

## BMTS Article Digest January – February 2015

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](http://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/newsletter.php>.

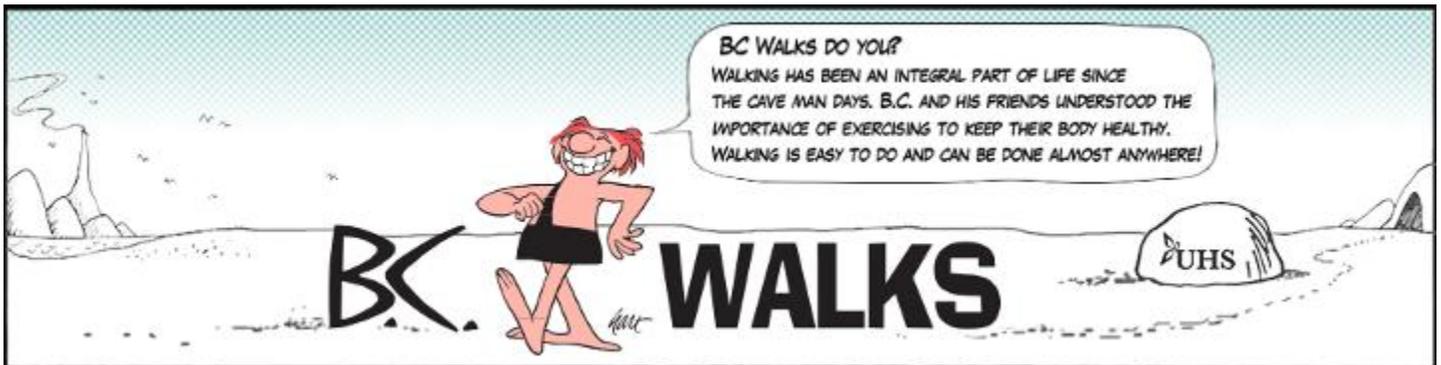
**CenterLines** is the bi-weekly electronic news bulletin of the National Center for Bicycling & Walking. **CenterLines** is our way of quickly delivering news and information you can use to create more walkable and bicycle-friendly communities.

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# SIGN UP!

for



Go to [www.BCWalks.com](http://www.BCWalks.com)!

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Check out this website for Bike & Pedestrian Information!



[www.coexistnys.org](http://www.coexistnys.org)

In particular, view the interactive educational video clips.

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EDITORIAL

THINGS TO DO IN 2015

**Region can improve if we tackle problems together.**

A new year brings many of the same challenges to the Southern Tier region, but it also gives us a chance to re-evaluate where we stand and plot a course for 2015. Here are 12 ideas (one for each month) that would improve our area and build the foundation for a better 2016 and beyond.

**Create more public/private partnerships** that help to make the region more friendly to businesses — manufacturing or otherwise — looking to relocate or stay here.

**Invest in revitalization of downtown districts**, attracting new retail businesses and retaining current ones.

**Work to ease the combined burden of income tax, property tax, sales tax and fees on New York taxpayers.**

**Re-examine public pension reform on a state and local level**, so that spiraling costs are brought under control.

**Build bridges** among teachers, administrators, parents and other stakeholders to improve our schools and better educate our students.

**Develop more partnerships** between local consumers and local farmers.

**Establish neighborhood digital hubs** and listservs so communities can address common concerns (safety, crime, transportation) and establish stronger links between neighbors.

**Encourage the development** and use of renewable energy in the region.

**Develop more community programs** to encourage healthier lifestyles.

**Develop a plan to make high-speed Internet accessible** to all households and businesses in the region by 2020.

**Expand the region's fitness trails, bicycle paths and outdoor recreation potential.**

**Support local arts organizations** through attendance at events as well as donations, so that they can continue to entertain and inspire us.



## Personal Freedoms

# Authorities investigate Maryland parents who let kids walk home alone

Published January 16, 2015  
FoxNews.com

A Maryland couple that believes in "free-range parenting" said they are being investigated for child neglect after police picked up their children, ages 6 and 10, walking home alone from a park.

The Washington Post reported Thursday that the kids were walking home from the park, which is about a mile from their Woodside Park neighborhood, in broad daylight last month and were stopped by police after someone reported seeing them.

The kids were returned to the home and police reportedly talked to the parents about the dangers of the world.

Police reportedly did not have information on the case, but told the paper it has a "responsibility as a part of our duty to check on people's welfare."

The parents, Danielle and Alexander Meitiv, said they would not let their son and daughter walk home alone if they didn't think the kids were ready.

"The world is actually even safer than when I was a child, and I just want to give them the same freedom and independence that I had — basically an old-fashioned childhood," Danielle, a climate-science consultant, told the paper. The report said the kids would often carry a laminated card that states "I am not lost. I am a free-range kid."

But the story did not end there. The Montgomery County Child Protective Services reportedly followed up and forced the parents to sign a safety plan acknowledging that they would not let the kids go unsupervised. Alexander told the paper he resisted at first, but CPS threatened that if they refused, the kids would be removed from the home. He signed.

The agency, which does not comment on current investigations, reportedly followed up and began an investigation, requesting to examine the house and even interviewing the children at school.

"We feel we're being bullied into a point of view about child-rearing that we strongly disagree with," Alexander said. The parents say they just want to teach their children to be self-reliant.

"The riskiest thing we can do with our kids is put them in a car," Danielle told "Fox & Friends" on Friday. "We do that because we realize that some risks are worth taking."

The couple plans on meeting with CPS next week.

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## Pothole? Plow problem? App makes city requests a snap

Megan Brockett 6:05 p.m. EST January 22, 2015



(Photo: MEGAN BROCKETT /Staff Photo)

Ever had a pothole in your neighborhood that you wanted to see about getting fixed? Or had issues with snow plowing or garbage collection on your street that you wanted to report?

If you live in the City of Binghamton, there's now an app for that.

Mayor Richard David announced on Thursday the launch of the official City of Binghamton mobile app, which lets residents submit service requests to the city on issues ranging from potholes to graffiti

to traffic problems. The free app allows users to include a picture and description of the issue, and it uses GPS technology to pinpoint the location of the request, David said.

The requests are then received and handled by the appropriate city departments. David said the app is a way to improve the delivery of basic city services, expand communication and increase the level of transparency at City Hall.

"(This) was something that was part of our overall plan to make the City of Binghamton not just more business-friendly, but (more) user-friendly," he said. "This is an easy way for (residents) to let us know what's going on in (their) neighborhoods."

Anyone with the app can view a list of submitted requests and follow the status of each request as it is updated from "submitted" to "received" to "in progress" to "completed."

The app is now focused on Department of Public Works services, but the city plans to phase in other types of services and departments beginning over the next several months, according to David.

Bernice St. Clair, the superintendent of city streets in Binghamton's public works department, said the app will help the department handle all of the requests it receives.

"Keeping everything in a centralized location makes it a lot easier to keep track of all the requests that are coming in and get them done in a more efficient manner," St. Clair said.

The software system is expected to cost the city \$9,750 annually and will be paid for out of the information technology budget, David said. There was no upfront cost to the city for design or testing.

In addition to submitting service requests, users can also find information about City Hall meetings, answers to frequently asked questions and news from city officials.

In November, David [announced the launch of a free community notification service](#) that sends public safety alerts, traffic updates and other urgent information to registered residents via text messages and emails.

David said at the time that the initiative was about [evolving to meet the needs of residents](#).

On Thursday, he said the new mobile app is the latest effort by his administration to "build Binghamton's reputation as a leader in municipal technology."

The app is available for download on iOS and Android devices by searching "City of Binghamton" in the Apple App Store or in Google Play.

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## Kerry fined \$50 for not shoveling sidewalk in Boston

Published January 29, 2015  
FoxNews.com

Secretary of State John Kerry was fined \$50 for failing to clear the snow from sidewalk on the side of his home in Boston. The area received more than two feet of snow from a blizzard that hampered the Northeast earlier this week. It prompted Mayor Martin Walsh to crack down on anyone who left snow on the sidewalks in front of their homes and businesses.

Kerry was in Saudi Arabia at the time attending the funeral of King Abdullah with President Obama.

The Boston Globe reported that a snow removal company was on the way to clear the snow from Kerry's home. The company saw yellow hazard tape next to the brick mansion, which was used to warn pedestrians about snow and ice falling from the roof of the building.

The company mistook the tape for police tape and thought that part of the sidewalk was off limits. However, by the time was shovelers removed the snow, Kerry already received the fine.

Kerry's spokesman Glen Johnson told the paper that Kerry will "gladly pay the ticket" and added that he hopes it is the last blizzard of the year.

*The Associated Press contributed to this report*

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## **Viewers: SUNY Broome students crossing four lanes of traffic**

<http://www.wbng.com/news/local/Viewers-seek-answers-to-why-BCC-students-walk-through-traffic--290611911.html>

By Josh Martin

February 3, 2015 - Updated Feb 3, 2015 at 12:07 AM EST

Town of Dickinson, NY (WBNG Binghamton) In the wake of two separate accidents in Tompkins County that took the lives of two pedestrians after they were hit by vehicles, viewer have begun reaching out to Action News about another traffic situation some say poses a threat to the safety of local students.

SUNY Broome Students often decide to cross a busy portion of Upper Front Street without a crosswalk. Action News has been receiving calls from concerned residents who drive through that area on their commute. They say this is not a new issue and that it has been going on for years.

Viewers responded to a question posted Friday on the Action News Facebook page, with mixed reactions. Some felt students were placing themselves in unnecessary danger. Others pointed out the practice has been the same for years.

SUNY Broome students also gave their input. Students have a \$90 payment built into their bill that covers parking and bus trips, but many said it's tough to find parking on campus, and parking at Regal Cinemas is just more convenient.

The Broome County Sheriffs Office said crossing the road without a crosswalk is not illegal.

"We don't have jaywalking way out here," said Sheriff David Harder. "I mean the one crosswalk is quite a ways up, the other is quite a ways down and it is a shorter distant to cross over the road. It is not like the city where every block is a crosswalk," he added.

The sheriff said crossing the street without using the crosswalk in that area would be illegal only if the pedestrian disrupted traffic. He also added the responsibility is on Regal Cinemas to prevent students from parking in their lot because it's private property.

"The burden is more on the individuals driving up and down the road to observe the safety rules." said Joe O'Connor, chief of public safety at SUNY Broome. "The individuals crossing the roads need to make sure they are observing the safety rules as well."

Several calls to Regal Cinemas have not yet been returned.

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