



Fairfield County
Community Foundation



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FORUM PROVIDES IDEAS FOR PROMOTING SAFE ROADS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Bridgeport—What do safer streets for cycling and walking mean for the economy? According to leading regional experts in transportation—a great deal.

At an event sponsored by Tri-State Transportation Campaign, the Fairfield County Community Foundation, the One Region Funders' Group, and the City of Bridgeport, over 60 state and city planners, engineers, government officials, community advocates, and non-profit leaders heard from transportation policy experts on how to quickly and cheaply implement safer, greener, and transit accessible street designs that support economic development.

The forum, called *Sustainable Streets: Promoting Safety, Promoting Growth*, took place at Housatonic Community College in Bridgeport and included City of Bridgeport Sustainability Director Ted Grabarz and Connecticut Department of Transportation Commissioner Jim Redeker. Jon Orcutt, Policy Director for the New York City Department of Transportation, was the keynote.

Mr. Grabarz and Commissioner Redeker discussed how the city and state, respectively, are working towards creating a transportation system that emphasizes walkability and bikeability, as well as a system that includes more street space for transit and 'green' infrastructure, infrastructure that reduces impacts on the environment.

“Through our BGreen 2020 greenprint for the City, we are focused on moving forward with creating a more walkable, bikable, vibrant city,” said Bridgeport Mayor Bill Finch. “A complete street approach is important for the health of our residents and the long-term sustainable future of Bridgeport.”

Mr. Orcutt provided an overview of how New York City became a nationwide leader in fostering bikeable and walkable streets with limited resources. Mr. Orcutt also discussed how these safety and transportation improvements served as a catalyst for economic development in areas of New York City and how improvements could be similarly achieved in Connecticut.

“Though cities and towns in Connecticut are unique, there is a lot to learn from the affordable, near-term improvements made by New York City to enhance safety and livability,” said Kate Slevin, executive director of the Tri-State Transportation Campaign, a non-profit transportation policy watchdog working in Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey, and a co-sponsor of the event.

Since New York began implementing more innovative safe street infrastructure, traffic fatalities have fallen to a record low and retail spaces in close proximity to New York City’s pedestrian plazas have become some of the most desirable locations for businesses.

A panel of experts from the cities of Bridgeport, Norwalk, and New Haven, along with the Vice Chair of Connecticut’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board, responded to Mr. Orcutt’s presentation and provided an overview of how municipalities in the state are already striving to make communities more walkable and bikeable.

“Connecticut, and in particular, the City of Bridgeport, has made great strides in recent years towards fostering more walkable, bikeable, and transit accessible communities,” said Ryan Lynch, policy director and Connecticut coordinator for Tri-State. “We hope this educational forum can arm state and city engineers and planners with the tools necessary to make even more progress in the future.”

The organizers intend to develop a report covering the lessons learned from the event, and share it with state and municipal officials.

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Tri-State Transportation Campaign is a non-profit organization working toward a more balanced, transit-friendly and equitable transportation system in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.