MONROE COUNTY TRANSITION COMMITTEE

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MONROE COUNTY TRANSITION COMMITTEE ISSUES FINAL REPORT TO COUNTY EXECUTIVE BELLO

The Transition Committee for Monroe County Executive Adam Bello today delivered its final Transition Report, capping one of the most intensive community-stakeholder driven efforts ever for County Government. Joining Bello for the presentation were Transition Co-Chairs Jerome Underwood, Fran Weisberg and Robert Duffy, and multiple members of the community who took part in the process.

The report represents the input of over 130 members of the committee who collectively donated several hundred hours to help identify the major critical issues for the new County Executive to confront. In total, the report features 235 recommended strategies to address those issues, including 29 priority recommendations.

The report can be found at https://www2.monroecounty.gov/files/executive/bello-transition-report.pdf.

"If we are to bring new ideas to our Government, we must look outside the walls of the County office building. The people of Monroe County are its greatest asset, and this transition process has relied on their wisdom and energy to provide a compass for my Administration," said County Executive Adam Bello. "I am humbled by the amount of time our community dedicated towards this Transition Plan and remain grateful to the many people who participated in the process."

In November, shortly after his election, Bello empaneled a transition committee made up of community leaders, advocates and other stakeholders. The aim of the transition was to make good on Bello's pledge to engage with the Monroe County community in tackling the major issues with which County Government interfaces.

The transition committee was broken into five subcommittees: Economic & Community Development, Human Services, Infrastructure, Public Safety & Justice, and, Administration. Throughout December and early January, the subcommittees met several times, working to identify both critical issues that warrant the new Administration's attention, and strategies to address these issues. Subcommittees were also asked to provide a vision statement for their respective areas.

At the direction of the Transition Co-Chairs, the report includes 29 priority recommendations that warrant the County Executive's immediate and sustained attention. Many of these priority recommendations represent common themes found across the various subcommittee reports.

"Monroe County government must work to be more inclusive, equitable and receptive to the community it serves," said Transition Co-Chair Jerome Underwood of Action for a Better Community. "I applaud County Executive Bello for reaching out and seeking to garner an understanding of the challenges that all of his constituents face. This Transition has been a good first step towards creating a government that is more representative of, embodies the spirit of, and works for the people of Monroe County."

"Our community is full of talented, passionate and dedicated people who are willing to roll up their sleeves, and be a true partner with county government," said Fran Weisberg, Transition Co-Chair & longtime community leader. "Government cannot do it alone anymore, and this transition process has represented a massive paradigm shift. It is a new day in Monroe County – one where we will demonstrate how the community and government can work together to lift people up."

"County Executive Adam Bello has made it clear that County Government will no longer operate in a vacuum. I can't say enough how proud I am of our community for rising to his call for action," said Transition Co-Chair Robert Duffy of the Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce. "As Lieutenant Governor, I saw firsthand the good that can come when government is a team sport with the community it serves. Adam's spirit of collaboration has brought an entirely new culture to county government and it will lead to a stronger economy and better future for everyone."

The Transition subcommittees have already agreed to meet with County Executive Bello in the near term to provide a more detailed briefing, and also, serve as a resource for the County Executive as his Administration continues to take shape and implement new strategic initiatives.

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PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

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Organizational Priorities

1. Develop and communicate a set of "Guiding Values" that will outline a new culture for Monroe County government, which will be the basis for setting expectations for County employees
2. Appoint a Chief Diversity Office (CDO) to ensure that the County workforce mirrors the community it represents. This office would be dedicated to training for current and future personnel in all aspects of diversity, equity and inclusion; and, the development and implementation of strategies to increase diversity among county employees. In particular, the CDO should identify strategic partnerships to increase the number of people of color who participate civil service examinations.
3. Ensure that worker retention is a priority and make Monroe County competitive with other municipal governments to minimize turnover

4. Engage with Monroe County residents, drawing regular feedback from constituents and stakeholders through Town Hall meetings and better usage of social media
5. Make Monroe County an active participant in major community-driven efforts, especially the System Integration Project which aims to interconnect local health, education and human services organizations. As the largest human service provider in the area, Monroe County cannot sit on the sidelines
6. Prioritize the identification and evaluation of potential issues that have the highest risk of negatively impacting public welfare, key county initiatives or critical projects in order to help the County avoid or mitigate those risks.
7. Explore new opportunities for shared service agreements, which can be facilitated through reviving the Council of Governments
8. Link budget and resource decisions to a long-term strategic plan for the county; work to develop clear strategic goals and metrics that are measurable

Economic & Community Development

9. Bolster County efforts to attract and retain college students and young professionals to work in Monroe County through the creation of a partnership with CampusROC
10. Address the middle skills job gap by establishing a Workforce Educators Coordinating Council which will develop a plan for better alignment and coordination of workforce programs
11. Develop a community stakeholder driven Comprehensive plan for Monroe County to establish a vision, goals and strategies to guide future development and investment
12. Create the Monroe County Land Bank to address vacant Zombie Homes
13. Endorse and support the vision and goals of ROC2025, an alliance of economic development organizations dedicated to expanding our area's economy and making it more dynamic
14. Establish a body which effectively and accurately represents arts community in Monroe County to provide guidance on issues relating to arts and culture, public art, and arts funding.

Human Services

15. Designate a point-person to provide proactive, coordinated leadership to address the opioid crisis and better connect resources to behavioral health.
16. Focus on Child Protective Services (CPS) caseload ratio with a goal of achieving a caseload range of 12-15 for each caseworker. This involves both worker recruitment and retention efforts.
17. Provide more support for children with special needs: Increase spending for Special Children's Services, which includes the Preschool Special Education (PSE) and Early Intervention (EI) programs. Fund the 15% rate increase in the PSE program (approved in March 2019) and ten additional service coordinators for the EI program.
18. Conduct a racial-equity impact assessment of policies, programs and practices and develop a plan to address the findings.

19. Review the serious concerns regarding the availability of shelter beds and the challenges faced by the non-profit community to provide shelter services.
20. Leverage additional state and federal funding for new county investments.

Sustainability

21. Establish Climate Action Board, comprised of community stakeholders to develop Sustainable Monroe Plan which will work to build a thriving future through collaborative initiatives that deliver environmental, economic and social benefits and promote sustainability and resilience.
22. Dedicate a Sustainability Manager within the County Administration focused on advising the County Executive on critical sustainability issues and coordinating all County activities in this area.

Infrastructure

23. Change the mindset and culture within the County Department of Transportation to incorporate pedestrian-friendly components into county projects; and, facilitate a countywide active transportation plan
24. The County Executive should spearhead a new long-range strategic plan for the County Park system, with an eye towards enhancing current assets and exploring new opportunities to expand park amenities.
25. Continue implementation of the Seneca Park Zoo master plan to ensure it remains a top destination of families and visitors alike; and, accelerate capital improvements at Frontier Field to reflect modern standards needed to keep the Rochester Red Wings an integral part of our community fabric.

Public Safety & Justice

26. The County should more fully participate in the NYS Justice for All initiative and assess how it best fits into the statewide Strategic Action Plan, the goal of which is to provide all who seek civil justice some access to civil legal assistance.
27. Create a county task force to develop a plan and protocols for addressing issues created by new criminal justice reforms adopted by the State, including bail reform and discovery; utilize the existing community expertise in conjunction with all involved stakeholders
28. Ensure that Countywide Pubic Safety communications and IT projects do not move forward until there the better synchronization and coordination among all stakeholders to ensure maximum effectiveness
29. Engage all municipalities in establishing a common set of benchmarks emergency response, embracing the "Whole Community" concept

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