

B. FUTURE LAND USE (CONTINUED)

CHARACTER AREAS

>> NEIGHBORHOOD MIXED-USE

RECOMMENDED PRIMARY USES:

Multi-family residential, residential uses when part of a mixed-use building, and commercial uses, including small-scale artisanal manufacturing such as chocolatiers, cheese makers, and microbreweries, within up to 9,000 square foot spaces. Mixed-use buildings should be allowed to contain more than one 9,000 square foot space. High density residential uses are encouraged to increase vitality and support for local businesses.

Auto-oriented uses should be subject to additional requirements in order to mitigate impacts on the public realm. Auto sales as a primary use should be directed to Industrial and Regional Commercial Character Areas.

EXAMPLE AREAS:

South Ave, Thurston Rd, North Clinton Ave, Monroe Ave, Dewey Ave

GEOGRAPHIC PATTERN:

Commercial and mixed-use corridors are typically at least four blocks in length and are sometimes very long. These areas tend to radiate from the center of Rochester out towards the edges. Historically, these areas developed along transit routes, some dating back to Rochester's first public transit in the 1860s. They are primarily depicted as linear corridors with a consistent 300-foot width. The distance is not meant to propose a precise edge of a future zoning district, but rather is a consistent graphic depiction to reinforce their linear nature. Although shown as linear, many mixed-use corridors have an intersection or two that is a key node that serves as an "urban village" center. Examples include South and Gregory, Park and Berkeley, Dewey and Driving Park, and Culver and Merchants.

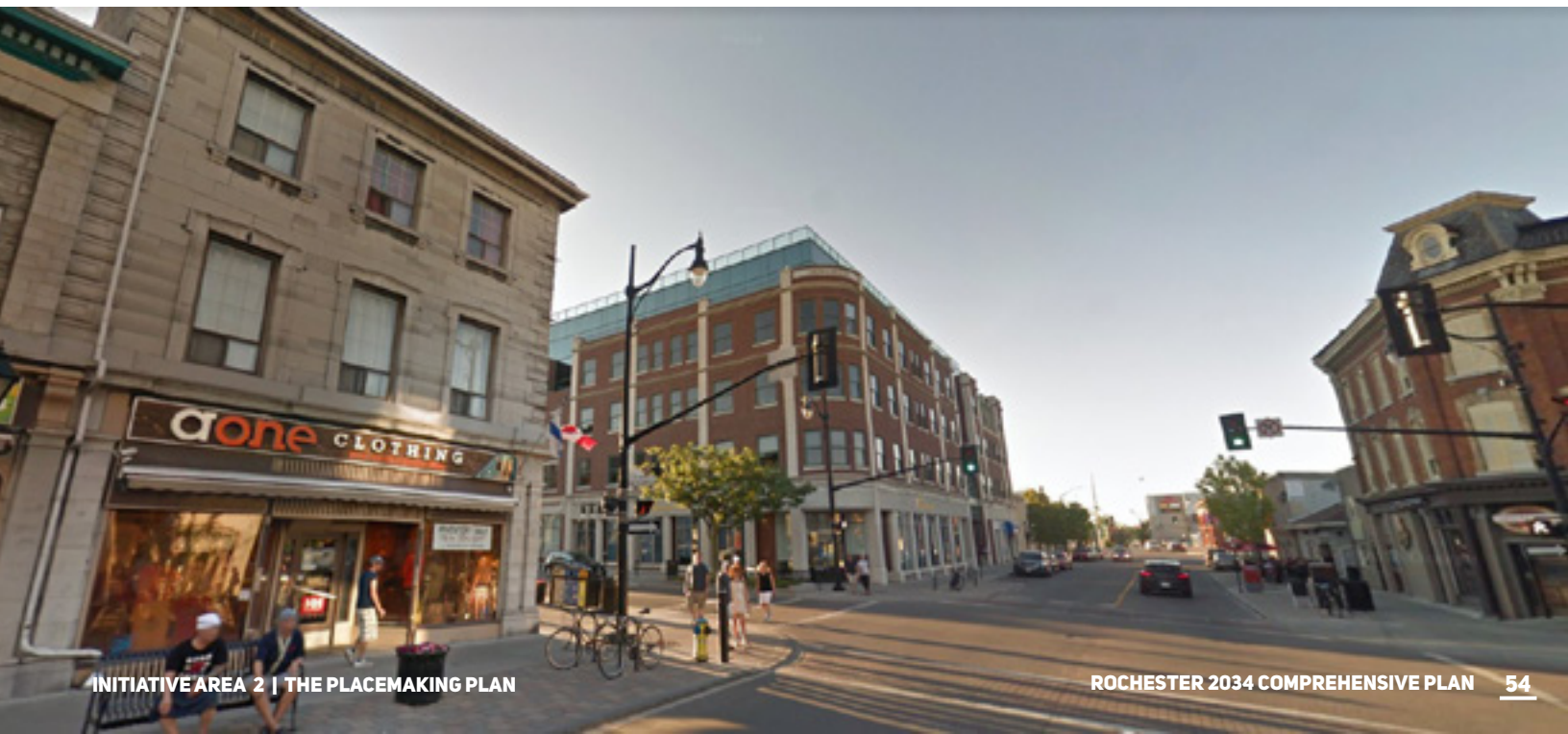
Some areas are more representative of the uses and form desired for this Character Area than others. For example, South Ave is highly representative of Neighborhood Mixed-Use designation, whereas Portland Ave north of Norton St is rather car-oriented but could potentially be retrofitted over time.

Nearly all Frequent and Local corridors of the *Reimagine RTS* project are substantially covered by Neighborhood Mixed-use designations. Breaks in those designations along the corridors are almost always covered by Medium Density Residential or other mixed-use designations. Combined, all of these higher activity Character Areas promote the restoration of density that is needed to leverage investments, increase housing choices, and build the critical mass of population needed to support corridor businesses, vibrant neighborhoods, and frequent transit.





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DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS FOR ALL MIXED-USE CHARACTER AREAS:

The regulations of all Mixed-Use Character Areas should recognize the community's desire to maintain its historic character, provide for enhanced walkability, and support a vibrant economic and neighborhood environment. As such, it is recommended that all existing commercial zoning districts be redefined as mixed-use districts, with the exception of a future district reflecting the Regional Commercial Character Area. This change will emphasize the critical role that a restored density of housing, whether within mixed-use buildings or as standalone structures, plays in supporting neighborhood businesses.

Pedestrian safety and experience should be prioritized while balancing the needs of the automobile. This includes the provision of amenities such as ample sidewalks (circulation within and around the site), buffer landscaping for parking lots, seating, transit stops, bicycle parking, and highly-visible crosswalks. Multi-story buildings are encouraged when feasible. Buildings should be attractively designed and should address the public realm on all visible sides. They should be built to the sidewalk, or as close as possible, with parking lots (if any) located in the rear of buildings. Urban-appropriate landscape and hardscape areas should be designed as integral features of the land use, as illustrated by the Public Space Design within Private Development on page 101 (Other Placemaking Elements).

The City of Rochester currently utilizes a form-based style code for some zoning districts, with the Center City District (CCD) being the most prominent, placing a far greater emphasis on the design of buildings and sites than the uses that are permitted or not permitted. The Placemaking Plan recommends that this approach be applied to all mixed-use Character Areas throughout the city with some variation included to recognize desired differences in scale and neighborhood impacts. Most form-based codes provide detailed guidance for new construction, however, Rochester's form-based code for mixed-use areas must also provide clear guidance for renovating existing buildings.

The form, massing, proportion and composition of architecture in these areas should complement the historic character of the city's mixed-use districts. However, quality of design and material should take precedent over disingenuous attempts to recreate historic styles through the application of superficial details. While the community has expressed a strong preference for traditional architectural styles, it is recognized that the Rochester real estate market often makes such designs and techniques financially infeasible. Additionally, new technologies, materials, and sustainable practices have made notable advancements over historic styles and designs. Lastly, minimalist contemporary styles, with their extensive use of glass, metal, and wood, are gaining in popularity.

The City should continue to work with the architecture, development, and trades community to raise the design standards for building projects while acknowledging that Rochester has a relatively weak real estate market. Regardless of the architectural style employed for a project, it is always critical that the design of the first floor engages the street with pedestrian-scaled, high quality materials and substantial transparency for non-residential uses. These standards must be used in concert with site design standards that preserve the pedestrian-oriented environment and place parking and other auto-related elements to the back of the property.

See sidebar on Building Heights in Mixed-Use Areas on page 35 (Future Land Use). Lastly, the city should revise certain parking policies (see page 107, Other Placemaking Elements), and strategies in mixed-use areas, as outlined later in this Section.



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