

Albany Bicycle Coalition Meeting Notes for September 28, 2023

Attendees: Chester Bennett, Pam Bentien, Ed Brennan, Hugh Johnson, Mike Maloney (1st Time Joiner!), David Pisaneschi, Glenn Sandberg, Emily Scimeca (1st Time Joiner from Capital Roots!), Peter Thomas

Special Topic - Mayhem on the Roadways

- **Safe Streets Coalition Legislative Priorities for Next Session** Ed reported our Safe Streets Coalition wished to only commit to 4 or 5 priority bills this session. The other bills considered would be “supported” - meaning constituent organizations could discuss them with their representatives at lobby days, but they would not be actively pursued by the coalition. The choices emphasized vision zero priorities: safer roads/safe speeds/safe people/safe vehicles
 - Sammy’s Law
 - Complete Streets Maintenance
 - Vehicle Safety Technology - speed controls for persistent offenders
 - Last choice was undecided. Groups were asked to vote for either Idaho Stop “or” Safe Passage (was 3-foot law) “or” both
- We discussed a request to ask the Albany City Council to pass a resolution in support of the Idaho Stop. We decided to wait for the Safe Streets Coalition to determine their slate of priority bills. The preference would be to ask the Common Council for a resolution to support all the Coalition bills (as has been done before), not just Idaho Stop.
- **Albany City Ordinance Proposals**
 - Naqiy McMullen, Kyle Hatch and Ed attended the last meeting of the Public Safety Committee of the Albany Common Council. The Mayor spoke and said she supported having the Common Council fund a road study that would determine justification for lowering our speed limit to 25 mph. She said the recent joint municipal Federal “Vision Zero” Grant would take 18 months and she wanted the funding for the study sooner so this could be done before her term in office is completed.
 - We noted with disappointment that TU reported Schenectady is opting not to lower their speed limit, but will emphasize engineering changes to make their roads safer. This sounds like a replay of the Central Avenue road study that cost many dollars for an engineering, education and enforcement (anything but reduced speeds) approach that has led to many more lives lost.
 - East Greenbush passed their Town’s 25 mph local law back in the Spring. Ed was told their neighborhood streets have new 25 mph signs.

- The Mayor also addressed School Zone Speed Cameras, which she appeared to support, but noted that the Governor's signature to the enabling legislation was still pending. **NOTE: The Governor has since signed this into law on 9/29!**
- The Proposed Beg Button Ordinance will be taken up by the Law Committee of the Common Council on Thursday, October 5th.
- Patroon Creek Greenway - David P. reported no new progress on the City Council Resolution in support of having the Planning Dept. seek grants to fund the PCG.

Reports

- **Bikeatoga/Union Ave Update** - Ed Lindner Reported
 - They will hold Fall Foliage Rides Oct 7th and 8th - see our events page
 - Nothing moving on safer streets / trails / bike lanes til after election
- **Cycle Schenectady Update** Art Clayman Reported
 - Oct. 7th is the last of three bike rodeos with the Schenectady County Public Library using a CDTC mini-grant. 1st drew 25 kids; 2nd drew 38. Hoping for more this time. Have given away lots of helmets, blinkie lights and bells.
 - City finally installed signage for a Greenway between Central Park and downtown that has existed for about 8 yrs. This was a result of CS nagging.
 - City has also asked for CS input on a signage plan they have developed to get Canalway riders through the section that uses city streets.
 - At the urging of Metroplex and the tourism agency "Discover Schenectady", CS provided a series of low-stress rides, mostly using the bike trail, that start in Schenectady. They want to use them as an activity for visitors and a lure for bike tourists.
 - The city just got a \$500,000 grant from Assemblyman Santabarbara to turn the vacant and derelict Central Park Casino (not a real casino) into an environmental education center for kids. In addition, it will be used as a meeting space for neighborhood groups and nonprofits like CS. There's a good chance the bike rescue will move there (it has a huge basement), or at least have a satellite location there. The lead environmental organization has programs where kids ride around on bikes to take water and air samples, and the executive director is keen on doing more

programs that involve bikes. It's a big opportunity for CS to get more attention, members, and grow.

- **8/30 Capital Streets Update**
 - They are working up memos on their priorities (Washington Park/Western Ave Study/Morton Ave Bike Lanes/Albany DOT)
 - They had a very successful gravel ride with over 60 participants
 - They aim to meet with Mayor and Neighborhood Associations to push their priorities
- **Albany Bike the Branches Ride Update** Glenn Reported
 - The route was test ridden and updated to minimize safety issues and hills
 - The ride will celebrate the Albany Public Library's 100th Anniversary
 - 11:15am, Saturday October 7 at the Pine Hills Branch Details:

<https://albanybicyclecoalition.com/upcoming-events/bike-the-branches-ride/>

- Rain Date: Saturday October 14

Old Business – Transportation Projects

- **8/29 Capital Region Transportation Comm. Menands Bridge Survey**
 - Complete the survey:
 - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/829ActiveTranspo>
 - Website: <https://www.dot.ny.gov/troymenandsbridge>
- **DOT Reimagining 787 Effort** - Currently seeking public comments:
 - The website is: <https://787.dot.ny.gov>
 - You may also send comments to: 787@dot.ny.gov
- **County Rail Trail Bridge Update** - Glenn Reported
 - Plan is to have “temporary bridge” in place by October 31st
 - He wrote County Supervisor McCoy and the TU regarding concerns about how much higher the new bridge will be, what dangers are there if the temporary bridge is hit and whether there will be signage. He noted Spotlight reported the same engineering firm involved with the failed Rail Trail bridge had a similar failure during concrete pouring in the past.
- **County Rail Trail Update** - Peter Reported

- Work is being done on new CSX rail tracks that will increase rail traffic in Voorheesville
 - Rehab of the wagon bridge overpassing the rail trail at mile 7.5 will be underway shortly. Eventually, that should allow bike/hike access from the rail trail to New Scotland Town Park and to the Yellow and Red trails at the Bender Melon Farm
 - The subsidence at mile 6.7 was repaired a 3rd time - unclear if it will last
- **Clinton Ave & Ten Broeck** - Ed showed a photo of work being done to close the bike lane gap from the Clinton Ave and Ten Broeck bike lanes to the Albany Skyway & and Corning Trail. Looks like this will be done soon.
 - <https://www.albanyny.gov/2202/Albany-Pedestrian-Experience-DRI---Clinton-Ave-and-Ten-Broeck>
- **Brevator Complete Streets Project** - Ed provided a quick recap
 - Brevator is to have either bike lanes or a multiuse path.
 - The public comment period ended
 - Per DGS, the project is to start Spring 2024.

<https://www.albanyny.gov/2177/Brevator-Street-Improvement-Project>
- **Lark Street Improvement Project** - Ed provided a quick recap
 - The bike unfriendly cobbles at the corners on Lark are gone
 - Pedestrian friendlier design is in the works
 - Per DGS, the project is scheduled to be completed by October
 - <https://www.albanyny.gov/2158/Lark-Street-Infrastructure-Project>
- **New Scotland Avenue Bike Lanes Update** Ed provided a quick recap
 - Sidewalk work is completed and key intersections were narrowed to facilitate pedestrian crossings
 - Nighttime milling and paving of the roadway began 9/27
 - Bike lanes are promised from Manning to O'Neil (by the golf course)
 - <https://www.albanyny.gov/2168/New-Scotland-Avenue-Infrastructure-Project>
- **Albany High School Area Traffic Calming** - Chester reported that he has communicated with the School Board and the new Superintendent. They were all supportive of the recommendations for making the area safer and want to get it done. They in turn reported having conversations with the City and the City is supportive. As Washington Ave is an “unnumbered state highway”, they initiated conversations with Assembly Member Pat Fahy. Plan is for one lane in either direction with a middle turn lane, bike lanes and where appropriate a full

median/pedestrian safety zone (especially by the High School). Chester and the Superintendent will be following thru with the PTA. Emily of Capital Roots offered to work with Chester. Capital Roots may have funding for demonstration projects to test out some of the proposed street safety changes.

- **South End Connector Ambassadors & Construction Disruptions -**
 - Hugh remarked on continuing issues with glass on the SEC running along 787. It is believed this is caused by trucks transporting crushed glass to and/or from the recycling center just south on Rt. 32. We have been asked by Jennifer Ceponis of the Capital Region Transportation Council to assist with promoting the SEC. We are happy to do so, but raised the glass issue with her. She has in turn raised the issue with the City to see what more can be done. In the meantime, ambassadors are doing glass and garbage cleanup when possible and DGS has been responsive to requests to send a sweeper through.
 - Peter Thomas noted the long overdue trailside amenities planned for under 787 have been making some progress. It is hoped that they will be completed before winter.
- **Manning Boulevard Improvement Project** - Recap - there may still be opportunities to comment at:
<https://www.albanyny.gov/2201/Manning-Boulevard-Improvement-Project>
- **Pedal to Peebles with PTNY** Ed Reported they had a chilly but great ride with 60+ participants, the revolutionary and manufacturing history of the area was presented and there were brief talks by Pat Fahy, John McDonald, the New PTNY Executive Director Paul Steely White and ABC President Ed Brennan. Noemi Waight of Go Bike Buffalo's Board of Directors was able to provide insights about the problems Buffalo had with their **School Zone Speed Cameras** - which were abandoned after public outcry.
- **Sand Creek Road Complete Streets Concept Study** - John G. reported
 - Village of Colonie is looking to improve bike/ped conditions on Sand Creek Road between Watervliet-Shaker Road and Wolf Road
 - The project survey has closed but comments can still be submitted at the following: www.sandcreekcompletestreets.com
 - John Gillivan provided mark-up comments highlighting wayfare signage for local connectors and on the preliminary roadway plan

- **Mohawk Hudson Bike Hike Trail Connector Update** - John Gillivan formally responded to Supervisor Peter Crummey on September 18th, 2023 regarding Crummy's questions pertaining to building a Safe Town of Colonie. Ed Brennan's editorial in a Sunday Times Union promoted a trail across the North end of the airport connecting to the Ann Lee/British American Blvd trails and bike lanes and a connection from the airport to the MHBHT.
- **Bike Map Updates** - Glenn noted that he is working on moving the CapitalNYBikeMap.com site from our current vendor, Carto, to ArcGIS. He has had a much better experience with support for ArcGIS. An ArcGIS test version of the map has been operational for some time. He aims to complete the transition soon.

New Business

- **Upper Madison Ave Street Fair** - Ed, Hugh and Glenn manned a table at this event, on Sunday, Oct. 1st. We promoted ABC and its efforts, our upcoming Bike the Branches Ride and obtained many petition signatures in support of lowering the City speed limit to 25 mph.
- **World Day of Remembrance for Traffic Crash Victims**
 - A planning meeting for this event was held Tuesday the 26th.
 - We will hold a protest/demonstration in Academy Park on Friday the 17th of November at 12:30pm rather than the official date of the 19th so we can have a better chance of press coverage and attracting other civic leaders
 - We will be reading the names of Albany victims of traffic violence, placing shoes on the steps of City Hall and displaying a ghost bike
 - Our asks this year will be for 25 mph speed limits, school zone speed cameras and implementation of the Washington Park Safety Plan.
- **New Yorkers for Transportation Equity - Another Statewide Effort!**
 - This new statewide group hopes to get more state and federal dollars committed to Active and Public Transportation
 - Ed attended their initial meeting, David P. will be ABC's representative going forward
 - Please Complete Their Survey!
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdJXi9p1iowH8oICqDNngZFN-WPkAYUayTAI1VMjqT1tMBH_A/viewform?usp=sf_link

- **League of American Cyclists Slow Roads Save Lives Campaign (Ed)**
 - The League is Upping their Game to promote road safety
 - You can sign the pledge to drive slower in your neighborhood here: <https://bikeleague.org/take-action/slow-roads-save-lives/take-the-pledge/>
- **Capital Region Transportation Council - Active Transportation Advisory Committee** starting again: October 10th at 9:30
 - Open to public - email info@capitalmpo.org for an invite
- **New York State Transportation Master Plan** - Put in your two cents for better support for active transportation!
 - Survey <https://publicinput.com/j1748>
 - <https://nytransportationmasterplan.com/>
- **Elections** - Mark will be setting up a meeting of the Board to discuss the process
- **New Scotland / Madison Bike Lane Ride** - Assuming New Scotland Avenue's new bike lanes appear before the snow flies, we will be scheduling a ride that will start at the Golf Course, ride out those new lanes to Allen, over to the Madison Ave bike lanes, around Washington Park and back to the golf course to celebrate at Martel's.
- **3rd Annual Halloween Ride** - Will be at Albany Rural Cemetery on Saturday, October 28th, 2023 at 11:30 AM. Under 2 hours and on relatively flat terrain. Cemetery Trustee Michael Radlick has confirmed his availability. See upcoming details at <https://albanybicyclecoalition.com/resources/upcoming-events/>
- **ADK Sports & Northeast Ski Expo**: We will have a table at the Albany Capital Center, November 11th-12th, 2023. Volunteers needed!
- **T-Shirts** - Ed reported we still have a limited quantity of t-shirts available. Anyone interested should e-mail albanybicyclecoalition@yahoo.com
 - Performance T-Shirts \$26 1 x 2XL, 3L, 1M
 - Standard Cotton T-Shirts \$18 3L, 1M
- **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: 10/26, 11/30, 12/28.

Treasurer's Report - David P. went over the financials at the conclusion of our meeting. His reconciliation was approved.

Articles and Links of Interest:

Report: America's Historic Bike Boom is Flatlining

<https://usa.streetsblog.org/2023/09/28/report-americas-historic-bike-boom-is-flatlining?fbclid=IwAR1nzAcZqHWRr7YythMq1z5Ms8xzOeAh1nkRapXwTv3TsmkICTAjuPJkuUc>

America has the world's safest air travel but sucks so bad at car safety

<https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2023/8/25/23844717/america-safe-air-travel-car-safety-accidents>