TOOLE
DESIGN

2 OLIVER STREET
SUITE 305
BOSTON, MA 02109

617.619.9910
TOOLEDESIGN.COM

MEMORANDUM

April 7, 2023 (originally submitted April 14, 2022)

To: Monroe County CATP Team
From: Toole Design and Bergmann
Project: Monroe County Countywide Active Transportation Plan

Re: Public Engagement Plan

Introduction and Purpose of the PEP

An equitable, inclusive, and data-driven approach to public engagement will be the backbone of the Monroe County Countywide Active Transportation Plan (CATP). To guide the development of the CATP, Toole Design, and Bergmann (the Project Team) will conduct public and stakeholder engagement throughout the project. This Public Engagement Plan (PEP) sets a foundation for initiating this work, but the Project Team encourages a flexible approach that can align engagement efforts with important events and opportunities, and allows the Project Team to rework its approach if critical voices are not being heard.

The PEP outlines key stakeholders, communication methods, a schedule for public events, and the roles and responsibilities of the Project Team, County staff, and the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). It is informed by our best practices and local knowledge and is tailored to respond to the context of communities in Monroe County. While this PEP is focused on outward-facing engagement with the public, the project will also be informed by significant stakeholder engagement from the Project Advisory Committee and through stakeholder interviews. These touchpoints will also be essential for crafting an implementable and action-oriented plan.

Engagement Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of the public engagement process is to understand longstanding and emerging active transportation concerns that residents have regarding their community, public perceptions related to this or other projects, and local dynamics that have an impact on decision making. The Project Team intends to navigate these dynamics to better address concerns, manage expectations, and provide recommendations that are responsive to the needs of Monroe County communities. To accomplish this, the proposed goals and objectives of the PEP are to:

- Connect with and learn from those most impacted by existing conditions and proposed changes;
- Make engagement easy, accessible, and relevant to stakeholders and the community;
- Leverage opportunities to coordinate engagement with the Monroe County Comprehensive Plan Update, the Monroe County Climate Action Plan, and the Rochester Active Transportation Master Plan; and
- Acknowledge the uncertainty of the pandemic and varying comfort levels relative to in-person engagement.

The Project Team believes these proposed goals and objectives will help build a shared understanding of and vision for active transportation and a plan for Monroe County that will create a safe, healthy, efficient, connected, and equity-focused pedestrian and bicycle network for people of all ages, backgrounds, and mobility levels.

Messaging

To set the tone for engagement and dialogue with the community and with stakeholders, it is important that the County and Project Team deliver a consistent and compelling message throughout the planning effort.

Intro/Icebreaker/Warm-Up

To get everyone thinking about the big picture, the Project Team will begin by asking PAC members to finish the following sentence *(sample responses provided)*:

- **"When all the objectives and related projects outlined in the CATP are complete, active transportation in Monroe County will…"**
    - *be safer and more accessible*
    - *be an easier choice to make*
    - *be more efficient and more attractive*
    - *improve community and regional connectivity*
    - *better connect us to parks and greenspaces in the region*
    - *better connect us to transit*

Primary Message

Next, the Project Team will explore community priorities – in collaboration with target audiences – through the following statements that must be 1) **clear** – using common words, and short, action-oriented sentences, 2) **compassionate** – through honesty, authenticity, and sincerity, and 3) **confident** – to inspire and encourage possibilities that help create an accessible community for all.

1. **A Countywide Active Transportation Plan…**
    a. is a vision that outlines goals and strategies to support biking and walking in the community.
    b. includes projects and programs to enhance safety, create a connected network, and make walking and biking safer for people.
2. **With your help, the Countywide Active Transportation Plan will…**
    a. identify the challenges and opportunities for active transportation in Monroe County.
    b. set priorities for the projects.
    c. represent your needs in the plan's strategies and recommendations.
3. **It's important to you because…**
    a. it makes community more attractive to visitors.
    b. it creates healthier options for people.
    c. it makes the community more inclusive.
    d. it reduces air pollution and creates a quieter environment.
    e. it benefits local small businesses.
4. **This work is being done now because…**
    a. the County wants to create a vision for the future in support of improving biking and walking.
    b. decision makers are on board.
    c. there is a need to craft proactive approach for the future of active transportation.
5. **You can help by…**
    a. participating in surveys, workshops, and online engagement.

b. being honest about the challenges currently facing the County, in general, and in your community.
c. being open-minded about change.
6. **Sum it up in one message:**
a. The CATP is a long-range plan and vision to make Monroe County and its communities a better place to bike and walk.

Target Audiences

In support of the goal to realize an equitable, inclusive, and data-driven approach to public engagement, Toole Design has taken a first step of reviewing census data to get a sense of the general demographic makeup of Monroe County (first column). As the engagement process unfolds, it will be important for the County and Project Team to keep track of who is being engaged in this process to identify where gaps are, and what may need to change (second column). For additional demographic data, use Data USA.

Category	Census %	Survey %
Race		
White	70%	-
Multiracial	2.17%	-
Black	14.6%	-
Asian	3.54%	-
American Indian/Native Alaskan	< 1%	-
Hispanic	9.18%	-
Sex		
Female	51.9%	-
Male	48.3%	-
Nonconforming	-	-
Age		
< 18	20.6%	-
18 - 24	9.7%	-
25 - 34	14.3%	-
35 - 44	11.5%	-
45 - 54	12.2%	-
55 - 65	13.8%	-
Above 66	17.9%	-
Car Ownership by Household		
0	5.1%	-
1	22.6%	-
2	46.4%	-
3+	25.87%	-
Physical Limitations		
Hard of hearing/Deaf	-	-
Low Vision/Blind	-	-
Use a wheelchair, walker, or other mobility device	-	-
Other (Including mobility limitations)	-	-

The following table begins to identify communities and groups whose lived experiences are fundamental to realizing an equitable and inclusive active transportation plan due to historical trends of exclusion and marginalization. This is not an exhaustive list and can be updated over the course of the project. Identifying individual leaders, trusted organizations, and gathering locations for each population should be a priority, as they

are important points of contact. Where there are gaps in information, the County and Project Team must work together to fill those gaps.

Priority Population	Contact Details
Example: People experiencing homelessness	*Aisha Saunders with Homes for All – Susan knows her* *People tend to gather on the edge of the trail by the river at Livingston Avenue – Robert and his bike group stop there sometimes to pass out socks and gloves* *Summit United Methodist Church Feeds people every Saturday from 11a-1p*

Key Questions

The following are a first pass at key questions to help frame future conversations with stakeholders and the public at different phases of the project. It is possible and highly likely that additional questions will be included based on how the project naturally evolves. **NOTE:** As currently phrased, these questions are meant to capture what the County and Project Team may wish to know. To the extent that these questions will also be presented to the community, they may need to be rephrased to eliminate any technical words and be more accessible/understood.

1. **Existing Conditions**
    a. What are the primary challenges and barriers to active transportation in Monroe County?
    b. What destinations currently generate active transportation trips?
    c. What gaps exist in the active transportation network?
    d. Are there demographic disparities in how county residents access bicycling and walking opportunities?
2. **Proposed Network, Plan Recommendations, etc.**
    a. What is the public's vision for Monroe County's active transportation network?
    b. What are the top priorities for improving bicycling and walking in Monroe County?

Team Responsibilities

Bergmann will serve as engagement lead for this project, given their extensive experience developing ATPs for municipalities in Monroe County, and their familiarity with its communities. Bergmann will ensure that the County's plan knits together and aligns with the local planning work that predates this effort. Toole Design will support Bergmann in content development and staffing. Generally, the County's role will be to review and vet content and strategies, take the lead on advertising engagement events through County and city/town websites and social media channels, and staff events. As a result, consistent and clear communication between the Project Team and the County will be needed to effectively coordinate all engagement tasks.

Engagement Strategy	Project Team's Role	Monroe County's Role
General Materials	Develop language for project website, create a paper flyer, etc.	Review/vet materials
Online Engagement	Design, host, and update website Provide content updates *(frequency TBD)*	Review/vet materials
Surveys	Develop print and online surveys	Review/vet materials
Public Workshops	Create materials (board, posters), staff events	Review/vet materials, invite community members and key stakeholders through appropriate channels, staff events w/ project team and support facilitation
Pop-Up Events	Create materials in collaboration with the County *(feedback forms, interview questions, brief presentations, etc.)*	Review/vet materials, identify prime locations, advertise on County/city website/social media channels, staff event w/ Project Team and support facilitation

Engagement Methods and Schedule

	Mar. '22	Apr. '22	May '22	Jun. '22	Jul. '22	Aug. '22	Sept. '22	Oct. '22	Nov. '22	Dec. '22	Jan. '23	Feb. '23	Mar. '23	Apr. '23	May '23	Jun. '23
PEP	▓															
Online		▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	
Workshops and Events (In-Person)			▓	▓			▓	▓					▓	▓	▓	
Focus Groups			▓	▓			▓						▓	▓	▓	

Creative strategies are needed to effectively reach the community. With assistance from Monroe County, Bergmann, and the PAC, Toole Design has identified unique outreach strategies that will cast a broad geographical and social net for soliciting feedback, disseminating information, and engaging in dialogue with the public. Most are designed to specifically solicit input from an audience while several are intended primarily to communicate with audiences and drive them toward other outreach materials. Strategies are further detailed below.

Online Engagement

Intent

The primary online engagement strategy will be a project website from which project-specific content can be hosted, such as surveys, meeting notes, photos, videos, etc. Websites are easily created, updated, accessible to members of the public with reliable internet access, and can serve as a hub for information related to the plan.

Budgeting for expenses related to driving traffic to the site, as well as the creation of interesting design elements that are informative and easy to engage once people arrive, make websites a more valuable engagement tool. The goal of the project website is to provide meaningful updates on the plan in transparent and accessible ways for stakeholders.

Approach

The Project Team will draft content for the project website, in addition to formatting them for print, when applicable. While the site will be in English, some print materials will have both English and Spanish versions.. Through surveys and intake forms, the website will allow the Project Team to gather information on:

- Participants' generalized demographics;
- Generalized location of home, work, school, shopping, and other regular activities;
- Mode(s) used to travel to these locations;
- Additional locations participants would like to access by walking and biking; and
- Barriers to walking, bicycling, and taking the bus, including social and economic barriers and locations of safety concerns.

Surveys (Online and In-Person/Intercept)

Intent

Surveys are an effective tool to gather initial feedback before the plan, and to gauge reactions after the plan has been in place for some time to track shifting public opinion. In addition to gathering information, online surveys are effective educational tools because they explain specific situations, such as safety challenges. However, they do not provide opportunities for dialogue. As a result, it's important to use plain language and ask understandable and interesting questions.

Approach

Surveys are typically conducted electronically, though paper versions should be distributed to areas that under-resourced populations can access. These locations may include grocery stores, libraries, community centers, transit stops, and near newly built or proposed projects.

The Project Team will distribute printed surveys at the pop-up events. The Project Team will work with the County and its communities to identify prominent locations for surveys to be distributed – such as libraries, community centers, municipal buildings, and local businesses. The Project Team will work with staff at the city and county levels to ensure these surveys are collected and returned for tabulation and analysis.

Public Workshops

Intent

Public workshops create opportunities for attendees to receive information from exhibits, displays, handouts, slideshows, video displays, and through one-on-one or small group discussion with the Project Team. By design, these are large events that are meant to spread awareness of the project and check in with the community to provide updates at key moments in the process. The goal is to cast a wide net, advertise these events through local and familiar channels, and invite as many community members and stakeholders as possible. The first public workshop will focus on needs assessment, and the second will focus on plan recommendations.

Approach

Public workshops are an effective engagement strategy because they do not typically require a formal agenda, presentation, or open microphone. Attendees can review all materials at their leisure, ask questions, and discuss

the issues with the Project Team, and can come and go as they please. This casual and informal environment encourages participants to provide input directly to decisionmakers.

These events are typically two to four hours during the late afternoon into early evening to maximize attendance. It is important to consider that late afternoon and evening times are difficult for people who do not have traditional work schedules and may have parenting responsibilities. As a result, it may be necessary to provide childcare or children activities and/or alternative channels to provide feedback.

Pop-Up Events

Intent

By leveraging existing events or popular destinations, the Project Team will engage a wide swath of the community, especially those who might not be able to participate in online or traditional forms of engagement. Pop-ups include a booth with display boards that explain the plan's purpose, handouts, interactive activities, and various platforms for soliciting public feedback. They can take place at special events, ongoing community life, or as part of daily destinations. Locations to consider in Monroe County are shown in the following table:

Event	Timing
Rochester Public Market	Year round every Saturday, 8:00-3:00
Brighton Farmers' Market	Every Sunday, May – October, 9:00-1:00
Lilac Festival	May 6-22
Fairport Canal Days	June 3-5
Pop-up Pride Day at the Zoo	June 11, 5:00-7:00
Rochester Street Films	June 14
Jazz Festival	June 17-25
Pride Day at Beach	July 2, 5:00-9:00
Corn Hill Festival	July 9-10
Hilton Apple Fest	October 1-2
Genesee Country Village and Museum Fall Festival & Agricultural Fair	October
ROC Holiday Village	December
Pink Ribbon Walk & Run, Genesee Valley Park	May 7
Greek Fest	June 2-5
Walk MS, Genesee Valley Park	May 1
Golisano Stroll for Strong Kids, Genesee Valley Park	June
Tuesday at the River	Every first Tuesday
Rochester Marathon, Frontier Field	September
Main Street Pittsford Food Truck and Music Fest	September 10, 12:00-9:00
Other Farmers Market: Chili, Irondequoit, Mendon, Henrietta	
Puerto Rican Festival	
Clarissa Street Reunion	
Erie Canal Trail	
Frontier Field Red Wings game	
Unity Ride East	Tuesday evenings in the summer
Unity Ride West	Thursday evenings in the summer
Flower City Feeling Good bike rides	Wednesdays in the summer
ROC Freedom Riders	

Event	Timing
Jordan's Health Front Porch Festival	August 3
La Marketa on North Clinton	
Rochester and Museum Center Climate Action Days	May 3-4
Grand Opening of the new area in Fairport	May 20
National Trails Day	June 4
Brockport Low Bridge High Water	June 11
Adirondack Mountain Club Day at Mendon Ponds	June 11

Monroe County staff will provide additional public workshops to specific community groups, as needed.

Approach

The pop-up events will focus on bringing residents and stakeholders into the process of crafting the plan through hands-on activities and other interactive content. Using folding tables, easels, clipboards, maps, and other materials, pop-up events are mobile community meetings that can be set up virtually anywhere. (*NOTE: Locations TBD in partnership with Monroe County and PAC.*)

Staff at the pop-up events will use a variety of activities to solicit and record feedback. These activities will optimize collecting feedback from community members in a short amount of time while informing participants of the overall planning process. Toole Design will develop all activities and materials to be used at the events, including:

- Paper versions of the surveys;
- Maps that allow people to give spatial feedback on challenging locations, destinations they would like to reach by walking or bicycling, and important routes for projects; and
- Activities that help envision possibilities for redesigned streets given real constraints.

The Project Team will attend up to eight (8) pop-up workshops and will create the necessary materials for each event, which will also be available for Monroe County and/or its communities to use at additional events as appropriate with the project schedule. If additional workshops are conducted, typed notes will be prepared by the County and/or its communities and provided to the Project Team.

Since we will be unable to attend every event listed above, **a key task will be to identify which events are a priority for Project Team attendance, and which ones may be covered by PAC members, County staff, or other key stakeholders.** Decisions should be based on the number of people expected at each event, specific demographics groups that are targeted or involved in these events, and geographies where the events take place. **This task should occur within in the next two weeks so we can begin planning logistics and scheduling.**

During the first PAC meeting and in subsequent conversations, PAC members embraced their role as collaborators and champions of the CATP. The County should leverage this enthusiasm as much as possible, and secure commitments from individual PAC members to cover events for which the Project Team will not be present.

Key Stakeholders

County

- Monroe County

Project Advisory Committee

- County Legislature

- MC Planning and Development
- Genesee Transportation Council
- MC Dept. of Parks
- MCDOT
- NYSDOT
- Empire State Trail/Erie Canalway Trail
- Regional Transit Service

- Center for Disability Rights
- Rochester Accessible Adventures
- Common Ground Health
- Reconnect Rochester
- Black Girls Do Bike: Rochester
- Rochester-Monroe County Aging Alliance

- City of Rochester, DES
- Suburban Municipality: Town of Henrietta
- Suburban Municipality: Village of Brockport
- Suburban Municipality: Town of Brighton
- Suburban Municipality: Town of Greece

Cities, Towns, and Villages

- *Brighton
- *Brockport
- *Chili
- Churchville
- Clarkson
- East Rochester
- Fairport
- Gates
- *Greece
- Hamlin
- *Henrietta

- Hilton
- Honeoye Falls
- *Irondequoit
- Mendon
- Ogden
- Parma
- *Penfield
- *Perinton
- Town and Village of Pittsford
- Riga

- Rochester
- Rush
- Scottsville
- Spencerport
- Sweden
- Town and Village of Webster
- Wheatland

indicates cities and towns with ATPs (or similar) completed within the last 10 years

Other

- Genesee Transportation Council
- Monroe County Office for the Aging
- Community- and Faith-Based Organizations
- Local Business and Commercial/Retail Districts
- Schools and Higher Education Institutions
  - Monroe Community College (MCC)
  - Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)
  - University of Rochester
  - St. John Fisher College
  - Nazareth College
  - SUNY Brockport
  - Roberts Wesleyan College
  - *Grade Schools
- Neighborhood Associations

Further discussion needed.