



WEST HARTFORD VISION ZERO TASK FORCE MEETING

Monday, January 8, 2024: 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Town Hall Room 400

NOTES

Attendees

Task Force: Sandy Castellon, Tom Condon, Eric Dency, Mary Donegan, Aryan Grover, Rick Ledwith, Duane Martin, Renée McCue, Eric Munsell, Ed Pawlak, Amalia Seedman, Greg Sommer, Jay Stange

Absent: Adrienne Billings-Smith, Erin Conneely, John Phillips, Maxine Nugent, AC Larry Terra

Consultant Team: Parker Sorenson (FHI Studio); Shawna Kitzman (Toole Design)

1. Welcome and Updates

Parker welcomed the Task Force, Town staff, media, and the public, and turned the meeting over to Duane. Duane led a moment of silence to honor the pedestrian fatality on Saturday, January 6, and the deaths and serious injuries that have occurred on our roadways. He reiterated that the Action Planning process is nearing completion and is the appropriate measure to make our roadways safer in a deliberate, data-driven manner.

Parker reviewed the project timeline and noted this is the last meeting before the Project Management Team incorporates final comments and prepares to present to the Community Planning and Economic Development committee.

2. New Business

a. Debrief of December 6 Public Meeting

i. Summary of comments and Action Plan revisions

Shawna revisited the details of the December 6 public meeting, reiterating the meeting's purpose and sharing themes of the community feedback. She then walked through how the team thematically organized the 50 comments from the public and Task Force, and Parker walked through how this input influenced edits to the Revised Draft Action Plan.

b. Draft Online Crash Dashboard

Shawna introduced a new work product, the crash dashboard which is designed as a tool for the community to understand crash trends over time, where crashes have occurred, and statistics on fatal and serious injuries in Town. Shawna and Parker walked through the interactive draft dashboard.

Ed suggested that the data dashboard strategically show the most critical information, as space is at a premium. He indicated it may be more valuable to show time of day or age of crash victims than the type of crash. He suggested that the user interface is important and to limit toggling for ease of use. Jay suggested that roadway classification be included.

c. Vision Zero Advisory Committee

Rick indicated that the Town is in conversation with several Advisory Committee members, with one firm commitment. They will meet a minimum of quarterly starting in February 2024. He invites any interested Task Force members to continue on in this new capacity. Parker noted there are 35 tasks outlined in the Plan to begin in 2024, with 70 tasks in total.

d. Thank You!

Shawna and Parker expressed gratitude to the Town and Task Force for their hard work, time, and dedication, and outlined the achievements of the past year as a Task Force, and eight months working with the Consultant Team.

3. Calendar

a. Upcoming Meetings

- i. Town Community Planning and Economic Development Committee (CPED):
January 17, 2024 at 8am (virtual)
- ii. Related: Pedestrian and Bicycle Committee Meeting Monday, January 8, 2024
Town Hall Room 400 at 7pm

4. Task Force Comments

The Task Force shared the following feedback and questions:

- Ed is concerned that Road Safety Audits (RSAs) constrain the plan and will slow progress to roadway improvements. Rick noted that the RSAs are a critical component of the Plan, yet progress can still be made without RSAs, such as how the Town has convened an internal team to address the Albany Avenue pedestrian fatality. He confirmed there is a resource and time

constraint to completing them. Duane asserted that the Town values the RSA process and outcomes and may hire consultants to complete them.

- Ed noted that actions taken in the first year, particularly visible changes in our roadways, are critical to confirming to the community that the Town is committed to improving safety.
- Mary asked if the Task Force would have another opportunity to review and share their support or non-support of the Action Plan before finalized. Rick indicated that this is the last scheduled Task Force meeting but could host another if necessary. The Town is reviewing and editing the Revised Draft Action Plan now, and the Task Force and community will have another chance to review and comment beginning Friday, January 12.
- Jay indicated that the Action Plan could focus more on school zones, with a request to lower speed limits through the state Office of State Traffic Administration OSTA. Sandy asked why there are so few school zones in town. Duane indicated that the two school zones are at Sedgwick Road and King Philip Drive because these roadways have a higher speed limit than the other schools, located on neighborhood roads. Duane and Jay discussed Morley School on Fern Street as an example for lowering speeds.
- Tom suggested that the plan does not fully explore transit riders and ask that the Town and State discuss integration with safe local bus amenities.

5. Public Comment

The public shared the following statements, in summary.

- Some members of the public requested additional time to review Action Plan but were pleased to hear that the CPED committee will first review the Action Plan at their 1/17 meeting before advancing plan in a second meeting in February.
- Request for additional review by Task Force
- Support for enforcement of reckless driving; people need real disincentives to slow down and drive respectfully. Note that West Hartford drivers appear to be among the worst and most aggressive.
- Enthusiasm for the upcoming speed camera program but concerned about where the revenue from fines will go.
- Frustration that the length of the planning process and desire for action.
- Support for demonstration projects within one-week and collect before- and after data to determine if narrowing the roadways and intersections slows speeds. Funding does not need to be a limitation.
- Concern that bicycle infrastructure is low priority of plan. Support for protected bike lanes and non-support for sharrows.

- Disappointment that the Town promised action and changes to the roadway a year ago and has not delivered.
- Consider roadway lighting in the Action Plan.
- Concern that progress can be slow, for example, North Main Street Road Diet took eight years. There was a lot of community opposition and many doubted its feasibility. Now that it's been implemented, many agree the results are good.

6. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned around 6:40pm.