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New NVCC bus shelter, sidewalk celebrated by Waterbury officials

BY MICHAEL PUFFER
REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

WATERBURY — Several prominent city leaders gathered along Chase Parkway by Naugatuck Valley Community College on Tuesday to celebrate 600 feet of new sidewalk and a new bus shelter.

The shelter is clean and crisp. Mayor Neil M. O’Leary joked it must be the finest in the city.

And the stretch of concrete sidewalk running along the roadway in front of the college will make things much safer for students and other pedestrians passing by a portion of the college.

The project marks the first time city workers have built city infrastructure using money from a non-city entity — the college. It’s also the first time the city’s public works department has attempted a construction project nearly this ambitious, officials say.

On Tuesday, officials gathered for speeches, then cut a green and blue ribbon at one end of the bus shelter. After that, they used flat-head



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A young man gets on a city bus by a new shelter and sidewalk along Chase Parkway in front of Naugatuck Valley Community College.

shovels to turn some earth for a “ground-breaking” for the sidewalk.

Normally, for a sidewalk project this large, the city would hire a private contractor. Officials say this new method, in this case, saved time and money. How much money was not available Tuesday. O’Leary, speaking at the ceremony, said it was the fastest project turnaround he has seen in three years as mayor and 30 more with city police.

“If we were to do this the typical way, we would prob-

ably be standing here three years from now,” O’Leary said.

Student Government Association President Iralis De Jesus, who helped lobby for the project last year, said she’s happy to see it open before graduation. Before, students crossing campus along the street would sometimes feel the wind of passing cars, she said.

Saint Mary’s Hospital paid \$9,700 for the materials for the bus shelter. NVCC maintenance staff put it together.

Many NVCC students

travel to Saint Mary’s for care or to train for jobs, Saint Mary’s Health System President and CEO Chad W. Wable said. The college supplies about 80 percent of Saint Mary’s nursing staff, he said. He also touted NVCC’s efforts to extend the city’s public bus hours into the evening.

“This is really about community partnerships and investing in our future,” Wable said.

The state college system came through with \$125,000 for construction of a sidewalk through campus. Interim City Public Works Director David Simpson said about \$50,000 has been used so far, including labor costs. Enough money remains to carry the sidewalk further east, almost to where Chase Parkway meets West Main Street by an overpass of Interstate 84 — about another 1,100 feet, Simpson said.

Eventually, city and college officials would like to see a sidewalk extend all the way to meet one that stops just before Park Road, near a CVS Pharmacy on West Main Street.

SGA's Lobbying for New Sidewalks Along Chase Parkway Pays Off

Saint Mary's Hospital, City of Waterbury Enhance Transit Link to NVCC Campus



WATERBURY, Conn. – Naugatuck Valley Community College hosted a dual ribbon-cutting/groundbreaking ceremony on Tuesday, May 12 to celebrate additional enhancements to the #42 CTTransit Chase Parkway bus line that serves the College, made possible by a generous sponsorship from Saint Mary's Hospital and a partnership with the City of Waterbury.

The hospital has funded the purchase of a new bus shelter along Chase Parkway. The City and College are splitting the cost of new sidewalks, which will run from the College's west entrance to the east property line near the I-84 overpass.

"We are thrilled that we've found a way to enhance this vital transportation link to campus—even in this time of fiscal challenges," said NVCC President Daisy Cocco De Filippis, Ph.D. "This just adds to the mobility momentum that began nearly four years ago when we stood side-by-side with the City and our legislative delegation in Hartford to return evening bus service to campus and the City."

"Saint Mary's and NVCC are both economic engines for Waterbury and better access to bus service will only make our community stronger," said Waterbury Mayor Neil M. O'Leary. "Adding a new bus shelter to the sidewalks the City is building is just icing on the cake."

"Saint Mary's enjoys a great relationship with NVCC and many of their students train here at Saint Mary's and go on to become members of our staff. We are pleased to improve bus service for NVCC students and local residents alike," said Chad W. Wable, President and CEO of Saint Mary's Hospital. "This is a win-win-win for the College, the City and the hospital."

Members of NVCC's Student Government Association led an all-campus walk for the sidewalk project last fall.