



June 2, 2008

Michael Piscitelli, AICP
Director
Department of Transportation, Traffic and Parking
200 Orange St. G3
New Haven, CT 06510

Re: Bicycle Plan Implementation, Fiscal Year 2008-2009

Dear Mr. Piscitelli:

At your request Elm City Cycling has prepared this technical memo outlining our recommendations for the 2008-2009 fiscal year, relating to the continued implementation of the city of New Haven's 2003 Share the Streets Program. Specifically, the Share the Streets Program is a document published by the city in February of 2003 outlining numerous goals and strategies for improving conditions for cyclists in the city of New Haven. The purpose of this memo is to translate those goals into specific actionable improvements to the city's physical infrastructure based on the anticipated municipal resources available for the upcoming fiscal year. We are assuming a budget of \$40,000-\$50,000 for bicycle-related improvements. Our recommendations include: planning and engineering studies, striping, signage and pavement quality that serves to encourage cycling and provides for added cyclist comfort and safety on public roadways, and provisions for bicycle parking and storage.

Planning and Engineering Studies

Planning and engineering studies are crucial to the successful creation and maintenance of bicycle-related infrastructure. To this end, Elm City Cycling recommends a number of studies be undertaken in the upcoming year.

First, we recommend that the city undertake a study regarding the feasibility of the creation of bicycle boulevards throughout New Haven. Bicycle boulevards are streets on which bicyclists have priority over motor vehicles and motorists and not allowed to pass cyclists. Bicycle boulevards are usually placed on secondary roadways with relatively low traffic volumes that are

not emergency routes. The city of Berkeley, CA has successfully created a network of bicycle boulevards. Most notably, these streets have been found to benefit both cyclists and non-cyclists alike, as residents on the streets have noticed an increase in property values and quality of life from the resulting overall reduction in motor vehicle travel speeds.

Second, we recommend that the city of New Haven conduct an overall review of its existing bicycle lanes, including the total mileage, the width of various lanes, and pavement quality. An inventory of existing facilities is crucial in terms of maintenance and future planning efforts. As part of this review, we ask that the city reevaluate the feasibility of bicycle lanes throughout the city. Specifically, city planning and engineering staff have indicated in the past that only 12 streets in the city have sufficient width to allow for the installation of bicycle lanes in accordance with the city-adopted Chicago standards. We believe that there may be additional streets that are suitable for the installation of bike lanes, particularly if the city were to explore the possibility of striping vehicular travel lanes at a width of nine to ten feet rather than twelve to fourteen feet. Narrower travel lanes would have the added benefit of reducing vehicular travel speeds to levels closer to the 25 mile per hour speed limit that exists on the majority of city streets.

Third, we recommend that the city evaluate traffic signals along popular bicycle routes to determine whether or not improvements such as additional loop detectors or video detection is warranted. Particularly, many actuated signals throughout the city are not designed to detect bicycles, which forces cyclists to run a red light and cross several lanes of moving traffic.

Finally, we recommend that the SCRCOG bicycle and pedestrian study adequately address bicycle issues pertaining to travel to and from Union Station and evaluate bicycle routes in the West River and Fair Haven neighborhoods.

We assume the abovementioned recommendations can be undertaken using the resources of the New Haven City Plan department, without need for specific or separate funding.

Striping and Signage

Roadway striping and signage serves to increase the comfort and safety of cyclists. It signifies to motorists and cyclists alike that bicycles have a rightful place on the roadway, which in turn alleviates the stress and anxiety of cyclists, and the frustration and confusion of motorists. Accordingly, Elm City Cycling recommends the continued installation of roadway striping and signage designating bicycle routes throughout the city of New Haven.

First, we recommend that the city pilot a bicycle boulevard similar to the way in which the Orange Street bicycle lane was originally created as a pilot project. It is recommended that such a facility be constructed in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the city of Berkeley, CA. We estimate the cost of this project to be approximately \$15,000.

Second, we recommend that the city paint a bicycle lane along Howard and Kimberly Avenues. It should be noted that the city of New Haven has already determined that this stretch of roadway has sufficient width to safely stripe and sign bicycle lanes in accordance with the standards set

forth by the city of Chicago. The Chicago standards are those that have been adopted by the city of New Haven. We estimate the cost of creating bicycle lanes on the city-approved portions of Howard and Kimberly Avenues to be approximately \$15,000.

Third, we recommend that the planned greenways within New Haven be signed as such. The purpose of this improvement is to educate the public and generate excitement about these upcoming projects, as well as to encourage cycling along these routes.

Finally, we recommend that all roadway surfaces along designated bicycle routes be adequately repaired. Potholes and other deficiencies in the roadway that may cause an annoyance or inconvenience to motorists can pose a serious threat to the safety of cyclists. In particular, sections of Orange Street and Whitney Avenue that serve as dedicated bicycle routes are in dire need of repair/resurfacing. We have not estimated a budget or cost for these repairs, as they are not specific to cyclists – indeed, such improvements would benefit all roadway users.

Bicycle Parking and Storage

In terms of infrastructure, the expanded provision of bicycle parking and storage is the top priority of Elm City Cycling in the upcoming year. In many ways, the available parking supply represents the terminal capacity of the bicycle transportation system. Simply put, people will be reluctant or unwilling to utilize the bicycle as a form of transportation if they are not certain that they will have a safe place to secure their bicycle at the end of each trip. Moreover, bicycle parking facilities must be created to allow for cyclists to access other modes of transportation such as buses and trains. Therefore, we recommend that bicycle parking be provided and/or increased at major transit hubs in the city including: Union Station, State Street Station, and the New Haven Green. Bicycle parking should be provided such that at periods of peak demand 10% of bicycle parking spaces at a given location are available. While we have been very pleased with the quality of city-installed bicycle racks, we ask that all new bicycle parking be constructed in accordance with the bicycle parking guidelines published by the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals. A copy of these guidelines can be provided upon request. We estimate the cost of the abovementioned improvements to be \$10,000. Additionally, we recommended that numerous bicycle parking facilities (bike racks) be installed throughout downtown New Haven, as well as at popular destinations outside of downtown. We estimate the cost of additional downtown bicycle racks to be approximately \$10,000. Please see Figure 1 for a list of the recommended locations for additional bicycle parking.

We also recognize the importance of bicycle parking at schools in New Haven. More so than other types of commuters, students traveling to and from school are typically making relatively short trips (less than three miles), which are perfectly suited to bicycle transportation. We therefore recommend, as a minimum, high-quality bicycle parking at all New Haven Public Schools. We assume funding for this type of project could be obtained through participation in the SRTS program, and have not included a cost estimate nor included this project as part of the budget for bicycle infrastructure improvements for the 2008-2009 fiscal year.

In total, the cost of the recommended improvements to bicycle infrastructure for the 2008-2009 fiscal years is \$50,000. We hope this memo is helpful to you and the city of New Haven. If you

have any questions, or need additional information or materials, please do not hesitate to contact us at: ecc_bike_plan@googlegroups.com.

Very truly yours,

ELM CITY CYCLING



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private:stream