



Connecticut Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board

Volunteer board members advising agencies of the state on policies, programs, and facilities for bicycles and pedestrians.

2800 Berlin Turnpike • Newington, CT 06111-4113



January 22, 2021

Honorable Governor Ned Lamont

Legislative Transportation Committee Chair, Honorable Roland Lemar, and Vice Chairs Steve Cassano and Travis Simms

Legislative Transportation Committee Members

Commissioner Joseph Giulietti

Dear Governor Lamont, Transportation Committee Chair, Vice Chairs and Members, and Commissioner Giulietti,

Established under the Complete Streets Law (CGS Section 13b-13a), the Connecticut Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board is required to submit an annual report to all of you that outlines a) the progress made by state agencies in improving the environment for bicycling and walking in the state; b) recommendations for improvements to state policies and procedures related to bicycling and walking; and c) specific actions taken by the Department of Transportation (DOT) in the preceding year that affect the pedestrian and cyclist environment. This letter serves as our 2020 report.

The progress since the Complete Streets legislation was enacted in 2009 has been transformative. In the past year, even with COVID-19 restrictions, we saw significant strides in improving conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians. These efforts could not have moved forward without the programmed investments of state and federal funding in bicycle and pedestrian facilities and programs throughout the state. The Board urges those receiving this letter to continue to invest in improving safety and facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Investments in bicycle and pedestrian facilities are especially important as the pandemic has illustrated pent up demand for these facilities, with trail use increases of up to 200% in some parts of the state. As the economy gets back to normal over the next year, multi-modal transportation will help us to build back better, giving more individuals the option to walk or bicycle for regular transportation, perhaps in combination with a transit trip. We know that well designed bicycle and pedestrian facilities bring visitors to the state and give residents a reason to stay put.

Specifically, we can report the following statewide progress in 2020:

- The legislature introduced HB 5324 which included several bicycle and pedestrian safety provisions such as: requiring motorists to grant the right-of-way to pedestrians at a crosswalk who express their intention to cross the road; allowing municipalities to set speed limits on certain roads; requiring that the Office of State Traffic Administration consider bicycle and pedestrian safety when completing major traffic generator reviews; requiring that motorists use reasonable care when opening the door of a vehicle for the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians; increasing the fee provided to municipalities for certain moving violations; and establishing a greenways commemorative license fund. The CTDOT supported the first four of these provisions. Unfortunately with COVID, the bill did not move forward, but the contents are expected to be re-introduced in the 2021 session.
- The Connecticut Greenway's Council awarded Scott Bushee, a DOT design engineer, its 2020 Design Award for work on the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail in Cheshire.



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- The CTDEEP and CTDOT working jointly have contracted with UConn Extension CT Trails Census to initiate an effort (Trail Finder) to publish an online guide and collective database of all trails in the state.
- The DOT Vendor in Place paving program scheduling has been adjusted to allow more time for local government input on bike facilities, which can be implemented as part of repaving.
- The DOT, with local governments, spent \$1.3 million in 2020 for multi-use trail construction and the following sections of trail opened:
 - Pequonnock River Trail (Trumbull)
 - Moosup Valley State Park (Sterling)
- The DOT continued to promote local improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities through the Community Connectivity grant program. Of the total amount of \$25.8 million awarded to date, \$3.2 million was expended in 2020 with \$4.9 million total expended to date. A new solicitation for these projects was issued in August 2020 with an expected total award of \$5 million. Seven projects (Bridgewater, Essex, Meriden, Southington, Sprague, Stamford, Tolland) were completed and ten projects (Bristol, Cheshire, East Hartford, Ellington, Glastonbury, Old Saybrook, Portland, Simsbury, West Hartford, Westbrook) moved into construction.
- To address the rising number of pedestrian involved fatal crashes in the state, DOT has taken the following steps:
 - Continued to fund the “Watch for Me CT” public outreach and media campaign to encourage safer use of the roads by all users, bicyclists, pedestrians and motor vehicle operators. Approximately \$350,000 is budgeted for this campaign annually.
 - Provided up to \$15,000 in funding to seven police departments (Hartford, Bridgeport, New Haven, Stamford, East Hartford, Waterbury, New Britain) for traffic enforcement aimed at unsafe vehicle driver and non-motorized road user behaviors that put pedestrians and bicyclists at risk.
 - Held a two day virtual Strategic Highway Safety Summit.
 - Designed upgraded pedestrian controls, including curb ramps and pedestrian signals. These improvements are planned for construction at 69 locations in 2021.
 - DOT took an active role in encouraging deployment of Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB) at pedestrian crossings by beginning designs for municipally owned roads. Designs are projected to be completed in 2021 with construction beginning in 2022.
- FHWA approved the DOT’s ADA Transition Plan in mid-October 2019. Per this plan, all curb ramps will be ADA compliant by 2034. The DOT commits \$5 million annually to provide for ADA upgrades to curb ramps and sidewalks on state roads. (****Note: \$6 million was budgeted for the 2019-2020 year only because it included the pedestrian facilities for the rest areas as part of the ADA curb ramp upgrade.*)
- The DOT plans to conduct a Road Safety Audit in Easton by the end of 2020
- The DOT continues to allow for 11 ft. wide lanes when repaving, resulting in wider shoulders. This standard was implemented on 166 miles of state highway in 2020. (Note that 166 out of the 176 miles in the 2020 Program were restriped with wider shoulders – 94%)



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- The DOT, working with UConn, convened a Complete Streets Information Exchange for municipal staff and officials.
- The DOT has established, and convenes on a quarterly basis, a Complete Streets Committee. This group includes planners and engineers representing all bureaus within the Department, and they meet to discuss issues regarding bicycle and pedestrian facilities and safety. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board intends to share issues that come to our attention with this committee on an ongoing basis. In fact, we are sending them a letter at this time with specific recommendations for DOT operations.
- Complete Streets Design Reviews. All state and federally funded projects are required to fill out a Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel Needs Assessment Form. This provides the basis for the Project Coordination Unit to review the projects to assure that complete streets has been addressed. While 113 projects were reviewed in 2019, 66 had been reviewed by mid-November 2020.

While this is significant and noteworthy progress to date, there remains much work to be done. On the following page are the Board's recommendations for consideration in 2021. The key recommendation, which is listed first, is that investments must continue to be made in bicycle and pedestrian facilities and programs. Even with the best of intentions, progress will not be made without the state investing in the effort to make our streets complete and safe for all users.

The Board would be happy to discuss any of these recommendations with you. My contact information is listed below.

Sincerely,

Sandra M. Fry, P.E.

Chair

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2021 RECOMMENDATION	DISCUSSION	IMPLEMENTING AGENCY	
1	The state should continue to allocate funding for bicycle and pedestrian improvements.	Significant funding provided since 2016 has enabled marked progress in building bicycle and pedestrian facilities and in focusing upon bicycle and pedestrian safety in the state. We look forward to the addition of substantial investments in bicycle and pedestrian facilities with CT2030 as that plan evolves.	Governor, Legislature
2	Modify existing crosswalk legislation to ensure pedestrians are protected when approaching the crosswalk instead of in the crosswalk.	The Board recommends that the legislature adopt language that states cars must yield when a pedestrian is "at" a crosswalk rather than just "in" a crosswalk. Prior to 2007 our statutes had this provision.	OLR, Legislature
3	The legislature should adopt "dooring" legislation that requires that a person opening a vehicle door does so with a degree of care for moving traffic.	CT is one of only 9 states that does not have legislation in place regarding dooring. Dooring crashes can be catastrophic for bicyclists.	OLR, Legislature
4	Support designation of \$10 million in bond funds for greenway development	When the DOT decided to roll federal Recreational Trails funds into a more general category of transportation spending, it was with the promise that the state would replace these funds with state monies. This has not been done on a regular basis and the recreational trails program has not issued a request for projects that could be funded since 2018. CT is the only state that did not accept the federal apportionment of Recreational Trails Funds. Previous unfunded requests for recreational trail grants funding exceed \$11 M	Governor, Legislature
5	Continue educational outreach and awareness program.	The Watch for Me CT program fills a critical need and should be continued and expanded so that the messaging reaches the entire state in a systematic way. This type of safety campaign helps all road users to understand their rights and responsibilities and leads to improved conditions for vulnerable road users. Campaigns related to distracted driving and "dooring", including promoting the "dutch reach" should be added.	CTDOT in cooperation with DMV and DESPP

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2020 RECOMMENDATION	DISCUSSION	IMPLEMENTING AGENCY
6	Pass legislation to allow for a pilot of school zone speed cameras designed to collect data and establish the efficacy of this method for reducing speeding.	OLR, Legislature
7	Ongoing program for training law enforcement officers in bicycle and pedestrian laws should continue and grow	CT Dept of Emergency Services and Public Protection
8	Support Bike Walk CT's efforts to implement bike and pedestrian safety training in elementary schools.	DOT, Department of Education
9	Modify state legislation to allow Payment in Lieu of Sidewalks (PILOS) with such funds dedicated to bike/ped improvements where they are needed most.	OLR, General Assembly
10	Document the economic benefit of investments in bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including trails and complete streets.	UConn, DECD, OLR
11	Encourage development of bicycle and pedestrian networks that serve affordable housing.	OLR, General Assembly, OPM, CHFA, DOH