

Sustainability and Resiliency Community Work Plan

Created by and for
Our Community Members



The Need for Community Sustainability and Resiliency Recommendations

Our city's release of planet-warming gases will put our community at a greater risk for economic hardship, extreme weather events, and changes to our ecosystem. Vulnerable populations as well as Black, Indigenous and persons of color in our city, are at a particularly high risk from climate change, as they are more exposed to its effects while having fewer resources to cope with it. These recommendations are essential to confront these issues by reducing Rochester's greenhouse gas emissions while also increasing the city's equity, connectedness, and ability to meet challenges. Cities such as Rochester must lead the way to address climate change before it becomes a major threat to people around the world by increasing the prevalence of severe drought, flooding, heat waves, and extreme weather events such as wildfires.

The Sustainability and Resiliency Task Force

Beginning in 2019, Mayor Norton created the Sustainability and Resiliency Task Force. To ensure these recommendations meet the needs of the entire Rochester community, great care was taken to establish a task force that represents all perspectives, not only the most outspoken or influential. The task force consisted of nonprofit leaders, government agency employees, local business owners, people involved in higher education, and residents from Rochester's diverse ethnic and age groups. Through collaboration and discussion the Sustainability and Resiliency Task Force created a statement that envisions Rochester to be **"an equitable, inclusive community where people, economy, and environment are supported and thrive together."** Using this vision statement, the task force created a series of policies, strategies, infrastructural improvements, and actions that make up these recommendations.

A Community Process

The creation of these recommendations was a community-led effort every step of the way. Designing this process to be led by the community was a deliberate choice to integrate equity into the process. During the summer of 2020, the task force organized 37 community listening sessions that engaged more than 40 community groups in the Rochester area. These sessions gave members of the community the opportunity to discuss their lived experience and propose actions to make Rochester a more sustainable city. In addition to these sessions, 173 members of the community provided feedback through surveys created by the task force, which were translated into a number of languages by Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association. The task force found equity and inclusion, community events, and affordable housing to be most pressing needs within the community.

Recommendations Summary Content

The following pages outline the high-level strategies identified by the Task Force through an intensive community listening process. Each strategy has a number of tactics identified to translate the strategy to implementation. The final recommendations will include all strategies, tactics and justification in full.

"An equitable, inclusive community where people, economy, and environment are supported and thrive together."





Climate Change Resiliency



City for Health



Vibrant Neighborhoods



Accessible Transportation



Resilient Economy



Environmental Health

Sustainability and Resiliency Recommendations Content

The recommendations focus on **six key areas** to address the needs of our residents and outline specific actions that will lead to success in our efforts.

Climate Change Resiliency

Rochester will lead the transition to an equitable, reliable, and responsible carbon-free community to adapt and thrive in a changing climate. Our community will continue to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, increase access and equitable distribution of resilient infrastructure and transportation, and learn from and alongside one another about climate change and ways to interrupt and reverse it.

Strategies:

- Work with state and federal representatives to advocate for policies that address local concerns about climate change
- Improve the climate resiliency of our built environment
- Power our buildings with locally generated renewable electricity
- Rochester's Sustainability and Resiliency Commission will recommend a carbon emissions reduction goal for City residences to reach by a specified date.
- Rochester's Sustainability and Resiliency Commission will recommend a carbon emissions reduction goal for commercial buildings to reach by a specified date
- Increase residents' understanding of climate change and its disproportionate impacts on our community
- Support the implementation of Rochester Public Utility's transition to 100% net renewable electricity

City for Health

Healthy residents nurture a sustainable and resilient city. Healthy environments, community connectedness, and access to quality healthcare and providers support an enriched, holistic view of health for our community. Our community will work to meet the individual needs of all residents in an equitable, culturally relevant way to attain the highest standard of health for all.

Strategies:

- Increase access to healthcare for our residents with inadequate or no healthcare
- Resiliency Hubs: Create a network of resource hubs to increase resident's access and education to respond to community needs
- Develop comprehensive healthy home assessments
- Encourage and develop multigenerational programming within our community
- Support recommendations from the food security assessment through local, economically beneficial actions
- Foster healthy activity and community connectedness

Vibrant Neighborhoods

A vibrant neighborhood is a supportive, connected, and inclusive community where residents with diverse identities and backgrounds are welcomed and engaged and can achieve a high quality of life. Community members and local leaders will foster resident-led efforts to develop mutually beneficial relationships and partnerships that make our neighborhoods more sustainable, resilient, and reflective of all Rochester residents.

Strategies:

- Promote positive changes to our community that have developed as a result of the pandemic
- Ensure all residents and visitors enjoy the same level of safety and security regardless of race, ethnicity, age, disability, gender orientation, or immigrant status
- Celebrate, appreciate, and showcase Rochester's expansive cultural diversity and community
- Develop and support more robust neighborhood services and programs
- Improve the equity and accessibility of housing in Rochester
- Ensure all residents have the opportunity to learn English

Resilient Economy

A resilient economy relies on a diverse set of sectors, employers, employees, and resources to create equitable opportunities and access to financial stability for all. Our economy will become more sustainable through local supply chains, community engagement and collaboration, education and training, mentorship, and entrepreneurship. Our community will work to diversify, grow, and retain both businesses and residents to build a resilient economy where all are welcome.

Strategies:

- Create integrated downtown and area business centers
- Support and incentivize local employers and educational institutions to collaborate to employ a local workforce
- Support and increase local and diverse businesses
- Create and facilitate career skills and workforce development opportunities for young people that support living wages
- Address living wage, prevailing wage, and wage security for the community

Accessible Transportation

Access to transportation is a necessity for all, especially community members seeking affordable and accessible options. Our community will work to create a nonpolluting, multimodal transportation network through which residents can easily and safely travel regardless of means, language, or ability.

Strategies:

- Increase accessibility to transportation for nonnative speakers of English and speakers of sign language
- Support and increase initiatives, policies, and programs that accelerate the transition to lower-carbon transportation
- Generate more safe, economical, multimodal options prioritizing Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and low-income communities
- Support quick implementation of improvements to public transit
- Promote mobility-sharing and active commuting practices such as biking and walking as a means of transportation



Environmental Health

A healthy environment encompasses responsible use of natural resources; land preservation; biodiversity; pollution prevention; and overall soil, air, and water quality. A healthy environment is also one that is equitable and economically efficient for all. Our community will work to balance our natural resources, social equity, and financial resources to create a healthy environment for our residents.

Strategies:

- Improve land and soil health
- Protect and conserve water
- Ensure healthy air quality
- Establish a community-wide waste reduction target

Increasing our chances of success

To add a layer of accountability and transparency to this work, we will establish a community nominated, formal, and diverse community advisory group to steward the Sustainability and Resiliency Recommendations' implementation, and provide a mechanism for feedback and communication with the broader community.

Sustainability and Resiliency Recommendations:



Collective Outcomes

The six focus areas each address a different aspect of our community. Despite their separate areas of focus, they all contribute to the central components of sustainability, which are **environmental stewardship, fiscal responsibility, and social equity**. **These three pillars of sustainability are all interconnected and must be addressed together to create a sustainable city.**

Collectively and with the community, the implementation of the 33 strategies will put Rochester on a path to becoming a resilient and truly sustainable community where our residents have an opportunity to thrive.

Contact information:

Find out more information on the task force, recommendations and process at RochesterMN.gov/Sustainability

Environmental Stewardship

Fiscal Responsibility

Social Equity

These three pillars of sustainability are all interconnected and must be addressed together to create a sustainable city.



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ROCHESTER
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