

WEST HARTFORD VISION ZERO TASK FORCE MEETING

Monday, October 16, 2023

5:00 p.m.

Town Hall Auditorium

MEETING SUMMARY

Attendees

Task Force: Adrienne Billings-Smith, Sandy Castellon, Tom Condon, Erin Conneely, Eric Dency, Aryan Grover, Rick Ledwith, Duane Martin, Renée McCue, Eric Munsell (FD), Maxine Nugent, Ed Pawlak, John Phillips, Greg Sommer, Jay Stange, AC Larry Terra

Absent: Mary Donegan, Amalia Seedman

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

1. Welcome and Updates

- Duane kicked off the meeting and welcomed all.
- Shawna thanked the public for participating and reviewed the expectations for public comment, open for 10 minutes at the end of the meeting.
- Shawna mentioned the next Public Meeting will be held on December 6 from 5:30-7:30 in the Noah Webster Meeting Room. Stay tuned for details and event notifications.
- Parker mentioned the upcoming Road Safety Audit on October 24 with select invitees, Task Force members, and Park Road business stakeholders.

2. New Business

a. Action Plan Action Table Review

Adam reviewed the primary Action Table factors including need/urgency, impact, cost, legal, barriers/fiscal, staffing, and equity impact. He discussed the framework of the Action Table, which is in four strategy categories:

- I. Programs and Policies
- II. Safe Roads
- III. Culture
- IV. Data

The VZ team will send a digital survey following this meeting and asks that this remains within the Task Force. It is not for public consumption in this draft format.

I. Programs and Policies

Strategy 1. Create the Institutional framework for the implementation of Vision Zero.

Ed suggested editing. Edit to **1f** – strike “it to determine where the project” to “they can advance Vision Zero”.

Sandy inquired if **1g** refers to continuation of the Vision Zero Task Force, since later actions include Task Force activities and training. Adam responded that it does include.

Strategy 2. Establish policies and programs that will support efforts to reduce speeds, calm traffic, and increase safety for all users.

Duane asked if there would be a glossary (i.e. explain quick build, access management, vulnerable user). Adam responded that it wasn’t planned, but the team would consider.

Jay suggested that OSTA is a partner/governing agency; would the recommendation include mention? Adam replied that these considerations would likely be listed as partners in the final Action Plan.

Tom asked if **2e** would imply closing roadways for pedestrian safety zones. Adam responded that the design specifics are beyond the scope, however, this type of action references the State’s recently passed Complete Streets law.

Strategy 3. Undertake important studies and plans.

Duane suggested splitting **3c** into two different actions.

Strategy 4. Integrate safe street design standards into zoning and subdivision ordinances.

No comments

Strategy 5. Build meaningful partnerships to support new policies, practices, and projects.

Jay appreciates **5a** but indicates we may strike “off-road” so it’s not exclusive. On-road facilities are also valuable to a network. AC Larry Terra’s comment differentiated between pedestrian and bicyclists being in the street; suggestion is to replace with language such as “comfortable pedestrian and bicyclist facilities”.

Strategy 6. Become a leader in Vision Zero in Connecticut.

No comments

Programs and Policies Task Force Temperature Check

The team paused for the Programs and Policies *temperature check*. All Task Force members presented **green cards**, indicating general support for the direction and actions outlined.

II. Safe Roads

Strategy 1. Make short-term infrastructure improvements that will advance Vision Zero.

Tom indicates **1e** should be prioritized and swap places with **1a**.

Jay noted the choice of language ‘consider’ in **1b** feels non-committal. Adam responded that actions such as the road safety audit would inform the specifics of quick-builds.

Strategy 2. (Re)design streets for safe speeds.

Jay requested clarification on how a road becomes eligible for a road diet. There is confusion around the law. Parker replied that the specifics may be limited in this document, and the team will reassess the language. Duane suggested that Jay may find more clarity during the Bicycle Plan update process.

Ed suggested that **2e** go beyond ‘identify’ to establish a goal for building/implementation. Adam responded that this represents a bit of friction, and the specifics of such implementation strategies (i.e. cost, resources) will carry weight. Applies to **2d** as well.

Duane pointed out several school-related mentions of lowering the speed limit 20 mph, mentioned in **2f** as well as **Safe Roads 4a**. The lowering of speed limits, in school zones or otherwise, will be nuanced. Greg suggested replacing the word *implement* with *evaluate* to capture the specifics of each location throughout the document.

Strategy 3. Make investments to protect vulnerable users.

Erin suggested that ‘vulnerable user’ is an umbrella term. Clarified that it refers to all people not in an automobile.

Ed commented that *review*, *consider* and *identify* are not strong enough in terms of holding the community accountable. Jay suggested *propose*.

Strategy 4. Design for safe streets near schools.

Duane asked if **4c** applies to safe walking paths to school and excludes school property. Parker confirmed.

Tom suggested adding an action that discourages idling at school pick-up/drop-off. Relates to health quality. Adam responded this is an area to rank impact in the Task Force survey.

Strategy 5. Design for safe intersections and access management (driveway) areas.

Sandy asked for clarification of the mechanism outline in **5e**. Parker explained the signal-phase only signage indicates ‘No Turn on Red’ and ‘Yield to Pedestrian’ only if a pedestrian hits the button.

Tom questioned why roundabouts are restricted to single-lane in **5g**. Parker noted the feedback and suggested that single lane roundabouts have greater safety outcomes. Tom agreed there may not be enough ROW at key town intersections to create a multi-lane roundabout.

Duane asked if the strategies apply to local and state-owned roads. Parker confirmed and Adam replied that this Action Plan is our best attempt to provide directions to complete roadway safety.

Safe Roads Task Force Temperature Check

The team broke for the Safe Roads *temperature check*. All Task Force members presented **green cards**, indicating general support for the direction and actions outlined.

III. Culture

Strategy 1. Increase awareness of Vision Zero through a variety of communication methods.

Duane suggested reconsidering how to set and adjust the target quantities in **4e**. If the town hosts quarterly pop-ups and no one shows up, this should allow the Town to modify. Adam confirmed.

Sandy indicated Action strategies should incorporate off-line, traditional engagement to counteract the bias-enforced, AI nature of social media outlets. People see what they want to see, and what the algorithms feed them. Adam suggested a potential need for a feedback loop, to better measure success or failure of engagement efforts.

Strategy 2. Integrate Vision Zero education into West Hartford schools.

No comments

Strategy 3. Promote non-motorized travel as a viable alternative to driving.

No comments

Strategy 4. Establish the town as a leader in Vision Zero best behaviors.

AC Larry Terra indicated it is not realistic for law enforcement to educate motorists upon pulling them over for infractions, as suggested in **4a**.

Sandy suggested adding a strategy that outlines publicly championing successes in yielding behavior.

Ed reminded the Task Force of his early strategy suggestion of sharing the responsibility of safe driving via pledge (gentle driving, pledge associated with Hoboken's Vision Zero).

Culture Task Force Temperature Check

The team broke for the Culture *temperature check*. Two members presented **yellow cards**, and the rest presented **green cards**, indicating general support with need for clarification or edits.

IV. Data

Strategy 1. Report data to community members, town staff, and the state.

Regarding **1a**, Duane indicated there is confusion about the dashboard elements. The data changes frequently. AC Larry Terra indicated people will look for real-time information; data about serious and/or fatal crashes can take 6 months or longer to process and publicize. Adrienne inquired about how the Police Department tracks. Larry responded that they track in 'Next Gen' platform, which informs the UConn Crash Database. Adam indicated this may be an opportunity for the Rapid Response team. The PD releases a serious and fatal report each time it occurs, which may be easier to report.

Sandy requested less reliance on online mechanisms for broader engagement (especially for non-digital natives); for example, sharing information via a poster at the library. Do not rely solely on digital dissemination, which excludes certain populations.

Larry Terra says a serious injury is 'life altering' to a person, not property damage.

Strategy 2. Analyze data to improve the town's understanding of crash patterns.

Duane and Renee indicated "hot spots" in **2a** needs definition; it's not known language.

Strategy 3. Improve data diversity surrounding available crash data.

No comments

Data Task Force Temperature Check

The team paused for the Data *temperature check*. Two members presented **yellow cards**, and the rest presented **green cards**, indicating general support with need for clarification or edits.

3. Public Comment

Brian, a resident, appreciated the webmap that solicited near misses, and the opportunity to understand his neighbor's issues. He also supports the concept of Gentle Driving and bumper stickers that promote the shared culture of safe driving awareness.

Shawna to send out Action Plan survey to all Task Force members. Responses due by Monday, October 23.

4. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned just after 7pm.