



January 20, 2026

Re: City of Rochester 2026-27 Budget

Dear Mayor Evans,

We would like to thank you for championing investments in our transportation infrastructure that create a safer, equitable mobility network for all road users, including cyclists, pedestrians, and public transit riders. After the incredible progress in 2024, we are all too aware of the headwinds facing the Rochester community, but we stand with you in your resolve that we can make progress for safer streets, the Inner Loop North transformation, and expanding bus amenities, among other priorities.

Reconnect Rochester champions transportation choices that enable a more vibrant and equitable community. Our mission supports efforts that are aimed at improving accessibility and expanding mobility options for all people – regardless of age, ability, income or mode of transportation. We aim to inspire and activate Rochester residents to support safer streets for all users, regardless of their choice of transportation.

You have made deliberate policy and financial choices to invest in people and make our streets safe and connected for all residents. At a time when the City faces real financial constraints, it may be tempting to see street safety as something that can be deferred, but the momentum cannot stop. Safe streets are basic public infrastructure. They support economic growth, reduce public safety costs, and make Rochester a city where people want to stay and raise families.

Below we have outlined the financial investments we'd like to see the City of Rochester make in the next budget to continue the momentum of ensuring our streets are safe and accessible to all. These investments are needed to support city residents who use public transit, walking and biking to get around, and for the City of Rochester to reach the goals outlined in the Rochester 2034 Comprehensive Plan, 2023 Active Transportation Plan (ATP), and the ROC Vision Zero (RVZ) Program.

**Prioritize funding to ROC Vision Zero programs** to eliminate serious injuries and deaths from road violence by supporting a City Hall wide and community-wide effort to educate



and expand safe systems in Rochester, including required staffing to implement initiatives. **Ensure the budget includes new signage for speed limit changes and any new education programs.**

As we have discussed previously, we would encourage the City of Rochester to explore quick-build program frameworks to use temporary materials to improve safety to prevent crashes and rapidly respond to sites of serious injuries and fatalities. It is critical to show residents that ROC Vision Zero commitments translate to immediate action to prevent or respond to fatal crashes. While traditional projects take years, a quick-build response can be done immediately and then transition to a project where more permanent changes can be implemented in future projects. In order to put in place quick-build solutions, there are important budget considerations:

- Study how City of Rochester **traffic engineering functions** are currently fulfilled.
- Increase **Staffing for Vision Zero and Active Transportation** (planners, engineers, & project managers) and onboarding more of its own traffic engineering expertise.
- An approved policy and toolkit of **traffic calming intervention** (bollards, flexposts, lane striping equipment, low profile concrete barriers & more)
- Increasing the City's own **operational equipment and personnel** for striping, installing and maintaining traffic calming materials.
- **Dedicated money to fund these projects**

While we explore ways to improve driver safety among residents, the City of Rochester can immediately start to equip its own fleet with safety technologies such as **intelligent speed assistance** to improve fleet safety and limit insurance liability.

Additionally, the City of Rochester should consider becoming **an official NACTO member**, unlocking the benefits and resources available to [dozens of other major cities](#) across the United States.

**Building on recent successful state and federal grant applications, continue to aggressively pursue funding for the Active Transportation Plan and increase the City of Rochester's own budget investment.** Reconnect Rochester is actively engaged with the City of Rochester's SS4A projects, including the protected bike lane demonstration project and the enhanced winter maintenance plan that will develop standard operational frameworks for bike lane protection and maintenance. After the completion



of these planning efforts, it is critical the City of Rochester invest its own funding to operationalize the plans to build protected bike lanes, maintain them, and keep active transportation routes free of debris and snow and ice.

**Our continued focus is to build the protected bike spine** network and to close critical gaps that currently exist. The 2024 Ride for the Spine highlighted the 8 miles of the 63 mile bike spine that, when completed, would create a north-south and east-west minimum grid through downtown, which will likely raise Rochester's Bike Friendly Cities ranking from bronze to silver. 2025 saw a massive step forward with the concrete barrier protected bike lanes on West Main Street as part of the road project. We urge you to ensure the concrete barriers can be maintained year-around from glass, debris and snow going forward. Additionally, we urge DES to prioritize the remaining unfinished segments of Chili Ave and E. Main St where protected bike infrastructure is called for.

The north-south axis of the bike spine has a lower bar to completion, focusing mainly on two miles north of downtown. The Genesee Riverway Trail north of downtown study recently completed gives some guidance on investments that need to be made to close this gap. In addition, we are pleased the City of Rochester plans to go after Transportation Alternatives Program funding for Genesee Riverway Trail maintenance and we would like to encourage you to continue to seek funding to maintain and upgrade trails such as the El Camino and Genesee Riverway trails. Regular maintenance such as milling root heave and leveling the trails, sweeping, and snow clearing should be prioritised as these are critical routes for travel throughout our city.

**Reconnect recommends increasing funding for the frequency of street, sidewalk and cycletrack sweeping to address broken glass and other debris (often caused by car crashes!).** Currently the City of Rochester recommends reporting specific areas to 311 for targeted cleanup, but the quantity of broken glass at various locations suggests a minimum maintenance routine needs to be established, particularly on bike spines and bicycle boulevards. Bicycle tires are much more vulnerable to puncture than car tires.

**City Special Events** currently offers bike corrals for many events, and we would encourage the City of Rochester to proactively plan for and market the availability of secure bike parking at festivals and special events.



**VEO** continues to exceed expectations in the City of Rochester, and the e-scooter share's expanded season and expanded geographic reach is paying off. We understand a new contract has been negotiated. We are disappointed the company would not be willing to expand the vehicle offering to include [pedal bikes or pedal-assist e-bikes](#), giving residents access to a more traditional bicycle offering. However, we would encourage you to offer Rochester as a test market for the [VEO Trike](#), a more stable cargo-bike e-scooter which we believe would be appealing to inexperienced riders. Finally, we would urge City Communications to more **actively promote the VEO Access program** for low-income residents to have reduced price VEO subscriptions.

DES has greatly improved its alignment with and planning for **RTS bus stop amenities**, including concrete pads and bumpouts, on each street project. We encourage the City of Rochester to continue to include in their project plans pads, seating and bus shelters, enhanced lighting, and crosswalks near transit stops.

**With thanks to DRHS, we are excited to continue to offer 20 Flower City Feeling Good Rides series rides.** This series familiarizes residents with Rochester's bike network investments and easier ways to get around by bike. We are also thankful for the **10 Learn to Bike** workshops the City of Rochester supports us to offer at the R-Centers from January to June. We have the capacity and the registration numbers support expanding those workshop offerings to year-round. Bike education programming coupled with investments in safe active transportation infrastructure ensures that all city residents can equitably access and enjoy cycling as transportation.

**Finally, we would like to see covered bike parking and bike repair stations at every R-Center and at Public Libraries.** R-Center staff could be trained in simple bike repair to aid riders and provide tire tubes and spare parts.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our input.

Bill Collins



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