

**CITY OF NORWALK  
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
AUGUST 7, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Tanner Thompson, Chair; Emily Burnaman; Jud Aley; Nicholas Pappas;  
Christine Bisceglie

STAFF: Greg Pacelli, Transportation Planner; Garrett Bolella, Asst. Director, TMP

OTHERS: Ben Hanpeter; Brian Boland; Paul Chenard; Anthony Lima; Michael Morehouse,  
FHI Studios; Hannah Brockhaus, FHI Studios; Wendy Bjerke

To allow public access, anyone may access a meeting by telephone, Zoom, and/or the City of Norwalk YouTube channel. Specific instructions and links can be found at <http://www.norwalkct.org/meetings>.

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**FHI STUDIOS**

- Complete Streets Pedestrian and Discussion- Mike Morehouse and Hannah Brockhaus

Mr. Bolella said this is an exciting time for the city and recognized all the Bike Walk Commission's efforts to get them to this point, as well as the support of the mayor, this administration, and the Common Council for moving these complete streets initiative forward. He said that Norwalk will be the thirteenth town in the state to adopt a policy and ordinance and to come up with this design and implementation guide and are the community that is investing the most money into this process. He said they are still very early on in the process, but FHI will share a lot of what there is to look forward to in the coming months.

Mr. Morehouse presented and said the project is focused on cs policy, design guide, integration plan, and engagement and are now in the process of inventorying all of Norwalk's streets and looking at different contexts and will develop a set of typologies and will have design guidance associated with them and based on their canvassing of the streets there will be between 9-11 distinct typologies. He said they have been interviewing many of the departments within the city to understand how they do things on a day-to-day basis and that collaboration is critical. He said they have a demonstration project that is scheduled which will use inexpensive temporary material to trial something and selected an intersection along North Main Street @ Ann Street, and on Thursday they will be walking the entire corridor and will focus on the experience of walking the area and would like to hear from the Bike/Walk Commission on their thoughts

on the project and their interest in supporting it. He said they would also like to do a walkability workshop to get public/ business owner feedback and following that have some public input on the design and will be recruiting local members of the community to help and the installation which is scheduled for early October 2023.

Ms. Brockhaus discussed the timeframe and said they are gearing up for a public workshop which will be scheduled in the next month to month and a half that will provide a larger opportunity for the public to provide feedback on the design and will be an opportunity to provide larger education awareness on complete streets as a whole and will move into the demonstration project shortly after that.

Ms. Bisceglie asked which groups have they reached out to and if the public is invited to attend the walk of the corridor, and how FHI works at the goal of being diverse. Mr. Morehouse said they are just starting the recruitment process to see who will be participating in the installation but are currently in the project identification stage, so they have not done much outreach yet. Mr. Bolella said they have already reached out to some of the business owners and neighbors who are adjacent to the intersection to get their input and invite them to the walk, and over the next month's expand that to the entire North Main Street section but thought this would be a great place to get the entirety of the community involved. Mr. Morehouse said due to logistics the walk will need to be kept to a finite group so it can be managed and there is an invitation list. Mr. Bolella said there is a steering advisory committee that was started in the early stages of the project and includes several city departments, adjacent business owners as well as the Bike/Walk Commission. Mr. Thompson said that he and Ms. Bisceglie would attend the walk and said if there is one other commissioner that is interested in attending to reach out to him. Mr. Morehouse said that FHI is a diverse company and is a women owned organization, the president is African American and have an equity inclusion program to assure they are addressing equity within their organization and to do a better job on the projects in the communities that they serve. Mr. Bolella said there is a complete streets webpage in the city's website under TMP and there is a link and email address that is shared with FHI.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments this evening.

### **FAIRFIELD AVENUE DISCUSSION**

Mr. Pacelli said there have been some concerns about safety on Fairfield Avenue and in the spring 2024 DPW is slated to perform some sidewalk improvements on Fairfield Avenue between Cedar Street and Washington Street and is schedule to be paved in 2025 once the sidewalk work has been completed. He said they are working with DPW and coordinated an improvement plan and implementation of the complete streets best practices into the corridor as well. Mr. Thompson asked if the commission will be able to see the high-level designs before they go out to bid or will they be released as part of the bid. Mr. Pacelli said they will be released as part of the bid and that it is a DPW project and TMP will be coordinating with them on the street layout but are still in the process of analyzing the data. Mr. Thompson said based on the cursory measurements it looks like the lane widths may be as much as thirteen feet and the commission would like to see those narrowed for the purposes of traffic calming. Mr. Hanpeter said although the road may be too narrow for bike lanes, a shoulder would be better then

nothing. Mr. Pacelli said that the slope of the street will need to be taken into consideration, but they always look at any bicycle infrastructure that they can implement into any project. Mr. Lima said one of the concerns he raised was the heavy amount of industrial traffic causing a lot of disruption and asked if there is anything on the table to reduce that traffic. Mr. Pacelli said making a street a “no through trucks” is up to the State Traffic Administration and any truck that has an origin or destination inside of Norwalk has the ability to use any road but they will look to implement traffic calming measures such as sidewalks and street trees wherever possible to change the nature of the street.

### **PROPOSED WALK AUDIT DISCUSSION- EAST AVENUE**

Mr. Thompson introduced Dr. Bjerke and said over the last year she has been working with a student working on a research project looking at crash data using the Connecticut crash data repository and her student did a review of the crash data on East Avenue and Dr. Bjerke has expanded on that in particular walk audits.

Dr. Bjerke presented and said the current project combines the walkability audit with the crash data and the commission suggested an audit of East Avenue and found there were three crashes that involved cyclists at the round a bout on the way to the beach but when she went to take photos, she found it interesting the area looked safer compared to 15 years ago when some of the accident’s occurred. She said she has sent this abstract to an international conference which will take place in June, and she will be notified in October if the abstract is accepted but she did leave the abstract open-ended for the opportunity for the continued work to be more collaborative and additionally open to additional authors on the abstract as well. She said she and Mr. Thompson discussed members of the commission getting together over the fall to do some audits in some of the areas that she had identified using the crash repository, and she is also interested in getting her students and interns involved in the work.

Mr. Thompson said he would like to get TMP involved because they along with their consultants have been doing similar work and there is now a draft transportation master plan which included a lot of analysis about crashes and there is also some ongoing work around crash analysis. Mr. Pacelli said they have a similar toolkit that the Traffic Analyst has been putting together and they utilize the crash reports from the police department as well as the crash repository. Mr. Thompson asked to what extent they have combined that data with the walk audits that TMP or their consultants have done. Mr. Pacelli said the complete streets and transportation master plan include data from walk audits. Mr. Thompson asked if that data is accessible to the public so that efforts are not duplicated. Dr. Bjerke said she would be interested in looking at any walk audit data that is available. Mr. Pacelli said they are in the process of doing a study of the Route 1 corridor and have received funding for a comprehensive study of East Avenue as well, and through the bid process will hire an engineering consulting firm to perform that study as that is the best option to get funding and will need to look to see when and how past audits were done. Ms. Bisceglie said this could be a wonderful partnership and suggested that some of the commissioners get involved in the ongoing walk audits and requested a list of what has already been done and said by working together they can make a robust bike friendly application and Legue of American Bicyclists. Mr. Pacelli said he is open to sharing the data they have but from a city perspective they are looking to do the corridor studies and put the investment into engineering consulting firm that will provide documents and public input to help get grant funding for the projects. Mr. Thompson asked Dr. Bjerke if there are locations that are high on her priority list if a first walk audit is scheduled. Dr. Bjerke suggested that she broaden the scope to include the whole city of Norwalk and identify the top 10 areas for pedestrian and

bike incidents from 2015 and prioritize those and would be appropriate to do the audit during the warmer weather to attract more interest. Mr. Thompson suggested scheduling a walk audit before the next meeting and based on the success plan to hold additional walks between the September and October meeting.

### **TMP PROJECT UPDATES**

➤ Fox Run School Sidewalk Project

Mr. Pacelli reported and said the Fox Run sidewalk project has begun to improve the sidewalk and frontage of Fox Run School and is the next safe routes to school project and the goal is to have it completed before school starts. He said once that is completed it is on the list for DPW to pave either late this year or early next year.

➤ Union Park Raised Crosswalk

Mr. Pacelli said once the crew is done on Fillow Street the raised crosswalk will be installed between the NRV and will be a 6" raised crosswalk so there will not be any ramps and are currently working on the drainage updates to accommodate it. He said it is a partnership with the Health Department as they were awarded a grant for a portion of the cost for this crosswalk. Mr. Thompson asked when the work will begin. Mr. Pacelli said early to mid-September.

➤ Pavement Markings and Signage

Mr. Pacelli said that DPW has paved a significant amount of mileage of roadways this year and are going through them with the striping vendor this summer to lay out the roads and will be putting in bike lanes and 10' travel lanes on Highland Avenue, installing bike lanes where the work was done on West Rocks Road, installing 10' travel lanes and bike lanes on Bayne Street, refreshing the bike lanes on Aiken Street as well as Richards Avenue from Route 1 to Cedar Street and incorporated a road diet and worked with DPW to install a sidewalk adjacent to the Walmart parking lot. He said as part of the connectivity grant project the striping vendor will be installing white epoxy on the green and red pavement that has been installed on Fort Point Street and are very excited to see it implemented and near its completion.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

➤ League of American Bicyclists Membership

Mr. Thompson provided an update on the application and said that he and Mr. Hanpeter have been going through each question on the application and noted the things they already have accomplished that would count, the items that are in progress, and used the opportunity to note the items they don't have that the application that would be awesome to see in Norwalk which he has included on a wish list, and sent some action items to TMP last week and asked Mr. Pacelli if he had any updates. Mr. Pacelli said they are working through those and have the application completed by the August 30<sup>th</sup> deadline.

Ms. Bisceglie said that Mr. Yeosock always made sure that the membership was active and is a requirement of the application, so they need to be sure it is still active. Mr. Thompson asked Mr. Pacelli and Ms. Bisceglie to look into that.

➤ E-Bikes

Ms. Bisceglie said there has been another fatality in Norwalk last month and a moment of silence was held for Mr. Joseph Valez who died on July 22<sup>nd</sup>.

➤ BWC Budget Planning

Mr. Thompson said in past years they have discussed doing bicycle valets at different events in the summer and had assigned that to Mr. Pappas and what is needed to do this successfully is a decent bike rack which he is pleased to report he was able to use a bicycle valet while traveling and he spoke with the organizers and asked for connections on how to get the A-frame bicycle racks. Mr. Pappas said he has been in contact with Michael Riley of the Seaport Association, and he said before they can offer a bike valet that insurance and bike racks would be required. Mr. Thompson requested that Mr. Pappas send Mr. Pacelli an email for the insurance requirements, and he will reach out to the city's legal department.

Ms. Bisceglie requested installing a port-a-potty on the NRV. Mr. Thompson asked if an actual bathroom structure was to be installed would that fall under the responsibility of Recreation and Parks. Mr. Pacelli said it will depend on the location and someone would need to be hired to do the maintenance. Mr. Thompson said that he agrees that there is a need for this, and the first step will be to see who is responsible for the land of where the temporary and permanent solution will go and asked Mr. Pacelli to inquire about it and that Ms. Bisceglie do an analysis on the cost and report back to the commission.

**APPROVE MEETING MINUTES FROM JULY 10<sup>TH</sup>, 2023 MEETING**

**\*\* MS. BURNAMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.**

**\*\* MR. PAPPAS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED WITH THREE (3) IN FAVOR AND (1) ABSTENTION- MS. BISCEGLIE**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* MS BURNAMAN MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* MS. BISCEGLIE SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:55PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd

