

## BMTS Article Digest July – August 2022

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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## 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.

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

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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).



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



In a [press release](#) on Friday, Governor Kathy Hochul announced that she had signed legislation which would require new drivers to learn about pedestrian and bicyclist safety awareness as part of the process to obtain a driver's license.



The bill adds curriculum to the pre-licensing course and to the Department of Motor Vehicles instruction handbook. It's just the latest in a number of actions taken by Governor Hochul in an attempt to improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists, including expanding the use of school zone cameras in New York City and \$11.3 million for pedestrian safety projects on Long Island.

In her press release, Governor Hochul stated "My top priority as Governor is to keep New Yorkers safe, and it is common sense to make pedestrian and bike safety education mandatory for drivers. This law will help prevent crashes and save lives, and I thank my partners in the Assembly and Senate for passing this legislation to make our streets safer."

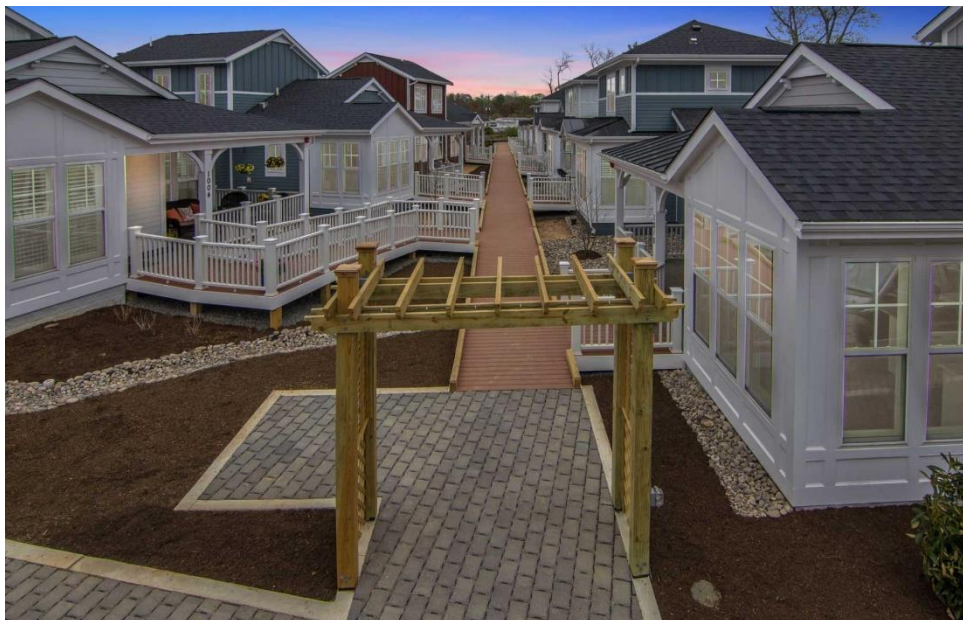
Pedestrian safety has seen an uptick in attention in recent years. New York City's "[Vision Zero](#)" initiative was put into place in 2014 to protect pedestrians from drivers who speed or fail to yield to pedestrians. And Broome County has spent over a year already constructing the \$22 million Route 434 Greenway, creating a two and a half mile pedestrian path along Vestal Parkway connecting downtown Binghamton to Binghamton University. Initiatives like this both improve the physical safety of pedestrians and bicyclists as well as make the area much more convenient for those who prefer not to drive.

While the legislation signed by Governor Hochul will not create any new pedestrian paths or change any driving laws in the interest of safety, it may teach some new drivers to be more mindful of those they're sharing the roads with.

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## PUBLIC SQUARE

A CNU Journal



The Railroad Cottages, Falls Church. Source: City of Falls Church.

### MISSING MIDDLE

**Missing  
middle  
where the  
trains used  
to run**

A cottage court called the Railroad Cottages shows how abandoned rail lines converted to trails have potential for incremental development.

[ROBERT STEUTEVILLE](#) JUL. 6, 2022

The US has a wealth of abandoned rail lines—tens of thousands of miles running every which way across America. Many sections have been converted to walking and bicycling trails. Less often, planners use these corridors as an amenity that attracts compact housing or mixed-use development.

The 22-mile Beltline in Atlanta is the most notable exception. This rail-to-trail conversion reportedly has attracted [more than \\$8 billion](#) in economic development around the city as of 2020. The High Line in Manhattan is another well-known example. Those are big vision, big money projects that are notable because they are unique.

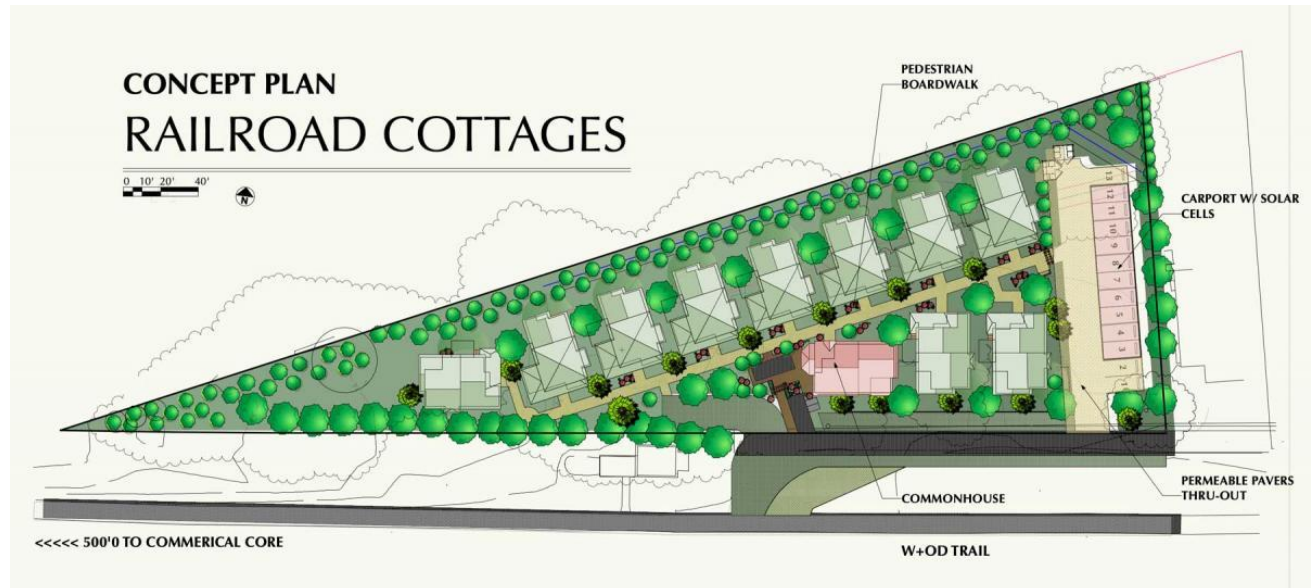
So how could former rail corridors, and other disused transportation rights-of-way, be part of a redevelopment trend that is both broader (in hundreds of cities and towns) and incremental (supporting small-scale development)?



W&OD Trail, next to a cottage court site. Source: City of Falls Church

The Railroad Cottages in Falls Church, Virginia, points to what is possible. This “pocket neighborhood” of 10 small houses and a “common house” was built in 2019 on an underutilized sliver of land adjacent to the 45-mile-long Washington & Old Dominion (W&OD) cycling and pedestrian trail, a former rail corridor.

The development, built on a triangular 1.25-acre site at the end of a very narrow lane, is inspired by Ross Chapin's [Pocket Neighborhoods](#) concept and book. Pocket neighborhoods are a form of cottage court, a "missing middle" housing type that is being incorporated into zoning codes, often with form-based standards.



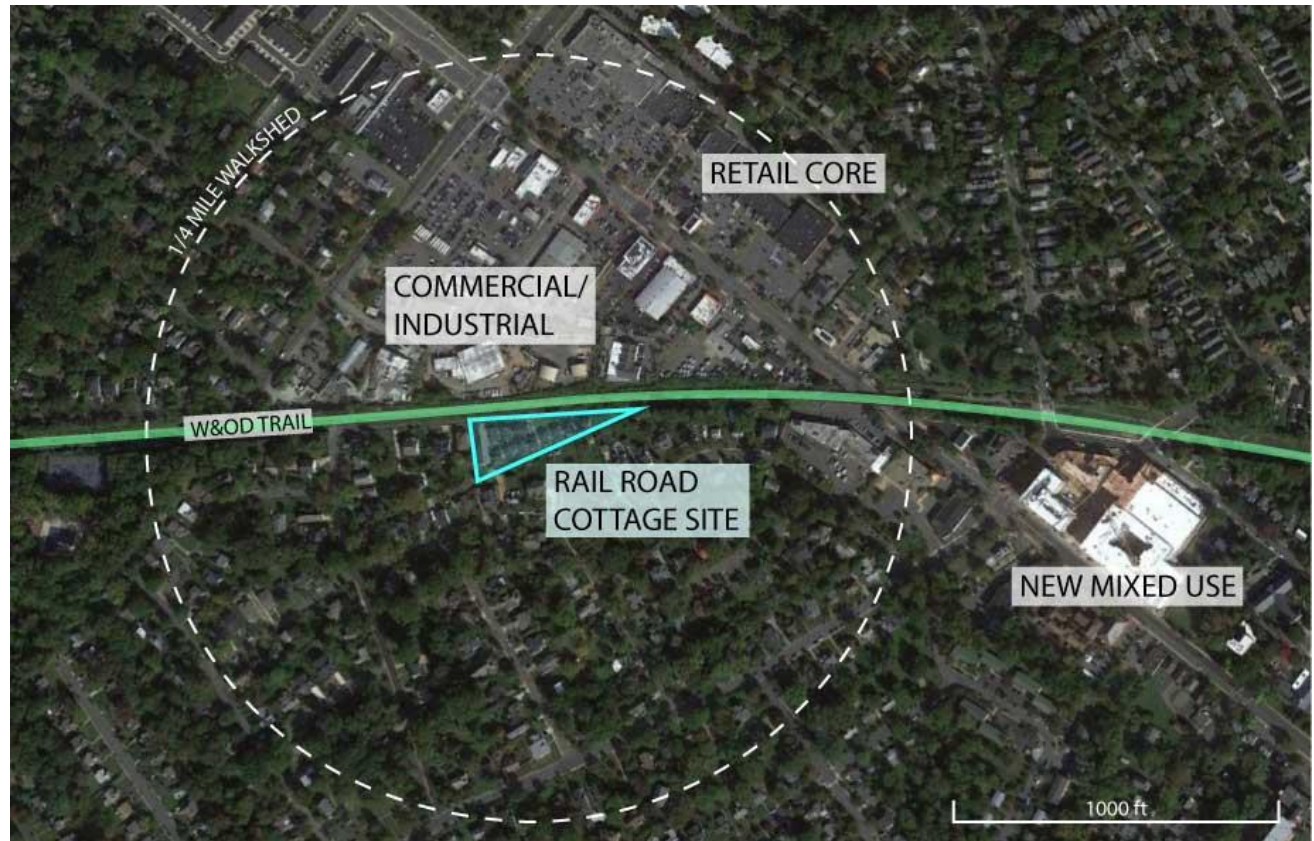
Site plan shows the layout and connection to the trail.

A small patio with an arbor next to the common house offers benches and space for residents to gather. The Common House is designed for casual meetings, or can be reserved for larger events. Upstairs, a guest unit was built, giving households a spare bedroom that may be reserved. The Common House has backup power, so residents have someplace to go in the event of an outage. The Common House dining room has seating for 20, with an oversized kitchen, and there's a living room with a large TV. The Railroad Cottages offer some advantages of co-housing, and yet are not co-housing (homeowners don't buy into a lifestyle and there are fewer planned or common activities).

The trail traverses 45 miles of Northern Virginia, through historic settlements like Falls Church and Leesburg, high-tech centers like Reston, conventional suburbs, and countryside. Along the way, restaurants, inns, and access to shopping areas within walking distance of the trail are plentiful—except in rural areas. The cottages are within walking distance of public transit, a grocery, drug store, numerous restaurants, and other retail and service businesses.



“I’ve walked now more than I’ve ever walked in my life,” one resident told *Common Ground*, a magazine for community associations. “I walk to the barber, I walk to the post office, I walk to the Giant grocery store. And as far as the amenities of the local area, the recreational opportunities are phenomenal.”



Site within the five-minute walk shed of the retail core of Falls Church. Source: City of Falls Church

The Railroad Cottages show how rail-to-trails can be an armature for residential development in a broad sense, providing non-automotive connectivity that is lacking in many metro areas. This involves not only the ability to go out your front door and ride or walk on a round trip of 90 miles, but also practical access to live, work, and play destinations.

Approved by the city in 2017, the development was completed in 2019, not long before the pandemic. Residents used the common facilities to shelter in place and to support one another.

The Railroad Cottages were a test case in Falls Church for cottage court development, which the city had not tried before. Due to fears of some residents nearby, the city

imposed restrictions—this housing type was reserved for those 55 and older, could only be built within 500 feet of a revitalization zone, and needed a site of at least an acre, for example. In light of the success of the project, city leaders are considering loosening all of these restrictions on future cottage courts.

Native plantings and landscaping around the site. Source: City of Falls Church



Like most similar developments, parking is clustered together. In this case, there is a carport for 10 cars, plus three spaces that are uncovered. The carport has electric car charging stations.

Each cottage is about 1,500 square feet, but is only 1.5 stories high (part of the second floor is under roof), with the goal of making the units unobtrusive. The cottages are located on an infill site, which means that they had to fit into the neighborhood context.

The design incorporates a declension of public to private space. The front porches are



closely connected to the central walkway through the court. The most public parts of the interiors, like the kitchens, are in the front of the houses, and rooms requiring more privacy are located in the back. Each cottage includes a private



rear patio or deck that is not visible to neighbors. Residents have space for a backyard garden.

The patio by the Common House. Source: City of Falls Church

The cottages have been recognized by many planning and development organizations. According to APA (American Planning Association) Virginia, the Cottages “incorporate numerous planning best practices, especially with respect to sustainability and resiliency. Climate change mitigation efforts are prevalent, including photovoltaic solar cells on the roof of the carport and geothermal heating for renewable energy; building upgrades to reduce harmful chemical emissions; pervious pavers and native plants for more natural stormwater management; and universal design elements for greater accessibility for all residents and guests.” The site uses little pavement, and what is there is permeable.

Best of all, the location is within a short walk of the urban core. The city told CNU: “this community allows people to reap the walkable benefits of city living while enjoying the comfort and connection of a cottage community.”

Bwdarchitects designed the cottages, the developer is Robert Young, and a local real estate agent, Theresa Sullivan Twiford, spearheaded the idea.

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## **Pedestrian, 19, struck by vehicle, critically injured in Johnson City**

**Neal Simon**

July 14, 2 022

Binghamton Press & Sun-Bulletin

A Johnson City woman was critically injured Wednesday when she was struck by a vehicle in the village.

Police responded at about 2:10 p.m. to Baldwin Street between Floral and Grand avenues.

Johnson City Police said a preliminary investigation indicates the 19-year-old entered the roadway on Baldwin Street directly in front of a moving vehicle.

The Johnson City Fire Department and the Union Volunteer treated the woman at the scene. She was taken to UHS Wilson Hospital where she was listed in critical but stable condition Thursday, police said.



Johnson City officers and detectives interviewed numerous individuals who were present during the incident and collected video evidence from the area. The New York State Police accident reconstruction unit was also called in to assist.

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It's been a year since Broome County started cracking down on people who drive past stopped school buses by catching the dangerous offenders on film. It appears, however, that people still just don't 'get it.'

County officials announced there have been over three-thousand violations since the launch of the program last summer in spite of the \$250 fine for a first offense and the increased chances of getting caught with the equipping of buses with cameras on their swing-out stop signs.

School buses throughout Broome County have recorded three-thousand, thirty vehicles illegally passing buses that have been stopped to pick up or discharge passengers and that have their lights flashing and the stop arm deployed.

The final month of the school year was better than some but not the best with 297 drivers illegally passing buses.

The worst month of the program so far has been May with 439 motorists breaking the law and putting children's lives in danger.

At the start of the school year last September, there were the fewest violations record at 203. There were 395 offenders caught last December in spite of a shortened schedule of classes for the month due to the holidays and 362 violators were caught in April, the third worst month.

Following the initial \$250r fine issued to drivers via mail, the second and third violations in an 18-month period are \$275 and \$300 respectively.

County Executive Jason Garnar says if there is an upside to the number of violators recorded, it is that the program is catching and fining those drivers.

For more information on the program go to [www.gobroomecounty.com/e911/Stop-Arm](http://www.gobroomecounty.com/e911/Stop-Arm)



## DOWNTOWN BINGHAMTON CELEBRATES COMPLETION OF MASSIVE MURAL



Bob Joseph | Published: July 21, 2022

Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News

The finishing touches are being applied to a five-story mural on a building in the heart of downtown Binghamton.

Danae Brissonnet of Quebec and her mother Daphne have been working on the giant public art project for the past three weeks.

Brissonnet used a wide array of colors of paint she mixed specifically for the Binghamton project.





Daphne Brissonnet was working on a mural from a lift high above State Street on July 21, 2022. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

The 3,500-square-foot mural covers the south side of the building that is home to the Rathskeller pub.

According to a news release issued by Broome County government, building owner Chrissy Pasquale-Urso has been enthusiastic about the project. She said she "thought Danae's whimsical and colorful aesthetic would be the perfect fit for our wall that welcomes residents and visitors to the downtown area."



The nearly-completed mural at 92 State Street on July 21, 2022. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

A mural dedication to celebrate the project is scheduled for Friday at 2:30 p.m.

Brissonnet said she and her mom plan to return to Canada after they complete the Binghamton project. She said she expects to travel to the Detroit area next month to work a community mural there.

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In a press release on Tuesday, City of Binghamton Mayor Jared Kraham announced that the City has begun a pilot program to build stronger and more sustainable sidewalks using recycled glass manufactured by KLA W Industries.

KLA W Industries, which won the Binghamton Business Plan Competition earlier this year, was founded by Binghamton High School and Chenango Forks High School graduates. In addition to winning the Binghamton Business Plan Competition, KLA W Industries has also won the MIT Solve Youth Innovation Challenge and the Heartland Competition, landing the company a \$100,000 prize for their win.

They use a patent-pending process to turn recycled glass into a replacement for cement in concrete mixes that is both stronger than the cement alone and better for the environment. They call the product "Pantheon," and the process reduces cement needed in typical mixes by 20 percent. It's estimated that the 20% reduction in cement needs reduces the amount of carbon dioxide used by 1,000 pounds per truckload.

Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer Jacob Kumpon stated "These projects are proof of the City's commitment to supporting local companies and deploying cost-effective, sustainable materials."

Mayor Kraham stated "Since it's founding in 2019, KLA W Industries has made waves across the country with its innovative cement replacement product that's stronger and better for the environment. By switching to KLA W's product for municipal curb and sidewalk projects, we're reducing the City's carbon footprint and supporting a growing East Side business."

According to the press release, curb and sidewalk upgrades in the City will cost an estimated \$1.7 million this year, but Mayor Kraham assures residents that switching to KLA Industries to perform those upgrades comes at no cost to the City.

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The warm weather months are heaven for those of us who love to ride bicycles, although some die-hards here in the northeast part of the country ride their bike through all four seasons through any type of weather event, including snowstorms. That's a bit extreme in my opinion, but what do I know?

Maybe it's just me, but it seems that there are more and more people riding bicycles these days. I pass by many on my way to work and back or wherever I'm traveling to in the Southern Tier of New York. I make sure I'm aware of where they are and give the bike rider enough room when passing.

And while many follow the rules of the road, there are still some who do not. One question I had, was when a bike rider comes to a red light, do they have to stop and remain stopped the same as a motor vehicle until the light turns red? And how about stop signs? What are the rules there?

I've noticed several bike riders briefly slowing down for a red light or a stop sign, and then passing through. So, I looked up the rules of the road for bicycles in New York State, and this is what I found.

According to the [New York State Department of Transportation](#), "Bicyclists must obey all traffic lights and signs and must signal for turns whether riding on a roadway, a bike lane or shared-use pathway with pedestrians." That means you can't just briefly stop at a red light



and then proceed on. And bicyclists can be issued traffic tickets for breaking the rules of the road laws.

Another thing to keep in mind when you are bicycling on a public roadway in New York State - anyone 14 or younger must wear a bike helmet. Some communities in New York have additional requirements such as wearing helmets regardless of age.

Also, bicycles are not allowed on interstate highways and expressways, and some communities do not allow a bicycle to be ridden on a sidewalk. Check with your local municipality for their rules. As for the right of way, just like a motor vehicle, pedestrians have the right of way over a bicyclist.

Oh yea, the biggie as far as I'm concerned - always ride on the right side of the road with traffic. So many times I see bike riders traveling against traffic. Another thing to remember - it's illegal to use earphones while riding a bike on a public right-of-way. Check out some local rules from the [Visit Binghamton website](#).

For a complete FAQ sheet on bicycle laws in New York State, visit the [NYS DOT website](#).

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## Cognitive decline can be avoided with simple everyday exercises, new study suggests

By Phillip Nieto

Published August 03, 2022

[Fox News](#)

While scientists have always recommended physical activity to keep the brain healthy, research now shows regular stretching and motion exercises can help older people with mild memory troubles.

Researchers at the Wake Forest University School of Medicine recruited 300 adults with mild cognitive decline to do aerobic and stretching-and-balance exercises. The groups were split up based on those two exercises, twice a week with a personal trainer, and trained two additional times a week on their own over a 12-month period.

The study was presented on Tuesday at the 2022 Alzheimer's Association International Conference in San Diego, California. All the participants had some form of mild cognitive impairment, one of the first stages of dementia, and lived sedentary lifestyles.

Overall, both groups completed 31,000 exercise sessions, claimed the study's author, Laura Baker. At the end of the experiment, none of the group members had experienced cognitive decline, while a control group with similar participants with mild cognitive impairment who did not work out did decline.



The study shows that even simple exercises can slow cognitive decline for senior citizens in the early stages of dementia. (iStock)

Baker told the Associated Press the results from the study indicate "this is doable for

everybody," especially for seniors who have a limited physical exercise routine. Moreover, she recommends that exercise "needs to be part of the prevention strategies" for elderly citizens already at risk.

Maria Carrillo, the chief scientist at the Alzheimer's Association, told the AP that research in the past has indicated daily physical activity has helped reduce inflammation in the brain and increase the amount of blood flowing to it.

Baker also noted that having a social group or a network of support was crucial for the elder participants.

Participants were routinely given support while being active at their YMCA facilities, and regular video call sessions were set up after Covid-19 shut down the gyms, according to the Associated Press.

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