

Hon. Peter Crummey, Supervisor
Town of Colonie
Sean Maguire, Director
Town of Colonie Planning and Economic Development

Planning Board Members

VIA EMAIL and Hand Delivered

January 7, 2022 (Revised 3/10/22)

Dear Hon. Peter Crummey, Mr. Maguire and Planning Board Members;

On Tuesday, January 11, 2022, the Town of Colonie Planning Board is scheduled to hold a Concept Review of Keeler Motor Car Company's expansion of its dealership to encompass the former Hewitt's site. We understand they've abandoned the 12 foot wide "multi use pathway" from the rear of the proposed Keeler parking lot down to River Road, largely due to neighbor opposition based upon increased automobile traffic on River Road.

We, the undersigned individuals and groups, view this Keeler's expansion as a wonderful opportunity for our town to create, at last, a safe bike path connection from Troy-Schenectady Road down to River Road directly opposite town-owned lands and the Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Trail. The existing connectors between the bike path and Troy Schenectady Road - Fort's Ferry Road, Buhrmaster Road and Rosendale Road- are very dangerous for runners, pedestrians and cyclists.

A safe bike and pedestrian connection has been sought and advocated for by the Town of Colonie in the Comprehensive Plans of 2005 and 2019, in a 2005 Transportation Corridor Study as part of CDTC transportation corridor planning efforts, and by nearby residents and interest groups for over 20 years. The need for bike path connection to

the Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Trail was identified across Route 7 at British American Boulevard. When the Planning Board approved the Cumberland Farms project, in October 2016, they actually made their approval conditional on the creation of an easement for a bike path connection. Unfortunately, the PEDD failed to enforce the Board's condition, and no such easement was filed. The current Planning Board and the new administration now have the chance to rectify this situation.

In 2017, the developers of the Flower Hill subdivision in Niskayuna/Schenectady County west of Rosendale Road, donated a strip of land to connect that neighborhood to River Road and the Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Trail. The Town of Niskayuna secured CDTC grant monies to cover 80% of the costs for the construction of this bike connection. We suggest Keeler's, a good neighbor and long-time very successful Colonie business, could be similarly persuaded/induced to donate the land they'd proposed for the multi-use driveway for a similar bike path connection to fulfill this long awaited goal.

Keeler's has benefited greatly from its position in Colonie. It has been allowed unprecedented expansion despite concerns about the increase in traffic and congestion its activities generate. In 2018, the Town sold Ronald Drive for only \$5,000 to an entity affiliated with Keeler's; this sale facilitated Keeler's expansion plans that are before you today. Keeler affiliated businesses have recently purchased even more large parcels in this busy corridor, so we can expect more proposed projects.

We hope that the Planning Board takes this opportunity at last to create this long-awaited connection between the existing bike routes throughout Albany County and the Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Trail. Doing so will be a win-win for the new administration, ALL our town's residents, close neighbors of the Keeler's connection, Empire State Trail thru-cyclists in need of food or accommodations and businesses that supply them, and other biking enthusiasts and pedestrians.

The Board should forgo its approval of Keeler's concept plans until the town, stakeholders and Keeler's can negotiate a bike path connection as part of this project.

Sincerely,

Birchwood Neighborhood Association
Albany Bicycle Coalition
Friends of the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail
SAVE Colonie: A Partnership for Planning

Cc: Town Board Members
Hon. Phil Steck
Times Union

Revised 3/10/22 to delete signor Capital District Transportation Committee's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, included in error