

Vision Zero Council
September 26, 2024 Meeting Minutes
10:00 am – 12:00 pm
This virtual public meeting was hosted on Zoom

Council Members Present: Deputy Commissioner Laoise King, Susan Logan, Jon Slifka, Nancy Chupak, Jim Polites

Council Members Absent: Commissioner Garrett Eucalitto, Dept. Education, Dept. Early Education, Connecticut State Police

Other Attendees: Aaron Swanson, Charles Harlow, Alec Slatky, Amy Watkins, Donna Shea, Ellen Lee, Luke Bittenwieser, Ernie Bertothy, Terri Thompson, Natasha Fatu, Katherine Hedberg, Jake Fusco, Shaun Formica, Andrea Merejo, Phyllis DiFiore, Laura Baum, Douglas Hausladen, Roger Krahm, Haley Fournier, Judith Proctor, Craig Yannes, Nancy Dutta, Jay Stange, Adam Weber, Jason Hughes, Carri Roux, Timothy Young, Cora Barber, Anna Stern, Tracy Noble, Robert Dickinson

I. Committee Chair Welcome and Introductions

II. National Transportation Safety Board – Ellen Lee: Reducing Speed and Recidivism Presentation

a. Questions from Council

Deputy Commissioner King: Thank you so much, Ellen. We will open it up to questions from the Council, in a moment. I did have a quick question for you, though, before we open it up. Have any of the studies shown a difference in the effectiveness of the different types of ISA technology that's out there? I saw that the recommendations are for some type of ISA, and you mentioned several times that even alerting the driver is useful, but have the studies shown a variation and effectiveness of the different types of ISA technology?

Ellen Lee: Yes, that is a good question. In general, the studies do show that the active technology is going to be more beneficial than the passive warning technology and you see that for other technologies that you have in your vehicle as well, like forward collision warning versus the automatic braking. The active technology is going to be more effective, but they do both have safety benefits, I want to stress that. Again, we made the recommendation for getting the warning systems on the cars again as a first step. We need to get moving on this, that's a typical way that these types of technologies are introduced into vehicles. Start with the warning and move to the active system.

Natasha Fatu: Good morning everyone, my name is Natasha I work at the Connecticut Department of Transportation. I had a question for you Ellen, regarding the states being able to share information regarding the repeat offenders. Has there ever been a thought to maybe using insurance information? I know when someone gets a ticket it's usually captured and then your insurance company knows about it, so when you go for new rates it usually identifies. Has there been any thought to maybe plugging into the insurance companies? I know it won't capture because not everyone has insurance, but at least

maybe for some of the repeat offenders it could be captured, and I don't think it matters what state you're in that that insurance information is captured.

Ellen Lee: Yeah, that's a great suggestion. I don't think we at the NTSB have personally looked into it, but I agree that anything we can do to help to try to capture more of these folks is good and to your point, I kind of talked about statewide sharing of data but really drivers can move from state to state. So ultimately, we want to be able to look nationally, and insurance might be a good approach for that.

Natasha Fatu: So is that something the States would then have to kind of take on themselves to figure out a mechanism, to look at the insurance to capture those repeat offenders like the judicial system?

Ellen Lee: That's a good question, I'm not sure I know exactly how it would be implemented. If you guys have any contacts with the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, they might be a good entity to ask those types of questions, since they would be more in tune with the insurance side of things.

Susan Logan: Great talk, Ellen, it was very informative. I didn't hear a lot about the ISA prior to this and so I just was wondering on the judicial side. When it said this person had pled, but it was brought down to illegal parking. Is that something that is commonly done? Is that done in Nevada? I don't understand how something from speeding could be brought down to like a non-moving events.

Ellen Lee: So my understanding is that it's fairly common practice, we did find that in Nevada, but also in other states as well. The courts have a lot of latitude with how they do adjudicate their cases. Some of its court backlog, it could be a number of different factors. I think it's probably more common than we realize, and I guess what we're trying to say is that we can't really recommend, maybe that the courts do something a certain way, but what we want to do is sort of be able to track that and say, well if you have to do that for whatever reason, let's at least understand that this individual has got these speeding tickets, and you have to look over them.

Susan Logan: Yeah, it's important to document that somewhere that this person was originally found to be speeding and then was brought down to a non-moving violation. Just somewhere in the documents that we would have access to. Because you're right, looking back at his record it didn't seem like there was a lot of speeding history and so there wasn't a lot to go on, and providing education, and these kind of talks, I think, to the judicial side, I think, will be very helpful as well to make them think twice about making those decisions and moving them down to a non-moving violation.

III. Local Vision Zero Spotlight – Luke Battenwieser: Stamford Vision Zero Presentation

a. Questions from Council

Deputy Commissioner King: Luke, thank you so much and I think you've set a pretty high bar for the other communities that we're going to look at in the future. It's just really impressive to see a community taking such a proactive and intentional approach to safety this way and also I really appreciate the way that you're relying on data but also really making community engagement such a high priority. So thank you for all of that. I did have a question before we open it up to other council members. I'm wondering whether your analysis has been limited to state roads, or whether you've also included data on state roads, and if so, whether you've shared that information with our staff here at CONNDOT?

Luke Buttenwieser: Yeah so we did look at all local roads, we excluded the Merit and I-95 but we did look at our local roads. We have High Ridge Road, Long Ridge Road East Main (Street) West Main (Street) Tressor, Route 1. One of our recommendations is actually to develop better communication lines with CONNDOT related to those high-entry network roads, and how can we target working with CONNDOT more hand in hand because, quite frankly all the state roads are tier 1 roadways. So that is something that we want to address, and I think we've been in conversation already with traffic engineering, for instance, in Newington. We're actually working on a lot of improvements on Washington Boulevard, we just completed a great Road Safety Audit with the Community Connectivity team as well as traffic engineering that has really I think understood the needs of the community and the desires of the community and actually recommended a lot of new, kind of cutting-edge approaches to roadway safety that we're excited about that we're working on obtaining funding for. So I mean, the partnerships really been great with CONNDOT, and you really have been understanding the community here in Stamford and what we're trying to achieve here with Vision Zero.

Susan Logan: So I do have a question about the partners that you are engaging because you had this section on engaging and collaboration in your Policy Section. So have you reached out to, because I know motorcycle riders are, it's like a serious or fatal injury when they do have a traffic accident. So have you engaged them and in your analysis have you looked at those statistics?

Luke Buttenwieser: So we haven't specifically engaged, there's no like motorcycle riding organization in Stamford, we haven't engaged them directly necessarily, it hasn't been necessarily, a I don't want to say a large issue in Stamford just in terms of like our total crashes. We know we don't have many rural winding roads that motorcycles may be more interested in riding on. We do have more scooter and motorbike users that we've been working with our police department on, as well as the community, on kind of engaging that demographic, since they tend to be a little bit younger, working with them on roadway safety and if there's a second part to your question, I believe I'm sorry.

Susan Logan: It was the analysis of, since you're probably not seeing a lot of motorcycle crashes, have you broken that out in your analysis to look at the crash in motorcycles, and how severe they were?

Luke Buttenwieser: Yeah, I know we didn't really break that out as like a key kind of user group in our analysis, but they would have been in the serious injury group that wrote that out.

Susan Logan: And then finally, as far as your bicyclist and pedestrian injuries, have you looked at like the root cause of how those happen? Is it more about, there's no bike lanes or less limited crosswalks? Or is it people just not paying attention when they're driving and they take a right turn and they crash into somebody, or is it really speed? So what are the things that you're seeing with these kind of crashes?

Luke Buttenwieser: I know we did an analysis; we have a full like 30-page crash analysis document. I think it's on our website and can definitely share that with the group, but we found that I think it's between like 70% and 80% of our pedestrian crashes occur within like a 100ft. of sidewalk or 100ft. of like a bus stop, for instance. So we know that where we have some pedestrian facilities that's obviously where pedestrian crashes are happening and I think when we're looking at the system, it's making sure that we have that infrastructure in place to support. Do we even have sidewalks? Is the roadway lit or are the crosswalks lit? Are we just putting up signs in a crosswalk across a 5-lane road with no support whatsoever or are we putting in RRFBs, hawk signals, pedestrian refugee islands, raised crosswalks, different things like that. So one of the recommendations, for instance, in our Action Plan, is don't just

install a crosswalk and solve crosswalk with protections that go along with it that are more than just signs and paint. Put in some harder infrastructure. Make sure the lighting is done right really so, we're creating that very much safer system a much safer for our pedestrians.

IV. Sub-Committee Updates and Draft Policy Recommendations

- a. Enforcement Recommendations**
- b. Engineering Recommendations**
- c. Education Recommendations**

Comments from Council

Susan Logan: As far as, you talk a lot about driver's education. Has anyone considered education with the parents of say, high school kids who either do not drive or drive because they're going through an experience where their kids are just starting high school and they're now engaging with older kids who are driving and so they may not know whether or not they should allow their child to be in a car with older drivers who have their driver's license within a year. So there's like new drivers out there that are, in my experience, as I'm a mother with children of that age when my kids first started high school they got in cars with kids that had only been driving for less than a year. So I think it would have been helpful for me, I'm sure for other parents, to have early education, even for parents who don't have kids who are driving at that point. Has anyone considered that?

Amy Watkins: It's a great suggestion. I believe that the current drivers education program, and Ernie can maybe speak to it, I think there is a parent component to it. I believe that parents attend their own little session, and we have a graduated drivers licensing program. So it prohibits kids riding with other kids for certain periods when they first get their license, or they have their learner's permit, it also restricts their nighttime driving. I don't know how we're getting the information out about that but certainly parents play a key role in their child safety and as previously mentioned, a lot of our crashes are younger drivers, and that GDL is really helping to move those deaths and injuries down. Ernie, do you have anything about the parent education part?

Ernie Bertothy: Yeah, I think you touched on it, Amy. Thank you, and thank you, Susan, for the idea, because Amy you're 100% right but I think, Susan what you're referring to is basically educating parents who might have a freshman in high school, that they haven't actually gone through the process to get a license and I and I think a lot of that just comes from the opportunities that we have, the State has to promote the GDL here in Connecticut, and what the rules of the road are. So it's just a public relations component, but we definitely should and could consider getting that education back into high schools, even for the younger students, not just juniors and seniors .

Susan Logan: Yeah, I agree, and I did attend all my kid's parent sessions for their driver's education, and it was really eye opening, because with my first one I'm like oh, I didn't know that. I knew that they shouldn't be in cars with new drivers, but I mean other parents didn't know that, but there's a lot of education that I got in those driver's education sessions that I wish I'd known when my kids were just starting high school. Thanks.

Amy Watkins: It's good for us to even consider as part of Watch for Me, part of our school outreach and education to consider educating parents of younger kids about that sort of thing. So we we're taking that suggestion, I'm taking that also into my other, my other job because that's a great suggestion. But one

thing I forgot to mention because I couldn't see the notes page, was that the research position that we were proposing would be modeled after the position at the OLR, so the people in the legislative office building that do the research to help inform legislative recommendations and best practices. So we have a model for what that would look like and how that would operate, but it would be something that would operate to inform the Vision Zero committee.

d. Equity Recommendations

V. Adoption of 6/20/24 Meeting Minutes

-Motion by Jim Polites, second by Susan Logan, no objections.

VI. Other Business and Next Steps

- a. Additional Sub-Committee Work**
- b. T2 Center - Nighttime Visibility for Safety**
- c. VZ Schools of Distinction Awards**
- d. Future Meeting Dates:**
 - **12/10/24-Reschedule**

VII. Public Comment

Judith Proctor: Hi, I'm Judith Proctor, citizen advocate, and I wanted to get back to Terry Thompson's first recommendation about speed cameras and my question is, she suggested there be additional programming. So I don't know if Terry is still on the call, if she could describe that a little bit and also get any feedback on how we can broaden the use of speed cameras on our State highways.

Terri Thompson: Actually your last comment was exactly what was suggested, and maybe I didn't say it out correctly, but it is doing the expansion of speed cameras on the limited access highways and that's what we wanted to do, maybe a pilot program in that. As everyone know here knows, speeding is a big issue in the State and trying to do something to that effect and use those types of speed cameras for that. So that was a suggestion, Judy.

Judith Proctor: Okay, so that's not just for highway workers. That would be for the broad population?

Terri Thompson: Correct.

Jay Stange: I just have a couple of quick announcements. Thanks for the great meeting today, thank you for your participation and your work on this really important council. There is a walk role to school day coming up nationally and it's on October 9th and there are some really amazing things happening here in the State of Connecticut that I want to share just quickly. One is that we have a bike bus at KP Middle School in West Hartford that runs every day of the week, parent supported rides to school with kids, healthy, active transportation, super cool community building and we're proud to also announce that thanks to Paul Ashworth and Connecticut DOT Safe Routes to School folks and other community advocates we have another bike bus starting in Manchester. Tomorrow is going to be the first morning at 8:20 AM you can meet at Manchester High School there's a link that I can share in the chat. So two bike

buses running in Connecticut and walk role to school day on October 9th, I hope everybody can join, and thanks for the time.

Tracy Noble (Online Q&A): Just to make everyone aware there are parent orientation programs in other states. I think this is related to education for parents' education for parents of young drivers and young children and teens in general. So just to make everyone aware parent orientation programs in other states. Some are voluntary and some are tied to parking at the school. If the parents did not attend the orientation, then that student is not authorized to park on campus.

Robert Dickson (Online Q&A): Two comments: Use evaluation of or on a driving simulator should be a requirement for drivers over sixty, every five years much cheaper and safer than in vehicle. One more from Robert: why not make it a requirement for getting a driver's license to be formal training? Having a car is expensive anyway, having crashes is more expensive.

VIII. Adjourn

-Motion by Jim Polites, second by Jon Slifka, meeting adjourned.