

Albany Bicycle Coalition Monthly Meeting Notes July 28, 2022

Attendees: Jill Haimson, Mark Maniak, Nesta Littlejohn, Lorenz Worden, Glenn Sandberg, John Gillivan, Hugh Johnson, Chester Bennet, David Pisaneschi, Ed Brennan

Special Topic - Mayhem on the Roadways

- Crash Victims Rights and Safety Act - Ed provided a bill status update:
 - Gov. Hochul signed the new law making pedestrian and bicycle safety awareness a component of the pre-licensing exam for new drivers.
 - Ed was on a Safe Streets Coalition Zoom call with Deputy Sec'y of Transportation Nivardo Lopez. Per Mr. Lopez:
 - the upstate 25 mph bill was very likely to be signed and was being held up by questions about when and where to sign it and whether there would be any special publicity effort
 - Pat Fahy's Complete Streets Bill was in some trouble. DOT apparently had some unspecified objections. They were looking into the possibility of a "Chapter Amendment" or adding it to the Budget Bill next Session
 - Keep up those calls, cards and letters to the Governor's Office!
 - <https://www.governor.ny.gov/content/governor-contact-form>
 - 1-518-474-8390 | Office hours: 9:00am to 5:00pm
 - The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224
- The Safe Streets Coalition is collecting legislation recommendations for next session (besides resubmitting CVRSA bills that didn't pass last session). We discussed submitting the following:
 - Beefing up law about stopping for peds in crosswalks - Mark offered to do some comparative research with states that seem to treat peds better
 - Felonizing hit and run of vulnerable road users. This is currently a misdemeanor except in instances of severe injury and repeat offenses. Ed is doing some comparative state research. He already noted there are other states that treat this as a felony if there is any injury
 - Creto-Kade Law - this is a bill that had passed the senate in years past
 - It was dedicated in part to the memory of David (Creto) Sherry, who was struck and killed while riding his motorcycle on July 11, 2014 in Guilderland, NY.

- Under existing state law, there is no serious penalty for committing a moving violation that results in the death or serious bodily injury of another person, unless the violation is considered Vehicular Manslaughter or falls under a separate offense, such as driving under the influence or driving with a revoked/suspended license.
- Creto-Kade's Law would ensure a misdemeanor charge against any driver who disobeys traffic law and causes serious bodily injury or death to another person, while carrying a punishment of 30 days in jail and/or a minimum fine of \$300. The offending driver would also be mandated to complete an accident prevention course

Special Topic - Local Legislation

- Ed reported on the push For 25 MPH Speed Limits Locally
 - Schenectady City Council and Albany City Council Members (especially Deborah Zamer) are awaiting the Governor's signature to submit local legislation. Ed Lindner of Bikeatoga also reports support from Saratoga City Council persons.
 - We should expect some blowback - we need to have our arguments together
 - We need to be at City Council meetings to present those arguments
 - We need letters to the editor - Ed noted the TU has already provided their own positive editorial - See: Editorial Tuesday, July 5, 2022 "Can't drive 25? Oh yes you can."
- Updating Albany City's Archaic Bike Ordinances. In the course of the recent debate about Skateboarding in Albany, we noted the need to update Albany's Ordinances related to bicycles. A synopsis of our findings is at the end of these minutes.

Reports

- **Treasurer's Report** - David reported our income from donations has been flat but that we still have plenty in our account for our needs at this time.
- **Transport Troy Update** Pam had a conflict but reported by e-mail:
 - Transport Troy met a couple of weeks ago and assessed the situation. TAP, Inc. has concluded that they don't have the "bandwidth" to continue coordinating the group's activities effectively.

- The members are interested in continuing efforts to improve conditions in Troy and it seems possible that the Independent Living Center may be able to take Transport Troy under their wing.
- The change hasn't been officially announced yet so consider this still tentative.
- **Cycle Schenectady Report** - Art Clayman reported they:
 - Provided manpower for a bike corral at a local pub when Cycle the Erie ride came through Schenectady on July 16 - roughly 150 riders stopped
 - Did a bike rodeo at kick-off event for Schen'y Inner City Ministry's summer free lunch program.
 - Are planning a Sept ride introducing new Union College students to Schen'y
 - Will be tabling at Schen'y Greenmarket on July 31, with Electric City Bike Rescue offering repairs.
 - Will be participating in a Sustainability fair at Greenmarket in Sept.
 - Are working with Schen'y United Neighborhoods for 25 mph on most roads.
 - Wrote letter of support for Schen'y County Planning Department's grant proposal to NYS Parks and Historic Preservation for restoration of bridge over Nott Street, which was removed about 15 years ago. This would eliminate a confusing, annoying and dangerous gap in the Mohawk Hudson Bike Trail that includes a grade-level crossing at a busy intersection.
 - Are planning to do more tabling at various Electric City Bike Rescue Fix-It Days (Steinmetz Park, Bellevue, Central Park)
 - Scored 35 helmets from Martin, Harding, Mazzotti in teen-age sizes, which will allow bigger kids to participate in our activities.
- **CDTC Bike Ped Committee March Meeting** Ed reported the following from the July CDTC meeting
 - Local Saratoga entrepreneur spoke on micro mobility charging needs (e.g. e-bikes and e-scooters)
 - Though a fraction of EV car needs & cost these needs have been largely ignored
 - 100 alternative micromobility devices can be charged vs per EV car
 - It can be done at light poles with 20 amp circuit
 - Are we recreating the same congestion and energy issues we have now?
 - Five Year Draft Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for 2022-27 is awaiting your review and comment!
 - See <https://www.cdtcmopo.org/transportation-plans/2022-2027-tip>

- Outreach:
 - 5-7 p.m. Aug. 2, Albany Public Library main branch
- Comments will be due on August 12, 2022!
- CDTA Cycle! Reported
 - Over 25,000 rides so far - added Menands and Watervliet.
 - Expect e-bikes at the end of the season.
 - Still working on logistical issues with Scoot - expect end of July.
 - Ridership is steady or increasing.
- **Village of Colonie Bike Safety Day** - John Gillivan reported this event was successfully held at Cook Park on Saturday July 16th, 2022. The Albany Bicycle Coalition led the bike helmet sizing/giveaway and conducted the bike rodeo. 35 children participated in this event. The Albany County Dept of Health & Village of Colonie Traffic Committee representatives also were in attendance.

Old Business –

- **Transportation Projects**
 - **Patroon Greenway Project Final Report** (Ed) -
 - <https://www.patroongreenway.com/project-resources> still only lists draft report.
 - They are making a few minor changes based on feedback from Mayor Sheehan and compiling an executive summary. The final report should be posted by mid-August.
 - **MHBHT Connector** - John Gillivan has no news to report. He believes we need to take a look at alternative routes.
 - **Washington Park Update** Ed attended an advisory group Zoom Meeting with Mr. William Trudeau and Creighton Manning's Mark Sergeant on Tuesday 7/26
 - Announced the beginning of a 30 day Public Comment Period starting Wed 7/27
 - The website below has an “Online Public Workshop” where people can view a 16 minute presentation video, review documents and create their comments - they say this online workshop has been more responsive than in person meetings
 - Big takeaway - they are dropping one way Washington Park Rd option
 - They ask that you complete the Online Survey
 - You can also click a link to email additional comments
 - See: www.albanyny.gov/CompleteStreets !
 - **New Scotland Avenue Update** - Ed reported the following he learned from Councilperson Jack Flynn:

- Paving contract is out for bid for the area from Manning to Whitehall
 - Expect work in August
 - After meeting with Bill Trudeau, Councilpersons Flynn and Romero report the project WILL INCLUDE BIKE LANES!!!
 - Fingers Crossed!
- **South End Connector** - Hugh reported frustration with the glass cleanup plans. The person that he was working with is no longer on the project. The project has been delegated to an individual in the City Planning Department that has so far not responded to his inquiries.
- **Champlain Canalway Trail** - While not reported at the meeting, Ed provided a letter of support to the Town of Halfmoon in their quest for a funding of a staged completion of the Canalway Trail north of Upper Newtown Road to Mechanicville.
- **CapitalNYBikeMap.com Conversion Update** Glenn reported that map data has been successfully imported into ArcGIS, and a prototype map was successfully created with all required features (except "Directions" custom routing, which had to be dropped since it depended on expensive proprietary software). However, there are unsolved problems. In particular: we don't yet know how to incrementally add new routes within the ArcGIS environment, without deleting and recreating / reconfiguring the data every single time. Research is ongoing.

New Business –

- **T-Shirts** David reported that Paypal has told them they can help him set up a new button for people to pay for t-shirts. Glenn said he would work with David to post the button to a test webpage on our site.
- **Rides**
 - **8/7 Champlain Canalway Carnival/Bike Safety Day** John Gillivan reported this will take place Sunday August 7 from 1 - 4 pm at Hudson Crossing Park, County Route 42 in Schuylerville.
 - **Slow Rides for 2022 -**
 - Capital Corruption Ride - Ed reported there are several groups interested in participating with us in a Capital Corruption Ride in Albany's Downtown. The ride would focus on the 1960's and 70's and is tentatively scheduled for September 24th.
 - The Daily Grind Ride is **Now The Bard and Baker Ride!** - We agreed the ride will be held **August 13th**. As the Daily Grind is closed on Saturdays we will meet instead at Bard and Baker 1034 Madison Avenue in Albany at 9:45 am and shove off at 10 am. We will ride to Bard and Baker 501 Broadway in Troy for brunch.

Riders have the option of meeting the group at the Corning Preserve Boat Launch. We should be passing the Boat Launch between 10:30 & 10:45. The ride is free to all - brunch is not. For more details see: <https://albanybicyclecoalition.com/events>

- **Membership Outreach/Tabling**
 - **Tabling** - Glenn and Ed tabled the Alive at Five Reggae night. It was hot and windy. Tables were set up in the bright sun. Attendees stayed in the shade. It was hard to hear the few people that came by. We won't be doing Alive at Five again. We had a better experience at the Delaware Farmers Market. Ed will look into doing a Saturday Farmers Market at Washington Park
- **Business Card Redesign** - We agreed to go with Glenn's traditional business card redesign.
- **Upcoming** – Rides/events? Go here:
<https://albanybicyclecoalition.com/resources/events/>)
- **Meeting Dates**
 - ABC meets the last [not the 4th] Thursday of each month unless there is a conflicting holiday. Upcoming dates are as follows: 8/25, 9/29, 10/27

<<< Recommendations for Albany City Bike Ordinances >>>

Initial comment: City should consider removing the obsolete term velocipede and may wish to include references to e-bikes (perhaps by state defined class), scooters and e-scooters (except those used by the disabled), skateboards and e-skateboards

City of Albany, NY / The Code / Part II: General Legislation / Vehicles and Traffic
Article I Bicycles and All Motor Vehicles

City Ordinance § 359-1 Alarm bells for bicycles.

All persons riding or propelling with the feet a bicycle, tricycle, velocipede or other vehicle of propulsion on the public streets or avenues or in the parks of this City shall attach to and carry on such vehicle an alarm bell, which said bell the persons **shall ring or sound on approaching and within 30 feet of the intersection** of any street or avenue proposed to be crossed.

This should be repealed entirely. Firstly, bells are already required by state law Vehicle and Traffic Sec. 1236:

New York State Vehicle and Traffic Laws

§ 1236. Lamps and other equipment on bicycles.

(b) No person shall operate a bicycle unless it is equipped with a bell or other device capable of giving a signal audible for a distance of at least one hundred feet, except that a bicycle shall not be equipped with nor shall any person use upon a bicycle any siren or whistle.

Secondly, we guessed the requirement of ringing the bell on approaching intersections was to avoid scaring horses and pedestrians. This makes no sense now when most road users are noisy motor vehicles with their windows rolled up. In modern times nearly all pedestrians crossing intersections are worried enough about getting hit by cars that they ought to be aware to look out for traffic. We know that is not always true, but the ringing a bell at all intersections seems like it would be of little help to improving pedestrian safety. I looked at the ordinances of Buffalo, NYC, Rochester, Syracuse, Utica, Saratoga, Schenectady, Troy, Plattsburgh, Binghampton and Ithaca. I found nobody else doing this. It just seems silly and more a source of needless noise than worthwhile.

City Ordinance § 359-2 Speed limit for bicycles.

No person using a bicycle, tricycle, velocipede or other vehicle of propulsion on the public streets or avenues or parks of this City shall propel such vehicle at a rate of speed greater than **eight miles an hour**, and all such persons shall observe the law of the road.

We thought this should be repealed. I found no other City imposing special speed limits on bicycles. Occasionally, speed limits are posted on signs along multiuse trails. If there are trails in our parks where we want to limit bike speed, the speed limit should be posted there.

Bikes are no doubt much faster than when the ordinance was created. Are police really going to stand around with radar guns pointed at bikes? Seems better to have them limited by the road speed limit as is required by the state law that also states cyclists should abide by the traffic laws:

New York State Vehicle and Traffic Laws

§ 1231. Traffic laws apply to persons riding bicycles or skating or gliding on in-line skates. **Every person riding a bicycle or skating or gliding on in-line skates upon a roadway shall be granted all of the rights and shall be subject to all of the duties applicable to the driver of a vehicle by this title**, except as to special regulations in this article and except as to those provisions of this title which by their nature can have no application.

City Ordinance § 359-3 Number abreast limited.

No greater number of persons than two abreast shall parade or ride in the streets or avenues or parks of this City at any time on such bicycles, tricycles, velocipedes or other vehicles of propulsion.

This can be repealed with respect to streets and avenues as already required by State law. It may still be useful for park paths.

Vehicle and Traffic

§ 1234. Riding on roadways, shoulders, bicycle or in-line skate lanes and bicycle or in-line skate paths.

...
(b) Persons riding bicycles or skating or gliding on in-line skates upon a roadway shall not ride more than two abreast. Persons riding bicycles or skating or gliding on in-line skates upon a shoulder, bicycle or in-line skate lane, or bicycle or in-line skates path, intended for the use of bicycles or in-line skates may ride two or more abreast if sufficient space is available, except that when passing a vehicle, bicycle or person on in-line skates, or pedestrian, standing or proceeding along such shoulder, lane or path, persons riding bicycles or skating or gliding on in-line skates shall ride, skate, or glide single file. Persons riding bicycles or skating or gliding on in-line skates upon a roadway shall ride, skate, or glide single file when being overtaken by a vehicle.

City Ordinance § 359-4 Riding on sidewalks prohibited; exceptions.

No person shall ride any bicycle, tricycle, velocipede or other vehicle of propulsion on or over any footpath in any of the parks, or on or over any of the

sidewalks of any of the streets or avenues in this City, except if it is to go into a yard, lot or building; provided, however, that the foregoing provision of this section shall not apply to children under 10 years of age; and provided further that this section shall not be so construed as to prohibit the riding of any bicycle, tricycle or similar vehicle upon or over the unpaved portion of the sidewalk of any such street or streets outside of the thickly settled part of the City as shall be designated in writing by the Mayor. Every designation so made as aforesaid shall be filed with the Chief of Police and may be revoked by the Mayor at any time in his discretion.

Ordinances prohibiting bicycles on sidewalks are pretty typical. A suggestion was made to change the age to under 14 to be consistent with state helmet law:

Vehicle and Traffic

§ 1238. Passengers on bicycles under one year of age prohibited; passengers and operators under fourteen years of age to wear protective headgear; operators of class three bicycles with electric assist to wear protective headgear. <specific provision omitted>

With respect to skateboards - we would have thought this was included under "other vehicle of propulsion". My review of other cities found much inconsistency. Some prohibited their use on roads, pretty much leaving them to sidewalks (Utica and Yonkers). Some prohibited skateboarding in certain areas - such as those associated with a great deal of other human activity (farmer's markets, commons - see Saratoga, Schenectady). NYC just seems to limit their use in a "dangerous manner". Ithaca seemed to have the most interesting approach distinguishing "recreational" use from "transportational" use

The Code / Part II: General Legislation / Parks and Recreation

City Ordinance § 251-7 Use of bicycles, tricycles and vehicles in Washington Park and Beaver Park.

[Amended 6-18-1990]

A.

No animals, bicycles, tricycles or motors or vehicles shall be permitted to either stand, congregate or loiter upon the driveways of these parks or in any other parts thereof to the obstruction of the way or to the inconvenience of or interference with travel therein, except on such occasions as may be specially designated by the Superintendent of Parks.

This section seems ok.

B.

Neither shall bicycles, tricycles, motors or vehicles go together in numbers or abreast, except in pairs, to the inconvenience, obstruction or interference with the driving public.

This section seems ok and not unusual. It is unclear of the State law above related to riding abreast applies to park paths.

C.

No part of such parks shall be used for a place of instruction in the use or management of any vehicle, including bicycles, tricycles and motors, and drivers or wheelmen must turn to the right hand in passing, and in all cases bicycles, tricycles and motors must carry lighted lamps after dark.

This section should be removed, except perhaps the part about lights. People ought to be able to be taught to use a bikes, skateboards, etc in our parks. The description of how to pass is confusing. There is already a state law about using lights on bikes after dark - but this may not be applicable to multiuse paths in the park:

Vehicle and Traffic

§ 1236. Lamps and other equipment on bicycles.

(a) Every bicycle when in use during the period from one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise shall be equipped with a lamp on the front which shall emit a white light visible during hours of darkness from a distance of at least five hundred feet to the front and with a red or amber light visible to the rear for three hundred feet. Effective July first, nineteen hundred seventy-six, at least one of these lights shall

be visible for two hundred feet from each side.

D.

No vehicle drawn by horses, or propelled in any other way, including bicycles, tricycles and motors, shall travel or use the park roads at a greater rate of speed than **eight miles an hour, and on short curves four miles an hour.**

This section should be repealed for the reasons stated above. Bikes, etc. should just have same speed limits as other vehicles. If there is a multiuse path that the City wants a special speed limit on - that speed limit should be posted there - along with Rules of Trail Etiquette (e.g. see the Albany County Rail Trail Rules).

E.

The use of bicycles, tricycles or vehicles of any kind is not permitted on the paths or walks of these parks.

This section should be removed. We were pretty sure this would be news to every cyclist in Albany. Most cyclists presume paths to be multiuse. Multiuse paths are best regulated with posted Rules of Trail Etiquette. If there are trails and/or spaces inside the park where cycling, skateboarding should not be allowed, we suggest the City adopt the method I have seen in other Cities - posting signage directing where cyclists/skateboarders, etc must "dismount here" and where they may remount, with a "remount here" sign. To reduce sign clutter, I noticed one location where the directives were embossed or painted onto the pavement.

Sample Rules of Etiquette: Albany County Rail Trail Rules of Etiquette

Trail Etiquette

Friends, neighbors and visitors come together to enjoy a pleasant outdoor experience on the Rail Trail.

For the safety of all Rail Trail patrons please observe these courtesies:

- Be courteous and considerate of other trail users.
- Respect our neighbors and don't trespass on private property.
- Pets **must** be leashed at all times
- Control and clean up after your pet(s).
- Bicyclists should yield to pedestrians.
- Travel at a reasonable speed and in single file when path is crowded.
- Avoid startling others; announce "on your left" then pass with care.
- Move to the side when stopping on the trail.
- No hunting or discharging of firearms.
- Overnight camping and camp fires are prohibited.
- Remove your litter - this is a "Carry In/Carry Out" trail.
- Motorized vehicles are prohibited. (Wheelchairs, scooters, and other mobility assistance devices are permitted.)
- Enjoy the beauty of wild plants & animals, but leave them undisturbed for all to enjoy.

Above all, please do whatever you can to leave the Rail Trail better for your next visit!