

Bethlehem is not a very walkable or bikeable city (2)

The Bethlehem Gadfly Serious Issues, Walkability and Bikeability January 6, 2019
(2nd in a series on Walkability and Bikeability)

Peter Crownfield is officially retired but spends most of his time working with students in his role as internship coordinator for the Alliance for Sustainable Communities–Lehigh Valley.

Bill, best wishes for 100% recovery. I've only had 1 semi-serious car-bike accident, when I was sideswiped by a car on 7th Street in Allentown. The woman was talking on her mobile and/or just didn't believe in sharing the road. I too had a [less-serious] rotator cuff injury that took about 6 months of PT.

Bethlehem likes to think it's a very walkable & bikeable city. It is not. Pedestrians have to contend with irregular sidewalks with height differences of 10–15 cm, some of which have persisted for a decade or more. Also with curb ramps constructed at a 45° angle and with frequent sidewalk closures. Rarely does the contractor limit the closing to the time it's actually necessary—but a big thank you to Ondra-Huyett—they actually move the fence in to the building wall when they're not actually working on that face of the building. [the former Lehigh services building on the SS]

Cyclists have to deal with clueless motorists: those too busy texting or talking on the phone, of course, but also with a city that doesn't properly maintain the sharrows markings and sometimes placed them far too close to the parking lane, as in some blocks of 4th Street. And, of course, no bike lanes. In reality, it's difficult to construct a good, safe system of bike lanes that don't dump cyclists into an intersection that's even more dangerous because motorists tend to be less aware of cyclists if they're not in the roadway. I don't think we want to turn this over to PennDot or the City planners! (Especially seeing how they handled the rooftop addition in the Benner monstrosity at 3rd & New.)

Peter

