

Gov. Andrew Cuomo to announce \$100M for Interstate 390 in Rochester

ALBANY — Rochester leaders on Friday hailed a pending announcement by Gov. Andrew Cuomo to fund a \$100 million upgrade to Interstate 390 in the city, calling it a transformative project that will bolster the region's economy.

The Interstate 390 project has been on the drawing board for years but has struggled to secure state and federal **funding**. The project has been viewed as critical to providing better access to the city's largest employer, the University of Rochester, as well as the nearby Monroe Community College and Rochester Institute of Technology.

The project will begin this year, Cuomo's office told Gannett's Albany Bureau on Friday. The new interchange on Interstate 390 at Kendrick Road will include new access ramps, expanded lanes, a new bridge and ramp relocation, the governor's office said.

"It is a critical economic-development project," said Sandy Parker, president of the Rochester **Business Alliance**. "All of that area is extremely congested, so without this project coming into being, it would

restrict further expansion of the University of Rochester and RIT."

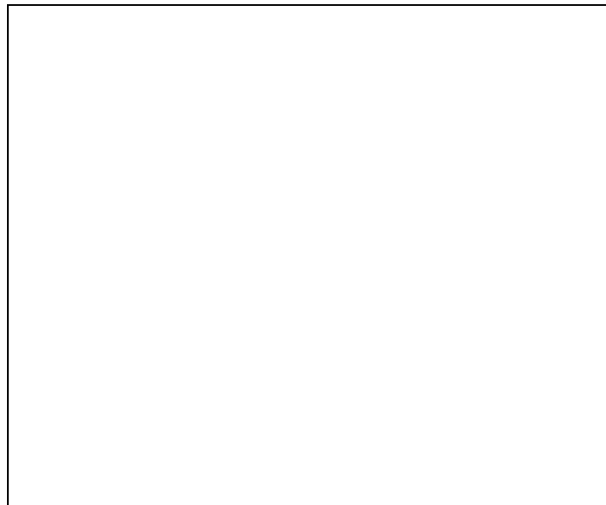
The news comes two days after Parker and other local officials criticized Cuomo's State of the State address. He outlined \$1 billion in economic-development aid to Buffalo, without mentioning any money for Rochester and other upstate cities. Cuomo said Buffalo's deteriorating economy was more severe than other areas.

"This is certainly a move in the right direction," Parker said of the money for Rochester.

Cuomo is set to make the announcement next week. He is expected to make other infrastructure announcements across the state in the coming weeks.

The upgrade to Interstate 390, which runs from the city of Rochester to the Southern Tier, has been the top road project for Rochester-area leaders. It was among the projects the Finger Lakes regional development council recommended in

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November that should be funded.

he said in a statement.

"This is the perfect example of how [investing](#) in regionally critical infrastructure projects can be a shot in the arm for economic development," Cuomo spokesman Josh Vlasto said in a statement. "The colleges and universities, state government, as well the private sector all came together through the regional councils to support this key project as way to create jobs in the region."

Economic-development officials said the University of Rochester, which employs more than 20,000 people through its college and medical campus, would benefit from the project because it would provide the school better highway access. Also, the project will help commercial sections between the campus, RIT and MCC, particularly in the congested Mt. Hope Avenue corridor.

Cuomo's office estimated that the new interchange would help add 29,000 new jobs to the local economy by accommodating the growth of the [colleges](#). About 1,300 construction jobs would be created through the project.

Assemblyman Joseph Morelle, D-Irondequoit, Monroe County, said the criticism over Cuomo's commitment to Buffalo shouldn't be a deterrent in the Rochester area's bid to win state support.

"We've had a lot of projects in Monroe County, and I can't think of another project that had more consensus around it than this project," Monroe County Executive Maggie Brooks said.

"That's why when people have been raising the Buffalo-Rochester issue, my attitude is that we need to advocate for the things that help take us to the next level. This is one of them," Morelle said.

The project is to be funded through state and federal funding, Cuomo's office said. There was no immediate breakdown on how the funding would be split or a timeline on how long it would take to complete.

Brooks said, "Is \$100 million equal to \$1 billion? Probably not, but I applaud the

University of Rochester President Joel Seligman praised the announcement.

"The I-390/Kendrick Road Interchange Project will be transformational to the region's economic future and is also a signal moment in the university's history,"

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governor for focusing on the one project that we've all come together on."

In his State of the State address on Wednesday, Cuomo announced the New York Works Fund and Task Force to accelerate infrastructure projects across the state.

Last month, Cuomo and lawmakers agreed to spend \$1 billion on infrastructure repairs, using \$700 million in state borrowing and \$300 million from the Port Authority for New York City.

An additional \$1 billion would come from private, and possibly public, pension funds and private investment.

Cuomo pledged to improve or replace more than 100 bridges, 2,000 miles of road, 90 municipal water systems and 48 state parks.

Richard Perrin, executive director at Genesee Transportation Council, a Rochester-based planning group, said the Interstate 390 project was expected to be funded in various stages. With the governor's support, Perrin said hopefully the project would move forward quickly.

"This is an enormous deal," Perrin said. "It's a great recognition by the governor just how important this is to the city of Rochester and the university, but also the entire region."

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