



CT Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update Steering Committee Meeting #3

September 23, 2008

*10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
ConnDOT Room G300*

Attendees:

Sandy Fry – Capitol Region Council of Governments
Mark Paquette – Windham Region Council of Governments
Dan McGuinness – Northwestern Connecticut Council of Governments
Mark Nielson – Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency
Ray Rauth – Sound Cyclists Bicycle Club
Sam Gold – Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley
Alex Karman – South Western Regional Planning Agency
Francis Pickering – Central CT Regional Planning Agency
Jim Larkin – Northeastern CT Council of Governments
Charlie Beristain – Central CT Bicycle Alliance
Laurie Giannotti – DEP, Parks
David Balzer – Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT)
Sharon Okoye – ConnDOT
David Fabry – ConnDOT Traffic
Ken Livingston – Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. (FHI)
Marcy Miller – FHI
Jeff Olson – Alta Planning + Design
Joshua Poppel – Alta Planning + Design

Meeting Summary:

Welcome / Introductions

Ken Livingston, of FHI, welcomed everyone and each participant then introduced him or herself.

Work Update

Ken first provided a work update on the goals and action strategies. After the June Steering Committee (SC) meeting, the study team revised the goals which were then reviewed by select managers at ConnDOT. The resulting changes were emailed to the SC two weeks ago for

additional comment. There were concerns about the soft language of the goals. The SC would like to see fewer tentative words such as “encourage, support, identify, and promote”, and more proactive words such as “implement”. Mark Nielson stated that while bicycle and pedestrian safety is important, he does not believe ConnDOT is trying to make traveling safer for bicyclists and pedestrian. Sandy Fry questioned whether the SC was wasting their time, and asked for some assurance that ConnDOT is committed to the importance of bicycle and pedestrian access.

Carmine Trotta stated that the goals were revised by ConnDOT based on concerns with whether the goals would be attainable/implementable and/or the responsibilities were under the auspices of the Department. He stated that the study team may revise the goals again based on the SC input and public outreach in October. These goals will be reviewed by ConnDOT management, noting the SC comments and concerns. There was a question regarding who has reviewed the goals and action strategies to date. Carmine answered that Ned Hurle and Charlie Barone, as well as representatives from the ConnDOT internal study team (such as the office of the State Traffic Commission) have reviewed the goals. When asked if the Commissioner would review the goals before the draft publication, Carmine stated that historically the Commissioner has reviewed similar planning documents prior to the draft publication, but as there is a new Commissioner, he could not state how the review process would be carried out. Dan McGuinness suggested that the SC should request a meeting with the Commissioner or with Charles Barone. Carmine suggested that a meeting with the Commissioner would not be appropriate at this time.

There were suggestions that the goals and action strategies should include sustainability and there should be ConnDOT and DEP coordination.

Joshua Poppel, of Alta Planning, next provided a summary of the benchmarking review. Currently, the seven states’ questionnaires and interviews are complete. The study team is in the process of preparing the draft memorandum, which will be distributed to the SC shortly thereafter. Sam Gold questioned other states’ mapping efforts, their purposes, and inclusion of local routes.

Ken next discussed the draft bicycle suitability map. He described the methodology and the Bicycle Subcommittee’s response to the analysis. There was a question whether this new type of map would include multiuse trails. Ken answered that yes, it would include major multiuse trails, such as the Farmington Canal and Airline Trails that serve a dual recreation and transportation purpose. There were comments about map details such as the thickness of the unsuitable roadways. In addition, there were questions about what unsuitable roads meant in terms of needing improvements and funding. Ken responded that it would be up to ConnDOT and the RPAs to infer that an area of roadway labeled as unsuitable was in need of improvements. This depends on a variety of factors, such as bicycle demand and other needs in the area. Finally, it was suggested that the map be enlarged for each respective area for the public meetings.

Marcy next discussed the crash data. She presented five years of vehicle pedestrian crash data. Crashes were largely in more urban areas. There was a question about the source data and if age of pedestrian was available. The source data that was used for the map does not have this, though there is a breakdown by age in another database. In addition, Marcy presented

the percentage of State Transportation Improvement funds that were directed to bicycle and pedestrian projects. It was noted that many of the projects were Congressional Earmarks. It was also noted that the funding information represents bicycle and pedestrian stand alone initiatives, and does not include funds spent to construct such facilities as part of larger transportation projects.

Public Outreach

Ken and Marcy described the upcoming public meetings. They stated that a press release has been distributed to ConnDOT's press office and the meeting dates are posted on the ConnDOT website calendar. A copy of the press release was transmitted to the committee members for their distribution. If RPAs would like to distribute it as well, the study team would greatly appreciate it. The team has recently met with Central CT Bicycle Alliance, Farmington Valley Trail Council, and CT Greenways Council about their Plan and Map Update concerns. Marcy plans to attend an Elm City Cycling Board meeting in October as well. In addition, the most recent newsletter is available online, at today's meeting, and has been sent to the entire contact list.

Ken adjourned the meeting. The SC will meet again in December 2008.