

Albany Bicycle Coalition Meeting Notes for January 26, 2023

Attendees: Zoomers: Andrew Matrai, Chester Bennett, Danette Jewell, Dennis Gaffney, Glenn Sandberg, Hugh Johnson, John Gillivan, Mark Maniak, Pam Bentien, Peter Thomas, Skye van der Laan. On Site: Clair Nolan, Ed Brennan

Special Topic - Capital District Vision Zero Alliance

- Proposal - join with other organizations and individuals in a **Capital District Alliance for Vision Zero** to:
 - keep each other informed about what is happening - or not happening in our respective cities and towns (because local media reporting is awful)
 - share ideas on how to keep Vision Zero and Complete Streets in the news and spread understanding of what is meant
 - perhaps coordinate local campaigns or protests (like Rides of Silence in May and World Day of Remembrance for Traffic Victims Protests in November)
 - provide mutual support where appropriate to pressure local government
 - promote safety programming
- We have a growing list of Joiners including Walkable Albany, Capital Streets and Whitney Young Health Centers.
 - We are still looking for partners. Spread the news and have interested organizations and persons e-mail albanybicyclecoalition@yahoo.com
 - Walkable Albany has been especially helpful to grow and go thru our contact list.
- The proposal to have ABC pay for CDVZA.org cdvisionzero.org and albanybicyclecoalition.org domains had no opposition
- Andrew Matrai offered to help get a web page started for the cdvsa
- Glenn recommended ABC could sponsor the web page as we are a 501(c)(3) and able to get a not-for-profit discount from Dreamhost
- Initial Zoom Meeting for the CDVZA is 7pm February 9th

Special Topic - Mayhem on the Roadways -

Nothing Appears to be Moving Locally

- Lower speed limits to 25 mph - still in Albany City Council Public Safety Committee. State requirements under the new law are unclear.
- Speed Cameras - requires state legislative approval
- Speed Humps - more may be rolled out in residential neighborhoods in the Spring
- Beg Buttons - ped priority for crossing signals is proving a tough sell
- The Statewide Safe Streets Coalition, which includes ABC
 - Held Lobby Day at Capitol on Tuesday the 24th. A bus load from NYC met up with folks from around the state to visit Assembly and State offices to encourage legislators to commit to the Safe Streets Coalition bills (below). Local attendees included Erica Schneider and Dylan Carey (PTNY), James Rath (Capital Streets) and Ed Brennan (ABC)
 - Held Zoom meeting with DOT on Thursday the 26th.
 - Ed was in on the meeting that concentrated on extending the Complete Streets laws to include repavings and other maintenance projects, to include all projects whether funded by State and/or Federal funds and the need to clarify the engineering certification hurdles of the new 25 mph law.
 - DOT noted it would soon be seeking public input for a forthcoming “State Active Transportation Plan”
 - This year’s slate of bills is called the “SAFE Streets Act” not the “Crash Victims Rights and Safety Act” (note some bill numbers need to be updated for the new session). Bill numbers and descriptions are located here: <https://www.transalt.org/safe>
- We are still on the lookout for partners for matters that Safe Streets Coalition didn’t want to take up (such as crosswalk issues and anything related to increasing punitive measures)

Special Topic - Smart Cycling Training

- ABC agreed to take Clair Nolan up on her offer to run League of American Cycling “Smart Cycling Training”
- Clair is an LCI (League of American Cyclists Certified Instructor)
- There is a classroom and on bike component
- The class is \$40, but we would likely have an ABC Member discount
- We are tentatively scheduling this for April 28 (classroom) and April 29 (on bike)
- Clair would hold the class with a minimum of 3 persons.

- Submit intention to join the class by e-mailing albanybicyclecoalition@yahoo.com by the 2nd week of April
- The Smart Cycling Course is a prerequisite to LCI training

Special Topic - Tivoli Preserve Mountain Bike Trails - Skye van der Laar discussed his proposed Tivoli Preserve Mountain Bike Trail Program

- Skye discussed the need to bring mountain biking to the young people of Albany by creating a five mile mountain bike trail system in Tivoli Preserve.
- The program would provide training for beginners
- He has already created a 3 mile advanced trail system on the north side of the tracks near the Albany Victory gardens, but this system is hard to get to for many and is more advanced than beginners can handle
- Young people outside of Albany have access to trails in Guilderland and Saratoga
- He also wants to have a mountain bike loan program with the public library
- Skye is currently in conversation with the city planning department and Friends of Tivoli
- ABC members present indicated support for these efforts

Reports

- **Bikeatoga/Union Ave Hearing Report** - Ed Brennan reported watching the January 17th Saratoga City Council Meeting on the proposed Union Avenue bike lane extension.
 - The project was facing NIMFY (not in my front yard) opposition from some Union Avenue residents
 - Mike King from Traffic Calmer gave an excellent presentation,
 - Most impressive was the legion of Saratoga citizens that showed up and spoke so well for the need for safe and equitable transportation for Union Ave and the City in general. It was truly inspirational.
 - It was noted that this would be an extension of bike lanes state is putting in East of the area in question
 - The project would provide bike lane into downtown
 - It has been a City Bike Route since 1996
 - Historically, there were cycle paths on Union Avenue with references in a 1900 Visitors Guide
- **Cycle Schenectady Report** - Art Clayman reported:

- CS developed a brochure for political leaders and the public, to push for traffic calming. It shows examples of good things the city has already done, such as bumpouts and wider islands to narrow streets, as well as examples of what has been done successfully elsewhere.
- CS was invited to participate in a meeting with Greenmarket people to discuss bike parking in a mini park that is to be created near the Greenmarket. We gave them an innovative-looking curved rack that can be extended higher to protect bikes from the elements. They seemed to like it.
- The county's bike coordinator sent Art a tentative design for bike rest areas on the bike path. It includes a 12x12 pad, with a rack, bench, water fountain and historical sign/marker. Art told him it looked good except for the bike rack, which was the wave design now advised against in CDTC's Complete Streets Guide.
- At the request of Families for Safe Streets, CS provided a letter in support of the state's Safe Streets legislation for them to use at the legislative lobby day.
- CS got a CDTC mini-grant to conduct three bike rodeos in collaboration with the county library system. The rodeos will include bike helmet and blinkie light giveaways, safety instruction, bike handling games, and refreshments. They will be held at three different library branches -- one in May, one in July, one in September -- and will be led by a League-Certified Instructor (LCI).
- CS is going to hold either weekly or bi-weekly rides this year, on the same weeknight starting at 6 pm. Starting location will be somewhere downtown, and we will take rides to different neighborhoods or the bike trail. CS decided that the start and finish should be near but not at one of the city's brew pubs, so as not to turn off families, non-drinkers, etc., and also to avoid showing favoritism to any particular brew pub.
- **CDTC Active Transportation Committee October Meeting** - Ed reported:
 - Tom Polk Bicycle (Program Manager, YMCA of Kingston and Ulster County) gave an impressive presentation on community-based bicycle programming by the Kingston Y,
 - It's probably the most extensive bike program of any Y in the country and one of maybe 1/2 dozen others around US
 - "lend a wheel program" - 1000 bikes repaired and put back on road so far with vests, locks, lights, helmets. Safety education with every bike.
 - monthly bike repair clinics in warmer months, volunteer mechanics and helpers (volunteers learning as they repair).

- refer things they can't handle to bike shops.
- Collaboration with local "repair cafe" (run by people who fix all kinds of stuff).
- Participation in "Sustainable Saturday" and Kingston Food Coop Block Parties
- Bike It! - youth program.
 - Sat mornings for kids 10 - 14.
 - Bike safety or repair lesson then a bike ride.
 - 2 x 8 week sessions each year.
 - Also had after school programs in Kingston and Highland middle schools (latter initiated as part of PE). Eventually Highland got their own bikes. The Y still works with Kingston schools.
 - After school elementary school program at the Kingston community ctrs. Scored bikes thru Cornell Cooperative grant.
 - Summers Skills Clinics and Bike Clubs conducted at the City summer camps.
- Bike IT! - mechanics bike repair program. Individuals get a beat up bike to repair and learn about every part. They get to keep the restored bike.
- League Cycling SMART CYCLING for Adults. 9 hour course. 4 in classroom. Written and Road Test.
- Learn to ride - 1 to 2 hr 1 on 1 program. for any age 6 to 66.
- Bike Friendly Kingston - loose facebook group. Slow Rides. "Snowflake Festival". Bike Raffles. They provide helmets, locks and safety gear
- "Expect a Bike Campaign". Launched after a serious injury. Yard signs - "Be Prepared to See a Bike Ahead".
- Women's Bike Fest - org by women to get more women cycling
- Ulster Friendly Driver Training. For professional truck drivers. 90 minutes powerpoint. Working with Ulster County drivers now. Based on a League of American Cyclists program.
- Tom Polk also noted that Kingston is looking to lower their speed limit in Kingston to 25mph
- 2023-24 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) - They expect the proposals will be available Feb 2nd for public review and consultation. Expect some workshops. There is \$1m available for \$1.2 M in requests
- **Webinar Update on the Capital District Trails Plan:**
 - New Tools for Advancing a Vision for a Regional Trail Network

- Description: This webinar provides an overview of the development of the region's multi-use trail network, goals for its expansion, and perspectives from different levels of government on how to create the seamless regional network envisioned in the Capital District Trails Plan. Runtime: 1:05:31
- See: <https://www.cdtcmopo.org/news/nv-webinars>
- **Transport Troy / Capital Streets Update** - Ed reported he
 - saw James Rath of Capital Streets at the Safe Streets Lobby Day
 - Capital Streets will have some kind of launch in March.
 - Pam Bentien reported attending the Better Cities Film Festival in Troy where they screened "Reimagining Albany's Waterfront"
- **Mobility Hubs Focus Group Reports** - Ed participated in one of the CDTA's focus groups
 - The mobility hub concept provides a central location where users can switch from one type of public transport to another (bus/bike/car share/flex bus) and thereby shorten the time it takes to get between destinations
 - 3 Large Locations Are Being Planned
 - Albany (Western Ave, by the SUNY City Campus)
 - Amsterdam - South of Mohawk near the EST
 - Cohoes on north end of Remsen
 - Mini-mobility hubs were discussed at:
 - troy hill/liberty
 - Albany by St Peter's on Manning

Old Business –

- **Transportation Projects**
 - **MHBHT Connector Update** - John and Ed
 - presented their concept of connecting the Shaker Trail System with the Mohawk Hudson Bike Hike Trail via Buhrmaster Road and vacant Albany County Airport property to Save Colonie members
 - Thursday 2/2 they have a meeting with airport planning personnel
 - **Albany High School Area Traffic Calming** - Chester Bennett reported he is planning on presenting this project to the City Council Persons in the adjoining wards, the school board and high school PTA.
- **South End Connector Ambassador Project** - Hugh reported
 - the city has promised to provide tools and supplies for cleaning the SEC and perhaps a storage shed
 - we held a meeting with leaders of the Albany County Rail Trail ambassador program discussing:
 - what trail ambassadors do and don't do

- strategies to increase the pool of potential ambassadors - social media, posting signs on the trail, youth summer employment
- searching for additional partners including the Albany Running Exchange & nearby businesses

New Business –

- **T-Shirts** - Ed reported we still have a limited quantity of t-shirts available. Anyone interested should e-mail albanybicyclecoalition.com
 - Performance T-Shirts \$26 1 x 2XL, 3L, 2M
 - Standard Cotton T-Shirts \$18 4L, 3M
- **Champlain Canal Bike Rodeo/Safety Day** - John G. reported this will be held the 3rd weekend in May in Waterford (May 20 & 21). He is looking for volunteers
- **Ideas Needed for Ride of Silence! May 17th** - Before the ride last year we held a vigil for over 40 victims of traffic violence on Central Avenue. Do we want to do something similar this year? We are looking for suggestions!
- **Any More Ideas for Earth Day Ride April 22nd?**
 - Hugh Suggested Jennings to Peebles would be a little under 22 miles round trip from Jennings Landing - while not ruling out the idea, we noted the ride is longer than past years and would include a challenging on street Green Island section
 - Glenn offered option of resurrecting a variation of our “Parks Ride”
 - Ed suggested turning the parks ride into a “water themed” ride, possibilities:
 - the massive Lincoln Ave Storm Water and pool replacement projects
 - plans for 787 and reuniting Albany with its riverfront
 - Tracking Albany’s lost creeks
 - the Patroon Creek Greenway and Daylighting projects
 - Fox Creeks tendency to resurrect itself in the form of flooding on Sheridan Avenue
 - Beaver Creek and its relations to Buckingham, Washington and Lincoln Parks
 - Bleeker Stadium and the history of Albany’s water sources

- **Should We Do a Tulip Fest Ride? May 13 & 14** - The Tulip Fest “Sustainability Tent” folks asked if ABC might sponsor a ride highlighting recycling and sustainability efforts. We decided this might be too much on the heels of Earth Day and with our busy May schedule. We came up with an idea for less ambitious rides from Tulip Fest up the Madison bike lanes and back. This was presented to DGS at a meeting on Tuesday the 31st and they liked this idea.
- **Adirondack Sports Expo March 18 & 19** - Ed, John G. and Glenn noted this was a successful outreach event in 2021. The cost for a table has gone up, but we still think it is worthwhile assuming we can get enough volunteers.
- **Welcoming EST Riders at Discovery Center** - Ed reported he got an encouraging response from the Albany Discovery Center and PTNY to do more to draw Empire State Trail riders to the Discovery Center. Though Albany is effectively the center of the Empire State Trail between the NYC, Buffalo and Rouse's Point, riders often find their arrival in Albany to be anticlimactic. The Discovery Center could encourage riders to sign-in, take a picture and could provide information about the trail, weather, detours and local sites of interest, food and accommodations.
- **Ed Riding West in May After ROS** - Ed reminded members that he will be starting a cross country ride in late May and may not be back for the June meeting either. Somebody will need to manage the Zoom meeting from the LaSalle School. Volunteers?
- **Cycle the Hudson Valley** - Just passing this on!
 - This 7-day, 200-mile cycle along the Empire State Trail kicks off in Troy in Rensselaer County on July 30th and heads south on the Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail to New York City's Hudson River Park.
 - On July 29th, PTNY will be hosting pre-ride activities including bike tours and an opening dinner.
 - PTNY has capped the number of participants to 300,
<https://www.ptny.org/events/hudson-valley-tour/register>
- **Comments on Albany County Draft Climate Resiliency Plan** Passing this on as well!
 - Make sure the County knows how we feel about the importance of sustainable transportation (especially the kind with pedals)
 - Comments requested by Feb 6th!

- <https://www.albanycounty.com/government/county-executive/albany-county-climate-resiliency-plan>
- **Albany County Traffic Safety Board - Introductory Meeting** - ABC now has a member on the revitalized Albany County Traffic Safety Board. Ed will be reporting on activities as appropriate as this gets up and running.
- **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: 2/23, 3/30, 4/27, 5/25.