

## B. FUTURE LAND USE (CONTINUED)

### CHARACTER AREAS

#### >> DOWNTOWN MIXED-USE

##### RECOMMENDED PRIMARY USES:

Mixed-use buildings, large employers, apartment buildings, entertainment venues, restaurants, retail, large public facilities, regional destinations, and primary public spaces. This is the highest density of all Character Areas, functioning as both the center of the city and the region. Mixed-use high rise buildings abound, framing vibrant streets in this hub of activity.

As noted in The Urban Form of Mixed-Use Development (see page 35, Future Land Use), siting retail in buildings with a vertical mix of uses can be challenging in the Rochester market. While that is certainly the desired form for downtown buildings in general, the evolving nature of the retail industry in mid-sized Rust Belt cities should influence expectations. Given the limited market for small-scale retail in a downtown setting, when that use does materialize it is critical to focus first floor activity on smaller nodes or blocks within the larger mixed-use area. Restaurant and entertainment businesses are slightly more location-resilient than shopping, as they are sometimes the lone business visited by patrons on a given trip. In contrast, shoppers are often looking for the experience of a cohesive district with multiple adjacent options for browsing.

Encouraging first floor commercial uses, especially retail uses, throughout downtown could effectively dilute the market potential, putting those businesses at risk and missing the opportunity to assemble a critical mass of activity. This recommendation should not necessarily translate to prohibiting commercial or retail establishments in fringe areas of downtown. However, through the City's request for proposal (RFP) process for selling City-owned properties, as well as ongoing partnerships with building owners and developers, downtown stakeholders should be cognizant of this dynamic and plan accordingly.

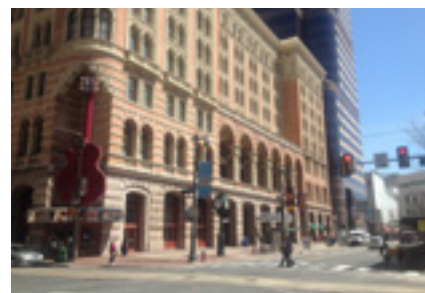
##### EXAMPLE AREAS:

Downtown, including portions of the East End, Corn Hill, and High Falls.

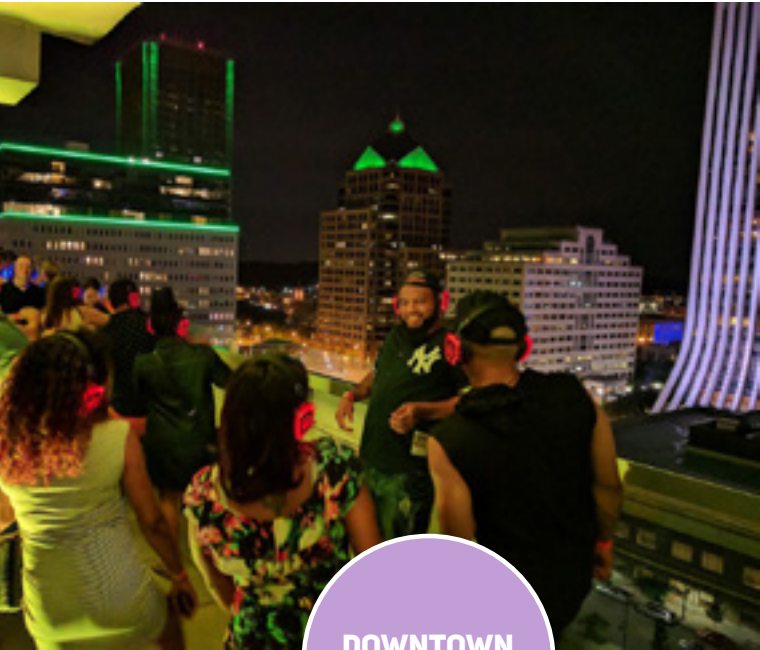
##### GEOGRAPHIC PATTERN:

The Downtown Mixed-Use designation is somewhat smaller than the existing CCD district. However, the Flexible Mixed-Use Character Area that covers remaining portions of the CCD should have similar use flexibility and design standards while covering an area that has a different character than downtown. The location of the boundary between Downtown Mixed-Use and Flexible Mixed-Use is not critical, as some areas like the High Falls District could be placed in either category.

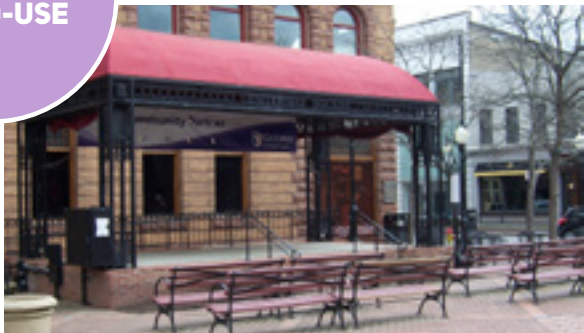
If retail is to gain more footing in downtown, it appears most likely to coalesce in the East End and around the former Midtown site and Sibley Square, with the potential to extend down East Main Street to the Genesee River. Restaurant and entertainment uses should be similarly focused in those areas, but there will continue to be additional markets in other areas like West Main Street, State Street, and along the river.







**DOWNTOWN  
MIXED-USE**





## B. FUTURE LAND USE (CONTINUED)

### CHARACTER AREAS

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##### DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:

See Design Considerations for All Mixed-Use Character Areas on page 55 (Neighborhood Mixed-Use Character Area). Specific to the Downtown Mixed-Use designation, strategies should be identified to preserve existing and encourage more medium- and small-scale mixed-use buildings to complement the larger projects that have dominated recent development. The form-based code used in CCD, while solid in principle, requires some improvements as noted in Design Considerations for All Mixed-Use Character Areas. In addition, the Public Space Design within Private Development section on page 101 (Other Placemaking Elements) is particularly important to the Downtown Mixed-Use Character Area.

Parking design standards and regulations should be somewhat customized for the Downtown Mixed-Use Character Area. For example, developers and architects should have more guidance on the design of first floor covered parking within mixed-use and multi-family residential buildings. Those design standards should effectively limit, but not prohibit, the creation of first floor covered parking as well as mitigate its negative impacts on adjacent street life. In addition, surface parking lots should be discouraged even more than they are in the current code.





