Erie County CCAP Transportation Chapter - Goal

A safe, equitable, affordable and connected transportation system with energy efficient options that enhances mobility, eliminates fossil fuel dependency, promotes vibrant and healthy communities, ensures a resilient supply chain, decreases greenhouse gas emissions, and improves air quality.

For thousands of years before European settlers arrived, the Haudenosaunee and other Indigenous people of North America understood the importance of the western New York geography as critical to the movement of people and trade throughout the region. The location and geography of what is now called Erie County remains critical for the efficient transportation of people, goods, and services locally, regionally, and throughout North America.

Unfortunately, the rise of the automobile and a reliance on fossil fuels resulted in a wide range of significant adverse environmental, social and economic impacts we live with today. Many of those adverse impacts are distributed and experienced disproportionately within Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities across the County. Decades of "sprawl without growth" have created land use patterns for which it is increasingly difficult to provide convenient, reliable, and energy efficient transportation options that connect our urban, suburban and rural communities and employment centers. Sprawl and the expansion of auto-oriented highway and road infrastructure have also resulted in dramatic social, health, housing, and mobility inequities primarily impacting poor and BIPOC neighborhoods.

As the impacts of climate change are increasingly evident in our region, how we choose to transport goods and services, connect people and communities, and promote energy efficient modes of transportation and delivery will determine how resilient Erie County will be.

New technologies and emerging trends offer unprecedented opportunities to build a transportation system that works better for our environment and our health. Electric vehicles (EV), ride-sharing services, autonomous vehicles, and advances in information technology, as well as improved bicycling and pedestrian infrastructure, and electrified and expanded public transit, offer ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and co-pollutants, make land use more efficient, and connect people to employment opportunities.

The County maintains more than 1,000 miles of roadways and has a key role in maintaining a resilient transportation system. One of the lessons that the COVID Pandemic has made clear, is the need for a more resilient logistics and supply chain network. We need to realize that 'the supply chain' is a critical element of our transportation network, and one that has a direct impact on our quality of life. A more resilient supply chain in the future requires that we rethink how we integrate our economic and industrial development, workforce development, energy management, agriculture and food systems delivery, and EV infrastructure into land use decisions.

Transportation is what connects our economy, our communities, and our environment. How we develop and use our region's transportation system will determine whether or not we reduce our CO2 emissions and make the most of a seemingly bright but uncertain future.