



CT Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update Steering Committee Meeting #4

Tuesday, December 16, 2008

*10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
ConnDOT*

Meeting Summary

Attendees:

Sandy Fry – Capitol Region Council of Governments
Mark Paquette – Windham Region Council of Governments
Dan McGuinness – Northwestern Connecticut Council of Governments
Robert Haramut – Midstate Regional Planning Agency
Mark Nielson – Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency
Dave Elder – Valley Council of Governments
Dick Guggenheim – Southeastern Council of Governments
Francis Pickering – Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency
Melon Wedick – Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency
Ray Rauth – Sound Cyclists Bicycle Club
Sam Gold – Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley
Joe Perrelli - Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley
Alex Karmen – Southwestern CT Regional Planning Agency
Janice Ehlemeyer – Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency
Jean Davies – Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency
Mary McCarthy – UConn – CTI
Laurie Gainnotti - DEP
Jim Larkin – Northeast CT Council of Governments
Diane Ciano – CT Horse Council
Meg Sauttler – CT Horse Council
Jan Collins – CT Horse Council
David Balzer – Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT)
Ken Livingston – Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. (FHI)
Marcy Miller – FHI

Welcome / Introductions

Ken welcomed the attendees and everyone introduced him or herself.

Goals and Action Strategies

Ken distributed a revised goals and action strategies. He stated that, based on the November meeting between Charles Barone and members of the Steering Committee, ConnDOT had revised much of the language to be more proactive. The members of the Steering Committee overall thought the changes were an improvement. However, there were additional suggested changes, including:

- There should be an implementation measure that outlines how often a review of the Plan and Map will occur.
- There should be a self-governing advisory committee that is more autonomous than other ConnDOT committees. This committee could call its own meetings to review the implementation strategies and other items in the Plan.
- The term, "and federal government initiatives" should be added to the end of Goal 6.
- There were concerns with the second sentence of the introductory paragraph, that it is much too broad to initiate change within ConnDOT. This statement has to be very explicit as to what the exceptions are. The phrase, "whenever possible", should be removed from the second sentence of this paragraph.
- Equestrians should be added the Action Strategy 5.2, number 2.

Equestrian Needs

Ken stated that the Plan will provide information on sharing trails and roadway with equestrians. This is a concern among equestrians that has been raised at public meetings and through the website comment area. Diane Ciano and other member of the CT Horse Council provided pamphlets with information on these issues. In addition, Diane stated that equestrians often need to ride on state roadways to move between various state parks or riding areas. These connections, and providing facilities for horses on them, is a very important factor to consider in the Plan. Jean Davies agreed, stating in the past the CT Estuary RPA looked for policy or guidance information on providing facility accommodations for horses and has limited success in obtaining guidance on incorporating horse facilities into roadway improvement projects. There was an ensuing discussion on overall connection needs and priorities for horse facilities across the state. Many of the more rural focused RPA's stated there was limited, readily available information on the needs of equestrian users throughout the state. Laurie Gainnotti stated that the need for a statewide review of equestrian connections is something that DEP could look into and there may be funding to complete such a study of equestrian needs.

Ken also stated there will be a panel on the back of the map that provides information on how bicyclists and motorists should pass horses on the roadway and trails.

Other Plan Items

There was a suggestion to include a glossary of terms in the Plan. Ken stated that the Draft Benchmarking Review is completed. He will email copies to the Steering Committee.

Statewide Bicycle Map

Ken summarized the public and Steering Committee comments received on the suitability analysis. He then presented a revised suitability map. He noted that changes / new additions to the map include a completely revised suitability to account for fewer roads marked as yellow. He noted that much work has been done on the back of the map. Members of the Steering Committee generally liked the look of the back of the map but had some suggested improvements. These included:

- The figures in the Safety/Rules of the Road (signals) section need to be revised. Currently, one cannot tell if they are of the front or back of a bicyclist.
- Include a panel on the Greenways license plate.
- Include information on the CT River Ferry Crossing.
- The best way to verify the information on the state parks table is to check each park and its uses on the DEP website.
- The state parks table should include a column for equestrian use.

ConnDOT Design Review Process

Ken distributed design guidelines and forms related to assessing potential needs for bicycle and pedestrian travel on ConnDOT projects. Included within the guidelines is a form that assesses the bicycle and pedestrian travel and needs in a project area. Project managers are to complete this questionnaire in the preliminary design phase of a project. Both a completed questionnaire and an blank questionnaire were distributed.

There were a number of questions about the questionnaire. Many on the Steering Committee felt it was a good tool, yet had never seen or heard of this before, nor been consulted on the completion of the form. David Balzer stated that it was developed almost two years ago with the intent to raise the profile of bicycle and pedestrian travel needs. Once completed, this becomes part of the project file. David noted that he also does not see these as they are completed, though he is sometimes consulted by Project Managers as they complete the form.

There were suggestions to improve the questionnaire. First, the questionnaire should have a conclusion or a final recommendation. This should not be used as an excuse to not build sidewalks or bicycle facilities when constructing projects. The bicycle suitability map, once completed, could be referred to in the checklist. In addition, in the checklist of organizations, the Connecticut Bicycle Coalition should be changed to Advocacy Organizations. Perhaps a list of the four or five largest in the state can be included here.

Adjourn

Ken thanked everyone for attending the meeting and stated that the next meeting would likely occur in late-February or early-March. The team plans to work on much of the draft document between now and then.