

UB Graduate Students new Clarence Bike Path Plan is Realistic and Achievable.

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University of Buffalo Graduate students Lewis Bondor, Bill Frantz, Emily Gibson, Samantha Herberger, Amruta Kharote, Mengjie Song, Mattghew Austin, Oxana Bazhenova, Rushikesh, Nicole McMahon, Rebecca Yanus and Yanqi Zhanga, under the direction of professor Himanshu Grover have assembled an impressive review of the current bike path system within the Town of Clarence. In addition to mountains of data on who uses the bike path and why they use it, they have provided concrete suggestions for improving the bike path that won't break the bank. Let's take a look at their three key goals and objectives for expanding the bike path as we know it today:

1. To expand upon the components of trails and greenway system by connecting it to important nodes within and outside of the town.

Their recommendations include plans to connect most of the major hubs of Clarence Hollow, Clarence Center, Wolcottsburg and Swormville with schools, residential communities and parks in the Towns of Clarence. They cited a need for a North-South connector and additional off-road trails for mountain bikes. In connecting all of the bike trails with parks, schools town centers, they asked the town to consider using existing roads that were striped with bike lanes, similar to the bike lanes in downtown Buffalo.

2. To promote the usage of the trails and greenway system by both residents and visitors

They propose to do this by adding conveniences such as additional drinking fountains and portable toilets as well as increasing the number of places to eat along the path. They want the path to be brought up to ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) standards, with ADA compliant bathrooms and benches.

3. To enhance the promotion and outreach efforts in order to familiarize residents and visitors of the benefits of the trails and greenway system.

They suggest that the Town of Clarence provide more information (via a web page or smartphone APP) to residents about the benefits of using the trail

system. They suggest that the community host events that increase the utilization of the trails and greenway system.

One of the most interesting part of their proposal was the data that they gathered from the use of the bike path. They sat on the side of the bike path and noted what times it was used, who was riding/biking/walking on it and where they were from. They stopped folks on the bike path and asked them how far did they live from the bike trail, what their primary usage of the trail was and how frequently they used the bike path. Some of the more interesting data is as follows:

The most used section of the bike path is the northern route, or Peanut line. The southern route, or West Shore Line, was not as heavily traveled. On the Peanut line, Saturday was the busiest day, and the busiest hours were between 8AM and 2:30 PM. The most popular activity was biking. 70% of the people who used the Peanut Line did so at least once a week, with 30% using it on a daily basis.

In the end, their vision statement was that they wanted “an integrated and connected trails and greenway bike system that is natural, convenient, and frequently utilized by both residents of Clarence and visitors to provide a combination of recreational and health benefits.” I couldn’t have said it better myself!

Should you have any questions or comments about this article, please feel free to call me at 741-8930, email dhartzell@clarence.ny.us or stop by the Supervisors office in Town Hall. My door is always open!