



June 27, 2025

Re: Monroe County 2026-2027 Budget Priorities for Transportation and Mobility

Dear County Executive Bello,

We would like to thank you and Monroe County for your ongoing investments in our transportation infrastructure. **You are demonstrating a commitment to create a safer, more equitable transportation system for all road users, including cyclists, pedestrians, and public transit riders.** As a partner with Monroe County in these efforts, we are reaching out today to share our thoughts on the development of the next Monroe County budget 2026-2027.

County Executive Bello, we appreciate your willingness to meet with us again this year. Furthermore, thank you for accepting our invitation to speak at this May's Bike Month Proclamation where you announced additional investments in bike lanes. Reconnect Rochester also appreciates the recognition of our work through the award you presented to Cody Donahue at the 2025 Traffic Safety Annual Awards Luncheon as well as his appointment to a 3-year term on the Monroe County Traffic Safety Board. Cody looks forward to his service!

As a strategic partner of the county, we have raised our voice to ensure that previously announced funding awarded to Monroe County such as **Safe Streets and Roads for All and TAP-CMAQ-CRP** be maintained over the last six months of federal funding cut threats. We also continue to engage with the **Monroe County Legislature to educate and demonstrate community support** for the advancement of the County Active Transportation Plan and the Countywide Climate Action Plan.

Below, we humbly submit as an input to your budgeting process the financial investments we'd like to see the county make in transportation and sustainability initiatives that support Monroe County residents who use public transit, walking and biking to get around.



Invest in county staffing to achieve plan goals

Having the staff capacity in key departments is going to make the difference to achieving our collective goals. **We encourage you to add staff capacity across key departments to help meet the demands of the critical goals set out by the Active Transportation Plan, the Climate Action Plan, and Traffic Safety Initiatives.**

Build on your commitment to Traffic Safety Initiatives

County Executive Bello, you have **stepped up your traffic safety initiatives** with the Community Traffic Safety Team, the Stop-DWI team, and community education initiatives. **We have celebrated the continued engagement of the MCDOT in implementing safety enhancements** in key projects such as Elmwood Ave and Brighton-Henrietta Town Line Rd. We are excited for the proposed road diets on Bay Rd. and Culver Rd. We recognize and appreciate the role Monroe County plays in engineering and traffic control, among other things, that contribute to safer streets in the City of Rochester and across the county. **We hope to see the county build on this and do even more. Our audience across Monroe County has made it very clear that unsafe roads are a top concern for them and their families.**

Specific to traffic safety in the budget process, we suggest the following:

- Ensure the **Community Traffic Support Team** process is fully resourced to receive traffic concerns from the public and respond to them within three months after submission. Provide GIS expertise to create an public online portal of the safety concerns reported by the public and the responses from the road owner.
- Keep supporting and expanding **school-bus arm cameras** in county school districts to hold drivers who pass a stopped school bus accountable and educate municipal leaders on the importance of automated speed enforcement.
- Consider installing **speed limiter technology** on all county-owned vehicles, which has the benefit of limiting insurance liability, controlling unsafe speeds and reducing driver error, and using less fuel (both a climate and cost saving). There has been successful piloting of this technology on all New York City vehicles.
- Budget for signage updates including **speed limit sign changes** that may result from municipalities reducing their speed limits, which has been growing since NYS granted local control over speed limits in 2022. **See the current list:**
<https://nybc.net/advocacy/strive-for-25>



Enhance walkability and active lifestyles by continuing to invest in sidewalks

Your prior year investments in sidewalks are starting to pay off. We see enthusiasm and commitment to making Monroe County a better place to walk, providing transportation and recreation opportunities, especially for those who do not own a car or cannot drive due to age or health conditions. **We encourage you to recommit to funding sidewalk improvements in the county. We are pleased to see Thomas Ave. in Irondequoit receive a proposed sidewalk. However, it is very unfortunate that a solution cannot be reached to equip Calkins Rd. with a sidewalk during the upcoming Monroe County road project. We will continue to advocate with the Town of Henrietta to match county sidewalk funds.**

Aggressively implement the County Active Transportation Plan (CATP), within and beyond capital plans

We are closely following the GTC-supported CATP implementation plan study, which will identify which county roads should implement active transportation improvements. Our budget request is that the **capital plan be aligned immediately with the outcome of this study and that priority roads be moved up in the capital planning schedule, as allowed by existing conditions**. The additional request is to identify funds to make immediate or temporary improvements to county roads that are identified as eligible so that improvements can be done sooner than a capital improvement project. Our hope is that the current 4 miles of new bike lanes in the MCDOT budget will be increased substantially to build out the active transportation network throughout the county in next year's budget once the CATP Implementation Study is in hand.



Budget for active traffic safety communication and education campaigns

We will continue to partner with the county on the **drive2Bbetter campaign and other traffic safety education programs**. We are excited for additional funds coming to these programs from grant sources. We would like to

ensure continuity and fidelity of the campaigns by ensuring continued county budget



support for this work. Reconnect Rochester has printed hundreds of drive2Bbetter bike license plates at our own expense. They are very popular! In addition, we believe the county can help **promote biking and walking as options to key events and destinations throughout Monroe County in promotional materials**. Cyclists visit our region from around the world every year and this is a potential economic boost to the community - if it's promoted.

Invest in land use research/data to identify housing gaps that can be filled while building walkable mixed-use neighborhoods

Many cities and counties have already invested in studies to better understand opportunities for developments that are dynamic, mixed-use, accessible by transit and active transportation and create revenues for local municipalities. We continue to face fiscal challenges because of land use patterns that spread our development out over larger and larger areas of the county. **Monroe County has the opportunity to learn how to build more housing and create vibrant neighborhoods that generate tax revenues by investing in a land use/parcel study similar to ones conducted by Urban 3** (<https://youtu.be/SmQomKcfYZY?feature=shared>).

Conduct a study on a county-wide carshare program

Many of our county's jobs and amenities are a 20-30 minute drive from home and over 70% of county residents leave home and travel to a different municipality to go to their job. This puts people who don't own a car at a significant time disadvantage. If a carshare, especially one that focused on electric, plug-in hybrid and hybrid vehicles, served all of Monroe County, this could address transportation barriers to work, school and amenities. **We would like to encourage the county to work with GTC to conduct a UPWP study on carsharing systems.**

Incentivize towns to conduct trail maintenance and upgrades, including snow and ice control in a coordinated fashion. We would like to see specific budget funding to maintain and upgrade trails in Monroe County. Trails can serve as important connections within the active transportation network, and in order to achieve the vision set out in the County Active Transportation Plan it will be crucial to keep these corridors accessible year round. Currently, trail maintenance is left to each individual municipality and dedicated volunteers like Genesee Regional Offroad Cyclists. **We would encourage**



the county to look into a unified trail maintenance system that allows economies of scale on maintenance tasks.

Put in place internal Human Resource policies and practices to incentivize county employees to choose multimodal, car-lite ways to commute to work

We think Monroe County can follow [Erie County's lead](#) in becoming an employer that encourages transit, bikeshare, and walking to work. Your main office is in a transit rich area with increasingly safe and accessible bike and walking infrastructure. The county can offer benefits such as the RTS Universal Pass to its employees at a nominal cost as the City of Rochester and the UR have done. Additionally, you can work with your facilities department and HR to invest in secure, sheltered bike parking for employees at all locations to encourage cycling to their job.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our input.

Sincerely,

Bill Collins
Advocacy Committee Chair

Cody Donahue
Co-Executive Director

And...

Mary Staropoli, MPA, Co-Executive Director
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