



April 5, 2021

To: Governor Andrew Cuomo
Matthew Driscoll, Executive Director, NYS Thruway Authority
Majority Leader Senator Andrea Stewart Cousins
Senator Pete Harkham
Assemblyman Tom Abinanti
Majority Leader Senator Charles Schumer
Senator Kirsten Gillibrand
Representative Mondaire Jones
Representative Jamal Bowman

Re: Westchester Route 9 Project

Sustainable Westchester strongly supports the proposed shared use path and other safety and pedestrian improvements along Route 9 as envisioned by the Route 9 Active Transportation Conceptual Design Plan. This project would connect the Route 9 corridor and five communities along it--Hastings, Dobbs Ferry, Irvington, Tarrytown and Sleepy Hollow--to the newly opened bike/pedestrian pathway on the Mario M. Cuomo bridge, as well as to each other.

This project is the product of years of sustained collaboration among these five villages--who have each twice enacted supporting resolutions. To date, the project has benefited from the involvement of hundreds of local residents who discussed and had input into the plan through multiple workshops and open houses as well as a community survey.

Under the auspices of Sustainable Westchester, this project received initial funding in the form of a New New York Bridge grant from the NYS Thruway Authority. That funding produced a comprehensive conceptual design for the project performed by the top-flight transportation and mobility planning firm Nelson Nygaard that showed the feasibility of the plan for this route. Since then, the Intermunicipal Stakeholder Committee has held a briefing with NYSDOT Region 8, and has been engaged in collaborative discussions ever since.

Route 9 is not just a highway--it effectively functions as the main street of these communities. 23 schools are situated along or very nearby Route 9 in this corridor, making safety concerns paramount. Many families fear to send their children to school walking or by bike, and defensively drive them to school, in turn further increasing congestion and danger, creating a vicious cycle. This project seeks to reverse that cycle by creating a safe and inviting environment for non-motorized travel that can in turn ease traffic and safety concerns for others.

Sustainable Westchester believes that the Route 9 active transportation project would have multiple, self-reinforcing benefits for the community and beyond it:

- Safety--protecting pedestrians and cyclists
- Health--encouraging exercise and reducing emissions as vehicle trips are displaced by walking and cycling for short trips
- Economic Development--riders and pedestrians are more likely to patronize local stores and businesses; and connecting these communities to the MMC Bridge Shared Use Path will put the area on the map as a tourism and day-trip destination.
- Mass Transit--the plan includes improving the accessibility of the BeeLine Bus along the corridor
- Climate goals--helping people into alternative modes of transportation is entirely consistent with and supportive of New York's leading role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

We know this project is not only possible, but would be a game changer for the region, leading to all the beneficial developments cited above. This will be a nationally visible project that will put New York in a favorable spotlight and demonstrate its leadership. With new sources of funding likely to become available for projects of this type through the anticipated Transportation and Infrastructure bill and other programs, we encourage support for this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nina Orville". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nina" and last name "Orville" clearly distinguishable.

Nina Orville
Executive Director