

July 30, 2019

Route 119 Complete Street Design Plan  
Feedback on the Draft Drawings and the Steering Committee Meeting of May 14, 2019  
by Daniel Convissor

## Tradeoffs

Motor vehicle level of service is one metric our study has to consider. We also must remember streets are public spaces for the whole community to use. This requires elevating more important metrics: safety, independence for people who can't drive, opportunity for low-income households, community cohesion, health, environment and climate. ([More info.](#))

There are places along Route 119 where improving overall conditions means slightly reducing the convenience of people driving. This is OK. Everyone driving will still get where they want to go. Since most trips are short trips (19% of person trips are < 1 mile, 46% are < 3 miles), making walking and cycling safe reduces the number of vehicles on the road. Similarly, the study seeks to improve bus conditions, which will further lower vehicle demand. And safer streets means people driving will be more likely to actually arrive at their destinations. ([More info.](#))

## Scofflaw Cyclists

The Steering Committee meeting included comments about people cycling not adhering to traffic laws. [Several studies](#) show that making streets safe for cyclists results in [better behavior by people biking](#).

Let alone [people driving violate laws](#) in [staggering numbers](#) and cause 2.5 million injuries and 39,000 deaths each year in the USA.

## Quick Build

The RFP indicated a preference for “quick build” designs that use existing road space. It gets improvements implemented inexpensively, as fast as possible. And reallocating excess driving lanes narrows the street, which makes things safer by reducing speeding and shortening crossing distances. But the plans shown involve significant hardscaping and off-street construction. The exponentially higher cost and complexity will delay, or even kill the project.

## Gas Line

The study should note where on Route 119 the high pressure gas main starts and ends. Several trail projects have been built as community benefits when utility lines were constructed.

## General

Every bit of Route 119 has people walking on it, even the scary parts. Thus, sidewalks should be drawn for the entire length on both sides of the road.

Throughout the project area, safe systems techniques should be proposed for every intersection.

- curb extensions
- median refuges
- right angles
- designs should acknowledge trucks can turn using adjacent lanes

- “No right on red” across the bike lane
- reduce width of cross streets where possible. Example: does the Stop & Shop driveway across from Benedict Ave *really* need to be 5 lanes wide?

## Elmsford

### 287 Spillover

Incidents on 287 cause cars to fill every lane 119 has. Adding or removing lanes on 119 won't change congestion or travel times. The question is “how many lanes of congestion does Elmsford want to host?”

### Relieving the Burden

Elmsford bears Route 119's biggest brunt. Walking across the 60' wide speedway is a death defying feat -- and driving across it isn't much better. This complicates maintaining friendships and conducting commerce between opposite sides of the highway. Fixing the dangerous crosswalks here will free the community [to walk places they wouldn't before](#).



These problems have been solved many times over by adopting safe engineering techniques. See example, left.

Intersections with modest turn volumes (like Evarts Ave) can be made safe by creating crosswalks with:

- Median refuges. The refuges create separate spaces for people walking and driving to negotiate one direction of traffic, pause, then negotiate the other direction of traffic. ([More info.](#))
- Curb extensions filling the width of parking lanes on both Route 119 and the side streets. They shorten crossing distances and improve visibility of people crossing. Plus they make people drive at safer speeds around corners. ([FHWA info.](#))
- One motor vehicle travel lane in each direction on Route 119, plus turn lanes as needed. This layout moves motorists more efficiently and safely by separating through traffic from turning traffic. ([La Jolla Blvd](#) in San Diego, [South Grand Blvd](#) in St. Louis via Nelson\Nygaard which carries ~22k vehicles per day, [Streetsblog data](#) and [FHWA data.](#))
- Raised crossings on the side streets. This ensure safe driving speeds when turning and indicates people are driving into a neighborhood. ([More info.](#))
- Add small lateral deviations where possible so the road isn't a straightaway
- See drawing, at right above. A high resolution version of the drawing [is online](#).



### Route 9A / South County Trailway

The Route 9A intersection is Elmsford's choke point along Route 119. Also, this intersection is treacherous for walking due to conflicts with large numbers of turning cars and trucks. The study should examine ways to better organize the lanes and signals at this location to improve safety and throughput.

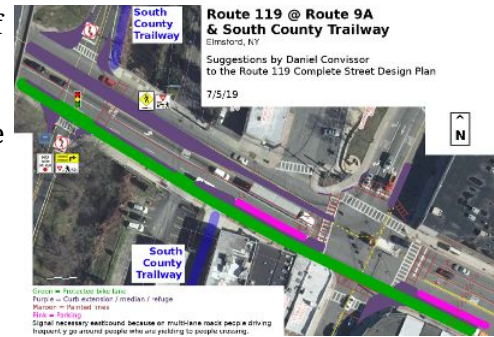


People using the South County Trailway who want to cross Route 119 are asked to walk 440' on the sidewalk and use the unsafe crosswalk at Route 9A. This is unrealistic and unwise. Do note, not everyone can walk their cycles (see photo, left, of a disabled person using a recumbent trike). And adding more people

walking the 9A intersection will increase vehicle congestion there.

The Trailway needs a crosswalk of Route 119 at the intersection of the Saw Mill River Parkway's northbound ramps.

These issues can be addressed using a proposal like the one on the right. ([High resolution version.](#))



## Angled Streets

Three streets in Elmsford intersect Route 119 at odd angles that create long crosswalks through which people can drive at high speed. Here are ways that can fix these dangerous locations:

- Saw Mill Parkway on ramp: close leg in front of 9 W Main St. The needed right turn can be made by driving 100' to the west.
- Hartsdale Rd: add curb extensions to create a right angle intersection
- Old Rd: close the road in front of 145 E Main St's second driveway. Drivers can reach Old Rd via Winthrop Ave, 300' to the east. Drivers can enter 145 E Main St via Robbins Ave. This will make things safer for kids getting to the Legion Park playground.

## Tarrytown

Shift the 1-side / 2-way bike lane to the north side:

- **3x more people** live on north side (1,847 vs 575)
- Avoids telling people to ride 2,000' on the sidewalk between Crescent Dr (where there's a signal) and Old White Plains Rd (where there's no signal)
- People don't like riding on the sidewalk because it is bumpy, narrow and people walking there
- Cycling on sidewalks introduces crash risks at intersections because people driving don't expect to see people riding there
- Most people biking will ride in the bike lane to their street, even if signals don't exist there
- Thus the northern side configuration will prevent crashes at:

Location	People Driving	Crashing Into People Cycling
Thruway Ramps	to/from the ramps	crossing the ramps
Meadow St	turning onto Route 119	crossing Route 119
Crescent St	turning onto Route 119	crossing Route 119
Carrollwood Dr	along Route 119	crossing Route 119
Old White Plains Rd	along Route 119	crossing Route 119

- Quicker because it avoids the delays of crossing Route 119 twice and the Thruway ramps
- Lower cost and easier construction because Route 119 median by Route 9 can stay in place
- Creates a much flatter, safer route than cycling on Benedict Ave
- While additional housing may be coming to 200 White Plains Rd (Talleyrand office building), they have a signalized crossing and the population will still be lower than the north side

## White Plains

### Proposed Bronx River Routing is Problematic

The draft plan ends the Route 119 bike lane at the County Center, directing riders to the Bronx River Trailway, under the train station via the pedestrian underpass, through parking garage and on to Water St. Doing so would have several problems.

- Crosses 12 lanes of traffic, with heavy turning movements

- Puts people in the path of cars on the Bronx River bridge and in the parking garage
- Mixes cyclists with people walking on the trail and in the underpass
- Sends people to secluded areas, which will undercut nighttime use
- Leads to a car door zone bike lane on Water St. Such lanes are only usable by confident cyclists.
- Misses the Battle Hill neighborhood, where 2,500 people live within ¼ mile of Route 119
- Directs people cycling away from key destinations in downtown White Plains
- **Ignores the public safety crisis that exists on Route 119 from Central Ave to Bronx St:**
  - **~145 crashes each year**
  - **~20 injuries each year**
  - Roadway is ~47' wide in each direction, and even wider where turn lanes exist
  - The total width, and the width of each lane in it, encourages speeding
  - The layout requires many drivers to merge across 4 lanes of traffic in order to make turns
  - The width makes it dangerous to walk across the road

### **Stay on 119 from Central Ave to Bronx St**

It will be better to continue the 2-way protected bike lane on Route 119 to Bronx St. There people can connect with the Bronx River Trailway. This creates a new, safe, direct route. The existing County Center - Water St connection can still be used by people who want to.

#### **Roadway Has Excess Capacity**

- Existing: 4 through lanes each direction, plus turn lanes
- Capacity: over **4,000** vehicles per hour per direction
- Actual use (vehicles in peak hour, 10/28/2014)
  - Eastbound
    - Central Ave - Chatterton Ave: 2,100
    - Chatterton Ave - Battle Ave: 2,500
    - Battle Ave - Bronx St: **2,900**
  - Westbound
    - Battle Ave - Chatterton Ave: **3,100**
    - Chatterton Ave - Central Ave: 2,500

#### **Simplify for Safety**

- Three 10' wide through lanes in each direction, plus turn lanes (capacity over **3,000** vehicles per hour each way)
- Convert rightmost lane in each direction into 2-way protected bicycle lanes. (On Hamilton Ave, a 2-way protected lane can easily fit all the way to Martin Luther King Jr Blvd.)
- Build planted buffer between the cycling lane and motor vehicle lane
- Close ramp to southbound Bronx River Pkwy from eastbound Route 119 next to Battle Ave
  - Major conflict zone for all users
  - People driving can easily use the Central Ave and Chatterton Ave entrances