

PaTHs 4 Bethlehem
Meeting Summary
October 25, 2011

Present: Henry Peyrebrune, Ann Mullaly, Scott Lewendon, Anne Benware, Oliver Holmes, Kristin Legere, Dan Lewis
Town of Bethlehem Staff: Rob Leslie, Jason Gallo, Gregg Sagendorph
VHB Staff: Bill Desantis, Jason Zogg, Keith Forbes

Comments on September Meeting Summary

No comments provided. The meetings summary will be posted to the Town website.

Bike Pilot Project (VHB Task 7)

- 1. Review of new proposed project connecting the existing shared-use path along the By-Pass with the existing Delmar Bike Route, Darroch Road, Winne Road and Delmar Place, McGuffey Lane, Parkwyn Drive, Murray Ave. Would require adding a portion of Darroch Road and Axbridge Road to the Bicycle & Pedestrian Network.**

Rob – Reasons for new route:

- Builds on the current bike route that is already partially signed
- Will have a good amount of neighborhood users
- Could easily be implemented by highway staff (SLM's and signage)
- We do not need confirmation or permission from state
- Highly visible project with a high population area

Ann- This route would connect to the group rides out of the park and ride and it would also bring you to Eagle Elementary which may one day provide a path to the back of the YMCA.

Bill – Cost associated is mostly spent on signage, total length is about 4.5 miles with a \$25,000 total cost, no shared lane markings.

Rob – Part of the goal would be to get residents to learn and understand SLM's.

Bill - We can add then but it would increase cost

Henry – Not sure this route is the old bike route

Rob – A portion of this new route is the same as the old route, but old signs lead only in 1 direction

Dan – I think this project is a good idea, Delaware Ave is more obvious regarding where it connects and the associated benefits but a key part of this project needs to be the education of SLM's and literature which this route may help lend itself too better.

Jason – I agree with both Dan & Rob and believe this is why SLM's should be included in the project.

Bill – I recommend that it should not just be a signed bike route but also an information/way finding system.

An introduction to SLM's is a great idea especially if future projects are to be done in town.

Oliver – Both the motorists and cyclist get initial understanding, so even if it is just a small stretch of the route it would help with our education piece and possibly build into enforcement.

Henry – The crossing of Elm Ave is a concern for me as there is zero enforcement and zero compliance. I observed the other day an officer watching for speeders but not paying attention to crosswalk compliance.

Bill – It is all a matter of enforcement and when this gets launched coordination with the police department should serve as part of the overall implantation. But the good news about that particular spot is there are good sight distances for all users.

Oliver – With the launch of this project it might be wise if we use some variable message signs to help announce and bring awareness to the route, then follow up with enforcement at the identified spots of need.

Dan – An official kickoff with a ribbon cutting ceremony would seem appropriate for this project.

Rob – I wanted to try and create a loop which is why I chose Darroch going north, but if there are other ideas for a better route going north let me know.

Henry – I think Mosher to Oldox to Adams and Winne.

Rob – So take Darroch off and bring Mosher to Oldox back over to Winne.

Dan – Well why was Darroch on our original map? I am open to change but we did develop a network for a reason.

Anne – More people would see the project on Darroch.

Rob – Good points, let’s keep Darroch. We will keep this route as our pilot project. VHB will now look at where signage and SLM’s will go.

Scott – If we use SLM’s especially on Murray Ave. I suggest we use them between two major roads so we get enough on the road to have impact. Between Darroch and Parkwyn you would probably only get 3 SLM’s each way. I agree that SLM’s should only go on major streets.

Rob – I don’t see the harm in putting them on the full route, I don’t think we are tied to the MUTCD.

Scott – Maybe we should take a step back and look at the various treatments for bicycle improvements for the as a function of the type of roadway. The only roads that really should use SLM’s are the heavier traffic thru ways while a neighborhood connector like Darroch should use signing. Keep in mind that the average bike ride is 5 miles, so maybe we should strategize marking roadways for all types of bicycle facilities.

Jason – Is time really on our side to take this approach?

Rob – We have limited time (until March) to get the work done by VHB.

Bill – Although I don’t disagree with what you are saying, I Personally like the idea of the pilot project doing the latest treatments, it might also be better for the town highway crew to do this type of installation on a lower volume roadway as they get to know how to better install these markings.

Dan – As I see it the advantage of the SLM’s brings attention to the both the driver and the bicycle and that what we desperately need in town, while signage is more for the bicyclist. So as we shift this paradigm in town we need to really get the driver to change their driving pattern and understand this and SLM’s help start that education.

Oliver – As we advance this in subsequent phases you can make that determination that a SLM might not belong on a lower volume street but we are just discussing a pilot project, And we know there will be more difficulties when it comes to SLM installation with state or county roads, so we should take advantage of the fact that we have control of our roads and can start this type of education.

Jason – Scott, what is the major down side to having a SLM on these lower volume roads?

Scott – It’s like a stop sign, once over used they lose their significance. But I think as a pilot project this is fine because we are not going to have them on other roads and as we go further along with SLM installation we could take them off these roads.

Oliver – They will also eventually go away.

Oliver – Over any stretch of road I would suggest Delmar Bypass Ext. be treated with SLM.

Gregg – Regarding SLM’s, they do not have to be 250 feet or less apart?

Bill – It is more of guidance and also comes down to a matter of visibility.

Rob – The guide reads: SLM’s *should* be placed immediately after intersections and spaced at intervals not greater of 250 feet thereafter.

Gregg – That would be 20 SLM’s each direction per mile of road.

Rob – If on a state road they would follow the 250.

Jason – So go with 250 feet apart on roads that we deem have higher volume and further apart on lower volume roads.

Bill – Instead of developing detailed plans for the SLM installation we would probably just go out with the town crew and do some spray paint in the field marking where they should go.

Gregg – Be prepared to get some push back from the residents that do not want more signage and paint in their neighborhood because they consider it commercializing their residential area.

Bill –

Oliver – The signage for the bike route will probably only be at intersections so the number of additional signs should not be that great.

Gregg – We also try to utilize the existing street sign posts, use round brackets and attach to the existing post.

Jason – Will we have a public open house to announce this project?

Rob – We will present to the Town Board at a Board meeting. The public will have an opportunity to view the bike pilot route project at that time and comment.

2. Brief review of Kenwood Avenue/Delaware Avenue pilot project and discussion on why these roadways may not be an ideal pilot project

Rob - As we confirmed with NYSERDA the parameters of what we can and cannot do for this project we learned that we have additional funds that have not been earmarked. So we decided to design a second bike pilot project and address a State road and get experience working with NYSDOT. Two possible projects that score high on our evaluation are Delaware Avenue from Van Dyke Road to Elsmere Avenue or Elsmere Avenue from Delaware Avenue to Feura Bush Road.

3. Confirmation of Town discussion with NYSDOT regarding anticipated engineering/traffic evaluation for bike accommodation improvements on Delaware Ave (Route 443)

Rob – For this second project I called DOT and looked to use Delaware Ave. in Albany as a model for our second pilot project, but learned that because that portion of Delaware is a state touring route which the city maintains DOT does not have as much of a say as compared to the roads that they do maintain. I spoke with Rob Cherry and Kevin Novak to find out what is needed to implement the project. Rob Cherry indicated we may need to do a project justification for these types of facilities with bicycle counts and bicycle accident data. A NYSDOT Highway Work Permit will be needed.

Anne – It might be good to bring a project like this south into Glenmont.

Oliver – Along with all the development that has come in and continues, the traffic that currently exists along FBR might eventually lead DOT to consider dropping the speed limit to 35, thus making FBR the perfect candidate for this kind of treatment. So making a connection now to FBR would make a lot of sense.

Ann – A bike count could be completely swayed by the weather or a number of other factors like a flat.

Henry – What exactly are we asking NYSDOT to do?

Rob – Grant permission for the Town to install sharrows (shared lane markings) and signage on either Delaware Avenue or Elsmere Avenue to better accommodate bicycle travel. The request is for NYSDOT to inform us of the process the Town needs to take and the information required by the NYSDOT.

Oliver – I am going to send a quick survey out to the cycling club and find out how many are traveling into Albany and their route.

Scott – The DOT Pedestrian checklist does not ask for pedestrian counts, the questions on the checklist are related to land use and destinations, the same methodology should be used for bicyclists. The only thing they may ask for is a speed analysis.

Rob – The next step is to set up a meeting with DOT and discuss their exact needs.

Scott – I would like to be included in that meeting.

Keith – We have a former senior member of DOT on our staff, if you could draft me some questions to ask him we may be able to get some insight and a better idea of what to anticipate from DOT.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Program

(VHB Task 6.b.i – Review Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Network)

- **Overview and assignments for bike-friendly community applications**

Bill- One of the encourage initiatives we have is to complete this 28 page application. Divide it up among the committee to complete and get back to the Town staff for review. The purpose is to get an official designation from LAB and they advertise through multiple mediums the status of how bike friendly we are with a classification of bronze, silver, gold etc. This will serve as a good public relations tool for the community and will also provide suggestions for improvement. It will also serve to make the Committee more aware of what our community needs to do to be bicycle friendly.

- **Overview of PBIC's Walk Friendly Communities – Community Assessment Tool**

This is a similar measurement tool that will provide the Committee with a status level of where we are as a pedestrian friendly community and make suggestions for improvement.

(VHB Task 6.b.ii - League of American Bicyclists Traffic Skills 101 Course Overview)

- **Feedback on course content and effectiveness and how skills can be taught to others.**

Bill – We started off with parking lot skills to prepare us for a ride out on the road as a group. The skills that were learned included scanning, signaling, rock dodge and start stops. A slide show of the group performing the skills in the parking lot and on the road was shown to the committee. All those that completed the course received a certificate of completion.

Anne – I will definitely use these skills during my rides around town.

Rob – The course increased my confidence to ride in traffic. I spoke with the Deputy Chief of police after the course and he indicated the officers that participated thought the course was beneficial. They even suggested the officers lead a ride through a portion of town for teenage and adult riders at the Bike Expo next year.
Scott – The key now is for us to find a way to teach and market these skills to some of our younger riders in the community.

New Business

Jason – Mark Jordan has resigned from the committee. We do not anticipate filling this vacant seat at this time, at least not until we finish our work with VHB, March 2012.

Henry – Will the seat be filled by a Town Board Member?

Jason – We do not know at this time.

Jason – Another new item is that we (Rob, Jason, Scott, Henry, Ann) will be meeting with the school district administrative counsel tomorrow, 10/26. We will share our committees work and look to identify a liaison.

Rob – In preparation of this meeting I obtained some bicycle accident data from the police department for the past 3 years, 26 total accidents, 15 were bicyclists traveling against traffic (either on the sidewalk or roadway), 50% were under the age of 18, 65% were male, and 23% were bicycle overtaken by vehicle. The bicyclist traveling against traffic accident type mirrors a national trend. Clearly working with the School District to educate students (ages 18 and under) would help to reduce the occurrence of this accident type.

Dan – The 4th Tuesday of this month may be difficult for some to meet. Can we meet on the 29th instead?

Jason – The November meeting will be changed to November 29.

Dan – MHLIC has received two grants: One from the Capital District Road Runners Club, which will put down some crushed stone on a portion of the trail. A second is \$10,000 from Hudson Greenway to help provide signage, amenities and a sense of theme, place and history to the trail.

Public Comment

John – If traffic counts are any value there are a series of counts through the Traffic Impact Studies prepared for various projects that are reviewed by the Planning Board.

Anne – Do you ask for bike/ped counts for the projects that come in?

John – I don't think so but that is an excellent idea

John – In considering the choice of the second pilot project, while Elsmere provides value through connection to some recreational resources (Colonial Acres and Soccer Plex) consider that there will be a series of projects that will come up along that corridor which bike/ped accommodations would required of the developer. So it argues more to the consideration of Delaware Ave as the choice for the second bike pilot project.

John - With respect to having a Town Board member sit on the committee, I don't really have an opinion one way or another but in relation to the Planning Board it has been really valuable to have Rob share the committees work. Perhaps at some point it would be appropriate in invite the Planning Board to a presentation or a meeting.

Scott – Thank you to John as a member of the planning board and Gregg, Superintendent of the Highway Department, for being here tonight, it shows commitment to the work and progress of this Committee.

Adjourn

8:30 p.m.