



2024 Legislative Priorities



City of Rochester

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Strategic Priority: Affordable Living

Areas of Focus

- Housing variety and affordability
- Transportation options and access
- Equitable regulatory landscape and creative incentives
- Access to opportunities and amenities
- Owner-occupied affordable housing
- Increasing ownership opportunities for Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and Seniors

Strategic Priority: Economic Vibrancy and Growth Management

Areas of Focus

- Create clarity, alignment, and unity with economic development partners in defining City leadership and community values
- Establish competitive and sustainable approach to effectively allocate DMC resources, Legislative allocations, and City revenue
- Develop implementation tools and strategies for Comprehensive Plan to ensure current decisions reflect future projections
- Adopt design guidelines that better reflect Council and community values

Strategic Priority: Quality Services

Areas of Focus

- Cultural and recreational opportunities that provide access and equity
- The organization and services reflect changing demographics and needs identified by the community
- Operations are sustainable, integrated, and easy to navigate
- Service delivery is optimized, cost effective, and reflect our Foundational Principles

In order to achieve these priorities, the Council has committed to a legislative and process structure that emphasizes **Strategic Governance and Inclusive Decision-Making**:

- Service delivery models consider partnerships where City is not always the leader
- Decision-making is informed by citywide communication and engagement strategy with Diversity/Equity/Inclusion (DEI) at the forefront
- Teammates create action plans/annual commitments aligned with Foundational Principles and Strategic Priorities
- Policy and operational actions reflect equitable community investment

Rochester at a Glance

Incorporated
1854

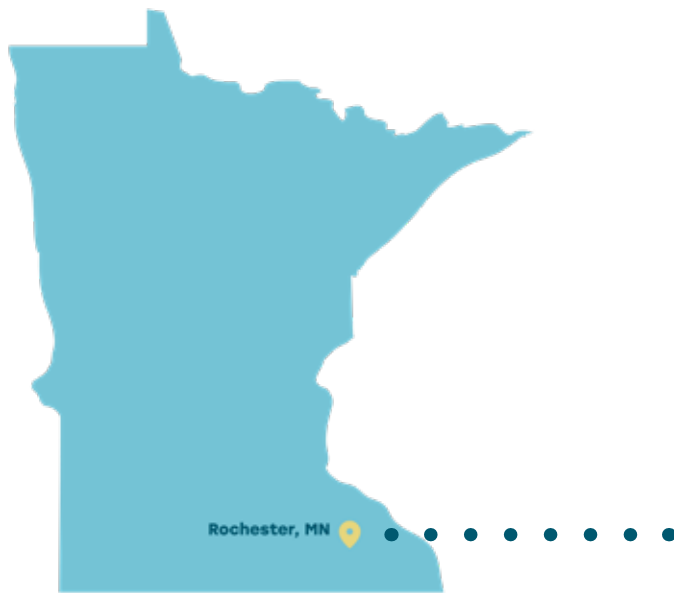
55
Square miles

Population
125,000*



The City of Rochester is the third largest city in the State of Minnesota, with a population of over 125,000*, which is anticipated to grow by 50% over the next 20 years. Rochester is home to major employers including Mayo Clinic and hosts a strong small

business community. Factors such as civic engagement, affordable housing, a strong regional economy and great education options have helped the community stand out for years.



Community at a Glance

- Median Age: 37
- Total Households: 49,984
- Median Home Price: \$273,000
- 77% of white households are homeowners compared to 22% of black/African Households
- 26.8% of residents are BIPOC (approximately 40% of students at Rochester Public Schools are BIPOC)
- 14.1% of residents are foreign born
- 82% of residents speak English only, and 18.7% speak a language other than English
- 16% of residents are age 65 and older
- 12.4% of residents have a disability
- 6% of residents are veterans
- 7.4% of residents are below poverty income level

Regional Center:

20,000 commuters daily
3 million visitors annually



Awards & Accolades

- Gold LEED City
- AAA Bonding Rating
- Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for almost 50 years
- Top 3 Best Places to Live in the U.S. - Livability
- Top 7 Most Beautiful Cities in MN - World Atlas
- Top 25 Best Place to Retire - Forbes
- Top 4 Best Cities to Buy a House in America - Niche Magazine

- Top 6 Best Small College Areas - University Business
- First American City to become an Intercultural City (ICC)
- Inclusive Workforce Employer (I-WE) Designation from Workforce Development Board of Southeast Minnesota

*2022 estimate



Riverfront Public Realm & Redevelopment

Project Overview

The City of Rochester seeks funding to repurpose existing riverfront property (aging parking ramp, surface parking lot, and vacant commercial building) to provide needed ADA accessibility improvements in skyway and other Riverfront public realm improvements. The project includes design, engineering, further environmental analysis, site remediation and preparation, limited demolition, and construction of public realm improvements, including trail improvements, tree planting, public wayfinding, public amenities, and related infrastructure for the reuse of properties in the city of Rochester near the Government Center and Zumbro River area envisioned by the Rochester Riverfront Area Wide Plan.



Project Funding Details

\$23.275M state request (50% of total project cost)*

*Amount may be updated with additional information. Estimate based on components listed.

Project is able to be phased into components and into design, construction and other stages.

Project Components- Budget

Riverfront Trail	\$4.75 million
Parking Ramp Demo & Skyway Rebuild	\$8.5 million
Riverfront Public Realm	\$18.3 million
Redevelopment & Expansion	\$15 million



Background

This riverfront redevelopment project would provide economic, environmental, and social vibrancy through enhanced connection to nearby downtown, University of Minnesota Rochester (UMR), city services, and regional attractions. Public investment in the public realm is key to achieving goals around resiliency, public access, accessibility, and building reuse. The project would support local, diverse businesses and programming that grow entrepreneurial endeavors.

Airport Solar Array Parking & Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Project Overview

As part of the Rochester International Airport (RST) commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainability, incorporating renewable energy into the airport campus will help the City meet its 100% renewable energy goal by 2030. The installed solar panels are expected to generate enough electricity annually (871,000 kWh) to cover approximately half the terminal building's current power needs. The system will offset of 824 metric tons of CO2 emissions per year. There would be 12 parking stalls with electric vehicle (EV) charging access. A portion of the passenger parking would be reconstructed to improve pavement conditions and accessibility for users. The covered parking lot area (half of the total parking lot) would feature covered parking and shelter for an estimated 200 vehicles. This is part of a larger Airport Parking Improvement Project, which include a larger terminal energy efficiency project pending federal funding.



Project Funding Details

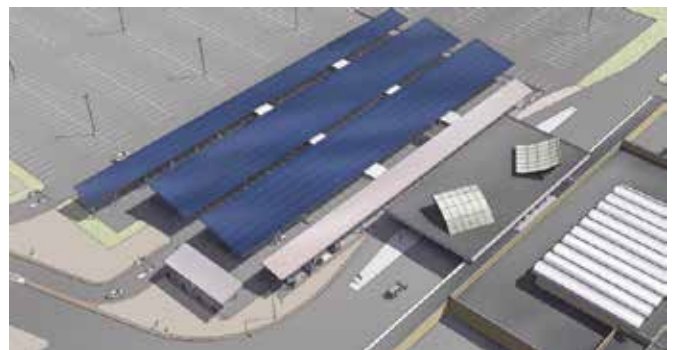
\$3 million state bonding request (50% of project cost)
\$1 million City of Rochester airport reserves
\$2 million federal funding request

\$6 million total project cost



Background

The Rochester International Airport is a critical gateway for SE MN. Air ambulance operations, cargo carriers transporting medical supplies, and patient travelers rely on RST. There are 168,000 passengers annually that use the airport and 103 million pounds of cargo, including 30,000 medical patient samples that arrive daily to the airport for processing and evaluation by Mayo Clinic laboratories.



Transit Operations Facility Expansion & Electric Vehicle Fleet Conversion

Project Overview

The City of Rochester seeks funding for a bus facility that would provide storage, maintenance, and charging for a fleet of electric buses that will be deployed for the first bus rapid transit (BRT, the LINK) line in greater MN that is expected to start operation in 2026. The facility will be a dedicated space with charging infrastructure and safe maneuvering space for BRT line's 60-foot buses. The facility would also provide additional office space, dispatch area, training space, and other administrative space to support the service expansions and also include charging and storage for a micro-transit pilot program that was funded in part from the state legislature in 2023. Additional resources would



allow for conversion of existing 68 bus fleet that services 32 fixed routes currently with diesel buses to electric and electric conversion of paratransit vehicles that provide origin-to-destination transportation service for over 30,000 trips annually for people who cannot use Rochester Public Transit's fixed route service due to a disability.

Project Funding Details

Transit Facility: TBD (50% of building cost)*

Fleet conversion is phase-able based on available resources (Approximate cost of 1 electric 45-foot bus is \$1 million)

Background

The current transit vehicle and maintenance facility is not equipped for the additional or changing vehicle type that will be used for the LINK bus rapid transit line that will begin operations in 2026. This bus rapid transit line, the first in Greater MN and one that will be fare free, will utilize 12 electric buses, which require charging infrastructure. At 60 feet long (accordion), these BRT electric buses will also be larger than the current 45 foot buses used for the Rochester Public Transit system. Thus adequate maneuvering with entry/exit in the storage and maintenance facilities is key for worker safety and efficient use of transit infrastructure. The use of electric buses for this purpose, and other public service and transit vehicles, will help achieve greenhouse gas emission reductions. Within .25 miles of the current 32 fixed routes served by diesel buses, 30% are BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) households and 11% of population meet poverty guidelines.

The envisioned new transit facility would be located adjacent to the current transit facility, which will be repurposed into a public works and parks and recreation department facility. State funding for this facility would allow the future building to have renewable energy components, compliance with SB 2030 requirements, and other goals for the City of Rochester and State of Minnesota. The City has begun investing in some electric vehicles for specific use based on specific funding. Holistic, sustainable funding for electric vehicle conversion, similar to state and federal programs through the Inflation Reduction Act and other sources for fleet conversion, bus conversion, and other vehicles would accelerate this active and investment, along with greenhouse gas emission reductions at a faster pace.

*Cost estimate will be updated

Public Infrastructure Accessibility & Energy Improvements

Project Overview

The City of Rochester seeks funding for needed accessibility and energy improvements to the public buildings and right-of-way public infrastructure that aligns with city and state goals around equity, accessibility, and greenhouse gas reductions and climate resiliency.

This request has two components:

1. Accessibility improvements to right-of-way public infrastructure, which could include sidewalks, ramps, and other public infrastructure
2. Design and study of accessibility and energy improvements at the Mayo Civic Center

The Mayo Civic Center project could include ADA improvements to the skyway entry ramp (pictured) to decrease the slope, installation of rooftop solar (35,000 square feet), consideration of additional accessible parking, energy improvements to reduce cold air entry into the building during the winter, and other improvements.



Project Funding Details

State Request: \$2.4 million (total current project scope is estimated at approximately \$4.8M):

- \$4 million of ADA projects currently in the city's capital improvement plan (CIP)
- \$800,000 for design and study of energy and space improvements to Mayo Civic Center and adjoining publically-owned theater space, art center, and exterior park spaces (Mayo Park)

Background

The \$946,034 received by Rochester via the 2023 accessibility funds from the state legislature (Chapter 68, sec 17. Subd. 14) will be used to further implement parts of the city's ADA Transition Plan, including intersection improvements for accessibility along a safe routes to school project, sidewalk infrastructure, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) scattered site defects in city. The city currently budgets \$586,000 annually for ADA improvements. Approximately \$4M in projects are included in the city's capital improvement plan which details future needed projects. Additional funding would allow additional projects to be completed in the plan.

In 2022, the Mayo Civic Center provided an estimated \$22 million community-wide tourism economic impact. With over 200,000 square feet of space used for a variety of public and regional uses, the space is also ripe for additional investment in energy efficiency and accessibility.



Affordable Living & Housing

Issue

The 2020 Maxfield Housing Study of the City of Rochester and Olmsted County demonstrated a need for over 18,000 housing units through 2030, including over 5,400 senior housing units, over 5,000 rental units (including market rate, naturally occurring affordable, and subsidized), and over 5,600 new and existing single-family homes. In 2023, approximately 200 single family and 500 multifamily permits have been issued.

The City of Rochester has a racial homeownership gap, similar to the state as a whole: 22% of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) households are homeowners, compared to 76% homeownership rate for overall Olmsted County population. A recent local community engagement co-design effort related to BIPOC homeownership was made up of key stakeholders from financial/lending institutions, realtors, community housing support stakeholders, developers/builders, and BIPOC community. The final report highlighted themes of education, navigation, belonging, safety and security, structural racial barriers, mentorship, and representation as facets in the barriers and opportunities to address the racial homeownership gap.



Problem

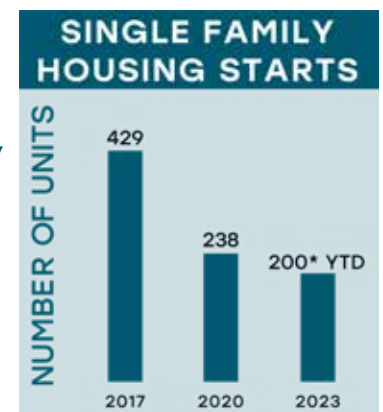
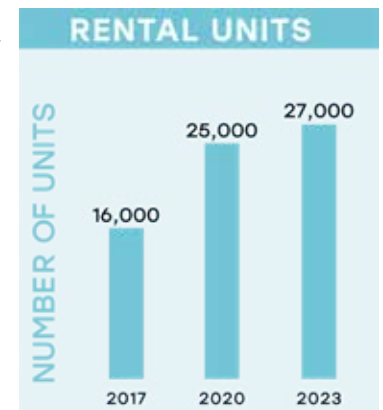
Approximately one-third of Rochester's households have a need for affordable housing. While different measures might be used to define affordability, the general definition most often used is that housing costing more than 30% of a household's income is not affordable. The greatest need is for housing options at 30-55% Area Median Income (AMI), housing options at 70-90% AMI level are also needed to address new job growth in construction, education and health care sectors.



Affordable Living & Housing Continued

Solutions

- Support for increased state funding for housing infrastructure bonds (HIBs) and general obligation bonds, as well as sources for public housing rehabilitation, to help address the immediate and growing need for affordable housing.
- Policies that will prevent and reduce evictions and increased notices of, and protections for, those being displaced especially during the winter. This could include funding for Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP) and other similarly aimed programs.
- Support energy efficient new affordable housing, as it will benefit lower-income residents by lowering monthly costs and the possibility that costs of poorly constructed buildings are shifted onto its residents, in addition to aiding in the city’s climate action plan.
- Support programs and funding for the preservation of current housing stock, including reenacting the “This Old House” program, and tenant protections.
- State funding to assist local efforts around increased access to home ownership including BIPOC home ownership
- Funding the Greater Minnesota Housing Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) Fund.
- Support the League of MN Cities efforts around housing and race equity that align with the city’s goals, including reducing racial disparities in home ownership and cost burdens for renters.
- Examine tools and changes to assist with lot availability and first-time homebuyers.
- Consider tools and incentives for conversion of vacant commercial/ office property into housing
- Changes to 4d program that will provide for additional local flexibility and usage.
- Changes to MN Housing Finance Agency scoring criteria to reward projects that utilize existing transportation and other service infrastructure.
- Targeted funding for temporary homeless sheltering, warming houses and other support, including increased mental health and chemical dependency treatment programs to reduce future growth in homelessness and to protect our residents struggling with these issues. This includes support for the Emergency Services Grant Program (ESP), aid dedicated to providing homeless services, and programs to support capital investment in local facilities.



Impact

These solutions will help implement the near-term and long-term Affordable Housing Policy Recommendations from the 2020 Affordable Housing Study to support the creation and retention of affordable housing in Rochester. These solutions would also help implement the BIPOC homeownership report recommendations.

Resources for Continued Water Quality & Stewardship

Issue

The State of Minnesota's new regulations for lake and river eutrophication standards require the City of Rochester to have a more stringent phosphorus limitation on wastewater treatment plant discharge (less than 1 mg/l). This will require different treatment technology than is currently at the Water Reclamation plant. The Point Source Implementation Grant (PSIG) is a program that provides local governments 80% grant funding up to \$7 million to help fund some of the costs to meet these new requirements.

Amounts of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), often called 'forever chemicals' in ground water and water sources is of heightened interest at the state and federal level. Rochester is participating in a recent measuring effort in partnership with the MN Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) for measuring PFAS being discharged to the Water Reclamation Plant (WRP).

The City is developing strategies to help human and natural systems become more resilient to changes in precipitation levels and weather patterns. A large part of that planning involves assessing vulnerabilities and developing plans to improve stormwater infrastructure resilience and reduce localized flood risk, improve the resilience of wastewater systems, and adapt community services to meet the needs of residents and businesses prior to, during, and after an extreme event.

Problem

To ensure that the City of Rochester is able to access these PSIG funds in the future, it is important to include the Public Funding Authority (PFA) bonding request and final legislative appropriation at a funding level that will support the requests coming from local government for this grant money. Rochester has requested PSIG funds and is on the project priority list (#35 on the project priority list and 20th on the funding list due to shovel ready status) ..

PFAS chemicals take many years to degrade and are very prevalent in commonly used products. Residents and commercial and industrial businesses discharge PFAS laden wastewater which flows to WRP and is not treated by conventional treatment technologies. PFAS treatment at the WRP is not economically feasible, so source identification and reduction is the primary solution. Sampling for PFAS, identifying sources, and finding alternative products is time-consuming and expensive. It is also a global problem that cannot be solved one City at a time. Funding is needed to cover the cost of sampling and much more research is needed on sources and alternative products. Currently there are funds available to assist with climate related assessments and planning however implementation funding is not available. The current funding mechanisms are set up to address water quality impairments and not proactive planning associated with climate adaptation. Without funding support for implementation projects, there will be delays in implementation or the need to scale back needed projects.

Resources for Continued Water Quality and Stewardship (Continued)

Solutions

- Support the inclusion of Public Facilities Authority (PFA) request's for Point Source Implementation Grant (PSIG) in state legislation (i.e. state bonding bill) at an amount that would fully fund projects awaiting funding from previous years and newly-added shovel ready projects to allow for funding of Rochester's project.
- Assistance with managing additional PFAS requirements in wastewater with funding for sampling, assistance with research and consumer education, and/or banning PFAS materials at the source, along with a narrowly focused protection for municipalities to provide time to develop holistic reduction strategies that protect human health.
- Support continued funding for climate resiliency efforts
- Encourage innovative projects that provide multiple benefits such as climate resiliency, water quality, and recreational opportunities.

Impact

The MPCA recently changed the regulation on phosphorous limits for surface water. Increasing Rochester's chance to receive PSIG funding will support construction and work on current wastewater and storm water treatment facilities to meet these standards and improvement the water quality in Rochester. Without this PSIG funding, the City of Rochester would pay an additional \$7 million to upgrade the Water Reclamation to assure that the new lake and river regulations are met.

By partnering on monitoring and potential funding for managing, cleaning up and measuring PFAS, the issues associated with these chemicals may be more likely to be addressed in a productive manner. Banning PFAS materials at the source would reduce additional and future needs for remediation and other costly impacts on local communities.

By providing implementation funding, Rochester could move forward with valuable climate adaptation projects like our Section 7 pond that will reduce the rate of flood water entering the city and further consideration of building the resiliency hubs that will be identified through our climate resiliency hub assessment and planning project.



Transportation & Transit

Issue

Similar to other cities in Minnesota, Rochester is beginning to face major financial constraints due to the cost of maintaining and repairing the city's network of streets, in addition to a commitment to complete streets, active transportation, bridge replacement, and street reconstruction.

Currently, there are over 100 miles of streets that are at least 51 years or older in the city. The City of Rochester will be the first bus rapid transit and fare-free system outside the metro area when the LINK opens in 2026 providing a 2.1 mile corridor in the community that has over 3 million visitors annually, 20,000 commuters daily, and the 125,000 residents. Reliable and suitable funding of a variety of state, federal and other resources is vital to a vibrant transportation and transit system for Rochester and the region, such as:

- The Local Bridge Replacement Program (LBRP; Minnesota State Statue 174.50) provides local agencies transportation funding for the reconstruction, rehabilitation or removal of bridges or structures in their local road system through general obligation state bond funds via the state bonding/capital investment bill;
- Greater MN Transit operations funding that currently helps support our fixed-route bus system; and
- MNDOT programs such as Safe Routes to School and Transportation Alternatives that align with the city's active transportation plan.



Problem

Bridge maintenance and replacement costs are heavily outpacing the bonding dollars that have been passed by the legislature. In addition, the funds available for the program vary with each legislative appropriation. Due to the similar age of bridges in the community, an increased and continued need for bridge repairs and replacements is anticipated in the future. In order to address the necessary work and plan for these important infrastructure projects, there needs to be consistent and adequate funding into the Local Bridge Replacement Program via the state bonding bill. The City of Rochester has an upcoming bridge preservation project for the key corridor of 37th Street NW (Bridge #55519) that could benefit from this program's funding. The project cost is estimated to be \$2.2M.

In addition to the upcoming bus rapid transit LINK route, the City of Rochester also will continue to operate a fixed-route system of Rochester Public Transit buses that rely on the limited state and federal funding for operations. The LINK bus rapid transit system will begin service in 2026 and operations will be partially funded via partnership agreement with a major local employer which allows for partial coverage of the fare-free model. The LINK bus rapid transit will require additional state support for financial coverage of a fare-free operation sustainably. By adding an additional line of operations to the city's public transit system that serves the region's workforce and economy, additional state funding will be needed for bus rapid transit systems.

Transportation & Transit Continued

Utilizing traditional funding methods for streets such as the tax levy would place a heavy burden on the citizens of Rochester. For example, including the \$16-20 million needed annually would result in an increase in the tax levy. Growing to this \$16-20 million over time by adding an additional \$1 million every year would, in time, increase the city levy by 1.8% for residential properties and 1.75% for commercial. Additional revenue sources continue to be needed for street infrastructure to defray the costs of street improvements.

The City adopted an Active Transportation Plan in 2022 which includes various opportunities for multi-modal infrastructure that would transform active transportation into a primary mode of daily transportation for residents and visitors. However, a consistent source of funding is not identified for completing the active transportation network developed in the plan, which would make the envisioned multi-modal system a safe and convenient reality.



Solution

The City supports additional and consistent funding into the Local Bridge Replacement Program. Support for an increase in funding for the Local Bridge Replacement Program is critical for necessary community infrastructure of bridges and community benefits from bridges are maintained and would allow projects like the 37th Street NW bridge preservation, which serves regional traffic, to be accomplished.

Additional, dedicated, reliable, and predictable funding for bus rapid transit system operations from the state will be needed to provide the fare-free model of operations for the LINK in addition to the existing Rochester Public Transit system of 32 fixed route buses that provided over 2 million rides in 2022.

Residents would benefit from additional funding for multi-modal projects, as guided by the active transportation plans and policies adopted by city council. Additional funding of state programs such as Safe Routes to School and Transportation Alternatives would allow for additional investment in the active transportation infrastructure used by Rochester residents and visitors regularly.

Impact



Bridges connect workers to jobs, people to necessary services, and provide critical access between different cities and regions. Allowing bridges to continue in states of disrepair will result in complications for safety, mobility, and economic activity in the City of Rochester and the State of Minnesota. Safety is a top priority and funding for preservation of bridges like the 37th Street NW Bridge can safely support travel lanes and better serve those utilizing and relying on the bridge. The LINK bus rapid transit system will reduce greenhouse

Transportation & Transit Continued

gas emissions, provides an accessible option for getting to work, home, school, and leisure activities along the route which will go through the downtown corridor. It also helps Rochester meet its goal to reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips into downtown by nearly 30% in the next 20 years.

Funding for safe, viable, and convenient transportation options, including active transportation options, and networks could offer more appealing alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle use and help meet citywide greenhouse gas reduction and vehicle miles traveled reduction targets, in addition to reducing housing and transportation cost burdens.



Sustainability & Environmental Stewardship

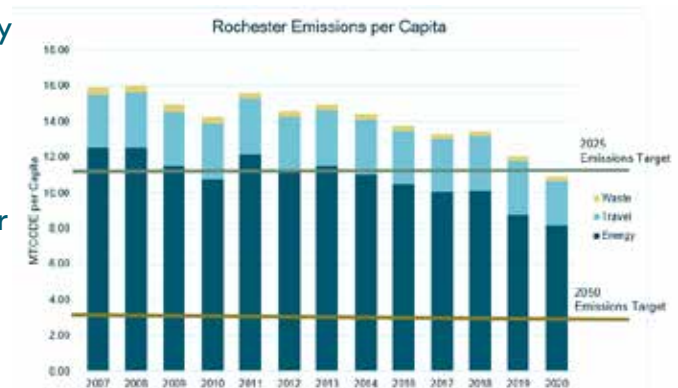
Issue

The City of Rochester has opportunity to be a leader in greenhouse gas emission reductions, sustainability, and environmental stewardship. In 2017, Minnesota’s building sector made up 40.6% of the total energy consumed in the state, 19.5% of which was from within the commercial buildings sector, including high-rise multifamily buildings), building efficiency of public spaces including at the Rochester International Airport, city service buildings, and future geothermal and solar components to heat and cool city hall, the Rochester Public Library, Mayo Civic Center, Rochester Art Center, and Rochester Civic Theater. Nearby private properties expected for redevelopment also provide potential opportunity for renewable energy projects.

Current efforts on transportation and building efficiency, along with Rochester Public Utilities (RPU) commitment to 100% renewable power generation by 2030 has set the City on track to surpass its original goal of 30% reduction in greenhouse gas (ghg) emissions by 2025. In September of 2022, the Rochester City Council adopted updated ghg emissions reduction goals in accordance with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Rochester’s new ghg targets include a 50% reduction in ghg emissions by 2030 and a 100% reduction in emissions by 2050.

Problem

Funding for renewable energy and energy efficiency projects is complex and dynamic as technology advances and opportunities for redevelopment and facility management practices are evolving. Additional funding from the federal Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act (IIJA), MN Department of Commerce, Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), and other funding sources at the state or federal level could be a catalyst in allowing renewable and energy efficiency projects in Rochester’s public and private spaces.



Solution

- Ability for cities to adopt the State of Minnesota SB 2030 Energy Standard in order to curb the energy use and carbon emissions of local buildings (SB 2030 must be met by all projects receiving general obligation bond funding from the State of Minnesota, however it can also be voluntarily applied to any new or renovated building during the design phase).
- Federal funding allocated to the state for renewable energy, energy efficiency, or other green building projects should be readily made available to cities, including municipal utilities and municipal airports, with particular emphasis on projects that are able to align with greenhouse gas emission goals or other state and city goals.
- Clarification to the ECO statute to strengthen and enhance electrification incentive opportunities and better align with the 100% renewable energy goals
- State funding and incentives for electric vehicle fleet conversion and EV Chargers for public use
- Resources, funding, and tools to incentivize decarbonization for large existing buildings

Impact

Buildings must become more efficient if the State’s carbon-reduction goals are to be reached. The State is currently not on track to meet its statutory greenhouse gas reduction goals of 30% reduction from 2005 levels by 2025, nor is it on track to meet the 80% reduction by 2050 goal.

Parkland Dedication

Issue

Currently, new residential development results in only partial provision of public park spaces in the community. Current legislation allows the municipality to require dedication only if the property is ‘subdivided.’ Minneapolis and St. Paul have received special legislation that allows their municipalities to require parkland dedication when most development occurs. This authorization was handed down due to the amount of development/redevelopment of existing parcels in the Twin Cities that does not require subdivision of the property but still generates need and impact for the park system. Rochester is in a similar situation.

Problem

Rochester is experiencing redevelopment/development challenges similar to those of Minneapolis and St Paul whereby we are anticipating 10,000 new residential units over the next 20 years along with multiple types of commercial & retail development in the downtown core. If legislation allowing a modification to the enabling legislation is not provided, the development of these properties will not be making contributions toward the public park spaces they will be demanding the city provide. Recent examples of redevelopment that could not collect parkland dedication despite the increased demand on the parks system include: 1) the Bryk multifamily property (created 180 units; previously 6 vacant lots on 1.2 acres), 2) the Benaiah on Broadway (created 27 units; previously 4 developed lots with 4 units), and 3) Northern Heights (created 66 units; previously 2 vacant lots on 2.4 acres). These types of projects greatly increase the need for parkland without providing any associated funding to support their resident’s desires. Even with a nominal per unit park dedication charge similar to what the metro area charges the funding provided would be a step towards enhancing existing older parks and trails serving these community members.

Solution

The City supports legislative solutions in conjunction with League of MN Cities and other cities that would allow cities to enact parkland dedication requirements without the current requirement that the property be ‘subdivided.’

Impact

The purpose of this legislation is twofold. First, this is intended to equalize the terms of development across the entire spectrum of properties in the community. Secondly, it aims to provide adequate parkland improvements serving the downtown area. Additional park usage and demand from residents was particularly evident during the pandemic and will continue into the foreseeable future.



Parking Fine Revenue Sharing

Issue

As part of the State government’s efforts to raise revenues without resorting to tax increases, the State government enacted a \$3 parking ticket tax in July of 2003, followed by the enactment of an additional \$1 parking ticket tax in July of 2006. The amount charged for a Rochester parking ticket was \$9, with \$5 going to the City of Rochester and \$4 going to the State. In 2009, the Legislature passed an Omnibus Public Safety Appropriations Bill, which increased the state imposed parking ticket revenue from \$4 to \$12.

Problem

The City issued 22,254 tickets in 2022 and was required to pay \$267,048 to the state for the surcharge. As it currently stands, the City’s ability to adjust the parking fee for the purpose of covering the cost of enforcement, as well as collection and enhancing the revenues, is hindered by this substantial surcharge.

Solution

Eliminate the State surcharge on parking tickets.

Impact

The main purpose of the City’s parking ticket charge is to ensure there is adequate turnover in the parking meters to provide spaces for individuals who come into the downtown area for shopping, eating, or entertainment. The State’s surcharge does not contribute operationally to the management and implementation of the program.

PARKING VIOLATION
CITY OF ROCHESTER
STATE OF MINNESOTA



PARKING CITATION

Issue No.	Issue Date	Issue Time	
Agency	GEO Code		
Location	Meter Number		

Violation

Ordinance: **11-6-34(b)(2)**
EXPIRED METER

Due Now	After 11/28/2020	12/08/2020	12/18/2020
\$20.00	\$25.00	\$30.00	\$45.00

Vehicle		
License	State	Plate Type
Make		
Body Type	Color	

Remarks

Officer Shield: _____ Officer Name: _____

All tickets include a \$12.00 surcharge required by the State of Minnesota
Pay on-line at www.rochestermn.gov/parkinginformation
or see reverse side for payment instructions



Other Areas of Support

The City of Rochester supports:



The legislative platforms adopted by the **League of Minnesota Cities**, to the extent they do not conflict with the City's Legislative Priorities, or related Council action, including:

- Protecting local government aid (LGA) funding and updating formula
- Fire Department Recruitment, Retention, and Pension Plan Membership Eligibility issue
- Ongoing funding for mental health injury prevention and treatment related to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) to address ongoing duty disability expenses
- Alternatives to print newspaper publication requirements
- Protecting local authority related to development fees, zoning, and planning
- Transportation infrastructure funding tools such as impact fee and public infrastructure utility.
- Efforts around racial equity in Minnesota
- Veterans preference promotional probationary period
- Updates to the arbitration process
- Updates to open meeting law requirements for interviews
- Allow virtual meetings attendance for boards and commissions
- State involvement in massage therapy regulation, including consideration of a centralized database
- State funding to local governments in implementing the Data Practices Act (in 2022, Rochester experienced a 341% increase in data requests since 2018)
- Liquor license updates such as allowing cities to issue full intoxicated liquor licensure for businesses such as food halls, health/wellness service providers, group art classes, bridal boutiques, museums, and art exhibits in the City of Rochester; also consideration of special district permissions for liquor licensing for downtown area.



Preserve and increase state funding to Rochester for accessibility infrastructure, public safety, microtransit, housing and homelessness, and other similar funding.



State & Local **Cybersecurity Grant awards** to be based with consideration of city size and needs.



Legislative authority to advance **Public Private Partnerships (P3)** and design build for public infrastructure projects



Incentives to **encourage reinvestment in historic properties** through tools such as the Mills Act in California where local governments can create programs that limit property tax increases when qualified investments are made and also State's Historic Tax Credit program.

Other Areas of Support Continued



Evaluation of Minnesota Rules to allow **flexibility for School Districts** to design schools on **smaller sites in urban areas**



Updating Minnesota Statute to align with federal interpretation by **Federal Transit Administration (FTA)** to allow for **small commercial/retail at transit stops**



Additional funding and economic flexibility for coordination with state and federal partners around federal funding opportunities



Funding for **retrofitting sprinklers in privately owned multi-family properties**



Local fee options and continued, permanent **state funding to support emerald ash borer and urban forestry**



Funding for the state arts board, including regional grants that can help provide additional opportunities for Rochester Public Music, Rochester residents, and visitors.



Funding for the Greater MN Parks and Trails priorities, to the extent they do not conflict with the City's Legislative Priorities, or related Council action.



Partnerships and funding around workforce development and readiness through Department of Employment and Economic Development and others.



Removing regulatory barriers and giving all local jurisdictions in Minnesota the option to use **Ranked Choice Voting**



Support intellectual freedom and access to information in alignment with the Library Board's Freedom to Read Resolution adopted on October 19, 2022. Support MN Library Association efforts to provide more stability and funding for library services, with the understanding it would not diminish local government aid or other city funding.



2024 Federal Priorities*

The City of Rochester works with Sustainable Strategies DC to continuously evaluate federal opportunities including those from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) that are in alignment with city priorities. Some examples of 2024 federal priorities could include:

- Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Small Starts Program Rapid Transit Funding for LINK bus rapid transit
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Program for assessment and redevelopment of vacant parcels
- USDOT programs such as Bus & Bus Facilities Program, USDOT Reconnecting Communities, RAISE, Electric Vehicle charging, and other sources that would continue to advance transportation priorities around mode shift and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and community infrastructure investments.
- National Parks Service (NPS) programs for parks, historic preservation, trails, park development, and/or riverfront development
- National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) funding for public music, alley activation, and community programming and needs related to department mission and council priorities
- Department of Energy and other energy/sustainability related programs that could include affordable housing components, airport energy efficiency, public private partnership opportunities, advanced metering infrastructure, smart thermostats, stormwater management, and other similar aims.
- Congressionally directed spending requests that align with council adopted capital improvement plan, council priorities and council action.



As a member-city, Rochester also joins with priorities from the National League of Cities to the extent they do not conflict with the City's Legislative Priorities, or related Council action.

*List subject to updates as opportunities become available that align with city priorities.



2023 Mayor and City Council Members



Mayor Kim Norton



Brooke Carlson
City Council President



Patrick Keane
City Council Member
1st Ward



Mark Bransford
City Council Member
2nd Ward



Norman W. Wahl
City Council Member
3rd Ward



Kelly Rae Kirkpatrick
City Council Member
4th Ward



Shaun C. Palmer
City Council Member
5th Ward



Molly Dennis
City Council Member
6th Ward

Questions?

Heather Corcoran, Legislative Affairs & Policy Director

hcorcoran@rochestermn.gov 507-269-9893

Alison Zelms, City Administrator

azelms@rochestermn.gov 507-328-2004

Aaron Parrish, Deputy City Administrator

aparrish@rochestermn.gov 507-328-2006

Cindy Steinhauser, Deputy City Administrator – DSIC

csteinhauser@rochestermn.gov 507-328-2015



City of Rochester
201 4th Street SE
Rochester, MN 55904