

Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Committee Meeting – DRAFT Minutes

TIME: 12:00pm

DATE: Tuesday, December 12, 2023

PLACE: Zoom Call

<i>Name</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>
Amy Watkins	Watch for Me CT
Bob Dickinson	Resident of Bloomfield
CJ Gandza	City of New Britain
Grace Yi	City of Hartford
Hiram Peck	Town of Avon
Jay Stange	Transport Hartford
Jason Scott	Town of Rocky Hill
Michele Lipe	Town of South Windsor
Owen Deutsch	City of Hartford
Patrice Carson	Town of Bolton

CRCOG Staff

Anaka Maher
Caitlin Palmer
Jacob Knowlton
Heidi Samokar
Lindsay Drotman
Mike Cipriano
Rob Aloise

Roll Call

1. **Call to Order (00:00)** Caitlin Palmer called the meeting to order. Attendees were asked to introduce themselves.

2. Public Forum (03:55)

Mike Cipriano invited any comments from the public.

3. Approval of Minutes from the Meeting on September 12 (04:05)

Caitlin asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the September 2023 meeting. Motioned by Patrice Carson and seconded by Jason Scott. Motion was approved.

4. Approval of 2024 Meeting Schedule (05:15)

Caitlin asked for approval of the updated meeting schedule for 2024 as we shifted the meetings from March, June, September and December to February, May, August and November. Motioned by Michele Lipe and seconded by Patrice Carson.

5. Updates and News (08:05)

Caitlin gave the committee a brief overview of East Coast Greenway Study activities over the past quarter. She detailed to the group the preferred alignments in East Hartford. She also mentioned that the Simsbury Board of Selectmen endorsed the preferred alignment using an old railway corridor to connect to the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail to the west and the newly built Bloomfield/Simsbury Multi-Use Trail to the east. Caitlin also mentioned that the Simsbury Study is currently open for Public Comment until January 15. She also described that both Bloomfield and Hartford are progressing their shortlist options. In addition to Hartford progressing their shortlist options, she described the feasibility of the Griffin Line corridor for rail-with-trail and mentioned the Griffin Line task should wrap up in early 2024.

Mike mentioned the Walk Audit Program and CRCOG's first walk audit in Andover on Route 316 that was performed by CRCOG and Eric Anderson and his staff in Andover. Mike mentioned there were some possible walk audits in the future and CRCOG was looking to increase walk audits in the future.

Caitlin described to the committee that CRCOG is partnering with Bike Walk Connecticut (BWCT) on two surveys. The first to members of the public to get their feedback as they share their experiences and priorities as a bicyclist and pedestrian in their individual towns, with the second survey being presented to municipalities to describe what the status of their bike and ped planning efforts are. Caitlin gave some brief stats and stated that slightly more than 50% of respondents are "somewhat uncomfortable" or "uncomfortable" as a pedestrian, with 18% responding as "uncomfortable". Caitlin mentioned that from the surveys, the most frequent response from people was that traffic was either traveling too fast or there were too many challenges to cross the road. Regarding the survey, CRCOG received the most feedback from Wethersfield, West Hartford, Simsbury, Hartford and Rocky Hill.

Heidi Samokar provided some information on Public Act 23-207 that allows for cities and towns to adopt an abatement ordinance so certain trails in their town could qualify for a reduced tax abatement and allows them to consider those trails under PA 490 open space. CRCOG created a guidance document that should be available to towns in January.

Rob Aloise mentioned that CTDOT is looking to get some Federal funding to do ADA Transition Plans for communities across the state. Rob mentioned that with it being funded by FHWA, it may be limited to only transportation related projects and might

not include buildings such as schools. Rob stated that CTDOT will begin the process with NVCOG and then progress to the rest of the state.

Caitlin thanked Sotoria Montanari for all her work on the Multi-Use Trail in Simsbury and Bloomfield as they recently had their ribbon cutting ceremony.

Caitlin also mentioned the upcoming LOTCIP solicitation for towns that closes in February 2024. Caitlin said that a CTDOT Rec Trails Grant solicitation is also open for towns.

Rob also talked about automated street enforcement was enabled by the legislature the last session and CTDOT will be providing towns guidance on how towns can proceed. Rob mentioned that there were four zones where cameras can be placed, at traffic signals, school zones, bike ped safety zones and "other", any cameras in the "other" category, need to be backed up by data. Jay Stange asked follow-up questions regarding the "school zone" definition, with a brief discussion ensuing.

6. Bike Ped Priority Network Plan (36:50)

Mike gave a presentation unveiling the Bike Ped Priority Network Plan throughout the region. He mentioned that we will be looking to build off some existing work, such as our East Coast Greenway and Complete Streets Studies and that the focus will be on Off-Road and Separated Trails. He also described that there will be an existing conditions review and then performing a screening analysis to close significant gaps or create new corridors in the region. He stated that we'd be looking to identify benefits for our communities and create an actionable plan to identify priorities and funding options. Mike went through the project timeframe for the committee. He also mentioned the extensive public outreach that is envisioned for this study. Jay Stange provided a question in the chat regarding on-road facilities. Jay stated that ideally, he'd like to see utility users being able to connect corridors with on-street facilities as well. Jay also made a comment about bike lanes in one town, and then the bike facilities ending in another town. A discussion followed to discuss what potential facilities and what the scope in general might look like.

7. What's New in My Town (01:08:15)

- **CJ Gandza, New Britain:** He mentioned the Stanley Loop trail is finally completed and was originally a TA Grant, its roughly 3.5 miles through two parks. CJ also mentioned the Beeline Trail that has three phases with each at various levels of design. He talked about the John Downey Trail that he hopes will one day connect to the rest of the network. CJ said their bike friendly application was recently submitted and they are anxiously awaiting a response.
- **Jason Scott, Rocky Hill:** Jason said that earlier this year Rocky Hill adopted their complete streets policy and is looking to incorporate those in the future. Also, he said they established their first sustainability task force this year and that there is some momentum to establish a bicycle network in town with the goal to connect to surrounding towns. Jason also stated that they have about four miles of sidewalks in current LOTCIP projects.
- **Patrice Carson, Bolton:** She mentioned that the project they have been working on for their connectivity area is in progress and the portion from the firehouse to the town hall is completed. She said the whole project should be completed and ready to use by the summer.
- **Michele Lipe, South Windsor:** Michele said that Evergreen Walk finished a trail that runs a couple of miles. She also mentioned that Pleasant Valley Road is getting a sidewalk the whole length and will be connecting Pleasant Valley School and Ellington Road. She also said that Dart Hill Road will be getting sidewalks that

connect to Vernon. Michele also mentioned the area around Deming Road will also be getting sidewalks.

- **Owen Deutsch, Hartford:** Owen said they have a streetscape project on Farmington Avenue coming up and planning on starting construction in the next couple years. He also mentioned a trail project along the south branch of the Park River.

8. Other Business (1:17:20)

Caitlin reminded the group if anyone has any questions or topics, they want to discuss in the future to let us know.

9. Adjournment (1:18:20)