

January 31, 2022

Honorable Kathy Hochul  
Governor, New York State

Re: Updating bicycle facility design guidelines

Dear Governor Hochul:

We write you to urge the State Department of Transportation to update the Bicycle Facility Design<sup>1</sup> section of their *Highway Design Manual*. In the mean time, have NYSDOT readily recognize modern guidelines. These actions will help advance important local projects.

The State DOT's existing specifications are targeted toward the small number of people who are already confident cycling with motor vehicles. **Modern standards aim to get cautious people cycling for local trips.**

Two examples of new manuals are the USDOT's *Separated Bike Lane Planning and Design Guide*,<sup>2</sup> and NACTO's *Urban Bikeway Design Guide*.<sup>3</sup>

As you know, dramatically growing the number of people cycling is **crucial for New York to meet its ambitious climate goals**. The NYS Climate Action Council's recently released draft plan includes Strategy T8, which calls on the State to “prioritize, incentivize, and expand access to funding for bike, pedestrian, transit, and complete streets projects”<sup>4</sup>

In addition, the **safety, health, and economic benefits** of roads that welcome people walking, cycling, using wheelchairs, etc are well documented.

The welcome mat for using better guidelines was laid out in early January when **the Federal Highway Administration adopted regulations that say “public entities may wish to also reference other documents to inform the planning and design process** [in order to develop] transportation projects that incorporate safe and convenient walking and bicycling facilities. Such projects improve safety for all modes, create more equitable access to transportation, and combat climate change.”<sup>5</sup>

We are excited by the steps you have taken so far to improve cycling in the State. Bringing NYSDOT's manuals up to modern standards is the next step for creating a brighter future for all New Yorkers.

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<sup>1</sup> NYSDOT, Highway Design Manual, Chapter 17, Bicycle Facility Design, 2015.  
<https://www.dot.ny.gov/divisions/engineering/design/dqab/hdm/chapter-17>

<sup>2</sup> USDOT, Separated Bike Lane Planning and Design Guide, 2015.  
[https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle\\_pedestrian/publications/separated\\_bikelane\\_pdg/page00.cfm](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/publications/separated_bikelane_pdg/page00.cfm)

<sup>3</sup> NACTO, Urban Bikeway Design Guide. <https://nacto.org/publication/urban-bikeway-design-guide/>

<sup>4</sup> NYS Climate Action Council, Draft Scoping Plan, 2022, p 114. <https://climate.ny.gov/Our-Climature-Act/Draft-Scoping-Plan>

<sup>5</sup> FHWA, Design Standards for Highways, 2022, p 36.  
<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/01/03/2021-28236/design-standards-for-highways>

Sincerely,

Daniel Convissor, Director, **Bike Tarrytown**

Daniel Flanzig, Esq., Advocacy Chair, **New York Bicycling Coalition**

Danny Harris, Executive Director, **Transportation Alternatives**

Ed Lindner, Spokesperson, **Saratoga Safe Cycling Coalition**

Eric McClure, Executive Director, **StreetsPAC**

Greg Faust, President, **Bikeatoga.org**

John Kelly, Co-Founder, **Eastern Queens Greenway**

John van Otterloo, Co-Founder, **Corning Bikes**

Jon Orcutt, Advocacy Director, **Bike New York**

Justin Booth, Executive Director, **GObike Buffalo**

Margaret Johnson, Director, **Bike Walk Tompkins**

Mary Staropoli, Interim Executive Director, **Reconnect Rochester**

Rena Reynolds, Executive Director, **Tri-State Transportation Campaign**

Tara Escudero, Co-Founder, **Elmira Community Cycle**

Tom Polk, **Bike Friendly Kingston** and Bicycle Program Manager, **YMCA of Kingston and Ulster County**