Meeting of the Connecticut Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board

October 20, 2011

Connecticut DOT Headquarters, Newington, CT

*Board members present*: Ray Rauth, Neil Pade, Rod Parlee, Tom Gutman, Jason Stockmann, Charlie Beristain, Richard Stowe (by telephone). Deb Daupinais attempted to call in, but the teleconferencing phone was only able to accept a single incoming call.

*DOT personnel*: Colleen Kissane, David Head, Kate Rattan

*Guests*: Kathy Connolly

Come to order at 1:12 pm

Move to approve August minutes. Seconded. Motion passes.

Move to approve September minutes. Seconded. Motion passes.

In the future, the Secretary will circulate draft minutes to the entire Board for review prior to the minutes being posted to the Board website. We are required by the Freedom of Information Act to post our draft minutes within 7 days of our meetings.

**DOT Reports** (David Head, Kate Rattan, Colleen Kissane)

* Letters went out to the RPOs. Solicitations for the Transportation Enhancement Program. $8 million is available. Solicitation is due by February 1st.
* CMAQ (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality) funds are also available, $10 million statewide. Solicitations are due in December.
* Greenway Council Award Ceremony will be held tomorrow.
* Manchester Bolton notch surveys are underway. Preliminary design plans are anticipated by Summer 2012.
* Metro North Bike Rack Survey is up to 14 respondents. The feedback quality is good. But we need more feedback. Metro North can’t really change which train it is on. People tend to like the “A” style rack better, although it doesn’t work very well with racks. It will hold bikes that have racks, but they wobble more.
  + Because they are M-8 cars, they need to stay in the M-8 rail yard, which is in New Haven. There are only 24 M-8 cars in use so far, three sets of 8.
* Bike racks (and lockers?) will be installed at DOT Headquarters
* East Coast Greenway Signage 🡪 there will be a big ride next year from Rhode Island to Hartford. Looking at how to get encroachment permits to get signs up along the route more easily.
* Putnam Bridge meeting coming up with the FHWA. Funding is in place for feasibility study for pedestrian and bicycle sidewalk. Project should get going soon.
* We are well over our 1% bike/ped spending requirement for the year. David Head has no knowledge of a recision.
* Official guidelines for bike lanes and trails are 1999 ASHTO standards, which are not very good. The new standards have best practices from around the country and are much better.

**Open ACTION ITEM run through** (Jason)

* Conference on crash data took place at the DOT on a developing a searchable database. UConn was involved. UConn is working within the last three days with accident data.

**Initiatives for Complete Streets**

* Neil compiled suggestions for Board initiatives from member suggestions.
* Tom suggested picking three or four initiatives for the Board to take on in the next year
* Ray suggested petitioning Amtrak to allow bicycle access on trains. Enlist every bicycle group in the state. Send to our representatives and senators.
  + **ACTION ITEM**: Nominate Richard in absentia to draft a letter about bikes on Amtrak. The letter will be signed by the board and sent to similar agencies for their signature and endorsement.
* **ACTION ITEM**: Ray will look into Initiative 1a: Researching the status of current federal legislation proposals pertaining to complete streets (H.R. 1780 & S. 1056)
* We have generally been reacting to problems as they come up… Maybe we should try to be more proactive. Work with town planners to roll out improvements on a statewide basis.
* Open up the Complete Streets law to make some subtle changes.
* Creation of our own Bicycle and Pedestrian Needs Checklist. Make available to STC, town planners, DPW directors, etc. A tool for evaluating roadway projects. Even private engineers could use it as a resource.
  + In Neil’s meeting with DOT Traffic Dept, this idea got a good response. Build the checklist into the process from the grassroots level.
  + DOT already has such an internal checklist, but the STC only reacts to what is proposed in the project by the towns. The checklist does not apply to the STC, since the STC reviews what has been proposed by the developer with changes made by the towns. We need to give the checklist to the towns so they can use it from the inception of projects.
  + Maybe we can build our checklist on the model of the DOT’s checklist.
  + Given them a tool laid out in 2-3 pages and convince them that the guidelines will help the town grow in a healthy way.
  + Give it to private consultants so they can use it to advise their clients (the towns and private developers)
* Peak hours ban on Metro North? Maybe we should get the bike hooks installed first, and then take on the peak hours ban in the future… take on one challenge at a time. Maybe invite a member of the CT Commuter Rail Council to one of our Bike and Ped Board meetings?
* The idea of prioritizing Complete Streets projects when it comes to putting things in the TIP was discussed. This would be a long term project with high reward. Deferred until a later time.
* Add a fifth goal to our list of goals, to implement the Complete Streets Law. ACTION ITEM: Motion to make one of our goals “To facilitate the implementation of the Complete Streets Law”, per agenda item 3.1b. MOTION PASSES.

**CTB&PAB Policies**

* Implementers or stakeholders for the Complete Streets Law
* ACTION ITEM: Jason will put our list of funding sources onto the Board web page. Also, get Neil and Rod set up on Google Docs.
* Put old agendas onto the website

**State Traffic Commission**

* Is anyone besides Neil and Tom H. also willing to meet with the STC on a semi-regular basis? Tom G. and Ray are willing.
  + David Head will find some dates for November to meet with STC representatives.

Rod asked for clarification on the purpose of the meetings with STC. STC was to attend the October meeting, but STC's original interpretation of the Complete Streets law was that it does not apply to projects under their jurisdiction. Neil met with them between meetings and explained the boards interpretation on how it does apply. It was agreed to meet in a semi-regular workshop type setting with a subcommittee of the board for the purpose of identifying specific types of information that if submitted or included into projects reviewed by STC, would have a greater affect in the consideration of issues and improvements for the non-motorized users of the road. Board members are also to come to the November meeting with thoughts on examples of case study projects where improvements for non-motorized users could have had a positive affect.

Part of the process of meeting with the STC will be to develop a list of criteria that could be included in the Bike/Ped checklist being developed by the Board. ACTION ITEM - The Board requested that DOT provide copies of completed DOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Inclusion checklist so we can understand how they are used and benchmark them for the creation of our own.

**Cross-state Bike routes**

* Charlie put something on Google Docs
* We should find out what other states have done with cross-state routes. Also ask the East Coast Greenway.
* Problem with these routes is that the DOT can’t connect them through towns via local roads.
* The cross-state designation does give the DOT (and Kate especially) more leverage to ask for bike/ped improvements when the road comes up for repairs.
* Shoreline gets lots of tourist bicyclists, but it hasn’t received many bicycle improvements. They would like more bike routes through the area.
  + Work with East Coast Greenways to create a spur route along the Shoreline.
* How to get sign-off from a local entity for a state route passing through the municipality?

**Sidewalk Maintenance and Safety** (Tom G)

* Injuries in the West End of Hartford prompted tom to communicate with trauma staff at St. Francis. Tom met with them on Sept. 22. They sounded very willing to work with the Board to reduce the number of falls around the hospital due to defective sidewalks.
  + Tom asked the hospital staff to locate the accidents on a map
  + Staff are concerned that providing this information would constitute a breach of HIPPA confidentiality.
* Kate had a safety conference with Yale and they sounded receptive to having an on-going discussion about traffic safety.
* Could we get a college student to go out there with a camera and GPS to document the conditions of sidewalks in the West End? Put the photos on SeeClickFix.

**DOT Accident Database**

* UConn is also developing an accident database. We are inviting them to our November Board meeting.

**Legislative Agenda**

* Commission on Children contacted Neil with four initiatives that they suggested incorporating into the Complete Streets Bill.
* The DOT is committed to reporting on the 1% bike/ped expenditure requirement.
* **ACTION ITEM**: Ray will look into federal Complete Streets bills.

**Workshop on how to tap underutilized bicycle and pedestrian funding**

* Friday, Nov. 4 at Central CT State Univ. Audience is municipal and regional officials.
* Kate is working with CRCOG and Bike Walk CT on this.
* Can we get CTN to cover the event

**DOT 11-foot lane policy**

* This is now standard practice for the DOT. There will still be opportunities that are missed, and Kate and David are looking for these so that they can be avoided in the future.
* Route 53 got striped at more than 12-feet. When they go back after a year to stripe with epoxy-based paint, they will probably stripe at 11-feet if it is eligible.
* DOT Chief Engineer is committed to 11-foot lanes.

**Complete Streets Training Opportunity**

Neil has been involved in discussion with the UCONN Center for Transportation and Liveable Systems and the CT Main Street Center involveing developing a training workshop for complete streets implementers to be held at DOT and the possible development of a Complete Streets guidance manual. Neil is going to invite representatives to attend the next meeting to discus this opportunity.

The board is also looking for infromation on local municipalities that have their own local Bike/Ped adivsory boards.

**Smart Growth America Grants**

* Grants are best suited for local municipalities

**Annual Report**

* Coming fast and furious
* Start brainstorming
* ACTION ITEM: Jason can circulate the minutes from the past year to jog our memories for the annual report.
* What has happened? What direction are we going in?
* Neil will send out a list of items for possible consideration between Board meetings.