

LOCAL LAW NO. ____ – 2026

A LOCAL LAW TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF VULNERABLE ROAD USERS IN
ONONDAGA COUNTY

BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNTY LEGISLATURE OF THE COUNTY OF
ONONDAGA, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Title.

This local law shall be known as the “Cyclist Yielding and Clearance Lane for Everyone Safety Act” and referred to as the “Onondaga CYCLE Safety Act.”

Section 2. Purpose.

The County of Onondaga has a responsibility to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its residents. This Legislature finds many Onondaga County residents use our roadways for walking, running, bicycling and recognizes these bicyclists, pedestrians, and other vulnerable road users often need to share roadways with motor vehicles out of necessity. This Legislature acknowledges these users are susceptible to the actions of motor vehicle operators who can pose a threat to their health and safety. Therefore, this Legislature finds it necessary to establish a minimum passing distance for motor vehicles approaching or passing vulnerable road users, and to penalize those who disregard their safety.

Section 3. Definitions.

As used in this local law, the following term shall have the meanings indicated:

A. “Vulnerable Road User” (“VRU”) shall mean any of the following:

1. A pedestrian, including:
 - a. An individual walking or jogging on or along a roadway.
 - b. An individual in a wheelchair, or other device designed for and used by a person whose mobility is limited by one or more conditions or functional impairments;
 - c. An individual with a service animal, including the animal itself;
 - d. An individual waiting to board, or just having disembarked, any bus, shuttle, taxicab, ride share, or bicycle share;
 - e. Any other individuals existing upon a roadway and outside of any vehicles;
2. Any individual(s) on a bicycle, e-bicycle, motor-assisted bicycle, or other nonmotorized modes of transportation such as roller skates, rollerblades, roller skis, skateboard, longboard, or unicycle;
3. Any rider of a horse or other animal, including the animal itself;
4. An individual who is not in or on a motor vehicle, streetcar or other motor vehicle running only upon rails, motorized snow vehicle, traction engine, farm tractor, self-propelled instrument of husbandry, or roadbuilding machine;

Section 4. Minimum Passing Distance Required.

The operator of a motor vehicle approaching or overtaking a VRU on the same side of the road, shall pass only to the left of a VRU and shall provide not less than three (3) feet of distance around a VRU.

Section 5. Compliance with Other Laws.

Motor vehicle operators shall comply with this local law to the extent practicable and permitted pursuant to other applicable law, including but not limited to, New York Vehicle and Traffic Law §§ 1122-a, 1124, 1125, and 1126.

This local law shall not apply on roads with clearly-marked usable bicycle lanes, as defined by New York Vehicle and Traffic Law § 102-a.

Section 6. Enforcement.

This local law may be enforced by all duly authorized law enforcement entities within Onondaga County, including but not limited to: Onondaga County Sheriff's Department, Syracuse Police Department, town and village police departments, and university departments of public safety.

Section 7. Penalties.

Any person committing an offense of Section 4 shall be guilty of a violation and subject to a fine not to exceed two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00) for a first offense, five hundred dollars (\$500.00) for a second offense, and one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500.00) for a third and any subsequent offense(s). This section does not preclude an individual from being charged with, convicted of, or punished for any other violation(s) of law.

Section 8. Applicability.

This local law shall apply to all actions occurring on or after the effective date.

Section 9. Severability.

If any section, subdivision, clause, paragraph, sentence, or part of this law, or the application thereof, shall be rendered by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, illegal, or unenforceable, such order or judgment shall not affect, impair, or invalidate the remainder thereof, and shall be confined in its operation to the section, subdivision, clause, paragraph, sentence, or part of this law, or the application thereof, specific to the controversy in which such court order or judgment is rendered.

Section 10. SEQRA Compliance.

This County Legislature determines that this local law constitutes a Type II action pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act, and that no further action thereunder is required.

Section 11. Effective Date.

This local law shall be filed pursuant to the provisions of Municipal Home Rule Law, and shall take effect ninety (90) days after filing with the Secretary of State.