

# Planning and Development Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-5353

AN ACT AUTHORIZING CERTAIN MUNICIPALITIES TO ESTABLISH TRAFFIC

**Title:** AUTHORITIES.

**Vote Date:** 3/20/2023

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 3/3/2023

**File No.:**

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

Planning and Development Committee

### REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill would authorize certain municipalities to establish traffic authorities that are independent of the local board of police commissioners or other municipal officials or bodies. The goal is to reduce traffic fatalities and injuries, working towards Vision Zero for Connecticut.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Garrett Eucalitto, Commissioner, CT Department of Transportation](#): Opposes as written

If the committee moves forward with drafting the proposed bill, it is OSTA's recommendation that the language specify that the traffic authority have similar professional credentials as noted in Section 14-297. It would be undesirable for a municipality to establish a traffic authority which does not have training and/or experience in one of the following areas: law enforcement, engineering, public works, or executive municipal administration (e.g., Mayor, Selectman, Town Manager).

### NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[New Haven Safe Streets Coalition, Testimony from 2 members](#): Supports this bill

Currently, New Haven's TA is housed in the Police Commission. This is illogical and ineffective. Instead, we need experts in transportation justice, sustainability, and safe, people-centered infrastructure spearheading the TA. The New Haven Safe Streets Coalition and its

members are advocating to amend our Charter to establish an independent TA. This bill would make clear that New Haven is empowered to make this change.

All three written testimonies are identical – written by: [Anastasia Brewczynski](#), and [Adam Callaghan](#)

**Anonymous:**

"Please pass this bill so that we can have cities that are better suited to dealing with traffic and pedestrian deaths! This will make our city more efficient and put the experts in city and street planning where they need to be."

**Aaron Goode, Advocate, Safe Streets Coalition:** Supports this bill

"I would urge the committee to not only approve this very simple bill directly benefiting Hamden and New Haven, but also to enact minimal training requirements for traffic authority commissioners that would benefit all communities in our state. Legislation to that effect (HB 5988) has been introduced in the Transportation Committee -- perhaps the language could be combined with this bill because they are obviously complementary. A further suggestion is that the arbitrary cut-off of 50,000 be removed from the language of the bill. Any municipality with sufficient interest and adequate means should be permitted to establish an independent traffic authority, subject to review and approval of the Office of State Traffic Administration."

**Abigail Roth and William Valvo:** Identical testimonies submitted supporting this bill

In New Haven, as in many other municipalities, the TA is housed in the Police Commission. The Police Commission is not a logical location for a TA because police commissions have lots of things to worry about, and the design of our streets is not their top priority. They also do not have expertise in traffic safety infrastructure

**Lorena Mitchell, Advocate, New Haven Safe Streets Coalition:** Supports this bill

Our roads are dangerous for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers alike and we need a separate, committed, and resourced TA to address the many challenges to street infrastructure improvement. Additionally, the timing of this bill is helpful to New Haven

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Donna Hamzy Carroccia, Chief Strategy Officer, CT Council of Municipalities (CCM):**

Warns this could lead to numerous, inefficient local entities. States, "balkanization can also lead to duplication of efforts, further squandering of resources. Finally, the balkanization of local government can prevent strategic planning, as the multiple subgovernments may not understand the bigger picture. This can lead to short-term solutions being implemented, which may be detrimental to long-term planning."

**Reported by: Robert Mayne**

**Date: March 23, 2023**

