

TOWN OF NISKAYUNA
Complete Streets Committee

A G E N D A

May 20, 2024

3:00 P.M.

Schaefer Room, Town Hall & Hybrid Google Meets

- I. CALL TO ORDER**
- II. ROLL CALL**
- III. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR**
- IV. MINUTES**
 1. April 22, 2024
- V. OLD BUSINESS**
 1. Draft Comprehensive Plan Chapter “Mobility and Transportation” (Duggal/Kuzsman)
 2. Safety on Route 7 – Linkage Study Update
 3. Request to Schenectady County for sidewalk on Nott Street from Baker to Lexington Parkway / Request to Schenectady for Bike Lanes on Grand Boulevard
- VI. NEW BUSINESS**
 1. Planning Projects Updates
 2. 2024 Complete Streets Goals
- VII. DISCUSSION ITEMS**
 1. Request for speed bumps on Birchwood Lane
 2. Complete Streets Demonstration Projects – June 15 @ Town Hall
 3. Winnie Road Easement – Letter to owners
 4. Priority Letter meetings – Schenectady County Manager Rory Fluman / DOT
 5. Complete Streets map updates (Bill Chapman)
 6. Climate Smart Communities Grant - update
- VIII. REPORTS**
- IX. ADJOURNMENT**

NEXT MEETING

June 17, 2024

3pm in the Schaefer Room

**TOWN OF NISKAYUNA
COMPLETE STREETS COMMITTEE**

**Hybrid In Person (Schaefer Room) / Remote Meeting (Google Meets)
Meeting Minutes
April 22, 2024**

Members Present: William Chapman, Co-Chairman
Ben O’Shea (virtual), Co-Chairman
Theresa Healy
Karla Duggal
Jim Levy
Andrew Millsbaugh
Catherine Kuzsman
James Lian, Student Representative

Also Present Laura Robertson, Town Planner
Trisha Bergami, Planning Department

I. CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chairman Chapman called the meeting to order at 3:00pm.

II. ROLL CALL

Avi Barr and Percy Davis were excused/absent today.

III. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Bill Poppino said people keep driving into a resident’s driveway thinking they are pulling into Bellevue Hospital. He said they put a sign on their mailbox that says Private Driveway. Mr. Poppino said for parents that do not want to leave the hospital with their brand-new baby on Troy Road there is a back entrance they can go out. Mr. Poppino feels the stop light should be put at Vrooman, not Hickory. He said Vrooman is closer to the Hospital than Hickory.

IV. MINUTES

1. March 25, 2024 minutes will be on next month’s meeting agenda

V. OLD BUSINESS

1. Draft Comprehensive Plan Chapter “Mobility and Transportation”
(Duggal/Kuzsman)

Ms. Kuzsman said she sent the draft of the chapter to everyone. She is not done but wanted everyone to have a chance to look at it.

Ms. Duggal said she had a bit of a struggle with how to place the information she had.

Ms. Kuzsman said she tried to eliminate some of the duplication. She said this is one chapter and has to read as such. She would like to know from the committee members if this is the

40 direction they want to go with the chapter or if they see anything that is incorrect or should be
41 eliminated.

42 Co-Chairman Chapman said maybe add some traffic calming things and give some examples.
43 Co-Chairman Chapman said they were not sure about speed humps but Mordella Road in
44 Colonie has them and there are some residents on Birchwood Lane that would like them.

45 Ms. Robertson said they can recommend the speed humps for Birchwood Lane. Ms. Kuzsman
46 asked if she should add that to the Comp Plan.

47 Mr. Levy said the first speed hump in is the hardest. Everyone complains about the noise or the
48 cars bottoming out. Mr. Levy said once people get used to having speed humps, they are fine.
49 He said people see it slowing the traffic down, then everyone wants them. Ms. Robertson said
50 she thinks schools are a really acceptable place to try them out.

51 Mr. Levy said he has two thoughts so far. He said he thinks having recommendations in every
52 area might be too much and inconsistent with the rest of the Comp Plan. Co-Chairman Chapman
53 said he prefers it after each section. Ms. Robertson said she is ok with either way but it has to be
54 consistent with the other chapters of the Comp Plan.

55 Mr. Millspaugh said he thought the Town was hiring a consultant to look at this issue. They
56 would make sure each chapter is set up using the best practice. Ms. Robertson said the RFPs for
57 the consultant came in too high.

58 Mr. Levy said typically they are consolidated together whether it is at the end of each chapter for
59 each section or usually it is at the very end. Ms. Robertson said they use the Comprehensive
60 Plan when they are writing grant applications. Mr. Levy said if the list is in the appendix rather
61 than written in the actual Comp Plan you are able to update it or change it without editing the
62 actual document.

63 Mr. Levy said the other thing he thinks should be updated is the language used like “safety
64 issue”, without documentation legally you shouldn’t use statements like that.

65 2. Safety on Route 7 – Linkage Study Update

66 Ms. Robertson said she needs to get the contract.

67

68 3. Request to Schenectady County for sidewalk on Nott Street from Baker to 69 Lexington Parkway

70 Ms. Robertson said the County told her the City of Schenectady is doing the engineering for their
71 portion of the sidewalk then they will bid it out.

72

73 4. Grand Boulevard – Proposing Bike Lane with Share Lane

74 Ms. Robertson said the County gave her an update on Grand Boulevard, they are proposing to
75 just put a parking lane with a sharrow.

76 The Board discussed this option and are really not happy about the choice. There are only a
77 couple cars that park on Grand Boulevard now.

78 Co-Chairman Chapman asked if they want to support the travel lane, bike lane and then a narrow
79 parking lane. It seems like the committee feels this is the best choice.

80 Ms. Healey asked if they can respond to the County to let them know Complete Streets would
81 like to have a bike lane and a narrow parking lane rather than no bike lane. Ms. Robertson said
82 she feels with the bike lane being painted on both sides it gives a much bigger presence on the
83 road.

84 Co-Chairman Chapman moved that they recommend to the County the Grand Boulevard
85 Pavement Preservation and Bicycle Improvement Project have a travel lane and a buffered bike
86 lane, seconded by Ms. Kuzsman. All were in favor.

87 Ms. Healey asked to talked about the Bike project. She said it is approved for June 15 with a
88 rain date of June 22. Ms. Healey said definitely they would definitely be doing the bike rodeo
89 and the group ride. She asked if the sharrows are getting painted again or will there be ride
90 leaders. Ms. Robertson said they sent letters the last time to the residents on Orchard Park to let
91 them know they are getting temporary sharrows and not a single person complained.

92 Ms. Robertson said she spoke with the police and they will provide police to be ride leaders.

93 Ms. Healey said she will make a flyer that can be put around town to get the word out.

94 Co-Chairman Chapman suggested asking Metroplex to donate some bike helmets.

95 Ms. Healey is going to reach out to Stewarts to see if they will donate for the event. Also Ms.
96 Robertson and Ms. Bergami will reach out to Metroplex, Martin Harding, CRTC, Market 32 and
97 the CO OP to see if they are willing to donate.

98 Mr. Levy will reach out to get the CDTA bus.

99 Ms. Healey said she will try to have the simple bike repair clinic as well. Ms. Healey asked if
100 they wanted to have music this year.

101 Ms. Bergami suggested asking some of the high school students if they would like to play. Mr.
102 Lian said he would ask at school.

103 Ms. Bergami will call Uncle Rico's and Union Pizza for food donations.

104 The hours will be from 10:00 – 1:00.

105 VI. NEW BUSINESS

106 1. Planning Projects Updates

- 107 i. 3900 State Street: This is proposed to be a Convenience Store/Smoke
108 Shop.

109
110 The Complete Streets Committee had the following comments related to the site plan
111 application:

- 112
113 1. Fix curb ramps and designate an area for people to walk from sidewalk to
114 sidewalk along State Street – either via sidewalk extension or a painted crosswalk.
115 There is currently no area for pedestrians to walk along State Street. Complete
116 Streets felt if there was not room for parking and a sidewalk – a sidewalk should
117 take precedence at the front of the building.
- 118 2. Look at ways to add greenspace to the front / sides of building, especially if the
119 parking doesn't fit.

- 120 3. Complete Streets noted the front parking spaces, as configured, mean that cars
121 would back out into sidewalk area / State Street. They suggested looking at a
122 configuration with less parking spaces out front where the parking faced the
123 adjacent business to the east. That way cars could back out into the driveway for
124 the store and face State Street squarely when they exited the property.
125 4. One of the front parking spaces should be handicap accessible.

126

127 3905 State Street

128 This is Matthew Kia – there were no comments for this meeting.

129

130 2. 2024 Complete Streets Goals – Van Antwerp addition

131 Ms. Robertson said she will have this for next meeting.

132 3. 2024 Meeting dates and times- Final attached

133 **VII. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

134 1. Request for speed humps on Birchwood Lane

135 A resident sent a letter, to the Town Supervisor which she forwarded to Complete Streets, in
136 support of the sidewalks on Birchwood Lane. They also said there has been an increase in
137 commercial traffic on Birchwood and they feel speed humps would be beneficial in that area.

138 Ms. Robertson said this would be a heavy lift, they might need to do a budget item for next year.

139 Co-Chairman Chapman said it would be important to know whether Mr. Smith would make a
140 recommendation or not.

141 Mr. Levy said there is a way they set them which allows the emergency equipment to miss the
142 hump but regular vehicles cannot.

143 2. Complete Streets Demonstration Projects

144 3. Winnie Road Easement – Letters to owners

145 4. Priority Letter meetings – Schenectady County Manager Rory Fluman / DOT

146 5. Complete Streets map updates (Bill Chapman)

147 6. Climate Smart Communities Grant - update

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149 **VIII. REPORTS**

150

151 **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

152 Motion to adjourn by Co-Chairman Chapman, seconded by Ms. Duggal. All were in favor. The
153 meeting was adjourned at 4:35 pm.

2024 Goals for Niskayuna Complete Streets Committee

(5/17/2024)

Infrastructure

- 1. Route 7 Road Safety and Traffic Calming Measures.** Route 7 in Niskayuna (also known as Troy Schenectady Road) has had 8 traffic fatalities in the last 4 year and 2-month month period (January 1 2020 to February 29 of 2024). In March of 2024 the Town of Niskayuna was approved for a \$150,000 federal grant administered by the Capital District Transportation Council (CRTC) to perform a Complete Streets Corridor Study of Route 7 from St Davids Lane to the Colonie Town Line which will develop recommendations and infrastructure designs for traffic calming, and speed reduction, making the road safer and more accessible for pedestrians and bicyclists. Further, the Town is awaiting word on a \$4.1 million federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant what would install safety upgrades in the Route 7 corridor between Vrooman and Algonquin Roads. The Complete Streets Committee will continue to provide support and recommendations to Town and County officials who are requesting that the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) implement road safety and traffic calming measures on State Route 7 in Niskayuna.

- 2. Submit Grant Applications** The Complete Streets Committee will encourage and provide support for Town and County officials to prepare grant applications in 2024 that will address one or more road safety projects in Niskayuna, in particular those that will prevent roadway deaths and serious roadway injuries. These funding sources can include the New York State Climate Smart Communities Program, the federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), the federal Safe Streets and Roads for All Program (SS4A) funded by the Federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law of 2022 (BIL).

- 3. Pedestrian and bike paths added to Niskayuna Schools** – Continue meetings with Niskayuna School District officials to ensure that pedestrian and bike path improvements that have been recommended by the Complete Streets Committee are included in planned improvements at each of the eight school campuses in the school district. These school campus improvements could be funded as part of approved bonding resolutions in 2021 and 2024 by school district taxpayers or by new bonding resolutions that may be put before school district taxpayers for approval.
 - a. Birchwood Lane Side path or Sidewalk -and Push Button Crosswalk at entrance to Birchwood Elementary.**

Work on possible funding sources and prepare preliminary plan for side path or sidewalk on Birchwood Lane from Route 7 to the Town Line with the Town of Colonie that will serve

students and parents who wish to walk from nearby neighborhoods to Birchwood Elementary School. Support installation of push button crosswalk on Birchwood Lane at entrance to Birchwood Elementary School. Students and parents walking to Birchwood Elementary would have a safe walk path along Birchwood Lane.

b. Cornelius Avenue Side path

Work on possible funding sources and prepare preliminary plan for side path or concrete sidewalk along Cornelius Avenue between Ray Street and Hillside Elementary School. Also consider sidewalk on Nicholas Street from Ray Street to Hillside Elementary. Students and parents walking to Hillside Elementary would be out of the roadway used by cars and buses.

4. Craig School and Jewish Community Center Safety – a. 20 mph School Traffic Speed Zone on Balltown Road b. Examine feasibility of a crosswalk on Balltown Road at Craig Elementary School entrance that would also extend to Jewish Community Center driveway

a. School Speed Zone for Craig Elementary School

The Town of Niskayuna received a grant award from the Capital District Transportation Committee/Capital District Regional Planning Committee (CDTC/CDRPC) for technical assistance to evaluate potential improvements to the walking environment along Balltown Road in the vicinity of the Craig Elementary School. The first and most crucial step for Complete Streets improvements for all modes of traffic in that area is to establish a school zone in front of Craig Elementary School.

b. Crosswalk for Craig Elementary School and Schenectady Jewish Community Center (JCC)

The second critical step for Complete Streets identified in the CDTC/CDRPC study is the creation of a crosswalk between Craig Elementary School and the Schenectady JCC. Many Craig Elementary School students attend after school programs at the JCC, there is an overlap in staff and the JCC is the shelter in place site for the school.

5. Grand Boulevard Sidewalks and Bike Lane - Support planning by Schenectady County to install new curbing **on both sides of Grand Boulevard** from Nott Street up to Van Antwerp Road and to include a **painted bike lane** on each side of Grand Boulevard along this route

6. Rosendale Road Bike-path and/or sidewalk construction - Work on feasibility and possible funding sources for an asphalt side path on Rosendale Road from Rosehill BLVD to Lishakill Nature Preserve and concrete sidewalk on Rosendale Road from Upper Union to Mayfair Drive. Side path would enable pedestrians and bicyclists to safely reach Rosendale Elementary and Iroquois Middle School and the Lishakill Nature Preserve using Rosendale Road

7. **Van Antwerp Road Bike-path and/or sidewalk construction** - Work on feasibility and possible funding sources for an asphalt side path on Van Antwerp Road from the traffic circle on River Road to the intersection of Van Antwerp Road and Balltown Road. This Side path would enable pedestrians and bicyclists to safely reach the General Electric Research Center on River Road, the Nott Street East side-path which connects to Town Hall, the Town Library, the post office, Niskayuna High School , and other businesses on Nott Street and Balltown Road, and will serve students, pedestrians and bicyclists who wish to reach Van Antwerp Middle School, and businesses on Upper Union Street

8. **Complete missing bike path segments on Hillside Avenue** between Providence Avenue and Banker Avenue. This will provide a safer pedestrian and bike route to the Town Pool and Community Center and a closer connecting link to the Mohawk Hudson Bike Path. Encourage Town Officials to send a request to National Grid, the US Army Reserve Center, the school district bus garage, and apartment complexes on Hillside Avenue to fill in segments of the bike path that lie along the frontage of their property adjacent to Hillside Avenue.

9. **Use of Utility Corridors for additional bike and pedestrian access** – Continue to investigate the feasibility of bike and pedestrian trails that would lie under power line corridors in the Town of Niskayuna. Even an agreement between the Town and Utility Corridor operators that would allow residents to use existing dirt trails would be a useful as a recreational resource and a way to add further connectivity to the existing town wide bike and pedestrian path system.

Public Education on pedestrian, bicycle, and motorist safety

1. **Update of Transportation Chapter of Town of Niskayuna 2025 Comprehensive Plan** – The Complete Streets Committee will offer recommendations to the 2025 Town Comprehensive Plan Committee designed to strengthen access and safety of pedestrian, bicycle, bus, and automobile movement in the Town.

2. **Conduct Demonstration Project in 2024**– Plan and conduct a demonstration project in 2024 that addresses one or more aspects of safe pedestrian, bike, or automobile movement.

- 3. Safety signage on Mohawk Hudson Bike Path** – continue to offer recommendations and support to current efforts by Metroplex Economic Development Authority and Schenectady County to add additional safety and directional signage on the Mohawk Hudson Bike Path (MHBT) in Schenectady County

- 4. Maintain Source Document on Traffic Calming Measures** – The Committee will continue to add to and maintain a source document of traffic calming measures. Examples include photos of traffic calming measures used in neighboring communities.

- 5. Make additions to the Town’s website on information about the Town Complete Streets Committee** *(goals Last revised by CSC 5/20/2024 WRC)*