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Partnership leads to increased pedestrian safety on Richards Avenue

Bike/Walk Commission worked with Norwalk Community College to improve safety on a busy street



(Norwalk, Conn.) - The City of Norwalk, Norwalk Bike/Walk Commission, and Norwalk Community College (NCC) worked together to address pedestrian safety issues on Richards Avenue. The result was a cost-effective project that increased public safety by reducing vehicular speeds in the area.

As a street nearly 40-feet wide, Richards Avenue offered few cues to reduce speed. Motorists often approached NCC along Richards Avenue at speeds that were greater than posted and higher than recommended for pedestrian areas. Vehicles approaching NCC pass through low-traffic areas, such as cemeteries and single-family neighborhoods, before entering a section of Richards Avenue that bisects the campus where students regularly cross. The project created more than 30 new on-street parking spots and included the installation of speed monitoring signs.

A before and after along Richards Avenue shows the newly added parking spots. The spaces help to slow vehicle speeds by visually reducing the road width.

great partnership that will benefit many in our community. I am grateful for the expertise of our Commissioners and staff who took this project from start to finish."

"The ingenuity of the Bike/Walk Commission lead to a creative solution to a long-standing problem on Richards Avenue," said Norwalk Mayor Harry Rilling. "This was a

The Bike/Walk Commission first developed the initial proposal in mid-2017. The Commission, Department of Public Works, and staff from NCC met to discuss the plan and agreed to move forward with the project. After local agencies, such as the Traffic Authority, approved the plan, the markings were installed in 2018. The new on-street parking is a major contributing factor to slower vehicle speeds as it visually reduces the road width and cues motorists to pay more attention. Slower vehicle speeds typically result in less severe injuries to pedestrians and can significantly reduce the severity and chances of a collision. Bike/Walk Commissioner Colin Grotheer helped spearhead the proposal.

"I believe we were able to take a multi-million dollar project and achieve a similar result for a few thousand dollars," Grotheer said. "We were able to have a maximum impact for minimal effort and cost on all fronts."

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