

Norwalk police roll out electric mountain bikes

By Leslie Lake



Photo: Bob Luckey Jr. / Hearst Connecticut Media

Norwalk Police officer Max Sixto poses with two Pedego electric bikes that were donated to the Norwalk Police Department in a collaboration by Norwalk agencies at Norwalk Police Department Headquarters, Conn., ... more

NORWALK — In a collaboration between city agencies, a donation of the funds to purchase two electric mountain bikes for the Norwalk Police Department was seen by stakeholders as a way to enhance safety and the level

of community engagement between police and South Norwalk residents.

The bikes, Pedego Ridge Rider electric models, will be used primarily by Community Policing officers. There are currently 30 Norwalk police officers who are bike-certified.

“These bikes will allow officers to get to emergencies faster and to expand areas of patrol,” said Norwalk police Lt. Terry Blake. “The level of community engagement is invaluable.”

The two mountain bikes are “top of the line,” Mike Heslin of Pedego said. Coming with a price tag of \$3,800 each, the bikes reach speeds of 25 mph and have a twist throttle to allow the officer to alternate between pedaling as a regular bike or using the “pedal assist.”

“The bikes will allow better community outreach,” Heslin said. “This will help to enhance the future of Norwalk as a biking community.”

Community Policing Officer Max Sixto was one of several officers who tested out various bikes before settling on this model.

“This bike is really great,” he said.

The funding for the bikes was part of a \$30 million Choice Neighborhoods grant, according to Tom Ivers, director of Choice Neighborhoods Initiative.

“The Housing Authority applied jointly (for the grant) with the Redevelopment Agency,” Ivers said. “There is a \$150 million investment in the Choice Neighborhoods program for Washington Village. We want the neighborhoods to be safe and community policing is an integral part of this.”

Ivers, Norwalk Redevelopment Agency Director Tim Sheehan; Norwalk Housing Authority (NHA) Commissioner Brenda Penn-Williams, NHA Chairman Cesar Ramirez, NHA Deputy Director Candace Meyer and Norwalk Police Chief Thomas Kulhawik were on hand Friday morning for the

presentation of the check at police headquarters.

“Thank you Tim (Sheehan) and Tom (Ivers) for including us in the grant,” Kulhawik said.

“On behalf of the Norwalk Housing Authority, I’m proud to present the checks to pay for the two bikes,” Ramirez, also a Norwalk police officer, said. “The leadership of the (police) department has demonstrated a commitment to reach out to the community. This is one of the best channels.”

Penn-Williams noted that the bikes are sure to be a hit with the children in the community.

“It’s a wonderful thing to get involved with the community,” she said. “The kids are going to love those bikes.”

“It’s all about community,” agreed Meyers. “Visibility and community engagement are important to the area.”

Meyers said she’s excited about the transformation of South Norwalk — something she’s been working on since 2008.

“People that have lived here for decades will be part of the new South Norwalk,” she said.