Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress FAQ

Q: What is Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (LTS)?
A: Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) seeks to determine the level of stress experienced by bicyclists on any given roadway. This tool works by reviewing various road attributes, such as speed of cars, traffic volumes, shoulder space, or the presence of parking and bike lanes. It does not incorporate road surface condition or topography.

Q: Why is LTS being used?
A: Bicycle LTS measures how well a community can be accessed by bicycling. If your community is full of roadways with a Level of Traffic Stress “3”, this means that it is only accessible by bicycle for those who are “comfortably confident” bicycle riders. If our goal is to enable more people to ride a bike to work, school, or for errands, we need to make sure our roadways are comfortable enough for people who are less confident on a bike. The “willing but wary” riders make up a large chunk of the population.

Q: What will LTS be used for?
A: LTS will be used for network analysis purposes. Planners will tie in census data, destinations from open street map, employment, and other data to measure the roadway connectivity for people of various levels of confidence on a bicycle. This tool can be used to estimate which street or roadway improvement projects best improve the bicycling network, can help score project applications, and can help us measure progress in improving bike-ability over time. As of now there are lots of tools out there to measure how well our roads serve cars, but there is nothing for bicycling.

Q: Who is working on this project?
A: Six NH Regional Planning Commissions have teamed up with Plymouth State University to implement this pilot program through a Federal Highways (FHWA) pilot program. The hope is that someday this measure will be used statewide and locally to help improve bicycling conditions.