

A photograph of a snow-covered path, likely a pedestrian or bicycle trail, with trees and a fence on the left. The path is covered in a thick layer of snow, and there are footprints visible. The trees are also covered in snow, and the sky is overcast.

BMTS Article Digest January - February 2023

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 from the Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee page at <http://bmtsonline.com/about/committees>.

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See the **Two Rivers Greenway Pedestrian & Bicycle Monthly Counting Reports** at <http://bmtsonline.com/data/bikeped-counts>.



WBNG-TV

JCPD shares tips to keep pedestrians safe on the road

(WBNG)

By [Ashley Soriano](#)

Published: Jan. 11, 2023 at 1:07 AM EST | Updated: 9 hours ago



JOHNSON CITY (WBNG) - Whether you're driving on the road, crossing a street, or riding a bicycle -- it is important to take precaution.

According to the New York State Department of Health, on average there are 312 deaths each year due to vehicle-related pedestrian injuries.

Johnson City police Chief

Brent Dodge said he has often time seen pedestrians utilize busy highways to travel by foot. However, he said this is not only unsafe, but illegal.

"From time to time I see people walking on state routes like State Route 201, or even on Highway 17 or 86," Dodge said. "Pedestrian traffic is not allowed on those highways, so it's important to stay off and find alternate village streets or city streets. It is New York State law that pedestrians have the right of way at a crosswalk, but pedestrians need to remember that they have to use the crosswalks and have to use the crossing signal. You can't cross against the signal at a crosswalk."

Dodge said if you're out walking or riding your bike at night, it is important to wear bright, reflective clothing and have a flashing light on your bike to alert drivers. He said drivers should also be aware of their surroundings.

"You need to be paying attention. Someone can step out off a curb in front of you at a moments notice, and if you don't have your eyes focused on the road in front of you, you're not going to see that," said Dodge.

He said drivers should make it a habit to scan the roads for pedestrians and bicyclists so that drivers are prepared to stop and avoid an accident.

New business, greenspace planned at old Kmart plaza

Green Mountain Electric Supply to revive vacant building at 219 Vestal Ave.

Chris Potter
Binghamton Press & Sun Bulletin
USA TODAY NETWORK



Former Kmart Plaza in Endicott.
EMILY BARNES/BINGHAMTON PRESS AND SUN-BULLETIN

The lights are turning back on at Endicott's former Kmart shopping plaza.

Green Mountain Electric Supply will be reviving the long-vacant building at 219 Vestal Ave. in the coming months as it establishes a \$12 million distribution center for the company's central and western New York locations. Green Mountain is familiar with Broome County, having acquired Binghamton's Dunn Electric Supply in 2021.

"Inventory is really tough to come by across Upstate New York," said Green Mountain's Luc Choquette. "We found this building and already had a location in Binghamton on Robinson Street, so we knew that the people there are welcoming and it's a great area that we see as future growth."

Green Mountain is a distributor of electrical material, PV solar material and heat pumps. It primarily sells to commercial contractors working on large projects. Green Mountain's own large project, the total renovation of a shopping center abandoned since the flood of 2011, is expected to start in early April.

The company plans for the distribution center to be operational by Dec. 1, with hiring commencing a few months before.

Green Mountain projects starting with 20 employees on Day 1 and a minimum of 27 within the first three years, with additional growth possible. The jobs include warehousing positions, drivers and management positions averaging a \$50,000 annual salary.

"We found this building and already had a location in Binghamton on Robinson Street, so we knew that the people there are welcoming and it's a great area that we see as future growth."

Luc Choquette, of Green Mountain Electric Supply

The project will also support 75 construction jobs as the 100,000-squarefoot building requires extensive upgrades.

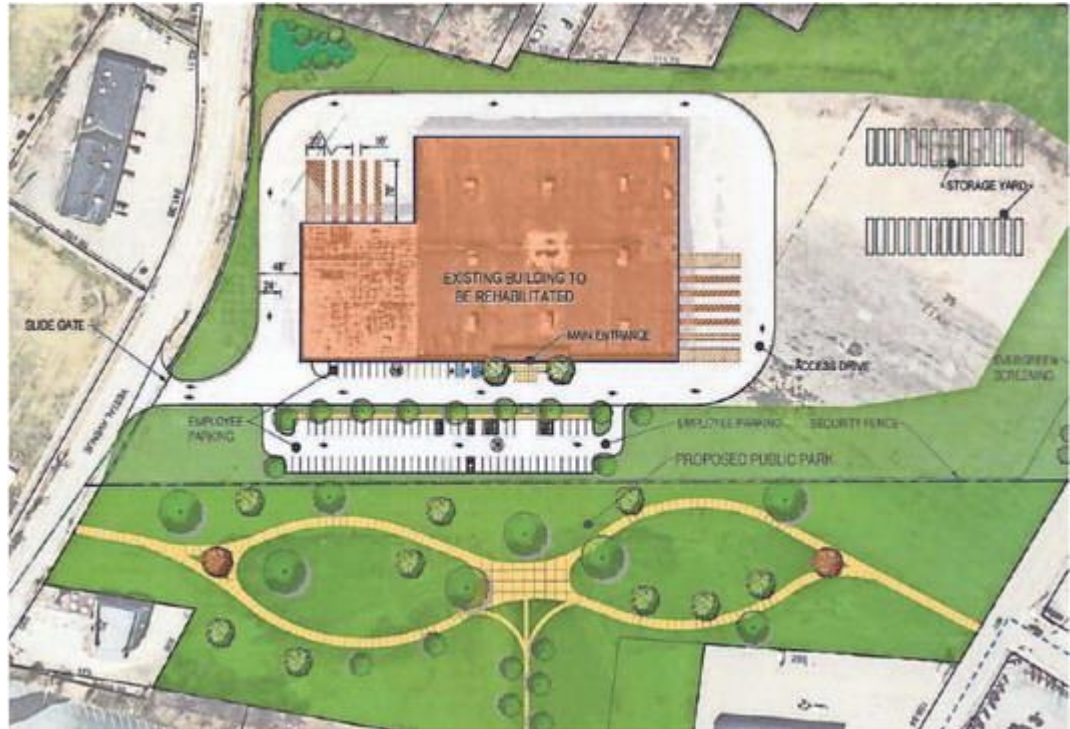
"It's basically a shell at this point," said Choquette. "We're going to fence in the entire property with privacy fencing so it's not an eyesore. Inside the building we're going to repurpose it with racking, and add some more dock doors around the building so it can be used with trucking and whatnot. The roof needs to be redone. It's kind of like starting over, in a sense."

Former plaza 'going green' with new greenspace, park on site

The appearance of the property will also change as it no longer needs to accommodate hundreds of shoppers.

The existing parking lot will be torn out and total impervious surfaces reduced from 15.8 to 7.3 acres with the removal of asphalt areas. The reclaimed land will be seeded with grass and trees, and greenspace on the 18-acre parcel will increase from 2.6 to 10.5 acres.

Stormwater retention ponds will be installed to handle excess runoff and reduce flood risk. The site sits in a 500-year floodplain.



A conceptual site plan for Green Mountain Electric Supply's renovation project at the former Kmart plaza in Endicott, including new walkways and a public park. PROVIDED BY BROOME COUNTY IDA

Green Mountain intends to donate 5.8 acres to the village, county or a nonprofit to accommodate a walkway path from the school to the area behind a nearby McDonald's, while also providing enough land for a new public park at the southern end of the property. Jennie F. Snapp Middle School, Union-Endicott High School, All Saints School and St. Paul's Episcopal Church Pantry all sit within 1,500 feet of the site.

The village has yet to formally accept the property, but Green Mountain agreed to install a concrete walkway if the land is acquired prior to Oct. 15. If that date is not hit, the company will donate \$50,000 toward the installation of a walkway.

Truck arrivals and departures will be scheduled for off-peak traffic hours, and the impact of new traffic is expected to be negligible compared to the site's previous use as a commercial shopping center.

The Endicott distribution center will service Green Mountain's locations across much of the state, while also being well-positioned to handle potential expansion into Pennsylvania. Green Mountain has about 400 employees across 30 locations in New York, Vermont and New Hampshire. The company's Binghamton location will continue to act as a standalone branch, Choquette said.

Former plaza was built over old Endicott landfill

The Endicott planning board last week approved Green Mountain's site plan and the State Environmental Quality Review. The plaza is among several properties in the area that were built over

an old village landfill. The landfill settled unevenly over time, causing the plaza's parking lot to buckle in several areas.

In approving Green Mountain's special use permit, the planning board added amendments that require the company to acquire all necessary approvals from the DEC prior to beginning construction, while mandating activity on the site have no adverse impact to the historic landfill or any significant adverse impact on public health or the environment.

A site environmental assessment found there are no environmental problems associated with the disposal of hazardous waste at the site.

Project receives financial support from local, state sources

Redevelopment of the dilapidated plaza received a flurry of support over the last month. The project received \$3.1 million of Endicott's \$10 million Downtown Revitalization award, and the state earmarked another \$350,000 in Restore New York funding. Broome County is also expected to contribute from its American Rescue Plan funds.

The Broome County IDA, meanwhile, accepted Green Mountain's application for tax exemptions totaling up to \$2 million. The property is the subject of a 15-year PILOT agreement. Payments will increase from \$14,212.35 in Year 1 to \$243,009.46 in Year 15.



January 19th, 2023

We Were Wrong About Sharrows

By: Dave Snyder, PeopleForBikes' senior director for infrastructure

The former executive director of the California Bicycle Coalition was a key player in the proliferation of shared lane markings. Twenty years later, he's disillusioned with them.



It was the late 1990s and I thought we were so clever. We had just convinced the San Francisco Department of Parking and Traffic to incorporate an innovative new design into its bike plan, a bold statement conveying "bikes belong" right there in the middle of the street. I had first seen a shared-use marking, or "sharrow" — a white bicycle painted directly on asphalt — in photos of Paris and Chicago, put there to help bicyclists get through intersections by indicating their path of travel. In 1993, James McKay, a bike planner in Denver, used it on a trial basis to emphasize a bicyclist's right to ride in the middle of the lane.

I was the young executive director of the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition. We published a hard-hitting newsletter and organized leaders from businesses, churches, community organizations, youth groups, and more into a coalition that was giving unprecedented voice to the demands of San Franciscans for safer streets. Looking to those examples from Chicago, Paris, and Denver, we pushed to get an improved version of the sharrow design formally included in the city's bike plan and approved for use by the state of California. Mayor Willie Brown famously painted the first sharrow on Grove Street outside of City Hall, getting some green paint on his fancy suit and laughing it off in his inimitable style.



The City of Oakland, CA, experimented with this "super sharrow" on 40th Street in hopes that the symbol would be more effective if underlined by green pavement. It didn't work, and the USDOT did not approve the treatment.

San Francisco went on to paint thousands of these symbols all over its bike network, and hundreds of cities followed suit. I

thought the sharrow would educate bicyclists to stay out of the "door zone" — the three or so feet of space adjacent to parked cars where motorists opening car doors and bicyclists could collide — and usher in a new era of safer streets, one where motorists would patiently wait behind bicyclists "taking the lane" because this painted symbol made it clear they had the right to do so. Where we couldn't get a bike lane, I hoped this symbol would effectively convert the mixed-traffic lane into an adhoc bike lane when bicyclists were present.

I was wrong.

It turns out that motorists really don't like to wait behind someone on a bike, regardless of the paint on the street. Even Oakland's experiment with the so-called "super sharrow," where the bicycle path of travel is painted solid green, isn't enough to get people on bikes to comfortably "take the lane." Sharrow or no sharrow, most people on bikes dangerously hug the edge of the roadway, squeezing themselves into the door zone to avoid blocking car traffic.

Simply put, sharrows don't do what we hoped they would. Studies back up that claim.

Early research in [San Francisco](#) and [Florida](#) showed evidence that behaviors changed slightly on streets with sharrows. For example, some bicycle riders positioned themselves a few inches further from the curb or car doors. A 2010 [evaluation of shared lane markings](#) in three separate cities again showed that the markings had some positive impact on behavior. Looking closely at the results, however, it was clear the changes were too minor to make a difference. After Oakland's experiment with the super sharrow, the Federal Highway Administration announced it would not support future experiments, and Oakland does not plan to continue the treatment when it repaves the street.

San Francisco still uses sharrows, but for the most part, city officials know better than to expect them to do much for safety. Today, beautiful sharrows point bicyclists along the circuitous path of the “wobble,” where a right-left-right-left series of turns directs riders on a gentle grade between San Francisco’s steep hills. They are great for navigation and, perhaps, concentrating riders on certain streets — that’s about it.

Bright green arrows are useful for marking the zig-zag path that takes bicyclists across San Francisco while avoiding the steep hills.

It’s been more than 20 years since I had high hopes for the sharrow as a tool for safety. Today, we know so much more about what it takes to make our streets safer for bicycling. We need

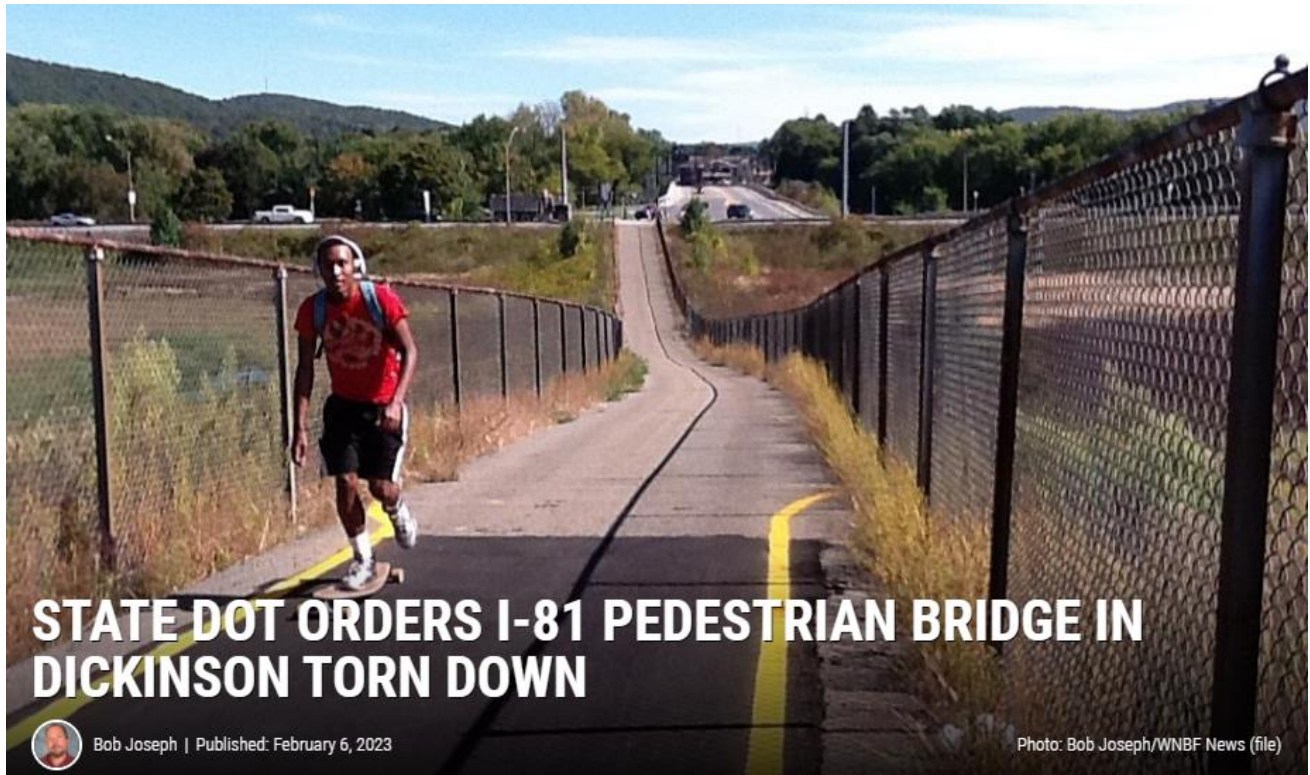
separate bike paths; we need protected bike lanes on busy roads; and where the lanes are shared, we need *actual speeds* reduced to 20 mph or slower. Sharrows don’t do any of that.

Sharrows do, however, accomplish something pernicious which I did not anticipate. They allow officials to take credit for *doing something* for bicycle safety without impacting car traffic, even though that something is next to nothing. It’s just pretending, and it’s worse than being honest about priorities. It’s insulting to the public to encourage bicycling by painting bike symbols on the street but doing nothing to actually make riding a bike any safer.

Yes, good bike infrastructure can require tradeoffs that are more politically challenging than simply painting a symbol on the street. Now, at PeopleForBikes, I’m part of a team that has successfully [helped cities build networks of bikeways](#) that actually get more people riding safely and joyfully. We help city leaders with communications, organizing, and political strategies to overcome the challenges they will surely face in building truly effective infrastructure.

We *never* suggest using sharrows to create a bikeway. We’ve learned our lessons. Now that we know better, it’s time to do more.





A walkway over Interstate 81 linking homes in the Sunrise Terrace neighborhood with Otsiningo Park in the town of Dickinson will be removed soon.

The pedestrian bridge between Bevier Street and Old Front Street opened for use in January 1968.

A sign informs pedestrians that the bridge over Interstate 81 is no longer available. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

The state Department of Transportation shut down the walkway without advance notice to the public a few years ago.

Town supervisor Michael Marinaccio said there are more than 300 homes in the Sunrise Terrace development located to the west of the pedestrian bridge.





A pedestrian bridge in the town of Dickinson on February 3, 2023. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

The DOT sent a letter to residents and business operators informing them of what the agency described as "an upcoming bridge project." The message explains the "project" will entail the removal of the walkway.

According to the letter from the agency's

Andrew Stiles, winter maintenance of the aging structure had become "increasingly hazardous" so the decision was made to close the bridge.

According to The Evening Press, the walkway cost \$312,054 to construct. Over its nearly 55-year lifespan, the bridge was used by a relatively small number of walkers, bicyclists and skateboarders.

A view of the I-81 pedestrian walkway west of Otsiningo Park. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

The letter noted a new pathway for pedestrians was recently constructed along Front Street.

The DOT plans to remove the old bridge during the upcoming construction season. Some nighttime work will be required for the project. It's not known when the removal will occur.





Broome County's most unusual and ambitious upcoming relocation project will involve transporting the historic Erie-Lackawanna Train Station across the Vestal Parkway.

The old depot has served as the Vestal Museum for more than four decades. The building started life as a railroad station in 1881.



A historical marker located near the building that now houses the Vestal Museum. Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News

According to the museum's website, the train station was used for rail service between New York City and Buffalo until 1959.

The building was moved from its original site east of Main Street to its current location near the Vestal Library just over 50 years ago - on December 19, 1972.

Money from the state Environmental Protection Fund has been allocated for the Vestal museum moving project. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

In recent years, the town has been developing plans to relocate the building to a spot near where had been in the first place.

Museum director Cheresé Rosales said efforts are continuing to coordinate the planned move with the State Historic Preservation Office.



The upcoming move will take a different route from the one used a half-century ago when the building was hauled on a trailer down the Vestal Parkway. The plan is to hoist the structure above power lines with a crane and then cross the parkway to move it west along the rail trail.



The Vestal Museum building is to be moved near the Coal House adjacent to a walking trail. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

The state has awarded \$360,000 for the relocation project. But that amount will only cover part of the cost of the move.

Rosales said efforts are continuing to raise more money for the project. She noted things have gotten more expensive in the aftermath of the

Covid-19 pandemic. She said the latest estimate indicates the relocation could cost about \$2 million.

The museum's new location will be about 100 yards from the old Coal House near the Vestal Rail Trail.

It's still not known when the move will occur. Rosales said "it's possible" it could happen this year - but she's not certain it will happen.



A glimpse inside the Vestal Museum on January 17, 2023. Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News

Crews respond to car vs. pedestrian crash in Johnson City

Car vs Pedestrian in Johnson City(WBNG)

By [Scott Sasina](#)

Published: Feb. 9, 2023 at 7:25 PM EST | Updated: 13 hours ago

Johnson City (WBNG) --
Emergency crews were called to Harry L. Drive in Johnson City Thursday night for reports of a person hit by a car.



When our news crew got to the scene around 7:15pm, Johnson City Police, Fire Department and Union Ambulance were all present.

According to the Johnson City Police, the person who was hit has a leg injury. This happened in the village right before the intersection on Harry L. Drive and Reynolds Road.

This is a developing story so stay with us if any more information comes into our newsroom.
