

## **Albany Bicycle Coalition Meeting Notes for July 27, 2023**

### **ATTENDEES:**

In Person: Ed Brennan, Hugh Johnson, David Pisaneschi and special guests: Peter Knaup, Mary DiChristopher and A. Neto of [WesternAveALB](#)

Zoom: Pam Bentien, Kyle Hatch, John Gillivan, Lola M., Andrew Matrai, Naqiy McMullen, Glenn Sandberg, Ira Share, Peter Thomas, Lorenz Worden

### **Special Topic - Mayhem on the Roadways**

- **Safe Streets Coalition Legislation Report** - Ed reported the coalition's NYS legislative agenda for the last session was not so successful as the year prior.
  - Sammy's Law - 20mph for only NYC - passed senate only
  - Complete Streets Maintenance Bill - passed senate only
  - Complete Streets Application Bill - did not get out of committee
  - Safe Vehicles Act - - did not get out of committee
  - Crash Victims Bill of Rights - did not get out of committee
  - 3 Foot Law - passed Senate only
- **Albany City Ordinance Proposals**
  - 25 MPH Ordinance and Petition - Introduced by Deb Zamer. Still in the Public Safety Committee, FWIW - Ed did speak on behalf of ABC to the Common Council Public Safety Committee in support of the Ordinance.
  - Albany Speed Cameras for School Zones - A home rule resolution was passed by Albany City Common Council. It was sent to the NYS legislature. It was passed by the NYS assembly and senate. Assembly Member Fahy's Office expects it will be signed by the Governor.
  - Pedestrian Signal Priority as Crosswalks - Current Proposal:
    - All pedestrian signals will be on a pre-timed cycle and shall not require pedestrians to push the button
    - No less than 15 seconds crossing interval
    - 3 second lead for peds with all red for vehicles

### **Reports**

- **Western Avenue Improvement Organization**

- Peter, Mary and Neto of the Western Avenue improvement joined us to discuss their goals and possibilities of working together (ABC looks forward to doing so!)
- They wish to address speeding and make Western Avenue from the Madison Triangle to Mckownville safer for all road users.
- They also wish to make Western Avenue less of a highway and more of a gateway to the City and their neighborhood
- They are very interested in linking the Western Avenue bike lanes in Mckownville (by SUNY) to those at the the Madison/Western Triangle
- Their website, [www.WesternAveALB.org](http://www.WesternAveALB.org)
  - Shows potential road treatments
  - Has a link to their petition
  - Has an option for interested parties to sign up for email updates
- **Bikeatoga/Union Ave Update** - Ed Lindner Reported by E-mail:
  - They are hoping to have a final design for Union Ave in the next month.
  - After that they'll have another organizing push to get it done.
  - The Saratoga Foliage Ride website is up and running.
    - They are sponsoring two bike rides!
      - Oct 7 Battle of Saratoga Ride
      - Oct 8 Fall Foliage Ride
      - Choice of three routes each day – 30, 50, and 75 miles – with full SAG support.
    - <https://srymca.org/saratoga-foliage-ride>
- **Cycle Schenectady Report** -
  - They started biweekly rides starting July 10, 2023, beginning at 6 PM at Mohawk Harbor
  - Art noted they have had a few rides rained out
- **Capital Streets Update** - Kyle Hatch reported
  - Their new regional organization is moving forward
  - They recently held a fun get together at Dove and Deer and will hold a more formal event in September
  - They will hold a Gravel Ride September 10th in Pittstown. See: <https://www.capitalstreets.org/gravel-pitt>
  - They especially wish to help areas in the region like Menands and Watervliet that do not have their own organizations
  - Locally they are looking at what priorities to push in Albany with the cooperation of groups like ABC and Walkable Albany
- **Selecting Priority Target Projects for Albany**

- We all discussed various project possibilities, including Western, Morton, Washington Ave, Washington Park, the Patroon Creek Greenway, Central Avenue and Broadway. For the priority road project, almost everyone in attendance most wanted to see improvements to Western Avenue, including bike lanes to complete the bike lane gap from where bike lanes currently end at the Madison/Western Triangle to where they end by SUNY in McKownville. We recognized this will likely be a multi-year effort requiring a feasibility and engineering study.
- The Albany High/College of St. Rose/Downtown SUNY area that has a high concentration of students that do not drive was seen as the 2nd road project priority. Washington Avenue in this area is of particular concern. Chester and Naqiy have been working on their own plan for this area and recently had it reviewed by a planner from Buffalo.
- We also agreed to press for implementation of the recommendations made in the Washington Park Study that would improve safety there for cyclists and especially for pedestrians. In theory many of these recommendations could proceed more quickly as the “Study” has already been done
- Patroon Creek Greenway also has a recent study, but that study called for a phased approach and recommended an engineering study as the next step for Phase 1 (from the Skyway to Fuller Road). We noted the Greenway Phase 1 would address mobility for several underserved areas. We proposed pushing the City and the Planning Dept to seek a Federal “Reconnecting Communities” grant and NY Environmental Bond Act funding for the Engineering Study and Phase 1 of the project.
- **(CDTC Active Transport Committee - Committee off for the Summer)**
- **DOT 787 Effort** - Ed reported that he was at the well attended Reimagining 787 DOT sponsored meeting at the Housing Authority Office early in July. Others had gone to the well attended June meeting at the MVP Arena. There is widespread interest in doing away with this monstrosity on our riverfront. What do we want instead? DOT wants your ideas for their Planning and Environmental Linkage Study. The website is:

787.dot.ny.gov

You may also send comments to:

787@dot.ny.gov

- **Sand Creek Road Complete Streets Study** John G. has long been on the Village Bike-Ped Committee and spoke about the Study. Ed attended the July consultant's presentation introducing the study
  - Study area is from Watervliet-Shaker (155) to Wolf Rd. The Study is specifically highlights the need for bike-ped improvements
    - The road has the potential of providing an alternative bike-ped East/West alternative to Central Avenue and has important bike/ped links between the Village of Colonie and
      - Wolf Road Shopping
      - the Ann Lee Pond/Shaker Trails & British American Blvd Bike lanes
      - New Trails going in along Rt 155 (Watervliet/Shaker Road)
      - ABC has long included a section of this road in our goal of an “Albany-Colonie Connector” from the City of Albany to the Mohawk Hudson Bike Hike Trail
    - Much of this road is currently very narrow with fast, heavy traffic and little or no shoulder
  - [www.sandcreekcompletestreets.com](http://www.sandcreekcompletestreets.com)
  - Please visit the site and complete the site survey!!

#### **Old Business –**

- **Transportation Projects**
  - **MHBHT Connector Update** - John G. attended the Albany County Airport meeting on their Long Range Plan.
    - He reported that we have been lobbying for allies in a plan to create a multi-use path along the Northern end of the airport property (outside the security fence) that would create a link from the signalized pedestrian crossing at the East end of British American Blvd to the signalized pedestrian crossing of Rt7/Troy-Schenectady Rd at Mill Road.

- He also reported having a positive communication with Colonie Town Supervisor, Peter Crummey
  - Eventually, the goal is to provide a safe bike/ped route from the Ann Lee/Shaker Trails all the way to the Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Trail via this Airport Trail and Buhrmaster Road.
- **County Rail Trail Bridge Update** Glenn and Peter reported on the sad saga of the rail trail bridge over Route 85.
  - The long awaited newly installed bridge buckled while concrete was being poured.
  - Has now been removed and is to be replaced with a “temporary” bridge by Halloween.
  - For the complete and ongoing story - see:  
<https://albanybicyclecoalition.com/resources/cycling-in-the-news/>
- **Brevator Complete Streets Project** - Ed reported
  - The Project will replace the crumbling wide concrete street connecting Washington and Western with something more bike-ped friendly. See the project website for design options, to sign up for updates and to submit questions:
  - <https://www.albanyny.gov/2177/Brevator-Street-Improvement-Project>
  - The City aims to break ground Spring 2024
- **Lark Street Improvement Project** - Ed reported this is happening soon!
  - Work that aims to calm traffic, improve pedestrian safety and enhance the streetscape is expected to run from August to October
  - <https://www.albanyny.gov/2158/Lark-Street-Infrastructure-Project>
- **Dunn Memorial Bike-Ped Detour** - Ed reported the section of the bike-ped ramp that was threatening to fall has been removed. Per DOT we should expect the detour to be in place for years to come - at least until the fate of 787 is determined as any investment in a permanent replacement of the bike-ped path across the Hudson will be impacted by that project
- **New Scotland Avenue Bike Lanes Update** - Ed reported this work is behind schedule, probably due to the rainy weather. They are currently still doing sidewalk work and have yet to do any significant roadway work

- <https://www.albanyny.gov/2168/New-Scotland-Avenue-Infrastructure-Project> (sic)
- **South End Connector Ambassador Project** - We neglected to call on Hugh at the meeting, however this program is underway! Several volunteers are on the schedule to clean up and report on the South End Connector. Additional volunteers should e-mail [Stewart Dutfeld](#)
- **Bethlehem/Delaware Ave Complete Streets Project** - Lorenz reported there is some plan for improvements for pedestrian crossings, but nothing is planned for bike lanes, nor would they be possible given the physical dimensions of the current road design. There might be a 2-3 foot shoulder.
  - See: <https://www.delawarecompletestreets.com/>

## **New Business**

**Upper Madison Ave Street Fair - October 1/Western Ave ALB** - We are looking for volunteers to table at the street fair - even if just for an hour or two. E-mail: [albanybicyclecoalition@yahoo.com](mailto:albanybicyclecoalition@yahoo.com).

- **Elections** - ABC needs to hold new elections. This will be addressed in an upcoming e-mail to voting members.
- **New Multi-use Trail Along Slingerlands Expressway.** Lorenz reported
  - a new path will connect New Scotland Ave by the Slingerlands Circle (by Market 32) to the Rail Trail along the East side of Rt 85.
  - Lorenz reported it is in progress. Some work has been done.
  - Paving work is expected in 2024.
  - Peter reported the path would continue to the canoe/kayak launch by the Normans Kill off New Scotland Ave
  - **<Anyone have a link to this plan???? Lorenz? Peter????>.**
- **Environmental Bond Act** Peter and David both attended meetings on the \$4.2 Billion bond act. Kyle also reported that he is working for one of the project consultants.
  - The Act provides primarily capital funding for:
    - Climate change mitigation
    - Flood restoration and flood reduction
    - Open land space land conservation and recreation

- Water quality improvement and resiliency

- Projects that address environmental justice are to get about 30% of the funding
- The Bond Act survey below allows people to recommend specific projects:

<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/1009c5d5ef5e4bc4b09f47ba7012086b?portalUrl=https%3A//RambollGlobal.maps.arcgis.com>

- There is potential for using these funds for multi-use paths. The Capital District Trails Plan is a great source of such projects. It was noted the Patroon Creek Greenway is a trail project that has a positive environmental justice impact on the disadvantaged West Hill and Arbor Hill neighborhoods. The Livingston Avenue Bridge bike/hike path is another.
- **Tabling Washington Park Farmer's Market** - Ed will reach out to them again.
- **Capital Trails Alliance** - Peter reported this is a new organization with a mountain biking organization with a large membership.
- **Rides:**
  - **ABC Albany-Troy / Daily Grind to Bard & Baker Coffee Shop Bike Ride** - Will be held August 12 (Aug 19th rain date) leaving at 10am from the Daily Grind on Lark Street. Others may join at the Corning Preserve boat launch, leaving there by 10:40am. We will have lunch at Bard and Baker in Troy and return to Albany. For details see: the [ABC events page](#).
  - **Bike the Branches Ride** - This ride is being held in cooperation with the Albany Public Libraries in recognition of the 100th Anniversary of the Albany Public Libraries. It will be held October 7, 11:30am starting at the Pine Hills Branch. For details see: the [ABC events page](#).
  - **New Scotland / Madison Ride** - Assuming the weather and supply chain gods permit and the New Scotland Avenue Bike Lanes are completed by early September we will have a September ride beginning at the Albany Golf Course parking lot (at the end of O'Neil Rd) in Albany. The ride will encompass the New Scotland Avenue bike lanes, Madison Avenue bike lanes, Washington Park and back for refreshments at Martell's at the golf course.
- **Picnic** - ABC will hold its coalition pot luck picnic on Sept 10 at 11am at 6 Mile Waterworks - contact [Hugh Johnson](#) with what you plan to bring!

- **T-Shirts** - Ed reported we still have a limited quantity of t-shirts available. Anyone interested should e-mail [albanybicyclecoalition@yahoo.com](mailto:albanybicyclecoalition@yahoo.com)
  - Performance T-Shirts \$26 1 x 2XL, 3L, 1M
  - Standard Cotton T-Shirts \$18 3L, 2M
- **Upcoming – Rides/events** (Go here - <https://albanybicyclecoalition.com/resources/upcoming-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: 8/31, 9/28, 10/26

**Treasurer's Report** - David P. reported ABC is still on solid financial ground. He explained his new documentation and the ABC members in attendance approved his latest reconciliation.