



Monroe County Legislature

RACHEL BARNHART

Legislator – District 17

To: Supervisor Andrae Evans
State Senator, Samra Brouk
State Assemblymember Sarah Clark
State Senator, Jeremy Cooney
NYSDOT Region 4 Director Chris Reeve

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Representatives,

As a Monroe County Legislator representing a portion of the Town of Irondequoit, I am writing to advocate for improvements to Empire Boulevard (NYS Route 404) between Winton Road and Bay Road. This corridor is vital to our region, providing access to Irondequoit Bay, serving local businesses, and connecting neighborhoods. Yet its current design prioritizes high-speed vehicle traffic at the expense of safety and accessibility for all users — pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and drivers alike.

The data speaks volumes: between 2017 and 2023, there were 770 crashes on this stretch of Empire Boulevard, including some that resulted in fatalities and serious injuries. With speeds reaching up to 56-m.p.h. in a 40-m.p.h. zone, the need for immediate action is undeniable.

I commend the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) for committing funds to address these challenges. To make Empire Boulevard safer and more accessible, I support implementing the following measures proposed by Reconnect Rochester, which align with proven safety recommendations from the Federal Highway Administration.

- **Narrowing travel lanes to 10 feet** to encourage safer speeds.
- **Reducing the speed limit to 35 MPH**, aligning with the mixed-use character of the corridor.
- **Converting shoulders into protected bike lanes** using flexible bollards, creating a continuous east-west route for cyclists.
- **Installing a High-Intensity Activated Crosswalk (HAWK) signal near LaSalle's Landing Park** to improve pedestrian safety and calm traffic.

A multimodal Empire Boulevard would fill gaps in Irondequoit's active transportation network. By embracing these improvements, we can address longstanding safety concerns, reduce traffic violence, and promote economic growth by creating a corridor that welcomes everyone — not just those traveling by car.

I urge the NYSDOT and local leaders to prioritize these safety measures and move swiftly toward implementation. Thank you for your attention to creating a safer and more inclusive Empire Boulevard.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel Barnhart". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.

Rachel Barnhart
Legislator – District 17