

City of Norwalk
Norwalk Bike/Walk Taskforce
Meeting Minutes
October 5, 2015, 7:00pm
Health Department 1st Floor Conference Room
137 East Avenue, Norwalk CT 06851

Attendees: Jim Carter, Megan DiMeglio, Colin Grotheer, Tilly Hatcher, Michael Jeske, Kevin Kane, Kaitlin Latham, Peter Libre, Mike Mushak, Ian Ray, Nancy Rosett, Gunnar Waldman

Introductions

The Bike/Walk Taskforce welcomed Michael Jeske to the meeting. Michael is a Norwalk resident and is interested in the walkability of South Norwalk.

Wheelchair Tours of South Norwalk

Tilly Hatcher offered to lead wheelchair tours of South Norwalk to the taskforce, tentatively scheduled for 12pm on Friday, October 16, 2015. Tours will start at the Corset Factory on Ann St. The intention of the tour is to give everyone a chance to experience the sidewalks of South Norwalk from the perspective of a wheelchair user. Together we can explore the issues and think about solutions. The BWTF plans to invite the media to future wheelchair tours to highlight the importance of our city streets, sidewalks and public spaces being compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and accessible to all users.

Kaitlin Latham shared that the Norwalk Health Department is currently auditing and re-mapping its 40+ NorWalker routes (<http://www.norwalkct.org/index.aspx?nid=773>). All previous audits were completed by walkers, so the perspective of a wheelchair user would be helpful in understanding how accessible Norwalk's streets, paths and parks are for non-walkers.

Beacon St and Tierney St Repaving

Peter Libre shared that Beacon St and Tierney St are getting repaved. Paul Sotnik took measurements on both streets to determine what bike infrastructure, if any, would be suitable. As of October 5th, plans for bike infrastructure on Beacon St are as follows: downhill sharrows throughout the length of the road, uphill sharrows at the top and bottom of the street, and a bike lane uphill through the midsection. There will be no bike lane against the baseball field on Beacon.

The City will not be putting bike lanes or sharrows on Tierney St. To comply with the CT Complete Streets Law (<https://www.cga.ct.gov/2009/ACT/PA/2009PA-00154-R00SB-00735-PA.htm>), DPW must certify that Tierney is not suitable for bike infrastructure.

Lane Width

The BWTF is still advocating for 10' lane widths in order to reduce motor vehicle speed and increase road safety for all drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, etc. It appears that the public may be confused about lane width and street surface: lane width includes the space from the yellow mid-line to the shoulder, while street surface includes the shoulder, driving lane, yellow line, bike lane, etc.

The East Avenue overpass has 5 approximately 10' driving lanes; as a result, cars and trucks drive slower and the area is safer for all who use it. Mike Mushak brought up another example: 1st Avenue and Seaview Avenue near Partners Café and the sharp curve in front of Mr. Frosty's Ice Cream. Seaview has

wide driving lanes, and as a result, cars whip around the corner in front of Mr. Frosty's at a dangerously high speed. Lanes near Partner's Café are much narrower, so driving speeds are drastically reduced, improving safety for all road users.

Nancy Rosett suggested contacting the Police Department for statistics on accidents related to lane width. The BWTF would like to know what portions of serious accidents/injuries (rollovers, fatalities, pedestrian/cyclist strikes, etc.) occurred on roads wider than 10'. A goal is to have all future accident reports include street width.

Additional suggestions included contacting Mayor Rilling and council members to discuss the benefits of 10' driving lanes over the current 11' lane widths. Mike Mushak and Peter Libre will follow up with talking points and statistics.

Route 53

Route 53 (Newtown Ave) is currently getting repaved and restriped. This is a State road so Norwalk's DPW does not have influence over the redesign. The BWTF is pushing for 10' lanes on this road to include a wider shoulder for cyclist and pedestrian safety. Peter and Mike will contact the State DOT with information about the benefits of 10' lanes.

Taskforce Achievements

Mike Mushak compiled a list of the Taskforce's achievements over the past 15 months and will distribute to members via email.

Mall Updates

The mall's Land Disposition Agreement (LDA) is being discussed tonight (10/5/15).

Taskforce members inquired with GGP and the City about an environmental impact study (EIS), but it has not been completed at this time. It is not required in the state of Connecticut.

Finally, the Taskforce agrees that bike lanes on West Avenue should be required of GGP in order to move forward.