



# Rochester

## 2034

— Where the River Flows —

# DRAFT

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**Believe.**



City of Rochester, NY  
Lovely A. Warren, Mayor  
Rochester City Council



## WELCOME MESSAGE FROM MAYOR WARREN

I am pleased to present *Rochester 2034*, the City of Rochester's Comprehensive Plan. This plan outlines the principles that will shape our city's growth for the next 15 years. It's our blueprint to guide our efforts to create more jobs, safer/more vibrant neighborhoods and better educational opportunities.

*Rochester 2034* reflects the vision of thousands of residents and stakeholders who took part in its creation. I am thankful to everyone who participated and I look forward to building on the partnerships we created during its development. Together, we can realize the vision of *Rochester 2034* and launch our great city to its full potential.

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Lovely A. Warren".

# 2034 VISION

“ Rochester is a beautiful, progressive, lively, healthy, and welcoming city. We build from strength – leveraging our assets to grow our population, local business community, and tax base. We celebrate our 200th birthday in 2034 as a resilient and confident community where diverse neighborhoods are engaged and thriving; downtown is the vibrant heart of our region; our unique network of active waterfronts is accessible to all; and innovation, adaptation, and inclusion drive us forward. ”

-The People of Rochester



**Lovely A. Warren, Mayor**

**Baye' Muhammad, Commissioner of Neighborhood and Business Development**

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**Mayor's Office of Community Wealth Building**

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**Consultant**

Bergmann

**Also acknowledging all the community stakeholders and City staff that assisted in the building of Rochester 2034. The people, too many to name, include those who contributed by providing input at meetings or through surveys and took the time to review portions of the draft to edit, offer comments, and add content. Special thank you to the staff in the City Zoning Office and the Planning Collaborative, an interdepartmental working group of planning professionals in City government.**

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# FINDING YOUR WAY BY USER

This list is a companion to the Table of Contents, providing references to various Sections of *Rochester 2034* that are relevant to different people who might use the Plan.

## TOPICS YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN IF YOU ARE A...

### RESIDENT OR NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP



Getting involved in land use decision making at City Hall.....	<b>Sections 2A, 6B</b>
Support for neighborhood organizing, marketing, and branding.....	<b>Sections 5D, 6B</b>
Energy-saving resources.....	<b>Sections 4A, 4C</b>
Tax benefits available for historic buildings.....	<b>Section 3D</b>
Community policing.....	<b>Section 3F</b>
Getting prepared for a changing job market.....	<b>Sections 5A, 5B</b>
Vacant lots and community gardens.....	<b>Sections 3B, 3G, 4D</b>

### BUSINESS OWNER OR ASSOCIATION



Fostering new businesses, support for existing businesses.....	<b>Sections 5A, 5B</b>
Zoning guidance to encourage reoccupancy of vacant buildings.....	<b>Sections 2A, 5A</b>
Energy-saving resources.....	<b>Section 4C</b>
Tax benefits available for historic buildings.....	<b>Section 3D</b>
Marketing and branding neighborhoods.....	<b>Sections 5D, 6B</b>
Getting involved in developing Rochester’s workforce.....	<b>Section 5B</b>

### DEVELOPER OR LANDLORD



Zoning guidance to encourage reoccupancy of vacant buildings.....	<b>Sections 2A, 5A</b>
The Rochester Land Bank’s role in affordable housing development.....	<b>Sections 3A, 3B</b>
The Housing Market Study findings and how they influence..... development goals	<b>Sections 2A, 3A, 3B, 5A, Appendix D</b>
Strategic development sites.....	<b>Sections 2A, 5A</b>
Energy-saving resources.....	<b>Section 4C</b>
Goals for diversifying housing types and affordability.....	<b>Sections 2A, 3A</b>

### FUNDER OR INSTITUTION



Trends and challenges in Rochester today.....	<b>Appendix C</b>
Building neighborhood capacity.....	<b>Section 6B</b>
Increasing access to health services and facilities.....	<b>Section 3F</b>
Anchor institution strategies.....	<b>Sections 5D, 6B</b>
Housing opportunities for everyone.....	<b>Sections 2A, 3A</b>
Preservation of natural resources and environmental resilience.....	<b>Sections 4A, 4C</b>

### SPECIAL INTEREST OR ADVOCACY GROUP

Given the wide variety of special interest groups in the Rochester community, a list of each topic would be very long. The Table of Contents and searching the Plan online are additional tools that groups can use to find topics of interest in *Rochester 2034*.

# FINDING YOUR WAY BY INTEREST

This list is a companion to the Table of Contents, providing references for various areas of interest that are covered in multiple Sections of *Rochester 2034*.

## IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT ROCHESTER 2034 SAYS ABOUT...

### JOBS



Fostering a workforce that is positioned for employment.....	<b>Section 5B</b>
Supporting business startups and establishing workforce pipelines.....	<b>Sections 3E, 5A, 5B</b>
Inclusive and equitable access for businesses development support.....	<b>Sections 5A, 5B</b>
Improving our transportation systems to better connect people to jobs.....	<b>Sections 2B, 4E</b>
Marketing strategic development sites for economic development and job creation.....	<b>Sections 2C, 3B, 5A</b>
The role local institutions play in economic development.....	<b>Section 5A</b>

### SAFE + VIBRANT NEIGHBORHOODS



Housing for vibrant, equitable neighborhoods.....	<b>Sections 2B, 3A, 3B, 3D</b>
Options for transforming vacant lots or advancing urban agriculture.....	<b>Sections 3A, 3B, 4B, 4D, 5A</b>
ROC the Riverway Initiative.....	<b>Sections 2B, 3F, 4A, 4B, 5A</b>
Getting vacant buildings rehabbed and reoccupied.....	<b>Sections 2B, 3A, 3C, 3D, 5A</b>
Strengthen neighborhoods through marketing and branding.....	<b>Sections 3A, 3D, 4B, 5A, 5D</b>
Placemaking – why it’s critical and how to nurture it.....	<b>Sections 2A, 2B, 2C</b>
Using art and playful elements to activate streets, vacant lots, and parks.....	<b>Sections 2C, 3B, 3C, 4B, 6B</b>
Ensure neighborhoods are safe for all residents.....	<b>Sections 3A, 3F, 4B, 4E</b>

### EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE



Benefits and highlights of the Rochester City School District.....	<b>Sections 3E, 5D</b>
Advancing the concept of neighborhood/community schools.....	<b>Section 3E</b>
The ROC the Future initiative.....	<b>Section 3E</b>
Improving education and community centers through partnerships.....	<b>Sections 3E, 4B</b>

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL



Increasing capacity for the community to influence decision making.....	<b>Sections 6A, 6B</b>
Creating a more walkable, bikeable, transit-friendly city.....	<b>Sections 2B, 2C, 4B, 4C, 4E</b>
Wealth building for city residents.....	<b>Sections 2B, 3A, 5A</b>
Improving community health and health access.....	<b>Sections 3A, 3F, 4A, 4D, 4E</b>
Energy conservation and sustainable living for city residents.....	<b>Sections 5A, 5C</b>
Employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for underrepresented populations.....	<b>Sections 5A, 5B</b>
Increasing access to natural resources such as parks and the river.....	<b>Sections 2B, 2C, 4A, 4B, 4C</b>

# 1

INITIATIVE AREA

# LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

- A. WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?
- B. HOW TO NAVIGATE *ROCHESTER 2034*
- C. VISION + PRINCIPLES
- D. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT + INPUT INTO *ROCHESTER 2034*







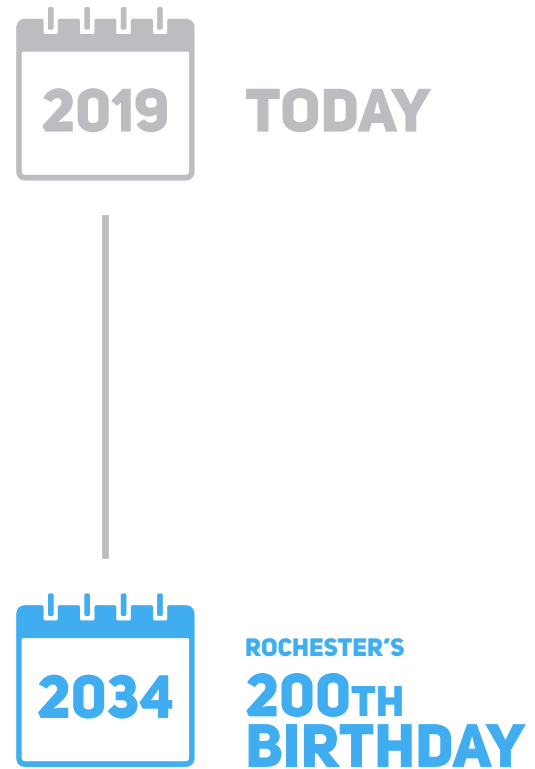
# A. WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

## INTRODUCTION

Fundamentally, a comprehensive plan is a means to promote and protect the general health, safety, and welfare of the people in a community and to lay out a course of action for the future physical and social development of that community. A comprehensive plan serves as the blueprint for making public and private sector decisions on land use regulation, development, future investment, and the allocation of critical resources.

Comprehensive plans typically provide guidance for a 15 to 20-year window for a municipality. The year 2034 is fifteen years from this plan's adoption, which coincides with the City of Rochester's 200th birthday. Therefore, this plan outlines who we want to become as a community at that monumental milestone and how we can achieve that vision.

*Rochester 2034* tells the story of who we are as a community, our history, and our vision for the future. The plan explores a variety of topics through data analysis, goal-setting, and best practices. It celebrates our assets and values in order to promote living, visiting, and doing business in Rochester. It is intended to serve as a tool for resident and agency engagement as well as informed decision making. An overarching objective of the plan is to re-establish the strong connection between the city's comprehensive plan, budget, and capital improvement program.



**THROUGH ITS VISION  
AND EXPRESSION OF  
COMMUNITY VALUES,  
ROCHESTER 2034  
AIMS TO  
INSPIRE HOPE AND  
EXCITEMENT FOR  
OUR FUTURE!**



# B. HOW TO NAVIGATE ROCHESTER 2034

**THE ROCHESTER 2034  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WEBSITE  
[WWW.ROCHESTER2034.COM](http://WWW.ROCHESTER2034.COM)  
FEATURES ALL  
87 GOALS + 473 STRATEGIES FOUND  
IN THE PLAN WITH A DYNAMIC  
SEARCH FUNCTION THAT ALLOWS  
RESIDENTS, STAKEHOLDERS, CITY  
STAFF, AND ELECTED OFFICIALS  
TO CREATE LISTS OF STRATEGIES  
ACCORDING TO THEIR TOPIC OF  
INTEREST.**

*Rochester 2034* covers myriad topics such as housing, transportation, and economic development. Each has a collection of strategies aimed at advancing the community towards a more desirable state for that topic. The topics are highly interrelated and overlapping in nature. As such, they are not intended to serve as standalone components of the plan.

Rochester's comprehensive plan has a distinct hierarchy and organization, from the broad community-wide Vision on down to the most specific Strategies. The **graphic** at right illustrates how each of the plan elements are organized.

In addition to this hierarchy of components, *Rochester 2034* contains an elaborate discussion and recommendations related to the concept of "Placemaking," found in [Initiative Area 2, The Placemaking Plan](#). This chapter overlaps substantially with the rest of the plan and represents a comprehensive approach to the physical redevelopment and enhancement of the City of Rochester.

*Rochester 2034* also features an innovative tool for searching and organizing strategies by topic or keyword. The *Rochester 2034* Comprehensive Plan website [www.Rochester2034.com](http://www.Rochester2034.com) features all **87 Goals** and **473 Strategies** found in the Plan with a dynamic search function that allows residents, stakeholders, City staff, and elected officials to create lists of strategies according to their topic of interest.

A comprehensive plan is meant to be a living document, with room for flexibility and adaptation over the next 15 years. *Rochester 2034* should be revisited at least once during its lifespan for a comprehensive reassessment and update. As conditions change, trends emerge, and priorities shift, plan elements can be revised as needed.

**Note:** Throughout the Plan, some text appears as **dark blue, underlined**. In the digital version of the Plan, this text can be clicked on to navigate to other parts of the document or to link to outside websites. The same is true for underlined white text used in side bars.

# ROCHESTER 2034 PLAN ELEMENTS

## VISION STATEMENT

A brief description of how we picture our community in 2034.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The values that guide us as we implement this plan.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

PLACEMAKING PRINCIPLES

## INITIATIVE AREAS

The major themes by which the Sections (topic areas) are organized.

1

2

3

4

5

6

## SECTIONS

Topic areas that describe a topic and provide an action plan.

A B C D

A B C

A B C D E F G

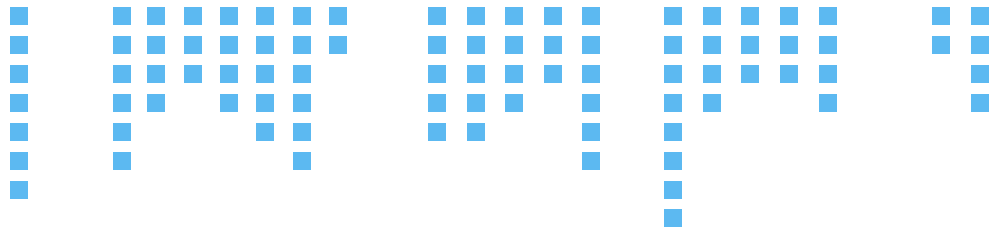
A B C D E

A B C D E

A B

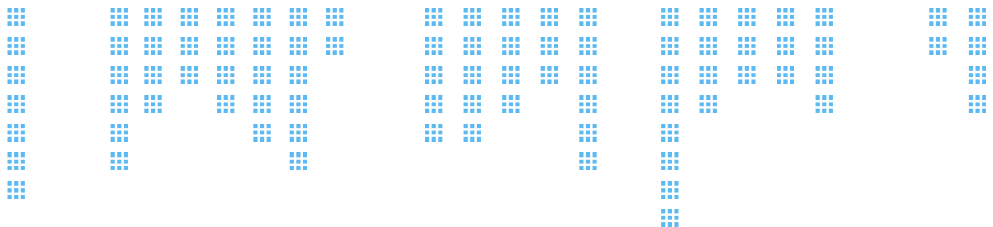
## GOALS

The results we are working toward.

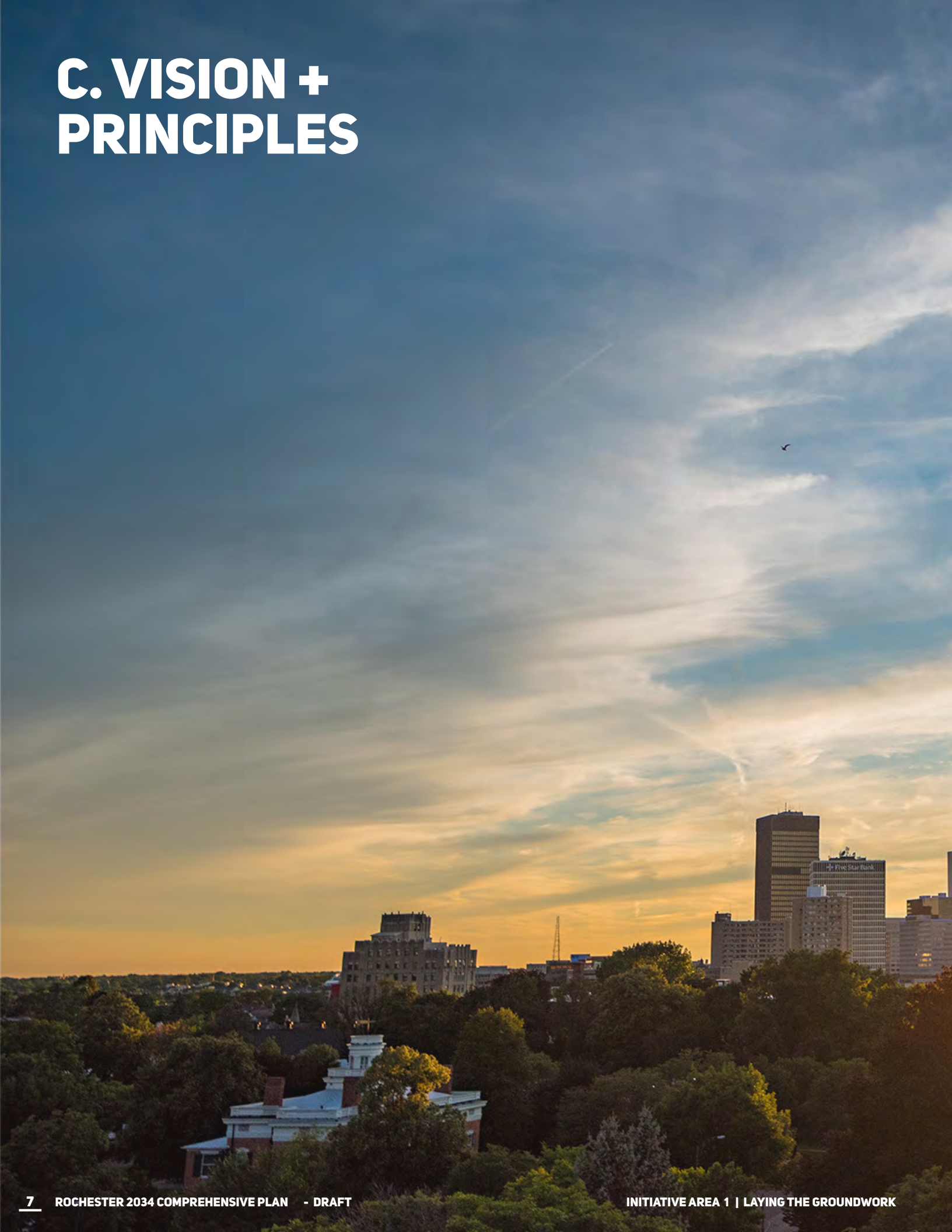


## STRATEGIES

Specific actions we will take with our community partners to achieve our Goals.



# C. VISION + PRINCIPLES





# 2034 VISION

**“Rochester is a beautiful, progressive, lively, healthy, and welcoming city. We build from strength – leveraging our assets to grow our population, local business community, and tax base. We celebrate our 200th birthday in 2034 as a resilient and confident community where diverse neighborhoods are engaged and thriving; downtown is the vibrant heart of our region; our unique network of active waterfronts is accessible to all; and innovation, adaptation, and inclusion drive us forward.”**

**-The People of Rochester**

# POLICY PRINCIPLES

These principles are the basis for our decision-making and guide our policy development. They are broad, overarching themes that we want our policies to achieve.

## HEALTHY LIVING

We will strive to be a city where all residents, regardless of age, income, and ability, live active lives in a healthy environment, have access to community-based health services, healthy food, and healthy housing, and where they have equitable economic and social opportunities.



## EQUITY

We will promote equity, inclusion, and environmental justice by working to reduce disparities, extend community benefits, ensure access to housing, and include traditionally under-represented populations.





## RESILIENCE

We will reduce risk and improve the ability of individuals, communities, economic systems, and the natural and built environments to withstand, recover from, and adapt to natural hazards, human-made disasters, climate change, and economic shifts.

## PARTNERSHIP

We will join with neighborhood, government, business, not-for-profit, and institutional partners to implement this plan and enjoy the results of reaching our goals together.

## PROSPERITY

We will support a diverse, low-carbon economy, and foster employment growth, competitive advancement, and equitable prosperity.



# PLACEMAKING PRINCIPLES

The design of our surroundings is intimately related to how we experience, interact with, and feel about places. Thoughtful design is important to creating places where people want to be. These principles are intended to cultivate a strong and unique sense of place for the City of Rochester, and to make it a place where people want to live, work, and play.

## CREATE BEAUTIFUL SPACES

We will design our streetscapes and public spaces to be vibrant, playful, and environmentally sustainable, to reflect, cultivate, and celebrate the unique identities of our city and neighborhoods.

## DESIGN AT THE PEDESTRIAN SCALE

We will prioritize development and design that is pedestrian-scaled and generates street-level activity in order to promote walkability and healthy lifestyles, and to create an attractive and welcoming built environment.

## PROVIDE DIVERSE HOUSING OPTIONS

We will work to preserve our existing housing stock while also providing more diverse options within all neighborhoods that expand our range of housing types, densities, and prices.





### **STRENGTHEN MULTI-MODAL TRAVEL**

We will strengthen multiple modes of transportation and promote more sustainable transit options by improving walkability and increasing bus and bicycle access throughout the city.

### **CELEBRATE ASSETS**

We will capitalize on our existing unique assets, including natural and scenic amenities, cultural heritage, and distinctive historic structures and landscapes, recognizing that these assets enhance neighborhood pride, foster a strong cultural identity, and attract visitors, new residents, and investment.

### **FOCUS GROWTH**

We will focus population growth and commercial development along key transportation corridors and within mixed-use centers in order to capitalize on existing infrastructure and a critical mass of activity.



# D. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT + INPUT INTO *ROCHESTER 2034*

## INTRODUCTION

Community engagement is vital to crafting an effective and responsive long-range plan. Involving a community in planning for its future creates a sense of excitement, hopefulness, and ownership. This engagement is a valuable outcome of a successful planning project. The following is a brief description of the varied means by which the community in Rochester was brought into the planning process for *Rochester 2034*.

## COMMUNITY MEETINGS

### MAYOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Mayor's Advisory Council, consisting of elected officials, municipal staff, and other key stakeholders, met on April 27, 2016 to assist with providing input into the planning process. The Mayor of Rochester, Lovely Warren, chaired the Council to introduce the planning process to this group of stakeholders. The group served as a sounding board to establish a consensus on major themes, issues, recommendations and priorities for the plan moving forward. Following the presentation the group participated in an interactive exercise that had the members identify Rochester's greatest assets and challenges.

### PLANNING AREA COMMITTEES

Between June 2016 and April 2017, five Planning Area Committees were assembled within the four quadrants of the city and downtown. Each of the five planning areas had their own committee consisting of eight to 16 members. Committee meetings gathered local perspectives on opportunities, needs, and issues at a quadrant level. Each committee met between three and four times.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Valuable input was received from over 50 neighborhood groups and over 100 topic-based stakeholder groups.
- Two surveys gathered input from over 4,000 respondents.
- “Pop-up” community outreach events at the public market, Celebrate City Living, and local colleges brought additional input and awareness.
- Supplemental plans and studies provided valuable technical guidance and further input to inform *Rochester 2034*.





# D. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT + INPUT INTO ROCHESTER 2034

(CONTINUED)

## COMMUNITY MEETINGS CONTINUED

### NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS

Using the information gathered through the quadrant meetings, City staff from the Office of Planning decided that a more grass roots approach for community input was needed, so they arranged to meet with every neighborhood association in the city which amounted to meeting with over 50

neighborhood groups, involving about 500 people. This process also allowed for City planners to further their relationships with neighborhood associations while gaining input into *Rochester 2034*.

#### A TYPICAL MEETING AGENDA AT A NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION MEETING:

**Presentation.** City staff explained the purpose of a comprehensive plan, how to take the survey, and informed residents about ways to continue involvement in the planning process.

**Outreach Area.** Attendees informed staff about the geographic area their group represented. This helped with understanding for whom the association was speaking, and which parts of the city may not have the benefit of locally-organized representation. This exercise informed [Initiative Area 6-Section B, Building Neighborhood Capacity](#).

**Commercial Center.** Neighbors discussed where they see the commercial center(s) of their neighborhoods. This exercise informed [Initiative Area 5-Section A, Economic Growth](#) and [Initiative Area 2, The Placemaking Plan](#).

**Strategic Sites.** Neighbors identified underutilized/vacant sites in their neighborhood that could have a transformative impact if they are developed or rehabilitated. The responses helped inform the City's Strategic Sites Inventory, which directs public and private investment to areas where it will benefit the surrounding neighborhoods the most.

**Open Spaces and Parks.** The project team asked neighbors to identify where their most valuable open spaces and parks were, as well as which parks were underutilized. This helped to inform [Initiative Area 4-Section B, Parks, Recreation, and Open Space](#).

**“What do you LOVE about your neighborhood?”** Attendants were asked to discuss positive characteristics and assets of their neighborhood that were most important to them. A prioritization exercise identified the top items discussed. This exercise influenced strategies for [Initiative Area 5-Section D, City and Neighborhood Promotion](#).

**Open Dialogue.** City planners provided neighbors with time to talk about the issues that were most important to them as citizens and as an organization. Common dialogue topics included: neighborhood goals and areas of focus; resources that could assist associations with organizing and sustaining involvement; types of investment that would make the biggest difference in the neighborhood; specific challenges and opportunities.

# WHAT WE LOVE ABOUT OUR NEIGHBORHOODS!

These attributes and assets were identified as most important by residents at various neighborhood meetings.



# D. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT + INPUT INTO ROCHESTER 2034 (CONTINUED)

## COMMUNITY MEETINGS CONTINUED

### TOPIC-BASED STAKEHOLDERS

In order to have a deeper understanding of various community dynamics, topic-based stakeholder groups were identified including a wide range of advocates, employers, educators, service providers, developers, etc. Various members of the project team met with them to learn more about issues, needs, and strategies around specific topics. This process not only informed *Rochester 2034*, but helped establish and nurture relationships with people and organizations that will play a key role in plan implementation. Over 30 meetings were conducted involving over 100 different stakeholder groups.



Follow along with teacher  
Stay present  
Ask questions  
Take risks  
One voice  
Raise your hand



3-MAIN COMPONENTS OF A CITY  
Physical Social Environmental



Rules  
Be safe and take care of others  
Think before you act  
Take care of materials  
Stay positive  
Comfort zone

Build  
repetitive  
deliberate  
includes  
bystander



## COMMUNITY MEETINGS CONTINUED

### YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

**Mayor's Youth Advisory Council.** In May 2018, City planners met with the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council and presented the comprehensive planning process. Input was gathered by asking questions on the councilmembers' personal experiences living in Rochester and what changes they would like to see in the future.

**Rochester City School District (RCSD).** High school students from across the district came together for an interactive event in May of 2018. Students learned about *Rochester 2034*, met with specialized staff from City departments, provided input, and learned about city planning as a potential career choice. Additionally, through the Future Cities Program, over the course of 20 weeks RCSD students learned about urban planning and sustainability principles and competed in designing a sustainable future city with other schools. City staff worked with the students throughout the process by capturing their ideas and vision for the future and mentoring them in creating their design.

**Genesee Community Charter School.** Project team members visited the GCCS 6th grade class to teach and engage students about city planning principles. The class was in the midst of their capstone project, "Whose Renaissance Is It? A Closer Look at Rochester's Renewal." Students were exploring the progress of the City's previous comprehensive plan as well as examining the degree to which all of the city's residents were or were not benefiting from recent positive trends.

**Rochester Children's Agenda.** City planners met with staff from the Rochester Children Agenda, which advocates for the success and well-being of Rochester's youth.



# D. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT + INPUT INTO ROCHESTER 2034 (CONTINUED)

## POP-UP EVENTS

### PUBLIC MARKET

A *Rochester 2034* station was set up at the Rochester Public Market, a popular gathering place for people from throughout the city as well as from the surrounding suburbs. During the event, citizens were informed about the survey and were asked a series of three questions:

- **What is your dream for Rochester?**
- What is your favorite thing in Rochester?
- What does Rochester need to be an even better city?

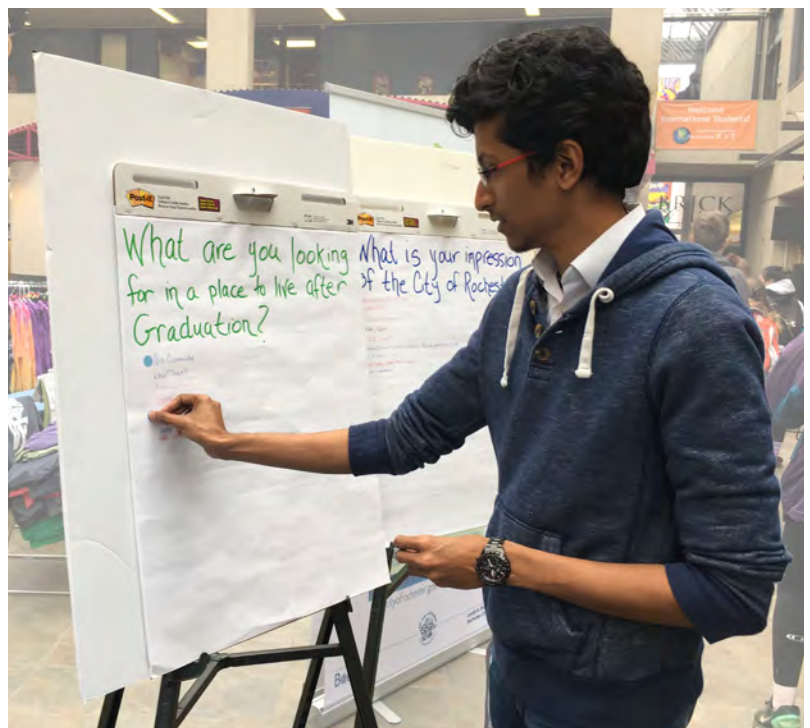
The varied responses helped create a narrative for *Rochester 2034*. A slideshow of the responses can be found on the [project webpage](#).

### CELEBRATE CITY LIVING

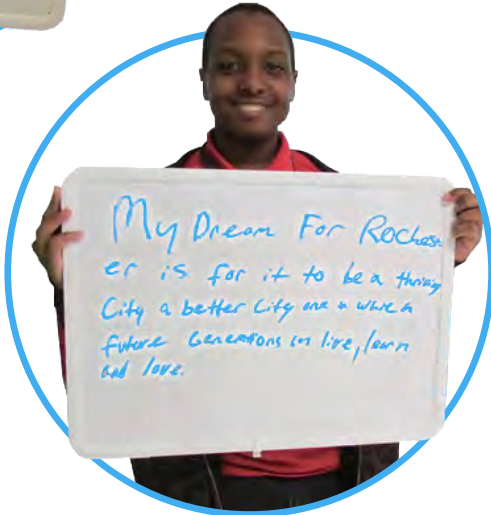
City staff were present at the annual Celebrate City Living event at Sibley Square. This public expo encourages people to create roots in Rochester by investing in city living. The format of the input process was the same as the format of the Public Market pop-up event. The project team promoted the plan and heard from attendants about the challenges and benefits of buying or renting a home in the City of Rochester.

### UNIVERSITIES

Rochester is a regional center for education, as thousands of students are educated in the region annually. City staff set up tables at the student unions at local colleges and universities to introduce *Rochester 2034* and gather input. Students were asked about their impression of the City of Rochester and what would compel them to stay after graduation. The responses helped inform the plan on strategies for retaining students after graduation.



# WHAT'S YOUR DREAM FOR ROCHESTER?



# D. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT + INPUT INTO ROCHESTER 2034 (CONTINUED)

## SURVEYS

### **SURVEY #1 (NOVEMBER 2016 – FEBRUARY 2017)**

Early in the planning process, a survey was administered to get a broad understanding of the vision and goals Rochesterians have for their community. Over 1,250 residents, employees, and visitors took the survey over a 6-week period. The survey was composed of approximately 20 questions ranging from basic demographic information to questions like, “What is the City of Rochester’s greatest asset?” A summary of this survey and its results is available on the [project webpage](#).



### **SURVEY #2 (JANUARY – MAY 2018)**

A second survey took a more targeted approach to gain an understanding of people’s priorities while also educating the public about what topics and information are addressed in a comprehensive plan. The survey had many opportunities for participants to comment and allowed respondents to link comments to specific locations. In addition to being an online survey, a printed version was developed to reach citizens without computer access. Both versions were available in Spanish.



Survey takers were able to insert pinpoints on any location within the city on an interactive map and define them as a “Favorite Place”, a “Challenge Area”, or a “Wish List” and could add comments to each pin to provide specific feedback on that location. Survey results also ranked 25 different issues of importance to respondents. The full results of this survey can be found [online](#).

**SURVEY #2 RESULTED IN 3,022 SUBMISSIONS AND YIELDED OVER 10,000 COMMENTS AND MORE THAN 80,000 TOTAL DATA POINTS.**

## SURVEYS CONTINUED

### ACCESSIBILITY

To maximize access to and participation in Survey #2, the following actions were taken:

#### COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT:



#### WORKING WITH RMAPI TO EXPAND OUTREACH

The Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative (RMAPI) was an invaluable partner in our efforts to expand outreach to people who are not traditionally involved in community planning processes and to diversify the range of input we received to inform *Rochester 2034*.

RMAPI staff invited the City's Manager of Planning to present on *Rochester 2034* to several of their working groups, distributed information about the survey to all of their staff and grantees, and conducted nearly 40 survey outreach events on their own time (with tablets and paper copies) at libraries, rec centers, public housing facilities, settlement houses, Foodlink mobile markets, and other community locations.

**Neighborhood Associations.** City planners reviewed the survey with meeting attendees at all of the 50+ neighborhood association outreach meetings and encouraged neighborhood leaders to distribute the survey through their networks and social media to ensure broad participation.

**Monroe County Library System.** City library branches promoted the survey at their computer stations and Library staff provided assistance to help community members take the survey, which helped to make the survey more accessible to people without internet access, or who needed assistance in filling out and submitting the survey.

**Faith Community.** The Mayor and City planners hosted a Faith Leaders' Summit at City Hall to discuss *Rochester 2034*, gather their input, and solicit their assistance in promoting the survey to their respective congregations.

**City of Rochester Social Media.** The survey was heavily promoted on the City of Rochester's Facebook and Twitter accounts, reaching over 20,000 followers.

**Our Voice Magazine.** This magazine promoted the survey for two months to help get input from Black and Hispanic communities in Rochester.

**CityWise.** City planners went on WXXI's talk show to discuss the comprehensive plan, how to take the survey, and how to get more involved.

**Rochester Black Young Professionals (ROCBYP).** City planners teamed up with the leaders of ROCBYP to sponsor an event during which *Rochester 2034* was promoted and the online survey was made available.

**Blue Cross Arena.** The marquee in front of the Blue Cross Arena displayed information about *Rochester 2034* and the online survey.

**Rochester Housing Authority (RHA) Jurisdiction-Wide Resident Council.** City planners met with the RHA's Jurisdiction-Wide Resident Council to introduce them to the survey and to give them printed copies to distribute. They were encouraged to foster participation in the survey from their fellow residents.

# D. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT + INPUT INTO ROCHESTER 2034

(CONTINUED)

## INPUT FROM OTHER PLANS

### NEIGHBORHOOD, CITY, AND REGIONAL PLANS

Rochester’s history of community planning has given rise to many plans. The city’s active resident population drove the creation of those plans. Respecting those past efforts for *Rochester 2034*, the project team looked at all existing neighborhood, City, and regional plans and incorporated key points and relevant information into *Rochester 2034*.



#### *Renaissance 2010 Plan*

Adopted in 1999, the [Renaissance Plan](#) served as Rochester’s comprehensive plan until the adoption of *Rochester 2034*. City planners reviewed the Renaissance Plan, noting how the plan was or was not a useful tool for elected officials and City staff after adoption. Staff also incorporated elements of the plan that are still relevant to the *Rochester 2034* process and document.



### NEIGHBORHOOD, CITY, AND REGIONAL PLAN INVENTORY

One outcome of the *Rochester 2034* planning process is the creation of an inventory of all neighborhood, City, and regional plans that have been developed over the past 10 years. This inventory can be found on the City’s Projects and Plans website, under the “Plans and Studies” tab. On this website, copies of any of the inventoried plans can be downloaded. Each of these plans were reviewed and taken into consideration during the development of *Rochester 2034*.

## INPUT FROM OTHER PLANS CONTINUED

### SUPPLEMENTAL PLANS AND STUDIES

The following technical studies and plans were prepared to inform the [Goals and Strategies](#) of *Rochester 2034*. Each project featured its own community engagement and input process.



#### [Citywide Housing Market Study](#)

The [Citywide Housing Market Study](#) analyzed housing market data and provides recommendations for housing and community development policy and strategy, moving forward. The findings are reflected in the narrative and in [Initiative Area 3-Section A, Housing Action Plan](#).



#### [Transit Supportive Corridors Study](#)

This [study](#) analyzed the relationship between land use, development, and transportation choices in Rochester and developed recommendations on how to target development along key corridors to enhance the viability of transit and multi-modal transportation in Rochester. [Initiative Area 2, The Placemaking Plan](#) and the [Initiative Area 4-Section E, Transportation](#), were heavily influenced by this study.



#### [Comprehensive Access and Mobility Plan](#)

This [plan](#) studied Rochester's multi-modal transportation system, outlining recommendations for future transportation-related decisions. Its findings and recommendations are the foundation for the [Initiative Area 4-Section E, Transportation](#).



#### [Commercial Corridors Study](#)

This [study](#) analyzed the market strength of, and recommendations for, the city's prominent commercial corridors. [Initiative Area 2, The Placemaking Plan](#) and the [Initiative Area 5-Section A, Economic Growth](#), are reflective of this study's conclusions.

# 2 INITIATIVE AREA THE PLACEMAKING PLAN

- A. OVERVIEW OF THE PLACEMAKING PLAN
- B. FUTURE LAND USE (CHARACTER AREAS)
- C. OTHER PLACEMAKING ELEMENTS







# A. OVERVIEW OF THE PLACEMAKING PLAN

## INTRODUCTION

Conventional comprehensive plans contain a future land use plan as the centerpiece for guiding physical change in the municipality. The community engagement process for *Rochester 2034* made it abundantly clear that there are many other elements – physical projects, policies, and programs – that intersect with land use and development to contribute to a functional cityscape and positive sense of place. As such, this comprehensive plan contains an innovative approach to conventional land use planning by integrating these other elements into a larger Placemaking Plan.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- We create places of great character when we invest in things like quality parks, access to the river, attractive public spaces, dynamic streetscapes, resident engagement, and thoughtful land use planning.
- Growing the population of Rochester will restore the critical mass of residents needed to support local businesses, deconcentrate poverty, grow the tax base, and address housing affordability.
- Updating zoning and land use regulations will help create jobs, reoccupy vacant commercial spaces, and preserve community assets.
- High standards for building and site design will make Rochester more attractive to residents, businesses, and visitors.



PLACEMAKING IS THE ART AND SCIENCE OF SHAPING PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC FACILITIES, AND THE PUBLIC REALM INTO PLACES OF GREAT CHARACTER.



# A. OVERVIEW OF THE PLACEMAKING PLAN (CONTINUED)

## INTRODUCTION CONTINUED

Placemaking is a people-centered approach to activating our communities and creating vibrancy for all walks of life to enjoy. The Placemaking Plan is a holistic approach meant to simultaneously address these elements in a unified plan.

Whether it be the design of streets and buildings, the amenities of public spaces, or the functionality of infrastructure, successful placemaking impacts the way people engage in community and with nature. This endeavor is vital to the success of the City of Rochester as these relationships contribute to a sense of pride and quality of life for residents and visitors. Enhancing all factors related to placemaking will continue to position Rochester to attract more residents and businesses. As noted in the [2018 Citywide Housing Market Study](#) (Recommendation #2), building up a critical mass of residents and activities is crucial to addressing concentrated poverty, a condition that is connected to nearly all of the city's challenges.

**Economic vitality, civic beauty, and equitable access to great public services has a significant impact on the daily experiences of locals and visitors. When these ideals are present and nurtured in a building, street, or district, they create a strong sense of place and foster further care for that place. When these ideals are ignored, or are challenged by a declining economy or other factors, places fall prey to poor design or disinvestment. Cities then lack sufficient resources to engage in positive placemaking, which amplifies the cycle of disinvestment.**

Rochester is home to neighborhoods that vary widely in their sense of place and overall health, boasting proud and vibrant neighborhoods, extremely impoverished neighborhoods, and many places that fall somewhere in the middle. The *Rochester 2034 Placemaking Plan*, in conjunction with the housing market typologies outlined in [Initiative Area 3-Section A, Housing](#), represents a vision for enhancing the city's physical realm so as to positively influence our economic, social, and natural environments.



## INTRODUCTION CONTINUED

The principles and ideas in this plan reflect *Rochester 2034's* vast community engagement efforts. They also present many future opportunities for residents to participate in implementing projects. Placemaking puts a high value on community-supported projects as well as the organic generation of new ideas to revitalize our public spaces and neighborhoods.

While this Initiative Area focuses on the multitude of factors influencing placemaking, there are many Goals and Strategies throughout *Rochester 2034* that contribute to the Goals of this section, directly or indirectly.

Guided by the [Placemaking Principles](#) listed in [Initiative Area 1-Section C, Vision and Principles](#), this Initiative Area explores intentional planning around a series of interrelated physical elements. The first collection of elements discussed in this section have recommendations that are location-specific and are therefore found on the Placemaking Plan Map as well as the Action Plan:

- future land use (character areas)
- multi-use trails and bicycle facilities
- parks and open spaces
- community facilities
- Genesee River access
- infrastructure and streetscapes
- neighborhood planning



An additional collection of elements in this Initiative Area are equally important to placemaking efforts but are city-wide in nature. Thus they are addressed in the Action Plan but do not have location-specific recommendations on the map.

- historic preservation
- strategic development sites
- public space design within private development
- reuse of vacant lands
- grass roots initiatives
- public space programming
- parking policies

The Placemaking Plan illustrates a particular emphasis on the relationship between land use and transportation, as existing and planned mobility corridors (transit, multi-use trails, and mixed-use neighborhood corridors) influence proposed patterns of higher density activity and vice versa. Each of these interrelated elements is described in detail later in this Initiative Area and displayed on The Placemaking Plan Map.

**Placemaking is also greatly enhanced through active groups of organized residents, business owners, and community organizations.** Collectively they contribute to placemaking through efforts such as neighborhood beautification, programming of public spaces, participating in local planning and development projects, individual property maintenance, providing desirable goods and services, and fostering a spirit of neighborliness.

Combining each of the above elements into a comprehensive Placemaking Plan illustrates their interrelated nature and provides a more holistic view of how to create places of great character. The plan also provides comprehensive context and guidance for decision making such as future capital improvements, grant writing, building local capacity, and the development review process.

# B. FUTURE LAND USE

## OVERVIEW OF LAND USE PLANNING

Comprehensive plans traditionally have a future land use plan which is a geographic vision for how land uses and urban form should change and be preserved over time. In legacy industrial cities, the future land use plan is typically designed to promote redevelopment, redensification, and historic preservation. **Land use planning in an urban setting requires a strategic blend of orderly growth, organic flexibility, and preservation of neighborhood and natural assets.** The Placemaking Plan attempts to strike that balance.

New York State’s Consolidated Laws, General City Law, §28a contains the enabling legislation that encourages municipalities to address “the existing and proposed location and intensity of land uses” for the purpose of “protecting the public health, safety and general welfare of its citizens”. Whereas the city’s zoning map and ordinance serve as the regulatory tool for managing growth, the future land use plan provides concept-level guidance for future zoning updates.

Historically, land use planning and zoning regulations were used to segregate land uses in order to minimize the adverse impacts of large-scale commerce and industry on residential neighborhoods. While some health and safety benefits were realized by that approach, the automobile-centered culture of the past 70 years amplified the separation of uses, including among highly compatible uses such as housing, shopping, and employment centers. Twentieth century zoning regulations effectively eroded the traditional small-scale, walkable development pattern that existed for millennia and reduced the tangible sense of community.

Form-based and performance-based zoning codes have emerged as an alternative to traditional zoning, focusing more on the design of buildings and

sites rather than the use of land. This approach effectively encourages a mix of compatible uses, rather than separation. Rochester currently has a form-based code for the Center City District, Marina District, and Collegetown Village District. Aside from heavy industry and other high-impact uses, these codes allow for almost all uses in buildings provided that the design of the site and building meet certain standards for quality, performance, and pedestrian-scale features.

While this form-based approach may not be appropriate for residential areas, it is recommended to be expanded beyond downtown into other mixed-use areas throughout the city. Additional recommendations related to this approach are found below in descriptions of individual Character Areas.





## POSITIONING ROCHESTER FOR GROWTH

The Placemaking Plan is meant to both enhance the quality of life for residents and to facilitate the repopulation of the city. Having lost more than a third of its population since the 1960s, Rochester must build up the critical mass of residents and consumers needed to support small businesses, stabilize the tax base, increase housing affordability, and provide critical services to residents in need. We must also work towards an environment where current residents can age in place, providing diverse housing options and support services for an aging population.

The dramatic population loss has also resulted in the concentration of poverty in certain neighborhoods, which is correlated with numerous other challenges faced by the community. As such, The Placemaking Plan includes numerous strategies to encourage the restoration of a critical mass of residents and businesses through re-legalizing the city’s historic built form. After decades of decline, the city stands poised to have a stabilized, and potentially slowly growing, population.

Cultivating population growth is challenging in a legacy industrial city and is even more difficult to accurately predict. However, as the city has enjoyed many signs of revitalization in recent years, we must take an optimistic approach and position the community to welcome and nurture new residents and businesses. Positioning Rochester for growth and vitality requires greater flexibility in land use planning along with a comprehensive approach to other placemaking elements. As such, The Placemaking Plan, in particular the land use planning element, is meant to direct growth and development while not being overly prescriptive.

## B. FUTURE LAND USE (CONTINUED)

**INVESTMENT AND GROWTH MUST BE FOCUSED AND STRATEGIC TO MAXIMIZE THE POTENTIAL FOR STRONG CORRIDORS AND HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS.**

### CHARACTER AREAS OVERVIEW

The *Rochester 2034* Placemaking Plan Map displays categories of various land uses, or Character Areas, as they are recommended to evolve over the next 10 to 15 years. As the city is almost entirely built out and change occurs slowly in a relatively weak market setting, it is envisioned that much of the city's land use patterns will remain the same. Modest changes are proposed in the form of:

- refined zoning district boundaries;
- greater flexibility in allowable uses;
- high design standards;
- allowances for improved vitality of various districts;
- recommended form and scale of new development; and
- promoting the critical mass of quality housing needed to support economic and affordability goals.

Character Area boundaries are depicted on The Placemaking Plan Map with gently curving edges and consistent buffers between adjacent categories. This is meant to graphically reinforce the conceptual and visionary nature of future land use planning. While the map is intended to inform a future zoning map, the boundaries do not follow property lines and should not be interpreted as specific edges of new zoning districts.

In many areas, the desired character is consistent with the existing character. The Placemaking Plan then serves as a guide for preserving and strengthening that character. In other locations, modest modifications to the pattern of use and form are recommended through revised zoning regulations and other placemaking strategies.

In addition to the aforementioned Placemaking Principles, several factors were considered in

developing these Character Area boundaries. These include:

- existing land use and zoning;
- current patterns of residential density (such as number of units in a structure);
- patterns of existing commercial and mixed-use building sizes;
- commercial and activity centers identified by neighborhood associations;
- transit corridors; and
- city planning best practices.

Regional Transit Service (RTS) corridors were factored into focusing a critical mass of housing and commercial activity. The *Reimagine RTS* draft plan contains “Frequent” and “Local” corridors that influenced the Character Areas. These corridors are further supported and expanded by the findings of the City's 2018 *Transit Supportive Corridor Study*, which also informed the design of the Character Areas.

In general, each of the transit corridors were recommended for restoring at least a medium level of housing density and in many cases a higher concentration of mixed-use activity. This reflects the importance of coordinating land use and transportation planning. Additionally, it reflects the fact that Rochester's population has shrunk dramatically since the 1960s and no longer has the critical mass of residents to support all of the commercial corridors and buildings that were once fully occupied. Therefore, investment and growth must be focused and strategic to maximize the potential for strong corridors and healthy neighborhoods.





## CHARACTER AREAS OVERVIEW

### CONTINUED

In identifying the Character Areas, care was taken to ensure that the majority of residential areas are in walking or biking distance of mixed-use centers, striking a balance of visionary thinking and market realities. The land use plan cannot control the larger market forces at play within the city and region but it can at least ensure the opportunity for some commercial activity to be proximate to housing.

Each of the Character Areas is described on the following pages. Each is defined by the preferred uses that should be considered for these areas during a future zoning code update. Also included are a description of the geographic pattern and design considerations such as form and scale, as illustrated by example imagery. Some images are from Rochester, illustrating high-quality, desirable building and site designs that have been achieved locally. Other images are taken from other cities in order to inspire future development to achieve high standards.

While the names, locations, and associated recommendations of these Character Areas should not necessarily be interpreted as new zoning districts, they do provide a community-wide vision for development and substantial guidance for revising the City's Zoning Code and Map.

The Placemaking Plan consists of 11 Character Areas:

- >> **PARKS + OPEN SPACE**
- >> **LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL**
- >> **MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL**
- >> **HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL**
- >> **BOUTIQUE MIXED-USE**
- >> **NEIGHBORHOOD MIXED-USE**
- >> **FLEXIBLE MIXED-USE**
- >> **DOWNTOWN MIXED-USE**
- >> **REGIONAL COMMERCIAL**
- >> **INDUSTRIAL**
- >> **INSTITUTIONAL CAMPUS**

**Note:** While The Placemaking Plan is intended to be the foundation for future zoning code updates, it does not incorporate existing or potential zoning-specific tools like Planned Development Districts, Urban Renewal Districts, or Overlay Districts. The use of those tools should be reevaluated at the time of the zoning code and map update.

## B. FUTURE LAND USE (CONTINUED)

### BUILDING HEIGHTS IN MIXED-USE AREAS

The Placemaking Plan designates a series of Character Areas across the city based on building form and use. Perhaps one of the most important transitions is between Boutique Mixed-Use (BMU) or Neighborhood Mixed-Use (NMU) Character Areas and adjacent residential areas. Given that most business districts are a single property deep on either side of a corridor, these Character Areas are often immediately adjacent to houses on side streets. How that transition from a commercial or mixed-use building to a residence is designed is very important.

The Placemaking Plan is designed to mitigate conflicts while encouraging density along key corridors and transit routes. In BMU areas, which are meant to be a somewhat smaller scale and intensity than NMU areas, it is recommended that buildings be limited to three stories or approximately 40 feet. In NMU areas, a limit of five stories or approximately 60 feet is recommended.



Example of a four story building constructed in the 19th Century (South Clinton Avenue)

Allowing taller buildings in the BMU and NMU Character Areas is important for several reasons:

- 1 It fits the historic pattern of development along Rochester's mixed-use corridors, some dating back 140 years.
- 2 Higher density development along these corridors contributes to establishing a critical mass of residents (customers) that will support local businesses. Rochester's dramatic loss in population since the 1950s, whether it be from traditional neighborhoods or upper story apartments, is directly correlated with the decline in traditional storefront shops.
- 3 This critical mass of residents (and businesses) supports the higher frequency transit that RTS is proposing for many of these corridors. In turn, the higher frequency transit supports the residents and businesses by offering options for mobility. These corridors provide an option in the Rochester region for people who choose not to, or cannot, use a private car.

When carefully designed, higher density development in these BMU and NMU areas can fit very well into the neighborhood context. There are some basic ways, as shown to the right and on the next page, to ensure that new development in these corridors minimizes negative impacts on adjacent houses on side streets.

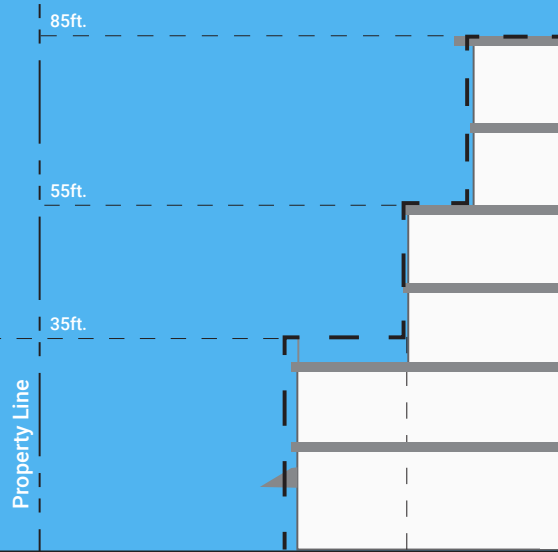
### REAR BUFFER

Whenever possible, locate parking and/or driveways between the larger mixed-use building and the smaller houses. This ensures that the larger building does not create substantial shadows or privacy issues. A great example of this is the 2007 mixed-use building at 661 South Avenue. Despite being four stories tall, the rear parking lot buffers the larger building from the residential properties to the west. Locating parking between the larger building and smaller buildings creates a buffer.

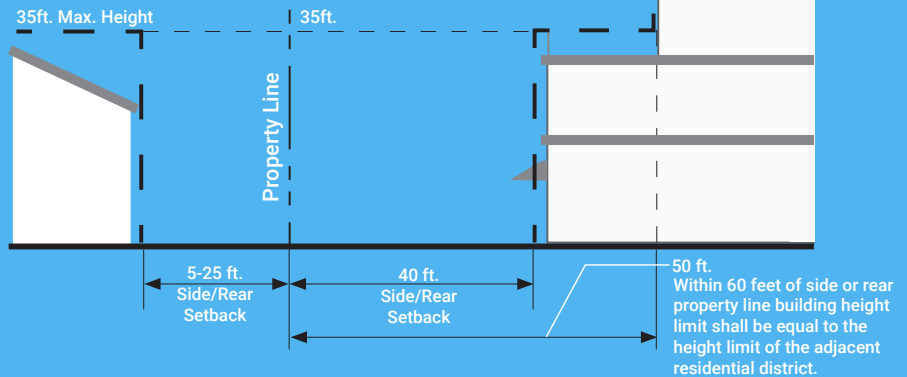
**BUILDING HEIGHTS IN MIXED-USE AREAS** (CONTINUED)

**STEP DOWN** Whenever possible, reduce the height of the portion of mixed use building toward the rear where it is closer to adjacent homes. There are several historic and recent examples of this. Many cities include requirements for this in their zoning code, a consideration for the update to Rochester zoning code.

- 1 Example of Rear Buffer and Step Down: Although the building is taller than this plan recommends, the driveway is used as a buffer and the building is stepped to reduce visual impact (Toronto, ON).



- 2 Example of zoning code requirements to ensure a well-designed transition between larger and smaller buildings.



Example of rear buffer parking at 661 South Avenue



Front View



Rear View



Aerial View

## B. FUTURE LAND USE (CONTINUED)

### THE URBAN FORM OF MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

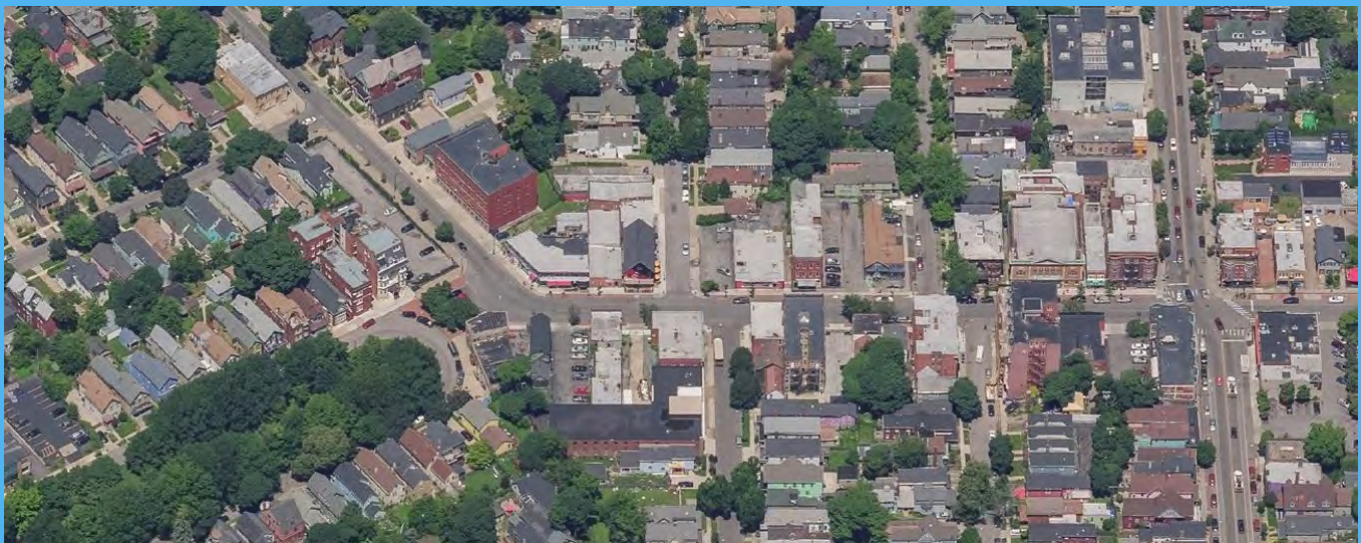
In cities, mixed-use patterns have both a vertical and horizontal form. Vertical mixed-use refers to individual buildings that have both a residential and commercial use. Traditional “Main Street” type buildings contain retail, restaurants, or services on the first floor with offices and/or housing on upper floors. Horizontal mixed-use refers to neighborhoods or districts where there is a mix of uses within walking or biking distance of each other. The Placemaking Plan accounts for both types of mixed-use development as it seeks to encourage active transportation choices and vibrant neighborhoods.

Vertical mixed-use buildings have long been a highly desired form in urban areas, especially in downtowns and primary corridors. While this form remains ideal for mixed-use areas, the City and community must temper their expectations with the realities of the evolving retail market. The retail industry is changing significantly and, coupled with the relatively weak market conditions in Rochester, it is not always feasible to expect a commercial use will be viable on the first floor of a new or redeveloped multi-story building. Recommendations related to downtown’s retail environment can be found under the Downtown Mixed-Use Character Area heading.

# VERTICAL



# HORIZONTAL





## B. FUTURE LAND USE (CONTINUED)

### CHARACTER AREAS

#### >> PARKS + OPEN SPACE

##### RECOMMENDED PRIMARY USES:

Parks, playgrounds, athletic facilities, trails, supportive buildings and facilities, waterfront amenities, and large natural areas. It should include official parks as well as those publicly-owned lands that should remain undeveloped.

##### EXAMPLE AREAS:

Genesee Valley Park, Riverside Cemetery, Troup St Playground, Genesee River Gorge.

##### GEOGRAPHIC PATTERNS:

Aside from a concentration along the Genesee River corridor, there are no particular patterns in the dispersion of parks and open spaces within the city. Large areas are designated with a green area on the map. Small areas have a park symbol but there is no regulatory or recommendation significance to the distinction.

##### DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:

These lands are and should remain primarily undeveloped, providing ample natural areas and recreation opportunities that are a respite from the active urban environment. However, it is important that select parks have up-to-date improvements and amenities that enhance the park experience. The City should continue to apply high standards of landscape design and quality architecture for park facilities.

A particular focus of this Character Area is the Genesee River corridor. The Placemaking Plan Map identifies numerous opportunities for improving access to the water's edge, increasing boating opportunities, and enhancing mobility and recreational infrastructure in the corridor, consistent with the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program and ROC the Riverway initiative.

Multi-use trails are a critical element of the city's park landscape. Further expansion of the trail system is a high priority and is outlined below and illustrated on the Placemaking Plan Map. As described in the [Initiative Area 4-Section B, Parks, Recreation, and Open Space](#), it is highly recommended that the City increase its resources dedicated to park design, development, and maintenance. The value of parks, open spaces, and multi-use trails, as well as the potential for more and better facilities, was one of the most common points of feedback throughout the community engagement process.

There are some privately-owned properties within this Character Area. During a zoning code update, these private lands must retain some development rights. However, given their unique natural and geologic setting, especially within the Genesee River Gorge, zoning code provisions should provide protections for adjacent natural features.





**PARKS +  
OPEN SPACE**



## **B. FUTURE LAND USE** (CONTINUED)

### **CHARACTER AREAS**

#### **➤➤ LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL**

##### **RECOMMENDED PRIMARY USES:**

Traditional detached single-family homes are the primary use, located on lots that are generally larger than the other residential Character Areas. While this is the lowest density of residential designations, these areas were developed prior to widespread use of the private automobile.

In the interest of restoring a critical population mass, existing two-family homes (as-built or legally converted) should be allowed as-of-right and no longer subject to lost rights through abandonment. Over time, if Rochester's population increases, the City should consider additional affordability strategies that increase housing options, such as allowing one extra (subordinate) unit in the this Character Area. For now, those uses are and should continue to be permitted in the remainder of residential areas.

New construction of two-family homes should not be permitted in the Low Density Residential Character Area but encouraged in other residential Character Areas. Single-family homes that are attached, such as townhomes, should remain permitted as-of-right.

New single-family home construction, such as scattered site infill projects, is most appropriate in Low and Medium Density Character Areas. Multi-family residential development (new construction or rehabilitation of historic buildings) should be focused in Medium and High Density Character Areas, as well as in all mixed-use areas.

An effective way to prevent vacant buildings while furthering the traditional small-scale, walkable development pattern is to allow the opportunity for built-as commercial buildings located in all residential Character Areas the opportunity to be occupied with a low-intensity commercial use. This use should be allowed as-of-right.

Lastly, the City should reexamine the definition and design/performance regulations related to home occupations and live-work spaces. This is consistent with the notion of "zoning for jobs", a goal supported by multiple strategies in the Placemaking Plan. The option of starting a business from a home allows an entrepreneur a low-cost opportunity to build a business to a point where it is successful enough to move to a commercial space. Most homes, however, are located in a residential district so home-based business activities are limited by current zoning regulations to avoid the encroachment of commercial activities into residential neighborhoods. Regulatory burdens should be reduced to further encourage these uses while not compromising the character of their surroundings.

##### **EXAMPLE AREAS:**

Browncroft, 19th Ward, Maplewood, Highland Park

##### **GEOGRAPHIC PATTERNS:**

The geographic relationship between Low and Medium Density Residential is both reflective of the desired pattern of restored density and somewhat concentric in nature. Low Density Residential areas generally fill the spaces beyond the Medium Density Residential Character Area that encircles downtown and in between the higher-density corridors.





**LOW  
DENSITY  
RESIDENTIAL**



## B. FUTURE LAND USE (CONTINUED)

### CHARACTER AREAS

#### ➤➤ LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (CONTINUED)

##### **DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS FOR ALL RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER AREAS:**

There are several core features that define the longstanding character of all residential neighborhoods that should be celebrated and preserved. Urban neighborhoods are unique because of unifying elements that provide a sense that residents belong to something bigger than themselves and their property. These pedestrian-scale elements include sidewalks, street trees, tree lawns, streetlights, front porches, and a relatively consistent, shallow setback of homes from the street.

Together, these features create a sense of spatial intimacy that makes walkable urban neighborhoods different from car-oriented neighborhoods. These features also act as a stabilizing and somewhat predictable visual rhythm of a neighborhood and encourage residents to take care and pride beyond their yards. They make Rochester's neighborhoods special while encouraging a strong sense of community.

These unifying elements should be encouraged in future construction and preserved in redevelopment and general maintenance. Specifically, converting front porches to enclosed rooms should continue to be prohibited, and the City should continue to discourage property owners from placing major visual obstructions like fences in front yards. However, regulations for all residential Character Areas should be more flexible so as to not necessarily require that new homes match existing traditional architectural styles, as long as they do not compromise the core features mentioned above.

Current code, regulations, and policies, namely the 5,000 square foot minimum lot size in the R-1 district and the "unbuildable lot" policy, are inconsistent with the current built form of the city and our desired restoration of urban vitality, density, and pedestrian scale design. When applied to infill development on large parcels, they prohibit subdivision into lots that match the typical lot sizes found throughout the city. These regulations and policies should be revised so as to encourage the continuation of scale and form that define Rochester's historic neighborhoods. Consideration should be given to removing the minimum lot size requirement or basing it on the average size of residential lots in the surrounding area, allowing for some percentage of variance.





## A CELEBRATION OF SIDEWALKS AND FRONT PORCHES

A consistent five-foot wide walkway is found along nearly every residential street in the city, encouraging people to walk for leisure, social, and practical reasons. Sidewalks not only connect all houses to their neighbors on a block, but are a human-scale, elaborate transportation network that links to nearly every home and business in Rochester. The presence of that network, which is largely decorated with tree lawns and street trees, is a major point of pride and unity for residents.

As well, the front porch serves as a transition zone between private and public space in support of the sidewalk commons. It is a design feature unique to North American residential architecture. It is so integral to urban and village living that the front porch is part of the Landmark Society of Western New York's 2017 *Five to Revive* list, which celebrates and advocates for the preservation of key community assets.



**LOW  
DENSITY  
RESIDENTIAL**



## B. FUTURE LAND USE (CONTINUED)

### CHARACTER AREAS

#### ➤ MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

##### RECOMMENDED PRIMARY USES:

One- to four-family homes allowed as-of-right, not subject to lost rights through abandonment. This Character Area will likely include more scattered non-residential non-conforming properties. The City should explore strategies for encouraging more four-family buildings and other small-scale, incremental development.

As with the Low Density Residential Character Area, built-as commercial buildings should be allowed the opportunity to be occupied with a low-intensity commercial use. New single-family home construction, such as scattered site infill projects, is most appropriate in Low and Medium Density Character Areas. Multi-family residential development (new construction or rehabilitation of historic buildings) should be focused in Medium and High Density Character Areas, as well as in all mixed-use areas.

##### EXAMPLE AREAS:

Park Ave (western portion of the neighborhood), South Wedge, Marketview Heights, Corn Hill, Monroe Village, Susan B. Anthony, Grove Place

##### GEOGRAPHIC PATTERN:

The geographic relationship between Low and Medium Density Residential is both reflective of the desired pattern of restored density and somewhat concentric in nature. Medium Density Residential areas should be clustered closer to downtown, forming a radial band that starts about a half mile from the city center and stretches between 1.25 to two miles from downtown. This reflects the historic built form of Rochester as these areas were generally developed prior to 1900 and reflect a city built around walking and relatively limited transit options. These areas are home to the majority of side streets adjacent to primary mixed-use corridors, heavily interspersed with older industrial and commercial buildings.

Beyond that radial band, they should also cover the non-mixed use segments of most proposed Reimagine RTS corridors. The distinction between Low Density and Medium Density Residential areas is also based on the location of a higher concentration of structures with three to four residential units.

##### DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:

See [Design Considerations for All Residential Character Areas](#).





**MEDIUM  
DENSITY  
RESIDENTIAL**



## B. FUTURE LAND USE (CONTINUED)

### CHARACTER AREAS

#### >> HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

##### RECOMMENDED PRIMARY USES:

Residential buildings of all sizes, especially those with five or more units, and some commercial and mixed-use structures. Multi-unit buildings include apartment complexes, large apartment buildings, and converted mansions. These areas tend to have an even higher concentration of scattered non-residential uses than Low and Medium Density Residential designations. Built-as commercial buildings located in this Character Area should be provided low-intensity commercial options as-of-right.

##### EXAMPLE AREAS:

Ellison Park Apartments, converted East Ave and Lake Ave mansions, high-density apartment complexes around Joseph/Clinton/Upper Falls.

##### GEOGRAPHIC PATTERN:

The High Density Residential Character Area, which has limited commercial uses compared to the mixed-use areas, should be close to Downtown along with a scattering of large apartment complexes and corridors of converted mansions. High density housing is present and further encouraged within all mixed-use designations, especially downtown.

It should be noted that not every apartment complex is designated as High Density Residential on The Placemaking Plan Map. As with the current zoning district map, this designation focuses on larger complexes, especially when there is a concentration of apartment buildings and multi-unit converted residences nearby. Also similar to the current zoning map, many apartment complexes are absorbed by Low Density or Medium Density Residential Character Areas, as they have a relatively small impact on the character of the larger area. As most apartment complexes were constructed after Rochester was fully built out but prior to the current zoning map, their distribution is scattered across the city.





**HIGH  
DENSITY  
RESIDENTIAL**



## B. FUTURE LAND USE (CONTINUED)

### CHARACTER AREAS

#### >> HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (CONTINUED)

##### DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:

See [Design Considerations for All Residential Character Areas](#). In addition, the following considerations should be applied to high density residential character areas.

Regulations for these areas should be more flexible so as to not necessarily require that they match existing traditional architectural styles. Current Zoning Code requirements relating to lot area should be revised to encourage more traditional urban forms and densities, including increasing the maximum lot coverage and adjusting minimum lot size requirements to allow for various arrangements of multiple units.

New apartment buildings or complexes should avoid suburban style, auto-oriented site designs. Development proposals often include at least one parking space per unit, reflective of developers, financiers, and the broader culture being conditioned to accept a car-centric built environment. However, there are many examples of apartment buildings within the city that have functioned for decades with less than one parking space per unit. Developers should demonstrate that they are designing first for pedestrians and the urban surroundings, not for vehicular access and storage.

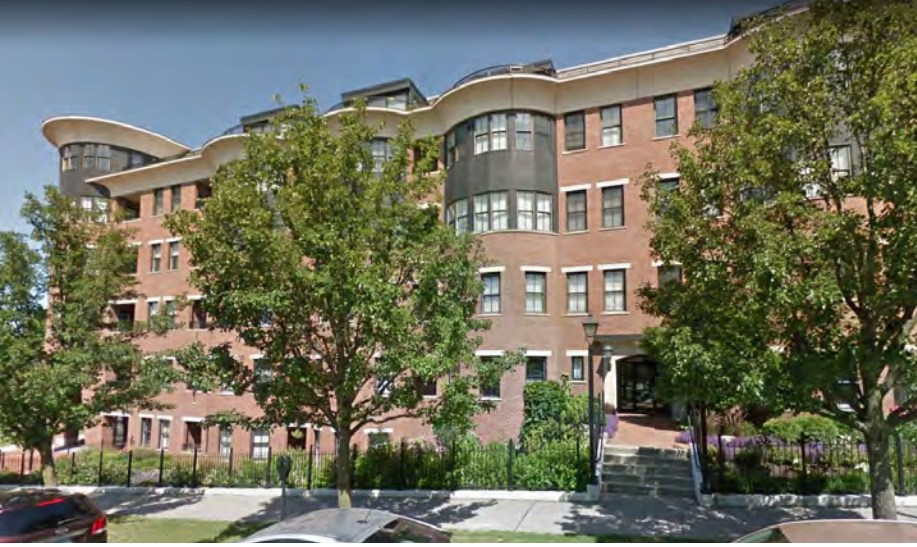
Rochester also has investment programs dedicated to multi-family, low- or mixed-income housing projects. The City should continue its progress in raising standards for architectural design, use of quality materials, pedestrian-oriented site design, and consistency with the historic built environment of cities. The nature of subsidized housing developments does not have to translate to substandard designs and materials.

Numerous examples in other cities demonstrate that through creativity and a commitment to quality, dignity and pride in design can be present despite the absence of market rate rents. As with market rate projects in other Character Areas, high-quality, pedestrian-scale architectural detailing and materials should be prioritized over the use of EIFS, vinyl, large fiber cement panels or similar large-scale, out-of-context techniques. The use of quality glass, brick, stone, and similarly fine-grained, pedestrian-scaled materials is especially important for first floor facades and if possible, all other highly visible portions of the building.

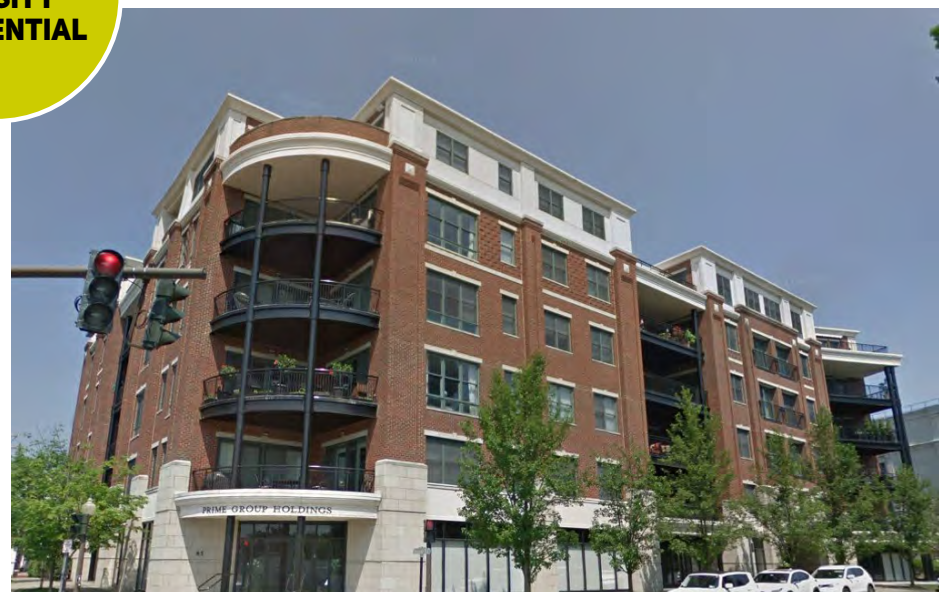
In addition, authentic and time-tested techniques to break up large building masses should be employed rather than seemingly random color/material changes disguised as a contemporary aesthetic. A significant part of desired urban building design is a strong attention to detail at corners, entryways, fenestrations, and cornice lines. This is a standard that is compatible across multiple architectural styles, not just traditional aesthetics.

Lastly, the above standards should be applied to market rate multi-family and mixed-use projects. Higher standards for design are not necessarily incompatible with a relatively weak real estate market. However, the community should expect that market conditions, along with evolving architectural tastes and practices, will not typically result in replicating traditional buildings of the 19th and early 20th Centuries.





**HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL**



## B. FUTURE LAND USE (CONTINUED)

### CHARACTER AREAS

#### >> BOUTIQUE MIXED-USE

##### RECOMMENDED PRIMARY USES:

Multi-family residential, residential uses when part of a mixed-use building, and commercial uses within spaces up to 3,000 square feet. Mixed-use buildings should be allowed to contain more than one 3,000 square foot space. These areas should have smaller lots and smaller mixed-use or commercial structures when compared to other mixed-use Character Areas. Commercial uses should have a relatively low impact on surrounding residential areas.

One consideration during the zoning code update would be to align the regulation of uses with the use and occupancy classification system of the NYS Building Code. Defining uses in terms of broad categories and occupancy would be more efficient from an administrative perspective and could also be more effective in addressing use limitations because the regulatory emphasis would be on occupancy rather than strictly on use.

For example, a small neighborhood bar that allows an occupancy of 35 people would have less impact on a neighborhood than a large bar where two hundred or more people could be gathering at any one time. Both bars are treated the same under current regulations. If the code were designed around occupancy rather than use, they would be regulated differently. This approach should be considered for all mixed-use Character Areas.

##### EXAMPLE AREAS:

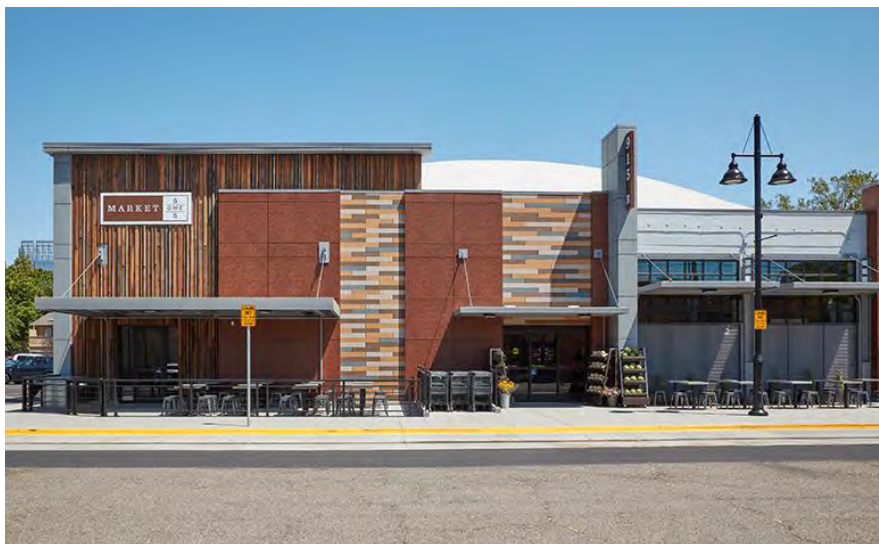
St. Paul and Norton, Arnett and Warwick, Park and Colby, Jay and Ames.

##### GEOGRAPHIC PATTERN:

Boutique Mixed-Use areas are small nodes of commercial activity centered on an intersection or two in residential areas. These areas are depicted as either a circle or oval on the map. The size of the circle or oval is not meant to propose a precise edge of a future zoning district, but rather is a relatively consistent graphic depiction to reinforce this Character Area being nodal in nature.

##### DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:

See [Design Considerations for All Mixed-Use Character Areas](#), and sidebar on [Building Heights in Mixed-Use Areas](#).





**BOUTIQUE  
MIXED-USE**



## 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 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.

In order to increase vibrancy in the city and provide greater flexibility for businesses, the City should revise regulations in all Mixed-Use, Commercial, and Industrial Character Areas to allow entertainment uses as-of-right. Potential neighborhood impacts from these uses are regulated by the Rochester Police Department through the entertainment license process and should not be regulated through the Zoning Code. 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 Berkley, 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 proposed *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.





**NEIGHBORHOOD  
MIXED-USE**



## B. FUTURE LAND USE (CONTINUED)

### CHARACTER AREAS

#### >> NEIGHBORHOOD MIXED-USE (CONTINUED)

##### **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. 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](#).

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 and development 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](#). Lastly, the city should revise certain [Parking Policies](#) and strategies in mixed-use areas, as outlined later in this Section.



**NEIGHBORHOOD  
MIXED-USE**



## B. FUTURE LAND USE (CONTINUED)

### CHARACTER AREAS

#### >> FLEXIBLE MIXED-USE

##### RECOMMENDED PRIMARY USES:

Commercial and mixed-use structures with no size restrictions, relatively low-impact production and industrial uses, and some higher density residential structures. This Character Area is meant to reflect the growing popularity of loft residences, unique businesses, artisanal crafts and production, and creative adaptive re-use of legacy industrial buildings of the late 19th and early 20th century. Building sizes vary significantly and include some higher density residential structures. 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:

Hungerford Building and Village Gate area, Lyell and Dewey area, Eastman Business Park (portion of master planned area), north side of University Ave east of Elton Street, University Ave Business Park, St. Paul and Upper Falls area, High Falls District, Vacuum Oil Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA).

##### GEOGRAPHIC PATTERN:

The buildings in this Character Area tend to be less organized along a corridor and are more of a district in shape. The areas tend to be clustered in a band around downtown and along the east side's primary railroad corridor. While the existing Center City Zoning District (CCD) extends well beyond the conventional Inner Loop boundary, the Flexible Mixed-Use designation recognizes that some areas outside of the Inner Loop have a different character than downtown, yet deserve the same use flexibility and high design standards of the CCD.







**FLEXIBLE  
MIXED-USE**



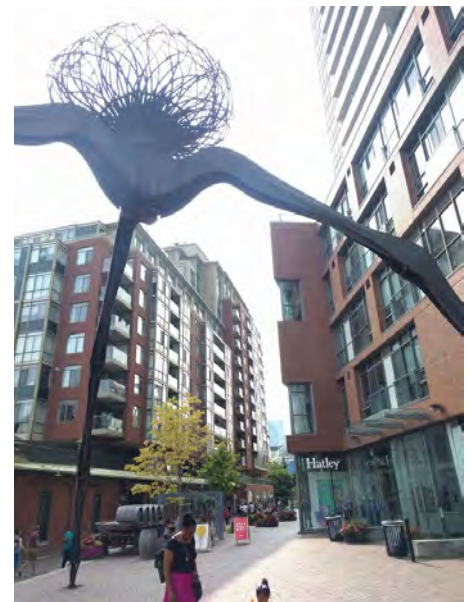
## B. FUTURE LAND USE (CONTINUED)

### CHARACTER AREAS

#### >> FLEXIBLE MIXED-USE (CONTINUED)

##### DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:

See [Design Considerations for All Mixed-Use Character Areas](#). Specific to the Flexible Mixed-Use designation, this Character Area recognizes that many urban industrial uses no longer have noxious impacts on their surroundings. These areas allow for production to continue with minimal neighborhood impacts or for these buildings to transition into non-industrial uses. Compared to other mixed-use Character Areas, transparency, building entrance, and materials requirements should be more reflective of the traditional late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial architecture which did not often have first floor storefronts.





FLEXIBLE  
MIXED-USE



## 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](#), 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.

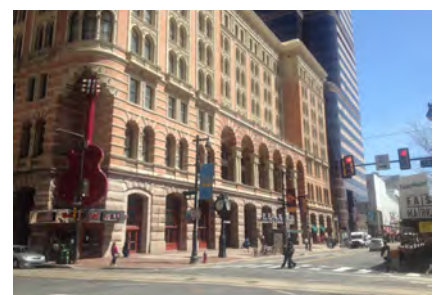
##### EXAMPLE AREAS:

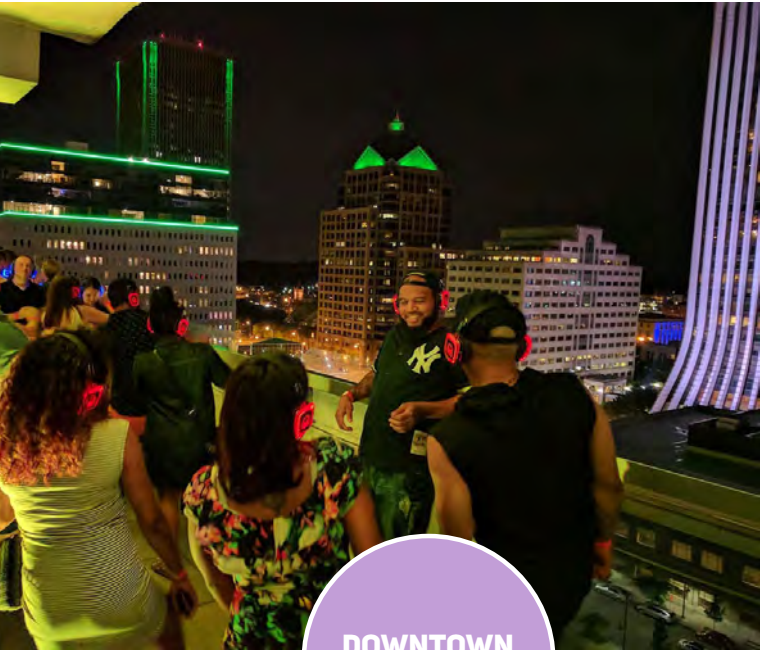
Downtown, including portions of the East End, Corn Hill, and High Falls.

##### 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

#### >> DOWNTOWN MIXED-USE (CONTINUED)

##### DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:

See [Design Considerations for All Mixed-Use Character Areas](#). 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 below 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.





**DOWNTOWN  
MIXED-USE**



## B. FUTURE LAND USE (CONTINUED)

### CHARACTER AREAS

#### >> REGIONAL COMMERCIAL

##### RECOMMENDED PRIMARY USES:

Mix of commercial, retail, and service uses with limited or no residential component. These areas are more auto-oriented than most other mixed-use or commercial areas of the city but should still retain strong pedestrian-oriented design features. These areas typically serve a market located well beyond adjacent neighborhoods.

##### EXAMPLE AREAS:

West Ridge Rd (west of Bernice), East Ridge Rd (east of Seneca Manor), Lyell Ave (west of Wetmore), Citygate.

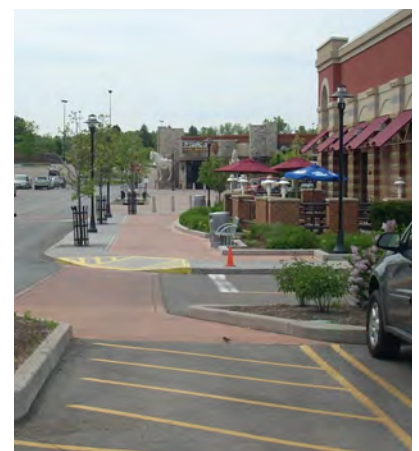
##### GEOGRAPHIC PATTERN:

While the City should limit auto-oriented uses and design as much as possible, this category recognizes that there are a few concentrations of these uses on major corridors that are highly unlikely to convert to a more pedestrian-oriented scale/form in the next 15 years. Whatever market materializes for traditional urban mixed-use development should be focused on the areas of the city where that form exists or can more easily be fostered.

##### DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:

More intentional design standards are needed to mitigate the auto-oriented nature of land uses, including restricting front yard parking. Shared parking facilities and cross access between privately owned parking facilities should be promoted whenever possible. 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, seating, transit stops, bicycle parking, and highly-visible crosswalks.

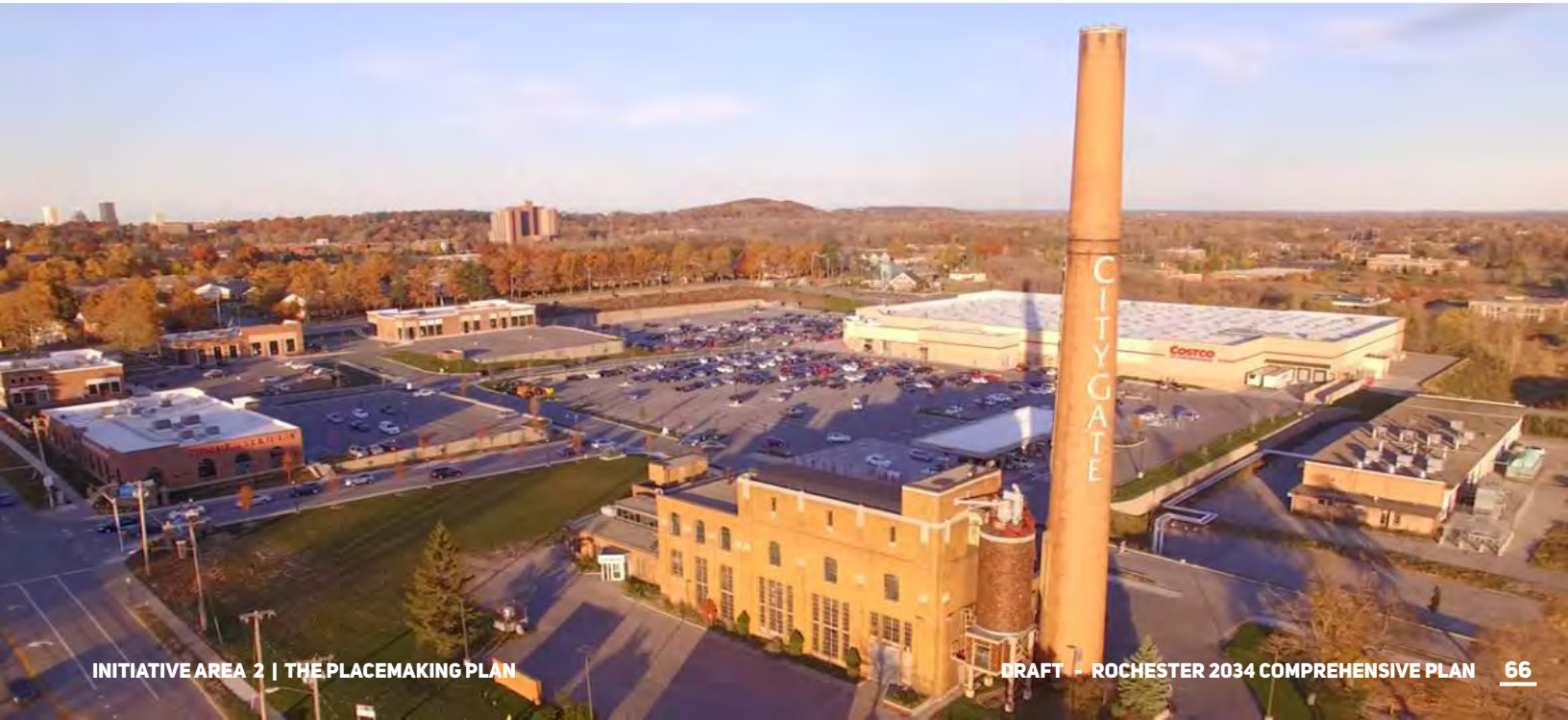
In order to improve the corridor's urban form and street presence, multi-story buildings are encouraged when feasible. Buildings should be attractively designed and should address the public realm on all visible sides. Urban-appropriate landscape and hardscape areas should be designed as integral features of the land use. In general, design elements related to architecture, landscaping, site plans, and signage should create an aesthetically appealing experience that is appropriate in scale and form and provides pedestrian connectivity internally and with surrounding land uses where feasible.







**REGIONAL  
COMMERCIAL**



## B. FUTURE LAND USE (CONTINUED)

### CHARACTER AREAS

#### >> INDUSTRIAL

##### RECOMMENDED PRIMARY USES:

Manufacturing and moderate to heavy production, warehousing/distribution, vehicle repair/storage, and other high-impact commercial uses with environmental/neighborhood nuisances that warrant substantial buffers from residential and natural areas.

The City should consider removing the current marketability provisions for allowing some commercial uses in the Industrial Character Area. With the introduction of the Flexible Mixed-Use concept, industrial areas should be more focused on manufacturing, production, warehousing, etc., while future non-industrial commercial uses should be encouraged in mixed use Character Areas.

##### EXAMPLE AREAS:

Mt. Read corridor, Buffalo Rd corridor, Erie Canal corridor west of the Genesee River, CSX railyard.

##### GEOGRAPHIC PATTERN:

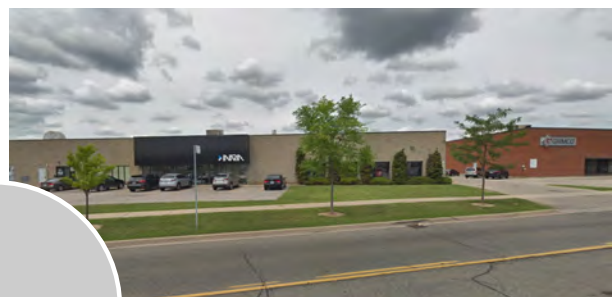
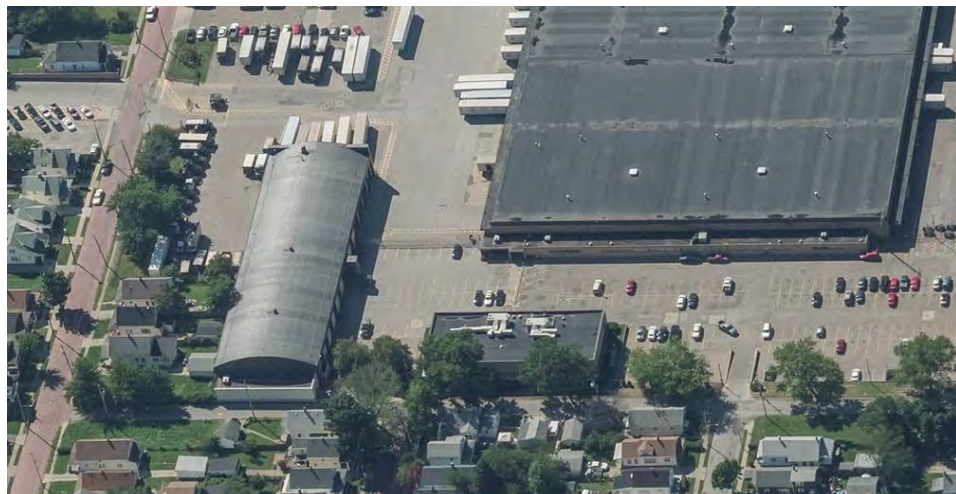
Some areas currently zoned M-1 are designated as [Flexible Mixed-Use](#) in The Placemaking Plan, recognizing the wide range of levels of impacts from former and current industrial/commercial sites and buildings. Other M-1 areas are designated as Industrial. An additional industrial/manufacturing distinction may be warranted during the zoning code update that reflects clusters of properties that have high environmental/neighborhood impacts but are already substantially buffered from residential neighborhoods. These areas should be considered for more relaxed site design requirements to encourage the viability of important employers and producers. This approach is consistent with the aforementioned “zoning for jobs” Goal of The Placemaking Plan.

As Rochester no longer has a substantial manufacturing base, and as those remaining operations have evolved, negative neighborhood impacts are often limited to heavy trucking operations such as at distribution centers or contractor yards. Whenever possible, these uses should be located in areas with quick access to major transportation routes, minimizing the amount of heavy traffic on collector and local routes through neighborhoods. The Placemaking Plan designates significant amounts of land to these uses, primarily on the west side along railroad lines and major corridors with limited residential properties. Examples include Mt. Read Boulevard and Lexington Ave west of the Edgerton neighborhood.

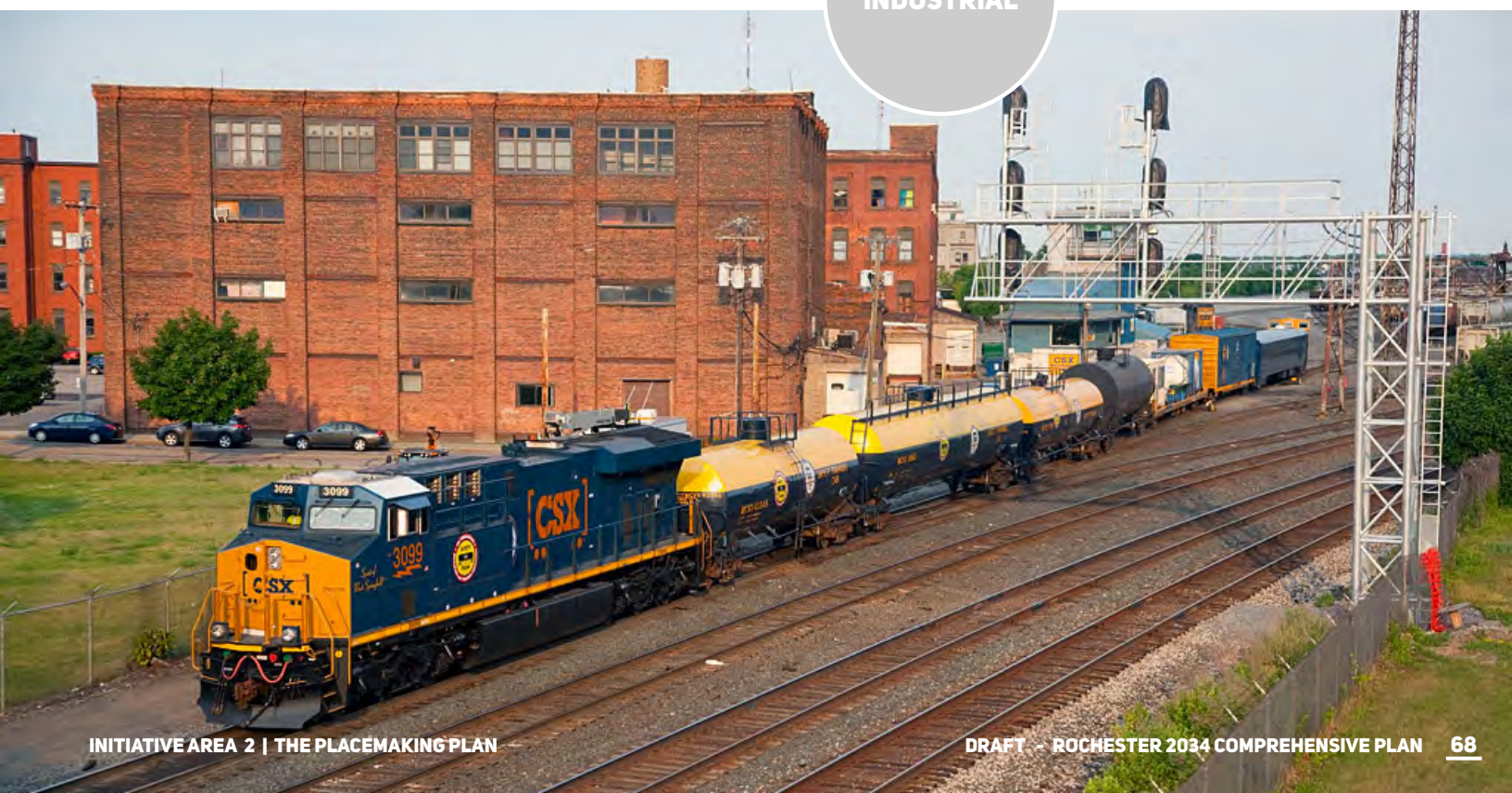
##### DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:

The Industrial Character Area should have less stringent design standards, recognizing the nature of the businesses and operations located in these areas. Operational noise, odors, heavy trucking, and visually unattractive sites are acknowledged as necessary characteristics for these important employers and producers to continue. However, careful screening and property maintenance should be enforced for all sides of a property adjacent to residential areas and street frontages.





INDUSTRIAL



## B. FUTURE LAND USE (CONTINUED)

### CHARACTER AREAS

#### >> INSTITUTIONAL CAMPUS

##### RECOMMENDED PRIMARY USES:

Large campuses and associated buildings/grounds for schools, museums, and other major institutions.

##### EXAMPLE AREAS:

University of Rochester, all hospitals, major school campuses, major museums.

##### GEOGRAPHIC PATTERN:

Not every major institution is identified in this category on the map. It is limited to those with large properties that are easily recognizable at a city-wide scale. These areas may not warrant their own zoning district in a future code update, aside from existing Planned Development (PD) Districts, but are important to recognize at this stage as different in character than their surroundings. Therefore, the difference between campuses identified in this Character Area and smaller campuses absorbed by other categories has no significance in terms of recommendations or regulations.

##### DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:

This Character Area is not necessarily recommended to be the basis for a future zoning district. Rather, individual campuses will remain PDs or be absorbed by an adjacent zoning district. In the case of the latter, properties will be subject to use and design regulations of that district.





**INSTITUTIONAL  
CAMPUS**

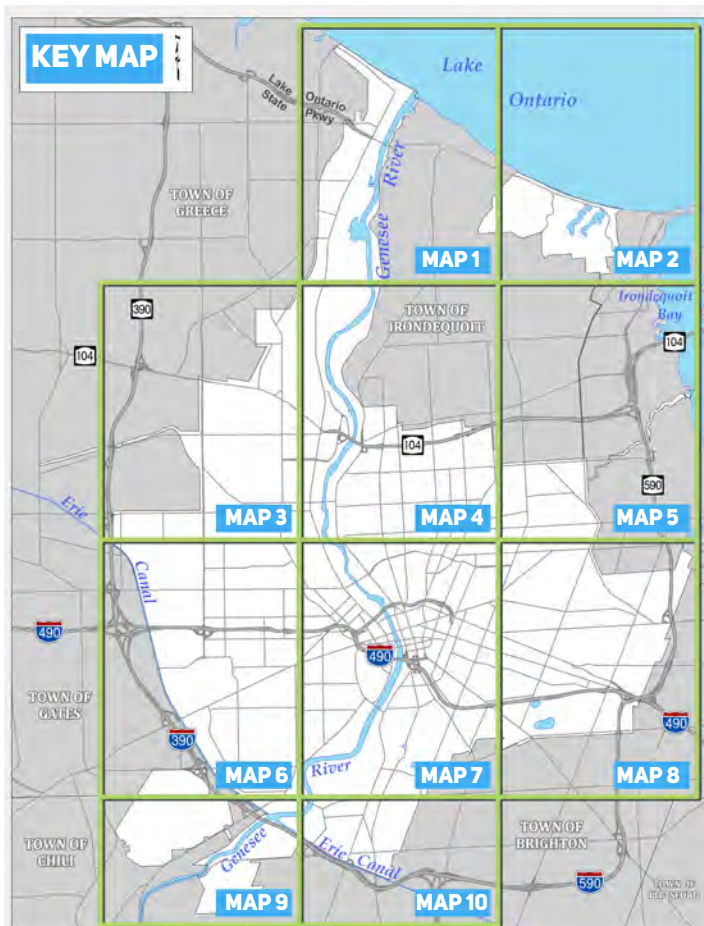


## B. FUTURE LAND USE (CONTINUED)

### PLACEMAKING PLAN MAP

The Placemaking Plan is illustrated in map form on the following pages. It includes all of the major elements that comprise placemaking, as illustrated in the Legend at right. The first map presents a city-wide perspective of Character Areas and the transportation network. This is followed by a series of 10 larger scale maps with greater detail, as shown on the Key Map below.

Other placemaking elements, such as improvements to river access and infrastructure, are depicted as points on the large scale maps, color-coded by type of recommendation. They are also numbered, corresponding with the list found on pages 81-88. Following the maps and associated list of recommendations, The Placemaking Plan Initiative Area continues with a more detailed discussion of these Other Placemaking Elements.



### PLACEMAKING ELEMENTS LEGEND

#### CHARACTER AREAS

- Parks + Open Space (page 39)
- Low Density Residential (page 41)
- Medium Density Residential (page 45)
- High Density Residential (page 46)
- Boutique Mixed-Use (page 51)
- Neighborhood Mixed-Use (page 53)
- Flexible Mixed-Use (page 57)
- Downtown Mixed-Use (page 61)
- Regional Commercial (page 65)
- Industrial (page 67)
- Institutional Campus (page 69)

#### MULTI-USE TRAILS + PROTECTED BIKE LANES (page 89)

- Existing Trails + Protected Lanes
- Existing Spur Trails + Park Paths
- Recommended Trails + Protected Lanes
- Recommended Spur Trails + Park Paths

#### DRAFT REIMAGINE RTS CORRIDORS (page 33)

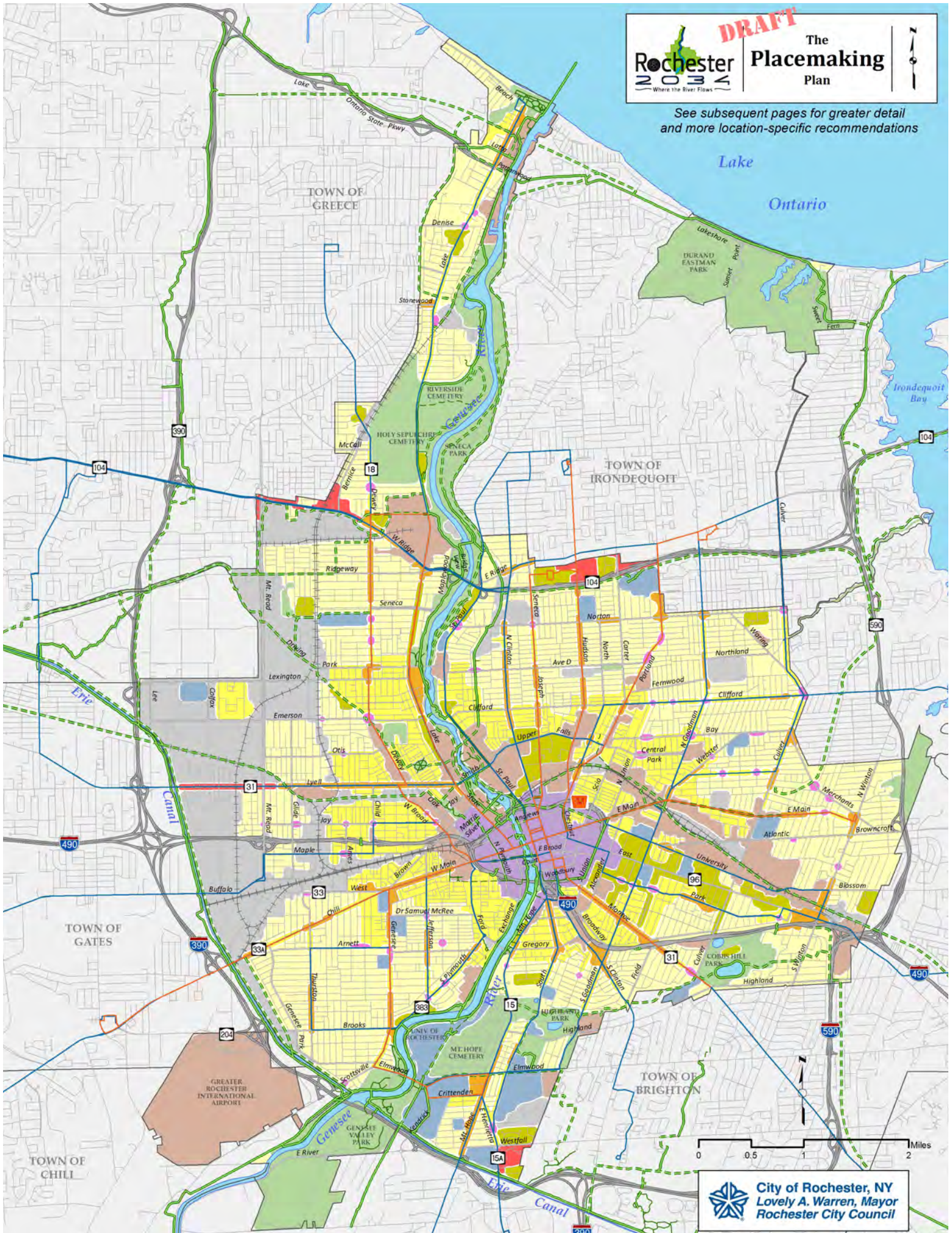
- Frequent
- Local

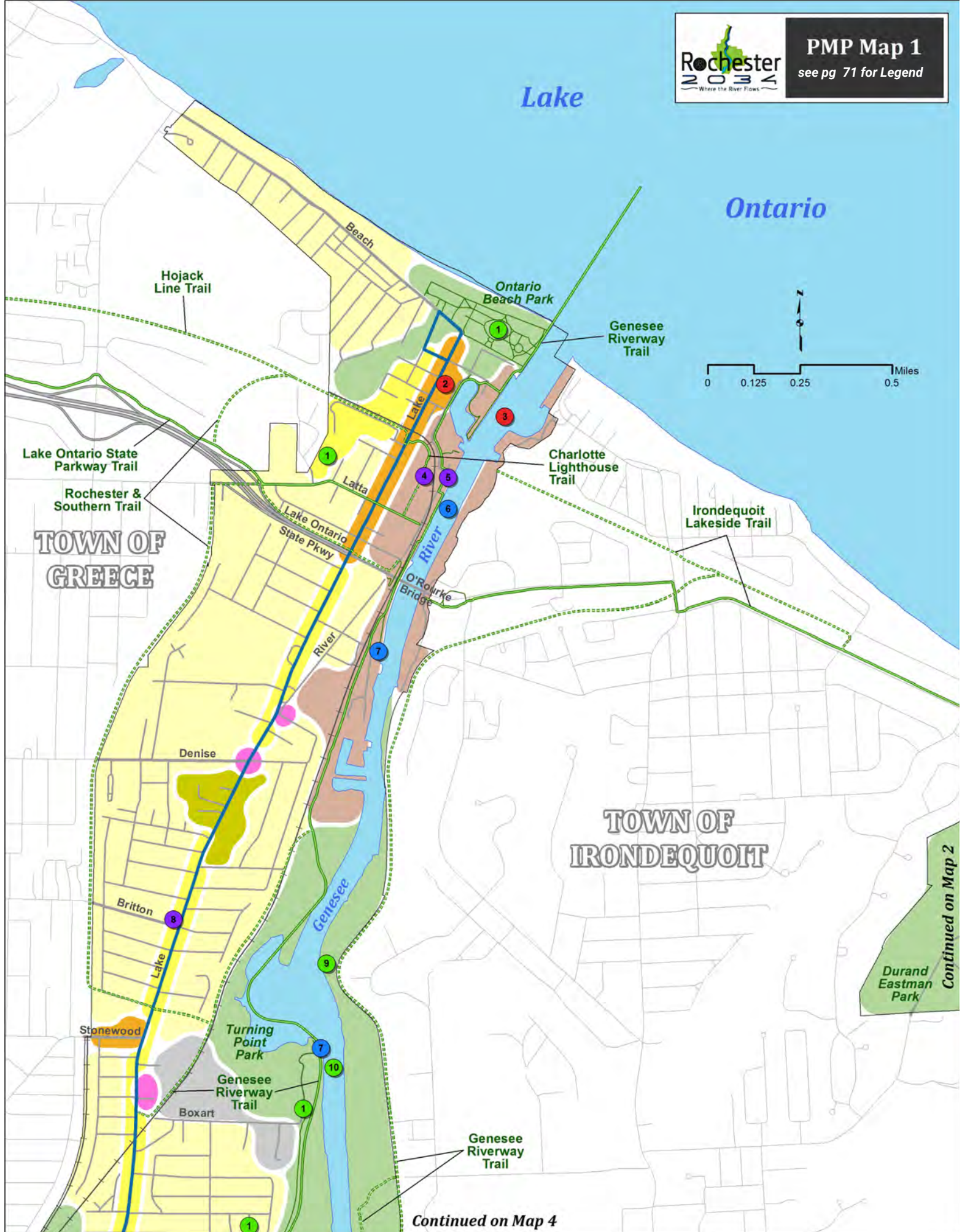
#### OTHER PLACEMAKING ELEMENTS\*

- Parks + Open Space (page 90)
- Community Facilities (page 91)
- River Access (page 92)
- Infrastructure + Streetscapes (page 93)
- Neighborhood Planning (page 94)

\* Maps 1-10 only; numbers correspond with table that follows maps

See subsequent pages for greater detail and more location-specific recommendations





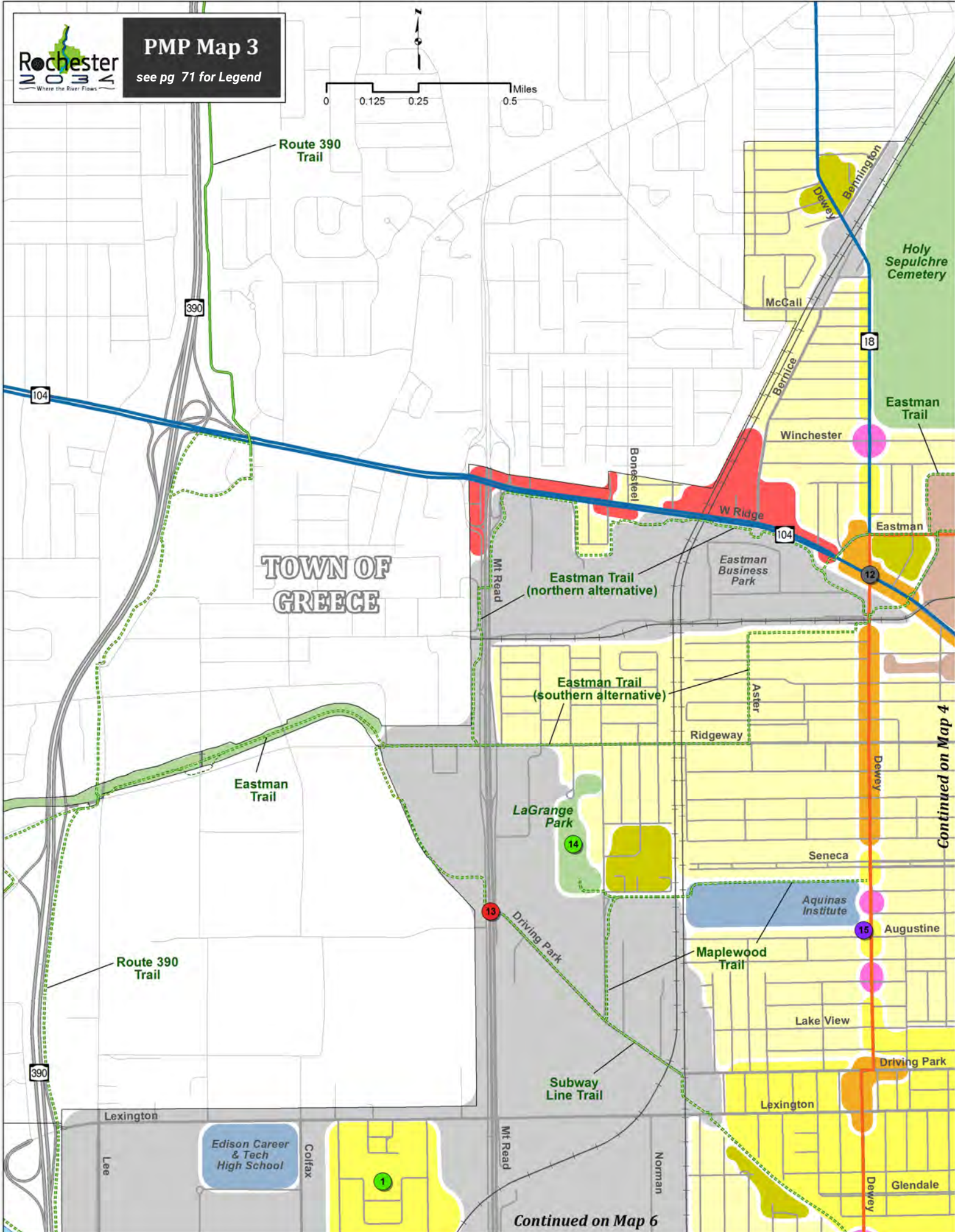
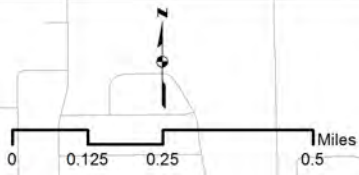
Continued on Map 4

Continued on Map 2



**PLACEMAKING IS THE ART AND SCIENCE OF SHAPING PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC FACILITIES, AND THE PUBLIC REALM INTO PLACES OF GREAT CHARACTER. IT IS A PEOPLE-CENTERED APPROACH TO ACTIVATING OUR COMMUNITIES AND CREATING VIBRANCY FOR ALL WALKS OF LIFE TO ENJOY.**

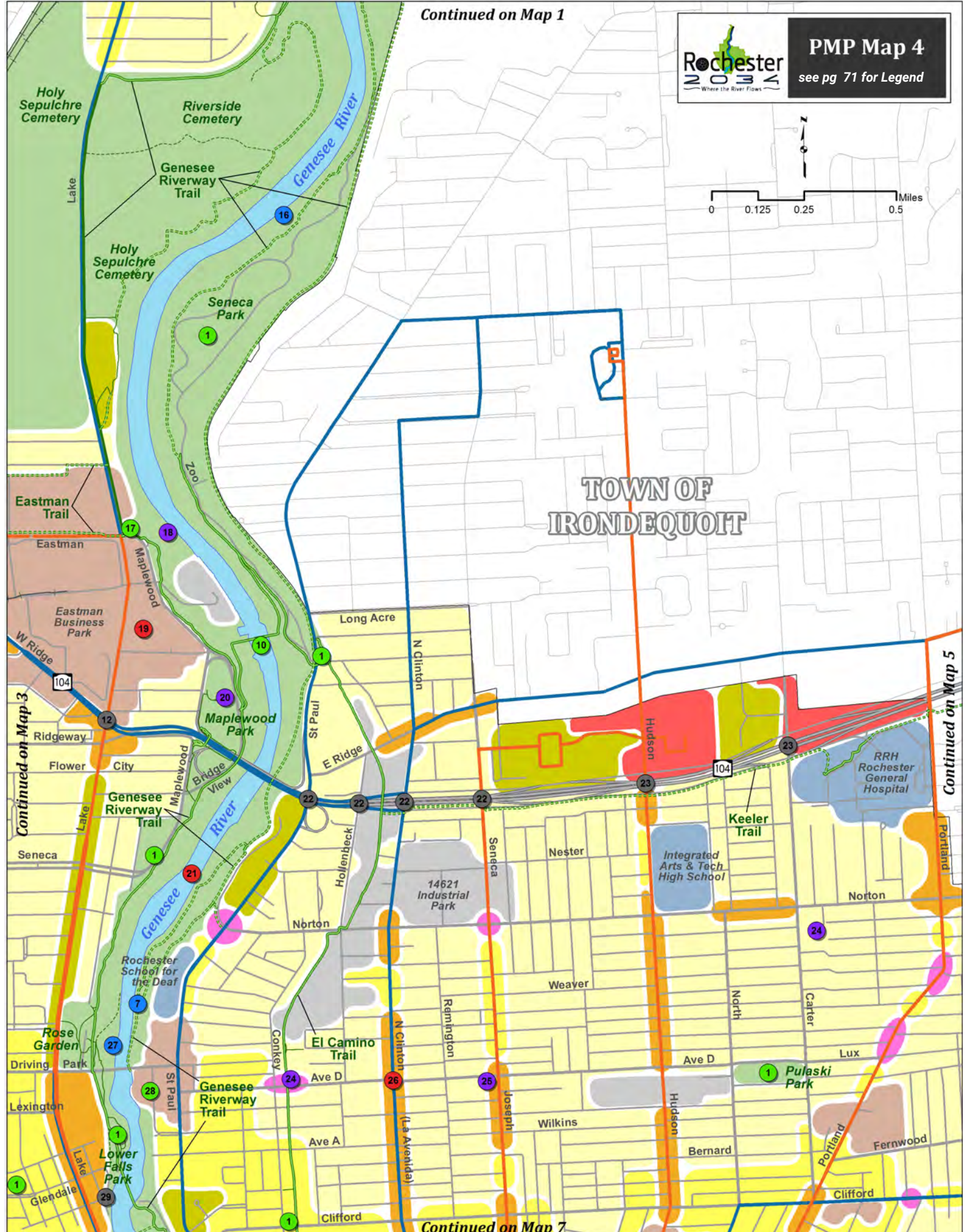




Continued on Map 1



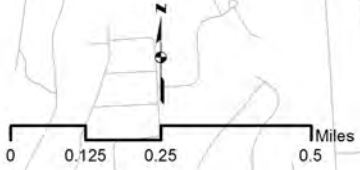
**PMP Map 4**  
see pg 71 for Legend



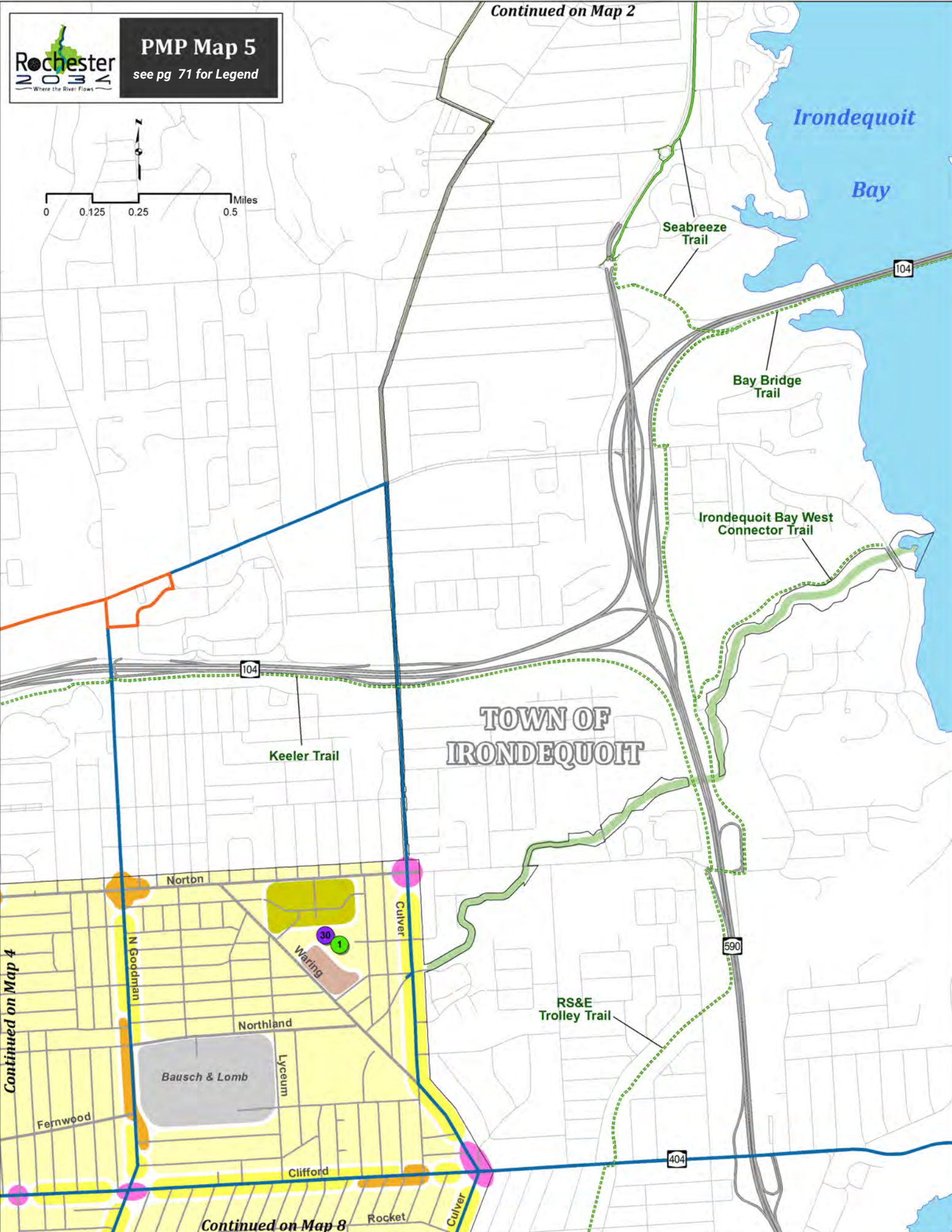
Continued on Map 3

Continued on Map 5

Continued on Map 7

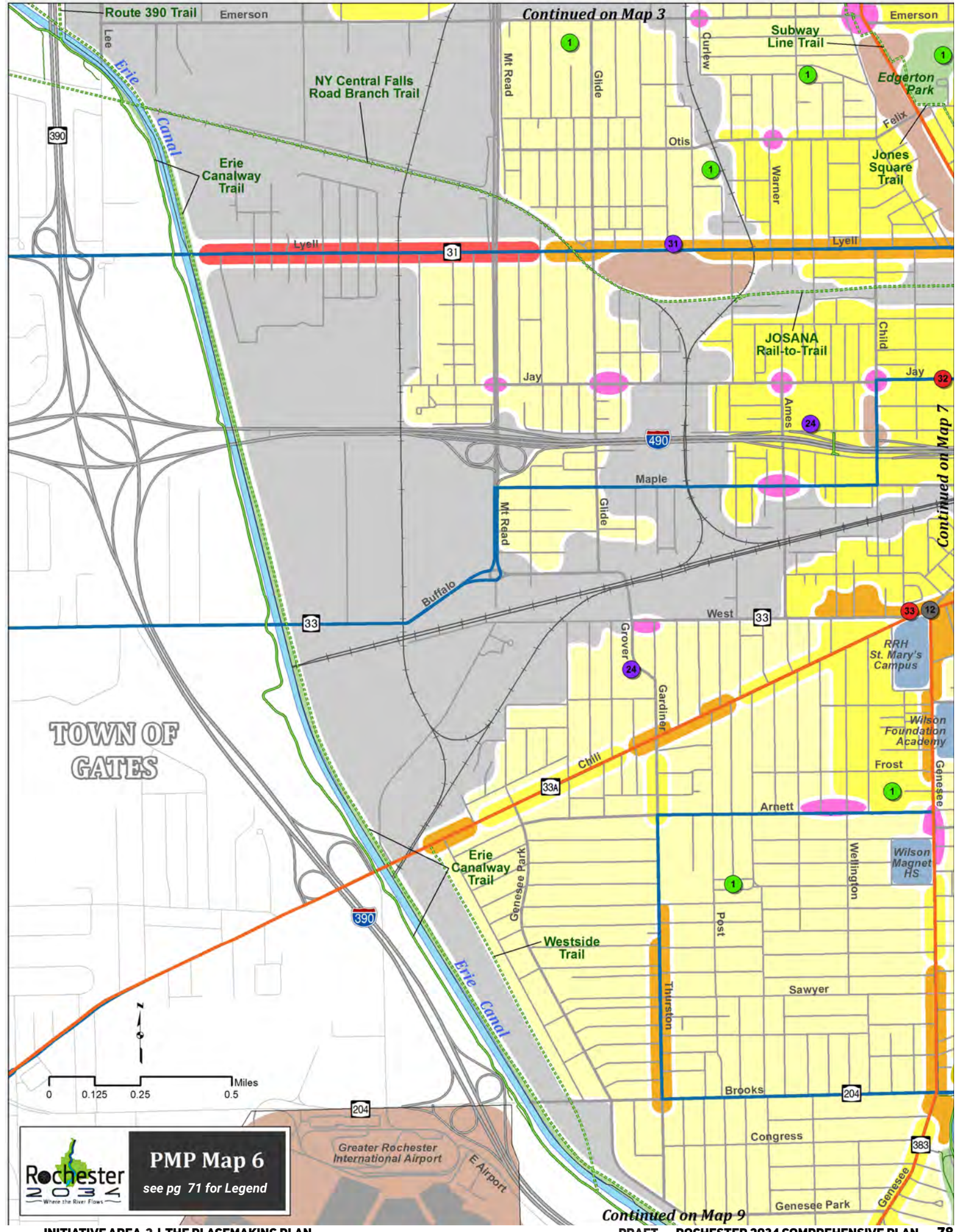


Continued on Map 2



Continued on Map 4

Continued on Map 8

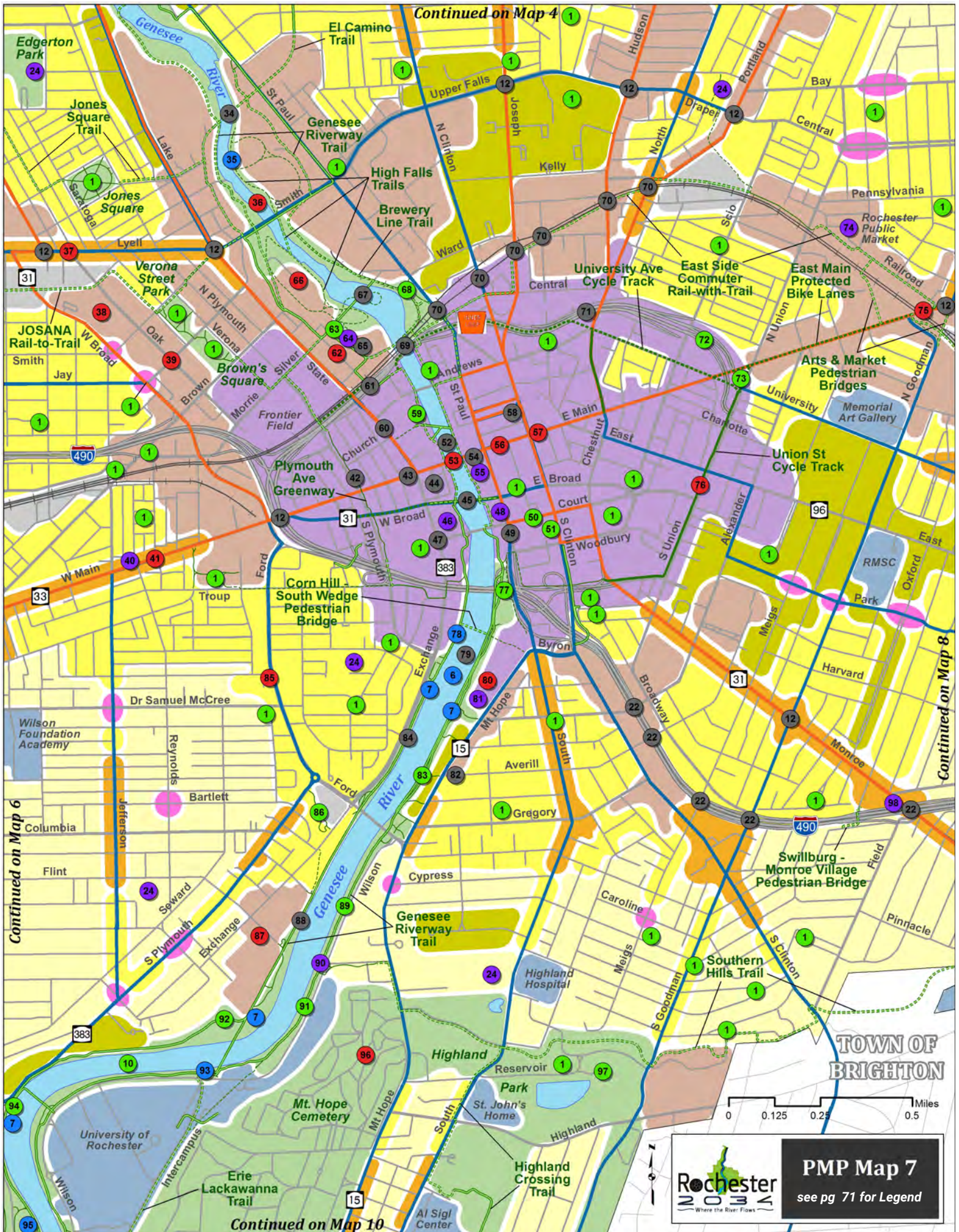


Continued on Map 3

Continued on Map 7

Continued on Map 9

**PMP Map 6**  
see pg 71 for Legend



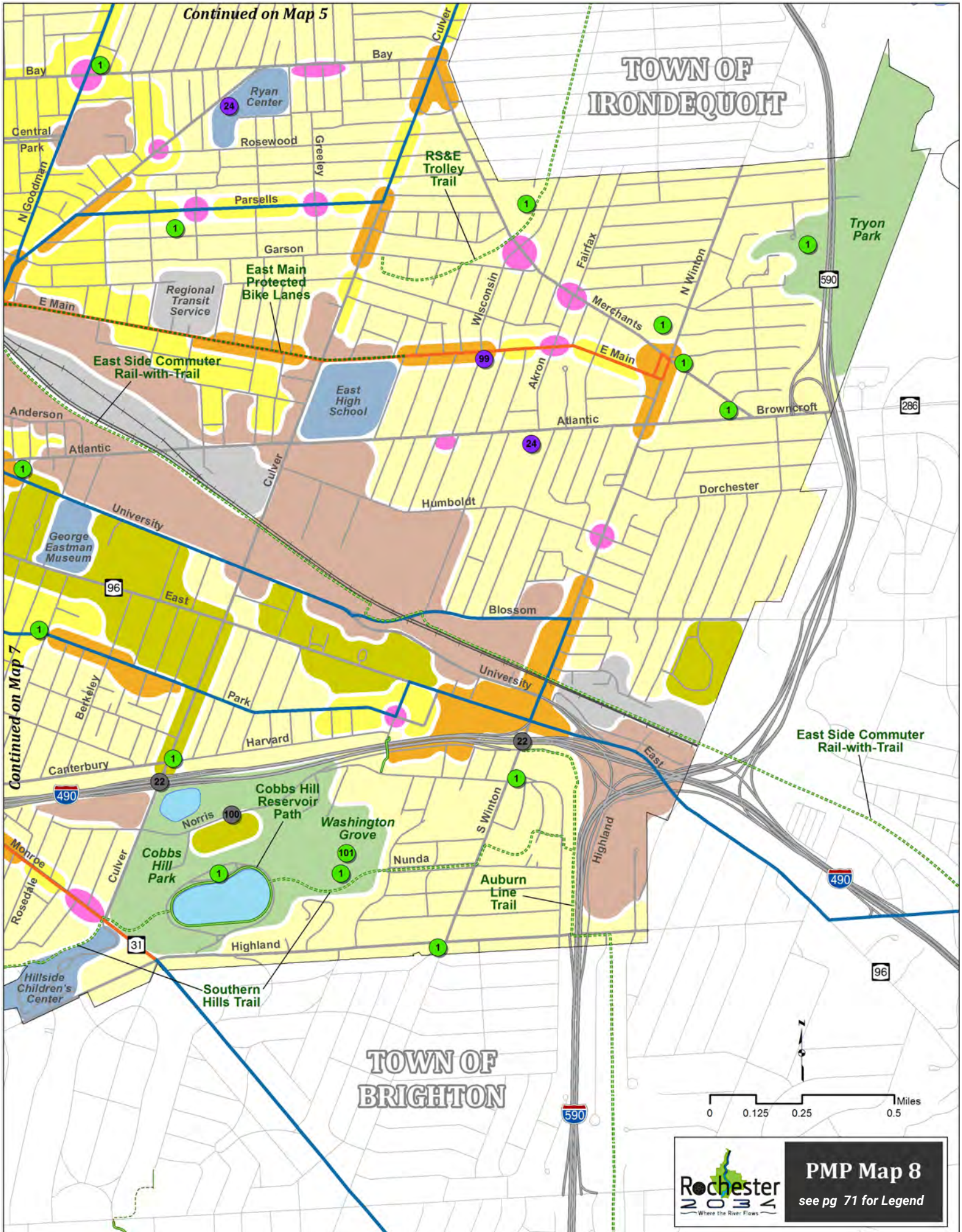
**Rochester**  
Where the River Flows

**PMP Map 7**  
see pg 71 for Legend

Continued on Map 5

# TOWN OF IRONDEQUOTT

# TOWN OF BRIGHTON

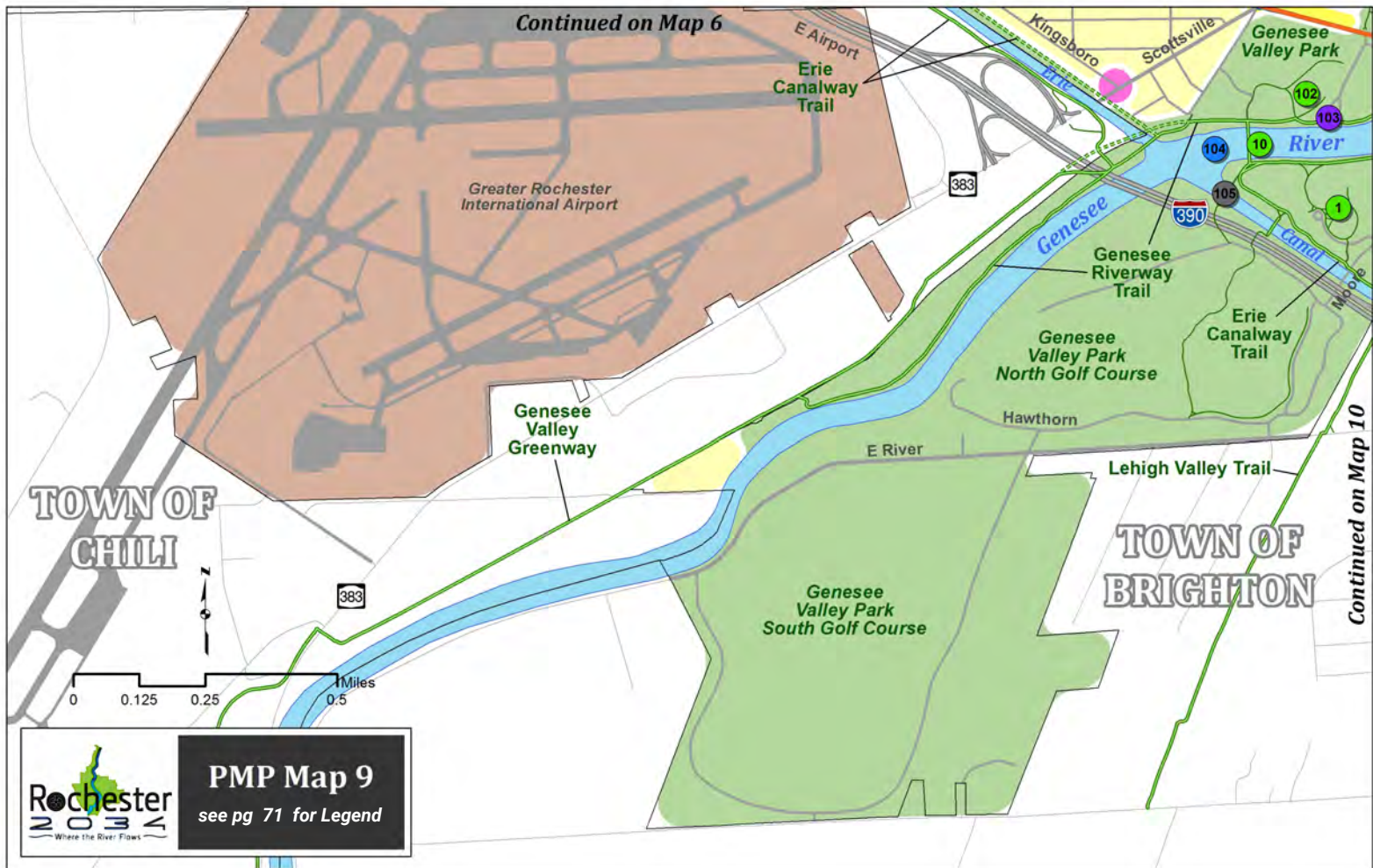


Continued on Map 7

East Side Commuter Rail-with-Trail




**PMP Map 8**  
see pg 71 for Legend



## OTHER PLACEMAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

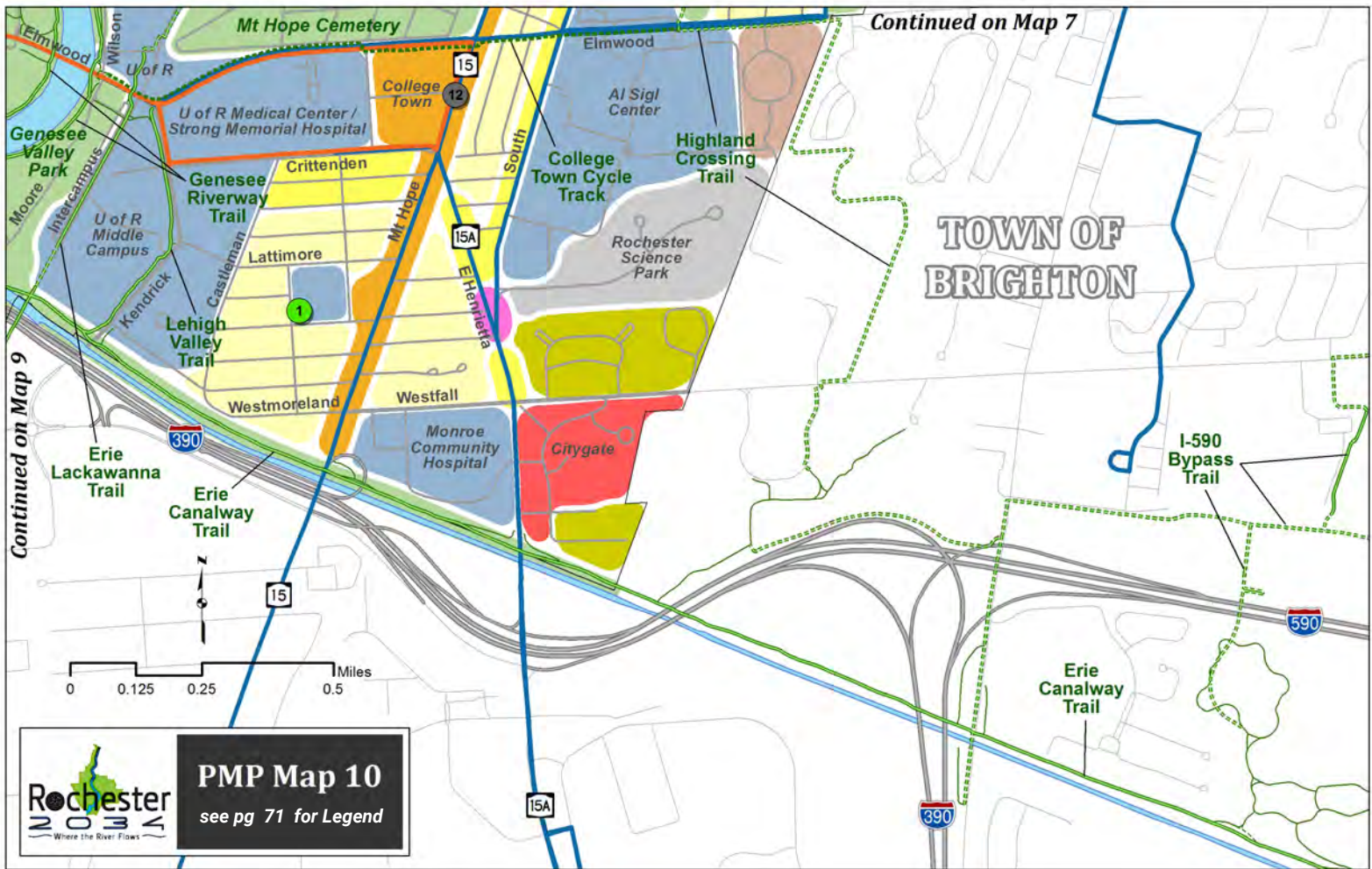
A variety of location-specific recommendations are listed below and shown on Maps 1-10. Together with the other placemaking elements outlined in this Initiative Area, they will contribute to a sense of place and improve the quality of life in neighborhoods throughout the city.

### # OTHER PLACEMAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 As part of a city-wide parks and recreation master plan, develop a park-specific plan to maintain and/or enhance this park.\*
- 2 Continue to develop the Port of Rochester as a local and regional destination.
- 3 Continue to implement recommendations of the Port of Rochester Harbor Management Plan.
- 4 Continue enhancements to the Charlotte-Genesee Lighthouse including historic restoration of the building and site as well as connections to the Genesee Riverway Trail.
- 5 Establish a fire station / boat house to serve the Lake Ontario shore, Port of Charlotte, and points south, complete with sheltered and secured boat storage and lift equipment to allow for faster response times. Such a facility could be shared by the NYSDEC, Homeland Security, US Coast Guard, and the RFD, as each of those agencies serve the area and have needs beyond their current facilities.

\*This recommendation can be found in multiple locations throughout Maps 1-10.





## KEY

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <span style="color: green;">#</span> Parks + Open Space    | <span style="color: grey;">#</span> Infrastructure + Streetscapes |
| <span style="color: purple;">#</span> Community Facilities | <span style="color: red;">#</span> Neighborhood Planning          |
| <span style="color: blue;">#</span> River Access           |   |

### # OTHER PLACEMAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6 Identify a continuous and sustainable funding mechanism to dredge sediment from the river that interferes with and prevents certain boating activity; work with regional partners to increase collaboration and accountability with municipalities to the south that contribute to excessive runoff in the river.\*
- 7 Develop or enhance car top boat launch/landings for canoes, kayaks, etc. with connections to the Genesee Riverway Trail.\*
- 8 Per the Rochester Public Library Branch Facilities and Operations Master Plan, upgrade the Charlotte branch to serve as a community and senior hub. Include improved ADA access to parking and building facilities, a redesign of the interior of the building, expanded technology, and new workout equipment. Explore opportunities to efficiently consolidate space or co-locate/relocate the facility.
- 9 In collaboration with NY State and the Town of Irondequoit, support creation of a State Park at Rattlesnake Point.

\*This recommendation can be found in multiple locations throughout Maps 1-10.

## B. FUTURE LAND USE (CONTINUED)

### OTHER PLACEMAKING RECOMMENDATIONS CONTINUED

#### # OTHER PLACEMAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10 Throughout the river's parks and public spaces, develop a unifying landscape design aesthetic to yield a corridor-long living outdoor museum -- a Genesee Botanical Gardens -- that celebrates the region's natural history; a unified destination creates a funding and patron draw greater than the individual components would on their own.\*
- 11 Advance the concept of a bath house for the Durand Beach area, as well as other needed improvements to the Durand Eastman Park lakefront.
- 12 Consistent with Reimagine RTS and the Transit Supportive Corridors Study, establish a Transfer Point at this convergence of RTS routes, complete with amenities such as covered shelters, robust system displays, bicycle parking, and potentially fare vending equipment.\*
- 13 Implement the various recommendations of the Mt. Read Boulevard Corridor Study.
- 14 Redevelop LaGrange Park including ball field reorganization and enhancement, property acquisition for expansion, and overall park improvements.
- 15 Per the Rochester Public Library Branch Facilities and Operations Master Plan, upgrade the Maplewood branch to serve as an immigrant and refugee service hub. Include new and expanded programming, redesigned interior space, and expanded parking opportunities. Explore options to expand, co-locate relocate the facility.
- 16 Develop a car top boat launch/landing for canoes, kayaks, etc. somewhere in Seneca Park.
- 17 Identify strategies for preserving and enhancing the historic King's Landing Cemetery.
- 18 Establish a fire station and boat house in the King's Landing area of the river. This facility would include sheltered and secured boat storage and lift equipment to allow for faster response times.
- 19 Continue to partner with Eastman Business Park on implementation of their master plan. The City's land use, mobility, public access to the river, and other placemaking objectives should be incorporated into the plan.
- 20 Develop a river-oriented nature center at the Maplewood Training Center site in Maplewood Park. The center could be part of a larger network of river and urban ecology-oriented facilities along the Genesee.
- 21 Implement stormwater, forest management, riparian habitat, scenic resource management, and restoration projects throughout the corridor.
- 22 Improve pedestrian/bicycle experience across the bridge, including safer connections and beautification.\*
- 23 Improve pedestrian/bicycle experience under the bridge, including safer connections and beautification.\*
- 24 As part of a city-wide parks and recreation master plan, develop a specific plan to maintain and/or enhance this rec center.\*
- 25 Per the Rochester Public Library Branch Facilities and Operations Master Plan, upgrade the Lincoln branch to better serve as a flexible opportunity space. Include a full interior renovation, improved wayfinding and signage, expanded resources for social services and health/wellness staff, and improved connections to the toy library.

\*This recommendation can be found in multiple locations throughout Maps 1-10.

# KEY



Parks + Open Space



Community Facilities



River Access



Infrastructure + Streetscapes



Neighborhood Planning

## # OTHER PLACEMAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

26

Implement the recommendations of the 14621 Brownfield Opportunity Area Revitalization Strategy.

27

Develop a car top boat launch/landing for canoes, kayaks, etc. somewhere in Maplewood Park.

28

Reclaim and enhance parkland along Carthage Drive.

29

Identify alternatives for creating bicycle connections, whether on or off street, linking existing and recommended segments of the Genesee Riverway Trail and providing a safe alternative to current conditions on Lake Ave.

30

Upgrade and enhance rec center building, athletic fields, and other amenities.

31

Per the Rochester Public Library Branch Facilities and Operations Master Plan, upgrade the Lyell branch to serve as a job training hub. Include improved technology, expanded programming, and a redesigned building interior. Explore potential relocation of the facility, or converting the library to a mobile service center.

32

Implement the recommendations of the JOSANA Neighborhood Master Plan.

33

Implement the recommendations of the Bull's Head Urban Renewal Plan.

34

Per the ROC the Riverway initiative, rehab the former Running Track rail bridge as a multi-use trail including connections to the Genesee Riverway Trail, El Camino Trail, Lake Ave (via an enhanced Ambrose St), and Smith St (via an enhanced Cliff St).

35

Identify location(s) for installing a cartop boat launch/landing for canoes, kayaks, etc. between High Falls and Lower Falls.

36

Develop and implement a plan for the gorge area from High Falls to Lower Falls, including parks and recreation opportunities, improved water access, green energy demonstration projects, and supportive private development on adjacent sites.

37

Implement the recommendations of the LYLAKS Brownfield Opportunity Area Master Plan.

38

Conduct a study for reuse of the soccer stadium.

39

Implement the recommendations of the Browns Square Circulation, Accessibility, & Parking Study.

40

Support the implementation of the Susan B. Anthony House 2018 Strategic Plan, including the establishment of a Visitors Center.

41

Implement the various recommendations of the Susan B. Anthony Neighborhood Circulation, Accessibility, & Parking Study.

42

Upgrade Plymouth Ave Greenway to comply with design standards for a cycle track.

43

Continue ongoing Main Street streetscape enhancements to complete the corridor between Broad St and Chestnut St.

44

Per the ROC the Riverway initiative, construct and enhance Aqueduct St and adjacent streets at historic Child's Basin to complement nearby improvements to Main Street and the Broad St / aqueduct corridor.

45

Remove the upper deck of the Broad Street Bridge; establish a dynamic public space along the former aqueduct as a centerpiece of the ROC the Riverway initiative, connecting to new plazas and riverfront promenades adjacent to the bridge.

## B. FUTURE LAND USE (CONTINUED)

### OTHER PLACEMAKING RECOMMENDATIONS CONTINUED

#### # OTHER PLACEMAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

- 
- 46 Per the ROC the Riverway initiative, continue to upgrade and enhance the Blue Cross Arena and its streetside and riverfront presence, making it an integral part of the riverfront promenade and other ROC the Riverway projects.
- 
- 47 Per the ROC the Riverway initiative, realign the Court St / Exchange Blvd intersection to accommodate future development of the Court/Exchange site to the south while improving staging and loading capabilities at the Blue Cross Arena.
- 
- 48 Per the ROC the Riverway initiative, continue to design and implement solutions for Rundel Library's north and south terraces, repairing/replacing critical underground infrastructure while developing dynamic public spaces adjacent to the building and river.
- 
- 49 Continue to implement the Center City Two-Way Conversion Project on various downtown streets to reduce speeds, enhance street-level pedestrian activity, enhance pedestrian/bicycle connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods, and make the area easier to navigate.
- 
- 50 Develop Play Walk -- a playful sidewalk with public art and interactive installations, connecting The Strong National Museum of Play expansion with the ROC the Riverway initiative, as well as Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, Washington Square Park, and the Rundel Library.
- 
- 51 Implement the recommendations of the Washington Square Park Charrette, enhancing this downtown park.
- 
- 52 Per the ROC the Riverway initiative, continue to extend the downtown portion of the Genesee Riverway Trail on both sides of the river as a promenade providing greater access and dynamic public spaces along the riverfront.
- 
- 53 Per the ROC the Riverway initiative, partner with NY State and local stakeholders to establish a downtown/riverfront management entity -- an organization focused on downtown and the central river corridor; explore combinations of models in other cities such as Business Improvement Districts, Local Development Corporations, and Downtown Partnerships.
- 
- 54 Identify location(s) for food and retail-based businesses to operate in pop-up, temporary, or low-cost structures such as re-purposed shipping containers; a cluster of these operations could encourage entrepreneurs to launch their product and it could create a pipeline of viable businesses to fill vacant commercial spaces throughout the city.
- 
- 55 Per the ROC the Riverway initiative, continue to upgrade, enhance, and expand the Joseph A. Floreano Riverside Convention Center and terrace, including building on the concept of a "convention district" where facilities and amenities are provided in other buildings and spaces in the area.
- 
- 56 Continue to encourage and invest in the revitalization of highly visible Main Street properties to rehabilitate dilapidated buildings and activate first floor spaces. Buildings such as the Riverside Convention Center, Riverside Hotel, and The Metropolitan should identify opportunities to activate their Main Street frontage.
- 
- 57 Support the "Music on Main" effort led by Eastman School of Music to engage downtown stakeholders on strategies for activating key downtown corridors and spaces with music, art, and other programming.
-

# KEY



Parks + Open Space



Community Facilities



River Access



Infrastructure + Streetscapes



Neighborhood Planning

## # OTHER PLACEMAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

58

Work with the Mortimer Street Garage operator to convert a portion of the garage into an improved extension of the Transit Center focusing on connections to non-fixed route mobility services.

59

Per the ROC the Riverway initiative, redevelop Charles Carroll Plaza, shoring up the parking garage structure underneath the park and creating a focal point along the downtown riverfront.

60

Redesign the State and Exchange corridor streetscape, enhancing the pedestrian and bicycle environment and attracting private investment on adjacent properties.

61

Widen Mill Street Pedestrian Tunnel; improve lighting and other bicycle/pedestrian features to encourage linkage between Downtown and High Falls.

62

Continue to support Greentopia's EcoDistrict Plan to promote green infrastructure and economic, social, and environmental equity.

63

Per Greentopia's conceptual plan, redevelop Granite Mills Commons to feature better plantings, seating, plaza surfaces, and amplification for performances.

64

Reestablish a visitors/interpretive center in the Brown's Race area.

65

Identify location for public elevator access to gorge bottom to complement multi-use trail access.

66

Improve pedestrian and recreational amenities in the gorge through implementation of recommendations in the High Falls Pedestrian Access Improvement Study and ROC the Riverway Vision Plan.

67

Per the ROC the Riverway initiative, perform structural repairs to the Pont de Rennes Bridge and enhance the public space along the bridge and at the eastern and western approaches.

68

Per the ROC the Riverway initiative, continue to make upgrades and enhancements to High Falls Terrace Park, including new amenities, establishing the Brewery Line Trail and connecting paths, public art, and studying the feasibility of creating a High Falls Overlook.

69

Identify long-term design solutions for providing pedestrian/bicycle access that overcome the Inner Loop and CSX Railroad bridge barriers, building on the short-term solutions of the ROC the Riverway initiative and utilizing the Inner Loop North scoping study.

70

Identify opportunities to improve this railroad underpass through lighting improvements, stormwater management, and bicycle and pedestrian enhancements.\*

71

Following the success of the Inner Loop East project, complete a scoping study and implement the preferred alternative for the reuse of the Inner Loop North corridor that divides downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.

72

Identify opportunities for establishing ball fields and other athletic facilities to serve School #58 as part of the Inner Loop North project.

73

As part of the Inner Loop North project, expand and enhance historic Anderson Park to its pre-Inner Loop footprint.

74

Continue to implement the Public Market Improvement Project, including development of a state-of-the-art nutrition center and demonstration kitchen, as well as other facilities.

\*This recommendation can be found in multiple locations throughout Maps 1-10.

## B. FUTURE LAND USE (CONTINUED)

### OTHER PLACEMAKING RECOMMENDATIONS CONTINUED

#### # OTHER PLACEMAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

75	Continue implementation of recommendations in the East Main Arts & Market Study, improving bicycle and pedestrian linkages along and across East Main St and the CSX railroad tracks.
76	Continue mixed-use development on lands of the former Inner Loop, including creation of a "Neighborhood of Play" centered around The Strong National Museum of Play's expansion.
77	Per the ROC the Riverway initiative, develop the Roc City Skatepark with full integration into the Genesee Riverway Trail system and other ROC the Riverway projects; pursue parking arrangements with adjacent landowners.
78	Per the ROC the Riverway initiative, continue to support Corn Hill Navigation's campaign to purchase a new tour boat and return excursions and educational programming to the Genesee River.
79	Identify opportunities for water taxi service connecting various points in the South River Corridor, including connections south to RIT.
80	Work with private landowners along the east side of the Genesee River south of downtown to identify water-oriented redevelopment opportunities.
81	Continue to partner with local institutions such as Rochester Institute of Technology, St. John Fisher, and the Seneca Park Zoo to identify a site for establishing an urban ecology center. The center's facilities and programming would be designed to complement similar nature/river-oriented centers proposed for the river corridor.
82	Enhance the bike/ped environment on Gregory, Hickory, Averill, Hamilton, & Alexander & across Mt Hope through improved signage, street/sidewalk conditions, crosswalks, & bicycle pavement markings.
83	Per the ROC the Riverway initiative, continue to implement recommendations of the 2011 and 2018 Genesee Gateway Park (Erie Harbor) master plans.
84	Implement Phase I of the West River Wall project, establishing a healthier and more dynamic relationship between the river and Corn Hill neighborhood.
85	Develop and implement a plan for expanding the Rochester Heritage Trail, including potential sites/ areas such as the Genesee Valley Canal, Corn Hill, South Plymouth Ave, East Ave Historic District, Grove Place, Mt Hope Cemetery, High Falls, and other areas as identified.
86	Redevelop the Exchange Street Playground according to past master planning efforts, with a focus on connecting the park to the Genesee Riverway Trail.
87	Implement the various recommendations of the Vacuum Oil Brownfield Opportunity Area 2035 Vision Plan.
88	Implement Phase II of the West River Wall project, establishing a healthier and more dynamic relationship between the river and Plymouth-Exchange neighborhood.
89	Per the ROC the Riverway initiative, enhance and expand the Genesee Riverway Trail on both sides of the river between Genesee Valley Park and downtown, providing separate bike and pedestrian paths/ lanes when space allows, repairing deteriorated sections, adding more green infrastructure, and creating additional neighborhood connections.

# KEY



Parks + Open Space



Infrastructure + Streetscapes



Community Facilities



Neighborhood Planning



River Access

## # OTHER PLACEMAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

90

Establish a fire station and boat house in the Erie Harbor and/or Genesee Valley Park areas of the river. This facility would include sheltered and secured boat storage and lift equipment to allow for faster response times, especially in light of the anticipated and desired increase in boating activity resulting from the ROC the Riverway initiative.

91

Per the ROC the Riverway initiative, when separate bicycle and pedestrian paths exist, or when sufficient parallel space exists next to the trail, groom a path for cross country skiers and/or snowshoers to help activate the river during winter months.

92

Implement the parks master plan for the potential parks, trails, and public spaces to be located in the Vacuum Oil redevelopment area.

93

Develop a car top boat launch for canoes, kayaks, etc. somewhere on the University of Rochester's River Campus.

94

Per the development plan for Brooks Landing, install public art on the hardscaped plaza.

95

Per the ROC the Riverway initiative, identify location(s) for trailered motorboat launch and/or public marina so as to increase boating activity in the South River and Erie Canal as well as provide emergency watercraft access for fire/police boats.

96

Implement the 2016 Mt. Hope Cemetery Master Plan for this historic Victorian Cemetery.

97

Rebuild the Children's Pavilion in Highland Park, creating a space for events and panoramic views of the park and region.

98

Per the Rochester Public Library Branch Facilities and Operations Master Plan, upgrade the Monroe branch to serve as a hub for teen services. Include a new community meeting room, redesigned interior space, expanded technology services, and expanded programming. Explore options to expand or co-locate/relocate the facility.

99

Identify an alternate location for RFD Engine 12 with a larger lot and better access, allowing for adequate storage and access for modern equipment. Consideration should be given to co-locating a new station with other needed community services such as a satellite library and/or community center.

100

Convert Norris Drive, an unimproved street, to a "green street", complete with porous pavement, rain gardens, and safe spaces for bicycles and pedestrians.

101

Implement access, trail, and signage recommendations of the Washington Grove Trail Study.

102

Implement the 2015 Genesee Valley Park West Master Plan.

103

Per the Genesee Valley Park West Master Plan, develop a new state-of-the-art boathouse and water sports center, complete with community event space, water sports and other athletic facilities, car top boat launch, bike and boat rentals, meeting rooms, and concession/retail space.

104

Identify location(s) around the intersection of the Erie Canal and Genesee River for installing a cartop boat launch/landing for canoes, kayaks, etc.

105

Identify funding sources and implement restoration of the 3 historic Olmsted bridges over the Erie Canal; upgrade trail connections leading to the bridges.

# C. OTHER PLACEMAKING ELEMENTS

## MULTI-USE TRAILS + BICYCLE FACILITIES

The Placemaking Plan Map illustrates a network of existing and recommended multi-use trails, and protected lanes. A more in-depth examination of all other bicycle facilities and amenities can be found in the [Comprehensive Access and Mobility Plan \(CAMP\)](#). The major bicycle network corridors are addressed here.

Multi-use trails and other bicycle facilities, while important elements in the transportation system, do not have the critical mass of users to drive land use patterns. However, they play an important role in providing active transportation and recreation opportunities. Therefore, the existing and proposed land use patterns were factors that influenced the location of future trail linkages.

The network of recommended trails represent opportunities to connect origins (mainly residential areas) and destinations (employment/mixed-use centers, parks, etc.). The recommended segments also include opportunities to fill in gaps in the existing multi-use trail and bicycle facility network. Future opportunities are limited by available land in corridor form such as large landowners, current and former railroad rights-of-way (ROWs), utility ROWs, and highways ROWs with ample undeveloped space.

The City of Rochester, as well as its neighboring towns, have collectively developed one of the most extensive regional trail networks in the country and certainly New York State. Most of the easiest trails – the “low hanging fruit” – have been built. What remains in the recommended network are the more challenging corridors in terms of available land and physical constraints. As the City and its partners continue to develop these linkages, they will become part of a robust network of transportation alternatives and recreational opportunities, making a significant contribution to Rochester’s placemaking efforts.





## PARKS + OPEN SPACES

The identity of many streets and neighborhoods is tied, formally or informally, to the city's wonderful collection of parks. Preservation and expansion of these critical community assets is addressed in the Parks and Open Space Character Area as well as in [Initiative Area 4-Section B, Parks, Recreation, and Open Space](#).

In addition, The Placemaking Plan Map contains numerous enhancements to specific parks and playgrounds throughout the city. Continuously tracking and improving the conditions of these amenities should be a high priority. The proliferation of public art, educational programming, and special events contributes to the vitality of parks and other public spaces.



## C. OTHER PLACEMAKING ELEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Rochester boasts an extensive network of community facilities including libraries, recreation/ community centers (rec center), public safety buildings, sports complexes, and other public facilities. Collectively, they contribute to the rich assortment of activities, resources, and programming available to residents and visitors.

The Placemaking Plan Map includes a variety of improvements to these facilities. In addition, the challenges and opportunities related to these facilities are explored in more depth in [Initiative Area 3-Section E, Schools and Community Centers](#).

This includes planning for co-locating services and facilities such as community meeting rooms at fire stations and siting rec center on or near school campuses. Of particular importance is the Rochester Public Library's Branch Library Facilities and Operations Plan, which outlines a series of policy, programming, and facility changes to enhance their role in serving the community.



## GENESEE RIVER ACCESS

While the Rochester area boasts an unrivaled abundance and diversity of waterbodies, the Genesee River is the most closely associated with the city's identity. The river features ever changing scenery as it winds 13 miles from Genesee Valley Park north to Lake Ontario. From the meandering flatwaters of the south river corridor to the channelized urban setting of downtown, from the dramatic cliffs and waterfalls of the gorge to the bustling river terminus in Charlotte, the Genesee is an important resource and source of pride for many neighborhoods along its course. However, generations of neglect coupled with formidable topography has limited access to the river.

The Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) and ROC the Riverway (RTR) initiative have provided a transformative vision for the city's reconnection with the waterway. Each of the capital projects in the LWRP and RTR are integrated into The Placemaking Plan Map, including opportunities for improved access, dynamic parks and public spaces, expanded multi-use trails, and greater boating activity.



## C. OTHER PLACEMAKING ELEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### INFRASTRUCTURE + STREETSAPES

There are numerous opportunities throughout Rochester to improve the public realm, especially in the form of redesigned streetscapes that emphasize the pedestrian experience. Examples of major capital projects included in The Placemaking Plan Map include safer and more attractive highway bridge crossings, streetscape and intersection improvements, on-street bicycle facilities, restored and new pedestrian bridges, riverfront promenade segments, and the Inner Loop North project. These projects can have a transformational impact on the urban experience, as evidenced by previous successful projects like the Port of Rochester Marina, Maplewood Park Pedestrian Bridge, Midtown Rising, Western Gateway I-490 Project, ARTWalk, and the Inner Loop East Transformation Project.



## NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING

*Rochester 2034* provides a blueprint for growth and development from a city-wide perspective, with some detail provided at the neighborhood scale. Neighborhoods are encouraged to partner with the City to do more in-depth plans and studies that will add more specificity to placemaking strategies. Projects such as brownfield opportunity area (BOA) plans, corridor studies, and neighborhood charrettes are useful tools for digging deeper than a comprehensive plan. The City should continue to implement existing small area plans while supporting additional follow-on studies and plans. Many examples of these projects are included on The Placemaking Plan Map.



# EAST MAIN ARTS & MARKET INITIATIVE

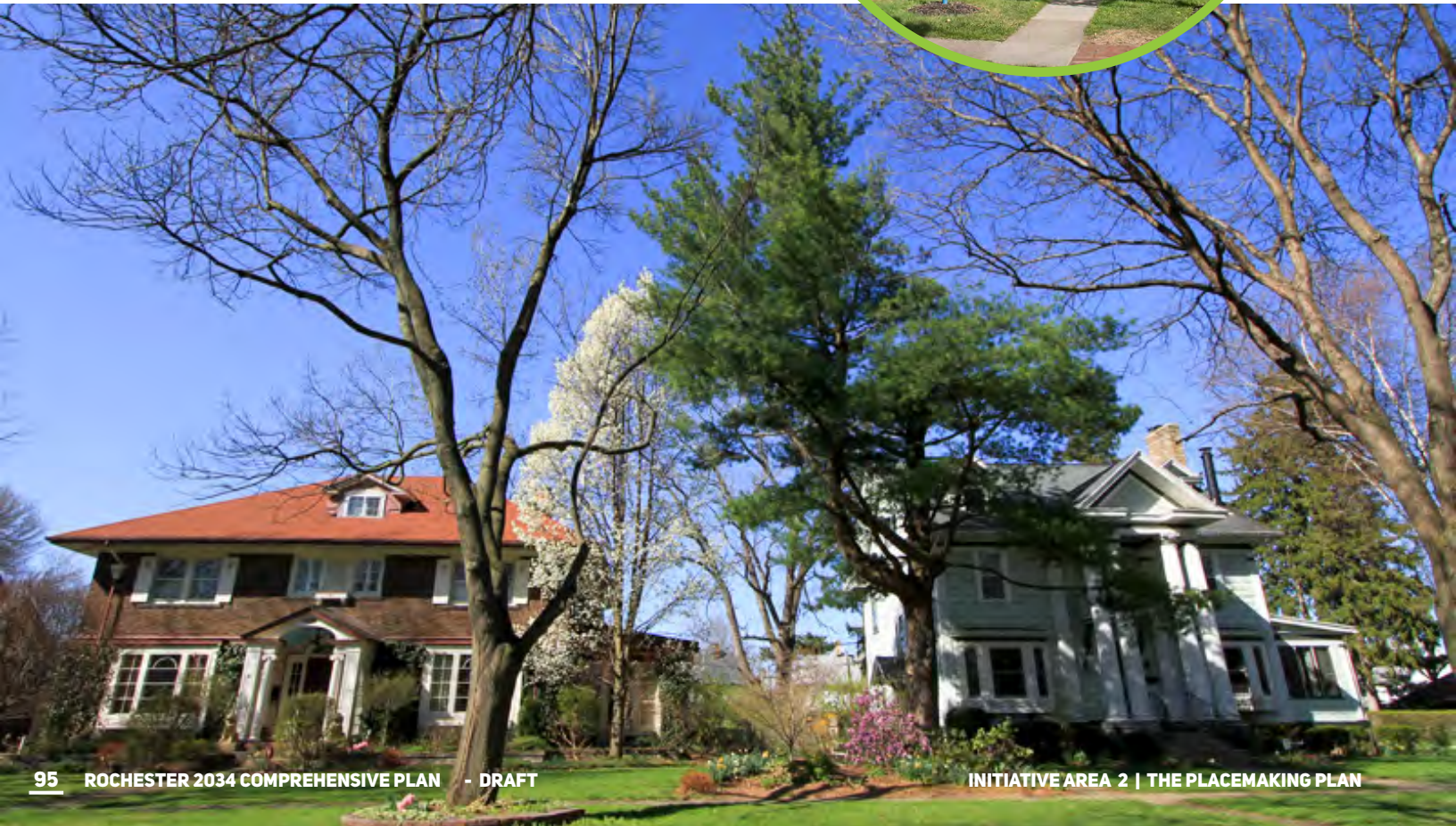


NOVEMBER 2015

## C. OTHER PLACEMAKING ELEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Placemaking is enhanced by preserving our traditional built environment. Rochester has an abundance of historic buildings to complement its unique history of innovation, democratic pursuits, and enrichment. Museums, landmarks, heritage trails, and history-oriented programming all help tell the story of the Flour/Flower City's evolution and the great figures from our past. The recommendations found within each of the Character Areas work towards preserving the traditional form of Rochester's neighborhoods, as do the numerous strategies listed under [Goal PMP-4](#).



## STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SITES

During the community engagement stages of *Rochester 2034*, each neighborhood association was asked to identify buildings or sites that, if redeveloped in a positive way, would have a substantial impact on their entire neighborhood. Their suggestions were combined with numerous other underutilized sites and buildings that City staff have identified as being of neighborhood or city-wide significance. The collection of sites also includes the Landmark Society of Western New York's [Five to Revive](#) sites.

These sites represent a wide variety of scenarios. There are vacant lots, dilapidated buildings, and structures that are relatively sound but remain vacant. Some are privately owned, some are owned by the City. Some are in various stages of redevelopment; others have no plans as of yet. Many are brownfield sites in different stages of cleanup. For all of these sites, the City should develop a



comprehensive program to advance their reuse through documenting existing conditions, fostering partnerships with landowners of privately-owned sites, pursuing environmental remediation funds, and marketing the sites through multiple platforms and partners.



## C. OTHER PLACEMAKING ELEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### PUBLIC SPACE DESIGN WITHIN PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT

The terms ‘public space’, ‘open space’, and ‘greenspace’ are typically associated with formal publicly-owned parks, both large and small. However, many of the benefits of parks can be incorporated into the site design of private development. Creating an attractive respite in the fully manmade urban environment is not limited to setting aside entire parcels for public space, nor is it limited to the natural landscape or purely green landscaping. Well-designed, dynamic spaces play an integral role in community placemaking.

When space is limited within a development site, the benefits of public parks can still be obtained at a small scale through the creative design of how buildings and the absence of buildings interact with each other. The following annotated images illustrate how the pedestrian-scale intricacies of site and building design can create small gathering places, beautiful landscapes, and whimsical spaces for play within the urban environment. When designed properly, they reinforce a strong sense that people are valued as residents of a place, not merely consumers of products.

Rochester’s relatively weak real estate market has limited how much developers and property owners are willing to incorporate these elements that do not produce direct revenue. However, as our market strengthens, especially with the resurgence of downtown, the City should gradually raise the standards based on the [principles illustrated in the following pages](#). This should include incorporating public space concepts into the updated/new form-based codes for downtown and mixed-use districts.

Public space enhancements should be viewed as a strategic investment for property owners and developers. Combined with a highly attractive, playful public realm, these investments will multiply street level vibrancy, bolster the positive perception of the city, and drive greater levels of economic activity. Given the presence of The Strong National Museum of Play and the City’s newfound commitment to incorporating ‘urban play’ elements into the public realm, Rochester is uniquely positioned to craft a new identity.

#### EXAMPLE: CHANNEL GARDENS AT ROCKEFELLER CENTER, MANHATTAN

One of the world’s most famous public spaces within private development is Channel Gardens at Rockefeller Center. Not only does this tiny four-season ‘outdoor room’ not generate any direct revenue, it is costly to maintain. Yet for nearly a century, it has been the centerpiece of Rockefeller Center, indirectly generating untold millions of dollars in revenue for adjacent uses because of its irresistible lure in the heart of the highly dense Manhattan landscape. While Rochester does not have nearly the critical mass to replicate these levels of investment and activity, the same principles regarding the direct and indirect value of public space can be applied on a smaller scale.





**EXAMPLE:  
LA CIUDELA, SAN JUAN**



first floor unifying elements like awnings and cornice lines allow for variation and interest in upper floors

whimsical, undulating paths communicate that this is a destination, a place to 'be', not just a connector



**THIS  
OVERALL  
DESIGN  
PROMOTES  
A SENSE  
OF URBAN  
'PLAY'!**

changing building orientation counters the monotony of large-scale development

outdoor eating spaces soften the barrier between private and public space

high-density development adjacent to public space, when designed well, creates a sense of place – an 'outdoor room'



historic and modern building designs complement each other when emphasis is placed on first floor and public space design

creative lighting enhances the 'after 5' experience

## C. OTHER PLACEMAKING ELEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### EXAMPLE: THE GULCH, NASHVILLE



enhancements to even the smallest public spaces contribute to vitality

first floor uses like restaurants and shops contribute to regular pedestrian traffic; offices and certain services do not

first floor transparency highlights pedestrian activity

maintain overall feel of development built to the sidewalk while allowing for small-scale variations in setbacks for visual interest and gathering spaces



gardens, fountains, and outdoor seating

sidewalks with varying widths and nuances

modern features added to historic buildings

## REUSE OF VACANT LANDS

One of Rochester's greatest challenges is the prevalence of vacant lands in its most economically distressed neighborhoods. Their presence can negatively impact a sense of place and pride as they raise safety concerns, portray disinvestment, and are even correlated with low educational outcomes for nearby children. As discussed in [Initiative Area 3-Section B, Vacant Lands](#), the City should pursue a more deliberate set of strategies for repurposing vacant lands. Whether converting them to community gardens, holding them for future development, or installing renewable energy facilities, the City should engage neighborhoods and other stakeholders to customize strategies for different areas across the community.

Not only will the reuse of these lands enhance a sense of place, empowering neighbors to drive these investments will foster hope and commitment. These properties are far too numerous to clearly show on the Placemaking Plan Map. However, the City does maintain an inventory of vacant properties and the most significant ones are shown on the map as Strategic Sites.



## C. OTHER PLACEMAKING ELEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### GRASS ROOTS INITIATIVES

While documented extensively in this Initiative Area, not all placemaking efforts come from municipal investments, policies, and regulations. Of equal importance are the efforts of local residents, businesses, and organizations. Sometimes these initiatives are done in partnership with the City such as the BoulevART program that allows neighbors to promote traffic calming and beautification through street murals. The annual Clean Sweep event and recent pop-up mini-festivals at La Marketa site are additional examples.

In other cases, character and vibrancy are fostered solely through grass roots resources. Block parties, active neighborhood organizations, and community gardens are defining features of many parts of the city. As well, the basic upkeep and beautification of individual homes, businesses, and yards has a significant impact on the daily experience of residents and visitors. Many neighborhoods and business corridors self-organize and promote these values. The Action Plan for this Initiative Area contains several strategies for continuing to build local capacity for placemaking.



## PUBLIC SPACE PROGRAMMING + PUBLIC ART

Another key element in creating places of great character and vibrancy is programming activities and events in those public spaces, districts, and neighborhood centers. The City of Rochester sponsors and promotes festivals and other events that enliven parts of the city. Local groups and organizations also play a role in programming public spaces. Examples of this includes the Puerto Rican Festival, Corn Hill Arts Festival, and Park Avenue Festival. As part of the ROC the Riverway initiative, the City will form a downtown/riverfront management entity that will program, market, and maintain the proposed new public spaces.

Public art is essential to the beauty and vitality of a place and is free and accessible to everyone. Rochester has numerous public art installations, especially in the downtown area and in the Neighborhood of the Arts. Additionally, many neighborhoods and grass roots organizations have proudly advocated for and successfully installed unique public art to create a greater sense of place in their community. Future development projects and public space enhancements should add even more artistic installations to the cityscape.



## C. OTHER PLACEMAKING ELEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### PARKING POLICIES

As Rochester continues to see a renewed interest in city living and urban development, and as mobility options and preferences continue to evolve, the City should reexamine its parking-related policies.

**Prioritizing parking in development decisions works against the principles of placemaking. Ample parking can often stifle the economic success of a street or district, as it discourages pedestrian activity and is an inefficient use of land.**

Conversely, businesses or destinations can often be highly successful despite the lack of parking. For example, two of Rochester's most popular restaurants, Dinosaur Bar-B-Que and The Playhouse / Swillburger, have no dedicated parking. Over time, patrons have organically found nearby parking or alternative transportation solutions to get to these locations. Similarly, it can often be challenging to find a parking space along or nearby the city's most vibrant business corridor, Park Avenue. Few businesses in this area have dedicated parking of their own. Yet these places demonstrate that people will find a way to get to a business or destination if the 'product' is highly desirable.

Ride share and bike share are solidly established in Rochester, reflecting emerging preferences for non-single occupancy vehicle modes of transportation. Reimagine RTS is positioning bus service to be even more viable for riders. Also, e-bikes, e-scooters, and autonomous vehicles are showing signs of collectively having a major impact on transportation choices in the next 15 years. Driving will remain the majority mode of choice in future years, but its expected decline should be reflected in land use regulations and the overall urban investment mindset.

**It is recommended that minimum parking requirements for future commercial, mixed-use, and large-scale housing development be made more flexible for all mixed-use Character Areas.**

Proposed parking should be based on parking demand strategy that considers all relevant modes of transportation and potential impacts of likely off-site parking demand. Parking minimums often pose a barrier for new shops, businesses, and housing to be established, especially in cases of repurposing historic commercial or industrial buildings.

Parking minimums are car-oriented regulations intended for car-oriented places that fail to recognize, let alone encourage, the urban environment, its transportation choices, its historic context, or emerging trends. In most cases, businesses and residential buildings should be able to supply sufficient parking and accessibility to patrons through:

- nearby parking lots and garages;
- shared parking agreements;
- on-street parking;
- bicycle parking;
- transit access;
- being in a walkable environment; and
- other emerging trends in transportation options and preferences.

Limited amounts of on-site parking spaces, if any, can be combined with each of these options to make the development economically viable. Under current regulations, when the required amount of parking is installed, it often perpetuates an overly car-dependent culture and covers valuable real estate with asphalt.

The recommendation to remove required parking is consistent with an emerging movement across the country to eliminate parking minimums in favor of promoting alternatives to driving. By removing these requirements, it allows for the market, not regulations, to determine how much parking is needed for individual new development projects.

Parking maximums should be retained, with a variance needed for proposals exceeding the cap. These regulations ensure that proposed projects do not include an oversupply of spaces. However, the current maximums should be revisited and adjusted, as needed, if there are recurring issues with their levels. In addition, greater emphasis should be placed on the City, developers, and landowners identifying opportunities for community parking lots and shared parking agreements.

As mentioned in the [Design Considerations for the Downtown Mixed-Use Character Area](#), developers and architects should be provided more guidance on the

design of first floor covered parking within mixed-use and multi-family residential buildings. The high cost of creating underground parking, coupled with the CCD's limits on surface parking, often results in development proposals containing first floor covered parking. Revised standards should effectively limit, but not prohibit, this design approach as well as mitigate its negative impacts on adjacent street life.

Lastly, the City should revise each of its request for proposals (RFP) processes for development of City-owned land. Developers responding to these RFPs should be required to outline a holistic approach to transportation choices, as opposed to the more conventional request for a parking plan. Several recent development proposals for new construction projects in downtown have contained less than one parking space per residential unit, an encouraging sign. This market shift should be supported by revising related City policies.

**“AS PARKING REGULATIONS WERE PUT INTO ZONING CODES, MOST OF THE DOWNTOWNS IN MANY CITIES WERE JUST COMPLETELY DECIMATED. WHAT THE CITIES GOT, IN EFFECT, WAS GREAT PARKING. BUT NOBODY GOES TO A CITY BECAUSE IT HAS GREAT PARKING.”**

**- MICHAEL KODRANSKY, INSTITUTE OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY**



# THE PLACEMAKING PLAN [PMP]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>PMP-1</b></p> <p><b>Create a comprehensive placemaking approach that goes beyond traditional land use planning, with a particular emphasis on aligning land use and transportation planning efforts.</b></p>	<p>PMP-1a Update the zoning code regulations and map to reflect the vision expressed in the Character Areas of the Placemaking Plan</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>PMP-1b Consider adopting a unified development code (UDC), combining multiple sets of regulations into a single document. Consolidating permits and processes required by multiple codes can improve efficiency, consistency, and clarity. A UDC can also serve to promote a holistic, big picture approach to land use, development, capital projects, and other community investments. See <a href="#">Initiative Area 6, Section A, Implementation and Stewardship of Rochester 2034</a>, for more information.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>PMP-1c Develop mechanisms and relationships within City departments that elevate the holistic placemaking approach in investment and development review decisions, including development of the annual Capital Improvement Program.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>PMP-1d Focus mixed-use investment along transit corridors as identified by the Reimagine RTS plan and Transit Supportive Corridor Study.</p>	<p><b>City, Developers, RTS, NYS HCR</b></p>
	<p>PMP-1e Incorporate the findings of the 2018 Citywide Housing Market Study into land use planning and housing investment decisions.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>



**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>PMP-1</b> <b>Create a comprehensive placemaking approach that goes beyond traditional land use planning, with a particular emphasis on aligning land use and transportation planning efforts.</b></p>	<p>PMP-1f      Establish a downtown / riverfront management entity per the ROC the Riverway Vision Plan. This organization may be some combination of a Business Improvement District, Local Development Corporation, and/or Downtown Partnership. It would be responsible for vision casting, marketing, beautification, and business recruitment for the core of the city as well as programming activities and events for key public spaces.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Empire State Development, Downtown Stakeholders</p>

# THE PLACEMAKING PLAN [PMP]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>PMP-2</b></p> <p><b>Foster growth in the City’s population and business community in order to restore the critical mass needed to support local businesses, deconcentrate poverty, grow the tax base, and address housing affordability.</b></p>	<p>PMP-2a Create a more consistent and rational approach to the dispersion of low, medium, and high density residential zoning districts, reflective of the residential Character Areas outlined in the Placemaking Plan.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>PMP-2b Identify strategies for encouraging more small-scale, incremental development in downtown and other mixed-use corridors/districts to complement the larger projects that have dominated recent development. This may include partnering with federal and state agencies to refine/expand programs or create new funding mechanism.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, developers, HUD, NYS HCR</p>
	<p>PMP-2c Develop a comprehensive program to advance the reuse of strategic development sites through documenting existing conditions, fostering partnerships with landowners of privately-owned sites, pursuing environmental remediation funds, and marketing the sites through multiple platforms and partners.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Developers, Landowners, NYS DOS, NYS DEC</p>
	<p>PMP-2d Expand the total amount of land in the city where 2- to 4-family residential buildings are permitted as of right, reflective of recommendations outlined in the Medium Density Character Area description.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>PMP-2e In the future zoning district reflective of the Low Density Character Area, re-legalize existing two-family homes (as-built or converted) as of right.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>PMP-2f Revise dimensional requirements in residential areas to allow for restoring historic forms and densities. See <a href="#">Design Considerations for the High Density Residential Character Area</a> for more detail.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>PMP-2</b> <b>Foster growth in the City's population and business community in order to restore the critical mass needed to support local businesses, deconcentrate poverty, grow the tax base, and address housing affordability.</b>	PMP-2g For revised zoning districts covering key corridors and legacy commercial/industrial areas, change the name, purpose statement, and regulations to reinforce the mixed-use rather than commercial nature of the districts.	<b>City</b>
	PMP-2h Implement the various recommendations of the Brownfield Opportunity Areas (BOAs) for Vacuum Oil, LYLAKS, 14621, and Bull's Head.	<b>City</b> , NYS DOS, NYS DEC, Community Partners
	PMP-2i Revise the Center City District regulations, and subsequent application to other mixed-use areas, to allow for greater efficiency and flexibility while not compromising quality. See <a href="#">Design Considerations for All Mixed-Use Character Areas</a> for more detail.	<b>City</b>
	PMP-2j Continue to work with developers and building owners to focus first floor retail in targeted downtown areas like the East End and around the former Midtown Block 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.	<b>City</b> , Developers, Property Owners
	PMP-2k Allow entertainment uses as of right accessory to permitted uses. The Rochester Police Department already regulates patron behavior through the Entertainment Center licenses process and it is duplicative for the Zoning Code to also regulate this use.	<b>City</b> , RPD

# THE PLACEMAKING PLAN [PMP] ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>PMP-3</b></p> <p>Employ a “zoning for jobs” approach whereby greater flexibility and efficiency of land use regulations fosters emerging business trends and creative re-use of buildings while not compromising the historic character and stability of neighborhoods.</p>	<p>PMP-3a Create an innovative new district based on the Flexible Mixed-Use Character Area. It would reflect the growing popularity of converting legacy industrial/commercial buildings into loft residences, unique businesses, artisanal crafts and production, and other creative re-uses of these buildings. The district would also allow provide flexibility to owners/developers to create or continue to operate low-impact production/craft businesses.</p>	<p>City</p>
	<p>PMP-3b Re-legalize the use of as-built commercial spaces as offices and specified types of commercial uses in all residential zoning districts.</p>	<p>City</p>
	<p>PMP-3c Through revised zoning districts and regulations, encourage the re-use and construction of two-to four-family homes in areas consistent with the Placemaking Plan Map. This change, when crafted carefully to respect the core features of urban neighborhoods, represents small-scale wealth building opportunities, diversifies housing options, and increases the likelihood that pre-existing multi-family homes will be rehabilitated. Re-legalizing these housing types often provides for greater access to financing.</p>	<p>City</p>
	<p>PMP-3d Rather than requiring minimum parking requirements, subject new development in all mixed-use Character Areas to a parking demand analysis. See <a href="#">Parking Policies</a> subsection for more detail.</p>	<p>City</p>

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2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>PMP-3</b></p> <p>Employ a “zoning for jobs” approach whereby greater flexibility and efficiency of land use regulations fosters emerging business trends and creative re-use of buildings while not compromising the historic character and stability of neighborhoods.</p>	<p>PMP-3e Consider creating more than one industrial/manufacturing zoning district based on the Industrial Character Area, reflecting clusters of properties that have high environmental/neighborhood impacts but are already substantially buffered from residential neighborhoods. Such a district would have somewhat more relaxed site design and property maintenance requirements to encourage the viability of important employers and producers.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>PMP-3f Update zoning regulations in residential districts to provide more flexibility for home occupations while not compromising the core features of urban neighborhoods. See <a href="#">Recommended Primary Uses for the Low Density Residential Character Area</a> for more detail.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
<p><b>PMP-4</b></p> <p>Protect the existing character of neighborhoods while allowing room for evolution into more vibrantly urban, inclusive, and resilient design and character.</p>	<p>PMP-4a Consider expanding use of form-based code outside of downtown into mixed-use areas identified in The Placemaking Plan, allowing for some variation among the districts to recognize desired differences in scale and neighborhood impacts.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Developers, HUD, NYS HCR</p>
	<p>PMP-4b Continue to protect and preserve the core unifying elements of a traditional pedestrian-scaled city streets, including sidewalks, street trees, tree lawns, streetlights, open front porches, unobstructed front yards, and a relatively consistent, shallow setback of structures from the street.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>

# THE PLACEMAKING PLAN [PMP]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>PMP-4</b></p> <p><b>Protect the existing character of neighborhoods while allowing room for evolution into more vibrantly urban, inclusive, and resilient design and character.</b></p>	<p>PMP-4c    Revise regulations, code, and policies so as to encourage the continuation of scale and form that define Rochester’s historic neighborhoods. For example, the 5,000 square foot minimum lot size in the R-1 district and the “unbuildable lot” policy are inconsistent with the current built form of the city and should be removed or revised, as should minimum lot size requirements in other residential Character Areas.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>PMP-4d    Continue to update the City’s housing investment programs to ensure the use of high quality materials and sustainable building practices. Consideration should be given to the long-term benefits of metal roofs and traditional siding materials, avoiding vinyl siding whenever possible.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>PMP-4e    Within City-funded programs dedicated to multi-family, low- or mixed-income housing projects, continue to raise standards for architectural design, pedestrian-oriented site design, use of quality materials, and consistency with the historic built environment of cities. Additional details can be found in Design Considerations for High Density Residential Character Area.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>PMP-4f    Continue to work with the architecture and development community to raise the design standards for mixed-use and multi-family building projects, as described in <a href="#">Design Considerations for High Density Residential Character Areas</a> and <a href="#">Design Considerations for All Mixed-Use Character Areas</a>.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, developers, architecture firms</p>
	<p>PMP-4g    Revise request for proposals (RFP) processes for development of City-owned land to reflect evolving parking demand. Developers responding to these RFPs should be required to outline a holistic approach to transportation choices, as opposed to the more conventional request for a parking plan.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>

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GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>PMP-4</b> <b>Protect the existing character of neighborhoods while allowing room for evolution into more vibrantly urban, inclusive, and resilient design and character.</b>	PMP-4h Revise the Center City District regulations to be consistent with guidance provided under the Downtown Mixed-Use Character Area.	<b>City</b>
	PMP-4i Revise regulations in the Downtown Mixed-Use Character Area to provide more guidance on the design of first floor covered parking within mixed-use and multi-family residential buildings. Revised standards should effectively limit, but not prohibit, inclusion of first floor covered parking as well as mitigate its negative impacts on adjacent street life.	<b>City</b>
	PMP-4j Account for and encourage emerging and as-of-yet untapped housing types, including tiny houses (permanent, not mobile in nature), co-housing, attached single-family homes (townhouses), in-law apartments, four-family homes, and condominiums.	<b>City</b>
	PMP-4k Consider regulating commercial activity according to occupancy rather than by use type. For more detail, see <a href="#">Recommended Primary Uses for the Boutique Mixed-Use Character Area</a> .	<b>City</b>
	PMP-4l Consider creating a maximum lot size for residential properties.	<b>City</b>
	PMP-4m Continue to provide aggressive enforcement of property maintenance and nuisance laws.	<b>City</b> , RPD, Monroe County Dept of Public Health
	PMP-4n Examine ways to encourage or incentivize the repair of original wood frame windows rather than immediately resorting to installing vinyl replacement windows.	<b>City</b> , Housing Partners, Landmark Society of WNY

# THE PLACEMAKING PLAN [PMP] ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>PMP-5</b></p> <p>Continue to elevate the importance of the pedestrian and bicyclist experience through infrastructure, policies, traffic safety enforcement, and education.</p>	<p>PMP-5a See collection of specific recommendations on Placemaking Plan Map.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>PMP-5b Expand bicycle facilities and the multi-use trail network to better connect origins and destinations and enhance the environment for active transportation choices.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Genesee Transportation Council, Monroe County Dept of Parks, NYS DOT</p>
	<p>PMP-5c Improve safety for all modes of transportation at key intersections and along primary corridors.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, MCDOT, NYS DOT</p>
	<p>PMP-5d Continue to advance infrastructure projects that minimize the impacts of transportation corridors on neighborhood connections and the bicycle/pedestrian experience. Examples include further mitigation of expressway barriers around downtown, safer crossings of railroad lines, and improving bridge crossings and underpasses.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, MCDOT, NYS DOT</p>
	<p>PMP-5e Work with the Rochester Police Department and Rochester Fire Department to ensure policies and standards, such as traffic enforcement and street design requirements, are consistent with other urban design objectives and the nature of a dense, pedestrian-oriented environment.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, RPD, RFD</p>
	<p>PMP-5f Continue to promote responsible driving through programs and campaigns such as Pace Car and Drive 2B Better.</p>	<p><b>Reconnect Rochester</b>, City RPD</p>
	<p>PMP-5g Target areas around schools, rec centers, libraries, parks, and other areas frequented by children in order to calm traffic with techniques such as street art, speed humps, curb extensions, enhanced crosswalks, road diets, and changed crosswalk timers.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, MCDOT, RPL, RCSD, Healthi Kids</p>
	<p>PMP-5h Continue to convert “cobra head” and other auto-oriented street lighting to fixtures that better illuminate the pedestrian environment and add more character to the streetscape.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>



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GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>PMP-6</b>  Improve public parks, open spaces, public facilities, and waterfront access.	PMP-6a See collection of specific recommendations on Placemaking Plan Map.	<b>City</b>
	PMP-6b Increase City resources dedicated to park design, development, and maintenance.	<b>City</b>
	PMP-6c Continue to implement the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program and the ROC the Riverway Vision Plan.	<b>City</b> , NYS DOS, Empire State Development, NYS DOT, DASNY, NYS Canal Corp
	PMP-6d Work with developers and property owners in downtown and major mixed-use corridors to incorporate small-scale public spaces, as illustrated in the Public Space Design within Private Development section. Incorporate these principles in new/updated form-based codes for these districts.	<b>City</b> , Developers, Property Owners
	PMP-6e Identify opportunities throughout the river corridor, the parks system, and streetscape projects to proliferate public art, educational opportunities, historic interpretation, celebration of the local natural environment, and 'urban play' elements; work with developers to incorporate these elements into private development whenever possible.	<b>City</b> , Local and National Artists, Common Ground Health, Educational Institutions, Landmark Society, Developers

# THE PLACEMAKING PLAN [PMP] ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>PMP-6</b></p> <p><b>Improve public parks, open spaces, public facilities, and waterfront access.</b></p>	<p>PMP-6f Identify obstacles to live music, plays, outdoor uses, sidewalk entertainment, and other performances in the entertainment licensing process and zoning code and work to streamline procedures and regulations. This may include changes to the zoning code, the entertainment licensing process, and even on-street parking regulations. Greater flexibility should be afforded to first floor uses such as restaurants and cafes to provide outdoor seating, seasonal open air facades, and other techniques that enliven streets in downtown and mixed-use areas.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>PMP-6g Identify opportunities in the parks system for demonstration projects related to environmental stewardship and urban ecology, similar to the rain garden installed in Turning Point Park.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, NYSERDA, Local Education Institutions</p>
	<p>PMP-6h Partner with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra (RPO) to identify potential sites in the river corridor for outdoor performances and/or reestablishing the RPO river barge for performances at Corn Hill Landing.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, RPO</p>
	<p>PMP-6i Implement the various strategies of the Rochester Public Library Branch Facilities and Operations Master Plan. This includes repositioning libraries to be more dynamic hubs of education, social services, and other community needs. Several branch-specific projects are shown on the Placemaking Plan Map.</p>	<p><b>RPL</b></p>

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GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>PMP-7</b> <b>Support capacity building and creative programs, both organic and formal, that enable more localized participation in placemaking.</b>	<p>PMP-7a Continue to support programs like BoulevART and Playful Sidewalks that promote community building, public art, and traffic calming.</p> <hr/> <p>PMP-7b Continue to support community partner and grass-roots programs like Healthi Kids' Play ROCs and Re-connect Rochester's Complete Streets Makeover to enhance the public realm and promote active, playful lifestyles.</p> <hr/> <p>PMP-7c Continue to implement existing small area plans while supporting additional follow-on studies and plans.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Common Ground Health, Reconnect Rochester, Community Groups, Artists / Arts Advocates, MCDOT</p> <hr/> <p><b>City</b>, Common Ground Health, Reconnect Rochester</p> <hr/> <p><b>City</b></p>

# 3

INITIATIVE AREA

# REINFORCING STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS

**A. HOUSING**

**B. VACANT LANDS**

**C. ARTS + CULTURE**

**D. HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

**E. SCHOOLS + COMMUNITY CENTERS**

**F. PUBLIC HEALTH + SAFETY**

**G. COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION**





# A. HOUSING

## INTRODUCTION

Housing is critical to the health and well-being of people, neighborhoods, and cities. Good-quality, safe, and affordable shelter is vital to mental and physical health, and is the underpinning of private and family life. Homes are the places we sleep and study, where families gather and grow, where memories are made, and around which our day-to-day lives and activities revolve. Housing profoundly shapes our public sphere as well. It is the face of our streets and the composition of our neighborhoods. Its design and maintenance can impact the way we feel walking down the street – conveying a sense of beauty, history, pride or neighborliness, or leaving us with the sense of abandonment, struggle, anxiety, or decline. For all these reasons and more, housing policy and housing development will be a key driver of our ability to achieve the vision and goals of *Rochester 2034*.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

**“Have more low income housing options in more areas to avoid creating depressed neighborhoods and rich ones.”**



**SINGLE FAMILY HOME**

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Housing is critical to the health and well-being of people, neighborhoods, and cities.
- Rochester’s mostly historic housing stock has unique assets and challenges.
- Our proactive code enforcement and lead ordinance are nationally recognized models for maintaining and increasing healthy housing that we should continue to refine and improve.
- We should promote the benefits of city living and work together to diversify housing choices, affordability, and income across all neighborhoods.
- A 2018 Citywide Housing Market Study indicated that the City’s housing market is soft, overall, but has wide variation across neighborhoods.
- Our housing policy goals should be to maintain and make the strongest market areas more inclusive, revitalize and strengthen middle market areas, and stabilize and position weaker market areas for community development and job growth.
- Low-incomes are at the root of Rochester’s housing affordability challenges, so we must work on job creation, economic development, and workforce development in addition to housing policy to address our housing affordability issues.

## ROCHESTER'S HOUSING STOCK

Because of the time period when most of our housing stock was built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Rochester inherited a network of beautiful, compact, walkable, historic neighborhoods. A number of city neighborhoods are on the National Register of Historic Places or in local preservation districts and all of them benefit from their regional proximity to downtown, our historic Olmsted parks system, and the city's utterly unique Genesee River gorge and waterfronts. Rochester also boasts a rich architectural diversity that reflects the entire history of different styles in American architecture.

However, the historic nature of Rochester's housing stock also comes with challenges. Older housing has higher maintenance needs and costs than newer units. These homes were typically built without insulation or other energy efficiency measures that are standard in today's construction. In fact, housing is the largest local contributor to climate change according to the City's Climate Action Plan, with the residential sector contributing 52% of total emissions generated locally. Older units were also often built with materials like asbestos and lead paint that have since been banned from

construction, as they have been proven to be harmful to human health.

The physical challenges of our city's older housing stock are compounded by the declines we have experienced in population, employment, and commercial and industrial activity citywide. Taxes on the value of real property are a significant source of revenue for the City's budget. **Yet taxable assessed property values, citywide, have declined 30% in the last 25 years in constant dollars (i.e., adjusted for inflation), and residential property values in 2018 are still 5% lower in constant dollars than they were in 2008.**

A city's fiscal ability to invest in its people and neighborhoods is limited if revenues do not keep pace with inflation. Flat or declining real property values can also have negative impacts on homeowners by limiting their ability to build equity and wealth and to borrow against the value of their home to make needed repairs. Declining property values also impact tenants since landlords may have fewer financial incentives or less of an ability to borrow against their property to maintain higher-than-minimum quality standards.



**2-FAMILY HOME**



**4-FAMILY HOME**



**MULTI-FAMILY BUILDING**

# A. HOUSING (CONTINUED)

## CHANGING NEEDS AND PREFERENCES

More than half of the city's residential buildings were built before 1940 and three quarters were built before 1960. At Rochester's population peak in 1950 (pop. 332,448), there were about 101,000 housing units in the city. Today, after losing roughly 37% of the city's population, there are still over 96,000 housing units, a decline of just over 5%.

**The composition and economics of city households have changed dramatically in this time frame, but our housing stock has remained largely the same.**



**DECREASE**  
number of nuclear families



**DECREASE**  
household size



**DECREASE**  
median household income



**INCREASE**  
median age



**INCREASE**  
diversity of population

The number of “nuclear families” (defined as two adult, married households with children) has decreased over time. Today, less than half of city households are “families” (defined as two or more people related by birth, marriage, or adoption residing together) and, of those, nearly 60% are headed by a single adult. Median household size has also decreased over time. Today nearly 70% of city households have two or fewer people and 41% of city households are individuals living alone. As jobs have left the city and as more and more city households are single people or single adult families, median household income has also sharply declined, falling nearly 20% in constant dollars since 2000.

About 17% of city residents live with a disability (defined as a person who has difficulty with hearing, vision, cognition, physical movement, self-care, or independent living). The city's population is also aging and becoming more racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse.

These shifts impact people's housing needs and preferences, as well as the scope of (and limitations to) their housing choices. For example, single individuals may not want as much space or the level of maintenance that a single family home conveys, but may have trouble finding other housing options in city neighborhoods that are dominated by single family homes. Similarly, a disabled person or an aging household may have a strong desire or need for accessible housing and single floor living, but Rochester's historic housing stock does not currently offer enough of these options.

In addition, generational and societal shifts in housing preferences have taken place. Some of these shifts – such as the increasing interest in downtown and walkable urban neighborhood living – give the city a competitive advantage relative to housing choices in other municipalities in the region. Other shifts, like the growing interest in new housing types such as condos, senior communities, co-housing, housing cooperatives, tiny homes, etc., may mean that the city's current housing stock is outdated relative to emerging preferences.



**ONE OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES FACING OUR COMMUNITY – GIVEN THE AGE OF OUR HOUSING STOCK, THE INCREASING DIVERSITY OF OUR COMMUNITY, AND THE RELATIVELY LOW WAGES AND HIGH LEVELS OF POVERTY IN THE CITY – IS HOW TO PROVIDE A RANGE OF HOUSING CHOICES THAT MEET PEOPLE’S NEEDS AND PREFERENCES AT PRICE POINTS THAT CITY RESIDENTS CAN AFFORD.**



# A. HOUSING (CONTINUED)

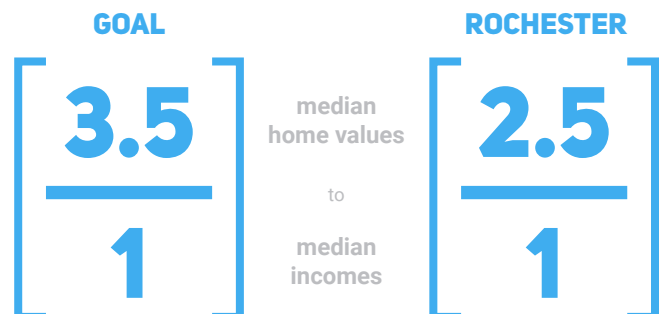
## 2018 CITYWIDE HOUSING MARKET STUDY

One tool that more and more communities around the country are using to help better understand their context and develop more effective housing and community development policy and investment strategy is a community-wide housing market study. The practice was pioneered by The Reinvestment Fund, a mission-based community development financial institution (CDFI) based in Philadelphia, and has been adopted as a best practice by the Federal Reserve Bank and applied in dozens of communities across the country.

The City of Rochester conducted a [Citywide Housing Market Study](#) in 2018. Key findings were that:

- 1 Overall, Rochester's housing market is soft.** Decades of population and job loss in the city has resulted in an excess housing supply and a housing stock that is broadly undervalued. Housing markets are considered to be healthy overall if median home values equal about three and a half times median incomes. In Rochester that ratio is 2.5 to 1, meaning that the median home value citywide (currently \$77,800) would need to be about \$33,000 higher relative to current median income (currently \$31,684) for our market to be considered well balanced. Monroe County's housing market is also considered to be soft, with a ratio of 2.6 to 1, but the county has significantly higher median home value (\$140,200) and median income (\$53,568) than the city.

The relatively low value of the city's housing stock dampens reinvestment by property owners and limits the city's fiscal capacity to invest in community goals. Unlike very strong housing markets such as Denver, Portland, or San Francisco – which are overheated, experiencing rapid growth in housing prices relative to current incomes, and trying to rein in very high demand to better serve community goals – Rochester still needs to work on stimulating demand in the city, growing property values and incomes to help create more balanced markets, and attracting more people to live in the city.



## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

**“There should be more choices besides single-family homes and high-rises. ~3 story apartment buildings with 4-8 units would be attractive to many people.”**



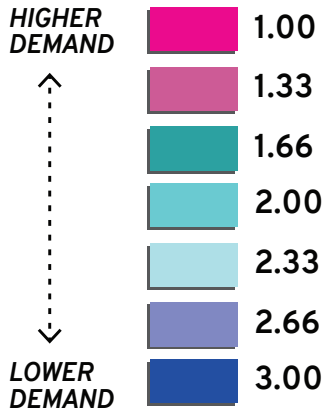
## A. HOUSING (CONTINUED)

### 2018 CITYWIDE HOUSING MARKET STUDY CONTINUED

- 2** *Still, there is significant variation within the city's housing market.* Although the city's market is considered to be soft, overall, there is a wide range of housing values and incomes throughout the city's neighborhoods. Analyzing a wide range of data – including real estate sales and financing, assessed value, bank foreclosure filings, tax delinquency, code violations, and demolitions – we developed a citywide housing market “typology” that identified seven housing market types (see [insert map of HMS typologies] ). These market types are clustered within three distinct patterns of housing demand – higher demand, moderate demand, and weaker demand – each of which present their own unique opportunities and challenges to address, and goals to work towards. See [Appendix D: 2018 Citywide Housing Market Study](#) for a complete list of recommended strategies within each type.
- The city's **highest demand markets** (types 1 and 1.33, shown in shades of pink on the map) are home to just under a third of city households (32%). Overall, these areas have the highest median incomes, property values, and rents in the city; are the only areas where real assessed residential property values have risen in the last 10 years (adjusted for inflation); and are where 60% of new housing development in the city has occurred in the last 10 years (nearly two-thirds of which was constructed downtown). These areas offer the most diverse mix of housing choices in the city, including over 60% of the city's apartment buildings and nearly 30% of its doubles and triples, and have fairly low homeownership rates (just over 30% in 1.00 and just over 37% in 1.33). The goal in these markets is to maintain their strength and increase their inclusivity (e.g., through affordable housing set asides to promote mixed income housing).
  - The city's **moderate demand – or middle – markets** (types 1.66, 2, and 2.33, shown in shades of aqua on the map) are home to about 40% of city households. Overall, they have lower median incomes, property values and rents; have seen real assessed residential property values fall in the last 10 years (adjusted for inflation); and have experienced less than 10% of the city's new housing development in the last decade (mostly programs to rehab formerly vacant homes into affordable homeownership opportunities for first time homebuyers). These markets are home to fully half of the city's single family homes, are the most racially diverse neighborhoods in the city, and have the city's highest rates of homeownership (just over 45% in 1.66, nearly 48% in 2.00, and over 53% in 2.33). They also have the highest rate of foreclosure filing in the city. The goal in these markets is to revitalize and strengthen them (e.g., promote homeownership, especially for income qualified buyers and strengthen values as a means towards community wealth building).
  - The city's **weaker demand markets** (types 2.66 and 3, shown in shades of purple on the map) are home to just under 30% of city households. Overall, they have the lowest median incomes and home values, but gross rents are not significantly lower, which means they have very high rates of “cost burden,” which is when a household pays more than 30% of its income in rent; nearly 72% of renters are cost burdened in 2.66 market types and nearly 75% of renters are cost burdened in 3.00 market types. A third of new housing development in the city in the last 10 years has taken place in these areas, all of which was affordable housing development for low, very low, and extremely low income households. These areas have the highest poverty rates in the city, the lowest homeownership rates, and the largest proportion of vacant structures, vacant land, and properties with chronic code violations. The goal in these markets is to stabilize through proactive code enforcement and healthy housing strategies, and re-position them for future development opportunities, including job creation, vital services, and creative re-uses of vacant land (energy production, gardens, etc.)

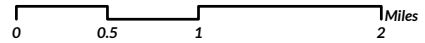
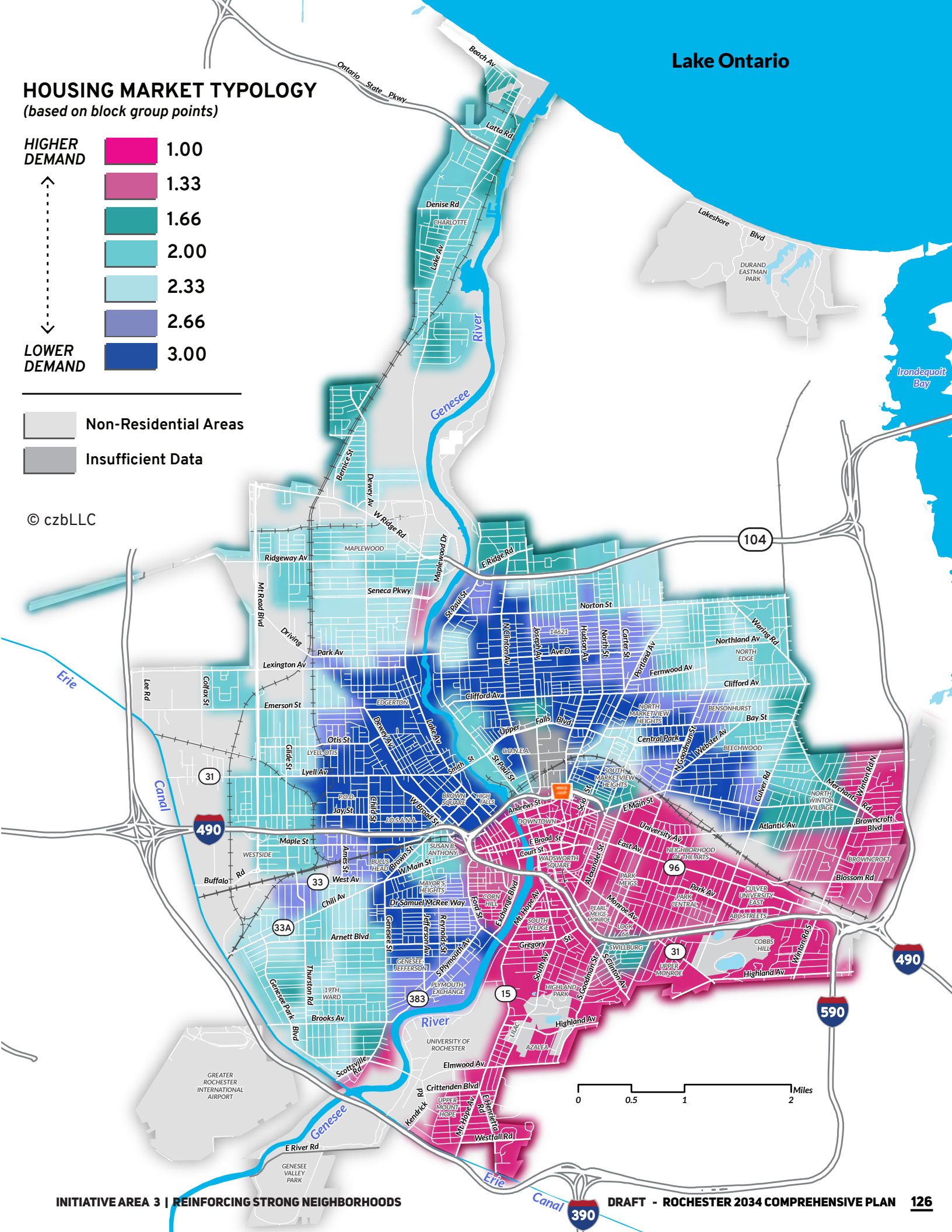
# HOUSING MARKET TYPOLOGY

(based on block group points)



Non-Residential Areas  
Insufficient Data

© czbLLC



# A. HOUSING (CONTINUED)

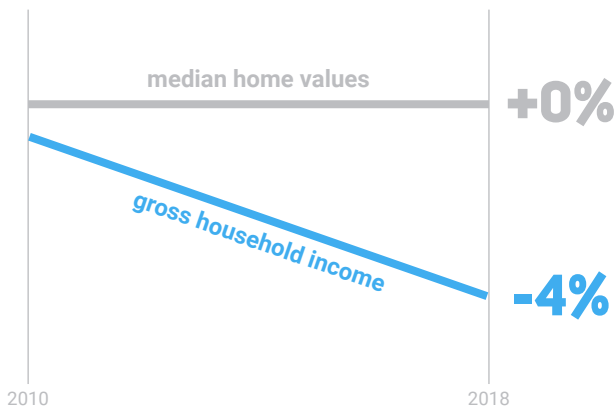
## 2018 CITYWIDE HOUSING MARKET STUDY CONTINUED

**3** *Very low incomes, not high housing costs, are at the root of affordability challenges in Rochester.* Based on current home values and gross rents, Rochester’s housing market is considered generally affordable for households earning modest incomes and widely affordable for households earning middle class incomes and higher (see sidebar). Citywide, Rochester’s housing costs have remained steady in recent years when adjusted for inflation. In constant dollars, median gross rent (contract rent + utilities) has remained flat since 2010 and the median value of owner-occupied homes has declined slightly (3%).

Yet housing affordability is a significant issue in the city. Nearly 60% of renter households and nearly 25% of homeowner households in the city are “cost burdened,” paying more than 30% of their gross income to housing costs. The main driver of this problem is that incomes for many households in the city are very low. More than 25% of city households have incomes below \$15,000/year and more than 40% have incomes below \$25,000/year. Additionally, gross household income has been declining in recent years, falling nearly 4% since 2010 (adjusted for inflation).

A very different story is playing out in stronger market cities like Denver. Denver has added over 100,000 people to its population since 2010 and the city’s current median household income is \$60,098. Adjusted for inflation, Denver’s median household income has grown 18% since 2000, but housing costs are much more expensive, relative to median income, in Denver than they are in Rochester. The median home value in Denver is \$322,900 – more than five times higher than the city’s median income. Adjusted for inflation, home values in Denver have risen nearly 20% since 2000, and median gross rent has grown by more than 26% to \$1,131 over that same time.

**Household Income vs. Home Value**



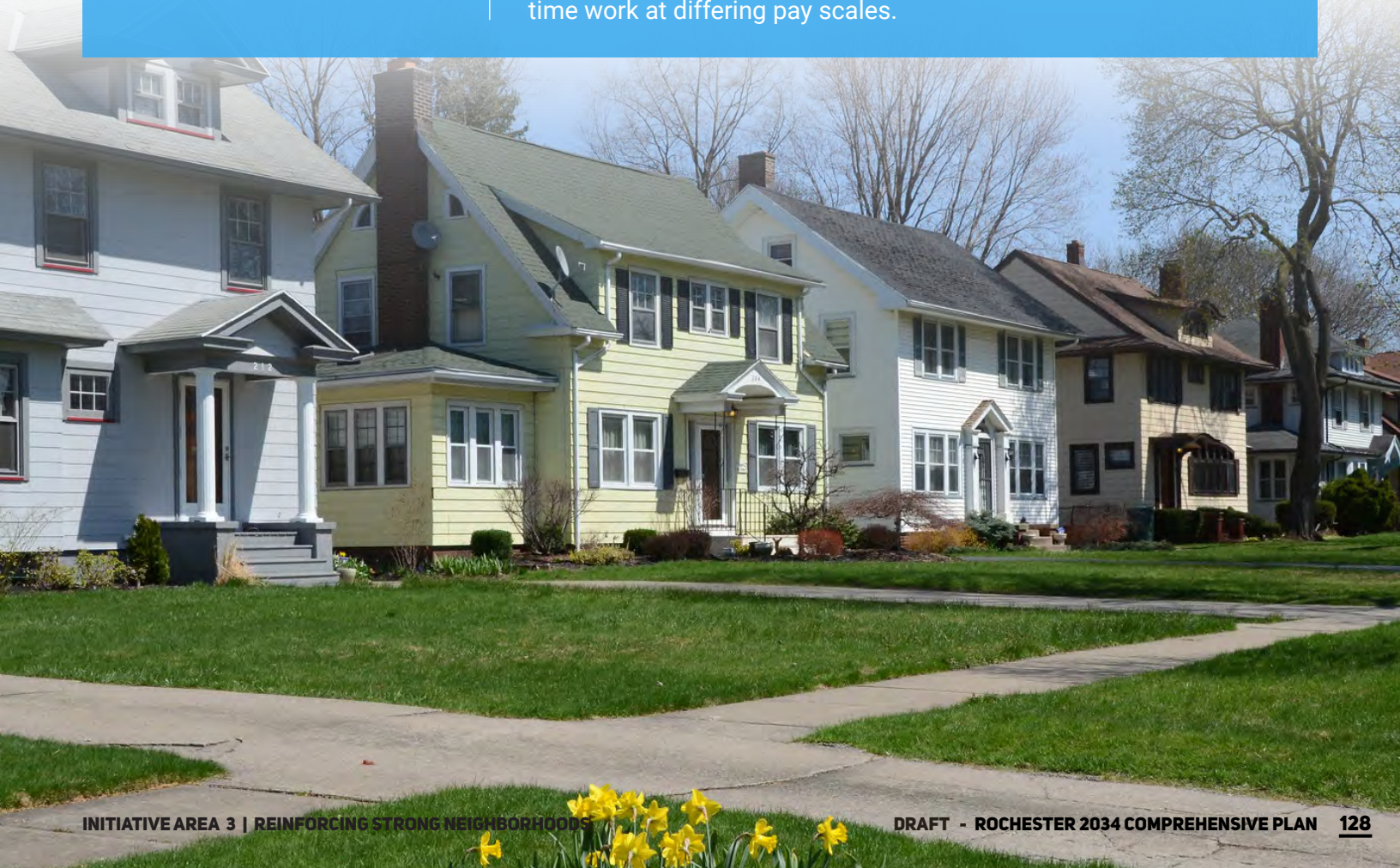
**Housing affordability challenges in Rochester are rooted in very low incomes, not high and rising housing costs. This distinction is critical to understand because low incomes are a different problem to solve than high housing costs, and they are a problem that housing policy cannot directly solve on its own.** Strategies around economic development, workforce development, education, financial literacy, and others must be seen as critical components to addressing affordable housing challenges that are specific to our market.

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY SCENARIOS IN ROCHESTER

Housing costs are considered to be “affordable” if a household is paying 30% or less of their gross income on their gross rent (contract rent + utilities) or mortgage payment (principal + insurance + taxes + interest).

*For a person or household earning \$32,000/year – more than 66% of the city’s owner-occupied homes and more than 50% of its rental housing units are considered affordable for this person or household. That’s about half the median income for New York State (\$60,741) and the U.S. (\$57,617), overall. It’s an amount that could be earned by a single person working a full time job paying \$15/hour (e.g., medical technician), or two people pooling together a combination of full-time and part-time minimum wage work.*

*For a person or household earning \$62,000/year – more than 90% of the city’s owner-occupied homes and nearly all (97%) of its rental housing units are considered affordable for this person or household. That’s the city’s median income for married couple family households. It’s an amount that could be earned by a full time worker earning \$32/hour (e.g., Registered Nurse, mid-career Teacher) or two people working a combination of full time and part time work at differing pay scales.*



## A. HOUSING (CONTINUED)

### 2018 CITYWIDE HOUSING MARKET STUDY CONTINUED

- 4** *Because of our soft market conditions, virtually all new housing development in Rochester requires some kind of subsidy, whether to induce or assist.* Simply put, it costs more to build new housing – and in many cases to rehab older industrial or commercial buildings for housing – than most people in Rochester are able or willing to pay. Although the cost of acquiring land and residential buildings is much lower in Rochester relative to strong housing markets like Boston or Denver, there are numerous other development costs that must be covered in order for a project to, at minimum, breakeven – including construction materials, labor, architecture/engineering, environmental, property management and operations, ongoing maintenance, debt service, taxes, etc.

Downtown Rochester has seen the most housing construction in the last ten years of anywhere in the city (adding nearly 1,200 new housing units since 2007), and new units downtown can command significantly higher rents than most parts of the city. But even downtown, the cost of market rate development has been high enough that some form of financial assistance – whether tax relief, low-interest loans, or gap financing grants – has been needed to make projects happen. Recently though, there are signs that new mixed-use projects downtown do not need the same level of financial assistance that they have in the past.

Projects targeted for affordable housing, however, have larger and more complicated financial hurdles to overcome than market rate development. Affordable developers are restricted in what they can charge for the units they produce, depending on the income of the prospective tenants or purchase borrower. As such, these projects often have significant funding gaps that must be filled by public subsidy – especially for projects intended to serve the lowest income households, since the rents they can afford are very low.

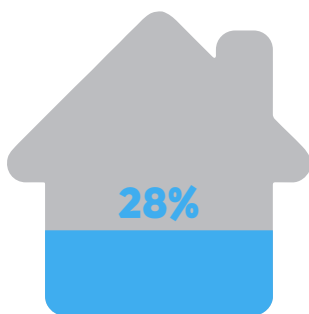




**5** *In order to strengthen Rochester's markets and financial capacity, the city must grow its share of regional housing demand.* The city of Rochester is home to almost a third (28%) of Monroe County's households, but more than half (54%) of the county's households with incomes of \$20,000 or less per year and just 11% of the county's households with incomes of \$100,000 or more per year. This limited share of regional housing demand has a considerable influence on disinvestment and market softness within the city. Moving in the direction of a fair share of regional demand is critical to help City efforts to stabilize, revitalize, and strengthen neighborhoods, as well as to increase the city's fiscal sustainability and capacity to invest in community goals. This can be done through economic development work that brings more and better jobs into the city (and efforts to connect city residents with employment and better wage work even outside the city), as well as by competing for a fairer share of middle and higher income households to choose to live and invest in city neighborhoods.

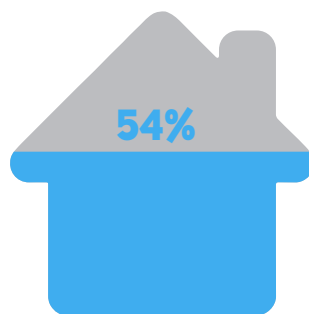
### HOW A FAIR SHARE OF REGIONAL HOUSING DEMAND COULD BENEFIT THE CITY

If the economic distribution of city households reflected Monroe County's current distribution, there would be 18,000 more city households earning \$50,000 per year or more. This could potentially translate into an additional \$700 million in annual spending on mortgage payments, rents, housing maintenance, and home improvements (based on the 30% of income standard for housing spending), as well as hundreds of millions of dollars in potential additional goods and services spending in city neighborhoods, and significant new revenue to help the city invest in community services and goals.



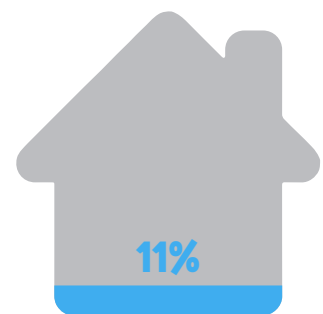
of Monroe County's households are located in the City of Rochester

but



of the county's households making less than \$20,000 per year are located in Rochester

and only



of the county's households making \$100,000 or more per year are located in Rochester

### CITY OF ROCHESTER'S INVOLVEMENT IN HOUSING

City staff and leadership are involved in a wide array of initiatives and activities related to housing policy, development, and investment. Work is guided by an official City Housing Policy, adopted in 2008, which calls for the city to “engage stakeholders and foster public/private partnerships that improve neighborhoods, create healthy real estate markets, stabilize and enhance the tax base, and provide a broad array of housing options to address the needs of diverse households.”

#### PROMOTING CITY LIVING

The City is an integral member of the community coalition that produces [Celebrate City Living](#), an initiative to promote the many great reasons to live in Rochester, explore our diverse neighborhoods, and experience our unique assets and amenities. Celebrate City Living hosts an [online resource center](#) with neighborhood descriptions and current housing listings (for sale and for rent), produces blog posts and social media campaigns that celebrate different city-related themes throughout the year, and puts on an annual citywide housing and neighborhood information expo, as well as a series of pop-up events in different neighborhoods throughout the year.

#### SUPPORTING AND EXPANDING ACCESS TO HOMEOWNERSHIP

The City recognizes the value of homeownership to people and neighborhoods, and is particularly supportive of expanding access to affordable homeownership opportunities citywide. Initiatives with partners like the Greater Rochester Housing Partnership and Flower City Habitat for Humanity help rehab vacant homes and construct new homes on City-owned vacant lots for purchase by income-eligible buyers. And the City's Home Purchase Assistance Program provides grants that help income-eligible buyers purchase their first home anywhere in Rochester. These programs are often combined with initiatives by local lenders and community organizations (e.g., First Home Club, rehab or renovation loans, etc.). The City also provides funding to several local housing agencies to offer pre-purchase homebuyer education classes and financial counseling, which further support the goal of expanding affordable homeownership opportunities within Rochester.

Lastly, the City's [Employer Assisted Housing Initiative](#) partners with local employers to give matching grants that help employees of any income level purchase homes in city neighborhoods – sometimes targeted for areas nearby the employer's location.

## ROCHESTER LAND BANK CORPORATION

Formed in 2014, the [Rochester Land Bank Corporation](#) is a key tool to help achieve community housing and revitalization goals. The purpose of the Land Bank is to acquire real property that is vacant, abandoned, underutilized, or tax delinquent and convey it to new ownership that will return it to productive, positive, neighborhood-serving use. The Land Bank is a public authority whose Board is composed of Ex Officio City staff (Treasurer, Director of Development Services, Director of Buildings and Zoning, Manager of Housing, City Council Chief of Staff) as well as a Mayor's appointee and a City Council President appointee.

The Land Bank works closely with the City and its community development partners, but is legally distinct from the City and is endowed with certain powers that the City does not have. Most important of these is its preferential powers to acquire property through the City's annual tax foreclosure auction. State law typically requires that the City sell properties to the highest bidder and does not allow the city to pre-qualify parties who want to bid at the auction. The Land Bank, however, is able to use what's called a "trump" bid or "super" bid, placing an opening bid for just the tax debt owed and cutting off any subsequent bidding for the property. This means it is able to acquire property at the lowest possible cost, making it a more viable candidate for redevelopment. The Land Bank is also able to use a "credit" bid, where (unlike other bidders) it can successfully bid on properties without having cash on hand at the auction. If the Land Bank has pre-qualified a development partner who has the funds necessary to cover any tax debt owed on the property, the Land Bank can bid on behalf of that developer and convey the property to them for redevelopment.

With these powers, the Land Bank is a powerful tool to gain control of vacant and abandoned property, and to reduce vacancy and blight by either demolishing properties or conveying them to development partners to rehabilitate for affordable rental housing, as well as affordable homeownership programs.



## A. HOUSING (CONTINUED)

### CITY OF ROCHESTER'S INVOLVEMENT IN HOUSING CONTINUED

#### NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Staff work with multiple types of developers and community-based organizations throughout the city to develop new housing options that are affordable across a range of income levels and available for a variety of special needs populations, including senior housing, supportive housing, and transitional housing. Housing development is pursued for both rental and homeownership populations and diverse housing types including single-family homes, condos and townhomes, apartments, lofts, live/work spaces, and mixed use buildings are supported.

Housing development projects include new construction, strategic infill on formerly vacant City-owned land, the conversion and adaptive reuse of formerly commercial or industrial buildings to residential uses, and the rehabilitation of formerly vacant single family homes. These are complicated projects that typically include multiple funding sources, multiple layers of governmental regulatory

review (city, county, state, federal), and extensive environmental investigation and, as may be necessary, clean-up.

The City often works with developers to provide loans, gap financing, or land assembly that makes projects financially feasible. This provides opportunities for negotiating community benefits from projects that might otherwise not have them. Such benefits negotiated in exchange for subsidies include affordable housing units within market-rate housing development, MWBE and workforce goals, and job creation. Additional types of community benefits should be considered during these negotiations, including public art, public amenities, bicycle/pedestrian enhancements, and small public spaces. For City-owned sites, the City engages developers by issuing requests for proposals (RFPs) for the redevelopment of select parcels and selecting winning proposals based on how well they match the City's vision and goals for redevelopment.





**WARNER LOFTS**

## A. HOUSING (CONTINUED)

### CITY OF ROCHESTER'S INVOLVEMENT IN HOUSING CONTINUED

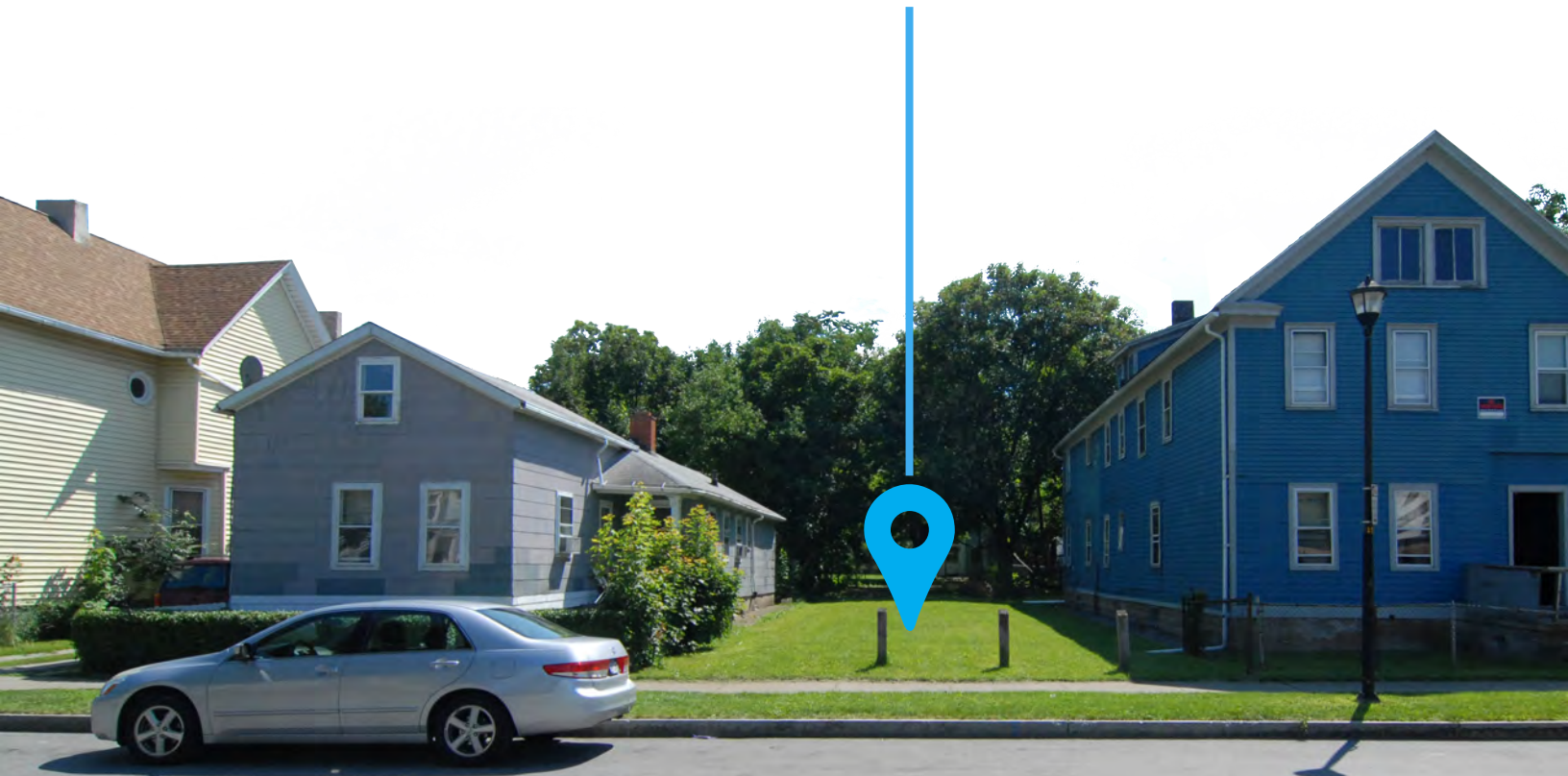
#### MANAGING CITY-OWNED REAL ESTATE

The City is the largest land owner within municipal boundaries. The Real Estate Division is given responsibility for overseeing and managing this property. Its goal is to responsibly steward all City-owned property while working to return surplus City-owned property to productive use through infill development that supports home ownership, economic development, neighborhood revitalization, and growing the tax base.

The City's main source of surplus property is the annual tax foreclosure sale. Any property included in the auction that does not receive a bid automatically transfers to City ownership, but the City is also able to bid on properties in the auction

so long as acquisition funds have been allocated for its purchase. In addition, the City can also acquire property via eminent domain, negotiated sale, or donation.

The Real Estate Division's inventory includes nearly 60% of the vacant residential parcels within the city. Real Estate staff assess and monitor the condition of these parcels and, while seeking permanent disposition, entertain applications for community gardens. They work with other City departments, residents, community partners, and developers to plan for property disposition. For more information on the City's vacant land management, see [Initiative Area 3-Section B, Vacant Lands](#).



## STRATEGIC REHAB AND REPAIR

The age of Rochester housing stock combined with the impact that four seasons and relatively harsh winters has on older buildings means that most homeowners and landlords need to make significant ongoing maintenance investments in their property. The City focuses its support for rehab and repair efforts – in partnership with local housing agencies like [Pathstone](#), [NeighborWorks Rochester](#), and [ABC](#) – to low-income homeowners and renters. This support largely includes emergency furnace and hot water replacement, “aging in place” home modifications for seniors (with [Lifespan](#)), and roof repair financing. The City sometimes targets these initiatives in neighborhoods where new housing development is taking place.

One of the most important rehab and repair initiatives is the City’s Lead Hazard Control Program. Lead poisoning is a public health crisis affecting cities across the country, particularly those with older housing stock built before lead paint was banned in 1978 (90% of Rochester’s housing stock). There is no level of blood lead concentration that is known to be safe, and the impacts of childhood lead exposure are irreversible, so it is critical to identify and prevent lead exposure upfront. Under the program, a lead risk assessment is completed and funding is available to help income-qualified households (both rental and owner occupant) make improvements to eliminate lead hazards such as window and door replacement, porch repair or replacement, paint stabilization, remediation of bare soil.

## COMPREHENSIVE AND PROACTIVE CODE ENFORCEMENT

Enforcement of municipal property codes ensures that property meets or exceeds required standards, thereby protecting the health, safety and welfare of those who live, work and visit the city and conserving the value of property. Rochester has one of the most proactive and comprehensive code enforcement programs in the country. There are between 8,000 and 10,000 individual properties being addressed through the City’s code enforcement programs at any given time and each Code Enforcement Officer manages an active caseload of 300-350 properties, paint stabilization, remediation of bare soil.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

**“Building conditions are critical. When homes, commercial buildings, and municipal buildings are crumbling or poorly maintained the city suffers.”**

### PUBLIC COMMENT

**“Explore some sort of tax incentive to encourage landlords to update their buildings to make them safe and more sustainable.”**

# A. HOUSING (CONTINUED)

## CITY OF ROCHESTER'S INVOLVEMENT IN HOUSING CONTINUED

### CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY

Rochester's renewable Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) process requires interior and exterior inspections of all residential rental properties in the city to ensure that they meet basic health and safety standards, and has an 88% voluntary compliance rate from landlords. Multi-family and mixed-use buildings with at least one residential unit require C of O renewal every three years, and singles and doubles require C of O renewal every six years (unless a lead hazard has been identified and the property is in a "high risk" area for lead, in which case interim controls are put in place to mitigate the violation and C of O renewal is required after three years).

A unique partnership with the Monroe County Department of Human Services helps to drive compliance, as the City shares which properties have failed to meet health and safety standards each month and the County issues stop-rent orders for all landlords accepting social services rental assistance until violations are addressed.

Rochester's C of O process is nationally recognized as one of the most proactive in the country, and is unique in requiring interior inspections of all rental units. Most cities rely on exterior inspections alone and are driven by tenant or neighbor complaints, rather than a comprehensive list of all rental properties in the city.





In 2005, Rochester passed its [2005 Lead Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Ordinance](#), which is considered by many to be the most aggressive and effective lead law in the country. The law was passed after close collaboration with the Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning and County Health Department, and builds on the strength of our proactive C of O and interior inspection process. **As a result of the lead law, the Lead Hazard Control Program, and ongoing community partnerships, blood lead levels in city children have been reduced by 85% since 2004.**

As a resource to the community, the City provides real time information (updated nightly) on every rental unit citywide that has been inspected and found to be [code compliant](#) and [lead-safe](#).

## **CODE ENFORCEMENT + TARGETED REHAB AS A FOUNDATION TO HEALTHY HOUSING**

Rochester's efforts to promote healthy housing through our proactive rental inspection, lead ordinance, Lead Hazard Control Program, and collaborations with Monroe County's Departments of Health and Human Services, the Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning, and other community partners led to an 85% reduction in elevated blood lead levels among city kids and have been **recognized by the National League of Cities as the nation's "gold standard in city-level healthy housing policy and programming."**

Given our unique and comprehensive data generated from full interior inspections of all rental housing in the city, the city hopes to leverage its lead work and expand to other health conditions with a strong correlation to housing quality, such as asthma or depression. A citywide Healthy Housing Needs Assessment was developed in 2016 through a data partnership with faculty at the University of Rochester's Department of Environmental Medicine and the City is working towards stronger relationships with local healthcare providers to facilitate further research, data sharing, and partnerships.

And through the Rochester Safe and Efficient Housing Initiative, headed by the Community Foundation, City staff help to facilitate a new more integrated approach and braid funding across city and local housing agency initiatives to complete holistic health housing and energy efficiency improvements for low-income homeowners.

## CITY OF ROCHESTER'S INVOLVEMENT IN HOUSING CONTINUED

### VACANT PROPERTY MANAGEMENT, DEMOLITION, AND REDEVELOPMENT

Code enforcement staff monitor all vacant buildings within the city, 90% of which are vacant residential structures. Most vacant structures are identified by Code Enforcement Officers on the ground, but staff also identify new vacant cases by reviewing the County Clerk's foreclosure filings list each month for properties that aren't already in the code enforcement system. Vacant structures are boarded up when necessary and receive continuous monitoring for grass, trash, and security. They are given a condition assessment and classified as one of three types:

- **Non-Blighted.** The goal with non-blighted vacant properties is to monitor and maintain them in relatively good condition and pressure banks to resolve or move through the foreclosure process as quickly as possible to ensure minimal deterioration and neighborhood impact.
- **Blighted.** Blighted properties are those that stick out on a block or a neighborhood. The goal with these properties is to enforce the correction of blight, or pursue strategic abandonment actions to expedite a change in ownership as quickly as possible and work with new owners to bring properties up to better conditions.
- **Demolition Candidate.** Properties in the most serious state of deterioration and abandonment are identified as demolition candidates in order to eliminate blight in neighborhoods as quickly as possible. These cases are aggressively ticketed and pursued via acquisition at the tax foreclosure auction or through the demolition hearing process. Immediate demolitions are also pursued in the most extreme cases of properties that pose health and safety risks.

**THROUGH MONITORING AND AGGRESSIVE ENFORCEMENT, THE CITY HAS SUCCESSFULLY REDUCED THE NUMBER OF VACANT STRUCTURES IN THE CITY BY ABOUT 26% SINCE 2008, DOWN TO JUST OVER 2,000 – ABOUT 3% OF STRUCTURES CITYWIDE.**



## A. HOUSING (CONTINUED)

### CITY OF ROCHESTER'S INVOLVEMENT IN HOUSING CONTINUED

#### PREVENTING AND ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS

City staff work closely with local homeless service providers, housing providers, and funders to prevent homelessness, rapidly re-house individuals and families who become homeless, and support appropriate services available for individuals and families facing homelessness by:

- Participating in the [Rochester/Monroe County Continuum of Care](#) and working with members of the [Homeless Services Network](#) on coordinated access to services.
- Partnering with [The Housing Council](#) and [Empire Justice](#) to support their foreclosure prevention and predatory lending work.
- Partnering with the [Legal Aid Society](#) to prevent evictions through landlord-tenant education and counseling.

The City does not construct, own, or operate homeless shelters. Its resources are focused on supporting the numerous community partners that provide services and housing to this vulnerable population.

#### HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

The City works collaboratively with a wide array of internal and external stakeholders – including other City departments, community groups, housing and human service agencies, developers, advocacy groups, government agencies, etc. – to develop plans and studies related to housing development, neighborhood revitalization, brownfield redevelopment, and citywide or regional housing policy or fair housing promotion. Some examples include:

- [2018 Citywide Housing Market Study](#)
- [Consolidated Community Development Plan](#)
- [2015 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice](#)
- [2012 Homeless Resolution Strategy](#)

For full list of active city plans, visit the [City's Projects and Plans](#) website.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

**“No one should be homeless. We need affordable housing and need to renovate existing homes that could be lived in.”**

## PUTTING THE CITY’S ROLE IN HOUSING INTO CONTEXT

It is important to recognize that the City’s role is limited when it comes to housing, despite the many different City departments, bureaus, and leadership who are involved in work related to housing.

The City is able to set and enforce standards for code enforcement. It can develop housing-related policies and identify goals or preferences for the design, types, and populations served by City-supported housing development projects. It provides tax relief and limited gap financing to support housing projects that serve city goals, and can require that developers provide community benefits as a condition of receiving city resources (e.g., reserving set asides of affordable units to ensure mixed-income housing or meeting workforce hiring targets to ensure that city residents or historically marginalized populations benefit from construction projects). However, outside the limits of code enforcement and zoning compliance – the City cannot tell private property owners what to do with their property. Nor can it dictate rents or sale prices being offered. And unlike the [Rochester Housing Authority \(RHA\)](#), the City does not construct, own, or operate affordable housing units.

In order to meet the housing and other community goals of *Rochester 2034*, the City will need to work closely with a wide range of partners, including, but not limited to, housing service providers, lenders, neighborhood associations, developers (for profit and not-for-profit), realtors, employers, anchor institutions, community based organizations, schools, universities, foundations, advocacy organizations, social service providers, healthcare organizations, and many others.

## WHAT WE HEARD

People care passionately about housing choices, affordability, and quality of life in neighborhoods. A few of the big themes from neighborhood association meetings conducted during *Rochester 2034* were that people want to promote more homeownership opportunities in neighborhoods and want to see a broader array of housing types and designs that better reflect diverse and changing community needs and preferences. A number of aging homeowners also expressed concern about the idea of “aging in place” – they love their city neighborhoods and want to stay as they age, but are looking for a smaller space and can’t find the kind of housing type that feels like a good match (e.g., a smaller size, mid-price point, single floor, low maintenance condo).

### PUBLIC COMMENT

**“So much of the city is very restrictive single family zoning. Residential districts should allow a greater diversity of housing types such as doubles, small apartment buildings, accessory dwelling units, etc.”**

### PUBLIC COMMENT

**“End parking requirements and allow more multifamily housing which makes more sense for today’s demographics especially for young people. Upzone! Replace restrictive single-family house on large lot zoning. A neighborhood needs people in order to be vibrant, and to get more people you need more housing. Multifamily housing with less lot size restrictions, and remove parking requirements.”**

# A. HOUSING [HSG]

# ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>HSG-1</b></p> <p><b>Fully implement existing housing plans, initiatives, and policies.</b></p>	<p>HSG-1a Work with community partners to implement the recommendations of existing housing and community development plans and studies, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <a href="#">2018 Citywide Housing Market Study</a></li> <li>– <a href="#">Transit Supportive Corridors Study</a></li> <li>– <a href="#">2015 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice</a></li> <li>– <a href="#">JOSANA Neighborhood Master Plan</a></li> <li>– <a href="#">Marketview Heights Urban Renewal District (URD) Plan</a></li> <li>– 14621 Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Plan</li> <li>– <a href="#">Lyell-Lake-State Street Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Plan</a></li> <li>– <a href="#">Vacuum Oil-South Genesee River Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Plan</a></li> <li>– <a href="#">Bulls Head Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) and Revitalization Plan</a></li> <li>– <a href="#">East Main Arts and Market District Plan</a></li> <li>– <a href="#">Center City Master Plan</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>City</b>, NYS, HUD, Developers, Housing Agencies, Landlords, Monroe County, RHA, Other Community Partners</p>
	<p>HSG-1b Build on the success of Celebrate City Living and identify additional strategies to aggressively market the housing choices and benefits of living in the City of Rochester, with its many diverse neighborhoods and outstanding community amenities.</p>	<p><b>Celebrate City Living Coalition</b>, City, Realtors, Neighborhood Groups, RDDC, Other Community Partners</p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>HSG-1</b> Fully implement existing housing plans, initiatives, and policies.	HSG-1c Continue to implement the City’s Housing Policy	<b>City</b> , Housing Agencies, Housing Service Providers, HUD, RHA, NYS HCR, Lenders, Developers, Landlords, Monroe County, Neighborhood Groups, Celebrate City Living Coalition, Other Community Partners
	HSG-1d Seek strategic opportunities to expand the City’s homeownership programs and Employer Assisted Housing Initiative (EAHI).	<b>City</b> , Housing Agencies, Housing Service Providers, Lenders, Community Partners
<b>HSG-2</b> Improve understanding and monitoring of local housing and community development issues, needs, opportunities, and impacts.	HSG-2a Develop an up-to-date citywide housing inventory with as much information as possible on unit types, affordability levels and expiration dates, ownership patterns, accessibility (including physical accessibility, but also proximity to key anchors and amenities), neighborhood characteristics, housing market indicators, etc. and establish expectations for ongoing inventory maintenance.	<b>City</b> , RHA, Developers, Housing Agencies, Other Community Partners
	HSG-2b Develop housing and community development measures to document neighborhood conditions, track change, and identify emerging needs. Share measures with the public and community partners, and use them to inform community development strategy and investment. Identify recommended timeframe for updating measures to monitor change over time.	<b>City</b> , Community Partners

# A. HOUSING [HSG]

# ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>HSG-2</b></p> <p><b>Improve understanding and monitoring of local housing and community development issues, needs, opportunities, and impacts.</b></p>	<p>HSG-2c Conduct research to inform new strategies and initiatives, on issues such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Private rental market to develop more creative and effective strategies to engage landlords in neighborhood revitalization and the provision of quality affordable housing (particularly for low, very low, and extremely-low income renters).</li> <li>– How to promote more mixed-income development across all neighborhoods and housing market types.</li> <li>– New, emerging, or untapped housing types and ownership structures, how they work, and if/how local developers could produce them for a range of affordability and accessibility needs, given Rochester’s market context. These could include condos, co-housing, ranch homes, cooperatives, tiny or small homes, resident landlords, micro apartments, in-law apartments, senior communities, live/work spaces, small apartment buildings or mixed-use buildings, etc.</li> <li>– New housing development to understand where tenants move from and assess whether new construction has any impact on vacancy, blight, or demo needs in other parts of the city; and to assess whether different building types have different neighborhood impacts over time (scattered site infill vs. larger multi-family buildings).</li> </ul>	<p><b>City,</b> Colleges and Universities, Foundations, Housing Agencies, Developers, Community Partners</p>



**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>HSG-3</b> <b>Improve collaborative planning and coordination to promote more holistic housing policy and community development.</b>	HSG-3a Integrate housing and community development planning efforts with the City Planning Office and <i>Rochester 2034</i> .	<b>City</b> , Community Partners
	HSG-3b Develop and then implement an Assessment of Fair Housing plan in coordination with the Rochester Housing Authority (RHA), Monroe County, and Towns of Greece and Irondequoit.	<b>City</b> , RHA, Monroe County, Greece, Irondequoit, Community Partners
	HSG-3c Proactively connect housing initiatives, policy, and development with economic development and employment initiatives, parks and recreation programming, commercial corridor strategies, community school implementation, street design and infrastructure planning, etc.	<b>City</b> , Community Partners
	HSG-3d Partner with the Monroe County Aging Alliance and local towns and villages on Age-Friendly Community planning and certification efforts, and develop strategies to produce housing types needed by the growing senior population.	<b>Monroe County Aging Alliance</b> , <b>City</b> , Monroe County, RHA, Developers, Community Partners

# A. HOUSING [HSG]

# ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>HSG-4</b></p> <p><b>Pursue new housing development that grows the city's population and fosters the creation of vibrant, equitable neighborhoods.</b></p>	<p>HSG-4a Support the production of new high-quality, mixed-income housing that is affordable and accessible to people across a wide range of incomes, abilities, household compositions, life stages, and ages.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Developers, Neighborhood Groups, Other Community Partners</p>
	<p>HSG-4b Focus housing investments and encourage mixed-use development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Prioritize development along multi-modal corridors, in/near mixed-use centers, and near major investment areas, as outlined by <a href="#">Initiative Area 2, The Placemaking Plan</a>.</li> <li>– Encourage new housing development near jobs and employment centers, childcare, schools, retail, parks and recreation or community centers, and other community anchors/amenities</li> </ul>	<p><b>City</b>, Developers, Neighborhood Groups, Other Community Partners</p>
	<p>HSG-4c Encourage the development of new, creative, emerging housing types and styles that reflect the varied needs and evolving preferences of city residents. This could include condos, co-housing, ranch homes, tiny or small homes, micro apartments, in-law apartments, senior communities, live/work spaces, etc.</p>	<p><b>Developers</b>, City, Neighborhood Groups, Other Community Partners</p>
	<p>HSG-4d Ensure that new housing meets high quality urban design standards.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Developers, Neighborhood Groups, Other Community Partners</p>
	<p>HSG-4e Inventory and assess opportunities to increase or expand the community benefits required of projects receiving City development support (e.g. loans, grants, PILOTs or other tax relief, land sale contracts, support letters for external funding applications), such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Additional affordable units</li> </ul>	<p><b>City</b>, Community Partners</p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>HSG-4</b> <b>Pursue new housing development that grows the city's population and fosters the creation of vibrant, equitable neighborhoods.</b>	HSG-4e cont. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Additional mixed income units</li><li>– Workforce and contracting commitments that benefit women, minorities, city residents, Section 3, or other underrepresented groups, etc.</li><li>– Community amenities such as public art, bicycle/pedestrian enhancements, public spaces, etc.</li><li>– Additional categories of community benefits as identified</li></ul>	
	HSG-4f Use information from the 2018 Citywide Housing Market Study to inform housing and community development strategies and partnerships: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Maintain the strongest markets and work with strategic partners to increase their inclusivity by creating more affordable opportunities for low and moderate income households to rent or buy</li><li>– Revitalize and strengthen middle markets by promoting homeownership, fostering neighborhood pride, and encouraging community reinvestment</li><li>– Stabilize housing through proactive code enforcement and healthy housing initiatives in the weakest markets, seek opportunities to develop neighborhood employment or connect residents with jobs, and aggressively re-position vacant and abandoned property as an asset for future redevelopment</li></ul> <p>(For a complete list of recommended strategies, see Rochester's <a href="#">2018 Citywide Housing Market Study</a>.)</p>	<b>City</b> , Developers, RHA, Lenders, CDFIs, Neighborhood Groups, Other Community Partners

# A. HOUSING [HSG]

# ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>HSG-5</b></p> <p><b>Pursue additional housing strategies that support innovative and equitable housing and community development.</b></p>	<p>HSG-5a Increase the effectiveness, impact, and reach of the Rochester Land Bank to control the disposition of tax delinquent properties in order to increase owner occupancy and ensure that more properties are brought up to code:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Identify and grow sustainable funding sources for the Land Bank</li> <li>– Expand the network of pre-qualified development partners that the Land Bank can work with</li> </ul> <hr/> <p>HSG-5b Seek opportunities to expand our community's innovative healthy housing work while maintaining significant focus and results preventing child lead poisoning including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Growing an integrated, braided funding approach to healthy housing as modelled by the Rochester Safe and Efficient Homes Initiative (RSEHI)</li> <li>– Continuing to refine targeting of efforts to areas and households most impacted by unhealthy housing</li> <li>– Building stronger collaborations with local health and healthcare providers</li> <li>– Improving and standardizing data collection to analyze impacts of healthy housing work</li> <li>– Fully integrating energy efficiency into healthy housing efforts</li> <li>– Integrating home modifications for “aging-in-place” into healthy housing</li> </ul>	<p><b>City</b>, Land Bank, NYS AG, Developers, Housing Agencies, Other Community Partners, Funders</p> <hr/> <p><b>City</b>, Housing Agencies, Housing Service Providers, HUD, NYSERDA, Monroe County DHS, Monroe County Health Dept., Health Agencies, Healthcare Providers, Healthy Housing Community Partners, Funders</p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>HSG-5</b> <b>Pursue additional housing strategies that support innovative and equitable housing and community development.</b>	HSG-5c Work with strategic partners to test and improve implementation of innovative strategies to address homelessness, such as housing first strategies, tiny homes with coordinated services, etc.	<b>City</b> , Homeless Services Network, Community Partners
	HSG-5d Explore creative financing options (micro mortgages, loan interest write-downs, mixed-use property rehab loans) and ownership models (resident landlords, cooperatives, land trusts, affordable condos) that could help to expand access to homeownership and housing reinvestment.	City, Lenders, CDFIs, Housing Organizations, Community Partners
	HSG-5e Explore the feasibility and value of a housing trust fund to raise additional resources to help invest in housing and community development goals.	City, , Lenders, Foundations, Community Partners

# A. HOUSING [HSG]

# ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>HSG-6</b></p> <p><b>Develop and implement middle neighborhoods strategies and advocacy as a means towards expanding homeownership and building community wealth.</b></p>	<p>HSG-6a Proactively partner with developers and the Rochester Land Bank to rehab vacant homes and make them available for first time, income qualified homebuyers in middle market neighborhoods.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Land Bank, Greater Rochester Housing Partnership, Flower City Habitat For Humanity, Land Bank Preferred Developers Network, Developers, Housing Agencies, Community Partners</p>
	<p>HSG-6b Proactively partner with organizations working to promote and expand homeownership, such as housing agencies and young professional organizations, to encourage their clients and members to purchase homes in middle neighborhoods.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Housing Agencies, ROCBYP, RYP, Roc City Coalition, Community Partners</p>
	<p>HSG-6c Recruit additional employers to participate in the Employer Assisted Housing Initiative (EAHI) and work with participating employers to market middle neighborhoods to their employees. Aggressively market the city's home buyer programs to residents, businesses, neighborhood associations, realtors, housing agencies, and other community partners working in middle neighborhoods.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Employers, Community Partners</p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>HSG-6</b> <b>Develop and implement middle neighborhoods strategies and advocacy as a means towards expanding homeownership and building community wealth.</b>	HSG-6d Identify which middle neighborhoods already have areas that are eligible for historic residential or commercial tax credits and aggressively market the credits as a source of financing for property reinvestment; also seek opportunities to designate additional districts that overlap with middle neighborhoods.	<b>City</b> , Landmark Society, Celebrate City Living Coalition, Neighborhood Groups, Realtors, Community Partners
	HSG-6e Work with lenders and community development financial institutions (CDFIs) to develop innovative home improvement and renovation loan products that support and encourage private reinvestment.	<b>City</b> , Lenders, CDFIs, Community Partners
	HSG-6f Continue participating in The American Assembly Middle Neighborhoods Community of Practice and identify additional middle neighborhood strategies to implement with local partners.	<b>City</b> , Community Partners, The American Assembly

# B. VACANT LANDS

## INTRODUCTION

Rochester's population losses over the last several decades, like so many other "Rust Belt" cities, left a legacy of vacancy that is one of our greatest urban challenges. A rigorous demolition program, along with City Hall's home sale programming, is steadily addressing the issue of vacant homes. However, while demolishing vacant dilapidated buildings is a necessary and beneficial process, the City's demolition program leaves behind hundreds of vacant lots scattered throughout Rochester. Programming the future of these vacant lots is the subject of this section of *Rochester 2034*.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Half of the vacant parcels in Rochester are owned by the City
- All city-owned vacant lots are maintained at a "clean and green" standard, which exceeds what many cities have in place.
- The City should become more strategic in how it plans for and disposes of city-owned vacant land, taking guidance from the recommendations of the 2018 Citywide Housing Market Study.
- Until redevelopment is feasible, vacant land may present opportunities for creative, community-oriented interim uses (gardens, play spaces, art or beautification projects).





## VACANT LAND IN THE CITY OF ROCHESTER

Rochester's aging housing stock, combined with the nearly 70-year decline in population, creates today's challenge of managing an inventory of vacancy that impairs neighborhoods around the city. Over the years, the number of vacated buildings has grown, many with only one option – demolition. The expense of demolition, which includes

costly environmental abatement and technical expertise, contributes to Rochester's inventory of structures needing demolition. During the last decade, however, the City of Rochester committed substantial resources to tackling the challenges of vacant buildings, and recently that effort has been ramped up. Annually, the City is demolishing about 100 vacant structures that are persistently blighting a neighborhood or are structurally unstable.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

**"Find more beautiful options, seek opportunities for vacant lot maintenance to be a workforce development/training strategy, develop some innovative interim or perhaps long term uses that involve urban agriculture, renewable fuel production, or other innovative creative emerging opportunities."**

## B. VACANT LANDS (CONTINUED)

### VACANT LAND IN THE CITY OF ROCHESTER CONTINUED

The cost of demolishing one structure is approximately \$20,000, which generally includes asbestos and lead surveys and abatement, demolition, debris disposal, and re-grading and seeding the site. The basement structure is crushed into pieces of no more than two feet and placed in the bottom 1/3 of the basement hole and the basement slab is cracked to allow for drainage. The remainder of the hole is then backfilled with visually-inspected soil. The site is left graded and seeded. With this demolition method, the cost to build a new structure on these vacant lots is higher because the residual subsurface debris must be removed before new construction can begin. If, instead, the

basement materials of the preexisting structure were removed from the site and the hole backfilled with clean soil, redevelopment could be expedited. The following two alternatives, while adding to demolition expenses, would reduce redevelopment costs:

- Remove basement and backfill with clean, virgin fill (\$12,000+ additional costs)
- Remove basement and backfill with clean tested fill (\$15,000+ additional costs)

In 2018, the City implemented a strategy of performing the first above listed option for demolitions in targeted housing development areas. According to city records, there are approximately 5,000 vacant parcels across all land uses. Over 2,500 of these vacant parcels are city owned, and of that, nearly 90% are in a residential zoning district.

An interactive map of City-owned vacant land can be found [here](#).



## COSTS OF MAINTAINING VACANT LAND

While removing dilapidated structures is clearly a priority for the City and its residents, the remaining vacant lots present their own challenges. Rochester is committed to a minimum standard of maintaining vacant lots as graded, seeded, and mowed, while also protecting them with a perimeter of bollards to avoid illegal dumping on the lot. Rochester’s “clean and green” maintenance standards exceed the standards of many other cities. The annual cost of maintaining City-owned

vacant lots is approximately \$650,000, or \$260 per lot, which includes the physical maintenance of the lots but does not include the cost of City staff monitoring the condition of the vacant lots to ensure they meet minimum standards. In addition to being costly to maintain, vacant lots are not contributing to the tax base and can leave a neighborhood feeling a sense of abandonment and isolation.



## B. VACANT LANDS (CONTINUED)

### CURRENT DISPOSITION PRACTICES FOR VACANT CITY-OWNED PARCELS



#### **SALE TO ADJACENT PROPERTY OWNERS FOR SIDE YARDS**

Currently, if a property is deemed “unbuildable” generally due to its size, terrain, or irregular shape, it is offered to adjoining property owners for \$1.00, plus recording fees. The purchaser(s) is required to combine the lot with their own lot.



#### **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL SALE**

A vacant lot that is of a size that is deemed “buildable”, often resulting from the City combining contiguous parcels, is appraised for its value for potential reuse. Then, the City’s Real Estate Office prepares and distributes a Request for Proposals wherein interested parties are requested to submit a concept plan and proof of financial capacity to the City for a chance to purchase the property at the appraised value. The Real Estate Office may also offer lots to adjacent property owners for appraised value. Currently, a garden use would not be the subject of a Request for Proposals because it would be facilitated through a seasonal garden permit.



#### **GARDEN PERMIT PROGRAM**

The City of Rochester offers seasonal permits for gardeners who want to build and maintain seasonal gardens on City-owned vacant lots. As of 2018, the City processes approximately 80 garden permits each year. Gardeners who wish to use the lot for multiple years must get a new permit every year.

In late 2018, Mayor Warren announced that the City will begin issuing five-year permits in 2019 for established community gardens. Until this announcement, the city issued permits for community gardens on vacant, City-owned properties for one growing season at a time. Under the new policy, if a not-for-profit organization has held a permit for three years and the City has not received any complaints about the organization’s garden, then it will qualify for the new five-year permit.



#### **LEASE/LICENSE AGREEMENTS**

The City also uses standard license agreements or leases to facilitate the use of City-owned land for uses that are longer than short-term temporary uses. These agreements are a good tool for longer term arrangements with provisions for management and maintenance requirements, allowing the City to retain some control.



**PUBLIC COMMENT**

“Create policies that directly allow entrepreneurs to make use of vacant space for urban agriculture.”

## B. VACANT LANDS (CONTINUED)

### NEW APPROACHES TO REPURPOSING VACANT LOTS

The City seeks to have no unproductive vacant land by 2034. While this is essentially the same objective under which the City is currently operating, *Rochester 2034* aims to guide the City's land disposition decisions so we invest strategically and in a way that makes the use of land sustainable. Although urban vacant land is often viewed negatively, Rochester intends to change that view to one of optimism and hope by offering alternatives so that vacant lots can be viewed as opportunity sites. The following list offers options for the repurposing vacant lots citywide.

#### VACANT LOT DISPOSITION IN ACCORDANCE WITH 2018 CITYWIDE HOUSING MARKET STUDY

Decisions around repurposing vacant land should rely on the findings and strategies outlined in the City of Rochester [2018 Citywide Housing Market Study](#). Guided by the Study, the options for highest and best use of vacant land are listed below by market type:

- **Strongest Demand Housing Market (Type 1.00-1.33).**  
Vacant land in this market must be made available for new residential and mixed-use development. Land should be reused as housing with an eye toward ensuring that new housing development includes dwelling units that are affordable to residents of varying income levels.
- **Middle Demand Housing Market (Type 1.66-2.33).**  
Vacant land in this market should be oriented specifically to encourage and support home ownership. Where vacant land, smaller than 4,000 square feet, can bolster a smaller-than-average owner-occupied lot, the side-yard disposition program should be applied. Otherwise, to the extent practicable, City-owned vacant lots should be strategically made available for infill owner occupant development such as Habitat for Humanity projects, rent-to-own projects, owner-occupant private development, etc.
- **Lowest Demand Housing Market (Type 2.66-3.00).**  
Acquiring vacant land in this market should continue to be the City's practice. Vacant land should be held by the City for the purpose of assembling land for development opportunities that include energy production, food production, job formation, workforce development, and construction of medical facilities and consumer services. Building community capacity and fostering interest in community gardens should be a programming priority in the City in this market type. See [Initiative Area 4-Section D, Urban Agriculture and Community Gardens](#) for more information.

## NEW APPROACHES TO REPURPOSING VACANT LOTS CONTINUED

### VACANT LOTS ALONG TRANSIT CORRIDORS

Vacant lots present an opportunity to support the initiative of promoting transit through land use. See [Appendix E: 2018 Transit-Supportive Corridors Study](#) for more information on Rochester’s transit corridors. Small vacant lots along transit corridors should be prioritized for use as enhanced bus stops or transit hubs with bike racks; locations for public art; and/or, installation of public information kiosks. This should be a consideration city-wide along transit routes. Larger vacant lots or clusters of lots along transit corridors should be viewed as opportunity sites for high-density residential and mixed-use development.

### COMMUNITY SOLAR

Many households and businesses do not currently have access to solar because they rent, live in multi-tenant buildings, have roofs that are unable to host a solar system installation, or cannot afford the capital costs to install solar. Community solar offers homeowners, renters, and businesses access to the economic and environmental benefits of solar energy generation regardless of the physical attributes or ownership of their home or business.

Community solar refers to large local solar facilities, owned and operated by solar developers that community members may join. Community solar subscribers receive credit on their electricity bills for their share of the solar power produced and generally receive a separate bill from the solar provider for the solar power purchased. The solar power is purchased for a lower amount than the credit received, providing a cost savings to the subscriber. This model for access to solar energy is being rapidly adopted nationwide. While most community solar developments are constructed on large multi-acre parcels of land in rural or suburban areas around the city, surplus vacant land in the city could lend itself to installing community

solar facilities, which could be marketed by the developers to the surrounding neighborhood, providing residents with lower electricity costs. The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) maintains a [listing of community solar developments on its website](#). Note that customers do not have to reside in the municipality where the solar field is located to subscribe, but the solar developer must be contacted directly to inquire about signing up.

NYSERDA also offers a [“Solar for All” community solar program](#) designed specifically for low and moderate income residents. This program provides solar credits on the participant’s utility bill, with no additional cost to the participant (e.g. no separate bill from the solar developer for the power). Solar projects under this program are currently being planned for the Rochester region.

Community solar expands access to solar for all, in particular, low-to-moderate income customers most impacted by a lack of access, all while building a stronger and more resilient electric grid.

Both the public and private sector have been involved in installing solar facilities within the City of Rochester. For more information on community solar as an energy alternative, see the Rochester Climate Action Plan.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

“Solar panels in vacant lots!”

## B. VACANT LANDS (CONTINUED)

### NEW APPROACHES TO REPURPOSING VACANT LOTS CONTINUED

#### GATHERING AREAS, PUBLIC ART, PLAYABLE SPACES

With approval from the City of Rochester, City-owned vacant lots can serve as gathering spaces for a neighborhood, with amenities such as a community bulletin board, gazebo, pavilion, or stage. They can also be more elaborate, by acting as a location for food trucks, concerts, and festivals. Activities such as installing a sculpture or painting a wall adjacent to a lot is aesthetically pleasing with generally low-controversy and can encourage residents, youths, and students in the neighborhood to gather. A community can work together at creating public art projects to beautify a vacant lot in their community.

Creating a play space is a creative option for enlivening a vacant lot. Play is essential to children and young people's physical, social and cognitive development. Outdoor play is particularly valuable as it provides unique opportunities to experience the natural environment, providing a sense of well-being and enjoyment that being outdoors can bring. Seeing and hearing playing children is important to a vital community. In 2007, the American Academy of Pediatrics reported that play is essential to the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being of children and youth.

#### HEALTHY KIDS COALITION

The Healthi Kids Coalition, an initiative of Common Ground Health, boast the "Our Play ROCs" campaign, advocating for safer, more accessible play spaces in neighborhoods to make sure every child is able to play for at least 60 minutes, 365 days of the year. "PlayROCs Your Neighborhood" works with community groups to host pop-up play spaces at various locations throughout the City. The City should continue to partner with Healthi Kids on policy development, municipal projects, and grass-roots projects.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

**"Vacant lots would be great spaces for neighborhoods to organize events like pop-up event spaces such as food truck rodeos, craft fairs, car wash fundraisers, CSA drop off sites or weekly farmers markets."**





### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

“Turn vacant lots into community green space such as gardens, tree landscapes, rock formations, community art and music space for expression through performance. Give all Rochester people healthy quality city living.”

## B. VACANT LANDS (CONTINUED)

### NEW APPROACHES TO REPURPOSING VACANT LOTS CONTINUED

#### COMMUNITY GARDENS AND URBAN AGRICULTURE

The practice of using vacant lots for community gardens and, on a larger scale, urban agriculture is common in urban settings and is certainly happening in Rochester. Community gardens provide an opportunity for a community to work together to produce fresh food and/or flowers while beautifying their neighborhood. For a complete discussion of this topic, see [Initiative Area 4-Section D, Urban Agriculture and Community Gardens](#).

#### CLIMATE BUFFERS

Climate buffers are natural areas specially designed to reduce the consequences of climate change. In Rochester, this could translate into vacant lots being used to catch stormwater runoff and filter water in flood-prone areas during times of intense precipitation. Green infrastructure, such as rain gardens, strategically placed in areas of flooding could serve to relieve flooded streets or sidewalks if designed for such a role. It also could include pollinator gardens and pollinator paths which support biodiversity and stabilize ecosystems against climate change.



## PLANNING FOR THE HIGHEST + BEST USE OF VACANT LOTS

Enlivening a vacant lot is good for a neighborhood, but it may ultimately be in the best interest of the neighborhood and City if the lot is developed with a building in the future, as the market evolves. The determination of the highest and best use of vacant lots must take into consideration many different and sometimes competing factors, including the market, neighborhood goals, physical site conditions, neighboring uses, and location. Neighborhood engagement in decision making is prudent and encouraged. Actual development proposals are subject to review under the Building and Zoning Codes, where regulatory requirements, including community notification, are already built in.



## CITY-OWNED VACANT LAND IN ROCHESTER

“An Inquiry into City-owned Vacant Land in the City of Rochester, NY” (June 2018), a report summarizing 18 months of research carried out by RIT students, faculty, and staff reveals and analyzes issues and opportunities associated with City-owned vacant land in Rochester. Collaboration with the community was an important component of this research process. Key findings include:

- Gardening is not the only re-use of vacant land residents value; alternatives include community gathering spaces, public art spaces, children’s play spaces, orchards and wood lots
- Re-use of vacant lots enhances residents’ sense of place, social well-being, and attachment to their neighborhood
- Residents place a high value on access for children to outdoor spaces and nature
- Residents involved in community gardens, both food and flower gardens, value the social interactions associated with working with their neighbors on gardening activities;
- Growing food for food pantries, soup kitchens, and other similar organizations is highly valued by the gardeners
- Gardeners value the sharing that takes place, including sharing knowledge of gardening techniques, sharing seeds and plants, and sharing the food that is grown
- Community gardens provide educational opportunities that may not have otherwise been available - learning how to grow your own food, learning how to prepare foods grown, learning more about neighbors
- Residents strongly value the assistance they receive from local organizations such as the City of Rochester horticulturalist, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and Common Ground Health’s Healthi Kids Initiative
- Maintaining resident involvement is an issue for the regular and longer-term gardeners
- Residents are frustrated with current City policies involving the re-use of City-owned vacant land.

# B. VACANT LANDS [VNT]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>VNT-1</b> <b>Strategically position vacant sites for expedited redevelopment.</b>	VNT-1a Allocate additional demolition funds to allow properties to be backfilled with soil that is appropriate for a planned reuse. Confer with the City’s Division of Environmental Quality to determine the appropriate backfill soil quality for the anticipated or known redevelopment.	<b>City</b>
	VNT-1b Inventory the vacant lots identified as 1.00-1.33 in the <a href="#">2018 Citywide Housing Market Study</a> and identify: 1. lots that should be provided to housing partners such as Home Rochester, Habitat for Humanity, or other partners for new house construction for home ownership, 2. lots that would together be the subject of a Request for Proposals to generate interest in getting them redeveloped with housing for all income levels, and 3. lots that should be set aside for public uses such as community gardens or transit hubs.	<b>City</b>
	VNT-1c Inventory the vacant lots identified as 1.66-2.33 in the <a href="#">2018 Citywide Housing Market Study</a> and identify: 1. lots that should be provided to housing partners such as Home Rochester, Habitat for Humanity, or other partners for new house construction for home ownership, 2. lots that would together be the subject of a Request for Proposals to generate interest in getting them redeveloped, 3. lots that should be offered to adjacent property owners for side yard additions, and 4. lots that should be set aside for public uses such as community gardens or transit hubs.	<b>City</b>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>VNT-1</b> <b>Strategically position vacant sites for expedited redevelopment.</b>	VNT-1d Inventory the vacant lots identified as 2.66-3.00 in the <a href="#">2018 Citywide Housing Market Study</a> and identify: 1. lots that should be offered to adjacent property owners for side yard additions, 2. lots that should be set aside for public uses or community activities, 3. lots that may be aggregated and included in a request for proposals for community solar field installations, and d. lots that would together be the subject of a Request for Proposals to generate interest in getting them redeveloped for economic development projects.	<b>City</b>
	VNT-1e Based on an inventory (see strategies VNT-1b, VNT-1c, and VNT-1d) for lots that should be repurposed for construction of new homes for home ownership, prepare a Request for Proposals for the lots along with a promotional campaign to foster interest in the lots. This campaign should include pro formas for new homes (both singles and doubles) and quality of life information along with strategic promotional activities and events to foster interest in the lots and city living.	<b>City</b>

# B. VACANT LANDS [VNT]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>VNT-2</b> Create playable spaces on vacant lots.</p>	<p>VNT-2a Identify community groups who are willing and have the capacity to help manage and program space for community gathering and playability. Write grants to offset capital and operational costs. It should be clear to all involved parties that it is not the City’s intent to turn vacant lots into long-term parkland by virtue of allowing interim uses.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Common Ground Health, Community Groups</p>
<p><b>VNT-3</b> Facilitate Community Gardening on vacant lots.</p>	<p>VNT-3a Create the administrative infrastructure for long-term (e.g.,5-year) permit/lease arrangements for the sponsor of a community garden on City-owned land who has demonstrated a sustainable gardening operation that is supported by the immediate neighborhood.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>VNT-3b Allow gardeners to respond to City Requests for Proposals for vacant lot redevelopment in areas where gardens may be a desired amenity and are widely supported by the surrounding neighborhood, particularly within the lower demand housing markets.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>VNT-3c Consider changes to the Zoning Code that allow gardening as a principle use within specified parameters.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>VNT-4</b> <b>Create the City Hall administrative infrastructure to allow creative and flexible options for repurposing vacant lots.</b>	VNT-4a Revisit Real Estate land disposition policies to see where changes can be made to respond to the 2018 Citywide Housing Market Study recommendations.	<b>City</b>
	VNT-4b Remove or revise the City’s policy and language in Chapter 21 of the City Code around the terms “buildable” and “unbuildable” residential vacant lots. The current policy is inconsistent with the built form of the city and our desired restoration of urban vitality, density, and pedestrian scale design.	<b>City</b>
	VNT-4c Develop policies and protocols for temporary or interim uses of City-owned vacant lots for green space, while recognizing that the City’s long term goal is to return most City-owned lots to housing, commercial, or mixed-use development that provides community benefits while also contributing to the city’s tax base.	<b>City</b>
	VNT-4d Research the feasibility of granting long-term (3-10 years) lease arrangements with minimal or no fee to a person/group/institution to allow the management and programming of City-owned vacant land for community use and benefit.	<b>City, Community Partners</b>
	VNT-4e During the rewrite of the City Zoning Code, include provisions to allow long-term temporary uses of vacant lots for gardening and/or community gathering/events space.	<b>City</b>
	VNT-4f Review models from other cities to develop some creative programming for public art installations on strategic vacant lots throughout all areas of the City of Rochester.	<b>City, Memorial Art Gallery, Local Artists, Art Advocates</b>

# C. ARTS + CULTURE

## INTRODUCTION

Arts and culture are key components of thriving and vibrant cities. A strong arts and cultural sector will instill a sense of place, connect diverse residents, and provide the needed creative retreat that can rejuvenate and inspire. Experiencing the arts removes us from the mundane and ordinary and frees our minds to consider new things, learn from each other, and connect. Places that are rich in arts and cultural offerings are desirable places to live, visit, and interact within. They attract investment, drive civic engagement, and shape a positive community culture.

As Rochester looks towards the future, we take seriously the impact and opportunity that our arts and cultural assets have to help us meet our goals. We envision Rochester as a premier “City of the Arts” and we need to plan and coordinate limited resources effectively to achieve that vision.

## ROCHESTER’S ARTS AND CULTURE SCENE

Rochester’s historic roots, early industrialists, and philanthropic community left us a rich legacy of arts and cultural institutions like the Memorial Art Gallery (MAG), Eastman School of Music, Rochester Museum and Science Center/Planetarium, Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra (RPO), Strong Museum of Play, Rochester City Ballet, George Eastman Museum, and Susan B. Anthony House. George Eastman, in particular, had an outsized role in fostering the creation of a strong and vibrant local arts community starting in the early 20th century, because he saw it as key to establishing the kind of high quality of life that would attract top employees to move to the city and work at Eastman Kodak.

Yet Rochester’s arts and culture scene is much bigger and more diverse than our oldest and largest museums and performing arts institutions. The city is filled with countless lesser-known organizations

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Rochester’s arts and culture scene is diverse and strong, considering the city’s size
- Collaboration among artists, arts organizations, institutions, the City, and philanthropic supporters is necessary to move community goals for arts and culture forward.
- We should aggressively promote Rochester as a City of the Arts and pursue policies and strategies that support that goal.
- Integrating public art into development projects and public spaces can help make Rochester a more beautiful city for all.

and artists that contribute to the overall sense that the scene is bigger than most would expect from a mid-size city, and that something exciting and new is always around the corner. From the burgeoning underground street art and wall mural scene to the seemingly out-of-nowhere Roc Holiday Village festival, the Flower City is disproportionately blessed with individuals, groups, and events that add tremendous flavor to our community.

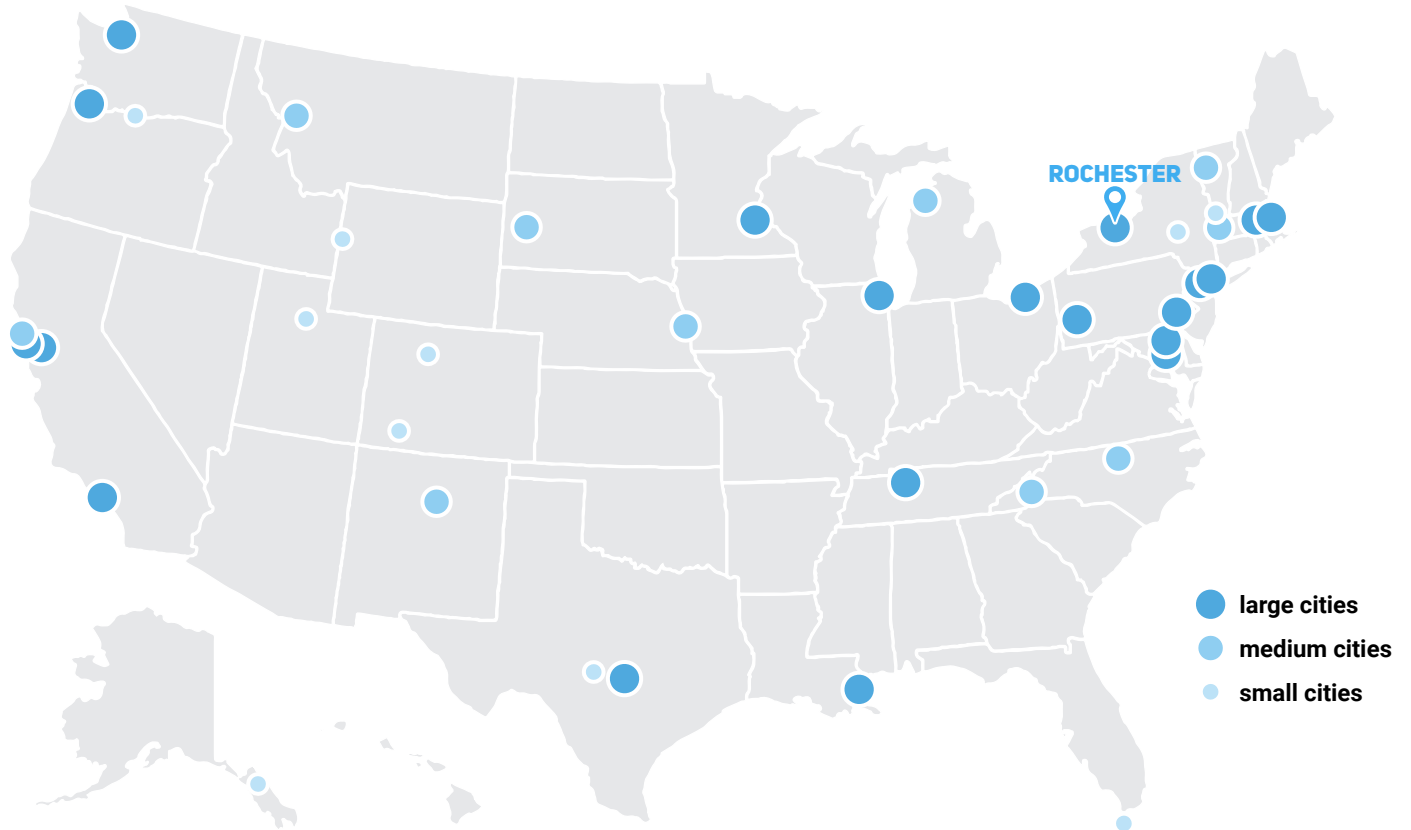
Each year, Rochester ranks highly in the Southern Methodist University (SMU) [National Center for Arts Research’s Art Vibrancy Index](#). The index looks at over 900 small, medium, and large metropolitan areas nationwide, and ranks them using a methodology that includes how many nonprofit arts and cultural organizations exist per capita and the amount of government support for the arts in each community.



## PUBLIC COMMENT

“Public art gives us cause to pause and to think about beauty and life. It can cause us to get involved and it gives us pride in our city that thinks this is important.”

### MOST VIBRANT CITIES FOR THE ARTS, 2018



**ROCHESTER ROUTINELY APPEARS IN THE ARTS VIBRANCY INDEX'S TOP 20 FOR LARGE METRO AREAS IN THE COUNTRY (AREAS WITH ONE MILLION OR MORE RESIDENTS), AND IN 2018 ROCHESTER RANKED 17TH – JUST BELOW CHICAGO, BUT ABOVE AUSTIN AND PITTSBURGH.**

## C. ARTS + CULTURE (CONTINUED)

### ROCHESTER'S ARTS AND CULTURE SCENE CONTINUED

Rochester is home to a wide variety of arts organizations spanning multiple genres that can be accessed at a diverse range of venues that serve and engage diverse audiences and interests. From finding an art or dance class for your toddler to watching world-renowned musicians perform at Eastman Theater to taking a non-fiction writing class on writing your own memoir, the range of art experiences, classes, performances, and exhibitions in Rochester is immense. The 2018 Arts Vibrancy Index counted over 140 arts organizations being based in Rochester. We cannot list them all here, but some of the better known examples include:



#### **SCHOOLS, COLLEGES, AND UNIVERSITIES SPECIALIZING IN THE ARTS**

Including the Rochester's City School District's 6-12th grade School of the Arts, as well as nationally ranked college and graduate programs in music (University of Rochester's Eastman School); photography, fine art, jewelry, and design (RIT's College of Imaging Arts and Sciences); and dance (SUNY Brockport).



#### **COMMUNITY ARTS EDUCATION FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS**

Such as the Hochstein School of Music and Dance, Writers and Books (a non-profit literary center), Flower City Art Center (with community darkroom, letterpress, ceramic studio and kiln, artist-in-residence programs, and gallery in addition to classes), Creative Workshop at the Memorial Art Gallery, Rochester Area Performing Arts (RAPA), and Borinquen Dance Theater, among others.



## **THEATER**

Such as Eastman Theater, Geva, Auditorium Theater, Rochester Broadway Theater League, Blackfriars, Downstairs Cabaret, PUSH Physical Theater, Kodak Center, Lyric Theater, Rochester Latino Theater Company, Multi-Use Community Cultural Center, Bread and Water Theater, and more. In fact there are so many theater venues, companies, festivals, and initiatives locally that a number of them have formed a non-profit consortium – TheatreRocs! – that produces a community theater calendars of all the different shows and events taking place.



## **MUSIC**

Including more than 700 public concerts given by the world-renowned Eastman School of Music, numerous local choirs and music ensembles in addition to the RPO such as Madrigalia, Rochester Gay Men's Chorus, Rochester Oratorio Society, and music festivals such as the Rochester International Jazz Festival, Party in the Park, Rochester Summer Soul Festival, ROC Women's Music Fest, and more. These are on top of the rich pop/rock music scene that boasts great venues and emerging artists capturing national attention like Joywave, Mikaela Davis, and Giant Panda Guerilla Dub Squad and has produced local legends Lou Gramm, Cab Calloway, Steve Gad, and Chuck Mangione.



## **MUSEUMS AND ART GALLERIES**

Including all the museums listed above, as well as the Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester Contemporary Art Center, ArtisanWorks, High Falls Center and Museum, numerous private art galleries, and monthly "First Friday" artist open studio programming at numerous locations around the city.

## C. ARTS + CULTURE (CONTINUED)

### ROCHESTER'S ARTS AND CULTURE SCENE CONTINUED



#### DANCE

Rochester has been home to Garth Fagan Dance, a world-renowned contemporary American dance, since 1970. A number of local theaters, including the Eastman theater, Auditorium Theater, Geva, and the Nazareth College Performing Arts Center host local company performances as well as traveling dance concerts from around the world. Rochester is also home to the Rochester City Ballet, founded in 1987 by Timothy M. Draper.



#### CINEMA

Including two non-profit film centers, such as The Little, which specializes in independent and foreign films, documentary series, and community film screenings, and the Dryden, which shares the George Eastman Museum's extraordinary collection of historic, independent, foreign, and art films, and is one of only a few cinemas in the world that is certified to project original nitrate film prints. The Highland Park neighborhood features the Cinema Theater, one of the oldest (and perhaps the oldest) continuously running movie theater in the country. Rochester is also home to numerous film festivals, including the Rochester International Film Festival (the world's longest continuously running short film festival), High Falls Film Festival (devoted to celebrating women in film), Fast Forward Film Festival (showcasing films on environmental themes), the Rochester Labor Film Series, Rochester International Jewish Film Festival, and Image Out (the largest LGBTQ+ film festival in New York State).

## PUBLIC COMMENT

**“Public art is the one of the few opportunities to be unique as a city, and create lasting beauty for everyone to enjoy.”**



## FESTIVALS

Including more than 100 festivals taking place in the region each year, the city itself is home to dozens of festivals throughout the year. Some of the largest and best known are:

- Lilac Festival (May) – ten days of celebration that attracts 500,000 people to Highland Park to see the largest collection of lilacs in the world.
- Rochester International Jazz Festival (June) – more than 320 shows at more than 20 venues over 9 days that brings 200,000 to downtown Rochester.
- Puerto Rican Festival (July) – three days of live music, food, and cultural events celebrating and recognizing the culture of Puerto Ricans in Rochester. In 2019, this festival celebrates its 50th anniversary.
- Corn Hill Arts Festival (July) – nine days of events, education, and outreach culminating in a parade and festival to celebrate LGBTQ+ community in Rochester.
- Clarissa Street Reunion (August) – A weekend gathering along Clarissa Street in the Corn Hill neighborhood that celebrates the rich history of the area where Rochester’s first African American neighborhood was founded and thrived for over 100 years before much of the area of demolished under Urban Renewal programs in the 1960s.
- Clothesline Festival (September) – Rochester longest fine arts and crafts festival that showcases a variety of mediums and styles and is held over the weekend on the lawn of the Memorial Art Gallery.
- Rochester Fringe Festival (September) – Self-described as “an 11-day, all-out, no-holds-barred, multi-disciplinary visual and performing arts festival featuring international, national and local artists. It showcases theater (physical, street, musical), comedy, visual arts, family entertainment, music, dance, spoken word, opera, poetry, literature and experiences that have yet to even be imagined.”

## C. ARTS + CULTURE (CONTINUED)

### ROCHESTER'S ARTS AND CULTURE SCENE CONTINUED

The variety of arts and cultural experiences and activities in Rochester is remarkable for a city of our size. The legacy that Rochester's early leaders and philanthropists left behind continues to impact daily life in our community, but today's scene is being enriched by the city's growing cultural diversity, the people and institutions that continue to invest in arts and culture today, and the creative individuals and groups who decide to make Rochester their home.

With such a strong framework already established, Rochester has the opportunity to grow and evolve its arts and cultural sector into an economic driver that can positively shape our future, far more than it currently does. There is room for further collaboration between local arts organizations, the City, philanthropy, private businesses and academia to infuse creativity into all that we do. There is also room to support promising grassroots efforts and start-ups that are looking to impact the community by expanding access to arts and cultural resources.

A key challenge pointed out repeatedly in the public engagement process, however, was the feeling that arts and cultural programming and investment feels unevenly distributed, both in terms of geography and socio-economic diversity. While the Neighborhood of the Arts and Downtown Rochester – two locations many of the largest and most prominent arts and culture institutions in the city are located – are popular places to live and visit, it was clear that many respondents want a rich diversity of arts and culture opportunities in their neighborhoods as well. Another common theme is the desire to provide experiences that are representative and relatable to the communities in which they intend to serve. Residents feel a strong desire to engage with the arts, but they want these experiences to feel authentic, homegrown, and unique.

#### JOSEPH AVENUE ARTS + CULTURE

The Joseph Avenue Arts and Culture Alliance (JAACA) is addressing the challenge of uneven distribution of arts and culture programming head on. Founded in 2014 by a small group of performing arts lovers in the northeast area of the city, JAACA is in the process of renovating an historic vacant synagogue on Joseph Avenue into a performing arts center with seating for 300 people. JAACA programming currently includes hosting theater, music, and dance at community gatherings, and music/instrumental instructions for children at the local public library. The recent opening of The Avenue Blackbox Theater in a formerly vacant commercial building on Joseph Avenue speaks to the positive impact that initiatives like the JAACA are already having.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

**“Public art and events are key to bringing a city together and maintaining a sense beauty and vibrancy. It helps folks to understand that creativity is essential.”**



### **ROCHESTER'S CRAFTY CULTURE**

Over the past several years, the local crafts scene has taken off, with an ever-expanding variety of homemade goods being sold at craft fairs and through local retailers. Locally made soaps, needlepoints, letterpress cards, terrariums, upcycled and repurposed items, T-shirts and other objects can be readily found. Many artists now include the City's skyline, border, logo, or some play on the word "Rochester" in their designs, revealing the emergence of a newfound sense of place and city-pride. Spaces like the Rochester Maker Space and Rochester Brainery have opened, which provide classes and workshop space for people to tinker, learn, craft, and connect. It is an exciting time to witness these changes and the new energy and enthusiasm artists and crafters have in positively incorporating the city into their work.

## C. ARTS + CULTURE (CONTINUED)

### PROMOTION AND SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS

Rochester's arts scene benefits from local media coverage, some specialized business support, and a philanthropic community that seeks to expand art access and appreciation in public life through grant making and charitable contributions.

The [Arts & Cultural Council of Greater Rochester](#) provides business support and advocacy tailored to the needs of arts organizations and creative entrepreneurs. It offers grants made available through different philanthropies, provides listings of display or performance spaces, and connects members to technical, legal, and marketing assistance. The Council maintains a calendar and directory of events, artist, and arts organizations locally.

Local public broadcast station WXXI highlights local artists and arts organizations through its Arts InFocus program, Classical 91.5 films series, Live from Hochstein, blogs, specials events, and many other communications. WXXI regularly includes arts and cultural news and events in their daily news programming. They also maintains the City of Rochester's local government access channel [City 12](#), which often includes programming that highlights local artists or creative individuals.

The local weekly [City Newspaper](#) provides perhaps the most comprehensive and accessible listing of arts and cultural events in Rochester. Detailed guides are published regularly for content/theme specific detailed coverage of arts and cultural events such as the annual Festival Guide, different seasonal guides, and specific guides to large events like the Fringe Festival. A video series Art/WORK celebrates the work of Rochester's rich community of artists. Regular opinion pieces and critiques discuss local shows and performances, ultimately providing the reader with some knowledge or understanding.

The local philanthropic community is a key asset that helps arts and cultural organizations operate, create programming, and provide equitable access. The Rochester Area Community Foundation, ESL Charitable Foundation, Farash Foundation, and other smaller local grant making groups all have a specific mission to support the arts and culture amenities and organizations in Rochester. Many local banks and other corporations are generous in their support for the arts.

The City also works to promote arts and culture through a variety of initiatives, such as:

- the ROCmusic program, which provides tuition-free high quality music lessons in rec centers;
- Roc Paint Division, which pays teaching artists and hires teen artists to design and paint murals that beautify city rec centers;
- other music, dance and theater programs that are offered as after school programs and summer camps at rec centers around the city;
- sponsoring free music concerts in a variety of styles in city parks, the public market, and other community venues; and
- sponsoring numerous music and other community festivals and parades that celebrate the diversity and history of our city.



## PUBLIC ART

Public art is art that is free and accessible and usually within or highly visible from the public realm. It is a popular concept that was broadly supported throughout the *Rochester 2034* public engagement process. Public art and its ability to impact how we perceive our environment is an important opportunity as we look to 2034. To quote directly from the [Association for Public Art](#), “what distinguishes public art is the unique association of how it is made, where it is, and what it means. Public art can express community values, enhance our environment, transform a landscape, heighten our awareness, or question our assumptions.” Public art can be permanent, temporary or rotating, large-scale or tiny, and sometimes controversial, but it almost always requires a collaborative effort.

Rochester has many examples of public art installations/initiatives, a few of which are discussed as follows.

### ALBERT PALEY

Rochester is home to [Albert Paley](#), an internationally renowned sculptor who creates giant metal sculptures and is recognized as one of the most distinguished metalsmiths in the world. Albert Paley’s work can be seen throughout the Rochester community, including:

- A 25-foot stainless steel sculpture, *Soliloquy*, at Centennial Sculpture Park at the MAG.
- The metal railings along the Main Street Bridge over the Genesee River in Downtown.
- A 90-foot high piece, *Threshold*, located outside the Klein Steel Building on Vanguard Parkway in northwest Rochester.
- A 60-foot high steel sculpture, [Genesee Passage](#), in Bausch and Lomb Place in Downtown.

“My involvement with aesthetics has gone through various phases over the years. In this evolution the constant has always been my focus on personal awareness and perception. My investigation in form development centers on the exploration of material characteristics, related processes and technologies. In creating a work of art, besides my personal experience, my concern is how it emotionally and intellectually engages the viewer. Through the creative process I have developed a personal visual vocabulary fundamentally based in symbolism and metaphor which is implicit in my work.”

–Albert Paley



## C. ARTS + CULTURE (CONTINUED)

### PUBLIC ART CONTINUED

#### ARTWALK

ARTWalk, conceived of by local residents and nationally recognized, is a permanent urban art trail, connecting arts centers and public spaces within the Neighborhood of the Arts (NOTA). The ARTWalk vision is “to be a thriving, spirited and passionate model for positive change and economic revitalization of urban spaces everywhere through its delivery and promotion of compelling and engaging outdoor arts and cultural programs.”

#### PERCENT FOR ART ORDINANCE

Percent for art programs are used to fund public art where private or specialized funding of public art is unavailable or undeveloped. This can take the form of a municipal ordinance whereby a City would stipulate that a specified percent of eligible city capital improvement project funds be set aside for the commission, purchase and installation of artworks in a variety of settings across the city. Or, it could require that a percent of the budget for eligible City-funded construction projects be spent on public art.





### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

“Seeing public art makes people know that an area is cared about and focused on. It’s exciting, it gives people landmarks and photo opportunities, helps people share excitement about the City on social media—it’s like a built-in advertisement for City culture and experiences.”

## C. ARTS + CULTURE (CONTINUED)

### PUBLIC ART CONTINUED

#### WALL\THERAPY

The [WALL\THERAPY](#) initiative in Rochester has produced large-scale murals throughout the community. It is an 'art and community intervention project using public murals as a means to transform the urban landscape, inspire, and build community.' Since 2012, the program has been bringing artists to Rochester to paint murals on buildings throughout Rochester. The initiative also helps fund diagnostic imaging sites in developing countries, enabling radiologists and other doctors to use cloud computing to access images, interpret them and recommend treatment.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

**"The Wall Therapy project has decorated our city with many beautiful murals. Building owners should be encouraged to allow the painting of more murals."**



## C. ARTS + CULTURE (CONTINUED)

### PUBLIC ART CONTINUED

#### ROC PAINT DIVISION

[Roc Paint Division](#) is the City of Rochester's Youth Mural Arts Program. Created in the fall of 2015, Roc Paint Division's mission is to beautify the City's rec centers through mural arts while providing employment and training opportunities to **young developing artists**.

#### STORY WALK

Through a grant from KaBOOM!, a national not-for-profit, the [Story Walk](#) around Phillis Wheatley library combines play with public art, offering interactive games with story themes along the sidewalk. Mounted book pages around the library give families and kids the experience of walking through their favorite story, while getting active and having fun.



## PUBLIC ART CONTINUED

### BOULEVART

The City of Rochester’s [BoulevArt](#) program combines neighborhood traffic calming with community building toward producing a truly public piece of art. The purpose of the program is to support neighborhoods seeking to organize and create painted murals on their residential streets.



### CHALLENGES

While it is recognized that strengthening the arts is important to a well-rounded and healthy community and economy, adequate funding is one of the biggest challenges. Government budgets are being tugged in many directions and the philanthropic community is also balancing a number of competing priorities. Historically, large corporations were the founders and supporters of the arts and cultural institutions and the benefactors of individual artists in their communities. But with Rochester’s shifting corporate presence, this financial support is currently sparse.

In an environment of shifting funds and competing priorities, strong advocacy is critical to successfully advancing the needs and impacts of artists and arts and cultural institutions. Coordination of that advocacy helps to implement a stronger and more sustainable agenda. The Rochester arts community is working to shore up local arts advocacy coordination to increase outreach and effectiveness in growing our local arts and cultural sector.

Inclusion across income, cultural, ethnic, and racial groups – as well as geographically, across the city’s many different neighborhoods – has historically been a challenge in the coordination and advancement of the arts. Rochester’s arts community is making strides toward meeting this challenge, recognizing the value of diversity, and growing arts venues, programming, and access throughout the community. But there is still more work to be done to achieve greater equity in accessing and experiencing our community’s arts and cultural resources.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

**“I think beautifying our city is one of the most important things we can do. By commissioning local artists the city supports local culture and local history, as well as creates a draw for people visiting the city.”**

# C. ARTS + CULTURE [AC]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>AC-1</b> Support, grow, and sustain the creative economy.</p>	<p>AC-1a Promote Rochester as a City of the Arts by leveraging marketing materials and promotions in new ways and to broader audiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Collaborate with relevant organizations to plan public campaigns and strengthen the impact by including more stakeholders.</li> <li>– Create or improve marketing materials that target creative economy employers looking to relocate.</li> <li>– Promote Rochester as an artist friendly community because of our existing arts scene, historic housing stock, affordability, and educational amenities.</li> </ul>	<p>City, Visit Rochester, Arts &amp; Cultural Council for Greater Rochester Academic Institutions, Local Museums, GRE</p>
	<p>AC-1b Explore innovative policy tools and initiatives deployed by other cities that attract artists to live and work in neighborhoods that are trying to expand access and connection to art, such as the <a href="#">Artist Relocation Program Paducah</a> in Paducah, KY.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Arts Organizations, Neighborhood Groups, Local or National Philanthropic Organizations</p>
	<p>AC-1c Integrate artists and creative businesses into economic development efforts to test, incubate, and grow emerging business types in the city, including as part of pop-ups or through partnerships with property owners to provide low or no-cost access to vacant or underutilized land, storefronts, or other space.</p>	<p>City, GRE, Living Cities, Center for Financial Empowerment, Kiva Rochester, RIT's CUE, Art Council of Greater Rochester, Various Other Business Incubators</p>
	<p>AC-1d Revisit a percent-for-art ordinance and explore which of the various models being implemented around the country would be most effective and impactful in Rochester.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Community Partners</p>



**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>AC-1</b> Support, grow, and sustain the creative economy.	AC-1e Identify obstacles to live music, plays, and other performances in the entertainment licensing process and zoning code and work to streamline procedures and regulations. This may include changes to the zoning code, the entertainment licensing process, and even on-street parking regulations.	<b>City</b>
	AC-1f Support the Eastman School of Music-led effort, "Arts in the Loop", to encourage a stronger arts presence along Main Street, connecting the successful East End District with the ROC the Riverway initiative.	<b>Eastman School of Music</b> , City, Community Partners
	AC-1g Consider adding an Arts and Culture liaison/ advocate/grant writer to City government.	<b>City</b>
<b>AC-2</b> Support Rochester's local arts and cultural organizations through community collaboration and joint fundraising.	AC-2a Collaboratively seek funding to support arts and culture programming, particularly if the funding source is available to municipal applicants or if it helps to achieve other goals (e.g., improving public health, educational opportunities, placemaking, sustainability, etc.). This may include proactively soliciting arts organizations or convening groups with similar missions to identify ways to coordinate efforts and resources.	City, Grant Making organizations Local Arts Organizations
	AC-2b Identify and pursue opportunities for enhanced outdoor performance spaces, such as a bandshell and/or music barge for the RPO (identified in the ROC the Riverway Vision Plan) and a covered outdoor space with permanent stage infrastructure for festivals and concert events.	<b>City</b> , RPO, Empire State Development

# C. ARTS + CULTURE [AC]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>AC-3</b></p> <p><b>Increase access to public art and cultural resources in an equitable and culturally sensitive way.</b></p>	<p>AC-3a Create a Public Art Master Plan for Rochester that connects public art and cultural programming to neighborhood revitalization, community building, place-making, and economic development and includes input from residents about how public art is planned and reflects the unique brand and culture of each neighborhood.</p>	<p>Arts &amp; Cultural Council of Greater Rochester and Other Arts and Culture Organizations, Community Partners, City</p>
	<p>AC-3b Continue to support event planning and programming that celebrates the city’s cultural and ethnic diversity. Seek to understand the demographics served at City-sponsored arts and cultural events so that programming and marketing can become as inclusive and culturally responsive as possible.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Festival Organizers</p>
	<p>AC-3c Identify geographic areas that lack public arts or cultural programming and work to increase access through expanded programming at rec centers or libraries, installation of public art where possible, or partnerships that bring programs like the MAG Connector.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Philanthropic community, Major Arts Institutions, Neighborhood Groups</p>
	<p>AC-3d Continue to support public art installations and pop-ups or other creative experiences that are community supported, community driven, and can proceed without public subsidy. Reduce bureaucratic or process barriers that slow these initiatives down or reduce organizers’ enthusiasm and momentum.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Local Artists</p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>AC-3</b> <b>Increase access to public art and cultural resources in an equitable and culturally sensitive way.</b>	AC-3e Integrate artistic, creative, playful, or beautifying design elements into infrastructure and development projects (e.g., decorative benches, bicycle racks, transit shelters, lighting, fences, pavers, signage, etc.).	<b>City</b>
	AC-3f Heighten public awareness and facilitate improved connection to create a sense of connectivity of existing public art installations through outreach, self-guided walking and biking tours, branded signage, and through wayfinding tools. Include older public art installations and places of interest to draw them into the public consciousness. Consider the development of an interactive application that can be used to search for public art based on location or interest.	<b>City, Local Artists</b>

# D. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

## INTRODUCTION

Rochester values its unique architectural and landscape heritage and recognizes the importance of retaining and maintaining our historic buildings and landscapes. Historic properties safeguard the city's heritage, stabilize and improve property values, foster civic pride, enhance the city's attractions for tourists and visitors, and strengthen the economy of the city. Rochester has a long history of protecting these valued resources. During the *Rochester 2034* community engagement process, the city's history and historic buildings were often mentioned as what is loved about Rochester.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Rochester has one of the most historic housing stocks in the country, and values its historic properties.
- Historic properties safeguard the city's heritage, stabilize and improve property values, foster civic pride, enhance the city's attraction of tourists and visitors, and strengthen the economy.
- Owners of designated historic buildings can receive tax incentives to help rehabilitate their properties.
- Historic preservation efforts can be boosted through collaborations among the City, community partners, homeowners, property owners, and developers.





**PUBLIC COMMENT**

"My favorite thing about Rochester is..."

our history and  
all of our historic  
beautiful Buildings

## D. HISTORIC PRESERVATION (CONTINUED)

### HISTORIC STATUS

Designating properties as historically significant offers regulatory protections for the preservation of that property as well as possible tax benefits. In the City of Rochester, properties can have a designation as one or more of the following:

#### LOCALLY-DESIGNATED PRESERVATION DISTRICT

The City of Rochester has the authority to designate local Preservation Districts. Construction or rehabilitation within these districts is regulated by the Rochester Preservation Board. Rochester's [8 Preservation Districts](#) are listed at right.

#### LOCALLY-DESIGNATED LANDMARK

The City also has the authority to designate Local Landmarks. There are approximately [80 properties](#) that are designated Local Landmarks. While some are within the Preservation Districts, others stand alone. Construction or rehabilitation work on these properties is regulated by the Rochester Preservation Board. A full list of these properties can be found [online](#).

#### STATE AND NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

While Preservation Districts and Local Landmarks are designated and regulated by the City of Rochester, an additional tool for preservation of culturally important properties is the State and National Register of Historic Places. Properties are listed on the State and National Register by the NYS Historic Preservation Office which is within the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. More information on the State Historic Preservation Office can be found [here](#) and a complete map of National Register Properties can be found [here](#).

#### DESIGNATED BUILDING OF HISTORIC VALUE

Though it would seem that a property included on the State and National Register would have the most protection, this designation only provides protection if State or federal money is being used to fund the construction or rehabilitation of the property. Most construction, demolition, and rehabilitation projects, however, do not involve State or federal money. The City of Rochester responded to this limitation by developing protective regulations in the City Zoning Code. In 2003, the City created a provision in the City Zoning Code that references "Designated Buildings of Historic Value." All the properties on the National Register or which are contributing properties in a national or local historic district are captured into one list for the purposes of addressing construction and demolition considerations through zoning review. This is an indication that Rochester values its historic resources. The City of Rochester works with the Landmark Society of Western New York to ensure that the list of Designated Buildings of Historic Value remains accurate and concise.

**LOCAL  
PRESERVATION  
DISTRICTS**

**1,750**  
properties

**8**  
districts



**BEACH  
AVENUE**



**BROWN'S  
RACE**



**SUSAN B.  
ANTHONY**



**GROVE  
PLACE**



**CORN HILL /  
THIRD WARD**



**EAST  
AVENUE**



**MT. HOPE /  
HIGHLAND PARK**



**SOUTH AVENUE /  
GREGORY STREET**

## D. HISTORIC PRESERVATION (CONTINUED)

### TAX BENEFITS OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

#### TAX CREDIT PROGRAMS

NYS offers tax credits to owners of income-producing real property and owner-occupied properties for rehabilitating a property that is listed on the State or National Register of Historic Places, or is a contributing building in a historic district that is listed in the state or National Register of Historic Places. The tax credit programs include:

- NYS Historic Homeownership Rehabilitation Tax Credit
- NYS Tax Credit Program for Income-Producing Properties
- Federal Tax Credit Program for Income-Producing Properties

These programs can be very beneficial for incentivizing or assisting with the cost of rehabilitation in neighborhoods such as the Susan B. Anthony Neighborhood or Maplewood Neighborhood. More information about these programs can be found [here](#).

According to the Tax Credit Program requirements, properties within a district listed on the State or [National Register of Historic Places](#) must also be in a “qualifying census tract.” Fortunately, all census tracts in the City of Rochester, except for 78.02, are qualified.

#### PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENTS

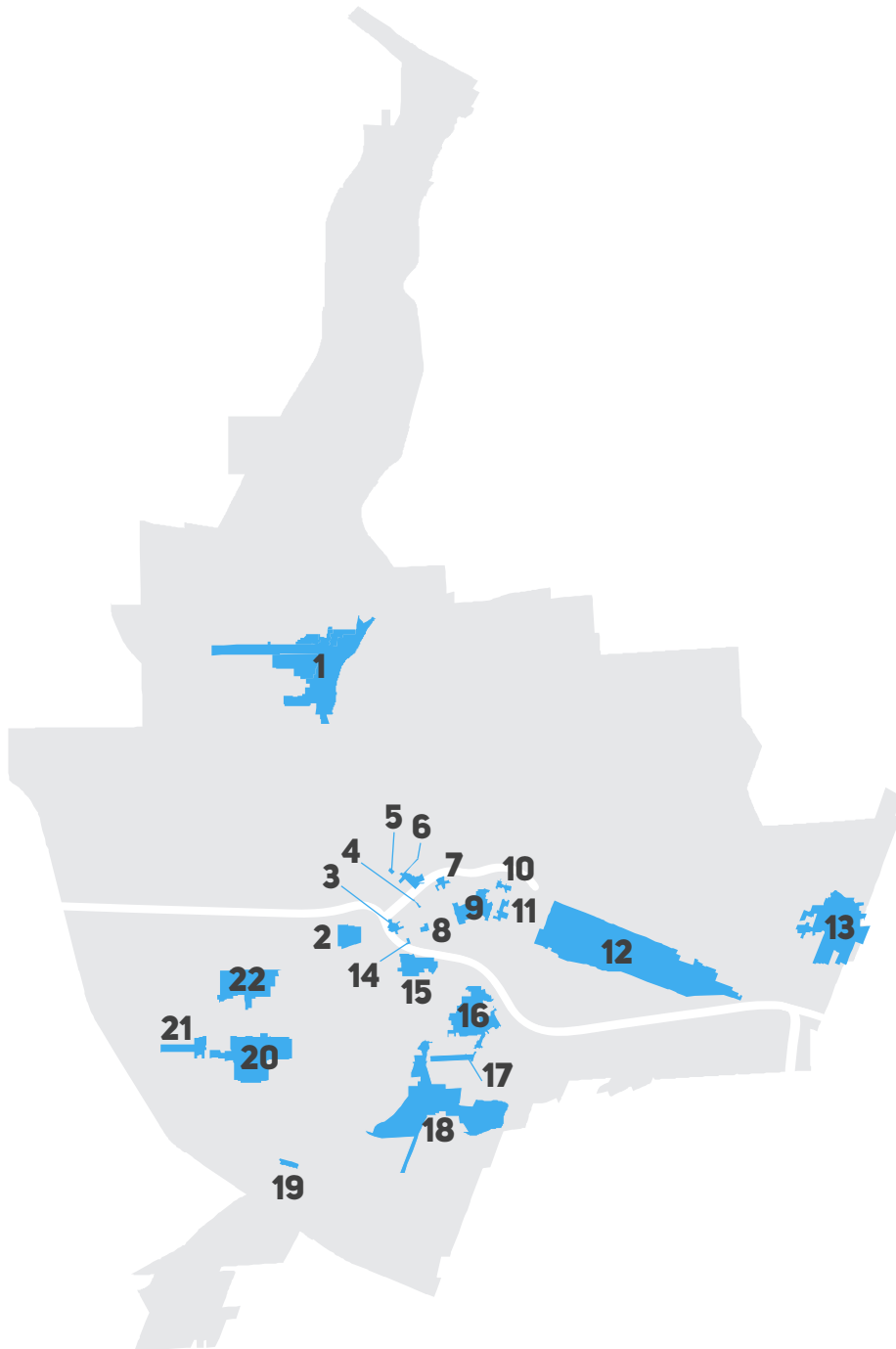
The City of Rochester also offers a [Historic Improvement Exemption](#) for Historic Properties which offers a five-year freeze on increases in assessment that may result after an owner has rehabilitated an historic property. After five years, the increased taxes will be phased in over the next five years, resulting in a ten-year delay before the full impact of the new assessment is felt.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

“Historic preservation – of buildings and other structures, neighborhoods, archaeological sites, landscapes, and other historic properties – can add to a community’s understanding of and pride in its history, and bring economic and other benefits as well.”



## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES HISTORIC DISTRICTS



- 1 MAPLEWOOD**  
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 2 MADISON SQUARE-  
WEST MAIN STREET**  
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 3 BRIDGE SQUARE**  
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 4 STATE STREET**  
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 5 TEORONTO BLOCK**  
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 6 BROWN'S RACE**  
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 7 ST. PAUL-NORTH  
WATER STREETS**  
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 8 CITY HALL**  
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 9 EAST MAIN STREET  
DOWNTOWN**  
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 10 GROVE PLACE**  
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 11 EASTMAN**  
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 12 EAST AVENUE**  
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 13 BROWNCROFT**  
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 14 CHILD, JONATHAN,  
HOUSE + BREWSTER-  
BURKE HOUSE**  
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 15 THIRD WARD**  
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 16 SOUTH WEDGE**  
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 17 LINDEN-SOUTH**  
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 18 MT. HOPE-HIGHLAND**  
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 19 ARVINE HEIGHTS**  
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 20 SIBLEY-ELMDORF**  
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 21 INGLEWOOD +  
THURSTON**  
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 22 CHILI WEST**  
HISTORIC DISTRICT

## D. HISTORIC PRESERVATION (CONTINUED)

### COMMUNITY PARTNERS IN PRESERVING ROCHESTER'S HISTORY

#### LANDMARK SOCIETY OF WESTERN NEW YORK



According to their website, the [Landmark Society](#) of Western New York, Inc., is one of the oldest and most active preservation organizations in America. It is a not-for-profit membership organization dedicated to protecting the unique architectural heritage of the Rochester region and promoting preservation and planning practices that foster healthy, livable, and sustainable communities. The Landmark Society's service area covers nine Western New York counties.

Their activities and programming include advocating for a threatened building, promoting smart growth, advising municipal officials, leading school children on tours of the Stone-Tolan House, sponsoring events, and providing information and services focused on education about and preservation of historical and cultural resources.

In 2013, the Landmark Society began publishing the annual Five to Revive list that calls attention to five properties in Western New York that are in need of investment. Whether buildings, landscapes, or structures, they are significant historic aspects of the built environment whose redevelopment is deemed to be potentially catalytic projects. The historic resources listed in Five-to-Revive become priority projects for Landmark Society staff and programs. The Landmark Society works collaboratively with owners, municipal officials, and developers to facilitate investment and foster rehabilitation so that these structures can again play an active role in their communities.

#### ROCHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The [Rochester Historical Society](#) was established in 1860 and has collected and preserved over 200,000 objects and documents. In 2000, the Rochester Historical Society hired its first professional staff and now has three staff, a Board of Directors, and volunteers to carry out the mission to collect, preserve, and interpret the city and region's history. The Rochester Historical Society's On the Road program offers ten one-hour presentations on a variety of topics. They also help neighborhood groups or other groups fund and develop a community archive of stories, photographs, and memorabilia.

The Rochester Historical Society has thousands of documents, images and artifacts concerning residents, properties and events of the City of Rochester and Monroe County. Their librarian will search the catalog to see if they have any materials on your family, house, businesses, organizations or past events. Although an important resource, the organization faces significant funding challenges that will need to be resolved in order to sustain their role in the community.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

**"We should promote, support, and expand historic preservation efforts in our city. Our unique cultural heritage should be a point of pride and something to be celebrated, as well as creatively reimaged for the future."**



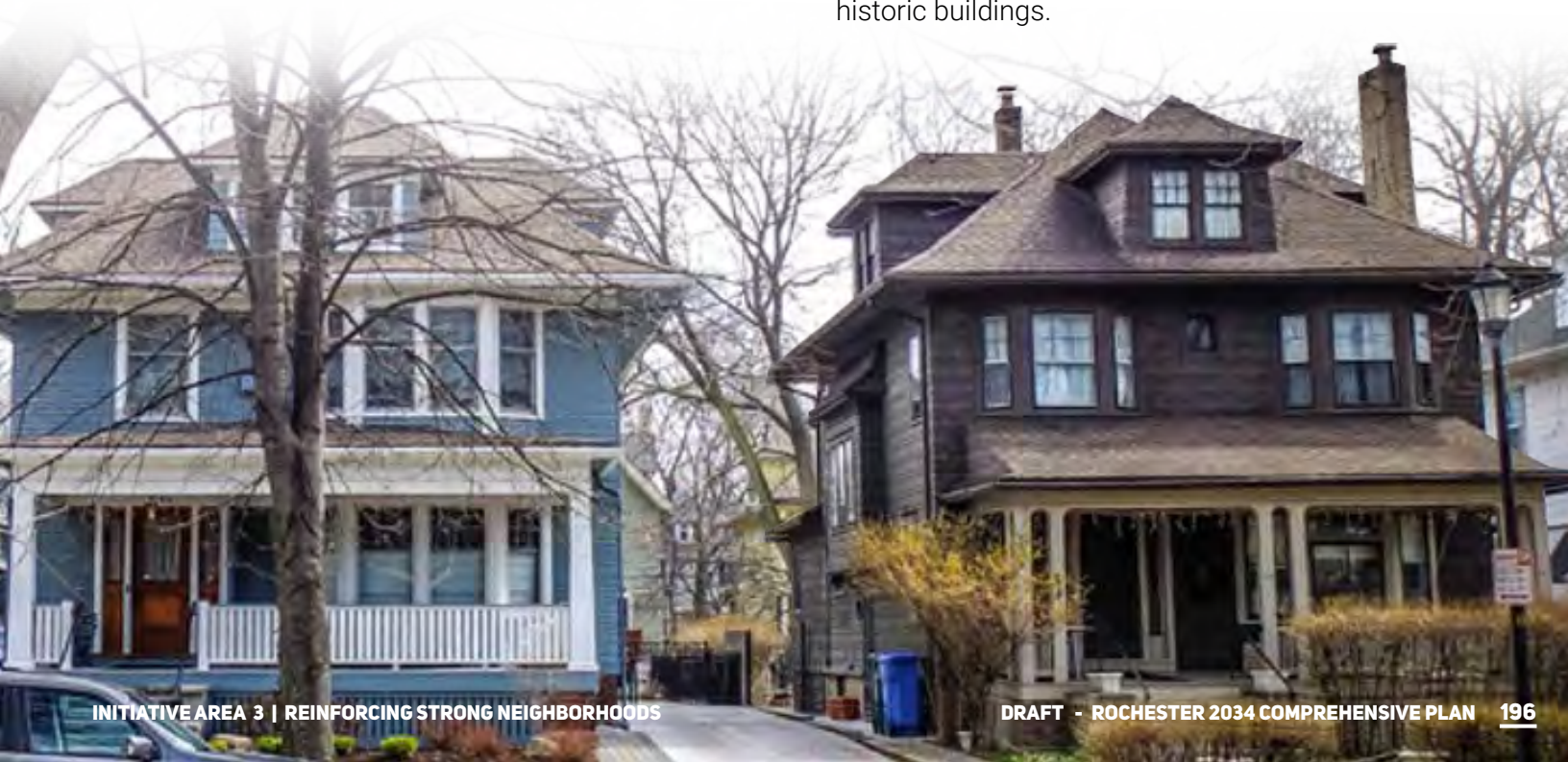
## THE HERITAGE TRAIL

The Heritage Trail, a 1.25-mile long walking path that leads to 15 points of historical significance, follows an 8" wide line of either granite or blue paint on city sidewalks in the southwest area of the city. Along the way, historical markers, plaques, and interpretive signs tell some of the stories that make up Rochester's rich history. The trail connects the Susan B. Anthony House (17 Madison Street) to the second Erie Canal Aqueduct Bridge (50 West Broad Street). A future extension of the trail will lead to the Rundel Memorial Library located at 115 South Avenue. It is envisioned that the trail will continue to be incrementally extended as funds are made available.

## CHALLENGES

Historic buildings are competing in the marketplace with buildings that are newly built or renovated for an occupant that needs or wants a contemporary design and modern fixtures. It can be costly to upgrade a historic building to meet the needs of a changing demographic in both the residential and commercial market. For that reason, historic properties may be vacant for a long time, falling into disrepair and further increasing costs of reoccupancy. Examples of successful renovations of historic buildings and the value that is added by saving and restoring these buildings should be used for education and promotion purposes.

The state and local tax benefits that are available for improving historic buildings are largely unknown and underutilized. The information is not widely publicized and is not always reaching people who may be in a position to renovate or reoccupy an historic building. Financial resources and tax benefits should be promoted to increase the understanding and possibly encourage people or companies to consider investing in our valued historic buildings.



# D. HISTORIC PRESERVATION [HIS]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>HIS-1</b> Promote and preserve Rochester's rich history.</p>	<p>HIS-1a Connect City staff and the community to the Landmark Society, City Historian, Local history branch of the Rochester Public Library, and the Rochester Historical Society by sponsoring Lunch and Learn events and promoting their programming.</p>	<p>City, Landmark Society, RPL, Rochester Historical Society</p>
	<p>HIS-1b Work with the Rochester Historical Society as they reposition their assets and seek funds to continue the important work they do to preserve the history of Rochester and provide access to a rich collection of historical artifacts.</p>	<p>City, Philanthropic Community, Local Industry, Educational Institutions</p>
	<p>HIS-1c Continue to add properties on the Landmark Society's Five to Revive list to the City's inventory of strategic sites. This inventory presents a prioritized list of sites where reinvestment goals are focused.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Landmark Society</p>
	<p>HIS-1d Prepare a series of Rochester Historic Walking Tours and Biking Tours and distribute/publicize them in creative ways such as putting them in hotels, passing them out to RCSD students and staff, placing them in Neighborhood Service Centers, and putting them online.</p>	<p><b>Landmark Society, Rochester Historical Society</b>, City, Visit Rochester, Philanthropic Partners</p>
	<p>HIS-1e Extend the Heritage Trail to include more historic buildings and sites that are significant to telling Rochester's story.</p>	<p><b>Landmark Society, Rochester Historical Society</b>, City, Visit Rochester, Philanthropic Partners</p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>HIS-2</b> <b>Promote the benefits of the NYS tax credit programs for rehabilitation of homes and businesses in historic districts.</b>	HIS-2a Develop a marketing strategy about the tax credit programs and how they work, including a map of eligible areas. Display a digital map of eligible districts on the City’s website so individuals can look up their property and cross-promote with the Landmark Society and other partners.	<b>Landmark Society</b> , City, Celebrate City Living Coalition, Realtors, Housing Partners, Neighborhood Groups
	HIS-2b Promote the tax benefits for rehabilitation in the City Home Buyer Assistance Program and at the City Permit Counter.	<b>City</b>
	HIS-2c Conduct training of city staff and members of the Rochester Preservation Board on the Tax Credit Programs and how they can help foster interest in these programs as tools for redevelopment.	<b>Landmark Society</b> , City
	HIS-2d Consider adding districts to the State and National Register of Historic Places to afford more property owners the opportunity to take advantage of the tax credit programs, particularly in middle neighborhoods where the City is trying to expand and support homeownership and community wealth building.	City, Landmark Society, NYS Historic Preservation Office

# D. HISTORIC PRESERVATION [HIS]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>HIS-3</b>            Reduce barriers to rehabilitating buildings in Preservation Districts and foster enthusiasm for owning homes in these areas of the city.</p>	<p>HIS-3a Conduct a survey of applicants that have had an application reviewed by the Rochester Preservation Board. Specifically ask if the process was supportive of or a barrier to redevelopment. Use the information to determine strategies for process improvement, if needed.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>HIS-3b Prepare a brochure that demonstrates how the designation as a Preservation District has protected property values over the years.</p>	<p><b>Landmark Society, City, Neighborhood Groups</b></p>
	<p>HIS-3c Start a program to help property owners navigate through the Certificate of Appropriateness process.</p>	<p><b>Landmark Society</b></p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>HIS-4</b> <b>Use local regulations and programs to supplement the State and federal government's protection of historic resources.</b>	HIS-4a Retain Zoning Code provisions related to Designated Buildings of Historic Value, and maintain and routinely update the list to ensure it is accurately including properties of value.	<b>City</b> , Landmark Society
	HIS-4b Work to build the capacity of the Landmark Society to be a rehab/development partner with access to acquiring City-owned properties that are deemed historically valuable so they can apply additional resources and help rehabilitate these properties to meet historic preservation standards.	<b>City</b> , Landmark Society

# E. SCHOOLS + COMMUNITY CENTERS

## INTRODUCTION

Schools and other community centers are facilities that play an integral role in the health and vitality of neighborhoods and the city overall. They are centers of education and engagement but also provide services and activities to residents of all ages. In Rochester, these facilities include:

- 50** public schools
- 15** charter schools
- 3** higher education institutions
- 12** public libraries  
(10 of which are neighborhood branch libraries)
- 11** recreation centers (“R-Centers”)
- 4** neighborhood service centers

There are also 15 Rochester Fire Department (RFD) stations and six Rochester Police Department (RPD) section offices that round out the collection of community facilities in the city. These locations are not necessarily centers of community activity but, given that they are City-owned, there are some opportunities for these stations to provide community space or programming services.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Schools and other community centers, like libraries and rec centers, play an important role in the health and vitality of neighborhoods.
- The neighborhood/community school model focuses on building up schools as multi-purpose community centers that help bring a neighborhood together.
- Highlighting the successes and assets of RCSD can help to counter the dominant negative perception of city schools.
- Our community needs to pursue every option possible to improve educational outcomes and attract more young people and families to live in the city and get involved in our schools.
- Libraries are evolving into neighborhood resource centers that complement schools and offer a wide range of educational, community, technology, job training, and other programming to meet the needs of the people they serve.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

“Stronger libraries are what we need. They help support all age groups not just a chosen few.”

### PUBLIC COMMENT

“More people need to take advantage of the libraries.”



## INTRODUCTION CONTINUED

While the success of each of the above facilities contributes to the daily experience of residents and visitors, this section is primarily focused on the challenges and opportunities facing schools and education in the city of Rochester, as well as the role that libraries play in education. For decades, libraries have acted as a cornerstone of neighborhoods. They are gathering places for residents of all ages and backgrounds to learn, experience, and connect.

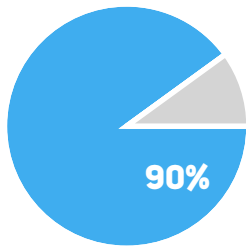
**While a library's traditional role of book and media lending is still important today, libraries are evolving to become hubs for other important community services including public gathering rooms, employment assistance, classes and tutoring, access to technology, and youth resources.** For example, the Central Library's LROC initiative works with local agencies to provide direct connections and expedited access to services for the homeless, and its Health Central initiative embeds University of Rochester School of Medicine students in the library to provide health screenings, conduct outreach, identify clinics for patrons without insurance, etc.



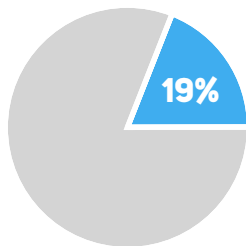
## E. SCHOOLS + COMMUNITY CENTERS (CONTINUED)

### CHALLENGES

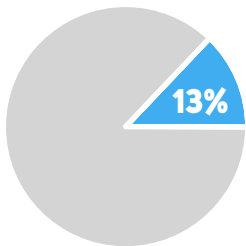
The main component of the education system is the Rochester City School District (RCSD). The district has 50 schools in their system. There are seven high schools (grades 9-12) and the remainder are some combination of pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. In 2018, total enrollment was nearly 30,000, among which there are many students facing challenging circumstances:



are classified as being  
**economically  
disadvantaged**



face some sort of  
**physical, mental, or  
behavioral disability**



are students for whom  
**English is a  
new language**

A holistic view of the system also reveals the importance of workforce training to build employment skills, continuing education for all ages, and higher education for young adults. These needs are met by the RCSD, libraries, colleges and universities, technical schools, cultural organizations, and rec centers. Although some of these institutions, in particular the RCSD, face perception issues, there are many exciting and enriching programs and activities offered throughout the city.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

**“Schools are reflective of the community in which they are. If the community is strong, the school will be as well.”**

A more in-depth examination of educational statistics can be found in [Appendix C, Rochester Today](#).

## CHALLENGES CONTINUED

Educational institutions and facilities offer benefits that reach beyond just the student population. Schools can provide great value to a neighborhood, especially if their enrollment process prioritizes nearby households. It is a mutually beneficial relationship that provides stability, engagement, and resources that collectively strengthen a neighborhood.

The RCSD is a separate entity from the City of Rochester, each with its own governing body and regulatory processes. While the two share the same jurisdictional boundary and constituents, there are limits to the influence that the City has on district policies and actions and vice versa. As such, *Rochester 2034* attempts to examine the myriad of challenges and opportunities for education while recognizing the School District is primarily responsible for executing strategies that directly improve conditions for students.

The City of Rochester and other organizations must partner with the RCSD to provide strategic support to the district, addressing conditions that indirectly affect school performance. Reducing crime, deconcentrating poverty, improving access to stable, quality housing, and attracting job opportunities are all initiatives that can improve conditions for students, thereby improving performance.

In addition, it is the City's responsibility through this comprehensive plan to report back to the RCSD the community feedback gathered about the role schools can play in turning around the City. Many residents and local leaders expressed the potential and desire for neighborhoods and their schools to have a mutually beneficial relationship that supports faculty and students but also transcends the world of education.



## E. SCHOOLS + COMMUNITY CENTERS (CONTINUED)

### CHALLENGES CONTINUED

While the Greater Rochester region largely has a negative perception of the RCSD, the region must own many of the circumstances that led to and perpetuate the district's struggles, as well as seek ways to advance solutions. Concentrated poverty is a major factor, if not the most significant, in determining educational outcomes. High levels of economic and racial segregation are not solely the responsibility of the locale where poverty is concentrated – they must be accounted for at a regional level. A region cannot fully succeed when such a large percentage of its children face seemingly insurmountable obstacles to success. Rochester will rise and fall as a region; all communities within the region must face the harsh reality of the role they play in impacting our collective trajectory.

The story of Rochester's decline is well documented and oft repeated. The mass exodus of the middle class from the city to suburbs in the post-WWII era was compounded by the exodus of manufacturing jobs out of Rust Belt cities during the same period. Almost all of the city's current challenges can be traced to its nearly 40% decline in population from its peak in the 1950s. This large scale disinvestment over many years was also a crushing blow to the public school system in Rochester. Families that could afford to leave did, finding more promising opportunities in the suburbs. The RCSD continues to wrestle with the impacts of that movement, made even more difficult by the typical challenges faced by a large-scale bureaucratic organization. Graduation rates are trending upwards, but much more needs to be done to close opportunity and achievement gaps.

Students also face myriad other challenges that contribute to low school attendance and poor graduation rates. Many of these are environmental, including:

- family instability, from single-parent households to in-home trauma to frequent moves to different neighborhoods;
- high levels of lead contained in the paint of an aging housing stock, a condition found to dramatically affect healthy brain development;
- persistent crime and fear of crime in Rochester's most distressed neighborhoods;
- lack of stable employment opportunities; and
- lack of transportation resources to support employment and educational needs.

Most of these challenges are and should continue to be addressed by investments and programs led by the City of Rochester and various community partners.

Despite these formidable circumstances, desperate conditions often breed innovation and high levels of passion and commitment. The City and its school district are filled with heroic efforts, inspirational stories, and glimmers of hope. It is an uphill battle to fight perception that has dogged the district for decades. Shining a light on successes in the face of great hardship is challenging but well worth the community's effort.

## LOOKING FORWARD

There is widespread pessimism in the region about RCSD, but there are in fact multiple viable school options for families and students, from pre-Kindergarten all the way through graduation, especially if a child benefits from a relatively stable household and neighborhood (see sidebar on School Quality Index). A student can receive an excellent education in the RCSD and be highly prepared for college and a career, even if many of the students around them do not succeed in school. District-wide statistics mask the diverse offerings and quality instruction found at individual schools. Even school-wide statistics fail to tell the story of great programs, activities, and students, as well as the beauty of learning in a multi-cultural setting.

**A close look beyond conventional performance statistics reveals school leaders that inspire their students to rise above tragic circumstances, scores of teachers whose dedication and resolve surpass many of their suburban counterparts, and emboldened students who refuse to succumb to the failure narrative cast at them from all facets of society. These are the hidden gems that define Rochester's story in 2019 – a place that, despite the odds, is filled with more hope per acre than anywhere in the region.**

### SCHOOL QUALITY INDEX

The *Democrat and Chronicle*, recognizing that conventional academic statistics fail to tell a complete story of student experience at a school, developed an elaborate database of area schools to examine non-academic factors. These included diversity, class size, suspensions, teacher experience, and attendance and were based on the New York State Education Department's Report Card Database from 2015-2016.

The database is dynamic, with users able to customize rankings by giving higher weight to factors most important to them. When the factors are weighted equally, five of the top ten schools in the region are located in the city – three RCSD elementary schools and two charter schools. Francis Parker School No. 23 tops the list. Among high schools, RCSD boast two of the top five – School No. 58 World of Inquiry School and School Without Walls. This supports the notion that while the district faces significant hurdles, there are many bright spots that provide a positive experience and an excellent education.



**5 OF THE  
TOP 10  
RANKED  
SCHOOLS  
ARE LOCATED IN  
ROCHESTER**

## E. SCHOOLS + COMMUNITY CENTERS (CONTINUED)

### LOOKING FORWARD CONTINUED

Much more can be done to celebrate unheralded programs and benefits of being educated in the RCSD. For example, students that graduate from a public high school, qualify academically, and come from income-qualifying households can receive significant or full scholarships to the University of Rochester, Rochester Institute of Technology, and Monroe Community College.

The district also features a program for preparing students to join the RFD, RPD, and other public safety careers. In the case of RFD, the department offers basic training classes during high school for qualified students. Upon graduation from an RCSD high school, they are guaranteed a job and a position in the next academy class. Their training and qualifications allow them to skip the Civil Service Exam. Between that waiver, the customized training, and the academy benefit, this program

is an excellent career boost and presents a major advantage over students outside of the City.

For all preschoolers in Rochester, RCSD provides a free Universal Prekindergarten programming taught by NYS certified teachers. This program is considered a highly progressive model. Research shows that children who participate in quality early childhood programs:

- Learn socialization skills through group activities;
- **Experience reading** and writing readiness activities;
- Are better prepared for school success; and
- Are more likely to attain higher levels of education.



## LOOKING FORWARD CONTINUED

Additional benefits and highlights within the RCSD include:



### Vision Care Program

Vision Care Program at East High School, which teaches students the skills of an optician and manufactures glasses for children in need throughout the City.



### International Baccalaureate Program

Wilson Magnet High School's International Baccalaureate Program, featuring a rigorous curriculum that leads to a diploma recognized worldwide.



### Student Diversity

The Children's School of Rochester School No. 15's remarkable diversity, where half of the student population is from a different country.



### Dance Concert

Dance Concert at School of the Arts, a popular community event which features some of the most talented student dancers in the region performing their annual capstone projects.



### HOLA Program

HOLA Program at Anna Murray-Douglass Academy School No. 12, an immersive Spanish/English dual language program that attracts many families from the surrounding neighborhood.



### Educational Partnership Organization

University of Rochester serving as East High School's Educational Partnership Organization (EPO), tapping into the educational management, research, and application expertise of this prestigious university.

## E. SCHOOLS + COMMUNITY CENTERS (CONTINUED)

### LOOKING FORWARD CONTINUED

In addition to bright spots within the public schools, living in the city offers numerous other education options for families. There are 15 charter schools in the city, several with strong reputations, which are a free, public option that feature many of the same diversity benefits of other RCSD schools. The homeschooling movement continues to evolve, with more and more opportunities for learning networks, group collaboration, and organized field study. Additionally, Rochester has a long tradition of excellent private schools – some in the city limits and some very close by – that provide another school alternative.

Choices abound and make city living accessible to everyone in the region. The City should be more intentional in promoting the wealth of options. All of the great amenities and the quality of life found in an urban setting are available even if the public school system is not the right fit for a household. There is great potential to promote the multiple viable education options to young people before they start a family, especially to those that have the means to leave the city.



**Many of Rochester's young adults have a deep passion for city living and identify as urbanists, perhaps more so than previous generations. There should be more deliberate outreach to that demographic to provide them first-hand experience and exposure to the quality options available.** According to RocCity Coalition's Vision 2025 Report and Action Plan, most young professionals currently enjoying city living note that education is the top issue influencing whether or not they will remain in the City once they start a family. The Plan recommends that "as a community, we need to involve younger generations in efforts to improve educational outcomes before they have children."

Young professionals should be connected with parents and students that are thriving in some of the public schools, or with those that chose private schools or homeschooling in order to not give up on the urban lifestyle that they love. While this arrangement will not work for everyone, there is an untapped potential for young Rochesterians to discover desirable options that they would not have found if they solely relied on local media coverage, educational statistics, or widespread perceptions.





PHILLIS WHEATLEY COMMUNITY LIBRARY

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**PUBLIC COMMENT**

“I believe in public education and public libraries with my whole heart. All our resources should be poured into making schools wonderful, inviting, engaging places to be.”

## E. SCHOOLS + COMMUNITY CENTERS (CONTINUED)

### LOOKING FORWARD CONTINUED

There are numerous strategies that should be pursued to improve educational outcomes and a healthy learning environment in the City of Rochester. Most are encapsulated by an initiative that began in 2013, ROC the Future. This collaborative, community-wide effort, following the collective impact model, brings together the resources of numerous organizations and institutions to tackle the primary issues facing students today. Currently, they are focusing on three main outcomes: kindergarten readiness, early grade reading, and high school graduation. For each outcome, a team is in place to pull together area resources and implement a plan of action in support of children.

The City of Rochester, while highly supportive of all three, is primarily involved in the Early Grade Reading Outcome Team. [Mayor Lovely Warren](#) leads the team along with leadership and staff from the Department of Recreation and Youth Services (DRYS), the Rochester Public Library (RPL), and the Office of Innovation. Based on well-documented research, the team aims to support students to be developmentally on track, especially with reading competency, by 3rd grade. This metric has been shown to be a strong predictor of educational outcomes over the rest of a student's career.

DRYS, through its various child-centered programs at various rec centers and program sites, and the RPL will continue to have a dramatic impact on the lives of students. Their efforts should be supported and bolstered, as they have significant long-term implications for individuals and the community as a whole. While the City has less involvement in the other outcome teams, they are equally important. Community partners, be they education experts, childhood development specialists, or community foundations, are encouraged to throw considerable support behind the ROC the Future effort.

Similar to these ROC the Future efforts, the City should examine additional opportunities for co-locating facilities and programs. Between the rec centers, libraries, neighborhood service centers, colleges/universities, fire stations, and even police stations, there is the potential to site future facilities on or nearby existing facilities.

For those already co-located, such as the library and rec center on the School No. 12 campus, each of the entities should continue to look for ways to coordinate programming and services. Additionally, these facilities should be made more available for community partners to expand their offerings that are directly or indirectly tied to educational outcomes. The potential for these various co-location efforts requires more deliberate communication and understanding of needs among entities running these community facilities.

The RPL in particular will continue to be a critical partner in providing access to educational programming and human services. The 2018 RPL Branch Facilities and Operations Master Plan is a comprehensive exploration of how these facilities can be maximized to provide resources to the community. The plan outlines numerous policy and capital recommendations that are supported here and in [Initiative Area 2, The Placemaking Plan](#).

A woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a light-colored blouse, is smiling and shaking hands with a young boy. The boy is wearing a dark blue shirt and a backpack. They are in a room decorated with colorful balloons (red, green, yellow, orange) and a wall covered in colorful sticky notes. Other people are visible in the background, some smiling.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

**"LIBRARIES! Yes Libraries are what are needed to advance communities. They care for the youth, teens, and adults... they do it all. Stop stripping away at the services they provide. Add more staff (and not just low end ... LIBRARIANS). Add FULL TIME librarians to city libraries so that they can run better programs and be there more for the patrons."**

## E. SCHOOLS + COMMUNITY CENTERS (CONTINUED)

### EXPLORING NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Neighborhood schools are common throughout cities and towns across the country. Students enrolled are primarily or entirely drawn from the surrounding area so as to reduce transportation costs and promote a strong connection between the school and neighborhood. Community schools are a more intensive model; they similarly draw students from nearby areas but also provide a variety of services and activities to all local residents in the form of a “hub of access”.

In the early 2000s, RCSD transitioned to a choice-based model of schooling, called the Managed Choice Policy, moving away from the neighborhood school model that had been in place for generations. One of the objectives of the change, in addition to providing more equitable choices to families regardless of where they live, was to deconcentrate poverty by not limiting schools in the most impoverished areas to drawing students exclusively from the surrounding neighborhood. Conversely, schools in more stable areas would be made accessible to students from outside of the surrounding neighborhood.

After more than 15 years of Managed Choice, the district should reexamine if either of those objectives, or any of the other foundational goals, have been met by the system. The City of Rochester remains similarly racially and economically segregated, both within the district and within the region, as it was when the policy was instituted. Poverty overall has only gotten worse while schools continue to struggle. The condition of the district remains the primary reason for many middle class families leaving the city or never considering city living.

Currently, more than 80% of children in the RCSD attend elementary schools outside of their neighborhood. This has substantial implications for district and household transportation costs, relationships between schools and their surroundings, and the ability of families to participate in their children’s schools. Parental involvement is well documented as a major contributing factor to a child’s educational attainment. Also, around half of students in the district do not engage in the lottery/choice process at all, foregoing the benefits of school choices and necessitating district staff to make decisions that are absent of any formal guidance.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

“Keep students in their neighborhoods so their parents can be an active part of their education.”

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

“Schools are often a central force in creating a sense of community, but if children are bussed all over the city, that potential connection is lost.”

## EXPLORING NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY SCHOOLS CONTINUED

Another predicament created by the current model relates to busing. Currently, New York State only reimburses school district costs for transporting students more than 1.5 miles. Closer schools require families to identify their own transportation solution. In many cases, families choose schools that are far from their home because it is easier to put children on a bus in the morning than to walk, bike, or drive them to a school that is nearby.

They often make this choice as well because long bus rides present a free, albeit far from ideal, before-school and after-school childcare option for parents in inflexible or insecure employment situations. This dynamic is on top of the \$66 million spent every year on busing students in far flung, haphazard patterns across the city. While the State reimburses the School District for 90% of those costs, a \$6.6 million local burden is still a substantial cost for a district where the vast majority of students live short distances – often reasonable walking distances – from an elementary school. The sheer

mileage represented by a \$66 million transportation budget, regardless of where the money comes from, has significant implications for air quality, energy consumption, and energy resiliency.

The disincentive to choosing neighborhood schools would need to be addressed through creative transportation and wrap-around service solutions. A return to the neighborhood or community school model, even if done incrementally, could have a positive impact on both schools and their surroundings. Throughout the *Rochester 2034* process, residents and neighborhood groups spoke of the desire for stronger connections to and partnership opportunities with their nearby school. Most noted that relationship to be non-existent and many were not aware of any neighborhood families that attended the local elementary school. Having the local school serve as an anchor institution could be particularly beneficial for areas of disinvestment that lack notable community assets.



## E. SCHOOLS + COMMUNITY CENTERS (CONTINUED)

### EXPLORING NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY SCHOOLS CONTINUED

In addition to the opportunity for stronger involvement from nearby community groups, the neighborhood or community school approach would allow local families to be more engaged with their kids' school than if the facility was on the other side of town. **Even if a neighborhood school was predominately made up of low-income families – a scenario that has not been eliminated by the Managed Choice model – at least those families would have the chance to form stronger bonds with neighborhood parents, students, and school faculty.** They would also have far more convenient access to the school for parent-teacher meetings, volunteer opportunities, school assemblies, and other enriching activities. Lastly, having a community school would greatly enhance the identity and sense of pride of the neighborhood, regardless of the school's performance.

The RCSD is now experimenting with elements of the neighborhood/community school approach for certain buildings. In partnership with the City of Rochester and Ibero-American Action League, **Enrico Fermi School No. 17** is envisioned to be a community school, hoping to draw students primarily from the nearby JOSANA neighborhood. The school also offers a full menu of wrap-around services to students and their families, including medical, dental, mental health, and human services. This “hub of access” model positions the school as a holistic resource for an area facing entrenched poverty. Its success is highly reliant on most of the enrolled families to live near the school, a condition they have not yet achieved but hope to in coming years. If successful, the model could be repeated but it requires additional funding.



## EXPLORING NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY SCHOOLS CONTINUED

At John James Audubon School No. 33, a recent change allows for children moving on from the elementary school in the Beechwood neighborhood to automatically enroll in the closest 6-12 campus, East Lower and Upper School. Parents can opt out of this policy if they would like to pursue other options, but they are no longer forced to go through a process where they may not get into East even if it is not their first choice. This creates a more deliberate relationship between the Beechwood neighborhood and its two school facilities. However, School No. 33 is not a neighborhood school to begin with, so the community connection will be limited until that policy is addressed.



The City of Rochester supports and recommends the district's continued adoption of a neighborhood or community school approach at the elementary school level. These models, or specific elements of the models, may also be effective in certain middle school or high school facilities. However, it may not be practical district-wide as there are far fewer schools at those grade levels.

A recent RCSD School Board committee examined these issues in depth and recommended some changes to the system, including:

- guaranteeing every student a seat in the school closest to their house;
- replacing the three school selection zones with a system allowing children to apply to any of the three closest schools, or to the citywide schools; and
- providing busing for students who live within 1.5 miles of a school.

In December 2018, Mayor Warren conducted a series of input sessions around the challenges and opportunities facing the RCSD. As part of a series of poll questions, 90% of participants indicated they would support more community schools throughout the district.

The City recommends further exploration of these and similar strategies that will balance the complexities of a large district with the benefits of neighborhood and community schools. In particular, the City desires to partner with the RCSD to examine how the benefits of these models go well beyond education. Closing opportunity and achievement gaps and promoting equitable outcomes for all children requires a comprehensive approach that encompasses school policies as well as the investments that the City and community partners put into each neighborhood.

# E. SCHOOLS + COMMUNITY CENTERS [SCC] ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>SCC-1</b>  <b>Improve conditions for students to ensure a healthy and nurturing environment for learning that is targeted at key success indicators.</b></p>	<p>SCC-1a Continue to support the ROC the Future initiative, ensuring the myriad community partners in education, childhood development, social services, community development, and economic development are fully coordinated and unified in their strategic investment in public schools.</p>	<p><b>ROC the Future</b>, Various Community Partners, RCSD, City</p>
	<p>SCC-1b Continue to address conditions that indirectly affect school performance and a healthy environment for students such as reducing crime, deconcentrating poverty, improving access to stable, quality housing, and attracting job opportunities.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, RPD, RMAPI, Housing Developers, GRCoC, GRE, RCSD, ROC the Future</p>
	<p>SCC-1c Strengthen linkages between educational institutions, employers, and economic development partners. Educational programs and degrees should be regularly modified to meet the workforce demands of local industries. Additional creative pipeline programs should be developed to provide multiple viable options for RCSD students. See also <a href="#">Initiative Area 5, Section B. Workforce Development</a>.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Education Institutions, GRCoC, GRE, Employers, ROC the Future</p>
	<p>SCC-1d Support and expand Educational Partnership Organization (EPO) agreements with the University of Rochester, SUNY Geneseo, and other colleges and universities.</p>	<p><b>RCSD</b>, UR, SUNY Geneseo, Other Education Institutions</p>
	<p>SCC-1e Continue to partner with and support the Warner School of Education's Center for Urban Education Success (CUES) at UR. CUES is studying urban success models throughout the country and helping apply those best practices to Rochester schools, in particular through the UR's partnership with East High School.</p>	<p><b>RCSD</b>, UR</p>



**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>SCC-1</b> <b>Improve conditions for students to ensure a healthy and nurturing environment for learning that is targeted at key success indicators.</b>	SCC-1f Encourage better student-based data development and sharing between DRYS, RPL, and the RCSD. With strategies such as a universal ID card used for all three networks, administrators can better track a child’s access or lack of access to community facilities and programs.	<b>City</b> , RPL, RCSD, ROC the Future
	SCC-1g Develop a district-wide strategy to address race and cultural competence as it relates to hiring practices, curriculum, and school environment.	<b>RCSD</b>
	SCC-1h Utilize the findings of the Mayor’s community input sessions on opportunities and challenges facing the RCSD (December 2018) to identify additional strategies. This includes the potential for the City of Rochester and RCSD to have a more formal relationship around budgeting, communications, facilities investments, and providing services at community schools.	<b>City</b> , RCSD

# E. SCHOOLS + COMMUNITY CENTERS [SCC] ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>SCC-2</b> Nurture a culture of positivity around public school options and benefits in order to encourage current residents and students and to help rebuild the city's population.</p>	<p>SCC-2a Work to redefine the negative, inaccurate narrative in the Rochester region that public schools are a failed proposition and that the RCSD and district parents are solely responsible for the failed educational environment in the city. The region must own this problem collectively, recognizing that concentrated poverty is caused by middle class flight and is a primary driver of educational outcomes. Additionally, greater emphasis should be placed on the positive, inspirational, and unique elements of city public schools.</p>	<p><b>RCSD</b>, City, Various Community Partners, Monroe County</p>
	<p>SCC-2b Examine additional opportunities for co-locating community facilities and programs. Between the rec centers, libraries, neighborhood service centers, colleges/universities, fire stations, and even police stations, there is the potential to site future facilities on or nearby existing facilities. Various public services could be co-located at these facilities such as health clinics, senior centers, senior housing, childhood development centers, day care, after-school programs, and employment services. Other types of services may be explored, such as not-for-profits, satellite college campuses, fitness centers, or medical offices. Co-location can offer cost savings, community integration, and intergenerational support.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, RPL, RFD, RPD, NSCs, ROC the Future, various community service providers and educational institutions</p>
	<p>SCC-2c Expand the RIT (Destler/Johnson Rochester City Scholars Program) and UR (Rochester Promise Initiative and IB program at Wilson) tuition benefits to offer scholarships on a sliding scale of income. Making these benefits available to middle class families will incentivize more families to consider city living, having an impact that substantially transcends educational issues and supports the larger Vision and Goals of <i>Rochester 2034</i>.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, RCSD, RIT, UR, ROC the Future</p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>SCC-2</b> <b>Nurture a culture of positivity around public school options and benefits in order to encourage current residents and students and to help rebuild the city's population.</b>	SCC-2d Work with the business community, not-for-profits, and other partners to develop a full scholarship program for students graduating from public high schools in the City of Rochester. This program could be modeled after the Kalamazoo Promise or the Say Yes to Education program present in Buffalo and Syracuse, all of which are primarily funded by community donors. In our Upstate NY neighbors, guaranteeing a scholarship to graduates for at least the level of state school tuition, regardless of a family's income, has improved graduation rates, inspired students to greater achievement and focus, and even attracted more middle class families to move to or remain in the city.	<b>RCSD</b> , City, Educational Institutions, Business Community, Community Organizations, Philanthropic Partners, ROC the Future
	SCC-2e Implement the strategies identified in the RocCity Coalition's Vision 2025 plan, particularly those related to education, recognizing that attracting and retaining young professionals and young families and engaging them in the work of improving educational opportunities and outcomes in the city is critical.	<b>RocCity Coalition</b> , City, RYP, ROCBYP, RCSD, Community Partners
	SCC-2f Engage young professionals living in the city about the benefits of remaining in the city and the various viable schooling options. Too often people form their opinions about city schools based on local media, conventional education statistics, and widespread perceptions. Prior to starting a family, this demographic should gain more firsthand exposure to the solid schooling options through interface with parents and students.	<b>City</b> , RocCity Coalition, RYP, ROCBYP, GRCoC, RCSD, Charter Schools, Private Schools

# E. SCHOOLS + COMMUNITY CENTERS [SCC] ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>SCC-3</b> Reposition public facilities to serve as, or support, multi-purpose community centers.</p>	<p>SCC-3a Implement the strategies and projects identified in the Rochester Public Library Branch Facilities and Operation Plan, which will help redefine libraries as resource centers for neighborhoods.</p>	<p>RPL, City, Community Partners, Neighborhood Groups</p>
	<p>SCC-3b Examine additional opportunities for co-locating community facilities and programs. Between the rec centers, libraries, neighborhood service centers, colleges/universities, fire stations, and even police stations, there is the potential to site future facilities on or nearby existing facilities. Various public services could be co-located at these facilities such as health clinics, senior centers, senior housing, childhood development centers, day care, after-school programs, and employment services. Other types of services may be explored, such as not-for-profits, satellite college campuses, fitness centers, or medical offices. Co-location can offer cost savings, community integration, and intergenerational support.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, RPL, RFD, RPD, NSCs, ROC the Future, various community service providers and educational institutions</p>
	<p>SCC-3c For those facilities already co-located, such as the library and rec center on the School No. 12 campus, each of the entities should continue to look for ways to better coordinate programming and shared facilities. Additionally, facilities should be made more available for community partners to expand their offerings that are directly or indirectly tied to educational outcomes.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, RPL, RCSD, Community Partners</p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>SCC-3</b> <b>Reposition public facilities to serve as, or support, multi-purpose community centers.</b>	SCC-3d Increase the number of neighborhood and/or community schools. This effort should include consideration of the benefits that go well beyond education, especially the overall health of neighborhoods and the environmental and economic benefits of dramatically reduced transportation service.	<b>RCSD</b> , City, ROC the Future, Various Community Service Providers
	SCC-3e Provide support to early intervention programs run by community partners. Examples include GROW-Rochester, which integrates screenings for three-year olds to identify physical, social, and developmental needs and the All Kids Thrive initiative, which promotes a universally accessible system of holistic supports for children birth to age eight and their families. This support could include making available City-owned facilities for program aspects requiring community spaces.	<b>City</b> , ROC the Future, GROW-Rochester, Kids Thrive Initiative, Various Community Service Providers
	SCC-3f Promote schools as platforms to provide multiple support services, such as extended learning programs, nutrition counseling, free or subsidized breakfasts and lunches, and health services to low-income families in the community.	<b>RCSD</b> , ROC the Future, Various Community Service Providers
	SCC-3g Create after-school programs for students and adult community members that incorporate a variety of educational and recreational activities, such as art programs, English as a Second Language (ESL), and General Education Development classes.	<b>RCSD</b> , RPL, Educational Institutions, Various Community Service Providers

# E. SCHOOLS + COMMUNITY CENTERS [SCC] ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>SCC-4</b> Provide educational facilities and programs of the highest quality, enriching the student experience through stronger connections to their community, the arts, and the natural environment.</p>	<p>SCC-4a Complete the implementation of The Path Forward and Facilities Modernization Plan, positioning teachers and students to have access to highly innovative, updated, and tech-savvy buildings and facilities.</p>	<p><b>RCSD</b>, City</p>
	<p>SCC-4b Develop and enhance arts programs that provide opportunities to students that might not otherwise be possible with the RCSD’s constrained budget. Examples include the ROCmusic program and the City’s Roc Paint Division.</p>	<p>RCSD, City, Art Schools and Educators, Arts Organizations, Artists, Arts Advocates, Community Partners</p>
	<p>SCC-4c Support development of educational curriculum and facilities focused on Genesee River, including efforts of Corn Hill Navigation and the Genesee River Alliance.</p>	<p><b>RCSD</b>, City, Genesee River Alliance, Corn Hill Navigation, Genesee RiverWatch, Educational Institutions</p>
	<p>SCC-4d Support the development of a nature center in Maplewood Park, serving as a hub for nature-based educational enrichment and expeditionary experiences.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, RCSD, Genesee River Alliance, Genesee RiverWatch, Educational Institutions</p>
	<p>SCC-4e Support the growth and reach of organizations like Teen Empowerment that foster dialogue and leadership development among young people and are engaged with RPD and other stakeholders.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Teen Empowerment, Various Community Partners</p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>SCC-4</b> <b>Provide educational facilities and programs of the highest quality, enriching the student experience through stronger connections to their community, the arts, and the natural environment.</b>	SCC-4f Expand outdoor classroom opportunities along the Genesee River and throughout the City’s park system.	<b>City</b> , RCSD, Genesee River Alliance, Genesee RiverWatch, Educational Institutions
	SCC-4g Further connect middle and high schools with other parts of the existing and emerging educational ecosystem such as maker labs, innovation challenges, hack-a-thons, interactive art installations, online experiences, and colleges/universities.	<b>RCSD</b> , Various Community Groups and Not-for-profits, Educational Institutions
	SCC-4h Encourage and support development of “sustainability curriculum” and environmental programming in schools, rec centers, and other community venues to educate students and adults about issues related to natural history, environmental stewardship, urban planning and ecology, sustainability, climate change, etc.	<b>RCSD</b> , City, Various Community Groups and Not-for-profits, Educational Institutions
	SCC-4i Encourage and educate youth on healthy food by starting farming and garden programs at rec centers and RCSD schools.	<b>RCSD, City, Monroe County Cornell Cooperative Extension, Foodlink, Community Partners</b>

# F. PUBLIC HEALTH + SAFETY

## INTRODUCTION

A safe and healthy city is a fundamental expectation of any city resident, property owner, business owner, employee, and visitor. The City of Rochester works every day and night toward improving the health and safety of people who live, work, and play here. Whether it is through the work of our police officers and fire fighters, code administrators and inspectors, parks and recreation staff, City planners, or political leaders, health and safety is the City's number one concern. And, side by side with the City are hundreds of community organizations and agencies also focusing on health and safety in their daily work.

The City takes a lead role in public safety, primarily through the Rochester Police Department (RPD) and Rochester Fire Department (RFD), which are both highlighted in this Section, but does not have its own health department. Still, the City is engaged in numerous initiatives that impact public health, from efforts to make our city more walkable and bikeable, to collaborating with the Monroe County Health Department and community partners on lead poisoning prevention, and activating our parks and public spaces. Many efforts related to community health are woven into the narrative and Action Plans in other Sections of *Rochester 2034*, as well. These are wide-ranging and multifaceted issues that must be integrated across multiple efforts and goals.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Everyone has the right to live in a safe, healthy, and peaceful community.
- Community policing is a partnership between the Police Department and the residents it serves.
- The Rochester Police Department is dedicated to using the community policing model and to being transparent and accountable to the public.
- The Rochester Fire Department has received the highest insurance rating achievable and is recognized as one of the most capable departments in New York State.
- Public Health is a complex topic that is integrated into multiple sections of *Rochester 2034*.
- Access to health services and healthy food are two issues that are essential to community health and wellness, and that the City would like to better address, moving forward.





## ROCHESTER POLICE DEPARTMENT (RPD)

The RPD's goal is to make the City of Rochester the safest mid-size city in America in which to work and raise a family. Rochester can trace its origins of policing back 200 years to 1819. According to the extensive crime statistics reported on the RPD's Open Data Portal, Rochester crime rates have decreased since 2010 in all seven reported areas, including violent crimes, burglaries, larcenies, robberies, homicides, property crimes, and aggravated assault.

The work of the men and women of the RPD goes beyond the risks and challenges of trying to keep Rochester safe, it also consists of advancing stronger community relations, transparent accountability, and the internal challenge of ensuring a diverse workforce. The RPD is constantly reacting to these challenges through policy and program development as described in this section.

### COMMUNITY POLICING

In 2015, RPD underwent a [restructuring](#) of its operations, returning officers to neighborhood patrol beats to engage in community policing efforts. RPD also established the Community Affairs Bureau, which coordinates all communications, public information, and community engagement initiatives. The following is a list of some of RPD's programs to help engage and develop strong relationships in the community:

- [Clergy on Patrol](#). Clergy on Patrol is a partnership between the RPD and the local clergy. Officers walk the neighborhoods with members of the clergy to identify neighborhood-specific issues, and build relationships with neighbors.
- [Community Volunteer Response Team](#). CVRT volunteers check in on residents after a homicide occurs in a neighborhood to help rebuild peace of mind, and refer individuals experiencing negative physical or emotional symptoms to appropriate support services.
- [Police and Citizens Together against Crime](#). PAC-TAC volunteers work with on-duty patrol officers in their neighborhood and interact with other residents and local merchants to help prevent crime. All volunteer residents receive extensive training.
- [Police Citizens Interaction Committee \(PCIC\)](#). Each section convenes monthly meetings attended by section staff and representatives of neighborhoods groups within the section to discuss crime patterns, quality of life issues, environmental concerns, problem locations and crime statistics. Meetings are intended to be interactive, where everyone is encouraged to participate in an open dialogue.
- [Police Training Advisory Committee](#). This committee is made up of Department representatives and community members to review current and proposed police training and advise RPD on training policies.
- [ROC Against Gun Violence Coalition](#). This coalition of residents, organizations, and city officials seeks to decrease gun violence in Rochester by bringing attention to the causes and effects of gun violence and promoting quality of life in Rochester's neighborhoods.
- [Neighborhood Association Meetings](#). Police officers regularly attend neighborhood association meetings in their beat. This allows for a dialogue between police and members of the community to address specific problems in a neighborhood.

## F. PUBLIC HEALTH + SAFETY (CONTINUED)

### ROCHESTER POLICE DEPARTMENT (RPD) CONTINUED

#### YOUTH AND STUDENT OUTREACH

Building a positive relationship with police at an early age improves the relationship between police and the community long term. Positive youth interaction with police officers builds trust, which discourages deviant behavior and allows for officers to do their jobs safely and efficiently. By creating a youth-police partnership, officers can also teach skills and encourage interest in young people joining the ranks of the Department. The following are some of the ways the Rochester Police Department engages with young people:

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

“Public safety is a key factor in growing the city.”

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

“The perception of public safety is very important.”

- **Books and Bears.** Rochester police officers keep children’s books and teddy bears in the trunks of their patrol cars. The books and bears are given to children who find themselves in traumatic situations.
- **Do the Right Thing Program.** The program recognizes youth for helping law enforcement and other first responders, acts of heroism, courage and quick thinking, leadership and role model behavior, and volunteering in their community. The award distinguishes school-age children who strive to make good choices, do well in school, give back to their communities, or demonstrate a “turn-around” or improved behavior.
- **Police Explorer Post 655.** The Police Explorer Post is an organization established with support of 'Scouts BSA' which closely follows the basic methods and policies of scouts. The purpose of the Explorer Post is to offer young men and women between 14 and 20 years-of-age insight into the field of law enforcement.

#### POSITIVE TICKETS

Creating positive relationships between community members and the police is the main goal the positive ticket movement. Positive Tickets are tickets that RPD officers distribute to community members who have done something positive for themselves, another individual, or the community. The tickets come with gift certificates from various sponsors, or champions, around the city of Rochester. This relationship is a proactive strategy to help youth in the future to be honorable members of their community. Youths need positive mentoring and guidance from adults and that is what positive tickets are doing.



## ROCHESTER POLICE DEPARTMENT (RPD) CONTINUED

- **Urban Fellows Program.** The Department offers fellowship opportunities to both graduate and undergraduate students in areas of criminal justice, sociology, and political science.
- **Pathways to Peace.** This is a collaboration between RPD, the City's Department of Recreation and Youth Services, and multiple community partners that addresses the growing number of youths who are "at risk" of becoming involved in gangs, drugs, or other crimes because important needs in their lives are not being met.
- **Police Recruit Education Program.** The mission of PREP is to prepare students for a successful law enforcement career with the Rochester Police Department. PREP is a two-year program and is open to first-year Criminal Justice students enrolled at Monroe Community College. PREP gives "Cadets" a first-hand practical training experience with the Department, including participation in a mentorship program, part-time employment, and job shadowing. PREP participants are also exposed to a number of law enforcement activities, such as role-play training exercises, riding along with police officers, and engaging in community outreach events. A number of Cadets have become sworn police officers with the Department.
- **Wegmans Mentorship Program.** This program is a partnership with Wegmans to provide young adults an opportunity to explore the various aspects of a career in law enforcement with a focus on becoming a Rochester Police Officer.

### CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, or CPTED, is a technique to prevent criminal activity through the design of a built environment. A few CPTED principles include, but are not limited to:

#### Natural Surveillance:

- Windows facing streets and sidewalk,
- Minimal visual barriers such as fencing and walls

#### Natural Access Control:

- Single, visible point of entry
- Locking gate between front and back yards

#### Natural Territorial Reinforcement:

- Maintained premises and landscaping
- No chain-link or razor-wire fence topping



## F. PUBLIC HEALTH + SAFETY (CONTINUED)

### ROCHESTER POLICE DEPARTMENT (RPD) CONTINUED

#### ACCOUNTABILITY

The City recognizes the importance of being transparent and accountable to the residents it serves. The following are initiatives that RPD has taken to work towards this objective.



**Body Cameras.** Mayor Lovely Warren has worked with RPD to put body cameras on uniforms of officers who regularly interact with the public in enforcement capacities. A description and compliance audit of the program can be found [here](#).



**Open Data Portal.** The RPD's Open Data Portal reflects the City's commitment to "engagement through transparency." The portal is a public platform for exploring and downloading the same data that RPD looks at to inform decisions and analyze trends, and anyone in the public to explore these data, as well as combine and analyze datasets, and visualize them with maps and other web applications. The "similar cities" tool on the portal also allows users to compare Rochester to every other city over 50,000 people in the U.S. on a range of indicators, including crime and safety data, but also census information.



**Civilian Review Board.** The purpose of the Board is to review and make recommendations on completed internal affairs investigations of alleged misconduct by employees of the Department.

Click here to download the [90 days of Community Engagement](#) report, which was the work of the RPD to engage the community from October to December, 2016, and hear views on the department, and how it could do better.

## ROCHESTER POLICE DEPARTMENT (RPD) CONTINUED

### DIVERSITY

One of the City's priorities as it works to implement community policing and strengthen relationships between residents and RPD is increasing workforce diversity so that the police force better reflects the community that it serves. RPD works with the Mayor's Office of Constituent Services and other City departments to conduct outreach and provide information about career pathways in public safety at local high schools, colleges, faith-based partners, and other community venues. As a result, a larger portion of the police recruits that have graduated from the RPD Academy since 2014 have been women or people of color.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

"I attend neighborhood association meetings and love the fact that the police and fire persons attend to give us current updates. Just learning their names and recognizing their faces is a true pleasure."



## F. PUBLIC HEALTH + SAFETY (CONTINUED)

### ROCHESTER FIRE DEPARTMENT (RFD)

The Rochester Fire Department (RFD) serves the entire City of Rochester, as well as the West Brighton Fire District. The City has fifteen neighborhood fire stations and one community outreach unit. The RFD responds to about 33,000 emergency calls per year, half of which are for emergency medical services. The RFD also focuses on preventative safety measures to decrease incidents in the future. This includes event safety coordination, safety training, and emergency preparedness.

The RFD boasts more than 500 uniformed and non-uniformed members, most of whom are EMT certified. There are thirteen specialty teams that are trained in issues including hazardous materials, structural collapse, rescue, and incident support. Keeping up with the demands of the RFD workload and achieving a diverse workforce are ongoing challenges confronting the RFD and are the subject of programming and recruitment initiatives.

An additional challenge for the department is updating and maintaining their structures and equipment. The majority of RFD stations are in need of improvements. Most are between 50 and 150 years old and do not always meet current building codes. Many stations lack modern amenities, technologies, and appropriate accommodations for firefighters. They are also often too small for the trucks and other equipment used by the department. Ultimately, a system-wide master plan to examine locations and

station upgrades will be necessary to address these needs in an efficient, holistic manner. This assessment should explore opportunities for co-locating other City services or community needs in new or expanded fire stations.

The RFD and Rochester community are also in need of better water-based rescue infrastructure. There has long been a need to improve access and response time to the Erie Canal, Lake Ontario, and varied segments of the Genesee River. With the ROC the Riverway initiative, and its objective of increasing boating and riverside activity in the South River Corridor, there is an even greater need to provide multiple sheltered, secure boathouses as well as motorized craft to serve these areas. Specific locations are addressed in Initiative Area 6, The Placemaking Plan



## ROCHESTER FIRE DEPARTMENT (RFD) CONTINUED

### FIRE DEPARTMENT INITIATIVES

#### → Community Emergency Response Team.

Founded in 2002 as the first program of its kind in New York State, the CERT program trains residents in basic disaster survival and rescue skills to improve the ability of community members to survive a disaster until first responders or help arrives. Participants are trained in a multitude of topics including disaster preparedness, disaster fire suppression, disaster medical operations, light search and rescue operations, CPR and AED handling, disaster psychology, team organization, and “points of distribution” locations.

#### → Career Pathways to Public Safety Program.

This program targets 11th and 12th graders in the Rochester City School District to increase the awareness of career opportunities within the public safety field, and increase minority representation and local residency in its uniformed divisions.

→ Protectives. The Rochester Protectives is a volunteer firefighter organization that has worked with the Fire Department for over 150 years. The Protectives provide assistance to the Department by covering or removing property after a fire, recovering family valuables, providing ventilation through the use of smoke-ejecting fans, and setting up emergency scene lighting.

#### → Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detector Safety.

The RFD will install pre-purchased fire detectors upon request, and check to see if existing detectors are installed correctly. The Department receives federal funding to purchase and install a limited number of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors for low-income homeowners and for emergency situations. The RFD also has SilentCall Smoke Detectors available for the hearing-impaired community.



### ISO CLASS 1 RATING

The Insurance Service Office (ISO) is an organization that provides statistical information on risk by analyzing a range of municipal data nationwide. The program provides an objective, national standard that helps the city administrations and fire departments in planning and budgeting for facilities, equipment, and training. Communities with excellent ISO ratings are capable of securing lower fire insurance premiums for residents and business owners.

In 2016, the ISO intensively analyzed the performance and infrastructure of the RFD and the City's water distribution system, and assigned a rating to classify our community's ability to suppress fires. Upon the conclusion of the review, the Rochester Fire Department received a Class 1 Rating. Nationwide, less than 1% of fire districts have an ISO Class 1.

## F. PUBLIC HEALTH + SAFETY (CONTINUED)

### PUBLIC HEALTH

Health is fundamental to the length and quality of a person's life. It has been defined as the "absence of disease" and also as a "state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being." Either way, a person's health results from a complex interplay between their genetics and a variety of other factors, such as:



**Clinical Care** – not just the quality of physical and mental healthcare, but also healthcare access (insurance coverage, affordability of visits and prescriptions, location and transportation accessibility of health care services)



**Physical Environment** – air and water quality, proximity or exposure to toxic materials, housing quality, transportation accessibility, the design of buildings and infrastructure, real and perceived safety and accessibility of public space, etc.



**Health Behaviors** – sleep, diet, physical activity, stress management, sexual activity, tobacco, alcohol and other drug/substance use, medication adherence, healthcare seeking behavior, etc.



**Socio-Economics** – race, class, language, income, employment, education, and access to family, social and community resources and supports

Because health is such a crosscutting issue, a number of sections in *Rochester 2034* include narrative and action plan strategies related to health. These include protecting the city's natural resources, continuing healthy housing initiatives, improving multi-modal transportation networks, and bolstering parks and recreation facilities and programming. This section provides a brief narrative on some health-related issues, including access to health services and healthy food, not adequately covered in other sections.



## PUBLIC HEALTH CONTINUED

### ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES

The City of Rochester does not have a health department and does not provide direct health services, but numerous healthcare and social service providers, community organizations, and State and County agencies work to provide direct medical and social services across the city and region.

As discussed in [Appendix C, Rochester Today](#), many city residents live in poverty and poverty has a direct correlation with negative health outcomes. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, “The effects of poverty on children’s health and well-being are well-documented. Poor children have increased infant mortality; more frequent and severe chronic diseases such as asthma; poorer nutrition and growth; less access to quality health care; lower immunization rates; and increased obesity and its complications.”

Rochester residents are vulnerable to the health impacts associated with poverty concentration, yet access to health services, especially primary care, within low-income neighborhoods is limited and often inadequate. Emergency rooms at local hospitals, by default, are where many residents seek treatment. This is costly and does not provide the kind of holistic family-oriented care that a doctor’s office provides. Emergency rooms treat acute illnesses and cannot provide preventive care like well-child visits or annual physicals and routine screenings. In stakeholder meetings with health service providers, there was consensus that more needs to be done to address the shortage of accessible services to our most vulnerable populations.

Given the presence of two non-profit hospital systems, a medical school that does extensive research, a regional health planning agency, a regional health foundation, and multiple health-focused non-profits and community service providers based in Rochester, there is a lot of research conducted locally about health challenges, needs, and opportunities. With the many shifts in healthcare delivery that are currently underway, including as a result of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2010 and the waiver secured by New York State’s Medicaid Redesign Team (MRT) in 2014, there have been numerous “community needs assessments” conducted to inform local efforts.

Yet none of these efforts has focused exclusively and comprehensively on the city of Rochester itself. They tend to look at the county, the region, or a particular target population, geography, or health condition. For the City and community partners to more effectively advocate for improved health services in underserved areas, and to better integrate health across the full range of local policies, programs, and development initiatives, we need to better understand the range and severity of health needs, gaps, and opportunities that are specific to Rochester.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

**“Wellness, community and public health are intricately tied to a community’s ability to thrive.”**

## F. PUBLIC HEALTH + SAFETY (CONTINUED)

### PUBLIC HEALTH CONTINUED

#### ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD

The emergence of “food deserts” in American cities – areas where it is difficult to access affordable, good-quality fresh food – is well documented. As population, employment, and wealth shifted from cities to suburbs, many full-service urban grocery stores closed up shop, following the migration of population and wealth while also developing new grocery store models that demanded more square footage and parking spaces than most urban locations could provide.

There is no single, standard definition of what constitutes a “food desert,” but most definitions focus on measures of distance and access for low-income populations to the nearest grocery store. The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) maintains a [food desert locator](#) data and mapping tool that shows two very different scenarios in Rochester, depending on which definition is used (based on 2015 data):

- When looking at low income census tracts where at least one-third of the population would have to travel at least one mile to get to the closest grocery store, 5 of the City’s census tracts are considered food deserts.
- When looking at low-income census tracts where at least 100 residents do not have a vehicle and would have to travel at least half a mile to get to the nearest grocery store, more than 30 census tracts in the city are considered food deserts.

Another concept that is used to describe a community’s food environment is “food swamp,” which describes a place that are oversaturated with providers of unhealthy, highly-processed, low-nutrient food, such as fast-food establishments and convenience stores. Diets that are high in fat, low in nutrition, and lacking in fresh produce can lead to negative health outcomes like obesity or other illnesses, especially in communities that also lack safe, welcoming, accessible opportunities for physical activity. Initiatives to better understand local food access, food environments, eating behaviors, and physical activity can play an important role in helping to support the development of healthier communities.



## F. PUBLIC HEALTH + SAFETY (CONTINUED)

### PUBLIC HEALTH CONTINUED

#### ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD

Though most definitions of food deserts focus on grocery store access, there are actually many other kinds of places where people purchase or access food. A few examples to highlight that are specific to Rochester are:



The **Rochester Public Market** is open year-round 165 market days per year and runs the largest and most effective Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit initiative (“Token Program”) in the country (thanks to a partnership with the non-profit Friends of the Rochester Public Market). Market customers who use their SNAP benefits to purchase produce receive a 40% bonus, allowing them to get more food for free. Eight thousand unique market visitors participated in the initiative in 2017, generating \$1.3 million in sales. This is 25-30% of the business that SNAP benefit initiatives generate at the more than 500 participating markets statewide, and more than the total business generated by SNAP benefit initiatives in all participating markets of 23 entire states combined.



**Foodlink**, a regional food bank headquartered in Rochester, is known as one of the most innovative food banks in the country and for its work to integrate as much fresh, local food and produce into its programs as possible. In addition to typical food bank programs and community nutrition education, Foodlink’s innovations include its pop-up food access programs in low-income neighborhoods (curbside markets and urban farm stands), its garden project and Lexington Urban Farm that works with refugees in NW Rochester, and its efforts to transition to serve as a regional food hub with value added processing initiatives and workforce development programs to help low-income individuals build career pathways in the regional food industry.

## PUBLIC HEALTH CONTINUED



A number of entities provide **free meals** throughout the year. For example, the Rochester City School District (RCSD) provides free breakfast and lunch for youth throughout the school year, city rec centers provide free dinners, and the summer meals program provides breakfasts and lunches at schools, rec centers, and summer camp programs during school break. Many senior centers, child care providers, adult day care providers, social service agencies, churches, and other organizations also provide meals through a variety of programs and funding sources.



**Community gardens** are gaining attention as an effective way to get fresh produce into people's diet and the number of gardens growing fresh produce has been increasing in recent years. Numerous churches, as well as schools, rec centers, non-profits, and individual garden enthusiasts install and maintain these gardens and share the bounty informally in their communities, as well as through formal partnerships (e.g., with Foodlink, who can then help to redistribute through its network).

## F. PUBLIC HEALTH + SAFETY (CONTINUED)

### PUBLIC HEALTH CONTINUED

#### ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD

These important efforts to increase access to healthy food must be supported and new ideas must be innovated. Strategies discussed in other sections of *Rochester 2034* include City policy development and regulatory changes around urban agriculture, and encouraging business development in hydro and aquaponics for food production (see [Initiative Area 4-Section D, Urban Agriculture and Community Gardens](#)).

In 2017, Common Ground Health convened organizations and conducted analysis to look at the regional [Food and Health Connection](#), which provided interesting analysis and data tools that help to visualize food resources within each county in the region, but there is not currently any comprehensive inventory of food access opportunities and gaps in the City of Rochester.

Disincentivizing the proliferation of convenience stores in neighborhoods through land use controls has been attempted by the City of Rochester in the past. This attempt was heralded by residents and health advocates alike. While past attempts were challenged and abandoned, the City should not give up on finding solutions to reducing the negative impacts of an overabundance of convenience stores in neighborhoods.

Across the country, a number of cities and regions have formed food policy councils or task forces to assess local food policy and access issues and work together to develop solutions. A local council/task force could focus on Rochester's food deserts, document existing resources, gaps, and opportunities, and work to develop food access policies and initiatives that improve community food access and nutrition.

### QUALITY OF LIFE

Everyone has the right to live in a safe and peaceful community, free from public nuisance. A public nuisance refers to a violation of a law or code that disrupts the human, built, or natural environment of a neighborhood, such as litter, public substance abuse, or excessive noise.

The City has recognized that since neighbors are most familiar with public nuisances happening in their neighborhoods, they should be involved in the nuisance abatement process. In 2018, Mayor Lovely Warren and City Council voted to restructure the existing nuisance abatement program to more efficiently deal with nuisance problems. The newly created [Nuisance Advisory Board](#) meets monthly, and allows any resident to speak on issues happening in their neighborhood, and helps to find solutions through collaboration with the City's four [Neighborhood Service Centers](#). The Centers act as mediators in neighborhood conflicts, and work closely with residents, businesses, City staff, and the police department to constructively address quality of life problems.

The City's Nuisance Point Program is a way to identify and correct chronic nuisance activity. The program is designed to provide residents and business owners an opportunity to partner with City staff to abate nuisance activity. If the responsible party fails to properly address and abate the nuisance activity, and the number of points exceed the thresholds established in [Section 10-12 of the City Charter](#), the City can initiate an action that could result in the closure of the property or business. Residents are able to see current, active nuisance points and enforcement actions on an [online map](#).



**PUBLIC COMMENT**

“Public spaces are critical for public health and the social-emotional development of children.”

# F. PUBLIC HEALTH + SAFETY [PHS]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>PHS-1</b></p> <p><b>Continue building connections and partnerships with the community to enhance public safety efforts and impacts.</b></p>	<p>PHS-1a Continue to enact and enhance RPD's model of Community Policing to better engage with the community on safety issues, and ensure that enforcement is a partnership with the community.</p>	<p><b>RFD</b></p>
	<p>PHS-1b Promote and encourage volunteer opportunities through the RPD and RFD to build the capabilities of the organizations, and increase civic capacity in public safety efforts. Market volunteer opportunities through libraries, rec centers, and City events.</p>	<p><b>RPD, RFD, Rec Centers</b></p>
	<p>PHS-1c Develop a Language Access Plan for the RPD and RFD to improve communication and build trust with non-English speaking communities.</p>	<p><b>RPD, RFD</b></p>
	<p>PHS-1d Promote and market RPD resources that address at-risk youths through rec centers, libraries, and schools.</p>	<p><b>RPD, RPL, RCSD</b></p>
	<p>PHS-1e Promote and expand resources for the RFD's Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detector initiative.</p>	<p><b>RFD</b></p>
	<p>PHS-1f Continue to grow partnerships with local schools, community organizations, faith leaders, and other partners to recruit a diverse, high-quality workforce to the RPD and RFD.</p>	<p><b>RPD, RFD, RCSD, Colleges/ Universities, Faith Partners, Community Partners</b></p>
	<p>PHS-1g Continue and expand on the Positive Tickets program administered by the RPD to recognize the efforts of people working to improve their community.</p>	<p><b>RFD</b></p>



**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>PHS-2</b> <b>Incorporate preventative public safety and active design principles into the built environment through development projects and infrastructure.</b>	PHS-2a Train key personnel in police, fire, architecture and engineering, planning, and neighborhood and business development in the principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED), to encourage a culture of crime preventative design and development.	<b>City</b> , RPD, RFD
	PHS-2b Develop a street design guide that prioritizes safety and adheres to both the Fire Prevention Code and multi-modal planning principles.	<b>City</b>
	PHS-2c Explore opportunities for incorporating current Fire Prevention Code standards into an urban setting, while prioritizing safety, accessibility, and complete streets.	<b>RFD</b>
<b>PHS-3</b> <b>Increase the capabilities of the RPD and RFD through collaboration, data analysis, technology, and new or improved resources.</b>	PHS-3a Build on the existing capabilities of the RPD and RFD to use GIS and data analysis to investigate public safety threats and efforts, communicate information to the public, and share with colleagues and partners to inform joint planning.	<b>RPD, RFD</b>
	PHS-3b Include representatives from the RPD and RFD in early stages of the planning process for development projects.	<b>City</b> , RPD, RFD
	PHS-3c Investigate the results of the RPD’s Street-to-Treatment pilot program, and consider further expanding and promoting the program to address the opioid crisis.	<b>RPD</b> , Rochester Regional Health, Community Partners

# F. PUBLIC HEALTH + SAFETY [PHS]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>PHS-3</b>  <b>Increase the capabilities of the RPD and RFD through collaboration, data analysis, technology, and new or improved resources.</b></p>	<p>PHS-3d Evaluate the additional police and fire resources needed to accommodate the increased activity along the Genesee River as part of the ROC the Riverway Initiative.</p>	<p><b>RPD, RFD, City, Empire State Development</b></p>
	<p>PHS-3e Develop a system-wide master plan for the RFD to examine locations and station upgrades that will be necessary to address department and community needs in an efficient, holistic manner. This assessment should explore opportunities for co-locating other City services or community needs in new or expanded fire stations.</p>	<p><b>RPD, City</b></p>
	<p>PHS-3f With stakeholder collaboration, continue to replace aging Police and Fire Facilities with modern facilities that better serve the community. For more location-specific needs, see <a href="#">Initiative Area 2, The Placemaking Plan</a>.</p>	<p><b>RPD, RFD, Community Partners</b></p>
	<p>PHS-3g Establish a city-wide training facility for all RFD employees, providing a more centralized and up-to-date center than is currently available on Scottsville Road. This would also enable the RFD to reduce training operations at vacant buildings throughout the city that congest streets with emergency vehicles.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>PHS-3h Seek out opportunities to create more specialty teams through the Police and Fire Departments, including an Urban Search and Rescue Team.</p>	<p><b>RPD, RFD, Monroe County Sheriff's Office</b></p>
	<p>PHS-3i Perform a Community Risk Assessment to evaluate the hazards faced by residents, and create a Community Risk Reduction program designed around the information gathered.</p>	<p><b>RFD</b></p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>PHS-3</b> Increase the capabilities of the RPD and RFD through collaboration, data analysis, technology, and new or improved resources.	PHS-3j To respond to the increased emphasis on the use of and access to the Genesee River, obtain additional safety equipment, including a fire boat for the Port of Rochester and a Water Rescue Boat for the Erie Harbor.	<b>RFD</b>
	PHS-3k Identify locations with high vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic to place security cameras and assist RPD with improving public safety.	<b>RPD</b>
<b>PHS-4</b> Maintain and seek out accreditations and standards for the RFD that allow it to best do its job, and benefit the whole community.	PHS-4a Seek accreditation of RFD through the Commission on Fire Accreditation International.	<b>RFD</b>
	PHS-4b Maintain RFD’s Class 1 Rating from the Insurance Service Office and use to support economic development and business attraction efforts.	<b>RFD</b>

# F. PUBLIC HEALTH + SAFETY [PHS]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>PHS-5</b>  <b>Improve understanding of community health conditions, needs, service provision and access in the city, and use to improve access and overall community health.</b></p>	<p>PHS-5a Work with health care and health planning partners to inventory health facilities in the city, and document major health conditions, trends, utilization, needs, gaps, and opportunities to better inform City efforts to integrate health into its policies, programs, and neighborhood development efforts.</p>	<p>City, Common Ground Health, Health Foundation, FLPPS, United Way, Monroe County, Healthcare Providers, Community Partners</p>
	<p>PHS-5b Work with ongoing health care and health planning efforts to share City data and knowledge that could benefit those processes, identify new opportunities for joint work, and collaboratively fundraise to implement ideas.</p>	<p>City, Common Ground Health, Health Foundation, FLPPS, United Way, Monroe County, Healthcare Providers, Community Partners</p>
	<p>PHS-5c Work with partners to identify available sites for development of health and human service facilities that will benefit neighborhoods, particularly in underserved areas. Ensure that facilities are easily accessible, make the best use of existing facilities, and are compatible with adjoining uses.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Hospitals Systems, Health Centers, United Way, Health Foundation, Human Service Providers, Monroe County, Community Partners</p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>PHS-6</b></p> <p><b>Increase access to healthy foods and decrease the proliferation of establishments that only offer unhealthy, highly-processed, low-nutrient food.</b></p>	<p>PHS-6a Work with partners to help fundraise and expand initiatives that provide access to fresh and nutritious food in neighborhoods and to underserved youth, families, and seniors. Examples include the Public Market Token Program; Foodlink’s many innovative initiatives; meals at schools, rec centers, senior centers, child care, and adult day programs; the summer meal program; and efforts to support existing and new community gardens.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Foodlink, RCSD, Social Service Providers, Day Care Providers, RACF, United Way, Common Ground Health, Community Partners</p>
	<p>PHS-6b Work with community partners to develop an inventory of food access opportunities and gaps in the City of Rochester and use it to inform food access related policies and initiatives.</p>	<p>City, Monroe County, Foodlink, RCSD, Institutional Food Purchasers, Regional Planning Agencies, Food Agriculture and Nutrition Stakeholders, Community Partners</p>
	<p>PHS-6c Explore the opportunity to convene a local or regional Food Policy Council or Task Force. The most appropriate entity to lead this effort would need to be identified.</p>	<p>City, Monroe County, Foodlink, RCSD, Institutional Food Purchasers, Regional Planning Agencies, Food Agriculture and Nutrition Stakeholders, Community Partners</p>
	<p>PHS-6d Find solutions to reducing the negative impacts of an overabundance of convenience stores in neighborhoods, including increasing access to other sources of food, and supporting convenience stores in increasing their supply of healthy, affordable foods.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Foodlink, Community Partners</p>

# G. COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION

## INTRODUCTION

It is undeniable that people prefer to live, work, and play in surroundings that are beautiful. Rochester takes pride in its beautiful natural resources as well as the beauty that is fostered through the buildings, parks, public spaces, artwork, and actions of our community. We continue to strive to achieve a more beautiful city through public art installations, ensuring a clean environment, and committing to maintain those distinguishing features in which our community takes pride.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

Rochester has an abundance of natural resources, including the coastline of Lake Ontario, the Genesee River, our urban forest, and our amazing parks and greenspaces. Extraordinary views can be experienced along the Genesee River from the beautiful Olmsted designed Genesee Valley Park to the spectacular gorge north of Downtown to the River's outfall into Lake Ontario, with three waterfalls along the way. This community has long recognized and appreciated our significant environmental assets that create this beautiful city. For more information, see [Initiative Area 4-Section A, Natural Resources](#).

## PUBLIC ART

According to the Americans for the Arts, Public Art Network Council, "Cities gain value through public art – cultural, social, and economic value. Public art is a distinguishing part of our public history and our evolving culture. It reflects and reveals our society, adds meaning to our cities and uniqueness to our communities. Public art humanizes the built environment and invigorates public spaces."

Public art is essential to the beauty and vitality of a place and is free and accessible to everyone. Rochester has numerous public art installations,

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Rochester's river gorge, waterfronts and waterfalls, park system, and historic neighborhoods make it a uniquely beautiful city.
- Preserving historic buildings and holding new development to high quality architecture, construction and urban design standards are key to protecting Rochester's character.
- In addition to its buildings, Rochester's public art, parks, and natural resources also contribute to its beauty.
- Everyone deserves access to beautiful places, no matter what part of the city they live in.
- Clean Sweep and Keep Rochester Beautiful are important City-community partnerships to keep neighborhoods, parks, and streets looking their best.

from sculptures to murals to street furniture, especially in the downtown area and in the Neighborhood of the Arts. The celebration of this artwork and the encouragement and support of new pieces is a priority of the community, expressed extensively in *Rochester 2034*. Future development projects and public space enhancements should try to include artistic installations in the project design. For a more specific discussion on public art, refer to [Initiative Area 3-Section C, Arts and Culture](#).

## BUILT ENVIRONMENT

There are numerous opportunities throughout Rochester to improve the public realm, including streets, buildings, parks, and civic spaces. These features contribute to a 'sense of place' by reflecting local history that tells the story of our past, while providing the space for current activities and social interaction. The built environment is key to the special character and distinctiveness of a community. Rochester is fortunate to have an abundance of historic buildings to that relay the stories of its unique history. Preserving historic buildings is part of one of the Placemaking Principles of *Rochester 2034*.

Complementing the beauty of historic buildings, new construction can also contribute to a community's beauty and sense of place. Beautiful design of a building, street, or landscape creates a strong sense of place and fosters care for that place. In a challenged economy, design ideals

are often ignored in the interest of economic development. Instead, design should be prioritized because a well-designed built environment that brings delight has a significant impact on the economic vitality of an area, the daily experiences of local residents and visitors, and ultimately the long-term economic success of a place.

The City of Rochester Zoning Code is a mechanism for preserving historic buildings and providing design direction for new development. This is one of the strongest tools for ensuring that Rochester's built environment reflects the community's commitment to maintaining and creating a beautiful place. The foundation for updating and strengthening the Zoning Code is found in [Initiative Area 2, The Placemaking Plan](#).



## G. COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION (CONTINUED)

### CITY PROGRAMMING

#### FLOWER CITY FEELING GOOD

The City appreciates the hard work and commitment residents give their neighbors and city by making their properties beautiful. “Thanks for Showing Your Pride” is a City program that puts door hangers on residents’ front doors as a thank you for their commitment to keeping their yard/neighborhood beautiful. The address of door hanger recipients is entered into a raffle to win a prize.

Additionally, the efforts of hundreds of dedicated city gardeners and their contributions to making Rochester more beautiful have been recognized through the Flower City Garden Contest. Any city gardener may nominate his/her own garden or a neighbor’s garden. Annual recognition and awards are provided to the winners of the garden competition.

The City also sponsors horticultural workshops and garden talks to support and foster community interest in gardening. The Rochester Blossoms Plant Giveaway program takes place every year and is open to community gardeners and neighborhood groups that hold a City garden permit or steward a neighborhood street mall or garden (no private gardens). In the spring, groups sign-up to receive flats of annuals and, in the autumn, the City sponsors another plant giveaway to provide mums, bulbs, and perennials.







## G. COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION (CONTINUED)

### PUBLIC COMMENT

“Expand and better advertise the Clean Sweep program.”

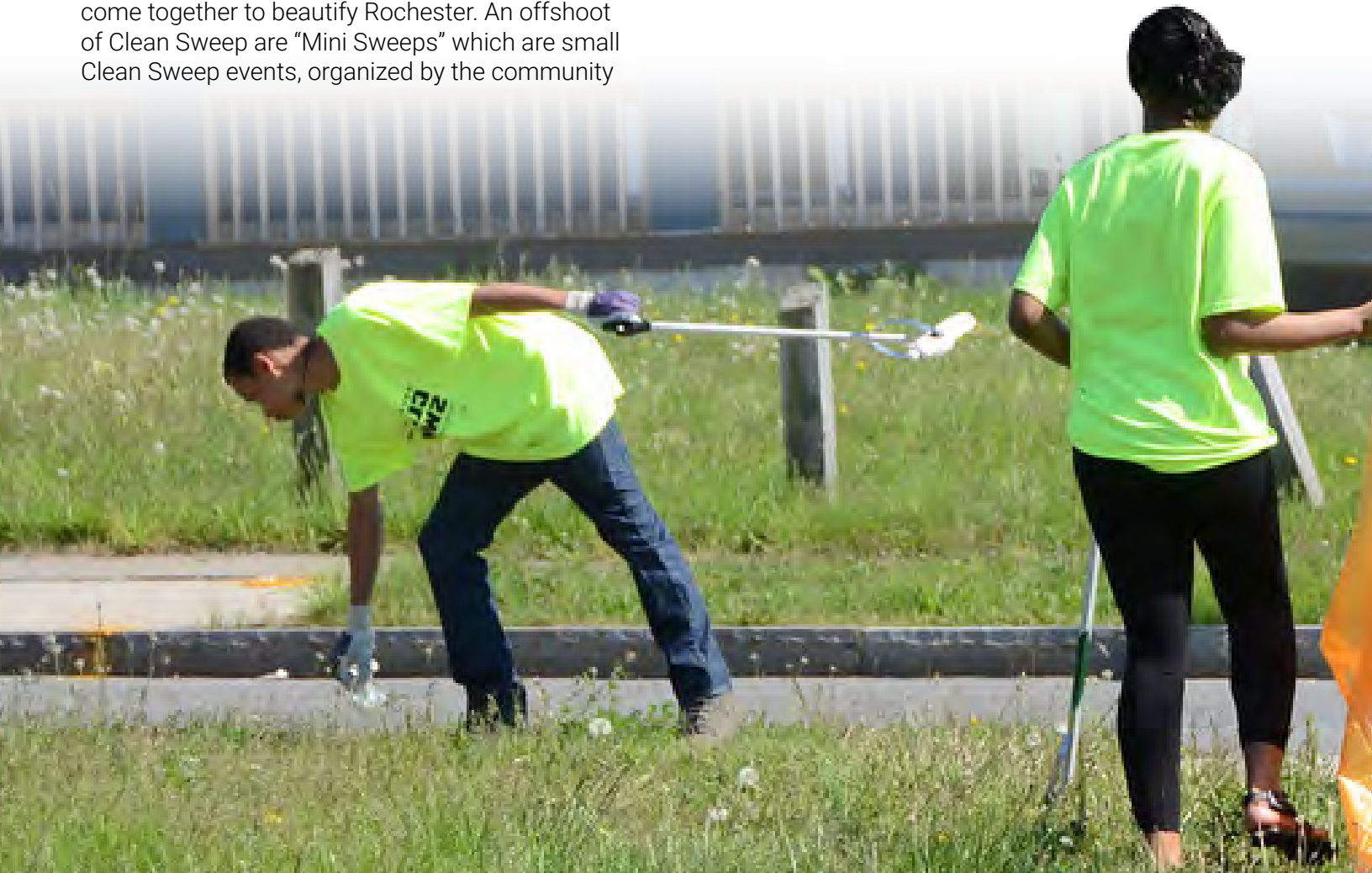
### CITY PROGRAMMING CONTINUED

#### CLEAN SWEEP

In 2006, the City started the annual spring Clean Sweep program in partnership with the community. The City coordinates thousands of volunteers and dispatches them throughout the community to pick up litter and beautify their assigned neighborhoods. Clean Sweep volunteers help remove the accumulation of litter and winter debris from the streets and public spaces, help remove graffiti, and plant perennial flowers.

The Clean Sweep Program has emerged as a valued annual event where people from the community come together to beautify Rochester. An offshoot of Clean Sweep are “Mini Sweeps” which are small Clean Sweep events, organized by the community

and supported by the City. A Mini Sweep starts with a community group picking an area they want to work on, setting a date, and notifying the City. On the day of the event, the City will drop off tools, work gloves and bags, and when the event is complete, the City will come back to pick up the tools and debris.



## CITY PROGRAMMING CONTINUED

### ONGOING LITTER MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS

Accumulation of litter has a detrimental effect on a community by contributing to a decline in home values, patronage of businesses, and perceptions around community health and safety. Litter presents an appearance of disorder and disorder breeds more disorder. During the *Rochester 2034* public outreach process, people of all ages expressed concern about the proliferation of litter in their neighborhoods.

The City has ongoing operations to address litter. In addition to regular trash pickup and street sweeping in the right of way, the City engages job-transition teams to perform litter pickup on arterial streets on a weekly schedule. To further respond to litter concerns, the City increased the number of litter baskets on the arterial roadways and increased the fine for littering to \$500.



## G. COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION (CONTINUED)

### CITY PROGRAMMING CONTINUED

#### KEEP ROCHESTER BEAUTIFUL

In 2018, Rochester became an affiliate of Keep America Beautiful, a 60 year-old organization that provides expertise, programs, and resources to help end littering, improve recycling, and beautify communities. Keep Rochester Beautiful is working closely with the community on strategies to implement the following:

- Improvement of current litter and recycling efforts;
- Use of a Litter Index Inventory to assess conditions and target problem areas;
- Engagement of residents in litter cleanup and prevention efforts;
- Education of youth and adults surrounding littering and recycling; and
- Securement of funding for litter efforts, including grants.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

“We need to teach people to properly dispose of their litter.”



## CITY PROGRAMMING CONTINUED

### GRAFFITI REMOVAL

Graffiti, which is vandalism not sanctioned by the property owner whose property is affected, is a sign of decay and makes people feel that their neighborhood is being lost to gangs and crime. If allowed to remain, it sends the message that the community is unconcerned about its appearance. Graffiti is a crime that is costly to communities. Through its “Defacer Eraser” program, Rochester removes graffiti from City-owned structures in the public right-of-way and from structures on the first floor of private property after property owners have been given an opportunity to clean the graffiti themselves. Graffiti removal is provided year round, but is most effective in certain weather conditions. The City of Rochester will remove graffiti on private property, with written permission of the property owner, one time per year without a fee.

### NEIGHBORGOOD GRANTS

The Community Foundation offers Special Regional Improvement Grants (“NeighborGood Grants”), awarded to help resident-controlled, neighborhood-based organizations in the City of Rochester improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods.

#### Maximum Grant Size:

- Neighborhood Associations: \$2,500
- Block Clubs: \$750



### PUBLIC COMMENT

“Encourage neighborhood-based beautification projects.”

# G. COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION [BFN]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>BFN-1</b></p> <p><b>Continue and expand community beautification efforts.</b></p>	<p>BFN-1a Bolster Clean Sweep funding to allow for more frequent events. Clean Sweep is a valued program that generates community excitement around cleaning and beautifying city neighborhoods. Pursue donations, sponsorships, and other creative funding ideas to fund this program.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Community Partners</p>
	<p>BFN-1b To empower and support more neighborhood-driven community beautification efforts, bolster funding for small neighborhood grants, like the NeighborGood Grant or the Urban Agriculture Working Group mini-grants. These kinds of small grants do not require large amounts of money, yet they can create enthusiasm and momentum that may last longer than the immediate project. Activities like these empower and engage neighbors to clean up and beautify their own neighborhoods making them feel powerful and give a strong sense of community.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, The Community Foundation, Community Partners, Urban Agriculture Working Group</p>
	<p>BFN-1c For the purpose of supporting neighborhood-driven beautification efforts and to respond to community demand, evaluate policy and funding sources for providing water to community flower gardens.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>BFN-1d Look for auxiliary staff (e.g., AmeriCorps) or work with Code Enforcement Inspectors to support the Flower City Looking Good- Door hanger Program.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>BFN-2</b> <b>Continue and expand existing efforts to decrease the accumulation of litter in the community.</b>	BFN-2a Use an annual Litter Index Inventory to monitor litter conditions and trends throughout the city. Use the index to establish priority areas where litter abatement efforts should be targeted.	<b>City</b>
	BFN-2b Engage residents in litter cleanup by creating an “adopt a street” system for litter. Offer incentives for residents who pick up litter, such as acknowledgement from the Mayor’s office, or discounts from businesses.	<b>City</b> , Community Stakeholders
	BFN-2c Expand educational programming around litter and recycling.	RCSD, RPL, City
	BFN-2d Expand marketing of 311 as a resource to communicate with the City about litter problems such as overflowing trash receptacles.	<b>City</b>
	BFN-2e Continue to seek out grants that provide funding and resource to address the litter problem.	<b>City</b> , Keep America Beautiful
	BFN-2f Engage transitional employment work crews to help address litter, particularly in areas that have been identified as priority areas.	<b>City</b> , Transitional Employment Programs and Partners, Community Partners

# 4 INITIATIVE AREA SUSTAINING GREEN + ACTIVE SYSTEMS

**A. NATURAL RESOURCES**

**B. PARKS, RECREATION, + OPEN SPACE**

**C. CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION + ADAPTION**

**D. URBAN AGRICULTURE + COMMUNITY GARDENS**

**E. TRANSPORTATION**







# A. NATURAL RESOURCES

## INTRODUCTION

The natural environment is a fundamental component of a community's health and well-being. Rochester is fortunate to have an abundance of beautiful natural resources, from our waterways that give us miles of coastline, to our urban forest integrated throughout the city landscape, to the clean air that we breathe, to the diversity of wildlife that contribute to our ecosystem. Recognizing and appreciating Rochester's environmental assets is important not only to create a beautiful city, but to ensure the well-being of the people who work and live here.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

**"We have one of the most geographically beautiful areas in the state, yet it is a secret, even to many residents."**

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Rochester has an abundance of fresh water, which is a unique asset we should build on.
- The City of Rochester has been consistently awarded for having the best tasting drinking water in New York State.
- Stormwater infrastructure and regulations protect water quality and prevent flood damage.
- A healthy urban forest is an important part of the City's infrastructure and essential for the well-being of residents.
- Despite being an urban area, Rochester also provides valuable habitat to many animals, and a portion of the Genesee River in the city has been designated a "coastal fish and wildlife habitat of state-wide significance" by New York State.

## INTRODUCTION CONTINUED

A 2018 report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, [\*Urban Nature for Human Health and Well-Being\*](#), summarized the findings of several studies that together indicate the range of effects that exposure to the natural environment has on us. These effects include:

- People living near parks and green space have less mental distress, are more physically active, and have extended life spans.
- Exposure to nature may impact human mortality from chronic disease.
- When people exercise outdoors in natural environments, they do so for longer periods of time and at greater intensities.
- Positive health effects are enhanced when green space includes the presence of water, or blue space.
- There is strong evidence that time spent in nature can improve the attention capacity of children with attention deficit disorders.
- Some research shows that inner-city children who grow up in public housing buildings with a view of nature have greater impulse control and are able to concentrate better and delay gratification longer.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

**“Plant more trees. Trees improve walkability, safety, and beauty of neighborhoods.”**

### PUBLIC COMMENT

**“We need more trees and native plants for the birds, bugs, and especially bees to rest make homes and breed.”**

# A. NATURAL RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

## URBAN FOREST

A healthy urban forest is an integral part of the city infrastructure and essential for the well-being of all area residents. One of the most distinguishing characteristics of Rochester is its forest of trees. In 2019, Rochester celebrated 38 years of being designated as a “Tree City USA” community. The Tree City USA program is sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the National Association of State Foresters and the USDA Forest Service. Trees fill our parks, line our streets, and turn our cemeteries into parks; the diversity and age of our trees are without rival.

There is a strong link between urban trees and improved physical and mental health. Trees cool cities affected by the “heat island effect” and clean the air, which allows cities to be resilient against negative health effects brought on by rising

temperatures and air pollution. Trees also fight against noise pollution, increase the presence of wildlife, and allow people to connect with nature, all things that are linked to better mental health.

Updated in 2012, the [City of Rochester Urban Forest Master Plan](#) describes the unique history of our urban forest, discusses the benefits of trees, provides an overview of Rochester’s current urban forest, compares benchmarks established in previous plans, details elements influencing that forest, states the City’s urban forest policy, and poses a series of recommendations. The City Forester maintains an inventory including the location and characteristics of every tree on public land in Rochester. Each year, 1/6th of city trees are re-inventoried by City Forestry staff.

### ELEMENTS THAT AFFECT ROCHESTER'S URBAN FOREST

#### Construction

Construction is a major man-made influence affecting the urban forest. Often, 50% of mature street trees within a street reconstruction project are lost within five years. Vandalism and de-icing salts also profoundly affect tree establishment and longevity.



#### Pests

Pests are a considerable threat to the urban forest so they are factored into the species selection. Current arboricultural standards recommend that a tree species not exceed 10% of the forest population in order to minimize potential losses and to passively control pests attacking a specific species.

## URBAN FOREST CONTINUED

### WASHINGTON GROVE

Washington Grove is a City-owned woodland area near Cobbs Hill Reservoir. The grove comprises 26 acres of undisturbed old growth forest, with some trees hundreds of years old. The area has hiking trails, and is open to the public.

The City of Rochester has partnered with the Friends of Washington Grove to establish a fund within the City's Reforest Rochester Initiative, which focuses on replacing damaged trees and planting new trees. The fund has helped to preserve and maintain the grove for generations to come.



## ELEMENTS THAT AFFECT ROCHESTER'S URBAN FOREST CONTINUED



### Precipitation

With an annual rainfall of 34 inches and snowfall of 93 inches, there is ample moisture for tree growth. The combination of temperature and moisture allows for an extraordinarily broad range of tree species to grow in Rochester.



### Funding + Management

Funding, and management practices, along with condition survey and data collection have the most direct man-made influence on our urban forest. Without funding, trees do not get planted, pruned or removed. Planning and organizing workloads, driven by data analysis, provides the foundation for effective management of our forest resources.

# A. NATURAL RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

## WATER RESOURCES

### GENESEE RIVER

The Genesee River runs 157 miles from its source in northern Pennsylvania to its mouth at Lake Ontario. With 13.5 miles of shoreline in Rochester, the River stretches from Genesee Valley Park in the south, cutting through the middle of Downtown, dropping down three waterfalls, and ending at Lake Ontario. The Genesee River originated as a tool for industry and navigation. Now, in addition to the hydroelectric plant, the river is celebrated for its beauty and its recreational opportunities.

### ERIE CANAL

The Erie Canal, completed in 1825, stretches from the Niagara River in Buffalo to the Hudson River north of Albany. The Canal makes up the southwestern boundary of the city, providing approximately 6 miles of shoreline within Rochester. The Canal contributed to Rochester's early growth, as it allowed for goods to be shipped around the country and the world. While the canal is still utilized for commercial shipping, its primary use is for recreation and beautification.

### LAKE ONTARIO

The City of Rochester is located on a Great Lake. Lake Ontario is the smallest of the five Great Lakes, but, at 7,340 square miles, it is the 14th largest lake in the world. Lake Ontario carries water from all the Great Lakes to the St. Lawrence River, which carries it to the Atlantic Ocean. The Lake forms Rochester's northernmost boundary, providing approximately 2.5 miles of shoreline in the city, including Durand Eastman Park. Lake Ontario provides Rochester with two natural sand beaches.

### LOCAL WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

The Local Waterfront Revitalization Program is a strategy that acknowledges the unique opportunity Rochester has in its waterfront. It addresses the assets and challenges that exist along waterways, and provides strategies to guide land use and community development. Initially completed in 1990, Rochester's LWRP was updated in 2017 and its boundary was extended to include more than 4,000 parcels along the city waterways – the Erie Canal, Genesee River and Lake Ontario. For more than 4,000 individual waterfront parcels. More information can be found [here](#).

### PUBLIC COMMENT

**"Make our waterfronts (river/lake/canal) vibrant and beautiful!"**

### PUBLIC COMMENT

**"We can have all of the natural resources we want, but if we don't take proper care of them we might as well not have them at all."**



**LAKE  
ONTARIO**



**GENESEE  
RIVER**



**ERIE  
CANAL**



**COBBS HILL  
RESERVOIR**



**HIGHLAND PARK  
RESERVOIR**

# A. NATURAL RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

## WATER RESOURCES CONTINUED

### WATER QUALITY

Like many post-industrial cities, Rochester industry used waterways, primarily the Genesee River, for industrial shipping, processing, and waste discharge. Some legacy contaminants like heavy metals remain in the sediment of the Genesee River today. In addition to legacy contaminants, other pollutants continue to impact the River's water quality, including phosphorous and sediment carried to Rochester from agricultural activities and erosion in the watershed upstream.

Lake Ontario water quality continues to be the subject of study and programming. Due to federal and State water quality standards and programs, Rochester's waterways are improving. In 1987, the Environmental Protection Agency identified the area of Lake Ontario in proximity to Rochester, as well as six miles of the Genesee River from the lake to Lower Falls as an Area of Concern. This designation started an ongoing targeted effort led by the New York Department of Environmental Conservation and the Monroe County Department of Health that has led to water quality improvements throughout the Area of Concern.

The Lake Ontario waterfront has also been designated a Coastal Erosion Hazard Area of concern, meaning special precaution must be taken when developing the waterfront, to decrease runoff, ensure the preservation of the shore, and protect private property.

Stormwater runoff is a water quality concern, especially in an urban environment. Runoff can pick up and carry litter, nutrients, bacteria, chemicals, sediment and other pollutants across land or through the storm drain system to Rochester's water. Older cities often rely on sewer systems that combines household, commercial, and industrial sewage and stormwater runoff into one pipe system for conveyance to wastewater treatment plants.

During major rain events, these combined sewers are designed to overflow into waterbodies to reduce damage to homes and facilities. To substantially lessen these overflows in Rochester, a massive underground wastewater tunnel system became fully operational in 1993, completing over 20 years of design and construction. This Combined Sewer Overflow Abatement Program (CSOAP) drastically improved the quality of Rochester area waters by virtually eliminating the 60-70 annual sewer overflows that had occurred prior to its existence.

While the CSOAP system has minimized combined sewer overflows, they still occur, as designed, when the system exceeds capacity. The City of Rochester is addressing this issue through the implementation of green infrastructure techniques, as outlined in the City of Rochester [Sustainable Developer's Guide](#) and [Green Infrastructure Retrofit Manual](#), such as:

- Permeable pavements
- **Bioretention/bioswales**
- Green roofs





## WATER RESOURCES CONTINUED

### WATER QUALITY CONTINUED

Other measures can also be implemented, including:

- Stream daylighting
- Downspout disconnection/redirecting stormwater into rain barrels or rain gardens
- Stormwater harvesting and reuse
- Use of vacant lots for stormwater management

Lastly, it should be noted that the water quality of the Genesee River is significantly impacted by the farming and development practices of suburban and rural towns south of Rochester. Substantial runoff from farms and subdivisions carries sediment and other pollutants into the river, increasing turbidity and affecting people’s perception of its cleanliness.

### DRINKING WATER SUPPLY

Since 1876, the Rochester Water Bureau has been delivering quality drinking water from Hemlock and Canadice Lakes, located about 30 miles south of the City of Rochester in the Finger Lakes region. The Water Bureau maintains three finished water storage reservoirs having a combined capacity of 230 million gallons, one located in the town of Rush, NY and the other two at beautiful and historic Highland and Cobbs Hill Parks in the city.

The City supplements its water supply with Lake Ontario water purchased from the Monroe County Water Authority (MCWA). This water is treated at the Shoremont Treatment Plant located on Dewey Avenue. **The City of Rochester has consistently been awarded for having the best tasting water in New York State.**



## A. NATURAL RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

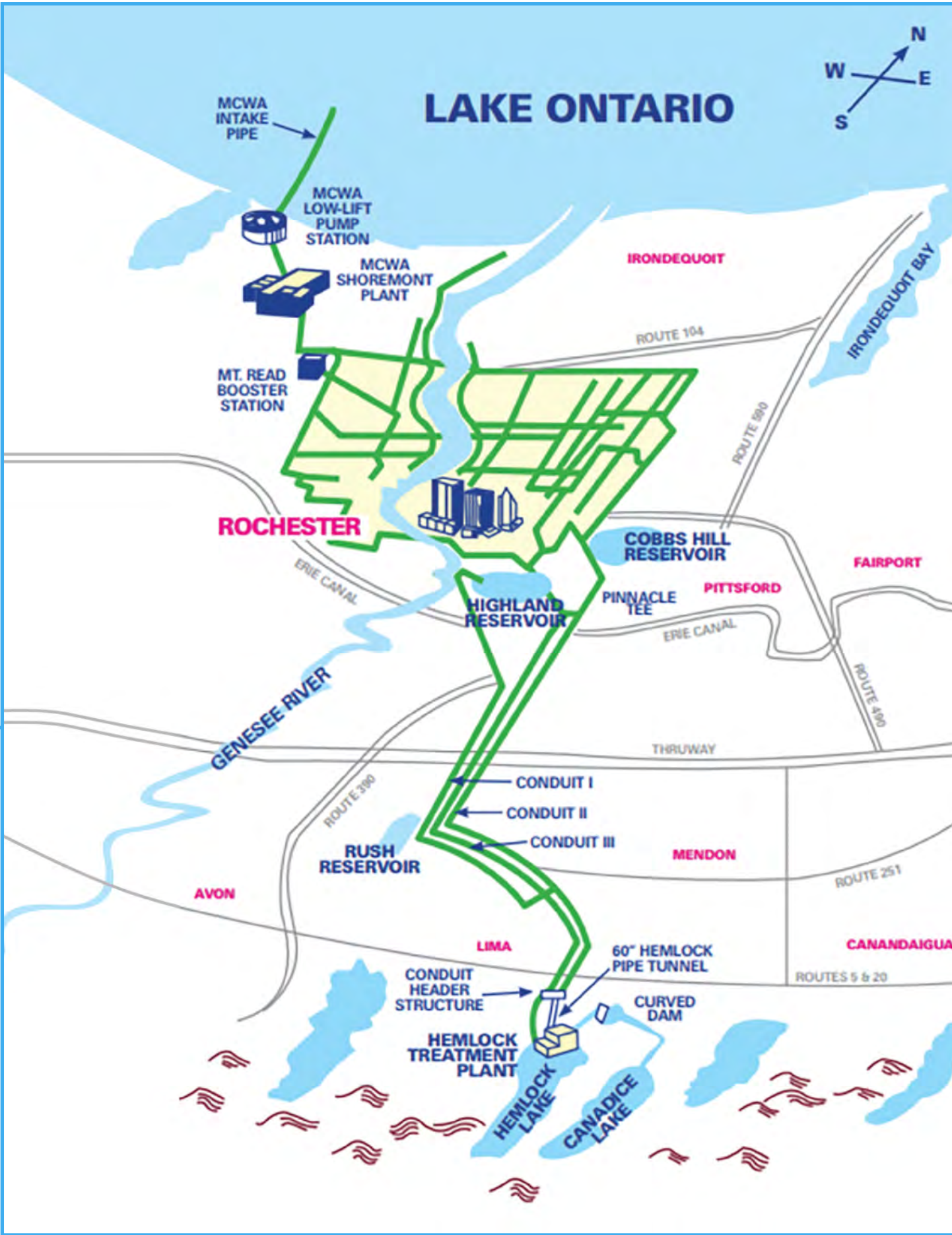
### WATER TREATMENT AND DELIVERY

The Hemlock and Shoremont treatment plants both employ similar treatment processes involving coagulation, filtration and disinfection. On a yearly average, the City's Hemlock Lake Filtration Plant produces 37 million gallons of treated water each day, which is delivered to the residents and businesses in the City of Rochester and sold to the MCWA for distribution to municipalities outside of Rochester. Water treated at the Hemlock Filtration Plant flows to the city by gravity through three large 100 year-old pipelines. This method of water transportation is unique to many Great Lakes cities, as it doesn't rely on pumping water uphill from the lake. This requires less energy, and is more resilient in the face of power outages.

Treated water is stored in the city's three reservoirs where it is re-disinfected as it exits each reservoir and enters a complex grid of water mains that distribute the water to city homes and businesses. The Water Bureau also maintains approximately 75 miles of water transmission conduits from Hemlock to Rochester, 570 miles of distribution mains, 7,600 fire hydrants, 57,800 water meters and 16,700 water valves. The [figure at right](#) is a graphic representation of the city's drinking water supply system. Maintaining this extensive and complex system is challenging and expensive, but critical.

In 2006 the United States Environmental Protection Agency issued new regulations for uncovered water storage facilities. The Long Term 2 Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule (LT2) addresses the health effects associated with contamination of drinking water. One of the requirements of the LT2 regulations is that uncovered reservoirs must be covered or provide treatment against the microbial pathogens. In response to these new regulations, Rush Reservoir was brought into compliance in 2012 with the installation of a synthetic membrane liner and floating cover. The City of Rochester is committed to having the Highland Reservoir and Cobbs Hill Reservoir in compliance with LT2 by 2023 and 2034, respectively.





## A. NATURAL RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

### AIR QUALITY

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation regularly monitors Rochester's air quality, and publishes results annually. As of 2017, measurements for Sulfur Dioxide, Inhalable Particulates, Carbon Monoxide, and Nitrogen Dioxide have steadily decreased, and ozone has stayed steady. On average, all chemicals were measured to be below the established limits.

The American Lung Association monitors air quality regionally throughout the United States. The Association gave Monroe County a passing grade in air quality, with an 'A' for levels of 24-hour Particle Pollution, and a 'B' in levels of Ozone, however the weighted average number of days with "high ozone" conditions has sharply declined from nearly 20 in 2001-2003 to about one in 2014-2016.

The Federal Environmental Protection Agency monitors the number of unhealthy days for Asthma or other lung disease, which are diseases made more prevalent by poor air quality. In Monroe County, this number decreased from 12 in 2012 to three in 2017.



### WILDLIFE

Despite being an urban area, Rochester is home to a diverse number of animal species who live in the built environment, or in the city's natural areas. By protecting the habitats and well-being of animals, the entire ecosystem, including other natural resources such as trees, water, and air will be strengthened. Abundant wildlife also has the benefit of increasing tourism and enhancing residents' recreational experience.

Birds are also a common sight in Rochester. Birds such as falcons, hawks, blackbirds, sparrows, and woodpeckers have used the urban forest and built environment as habitat. In the city's riverway and wetlands, water birds such as mallards and wood ducks, herons, and sandpipers can be found. The river is also home to animals such as the Northern Water Snake and the Painted Turtle.

New York State has designated almost 6.5 miles of the river as a "coastal fish and wildlife habitat of state-wide significance". Fish can also be found in Lake Ontario, and in smaller lakes and wetlands. Some of the most common residents of Rochester's waterways include bass, salmon, and trout.

As the City of Rochester is almost entirely built out, there are minimal if any large scale future development threats to wildlife or their habitats, especially compared to development trends in the suburbs. However, each individual development project must go through a state-mandated development review process to ensure impacts are mitigated. As well, Rochester's renewed focus on its river, whether it be development projects or open space enhancements, should include not only the protection of these natural resources but the celebration and restoration of assets throughout the river corridor.



### **TIMES SQUARE BUILDING: FALCON HABITAT**

Peregrine falcons are the fastest birds in the world, as they can fly up to 180mph. In New York State, they are considered endangered.

In Rochester, the Times Square Building downtown has become a home for falcons and a popular destination for birdwatching enthusiasts. As of 2018, 66 falcons have hatched on the building, including 23 peregrine falcons. This site is closely monitored to ensure the protection of its habitat.



# A. NATURAL RESOURCES [NR]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>NR-1</b> Invest in infrastructure, policy, and advocacy efforts that protect and enhance Rochester’s water resources.</p>	<p>NR-1a Promote the distribution and use of the <a href="#"><i>City of Rochester Sustainable Practices for Building Owners and Occupants Guide</i></a>, as well as the <a href="#"><i>City of Rochester Green Infrastructure Retrofit Manual</i></a>, by local developers and infrastructure project leads.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Developers, Building Owners</p>
	<p>NR-1b Expand investments in green infrastructure in areas surrounded by impervious materials to reduce the amount of storm water runoff.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>NR-1c Coordinate with the Center for Environmental Initiatives’ Genesee RiverWatch and other regional partners to identify strategies for improving water quality in the River.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Genesee RiverWatch, Monroe County, Regional Planning Agencies</p>
	<p>NR-1d Use the LWRP as a guideline for development, activity, and collaboration along the city’s waterfront, and enforce the policies outlined in the plan in order to protect our natural resources.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, State and Regional Partners</p>
	<p>NR-1e Protect the coast from erosion risks through administration of Chapter 43 of the City code.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, NYS DOS, NYS DEC</p>
	<p>NR-1f Support the formation of a Genesee River Alliance, a coalition of area stakeholders focused on education, river health, advocacy, and community engagement. This organization, combined with the efforts of the City and the proposed downtown/riverfront management entity through ROC the Riverway, will form a critical partnership to ensure a holistic approach to the river’s preservation and potential as a community asset.</p>	<p><b>Genesee Land Trust</b>, City, Empire State Development, Various River Stakeholders</p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>NR-2</b> Provide ongoing upgrades and modernization of water distribution, storage, and treatment systems and facilities.	NR-2a Bring the Highland and Cobbs Hill Reservoirs into compliance with LT2 while respecting the surrounding significant historic and parkland resources.	<b>City</b> , NYS Department of Health
	NR-2b Upgrade and modernize the water supply conduit system.	<b>City</b>
	NR-2c Improve the Cobbs Hill fence surrounding the Reservoir.	<b>City</b>
	NR-2d Renovate and upgrade the Hemlock Water Filtration Plant.	<b>City</b>
<b>NR-3</b> Protect and expand Rochester's urban forest.	NR-3a Use the Forestry Master Plan to guide Rochester's efforts in protecting and expanding the urban forest and commission an update of the current Master Plan.	<b>City</b> , Community Partners
	NR-3b Continue to administer targeted control measures to protect the urban forest from invasive insects and diseases.	<b>City</b>
	NR-3c Identify a goal for the percentage of the city to be covered by tree canopy and set strategies for meeting that goal.	<b>City</b>
	NR-3d Provide information about species, planting techniques, placement guidelines, and underground utility location for private property owners interested in planting trees on their property.	<b>City</b> , Property Owners

# A. NATURAL RESOURCES [NR]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>NR-4</b>  <b>Promote and protect Rochester’s natural resources as assets for attracting residents, businesses, and tourists.</b></p>	<p>NR-4a Promote Rochester’s abundant fresh clean water supply as an asset to attract new residents and businesses.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, GRE, Visit Rochester</p>
	<p>NR-4b Create a promotional video vignette about Rochester’s extraordinary natural resources.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, University Student Project, Visit Rochester, GRE</p>
	<p>NR-4c Implement the ROC the Riverway Vision Plan and Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Various NYS Agencies</p>
	<p>NR-4d Explore the opportunity to support bird-friendly development and design guidelines for new development within the city, which could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Install bird-friendly, non-reflective windows</li> <li>– Use awnings and overhangs to add visual cues to birds and reduce reflection</li> <li>– Discourage use of angled glass windows</li> <li>– Use glare-minimizing external lights, and reduce spill light</li> </ul>	<p><b>City</b>, Rochester Birding Association, Genesee Audubon Society, Developers</p>



**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>NR-5</b> <b>Protect natural resources and promote long-term sustainability through increased environmental awareness and education.</b>	NR-5a Develop targeted education and community engagement campaigns on specific issues related to the personal and community benefits of environmental sustainability.	Environmental stakeholders, City
	NR-5b Develop diverse and engaging environmental programming that instills a love of the natural world and cultivates an environmental stewardship in residents from a young age.	Environmental stakeholders, RCSD, City
	NR-5c Encourage and support development of "sustainability curriculum" and environmental programming in schools, rec centers, and other community venues to educate students and adults about issues related to natural history, environmental stewardship, urban planning and ecology, sustainability, climate change, etc.	RCSD, Rec Centers, City
	NR-5d Support efforts to establish an ecology center or centers along the river.	City, Environmental stakeholders

# B. PARKS, RECREATION + OPEN SPACE

## INTRODUCTION

Parks, and the recreation facilities and services that support their use, are an essential public good – as important to the success of any city as water, sewer, or public safety. Some have called parks the “soul” of a city, arguing that what you see in city parks and public spaces reflects something deep about the character and values of its leadership and investments. Rochester is in elite company in this regard – visionary planning and investment by community leaders more than a century ago endowed us with one of the most unique and extensive urban parks and recreation systems in the country.

**“EVERYBODY NEEDS BEAUTY AS WELL AS BREAD, PLACES TO PLAY IN AND PRAY IN, WHERE NATURE MAY HEAL AND GIVE STRENGTH TO BODY AND SOUL.”**

**-JOHN MUIR**

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Rochester has more than 3,500 acres of parks and public open space, including 35 miles of multi-use trails.
- Rochester’s park system is historic and nationally renowned.
- It is important to provide safe access to parks, trails, and recreational amenities for all residents and to design programming that serves our diverse community.
- The City will work with community partners to explore new ways to maintain, activate, and expand our network of parks and public spaces.
- Connecting parks facilities management and planning to recreational programming and stewardship improves the delivery of parks services to the community.
- Implementation of the *ROC the Riverway Vision Plan* will leverage the waterfront for economic and community development while also increasing public access to the River and parks system.



## PUBLIC COMMENT

“Parks and green space are not an amenity, they are a necessity.”

## BENEFITS OF PARKS AND RECREATION

A growing body of literature documents the many benefits – physical, mental, social, environmental, and economic – of developing and sustaining a robust parks and recreation system. Such a system can:



Improve **mental and physical health** for residents by providing free and open space for people to enjoy the beautiful natural environment, fresh air, and diverse opportunities for individual or group exercise, athletics, and open play



Support **quality of life** across the lifespan and make cities more attractive places for people to raise families or age in place – residents often cite parks and recreation services as one of the most important factors in the livability of their community



Spur neighborhood **community building and revitalization** – provide gathering spaces, strengthen relationships and improve social cohesion



Increase **access to nature**, instill an ethic of environmental stewardship, and foster connection to place



Preserve natural resources that help to **combat climate change**, manage storm water, and provide wildlife habitat



Promote **homeownership** and **support the tax base** – research shows that proximity to parks improves property values and that homebuyers prefer to purchase homes near parks and green space



Enhance **economic development** by making cities more attractive to employers, tourists, event organizers and conventions – plus the spillover effects on local businesses, restaurants, and cultural institutions.

## B. PARKS, RECREATION + OPEN SPACE (CONTINUED)

### BENEFITS OF PARKS AND RECREATION CONTINUED

Recognizing these and other benefits, cities around the globe are making historic reinvestments in their parks. Even mid-size cities like Indianapolis (Cultural Trail), Buffalo (Canalside), and Tulsa (The Gathering Place) – who share similar challenges to Rochester – are finding ways of making significant new investment in parks and trails and spurring renewed engagement and reinvestment for their communities in the process.



### ROCHESTER'S PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM

Rochester has more than 3,500 acres of **parks and public open space** (about 15% of the city's land area), including large anchor parks, as well as neighborhood parks, historic squares, pocket parks, tree-lined street malls, cemeteries, and school campus fields and greens. →





Eleven of the city's parks flank the Genesee River corridor, which runs north through the heart of the city to link the Erie Canal with Lake Ontario, flowing through downtown, over three waterfalls, and a river gorge to create 21 miles of diverse urban waterfronts.

More than 35 miles of multi-use trails (70% of which is the Genesee Riverway Trail) provide space for walking, running, biking and general enjoyment and appreciation of the natural environment. These trails – along with 10 bicycle and pedestrian bridges that cross the river and canal – also facilitate multi-modal connectivity across the city's park system, and provide linkages to regional and statewide trails, such as the 365-mile Erie Canalway Trail.

A growing on-street bike network – currently at 64 miles, but with another 140 miles planned – extends the reach of existing trails further into the city, connecting pocket parks, recreation facilities, and other destinations within neighborhoods, but also facilitating resident access to the broader system of parks and trails.

Hundreds of recreation amenities are located in our parks and community spaces, including recreation centers, playgrounds, athletic courts and fields, community gymnasiums and exercise rooms, pools and spray parks, beaches and a bathhouse, ice rinks, picnic shelters and grills, community lodges, performance pavilions, a network of community maintained (but City-owned and supported) gardens, boat and paddle docks, fishing access points, golf courses, and marinas.

# PARKS + OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

-  parks and open space
-  trails
-  bike lanes
-  city recreation centers



## B. PARKS, RECREATION + OPEN SPACE (CONTINUED)

### ROCHESTER'S PARKS SYSTEM CONTINUED

In addition to the physical network, the City leads many activities and events to engage a broad range of people to activate our park system year-round. In addition to ongoing recreation center staffing and programming year-round, these include:

- Year-round **fitness classes**, sports leagues, and lessons for youth and adults
- Weekly free summer bike rides, nature walks and **low-cost paddle adventures on the river**
- Winter hikes, shoe show excursions, and **ice skate rentals in parks**
- Lectures, trainings, resources, and community events to support neighborhood gardens and beautification
- Special events and festivals like the River Romance/ROC the Riverway Weekend, Lakeside Winter Celebration, and Maplewood Rose Festival
- Mobile programs like Rec on the Move that bring staff and equipment directly into neighborhoods where they live

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

“Ensure that people are informed about the variety of programs available.”



#### PUBLIC COMMENT

“Recreation opportunities are instrumental to helping our youth grow in a positive way. It is a great outlet for teens.”



## B. PARKS, RECREATION + OPEN SPACE (CONTINUED)

### HISTORICAL + CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Rochester’s park system is historic and nationally renowned. The City was a leader in the urban parks movement at the end of the 19th Century and has one of only four park systems designed by Frederick Law Olmsted – a famous social reformer and noted “Father of Landscape Architecture” who is better known to many as the designer of New York’s Central Park.

**Olmsted saw the Genesee River – with its rolling pastoral hills south of downtown, dramatic waterfalls, and picturesque river gorge further north – as distinctly beautiful and distinctively Rochester. He believed that the river corridor’s scenic vistas should be preserved as a public resource, accessible and open to all, and made the river the connective tissue that bound together his park system design.**



The Genesee River has been drawing people and activity to our region for more than 200 years. Its gorge rim hosted a Seneca Nation village (Casconchiagon, now the site of the Maplewood Rose Garden) and early American settlements in the area; its waterfalls supported the rise of flour milling, other water-powered industry, and energy generation (which continues to this day); its location made it the northern terminus of the Underground Railroad (flowing north towards Canada). Developing a park system anchored by the river gave us a park system that helps to tell our story – the story of our unique place – its geology, ecology, history, industry, people, and values.





## HISTORIC MT. HOPE CEMETERY

Notable as the first municipal “garden cemetery” in the U.S. – beautifully designed and landscaped to be park-like and used for public recreation – it is also historically important because it is the final resting place of many prominent Rochesterians, including Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony. These iconic figures contributed to American History in their roles as leaders in the abolition and women’s suffrage movements.

## B. PARKS, RECREATION + OPEN SPACE (CONTINUED)

### SUPPLY, ACCESS, EQUITY

In 2003, the City conducted a Parks System Management Plan that found that 99% of city residents lived within a half mile of at least one park or recreation space. It also assessed existing facilities against metrics from the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) and found that Rochester met or exceeded NRPA standards for all four categories of parks and playgrounds, and met or exceeded NRPA standards for 8 of its 10 metrics related to trails, play fields, and athletic courts.

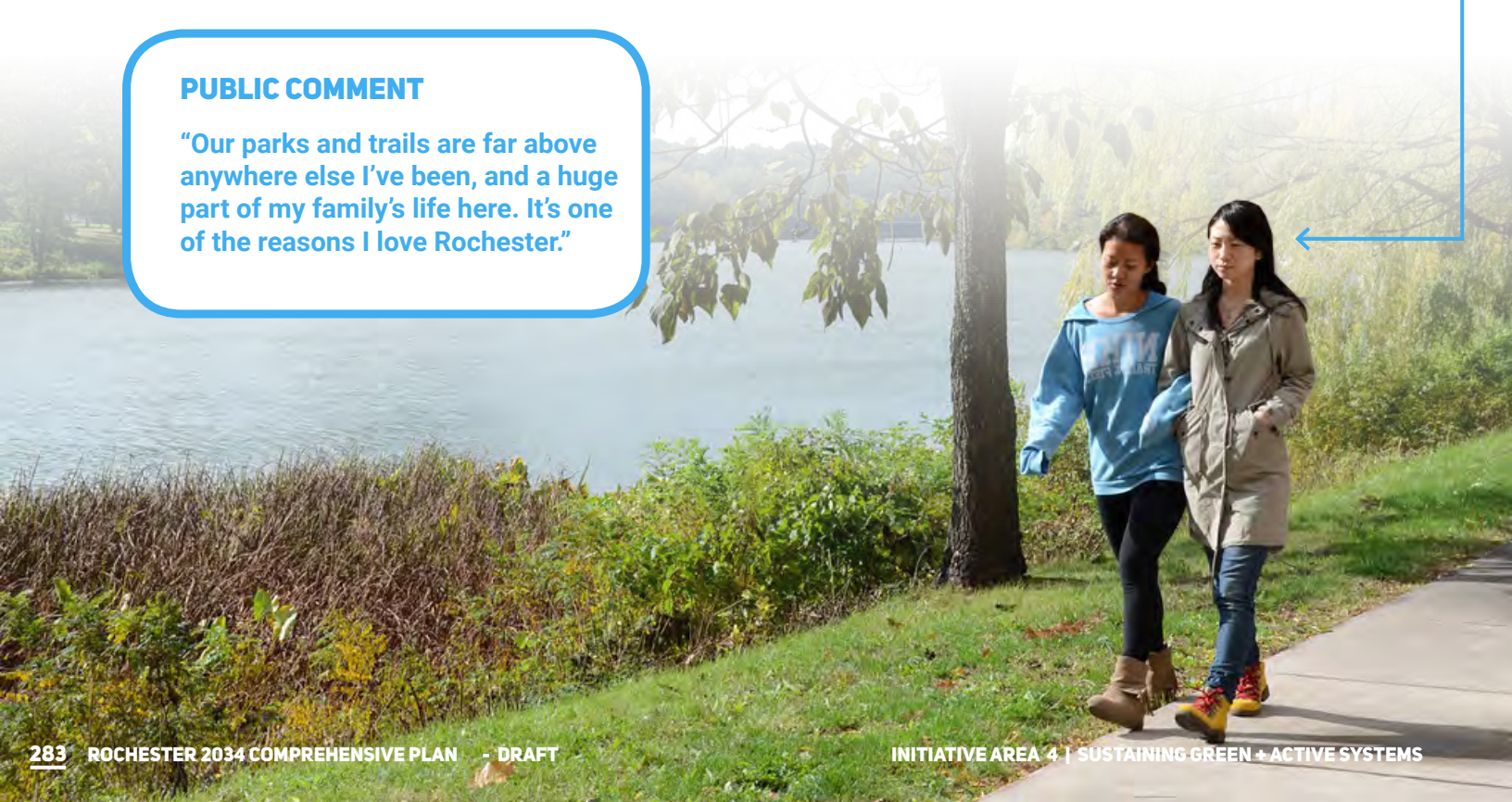
These are statistics to boast about, yet they do not tell the whole story. Physical distance (as the crow flies) may not reveal other barriers to access, whether physical (e.g., busy roads or intersections, lack of curb cuts and accessible sidewalks or trails) or psychosocial (e.g., real or perceived safety concerns, cultural or linguistic barriers). As well, not all parks are created equal – there is variation

in park and recreation facility types, amenities provided, and the quality and condition across the system.

In late 2017, Mayor Lovely Warren signed on for the launch of the NRPS's National [10 Minute Walk to Parks Campaign](#), which encourages cities to increase equitable park access and quality. Studies show that kids who live within a 10 minute walk of a neighborhood park are 400% more likely to use it than those who live farther away. Initial estimates show that 78% of Rochester residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park. The national average is 54%. During the next update to the parks and recreation inventory, it is critical to assess more holistic measures of quality, access, and usage – particularly to inform strategies for how to better serve underrepresented groups through our parks and recreation facilities and programs.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

**“Our parks and trails are far above anywhere else I’ve been, and a huge part of my family’s life here. It’s one of the reasons I love Rochester.”**



## CHALLENGES TO ADDRESS

Few cities are blessed with a park system as extensive, varied, and beautiful as ours. Yet there are a number of challenges we face with how to sustain and evolve our parks and recreation work, moving forward:

### PUBLIC COMMENT

**“Our parks can be gems and huge assets but they must be kept clean and safe.”**

### BALANCING MAINTENANCE AND EXPANSION

Despite having many parks and trails, gaps in our system still remain. There are also evolving recreation facility needs/ interests and areas that could use more, better, or different kinds of access. Funding for new acquisitions and capital investments may be available through external sources like state or federal grants (though competition is often tight), but they also add to the City’s ongoing maintenance costs.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

**“Reinvest in parks and recreation. Focus on stewardship!”**

### FUNDING

With population and resources declining in recent years, funding is tight and competition for dollars is fierce. The wish list of parks-related investments (more high-quality, culturally responsive infrastructure, facilities, staff, maintenance, programming, promotion, etc.) is much longer than available resources can meet. Some communities have come together to create a “Friends of...” organization to help with fundraising and programming, such as the [Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy](#). Articulating the value of parks and recreation investments, developing and leveraging community partnerships, and identifying new and creative sources of funding is critical.

## B. PARKS, RECREATION + OPEN SPACE (CONTINUED)

### CHALLENGES TO ADDRESS CONTINUED

#### GOVERNANCE (INTERNAL)

Internal re-organizations during the last few years have carved various parks and recreation responsibilities out to different departments, rather than having a unified Parks and Recreation Department as we did in the past. Currently:

- Parks design, operation, and maintenance is led by Environmental Services
- Parks stewardship, programming, and promotion is led by Recreation and Youth Services
- Special event scheduling and planning is led by the Communications Bureau
- Public safety is led by the Rochester Police Department and Rochester Fire Department
- City planning and regulatory functions are led by the Neighborhood and Business Development Department.

The separation of responsibilities allowed for some cost saving efficiencies, but also resulted in a lack of formal integration across efforts. Both internal and external stakeholders overwhelmingly supported reconstituting a City Department of Parks and Recreation. Integrating some of the above functions under the leadership of one department head may better integrate facilities and programming and may provide better overall service delivery to the Rochester community.

#### GOVERNANCE (EXTERNAL)

Park system management involves a number of external relationships:

- Monroe County operates five City-owned parks through a City-County Parks Agreement:
  - Ontario Beach Park
  - Durand Eastman Park (though the City operates Durand Beach)
  - Seneca Park
  - Highland Park
  - Genesee Valley Park East.
- The City maintains a number of playgrounds, athletic fields, recreation sites, and other amenities co-located with City schools via cooperative agreement with the Rochester City School District.
- Coordination is required with a number of entities that own or operate facilities that intersect with city parks and trails – e.g., New York State Canal Corporation, New York State Department of Transportation, Rochester Gas & Electric, Monroe County Water Authority, CSX Railroad, and numerous private land owners, particularly along the city trails and waterfronts.

Multi-jurisdictional coordination can help bring additional capacity and resources to benefit the system, but can also complicate decision-making and funding, especially when parties have differing or competing interests.

## CHALLENGES TO ADDRESS CONTINUED

### CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS, CHANGING NEEDS

Rochester’s population is changing. It is becoming more racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse; it is aging; children are growing up in more diverse family structures and parenting arrangements; there are more people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ people who are out, and more immigrants and refugees living in our community. With a changing population comes changing needs and changing desires, as well as perceptions about what makes a public space feel safe, welcoming, accessible, and enjoyable.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

“Community centers and recreation programs are vital to building communities.”

### LIMITED DATA + TECHNOLOGY

Data is critical for developing more holistic measures of parks and recreation supply, conditions, access, and needs. New methods and means for collecting data – through surveys, program participant tracking, bike/pedestrian counters on trails, smart sensors in pavement or maintenance fleets, surveillance cameras in/near facilities, etc. – will be needed. New data collaborations and data sharing agreements (internally and externally) will be needed as well. Technology could help with these tasks. It could also be used to better promote existing resources via mobile apps, online interactive maps, online registration and payment for programs, events, and facility rental.



## B. PARKS, RECREATION + OPEN SPACE (CONTINUED)

### VALUE OF PARKS TO THE COMMUNITY

Strong community support will be needed to successfully implement our LWRP, complete proposed ROC the Riverway projects, and meet the challenges we face to maintain, steward, and grow the impact of our parks and recreation system. What we heard during the development of *Rochester 2034* was that people care passionately about parks and public space and that they are a primary source of pride in the community.

**Of the 25 topics listed in the *Rochester 2034* community survey, “parks and green space” was rated as the most important topic to address in the plan (overall, and for both homeowners and renters).**

The value of parks, green space, play space, and public gathering space was discussed at every neighborhood meeting we held and at many of the stakeholder meetings as well. In some areas – particularly those with higher concentrations of vacant land – people expressed interest in seeing vacant lots repurposed as pocket parks, gardens, play lots, and community green spaces. The City doesn't currently have a formal, consistent process for designating or approving park and recreation uses on City-owned vacant land, so this is something to explore.



## RE-ENGAGING THE GENESEE

Two local initiatives are bringing renewed attention to the Genesee River corridor and additional resources to more fully realize our waterfronts as recreational assets that directly feed the City's broader community revitalization and connectivity goals:

### **LOCAL WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PROGRAM (LWRP)**

Initially completed in 1990, Rochester's LWRP was updated in 2017 and its boundary was extended to include all of the city waterways – the Erie Canal, Genesee River and Lake Ontario. It provides a vision for the city waterfronts and offers guidance on land use and community development for more than 4,000 individual waterfront parcels.

### **LWRP VISION**

“The City of Rochester’s three great waterways and their unique assets and resources are a world-class attraction that enhances the quality of life for residents and visitors, preserves and protects the environment, encourages economic investment and is integrated into the fabric of our community.”



## B. PARKS, RECREATION + OPEN SPACE (CONTINUED)

### RE-ENGAGING THE GENESEE CONTINUED

#### ROC THE RIVERWAY

ROC the Riverway is an exciting new initiative that draws directly from the LWRP. It consolidates more than two dozen riverfront projects concentrated in or near downtown under a single revitalization and river activation concept, expressed through the *ROC the Riverway Vision Plan* (2018). Governor Andrew Cuomo announced an initial investment of \$50 million in Spring 2018 – leveraging more than \$40 million in planned investment from the City – which includes funding to connect the Genesee Riverway Trail, redesign waterfront parks, redevelop the Broad Street Aqueduct, construct a long-anticipated skate park, **enhance and expand the Convention Center**, and fund a new downtown/riverfront management entity that can work with the City and community partners to maintain and program existing and newly developed public spaces.







# B. PARKS, RECREATION + OPEN SPACE [PR]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>PR-1</b></p> <p><b>Reclaim the Genesee River and the City parks and recreation system as foundational assets that help achieve cross-cutting community goals.</b></p>	<p>PR-1a Implement existing parks and recreation-related plans, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– ROC the Riverway, including development of a plan for Phase II projects and funding</li> <li>– Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP)</li> <li>– Genesee Valley West Master Plan</li> <li>– Durand Beach Master Plan</li> <li>– Mt. Hope Cemetery Master Plan</li> <li>– JOSANA Trails Feasibility Study</li> <li>– Eastman Trail</li> <li>– Martin Luther King Jr. Park Master Plan</li> <li>– Irondequoit Seneca Trail Feasibility Study</li> <li>– Washington Square Park Charrette</li> </ul>	<p>City, Various NYS Agencies, Monroe County, Town of Irondequoit, CSX, Genesee River Alliance, Private Developers, Community-based Organizations</p>
	<p>PR-1b Increase data capacity, then use data to document the value of parks, recreation, and open space investments and make the case for how they contribute to achieving key community goals.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Monroe County, Community Partners</p>
	<p>PR-1c Engage non-traditional parks partners to communicate the value of parks to their interests and partner with them to identify or leverage new funding or in-kind resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Physical and mental health providers, agencies, and advocates</li> <li>– Economic development entities, including employers, businesses, cultural institutions, tourism organizations</li> <li>– Developers (for-profit, not-for-profits, community), realtors, potential homeowners, neighborhood organizations</li> <li>– Foundations and philanthropists</li> </ul>	<p><b>City</b>, Monroe County, Community Partners</p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>PR-1</b> <b>Reclaim the Genesee River and the City parks and recreation system as foundational assets that help achieve cross-cutting community goals.</b>	<p>PR-1d Explore additional categories of community benefits that could be negotiated with developers such as public art, public amenities, bicycle/pedestrian enhancements, and small public spaces throughout the city, but particularly along the City’s waterfronts to improve public access.</p> <hr/> <p>PR-1e Develop a plan for reconstituting a City Department of Parks and Recreation.</p> <hr/> <p>PR-1f Seek opportunities to co-locate new City facilities or programming with key community partners and community facilities – e.g. rec centers with schools and libraries.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Developers</p> <hr/> <p><b>City</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>City</b>, RCSD, Community Partners</p>
<b>PR-2</b> <b>Enhance parks and recreation planning capacity.</b>	<p>PR-2a Allocate resources to support parks and recreation planning activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Formalize coordination for joint planning, programming, investment, and community impact</li><li>– Increase utilization of mapping and GIS</li><li>– Improve data collection, holistic metrics, and evaluation</li></ul>	<p><b>City</b></p>

# B. PARKS, RECREATION + OPEN SPACE [PR]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>PR-2</b></p> <p><b>Enhance parks and recreation planning capacity.</b></p>	<p>PR-2b Create an up-to-date inventory of all parks, recreation, and open space facilities within city limits (including locations, amenities, conditions, physical accessibility, historic designation status, sensitivity rating, lead maintenance entity, etc.), reconcile across the City’s internal data systems (assessment, zoning, GIS/mapping, etc.), establish expectations for ongoing inventory maintenance, and use to inform planning and strategic investment.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Monroe County, NYS PRHP, Community Partners</p>
	<p>PR-2c Inventory existing parks and rec center programming, which city populations are served by current programs and which are not, and use this information to assess new program development needs and opportunities.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Community Partners</p>
	<p>PR-2d Develop a system-wide Parks and Recreation Master Plan, including equitable access, safe routes to parks and recreation, and 10 Minute Walk to Parks pledge analyses and metrics.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Monroe County, Community Partners</p>
	<p>PR-2e Develop a small parks/parklets strategy and explore options for public/neighborhood use of City-owned vacant land.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Monroe County, Community Partners</p>
	<p>PR-2f Continue to work with the Monroe County Parks Department and the Rochester City School District to coordinate parks planning and investment for parks and recreation facilities that are subject to the City-County Parks Agreement and the City and RCSD’s Cooperative Agreement.</p>	<p>City, Monroe County, RCSD, Neighborhood Groups, Community Partners</p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>PR-3</b> <b>Ensure high quality maintenance, operations, and safety of parks and trails.</b>	<p>PR-3a Provide adequate funding, technology, and staffing for high quality maintenance, operations, and safety of parks, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Sufficient mowing, pruning, watering</li><li>– Safe and accessible playgrounds, athletic facilities</li><li>– Parks free of litter and graffiti</li><li>– Trails and pathways clear and smooth</li><li>– Technological improvements for planning and monitoring</li><li>– Staff training and education in best management and maintenance practices.</li></ul>	<b>City</b>
	<p>PR-3b Increase user-friendly, non-sworn Park Patrol personnel (e.g., City security staff) on bikes and mounted police patrols in city parks and along trails. Consideration should be given to restoring downtown’s “Red Shirt” guides, as part of establishing a downtown / riverfront management entity.</p>	<b>City, Community Partners</b>
	<p>PR-3c Conduct periodic assessments in individual parks with parks personnel, community representatives, and police to identify opportunities to improve safety and accessibility through improved design, lighting, maintenance actions, and/or programming changes.</p>	<b>City, Community Partners</b>
	<p>PR-3d Develop and administer user satisfaction surveys for City parks and recreation facilities.</p>	<b>City, Park Users</b>

# B. PARKS, RECREATION + OPEN SPACE [PR]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>PR-4</b></p> <p><b>Increase community awareness, pride, and engagement with our parks and recreation system.</b></p>	<p>PR-4a Promote existing parks, facilities, programs, and recreation resources through improved marketing, technology, and customer service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Mobile app</li> <li>– Interactive mobile maps of parks, trails, play spaces, facility rentals, etc.</li> <li>– Online registration, program payment, and facility rental</li> </ul>	<p><b>City</b>, Private Technology Vendors, Monroe County Parks Department</p>
	<p>PR-4b Increase visibility and welcome near parks and recreation facilities through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Public art, murals, and playful design elements and amenities in or leading to rec centers, trails, park entrances, and other facilities</li> <li>– Colorful, beautiful, and informative wayfinding and interpretation signage</li> <li>– Traffic calming treatments to slow vehicular speeds and make it safer and easier to walk and bike to parks and recreation facilities</li> </ul>	<p>City, Roc Paint Division, Healthi Kids, Wall/Therapy, RPL, RCSD, Arts Community, Monroe County</p>
	<p>PR-4c Activate parks with community-oriented programming for diverse audiences, ages, interests, and abilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Exercise, yoga, dance classes in parks</li> <li>– Nature education and adventures, local history walks, garden programs, music</li> <li>– Accessible adventures, athletics, and recreation programming</li> </ul>	<p><b>City</b>, Community Partners</p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>PR-4</b> <b>Increase community awareness, pride, and engagement with our parks and recreation system.</b>	<p>PR-4d Use rec center facilities to support non-recreation activities to expand and diversify community reach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Health screenings or insurance enrollment/navigation</li><li>– Adult education, job training, senior programming, etc.</li><li>– Foodlink markets, food access, nutrition education, commercial kitchens</li></ul>	<b>City</b> , Community Partners
	<p>PR-4e Develop a community-wide communications campaign celebrating Rochester’s unique and beautiful parks and recreation system, and participate in existing national promotional campaigns (e.g., I Love My Parks day).</p>	<b>City</b> , Ad Council, Parks Advocates, Community Partners
	<p>PR-4f Develop a formal Friends of the Parks organization which actively promotes, advocates for and assists with fundraising for our parks and greenspaces.</p>	<b>City</b> , Parks Advocates, Community Partners
	<p>PR-4g Support community efforts to celebrate parks and direct residents to parks, such as the Southeast Area Coalition’s Playfinder program, the Maplewood Neighborhood Association’s Gorge Guides, Conkey Cruisers weekly community bike rides along the El Camino Trail, etc.</p>	City, Neighborhood Groups, Parks Groups, Other Community Partners
	<p>PR-4h Support efforts to establish river, nature, recreation, and urban ecology centers and programming along the river.</p>	<b>City</b> , Educational/Nature/Science Institutions, Genesee RiverWatch, Genesee River Alliance, Genesee Waterways Center

# B. PARKS, RECREATION + OPEN SPACE [PR]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>PR-5</b></p> <p><b>Extend the reach of our parks and recreation system through innovative programming and strategic infrastructure investments.</b></p>	<p>PR-5a Extend the geographic reach of parks and recreation through mobile programming and events that brings activities directly out to people in their neighborhoods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— City-led initiatives like Rec on the Move, STEAM engine</li> <li>— Programs and special events with partners (Play ROCs, Play Streets, BoulevArt, Open Streets, etc.).</li> </ul>	<p><b>City</b>, Healthi Kids, Community Partners</p>
	<p>PR-5b Target infrastructure investments within existing parks, trails, and recreation facilities to areas that need improved access for people with disabilities, particularly Washington Grove, Lower Falls Park, and other areas of the Genesee River Gorge.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>PR-5c Complete the Genesee Riverway Trail along the entire river corridor and improve and enhance its connectivity to the surrounding communities and other local and regional trails.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Community Partners</p>
	<p>PR-5d Implement a Safe Routes to Parks and Recreation strategy that better connects parks and recreation facilities citywide for people who bike, walk, or roll.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Community Partners</p>
	<p>PR-5e Begin provision of snow plowing service to major trail segments, especially the Genesee Riverway Trail and other segments that are frequented by commuters and car-free households. Pursue the possibility of an “adopt a trail” program to assist with snow/ice clearance and litter control.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Neighborhood Groups, River/ Environmental Advocates</p>



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# C. CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION + ADAPTATION

## INTRODUCTION

Climate change is being caused by the excessive build-up of greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) in the Earth's atmosphere and is one of the most critical challenges facing our world today.

While upstate New York will not experience some of the most visible negative impacts of climate change like rising sea levels and increased forest fires, we will experience other direct impacts of climate change, including higher temperatures, increased precipitation, and **more extreme weather events and storms**. Average temperatures are expected to rise six degrees Fahrenheit by the 2050s, which may result in more heat-related illnesses and deaths, potentially worsen air and water quality, and impact the viability and productivity of local agriculture. Increasing precipitation and extreme weather in combination with rising temperatures will also place additional stress and maintenance needs on local building stock and public infrastructure.



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Local governments play an important role in preparing for and responding to the effects of climate change.
- The *Rochester Climate Action Plan* set a goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 40% below 2010 levels by 2030, and 80% by 2050.
- The City is now developing a *Climate Change Resilience Plan* to identify and prioritize specific climate change adaptation strategies we should pursue.
- The City is working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with municipal operations (via city buildings, vehicle fleets, Lexington Solar Field, etc.) and grow access to renewable energy for city residents and businesses.
- It is important to pursue energy efficiency improvements and initiatives that switch residential and commercial buildings over to run on clean, renewable energy because buildings are a significant source of local emissions.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

**“No new building should be built unless it uses “green” materials and is environmentally friendly.”**

### PUBLIC COMMENT

**“Please make composting part of everyone’s services. Many residents already do this, but for a fee. Make it affordable and accessible to all!”**

## PUBLIC COMMENT

"More composting and stormwater runoff treatment would be great to see. We need to preserve our lake systems as much as possible!"

## LOCAL LEADERSHIP

States and cities are increasingly stepping up to assess potential impacts and identify proactive strategies that they can take to address climate change. Recognizing that a sustainable environment is the basis upon which we can create a vibrant, healthy city, the City of Rochester has been proactive in this arena:

- 2007** Signed the U.S. Conference of Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement.
- 2010** Joined the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's Climate Smart Communities program, which helps the City leverage technical and financial resources available through state and federal programs.
- 2011** Completed a GHG inventory for baseline year 2008 and set a goal to reduce GHG emissions from municipal operations to 20% below the 2008 baseline by 2020.
- 2012** Joined the United States Department of Energy's (DOE) Better Buildings Challenge (BBC), which pledges a 20% reduction in building Energy Use Intensity (EUI) from a 2009 baseline by 2020.
- 2015** Joined the Compact of Mayors, a cooperative effort among mayors and city officials around the world to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and track progress.
- 2017** Completed new 2-megaWatt solar field with 7,800 solar panels on a City-owned lot that formerly housed the Emerson Street landfill, to provide energy for a number of city facilities, including City Hall.
- ONGOING** Installation of various bicycle infrastructure elements (bike lanes, protected lanes, bike boulevards, bike share system, bike parking/storage, bike maintenance stations) to encourage this cleaner, healthier mode of transportation. See [Initiative Area 2, The Placemaking Plan](#), for additional recommendations that foster sustainable land use and transportation practices.

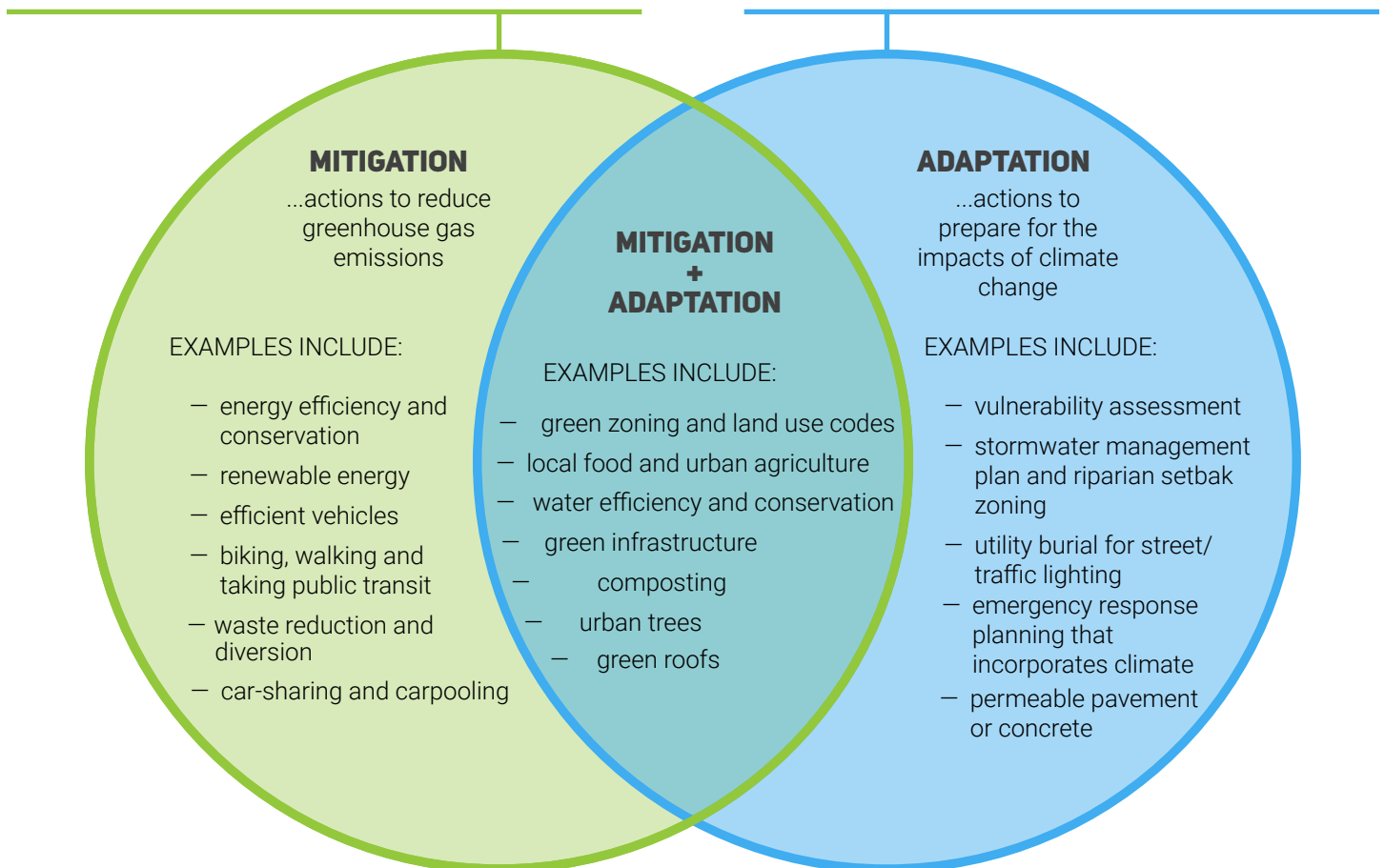
## C. CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION + ADAPTATION (CONTINUED)

### PROACTIVE CLIMATE ACTION PLANNING

In addition to the efforts above, the City's Office of Energy and Sustainability has led a number of climate action planning processes since 2013. Climate action planning is a proactive, strategic effort to address growing concentrations of GHGs in the atmosphere. Deliberate planning and action measures can greatly reduce the amount of GHGs produced and generate numerous community benefits, such as lower utility costs and improved environmental and public health. Climate action planning typically organizes policy/program responses in two major categories:

**Mitigation** aims to address the root cause of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions directly.

**Adaptation** identifies measures to help communities adjust to actual or expected future conditions associated with climate change impacts.



Source: Center for Clean Air Policy

## PROACTIVE CLIMATE ACTION PLANNING CONTINUED

Both approaches are necessary because, even if emissions significantly decrease in the next decade, adaptation measures will still be needed to deal with the changes already set in motion. The City's Office of Energy and Sustainability has worked with numerous internal and external partners to complete several plans related to climate adaptation and mitigation:

- [Municipal Operations Climate Action Plan](#). Completed in 2013, this plan focused on the City's municipal facilities, fleet and operations. It outlines policies and implementation activities intended to help the City reduce its own GHG emissions 20% by 2020.
- [City of Rochester Energy Master Plan](#). Completed in 2015 as part of the Five Cities Energy Plans Initiative in collaboration with the NY Power Authority (NYPA). The plan is intended to strengthen the reliability and resiliency of energy infrastructure, spur clean energy investment, and reduce energy consumption.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

**"The sooner we move to a more sustainable energy source, the better. That is the way of the future. Rochester can get there and be a leader in this movement."**

### COMMUNITY SHARED SOLAR

Due to a variety of factors, including the cost, location, condition, and the size of a roof, not everyone is able to install solar panels. Alternative business models, like shared solar (or community solar), offer residents and businesses the chance to invest in solar together, benefiting directly from the energy produced by one solar array. By aggregating customer demand, shared solar programs can reduce the financial and technical barriers of individually installing solar equipment.



## C. CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION + ADAPTATION (CONTINUED)

### PROACTIVE CLIMATE ACTION PLANNING CONTINUED

#### → **Rochester Climate Action Plan (CAP).**

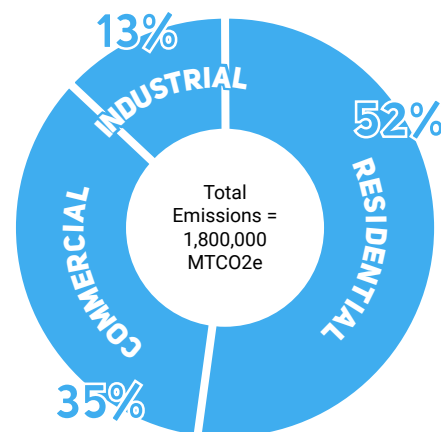
Completed in 2017, the CAP is a community-wide plan that identifies a community-wide goal of reducing Rochester's GHG emissions 40% below 2010 levels by 2030, and 80% by 2050. In order to achieve this goal, the CAP identifies 35 implementation actions divided across five focus areas:

- 1 Energy Use and Supply** – including mitigation actions related to increasing commercial and residential energy efficiency, increasing renewable energy utilization by residents and businesses, and fuel switching to convert residential, commercial and industrial natural gas consumption to clean electricity.
- 2 Transportation** – including mitigation actions that help to promote multi-modal transportation, reduce vehicle miles traveled, increase walking, biking, and transit utilization, and support more people and fleets using alternative fuel vehicles.
- 3 Waste and Materials Management** – including mitigation actions to reduce and divert waste from landfills, such as composting, recycling, and community education.
- 4 Clean Water** – including adaptation actions such as developing a green infrastructure portfolio standard and integrated water management practices
- 5 Land Use** – including adaptation actions such as promoting coordinated land use and transportation planning, transit-supportive development, redevelopment of brownfields and vacant/underutilized property, urban agriculture, eco-districts, and parks and open space planning.

The CAP included an updated GHG inventory, which identified the residential sector as the largest source of local GHG emissions (52%), closely followed by the commercial sector (35%). As such, many of the implementation actions identified in the CAP are targeted towards homeowners, landlords and tenants, and commercial property owners or tenants.

The CAP also makes a commitment to ongoing monitoring of performance (emissions and emissions reductions), as well as plan implementation. The City's Office of Energy and Sustainability staff convene working groups to review implementation, assess new funding and partnership opportunities, and identify subsequent climate planning needs.

Rochester Emissions by Sector, 2014



Source: Rochester Climate Action Plan

## PROACTIVE CLIMATE ACTION PLANNING CONTINUED

### → Climate Vulnerability Assessment.

Completed in 2018, this study expanded on the adaptation and resiliency components of the CAP. It provides several high-level insights into Rochester's strengths, challenges, and opportunities as it prepares for changing climate conditions. It identifies several short-term strategies to address local infrastructure, natural resource, and socioeconomic vulnerabilities. It also calls for the development of a Climate Change Resilience Plan to identify, assess, and prioritize specific adaptation strategies or actions, moving forward.

### **COMMUNITY CHOICE AGGREGATION (CCA)**

CCA is a municipal energy procurement model that replaces the utility with the municipality as the default supplier of electricity for homes and small businesses. By pooling demand, communities are able to choose cleaner energy sources and negotiate lower rates with private suppliers.

To implement CCA, the City of Rochester would be required to adopt local legislation authorizing the program, select a CCA program administrator, develop an implementation plan and data protection plan for the Public Service Commission, and contract with an energy supplier to provide clean, renewable energy to all participating customers. NYSERDA offers technical assistance for municipalities pursuing CCA legislation. A CCA can also be implemented with a group of municipalities operating under an inter-municipal agreement.

# C. CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION + ADAPTATION [CC]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>CC-1</b></p> <p><b>Improve Rochester’s ability to mitigate and adapt to climate change through coordinated planning, plan implementation, and performance monitoring.</b></p>	<p>CC-1a Implement the Rochester Climate Action Plan (CAP), using data and analysis to monitor and report progress towards our goal of reducing GHG emissions 40% by 2030, and 80% by 2050:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Develop annual memo or report on status of each CAP strategy and action</li> <li>– Update GHG Inventory at least once every 5 years (2020, 2025, 2030) and report current emissions by major sector (e.g. residential, business, transportation, etc.)</li> </ul>	<p><b>City</b>, Community Partners</p>
	<p>CC-1b Develop and implement a Climate Change Resilience Plan that identifies strategic actions to help the City and community become more resilient, and better prepare for and adapt to future climate change impacts in our region. Include analysis of potential for population change from climate refugees.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Community Partners</p>
	<p>CC-1c Conduct and implement a climate impact study specific to the water and potential changes to water quality, supply, and infrastructure that includes analysis and recommendations for a regional approach to proactive watershed management.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Monroe County, Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council, Community Partners</p>



**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>CC-1</b> <b>Improve Rochester’s ability to mitigate and adapt to climate change through coordinated planning, plan implementation, and performance monitoring.</b>	<p>CC-1d Work with community partners to implement existing plans that help Rochester adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change by promoting transportation choices, integrating transportation and land use decision-making, and remediating and redeveloping brownfields, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Finger Lakes Regional Sustainability Plan</li><li>– <a href="#">Comprehensive Access and Mobility Plan</a></li><li>– <a href="#">Transit Supportive Corridors Study</a></li><li>– 14621 Brownfield Opportunity Area Plan</li><li>– <a href="#">Lyell-Lake-State Street Brownfield Opportunity Area Plan</a></li><li>– <a href="#">Vacuum Oil-South Genesee River Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area Plan</a></li><li>– <a href="#">Bulls Head Brownfield Opportunity Area and Revitalization Plan</a></li></ul> <p>Additional strategies addressing sustainable land use and transportation policies can be found in <a href="#">Initiative Area 2, The Placemaking Plan</a>.</p>	<b>City</b> , Developers, NYS, GFLRPC
	<p>CC-1e Conduct a study to explore benefits, costs, and strategic opportunities to reduce solid waste, including topics such as municipal composting of food scraps and waste reduction incentives like “pay-as-you-throw.”</p>	<b>City</b>
	<p>CC-1f Commission a study to analyze the feasibility of expanding renewable energy sources within the City’s electricity supply, including solar, wind and Geothermal power.</p>	<b>City</b> , RG&E, Not-for-Profits, Renewable Energy Developers

# C. CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION + ADAPTATION [CC]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>CC-1</b>  <b>Improve Rochester’s ability to mitigate and adapt to climate change through coordinated planning, plan implementation, and performance monitoring.</b></p>	<p>CC-1g Map energy density/intensity by geography (e.g. neighborhood or district) to inform program and outreach campaign planning, as well as investment priorities.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, RG&amp;E, NYSERDA</p>
	<p>CC-1h Support implementation of the High Falls Ecodistrict as a neighborhood-scale sustainable development model. Seek lessons learned and apply to other areas if/as possible.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Greentopia, Community Partners</p>
<p><b>CC-2</b>  <b>Use City authority, facilities, policies, operations, and investment to help achieve climate action planning goals.</b></p>	<p>CC-2a Continue working to implement a Community Choice Aggregation Model of energy management to offer cleaner, cheaper electricity for residents.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Not-for-profits</p>
	<p>CC-2b Expand the existing solar field on the former Emerson Street Landfill and identify additional options to expand renewable energy within the City’s electricity supply.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Solar/ Renewable Energy Developers, RG&amp;E, Not-for-profits</p>
	<p>CC-2c Implement community shared solar options and programming, particularly where it could benefit low-moderate income residents, and work with partners to implement community solar in Rochester.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Solar and Renewable Energy Developers</p>
	<p>CC-2d Pass legislation authorizing the City to participate in New York State’s Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing program and become a member of the Energy Improvement program to help commercial property owners finance capital costs for energy improvement projects and renewable energy installations.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Commercial Property Owners, Energize NY</p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>CC-2</b> Use City authority, facilities, policies, operations, and investment to help achieve climate action planning goals.	CC-2e Pass legislation encouraging renovated and newly constructed buildings to obtain LEED or other green building certification.	<b>City</b> , Developers
	CC-2f Participate in Governor Cuomo’s Smart Street Lighting Initiative, converting City streetlights to LED.	<b>City</b> , New York State
	CC-2g Explore the option of converting the City’s development-related codes into a Unified Development Code to better integrate land use and transportation decision-making.	<b>City</b>
	CC-2h Continue to acquire and remediate selected brownfield sites for future re-use.	<b>City</b> , NYSDEC, US EPA
	CC-2i Expand the city’s multi-modal transportation facilities and continue to install electric vehicle charging ports and bicycle parking on City-owned parking lots and other facilities.	<b>City</b>
	CC-2j Design and implement green infrastructure construction specifications for use in right-of-way improvement projects, including continued use of permeable pavement.	<b>City</b>
	CC-2k Expand investments in rain gardens or stormwater planters in areas surrounded by impervious materials to reduce the amount of storm water runoff. Encourage permeable surface materials when creating new or replacement parking lots and other hard surfaces.	<b>City</b>
	CC-2l Encourage companies to participate in the State Voucher Incentive Fund and the EPA’s SmartWay program, which support the creation of cleaner fleets to reduce emissions.	<b>City</b> , NYS, EPA, Freight Partners

# C. CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION + ADAPTATION [CC]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>CC-3</b></p> <p>Work with property owners and community development partners to improve building energy performance and sustainability.</p>	<p>CC-3a Collect, analyze, and share data to educate different target audiences (e.g., homeowners, renters, landlords, business owners, institutional property owners, developers) about the individual and community benefits of improving building energy performance and sustainability.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, RG&amp;E, NYSERDA, Community Partners</p>
	<p>CC-3b Develop a targeted outreach campaign, technical assistance programs, and incentives that help homeowners of various income levels understand the benefits and financing opportunities available to support energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements in their homes.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, RG&amp;E, NYSERDA, NYPA, RSEHI, Housing Agencies, Community Partners, Homeowners</p>
	<p>CC-3c Develop a targeted outreach campaign, technical assistance programs, and incentives that help renters and landlords – particularly for low-moderate income tenants and the landlords who rent to them – to understand the benefits and financing opportunities available to support energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements in their units.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Solar Providers, NYSERDA</p>
	<p>CC-3d Develop a targeted outreach campaign, technical assistance programs, and incentives to help various commercial/institutional groups – such as businesses, schools, hospitals, churches, universities, etc. – understand the benefits and financing opportunities available to support energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements for their properties.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, RG&amp;E, NYSERDA, NYPA, RSEHI, Housing Agencies, Community Partners, Landlords, Tenant Associations, Property Management Companies</p>
	<p>CC-3e Create a Voluntary Commercial Building Energy Benchmarking and Disclosure program, to encourage competition between businesses to conserve energy.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Commercial Property Owners, Community Partners</p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>CC-3</b> <b>Work with property owners and community development partners to improve building energy performance and sustainability.</b>	<p>CC-3f Increase support for the adoption of rooftop solar installations. Target financial support to support homeowners, renters/ landlords, and business property owners in underserved communities.</p> <hr/> <p>CC-3g Promote the distribution and use of sustainable development resources, including the <a href="#">City of Rochester Sustainable Development Guide</a> and the <a href="#">City of Rochester Green Infrastructure Retrofit Manual</a>, by local developers and infrastructure project leads.</p> <hr/> <p>CC-3h Encourage installation of trees, landscaping, electric vehicle charging stations, bicycle parking, bikeshare, carshare, and emerging transportation alternatives on private property and in new development.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Solar Oroviders, NYSERDA, Nonprofit Organizations, DOE</p> <hr/> <p><b>City</b>, Developers, Community Partners</p> <hr/> <p><b>City</b>, Developers</p>
<b>CC-4</b> <b>Develop broad outreach campaigns and community programs that educate people and support them living more sustainable lives.</b>	<p>CC-4a Develop targeted education and community engagement campaigns on specific issues related to the personal and community benefits of environmental sustainability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Recycling, waste reduction, and composting</li><li>– Energy and water conversation</li><li>– Benefits and options for walking, biking, transit and other transportation alternatives</li><li>– Availability of tax credits and benefits of electric or other low-emission vehicles</li><li>– Anti-idling education</li></ul> <hr/> <p>CC-4b Implement a program that collects and recycles universal wastes and electronics that are not included in curbside collection.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Community Partners</p> <hr/> <p><b>City</b>, Monroe County, Not-for-profits, Retailers</p>

# D. URBAN AGRICULTURE + COMMUNITY GARDENS

## INTRODUCTION

Urban agriculture is the practice of cultivating and distributing food in a city. This source of food production in the urban setting is helping to meet growing demand for local food in cities all over the country and in the City of Rochester. Urban agriculture practices include community gardens, urban farms, bee keeping, raising farm animals (chickens, goats, etc.), hydroponics (growing food without soil), and aquaponics (raising fish). Urban agriculture operations can range from large industrial-scale hydroponic operations to a small community garden on an individual vacant city lot. Each practice comes with unique land or facility requirements and cities must determine where and under what conditions these practices will be conducted in the city and to what scale.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Community gardens can help meet a growing demand for locally-grown food, especially fresh produce.
- Beyond providing food, gardens bring people together, teach values and skills, and beautify neighborhoods.
- Some urban soils may not be suitable for growing food for consumption.
- It can be difficult to find individuals or groups that can maintain a community garden for several years.
- Creative new ideas and approaches should continue to drive City policy and community programming in support of community gardening and urban agriculture.

## COMMUNITY GARDENS

The most common practice of urban agriculture in Rochester is community gardening. Community gardens offer a number of recognized benefits to individuals, families, and communities, including:

- fostering a sense of community ownership, identity, and pride;
- bringing people together;
- increasing eyes on the street;
- providing unique opportunities for immigrants to grow their traditional foods, provide opportunity for cultural practices and traditions, and connect them to the community;
- teaching youth about where food comes from, basic business principles, the importance of community, environmental sustainability, and job and life skills;
- providing a source of nutritionally-rich food and/or income;
- beautifying the neighborhood;
- filtering rainwater;
- providing green space in neighborhoods, which reduces stress and increases a sense of wellness and belonging; and
- increasing property values in the immediate vicinity where they are located.



**PUBLIC COMMENT**

“More gardens provide both beauty and healthy recreation, as well as producing healthy food.”



**PUBLIC COMMENT**

“I want vacant lots to be used for: (1) community gardens to bring pride on an individual basis and (2) gardens to provide fresh produce, improve nutrition levels of children and food security for families and seniors within the city.”

## D. URBAN AGRICULTURE + COMMUNITY GARDENS (CONTINUED)

### COMMUNITY GARDENS CONTINUED

While many residents of Rochester grow a garden on their privately-owned lot, there are many who cannot have a garden where they live because they live in an apartment or their lot is too small. In these cases, a nearby vacant lot becomes an attractive option for growing a garden and enjoying the benefits listed on the previous page. If a desired vacant lot is privately owned, gardeners would have to engage in an agreement with the lot owner to use the space for a garden. If the vacant lot is City-owned, which most of them are, then gardeners must have an agreement with the City to use the lot for a garden.

Through the *Rochester 2034* survey and community discussions, there was a resounding community call for more gardens on vacant lots and reduced regulatory burdens to do so. As of the date of publication of *Rochester 2034*, the City offers two options for using City-owned vacant land for gardens:

- **Garden Permit Program.** The City of Rochester offers seasonal permits for gardeners who want to build and maintain seasonal gardens on City-owned vacant lots. The City processes approximately 80 garden permits each year and gardeners who wish to use the lot for multiple years must get a new permit every year.
- **Lease / License Agreements.** The City also uses standard license agreements or leases to facilitate the use of City-owned land for uses that are longer than short-term temporary uses. These agreements are a good tool for longer term arrangements with provisions for management and maintenance requirements, allowing the City to retain some control. This tool is not routinely used for gardens.

#### ROCHESTER URBAN AGRICULTURE WORKING GROUP

Additional support of community gardeners comes from the Rochester Urban Agriculture Working Group (UAWG). Formed in 2014, the UAWG brings together Rochester's urban agriculture leaders to identify and address issues and challenges facing community gardens and urban farms throughout the city. The UAWG consists of representatives from community gardens, nonprofit agencies, urban farms, government agencies, universities, community associations, and community members. Each year the UAWG sponsors a community garden conference to provide on-going education and coalition building among the community gardeners in the City of Rochester.





## COMMUNITY GARDENS CONTINUED

Starting and operating a community garden is a challenging task. In addition to needing sufficient sunlight and access to water, a successful garden requires commitment of neighborhood leadership and volunteers willing to work in the garden. Studies show that another key element of success is the availability of skill-building opportunities for volunteers. This helps to ensure ongoing participation and momentum while cultivating new leaders for the future.

The level of commitment necessary for running a successful community garden means that gardens need to be strategically placed where there is easy access by a population that will volunteer to work in the garden. The gardens also usually need to be near an occupied building where occupants can keep an eye on the garden. Lastly, success is more likely if there is a sponsor for the garden that can help with the capital costs and equipment.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

**“Rochester residents should be allowed to use vacant lots for gardening, and to put up greenhouses, hoop houses, tunnels, and other garden production aids.”**



## D. URBAN AGRICULTURE + COMMUNITY GARDENS (CONTINUED)

### CITY OPERATIONAL SUPPORT OF COMMUNITY GARDENS

The City of Rochester is committed to supporting community gardens, providing technical advice and gardening supplies, including plants, soil, mulch, and materials for raised beds. The City's Flower City Feeling Good series is a spring/summer program that aims to get community members outside, active and engaged. The series kicks-off in April and May with horticultural workshops and garden talks at recreation centers and city libraries. These workshops are provided in partnership with Monroe County Cornell Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners.

The Rochester Blossoms Plant Giveaway takes place every May and is open to community gardeners and neighborhood groups that hold a City garden permit or steward a neighborhood street mall, etc. (no private gardens). This event typically has more than 130 groups sign-up for the giveaway, with each group receiving two to three flats of annuals. In the autumn, the City sponsors another plant giveaway to provide mums, bulbs, and occasionally perennials for community gardens. When funding is available, the Coordinator of Horticultural & Environmental Programming provides lumber and rain barrels to gardens based on need and seniority.



#### MUNICIPAL COMPOSTING FOR GARDENS

The City Department of Environmental Services composts yard wastes and street sweepings, making the compost available for pick up by city residents or delivery to garden permit holders. Currently, the City does not recommend that municipal compost be used for vegetable gardens, however, each year the City orders food grade compost (approximately 20-30 yards) for giveaway to a portion of the community gardens that are raised bed vegetable gardens.



#### WATER FOR GARDENS

The City will install a metered water spigot on a permitted garden site. The meter must be tied to a sponsor who is responsible for the water bill. Currently, there is no budget designated for water installations; therefore, groups seeking to have water installed may be responsible for the cost of installation. This cost is often a limiting factor for community gardens, so they seek other options to securing a water source for their gardens. As an alternative to a water spigot on site, community gardeners may choose to enter into an agreement with a property owner of an adjacent lot to share water and compensate the owner for costs associated with the garden's water use.

## ZONING PROVISIONS TO ALLOW FOR URBAN AGRICULTURE

The City Zoning Code has few provisions pertaining to gardening or agriculture which generally means that the use is not readily permitted. The only relevant provision in the Code allows agricultural uses as temporary uses with a prohibition on any permanent structures. This limited attention to the subject of agriculture has sparked a substantial amount of public urging for more flexibility and allowances in the Zoning Code to reduce the current regulatory barriers to gardens as a principle and long-term land use.

### NY AGRICULTURE AND MARKETS LAW (ARTICLE 2-C §31F)

The State Legislature finds and declares that community gardens provide significant health, educational and social benefits to the general public, especially for those who reside in urban and suburban areas of this state. Furthermore, it is the articulated public policy of the State to promote and foster growth in the number of community gardens and the acreage of such gardens. It is therefore the intent of the legislature and the purpose of this article to foster growth in the number, size and scope of community gardens in this state by encouraging state agencies, municipalities and private parties in their efforts to promote community gardens.

## NYS SUPPORT OF COMMUNITY GARDENS

State law defines community gardens as “public or private lands upon which residents of the state have the opportunity to garden on lands which they do not individually own.” There are well over 1,000 registered or permitted community gardens in New York’s cities and many more cases where residents have rescued vacant private or public lots in an effort to build more livable neighborhoods.

The NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets supports community gardens through their Community Gardens Program, which was “created to support the thousands of New Yorkers who are building greener, healthier cities through community gardens, school gardens and educational farms.” The mission of this program is to help develop and sustain community gardens in New York by leveraging resources across state agencies. The mission is based on [Article 2-C of the Agriculture and Markets Law](#) – mandating the Department of Agriculture & Markets to:

- Assist in the identification of vacant public land for community gardening purposes
- Coordinate on behalf of interested community groups and state or local agencies to facilitate the use of vacant public lands for community gardens
- Support and encourage networking among community garden programs around the state.

## D. URBAN AGRICULTURE + COMMUNITY GARDENS (CONTINUED)

### CHALLENGES

While community gardens, including those where vegetables are grown, are gaining momentum in Rochester, there are some challenges to seeing the movement reaching its full potential. For starters, urban soil in a city that has been almost fully built out for generations is generally not considered suitable for growing and consuming food.

Establishing and maintaining a community garden is labor intensive. In recent years, there have been examples of well-meaning individuals and groups that want to start a community garden but fail to follow through on upkeep. It can be challenging to sustain the interest and capacity of a group of neighbors and/or volunteers to regularly tend to a plot, let alone remain committed to the off-site logistics and organizing necessary to sustain a group's effectiveness.

There is strong support for more urban agriculture in the city, which was made clear throughout the community engagement process for *Rochester 2034*. However, those passions and convictions need to be matched by a commitment to the required labor and organizational efforts, as well as the creative techniques needed to overcome environmental restrictions.

#### FLOWER CITY GARDEN CONTEST

The City conducts the annual Flower City Garden Contest where community members can nominate their own garden or a community garden.



## CREATIVE NEW IDEAS

Rochester is poised to embrace urban agriculture on a larger scale. We have available land and intend to refine regulations to encourage these activities. As concerns about access to healthy food and overdependence on non-local sources continue to rise, the Flower City should nurture this emerging trend. Below is a sampling of creative ideas for consideration that communities are using to increase the presence of food and plant cultivation in an urban setting.



### PUBLIC COMMENT

**“Would LOVE to see more community gardens and initiatives that get fresh produce into food deserts and food pantries.”**

### FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

Across the country, cities and regions are engaging various stakeholders to form food policy councils or task forces to look at a wide range of food policy and access issues, including food distribution and production challenges in cities, and work together to develop solutions. A local council/task force could focus on Rochester’s food deserts, document existing services, needs, gaps, and opportunities, and develop food access policies and initiatives that help to improve community food access and nutrition. This group could also assess the risks and benefits of in situ gardening (i.e., growing directly in the ground without raised beds) on city lots to inform City policy.

### EDIBLE LANDSCAPES

Some cities have enacted policies and actions to create edible landscapes. With the goal of connecting people to real food, city leaders and community members are looking at public walkways and spaces for ways to integrate fruit trees and vegetables into the landscaping. This has multiple benefits, not the least which is public foraging and appreciation.

### HYDROPONICS / AQUAPONICS

Hydroponics is a system of agriculture that utilizes nutrient-rich water rather than soil for plant growth. It does not require natural precipitation or fertile land in order to be effective. Hydroponic systems do not require pesticides, require less water and space than traditional agricultural systems. This makes them optimal for use in cities, where space is limited, and where there are defunct industrial buildings that lend themselves to this reuse. Aquaponics adds the raising of fish to the hydroponics system.

# D. URBAN AGRICULTURE + COMMUNITY GARDENS [UAG]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>UAG-1</b></p> <p><b>Support urban agriculture as a valid reuse option for vacant land and vacant buildings.</b></p>	<p>UAG-1a Adopt a comprehensive urban agriculture policy that addresses the environmental, health, and social benefits of urban agriculture and provides a vision for the future of urban agriculture in Rochester.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Urban Agriculture Working Group, Community Partners</p>
	<p>UAG-1b Make changes to the Zoning Code that allow urban agriculture as a principle use within specified parameters.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>UAG-1c Market strategic sites for large-scale hydroponic and aquaponics operations to support food production, workforce development opportunities, and employment.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Urban Agriculture Working Group, Community Partners</p>
	<p>UAG-1d Build on existing recycling and composting programs, focused on enhancing collection of organic material (yard and food waste) at a community-wide scale for use in a composting program. Some ideas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Pilot a program at the Rochester Public Market for collecting compost.</li> <li>– Pilot a program of isolating leaf and organic debris at park sites.</li> <li>– Create leaf compost without street sweepings to produce organic material that would be ‘food grade’.</li> </ul>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>UAG-1e Continue and enhance the City’s Flower City Feeling Good series through additional funding and funding sources.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Community Partners</p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>UAG-1</b> <b>Support urban agriculture as a valid reuse option for vacant land and vacant buildings.</b>	UAG-1f To respond to community demand, identify and evaluate policy and funding sources for providing water to community agricultural uses.	<b>City</b>
	UAG-1g Pursue grants to support food-based community gardens as well as innovative urban agriculture initiatives that offer workforce development programs and job opportunities.	<b>City</b> , NYS Dept. of Ag & Markets, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Community Partners, Urban Agriculture Working Group
	UAG-1h Sponsor grants to support community gardening as well as other urban agriculture applications.	<b>Community Funders and Foundations</b>
	UAG-1i Explore the opportunity to convene a local or regional Food Policy Council or Task Force. The most appropriate entity to lead this effort would need to be identified.	City, Monroe County, Foodlink, RCSD, Institutional Food Purchasers, Regional Planning Agencies, Food Agriculture and Nutrition Stakeholders, Community Partners

# D. URBAN AGRICULTURE + COMMUNITY GARDENS [UAG]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>UAG-2</b> Facilitate community gardening on City-owned vacant lots.	UAG-2a Create a long-term (5-10 years) permit/lease arrangement for community garden sponsors who have demonstrated sustainable gardening operations over the course of a full growing season and have support by the immediate neighborhood.	<b>City</b>
	UAG-2b Convene a meeting with representative gardeners and relevant City staff to assess the garden permit process and garden support to discuss opportunities for improvement and efficiencies.	<b>City, Garden Partners</b>
	UAG-2c Allow gardeners to respond to Requests for Proposals for vacant lot redevelopment in areas where gardens may be a desired amenity and widely supported by the surrounding neighborhood, and particularly within the lower demand housing market.	<b>City</b>



**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>UAG-3</b> <b>Explore innovative urban agriculture initiatives.</b>	UAG-3a Research the feasibility of introducing edible landscaping into public parks, streetscapes, and landscaping around public buildings.	<b>City</b>
	UAG-3b Research the feasibility of using a hydroponic/aquaponics operation as a potential employee owner coop project as a community wealth-building initiative.	<b>City, Community Partners</b>

# E. TRANSPORTATION

## INTRODUCTION

The demand for a diverse selection of transportation options is growing, and the City of Rochester is striving to meet that demand. What was once a car-first mentality is shifting to a car-optional one. From its emphasis on [Complete Streets](#) that embrace bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users, to its commitment to launch and expand shared mobility services, the City recognizes the importance of a robust multi-modal transportation system to the quality of life and economic competitiveness of this community.

The transportation world is ever evolving, with new modes of travel, business models, and technology emerging at a seemingly faster and faster rate. Whether it's the rising demand for multi-modal transportation choices and progressive street design, the impacts of ride-hailing and shared mobility, growing popularity of e-scooters and e-bikes, the emergence of "smart transportation technology" and "smart cities", or the potential arrival of automated vehicles, the City must identify ways to stay ahead of the curve to best plan for and manage change.

As part of the *Rochester 2034* project, the City commissioned the [Comprehensive Access and Mobility Plan \(CAMP\)](#) to inform the Comprehensive Plan. This section is a summary of the findings of the CAMP, combined with other transportation studies, research and best practices, and community input.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Thriving cities offer a diverse range of transportation choices and invest in quality infrastructure for walking, biking, and public transportation (in addition to motor vehicles).
- Rochester has been a leader among mid-sized cities in adopting progressive, multi-modal transportation planning and engineering.
- Equity and safety should be key drivers of multi-modal transportation decision-making.
- An important part of encouraging transportation choices is to better integrate land use and transportation regulations and decision-making.
- With the growth of shared mobility services and emerging technologies, investing in better data and implementing "transportation demand management" strategies are important to help manage change and remain competitive.



### PUBLIC COMMENT

"I'd love to see a city where people walk to where they need to go."

## GREEN TRANSPORTATION

In the 21st century, it is essential that energy use and climate change be taken into consideration when managing systems. Motor vehicles are one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, alternate modes of transportation, such as walking, biking, riding the bus, or carpooling can greatly cut down on the environmental impact of traveling.

While single-occupancy vehicles are detrimental to the environment, they may be unavoidable in many situations due to our car-oriented region, lifestyle choices, and logistical challenges. And while reduction of car usage may take generations to achieve, the following are strategies that can help cut down on the impact of automobiles now.

- **Alternative Fuel Vehicles:** Use of compressed natural gas or electricity instead of gasoline and diesel can increase the efficiency of vehicles, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Electric Vehicle Charging Stations:** Increasing the number existing electric vehicle charging ports will further encourage the adoption of electric vehicles.
- **Anti-Idling Education:** A reduction of vehicle- idling will reduce emissions, improve overall air quality, and reduce noise pollution.

## WALKING

Creating a more walkable city is essential for a community to thrive. The more that people walk to destinations instead of drive, the fewer motor vehicles there will be on the roadways, which leads to less congestion, reduced parking demand, and fewer greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere. Walking leads to more interactions with neighbors, and increased patronage of

neighborhood businesses, which strengthens the bond of a community. When locals consider an area to be walkable, it is often indicative of a healthy mixed-use district with shops, services, an attractive public realm, and well-maintained architecture. Residents that walk will also be healthier, both mentally and physically. For more information, see the *Walkable City Report* in the *CAMP*.



## E. TRANSPORTATION (CONTINUED)

### WALKING CONTINUED

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF A WALKABLE COMMUNITY

High-density, mixed-use neighborhoods are conducive to walkability. For more information on strategies to plan land use and development for maximum walkability, see [Initiative Area 2, The Placemaking Plan](#).

Designing streetscapes for safety and connectivity is essential to ensure the safety of pedestrians.

Crosswalks are a key element of streetscapes that influence a person's sense of safety and accessibility. There are several ways crosswalks can be managed so that they put pedestrian safety first.

- **Continental and bar pair crosswalks** are more noticeable and visible crosswalk marking styles, improving roadway safety for both drivers and pedestrians. The crosswalks keep people visible while crossing the street and set clear limits to drivers.
- A **curb extension**, also known as a bulb out or bumpout, is an extension of the sidewalk into the parking lane which is directly adjacent to the travel lane. Crosswalks that connect curb extensions shorten the amount of time that pedestrians are crossing a street and cue drivers to slow down at the intersection.
- A **Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI)** is a walk sign that typically gives pedestrians a 3–7 second head start when entering an intersection with a corresponding green signal in the same direction of travel. It enhances the visibility of pedestrians in the intersection and reinforces their right-of-way over turning vehicles, especially in locations with a history of conflict.
- **Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs)** are devices using LED flashing beacons in combination with pedestrian warning signs to provide a high-visibility strobe-like warning to drivers when pedestrians are actively using a crosswalk. These devices are proven to improve driver compliance with yield-to-pedestrian laws.



Streetscape improvements are an important factor for walkability, as they create a more welcoming environment for walking, improve the perception of safety, and create a barrier between pedestrians and cars driving on the street. Street trees create a buffer between walkers and drivers. Well-lit sidewalks are integral to making pedestrians feel safer. Other amenities, such as public seating, art, and plantings create a welcoming atmosphere that encourages walking.

Good wayfinding simplifies navigation and efficiently relays important information, which adds to a sense of place and makes a district more vibrant and enjoyable. Strategically-placed pedestrian-oriented signage that presents clear, meaningful information for pedestrians emphasizes non-motorized routes in map form, and guides users of multiple transportation modes, makes navigating around the city a simpler task.

Walkable communities are also more than the collection of infrastructure elements that make the pedestrian experience safe and enjoyable. They are also defined by the presence of destinations that are nearby, making walking more appealing than driving. Whether it be shops, services, restaurants, parks, or schools, having these community amenities in close proximity to residential areas allows for people to choose to walk or bike. Conversely, business districts that have many vacancies can limit the amount of trips made by walking, despite the pedestrian infrastructure in place to support those choices.

## WINTER MAINTENANCE

Rochester has a proud history of public snow removal dating back to 1861. The current and long-standing policy of sidewalk plowing after 4" of snow has been the envy of our Upstate urban neighbors. Substantial feedback was received on this topic during the community engagement process for *Rochester 2034*, as well as the *ROC the Riverway Vision Plan* and *Comprehensive Access and Mobility Plan (CAMP)*, with many in the community calling for stronger winter maintenance efforts of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, as well as transit stops. This perspective goes hand in hand with the public's overwhelming support for a more robust pedestrian and bicycle environment in the city, as well as the practical need to provide equitable access for people in wheelchairs and parents pushing strollers.

There are several practical factors that make it extremely difficult to ensure sidewalks and trails are cleared of snow to the same standard for streets.

- Rochester is among only five worldwide cities that have at least 200,000 people and average 100 inches or more of snow during the winter.
- Street snow removal is as effective as it is because of how salting complements plowing efforts. Salting the extensive network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities is a substantial expense and would be highly detrimental to tree lawns, trees, front yards, and the environment in general.
- Streets are much easier to keep clear because of high levels of friction created by tens of thousands of pounds worth of vehicles traversing the pavement all day long.
- The larger the travel area, the more efficiently it can be cleared. Expressways can be quickly cleared by large, heavy duty plow vehicles. Given the nature of narrow, low-traffic pedestrian and bicycle facilities, the costs are substantially higher per square foot compared to streets.

Rochester has made tremendous strides in becoming a less car-dependent city, as well as becoming a place that embraces more inclusive policies. Part of the next chapter in advancing these efforts is extending the investment into the more challenging winter months. While it may not be reasonable to expect complete winter maintenance of all bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the near future, strides must be taken to work in that direction, such as:

- Prioritizing facilities according to higher levels of non-automobile traffic, such as mixed-use corridors, bus stops, routes to employment centers frequented by those who cannot or choose not to drive, key trail segments, and areas around large residential buildings.
- Creating partnerships with other entities to work together on snow removal.
- Researching equipment and technology available to more effectively construct and treat the surfaces of sidewalks and bicycle routes.

## E. TRANSPORTATION (CONTINUED)

### BIKING

Cultivating a bicycle-friendly culture in a city has numerous benefits. Similar to walking, the more trips made by bicycle means fewer motor vehicles on the road, which decreases congestion on our streets, lowers the demand for parking, and decreases the amount of greenhouse gas emitted into the atmosphere. Increasing the ability of residents to bike will provide residents who don't own cars with an alternative to get to work or the store. Residents bicycling instead of driving also incorporate exercise into their daily routine, which increases overall health. For more information, see the Bikeable City Report in the CAMP.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

"Many more people would bike to work/the grocery store/etc. if there were safer bike lanes."

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF A BIKEABLE COMMUNITY

According to the 2018 CAMP survey, over one-third of residents say they have a desire to bike more, but are unwilling or unable to so. Building on preliminary research, stakeholder input, and data analysis, there are three key topics that impact bikeability in Rochester:

- **Bicycling Environment:** Low traffic stress is important for a welcoming bicycling environment. To do this, cities can improve traffic calming along the bike network as they add protected bike facilities, increase driver awareness regarding the presence of cyclists and their rights, and design bicycle facilities to improve the overall cyclist experience.
- **Connections:** A functional bicycle network fills in network gaps and expands infrastructure in areas with high biking demand, as well as in corridors where there are already existing bike facilities, prioritizing areas with low income, youth, and zero-vehicle households.
- **Safety and Maintenance:** It is important to design bike facilities and maintain them with safety in mind. This includes upgrading current bike facilities to protected bike lanes in high traffic volume locations, extending the bike network across intersections, employing traffic calming within bike facility design, and extending the multi-use trail network across the city.



## PUBLIC COMMENT

“Bike lanes, bike lanes, bike lanes! Less car lanes and more development so people will slow down.”

## BIKING CONTINUED

### CITY-LED EFFORTS TO INCREASE BICYCLE USE

Since Rochester’s [Bicycle Master Plan](#) was completed in 2011, the City has installed over 60 miles of bike lanes and protected lanes and has added bike boxes at six signalized intersections. Rochester’s ever-expanding trail system offers bicyclists access to 35 miles of recreational trails connecting all corners of the city.

The City also offers a range of end-of-trip amenities for bicyclists, including indoor bike lockers and sheltered bike racks at six City-owned parking garages, four bicycle repair stations in public parks, and hundreds of curbside bike racks throughout the city. The City recently opened its first bike corral, a type of bike rack installed in place of a single on-street parking space to provide bicycle parking where existing sidewalk space cannot accommodate it.

In July 2017, the City launched a partnership with Zagster to provide bicycle sharing services. Nearly 52,000 rides were taken during the first year of operation. Now known as Pace, the system was modified and expanded in 2018. Early trials of the new system, which combines dock-based and dockless bikes, showed six to seven times the ridership of similar programs in other mid-sized cities. Moving forward, the system is exploring options to integrate additional choices to grow the reach and participation in the system, including e-bikes, e-scooters, and other options as they arise.

The City’s Department of Recreation and Youth Services has been providing bicycle programming, education, and community rides for more than 20 years. These includes free weekly community bike rides all summer, led by a local bike expert and designed to highlight the diverse city parks, trails, neighborhoods, and landscapes available for recreational and everyday bicyclists to enjoy. These programs have also included youth and adult bicycle safety education classes, helmet fittings, youth bike rodeos at rec centers, and implementation of a bicycle benefits program at the Rochester Public Market. These community outreach and education efforts are vital to promoting a more lively and engaged bike culture in Rochester, but have not always been well connected to the City’s other bicycle promotion efforts.



## E. TRANSPORTATION (CONTINUED)

### TRANSIT

Rochester's transit system consists exclusively of buses, operated by Regional Transit Service (RTS). From 1927 to 1956, however, a single-line subway also contributed to the movement of people around Rochester, as did a network of street cars from 1862-1940. Whether or not Rochester could ever advance beyond a bus-only system is often discussed and may become increasingly relevant as we approach 2034.

A viable street car, trolley, light rail, or other similar fixed-rail system would require a substantial capital investment and a critical mass of population, jobs, and destinations that are not clearly evident in Rochester today. It would also likely require significant leadership and support from institutions, the business community, and other regional partners along with RTS and the City. Any advancement to a new form of transit must not come at the expense of maintaining a high-quality city-wide system of bus service. Prior to any form of fixed-rail transit becoming feasible in Rochester, the highest priority advancement is in the form of enhanced bus service, with the eventual target of bus rapid transit (BRT) in certain high-frequency corridors. If ridership grows on BRT corridors, the potential for fixed-rail transit could be examined at a future date.

To that end, RTS completed the [Reimagine RTS](#) system redesign study in 2018. The redesign, which is anticipated to be implemented in 2020, fundamentally transforms the transit network through reassignment of service to high-frequency corridors from those that are currently underperforming. This reallocation of resources allows for more frequent transit service along these corridors. Depending on the growth of ridership along these corridors, the City and RTS should continue to examine the prospect of BRT as the next stage in our transit evolution.

To connect *Reimagine RTS* to land use planning in *Rochester 2034*, the City of Rochester commissioned the [Transit Supportive Corridors Study](#), which took those high frequency corridors and recommended land use strategies to encourage mixed-use high density development or "transit supportive development." Transit supportive development helps create compact, vibrant communities where it is easier for people to walk, bike, and use public transit to get around. These recommendations are reflected in [Initiative Area 2, The Placemaking Plan](#). For additional information, see the *Transit Ready City Report* in the [CAMP](#).



#### PUBLIC COMMENT

**"Extended public transit options help people in poor neighborhoods get and maintain jobs in all neighborhoods of the city."**





## E. TRANSPORTATION (CONTINUED)

### GOODS MOVEMENT

Goods movement relies on a substantial network of physical infrastructure as well as a complex logistics framework. Shippers, carriers, and receivers harness technology to maximize routing and scheduling for themselves and their customers. The movement of goods occurs on a global scale at each stage of development: production, transport, and delivery. This requires an interconnected network of the various modes of goods movement that generally begins and ends with trips by truck with transfers to trains, marine vessels, and airplanes prior to delivery to stores and residences. For more information, see the *Urban Good Movement/Emergency Service Report* in the [CAMP](#).

According to *Transportation Strategies for Freight and Goods Movement in the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region*, approximately 300 million tons of freight worth \$1.2 trillion moved into, out of, and through the region in 2017. This amount is expected to increase to 420 tons valued at \$2.0 trillion in 2035. By tonnage, two-thirds of these freight flows are through movements: they neither originate at nor are destined for a location within the region. The remaining amount is split equally between inbound and outbound movements. This distribution of movements is expected to continue into the future.

### MAJOR FREIGHT GENERATORS

- **Manufacturing and Processing:** This includes light, industrial, and high technology operations, as well as businesses involved in salvage. Deliveries to these facilities can come from a variety of truck sizes as well as rail.
- **Storage and Distribution:** This includes warehouses, distribution centers, lumberyards, and cold storage facilities for perishable items. These facilities typically have the most loading docks relative to the amount of square footage and are usually served by large trucks and rail..
- **Retail:** This includes regional and neighborhood-level shopping centers, grocery stores, minimarts, and multiple use structures that currently house or are zoned to allow establishments that sell products to the general public. Depending on the industry, numerous shipments from multiple carriers can occur to and from each of these types of establishments daily.
- **Hospitals:** These facilities require deliveries of equipment, food, cleaning supplies, and other materials on a large-scale.
- **Lodging:** This includes hotels and motels, which require deliveries of food, cleaning supplies, and new furnishings, linens, and equipment on a regular basis.
- **Stadiums:** The large crowds that attend events at these venues require significant deliveries of food, cleaning supplies, and materials to maintain the performance surfaces, seating, and vending areas.

## GOODS MOVEMENT CONTINUED

### GOODS MOVEMENT CHALLENGES

→ **Retail Challenges:** The nature of retail (i.e., the sale of goods to the final consumer) continues to change at an accelerating rate as does the wholesale market (i.e., the sale of goods to businesses that resell goods in smaller quantities than they receive). The supply chains that serve those industries also continue to evolve. The public is purchasing more goods via the internet and expect delivery in hours or days, not weeks. There is no disputing that the numbers of direct deliveries to residences has and will continue to increase. However, the frequent reports of “bricks and mortar” closings and financial difficulties paint a broad brushstroke of the retail sector that misses nuances affecting cities. Certain chains such as Dollar General and Dollar Tree continue to open new stores at a steady rate, and higher end retail is becoming more experiential, offering cities the opportunity to meet both the needs of residents with lesser financial means and to attract higher income shoppers to their downtown and neighborhoods.

→ **Bridge Clearance:** There are railroad bridges in the city where the vertical clearance under them is less than the minimum of 14 feet and desired 14 feet, 6 inches for non-National Highway System roadways. Clearances like these allow the highways below them to accommodate some trucks but can represent impediments to efficient operation of the highway network. In the event of a bridge strike, extrication of the vehicle that struck the bridge and an inspection to affirm the bridge’s structural integrity can result in rerouting of all traffic potentially causing backups and delay in the vicinity of the incident and beyond.



## E. TRANSPORTATION (CONTINUED)

### EMERGENCY SERVICES

Providing the necessary services to save lives and reduce property damage resulting from natural and human-created hazards is a critical function of the City. Regardless of the emergency, response time is key and reducing it is a top priority for all responders. The ability to provide emergency response and ensure public safety requires predictability in the transportation network because emergency responders cannot choose when they travel and direct routing is critical.



#### PUBLIC COMMENT

**“The fire departments must learn how to be successful even with narrower streets.”**

#### INTERNATIONAL FIRE CODE AND COMPLETE STREETS CHALLENGE

The International Fire Code (IFC) provides construction standards to ensure that fire safety is a consideration through the proper design and separation of incompatible uses within buildings. Adherence to the IFC, however, means that the construction of buildings four stories or more could require that the surrounding streets have widths that are not consistent with the principles of Complete Streets to provide for bicyclists and pedestrians. There are a few ways to work around this conflict:

- Bicycle lanes expand the width of streets, providing space for fire apparatus and creating wider turning radii for their turns.
- Inset parking provides on-street parking while maintaining limited lane widths
- Speed cushions are speed humps or speed tables with cuts that are spaced for tires of fire engines and fire trucks, allowing unencumbered mobility for the largest emergency vehicles while slowing most other vehicles
- Incorporating apparatus access roads in site design alleviates the need for wider public streets.

## TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) refers to policies, physical amenities, programs, tools, and services that support the use of sustainable modes of travel. TDM programs collectively work together to change how, when, where, and why residents and employees travel. TDM offers a solution to the problems that plague many cities and their residents including traffic congestion, long commutes, and reduced quality of life. The programs work within the existing transportation system to expand and support mobility options that accommodate future growth while meeting larger local and regional goals.

TDM and other transportation policies and strategies are not intended to completely eliminate driving – they recognize that alternatives to driving are simply not feasible for many Rochesterians. Rather, they are intended to promote car-free or car-light lifestyles and choices for more people than currently make those choices. For more information, see the *TDM Focus Area Report* in the [CAMP](#).

### PUBLIC COMMENT

**“By building dense, walkable neighborhoods, communities will become healthier. Investing in infrastructure for people, not cars, leads to better health outcomes.”**



## E. TRANSPORTATION (CONTINUED)

### TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT CONTINUED

#### EMPLOYER OR WORKSITE-BASED STRATEGIES

Employer or worksite-based strategies are programs and incentives to help diversify commute options and create lower-cost options for how people get to and from work. These strategies are designed to be implemented by employers:



##### Parking Cash-Out

Employers continue to offer parking but offer the cash value of the parking subsidy to any employee who chooses not to use it.



##### Carpooling, Rideshare, and Ride-Matching Services

Carpooling is an arrangement with coworkers to travel to and from work in the same vehicle.



##### Vanpools

Vanpools are a type of ride-sharing, similar to carpooling, but typically involving more people and a shared, provided vehicle. The City of Rochester launched the [Commuter Vanpool Program](#) in 2016. RTS now administers the program and it continues to grow.



##### Guaranteed-Ride-Home (GRH) Programs

Circumstances such as working late or traveling on the job often make it difficult for employees who do not drive a personal vehicle to work. Oftentimes, employees are discouraged from using alternative modes of transportation because of these scenarios. GRH programs present alternative travel arrangements for employees to use as needed, such as a taxi or other ride home, which makes a non-driving commute more palatable and feasible.



##### Live-Near-Your-Work/Homebuyer Programs

Live-near-your work programs are home-buying assistance programs designed to encourage employees to purchase homes within a short distance of their place of work. The City of Rochester manages a version of this program called the [Employer Assisted Housing Initiative](#).



##### Employer Shuttles

Employer-specific or site-specific shuttles connect high-employment areas with important transit stations or centers.



##### Pre-Tax Transit Passes

Federal tax law allows employers to offer tax-free benefits for the purposes of taking transit, vanpooling, and paying for parking. These benefits are deducted from corporate gross income for taxes paid by the employer, allowing both employers and employees to save on taxes because neither pays federal income or payroll taxes on these benefits.

## TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT CONTINUED

### EMPLOYER OR WORKSITE-BASED STRATEGIES

TDM programs can be implemented on a regional scale, such as a neighborhood or a large employment center. Some regional TDM strategies require policy initiatives and coordination across multiple government entities, while others may be initiated or managed at a regional level but implemented locally.

One common program that oversees Regional TDM strategies are Regional Transportation Management Associations (TMA), which are a collaboration between local governments, agencies, and major employers to provide services such as organizing commuter programs, access management, parking management and brokerage, standards and guidelines development, wayfinding and multi-modal navigation tools, and marketing and promotion. The Genesee Transportation Council (GTC) is currently performing many of the duties of a TMA, including providing some TDM programs.



# E. TRANSPORTATION [TRN]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>TRN-1</b></p> <p><b>Expand and strengthen Rochester's multi-modal planning, policy, programming, and data collection.</b></p>	<p>TRN-1a Implement the recommendations of the recently completed Comprehensive Access and Mobility Plan (CAMP), including the location-specific and priority projects it identifies.</p>	<p><b>City,</b> Monroe County, RTS, GTC, NYSDOT, CSX, Community Partners</p>
	<p>TRN-1b Implement previously completed plans that improve multi-modal accessibility, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Rochester Bicycle Boulevards Plan</li> <li>– Irondequoit Seneca Trail Feasibility Study</li> <li>– Finger Lakes Regional Trail Initiative</li> <li>– JOSANA Trail Feasibility Study</li> <li>– Eastman Trail</li> <li>– East Main Arts and Market District Plan</li> <li>– ROC the Riverway Vision Plan</li> <li>– Reimagine RTS</li> </ul>	<p><b>City,</b> Monroe County, RTS, GTC, NYSDOT, CSX, Community Partners</p>
	<p>TRN-1c Continue to implement Rochester's complete streets policy, traffic calming and BoulevArt policies, and the Zoning Code's existing off-street bicycle parking regulations.</p>	<p><b>City,</b> Monroe County, NYSDOT, Community Partners</p>
	<p>TRN-1d Evaluate alternatives, advance recommendations, and seek funding to implement a redesign of the Inner Loop North corridor, including expressway removal and restoration of at-grade "complete" streets, infill development parcels, new green spaces for active and passive recreation, and multi-modal linkages to reconnect Northeast Quadrant neighborhoods with Downtown, the riverfront, and Genesee Riverway Trail.</p>	<p><b>City, NYSDOT,</b> Monroe County, Developers, Community Partners</p>



**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>TRN-1</b> <b>Expand and strengthen Rochester’s multi-modal planning, policy, programming, and data collection.</b>	TRN-1e Adopt a City of Rochester Street Design Guide based on street typologies developed in the CAMP in 2019 and the notion of “self-enforcing design.” The Guide should provide standards and direction for how to best balance the needs of multiple transportation modes (pedestrians, cyclists, wheelchair and scooter users, transit, cars, trucks, emergency response vehicles, etc.) as well as adjacent neighborhoods and property owners with the goals of <i>Rochester 2034</i> and <a href="#">The Placemaking Plan</a> to achieve safe, functional, and welcoming streets.	<b>City</b>
	TRN-1f Rewrite the Zoning Code and Map to reflect the vision expressed in The Placemaking Plan, including zoning and development guidance to promote walkable, higher-density mixed-use development and more flexible, demand-responsive parking requirements, particularly along high-frequency transit corridors and nodes.	<b>City</b>
	TRN-1g Explore the opportunity to convert the City’s various development-related codes into a Unified Development Code (UDC). This could improve efficiency, consistency, and clarity by combining multiple sets of regulations into a single code, as well as promote a holistic, big picture approach to help integrate transportation, land use, development, capital projects, and other community investment decisions.	<b>City</b>
	TRN-1h Revise City policies and procedures that reference vehicular Level of Service (LOS) and transition to the use of Multi-Modal Level of Service (MMLOS) to inform alternatives analysis, project design, and performance evaluation.	<b>City, Monroe County</b>

# E. TRANSPORTATION [TRN]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>TRN-1</b></p> <p><b>Expand and strengthen Rochester's multi-modal planning, policy, programming, and data collection.</b></p>	<p>TRN-1i Develop holistic performance measures that recognize the impacts of transportation facility and network design on issues like multi-modal traffic safety and accessibility, community health, economic vitality and opportunity, equity, environmental sustainability, quality of life, etc., and use them to inform infrastructure planning, design, and capital programming/prioritization. For example, this could help to ensure that Capital Improvement Program (CIP) investments and prioritization responds to additional criteria and measures beyond pavement or facility condition.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Community Partners</p>
	<p>TRN-1j Develop a strategy for multi-modal transportation data gathering, integration and maintenance. Inventory available data and sources, as well as data gaps that need to be filled.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, RPD, Monroe County, RTS, GTC, NYSDOT, Community Partners</p>
	<p>TRN-1k Create an Active Transportation Program to coordinate and target multi-modal projects, including the establishment of a Complete Streets Advisory Committee, regular reporting on the implementation of Rochester's Complete Streets Policy, and implementation of pilot projects or temporary tactical urbanism treatments that test and refine new concepts for best application in Rochester.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>TRN-1l Develop a more holistic citywide strategy to expand and integrate multi-modal wayfinding signage along key bike facilities, trails, transit corridors, walking routes, as well as downtown and near key activity centers.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Monroe County, RTS, Community Partners</p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>TRN-1</b> <b>Expand and strengthen Rochester's multi-modal planning, policy, programming, and data collection.</b>	TRN-1m Identify and implement additional strategic winter maintenance and/or snow and ice accumulation prevention activities to better maintain key walking and biking facilities, as well as areas around key transit stops, through the winter months. Explore partnerships and funding options to keep key facilities accessible during snow events, e.g., transit stop adoption and/or transitional employment programs that help keep bus stops clear of snow.	<b>City</b> , RTS, Monroe County, Center for Disability Rights, Reconnect Rochester, Rochester Cycling Alliance, Community Partners
	TRN-1n Work with the Rochester City School District and community partners to explore and implement safe routes to school strategies that support and encourage students walking and bicycling to school. These efforts could help with the implementation of community or neighborhood schools.	RCSD, City, Healthi Kids, Funders, PTAs, Neighborhood Groups, Community Partners
	TRN-1o Conduct a citywide study to examine how best to plan for and address the impacts of large, heavy vehicles on multi-modal city streets.	<b>City</b> , Monroe County, NYSDOT, GTC, Community Partners
	TRN-1p Work toward becoming a member of the World Health Organization's Network of Age-Friendly Communities and an AARP Livable Community by identifying and implementing strategies that respond to the varying mobility needs of residents as they age.	<b>Monroe County Aging Alliance, City</b> , RTS, NYSDOT, Community Partners
	TRN-1q Identify opportunities to evolve our multi-modal planning, policy, programming, and data collection to address emerging issues, needs, conflicts, and opportunities as the transportation sector experiences change locally and globally (e.g., e-scooters, autonomous vehicles and freight, new curbside management conflicts, etc.).	<b>City</b> , Monroe County, RTS, NYSDOT, Community Partners

# E. TRANSPORTATION [TRN]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>TRN-2</b></p> <p><b>Improve the quality, connectivity, accessibility, and safety of the pedestrian network to make Rochester a more walkable city for people of all ages and abilities.</b></p>	<p>TRN-2a Develop a complete inventory of pedestrian facilities and perform a Pedestrian Environmental Quality Assessment to identify pedestrian issues as they relate to intersection safety, traffic, street design, land use, and perceptions of safety and walkability. One model to consider is the Pedestrian Environmental Quality Index (PEQI) developed by the San Francisco Department of Public Health.</p>	<p><b>City, Monroe County,</b> Community Partners</p>
	<p>TRN-2b Assess crossings and key pedestrian conflict points for opportunities to improve intersection design and/or implement treatments that prioritize pedestrian safety, such as improved crosswalks, Lead Pedestrian Interval (LPI) signal timing, Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs), etc.</p>	<p><b>City, Monroe County,</b> Community Partners</p>
	<p>TRN-2c Assess where to focus Americans with Disability Act (ADA)-compliant accessibility improvements to achieve the greatest impact and work towards achieving a fully accessible pedestrian network.</p>	<p><b>City,</b> Center for Disability Rights, Community Partners</p>
	<p>TRN-2d Improve the walking experience through improved streetscaping and beautification (street trees, improved pedestrian-scale lighting, benches and other street furniture, public art, etc.), particularly to offset the impacts of wide or heavy volume streets, large parking lots, or other conditions that could negatively impact the walking experience.</p>	<p><b>City,</b> Monroe County, NYSDOT, Developers, Neighborhood Groups, Community Partners</p>
	<p>TRN-2e Pursue Walk Friendly Community designation and work to achieve higher ratings and awards from pedestrian advocacy organizations.</p>	<p>City, Community Partners</p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>TRN-3</b> <b>Develop a “minimum grid” dedicated bicycle network and work to increase bicycle mode share.</b>	<p>TRN-3a . Strategically fill gaps in the dedicated bicycle network while also expanding to form a safe, interconnected “minimum grid.” Focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Connecting home locations with key destinations and activity centers to create a more continuous, usable network</li><li>– Prioritizing corridors with few gaps and high bike demand; areas with higher low-income, youth, and zero-vehicle household populations; and areas with traffic safety challenges that need to be addressed</li><li>– Designing context-suited facilities that respond to differing roadway and traffic conditions to create low-stress bicycle options for people of all ages and abilities</li><li>– Fully integrating the network including crossing applications at intersections, driveways, and trail linkages/crossings to improve visibility and safety</li><li>– Implementing best practice bicycle parking</li></ul>	<b>City</b> , Monroe County, NYSDOT, Business Owners, Developers, Community Partners
	<p>TRN-3b Perform periodic, citywide bicycle demand and Level of Traffic Stress analyses to help further pinpoint priority investments that expand the bike network, as well as its use and safety for cyclists of all ages and abilities.</p>	<b>City</b>
	<p>TRN-3c Evaluate the potential for an east-west multi-use trail.</p>	<b>City</b>
	<p>TRN-3d Expand the bikeshare system. Prioritize station expansions around employment, residential, and activity centers, as well as high volume transit stops and transit connection hubs. Expand the fleet to include more bikes, as well as e-bikes, e-scooters and other innovative mobility options as they emerge.</p>	<b>City, Zagster, Station Sponsors</b> , Community Partners

# E. TRANSPORTATION [TRN]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>TRN-3</b></p> <p>Develop a “minimum grid” dedicated bicycle network and work to increase bicycle mode share.</p>	<p>TRN-3e Work to achieve higher ratings and awards from bicycle advocacy organizations, including the League of American Bicyclists and Places for Bikes.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Rochester Cycling Alliance, Community Partners</p>
<p><b>TRN-4</b></p> <p>Implement a high-frequency transit network and work to grow its impact and reach.</p>	<p>TRN-4a Implement the new transit network proposed in <i>Reimagine RTS</i> and work with RTS on complementary planning, coordination, and capital improvements, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Developing a bus stop hierarchy, with amenity inventory and inclusion standards for stops along the new network, including best options for “connection hub” installation at key transfer points and employment or activity centers</li> <li>– Identifying strategic areas that need additional bus layover and staging solutions, or that could benefit from right-of-way treatments like curb extensions, bus turn outs, transit lanes, and queue jumps</li> <li>– Assessing technical and capital requirements of transit signal priority with interconnected traffic controllers and vehicle detection and identifying which areas could benefit</li> <li>– Helping facilitate agreements between RTS and developers and/or owners of buildings near transit stops (e.g. allow for the use of restrooms for riders waiting for the bus and/or to help keep bus stops clear and accessible when it snows).</li> <li>– Improving the image, integration, and utilization of the Transit Center as a key community asset downtown.</li> </ul>	<p><b>City, RTS</b>, Monroe County, NYSDOT, Developers, Building and Property Owners, Downtown Stakeholders, RDDC, Community Partners</p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>TRN-4</b> <b>Implement a high-frequency transit network and work to grow its impact and reach.</b>	TRN-4b Encourage mixed-use and high-density residential development along high-frequency transit corridors.	<b>City</b> , Developers
	TRN-4c Work with shared mobility providers, RTS, and other community partners to identify and implement additional mobility options that improve multi-modal accessibility citywide, as well as into the broader region. These options could include expanded bikeshare (including e-bikes and e-scooters), carshare, and ride-hailing, as well as micro transit, personal mobility on demand, vanpools, etc. Where possible, these options should be planned and coordinated to extend the reach of transit, particularly in “community mobility zones” where RTS does not provide fixed route service.	City, RTS, Zagster, Shared Mobility Providers, Employers, Community Partners
	TRN-4d Monitor the progress of newly implemented transit corridors in order to identify the potential for expanding the high-frequency network, making existing high-frequency service even more frequent (e.g., 10-minute headways), implementing additional service improvements or developing higher intensity transit service/modes, where possible.	<b>City, RTS</b> , Community Partners

# E. TRANSPORTATION [TRN]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>TRN-5</b></p> <p><b>Achieve safe, multi-modal streets and eliminate traffic injuries and deaths through strategic traffic calming, community outreach and education, and enforcement.</b></p>	<p>TRN-5a Develop a multi-modal traffic safety initiative modeled on “vision zero” that provides guidance on how we should work together as a community to eliminate traffic injuries and deaths in Rochester.</p>	<p><b>City,</b> Monroe County, RTS, RCSD, Neighborhood Groups, Community Partners</p>
	<p>TRN-5b Identify streets that are overbuilt relative to current traffic volumes or desired speeds and redesign to improve multi-modal safety and accessibility. This could include cost-effective solutions like the elimination of alternate side street parking in areas where it could provide a traffic calming benefit. The idea of “self-enforcing design,” where the street design itself provides environmental cues to encourage drivers to drive at slower, safer speeds is key to development of the Rochester Street Design Guide. This approach helps to improve safety even as it also reduces the need for active traffic enforcement.</p>	<p><b>City,</b> Neighborhood Groups, Community Partners</p>
	<p>TRN-5c Target areas around schools, rec centers, libraries, trails/trail crossings, and parks for traffic calming efforts that help to reduce motor vehicle speeds such as street art projects, playful elements, welcoming murals and public art, speed humps, curb extensions, enhanced crosswalks, road diets, and changed crosswalk timers.</p>	<p><b>City,</b> RCSD, RPL, Monroe County, NYSDOT, Neighborhood Groups, Community Partners</p>
	<p>TRN-5d Increase education and outreach about the City’s traffic calming and BoulevArt policies and encourage more neighborhood groups, businesses, or other community groups to utilize and participate in these initiatives. Also work to link these initiatives with Healthi Kids’ play walks, story walks, and Play ROCs campaign activities, as well as Reconnect Rochester’s Complete Streets Makeover and other community traffic calming and street beautification efforts.</p>	<p><b>City, Healthi Kids, Reconnect Rochester,</b> Neighborhood Group, Community Partners</p>



**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>TRN-5</b> <b>Achieve safe, multi-modal streets and eliminate traffic injuries and deaths through strategic traffic calming, community outreach and education, and enforcement.</b>	TRN-5e Identify areas with traffic safety concerns and work with the Rochester Police Department, the recently created Rochester Traffic Violations Agency, and community partners to develop traffic enforcement and adjudication processes that that improve compliance with traffic safety laws, but don't unjustly burden low-income city residents.	<b>City</b> , Neighborhood Groups, Community Partners
	TRN-5f Collaborate on community-wide education campaigns, such as Drive 2B Better and Pace Car, that educate drivers (including truck and bus drivers), as well as cyclists and pedestrians about how to safely and responsibly "share the road."	City, Healthi Kids, Reconnect Rochester, Neighborhood Groups, Community Partners
	TRN-5g Work with the NY State Department of Motor Vehicles to improve driver safety and education materials on how to safely "share the road" and what their legal responsibilities are for how to interact with on-road bicycle facilities (i.e., not driving, stopping, or parking in bike lanes).	City, NYSDOT, Healthi Kids, Reconnect Rochester, Community Partners
	TRN-5h Continue and grow the City's summer recreation bicycle programming, safety education for youth and adults, and community rides. Also work to better link City recreation's bicycle programming and education work to other efforts (by City departments and community partners) to promote bicycle culture in Rochester.	<b>City</b> , Rochester Cycling Alliance, Community Partners
	TRN-5i Work with community partners to implement safe routes to school strategies that encourage students to walk or bike to school, and develop similar initiatives that create "safe routes to..." parks and recreation facilities, libraries, and other key community centers. community partners) to promote bicycle culture in Rochester.	City, RCSD, RPL, Healthi Kids, Funders, Parent Teacher Associations, Neighborhood Groups, Community Partners

# E. TRANSPORTATION [TRN]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>TRN-6</b></p> <p><b>Develop transportation demand management (TDM) and transportation access policies and initiatives that help encourage people to reduce drive-alone trips, particularly for workers and large employers.</b></p>	<p>TRN-6a Develop citywide or area specific parking inventory and study to inform TDM efforts that looks at various parking needs and opportunities, such as real-time parking, parking supply and need, pricing, metering areas, community/shared parking lots, etc.</p>	<p><b>City,</b> Community Partners</p>
	<p>TRN-6b Develop citywide or area-specific Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies, plans, or policies that help to shift drive-alone trips to more active, sustainable alternatives (e.g., walking, biking, transit, carpool, vanpool, etc.). TDM approaches may need to focus on specific areas of the city, such as downtown, or areas with constrained parking or anticipated development.</p>	<p><b>City,</b> RTS, GTC, Community Partners</p>
	<p>TRN-6c Integrate TDM strategies into the update and rewrite of the City's Zoning Code, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– A more flexible, demand responsive approach to automobile parking regulations; more provisions for bicycle parking, carshare parking, etc.; encouraging or requiring unbundling of parking from new development projects</li> <li>– Promotion of increased density and transit-supportive, mixed-use development</li> <li>– Potential requirements for site-specific TDM plans for new development that meets certain criteria, such as trip mitigation fees and plans, TDM measurement and reporting, etc.</li> </ul>	<p><b>City</b></p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>TRN-6</b> <b>Develop transportation demand management (TDM) and transportation access policies and initiatives that help encourage people to reduce drive-alone trips, particularly for workers and large employers.</b>	TRN-6d Work with existing employer-based TDM programs (e.g., at University of Rochester, Rochester Institute of Technology) to support their efforts and identify additional entities that could be good partners to implement TDM strategies.	City, RTS, GTC, UR/URMC, RIT, Large Employers, Community Partners
	TRN-6e Work to integrate equity and job access goals into local and regional TDM and transportation access efforts to help address unmet transportation needs and better connect low and moderate income people with good jobs without having to rely on a personal automobile to get to work.	<b>City</b> , RMAPI, RTS, GTC, Large Employers, Community Partners
	TRN-6f Expand the City's Employee-Assisted Housing Initiative to additional employers to increase city homeownership near employers and shorten commute times.	<b>City</b> , Employers, Lenders
	TRN-6g Explore the feasibility of creating one or several Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) that could coordinate TDM and transportation access activities across multiple large employers, institutions, or geographic areas. This should include analyzing the potential for a TDM/Mobility Coordinator position to staff the TMA and oversee the creation and day-to-day administration of various programs and incentives.	City, RTS, GTC, Large Employers, Community Partners

# 5

INITIATIVE AREA

# FOSTERING PROSPERITY + OPPORTUNITY

- A. ECONOMIC GROWTH**
- B. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**
- C. TOURISM**
- D. CITY + NEIGHBORHOOD PROMOTION**
- E. SMART CITY INNOVATIONS**





# A. ECONOMIC GROWTH

## INTRODUCTION

Rochester is at a critical point in its economic history. In the past, Downtown Rochester was the retail anchor of our entire region; commercial areas and small businesses that provided consumer goods and services were scattered throughout the city in vibrant, mixed-use small business districts. The decline of local industrial giants, macroeconomic shifts that are changing the way in which our country consumes goods and services, and decades of population decline and job sprawl have left our downtown and neighborhood business corridors with fewer people and businesses than they had in the past. Some neighborhood business corridors are still healthy, but many others are struggling to maintain or re-develop their market base as people, jobs, and retail have moved to the suburbs.

These changes over time require Rochester to reinvent itself as a vibrant and inclusive hub of opportunity in both downtown and across its diverse neighborhoods. **Rochester is pursuing aggressive and creative economic development strategies that are grounded in data and best practices from across the country. We must tap into our heritage of innovation and resilience in order to build a diverse, thriving, and equitable local economy.**

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Rochester has a rich legacy of innovation in science, technology, and manufacturing.
- Population loss and the decline of local industrial giants has negatively impacted the city and region.
- Reinvention requires creative and aggressive economic development strategies that are grounded in data and best practices, and that build on the city's unique assets.
- We need to focus on growing the number of businesses and employees located in Rochester, and prepare a skilled workforce that can help attract and retain businesses.
- Restoring Downtown Rochester as our region's economic core, revitalizing key neighborhood business corridors, and supporting the development of non-traditional businesses throughout the city are all important.
- Rochester continues to have a relatively strong manufacturing sector that is well positioned to grow in the developing field of advanced manufacturing.



## ROCHESTER DOWNTOWN INNOVATION ZONE

### ROCHESTER'S DOWNTOWN INNOVATION ZONE

Rochester Downtown Development Corporation recently pulled together several CEO's from a variety of innovation and creative class enterprises to discuss their renewed interest in Downtown. They explained that downtowns are highly kinetic, frictional and dynamic places that offer iconic neighborhoods, activated public spaces, and walkability. Buildings are packed with lofts and non-traditional work spaces, creating the proximity that innovators crave to transfer ideas and knowledge quickly and seamlessly. This was the basis for branding Rochester's Downtown Innovation Zone.

The Brookings Institution defines an innovation district as a "Geographic area where anchor institutions and companies cluster and connect with small firms, start-ups, business incubators and accelerators. Physically compact, transit-accessible, and technically wired, they offer mixed-use housing, office, and retail."

The Rochester DIZ was created in 2014 to promote emerging creative industries and businesses and to serve as a resource for launching and nurturing them.

## A. ECONOMIC GROWTH (CONTINUED)

### DOWNTOWN ROCHESTER AS A REGIONAL ECONOMIC CORE

Historically, Downtown Rochester was a regional hub for commerce, industry, and innovation. Decades of decline in the industrial sectors, however, have fundamentally changed not only Downtown Rochester, but downtowns in small to midsized legacy cities across the country. Weak market demand, decaying physical infrastructure, and population loss led to high levels of vacancy in downtown buildings.

However, in recent years, this trend has begun to reverse and reformulate. Innovative companies, particularly in the technology sectors, are locating and growing in Rochester's downtown, bringing with them a robust, and often young, workforce. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been invested in housing, renovation of commercial buildings, and streetscapes downtown. In addition, the ROC the Riverway initiative will unlock the unique and powerful asset that the Genesee River represents, changing the face of downtown.

The City of Rochester will continue to support efforts to position downtown as the economic hub of the Finger Lakes region, as outlined in the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council's Upstate Revitalization Initiative Plan, *United for Success*. Currently, the Rochester Downtown Development Corporation (RDDC) is tracking nearly 90 innovation and technology companies and 85 creative class entrepreneurs as part of a Downtown Innovation Zone (DIZ). Also located in the heart of the city are several existing and planned small business incubators and centers including NextCorps, Luminare, The Commissary, and Rochester Institute of Technology's (RIT) Center for Urban Entrepreneurship.

In addition to existing incubators and accelerators operating downtown, the City is working to support the creation of additional incubators connected to growing economic trends and local colleges and universities. For example, RIT is well known for its interactive game design and media development curriculum and is regarded as an industry leader. RDDC and RIT, along with others, have discussed the possibility of launching a gaming focused incubator powered by creative and technical competencies of graduates from area colleges and universities.

An investment in this kind of incubator would provide meaningful opportunities for startups locating and growing in downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. The City of Rochester is supporting this and similar efforts by serving as a community champion, advocating for increased State and Federal funding, and aligning its significant resources to support the growth and attraction of innovative companies to downtown.





## NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

While downtown economic development strategies are critically important to the city and the region, these efforts must also focus on neighborhood-based commercial districts. Decades of population and income decline have eroded markets for many of the small businesses that were traditionally situated in commercial corridors scattered throughout Rochester neighborhoods. These commercial corridors provided residents with consumer goods and services that are critical to sustaining vibrant urban neighborhoods. Abandonment of commercial and mixed-use buildings in some city neighborhoods has left behind blight, an absence of needed goods and services, and feelings of uncertainty or unease about the future.

An increase in essential neighborhood services within the commercial districts would have positive effects on all aspects of community development. For example, access to fresh and healthy food alternatives is commonly noted as lacking in many Rochester neighborhoods, particularly in low-income communities. This is largely due to secondary effects from the decline of good manufacturing jobs and the loss of population causing the relocation of area grocers and other private sector retailers to the suburbs where land is plentiful and the majority of family and community wealth is concentrated.



## A. ECONOMIC GROWTH (CONTINUED)

### NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS CONTINUED

Certainly, growing the population and resident incomes would help to turn the tide in our neighborhood commercial areas, but intentional focused support and interventions could also help stabilize and grow neighborhood commercial development. In addition to the providing goods and services to residents, neighborhood-based businesses tend to hire more employees from their communities, thus creating jobs where they are most needed. They also contribute to the walkability of a community, making healthier and sustainable transportation choices more viable for the average resident. **Expanding workforce development and entrepreneurial opportunities, particularly for low and moderate income households, will not only help to increase local incomes, it would also improve market conditions in high poverty neighborhoods.**

Small neighborhood businesses, while offering essential consumer services and jobs in the neighborhoods, often face challenges that keep them from being as profitable as possible, or from being successful at all. These challenges include the lack of access to capital, insufficient training and technical assistance, an absence of reliable market data, and increasing costs due to permitting and regulations.

Many of the city's neighborhood commercial corridors suffer from retail leakage, meaning that residents are spending money on consumer goods and services outside of the neighborhoods in which they live because the goods and services are not available in their neighborhood. This issue is exacerbated by disparities in access to transportation, meaning that many city residents



## NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS CONTINUED

must use public transit or other transportation networks to obtain staple food items and other goods and services from outside their neighborhood.

Running a small business, whether it be a restaurant, retail shop, or service provider, is limited to the capabilities of the individual, family, or small group of partners that own the business. Compared to the elaborate support network of a chain store or franchise operation, small businesses often struggle to provide sufficient open hours, have thin profit margins, and are not as resilient when faced with major setbacks. Yet they remain critical components of a community, both in terms of economic diversity and the scale and personal touch that is highly desirable to residents.

The [2019 Commercial Corridor Study](#) is a comprehensive study of market dynamics along selected neighborhood commercial corridors. This study provides an in-depth analysis of the markets, with emphasis on understanding the potential for increased investment in specific nodes along the corridors. The City of Rochester will use this tool to target investment into areas that are primed to sustain it, and will catalyze increased private investment. Findings are supported by the targeted investment approach of [Initiative Area 2, The Placemaking Plan](#).



# A. ECONOMIC GROWTH (CONTINUED)

## URBAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP + SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

Key strategies for economic development include fostering entrepreneurship and the sustainability of small businesses, both Downtown and in neighborhood commercial districts. As discussed previously, the Rochester economy has historically been dominated by a few industrial giants which employed tens of thousands of residents.

**Rochester must transform itself “from a company town to a town of companies”. More importantly, we must ensure that, as this transformation occurs, there is an explicit focus on supporting communities which have suffered from a history of both acute and structural racism that has been a barrier to new business support and financing.**

### COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING

In 2016, the Office of Community Wealth Building was created in City Hall to increase opportunities for both businesses and residents to participate in Rochester’s economic revival. The Office collaborates with financial institutions and organizations to make lending practices more accessible, develop new financial products, and assist community groups with establishing cultural-congruent resource pools and credit-based assets. The Office finds ways of promoting and educating residents about current City resources to help facilitate asset building, savings, and investments

### ACCESS TO CAPITAL

The City of Rochester prioritizes increasing access to capital and credit for entrepreneurs and small business owners as a means to accomplish local job and business creation. The City started Kiva Rochester, which provides 0% interest loans of up to \$10,000 to entrepreneurs via an innovative online crowdfunding platform, in an effort to expand business growth opportunities to historically disadvantaged communities. The City seeks out and supports innovative external methods of increasing capital access through micro-lending and other systems.

The City’s primary focus in expanding access to capital will come in the form of a technical assistance and training network. The goal of this network would be to empower new and existing businesses to develop viable business plans and the necessary skills to grow and prosper.

The City of Rochester is partnering with local and regional financial institutions to create a new financing vehicle housed within the Rochester Economic Development Corporation (REDCO). This initiative focuses on providing early-stage commercial predevelopment funding in order to allow for traditionally difficult projects to succeed. This investment is guided by the 2019 City of Rochester Commercial Corridor Study, and focuses on high-impact neighborhood projects that serve as the anchor for increased development in neighborhood districts.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

“Focusing on small local businesses is important here so the money actually stays in Rochester.”

## URBAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP + SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT CONTINUED

### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE + TRAINING COORDINATION

Rochester has long suffered from a fragmentation of services, separation of agencies and organizations, challenges with data sharing, and lack of systems integration. In the entrepreneurship and small business development ecosystem, these challenges result in a lack of closed-loop referrals, disjointed and inconsistent service delivery, and potentially viable entrepreneurs falling through the cracks. Conversely, it also results in entrepreneurs launching businesses haphazardly and without the proper training and supports, particularly in low-income areas of the city.

In discussions with representatives of local financial institutions, a common theme that emerged was

that the pipeline of businesses qualified to access traditional commercial financing is weak. **To build a stronger pipeline of qualified businesses, the City of Rochester is leading an initiative to build a stronger and more coordinated network of service providers focused on technical assistance, training, and mentorship opportunities for urban entrepreneurs and existing business owners.**

This initiative focuses on connecting service providers through systems integration, shared performance management, the creation of a central hub of information and referrals, and increased funding to support “Navigator/Advocates” to assist entrepreneurs with accessing services.



## A. ECONOMIC GROWTH (CONTINUED)

### URBAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP + SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT CONTINUED

#### OTHER START-UP ASSISTANCE STRATEGIES

Providing low cost incubator space and pop-up opportunities could be an important support to entrepreneurs with good business ideas but who lack experience and/or the equity needed to leverage investment from financial institutions to start a business and establish a presence in a traditional storefront. By having the opportunity to test marketing services and products on a small scale, without the need to enter into loan and lease agreements before knowing there is market interest, entrepreneurs can reduce their chances of failure as they work to scale up, or adjust their business plan to better align with their market.

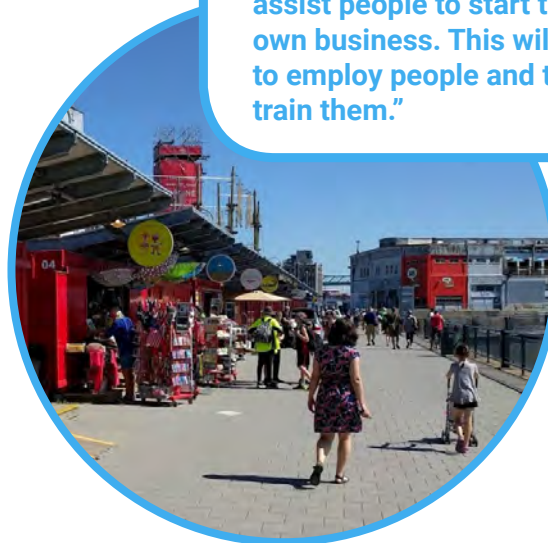
The option of starting a business from a home allows an entrepreneur a low-cost opportunity to build a business to a point where it is successful enough to move to a commercial space.

Establishing a home-based business, or home occupation, is subject to the City Zoning Code and NYS Building Code, primarily to preserve the residential character of the home and avoid the encroachment of commercial activities into residential neighborhoods.

There may also be opportunities for the City and/or development partners to create small clusters of temporary or low-cost structures, such as shipping containers, to house start-up retail and restaurant operations. For example, establishing this kind of cluster in Downtown could be a strategic complement to The Commissary in Sibley Square as food purveyors “graduate” from a stall in the food court to a somewhat larger, longer-term lease in a start-up cluster. If the business continues to grow and its market looks promising, it could “graduate” once again to a traditional storefront somewhere else in the city.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

“Support businesses and assist people to start their own business. This will help to employ people and to help train them.”



**This pipeline approach, which could be assisted all along by the City’s business assistance programs, innovative lending partners, and the community’s robust business support network, is a key strategy for a relatively weak market where the cost of entry into the marketplace is cost-prohibitive for many great product and service ideas.**

It is an approach taken by other cities to nurture businesses while creating unique shopping and food experiences in a Downtown setting. It is reflective of the ever-changing world of retail and restaurants, where a unique shopping and dining experience is key to those businesses competing with online shopping and the convenience of suburban commercial areas. It is also reflective of an evolving economy where food trucks, retail trucks, and pop-up spaces provide a lower-cost and flexible model for entrepreneurs. Fortuitously, these non-traditional models have a high appeal for urbanists and younger generations.

## URBAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP + SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT CONTINUED

### INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

The City of Rochester and its partners will work toward making explicit and sustained efforts to ensure that all entrepreneurs have the opportunity to access services and providers that reflect the economic demographic, linguistic, cultural, and market realities of the City of Rochester.

**The City recently adopted the most aspirational minority and women-owned business enterprise (MWBE) goals of any municipality in New York State, setting targets of 30% across procurement, workforce utilization, professional contracting, and more. This is an important step to ensuring that historically disadvantaged businesses have access to contracting opportunities with the city.**

### ROCHESTER PUBLIC MARKET – ROCHESTER’S OLDEST SMALL BUSINESS INCUBATOR

Located in Northeast Rochester since 1905, but continuously in operation since 1827, the Rochester Public Market is open year-round on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, as well as numerous Sundays and weekday evenings seasonally and for special events.

Named “America’s Favorite Market” in 2010, the public market is visited by nearly 3 million people annually, used by more than 1,000 vendors throughout the year, and constitutes the most diverse and unique shopping district in the city. It attracts people with a wide range of ages, races, and ethnicities, including recent immigrants whose primary language is not English, and tourists. The most famous business to get its start at the market is Wegmans.

Demand at the market is strong. The recently completed Public Market Improvement Project developed space for additional vendors, as well as expanded programming and special events. Other planned improvements include a commercial kitchen and facilities for more small scale food processors and other food-related businesses. Recent improvements at the market and surrounding Market District have spurred over \$30 million in private investment, as well as numerous new year-round businesses and community development projects, including restaurants, bakeries, coffee roasters, artists and artisans, a brewery, micro distillery, and housing.

## A. ECONOMIC GROWTH (CONTINUED)

### MANUFACTURING LEGACY + FUTURE

Despite the reductions of the big three, Kodak, Xerox, and Bausch + Lomb, Rochester still has a strong manufacturing sector that continues to thrive and carry on our manufacturing heritage. With the major portion of Rochester's industrial uses located in the northwest quadrant, this area of the city is one of the most robust employment areas in the region. This area alone includes more than 100 companies that perform various industrial activities such as advanced contract manufacturing, precision machining, tool and die, precision optics and injection molding, and sheet metal fabrication. A significant number of these businesses are located in the area bordered by Ridgeway Avenue to the north, Lee Road to the west, Dewey Avenue to the east, and Lyell Avenue to the south.

Eastman Business Park (EBP), also in the northwest, is undergoing a revival that is attracting new industries to Rochester. EBP is a 1,200-acre campus with over 16 million square feet of manufacturing, distribution, lab and office space, including some properties in the Town of Greece. EBP is the home of almost 100 companies, employing over 6,000 people, many of them responsible for the development of our nation's next generation technologies in the areas of Energy Storage, Chemical Manufacturing, Roll-to-Roll Manufacturing, and Photonics. Additionally, EBP offers a unique manufacturing infrastructure, including the private utilities and onsite water and wastewater management system.

Manufacturing is in the midst of a major transformation to "Advanced Manufacturing" which encompasses all aspects of the value chain from concept to product output and relies heavily on technology. This form of manufacturing involves integrating innovative technologies and methodologies in both products and processes. Products will have higher levels of design and innovation, while processes will include use of CAD/CAM/CAE, rapid prototyping, robotics and 3-D printing.



According to Greater Rochester Enterprise (GRE), the "Greater Rochester region has world-class advanced manufacturing capability, testing capability and intellectual horsepower." GRE boasts that with our manufacturing base, highly-skilled workforce, and low-cost operating environment, we have a strong regional competency for advanced manufacturing enterprises such as radio-frequency identification, sustainable packaging, drone technology, software development, and data.

The City of Rochester is a designated "Manufacturing Community" by the U.S. Department of Commerce under the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP) program. The IMCP program's goal is to accelerate the resurgence of manufacturing and create a competitive climate for communities to attract manufacturing jobs and investment. When selected, the statement from the U.S. Department of Commerce was that "the Greater Rochester region, led by the City of Rochester, is bringing new life to manufacturing business parks and expanding its workforce development efforts to maintain its historic lead in precision machining and optics, photonics and imaging." The regional strategies for manufacturing revitalization seeks to advance and strengthen existing advanced manufacturing clusters of precision manufacturing and optics/photonics/imaging. It builds on the region's leadership in advanced manufacturing, our strong higher educational system and training programs, and our extensive physical infrastructure.



## OPPORTUNITY ZONES

The Qualified Opportunity Zones Program, established in the U.S. Tax Cut and Jobs Act of 2017, represents a unique opportunity to drive investment into low-income communities in Rochester. The program first created Opportunity Zones: low-moderate income census tracts designated by the U.S. Department of Treasury. There are 18 Opportunity Zones within the Rochester city limits, as shown on the map at right.

The program will encourage investment in Opportunity Zones through major tax incentives available to investors that roll capital gains into Opportunity Funds – investment vehicles that hold 90% or greater of their assets in Opportunity Zone census tracts. These investors will have the ability to realize invested capital gains without paying traditional capital gains taxes, and distressed communities will benefit from increased levels of investment in housing, commercial property, and businesses.

The City of Rochester, and municipalities across the U.S., have a crucial role to play in guiding investment to projects and neighborhoods that will benefit from the positive impacts of new investment. The City will work with the business community, private investors, and other relevant stakeholders to market the program, identify potential projects, and couple Opportunity Zone investment with other economic development tools such as loans and grants.

## BUILDING AN EXPORT ECONOMY

Since experiencing declines in regional exports following the decline of Kodak, Xerox, and Bausch & Lomb, Rochester's exports have begun to improve. Exports are critical to bringing new dollars into our regional economy, which in turn fuels economic growth and expansion. To better support export industries and improve the resiliency of our



### PUBLIC COMMENT

**“Rochester should do everything within its power to promote business. A business is the reason why I live here. I then purchased a home in the city, pay taxes, and spend my disposable income locally. Business is the engine that will drive the success of the city.”**

economy, it is important to foster local business development in industries offering tangible as well as intellectual goods and services. Decreasing our reliance on imports by sourcing goods and services regionally is vital to creating a stronger economic ecosystem – creating more local jobs and enabling residents to become self-sufficient in the process.

## A. ECONOMIC GROWTH (CONTINUED)

### ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS

Anchor institutions are large not-for-profit, government, higher education, and healthcare institutions that are rooted in the local community and unlikely to move due to significant investments such as a built up campus. Anchors are usually the biggest employers in a region and large purchasers of goods and services. Anchors are also typically chartered to benefit their local community and have a vested interest in improving their local economy. Unlike for-profit corporations, these institutions tend to be more resistant to economic change and are likely to remain in the community for many generations to come. All these factors make them a reliable partner for long-term local economic development strategies. Rochester's anchor institutions include:

#### **THE UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER (UR)**

In addition to being a leader in research, education and medicine, UR is the largest employer in the City of Rochester, and one of the top 10 largest employers in New York. In addition to UR's campuses, including its River Campus, Strong Memorial Hospital Campus, and the downtown Eastman School of Music, UR includes Highland Hospital, the Memorial Art Gallery, and George Eastman Museum.

#### **MONROE COMMUNITY COLLEGE (MCC)**

MCC's main campus is in Brighton, but they also operate a second campus in Downtown Rochester which recently moved into newly renovated space adjacent to Kodak Tower. MCC provides accredited and affordable college credits, certifications, and degrees.





## ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS CONTINUED

### ROCHESTER REGIONAL HEALTH (RRH)

RRH is the second largest employer in the Region, operating St. Mary’s Hospital and Rochester General Hospital, both located within the city. They also operate several other hospitals in Western New York.

### ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (RIT)

While its main campus is located in Henrietta, RIT has a significant impact on the city by bringing opportunities for education, employment, and innovation to the region.

### OTHER AREA COLLEGES

St. John Fisher College, Nazareth College, Roberts Wesleyan College, SUNY Brockport (including downtown’s Rochester Educational Opportunity Center), SUNY Geneseo, and other small colleges dot the Rochester region.

### THE CITY + OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The City of Rochester is an institutional anchor with 3,500 employees in several hundred different job titles each making a difference in the quality of life for city residents. Other government institutions like Monroe County, New York State, and other local towns and villages are important anchors in the Rochester area.

Cities and economic development agencies have long understood the importance that anchors can play in driving the local economy, particularly with the commercialization of research and university-born startup companies. However, in recent years, a more proactive and holistic approach to anchor partnerships has begun to take hold in the United States.

## A. ECONOMIC GROWTH (CONTINUED)

### ANCHOR INSTITUTION STRATEGY

The ‘anchor institution strategy’ is an economic development strategy that was largely pioneered by The Democracy Collaborative, a think tank based in Washington, DC and Cleveland, Ohio. It recognized the immense economic development potential that large institutions have for their local communities, and puts special emphasis on opportunities to build local wealth and reduce economic inequality. In their 2013 report, The Anchor Dashboard, The Democracy Collaborative identified 12 focus areas in which anchors can maximize their impact on their local economy. Core to all strategies is encouraging anchor leadership to embrace public goals and new measurement practices to help drive accountability and action.

In late 2014, the reports about the Evergreen Cooperatives served as an inspiration to Rochester City Hall and Mayor Lovely Warren contracting with The Democracy Collaborative to conduct a feasibility study to determine if the strategy could be replicated in Rochester. The 2016 report, Rochester Market Driven Community Cooperatives: A Feasibility and Implementation Plan, outlined great potential for the strategy in Rochester and reported on the overwhelming support from local anchor institutions and community stakeholders. The Democracy Collaborative suggested exploring more services-based businesses which require less startup capital and outlined opportunities to facilitate conversions of existing traditional businesses to a worker-cooperative structure.

### THE EVERGREEN COOPERATIVES

The Democracy Collaborative was a central force in developing the Greater University Circle Initiative in Cleveland, an anchor based strategy launched in 2005. The anchor institutions, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland Clinic, and University Hospitals are close neighbors, surrounded by neighborhoods of high poverty and historic disinvestment.

The Cleveland Foundation convened the anchor leaders and local government stakeholders with the help of The Democracy Collaborative at a pivotal moment with more than \$3 billion in capital projects planned within the area. The group came to the consensus that it was imperative to break down the barriers to economic inclusion for neighborhoods just outside their gates, and that they needed to change the way they did business to achieve this. The top executives agreed to formalize the partnership, set collective goals, and meet regularly to drive accountability.

One of the more prominent strategies that came out of the Greater University Circle was the Evergreen Cooperatives. This not-for-profit holding company owns a portfolio of worker-owned cooperative businesses. These businesses were startups based on the procurement needs of the anchor institutions who had previously been purchasing goods and services from outside the region. The anchors redirected their purchasing to support these new companies through a “buy local” component of the overall strategy. The companies are also chartered with a mission to employ residents from surrounding high poverty neighborhoods. Under the cooperative model, the employees have an opportunity to become part owners of the company with a stake in any profits.

Today, Evergreen has an industrial laundry, a 12-acre hydroponic agriculture facility, and a solar panel and LED installation company that collectively employ over 200 people.

## OWN ROCHESTER

In late 2016, the City and anchor stakeholders founded a not-for-profit holding company, Rochester Market Driven Community Corporation, which proceeded to launch an LED and solar energy installation business called ENEROC in the spring of 2017. In spring 2018, the not-for-profit, rebranded as OWN Rochester, launched its second business, a custodial company serving Wegmans Food Markets. Anchor representatives continue to be some of the most active members of the OWN Rochester board and continue to support the cooperative companies with contracts. Own Rochester is implementing a strategic plan to build its capacity and continue to launch and support a growing portfolio of businesses.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

**“Involve established local employers and local educational institutions, to see what niches need to be filled. Recruit high school and college students, early on, to be trained for those niches. Employers should offer education incentives.”**

## A. ECONOMIC GROWTH (CONTINUED)

### BOLSTERING THE LOCAL WORKFORCE FOR NEW BUSINESS ATTRACTION

Rochester’s renowned colleges and universities constantly produce remarkable graduates, many of whom relocate to larger markets such as New York City, San Francisco, and Boston to pursue employment opportunities. Although recent studies have shown that Rochester is retaining its young, educated residents at stronger rates than most other cities in the country, the City must prioritize this regional talent base to nurture the burgeoning technology sector. Currently, the City is building partnerships with RIT, the University of Rochester, Monroe Community College, and other area colleges to inform students about career opportunities available to them across the Greater Rochester Community.

An educated and skilled workforce is imperative for attracting new businesses. Technology sector companies such as Datto, CloudChekr, and Live Tiles chose to make Rochester the base of their operations and rely on the skills of the local workforce. Rochester offers potential employers and employees a competitive cost of living that is significantly lower than other markets in terms of commercial rents, housing, and other aspects. The low cost of living, coupled with a strong regional talent pool available from area colleges and universities, makes Rochester a prime location for companies to thrive. See [Initiative Area 5-Section B, Workforce Development](#) for more information.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

“I would love to see more women and minority owned or start-up businesses receive more help/support and funding/grants. Also expand on Kiva funding.”



### MAJOR ECONOMIC + INFRASTRUCTURE OPPORTUNITIES

The map at right highlights some major economic and infrastructure opportunities in Rochester, both current and near future. It represents a balance of downtown and neighborhood investments as well as public and private projects. It also illustrates the importance of high frequency transit service that

connects neighborhoods to downtown and other employment centers. Smaller scale projects and development opportunities can be found at the City of Rochester's website for [Project and Plans](#) and [Strategic Sites](#).



Major Investment Corridors



Major Investment Areas



Neighborhood Opportunity Corridors\*



Reimagine RTS Frequent Network



Major Employment Centers

\*Per the 2019 Commercial Corridors Study



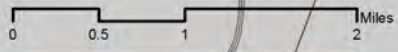
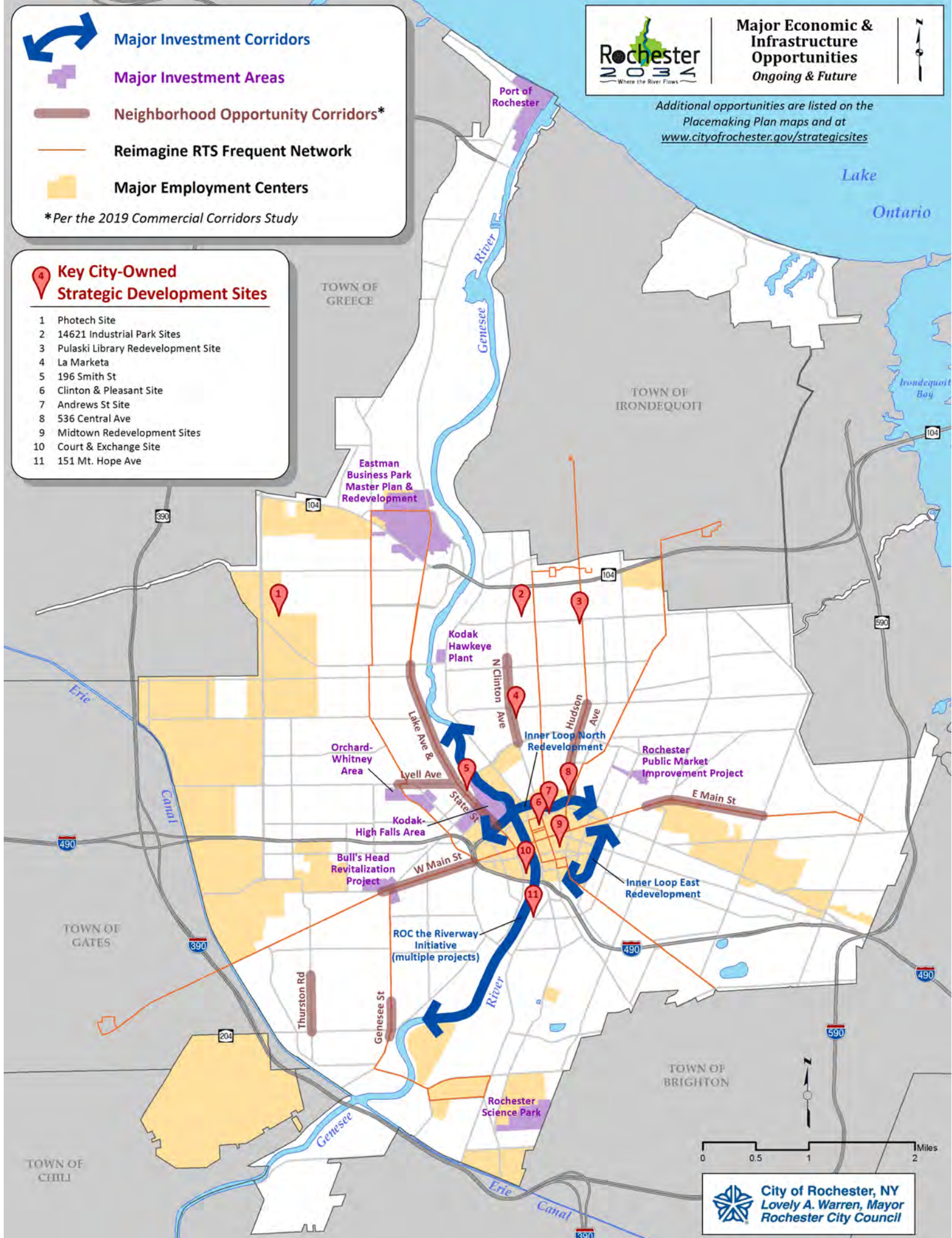
**Key City-Owned Strategic Development Sites**


- 1 Photech Site
- 2 14621 Industrial Park Sites
- 3 Pulaski Library Redevelopment Site
- 4 La Marketa
- 5 196 Smith St
- 6 Clinton & Pleasant Site
- 7 Andrews St Site
- 8 536 Central Ave
- 9 Midtown Redevelopment Sites
- 10 Court & Exchange Site
- 11 151 Mt. Hope Ave



**Major Economic & Infrastructure Opportunities**  
Ongoing & Future

Additional opportunities are listed on the Placemaking Plan maps and at [www.cityofrochester.gov/strategicsites](http://www.cityofrochester.gov/strategicsites)



 **City of Rochester, NY**  
Lovely A. Warren, Mayor  
Rochester City Council

# A. ECONOMIC GROWTH [ECN]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>ECN-1</b>  <b>Attract businesses to Downtown Rochester through advocacy, incentives, and marketing.</b></p>	<p>ECN-1a Coordinate advocacy and align resources to support the growth and attraction of new companies to Downtown Rochester.</p>	<p>RDDC, City, County, GRE, Chamber of Commerce, State + Federal Governments</p>
	<p>ECN-1b Leverage the ROC The Riverway initiative to market downtown Rochester as a vibrant community with waterfront amenities and cultural programming.</p>	<p>City, County, GRE, Development Partners</p>
	<p>ECN-1c Continue the public/private partnership that defines the Downtown Innovation Zone for adding real economic value to the city and the regional economy.</p>	<p>City, RDDC, Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce, GRE</p>
	<p>ECN-1d Support the initiative, sponsored by the Rochester Downtown Development Corporation and RIT, to create a video game development incubator, leveraging talented graduates of local colleges and universities, to provide opportunity for startups to locate and grow in Downtown.</p>	<p>RDDC, RIT, City, County, Development Partners</p>
	<p>ECN-1e Partner with Rochester-based companies to help structure a strong business case for use in marketing downtown, then develop outreach strategies targeting major markets and professional networks</p>	<p>City, GRE, Local Businesses</p>
	<p>ECN-1f Develop strategies to create increased demand for storefront spaces in downtown.</p>	<p>City, RDDC</p>
	<p>ECN-1g Explore the idea of offering incentives to building owners to subdivide their building into commercial condominiums as a way to attract the commercial market that would prefer to own their space.</p>	<p>City, Building Owners</p>



**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>ECN-2</b> <b>Support existing and help/incentivize new neighborhood businesses.</b>	ECN-2a Implement the recommendations of the 2019 City of Rochester Commercial Corridor Study.	<b>City</b> , Neighborhood Businesses and Business Associations, Community Partners
	ECN-2b Guided by the 2019 City of Rochester Commercial Corridor Study, create a new financing vehicle housed within the Rochester Economic Development Corporation (REDCO) aimed at providing predevelopment funds for small businesses. This investment should focus on high-impact neighborhood projects that will serve as anchors for further development in neighborhood districts.	City, REDCO, Investment Partners
	ECN-2c Continue the efforts to reinforce and grow the Rochester Public Market as a community, local business, and entrepreneurial incubation anchor in Rochester, particularly for businesses in craft production, small scale food processing, and food service.	City
	ECN-2d Assess and reduce administrative and regulatory barriers for small business development and support.	City
	ECN-2e Continue to explore creative and innovative ways to finance businesses, focusing on providing grants, below-market interest rates on loans, and large-scale economic development incentives through programs like the SBA 504 lending program.	<b>City</b>

# A. ECONOMIC GROWTH [ECN]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>ECN-2</b></p> <p><b>Support existing and help/incentivize new neighborhood businesses.</b></p>	<p>ECN-2f Continue to support and expand programs such as Kiva Rochester and other innovative community-based methods for increasing capital access such as micro-lending, shared assets, and resource pools.</p>	<p><b>City, Kiva Rochester</b></p>
	<p>ECN-2g Collaborate with traditional financial institutions to make lending practices more accessible and culturally inclusive.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>ECN-2h Raise awareness of new and existing financial products and strategies available to residents and small businesses.</p>	<p><b>City, Businesses</b></p>
	<p>ECN-2i Develop and support community and business promotional initiatives like Shop the ROC, Small Business Week, and Shop Small Businesses campaigns.</p>	<p><b>City, Anchor Institutions, Chamber of Commerce, Celebrate City Living Coalition, Business Associations</b></p>
	<p>ECN-2j Foster interest in neighborhood businesses as part of the Celebrate City Living initiative.</p>	<p><b>City, Celebrate City Living Coalition, Business Associations</b></p>
	<p>ECN-2k Offer businesses a stronger and more coordinated network of service providers focused on technical assistance, training, and mentorship opportunities. Focus on connecting service providers through systems integration, shared performance management, navigating multiple levels of bureaucracy for development projects, the creation of a central hub of information and referrals, and increased funding to support “Navigators/ Advocates” to assist in accessing services.</p>	<p><b>City, Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce, Business Support Organizations</b></p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>ECN-2</b> <b>Support existing and help/incentivize new neighborhood businesses.</b>	ECN-2l Consider having district managers in targeted corridors that would help recruit businesses to create a better store mix, and provide technical assistance to existing businesses. District managers could also be tasked to market the district by regularly creating events , organizing business promos, implementing social media campaigns, etc.	<b>City</b> , business associations
	ECN-2m Expand the Land Bank’s focus to include commercial properties in support of strengthening neighborhood commercial districts.	<b>Land Bank</b> , Developers
<b>ECN-3</b> <b>Support entrepreneurship as the foundation of business development.</b>	ECN-3a Support and grow existing incubator and small business programs and initiatives, such as NextCorps, Luminate, RIT Center for Urban Entrepreneurship, and the Commissary.	City, County, NYS Empire State Development, RDDC
	ECN-3b Recognize home-based businesses as starting points of the business development lifecycle and provide resources and support to those with the potential to grow and eventually own and-or occupy community-based commercial structures.	<b>City</b> , Home Based Businesses
	ECN-3c Support existing efforts to incubate and accelerate startups conceived on local college and university campuses and make the business case for them to remain and grow in Rochester instead of fleeing to larger markets.	<b>City</b> , Anchor Institutions, GRE, Chamber of Commerce
	ECN-3d Create more opportunities for pipeline business development by allowing pop-up commercial uses, mobile vending, temporary land uses, and business support for home-based businesses, thereby providing business incubator and test marketing at low costs.	<b>City</b> , developers, business support organizations, banks

# A. ECONOMIC GROWTH [ECN]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>ECN-4</b></p> <p>Drive job-generating economic development to city neighborhoods.</p>	<p>ECN-4a Assemble and actively market City-owned vacant lots in low-demand housing market areas for economic development in sectors such as the food and beverage industry, manufacturing, medical services, etc.</p>	<p><b>City, GRE</b></p>
	<p>ECN-4b Maintain a list of strategic development sites in Rochester, actively market them, and consider providing a degree of pre-approval for generic site concept plans.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
<p><b>ECN-5</b></p> <p>Improve opportunities for historically disadvantaged businesses through business development programming and by providing access to contracting opportunities with the City of Rochester.</p>	<p>ECN-5a Support MWBEs by more intentionally producing and distributing information about certification, contracting requirements, and other aspects of MWBE regulation.</p>	<p><b>City, Businesses</b></p>
	<p>ECN-5b Leverage business accelerator strategies and programs to assist MWBEs' progression from sub-contractors to prime contractors.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>ECN-5c Ensure loan and grant-making processes are equitable and responsive to the needs of all cultures, ethnicities, and abilities.</p>	<p><b>City, Businesses</b></p>
	<p>ECN-5d Work to make procurement processes and activities more equitable and responsive to the needs of all cultures, ethnicities, and abilities.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>ECN-6</b> <b>Establish a culture of collaboration among Anchor Institutions in order to better drive positive economic change locally.</b>	ECN-6a Create a formalized anchor collaborative network in the Greater Rochester region. Draft goals and strategies for anchor collaboration including support for OWN Rochester Companies, shifting procurement streams to support local businesses, hiring employees from low-income communities, community-building activities, supporting local homeownership, and more.	<b>City</b> OWN Rochester Anchor Institutions
	ECN-6b Define the City’s role as an Anchor Institution in the Rochester community. Develop an anchor mission, and participate in the collaborative network as both a convener and a member.	<b>City</b>
	ECN-6c Continue to partner with regional institutions, including NY State agencies, to identify opportunities for establishing/growing a presence in Downtown or somewhere else in the city.	<b>City</b> , NYS, Anchor Institutions
	ECN-6d Attract students and Anchor Institution workers into local businesses with targeted welcome signs, home team recognition/specials, displayed school colors/mascots, etc.	Colleges and Universities, Anchor Institutions, City, Local businesses

# A. ECONOMIC GROWTH [ECN]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>ECN-7</b></p> <p><b>Focus on market research, data, and analysis to drive economic development decisions and programming.</b></p>	<p>ECN-7a     Adopt evidence-based methods and approaches to analyzing citywide economic/market trends, commercial dynamics, and economic development opportunities on an on-going basis.</p>	<p>City, GRE</p>
	<p>ECN-7b     Utilize market research to develop resources in response to emerging markets. For example, conduct a retail and consumer service leakage analysis to better understand retail and service market opportunities and track key market indicators at the neighborhood and city levels.</p>	<p>City, GRE</p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>ECN-8</b> <b>Build on Rochester's competitive edge in advanced manufacturing, working to grow this sector locally and help more city residents to work in it.</b>	ECN-8a Maintain contact with manufacturing business owners and operators through regular customer visits/correspondence and identify opportunities to help grow their business and expand hiring of city residents.	<b>City</b>
	ECN-8b Inventory and actively market available industrial land and vacant buildings. Be prepared with a current and data-rich list of sites for when opportunities arise for new companies to move in the city or for existing companies in the city to expand in a new location.	City, GRE
	ECN-8c Maintain partner relationships for attracting new businesses to the city.	City, GRE, Monroe County Economic Development, Empire State Development, Local Banks and Professional Firms

# B. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

## INTRODUCTION

Increasing employment and raising incomes of residents in the workforce are top priorities for the City of Rochester. Unemployment and underemployment have negative impacts to individuals as well as an entire community. Conversely, high-quality jobs lead to financial stability, high educational attainment, low crime, and increased health and well-being of residents. This Section outlines strategies for increasing the number of and access to quality lasting jobs in the community. Rochester's workforce must be ready to innovate, create, and participate in a competitive economy.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Increasing employment and raising incomes of residents are top priorities for Rochester.
- The skills and readiness of the city's workforce must match the kinds of jobs available.
- Successful training programs exist in the community today, but often struggle to connect to potential participants.
- Local workforce development partners must work together and stay current to best respond to a competitive and constantly evolving job market.
- Workforce development efforts should constantly strive to be inclusive and responsive to underserved populations.
- Rochester's immigrant and refugee populations contribute to a diverse, entrepreneurial workforce.

## WORKFORCE AS A TOOL FOR BUSINESS ATTRACTION + RETENTION

The quality of Rochester's workforce is fundamental to attracting economic development, sustaining existing businesses, and achieving individual and regional prosperity. Over the past several decades, the rise of technology and automation has fundamentally changed the way in which work is conducted.

Historically, Rochester was a hub of manufacturing and production; it was not only possible, but common for a person with a high school education to secure a well-paying job that would adequately provide for a family. However, economic forces on the national and regional level, the decline of unions, and other factors have combined to create an economy in which well-paying employment requires skills and knowledge more substantial than a basic high school education can provide.

As Rochester's economy, and that of the region as a whole, becomes more focused on technology, particularly optics, photonics, and imaging, the City of Rochester and its partner organizations have a crucial role to play in building a competent workforce that can meet increased labor demand. As we build a competent and well-positioned workforce, it is imperative that we promote competency for business attraction and foster connections between workforce and employers.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

**"Involve established local employers and local educational institutions, to see what niches need to be filled. Recruit HS and college students, early on, to be trained for those niches."**





## B. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT (CONTINUED)

### LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

The following are workforce development efforts that are having a positive impact on our community. A more comprehensive list of programs and resources can be found [here](#).

#### FINGER LAKES REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (FLREDC)

The FLREDC is the State-managed Economic Development Council for the Rochester region. It provides financial, technical, and strategic support to a number of local workforce development programs. The FLREDC also helps local programs by providing essential data and creating connections that can help secure external funding for initiatives.

#### MONROE COMMUNITY COLLEGE (MCC)

MCC is an important local leader, partner, and resource for economic and workforce development. MCC was ranked by Washington Monthly as one of the 12 most “innovative colleges for adult learners” in 2017 because it is “on the cutting edge of making college more responsive to changes in the labor market.” And the college is nationally known for its data-driven approach to monitoring changes in the regional economy, measuring regional skills gaps, working with firms to develop new training programs to fill those gaps, and measuring the economic impact of its academic programs and certificates.

MCC’s Economic and Workforce Development Center maintains a database of over 2,400 local businesses that it engages to better understand the types of positions that open and skills that are needed, publishes research on local economic development needs and opportunities, and provides real time information about the regional labor market for four workforce clusters – advanced manufacturing, applied technologies, health care,



and information and computer technology. MCC is active on the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council and MCC leadership and staff partner with multiple local institutions on a broad range of initiatives to better train and connect local residents with good jobs.

#### SUNY BROCKPORT / ROCHESTER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CENTER (REOC)

SUNY Brockport manages the REOC in Downtown Rochester. This center focuses on developing skills for college students and pre-college students. REOC targets populations who are at a disadvantage when applying for school or jobs. The program offers close guidance to students as they navigate a traditional college program, a trade or certificate program, or learn skills that help apply for school, work in a job, or set personal goals. Tuition-free classes are also available to students in order to help transition students into an academic setting.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

“Can we document, coordinate and then communicate all of the various job training programs? Can we ask businesses what skills they need and then focus the training on those skills?”

## LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES CONTINUED

### OPERATION TRANSFORMATION ROCHESTER (OTR)

OTR is an employment readiness training program that assists program participants with the development of job and life skills through employment training, educational opportunities, and mentorship. OTR connects job seekers to area employers, specialized training programs, and sustainable employability. Participants can utilize resume building, job search assistance, and community resource referral services to enhance their employability and access new employment opportunities.

In order for participants to succeed in workforce development training, it is often necessary to first focus on basic workforce readiness skills, such as ones taught through OTR. Program participants in OTR will be connected to additional skills training upon graduation, rather than focusing primarily on job placement. This will ensure that participants are equipped with the necessary skills to secure well-paying employment.

### YOUNG ADULTS MANUFACTURER TRAINING EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (YAMTEP)

Designed for individuals older than 19 that have already completed the OTR program, YAMTEP is a not-for-profit organization that trains young adults and provides skills for jobs in manufacturing, health services, and food services. This 90-day program helps individuals to bridge skill gaps for entry level employment, and help integrate them into stable employment. YAMTEP collaborates with a number of stakeholders including the City of Rochester and Rochester Works, as well as with over 30 employers that perform interviews with students who complete the program.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

“Support job training programs that have effective linkages with employers.”

## TRANSITIONAL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

In 2015, Albuquerque launched the "There's a Better Way" program, which provides panhandlers and those experiencing employment instability with a paid opportunity to serve their community. The program pays individuals an hourly wage to work on litter cleanup teams throughout the city. The program has been a model for cities across the country, including Syracuse.

Programs like this target residents who face a housing and employment crisis a stepping stone to long-term opportunities. Providing low-skill, short term jobs can provide confidence, work experience, and access to services, which can all lead to stable employment in the future. These programs help connect participants to resources such as long-term employment programs, housing services, and mental health and substance abuse services. Offering panhandlers, the homeless, and other residents a paying job can be a catalyst for long term stability and dignity.

## B. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT (CONTINUED)

### LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES CONTINUED

#### URBAN FELLOWS

The City of Rochester's Urban Fellows Program provides talented graduate and undergraduate students an introduction to the governance, operations, and administration of City government. Through a combination of work experience, seminars, trainings, volunteer service, and tours, students are provided a unique opportunity to learn about City government, and develop skills that can help them to achieve employment in similar environments.

#### ROCHESTERWORKS!

The Federal Government requires states to designate Local Workforce Development Boards. In Rochester, the board has been delegated to RochesterWorks!. The Board acts as a one-stop career center where residents can get connected with the resources they need. Residents are directed to career services including job search and placement assistance, individual and group counseling and career planning, internships, youth services, and English language classes. Residents can also find training services includes job skills training and general adult education classes. RochesterWorks! provides a unique set of customized services to businesses and job seekers at little-to-no cost, preparing a skilled workforce and connecting them with opportunities in our region.

#### REJOBS

The Rochester Environmental Job Training Program, or ReJobs, is a federally funded program for underemployed and unemployed city residents. This eight-week program is a comprehensive, multi-partner effort designed to lead to sustainable, long-term employment. It is intended to improve the opportunities for city residents to share in the economic benefits derived from environmental cleanup projects.

Successful applicants to the ReJob program are provided life skills and remedial education training to foster self-sufficiency, in addition to training certifications needed for jobs in the asbestos abatement, hazardous waste site cleanup and general construction fields. High achieving graduating students may also be offered additional training in related fields including lead and mold abatement.



#### PUBLIC COMMENT

**“More job training for city residents, especially in skill sets for jobs for which there is a demand. Partner with county and local schools and colleges.”**

## LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES CONTINUED

### ROCHESTER CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT (RCSD)

The RCSD's primary goal is to educate students and provide them with the skills they need to enter the workforce or continue their education. For more information on K-12 education, see [Schools and Community Centers, Section 3E](#).

The school district's Office of Adult and Career Education Services (OACES) is a training and education center that encourages adults to return to school in order to build workforce skills that can help them get a job. OACES offers the following:

- Classes in English for Speakers of Other Languages, helping non-English speakers learn the basic skills they need in the workforce.
- Career Pathway classes to train people in trades such as building maintenance, culinary, electrical, and customer services.
- Apprentice Related Supplemental Instruction Program where apprentices in different trades are registered and closely monitored for their participation in new jobs in order to ensure success.
- Early College International High School, in partnership with Monroe Community College, which offers an Early College Program. Students are put on an accelerated track through school and have the option to take college classes at no cost. This gives students more incentive to graduate, as they will have a head start when beginning their college or working career.

### ROCHESTER-MONROE ANTI-POVERTY INITIATIVE

RMAPI is a community-informed strategy to coordinate and align resources, policies and practices in an effort to reduce poverty in Rochester. The initiative, in collaboration with multiple community partners, focuses on building up the community in order to combat poverty.

RMAPI has acknowledged the important role that workforce development plays in fighting poverty, by collaborating on several workforce initiatives. This includes the Strengthening Working Families Initiative, which helps parents develop skills to succeed in the workforce and support their family, and the Rochester Health Profession Opportunity Grant, which helps underprivileged individuals learn skills and train for certifications in the healthcare field.



## B. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT (CONTINUED)

### CHALLENGES

#### MAKING THE CONNECTIONS

Feedback from workforce-focused community partners indicates that connecting to target populations is a major challenge for many organizations. Highly successful training programs exist in the community today. However, program directors often struggle to find enough participants to fill cohorts.

In many cases there is a serious disconnect between these organizations and the populations they strive to serve. This gap is often filled by predatory for-profit services and training programs that do not place the interest of the resident first. As stated by a workforce development partner, “it is very difficult to out-market these types of organizations. They have more resources to target advertisements and outreach than we do in most cases.”

#### ACCESS

Poverty and skill levels often limit the ability of some city residents to take advantage of workforce development programs. In many cases, participants cannot afford to take several weeks to attend training, which often represents a significant time commitment. It is critical for these programs to provide additional services, such as childcare, transportation, and stipends to program participants. This will help to ensure they have the best chance possible to complete training and secure employment.

An excellent model of this can be found in the new MCC Downtown Campus. The College has created a hub for students at which they can learn about services available to them. In addition, MCC provides free bus passes to all students and workforce development program participants.



#### STAYING CURRENT

The Rochester economy has shifted in recent years. The technology sector is growing, and emerging trends in the regional labor market point to growth in industries such as web development, high-tech manufacturing, and other sectors which require a distinct skillset. Workforce development systems and programs must constantly evolve to meet the needs of the new economy and not focus efforts on the industries that provided our employment base in the past.

#### STRUCTURAL RACISM

Decades of structural racism caused people of color in the Rochester community to be denied equal opportunity to gain skills and advance. Today, this is reflected in disparities in educational attainment, employment, and wages. According to the FLREDC, the unemployment rate for those without a high school diploma is 23%, more than five times higher than that of college graduates. Digging deeper, those without a high school diploma tend to be poorer and are overwhelmingly African American and Hispanic.

Under the current system, there is a failure to provide opportunity to those in our community who have historically been hindered from full participation in the economy. It is imperative that any discussions of workforce development are viewed through the lens of racial equity.

## IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

Rochester has a long history of welcoming people from outside the continental U.S. into the City. According to 2016 ACS estimates, more than 18,000, or almost 9% of all Rochester residents were foreign-born. In 2017 and 2018 Rochester saw an influx of approximately 3,400 climate refugees from Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria.

The immigrant and refugee population in Rochester is an asset to the local workforce and economy. Often, people coming to Rochester from other countries left behind skilled trades, professional positions, or businesses of their own. In fact, immigrants are often quite entrepreneurial— with some studies suggesting that they start new businesses at a rate of 17 times more than native-born Americans. It is important to work together to overcome barriers and provide better access to jobs, job training, small business support, or other economic opportunities for immigrants and refugees to support themselves and their families in their new life in Rochester.



### PUBLIC COMMENT

**“Many remain unemployed due to lack of resources. Job training is key. It gives hope and opens up new horizons.”**

## THE CITY AS A WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT LEADER

The City has strong relationships with many large employers in the region and can assist programs in bridging the gap between training and employment. The City, along with community partners, must bolster coordination of service offerings, publicize them when appropriate, and provide connection between residents and workforce development programs. For example, the City has a state of the art rental inspection program which places inspectors in the homes of residents, primarily in low-moderate income areas of the city. Inspectors could be partners in disseminating information about workforce programs to tenants who may be suffering due to joblessness.

In addition to the ability to publicize existing programs, the City of Rochester has access to an extensive network of “touch points” in the community in the form of its libraries, recreation centers, and Neighborhood Service Centers. These City facilities are widely used in the community, and are geographically spread across all neighborhoods. Often, they are already a trusted source of news and information. Librarians provide guidance on topics ranging from job interview and resume preparation to digital literacy. These community facilities can be used as recruitment hubs for high-performing workforce development programs.

# B. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT [WRK]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>WRK-1</b></p> <p><b>Help build the capacity of workforce development programs and encourage collaboration to better serve program participants.</b></p>	<p>WRK-1a Continue hosting workforce connections summits with workforce development partners. Expand the stakeholders in the summits to include RCSD and unions.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Workforce Development Partners, RCSD, Unions</p>
	<p>WRK-1b Position Operation Transformation Rochester (OTR) and other workforce readiness programs as funnels to successful workforce development programs.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Workforce Readiness Programs</p>
	<p>WRK-1c Coordinate and analyze data around the labor market in terms of growing industries. Share this information with workforce partners to help guide their strategies and support skills development in emerging labor sectors.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Workforce Development Partners</p>
	<p>WRK-1d Develop new resources to provide crucial services to support workforce programs, such as childcare, transportation, stipends, and benefits navigation to program participants.</p>	<p><b>Workforce Development Partners, City</b></p>
	<p>WRK-1e Connect workforce development programs to skilled grant writers who can help bring in additional funding that will support and expand programs.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Workforce Development Partners, Grant Writers</p>
	<p>WRK-1f Use libraries and rec centers as hubs for workforce development, with skills training programs, recruitment locations for workforce development programs, and employment fairs.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>



**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>WRK-2</b> <b>Work with partner organizations to build connections between workforce programs and employers to help bridge the gap between training and employment.</b>	WRK-2a Develop and maintain a list of employers in Rochester interested in hiring employees and interns from local universities. Work with universities to have businesses attend job recruitment events on campus, and participate in internship, co-op, and workforce development programs.	<b>City</b> , Employers
	WRK-2b Encourage employers to work with members of training programs, such as Operation Transform Rochester (OTR), to offer financial support to students in the form of scholarships	<b>City, Workforce Training Programs</b> , Employers
	WRK-2c Work with employers to offer jobs to people who come directly out of City-led and Community-led job programs.	<b>City</b> , Employers
	WRK-2d Encourage local businesses to partner with institutes of higher education to help retain students in the area after graduation, by establishing internships and fellowships, participating in job fairs, and establishing employment pipelines.	<b>City</b> , Employers
	WRK-2e Explore creative solutions to allow refugees to receive full or partial credit for degrees received in other countries.	<b>Educational Institutions</b>
	WRK-2f Work with colleges, universities, and other training partners to develop a workforce that align with the needs of expanding businesses and high growth industries. Work with community partners to develop ways to actively promote these programs in high schools and throughout the community.	<b>City</b> , Anchor Institutions, Businesses

# B. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT [WRK]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>WRK-3</b></p> <p>Focus workforce development efforts on vulnerable populations.</p>	<p>WRK-3a Partner with and help to grow the reach and impact of transitional employment programs and organizations (e.g., Center for Employment Opportunities, Renewal Services Rochester, Monroe County Work Experience Program, Coffee Connection) that work with people in transition (e.g., returning home from prison, refugee resettlement, people in recovery, etc.) to help provide experience, training, and a pathway to future full-time employment.</p>	<p>City, Transitional Employment Programs and Organizations, Funders, Employers, Community Partners</p>
	<p>WRK-3b Train City staff who regularly interact with the public to recognize signs of joblessness, and promote workforce development programs to residents.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Workforce Development Programs</p>
	<p>WRK-3c Develop a transitional employment program that features simple, low-skill, short-term job opportunities to assist panhandlers and other residents facing housing or employment crises. Similar programs exist in Syracuse and Albuquerque and are designed to provide people who are not yet employable in the traditional job market with a stepping stone. The transitional employment set-up will give them confidence, work experience and access to services.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, Service Providers</p>
	<p>WRK-3d Create and distribute materials outlining the benefits of hiring refugees and immigrants to local employers.</p>	<p><b>Refugee Service Providers</b>, Employers</p>
	<p>WRK-3e Promote English classes for non-English-speaking residents in order to decrease barriers to participating in the workforce.</p>	<p><b>City</b>, ESL Education Programs</p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>WRK-4</b>  Provide support for individuals starting their own businesses.	WRK-4a Direct qualified entrepreneurs and start-ups to CUE, NextCorps, and the Commissary in order to help businesses build capacity.	<b>City</b> , CUE, NextCorps
	WRK-4b Building off the Office of Innovation’s experience with establishing the first child care cooperative, engage others, including businesses, child care providers, and The Children’s Agenda to explore the feasibility of launching additional child care cooperatives.	<b>City</b> , Children’s Agenda

# C. TOURISM

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an important industry in cities, as it is an economic driver and is reflective of civic pride. Rochester is home to many unique spaces, events, and buildings, making it a center of culture that attracts thousands of visitors from around the region and the world.

The Finger Lakes Region, consisting of 14 counties in Upstate New York, saw a 2.4% increase in traveler spending in 2017, to a total of over \$3 billion.

Roughly one third of this was spent in the City of Rochester. Tourism in the region supports over 58,000 jobs, generates \$925 million in direct labor income, and \$229 million in local taxes.

Visit Rochester is the official tourism promotion agency for Monroe County; they also do extensive promotions for the larger Finger Lakes Region. They are a membership-based organization, boasting more than 400 members including the lodging, retail, restaurant and service industries as well as community organizations. The Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council serves a similar role, but covers the larger 14-county region, in which Rochester is the largest city.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Tourism is an economic driver – an average visitor spends \$240-\$450 on Rochester hotels, restaurants, museums, and shops each day.
- Rochester's variety of natural, historical, cultural, and business assets are all things that can attract visitors.
- Better promotion of events and amenities can be enhanced through community partnerships.
- Tourism is an opportunity for residents to build community pride by showing off our unique identity and assets to visitors.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

**“We need to get young entrepreneurs in the city and make this a destination place! Capitalize on tourism.”**



## BENEFITS OF TOURISM

### VISITOR SPENDING

According to Visit Rochester, an average visitor here spends roughly \$240-\$450 per day. This money is pumped into the local economy through shopping, eating at restaurants, and visiting museums, theaters, and festivals – all of which supports the jobs and businesses of local Rochesterians. New tax dollars from these businesses direct money into municipal funds to be spent on other areas such as infrastructure and public projects. According to the Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council, the average household in the region would have to pay an additional \$495 to maintain the same level of government revenue.

### STRENGTHENED LOCAL IDENTITY AND CULTURE

Rochester has a rich collection of arts, culture, destinations, and neighborhoods/districts. Tourism is an opportunity for residents to show off our unique identity to visitors. By building on assets and promoting them to visitors unfamiliar with the city, Rochester can reinforce its identity and create pride for the residents who live here. More specifically, as Rochester turns the corner after decades of decline, its increasing attractiveness to visitors and those relocating here contributes to a reversal of negative perceptions that is especially meaningful to locals.



### INCREASED INVESTMENT

When visitors come to a city, they patronize local businesses, talk with residents, and explore the area. By enhancing these experiences, visitors may be encouraged to invest in the city, whether it's by buying a home, pursuing local employment, starting a business, or simply visiting again in the future. The more positive experiences people have in Rochester, the more likely they are to make the city a part of their future. As much larger cities become increasingly more expensive and crowded, legacy cities like Rochester become more viable choices because of their affordability and more reasonable pace of life.



## C. TOURISM (CONTINUED)

### PUBLIC COMMENT

“Please find a way to advertise events better. I know people who have lived here their whole lives and don’t even know about some of the festivals and activities.”

## CAPITALIZING ON ROCHESTER’S STRENGTHS + AMENITIES

### WATER

Waterfront areas present important activity hubs for visitors and provide visitor entryways into the city. Waterfront attractions are key economic drivers and should be part of any economic development vision and planning. Rochester and the surrounding region has one of the most unique and varied collections of water features of any metropolitan area.

The city features the Genesee River, with its highly diverse array of settings as it flows through Rochester, as well as the Erie Canal and Lake Ontario. Beyond that, the region boasts Irondequoit, Braddock, and Sodus Bays and the 11 Finger Lakes. There are three waterfalls along the Genesee, making Rochester the only large city in the country with a downtown waterfall.

The river has been named a Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitat of State-Wide Significance, branding it as a regional center for fishing. The river also forms a

highly unusual four-way “intersection” with the Erie Canal within Genesee Valley Park, framed by historic footbridges designed by Frederick Law Olmsted. Also intersecting at this point are the Genesee Riverway Trail, Genesee Valley Greenway, and Erie Canalway Trail, three of the most significant multi-use trails in the state.

**The ROC the Riverway initiative has brought a renewed sense of hope to Rochester’s downtown waterfront. It has rebranded the Genesee River from an abandoned industrial waterfront to a recreational asset that will benefit residents and visitors.** More information can be found on the [project website](#).

At the mouth of the Genesee River at Lake Ontario, the Port of Rochester boasts a new state of the art



## CAPITALIZING ON ROCHESTER'S STRENGTHS + AMENITIES CONTINUED

### MARKET NEW YORK GRANT

Market New York is a grant program funded by Empire State Development that supports regionally themed marketing projects that promote tourism destinations, attractions and special events, as well as tourism facility capital improvement projects. Eligible applicants include municipalities, tourism promotional agencies, and not-for-profit and private companies.

In 2017, the Rochester Museum and Science Center was awarded a \$1 million Market New York Grant. The museum plans to use the money to undertake Phase 2 of a renovation project to construct a 4,000 square foot Gateway Building to bridge the gap between the Museum and Strasenburgh Planetarium.

marina that welcomes boaters visiting from all over the United States and Canada. It is widely regarded as the highest quality marina on Lake Ontario's southern shore. The tourism potential at the Port is not yet fully realized, as the new marina is just beginning to increase boating traffic and a major development site is now poised for a mixed-use infill project.

The South River Corridor, also known as Erie Harbor, is part of the Erie Canal system. The ROC the Riverway initiative aims to dramatically increase boating activity in this corridor by providing better boating facilities and amenities, improved parks and trails, more programming, and the reestablishment of a tour boat. These improvements should attract more Erie Canal traffic and increase usage of the city's segment of the canal.



### CAPITALIZING ON ROCHESTER'S STRENGTHS + AMENITIES CONTINUED

#### HISTORY

Rochester's rich history is a centerpiece of the tourism industry. It is bolstered by being the home and final resting place of freedom-fighter and abolitionist Frederick Douglass and suffragist Susan B. Anthony. Rochester has an extensive history as a center for social justice and human rights – with key stops along the Underground Railroad. The Susan B. Anthony House attracts thousands of visitors a year.

George Eastman had arguably the single greatest impact on the city through the massive success and footprint of Eastman Kodak Company and his widespread philanthropic efforts. The George Eastman Museum, founded in 1947, is the world's oldest photography museum and attracts over 100,000 visitors a year. The wealth generated by his company, and the resulting economic ripple effects, contributed to an abundance of ornate homes, institutional centers, and commercial buildings. History enthusiasts can enjoy tours of many well-preserved neighborhoods, sites, and architectural gems throughout Rochester.





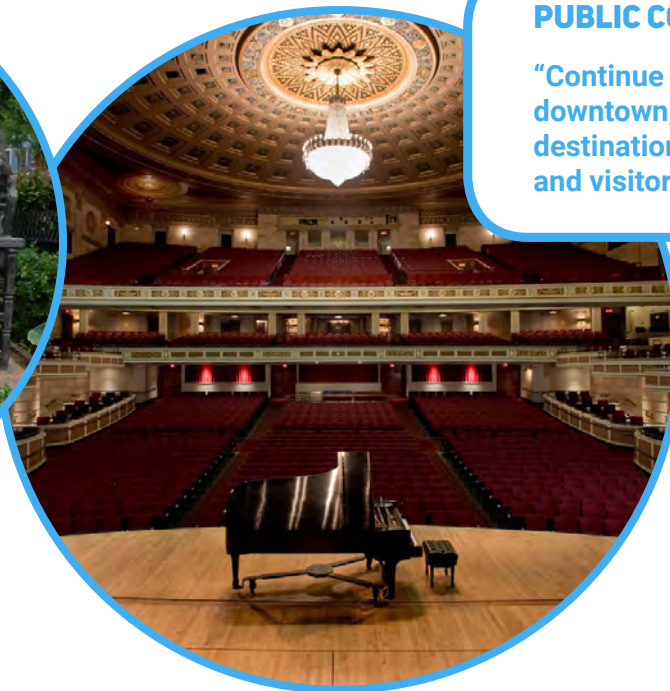
## CAPITALIZING ON ROCHESTER’S STRENGTHS + AMENITIES CONTINUED

### ARTS AND CULTURE

Initiative Area 3-Section C, Arts and Culture, describes Rochester’s arts and culture scene, which is often noted as being unusually robust for a city of our size. This scene is one of the primary drivers of tourism in the city, from museums to performances, from cultural celebrations to ethnic restaurants, and from major destinations to individual creators. Despite its successes, there is room for improvement with regards to coordination within the industry. Greater collaboration on promotions and programming can leverage investments. Stronger arts advocacy and increased support from the City can increase patrons while strengthening these pursuits as viable careers or as a source of supplemental income.

### BUSINESSES

The business community and the tourist community mutually benefit each other, as businesses thrive when patronized by a mixture of residents and visitors. Rochester is home to thousands of businesses, many of which are independently owned and operated by locals. Visitors have the option to patronize an eclectic mix of businesses, including retail stores, entertainment venues, and restaurants. Recent years have seen a growth in creative establishments, especially in food and entertainment, which feature the vibe of much larger cities and have contributed to a growing sense of optimism in Rochester’s future.



#### PUBLIC COMMENT

“Continue to revitalize downtown, making it a destination for locals and visitors alike.”

## C. TOURISM (CONTINUED)

### CAPITALIZING ON ROCHESTER'S STRENGTHS + AMENITIES CONTINUED

#### PARKS

Rochester has more than 3,500 acres of parks, including the aforementioned Olmsted-designed system. The parks are diverse in physical attributes and amenities and therefore offer a range of opportunities for visitors. Beaches, picnic areas, hiking trails, arboretums, wildlife viewing areas, athletic facilities, and robust programming for youth make the system highly beneficial to residents and visitors alike. More information can be found in [Initiative Area 4-Section B, Parks, Recreation, and Open Space](#).

#### EVENTS

Rochester is home to many highly-successful events focused on food, music, arts, and culture. The festival season kicks-off with the Lilac Festival at Highland Park, home to the world's largest lilac collection, where hundreds of thousands of visitors enjoy the 10-day festival each year. The Corn Hill Arts Festival, Park Avenue Festival, Clothesline Festival, Rochester Pride, Puerto Rican Festival, Fringe Festival, Image Out Film Festival, and Xerox Rochester International Jazz Festival are just a sampling of the more than 100 festivals offered throughout the year. Rochester even hosts a popular winter event, the Lakeside Winter Celebration at Ontario Beach Park, which features the Annual Lake Ontario Wine and Craft Beer Festival, Polar Plunge, and Chili Challenge. Understanding and maximizing the economic impact of these events should be part of the City's economic development planning.



#### OLMSTED PARKS

Rochester is fortunate to be one of only four American cities that have a comprehensive park system designed by one of the most revered landscape architects in American history, Frederick Law Olmsted. Olmsted, who also designed New York City's Central Park, was commissioned in 1888 to design an exceptional urban park system which resulted in Genesee Valley Park, Highland Park, Seneca Park, and Maplewood Park. Today, these parks remain outstanding examples of Olmsted's pastoral designs.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

“The festivals in all neighborhoods are what makes the city breathe. Now keep them safe and family friendly.”

## LOOKING AHEAD

In future years, reaching the full potential of these various tourism generators will have a substantial impact on the local economy and overall sense of pride in Rochester. The City should continue to stay on the leading edge of trends related to amenities desired by visitors and those considering relocating to Rochester. This includes mobility choices, urban outdoor adventuring, the ever changing lodging industry, trends in conventions, and the urban experience-based desires of younger generations.

More robust partnerships between the City, visitor organizations, the hospitality industry, and economic development partners will ensure better promotion of events and amenities. These enhanced relationships are also critical to achieving a holistic and dynamic approach to securing Rochester’s brand locally, nationally, and beyond.



# C. TOURISM [TOU]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>TOU-1</b> <b>Expand opportunities to attract new visitors to the city</b>	TOU-1a Identify groups, regions, or population segments underrepresented in tourism figures and develop marketing strategies to encourage them to visit the city and establish Rochester as a long distance destination.	<b>Visit Rochester/ Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council, Empire State Development, City</b>
	TOU-1b Pursue funds through the Market New York Grant to help promote tourist destinations, attractions, and special events, or capital improvement projects for tourist facilities.	<b>Visit Rochester/ Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council, City</b>
	TOU-1c Promote tourism opportunities through social media outlets.	City, Celebrate City Living Coalition, Visit Rochester/ Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council, City , Museums, Business Community, Local Theaters and Event Spaces
	TOU-1d Ensure all new investments and developments through the ROC the Riverway project are included in tourism marketing strategies.	City, Visit Rochester, Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council
	TOU-1e Develop a robust outreach strategy for potential visitors coming to Rochester by boat through the Port of Rochester or from the Erie Canal.	Visit Rochester/ Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council, Empire State Development, City

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>TOU-1</b> <b>Expand opportunities to attract new visitors to the city</b>	TOU-1f Develop events and activities during the wintertime, and promote existing wintertime activities, to encourage tourism during cold weather.	Visit Rochester/ Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council, City, Museums, Business Community, Local Theaters and Event Spaces
	TOU-1g Promote the Genesee River’s status as a Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitat of State-Wide Significance to encourage fishing activity.	<b>Visit Rochester/ Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council, NYS DEC, City</b>

# C. TOURISM [TOU]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>TOU-2</b> Enhance the visitor experience.	TOU-2a Increase the number of bike share station locations near hotels to encourage visitor use of Pace Bikes.	<b>City</b> , Pace
	TOU-2b Establish a relationship with Airbnb to improve safety standards in rental units and partner with Airbnb hosts to promote tourist opportunities to guests.	<b>City</b> , Visit Rochester, Airbnb
	TOU-2c Install “Welcome to Rochester” kiosks at Brooks Landing, Corn Hill Landing, Erie Harbor Landing, and at the Port of Rochester to greet visiting boaters and direct them to local shopping, eateries, and cultural amenities.	<b>City</b> , Marina Manager, Chamber of Commerce, Event Sponsors, Local Businesses

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>TOU-3</b> <b>Increase tourism dollars spent within the city.</b>	TOU-3a Work with local businesses to help them capture the patronage of the people visiting the many attractions and festivals within the City of Rochester.	<b>City</b> , Chamber of Commerce, Visit Rochester/ Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council, Business Community
	TOU-3b Develop a “convention district” that is centered on the Riverside Convention Center but also includes the conference rooms and amenities of nearby hotels as well as a more robust experience outside these buildings through ROC the Riverway investments.	<b>City</b> , Riverside Convention Center, Hotels

# D. CITY + NEIGHBORHOOD PROMOTION

## INTRODUCTION

Promoting the City of Rochester to local, regional, national, and international audiences is one of the primary purposes of *Rochester 2034*. Rochester has a great story to tell and the entire community must work together to make sure it is heard. Our powerful message will foster the confidence of those who invest in our city, whether they are residents, workers, employers or visitors.

## A PROUD + PROGRESSIVE CITY

Rochester is the largest city in a six-county Metropolitan Statistical Area of more than one million people, in the heart of New York's breathtaking Finger Lakes Region. The city straddles the Genesee River from the Erie Canal on its southern border to the Port of Rochester at the terminus of the river at Lake Ontario. A beautiful 96-foot waterfall provides an iconic vista in the center of the city.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Rochester has a great story and the entire community must work together to make sure it is heard.
- Promotional efforts, like Celebrate City Living and Downtown Definitely, highlight the benefits of living and investing in the City and help to foster interest and excitement.
- By marketing and branding their neighborhoods, community organizations can help foster community pride and bring in new residents and businesses.
- More needs to be done to celebrate and promote school programming and successes in the RCSD.

The Flower City is the largest population and employment center between New York City and Buffalo and provides a quality of life that combines the convenience and accessibility of a small town with the cultural offerings of a large city. Rochester is within a 10 hour drive of many of the largest cities in North America, including New York City, Toronto, Boston, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Washington and Baltimore.

The Rochester region is in the midst of economic transformation shaped by its unique history as a center of imaging sciences and other technological advancements. For much of the 20th century,





## A PROUD + PROGRESSIVE CITY CONTINUED

Rochester was informally known as the Image City because it was home to the Eastman Kodak Co., Xerox, and Bausch and Lomb. The principals of these iconic companies were also prominent philanthropists who helped shape Rochester's quality of life with generous investments in the city's artistic, cultural and natural resources. They helped establish the Rochester Institute of Technology and the University of Rochester as centers of innovation and research, which are now cornerstones of the region's growing knowledge economy.

The science and talented graduates emerging from these institutions, along with a knowledge base and trained workforce from the former "big-three" employers, is one reason the U.S. government has made investments to establish Rochester as a national center for photonics research and manufacturing. Downtown Rochester is home to more than 50 firms that specialize in design and innovation.

This economic transformation has coincided with major changes to the built environment as the City continues to focus on quality of life with its investments in infrastructure. The City has built a deep draft Marina at the Port of Rochester; replaced a sunken expressway with an at-grade boulevard with improved access for pedestrians and bicyclists; demolished a downtown mall and superblock, making way for more pedestrian-friendly redevelopment opportunity; and has installed more than 100 miles of bicycle lanes. The City Department of Environmental Services is bringing more green infrastructure to the city and is pursuing an aggressive plan to reduce Rochester's carbon footprint.

In 2018, the City launched an ambitious effort to change a historically industrial relationship with the Genesee River to one built on aesthetics and environmental sustainability with its ROC the

Riverway initiative. This \$500 million plan will guide investments in public spaces near the river to leverage the tremendous value of Downtown's waterfront and attract private development and the next generation of employers and workers.

Rochester is home to many world-class events focused on food, music, the arts and culture. A series of wildly successful festivals help define the Rochester experience. The City of Rochester Public Market, in addition to being the nation's oldest and best farmer's markets, hosts many events throughout the year, including free summer concerts and monthly Food Truck Rodeos.

Rochester has a rich history as a center for social justice and human rights, being the home and final resting place of freedom-fighter and abolitionist Frederick Douglass and suffragist Susan B. Anthony. Residents and visitors can enjoy tours of many historic sites including Mount Hope Cemetery, visit one-of-a kind museums, or they can simply take a self-guided walk in one of the city's eight Preservation Districts.

Rochester is also a city of neighborhoods, with a well maintained stock of 19th and early 20th century homes in a variety of architectural styles, including Victorian, Tudor and American Four Square. Thriving commercial corridors host eclectic boutiques, artisan coffee shops, unique entertainment venues, and sidewalk cafes to give residents plenty of walkable destinations.

**Despite the many challenges of our past, Rochester has proven time and time again to be resilient, innovative, and generous. We must continue to celebrate that heritage and let it guide us as we approach our 200th birthday in 2034.**

## D. CITY + NEIGHBORHOOD PROMOTION (CONTINUED)

### LOCALS' LOVE FOR ROCHESTER

During the *Rochester 2034* community engagement process, City planners asked the community to express what they love about the city and various neighborhoods. Pop-up events were held throughout city to capture people's enthusiasm for all things Rochester.



STUDENTS + RESIDENTS DISCUSS WHY THEY

### LOVE ROCHESTER...



# What do you Love about Rochester?

- the diversity
- The People
- Something to do, all the time!
- Festivals/ Music
- The medical school
- The MURALS
- High Falls
- Public Market
- Short work commute
- The River!
- The Culture
- The Food
- The Garage Sales and the people
- People working THE RIVER to make ROC better
- the market, of course, and the beach!
- Green Spaces
- RIVER Renfice
- Flower City American
- Art Community

# What do you Love about Rochester?

- It's great
- The Trolley @ the Rochester Public Market (Great for Parking)
- Bike trails - easy access and away from traffic
- The Public Market
- Diversity - restaurants
- Rochester Public Library
- Jazz Fest!
- The Market in Rochester?
- I LOVE NY

# What do you Love about Rochester?

- The Gorge + Waterfall
- Lilac Festival!
- Festivals
- Everything
- COFFEE SCENE
- CULTURAL EVENT
- Open Space
- WALL THERAPY
- Peaceful
- it's history!
- Salena's
- PARKS
- Dog Parks
- Festivals
- Summer events
- the beach @ Charlotte!
- Public Market
- Free events
- I Love Ana Preschool For Kids
- The public market activities - Welcome to Moe's
- Don'ts Debate
- The public market
- Generous/Giving people
- The unique neighborhoods: cultural diversity
- Summer festivals & the Red Wings!
- The Public Market
- Music Everywhere
- THRIVING ARTS COMMUNITY!

# What do I Love about Rochester?

- Easy to get around
- The people have great ideas
- All the murals & art on the buildings.
- Festivals
- The unique neighborhoods: cultural diversity
- Summer festivals & the Red Wings!
- The Public Market
- Music Everywhere
- THRIVING ARTS COMMUNITY!
- public market
- Generous/Giving people

## D. CITY + NEIGHBORHOOD PROMOTION (CONTINUED)

### STRATEGIC PROMOTIONAL EFFORTS

#### CELEBRATE CITY LIVING

Celebrate City Living is Rochester's resource for learning about Rochester living and housing, touting the city as a great place to establish roots and grow. A cosponsor of this initiative, the Rochester Coalition for Neighborhood Living, conducts an annual housing exposition that brings people from all over to gather and discover the character and amenities of Rochester's diverse neighborhoods. The [program's website](#) helps people find available housing and learn about Rochester's many distinct neighborhoods, events, and housing resources.

#### DOWNTOWN DEFINITELY

A public-private collaboration created a marketing campaign entitled "Downtown Definitely" in 2018 to highlight Downtown's developing character and amenities. Downtown has become one of the most diverse neighborhoods in the region, blending young professionals, artists, students, mid-career executives, senior citizens, retirees, and people of all incomes. Downtown's residential population grew to 7,200 in 2018, adding 4,000 people since 2000. At least 3,000 more are expected to move in by 2021. New housing and innovation companies are fast-tracking the highly visible transformation underway in Center City. The [Downtown Innovation Zone](#) is an online hub for Downtown's digital and technology ecosystem, promoting and supporting multiple incubators and start-up companies.



## ROCHESTER'S OFFICIAL FLAG

The City of Rochester's current official flag was designed in 1910, and adopted by City Council in 1934. According to flag designer Mayor Hiram Edgerton, "The blue represents our exceptional water and electric power; the white, the cleanliness of our city; the gold, our financial strength and industrial prosperity". The flag also features the coat of arms of the Rochester family.



The purpose of a City Flag is to resonate with the community and to be a symbol of local pride. However, the current flag is largely unknown, is rarely depicted in the community, and its symbolism does not necessarily resonate with the larger population. Rochester should follow the lead of many cities in redesigning their flags, such as through a design competition to update the current flag.

The popular Flour/Flower City logo could be incorporated into the new design. In order to do this, consideration would need to be given to remove the trademark on the logo, a policy intended to restrict widespread usage by non-City entities. The logo is already frequently used throughout local popular culture and the design community, despite that policy. It could be legalized, as has been done by cities like Chicago and Amsterdam, whose flags and logos are widely used and contribute to those cities' brand and strong sense of identity.

## MARKETING PARTNERS

### VISIT ROCHESTER

Visit Rochester is the official tourism promotion agency for Monroe County, aiming to grow and maximize visitors to enhance the local economy. Visit Rochester's members include the lodging, retail, restaurant and service industries as well as community organizations.

### ROCHESTER DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

A private, not-for-profit, economic development entity, the Rochester Downtown Development Corporation (RDDC) works to create the synergy and balance that is part of a healthy downtown. RDDC's agenda promotes and nurtures a broad range of development initiatives. These include housing, commercial, entertainment, and large public projects. RDDC's primary role is to promote and advocate for a vibrant and economically strong downtown as part of the region's larger asset package.

### GREATER ROCHESTER ENTERPRISE

The Greater Rochester Enterprise (GRE) is Rochester's economic development organization committed to attracting new capital investments and creating regional wealth and new jobs. They highlight our talented workforce, exceptional quality of life, and proximity to major markets as major reasons that Rochester is the right place for business expansion. More information on business in Rochester can be found [here](#).

### GREATER ROCHESTER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The mission of the Chamber of Commerce is to advocate for an environment that promotes the success of their members and of the local economy. The Chamber features a variety of programs and services to serve its members that can help them reach their full potential. The organization is a strong partner with the City of Rochester, GRE, RDDC, and other economic development and promotional partners in the region.

# D. CITY + NEIGHBORHOOD PROMOTION (CONTINUED)

## NEIGHBORHOOD PROMOTION

Building strong neighborhoods and real estate markets contributes significantly to a city’s brand and perception. It requires more than constructing and rehabilitating buildings – grassroots community participation and targeted marketing and branding efforts are necessary. Neighborhood marketing and branding improves perceptions and increases resident and investor confidence in neighborhoods, thus having positive effects on real estate markets and overall quality of life.

### NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS + EVENTS

The sense of community found in neighborhoods has been shown to be linked to so many positives attributes: creating sense of belonging, providing a physical and mental health boost, and even lowering crime rates. Rochester’s many neighborhood groups are tremendous assets for building community and promoting neighborhoods. These groups are recognized as important partners in making Rochester successful and attractive for living, visiting, and opening a business.

### NEIGHBORHOOD SIGNS + BANNERS

Throughout Rochester, neighborhood banners and welcome signs enhance a sense of place and identity while beautifying streets and instilling pride. These signs and banners are an effective way to celebrate a distinct city neighborhood. They add color and flourish to a streetscape and create a sense of unity, pride and belonging. The City of Rochester provides assistance to community groups who would like to design and install welcome signs and banners in their neighborhoods.



What residents of the Maplewood Neighborhood LOVE about their community!

## “BRANDING YOUR CITY”, BY CEOs FOR CITIES

A brand — clear, compelling and unique — is the foundation that helps to make a place desirable as a business location, visitor destination or a place to call home. Development of a brand strategy for a city leverages the features of that place to provide a relevant and compelling promise to a target audience. It is not an ad campaign or a tagline. Rather, the branding strategy is a deeper, more emotionally shared vision that influences actions. There are many reasons why it is critical for a place to have a brand strategy, but the most common is to stimulate economic growth. That’s because a strong brand can:

- Shift the perception of a place that may be suffering from a poor image among external and internal constituents.
- Create a common vision for the future of the community and its potential.
- Provide a consistent representation of the place.
- Enhance its local, regional and/or global awareness and position.
- Shed unfavorable stereotypes associated with a place and make it more appealing.

## NEIGHBORHOOD PROMOTION CONTINUED

### NEIGHBORHOOD BRANDING

The first step in determining a neighborhood brand is identifying its unique strengths and attributes. This can be a fun, positive, and unifying exercise for a neighborhood group to undertake. During the *Rochester 2034* community engagement process, City planners asked neighborhood members to express what they love about their neighborhoods. Residents across the city were excited to list all the great characteristics of where they call home. The top five things mentioned across the city are:

- **Local Amenities** (i.e., parks, gardens, businesses, and events)
- **Walkability**
- **A sense of community within neighbors**
- **History / Architecture**
- **Convenient Location**

These common themes should influence any branding or promotional efforts undertaken locally or city-wide.



### NEIGHBORHOODWORKS AMERICA

NeighborWorks America is one of the country’s preeminent leaders in affordable housing and community development. They published a series of articles entitled, “Neighborhood Branding and Marketing: A Series on Redefining Your Neighborhood Image” that offers a step by step approach to creating a neighborhood brand and how to use it to boost resident confidence and attract new residents, businesses, and other investment. Find the series of articles [here](#).

Recent NeighborWorks grant awards centered on marketing and branding Rochester’s Triangle and Swillburg neighborhoods resulted in marked increases in home sale prices and fewer days on the market. Additionally, there was a notable increase in the number of residents participating in community activities and an increase in volunteer hours.

# D. CITY + NEIGHBORHOOD PROMOTION [CNP]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>CNP-1</b></p> <p><b>Support neighborhood efforts around branding and promotion.</b></p>	<p>CNP-1a Distribute copies of the NeighborWorks series of articles entitled, “Neighborhood Branding and Marketing: A Series on Redefining Your Neighborhood Image” to neighborhood groups.</p>	<p><b>City,</b> Neighborhood Groups</p>
	<p>CNP-1b Pursue funding for support of community branding and promotion, including guidance on creating signage, public arts, beautification, banners, and other visible improvements.</p>	<p><b>City,</b> Neighborhood Groups, Philanthropic</p>
	<p>CNP-1c Install more welcoming neighborhood gateways through signage, beautification, public art, and wayfinding.</p>	<p>City, Neighborhood Groups</p>
<p><b>CNP-2</b></p> <p><b>Promote the City of Rochester as a premier place to live, work, and visit.</b></p>	<p>CNP-2a Create strategies for being more intentional about positive messaging about the city. Actively counter the negative perceptions perpetuated through social media and other channels.</p>	<p><b>City,</b> Neighborhood Groups, Landlords, Residents, Developers, Local Media</p>
	<p>CNP-2b Preserve and promote iconic and unique Rochester facilities and events that appeal to local residents and attract tourists, convention business, corporate relocations, and the recruitment of skilled workers.</p>	<p><b>City,</b> Visit Rochester, RDDC, GRE, Chamber of Commerce</p>
	<p>CNP-2c Continue the Celebrate City Living effort as an effective program for generating interest in living in the city. Explore opportunities for more deliberate relationships between CCL, Street Managers, business associations, and neighborhood groups.</p>	<p><b>City,</b> Program Sponsors, Celebrate City Living, Street Managers, Business Associations</p>



**PUBLIC COMMENT**

“Create banners throughout the city to promote City and Neighborhood branding”

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

“We need gateway improvements to welcome people to neighborhoods.”

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>CNP-2</b></p> <p><b>Promote the City of Rochester as a premier place to live, work, and visit.</b></p>	<p>CNP-2d Prepare a series of guided Rochester Walking Tours (i.e., historic tours, mural tours, architectural tours) to complement existing self-guided tours. Include a creative plan for promoting the tours and distributing materials.</p>	<p><b>Landmark Society, Neighborhood Groups, City</b></p>
	<p>CNP-2e Utilize "What's Good Rochester" as a platform to collect broadcast and social media content from local residents and organizations, promoting all the current positive assets, projects, people, and developments in the city.</p>	<p><b>City, WXXI Station</b></p>
	<p>CNP-2f Convene a branding stakeholder group to develop a brand for the City of Rochester.</p>	<p><b>City, Institutions, Business Community, GRE, Chamber, Visit Rochester, Tourism Destinations, Neighborhoods</b></p>
	<p>CNP-2g Facilitate a design competition for the creation of a new official city flag for the City of Rochester. The current flag, designated in 1934 and featuring the coat of arms of the Rochester family, is outdated and nearly non-existent in the community. The competition should be framed by widely accepted design principles of the vexillological community, who specialize in the study of the history, symbolism, and usage of flags.</p>	<p><b>City, Flag Designers</b></p>
<p><b>CNP-3</b></p> <p><b>Work with the Rochester City School District to promote innovative school programming and successes.</b></p>	<p>CNP-3a Produce regular videos featuring students, graduates, parents, teachers, and administrators that promote the positive stories around attending city schools.</p>	<p><b>City, RCSD</b></p>
	<p>CNP-3b Continue to celebrate and broadcast achievements by students and teachers of RCSD and charter schools.</p>	<p><b>City, RCSD, Charter Schools</b></p>

# E. SMART CITY INNOVATIONS

## INTRODUCTION

In the face of a rapidly changing world, cities must integrate smart technology into their systems in order to better serve residents and enhance their competitiveness as regional centers. A smart city is a municipality that uses information and communication technologies to increase operational efficiency, share information with the public, and improve both the quality of government services and resident welfare. Rochester's smart city programming is doing just that. With an interdepartmental smart city team, Rochester is critically examining City systems, particularly transportation and infrastructure, and implementing policies and processes that are more economical, more efficient, and more equitable for our residents. By looking at City systems through a lens of efficiency and technology, Rochester is a leader of innovative municipal practices. The following text describes the initiatives that Rochester is currently working on or will be in the near future.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Rochester seeks to improve as a “smart” city, using information, smart infrastructure, and communication technologies to better serve residents and businesses.
- Open data encourages innovation, civic empowerment, and trust between City Hall and the people of Rochester.
- Increasing access to high-speed internet and cellular technologies will help connect people to opportunities.

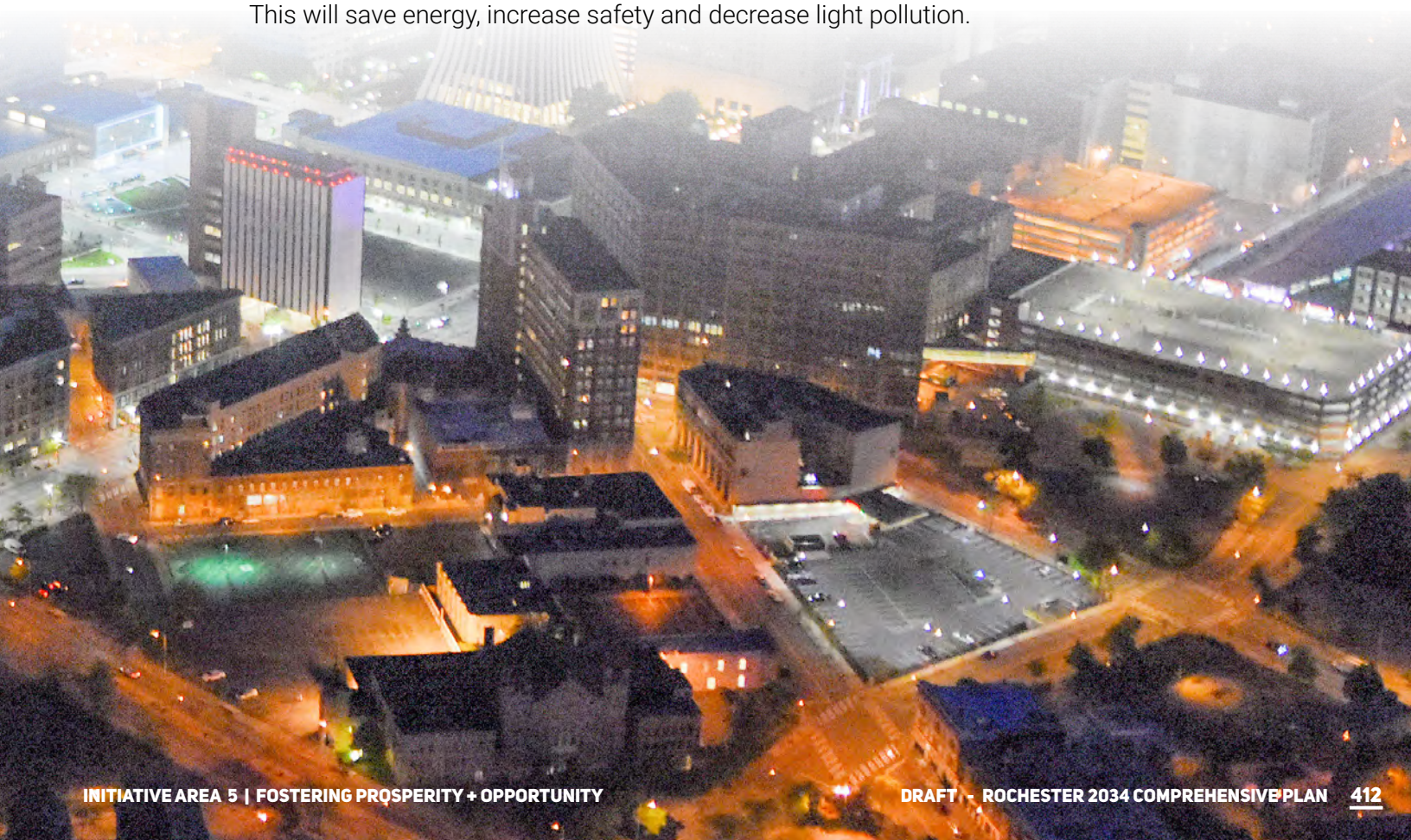
## CHARACTERISTICS OF A SMART CITY

- Efficient utility infrastructure
- Improved technological capacity among residents
- Incorporation of technology into infrastructure
- Accessible transportation systems
- Improved Data Management
- Sustainable Energy (see the Sustainability section of the plan)

## SMART INFRASTRUCTURE

Integrating smart technology with transportation infrastructure will make it easier to analyze and track data that will ensure infrastructure is serving residents as efficiently as possible.

- **Streets** By putting sensors in streets, traffic conditions can be tracked in real time enabling traffic signals to dynamically adjust to conditions, creating a safer, more efficient traffic flow and reducing productivity loss due to time spent sitting in traffic. Sensors can also be used to monitor condition for infrastructure maintenance purposes.
- **Parking** Sensors in parking spaces can feed a database that displays parking capacity in real time. This will result in an ease of parking for drivers, and may reveal available parking in an area perceived to have a parking shortage, increasing the economic activity and quality of life experience in the City of Rochester. Parking meter rates can also be adjusted dynamically based on experienced demand.
- **Streetlights** Smart streetlights use intelligent LED lights outfitted with sensors that sense when there is vehicular or pedestrian traffic nearby, and will adjust the brightness of lights accordingly. This will save energy, increase safety and decrease light pollution.



## E. SMART CITY INNOVATIONS (CONTINUED)

### DIG ONCE POLICY

A Dig Once Policy, or pavement management system, strategically plans when street construction occurs, so that it occurs as infrequently as possible. This is a more deliberate method of street construction that saves money and time, and minimizes negative impacts of construction. It also involves using technology to better coordinate with utility companies to combine street repair efforts with utility maintenance or installation efforts, to ensure a street will only have to be dug up once. In 2018, the City of Rochester implemented a Dig Once/Right-Of-Way policy and management program, continuing to improve street construction coordination through GIS-based solutions and introducing more predictability in future infrastructure maintenance needs.



### SMART METERING

A smart meter is a device on a structure that records consumption, such as electricity, water, gas, or even parking, and communicates the information to the appropriate agency for billing purposes or alerting of possible malfunctions, leaks and other safety issues. Retrofitting structures with smart meters and encouraging new construction to install smart meters will significantly reduce the need for the manual inspections.



## SOLAR-POWERED REFUSE COMPACTION

A solar-powered waste compactor uses a smart device to read a waste bin's fill-level. When a bin is filled, a mechanism automatically compacts the waste, increasing the overall capacity of the bin, and decreasing the number of times the bin needs to be emptied. Rochester currently operates four solar-powered compactors at the Rochester Public Market. Since these compactors are very expensive, significant funds are required to deploy enough of them to make a meaningful difference in the benefits of fewer pickups.



## OPEN DATA

Open data encourages innovation, civic empowerment, and trust between governments and constituents. Rochester has expanded its data resources available to the public and will continue to do so over the coming years. Below are some of the more cutting-edge open data resources the City has available:

- [Building Blocks](#)  
The Building Blocks software integrates a variety of data sets related to the various activities associated with vacant and/or potentially problem properties.
- [NBD Maps](#)  
The Department of Neighborhood and Business Development has created a series of GIS maps that display data, such as property tax information, business permits, vacant land, and demolition sites.
- [Projects and Plans App](#)  
This app allows visitors to see current development projects, street projects, environmental sustainability efforts, and plans and studies.
- [PlowTrax](#)  
A web-based map that is activated during snow events utilizing GPS to track the progress of approximately 150 snow plows, and show their current locations. The map is updated every five minutes during snow events and integrated with the 311 Call Center.
- [RPD Open Data](#)  
The Rochester Police department has made available information on crime and crime statistics, personnel, projects, and analyses.

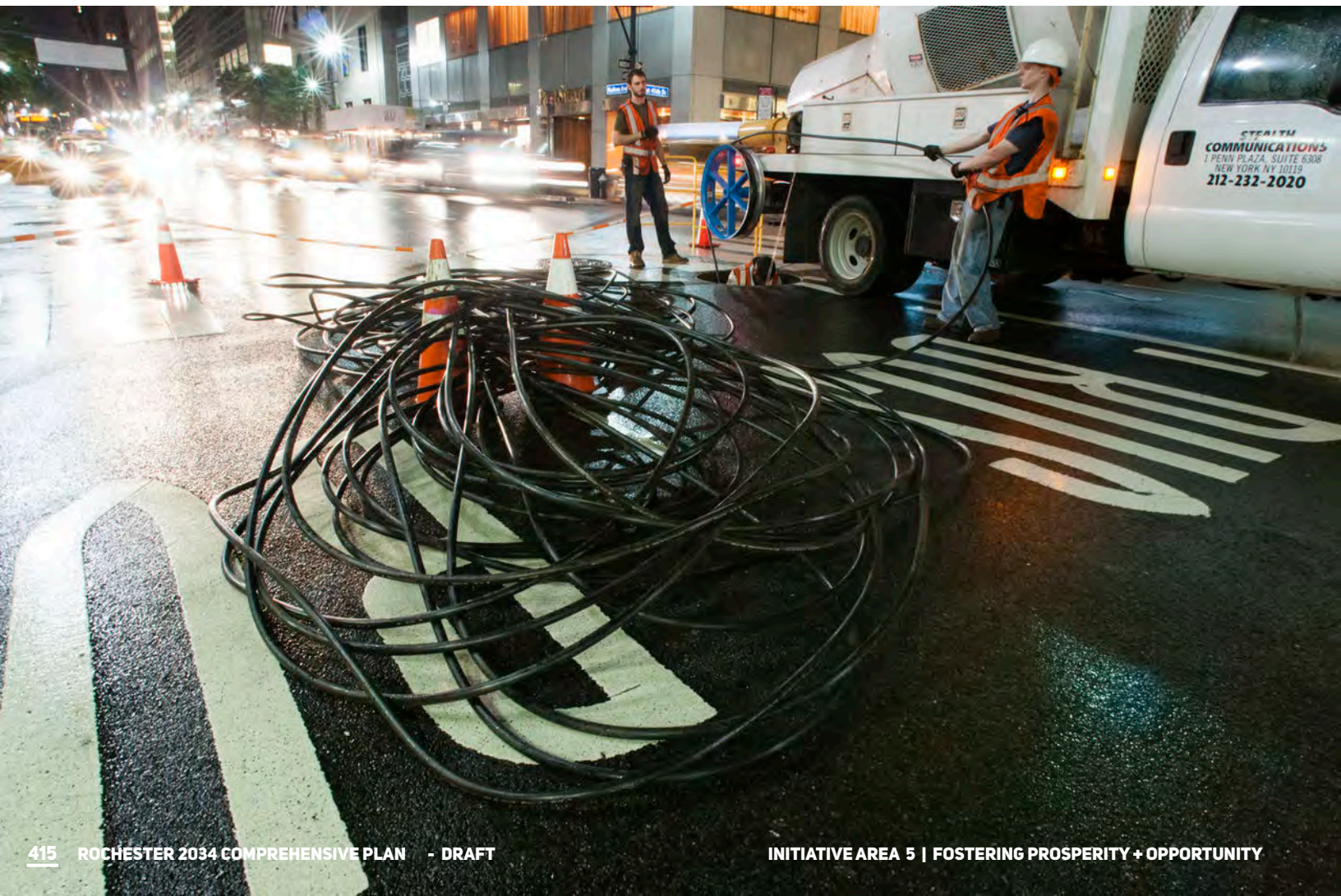
## E. SMART CITY INNOVATIONS (CONTINUED)

### FIBER OPTICS

Fiber Optic Cable is a telecommunications cable made from glass fiber strands that is used as a utility to deliver a signal such as internet to homes and businesses. Fiber optic cables differ from traditional cables because they provide faster internet speeds, are more resilient in the face of weather and power outages, and have less of a fire risk. Expanding the installation of fiber optic cable will increase connectivity among residents and businesses, and drive more competitive prices between internet providers. As the city moves forward in expanding access to high-speed internet, the city continuously seeks strategies to incentivize the expansion of fiber optics throughout the entire city, in an effort to provide digital access to all residents.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

**“High-speed internet should be available for free or at low cost throughout the city borders. We families into the hi-tech world, and help their children use their potential to improve their lives through technology work opportunities. They won’t know what they can do until they have exposure to this world.”**



## 5G

5G Smart Cell Technology is the next step in cellular technology providing increased speed, coverage, and reliability. 5G is a new technology, and is only available in a few locations across the country. The City is looking at ways of introducing 5g technology into the Rochester area in order to increase connectivity and accessibility to cell technologies. Local deployment of this technology would increase the viability of the city as a destination for economic investment.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

**"Find companies that have operations in cutting edge technology, and those that support a diverse workforce."**

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

**"Having high speed internet is critical!"**

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

**"BETTER INTERNET SPEEDS. Businesses need faster speeds, even fiber."**

## SELF-DRIVING VEHICLES

Major efforts are being made among private companies to make self-driving vehicles and bring them into the mainstream. This technology could be applied to many forms of travel, including for personal mobility, as well as freight delivery, or even public transit. The impacts of autonomous vehicles could be significant, so it is important to begin planning now.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

**"Support new tech companies that will develop traffic signals whose timing will be controlled by actual traffic. Much improved efficiency."**

# E. SMART CITY INNOVATIONS [SC]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>SC-1</b> Implement the Dig-Once/Right-of-way Management Program	SC-1a Create a data-driven pavement management system by tracking the date of previous construction and identifying the next needed date for repair.	<b>City</b>
	SC-1b Create a digital inventory of utilities found beneath streets and public right-of-ways.	<b>City, Utility Providers</b>
	SC-1c Work with utility companies to schedule street repairs and utility work at the same time.	<b>City, Utility Providers</b>
	SC-1d During construction on streets, upgrade streets to have smart technology, such as sensors.	<b>City</b>
	SC-1e Study the feasibility of combining street reconstruction projects with the opportunity to replace multiple residential water connections (i.e. due to deteriorating lead pipes and/or pipes threatened by tree roots). Households could be bundled, potentially lowering the cost per property if a single contractor performs the replacements.	<b>City</b>
	SC-1f Study the feasibility of combining street reconstruction projects with installation of a block or district geothermal system. In theory, the more households opting to participate, the more the installation and long-term costs could be lowered.	<b>City</b>
<b>SC-2</b> Increase access to high-speed internet and cellular technologies.	SC-2a Create and implement plan to increase access to high-speed internet in vulnerable and middle neighborhoods.	<b>City, Utility Providers</b>
	SC-2b Work with private internet providers to expand fiber-optics throughout the city.	<b>City, Utility Providers</b>
	SC-2c Upgrade internet speeds and capabilities in public facilities such as libraries and rec centers.	<b>City, Utility Providers</b>



**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES		PARTNERS
<b>SC-3</b> <b>Improve Transportation Systems using Smart Technologies.</b>	SC-3a	Use smart technology to identify and administer smart transit solutions to solve accessibility issues.	<b>City</b> , Smart-Technology Companies
	SC-3b	Expand the development of automated vehicle technology in the city.	<b>City</b> , Smart-Technology Companies
	SC-3c	Implement real time parking analytics and make parking data publicly viewable through a smart phone app.	<b>City</b> , Smart-Technology Companies
<b>SC-4</b> <b>Improve municipal technology to better serve the city, its residents, and its stakeholders.</b>	SC-4a	Develop a formalized plan for a Data Management Strategy among City departments.	<b>City</b>
	SC-4b	Seek accreditations and certifications for national and international standards regarding smart technology.	<b>City</b> , Smart-Technology Companies
	SC-4c	Deploy remotely-activated LED street lights that adjust to traffic patterns.	<b>City</b> , Smart-Technology Companies
	SC-4d	Implement a smart-metering strategy for tracking utility usage.	<b>RG&amp;E, Utilities</b> , Smart-Technology Companies, City

# 6 INITIATIVE AREA PLANNING FOR ACTION

**A. IMPLEMENTATION + STEWARDSHIP OF ROCHESTER 2034**  
**B. BUILDING NEIGHBORHOOD CAPACITY**





# A. IMPLEMENTATION + STEWARDSHIP OF ROCHESTER 2034

## INTRODUCTION

According to Section 28-a of the NYS General City Code, the legislature finds that “among the most important powers and duties granted by the legislature to a city government is the authority and responsibility to undertake city comprehensive planning and to regulate land use for the purpose of protecting the public health, safety and general welfare of its residents.” To that end, **extensive public engagement, combined with research, analysis, and input from dedicated public servants across City Hall, resulted in the direction set forth in Rochester 2034.**

As a long-range plan, *Rochester 2034* includes Goals and Strategies, some of which can be implemented quickly and others that require organizational changes, collaboration, innovation, and funding. Each Strategy is assigned implementation “partners,” which often includes the City of Rochester. This may mean that the City will implement the Strategy itself or that it will lead as the convener of stakeholders who will implement the Strategy together. In other instances, partner organizations are listed where the City does not have a role or is not the appropriate lead.

The Office of Planning will be responsible for the overall stewardship and monitoring of *Rochester 2034* and will periodically update the Plan. Effective monitoring and implementation will help Rochester attract public and private investment and financing to achieve the Vision and Goals of the Plan.

One result of a robust community engagement is that the community is aware of *Rochester 2034* and has an expectation that decisions will be driven by the Plan. Government and community decision makers will be held accountable to the Guiding Principles, Goals, and Strategies outlined in the Plan. Projects and programming of the City and community groups must work toward aligning with these elements of the Plan. The Office of Planning will work with colleagues, departments, systems, and elected officials in City Hall to build that alignment into the routines and the framework of decision-making, while also looking for opportunities to engage the community in implementation.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- *Rochester 2034* will be adopted by City Council and City Code will be modified to recognize and help implement *Rochester 2034*.
- *Rochester 2034* will inform City budget decisions and lays the groundwork to update the City’s Zoning Code.
- The City plays an important role in helping to implement *Rochester 2034*, but it is a communitywide plan, not just a City plan.
- Successfully implementing *Rochester 2034* will take collaboration, funding, resources, and commitment from the public and community partners in addition to City Hall.

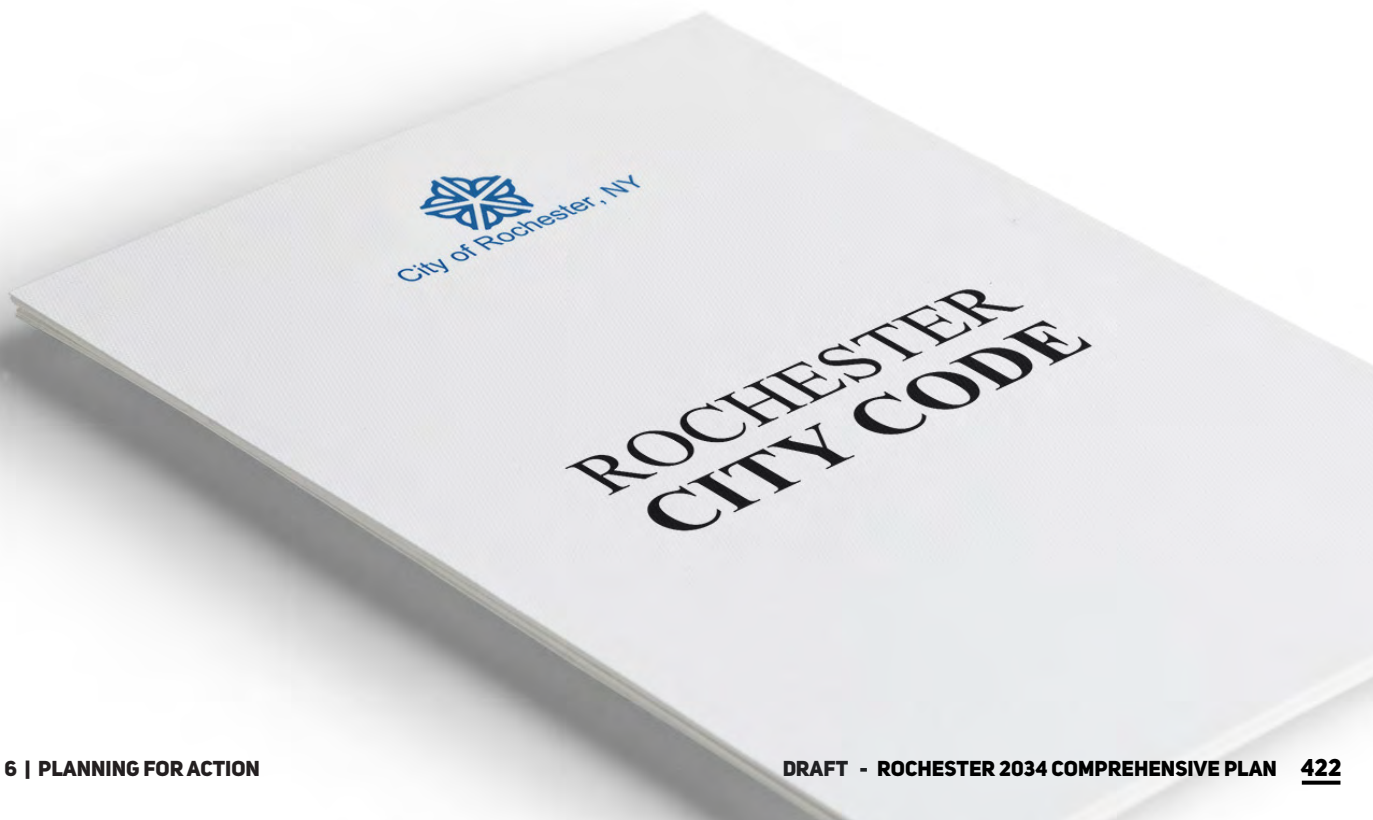
## IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH THE CITY CODE

### PLAN ADOPTION

Section 14-1 of the City Charter, states:

“There shall be a City Comprehensive Plan, approved by the City Council, which shall identify the goals, objectives, principles, policies, standards, directions and/or programs for the immediate and long-range protection, maintenance, enhancement, growth and development of the City. The Comprehensive Plan shall consist of materials, written and/or graphic, including but not limited to plans, maps, charts, studies, ordinances, resolutions, reports and other descriptive material. The Comprehensive Plan shall be readily identifiable and available for use by the public; it shall consider the diversity of resources and conditions in the City; it shall be developed through an open and flexible planning process and while promoting the health, safety and welfare of the people of the City; and it shall consider the needs of the region.”

In accordance with the City Charter and the NYS General City Law, a Comprehensive Plan is adopted by City Council through an ordinance. Moreover, the Charter requires City Council to produce a municipal code that consists of “ordinances and local laws of a general nature”. Chapter 130 of the City Code is where the comprehensive plan is officially presented.



# A. IMPLEMENTATION + STEWARDSHIP OF ROCHESTER 2034

(CONTINUED)

## IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH THE CITY CODE CONTINUED

### CHAPTER 130 OF THE CITY CODE: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

According to Chapter 130, the comprehensive plan shall be considered an official statement of the City of Rochester with respect to the:

- 1 Existing and developing character of various areas of the city;
- 2 Proper objectives, standards and direction for the future maintenance, growth and development of the city;
- 3 Means to be employed to protect existing character or development and to encourage future development that will be in the best interest of the city; and
- 4 Actions and programs to be undertaken by the City with respect to its future maintenance and development.

It further states that the comprehensive plan shall serve as a guide and resource for City officials and agencies in the performance of their duties.

### CHAPTER 120 OF THE CITY CODE: ZONING CODE

Zoning is a critical tool to successfully implement the land use and placemaking goals outlined in *Rochester 2034*. In fact, a comprehensive plan that is kept current is necessary before a local government can lawfully adopt or amend zoning. Thereafter, aligning zoning with the Plan is an ongoing process. Upon adoption of *Rochester 2034*, the process of revising zoning will involve substantial effort on the part of City staff and the community.

The Zoning Code includes two parts: the zoning text and the zoning map. The text of the ordinance contains the community development objectives and the necessary technical provisions to regulate building form and the use of land. The zoning map delineates the boundaries of the specific districts or zones created in the code. The revised districts

will be guided by the Character Areas shown in [Initiative Area 2, The Placemaking Plan](#) of *Rochester 2034*. The text will be guided by the Placemaking Principles and Action Plan listed in that Initiative Area.

Currently, the City Planning Commission (CPC) is the primary entity responsible for administering the connection of the comprehensive plan with zoning decisions. In accordance with the Zoning Code, the CPC must consider the comprehensive plan in their decisions for designation of Preservation Districts and local landmarks, on amending the zoning text and map, and for approving subdivisions, cluster developments and Special Permits. The CPC is key to reinforcing the Vision, Guiding Principles, Goals, and Strategies in the land use decision-making infrastructure in City Hall.

## IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH THE CITY CODE CONTINUED

### CHAPTER 104 OF THE CITY CODE: STREETS AND STREET ENCROACHMENTS

The City Zoning Code only regulates development that is located within a parcel of land, which amounts to approximately 85% of the city. The remaining 15% of land is public right-of-way (ROW) and is regulated through Chapter 104 of the City Code and, in a minor way, through Chapter 128, Land Subdivision Regulations. The design of ROW facilities (e.g., roads, sidewalks, bike lanes, tree pits, etc.) is primarily administered by the City Engineer. While the comprehensive plan is not specifically referenced in Chapter 104, the closest tie is in City's *Complete Streets Policy* (§104-29), stating:

“The City seeks to create an interconnected network of transportation facilities which accommodate all modes of travel in a manner that is consistent with neighborhood context and supportive of community goals by establishing a Complete Streets Policy to incorporate active transportation into the planning, design, and operation of all future city street projects, whether new construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, or pavement maintenance.”

The design and interface between private development (buildings) and the adjacent public sidewalks and streets is often how the public experiences the city. The current separation of Chapter 104 and Chapter 120 can lead to disjointed design and decision making. *Rochester 2034* seeks to better connect these two regulatory processes, as discussed in [Initiative Area 2, The Placemaking Plan](#), potentially through the creation of a Unified Development Code (see sidebar).

### UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE

A Unified Development Code (UDC) is a document that consolidates all development-related regulations including zoning requirements, subdivision regulations, design and development standards, and review procedures on public and private parcels and within the right-of-way into one consolidated code. By integrating all types of development, the UDC offers a more flexible and comprehensive approach to design, which leads to a more consistent treatment of different and interrelated types of development. A UDC recognizes the interrelationship between contiguous land areas and better facilitates the regulation of the shared boundaries.



# A. IMPLEMENTATION + STEWARDSHIP OF ROCHESTER 2034

(CONTINUED)

## IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH CITY BUDGET PLANNING

Funding is also a key implementing tool for a comprehensive plan. Funds are allocated through the operating budget, Capital Improvement Program, and Consolidated Community Development Plan.

### OPERATING BUDGET

The annual operating budget shows the projected revenue and associated expenses and outlines the City's work plan and delivery of services for the year. The comprehensive plan is an effective tool to help ensure that the budget is responsive to community goals and priorities as reflected in the various elements of the plan.

### CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The City's Capital Improvement Program presents the spending plan for major infrastructure improvements and public construction projects, prioritized across a five-year timeframe. The development of this annual program will take guidance from the Goals and Strategies of *Rochester 2034*.

### CONSOLIDATED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Consolidated Plan is a 5-year strategic plan, required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which guides the allocation of federal entitlement funds available through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, Home Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program, Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program, and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA). The Consolidated Plan will also be informed by *Rochester 2034*.

"Fiscal responsibility and fair stewardship of taxpayers' dollars is something we work very hard at. It gives me great pride to have a team at City Hall – especially those in the Finance and Budget Departments – whose diligence and proficiency have resulted in Rochester's excellent bond ratings. There is a great deal of exciting investment and revitalization taking place in our city right now. Our excellent credit ratings help us continue our mission of building a safer, more vibrant city with sufficient jobs and educational opportunities for all of our residents."

–Mayor Lovely A. Warren  
(quote from January 2017 when Rochester's bond rating was upgraded from an A+ to an AA-)



## IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH SEQR

Outside of the City Code, the comprehensive plan is a consideration in all discretionary decision making processes that trigger review under the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR). SEQR establishes a process to systematically consider environmental factors early in the planning stages of actions that are directly undertaken, funded or approved by local, regional and state agencies. Within those environmental factors to be considered is the consistency of the proposed action with officially adopted plans or goals. This is a substantial implementation tool for early consideration of *Rochester 2034* in regulatory decision making.

## IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING AND ADVOCACY

The Office of Planning will take a leadership role in advocacy and spurring implementation of *Rochester 2034*. To assist in the implementation process, a Master Action Plan, which is a tool to help sort and organize all of the plan's Goals and Strategies, is available on the Comprehensive Plan [website](#). Recognizing that *Rochester 2034* is a 15-year plan, the action plans include Goals and Strategies that will be implementable over time.

Not all strategies will be immediately pursued. After plan adoption, the Office of Planning will work with a plan implementation oversight committee to set some high-level priorities and timelines and manage a collection of implementation teams based on topics covered in *Rochester 2034*. Those implementation teams will include partners, such as those identified in the Action Plans, from inside and outside of City Hall.

When setting direction, the oversight committee will need to consider the capacity of City staff and resources, as well the capacity of external stakeholders. As priorities arise, additional staff and/or professional services may be necessary to effectively carry out the Plan. As success is incrementally achieved, subsequent prioritization exercises will follow to continue implementation activities. *Rochester 2034* is meant to be a "living document", in that Goals and Strategies may be revised periodically as conditions change, priorities evolve, and new ideas emerge. A forum for routinely updating the community and City leaders on the implementation progress of *Rochester 2034* will be designed and implemented, including the preparation of a biennial report.

***Rochester 2034 is a community-wide plan, not a City plan. There are some Strategies identified in the Action Plans that the City may implement on its own. However, most Strategies will require collaboration, funding, resources, and commitment from the public and our community partners.***

It will be critical to sustain public support and significant community investment beyond the City's budget by civic leaders, funders, developers, and other key partners if we want to successfully implement this Plan and realize the vision of *Rochester 2034*.



# A. IMPLEMENTATION + STEWARDSHIP OF ROCHESTER 2034 [IMP]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>IMP-1</b> Implement <i>Rochester 2034</i> through City Code amendments and procedural improvements.	IMP-1a Amend Chapter 130, Comprehensive Plan, to codify <i>Rochester 2034</i> . While listing the entire document in the City Code is not possible, it can be adopted by reference.	<b>City</b>
	IMP-1b Develop a mechanism for including a reference to <i>Rochester 2034</i> in City Council items, encouraging the regular use of the Plan and ensuring legislative actions are consistent with the Plan.	<b>City</b>
	IMP-1c Rewrite the Zoning Code and Map as either a standalone document or as part of a Unified Development Code. Within that new code, enhance the connection between zoning decisions, especially within the jurisdiction of the Manager of Zoning, and <i>Rochester 2034</i> . More detail can be found in <a href="#">Initiative Area 2, The Placemaking Plan</a> .	<b>City</b>
	IMP-1d Revise the Subdivision Code as either a standalone document or as part of a Unified Development Code. Within that new code, enhance the connection between subdivision decisions and <i>Rochester 2034</i> .	<b>City</b>
	IMP-1e Explore the option of converting the City’s development-related codes into a Unified Development Code. A Unified Development Code would modernize and consolidate all development regulations into a unified development code that includes development standards and design guidelines outlined in <a href="#">Initiative Area 2, The Placemaking Plan</a> .	<b>City</b>
	IMP-1f Prepare a City of Rochester Street Design Guide that includes references to the Complete Streets Policy and the Guiding Principles, Placemaking Plan and Goals of <i>Rochester 2034</i> .	<b>City</b>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>IMP-2</b> <b>Implement Rochester 2034 through collaboration and organization.</b>	IMP-2a Develop an oversight committee, led by the Planning Office and including the Mayor’s Office, to provide broad oversight of and direction to the implementation of <i>Rochester 2034</i> .	<b>City</b> , Community Partners
	IMP-2b Under the direction of an oversight committee, create implementation teams to help prioritize and implement Action Plan Goals and Strategies. These teams should include a mix of Planning Office staff, other City staff, and strategic partners identified in the Action Plans. Additional staff and/or professional services may be necessary to effectively implement the Plan.	<b>City</b> , Community Partners
	IMP-2c Prepare a forum, online or otherwise, for routinely updating the community on the implementation progress of <i>Rochester 2034</i> . This should include a biennial report to update the community and City leaders on the status of the prioritized list of goals and strategies.	<b>City</b>
	IMP-2d Facilitate development of regular meetings between planners from neighboring municipalities, as well as regional planning and development agencies, to encourage information sharing and regional collaboration.	<b>City</b> , FLREDC, RTS, GTC, NYSDOT Region IV, Monroe County, GFLRPPC, Neighboring Municipalities
	IMP-2e Aggressively communicate the Vision, Goals, and Strategies of <i>Rochester 2034</i> to secure the commitment, resources, and collaboration needed from strategic partners to implement <i>Rochester 2034</i> .	<b>City</b> , Community Partners

# B. BUILDING NEIGHBORHOOD CAPACITY

## INTRODUCTION

The City of Rochester benefits from having a wide variety of organized neighborhood and community groups. No one knows what's best for their community more than the people who live and work and invest their time and talent here. There are many opportunities for residents and business owners to engage and participate civically, whether it's by participating in a neighborhood association, commenting on a proposed development project, working to beautify their street, providing input to the City budget, or looking out for their neighbors.

Key to achieving full civic engagement, however, is that all community members – regardless of age, gender, ability, language, culture, tenure, income, etc. – have access to information and can share their voice to inform community and government activities and decision making. Robust and inclusive civic engagement is a driving force that will shape Rochester into a great city to live, work, play, and visit.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Everyone, regardless of age, gender, ability, language, culture, or housing situation should have access to participating in achieving the goals of *Rochester 2034*.
- Public participation is essential to informed decision making.
- Collaboration among government, residents, businesses, neighborhood groups, and community development partners make it possible to pool knowledge, balance interests, reduce conflict, and sustain engagement.
- Neighborhood and community organizations are critical partners to implement *Rochester 2034*.
- Many neighborhood groups could benefit from additional support, resources, and/or technical assistance to better engage and represent the people and areas they serve.

## A GOOD NEIGHBORHOOD LEADER

- **Keeps the organization open and flexible** enough to bring in new members and ideas.
- **Encourages members to participate** in the association and committee planning process.
- **Defines and discusses the goals and objectives** of the association with the membership.
- **Includes all neighbors** in an organization, regardless of background, beliefs, or living situation.
- **Shares the power** and prepares other association members to assume leadership responsibilities.
- **Gives recognition to members** and committees who have contributed to the advancement of the neighborhood association.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

**“The importance of community-building cannot be overstated.”**



## B. BUILDING NEIGHBORHOOD CAPACITY (CONTINUED)

### NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

There are over 50 neighborhood associations in the city and even more neighborhood groups if block clubs, business associations, and topic-based community groups are included. Rochester has a legacy of community involvement in decision making and neighborhood improvement. These neighborhood groups facilitate Rochesterians coming together to influence change and build community. By building and maintaining their capabilities, while creating partnerships with city government and other community organizations, they ensure their effectiveness to influence change and prioritize the people who live and work in the city.

Staff from the *Rochester 2034* project team met with each of the neighborhood associations in the city over the course of the Plan's development. **The following general observations were made with regards to the functionality and effectiveness of these groups:**

- 1** No matter the size of the group or neighborhood, **residents across the city expressed great enthusiasm and passion for where they lived.** Numerous residents have been involved in community organizing for most of their adult life and were eager to talk about what they loved about the city and their neighborhood.
- 2** **Almost all neighborhood associations are volunteer-led.** There is a substantial range in their resources, capacity, geographic coverage, and participation (in terms of size and diversity).
- 3** Many groups find it **difficult to achieve a consistent, representative turnout** from neighborhood residents.
- 4** The collection of neighborhood associations and their geographic reach results in **some overlapping areas and major gaps in coverage.**
- 5** Residents were enthusiastic about City engagement and **desire more consistent opportunities for interface with City staff.** Numerous times, the approach of neighborhood-based outreach versus quadrant-based outreach was noted as highly desirable for engagement with City staff.
- 6** Groups often **struggled to attract involvement from younger generations, tenants, and traditionally underrepresented populations.**
- 7** Some groups found that a **commitment to eating together each month, potluck style, was great for relationship building** prior to getting into meeting agendas. They noted that it contributes to a healthier, more respectful, and effective dialogue around challenging issues.
- 8** A few groups had agendas focused exclusively on development and/or public safety issues, which appeals to some residents but not all. During *Rochester 2034* community engagement meetings, **several young professionals expressed a desire to be more involved in their neighborhood, but did not necessarily feel welcome in their attempts to get involved.** These young residents are often **looking for a greater focus on community-building and the positive benefits of urban living.**

## NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY CONTINUED

In addition, the following capacity-building observations were made over the course of dozens of meetings with neighborhood groups:

- 1** Neighborhood groups could improve community outreach capabilities if they received a small amount of financial assistance to help with the cost of copying, postage, welcome packets, and food for meetings.
- 2** Groups need affordable public spaces for community-building events.
- 3** City Hall and various community partners could provide technical assistance to strengthen the capacity of neighborhood groups to serve the community. This assistance could be provided in the form of written documents, websites, and workshops on topics such as how to prepare a neighborhood plan, how to navigate bureaucratic processes, or understanding the role of the Zoning Board of Appeals.



## B. BUILDING NEIGHBORHOOD CAPACITY (CONTINUED)

### NEIGHBORHOOD CAPACITY-BUILDING GRANTS

The Rochester Area Community Foundation offers “Special Regional Improvement Grants” – also known as **NeighborGood Grants** – which are awarded to resident-controlled, neighborhood-based organizations in the city. Eligibility rotates each year from west-side organizations to east-side organizations so a given neighborhood group is eligible to apply every other year. Grants are awarded for up to \$2,500 for Neighborhood Associations, \$750 for Block Clubs, and \$2,000 for other neighborhood organizations like landlord-tenant groups or business associations.

Love Your Block is a national funding source for cities to provide small grants that support volunteer-led neighborhood improvement projects like turning vacant lots into community gardens, removing graffiti, or helping elderly neighbors with simple home repairs that allow them to keep their homes, resident volunteers use this grant to help their neighborhoods and their cities be better places to live.

### COLLABORATION AND INCLUSION

Collaborative efforts between City government, residents, local businesses, and other community development stakeholders have historically led to the best outcomes. When community or business groups come together with the City and other community development partners to work on revitalizing a target area, reviewing a proposed project, or creating new policies or programs, it is possible to:

- **Pool knowledge.** Each participant in a collaborative process brings unique knowledge, perspectives, and experiences to the table. Engaging upfront to listen and learn from one another sets the table for more creative visioning and problem solving.
- **Balance interests.** Combining residents’ understanding of specific conditions in a neighborhood with the City’s understanding of the broader city context and relevant data can help improve decision making and help residents and business owners understand and participate in the process of balancing sometimes competing interests.
- **Reduce conflict.** Building relationships and creating channels for open communication among residents, business owners, City staff, and other community development partners puts everyone on the same team, and encourages respect among everyone involved.
- **Sustain engagement.** Engaged residents, business owners, developers, and other community development actors bring tremendous energy and commitment to the city. We will only achieve the vision and goals for *Rochester 2034* if we work together, so learning to collaborate and sustain that level of engagement over time is critical to our community’s future.

**Critical to a reliable partnership is the assurance that organizations acting on behalf of a group are being inclusive. City Hall must have confidence in community groups that when they are speaking on behalf of a group or neighborhood, they have made every attempt to ensure their representation is inclusive and that they are consistently and actively reaching out and welcoming all residents, business owners, and other stakeholders.**



## COLLABORATION AND INCLUSION CONTINUED

Also critical to reliable partnerships among city staff, stakeholder groups, and community members is easy and effective access to City government information, offices, and staff. To that end:



**[CityOfRochester.gov](http://CityOfRochester.gov)**. The City's website is a hub for all public information including City and community events and meetings, development project updates, property information and interactive maps, snow plow resources, online bill pay, and the latest press releases.



**City Hall**. City Hall offices are open to the public 40 hours a week and the building is usually open for public meetings, hearings, and events "after hours" each week.



**Community Meetings**. City leadership and staff frequently attend or convene meetings and work one-on-one with community members, both at City Hall as well as in community settings and outside business hours inside and outside of regular business hours.



**Communication**. The City uses communication tools, such as websites, social media, press releases, the 311 Call Center, newsletters, and community facilities (Libraries, Rec Centers, and Neighborhood Service Centers) to help share information with the public.

## B. BUILDING NEIGHBORHOOD CAPACITY (CONTINUED)

### COLLABORATION AND INCLUSION CONTINUED

One of the most significant challenges to open communication and inclusive engagement is that the city and its neighborhoods are always changing. One example that impacts Rochester, and several neighborhoods in particular, is our growing population of immigrants, refugees, and non-English speaking residents. According to 2016 ACS estimates, nearly 9% of city residents (more than 18,000 people) were born outside the U.S. and nearly 20% of city residents (more than 34,000 people) do not speak English at home.

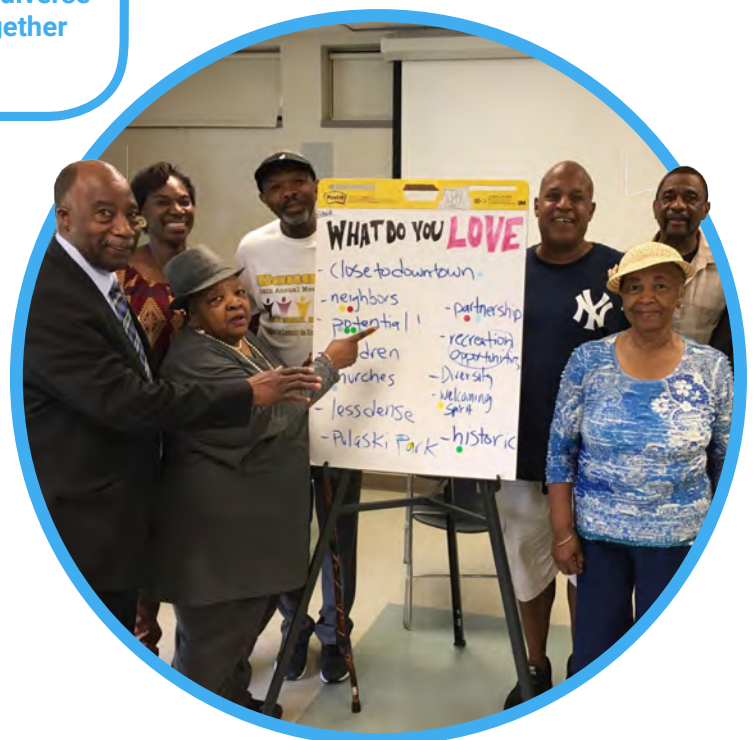
The Catholic Family Center has helped to settle more than 15,000 refugees from a wide range of cultures, ethnicities, and languages here, and nearly 3,400 refugees from Puerto Rico moved to Rochester after Hurricane Maria in 2017 and 2018. Our community and neighborhoods benefit from the rich cultural diversity that these new residents bring, but these population changes also create challenges to effective communication and engagement, which the City and community partners should work to address.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

“There needs to be more effort to incorporate people of diverse backgrounds to work together in neighborhoods.”

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

“A community is only as strong as the individuals who make it up. When those individuals are engaged in partnering together for community building, everyone wins.”



## CITY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Public participation in government is a keystone of democracies and is made possible through local board and commission actions and membership. Residents serving on a public board or commission help to ensure that decision making is based upon the public interest and residents' points of view. The hard work and dedication of people who serve on more than a dozen boards in the City of Rochester contribute to the successful operation and development of our city. These bodies have a positive and direct effect on the quality of life and economic vitality of Rochester. Boards include, but are not limited to:

- City Planning Commission
- Zoning Board of Appeals
- Rochester Preservation Board
- Rochester Environmental Commission
- Board of Assessment Review
- Board of Ethics
- Board of Stationary Engineers
- Electrical Examining Board
- Rochester Economic Development Corporation

Becoming a board member often requires Mayoral and/or City Council approval and members are bound by a Code of Ethics. These are important appointments and any city resident is usually eligible to apply, unless a particular expertise is required. More information on Rochester's Boards and Commissions, can be found [here](#).

Becoming a member is only one way to get involved with boards and commissions. Attending meetings to hear about projects, get to know review processes, and/or to provide input is also an effective way to be engaged and participate in local government decision making.

## RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE CITY BUDGET PROCESS

Fundamental to government operations is the operating budget and capital improvement program. Robust community engagement in the budgetary processes is critical to be effective in impacting priorities and actions in local government. The City of Rochester is committed to resident involvement in the process of developing the City budget. During the budget process, community input is typically solicited through facilitated meetings at City Hall, telephone town hall meetings, and online surveying.

During the *Rochester 2034* public input process, the concept of Participatory Budgeting was mentioned numerous times by the community. Participatory Budgeting is a democratic process used to determine how funds are spent in a community. The Rochester Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative (RMAPI) is currently conducting a pilot of Participatory Budgeting in Rochester and Monroe County, with \$175,000 allocated for participants to decide how to spend on projects in their community.



# B. BUILDING NEIGHBORHOOD CAPACITY [BNC]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>BNC-1</b> <b>Build the capacity of community organizations and associations.</b>	<p>BNC-1a Establish a funding program, through the City budget, grants, or by seeking philanthropic donations, to provide small financial contributions to neighborhood and business associations for capacity-building activities. This can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Neighborhood events</li><li>– Printing and distribution of materials</li><li>– Signage</li><li>– Website design</li><li>– Communication tools</li></ul>	<b>City,</b> Neighborhood Groups, Philanthropic Community
	<p>BNC-1b Create a Neighborhood Toolkit, inclusive of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– How to create a community website</li><li>– Effective and inclusive neighborhood outreach</li><li>– How to plan and facilitate an effective meeting</li><li>– Preparing “Welcome to the Neighborhood” packets to recruit new members</li><li>– How to organize a community garden</li><li>– Zoning 101</li><li>– How to effectively engage in land use and development decisions</li><li>– How to navigate the City Council legislative process</li><li>– How to access and use City open data</li><li>– Successful grant writing and fundraising</li><li>– Tips for running a successful, inclusive neighborhood association</li><li>– How to prepare a neighborhood plan</li></ul>	<b>City,</b> Neighborhood Groups

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>BNC-1</b> Build the capacity of community organizations and associations.	BNC-1c Make a concerted effort to expand neighborhood association membership to include all age groups, people from diverse racial and socio-economic backgrounds, people with disabilities, tenants, and business owners.	<b>Neighborhood Groups</b>
	BNC-1d Pursue a Love Your Block Grant or similar grant, which would give the City funds to provide small grants to support volunteer-led community projects in neighborhoods community.	<b>City,</b> Neighborhood Groups
	BNC-1e Support and participate in the creation of a deaf community master plan by NTID.	<b>NTID,</b> Deaf Community, City
<b>BNC-2</b> Continuously improve City Hall public outreach and communication of City services.	BNC-2a Continue to promote City services through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Media and social media outreach</li><li>– Web maps and apps</li><li>– City staff attendance at community meetings</li><li>– Tabling at special events</li></ul>	<b>City</b>
	BNC-2b Continue to host Neighborhood Presidents meetings and Business Association Presidents meetings to encourage collaboration between the City and neighborhood/business groups and among the presidents.	<b>City,</b> Neighborhood Groups, Business Associations
	BNC-2c Have City staff more regularly attend community meetings to provide direct interface with constituents.	<b>City</b>
	BNC-2d Develop a “Public Engagement Protocol” for City departments to clearly outline goals, objectives, approaches, and tools for all City staff to reference when interacting with constituents. Ideas for meeting locations, times, formats, style, and inclusive outreach should be included in the protocol discussion and product.	<b>City</b>

# B. BUILDING NEIGHBORHOOD CAPACITY [BNC]

## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p><b>BNC-3</b>  <b>Improve City Hall systems to make them more inclusive and accessible.</b></p>	<p>BNC-3a Implement the City of Rochester Language Access Plan, including providing greater provisions for non-English speakers and blind/hearing impaired individuals.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>BNC-3b Develop protocol for when to make language interpreters available at City meetings and events, and as well as when City publications or surveys should be translated.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>BNC-3c Explore options for improving access to 311 by non-English and Spanish speaking residents.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>BNC-3d Consider creating a new City position for an Immigrant/Refugee liaison to help better engage immigrant/refugee communities in the city, gather their input, and connect them with services, resources, and opportunities.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>BNC-3e Apply for the Gateways for Growth Challenge grant to secure funds for the development of municipal initiatives that support immigrants.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>
	<p>BNC-3f Join over 100 cities in becoming a Welcoming America member, to better develop partnerships and resources that can help to support the immigrant and refugee communities.</p>	<p><b>City</b></p>

**Notes:**

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<b>BNC-4</b> <b>Increase resident engagement in City decision-making processes.</b>	BNC-4a Attend board and commission meetings to learn about or to provide input into local government decision making.	<b>Residents</b>
	BNC-4b Actively engage and invite city residents to participate in boards and commissions. Create strategies for engaging traditionally underrepresented populations and young people that would bring an important perspective to decision making.	<b>City</b>
	BNC-4c Get involved in City government by becoming board and commission members.	<b>Residents</b>
	BNC-4d Continue to involve residents in the budget process through community meetings and other means that encourage input from all residents.	<b>City, Residents</b>
	BNC-4e Work with the Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative as they pilot a Participatory Budgeting demonstration project to see what can be learned from their results, as well as from past City-led examples of this model.	<b>City, Residents, RMAPI</b>

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APPENDIX

# A LIST OF ACRONYMS

# A. LIST OF ACRONYMS

## ACRONYMS USED IN THE ACTION PLANS

<b>ACS</b>	American Community Survey
<b>CCD</b>	Center City District
<b>CDFI</b>	Community Development Financial Institutions
<b>CUE</b>	Center for Urban Entrepreneurship
<b>DASNY</b>	Dormitory Authority of the State of New York
<b>DEC</b>	Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)
<b>DHS</b>	Department of Human Services (County)
<b>DOE</b>	Department of Energy (federal)
<b>DRYS</b>	Department of Recreation and Youth Services (City)
<b>ESL</b>	English as a Second Language
<b>FLREDC</b>	Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council
<b>GFLRPC</b>	Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council
<b>GHG</b>	Greenhouse Gases
<b>GRCOC</b>	Greater Rochester Continuum of Care
<b>GRE</b>	Greater Rochester Enterprise
<b>GTC</b>	Genesee Transportation Council
<b>HUD</b>	Housing and Urban Development Department (Federal)
<b>LEED</b>	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
<b>LT2</b>	Long Term 2 Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule
<b>LWRP</b>	Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan
<b>MC</b>	Monroe County
<b>MC DOT</b>	Department of Transportation
<b>MCC</b>	Monroe Community College
<b>MWA</b>	Monroe County Water Authority
<b>MWBE</b>	Minority and Woman Owned Business Enterprises
<b>NY</b>	New York
<b>NY SHPO</b>	State Historic Preservation Office
<b>NYPA</b>	New York Power Authority
<b>NYS</b>	New York State
<b>NYS AG</b>	New York State Attorney General
<b>NYS HCR</b>	Homes and Community Renewal
<b>NYSDEC</b>	New Your State Department of Environmental Conservation
<b>NYS DOT</b>	New York State Department of Transportation
<b>NYSERDA</b>	New York State Energy Research and Development Authority

## ACRONYMS USED IN THE ACTION PLANS

<b>OTR</b>	Operation Transform Rochester
<b>OWN</b>	Owner Worker Network
<b>PRHP</b>	Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (state)
<b>RCSD</b>	Rochester City School District
<b>RDDC</b>	Rochester Downtown Development Cooperation
<b>REDCO</b>	Rochester Economic Development Corporation
<b>RFD</b>	Rochester Fire Department
<b>RG&amp;E</b>	Rochester Gas and Electric
<b>RHA</b>	Regional Housing Authority
<b>RIT</b>	Rochester Institute of Technology
<b>RMAPI</b>	Rochester Monroe Anti Poverty Initiative
<b>ROCBYP</b>	Rochester Black Young Professionals
<b>RPD</b>	Rochester Police Department
<b>RPL</b>	Rochester Public Library
<b>RTS</b>	Regional Transit Service
<b>RYP</b>	Rochester Young Professionals
<b>UR</b>	University of Rochester
<b>WNY</b>	Western New York

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APPENDIX

**B**

# THE HISTORY OF ROCHESTER

# THE HISTORY OF ROCHESTER

## EARLY HISTORY

- 1817** The City of Rochester grew from Rochesterville, a small settlement along the Genesee River that was established in 1817.
- 1823** Connected via roads, the river, and rail lines, by 1823, the Rochesterville village was a booming agricultural, milling, and industrial center, fueled by the opening of the Erie Canal.
- 1834** In 1834, with a population hovering at around 10,000 people, Rochester was incorporated as a city.
- 1838** By 1838, numerous flour mills were in operation in the Browns Race district, powered by the Genesee River's mighty High Falls waterfall. Rochester soon became the largest producer of flour in the United States and earned its nickname, the "Flour City." The population of Rochester continued to increase, attracting immigrants and settlers eager to put down roots in the bustling city. The rapid growth earned Rochester the distinction of being America's first "boom town".
- 1850s** As the production of flour shifted to westward cities in the 1850s, Rochester's economy was in a phase of transition. Nursery and seed businesses were thriving and beginning to dominate the local economy, rendering Rochester its second nickname, the "Flower City." This new identity was enhanced by George Ellwanger and Patrick Barry, the city's most influential horticulturalists, who cultivated over 500 acres of land into the Mount Hope Nursery.
- 1888** In 1888, the city's formal park system was founded with Ellwanger and Barry's donation of twenty acres of land, which became Highland Park. Famous landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted, was commissioned to design this and several of the city's other urban parks, including Genesee Valley Park, Seneca Park, and Maplewood Park. Today, Rochester's iconic nicknames are memorialized in the city's logo, referenced in many local business names, and celebrated annually at the Lilac Festival, the largest free festival of its kind, hosted in Highland Park.





**ROCHESTER TODAY IS SHAPED BY OUR PAST,  
INCLUDING INCREDIBLE WEALTH, WORLD  
RENOWNED INDUSTRIAL TITANS, AND  
EXTRAORDINARY CIVIC ACHIEVEMENTS.**

# THE HISTORY OF ROCHESTER (CONTINUED)

## EARLY CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

During the 19th century, as Rochester emerged as a major agricultural and industrial region, it also gained a reputation for having very active, civic-minded and outspoken residents fighting for change. In the mid-1800s, Rochester was the backdrop to significant sociopolitical events and home to leaders of the abolitionist and women's suffrage movements. The city was the adopted home of both Susan B. Anthony, a leader of the women's rights and suffragist movements and Frederick Douglass, a former slave and a leader in the abolitionist movement.

Rochester's progressive roots and history of civic advocacy continue to be celebrated and recognized in the city today. The legacies of Anthony and Douglass are proudly preserved, both in the local lore and also in events, public infrastructure and parks, and foundations. For instance, the City of Rochester, alongside many community partners, celebrated the bicentennial of Douglass' birth through a year-long series of events, public art dedications, and educational forums in 2018. The Susan B. Anthony House was designated as a national landmark in 1966. Both Anthony and Douglass are buried in Mount Hope Cemetery.

### SUSAN B. ANTHONY

Soon after arriving in Rochester in 1845, Susan B. Anthony began working to secure equal rights for women, including the right to vote. Along with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Anthony founded the American Equal Rights Association and published an influential newspaper, called *The Revolution*, featuring pieces that advocated for justice for all. Anthony's advocacy catalyzed the passing of the New York State Married Women's Property Bill in 1860, which afforded married women the right to own property, maintain control of their own wages, and have custody of their children. Anthony was famously arrested, along with several other suffragists, for voting in Rochester in 1872.





## **FREDERICK DOUGLASS**

Born in slavery in Maryland in 1818, Frederick Douglass spent his first twenty years a slave. In 1838, he successfully escaped to New York City and began speaking publicly and writing of his experiences and the need to abolish slavery. An influential writer and orator, his book, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself*, gained national recognition and thrust him into national spotlight as a key voice in the fight for racial equity.

By the time Douglass moved to Rochester in 1847, he was an established leader in the abolitionist movement. He published the historic newspapers, *The North Star* and the *Frederick Douglass Paper*, from a local church basement. He was active in the Underground Railroad, hosting runaway slaves in his own home. Douglass also advocated for educational reform in partnership with Anthony and in 1857, was successful in ending legalized racial segregation in the Rochester school system. He supported women's suffrage alongside Anthony before moving his family to Washington, D.C. in 1872 after his house on South Avenue was burned down.



# THE HISTORY OF ROCHESTER (CONTINUED)

## EARLY INDUSTRY AND CHANGES IN THE LOCAL ECONOMY

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Rochester was a city of entrepreneurial activity and groundbreaking industrial innovation. Rochester's 19th century economy was rooted in thriving industrial businesses, including Gleason Works, the Rochester Button Company, Stromberg-Carlson, Hickey-Freeman, and the Genesee Brewery. Rochester was internationally known for its production of eyeglass lenses, as Bausch & Lomb established itself as a worldwide leader in production of rubber eyeglass frames, photographic lenses, microscopes, and telescopes. It employed 6,000 people in the early 1900s and grew to 11,000 employees during World War II.

Rochester's most significant innovator and entrepreneur at this time was George Eastman, who founded the Eastman Kodak Company in 1880. The leading pioneer of photography and film in the United States for nearly a century, Kodak shaped not only the industry, but also the Rochester economy and community. At its peak, Kodak produced 90% of the film used in the United States. Eastman achieved great wealth and invested in arts, cultural, and education institutions in Rochester; his name is attributed to organizations such as the Eastman School of Music, the Eastman Theater, and the Eastman Dental Center, as well as investing heavily in the University of Rochester. Rochester's economy was directly tied to the success of Kodak and its local operations. At its employment peak in 1984, 60,400 Rochesterians worked at Kodak.

GEORGE EASTMAN



In the 1960s, Xerox emerged as a major Rochester company, joining Kodak and Bausch & Lomb as the city’s “Big Three” and solidifying Rochester as an international powerhouse in imaging. Although its headquarters were established in downtown Rochester at the Xerox tower for just one year – 1968 – it maintained a strong presence in the region.

As dominant as the Big Three were in shaping Rochester’s economic landscape in the 1960s, their respective declines have fundamentally changed the fabric and economic base of the city. In the 1990s, Xerox employed more than 13,000 people, Bausch & Lomb employed 4,200 people, and Kodak more than 42,000 people in the Rochester area. Nearly one out of ten workers in the Rochester region – approximately 59,100 people – worked at these three companies at that time. However, the emergence of new technology in the digital age, shifts in the companies’ structures, and the great recession had major repercussions. The downfall of these companies was swift and significant.

Today, the University of Rochester, Rochester Regional Health, and Wegmans are Rochester’s new “Big Three”, employing a total of over 55,000 people. The success of these healthcare and grocery retail businesses, respectively, have breathed new life into the Rochester economy, spurring change in the future of the economic landscape.

**THE “BIG THREE” THEN**

**Kodak**

**BAUSCH  
& LOMB**

**XEROX**

∨  
∨  
∨

**THE “BIG THREE” NOW**

UNIVERSITY of  
**ROCHESTER**

**ROCHESTER  
REGIONAL HEALTH**

*Wegmans*

# THE HISTORY OF ROCHESTER (CONTINUED)

## RACIAL TENSION AND CIVIL RIGHTS ADVOCACY

As a result of the mass exodus of African Americans from the Jim Crow South to northern cities during the late 1940s to 1960, the population of African Americans in Rochester increased 300%. Upon arrival in Rochester, African Americans were frustrated to find discriminatory treatment and lack of opportunity in their new city. Racial clauses were instituted in housing, job, and educational opportunities, making it difficult for African Americans to gain economic security or mobility. Black families experienced de facto segregation, as they were primarily forced to live in two crowded city wards. Many did not have the high school diploma necessary to secure manufacturing jobs. They experienced a heavy police presence in their neighborhoods, and were subject to mistreatment and excessive force tactics.

Civil rights advocacy groups were formed by African Americans who called for an end to their separate and unequal experiences in job markets, housing, and education, and called for police reform and representation. Efforts led to the creation of the Integrated Non-Violence Committee, a strong grassroots community organization with both black and white participants. The group was successful in electing the first African American to local public office. In 1961, Constance Mitchell was the first African American to be elected to the Monroe County board of Supervisors (now the Monroe County Legislature). Governmental and industrial practices and policies were being reexamined in favor of more progressive, anti-discriminatory practices. For example, Kodak and Xerox introduced new training procedures to facilitate a pathway for more skilled employment opportunities for African Americans. Even still, unemployment for blacks in 1963 was 16%, compared to 2.5% for whites.

Despite the civic engagement and progress made in the Rochester community, racial tensions continued and eventually erupted with the historic 1964 Race Riots which started with a clash between police officers and community members. The National Guard was forced to intervene to restore order. Following the riots, community and government leaders regrouped, but the strategies to address the underlying problems were varied. The City Manager's antipoverty task force implemented new job training programs and housing initiatives.

In 1965, Saul Alinsky, a national radical leader in community organizing, was invited to help black Rochesterians develop the tools and skills they needed to organize and advocate for structural changes in the city's institutions. Through this engagement, two powerful groups formed: black-led FIGHT (Freedom, Integration/Independence, God, Honor, Today) and Friends of FIGHT, a group of progressive whites who supported FIGHT. The groups advocated for fair employment and economic opportunity.

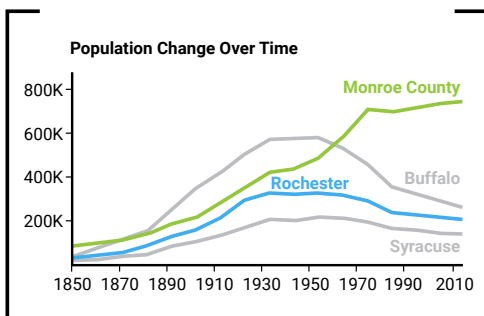
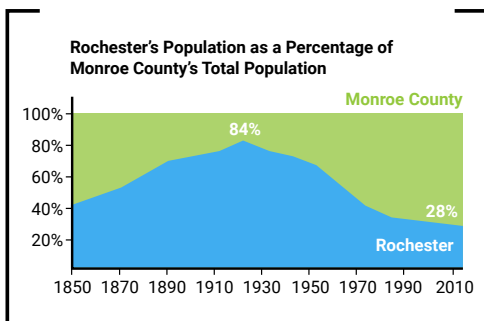
→ 1964 RACE RIOTS



# THE HISTORY OF ROCHESTER (CONTINUED)

## SHIFTS IN THE GEOGRAPHY OF POPULATION, RACE, AND WEALTH

In the 1950s, Rochester was the 32nd largest city in the United States and its population of 332,000 people was 98% white. Rochester's decline in population followed a national trend in urban depopulation brought on by suburbanization, racial tensions, and 'white flight' that began in the late 1950s. In 1940, whites comprised 97.4% of the city's population, compared to 43.7% in 2010. The rise of the automobile, new highway systems, and the creation of residential home mortgages began an exodus of families from the city to newly built tract homes in the suburbs. The population of Rochester fell the most from 1970 to 1980, down 18% in ten years.



White flight and suburbanization constituted a dramatic shift in wealth and economic power from the city to the suburbs. Wealthy residents sold their homes in the city, purchasing newly built homes in the suburbs. Depopulation caused demand for city homes and apartments to decline, leading to decreasing property values over time. This led to serious decline for neighborhood economies and contributed to increasing concentrations of poverty. Until 1968, discriminatory practices in lending known as 'redlining' limited blacks from getting mortgages to purchase homes in white neighborhoods, and confined black homeowners to certain neighborhoods in Rochester.

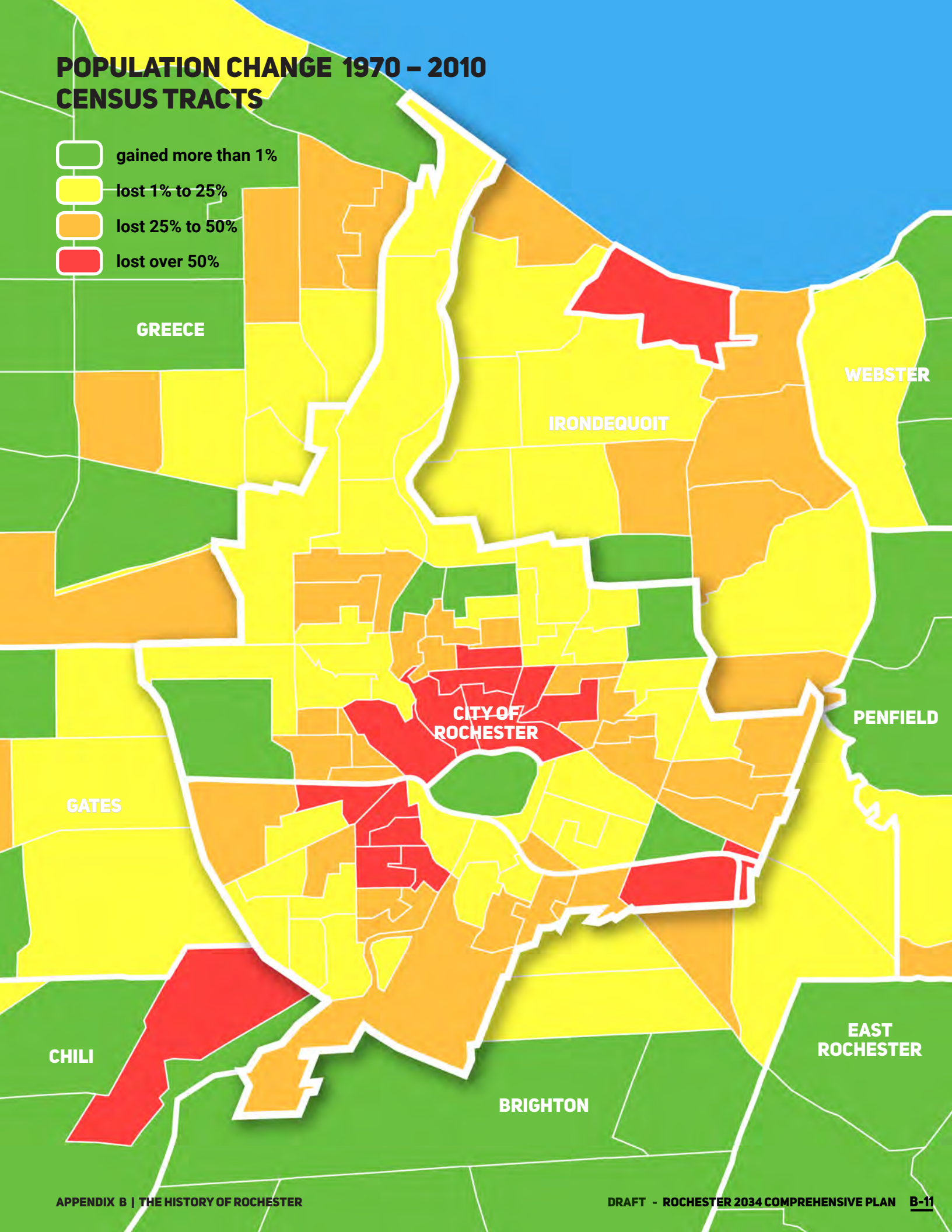
The Rochester City School District began to suffer from increased concentrations of high needs children and declining educational outcomes, alarming remaining families and creating yet another impetus for them to move to the suburbs for better educational opportunities. Over time, all of these factors have combined to create a distilling effect, where those who could afford to move out of the city often chose to, leaving behind those who could not in larger and larger concentrations.

The long-term effects of depopulation as a result of white flight in Rochester included the redistribution of jobs from the city center to the suburbs, resulting in the closing of historic downtown shopping centers such as Midtown Plaza and Sibley's Department Store. Investors and businesses shifted investment patterns to follow white workers and wealthy clientele, building new employment and shopping centers on inexpensive land in the suburbs. Car-oriented shopping malls and suburban office parks sprung up to serve suburban residents. Over time, the bulk of low-skill and entry-level jobs shifted to suburban locations, while some high-skill high paying jobs continue to be concentrated in downtown and at certain city job sites.

These trends result in a spatial mismatch, where many city residents are commuting to the suburbs for work while suburban residents are commuting into the city. The new suburban sites are harder to serve through traditional public transit which makes commuting to suburban locations for city workers without automobiles difficult, isolating them from job opportunities in the suburbs. This structural urban versus suburban divide is one of the biggest issues facing the City of Rochester today.

# POPULATION CHANGE 1970 – 2010 CENSUS TRACTS

-  gained more than 1%
-  lost 1% to 25%
-  lost 25% to 50%
-  lost over 50%



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APPENDIX

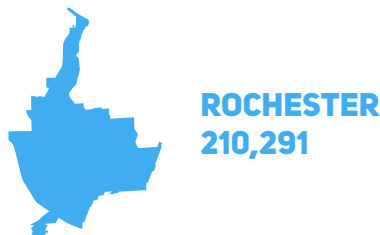
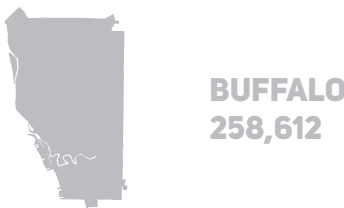
**C**

**ROCHESTER  
TODAY**

# ROCHESTER TODAY

## POPULATION

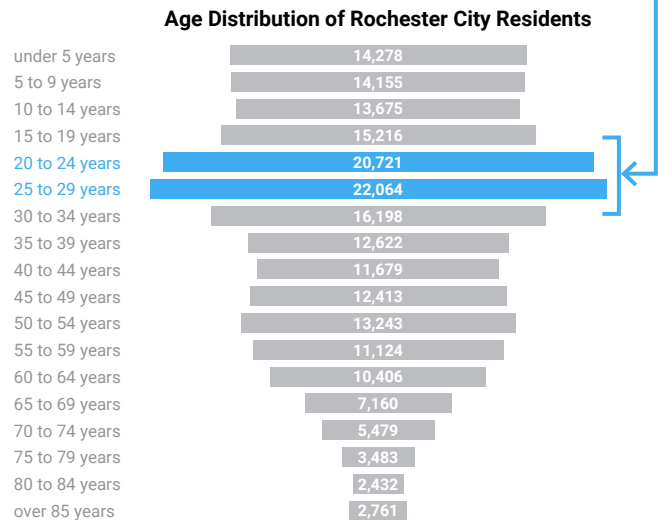
In recent years, population decline has leveled off significantly in the city, with a decrease of only about 4.4% since 2000. Today, with a population of 210,291, Rochester is still New York State's third largest city after New York and Buffalo. The region's greater metropolitan area, which includes Monroe, Orleans, Livingston, Wayne, Ontario, and Yates Counties, has just over one million residents. The city has lost some of its population in the past few decades to suburban areas in Monroe County, which have grown modestly during the same period.



## AGE DISTRIBUTION

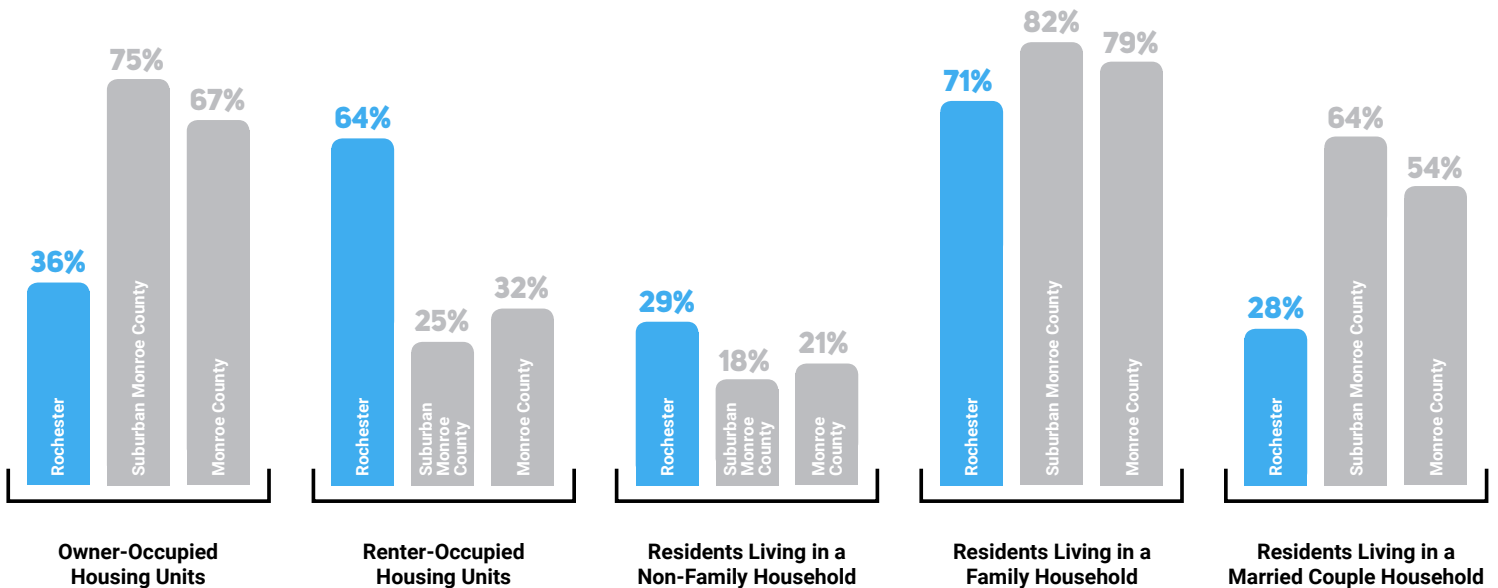
The city's population is aging, as the population of people of childbearing age drops and total births in the city also falls. For example, 3,535 people were born in the city in 2009-2010, but that had fallen to 2,849 by 2015-2016. This is a common trend in the Upstate New York region; Rochester's birth rate per 10,000 people in 2016 was 13.6, similar to that of Buffalo, Syracuse, Yonkers, and Albany at 14.4, 14.4, 12.9, and 12.0, respectively. Rochester's teen pregnancy rate dropped in the recent years. Roughly 10% of all pregnancies were carried by teens in 2016, which is down from nearly 16% in 2000.

Rochester's share of residents 18 and under is projected to decrease to 23% by 2020 while the proportion of residents 65 and older is predicted to rise to 12%. The current median age for city residents is just over 31 years. Monroe County is also experiencing an overall greying of its population, with its median age now 38.6 years. Despite overall aging, the city's age distribution shows a significant millennial population between ages 20 and 30 in the city. **Recent studies have shown that Rochester is retaining its young, educated residents at stronger rates than most other cities in the country.**



## HOUSEHOLDS

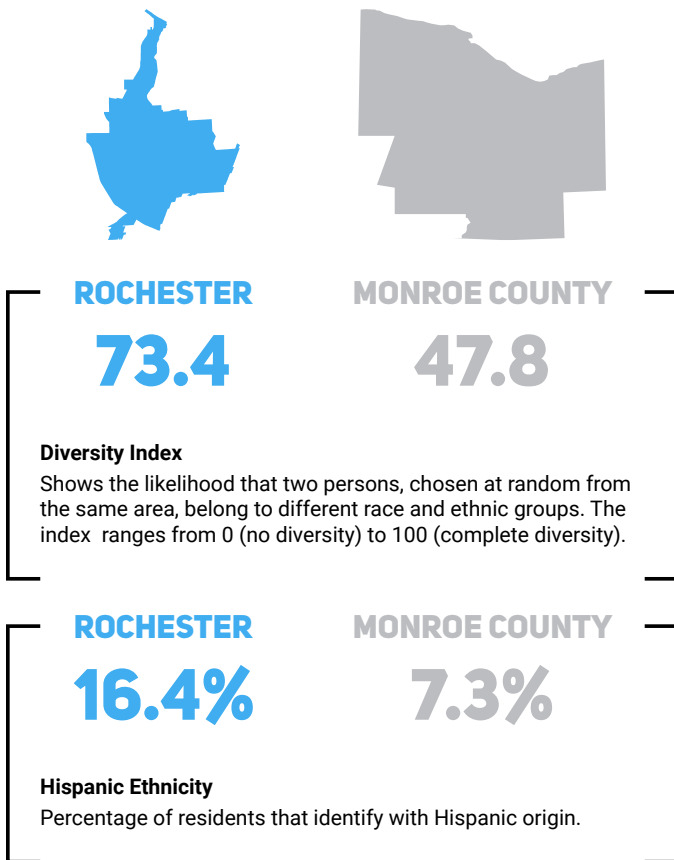
In 2016, there were an estimated 85,814 households in the City, with an average household size of 2.34. Nearly two-thirds of Rochester’s households are renters (64%), while 36% are owner-occupants. The county’s households (outside the city), on the other hand, are mostly (75%) owner-occupants. Most city residents (71%) live in a family household, while only 28% live in households headed by a married couple. This is lower than Monroe County as a whole, where 79% of County residents live with family, and just over half (54%) live in a married couple household.



Source: Census ACS  
2016 5-Year Public  
Microdata Sample

## DIVERSITY

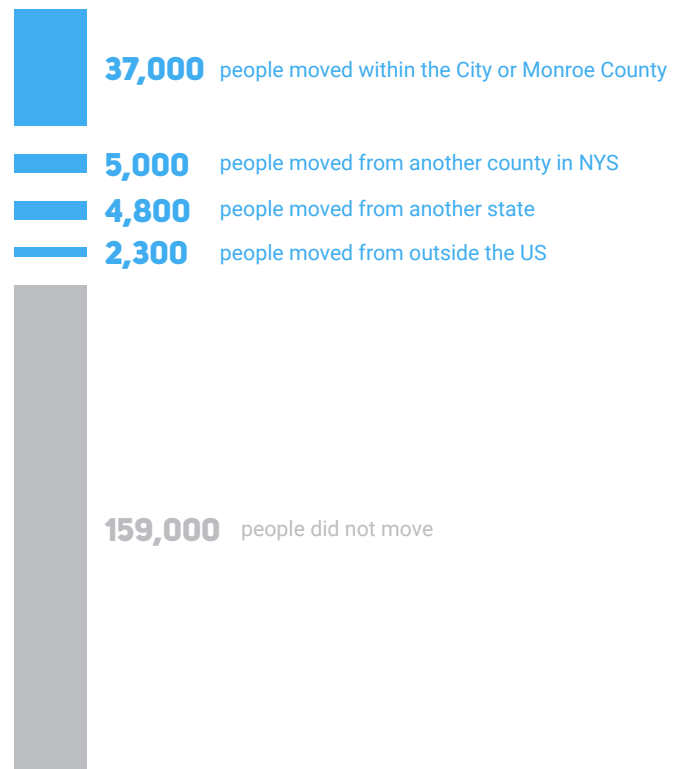
Rochester is a racially and ethnically diverse city, especially relative to the wider Monroe County area. Just over 63% of the city’s residents are from historically underrepresented and marginalized cultural groups, making Rochester one of a growing number of so-termed ‘minority majority’ cities in the United States. This stands in stark contrast to suburban Monroe County, where non-White cultural groups make up 13.4% of the population (i.e., 86.6% non-Hispanic white). This contrast in racial and ethnic strata reflects severe socioeconomic disparities, which will be further discussed later in this section.



Source: Census ACS 2016 5-Year Estimates

Nearly one in five Rochester residents speaks English as a second language, the most common first language being Spanish. Roughly 8.7% of Rochester’s 2016 population was born abroad. Of this foreign-born population, 42.7% have become naturalized citizens. In 2016, approximately 2,284 people had moved to the City of Rochester from outside the US in the past year. Rochester has seen the growth of communities of Bhutanese, Nepalese, and Sudanese, among other immigrant groups moving to Rochester as part of refugee resettlement programs. In 2017 and 2018 Rochester saw an influx of approximately 3,400 refugees from Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria.

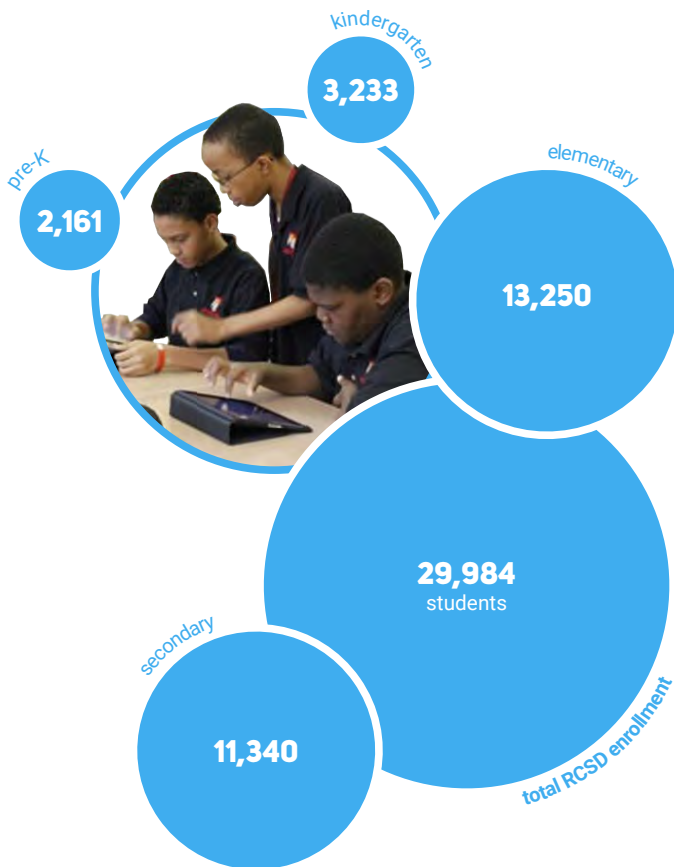
### Migration into Rochester in the Past Year, Age 1 and Older



Source: Census ACS 2016 5-Year Estimates

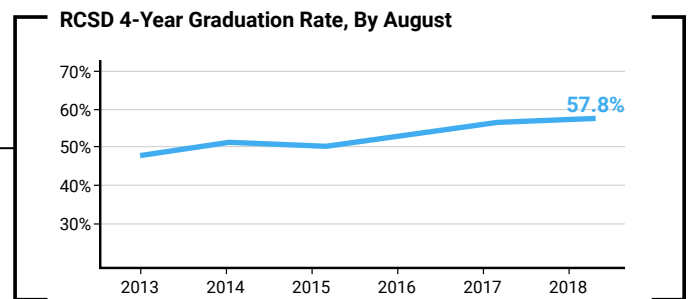
## EDUCATION

The Rochester City School District (RCSD) operates the 50 public schools within the City of Rochester and serves nearly 30,000 students from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. There are an additional 15 charter schools within the city limits serving more than 6,000 students, a figure that has grown substantially in the past ten years. Roughly 13% of RCSD students are learning English as a new language while in school. Of these new English language learners, the most common languages spoken at home are Spanish (67%), Somali (7.5%), Nepali (6.7%), and Arabic (5.5%).



High school graduation rates for the Rochester City School District (RCSD) have been gradually improving in recent years but remain substantially lower than suburban school districts in Monroe County at 56.8% in 2017. Subtracting out RCSD, the County's public school graduation rate is 91%. Despite this disparity, Rochester's graduation rates are largely comparable to the city school districts of Buffalo (63%) and Syracuse (60.5%). Certain high schools, however, like School of the Arts and World of Inquiry School No. 58, regularly graduate more than 90% of their students. District-wide, many schools struggle with low state test passage rates and poor student attendance. Additional challenges and opportunities related to education are discussed later in [Initiative Area 3-Section E, Schools and Community Centers](#).

Compared to suburban Monroe County, City residents are more than three times as likely to not have graduated high school or received an equivalent diploma, reflecting the long term challenges of concentrated poverty in the city.



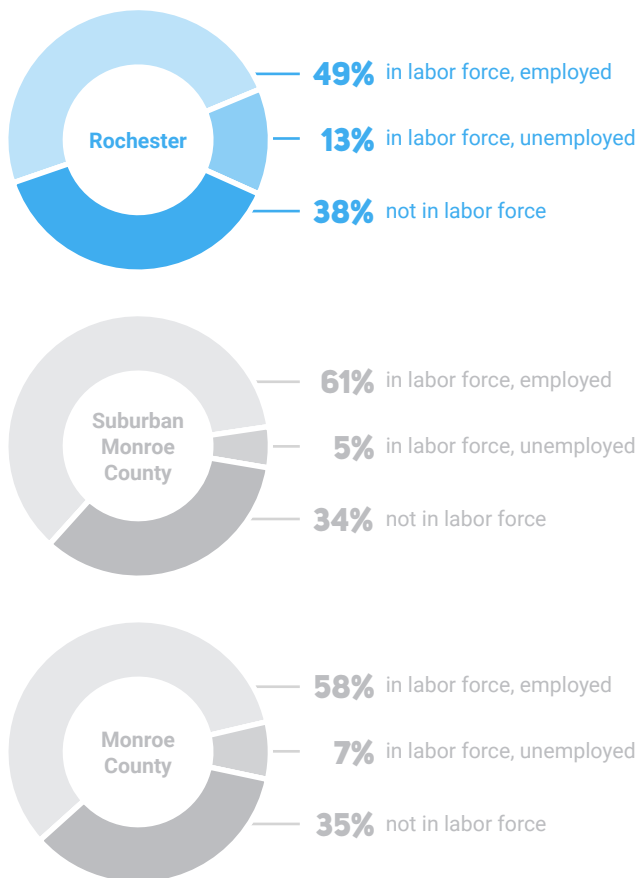
Highest Level of Educational Attainment for Population 25 Years or Older	Rochester	Suburban Monroe County	Monroe County
less than high school	19.2%	6.2%	9.6%
high school graduate	28.1%	23.2%	24.5%
some college or associate's degree	29.0%	29.3%	29.2%
bachelor's degree	14.0%	22.7%	20.4%
graduate or professional degree	9.6%	18.5%	16.2%

## EMPLOYMENT AND WORKFORCE

Rochester has lower rates of labor force participation than Monroe County, New York State and the nation. Labor force participation includes those either employed or actively looking for work (unemployed). It does not include those who have given up searching for work. According to the Census ACS, 62% of Rochester residents age 16 and older are in the labor force, in comparison 65.8% of people 16 or older in suburban Monroe County. In

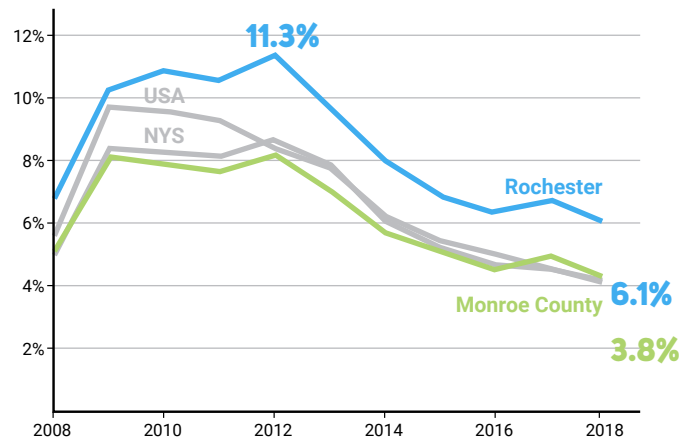
addition, 49% of this population was employed in the city, compared to slightly over 60% in suburban Monroe County. For the most accurate and up to date unemployment rate statistics, this section will refer to Bureau of Labor Statistics data. The city's 6.1% unemployment rate in June 2018 is higher than that of suburban Monroe County (3.8%), Monroe County (4.3%) the state of New York (4.2%), the United States (4.2%) and the Cities of Buffalo (5.9%)

**Employment Status for Population 16 Years and Over**

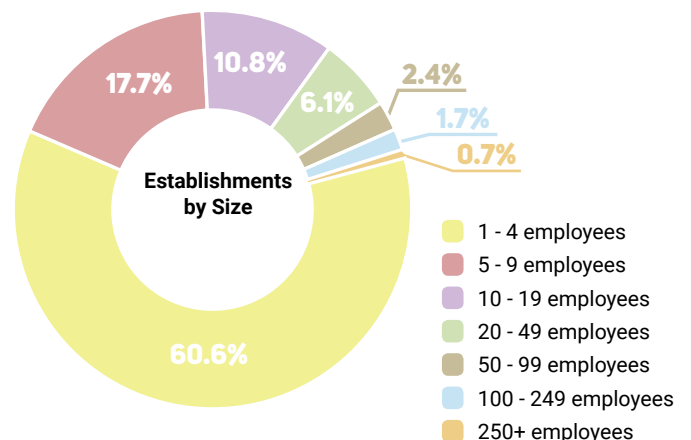


Source: Census ACS 2016 5-Year Estimates

**Unemployment Rates, Month of June**



Source: Census Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Statistics



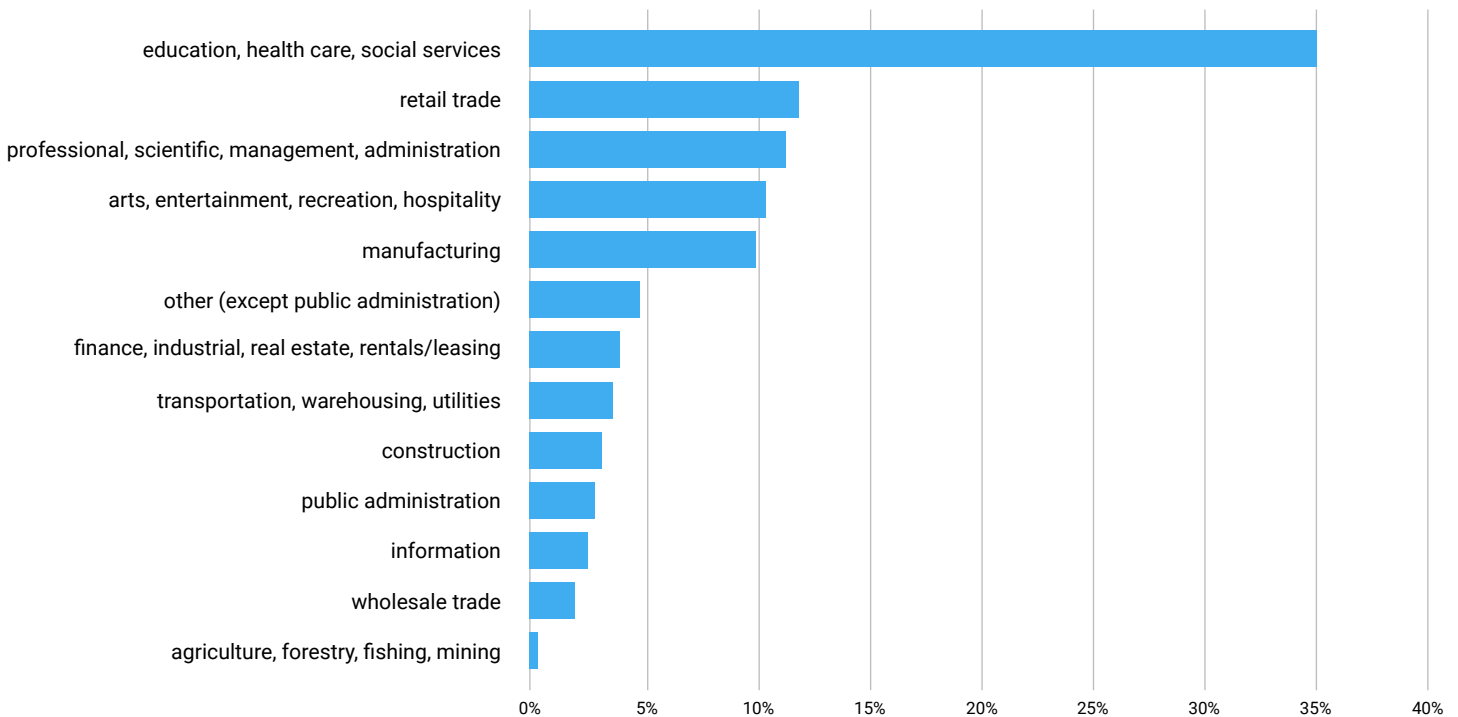
Source: Census ACS 2016 5-Year Estimates

and Syracuse (5.8%). The city's unemployment rate has declined steadily since 2012, but only in 2016 did it achieve a rate lower than it was prior to the great recession that began in 2008. The data suggests that even an improved economy will not cure employment disparities for city residents, and further strategies may be required to help Rochester residents get and maintain employment.

Of Rochester's employed population, 85% work for private sector organizations, 11% in government positions, and roughly 4% are self-employed. Rochester's top industry sector according to number of employees is 'Education, Health, and Social Services' by a wide margin. This industry is anchored by a large number of local universities and a growing health care field.

The data also highlights the decline of Rochester's former leading manufacturing industry, once led by industrial giants like Kodak, Xerox, and Bausch & Lomb. In 2018 the largest employers in the Rochester region are the University of Rochester, Rochester Regional Health, and Wegmans Food Markets, which collectively employ over 55,000 people. However, small businesses are the core of the Rochester's employment base. A majority (60.6%) of establishments in Rochester employ one to four people, while less than 1% employ over 250 people. The City of Rochester is home to over 15,700 companies.

**Employment Status for Population 16 Years and Over**

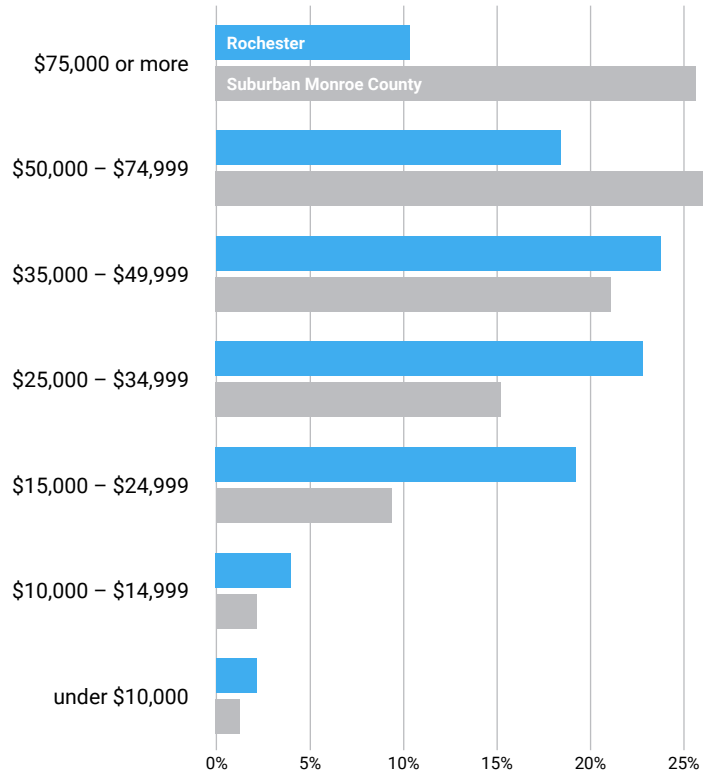


Source: Census ACS 2016 5-Year Estimates

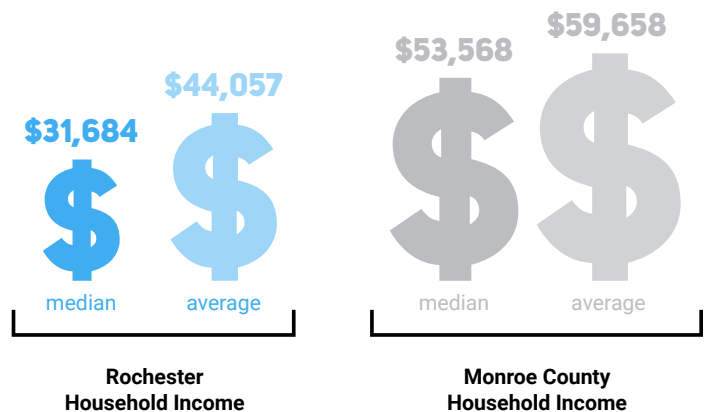
**INCOME**

Rochester residents have significantly lower median individual earnings and median household income, compared to suburban Monroe County and Monroe County as a whole. Rochester has a much higher proportion of workers in the low and middle earnings categories, as shown in the chart at right. Over a quarter (25.1%) of full-time earners in Rochester make less than \$25,000, compared to only 12.5% for their counterparts in suburban Monroe County. Census data estimates don't allow for calculation of median earning and income values for suburban Monroe County, but compared to Monroe County as a whole, the City of Rochester's median household income is 40.8% less. This disparity would be even larger if comparing to the median for suburban Monroe County. A good deal of this disparity is driven by Rochester's much higher prevalence of single-earner households compared to the suburban county, as discussed earlier. Rochester's median household income, however, is comparable to Buffalo and Syracuse.

**Earnings in the Past 12-Months for Full-Time Workers**



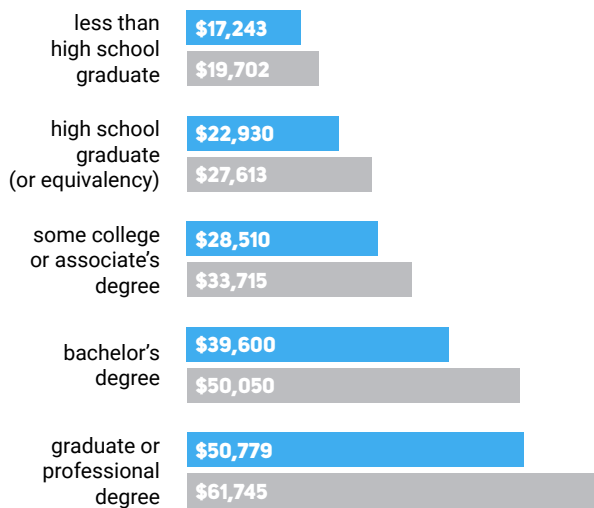
Source: Census ACS 2016 5-Year Estimates



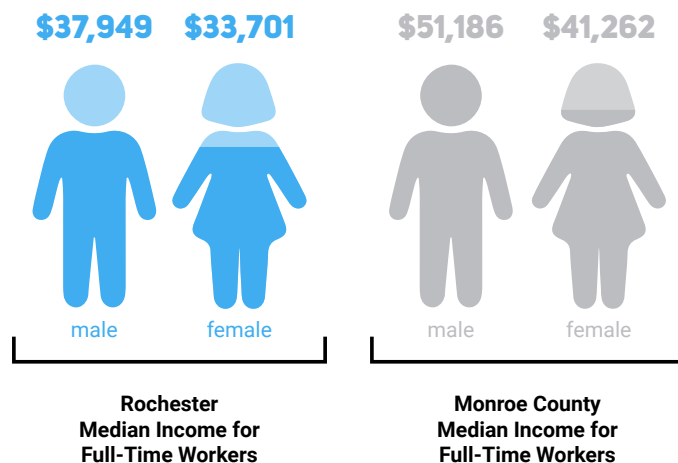


A common perception is that the earnings and income gaps between residents of the city and suburban county may be driven by the substantially lower levels of educational attainment in the city, as discussed earlier in this section. However, controlling for education levels, City of Rochester residents are still earning less than their counterparts of equal education levels in the suburban county. Median earnings for city residents are lower at every education level compared to the median earnings county-wide as shown below. The earnings gap is largest for the highest education levels, with Rochester residents median earnings about \$10,000 less than the county median for their counterparts. This data suggests that higher earners tend to choose to live in the suburbs, no matter their education level. It may also suggest some degree of discrimination on the part of employers related to the achievements of minority populations.

**Median Earnings for Workers 25 or Older with Earnings**



A good deal has been written about disparities in pay between men and women at both the national and local level. Despite improvements over the last two decades, earnings disparities still exist between male and female workers in Monroe County and Rochester. Male full time workers make more than their female counterparts when considering both the city and countywide median earnings. Interestingly, the gap in earnings is significantly smaller in the city compared to the countywide median.



**HOUSING AFFORDABILITY**

The Rochester metro area has some of the lowest home sale prices in the country, especially compared to large cities where housing prices are skyrocketing. Rochester is regularly included on lists of most affordable communities in which to live, such as Forbes. Homeownership is very attainable for households in Rochester with stable income and/or two income earners.

The city and county, however, show wide disparities in home values driven by long term depopulation and entrenched issues of concentrated poverty. Almost 65% of housing units in the city are valued below \$100,000, compared to just 20% of units in Monroe County. The city’s median home value is \$77,800, which is 45% lower than Monroe County’s (\$140,200).

Although the dollar amount of gross rent in Rochester (\$779) is significantly less expensive than for places like Boston (\$1,274) or New York City (\$1,297), median income in Rochester (\$31,684) is also much lower than those places – so much so that median gross rent eats up a significantly larger portion of median income in the City of Rochester than it does for some cities with much higher housing prices. The Rochester metro area is more affordable for renters on this metric than the city is, because it has

significantly higher median income (\$138,500) due to inclusion of higher earners in the suburbs, while median gross rent (\$821) is only slightly higher than the city’s. This continues to highlight the disparity in urban vs suburban income and housing affordability in our region.

Due to low incomes and high poverty rates, Rochester’s homeownership rate is quite low. Just over one third of households (36.4%) in the city were homeowners as of the latest Census ACS 5-Year 2016 estimates. Comparing to Suburban Monroe County where nearly three out of four households own their home, there is a stark disparity in homeownership rates. However, city residents who are able to purchase a home have relatively affordable housing costs.

The Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines affordability as spending no more than 30% of income on housing. For homeowners this includes a mortgage payment with principal, insurance, taxes, interest (PITI). Only one quarter of homeowners in Rochester spend more than 30% of their income on housing. While the city should further research and develop solutions to support the 25% of homeowners who

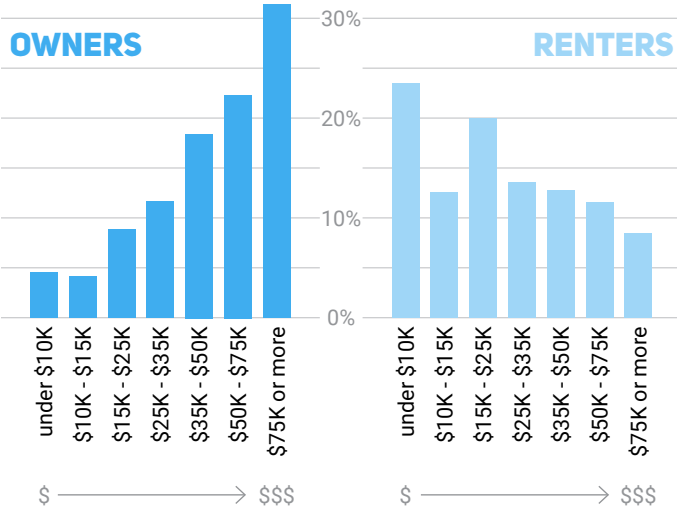
**Comparative Housing Costs and Income Data**

	<b>Rochester</b>	Monroe County	New York City	Boston	San Francisco
Median Household Income	<b>\$31,684</b>	\$53,568	\$55,191	\$58,516	\$87,701
Median Owner-Occupied Home Value	<b>\$77,800</b>	\$140,200	\$508,900	\$423,200	\$858,800
Median Gross Rent	<b>\$779</b>	\$843	\$1,294	\$1,369	\$1,632
Median Annual Rent	<b>\$9,348</b>	\$10,116	\$15,528	\$16,428	\$19,584
Years of Median Household Income Needed to Purchase Median Value Owner-Occupied Home	<b>2.5</b>	2.6	9.2	7.2	9.8
Percent of Median Household Income Needed to Pay Median Gross Rent	<b>30%</b>	19%	28%	28%	22%

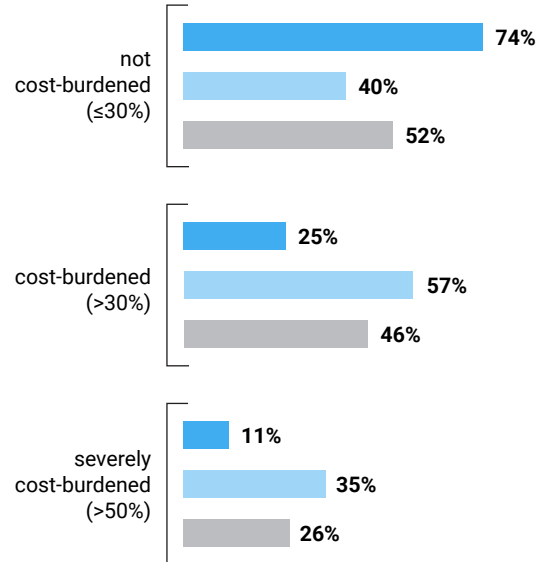
Source: Census ACS 2016 5-Year Estimates

**Median Household Income and Cost Burden in Rochester**

**Income Distribution of Rochester Households**



Source: Census ACS 2016 5-Year Estimates



Source: Census ACS 5-Year Estimates 2015 and HUD's 2015 CHAS (released June 2018)

are “cost burdened” – a term that describes anyone paying more than 30% of their income on housing – this indicator suggests that most homeowners in the city enjoy stable, affordable housing.

Two thirds of city households (63.5%) are renters. Median gross rent in the city is \$779 and renter households have a much higher rate of housing cost burden than homeowners. Nearly 60% of renter households spend more than 30% of their annual household income on housing costs (contract rent plus utilities). This is primarily driven by the city’s high rates of poverty, low household incomes, and the fact that there is a pricing floor below which there are very few rentable apartments. As the table below shows, less than 15% of occupied rental units in Rochester have gross rents less than \$500.

Breaking households out by federally-defined HUD income bands, we see the greatest number of Rochester’s rental households are in the lowest income bands. Nearly 40% of Rochester’s rental households (20,237) earn 30% or less of area median income (AMI), which is a maximum of \$10,107 per year. This income band also has the worst rates of

housing affordability, as more than 91% of these households are cost burdened.

Looking exclusively at households that have affordable rent levels helps illuminate the challenges in addressing housing affordability for the lowest income bands. Households below 50% of AMI (up to \$21,299 per year) would need to pay gross rent below \$500 to satisfy their affordability needs. These households make up nearly 58% of rental households in the city, but as noted above, fewer than 15% of occupied rental units have gross rents less than \$500 a month.

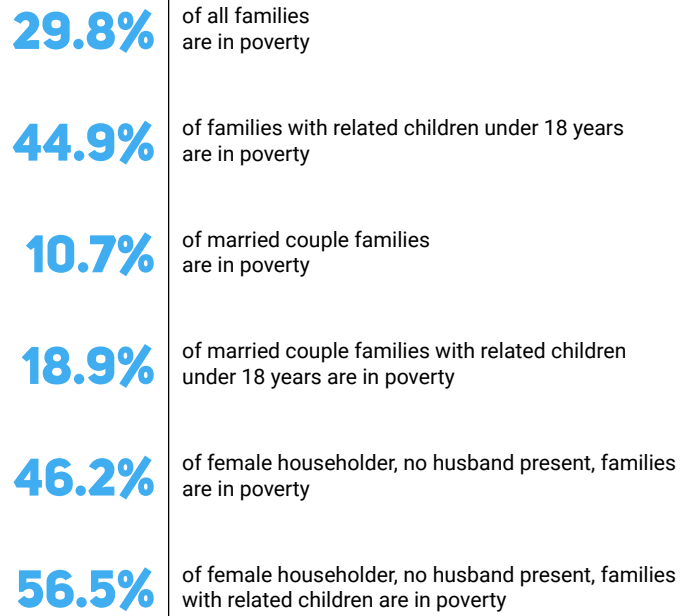
The housing market may not be able to satisfy the high need for affordable rents at the lowest rental price points due to limits on how cheaply units can be rented while still covering fixed costs of construction and operation. Without access to the enormous amount of subsidy that would be required to create tens of thousands of low-rent units, it is more realistic for the City to work on increasing incomes and other strategies to support these households. See [Initiative Area 3-Section A, Housing](#) for more information on the city’s housing market.

**POVERTY**

Low household incomes in the city translate to high poverty rates as shown in the bar chart below. Poverty is a measure designed to quantify a household’s ability to purchase their basic needs. A household’s poverty status is determined based on the number of individuals in the household and the total household income, and an income threshold updated annually by the federal government. For example, in 2018 a family of four must make at least \$25,100 or they are considered to be in poverty. Individuals who live in households in poverty are counted towards the total individuals in poverty. The poverty rate is the percentage of the total population in poverty. As of the latest Census American Community Survey data from 2016, over 32% of people in the city are living in poverty.

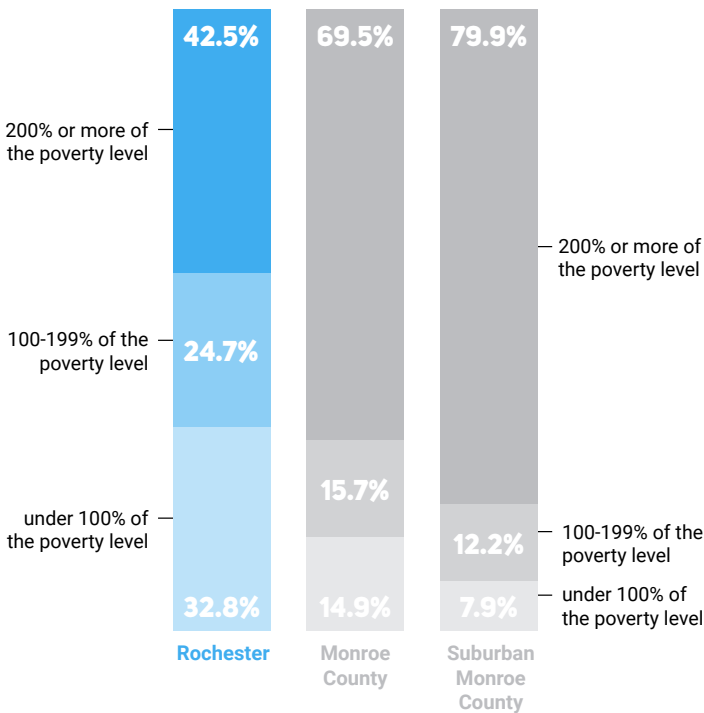
Certain family types have higher rates of poverty. Households with multiple children and only one income earner are extremely challenged to meet the poverty threshold. 56.5% of single-female headed family households are in poverty and account for 54% of the total population in poverty in the City of Rochester. Single-female headed households also account for 88% of children in poverty in the city. Married couple families are much less likely to be in poverty.

**Poverty Rates by Family Type, Rochester**



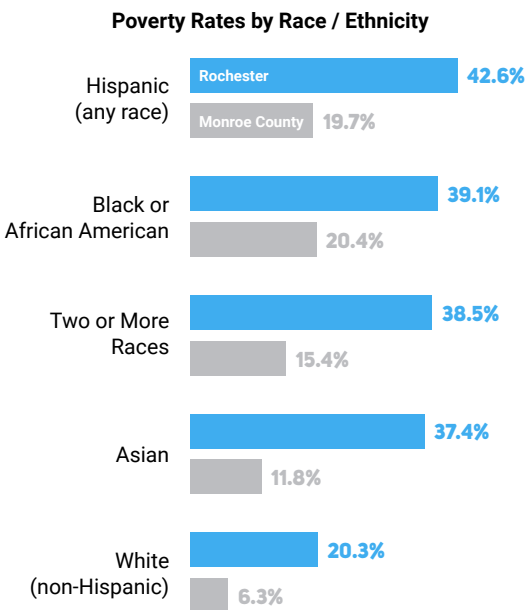
Source: Census ACS 2016 5-Year Estimates

**Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months**



Source: Census ACS 2016 5-Year Estimates

As has been shown through extensive research nationally and locally, certain racial and ethnic groups also have higher poverty rates. Black and Hispanic individuals in the city are more than twice as likely to be in poverty as their non-Hispanic white counterparts. In the suburbs, they are more than three times as likely to be in poverty, while rates for both groups are substantially lower. Interestingly, whites in the City of Rochester have about the same poverty rate as black and Hispanic individuals in suburbs. These disparities in poverty rates by geography and race continue to underscore Rochester’s history of economic and racial segregation.

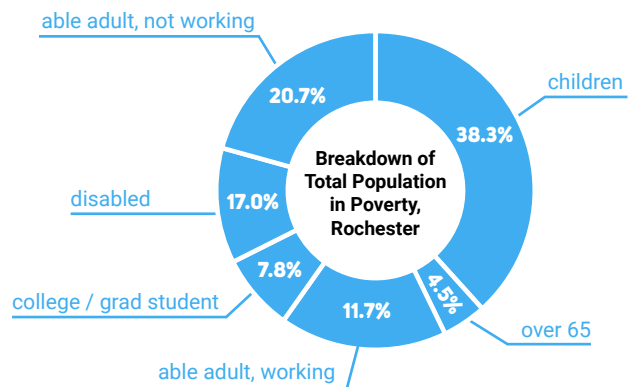


Source: Census ACS 2016 5-Year Estimates

Breaking down the diverse population in poverty into sub-populations according to employability is valuable to help determine potential strategies that may be tailored specifically to their needs. Over 38% of people in poverty in the City of Rochester are children. While it is critical to support children’s health and educational opportunities, children’s poverty status can only be impacted by increasing the income and employment of the adults in their household.

Another 17% of the population are adults that have a disability, 7.8% are currently in college or graduate school, and 4.5% are over age 65. These individuals may be able to work, but may face barriers that require strategies to address them that are more difficult and nuanced. The remaining 32.8% (21,711) of people in poverty are considered ‘able bodied’ adults, and do not appear to have major physical or lifecycle barriers to employment. These individuals are potential targets for traditional workforce development strategies.

Approximately 17,139 children in poverty live in households headed by an ‘able adult’. Combining able adults and their children together, this group makes up 58% of people in poverty who could potentially be impacted by traditional workforce development strategies.



Source: Census ACS 2016 5-Year Public Microdata Sample

**POVERTY** CONTINUED

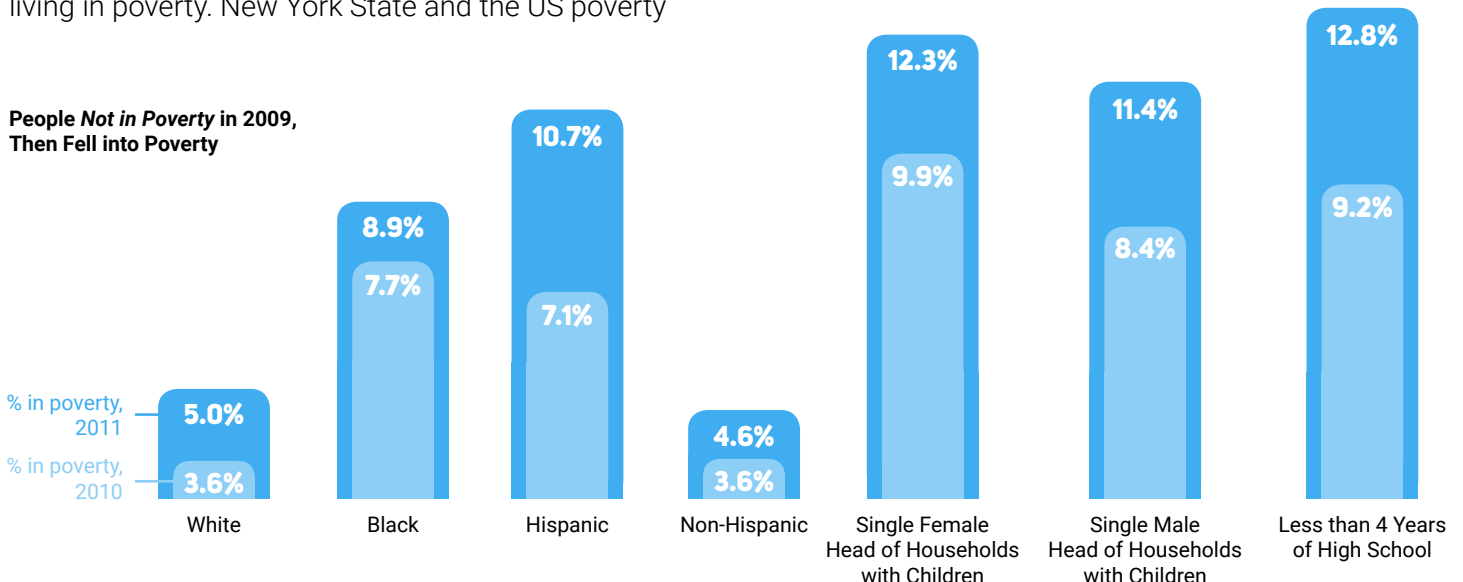
The federal poverty threshold is a low standard, and many households with incomes that place them out of poverty are still not self-sufficient. These households still rely on public benefits and government programming to afford many basic needs, goods, and services. These families also do not have the disposable income to save money, build wealth, or advance up the socioeconomic ladder. Households that have earnings between poverty and self-sufficiency can end up falling into poverty when minor life crises spin out of control. For example, deferred maintenance on a car can lead to a breakdown, causing a person to be late for work, and getting them fired from their job. Without income, that household would potentially be put into poverty. Of people in poverty, about 35.4% will be out of poverty within two years. The median length of stay in poverty is 6.2 months, 8.2 months for minority groups. This more dynamic understanding of the fluctuations of poverty for individuals and families is important to help policymakers and service providers address these issues.

Despite these severe poverty issues in the city, Monroe County as a whole is on par with national and state poverty averages, with 14.9% of people living in poverty. New York State and the US poverty

rates are 15.5% and 15.1%, respectively. What sets the Rochester metro area apart is its concentration of poverty in the city in relation to the surrounding suburbs, another measure of geographic income inequality and segregation. While the City of Rochester accounts for only 28.1% of the population in the County, it accounts for 61.4% of the County's people in poverty. The poverty rate for suburban Monroe County is only 7.9%.

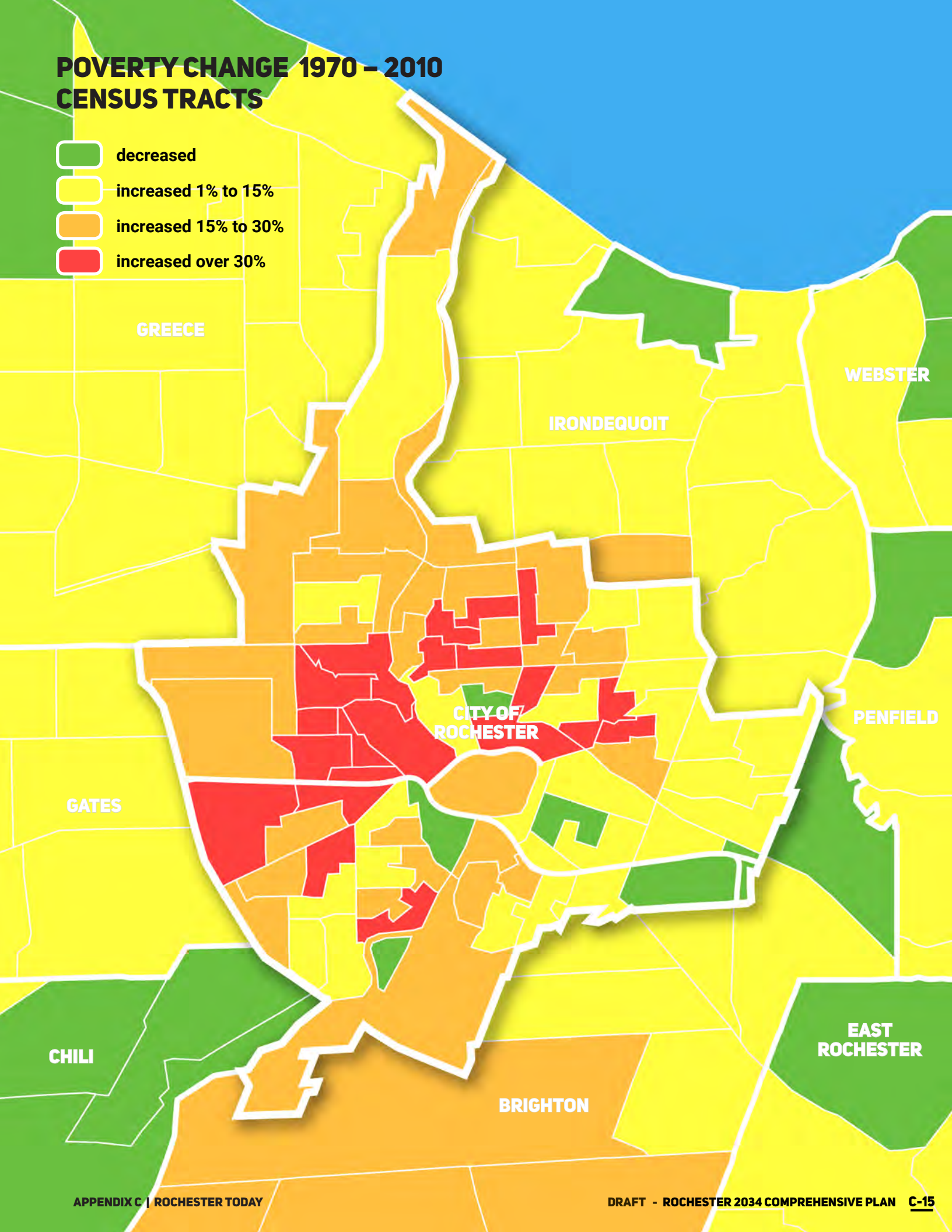
In 1970, Rochester had only two census tracts over 30% poverty rate, compared to 34 in 2010, an increase of 1600%. According to 2016 Census data, the population of these 34 census tracts is 83.4% minority (non-white and/or Hispanic), and have a collective poverty rate of over 48%. Eighteen of these 34 tracts saw dramatic increases in poverty rate over 30% between 1970 and 2010. None of Rochester's tracts that have ever eclipsed 30% poverty rate since 1970 have rebounded to under 15% poverty rate. Of city census tracts that have ever eclipsed 15% poverty, only three have rebounded to be under 15% by 2016. These tracts include a portion of the Swillburg neighborhood, a portion of the ABC Streets neighborhood, and 'the Triangle' portion of North Winton Village.

**People Not in Poverty in 2009, Then Fell into Poverty**



# POVERTY CHANGE 1970 – 2010 CENSUS TRACTS

- decreased
- increased 1% to 15%
- increased 15% to 30%
- increased over 30%



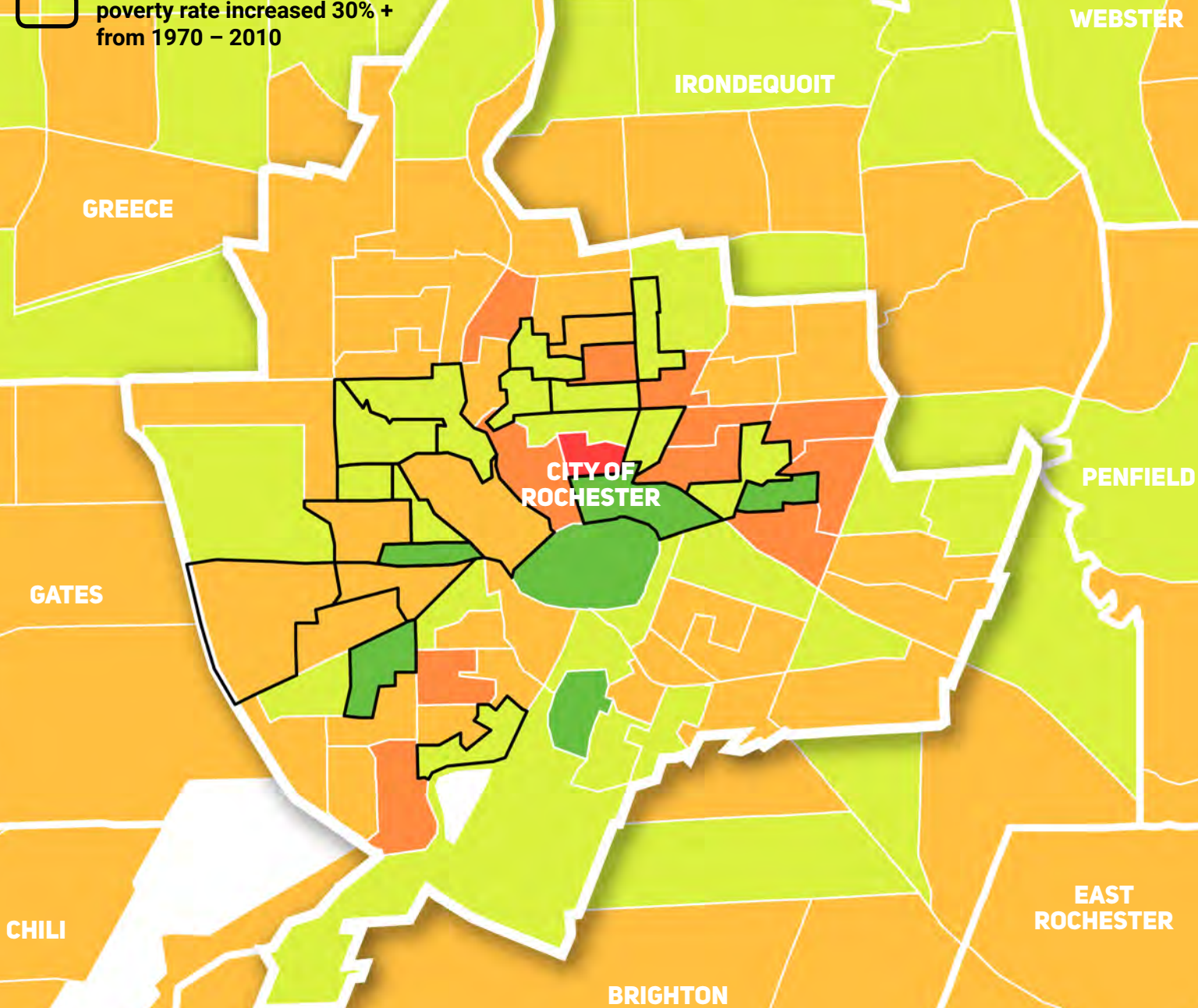
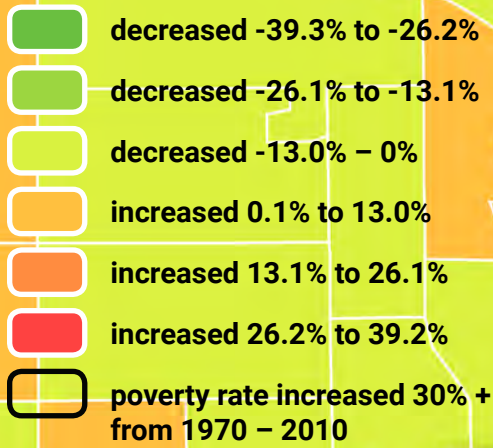
## POVERTY CONTINUED

From 2010-16, the city gained an additional 11 tracts with over 30% poverty rate, bringing the total to 45 census tracts. However, there were some more positive trends. Of the 34 tracts over 30% poverty in 2010, 17 saw their poverty rates go down 2010-2016. The decline in poverty rate for these tracts averaged about 9%. This data seems to show that longtime high poverty tracts are improving slightly, while high poverty concentrations are spreading into new areas of the city.

Monroe County is not immune to these economic challenges. Nearly every census tract in the surrounding suburban towns of Monroe County saw increasing poverty rates from 2010 to 2016. Many suburban leaders are beginning to understand that poverty and concentrated poverty are no longer just the city's issue. Left unaddressed, poverty may continue to grow and have a more pronounced impact on suburban and rural communities.



# POVERTY CHANGE 2010 – 2016 CENSUS TRACTS



## POVERTY CONTINUED

Rochester's poverty issues, concentrated poverty, and economic segregation are one of the greatest threats to the future of the region.

### ADDRESSING POVERTY

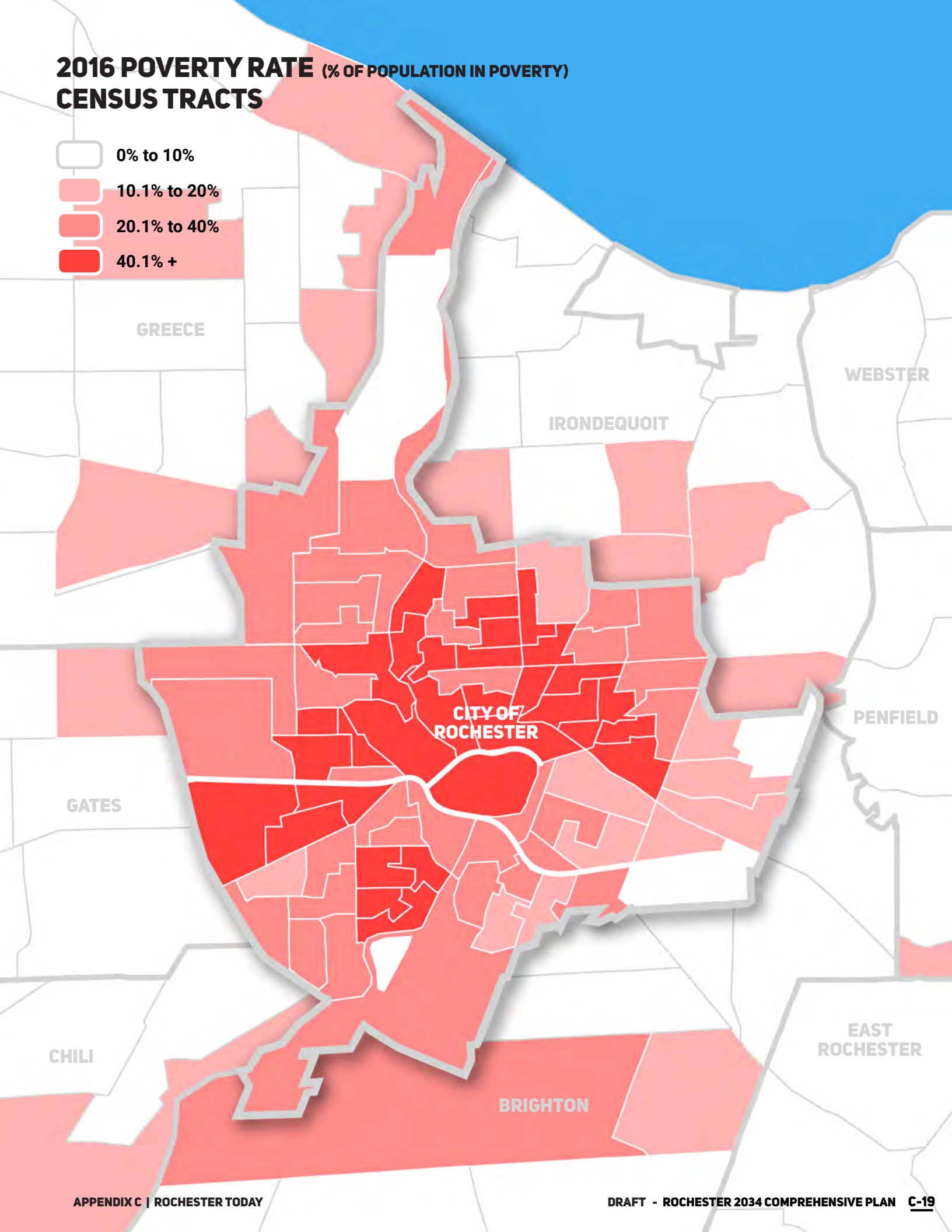
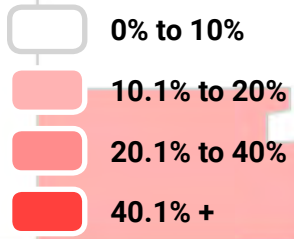
Though Rochester has struggled for decades with poverty, a 2013 report from ACT Rochester and the Rochester Area Community Foundation articulated the issue in stark and measurable terms, which catalyzed unparalleled community action. While the report highlighted the problems facing Rochester, it also motivated individuals and groups across the community to come together and develop strategies to address them.

In 2014, the Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative (R-MAPI) was launched by Governor Andrew Cuomo and local leaders as an unprecedented community-wide effort in Rochester and the Monroe County region to address its approach to reducing poverty, with fragmented and often disconnected service providers leaving gaps in service and duplicating efforts. R-MAPI was created to address the need for agencies to work together in alignment towards mutual goals as well as alongside the residents in poverty who they were working to help.

R-MAPI is a convening organization, composed of community leaders, including elected officials, nonprofit and business and government agency executives, local college administrators, the faith community, and community members. R-MAPI began to deploy a collective impact strategy to move the needle on poverty, with a collaborative, community-driven, data-informed, and person-first approach. After a period of extensive community outreach, R-MAPI began to and is currently implementing, or working with partner agencies to implement actions from the frameworks of community building, addressing structural racism, and poverty-induced trauma.

The overarching mission of R-MAPI is to reduce poverty in Rochester by 50% by 2030 by increasing household income and improving the affordability of basic needs, while reducing the concentration of poverty in Rochester. R-MAPI is working to bring a vision of a comprehensive, integrated system of social supports that empowers families as they move out of poverty and capitalize on opportunities to increase their economic mobility.

# 2016 POVERTY RATE (% OF POPULATION IN POVERTY) CENSUS TRACTS



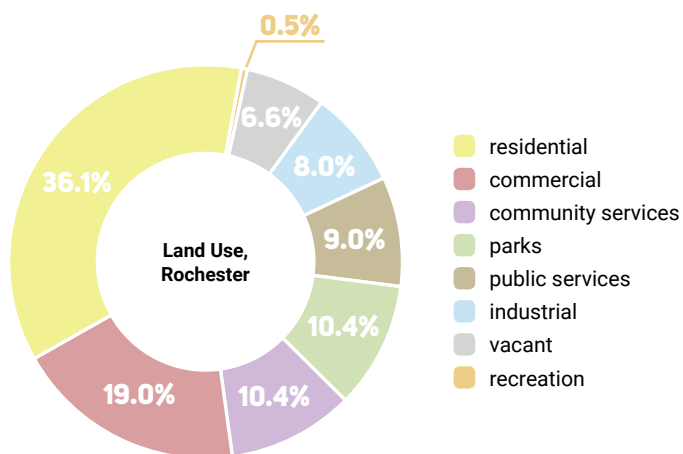
## LAND USE AND ZONING

The City of Rochester occupies 37 square miles, of which 1.3 square miles are water. The city is almost entirely built out, with the only remaining undeveloped lands found in portions of the Genesee River Gorge. The rest of the city was fully developed by the middle of the 20th Century. Homes and commercial buildings built since then have typically replaced demolished structures that predate World War II. Unlike many municipalities in Midwestern and Western states, Rochester stopped annexing land in the 1910s due to increasingly challenging annexation laws.

The largest land use category in the city is residential, covering about 36% of the area. Commercial lands, including mixed-use corridors and the downtown core make up the next largest category at 19%. The breakdown of zoning district categories has a noticeable discrepancy with existing land uses. **While zoning and land use categories are not expected to match exactly, Rochester's residential zoning districts cover 15% more area than is occupied by actual residential properties. Given that Rochester does not have a booming single-family residential market, this suggests that the city is somewhat over-zoned for residential uses.**

The City's first zoning code was created in 1919; it was last given a major overhaul in 2003. During that update, the City also established its first form-based code, pertaining to the downtown area, whereby far greater emphasis was placed on the design of buildings and sites than traditional lists of permitted and non-permitted uses. [Initiative Area 2, The Placemaking Plan](#) presents a blueprint for a proposed revised zoning district map and associated regulations.

Vacant land is a challenge in Rochester that impacts some areas more than others, as decades of disinvestment have led to substantial levels of abandonment, disrepair, and demolition in certain neighborhoods. Nearly 7% of the city's land is vacant. The City's demolition program has accelerated in recent years to mitigate negative impacts of abandoned structures, leaving many empty lots in some neighborhoods. [Initiative Area 3-Section B, Vacant Lands](#), explores this issue in greater depth, outlining recommendations for these properties moving forward.



## HOUSING

Approximately 90% of the roughly 65,000 properties in the city have some kind of residential use, according to City tax assessment records. However, as noted above, these uses cover only 36% of the land, as residential properties tend to be much smaller than other land use categories.

Single family homes compose three quarters of the residential buildings in the city, but only 43% of all residential units, meaning that most housing in the city is multi-family. Nearly a quarter of residential units are in doubles or triples, but doubles and triples make up just 20% of all residential buildings. Although apartment buildings with four or more units constitute only 3% of all residential buildings in the city, they contain nearly 30% of all its residential units.

Rochester has one of the most historic housing stocks of any U.S. city, which reflects the time period when the city was industrializing and growing during the 19th century and early to mid-20th century. More than half of the city's residential buildings were built before 1940 and three quarters were built before 1960, when the city's population began to decline. Less than 4% of residential buildings in the city are vacant. The vast majority of vacant residential buildings are privately owned (96%). Two thirds of vacant residential buildings are single family homes and a quarter of them are doubles.



Age of Rochester's Housing Stock



## TRANSPORTATION

Rochester is home to a large, multi-modal transportation network that sees over 1,200,000 daily trips, including people coming to the city, leaving the city, passing through, and those traveling from one part of the city to another. Rochester's transportation system is dominated by a network of streets of varying types that support commercial corridors and employment centers. Automobile traffic is greater on north-south major streets as expressways carry the highest east-west volumes. The El Camino and Genesee Riverway Trails allow pedestrians and cyclists to travel easily along most of the Genesee River corridor, while the Erie Canalway Trail provides an important non-motorized link along the city's southern edge.

Meanwhile, Rochester's streets are home to over 50 miles of bike lanes and protected lanes, all of which have been implemented since November 2011. Additionally, a bikeshare system was launched in the summer of 2017 and expanded in 2018. Regional Transit System (RTS) manages the bus system for the Greater Rochester Area, which sees over 40,000 transit rider trips per day, a number expected to grow after a redesign of RTS's transit routes going into effect in 2020. As a regional center, Rochester is also the focus of a high amount of freight transport activity both on the street network as well as via rail. For more information on Rochester's transportation system, see [Initiative Area 4-Section E, Transportation](#), or the [City's Transportation System Factbook](#).



## POSITIVE TRENDING

The City of Rochester is in a phase of reinvention and reimagination. Mayor Lovely Warren has repeatedly stated that Rochester, once a company town, is now a town of companies, referring to an economy that is far more diversified than in previous generations. Fueled by its residents' entrepreneurial spirit and a new wave of funding opportunities, Rochester is taking action. Local and state leaders are working together on many anti-poverty and economic development plans, and successfully securing funding streams to facilitate their implementation. There is unprecedented alignment toward the goals for achieving a robust and vibrant Rochester that focuses on accessibility, development, and commitment to ensuring opportunity for all.

In addition to these improved strategies and greater collaboration, the private market is showing many signs of health, especially in certain neighborhoods and downtown. For example, the number of building permits submitted has increased by 36% since 2010. Multiple neighborhoods are seeing an increase in population for the first time in decades, with several others stabilizing. The city is experiencing a wave of renewed entrepreneurialism, embracing new small businesses that are headquartered in buildings vacated by the city's former corporate giants. Eastman Business Park, Kodak's largest manufacturing complex at 1,200 acres, is now home to 70 diverse businesses. Many of these new businesses are remnants of former operations of the Big Three (Kodak, Xerox, Bausch and Lomb) or are staffed and run by former employers. This speaks to Rochester's resilience in the face of decline, as well as the entrepreneurial spirit that has been a constant driver throughout the region's history.

Capitalizing on a wave of urbanism and the love of city living among the millennial generation, Rochester boasts many pockets of exciting new businesses, neighborhoods that are getting healthier and even thriving, and a renewed sense of hope and pride. Most notably, many of Rochester's young enthusiasts are driving the perception shifts and are heavily involved in charitable work and activism, seeking a revitalization that positively impacts all of Rochester's residents. This enthusiasm and inclusive spirit is reflected in the vision, principles, goals and strategies of *Rochester 2034*.

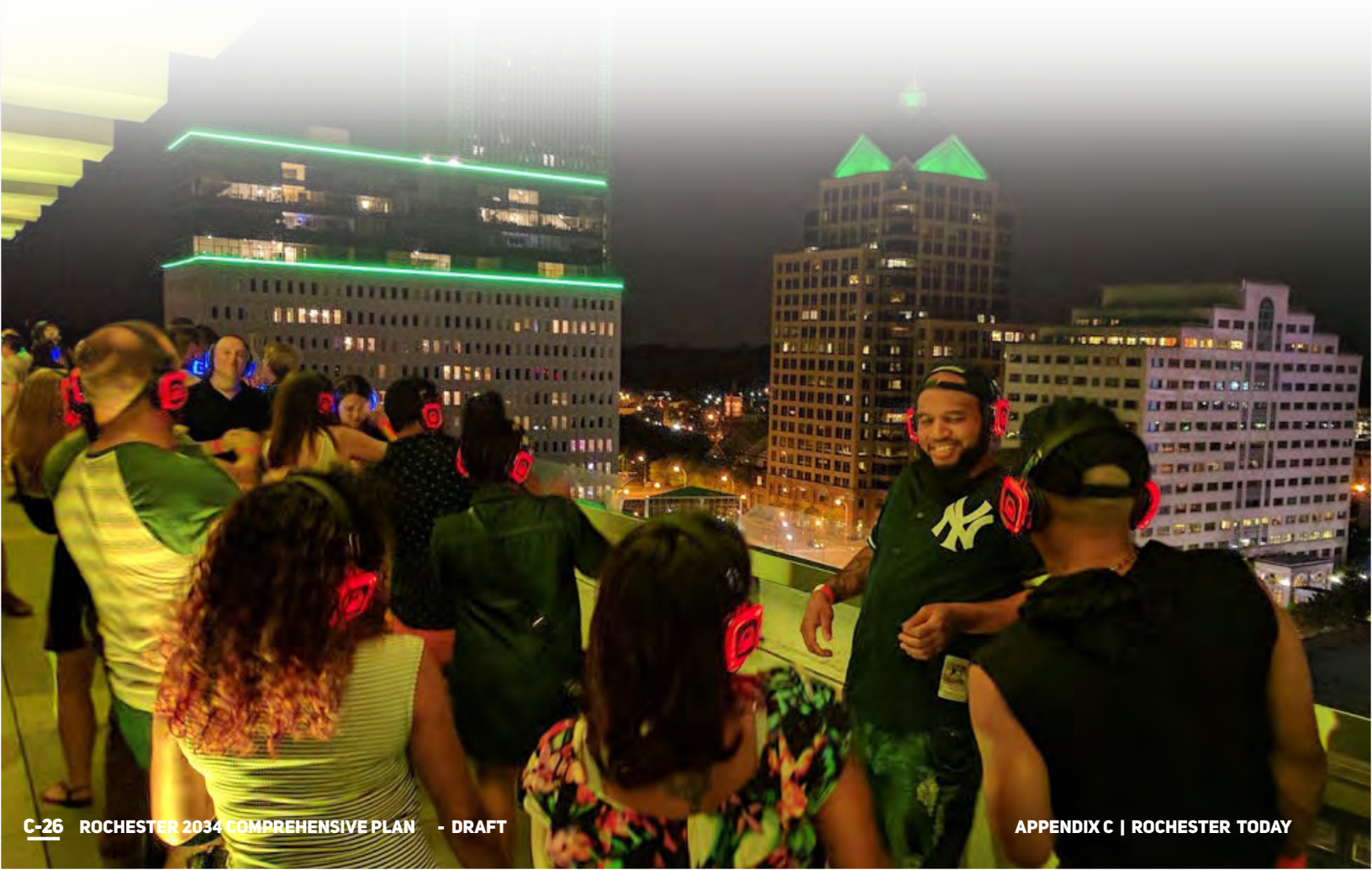




## DOWNTOWN'S RESURGENCE

Downtown Rochester has experienced its strongest resurgence since its heyday in the mid-20th Century. Long a center for office buildings and shopping, the high vacancies of the 1990s and 2000s have given way to a new wave of development: residential, dining, and entertainment. Downtown's population was about 3,250 in 2000. It is now at 7,200, with 3,000 more people expected by 2021 – a 42% increase. Rochester Downtown Development Corporation has tracked over \$2.2 billion in public and private investment since 2000. The Downtown Innovation Zone now features 172 innovation and creative class enterprises that are attracting young and highly-skilled talent to the area, up from 108 in early 2016.

New restaurants are gaining a foothold beyond the typical weekday lunch crowd. The majority of buildings in the downtown section of Main Street, once the most visible evidence of Rochester's decline, are either slated for rehabilitation or have recently been renovated. The downtown festival scene has exploded with the growth of the Rochester International Jazz Festival and Fringe Festival. A bike share program, operated by Zagster and focused on the heart of the city, has given a major boost to the local bicycling culture, appealing to both bike enthusiasts and new leisure riders. Lastly, Rochester has embarked on three bold and transformative redevelopment projects that have garnered national attention – Midtown Rising, filling in the eastern leg of the Inner Loop expressway, and ROC the Riverway.



In 2011, the City published a report detailing the importance of revitalizing Midtown Plaza, eliminating its blighting influence, attracting private investment, boosting the tax base, supporting job growth, and catalyzing increased downtown development. Once the core of downtown Rochester's shopping and business district, the complex was closed for business in 2007 and demolition began in 2010. The redevelopment of the complex began with the redevelopment of the Seneca Tower into an office building. Then, Midtown Tower was transformed into the mixed-use building *Tower 280 at Midtown*. A handful of development parcels remain at the Midtown site.



The Inner Loop East Transformation Project began construction in 2014, a major initiative to reconnect the city's vibrant Southeast neighborhoods to downtown. The Inner Loop highway, a sunken four to six lane expressway, encircled Downtown, creating a barrier that hindered pedestrian and vehicle access between nearby residential areas and the heart of Rochester. In order to encourage sustainable economic growth and create a more livable Downtown, the project included reconstructing a 2/3 mile stretch of the eastern segment of the Inner Loop between Monroe Ave and Charlotte St into a high quality complete city street.



The new at-grade street enhances the area's livability, allowing people to easily walk and bicycle between neighborhoods and Downtown. This initiative resulted in approximately six acres of available land that is being repurposed for mixed-use development, including an expansion of the The Strong National Museum of Play. The City of Rochester is currently exploring the possibility of continuing the transformation into another segment of the Inner Loop on the north side of Downtown.

## DOWNTOWN'S RESURGENCE CONTINUED

In February 2018, the ROC the Riverway Vision Plan was announced, which details a vision for the future revitalization of six miles of the Genesee Riverfront in Downtown. The plan leverages recommendations made from the City of Rochester 2018 Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan and a 2016 Rose Fellowship program. The ROC the Riverway Plan envisions a transformative approach to reestablishing a relationship with the river, creating accessible pedestrian and bicycle connections, public spaces, and new infrastructure to redefine the riverfront as a community hub. The Plan suggests focused public investment along the river corridor to create dynamic public spaces and spur private investment. Nearly \$100 million, including a generous \$50 million grant from New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo, is dedicated to the 13 projects of Phase I.



## REGIONAL PLANNING

Planning at the regional scale is critical for problem solving and long-term success of the city of Rochester. Likewise, the future of the region will be shaped and strengthened by the success of its core, the city. Regional leaders and partnerships committed to the core's success are essential to effectively and sustainably advance.

New York State's Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) is a regional approach to State investment and economic development. In 2011, Governor Cuomo established 10 Regional Councils to develop long-term strategic plans for economic growth for their regions. The Councils are public-private partnerships made up of local experts and stakeholders from business, academia, local government, and non-governmental organizations. The Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council boasts four overarching goals: grow jobs, increase regional wealth, drive private investment, and reduce poverty.

With regard to planning transportation facilities on a regional level, the U.S. Department of Transportation requires every metropolitan area with a population of over 50,000 to have a designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to qualify for the receipt of federal highway and transit funds. The Genesee Transportation Council (GTC) is the designated MPO responsible for transportation policy, planning, and investment decision making in the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region.

The Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (G/FLRPC), established in 1977, is a regional planning partner for the nine-county region. G/FLRPC provides forums for discussion, debate, and consensus building. This agency's mission is to identify, define, and inform its member counties of issues and opportunities critical to the physical, economic, and social health of the region.

## REGIONAL “STORY OF PLACE”

In 2013, under the leadership of G/FLRPC, municipalities and stakeholders throughout the Rochester area came together and developed the *Finger Lakes Regional Sustainability Plan* (FLRSP). The document provides a guide for policies, investments, and strategies related to a more resilient and vibrant future for the region. In the interest of first understanding our unique heritage as a region, a “Story of Place” was developed. Although meant to tell the story of the Finger Lakes Region’s socio-economic heritage, there is a substantial focus on the City of Rochester, being the largest and most influential community in the region.

The region’s Story of Place is derived from an in-depth examination of our history, conducted in a manner not found in any other study or document. Beyond our storied past of urban development, great public figures, and industrial and social evolution, the Story of Place overlays these elements with our geographic and geologic setting, as well as our ecological history across many eras pre-dating Rochester’s establishment.

The region’s Story reveals that the Finger Lakes or the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region has functioned as a place of collection, settlement, nurturing, and dissemination of valuable innovations that have benefitted the region as well as all corners of the globe. Throughout the era of European settlement in the region, and continuing through Rochester’s “boom town” years, the region was highly accessible to westward-bound Americans that either spent extended time here or settled permanently.

## FINGER LAKES FORWARD: UNITED FOR SUCCESS

In 2015, Governor Cuomo announced an opportunity for each of the ten New York State geographic regions to compete for funding to execute their long-term, strategic economic development plans. The Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council (FLREDC) secured \$500 million to implement its Upstate Revitalization Initiative (URI) Plan, titled Finger Lakes Forward: United for Success. In this plan, the FLREDC identified new opportunities for economic growth, representing a new strategy and direction for the region’s long-term development that capitalizes on the strengths of the region. The identified industry opportunities are:

- optics, photonics, and imaging;
- agriculture and food production; and
- next generation manufacturing and technology.

The URI is spurring an unprecedented level of investment in the region, with significant impact and investment rooted in the City of Rochester. Since the URI award was announced, several key projects have been awarded funding. Agencies, developers, and government entities can access the URI funds through a competitive consolidated Funding Application process.

The Finger Lakes Forward Plan recognizes that continued downtown development and revitalization are key to the region’s prosperity. Several key development projects are underway in downtown Rochester, transforming buildings, public spaces, transportation infrastructure, and accessibility.

# ROC THE RIVERWAY

Believe in the power of the message

New York State and the City of Rochester  
will launch a new focused strategy

Finger Lakes Forward

Text NEW YORK to ROCOS



## REGIONAL “STORY OF PLACE” CONTINUED

Many highly-influential ideas, products, and historic figures were developed and nurtured here, and ultimately were made more accessible to people of all backgrounds and to places well beyond Rochester. The region has an extraordinary number of these innovations and innovators, including:

- the Five Nations of the Iroquois, the first democratic confederacy in the Americas, which inspired American federalism and elements of the nation’s early formation;
- world renown wheat and flour, earning Rochester the nickname, “Flour City”;
- Jell-O and gelatin molds, once available only to wealthy elites of the Victorian Era;
- Grange farmer cooperatives;
- techniques for growing cold-tolerant fruits;
- Canal lock designs and other modern canal technologies;
- world renown seeds and plants, earning Rochester its second nickname, “Flower City”;
- religious movements and revivals such as Seventh Day Adventism, Mormonism, Spiritualism, and the Second Great Awakening;

- 
- major social movements such as abolitionism and women’s rights, led by Frederick Douglass, Susan B. Anthony, Harriet Tubman, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton;
  - industrial giants and their innovations such as Western Union, Kodak, Bausch & Lomb, Xerox, Gannett newspapers, French’s Mustard, and Champion Sportswear;
  - Gould’s pumps, including the world’s first fire engine; and
  - Wegmans’ innovative grocery store model focused on relationships with farmers, positive employee environment, and heavy community investment.

Each of these were rooted in the Finger Lakes Region and went on to impact the rest of the world.





## REGIONAL “STORY OF PLACE” CONTINUED

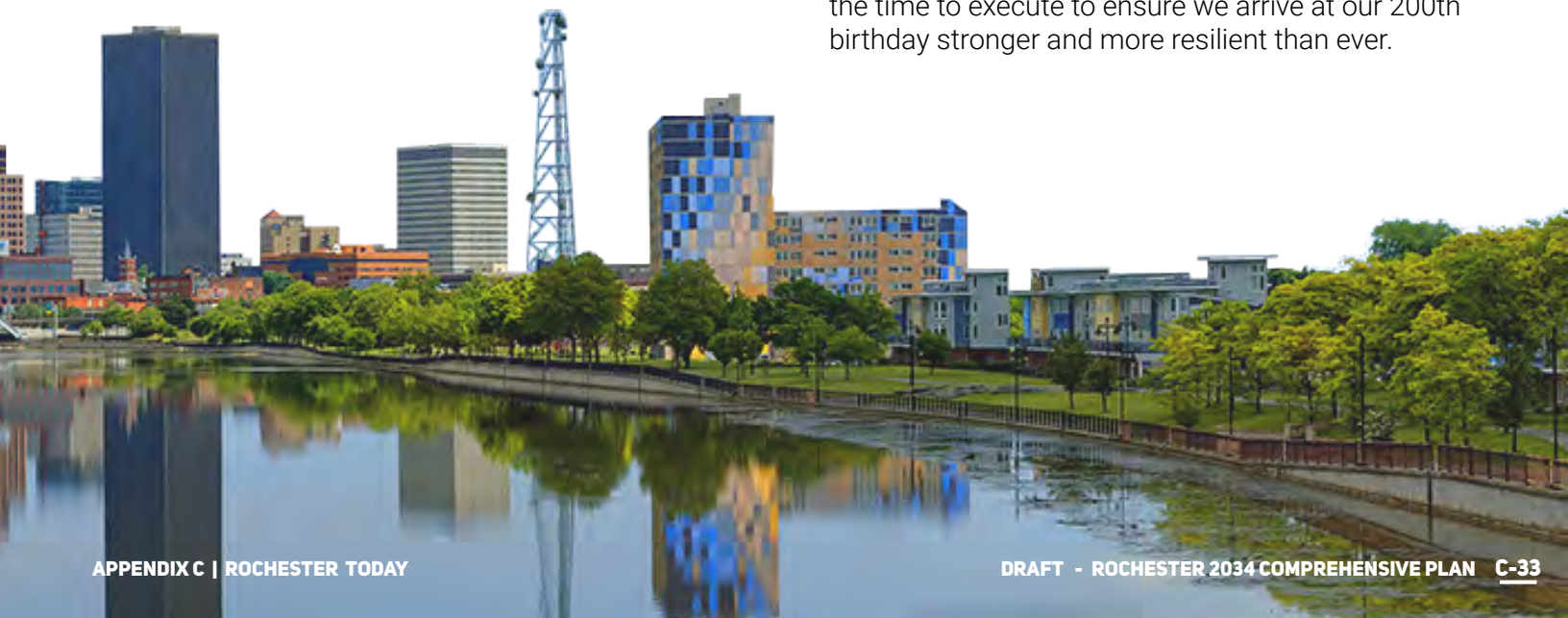
The fertile ground of this region made settlement possible and attractive. The combination of settlement and a continual stream of people and fresh ideas passing through contributed to its evolution to naturally function as a place where ideas and technologies came together, were enriched and developed, and then dispersed around the world to the benefit of all. A more detailed explanation of the Rochester region’s Story of Place can be found at [here](#).

The City of Rochester embraces our region’s unique heritage and seeks to employ the assets and lessons outlined in the Story of Place in our strategies for growth and prosperity. **Despite the great challenges of our past, we must continue to serve as a place that nurtures and enriches great ideas, supports innovative thinking and technology, and makes these advancements available to all residents of Rochester. We can then serve as a beacon of inspiration and a valuable resource for communities beyond our region.**

## COMMITMENT TO PROGRESS

The community’s commitment and collective initiatives are making a tangible impact on the Rochester economy and creating a buzz around Rochester that has not existed for decades. With continued investment and completion of existing projects, Rochester’s downtown and budding entrepreneurial economy have the potential to catalyze a new age for the Flower City, and continue to draw national and international attention.

With continued growth and innovation, the City, its residents, and its numerous community and regional partners are committed to advancing the city and to transforming the lives of those living in deep poverty. While there will always be a leading edge of change, Rochester will pursue inclusive prosperity in all of its investments and strategies, as illustrated by the vision and philosophy behind *Rochester 2034*. Rochester stands poised to capitalize on a resurgent downtown, a diversified economy, its affordable cost of living, and wealth of natural resources. However, its future will depend on if it can learn from its past, and take action to address its serious challenges of economic disparities. With unprecedented cross sector collaboration, sound planning, and dedicated leadership, Rochester is already charting the road towards a more vibrant and inclusive future. Now is the time to execute to ensure we arrive at our 200th birthday stronger and more resilient than ever.





#roctheplan  
Rochester

2034

Where the River Flows