



CITY OF BUFFALO

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MAYOR



CITY OF BUFFALO 2007-08 STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Budget Priorities

Additional Municipal Aid to “Transition” the City to Fiscal Self Reliance

Funding Request: \$32 million (local assistance)

The City of Buffalo, now entering its fourth year of a wage freeze, faces a \$32 million deficit in its upcoming 2007-08 budget, this is due to expenditure growth outside of the City's control, primarily inflationary growth in employee benefits and police overtime along with the effects of a stagnant tax and revenue base. Additional unrestricted and flexible local assistance is imperative for the City to continue to balance its budget without layoffs or service reductions.

Efficiency Incentive Grants

Request: Retain \$12 million recommended in Executive Budget for important City efficiency measures.

Buffalo Safe Streets, Secure Neighborhoods

Funding Request: \$10.5 million (operating)

Modeled after the highly successful program in New York City in the 1990's, Buffalo's Safe Streets, Secure Neighborhoods Program would provide a comprehensive approach to reducing crime in the City. It would combat crime with additional police officers in every city neighborhood and policing strategies to aggressively target criminal activity and would prevent crime with a state-of-the-art surveillance camera system, extensive youth crime prevention initiatives, and partnerships with business to create employment opportunities for youth.

Buffalo Revitalization Initiative for Land Acquisition, Demolitions, Business Development Space, and Neighborhood Renewal

Funding Request: \$50 million (capital)

These additional resources would significantly improve the economic potential of the City of Buffalo by: enabling it to accelerate its programs to remove blighted properties; broaden multiple and large-scale development site opportunities across the City; offer “move in ready” space for small to medium sized businesses seeking to establish or grow their presence in the City; increase its “Neighborhoods of Choice” program; stabilize City neighborhoods through housing initiatives targeted to middle-and upper-income home buyers, “gap financing” for downtown housing projects and single family market rate housing, and housing rehabilitation funding for low-income, disabled and senior citizen homeowners.

Program Clarification: RESTORE NY

It is recommended that the RESTORE NY Program be revised to: remove an agency imposed cap of \$5 million on the amount of aid each municipality is eligible to receive; include “ability to pay” as a factor in awarding funds; include commercial as well as residential property; and recognize the special needs of Buffalo and other municipalities having a disproportionate share of vacant and abandoned property.

Buffalo Joint Schools Construction: Phase III

Funding Request: \$46 million (capital)

The Maximum Cost Allowance (MCA) calculated by the NYS Department of Education fails to account for \$46 million in inflationary increases that have occurred since the MCA formula was last calibrated. Commencement of construction is dependent on the State providing funding to fill this gap.

Fully Fund the CHIPS Program

The Executive Budget eliminates the 2007-07 increase of \$20 million, which will negatively impact roadwork in municipalities throughout the State.

**Legislative Priorities with a City Fiscal Impact:
For Consideration as Article VII Amendments**

Amend Executive Budget Article VII Proposal Enabling Mayoral Appointments on Certain Dependent School District Boards

The Executive Budget recommends increasing the numbers of members on the School Boards of Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse by increasing the numbers of Board members from 9 to 11 to allow for 2 mayoral appointments. The City of Buffalo does not wish to increase “the size of government” by increasing the size of the School Board yet strongly supports a greater mayoral presence. Consequently, it is advocating for amendments that would keep the Buffalo School Board at 9 members and would change the 3 “at large” members to mayoral appointments. Because the at large members are not up for re-election until 2009, the City recommends retaining the present individual at large members, but changing them to mayoral appointments, serving at the pleasure of the Mayor.

Authorize A “Deferred Retirement Option Plan” (“Police Drop Legislation”)

State legislation is requested to allow certain members (uniformed officers and investigators) to be rehired by the City on a limited basis, while still receiving their pension benefits. Such legislation would allow the City, in a cost effective manner, to make up for the substantial decreases of its police personnel and crime fighting capabilities which have occurred since the beginning of its financial “control period.”

Remit Surplus Funds from City Foreclosures to the City
S.2983/Stachowski, A. 5936/Tokasz (2006 Legislative Session)

Under current law, when a city or town sells properties at auction post-foreclosure, they only receive the amount of the municipality’s tax lien. Surplus monies are deposited with the County Comptroller and remitted to the State if they remain unclaimed after five years. Remitting the surplus funds to the City would provide it with approximately \$1 million annually.

Authorize the City to Deploy a Pilot “Red Light Camera System”
A.5651/Hoyt (2006 Legislative Session)

The State’s Vehicle and Traffic Law, presently, contains a blanket provision prohibiting any local ordinance contradictory to or redundant of any state law or regulation regarding traffic regulation without authorization from the State (section 1600). While State law does not contain any direct prohibitions for deploying a “Red Light Camera System,” the City of Buffalo is requesting statutory clarification of the issue so that it may implement this system, which will increase safety, lessen the need for placement of police officers and vehicles to monitor red light areas, and have a positive impact on revenues collected for both the City and the State.

Enact Reforms on State Provisions Governing “Injured on Duty” (IOD) Benefits to Police and Fire

Section 207 of the General Municipal Law provides for municipal payments to firefighters and police officers after they are injured on duty. Like the State’s Worker’s Compensation System, the provisions of this law are extremely costly to the City of Buffalo and all other municipalities. Lowering these costs through either statutory or regulatory changes is critical to restoring long-term fiscal stability to the City’s finances.

Allow Cities to Keep All Fines from the Temporary Surcharge on Motor Vehicle Violations S.1309 (2004 Legislative Session)

Presently, the State imposes a \$15 surcharge on every parking ticket issued in cities with populations of 100,000 or more (NYS Vehicle and Traffic Law, Section 1809-a). Of this sum, the City receives \$7.50 with the remainder remitted to the State. Given that these are City issued and administered tickets, with the City bearing the burden of these costs (including detailed and burdensome reporting to the State), the City should retain the full sum. This would result in an additional \$1 million of revenue for the City.

Add Voting Mayoral Appointments to the Boards of the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation and the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority