

ROCHESTER COMMUNITY COALITION

2010 Top Priorities for State Investment

Business – City and County Government – Education – Nonprofits
Many voices, one agenda for a greater Rochester

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

Rochester After-School Initiative

Investment: Four-year investment of \$5 million (\$1.25 million per year)

Among Rochester youth, homicide is now a leading cause of death, 13 is the average age for entering a gang and criminal activity contributes significantly to a low high school graduation rate. And it's not just the youth themselves that are affected. Their problems cause strain on families, our economy, and our community at large.

The Rochester After-School Plan was developed through collaboration among the City of Rochester, the Rochester City School District, the United Way and the Community Foundation. This plan is designed to help our youth find safe and constructive options, develop critical social skills, establish mentor relationships with caring adults, and provide access to academic enrichment.

Return: The investment will be used to bolster this program and develop a long-term implementation strategy, as well as allow the program to serve an additional 625 youth annually, which will support a reduction in youth crime and improved graduation rates.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

I-390 Interchange Project

Investment: State support for \$150 million in federal funding

The proposed I-390 Interchange Project will provide a comprehensive overhaul of the corridor from the Genesee River to the I-390/I-590 Interchange to sufficiently support and accommodate the increased traffic flow associated with planned and future growth of the University of Rochester, as well as from planned projects along Mt. Hope Avenue and East Henrietta Road. Continued growth at UR will have a direct impact on job creation, help further stimulate innovation in high-tech and biotech, strengthen our community's rich cultural resources, and improve the overall health of our region.

Return: Changes in the existing transportation infrastructure will allow our region to fully realize the University's potential for growth, which includes a \$500 million strategic plan. According to CGR, this plan will result in hiring 771 new staff at the UR Medical Center, creation of 1,000 permanent jobs in the community, and an average 1,400 construction jobs per year to accommodate the associated major capital projects. Union and Business United in Construction (UNICON) has estimated that as many as 4,500 construction jobs could be created.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

Local Government Control - Mandate Relief

Local governments are frequently required to support state-directed programs and regulations without the necessary funding or decision-making power. These mandates often follow a "one-size-fits-all" approach with little regard for issues unique to localities, particularly the economy and taxpayer concerns. Albany should refrain from enacting new mandates, and revise existing ones such as the Taylor law, that fail to factor in municipalities' ability to pay and restrict local governments' ability to manage.

2010 Goals:

Taylor Law. This labor relations statute increases government costs by placing key decisions on salary and benefits of local public safety employees outside the control of local officials and taxpayers through a binding interest arbitration provision. The binding interest arbitration provision should be amended to require that an arbitration panel accord substantial weight to "ability to pay," without increasing taxes and fees, when making an award.

Expanded Waiver Implementation. Functioning at times as the administrative arm of state government, counties provide many state mandated functions, including social service programs, which are often unfunded. To provide greater flexibility, efficiency and cost control, counties can apply to the state for waivers from restrictive procedural requirements governing administration of mandated social service programs. Rather than requiring each county to apply individually for waivers, the state should make all counties aware of both existing and newly granted waivers, and allow each county to opt in to approved waivers, thus extending the potential cost-savings of innovative waiver initiatives to all.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

Institute for Sustainability at Rochester Institute of Technology

Investment: \$40 million

The institute will conduct initiatives in education, research and technology transfer that build on RIT's strongest academic programs and regional assets in sustainability and related fields. The state investment is essential to completing a total public-private partnership fundraising goal of \$107 million. In addition to providing employment, the institute will establish the region as a global hub for the emerging green-tech economy. RIT's work in job creation and technology transfer has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Commerce with its 2009 Award for University-Led Economic Development Strategies, the first granted to any organization in New York state.

Return: Up to 6,000 new jobs regionally; 100 new professional and technical positions at RIT; \$650 million in regional earning potential; 140 construction jobs over two years.

BOOSTING REGIONAL INDUSTRY

Empire Zones and IDA Reform

Attracting new employers and growing existing businesses is essential to regional job growth. Programs designed to assist employers remain competitive and continue to do business in New York, such as Empire Zones and Industrial Development Agencies, play a crucial role in creating and retaining jobs. Several bills are under consideration to reform these programs. Provisions that increase program transparency and accountability should be supported. Provisions that will increase costs and stifle development, such as prevailing wage requirements, will cost Rochester jobs and must be defeated.

Cost: Passage of IDA prevailing wage legislation will increase construction costs by an estimated 28 percent, deterring business expansion projects and hurting construction jobs. Likewise, mandating the use of project labor agreements and unionized employees on construction projects eliminates competition and increases cost. A more reasonable compromise is requiring the use of local labor, union or non-union, to ensure work is performed by local companies and taxpayer dollars remain in the community.

