

City of Norwalk
Norwalk Bike/Walk Taskforce Meeting Minutes
November 2, 2015, 7:00-8:30pm
Health Department 1st Floor Conference Room
137 East Avenue, Norwalk CT 06851

Attendees: Jim Carter, Colin Grotheer, Tilly Hatcher, Kevin Kane, Kaitlin Latham, Deborah Lewis, Peter Libre, Mike Mushak, Ian Ray, Nancy Rosett, Gunnar Waldman

1. Route 53 Restriping

- a. Mike Mushak drafted a letter to the State from Mayor Rilling asking for 10' driving lanes and a 3'-4' shoulder when striping the section of Route 53 between Routes 1 and 33. Charles Harlow, the State's DOT Division Chief of Traffic Engineering responded, stated that since Route 53 is a minor arterial in a mostly suburban area, 11-12' lanes are recommended as an improvement from current 11.5' – 13' lanes. It was stated that 10' lanes were not possible in this suburban section; however, 10' lanes were possible in the section between Merrill Rd and Route 1 since it is an intermediate area (between urban and suburban). The letter confirmed that the Office of Maintenance was asked to provide 10' lanes in this intermediate area, but this request was not accommodated.
- b. The group suggested writing an open letter stating our disappointment with the restriping of Route 53. This letter can be signed by fellow towns/cities that share our disappointment with the restriping process.
- c. The Taskforce agreed that it should be involved in the restriping process earlier than the weeks before the work is scheduled to take place. It was suggested to contact the Mayor asking how Norwalk, the State, and the Taskforce can work together to be more informed about upcoming work.
 - i. For now, the Taskforce will research the State paving schedule to determine which State roads will be repaved and/or restriped next.

2. High Point and Glover Avenue Projects

- a. The new High Point project will bring apartments, restaurants, and retail space to North Avenue, High Street, and Main Avenue. The developers plan to widen North Avenue (near the Laurel Athletic Club) to accommodate extra driving lanes, but bike lanes are not part of the plan. Mike Mushak recommended that Taskforce members attend Planning & Zoning meetings to advocate for the addition of bike infrastructure on this road. Mushak offered to attend on behalf of the Taskforce.
- b. A new apartment complex will be built on Glover Ave, consisting of 750 apartments in 3 buildings. Mike shared that this area falls along the Norwalk River Valley Trail, and drew plans to adjust the NRVT so it follows under the Danbury line railroad tracks and under Grist Mill. The NRVT will follow the railroad grade and will avoid crossing Grist Mill.

3. CT Rides Business Forum

- a. Nancy Rosett shared that the CT Rides Business Forum will take place on Monday, November 9 from 8-10am at the Webster Bank Arena in Bridgeport. She suggested that the Taskforce have a table at the Forum to display the master bike plan and information about our efforts to make Norwalk a more bike and pedestrian friendly city. Gunnar Waldman offered to attend on behalf of the Taskforce.

4. Possible Roundabouts

- a. Peter Libre suggested that the City look into installing a roundabout at the intersection of Route 136 and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive.
- b. Colin Grotheer also suggested looking into a roundabout at the Jarvis St – Ward St – Union Dr intersection. The Taskforce will bring these suggestions to DPW.

5. Gregory Boulevard Striping

- a. Next year, Gregory Boulevard is scheduled to be restriped south of 5th street. The taskforce would like 10' driving lanes which would increase the shoulder width to make it safer for cyclists and pedestrians.

6. Flax Hill Rollovers

- a. Peter Libre noticed an increase in rollovers on Flax Hill Road, stating that roads with wider driving lanes seem to have the most accidents. He suggested to restripe the road with 10' driving lanes, delineators (similar to what's on East Avenue near the I-95 S entrance), and bike lanes.

7. New Business

- a. Mike Mushak kindly suggested that members state that they are speaking as a private citizen, and not on behalf of the Bike/Walk Taskforce when discussing matters of walking and biking. Otherwise, statements can get misconstrued and taken out of context.
- b. Tilly Hatcher shared that she often observed restaurant workers riding their bikes the wrong way or on the sidewalks at night, often without any lights or reflective gear. She asked what the Taskforce could do to address this safety issue, and to educate the public about bike safety and laws.
 - i. Peter Libre thinks that the reason this is happening is because without bike infrastructure in place, it's not safe to follow the laws. A lack of bike lanes or sharrows, no shoulders, wide driving lanes, and high-speed traffic actually make it unsafe for a cyclist to follow the law and ride with traffic; it's safer for them to ride against traffic or on the sidewalk. With the proper education (of drivers and cyclists) and the implementation of bike infrastructure throughout the City of Norwalk, this issue can be addressed.
 - ii. The group agreed to pass out Smart Cycling Quick Guides to all South Norwalk restaurants in hopes of educating those who ride their bikes to and from work. Additionally, it was suggested that Taskforce members pass out Quick Guides to

anyone who they see disobeying the cycling laws.