

Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Committee Meeting – DRAFT Minutes

TIME: 12:00pm

DATE: Tuesday, May 14, 2024

PLACE: Zoom Call

Name

Affiliation

Amy Watkins

Watch for Me CT

Anna Stern

Watch for Me CT

Chris McArdle

Sheldon/Charter Oak NRZ

CJ Gandza

City of New Britain

Jay Stange

Transport Hartford

Jason Scott

Town of Rocky Hill

Justin Russo

Town of South Windsor

Lisa Coggins

Canton Traffic & Ped Safety Advisor

Lon Hultgren

Bike Mansfield

Martha Conneely

Riverfront Recapture

Nathaniel Jarvie

Town of Canton

Owen Deutsch

City of Hartford

Patrice Carson

Town of Bolton

CRCOG Staff

Anaka Maher

Caitlin Palmer

Matt Hart

Mike Cipriano

Sonya Carrizales

Roll Call

1. **Roll Call (00:00)** Mike Cipriano asked that attendees introduce themselves either via chat, or verbally to the committee.

2. **Public Forum (01:40)**

Mike invited any comments from the public.

3. **Approval of Minutes from the Meeting on February 13, 2024 (01:50)**

Mike asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the December 2023 meeting. It was motioned by Jason Scott and seconded by CJ Gandza. Motion was approved.

4. **Presentation–Riverfront Recapture (Martha Conneely & Marc Nicol) (03:00)**

Martha introduced the presentation along with Marc Nicol, where they discussed a new initiative that they've launched to count both park and trail visitors. Martha gave a brief background of Riverfront Recapture which began in 1981 with the mission of connecting people with the Connecticut River. Riverfront Recapture manages the riverfront parks in both Hartford and East Hartford through contracts with the two municipalities. In 2023, Martha said they have over 800,000 total visitors, and since 2000, they've had over 17,000,000 visitors at their various parks.

In addition to Riverside Park, Mortensen Riverfront Plaza, Charter Oak Landing and the Great River Park, Riverfront Recapture is developing their 5th park in the north of Hartford. Martha said they have been doing a lot of community engagement with this park.

As stated, they have counted park visitors since 2000 using manual counts, estimations, registrations & private event numbers, boat launches, etc...she mentioned that there are limitations on infrared technology and that current count methods are undercounting users. She provided an example from the 2022 Hartford Half Marathon where 975 people were counted for the whole day, but during the 8am hour when runners went by it counted 726 people, however there were 2,900 finishers in the race, so the limitations in the current technology were noticed, especially with large crowds.

Riverfront recapture applied for and was awarded a CT DEEP Rec Trail Grant for the expansion of camera network/park wireless system in Hartford and East Hartford and for the development of a counting dashboard through a company called Lumeo. This will provide fully automated, consistent, reliable and accurate visitor counts using advancing technology in their security camera network. She wanted to inform people that they are counting people, not facial recognition. She then showed an example of their live feed that has the ability to show objects in motion that for example can be tracked along the Founders Bridge and trail with people walking. The system has the ability to differentiate between bikes, peds, cars, trucks, etc...as well as determining the direction the user is going.

Jay Stange mentioned that this is interesting data because you can get a bicycle to pedestrian mode share from this technology as opposed to using just surveys.

Marc said this is also a great way to help market the park from a vendor perspective because they're able to get accurate information on total users.

Marc also mentioned that the security cameras can also help with any safety concerns that are in the field of view and allow them to monitor a large area of the park with a smaller staff.

Caitlin asked a question on equipment, installation and cost. Marc stated that it really does vary depending on the type of camera, technology within the camera and how many are purchased. Martha mentioned that this might be a good opportunity for a regional agency or a group of municipalities to work together to purchase this technology.

5. Updates and News (32:40)

East Coast Greenway Study (32:40) – Caitlin notified people that we’re making pretty good progress with the study. We’re keeping all trail options open, and also exploring what a rail-with-trail would look like. We’re currently working with the City of Hartford to determine which their preferred alignment might look like.

CRCOG Bike Ped Priority Network Plan (35:25) - Mike mentioned that the scope of work was reviewed and approved by CTDOT. He also mentioned that we’ll be conducting interviews in early June.

CTDOT Active Transportation Microgrant Program (36:35) - Mike detailed that CTDOT received 32 applications from 7 of the 9 COG’s statewide for a total of just under \$150,000 and CRCOG received 9 applications for about \$41,000. Funding is capped at \$5,000 for bikes, e-bikes, helmets, LCI Training, Reflective Vests, Promotional Material, etc...Mike let the committee know that the next round of submissions to CTDOT will take place at the end of June.

Regional Transportation Safety Plan (38:20) - Caitlin let the group know that they received funding to update our Regional Transportation Safety Plan that looks at dangerous intersections and corridors as well as bike and pedestrian safety concerns. She mentioned that CRCOG will present this to the group in the future. Caitlin also mentioned that the Vision Zero Task Force has begun to meet.

Regional Shared Micromobility Program (39:10) - Caitlin reminded people that we have a newly released RFP to bring back a shared micromobility system in Hartford and we were approached by New Haven to be included in this. She said that we’ll be able to offer this to other municipalities within the Capitol Region Purchasing Council (CRPC).

Walk Audits (41:05) - Mike informed the group that we will be going out to Canton to help with Walk Audits in three different sections of town; First, Harts Corner, which is a high speed, low pedestrian infrastructure intersection. Second, we’ll be looking at Dyer Avenue, which is a residential street that includes a school campus, community center and rail trail and was recommended by the Canton Traffic Safety Committee after being ranked highly by residents in a survey. Lastly, Lawton Street, which has the highest ADT of any local road in Canton and connects Route 44 and will look at both on-road, and off-road component as well as a 5-way intersection, Mike stated that this was also recommended to us by the Canton Traffic Safety Committee.

CRCOG Bike Ped Social Media Initiative (44:00) - Anaka Maher stated that we’re trying to get more engagement with the community and have better discussions through social media. She mentioned that this is a good way to get more information out to the public and helps us better understand what perceptions are out there.

2024 LOTCIP Solicitation (45:20) - Mike informed the group that CRCOG communities received just under \$40 million for 19 projects. Of those 19, one of them was Bike and Ped infrastructure specific, which was a trail in Bloomfield from Tyler Street to Rockwell Park, using an abandoned trolley line as the trail corridor.

Bike to Work (47:00) - Mike mentioned that May is bike to work month, and May 13 through May 19 is back to work week. Mike let the committee know that CTDOT has a lot of good information on this topic.

6. What's New in My Town (47:35)

- **CJ Gandza, New Britain:** CJ mentioned that they have their annual bike rodeo scheduled for June 8th and every youth in the city is eligible to come to receive a free helmet and lock and can go through a bike safety check station if they have their own bike and if they don't have their own bike, they can borrow one and go through a training course with LCI trained instructors. CJ also notified the group of the Beeline Trail connecting downtown New Britain and downtown Plainville.
- **Jay Stange, Transport Hartford:** Jay let the group know that on June 9th Hartford Transport is hosting a Bike Life Festival at the Center for Latino Progress, and that the 40 kids who went through the training will be receiving a free bike with helmets and locks. Love Your Block Festival will be May 26th on Park Street in the Parkville neighborhood.
- **Lon Hultgren, Mansfield:** Lon mentioned that the Mansfield Town Council approved their Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan and were able to incorporate public comments. He mentioned that the 4th grade bike education program is due to start on May 29th.
- **Amy Watkins, Watch for Me CT:** Amy gave a couple of quick updates, first, that they hired Anna Stern to help with outreach. Working with Manchester to help with communicating their road diet and other initiatives and Simsbury on some safety messaging on safety. She also mentioned that they will be at numerous events throughout the region to help.
- **Owen Deutsch, City of Hartford:** Owen also mentioned the Love Your Block Festival, and another event at May 30th, there will be meetings in both Hartford and Wethersfield to discuss potential trails between the two communities, he mentioned that there will be a meeting in Wethersfield a week prior to Hartford.

7. Other Business (55:10)

Mike asked if anyone had any other business to discuss.

8. Adjournment (1:07:30)

Caitlin reminded any communities that if they have a topic or project they're especially interested in and want to present, that they're welcome to do so.