

## **People Friendly Stamford strategy meeting minutes**

Wed June 16 2021, 5 p.m. EST

### **Attendees**

Chris Dawson, Dice Oh, Emily Gordon, Emily Yamron, Frank Petise, Jerry Silber, Jordan Force, Luke Bittenwieser, Mary Cygan, Mike Moore, Ralph Blessing, Robin Stein, Sheila Williams-Brown, Tanner Thompson, Thomas Madden, Vitaliy Razhanskiy, Will Wright

### **Happy Hour Update (Will Wright)**

Great success with our [last happy hour](#) - more than 40 people showed up, and Bobby Valentine and Mayor Martin were there. Caroline Simmons may attend the next one. Our next happy hour is Thursday, June 24th.

### **City Department of Transportation (DOT) update**

The city DOT was hoping that ConnDOT would put four crosswalks (currently there are only three crosswalks) at Washington & Bridge St during their repaving of Washington Blvd which is a State Road. But ConnDOT said no because they claimed it would require more work (signals, curb changes), the budget for these critical improvements either wasn't protected or budgeted, and the ["accident history doesn't warrant it"](#) (i.e. they don't want to make the intersection safe until a bunch of people get hit and killed there). This is exactly the kind of cultural rot that we need to stand up and challenge.

Some discussion of whether we should talk to Carlo Leone (former State Senator who's now at ConnDOT), along with Commissioner Joseph J. Giulietti and Deputy Commissioner Mark D. Rolfe.

We agreed that we need to focus more on state-level advocacy to help change the culture at these state agencies. Safe Streets Coalition of New Haven and the Norwalk Bike/Walk Commission are organizations we can work with.

### **High Ridge Rd**

ConnDOT is repaving High Ridge Road but making the city handle all the bike lane painting (and associated costs). Another example of the lack of care that ConnDOT has for bike/pedestrian infrastructure. Our best guess is that re-paving with bike lanes will happen around August. Bike lanes will only include an unprotected painted buffer. Vine Road will also be repaved with unprotected bike lanes.

### **West Main Street Bridge**

Some discussion of a potential city-run project (e.g. a farmer's market in the city-owned lot just to the southeast of the bridge) to help revitalize the area.

The [West Main St Bridge has been in disrepair for decades](#) and needs to be demolished and replaced, ideally with a pedestrian-only bridge. There is a plan now for a temporary pedestrian bridge in another location to avoid having to deal with the messy politics of replacing the existing bridge. We learned that there are two members on the Board of Reps Operations Committee who are stalling the city effort, because they want to either “preserve” the historic bridge or spend a significant amount of money to make it a vehicular bridge rather than pedestrian-only.

### **Infrastructure Projects**

A discussion of what role PFS should play in the deep evaluation and ranking of bike/ped infrastructure projects. City of Stamford DOT Bureau is critically understaffed with unfilled open positions which is undermining its ability to assess and potentially procure federal infrastructure funding when it becomes available. As a community advocacy group PFS is ill-equipped to be a substitute for professional Bureau staff regarding work of this type.

### **Board of Rep Advocacy**

If you have not done so yet, please reach out to your Board of Rep member to find out their priorities, share ours and most importantly establish a relationship.