

Albany Bicycle Coalition Meeting Notes for September 2, 2024

Attendees:, Chester Bennett, Norm Berg, Ed Brennan, Lola Grillo, Mark Maniak, Andrew Matrai, David Pisaneschi, Andrew Reilly, Glenn Sandberg, Ira Share, Debbie Van Ryn

Special Topic - Mayhem on the Roadways

- **Week Without Driving** - September 30 to October 6
 - Andrew told of our effort to publicize the Week Without Driving along with our partners Capital Streets, WalkableAlbany, VocalNY, VocalAlbany, and WeAreRevolutionary
 - Aims to get people out of their cars
 - Aims to get politicians to understand the plight of those that don't drive
 - Participate by taking at least one trip that you would normally take by car and sharing your experience on social media with the campaign tags (#WeekWithoutDriving, #518WeekWithoutDriving).
 - For details see: <https://albanybicyclecoalition.com/2024/09/23/week-without-driving/>
- **New Albany City Proposed Active Transportation Ordinance** - Report on hearing of City Council Law, Building and Code Enforcement Committee
 - Ed had about 50 minutes to present and be involved in the committee discussion
 - Ed raised that ordinance needs to address behavior on multi-use paths
 - Ed also noted the 5 foot distance for bikes to pedestrians shouldn't be more than proposed distance of safe passing laws that require 3 or 4 feet. He recommended a citywide "due care" distance definition of 4 feet for cars on roads approaching vulnerable road users as well as for active transportation approaching pedestrians
 - Ed noted he did not think to mention issue of riding on "crosswalks" at the meeting, but would follow up with an e-mail to sponsor Ginnie Farrell
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dPhHjXodPCM>
- **More Local Municipalities Looking at 25 mph Speed Limit**
 - Hudson, Kingston are done

- Schenectady, Saratoga appear to be making their move with help from CRTC
- <https://nybc.net/advocacy/strive-for-25>
- **Safe Streets Coalition State Legislation Update** - Several group leaders met with DOT representatives. There was pushback regarding Complete Streets Maintenance, even though the proposal was changed so it is limited to projects expecting to extend the life of a road by 10 years. DOT expressed that the bill would pull funding from essential maintenance projects.
 - Tentative lobby days in January (TBD) and May 13

Reports

- **Walk, Bike and Roll Conference Report** - Ed went to this biannual event.
 - It was a great networking opportunity with advocates and state and local administrators and electeds
 - AARP now has “bike audit” tool to evaluate an area's bike friendliness. It has had a pedestrian audit tool for many years.
 - A DOT presenter at the Vulnerable Road User panel was surprisingly comfortable with the various approaches municipalities have taken to move to 25 mph - perhaps suggesting DOT will continue to be flexible to local needs and conditions.
- **Capital Region Vision Zero Public Meetings/Process**
 - We encourage everyone to use the online interactive map tool which allows anyone to note problem areas
 - <https://www.capitalregionvisionzero.org/participate>
 - CRTC In Motion: The Plan to 2050 New Survey:

<https://form.jotform.com/crtcmopo/long-range-survey>
- **Cycle Schenectady Update** - Art Clayman reported:
 - CS held a ride on a new, 4.5-mile loop around the Mohawk River,
 - The loop uses two new pieces of bike infrastructure: a contra-flow lane on Washington Avenue in the Stockade and a paved trail on the Glenville side of the river.
 - Other new infrastructure, installed at CS urging, are bike racks for a streetscape project in front of the Niskayuna Co-op
 - After complaining that Schenectady was being ignored by the CRTC and its consultant regarding a regional Vision Zero Plan they are developing, we got our own Zoom briefing, where we were told that Schenectady was

the only city that didn't participate. Nonetheless, we were told, the city has recently shown interest and there will be informational sessions in Schenectady before the report is produced next spring.

- After Art's letter in the Gazette blasting the City Council and Mayor for inaction on 25 mph, the council's transportation committee had a meeting where the lower limit was treated as a foregone conclusion and such traffic-calming measures as speed bumps, humps and tables were presented as options by the city engineer, as well as red-light cameras.
- Art has also pitched the idea of parked car-protected bike lanes to the city engineer, who seems interested in trying it next time a bike lane is created.
- **Bikeatoga Update** Ed Lindner from Bikeatoga reported:
 - Things are a bit up in the air in Saratoga since our Commissioner of DPW resigned and the remaining council members are deadlocked 2-2 on his replacement.
 - There was some movement on 25 MPH. Ken Grey and Ted Orosz from our Complete Streets Advisory Bd did a presentation for the council last week on goals for the next year and 25 MPH got the most discussion from council members. The consensus seemed positive, but several council members were concerned about the cost of the engineering study and cited ridiculously high cost estimates.
 - Ed is also running the Saratoga Foliage Ride, their major fundraiser.
<https://www.bikeatoga.org/sfr2024>
 - We've been playing up the notion that Saratoga can be a bike tourism destination, particularly when the Zim Smith trail is connected to the Spa Park and we are connected to the EST.
 - Ed put Ed Lindner in touch with the Safe Streets Coalition 25 mph team regarding study costs. We found that Saratoga Springs is part of the CRTC Safe Streets for All planning study, 25 mph is well within that scope - this will likely cover their study costs.
- **Albany County Rail Trail / SE Connector Update** - Ed noted that some homeless persons were apparently residing along the 787 underpass section of

the SEC. Sadly, this would be an issue for the upcoming Kids Learn to Ride Program that will be held there October 19th.

- **Bike The Branches Report** - All agreed this was a very successful event. The weather was great for the 18 participants and the poet, Dan Wilcox, who gave us a poem at every Library stop. The library participants were also pleased. We agreed should do something similar next year.
- **Farmers Markets Report/Albany County Traffic Safety Awareness Weekend Report**
 - Ed , Lola and Ira contributed their time to table three Delaware Farmers markets and one Washington Park
 - We combined NYBC bike helmet and bike light giveaways with handouts of ABC bike map and resource lists.
 - In all we gave out & fitted 192 helmets, provided about 250 sets of blinky lights for after dark visibility and handed out piles of safety literature
- **Colonie Connector Update** -
 - Current goal is a trail study connecting the airport and Ann Lee Trail system with the Mohawk Hudson Bike Hike Trail
 - Ed spoke with County Legislator Susan Laurilliard, who is feeling frustrated in her efforts to get the trail study, but she continues to make friends at the County level for the project.

Transportation Projects

- **Central Avenue** - Ed suggested everyone go to this site and put in their recommendations - especially for protected bike lanes:
<https://www.albanyny.gov/2327/Central-Avenue>.
- **Everett Road/I90 Interchange** - Ed reported on the rumor that plan for upgrades to this horrible interchange had dropped planned pedestrian improvements. Actually, there was a project that was part of the TIP (Transportation Improvement Plan) a couple of years ago - but the whole project was dropped from the TIP, not just the pedestrian improvements. An inquiry was made to see if the State DOT was still going to do some kind of repair work. The danger is that maintenance work to extend the life of the interchange, will also serve to extend the life of a deadly situation for vulnerable road users.
- **Brevator Street** - Ed reported he saw median work beginning. When completed there will be a multi-use path on the East side of the road.
- **Livingston Ave Bridge** - As noted in the previous meeting, Cranes and other equipment are working on the Rensselaer side of the new rail bridge site. When

completed there promises to be a multi-use bridge across the Hudson next to the rail bridge.

- **Blessing Road Trail Progress** - Ed reported work is continuing and should be done and paved by November 1st. Ed later learned that this year the path may only extend from Krumkill to the Meadow Brook apartments.

Rides & Other Business

- **NYBC Bike Summit** - October 17 & 18: 1 or 2 day tickets available

<https://nybc.net/bike-summit/2024-bike-summit-home>

- There are some great speakers - including Wes Marshall, author of Killed by a Traffic Engineer
- ABC is sponsoring a ride for the afternoon of the 18th for attendees.
- Discounts for anyone that will help with the ride!!!! Ed needs more helpers!

- **Learn to Ride for Adults** - October 11 & 12, Register at:

<https://bit.ly/3Y8a3XY>

- The 1st day is for those that need more basic bicycling instruction
- The 2nd day is more focused on skills for riding on roads with cars
- Anyone that wants to use the class as a prerequisite for taking the LCI course should attend both days

- **Kids Learn to Ride** - October 19th 10am to noon

- Rich Conroy, who taught many local LCI's, will be offering a free 2 hour Learn to Ride program for kids
- We worked with the City to locate the training under 787 at the new "Learn to Ride Park", by the corner of 4th & Dongon Avenues
- Volunteers will get a unique opportunity to learn how Rich Conroy gets kids off training wheels and riding in a short space of time
- Signup is limited to 20 children 5 yrs and up.

<https://www.nybc.net/learntorideoct19>

- **ABC Charities Bureau Status** - Ed reported we are still waiting on the State Charities Bureau for an update.
- **Albany Social Cycling** is holding weekly "Slow Roll Albany" Rides

- Check their instagram for times, they are rolling earlier
- **Halloween Ride at Albany Rural Cemetery** - John G. reported after the meeting that he is working on scheduling for the weekend prior to Halloween.
- **World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims**: Friday November 15, 2024. Currently planned for Academy Park (across from City Hall). Time TBD.
 - Ed and James Rath are going to be presenting at October 8th CRTC Active Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting
- **Options for In Person Meetings** - We are looking for alternatives to our old in person meeting site at the LaSalle School on Western. We discussed meeting at Libraries, but most sites close early and the Washington Avenue sight would not have good security for bicycles. Martel's does not appear to be an option as they often have bands on Thursdays. Chester will look into Lark Hall.
- **Upcoming Meetings**: Oct 24 (moved from Halloween night), Nov 21 (moved from Thanksgiving)
- **Treasurer's Report** - David reported an unexpected \$250 gift from a generous member (**Thank You!**). Our numbers were behind last year, but we are still in the black.