



PUBLIC MEETING #2: Meeting Summary

Meeting Location and Time

Date and Time: Tuesday, November 15th at 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Location: New Haven Free Public Library – Ives Main Library, 133 Elm St, New Haven

Introduction and Presentation Overview

Anna Bergeron, the Project Manager for this project at CTDOT, welcomed meeting attendees and provided a brief overview of the project, including its background, purpose, and team. Anna then introduced Marcy Miller, the Consultant Team Project manager. Marcy asked attendees to introduce themselves before beginning the presentation.

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

During the presentation, Marcy covered the following key ideas:

- Purpose of the Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and Map Update (2017 Plan Update)
- Statewide progress in bicycling and walking efforts since 2009
- Public outreach efforts for the 2017 Plan Update
- Updated vision, mission, goals, and action strategies
- Data collection for development of Draft Bicycle Network Map
- Methodology for development of Draft Bicycle Network Map
- Draft Bicycle Network Map
- Action strategies
- Next steps

Marcy stated that a key objective of this meeting is to gather feedback and input on both the Draft Bicycle Network and the action strategies for the 2017 Plan Update before opening up the meeting for questions and comments. The following bullets summarize the major points of discussion.

Discussion

Draft Bicycle Network

Connections

- Attendees expressed a positive reaction to the methodology behind the creation of the Draft Bicycle Network, which was based on creating connections between destinations of statewide significance.

- An attendee stated that Draft Bicycle Network should include enough locations where bicyclists can cross rivers, such as the Connecticut River, when travelling east or west. There are a limited number of bridges but improvements can be made.
- An attendee stated his opinion that if the Draft Bicycle Network is primarily focused on accommodating bicycling as a mode of transportation (as opposed to only recreational bicycling), greater consideration should be given to urban location since this is where the majority of this kind of “commuter bicycling” occurs.
 - This attendee feels that a local, fine grain bicycle network is more important for people who use bicycling as a mode of travel than a broad, statewide network since the majority of people don’t commute via bicycle for such long distances.
 - Marcy stated that while a strong local network is certainly important, this project is focused on establishing a statewide bicycle network that can serve as a solid foundation for the regions and municipalities to build off of. Additionally, local agencies often aren’t able to focus on these statewide connections between these regions and municipalities.
- An attendee stated that Route 146 on shoreline should be added to the network due to high volume of cyclists on road regardless of presence of Shoreline trail.
- The same attendee also noted that Atkins Street be added as a local alternative between Meriden and Route 160 in Berlin.
- An attendee noted that the Hartford Turnpike towards Wallingford be added as a local alternative.

State Roads and Concept of ‘Preferred Local Alternative’

- Attendees requested clarification on the idea of a potential “Preferred Local Alternative” for certain routes on the Draft Bicycle Network Map.
 - Attendees highlighted the following examples of state routes that people would be unlikely to use since there is already a better, local option:
 - Connection between New Haven and Waterbury: most bicyclists choose to ride along Hartford Turnpike (local) instead of Route 5 (state).
 - Connection between New Haven and Southington: most bicyclists would take the Farmington Canal Trail as opposed to any state road.
- Marcy explained that the concept of a ‘preferred local alternative’ is a new one and details as to how it is implemented are still being determined.
 - We’ve identified Route 5 but recognize that it isn’t the best option, which is why we’ve identified the preferred local alternative. While it’s important to note that the preferred local alternative exists, a state route needs to be identified in order to guide CTDOT where to focus resources to improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- It is notable that CTDOT is making an effort to acknowledge the importance of these local connections in some way. It has been challenging to do so in the past since CTDOT only has jurisdiction over state roads.
 - It would be inappropriate for CTDOT to make any recommendations about the design of any local streets since they are the responsibility of municipalities and regions.

- Since this project is focused on determining what CTDOT can do to improve bicycling and walking, recommendations need to be focused on roads and facilities on which CTDOT has authority to implement such recommendations.
 - The hope is that regions and municipalities will adopt complementary plans that strengthen the local bicycle networks.
- The Draft Bicycle Network provides CTDOT with clear guidance as to where resources should be focused for bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

Implementation

- An attendee requested information on what kinds of recommendations will be made to improve conditions for bicyclists along the segments identified in the Draft Bicycle Network.
 - Marcy emphasized that recommendations would not simply be limited to recommendations to increase the shoulder width by restriping the road in coordination with CTDOT's VIP Paving Program. Recommendations will be much more comprehensive and an effort will be made to prioritize improvements.
 - Marcy stated that recommendations will set the foundation for CTDOT to further examine the identified segments to develop detailed design recommendations.

Transit

- Attendees stated that the connection between bicycling and walking, and transit should be a primary focus of this Plan Update.
 - Many individuals expressed vocal support for an emphasis on this connection, especially the 'first-mile, last-mile' issue, within the action strategies.
 - Attendees also stated that the Bicycle Network should make sure to align with the location of existing and planned transit stops and lines, such as the New Haven-Springfield commuter line.
- Attendees discussed which transit lines allow for people to easily travel with their bikes. The rules for which lines allow this and at what times of the day can be confusing and create difficulties. Additionally, the facilities to accommodate bicycles on transit is often limited.

Education

- Attendees responded positively that CTDOT is working to encourage a stronger bicycle and pedestrian culture across the state.
- An attendee suggested that one key method to encourage such a culture is through education and discussed whether it's possible to incorporate cycling education into the school system.
 - This attendee stated that cycling education for children should be a priority action strategy because it is important to teach children to consider all modes when they use the road. This will encourage them to be safer bicyclists and future drivers.

- Attendees discussed the need to raise awareness of the Vulnerable Users Law as another way to educate more drivers.

Roadway Design and Speed Limits

- An attendee stated that New Haven is in the process of advocating for reduced speed limits in certain areas of the city. Efforts have been made to reduce speed limits to 20 MPH on neighborhood streets, but the process has been tedious and challenging.
 - CTDOT's engineers set speed limits on state routes by assessing numerous variables, including the most up-to-date design standards, ADT, and more in order to ensure safety for all users of the road.
 - A road is defined as 'safe' if there are no or very few speed tickets, crashes or fatalities in recent data trends.
 - Additionally, any road in CT cannot be lower than 25 MPH at this time.
 - An attendee suggested that the project team look to Seattle as a case study for how CT can progress on this issue. Seattle recently passed the Greenway Act, which allows neighborhood streets to be below 25 MPH.

Pedestrian Facilities

- An attendee requested that further consideration be given to pedestrian and that CTDOT consider the development of a separate Statewide Pedestrian Plan.
- Attendees suggested that better data should be developed to illustrate facilities to accommodate pedestrians on statewide level. This data should be illustrated on a map and initial data suggestions include:
 - Existing pedestrian infrastructure, such as crosswalks or pedestrian signals at crossings, on all state routes; and
 - Transit shelters that have pedestrian refuges along state routes.