



CT Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update Steering Committee Meeting #1

April 29, 2008

*10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
ConnDOT Room 3130*

Attendees:

Gene Nichols – Department of Public Health
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
Dick Guggenheim – Southeastern Council of Governments
Chris Squires – Connecticut Bicycle Coalition
Stephanie Nadler – Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency
Ray Rauth – Sound Cyclists Bicycle Club
Eric Weis – East Coast Greenway Alliance
Charlie Beristan – Central CT Bicycle Alliance
Sam Gold – Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley
Joe Perrelli - Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley
Janice Ehlemeyer – Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency
Bill O'Neill – East Coast Greenway

David Balzer – Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT)
Carmine Trotta – ConnDOT
Sharon Okoye – ConnDOT
Paul R O'Keefe – ConnDOT Project Development Unit
David Fabry – ConnDOT Traffic
Tim Gaffey – ConnDOT

Ken Livingston – Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. (FHI)
Susan VanBenschoten – FHI
Marcy Miller – FHI
Joshua Poppel – Alta Planning
Keith Beaver – Didona Associates

Meeting Summary:

Welcome / Introductions

David Balzer welcomed everyone to the first Steering Committee (SC) meeting for the Connecticut Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and Map Update. He introduced Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. (FHI) as the lead consultant for the project. All attendees then introduced him or herself. Ken Livingston, of FHI, introduced himself and the other members of the project team.

Study Purpose and Schedule

Ken Livingston explained that the Update is an 18-month effort that will revise both the existing Plan, completed in 1999, as well as the Bicycle Map, completed in 2002. Ken stated that only two members of the SC observed the planning effort for the existing Plan and Map. Mark Nielson noted that in 1999, the Plan development relied heavily on compiling the individual plans for the regional planning agencies, rather than creating a unified statewide system. There was little regard to regional boundaries, inter-regional facilities, and interstate facilities. He would like to see these factors considered in the Update.

Steering Committee Membership

Ken passed around a list of SC member contact information. He asked that any additions and /or corrections be made to this list. It was suggested that Leslie Lewis at Connecticut Forest and Park Association be asked to join the SC.

Ray Rauth suggested that the project team place the email addresses in the 'to' field, rather than the 'bcc' field, when sending emails. This will enable the SC members to reply to all. Marcy Miller stated that some SC members may not want to receive emails other than those pertaining to pertinent meeting and study information. Mary McCarthy offered to host a Listserv and all agreed this would be the best forum for additional SC discussion. Regular emails relating to meeting and study information will still be sent.

Key Tasks

Ken briefly reviewed the key tasks of the scope, including the benchmarking study, facility design guidelines, map update, public outreach, and vision and goal development.

Joshua Poppel, of Alta Planning, provided information on the benchmarking review. He explained the reasons behind the four neighboring, and three state-of-the-art states chosen for the analysis. The questions that the team planned to ask the other DOTs were distributed. Ken stated that the list of questions would be emailed to the SC with a date to provide comments on them by. There was a suggestion to include a question related to the cost of constructing bicycle and pedestrian facilities in other states, as compared to CT. How this cost is minimized was also a point of interest. Sam Gold suggested that these same questions be asked of ConnDOT.

In addition, members of the SC were interested in learning of, and distributing to their respective groups, the results of the benchmarking questionnaire. Ken stated a technical memo will be developed at the completion of the benchmarking task and be provided to all SC members and SC members can distribute accordingly.

Ken briefly reviewed the facility design analysis completed in the existing Plan. He stated that this topic would be further discussed at a future SC meeting, including the level of detail to be included in this area.

The topic next addressed was that of the bicycle map. There were suggestions to create a more detailed, spiral-bound map, such as the one done for the Erie Canal Trail. One suggestion was to zoom into the county level or regional tourism district level. There was considerable discussion whether a large, flat-fold map is of value to the public. Some stated that there was no value in this, while others disagreed.

Ken asked the SC if they supported creating a smaller, working group to focus on the map development. This group would meet a few times, or stay an extra hour a select SC meeting to discuss the map development. The majority voted to form a smaller, working group. The following SC members volunteered to be a part of this smaller group:

- 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
- Chris Squires – Connecticut Bicycle Coalition
- Stephanie Nadler – Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency
- Ray Rauth – Sound Cyclists Bicycle Club
- Eric Weis – East Coast Greenway Alliance
- Charlie Beristan – Central CT Bicycle Alliance
- Sam Gold – Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley
- Joe Perrelli - Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley
- Janice Ehlemeyer – Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency
- Bill O’Neill – East Coast Greenway

A number of SC members suggested including a tourism component to the map. Ken stated that this option is being explored. The project team met with representatives from the Commission of Culture and Tourism in March. The Commission is very interested in including a significant tourism component to the Statewide Bicycle Map.

Mary McCarthy suggested coordinating with Department of Environmental Protection for information, and potential funding, for efforts related to statewide trail mapping. In addition, there was discussion of virtual bike tours on Google Earth. The East Coast Greenway Alliance has developed this capability to view the East Coast Greenway trail via Google Earth.

Ken next described the efforts related to public outreach for the project. There were suggestions to coordinate with the Merritt Parkway Greenway Alliance as well as the Statewide Office of Policy and Management (OPM). It was noted that there are no bicycle and pedestrian

components in the Statewide Plan of Conservation and Development. Ken asked for suggested locations for the four public meetings, to be held in Fall 2008.

Marcy Miller provided a work status of the key tasks.

Vision and Goal Development – Small Group Exercise

The SC next separated into three subgroups to complete a visioning exercise. Each person received the vision and goals from the 1999 Plan. Each group then collaborated to answer six questions related to the vision update. These questions and their responses include:

1. What do you like the most about the 1999 Vision?
 - Nice goals
 - Mom, apple pie
 - Comprehensive vision
 - The first sentence
 - Created a ripple effect in ConnDOT
 - Reflected bicycle/pedestrian connectivity well in text
2. What do you dislike the most about the 1999 Vision?
 - Does not address on-road facilities; reliance on multiuse trails
 - Too recreation oriented, not transportation oriented
 - Not action oriented
 - Did not address all users, much too CT specific, eliminating tourism and non-residents
 - Lacked interstate awareness
3. What do you want to keep in the 1999 Vision for the new Vision?
 - Every project is considered
 - All
4. What is missing from the 1999 Vision?
 - Share the road ethic
 - Promotion
 - Encouragement
 - Education
 - Dedicated funding source
 - Connections to residential development
5. What topics / issues should be included in the 2008 Vision?
 - Education
 - Integration
 - Dedicated resources

- Should serve the maximum number of residents
- Return on investments, rather than just cost
- Incident management
- STC process should stress access and egress for bicycle and pedestrian travel and storage
- All community development mobility needs should be included in the ConnDOT process.

6. What six words do you believe should be in the 2008 Vision?

- Investment
- Share the road
- Legitimate
- Roadway users
- Facilities
- Enable
- Encourage
- Comprehensive
- Safe (Safety)
- Awareness
- Education
- Integrated
- Health
- Environment
- Connections (Connectivity)
- Commuting
- Designated routes
- Prioritization
- Code enforcement
- Interagency partnerships
- "The state will be crisscrossed by facilities that enable and encourage bicycle and pedestrian use."
- "The state will regularly and consistently invest in bicycle and pedestrian facilities and treat bicycle and pedestrian travel as a legitimate part of the transportation infrastructure."
- "All roadway users will clearly understand how to operate and share the road safely."

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June, 17, 2008 at 10:00 AM. The location will be coordinated with CRCOG in the coming weeks.