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#### **BEETLE BAILEY Mort Walker**

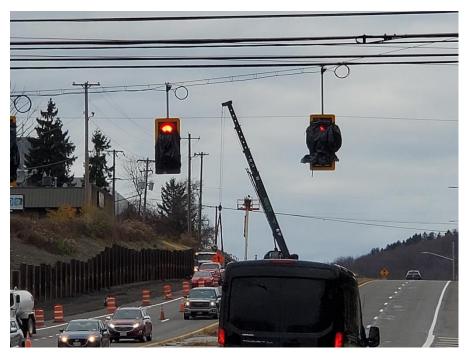




Another traffic signal system is being added to the heavily traveled Vestal Parkway corridor.

Electronic message signs indicate the new signals at the intersection with Plaza Drive are scheduled to go into operation on Tuesday.

A state Department of Transportation spokesperson did not know what time the signals would be activated.



A red light was displayed briefly as a new signal was tested on the Vestal Parkway on November 14, 2022. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

The busy intersection is being signalized as part of the \$25 million Route 434 Greenway project between the Binghamton University campus and downtown Binghamton.

Pedestrian signals will help people using the Greenway cross Plaza Drive. A striped crosswalk has been added at the intersection.

The WICZ-TV studios and the Residence Inn are located west of Plaza Drive. University Plaza with dozens of businesses and hundreds of student apartments is located east of Plaza Drive.

Plaza Drive looking north to the intersection with the Vestal Parkway. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

During the day, westbound motorists on the Parkway wishing to make a left turn onto Plaza Drive will wait until a green arrow signal is displayed.

A DOT study indicated the signals at the intersection could result in a 15 to 20 second delay during busy periods for eastbound



drivers. The report indicated additional stops and queuing could increase the potential for rear-end crashes for eastbound motorists approaching Plaza Drive.

Workers for Binghamton Road Electric were working on the new signals at the intersection Monday afternoon.

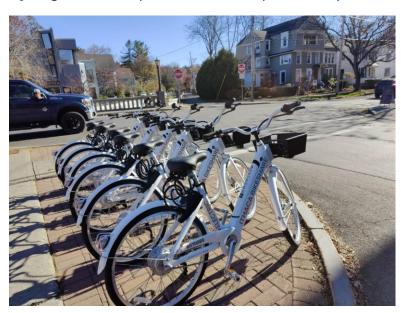


Binghamton Road Electric workers were testing signals on November 14, 2022. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)



# Bike sharing returns to Ithaca

By Megan Zerez, Report for America corps member | November 13, 2022



#### MORE

New electric bicycles were purchased with a \$50,000 grant from the City of Ithaca. (Megan Zerez/WSKG)

New electric rental bicycles hit street corners in Ithaca last week.

It's part of a local electric bikeshare program operated by Center for Community Transportation, or CCT, an Ithaca based non-profit.

The bikes can be unlocked via a mobile app called Ithaca Bike Share. It costs a dollar to unlock a

bicycle and 15 cents per minute to ride. Users can also purchase a day pass for \$20.

The Ithaca Common Council voted unanimously to <u>allow a bike-share program to operate</u> in the city for the first time since March 2020.

CCT agreed to cover all maintenance and operation costs for the program. The non-profit is also responsible if rental bikes block pedestrian or car traffic in the city.

In a separate agreement, the city provided \$50,000 to the non-profit to help purchase the first bicycles for the fleet.

For now, the bikes can only be used within city limits. Ithaca College, which is in the town of Ithaca, has not yet reached an agreement with CCT to allow the bikes on-campus, according to the student newspaper The Ithacan.

Bike rental company Lime Bike previously offered a bike-share program in Ithaca. The company pulled up stakes from the city in 2020, citing pandemic concerns.



# **Center for Community Transportation Launches New Ithaca Bikeshare**

Always free. Always local.

by **Community Announcements** November 11, 2022



Ithaca Bikeshare announces new fleets of dockless e-bikes around Ithaca. (Photo by Casey Martin)

The Center for Community
Transportation (CCT) today
announced it will launch Ithaca's first
non-profit, community-owned and
operated bikeshare on Wednesday
11/9, releasing the first set of
dockless e-bikes at locations
throughout the City. The launch
marks the much-anticipated return of
bikeshare following the departure of
the popular Lime bikeshare in early
2020, which left Ithaca due to
industry trends and the pandemic.

Plans to launch the new Ithaca Bikeshare were finalized with last Wednesday night's unanimous Common Council vote to approve the City's memorandum of understanding with CCT.

The bikes, purchased from Drop Mobility, are class 1 pedal-assist electric bikes with a maximum assist speed of 16 mph, and can be unlocked using the Ithaca Bikeshare app downloaded from the Apple Store, the Play Store or the ithacabikeshare.org website. Pricing is designed to be affordable with several different plan options, including monthly and annual memberships, and a reduced rate is available through the GO ITHACA Easy Access program. The dockless e-bikes may be parked in the public right of way in the treelawn/furniture zone – between sidewalk and curb – and at the ends of (but not in) bike racks. The program will also offer a \$1 credit to encourage people to return the bikes to selected hub locations, which will be visible on the app at the end of their ride.

"A lot of time and energy has gone into making Ithaca Bikeshare possible," said Jeff Goodmark, CCT's Director of Micromobility. "I want to thank everyone for their part in making it happen. I am personally excited for the return of bikeshare as this program brings much needed affordable, alternative, and sustainable transportation for everyone to use.

Ithaca is focusing on the Green New Deal and carbon reductions across the board and Ithaca Bikeshare ties into this idea perfectly." Acting City of Ithaca Mayor Laura Lewis said: "It's our hope and intention that bikeshare will add another safe and affordable multi-modal transportation option for residents, reduce traffic congestion, and maximize carbon-free mobility. I'm very pleased the City has been able to work with CCT to bring back this important transportation option."

"This program supports downtown and the city as a whole in being an economically vibrant place where everyone can better access employment, recreation, and business opportunities without always having to rely on a car," said Tom Knipe, Director of Economic Development for the City of Ithaca. "Thank you to CCT for bringing bike share back to Ithaca."

"The Long-Range Plan of the Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council (ITCTC) recognizes the need to offer multiple transportation options to the community in order to reduce car dependency and its associated environmental, financial and safety costs", said Fernando de Aragon, Executive Director ITCTC. "Well over 50% of all trips in the Ithaca area are less than two miles in length. Bicycling has great potential to benefit residents and visitors, and Ithaca Bikeshare will bring those benefits home."

"GO ITHACA is excited for the long-awaited return of bikeshare to our community. Our members have been asking us for a bikeshare program since the departure of Lime Bike, and we are so glad that we can now offer them a benefit from a program that will be community-led and community-focused. We will now be able to offer more options to help our members get around Ithaca in a sustainable and affordable way. We are thrilled to build our partnership with Ithaca Bikeshare and bring its benefits to our members", said Jane Bowman-Trently, Director of GOIthaca.

"We wholeheartedly support Ithaca Bikeshare as an important piece of the puzzle of making biking for transportation accessible to people of all ages, abilities and income levels. We look forward to partnering with this program and with

the City on other puzzle pieces, such as protected roadway infrastructure for bicycling," said Margaret Johnson, Director of Bike Walk Tompkins.

The City of Ithaca has allocated \$50,000 from its 2022 American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) funding for the purchase of bikeshare bikes. Additionally, \$140,000 has already been raised from private sources to make this launch possible. CCT is

seeking to fundraise a total of \$750,000 through a mix of public, private, and philanthropic contributions to buy a total of 350 bikes and initial equipment, to serve most of the City of Ithaca. Donations supplement user-based revenues and

support operations and outreach. CCT plans to increase the size of the bikeshare fleet towards a fuller launch in spring of 2023.

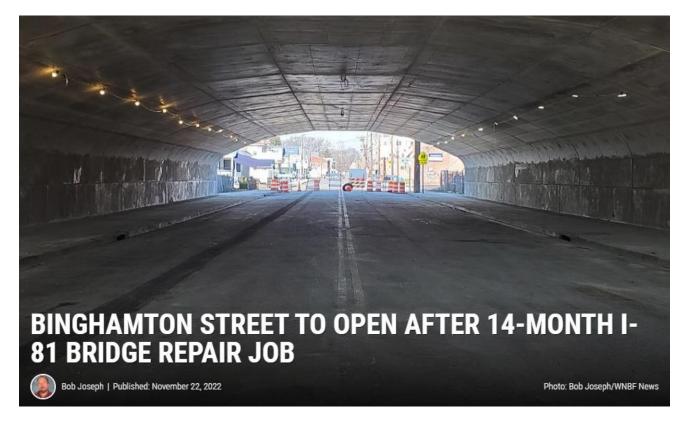
Meanwhile, a small number of bikeshare bikes will remain available throughout the winter. Smaller individual donations from community members are welcome. To donate to Ithaca Bikeshare, click here: <a href="https://donorbox.org/community-bike-share">https://donorbox.org/community-bike-share</a>.

The Center for Community Transportation (CCT) is a nonprofit whose vision is to achieve "a community where travel by shared and active transportation is healthy, safe, affordable, and convenient for all." CCT works with local transportation

providers, educators, planners, decision-makers, advocates, and users to fulfill its mission of enhancing transportation access in the community while reducing transportation's negative environmental and economic impacts. CCT's mission-

focused services and activities include Ithaca Carshare, Bike Walk Tompkins (and its signature program StreetsAlive! Ithaca), Backup Ride Home, and now Ithaca Bikeshare.

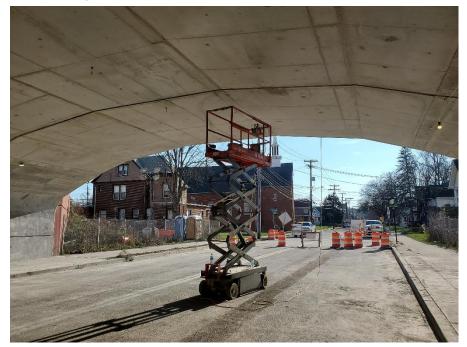
More information about Ithaca Bikeshare can be found by downloading the Ithaca Bikeshare app or visiting the website at <a href="https://ithacabikeshare.org">https://ithacabikeshare.org</a>.



State transportation department officials have given the green light for vehicular traffic to resume using Chenango Street on Binghamton's North Side.

A detour has been in place for more than 14 months as a contractor worked on a project designed to keep a new Interstate 81 bridge from sinking any further.

A crew from the state of Maine was heading to the site Tuesday afternoon to apply new striping to the road surface before it reopens. The street should be back in operation Wednesday.



One piece of equipment remained under the Interstate 81 on November 22, 2022. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

Two-way traffic will be permitted under what's called the Chenango Arch until Monday. Then temporary signals are expected to be used on both sides of the bridge to allow single lane operation in alternating directions.

Sandblasting is planned for next week. Some additional work also may be performed before operations are halted for the season.

Construction crews are to return to Chenango Street in the spring to complete the repair project.

Cranes lowered concrete sections into place for an I-81 bridge over Chenango Street in 2013. (Photo: NYSDOT)

The bridge was constructed using precast concrete sections in 2013. Problems with the span were observed shortly after it was built.

The state Department of Transportation began closely monitoring the abnormal sinking of the bridge.



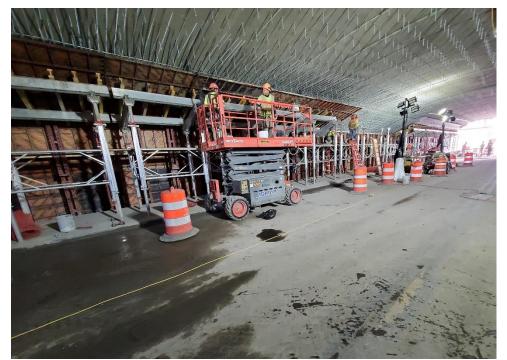


State DOT workers on Chenango Street on August 5, 2021. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

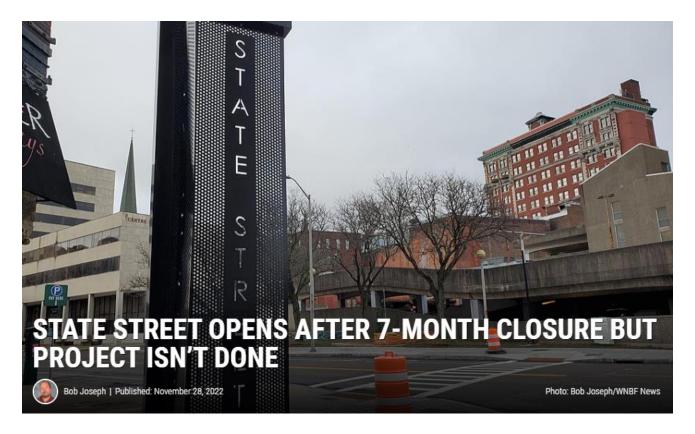
Officials initially expected the repair work would be completed in about three months. They said the first phase of the project cost about \$3.5 million.

The original effort to address the problem was unsuccessful, so additional concrete

pours were ordered. The DOT has not released a final cost estimate for the job.



Repair work beneath I-81 on Binghamton's North Side on January 4, 2022. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)



Business operators along a downtown street that had been closed most of this year for a reconstruction project are pleased the work has wrapped up for the season.

After struggling to stay open for the past several months, they are concerned that the job to remake State Street between Henry and Lewis streets has not been completed.

State Street was closed to traffic for more than seven months for the \$3.9 million makeover.



Inside Old Barn Market on State Street on November 22, 2022. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

Karen and Jeff Allen, the owners of Old Barn Market at 214 State Street, said "it's been a struggle" to stay in business since construction work started last April.

They managed to do some "restructuring" to remain open when customers found it difficult to get to the business while the

street was ripped up. They aren't looking forward to a new round of disruptions when the project resumes next spring.

A base coat of asphalt was applied to State Street between Henry and Lewis about two weeks ago. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

Pete Konstantakos, a co-owner of Chris' Diner at 192 State Street, on Monday said he's glad the roadway has "finally" reopened. He said the construction work had a big impact on the small restaurant which has operated downtown since 1996.



Konstantakos is hoping the impact on the business when the street project resumes is minimal. He said "I hope it's quick."



A "Downtown Arts" district sign on State Street near the Binghamton Federal Building. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

Mayor Jared Kraham has said the State Street reconstruction work was the first phases of a series of planned improvements tied to the development of a downtown arts and entertainment district.

Kraham said the final top coat of asphalt is expected to be

applied to State Street in April or June. In an email, he wrote: "Work shouldn't take more than a day or two to be complete."

The mayor said a few other items such as plantings or lighting installations also remain to be completed.



Traffic volume continues to increase as motorists learn Chenango Street on Binghamton's North Side has reopened after being shut down for bridge repairs for more than a year.

Chenango Street traffic was detoured between

Frederick and Bevier streets for 431 days for a project to stabilize the sinking Interstate 81 bridge.

The street reopened last Wednesday for two-way traffic over the holiday weekend. Portable signals were set up on either side of the bridge Monday to permit alternating one-way traffic while additional work is performed over the next couple of weeks.

Traffic signals in operation on Chenango Street near the I-81 bridge on November 29, 2022. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

Construction crews on Tuesday were sandblasting under the arch on the east side of the bridge.

Operations at the work site are expected to continue for a few more days before being suspended until next spring.



Cars, tractor-trailers and

delivery trucks were observed using Chenango Street Tuesday afternoon. Short traffic backups occurred while vehicles waited for a green light to proceed under the bridge.

An employee at Woodfern Florist at 501 Chenango Street said people were "very ecstatic" when they learned the detour was being scrapped after more than 14 months. She said things were getting back to normal at the shop. She said "it's great."

The state Department of Transportation had announced the planned bridge work was expected to take about three months to complete. But the job took longer because original concrete pours didn't meet specifications.

State officials have not revealed the final cost of the repair work. They previously said the initial attempt cost about \$3.5 million.

Why Dutch 'Bike Banks' are a Game Changer for Kids



IMAGE SOURCE, ANNA HOLLIGAN Image caption, Cycling is a way of life in the Netherlands

#### By Anna Holligan

BBC News, Amsterdam

### The Dutch like to say that children in the Netherlands learn to cycle before they can walk.

While it may be an urban myth, it is common to find oneself dodging toddlers careering around on two wheels.

In a society geared towards the humble bicycle, riding one is just part of everyday life.

So what happens when you can no longer afford this basic mode of transport? The cost-of-living crisis has resulted in a surge of families in the Netherlands turning to bike banks to ensure their children are not left behind.

The Royal Dutch Touring Club ANWB has created a scheme which transforms discarded second-hand bikes into cycle-path worthy condition.

Demand for refurbished bikes is soaring. Last year, one group in Amsterdam received more than 400 requests for help. So far this year it has already had 1,200 applications.

I visited one such project in a relatively underprivileged district of The Hague.

I arrived, by cargo bike, to the sound of sirens. Inge Veliscek from the ANWB explained there had been a ruckus about some of the volunteers smoking outside someone's home on the canal front.



IMAGE SOURCE, ANNA HOLLIGAN Image caption, Volunteers refurbish bikes at the bike bank project in Amsterdam

This bike bank project doubles as a social enterprise which offers teenagers who have dropped out of school the chance to learn a trade, alongside life lessons on punctuality and budgeting.

Some of the volunteers working alongside them are retired. "We are also giving them a new lease of life," Inge jokes, nudging an elderly gentleman, wielding a screwdriver, affectionately in the ribs.

"But seriously, they have vital skills which they can pass onto the next generation and while they are active and involved in the community, they also have a better quality of life, and it's all thanks to the bicycle!"

As we are talking a rainbow array of bikes is wheeled into a semicircle next to a mini course chalked out on the chewing gum encrusted pavement. Here, everyone who takes away one of these donated bikes is tested to ensure they are proficient enough to use it, without endangering themselves or others.

Melanie and her husband approach cautiously.



IMAGE SOURCE, ANNA HOLLIGAN Image caption, Sanne picked out a sky-blue bike on her visit to the bike bank

Poverty still holds some stigma in a country which expects people to, as one Dutch friend put it, "just shut up and get a job and don't complain".

The cost of living crisis has created more awareness of, and compassion for, those struggling to make ends meet as a result of forces beyond their control, including inflation and the tripling of energy bills.

According to the most recent figures, in September 2022, inflation in the Netherlands hit an all-time high of 14.5%, while energy prices shot up 200% compared with the same time last year. People are paying more for food, fuel, clothing, public transport and education.

Nevertheless, Melanie's eyes well up as she tells me she is ashamed she and her husband can't afford to provide for their three children.

IMAGE SOURCE, ANNA HOLLIGAN Image caption, Milan, with his father, tries out his new bike.

Her older two, Milan (9) and Sanne (11), are being ridiculed at school because they cannot do something all their classmates can.

Melanie tells me there's simply no wiggle room in their budget. "First it's the bills, then the groceries, then there is no money left for anything else."

Sanne has picked out a sky-blue bike. She's sitting, gripping the handlebars and grinning as the volunteers adjust the saddle so her feet can safely touch the ground.

Most Dutch children take it for granted that they will own a bike.

But watching Melanie and her kids made me realize cycling is a privilege and an increasing number of people are missing out.





#### IMAGE SOURCE.ANNA HOLLIGAN

Image caption, Emma (5) pronounces her new bike "pretty"

"It is a hidden poverty," Inge Veliscek seems to read my mind. "You just don't see the people who can't ride because they are stuck at home, they cannot participate in the same way as we expect everyone can."

And it's not just the financial poverty, not having a bicycle can result in multiple layers of disadvantage.

"In Holland, you need a bicycle to join in, to go to your football or to your friends or the school of your choice," says Inge.

"If you don't have a bicycle, these people here don't have the money to take the bus or tram. With a bike you can actually join in the world, which makes your world bigger."

Melanie tells me she wants her son to go to a better school, in a better neighbourhood, that's too far to walk to but if he learns to cycle it will be within his reach.

Conscious of the potential health benefits for the whole family, she assured me she and her husband would be encouraged to run round the park to make sure their children get up to speed.

"Pretty!" giggles five-year-old Emma, her face gleaming just like her new set of wheels. In a country where there are more bikes than people, Emma can now participate with pride.

"If you have a bicycle," smiles Inge, fixing a unicorn bell onto Emma's handlebars, "you have freedom. So at least they have a chance to have a better future, maybe better than their parents. We hope so anyway. And perhaps that's because of the bicycle".