



People Friendly Stamford

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The Honorable Pete Buttigieg, Secretary
Office of the Secretary of Transportation
U.S Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

September 1, 2022

RE: Letter of Support- WestCOG Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Application

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

We are People Friendly Stamford, a local safe streets advocacy group dedicated to making our neighborhoods more walkable, bikeable, and accessible. We are writing in support of the Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG) SS4A grant application proposal for projects to improve roadway safety across western Connecticut. The WestCOG's Regional Transportation Safety Plan identified streets with the highest rates of fatalities and serious injuries. It is vitally important that we implement proven safety countermeasures such as high-visibility crosswalks, leading pedestrian intervals, signal backplates with retroreflective borders, lighting, pavement markings, and new signage.

The application also proposes safety improvements along two highly traveled corridors in southwestern Connecticut. The City of Stamford is proposing reconstruction of Strawberry Hill Avenue with a road diet and enhanced pedestrian accommodations and traffic calming treatments. This will significantly enhance safety along this highly used and currently dangerous corridor.

Strawberry Hill Avenue begins at an intersection with four other roads, some of which do not have sidewalks on both sides. A total of 11 lanes approach the intersection, and without coordinated stop signals and safe medians, pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers all find themselves uncertain of where to go, and which users are approaching at any given moment. Pedestrians often find themselves waiting long periods to traverse just sections of the intersection, or risk dangerous crossings, and there is no dedicated infrastructure for cyclists. Current stretches of sidewalks along the road have sizable cracks and have been made bumpy by growing tree roots, making the corridor inaccessible to many residents with disabilities. We have heard personally from those in wheelchairs who find the sidewalk completely inaccessible.

In 2016, an 18-year-old student was killed by a driver while trying to cross Strawberry Hill Avenue in front of Stamford High School. A crosswalk was later added where she died, but the road remains dangerous to non-car users. A new K-8 school also recently opened on Strawberry Hill, adding to the urgency of safety improvements.

This application supports the goals of the SS4A program as well as WestCOG's goal to significantly reduce fatalities and serious injuries. Once implemented, these projects will help create a safer, more equitable, and more sustainable transportation system for all roadway users. I urge you to approve WestCOG's application.

Thank you,
People Friendly Stamford
Stamford, Connecticut
info@peoplestamford.org