

Technical Advisory Group (TAG)

Tuesday, September 9th 2025

11AM – 12PM ET

Virtual via Zoom

Attendees

WestCOG: Kristin Hadjstylianos, Kristin Floberg (and others in the Conference Room)

Toole Design: Carrie Long, Shawna Kitman

TAG Participants: Garrett Bolella (Norwalk), Luke Bittenweiser (Stamford), Gabriella Circosta-Cohee (Greenwich), Greg Dembrowski (Brookfield), Ed Gentile (Darien), Meg Haffner (Kennedy Collective), Jack Healy (New Milford), Veera Karukonda (Danbury), Rick Schreiner (Housatonic Area Regional Transit), Jianhong Wang (Stamford), Keith Wilberg (Westport), Michael Wrinn (Wilton), Bob Yastrzemski (Ridgefield)

Presentation

Introduction

Kristin Hadjstylianos of WestCOG, introduced the project to review progress to date and next steps for the Traffic Calming Toolbox effort. She then introduced Project Manager Carrie Long and team member Shawna Kitman.

Carrie walked through the planning precepts. Today, many CT municipalities depend on CTDOT's highway design manual (HDM), and this toolbox provides additional guidance to suit the context of WestCOG's communities, and to provide further guidance regarding when and where to use different traffic calming measures.

Regional Status Quo

Carrie reviewed the Regional Status Quo task, in which Toole Design captured how local engineers, departments of public works, and other municipal technicians operate. This research informed an understanding of current operations and norms in WestCOG communities.

Key takeaways include the advancement of Complete Streets, realignment of intersections, expansion of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, especially in lower density and rural areas with a focus on trails and side paths, reduction of curb cuts, parking management improvements such as reducing curb cuts.

Toole Design facilitated two focus groups last Spring, with municipal engineers and public works staff, emergency service providers (including EMS, Fire, and Police leadership), Transit, and Public School stakeholders. These focus groups revealed challenges and opportunities across the regional transportation network. These include vehicle rerouting to local roadways (which are unable to support increased AADT), honoring historic features while accommodating 20th century safety measures, preference for raised crosswalks, and coordination of tools and development practices suitable to the local landscape.

Best Practices

Toole design led a literature review of traffic calming and Complete Streets best practices, which resulted in a Technical Memorandum.

Carrie presented the need for context-sensitive design to intentionally reflect the natural and built environment of southwestern CT. Key priorities gathered from the Regional Status Quo process are to expand and connect the active transportation network, prioritize transition zones to manage target vehicle speeds, evaluate shared space opportunities, identify and implement a systemic approach to reduce crashes, especially serious crashes that result in death or serious injury.

Traffic Calming Measures

Carrie shared the three types of traffic calming infrastructure, including special streets, such as shared spaces/festival streets, periodical measures such as raised crosswalks, and cross-section measures such as land reconfiguration.

She explained the distinction between vertical deflection, horizontal deflection, width reduction, and route reduction, which will be reflected in the Toolbox. Raised crossings and raised intersections are popular among WestCOG stakeholders. Mini roundabouts, or neighborhood traffic circles, reduce speeds and therefore minimize conflicts of moving vehicles. Curb extensions create a choke point, forcing slower speeds. Other programs, policies, and site planning practices that improve safety, comfort, and operation of the roadway network, including safe connections to schools and stormwater management will be reflected in the toolbox.

The toolbox will also include specific details about application, cost range, and local examples.

Questions/Discussion

A participant asked if raised crosswalks are allowed on CTDOT roads like Route 202 in Brookfield. CTDOT has prevented the municipality from installing these in the past. Kristin indicated this is geared more to local roads. Carrie's confirmed that the toolbox will reflect state guidance.

A participant inquired about the discussion with emergency services. Carrie explained that the discussions centered on participants' experiences with traffic calming measures – in terms of their efficacy in addressing safety issues, and in participants' interactions with these devices on the roadway. Emergency service professionals were able to reflect on the key safety issues they experienced when responding to the scene of events in their community, and to provide insight on traffic concerns and risks that could be mitigated with the treatments in the Toolbox. Issues like mountable curbs, navigating large emergency trucks over devices, and other experiences were discussed in the focus groups as well.

A participant inquired about design specifications, to which Carrie responded that there will be higher-level details regarding context and application, anticipated cost by range (low, medium, and high), timeline (short, medium, and long) as well as exceptions. The participant asked if the TAG will get the opportunity to review, and Kristin noted that the Project Advisory Committee will review, but TAG members can send Kristin an email if interested, stating: "the more feedback, the better".

A participant asked if the Crash Modification Factors (CMF) will be included; the measures that have associated CMF will be in the master table. Carrie confirmed that CMF are incorporated with devices for which these factors are available, as well as a quick overview to what CMF reports and means related to the safety impacts of a given measure. The toolbox will illustrate a library of options, for both municipal staff, emergency service providers, and the public to consider.

Conclusion

Carrie thanked the TAG for the opportunity to present to their group and requested that participants share local examples and images of traffic calming or Complete Streets in their communities with Mike Wilson, the WestCOG project manager, for consideration in the Toolbox.