



November 7, 2022

Monroe County Planning and Development  
1150 City Place  
50 W. Main St.  
Rochester, NY 14614

Re: Monroe County Countywide Active Transportation Plan Input

Dear Monroe County Department of Planning and Development,

Reconnect Rochester envisions a more equitable, sustainable and multimodal transportation network for our region, and works every day to champion transportation choices that enable a more vibrant and equitable community. Our mission is to improve accessibility and mobility options for all people – regardless of age, ability, income or mode of transportation. We are excited to see Monroe County take steps to make this vision a reality by putting in place the first Countywide Active Transportation Plan. As you continue to develop the Plan, we offer the following recommendations for consideration.

### **Complete Streets Policy**

The Countywide Active Transportation Plan is a great opportunity to create an official Monroe County Complete Streets Policy to guide all future road projects. As County Executive Bello states in his transition report, there must be a shift in ideology within the Monroe County Department of Transportation that prioritizes the movement of vehicles above all else.

This Complete Streets Policy should hold the MCDOT accountable to other County departments and the County Legislature for its implementation. We suggest the following be incorporated into policy:

- Stricter exemptions to complete streets elements for projects, such as a financial threshold for the percentage of a project's budget that would allow a Complete Streets element to be excluded.

- Oversight of the exemptions of Complete Streets implementation that requires MCDOT to provide documentation with supporting data indicating the reason for an exemption to another County department or authority.
- A reporting requirement similar to the City of Rochester's Complete Streets Policy, where the Director of MCDOT would be required to provide an annual report on the Complete Streets implementation.
- A policy similar to [San Francisco's](#), in which a thorough investigation and intervention is required at the site of every fatal crash to improve safety conditions by taking the design and engineering of the roadway into serious consideration.
- A modal priority framework that informs transportation related decision making, similar to [Minneapolis' Complete Streets Policy](#) which creates the following modal hierarchy:
  1. Walking and rolling
  2. Biking, taking micromobility and using transit
  3. Driving cars, trucks and providing access for smaller freight vehicles
  4. Operating large freight vehicles
  5. Green stormwater infrastructure
- A requirement for the regular installation of public transit amenities as a part of County road projects

### **Other Policies**

In addition to the Complete Street Policy recommendation, we offer the following recommendations for other County policies to be included in the plan:

- New York State law specifically permits right turns on red unless there is signage prohibiting it. Right turns on red should be prohibited where there are high pedestrian counts and in villages and towns.
- We recommend setting a modeshift target, both a percentage of trips taken and a target date.
- We recommend that the County DOT consider updating their own standards to be in line with the FHWA standards used by NYSDOT. For example, the FHWA standards for traffic volume thresholds for road diets.
- The responsibility of the maintenance of bike/ped/transit facilities, including snow removal, should be addressed and a solid plan put forth that outlines each entity's role in said maintenance.
- The District Attorney and Sheriff's Offices should receive training regarding the vulnerability of pedestrians and cyclists, and best practices for handling ped/bike/vehicle crashes in the justice system.

## Network Connectivity

In Monroe County, there is a lack of safe and convenient bicycle infrastructure that connects the surrounding towns and suburbs to the City of Rochester and to each other. Monroe County also has [more cyclist crashes per capita](#) than Onondaga County and Erie County.

- As addressed in our previous letter on the Preliminary Network Development; we believe there is potential for connections in less obvious areas that could attract new riders, as many of the proposed routes run along high-stress 35 to 55 mph roadways.
- An additional connectivity recommendation is to examine opportunities to connect neighborhoods through separated infrastructure, such as cut-throughs between neighborhoods that are developed with T-junctions and cul-de-sacs.
- The network should also provide low-stress, comfortable routes to public transit connections, i.e. the RTS Connections Hubs that service the On-Demand zones throughout the County.
- We recommend creating a County Trail co-ordinating body to ensure maintenance and expansions of the County multi-use trail system.

## Infrastructure and Design

In order to increase active transportation in Monroe County, it will be necessary to create the appropriate infrastructure that serves all users regardless of age or ability. We would put forward the following recommendations for consideration:

- The MCDOT change its standards for lane widths for urban arterials from 11ft to 10ft, as recommended by [NACTO](#).
- Install infrastructure that prioritizes pedestrians and cyclists at intersections, including Leading Pedestrian Intervals at all signaled intersections, especially those located within the City of Rochester and village/town centers.
- Specify a timeline and target mileage for “x” amount of bike infrastructure to be built over a number of years. For example, [Bike Ottawa’s 2 - 4 - 10 plan](#).
- “Sharrows”/Shared Lane Markings (SLMs) be explicitly excluded in the definition of bicycle infrastructure that completes our network. This is in line with [NACTO standards](#), which also states that they are not substitutes for bike lanes, cycle tracks or other separation treatments.
- [State Bike Route 5](#) must have dedicated high-comfort bike infrastructure across its entire length.
- All Monroe County buildings and facilities, such as libraries and parks, be equipped with secure and sheltered bike parking.

## Education and Promoting Active Transportation

There are a number of ways we would like to see the County play a role in educating residents about active transportation.

- Monroe County currently has its own safe passage law that requires drivers to give 3 ft of space to cyclists when sharing the road. We recommend placing signage ([like this](#)) in high crash locations reminding motorists that cyclists have a right to the road and to give at least 3 feet of space when passing.
- Ongoing support and funding for the education initiatives to encourage motorists in Monroe County to drive safer and be aware of vulnerable road users, such as the [Drive2Bbetter](#) campaign.
- Incorporate into the Plan strategies the County could employ to encourage school districts to follow the [NYS law](#) that requires school districts to include bike education as part of the curriculum. This could be done through a letter from the County Health Department or Public Safety Department reminding superintendents in each district of said law.
- The County Youth Bureau should offer programs for bike and pedestrian education that would also encourage youth to use active transportation for getting around in a safe manner.
- The Office for the Aging can also play a role in educating and developing programs to encourage seniors to utilize active transportation and public transit, especially for those who can no longer drive or no longer want to drive.

We are excited to see this plan come to life over the next few years, and eager to collaborate with Monroe County to assure that these goals and strategies are reflected. Thank you for taking the time to consider our input.

Sincerely,



Bill Collins,  
Advocacy Committee Chair



Mary Staropoli, MPA

## Interim Executive Director, Reconnect Rochester

And...

Victor Sanchez, President

Pete Nabozny, Vice President

Jackie Marchand, Treasurer

Jason Partyka, Secretary

Erick Stephens

Bree-Ana Dukes

John Lam

Brendan Ryan

Bo Shoemaker

Renée Stetzer