

## BMTS Article Digest January – February 2020

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



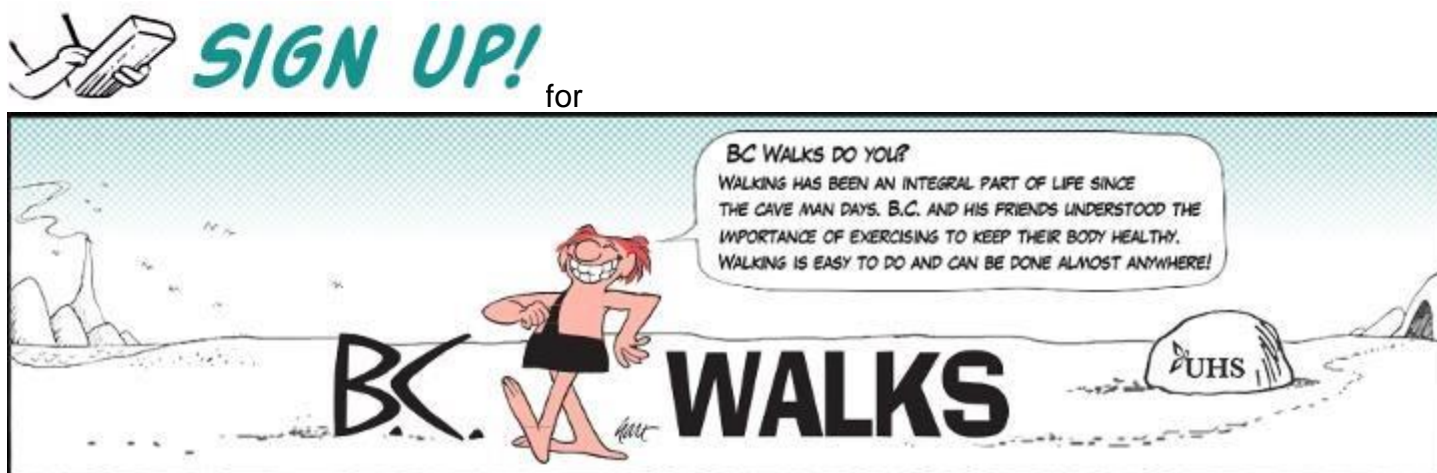
### CenterLines

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.ph>

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

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### Come out and play in Broome County

Go All Out Broome County is your simple guide to hundreds of places and thousands of acres in your own backyard or just down the road. Easily locate hidden gems and local favorites then map your next outdoor adventure in Broome County. Go to [www.GoAllOutBroome.com](http://www.GoAllOutBroome.com).



Explore more than a dozen state forests, 78 parks or 77 miles of paddle friendly waters. Give our antique carousels a go-round or enjoy a round of golf on courses worthy of professional competition. From challenging trails to hike or bike to riverside strolls or picnics, you can go all out in any way, in every season, in Broome County.

Now you're just a few clicks away from an awesome day.

Are you in? Then go all out in Broome County!

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## News from the Food and Health Network Team



We are deeply saddened by the passing our dear friend, mentor, and leader, Ray Denniston. In 2005 Ray helped found the Food and Health Network (FaHN) program of the Rural Health Network of SCNY, originally known as the Regional Community Food Project.

As a long-standing FaHN Advisory Committee Member he provided leadership and mentorship to the group, especially the younger AmeriCorps Members that served in support of the work. Always humble and appreciative of the contributions of others, he would often comment on the talent and commitment of the young people he worked with. Ray's knowledge, experience and compassion for those less fortunate have been and will continue to be guiding lights for those associated with FaHN and the Rural Health Network.

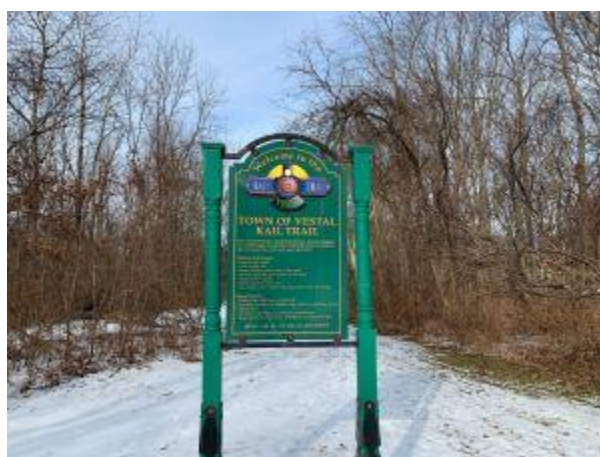
Ray's most referenced quote for many of us is "it's all about relationships", a reminder that our relationships are the bedrock for making positive change in the world. Ray's vision of different groups working together to address hunger and improving nutrition while also supporting our local farms is reflected in the work of FaHN and other food programs and projects throughout the Southern Tier and New York State.

*NOTE: Ray was also an instrumental partner in Broome County and Town of Conklin Complete Streets efforts. – Scott Reigle*

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## TrailsBlog: The Vestal Rail Trail is for everyone



**POSTED ON 9TH JANUARY, 20 CATEGORY: [TRAILSBLOG](#)**

Visiting the Vestal Rail Trail is a very pleasant experience. Even in the winter, you can see walkers, joggers, and bicyclists smiling hello to each other on the trail. In November 2019, the trail saw more than 10,700 pedestrians and over 980 bicyclists. There's something for everyone, whether you like outdoor recreation, snacks, events, or history.

This 3.5 mile path, part of the [Two Rivers Greenway](#), was formerly a right-of-way for the Delaware-Lackawanna & Western Railroad. The Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad was built in the 1800s and spanned about 400 miles. The particular mainline trackage that is now the Vestal Rail Trail connected Binghamton to Buffalo; it was abandoned in the late 1950's when the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad merged with the Erie Railroad, forming the Erie-Lackawanna Railroad. Today, the abandoned rail bed is a well maintained paved path that is 12 feet across, making it fully accessible to wheelchairs, with an additional unpaved 8 feet for joggers and walkers.

The trail serves as a community resource as well. During your visit to the trail, you can see neighbors and friends stopping to greet each other, and the trail connects with the Town Square Mall, giving visitors the opportunity to enjoy some shopping, dining, or a movie. Other great features include informational signage about local history, play areas, bike racks, and a short nature walk around a marsh that loops back to the trail.

At the end of the trail, you will find the [Vestal Coal House](#), a cafe and space for special events. The cafe offers healthy food and drink options, such as juices, wraps, and smoothies. This building gets its name from its unique history: it was the F.L. Rounds Coal Company Building, built in 1908, and served as a coal weighing station until 2002. The Vestal Coal House officially welcomed guests of the trail for use and entertainment in 2006.

In December 2019, the Town of Vestal received a [\\$350,000 Regional Economic Development Council award to relocate the Vestal Building and Museum to the Rail Trail](#), a more appropriate and safe site. They also hope this will make the building more appealing to potential visitors. This will be the second time a historic building has been moved to the Rail Trail, following the Rounds building.



*The historic Vestal Coal House building. The trail will soon be home to the historic Vestal Museum, thanks to a REDC award.*

*Even in the winter, the Vestal Rail Trail is quite popular for walkers and joggers.*





*A place to rest and park your bicycle has been cleared for users along the trail.*

*All 3.5 miles of the 12 foot wide path was cleared of snow, making it easy and safe to use the trail.*

Tags: [rail trail](#), [Vestal Rail Trail](#), [TrailsBlog](#), [Winter Trails](#)

Category: [TrailsBlog](#)



JANUARY 23, 2020  
Albany, NY

# Governor Cuomo Announces Legislation for Comprehensive E-Bike and E-Scooter Safety Measures

Legislation Is Part of FY 2021 Executive Budget and Establishes Safe Speed Limits and Operating Requirements for These Sustainable Transit Options

Allows Localities to Create Additional Regulations

Helps Ensure Localities and Delivery Drivers Who Use E-Bikes and Scooters Are Not Subject to One-Size-Fits-All Policy

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced legislation in the FY 2021 Executive Budget to establish comprehensive safety measures for the use of lower speed motorized bicycles, or e-bikes, and scooters and to give local governments the right to set additional regulations. This legislation addresses the concern that e-bike and scooter users, primarily delivery drivers, have been subject to unfair restrictions on these bicycles, while ensuring strong statewide measures for the safety of riders, pedestrians and drivers.

"We need an alternative to automobiles driving in New York City - the volume is paralyzing, the cost is prohibitive and it is environmentally destructive. New transportation technologies like e-bikes and e-scooters pose exciting potential as a sustainable alternative to vehicles, but we need clear laws and regulations that put the safety of riders and pedestrians first," **Governor Cuomo said.** "This legislation will create important speed and operating measures for these technologies that will provide clarity for everyone and end the arbitrary enforcement of vague laws that has posed substantial hardship on immigrant delivery workers, while enabling all delivery workers to do their work safely and more efficiently."

The legislation includes statewide provisions for traffic and operating requirements for e-bikes and scooters, including:

- Setting a maximum speed limit of 20 miles per hour on Class 1 and Class 2 e-bikes and 25 miles per hour on Class 3 e-bikes,
- A maximum speed limit of 15 miles per hour on scooters,
- Prohibiting e-bike and scooter use on sidewalks,

- Requiring e-bike and scooter users to be 16 years of age or older
- Mandating all Class 3 e-bike riders to wear helmets
- Mandating all e-scooter riders under 18 to wear helmets
- Empowering localities to mandate helmet requirements for Class 1 and Class 2 e-bikes

Localities can create further regulations, including but not limited to setting a maximum speed that is lower than the statewide requirement, setting clothing requirements for riding in dark hours, and opting out entirely of allowing these bicycles.

New transportation technologies like e-bikes and e-scooters pose exciting potential as a sustainable alternative to vehicles, but we need clear laws and regulations that put the safety of riders and pedestrians first

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo

**Danny Harris, executive director of Transportation Alternatives, said,** "We stand with Governor Cuomo in support of safe streets and sustainable, equitable transportation alternatives. By embracing e-bikes and e-scooters, the governor is advancing opportunity for all New Yorkers, including 40,000 delivery workers who have been subject to harassment simply for using the most efficient means to complete their jobs. For years we have witnessed an overreliance on cars destroying the fabric of our communities as well as our environment. Legalizing new forms of mobility can help us reverse that trend, and usher in a new era of possibility for New York."

**Jo-Ann Yoo, Executive Director, Asian American Federation, said,** "In the two years since the Asian American Federation created the Deliver Justice Coalition to advocate for the tens of thousands of immigrant delivery workers who rely on e-bikes to make a living and are largely Chinese and Latino, we called on our leaders to recognize the adverse effect of targeting e-bike workers and urged them to legalize e-bikes to ensure both justice for the workers and public safety. We are deeply grateful to Governor Cuomo for taking the lead on this issue in order to protect the rights and livelihood of some of the most vulnerable in our community. Immigrant workers are the backbone of New York's economy, and we are proud to have a governor who is committed to upholding sanctuary values."

**Deborah Axt, Co-Executive Director, Make the Road NY said,** "This is a big win for delivery workers, if enacted. This legislation will legalize the e-bikes they need to do their jobs and protect them against aggressive policing and criminalization of their work. For years, delivery workers have faced steep fines and confiscation of their e-bikes for simply doing their jobs and using e-bikes required by their employers. They engage in grueling work with unsafe conditions and low-wages to deliver hot meals to thousands of New Yorkers. We applaud the Governor, Senator Ramos and Assemblywoman Rozic for their leadership on this issue and bringing critical protections to these workers."

**Julie Tighe, President of New York League of Conservation Voters, said,** "We applaud Governor Cuomo for proposing to legalize e-bikes and e-scooters as part of the 2020 Executive Budget. Transportation is the #1 source of climate pollution and micro-mobility is part of the solution. And as we prepare for congestion pricing, New York must encourage these clean transportation options. We look forward to working with the Governor and partners to get this legislation passed."

**Dr. Do Jun Lee, Biking Public Project, said,** "We are happy to see Governor Cuomo act to support food delivery workers and the Deliver Justice Coalition in our long effort to make NYC fairer for immigrant delivery e-bike workers. This legislation will protect many thousands of workers from discriminatory and devastating e-bike fines and confiscations for simply doing their jobs of delivering food."

**Steve Wasserman, Staff Attorney with the Special Litigation Unit at The Legal Aid Society, said,** "On behalf of the food delivery workers, we thank Gov. Cuomo for his proposal to legalize e-bikes. With legalization, delivery workers will be able to earn a living without being subjected to discriminatory policing and the persistent fear of bicycle confiscation and harsh fines. Hopefully the City will now repeal its ban on e-bikes and enact sensible local regulations."

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## **California Cyclist Hit By Truck, Nearly Killed, Befriends Driver Who Hit Him: Bitterness 'Doesn't Help Anything'**

By Madeline Farber

Published January 15, 2020

Fox News

A California man and avid cyclist who was hit by a truck last May and suffered serious injuries as a result – some of which he is still recovering from – can personally attest to the power of forgiveness.

During Memorial Day weekend last year, Jack Keith, 46, of West Garden Grove, was driving along the Pacific Coast Highway after finishing a morning surf with friends. A portion of the route offers scenic views of the Pacific, and Keith, who was driving between 50 and 60 miles per hour at the time, was distracted by the waves for a split second, not realizing his truck had drifted into the bike lane parallel to the highway. The next thing he knew, a cyclist was airborne.

"It all happened so quickly. I looked up and boom, I just saw him flying through the air," Keith told Fox News on Wednesday of the man he hit, Tom Sovilla, a longtime bicyclist who was riding from La Habra to Seal Beach.

"I was like, 'Oh my God, what did I just do? Did I kill this guy?'" recalled Keith, who said he immediately pulled over and called 911. Two cyclists behind Sovilla who happened to be doctors also stopped to help the man as they waited for emergency officials to arrive.

"When people were tending to him, I never saw him regain consciousness; I never saw him move a muscle. I thought he was paralyzed," said Keith.



Jack Keith (right) visiting Tom Sovilla in the hospital. (Photo courtesy of Jack Keith)

Sovilla was rushed to the hospital, where he was found to have a fractured back, broken pelvis, torn knee ligaments and bruised intestines. He also suffered from two blood clots on his brain, according to a news release from UCI Medical Center provided to KTLA 5.

Keith was unable to get information from the hospital on Sovilla's condition due to privacy reasons, he said, and the Huntington Beach Police Department did not return his calls asking for information, according to The Orange County Register. Keith told the newspaper he was able to get in touch with one of the witnesses, who later contacted Sovilla's wife, Jenette Sovilla, on his behalf.

Five days following the incident, she reached out — to Keith's both shock and relief.



Jack Keith's truck following the incident. (Photo courtesy of Jack Keith)

“She texted me on my lunch break saying, ‘Hey, this is Jenette, Tom’s wife, the guy who was involved in the accident. He is going to be alright — we’ve been praying for you.’ I could breathe easier after that day,” said Keith, who noted he was distraught in the days following the crash.

A few days later, Keith was invited to come to visit Sovilla in the hospital. When thinking back on the moment, the 46-year-old said he was nervous and unsure of how it would go.

“I didn't know what to expect. For me, it’s kind of hard to hide my emotions. I just wanted to do the right thing,” he said, noting the meeting was “emotional but never awkward.”



Tom Sovilla's bike following the crash. (Photo courtesy of Jack Keith)

"I was blown away that they were OK with me being there and that they were worried about me. It was a nice start to the healing process," he added.

Sovilla – whose knee ligaments were surgically reconstructed, as was his pelvis with plates and screws – is still recovering. He continues to have trouble with his knees. Over the past months, he gradually moved from a wheelchair to a walker. He now uses a cane and is continuing physical therapy, The Orange County Register reported, adding he was hospitalized for 33 days.

Since the accident and his initial hospital visit, Keith said he has befriended Sovilla and his "amazing" family. Additionally, he started a GoFundMe for Sovilla's out-of-pocket medical expenses. As of this writing, more than \$6,300 of the fund's \$7,000 goal has been raised. Keith, a carpenter, also removed one of the shower doors in the family's home so Sovilla could have easier access when bathing.

"I've felt nothing but love from this man — and for the situation, that's unheard of."

— Jack Keith

As for his ability to forgive – as well as his wife and six daughters' ability to do the same – Sovilla told KTLA 5 that "holding on to things just eats away at you."

"It doesn't necessarily hurt the other person," he continued. "I think if people can understand that, then people would learn to forgive because forgiveness is a big part [of] your own mental and physical health."

“Jack made a mistake — I’ve been distracted before and veered into the next lane,” Sovilla said when speaking to The Orange County Register. “Do I wish it hadn’t happened? Yeah. But it did.”

Also speaking to the newspaper, Jenette Sovilla echoed her husband’s sentiment. “We could live our lives angry and bitter about lots of things that have happened to us,” she said. “Why? It doesn’t help anything.”

“He’s so determined and his attitude is inspiring,” Keith told Fox News of Sovilla. “I’ve felt nothing but love from this man — and for the situation, that’s unheard of.”

Madeline Farber is a Reporter for Fox News. You can follow her on Twitter @MaddieFarberUDK.

<https://www.foxnews.com/health/california-cyclist-hit-by-truck-befriends-driver>



A recreational facility and conservation area are to be developed along a busy section of the Vestal Parkway in coming months.

Town supervisor John Schaffer says plans call for the transformation of the land that had been occupied by more than a dozen homes in the Rivercrest development.

North Star Group of Vestal owns 27 parcels between the parkway and the Susquehanna River. The properties are just west of the Binghamton city line. Homes on the site across from University Plaza were demolished several years ago.

Schaffer said the town board has approved a conservation easement from North Star Group. He said the project will create a "beautiful green space" with amenities that could include trails and sidewalks.



The last homes in the Rivercrest Historic District were removed nearly four years ago. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

Plans presented to the board show a site for an open air facility that could be used for cultural, educational and recreational purposes.

A parking area for about 30 vehicles also has been proposed.

A North Star Group representative could not be reached to comment

on when work may start on the project.

Schaffer said he's excited about the planned work. He said he believes it could be completed by the end of the year.

A green space recreational project is planned on the Vestal Parkway, across from University Plaza. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)



# Binghamton Greenway meeting packed: One particular part of the plan has neighbors concerned

Jeff Platsky, Binghamton Press & Sun-Bulletin

Published 9:29 a.m. ET Jan. 29, 2020

Former South Side City Councilman Chris Pappastrat urges Greeway designers to consider concerns of neighborhood residents. Binghamton Press & Sun-Bulletin

A planned \$19 million pedestrian/bicycle path from MacArthur Park to Binghamton University hugging Route 434 received generally favorable reception Tuesday night, but one critical element came under sharp criticism.

A 1,000-foot trail from the north side of Vestal Avenue to the Greenway path along 434 was questioned by neighborhood residents. The planned trail would take a diagonal route with an entrance at Ivanhoe Road and proceed east to the walkway.

Those who faulted the project are either unwilling to sacrifice their property for construction or said the mid-point access will create a neighborhood nuisance.

"The access point at Ivanhoe Road will be very detrimental to our neighborhood," said Christian Tvetenstrand, who owns the parcel directly across from the planned approach.

The state is proposing taking nearly a half acre of his property on Vestal Avenue's north side to build the path access point at Ivanhoe Road.



**Marc Newman, developer of two student housing projects on the Greenway path, notes possible pedestrian and vehicle choke points along the trail. (Photo: Jeff Platsky/Press & Sun-Bulletin)**

About 300 people packed MacArthur School gymnasium in Binghamton to attend the public hearing conducted by the Department of Transportation on Tuesday night to solicit comment on the Greenway extension, which will extend the path from Binghamton's Pennsylvania Avenue to Vestal's Murray Hill Road.

Following a 45-minute presentation describing the project, nearly two dozen speakers addressed planners with comments ranging from praise about the project's ultimate purpose of providing a non-fossil fuel traveling option, to skeptics who deemed the effort nothing more than an expensive boondoggle.

"This whole project is insane," said Charles Galinsky of Vestal, who doubted the state's projections about usage.

[\[See a copy of the plan here\]](#)



**Signs in opposition to the Department of Transportation plan to extend the Route 434 Greenway can be seen along Vestal Avenue.** (Photo: Jeff Platsky/Press & Sun-Bulletin)

#### Highlights of the Greenway path

- Acquiring rights-of-way or property from 23 residential or commercial owners.
- Redesign of the Vestal Avenue Route 434 turnoff at the Binghamton city line — at the Clubhouse Road intersection — for a pedestrian crossing and to slow traffic entering Vestal Avenue from Route 434 eastbound.
- A traffic light at Route 434 and Plaza Drive.
- An October 2020 construction start and an August 2022 completion date.
- Potential for a future extension of the Greenway by a shared-use path through the Binghamton University campus that would extend the path beyond Murray Hill Road west to connect to the Vestal Rail Trail.
- New signals at Murray Hill Road and Route 434 and the University Plaza entrance to accommodate pedestrian traffic from the path.

Current designs have the path proceeding from Pennsylvania Avenue along the south side of 434, then cutting into MacArthur Park by swinging behind the softball field at the facility's west end to avoid a wetland, and then cutting back toward 434, hugging the south side of the highway on a raised pathway to the Clubhouse Road intersection.

Then the path continues along Route 434 eastbound to Murray Hill Road.

Transportation department plans call for 16 parking spaces along the Vestal service road that leads to the Residence Inn to provide other pathway access.

During construction in 2021-2022, motorists can expect one lane along Route 434 to be closed for portions of the work. Night work is also planned.

The final plan is one of three that made the final cut.

Designers were thrown a curve when neighborhood residents voiced a preference during a previous meeting for what was clearly the most expensive and difficult design of the three proposed pathway extensions.



**An artist's rendering of 16 parking spots planned at the service road by Plaza Drive, giving another access point to the Binghamton Greenway. (Photo: Jeff Platsky/Press & Sun-Bulletin)**

Rather than selecting the two routes along Vestal Avenue, which would have been far easier to design, residents in public meetings held in December 2018 were partial to the path along the south side of Route 434.

The other two design alternatives were at least one-third less expensive to build than the option selected, but South Side residents questioned the path's impact on the neighborhood and expressed concerns about pedestrians crossing driveways.

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# Broome, Tompkins Counties Awarded a Total of \$1.9 Million to Enhance Transportation

**Matt Steecker, Binghamton Press & Sun-Bulletin**

Published 3:00 p.m. ET Feb. 4, 2020 | **Updated 3:25 p.m. ET Feb. 4, 2020**

Alexia Michitti, a junior soccer athlete at Vestal High School, has spent years practicing soccer freestyle skills and shares her tricks on Instagram. Binghamton Press & Sun-Bulletin

Broome and Tompkins counties are receiving \$1.5 million and \$405,000 in state funding, respectively, to enhance public transportation.

The awards come from a state-funded initiative included in a five-year, \$435 million commitment to state suburban services.

Broome County's award will be applied toward the procurement of a chip-enabled contactless fare collection system.

Tompkins County's award will be applied toward the procurement of a clean-fuel electric bus, according to the Office of New York Governor Andrew Cuomo.

These projects and others were selected through a competitive solicitation process, which incorporated criteria developed as part of the governor's initiative to advance Health Across all Policies in New York State. Health Across All Policies is a collaborative approach that integrates health considerations into policy-making across all sectors to improve community health and wellness.

"New York continues to lead the nation in building and revitalizing transportation infrastructure that is cleaner, greener and more suitable for the 21st century," Cuomo said. "These strategic investments in public transportation systems will help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance services in these communities, once again showing that New York is committed to building a bright, sustainable future."

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## Governor Cuomo Announces New Safety measures through Slow Act

February 5, 2020, 8:07 am

WBNG Staff

Slow Down Act

(WBNG)- Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced on Tuesday, a new safety measure to protect highway workers through the Slow Act.



The Slow Act or the Slow Down and Look Out for Highway Workers and Pedestrians Act of 2020 will impose tougher criminal penalties for violent actions against highway workers as well as pedestrians and cyclists.

Governor Cuomo stated, *"Highway workers have a tough job, often having to work in rough weather and under tough circumstances keep our roads and bridges in good repair, and we need to do everything in our power to keep them safe in the field, "With the SLOW Act, New York is cracking down on violent or negligent acts against highway workers, protecting their personal safety and our roadways."*

If drivers don't follow the law they can be charged with an assault in the 2nd degree, Class D felony which is currently an assault in the 3rd degree, Class A misdemeanor.

The act also would charge drivers of a class E felony if they intentionally harm a worker.

Drivers could also face an immediate suspension of their driver's license for six months if convicted of the crimes of hitting a worker.

If a driver commits a crime they also could face a fine of \$250 to \$500 and/or up to 3 months in jail if they commit a Class B misdemeanor which is when the driver enters an active work zone after being told to wait.

They also can receive a fine for hitting pedestrians or cyclists will increase from the current \$500 to \$1,000. The fine for a serious injury will go from the current \$750 to \$1,500.

More than 900 incidents of violence towards highway workers have been reported over the past five years in these work zones in New York State.

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