

*Office of the County Executive*  
Monroe County, New York

**Adam J. Bello**  
*County Executive*

July 8, 2022

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No. <u>220227</u>
Not to be removed from the Office of the Legislature Of Monroe County
Committee Assignment
<b>ENV. &amp; PUB. WORKS-L</b>
<b>WAYS &amp; MEANS</b>

To The Honorable  
Monroe County Legislature  
407 County Office Building  
Rochester, New York 14614

**Subject:** Amend the 2022-2027 Capital Improvement Program and the 2022 Capital Budget to Advance the "Tropical Exhibit and Main Entry Plaza" Project from 2023 to 2022 and Retitle the Project as "Tropical Exhibit and Main Entry Plaza, Phase 2;" Amend the 2022 Capital Budget to Increase Funding for the "Tropical Exhibit and Main Entry Plaza, Phase 2" Project; Authorize Financing for the Project

Honorable Legislators:

I recommend that Your Honorable Body amend the 2022-2027 Capital Improvement Program and the 2022 Capital Budget to advance the "Tropical Exhibit and Main Entry Plaza" project from 2023 to 2022 in the amount of \$64,120,000 and retitle the project as "Tropical Exhibit and Main Entry Plaza, Phase 2;" amend the 2022 Capital Budget to increase funding for the "Tropical Exhibit and Main Entry Plaza, Phase 2" project in the amount of \$38,780,000; and authorize financing for the "Tropical Exhibit and Main Entry Plaza, Phase 2" project in the amount of \$102,900,000.

By Resolution 180 of 2015, Your Honorable Body adopted the 2016-2021 Capital Improvement Program which included the Tropical Exhibit and Main Entry Plaza Project. This project features a state-of-the-art Tropics complex, showcasing animals from the ecosystems of Borneo and Madagascar at the south end of the Seneca Park Zoo, in the area previously occupied by the rhinoceros exhibit and the main building. This will include a naturalistic orangutan habitat enabling climbing and more "treetop-like" movement. The new Tropics complex will also feature ring-tailed lemurs and an aquarium. Other animals from these ecosystems will be incorporated as well. A new Entry Building will include a Conservation Resource Center, housing conservation and education programs. It will also include larger event capacity, space for Parks staff and the Zoo Society, and operations like Zoo Membership and admissions. The ZooShop will be expanded and upgraded to meet the best-in-class standards as well as the increased demands based on attendance growth.

The new zoo facilities will provide a world-class experience to Monroe County residents and will be of a quality that the Seneca Park Zoo is expected to be a destination trip for regional visitors. The indoor tropical environmental is expected to be an attractive draw during the winter months and is expected to increase overall seasonal attendance.

Governor Hochul has committed \$42,500,000 in the State's 2022-2023 budget toward the project. In addition, the Seneca Park Zoo Society, a not-for-profit corporation chartered to cooperate with the County in the raising of funds for the benefit of the Zoo; to foster, develop, and promote interest and civic pride among the citizens of Monroe County in their zoo and the animals therein; and to provide an organization dedicated to the advancement of scientific education and conservation knowledge of the members of the animal kingdom, has committed to undertaking significant fundraising efforts to raise \$23,000,000 for the project.

This project is scheduled to be considered by the Monroe County Planning Board at its July 28, 2022 meeting.


**The specific legislative actions required are:**

1. Amend the 2022-2027 Capital Improvement Program to advance the "Tropical Exhibit and Main Entry Plaza," project from 2023 to 2022 and retitle the project as "Tropical Exhibit and Main Entry Plaza, Phase 2" in the amount of \$64,120,000.
2. Amend the 2022 Capital Budget to increase funding for the "Tropical Exhibit and Main Entry Plaza, Phase 2" project in the amount of \$38,780,000.
3. Authorize financing for the "Tropical Exhibit and Main Entry Plaza, Phase 2" in the amount of \$102,900,000.

This action is a Type I Action under the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act ("SEQRA"). Pursuant to Resolution 145 of 2022, the Monroe County Legislature issued an Amended Negative Declaration for this action. No further action under SEQRA is required.

Funding for this project consistent with authorized uses, will be included in capital fund 1774, the new capital fund to be created, and any other capital fund(s) created for the same intended purpose. No additional net County support is required in the current Monroe County budget.

I recommend that this matter be referred to the appropriate committee(s) for favorable action by Your Honorable Body.

Sincerely,  


Adam J. Bello  
Monroe County Executive