

Syracuse mayor complaints about pipes; Onondaga County fixes them (Your letters)



By **Your Letters**

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Water board chair: City could spend more on infrastructure

To the Editor:

Reading your editorial "[What Syracuse Can Learn From Flint's Water Crisis](#)," one is led to believe that Syracuse Mayor Stephanie Miner has been alone in her desire for infrastructure spending while other levels of government have ignored it.

The main difference is that Miner talks about it and others take action.

In the past eight years, Onondaga County has tripled its investments in infrastructure to pave roads, replace water pipes and clean Onondaga Lake. Onondaga County is doing something about the problem.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo has announced billions of dollars are being spent to pave roads, fix bridges and replace water pipes. In fact, in his recent State of the State speech, Cuomo announced a \$100 million investment in upstate water infrastructure. Cuomo is doing something about the problem.

Since Miner took office, she has not increased infrastructure spending. She complains about crumbling infrastructure, yet she doesn't increase spending for it. Miner will tell you it's because she lacks the resources and that the property tax base is skewed because properties are tax exempt. That is a cop-out; the city of Syracuse is not doing something about the problem.

The truth is that property taxes make up a small percentage of the city's revenue, accounting for about \$34 million. State and county assistance, including sales tax, accounts for more than \$150 million per year. That's right, state and county government gives the city of Syracuse nearly five times as much money as they collect from city taxpayers. And that revenue is going up. Since 2011, the state and county have given the city an additional \$37 million.

Furthermore, The City of Syracuse would not have the filtration waiver, except for the Metropolitan Water Board and the hundreds of millions of dollars invested by Onondaga County and the regions water users. MWB is the backup system required by the EPA, saving the city from building a \$100 million dollar filtration plant.

While Mayor Miner's and Mr. Maxwell's innovation team are traveling the country for solutions, perhaps they should explore their own partner at MWB here in Central New York. The Innovation team has had an open invitation since it was formed to visit MWB staff and management, to date they have not accepted.

Mayor Miner likes to say she needs help and no one is helping. Unfortunately, the facts just don't support that. The bottom line is that the state and county have given Miner millions of additional dollars and she hasn't spent any of it on infrastructure.

Bob Andrews

Chairman, Metropolitan Water Board

Board Member, Onondaga County Water Authority

Syracuse

Mayor wants others to fix her city's pipes

To the Editor,

I read your editorial "What Syracuse can learn from Flint's water crisis" and it prompted a few thoughts.

You state that Mayor Miner has made the replacement of city pipes a priority. In reality, the mayor has made asking everyone else to fix her pipes a priority. The only action she takes is to fix the water mains when they break and then tweet out a picture and ask someone to "fix our pipes." I think she deliberately does not take action in an effort to exacerbate the problem so she can keep asking others to fix it.

Miner started on the Common Council in 2002 and became mayor in 2010. In the 14 years she has held an elected position in the city of Syracuse, I don't recall one action she has taken to address the city's infrastructure issues. Oh wait -- she directed her innovation team to research solutions and your editorial says they have been working on it since May. How could this not have been the first thing the mayor did when she took office?

As she begins her 15th year, it appears the mayor will be talking about this again when she delivers her State of the City this week. Instead of another round of the "fix our pipes" cry for help, maybe she could spend some time explaining what she is doing with the millions of dollars in additional sales tax the city has been receiving since the new sales tax sharing plan went into effect. She certainly isn't spending it on the pipes or to fix the potholes. Maybe it's being spent on lawyers to fight with common councilors over computers and sue a local developer whose only apparent mistake is believing the city would embrace their efforts to develop the inner harbor.

Erin Doyle
Syracuse

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