay Stange noted the absence of the intersections and road segments between Boulevard, Farmington Ave, and Mountain Road, which form a triangle.

- Mary asked if the data and analysis methodology would be made available, for those interested. Parker Sorensen noted that it would be in the forthcoming tech memo.
- Jay Stange asked why intersections along Farmington Ave, Trout Brook Drive, North Main Street, Asylum Avenue, and Fern Street are not included. Intersection crashes seem critical, as demonstrated during the North Main Street Road Diet project. The team responded that this will be part of the future data analysis.
- Tom Condon wondered if speed enforcement or citation data is overlaid with our analysis. AC Larry Terra noted that the PD has a list of speed trap locations and is happy to share. Ben Silverstein noted that if speed is listed as a factor in the crash database citation, it is considered.
- Mary Donegan commented that locations with low pedestrian death and serious injuries may reflect a dangerous street where pedestrians are not comfortable. The correlation between dangerous conditions and no crashes should be considered. The team responded community input collected from the webmap would likely indicate if there are roadways that require a closer evaluation for inclusion in the HIN.
- In response to the relative scale on the crash data maps provided, Aryan inquired if fewer crashes correlate with lower severity. Ben Silverstein responded that we've collapsed the data scoring crashes based on severity. To simplify the maps for the public, we've simplified the scale.

Public Survey and Webmap

- In response to the outline of the forthcoming survey and webmap, Amalia Seedman asked how the team might distribute to high school and middle school students potentially using social media. Shawna Kitzman noted that she welcomes Amalia's ideas and will connect offline to discuss.
- Jay Stange asked if the Task Force could comment on questions to add or subtract, and the PMT confirmed yes, they could. All feedback is requested via the VisionZero email. Jay also asked if the PMT had cross referenced the North Main Street survey, which garnered 1,000 responses. FHI Studio worked on that plan and has access to it. Lastly, he asked why the Task Force wasn't given the survey content at this meeting, to which Susan replied that the presentation and discussion of the safety analysis was required significant time at this meeting and that only a brief discussion of the survey was possible within the meeting time. However, the Task Force can review and comment on the survey and webmap prior to launch and can take their time outside meeting time to review and get suggestions to the PMT.
- Sandy asked if the Town would consider partnering with businesses to get the word out. Rick Ledwith noted that the Town can coordinate with the Chamber of Commerce.

- Shawna noted the PMT would send a save the date for the September 19, 2023 Public Meeting #1.

Subcommittee Check In

- Susan reviewed the expected status of each subcommittee with a brief review of what should be done by now, and what should be completed prior to the August 21 workshop.
- Susan also reviewed the preliminary format for the workshop and reiterated that each subcommittee should decide who will summarize their findings.
- Susan requested that the subcommittees submit their completed worksheets via the Vision Zero email as early as possible the week of August 14, so the team can organize and prepare for the August 21 workshop.
- Mary Donegan asked how much the subcommittees should edit the project team's proposed text on packets. Adam Tecza responded that subcommittees should edit the proposed text however they see fit.
- Susan reviewed the project schedule and upcoming meetings through the end of September noting the August 21st Workshop, September 11th Task Force meeting, and September 19th Public Meeting. She noted that there are 4 additional Task Force meetings after September and before the end of the year and one additional Public Meeting targeted for early December.

Closing Discussion

- Ed Pawlak requested a map that shows all crashes. Parker noted such a map would probably be covered with dots. Adam Tecza cautioned against showing too much data, which doesn't prioritize the high injury network where there have been, or where the predictive model indicates, is more likely to have crashes that result in serious injuries or fatalities. These are areas most likely to allow the town to reduce crashes resulting in injury or death and we should not lose focus of the Vision Zero objective.

Adjourn

- Rick Ledwith, West Hartford Town Manager, adjourned the meeting and thanked everyone for their hard work and acknowledged the aggressive schedule that everyone was helping to support.