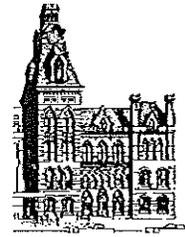




John DeStefano, Jr.
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Testimony of the City of New Haven
Before the Transportation Committee

In Support of

HB 6058 - AN ACT STUDYING AND IMPROVING PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Submitted by

James E. Travers
Director, Transportation and Traffic
February 4, 2013

Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrero and members of the Transportation Committee, I thank you for the opportunity to support HB 6058 – An Act Studying and Improving Pedestrian Safety. In New Haven we have begun work to address these concerns on local roads, but there are also numerous concerns about state controlled roads like Whalley Avenue (SR 63), Fountain Street (SR 243), Foxon Blvd (SR 80), State Street (SR 5), Ella Grasso Blvd (SR 34), Fitch Street (SR 10), Townsend Ave (SR 337) of which the City has limited ability to make improvements.

In 2008, in response to several pedestrian deaths, the Board of Aldermen created a Complete Streets Planning Committee who worked to develop and promote a safe, context-sensitive transportation network that serves all users and integrates the planning and design of complete streets that foster a livable, sustainable and economically vibrant community. According to our most recent census data, over 15% of our residents using non-motorized means to commute to work, the second highest percentage in New England, it was clear that we needed to quickly adopt Complete Streets legislation.

In 2010, the group published the Complete Streets Design Manual that provides technical guidance on the building, rebuilding, repair and rehabilitation of city streets with the intent of balancing the needs of all users. It is guided by a set of principles appropriate for an evolving understanding of the importance of streets to the social and economic fabric of a community. The manual is complemented by Complete Street Project Request Forms, providing a voice to the people that enable residents to identify problems, and help to recommend solutions. It is important to note that our Complete Streets manual was voted #1 Design Manual in the Country by the National Safe Street Coalition.

The process is starting to show results. Improvements range from low cost solutions like in road pedestrian signs to design improvements like round-abouts, chicanes, speed humps, speed tables, raised intersections and increased bike lanes in neighborhoods throughout the city. We currently have the most marked bike routes in the State and as a result have seen double-digit increases in cycling each year during the past four years that we have been counting cyclist movement. While we are making progress, it is limited by state control of many of our major arteries and by limits to funding availability.

I urge you to support HB 6058 to help bring these types of advancements to state roads. I recommend that the state develop a simple and transparent process for pedestrian and traffic calming improvements to state roads, and that you establish designated bond funds specifically for these initiatives to help facilitate improvements without competing with requests for funding normal routine maintenance.

Thank you for your consideration.

Check out the Complete Streets Manual at:

<http://www.cityofnewhaven.com/Engineering/pdfs/CS-Manual-FINAL.pdf>