



Transportation, Traffic & Parking

City of Stamford

888 Washington Blvd
Stamford, CT 06901

David Martin
Mayor

James Travers
Bureau Chief

TO: Transportation Committee
Valerie Rosenson

FROM: Jim Travers

DATE: August 28, 2017

RE: Ordinance concerning the use of mobile electronic devices by pedestrians

Honorable Members of the Transportation Committee,

I regret that I am unable to attend the August 31, 2017 meeting of the Transportation Committee to discuss the draft ordinance concerning the use of mobile devices by pedestrians due to a prior commitment.

As you are aware, Honolulu recently passed similar legislation that will go into effect October 25, 2017. While I share your concerns for pedestrian safety, it may be prudent to wait and see how the Honolulu legislation plays out before taking action. I believe that we can still move forward in addressing these concerns by incorporating these points into our Street Smarts Education Campaign rather than enacting legislation that not only would be difficult to enforce, but only targets one road user. With more people plugged into mobile devices, there is no doubt that distracted incidents are on the rise here in Stamford, as well as nationwide. However, we are also seeing the trend of more and more people who are choosing alternate ways to commute such as public transportation, biking, and walking, and I believe that we will be better suited to support these modes as preferable means of travel and through our education campaign, reinforce positive behaviors.

Two years ago, the Board of Representatives adopted Complete Streets legislation that calls for us to plan, design, operate, and maintain safe, convenient, and comfortable travel for all road users. Since that time we have been working on projects such as our Street Smarts campaign, our Bike and Pedestrian Plan, traffic signal optimization, and improving our intersections and roadways. This forward thinking approach will ultimately be what sets Stamford apart from other communities.

Walking is not only one of the best things that we can do to stay healthy, but more people walking and biking helps reduce congestion. I think that creating a cross-functional group of community partners that enables more residents and businesses to participate in reducing pedestrian and vehicle injuries should be the first approach to addressing this issue. A safety campaign may be something like, "Pick Your Head Up, Put Your Phone Down" or "Head Up, Phone Down", or the "LOOK" pavement markings that we are incorporating into the Summer Street improvements planned for Spring 2018. This safety campaign will allow us to continue to take action as we watch the results of the Honolulu legislation.

Again, my deepest regrets for not being able to attend the Transportation Committee meeting. I look forward to continuing to work with you on progressive practices that reduce distracted incidents.