

Connecticut Public Transportation Commission
Minutes of February 5, 2015

ConnDOT Headquarters. Conference Room B
2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington

Attendance: Members: Kevin Maloney, Richard Schreiner, Chris Adams, Ed McAnaney, Nick Lownes, Robert Rodman, Richard Sunderhauf. **Ex-officio members:** Frederick Riese (DEEP). **ConnDOT staff:** Katherine Rattan, Sherry Osterling.

Chairman Maloney opened the meeting at 1:45 pm, having delayed the meeting's start to allow for additional travel time on today's snowy roads. The minutes of the meeting of January 8 were then accepted as written.

Featured Speaker

Katherine Rattan, ConnDOT's Non-Motorized Transportation Coordinator, outlined her program and duties. As the coordinator for bicycle and pedestrian programs, she wears a number of hats. Rattan was in ConnDOT's Office of Intermodal Planning before she moved to her current position three years ago. Information about her programs can be found at www.ct.gov/dot/bikeped. Her program also has a Facebook page at www.Facebook.com/ShareTheRoadCT.

ConnDOT is beginning an update of the 2009 Connecticut State Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan, which had replaced the previous plan of 1999. The new Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan will be released in 2016.

A priority for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Program is to reduce the number of fatalities and injuries from accidents involving cyclists and pedestrians. Toward this end, Rattan does crash statistics analysis in order to shed light on potential strategies to improve safety. Among her other responsibilities, Rattan works as a liaison between the cycling community and FHWA, acts as a technical advisor to municipalities, coordinates with the Connecticut Forest and Park Association on trail issues, and works with Laurie Giannotti of DEEP's Recreational Trails Program to coordinate on trail issues with that agency. She also serves as a liaison to two other groups: the Greenways Committee run by Laurie Giannotti and the Connecticut Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board.

ConnDOT Executive Order 31 was signed by Commission Redeker in October 2014 to implement the Complete Streets Program of Public Act 09-154 (now codified in C.G.S. sect. 13a-153f), which seeks to make all reasonable accommodations for bicycle and pedestrian trips in the design of road projects. Toward this end, the ConnDOT Highway Design Manual is being updated to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian needs. Rattan said that a bicycle/pedestrian needs assessment is done as an element of all project design reviews.

Rattan mentioned that the sole performance measure currently used for the bike/ped program is that 1% of the capital budget must be spent on bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

According to Rattan, this serves poorly as a performance metric. Better measures of program performance would be based on safety, miles of facilities or connectivity.

Rattan next mentioned the U.S. Bike Route System which establishes key long distance bicycle corridors. In Connecticut, the US Route 7 corridor from Norwalk to the Canadian border and continuing to Montreal is one such designated system corridor.

Rattan is also working with the ConnDOT Office of Rail and the Bureau of Public Transportation to make it easier to get bicycles on trains. Last year, 100 new bike racks were installed on Metro-North trains but bicycles are only currently allowed on off-peak trains. Rattan is also involved in efforts to accommodate bicycles and cyclists on several major ConnDOT projects including the *CTfastrak* busway, the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield passenger rail service (now called the Hartford Line), transit-oriented development projects and trail projects. She noted that the busway segment from Downtown New Britain to Newington Junction includes a parallel multi-use trail, and that buses used on *CTfastrak* will have in-bus bike racks.

The East Coast Greenway, a multi-state trail running from Calais, Maine to the Florida Keys, was the next topic addressed by Rattan. Over 100 miles of the East Coast Greenway is in Connecticut, with the Farmington Valley Heritage Trail forming a large component of the Connecticut section. In Connecticut, the East Coast Greenway will serve as a trail system spine with other major trails branching off of it. These will include the Norwalk River Valley Trail, the Housatonic Trail, the Airline Trail, the Charter Oak Trail and the Hop River Trail. The Plainville segment of the East Coast Greenway is proving difficult to route. Pan Am Railroad, the preferred route, is not willing to sell property or an easement for the trail. Another route across Plainville will need to be found.

Funding for the ConnDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Program comes from a variety of sources including the ConnDOT budget, the Transportation Alternatives Program (a Federal initiative which Rattan said represents a dwindling funding source), the new Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program, the Federal Transit Administration, State bond funds and federal earmarks.

Bicycle lanes can be put in place as quickly as one year from conception to completion. However, Rattan said that towns should have their bike/ped plans in place to speed the implementation of bicycle facilities within ConnDOT projects. Though ConnDOT will stripe a new bike lane, it is the responsibility of the municipality to maintain the lane.

Local input, including local GIS data, is being solicited for the 2016 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan update.

In response to questions from Commission members, Rattan explained that cycle tracks are two-way bike lanes, one lane in each direction, thus one lane of the cycle track is in the opposing direction of the flow of auto traffic. Though common in other areas, cycle tracks are not currently legal in Connecticut. Proposed legislation may change that this year. Rattan also explained that in addition to bicycles and pedestrians, non-motorized transportation also deals

with issues including horse trails, non-motorized boat put-ins, and wheelchair access. Lastly, she noted that Share the Road public service messages are aimed at both motorists and cyclists. Cyclist behavior can be a safety issue as much as motorist awareness.

Reports from Operating Entities

Rich Sunderhauf distributed the January CT Transit newsletter entitled *CTFastrak Connection*. This issue contains a map of the Hartford portion of CTfastrak routes as well as schedule information on the routes.

Richard Schreiner displayed a copy of the just-completed *Greater Danbury Regional Bicycle Plan* prepared by HARTransit. Rick also mentioned that Francis Pickering is the new executive director of the Western Connecticut Council of Governments.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Maloney noted that, from recent articles he has read, Uber is beginning to recognize its need to cooperate with authorities. Chris Adams noted that the tenor of Uber's representative at the Capitol has been much more conciliatory of late.

Kevin also mentioned that cost figures contained in recent flyers and articles about the upcoming project to replace the Interstate 84 Aetna Viaduct in Hartford range from \$1.9 billion to 2.3 billion for an in-kind repair of the viaduct, \$4.3 to 5.4 billion for a new elevated highway, \$3.8 to 4.6 billion for a lowered highway, and up to as much as \$8.3 -10.4 billion for a tunnel option for I-84.

Kevin also related that the Bond Commission has approved \$100,000 for the design of a new train station in the Thompsonville section of Enfield.

Old Business

Fred Riese reported that he, Rick Schreiner, Mike Sharff from Peter Pan Bus Company and Jim Troup, Dean of Administration at Naugatuck Valley Community College, met at that college on January 23 to begin discussions on a potential bus service connection between the Waterbury and Danbury campuses of NVCC. The college also has an interest in pursuing a UPass program on HART Transit for its Danbury students, similar to the program it has with North East Transportation for its Waterbury students. A survey of the Danbury campus students to get a firmer estimate of the likely usage of both services is the next step in the process.

New Business

Fred also mentioned that the Connecticut Association for Community Transportation legislative breakfast will be February 25 at the Old Judiciary Room of the State Capitol at 9:00 am. ConnDOT Deputy Commissioner Anna Barry will be the keynote speaker.

Another meeting Fred mentioned is the first quarterly transit meeting of 2015, which will be March 4 at ConnDOT. Fred will present the CPTC Annual Report recommendations at that meeting. He also will develop the list of proposed locations for the Commission's spring public hearings for the March 5 meeting.

Rick Schreiner noted that the Northeast Passenger Transportation Association (NEPTA) conference will again be held in Hartford, March 24-26, at the Hartford Convention Center and the Downtown Marriott.

Chairman Maloney closed the meeting at 3:03 pm.