

BMTS Article Digest
April – May 2016

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.

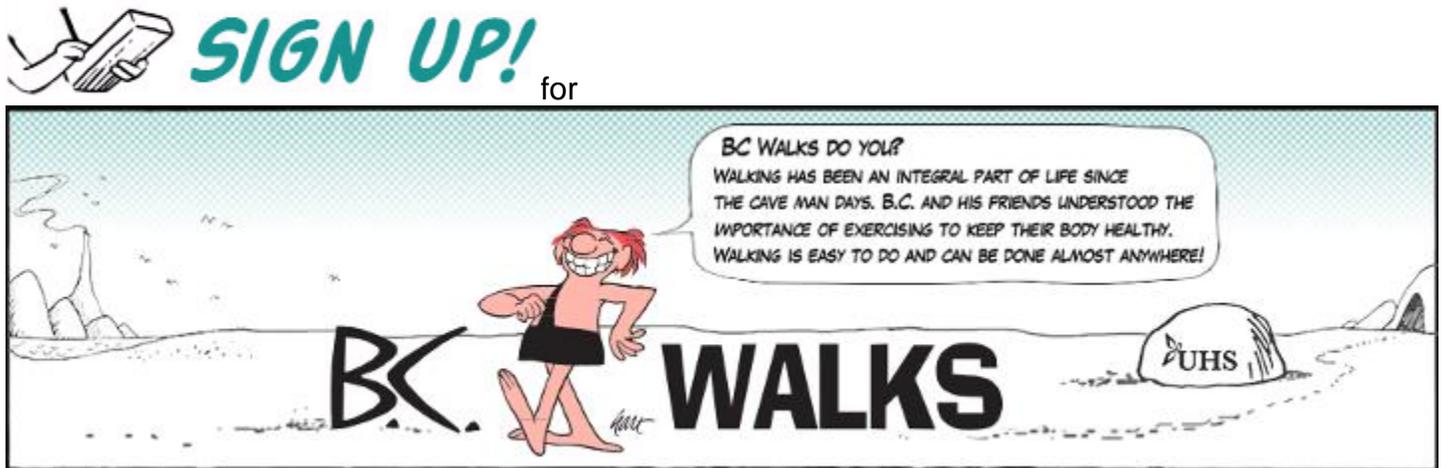
Scott



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/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.



Go to www.BCWalks.com!

Check out these websites for Bike & Pedestrian Information!



<https://www.facebook.com/coexistnys/> and <https://www.youtube.com/user/CoexistNYS>
or www.capitalcoexist.org

In particular, view the interactive educational video clips.

TRAIL BLAZING: \$16M pedestrian route would link BU, downtown

New trail would link Binghamton U. and downtown

Megan Brockett

3:36 p.m. EDT April 29, 2016

(Photo: ANDREW THAYER / Staff Photo)



How similar is Binghamton to Boston?

That depends.

Inside the former's City Hall on a chilly March morning, Mayor Richard David and Jack Williams, regional director of the New York State Department of Transportation, gave an overview of long-talked-about plans for a project they say will provide the Binghamton area with a major-city amenity.

The proposed Route 434 Greenway, a 2.5-mile pedestrian and bicycle trail linking downtown Binghamton to Binghamton University's main campus in Vestal, is moving closer to

becoming a reality following the Southern Tier's \$500 million win in the Upstate Revitalization Initiative late last year, according to David and Williams.

The perks of the estimated \$16 million trail could span the spectrum, benefiting downtown economic development and improving the region's sustainability, health, walkability and recreational opportunities.



The city of Binghamton plans to build a pedestrian and bike trail along Route 434 beginning at Binghamton University and ending in downtown

Binghamton. (Photo: ANDREW THAYER / Staff Photo)

It will also boost Binghamton's standing as a rising city, according to David and the state DOT, increasing its similarities to some of the bigger metropolises in the country.

"If you think about it, ... when you go to Boston

and you see the trail along the Charles River there, essentially that's what we'll have here," Williams said. "Seeing that trail ... lit up and pretty with people walking on it, it's just going to make the area feel alive ... It is transformative."

A changing blueprint

Plans call for the Route 434 Greenway to start at the South Side end of the South Washington Street Pedestrian Bridge and use the Pennsylvania Avenue bridge to cross Route 434, or the Vestal Parkway.



The trail would then curl under the Pennsylvania Avenue off-ramp, and run next to the south side of the parkway, with the four lanes of road separating it from the river. It would connect to BU's campus at Murray Hill Road.

A pedestrian trail connecting downtown Binghamton and the university has been discussed for years.

Route 434 in

Binghamton. (Photo: ANDREW THAYER / Staff Photo)

In 2012, the DOT was considering three different design options for the Greenway, all of which had the trail running along the river side of the Vestal Parkway before crossing the road near MacArthur Park and continuing on that side until the trail's end near BU.

The first option called for building a pedestrian overpass above the parkway to get trail users from one side of the road to the other.

The second option would have used an underpass to bring the trail across the parkway, building a culvert similar in appearance to the one near Confluence Park.

The third option called for installing a crosswalk and accompanying traffic lights on each side of the parkway near MacArthur Elementary School.

Williams said the decision process dating to 2012 turned up issues with each of the three design options: cost, maintenance and elevation issues with the overpass; flooding and security issues with the underpass; and safety concerns with the "at-grade" crossing near MacArthur Park.



The city of Binghamton plans to build a pedestrian and bike trail along Route 434 beginning at Binghamton University and ending in downtown Binghamton. (Photo: ANDREW THAYER / Staff Photo)

The design the DOT ultimately decided to go with — the current plan of using the Pennsylvania Avenue bridge to cross the parkway and having the trail curl under the off-ramp — is the safest, he said.

The intersection of South Washington Street and Conklin Avenue, just after

the South Washington Street Pedestrian Bridge, will be the trail's only conflict with traffic, and the traffic signal and the crosswalk there will be upgraded, Williams said.

Having the trail run along the side of the parkway closer to the South Side also allows for more trail access points. Under current plans, residents will be able to access the trail not just at the start and end, but at other points along the way, including near the area of Rush and Zane avenues on the South Side.

"It's very important that not only people from each end are able to access it, but the residents and neighborhoods it passes (by), there's opportunities for the community to access it as well," David said.

DOT officials will consider other trail access points based in part on input it receives from the public, Williams said. A public information meeting about the greenway is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. June 1 in the cafeteria of MacArthur Elementary School in Binghamton.

Positioning the project to move from the drawing board to a reality is the \$500 million Upstate Revitalization Initiative prize, officials said.

While the 434 Greenway was not listed as a priority project for the Southern Tier, Binghamton University President and Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) co-chair Harvey Stenger said it is "near the top of the REDC's list for seeking approval from (the Empire State Development Corporation), which is the last step in securing funding."

Stenger said it is becoming increasingly clear that having a complete bike and pedestrian network is important to cement the link between the university's campus and downtown Binghamton.

"It would provide a critical pathway for our students, staff and faculty," he said in an emailed statement. "It would also be yet another attribute that would assist Binghamton in attracting and retaining the best and brightest talent."

Ripple effect

When the trail is completed, residents and BU students will be able to easily access downtown Binghamton in a whole new way, creating the potential for an added boost to an area already in the midst of a revitalization.

It will also extend the length of Binghamton's Riverwalk, which draws to a close now at the the South Washington Street Pedestrian Bridge.

Williams said he anticipates downtown will need more bike racks to accommodate trail users who want to stop and have lunch or patronize other businesses.

Sherry Eaton, owner of Garland Gallery on Washington Street downtown, said she thinks the trail will be a draw for everyone who enjoys bike riding.

"It's going to add an additional length to the Riverwalk, and I think it's going to be great for families," Eaton said.

But for others, the project raises concerns.

Mike Tulsey, who owns Zona & Co. Grille on Hawley Street, said great safety concerns with the trail outweigh its upsides.

He is worried about students walking back to campus late at night, in the winter, or after a night of drinking.

"Selfishly, I think it's a wonderful idea to connect people downtown via foot, however you get them here," Tulsey said. "But unselfishly, what happens if the last place they were here was Zona Grille and something tragically happens to them?"

Town of Vestal Supervisor John Schaffer shares some of those safety concerns.

Schaffer said he think it's great for the area, but is a little apprehensive about it.

"I think it's a bit dangerous," he said.

But DOT officials and David said the trail will be well-lit, and plans call for the installation of blue-light security boxes along the trail, like the ones on BU's campus, that connect to emergency dispatchers, David said.

David said the Greenway will actually make the parkway area, which has been poorly lit for years, safer.

"I think that this project is going to enhance safety along the Vestal Parkway," David says. "Because the reality is you do have people walking on the Vestal Parkway and riding their bikes with no official lanes or trail. So, this is going to be well-lit, it's going to be elevated, and the people on the trail are, for the first time, going to be protected from motorists."

A groundbreaking for the first phase of the project, from the South Washington Street Bridge to near Rush Avenue just beyond the overpass, is tentatively scheduled for the fall.

The goal is to complete the entire trail, from the downtown bridge to BU, by the end of 2018.

Parents upset over policy banning walking kids to school

POSTED: APR 05 2016 08:13PM CDT
UPDATED: APR 06 2016 11:43AM CDT

MAGNOLIA (FOX 26) - Pick your child up from school and you could be charged with trespassing. That's the threat against parents at Bear Branch Elementary School in Magnolia ISD. This is the school's tactic to keep parents who live close to the school from walking on school grounds.

Bear Branch is losing students over this pick up policy, that's been in place since the beginning of this school year. The principal has decided that no matter how close the student lives to the school, the student must either take the bus, or the parent must wait in a long car pickup line. Try to walk your student off the campus and you could face criminal charges.

"She's threatening to arrest people," says Wendy Jarman about principal, Holly Ray.

Jarman pulled her children out of the school Monday and placed them in **private school**. She lives in the neighborhood behind the school. Her kids were walkers, and she escorted them, but they can't do that anymore.

Ray won't allow it. Ray has gotten Montgomery County Constables to be her enforcers.

"This has happened to many parents," Jarman says. "They have been cited. They have been threatened, if they step one foot on school property, they will be arrested and charged with who knows what."

Frank Young has one of those warnings. He also lives close to the school and he also pulled his children out of it. Young says no effort to negotiate a better policy or even hundreds of signatures on a petition got the district to change the policy or bully tactics.

"Mrs. Ray's policy is implying that a parent doesn't have the ability or capability to decide what is safest for her children and that the school district does," Young says. "I disagree."

The school district responded to our request for comment with a statement fully supporting Principal Ray, saying the goal is a safe dismissal process.

But parents who have been coming to the school for years say there was nothing unsafe about the old pickup and drop off procedures. They say this is simply a principal overstepping her boundaries.

Young says some parents are just going along with the principal to keep peace, but he says not speaking up allows a poisonous environment to fester.

"The most toxic thing we can do for our kids is not fight for truth and justice," Young says.

Fox26 knows of 2 other parents who were just threatened with arrest. They are not ready to speak about it publicly yet. But other parents told us the principal's "my way or else" tactics go deeper than the dismissal process. Parents say not only are students leaving because of it, but teachers and staff are leaving the school, too.

The City that Lets Cyclists Jump Red Lights

By Hugh Schofield
BBC News, Paris

11 August 2015

In today's Magazine



Cyclists in Paris no longer have to stop at every red traffic light - new rules mean that in certain circumstances they can ignore the signals and keep going. The aim is to make the city's roads much safer.

It's easy to enumerate the downsides of Paris cycling.

Parisian drivers can be rude and aggressive behind the wheel. They sound their horns loudly and gratuitously. They stop willy-nilly on busy roads to run errands or do a bit of shopping. Diplomatic plates are the worst.

Most aggravatingly, Parisians are appalling signallers. They turn without advance warning - or to add insult to injury, they start to indicate as they

turn. That is like a V-sign to the cyclist. It shows the driver knows about the indicator, but could not care less what it is for.

And one other thing: the way blocks of flats refuse the right to park bikes in communal areas. So you have to leave them on the pavement.

Such are the annoyances.

But it is good to be able to report that in recent years so much has also improved. For bikers today, the boons in Paris are better than the banes.

The latest gift, being introduced over the summer, is a radical step that recognises a regrettable truth: that cyclists in cities often fail to stop at red lights. Rather



than step up repression of this misdemeanour, the Paris city authorities have decided to make it legal.

Over July and August, signs are being put up at 1,800 junctions across the capital. They show an upside down triangle, with a picture of a bicycle and an arrow.

“If the light is red but equipped with one of these two panels, you can: Turn right; Go straight on”



What this indicates is that when the signal is red, cyclists can nonetheless - and with all due care and attention - jump the lights. They can, to use the lingo, "griller le feu".

"It required a rewriting of the Code de la Route [the laws governing road use], but what in effect we have done is turn the red light for cyclists into a give way sign," says Christophe Najdoski, deputy Paris mayor in charge of transport.

It is important to note that the change only affects right turns or going straight on at a T-junction - in other words where the cyclist can hug the pavement.

At a crossroads, even if there is no traffic, bikes will still have to wait for the green to go straight on.

"What we want to do is make life easier for the cyclist. Stopping and starting requires energy, and too often it is completely unnecessary. By not having to stop, they can get where they are going more quickly," says Najdoski, who belongs to the Greens.

"It is also a way of regularising a practice that is so widespread there is no point in trying to prevent it. As long as cyclists slow down, and if there are pedestrians they stop, then it is all perfectly safe."



Lobby groups are delighted because they have been pushing for the change for years.

"It is a great advance because it shows we are moving away from the idea that red and green lights are all that count," says Kiki Lambert of the group Mieux Se Deplacer a Bicyclette (Getting around better on a bike).

"If we have that attitude, then we turn people into automatons and it is much more dangerous. People end up thinking that just because a light is green it is safe to go - when it might not be... Far better to use all our senses all the time.

"Also allowing cyclists to proceed is safer, because it means they avoid getting caught beside trucks and buses as they wait for lights to change. That is the origin of a lot of accidents."

Lambert points out that the two ends of the Champs Elysees - the Arc de Triomphe and the Place de la Concorde - have different systems for regulating traffic.

At the Place de la Concorde there are traffic lights; at the Arc de Triomphe - with its 12 avenues entering the bewildering Etoile roundabout - there are none. Yet the accident rate at the Place de la Concorde is five times higher than at Etoile.

"That is because at the Arc de Triomphe drivers are obliged to be careful. The traffic lights act as an automatic trigger, and that is dangerous," she says.



The new red light rule for cyclists is part of a series of measures devised by the Hotel de Ville with the aim of dramatically increasing cycle use.

New cross-city cycle routes are being created, as well as 10,000 new parking places for bikes. From 5% of trips today, the hope is to push that up to 15% by 2020.

"In French towns today, 40% of car journeys are less than 3km (two miles)," says Najdoski. "These are trips that could easily be done on a bicycle - so we have to make it logical for people to

make that move."

Safety will also play a part. At the moment there are only on average between three and five cyclist deaths every year in Paris - though the figure is deceptive because it does not count accidents outside the *perif* or ring road.

Inside Paris proper, traffic moves quite slowly and the few fatalities there are tend to be when cyclists are caught on the inside of heavy vehicles.

"The more cyclists there are, the safer it will be - and not just for cyclists. For everyone," says Lambert.

"Because everyone will be going more slowly, and everyone will be keeping their eyes and ears open. And not just waiting for the lights."

10 INCREDIBLE BICYCLE CONCEPTS OF THE FUTURE

<http://10amazing.com/10-incredible-bicycle-concepts-of-the-future/5/>

Ikea's new chainless bike never rusts



By Laura Geggel

Published April 19, 2016

The new Ikea bike relies on a rust-free belt instead of chain. (Ikea)



Dealing with a rusty bicycle chain can be a messy affair, but an innovative new bike from Ikea solves that pesky problem. The furniture retail giant recently introduced its new "Sladda" bike, which uses an oil-free and corrosion-resistant drive belt rather than a metal chain.

The drive belt is designed to last about 9,320 miles, which is about two to three times longer than a typical steel chain, according to Ikea. Moreover, the unisex Sladda bike has a "click system" that lets the rider snap on accessories, such as a basket, a bike bag rack and a towing trailer, the company said.

"Sladda is like tablet apps: You can add endless accessories to enhance ease of use," Oskar Juhlin, director of industrial design at Veryday, a company that partnered with Ikea to make the bicycle, said in a statement.

The new drive belt may be a boon to riders who take to their bikes even during inclement weather. Over time, steel bike chains tend to rust, particularly when they're covered with corrosive salt that's left on the roadways, LiveStrong.com reported.

Accumulated rust can be difficult to remove, and it can also affect the chain's flexibility, LiveStrong.com said. But Ikea's new bike won't have those problems, the retailer said.

Moreover, the bike has automatic gears that are hidden in a sealed hub placed in the rear wheel, the website Core77 reported.

This year, the new urban bike won one of three Red Dot Awards, an internationally sought-after prize awarded by Design Zentrum Nordrhein Westfalen in Essen, Germany. The bike also won the Red Dot "Best of the Best 2016" award, meaning it got the top prize in each category, Ikea reported.

"The team wanted the [bicycle] frame to be gender- and activity-neutral, yet able to transform between semi-active and relaxed riding styles," according to the Red Dot website.

Sladda's frame is made from aluminum, meaning it will be easy to lift and carry up and down stairs, Core77 said. The bike, which comes with either 26- or 28-inch wheels, also has two layers of lacquer that will protect the frame from mud, salt and scratches, Core77 reported. But it's not for little kids — Ikea recommends that only people age 12 or older use it.

The bike is expected to be available beginning in August for \$797, although Ikea's loyalty members will be able to buy it for \$569 for a limited time, Core77 said.

But the Sladda isn't the only chainless bicycle out there. Gates Carbon Drive also makes a belt drive, but out of carbon fiber, [according to its site](#).

No matter the company, though, bikes are a good way to help people get active.

"Sladda is a great alternative to the car," Juhlin said. "It contributes to a more sustainable lifestyle and a better environment."

INNOVATION

City embeds traffic lights in sidewalk for smartphone users

By Elizabeth Armstrong Moore
Published April 26, 2016

File photo of a pedestrian walking while using a phone in New York. (AP Photo/Bebeto Matthews)



It's only been a matter of weeks since a 15-year-old girl in Germany was hit, dragged, and killed by a tram while she was distracted by her smartphone and headphones, but the nearby city of Augsburg has decided to take action.

Citing two similar, though not lethal, incidents of distracted pedestrians hit by quiet electric street trains, the town has installed traffic lights in the ground to catch the attention of those looking down at their phones when a tram is approaching.

The lights began operating at two tram stops last week, reports the [Local](#). "The normal traffic light isn't in the line of sight of many pedestrians these days," Tobias Harms of city administration tells the German-language [Augsburger Allgemeine](#), per the Local.

"The more we have, the more people are likely to notice them." The utility company that installed the lights says they rapidly blink red whenever the pedestrian doesn't have the right of way, reports [Atlas Obscura](#).

And while Germany is the home of the popular word "smombie," meaning smartphone zombie, the phenomenon is clearly a global problem, reports the [Washington Post](#).

The University of Washington estimates that one in three Americans is buried in a smartphone at dangerous road crossings, while in 2014 the Chinese city of Chongqing installed a 165-foot stretch of pavement where pedestrians had to actively choose between a normal lane and the smombie one.

But are the lights working? "Until now, I didn't even notice them," says one pedestrian. (Experts say [these are dark days for pedestrian safety](#).)

This article originally appeared on Newser: For Smartphone Zombies, a New Kind of Traffic Light

The Slow Way Home is a documentary film about walking and biking to school in Japan and in one US community in Oregon. The film will be airing in some PBS markets listed below. If you live in one of these markets, please share with your networks.

A link to the documentary website is here: <http://spinfilm.wix.com/slowwayhome>

You can view the trailer there, and can also order a copy for your library, for educational use.



Synopsis:

The way children travel to school structures daily life for families around the world--but the means differs dramatically. In Japan 98 percent of children walk to school every day, unaccompanied by a parent. In the United States just 13 percent of children walk or bike to school, and most are driven to school by a parent. The Slow Way Home explores this divergence, examining how American families have largely given up on keeping our streets and public spaces safe enough for children, while Japanese communities have mobilized to keep their streets safe and walkable, not only for children but for everyone in society. Seen through both a historical and contemporary framing, The Slow Way Home is an uplifting examination of differences in culture that provides both insight into a distressing trend in American society and simultaneously offers hope for change.
