



TOWN OF VERNON

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Construction Underway on Final Phase of Safe Routes to School Initiative

Program Encourages Children to Walk and Bicycle to Skinner Road School

(VERNON, Connecticut) – Construction is underway on the final phase of a multi-year effort to encourage students to walk and bike to school and to make the routes children take to school safer.

Much of the work is funded by the Safe Routes to School grant the Town of Vernon received several years ago which focused on Skinner Road School. Careful management of construction costs has allowed for additional improvements to the sidewalks that lead to Rockville High School.

“By being careful stewards of the taxpayers’ dollars, we are able to do more with this project than initially planned,” Vernon Mayor Dan Champagne said. “These sidewalk improvements will benefit everyone, but especially our community’s school children.”

The U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Highway Administration and the Connecticut Department of Transportation funded most of the grant. The Town of Vernon also completed some of the work.

“We know that physical activity, such as walking or biking to school, is beneficial for children,” Vernon Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph P. Macary said. “Being active helps students do better academically and have lower levels of stress. This work to improve routes to Skinner Road School will make them more accessible for children with disabilities and safer for all children.”

The final phase includes replacing existing asphalt sidewalk with concrete sidewalk in the following locations:

- Along Dart Hill Road west of Skinner Road toward the bridge over the Hockanum River.
- Along both sides of Route 83 from Regan and Dart Hill roads to the Loveland Hill Road intersection.
- Along the east side of Loveland Hill Road to the southern entrance to Rockville High School.

The bulk of the work is complete with crews now focused on the Loveland Hill Road portion of the project.

In locations where the sidewalk intersects a driveway, a concrete driveway apron will be installed.

Other improvements under the grant have included reconfiguring the Skinner Road School parking lot, a new walking path on school grounds, a walking path connecting Hayes Drive with Barbara Drive, improved crosswalks and signage along Skinner Road, all of which were completed by Vernon Public Works Department crews.

“The improvements around Skinner Road School have been years in the making and it’s gratifying to see that we are entering the final stage,” Vernon Town Administrator Michael Purcaro said. “There was tremendous collaboration among school, town officials and community stakeholders, who saw the benefits the Safe Routes to School program would bring and then worked together to make it a reality.”

The Safe Routes to School initiative’s goals include: reducing childhood obesity and getting children physically active by walking or riding bicycles to school, making the routes children take to reach school safer and more pedestrian-friendly, and reducing congestion and air pollution by having fewer children driven to school.

The contractor selected for the sidewalk work is Wiese Construction of Norwich. The cost of the project is approximately \$500,000.00. Milone and MacBroom consultants of Cheshire prepared the specifications and plans and will inspect the work.

About the Town of Vernon

The Town of Vernon is a celebrated place to live, work and visit. From its beautiful parks and lakes, to its vast trails and historic homes and buildings, Vernon is a resilient and thriving community that promotes the health and wellbeing of its residents and values the natural environment. With a resident population of approximately 30,000 and occupying 18.03 square miles, Vernon combines a balanced appreciation of history, and a strong economic base for growth, both residential and commercial. Located 15 minutes east of the Connecticut capital of Hartford, and 25 miles from the City of Springfield, Massachusetts, the Town of Vernon is strategically located in “New England's Knowledge Corridor” with close proximity to some of the top colleges and universities in the country.

Recently designated as a certified Sustainable Community, the Town of Vernon offers a wide range of benefits and services to its residents. The Town of Vernon is a full-service municipality that practices a management philosophy of continuous quality improvement. To learn more about the Town of Vernon, please call (860) 870-3670 or visit www.vernon-ct.gov.

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