

G. COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION

INTRODUCTION

It is undeniable that people prefer to live, work, and play in surroundings that are filled with beauty. Rochester takes pride in its beautiful natural resources as well as the visual appeal 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 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>BFN-1</p> <p>Continue and expand community beautification efforts.</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>City, Community Groups/Funders</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>City, Community Groups/Funders,</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>City</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>City</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
BFN-2 Continue and expand existing efforts to decrease the accumulation of litter in the community.	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.	City
	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 acknowledgment from the Mayor’s office, or discounts from businesses.	City , Community Groups/Funders
	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.	City
	BFN-2e Continue to seek out grants that provide funding and resource to address the litter problem.	City , Keep America Beautiful Organization
	BFN-2f Engage transitional employment work crews to help address litter, particularly in areas that have been identified as priority areas.	City , Transitional Employment Organizations, Community Groups/Funders