



Transportation Committee - Board of Representatives

David Watkins, Chair

Terry Adams, Vice Chair

Committee Report

Date: Tuesday, March 18, 2025
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Place: *This meeting was held remotely.*

The Transportation Committee met as indicated above.

In attendance were Chair Watkins, Vice-Chair Adams and Committee Member Reps. Gilbride, Grunberger, Sandford, and Strain. Also in attendance was Frank Petise, Transportation Bureau Chief; Sgt. Jeffrey Booth, Stamford Police Department Traffic Unit; Principal Frank Rodriguez, Strawberry Hill School; and Matthew Laskowski, Associate Superintendent – Middle Schools. Absent or excused was Rep. Moore.

Chair Watkins called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The agenda is as follows:

Item No.	Description	Invitee(s) or Designee(s)
1. T31.042	REVIEW; Update on Mitigating Traffic around Strawberry Hill School - since a pedestrian was hit on 10/31/24 02/05/25 – Submitted by Reps. Gilbride, Morson, Grunberger, Mays, Blank, Goldberg, Pollack and Shaw 02/18/25 – Held by Committee	HELD

Rep. Gilbride summarized the traffic issue at Strawberry Hill School and gave the history thus far of steps taken to address the issue.

- The injury of a pedestrian at the 5th Street side of the school campus, when a parent of a student at the school was hit while using the crosswalk on 10/31/24 when a vehicle stopped to allow the parent to cross as the pedestrian had the light, and another vehicle went around the stopped one and subsequently hit the pedestrian;
- How Rep. Pollack has also almost been hit at the 5th Street side of the school campus
- How about five (5) separate incidents where children were almost hit on the Strawberry Hill Avenue side while the school's crossing guard was holding a sign up
- Meeting with Superintendent Dr. Tamu Lucero regarding the pedestrian safety issue
- Public review of the pedestrian safety issue to promote pedestrian & child safety

Transportation Bureau Chief Petise gave an overview on what types of actions have been taken. He highlighted several important aspects of addressing the issue which both have already been instituted and are being looked at for future improvements:

Already installed/historic improvements:

- Speed hump added by where the parent drop-off and pickup queue area begins
- The intersection of Strawberry Hill Avenue and 5th Street was rebuilt
- Enhanced crosswalks were installed at both 5th Street and Strawberry Hill Avenue; the one on 5th Street has a rectangular rapid-flashing beacon (this is the pedestrian-activated push button)

Future improvements being considered:

- Considering creating a raised crosswalk at 5th Street, which would also act as a speed hump
- There is currently an RFP (Request for Proposal) for vendors for the video cameras to be installed by the school as part of the Speed Cameras for Enforcement Implementation. One of the locations set for the video enforcement cameras is in front of the school campus at Strawberry Hill Avenue.
- A larger project on the whole corridor of Strawberry Hill Avenue that an application for federal funding for the Build Program was submitted in January 2025; results of the application are expected in the summer of 2025, fluctuations to federal funding programs notwithstanding.

Rep. Pollack expressed hope of coming up with solutions for the immediate future to prevent worse accidents from occurring. Asked for more information regarding immediate crossing guards on 5th Street.

Principal Rodriguez provided some context regarding arrivals (drop-offs) and dismissals (pick-ups) at the school campus and showed a slide presentation with maps of the Strawberry Hill School campus layout with the traffic flow, arrival times and dismissals outlined. Specifically:

- All car arrivals are coming onto the school campus via 5th Street, with various campus locations to drop off students and these students access the school via the rear of the school.
- Most of the school buses use the 5th Street entrance and then leave via the Strawberry Hill Avenue entrance.
- Walking students access the school via the front or rear of the school.
- The location of the drop-offs and pick-ups has been designed to maximize the traffic flow in the limited time available.
- The heaviest traffic period for drop-offs (arrivals) is between 8:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m.
- The dismissal (pick-up) period is between 3:25 p.m. and 3:45 p.m. due to state regulations on the length of the school day and teacher contract timelines.
- Communication of the arrivals/dismissals plan at the school, with traffic flow information, is communicated to the parents at orientation, via text notifications, video instructions, the school's web page, newsletters and the regularly scheduled Safety Committee communications.

Sgt. Booth gave his thoughts on the issue as the head of the Traffic division:

- The way the roadway is designed in this area of 5th Street, there is not a lot of room for cars, so traffic is going to be an issue. There are 2 lanes, but 1 is a left turn only.
- Is not sure if the issue with the 5th Street exit is an enforcement issue; he monitored the area in person on Friday 3/14/25 and did not see anyone take that left turn.

- Showed “Extended Speed Summary” with traffic details gathered from 9/11/23 through 10/10/23 at 200 Strawberry Hill Avenue. Data on this slide showed most speeding at this area happens very late at night/very early in the morning.

During the question period after presentations were completed, the following questions were asked and answered by the presenters:

- Where do the school buses go? Do they use the front circle at all? (*see above*)
- What is the dismissal/pick-up time window? (*see above*)
- What solution ideas are there for the crossing guard area? (*idea of signage to route non-school traffic away from school during high traffic times at pickup and drop-off*)
- Do you know of any other pedestrian near-misses (pedestrians almost being hit by vehicles)? (*Principal gave 2 examples he heard of*)
- What does the school need from the Board of Representatives to help with the situation? (*request for speed enforcement from Police Department made to either deter speeding or encourage alternate routes for non-school traffic*)
- Is there currently a crossing guard at the 5th Street intersection? (*no, but this is something the police department is looking into*)
- Are crossing guards hired through the Police Department? (*yes, and open recruitment is posted around the city and online. Police also train the guards*)
- Can a crossing guard be moved to this 2nd spot on 5th Street? (*can ask, but short staffed on crossing guards all over the city*)
- There are 2 crossing guards in front of Stamford High School; can we do something like this while we’re waiting to hear about the \$20M application for federal funding? (*both Stamford High School and Strawberry Hill School are on the list for first available speed cameras*)
- Is there a school resource officer for Strawberry Hill School? (*no; there is 1 school resource officer shared amongst the middle schools, but Strawberry Hill School is a K-8 school.*)

Additional conversation, including the idea of a School Safety Program (SSP) where kids and adults can learn how to volunteer to help with crossing safety was brought up by Rep. Pollack and supported by Reps. Grunberger and Sandford. Chair Watkins stated that the SSP as mentioned could get into union issues. He also stated this is probably an issue of traffic causing driver frustration, not an issue of speeding during school drop-off/pickup times. The goal of ensuring the flow of traffic at these times could reduce the chances of stalled traffic causing frustrated residents to drive in an unsafe way, causing increased risk to pedestrians by the school. Idea of routing traffic exiting on 5th Street through the neighborhood to reconnect to Strawberry Hill Avenue further north as a possible way of positively impacting traffic flow at these peak times was mentioned. It was also noted that student pedestrian traffic was not shown or covered in the principal’s presentation. Rep. Pollack stated the crossing guards help with the flow of traffic as they direct both pedestrians and vehicular traffic. The need for additional research on the proposed SSP was agreed on.

A motion to hold Item 1 was made, seconded, and approved by a vote of 5-1-0 (Vice-Chair Adams, Reps. Gilbride, Grunberger, Sandford, and Strain in favor; Chair Watkins voted against).

Chair Watkins adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
David Watkins, Chair
This meeting is on [video](#).