

Albany Bicycle Coalition February 29, 2024 Meeting Notes

Attendees: Ed Brennan, John Gillivan, Lola Grillo, Jill Haimson, Hugh Johnson, Gary Lessard, Mike Maloney, Mark Maniak, Darlene McGraw, David Pisaneschi, Glenn Sandberg, Ira Share, Peter Thomas, Lorenz Worden

Special Topic - Mayhem on the Roadways

- **Safe Streets Coalition Update**

- Automatically ask your state reps to sign on to the Safe Streets Coalition slate of bills: <https://transalt.org/safe>
- One of those bills is for Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA) for persistent speeding offenders that would prevent them from speeding on our roads. Ed noted the District of Columbia just successfully passed an ISA local law that is modeled after our NY bill!
- To see new research on NYC super speeders, see: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-02-09/nyc-s-speed-cameras-reveal-super-speeders-on-the-rise>
 - With automated enforcement in NYC most drivers stop accumulating tix after 1 or 2
 - Super speeders have accumulated over 100 tix. They once made up a fifth of all speeding tickets; now it's closer to four-fifths.
- Ed reported several local advocates attended the Feb 6th Transportation Equity Day in Albany Andrew Matrai, Naqiy McMullen and James Rath from Capital Streets joined many others from groups across the state
 - Rallied in the Capitol Bldg for better use of transportation funds for improved mass transit, services for the disabled and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure
 - They also push for VMT limits and canceling of projects like the Rt 17 expansion
 - A post rally meeting at the Justice Center on Central Avenue gave us a networking opportunity to people with transit and transportation equity interests in Albany
- May 7 is NYS Safe Streets Coalition Day of Action a great opportunity for anyone interest to tell our State electeds to pass the Safe Streets bills. You need not have any politicking experience! Sign Up To Attend: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1y6MjOhbSeafd3rvmvWV33I7dTUbYDHFsqiOnBKLhHYg/viewform?edit_requested=true

- **Albany City Ordinance Proposals**

- Ed also discussed the Safe Streets Coalition's streamlined methodology for NY Cities and Villages to Lower Speeds to meet the state law requirements to justify lowering their area speed limits to 25 mph.
 - Using this methodology, running existing publicly available speed studies thru the FHWA USLIMITS2 system for speed recommendations, there no way the City of Albany should need to spend \$100,000 (as planned) to get this done.
 - Ed had run about half the City's speed studies thru USLIMITS2 already and will present the results to City officials when it is completed.
 - Crash data can also be added to USLIMITS2. This would likely produce lower speed recommendations, but street level crash data is not available without that information being FOIL'd
- Another alternative might be to follow the recent example of the Village of Mamaroneck which adopted 25 mph with a method even easier than USLIMITS2. The engineer from AKRF that signed off on Mamaroneck's lower speeds thought USLIMITS2 was itself more complicated than needed. In this case AKRF had a long established relationship with the Village of Mamaroneck, but he said they'd be open to this kind of work for other Villages and Cities.
 - AKRF did the work for a small amount of money - single thousands of dollars (rather than \$100,000 as budgeted by Albany)
 - They reviewed legislation with the Village Attorney and then did a desktop GIS exercise, looking at widths, travel lanes etc. and determined that it would be "safe and reasonable to lower the area speed limit" which they certified as required by law.
 - It was noted the area limit only applied to village owned roads. There was no change to county or state routes. Typically, these main roads are the most dangerous. Using this method risks leaving such streets behind as localities may lack the attention span to push for changes to State and County Roads after the locally owned road speeds are reduced.
 - Implemented by a resolution by the Village Trustees § 326-6 *Speed limits. [Amended 12-12-2022 by L.L. No. 6-2022, effective 12-15-2022]*
The maximum speed at which vehicles may proceed on or along any streets or highways within the Village, excluding state highways, is hereby established at 25 miles per hour.
<https://ecode360.com/7712287>

- Here are the minutes of the relevant meeting of the Board of Trustees (start on p3)
<https://mamaroneck.novusagenda.com/agendapublic/DisplayAgendaPDF.ashx?MinutesMeetingID=1510>
 - The Village informed DOT, but did not need permission.
- A Proposed City Bicycle Ordinance Update was also discussed by Ed. Anne Savage of NYBC and Ed reviewed the ABC recommendations from over a year ago along with other provisions and presented the results to an interested City Councilperson. Highlights included:
 - Getting rid of the requirement for cyclists to ring a bell at every intersection (!?!)
 - Getting rid of the 8 mph speed limit for cyclists
 - Getting rid of prohibition on riding on trails in Washington and Lincoln Parks
 - Permitting cyclists (and other non-motorized, person powered devices) to ride on sidewalks at speed of no more than 5 mph and not within 5 feet of a pedestrian - a preamble to this change explains the dangers of riding on sidewalks.
- Russell Rd and Berkshire Blvd Study - Ed noted a City Council Resolution was proposed that the City share costs for a County study of these roads which lack sidewalks and have parks and schools that children bike and walk to. ABC submitted a message of support for the resolution
- **Naqiy McMullen's Albany County Bike / Ped Crash Data Viewer**
 - Ed demonstrated Naqiy's GIS website on which he loaded Albany County Bike Ped Crash data from 2016 to 2023 which he FOIL'd from the state.
 - This is a tremendous resource that can be used by citizens to better understand the stakes involved in local road projects and for those that wish to fight for new projects. Thank you, Naqiy!
 - <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/969cbc14361a4b2c923a90ac62fc59cb>
- **Central Avenue Campaign**
 - John Gillivan reported there is no announcement yet for the promised Central Ave road study in Colonie
 - Ed and Mark reported there was mention of an upcoming redesign for Central Avenue in the City of Albany - but no official meeting dates yet
 - ABC will be return its 2024 Ride of Silence 2024 to Central Avenue
 - Cycle Schenectady is considering a joint media event at the start of the ride, perhaps a reading of the names of Central Ave victims and guest speakers, after which CS would conduct a ride toward Schenectady and ABC would conduct a ride toward Albany

- We need:
 - Ride design/testing volunteers
 - Media Outreach / Advertising Volunteers
 - Volunteers to FOIL information on several deadly crashes that were never reported in news media
- Unlike Colonie, Niskayuna is moving forward on a Route 7 study
 - Coincidentally and sadly it appears Assembly Member Smullen's son was the ped struck on Rt 7 on Feb 22nd by Bellevue Hospital

Reports

- **Cycle Schenectady (CS) Update** - Art Clayman reported:
 - At his neighborhood assn meeting Tuesday night Council President Porterfield said that the city has completed the work necessary to lower the speed limit on city streets and submitted a home rule request to the state legislature - Ed noted a home rule request isn't needed for 25 mph!
 - Art attended a Craig Street Complete Streets project open house in Hamilton Hill. They considered whether to have a 10-ft-wide bike path right next to the ped sidewalk, or an 8-ft-wide path with grass strip and trees separating the two. Art, and most others, favored the 2nd option.
 - This project also involves public art and play areas. It has been 5 yrs in the making, and greatly improved thanks to many opportunities for public input. It's the way these projects should be done.
 - City Engineer reached out to Art for help deciding where to route a bike path extension connecting downtown & Central Park, which now ends at the park's Rose Garden. The extension would connect to Fehr Avenue, which will get its own bike path all the way down to State St. These projects will provide safe bike-ped access to the park's new \$10 million swimming pool.
 - Progress on signs continued with Metroplex and Discover Schenectady releasing a signage plan for 12 County Erie Canalway sites, with an emphasis on historic photos and descriptions. Very attractive and well done.
 - Next to come from these two entities are better signage directing riders from the EST where it ends at North Jay Street, through city streets to where it resumes again at SCC. A show of hands at the ABC meeting

demonstrated how many of us got lost trying to follow the EST through Schenectady!

- CS Earth Day ride is planned for Saturday, May 20, followed by cleanup of a section of bike trail in the city on May 27.
- CS will participate in Kids' Arts Fest on June 2.
- CS will continue biweekly Monday rides in May.
- CS planning continues for bike fix-it/bike safety, and health education days -- along with the bike share people and CDPHP health officials -- at two Municipal Housing Authority complexes. 1st Early May; 2nd Sept.
- CS is holding talks with Schoharie River Center, lead agency for the new Schenectady Environmental Education Center in Central Park, about having bike repair programs and bike rides there. It looks as if the bike rescue will have a satellite location in the basement of the center, and CS would like to have a presence there as well.
- The CS board is meeting after a public meeting on a new Franklin St. cycle track. Also years in the making, the cycle track will connect the Central Park-Vale Park Greenway, where it now ends at Nott Terrace, to Jay St. and the middle of downtown.
- What first looked like a simple painted bike lane on either side of the street has turned into a serious bi-directional cycle track, separated from travel lanes by a grass strip with trees. The overly wide, lightly traveled street with two lanes in either direction has been put on a road diet

- **Bikeatoga Rpt**

- They are not very hopeful for rapid 25 mph movement due to bandwidth being absorbed by other contentious city controversies
- Bikeatoga is hosting a community forum on March 27th on "Physical Activity and Successful Aging in Saratoga Springs: A Community Partnership." The CEO of Saratoga Hospital, CEO of the Saratoga Regional YMCA, AARP New York State Director for Community Engagement and Mike King from TrafficCalmer.com will talk about how building complete streets is a public health initiative, especially for seniors.
- The Union Ave bike path historical marker has been delivered from the foundry and we'll install that this Spring

- They are cautiously optimistic that the Union Ave bike lane extension to Congress Park will be before the council this Spring. It's too early to speculate how that will unfold.
- **Capital Streets** - Announced they will be holding a celebration of their 1st year of operation - see Events below for details
- **CRTC In Motion: The Plan to 2050** - Ed reported:
 - This is the long-range transportation plan for the Capital Region that will guide federal transportation investments for the next 25 years.
 - five phases with opportunities for the public to engage in every phase - (1) Data Collection, (2) Inform, (3) Imagine, (4) Decision-making, and (5) Review and Adopt
 - **March 21, 2024 at 6p** virtual workshop signup:
 - <https://capitalmpo.us14.list-manage.com/track/click?u=59fbdae21f493912c2029a66&id=10c1a70870&e=b59008b9d1>

Transportation Projects

- **County Rail Trail / SE Connector Updates** - Hugh reported the South End Connector Ambassadors are soldiering on through the winter to check on and clean the trail. Peter reported the area of subsidence on the western part of the trail continues to get worse. He also reported that Bethlehem is commencing a new multiuse trail along hazardous Blessing Road.
- **Manning Boulevard Improvement Project** - Ed reported DGS has posted their final plans.
 - Little was changed in final recommendation
 - <https://www.albanyny.gov/2201/Manning-Boulevard-Improvement-Project>
 - Travel lanes will be reduced to 11' width. 2' shoulders will be provided on each side to allow space for emergency pull-offs / vehicle passing.
 - **Pedestrian / Bicycle Safety**
 - In lieu of shared lane bicycle markings on an un-striped roadway without defined lanes, signage will be installed identifying the bridle paths as the designated Bike Route.
 - Signed mid-block crossings will be provided at each bridle path access point and at the intersection of Lancaster Street. Advanced warning signage will be installed to alert motorists of a crossing ahead. Crosswalks will be striped and refuge islands will be provided within the medians.

- Crosswalks at the intersections of Western Avenue and Washington Avenue will be restriped & realigned as part of this project, along with minor sidewalk/curb ramp improvements. A more extensive reconstruction of these intersections is being considered as part of a larger intersection improvement project along both of those roadways.
 - Sidewalks within the project area will be reconstructed to create ADA-accessible walkways.
- **Brevator, Washington and Western -**
 - Ed reported last meeting that the City is seeking Grant Proposals for Washington Ave from Manning to Brevator & Western from Manning to the City Line.
 - At the City's request ABC submitted letters of support for the grants
 - Proposal spoke of bike lanes on both these sections with other road sections to come in later years
 - **Brevator Project:**
 - Per DGS, the project is to start Spring 2024
 - <https://www.albanyny.gov/2177/Brevator-Street-Improvement-Project>
- **Frisbie Avenue Improvement Project**
 - Still in comment period!
 - This road is a cut thru for many commuters at speeds which are a danger to the Green Tech school students, Hoffman Park users and residents
 - <https://www.albanyny.gov/2263/Frisbie-Avenue-Street-Improvement-Project>
- **Colonie Connector** - John G. and Ed reported they had a good Meeting with Caitlin O'Brien, Chief of Staff for new Chairwoman of County Legislature and Nicollete Simonds, Dir. of Communications for Chair's Office
 - Reviewed recreational, transportation, economic and eco benefits of the proposed connector trail, discussed the "airport" option,
 - To their question of costs, we said we believed the Patroon Creek study cost in the area of \$100,000 - but they should contact CRTC for better idea of current study costs and what grants would be available

- **North Greenbush Route 4 Insanity by Design Study** - Ed report the study proposes:
 - an extra northbound lane on Rt 4, despite evidence that adding traffic lanes only leads to more congestion
 - several 2 lane traffic circles, that will be a horror for bikes and peds to cross
 - Creation of service roads away from Rt 4 to get cyclists off the road
 - See Jan. 30th meeting video at 1:29:20 for a non-explanation of how bikes and peds will be able to cross the 2 lane traffic circles
 - <https://www.nyroute4study.com/meetings>
 - Click the “connect” button to explain that Rt 4 needs to serve the transport needs of more than motor vehicle users.
- **Rt 155/New Karner (NK) Rd “Let’s Put a 2 Lane Traffic Circle in the Middle of a MultiUse Trail Study”** - Ed reported attending the Feb 1st meeting on this study at which it was:
 - Acknowledged County is expecting a decision on funding a multi-use trail along the East Side of 155/NK b/n Western and Washington Ave Ext.
 - Acknowledged the CRTC Albany Loop plan is to build trail along 155/NK north to Central and beyond
 - Stated they still want to build two lane roundabout at Washington Ave Ext and 155/NK intersection - right where these 2 trail segments would meet and would need to get cyclists and pedestrians across
 - The brief time for comments allotted has passed, please contact Albany City Engineer, Albany Council People, Guilderland, County Legislators, County Exec McCoy to tell them this is no place for a 2 lane traffic circle. The intersection should have full signalization and safe passage for bikes and peds.
 - <https://www.albanycounty.com/departments/public-works/new-karner-road-project>
- **Menands Bridge Replacement** - comment period has passed
 - Website: <https://www.dot.ny.gov/troymenandsbridge>
- **Livingston Avenue Bridge Update**

- While the promised federal funding is still hazy, from the CRTC meeting below, it is apparent state funding is in the bank and contracting is going forward for the bridge replacement with the bike/ped trail.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-QQvgrJ2HY>
- The apparent Rensselaer County eagerness to pursue the Rensselaer to Troy trail is also very encouraging.
- **DOT Reimagining 787 Effort** - PEL stage - taking public comments
 - The DOT website is: <https://787.dot.ny.gov>
 - You may also send comments to: 787@dot.ny.gov

Other Business and Events

- **Capital Streets 1st Year Celebration** - March 27th at Lark Hall, 351 Hudson Ave, Albany, NY. 6 PM Happy Hour, 7 PM Celebration followed by live music from Boss Crowley and a DJ set.
- **Earth Day Ride** - Will have a Complete Streets Theme - Saturday, April 20th
 - Volunteers needed for ride design, media outreach and advertising
 - Proposed locations: New Scotland and Madison bike lanes, Washington Park Study proposed improvements, Western Avenue Transit MiniHub, Lark Street Improvements, Central Ave need for improvements, Lower Clinton Improvements and the Albany "Skyway"
- **Champlain Canal Sweep Day** - 4/21/24 (Sun) in Ft Edward
- **Tulip Fest** Volunteer for the ABC table! Washington Park May 11th & 12th
- **Ride of Silence**. May 15th Details TBA
- **Waterford Canal Fest Bike Safety Day**. 5/18-19 Rodeo/Ride
- **Bike Safety Day at Derby Park in Hudson Falls**. 6/1/24 Rodeo & Rides
- **Bike the Branches 2024** - Library is interested in a September Ride, we will be working out details, but will likely keep the same route as last year
- **NYBC Bike Summit**. Oct 17 & 18 at Albany Convention Ctr
- **Annual Donation Appeal** Mark said he is putting the finishing touches on our annual donation appeal
- **League of American Cyclists Slow Roads Save Lives Campaign**
 - Pledge here to slow yourself down when driving in your neighborhood: <https://bikeleague.org/take-action/slow-roads-save-lives/take-the-pledge/>
- **New York State Transportation Master Plan**

- Survey <https://publicinput.com/j1748>
 - <https://nystransportationmasterplan.com/>
- **New York State Active Transportation Survey!**
 - <https://nysdotwalkbikeplan.com/>
- **Upcoming – Rides/events** (Go here - <https://albanybicyclecoalition.com/resources/upcoming-events//>)
- **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
- **Deployment of ABC Bank Funds** - David P. discussed the relative merits of investing extra ABC funds in a Preferred account vs a CD account. A quorum of the Board approved placing \$2500 in extra funds in a Preferred market account.
- **Treasurer's Report** - David finished the meeting by reviewing the coalition accounts, receipts and expenditures. The bank balance was approved by a quorum of the Board.