

**CITY OF NORWALK
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION
NOVEMBER 1, 2021**

ATTENDANCE: Tanner Thompson, Chair; Barbara McCabe; Jud Aley; Christine Bisceglie;
Colin Gotheer; Sam Ebert; Greg Washinsky

STAFF: Greg Pacelli, Transportation Planner; Michael Yeosock, Principal Engineer,
TMP; Carly Kramer, Redeployment Agency; Sergeant Gulino, Norwalk
Police Department

OTHERS: Philip Katz, Stantac; Chelsea Henderson, Stantec

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CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:05PM.

PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public comment this evening.

**PHILIP KATZ AND CHELSEA HENDERSON , STANTAC
SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS FROM THE TRANSPORTATION MASTER
PLAN**

- George Avenue
- Riverside Avenue
- Linden Street

Mr. Pacelli introduced Philip Katz and Chelsey Henderson of Stantac and said they are working on some sidewalk projects for the Transportation Master Plan for the City of Norwalk.

Mr. Katz presented the preliminary plans and said Stantac was engaged by the City of Norwalk to look at three areas to add sidewalks which include George Avenue, Riverside Avenue and Linden Street, and two of the locations have connections to the current walking routes. He said as part of the study we have driven the locations to see what obstructions there would be to install sidewalks and found on George Avenue there were several fences that are in the right of way, large trees and hydrants that would need to be relocated and are trying to keep the sidewalk installation in the right of way to avoid impacts to the property owners. He said on Linden Street that are also a lot of walls and fences that are in the right of way as well as trees, but there are sidewalks already installed on most of the street and we would be connecting into those sidewalks. He said the final section we looked at was on Riverside Avenue and found some steep topography and some catch basins that would need to be redone, and the sidewalks would connect to the NRVt trail and would create four-way ramps and crosswalks at the intersection of Spring Hill and New Canaan Avenue.

Ms. McCabe said when going down Hill Street and cross over to the NRVt there is no entrance and would have to walk along the street. Mr. Katz said that connection will be made once the project is approved, and this is just a primary plan at this point and the next task would be to do the design.

Mr. Aley asked how these three streets were chosen. Mr. Pacelli there is a need for sidewalks all over the city, but these three streets have been a topic of discussion and are not prioritizing that these are the only sidewalks that we are looking at and there are other sidewalk projects that are being looked at, but we would like to see these locations completed with sidewalks as part of the Master Plan.

Mr. Thompson suggested that the section between George Avenue and Tierney Street be completed as part of this plan. Mr. Pacelli said that would be part of a separate project and would need to be looked at through a different funding source.

Mr. Grotheer asked if they are looking at taking any property on George Avenue. Mr. Katz said we have not yet finalized our evaluation and are now looking at any street that is wider than it needs to be and doing a road diet rather than taking from the adjacent property owners, but we have not yet completed that analysis.

Mr. Grotheer asked if the scope of the project included tree replacement for those that will need to be removed. Mr. Katz said that is something that we would recommend and will be included in the budget to replace and add trees. Ms. Henderson said we will try and stay out of easements particularly on George Avenue but there is no avoiding moving fences, hedges and walls that have been built on the right of way.

Mr. Grotheer asked if there is any plan for bike share or bike infrastructure and if traffic lights will be installed or will they be three way stops. Mr. Katz said we were not evaluating the areas for signals but that may be warranted but is currently not in the scope.

Mr. Grotheer asked if the telephone poles on Linden Street will be moved to make it more pedestrian friendly. Mr. Katz said we will work with the utility companies and come up with a plan. Mr. Grotheer suggested items like these be included in the presentation to the community because it will go a long way.

Mr. Grotheer asked if there is any plan for bicycle infrastructure on Riverside Avenue for transportation use rather than for recreation, and if the cemetery will be responsible for any of the maintenance of the sidewalk. Mr. Pacelli said once it is determined where the best fit for the sidewalk installation and begin the design phase will then look at those sorts of issues, but at this point Stantec is looking at what the best layout will be and what the roadways can fit.

Mr. Katz said all of the comments from tonight will be included in the comment section of the preliminary plan, so they are not lost.

Mr. Ebert asked why more asphalt sidewalks are not installed given they are so much cheaper than concrete. Mr. Pacelli said there is no funding available for asphalt sidewalks or curbing through any state or federal funds and, they do not last as long as concrete and there is no standard so would deteriorate much faster. He said the homeowner would also not be required to maintain an asphalt sidewalk.

GREG PACELLI

▪ Bike Rack

Mr. Pacelli reported and said the shark bike rack was delivered last week which will be installed on North Water Street in front of the Maritime Garage and will be installed in the next couple of weeks and he will send a photo to the committee once it has been installed. He said the other remaining bike racks will also be installed in the next couple of weeks and Mr. Emery has been overseeing the installation of the bike racks and has been providing him the updates. Mr. Aley asked which locations the biker racks will be installed. Mr. Pacelli said the Main Street Lot, The Webster Lot, Police Department and the outbound approach at the South Norwalk Railroad Station and one was installed at Calf Pasture Beach.

Mr. Grotheer asked what happened to the comments from last month regarding the locations and that he thinks it is a waste to put an artistic bike rack up against the parking garage. Mr. Pacelli said that rack was custom designed and was custom ordered to fit that location, but in the future can look at other locations. Sergeant Gulino asked if the location has been chosen for the bike rack at the police department. Mr. Pacelli said “yes” and has been discussed with representatives from the Police Department and will be installed on the concrete portion of the plaza area.

- **Connectivity Grant**

Mr. Pacelli provided an update and said that the DOT had recently submitted their comments back to us and we have begun updating the plan with some of the comments they had submitted, and are working with them to get it finalized for their review.

- **Sidewalk inventory**

Mr. Grotheer reported and said VHB has provided us with a proposal and have had a few meetings with them to form a collection of all of the walkways in the city found it will be more cost effective to have them perform the sidewalk assessment and ramp data, and staff is now working on the proposal and he will keep the commission updated as it advances. Mr. Thompson said the city has hired a Traffic Analyst with GIS experience and one of his responsibilities will be to ingest this data.

Mr. Aley asked the status of the Ludlow Avenue circle study. Mr. Pacelli said he will follow up with TMP staff and report back to the committee. Mr. Thompson said he will add it the December agenda.

CARLY KRAMER

- **CT DEEP Recreational Trails Grant- NRV/HLT Link**

Ms. Kramer said we have just submitted recreational trails grant application on Friday and was due today for the completion of the construction of the trail at 40 Cross Street, and the Bike/Walk Commission had submitted a letter of support and she thanked the commission. She said she is hoping the application is approved so that the trail can be completed. Mr. Thompson presented a map of the area and asked if there will be a crosswalk installed across on Cross Street as part of the scope of the grant. Ms. Kramer said “no” not at this time because we decided a mid-block cross walk at the busy intersection would not be safe but can be looked at in the future. Mr. Thompson asked if the trail can be routed under the bridge. Ms. Kramer said that would be a question for engineering. Mr. Yeosock said it would be in a flood plain and would not be ADA assessable and would not be feasible. Mr. Thompson said he acknowledges the constraints of the grant but to wait on the idea of a crosswalk until there is a critical mass of people using the trail is backwards, and he hopes the city can find the funds to install the crosswalk. Ms. Kramer said staff can revisit the designs before they are constructed.

COLIN GROTHEER

- **West Rocks Striping (see attachment)**

Mr. Grotheer presented and said that Mr. Travers and Mr. Bolella have worked very hard to get the lane width reduced citywide to 10' and wants to be sure that is being taken advantage of to meet the goals of connectivity so there are better buffers on the street for pedestrians especially being this lower section of West Rock Road is in within the walk shed of Tracey School. He suggested striping the road in such a way that it is bike friendly will be good, and he has been working with TMP to get a edge line dash across Jarvis Street because that is a very high speed decent and there is a crosswalk there that gets used at least twice a day by kids. He said he requested the same thing be done at Glendenning Road because there is a very wide apron on the road and encourages people to speed up the road so keeping them more in the lane would be beneficial and would also give some additional guidance to families that come out of Glendenning Street.

Mr. Pacelli said that he did review this with Mr. Travers and Mr. Bolella and the road was just paved and the design has been laid out, but they will come back and will be installed a 10 ½,' edge line which would provide better bike and pedestrian access. Mr. Grotheer said that is great news but his preference on the lower end would be to have a wider shoulder on the upward section if possible of 5' or greater and shift the center line where possible.

- **Camp Street/Adams Avenue Intersection (Tracey School) (see attachment)**

Mr. Grotheer presented and said over the past couple of years the parking on the sidewalks has become a terrible issue and while the on-street parking is beneficial to the community, the cars need to be parking on the street and not on the sidewalk. He said the intersection does need to stay clear and have indicated on the drawing where striping or a bollard would be beneficial to keep people from parking and obstructing the turning of the buses. and to install a no parking zone to better help the buses navigate the turn during the busy times. He also said the stop sign at the intersection is too low and does not meet ADA guidelines.

Mr. Pacelli said that he met with Mr. Travers and Mr. Bolella to discuss this and this has been an area that TMP has been looking at as well but they are not planning on doing any striping or installing delineators on the road, but their plan is to normalize the signage in the area to insure there is nothing to impede the buses turning and also make it easier for pedestrians to get through. He said the sidewalk is an existing sidewalk and a service request submitted to DPW can easily fix the curb and raise the sidewalk and make a better sidewalk for the area. He said another thing we would like to do along Camp Street

is to install an edge line along the northbound approach to improve the traffic flow, and install speed feedback signs on both sides of the roadway to deter speeding. He also said that TMP has been working with the principal regarding installing a 12' wide asphalt driveway behind the school to accommodate passenger vehicles during drop off and pick up times to ease traffic and parking issues on Camp Street and would be connected to the existing parking lot and be used as a bike and pedestrian plan on the off peak hours. He said it has been presented to the Principal and the Asst. Superintendent but since it is on school property the funds would need to come through their budget.

Ms. McCabe said when we looked at the traffic pattern a year ago and were talking about going around the building one of the things, we were told was that Recreation and Parks had some strong feelings and apparently that field was theirs and they did not want anything done in the area and asked if that has been addressed. Mr. Pacelli said the field would not be touched as part of this project.

- **Flax Hill Park Accessibility (see attachment)**

Mr. Thompson said on Flax Hill Road at the entrance to the park used to have a fence in front making it difficult to access the park, but Recreation and Parks has recently installed a bollard and he thanked Mr. Hughes for having that installed. He also presented a photo of someone who was trying to access the north end of the park where the gap between the gate and rock is so small they could not get a baby carriage through but according to Mr. Hughes the rock has now been moved

TANNER THOMPSON

- **People For Bikes City Ratings**

Mr. Thompson said in past years we had filled out an application to receive a score from the People for Bikes Association and we received a very low score and was the lowest in all of Connecticut in terms of bike friendliness. He said a lot of their methodology is through open street map and they asked that cities that want to improve their score have their biking facilities updated on the map and he will be putting together a "mapping party" to be sure the information is up to date and asked if anyone on the committee would like to attend and assist. Mr. Aley and Mr. Washinsky volunteered to assist. Mr. Thompson said he will provide further details at the next meeting.

Mr. Thompson said that Ms. Cozzarin shared that there will be an event on the Norwalk Green on Monday, November 22, 2021, for a song and celebration and asked if the commission would like to be a partner and although he thinks it's great to participate in community events, there is not promotion of biking or walking at this event and asked the

commission their thoughts. It was the consensus of the commission that it is not in line with the mission of the commission but to share the flyer on the website.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. ALEY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MS. MCCABE SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:40PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd