

**CITY OF NORWALK  
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
JANUARY 9, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Tanner Thompson, Chair; Colin Grotheer; Jud Aley; Emily Burnaman; Christine Bisceglie; Sam Ebert

OTHERS: Greg Pacelli; Transportation Planner; Garrett Bolella, Asst. Director, TMP  
Jahliah Green, Health Department; Ben Hanpeter; Brian Boland; Phil Chiaia;  
Audrey Cozzarin; Paul Chenard; Jeremy Leung; Carly Kramer; Rebecca Buxton-  
Petho; Brad Craighead; Rebecca Klein; Peter Franz; Anthony Pavia; M. Salgado

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 6:00PM.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Thompson said he had a conversation with Mr. Craighead who leads the Norwalk Green Association and has received over 100 responses from residents around the East Avenue corridor that are concerned about safety and traffic along East Avenue and is hoping that a study makes it into the 2023 budget request.

Mr. Salgado said that he moved to Norwalk in September and is interested in hearing about walking and Bikeability in Norwalk.

Ms. Burnaman shared two upcoming events and said this Thursday the Resilient South Norwalk public workshop will be held and is a public meeting to learn more about climate change and the impacts to South Norwalk and the details are on the Bike/Walk commission calendar. She also said next Thursday is the street project film event at the Fairfield library and it is a free event.

**TRANSPORTATION MOBILITY AND PARKING CAPITAL BUDGET REQUESTS**

- Presentation of upcoming Capital Budget items requested for Fiscal Year 2023/24

Mr. Bolella presented the fiscal year 2023/24 budget request and said the budget request was based on community needs and the achievements from 2023 and goals moving into 2024 and is realistic as to what can be accomplished in 2024, and a significant amount of the budget will go towards keeping the transportation system in a state of good repair. He provided an overview of

the accomplishments for 2023 and said they include the addition of new bike racks at all of the train stations, and the installation of 5.6 miles of new bike lanes so there are now a total 15.8 miles of bike lanes, and the community connectivity project which will commence this spring will establish several more miles of bike lanes. He went on to say that over the past year they were also able to establish new sidewalks on Hunters Lane as part of the community connectivity grant as well as a safe routes to school project on Highland Avenue that was many years in the making and this fall added another mile of sidewalks, improved crossings, installed a raised crosswalk and a few RRFB's on that roadway.

Mr. Bolella said over the past year TMP has also worked on a design survey for the Yankee Doodle Garage and the community voted on a new façade and will be forwarded into design this year and have finalized the improvements to the Webster Street lot which resulted in the paving of that lot.

Mr. Bolella said this spring another mile of the Norwalk River Valley Trail will be opened and over the past year there has also been a lot of work on the Harbor Loop Trail and a section was completed along the property of 40 Cross Street and there is now an opportunity to connect the sections of the Harbor Loop Trail across route 1.

Mr. Bolella said they also released the final draft of the Norwalk Transportation Master Plan and continue to collect feedback and worked on finding consultants and are finalizing the contract for complete streets. He said they also worked on improving the traffic signal technology on West Avenue that included the addition of adapted traffic signals, and Norwalk is the leader in adaptive traffic signals in the state.

Mr. Bolella said TMP kicked off the Seaview Avenue enhancements project and will continue to work on that his year to make is much more friendly for pedestrians and bicyclists, and that the speed limit was reduced on several streets and continue to look at roads on a case-by-case basis. He said they have also looked at completing a sidewalk inventory for the entire city and will include the existing conditions of the sidewalk.

Mr. Bolella said TMP has also been busy looking at opportunities for grant funding and received over \$64 million dollars in grant funding over this past year and are anticipating good news for Wall Street shortly from the Federal government and have worked on advancing the concept of the Wall Street corridor and neighborhood and will continue to work on that over the course of the year.

Mr. Bolella presented and provided a brief overview of the fiscal year 2023/24 budget request by priority as follows:

- 1) Roadway Design and Reconstruction- \$500,000
- 2) Traffic Signal Equipment-250,000
- 3) Gregory Blvd@ Fifth St./Marvin St./Calf Pasture Beach Rd. intersection improvements- \$100,00
- 4) New sidewalk construction- \$700,000
- 5) Traffic system enhancements- \$60,000
- 6) Seaview Avenue improvements- \$100,000
- 7) Safe routes to school- \$250,000
- 8) Tracey School improvements- \$500,000
- 9) Wall Street corridor improvements (phase I, II, and II)- \$ 500,000
- 10) Pavement markings and signage- \$ 200,000

- 11) East Avenue corridor and intersection improvements- \$ 750,000
- 12) Norwalk River Valley Trail- \$ 300,000
- 13) Streetlights- \$75,000

■ Questions from the Commission

Mr. Thompson asked how many of the projects he expects will be funded and which will be the hardest to get funded. Mr. Bolella said last year the request was for \$3 million dollars and approximately \$2 million dollars was funded, so this year they have really increased the request in hopes the projects will be funded because they are important, and a lot are tied to public/private partnerships and state and grant funding.

Mr. Aley asked if the sign style guide is available to the public. Mr. Bolella said “yes” and suggested that he present it in detail at a later meeting. Mr. Aley requested that it be added to the next meeting agenda.

Mr. Aley asked where the funding is coming from for the grants. Mr. Bolella said it is a mix between state and federal funding.

Ms. Bisceglie said that Norwalk High School is being renovated and is in great need of sidewalks and asked if that will be incorporated into the construction. Mr. Bolella said one of the responsibilities of his department is sightline review so for any development including Norwalk High School TMP reviews it and they are currently in the process of looking at it to determine the needs for the high school

Ms. Bisceglie also asked if Mr. Pacelli keep the commission updated on the status of the budget so that that the funding can be added to the application for the Bike League of America. Mr. Pacelli said the application is due at the end of February so will need to look at the timeline to have the application completed. Mr. Thompson said he would like the working group for the application to keep the momentum going and asked Ms. Bisceglie if she could schedule some meetings for the group.

Ms. Cozzarin thanked TMP for all of their work and asked if there has been any conversation with law enforcement regarding traffic control, and if there will be public education in some form, and if there will be collaboration with the Transit District. Mr. Thompson said the commission will be helping with the public outreach portion and that he would love to see collaboration between TMP and the Transit District, but they are two different entities. Mr. Bolella said they do have a very good relationship with the Transit District and part of the process that TMP has committed to is having an open process and they look to include the Transit District with every project, and work together on a project-by-project basis and have committed to being open and transparent with all of their projects including having a large public outreach component. He said TMP also has a great relationship with the police department so whenever improvements are done, they coordinate with the police to be sure they are aware of the project.

Mr. Grotheer asked Mr. Bolella how he plans on addressing sign clutter and highlighted sign clutter on narrow streets because it is difficult for pedestrians, and some of the signs are too low and probably don't meet ADA requirements. Mr. Bolella said part of the exercise with developing a sign style guide is to come up with the required mounting height for signs and will use existing infrastructure where possible and is a huge opportunity to make the streets cleaner.

Mr. Grotheer said at the intersection between route 1 and Camp Street as well as the following intersection on route 1 are very congested and asked if this project will work in concert with the state's system. Mr. Bolella said that signal is part of a coordinated system and chose to work on that signal this year is because they received a grant to do the signal to the east and immediate west and is moving forward to a design phase now.

Mr. Grotheer asked if any offsite improvements are being looked at as part of the Tracey School improvements. Mr. Bolella said some low-cost improvements have been done in the area and this project is just for the Tracey School campus and is a first step in the mitigation.

Mr. Grotheer cautioned using RRFB's in lieu of good street design practices because they are not always necessary when good design practices are being used. Mr. Bolella said that often curb extensions are the answer and that is something that TMP is looking to move forward with in a lot of different locations throughout the city but noted Mr. Grotheer's points about looking for contact sensitive solutions. Mr. Thompson said some research was done in 2014 regarding yield rates at crosswalks and the research does underscore Mr. Grotheer's point.

Mr. Grotheer asked about the East Avenue improvements. Mr. Bolella said that is East Avenue is a CTDOT project and they are studying the portion off the roadway from Eversley Street south to Myrtle Street and are looking at different concepts and alternatives to improve operations at that intersection but have still not seen a fully vetted concept yet but will work closely with them as part of the city's project.

Mr. Leung said a lot of money is allocated to road improvements and asked what is being done for bus stops because the few bus stops that he sees are disgusting and there is nowhere to sit and if public transportation is improved there may be improved ridership. Mr. Bolella said the bus stops are under the purview of the Transit District and encouraged Mr. Leung to attend one of their board meetings and share his experiences because he does think there is a direct link between ridership and the amenities that are provided. Mr. Thompson said that Mr. Hanpeter has been doing an excellent job cataloging all of the bus stops and met with the CEO last month and she will be integrating the data into their system.

Mr. Leung also asked if relying on police enforcement is the best way to control driver behavior and asked if there is a plan to design the roads where police are not needed at all. Mr. Bolella said TMP is in the process of finalizing a contract to bring one of the best consultants for complete streets in the state forward to help the city adopt an ordinance and create a policy for complete streets over the next year.

Mr. Pavia said he is one of the cofounders of the City Hall Neighborhood Association and want to do what they can do work cooperatively with the city to make their neighborhood even better and safer and is excited to hear that the East Avenue study is part of the capital budget request and that this commission is supporting safety in their neighborhood. He said since their organization has been founded and funded they have been working with the Norwalk Green Association and this is one of the areas where the collaboration is important.

Mr. Thompson asked what phase the Seaview Avenue project is currently at. Mr. Bolella said that the request is for design and there are shovel ready plans and are hoping for 100% construction funding.

Mr. Thompson said as part of the Tracey School project if there are any explicit goals to increase the share of students who get to school without a car or is the goal more to accommodate students

to more safely get to school Mr. Bolella said the goal is to reduce the congestion around the school and encourage people to use other modes of transportation. Mr. Thompson asked if the concept would accomplish that goal. Mr. Bolella said “yes” because it will help to remove some of the barriers. Mr. Grotheer suggested that there is a conversation with the Mayor and the Superintendent of Schools if the goal is to get kids to take other modes of transportation because that is a conflict with the pathways and magnet schools that are being encouraged that are outside their neighborhood.

Mr. Thompson applauded the request of \$750,000 for East Avenue and the commission is looking very forward for this work to be done and asked if any of the design will be done in house. Mr. Bolella said it is anticipated that a consultant would be doing the work due to the magnitude of the project.

Mr. Hanpeter asked when the budget request will go before the Common Council for approval. Mr. Bolella said it will first go to the fiscal committees and there will be a public hearing in which he encourages the members of the committee to attend and voice some of the same concerns that were addressed tonight, and there should be an outline of the schedule online that he will forward to Mr. Thompson so he can share it with the committee.

#### **BIKE/WALK COMMISSION BUDGET**

- Discussion on commissions budget and potential expenditures for the remaining balance for fiscal year 2022/23

Mr. Thompson reviewed the remaining budget and said the budget is \$10,000 per year and reviewed the allocations and there was a discussion on what to spend the rest of the budget on.

Mr. Chia suggested partnering with the bicycle coop on some events and he could forward a list of supplies that would be needed.

Ms. Burnaman said the street documentary that she mentioned at the beginning of the meeting is interested in partnering with Norwalk for a screening and she will forward the email to the commissioners. She also requested the commission purchase reflective jackets. Mr. Pacelli said items that are ordered should be paid for upon delivery rather than when ordered and he would like all orders placed by April to avoid putting an order in at the end of the fiscal year. He also said to keep in mind there is limited space for storage. Mr. Thompson asked if a member of the commission can put together a swag order including dollar amounts that can be voted on at the next meeting. Mr. Thompson suggested that some of the funding should be set aside for some resources for public education. Ms. Burnaman said that she will present some thoughts and ideas around public education. Mr. Hanpeter also suggested when purchasing swag to include bike lights.

#### **APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 5, 2022**

- \*\* MS. BURNAMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.**
- \*\* MR. EBERT SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- \*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* MR. EBERT MOVED TO ADJOURN**

**\*\* MS. BURNAMAN SECONDED THE MOTION**

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:05PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd