

BMTS Article Digest April - May 2010

BMTS Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee Members:

The following is a compilation of articles that may be of interest to BMTS Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee members. This and past digests can also be accessed in the Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee page of www.bmtsonline.com.

Scott

Take a look at the National Center for Bicycling & Walking's newsletter, **CenterLines**. You can also arrange to have it emailed directly to you.

See <http://www.bikewalk.org/newsletterarchives.php>

CenterLines is the bi-weekly electronic news bulletin of the National Center for Bicycling & Walking. **CenterLines** is our way of quickly delivering news and information you can use to create more walkable and bicycle-friendly communities.

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Set example, police

MAY 6, 2010, 12:00 AM

With the warmer weather, the Binghamton police are again using their bicycles — and are again setting a bad example for bicycle-riding children. They do not wear helmets and have very low visibility at night with black bicycles, dark blue uniforms and no lights being used. They are almost invisible at night. I have been in large cities where their bicycle police have been in operation much longer than they have in Binghamton, and this is the first city where I have seen helmets not being used.

I find it difficult to believe that there is any law enforcement reason for no helmets and low visibility at night. There are lights with remote buttons available for when low visibility is needed.

When I barely see them at night with no helmet on, an old cyclist saying comes to mind: "Brain damage will make no difference to them."

Matthew Roman
Binghamton

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Crossing button needed

MAY 6, 2010, 12:00 AM

With the opening of the Walmart Supercenter in Johnson City not far off, I suggest that a crossing button be placed not far from the store.

I think that the best place for it would be at the corner of Rogers Street and CFJ Blvd.

Helen Schultz
Johnson City

Blind Olympic cyclist to visit A.V.R.E.

MAY 5, 2010, 7:07 AM

The Association for Vision Rehabilitation and Employment, Inc. will host its 23rd annual Employee Recognition Banquet at 1 p.m. Friday at its 174 Court St. facility in Binghamton.

A.V.R.E. will award Jen O'Brien, executive director of the Magic Paintbrush Project, the Outstanding Community Services Award for her ongoing commitment to working with children who are visually impaired and their families.

The keynote speaker is Jason Bryn from National Industries for the Blind. Bryn is legally blind and is one of three generations in his family with the hereditary eye disease. His resume includes college basketball, disability rights law, advocacy for the blind, life coaching, motivational speaking and competing as an Olympic tandem cyclist.

Volunteers look to improve pedestrian safety in Binghamton

BY JENNIFER MICALE • JMICALE@GANNETT.COM • APRIL 21, 2010, 8:15 PM



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Volunteers with AARP's Create The Good survey crosswalks and intersections Wednesday at South Washinton Street and NY Route 434 in Binghamton. Volunteers evaluate how these streets address walkers' needs, such as whether they have adequate traffic signals, properly marked crosswalks, or enough time for crossing. This effort is part of a week-long, statewide campaign, called Complete Streets Week: Making New York Walkable for All Generations, which will survey hundreds of dangerous roads and intersections across the state. The results will be used to demonstrate the need for state "Complete Streets" legislation which would assure that road design incorporates the needs of all people, including pedestrians. (REBECCA CATLETT / Staff Photo)

BINGHAMTON -- The car cut it pretty close.

Pulling onto Route 434 from South Washington St., its passenger-side tire rode up on the pedestrian cut-out at the edge of the sidewalk, where a bevy of people in red vests were jotting notes. "Hey!" one shouted as the car sped away.

The note-takers were volunteers from AARP and several other community organizations taking part in a statewide campaign called "Complete Streets Week." On Wednesday, they surveyed several city intersections -- including Route 434 and South Washington, Conklin Avenue and South Washington, Henry and Chenango streets and Chenango and Doubleday streets -- to see how they stacked up for pedestrian safety. They were looking at a number of factors, including crosswalks, traffic lights, curb cuts for the disabled and signs.

"Part of this is a walkability and safety issue," said Ann McNichols of the Aging Futures Partnership, noting that many communities are geared more toward moving cars than people.

According to AARP, the state ranks third in the nation when it comes to pedestrian fatalities for people over the age of 65. By 2025, people 65 and up will comprise nearly 20 percent of the population.

Survey findings will be sent to state policymakers to demonstrate the need for Complete Streets legislation, which advocates an approach to road design that takes into account pedestrians, bicyclists, people with disabilities and public transportation users. Currently, such legislation has been introduced in the state Assembly and Senate.

At first glance, South Washington and Route 434 might seem a tougher intersection than a block away on Conklin Avenue at the foot of the pedestrian bridge. Despite the symphony of screeching tires and heavy traffic, the former includes a timed crossing signal, marked crosswalks and curb cuts.

If you hit the button for the crossing signal at the wrong time, though, you're in for a bit of a wait, said Erin Mitchell, associate state director of AARP. And to make it accessible for the visually impaired, it needs a signal with an audible countdown, like the one on Court Street near Boscov's, said Erin Kavanagh, an orientation and mobility specialist at the Association for Vision Rehabilitation and Employment.

As for Conklin Avenue ... "I don't know where to start," Kavanagh sighed.

Pedestrian bridge aside, there's no signal at South Washington and Conklin -- just a blinking light. Pedestrians need to step into the road and past a line of parked cars to see if they can cross. For the visually impaired, it's just not navigable.

"The way it's set up, cars don't see you until you're crossing," Kavanagh said.

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Thater race named top cycling event

April 14, 2010, 8:34 am

The Chris Thater Memorial was recently named as one of North America's top 24 events by Velo News: The Journal of Competitive Cycling.

Now in its 27th year, the Thater Memorial is part of the National Racing Calendar and USA Crits Series. Named for a cyclist killed by a drunk driver, the free event will be held Aug. 28 to 29 in Binghamton's Recreation Park, and feature cycling events, a 5K run, a music festival and expo, and concessions.

For more information, visit www.bcstopdwi.com, call Broome County's STOP-DWI Coordinator James F. May at (607) 778-2056 or email bcstopdwi@co.broome.ny.us.

More parking places for pedalers

Program administered by CDTA will help place unique bike racks in Capital Region



Details of some of the new CDTA bike racks that will be placed along bus routes in the area in Albany on Tuesday. (Michael P. Farrell / Times Union)



Carrie Ward, a planner with CDTA, left, and Margo Janack, manager of marketing and sales, show off some of the new bike racks that will grace bus routes in the Capital Region in Albany on Tuesday. (Michael P. Farrell / Times Union)

By [ERIC ANDERSON](#) BUSINESS EDITOR

First published: Wednesday, April 14, 2010

ALBANY -- Bicyclists will find more places to park around the Capital Region in coming weeks, thanks to a new program administered by the Capital District Transportation Authority.

CDTA earlier this year invited businesses, public institutions and nonprofit organizations to apply for bicycle racks. The program provided 50 percent subsidies toward the cost of the racks for private companies, while nonprofits could acquire them for free.

The program was funded with a \$50,000 grant.

Seventy-seven applicants next week will begin installing enough racks to park 900 bicycles, according to CDTA spokeswoman Margo Janack.

Among them is Melville's Mug, a cafe on Clinton Square in downtown Albany.

Owner Gregory Harris, who is also an attorney, said he purchased two racks for \$1,250, which will hold four bicycles.

"They actually had some that looked like a steaming mug of coffee," he said Tuesday. Those seemed perfect for his business.

Harris expects the racks will be used not only by Melville's customers, but also by tenants in upstairs offices who now must take their bicycles indoors with them.

For CDTA, the bicycle rack program was a natural extension.

The transit authority already has equipped its buses with bicycle racks, but riders often didn't have any place to store the bicycles at their destinations.

The program seeks to remedy this dilemma.

Janet Kaplan, vice president of real estate for Stuyvesant Plaza in Guilderland, said the shopping plaza will acquire one rack that holds four bicycles. It also plans to reinstall a rack it already owns that was removed during recent renovations.

"We got a cute one," she said of the new CDTA rack. "It's called the mad biker."

Indeed, many of the racks offered were in whimsical shapes -- yoga poses, spiky guys and butterflies were among the offerings.

The transit authority carried 38,445 bicycles in its most recent fiscal year, Janack said. The bus racks get the most use on the #55 Albany-Schenectady, #22 Albany-Troy-Watervliet, #70 Troy-Schenectady, the Route 50 run between Schenectady and Saratoga Springs, and the #10 Western Avenue and #12 Washington Avenue routes.

Albany International Airport will install two racks, both near the CDTA bus stop near the south end of the terminal, said spokesman Doug Myers.

"The program is a natural fit with the airport's ongoing green initiative," Myers said.

"We will encourage our airport employees to take advantage of the benefits of riding a bicycle, which include both the health benefits and the reduction in vehicle emissions."

Myers said the airport also is near a network of bike trails, including one behind the nearby Hilton Garden Inn.

CDTA hopes to offer the program again next year, Janack said.

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Cyclist pinned under SUV

MAY 4, 2010, 8:25 PM

TOWN OF Chenango A bicyclist was injured Tuesday when a woman pulling into her driveway ran him over, police said. Andrew Lake, 53, of Chenango Bridge, was biking on Patch Road near Gordon Drive around 5:45 p.m. when the driver of a Rav-4 collided with him, pinning Lake under the sports utility vehicle, said Broome County Sheriff's Deputy Jan Cower. Firefighters worked for about 10 minutes to lift the car.

"We had to use airbags to lift the car off of him," Chenango Fire Chief Brian Curtis said. Lake, who was transported to Wilson Memorial Hospital with a possible broken leg, was wearing a helmet, Cower said.

The driver, a pregnant woman whose name was not immediately available, was issued a citation for failure to use due care when approaching a bicyclist, according to Cower. She was taken to Lourdes Hospital to be examined.
