

Ellsworth Bicycle Pedestrian Committee
February 1, 2007
Minutes

Attending:

- Lee Beal, Ellsworth City Council
- Candy Gammel, Ellsworth Recreation Commission
- Bob & Candy Bachorik, new to Ellsworth, were active with bicycle and pedestrian planning in Farmington
- David Baldwin, Downeast Scenic Rail
- Cathy Kozaryn, Union River Healthy Communities
- Jim Fisher, Hancock County Planning Commission
- Tom Stipe, Union River Healthy Communities
- Dan Stewart, Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, Maine DOT
- Heather Albert-Knopp, Hancock County Planning Commission
- Sarah Hammitt, College of the Atlantic employee, interested in bicycle and pedestrian planning
- Jaime Liepolt, College of the Atlantic student, head of the college's community bike program
- Michelle Gagnon, Ellsworth City Planner

1. Presentation on Maine Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning

Dan Stewart, Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator for the Maine Department of Transportation, presented a slide show about the purpose of bicycle and pedestrian planning and key points to consider. Brief notes are included below. For more info: dan.stewart@maine.gov, 624-3252

- Maine DOT's Bicycle and Pedestrian Program works to make communities more walk-able and bike-able around the state through policy development and other strategies. Sidewalks, shoulders, off-road trails, etc.
- It has grown harder for people to walk and bike over the past 50 years, due in large part to the way our communities have developed and grown.
- Attractiveness is an important part of a bicycle and pedestrian plan. Quality of places – people need places where they *want* to walk and bike.
- All people have a right to be able to have safe access to the transportation system – walkers and bikers are *part* of the transportation system, not separate from it. Dan uses the phrase “all users” of the transportation system, to include walkers, cyclists, people in wheelchairs, strollers, etc.
- Economic implications of pedestrian-friendly communities. When communities are more walk-able, people want to stop and spend money there. Frommer's recently listed Portland, Maine as one of the world's top 12 travel destinations for 2007, mentioning how walk-able Portland is.
- DOT has a new road shoulder policy. They will now build shoulders when they rebuild roads. Also putting in sidewalks in town, when in-town road construction projects are done.

- “Complete the Streets” is a national movement to make streets safe and accessible to *all* transportation system users: <http://www.completestreets.org/>
- Several strategies include: Shoulders, sidewalks, off road trails, signage, crosswalks
- DOT responsible for arterials. Municipalities responsible for work on minor collectors, but can apply to DOT for funds (town pays 1/3); Local roads are responsibility of community. Can work with DOT to get bicycle and pedestrian issues into the DOT plans for arterials, etc.
- There are many different funding sources that can support bicycle and pedestrian improvements.
- Improvements can be required by a town as part of the development approval process
- Identify policies that deal with bicycle and pedestrian issues, and make recommendations
- Walk-ability is about connectivity; green spaces; signage and information about where places are
- Countdown signals for crosswalks are better than the flashing pedestrian crossing signal alone
- MaineDOT has suggested changes to the State Planning Office on what communities are required to document when updating a comprehensive Plan. Communities would need to identify their walking/biking network systems, deficiencies, and how they’ll address those deficiencies.
- In bicycle and pedestrian planning it’s important to think about both destinations and origins

2. Vision, Goals and Objectives

Draft Vision (Refer to notes from 1/4/07 meeting)

- ◆ Jim and Heather worked with the information gathered in the last meeting’s discussion to do a first draft of a mission statement for the committee:

“Ellsworth is a welcoming community that offers safe and accessible options for walking and bicycling. People walk and bike daily for transportation and recreation inside the compact area and to reach favorite destinations.”

Corrections

- There is no “compact area” in Ellsworth. Instead there are a series of concentric areas starting in town with the “downtown” area, moving outward to the “urban core” area, and then beyond to the “growth” area. The planning office is in the process of determining the boundaries of these areas, and will share them with the Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee.
- Add “all users” to accommodate people with wheelchairs, strollers
- Might also consider adding the phrase “all ages”
- Replace “options” with “system” – make it stronger. Other possible words: “alternative”; “choice”
- Add “attractive” – has to be appealing to people. This is of primary importance.

- A date for the vision: 2030

Alternative

- The committee also agreed that the vision statement from St. Petersburg, Florida is generally good, but should also include mention of “attractiveness” or “quality of place”:

“St. Petersburg will be a City with a balanced transportation system designed to move people safely and effectively. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities shall be designed, encouraged and celebrated as indicators of a healthy city.”

Action: Jim & Heather will re-draft for next meeting

Mission Statement

- Draft mission: *“The Ellsworth Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee is a standing subcommittee of the parks and recreation committee created to promote development of policies, infrastructure and activities for bicycling and walking.”*
- Discussion: why is this group a subcommittee under Recreation rather than Transportation? This might be a long-term aim of the committee.
- The draft mission was revised to read:

“The Ellsworth Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee is a standing committee promoting development of policies, infrastructure and activities which improve conditions for all users of the transportation system, including bicyclists and walkers.”

Draft Goals/Objectives/Strategies

- Draft goals, objectives and strategies were reviewed from the 1/4/07 meeting minutes.
- “Quality of Life” was added as an additional goal. The current list of goals:
 1. Safety
 2. Education and Awareness
 3. Connectivity
 4. Infrastructure
 5. Quality of Life - including aesthetics

Action: Jim and Heather will turn these into goal statements

3. Visual preference exercise – the good, the bad and the ugly

Jim Fisher shared a slide show of photos of the city of Ellsworth including both assets and issue areas

4. GIS Demonstration

Jim Fisher shared a brief slide show with some of the mapping techniques that will be used to map assist with bicycle and pedestrian planning in Ellsworth. Different layers will be overlaid, including streets, Tom Stipe's work on sidewalks, bus routes, etc.

5. Next Steps

- The next meeting will include short summaries of the various planning documents and activities that have potential impact on bicycle and pedestrian planning in Ellsworth. This will help keep the committee from duplicating the efforts of other groups. These include the following (person who will present is listed in parentheses)
 - i. Ellsworth Comprehensive Plan (Michelle)
 - ii. Ellsworth Health Plan (Michelle)
 - iii. Waterfront Redevelopment Plan (Michelle)
 - iv. Down East Sunrise Trail (Jim)
 - v. Downeast Scenic Rail and STAR Center (David)
 - vi. MaineDOT Transportation Plans (Michelle)
 - vii. Other plans – High Street, Washington to Beckwith Hill, etc. (Michelle)
- Origin/Destination mapping – where are the neighborhoods and other “origins” of the routes that cyclists and pedestrians want to take? Map neighborhoods in relationship to destinations.
- Develop criteria to prioritize various bicycle/pedestrian improvements
- Revise Vision Statement and Goals Statements (Jim, Heather)

Next Meeting:

Thursday, March 1 at 5:30 PM
Ellsworth City Hall

Agenda will include:

- Origin/Destination mapping activity
- Presentations on plans that may impact bicycle and pedestrian issues in Ellsworth (see above)
- Review of revised vision statement, goals