

WEST HARTFORD VISION ZERO TASK FORCE MEETING

Monday, August 21, 2023: 5:00 – 9:00 p.m.

West Hartford Town Hall Auditorium

50 South Main Street

West Hartford, CT 06107

Meeting Summary

Attendees

- **Task Force:** Adrienne Billings-Smith, Sandy Castellon, Tom Condon, Eric Dency, Mary Donegan, Aryan Grover, Rick Ledwith, Duane Martin, Renée McCue, Maxine Nugent, Ed Pawlak, John Phillips, Greg Sommer, Amalia Seedman, Jay Stange, AC Larry Terra
 - Absent: Erin Conneely, Shana Gibbs
- **Consultant Team:** Parker Sorenson, Adam Tecza, and Susan VanBenschoten (FHI Studio); Jake Berman and Shawna Kitzman (Toole Design)

Welcome and Project Updates

- Susan VanBenschoten of FHI Studio kicked off the meeting. Susan thanked the Task Force for their dedication to developing the draft actions, strategies, and goals (all Task Force members had a packet of the group's work to review during the workshop).
- Susan reviewed the agenda for the evening's meeting with the main focus on hearing from the subcommittees on their work over the past 6 weeks.
- Susan reviewed several project updates, including:
 - » The consultant team's working update of the High Injury Network methodology, with a memo forthcoming in mid-September.
 - » A scope amendment that includes 508-compliance on the draft and final Action Plan, as well as incorporation of ADA-compliant best practices on all project material, and a focus group meeting with deaf and hard of hearing stakeholders, to be coordinated with Shana Gibbs. The Town will facilitate signed video work products with Shana.
 - » There is a slight delay in the community survey launch, with the anticipated launch by the end of the week (8/25 - rather than the targeted launch date of 8/21). The team will keep the survey open slightly longer to ensure is no change to the amount of time collecting responses.

- Susan reviewed housekeeping items, then passed the meeting to facilitator Adam Tecza.
- Adam thanked the Task Force for the awesome work they completed in advance of this meeting. He asked the Task Force to reflect on why they joined the group, recognized their time and effort in participating in the subcommittee prep meetings and workshop, and paused for a moment of silence to acknowledge the loss of life due to traffic violence. He then reviewed the ground rules for each subcommittee's presentation of 10 minutes, with 20 minutes for questions, answers, and discussion.

Practices & Policies Subcommittee

- The subcommittee presented draft strategies related to securing funding, piloting interventions, promoting safe street design standards, eliminating racial biases in traffic enforcement, encouraging collaboration, partnering with CTDOT and CT DMV, developing internal trainings, educating drivers, maintaining a Vision Zero committee, and establishing a Rapid Response team.
- Responses included kudos for incorporating DMV to increase understanding of Vision Zero among drivers, new and experienced.
- There was a discussion around parking, land use, and how they intersect with practices and policies. There is some desire to revisit town parking minimums and other parking-related standards as a way to potentially increase roadway safety.
- There was a discussion about hiring a Bicycle and Pedestrian-focused full-time staff person, versus a person dedicated to Vision Zero. One Task Force member suggested that bicyclists and pedestrians are the most vulnerable roadway users. Another member indicated that people of color, young, and old are also vulnerable; dividing by vulnerability is limiting and prefers to focus the potential position on saving lives and not to distinguish by mode.

Safe Design Subcommittee

- The subcommittee presented draft strategies encompassing evaluating and accommodating municipal budgets for safe roadway design, evaluating speed limits on all road types, installing proven safety countermeasures, identifying and addressing gaps in the sidewalk network, improving pedestrian safety along roads and intersections, and inspecting and improving signals where needed.
- Discussion centered on the acknowledgement of limited municipal resources, the need for school zones throughout town, the prospect of Safe Routes to School program in CT, and the need for sustained and combined efforts related to enforcement, design interventions, and education.

Culture Subcommittee

- The subcommittee presented draft strategies related to engaging students and residents, and leveraging a variety of Vision Zero touchpoints and media to meet people where they are.
- Group discussion centered on the limits of Town staff, building broader capacity beyond staff, establishing a culture of town-wide defensive driving with respect for bicyclists and pedestrians, and ensuring that people commuting through Town understand the culture as well.
- There is agreement in re-introducing the concept of a community pledge for individuals to personally commit to helping to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2033.
- There is a shared understanding that change is hard, and many are resistant to change. The community should understand that the right-of-way is the public domain, and not an extension of one's own private property.
- Every street, no matter which type, is someone's neighborhood.
- There is a desire to build a culture of pride around our safe streets, similar to our local school and sports team pride.

Data Subcommittee

- The data subcommittee shared draft strategies regarding analyzing existing and predictive crash patterns to improve safety and inform funding opportunities, collecting and analyzing before-and-after speed data, using data to introduce behavioral and structural interventions, sharing data via a crash dashboard, and to improving data diversity.
- The discussion focused on how Police Department are trained to interact with the public (i.e. not to lecture), the unique nature of people airing traffic-related grievances on social media rather than to the Police, the emotional nature of reporting real or perceived traffic violations, and how small, low cost prompts can shift human behavior to improve safety.

Closing Discussion

- Upon the close of the meeting, there were no public attendees, and therefore no public comment.
- Adam asked all Task Force members to spend 20 minutes this week considering the discussion and the contents of the packet. He encouraged all to email further thoughts about tonight's discussion to the Vision Zero email. All feedback is logged and will be

circulated accordingly during the next phase – the consultant team will draft the Action Plan. Task Force members should expect a preliminary action plan by early October.

- Susan reminded the members to keep an eye out for the upcoming community survey and the September 19 public meeting (which will be advertised shortly), and to share news of both to their communities.
- Shawna answered several questions about the format of the public meeting, which will be 5:30-7:30pm with a formal presentation followed by an open house format, in which the team will lead attendees through the community survey and webmap. The team seeks two Task Force members to help run the event. The team is also still refining the details of this event and expects a defined plan by early September.

Adjourn

- Susan concluded the meeting. Renee commended the team for setting up the subcommittees for success. The meeting ended around 7:45pm.