

Tarrytown and Sleepy Hollow Bike Lane Debate — Bring Balance to Broadway

Daniel Convisor — March 11, 2019



Op-Ed: Daniel Convisor, Bike Tarrytown

Most trips we take are short: school, friends, library, activities, shopping. When picking how to get places, we quickly calculate the best choice based on time, safety, enjoyment and cost. What most people don't realize is our decisions have been predetermined by public policy.

Most streets lack sidewalks. Where they exist, they're often narrow, uneven or blocked (by poles, shrubs, garbage cans, parked cars). Many locations where people need to cross are dangerous due to officials obsessed with shaving seconds off car trips.

Streets get plowed while sidewalks don't. Worse, plows push snow to crosswalks, sidewalks and bus stops.

We build roads and parking at great expense and give them away free most of the time. While people using transit face high fares and infrequent service.

Our streets have zero provisions for people cycling. The hostile, dangerous conditions mean people are too scared to bike for transportation.

No wonder people "choose" to drive! And if you're in the 1/3 of the population who can't drive (old, young, disabled, poor), tough luck.

It's time to bring balance to our transportation system. We need safe streets so everyone has the option to walk, bike, wheel chair, etc. for local trips — 19% of journeys are under a mile long, 46% are under 3.

Doing this produces huge returns on investment. It reduces community congestion and parking problems. It bolsters business because people spend more time in pleasant places. Plus a restaurant can seat 18 patrons, or park the bikes of 10 customers, in the space of 1 car.

Physical and emotional health are helped by turning travel into exercise and engagement of neighbors. Air, noise and water pollution are eliminated. It's the biggest way each of us can emit less carbon. Plus it cuts car crashes, the number one killer of kids and number two for adults.

Important pieces of this puzzle in Sleepy Hollow and Tarrytown are the recommendations of the Route 9 Active Transportation Plan's Steering Committee. Completing the sidewalk and crosswalk network along Broadway while calming the road.

The Committee also composed a compromise cycling plan. With parking concerns in mind, it didn't touch Broadway between Main St and Wildey St in Tarrytown. Heading north (C-Town to Phelps Hospital) and south (Citibank to the Irvington border), the largely unused parking along the one side of Broadway can be a 2-way protected bike lane.

This gets the "too scared to bike" folks out of their cars when going to Main St, C-Town, school, Peabody Field, Warner Library and the JCC. Plus it provides a place for Tappan Zee Bridge bikers, so they don't back up Broadway's car lanes. And it links the two long stretches of the Old Croton Aqueduct.

The problem is the Mayors of Sleepy Hollow and Tarrytown think "everyone" driving is inevitable. It's not. It's up to you to implore they learn this fact or step aside.

For more information visit www.biketarrytown.org/bway.