
APPENDIX D: PUBLIC MEETINGS

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS



CT Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update

Public Meeting Series 1

October 2008

5:30 PM

Bristol, Willimantic, New Haven, Stamford

Summary Plan Comments:

- The language in the goals and action strategies should be more proactive.
- There were concerns about what the 1999 Plan accomplished. Were there goals outlined in this that could be measured? There were questions about measuring the success and implementing the Plan Update. There should be quantifiable performance measures.
- There were concerns about public health. Goal 7 appears to be an afterthought, when it should have more emphasis.
- ConnDOT should work with the state's universities on the education and encouragement aspects of the vision and goals.
- There should be better, and more, 'share the road' education. In addition, there should be more information on the driver's license test on this.
- There were concerns about equestrian access and safety on roadways, especially where state roads are utilized to connect various trails and trail systems.
- Bicycles must be allowed on trains during peak hours.
- More and better parking for bicycles is needed at train stations.

- There was a comment supporting bicycle parking at state parks and ferry terminals.
- There were concerns about the danger of bicycling around the Route 44 / Route 84 interchange in Bolton.
- There was a concern that the plan largely focuses on bicyclists, and pedestrians should not be forgotten.
- Villages and town centers need traffic calming mechanisms and this should be noted in the Plan Update.
- There were concerns about sidewalk maintenance. If a sidewalk is within the ConnDOT right-of-way, ConnDOT should maintain it.
- There should be visibility of how funds that are funneled through ConnDOT are spent. Specifically, there were questions and concerns about enhancement funds.
- There were questions about the State Transportation Improvement Program funding process. How can a member of the public find out what projects are in the planning and construction process? In addition, who should an advocate first talk with to recommend improvements?
- There is a need for signage. In particular, there were concerns with the length of time required for towns or other organizations, in particular the East Coast Greenway, to obtain a permit to post share the road or other bicycle signage on state roadways.
- There was a concern that towns simply plan what bicycle and pedestrian improvements they want in their own towns, with little concern about connectivity with neighboring towns. Regional Planning Agencies should focus on regional connectivity.
- There should be a full time bicycle and pedestrian coordinator at ConnDOT.
- A summary of public comments should be included in the project report.

Summary Map Comments:

- There should be four bicycle maps instead of one statewide map. These maps should be of the following areas: Greenwich to New Haven corridor, New Haven to Springfield MA corridor, the area east of the New Haven to Springfield MA corridor, and the area west of the New Haven to Springfield MA corridor.
- There were concerns with the usage of the term "suitability" on the bicycle map. Specifically, there were attendees who did not like the term "unsuitable", because all bicyclists are allowed on all roads, and this might lead cyclists to think they are not allowed on these roads. In addition, perhaps developing a range based on "desirability", or activity intensity level, is better than the term suitable. Could support a number range as well.
- Vehicular speeds and grades should be accounted for in the bicycle suitability map.

- There was a question about the bicycle mapping effort and making it available online. The goal is for the statewide bicycle map to be transferable to Google or some other web viewing program.
- There was a question about off-road facilities and whether they would be identified in the Bicycle Map.
- There were concerns that the Draft Bicycle Map largely has an urban focus. There should be more of a rural focus.



CT Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update

Public Meeting Series 2

June 2009

6:00 – 8:00 PM

Norwich, Torrington, West Hartford, Fairfield

Summary Plan Comments (Verbal):

- There was a suggestion that the Plan should focus on commuter and utilitarian trips, more than recreational trips.
- There were questions about the upcoming schedule.
- There were questions about the Safe Routes to School program and whether this Plan would include guidelines for the Safe Routes to School program.
- There was a suggestion for the "Report an Issue" page on the website that CTDOT should offer detailed directions of how to fill it out with suggested typical issues (e.g. falling tree, driver speeds, etc.). The website should also let the user know who will be reading it and what they plan to do with the information.
- There were questions and comments about the need for bicycle storage on transit, at stations, and at destinations such as employment. Various storage options were dis-

cussed. In addition, there was a question about what the Plan recommended for bicycle parking at public facilities.

- There was a comment that it is unsafe to walk along Route 202 in Torrington, and that Route 202 needs sidewalks.
- There was general support for the recommendation for CTDOT to coordinate early with municipalities on roadway restriping and maintenance schedules.
- There was a question on how the public can track implementation of the Plan.
- There was a request for CTDOT to post information about all upcoming planning studies on a page on the CTDOT website.
- There was a request to make the bicycle and pedestrian design checklists, once complete, accessible to the public.
- There was a request to include the CT Horse Council in the list of advocacy groups (that the study team coordinated with) in the development of the Plan.
- There was a request to include the term “equestrians” in the second paragraph of the vision.
- There was a comment that the needs of non-motorized users are listed in the vision of the plan, but not in the recommendations. Recommendations, such as berms and other shoulder treatments, could make roads more equestrian friendly. In addition, crashes involving equestrians should be highlighted in the Plan.
- There was a question about how many full-time staff members work at CTDOT on issues related to Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning.
- There was a comment that there are problems with trees and roots on Connecticut multi-use trails.
- There was a question about the difference between state plans, regional plans, and local plans. How should locals move forward with this plan and desired improvements?
- There was a question whether the Plan prioritized on-road vs. off-road improvements.
- There was a question whether the state prioritized statewide or local improvements.
- There was a question about how best to track bicycle commute trips.
- There was a concern about lighting on multi-use trails.
- It was stated that the Oregon funding minimum comes from a gas tax.
- There was a concern about safety and the mix of vehicles on different roads.

-
- It was noted that there is little discussion of gasoline and greenhouse gas emissions in the Plan.
 - It was suggested that "Goal 7" be expanded to also include air quality and quality of life statements.
 - There was a suggestion to clarify and simplify the benefits discussion on page 34, and that the Plan needs a more simple formula that the public understands (e.g. every \$1 spent on bike trails saves the taxpayers a certain, identifiable amount in taxes).
 - There was a comment expressing appreciation for the study team's efforts to include equestrians in the Plan and Map.
 - A comment indicated that there are problems with bicyclists riding on sidewalks, including police on bikes, and cited the need to educate on this and to make clearer distinction between bicycle and pedestrian improvements.
 - There was a suggestion to put better signage on the trails listing rules and etiquette for trail use.
 - There was a question about whether the concept of road diets was included in the Plan.
 - There was a suggestion, for Goal 1.4, to include shifting striping to create wider shoulders in the Plan since a road diet is preferable, and less expensive, to other improvements.
 - There was a suggestion to require riders to register their bicycles. Police departments should be involved in this.
 - A comment stated that bicycling and walking on the Post Road is a challenge due to the narrow width and busy traffic.
 - There was a question whether any bicycle projects are going to be funded with stimulus funds.
 - There was a reminder that the Port Jefferson Ferry has free bicycle access; one only has to pay for one's own ticket.
 - There was a comment supporting the use of green painted bicycle lanes.
 - There was a concern expressed about the difficulty of finishing a segment of the Housatonic Trail in Newtown due to major challenges to using one parcel of land.
 - There was a suggestion to contact and try to coordinate events with colleges and schools during Bike Safety Week.

- There was a suggestion to make a recommendation encouraging impervious surfaces in the Plan.
- There was considerable discussion about roundabouts including the suggestions to include guidelines for pedestrian and bicycle access and egress on them. It was noted that blind persons have a very hard time crossing roundabouts.
- There was a suggestion to recommend counting bicycle trips on scenic roads.
- There was a suggestion to recommend a guaranteed ride home (similar to the one offered by the rideshare groups) for bicycle riders.
- There was a request to add a copy of the Statewide Bicycle Map to the Plan.

Summary Map Comments (Verbal):

- There was a comment that steep slopes should be shown on the Statewide Bicycle Map.
- There was a suggestion to reference the bike map in the DMV manual.
- There was praise for the mapping effort (both on-line and hard copy).
- There was much discussion about the on-line mapping effort. While most generally supported the use of Google for the interactive map, there was a concern that CTDOT wouldn't be able to sustain the web mapping effort. There was a question about the online map and the features that it would offer. Specifically, would the online version of the map include information and options for bicycling on local roads? Would local officials be asked for suitability data for their roadways?
- There was a question about how the cross-state routes were chosen and validated. The attendees made a suggestion to speak to local groups about cross-state routes, as they probably know much about the roads.
- There was a suggestion to add the "3-foot" law to the back of the map.
- There was a suggestion to include incorrect driver behavior on the back of the map.
- There was a comment that the state parks / facilities on the back of the map are inaccurate. More parks allow horse riding than noted here. The CT Horse Council will provide the team with a corrected list.
- There was a question about including the Adventure Cycling East Coast Trail on the on-line interactive map.
- There was a question about how users would be able to identify the surface of multi-use trails from the hard copy map.

- Road names should be included on the map where possible.
- The Route 11 greenway needs to be included on the map.
- The Still River Greenway needs to be added to the LHCEO regional map.
- There was a request to label individual trails and bike routes on the regional maps.
- The titles of the regional maps need to be rephrased, as they are priority maps rather than system maps.

Summary Written Comments:

- Land use and transportation should be integrated and planned together. It would be great to get the DOT, State, and local municipalities to plan together so we can have livable cities and smart growth. Sprawl should be discouraged and smart, mixed-use communities encouraged. Funding for all transportation projects should be at a level playing field (80%-20% match for all).
- Strengthen "smart growth" concepts; we need widespread coordination among agencies and governments, this is more than just DOT, STC, OPM presence on Advisory Committee.
- Smart growth seems well-suited for the level of regional government. Suggest greater coordination with regional COGs. Regions are a good blend of large enough areas to connect different areas, but small enough to know what is going on because often, timing during project development is very important.
- Use rail corridors for multi-use pathways as part of developing networks.
- Broaden health goal to include environment, climate, children, and education.
- How many full-time employees are at CTDOT working on this Plan?
- Praise and caution – Pleased with hybrid map (paper and on-line version). Great tool. Caution regarding the on-line map and its sustainability, including time to update.
- Google on-line map is good idea.
- What is the connection to state roadways/regional?
- Questioned on-road priorities vs. off-road priorities.
- Trail-crossing (Route 111 in Trumbull) needs crosswalk with signal.
- Good presentation, thanks. In terms of our largest city, Bridgeport, there is a somewhat unique issue of very poor quality roads. There are giant potholes, glass, debris, etc. There are also the usual traffic issues.

- Provide model zoning code for municipalities who want to improve walkability and bikability.
- DOT should really invest in making Route 1 pedestrian friendly! Many intersections need better crosswalks and flashing pedestrian signals, for example. Some sections need sidewalks. It is not safe to walk on the Post Road.
- SB 735 and Plan need to take into consideration all users when planning complete streets, including older and disabled populations. Building a truly complete street makes fiscal sense, allowing people to be more independent.
- Related to Goal #2 – Integrate and connect the New Haven Railroad Station sidewalk system to the VA Medical Center. Not many people do or will walk this route. One has to walk in the street and around puddles. For much of the 2+ miles of this route, there is no sidewalk.