

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, June 13, 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 12:05pm. Attendees were asked to introduce themselves.

2. Public Forum

There were no public comments.

3. Approval of Minutes of the March 28, 2017 Meeting

Tim Malone requested a motion to approve the minutes.

Mary Ellen Thibodeau made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 28, 2017 meeting. Rob Phillips seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Updates and News

Emily Hultquist briefed the committee on updates and news:

Many CRCOG municipalities have become designated Bike Friendly Communities in the past few years. CRCOG recently learned about the Walk Friendly Community designation. The designation has a similar process to the Bike Friendly Community designation. No communities in Connecticut have been designated.

Bike to Work day was held on May 19th this year. CRCOG staff helped with two municipalities who requested assistance: Hartford and New Britain. The events were a success. CRCOG also helped spread the word via social media and is available to do the same for other communities.

CRCOG staff also attended the Bike/Walk summit on 6/9/2017. The event focused on “tactical urbanism” and featured Mike Lydon, a national expert on the subject.

Emily gave an overview of proposed legislation that relates to bicycle and pedestrian issues that came up in the 2017 legislative session. 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

Based on the General Assembly’s website, none of these bills came up for a vote.

Sandy Fry noted that 6966 went pretty far in the process.

5. BiCi Co. & Transport Hartford Presentation

Tony Cherolis of BiCi Co. gave a presentation on the organization and its recent activities. It is hosted by the Center for Latino Progress, which was founded nearly 40 years ago. BiCi Co. is now two years old and the Transport Hartford Academy is six months old. BiCi Co. is focused on its storefront on Park St. They rehabilitate donated bikes and sell them at discounted prices. Programs at BiCi Co. teach youth mechanical and STEM skills. BiCi Co. also offers opportunities for members to work on their bikes, learn about maintenance, and purchase parts at a discount.

BiCi Co. also organizes and helps out with events, such as a “Slow Roll”, a walk to the West End Farmers Market, and the June 24 Farm-to-Street dinner.

Transport Hartford organizes presentations/talks on transportation issues in the greater Hartford region. The first event was focused on how projects are planned. The second event looked at multi-modal transportation for getting to work. The third event, on June 29, will focus on commuter rail and TOD implementation.

An attendee of the meeting asked what it means to be a member. Mr. Cherolis replied that members have access to “do it yourself” hours, as well as discounts on bikes and parts. He noted that a principle of their work is that their programs require some “skin in the game”. Chris Edge (Berlin) offered to connect the group to Ever Source, who may be able to assist with lights that would be given out with bikes. Andrea Drabicki (Columbia) asked about the recently launched roadside assistance program for cyclists. It was noted that this was an initiative that builds on the existing Hartford Business Improvement District roadside assistance program, but that BiCi Co. provided training. It was noted that BiCi Co. has bike rentals as well.

7. Presentation on Scope of Regional Complete Streets Plan

Tim Malone provided an overview of the regional complete streets plan project. He noted that CRCOG is getting ready to sign a contract with its selected consultant. The consultant has proposed some exciting events, such as pop-up events, tactical urbanism-style demonstration projects, and a panel of experts who will assist the region with policy and implementation plan development.

Sandy Fry (Hartford) asked if the region will be adopting a regional complete streets policy. Mr. Malone replied that that is a goal of the project, but that it remains to be seen what that will look like. Sandy Fry asked if multi-use trails will be included in the “complete streets” network that will be developed. Mr. Malone replied that they would be. CJ Gandza (New Britain) asked what happened with the data collection that began last summer in support of a new bike map for the region. Mr. Malone replied that the data was supplied to the state DOT for their statewide update and that it would be used as a base for the complete streets project.

Andrea Drabicki (Columbia) asked if there was a possibility to crowd source data from the public. She noted that Columbia responded to CRCOG’s request for map data, but had little to offer, though residents may. A comment was made that Strava data can help identify potential routes. Another comment was made that there is a disconnect between policy coming out of the DOT and how it gets implemented with the districts.

Chris Squires (East Hartford) noted that cycling clubs have a role to play in the plan. They are a great resource.

8. What’s New in My Town?

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

Southington (Rob Phillips): The town recently approved installing two restrooms along the FCHT. One near downtown and the other near the historic train station. They are still looking for funding. A local individual asked about the possibility of starting a bike share station. There is also momentum in town for starting a local advocacy group.

East Coast Greenway (Bruce Donald): New pieces of the FCHT and East Coast Greenway are being designed by CTDOT. Restrooms will also be installed in Cheshire. Currently 20 DOT East Coast Greenway projects. Nine will be accomplished in 2018. 37 new miles of spine trail in Connecticut, at a cost of \$61 million.

South Windsor (Michele Lipe): The town celebrated trails day. There is a new trail in town that is a cross country style trail. There is also a new safe routes to school project opening up and the town fought hard for amenities like bike racks and speed tables. The town is considering regulations regarding widening sidewalks and working on regulations to require bike racks in new development.

Enfield (Mike Cipriello): The town is developing a Tax Increment Financing district for Enfield Square area (Thompsonville). They are working on bike/ped improvements in the area, as well as a facilities inventory of roads and sidewalks.

Berlin (Chris Edge): The town is working to connect sidewalks from the Kensington area to Main St/Farmington Ave. This would connect residents to the train station. The town is also redoing paths on an old golf course. The town is conducting a TOD study in the train station area. They are also looking to issue a RFP for some land the town owns in the area.

Columbia (Andrea Drabicki): The town recently tried to outreach to DOT district staff about warning signs at crosswalks. The district did not assist the town. So far there has been no movement on that effort. The town's state trooper is organizing a bike safety day. The town hopes to move it to coincide with bike to school day. The town also plans to seek funding to tackle some low-hanging fruit from the recently completed Road Safety Audit.

Wethersfield (Peter Gillespie): A resident advocacy group (Bike/Walk Wethersfield) was recently formed. Progress is being made on a connection to the Putnam Bridge. The town recently held its fourth annual bicycle festival in Old Wethersfield. The town is coordinating with the Central Connecticut Health District to have conversation about moving bike/ped efforts along in the four town area.

Bolton (Patrice Carson): The state held a pre-construction meeting on the East Coast Greenway project (extending to the drive-in site). The trail would travel over Route 44. They expect to complete it in Fall of 2018 or early 2019. The town is taking advantage of the road safety audit to paint some lane markings using a new grant program from the state. The town, working with Coventry, was also successful in getting grant funding for a study of the Nathan Hale Greenway (using former Route 6 land).

Mike Cipriello (Enfield) asked if the state had a mechanism for funding bike/ped bridges over freeways. Bruce Donald responded that there was no dedicated mechanism, but that sources such as Recreational Trails could be used.

Canton (Emily Anyzeski): The town is focusing on finishing a contract for a design project in Collinsville. This would extend improvements that focused on pedestrian conditions in the town center.

Newington (Mike D'Amato): The town is applying for a Community Connectivity Grant. The parks and rec department has changed the way it programs parks and a lot of people are now coming to Mill Pond Park near downtown. The town is looking for ways to connect people from Downtown to the park.

Hartford (Sandy Fry): The city repurposed some grant funds to develop a citywide bike plan. They are also developing a bicycle facility selection guide and design guidelines. The city is also looking for locations where bike lanes can be easily striped. The city is looking to extend a bike trail to Windsor using Transportation Alternatives funds. They also are receiving technical assistance from the National Park Service, which may focus on what can be done along rivers.

Coventry (Mason Perrone and Eric Trott): Cooperating with Bolton to hire a firm for the Nathan Hale Greenway study. The town is working with the conservation commission to look at remapping some larger parks in town to verify boundary markers in relation to trails. Trail maps have been very popular. The town is working on linkages to a new town park, as well as to the Willimantic River. New bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure is being installed in central Coventry.

Hartford (Tony Cherolis): In talks with Bike/Walk Wethersfield regarding a possible connection along an old MDC road.

West Hartford (Mary Ellen Thibodeau): There is a \$850,000 bond being used to come up with improvements to the Bishops Corner area, based on the results of a RSA. Some sections of the Trout Brook Trail are being held up by permitting issues. The town is looking for ways to add bike lanes and shoulders as it repaves roads. The town is preparing to sign to bike routes. There was a ride of silence in town in honor of cyclist who was killed; 70 people attended.

Manchester (Matt Bordeaux): The remaining gap in the ECG in town is about to be finished. The new bridge should be installed soon. A high priority for the town is completing the Cheney Rail Trail, which will connect the Hop River Trail to the ECG and will complete a 15 mile loop trail. The town already has a grant for acquisition of a portion of the railroad.

East Hartford (Chris Squires): The extension down Forbes Road is basically complete. Piece from Willis Street to the waterfront is almost complete. Goodwin College received funding for a project to build a trail to tie into the Putnam Bridge.

New Britain (CJ Gandza): Construction is starting on phase 4 of the Complete Streets Master Plan. The city will rebid phase 5 (Beehive Bridge) in the fall. They are issuing a RFQ for phase 6 next week. They are pursuing a Hartford Road sidewalk project which will complete a gap between CCSU and Westfarms Mall. The city hosted a non-motorized RSA training class. The city will host its fourth annual bike rodeo on July 8. The last one drew 200 kids (and their parents). Bike New Britain is pursuing a storefront.

9. Other business

Emily Hultquist noted that the annual bike/ped count is coming up in the fall. CRCOG will be issuing a notice about the locations soon.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:30pm