



## The City of Albany - Manning Boulevard Improvement Project

### Final Concept Concerns (2/1/2024):

- Bridle Paths
  - No traffic calming infrastructure is included, allowing speeding and the use of the bridle paths as cut-throughs to continue
  - New right turn lane on Manning (near Western) will encourage bridle paths to be used at cut throughs
  - No direct bike connection from Western or Washington, so cyclists will need to use the busiest sections of Manning to access the bridle paths, which is clearly more dangerous
- Manning's Intersections at Western and at Washington:
  - The existing excessively large corner radii appears to be unchanged. This makes the intersection more dangerous, especially for people walking, by:
    - Allowing vehicles to take turns at high speeds
    - And making the crossing distance for pedestrians longer, leaving them in the roadway, where they are vulnerable to traffic, longer
  - A striped median is shown at both ends of the corridor. This should either:
    - Be eliminated, to decrease the width of the roadway, or
    - Made into a larger, concrete pedestrian refuge island
- No bicycle infrastructure
  - This ignores the City's 2021 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, which highlights the importance of Manning Blvd as a connector and calls for buffered or protected bike lanes
  - The Manning Blvd Improvement Project instead looks to put bicyclists on the bridle paths, yet does not give bicyclists a direct connection from the bridle paths to Washington or Western Avenue
    - The use of the bridle paths as low stress routes only makes sense if they are accessible without putting cyclists back onto Manning Blvd before the intersections at Washington and at Western, the most dangerous areas for any roadway user. It also is only realistic if the bridle paths include effective traffic calming measures to physically prevent speeding

**Conclusion: This project does very little to improve safety and noise along the corridor**

# CAPITAL STREETS



PLAN VIEW

- ① Right Turn Lane - This right turn lane significantly widens Manning Blvd, adding cost and crossing distance, while encouraging drivers to use the Bridle Paths as a cut-thru when there is congestion on Manning Blvd.
- ② Intersection Geometry - The excessive radii at these corners will allow vehicles to take turns at this intersection at dangerous speeds while also increasing crossing distance for people walking. These radii should be reduced as much as possible. If large vehicles need to be accommodated, mountable curbing can be used. Additionally, there is an opportunity to address the unalignment of Manning across Western.
- ③ Bicycling Connection - If the bridle paths are going to be the only safe and comfortable route for bicyclists, a connection is needed to Western Ave. This should be an asphalt path of at least 8 ft and paired with pavement markings across Western Ave.
- ④ Pavement Markings - Striping a wide median here widens Manning Blvd, resulting in more asphalt and a longer crossing for pedestrians. Stop bars should be 8 ft from the crosswalk to prevent vehicles from stopping in the crosswalk
- ⑤ Left Turn Lanes - Including turning lanes at this intersection significantly widens it. With these connections to the Bridle Paths servicing fewer than 20 residences, turning vehicles will be infrequent and do not warrant turning lanes
- ⑥ Absence of Traffic Calming Infrastructure - The bridle paths need traffic calming infrastructure, like speed humps, raised intersections, or diverters, to discourage speeding and cut-thru traffic from Manning. Stop signs are not speed controls and cannot be relied on to keep residents along the corridor safe.

## Manning Boulevard Street Improvement Project

City of Albany, Albany County, New York

**This project does not improve roadway safety.**

Conceptual Design





## Summary of Comments/Responses Manning Boulevard Public Meeting Held on August 14, 2023

[The following is a response to the public comments](#) received at the Manning Boulevard Street Improvement Project public meeting held on August 14, 2023. The comments have been numbered and listed with a response below. Please note, similar comments have been combined.

After reviewing the “final” concept released by the City in early 2024, Capital Streets reviewed the City’s responses to public comments related to the safety and streetscaping of Manning Blvd. Many of these response include misleading or false information. The comment numbers have been preserved and Capital Streets’s responses are in blue.

1. A number of people commented on their distaste for the proposed one way bridal paths. There was a desire for the paths to remain two way.

- The current width of the bridal paths is 22 feet. In order to maintain this width, there are two options. First, per the existing concept plans, the bridal paths will be converted to one way and the existing off street parking will remain. The second option would include two way traffic, however, as per City and State Roadway Design Standards, all off street parking would be eliminated as the 22 foot width will not safely accommodate both two way traffic and off street parking. Due to budget constraints, the widening of the bridal paths to accommodate bidirectional traffic and a parking lane was excluded. Any widening of the bridal paths will result in eliminating green space and drainage improvements. Please refer to the survey on the project website to indicate your preference for on this issue.
- [This is incorrect.](#) While Manning Blvd is classified as a minor urban arterial by NYSDOT, the bridle paths are not. The bridle paths should be treated as NHS Local Urban Streets, which come with their own standards, or as “other” facilities not subject to highway standards. The City of Albany can utilize the [NACTO Urban Design Guide’s Yield Street design principles](#), which are referenced in the beginning of the State Roadway Design Standards document, which clearly outline how two-way bridle paths can be maintained to increase safety and quality of life on this corridor.

2. How much was winter weather and snow plowing considered on the bridal paths? Isn’t narrowing the bridal path going to make snow plowing harder?

- Winter weather and plowing were considered; making the bridal paths one-way allows for a dedicated parking area which in turn creates space for alternate side parking to make snow plowing easier. The bridal paths are proposed to remain approximately the same width.
- [See 1.b, the bridle paths do not need to be one way to allow for snow plowing.](#) While winter maintenance is important, it’s more important the bridle paths are designed to improve quality of life and safety year-round.

# CAPITAL STREETS

4. The turning lanes at Western and Washington intersections should be looked at to avoid back-up of cars onto Manning Boulevard.

- The length of the turning lanes as shown on the concepts are approximate at best. Our consultant will complete an analysis to determine the appropriate lengths for the turning lanes to minimize back-ups.
- Designing for higher volumes will induce demand and, in the long term, contribute to increasing queues. By designing for shorter crossing distances and including actual bicycle infrastructure (as outlined in the City's Bicycle Master Plan) , the City of Albany can reduce VMT and increase connectivity along this key corridor. In the City's 2021 [Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan](#):
  - Manning Blvd is shown as having a high to medium bicycle & pedestrian demand, while connecting some of the areas to the north and south with the highest demand in the city (Figure 21, 2-25)
  - Manning Blvd is shown as a High Stress Roadway, without adequate infrastructure for bicycling (Figure 23, 2-28)
  - Protected/Buffered Bike Lanes are called for in the plan in the Proposed Bike Network (Figure 42, 4-48)

7. The proposed road widths are narrower which is good, but they should be narrowed further – perhaps to 11' maximum lane width. At 16', the lanes are essentially creating a better racing corridor.

- It is necessary to ensure emergency vehicles have lane width to pass vehicles in the event of an emergency. An 11 foot lane width is not adequate space for a vehicle to yield the right of way to fire or police vehicles.
- This is misleading. While an 11' wide roadway would not allow for vehicles to pass one another, claiming an 11' lane is inadequate is ignoring important context to understand how emergency response would actually operate on the corridor. When considering the bridle paths, turning lanes, and other opportunities like protected bike lanes, designing for low speeds with narrow lanes can easily accommodate emergency vehicles passing.

9. Will protected bike lanes be included in the project?

- The project budget will not support including protected bike lanes. The current plan calls for shared bike lanes along the bridle paths. The final configuration of the proposed tie ins with Washington and Western Avenues will be determined during the final design phase.
- This is misleading. Protected bike lanes drastically range in cost. The City could easily include buffered bike lanes with flexible delineators for well under \$30,000 (in thermoplastic). If the City is so dedicated to ignoring their Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, they should just be honest with the community about why, rather than hiding behind vague "costs".

# CAPITAL STREETS

13. Green areas are good. Access points to the bridle paths should be maintained. Please consider putting additional stop signs or other traffic control devices on Manning.

- These issues will be discussed with the City of Albany Traffic Engineering Division who has authority.
- Manning Boulevard needs speed controls to reduce deadly speeding, not arbitrary stop controls where conflicts do not exist.

14. Crosswalks on Manning are currently non-existent since the paint has faded. Safer crossing conditions should be included in this project.

- The project will include new painted crosswalks along Manning Boulevard and also at the intersections of Washington and Western Avenue.
- If the City of Albany cannot keep pavement markings visible, the City should invest in more permanent improvements when redesigning the streetscape through capital projects like this one

15. Will speed humps or raised crosswalks be included in the project?

- Manning Boulevard is classified as a minor arterial by the New York State Department of Transportation. Speed humps or raised crosswalks are not recommended to be installed on roadways with this classification.
- This is misleading/incorrect. While Manning Blvd is classified as a minor urban arterial, the bridle paths are not. Regardless, the guidelines from NYSDOT on Traffic Calming are over 25 years old and do not apply to today's roadway conditions. [FHWA issued a Tech Sheet in 2018](#) clearly outlining that raised crosswalks are appropriate uses of traffic calming on local and collector roadways, and can reduce pedestrian crashes by 45%. The same document mentions raised crosswalks are most commonly used on roadways with AADT below 9,000 (according to NYSDOT, Manning Blvd's AADT was below 7,000 in 2018).

16. It took a long time to reduce Manning from four lanes down to three and people still speed. Neither plan considers safety or convenience.

- Unfortunately this is an enforcement issue, not a roadway issue. Concerns of excessive speeding will be forwarded to the Albany Police Department.
- This is incorrect and negligent. While enforcement is important in some cases, only roadways that have been improperly designed should be relying on enforcement. It is critical that DGS properly designs this corridor, and does not rely on adding work to the Police Department for safe roadways.

18. Are the signals sensor based? People seem to creep forward into crosswalks to try and trigger the sensors. Curb extensions ("bump-outs") at intersections would help slow and control traffic in these areas.

- Traffic signal control sensors will be upgraded as part of this project. There is no plan to include "bump-outs" at the Washington and Western Avenue intersections.

# CAPITAL STREETS

- Vertical speed control elements, like raised intersections can help. Placing the sensors further from crosswalks and including signage may also help. Stop bars should be included and at least 8' from crosswalks (where sight lines allow) at all controlled intersections

19. Special consideration should be given to fix the intersections at Western & Washington.

- The current scope of work includes restriping the intersections at Western and Washington Avenues and rehabbing the ADA curb ramps. The project budget will not support extensive improvements at these intersections.
- While replacing curb, the City should reduce corner radii to mitigate speeds of turning vehicles to improve safety and comfort

20. People still speed down South Manning where they have large green medians. Additional signage, control lights, etc. would help.

- South Manning travel lanes are approximately 19 feet wide which may be encouraging speeding.
- Wider lanes certainly encourage speeding. Using highway standards results in creating highway behavior. It's critical DGS learns from past mistakes, looks at the data, and designs this section of Manning Blvd for slower speeds