

Capitol Region Council of Governments

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Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Committee Meeting
241 Main Street, 4th Fl. Hartford, CT, CRCOG Large Conference Room
Tuesday, March 28, 2017
12:00 p.m.

Name

Nate Hougrand
Kim Welch
Barbara Amodio
Jim Mayer
Mary Ellen Thibodeau
Craig Minor
Kevin Sullivan
Ginny Hole
Abby Kenyon
Lon Hultgren
Mason Perrone
Eric Trott
Patrice Carson
Jen Rodriguez
Jerry Ledger
Sandy Fry
Wendy LaMontagne
Rob Phillips

Affiliation

RiverCOG
Bolton
Bolton
Town of Manchester
Ped/Bike Commission (West Hartford)
Newington
Bike/Walk Wethersfield
South Windsor Walk & Wheel Ways
Town of Windsor
Bike Mansfield
Town of Coventry
Town of Coventry
Town of Bolton
Town of Windsor Locks
Farmington Valley Trails Council - Granby
City of Hartford
Town of Suffield
Town of Southington

CRCOG Staff

Mike Cipriano
Mary Ellen Kowalewski
Tim Malone
Emily Hultquist

Roll Call

1. Call to Order: Tim Malone called the meeting to order at 12:04pm. Attendees were asked to introduce themselves. One person, Rob Phillips of the Town of Southington, joined by phone.

2. Public Forum

There were no public comments.

3. Approval of Minutes of December 13, 2016 Meeting

Tim Malone requested a motion to approve the minutes.

Mary Ellen Thibodeau made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2016 meeting. Craig Minor seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously, with an abstention from Patrice Carson.

4. Updates and News

Emily Hultquist briefed the committee on updates and news:

Three projects in the Capitol Region were selected for funding under the Recreational Trails Grant Program. Bolton and Coventry received \$110,632 for a planning study of the Nathan Hale Greenway, utilizing land that was formerly set a-side for an extension of Route 6. Goodwin College received \$50,000 for its campus trail. East Windsor received \$85,000 for a new deck for the Melrose Road Bridge and two additional miles of trail.

Bike to Work day is May 19th this year. Emily asked the committee if any events in the region were being planned. It was noted that West Hartford was planning its usual ride to Hartford. It was also suggested that in the future we monitor bike to school day events.

Jerry Ledger noted that on April 9 the Farmington Valley Trails Council is organizing a trail cleanup day. More information is available at the FVTC website (fchtrail.org).

On March 22 CROG staff attended a meeting of a new group called RIDE CT. The meeting was organized by the West Hartford Pedestrian and Bicycle Commission. In all, 43 people representing 17 towns attended the meeting. The meeting was the first in what is planned to be a quarterly gathering in which advocates can share successes and challenges. Tim Malone noted that the latest Bike/Walk Connecticut newsletter mentioned that that organization was seeking to start a similar group statewide.

Emily gave an overview of proposed legislation that relates to bicycle and pedestrian issues. The bills included:

- H.B. 6271: An Act Concerning Electric Bicycles
- H.B. 6273: An Act Increasing the Penalty for Causing Harm to a Vulnerable User of a Public Way
- H.B. 6274: An Act Concerning Pedestrian Safety at Crosswalks
- H.B. 6966: An Act Modifying Guidelines for Urban Street Design

Patrice Carson asked if it was possible to be notified of bills like those mentioned. Emily responded that she could look into adding them to CROG's regular legislative update.

The Connecticut Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board released its 2016 report. Notable issues addressed in the report included: Ray Rauth's walk along Route 1, a case study of New Britain's complete streets efforts, and recommended actions for the coming year. Recommended actions included: update the Highway Design Manual, designate set aside for Highway Safety Improvement Program, connect critical gaps, and coordinate state roadway maintenance with local complete street plans.

BiCiCo is offering two classes this Spring that may be of interest. The first is a Traffic Skills/Safe Cycling 101 class. The second is the League Cycling Instructor Seminar (League of American Cyclists). Jerry Ledger noted that the Traffic Skills class is very valuable, even to experienced cyclists.

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission is hosting a workshop on how to *Incorporate On-Road Bicycle Networks into Resurfacing Projects*. The workshop will be held on April 4.

CRCOG is continuing its work on the Regional Complete Streets Plan. CRCOG received a \$450,000 grant from OPM to develop the plan. CRCOG staff have reviewed proposals and held interviews with consultants. They hope to have a contract ready within two months.

5. What's New in My Town?

Individuals used this time to update the committee on news in their town:

Windsor Locks: Jen Rodriguez noted that there are plans to move the train station to downtown and that the town has a grant of \$3 million for TOD. The town is working on a design that DOT will approve of. They are looking at a number of issues related to complete streets in the downtown, including back in angle parking. Looking at bridge to East Windsor. So much of the design hinges on relocation of the train station. She also noted that the town's Conservation Commission will be voting on a package of 14 small parcels that are delinquent on taxes that could be used for open space.

Granby: Jerry Ledger reported on the proposed traffic circle at Route 202 (five corners). Construction is supposed to start in 2018. He noted there is a traffic island where ice and snow piles up. The town is hiring a new town manager this summer. There is an East Coast Greenway signage problem at Route 189. The East Coast Greenway is now using Route 185 because of a DOT decision regarding bicycle access. The East Coast Greenway is working with DOT to resolve the issue. 1/2 mile of new sidewalk planned in the town.

Newington: Craig Minor reported that the town is part of Central CT Health District, which has taken an interest in bike/ped issues. Four planners from member towns have been meeting to do coordinated planning.

West Hartford: Mary Ellen Thibodeau attended a webinar regarding engaging health professionals with bike/ped planning. It used Nashua, NH as an example. Emily Hultquist noted that CROG's Step It Up Action Plan was developed with the assistance of health district officials. She noted that we can make our action plan available again. Patrice Carson also noted that there was a healthy communities initiative through the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association. Jen Rodriguez noted that the north central health district had Mark Fenton come out to talk about walkability.

Mary Ellen Thibodeau went on to note that the Bicycle Commission in West Hartford is now the Pedestrian and Bicycle Commission. She also reported that the Trout Brook Trail when completed will go from CT **fastrak** in Elmwood to Albany Ave. The town is working on a number of sections that should be completed by 2018. She also reported that there will be a ride of silence on May 17 to highlight unsafe conditions on the road

Manchester: Jim Mayer reported that plans are being finalized for a parking lot for the Cheney Trail.

Suffield: Wendy LaMontagne reported that the town was awarded a grant for a multi-use trail that will connect schools in the town. The project is being reviewed by CTDOT and the town hopes to go to construction in 2018.

Bolton: Patrice Carson reported that a road safety audit was completed under the Community Connectivity Program. The report includes recommendations about installing cross walks in key areas. Bolton is also working on greenway connection across Route 44 into the park and ride lot. The state has been working on a plan for the missing link through the Bolton Notch and has finally found a solution.

Coventry: Eric Trott reported that Coventry and Bolton are developing a RFP for the Nathan Hale Greenway study. He also reported that CTDOT performed a RSA in Coventry last year as well. It focused on the eastern shore of Coventry Lake to connect the municipal and school campus to the lake. He also reported on the Route 31 curb project, which was conceived under the context sensitive design policy. He noted that an extension of the Mill Brook Greenway is planned to the Willimantic River. The town's draft bike plan has been presented to the conservation commission. The plan may be merged into a bike/ped plan. They are looking for example plans from similar communities. He also noted that there is a Plan4Health conference in Denver.

South Windsor: Ginny Hole reported that the town just installed around four miles of mountain bike trail. They are holding a CT Trails Day celebration around the new trails. The town is also working on a cross town trail to connect parks. They are on the waiting list for recreation trails grant program if there is additional funding. The trail would mostly use the power line corridor.

Mansfield: Lon Hultgren reported that Bike Mansfield just finished a draft bike/ped plan. It has been submitted it to the town and is being reviewed. They used South Windsor's

plan as a model. Finally got approval to mark three sections of route 195 with share the road signs. Two sections are by UConn. One near Puddin Lane. CTDOT won't include those sections on the state bike route plan. He also reported that previously the town advisory committee agreed to open some town lands to mountain biking, but it was rescinded. Connecticut Forest and Park Association objected as some of their trails went through the land. They are working to resolve the issue.

Bolton: Barbara Amodio reported that Bike/Walk Bolton is scheduling an event for National Trails Day. She provided a handout on the event which takes place June 3. Andover is working with them. She also noted that the Charter Oak Greenway will soon connect to the Hop River Trail. They have a counter on the Hop River Trail that counted over 1,000 hits in January. She noted that there is no legal or safe access to the rail on the eastern side of town. Bike/Walk Bolton would like to have CTDOT address the issue of access to route 44.

RiverCOG: Nate Hougrand reported that the Airline Trail was approved for an extension from Madison to Clinton Beach. The project will take place in two phases due to push back from property owners. The COG is also undertaking a Route 81 corridor study.

Wethersfield: Kevin Sullivan from Bike/Walk Wethersfield reported that the town has been doing a lot with safe routes to school. Bike to school day is May 10. He asked if this group, or another should monitor such events. Mary Ellen Thibodeau noted that Simsbury has a bike to school day event as well. Bolton is also working on a walk to school event.

Hartford: Sandy Fry reported that the city is working on implementing its complete streets policy. She noted that it is hard to get hold of projects that already started and apply complete streets to things that have already begun. They are hoping to repurpose some grant funding to have a consultant develop a bike/ped plan for the city. It will probably be more of a bike plan. The city has a complete streets committee which meets monthly. There is a citizen group that is interested in tactical urbanism and wants to buy a kit to experiment with. The city is considering monthly beginner cycling rides through the parks department.

6. Presentation on Initial Count Results

Tim Malone presented this report to the committee. The 2016 Bike Pedestrian count has finally been completed. The bike-ped count began in 2009 as a part of the NBPD project. The goal of the count is document usage and demand similar to other modes. The count has taken place each year with the exception of 2013. In 2014, the CROG region expanded by 8 towns and some of those towns have also been incorporated in the count. The count was taken September 13-18, 2016. It was a two hour allocation period and included intersections and screen line counts. There were 52 volunteers, 61 counts, and 20 towns.

With a fairly significant decline in numbers, Tim discussed the outcomes and results of this year's count, highlighting differences including the dividing of count locations into 3 groups with each group being counted every 3 years. He also discussed the new count technology, automatic counters, used at some locations. He engaged the committee on top counts, town towns, gender differences, and bike to pedestrian comparisons. He also informed the committee on the active transportation audits used this count which captures on the ground infrastructure such as recent developments in a count area.

There were a few notable results. Women continue to be underrepresented in the bicycle count. One member of the committee asked if the volunteer counters are more likely to be men and if that could influence the count.

Tim also noted that the machine counts done in Hartford included entire corridors. He highlighted some areas where this could show gaps in the cycling or pedestrian networks, or where problems areas are located. A full analysis of these issues would be more appropriate for a small area study.

He then reported that CRCOG plans to use the detailed count data to help with the complete streets plan. Information such as where people choose to ride on the sidewalk could indicate where streets are not bike friendly. He also noted that comparisons between count data and audit data could be useful. He opened it up for suggestions from the committee on potential uses of the data. Sandry Fry noted that it will be helpful to have time series data at individual locations so that trends can be identified. She noted it will be interesting to see what happens before and after infrastructure is installed. Mary Ellen Thibodeau noted that West Hartford plans to do some video based counts on North Main Street. She asked if those could capture bike/ped data as well. It was determined that they probably capable but that the town would need to request that it be done.

7. Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:30pm