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STATE OF THE CITY

Evans: Rochester is resilient, robust, ready

Mayor highlights drop in gun violence, efforts to provide jobs and training for area youth

Kerria Weaver
Rochester Democrat and Chronicle
USA TODAY NETWORK

City of Rochester Mayor Malik Evans delivered his state of the city address on April 15 at the Theater at Innovation Square, highlighting several initiatives and projects.

Evans described the state of the city as resilient, robust and ready as he addressed matters such as gun violence, housing, food insecurity, youth development and commercial development.

“When the people of Rochester work hard and work together, there’s nothing we can’t accomplish,” Evans said. “If there’s a silver lining to be found in the work we did to recover from the pandemic, it’s that we elevated collaboration and cooperation from worthy goals to essential functions of government and community action.”

The state of gun violence

During his speech, Evans described how crime and gun violence increased



Evans

to 2021 those metrics fell by almost 60 percent.

“In fact, we beat the national average for closure rates of non-fatal shootings,

significantly, with 2021 being the peak year for gun violence.

He said by the end of 2025 almost all gun violence metrics had fallen to their lowest point since 2018 and compared

to 2021 those metrics fell by almost 60 percent.

“In fact, we beat the national average for closure rates of non-fatal shootings,

Online

For more information about the state of the city address visit www.cityofrochester.gov/departments/mayors-office/2026-state-city.

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Iran announced on April 17 that the Strait of Hormuz is opened to commercial vessels following a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Lebanon. REUTERS FILE

Strait of Hormuz opened amid two-week ceasefire

Trump says U.S. naval blockade to continue

Christopher Cann, Andrea Riquier and Michael Loria
USA TODAY

Iran declared the Strait of Hormuz “completely open” to all commercial vessels, the country’s foreign minister said, meeting a central demand of the United States as the two countries teased another round of peace talks and the clock wound down on a delicate two-week ceasefire.

In his April 17 announcement, Seyed Abbas Araghchi said the declaration was made possible by a separate 10-day ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel implemented the day before, which appeared to be holding.

“In line with the ceasefire in Lebanon, the passage for all commercial vessels through Strait of Hormuz is declared completely open for the remaining period of ceasefire,” Araghchi wrote on X.

Iran had maintained that Israel must stop attacking Lebanon before Iranian leaders would continue peace talks with the United States.

President Donald Trump said shortly after the April 16 announcement that he



Smoke rises following artillery shelling in Lebanon on April 11. Lebanon and Israel came to a 10-day ceasefire agreement on April 16. AMIR COHEN/REUTERS

may travel to Pakistan to approve a peace deal with Iran. Both Iranian and U.S. officials said another round of negotiations could soon occur, though no timetable has been set.

Despite the reopening of the strait, Trump said the naval blockade on Iran would continue until a deal is reached.

“THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ IS COMPLETELY OPEN AND READY FOR BUSINESS AND FULL PASSAGE, BUT THE NAVAL BLOCKADE WILL REMAIN IN FULL FORCE AND EFFECT AS IT PERTAINS TO IRAN, ONLY,

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County OKs surveillance transparency legislation

Kerria Weaver
Rochester Democrat and Chronicle
USA TODAY NETWORK

A mandate that requires the Monroe County Sheriff’s Office to disclose purchases of surveillance technology was passed in a 21-8 vote during the Monroe County Legislature meeting April 14.

With this legislation, the MCSO will be required to inform county officials of any surveillance purchases over \$100,000 as well as a description of the technology, its intended use, the vendor name and the funding source.

Last year, our reporting uncovered a 10-year, \$15 million contract between the Monroe County Sheriff’s Office and police technology giant Axon.

After learning about this contract, Legislator Rachel Barnhart introduced the resolution to ensure they have oversight over tax dollars and so the public understands what surveillance tools are being purchased and what they’re being used for.

For Barnhart, the disclosure legislation is a “minimum safeguard” to lift the veil on surveillance operations in Monroe County.

“To me this is fundamental to our democracy. Transparency is key to accountability and that is always a good thing,” Barnhart said. “I think this is a start on taking our power back as a legislature to really understand the decisions that are being made and to involve ourselves in those decisions.”

Legislator Jackie Smith voted no to the legislation as she explained how she understands the intent of the legislation, but does not believe “they should be providing criminals even a hint of advantage when it comes to technologies and strategies used to deter them.”

“As the Sheriff’s Office has indicated much of this information is already provided through existing county purchasing processes,” Smith said. “If legislators wish to seek out that information, I’m confident there are avenues to do so without creating a new mandate in county law.”

— This story includes findings and previous reporting by Kayla Canne.

— Kerria Weaver works as the Government and You reporter for the Democrat and Chronicle, with a focus on how government actions affect communities and neighborhoods in Rochester and in Monroe County.

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