Dear Chairs, Ranking Members, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Planning and Development Committee,

I am submitting testimony in support for H.B. No 5353, An Act Concerning Certain Municipal Traffic Authorities. Currently the state's definition of Traffic Authority is hard to decipher so it is not clear whether a municipality with a police commission is required to house its traffic authority in the police commission. In New Haven, as in many other municipalities, the TA is housed in the Police Commission. Police Commissions should and do focus their time and resources on the most critical policing matters, namely solving crimes and matters of public safety. Candidates for police commissions are selected for their expertise and experience in traditional policing issues; when our Board of Alders vets them, they ask questions related to policing, not to road infrastructure design. While there is some overlap between policing with traffic safety, similarly the domain of the TA represents a unique area of expertise, training, education, and profession. 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. Safe Streets advocates seek to amend our Charter to establish an independent TA. THis bill would make clear that New Haven is empowered to make this change. Please pass H.B. No. 5353. Thank you for your consideration.

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