



Crash Analysis Studio – Ella T Grasso Boulevard in New Haven, Connecticut

Introductory Trailer

Chuck Marohn: I want to give you two scenarios. Scenario number one a plane crashes. Scenario number two, two cars collide. In scenario number one, we pull out all the stops – we bring in the NTSB, we try to figure out exactly what went wrong. Scenario number two – we send out the cops, we sweep up the mess, and we go on our way.

John Pattison: If we, collectively – everyone on this call and the broader Strong Towns movement – if we do this right, we’re going to save thousands of lives.

Edward Erfurt: Mayors and local council members want to do the right thing. They have the ability to solve it. We’re going to help provide those tools for them.

Session

Tony Harris: All right, hi everyone. I think people are still filing in, but I do want to slowly get us started. Let me begin by saying thank you for joining us today, and allow me to welcome you to this crash analysis studio session co hosted by strong towns. We are really happy to have you here with us as part of this traffic safety conversation. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Tony Harris, and I am the Community Engagement Coordinator with strong towns, and I have been invited by our New Haven local conversation group as well, as well as some of our other colleagues on the ground in New Haven to help moderate this session today. So this is going to be our 24th session that we have conducted as an organization since October of 2024. We've also been doing some ongoing coaching with other communities who are interested in analyzing crashes and improving traffic safety in their areas. So in a few moments, I will introduce you to the rest of our expert panel. But first, I just want to speak briefly about why we're here today.

So we know that over 40,000 people die in automobile crashes in the United States alone every year, and hundreds of 1000s more suffer traumatic injuries during these collisions, despite the work of public safety officials, these crashes are continuing to happen, and they're continuing to affect all of our lives. Now there's a prevalent misconception that car crashes are caused by mistakes that drivers make looking at your phone, changing the radio, drinking alcohol and being behind the wheel, speeding. Now, the North American response to crashes focuses primarily on assigning blame, often to drivers and often to pedestrians too. However, we know the reality is the crashes are caused by multiple factors, often beyond driver error. When a traumatic crash occurs, we need to identify all the contributing factors, learn all we can, and take action so that we can reduce the number of deaths and traumatic injuries that are taking



place in our communities. So what you're going to see now is a session that uses the strong towns crash analysis approach.

So our panelists are going to look at a crash that occurred on the south section of L T Grasso Boulevard, a little bit south of Columbus Avenue in New Haven, Connecticut. Now we're also going to compare this crash to an additional crash that took place a little bit further north on the Boulevard as well. So I will introduce you to our panel, and then from there, we will review the facts of the crash, and we will assess the design factors that contributed to this collision. And I want to emphasize our goal today is not to assign blame. Our objective is to learn as much as possible about what happened, identify factors and then make some suggestions and recommendations for improving safety at this crash location and the area surrounding it. So before I take us into introductions, I do want to acknowledge that you know, both the crashes that we're referencing today were fatal for the people who were struck by motor vehicles while they were just trying to cross the road. The South section crash victim was 35 year old, Carlos Ortiz, and the north section crash victim was 50 year old, community member, Arthur bass tech, and as you'll hear later, you know, there have been several more people who have died along this Boulevard due to car crashes too. So I just want to invite you to take a moment of silence with me to honor Carlos and Arthur and the others that have lost their lives along this Boulevard.

Okay, thank you.

So allow me to introduce our experts for today. First, we have Leslie Radcliffe, who served three years as chair of New Haven City Plan commission. She is a longtime resident and homeowner in the hill her neighborhood in South New Haven. Leslie is a community organizer and a recipient of the Dorothy Richardson award for resident leadership. And for years, Leslie has been an advocate for local traffic safety and a liaison with elected leadership on transportation issues.

Next we have Jose DeJesus, who is a Community Engagement Program Coordinator at the Yale School of Medicine, and I believe he's currently teaching a course on community based research. Jose has held a variety of roles throughout his career, including some time working as a community health educator, an entrepreneur and a carpenter. Now, Jose is a lifelong resident of the hill, and he's dedicated to improving traffic safety and his neighborhood and the rest of New Haven.

And then our last panelist for today is Rishabh Mittal, who is a transport planner, and he's recently started. His own consulting practice in New Haven as well. He believes that we all live a multimodal life, and Rishabh wants to help build a transportation system that gives everyone the freedom to make choices while ensuring safety, comfort and reliability for all modes of transport. So now I'm going to walk us through the details of this crash in New Haven, and I'm going to share my screen to a PowerPoint that has some key pieces of information.

So, as I stated earlier, we're examining a crash that happened along Ella T Grasso Boulevard, south of Columbus. On this visual here, Columbus is marked with yellow. The South crash we're looking at happened down here, and then we are making reference to another crash that happened a little bit further

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north on the Boulevard as well. Wanted to point out the south section crash happened near the flea market, and the north section crash happened close to the Evergreen Cemetery entrance. Now, in both instances, the car that was involved in the crash was traveling southbound, and the pedestrians were both trying to cross mid block. And we also wanted to note that Ella T Grasso Boulevard is a state controlled road. It's also referred to as Connecticut route 10. Okay, so looking at the south section crash. Carlos was struck and killed by a car at around 6pm on December 29 2020 and the crash occurred between printers lane and Adeline Street. I think you'll see another visual a little later on that illustrates where those where those roads are now. The motorist was driving in the outer southbound lane, and, to my knowledge, cooperated with law enforcement after the crash occurred, and some sources listed Carlos Ortiz as unidentified, I think, including the crash report. But you can find his name through the Safe Streets New Haven website, and I believe it was Leslie who actually led us toward that resource and helped us with that information. So thank you, Leslie. To my knowledge, Ortiz was transported to the hospital, but passed away the next morning. So he passed away on December 30 at Yale New Haven Hospital. And when we looked at weather reports, they stated that it was dry in the 30s in New Haven that evening.

Now the north section crash, this occurred just north of Columbus, around 7pm I believe at 7:03pm exactly on January 14, 2020 again, a motorist struck and killed 50 year old Arthur Vastec and in early 2023 the Connecticut Department of Transportation used some quick build interventions at this crash location to help narrow down the road. Now on these diagrams of the north section and the South section crash areas, you're going to see some depictions pop up. So on each of these diagrams, the motorists are depicted in orange, and they're both headed southbound in their respective areas. And then we've illustrated the pedestrians or the people walking in red, and then the approximate crash location is outlined in red as well. Now on the right hand side for the South section crash, you can see the flea market. You can also see Printers Lane and Adeline street outlined here. And then on the left hand side for this north section crash. You see West River Park and the Evergreen Cemetery listed out too.

So I want to look at the overall site conditions. We know that this Boulevard is a major thoroughfare for city traffic. The South section features four travel lanes. So there's two travel lanes for through traffic in each direction, while the north section of the boulevard features two travel lanes and two buffer areas. To my knowledge, the posted speed limit in both of these areas is 35 miles per hour. And I wanted to point out the north section used to have four travel lanes as well, but that intervention by the Connecticut Department of Transportation led to basically a road diet right in early 2023 that reduced the area to one travel lane in each direction. The South section road configuration has remained unchanged since the crash in 2020.

little bit more on overall conditions. To my knowledge, the South section is sort of a commercial area. There are some shops. There's the local flea market. Think there may be some offices in the area as well. And as it's usually the case when you have businesses that's going to attract residents who might be walking across the boulevard or traveling on foot from their neighborhood. And I believe that the flea market also attracts people from potentially the surrounding areas that could increase or at least impact automobile traffic as well. Now this location is of interest to us. It's received considerable media coverage and community concern. I know Leslie and Jose were involved in some letter writing. Uh, activities about traffic safety and crashes here in in prior years. And there have been, you know, many car crashes and fatalities on this Boulevard. I believe it was nine occurring during the past five years, and 11 fatalities since 2019, mid

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block crossings are often listed as a cause for most of these fatalities when you're looking at like crash reports and coverage. So we're noticing a few things when we look at crash data for this area, and we put together these diagrams to help point some of this out. So on Ella T Grasso Boulevard and the surrounding areas, we're seeing 927 crashes total in that five year period. So when you do the math on that, that works out to about one crash every two days. On this right hand diagram here, you can see these yellow circles at some of these intersections. These are what I would call hotspots for crashes, right? I mean, that's 227 individuals on Columbus Avenue, where it intersects with Ella T Grasso Boulevard. And then here we're trying to look a little bit closer at the portion of the boulevard where the two crashes happened that we have been referencing today, we're seeing nine fatalities along this kind of mile or so long stretch of road since 2020 wanted to point out too that seven of these fatalities have taken place in the southern section. So I would say that the the burden for fatal crashes is kind of shared unfairly right between like north of Columbus and south of Columbus. Again, data suggests unsafe mid block crossings are a cause for most of these deaths. Now, since Mr. Ortiz was not referenced by name in some of the sources that we found, our group felt we should name the other individuals who lost their lives along this portion of the boulevard too. And I want to emphasize that this list isn't exhaustive, right? This is just a list of people. Since 2019 to my knowledge, we've got eight additional fatalities here, and these included gentlemen named Lonnie Pedro, Anthony, Eric Curtis, Henry Damaso and Dennis. And again, our hope is really to try and humanize this analysis. Right? These folks are beloved individuals, and we know that they left behind families, friends and legacies much sooner than they should have. So one of our aims today, really is to keep this list from growing any longer. Now, Rishabh and some of his colleagues who helped with information gathering, took measurements of where the crash happened, so we're going to look at the south section first. On the south section, you're going to see four through traffic lanes. Each of those are 12 feet wide. On either side, you're going to find an eight foot planting strip with some sidewalk trees. On one side, there's a seven foot wide sidewalk, and on the other side, you're going to see a five foot wide sidewalk with two additional feet dedicated to pole space, so that makes the distance across the the asphalt or the pavement 48 feet. And then when you add in the planters and the poles and the sidewalks, that distance jumps up to 78 feet.

Now on the north section of ELLA T Grasso Boulevard, we're seeing two through traffic lanes, each of them are 11 and a half feet wide. We're seeing one going in general direction of north, one going south. And then on either side, you're going to see about 14 feet of buffer space with two additional median areas striped out. And then each of those median areas are another two feet wide. So there's a five foot wide sidewalk on the east side with 10 feet of planter and pole area. And then on the west side, you're going to see, in some pictures, in a few moments, a two foot wide kind of blockade barrier set up as well. So that makes the distance across the pavement 57 feet. And then when you add in the planters in the sidewalk, that width jumps up to 72 feet.

So Rishabh and some of his peers conducted speed studies for us as well. So they conducted a study at the north area and at the south area. The north section being where the quick builds have been implemented, and then the south section being where the location has remained unchanged. They made an effort to conduct these studies under, like, typical free flow traffic circumstances. So I don't believe they were out there at rush hour. I don't believe they were, you know, out there when there was a big construction project happening, they tried to really, like, stay in integrity with what typical traffic flow might look like. So again, as a reminder, the speed limit in both of these areas is 35 miles per hour in the south section, which

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is depicted in the graph on the bottom, we're seeing 219 vehicles tracked with 81.3% of them found to be speeding in the south section. 52 vehicles were traveling at 10 miles per hour or higher over the limit. So that would be 52 vehicles. Going 45 miles per hour or faster. And then the 85th percentile speed, and that would be the speed at which 85% of drivers were found to be traveling at or below, was found to be 47 miles per hour. Then when we look at the north section, which is displayed up top here, we found 166 vehicles were tracked, and 76.5% were found to be going over the speed limit. Now in the north section, only 16 cars were going 10 miles per hour or higher over the speed limit, and 85% of drivers were found to be traveling at or below 44 miles per hour. So you can see there's some slight differences in speed distributions in these two areas.

Now, Rishabh and his colleagues pulled some photos of the crash locations for us too. The first one here is of the Northern crash area. This is an online photo, I believe, taken from Google Earth or Google Maps. You can see a southbound car approaching the crash site. I just wanted to point out the two buffer areas on either side with the bollards that you can see kind of separating. And then on this slide here, you can see vantage points from the west side of the approximate crash location. On the left hand side, we're viewing north. In the middle, we're viewing east, and then on the right here we are viewing south, and then for the southern crash area. Again, this visual came from online. You can see vehicles traveling southbound, and then these four lanes for through traffic that I referenced earlier. Can see laid out here. And then again, we have some views from the approximate crash location, again, from the west side of the boulevard. So there's one viewing north, one that is looking across the boulevard east, and then one viewing direction of South. And then I think these are our last visuals. Here you can see a couple of people waiting to cross the road. I believe this is from a northbound perspective, so it would be opposite of the way that our driver had been approaching during this crash. And so we just wanted to include this to give a sense for what it might look like to navigate this area as a pedestrian. So I'm going to stop sharing my screen for now. Hit Escape there, and I would like to turn to our panel, and maybe we'll start with Rishabh. And I just like to invite you to tell us, you know, what you think might have contributed to this crash in the way of factors. And you know, if there's anything you want to share, feel free to pull your screen up and share anything as you move us through.

Rishabh Mittal: uh, can you? Can you see my screen? Yeah, I can see it, yeah. So this is the south section. The main clash that we are looking at. It's the same picture that just showed. So to understand driving experience here at the south section, I think we can look at this picture here. This views for the southbound traffic to direction in which the driver was driving during this crash. And as you can see, the road looks very straight, very wide, and has multiple lanes. So each lane is like 12 feet wide, taking the total pavement to it which pedestrian has to cross is 48 feet a straight white road with multiple lanes, all the design features that would typically encourage drivers to speed, and there's no traffic coming here. So yeah, people have speeding as you can see in the speed study. Next we look at the walking experience, and if we try to understand why people are crossing mid block. So the nearest crosswalk from the flea market is about 300 feet. So this distance is 300 feet. And then once you're at this crosswalk, there's an additional turning lane, so which makes the crossing of the road to like 660, feet. Six, another 12 feet to the crossing distance. And. And again, you have to walk another like around 640 feet to get to the nearest Street, which is the Atlantic street. So this total walking distance is around 1000 feet from the from the market entries. So people are usually carrying grocery bags after shopping at the flea market. So you seem easier for people, I

think, to cross mid block and avoid this whole trip, especially if people are visiting the flea markets regularly for their daily needs. They are bound to kind of choose a shorter, shorter walking distance and avoid this 1000 feet extra working so, yeah, I think that's, that's kind of my take on this. And I would love to hear from this and Jose, what they have to say.

Tony Harris:

Great. Thank you. Rishabh Leslie, would you like to weigh in on factors?

Leslie Radcliffe

Can Can Rishabh, can you put that your screen shares is still up? Yeah, sure. Okay. Okay. There are, from from my viewpoint, several contributing factors, some of which, I guess are you know what we're discussing tonight, with regards to traffic. But there, there are also some concerns that that we have in this community about how, you know, the traffic needs are addressed for, let's say, not addressed. But that's a whole different that's, that's a whole different webinar. I can appreciate the the renderings that Rishabh put up, because it does show, I'm not sure of the word, I don't want to say disparity, but you know where there's a lot of pedestrian traffic, which is at the flea market area. That's what we're seeing at the screen. There's no crossing there, you know. And it's, it's very unlikely to, you know, it's unlikely to expect people to walk 300 feet past where they're going and then come back another 300 feet. You know, there is a crossing down at the adult education but again, you'll see on the left side the flea market area that's all industrial their shops there. There's schools, churches. On the right hand side is where the residential is. You'll see a little bit, I guess, south of the cemetery, and that's the neighborhood that I live in. Lots of residents in this area do shop at the flea market, but not just the flea market. There are other businesses on the other side of Ella Grasso Boulevard going towards orange Avenue. You know that individuals will go to Dunkin Donuts, you know, fast food, place, liquor store, or even just walking up orange avenue to get to the West Haven area, there's bus stops down at that end. There's bus stops throughout here, but there, as as is shown on this slide, there really isn't safe pedestrian crossing, even there at the adult ed at the upper left hand portion of the red dots, there's, there's a problem with the distance of the timing, you know, trying to get across what is actually five lanes turns into about five lanes of traffic, yeah. So it can be quite difficult, just on that strip alone, I am aware of, you know, the difficulty of the think it's the northern section, but they that being less residential attracts less pedestrian traffic. So the, you know, the occurrence of incidences we would expect to be lower, and they actually are in addition to, well, not in addition to, but with the names that you read, there actually a few more that have occurred since 2014 I think that's when you know it. We started tracking on in June 2014 Frank acito pedestrian fatality at the route 10 route one, which is it's not off on the map, but right at the intersection of where the north and the south crash areas show. And April 3 of 2017 Renko Borat at route 10 and Washington Avenue, which is closer to the flea market and. And September 2017 Shanika woods, age 38 also at the route 10, route one. Now, although it's not in this area near the flea market, it is in that stretch that is the southern portion of the Ella Grasso Boulevard. And there, there's, there's been one too many fatalities, and the traffic, I guess you say, traffic calming that has been done was simply to address the the speeding, you know? I mean, that's what it seems like. It was not geared towards pedestrians, pedestrian safety, but more to reduce the street racing the speeders on the Washington Avenue to Kimberly Avenue portion where they reduced it from four lanes to two lanes. But there really have not been any significant changes in this South crash area.

Tony Harris:

Great. Thank you. That's really helpful elaboration, especially the what you were saying about near the Adult Education Center, even where there is a crossing, excuse me, it sounds like there's an issue with, like, timing and maybe the length of how long that crossing is. And it's one thing to expect an able bodied individual to make it across. It's another thing to make a accessible crossing for people who might have differing needs. Yeah, absolutely. Thank you, Jose, could I ask you to weigh in on any factors you might be thinking about

Jose DeJesus: Thank you very much, and thanks for the opportunity to be in this meeting. I think it's extremely important. I think being a lifelong resident, this has always been a hotspot. It's a wide, straight Boulevard, even when I was a kid, that was the place to go drag racing. I don't see if you measured from the lights from Kimberly to Washington, from Washington there to the crosswalk where you have there, then to they're, they're about a half mile chunks of straight. So they used to use them for drag racing, quarter mile drag racing. And the problem with both of these streets not only Ella T Grasso Boulevard, but Columbus Avenue. Columbus Avenue is actually route one, State Route one. And to get things done, it really you need to have the state involved. I think when it's a city corner, a city problem, I think it's easier for the residents to lobby our local government to make change, to reduce traffic, to improve crosswalks, but when the both, when the intersection is two state roads, all of that bureaucracy takes a long, long time they have Been trying to upgrade, especially on Columbus and Boulevard that crossing, they've been trying to fix that for the last couple of years, and it's still next to the on the right hand side of this picture. If you go up a little bit where the cemetery is, it's still not a real sidewalk. It's a goat path. They they put concrete on it. But I don't, I don't think that sidewalk is, is, is 48 inches wide. I don't even think at some points. So, yeah, I think, I think policy wise, having the city have the leverage to make the state make these improvements, I think that's a policy, a perspective, that I'm really interested in pursuing to make sure that local issues like this get prominent play at the state level,

Jose DeJesus: So Leslie and I and the neighborhood, not just Leslie and I, but a coalition of us. We have been remember Leslie when they said it was on the five year plan, and we, we made it to start doing stuff in two years, which is in Connecticut, huge to get the state agency to move you from a five year fix to a two year fix. So that's huge. So they've started. So, you know, we're hoping that that that work continues and that it moves further south, because from Columbus to Washington, you cross that street at any time of the day, at any time of year. Yeah, you're taking your hand, your life, into your hands at any time between, you know, ELLA T , Grasso and Washington Avenue, that whole strip there. It's, it's, it's, it's incredible. It's, it's during rush hour in the mornings and the afternoons. It's, it's a four lane highway. People easily. I'm surprised you guys were clocking folks at 40. I've seen people drive their 5055, 60 miles an hour. No problem. I'm like, wow, yeah. So, so definitely, I think that's the street needs those calming measures, but then also more traffic like. Sites, or better crosswalks, or even a bridge, you know, get them off the street, get a bridge, you know, across where maybe Truman school is, or Adeline Street is, or West Street to get get folks off the street so they can cross a safely. But that that section is been a problem since I was a kid, and until, until the state and the city get together to calm that down, we're, unfortunately, we will be in rooms like this, until we can get our hands around this.

Tony Harris: Yeah, absolutely. Can I ask a clarifying question the drag racing that you've mentioned before, like, is that something that you're aware of that's still happening, or would you classify that as like a historical-

Jose DeJesus: No! It went from drag racing cars to now it's the street takeovers with the full the ATVs and the scooters and all of that stuff. And now it's not more drag racing, as opposed to them just do shutting down a block and they're doing donuts, and they're doing tricks, you know, making their cars slide. That it's less racing, because they have put in some of those, but it's more of that showboating street takeover, and it's a wide boulevard, so you can get a lot of folks in a relatively small footprint. You get a lot of cars, and a lot of vehicles.

Leslie Radcliffe; We do those do still have, on the weekends, the drag racing from Printers Lane all the way up to the Washington Avenue. Now, I think they've cut that off because it used to go over the bridge to Kimberly Avenue, and then if the police were there, they could just continue to go onto the highway with spotter cars in front to stop traffic. I mean, hold up traffic. Nobody can cross the boulevard while the races are going on. But since they put the Bollards in going over the Kimberley Avenue Bridge, the racetrack actually stops at around Washington avenues, the parking lot for the adult ed and printers lane, you know, that's where people park on both sides, even by the cemetery on the grass. You know, as they're watching the races or staging, you know, cars, but traffic is literally being shut down at the Columbus Avenue, route one, route 10, and then at route 10 and Washington Avenue, it's shut down. If you're not racing, you don't drive through there. And you know, you can hear, I live, oh, maybe 1234, blocks up, and I can hear when the races start, you know, inside my house, and as they go on, it's mostly the weekends and all that. But in addition to some of the things that that contribute, I think, to the the accidents, not just insufficient traffic crossing areas, designated traffic crossing areas, but also insufficient lighting. You know, at night time, it is a very dark stretch. Now you have businesses on one side that are closed, and on the other side is the cemetery, but you still have people crossing those areas because of the adult ed this church over there. And we have an an extremely high population of unhoused people, you know that will be going to Columbus Avenue and other places, not Columbus Avenue, the Columbus house and other places in that area. And the lighting, if you're not wearing reflective neon, you probably will not be seen. I have an adult brother that goes to work. He has to, he has to cross, you know. And I plead with him to make sure that he cross at the intersection. But the closest place is Adeline street, you know. And if you're going to go all the way down to the corner of Columbus Avenue, which is where the bus stop this, but even getting on and off the bus and trying to cross, there is it. You know you're taking your life in your hand. The light may be red on all sides for you to cross, but you have all these right turn lanes that individuals you know can and will turn on, even if the sign says no right turn. So there's infinite, insufficient lighting on the Ella Grasso that that section, the lack of the cross signals, you know, in places where people do cross, and also at that state intersection, I think there's two cross signals on corners, but the other two don't have them, you know, so you're out of luck there. And having the four lanes, actually there's a total of five lanes on each portion. Ella Grasso Boulevard at Columbus, five lanes. Columbus. Ella Grasso, five lanes. Ella Grasso, you. Know, in all four directions. At that intersection, there's a total of 20 lanes of traffic, and most times, all lanes are full, all lanes are full and all lanes are you know, because they're full. You now you have anxious drivers who are trying to get through it so they don't have to be held up at the light, so they're running yellow lights, they're running red lights. Heaven forbid you step off the curb while somebody's running a light or making a turn

where they shouldn't make a turn. It's one thing to put up a sign, but if people are not obeying the if drivers are not obeying the speed limit as well as you know the traffic signs, then, you know, there's, it's, it's a fatality, another fatality waiting to happen, you know. So I think, I mean, it may be inconvenient for drivers, but it will improve pedestrian safety. If we reduce the number of lanes. We've reduced them on the portion of Ella Grasso near the highway where the gentleman was killed, and we've reduced them on the Ella Grasso Kimberly, you know, to mitigate the drag racing, but that stretch of pedestrian travel area here has not received any traffic calming, you know, and and if you reduce them to two lanes, you know, you may have to wait a little bit longer, but you know, you adjust the timing with the with the with the lights for the cars, as well as you know, increase the timing for the people, with pedestrians. And with that happening, people may also start taking alternative routes, all right, because that is, that is the way coming down Ella Grasso Boulevard from Kimberly. That's how you come into the hill, or you continue on to go to route 34 to go out. But nobody gets off the highway to get on route 34 over there. So it's usually just a pass through, or you're coming into the hill. The other direction, it's to get onto the highway or to go to West Haven, you know. So, so the traffic patterns, you know, we we need to figure out how to reduce the volume, you know. We need to reduce the the volume and focus more on pedestrian safety. I love a good bike lane, but, you know, I'd rather have, you know, Mrs. Jones and her shopping cart and her two year old to be able to cross the street.

Tony Harris: Yeah, absolutely. Thank you for expanding on that that's really helpful to hear. And the I'm trying to picture Columbus and Ella T Grasso and the 20 lanes of traffic, it's interesting, when you were saying that and commenting on the anxiety of drivers, I know that's a theme that's come up in a lot of the past sessions we've done with people who are perfectly competent driving, right, saying that, like, oh, I avoid this area during certain times of day because I'm prone to panic when usually I'm a pretty composed person behind the wheel. Yeah. And so, how much more likely are you to run through lights or, you know, take that right turn on red, even if you see a sign that tells you not to take it.

Jose DeJesus: I just want to add, I think that area is just ripe for for multi level intervention. You know, the balance better. Crosswalks, lighting, speed camera, red light cameras. I think that area, it's prime. And also Leslie, not only folks coming into the hill. When you come to Yale, to the medical center, Yale, New Haven Hospital, and you're coming from New York, you to go into downtown, because a lot of that traffic route 34 is brutal. A lot of folks get off on Boulevard, go up to Columbus, take a ride on Columbus, and they're at the hospital. So it's a, it's a, it's definitely a shortcut through our our community. But there's, there's so that only, there's so many different folks going through there, and the folks that are being impacted the most are the pedestrians,

right?

Rishabh Mittal

I have a question, like, so there's, as you mentioned, Leslie, there's like Truman School, which is an elementary school like, so, so are there also like children who have to, like cross the street to get to the school. And

Leslie Radcliffe: no, we do not. We, for the most part, you will not find children, you know, unaccompanied in that area. They do not the children that go to Truman school you know, are on this side of the street, so there's not that type. Now, you do have the adult ed as well as some going to University of New Haven you know, that will travel that area, getting on the bus, some teenagers, some high school students, I believe, you know, also taking courses at the University. City, but we, we, when I say we, because I kind of take, you know, ownership of my community. We don't allow our children, you know, to go that far. There is a park now, however, on the corner of Washington and Ella Grasso Boulevard, McLean park, but it's usually the children on this side, you know where the residential area is, so there's not that much crossing up at that end. You will find it down at Kimberly Avenue, because that's where the fast food is. That's where McDonald's is, Dunkin Donuts, Popeyes, chicken and used to have a Dairy Queen down there, so there used to be a lot of traffic, but that's at that controlled intersection. Most of the times where you will see children is, you know, with adults going to the flea market and and it may, you know, be one parent with four children trying to wrangle them like chickens across all across the boulevard. And while you holding shopping bags?

Leslie Radcliffe: Yes, it's frightful to even watch, you know, it's like, I think there's a video game called Frogger, you know, and that's what it looks like sometimes. Except, you know, the the consequences are, are devastating. Um, I would just say, you know, I thank God. Out of all those names that we've read, you know, there have, there has not been a child. There was one individual, Shaniqua woods, she was actually speaking about, yeah, well, advocating for calmer traffic in the neighborhood where she lives, prior to her, you know, being struck by a vehicle in that area. So with, with her advocating in her neighborhood, I'm quite sure she was very familiar with what to do and what not to do's how to, you know, how to identify areas of potential, you know, accidents yet, you know, she still didn't make it across the street.

Tony Harris: Wow. Yeah, that's really striking. I mean, when you're an advocate and you're, you know, all the things so before, and you still can't, you know, survive making it across the street or navigating an area that's that's a big deal. Absolutely, any other thoughts on factors that we haven't identified so far, and if not, I might invite Rishabh to take us toward recommendations, and then we can kind of go Round Robin again, if that's okay.

Rishabh Mittal: uh, yeah. So I think that, as you said at North location, the state has implemented a quick demonstration project. I mean, I really like it. What they have done is rolled out and removed and Lane from side, even though it might seem like it is not, does do anything for pedestrian, but, I mean, it certainly reduces the crossing distance from 48 feet to 24 feet. This is a big improvement. If someone has to cross there, it's much easier to cross two lanes compared to four. It also improves traffic flow, I would say, comes to driver town, and reduces the urge to overtake and drive fast. So you have to wait behind if it's test crossing, or even if there's a vehicle turning into the cemetery, people have to yield and just makes for a calmer environment. The solution is simple and seems to work like for short term. I mean, the easiest solution for the South side would do something similar, near the flea market at the section between Columbus and Washington. I mean, and there are more options. So if, if we do a road diet, I mean something similar to not section is an idea for diet also provides us with some space to add other features, such as median. So as you can see here in the diagram, there's a median which kind of. It provides, like breaks the crossing into two stages. So you have to only cross one lane at a time, and then there's kind of a refuge in

the middle, and then you again cross the second lane. So, so yeah, this is providing, this really improves the mid block crossing species, and you have clear just cross one lane at a time. This also just frees up space for adding bike lanes if you want to with buffer. And I mean, and if not a low tide, I mean low tide requires the traffic volumes should allow for road diet, I guess. But if not a road diet, there's another possibility of right sizing the current lanes. So the current lanes are 12 feet wide, could probably reduce them to, let's say, 11 feet each, create a space of, like four feet, to add a meeting for pedestrian refuge against it, similarly, like this, you still have to cross two lanes at a time instead of four. So that is also a big improvement. And of course, I mean much more factors to be considered and stakeholders involvement, such as state, city, the community at large. But I mean, this is, I guess, just for inspiration here the options that I laid out and just a conversation starter. So yeah, that's how I see it.

Leslie Radcliffe: If I can ask the, what is the the, I guess, the distance for this option to, you know, what, what intersections are we talking about? It being, you know, reformatted to be, you know, one lane in each direction with the bike lanes, and then the, you know, the safety lanes. What intersections would that be proposed for, what stretch, what stretch of

Rishabh Mittal: land? I mean, I mean, of course, this requires the largest study, and this is just, just inspiration for inspiration, but I mean, there's space. So there is a space for 48 feet along even the south section the north section. So I mean, it could be implemented at larger section. But yeah, it requires much more, much more analysis, yeah,

Leslie Radcliffe: okay, thank you. My question was because of the you know that center space that's within the yellow boundaries, you know as that that is not a lane that cars would drive, or that is not a designated traffic lane, but if, if, if, yeah,

Rishabh Mittal: yeah. So, I mean, even in the center lane, there are, like boilers place, if you can see right, so which would kind of keep people from not driving

Leslie Radcliffe: at that at that crossing. But my question was for the rest of the area. yeah, yeah, okay,

Tony Harris: yeah, absolutely, and I know in my hometown, seeing like experimentation done with bollards to to limit areas where people are able to drive, I've seen it start on, like, almost a block by block basis, where they've like, started somewhere and gotten people used to it, and then expanded it and expanded it and expanded it until enough People get angry that they like, can't, can't speed down this road anymore. So that might be one way to think about it, too. Is like, how do we maybe begin in a smaller bite, whether it be like, I don't know, maybe between Adeline and printers or somewhere else along to cross the Boulevard to familiarize it with people.

Leslie Radcliffe: I think that that is a that, that is something that should be considered, because not only will it, it allow for a shorter distance, for people to be able to cross, but it will also help to reduce the amount of traffic, simply because you're only going to have one lane, so that the volume of vehicles you know, that you have to dodge is not going to be that great. I'm concerned about doing it in a gradual way, especially mid block. You know, if we were to do something like that in the middle section. Direction, you

know, and you'll catch people off guard or not knowing that they need to get into the right lane, you know, because the that left lane is going to run out. And we do see that on the Washington Avenue Boulevard going up the hill, you know, there, there are two lanes where you can go straight and knowing you could see the balance that's going to merge into one lane, but people will still be in that second lane, and then speed, you know, to get ahead of the car, something like that. If, if I were, if I were able to choose or make the decision, having the elder Grasso Boulevard is one lane in each direction, and then widen it to accommodate a left turn only at those intersections, and that incorporate that crossing At the Adeline Street area, you know, or even the adult ed is where the traffic light is, but it's the Adeline Street is the flea market, you know, just that section there where people tend to cross, and maybe not a signal light that stops the traffic, you know, On a regular basis, but at least for crossing, you know, it can stop the traffic if someone's there pushing the button to cross, you know, and and that's the only time that it's activated. But I truly believe, seeing how, how the reduction of traffic has, the reduction of lanes has improved on the north side of the boulevard, as well as the southern end towards Kimberly Avenue. That speaks volumes to me on how this can be addressed. It may be inconvenient for a while for the you know, for motor vehicles, but at what costs, you know, you can't put inconvenience on, on human life, you know, you just, you just can't. And another, I don't know how it's possible, but that's where, and I think we had talked about that a little bit, uh, Jose had brought it up with our communicating with city and state officials about, you know, doing, doing some work. And we're advised that, you know, because it's a state road, and we were on the plan, yeah, we were in the five year plan, you know, we, I think we make the two year plan. We were in the five year plan, though, with other measures that have already, you know, been done, but I don't see where that has happened, on that intersection of route one and route 10, because the city has no jurisdiction. I guess on that, that's where a lot of the delay is. We don't we're not we. We're not in a position. I'll say residents, you know, are not in the same position to communicate with our state legislation as we are with our local ones. So if there's even a deal that can be brokered where the city of New Haven, you know, becomes, I don't know what the term would be, but would become the somebody's got that word, you know, would would be the caretaker of that section to be able to quickly address, you know, pedestrian crossing traffic lights and things like that. Because it is, again, the residents of New Haven that are most affected by what's not working because of state delays?

Tony Harris: Absolutely. Yeah, well, put I'm thinking about an intersection nearby where I live, where there's a portion of a road that's under state control, and on either side of it, it's city control, right? Like as you're approaching downtown and as you're leaving downtown, there's this one segment that's under state control, and that, course, that's where crashes seem to continue to be happening, right? And getting changes made there has been difficult. So, yeah, ideal where the city of New Haven might be able to become like the caretaker or the maintenance ordinance, or like kind of maintenance provider for that intersection might be something to explore longer term to maybe even shorter term. Yeah, Jose, can I invite you to speak on any recommendations?

Jose DeJesus: Yeah, I think that's 12 just thinking here, in other situations where the state and the city have swapped properties for for highways, for schools. So it's not unprecedented for the state and the city to say, You know what, we're going to trade this parcel for that parcel, and you do the maintenance, and we'll do the maintenance. So I don't think it's would be out of the question to have our legalese find out how to do that. That would say from. On route 34 to i 95 new city, New Haven, now has jurisdiction to repair and, you

know, be kind of the authority over that Trump. So I don't think it's something that it hasn't been done in the city before. So I maybe not this specific about a state road or a section of State Road, but we definitely have seen land swaps in the past, so I don't think it's something that it would be out of control. And like I said, I think we definitely need a multi level intervention. It's one thing is not going to get us out of the woods. It's going to be all of this and then some other stuff that we haven't even thought of that somebody else may be in the audience, or some other office might have. Hey, this will help you also. So I don't think it's going to be one and done. I definitely think that you were going to have 456, 10 different measures to try to fix this issue, and I'm eager to work with whoever wants to do that here in the Hill.

Tony Harris: Thank you, Jose. Rishabh, did you have something you wanted to add? I saw you unmute,

Rishabh Mittal: yeah. I mean, I also just wanted to add that I don't think it is like cars versus pedestrians or anything like, I mean, as we, as we talked, even the cars are crashing, and everybody is a pedestrian at the end of the day, and everybody walks. So, so this would also reduce car crashes and and, I mean, whenever you are outside of your car, this would, this would help everybody. So, I mean, this is not like a car versus bikes or car versus pedestrians kind of scenario, and we are all in the same boat, and it could just improve, improve things for all of us. Yeah, that's, that's what I'd like to say. Yeah.

Tony Harris: Yeah, absolutely. And as I was thinking too, some of the things we had mentioned earlier with regards to like, signals and duration of timing for pedestrian crossings, I think some of those things could happen, like, really soon, right? Like people could go out and re time signals, re time traffic lights likely to the benefit of everybody on the road. So those might be like that, and then additional crosswalks or some other short term improvements might be possible. Too.

Tony Harris: Great anything else further in the way? Yeah, go ahead.

Rishabh Mittal: Yeah, yeah. And also, I think, for me, in these sessions, I mean, I think it's not just about the solutions, but also, like the approach you're taking, of like not gaining each other and, yeah, just kind of working together and understanding how and why people are behaving the way they are, and how can we change what design to increase compliance with the law and improve people lives? I think that that should be the main kind of takeaway, and not just the solutions.

Leslie Radcliffe: Absolutely, and I agree, because there, there is responsibility on, on, on both sides and and if we're able to, you know, change, you know, change the traffic behavior, we're able to change, you know, because that's, that's the one I think, that you can probably attend to easier. But when that change happens, so when that mindset set shifts, it makes it easier for you know, pedestrians to be able to, you know, navigate and you know, maybe not be so anxious. We're not, you know, they may not dash across the street here because, you know, there, there is another crosswalk with a signal, you know, that has better timing. So we're able to change, you know, the mindset of pedestrians and they too, will start taking more responsibility for their safety, either that or we're going to put a grandma on every curb. You know, tell kids don't run across the street without looking both ways.

Rishabh Mittal: Yeah, and the crossword you mentioned Leslie, and that crossword kind of does exist in front of the city hall. I mean, it works perfectly. So yeah, kind of do something similar there as well. Yeah.

Tony Harris: Yeah, absolutely, yeah. I was just looking back over the map myself. Anything further before we move into our closing section,

Leslie Radcliffe

I would just have a question of, you know, what, what? What are, what are next steps? You know, where do we go from here? What is it that that that? What is the expectation? I guess, what is it that we can expect after having this, this webinar, you know?

Tony Harris:

Yeah, that's a great question. That's a great question. So in keeping with what we've done after past sessions, I'm going to work on a draft report with inputs from Rishabh, inputs from the two of you, Leslie and Jose, if you have time to contribute. That would be great. We'll just kind of lay out, like the facts of the crash that we've looked at, the factors that we discussed today, and then some of the recommendations that we've put forth, kind of looking at immediate, near term, longer term, and then I think, kind of distributing that report out as like a conversation starter, with state officials, with local officials, potentially with advocates and other community organizers and people that might be able to help catalyze change sooner rather than later, could be a first step. Could be a first step in the right direction that I'm that I'm hopeful for. I know in some previous communities we've, we've had the good fortune of running these studio sessions right around the time that like re milling and repaving projects were scheduled to happen anyway, when we get lucky with timing like that, or fortunate with timing like that, sometimes our recommendations can get integrated into actual changes sooner rather than later. But I think at the very least we can be a conversation starter and help to kind of compile a lot of these disparate resources out there together. I think what Jose was saying about like, kind of a multi step or a multi layer intervention really resonates with me as I look at this area and I reflect on many of the things that you all have shared today or this evening, depending on your time zone. But yeah, that would be, that would be my response toward next steps. I think, okay, thank you. My pleasure. Okay, I'm going to go ahead and take us into a brief closing, pull up a PowerPoint one more time. Okay, so I'd like to offer a few acknowledgements and thanks to some different folks who have been involved as we've been getting prepared. So thank you to our panelists, of course, so Rishabh, Leslie and Jose, we really appreciate all of the time, energy, hard work you put into preparing for today and being here with us. So thank you, Rishabh and some of your colleagues and peers who've helped with information gathering, we really appreciate the time and energy you put into that component of preparation. And I'm sure there have been other community members who have helped out over the past couple of months too. So a big shout out to them, and a lot of appreciation for everyone who showed up to listen today, all of our participants. We know, you know, it's a time commitment, so thanks for coming out and listening in. I also like to offer some appreciation for the sponsor of the crash analysis Studio project, who is an anonymous donor, and offer a thank you to strong town staff who have helped put together a lot of the work that's led up to today. New Haven is looking to conduct one more studio this year. They anticipate that their third session is going to happen sometime in late summer or early autumn. You can keep an eye on the strongtowns.org website. We will post it there, and if you're a member, you'll receive emails about it too. You can reach out to the New Haven local conversation group, stronger Haven



through their social media channels. If you go on Instagram or Facebook and you search stronger Haven you'll find their group pretty quickly, but I'll keep these links available through the presentation that I'll post online as well, and you'll be able to find a recording of this session and all of our crash analysis studio sessions by going online to [strongtowns.org/crash studio](https://strongtowns.org/crash-studio), through our website, you can learn more about our Free Academy course for establishing a studio. You can request assistance from strong towns for conducting an in person or virtual studio. And of course, you can learn more about our upcoming sessions and events on behalf of my colleagues and our panel here today, thank you for watching this session of the crash analysis studio and keep doing what you can to build a strong town. Take care. Thank you.