

SAVE MONROE AVENUE THANKS WEGMANS FOR SUPPORTING ITS NEIGHBORS AND COMMUNITY EFFORTS TO RIGHT-SIZE THE WHOLE FOODS PLAZA PROJECT

Save Monroe Ave wishes to publicly thank Wegmans Food Markets and SMA's other supporters for helping it oppose the "special deal" given by the Town of Brighton to the Developer of the proposed Whole Foods Project. We are particularly proud and appreciative of Wegmans' support for its local neighbors and customers, without which we probably could not have stood up to the Developer, its deep pockets, and its political connections.

Save Monroe Ave is comprised of Monroe Avenue businesses and neighbors who have joined together to ensure that the Whole Foods Project is developed responsibly and in compliance with standard zoning requirements. We are especially concerned with the serious traffic impacts to Monroe Ave that the Project will cause. In addition to safety concerns, we fear that the excess traffic that the Project will cause—on an already heavily-congested main traffic artery—will drive away our customers and impact neighbors. We refuse to sit back idly while the Town gives the Developer a sweetheart deal, at the expense of neighboring businesses and residents who play by the rules.

Wegmans, whose Pittsford store is located in close proximity to the Project site, first objected in 2015 to the traffic problems this strip plaza would cause. By agreeing to support Save Monroe Avenue, Wegmans has given a voice to—and joined the fight of—several local businesses and countless residents in the community who lacked the resources to take on the well-financed and well-connected Project Developer.

The Project would consist of a Whole Foods grocery store, a drive-thru Starbucks, and 22 other retailers on the small site, which already sits along one of the most heavily congested and accident-prone corridors in the County. Yet, the Developer was permitted to bypass standard zoning protections through a special deal between it and the Town, which includes \$17 million in benefits given by the Town to the Developer. Neighboring residents and businesses are fighting to require the Project to comply with standard zoning protections to avoid the traffic congestion and safety issues that even the State DOT has recognized would result from the Project. The Project is currently in litigation brought by community residents and Monroe Ave businesses.

We want to be crystal clear about something. Wegmans has *never* made its support of us contingent upon anything other than addressing the issue of traffic—a concern that we both share. Wegmans also has *never* told us that we must oppose the inclusion of a Whole Foods (or any supermarket, for that matter) as part of the Project. In fact, we have made clear that we would consider supporting a Project that is smaller in size and density, including a version with a Whole Foods, so long as those and other reasonable restrictions are met.

"Wegmans has stepped up big-time to support its neighbors, and we're very appreciative." said Aaron M. Saykin, the attorney for Save Monroe Ave. *"We also find it very ironic that a well-financed Developer—which is getting millions in incentives from the Town, and is being supported by the world's largest internet retailer (Amazon as the owner of Whole Foods)—suddenly has a problem with community groups trying to match its resources. Apparently, everyone is supposed to just roll over for them. That's not how it works."*