

Pittsford’s active transportation plan

Reluctantly, petulantly, and by every indication dragged, screaming, to the task, Spring has sprung. Limbs are greening, café tables emerge at restaurants, daffodils are daffing. Across Pittsford people are raking, pruning, mulching, planting, cleaning and beautifying. The Canal is up. I can ride my bike to Town Hall. I have a good route, back and forth from home. Yet that’s not the case everywhere in town, or for everyone.

Mayor Bob Corby and I are committed to improving both design and infrastructure in support of pedestrians and cyclists. Municipal planners refer to this as “active transportation,” to distinguish these activities from motorized transport. Our goal is to coordinate the vision for active transportation implied in the Comprehensive Plans for the Village and Town, but not provided for expressly by either. We seek to increase the number and quality of pedestrian and cycling pathways, to improve their connectivity and to make them safer, especially in areas where high-intensity pedestrian or bike traffic confronts a high density of cars. We seek as well to define design guidelines with those goals in mind. Increasing mobility on foot and by pedal makes for a more livable and appealing community environment.

For this purpose, Pittsford’s Village and Town governments collaborated earlier this year in applying to the Genesee Transportation Council for a grant to develop jointly an Active Transportation Plan. The Genesee Transportation Council accepted our application on May 8, approving our proposed scope of work and confirming the grant. This enables us to move forward in evaluating and crafting a plan. Our work begins now. If you’re a Pittsford resident, it involves you. Success in developing the Active Transportation Plan depends in large measure on information derived from public participation in the process.

In the months ahead we’ll establish a steering committee, with subcommittees to focus on specific issues, including issues specific to each jurisdiction. We’ll use grant funds to engage a consultant to assist in the project. We’ll compile an inventory of relevant extant conditions, including such factors as traffic volume and roadway capacity; key safety issues for cyclists and pedestrians; connectivity of bike and pedestrian pathways. The work will include evaluating Village and Town regulations that affect active transportation.

Central to the task will be information provided by members of the public. Of particular importance will be information about priority routes and destinations: neighborhoods, schools, places of employment, trails both existing and proposed, and the most popular destinations. In general, we’ll be considering the question of what are the major factors, in addition to recreation, that generate trips for which walking or cycling would be practical.

This exercise will provide the basis for recommendations, which themselves will be subject to public review and comment as we move on to a final plan. That plan will include design guidelines among its other provisions.

The Active Transportation Plan we seek will complement the Town’s Comprehensive Plan. It will represent a logical follow-on to policies already in the Village’s Comprehensive

Plan providing for traffic calming and the “complete streets” concept – guidelines intended to improve safety by reducing injuries from pedestrian collisions with cyclists and reducing the severity of car accidents. In addition to improving walkability and cycling opportunity in general, our goal is to let bicyclists share the road with motorists more confidently and to help pedestrians cross the street in safety.

On a related note, the Village government is installing signal flags at two pedestrian crosswalks, to help alert drivers to stop when pedestrians cross the street. The flagged crosswalks are on Monroe Avenue at Sutherland Street, and on State Street near South Street, by the Library. There are other pedestrian crosswalks in the Village. All are ignored by drivers routinely. ***The pedestrian has the right of way at crosswalks!*** It's the law. Please respect it. Our pedestrians and bike riders will appreciate it. Should you have any comments or input regarding the Active Transportation Plan as always please feel free to contact me at call me at 248-6220 or send a message to bsmith@townofpittsford.org. To stay abreast of Town news, you can sign up for our weekly eNews at www.townofpittsford.org.