

CAPITAL STREETS | MEMORANDUM

Manning Boulevard Improvement Project

Background and Purpose (from [the City of Albany's project webpage](#))

“The purpose of the Manning Boulevard Street Improvement Project is to provide pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and mitigate flooding...” from Washington Avenue to Western Avenue (both intersections are included in the project boundaries). The project scope is expansive, and “reconstruction will include: drainage improvements, new curbing, new pavement, shared bicycle lanes, new sidewalks, new ADA-compliant concrete curb ramps, new street crossing signs, new street trees, other street amenities”. The project is being managed by Albany’s Department of General Services and the City has hired consulting firm Weston & Sampson to design the project.

Initial Public Meeting and Concepts

On 8/14/23 the project team held a well-attended public meeting at the Pine Hills Public Library to present an existing conditions overview and share initial concept designs. Both concepts presented focused on regrading the roadway to redirect stormwater into larger medians and reconfiguring the existing bridle paths. Little consideration was given to reducing vehicle speed or improving the intersections at Washington or Western.

Concept A - Bridle paths become one-way, with four access points. No dedicated bicycle infrastructure except signage. Manning drive lanes are 12’ wide with 2’ painted shoulders on each side, creating a 16’ roadway on each side of a boulevard down the middle.

Concept B - Bridle paths become one-way, with four access points. No dedicated bicycle infrastructure except signage. In place of a central median, the medians between the bridle paths and Manning are widened to accommodate more stormwater. This leaves Manning as a two lane roadway with 12’ drive lanes with 2’ shoulders (a 28’ wide roadway).

Community members spoke in opposition to the presented bridle path reconfiguration and demanded more be done to improve roadway safety. Many community members expressed concerns about speeding and the safety of crossing Western and Washington.

Capital Streets’ Analysis (08/27/23)

While the concepts presented offer marginal improvements over the roadway’s existing layout, several components of the design must be altered to better impact the community. With over 140’ of right-of-way, the Manning Blvd corridor presents a unique opportunity for Albany to create an especially safe and comfortable connection between two of its most important thoroughfares. Specific improvements needed include:

1. Prevent cut-through traffic on Bridle Paths

Bridle paths must be designed to maintain convenient access for residents, but discourage through traffic and prevent speeding. These roadways should feel like safe places for people to walk and children to play.

- a. Incorporate [speed reduction mechanisms](#), like speed humps, to slow traffic.



- b. Eliminate bridle path access points closest to Western and Washington Aves. This will require vehicle turnaround areas, but also significantly reduce conflicts with turning vehicles.

2. Intersection treatments at Washington and Western Aves

The intersections of Manning & Washington and Manning & Western are known to be high stress conflict areas, especially for people walking and bicycling.

- a. The City must analyze safety deficiencies at these intersections and include infrastructure improvements that prioritize vulnerable road users. Components contributing to these dangerous intersections include:
 - i. Excessively large turning radii.
 - ii. Excessive lane widths and crossing distances.
 - iii. Crosswalk location and orientation (especially crossing Western, and west of Manning crossing Washington).
 - iv. Signal timing and pedestrian phase actuation.
- b. Better connections for non-motorized roadway users to directly access the Bridle Paths from Washington and Western.
- c. Additionally, a raised intersection at Manning & Lancaster would help to reduce speeding.

3. Incorporate recommendations from the 2021 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

Albany's [2021 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan](#) calls for a protected/buffered bikeway on Manning Blvd to provide a much needed crosstown connection. With ample right-of-way width, separated lanes can easily be provided in a number of configurations.

- a. Research has shown wide travel lanes correspond with increases in traffic fatalities. The City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan recommends lane widths of 10-11ft. The current design alternatives propose effective lane widths of 14-16ft. This encourages fast moving traffic and prevents the City from adding bicycle infrastructure.

Community members, ask the City of Albany to take roadway safety seriously and advance the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan with this project! Contact your common council member and City officials today. Share this memo online and with your neighbors!

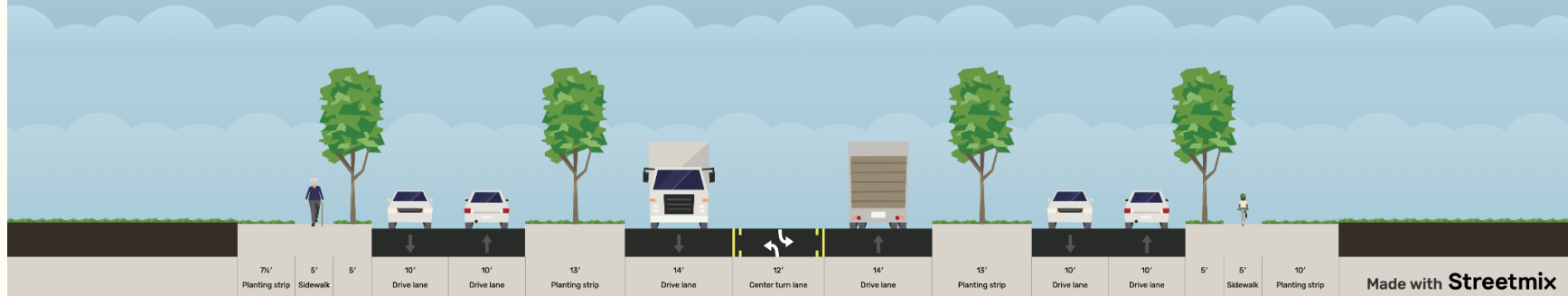
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- Ward 14: Hon Deborah Zamer - dzamer@albanyny.gov, (518) 428-0487
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City Staff

- David Galin, Mayor's Chief of Staff - dgalin@albanyny.gov, (518) 434-5100
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Existing Manning Boulevard



Proposed Manning Boulevard

CAPITAL STREETS
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Capital Streets recommendations include:

- Two-way bridge paths with infrastructure like raised intersections to keep vehicle speeds safe
- Separated bike lanes on Manning Boulevard, protecting cyclists from motor vehicle traffic
- Appropriate lane widths on Manning Boulevard: 10.5' with 1' shoulders, to reduce speeding

