

My name is [name] and I live at [address]. I encourage the council to pass Resolution Number 15.22.22R.

Walking is perhaps the best way to experience Albany's historic beauty and charm, in addition to being carbon-neutral and free. But at an increasing number of city intersections, pedestrians are given short shrift by being required to press a button to beg for a pedestrian signal, even if the signal is already changing for cars. As a result, pedestrians are forced to wait for several minutes at every corner (when the buttons are working or not blocked by snow and ice). Beg buttons are designed to prioritize car traffic. This is deeply counterproductive in a city attempting to revitalize its downtown core.

Albany's pedestrian signals should activate whenever the vehicle signals activate. This ultra-low-cost policy change would go a long way to promote walkability in Albany, making streets safer for pedestrians and motorists alike. As downtown Albany stands continues to welcome new apartment units in the next several years, we must be prepared for an increase in the number of pedestrians. The city has rightfully promoted its walkable downtown and transit-friendly outer corridors as key to its low-carbon, sustainable future. It is critically important that Albany protect all of its road users by bidding farewell to beg buttons. Doing so will benefit pedestrians, cyclists and drivers alike.