

A photograph of a snow-covered path, likely a pedestrian or bicycle trail, with trees and a fence on the left side. 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 February – March 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>.

*Sights you get to enjoy while walking!*

---

## Pedestrian & Bicycle Information Center (PBIC) Messenger e-Newsletter

Go to <http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/newsroom/newsletters.cfm>.

[Subscribe](#) to the new monthly PBIC Messenger. Send news for future issues to editorial team member [Linda Tracy](#).

## FREE Webinars

Go to <https://www.pedbikeinfo.org/webinars/>.

---

## 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).



---

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



### THE HILL

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY  
CONTRIBUTORS ARE THEIR OWN AND  
NOT THE VIEW OF THE HILL

## Secretary Pete's safe streets plan won't succeed if engineers continue business as usual

BY JEFF SPECK, OPINION CONTRIBUTOR -  
02/11/23 11:30 AM ET



Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg recently announced \$800 million in grants to reduce traffic deaths (with \$1.1 billion more on the way). The funds are desperately needed, but there's a catch: For every deadly street that these grants make safer, American engineers continue to build dozens of new streets that are just as lethal.

The problem is not just a few streets, but rather an entrenched apparatus of practices and standards that actively welcome dangerous driving. For this reason, only a dramatic change to the traffic engineering profession itself will produce the safer cities and towns Americans need.

The U.S. is witnessing a grave upswing of roadway deaths in its towns and cities, especially among people walking and biking. Cycling deaths are up 44 percent over the past decade, and pedestrian deaths have risen a stunning 82 percent since 2009 — and that in the context of 115 people dying every day in car crashes.

Meanwhile, both vehicular and pedestrian death rates in Europe have been dropping steadily for years. What makes the U.S. so bad?

There are three main factors that distinguish American driving from European driving. Two of these – the proliferation of highway-fed suburban sprawl and 2.5-ton SUVs – have been well discussed, and would be difficult to fix.

The third factor would be easier to fix, but almost nobody is talking about it: the design of our roads, or, more precisely, the practices of the American traffic engineering industry. Put simply, the roadway design standards enshrined by our nation's professional civil engineers are unnecessarily deadly to the point of criminal negligence. It's time to place blame and demand change.

A couple examples will make this contention clear. Engineers routinely design streets to support (and therefore invite) speeds well above the posted speed limit. Then, when speeding is observed on these streets, the manual published by the Federal Highway Administration requires that the speed limit be raised.

Next, engineers have been aware for a quarter century that replacing traffic signals with four-way stop signs saves lives. When Philadelphia removed the signals from 472 intersections in the 1970s, severe injury crashes dropped by 62.5 percent. Yet engineers still routinely place traffic signals where stop signs should go.

These are just two examples out of dozens available. Until these standards are changed, they will continue to kill and maim needlessly. And, because they are standards, enshrined in the manuals, they not only protect their perpetrators from lawsuits but they expose to great liability any engineer who has the nerve to build safer streets. For that reason, any change would likely need to come from the top. It's not coming.

In the Netherlands, 500 children were killed in traffic in 1971. This led to a national "Stop de Kindermoord" (child murder) movement, and a scientific rethinking of Dutch road design. By 2014, this effort had reduced the number of child traffic deaths to nine.

How did they do it? Here in the U.S., engineers enforce “minimum design speeds”; Dutch engineers do the opposite. When designing a street, they first ask what speed cars should travel in the neighborhood. They then shape that street to limit elbow room, so that drivers do not feel comfortable going faster.

Contrast that Dutch approach with my experience a number of years ago designing a suburban neighborhood near Birmingham, Alabama. I was required by the county engineer to loosen the curves in a street until it achieved a “design speed” 10 mph above the posted limit — in a residential community. This approach seems preposterous to everyone, except apparently American engineers.

The entrenched pro-speed practices of our engineers helps to explain why Vision Zero – the global campaign to eliminate urban traffic deaths – is failing so miserably in North America. In Scandinavia, when they invoke Vision Zero, they literally mean zero. Neither Helsinki nor Oslo witnessed a single pedestrian fatality in 2019. Meanwhile, Atlanta’s Vision Zero coordinator was killed last year, run down with four others in a Chattanooga crosswalk.

“Isn’t it curious that traffic engineers are so loath to learn something new, even after repeated demonstrations?” So asked prominent urban theorist Jane Jacobs 20 years ago. The question persists, and it’s time that this negligent profession learn, or be held responsible for not learning.

Unlike in other countries, American engineers habitually design streets to invite dangerous speeds, arguing against all evidence that lower design speeds would make the road less safe. The former engineer Chuck Marohn likens this activity to professional malpractice and documents how it meets the standards of gross negligence.

Who is going to mount the massive class action lawsuit that properly lays bare the inner workings of this negligent industry? In America, for better or worse, progress seems to be made in the courts. It is hard to imagine any other venue through which we can begin to bring down the established standards that result in thousands of excess deaths annually. Until we do, this institutionalized mass manslaughter will continue.

*Jeff Speck, FAICP, is a city planner and the author of “Walkable City, How Downtown Can Save America, One Step at a Time.” It has just been reissued in an updated 10th anniversary edition.*

---

**Bloomberg** CityLab Transportation  
**How E-Bike Rebates Will Make Cycling Safer**

Denver’s wildly successful incentive program isn’t just helping residents buy greener rides — it’s building an army of bike lane advocates.



Denver’s rebate program offering vouchers for new e-bikes is making this an increasingly common scene in the city.

*Photographer: RJ Sangosti/MediaNews Group/The Denver Post via Getty Images*

By *David Zipper*

February 9, 2023 at 8:55 AM EST

So much for Mile High City. Denver residents are embracing a new moniker: E-bike City.

In April 2022, the city began offering residents \$400 off a new electric bike or \$900 off an e-cargo bike, with low-income residents eligible for an additional \$800 discount. The program was a sensation: Over 4,700 Denverites snapped up a voucher in 2022, forcing overwhelmed city staff to pause the application process. The rebates' value dropped in 2023, but the city's newest batch of 860 vouchers, distributed in January, were still snapped up in about 20 minutes.

Mayor Michael Hancock took a victory lap in a press release last month that credited the new e-bikes for already replacing over 100,000 car miles: "This program showed there was a desire in our community for new, sustainable mobility options."

Beyond reducing emissions, all that e-biking likely improved residents' health, too — provided, of course, that riders don't get struck by a motor vehicle. Like many US cities, biking in Denver traffic can be uncomfortable and sometimes perilous. Last December two people were killed while biking there.

In fact, Denver's need for better bike infrastructure points to a hidden power of e-bike incentives. Thanks to the rebates, many residents will get their first taste of the joys and anxieties of navigating their city on two wheels. That experience could compel them to add their voice to those already clamoring for better bike accommodations.

Amplified calls for street safety could be among the most powerful legacies of e-bike rebate programs — not only in Denver, but in the many US states and cities now considering launching their own. If so, they could finally put to rest questions of whether to upgrade bike infrastructure before or only after many residents are riding, a challenge that has bedeviled US cities.

Mike Salisbury, Denver's transportation energy lead, already sees signs that could happen. He said that the city distributed a survey to rebate recipients last fall to gauge the program's impact, receiving around 1,000 responses. To his delight, the average respondent said they were using their new e-bike in lieu of a car 3.4 times per week. Better yet, nearly 30% claimed they had not previously biked at all. "That suggests to me that we're creating new cyclists," Salisbury said.

But he also noted a frequent complaint from rebate recipients: "The people who started to experience bike infrastructure, they weren't always happy with it."

In a comment Salisbury shared, one resident wrote the city: "There is still a lack of bike-friendly infrastructure, especially safe bike lanes, around potential destinations. This makes me hesitate using the e-bike even more because of the risk." Social media users sounded similar notes. "The ebike program is great," tweeted one Denverite. "The issue is safe bike lanes and

places to ride that you aren't worried getting hit by a car. Denver needs better bike infrastructure to go with the e-bike program."

Such reactions will not surprise frazzled American bike commuters who contend that the acute stress of trying to share the streets with 6,000-pound SUVs must be experienced to be understood. Tara Goddard, an assistant professor of landscape architecture and urban planning at Texas A&M, has found that car drivers are more likely to have positive views about cyclists if they themselves ride a bike weekly to get around town.

By all accounts, Denver streets today are safer than they were in the 1990s, when the city earned the ignominious distinction of deploying the first "sharrow," a bike figure painted atop asphalt that instructs drivers to share the road, but whose actual impact on safety is somewhere between nonexistent and counterproductive. "It's easy to despair about how sh--y it still is to bike, but we've come a long way for sure," said Jill Locantore, the executive director of the Denver Streets Partnership.

Denver is on track to fulfill Mayor Hancock's 2018 commitment to build 125 miles of new bike lanes by the end of this year, but the bulk of those still leave cyclists exposed. According to the city's new transportation plan, only 21 of the city's 246 miles of bike lanes are protected by parking, bollards or other barriers. As a 2019 study that examined 13 years of data across a dozen US cities confirmed, bike lanes delineated only by paint are considerably less safe than those that are physically separated from traffic.

Salisbury said that he knows that the city's work is far from finished. "We're trying to build out more high-comfort bikeways, and connect them," he said.

By rapidly expanding the ranks of people cycling, Denver's e-bike program could inject new energy into those plans, easing resistance from residents, business owners and political leaders. "It used to be weird to have an e-bike, and people would stare at you and ask lots of questions," said Locantore. "Now it's considered more normal."

As a headline in the Denver Post warned, the rebate program's popularity has placed a spotlight on Denver's inadequate cycling infrastructure: "Denver is adding e-bikes to city streets faster than it is building bike lanes."

Such discrepancies might be just what's needed to break through a logjam that has dogged efforts to build high-quality bike infrastructure in the US: Should cities build protected lanes only after there are plenty of people biking, or should the lanes be treated as an inducement for more people to ride? Which comes first, the cyclists or the infrastructure?

To be fair, this question is hardly Talmudic in its nuance; European cities like Paris and London show that major upgrades in bike infrastructure can indeed trigger a subsequent surge in cycling. But US city officials often insist on seeing plenty of people biking before throwing their support behind street adjustments that risk irking car owners.

By compelling around 1% of Denver adults to buy a new e-bike, the city's rebate program has made it easier to advocate for better bike lanes. Better yet, new riders might demand it

themselves. “If you’re actually using a bike to try to get places, you realize, ‘Yeah, we really do need bike lanes for me to get where I need to go,’” said Locantore. “Having that lived experience is really eye-opening.”

As Salisbury described it, “We’re creating new constituents who are going to advocate for better, safer bike infrastructure.”

A few years ago, the sudden emergence of shared e-scooters stoked similar hopes that residents’ views on street safety would shift after they took a spin. “These scooters are really showing that we have to build bike lanes all over the place,” Eric Bunch, the executive director of Kansas City’s BikeWalkKC, [told Streetsblog in 2019](#). In the same article, Nora Kern, then the executive director of Walk Bike Nashville, said that e-scooters were “making the need for protective infrastructure much more urgent.”

E-scooters have had a [rocky go of things](#) since then, and their future is uncertain. But e-bikes — which in the US are often owned, rather than shared — could have more staying power, with riders’ enthusiasm for safe infrastructure remaining undimmed.

Of course, enhanced bike lanes would protect more than just e-bikers; those riding pedal bikes, e-scooters, and other forms of micromobility would likewise benefit. And every person who bikes or scoots instead of using a car makes the air a little cleaner (and the planet a little less warm) for all residents.

In less than a year, Denver’s e-bike program has attracted [national attention](#) and inspired public officials across the country to study its design. The [District of Columbia](#) is now considering a proposal that resembles a carbon copy of Denver’s initiative, and [Nashville](#) leaders have introduced one as well. [Rhode Island](#) already has its own statewide incentive program, and legislators in [Oregon](#), [New York](#), and [Hawaii](#) are considering proposals to create their own.

What should you expect when an e-bike rebate becomes available in your community? Based on Denver’s experience, interested residents would be wise to grab that voucher as quickly as they can, and local bike shops should brace for an influx of shoppers.

Bike advocacy groups, for their part, might want to start searching for a bigger meeting space.

*Lucas Peilert provided research assistance. [David Zipper](#) is a Visiting Fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School's Taubman Center for State and Local Government, where he examines the interplay between urban policy and new mobility technologies.*

---

## Death toll in Tioga County pedestrian crash rises to 3



(WBNG)

By [Matthew Benninger](#)

*Published: Feb. 16, 2023 at 10:40 AM EST | Updated: 48 minutes ago*

NEWARK VALLEY (WBNG) -- Three people are confirmed dead after a vehicle struck pedestrians on a highway in Tioga County Wednesday morning.

Tioga County Sheriff's Captain Shawn Nalepa said four people in total were struck on Route 38 in Newark Valley. The killed were identified as 66-year-old John Stephens, 25-year-old Kurtis Acker and 52-year-old Doreen Wood; all are from Newark Valley.

The fourth, a 27-year-old woman, was flown to Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse and remains in critical condition.

Authorities said the four were struck by a black 2017 Hyundai Santa Fe driven by an 18-year-old man. He cooperated with investigators and remained at the scene of the crash.

The circumstances surrounding the crash were not released but the sheriff's office said the incident remains under investigation.

Wednesday afternoon, Tioga County officials said at least one person was killed in the crash.

Crews [shut down Route 38](#) between Wilson Creek Road and Brown for a majority of the day Wednesday as emergency personnel worked at the scene. Multiple emergency agencies responded to the incident, including some from Broome County.

Authorities said the names of the dead will be released soon.

---



Friday, 17 February 2023

## 3 People Killed, 1 Hurt in Crash

**Jeff Murray**

Binghamton Press & Sun Bulletin USA TODAY NETWORK

Three people are dead and one is in critical condition following a car-pedestrian crash late Wednesday morning in the Town of Newark Valley.

The crash took place shortly before 11:30 a.m. on state Route 38 between Brown Road and Wilson Creek Road, according to the Tioga County Sheriff's Office.

A preliminary investigation determined a black 2017 Hyundai Santa Fe SUV driven by an 18-year-old man was traveling south on Route 38 when it struck four pedestrians who were walking on the west shoulder of the roadway, the sheriff's office said.

Sheriff's deputies, state troopers and first responders from multiple agencies shut down the roadway and attended to the victims.

The sheriff's office said John Stephens, 66, Kurtis Acker, 25, and Doreen Wood, 52, all from Newark Valley, died after being struck by the SUV.

A 27-year-old woman, also from Newark Valley, was flown from the scene by LifeNet Air to Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse, where she is in critical condition. Her name is not being released at this time.

The driver, who was the only person in the SUV, was not injured. He remained at the scene and cooperated in the investigation, the sheriff's office said. His name is also not being released.

The investigation into the crash is continuing and no charges have been filed at this time, according to Capt. Shawn Nalepa of the sheriff's office.

Investigators are asking anyone who witnessed the crash or the described SUV traveling in the area prior to the crash to contact the sheriff's office Criminal Investigations Division at 607-687-1010.

The Tioga County Sheriff's Office was also assisted at the scene by the New York State Police Collision Reconstruction Unit and Unmanned Aerial System unit, Tioga County Emergency Management Office, Newark Valley and Berkshire fire departments, Maine and Owego EMS, the Tioga County District Attorney's Office, and New York State Department of Transportation.

---

## Binghamton woman struck and killed by pickup

A Binghamton woman died after she was struck by a pickup while walking along a Southern Tier highway early Friday evening.

New York State Police at Binghamton said Angela N. Kelley, 47, was walking in the westbound lane of state Route 7 shortly after 6 p.m. when she was struck by a westbound Dodge Ram pickup near the intersection with Belden Manor Road in the Town of Colesville.

The investigation determined Kelley was dressed in dark clothing and the driver of the Ram pickup was unable to avoid striking her in the road, troopers said.

The identity of the driver was not released and no charges have been filed.

State troopers and investigators were assisted at the scene by the state police Troop C Collision Reconstruction Unit, EMS personnel and the Broome County Coroner's Office.

---



## Two Vehicle Crash Leaves Pedestrian Injured on Binghamton's West Side

Monday, February 20th 2023, 3:34 PM EST

By Tyler Cunnington

On Monday afternoon, police responded to Binghamton's West Side to a two vehicle accident that resulted in a pedestrian being struck.

Shortly before 2:30 p.m., Binghamton Police were called to the intersection of Main Street and Beethoven Street where the crash occurred.

One of the driver's involved told a Fox 40 crew member on scene that he was stopped in his black SUV at the intersection, while a pedestrian was crossing the road. Then a white SUV rear-ended his vehicle, which forced his car forward into the individual walking. The extent of the pedestrian's injuries are unknown, but they were seen being taken away in a Superior ambulance while Fox 40 was on scene.

The driver of the black SUV suffered damage to his trunk gate, along with a shattered back windshield, while the white SUV received major damage and was forced to be towed away.

---



Image source: Steve Price

## SUSTAINABILITY

# Electric cars shouldn't distract us from changes to the built environment

News that mining of lithium comes up short to solve the climate crisis highlights a need for walkability and micromobility.

STEVE PRICE FEB. 20, 2023

Governments and car manufacturers are touting electric vehicles (EVs) as the wonder antidote to climate change. EVs will need abundant mined lithium, a key component of EV batteries. A recent report by the Climate and Community Project at the University of California, Davis, [Achieving Zero Emissions with More Mobility and Less Mining](#), calls into question whether mining lithium will be able to meet the urgent need to address climate change. The report challenges the hope that lithium mined in large quantities can steer America clear of structural changes to the built landscape, confirming the suspicions of new urbanists.

Lithium is an essential component of car batteries, and there is presently no replacement for it. It is mined from both hard rock and from below-ground brine. Both require significant landscape disturbance either from open-pit mines or from large evaporation ponds. Lawsuits by indigenous peoples and

environmentalists is a given. Although research continues in pursuit of a cheaper and more easily mined substitute, time is of the essence in the work to avoid climate disaster.

As America's cars and trucks continue to grow in size with Americans wanting bigger batteries for better electric car range, the challenge to source lithium will get steeper. The report's authors cite a projection from Benchmark Mineral Intelligence, a data provider reporting lithium supply for vehicle batteries, that securing enough lithium to electrify all of America's cars and trucks would require a 4,200 percent increase in lithium mining over the present. Yet lithium mines typically take on average 16.5 years to become fully operational. Much lithium will have to come from overseas, contrary to politicians' promises to quickly source materials domestically.

Europe and parts of Asia are in better positions to pivot toward greener futures because city forms there are supportive of alternatives to the automobile such as walking, bicycling, and transit, and vehicles are much smaller, with lower carbon emissions than American vehicles. Reducing America's car sizes and frequency of use to that of European or Asian countries would alone result in significant emissions reductions. Coupled with planning for walkable urban densities and electrifying more diverse forms of transportation will move these countries to making significant strides toward climate goals.

Even if all American cars could be electrified, Americans on average only buy new cars about every 15 years; this isn't fast enough turnover to meet climate goals. Under a California Air Resources Board mandate, 100 percent of new cars will need to be electric in California by 2035; even after that, for years there will be many legacy gasoline cars on the road. The authors also assumed that batteries would need to be replaced before the end of an electric car's life, putting additional strains on the lithium supply chain.

On the positive side, when lithium batteries have reached the end of their life, they can be recycled and the lithium reused, unlike fossil fuels, which are exhausted when burned, requiring never-ending drilling for more. This recycling potential could drastically reduce the environmental and social damages inherent to mining. That's good news . . . for the long-term. But climate change is happening fast. Although large-scale recycling must be encouraged, "Recycling still cannot meet even 50 percent of demand in 2050," the authors write. In car-intensive America, the authors posit that by 2050 the demand for lithium in the United States will be triple that of current total global demand. Of course, this ignores another large possible demand put on lithium production: the electric grid's needs for electricity storage to even out the variable electricity generation of wind and solar.

## Walkability and micromobility to the rescue

Sixty percent of trips in America are for 5 miles or less, usually not requiring a large vehicle. Fifty-two percent are under 3 miles easily done on a classic bicycle. The lithium-ion battery required in an electric bicycle weighs less than 1/100th that needed in a 4,000-pound electric car. For those who feel they must have an enclosed sit-down car-like experience for local travel, new electric microcars weigh a third or less than the typical electric car and use much less lithium. ([Management consultancy firm McKinsey & Company projects that the market for these small vehicles could reach \\$100 billion in 10 years.](#))

The Climate and Community Project report examined four scenarios, starting with a base case of changing nothing except to electrify the present number of cars, followed by three alternatives showing decreasing lithium use driven by changes in car ownership, how much cars are used, how much transit is used, active transportation by population, urbanization and density, and the lithium variables of vehicle design choices, battery warranty requirements, and worst- and best-case recycling futures. The researchers found that in all but the fourth most ambitious scenario to reduce lithium use, U.S. demand for lithium "will exceed current total global production, yet global production will need to meet demand for all [international] markets." The authors maintain that the fourth scenario is doable citing Vienna, Austria as exemplary for its work toward this goal of reducing auto dependency.

The numerous bad consequences of auto-dependency include pollution, congestion, rising obesity, structural racism, land consumption, loneliness, and the decline of local economies and government solvency. All these consequences will likely continue to get gradually worse, with no clear understanding by the public or our political leaders as to who or what is responsible. But the sourcing limitations of lithium is a clear brick wall, it won't imperceptibly get worse over a long period. At some point the supply-chain limits will be obvious.

Governments champion EVs to win voter support, and corporations offer optimistic product projections to lure investors. The reality is that electric cars will be less of a solution than presently expected. They will be essential to addressing climate change, but only as one component of a suite of transportation solutions to address climate change. "Achieving this future is possible," the report authors write, "with levers ranging from mass transit policy, to land use and zoning decisions, to regulations regarding battery size and car warranties, to streetscape planning that incorporates walkability and cycling safety." Given the time constraints to address climate change, we won't have enough lithium to do otherwise. Zoning fixes, micromobility, electrifying bus fleets, and bike lanes can happen now without gearing up large, environmentally destructive mining operations.

A very good interview with the lead author Thea Riofrancos explaining the report [Decarbonizing US Transportation with an eye toward global justice](#) can be heard on David Robert's podcast *Volts*.

---

## Wolfe Park reopens with new pedestrian bridge



(Kayla Madison)

By Kayla Madison

*Published: Feb. 24, 2023 at 12:17 PM EST*

CHENANGO (WBNG) -- As of Feb. 17, Wolfe Park's hiking trails reopened, as posted on the [Town of Chenango website](#).

According to Town of Chenango officials, Wolfe Park was temporarily closed due to a pipe being washed out.

The park reopened on Feb. 17 with a new walkway bridge that was designed in October 2022. With the nice weather, they decided to install the bridge and now everything is operating as normal.

Wolfe Park is located on Dorman Road in Chenango.

---

## Proposed project to bring waterfront access and recreation opportunities to Waverly

By [Kevin Quinn](#)

*Published: Feb. 23, 2023 at 5:45 PM EST*

WAVERLY, NY (WBNG) - A new proposal is looking to bring waterfront access and outdoor recreation opportunities to the Village of Waverly.

The project is a collaboration between the Tioga County Department of Economic Development and Planning, the Carantouan Greenway and Design Connect; a student-run design organization out of Cornell University.

Community Development Liaison for the Department of Economic Development & Planning Abbey Ortu said despite Waverly's proximity to the Chemung River there are no access points in the village currently.

"We realized that Waverly is a waterfront town without access to water so the village and some key stakeholders came forward and talked about putting an application to Design Connect," said Ortu.

Once Design Connect approved the project, Cornell University students began working with residents of the village to cater the project towards community needs. Ortu said there have been a variety of suggestions made so far.

"People suggested things like a dog park and access to the water for people who may have mobility issues," said Ortu. "There's a wonderful trail that's along a closed road there that is absolutely beautiful and perfect for strollers and bikes."

The site for the project is located on River Road in Waverly, right off State Highway 86. Ortu said she hopes the convenient location will help attract visitors from across the region.

"This site is perfect not only for residents of the Village of Waverly or visitors but also for people who may be getting on and off the highway as they travel," said Ortu.

The project is currently working to secure funding. Wednesday, it was announced that the Village of Waverly was a recipient of \$4.5 million dollars from New York State through the New York Forward Program.

The Tioga County Department of Economic Development & Planning said there is hope money from the award can be used to help this project move forward.

---

## LOCAL

# Johnson City woman, 72, struck, killed while leaving store at Oakdale Commons

## Neal Simon

March 6, 2023 / Binghamton Press & Sun-Bulletin

A 72-year-old woman has died after she was struck by a car while leaving a store at Oakdale Commons in Johnson City on Sunday. The driver of the car, a 20-year-old Binghamton man, has been charged with multiple felonies including second-degree murder, and he allegedly struck and killed the pedestrian while fleeing arrest.

Johnson City Police Department said officers responded to the shopping center around 4:20 p.m. to check on the welfare of man who witnesses said was intoxicated and had entered as many as two vehicles in the parking lot.



Investigators said the man, later identified as Rajee Almashni, had fled the mall on foot after being approached by security personnel and stole property from inside an unoccupied vehicle in the parking lot before entering his own vehicle.

The initial responding officer attempted to contact Almashni, approaching him while he was seated in the driver's seat of a vehicle, but police said he fled the scene, driving south at a high rate of speed. Seconds later, police said, Almashni's vehicle struck Elizabeth Atkinson, 72, of Johnson City, as she was leaving a store at the mall.

Police attempted to stop Almashni as he drove out of the parking lot and onto Reynolds Road, but he failed to comply and continued onto state Route 201.

Officers pursued Almashni onto Floral Avenue and subsequently to Baldwin Street where they said Almashni's car became disabled and he fled on foot before being taken into custody.

Atkinson was taken to UHS Wilson Hospital where she later died.

Almashni has been charged with:

- Second-degree murder
- Second-degree vehicular manslaughter
- Leaving the scene of a fatal motor vehicle accident
- First-degree unlawful fleeing
- First-degree reckless endangerment
- Driving while intoxicated
- Fourth-degree grand larceny

He is currently being held in Broome County Central Arraignment awaiting his arraignment Monday night.

---