



# Section 1

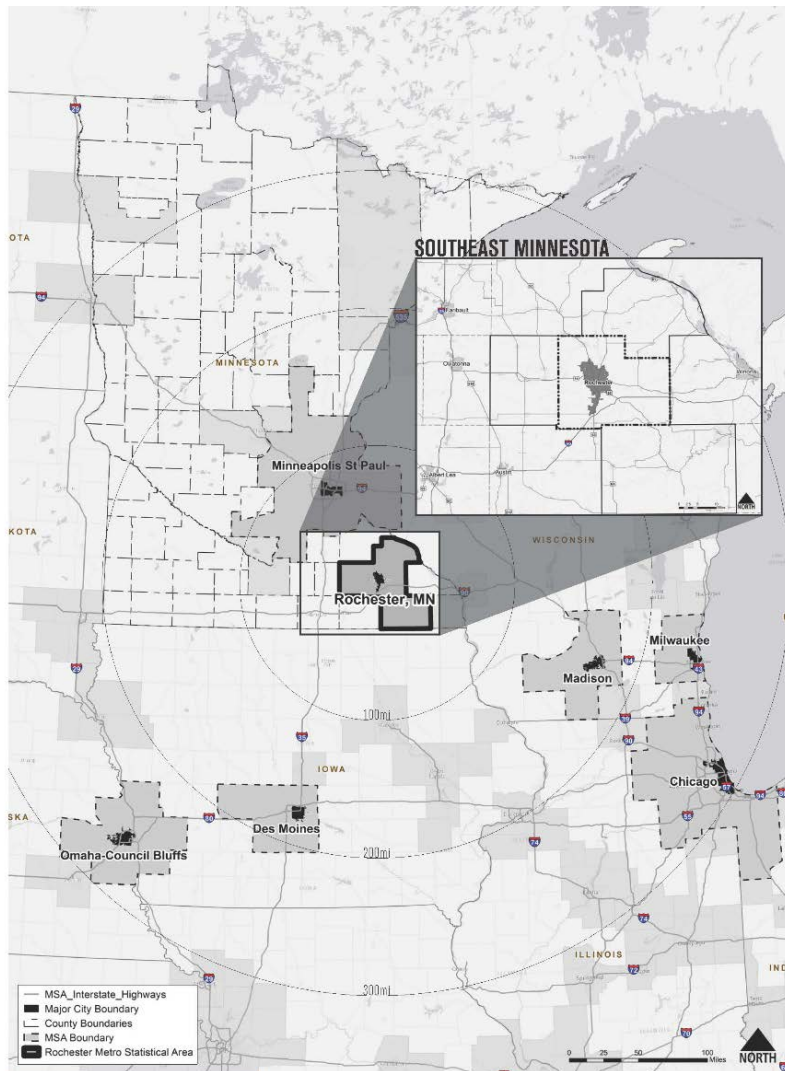
## A Vision for Our Future

# Part 1 | Introduction

Rochester is a unique city that enjoys a growing and diverse population, a high employment rate and percentage of the population that works, and international connectivity unlike other Midwestern communities of a similar size. As home to the Mayo Clinic and a large IBM campus, Rochester welcomes more than 3 million visitors annually, competing with cities across the nation and around the world for the best and the brightest minds in health and technology. City residents overwhelmingly believe Rochester offers them a high quality of life, providing arts and entertainment typically found only in larger cities along with an accessible parks and trails system that contributes to neighborhood identity and wellness. Inclusion on several “Top 10” lists from such renowned sources as *US News and World Report* and *Livability.com* provide national and international recognition of Rochester’s quality of life.

Rochester has experienced steady population growth throughout its history. Since its incorporation, Rochester has grown to become the third largest city in Minnesota and the largest city in the state outside of the Twin Cities. We expect this trend to continue through 2040, resulting in a more diverse community with a greater variety of economic, housing, transportation, and social needs. These changes will provide our city with major opportunities for a prosperous and sustainable pattern of growth and development.

Rochester serves as the economic, transportation, and cultural hub for smaller cities in southeastern Minnesota and is within an hour’s drive of the Twin Cities (see regional context map at the right). Madison, Wisconsin and Des Moines, Iowa are a three-hour drive away. The Rochester International Airport





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provides quick flights to larger cities in the Midwest and connections to other national airports. Thus, Rochester is a convenient destination not only for a significant number of regional commuters, but also for national and global patients, business travelers, and other visitors.

Rochester’s local economy is thriving. As the regional employment center for southeast Minnesota, Rochester has a 2011 employment base of approximately 110,000 jobs. Destination Medical Center (DMC) is a major economic development initiative that will increase and accelerate the demand for private development and public infrastructure in our city and its neighbors. Over the next 20 years, local employment is expected to grow by 50,000 jobs and the number of visitors to the city is expected to more than double - particularly to the downtown core - including Mayo Clinic patients and companions, business travelers, and convention and event attendees. It is hoped that this and other economic development efforts will help to diversify our economy beyond the medical, technology, and service sectors.



Community events like Thursday on 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> bring our residents and visitors together.

### What is a Community?

Stanford University’s Social Innovation Review defines “community” as a critical societal component:

*First and foremost, community is not a place, a building, or an organization; nor is it an exchange of information over the Internet. Community is both a feeling and a set of relationships among people. People form and maintain communities to meet common needs.*

*Members of a community have a sense of trust, belonging, safety, and caring for each other. They have an individual and collective sense that they can, as part of that community, influence their environments and each other.*

*That treasured feeling of community comes from shared experiences and a sense of—not necessarily the actual experience of—shared history. As a result, people know who is and isn’t part of their community. This feeling is fundamental to human existence.*

But a vital city is more than just a collection of buildings, roads, and parks. It begins with a network of people who feel a sense of belonging, security, and wellness. It’s a place where human interaction turns groups of houses into neighborhoods, transportation networks into social connections, and parks into gathering spaces. It’s a community.



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Competitive communities recognize that a city begins with its people and value the importance of the human and social infrastructure to the overall well-being of its residents and visitors. Employment opportunities may draw residents to our city, but good quality affordable housing, livable neighborhoods, and a vibrant cultural scene will keep them here. As Rochester plans the facilities and services needed to attract and retain visitors and residents, the community must strive to ensure it remains accessible and welcoming to all. The City of Rochester is committed to supporting these quality of life factors as our community grows and evolves.

Rochester is in an enviable position. Our local economy and quality of life are nationally recognized. However, we cannot get complacent. We have significant opportunities ahead of us and if we successfully take advantage of them, we will continue to be one of the best places to live, work, and raise a family for new generations of residents. ***Planning 2 Succeed: Rochester Comprehensive Plan 2040 (P2S 2040)*** will provide city decision makers and staff a solid, fiscally sustainable framework for guiding our future by implementing coordinated strategies specifically designed to meet community needs.

## Part 2 | Forces Shaping Rochester's Future

Rochester is expected to see significant growth over the next 25 years; 50,000 people, 50,000 jobs, and 23,000 housing units are projected to be added by 2040. This level of growth will have significant impacts on the city's land use, transportation, neighborhoods, infrastructure, natural resources, municipal facilities and services, health, and budget. While constraints such as topography, geology, and utility service and transportation limitations physically direct how and where this growth can be accommodated, public outreach efforts yielded community insights on how to best guide future development and sustainably allocate resources.

### Demographic and Economic Driving Forces

Rochester is unlike any other city in the country. We are a city of only 112,000 people, yet, as home of the world-renowned Mayo Clinic and its 35,000 employees, we are a global center of innovation and technology. Rochester has a high employment rate, with a high concentration of jobs in the downtown and a large number of annual visitors. Our economy is strong and our people are well educated. These factors must be considered when addressing planning and development related issues in our community.

### Unique Community Characteristics

Rochester's daytime population swells to nearly 160,000 most weekdays, with approximately 50,000 workers and visitors currently commuting into the city. In addition to the employment base, Rochester is estimated to attract more than 3 million visitors per year, 2/3 of whom are seeking medical treatment. Many of these visitors stay for extended periods of time to seek medical treatment, coming here in their most vulnerable hour. They may be scared and fragile. Whether it be a friendly face, a wayfinding sign to help find their destination, or our subway and skywalk system to shield them from the harshness of Minnesota weather, our community is uniquely designed to accommodate and assist our guests.

Having hotel rooms and other places for these visitors to stay in, restaurants for them to eat in, and places for them to visit are important features of our city. On





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weekends, sports teams and conventions fill many of these facilities with people who seek similar dining and entertainment opportunities. Our residents enjoy partaking in the local arts and entertainment scene, be that an evening of civic theater or exploring the latest brewpub, and benefit from excellent education facilities.

Rochester is an international community. Rochester Public Schools reports that over 80 languages are spoken in the school district. From doctors to hotel staff, economic opportunities have brought people from around the world to Rochester to build their lives. A significant amount of international investment occurs in our community, particularly in the downtown area.

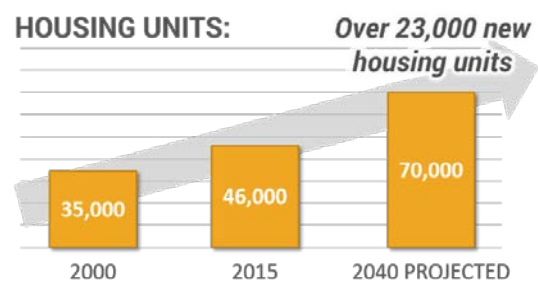
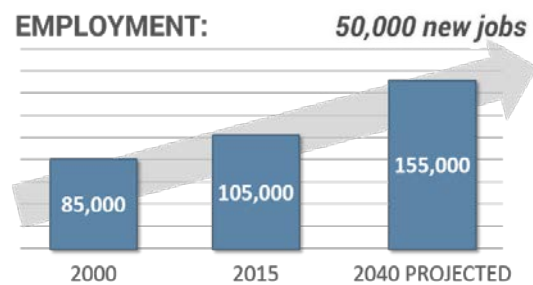
Rochester's local economy is thriving, but it is not diverse. In 2015, an economic diversity study by the website WalletHub evaluated the local economy of 313 largest metro areas across the country. Rochester's economic diversity ranked 312. That lack of economic diversity indicates that our local economy is susceptible to changes in the medical field. Expanding our economic base will help attract and retain residents skilled in many disciplines.

One characteristic that is unique to Rochester's physical structure is that in many ways it serves as both a central city with a strong downtown core and as a suburb. As our city ages, this will necessitate the provision of new infrastructure in our developing areas along with the allocation of adequate resources to rebuild the aging infrastructure in our core neighborhoods. The cost of municipal amenities often found in suburban communities, such as parks, trails, and other quality of life enhancements, must be balanced with transportation and other needs more associated with commuters and central cities.

### Rochester is a Growing Community

The three charts to the right summarize the growth that Rochester will face in the next 25-30 years: the population is expected to grow by

PROJECTED GROWTH IN ROCHESTER THROUGH 2040



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nearly 50% (50,000 people); employment is expected to grow by nearly 50% (50,000 jobs); and housing units are expected to grow by more than 50% (23,000 new housing units). This level of growth will have significant impacts on the city's people, finances, land use, transportation, facilities, and services. As a regional employment center and international destination for medical care, it is important that the P2S 2040 framework addresses and balances the needs of local residents, regional commuters, and the City's unique visitor population.

**Employees and commuters** | Already a regional employment center, Rochester is projected to see a 50% increase in jobs between 2015 and 2040. To fill this growing number of jobs, more residents will move to the city, but the number of regional commuters is also expected to grow from 35,000 to over 50,000 daily. This will increase demands on the region's transportation system and provide a great opportunity to provide economically feasible alternatives to single occupant vehicle (SOV) commuting.

**Workforce of the future** | Moving forward, it will also be critical to consider what is needed to attract young adults, particularly those with college degrees, who will be highly sought after as the baby boom generation retires from the labor force and new technologies in the workplace drive demand for new skills and knowledge. To date, this cohort has indicated a preference for communities with active and highly accessible downtowns, near restaurants and other cultural amenities, with a variety of housing and reliable transportation options. Since these young workers will be important to the economic prosperity of the region, it is important for Rochester to consider how it can provide a competitive urban environment to attract this generation of future employees.

**Smaller households and younger generations** | Rochester's share of married couple households without children is expected to rise much faster than the number of couples with children. Combined with a significant projected increase in single-person households (younger individuals as well as the 65+ age group), there is an expectation that greater demand for high-density, mixed-use housing opportunities, including increased demand for downtown housing in particular, will materialize.

**Lower-income households** | The continued growth in health sector jobs in Rochester brings great economic opportunity in the medical services and technology fields but will also increase the number of lower wage jobs in the health services, hospitality, and retail industries. Lower income residents may lack access to a personal vehicle or struggle with the combined costs of shelter and a personal vehicle. Service-oriented and multiple-shift jobs present an additional challenge in that they often have varying work schedules that require travel outside of the typical morning and afternoon commute hours when transit service is most available.

**Older adults** | By 2040, nearly 1 in 3 Rochester residents will be over the age of 60, compared to less than 1 in 5 in 2010. In addition, Rochester's many medical visitors increase the number of persons present in the city with mobility limitations. Older residents are less likely to drive, more likely to be disabled, and increasingly rely on walking, transit, and ADA compatible transportation facilities.



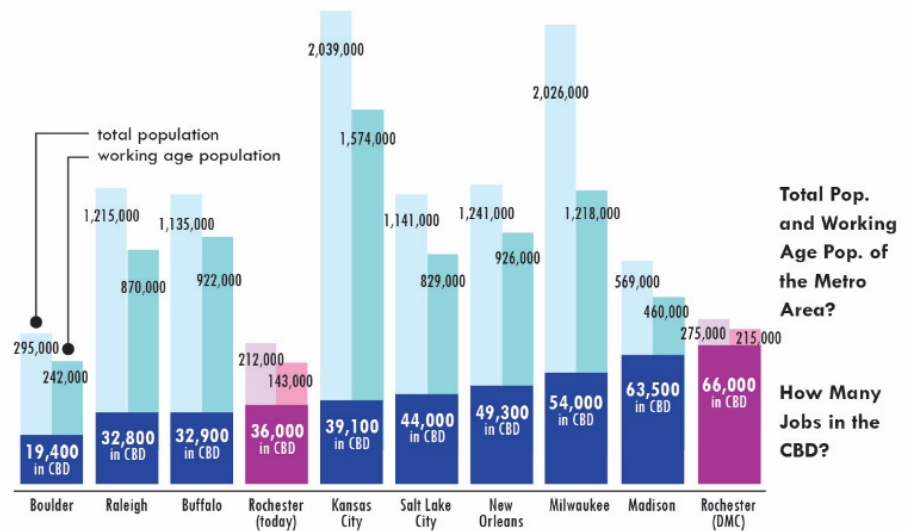


Visitors | Rochester has an outsized number of visitors, attracted by local medical services and an active convention and event sector. This market, which approached nearly 3 million visitors in 2015, seeks a seamless experience where they can easily access the services they need as well as places for relaxation, quality recreation, dining, and entertainment.

A more detailed look at demographic and employment projections is found in Appendix X of this plan document.

### Growth Prospects for Center City Development

The Destination Medical Center (DMC) is a public-private partnership designed to create local, regional, and statewide economic opportunities by leveraging the growth of Mayo Clinic and other related health science and service businesses within Rochester. The DMC Plan provides a vision for transforming Rochester into a dynamic urban center that integrates Mayo Clinic's medical campus with commercial, technology, residential, retail, hospitality, and entertainment uses. It aims to create a global medical destination that both appeals to visitors and stimulates development and investment.



The ratio of downtown jobs to the regional population is very high when compared to other US cities. This ratio is projected to increase further over the next 20-30 years and will result in a widening gap between workforce demand and working age residents. Source: DMC Development Plan

Three specific challenges must be addressed in order to make this economic opportunity a success.

Growth in downtown traffic with limited opportunity to expand capacity | Approximately 71% of current commuter travel to downtown Rochester is by single-occupant automobile. Since the number of jobs and visitors in downtown Rochester are projected to grow significantly as a result of the Destination Medical Center initiative, key arterial corridors connecting regional highways to downtown and local streets within downtown will be unable to accommodate demand during peak travel periods unless an increasing share of peak period travelers arrive downtown using transit or means other than private



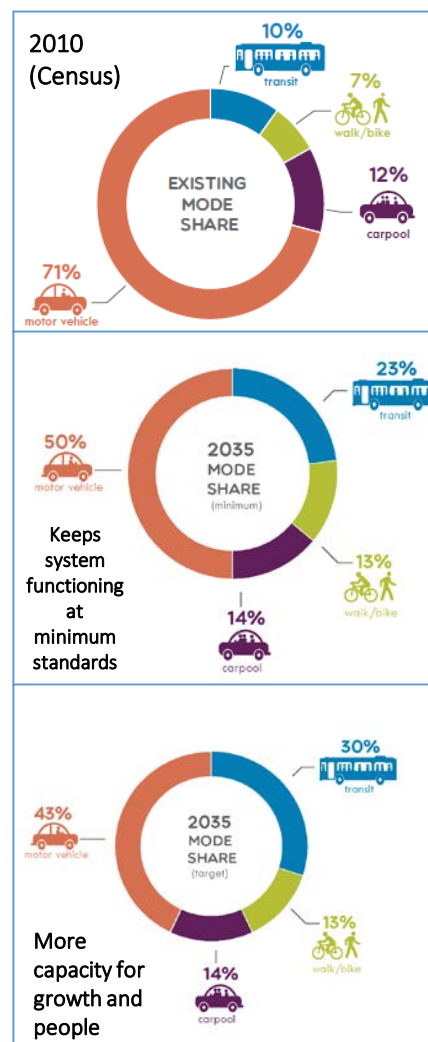
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vehicles. Adding significant vehicle capacity in and near downtown is not a feasible alternative to ease this congestion. The DMC Plan and Downtown Master Plan recommend that a variety of transportation options be developed to support downtown access, with a goal of shifting commuter travel choices during peak periods from over 70% SOV travel to 50% or less SOV travel. Since the most convenient commute option is to live near where you work, developing diverse, mixed-use residential opportunities in downtown and adjacent neighborhood areas is a key solution to reaching this goal.

Achieving a shift in downtown travel choice during these peak periods is affected not only by what happens in the downtown area, but also by the distribution of land use intensity throughout the city and the ability to encourage regional travelers to choose alternative travel and parking options. These plans encourage street design and land use changes that will facilitate not only commute but non-commute trips made on foot, transit, or by bike, with the goal that no more than 70% of non-commute trips into downtown be made by single occupant vehicle by 2040. This will require that land use and transportation development be considered jointly within the context of an integrated land use and transportation framework.

**Workforce demands higher than population growth** | Job growth is projected to outpace resident labor force growth creating a labor force gap. It is expected that between 2015 and 2040, Rochester could add 22,000 more jobs than there will be area residents to fill them. Expanding transportation options for regional commuters will be essential for ensuring employers have access to the labor resources needed.

**Limited land and more dense economic growth** | As a result of the DMC initiative, the value of land downtown is increasing. Attempting to meet the projected mobility needs of increased resident and daytime populations without a shift in how people reach downtown would require an estimated eight city blocks of six story parking structures. In addition to the extremely high cost to construct (as high as \$25,000 - \$60,000 per stall), dedicating a large share of downtown land to parking would dramatically reduce the vibrancy of downtown as a destination and could stunt physical development over time by devoting valuable land to a use that contributes little in the way of growth to economic activity.



The intersection of challenges created by downtown traffic growth, workforce growth, parking and limited land (and right of way) available to support a continued auto-dependent approach to downtown development articulates one of the major objectives which P2S 2040 must address: the reduction in peak period auto commuting and increased utilization of transit, shared mobility services, and opportunities for walking and biking to meet a greater share of transport needs.

### Infrastructure Capacity

Our community must maintain and replace aging infrastructure at the same time that we are developing new and innovative service options. The city is served by six sewer super districts; currently, four of those districts are at or near service capacity. While edge growth in our community has significantly increased in the last several decades, our ability to provide these areas with sanitary sewer and other services has expanded in some locations while others have service limitations. Development faces constraints along Highway 14 West and from the Highway 52/63 interchange south to the airport until such time as sewer capacity is enhanced in those areas. There are currently approximately 100 acres of sewer capacity in the Northwest Territories (roughly the area between 65<sup>th</sup> St. NW and 75<sup>th</sup> St. NW). After this small area is served by sanitary sewer, an investment of roughly \$30 million would be necessary to build out lift stations across the rest of this district. That investment is not expected within the horizon of this plan, however. Sufficient land area is available to support projected growth without incurring that expense. Prioritizing and phasing sewer capacity enhancements is necessary to ensure these infrastructure challenges are addressed in a timely, coordinated, and fiscally responsible manner, consistent with growth patterns and strategies included in this plan.



Many of the streets in the core areas of the city are also in need of investment. The effectiveness of Rochester Public Works' strategies for pavement maintenance is greatly diminished if funding is inadequate. Ideally, the City should be investing \$32 million dollars per year in street



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maintenance strategies. The current annual investment in Rochester streets is about \$9 million dollars. Over the past 20 years:

- The deficit in available funds for investment in street maintenance strategies has grown from \$3 million in 1997 to a projected \$23 million in 2017, a 750% increase.
- The number of miles of city streets has grown from 275 miles in 1997 to 467 miles in 2016, a 70% increase.
- The backlog of unmet reconstruction needs has grown from \$19.6 million in 1997 to over \$234.5 million in 2016, a 1,200% increase.
- The city street network is comprised of 467 miles of streets and has 204 miles of streets over 30 years of age.
- There are currently 107 miles of city streets that are over 50 years old and in need of street reconstruction projects at a cost of \$234.5 million.

Enhancing infrastructure capacity will be a time consuming and costly task, but we have an opportunity to explore new development options and devise funding strategies that will not overburden the taxpayers. Fortunately, P2S 2040 includes more efficient growth patterns that can reduce the pace of expanding systems that require costly maintenance and that will support a more sustainable future for the city.

## Competing in a Global Market

Our community is changing – physically, socially, and economically. Each new development changes the area around it. Each new family that moves here brings new life experiences to our community. This change will be steady, consistent, and transformational. Our challenge is to manage this change so it enhances our community while preserving the things we value most.

As stated earlier, we expect Rochester to be an older, more diverse community in 2040. This will have a major impact on the development of the community. With the increasing senior and young working populations, it is anticipated that a larger share of the population will look for housing options other than a traditional single family home. The significant increase in our senior population will also lead to an increase in mobility limited individuals. In addition, the increase of national and international immigration will require our community to think differently about how we communicate with one another. Finally, the greater economic diversity of our population will require us to think about how we can provide a high quality of life for people at all points along the income spectrum.

If current economic trends continue, there will be a significant labor force gap in our community. To ensure that Rochester has an adequate workforce to meet employment needs, the following will need to occur:

- Rochester must focus on being a competitive community for residents of all ages, races, and socio-economic backgrounds;
- Net migration into Rochester will need to increase at a higher rate than it has historically increased;
- Labor participation rates must increase, particularly among the retirement age population; and
- Commuting into Rochester from outside the city must increase.

Rochester must retain as much of its current work force as possible while also taking steps to attract new residents. The Mayo Clinic attracts health care professionals from around the world who can live and work anywhere they choose; service sector employees and their families are needed to support our industries. Many of the strategies outlined in this plan are designed to allow Rochester to accommodate a higher percentage of new residents than would otherwise be accommodated under historic growth and development patterns. Creating more affordable housing and building a greater diversity of housing types can help attract new residents and retain existing ones. Strategically increasing density in parts of our city will provide the opportunity for more people to live here while reducing the need for workers to commute from outside the city limits.

### Natural Forces Shaping Rochester's Development Patterns

A variety of natural features have shaped Rochester's historical development patterns and will continue to influence future growth strategies.

**Local Climate** | The Rochester area has a “continental” climate; that is, the area's seasonal temperature variation is quite large. Winters are long and cold, summers are warm and humid. Severe thunderstorms, potential tornadoes, damaging hail, winter storms, and extreme cold and heat are routine in this part of the country; the impacts of climate change will increase these extreme weather events. As a result, flood potential, stormwater management, temperature extremes, and weather-related road conditions will impact Rochester's development patterns.



The devastating tornado of 1883 led to the founding of St Marys Hospital



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**Topography** | Rochester's flat to gently rolling terrain is marked by areas of steep slopes along a network of seasonal and permanent waterways. This topography can pose challenges to service extension and development. Water pressure issues, for example, necessitate the use of water towers in the higher areas of the city. In some locations, landscapes may necessitate the use of sanitary sewer lift stations to move the sewer flow to the city's water reclamation plant.

**Geology** | The area's geology is sensitive to activities occurring at the land's surface. The bedrock units that underlay the Rochester area form a sequence of aquifers that are the source of this region's drinking water supply. Mildly acidic groundwater is slowly dissolving the bedrock in this portion of Southeast Minnesota, producing distinctive groundwater conditions and land features known as "karst." Karst aquifers are highly susceptible to groundwater contamination because cracks and sinkholes form pathways that funnel water and contaminants from the surface into the groundwater system. Surface pollutants can reach the first encountered bedrock throughout most of Rochester in a matter of hours to a few years.

**Soils** | A significant portion of the Rochester area's soils are classified as "highly erodible", based on their tendency to wear away due to wind or water movement. This erosion can result in slope instability, particularly during storm events. Proper engineering and potential avoidance of these sites is critical as the city develops in these sensitive areas in order to avoid, for example, the landslides we have witnessed in other parts of the country.

Many of Rochester's soils are shallow to the water table, providing opportunities for contaminants to quickly reach the groundwater as well as the potential for localized water damage to basements and roads. Some of these soils are also considered to be "hydric", indicating the potential presence of sensitive wetlands areas that development should avoid.

Floodplain soils are found along Rochester's perennial rivers and streams, intermittent streams, and in low areas. Their flood prone nature may lead to safety concerns and hazardous and costly damages to adjacent structures, particularly where flooding is relatively frequent.

**Groundwater** | Virtually all of Rochester's water supply is drawn from the bedrock aquifers located 300-700 feet below the surface. All of this groundwater began as



Groundwater flow freezes when exposed at area road cuts.

precipitation that entered the soil and moved into these rock formations. While the Rochester area has very high quality drinking water, local surface activities in sensitive locations, as well as historic improper well construction and abandonment, have introduced contaminants into the groundwater system. Since the underground flow of this critical water supply is toward the Rochester area, contaminants entering the aquifer from beyond the city limits will ultimately impact city water supplies.

While the aquifer closest to the surface in much of the city is contaminated to the point that it can no longer be used for potable water, a confining layer provides an 80-foot thick sequence of rock formations that separates it from the source of most of Rochester's drinking water. Approximately half of the groundwater recharge for our primary water supply occurs where the "Decorah Edge" meets the lower aquifer. Alteration of the vegetation, soils, and hydrology, therefore, is constrained in these areas by zoning and wetland ordinances designed to protect our critical drinking water source.

**Surface Water** | All but the southernmost tip of Rochester's Urban Service Area drains into the Zumbro River watershed. The Root River watershed collects water in the far south. Both of these watersheds drain to the Mississippi River. Numerous reaches of the area's rivers and streams have been placed on the state's Impaired Waters List. A water body is considered "impaired" if it fails to meet one or more water quality standard of the federal Clean Water Act. Fecal coliform (a bacteria that can cause disease), turbidity (murky or muddy water), and mercury in fish are the impairments found in Rochester waters to date. These impairments are typically a result of human activity. While surface water is not a drinking water source in Rochester, recreational activities in impaired waters can impact human and animal health. In addition, karst geology can facilitate the mingling of surface water and the groundwater drinking supply.

**Wetlands and Riparian Areas** | Wetlands have a wide range of natural functions, from controlling floods, to filtering water pollutants, to recharging groundwater. Retaining water on the landscape, rather than letting it rush into storm sewers, will help these features function as nature intended. Through its numerous water management programs, the City of Rochester is building on strategies to better conserve and utilize natural systems, such as wetlands, floodplains, and shorelands for water quality and quantity control.



Shoreland buffers help filter stormwater entering Silver Lake.

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**Floodplain Management** | Rochester was built on the banks of the South Fork of the Zumbro River to take advantage of the water supply, the power of natural falls, and, eventually, the manmade mill races. The city is laced with small creeks feeding the Zumbro, which has made the city subject to periodic severe flash flooding from heavy rainfall events. Working with the federal government, a flood control plan for Rochester was developed in 1976-77 and first submitted for funding in a bill to Congress in 1977. A devastating flood in 1978 further emphasized the need for this project; federal assistance was granted and the flood control project was completed in 1996. Floodplain management continues to this day, with the City choosing to adopt development standards more stringent than those currently mandated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in an effort to account for the greater number of intense storm events experienced here in recent years.



Impact of the 1978 Flood on the Mayo Civic Center

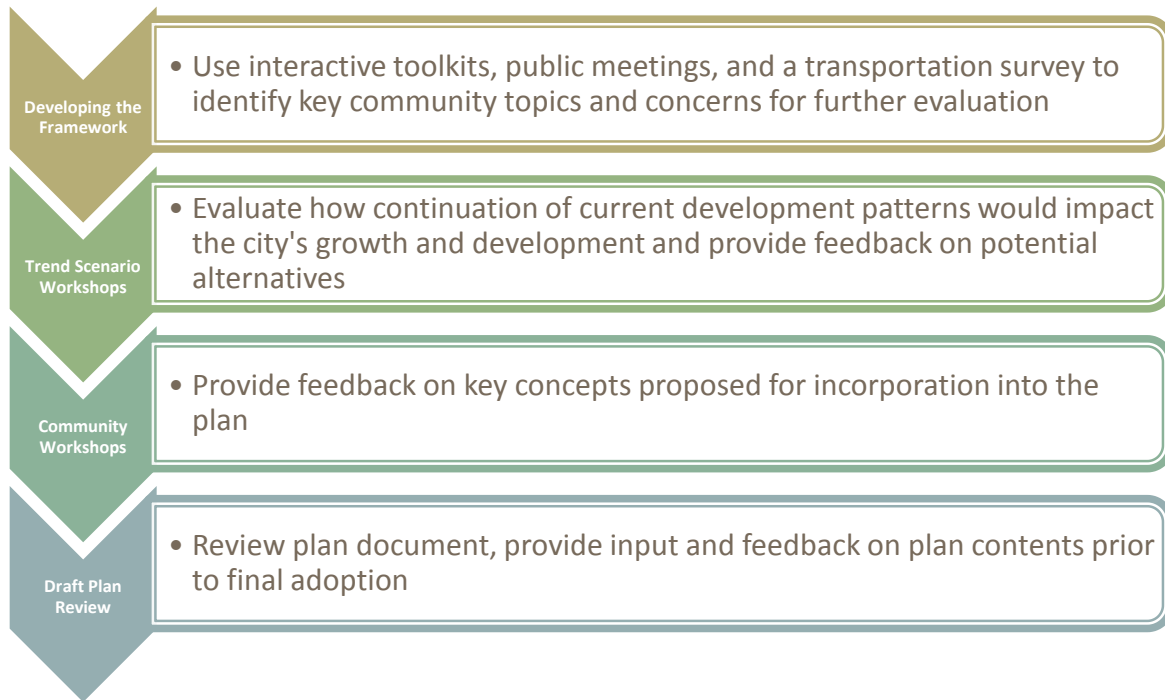
## Community Opinions Shape the Planning Framework

Rochester has long been growing in physical size as well as in population. Without suburbs or contiguous cities to limit expansion, Rochester has traditionally grown horizontally rather than vertically. To date, the physical and natural features discussed earlier in this section have provided the primary limitations on development patterns. Agricultural lands and other open spaces have been annexed into the city over the decades as suburban-style growth expanded.

Future growth patterns can be more compact and diverse, and the community favors these options. As part of this planning effort, community engagement tools were used to involve residents, employees, and visitors in developing strategies to guide the next generations of city growth.

## Community Engagement

Community engagement has been a key component of the P2S 2040 process. Overall, our effort was successful in accessing over 7,000 individual ideas and opinions that helped inform the planning process and, ultimately, the final plan document. Outreach efforts for P2S 2040 included a diverse set of strategies and methods to encourage participation from all segments of Rochester's population. These engagement efforts were focused on four areas:



*A detailed analysis of community engagement activities and themes can be found in Appendix X.*

## Emerging Priorities

The importance of certain key themes to Rochester’s future success were repeatedly expressed throughout these community participation activities. These topics form the basis of the comprehensive plan’s vision, principles, goals, policies, and implementation strategies and include:

- Integrated land use and transportation planning
- Transportation options
- Access to amenities
- “Placemaking”
- Housing diversity and affordability
- Fiscal responsibility
- Health and wellness

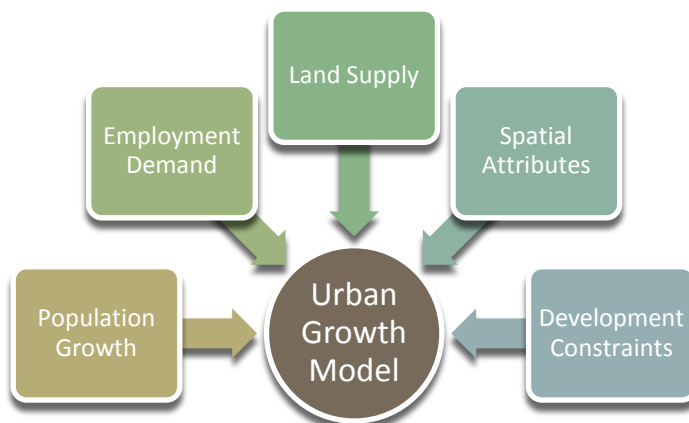
## Scenario Planning

The P2S 2040 planning process used technical evaluation tools, including an urban growth model customized for the City of Rochester. The model was created by using population growth projections, employment demand, land supply, spatial attributes, and development constraints to identify potential



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future land use patterns, creating alternative growth scenarios. From these scenarios, a series of land use outputs emerged, which were then measured against a set of indicators to understand how the different scenarios would ultimately impact aspects of the community.



These scenarios are not plans. Rather, they are depictions of ways in which Rochester could potentially develop based on knowledge about how Rochester currently functions and projections about its future. The scenarios are used to test assumptions and to predict the interplay between key drivers affecting the future growth of the community. They help planners, stakeholders, and decision makers evaluate the consistency of the resulting land use patterns with the community vision and preferences discussed earlier in this chapter. The scenario evaluation identified anticipated outcomes, opportunities, and consequences of three different future growth options. *A complete overview of the scenarios is provided in Appendix X.*

The P2S 2040 process evaluated three different growth scenarios before determining a preferred future.

<p>Trends Scenario</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Continuation of current trends and planning policies serving as a baseline comparison for alternative scenarios</li> <li>•Referred to as "dispersed growth"; density is too low to support transit system enhancements</li> </ul>
<p>Alternative Scenario 1 - Multiple Nodes, No Edge Growth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Assumes all future growth will happen within existing city limits</li> <li>•Identifies several high-density, transit-oriented nodes along key corridors best suited for enhanced transit service</li> <li>•More growth is distributed to downtown, consistent with DMC plan</li> </ul>
<p>Alternative Scenario 2 - Super Nodes, Limited Edge Growth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Assumes edge growth will require limited expansion of city limits</li> <li>•Enhanced transit system supported by higher densities and transit-oriented development concentrated in two "super nodes" connected by a corridor</li> <li>•More growth is distributed to downtown, consistent with DMC plan</li> </ul>

## Scenario Comparisons with Community Preferences

Indicators reflecting the Core Principles discussed later in this section, including elements such as land cover, location and type of residential and employment growth, roadway congestion, proximity to transit, and transportation mode share were used to compare each of the three scenarios to current conditions and to evaluate the degree to which each scenario would meet community preferences. A chart summarizing these findings is found in Appendix X.

In assessing the three scenarios, the continuation of current development trends would not support the Core Principles as strongly as the alternative approaches. It is clear that the general concept of more compact, mixed use development along key corridors helps achieve community priorities much better than if the current development trends continue. A Summary of Scenario Indicators includes key indicator results for the trends scenario and compares those results to the results of two alternative growth scenarios.

## Informing Development of the Land Use Framework

Based on the evaluation of the alternatives in conjunction with the community engagement process, this plan is based on a combination of Alternatives 1 and 2 - the "Preferred Scenario". Stakeholder feedback supported integrating multiple nodes, key corridor redevelopment, a stronger emphasis on transportation and housing choices, and more efficient use of existing infrastructure. Technical evaluation of possible options - including infrastructure systems, land use, and community development - align with stakeholder preferences. Land use and development patterns, transportation, and public infrastructure systems are fundamentally interrelated aspects of how the city grows and functions and are critical to the overall quality of life and sustainability of the community. The land use plan, therefore, seeks to find solutions that:

- **Integrate** land use and transportation systems (nodes and corridors);
- **Support** the Downtown Master Plan, DMC Plan, and related transportation strategies and goals (including the 2030 Mode Share goals for downtown);
- **Optimize** existing infrastructure systems and better supports long-term asset management; and
- **Balance** redevelopment and reinvestment with new growth on the edge of the community.

The resulting Preferred Scenario is transit supportive and supports stronger placemaking opportunities by featuring:

- Key intersections and transportation corridors with enhanced transit service and opportunities for higher density, mixed use, walkable development patterns, and



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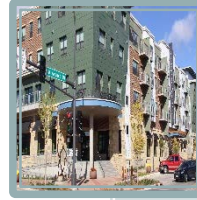
- Corridors that connect destinations and have good anchors with concentration of jobs, housing, entertainment

The Preferred Scenario supports growth in areas with existing infrastructure systems and investments in place and supports a balanced approach between redevelopment/reinvestment and new growth.



## Trends Scenario

- Dispersed growth may support gradual improvements in transit frequency but not higher-end frequencies and greater service levels.
- Mode share goals would not be met - only 14% of trips downtown would be via transit, which is well short of the 23% goal for 2030.
- Auto-oriented development would limit and negatively impact walking/biking opportunities.
- Dispersed development would not accommodate the diversity of housing and neighborhood choices to meet market demands (compact, walkable, mixed use)
- Dispersed development would not support the kind of vibrancy and placemaking that residents desire.
- Outward growth is a less efficient/sustainable use of public resources. More miles of pipe serving lower density development is more costly to build and maintain.



## Alternative Scenarios

- Alternative scenarios result in 15% less growth in vehicle miles traveled when compared to the trend scenario
- 16-19% less growth in Vehicle Hours Traveled due to use of other modes, shorter trips, less congestion and improved travel speeds.
- The percent of residents/jobs within ¼ mile of frequent transit is significantly increased over the trend scenario.
- Downtown mode share goals are achieved in the alternative scenarios.
- Transit supportive mixed use development opportunities provide greater housing choice, diversity, and affordability due to reduced transportation costs and land costs.
- A greater share of residents are within walking or biking distance to key activity centers and nodes.
- Less land is consumed for development leaving more open space and natural resources.
- Supports increased vibrancy and placemaking within key nodes outside of downtown.
- With the alternative scenarios, annualized cost of capital, operations, and maintenance for all transportation investments is 5%-10% less per capita when meeting downtown mode share goals.
- Constraining outward growth as done in the alternative scenarios, promotes more efficient and sustainable use of public resources (infrastructure, facilities, and services).



## Part 3 | What is a Comprehensive Plan?

### Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

Rochester is a growing community and that growth will continue. The purpose of the comprehensive plan is to develop a vision, guiding principles, policies and actions to chart a course for the future. By identifying issues, staying ahead of trends, and providing an opportunity to consider the future implications of today's decisions, the comprehensive plan can help ensure that growth makes our community better, not just bigger.

A major benefit of adopting a comprehensive plan is that it takes a big picture view of the city by considering how all of the different geographies and community systems are interrelated and interdependent. Some of the more important issues for consideration that have come to the forefront during the P2S 2040 process include:

- Enhanced transit service transit as an alternative to driving is needed;
- Urban design affects quality of life, community character, and the viability of walking and bicycling as a means of commuting and travelling;
- Adequate infrastructure must be available to serve both current and future growth;
- Land uses (jobs/housing), urban design patterns, density, and geographic location greatly influence the capital cost to build infrastructure and the ability to sustain that infrastructure over time;
- Community growth patterns significantly affect the way in which government provides key city services such as police and fire protection, transit, park and recreation facilities, educational systems, and arts/cultural amenities; and
- The city's physical and social health and well-being can be greatly enhanced by planning our built environment with health in mind.

Recognizing these relationships as an integral part of the planning process helps city leaders optimize their actions and limited budgets by building a prepared, competitive, and efficient community that can respond and adapt to change as needed.

### Legal Scope and Authority

Minnesota Statutes (M.S.) 462.351 provides the policy justification for municipal planning in Minnesota. Minnesota Statutes Section 462.353, Subdivision 1, gives cities the general authority to carry on comprehensive municipal planning activities for guiding the future development and improvement of



## What is A Comprehensive Plan?

the municipality. This section also grants cities the power to prepare, adopt and amend a comprehensive municipal plan and implement this plan by ordinance and other official actions in accordance with the provisions of M.S. 462.351 to 462.364.

M.S. 462.3535, Subdivision 4, states that the comprehensive municipal plan may establish an urban growth area (also referred to as the “urban service area”) for the urbanized and urbanizing area. This area includes the current city limits as well as those unincorporated areas that are planned for inclusion to the city within a specified time frame. The city plan must establish a staged process for boundary adjustment as lands within the urban growth area but outside the current city limits are annexed. The plan must also provide for the staged provision of urban services, including, but not limited to, water, wastewater collection and treatment, and transportation.

EXCERPT FROM M.S. 462:

“The legislature finds that municipalities are faced with mounting problems in providing means of guiding future development of land so as to insure a **safer, more pleasant and more economical environment** for residential, commercial, industrial and public activities, to preserve agricultural and other open lands, and to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare. Municipalities can prepare for anticipated changes and by such preparations bring about **significant savings in both private and public expenditures**. Municipal planning, by providing public guides to future municipal action, enables other public and private agencies to plan their activities in harmony with the municipality's plans. **Municipal planning will assist in developing lands more wisely to serve citizens more effectively, will make the provision of public services less costly, and will achieve a more secure tax base.**”

## Associated Planning Documents

P2S 2040 integrates information from several past and current plans. Summaries of these and other current plans are found in [Appendix X: The Background Documents Summary](#). Some of these plans are of particular importance and are summarized below. The Rochester Urban Service Area Land Use Plan, once a separate document adopted as part of the comprehensive plan, is integrated into the P2S 2040 text.



## What is a Comprehensive Plan?

P2S 2040 shall be the city's lead and overall policy guide for the growth and development of Rochester. All other plans related to the City's growth and development, as well as related infrastructure plans, must be aligned with and conform to this comprehensive plan. Future documents such as area plans, resource protection plans, and master plans, will be approved as amendments to P2S 2040 and shall refine the language of the comprehensive plan.

While smaller communities often combine all of their plans into a single comprehensive plan document, Rochester does not; incorporating all of the plans the Rochester Common Council has adopted as part of the comprehensive plan into a single physical entity would result in a very bulky, difficult to navigate document. Much of the information from other plans included in this document is summarized; several appendices include this material in greater detail.

## Approved Plans

**Rochester-Olmsted Council of Governments (ROCOG) Reaffirmation of the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan** | This plan was originally completed in 2010 and was reaffirmed in August 2015. The plan takes a comprehensive look at anticipated transportation system development in Olmsted County through 2040 and establishes 10 policy directions; identifies 42 bicycle and pedestrian accommodation strategies to improve the bike-walk environment in Rochester; and recommends rail, bus rapid transit (BRT), and streetcar feasibility studies. This plan will be revised to align with the P2S 2040 Plan with the next Transportation Plan update.

**Downtown Master Plan** | The Downtown Master Plan was a collaboration between the City of Rochester, the Mayo Clinic, the University of Minnesota Rochester, the Rochester Downtown Alliance, and the Rochester Area Foundation. It was completed in 2010. The plan establishes a vision for downtown and identifies development opportunities as well as design and development guidelines. Mobility is an important component of this plan, and it includes the goal of having 50% of commuter trips to the downtown accomplished by modes other than the single occupant automobile by 2030.

**Bicycle Master Plan** | The Bicycle Master Plan was completed in 2012 by the Rochester-Olmsted Planning Department and identifies improvements to the bicycling environment in the Rochester area. Recommendations address facility improvements, potential routes, support infrastructure, education and encouragement strategies, safety improvements, and implementation actions and priorities.

**2nd Street Corridor Framework Plan** | This plan was completed in 2009 and is intended to guide growth along the 2nd Street SW corridor that promotes development, connectivity, and safety. The plan identifies and describes three districts within the corridor and identifies opportunity sites and issues related to parking, pedestrian/bike circulation, and transit/transportation conditions. General design principles, goals, and objectives guide development in the corridor along with more detailed guidance



## What is A Comprehensive Plan?

for each district as appropriate. The plan also includes streetscape prototypes and implementation strategies for redevelopment, design, community organization, promotion, and public improvements.

**Energy Action Plan (EAP)** | The EAP's purpose is to guide the City in its effort to establish and achieve energy consumption and carbon reduction targets. The plan identifies Rochester's baseline and forecast for energy use and emissions, energy focus programs, opportunities for improvement, recommended best practices, next steps, and potential partnerships. Throughout the EAP's development, its project team gave contextual consideration to the P2S 2040 process.

**Parks and Recreation System Plan** | The Parks and Recreation System Plan, adopted in August 2016, identifies priorities for future system investments and sets direction for the system for the next twenty years. The plan includes an assessment of Rochester's current park and recreation system, facilities, and programming and an overview of demographic, population, and industry trends that will impact the City's system in the future. The plan establishes a vision and guiding principles for the park and recreation system along with goals, policies, and strategies. Its implementation section addresses priorities and funding recommendations and sources.

## Other Documents That Inform the Comprehensive Plan

**Olmsted County General Land Use Plan** | This land use plan was created by the Olmsted County Planning Advisory Commission and studies the unincorporated areas of Olmsted County. The plan defines the function of Rochester's Urban Service Area and outlines the time horizon and development policies for those areas. This plan also defines a suburban development area and its development policies. The work of the Rochester-Olmsted Planning Department ensures that growth throughout the county's urbanizing areas is coordinated.

**Destination Medical Center (DMC) Development Plan** | The DMC Development Plan was created by the DMC in 2015 and is intended to guide public and private investment around the DMC in downtown Rochester. It is an economic development plan and vision document that focuses on downtown, but its initiatives will have broader impacts on the City of Rochester and Olmsted County. The DMC plan includes sections dedicated to market research, transportation, infrastructure, finance, business development implementation, marketing and communications implementation, community outreach, and operations. The DMC Plan also includes an economic and fiscal impact report.

## P2S 2040 is a Living Document

While P2S 2040 generally has a 25-year time frame, it is not meant to be a static document. Periodic reviews are critical when changes in population and employment projections, major land use, and infrastructure policy make amendments necessary. The Plan should be reviewed and updated every five





## What is a Comprehensive Plan?

to ten years. Such amendments to the plan must be made in a consistent, orderly way that recognizes the long-term impacts to the community.

## Land Use vs. Zoning

As described earlier, P2S 2040 also serves as the land use plan for the City of Rochester. Land use designations are based on policies that guide the city's vision for growth and development. They are not always parcel specific, nor does a land use designation give a parcel legal rights. Zoning, on the other hand, is parcel specific and legally binding. The relationship between land use and zoning is that zoning districts must conform to the land use designation for the property, and the zoning policies are one set of tools for incrementally executing the comprehensive plan as development occurs. After the completion of P2S 2040, it is anticipated that zoning ordinance changes will be pursued to help implement this plan.



## Part 4 | The Plan Framework

Based on the over 7,000 public comments collected during the planning process, the P2S 2040 Plan Framework formalizes the vision and principles the community has committed to when building our physical environment. It identifies what we the community hopes to achieve with this planning effort and recommends tools to realize these shared aspirations.

### Community Vision 2040

The 2040 Community Vision statement is a critical framing element for P2S 2040. It synthesizes the public and key stakeholder input received into a description of how the community wants the city to look, feel, and function over the next two decades and beyond. It embodies what community members value most about their city and serves as their inspiration and commitment to work together to achieve it. It is an ambitious framework that is interwoven throughout the plan, informing the goals, policies and strategies that give our policymakers and elected officials the comprehensive perspective they need to make rational and disciplined decisions about Rochester's future.

**Rochester** is a city that cares: where residents, employees, and visitors enjoy a high quality of life; where business and industry thrive; and where the land and environment are renewed and sustained for the benefit of all. It is a welcoming and diverse community:

**Renowned** for its reputation as a center for growth and innovation, its robust economy, and programs and institutions that support life-long learning;

**Characterized** by its safe and friendly neighborhoods, diverse and affordable housing options for people of all ages and backgrounds, thriving downtown, vibrant public spaces, and easy access to parks and recreational amenities;

**Committed** to health and wellness, not only of its people, but also of the air, water, and land they depend on for sustenance;

**Connected** both physically and socially, offering balanced transportation options; well-planned streets, sidewalks, trails, and neighborhoods; and a hospitable cultural atmosphere; and

**Dedicated** to the sustainable and responsible use of public resources and provision of quality public services, supporting livability and long-term fiscal health.

## The Plan Framework

### City of Rochester Mission Statement

A mission statement concisely captures the City’s purpose and actions it takes to fulfill its duties. While the vision statement describes the community’s desires for the future, the mission statement describes how that vision will be achieved.

“The mission of the City of Rochester is to provide a safe, attractive environment through the responsive, efficient, and cost-effective delivery of municipal services. The City will strive to enhance community pride by improving the physical, environmental, economic, cultural, and social quality of the community.”

### Core Principles Set the Plan’s Foundation

The following principles reflect the community desires expressed in Rochester’s Community Vision 2040 and guide the P2S 2040 planning framework and strategies.



**Integrate Land Use and Transportation** | A 2015 survey conducted by the Southeast Minnesota Association of Realtors found that the majority of Rochester’s current residents would prefer to live in a walkable neighborhood that has a mix of houses and stores and other businesses. This survey also found that many residents don’t think that there are enough different housing options in the community. Meeting these community interests can be accomplished by emphasizing compact development and mixed land use patterns. These forms of development, however, are not being advocated universally across the city. Instead, they should be strategically located to encourage community reinvestment and convenient access to jobs and services while supporting transit and non-motorized travel options.



**Emphasize Fiscal Sustainability** | Sustainability is commonly defined as the ability to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Rochester’s fiscal sustainability as a center for growth and innovation depends on a skilled work force and a strong, diverse economy that provides quality jobs. We must ensure, however, that the municipal investments that accompany this economic development make wise use of the taxpayers’ dollars and not sacrifice long-term stability for short-term gain.



**Expand Housing Diversity** | Rochester has a strong supply of good, attractive housing, much of which consists of single-family detached housing. Options are more limited for young and smaller households, senior households, and those with lower incomes.

Rochester's ability to compete in the global and national markets depends on creating an expanded range of housing choices that serve the broader needs of the entire population.



**Enhance the Integrity of Existing Neighborhoods** | Rochester will change as the city continues to grow. Neighborhoods located along the edges of city development will see new housing units built on adjacent vacant properties, while redevelopment and infill opportunities will bring new residents and investment into established neighborhoods. The core neighborhoods bordering Rochester's downtown, for example, have been experiencing some of these residential changes as developers have sought to serve the market demands for housing close to Rochester's main employment center. These changes can be positive for residents if they reflect and enhance the integrity of the existing neighborhoods. This plan needs to keep all residents' interests in mind by incorporating policies aimed to ensure that Rochester's neighborhoods maintain and strengthen their vitality, while balancing reinvestment and transformation in some areas of the city.



**Improve Community Connectivity** | Community connectivity involves a wide variety of components that collectively create a system that facilitates the convenient and efficient movement of goods and people to and throughout Rochester. This system provides the physical, economic, social, and recreational links critical to maintaining the high quality of life we value. The need to align planning and design elements as a means to ensure a high quality of life has been a fundamental focus of this planning process.



**Champion Social Equity and Environmental Justice** | Rochester has a long history of inclusionary planning, recognizing and celebrating diversity in the community. The City's mission statement and the Community Vision 2040 strongly support social, environmental, and economic equity. Furthermore, through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Partnership, Rochester has made a commitment to creating "a community that welcomes diversity, and that provides a safe, non-discriminating environment with respect and opportunity for all."



**Maintain Commitment to Health, Wellness, and the Environment** | Rochester has a reputation as a healthy city, and public input indicates that strong support exists for maintaining and enhancing the community's health and wellness. These sentiments extend to ecological health and wellness, as expressed through support for initiatives such as protection of land critical to groundwater recharge. Attention to human and environmental health is seen as an opportunity that will not only have positive impacts on community sustainability but also enhance Rochester's place in a competitive global market.

## Key Strategies Guide Plan Implementation

The Key Strategies incorporated the Core Principles and aid in plan implementation by informing the goals and policies found in Section 3 of this plan.



### Integrate Land Use and Transportation Systems

Rochester cannot maintain current commute patterns and accommodate projected downtown growth. Therefore, we must take the opportunity to invest in systems that change the focus from moving vehicles downtown to those that focus on moving people downtown.

This change will require a dramatic shift in both our land use patterns and transportation systems. The transit system must provide a level of service that makes it easy for people to change their commuting habits. This transit investment can only be supported if land use patterns place a sufficient density of people and jobs near the transit routes to make them economically viable. When development proposals are approved that do not support this strategy, the overall ability to meet challenges of the next generation will be compromised.



It is important for the land use and transportation frameworks of the plan to be developed so that they work together to achieve the Community Vision and support the Core Principles. An integrated land use and transportation system for Rochester can provide the foundational policies and actions that respond to the following community growth issues:

- Reduce the pressure for new greenfield growth featuring low density, suburban-style, and segregated land use patterns that have historically led to a high dependency on single-occupancy automobile trips;
- Encourage a pattern and style of land use that will support expanded transportation options, enabling more efficient and connected development patterns that can generate higher transit ridership, leading to a more cost effective transit system with more frequent, dependable, and quality service that captures more trips;
- Reduce the need for high cost investment in road widening or new roads to reduce automobile congestion hot spots by providing alternatives during peak travel times;

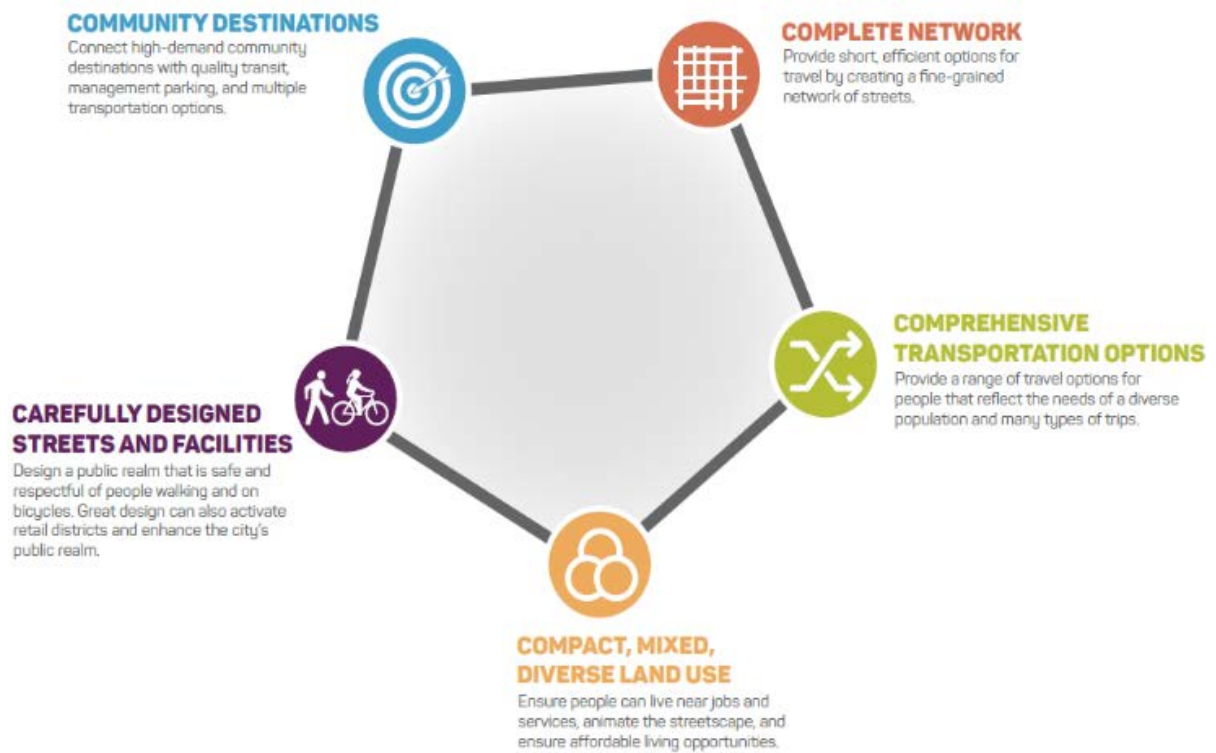


- Enable the City to grow its property tax base and increase tax revenues without extending infrastructure by fostering reinvestment, revitalization, and denser development in key areas with a reduced need for infrastructure expansion; and
- Nudge development towards a pattern that will result in a more cost effective and energy efficient community with reduced climate impact, consistent with the City’s Energy Action Plan.

### Primary Integration Elements

The following strategies will serve to integrate the Core Principles into the land use and transportation frameworks to achieve and realize the vision of the city:

**Develop Compact, Mixed, Diverse Land Uses** | Rochester will develop areas of compact and diverse land uses to support greater use of travel alternatives, create attractive and active street corridors, and expand affordable living opportunities by ensuring people can live near jobs and services and reduce their transportation costs. A diversity of land uses (including residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and recreational) within proximity of each other promotes walking, bicycling, and transit, and reduces driving, particularly when sufficient intensity of development is present to support higher frequency transit service. A mix of land uses also allows more daily needs to be met within shorter distances and creates a more interesting and active urban environment that makes traveling on foot, bicycle, or transit feel safer and more attractive at all times of the day and night.



## The Plan Framework

**Connect Community Destinations** | The integrated approach to land use and transportation will connect high-demand centers of development with quality transit and transportation options and encourage management of parking to focus on typical demand and not peak demand. Coordinating land use and transportation is necessary to provide a range of viable transportation options that suit the needs of all residents and visitors. This coordination encourages destinations to be located in places that can be efficiently served with frequent and reliable transit service competitive with private vehicle travel. Transit, in turn, can be provided effectively and efficiently when it serves multiple destinations located along direct routes connecting major activity centers at end points to provide a steady flow of passengers.

**Develop a Complete Transportation Network** | A well-connected street network shortens travel distances, opening up more options for people to travel quickly and conveniently by different modes to where they want to go. The Rochester transportation network will be enhanced to provide opportunities for efficient and reliable options for travel by creating a fine-grained network of transportation corridors.

**Provide Comprehensive Transportation Options** | Rochester's transportation system serves a diverse range of persons. People of all incomes, ages and abilities should be able to travel in a safe and comfortable manner, whether walking, pushing a stroller, using a mobility device, accessing transit, driving, or riding a bicycle. The transportation system will provide comprehensive transportation options that reflect the needs of a diverse population and many types of trips.

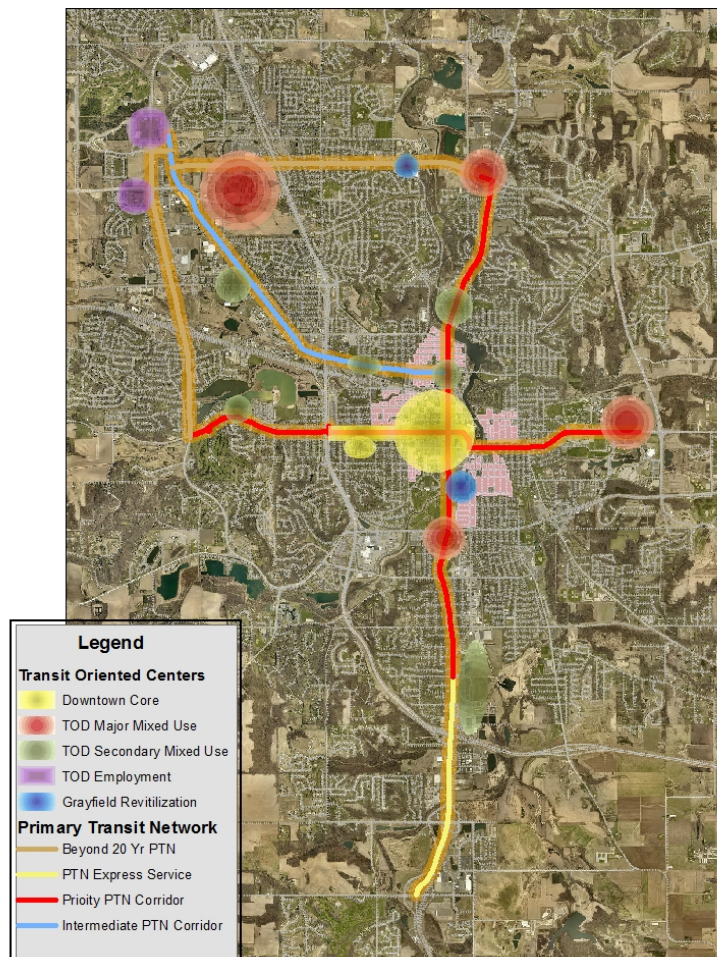
**Integrate Complete Streets and Urban Form** | With the emphasis on a more compact development pattern with a mix of uses and greater levels of intensity, urban design becomes a more critical consideration in both private and public realm development. We must design complete streets and other transportation facilities that create a public realm that is safe and respectful of people walking, on bicycles or accessing transit. Great street design can also activate retail districts and enhance the city's public realm.

### **Transit Oriented Nodes and Corridors: A Priority for the Future**

P2S 2040 defines a strategy for the delivery of transit in coordination with improvements to land development patterns, context sensitive roadway designs and the addition of high-capacity fixed route transit corridors. A proposed Primary Transit Network is key to realizing the P2S 2040 and DMC vision of reducing vehicular traffic entering downtown Rochester while enabling the City to support increased development intensity in the central core of the city that will strengthen the tax base and use existing infrastructure more efficiently. To achieve these outcomes, the P2S 2040 Land Use and Transportation Framework will emphasize the following features:

**Transit Oriented Growth Centers** | Important to the spatial organization of people and jobs in a city, centers are key to advancing the concept of “livability” – the creation of an attractive live-work environment that draws persons to live and work in urban areas. Centers are places where people live, go to work, go to school, shop, socialize, do business, visit their doctor or dentist, and simply “hang out”. Although it is possible to produce successful shopping centers clustered in “superblocks” at crossroad sites, there is growing evidence that we have too much of this type of single-use, auto-oriented housing, shopping, and employment development. There is, however, substantial, verifiable pent-up market demand for what has been labeled “walkable urbanism” – compact, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented districts served by transit.

“Nodes” of development located outside of the downtown center will benefit from their proximity to and connectivity by transit services to the Central Business District and Mayo Medical Center, which in turn can support moderate increases in development intensity without comparable increases in vehicle traffic. Transit supportive development places higher residential densities in these nodes along major transit lines in conjunction with expanded employment and shopping opportunities. Enhanced mobility choices and convenient access to employment results in the reduction of transportation costs. Reduced transportation costs positively impacts household budgets, particularly those of low income residents.



Transit Oriented Development Nodes vary in size and character and are heavily influenced by existing opportunities for redevelopment within the nodes and adjacent neighborhoods that define the edges of

## The Plan Framework

the node. The potential to attract redevelopment within these nodes will reflect the redevelopment “readiness” of an area, which depends on a factors including the size, configuration, and ownership of parcels, current land uses and existing development intensity. The Primary Transit Network can serve as an economic development driver and support reinvestment and revitalization of aged commercial corridors and nodes. Conversion of Broadway to a city street, from its former life as a State Trunk Highway, coupled with reinvestment and enhanced bus service can transform a key spine and gateway to the city.

While centers can be conceived in simply a spatial sense as places to put people and jobs, it is more effective to approach them as attractive places for people, and for that reason, the quality of the downtown center and transit-oriented nodes is vital to their success in attracting residents, jobs, and visitors. Nodes can help achieve many other regional planning objectives, such as increasing housing choices for an aging population, providing housing and job opportunities close to each other, making transit cost-effective, providing services and amenities in centralized locations, and providing businesses with the synergies of customers and contacts. Indicating in the plan that transit-oriented growth centers are the preferred location for jobs and housing provides a strong signal to the private sector of where investments will be made and where appropriate development applications will be supported.

**High Frequency Transit Corridors** | A Primary Transit Network (PTN) will help achieve these outcomes based on the presence of, or opportunities to, develop major activity centers along key transit corridors. The PTN is a network of transit corridors where top quality, high amenity transit services connect major destinations and mixed use nodes. The PTN aligns identified areas of housing, services, and job growth with transit infrastructure that will allow people to move around the city in a reliable, convenient, and dignified manner.



Transit amenities encourage ridership and development along the transit corridor.

Transit provides an alternative to driving, but the feasibility of transit is impacted by the intensity of development and mix of land uses in an area. To enable transit to serve a greater role in meeting the travel needs of people, the type and design of land use must create the conditions that will support transit service. Focusing development in these corridor areas demonstrates to the community,



developers, and other stakeholders where density is needed to support the PTN’s viability, resulting in synergies that can make viable a lifestyle less dependent on private vehicle travel.

**Areas not Adjacent to Key Transit Oriented Centers or Corridors** | Areas outside of the transit oriented growth and premium transit corridors will not have the same transit accessibility options as other areas and therefore development in these areas should not intensify to the same extent as in those served by premium transit.



### Emphasize Fiscal Sustainability

Municipal infrastructure (sewer, water, gas, electric, telecommunication infrastructure) is needed to serve future growth. The design and density of land uses and its geographic location greatly influence the capital cost to build infrastructure systems and the ability to sustain that infrastructure over time. As funding sources become less available, city leaders must employ strategies that protect our public investments without overburdening current and future taxpayers.

### Prioritize Greenfield Development in Areas with Available Infrastructure

With the current and projected infrastructure needs in our community, development should initially be focused in areas with adequate infrastructure capacity. In the timeline of this plan, greenfield development must be prioritized to those sewer super-districts that have available capacity: Kings Run (NW) and Hadley Valley (NE). The Plan includes ample area to accommodate the next 25+ years of growth without requiring major expenditures to expand capacity to other areas of the city. This type of development strategy will give the City time to formulate a phased plan for adding capacity across the community and also make the city’s investment in an enhanced transit service more economically feasible.



### Prioritize Maintenance of Existing Infrastructure

Rochester’s public assets include its water system, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, electric grid, roads and bridges, and parks and recreation facilities. With new growth and increased use of services, the public infrastructure system is increasingly stressed by a combination of growth pressures and maintenance needs due to aging facilities. In older parts of the city, including parts of downtown, public assets are nearing the end of their useful lives. **Appendix X provides a more detailed view of the reports and plans dealing with our city’s infrastructure.** Proper maintenance of investment in existing facilities positively impacts the viability if the growth and development strategies described in P2S 2040.



## The Plan Framework

### Water Supply

A high quality potable water supply is critical to human, environmental, and economic health; a city cannot thrive without good drinking water. Rochester Public Utilities (RPU) manages Rochester’s water supply and uses 31 wells located throughout the city to extract drinking water from underground bedrock aquifers. In 2012, the average amount of water pumped per day was 13,183,000 gallons. The capacity of the system is 35,882,000 gallons per day. The total amount of water pumped that year was almost 5 billion gallons, representing about 37% of the total capacity. Peak water consumption occurred in 2007 when 30,229,000 gallons of water was pumped in one day, representing 84% of total capacity. RPU will need to continue planning for long-term water system improvements to address peak demands as well as general community growth that needs to be supported by the system.

A sustainable water supply meets the public demand and requires the responsible use of water, now and in the future, without unacceptable social, economic, or environmental consequences. Rochester is committed to sustainable growth of its potable water infrastructure system by adopting the following strategies:

- Provide quality water for human use;
- Promote water conservation;
- Continually assess and provide for preventative maintenance;
- Continue to recognize water’s value;
- Plan for land use;
- Prevent aquifer depletion; and
- Prevent drawing contaminants into water wells.

### Sanitary Sewer

Rochester’s sanitary sewer system is designed to remove sewage from homes and businesses and deliver it to the City-owned and operated Water Reclamation Plant (WRP). Rochester’s sanitary sewer system consists of sanitary sewer interceptors (or mains), lift stations, and the WRP. Lateral sewer pipes serve neighborhoods and businesses, while trunk sewer pipes (generally larger than 12-inch diameter) collect sewage from laterals and lift stations that pump sewage from lower areas of the city and deliver waste to the WRP.

Rochester’s view of a sustainable sanitary sewer system means it is both economically sustainable and technologically superior in how it collects and treats wastewater to preserve and protect our natural resources. The City aims to accomplish this by:

- Managing volumes into the collection system;



- Preventing hazardous substances from entering the system;
- Providing for regular assessment and preventative maintenance;
- Building reserve capacity into the system;
- Staging development; and
- Planning for phased system replacement.

### Stormwater Management

Rochester’s water cycle has become “urbanized” by the creation of human habitat with associated hard, or impervious, surfaces like streets, roof tops, and even construction sites. These impervious surfaces prevent infiltration of precipitation, so when it rains or snow melts, this runoff (or stormwater) runs across both natural and constructed surfaces. When the water can’t permeate the surface, it misses the soil filtration step where microorganisms consume many pollutants. As a result, this change to urban areas causes lost recharge and more runoff that moves across the landscape at a faster pace. More and faster moving water can cause erosion and collect pollutants as it moves and transports them to receiving water bodies.

The City of Rochester has a history of stormwater management planning dating back to pre-1990. A utility fee was established in 2003 to help fund the program and demonstrate the important value that water resources have to the community. The primary goal of sustainable stormwater management is to minimize runoff throughout the City to the extent reasonable. Review of the potential for minimizing runoff starts at an individual site scale but is also viewed at a larger watershed scale, as well as city wide. Sustainable stormwater management mimics nature by integrating stormwater into development and utilizing it as a resource, not a nuisance. This approach limits runoff and pollutants leaving a site, and thereby reduces the effects of urbanization on water resources. The City’s stormwater management plan elaborates on these strategies and in general seeks to:

- Treat water as a resource, not a waste product;
- Design systems to mimic natural hydrology;
- Infiltrate, detain, or retain stormwater as close to where the rain falls as possible;
- Design stormwater management for water quality, quantity, and as an amenity;
- Be mindful of groundwater and stormwater interaction;
- Simplify sustainable stormwater BMP design, considering multiple, long-term goals; and
- Provide public education and involve stakeholders

## The Plan Framework

### Electricity

Rochester’s electric power is produced in a variety of ways. Each of the production facilities uses a different generation method. This diversity of power generation sources provides RPU the ability to effectively and economically meet sharp increases or decreases in energy demand.

- The Silver Lake Plant (SLP) is currently a steam producing facility. SLP is currently under contract with the Mayo Clinic to provide a specified amount of steam.
- The Cascade Creek Combustion Turbines use fuel oil and natural gas to generate electricity.
- The Lake Zumbro Hydroelectric Plant uses hydroelectricity to provide Rochester with a renewable supply of energy. The 440-foot spillway and powerhouse is located across the Zumbro River.

In 2015, the Rochester Public Utilities Infrastructure Study was finalized. The purpose of this study was to analyze the RPU power supply needs through 2035 and realize the short-term, intermediate, and long-term steps to be taken in order to continue to provide reliable, low-cost



power. The study found that the capacity and energy needs of the RPU are projected to increase substantially through 2035. This presents an opportunity to RPU to consider expansion or new energy generation methods to accommodate the forecasted demand. It’s clear that the forecasted growth in population will generate more demand for RPU services. The City needs to plan for the long-term and explore RPU facilities expansion or new development in order to maintain the current high level of services that contribute to the overall quality of life in Rochester.

Long-term planning requires more than simple expansion or development. It requires a strategy and consideration of the environment. There are many steps RPU could take to move towards energy conservation and resilience. The City of Rochester’s Energy Action Plan contains goals for RPU regarding resiliency and conservation.

### Asset Management

Local public entities do not have enough funding for every project in need of repair or improvements; the backlog of unmet street reconstruction needs, for example, has increased by 1200% in the past ten years. Deliberate use of asset management strategies helps city officials prioritize projects and make the most of limited tax dollars. Inventory databases, rating systems, and unit price estimates to replace, repair, or reconstruct public assets help department heads and officials evaluate, maintain, and upgrade current and future infrastructure facilities by looking at impacts on the network as a whole rather than in isolation.



## Expand Housing Diversity

Rochester’s demographic trends indicate that a wider variety of housing options are essential to meet the community’s current and future needs, particularly as the aging Baby Boomers compete for the same social and housing options desired by young professionals. As household sizes decrease and service jobs increase, there will be a need for more smaller-size homes and a similar shift to higher housing densities in order to accommodate more housing units within the city limits. At the same time, there will likely continue to be an increase in the number of households at the upper end of the income scales, suggesting an increasing demand for higher-end housing. The workforce cannot be retained or expanded unless people can find the housing they need in neighborhoods that offer the amenities they want.

P2S 2040 participants commented that housing and lifestyle options are currently limited, particularly for smaller households and those with lower incomes. The results of a 2015 housing survey conducted by the Southeast Minnesota Association of Realtors (SEMAR) corroborate these needs, noting that 43% of Rochester residents feel that there are not enough housing options available in the city. Quality of life factors such as neighborhood walkability, access to culture, and presence of quality schools topped the list of their lifestyle priorities.

Preservation of existing housing stock alone will not meet our housing needs. We must supplement our preservation efforts with responsible new residential development that

- Is focused within the existing community’s footprint
- Fits within the character of existing neighborhoods
- Demonstrates any incentives given are necessary for development
- Promotes fiscally responsible development

A portion of this new development should be focused on infill lots and adding housing units to our existing neighborhoods. These areas create investment in our core neighborhoods which already have the infrastructure needed for development.

When public commentary is combined with information compiled as part of the P2S 2040 Existing Conditions Summary, two major strategies surface to diversify our housing stock: expand the range of housing options and increase the supply of affordable housing.

## Increase Housing Options and Supply

Rochester is expected to add another 50,000 people by 2040 – a 55% increase in population. These residents, a mix of Rochester natives and those moving to the city for employment or educational opportunities, will need places to live. New and existing neighborhoods located throughout the city will

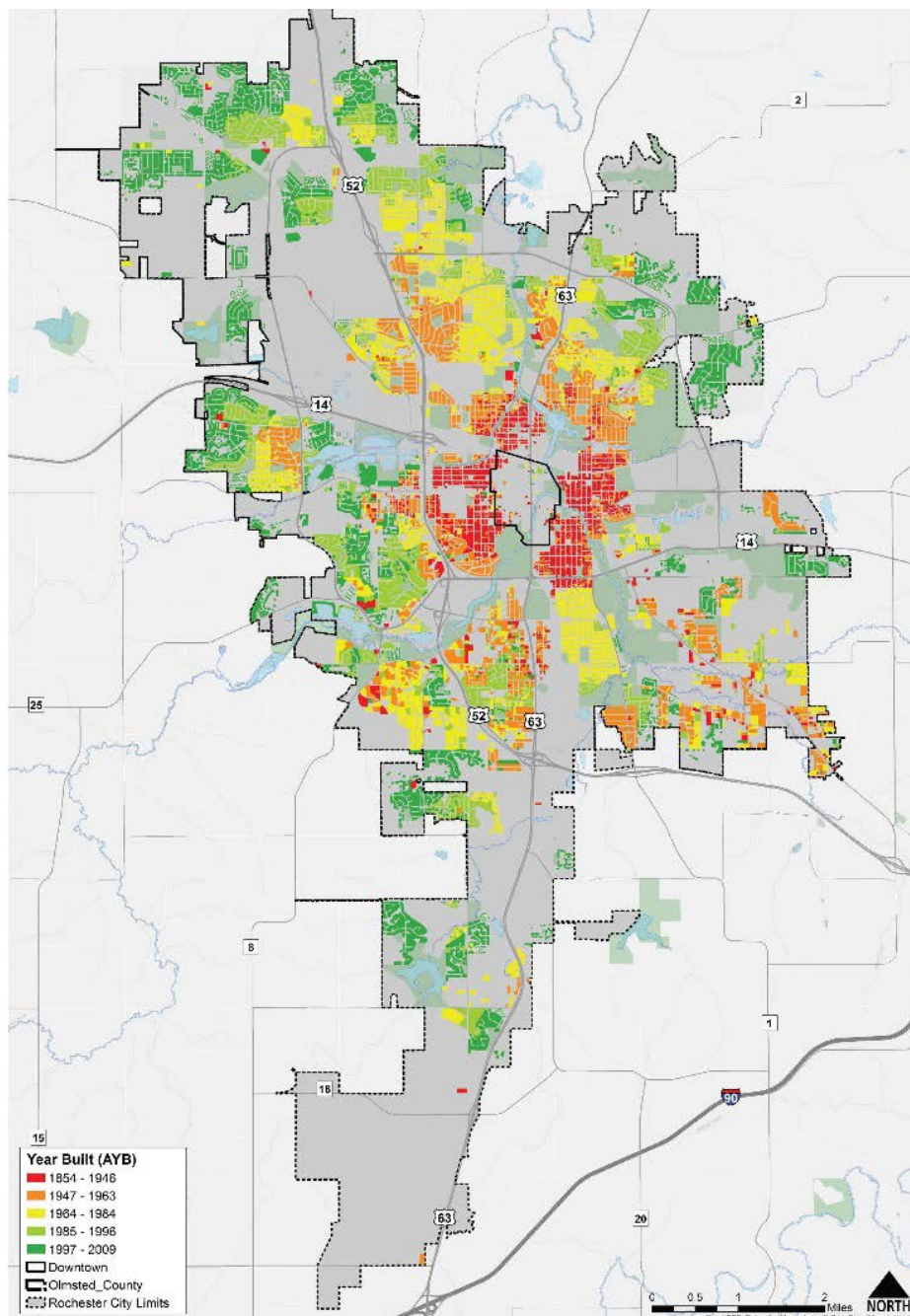
## The Plan Framework

provide the bulk of their housing opportunities, and increasingly, residents have options to live downtown.

Rochester’s housing has historically developed in a series of concentric rings radiating out from the downtown (Figure 1-1). The core neighborhoods around downtown generally filled in between 1854 and 1946. After World War II, another tier of housing evolved up until the mid-80s and since that time, newer neighborhoods have been created pushing out near the city limits in many areas. The vast majority of the housing in these neighborhoods is single-family detached units, most of which is owner-occupied.

Increasingly, other housing forms are becoming available, but their supply is

**FIGURE 1- 1: HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS**



still quite limited. Single-family attached units doubled its share of the housing stock from 5% in 2000 to



10% in 2010; and high density housing of 20 units or more grew to 13% of Rochester’s overall housing stock in 2010. Rental vacancy rates, however, have been very low in recent years: 4.5% for market unit rates; 1.4% for affordable units; and 0% vacancy for subsidized units. Recent increased multi-family development will impact vacancy rates and help meet demands.

Downtown presents significant opportunity to provide new homes for those seeking a vibrant urban environment with a range of housing opportunities and an array of amenities. In 2010, only 4% of Rochester’s population lived downtown, primarily in high-rise senior housing properties; 1% of the city’s population both lived and worked downtown. The percentage of people living downtown is expected to grow significantly in the future due in part to the Destination Medical Center (DMC) project and, to a lesser degree, from an expansion of the student population outlined in the University of Minnesota Rochester (UMR) Master Plan. Single-family neighborhoods located adjacent to downtown include some smaller-scale apartment buildings and are within an easy walking distance from most points of interest in the central business district. Mixed use neighborhoods provide key opportunities for access to jobs as well potential reduction in the proportion of household income devoted to transportation.



Blighted properties (before, top) can be redeveloped to create multifamily housing (after, bottom) that fits within the neighborhood fabric.

As more medical and technical professionals move to Rochester, there will continue to be a demand for single-family detached housing. The availability of high end housing within city limits, both single- and multi-family, may be an attractive option for those who do not want the commute from or yard maintenance of large lot suburban developments.

The housing supply must provide a mix of rental and owner-occupied units. For some, homeownership may not be an option due to finances or employment circumstances. New residents may want to rent while they grow roots in the area. Millennials have different views of homeownership than previous generations. Seniors may want to downsize while remaining in the neighborhood they consider home.

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The context for housing discussions is commonly based in market rate housing products: single-family homes, townhomes, apartments and condominiums. Maintaining housing diversity, however, needs to go much deeper. Rochester’s commitment to environmental justice means that a diverse housing supply needs to include residences for all members of our community, including those with physical and mental challenges, those needing financial assistance, multigenerational families, and veterans. It also needs to address housing for homeless individuals and families.

### Improve Housing Affordability

The City of Rochester has a critical shortage of affordable housing - housing that, through subsidy or other means, costs no more than 30% of the household income for those earning 80% of the area’s median income. As a result, the 2010 Census indicated that over 27% of Rochester households were experiencing “housing burden”. According to Maxfield Research’s *2014 Comprehensive Housing Needs Assessment for Olmsted County*, 53% of owner households earning less than \$50,000 per year and 75% of renters earning less than \$35,000 per year experience housing burden. Follow up research by the Greater Minnesota Housing Fund (GMHF) has determined a need for an additional 2,000 units of affordable housing by the year 2020.

According to the GMHF and Maxfield studies, there is a need for an additional 5,856 housing units in the Olmsted County study area by-2020, 37% of which should be “affordable”. Achieving these targets will require a combination of housing stock preservation and responsible new development. While we have neighborhoods that currently provide quality, affordable, “naturally” mixed income housing choices, many of the homes in these areas are over 50 years old and will require improvements to remain competitive in the marketplace. Enhancing and preserving these housing units for future generations should be a priority in order to utilize existing infrastructure and maintain neighborhood character.

There should not be any differentiation in our expectations for market rate or affordable housing. The previously stated studies have shown that affordable housing projects that fit within the fabric of existing neighborhoods do not have any impact on property values. There will be a need to evaluate and subsidize affordable housing projects. Policies that prioritize mixed income, mixed use projects in locations near amenities such as transit, employment, schools, grocery stores, and services that cater to low to moderate income populations should be prioritized. Affordable housing projects should be dispersed throughout the city and designed so that there is no difference in materials or character from market rate housing. A proactive housing policy that includes rental housing locations, management, materials, inspections, and design may proactively mitigate any potentially negative impacts.

Rent and mortgage payments, however, only tell part of the affordability story. The true long-term affordability of housing also needs to factor in maintenance and transportation costs. Cheaper housing construction typically carries with it higher long-term maintenance and life-cycle costs; initial savings on lower grade materials and fixtures often results in higher utility bills and repetitive replacement. In



Affordable starter homes promote entry into homeownership.

neighborhoods where transportation choices are limited, savings on housing costs can be more than offset by increased household expenses on items such as vehicle ownership and maintenance, fuel, and insurance. By providing housing opportunities in mixed use, mixed income, transit oriented areas, Rochester can create affordable neighborhoods where resources and opportunities are present without the need for expensive transportation options.

Many of the jobs created by area employers rely on workers working at moderate wage rates. The ability of employers to attract these workers is adversely affected by the shortage of truly affordable housing.

Housing, however, is a regional issue. Policy decisions made by the City will have an impact on other communities in the region. The City should lead by example and provide diverse housing types and styles that work for residents all along the social-economic spectrum.



## Enhance the Integrity of Existing Neighborhoods

Finding exactly the “right” neighborhood housing mix can be very tricky. We need quality housing options in all areas and at all price points. However, we don’t want to saturate any one residential neighborhood or housing price point with rental properties.

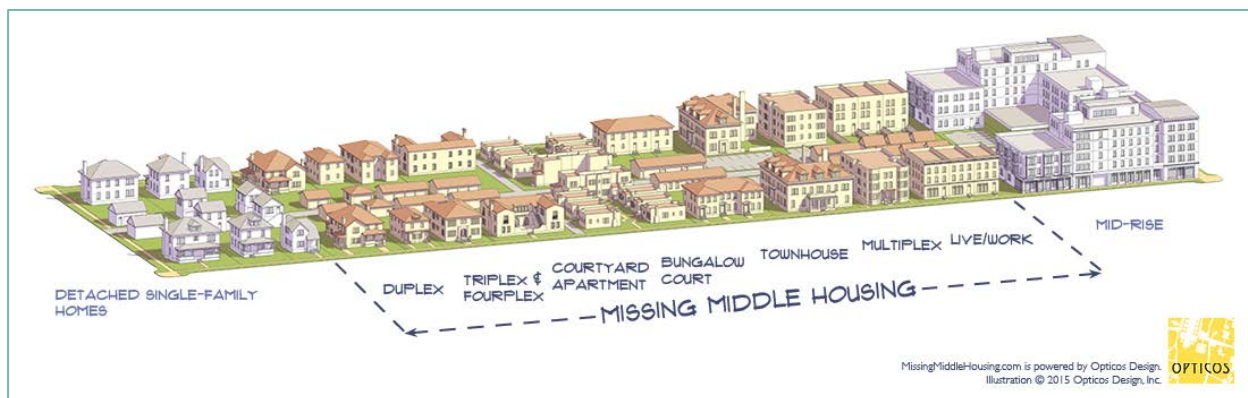
“Missing Middle” housing, a range of housing types compatible in scale with single family dwellings, can help meet Rochester’s growing demand for walkable urban living while enhancing the integrity of our existing neighborhoods. These housing types were once commonly found in pre-1940’s neighborhoods – duplexes, fourplexes, and courtyard apartments interspersed with single family homes – creating a moderate density that can support public transit, services, and amenities within walking distance. These homes typically have small to medium footprints with a structure width, depth, and height similar to a single family home. The mixture of these neighborhood building types result in the perception of low density, even though they often support more than 16 dwelling units per acre. Their simple construction,



Kutzky Flats is a local example of Missing Middle housing.



## The Plan Framework



"Missing Middle" housing can help meet demands for walkable urban living.

density, and access to destinations increases the affordability of these units while creating a sense of community through neighborhood vitality and the integration of shared spaces. The challenge is to create small spaces that are inviting, functional, and comfortable while ensuring these new housing types fit with the fabric of the neighborhoods in which they are developed.



### Improve Community Connectivity

Rochester has an opportunity to expand housing options and improve overall cost of living by reducing the combined cost of housing and transportation. As discussed earlier, where transportation options are limited, lower housing costs are often offset by high transportation expenses. Policies supporting access to public transit, safe pedestrian facilities, and a connected bicycling network are an essential component of P2S 2040 and vital to achieving the vision of a thriving downtown, vibrant neighborhoods, robust economy, and affordable living for people of all income brackets.

Rochester already benefits from high transit ridership for a city its size, primarily due to an impressive number of local and regional commuters traveling to downtown by bus each day. Employer policies limiting employee parking while providing free and subsidized transit passes are the primary support for the high use of transit. In addition to neighborhood bus stops, many utilize the city's convenient park and ride lots, while others travel on private commuter bus services operating out of more than 40 regional communities.



Not all Rochester residents and visitors, however, have viable transit options. Rochester Public Transit (RPT) service is oriented towards bringing commuters to and from downtown, which is reachable from most neighborhoods within 15 minutes. With limited evening and weekend hours, transit is not available to many low income residents working non-traditional hours, employees such as medical workers with evening shifts, students taking evening classes, or people wanting to linger downtown into the evening. Further, with most transit lines destined for downtown, people wanting to make trips that do not begin or end downtown face longer travel times. Many neighborhoods are not dense enough to justify the costs of providing more than the current level of service.

As discussed in greater depth in Section 2, future development patterns will need to shift for Rochester to expand transit beyond the successful commuter routes currently provided to include evening, weekend, and cross-town services. The location of future population and employment growth will influence transit demand and the efficiency of providing service.

### Establish a Primary Transit Network (PTN)

As described earlier in this section, the PTN is a future-looking network where top-quality, frequent, high-amenity transit services connect key destinations in Rochester. By identifying where to make the highest level of transit service and capital investment, the PTN will make it viable to live, work, and play in Rochester without a personal vehicle, thereby reducing the overall cost of living.

Rochester does not have the operating and capital resources to implement the PTN in full today. The PTN framework will develop with incremental investments in quality transit as residential, mixed use, and destination densities are realized, resulting in transit-oriented land use and street design.

### Enhance the Local Transit Network

The local transit network includes fixed-route buses that serve neighborhoods throughout Rochester, express service from park-and-ride lots to downtown, as well as demand response



The frequency of PTN buses eliminates the need for riders to consult a schedule.



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public transportation providing complementary paratransit service for those who are unable to navigate the fixed-route system.



ZIPS buses serve the needs of those unable to use the fixed-route city bus system.

The goal of the local transit network is to provide sufficient transit to maintain a basic or ‘lifeline’ level of service within ½ mile of most Rochester residents, as well as to employment, commerce, education, health care, and social services not on the Primary Transit Network. This level of service is defined by a minimum of 60 minute

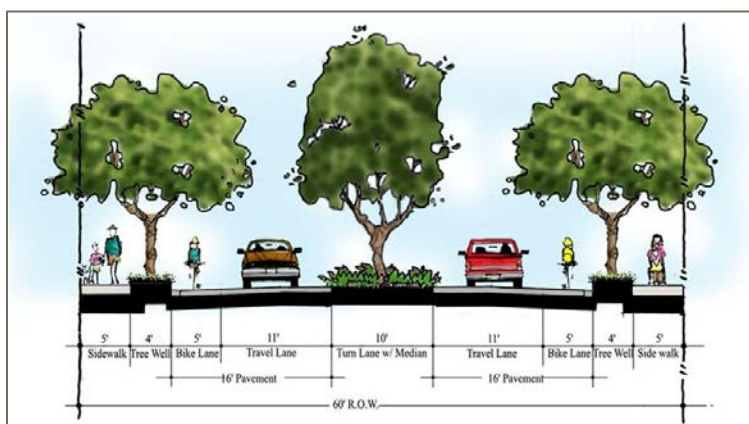
frequencies during daytime hours. A minimum density of approximately 2-4 people per acre is generally required to support even basic local service.

Access to local transit stops, particularly by people walking and bicycling, is critical to maximizing the usefulness of the local transit network. While transit access improvements and station amenities may be less than those provided on the PTN, making all transit stops comfortable and accessible is a priority.

Zumbro Independent Passenger Service (ZIPS) is the complementary paratransit system serving those unable to use the fixed route system. The significance of this service needed to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) will only increase as the community ages. The coordinated land use and transportation strategy of the comprehensive plan will improve the efficiency of this system by increasing the availability of mixed-use housing that will allow disabled and/or elderly residents to live closer to the goods and services they need.

### Continue to Build Complete Streets

In 2009, Rochester became the first city in Minnesota to adopt a “Complete Streets” policy. Complete streets are designed for everyone to use by enabling safe access for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and



“Complete Streets” are designed for everyone’s use.

transit riders of all ages and abilities. Each complete street is designed for the unique needs of the community, but may include features such as sidewalks, bike lanes, bus lanes, and safe crossing opportunities. Complete streets improve community connectivity by providing residents and visitors with choices in how they access the places they need to go to.

### Improve the Connectivity of the Rochester International Airport

As a national and global destination, Rochester will also need to ensure that the Rochester International Airport provides quality travel connections to areas outside our community. This facility is the third busiest commercial airport in Minnesota, following the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport and Duluth International Airport. RST is a significant contributor to the local economy.



RST is served by Delta Connection, United, and American Eagle for commercial flights and FedEx for cargo flights. In 2015, RST served about 226,000 commercial flight customers. In 2007, the process of developing a master plan for RST was initiated to study infrastructure needs and provide guidance for future development. The master planning

process revealed that the demand for RST services will continue to increase. To meet this demand, the master plan included 60 short-term and long-term improvements for the airport and the surrounding area. Chief among those improvements is the construction of a new passenger terminal to replace the current 60 year old facility. The airport layout plan was approved by the Federal Aviation Administration and the Minnesota Department of Transportation’s Aviation Division. Accommodating and encouraging the growth in RST helps to generate more economic activity in Rochester and the surrounding area.



### Champion Social Equity and Environmental Justice

One of the fundamental responsibilities of cities is the protection of public health, safety and welfare; the historic origin of traditional zoning by segregating land uses was designed for this purpose. However, establishing rigid separations of various land use types can result in disconnected areas of activity and contribute to sprawl. Mixed use development has been shown to be a more sustainable pattern of land use. While remaining sensitive to incompatible land uses, the establishment of mixed use areas can help address geographic inequities. P2S 2040 emphasizes Rochester’s continued evolution as a livable community supported by a convenient transit network. Livability and transit connectivity can promote environmental justice.

## The Plan Framework

### Create an Accessible Community for All

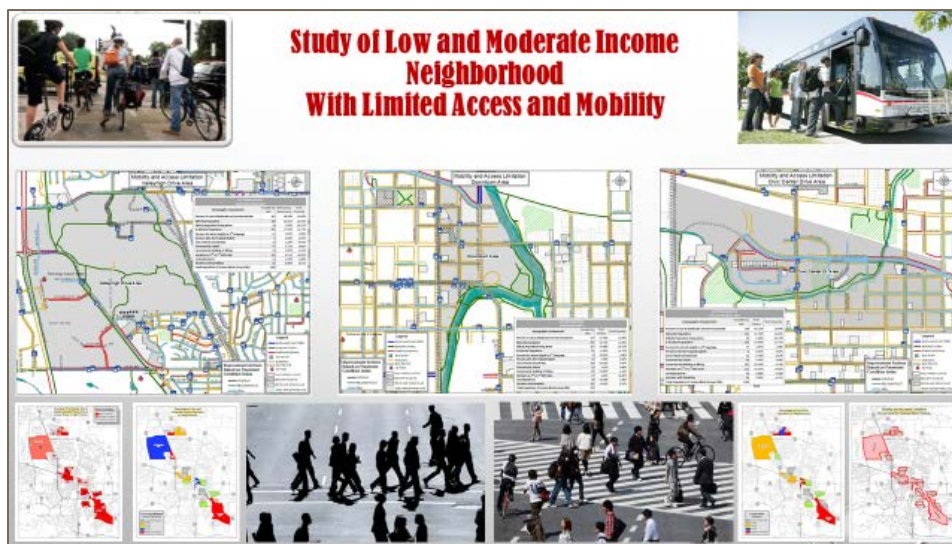
Dividing our community by income or by race fosters inequity, isolation, barriers to communication, disproportionate exposure to adverse environmental conditions, and ultimately divisiveness. What is true of income, class, and race is also true of other groups within the community. Separating the elderly and the disabled from neighborhood life inappropriately isolates these residents from community life. Segregation in any form is detrimental to the long term cohesiveness of our community and to our quality of life, leading to family, neighborhood, and ultimately community instability.

P2S 2040 seeks to equitably distribute public facilities and services throughout the community. Adequate public facilities and services enhance quality of life. Transit, parks, open space, trails, child care facilities, libraries, and other cultural facilities should be equally accessible to all socioeconomic groups. Our challenge is to build a community made up of inclusive neighborhoods that provide safe, secure, and neighborly environments in which all of us can thrive. It's the PEOPLE and the human environment that transform a great city into an even greater community.



### Enhance Mobility for Underserved Populations

In 2014, the Rochester-Olmsted Planning Department received a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) under the Entitlement Communities Program from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This funding was



used to identify mitigation strategies that reduce the negative impact of limited transportation choices in low and moderate income neighborhoods while improving residents' access and mobility limitations.



These strategies are also applicable in other parts of Rochester where higher income populations live. Infrastructure improvement facility maps were developed for each neighborhood included in the focus area. Implementing these strategies would help city residents affordably access a wider range of employment, goods and services, and community assets.



## Maintain Commitment to Health, Wellness, and the Environment

Minnesota Statutes, as described earlier in this section, grant cities the authority to plan in order to ensure “a safer, more pleasant, and more economical environment for residential, commercial, industrial, and public activities” by promoting the “health, safety, morals, and general welfare.” To many, the meaning of “health” in this passage is a historical reference to public health issues that were a consequence of early urban development. Unsafe water supplies, inadequate sewer facilities, unhealthy air quality, insufficient access to light, easily spread infectious disease, and high risk of fire were consequences that early planning efforts attempted to address. By 1948, however, the concept of health was expanded when the World Health Organization determined that health “is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. The link between the level of overall public health and vitality now contains a broader list of environmental and social factors.



Biking to do errands can build physical activity into our daily routines.

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### Engage in “Health in All Planning”

Since release of the first Surgeon General’s Report on Physical Activity and Health in 1996, the importance of physical activity in the reduction of risk for chronic diseases has come to the forefront of public policy. The provision of parks, open spaces and recreational amenities is a



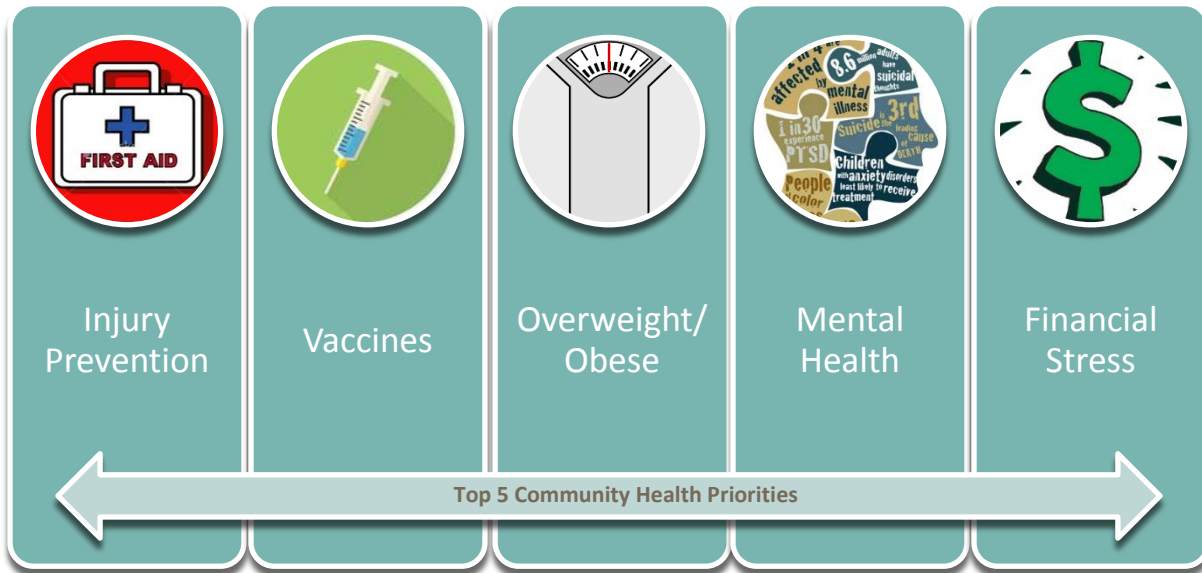
well-accepted planning tool to promote physical activity in a community. More recent work has attempted to show how community design and development - where and how we live, work, go to school, and play - can place unintended constraints on our ability to be physically active.

Rochester’s planning team is committed to the vision of “health in all planning”, thereby building a livable community that promotes positive physical, mental, and environmental health for all. The City of Rochester has been a leader in promoting active living and community wellness, and that effort continues today. As a center for health and innovation, Rochester is uniquely positioned to incorporate health and wellness into urban design. Initiatives ranging from Active Living Rochester to participation in the Statewide Health Improvement Project (SHIP) to adoption of the Rochester Area Bicycle Master Plan have laid the groundwork for land use and development patterns that allow people to integrate physical activity into their daily routines, support access to employment and services, promote health equity and safety, and stimulate social and economic connectivity. This work is far from done and will need involvement from all sectors of our community if this goal is to be achieved. The environment we strive to protect will be healthier for all our residents when we plan to maintain and create places that are considered safe, secure, accessible and attractive to active living.

In 2016, representatives from Olmsted County Public Health Services (OCPHS), Olmsted Medical Center (OMC) and Mayo Clinic updated the joint community health needs assessment (CHNA) to determine what our highest priority health needs are. The subsequent Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) will initiate cooperative efforts to alleviate the highest priority health issues over a three to five year time frame. The P2S 2040 Plan will incorporate these wellness concerns into land use, transportation, and quality of life strategies.



Throughout the P2S 2040 community engagement activities, participants repeatedly stated that a strong sense of community is critical to Rochester’s future success. A commitment to community health and wellness was seen as a priority to achieving this goal.



### Promote Rochester as “America’s City for Health”

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, one out of every two American adults is living with a chronic disease, such as heart disease, cancer, or diabetes. These diseases contribute to disability and premature death, and their medical treatment incurs significant costs for individuals, families, and the nation. Fortunately, many chronic diseases can be delayed, prevented, or managed through healthy behaviors such as regularly engaging in physical activity and eating nutritious food. Physical activity also supports positive mental health and healthy aging, making it one of the most important actions people can take to improve their overall health.

One of the goals of the DMC is to help develop Rochester to become an international attraction for those who are focused on wellness, not just coping with illness. That includes providing options for improving health and fitness, effectively managing the increase in visitors and residents, increasing the social connections that foster a vibrant community, and attracting highly trained young professionals to keep Rochester at the top in the health care field.

The community values the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and neighborhood features that make it easy to practice healthy behaviors are appealing to their residents and visitors. Access to safe and convenient sidewalk networks, bike systems that can be used both for recreation and purposeful trips, and sources of healthy foods are becoming a quality of life priority for current and future Rochester residents when

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looking for a place to live. Land use and transportation policy significantly impact the ability of our city’s built environment to facilitate healthy living goals.

### Facilitate Active Living

“Active Living” is defined as a way of life that integrates physical activity into daily routines. The ability to walk to school, bike to work, or wheelchair roll to the store allow people to get the exercise they need without having to hit the gym every day. Lack of sidewalks, accessible curb cuts, bikeways that connect homes to business centers, and appealing public spaces inhibit these types of activities. Accessible neighborhoods are good for our health, good for business, and good for social connection – they promote a sense of community.



Community gardens provide access to fresh, healthy foods.

Over the past two decades, Rochester has been a leader in promoting active living and community wellness, and that effort continues today. In 2007, the Rochester-Olmsted Planning Department entered into a contract with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota for Active Community Planning and Active Living MN efforts in Rochester. This initiative laid the groundwork for amendments to the Rochester Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision regulations, the City’s comprehensive plan, and other City policies in order to increase the supply and safety of an accessible non-motorized infrastructure. This work will continue through the goals and strategies of P2S 2040.

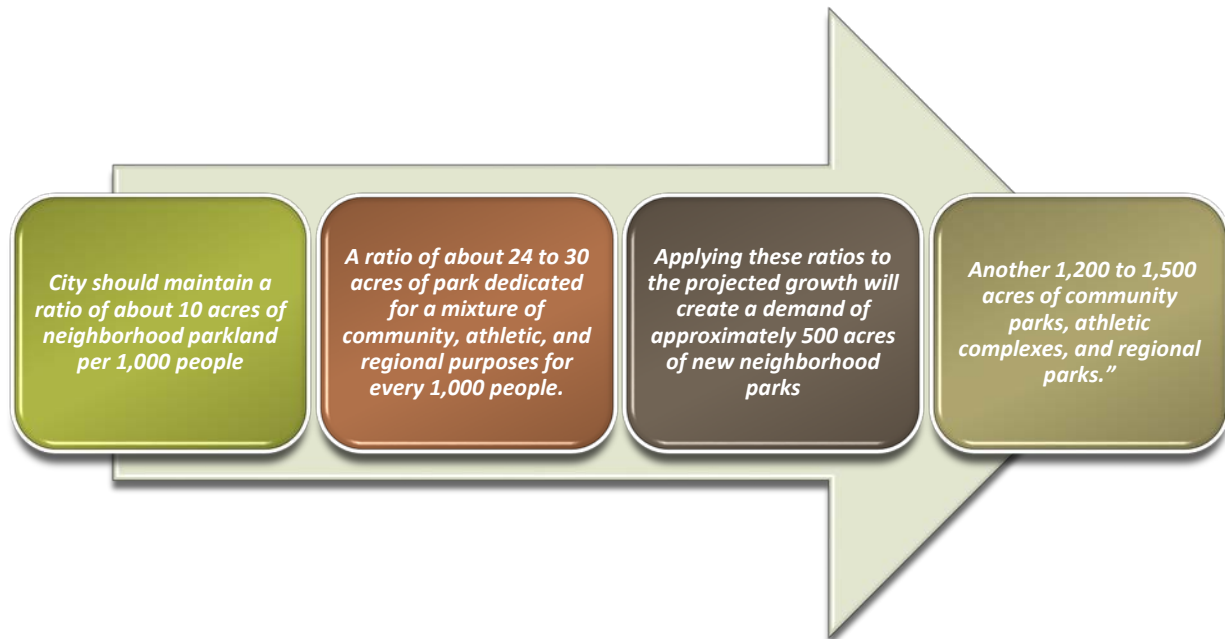
### Invest in City Parks and Recreation Facilities

When people talk about the places they love in a city, parks are typically at the top of list. For almost 150 years Rochester’s parks have created civic identity and pride, as well as contributed to neighborhood identity, environmental sustainability, resident health and well-being, and economic development. The City’s existing system is thriving, with more than 4,200 acres of parkland, 120 parks, and 85 miles of trails. Maintaining and updating Rochester’s recreational offerings in order to keep them fresh, exciting, and relevant in light of changing demographic and recreational trends is essential to the system’s continued success. Significant investment will be needed to restore aging parks and recreation facilities.

In Summer 2016, the City adopted the Rochester Parks and Recreation System Plan to guide them in maintaining, expanding, and programming these vital community assets. The plan contains more than 30 goals, 100 policies, and 250 strategies, classified into nine categories of impact on our community’s urban fabric

- Parks
- Facilities
- Trails
- Natural Areas
- Programming
- Sustainability
- Public Health
- Public Art
- Management and Operations

The parks and recreation system will need to expand as the community grows. Where neighborhoods are already developed and there are limited opportunities for park expansion, improvements will focus on additional facilities, amenities, and connectivity.



### Promote Access to Healthy Food

Access to healthy foods is another critical component of a sustainable lifestyle. The 2013 CHNA Survey identified obesity as the most pressing community health issue impacting Olmsted County. Diet and healthy eating were also noted as specific issues. Reliable access to affordable, healthy food is a fundamental factor in combatting the prevalence of obesity and diet-related diseases. The graphic below lists strategies to aid in this quest. Our community is stronger when everyone has the same

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access to health and quality of life.

### Household Proximity

- Improve household proximity to healthy food

### Food Production

- Increase food production and access to healthy food in residential settings
- Support increased local food production compatible with surrounding development

### Transportation

- Enhance transportation systems that connect people to sources of healthy food

### Businesses

- Support food related businesses and activities

## Improve Sense of Safety and Security

Community safety can be empirically demonstrated, but of equal importance is people’s perception of safety in public places and in their neighborhoods. Crime in Rochester has been generally trending downward since 2000, and in 2015 the City experienced the lowest crime rate since the 1970’s. While Rochester’s crime rate is 27% lower than the national average, a small segment of our population report that they do not feel safe in their neighborhood. Safety, as it relates to exposure to crime, is recognized as a social determinant of health that can affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks. Neighborhood safety not only affects potential immediate threats to life and physical wellness, but also impacts long-term quality of life and has a significant influence on population health outcomes. It can be an economic burden related to lost wages, lowered productivity, increased medical costs and increased costs associated with law enforcement, court services and detention facilities. Police and Fire Department staffing, as well as station location and coverage, will need to expand as the city’s population and land area grows.

### Promote Neighborhood Safety

The social environments of neighborhoods, including the degree of mutual trust and feelings of connectedness among neighbors, can shape a neighborhood’s sense of safety. Residents of “close-knit” neighborhoods may be more likely to work together to achieve common goals, exchange information, and maintain informal social controls, all of which can directly or indirectly influence health and well-being. Community outreach efforts such as National Night Out, Community Oriented Policing, and the

Police Benevolent Association enhance neighborhood safety by encouraging neighbors to get to know public safety personnel and each other.

The physical design of a neighborhood can also impact the incidence and fear of crime while improving community vitality and overall quality of life. Design principles rooted in the traditional “eyes on the street” concept create safer spaces by making them well used. Features such as good lighting, front porches, public art, and active sidewalks help increase visibility, provide the perception of supervision, and communicate care and protection.

### Mitigate Natural, Technological, and Manmade Threats

Health and safety is also impacted by natural, technological, and human-caused threats. Hazard mitigation reduces disaster damages by proactively diminishing or eliminating long-term risk to life and property from weather, geologic, and human threats. Events such as tornadoes, hazardous chemical spills, and terrorist attacks may result in the loss of life, property, infrastructure, and income. The ability of a community to prepare, respond, mitigate, and recover when confronted by



these threats, however, may mean the difference between long-term devastation and systemic resilience.

For several years, by means of a joint powers agreement, Olmsted County Homeland Security and Emergency Management was responsible for the creation of the Emergency Operations Plan for the City of Rochester. In December 2009, the Olmsted County Board of Commissioners adopted the area’s first All Hazard Mitigation Plan (AHMP); Rochester’s Common Council also adopted this document, which currently serves as the official mitigation plan for the city. In 2010, the City of



National Night Out encourages neighbors to get to know public safety personnel and each other



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Rochester formally ended the agreement, establishing its own emergency management functions. The City is committed to creating a well-rounded emergency management program and is in the process of creating the first AHMP focused solely on Rochester’s unique needs. This document is expected to be adopted as part of the City’s comprehensive plan in mid-2017.

### Create Safe Routes to School

In the last four decades, the United States has experienced a dramatic change in the way children travel to and from schools. In 1969, about half of all students walked or bicycled to school. Today, however, the story is very different. A county-wide survey conducted in 2011 for Olmsted County Public Health Services found that only about 15% of area students walk or bike to school, with the remaining 85% evenly split between riding the bus and being driven to school in a private auto.



#13467 1300-1530 10-12½ Hrs. After Peak of Bear Creek  
Corner 6th Ave. SE and SE 4th St.,  
So. York Zumbro and Bear Creek

Historic flooding led to building of Rochester’s flood control project.

Nationally, survey results indicate that this change has been costly both in terms of dollars and health:

- School traffic can account for 25% of morning traffic, leading to traffic congestion and decreased safety around schools.
- School transportation operating costs in the U.S. exceed \$14 billion annually, which is the second biggest cost in school budgets after salaries.
- Nationally, more than one third of school-aged children are overweight or obese as a result of poor diet and lack of physical activity.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a national initiative to create safe, convenient, and fun opportunities for children to bicycle and walk to and from schools, with the goal of reversing the decline in children who walk or bike to school and the trends towards greater childhood obesity and inactivity. SRTS is aimed at promoting walking and bicycling to school as well as improving traffic safety around school areas through education, encouragement, enforcement, engineering, and equity improvements.

Rochester has benefitted from this program in the past through funds awarded for targeted infrastructure projects, such as a traffic calming project on 40th Street NW in front of Gage Elementary

School and installation of speed feedback signs at various school sites. The program funds non-infrastructure projects as well, such as pedestrian and bicycle education and skills training, materials needed for encouragement or promotion activities such as Walk to School Day, development of school walk maps, and Walking School Bus programs.

The project to develop a Rochester SRTS Plan sought the involvement of schools, parents and organizations at a grassroots level to improve conditions for children in grades K-8 who, along with their parents, choose to walk or bike for some or all of their daily trips to school. Early in the planning process, mapping was completed for all elementary schools to identify gaps in safe walkways within their walking boundaries. School audits were also completed for selected schools in Rochester area by various



professionals, politicians, and school authorities. More than 800 parents, teachers, and students participated in a short survey to help identify issues and needs related to children who bike or walk to and from school within the Rochester Schools District. These inputs were used to develop various strategies and toolkits for improving safety and accessibility for bicyclists and pedestrians around Rochester area elementary and middle schools. Implementing these strategies district-wide will not only help kids get to school, it will also improve non-motorized access for all residents and visitors.

### Environmental Health

Environmental health is also important for our community’s overall well-being. Strategies that help promote clean air and water include utilization of green infrastructure and incorporating objectives of the City’s Energy Action Plan.

#### Utilize Green Infrastructure

“Green infrastructure” is the use of a planned network of natural areas and open spaces, such as fields, wetlands, river corridors, and forests, to provide flood protection, cleaner air and water, habitat, and aesthetic appeal. It uses vegetation, soils, and other natural elements to treat stormwater at its source while delivering environmental, social, and economic benefits. At the neighborhood and site scales,

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parks, rain gardens, green streets, green walls and roofs, community gardens, and the urban forest soak up, store, and filter water and particulates.

### Incorporate Energy Action Plan Objectives into Community Growth Strategies

In 2016, upon City Council authorization, the Rochester Energy Commission (REC), prepared an Energy Action Plan (EAP) in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan update. The EAP helps guide the community in incorporating sustainability objectives into the planning process. Energy and greenhouse gas (GHG, or carbon) reduction initiatives are two significant components that receive detailed focus in the EAP.



Source: Rochester Public Works

Rain gardens help treat stormwater at its source.

Within the last decade research has shown how the topics of sustainability and climate change have become increasingly relevant to land use and transportation planning. The need to conserve and manage energy costs, as well as public concern over climate change, are the primary drivers for this trend. Rochester is expected to grow faster than many other cities in Minnesota or even in the USA. With that growth will come an increased demand for energy use and, consequently, the potential for increase in greenhouse gas emissions. How Rochester grows will determine the level of growth in energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

The scenario planning performed as part of the P2S 2040 process evaluated alternative approaches to community growth and land use in order to determine the impact that different policy approaches might have on energy consumption, energy costs, and greenhouse gas emissions. The key impacts that land use scenarios have on energy use and greenhouse gas emission are illustrated in the following graphic.

A land use pattern that concentrates development in key nodes and corridors supports a more efficient transit system that results in fewer vehicle miles travelled and less dependence on automobiles.

The ability to capture more trips via transit results in fewer vehicle miles travelled and less dependence on the automobile, a significant contributor to energy consumption and greenhouse gas.

A mixed land use pattern, supporting trail/sidewalk system, and a network of complete streets create more walkable and bikeable neighborhoods further enabling fewer vehicle miles travelled.

Fewer vehicle miles travelled lessens the impact on traffic and roads and reduces the potential for traffic congestion which consumes more fuel.

Concentrating growth to vacant lands proximate to existing services and infrastructure supports a more efficient use of public facilities and services, reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

Redeveloping and or/revitalizing aging, underutilized development further increases the efficiency of infrastructure and services. It also results in the updating and modernization of buildings that can incorporate newer energy efficient and green building technologies.

Incorporating the EAP objectives and strategies into the P2S 2040 land use and transportation framework will help ensure that development patterns will result in a more cost effective, energy efficient, and climate friendly community.



## Part 5 | The Development Vision

Urban form is a term that describes the physical attributes of the city. Traditionally, urban form includes rectangular blocks connected by streets, avenues and arterials forming the development framework of the city. Along this hierarchy of urban streets, people move about and do their business. These



Source: *Pictometry.com*

A traditional street grid and the South Fork Zumbro River influence Rochester's urban form.

connections, combined with sidewalks, public transit and urban amenities like parks, plazas, landmarks and buildings from different eras of a city's history make up the urban form of the city.

Rochester's traditional urban form consists of a gridded network of streets with lower-density residential neighborhoods and higher-density, mixed-use nodes and

corridors. It includes pedestrian-scaled buildings and streets that accommodate pedestrians as well as automobiles, transit and bicycles. The urban neighborhood pattern resulted from Rochester's early growth when neighborhoods were built at a scale measured by "walking time". Most residents could reach the shops and services they needed within a few blocks of their homes and work places.

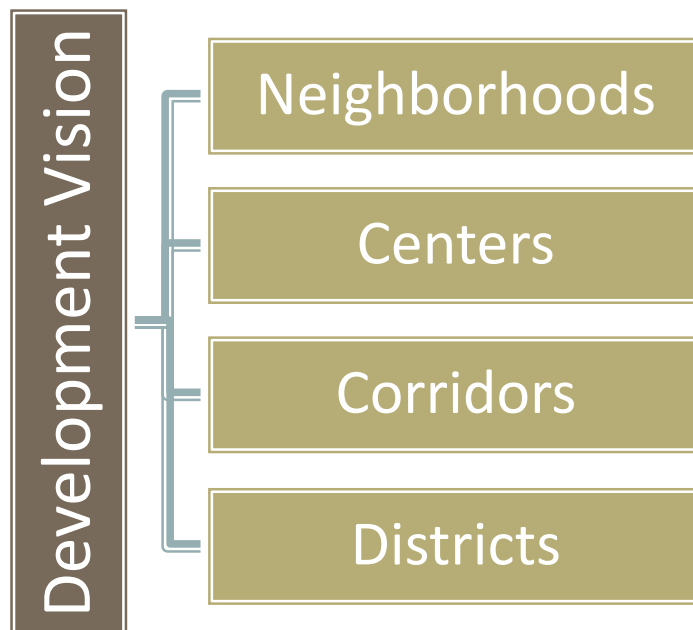
The pattern and scale of streets, open spaces, and buildings that make up Rochester's urban form have a direct and daily impact on how residents and visitors move about, patronize local shops and businesses, meet with friends and neighbors, and enjoy the amenities offered by the city. In some parts of the city, the compact nature of the streets and blocks is efficient and pedestrian-friendly. The built environment supports the network of streets and provides an attractive and interesting face on the city's public spaces. In other parts of the city, however, roadways and development patterns designed for the automobile tend to impede that efficiency and erode both the pedestrian experience and neighborhood character. In some instances, connectivity has been blocked off by artificial barriers like highways, railroad crossings, or large blocks of land uses that don't support pedestrian activity. In these areas, urban form has been impacted and the urban fabric needs healing. Urban design can contribute by



providing the policies and guidance for new development and built form that is implemented through the regulatory framework of the City’s zoning ordinance.

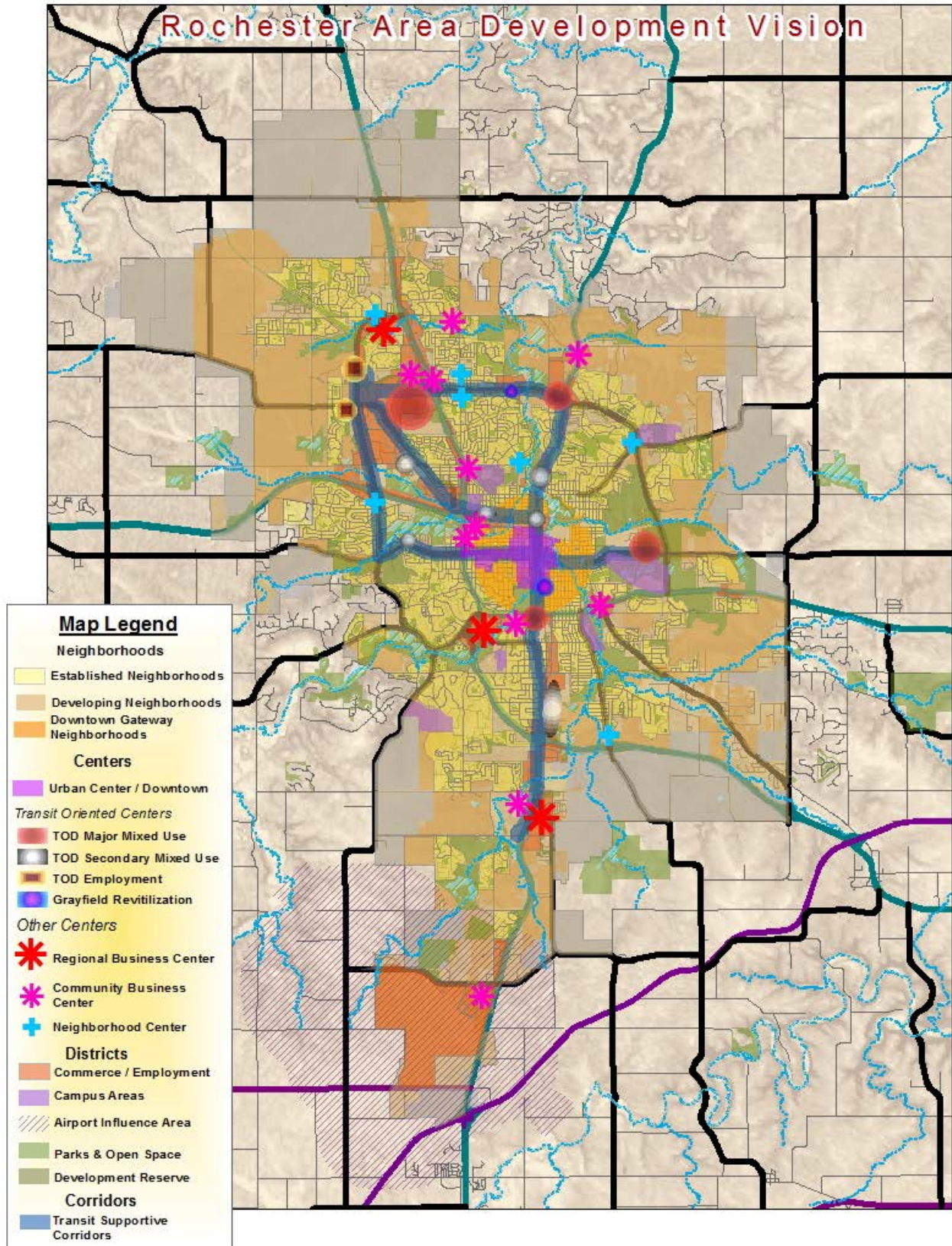
The Development Vision identifies place types that highlight different development contexts or forms that exist or will be encouraged in Rochester’s urban service area. Designation of place types is a way to organize thinking about and develop policies for areas of distinct character as well as the public actions and investment needed to support them. Mapping these place types reflects the Core Principles of the plan, particularly by encouraging more diverse, mixed use development areas supporting compact development, greater access to transit oriented opportunities, and expanded housing choices.

These place types should be thought of as land use “building blocks” that help to define the structure of the city. They incorporate human needs into the built environment and are generally categorized into one of the following four groups:



The Rochester Area Development Vision is illustrated on the following page. Designating areas on the Development Vision Map does not carry specific policy implications and only acquires the force of policy via references to the map in the P2S 2040 policy statements. The intent of the plan is to implement the development vision for growth and connectivity illustrated on the Map through more specific policy tools, such as the Future Land Use Map; and through amendments to the City’s ordinances, such as the adoption of special overlay districts to implement the preferred development pattern in designated centers or districts or along particular corridors segments. The four types of building blocks are described in more detail following the Vision Map

The Development Vision



**DRAFT**

3/22/17

## Neighborhoods

A **NEIGHBORHOOD** is a geographic area in which the residents have a common sense of identity or perceive that they have common interests. Neighborhoods are a basic building block of the built environment in Rochester and are the areas that most residents consider “home”.

Neighborhoods can vary widely in size, composition and configuration, reflecting the diversity of its residents. Neighborhoods can be formed or united by any number of geographic or demographic factors. Neighborhoods should be **walkable** and **connected**, include a **mix of housing types**, with destinations such as **schools, parks, neighborhood shopping** and desirably some places of **work** within walking distance.

Rochester’s existing and new neighborhoods must be able to adapt to changing demands of its residents and the local environment. Auto-oriented neighborhood development, without sidewalks or access to transit, are lifestyle choices that the City should discourage, instead focusing on housing and transportation choices that promote sustainability and healthy lifestyles. Prior to the widespread availability of the automobile, Rochester’s neighborhoods provided urban design features that were sustainable such as a highly connected network of streets and sidewalks, street trees, pedestrian scaled blocks and buildings, and shared public spaces. Going forward, careful consideration must be given toward the quality of place and context, creating identity as well as sustainable and responsible design in Rochester’s neighborhoods.

**Established Neighborhoods** | The quality of Rochester’s established neighborhoods plays an important part in why many people choose to live here. They help to define the character of the city. Neighborhood architecture varies, but it is typically consistent with the period in which dwellings were built. The typical neighborhood pattern in Rochester since the close of World War II has been that of a conventional neighborhood design, and this pattern predominates for most of the planning area, with development typically consisting of single family housing on individual building lots.

P2S 2040 includes policies to maintain and promote the distinct character and identity of these neighborhoods at a variety of prices and styles to enable households at a range of economic levels, family life cycle, and lifestyles to live within a community. Preserving existing housing and promoting

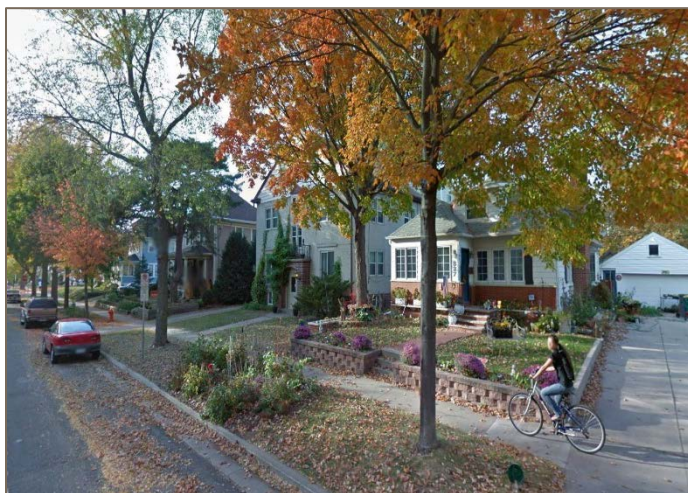


## The Development Vision

homeownership should remain the focus in established neighborhoods, with modest opportunities for infill and redevelopment. The City’s primary strategy for residential infill and redevelopment outside of the Greater Downtown area and Primary Transit Network priority areas is to encourage redevelopment and reuse of sites and buildings at a scale and character in keeping with neighborhood while accommodating a broader mix of housing and low intensity employment or neighborhood services.

**Developing Neighborhoods** | Developing neighborhoods reflect the opportunities that exist primarily near the edges of the city for the development of new neighborhoods on lands previously not developed. Proposed development of new neighborhoods should create a distinctive character that relates well to the surrounding area and promotes traditional development patterns such as a connected street and sidewalk network, pedestrian scaled blocks and buildings, tree-lined streets, and neighborhood amenities like parks, open spaces and trails. A suitable network of connected streets to provide the ability to effectively provide transit and service access should be incorporated into the planning of new neighborhoods. Environmentally sustainable development and development that enhances healthy lifestyle choices are encouraged.

Developing neighborhoods should have a variety of housing types and sizes, with compatibly scaled commercial and employment opportunities allowable at the edges of the development on major streets. The different needs and characteristics of lower and higher density housing styles should be considered when locating these uses within a neighborhood.



**Downtown Gateway Neighborhoods** | Immediately adjacent to the downtown core are well-established core neighborhoods consisting of a variety of housing and limited small scale commercial and institutional uses. In these areas a

combination of the new and old exist side by side and on many neighborhood streets are good examples of accommodating and encouraging the new while preserving and appreciating the old. Ensuring the continuity of neighborhood identity and character will be important as reinvestment and infill development occurs. Future development should feature a carefully integrated mixture of housing of various styles, sizes, and densities generally with attention paid to the walkability of the area given its proximity to many employment, commercial and cultural opportunities in the central development core. The mix of housing is expected over time to skew more toward attached single family and moderate density multi-family units rather than detached single family units. Mixed use development in the form

of live-work spaces is encouraged and other limited small scale commercial and service uses are also appropriate permitted.

## Centers & Nodes

**CENTERS** provide places of **focused higher intensity development** for residents to **shop, work** and **gather**. A differentiated web of centers provides opportunities for development that focuses on commercial activity, sites where a diverse set of **mixed use** development encourages and supports **walkable** urban development and **enhanced transit** services, or sites where smaller centers emerge to support and promotes the development of distinct neighborhoods and districts within the community. Centers are generally located in **highly accessible** areas, in some instances more auto oriented and in others more transit oriented, spaced with consideration to trade area and population served.

Centers have traditionally been conceived in the spatial sense, as places to put people and jobs. This plan, by introducing the concept of transit oriented centers to Rochester, conceives of a new class of centers where transit service and walkability are prime characteristics that **attract people, jobs and visitors**, with the quality of design and a pedestrian orientation vital to their success. These new centers will support many other regional planning objectives, such as **increasing housing choices**, providing housing in closer proximity to job opportunities, enhancing the cost effectiveness of transit, and providing businesses with synergies from the concentration of possible customers and contacts.

**Urban Center/ Downtown** | The Urban Center encompasses the existing and future limits of the Rochester’s central development core, serving as the primary business, cultural, and government services hub in the city. It includes entertainment, restaurants, offices, retail, civic, and cultural amenities as well as connections to local and regional transit options. Multiplying the choices available in housing, shopping, recreation and transportation in the Urban Center are central to Rochester’s desire to accommodate changing demographic needs and lifestyle desires in an active, highly walkable environment. The Urban Center will accommodate the widest mixture of uses and highest development densities within the city. Consistent with the economic development vision created by the Downtown



## The Development Vision

Master Plan and Destination Medical Center initiative, the Urban Center maintains its importance as the true hub for a growing region.

**Transit-Oriented Development Nodes** | Transit-Oriented Development Nodes are sites of dense mixed use development located at the crossroads of major urban streets along the Transit Supportive Growth Corridors identified on the Growth and Stability Map. With a mixture of residential, employment, and shopping uses at densities supporting frequent and accessible high quality transit service, it is expected that the evolution of these nodes will support the development of a live/work environment with uses that are active throughout the day. Design and connectivity are critical in these areas, with pedestrian amenities, transit orientation, and building siting and massing reflecting the best features of traditional urban form. These nodes will vary in size and character, typically ranging in size from 40 to 100 acres, and are expected to have a city-wide or even regional draw.

**Regional Business Centers** | Regional Business Centers are concentrations of service and retail commercial uses that serve city residents as well as more distant county or regional populations. They will feature a large concentration of retail floor space, typically anchored by one or more major retail chain stores, with convenient and direct access to major highways that are part of the regional road network. Total building floor areas typically exceed 500,000 square feet and can be much larger, with large expanses of surface parking to serve their customers.

**Community Business Centers** | Community Business Centers feature commercial and service development of less than 500,000 square feet in size that accommodate a variety of small, medium, and large sized stores. Typically, the marketing formula for community scale retail calls for construction at a low-density, one-story scale with surface parking on the street side of the development, often featuring a full-service supermarket as an anchor tenant with or without other medium scale tenants such as hardware, apparel, booksellers, larger restaurants and sporting goods that draw from a city wide customer base. Although these sites are traditionally more oriented to the automobile, they should be designed for pedestrian access and other modes of transportation to increase their compatibility with urban form and character where feasible.

**Mixed Use Neighborhood Centers** | Mixed-Use Neighborhood Centers are comprised of a handful of small - and medium-sized businesses, typically focused in one quadrant of an intersection. These places primarily serve the needs of the immediate surrounding area, although they may also contain specialty stores that serve a larger urban or regional client base. Neighborhood business prosperity varies throughout the city and is affected by a variety of factors, including the buying power of the surrounding area and competition from other commercial areas. The character of Mixed-Use Neighborhood Centers is defined by the limited scale of businesses operating in these locations. When located in older historical areas, these nodes typically consist of traditional commercial storefront buildings, with a building typology and pedestrian orientation that is appropriate for the surrounding residential area. In

newer residential areas, these development will often exhibit an auto-centric orientation with parking located along the street frontage of the buildings. Where feasible, they should be designed for pedestrian and bicycle access by area residents.

### SIDEBAR: The Key Center: Downtown Rochester

The City of Rochester, Olmsted County, and State of Minnesota have the unique opportunity to establish the world’s foremost medical destination built around a vibrant and growing urban downtown. The Destination Medical Center (DMC) initiative will sustain and support a 24-hour community where employees are able to enjoy dinner after work without fear of missing their ride home, where patients and their families experience a multitude of activities connected by great streets and numerous mobility options, and where downtown residents can meet their daily needs within a short walk. Transportation investments serve as the connective fabric that ties the DMC vision together.



**Downtown Rochester** is the most intense concentration of commerce in the region and is composed of multiple districts, defined in the Downtown Master Plan and the Destination Medical Center Vision, that form the city’s economic, cultural, and social center. Each district is defined by its concentration of land uses, destinations, public spaces, urban character, and form. The downtown core is characterized by dense tower buildings, with lower scale development radiating outward toward the Zumbro River and the surrounding single-family neighborhoods that ring the downtown in all directions. Together they make up a compact, walkable, and mixed-use destination. Redevelopment and revitalization are emphasized, supporting an urban design pattern that makes downtown a great place to work, play, learn, shop, and live.

As the major employment center within the region, with an estimated 40,000 daytime employees filling approximately 10.1 million square feet of non- residential space, the downtown has also begun to make significant strides in growing a residential base. The City has a significant number of new public and private development projects that will increase downtown’s vitality, provide new uses and services, and transform the skyline. These projects indicate a confidence that downtown Rochester that will continue to build off the Mayo Medical Center business to strengthen its role as the city’s premier destination.

The confluence and complexities of uses, scale, activities, and physical spaces in downtown require a finer level of detail than can be achieved using only the citywide policies that appear elsewhere in P2S 2040. The Downtown Master Plan, Destination Medical Center vision, and DMC Design Guidelines will supplement the policies included in this plan to outline development values and strategic initiatives addressing all of the elements that contribute to a vibrant, walkable and livable downtown.

### Districts

**DISTRICTS** are larger areas of activity, more general in nature than centers, but not intended to precisely correspond to existing or future zoning districts. These areas will comprise the largest portion of the city’s land area, but will generally be **developed at lower densities** or intensity that is most reliant on **private vehicular travel** for access, with **lesser levels of transit** service than found in transit oriented growth centers and corridors. While in most cases districts will **feature a predominant type of land use**, in many instances there will be complementary or possibly conflicting uses located within the district either as a legacy of historic development patterns or purposely planned for as part of new growth or redevelopment. Such areas are expected to remain relatively **stable** through the plan horizon with **limited pressure for significant land use change** or need for redevelopment or revitalization.

**Commerce/Employment Districts** | Commerce/Employment Districts typically include free standing office, retail, entertainment, service or industrial buildings on individual lots in a typical subdivision setting, with each lot having individual access to the street network and limited or no coordination in terms of building design or urban form elements. These areas are outside of Urban Center / Downtown as well as the transit oriented nodes and corridors. Commerce/Employment Districts generally rely on the major street system to provide the primary auto-oriented access they rely on. In some instances, particularly when developing Class A space for office or business use, efforts will be made to create more of a campus type development pattern with open spaces, landscaped parking lots and structures, screened service and storage areas, and landscaped buffers and boulevards all integrated into a park-like setting. The Commerce/Employment District should be directly served by local transit, but given the intensity of development, this service will be more oriented to the peak period and limited during the off-peak.

**Campus Districts** | Campus Districts in Rochester include major medical and educational facilities as well as selected other sites dedicated to a concentrated range of organizational activities and services, such as the Olmsted County Community Services Campus on the east side of the city. Campus facilities can feature either a urban and suburban-style character, but development of these sites typically relies on integrated master planning to address the full spectrum of site planning issues from infrastructure and access to open space and urban design considerations.



## The Development Vision

**Airport District** | The Airport District encompasses the airfield and surrounding environs of the Rochester International Airport. Key functions in this area include airport operations, landside access facilities, areas needed for mitigation of environmental impact, and complementary airport oriented business development. Growth in these areas are guided by the development and periodic updating of an Airport Master Plan and Airport Layout Plan.

**Parks/Open Space** | The Parks/Open Space category applies to permanent open space intended for recreational or resource conservation uses that benefit the community. Included are neighborhood, community, and regional parks and greenways. Also included are publicly owned lands that are managed for watershed protection, hazard prevention, and the protection of important visual resources. Land with this designation is intended to remain in open space in perpetuity.

**Development Reserve** | The Development Reserve designation depicts areas within the Rochester Urban Service Area, generally comprised of open space, agricultural lands, or very low density suburban style residential neighborhoods, that are located in areas planned to receive municipal services in the future but not needed to meet development projections during the current planning horizon. Designation of the Development Reserve is important for considering long term city growth patterns and in the planning of municipal infrastructure and transportation systems, which have useful life spans that far exceed the 25-year plan horizon.

## Corridors

While **CORRIDORS** primarily provide for a means of **connection** between different areas or destinations, in P2S 2040, with its emphasis on **integrated land use and transportation** planning, certain corridors take on meaning as not only a framework for transportation but a place type where consideration of the land use context along these linear facilities becomes an important consideration. Corridors associated with the proposed **Primary Transit Network** and those where a **Complete Streets** context has been identified as a priority in the Transportation Framework of Section 2 are places where the type of land use and the priority given to different travel modes become important considerations, influencing the success of the transit system and the public realm experience for people traveling about.

**Regional Highway** | Regional Highways are limited access roadways accommodating high volume and higher speed regional traffic flows. These corridors are typically separated from adjacent land uses by buffers or frontage road systems. Access to adjacent properties will be highly auto-dependent, with

## The Development Vision

transit services generally consisting of express bus services. Efforts to weave or integrate the environment of regional highways into the fabric of the community generally rely on landscaping, public art, gateway treatments, special lighting, or design features on structures such as bridges to soften the edges of these corridors.

**Urban Highway** | Urban Highways are major street corridors that maintain a focus on moving vehicular traffic across the city, typically at somewhat lower volumes and lower speeds than regional highways. These routes are often important commuter routes with high peak period volumes but volumes more typical of other arterial streets during off peak times. A defining feature of many of these corridors is that adjacent development has been sited with its “back turned” on the roadway, resulting in existing development patterns that are not transit-supportive. Opportunities do exist, however, to promote greater integration of transit or bicycling supportive of future enhanced transit service.

**Transit Supportive Corridors** | Transit Supportive Corridors form the backbone of the proposed Primary Transit Network, a higher level of future transit service featuring enhanced bus or Bus Rapid Transit connecting the Downtown Urban Core to targeted Transit Oriented Nodes and major park and ride sites in the city. A higher density and mix of uses along these corridors will strengthen surrounding urban neighborhoods and ensure the critical mass of ridership needed to support transit investments that provide more frequent and sustainable transit service. New medium- to high-density residential development along Transit Supportive Corridors is encouraged, particularly as part of mixed use development. Along these corridors, new infill or redevelopment should feature building design oriented towards the corridor, with the greatest intensity at or near the Transit Oriented Nodes. Development intensities are expected to be higher, parking requirements to be lower, with a greater emphasis on shared parking. Pedestrian amenities within developments along transit supportive corridors should be built to a higher level than other corridors.

**Urban Business Corridors** | Urban Business Corridors are characterized by denser residential and commercial development, with buildings typically brought forward to meet the street and sidewalk. Parking areas in these corridors are located to the side and/or rear of residential buildings, but are often found in front of commercial buildings. These corridors generally host local bus service and the opportunity exists over time to transform these corridors into walkable environments. Constraints and challenges for the Urban Business Corridors are numerous: dated site design, auto-dependent uses, multiple mid-block driveway accesses, inadequate landscaping, and limited pedestrian access and circulation. With much of the area developed in a single site, ad-hoc manner, assembling multiple parcels to create a unified development scheme will be difficult. At the same time, these areas are high-visibility corridors that would benefit from public investment and criteria to guide future infill or redevelopment towards a more traditional form of design. Architecture typically frames the public



realm, with urban design rather than landscaped buffers the means of integrating adjacent development differing in use or scale.

**Urban Residential Corridors** | Urban Residential Corridors are predominantly residential streets that serve a major collector or minor arterial function, with most lots fronting towards and having direct access onto that roadway. Design and development along Urban Residential Corridors is oriented towards the pedestrian experience and residential quality of life. These streets carry moderate volumes of traffic, yet they are important travel routes for both neighborhood residents and accommodate some through traffic. In many cases, they are part of the city’s regular route bus network.

## Other Urban Features

### Public Spaces

The network of public spaces – streets and sidewalks, plazas, parks and open spaces – that connect the residents and visitors of Rochester, also help define the city’s urban form. The character of public spaces is formed by the arrangement and details of the elements that define them, like building edges, public squares, and storefronts along a mixed-use corridor or homes that line a residential street. Public spaces are successful when they are designed with people in mind for year round use. Whether a sidewalk, plaza or park, public spaces need to function and draw people to use them by being interesting,



attractive, comfortable and safe. Integrated amenities, such as weather protection, landscaping, public art, seating, bicycle parking and other features all work toward creating a pleasant and unique experience. A variety of sizes and types of well-designed and programmed public spaces throughout the city will offer people the opportunity to engage with their surroundings and gather with their community.

New public spaces must be created with careful attention to location, accessibility, and sustainability. They should be encouraged close to where there is already activity or where there is a gap in the public space network and easy access is afforded to the site. A variety of uses and amenities for the public space should be explored to maximize interest and functionality. Public spaces may also be green spaces, valued not only for their recreational or social contributions, but also for the ecological functions they serve in the management of stormwater and improving air quality.

## The Development Vision

**Streets and Sidewalks** | Street and sidewalk design is shaped by the relationships of land use, buildings, parking areas, sidewalks, landscaping, lighting and street furnishings. Recognizing that a connected street network and a well-designed streetscape can result in a positive, greater impact to the economic, environmental, and social vitality of a community, policies are developed to bring pedestrians and bicyclists back to the streets and reduce the impact of auto-oriented streets. It is the city’s goal to provide these amenities and improve mobility, livability, and sustainability through well-designed streetscapes that provide multiple modes of transportation, adequate capacity and reduce impervious surfaces.



**Public Art** | Public art is art that is displayed in the city’s public realm. It can be integrated into many locations: streetscapes, entrances to neighborhoods, buildings, plazas, and parks are just a few examples. Public art is an asset that can transform public spaces in Rochester, encourage personal growth and creativity, increase public gathering and interaction, and enhance the city’s unique image.



As Rochester continues to grow more culturally diverse, the arts can introduce people to new cultures, traditions and art forms. Public art and cultural events, whether planned, permanent, or temporary, give residents and visitors the opportunity to engage with the community and learn about cultural and historic traditions.

In 2015, the Greater Rochester Arts and Cultural Trust, with financial support from its Trustees, the City of Rochester, and private donors, commissioned a consultant to create a public art master plan to inform the development of public art in Rochester. It was determined that public art would encompass works of art that are free and accessible to the public, including visual art, dance, festivals, music, theater, literature and photography. Public Art could be of a permanent or temporary nature. The first draft of the plan is in the process of being reviewed by an appointed task

force whose members represent all sectors of the community.

**Parking Facilities** | Certain areas of the city generate demand far beyond their immediate boundaries and need to accommodate significant automobile traffic through the provision of parking facilities.

While clearly a necessary element in an urban setting, parking facilities can have serious negative visual effects on their surroundings if not designed carefully. They can also break up streetscape continuity if not carefully designed and programmed. Any parking facility, regardless of whether it is a surface parking lot or a structured parking ramp, should be designed so as to blend in with its surroundings and fill important gaps in the urban fabric.

**Natural Features** | Rochester is blessed with dramatic and beautiful natural features that have shaped the development of the city. Since early settlement, the lakes, creeks, karst topography and the river have been important identifying features for the city. These sensitive landscape features should



continue to inform development patterns and growth within the city.

The Zumbro River winds its way through the city, connecting several neighborhoods, parks, open spaces and small lakes together and providing a greenway connection to downtown Rochester. The river defines the eastern edge of downtown, carving its way through the Arts and Culture District. This district gets much of its identity from the river. Revitalization of the Zumbro River's edge represents a tremendous opportunity

for downtown Rochester. New developments coupled with redesigning and rebuilding public spaces along the waterway would bring improved landscape, continuous trail connections, and open spaces along the river's edge. Parks, plazas, and trails should be located so that residents and visitors can visually and physically access the riverfront.

## Heritage Preservation

Heritage preservation provides a community with reminders of who they are and where they have been. Protecting those structures, sites, and objects deemed to have a special historical, community, or aesthetic value enhance a city's appeal to residents and visitors while promoting its unique character and economic viability. It can serve to create vibrant public spaces, attract economic growth, foster civic pride, and conserve resources.

## The Development Vision

The Rochester Common Council adopted a heritage preservation ordinance in Fall 2016. The ordinance establishes criteria for recognition as a landmark property or district, resulting in an approved inventory of designated property. These designated properties would be eligible for and have priority to participate in City incentive programs related to financial, developmental or technical assistance that will serve to preserve, maintain or enhance their historic and architectural character.



## Conclusion

The Development Vision identifies place types that highlight different urban design strategies that exist or will be encouraged in Rochester’s urban service area. We must continue to make our city an attractive place by offering a high quality of life where **all** people can live the American Dream, regardless of socio-economic status. The comprehensive plan alone cannot ensure that all of these issues are addressed, but its intent is to lay the community framework necessary to ensure that our growth is managed in such a way that it preserves our values, enhances our unique community, and embraces all residents.

The next section of the P2S 2040 document will detail how this Development Vision will be realized through the City’s land use and transportation framework.



## The Development Vision