



Pedaling for a better future

Bikeatoga, Inc
P.O. Box 670
Saratoga Springs, NY, 12866

Info@Bikeatoga.org (518) 290-0746

April 29, 2026

Mayor John Safford
Commissioner JoAnne Kiernan
Commissioner Jessica Troisi
Commissioner Tim Coll
Commissioner BK Keramati
Supervisor Sarah Burger
Supervisor Minita Sanghvi
City Hall
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

Mayor, Council members and Supervisors:

We write on behalf of Bikeatoga to express our frustration and disappointment with the decision to pave Henry Street and Union Avenue without considering the already existing plans for crosswalks and bike lanes on these important Complete Streets connections.

The city has spent tens of thousands of dollars studying, surveying, and engineering solutions for these two roadways. The Council has received a tremendous amount of public input at public hearings, presentations and workshops. The final recommendations of our engineering consultants have been posted on the city's website for years. And as announced in the last election cycle by the Commissioner of Public Works, we have [\\$5 million dollars in unexpended state funds](#) that can be used for this work. The failure to incorporate already designed Complete Streets and ADA upgrades into infrastructure as we re-pave these streets is baffling, disheartening and inconsistent with important city goals.

This missed opportunity is emblematic of a much larger problem. Despite numerous Council votes over years affirming the city's desire to create a truly walkable and bikeable city, the Council has failed to develop a coordinated, long-range plan across multiple city departments to achieve that goal in a reasonable time. Although the city's 2020 Natural Resources Inventory explicitly recommended that the city "build Complete Streets planning into interdepartmental

discussion before paving and striping each year,” there is nothing resembling that kind of sustained, professional project management of our Complete Streets plan.

We are asking that the City Council address this problem by creating a City Hall Complete Streets working group that includes staff from all relevant city departments and representatives of the Complete Streets Advisory Board. The working group should meet regularly throughout the year to evaluate pedestrian and bicycle improvements recommended by the CSAB, the School District, Saratoga County DPW, and the Capital District Transportation Council. The group should cross-reference paving and other infrastructure projects contemplated by Public Works, consider potential state, federal and local funding sources, make periodic reports to the Council and present the Council with a plan during budget season outlining Complete Streets projects that will be completed in the following year. The group would be an important resource for current and future city council members to facilitate incorporating previously approved city plans into their department’s projects.

Unlike many of the challenges that face the Council, this is not a matter of money. Again, as former DPW Commissioner Chuck Marshall announced last fall, [the city has \\$5 million dollars in unexpended state funds](#) available for paving projects. Eligible features include cold asphalt overlays, full-depth reclamation, structural, shoulder, and drainage improvements, along with sidewalks, bike lanes, and ADA-compliant upgrades. This is currently existing funding, and it is troubling that we’ve failed to utilize those funds to complete projects that have languished for such a long time.

Making Saratoga walkable and bikeable has been city policy for 15 years.

Saratoga Springs has been committed to making our city safe and enjoyable for pedestrians and cyclists for fifteen years. Our 2011 [Climate Smart Resolution](#) called for promoting “bikeable and walkable communities.” The city’s first [Complete Streets Policy](#) was passed in 2012. In 2014, the city commissioned the [Saratoga Greenbelt Trail](#) feasibility study.

The city has repeatedly reaffirmed its commitment to investing in bike and pedestrian infrastructure. The 2016 [Complete Streets Plan](#), which was updated in [2022](#), contains site-specific recommendations for sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes throughout the city. And expanding our network of sidewalks and bike lanes is an important component of our 2019 [Recreation Master Plan](#) (Goal 3, p6:

“expand and enhance Saratoga Springs’ pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure”), our 2020 [Natural Resources Inventory](#) (Climate Mitigation Strategies, p 43-44: “promote and enhance Complete Streets implementation and build Complete Streets planning into interdepartmental discussion before paving and striping each year”), our 2023 [Open Space Plan](#) (Table 6: Priority Improvements: “accelerate work on a complete re-striping of all priority streets identified in the Complete Streets Plan”) and our 2025 [Municipal Climate Action Plan](#) (Strategy 13: “adequately fund a multi-year plan to build a connected bike lane network as envisioned in the Complete Streets Plan with advice on priorities from the Complete Streets Advisory Board”).

Despite this consistent endorsement of Complete Streets at the policy level, implementation on the ground has been distressingly slow. The city has not built new bike infrastructure since the completion of the Downtown Connector in 2022. And while we applaud the recent award of a contract to engineer and construct the Crescent Avenue Connector in 2027, that project is yet another example of the problem. The [Crescent Avenue Connector feasibility study](#) was completed eight years ago, in October 2018. Congressman Paul Tonko secured [\\$300,000 in federal funding](#) for that three years ago, in April 2023. One new bike lane every five years is woefully inadequate to meet the city’s repeatedly stated Complete Streets goals.

The expertise of the Complete Streets Advisory Board is vastly underutilized.

The city is privileged to have an active and extremely talented [Complete Streets Advisory Board](#). These are your volunteer appointees, and you have wisely chosen individuals with deep ties to our community and professional expertise in planning, engineering and transportation infrastructure. We have personally observed the hard work they do in devising detailed Complete Streets priority lists, carefully balancing costs and benefits, and providing a useful roadmap for implementation.

In September 2024, CSAB made a presentation to the City Council with a [“work plan” for 2025](#). Both Henry Street and Union Avenue were included in the “highest priority projects to complete ... by the end of 2025.” Last year, CSAB created a spreadsheet listing priority projects and cost estimates that was shared multiple times inside City Hall. Both Henry Street and Union Avenue were included as PRIORITY 1 projects.

Yet in conversations with Commissioners and staffers in City Hall, we find little awareness that these priority recommendations exist and no evidence that, outside the Planning Department, anyone in city government has tried to implement them in a systematic, project management kind of way.

We regularly attend CSAB meetings and we're pleased to see that, in what is best described as a mix of civic duty and Sisyphean optimism, they are now in the process of updating their priority list for 2026. We urge the Council to create a City Hall Complete Streets working group that can act on their proposals.

A functional, connected bike lane network is key.

Among the reasons we are dismayed about the failure to implement Complete Streets improvements to Henry Street and Union Avenue while we are paving and re-stripping them is that both streets are critical segments of our city's plan for connected bike network. Just as with roadways and sidewalks, a bike lane is only useful as far as it will take you. A functional, connected bike lane network is key.

[A recent study](#) found that building a connected bike lane network was 4.6 times more likely to increase ridership growth than any individual bike lane installation. A patchwork of infrastructure with gaps discourages potential cyclists – particularly less confident riders – who perceive the lack of continuous, safe routes as a barrier to riding and commuting.

At Bikeatoga we see a broad cross-section of our community. Our bike workshop refurbished 777 used bikes in 2025 and got them back out to anyone who needs one on a “pay what you can” basis. We see more and more members of our local workforce who use bikes to get to work and economically stressed neighbors who rely on bikes as primary or secondary transportation. We see parents who want their teenagers to be able to ride bikes safely to the library, to school, and to the park. And we see Saratogians who want to reduce their carbon emissions by riding bikes for short trips around town instead of taking the car. All these groups need a [functional, connected network](#) of bike lanes that takes them from where they live to where they want to go.

Unfortunately, we have a long way to go. PeopleForBikes uses online traffic and mapping tools to analyze bike networks in cities around the country and around the world. [Saratoga Springs' network rating](#) is in the bottom 10th percentile of the 2900 U.S. cities they rated. We rank 66th among New York state communities,

scoring lower than New Paltz, Hudson, Cooperstown, Catskill, Kingston, Ithaca, Saugerties, Poughkeepsie, Albany, Buffalo or Troy.

Just four months ago, the Council endorsed creation of a connected bike lane network when you adopted the Municipal Climate Action Plan. Strategy 13 of that plan recommends that the city “fund a multi-year plan to build a connected bike lane network as envisioned in the Complete Streets Plan with advice on priorities from the Complete Streets Advisory Board.”

We support these goals and we believe a City Hall Complete Streets working group is the best way to move forward on these objectives.

Revisit Henry St and Union Ave and create a Complete Streets working group.

We recognize that at this point it is no longer feasible to add Complete Streets improvements to Henry St. and Union Avenue when they are repaved in the next few weeks. That’s an unfortunate missed opportunity that raises the worrisome possibility that adding bike and pedestrian infrastructure on those streets will not be considered again until they are repaved many years from now. **We cannot and should not wait that long.**

We call on the Departments of Public Safety and Public Works to revisit implementation of the Complete Streets plans now and to go back to Henry St and Union Ave as soon as possible.

It should not be particularly burdensome to add Complete Streets improvements to Henry St. later this year. The cycling improvements on Henry St. are largely thermoplastic striping and require only a survey to be implemented. The city did a very successful [Henry Street pilot](#) project in 2018, when Tina was in City Hall, and the consultants then recommended a [two-way cycle track](#) along the east side of Henry. Recognizing that outdoor dining now occupies the east side of the street during summer months, the 2025 [Vision Zero](#) recommended the same two-way bike lane on the west side of the street.

The city has a letter from the owner of the Henry Street Taproom supporting the plan – we’ve attached it here for those who haven’t seen it. We are advised that the Planning Board has been talking with developers in the area about securing funds to defray the cost, but even if that is not the case, it is not an expensive

proposition and it can be easily funded from the \$5 million dollars in state money we have available.

We note that on Union Avenue, the final Consulting Engineer's plan was the product of extensive public input and, as a result, maintains two lanes of car travel in each direction and does not remove street parking. There is near universal neighborhood support for the proposed high-quality crosswalks and ADA compliant curb ramps. The additional striping for the bike lanes is a relatively small part of the overall plan, and we are aware of Union Avenue homeowners who are ready to speak out in support. You have stamped engineering plans for this design in City Hall.

As we stated at the outset, we believe the sporadic and slow-paced implementation of our Complete Streets plan requires a new approach. We again urge the Council to create an inter-department working group to collaborate with the Complete Streets Advisory Board and formalize long-range plans on an annual basis to create the walkable and bikeable community that the City Council has long endorsed.

Respectfully,



Tina Carton
Bikeatoga Advocacy Co-chair
tina@bikeatoga.org



Ed Lindner
Bikeatoga Advocacy Co-chair
ed@bikeatoga.org

Dear City of Saratoga Springs Council,

As the owner of Henry Street Taproom, I am writing to express my full support for the Planning Department's proposal to add a two-way bicycle lane to Henry Street, between Lake Avenue and Congress Park, as part of the City's Complete Streets Plan. The roadway would be transformed into a one-way street northbound on Henry leading to greater safety, functionality for a better visitor experience.

The change would be a permanent version of the 2019 pilot project, led by Barton & Loguidice, which improved mobility and accessibility along Henry Street. This work was recently corroborated by the 2025 Safe Streets for All/Vision Zero study by Stantec and the Capital Region Transportation Council.

Initiatives to increase the number of local transportation options, including creating bike lanes, have proven to be good for business in the United States and across the world. Bicycle infrastructure built in retail corridors improves foot traffic to businesses. A new bike lane on Henry Street would, at the very least, allow businesses to continue thriving as they are, and it would likely increase their success as customers would have more ways to get to our storefronts.

The Complete Streets Plan is aligned with the interests of businesses in Saratoga Springs. I look forward to discussing this initiative with neighboring businesses on Henry Street, and I am confident they will be on board too. Hopefully we can implement this new bike lane in the near future. Pictured on the second page is Stantec's render of a complete Henry Street.

Sincerely,

Ryan McFadden



Henry Street

Site:

Henry Street is a minor two-way street with retail and restaurants, which have **on-street patios** during the summer months.

A **pilot project** implemented a two-way bikeway as link to Congress Park in 2019

Recommendations:

Implement two-way protected bike lane on west side of street, continuing to Congress Park.

On east side of street, retain restaurant patio seating in summer with parking in winter.

