

**Agenda Review Question and Answers  
January 2023 City Council Meeting -**

**\* \* Please Note \* \***

**For questions, call the City Clerk's Office at 585-428-7421**

**AGENDA REVIEW**  
**CITY COUNCIL MEETING JANUARY 24, 2023**  
**PARKS AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE**

**Int. 10 – Bond Ordinance – Authorizing the issuance of \$ 2,500,000 Bonds of said City to finance the costs of the 2023 Water Main Cleaning & Lining Project**

*Q: Is rehabilitation sufficient? (Smith)*

A: The cost of cleaning and cement mortar lining (C&L) is on average about 20% of the cost of replacing a water main. C&L typically extends the useful life of a water main from 50 to 75 years. Only water mains that are structurally sound with few observed breaks are candidates for C&L (i.e., application of the right treatment at the right location at the right time). C&L cleans the water main, removes barnacle-type deposits that form on the inside of the water main, and coats the interior of the water main with a ¼-inch thick coating of cement mortar to prevent the reformation of the deposits on the inside of the water main. This both improves the structural integrity of the water main and increases flows at fire hydrants. C&L improves water quality by reducing rusty water and the need for higher chlorine levels to maintain adequate chlorine residuals to ensure proper levels of disinfection. C&L involves excavating a hole in the street every 300 feet and has less impact to the roadway infrastructure compared to excavating trenches for replacements, making C&L a much less intrusive treatment with fewer impacts to residents and businesses.

*Q: Please provide a map of where water mains that have been replaced vs rehabilitated? (Smith)*

A: Maps of rehabilitated (C&L) water mains and replaced water mains are provided  
**(SEE ATTACHMENTS A & B).**

*Q: When considering maintenance/replacements, is racial/economic equality considered? Is there an annual schedule for maintenance/replacements? (Smith)*

A: A number of factors are considered when evaluating what water mains to be improved through rehabilitation or replacement. The primary factors considered when identifying the mains to be rehabilitated or replaced are listed below:

- Number of water main breaks that have occurred on the water main;
- Mains that have poor flow and unable to provide adequate fire protection;
- Mains where we have received water quality complaints or concerns;
- Water mains located within Disadvantaged Neighborhoods; and
- Coordination with street improvement project/plans.

Once the mains to be improved are identified, the most appropriate treatment within these two general types of improvements is applied.

This year's C&L project is located in an economically distressed neighborhood where a curb ramp upgrades project and an ARPA-funded lead service line replacement project will be undertaken.

\*Represents Tweeners

*Q: What do we know about the cause of Ford St water main break? How do we ensure that we are reaching the right locations when we are updating water mains? (Gruber)*

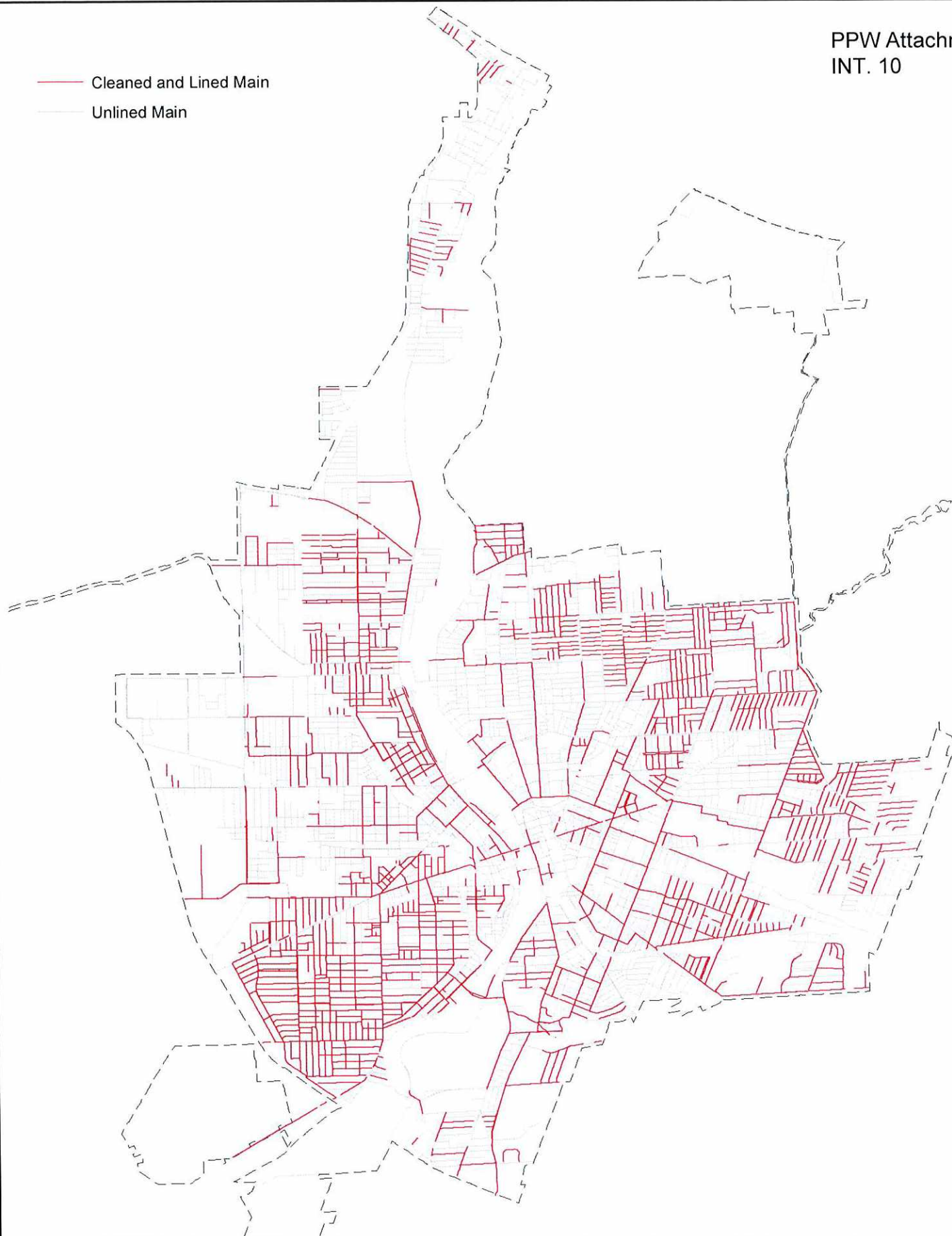
A: The water main break that affected Ford Street occurred to a 36-inch trunk water main that was installed in 1899 on Favor Street. The cast iron pipe appeared to be in good condition with little or no corrosion prior to the break on December 21, 2022, as the Water Bureau did not find any evidence of leaks before the catastrophic break.

The pipe likely burst when there was a transient instantaneous pressure surge of unknown origin that caused sudden and extreme internal pressure beyond the structural capacity of the nearly 125-year old pipe. The cause of the break cannot be identified for certain. There could be several possible causes of the break either as a single action or in combination. For example, the pipe was initially installed with about four feet of cover. When I-490 was constructed, an additional five feet of fill was placed on top of the already compacted soil above the pipe. This increased the amount of weight on the pipe via soil loading. In addition, an RG&E electric duct was installed directly on top of the pipe with only about six inches of separation. The added weight from and work associated with the two projects could have created a hairline fracture in the pipe that spread over time as there was no break prior to the transient instantaneous pressure surge.

The Water Bureau Engineering Team continuously investigates water main breaks/failures. The Water Bureau maintains a geographic information system that is updated with water main break information. The team performs tests to identify water mains that would be candidates for replacement and/or rehabilitation. The Water Bureau also invests in methods of reducing metallic corrosion of water mains (and, thereby, reducing leaks and breaks) by installing anodes that draw the corrosion away from the pipe. The result is that the Rochester water system has a record of main breaks well below the industry standard. The Partnership for Safe Water considers an optimized system one which has 15 or fewer main breaks per 100 miles of pipe. The City of Rochester has experienced an average of 8.6 breaks per year between 2013 and 2023.



— Cleaned and Lined Main  
— Unlined Main



### City of Rochester Cleaned and Lined Water Mains

NOTE: The water main locations as shown on this drawing are approximate and should be used for planning purposes only. Prior to any construction, field locations should be verified by calling Dig Safely New York at 1-800-962-7962.

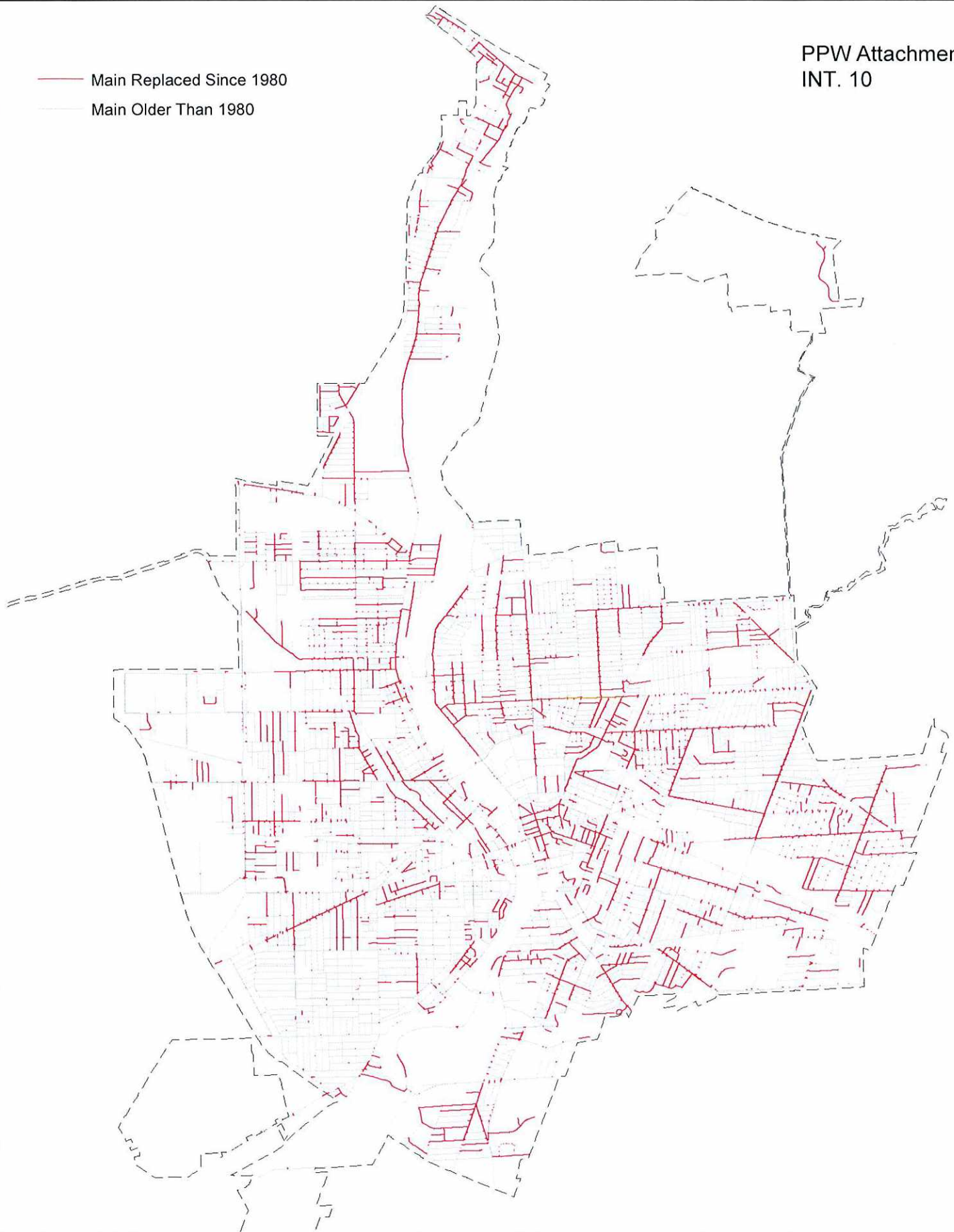
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Miles

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### Water Bureau Contact Information

Customer Service - (585)428-5990  
Water Bureau Dispatch Office - (585)428-7500  
Water Bureau Maps & Records - (585)428-7562

— Main Replaced Since 1980  
— Main Older Than 1980



### City of Rochester Water Mains Replaced Since 1980

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0 0.25 0.5 1  
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## **AGENDA REVIEW**

### **CITY COUNCIL MEETING JANUARY 24, 2023**

#### **NEIGHBORHOOD & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

##### **Int. 11 – Authorizing the sale of real estate and easement – Portions of 25-37 Canal Street**

*Q: Pertaining to the down payment & closing cost, to ensure affordability, is there or can there be a minimum percentage that is acceptable, or a clause that states the closing cost to the buyer will not exceed a certain amount? (Smith)*

A: This item has no development associated with it so closing costs, affordability and buyer clauses do not apply in this instance. The sale of the first two pieces of land will simply cure encroachments that caused a cloud on the title. The sale of the third piece will simply provide a permanent easement which will allow the owner to use City property to access the shipping/receiving areas of the adjoining building as well as the refuse/dumpster area.

##### **Int. 12 – Authorizing an Amendatory agreement with Flower City Habitat for Humanity, Inc.**

*Q: How much HOME funding do we have remaining? (Gruber)*

A: There is \$0 HOME funding remaining in the 2018-19 Housing Development Fund – New Housing Construction budget, and \$14,691 HOME funding remaining in the 2021-22 Affordable Housing Fund – New Housing Construction budget.

##### **Int. 13 – Resolution approving an appointment to the Examining Board of Plumbers**

*Q: It states the board will have zero women and 1 Black individual. Is it possible to be more intentional about diversity? (Smith)*

A: Yes, it is. Historically, our recruitment efforts have been limited to referrals and/or word of mouth via current board members. However, we have recently started collaborating with Human Resources to assist us in identifying additional outreach methods to qualified individuals with specific focus on increasing board member diversity.

##### **Int. 14 – Resolution approving an appointment to the Board of Examiners of Stationary Engineers and Refrigeration Operators**

*Q: Is it possible to be more intentional about diversity? (Smith)*

A: Yes, see answer above.

##### **Int. 15 – Resolution endorsing Monroe County application for Restore NY Communities Initiative – Round 7 grant to support the Historic Sibley Triangle Building Rehabilitations Project**

*Q: Considering over a quarter of the project is coming from public funds, how many units are affordable vs market rate? (Smith)*

A: The residential units will be student housing. Student housing is not considered “affordable housing” since students technically are not earning income that can be used to determine their household income.

*Q: How does this grant align with our housing policy? (Smith)*

A: The City’s 2008 Housing Policy states that “The City of Rochester will ... provide a broad array of housing options to address the needs of diverse households... To accomplish these goals, the City shall:

- 1) Promote rehabilitation, redevelopment and new construction of housing through... Redevelopment of residential, non-residential and mixed use structures to address market demand for currently underrepresented housing types in the existing housing inventory and/or provide for the preservation of historic structures.”

The proposed project redevelops a non-residential structure into mixed-use and preserves a historic building.

*Q: Have the required public hearings been scheduled? (Smith)*

A: Yes, the public hearing will be held in City Council Chambers on January 19th at 6:00pm.

*Q: An important goal of RNY is the revitalization of urban, rural and disadvantaged areas. Why East Ave, vs another area of the city more disadvantaged? (Smith)*

A: While the location of this project may not be as disadvantaged as some of the other neighborhoods, the City’s ongoing effort to foster economic development and growth within downtown is a key strategy towards its broader goals of reducing the concentration of poverty, reducing blight and underutilized/vacant structures, and supporting mixed-income communities. Accordingly, the City’s support for the County’s application for this project is consistent with goals identified in the City’s Comprehensive Plan - Rochester 2034.

*Q: How does the Administration decide which projects to endorse? Did any projects ask for an endorsement from City and not receive it? (Gruber)*

A: While the County has the right to choose to support a project outside of the city for their Restore NY grant application, the City strongly expressed its preference to have the County support a project within the city limits. The developer for this project requested to be included in the County’s grant application which requires a resolution from City Council. The City is not aware of other projects proposed to the County for their grant application.

**Int. 16 – Authorizing an application and grant agreement for Restore NY Communities Initiative- Round 7 grant to support the Four Corners/Aqueduct Downtown Initiative**

*Q: Will any of the designated units be a part of any of our housing projects (Section 8, Public Housing)? (Smith)*

A: No. The Rochester Housing Authority (RHA) administers Section 8 and owns/manages public housing in Rochester.

*Q: Please add the information about the AMI. (Patterson)*

A: The total unit count for the project has changed from 264 to 224 because one of the three property owners has withdrawn his property from the project. There are still 19 units that are



income-restricted and will be affordable to households at or below 60% AMI. An additional 20 units will be affordable to households earning up to 80% AMI. 17.4 % of the units are affordable to households earning up to 80% AMI. Of those remaining, 115 units are affordable to households earning up to 100% AMI.

*Q: Please provide more details about "mixed income" units. What is the AMI? (Smith)*

A: The total unit count for the project has changed from 264 to 224 because one of the three property owners has withdrawn his property from the project. There are still 19 units that are income-restricted and will be affordable to households at or below 60% AMI. An additional 20 units will be affordable to households earning up to 80% AMI, resulting in 17.4 % of the units being affordable to households earning up to 80% AMI. Of the remaining units, 115 are affordable to households earning up to 100% AMI.

*Q: For clarification, only 7% of the units will be "affordable"? Why so few? (Smith)*

A: Since the project has changed, 8.5% are affordable to 60% AMI households and 17.4% are affordable to household earning up to 80% AMI. While the City continuously encourages market-rate project developers to include affordable units, the primary goal of this program is to encourage the redevelopment of vacant and blighted structures. The decision for a developer to include affordable housing is often based on the level of assistance provided by a subsidy. As the overall project advances, the City will continue to encourage additional opportunities for affordable units.



**AGENDA REVIEW**  
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**RECREATION AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**Int. 17 – Authorizing an intermunicipal agreement with the County of Monroe for recreation and positive youth development programming**

*Q: Is this the same amount we receive every year? Harris*

A: The City has received the same amount on this grant since 2017.

*Q: What was the reason for the delay of the funds? Harris*

*Was there any staff or programming impacted by the delay in funds? It is historically not on time from the County. This is more similar to reimbursement. DRHS will confirm.*

A: The County receives the funding for this program from New York State, and the timing of the County's award notifications has been historically impacted by the NYS budget passage process. Per Monroe County, NYS will be changing the program period of the funding in an effort to eliminate these delays for the 2024 grant. This is a reimbursement grant and the City anticipates and includes the funding in the annual operating budget of DRHS so there have been no impacts to programming or staffing by the delay.

*Q: Does this funding meet all of the needs for the programming or do we add more funds for the Ref on the Move program? Harris*

A: The grant funds approximately 80% of the program, with the remaining funds provided by the DRHS operating budget.

## **AGENDA REVIEW**

### **CITY COUNCIL MEETING JANUARY 24, 2023**

#### **PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**

##### **Int. 20 – Authorizing agreement with New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services and amending the 2022-2023 Budget relating to a Lyell Otis Neighborhood Safety Improvement Project grant**

*Q: Should the Office of Violence Prevention do this survey as opposed to the RPD? (Smith)*

A: The Community Affairs Bureau of the Police Department has experience working with the businesses and residents in the affected area. Crime Prevention Officers are knowledgeable about ongoing crime and disorder and are experienced making suitable recommendations of crime prevention techniques and environmental changes to discourage criminal behavior. Violence is a major consideration but quality-of-life issues and other disorder may also need to be addressed. Additionally, Senator Cooney's Office directed the award to the Police Department in the initial award statement.

*Q: Will any of the dollar amount be spent on surveillance equipment? If not, can we add that language? (Smith)*

A: There are currently no plans to spend any of the available funds on surveillance equipment.



## **AGENDA REVIEW**

### **CITY COUNCIL MEETING JANUARY 24, 2023**

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

### **Int. 24- Authorizing an agreement with Living Cities and amending the 2022-2023 Budget for a Living Cities Grant**

*Q: What are the strategies to be implemented? (Patterson)*

A: There are two overarching areas of work: Supporting Small Businesses and promoting Homeownership.

For the Business Asset Development side of the OFE, our primary focus is to develop a Business Curriculum for start-ups and early stage Business Owners. We are also supporting entrepreneurs in accessing the many resources available to them through our internal offices and external organizations across the city of Rochester.

For the Homeownership side, we are working on the following:

1. Incentivizing low-income families to attend financial counseling with the Financial Empowerment Center to become 'mortgage-ready'
2. Compiling the many homeownership resources available to first-time and low income homebuyers.
3. Identifying opportunities to provide families with 1-1 assistance in pinpointing and applying for the appropriate resources for participating families.

*Q: When was the needs assessment completed and what were the highlights and areas of concern? (Smith)*

A: The Needs Assessment was completed by FSG on October 10, 2022. The Executive Summary of the Needs Assessment is attached (**ATTACHMENT A**)

*Q: What is the scope of the work outlined in the work plan? How many families are to be served? Are there any proposed outcomes? (Smith)*

A: As part of our tracking for this grant, we will review existing data collected by the City on the racial demographics of residents accessing our existing services for homeowners and businesses, such as homebuyer grants and business loans. We aim to see an increase of 10% for participation in these programs by residents of color.

### **Int. 25- Authorizing administrative tax cancellations and refunds of \$ 1,000 or less for 2023**

*Q: Who are the entities receiving these funds (home owners, developers)? (Smith)*

A: Of the 105 administrative tax cancellations, 66% were for homestead, and 34% for non-homestead properties. The administrative cancellations will cause an adjustment to the tax bill. The adjustment will reduce the amount owed, and generate a refund if the taxes have been paid. The majority of the

\*Represents Tweeners

cancellations are due to a change in the refuse status such as a multi-family dwelling being de-converted to fewer units, demolished or vacant properties erroneously billed for refuse, and reduced or cancelled code violations.

**Int. 26- Bond Ordinance of the City of Rochester, NY authorizing the issuance of \$ 15,100,000 Bonds of said City to finance the costs of improvements to specified City School District buildings**

*Q: Per RCSD Debt Policy with each CIP request the RCSD SHALL present a plan for school facility closures and school facilities decommissioning. Please provide the report. (Patterson)*

*A: Please see (ATTACHMENT B). Per the letter dated December 6, 2022, the RCSD has no current plans to turn any buildings over to the City for the 2023-2024 school year.*

**Int. 29 – Authorizing an agreement with Rochester Building & Construction Trades Council to assist with advertising and promotion of a recruitment campaign advertisement**

*Q: Who is the target audience for advertisement? (Smith)*

*A: Target audience includes:*

- Young adults – 15-24, additional targeting of those looking into colleges and/or trades
- Those already in trades
- Parents/influencers of young adults

*Q: How will we measure and evaluate the effectiveness of this advertising campaign? (Gruber)*

*A: Deliverables include sending weekly reporting of leads and there will be reporting by tactic/lead. The following metrics will be evaluated:*

1. Applications
2. Website visits
3. Website activity (videos watched, time spent, etc.)
4. Optimizations
  - Complete view through entire :30 commercial
  - Analytics of site visits by
  - Zip code
  - Media tactic and placements

**Int. 30 – Authorizing an amendatory with Harter, Secrest, and Emery LLP relating to securities litigation services**

*Q: The spelling of 'Emery' is inconsistent (Emery & Emory)? (Smith)*

*A: Spelling will be corrected in an Info and Amendment.*



## Executive Summary

The current racial inequities in homeownership and entrepreneurship in Rochester, NY result from a historical pattern of systemic racism toward people of color and preferences toward Whites. While Rochester has had many periods of prosperity throughout its history, Rochesterians of color have been excluded by housing and educational segregation, underemployment, underinvestment, White and economic flight to suburbs surrounding the city, income disparities, and extreme poverty. Today, the city remains highly segregated, and people of color continue to inherit inequitable wealth gaps while facing new challenges when trying to close them.

As Rochester embraces its status as a minority-majority city and aspires to rectify the injustices people of color have faced throughout its history, the systems within the city will need to shift. People of color, specifically Black Rochesterians, deserve reparations for the additional barriers set before them. These reparations, meant to close the gaps between White and BIPOC residents in Rochester, may come in many forms, including redirecting resources and providing direct support. The city is rich with leaders dedicated to supporting aspiring homeowners and entrepreneurs of color, yet a greater understanding of the systemic barriers to both is also needed. This report aims to provide an account of the historical and present-day challenges people of color face when attempting to build their wealth through homeownership and business ownership, as well as recommendations on actions the city of Rochester can take.

Please see below for a summary of the challenges and opportunities we identified in each area.

## Summary of homeownership findings and opportunities

Homeownership is a vehicle for greater stability, agency and self-determination, and wealth generation. Unfortunately, the state of homeownership in Rochester was shaped by generations of segregation and redlining, which concentrated Black families in neighborhoods that have experienced significant disinvestment. The legacy of these phenomena continues to impact all people of color within the city.

Today's aspiring homeowners face challenges in all phases of the home purchasing process:

Pre-purchase	During purchase	After purchase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mindsets and generational barriers</li> <li>• Homebuyer education</li> <li>• Housing cost burden</li> <li>• Down payment</li> <li>• Lending criteria</li> <li>• Discriminatory lending practices</li> <li>• Predatory lending practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rising home costs and limited housing market</li> <li>• Limitations of financial assistance</li> <li>• Lack of mentorship and guidance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance and refinancing</li> <li>• Community development and poverty</li> </ul>

Through our research, we identified several opportunities for building on the substantial work already happening in Rochester. Our research suggests that systems level changes are needed to address the systems and history that allow for inequity in homeownership and entrepreneurship. These solutions will have the most widespread impact and ensure that these opportunities are accessible for BIPOC communities in perpetuity. As such, the first three solutions outlined below are designed to activate systems level changes that will set the stage for progress in equitable homeownership; they are followed by homeownership-specific solutions that will on the systems thinking reflected in the first three.

**1. Align city leaders to make Rochester an anti-racist city:**

- a. The city of Rochester can release a public statement that declares the city's commitment to making Rochester an anti-racist city.
- b. The city can request the support of non-profit, philanthropic, business leaders, and residents to help realize this vision. The city will need to be unwavering in its commitment to support people of color, even when the beneficiaries of the status quo push back.
- c. In partnership with system leaders and residents, develop a strategic plan outlining the city's goals and roadmap towards becoming an anti-racist city.
- d. In partnership with system leaders, residents, and service providers, identify a set of shared metrics that would demonstrate progress toward anti-racist homeownership in Rochester. Use that input to create a public-facing dashboard.
- e. Establish or invite in an anti-racism training for system leaders to develop a shared understanding of Rochester's history and common definitions in the diversity, equity, and inclusion space.
- f. Offer grants to residents and system leaders interested in attending professional development events focusing on anti-racism.
- g. Establish a user-friendly referral system to help residents navigate the city's public and non-profit resources.

**2. Build trust between community and government**

- a. Encourage government employees, especially department directors, to participate in anti-racism training.
- b. Publicly acknowledge, reckon with, and be honest about the government's role in perpetuating racial wealth disparities in Rochester.
- c. Ensure that the public has access to relevant information that is accurate, comprehensive, honest, and accessible.
- d. Establish a physical presence in formerly redlined neighborhoods that consistently gathers feedback and observes dialogue among residents.
- e. Co-create solutions with community residents. Validate and incorporate their ideas and recommendations. Acknowledge that they know their community best.
- f. Distribute resources and offer to support their navigation of resources.
- g. Create an ongoing mechanism for feedback and clarify how their recommendations were or were not incorporated.
- h. Implement accountability processes that communities enthusiastically support.



**3. Implement race-based policy, financial interventions, and commitments**

- a. Establish a regular cadence for conducting disparity studies to substantiate and minimize the legal risk of potential race-based investments and policies.
- b. Completely disengage with any processes or policies that continue to contribute to wealth disparities in Rochester.
- c. Allow residents to lead conversations on what race-based investments would be best for them.
- d. Make a budgetary commitment to address wealth building for Black communities in Rochester. Dedicate a significant percentage of the amount committed to a participatory budgeting process, so residents can decide how to make use of the funds.

**4. Invest in community development**

- a. Co-create investment priorities in partnership with residents of color seeking to gain or preserve homeownership in the city.
- b. Ensure anti-displacement procedures are in place to combat gentrification as resource flows increase.
- c. Upgrade public infrastructure, community facilities, housing, public services, community centers, and parks with the input of community residents.
- d. Reform Rochester's public safety system in partnership with residents of color.
- e. Create a culture of vitality by investing in the arts and hosting events for residents.
- f. Partner with the County, school district leaders, and state lawmakers to explore ways to improve the Rochester City School District.
- g. Revisit zoning regulations in "transitional neighborhoods" to build vibrant business corridors with surrounding residential units.

**5. Support and promote financial education and mentorship resources**

- a. Develop a homeownership campaign or center that distributes information throughout BIPOC communities about the benefits of homeownership and the resources that could help them achieve it.
- b. Hire or fund resource navigators who support home seekers navigating the home buying process and advocate on their behalf.
- c. Develop, or encourage the development of, a network of BIPOC homeowners and seekers who provide ongoing mentorship and share resources.
- d. Encourage the Rochester city School District to adopt a financial literacy component into the district's curriculum.

**6. Increase housing stock and access to purchase**

- a. Subsidize affordable housing development that would create homeownership opportunities through tax incentives, grants, and loans.
- b. Subsidize housing development that would result in shared-equity ownership and mechanisms.
- c. Establish a land acquisition fund to purchase property to sell to homebuyers of color and affordable housing developers.

- d. Build capacity for and incubate community development corporations (CDCs) to operate community homeownership loan funds.
- e. Explore a policy that would give existing Rochesterians the right of first refusal on specific properties.
- f. Explore tenant right-to-purchase program ordinances.

**7. Increase housing affordability**

- a. Expand and modernize down payment programs to help BIPOC home seekers keep up with market rates. Audit the process to discover efficiencies that can be made to reduce the long timeline associated with participating in the program.
- b. Ensure that real estate agents are familiar with existing down payment assistance programs.
- c. Support wage increases among jobs that BIPOC employees traditionally hold.
- d. Identify and enroll additional employers to expand the city's employer-assisted housing initiative and offer greater subsidies to smaller employers.

**8. Address financial institution**

- a. Partner with cities across the state to align and develop a mechanism of accountability for banks.
- b. Fine or publicly critique institutions for which there is evidence of predatory lending practices.
- c. Mandate appraisers, loan officers, and real estate agents to participate in anti-bias training approved by the city.
- d. Require extensive reporting and transparency on mortgage and lending data.
- e. Expose and sever relationships with banks and lenders who refuse to participate in creating a more equitable Rochester. This includes excluding these institutions from city procurement processes.
- f. Provide funding for free legal aid assistance for Rochesterians who may claim that financial institutions have discriminated against them.
- g. Encourage or mandate financial institutions to use a new criterion for credit worthiness that is less reliant on credit scores and student loan debt.

For additional details on homeownership, see page 20.

## **Summary of business starts and growths findings and opportunities**

While business ownership can be a risky endeavor, it can also help to reduce wealth disparities significantly. Historically, Rochester has been a city dominated by industry giants such as Xerox, Kodak, and Bausch & Lomb. While these large companies created much prosperity for the region, people of color were not always included in that growth. Furthermore, the city's history of segregation and redlining has created pockets of poverty and underinvestment, which are unfavorable to business creation and growth. Today, the city has opened a new chapter in its economic development in which its prosperity is less reliant on a few large corporations. To succeed in this new context, Rochester will need to create more favorable conditions for people of color to build a robust small business economy.



Today's entrepreneurs of color still face challenges related to the following:

- 1) mindsets that hinder businesses from starting and growing
- 2) barriers accessing capital
- 3) a lack of social capital and networks
- 4) the need for better business acumen
- 5) the need for wrap-around services
- 6) challenges with the MWBE certification and procurement processes
- 7) the need for community development in historically marginalized communities

Through our research, we identified several opportunities for building on the substantial work already happening in Rochester:

**1. Enhance collaboration and accountability across ecosystem stakeholders**

- a. Convene stakeholders for joint sense-making of existing research/reports/plans and facilitate shared prioritization across efforts (in coordination with existing coalitions).
- b. Align economic development efforts to build industry clusters.
- c. Create a uniform and public tracking system to enable all stakeholders and residents to track progress.
- d. Map where resources exist by stage of business (and other categories, e.g., culturally specific) and strengthen the referral system.
- e. Assess the impact of the \$12 million annual spend on community development to ascertain how it supports BIPOC entrepreneurs and adjust accordingly.
- f. Create marketing and communications campaigns to increase awareness of community organizations providing culturally relevant services.
- g. Expand and create additional channels in city government for listening to BIPOC entrepreneurs, co-creating solutions, and joint decision-making.
- h. Create and amplify a one-stop shop for entrepreneurs. Consider continuing to develop Nexus190 or Roc My Biz and develop a cross-ecosystem plan to drive awareness/adoption of the resource.
- i. Hire or fund resource navigators to help entrepreneurs access the resources across the ecosystem. Ensure that these navigators are trained in implicit bias and anti-racism.
- j. Establish an advocate role/program/department to help entrepreneurs navigate government programs/services/processes across departments and jurisdictions.
- k. Research policy changes or adaptations to enable CDBG funds to support home businesses, internet businesses, and mobile businesses and overcome zoning restrictions that constrain the industries entrepreneurs can enter.

**2. Shift the narrative around entrepreneurship**

- a. Shift the existing mindset of Rochester as a "town of companies" to Rochester as a "town of diverse small businesses."
- b. Position entrepreneurs of color as valuable assets that require investment to increase the city's prosperity.

- c. Develop a “hobby to hustle” framework that will enable entrepreneurs to understand a pathway towards growth. Map the entrepreneurial support organizations to that framework.
- d. Elevate stories of successful entrepreneurs of color in the city.
- e. Fund youth development organizations that offer a curriculum in starting and growing a business.
- f. Build awareness of micro entrepreneurs across the ecosystem, including in the local philanthropic sector.

**3. Create opportunities to increase sales**

- a. Consider extending the city’s MWBE commitment beyond those who are certified; support entrepreneurs in getting on the path to certification.
- b. Encourage more organizations to make MWBE procurement commitments.
- c. Build buy-in across sectors for more stakeholders to take on risk and provide capital to BIPOC entrepreneurs, especially those not yet established enough to secure funding from traditional financial institutions.
- d. Allow entrepreneurs to use vacant properties for a low cost.

**4. Fortify networks of support**

- a. Invest in capacity building and provide additional funding to existing community organizations providing culturally relevant direct service and financing to entrepreneurs.
- b. Curate networking events by industry cluster to help entrepreneurs meet mentors, suppliers, and distributors.
- c. Establish partnerships with national organizations that provide culturally relevant mentorship to entrepreneurs of color in Rochester.
- d. Host events for entrepreneurs of color to connect to informal mentors and establish business partnerships. Use these opportunities to elevate the work of entrepreneurs in the city and gather input from entrepreneurs in the city.
- e. Identify a partner that can offer Black-owned businesses legal support when they perceive a financial institution has discriminated against them.

For additional details on the entrepreneurship, see page 42.



**Michael Schmidt**  
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Rochester City School District  
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Rochester, New York 14614  
[Michael.schmidt@rcsdk12.org](mailto:Michael.schmidt@rcsdk12.org)

December 6, 2022

Ms. Kim Jones  
Director of Finance  
City of Rochester  
30 Church Street  
Rochester, NY 14614

Dear Ms. Jones:

This is to inform you that at the present time the Rochester City School District will not be turning any buildings over to the City for the 2023-24 school year.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

*Michael Schmidt*

Michael Schmidt  
Chief Operations Officer

xc: Dr. Carmine Peluso, Superintendent of Schools