



March 12, 2019

Re: East Main Street Reconstruction Project

Dear Mayor Warren, Commissioner Jones, City Staff, City Council Members and Project Managers,

Reconnect Rochester and the Rochester Cycling Alliance are writing in support of The City of Rochester's **Concept Alt 2 for the East Main Street Reconstruction Project** between Goodman St and Culver Rd. This design alternative equitably satisfies the most demands, protects and accommodates the widest range of users, and complies with the City's climate and mobility plans.

We applaud the City's Complete Streets Policy, Climate Action Plan, Bicycle Master Plan and Comprehensive Access Mobility Plan, which articulate a vision and goals for a more multimodal community. We are proud to support The City of Rochester's efforts to allow for and encourage more active transportation. Complete streets allow everyone -- regardless of age, ability, income and mode of transportation -- safer access. Protected bike infrastructure, where possible, plays a key part in that access.

At recent public input sessions for the Comprehensive Access Mobility Plan, citizens called for upgrading shared lane markings to bike lanes and upgrading current bike lanes to protected bike lanes. They also prioritized the addition of an east-west trail to complement the north-south Riverway Trail, so cyclists of all ages and abilities could access downtown from all directions in a safe, efficient, low-stress manner. The "Alt 2" redesign is a step towards a safer, more intuitive east-west accommodation for all modes.

We support the "Alt 2" plan with protected bike lanes for the following reasons:

1. New York State leads the country in cyclist and pedestrian fatalities as a percentage of all traffic deaths. Roads need to be made safer by design. Protected bike lanes have been proven to calm traffic and assist drivers in keeping a safe distance from cyclists, making both driving and cycling safer and much less stressful.
2. Studies indicate that many people like the idea of biking more (or at all), yet do not feel comfortable mixed in with car traffic. Painted bike lanes are a step in the right direction, but do not provide an increase in ridership the way a protected buffer does. Whether it be bollards, planters, parked cars or curbs, ridership increases as people on bikes feel more confident and less stressed.
3. Without protected bike lanes, only the bold or economically-strained individuals cycle on the streets -- few women, children or elderly will cycle. All City of Rochester citizens deserve the opportunity to use Main Street safely.
4. Complete Streets countermeasures calm traffic and attract pedestrians. Cyclists and motorists are more likely to notice, stop and feel safe patronizing nearby businesses. Noteworthy examples

of thoughtfully designed bicycle infrastructure improvements affecting commercial and retail opportunities have occurred in a Seattle neighborhood, where roadway reconstruction contributed to a 350% sales increase for adjacent businesses, and a 179% increase in restaurant sales in a Fort Worth neighborhood.

5. A protected bike lane will help alleviate conflicts due to vehicles parked in painted bike lanes. A buffer provides a clear demarcation for drivers who are searching for parking spots, and cyclists are no longer forced to swerve into traffic to avoid parked cars.
6. Without formal analysis, Alt 2 would most likely reduce car congestion and crashes on Main Street since it includes a center turn lane for the vast number of RTS buses that use that stretch of Main Street each day.
7. Alt 2 contains more on-street parking, an important component identified by local small business owners, than alternate plans.

During recent meetings about the reconstruction project, there were hesitations about installing protected bike lanes due to snow clearing in winter. We believe becoming one of the world's premier winter cycling cities is a worthy and realistic goal Rochester can attain one day. It must first become a comfortable city to bike in during the spring, summer and fall. The RCA strongly supports winter maintenance of all bicycle infrastructure, but maintenance of infrastructure is an issue independent of the design selection for East Main Street. The Alt 2 plan provides optimal service for all mobility modes throughout all seasons. Winter maintenance considerations should not influence the viability of this design.

We are building the Rochester of tomorrow today. This Main Street reconstruction will stand for many decades. It is important, therefore, that it is aligned with Rochester's stated goals. The small number of people who do not support protected bike lanes because of a perceived inconvenience, should not overshadow the desires of the surrounding neighborhoods or represent future generations who will live with this design decision for decades. Residents and organizations in EMMA and Beechwood (including Reconnect Rochester), who are most impacted by this project, have shown overwhelming support for the "Alt 2" plan and protected bike lanes.

We believe this reconstruction project provides an opportunity to give Main Street a makeover so that it serves the people better, regardless of their mode of transportation.

As always, thank you for your work and consideration.

Sincerely,



Renee Stetzer
Reconnect Rochester



Bill Collins
Rochester Cycling Alliance