CITY OF NORWALK
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
February 3, 2025

ATTENDANCE:	Emily Burnaman, Chair; Nicholas Pappas; Manny Salgado; Becca Stoll; Tanner Thompson; Christine Bisceglie
OTHERS:	Greg Pacelli; Transportation Planner; James Travers, TMP, Director

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.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Burnaman called the meeting to order at 6:00PM.

II. ROLL CALL

Ms. Burnaman called the roll and all those that are listed in the attendance were present.

III. TMP BUDGET DISCUSSION

A. Presentation of TMP's Budget Requests for Upcoming Fiscal Year

Mr. Travers presented the TMP proposed budget and said it is early in the process, so this is not the approved budget but is at the department's request. He said the budget does increase significantly from a capital perspective but has good justifications and narratives behind it.

Mr. Travers provided an overview of the budget request. He said there was a significant increase in road design and reconstruction and often sought support in the design, including the match on grant requests.

Mr. Travers said the next request is for traffic signal equipment and said the city received record-breaking funds for the rebuild of Norwalk High School, however, those grants only cover the property line associated with the building, but the school will need a new signal, and they will need some funds for the gap funding to put in place. He said they are currently working with a designer, and the goal is to have it in place before the school opens.

Mr. Travers said the next request is for new sidewalk construction and is requesting a more significant increase than in years past. He said the goal is to have the sidewalks on George Avenue completed as were listed as a priority in the 2010 and 2022 Transportation Master Plan and did receive the design money so they are being designed this year with the anticipation that they will receive the funding for the installation next year.

Mr. Travers said they are continuing the Safe Routes to School and are looking for gaps in the sidewalks. He said they are looking to narrow the gap for Cranbury School and install sidewalks on Chestnut Hill Road. It will also allow them to do an application for school zones where lower speeds can be established around school zones and provide the necessary hardware and signage.

Mr. Travers said they continue to make capital investments in the Wall Street project and have been fairly successful by securing various funds that require the city to do the design, so they continue to look to request the design funds. He said this project is particularly concerning due to the changing requirements as they have a federal grant, but very much want to continue to look at advancement of the project.

Mr. Travers said there are current investments in pavement signs and markings and this past year they are wrapping up a citywide street sign audit and when DPW paves a road they would look at pavement markings.

Mr. Travers said there is a grant match for the West Rocks sidewalks and several years ago they applied for and were awarded a federal grant for sidewalks on West Rocks Road and are in the final stages of getting the grant approved for a higher dollar amount.

Mr. Travers said they requested funding for the design of the East Avenue corridor improvements and were able to secure a grant and have a match for that grant for the roundabout on Gregory Blvd. @ Fifth Street and the streetscape improvements on Fifth Street and have some design funds secured through this year's budget. Additionally, there are some roadway improvements needed on Isaac Street that they feel are necessary to advance.

Mr. Thompson asked if the street sign audit captured the street signs that impede the sidewalk. Mr. Travers said it didn't include whether there is additional space for them, but there was no inventory of signs and this year a street sign-style guide was refined that will have the specifics to share with the sign crew to give guidance on where the signs should be installed. Mr. Thompson asked if there is an approach or strategy to resolve the issues with the signs that are blocking the sidewalk. Mr. Travers said they need to be more proactive than reactive, lacking the resources to get that done.

Ms. Burnaman asked what the timeline is for the budget approval. Mr. Travers provided an overview of the approval process and said the budget needs to be voted on and approved by April.

Mr. Salgado asked what the timeline is for the traffic signal upgrade on Fifth Street. Mr. Travers said they hope to have it out to bid by the end of this year and will likely see construction in 2026.

Mr. Thompson asked if the improvements that were mentioned for Isacc Street were outside of the Wall Street project. Mr. Travers said that is correct because they came into play as a result of the development and are dependent on the development.

Mr. Thompson asked what has changed from this year to last year that he is unable to share individual line items. Mr. Travers said last year they had presented the budget later in the process but there are significant increases such as a 40% increase in roadway construction and a 140% increase in new sidewalks etc.

Mr. Thompson asked Mr. Travers what his thoughts are about how the projects will be prioritized if federal funding falls out. Mr. Travers said some of the grants are significant and in the worst-case scenario the projects will not get done. Mr. Thompson asked which project is dependent on federal funding. Mr. Travers said there is a 5.5-million-dollar grant for the next phase of Wall Street, the West Rocks Road sidewalks, and it would be massively disappointing if they couldn't move forward.

Mr. Travers left the meeting at 6:30PM.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no public comments this evening.

V. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. Approval of December and January Meeting Minutes

**** MR. PAPPAS MOVED TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER MEETING MINUTES.**
**** MS. STOLL SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** MR. THOMPSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE JANUARY MEETING MINUTES.**
**** MS. STOLL SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOUR (4) IN FAVOR AND (1) ONE ABSTENTION- MS. BISCEGLIE.**

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review of the intersection where Lowe Street meets Flax Hill Road in South Norwalk

Ms. Stoll said a resident of South Norwalk had brought this intersection to her attention. Mr. Thompson said he does agree that it is not optimal, but the rapid flashing beacons that were recently installed are effective and are a welcome addition to the Intersection from his perspective and if anything suggested a crosswalk at the end of Lowe Street.

Mr. Pacelli said Flax Hill Road is scheduled to be paved this year and TMP has been coordinating with DPW, and they have a designer on board because as part of the milling and paving they are doing sidewalk work along the entirety of the Flax Hill Road coordinator, and this intersection is being looked at and will look a lot different when those improvements go in which are expected to happen this year.

Mr. Thompson asked if it would be feasible to install a bike lane on Flax Hill Road even if it is only in one direction. Mr. Pacelli said that it is being looked at, the pavement marking plan is currently being developed and we are looking to incorporate dedicated bike facilities.

Ms. Burnaman said Flax Hill is sometimes used by larger vehicles and asked if it is an official roadway for larger vehicles. Mr. Pacelli said heavy vehicles cannot be restricted on this road. Ms. Bisceglie said the area is so populated and asked if the commission should be an advocate for these residents. Mr. Pacelli said they are putting a large investment into the area for other alternatives other than for vehicle usage and as part of the new school, it will be installing miles of sidewalks. Ms. Bisceglie said that the traffic would not stop and asked if there was anything the commission could do to start a conversation at a state level. Mr. Thompson said this area is part of the Route 1 corridor study and there was a public input session held, he believes there will be another one held and suggested that it may be the best vehicle for raising this concern. Mr. Pacelli asked if the commission found that another city has done something like this to restrict heavy-duty vehicles to let him know.

Mr. Pacelli reminded the commissioners to direct any inquiries they receive to the click-and-request app.

B. Request to Present Design Plans for Wall Street

Mr. Pacelli said the plans were approved to be advanced and part of that scope of work and additional public meetings will be incorporated, which is when the public will be able to review the plans and make comments, and he encouraged the commissioners to attend. Mr. Thomspon asked if a date had been scheduled. Mr. Pacelli said “no” and that they have been working just to get the contractor started on East Wall Street as is the largest investment in an area as far as roadway improvements are concerned, but there is a gap in funding, and will need to look at other funding sources.

VII. DISCUSSION

A. Final Review & Approval of Strategic Plan 2025

The committee discussed and finalized the strategic plan for 2025.

**** MR. THOMPSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2025.**
**** MS. STOLL SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

B. Update of Bike Safety Classes in Norwalk

Ms. Bisceglie said she could run the Smart Cycle class in early spring. Ms. Burnaman said that a special meeting can be held for planning if needed.

C. Upcoming Events/Bike Valet

Ms. Burnaman said the next event that is coming up for the bike/valet is the Earth Day Festival which will be held on Saturday, April 26, 2025.

Mr. Salgado said he had a discussion last week with Filling in the Blanks and welcomed the commission to attend the next food distribution that will be held on Saturday at 8:00AM to hand out brochures, and he will just need to send an email about how many people will be attending and that he plans on attending. Ms. Green said that she has attended the food distributions and will need someone there who speaks Spanish because a majority of those that attend are Spanish speaking and also suggested having the materials in Spanish as that would be helpful.

****MR. THOMPSON MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO TAKE THE AGENDA OUT OF ORDER.**
**** MR. PAPPAS SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

F. Update on BFC Application Work Estimates

Mr. Thompson reported on the Bike Friendly Communities application and said the biggest thing that TMP would need to do are two tasks that they did last time. One would be to fill out a worksheet with the number of full-time employees who are working on biking or walking, and the other would be to fill out the current roadway network worksheet. He said he thinks the application can be completed successfully if TMP can commit to doing those two worksheets between now and the end of June. Mr. Pacelli said that TMP has seven projects that are scheduled to be under construction this year and are short-staffed so he would not be able to commit and would need to discuss it with the team.

D. Discuss expenditures for the remaining FY 24-25 Commission Budget and Active Transportation Microgrant Funds.

The committee discussed the expenditures for the remaining fiscal year 24-25 budget and Active Transportation Microgrant Funds.

Mr. Pacelli reminded the commission that they still have the grant money from the previous application and cannot apply for another grant until the money is spent so the items that the commission would like to order need to be moved forward under the city's procurement guidelines by June 30, 2025.

**** MR. PAPPAS MOVED TO APPROVE THE EXPENDITURES FOR THE LEAGUE OF AMERICAN BICYCLISTS TRAINING TO BE PROVIDED BY MS. BISCEGLIE.**
**** MS. STOLL SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

E. Update on Open Street Event 2025

Ms. Bisceglie said she met with Mr. Stowers, and he wants these events to go under the complete streets-design concept umbrella and he would like to meet with Mr. Pacelli and Mr. Travers and have the commission support the event.

Ms. Burnaman said that Sarah Roy from CT Rides mentioned the opportunity for an event called Play Streets which may be something else for the commission to look at.

F. Update on Bike/Ped Master Plan

There was no discussion.

G. Update on 2025 Recreational Trails Grant Program

Mr. Pacelli said the grant will be released sometime in late April and will be due in June. Ms. Burnaman said she has been working with the Fairfield County Greenway group to build support in Darien. She also asked if anyone on the commission was interested in working on the grant to reach out to her.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. STOLL MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
**** MS. BISCEGLIE SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**
The meeting was adjourned at 8:10PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd