



The Norwalk Roundabout

The Official Newsletter of -- ACT -- Advocates for Calm Traffic

Website: CalmTraffic.org

Advocates for Calm Traffic is pleased to publish its first newsletter -- The Norwalk Roundabout. A roundabout is a landscaped island placed in an intersection that creates a slowing down of traffic. Our newsletter is intended to create a slow-down period and a time to reflect on alternatives to fast and furious solo driving. The Roundabout will be published quarterly.

Traffic Calming Funded in City Budget: ACT had a tough lobby last year for the first funding for Traffic Calming projects -- but we succeeded. In April of this year the going was much easier. The Mayor and the Council supported the funding. The accumulated \$200,000 will be used to place speed bumps on 10 of the more than 50 streets that have requests in to the city. In subsequent years we will be continuing to encourage the city to look to alternatives to speed bumps since some streets are not appropriate for speed bumps but could well benefit from another device intended to slow traffic.

Fillow Street designated a Scenic Road: The residents of Fillow Street obtained Scenic Road designation earlier this year -- and are the first road in Norwalk to receive this designation. Future development and additions will receive extra review prior to changes that could affect the character of the street. The designation will help to maintain the street with natural traffic calming features. This narrow winding tree-lined road keeps traffic calm.

Mayor's Traffic Summit: In May the city held a traffic summit in which the residents of Norwalk were invited to hear several panelists speak about the issues on traffic and transportation. The neighborhoods of Norwalk then provided the city with specific concerns and possible solutions. The mayor has held follow-up meetings to study the information and is in the process of identifying specific solutions. ACT has been involved throughout the process and continues to work with the city to create safer streets.

Traffic Islands Saved: Residents of Norwalk living in the area of Highland Avenue and Flax Hill Road worked successfully with the Public Works Department to save the three historic grass-covered traffic islands that have been in place since the time of horse-drawn carriages. Traffic islands are located in various places throughout Norwalk. They need to be protected. Traffic islands are not only historic and aesthetically pleasing but also act to calm traffic.

Controlling Trucks on Route 136: The residents of Darien and Rowayton have combined efforts to reroute some truck traffic away from Route 136 where it passes through the village of Rowayton and other sensitive residential areas. Excess speed increases the problem. Local officials from both jurisdictions and the Connecticut Department of Transportation are working to find solutions. The trucking companies in South Norwalk have previously heard the concerns of residents and made efforts to keep their trucks on the highways intended to carry them.

Norwalk now has a Tree Ordinance: The Council voted to take better care of the city street and park trees by creating a tree ordinance. A Tree Advisory Committee will also be created to recommend a tree management plan to the city. It has been shown that streets that are lined with healthy trees calm drivers and slow vehicles.

Bike To Work Day: ACT is supportive of establishing safe routes for cyclists and pedestrians and will work with the city in promoting cycling.

The Point System for Speeding: The habitual speeder would be less likely to speed if the point system was in place so that a person that repeatedly speeds would risk losing his or her license and would face hefty insurance rate increases. The change would need to be made in Hartford by our state legislators. ACT has received supportive responses.

The Transportation Strategy Board's Search: The TSB continues to work to find solutions to the traffic congestion in Fairfield County. It is currently involved in assisting the governor in the selection process for a new DOT commissioner. The choice will be critical to the future of our state. The new commissioner needs to be a leader who actively focuses not just on creating and maintaining highways but on finding ways to fund transportation alternatives to motor vehicle travel.

Trucks and Safety on the Interstate: Regular inspection of trucks needs to continue in order to minimize the danger of poorly maintained or overweight vehicles from causing accidents. Injury to passengers of the trucks and cars that share the road will be avoided in many circumstances.

The Lobby against Casinos: If development of more casinos occurs there will be substantial increases in the amount of traffic on the highways. We are already far over capacity in Fairfield County. The taxes that are generated and collected by the state create a dilemma for some. But the reality is that our highways cannot handle the additional traffic that would be generated. The economy can not help but suffer as a net result.

Freight by Rail or Barge: To decrease congestion on the highways and to move goods more quickly alternatives are being explored to using trucks for freight travel.

Saving Amtrak: A large debt for Amtrak resulted because the government does not subsidize alternatives to the automobile as well as it subsidizes the automobile industry. The end of Amtrak was near. Last minute advocacy efforts by legislators may yet save this passenger train system.

ACT committee members are at work: Ideas for future public awareness campaigns are being batted around in our committee. We are looking for new people to work with us.

Please call: Laurel Lindstrom at (203) 855-7668 or use the contact numbers on the CalmTraffic.org website to get involved. You may call for more information or call to participate.

Wishing you calm traffic.....

Remember that each time you leave your car at home and find an alternative means of travel, each time you drive the speed limit and each time you avoid cutting-through residential side-streets you find for yourself and give to others a roundabout for calm traffic.

.....until the next roundabout