

Report on the Community Bicycle Workshop portion of the Community Bicycle Workshop and Youth Programs session at the Multimodal and Transit Summit

This was the third meeting of community bicycle workshops in Connecticut, the last being convened in February 2018 at Center for Latino Progress.

The purpose of this meeting was to explore the possibility of working together more closely in a consortium. Projects might include joint fundraising, bike swaps, lending each other a hand with mechanics and other volunteers on special occasions, sharing best practices and bulk buying among activities.

In attendance were John Martin of Bradley Street Bicycle Co-op (New Haven), Joseph Dickerson of BiciCo (Hartford), Nancy Dunn (BiciCo volunteer), Mark Hoffman and Bruce Miller of Bike New Britain, Dave Hoyle of CT Cycling Advancement Program (Middletown), and Susan Smith of Bike Walk Connecticut.

We went around the room sharing information about our organizations' programs, challenges and needs. One common denominator shared by several organizations is the recycling of donated bicycles for distribution to low-income cyclists. Now that Bike Walk Connecticut is reviving its education program (primarily in the schools) this presents an opportunity for some of us to add an educational component to our programs (by this I mean traffic skills as mechanical education is nearly universal).

While they were unable to join us, Tony Suppa of Northeast Community Cycles (Stamford) and Rob Bareiss of Bike New London indicated they are both interested in joining the consortium.

A survey was distributed with questions about financial needs and will be compiled shortly. This will give us a first look at what grants and donations we might seek together and in what amounts for what projects.

The rationale behind joint fundraising is that together we might be able to attract the attention of donors (e.g. foundations and corporations) that might otherwise not be likely to fund any of our programs individually. Individual members of the consortium would be allowed to opt out of a particular solicitation and also to add donors or potential donors to a "do not solicit" list if they are actively being solicited by a member. The question of how funds would be distributed (equally or based on the size of an organization) is yet to be determined.

A draft letter of agreement which primarily concerns joint fundraising was distributed. Dwight Hall at Yale, the University's community service arm, has agreed to serve as a fiduciary agent for the purpose of accepting tax deductible donations for the consortium if members indicate that they will join the consortium.

Next steps: Distribution of second survey with basic information about each organization. Scheduling next meeting at Bike New London's new quarters on a Saturday in January (date TBA)