

December 13, 2013

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor of New York State  
NYS State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Re: Dedicated Funding for Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure

Dear Governor Cuomo:

The adoption of the Complete Streets law in 2011 has developed significant momentum for pedestrian and bicycle projects at the local level in our state. Communities across New York are eager to invest in pedestrian and bicycle projects, knowing that these projects improve their community's quality of life, promote a healthier population, revitalize downtowns, increase real estate values and business activity, provide more equitable and affordable transportation choices, and reduce air pollution.

**Unfortunately, recent reductions in funding, on a state and federal level, greatly reduce the ability of communities to realize their goals.**

Since passage of the state's Complete Streets law, the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) has substantially reduced funding for pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure. Through the Statewide Transportation Improvements Program (STIP), NYSDOT plans to spend 40% less on pedestrian and bicycling-only projects across the state over the next four years – equating to a \$100 million reduction over the planning period. Road and bridge projects that include a small portion of pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure will be reduced by 60% under the STIP (excluding major bridge projects like the Tappan Zee Bridge).<sup>1</sup>

In part, lower funding for this infrastructure is the result of a 30% reduction (\$12 million annually) in funding for pedestrian and bicycling projects in the most recently adopted federal transportation law, MAP-21. While the state cannot control the level of funding coming from the federal government, these reductions also stem from NYSDOT's new Preservation First policy, which categorically excludes new pedestrian and bicycling projects from 80% of the transportation dollars spent in this state.

While we support fix-it-first policies like Preservation First as the most efficient use of limited resources, there is an inherent bias to this policy against pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure given that 1) so many of the state's roadways lack adequate pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure now and 2) it is easier and most cost-effective to incorporate facilities such as sidewalks and bike lanes when roads are being repaired under Preservation First.

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<sup>1</sup>According to an analysis by Tri-State Transportation Campaign of the draft 2014-2017 State Transportation Improvement Program: <http://blog.tstc.org/2013/10/23/nys-passes-complete-streets-law-then-slashes-funding-for-pedestrian-and-bicycle-infrastructure/>

The reduction in funding adds to the peril pedestrians and bicyclists face on New York's streets. With the highest fatality rate in the nation for pedestrians and bicyclists, 27%, the state is only spending a few pennies on the dollar to protect the most vulnerable users of our roads.

**We urge you to take two essential steps to help rectify the recent funding cuts:**

- Establish a dedicated line in the 2014-15 state budget for pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure, with a minimum additional commitment of \$20 million annually over the next 5 years. This dedicated line item would restore funding for pedestrian and bicycling projects into NYSDOT's next capital program and will help to assure that these types projects don't get lost amidst the larger, more expensive transportation infrastructure needs of the state.
- Direct NYSDOT to revise its Preservation First policy so that it does not exclude new pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure projects. This would ensure that this policy is consistent with the intent of the state's Complete Streets law.

While we acknowledge that New York State has projects underway that seek to improve opportunities for safe walking and bicycling in select corridors, our contention is that the effort is not commensurate with the demonstrated and growing need. Connecticut and New Jersey offer financial assistance to municipalities wanting to implement such infrastructure. We hope New York State will follow their example. Doing so enables cities, towns, villages, and counties to take the spirit of the state Complete Streets law and turn it into measurable outcomes.

For the good of the economy and the health, safety, and quality of life of all New Yorkers, we urge you to increase New York State's financial commitment to pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure. We look forward to your response, and to discussing this issue further with you in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,

**New Yorkers for Active Transportation**, a coalition led by:

Veronica Vanterpool  
*Executive Director*  
Tri-State Transportation  
Campaign

Robin Dropkin  
*Executive Director*  
Parks & Trails New  
York

Josh Wilson  
*Executive Director*  
New York Bicycling  
Coalition

**And joined by the undersigned organizations:**

Peter Fleischer, *Executive Director*  
Empire State Future

Paul Steely-White, *Executive Director*  
Transportation Alternatives

Beth Finkel, *State Director*  
AARP

Nelson Ronsvalle, *President*  
Canalway Trails Association New York

Justin Booth, *Executive Director*  
GO Bike Buffalo

Eric Alexander, *Executive Director*  
Vision Long Island

Richard DeSarra, *President*  
Rochester Cycling Alliance

Duff Bailey, *Executive Director*  
Bike Walk Alliance of Westchester &  
Putnam

Megan Cea, *Secretary*  
Westchester Cycle Club

Nancy Brous, *Steering Committee*  
Hudson River Watertrail Association

Steven Rice, *Chairman*  
Ulster County Trails Advisory  
Committee

Kevin Smith, *Chairman*  
Woodstock Land Conservancy

Judy Bechard, *Steering Committee*  
Plattsburgh Acquiring Safe Streets

Chris Maron, *Executive Director*  
Champlain Area Trails

Bob Yaro, *President*  
Regional Plan Association

Manna Jo Green, *Environmental Action  
Director*  
Hudson River Sloop Clearwater

Edward Willett, *Chairperson*  
Bike Friendly Kingston

Dick Beamish, *Co-Founder*  
Adirondack Recreational Trail  
Advocates

Julianne Hart, *NYS Government  
Relations Director*  
American Heart Association

Debra Muratore, *Planning Committee*  
Penfield Green Initiative

Theresa Lou Bowick, *Founder*  
Conkey Cruisers

Victoria Amstrong,  
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Human Services Coalition of Tompkins  
County

Dorothy Willsey, *President*  
National Abolition Hall of Fame &  
Museum

Harvey Kliman, *President*  
Kliman Technology

Cheryl Longyear, *Planning Board Clerk*  
Town of Montezuma

Nelson Ronsvalle, *Grant Coordinator*  
Town of Halfmoon

Susan Russell, *Chairwoman*  
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Mike Governale, *Executive Director*  
Reconnect Rochester

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Northern Westchester Energy Action  
Consortium

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New York League Conservation Voters

Nancy Proyect, *President*  
Orange County Citizens Foundation

Rich Schrader, *NYS Legislative Director*  
Natural Resource Defense Council

Rick Magder, *Executive Director*  
Groundwork Hudson Valley

David Beebe, *President*  
Camillus Canal Society

Ann Roberti, *Founding Member*  
Andes Works

Adele Douglas, *Vice President*  
Friends of the Little Ausable River Trail

Edward Laraway, *President*  
Montezuma Historical Society

Edward Holmes, *President*  
Friends of the Genesee Valley Greenway

Fred Mastroianni, *Vice President*  
Greenman-Pederson, Inc.

Alan Vincent, *Board Member*  
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Linda Vishnesky, *Representative*  
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Glenn Hoagland, *Executive Director*  
Mohonk Preserve, Inc.

Michael Vitti, *President*  
Long Island Greenways and Healthy  
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Anne Bergantz, *President*  
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Howard Halstead, *Founding Member*  
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Hike Trail

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Concerned Long Island Mountain  
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Nina Orville, *Executive Director*  
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Peggy Shepard, *Executive Director*  
WeAct for Environmental Justice

## **COALITION MEMBER LISTS**

### **New York State Transportation Equity Alliance**

Abyssinian Development Corporation • Action Toward Independence Adirondack Council • Albany Bicycle Coalition • American Lung Assoc. in New York Arbor Hill Environmental Justice Asthma Free School Zone • ATU Local 1321 • ATU Local 726 • ATU Local 923 • BCID • Bedford Audubon Society • Belmont Housing Resources for WNY Beyond Oil NYC • Brooklyn Greenway Initiative • Capital Region Transit Advocates (CRTA) • CCCEH • Center for Disability Rights • Center for Working Families • Citizen Action NY • Citizens Regional Transit Corporation • City Council • Clean New York • Community League of the Heights • Community Voices Heard • East Coast Greenway Alliance • EDF • El Puente • Empire State Future • Environmental Advocates of New York • Environmental Justice Action Group of Western New York Fifth Ave Committee • For A Better Bronx(xx) • FXFOWLE Architects LLP • Good Jobs NY • Harlem Childrens Zone • Healthy Community Alliance • Highbridge Community Life Center • Hudson River Sloop Clearwater • League of Woman Voters New York State • Livable Streets Education • Long Island Progressive Coalition • Membership hopefuls • Metro Justice of Rochester • Metro New York Health Care for All • Mothers on the Move • Neighborhood Network • Neighbors Allied for Good Growth • NeighborWorks Rochester, Healthy Blocks Initiative • New York Academy of Medicine • New York Bicycling Coalition • New York City Environmental Justice Alliance • New York Jobs with Justice • New York Lawyers for Public Interest • New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV) • New York Public Interest Research Group, The Straphangers Campaign New York State Apollo Alliance • Niagara Heritage Partnership •

North Shore Waterfront Conservancy of Staten Island • Nos Quedamos CDC • NRDC • NY County Acad. of family Phys. • Project for Public Spaces • Public Health Solutions • PUSH Buffalo • Rail\*Train\*Ecology\*Cycling • Reconnect Rochester • Recycle a Bicycle • Regional Plan Association • Resources for Children with Special Needs • RightRides • Rudin Center • Rudin Center • Scenic Hudson • Self Advocacy Assoc. of NYS • Sierra Club New York City Group • Sinergia • St. Alliance for Health • Sustainable Flatbush • Sustainable Hudson Valley • Sustainable Long Island • Sustainable South Bronx • Syracuse First • TEN • The Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York • The Morningside Heights/West Harlem Sanitation Coalition • The Partnership for Onondaga Creek • The Point CDC • The Pratt Center • The Westchester-Putnam Bike Walk Alliance • Transportation Alternatives • Tri-State Transportation Campaign • TWU Local 100 • UPROSE • Urban Agenda • Urban Design Lab, Earth Institute at Columbia University Vision Long Island • VOICE Buffalo • WE ACT for Environmental Justice • West Harlem Group Assistance Ydanis City Council • Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice

## **Empire State Future**

Adirondack Council • American Farmland Trust • American Institute of Architects – New York Chapter American Institute of Architects – New York State • American Planning Association – New York Upstate Chapter Audubon – New York • Bike Walk Alliance of Westchester & Putnam • Binghamton Regional Sustainability Coalition • Building Performance Lab- CUNY • The Catskill Center • Centerstate Corporation for Economic Opportunity • East Coast Greenway Alliance • Environmental Advocates of New York • FXFowle Architects, PC • Green Options Buffalo • Green Village Consulting – Rochester • Hunt Engineers, Architects and Land Surveyors, PC. IBI Group • Jonathan Rose Companies • Landmark Society of Western New York • League of Women Voters of New York State • The Leyland Alliance • Local Initiative Support Corporation, Buffalo • Mid-Hudson Pattern for Progress • Natural Resources Defense Council • The Nature Conservancy – New York • NeighborWorks – Rochester • New York Bicycling Coalition • New York Civic • New York League of Conservation Voters • New York Planning Federation • New York State Association of County Health Officials • New York State Urban Council • Orange County Citizens' Foundation • Parks & Trails New York • Partners for a Livable Western New York • Partnership for the Public Good- Buffalo • Preservation League of New York State • Project For Public Spaces • Regional Plan Association • Rochester Regional Community Design Center • Scenic Hudson • Sierra Club – Atlantic Chapter • Smart Growth America • Sustainable Hudson Valley • Sustainable Long Island • Sustainable Saratoga • Sustainable South Bronx • Sustainable Tompkins • Syracuse First • The Stakeholders, Inc. • Ticonderoga Revitalization Alliance • Tri-state Transportation Campaign • University Transportation Research Center, Region II (UTRC) Urban Land Institute – New York District Council • Vision Long Island • WE ACT for Environmental Justice • Wildlife Conservation Society • W X Y architecture + urban design

## **Long Island Lobby Coalition**

AARP • American Communities Institute at Dowling College • American Planning Association—LI Chapter • Child Care Council of Nassau • Child Care Council of Suffolk • Citizens Campaign for the Environment • Citizens Campaign for the Environment • Concern for Independent Living • Concerned Citizens of the Plainview-Old Bethpage Community • Coram Civic Association • Cornerstone Church of God in Christ • Dowling College • Elmont Chamber of Commerce • Empire State Future • EmPower Solar • Friends of the Bay • Glen Cove Business Improvement District • Good Harvest Financial Group • Greater Smithtown Chamber of Commerce • Greenman-Pedersen Inc. • HIA-LI • Hicksville Chamber of Commerce • Huntington Township Chamber of Commerce • Laible and Fitzsimmons Inc. • Lake Ronkonkoma Civic Organization • Long Island Business Council • Long Island Federation of Labor • Long Island Hispanic Chamber of Commerce • Long Island Housing Partnership • Long Island Minority AIDS Coalition • Long Island Software and Technology Network • Longwood Alliance • Mastic Beach Property Owners Association • Mastics-Moriches-Shirley Community Library • Middle Island Civic Association • Nassau Council of Chambers of Commerce • Neighborhood Network • New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health • New York League of Conservation Voters • Plainview/Old Bethpage Chamber of Commerce • Renaissance Downtowns • Roel Resources • Save the Forge River • Selden Civic Association • Signature Organization • South Yaphank Civic Association • Sustainability Institute at Molloy College • Them TV • Tri-State Transportation Campaign • Uniondale Community Council • US Green Building Council Long Island Chapter • Verizon • Vision Long Island • Wading River Civic Association • Workforce Development Group • Youth of Ethical Societies Long Island Chapter

Cc:

Karen Rae, *Secretary for Transportation*

Janet Ho, *Assistant Secretary for Transportation*

Jeanine Thompson, *Assistant Secretary for Transportation*

Joan McDonald, *Commissioner of NYS Department of Transportation*

Senator Charles Fuschillo Jr.

Assemblyman David Gantt