



Simsbury Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan

Advisory Committee Meeting #1: Meeting Summary

Time and Place:

Monday, September 18th at 5:00 PM, Simsbury Public Library, 725 Hopmeadow St

Attendees:

Name	Affiliation
Pattie Smith Jacobus	Simsbury Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)
Paul Mikkelson	Valley Cycling Group
Steven Antonio	Antonio's Restaurant (133 Holcomb Street, Simsbury)
Patrick Zapatka	Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT)
Adam Kessler	Town of Simsbury
Lisa Heavner	Simsbury First Selectwoman
Jason Trombly	Simsbury Police
Lisa Gray	Simsbury Chamber of Commerce
Anita Mielert	Simsbury Main Street Partnership (SMSP)
John Lockwood	Simsbury Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)
Sarah Nielsen	Simsbury Main Street Partnership (SMSP)
Mike Glidden	Simsbury Planning Department
Debbie Thibodeau	Simsbury Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)
Laura Russotto	Squadron Line School Safe Routes to School Coordinator
Chris Nelson	Business owner and developer
Wanda Colman	Town resident
Sheree Landerman	Tariffville Village Association, former Simsbury Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
Barbara Collins	Farmington Valley Trails Council (FVTC)
Matt Naughton	Town resident and walking/biking advocate
Eric Wellman	
Mark Scully	Ensign Commons
Chuck Brody	Simsbury Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)
Jeff Shea	Town of Simsbury
Walter Rochefort III	The Bicycle Cellar; Pedego Electric Bikes Simsbury
Tom Roy	Town of Simsbury Public Works Department
Marcy Miller	Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.
Mary Miltimore	Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.



Meeting Summary:

Tom Roy, Director of the Public Works Department for the Town of Simsbury and the Project Manager for this project, began the meeting by welcoming all attendees before he introduced First Selectwoman Lisa Heavner. She provided opening remarks about the purpose behind this study and the importance of community members getting involved in this type of planning effort. Tom then provided additional background about the project and thanked all the attendees for their participation in the Advisory Committee. Each attendee briefly introduced him or herself and their interest in bicycling and walking in Simsbury.

Next, Marcy Miller gave a presentation that included information on the project purpose, project team, schedule, and what can be expected in the resulting Plan at the end of the process. The presentation can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/simsbury-pedestrian-and-bicycle-master-plan>

Visioning Activity

Mary Miltimore then explained the importance of a vision statement and set of goals for the project, which should reflect what the community wants for the future of walking and biking in Simsbury. The vision and goals will guide the development of the Plan to ensure the resulting recommendations reflect what the community wants. Meeting attendees were then asked to participate in an activity to help the project team understand the community's vision and goals. Each attendee was provided with a yellow and white notecard.

Attendees were asked to use the yellow note cards to write the top three words or key phrases they think of in response to the question: "What do you want to see for the future of walking and bicycling in Simsbury?" Next attendees were asked to use the white note cards to write up their top three words or phrases in response to the following question: "What has to occur to make your future in Simsbury possible?"

The project team then led a discussion based on what people had written on each card. These cards were collected at the end of the activity and were organized into categories to create the summary word clouds below, which give greater prominence to the words that appear the most often.

Question 1: What do you want to see for the future of walking and bicycling in Simsbury?



A word cloud visualization of transportation-related terms. The most prominent words are "Education" (large blue), "Facilities - sidewalks" (large white), "Funding" (large white), "crossings" (large green), and "bike racks" (large teal). Other visible words include "Connectivity", "Safety", "Enforcement", "Accessibility", "Traffic calming", "Business friendly", "Signage", "Multi-use trails", "Town reputation", "Affordable housing", "Walking", "Cycling", "Biking and walking culture", "Community involvement", "Neighborhood connections", "Transportation planning", "Accountability", "Maintenance", "Expertise", "Special services", "Innovative financing plans", and "Affordable transit".

Discussion

- A meeting attendee suggested that more town-wide events that promote bicycling could simultaneously help to promote a bicycling and walking culture while also promoting tourism and helping local businesses.
 - An attendee also felt that a dirt bike park could be an attraction for bicyclists in neighboring towns.
- An attendee brought up how difficult it can be to safely pass bicyclist on narrower roads with many turns or hills that inhibit visibility. There was a discussion about the recent 3-foot passing law, a statewide law that requires all motorists to allow for 3-feet of space when passing bicyclists on the roadway. An attendee supported the idea of a 4-foot passing law to further encourage safety.
 - The majority of attendees agreed that there needed to be more education for all the roadway's users, including motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians, to ensure they can safely share the road.
- An attendee stated that pedestrian and bicycle plans as well as advocacy efforts sometime devote more resources, focus and recommendations on improvements for bicyclists. This attendee encouraged the project team and advisory committee to make sure pedestrian improvements are equally considered during the development of this Master Plan.
- Numerous attendees described the importance of education in varying capacities, including the potential integration with school programs as well as with the DMV. Many agreed that education should be a critical component of the Plan.
- Similarly, numerous attendees agreed that the enforcement of existing laws should be a high priority to improve the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists.
- The majority of attendees believed that walking and bicycling should be accessible for all people of all ages and abilities.



Mapping Exercise

Following the discussion surrounding the visioning and goals activity, the project team introduced a mapping activity. Many attendees had discussed the need for greater connectivity within Simsbury, including the need for connections to the existing trails, improved facilities in the downtown and village areas as well as stronger connections between downtown or other key destinations and the surrounding neighborhoods.

The project team explained that the mapping activity would build on that discussion and provide attendees with the opportunity to draw where those potential connections could be on large maps of Simsbury. All attendees were divided into four different small working groups. Each working group engaged one another to identify all the key destinations on the maps with a blue "X" and any desired connections with a green line.

Upon completion of this activity, a member of each group briefly described their discussion and what they had mapped to the rest of the Committee. These maps were collected by the project team and are currently being incorporated into the development of the draft Plan.

Next Steps

Marcy closed the meeting by thanking all attendees for their attendance and involvement in the Master Plan. There was a brief discussion about potential dates for the next meeting, which is likely to be held in November. More details on a specific day and location will be announced at a later date.

Yellow note cards: Vision - What do you want to see for the future of walking and bicycling in Simsbury?
Make it easy to walk the resources downtown - for errands, businesses, residences, entertainment
Safe
Connected
Well communicated
Inclusive
Zero accidents
Dirt bike park
More locations to walk wide dirt paths
Safe, beautiful - get to connect to town and surrounding area
All ages
Well-maintained, multi-use trails
Logical sidewalk connections to multi-use trails
Careful expansion to regional trail connections
More children walking and biking to school
Connections within the town for bicycling
Safe for all
Respect for the Farmington River, wetlands and the environment by not putting any new trails near it. Have a plan to do this/ there is an alternative for ____.
Safer walking - better sidewalks in the villages and downtown Simsbury.





Safer biking - bikers have to be educated too (signage)
All year access to the rail trail
Safe (for children)
Business friendly
Asset (to the town)
Smart planning - don't add bike congestion where it doesn't fit already
1) expand the network of safe / segregated routes between periphery / neighborhoods and key destinations (school age user access; elderly / disabled user access)
Connect
Network
Safety
To improve connectivity to foster economic development, social interaction, and recreational activity
Education /Employments
Equipment for public works
Law enforcement
Better for pedestrians
Focus on other (non-cyclist) users
Pedestrian! Pedestrian!
Connect
Safe
Convenient
All age and purpose - accessibility and all abilities
Connectivity between villages
Promote community bicycle / walk friendly
East Coast Greenway - completed through Tariffville to Bloomfield
Key connections - parks, schools, school connections to trails/ sidewalks, transportation
Network
Safety
Bike stations
Connectivity with other towns
Safety
Accessible
Convenient
Accessible
Diverse
Safe
Village connection and safe crossings
Safe, walkable, bikable (cohesive) community w hic will promote economic development
More bicycle racks
Engage business community - help with funding
Easy, safe connections for walking and biking



Connecting neighborhoods
Connecting residences to trails and activity areas

White note cards: Goals - What has to occur to make your future in Simsbury possible?
Funding
Transit connections
Enforcement and education
Build new connections
Continue to develop culture to encourage walking and biking
Educate drivers, set expectations
Signage businesses
Accessibility for all ages
Town bicycle events to draw more out-of-towners - promote Simsbury
More education to residents: the police department does post on Facebook but we need more
Funding
Police presence
Maintenance
More sidewalks linking Route 10 with bike patch
Educate drivers about pedestrian traffic
Continuous safety - don't just stop after some features
Money
Speed humps
More of a focus on doing it for businesses. The opposition I have heard is generally negative about road cyclists. Let's focus on making bicycling and walking good for businesses.
Occur



4-foot lane for pedestrians and bicyclists
Affordable taxes
Safe multi-generational walks/multi-use trail
Sidewalk or trail connections
Continued community support
Safety education for all (rules/laws)
Finish connector from Bloomfield Route 7 with Route 10
Safe Routes to School bike/walk/multi-use trails
Signage
Develop a plan that is all ages, healthy from Town to town
Maintenance sign
Crack treatments
Traffic calming features
Xing by library to Fitzgerald
More education about the protection of wetlands, aquifer, and the river and streams and forests
Funding for better sidewalks all over town
Walkers, bikers, drivers need to have more patience, courtesy, and knowledge of the roads
Funding for better sidewalks all over town
Think before you act
Community involvement (that is not isolated to a few or too small of a group)
Rely on experts
Education / outreach - vehicle courtesy
Travel pattern optimization
Integrated facilities - connect businesses to routes
Safety education for all (rules/laws)



Transparency
Accountability
Accessible for all
Funding
Set priorities
Maintaining funding for network
Strategic connections to expand connections
Improve / expand access for all ages
All skills and age levels
Integrate plans from various groups
Improve infrastructure
Maintenance schedule
Funding for network expansion / grants
Community safety campaign - bike, pedestrian, motorist
More crosswalks
More sidewalks connecting to trails
A diverse array of destinations businesses and attractions
More / better signage directing bikers and walkers
"Share the road" education programs and campaigns
More bike racks
Traffic calming features