

## **BMTS Article Digest June – July 2020**

BMTS Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee Members:

The following is a compilation of articles that may be of interest to BMTS Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee members. This and past digests can also be accessed in the Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee page of [www.bmtsonline.com](http://www.bmtsonline.com).

Scott

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# **CenterLines e-Newsletter Merges with the PBIC Messenger**

**The next generation PBIC Messenger will become a free monthly enewsletter produced by the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center News Brief**

*April 29, 2020*

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**CHAPEL HILL, NC** — [The Project for Public Spaces \(PPS\)](#) and the [Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center \(PBIC\)](#) at the University of North Carolina are pleased to announce that the CenterLines enewsletter will merge with the PBIC Messenger to create the next generation of the PBIC Messenger. PBIC will begin distributing this free monthly enewsletter in late May.

This new partnership between PBIC and CenterLines will engage its combined audience with relevant, timely information they can use to create more walkable and bicycle-friendly communities. "PBIC is committed to helping transportation professionals prioritize mobility, access, equity, and safety for pedestrians and bicyclists," says Laura Sandt, director of PBIC. "Our partnership with CenterLines will help scale our collective impact by diversifying and expanding the information we can offer at more frequent intervals and respond to practitioners' needs." "We have been proud to publish CenterLines for the past decade," says Nate Storrington, Director of Communications at Project for Public

Spaces, "And we are excited to see it take its next step with such a longstanding resource for the walking and bicycling community at PBIC."

After nearly 20 years and over 500 issues every other week, the CenterLines newsletter will continue the evolution begun by its founding editor, John Williams. Williams created CenterLines as the next generation of [Bicycle Forum](#), a print journal he also edited that the Bicycle Federation of America published from 1978 until the Internet Age brought enough crucial bicycling and walking resources online. CenterLines editor for over 10 years, Linda Tracy, will become part of the editorial team of the next generation of the PBIC Messenger.

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

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## Come out and play in Broome County

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



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

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

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

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BABY BLUES / Jerry Scott & Rick Kirkman



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## Bike group says Gov. Mario Cuomo Bridge bike path set to open Monday (June 13)

**Peter D. Kramer**

Rockland/Westchester Journal News

TARRYTOWN — You won't hear it from anyone official in Albany, but the bicycle advocacy group Bike Tarrytown said Friday that the long-delayed bike-pedestrian path on the Gov. Mario Cuomo Bridge is set to open Monday.

In an email blast, Dan Convissor, the group's director, said the news of the opening, "has been confirmed by multiple sources, including people in contact with the governor's office."

Jennifer Givner, spokeswoman for the New York State Thruway Authority, would not confirm the timeline.

The opening of the "shared-use path" — a bright-blue painted ribbon on the northern edge of the Rockland-bound span of the new bridge — is the final major piece of the \$3.98 billion bridge that was first begun in 2013 and replaced the Tappan Zee Bridge between Tarrytown and South Nyack.

Construction on the path, including six scenic outlooks or "belvederes," has continued despite the coronavirus outbreak that has put most construction projects on hold.

If the path opens on June 15 — which happens to be the 88th birthday of Mario Cuomo, the governor's father and the bridge's namesake — it will be nearly a year behind schedule. It was first expected last spring, then the second half of 2019, then pushed back indefinitely.

Still, the completion of the path gives Cuomo, who this week unveiled an \$8 billion upgrade at LaGuardia Airport, another opportunity to stand before cameras and declare victory over infrastructure headaches.

This week, crews put the finishing touches on the belvederes and installed the sculptures that will adorn the plazas at both ends of the 3.6-mile-long path, which promises to attract the curious daytripper and serious cyclists alike to the brand-new bridge.

Crews also re-lined the Rockland-bound roadway, putting in two breakdown lanes and a long-promised dedicated bus lane that could speed things for commuters using the Hudson Link bus service.



## Safety concerns

But Convissor, the bike advocate, has concerns.

He took issue with the state for not addressing safety issues on the path and along the bike corridor from South Broadway in Tarrytown across the bridge to a bike trail intersection in South Nyack.

He charges the state with "bungling the implementation" of the bike-pedestrian path.

Convissor said the state has set the path's hours, from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., which would be news.

The Thruway Authority has consistently refused to announce the hours, which are a hot topic in the South Nyack neighborhood where the path ends. South Nyack Mayor Bonnie Christian has fought plans to keep the path open around-the-clock.

Convissor disagrees.

"The state is closing the path from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.," Convissor wrote. "This is a national transportation facility. It should be open 24/7."

In addition to the operating hours, the Thruway, the bridge's owner, has also declined to announce policies regarding the use of e-bikes and scooters, the speed limit on the bridge, how state troopers will police the path, and if pets will be permitted.

Convissor also faulted state officials for creating unsafe crosswalks across Broadway in Tarrytown.

He said Thruway plans also "showed that people biking would be required to stop six times while riding across the bridge" and faulted the path's planners for placing "cyclists dismount" signs in South Nyack.

"These are an ADA violation because there are folks riding bikes/trikes who either can't walk or can't do so easily," he wrote.

It wasn't just the Thruway at which Convissor took aim.



"There are several dangerous drain grates in the area. The DOT is flatly refusing to fix them," he wrote.

Givner was contacted for a response to Convissor's claims, but did not respond.

Neither South Nyack Police Chief Dan Wilson nor Tarrytown Mayor Drew Fixell would confirm the Monday opening for the path, saying they had yet to hear from Albany on any ceremony or event planned. Tarrytown Police Chief John Barbelet did not return a call seeking comment.

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Also see this CBS News Report from Tarrytown, NY by clicking the embedded link in the following news report title:

[New Pedestrian-Bike Path Opens Monday Along Gov. Mario M. Cuomo Bridge](#)

CBS New York

### **New Pedestrian-Bike Path Opens Monday Along Gov. Mario M. Cuomo Bridge**

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## **Take Back the Streets From the Automobile**

With people hunkered down at home, cities should act quickly to find a better balance between cars and pedestrians and cyclists.

**By Justin Gillis and Heather Thompson**

Mr. Gillis, a former Times environmental reporter, is a contributing opinion writer. Ms. Thompson is a transportation planner.

June 20, 2020, 11:00 a.m. ET

Since cities came to exist 5,000 years ago, epidemics have shaped their fate.

Plagues weakened the Roman Empire and may have helped bring it down. The sewers that cleaned up a filthy London in the 19th century were built in direct response to a cholera outbreak. Many of

the great urban parks, including Central Park in New York City, were similarly planned after epidemics, to provide more open space.

Today, the coronavirus pandemic, in all its horror, opens the prospect of sweeping urban change. Cities suddenly see the possibility of correcting their greatest mistake of the 20th century, the surrender of too much public space to the automobile.

Cities need to seize this moment and move at lightning speed. We need to find a better balance between the cars on our streets and the bicyclists and pedestrians who have, for decades, been neglected and pushed to the margins.

All over the world, forward-looking cities large and small have already jumped into action. In Medellin, the innovative Colombian city nestled in the Andes, workers are seizing traffic lanes and slapping down yellow paint to signify a change: Cars have been evicted and the lanes are now reserved for bicyclists. In Kampala, the capital of Uganda, the authorities have closed streets, encouraged cycling, and sped the construction of new bike lanes and walkways. In European cities, “corona cycleways” have become the new norm.

In New York, the city has responded to community demands by pledging to set aside 100 miles of roads in the next few weeks for people on foot or bike, largely closing the streets to traffic during daylight hours. Letting people dine at tables in the middle of the road may help in the salvation of New York restaurants. Across the country in Oakland, Calif., the city has decided to close nearly 10 percent of its streets. And in the middle of the country, Kansas City, Mo., was one of the first to limit traffic and turn parking spots into mini-parks to extend restaurant service.

This is a golden moment for the movement known as tactical urbanism. More than 200 cities have already announced road closings in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Thousands of cities have yet to act in any bold way, however. If they do not, they may miss what could be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

The circumstances that give rise to this situation are lamentable, of course, just as were the cholera epidemics that altered cities in the 19th century. Bicycling is booming — bike stores are reporting record sales and order backlogs — as people look for easier means to get around and find streets with reduced traffic to be safer and more congenial. Cities are finding they can make bold moves to accommodate all the new bikers and walkers because the drivers who would normally object to street closings are hunkered down in their homes.

The suppression of automotive traffic is giving us a vivid illustration of the potential future benefits of cleaning up our cities. Air pollution, which kills millions of people every year, is down nearly everywhere. In Mexico City, measurements of the smallest, deadliest particles have fallen by about half. The Indian government has publicly reported that several pollution measures are down as much as 70 percent in New Delhi; in some cities, Indian children are able to see distant mountains for the first time in their lives.

Most of the road closures announced so far have been billed as temporary, meant to last until the pandemic loosens its grip. The willingness of drivers to leave their cars parked is certainly not going to last. What can cities do to make sure they hold on to the recent gains as the economy reopens?

To answer that, we return to a phrase we used earlier: tactical urbanism. For the last couple of decades, this movement has been seizing moments of opportunity to improve urban life.

Sometimes a city government is the instigator, as in 2009, when New York closed several blocks of Broadway, one of the busiest streets in the city, to traffic. Sometimes citizens employ guerrilla tactics — converting a vacant lot into a miniature park or garden, for instance, or throwing up orange traffic cones in the middle of the night to create a bike lane.

The basic idea is to show people the benefits of a change, however temporary, in order to shift the political dynamic in favor of a more permanent alteration. You can bet that parents whose bored children are suddenly able to ride their bikes in the Oakland streets are seeing this whole set of issues with new eyes.

When Broadway was closed, thousands of New Yorkers flooded the street, delightedly plopping down in cheap lawn chairs the city had set out on the pavement. From that moment, the vision of a Broadway for people took hold, and the blocks of Broadway through Times Square have been closed to traffic for a decade.

Similarly, tactical urbanist projects all over the world have led to closed streets, new parks and many other amenities. A large majority of these projects entail reclaiming public space from the automobile. A third or more of the space in any city is devoted to streets, and in the middle of the last century, much of that was converted to traffic lanes and free parking spaces.

Today, we have been thrust into perhaps the greatest opportunity ever for tactical urbanism. With traffic missing from the streets, people are sensing how completely cars dominate them in normal times, endangering the lives of the pedestrians and cyclists squeezed into tiny strips along the margins. This situation was never sensible or moral, but until now, fixing it was politically impossible in many cities.

A viral twist of fate has given us a chance to alter the balance, creating streets that work for everyone. Cities that were thinking about lane changes or street closures before the pandemic should move quickly to try them out, and the most popular should be made permanent. Government leaders must pay particular attention to poor neighborhoods, which tend to be forgotten but whose people have just as much right to bike and walk as anyone else. Those neighborhoods are often deprived of parks or sports fields, so a street with few or no cars can be a godsend for children.

In the end, reclaiming streets will not be enough to lock in improved air quality and other benefits. Every city needs a comprehensive program of car control. Some, like London, are already banning the most polluting vehicles, and a few have gone so far as to declare they will no longer allow fuel-burning engines after 2030 or 2035. In those towns, you will drive an electric car if you drive at all.

Cities need to follow the lead of London, Singapore and more recently New York in enacting stiff congestion charges that discourage unnecessary driving, with the money plowed into mass transit, as well as more protected lanes for walking and cycling.



Cities need to be designed for the well-being and health of people, not for cars. We don't have time to wait. Now is the moment for cities to imagine that future and start willing it into being.

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### Updated Report Cards Assess Each State's Policy Supports for Walking, Biking, and Active Kids and Communities

A new report out from the Safe Routes Partnership and the YMCA of the USA, [\*Making Strides: 2020 State Report Cards on Support for Walking, Bicycling, and Active Kids and Communities\*](#), analyzes state policy in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia to provide a snapshot of each state's support for walking, biking, and physical activity. The report cards were generated by evaluating each state across a total of 28 indicator areas spanning four core topic areas: Complete Streets and Active Transportation Policy and Planning; Federal and State Active Transportation Funding; Safe Routes to School Funding and Supportive Practices; and Active Neighborhoods and Schools. In each of these topic areas, states have the opportunity to play a significant role—through policies, funding, and other support—in increasing the number of youth and adults walking, bicycling, and being physically active.





