



# LEGISLATIVE AND FUNDING PRIORITIES

CITY OF SYRACUSE  
MAYOR BEN WALSH

2021

CITY OF SYRACUSE

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# City of Syracuse

## A MESSAGE FROM MAYOR WALSH

When I became Mayor, my administration set a vision for Syracuse to be a growing city that embraces diversity and creates opportunity for all. It has been accepted across our community and has guided every action we have taken since. Over the past three years with your partnership, we have made great progress toward achieving this vision. I am pleased to report that Syracuse is standing strong despite the strains that our community and nation confronted in 2020.



We faced the blows of the pandemic, and while the threat of COVID-19 is not over, we have met the challenges at every stage. Instead of waiting for outside financial help, working with the Syracuse Common Council, we took responsible action to offset huge losses due to the pandemic. With your support, my administration also partnered with the economic arms of city government to extend more than \$1.3 million in grants and loans to city small businesses to help them get through COVID-19.

During the past year, we have made progress on the Syracuse Surge, our strategy for inclusive growth in the New Economy and the Resurgent Neighborhood Initiative, our comprehensive program to revitalize targeted neighborhoods and their surrounding business corridors. The City of Syracuse continues to make great strides and is well-positioned to experience a resurgence of opportunity. To maintain momentum for the people that we serve, we will continue to need the assistance of our state and federal government partners.

In the pages that follow, we outline critical financial needs and policy opportunities identified by our team across city government. They represent a broad range of priorities in infrastructure, public safety, neighborhoods, jobs, and economic development. With support for the projects and legislative priorities identified herein, Syracuse will overcome, succeed, and thrive.

Thank you for your steady and strong support for the City of Syracuse. I look forward to continuing our work together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben Walsh". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Ben Walsh, Mayor

# Funding Requests: Priority Initiatives

This section provides an overview of major initiatives and priority projects for 2021-2022. An entire list of funding opportunities organized by amount is included in Appendix A.

## **Project 1: Public Drinking Water Intake Extension**

This project will extend the City of Syracuse No. 2 public drinking water intake pipe in Skaneateles Lake to deeper water. The investment will help prevent the need to construct water treatment facilities for the City and the villages of Skaneateles, Jordan, and Elbridge at the cost of several hundred million dollars to state and local government.

Without the extension, the city water supply is susceptible to intake closures due to turbidity and Harmful Algae Bloom (HAB) events. If continued or more serious violations of turbidity occur, the City has the potential to lose its New York State Health Department filtration waiver, which would require the construction of one or multiple water treatment plants to ensure the continued supply of public drinking water to approximately 200,000 local residents.

***Funding Need: \$13,000,000***

## **Project 2: West Genesee Street “Dig Once” Reconstruction**

This project will fund the “Dig Once” reconstruction and replacement of the sewer and water infrastructure along a 2.3 mile section of West Genesee from Downtown Syracuse to the city line. The work will align with the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) funded mill and pave of the same section of West Genesee Street. The investment will save taxpayers tens of millions of dollars and prevent future disruption by aligning the underground reconstruction with the FTIP project.

***Funding Need: \$17,450,000***

## **Project 3: Resurgent Neighborhoods Initiative | New Home Construction**

This project will include the construction of new single-family houses in the City. It is part of the Resurgent Neighborhoods Initiative (RNI) Infill Housing plan to build 200 units of one and two-family affordable homes in targeted neighborhood corridors in all sectors of the City. Despite the pandemic, progress has continued on the plan, with 31 houses funded and ready to break ground in 2021. Half of the homes will get constructed this year, while the other half will begin in 2022. This funding is essential to fill gaps in neighborhoods left by vacant and abandoned properties over the past decade.

***Funding Need: \$1,000,000***

## **Project 4: Resurgent Neighborhoods Initiative | Blight Remediation**

As part of RNI, the City has identified eight block clusters throughout the city for targeted transformation and revitalization. In addition to our infill housing development project, we have identified about 80 parcels, most of which are owned by our Land Bank, which require substantial blight remediation and/or removal in order to make those sites ready for redevelopment. Removing or remediating blighted structures is a key step in our effort to stabilize these high priority city blocks and improve the quality of life for residents in these neighborhoods.

***Funding request: \$500,000***

## **Project 5: Urban Forest Master Plan | 4,000 Trees in City Neighborhoods**

This project will fund the protection and expansion of the tree canopy across the City. Trees in urban areas improve air quality, beautify neighborhoods, and improve economic activity in business districts. As outlined in the City of Syracuse Urban Forest Master Plan, funding will support: (1) planting of 4,000 trees over three years starting in areas of the City with low canopy areas, (2) creating jobs for young people to plant trees, and (3) removing and repairing hardscape to plant trees and protect existing healthy trees.

***Funding Need: \$2,000,000***

## **Project 6: Armory Square “Dig Once” Reconstruction**

This project will fund the “Dig Once” reconstruction and replacement of the sewer and water infrastructure on Walton Street in Armory Square in Downtown Syracuse, as well as reconstructed streetscape to correct ADA deficiencies and enhance public spaces and outdoor dining areas. It will also ensure safe travel for all modes in our premier urban retail and nightlife district. The work will align with planned sewer infrastructure work by Onondaga County in the same area. The investment will save taxpayers millions of dollars and prevent future disruption and negative economic impact in this active and highly trafficked section of downtown.

***Funding Need: \$7,440,000***

## **Project 7: Syracuse Surge | Smart Cities NYS Center for Smart Cities**

This project will fund the creation of the New York Center for Smart Cities, a public-private center of excellence for the development and implementation of Smart City and Internet of Things (IoT) technology. It will be located in the expanded Greater Syracuse Tech Garden at the heart of the Center City Innovation Hub in Downtown Syracuse. The project will solidify Syracuse’s and New York State’s position as a global leader in Smart Cities. The City’s Digital Command Center will be based in the NYS Center for Smart Cities, to centralize municipal data collection and advanced real-time analytics, and to co-develop Smart City solutions with researchers and technology companies. Funding will be used to support key technology and digital infrastructure needs for the center, including enhanced connectivity and digital networking capabilities, data storage and security tools, powerful analytics capabilities, data

visualization tools, and additional IoT sensors and related equipment.

**Funding Need: \$3,000,000**

### **Project 8: Syracuse Surge | High-Speed Connectivity**

This project will install high-speed fiber optic lines to the five targeted Resurgent Neighborhoods Initiative Neighborhood Business Corridors located across the City of Syracuse. It will help close the “digital divide” for city residents by increasing the presence of free public Wi-Fi areas and will attract economic investment in these corridors. Businesses in these areas could be afforded the opportunity to connect into the high-speed network as a competitive advantage for doing business in the City.

**Funding Need: \$5,500,000**

### **Project 9: Syracuse Build | Interstate 81 Jobs**

This project will provide funding for two key priorities under the collaborative Syracuse Build workforce development and career readiness program for job opportunities created by the Interstate 81 project.

Funds will be used for services and training for young people ages 16-24 who are considered “hard to serve” because they are neither in school nor in the formal labor market. Beyond basic economic barriers, many of these individuals are caught up in cycles of trauma and conflict.

In addition, funding will be used to support the Syracuse Build “Career Readiness Network” in partnership with neighborhood community centers, CNY Works, and SUNY EOC. Syracuse Build is seeking funds to build a shared data and client tracking system and have the capacity to provide assessments and referrals at a high volume.

**Funding Need: \$450,000**

### **Project 10: Bus Rapid Transit**

This project will enable Syracuse and Onondaga County residents who need jobs to get to employers by implementing a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in the City of Syracuse. BRT is an integrated system of digitally connected buses, facilities, traffic signal prioritization, and other amenities that improve the speed, reliability, and overall user experience of bus transit. BRT when done right is more like a light rail but on wheels.

The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council’s Smart1 Study identifies two transportation corridors that would effectively serve more than 80% of area jobs. More than 64,000 people live within these corridors, many of which have higher poverty rates. This project is essential to achieving the City’s vision of creating opportunity for all.

**Funding Needs:**

- *Capital requirements* – Infrastructure projects to improve the customer experience,

including streetscape and pedestrian ROW/sidewalk enhancements, lighting, bus shelter related infrastructure, and other roadway improvements: **\$4,000,000**

- *Operating grant* – Similar to the grant that the Capital District Transit Authority received from the State in 2019 to fund operating expenses for Albany’s new BRT system: **\$5,000,000**

# Funding Requests: Other Major Projects

## Public Safety - Fire

### **Project 11: Fire Training Tower - \$2,000,000**

The current fire training tower on State Fair Boulevard is over 50 years old and does not measure up to today's training needs. The project is also a shared services opportunity, because a new, updated tower could be used by non-city departments to conduct training. In order to maintain the high level of certification and service, the City of Syracuse Fire Department requires a new training tower.

### **Project 12: Fire Ladder Truck - \$1,000,000**

Appendix D of NFPA 1901 recommends that no fire apparatus be in front-line service beyond 15 years. In certain cases, the Authority Having Jurisdiction should consider removing apparatus from front-line service even sooner. The City of Syracuse's climate, road conditions, and call volume dictate that the Syracuse Fire Department should adhere to a schedule that is 10 years for front-line service. Beyond that, apparatus becomes less reliable and more expensive to maintain. The Syracuse Fire Department apparatus replacement schedule should alternate – 2 engines purchased in one budget year, and a truck (ladder/platform) in the next, and so on. The City of Syracuse has fallen off of that replacement schedule. As a result, the Fire Department's spare/recall apparatus fleet is old and in relatively poor condition. From 2001 to 2012, we purchased only 4 trucks. Due to their age, they require frequent maintenance to remain serviceable. With state assistance, the Department can get back on the proper replacement schedule.

### **Project 13: Fire Engine - \$800,000**

The Syracuse Fire Department still has some American LaFrance engines in the fleet, which is problematic. The company went out of business several years ago and replacement parts are difficult or impossible to find, or the parts are extremely expensive due to the fact they are not manufactured any longer. One of our American LaFrance engines, Engine 17, is still in front-line service. From 2008 to 2018, the Department purchased only five engines. During that period, we should have purchased ten. The two most recent training engines were in such poor condition that they had to be condemned. The used engine purchased from another municipality for training purposes is reaching the end of its utility.

### **Project 14: Propane Training - \$200,000**

The Syracuse Fire Department responds to several motor vehicle accidents and car fires each year. During the past two years, there have been several civilian fatalities in relation to these



types of car accidents/fires. The propane prop would give our firefighters realistic training to deal with these incidents, save lives, and prevent property loss. Currently, this training tool does not exist for the Syracuse Fire Department.

### **Project 15: Pole Barn - \$300,000**

The pole barn is a necessary piece of critical storage to properly maintain fire equipment. The City currently stores valuable apparatuses either outdoors or in unused properties that could be used for other tax-generating purposes.

### **Project 16: First Responder Vehicles (2) - \$150,000**

These vehicles play a vital role in responding to calls. This addition to the Fire Department fleet would ensure the continued safety of Syracuse citizens. Similar to the fire truck ladders and the fire engines, the City has lagged behind the fleet replacement schedule, and these vehicles need to be replaced for the proper safety of the Syracuse community.

## **Public Safety - Police**

### **Project 17: Taser Upgrade and De-escalation Training - \$200,000**

The current taser model is out of warranty and not covered under liability insurance. Upgrading to the Taser 7 also provides a VR training program emphasizing de-escalation, an important component of police reform.

### **Project 18: Police Street COPS Cameras - \$240,000**

The city averages around 15-20 camera replacements a year, and each camera costs around \$12,000. These cameras ensure safety and security in all neighborhoods.

### **Project 19: Dashboard Cameras - \$250,000**

Dashboard cameras increase transparency and accountability, in addition to being useful for documentation purposes and criminal investigations.

### **Project 20: Body-worn Cameras - \$140,000**

Mayor Walsh's pledge to outfit every uniformed officer was met ahead of schedule in November of 2020. In addition to this, he was able to outfit 10 Uniformed Sergeants in the first wave of body-worn cameras (BWCs), and is now seeking further funding to outfit the remaining 14 uniformed Sergeants. Each camera costs \$10,000 over a 5-year contract. Thus, \$140,000 total is needed for expansion.

## **Parks and Recreation**

### **Project 21: Soldiers and Sailors Monument - \$750,000**

This project will repair deficiencies in the Soldiers & Sailors Monument in Clinton Square. Currently, cracks are evident on the globe on top, which encourages weed growth stemming from the moisture inside the monument. These conditions will worsen and lead to greater damage to the monument structure.

### **Project 22: Fountains (Hanover, Fayette, Franklin, Clinton Square) - \$1,000,000**

This project will restore and repair fountains in downtown and nearby parks. The fountains are popular attractions but are in various states of disrepair. Many small repairs have been completed but will not last forever; therefore, greater investment in these areas would aid these areas long-term.

### **Project 23: Universal Playground - \$350,000**

This project would create a playground that can be universally accessed and used by persons of all abilities. The surfacing would be welcoming and accessible to those with mobility impairments, in addition to including features that can be used by wheelchairs.

### **Project 24: Historic Steps in City Parks - \$1,000,000**

There are multiple city parks that have historic stone steps that are deteriorating and are past the ability to patch quickly (Schiller, Edgehill, Sunnycrest, Burnet, etc). This project will help improve accessibility so that constituents are able to enjoy and utilize the parks to their fullest extent.

### **Project 25: Municipal Dog Shelter - \$2,000,000**

This project will fund the design and purchase/construction of a Municipal-owned Dog Shelter. The City of Syracuse Dog Control Department picks up more than 400 loose dogs on the City streets and currently contracts with a private business outside of City limits to house the animals. In addition to loose dogs, the City seizes dogs related to cruelty cases. While dogs wait to be reclaimed, adopted, or transferred to other safe facilities, they are held in an area that is not easily reached for all of our city residents. There is a great need for the City to own and operate our own facility and make the process easier for our residents. The regulation of a Dog Shelter is through the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. The City also works with multiple local nonprofits dedicated to animal welfare to constantly be improving the quality of life for our lost, abandoned, and abused canines.

### **Project 26: Splash Pad - \$750,000**

This project will fund the design and construction of at least two (2) splash pads to be

constructed in separate city-owned parks. The physical condition of the eight (8) City of Syracuse pools is so great, that to fix them would cost millions. However, it is crucial that the City provide heat-relief during our warmest months. Splash pads do not require additional staffing and can be programmed to operate for more hours than our traditional pool schedule. This investment will provide safety and enjoyment to many city residents – old and young – for many decades to come.

## **Mobility and Streetscapes**

### **Project 27: Butternut Street Streetscape Improvements - \$325,000**

The Butternut Street project would implement recommended striping and bike lane treatments highlighted in the SMTC study from 2015 with additional streetscape improvements. The area of this project would encompass Salina Street to Grant Boulevard.

### **Project 28: Erie Boulevard West Improvements - \$3,500,000**

This sidewalk and streetscape update on Erie Boulevard West developed in the 2014 Bike Plan for the City of Syracuse has not yet been realized. It includes a road diet with bike lanes from Downtown to West Genesee Street. This would capitalize on the recently completed NYSDOT Empire State Trail.

### **Project 29: West Fayette Street Multiuse Trail - \$750,000**

A trail project that would travel through Lipe Art Park, over the railroad bridges at Geddes, and to Tipp Hill. This would also include greenway treatments for Wyoming/Otisco Streets leading to the crosswalk at West Street, which connects to Creekwalk Phase II. Further benefits include complementing existing facilities (Lipe, bridges, Creewalk, etc.) and providing additional recreational benefits. (Final funding amount subject to structural assessment of railroad bridges).

### **Project 30: Regional Market and NBT Stadium Improvements - \$650,000**

This project would make improvements to high-volume intersections and streets around the Regional Market and Transportation Center, as well as the NBT stadium. The work would build on recently completed studies completed by the SMTC that shows a strong need for safe and accessible pathways to and from these areas for pedestrians as well as cyclists. With pedestrian and cyclist safety at its core, this project would capitalize on already completed studies for the area, and ensure access to food markets for north side residents.

### **Project 31: Creekwalk Improvements between Fayette and Walton Street - \$750,000**

This project presents an opportunity to enhance an area of the Creekwalk between Fayette and Walton Street, which is a highly visible location in Armory Square yet has limited public

access and is currently inaccessible and overgrown. This project would provide greater access to the Creek with a walkway at or between Fayette and Walton streets. It will enhance recreation, provide views of the Creek, as well as create economic development benefits downtown.

## **Drinking Water**

### **Project 32: Mosely Pump Station - \$1,500,000**

Mosley pump station is inadequate as well as non-compliant with security requirements. These pump stations help to support the overall drinking water system, but would also serve as vital infrastructure to maintain proper flow for fire protection and firefighter needs.

### **Project 33: Chlorine Gas Disinfection Replacement - \$5,500,000**

Providing a hypo-solution provides a safer process for the community and will assist with the protection of the water supply during a Harmful Algal Bloom event. The chlorination not only ensures clean ready to drink water, but it also has proven to be a worthy defense to Algal toxins associated with recent increases of algal blooms in Skaneateles Lake.

### **Project 34: Bowes Gate House Replacement - \$5,000,000**

The valves at Bowes gate house are broken at present. This is a strategic location for controlling flow into the city; therefore, this project would provide an opportunity to fix a critical piece of water infrastructure.

### **Project 35: Comstock Pump Station Replacement - \$6,000,000**

The pump station feeding the University area and fills eastern reservoirs is reaching its end of life. This project is a proactive fix to a necessary piece of water maintenance material.

# Legislative/Policy Priorities

## **Policy 1: COVID-19 Recovery | Release Hold Back and Increase AIM Payments**

The City of Syracuse appreciates the State’s commitment to return the majority of the Aid and Incentives for Municipalities (AIM) payments held back by the State due to the fiscal impact of COVID-19. Pending the State’s receipt of anticipated federal COVID-19 relief funding, the City requests that the full withheld AIM funds be returned to municipalities. Similarly, with the receipt of COVID-19 relief, the City asks that cuts to AIM proposed in the Executive Budget be restored. Consistent with the request of the New York Conference of Mayors (NYCOM), the City of Syracuse, respectfully, further requests an increase in AIM to cities, towns, and villages. As NYCOM states, “Just as annual increases in school aid helps school districts maintain essential services, municipal governments need and deserve similar annual increases in State aid.”

## **Policy 2: Syracuse Police Residency - NY State Assembly Bill 11008/ NY State Senate Bill S1320**

The City of Syracuse supports bill A11008/S1320 which will require new members of the Syracuse Police Department to be residents of the City. As noted in the legislation, the requirements would not apply to any person who entered service prior to the passage of the legislation. While the Administration will continue to seek police residency provisions through the arbitration process, it welcomes the codification of residency in State law.

## **Policy 3: Fireworks Regulation - Penal Law 405, Section 5(b)**

The City of Syracuse supports the amendment of Penal Law 405, Section 5(b) to give cities with a population of one hundred thousand or more, as opposed to one million, the ability to opt-out of the New York State law legalizing the sale and use of sparkling devices. Since the legalization of sparkling devices in 2014, the City has seen an increase in the usage of both legal and illegal fireworks. Activity around July 4th has reached an unsafe “crisis” point.

The use of fireworks in dense urban environments is dangerous, harmful to quality of life, damaging to veterans with PTSD, and harmful to pets. Enforcement and emergency response creates an unnecessary burden on police and fire resources, as well as taxpayers. In June and July 2020, there were nearly 1500 hundred complaints regarding the usage of fireworks in the City.

#### **Policy 4: Restoration of Downtown Revitalization Initiative and Restore New York Programs**

The City of Syracuse supports the reauthorization of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative and the Restore NY programs:

- The 5th round of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative was halted due to the fiscal impact of COVID-19. Restoration of the \$10 million grant program is essential to help Syracuse and other mid-sized and small cities implement urban revitalization initiatives. These efforts will be even more critical to helping small and minority businesses in urban areas recovering from the pandemic.
- Enacting a 6th round of Restore NY funding would support scattered site development projects and other streetscape enhancements targeted to priority business corridors that are part of Syracuse's Resurgent Neighborhoods Initiative (RNI). Funding to Syracuse rounds of the program have been used to yield private investment on a ~ 5:1 and ~ 8:1 leverage ratio.

#### **Policy 5: Adult-Use Cannabis**

The City of Syracuse asks New York State to ensure that cities of 100,000 or more (instead of 1 million or more) receive direct revenue from the cultivation, production, and/or sale of adult-use of cannabis. Syracuse and other cities will shoulder a significant burden of enforcement of new regulations and will face additional costs associated with unintended negative consequences of the product, such as enforcement, addiction, and related criminal activity.

#### **Policy 6: Taxation of Fiber Optic Cable - RPTL §102(12)(i)**

The City of Syracuse supports the amendment of RPTL §102(12)(i) to include fiber optic cable in the category of taxable real property. This is a situation brought about by technology changing faster than laws can keep up. The tax burden is inequitably distributed because the current law, written decades ago, does not include fiber optic cable as taxable property.

#### **Policy 7: Assessment of Newly-Built/Converted Condominiums and Cooperatives - RPTL §339-y and §581**

The City of Syracuse supports the amendments of RPTL §339-y and §581 to remove restrictions on the assessment of newly-built and newly-converted condominium and cooperative units. New York State Assembly Bill 2874 passed in 2018, but its companion Senate bill never made it out of committee. The tax burden is inequitably distributed because condominiums are subject to statutory limitation on assessment (below market value).

### **Policy 8: Market Value Assessment of Private Low Income Housing - RPTL §581-A**

The City of Syracuse supports the amendment of RPTL §581-A to permit market-value-based assessment of certain low-income residential properties. The tax burden is inequitably distributed because certain private low-income housing developers benefit from statutory assessment limitations (based on reported income and expenses rather than market value).

### **Policy 9: Prevent “Dark Store” Strategy - A4752-C**

The City of Syracuse supports state legislation to prevent the “Dark Store” strategy (which has been successfully promoted in courts in New York) from being advanced. Nationwide, large national retailers are attempting to dramatically lower assessments based on the Dark Store Theory; this disproportionately burdens other property owners. New York State Assembly Bill 4752 was passed in 2020 to address this, but there has been no action in the State Senate.

### **Policy 10: Limit Exemption of Non-Profit Property Used for Taxable Purposes - RPTL §420**

The City of Syracuse seeks the amendment of RPTL §420 to specify that any space in property owned by a tax-exempt, non-profit organization that is leased or rented to any other entity of any type, whether non-profit or for-profit, shall be taxable. Syracuse's heavy concentration of tax-exempt properties puts a strain on municipal finances and, again, creates assessment inequity in our community. The City would also support the NYCOM proposal to authorize the local option of imposing service charges to defray services consumed by large not-for-profit property owners.

### **Policy 11: Regulating Transportation Network Companies (TNC)**

The City of Syracuse supports amending Section 1700 of the New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law to allow any county, town, city, or village to enact a tax or fee or other surcharge on a Transportation Network Company (TNC), a TNC driver, or a TNC vehicle used by a TNC driver or require a license, permit, or additional insurance coverage for a TNC, a TNC driver, or a TNC vehicle used by a TNC driver.

### **Policy 12: Maintenance of Abandoned Cemeteries**

The City of Syracuse supports increased funding for Section 1507(h) of the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law for the maintenance of abandoned cemetery property, administered by the Division of Cemeteries within the New York State Department of State. The funds are intended for a cemetery for which the corporate board or body to maintain it no longer exists. The funds should be made explicitly available to cities, as it is currently stated in Town Law, Section 291 for towns and villages, and in County Law, Section 222(5-a) for counties. The City of Syracuse's initial cleanup alone of one abandoned cemetery costs in excess of \$5,000, not including the

cost of continued maintenance following that; the expectation is the number of these abandoned properties will continue to grow.



# Appendix A: Comprehensive Funding Requests by Amount

Requests	Project No./Name	Category	Description
\$140,000	Project 20 - Body-worn Cameras	Public Safety - Police	Mayor Walsh's pledge to outfit every uniformed officer was met ahead of schedule in November of 2020. In addition to this, he was able to outfit 10 Uniformed Sergeants in the first wave of body-worn cameras (BWCs), and is now seeking further funding to outfit the remaining 14 uniformed Sergeants. Each camera costs \$10,000 over a 5-year contract. Thus, \$140,000 total is needed for expansion.
\$150,000	Project 16 - First Responder Vehicles (2)	Public Safety - Fire	These vehicles play a vital role in responding to calls. This addition to the Fire Department fleet would ensure the continued safety of Syracuse citizens. Similar to the fire truck ladders and the fire engines, the City has lagged behind the fleet replacement schedule, and these vehicles need to be replaced for the proper safety of the Syracuse community.
\$200,000	Project 14 - Propane Training	Public Safety - Fire	The Syracuse Fire Department responds to several motor vehicle accidents and car fires each year. During the past two years, there have been several civilian fatalities in relation to these types of car accidents/fires. The propane prop would give our firefighters realistic training to deal with these incidents, save lives, and prevent property loss. Currently, this training tool does not exist for the Syracuse Fire Department.
\$200,000	Project 17 - Taser Upgrade and De-escalation Training	Public Safety - Police	The current taser model is out of warranty and not covered under liability insurance. Upgrading to the Taser 7 also provides a VR training program emphasizing de-escalation, an important component of police reform.
\$240,000	Project 18 - Police Street COPS Cameras	Public Safety - Police	The city averages around 15-20 camera replacements a year, and each camera costs around \$12,000. These cameras

			ensure safety and security in all neighborhoods.
\$250,000	Project 19 - Police Dashboard Cameras	Public Safety - Police	Dashboard cameras increase transparency and accountability, in addition to being useful for documentation purposes and criminal investigations.
\$300,000	Project 15 - Pole Barn	Public Safety - Fire	The pole barn is a necessary piece of critical storage to properly maintain fire equipment. The City currently stores valuable apparatuses either outdoors or in unused properties that could be used for other tax-generating purposes.
\$325,000	Project 27 - Butternut Street Streetscape	Mobility and Streetscapes	The Butternut Street project would implement recommended striping and bike lane treatments highlighted in the SMTC study from 2015 with additional streetscape improvements. The area of this project would encompass Salina Street to Grant Boulevard.
\$350,000	Project 23 - Universal Playground	Parks and Recreation	This project would create a playground that can be universally accessed and used by persons of all abilities. The surfacing would be welcoming and accessible to those with mobility impairments, in addition to including features that can be used by wheelchairs.
\$450,000	Project 9 - Interstate 81 Jobs	Syracuse Build	<p>This project will provide funding for two key priorities under the collaborative Syracuse Build workforce development and career readiness program for job opportunities created by the Interstate 81 project.</p> <p>Funds will be used for services and training for young people ages 16-24 who are considered “hard to serve” because they are neither in school nor in the formal labor market. Beyond basic economic barriers, many of these individuals are caught up in cycles of trauma and conflict.</p> <p>In addition, funding will be used to support the Syracuse Build “Career Readiness Network” in partnership with neighborhood community centers, CNY Works, and SUNY EOC. Syracuse Build is seeking funds to build a shared data and</p>

			client tracking system and have the capacity to provide assessments and referrals at a high volume.
\$500,000	Project 4 - Resurgent Neighborhoods Initiative   Blight Remediation	Syracuse Surge	As part of RNI, the City has identified eight block clusters throughout the city for targeted transformation and revitalization. In addition to our infill housing development project, we have identified about 80 parcels, most of which are owned by our Land Bank, which require substantial blight remediation and/or removal in order to make those sites ready for redevelopment. Removing or remediating blighted structures is a key step in our effort to stabilize these high priority city blocks and improve the quality of life for residents in these neighborhoods.
\$650,000	Project 30 - Regional Market and NBT Stadium Improvements	Mobility and Streetscapes	This project would make improvements to high-volume intersections and streets around the Regional Market and Transportation Center, as well as the NBT stadium. The work would build on recently completed studies completed by the SMTC that shows a strong need for safe and accessible pathways to and from these areas for pedestrians as well as cyclists. With pedestrian and cyclist safety at its core, this project would capitalize on already completed studies for the area, and ensure access to food markets for north side residents.
\$750,000	Project 21 - Soldiers and Sailors Monument	Parks and Recreation	This project will repair deficiencies in the Soldiers & Sailors Monument in Clinton Square. Currently, cracks are evident on the globe on top, which encourages weed growth stemming from the moisture inside the monument. These conditions will worsen and lead to greater damage to the monument structure.
\$750,000	Project 29 - West Fayette Street Multiuse Trail	Mobility and Streetscapes	A trail project that would travel through Lipe Art Park, over the railroad bridges at Geddes, and to Tipp Hill. This would also include greenway treatments for Wyoming/Otisco Streets leading to the crosswalk at West Street, which connects to Creekwalk Phase II. Further benefits

			include complementing existing facilities (Lipe, bridges, Creewalk, etc.) and providing additional recreational benefits. (Final funding amount subject to structural assessment of railroad bridges).
\$750,000	Project 31 - Creekwalk Improvements between Fayette and Walton Street	Mobility and Streetscape	This project presents an opportunity to enhance an area of the Creekwalk between Fayette and Walton Street, which is a highly visible location in Armory Square yet has limited public access and is currently inaccessible and overgrown. This project would provide greater access to the Creek with a walkway at or between Fayette and Walton streets. It will enhance recreation, provide views of the Creek, as well as create economic development benefits downtown.
\$750,000	Project 26: Splash Pad	Parks and Recreation	This project will fund the design and construction of at least two (2) splash pads to be constructed in separate city-owned parks. The physical condition of the eight (8) City of Syracuse pools is so great, that to fix them would cost millions. However, it is crucial that the City provide heat-relief during our warmest months. Splash pads do not require additional staffing and can be programmed to operate for more hours than our traditional pool schedule. This investment will provide safety and enjoyment to many city residents – old and young – for many decades to come.
\$800,000	Project 13 - Fire Engine	Public Safety - Fire	The Syracuse Fire Department still has some American LaFrance engines in the fleet, which is problematic. The company went out of business several years ago and replacement parts are difficult or impossible to find, or the parts are extremely expensive due to the fact they are not manufactured any longer. One of our American LaFrance engines, Engine 17, is still in front-line service. From 2008 to 2018, the Department purchased only five engines. During that period, we should have purchased ten. The two most recent training engines were in such poor

			condition that they had to be condemned. The used engine purchased from another municipality for training purposes is reaching the end of its utility.
\$1,000,000	Project 12 - Fire Truck Ladder	Public Safety - Fire	Appendix D of NFPA 1901 recommends that no fire apparatus be in front-line service beyond 15 years. In certain cases, the Authority Having Jurisdiction should consider removing apparatus from front-line service even sooner. The City of Syracuse's climate, road conditions, and call volume dictate that the Syracuse Fire Department should adhere to a schedule that is 10 years for front-line service. Beyond that, apparatus becomes less reliable and more expensive to maintain. The Syracuse Fire Department apparatus replacement schedule should alternate – 2 engines purchased in one budget year, and a truck (ladder/platform) in the next, and so on. The City of Syracuse has fallen off of that replacement schedule. As a result, the Fire Department's spare/recall apparatus fleet is old and in relatively poor condition. From 2001 to 2012, we purchased only 4 trucks. Due to their age, they require frequent maintenance to remain serviceable. With state assistance, the Department can get back on the proper replacement schedule.
\$1,000,000	Project 22 - Fountains (Hanover, Franklin, Fayette, Franklin, Clinton Square)	Parks and Recreation	This project will restore and repair fountains in downtown and nearby parks. The fountains are popular attractions but are in various states of disrepair. Many small repairs have been completed but will not last forever; therefore, greater investment in these areas would aid these areas long-term.
\$1,000,000	Project 24 - Historic Steps in City Parks	Parks and Recreation	There are multiple city parks that have historic stone steps that are deteriorating and are past the ability to patch quickly (Schiller, Edgehill, Sunnycrest, Burnet, etc). This project will help improve accessibility so that constituents are able to enjoy and utilize the parks to their fullest extent.
\$1,000,000	Project 3 - Resurgent	Syracuse Surge	This project will include the construction

	Neighborhood Initiative   New Home Construction		of new single-family houses in the City. It is part of the Resurgent Neighborhoods Initiative (RNI) Infill Housing plan to build 200 units of one and two-family affordable homes in targeted neighborhood corridors in all sectors of the City. Despite the pandemic, progress has continued on the plan, with 31 houses funded and ready to break ground in 2021. Half of the homes will get constructed this year, while the other half will begin in 2022. This funding is essential to fill gaps in neighborhoods left by vacant and abandoned properties over the past decade.
\$1,500,000	Project 32 - Mosely Pump Station	Drinking Water	Mosley pump station is inadequate as well as non-compliant with security requirements. These pump stations help to support the overall drinking water system, but would also serve as vital infrastructure to maintain proper flow for fire protection and firefighter needs.
\$2,000,000	Project 11 - Fire Training Tower	Public Safety - Fire	The current fire training tower on State Fair Boulevard is over 50 years old and does not measure up to today's training needs. The project is also a shared services opportunity, because a new, updated tower could be used by non-city departments to conduct training. In order to maintain the high level of certification and service, the City of Syracuse Fire Department requires a new training tower.
\$2,000,000	Project 5 - Urban Forest Canopy Goal: Plant 4,000 trees over 3 years	Parks and Recreation	This project will fund the protection and expansion of the tree canopy across the City. Trees in urban areas improve air quality, beautify neighborhoods, and improve economic activity in business districts. As outlined in the City of Syracuse Urban Forest Master Plan, funding will support: (1) planting of 4,000 trees over three years starting in areas of the City with low canopy areas, (2) creating jobs for young people to plant trees, and (3) removing and repairing hardscape to plant trees and protect existing healthy trees.

\$2,000,000	Project 25: Municipal Dog Shelter	Parks and Recreation	<p>This project will fund the design and purchase/construction of a Municipal-owned Dog Shelter. The City of Syracuse Dog Control Department picks up more than 400 loose dogs on the City streets and currently contracts with a private business outside of City limits to house the animals. In addition to loose dogs, the City seizes dogs related to cruelty cases. While dogs wait to be reclaimed, adopted, or transferred to other safe facilities, they are held in an area that is not easily reached for all of our city residents. There is a great need for the City to own and operate our own facility and make the process easier for our residents. The regulation of a Dog Shelter is through the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. The City also works with multiple local nonprofits dedicated to animal welfare to constantly be improving the quality of life for our lost, abandoned, and abused canines.</p>
\$3,000,000	Project 7 - Syracuse Surge   Smart Cities NYS Center for Smart Cities and Municipal Command Center	Syracuse Surge	<p>This project will fund the creation of the New York Center for Smart Cities, a public-private center of excellence for the development and implementation of Smart City and Internet of Things (IoT) technology. It will be located in the expanded Greater Syracuse Tech Garden at the heart of the Center City Innovation Hub in Downtown Syracuse. The project will solidify Syracuse's and New York State's position as a global leader in Smart Cities. The City's Digital Command Center will be based in the NYS Center for Smart Cities, to centralize municipal data collection and advanced real-time analytics, and to co-develop Smart City solutions with researchers and technology companies. Funding will be used to support key technology and digital infrastructure needs for the center, including enhanced connectivity and digital networking capabilities, data storage and security tools, powerful</p>

			analytics capabilities, data visualization tools, and additional IoT sensors and related equipment.
\$3,500,000	Project 28 - Erie Boulevard West Improvements	Mobility and Streetscapes	This sidewalk and streetscape update on Erie Boulevard West developed in the 2014 Bike Plan for the City of Syracuse has not yet been realized. It includes a road diet with bike lanes from Downtown to West Genesee Street. This would capitalize on the recently completed NYSDOT Empire State Trail.
\$4,000,000 (Capital Requirements)	Project 10 - Bus Rapid Transit	Syracuse Surge	Infrastructure projects to improve the customer experience, including streetscape and pedestrian ROW/sidewalk enhancements, lighting, bus shelter related infrastructure, and other roadway improvements.
\$5,000,000 (Operating Grant)	Project 10 - Bus Rapid Transit	Syracuse Surge	Similar to the grant that the Capital District Transit Authority received from the State in 2019 to fund operating expenses for Albany's new BRT system.
\$5,000,000	Project 34 - Bowes Gate House Replacement	Drinking Water	The valves at Bowes gate house are broken at present. This is a strategic location for controlling flow into the city; therefore, this project would provide an opportunity to fix a critical piece of water infrastructure.
\$5,500,000	Project 8 - Syracuse Surge   High-Speed Connectivity	Syracuse Surge	This project will install high-speed fiber optic lines to the five targeted Resurgent Neighborhoods Initiative Neighborhood Business Corridors located across the City of Syracuse. It will help close the "digital divide" for city residents by increasing the presence of free public Wi-Fi areas and will attract economic investment in these corridors. Businesses in these areas could be afforded the opportunity to connect into the high-speed network as a competitive advantage for doing business in the City.
\$5,500,000	Project 33 - Chlorine Gas Disinfection Replacement	Drinking Water	Providing a hypo-solution provides a safer process for the community and will assist with the protection of the water supply during a Harmful Algal Bloom event. The chlorination not only ensures clean ready



			to drink water, but it also has proven to be a worthy defense to Algal toxins associated with recent increases of algal blooms in Skaneateles Lake.
\$6,000,000	Project 35 - Comstock Pump Station Replacement	Drinking Water	The pump station feeding the University area and fills eastern reservoirs is reaching its end of life. This project is a proactive fix to a necessary piece of water maintenance material.
\$7,440,000	Project 6 - Armory Square "Dig Once" Reconstruction	Engineering/DPW with Mobility and Streetscapes	This project will fund the "Dig Once" reconstruction and replacement of the sewer and water infrastructure on Walton Street in Armory Square in Downtown Syracuse, as well as reconstructed streetscape to correct ADA deficiencies and enhance public spaces and outdoor dining areas. It will also ensure safe travel for all modes in our premier urban retail and nightlife district. The work will align with planned sewer infrastructure work by Onondaga County in the same area. The investment will save taxpayers millions of dollars and prevent future disruption and negative economic impact in this active and highly trafficked section of downtown.
\$13,000,000	Project 1 - Public Drinking Water Intake Extension	Drinking Water	This project will extend the City of Syracuse No. 2 public drinking water intake pipe in Skaneateles Lake to deeper water. The investment will help prevent the need to construct water treatment facilities for the City and the villages of Skaneateles, Jordan, and Elbridge at the cost of several hundred million dollars to state and local government. Without the extension, the city water supply is susceptible to intake closures due to turbidity and Harmful Algae Bloom (HAB) events. If continued or more serious violations of turbidity occur, the City has the potential to lose its New York State Health Department filtration waiver, which would require the construction of one or multiple water treatment plants to ensure the continued supply of public drinking water to

			approximately 200,000 local residents.
\$17,450,000	Project 2 - West Genesee Street "Dig Once" Reconstruction	Drinking Water and Engineering/DPW	This project will fund the "Dig Once" reconstruction and replacement of the sewer and water infrastructure along a 2.3 mile section of West Genesee from Downtown Syracuse to the city line. The work will align with the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) funded mill and pave of the same section of West Genesee Street. The investment will save taxpayers tens of millions of dollars and prevent future disruption by aligning the underground reconstruction with the FTIP project.

# Appendix B: New York Conference of Mayors Statewide Priorities

The City of Syracuse supports the below legislative priorities of the New York Conference of Mayors (NYCOM). The legislative priorities included in the New York Conference of Mayors and Municipal Officials 2018 Legislative Program were developed and approved by a 60-member legislative committee. NYCOM's priorities share the objective to provide local leaders with the resources and flexibility to deliver essential municipal services in the most effective manner for the taxpayers we serve.

## Finance

### 1. Increase Unrestricted State Aid

COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on municipal budgets, particularly with respect to revenue losses. In addition to plummeting sales tax receipts, local governments have experienced significant declines in payments related to municipally operated utilities and sanitation services, justice court operations, parking meters and garages, and public parks and recreation programs, just to name a few. Given the likelihood that the new administration in Washington will respond to our calls for state and local aid in the next federal stimulus package – and given that local governments have gone 12 years without an increase in unrestricted state aid – it is critical that the State not only ensure local governments receive the 20% that was withheld, but also increase AIM funding to all cities, villages, and towns in the upcoming fiscal year. Just as annual increases in school aid help school districts maintain essential services, municipal governments need and deserve similar annual increases in State aid.

### 2. Prohibit the Intercept of Local Revenue to Pay for State Programs

There has been a longstanding and offensive practice by the State of intercepting or diverting funds intended for local governments to help balance the State budget. As the State is now dealing with budget gaps, there is a likelihood that these inequitable budget-balancing practices will continue. NYCOM supports legislation that would prohibit the State from intercepting local revenue streams to fund State programs and purposes.

### 3. Provide Funding for Water and Sewer Infrastructure

NYCOM supports establishing an annual funding stream that could be used by all cities and villages to supplement their water infrastructure operation and maintenance costs. This program could be similar to – or in conjunction with – the CHIPS program where every municipality would receive an allocation based on the amount of pipelines and mains owned and operated by the municipality. This would help local governments manage and invest in the

replacement and rehabilitation of existing municipally owned and funded drinking water, stormwater, and sanitary sewer systems, and allow for better coordination with local road reconstruction projects.

#### **4. Increase Highway Funding (including Arterial Maintenance Aid)**

Annual local highway infrastructure needs continue to far outpace the amount of resources currently available. The Consolidated Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) – which has been funded at \$438 million since 2013-14 – assists local governments with the cost of construction, reconstruction, and improvement of local highways, bridges, and highway-railroad crossings. The funding is distributed based on local highway mileage and vehicle travel. Local governments must receive more bonded or pay-as-you-go State transportation funding than they do currently. Additionally, the CHIPS formula should be amended to provide additional aid based on sidewalk miles in a municipality. NYCOM also supports the continuation and codification of the PAVE-NY and BRIDGE-NY programs.

In addition to CHIPS funding, there are currently 38 cities that have arterial maintenance agreements with the State. Pursuant to these agreements, the cities maintain certain designated State-owned arterial highways and the State compensates those cities for this service. A proposed inflationary adjustment to \$1.87 per square yard would provide a much-needed increase for the 38 cities participating in this State-local shared services program and would represent an additional State expenditure of approximately \$12.7 million. If the State had to maintain these highways, the fiscal exposure would far exceed the reimbursements that would be paid to cities under this proposal.

### **Employee Relations and Public Safety**

#### **1. Amend the Civil Service Appointment Process**

Municipalities are always looking for innovative ways to manage their workforce. Unfortunately, in many instances, they are restricted by arcane civil service rules. The Civil Service Law should be amended to expand the “Rule of Three” which would allow a greater number of qualified candidates to be reachable on an eligible list and would give employers more suitable options when it comes to filling vacant positions.

#### **2. Allow Out-of-Title Work in a Declared State of Emergency**

Ordinarily, public employees are prohibited from regularly and routinely performing out-of-title work. However, in a declared state-of-emergency public employees must do what is necessary to protect the public’s health and safety. The Civil Service Law should not be an impediment to these efforts. Therefore, this law should be amended to remove all barriers which could prevent public employees from performing out-of-title work during a declared state-of-emergency.

### **3. Authorize an Early Retirement Incentive**

Personnel costs make up the largest portion of municipal budgets. Consequently, while reductions in personnel expenditures would often provide the greatest budgetary savings, these reductions are often difficult to achieve for a variety of reasons. One possible means of achieving such savings that have been used by both the State and local governments in the past is an early retirement incentive (ERI). ERIs offer many benefits: 1) they help avoid the adverse impacts associated with layoffs and other compensation givebacks; 2) eligible employees receive enhanced pension benefits; and 3) employers achieve savings by removing from their payrolls employees with higher salary and benefit costs. Given the significant fiscal challenges brought on by COVID-19, the State should offer a retirement incentive in 2021 that local governments could opt into and that would allow local leaders to target the incentive as necessary.

## **Government Operations and Community Redevelopment**

### **1. Limit the Application and Cost of the Prevailing Wage Mandate**

The New York State Constitution requires municipalities that are parties to public works contracts to pay laborers, workmen, or mechanics “the prevailing rate of wages.” In addition, the State Legislature has expanded the applicability of prevailing wage requirements beyond “public works” contracts to include building service contracts above \$1,500. That dollar threshold was enacted in 1971 and has not changed. However, since that time, consumer prices have quadrupled. A first and relatively easy step to reforming this mandate would be to amend the statute to exempt building service contracts of less than \$50,000 from prevailing wage laws. Additionally, the method currently used for calculating the “prevailing rate of wages” for public works projects results in local governments having to pay highly inflated wages. This method should be changed to use the State’s Unemployment Insurance Prevailing Wage tables to determine regional prevailing wage rates for projects. The Unemployment Insurance Prevailing Wage tables are updated annually based on the semi-annual Occupational Employment Statistics survey of employers and reflect local economies’ actual prevailing wages.

### **2. Allow Municipalities to Take Title to Abandoned Commercial Property and Streamline the Notice Process for Abandoned Property Proceedings**

Communities across New York continue to be plagued by abandoned properties. Currently, Real Property Actions and Proceedings Law Article 19-A provides a method for local governments to take title to residential property that is abandoned within their jurisdictions. However, Article 19-A does not apply to commercial property. This statute should be amended to allow municipalities to take title to all real property that is abandoned so that the properties’ negative effects on the surrounding community can be promptly and effectively addressed by the municipality. Moreover, the notice requirements for judicial proceedings should be amended to match the notice requirements for *in rem* tax foreclosure proceedings.

### **3. Preserve Local Authority Regarding Adult-Use Cannabis**

It is expected that in 2021 the State Legislature will again consider taking action on the legalization of adult-use cannabis. Although there is a lack of consensus among NYCOM membership regarding the question of legalization, there is absolute agreement on the issue of local control and local revenue if adult-use cannabis is, in fact, legalized. Specifically, any legalization scheme must 1) allow cities and villages, regardless of population size and subject to a permissive referendum, to opt-out of allowing cultivators, processors, distributors, dispensaries, and on-site consumption establishments to operate within their jurisdictions; 2) clearly establish that cities and villages have the authority to regulate cultivators, processors, distributors, dispensaries, and on-site consumption establishments; 3) provide revenue to local governments to help offset the costs of hosting adult-use cannabis businesses and dealing with the repercussions of cannabis use; and 4) require the State's cannabis regulatory agency to notify local governments of any proposed regulation or license which will impact their community, and provide such local government officials sufficient opportunity to provide feedback regarding the proposed regulation or license.

## **Energy, Environment, and Technology**

### **1. Ensure the Taxability of Cellular and Broadband Infrastructure**

State and federal law permit municipalities to receive fair and reasonable compensation from telecommunication providers' use of the right-of-way. While the Court of Appeals recently upheld the ability of cities and villages to receive this compensation through the taxation of telecommunications installations and equipment, proposed legislation threatens to supersede that decision and redefine what constitutes taxable wireless infrastructure. Rather than limit its applicability, the definition of real property should be strengthened and include all telecommunications equipment, so that cities and villages are authorized to receive a reasonable return on the use of the municipal right-of-way.

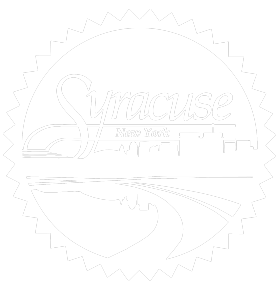
### **2. Preserve Right-Of-Way Control with Respect to 5G Proliferation**

Balancing the need for universal high-speed internet with local control over siting decisions is paramount. Wireless providers must grow and densify wireless networks, especially in underserved and rural communities, but must be required to install such facilities in accordance with local safety and aesthetic concerns. Consequently, legislation that preserves the safety and aesthetic considerations of cities and villages must be enacted to avoid any further attempts by industry actors to diminish cities' and villages' authority to manage public rights-of-way.

### **3. Enhance Statewide Internet Access by Authorizing Municipal Broadband Systems**

Unlike market-driven internet access, municipally-provided broadband may enable residents in

underserved communities to experience the benefits of high-speed internet access. Additionally, broadband access helps local governments and emergency responders manage natural disasters and emergencies. Consequently, increased internet connectivity through municipal programs may help cities and villages enhance their economic vitality and public safety. Legislation that promotes and fosters the creation of municipal broadband systems through partnerships with internet service providers would help provide high-speed access to users in underserved areas and promote the State's "Broadband for All" campaign. Given the State's policy on internet connectivity and the essential role high-speed internet plays in contemporary life, cities and villages should be authorized to establish community broadband networks.



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