

## **NHDOT Statewide Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan and Economic Impact Study**

Complete Streets Advisory Committee/ Project Advisory Committee Kick-off Meeting

Meeting Date: 28 November 2018

Notes Issued: 6 December 2018 by Alta Planning + Design

*See attached for list of meeting attendees*

### **Meeting Summary**

Phil Goff from Alta Planning + Design is leading the project team and presented an overview of the consultant team, the project scope of work, the 12-month timeline, and expectations for project advisory committee which includes:

- providing feedback on draft deliverables;
- promoting website, online input map and survey via word-of-mouth and social media;
- advertising public meetings amongst various constituents (using email lists, friends, colleagues);
- helping get buy-in from their respective agencies and organizations;
- potential assistance at public meetings;
- facilitating the “meeting-in-a-box” that will be provided for regions that want to host additional meetings, beyond those run by the project team.

It was noted the project team has already connected with Amy Villamagna at Plymouth State re: their Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (BLTS) work, and that a handful of RPCs/MPOs are pursuing a project with Amy to launch in ~ Jan 2019 related to implementing BLTS recommendations in those regions.

The project team has begun gathering data, policies, and reports to review. They will obtain Strava data from Erik Paddleford at NHDOT soon.

Base mapping has begun; regional data is still needed. The state will be divided up into six inset regions, based on the RPC boundaries. Ultimately, the analysis and network recommendations will be primarily on state roads and local arterials. In some discrete areas, the team will also study backroads that offer parallel bicycle routes to nearby state roads with high traffic volume and/or speed.

After Mr. Goff provided an overview of the scope of work using a slide presentation, the group had a round-robin discussion about their key goals for the project. The summary of the comments made included:

- Improving the network and filling gaps, including between communities and with low stress bike routes. There is a desire to have filling those gaps prioritized, and to link the bike/ped network with transit.
- Reducing level of traffic stress, especially for bicyclists
- Increasing buy-in by others in the community for walk/bike/complete streets, developing educational materials and communicating economic value.

- Interest in understanding economic value of walking and biking to build support for projects involving pedestrian/bike facilities and trails
- Understand and improve NHDOT processes, particular interest in improving integration with project development process so bike/ped is included by default; developing criteria for lane widths and design features
- Identifying funding sources
- Facilitate cooperation from utility companies
- Improved ped/bike count data
- Need for ped/bike facility design guide for RPC's and municipalities
- Improved safety for vulnerable users
- Wanting to see increased mode share for walk/bike
- Document existing infrastructure; compiled in a single state map
- Understanding maintenance responsibilities and a way to support the need to maintain infrastructure so that is not a barrier to construction
- Understanding/documenting/sharing the health benefits of walking/biking
- Sharing best practices related to infrastructure and programs from other states
- Attract a young workforce to NH
- Performance measures to guide future implementation

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## Detailed Meeting Minutes

**Intro** – statewide plan, project advisory committee (PAC) & CSAC

Will Stewart and Valerie Rochon are official members of the PAC.

Phil Goff from Alta provided Intro, welcome, will need **project advisory committee** for feedback, promote website, social media, public meetings amongst various constituents, email lists, friends, colleagues,

Where applicable, public agencies, RPCs, liaison with commission and executive director, want buy-in from agencies. To get funding implementation. Another role: public meetings, recruited to help facilitate a table, take notes, get there early to help set up tables.

Alta: specialize in active transportation. Intro to experience.

RSG intro, EDR intro (Adam Winston – Boston office)

**Schedule overview:** 12-month project. Aiming for draft before next Thanksgiving, 2019.

- Overall scope of work includes 8 tasks.

### **Task 1 Public Engagement**

Project website with separate URL, linked to DOT ped/bike page, some other places. Website will contain draft materials, links to relevant topics and reports. Will include online input map, online survey. Looking to you to promote website, draw people to online input map and survey to help the team understand key issues throughout state. Alta team will also do mtg flyers, social media, tag images of difficult intersections via Instagram and/or Facebook.

Presentations at Transportation Advisory Committee mtgs at each 9 RPCs to happen in midwinter (rep from all 9 in attendance). Alta will reach out to you to figure out when monthly/bimonthly TAC meetings occur. We want to make it efficient, work with you to invite other local/regional stakeholders to mtgs. Advocates, universities reps from chamber of commerce, etc.

Five public meetings—one for each Exec Council District—expected in April/May 2019 with a final public meeting in October to present draft recommendations (likely in Concord)

Per the map, the red dots are RPC mtg location, blue square single public meeting in each executive council district.

Also, consultants will develop the “meetings in a box” kit for RPCs who want to do more meetings, everything you need (handouts, flyers, slideshow, etc) to host a secondary meeting more local .

Tim B: have you reached/will you reach out to Plymouth state, Amy Villamagna, BLTS.

(Phil: yes)

### **Task 2: Existing Conditions Assessment**

Part of task includes review of data and reports. We know a lot of RPCs have done bike/ped/complete streets plans that we want to review. NHDOT has material for us to review as well. Getting access to Strava bike count data (via Erik P). The compendium of programs, major events around walk/bike in state will help to feed economic analysis.

We've started base mapping and have reached out to RPCs to get shapefiles. Trying to gather a bit more. We will put together statewide inventory of rail trail paths, bike lanes, sidewalks. Accurate assessment as possible re: existing infrastructure.

Planning for 6 inset maps that will work well with portrait layout for final report. Focus of maps is RPCs, mostly at same scale (except NCC).

Chuck Redfern (via phone): SWRPC included in map and report?

(Phil: yes)

Scott Bogle (RPC) how much will one be able to see at the proposed map scale? Cities are just a dot.

(Phil: balance, for statewide plan, not looking at local streets or collectors. This will not be a series of local bike/ped plans. Thrust of planning work are state roadways, not exclusively, and will include other main roadways arterials, etc. You will see recommendations for primary state routes, and primary roadways in municipalities. For the scale, we tried to find sweet spot.)

Tim B: it is my unscientific perspective, state routes have higher speed limits than adjacent municipal roads preferred by cyclists. Any comment? Are we going to miss out if we focus on state routes?

(Phil: in a number of places throughout the state, we will need to rely on folks like you and our own analysis to find alternatives that parallel with state roads, more locally managed roads. That would be appropriate to show as a recommended facility. We will need to hear about where bike-friendly bypass routes might be to understand how to fit them into the network. If it's a local street running for a couple blocks to bypass downtown, we won't show it, however, if a back road runs for a few miles to avoid a state highway, then we will include it.)

Dave Topham: Will you look at the existing NHDOT bike map?

(Phil: we've already looked at 7 of those maps tied to tourist regions. It's a good starting point so not to reinvent wheel)

Meghan Butts UVLSRPC: map edits: North **Country** Council, Strafford, missing town names. Some town shave changed region. Is GRANIT layer fixed? Q what towns in what PC, every RPC has accurate map. UVLSRPC in Lebanon not Hanover. Lakes is in Meredith not Laconia.

(Phil: location not necessarily RPC office locations, but perhaps where the mtgs will be held.)

**Task 3. Summary of Policies/Programs**, overlaps a bit with inventory. Looking at policies/programs related to walking/cycling, including 4 E's: education encouragement evaluation enforcement at the RPC/local level. Key task includes analysis/potential recommended changes to NHDOT project development process. RSG take lead on this due to their experience.

#### **Task 5: Level of Traffic Stress Analysis**

Alta has done this for handful of other cities, states, regions (including Vermont w/ RSG). Inputs include street width, presence of parking, speed, bike facility. Sophisticated model partially develop by Alta staffer Kyle James, key part of our team (one of Alta's 2-3 national experts on this type of modeling). He's communicated with folks from Plymouth State.. Primarily state roads but will include Main Street Nashua – major road, not state route—for example. A lot of medium, larger cities have those kinds of routes. Output will be color-coded maps, sense of BLTS. We are scoped for bicycling LTS...pedestrian LTS tends to be more localized, so not included. State highways tend not to be compatible with all ages and abilities and will be a key focus.

Craig T: MPOs in Central elsewhere doing a pilot program to operationalize LTS. Make sure what you are doing lines up. Definitions of LTS 1-4 can be a bit different so make sure its synched.

(Phil: we can play around with breakpoints/thresholds and narrative/descriptions to ensure showing roadways most logical for people, consistent with what RPCs doing.)

Scott Bogle: MPOs, FHWA measuring multimodal and will have kickoff meeting early January. Involves Plymouth State. Make sure consistent. This will look beyond state roads to local roads. We should include members of your team in this effort.

(Phil: yes, please do.)

Craig: good source for on street bike lanes, mapping, etc. might come in a little late

Scott B: on street parking, designating bike lanes, shoulder width (includes RPC, SRPC, Nashua, Southern, Central).

Tim B: how will you factor in urban compact boundaries into this plan? What I'm getting at, a lot of the cities that have urban compacts may be ahead of state in terms of bike/ped within urban boundaries, once you hit urban boundary limit. Will network plan be detailed enough to show transition point?

(Phil: depends on length of corridor within the urban compact. A corridor of a few blocks might not show up. A mile or more, I suspect many of roadways are, e.g. Lebanon Route 10 was redone recently and will likely show up as BLTS 2 in urban compact and 3 or 4 elsewhere.)

### **Task 5: Performance Measures**

Important for state to track progress over time and may include: People cycling, mode share, census mode share, crashes, injuries, number of League of American Bicyclist bike friendly communities/business/universities. Goal to double over 5 years for example. Some Perf Measures are subjective, some data-based, eg. number of miles of state designated bike lanes in a particular time period. Goals and objectives will drive performance measures...each will have a corresponding performance measure or two.

Craig T: will you include rec's for additional data collected for accurate performance measures?

(Phil: yes, tie back into a program recommendations)

### **Task 5: Network Recommendations**

Focus: what are destinations for folks on foot and on bike with emphasis on linkage and connectivity. Analyze crash data throughout state, wherever might have clusters of crashes, would expect to see recommendations on nearby roadways. Recommendation treatments: color coded dashed lines, depend on if roadway providing regional linkages between towns/cities, or run through cities/urban compacts.

Lots of things to take into account, such as projects on the TIP. Want to hear about roads that are scenic which are good for bike touring and have potential but have narrow shoulder, things that could impact recommendations.

For our work in Rhode Island, we had 700 segments of specific improvements. It can take 12-16 hours to crank out prioritize list of projects when they number in the hundreds so we will minimize how often we do that. (RI plan had ~750 individual segments, grouped into 80-90 individual corridors, which were prioritized). List of prioritized corridors will accompany each map.

**Task 6: Economic Impact analysis.** Starts in ~ May, led by EDRG. Economic impact of state's capital investment, expenditures on bike shops, ped oriented businesses and tourism impacts. Not hiking.

Tim B: how does the analysis fit in and consider road and mountain biking?

(Phil: thrust of scope is on-road, but will not exclude mtn biking however. Not at a level of detail to get between road vs rail trail. Good chunk of economic impact will encompass people here cycling, regardless of type. In economic analysis task, we will incorporate rail trail stuff which will be used to understand how develop a network. However, our work won't include significant inventory of rail corridors, what's available to convert to a trail, etc.

Dave T: advancing Senate Bill 80, 560. New bill put into legislative services, to update plan going ahead. Hope to be done this coming year and will have an economic impact study built into that. Your touching on it here, should be a more in-depth study on rail trail impact on tourism (this one higher level).

**Task 7: walking bicycling video** if budget available. Will gather video from public meetings as we go regardless. Longer version: 10 min type video for Vimeo and YouTube and be promoted on project website. We will also do a 60-90 second abridged version, more user-friendly, social media friendly. To be done next fall as we are completing the project.

**Task 8: draft/final report.**

Phil went through list of items to be included in the report based on tasks described above.

**Next steps:** data collection, base map. Public input map available in the next handful of weeks, before holidays or in early January. We are also focused on existing conditions analysis, gap analysis, equity analysis. Equity issues include: data around income, household access to auto, English second language, need for walk/bike transportation. Equity provides an additional criterion for evaluation and prioritization methodology.

Next CSAC/PAC meeting: January where we will focus on vision and goals prepared in draft format for comments. Sent a handful of days in advance to think about addition/subtraction, comments.

Meghan B: are you going to do consult RPCs when determine corridors for modeling. We have identified corridors in each region we do studies on.

(Phil: short answer yes. Is it safe to assume some RPCs have more formal ped/bike plans with corridors laid out in report format, while others don't have plan but have ideas where want to see improvements?)

Meghan: All RPCs have general transportation plan which is corridor focused. Nice to link corridors together.

(Phil: if in shapefile format, if able to get in GIS data, for sure we definitely want to get those into our maps. We've reached out to most RPCs so far to help with existing conditions requests which have helped us put together inventory of walk and bike facilities. We will reach out again for those already contacted to get additional info, such as GIS files relate to corridors RPCs already looking at.)

Stephanie Verdile OSI – What role can colleges play in the planning work? Lebanon, Keene, Dartmouth?

(Phil: no university representatives here today but they are perfect stakeholder to invite to each 9 RPC TAC meetings in the winter. If university/college officials don't want to be in a larger group, and prefer to have face to face, the team can meet with them individually. We will be putting those meetings together determine which additional stakeholders should be invited to the RPC TAC meetings.)

**Vision exercise:** What are your 2-3 top goals, or 2-3 things that are burning needs, things most critical to address in our planning work?

Tim Dunn, NHDOT: pass

Larry Keniston, NHDOT: pass

Henry Underwood, SWRPC: 1) reducing the level of stress on infrastructure for those walking & biking; 2) design standards for improvements that could be useful not just for the state but for municipalities; 3) sidewalk network: process of sidewalk construction opportunities needs to be streamlined in state projects, especially.

Doug Deaett, Hanover advocate: electric bikes, e-bikes changing scope of bike facilities, just beginning to get started in NH. Are you looking into future potential rideshare with electric bikes?

(Phil: e-bikes complicated, some folks are looking at how regulate them on rail trails. We'll work with NHDOT to get a better sense how much the Department might be looking for recommendations related to e-bikes that might come out of this plan, knowing other advocates, other agencies look at.)

Doug: Regulation based on volume. Other communities ahead of us, can you predict what NH will do, plan for that?

Alex Belensz, NCC: 1) want to echo Henry...reduce LTS, increase local buy-in to invest in complete streets improvements & codify commitment in local, help them understand role improvements have in place making economic development. 2) The way communities can bring in funding if state has commitment via a master plan. Demonstration projects, funding at state level. 3) Educational materials to sell communities to invest and plan for those.

Matt Waitkins, Nashua PC: 1) need a way to fund, have these improvements codified in documents so when road improved restriped, part of capital improvement program...should happen automatically. If done correctly, we wouldn't have 35-40 TAP applications, \$20 mill applications for only \$5 mil of funding for approved projects.

Chuck Redford, Pathways for Keene: in urban compact for bike and particularly ped, we have corridors where utility poles prevent us from adopting complete streets or a safe way for ped/bike travel. Specifically in Keene, we have a commercial corridor West Street which is a major arterial...could your study touch on other communities in other states and how they work with utility companies to get them to come to the table, work on burying lines, so we are not dealing with poles? Some sidewalks only 3' wide, pole in the middle, in busiest commercial street in the city. City had difficulty with utility company Eversource particularly. Can your study touch upon how to relate to utility companies to have a more cooperative manner?

Leigh Levine, FHWA: great to see this happening. 1) I want to piggy back on Matt's comments, policy on how to integrate concerns in project development process. We need to avoid missed opportunities when do normal highway development process. 2) Project prioritization for complete networks. 3) Strava data/crash data part of this process as well. Not so much ped data as bicycle crash data, however.

Craig Tufts, Central RPC: 1) Also, want to lower stress...we want all users of the roadway, all ages and abilities, including seniors, and kids' safe routes to school. Focusing on villages in the network planning is good (similar to the map of Rhode Island). 2) Biggest thing for me: promote innovation overall. A lot of cool things going on throughout country infrastructure- and policy-wise. BPTAC figured out what happened, no one made a mistake but not really good outcome. Get into inner working of NHDOT figure out.

Maddie Diionno, SNHPC: 1) Integrating complete streets projects with road reconstruction, rather than two separate projects. Integrate in master plan, rather than going back.

Adam Hlesny, SNHPC: 1) More robust set of count data. We've done a lot and our planning commission is starting to do more trails and sidewalks. Seeing more of that state wide would be good.

Simon Corson, Town of Amherst: 1) Echo comments about counts...it will help to change the conversation. 2) Also want to echo Alex educational materials, demo projects to get local buy-in. 3) important to consider econ impact of rail trail, value of homes along rail trail trails generally. This helps mode shift to work and attract young and skilled workforce to state.

Meghan Butts, UVLSRPC: 1) Although municipalities work hard on effort, for ped/bike, it ends at urban compact and the facilities typically don't connect to next town's business district. I'd like to see how this plan can help fill the gap.

Liz Strahan, NHDES: 1) get more people out of their cars.

Stephanie Verdile, Office of Strategic Initiatives: 1) Key for me is access, connectivity, safety, maintenance. Big thing for the muni's: who is going to maintain? We need certainty and less finger pointing. 2) Safe routes to schools get passed over for lack of maintenance, only so much can take care of in muni's budgets. Serious consideration of how communities maintain wonderful trails in a town of 3000 or less is important.

Greg Bakos, NH Bike-Walk Alliance: 1) key is the results of economic study....should become part of vocabulary, so don't have to force communities, so they want to for own economic health. Simon touched on when we are able to improve walking, biking, this improves NH culture, keeping/attracting young people. Change image of our communities to be like either Portland (ME or OR).

Scott Bogle, RPC: 1) Echo what Greg said. 2) Important to build public awareness of value of safe accommodation of bike/walk. Partly through economic impact study. 2) Importance of data to build case, integrating bike/ped count data into routine auto counts done at regional and state level. Hoping this plan can highlight best practices from other states around counting, crash-data collection what is available incomplete want more complete data with regard to incidents with bike ped, distracted driving data, are other states doing more with that so clearer picture of role distracted driving issue plays related to safety of walk/bike modes.

Scott Bogle, RPC (subsequent to meeting, via e-mail):

- Build awareness among state and local policymakers of the economic and other community benefits of bicycle and walking to the state and communities. The economic impact study will be very useful for this.

- Move toward a complete streets approach in NHDOT (and local) project development processes with early and thorough consideration of ped/bike and transit accommodation.
- Find solutions to the common impasse where NHDOT offers to incorporate sidewalks and/or bicycle lanes as part of highway projects, but only if municipalities will handle maintenance. Municipal reluctance to commit to winter maintenance, combined with NHDOT's policy that it does not maintain pedestrian and bicycle facilities, has led to sidewalks being omitted from multiple road projects. This policy needs reconsideration.
- Incorporate performance measures related to pedestrian and bicycle access into NHDOT and MPO performance-based planning. NHDOT's Balanced Scorecard currently lacks any ped/bike measure. The FHWA mandated measures address non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries, but not accommodation or access. Interested to talk with you about potential performance measures based on LTS.
- Highlight best practices for ped/bike data collection from other states, including integrating ped/bike counts into routine auto volume and turning movement counts. If examples exist from other states of better data collection protocols for crashes involving people bicycling and walking, or crashes potentially involving driver distraction, highlight these as well.

David Jeffers, Lakes Region RPC: we in Lakes region economy focuses on tourism. 1) Bike/ped plan, major factors coming out was a safety, we do have a few bike/walk paths, many of our main streets and major roads are state roads. 2) I don't know many families that take their kids out biking on in regions like that. If there were shoulders measured in feet instead of inches that would be a nice thing.

Valerie Rochon, Portsmouth Chamber: 1) I have a different viewpoint and perspective, for me economic impact is most critical. Three goals: a) quality of life and welcome workforce winter and summer, b) workforce development housing is impossible w/o transportation strategies that are safe and easy for folks to bicycle in, c) third thing is tipping point tourism for bike/ped friendly transportation. At some point narrow width of roads irritate folks coming into the town and not planning to bicycle. Visitors having expectation of the road design is important.

Adam Ricker, UVLSRPC. 1) Transit connectivity important. We have a great transit provider, but doesn't go everywhere, provide safe connections for bike/ped will cast a wider net for transit accessibility.

Erik Paddleford, NHDOT. 1) What bicycle-ped infrastructure is out there and where located. 2) need to know where are gaps, where can we extend network, build network out and spend money most fairly economically. 3) develop criteria to do things like 10' lanes, supported with data. 4) need integration of ped/bike facilities into highway project, ideally with a checklist so PM's can look at it and can't ignore it.

Craig Tufts: those are the kinds of things I'm thinking in terms of innovation

Will Schoefmann, City of Keene: 1) need a baseline inventory in terms of what's out there, have a starting place. 2) Also feeling gap analysis will lend itself to some of that, address connectivity between towns. Usually state routes connect those towns...where Urban Compact infrastructure ends, how to understand how on-street connectivity works is important.

Dave Topham, Granite State Wheelman and NH Bike-Walk Alliance: Many good ideas already, but generally we all seem to want infrastructure and road design for everyone not just cars: lane width and

signage. Economic impact. Tourism is big money. NH is 34<sup>th</sup> in country for bike friendly state by LAB. We were #6 some years ago but other states have improved while we haven't. We haven't updated bike/ped plan in 2005. National ranking which promotes tourism, money coming in, helps the workforce. Need to focus on using roads for what meant for: people. Let's look at big picture. (Larry: update was 2000, not 2005, but is supposed to be every 10 years.)

Tim Blagden, Concord-Lake Sunapee Rail Trail: 1) we need low stress connectivity...it is not connected unless it's low stress connectivity. Current NHDOT policy: bicycling is a local activity, it's intra-town not inter-town. Ped/bike infrastructure is local infrastructure, will not be maintained by state, that's department policy. Therefore, significant pressure brought to bear bicycling and walking valid modes for public right of way. We should own up to the fact that they are maintained by local public agency. 2) Claim made that fog line and centerline placement related to rumble strip placement not able to be done accurately enough so that perhaps fog lines and rumble strips not lined up probably, I think is being reviewed now. Rumble strips under fog line is better for everyone. I don't know why can't be done. 3) We also need a municipal design guide that town and private developers can use when designing a new street, or rehabbing a street, would make a big difference. 4) I would like the state to adopt complete streets as formal policy. 5) Speed limits on state roads: it takes an act of god to get speed limit less than 30 mph (state routes 5 mph faster than similar local roads). We should have a policy for 25 mph in town would be helpful. There are only 13 urban compacts...what do we do for those who live in rural areas who want lower speed limits?

Matt Watkins: land use ordinances drive what can be put in next to the right of way. Those kinds of land use ordinances impact bike ped (land use development patterns influence walking) as much as road infrastructure.

Doug D: we need to also focus on some policy language to describe different between "right of way" and "right of prescription".

Tim B: we technically don't own right of way, old enough roads we own right of prescription to maintain road in existing description.

**Meeting adjourned at 3:15 pm**

the science of **insight**

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