

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.



West Hartford Vision Zero Task Force Meeting

January 8, 2024



Moment of Silence



Agenda



1. Welcome and Updates
2. New Business
 - a. Debrief of Public Meeting #2
 - i. Summary of comments and Action Plan revisions
 - b. Draft Online Crash Dashboard
 - c. Vision Zero Advisory Committee
 - d. Thank You!
3. Upcoming Meetings
4. Public Comment



Project Updates



Project Schedule



2023

Jan

Feb

Mar

Apr

May



Town
Adopts
Vision Zero
Resolution



Town
Convenes
Task Force &
Forms Sub-
Committees



Town
Selects
Consultant
Team

2023

Jun

Jul

Aug

Sept

Oct

Nov

Dec

2024

Jan

**VISION ZERO
ACTION PLAN
ASSESSMENT**

Town Plan &
Policy Review

Develop Action
Plan Framework

Conduct Town-wide
Crash Analysis

Establish
Preliminary Goals,
Strategies & Action

**PUBLIC
MEETING
#1**

Establish
HIN & VZ
Safety
Focus Areas

Community
Survey &
Interactive
Map

Establish
Performance Measures &
Monitoring Plan

Develop DRAFT Vision Zero
Action Plan

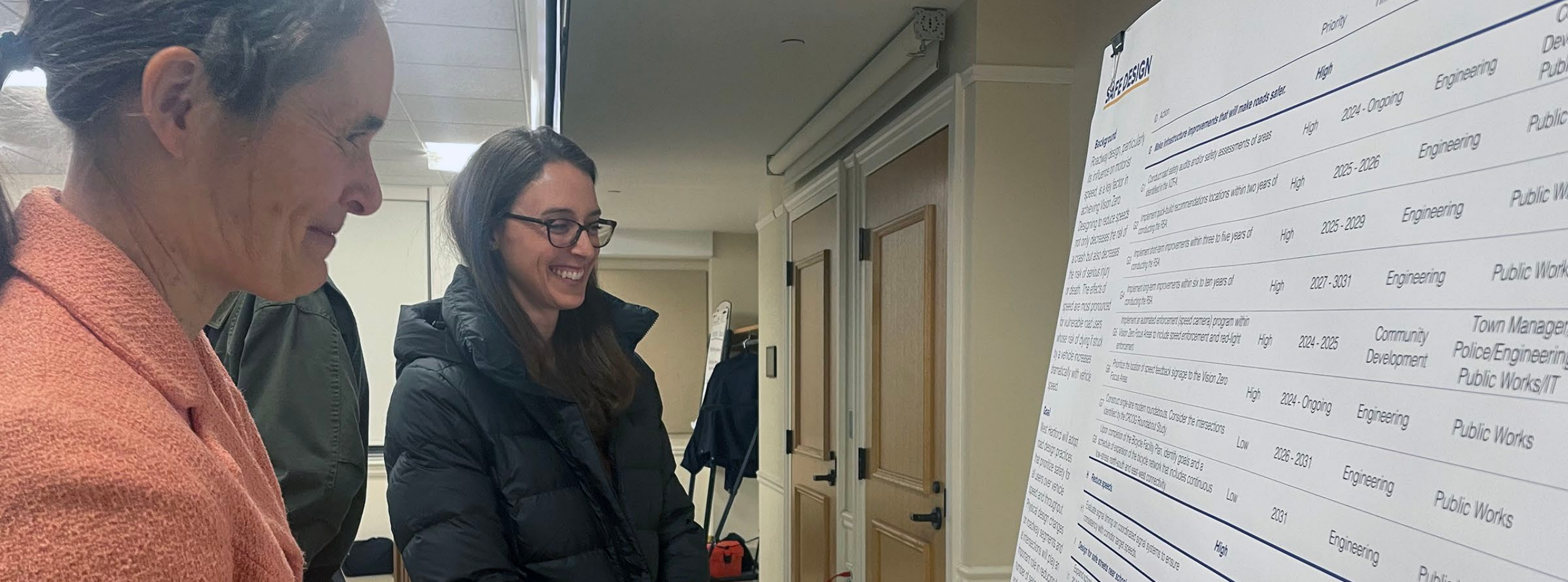
**PUBLIC
MEETING
#2**

Stakeholder Meetings to
Review Findings & Draft
Plan Elements

Develop
Final
Action
Plan

PROJECT WEBPAGE UPDATES

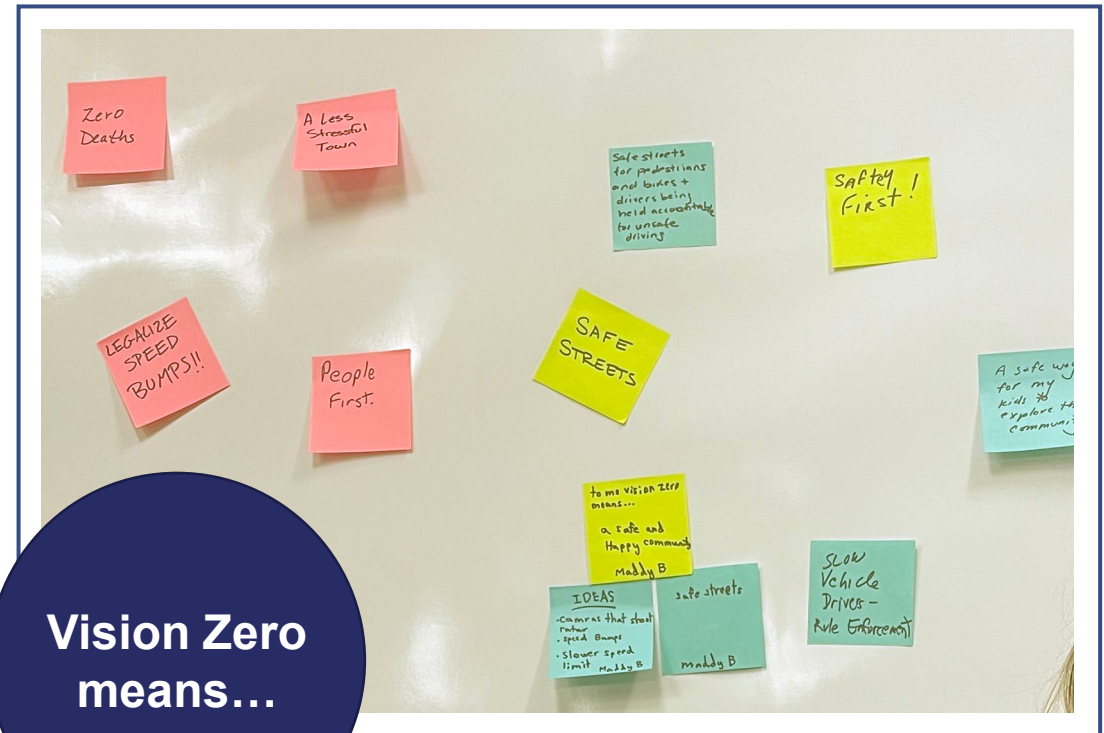
REGULAR TASK FORCE MEETINGS



Public Meeting #2 & Action Plan Revisions

Debrief of Public Meeting #2

- Held Wednesday, December 6, 5:30-7:30pm
- At capacity (80 people) in Library Meeting Room
- Open house with presentation, sign-in activity, and comment forms
- Media coverage
 - NBC, WHNH, CT Insider, We-Ha.com, etc
- Task Force support



Debrief of Public Meeting #2

- What we heard
 - Feedback on specific HIN roadways
 - Pace of the Action Plan process (too fast vs. too slow)
 - Concern for Action Plan strength and viability
- Advertised the public comment period of the Draft Action Plan from December 4-18



Public and Task Force Feedback



- 50 comments including emails and feedback to project staff
- Stakeholders are actively engaged and passionate about safety
- Both excitement and support, with frustration about how long actions may take
- Acknowledgement of funding and staff resource constraints
- Call for ongoing transparent communication

Summary of Comments



- Identify and fund immediate actions to meet the urgency of traffic violence
- Conduct inclusive community engagement
- Consider driver behavior, infrastructure, and specific locations of concern
- Support enforcement
- Other edits

Action Plan Revisions



Comment Theme: Identify and fund immediate actions to meet the urgency of traffic violence	Action Plan Changes
Funding and staffing • Concern about funding and resources available to complete Action Plan in a timeline manner • Inquiries about Town's intention to pursue additional grants	• Modified Action A3 ("Pursue implementation grant funding...") to 2024 timeframe • Added new Action to Strategy D to engage with CRCOG through 2024 RTSP update so that WH's priorities are represented at a regional level • Added new Action to Strategy D to leverage CRCOG's Grant Coordination support services
Road Safety Audits may thwart progress	• Added new Action to Strategy G to address "low hanging fruit" that will not impact corridor planning which can be implemented with limited coordination with community stakeholders and within 1-year by town staff • Added a "Key Action Highlight" to page 45 explaining the role and efficiency of the RSAs

Action Plan Revisions

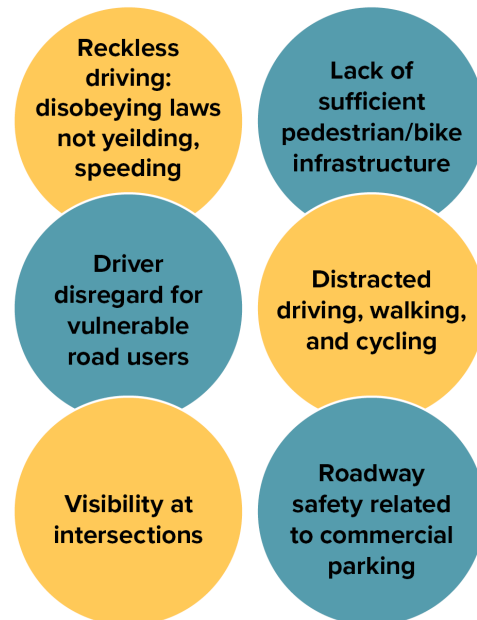


Comment Theme: (continued) Identify and fund immediate actions to meet the urgency of traffic violence	Action Plan Changes
Accelerate timelines, communicate performance measures, and share progress	• Modified Action A5: “Conduct an annual review of the Vision Zero Action Plan. <i>Include a work plan for projects to be undertaken in the upcoming year.</i>” • Modified Action A6 (“internal Response Team”) to begin in 2024. • Added two sections to the “Implementation Support” chapter • Performance Measures • Outline the Data Dashboard as an annually-updated resource that visualizes crash trends, patterns, and factors

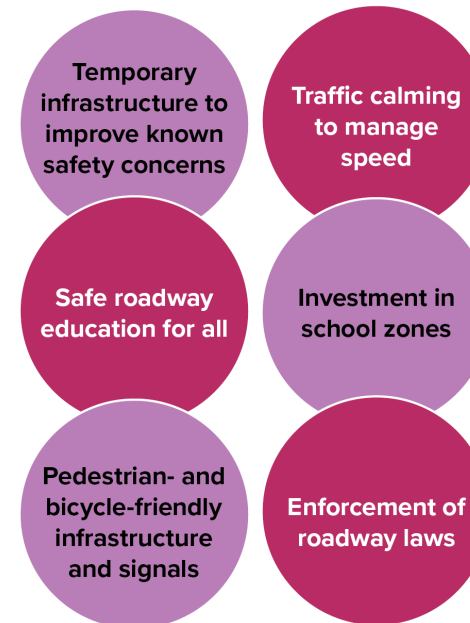
Action Plan Revisions

Comment Theme: Conduct inclusive community engagement	Action Plan Changes
Conduct transparent engagement and include those most impacted by traffic violence	Added graphic communicating the community's primary concerns and actions that they support to Public Engagement chapter

Concerns include...



Support for...



Action Plan Revisions



Comment Theme: Revisit the priority and timing of Vision Zero campaigns	Action Plan Changes
Mixed feedback on the need for and priority of strategic communications and Vision Zero education programs	Added new Action to Strategy J: “Publish an online <i>Vision Zero Pledge</i> that allows community members to show their personal commitment to achieving zero deaths and serious injuries.”
Comment Theme: Other Edits	Action Plan Changes
Based on review of urgent VZFAs and identification of issues in the Park Road RSA and applicable countermeasures	Revised list of potential countermeasures in Implementation Support chapter.

Action Plan Revisions



Comment Theme: Consider driver behavior, infrastructure, and specific locations of concern	Action Plan Changes
Suggestions about certain roadways or intersections that are not included on the VZFAs.	• Added text to High Injury Network section: “It is anticipated that VZFA will be updated in 2027. This may result in segments being removed as improvements are made and new priority areas identified.” • Added section “Areas not identified within Vision Zero Focus Areas” with explanatory text: • “VZFAs give direction to the Town on projects which should be prioritized for safety improvements. Other projects may be initiated with different goals such as regular maintenance, streetscaping, operational improvements, pedestrian and bicycle facility roll-out, or other goals. The Town will review opportunities for safety improvements as part of these projects. • VZFAs do not preclude traffic calming on the streets outlined in the “Neighborhood Street Traffic Calming Program.”

Action Plan Revisions



Comment Theme: Consider driver behavior, infrastructure, and specific locations of concern

Action Plan Changes

Call for pedestrians to travel responsibly (wear visible clothing in low-light conditions) and follow the rules of the road.

- Updated “Culture” background section to include: “While human error is inevitable, Vision Zero will be more successful if it is supported by members of the public who understand the importance of Vision Zero and the role that they play in ensuring safe streets. Motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians each have responsibility to demonstrate safe behaviors. Vision Zero must actively engage with the public to teach traffic safety and design a safer system together. Cultural changes are evident in community action.”



Draft Crash Data Dashboard

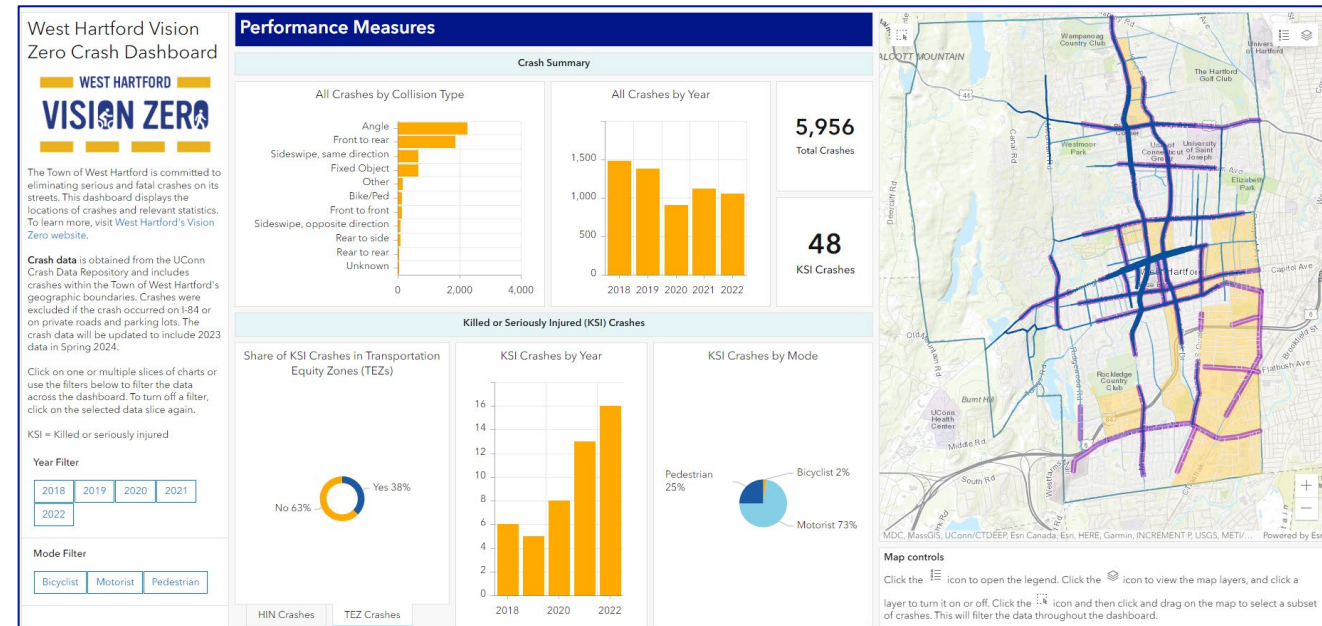


Draft Crash Data Dashboard



- Hosted on Town website
- Repository for crash data, interactive features, and roadway safety project status updates
- Timeline
 - Publish by end of January
 - Town will update annually
 - Anticipated early summer due to time delay in finalization of crash reports to the UConn Crash Data Repository

DRAFT



Vision Zero Advisory Committee



35 Tasks Identified to Begin in 2024

**70 Tasks in Total*



Thank You!





Upcoming Meetings

Upcoming Meetings



- Finalization of Plan
 - January 17, 2024 at 8am | virtual
Presentation to Town Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED)
 - Time & Date TBD
Acceptance of Plan by CPED
- Tonight: Pedestrian and Bicycle Committee Meeting at 7pm
Town Hall Room 400 (this room)
 - Discussion Bicycle Facility Plan Update



Public Comment



VisionZero@WestHartfordCT.gov

