STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #4

Meeting Minutes

Time: Wednesday, June 14th, 2017 at 9:00 AM
Location: Connecticut Department of Transportation Training Center, Classroom #3, 2780 Berlin Turnpike, Newington, CT 06111

Attendees

Name	Affiliation
Ken Shooshan-Stoller	FHWA
Bruce Donald	East Coast Greenway Alliance (ECGA); CT Greenways Council (CGC)
Anna Stokes	Bike Walk Connecticut
Joe Balskus	CT Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board (CT BPAB)
James Kulpa	VHB
Eugene Nichols	Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH); Nutrition and Physical Activity Program
Dan McGuinness	Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area Bike Committee
Ray Rauth	Sound Cyclists Bicycle Club; Weston Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee; CT Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board (CT BPAB)
Neil Pade	CT Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board (CT BPAB)
Sandy Fry	City of Hartford
Francis Pickering	WestCOG
Eric Sanderson	NECCOG
Sam Gold	RiverCOG
Nate Hougrand	RiverCOG
Emily Hultquist	CRCOG
Tim Malone	CRCOG
Stephen Dudley	SCRCOG
Kate Rattan	SECCOG
Ben Muller	NVCOG
Anna Bergeron	CTDOT
Marlon Pena	CTDOT
Matt Blume	CTDOT
David Elder	CTDOT
Will Britnell	CTDOT Highway Design
Kerry Ross	CTDOT, Policy and Planning – Crash Data and Analysis
Roxane Fromson	CTDOT, RPO Coordination
Grayson Wright	CTDOT, RPO Coordination
Sara Radacsi	CTDOT, RPO Coordination
Marcy Miller	Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.
Parker Sorenson	Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.

Mary Miltimore	Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.

Introduction and Presentation Overview

*The agenda and presentation for this meeting can be viewed at the following link: http://www.ctbikepedplan.org/meeting_materials.html

Anna Bergeron, the Project Manager at the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) for this planning effort, welcomed attendees to the meeting and for their participation in the Steering Committee throughout the Plan Update. She then introduced Marcy Miller, the Project Manager at Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. (FHI), which is the consultant for this project.

Marcy Miller gave a presentation that began with a review of the October 2016 Steering Committee meeting that focused on the Draft Bicycle Network. At this meeting attendees were asked to provide comments on both the methodology that was used to develop the network as well as to help identify routes for various network segments. Marcy also provided a summary of the feedback and discussion that the project team received during four public meetings that occurred in November 2016.

Marcy presented an update on the development of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update. She explained that the project team has worked on revising the statewide bicycle network and updating the goals and action strategies to reflect the input received during both the previous Steering Committee meeting and the four Public Meetings.

Parker Sorenson next explained how the Draft Bicycle Network was updated in more detail. He highlighted key routes that had been added and stated why others had not been incorporated.

Marcy then reviewed the planning 'hierarchy' for the Plan Update, including a description of the purpose of each of the items in that hierarchy as follows:

- Project mission – why are we doing this?
- Vision – what do we want to be?
- Goals – what must we achieve to realize the vision?
- Action strategies – how will we get there?
- Implementation options – what specific things can we do?

She then described each of these planning items in more detail as they specifically related to this Plan Update, including a review of the goals, which have been updated and refined since the previous Committee meeting.

Next, Marcy explained the following process that will take place before the Plan Update is finalized and adopted.

- Summer 2017:
  - CTDOT will complete the review of the Plan Update and the project team will update accordingly (June)
  - Steering Committee to review the Plan Update (July)
  - All comments on the Plan Update will be due (August)
- Fall 2017
  - Plan Update will be revised in accordance with input
  - Plan Update adopted by CTDOT

Marcy stated that in response to input the project team received during from the Steering Committee and other stakeholder meetings, the project team has sought to develop an online map that can complement the Rail Trail Explorer resource developed by the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (CT DEEP). Marcy asked for input as to

what to include on this online map and emphasized the importance of identifying who the end user should be.

Marcy then explained that a new phase of this project has been developed during which the project team will build upon the work that has been done to identify the Draft Bicycle Network and perform a Network Analysis. The results of this analysis will be (1) to identify which areas in the network are problematic and need improvements, and (2) to develop specific design guidelines that are specific to Connecticut and that can be applied to various areas of the bicycle network. The next steps will include more extensive data collection on the conditions along the network, a safety analysis and additional coordination with the regions and key stakeholders.

The project team asked for input throughout the presentation and the following bullets summarize the major points of discussion.

Discussion

Draft Bicycle Network

- An attendee asked about the methodology for identifying non-passable state routes for inclusion in the draft network.
    - Parker explained that certain segments were identified if there was no viable alternative but there was a need for a connection in that vicinity. Marcy added that the identification of these segments can be reviewed as a case-by-case basis to reach a consensus as to whether they should be included in the network.
- An attendee suggested that the draft bicycle map should incorporate transit information, including bus stops and train stations.
    - Marcy explained that transit nodes were incorporated into the methodology used to define the network.
- An attendee stated that it should be clarified that the route shown in the statewide network are not exclusive of routes included in local networks.
    - Marcy emphasized that the draft bicycle network is not all inclusive and that the hope is that regions and municipalities will develop local routes off of the statewide network that best serve their communities.
    - The bicycle network is intended to be used by CTDOT as they determine which state roads should be prioritized for bicycle improvements.
- An attendee asked whether it has been verified that the routes identified in the draft bicycle network are safe for bicyclists.
    - Marcy emphasized that the network is focused on desired lines of connectivity. Some routes are not currently suitable for bicyclists but people wish that it was suitable so improvements to this route should be prioritized going forward.
- An attendee asked why pedestrians weren't also being considered in the mapping effort since this is a Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and Map.
    - Connecticut is a complete streets state so the ultimate goal is that every state road will be appropriate and user friendly for all modes, including pedestrians.
    - However, due to the limited of funding, it is necessary to prioritize what improvements will be made first. Defining a bicycle network will provide the state with that guidance while also defining improvements that are achievable

within the next 5 – 10 years. This kind of incremental progress is necessary to improve conditions for both bicyclists and pedestrians across the state.

    - Marcy emphasized that there is overlap between corridors that bicyclist and pedestrians prefer to travel upon. In these cases, both bicyclists and pedestrians will benefit when improvements are made.

- Ray Rauth emphasized the importance of Route 1 along Connecticut's coast for bicyclists because it's the only realistic route along which to ride across the state. He understands that there are areas that present safety challenges, such as those around interchanges, but there is the potential to identify alternate routes when necessary.
    - Bruce Donald stated that Route 1 is also the on-road route that has been identified for much of the East Coast Greenway in Connecticut. He recognized that improvements for pieces of this route might take time but agreed that it's an important connection between Connecticut's communities.

Goals, Action Strategies, and Implementation Options

- An attendee asked whether the development of this Plan has been coordinated with other agencies at the statewide level. The attendee suggested that effort should be made to coordinate with organizations that maintain and develop utilities to explore the potential to coordinate bicycle and pedestrian improvements with their work schedule.

    - Marcy stated that representatives from other statewide organizations, such as the CT DEEP, are on the Steering Committee. The project team can further explore the potential for additional outreach with other agencies with CTDOT.

    - An attendee added that CT DEEP is in the process of updating their Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) so it is an ideal time to coordinate with them on this Plan Update.

- In regards to the updated goals and action strategies, attendees noted that economic vitality and encourage equitable access to transportation should be re-incorporated into the goals.

- An attendee questioned whether complete streets is referenced in the goals.

    - Marcy stated that complete streets is included in various sections throughout the Plan Update, including the goals and action strategies.

- Attendees recognize the value of the Plan Update and Draft Bicycle Network but are unclear how the action strategies will be implemented.

    - Marcy emphasized that as the Plan Update transitions to a new phase of work, FHI will analyze the draft bicycle network in detail to understand where and what the issues are and to develop Connecticut-specific design guidelines for various network areas. These guidelines will be incorporated into the state highway guidebook.

- In response to a question about who will formally adopt the Plan Update, Anna Bergeron explained the following process:

- The Plan Update is currently being reviewed by CTDOT, after which it will be updated accordingly and made publicly available. During that time, the Steering Committee will be asked to provide their review.

- After the Plan Update has been updated according to this input, it will be adopted by CTDOT. It is expected that the Plan Update will be utilized as a guiding document by the Department for the next 5-8 years.

Online Network

Online Map as a resource for the public

- Sam Gold stated that the online map should not duplicate the mapping information that Google already provides and that many people use.

    - Bruce Donald stated that Google's bicycle route information is still in beta and is often inaccurate. He stated that the information that Google provides should not be a reason to not develop an online map that can be used as a resource.

- An attendee pointed out that it will be important for the online map to clearly explain that planned routes might be unsuitable for bicyclists in their existing condition.

- Kate Rattan suggested that CTDOT should coordinate with CT's Office of Tourism to develop an online map that is a tool for visitors. She emphasized the number of people who visit CT to ride recreational bicycle routes. Kate also suggested that innovative technology such as crowdsourcing data could be used to keep the content up to date.

    - Marcy clarified that the Draft Bicycle Network map is not intended to be a static piece of information. She stated that FHI has been scoped to keep this map up to date over the next five years. In addition, Marcy stated that crowdsourcing could be problematic since it would be difficult to track the data sources and confirm their viability. This would create legal challenges for CTDOT since the online map will be a resource provided by CTDOT.

- Roxane Fromson stated that CTDOT already compiles an inventory of all modes in the existing transportation system, including bicycling and walking.

- Emily Hultquist suggested that CTDOT could coordinate with Google to update the map they currently have of existing bicycle routes. CTDOT could provide Google with information to update that map instead of duplicating their efforts.

Online Map as a planning tool

- Roxane Fromson stated that it's important that the online map will be able to be utilized as a planning tool and to identify routes that are being planned in the future. She pointed out that it is especially important to identify future routes so that the online map can be referenced in applications for grants or other funding sources.

- Francis Pickering stated that the online map could be a useful resource for municipalities as a planning tool since it will provide information on future routes and allow cities and towns to develop local bicycle networks that build on those future routes. Francis also suggested that a process should be developed to officially sanction local bicycle routes and include them on the online map.

    - Marcy stated that such an effort would require a standardization of terminology and other information since communities often use different naming conventions.

- Sandy Fry stated that she found the online Bicycle Suitability Map that was developed as part of the previous Plan in 2009 to be very useful as a planning tool. It would be beneficial if this Plan Update continued with that progression.

- Tim Malone stated that the online map could provide an opportunity for interactive progress reports in that it would highlight when routes went from design to construction and so on.

Data to include in the online map

- Sam Gold suggested that cross-state hiking trails should be considered for inclusion on the online map. This would be a way to incorporate pedestrian-relevant information. Sam also stated that the Connecticut Forest & Park Association (CFA) already has an online map of this data and CTDOT could coordinate with them to incorporate that information.

- Francis Pickering stated that people would like visit this online map and the CFA's online map for different reasons so there is a valid reason for both to exist as two separate things.

Data collection and sharing for the online map

- Sam Gold stated that there should be a process by which regions and municipalities can provide updated information with which to keep the map as current as possible. He stated that this would allow the map to include more detailed data and that it would be especially important when localities perform corridor studies on state routes. He emphasized how important it is that local communities are provided with an opportunity to share results of that work and make sure it is reflected in work being done at a statewide level.

    - Marcy emphasized that the development of this Plan Update, the Draft Bicycle Network, and the online map have all been collaborative efforts in which CTDOT has worked with the regions and municipalities. There has been an effort to avoid a 'top-down approach' in regards to the process.

- Sam Gold suggested that the online map should be capable of 'zooming' in to each town or city on a local scale. The map would be especially useful for municipalities if their planning departments could utilize it at a local scale and layer on their planning department's data, such as zoning or special districts.

- Sam Gold asked whether the GIS files used to create the online map will be shared with the regions and municipalities.

    - Marcy stated that that is something that will be discussed within CTDOT and that no decision has been reached at this time.

<u>Additional Comments</u>

- Ray Rauth emphasized the importance of expediting the development an updated Highway Design Manual for Connecticut. He is concerned that if this effort is not

completed before a new administration is elected to the governor's office, it might not be updated at all.

  - Will Britnell acknowledged that while the updated Highway Design Manual has been in development for some time, he expects that it will be completed in the next 6-12 months.

- Sandy Fry emphasized that the Plan Update needs to clearly state that every transportation project in Connecticut is an opportunity for a complete streets improvement. She stated her concern that targeting certain priority segments along the Network will prevent the rest of the state's transportation system to be considered for bicycle or pedestrian improvements.

Next Steps

This is the fourth and final Steering Committee meeting for the development of the Plan Update but all committee members will be contact once the Draft Plan Update is available for review, which will be in July 2017. Committee members will be provided with instructions on how to submit their comments and a deadline by which to do so. These comments will be incorporated into the Plan Update before it's finalized and adopted by CTDOT in the fall of 2017.

The project team thanks the Committee members for their contributions and participation throughout this planning effort. Their insights and guidance has been invaluable and are deeply appreciated.